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WHO ARE BARTRHARI'S *PADADARŚINS*? ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BARTRHARI'S PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE*

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One of the major problems discussed in the second book of the *Vākyapadiya* (VP) concerns the primary unit of language: Is it the sentence (*vākyā*) or the word (*pada*)? In the context of the discussion of this problem, two groups of thinkers are opposed in *kārikā* 2.57: the *vākyavādins* or upholders of the sentence and the *padadarśins* or upholders of the word.¹

Kārikā 2.57 is the only place in the VP where these two groups are explicitly juxtaposed.² But the opposition between the views which present the sentence as the primary unit and those which present the word as the primary unit pervades the entire second book of the VP, and also plays a role in the first and third book.³ According to *Punyarāja*, the upholder of the sentence is the grammarian, and the intention of *Bhartrhari* would have been to refute the views of the upholders of the word.⁴

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1 VP 2.57: *abhedapūrvakā bhedāḥ kalpitā vākyavādibhiḥ / bhedapūrvāḥ abhedārīḥ tu manyante padadarśināḥ //*

In the context of the whole discussion this may be translated as follows: "Those who speak of the sentence (as being the primary linguistic unit) postulate the divisions (i.e. words) as preceded by the undivided (sentence). Those who perceive the word (as the primary linguistic unit) think that the undivided (sentences) are preceded by the divisions (i.e. the words)."

2 In VP 2.217, the word *padārthadarśanam* evokes the opposition without mentioning the other group.

3 See for instance VP 1.72-74, 91-95; 3.1.1-2; 3.4.1-2.

4 The opposition between the upholder of the sentence and the upholder of the word is very much emphasized in the commentary ascribed to *Punyarāja*, the oldest commentary available for the second book. *Punyarāja* summarizes the purpose of the discussion in the second book as follows (VP II:4.26-28):

tatra vaiyākaranasyākhanda evaiko 'navayavah śabdah sphota-laksano vākyam, pratibhaiva vākyārthah, adhyāsaś ca sambandha iti padavādi-pakṣa-dūṣana-parah param tūkā-kāro vyavasthāpayaścīty asya kāndasya saṃksepah.

"For the grammarian the indivisible *śabda*, 'linguistic unit', without parts, defined as the *sphota*, is the sentence; *pratibhā* 'intuition' is the sentence meaning; and *adhyāsa*

Who are these upholders of the word, these *padadarśins* as they are called by Bhartrhari himself in kārikā 2.57? Commentators and interpreters have identified them, mainly and with increasing emphasis, as Mīmāṃsā-thinkers.⁵ It is true that many of the arguments used in the VP

'superimposition' the relation: it is this that is here being established as the highest by the author of the (Mahābhāṣya-) Tīkā (i.e. Bhartrhari), being intent upon refuting the view of the upholder of the word."

(The word *param* after *-dūṣanaparāh* is a bit odd and would not be missed if deleted. It may be due to an erroneous repetition by a scribe.)

5 Bhartrhari enumerates several definitions of the sentence in the first two kārikās of the second book. From of old, Bhartrhari's enumeration has been read and interpreted in different ways (K. Kunjunni Rāja, ALB vol. 26 (1962): 206-210). The oldest grammarian commentary available for these kārikās (the one attributed to Punyarāja) recognizes references to eight different views in Bhartrhari's enumeration, and categorizes them as either 'indivisible sentence' view or 'divisible sentence' view. It is the upholder of the sentence who accepts the sentence as primary and in principle indivisible. According to Punyarāja, Bhartrhari mentions five 'divisible sentence' views; three of them accept *anvitābhidhāna* and two *abhihitānvaya* (VP II:1.10-14). These terms, *anvitābhidhāna* and *abhihitānvaya*, characteristic for the opposition between the later Mīmāṃsā schools of Prabhākara and Kumārila, are not used by Bhartrhari himself. By using them Punyarāja may create the impression that the criticism of the upholder of the word is mainly a criticism of Mīmāṃsā-ideas. Elsewhere, the Mīmāṃsakas are explicitly referred to (VP II:10.10, 32.12). Yet Punyarāja recognizes that thinkers of other schools too had their own ideas about the primary unit of language. Their views, however, are in one way or the other implied in the views discussed by Bhartrhari (VP II:3.284.18). Punyarāja is also aware of a sentence definition in the tradition of grammar which accepts individual words. But this definition is only *pāribhāṣika* 'technical', and it is, moreover, implicit in one of the eight main views enumerated by Bhartrhari (VP II:2.17-19). Thus, while showing awareness of other upholders of the word, Punyarāja suggested that the Mīmāṃsakas occupied at least an important place among them.

Perhaps partly on the basis of Punyarāja's commentary, modern scholars have strongly emphasized the importance of the Mīmāṃsakas as Bhartrhari's opponents and upholders of the primacy of the word. According to Iyer, "the doctrine of the reality and indivisibility of the sentence and the sentence-meaning was put forward in opposition to the Mīmāṃsakas who believe in the reality of the individual word and its meaning" (Iyer, 1969:188). Gaurinath Sastri identifies the Mīmāṃsaka with the *padavādin*: "In seeking to develop the thesis that a sentence is an indivisible unit he [i.e. Bhartrhari, JH] has to unfold and examine the view of the Mīmāṃsists (or, *padavādin*) who regards terms as ultimate elements and vehemently repudiates the view that they are unreal abstractions" (Gaurinath Sastri, 1959:83). Biardeau makes the following remark with regard to Bhartrhari's ideas about the sentence: "Cependant, Bhartrhari connaît les idées de Śabara et des Mīmāṃsaka sur ce point (...), et ce sont elles principalement que son exposé vise à réfuter, tantôt en paraissant suivre Patañjali ou tel autre grammairien, tantôt en retournant simplement contre la Mīmāṃsā les arguments qu'elle avance" (Biardeau, 1964:402). According to Coward (*Bhartrhari*, 1976:129, note 21), Bhartrhari establishes in the second chapter "the *vākyā* or sentence *sphota* over against the view of the Mīmāṃsakas." And in a very recent book, B.K. Matilal (1990:106) says that "In *Vākyapadīya*, ch. 2, Bhartrhari (1965 edn.) notes that there are two principal philosophical theses regarding the notion of the sentence and sentence-meaning: one is called the

to support the reality of the individual word presuppose Mīmāṃsā-principles;⁶ but there also seem to have been upholders of the individual word among other groups including the grammarians themselves. The view that the sentence is divisible and that words are individual units may be subdivided into five views, in accordance with (Punyarāja's interpretation of) Bhartrhari's enumeration of views on the sentence at the beginning of the second Kānda. Among these 'divisible sentence' views, one in particular has very close connections with the grammarians themselves rather than with the Mīmāṃsakas.

The view I have in mind is identified as *samghātapakṣa* by Punyarāja, with reference to the word *samghāta* 'collection' or 'coalescence' in Bhartrhari's enumeration in kārikās 2.1-2.⁷ Bhartrhari discusses the view more elaborately in kārikās 41-48. The first two kārikās of this group are as follows⁸:

41. Whatever is expressed by a single word as the meaning, that much it expresses if it is in the sentence.

'indivisibility' thesis (*a-khanda-pakṣa*) and the other is the 'divisibility' thesis (*khanda-pakṣa*). [note that these two terms are used in Punyarāja's commentary but not in the kārikās, JH.] The first thesis is what Bhartrhari himself maintains while the second is held by his opponents, the Mīmāṃsakas."

Here I will not investigate to what extent there is a basis in the available Mīmāṃsā sources from about Bhartrhari's time, to consider the Mīmāṃsakas as upholders of the word. I only want to point out that we know of ancient Mīmāṃsā-thinkers who defended the individual phonemes (*varnas*) as eternal, but that the theoretical step from these eternal phonemes to eternally meaningful larger units remains rather vague in the earliest sources. See the discussion of this problem by Frauwallner, "Mīmāṃsāsūtram I, 1, 6-23" (WZKSO 5,1961), and D'sa, *Śabdaprāmāṇyam in Śabara and Kumārila*, Vienna 1980 (Publications of the De Nobili Research Library), esp. pp. 34, 93f, 113f.

- 6 Especially the passage VP 2.64-87 contains numerous references to the principles and technicalities of Mīmāṃsā.
- 7 Whereas Punyarāja is aware of a merely 'technical' (*pāribhāsika*) definition of the grammarians in which individual words are accepted and which is included in one of the main views (VP II:2.17-19), he presents the *samghāta*-view as one of the main 'divisible sentence' views. This view receives full attention in those parts of the second Kānda in which the 'divisible sentence' views and 'indivisible sentence' views are explained and contrasted or opposed (this happens roughly speaking in the whole second Kānda up to and including 2.413-446, the last passage in which the two groups of views are confronted). From this one may infer that Bhartrhari too considered the *samghāta*-view as one of the main 'divisible sentence' views.
- 8
 41. *kevalena padenārtho yāvān evābhidhīyate /*
vākyasthami tāvato 'rthasya tad āhur abhidhāyakam //
 42. *sambandhe sati yat tv anyad ādhikyam upajāyate /*
vākyārtham eva tarī prāhur anekapadasamśrayam //

42. But what arises as different and additional when there is a relation (*sambandha*) [between several words], that's what they call the sentence meaning, residing in several words.

These *kārikās* are reminiscent of some passages in the MBh. It is 42 in particular which is evocative of a sentence occurring a few times in the discussion of P 2.3.46 and 50 (MBh 2.3.46, 1:462.4; 2.3.50, 1:464.1012): *yad atrādhikyam vākyārthah sah* ‘what is additional here (namely, in the sentence in comparison with the separate words), that is the sentence meaning’. Because wording and context are so similar, there can be little doubt that 42 is a direct reference to this sentence.⁹ The sentence is also cited by Punyarāja and in the Vṛtti on this *kārikā*. *Kārikā* 42 and the immediately preceding 41 should therefore be considered a reference to this statement in the grammarians’ tradition rather than to a *Mīmāṃsā* view.

The close connection with the grammarians becomes especially clear from the Vṛtti. It is in the Vṛtti on *kārikā* 42 that we find the expression *tatrabhavat* ‘His Honour’ for the first time¹⁰: Time being limited it is not possible to enter here into a detailed discussion of the remarks by *tatrabhavat* ‘His Honour’, but I think there can be little doubt that the character of his remarks point to a grammarian rather than to a *Mīmāṃsaka*. Attention should be paid to the fact that the passage attributed to him constitutes a major citation in the text of one of the main ‘divisible sentence’ views. There is no indication that this grammarian *tatrabhavat* thought that the sentence would, in fact, be indivisible. Words and smaller divisions like the nominal stem and the ending are accepted in the passage attributed to him without apparent reservations. Is it possible that this

9 Another relevant passage which is not so close to these VP-*kārikās* in its wording is found in a discussion of Vārttika 4 on MBh 1.2.45, according to which from a sentence not only the word meanings are understood but also the relation between them (MBh 1.2.45, 1:217.25-218.10).

10 “And this difference between what is additional in the sentence and what is additional in the word has been explained in the (Mahā)bhāṣya. Hence *tatrabhavat* ‘His Honour’ says: While the meaning belonging to a single word becomes the cause of correct formation (*sāṃskāra*) of a word [read: *padasāṃskārahetur*] with regard to an utterance [read: *vacanam prati*] within the nominal stem (*prātipadika*), [the meaning] belonging to a single word – the very cause of correct formation of the word – is not the cause with regard to the joining/employment of endings: [as for instance in] *grāmo*, *grāmo rāmāṇiyah*. But the meaning of the sentence, residing in several words, is said to be a cause for establishing ‘loss of accent’ and all these things (*pratinighātādi*)” (VP II:210.24-211.3).

For the use of *tatrabhavat* outside the context of drama as a very general honorific (at least from the time of the MBh), cf. Aklijkar, 1972:186-187. In the MBhD *atrabhavat* is sometimes used to refer to a grammarian or thinker on grammatical subjects.

tatrabhavat 'His Honour' was actually a grammarian who upheld the reality of the individual word?

Tatrabhavat is referred to at one or two other places in the *Vṛtti*. First, *tatrabhavat* is cited in the *Vṛtti* on 2.447 in the context of a discussion of a sūtra in Pāṇini's grammar that presupposes a certain view on the sentence. Again there is no indication that the sentence is considered as the primary linguistic unit that would, in fact, be indivisible.¹¹

The other relevant place is the *Vṛtti* on 2.453. Although the text contains a gap, there seems to be another reference here to *tatrabhavat* 'His Honour'. The context is a discussion of general and more particular actions implied in the meaning of a verb. It can be shown that there is again a close connection between an idea attributed to *tatrabhavat*, and a view which accepts individual word meanings. As in the case of the reference in the *Vṛtti* on 42, the idea attributed here to *tatrabhavat* is closely related to the view called *saṃghātapakṣa* by Puṇyarāja, one of the main 'divisible sentence' views.¹²

11 The viewpoint attributed to *tatrabhavat* makes use of the notion of *ākāṅksā* (syntactic or semantic expectancy), which shows that the sentence is considered to be a composite whole. (The notion of *ākāṅksā* is used not only in *Mīmāṃsā*, but also in the MBh, together with *apeksā*).

tatrabhavanto manyante – bahusv api tirantesu yesv arthalaksanā kācid ākāṅksā vidyate tesām ekavākyatvam na vyāvartiyate / tathā ca sūtre 'rthavān tīṇiparyudāso bhavati (VP II:315.9-11).

12 The idea attributed here to 'His Honour' is as follows:

sāmānyamātram eva tatra vivaksitam viśeṣās tv anumeyāḥ, na tesām śabdena saṃsparśo 'sfiti. "There (tatra) only the general is intended, the particulars are to be inferred; language (śabda) does not touch these [particulars]." (VP II:317.8-10).

The problem of whether a word expresses a general or a specific meaning has been discussed in the context of views which accept individual words. According to one view, the word in a sentence expresses in fact a particular meaning. Yet, the word considered in isolation seems to express a general meaning. This is expressed in VP 2.17, and according to Puṇyarāja the idea presupposes *anvitābhidhāna*. There is another view in this context, which is closer to the idea attributed to *tatrabhavat*. It is expressed in one of the kārikās of the passage 41-48 (*saṃghātapakṣa* according to Puṇyarāja), namely 44:

*sarvabhedānugunyāḥ tu sāmānyam apare viduh /
tad arthāntarasāṃsargād bhajate bhedārūpatām //*

Others consider the general (meaning) to be in accordance with all particulars; on account of combination (*sāṃsarga*) with other meanings, it partakes of the state of being a particular.

Here the meaning of the word is first of all something general, next this general meaning acquires the status of a particular meaning on account of the combination with other words in the sentence. All this is in perfect accord both with the view attributed to *tatrabhavat* and with *abhihitānvaya*. Again, there is a close connection between an idea attributed to *tatrabhavat*, and a view which accepts individual word meanings.

It should be pointed out that even according to the view that the sentence is the primary unit, it is acceptable to divide the sentence secondarily into words and these into smaller parts. It is therefore not impossible that even *tatrabhavat* considered the sentence as actually one and indivisible. However, the fact is that he is cited three times in the context of views accepting individual words, but not in the context of the views which Bhartrhari ultimately seems to prefer and for which he has become famous, namely those that emphasize that the sentence is the primary, indivisible unit of language.¹³

What is clear is that one of the main views accepting individual words is closely connected with grammarians. As for the identity of *tatrabhavat* referred to at two or three places in the *Vṛtti*, it is difficult to arrive at definite conclusions, other than that he was a grammarian cited in the context of 'divisible sentence' views.

Let us now turn to the *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā* (MBhD), often held to be a work by the same Bhartrhari who wrote the VP. The MBhD is in several respects similar to the VP. Similar grammatical problems are discussed in a comparable way, and it seems to have originated in an almost identical cultural-intellectual *milieu*.¹⁴ While all these similarities are there, there is also an important difference. Whereas the upholders of the sentence and the upholders of the word appear as two well-established groups in the VP, the upholders of the sentence are by no means prominent in the MBhD. It should be remembered that a student of the MBhD is severely

13 The identification of *tatrabhavat* with Bhartrhari, the author of the *kārikās* himself, has played a role as a possible argument in the discussion about the authorship of the *Vṛtti*. But this identification has now become somewhat problematic. Cf. Iyer, 1965:xxxif, xxxvi; 1969:31f, 35f and Aklujkar, 1972:186-188, who have not accepted this identification as a strong argument. Bronkhorst, 1988:109-110, however, used it again as an argument for different authorship. For my own standpoint in this discussion, see "Bhartrhari and the ancient *Vṛtti*" (in preparation). The tentative conclusions at which I will arrive below, make the identification with Bhartrhari *in an earlier stage of his development* again possible, though by no means necessary.

14 About the similar Vedic background of the two works see Rau, 1980 and Bronkhorst, 1981 and 1987. Aklujkar, 1972:188 speaks of "the overwhelming similarities of diction, thought, and sources that are noticed in the V, *kārikās*, and *Tripādī* [= the VP *Vṛtti*, VP *kārikās* and *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā*, JH]". Cf. Srinivasan (1963:59-70), Yudhisthir (*saṁvat* 2020:347), and Iyer (1965:xxvi-xxix). In my view, the evidence that can be adduced shows (1) that the MBhD and the VP were *considered* to be the works of one and the same Bhartrhari for many centuries; (2) that the author of the MBhD and the author of the VP, if they were not identical, had at least a very similar background and were familiar with the same grammatical tradition. That it is for the moment very difficult to go beyond this conclusion is clear from the parallel case of the authorship of the VP-*kārikās* and *Vṛtti*, for which cf. the preceding note.

handicapped by the inferior quality of the single and incomplete manuscript available, on which all present editions are based. For this reason, all conclusions with regard to the MBhD necessarily have a merely tentative character. In numerous instances a few emendations are necessary to make a passage understandable. And perhaps future research and detailed comparisons with related texts like Kaiyata's *Pradīpa* will suggest new emendations which will alter the meaning of some of the passages. On the basis of the imperfect and problematic material, I would still like to present a few examples from this work that illustrate its distinctive perspective on the primary unit of language.

First of all, the author of the MBhD distinguishes between the language of Vedic literature and everyday language. In Vedic language words are not used in isolation, they occur in fixed sequence in a sentence; but in everyday language there is no fixed word order (MBhD 1:1.16-19). The difference between sentences in Vedic texts and sentences in everyday language is that in the former there is permanence in use (*prayoganityatvam*), whereas in the latter there is impermanence (MBhD 1:17.18-21). In the *kārikās* of the VP such distinction is not made.¹⁵ In two places there is a reference to tradition in support of the idea that sentences are permanent. The first place is VP 2.58-59, which contains a reference to a passage in the MBh applying strictly speaking only to the transmitted texts of Vedic literature. Yet the immediate context of this passage suggests that the conclusion should be applied to all sentences. The second reference to tradition, VP 2.344-345, concerns a minority view referred to in the *Nirukta*, a text outside the grammarians' tradition.¹⁶ The view applies to sentences in everyday life. This illustrates how the domain in which sentences are permanent in the 'indivisible sentence' views in the VP is not restricted to Vedic sentences as in the MBhD.

Second, the MBhD enumerates different views on the permanence of *śabda* (MBhD 1:16.26-17.26). At the corresponding place the MBh only asks the question: Is the word permanent or impermanent? It does not

15 As far as I know, no such distinction is made in the *Vṛtti* either, nor is it made in any of the views in Punyarāja's commentary, either in his 'divisible sentence' views or his 'indivisible sentence' views.

16 Grammar (*Vyākaraṇa*) and *Nirukta* are two of the six traditionally accepted 'ancillary disciplines of the *Veda*' (*Vedāṅgas*). The MBh considers grammar the most important one among the six ancillaries (MBh 1:1.19). As for the *Nirukta*, it draws a distinction between views accepted in this discipline itself and those accepted by grammarians (*Nirukta*, 1.12, 9.5, 13.9). The interpretation of the phrase *padaprakṛtiḥ saṁhitā* favoured in the VP (2.58-59) is exactly opposite to the one accepted in the *Nirukta* (1.17).

mention different views at all, so the author of the MBhD must have felt free to expound on the issue according to his own insights. The views he mentions are quite divergent; it seems that he even refers to the view of the Jainas, according to which only *prākrta* words are permanent (MBhD 1:16.9). As we have seen, permanence in the case of Vedic sentences has indeed been defended in this context (MBhD 1:17.18-21). However, there is no trace of a view that the *śabda* which is permanent would ultimately be the sentence in all cases. If the author of the MBhD accepted the sentence as primary in the way explained in the VP, i.e. in a general sense and not only in Vedic sentences, one would expect that this view would have been, if not discussed in some detail, at least referred to at this place.

Third, in a few places the author of the MBhD says explicitly that both words and sentences are meaningful units. And here the meaningfulness of the word is not made dependent upon the meaningfulness of the sentence, whereas according to the 'indivisible sentence' views in the VP, the sentence would be the primary meaningful unit and the word would be secondary. In MBhD 2:8.27-28 it is said that *śabda*, interpreted as either the word or the sentence, is meaningful and permanent, and that it is a collection of phonemes.¹⁷ Another passage in the MBhD comments upon the MBh-expression *atha kim idam aksaram iti* 'Now, what is this *aksara*?' (MBh 1:36.5), which occurs at the end of the critical study of the alphabet or list of phonemes. Therefore, *aksara* must have been intended as 'phoneme' by Patañjali. However, for the author of the MBhD this immediate context is not decisive. He mentions that according to some thinkers *aksara* is *varna* 'phoneme', but that according to others it is *pada* 'word' or *vākyā* 'sentence'. It is clear that the MBhD-author prefers the latter two options.¹⁸ In the MBh-passage which concludes the study of the

17 *śāstre hy arthavataḥ śabdasya nityatvāni pratijñātām, padasya vākyasya vā / sa ca samudāyo'bhyupagataḥ śāstre / samudāyaś ca varṇātmaka eva.*

18 He mentions an earlier MBh-passage in which *aksara* was used, apparently as an illustration of its meaning of *pada* 'word' or *vākyā* 'sentence' (although the meaning 'phoneme' would do very well too). Thus he diverts the attention from the preceding discussion about the phonemes. In the discussion of the following Ślokavārtikas about *aksara* he also finds occasion to bring forward the interpretation as 'word' and 'sentence'. One of the explanations of *aksara* in the first Ślokavārttika is that it is derived from *as* with the suffix *sara*. This is further explained in the MBhD as follows: "because it pervades (*asnute* = *vyāpnōti*) meaning, (and) because it is pervaded by meaning, therefore *aksara* (is so called)" (2:39.8-9). Next he mentions as examples of meaningful units only *pada* 'word' and *vākyā* 'sentence'. Thus he forgets that in the preceding discussion Patañjali accepted that in some cases phonemes may be meaningful, namely if they happen to be roots, affixes or certain particles. At any rate, the preceding passage dealt with phonemes

list of phonemes it is also said that *aksara* is the place where *brahman* resides (MBh 1:36.14). Commenting on this statement, the author of the MBhD mentions the *pada*¹⁹ as the place where *brahman* explained as the Veda resides, and not the *varna* (which is what one would expect on the basis of the context in the MBh) nor the *vākyā* (which one would expect on the basis of the second Kānda of the VP, especially as it is interpreted by Punyarāja). In other words, the word and the sentence are presented here as linguistic units which are on the same footing as far as their meaningfulness is concerned, perhaps with a certain preference for the word. In spite of the immediate context, the importance of the phoneme is neglected. And unlike the preferred views in the VP, the MBhD at this place does not make the meaningfulness of the word dependent on the meaningfulness of the sentence.

Finally, it is certainly not the case that there is no reference at all to the sentence in the MBhD. Such references, however, are usually compatible with Punyarāja's 'divisible sentence' views (*anvitābhidhāna* or *abhihitānvaya*). Still, I have found a reference to a view which seems very close to an 'indivisible sentence' view as found in the VP. It is the following (MBhD 6b:27.18-19)²⁰:

"Or, it is possible (to say) that just as phonemes (are) meaningless, words (in a sentence) are also meaningless. Thus the meaning is understood from the sentence."

It is clear that this is very reminiscent of a VP kārikā such as 2.413.²¹ In the VP, kārikā 2.413 is connected with an important, and even preferred view on the sentence. In contrast, the reference in the MBhD represents just one out of many approaches to the problems posed by P 1.1.44: *na vetti vibhāsā*. Further, it is also introduced by the MBhD-author as just a possible viewpoint. It is not presented either as an important viewpoint of a well-established group of thinkers, or as the only view ultimately accepted by the author.

(and the question whether they are meaningful or not), not with words and certainly not with sentences.

- 19 MBhD 2:39.16-17. Palsule's *pade* in MBhD 2:39.17 on the basis of the parallel in Kaiyata's Pradīpa and instead of *yade* (MS, AL, Sw) is an improvement.
- 20 *atha vā śakyam evānarthavadvarnavat padāny anarthakāny eva / evam eva ca vākyāt evārthapratipattiḥ* / The view is adopted here as one of the possible ways to avoid the conclusion that in some circumstances an individual word loses its (external) meaning and has only its own form as meaning.
- 21 *yathaivānarthakair varnair viśisto 'rtho 'bhidhīyate / padair anarthakair evam viśisto 'rtho 'bhidhīyate //*

The main points made above may be summarized as follows: First, in the MBhD, as in the VP, it is recognised that sentences may be considered permanent. In the MBhD, however, this applies in full only to Vedic sentences. In the places in the VP where the permanence of sentences is defended, no such restriction is made. Secondly, the view of the sentence being the primary, indivisible unit of language is not mentioned in places in the MBhD where one would expect this if the view was really important to its author. Thirdly, the author of the MBhD explicitly presents the word and the sentence as linguistic units which are on the same footing as far as their meaningfulness is concerned. He does not make the meaningfulness of the word dependent upon that of the sentence. However, more than an indirect, dependent meaningfulness of the word cannot be accepted if the 'indivisible sentence' views of the VP are adhered to. And finally, in a rare instance in which the MBhD does refer to an 'indivisible sentence' view similar to an 'indivisible sentence' view in the VP, it is not presented as an important view of a well-established group.

The author of the MBhD is therefore by no means as committed to the indivisible sentence as the author of the VP seems to be.²² Does this mean that the VP and the MBhD did not have the same author? Perhaps it does. But another explanation is possible, one that will do justice to the overwhelming number of similarities between the two works in terms of ideas and approaches to problems. It is not possible to demonstrate in this paper in detail how significant these similarities are. It may suffice to point out that the approach to the problem of the relation between word and phoneme is very similar in the two works.²³ The only difference is that in the VP it is applied not just to the relation between word and phoneme, but also to the relation between sentence and word.²⁴

22 That the two are identical and have the same convictions with regard to the indivisible sentence seems to have been presupposed by V.B. Bhagavat and Saroja Bhate, in their edition with translation and notes of the 6th *Āhnikā* of the MBhD. They mention the *vākyasphota*-view twice in reference to certain passages (MBhD 6a:4.11-12 and MBhD 6a:4.13-17) in the MBhD. Whereas the translation of these passages brings out correctly that they are about words and their constituents, not about the relation between words and sentences, the notes on p. 100 introduce without proper basis in the MBhD itself 'the theory of *vākyasphota*' and the idea that 'the word itself does not have an existence'. See also note 24 below.

23 Cf. references in note 14 above for some similarities between the MBhD and the VP *kārikās*. Similarities that can be traced back directly to the MBh are of course much less significant than those that cannot.

24 To give only one example, all that can be learned from the MBhD passages mentioned in note 22 (MBhD 6a:4.11-12 and MBhD 6a:4.13-17) is that the approach to the problem

Moreover, a problem which occupied the author of the MBhD was: How is it possible for one word to refer to a whole sentence or its meaning? Much attention is paid to this problem even where this would not seem necessary from the point of view of the MBh.²⁵ In the VP the fact that a single word, even a single phoneme, can refer to the meaning of a whole sentence is used as an argument for the sentence meaning being one and indivisible (VP 2.40, 444).

Is it possible to do justice both to the similarities and this one important difference between the VP and the MBhD? At this point we have to estimate what is historically probable and what not. Different scholars will have different ideas about this. Here, one hypothetical explanation of the facts just described will be put forward. It seems quite possible that the two works were written by the same author, but at different stages of his life. Apart from the great number of passages in the MBhD which express ideas very close to ideas expressed in the VP-kārikās, there is even one VP-kārikā that occurs in exactly the same form in the MBhD. On the basis of this fact, Joshi and Roodbergen have suggested that the VP must have been the earlier work, and that the MBhD cites from the VP (Joshi-Roodbergen, 1986:212-213, notes 904 and 908).²⁶ However, it is possible that this kārikā is cited in both cases from a third source. Or, if we want to maintain that one and the same Bhartrhari is the author of both the VP and the MBhD, and also of the kārikā in question, we might propose that while writing the MBhD, he also

of the status of different units of language (MBhD 6a:4.12 *paramārtha-darśane ca sarvatraivāyām pravibhāgo nāsti*) is similar to an approach well-known from the VP (e.g. VP 1.74: *pade na varnā vidyante varnesv avayavā na ca / vākyāt padānām atyantām pravibhāgo na kaś ca na //*). The important difference is that in the MBhD this approach is not applied to the sentence.

- 25 The most striking case is in the second Āhnikā, when the author of the MBhD starts to discuss the problem how the word *idam* in a phrase in the MBh can possibly refer to a whole sentence-meaning. From the point of view of the MBh the whole discussion is rather far-fetched (MBhD 2:16.23-17.2). In the discussion of the MBh-passage on the *samprasārana-sūtra* (P 1.1.45, MBhD AL:269) the consideration of this problem is more at its place. Commenting on the MBh on P 1.1.44, the author of the MBhD investigates in great detail how *vibhāsa* can be the name of the expression *na vā* (MBhD 6b:23.18-25.2). While following the broad outlines of the discussion in the MBh, he treats of the issues raised there in an elaborate and rather independent way, and even adds numerous related issues on his own.
- 26 In the introduction of Joshi-Roodbergen, 1986, the authors mention the *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā* as "a work written after the composition of the VP" (Joshi-Roodbergen, 1986, introduction:ii).

started to put some of his thoughts in the form of *kārikās*, at least one of which found its place in the later VP.

Indeed, because of the difference explained earlier, it seems to be more likely that the MBhD was written or finalised earlier than the VP, than the other way round.²⁷ To explain: There is no denying that both the MBhD and the VP have a strong tendency to enumerate different views on topics related to language and grammar. If the ‘indivisible sentence’ views were as important in grammatical circles as suggested by the discussions in the VP, why were they so much neglected in the MBhD, even there where its author felt free to discuss the views of quite divergent schools of thought? It is difficult to account for this if the MBhD was written later.²⁸ But if the MBhD was written earlier, it is not difficult to see why very little attention is paid by its author to ‘indivisible sentence’ views. Maybe there were a few thinkers who adhered to such views, but they were not prominent and the views were possibly not fully developed. The MBhD is still close to the MBh which, while taking the sentence into account in numerous instances, places no emphasis on its importance, let alone on the idea that it would constitute the primary and indivisible unit of language. In between the writing of the MBhD and the VP someone among the grammarians, perhaps the author of the MBhD himself, became increasingly interested in some of the existing ‘indivisible sentence’

27 K. Kunjunni Rāja, in the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* volume 5, suggests that the MBhD was written earlier than the VP without discussing arguments pro or con: “Bhartrhari’s philosophical ideas are found in their fully developed form in the *Vākyapādiya*, which is his magnum opus; but the germs of his theories may be found in his commentary on the *Mahābhāṣya* ... Some of the ideas that were *developed later* into a cogent system are found scattered here and there in the commentary on the *Mahābhāṣya*” (*Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, volume 5: The Philosophy of the Grammarians, ed. H.G. Coward and K. Kunjunni Rāja, pp. 172-173, my emphasis).

28 Because of their similar cultural background, it seems not very likely that either one was written and finalised and the author of the other one remained completely unaware of its existence. It should also be kept in mind that the purpose and scope of the MBhD and VP overlap to a considerable extent (for which cf. Aklujkar, 1980/81, p. 599 and notes 21 and 22). Both are commentaries on the MBh, both – not only the MBhD but also the VP – follow the MBh very closely. There is no topic in the VP which is not also somewhere a topic of the MBh. The difference is that the MBhD follows mainly the sequence of the exposition in the MBh and the VP not. Most importantly, both the author of the MBhD and the author of the VP are anxious to take numerous alternative views on a certain topic into account, adding even views beyond the different views directly referred to in the MBh. This gives both works the character of a ‘compendium’, and it is precisely the ‘compendium’ character of the MBhD which makes one expect references to the ‘indivisible sentence’ views at several places if they were as important as suggested in the VP.

views and developed them. By the time the VP was written, these views had become prominent enough to figure as major views in grammatical discussions. If it was the author of the VP himself who had developed these views, then it is also clear why these views figure suddenly so prominently in the VP: In his eyes these views were simply very important and probably even superior to views which accept the independent meaningfulness of words. Whereas the permanence of sentences was restricted to Vedic sentences in the MBhD, such a restriction was no longer necessary in the fully developed 'indivisible sentence' view in the VP.

This is, of course, nothing more than a hypothetical explanation on the basis of the facts pointed out above, and it is as a hypothetical explanation that it is being presented to the scholars assembled here today. Much more research will be needed to determine whether such an explanation can really do justice to both texts and to their treatment of a wide range of divergent views. We may now return to the question asked at the beginning of this paper: Who are the so-called upholders of the word, the *padadarśins* referred to in kārikā 2.57 of the VP? The emphatic identification by later commentators and interpreters of these upholders of the word with Mīmāṃsakas, has obscured the fact that there were important upholders of the word among the grammarians themselves, including probably the one referred to in the Vṛtti as *tatrabhavat* 'His Honour'. In the MBhD, the word is usually presented as being individually meaningful, not as an abstraction from an indivisible sentence. In the VP, in contrast, there are indications that its author ultimately preferred the view that it is the indivisible sentence which is primary. Yet, the author of the VP also discusses in a positive way views in which individual words are accepted as meaningful and the sentence as divisible. In so doing, he discusses views which were accepted among grammarians, and perhaps - if he is the same person who wrote the MBhD - even by himself at an earlier stage of his development.

Abbreviations

AL = Abhyankar and Limaye's edition of the *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1970).

MBh = Patañjali's *Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya* (Kielhorn's edition).

MBhD = 1. *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā*
2. The recent *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā* edition (with translation and notes) by a team of scholars (Poona, 1985-1991). Numbers following MBhD refer to this edition as follows: MBhD (number of Āhnika):(page).(line). 6a and 6b as number of the Āhnika refer to MBhD Āhnika VI, Part I (Poona, 1986) and Āhnika VI, Part II (Poona, 1990) respectively.

MS = manuscript of the *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā*, as referred to in the editions.

P = Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

Sw = Swaminathan's (partial) edition of the *Mahābhāṣya-dīpikā* (under the title *Mahābhāṣya Tīkā*, Varanasi: Banaras Hindu University, 1965).

VP = Bhartrhari's *Vākyapadīya*; references to the kārikās (with two or three arabic numerals separated by periods) follow W. Rau's critical edition of the kārikās (Rau, 1977).

VP II = Iyer's edition: *The Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari, Kānda II, With the Commentary of Punyarāja and the ancient Vṛtti*, Delhi etc.: Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1983. For Punyarāja's commentary reference is made to this edition as follows: VP II:(page).(line).

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