

VR̥TTI AND VR̥TTIKĀRA IN RĀMĀNUJA'S ŚRĪ-BHĀṢYA¹

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1. ONE WHO CANNOT BE RĀMĀNUJA'S VR̥TTIKĀRA

1.1. The topic specified in my title has been discussed by several scholars. What I wish to show in the present essay is that at least two oversights have been committed in the early stages of research, as a result of which the discussion has not been as conclusive and rewarding as it could have been. The oversights consist in not reading the primary evidence precisely as well as in not asking the questions that should have been asked. The consequence of the first oversight has been serious to the extent of affecting the perception of even traditional scholars (śāstrins, paṇḍitas) in India.

Rāmānuja's Śrī-bhāṣya 1.1.1 statement *bhagavad-bodhāyana-kṛtām vistīrṇām brahma-sūtra-vṛttim pūrvācāryāḥ saṃcikṣipuḥ / tan-matānusāreṇa sūtrākṣarāṇi vyākhyāsyante*² is followed by a slightly removed statement under the same sūtra

1 I prefer to make the reading of compound Sanskrit words easy by marking off their component words through hyphens. In doing so, I try to retain the sandhi seen in my sources. Therefore, in some cases, I succeed only in making the second or last member of the compound stand out. The hyphens should not be seen as invariably offering guidance regarding the syntactic relationship of the words involved.

Further, I use a dot/period inside a word to separate two consecutive vowels or to indicate that the nature of the following consonant has changed due to sandhi.

In my statements as well as the statements I cite, I italicize only those non-English (primarily Sanskrit) words which are mentioned (as distinct from used). The titles of book length texts, volumes, journals, etc. are italicized only in the bibliography at the end and, in the main text, only when the title is not Sanskrit.

I am grateful to Prof. Klaus Karttunen for a careful reading of the first draft of this essay and drawing my attention to the need for adding some bibliographic details and cross-references.

2 Tr. by Thibaut (1904: 3): "The lengthy explanation (vṛtti) of the Brahma-sūtras which was composed by the Reverend Bodhāyana has been abridged by former teachers; according to their views the words of the Sūtras will be explained in this present work."

Tr. by Karmarkar (1959: 2) "The Predecessor-teachers abridged the voluminous exposition of the 'Brahma-sūtras' made by His Reverence Baudhāyana; (and) in accordance with their views, the words of the 'Sūtras' would be commented upon (by us)."

Tr. by Rangacharya & Aiyangar (1899/1961/1988: 2): "Ancient teachers (such as Dramiḍācārya and others) abridged that extensive commentary on the Brahma-sūtras which was composed by the venerable Bodhāyana." See "References and Abbreviations" below for the publication history of this translation.

which goes thus: *tad āha vṛttikāraḥ* “*vṛttāt karmādhigamād anantaram brahma-vividiṣe*”³ *vakṣyati ca karma-brahma-mīmāṃsayor aikaśāstryam* “*sambhitam etac. chārīrakam jaiminiyena ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇene*”⁴ It is understandable that earlier scholars connected the two statements and thought of the Vṛttikāra, to whom Rāmānuja attributes the sentences *vṛttāt ... vividiṣā* and *sambhitam ... lakṣaṇena*, as Bodhāyana.⁵ Faith in the validity of this way of proceeding has gone so far that even scholars whom we would expect to follow traditional commentaries of the Śrī-bhāṣya have unhesitatingly identified the author of Rāmānuja’s citation pair with Bodhāyana.

3 (a) Translations of the citation: Thibaut (1904: 5): “after the comprehension of works has taken place there follows the enquiry into Brahman”. Karmarkar (1959: 3): “The desire to know Brahman is after the acquisition of Karman which has taken place before.” Rangacharya & Aiyangar (1899/1961/1988: 4): “The desire to know the Brahman comes immediately after the acquisition of the knowledge of (ritualistic) works is completed.”

4 (a) Translations of the citation: Thibaut (1904: 5): “this Śārīraka-doctrine is connected with Jaimini’s doctrine as contained in sixteen adhyāyas”. Karmarkar (1959: 4): “This Śāstra dealing with the embodied (soul) has been welded together by the treatise of Jaimini in sixteen chapters.” Rangacharya & Aiyangar (1899/1961/1988: 4): “This Mīmāṃsā of the Embodied (i.e. of the Brahman) is composed so as to be one with that of Jaimini (i.e. the Karma-mīmāṃsā) which consists of sixteen specific chapters.” See notes 14 and 27 below.

(b) The editions read *°ṇenetīti śāstraikatva-siddhir iti*. The two additional words *iti śāstraikatva-siddhiḥ* introduce redundancy after *aikaśāstryam*, unless they are taken to be Rāmānuja’s words, conveying a sense like the following: ‘Because the Vṛttikāra has made the specified two statements, the unity of the Karma-mīmāṃsā and Brahma-mīmāṃsā is proved.’ Even then, the third word *iti* remains dangling, and the fact of non-connection of *aikaśāstrya* with *vṛttāt karmādhigamād anantaram brahma-vividiṣā* in Rāmānuja’s words leads to awkwardness (Rāmānuja clearly connects the first quotation only with the ‘karma-jñāna → brahma-jijñāsa’ thesis and the second only with the ‘PM-UM unity’ thesis). If the sentences had the form *tad āha vṛttikāraḥ X iti. vakṣyati ca Y itīti aikaśāstryam/śāstraikatva-siddhiḥ*, no awkwardness would not have been felt. As it is, the phrase *iti śāstraikatva-siddhiḥ* has the appearance of a marginal manuscript note getting into the main text. Furthermore, I do not see any recognition of *iti śāstraikatva-siddhiḥ* in the older commentaries, Śruti-prakāśikā and Tattva-ṭīkā, of the Śrī-bhāṣya.

(c) Rangacharya & Aiyangar (1899/1961/1988: 5) make *itīti śāstraikatva-siddhiḥ* a part of the quotation from the Vṛttikāra, ignoring one *iti*, and translate thus: “and so there is the establishment of Śāstraic unity between them.” Thibaut (1904: 5) does the same by putting “this proves the two to constitute one body of doctrine” inside his translation of the quotation. Karmarkar (1959: 4) follows suit with a surface-level difference in translation: “and so is proved the oneness of the [two] Śāstras.” As all these translations ignore one *iti* (taking the other as ‘so’ or as ‘this proves’) and the incongruity involved in making the Vṛttikāra assert that oneness is proved because he told us that the two texts are joined – to take his word for the thesis, they only serve to highlight the textual problem identified in (b). Nor do they succeed in removing the redundancy in having both *aikaśāstryam* and *śāstraikatva* in what is a single syntactic unit.

5 Cf. among others, Kuppaswami Sastri 1924: 467; Kane 1930: 937–939; Ramaswami Sastri 1934: 433; Karmarkar 1959: 3; Rangacharya & Aiyangar 1964/1989: I.2n, 4, 113, 258; II.9, 76, 133; III.36n, 244n.

We, for example, find:

A. Subrahmanya Sastri 1961: iii: “Bodhāyana, the author of the Vṛtti which formed the basis of Rāmānuja’s bhāṣya.”

N.S. Rāmabhadra-cārya 1985: 4 (while specifying the source of Rāmānuja’s citation from the Vṛttikāra): *bo[dhāyana].vr[tti]*. On p. 376 of the same volume (while glossing *vṛtti-granthe* in a verse by Vedānta-deśika): *bodhāyanīya-mīmāṃsā-dvaya-vṛttau*.

Thangaswami Sarma 1996: 210: *vṛttikāra-bodhāyanas tu jaiminir ity āha*.

1.2. Surprisingly, it has not been noticed that Rāmānuja’s own words rule out the possibility that Bodhāyana could be his Vṛttikāra. In the first statement, *bhagavad-bodhāyana-kṛtāṃ vistīrṇāṃ brahma-sūtra-vṛttiṃ pūrvācāryāḥ saṃciksīpuḥ. tan-matānusāreṇa sūtrākṣarāṇi vyākhyāsyante*, Rāmānuja would have no reason to refer to the Pūrvācāryas who made abridgements of Bodhāyana’s work if that work was the basis of his own commentary. He could have simply written something like *bhagavad-bodhāyana-kṛtā vistīrṇā brahma-sūtra-vṛttiḥ. tan-matānusāreṇa sūtrākṣarāṇi vyākhyāsyante*. The *tad* in what he has actually written must stand for the post-Bodhāyana Pūrvācāryas (otherwise the reference to them would be vacuous), which means that Rāmānuja did not take Bodhāyana himself as his guide (note “their views” in the translations quoted in note 2).

Of course, Rāmānuja knew that Bodhāyana was an earlier commentator in the tradition and a venerable one at that. Equally evidently he knew that Bodhāyana’s commentary was the source of the commentaries he could use. This state of affairs, taken with the precise meaning of his statement, implies that Rāmānuja could not use Bodhāyana’s commentary, although he would have liked to use it. In other words, he did not have access to that commentary itself. This, in turn, implies that, even though Rāmānuja spoke of Bodhāyana’s commentary as a vṛtti, it cannot be the vṛtti that appears as a part of the attribution *vṛttikāra* about twenty sentences later. In his mind, there was no connection between *bhagavad-bodhāyana ... vyākhyāsyante*, on the one hand, and *vṛttāt ... -vividiṣā* and *karma-brahma-mīmāṃsāyor ... -lakṣaṇena*, on the other, except through the Pūrvācāryas. The referent of *vṛtti* in his first statement was not, in his perception, identical with the referent of *vṛtti* in his second statement. It is just an unintended and unfortunate outcome of the relatively small space between his two statements that the possibility of Bodhāyana’s vṛtti being the vṛtti that made the Vṛttikāra a vṛttikāra occurs to his readers and they are carried away by it if they are not mindful of the precise meaning of the first statement.

1.3. The corrective provided in the preceding section should not come as a surprise. About three-to-five centuries before Rāmānuja's time, Śaṅkara also gives no indication of ability to consult Bodhāyana's commentary. He speaks of Upavarṣa only. If his representation of Śabara under BS 3.3.53 is accurate as I have pointed out in Aklujkar 2009a: §§2.1–15, §3.1, then Śabara, who lived two-to-four centuries before him by current estimates, is also unlikely to have access to Bodhāyana's commentary. From all indications it seems that Bodhāyana was a very old author, and his work was lost or practically lost (survived only in fragments) before any time in which we may place Śabara.⁶

Moreover, the identification of Vṛttikāra with Bodhāyana is not found in the Śrūta-prakāśikā of Sudarśana (= Vyāsārya; c.1220 AD) and Tattva-ṭikā of Vedānta-deśika (c.1268–1369 AD). These commentators of the Śrī-bhāṣya are not as far removed from Rāmānuja's time as the commentators of most other commentanda in the Sanskrit-Pāli-Prakrit tradition are. The following remark of (the rightly respected) Kuppuswami Sastri (1924: 466), therefore, must be set aside as a case of Homeric nod: "The Viśiṣṭādvaita tradition of the Rāmānujīyas accepts Rāmānuja's identification of the Vṛttikāra with Bodhāyana." Neither Rāmānuja so identifies, nor do the Rāmānujīyas seem to have really accepted the identification 'Bodhāyana = the author of Rāmānuja's Vṛttikāra citations' until they were, unbeknownst to them, influenced by the statements of modern researchers.

It might be said by way of objection that, according to a passage cited by Kuppuswami Sastri (1924: 167), Vedānta-deśika accepts the 'Bodhāyana as Vṛtti author = Vṛttikāra' equation. Therefore, he should be viewed as accepting it also in the context of Rāmānuja's two statements. The passage is specified by Kuppuswami Sastri as coming from the Tattva-ṭikā (p. 149 of the Telugu edn published as vol. 6 in the Conjeevaram Oriental Library Institution Series in 1906. Conjivaram: Sudarśana Press) and reads thus:⁷

6 True, the PH, which speaks of Upavarṣa as the abridger of Bodhāyana, does not state that the latter's work went out of currency or survived only in fragments. However, that is exactly what we see frequently happening in several fields of ancient (Greek etc.) literature. It is but to be expected that when more convenient or useful works appear on the scene, the older ones would not be copied repeatedly and would gradually be lost to posterity. If one must have an Indian parallel in this respect, it is provided by the loss of Saṃgraha, ascribed to Vyāḍi, in the tradition of Pāṇinian grammarians; see Vākyapadīya 2.481–483.

7 In the two later edns accessible to me, Dharaṇīdhara-śāstrin's and Śrīvaṅ Śaṭha-kopa's (respectively 1916: 556; 1938: 434), no significant differences of reading are found. Only *svamatamāha* is printed as *svamata(pada)māha*. The intention probably is to indicate that, although the manuscripts read *pada*, what the context needs is *mata*. As the sentence *vṛttikāropajñāim sva-matam āha* is meant to be applicable to the commentandum author Rāmānuja, the emendation is warranted and appropriate. Its acceptance would not affect the issue at hand as the following discussion will indicate.

vṛttikāropajñānīṃ sva-matam āha śabdasyeti. apīr dūṣaṇa-samuccayārthaḥ. atra śābaram 'gaur ity atra kaḥ śabdaḥ? gākāraukāra-visarjanīyāḥ' iti. vṛttikārasya bodhāyanasyaiva hi upavarṣa iti syān nāma.

(The author Rāmānuja) states, beginning with the word *śabdasya*, his own view that is also the view originating with the Vṛttikāra. (The word) *apī* (that he, namely Rāmānuja) uses is meant to add (the present) defect (to the preceding defect(s) in the view he is rejecting). In this respect, Śābara's commentary (contains the following sentences): 'What is (to be considered as) word in (a form like) gauḥ? (The phonemes such as) *g*, *au*, and *ḥ* (are to be considered) word.' Upavarṣa may be the name of no one else than the Vṛttikāra Bodhāyana (i.e. perhaps Bodhāyana of whose vṛtti Rāmānuja speaks under BS 1.1.1 and Upavarṣa to whom the response quoted here is ascribed by Śābara were one and the same person).

Here, it should be noted that Vedānta-deśika uses *syāt* meaning 'may be, could be, perhaps' and does not unequivocally assert that Bodhāyana and Upavarṣa are identical. At the most he can be thought of as entertaining the possibility (as many modern scholars have implicitly entertained) that the vṛtti work mentioned in Rāmānuja's first statement is the same as the vṛtti understood by Śābara and others in the PM tradition. He sees Rāmānuja's view as agreeing with what Śābara mentioned as Upavarṣa's view, realizes that Upavarṣa is taken to be the Vṛttikāra in the PM tradition, recalls that Rāmānuja, at the beginning of the Śrī-bhāṣya, declared his intention to follow (through Pūrvācāryas) the views accepted in Bodhāyana's vṛtti, and senses a question coming up as to why Rāmānuja is following Upavarṣa's view in the text place at hand. Since he (Vedānta-deśika) apparently did not have the information we have from the PH, namely that Upavarṣa abridged Bodhāyana's commentary and hence could be one of Rāmānuja's Pūrvācāryas, he gives the only sensible conjecture he could make as his answer to the question. We have to bear in mind here that, as one well-versed in the PM, Vedānta-deśika knew how widely Upavarṣa's view denying wordness beyond the constituent phonemes⁸ was known and probably also how there was nothing that would justify attribution of the same view to Bodhāyana. The only logical way available to him to ward off the possible objection that Rāmānuja was acting against his own pronouncement was to raise the possibility that Upavarṣa and Bodhāyana were identical. That he was hesitant in doing so is clear from his

⁸ This is how Upavarṣa's pronouncement was understood in the Mīmāṃsā tradition. Whether Upavarṣa intended it to be taken in this way (or only in this way) is difficult to determine in the present state of our sources.

employment of *syāt*.⁹ If he had known the evidence (provided by the PH or some other work) to the effect that Upavarṣa could be one of the Pūrvācāryas – that the Vṛttikāra in the PM tradition and in Vedānta could be identical – his answer would have been different.¹⁰

It should also be borne in mind that the immediate question before us is not whether Bodhāyana was a Vṛttikāra. Rāmānuja himself tells us that he authored a vṛtti and was, in that sense, a vṛttikāra. The question is whether he was *the* Vṛttikāra that Rāmānuja presupposed as the author of *vṛttāt karmādhigamād anantaram brahma-vividiṣā* and *samhitam etac.chārīrakam jaiminīyena ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇena*. Vedānta-deśika's use of *vṛttikāra* before *bodhāyana* can definitely be taken as acknowledging the first fact, the one about which Rāmānuja informs us explicitly. But we cannot assert, especially in view of his use of *syāt*, that his use of *vṛttikāra* goes beyond this and establishes Bodhāyana as the author of the two sentences later quoted by Rāmānuja.¹¹ In Vedānta-deśika's *vṛttikāropajñam*

9 This employment is a tribute to Vedānta-deśika's forthrightness as well as care in arriving at conclusions of (what we would call) historical nature. Some modern scholars advocating the identity of Bodhāyana and Upavarṣa, on the other hand, have written as if *syāt* did not exist in Vedānta-deśika's statement.

10 (a) Also, if Bodhāyana's commentary was available to Vedānta-deśika, he would not have articulated a guess like the one he has. He would have tried to verify if the pronouncement attributed to Upavarṣa by Śābara actually occurred in that work and, depending on the outcome, taken out *syāt* or withdrawn his guess. See §1.3 for the early loss of Bodhāyana's vṛtti/bhāṣya.

(b) Sudarśana commenting on the same passage as Vedānta-deśika cites the corresponding Śābara-bhāṣya part, including the view attribution contained in *iti bhagavān upavarṣaḥ*, but does not take up for consideration the possibly problematic inference that Vedānta-deśika does.

11 An implication of the conclusion reached in this section is that arguments of the following kind that depend on Rāmānuja's access to Bodhāyana's bhāṣya/vṛtti should not be advanced: Ramaswami Sastri (1934: 433–434): “Bodhāyana ... has [→ had], it is believed, enunciated the doctrine of *jīvānutva* in his vṛtti on the BSs; and Rāmānuja, in the opening words of his Śrī-bhāṣya, says that he closely follows Bodhāyana vṛtti; and so, he proceeds further to establish the doctrine of *jīvānutva* in his bhāṣya. If Bodhāyana were not the person to speak of the *jīvānutva*, then Rāmānuja would not have ventured to elucidate that doctrine in vehement opposition to the *jīva-vibhūta* held by the Advaitins ...” There is no evidence of direct dependence on Bodhāyana on Rāmānuja's part. He can be said to have followed Bodhāyana through the abridgements of Bodhāyana's commentary, but, in that case, we cannot assert that he definitely did so or that he unwaveringly did so or that such and such was the extent of his acceptance of Bodhāyana's views. In fact, we really do not know what Bodhāyana's views as a Mīmāṃsaka or Vedāntin were.

The only possible exception to the preceding statement would result from identifying Bodhāyana with Kṛta-koṭi and attaching to him the Mañimekhalai mention of Kṛta-koṭi's acceptance of eight pramāṇas. However, the word *kṛta-koṭi* is attested in the PH as a text name (not as an author name; cf. §2.1 below) and is elsewhere found associated with Upavarṣa. See Aiyangar 1928: 57–68 for an early discussion; also §3.4 below.

that leads to his conjecture at the end of the passage, *vṛttikāra* must stand for Śābara's (and other Mīmāṃsakas') Vṛttikāra, namely Upavarṣa. Otherwise, his immediately following reference to Śābara's bhāṣya and writing the last sentence as a possible answer would make no sense. In other words, unless Vedānta-deśika started with the acceptance of a probably widely held view that the Vṛttikāra was Upavarṣa, he would not have written the way he has.

2. VṚTTI OR BHĀṢYA?

2.1. In Indology, it is rare that one author's statement finds a clear or direct corroboration in the statement of some other author. Fortunately, unmistakable echoes of three of the historically most important components of Rāmānuja's very short first statement are heard in a relatively long section of the Prapañca-hṛdaya (= PH):

tatra sāṅgopāṅgaśya vedasya pūrvottara-kāṇḍa-sambhinnasyāśeṣa-vākyārtha-vicāra-parāyaṇaṁ mīmāṃsā-śāstram. tad idaṁ viṁśaty-adhyāya-nibaddham. tatra ṣoḍaśādhyāya-nibaddham pūrva-mīmāṃsā-śāstram pūrva-kāṇḍasya dharmā-vicāra-parāyaṇaṁ jaimini-kṛtam. tad anyad adhyāya-catuṣkam uttara-mīmāṃsā-śāstram uttara-kāṇḍasya brahma-vicāra-parāyaṇaṁ vyāsa-kṛtam. tasya viṁśaty-adhyāya-nibaddhasya mīmāṃsā-śāstrasya kṛta-koti-nāmadheyam bhāṣyam bodhāyanena kṛtam. tad grantha-bāhulya-bhayād upekṣya kimcid saṁkṣiptam upavarṣeṇa kṛtam. tad api manda-matīn prati duṣpratipādaṁ viśtīrṇatvād ity upekṣya ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇa-pūrva-mīmāṃsā-śāstra-mātrasya deva-svāminātisaṁkṣiptam kṛtam. bhava-dāsenāpi kṛtam jaiminīya-bhāṣyam. punar dvi-kāṇḍe dharmā-mīmāṃsā-śāstre pūrvaśya tantra-kāṇḍasya ācārya-śābara-svāminātisaṁkṣepena saṁkarṣa-kāṇḍaṁ dvitīyam upekṣya kṛtam bhāṣyam. tatha devatā-kāṇḍasya saṁkarsaṇa/saṁkarsaṇena. brahma-kāṇḍasya bhagavat-pāda-brahma-datta-bhāskarādibhir mata-bhedenāpi kṛtam.

Now, the Mīmāṃsā-śāstra is devoted to a study of the meanings of all statements of the Veda – Veda taken together with its ancillary and sub-ancillary texts and divided between a Prior Section and a Latter Section. It (= the Mīmāṃsā-śāstra) is composed in twenty adhyāyas. In it, the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-śāstra consists of sixteen adhyāyas, is devoted to the study of dharma in the Prior Section and is authored by Jaimini. The remaining four adhyāyas constitute the Uttara-mīmāṃsā-śāstra, devoted to the study of brahman in the Latter Section and authored by Vyāsa. Of such a Mīmāṃsā-śāstra composed in twenty adhyāyas, a bhāṣya called Kṛta-koti was authored by Bodhāyana. Out of apprehension of its great textual extent (i.e. because of the concern that the prospective readers

will be turned off by its extensiveness), Upavarṣa, playing down its existence,¹² made a moderately smaller version of it. Playing down the existence of even that version because it was difficult to convey to persons of slow understanding due to its expanse, Deva-svāmin made a heavily abridged version that extended only up to the sixteen śāstra-parts (= adhyāyas)¹³ constituting the PMS. Bhavadāsa, too, authored a bhāṣya of the Jaiminīya.¹⁴ In turn, Ācārya Śabara-svāmin, prepared a highly abridged bhāṣya of the first Tantra part (= the first twelve adhyāyas only), playing down the existence of the second (part), namely the SK, from among the two-part Dharma-mīmāṃsā-śāstra. Likewise, Saṅkarṣa/Saṅkarṣaṇa authored (a bhāṣya) of the Devatā-kāṇḍa (= SK or what later complemented or substituted the SK in the eyes of some authors). [And] the highly revered (Śaṅkara),¹⁵ Brahma-datta, Bhāskara et al. prepared a bhāṣya (each) of the Brahma-section (= UMS) even through difference of views (= although they did not agree on what the import of the text was).

Here, too, we have Bodhāyana writing an extensive work in the Mīmāṃsā tradition that is abridged by scholars who lived after him but before Rāmānuja. The PH speaks of a commentary on the entire Pūrva- and Uttara-mīmāṃsā complex, with the Saṅkarṣa or Devatā-kāṇḍa in between. Rāmānuja speaks of only the UM part of the complex. The PH mentions specific names involved in the abridgement process. Rāmānuja employs only the general expression *pūrvācārya*. However, these differences amount only to making the PH statement more informative than Rāmānuja's statement, not to contradicting what we learn from Rāmānuja. The crucial details contained in the words *bodhāyana*, *vistīrṇa/grantha-bāhulya* and *samcikṣipuh/samkṣipta* remain unaffected. We are not compelled to ask if we should set aside one account in favor of the other.

12 In the original, *tad* stands for the object of *upekṣya* as well as *kṛtam*. In older Sanskrit (e.g. in Yāska's Nirukta), *upa+īkṣ* is used in the sense of 'see closely, observe minutely, study'. This sense is unlikely to have been meant in a relatively late text like the PH. On the other hand, 'neglect, disregard, set aside' in any strong sense is contextually improbable. The authors of the abridgements could not have abridged their object texts by setting the texts aside. Therefore, I have taken the middle ground and understood Upavarṣa et al. as assuming during the course of their undertaking that the longer text did not exist – was not available for use, although it was there for the use of those who could use it. The meaning 'not notice the presence of, pretend that X is not there' can be said to exist at the core of many attestations of *upa+īkṣ* and its derivatives.

13 The word *lakṣaṇa* can stand for śāstra (of any length, from a single rule to an entire volume) or topic (theme or theory component) in the present context.

14 That is, (a) the sixteen-lakṣaṇa PM text authored by Jaimini or (b) the twelve-adhyāya PM text authored by Jaimini joined to the four-adhyāya SK text authored by Kāśakṛtsna which was meant to be an appendix of Jaimini's text or which was edited by Jaimini; see Aklujkar 2009a: §§5.7, 12; 2009b: §4.

15 A justification of this rendering of *bhagavat-pāda* can be found in Aklujkar 2009b: §2.

2.2. There, however, is a potentially important question that has, as far as I know, escaped the analyses attempted by earlier discussants. The PH speaks of Bodhāyana's commentary on the MS-SK-BS as a bhāṣya. Rāmānuja calls it a vṛtti.¹⁶ It is not likely that the names of various commentary types were used indiscriminately in the Indic tradition, especially in the early period of the tradition.

We do not, as far as I can determine, have a definition of vṛtti as a commentarial genre, but we can gather from the surviving specimens that its functions were primarily clarification and supplementation – that it was thought of as a 'turn' given to what was already there in the commentandum, that its nature was primarily that of a restatement, with reasoning and background information added, of the content of a sūtra or kārīkā. It did not get into debates, although it did occasionally lay out the principal reasons behind differing views. Its engagement with justification of the commentandum author's views or statements was limited and subdued. If the justification contributed to elucidation and was not long, it was included. Otherwise, discussions of contrary views along with their pros and cons were avoided.¹⁷

On the other hand, a bhāṣya generally focused less on the elucidation activity. If at all it got into glossing or reformulation of what the mūla text conveyed, it did so to lead up to a scrutiny of the mūla text's statements. A similar consideration applied to its own statements.¹⁸ Either as a ground for these features or as a consequence of them, it presupposed a reader who had already mastered the basics of the branch of knowledge concerned.

Given the difference specified above, the PH author and Rāmānuja are unlikely to have used one term, bhāṣya or vṛtti, for the other indiscriminately. However, this has not been indicated as an issue at all in such statements as the ones

16 The PH uses the designation bhāṣya for all the commentaries mentioned in the cited passage. Śāṅkara does not characterize Upavarṣa's work as a bhāṣya or vṛtti in the two explicit references he makes to it (BS 1.3.28 and 3.3.53).

17 Further, the vṛtti tradition was more likely to be started by the author of the aphoristic text himself. It also seems natural that the author of the original text would use the opportunity to cover his oversights and round off his work through the addition of vṛtti-sūtras, gaṇa-sūtras, saṅgraha-, antara-, parikara-śloka etc. (the first two may come from later scholars, too). Given the relationship of Sanskrit vṛt with English "verse", one could also postulate a parallel semantic development (not a historically connected one) from the very literal meaning 'turn' of vṛtti to a meaning inclusive of 'versification, turn given to normal speech'.

18 The following verse, anonymously handed down in the tradition, contains a definition of bhāṣya: *sūtrārtho varṇyate yatra padaiḥ/vākyaiḥ sūtrānusāribhiḥ / sva-padāni ca varṇyante bhāṣyam bhāṣyavido viduḥ //* In *sva-padāni ca varṇyante*, justification of why a bhāṣya author interprets a sūtra or a kārīkā in a particular way is implicit. This justification naturally consists of laying out the pros and cons and possible alternatives.

concerning the identity of Rāmānuja's Vṛttikāra or the identity of Bodhāyana and Upavarṣa. Kane (1930:937–939), for example, takes Rāmānuja's Vṛttikāra to be Bodhāyana without wondering how the PH spoke of Bodhāyana as a *bhāṣya* author, and Gopinath Kaviraj (1987: 217–218)¹⁹ consistently speaks of Upavarṣa's BS commentary as a *vṛtti* without adducing any pre-modern textual source in support of his genre specification²⁰ and without explaining how the specification is to be reconciled with the PH's mention of Upavarṣa as a maker of *bhāṣya* abridgement.

2.3. The non-articulation of the question is unexpected also from another point of view. The PH, as noted above, speaks of increasing abridgements of Bodhāyana's *bhāṣya*. The use of *tad* in its second and third sentences leaves no doubt that Bodhāyana's commentary was first abridged by Upavarṣa, and then Upavarṣa's commentary was abridged by Deva-svāmin. In the case of Śabara, the PH wording is not as clear. It speaks of Śabara as aiming at greater brevity just like Deva-svāmin (cf. *ati+sam+kṣip*), but it does not state explicitly that the more abridged work of Deva-svāmin was the basis of Śabara's *bhāṣya*. It puts Bhava-dāsa's *bhāṣya* in between, indicating that this *bhāṣya* was not an abridgement of any other person's text and possibly also that Śabara drew material from it. However, since the PH does not use any expression going against the impression it creates of a continuing trend toward abridgement, we should conclude that it viewed Śabara as moving more in the direction of shortening than of enlarging through incorporation of material from Bhava-dāsa or re-incorporation of material from Upavarṣa and Bodhāyana.²¹

A text can be made shorter by taking parts out of it or by restating its content in different words. Either way, none of the later works mentioned above is likely to have remained obviously, fully or genuinely eligible for the designation *bhāṣya*. The earlier the abridgement was the greater its chance of passing for a *bhāṣya* would have been, but soon a point must have been reached when its *bhāṣyahood* would have appeared questionable. The later versions could not have jettisoned the

19 Kavirāj's article was originally published in volume 11, issue 2 of the Hindi periodical *Kalyāṇa* or *Kalyan*. As the periodical is said to have been started in 1927, I would take the year of original publication to be 1938. However, as the original issue is not accessible to me and its pagination has not been retained in the reprint accessible to me, I cannot specify the *Kalyāṇa* issue pages on which the article appeared.

20 My intention is not to assert that such a specification does not exist. As pointed out in Aklujkar 2009c: §1, it does exist.

21 There is much evidence, indirect though it is, allowing us to conclude that Deva-svāmin's and Upavarṣa's commentaries were available to Śabara, at least in parts (cf. Aklujkar 2009b: §1.5, 2009c: §1). No such evidence to establish knowledge of Bodhāyana's commentary on Śabara's part is available as far as I can determine.

parts explaining the sūtras as we can determine from Deva-svāmin's and Śabara's works.²² The extent reduction, therefore, could have occurred only or mainly in the debates etc. that typically characterize a bhāṣya (assuming that the *bhāṣya* appellation has been applied correctly by the PH). If Śabara's commentary and Deva-svāmin's commentary have been called *bhāṣya* (as they have been in their colophons), then that designation is more likely to be inherited (most probably through manuscript colophons), not earned or consciously introduced. It would, then, be quite justifiable to entertain the possibility that, with each abridgement, a greater scope was created to think of the text as a *vṛtti*, and that the change in thinking could have begun as early as Upavarṣa's time (assuming, again, that the PH is right in reporting that Bodhāyana's commentary was a *bhāṣya*).

2.4. There is one more angle from which we can look at the evidence. As the PH informs us, after Upavarṣa, the Dharma-, Karma- or Pūrva-mīmāṃsā tradition, inclusive of the SK, separated from the UM or BS. The abridgement activity may have stopped with Upavarṣa on the UM side, but it evidently continued for a longer time on the PM side. In other words, the scope for abandoning the designation *bhāṣya* and switching over to the designation *vṛtti* kept on increasing on the PM side, but it probably remained unchanged on the UM side. Yet, it is on the PM side that the term *bhāṣya* remained in existence, and, on the UM side, at least a few new bhāṣyas and vṛttis came into existence.²³ To some extent this is natural. There was more room for difference of opinions and less of a bond with specific words on the philosophical UM side. Nonetheless, since our present concern is only with how fitting the genre designations remained, we have to conclude that the situation we have on our hands is anything but a case of consistent or conscious application. On the PM side, Śabara's commentary,

22 As argued in Aklujkar 2009b: §1.4, there is no reason to doubt that the SK commentary Subrahmanya Sastri (1965) has edited is Deva-svāmin's work and that, as the PH informs us, it comes from a time before Śabara's. This commentary hardly engages in any discussions reminiscent of a bhāṣya. It gives us the bare essentials needed to understand the sūtras. Śabara's commentary, which is more likely to be an abridgement (by Deva-svāmin) of an abridgement (by Upavarṣa) than an independent work (despite its occasional inclusion of Bhava-dāsa's views), is also rarely so extensive on individual sūtras as to resemble Patañjali's Vyākaraṇa-mahābhāṣya or Śaṅkara's Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya. It is a little more extensive in the initial adhyāyas because, like any other commentator, Śabara has to prepare the ground for what follows. In most of the remaining adhyāyas, however, only once in a while it goes beyond what the sūtras absolutely need for their understanding. Its large size as a whole is due more to the number of sūtras covered than to the extent of pūrva-pakṣas and uttara-pakṣas under each sūtra or in each adhikaraṇa. In observing this, my intention is not to belittle the work. Without it, we would understand very little of the early Mīmāṃsā.

23 Cf. Kane 1930: 939, 941 and other studies of pre-Śaṅkara Advaita.

although it must principally have been an abridgement of an abridgement of an abridgement, continues to be referred to as a *bhāṣya* (by Kumārila, Prabhākara, Śāṅkara, and so on) while, except in the PH, the commentary of the much older Upavarṣa is viewed as a *vr̥tti*. Similar in nature is the designation discrepancy between Deva-svāmin’s commentary and Upavarṣa’s commentary. The PH author speaks of Bodhāyana’s work as a *bhāṣya*, and Rāmānuja speaks of it as a *vr̥tti*, despite his awareness of its great extent. Some scholars were obviously going by what they found in the titles and colophons of manuscripts,²⁴ and some by what they had heard in their tradition of learning.²⁵

2.5. We normally tend to consider an older characterization as more reliable. According to some scholars (cf. Bronkhorst 2007: 22), the author of the PH lived between the time of Śāṅkara/Bhāskara (not later than the 9th century AD) and Rāmānuja (not later than the 12th century AD). If, following this view, we put greater faith in the PH author’s genre specification, we may say that an oversight occurred on Rāmānuja’s part. However, as Kanazawa (1989: fn 10) points out – and I agree with him, the PH could have been composed a little before or a little after Rāmānuja’s time; that is, the PH author and Rāmānuja could even have been contemporaries (unacquainted with each other). Therefore, privileging the information given by the former is not warranted.

2.6. On the background furnished by the facts and considerations I have put forward so far, the possibilities that seem relatively strong (yet fall short of deserving the designation “historical fact”) are the following:

- (a) Bodhāyana’s work was indeed called a *vr̥tti*. The PH is inexact in the matter.
- (b) Bodhāyana did not engage in *bhāṣya*-like discussions. His work was extensive only or mainly because it gave much ritual or Vedic textual detail – concentrated more on explanation than on justification.
- (c) The word *bhāṣya* did not exist as a designation of a specific commentary genre in Bodhāyana’s time. He belonged to a more distant past than the time in which the oldest *bhāṣya* accessible at present, namely Patañjali’s *Vyākaraṇa-mahābhāṣya*, was written or Yāska’s *Nirukta* came to be thought of as a *bhāṣya*.²⁶

24 Most scribes copy their exemplars unquestioningly.

25 It has puzzled more than one scholar that the commentators closest to Śābara in time, Kumārila and Prabhākara, do not treat him with the same respect as the commentators of most other *bhāṣyas* do. They disagree with him openly, albeit in a few cases only. Could this be due to their awareness that Śābara was a *bhāṣyakāra* by inheritance?

26 In the *Nirukta* colophons themselves, the work is not characterized as a *bhāṣya*. However, its oldest available commentary, the one by Durga, certainly thinks of it as a *bhāṣya*. Durga could be a much older author than he is usually taken to be.

(d) Upavarṣa, aware of the kind of material he had taken out of Bodhāyana's work, applied the word *vṛtti* to his abridgement in contradistinction to *bhāṣya* found in the manuscripts of Bodhāyana's commentary and, rightly, continued to be mentioned as a *vṛtti* author, except by the PH.

(e) The PH author was aware of the differing genre characterizations of the commentaries concerned. However, he did not wish to make his statement complicated and therefore used *bhāṣya* throughout his account. His *bhāṣya*, in effect, became a synonym of *vyākhyāna*.

As a message collectively delivered by the preferable possibilities listed above, I would suggest that we should not try to determine the identity of the Vṛtti or Vṛttikāra meant by Rāmānuja and other authors in the two Mīmāṃsā traditions strictly on the basis of the occurrence of the word *vṛtti*. We should take a more liberal approach, one that would be in keeping with the divergent attestations before us, at least until new evidence pointing in a specific direction comes to light. In other words, we should think of both Kane and Kaviraj as prudent by happenstance (if the expression is not an oxymoron) – as justified in their practice (§2.2), although they did not make a case for the designations they adopted.

3. RĀMĀNUJA'S SECOND STATEMENT UNDER BS 1.1.1 THAT QUOTES THE VṚTTIKĀRA

3.1. When the word *vṛtti* occurs for the second time in Rāmānuja's comment on BS 1.1.1, it occurs as a part of the composite *vṛttikāra* and in introducing a pair of quotations: *tad āha vṛttikāraḥ "vṛttāt karmādhigamād anantaram brahma-vividiṣe"ti. vakṣyati ca karma-brahma-mīmāṃsayor aikaśāstryam "saṃhitam etac. chārīrakaṃ jaiminīyena ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇene"ti*. The first quotation concerns the expression *athātaḥ* in the sūtra and does not appear to have led to any difference of opinion historical in nature (although its content has been debated from the point of view of being a correct or desirable interpretation of *athātaḥ*). We may, therefore, directly take up the second quotation for discussion.

In Sheldon Pollock (2004: 770–771), we find the following translation of Rāmānuja's statement *vakṣyati ca saṃhitam etac.chārīrakaṃ jaiminīyena ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇena*: "He [Bodhāyana] will declare later on 'This śārīraka doctrine is integrated (*saṃhitam*) with Jaimini's doctrine so as to make up 16 adhyāyas' – that is, the Treatise of Twelve Chapters, or the Mīmāṃsā-sūtras (MS) of Jaimini, and the Treatise of Four Chapters, or the BS of Vyāsa Bādarāyaṇa, should be taken together as constituting a single work of Sixteen Chapters; this proves the two to constitute one body of doctrine."

In addition to taking Bodhāyana as the agent of the declaration (compare §§1.1–3 above), this translation takes the questionable step of using "so as to

make up” and “should be”. There is no support in the original Sanskrit sentence or its context for the use of these expressions as parts of the translation. The original is a matter-of-fact statement about the joint existence of two texts, lending support to the ‘single knowledge system’ understanding of the PM and UM. Appropriately, there is no optative element in the translations reproduced in my note 4a or in Vedānta-deśika’s explication translated by Pollock in his note 8. The proposition is that the BS and the sixteen adhyāyas preceding it in the form of the MS and SK are connected, not that the BS and MS, deprived of the SK, create a sixteen-itemed entity.

3.2. Another questionable understanding of Rāmānuja’s statement is found in the following remark of A. Subrahmanya Sastri (1961: iii): “That the SK is a subsidiary portion to the 12 chapters is approved by Rāmānuja, the author of Śrī-bhāṣya, and Bodhāyana, the author of the Vṛtti which formed the basis of Rāmānuja’s bhāṣya.”

Actually, there is no suggestion of subsidiary nature in the words of Rāmānuja or of (the ultimately absent) Bodhāyana. From the reference to a sixteen-adhyāya Jaiminīya, one can, because one already knows about a twelve-adhyāya MS and a four-adhyāya SK, infer that the latter is included, but one cannot infer that it is included as a subsidiary. This is not to say that Rāmānuja did not view the SK as a subsidiary or appendix. Like other scholars who, on good grounds, have taken that view, he too may have done so. My point is only that the citation of the Vṛttikāra does not directly or independently deliver that meaning. Minimally, we need to know beforehand the sources that speak of the SK as a supplementation of the MS. Then only can we justifiably ask if the ‘supplement’ notion can be read in the meaning the words of the citation collectively convey. In the literal meaning of the citation there is nothing that beckons us to raise the ‘supplementation’ (and hence the ‘subsidiary status’) possibility. And if there is no justification even to raise a specific possibility purely on the basis of the sentence involved, we cannot assert that the sentence affirms the possibility.²⁷

3.3. Rāmānuja’s use of the active *vakṣyati* (instead of the passive *vakṣyate*) is significant. It gives the impression that Rāmānuja had the Vṛttikāra’s text in front of him like a supporting backdrop.²⁸ He was not going to comment on it, but he

27 In Aklujkar 2009b: §4, §2, I point out how *jaiminīya*, ‘associated with Jaimini’, can be taken in one of the following two senses: (a) ‘twelve adhyāyas authored by Jaimini and four adhyāyas edited by Jaimini’ or (b) ‘to be considered included in Jaimini’s twelve adhyāyas as an appendix’.

28 Cf. Tattva-ṭīkā of Vedānta-deśika: *vakṣyati vyākhyāsyamāna-pradeśāntara-viṣayatayā bhaviṣyan-nirdeśaḥ*. “(The commentandum author uses) the future form *vakṣyati* because the

was going to consult it while commenting on his commentandum, the BS, and point to its support or real meaning whenever necessary. This impression is confirmed by his earlier wording, ... *vṛttīm pūrvācāryāḥ saṁcikṣipuḥ. tan-matānusāreṇa sūtrākṣarāṇi vyākhyāsyante*, in which the intention of taking guidance from the predecessors' explanatory literature is made clear. Further, the observation agrees with the fact that Rāmānuja has cited the Vṛttikāra *explicitly* at more places than Śāṅkara (cf. Aklujkar 2009c: §1).

3.4. The somewhat unexpected feature of Rāmānuja's references to the Vṛtti is that, at least in the present state of our knowledge, they do not go beyond the second pāda of the second adhyāya, even if we include the references for which his commentators are our only source (see Aklujkar 2009c: §1). References attested to by Rāmānuja himself stop at BS 1.3.32. This makes one wonder if the Vṛtti was available to him and his commentators for only the first half of the BS, approximately.

On the other hand, it is possible to advance the guess that the end of his Vṛttikāra's work was known to Rāmānuja. The sentence *samhitam etac.chārīrakam jaiminīyena ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇena* (see note 4b) comes across as made of two quarters composed in a variety of the āryā meter: *samhitam etac.chārīrakam* consists of 15 morae; the remaining words make 18 morae.²⁹ Having quarters made of 12, 15 or 18 morae is a common feature of the āryā group of meters. The second and/or fourth quarters, that is, the latter parts of verse halves, usually have 18 morae,

object (of the action of stating that the root *vac* in that form signifies) is a (text) part that is yet to be explained." In other words, the future element in *vakṣyati* stems from Rāmānuja's perspective, not from the perspective of the Vṛttikāra, who is the agent of the action of stating. The BS part, that is, the part of Rāmānuja's commentandum, near which or after which the Vṛttikāra wrote *samhitam etac.chārīrakam jaiminīyena ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇena* was yet to come in the eyes of Rāmānuja. It was not so in the eyes of the Vṛttikāra (see the later part of this section for its possible location).

That Vedānta-deśika felt like offering such an explanation indicates that he sensed that the Vṛttikāra's work was present before Rāmānuja as a commentandum would be. An active voice form that is appropriate in the case of the BS author was also used in the case of the Vṛttikāra. Perhaps Vedānta-deśika felt that a reader may fault Rāmānuja for this and pre-empted the objection. Otherwise, a simple word like *vakṣyati* need not be explained to a reader expected to be able to read an advanced work like the Śrī-bhāṣya.

That Rāmānuja maintains a distinction in the use of '*vakṣyati* : *vakṣyate*' is borne out especially by his use of the former form under BS 1.1.4 while referring to BS 4.4.17 and his use of the latter form under BS 1.2.1 while referring to what *he* would say under the same BS 4.4.17. His use of the two forms elsewhere also confirms the distinction.

29 (a) it is permissible to count the last syllable as heavy.

(b) Śāstra authors employing the āryā meter sometimes take liberty with the requirement that a certain number of four-morae groups be present in a pāda; cf. the case of the Sāṁkhya-kārikā.

but quarters with 15 morae are also found in these positions (as, for example, in the last prologue verse, *jayati ... harṣaḥ*, of Bāṇa's Harṣa-carita). The unusual word order in *samhitam... lakṣaṇena* (predicate first) also indicates that it is unlikely to have been produced with prose writing as the nature of the author's engagement with this part his text. Verses are found in some of the references made to the Vṛttikāra by other authors (Aklujkar 2009c: §2). Therefore, if we take *samhitam etac.chārīrakam jaiminīyena ṣoḍaśa-lakṣaṇena* as metrical in structure (but not as containing two contiguous quarters) – as a sentence made by putting two parts of an āryā verse or verse pair together, we can further surmise that the parts occurred at or near the end of the Vṛttikāra's commentary. A verse in āryā meter is found employed at the end of epilogues in more than one ancient śāstric work. For example, in Kauṭilya's Artha-śāstra, the epilogue consists of:

yena śāstram ca śāstram ca nanda-rāja-gatā ca bhūḥ /
amarṣeṇoddbhṛtāny āśu tena śāstram idaṁ kṛtam // (śloka or anuṣṭubh meter)
dṛṣṭvā vipratipattim bahudhā śāstreṣu bhāṣyakārāṇām /
*svayam eva viṣṇu-guptaś cakāra sūtram ca bhāṣyam ca //*³⁰ (āryā meter)

Thus, “This Śārīraka (= BS) is joined to the sixteen Jaiminīya adhyāyas (note 14)” was very probably the Vṛttikāra's ‘signing off’ statement. It informs us that the Vṛttikāra had completed commenting on the MS-SK-BS, that is, on both the Pūrva- and Uttara Mīmāṃsā, along with the appendix of the former – that he was one who ‘made it’ from one end of the śāstra to the other, one who had become a kṛta-koṭi (cf. Aklujkar 2009c: §2).³¹

Considering the available evidence, then, we should conclude that the text of the Vṛtti available to Rāmānuja (and possibly his early commentators) was probably not complete. Its middle part, in particular, is likely to have been lost before their time. Since, however, the possibility that the surmised āryā was employed at the beginning of Upavarṣa's Vṛtti cannot be ruled out, we should keep our minds open also to the possibility that Upavarṣa's Vṛtti was available to Rāmānuja and his commentators only up to the second pāda of the second adhyāya of the BS, approximately.

30 Whether the latter verse came from the author of the rest of the work or from someone else recording his/her information about the authorship of the work need not detain us here.

31 This inference, taken in conjunction with what we learn from the PH about the MS-SK-BS commentaries, strengthens the view that Rāmānuja's Vṛttikāra, as in the case of Śābara and Śāṅkara, was Upavarṣa (cf. Aklujkar 2009c: §1).

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- PM = Pūrva-mīmāṃsā, Karma-mīmāṃsā, Dharma-mīmāṃsā; in certain contexts the same as *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sūtra* or MS.
- PMS = *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sūtra*, MS, occasionally Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-śāstra.
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- SK = *Saṁkarṣa-kāṇḍa/Saṁkarṣa-kāṇḍa*. See Subrahmanya Sastri, S.
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- Sudarśana: see Rāmānuja.
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- UM = Uttara-mīmāṁsā, Vedānta, in certain contexts the same as Uttara-mīmāṁsā-sūtra or Brahma-sūtra, Vedānta-sūtra.
- UMS = Uttara-mīmāṁsā-sūtra, BS, Vedānta-sūtra. Occasionally Uttara-mīmāṁsā-śāstra.
- Vedānta-deśika (sometimes also referred to as Vedāntā-cārya and Venkaṭa-nātha): see Rāmānuja.