

## **Āgamārthānusāribhiḥ. Helārāja's Use of Quotations and Other Referential Devices in His Commentary on the *Vākyapadīya***

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**Abstract** Examining the function and style of the references to grammatical literature found in a substantial section of Helārāja's *Prakīrṇaparakāśa* on Bhartṛhari's third book of the *Vākyapadīya*, the article argues that the likely ideological motive of this commentary was to establish its *mūla* work firmly within the Brahmanical canon and should therefore be seen in the context of the appropriation of Bhartṛhari's ideas on the part of the roughly contemporary Pratyabhijñā philosophers of Kashmir. Incidentally, it also touches upon the making of the Pāṇinian tradition and the relation between Helārāja and Kaiyaṭa, the Kashmiri commentator of *Mahābhāṣya*.

**Keywords** Bhartṛhari · *Vākyapadīya* · Grammatical canon · Helārāja · Medieval Kashmir · Textual reuse

In the second and third *maṅgalaśloka*s of the *Prakīrṇaparakāśa* (henceforth PrPr),<sup>1</sup> Helārāja, the Kashmiri author of the only surviving prose commentary on the third *kāṇḍa* of Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* (henceforth VP), declares:

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<sup>1</sup> In the first verse Helārāja extols the splendor, majesty and power of *prātibha*, the “intuitive knowledge” that bursts forth in the individual soul allowing it—momentarily?—to experience a state of supreme bliss in which the distinction between subject and object is annulled. The word *prātibha* is a *taddhita* formation derived from *pratibhā*, the “flash of understanding” through which *sphoṭa*, the unitary sentence meaning, arises in the mind of the speaker and is grasped by the hearer. As is known, these are key concepts in Bhartṛhari's theory of language. While this verse is equally interesting and deserves to be analysed carefully, it is not directly relevant to the topic of this article, so I will have to postpone its study to a future publication.

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*kāṇḍadvaye yathāvr̥tti siddhāntārthasatattvataḥ |*  
*prabandho vihito 'smābhir āgamārthānusāribhiḥ || 2 ||*  
*taccheṣabhūte kāṇḍe 'smin saprapaṇce svarūpataḥ |*  
*ślokārdhadyotanaparaḥ prakāśo 'yaṁ vidhīyate || 3 ||*

“We, who follow the meanings taught by the tradition, have composed a commentary on the [first] two *kāṇḍas* in accordance with the *Vr̥tti* on the basis of the true nature of the meaning of the established views.

This *Prakāśa* is [now] being composed with the intention of casting light on the sense of the verses in the remaining *kāṇḍa*, with ample explanations due to the own nature [of its content]”.

Conventional as it may sound, Helārāja’s reiterated claim that in clarifying the true sense of Bhartṛhari’s verses he is not just relying on the latter’s auto-commentary but following the established tradition is, I believe, extremely significant and reveals the ideological programme underpinning his commentarial effort. Here I will present the findings of a survey of quotations and other referential devices used by Helārāja, on the basis of which I will attempt to draw some conclusions on the sense and purpose of his exegetical project.

## 1 Helārāja’s Notion of *āgama*

What is the exact sense of the word *āgama* in the compound *āgamārthānusārin* used by Helārāja to describe himself? Here Helārāja seems to follow in Bhartṛhari’s steps<sup>2</sup> and adopt a broad notion of *āgama*, ranging from scriptural texts (primarily, the Veda, which is in fact the foundation of all learned traditions) to the texts of the Smṛti and the seminal texts of the *śāstras*. Even a superficial (and by no means exhaustive) survey of some of the occurrences of the term *āgama* in the PrPr confirms the inclusiveness of this notion. For example, in the *Jāṭisamuddeśa*, the first chapter (*samuddeśa*) of the third *kāṇḍa*, under v. 46, which, broadly speaking, deals with yogic knowledge, Helārāja quotes a statement (of Upaniṣadic flavour) from an unknown source on the ability of omniscient (*sarvajña*) beings to transcend the limitations of the senses of ordinary human beings etc. and qualifies it as *āgama*.<sup>3</sup> It is on the basis of such authoritative sources (*āgamapramāṇyāt*)—Helārāja claims—that Bhartṛhari states that there are indeed beings who possess extraordinary knowledge. And under *Sādhanaśamuddeśa* (henceforth SāS) 24, he asserts that in *saṁhitāyām anu prāvarṣat* (quoted in the *Mahābhāṣya* ad A. 1.4.84, *anur lakṣaṇe*, as an example of *lakṣaṇa* that is in fact a cause) the Vedic recitation (*saṁhitā*) is ascertained to be the cause of rain also on the basis of *āgama*,<sup>4</sup> possibly traditional Vedic lore.

<sup>2</sup> On Bhartṛhari’s notion of *āgama*, see Aklujkar (2009, especially Appendix 1).

<sup>3</sup> *tathā cāgamah* “*nedānīm indriyair eva paśyanti, ghrāṇataḥ śabdaṁ śṛṇoti, spr̥ṣṭhato rūpāṇi paśyati, apy aṅgulyagreṇa sarvendriyārthān upalabhate*” *iti* (VP 3.54.2–10). Note that all the page references to VP 3 in this article are from Part 1 of Subramania Iyer’s edition.

<sup>4</sup> *kiṁ cāgamād api hetutvam atra niścitaṁ saṁhitāyāḥ pravarṣaṇa iti...* (VP 3.252.14–15).