

A Question of Priority: Revisiting the Bhāmaha-Daṇḍin Debate

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Abstract As has been obvious to anyone who has looked at them, there is a special relationship between the two earliest extant works on Sanskrit poetics: Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* (Ornamenting Poetry) and Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa* (The Mirror of Poetry). The two not only share an analytical framework and many aspects of their organization but also often employ the selfsame language and imagery when they are defining and exemplifying what is by and large a shared repertoire of literary devices. In addition, they also betray highly specific disagreements regarding the nature and aesthetic value of a set of literary phenomena. It has thus long been clear to Indologists that the two are in conversation with one another, but the nature of the conversation and its directionality have never been determined: Was Bhāmaha responding to Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa*? Was Daṇḍin making a rejoinder to Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*? Were the two authors contemporaries who directly interacted with one another? Or was their interaction indirect and mediated through other texts that are no longer extant? Determining the nature of the interrelations between the two authors and their texts may teach us a great deal about the origins of Sanskrit poetics, the direction in which it developed during its formative period, and the way in which some of the disagreements between Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha metamorphosed in later time. By reviewing existing scholarship, considering new evidence, and taking a fresh look at some of the passages that have long stood at the center of this debate, this article sets out to answer the question of the texts' relationship and relative chronology.

Keywords Bhāmaha · Daṇḍin · *Alaṃkāraśāstra*

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1. Background: Old Controversy, New Approach

The debate that this article revisits is a century old. It began in the early 1900s, when manuscripts of Bhāmaha's treatise, hitherto thought to be lost, first came to light. As soon as scholars began to examine this text, its special relationship with the already-available work of Daṇḍin became evident. An early trickle of attempts to fix the authors' relative chronology actually antedated the publication of Bhāmaha's work in 1909.¹ With this publication, however, the debate entered its formative period of roughly two decades. This was a time of extremely lively and notoriously rancorous discussion,² with challenges and rejoinders appearing only months apart, often in consecutive issues of journals such as the *Indian Antiquary*, the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and the journal of this society's Bombay branch. It was during this period that most of the questions that have haunted the debate since—such as the perplexing relationship between about a dozen parallel passages in Daṇḍin's and Bhāmaha's works, and the identity of one Nyāsakāra to whom Bhāmaha refers—became fixtures, and the main camps were formed. Among those arguing for Daṇḍin's priority were eminent scholars such as P. V. Kane, Arthur Berriedale Keith, and K. B. Pathak. The camp maintaining Bhāmaha's priority brandished its own list of luminaries, including K. P. Trivedi, Hermann Jacobi, Johannes Nobel, and Sushil Kumar De.

Beginning in the 1930s, energy seems to have been gradually sucked out of this discussion. New participants did join the fray, but usually by repeating an already fixed set of arguments and counterarguments.³ When new editions of De's, Keith's, and Kane's histories of Sanskrit poetics and Sanskrit poetry appeared in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, they repeated their authors' familiar positions but offered little or no fresh corroboration. A new generation of scholars in India and the West seems to have grown weary of this exchange and came to preach caution. Edwin Gerow, who in 1977 published his *Indian Poetics*, dubbed the Daṇḍin-Bhāmaha question the "toughest chronological problem" of the field and suggested that the two authors may have been contemporaries, for their "fundamental agreements and the acerbity of their disagreements" could be best explained by assuming a direct dialogue between them.⁴ But the sources Gerow cited all go back to the 1910s and 1920s, and his conclusion may be taken to reflect the seemingly insoluble nature of the older debate.

What Gerow overlooked is the potential importance of evidence that had surfaced since 1930. First, a growing body of research pointed to Daṇḍin's ties to

¹ Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* became available in print in 1863 and has been reprinted in a variety of editions ever since (for a brief summary of the history of printed editions and a complete and annotated list, see Dimitrov 2002, pp. 3–6, 305–321). Bhāmaha's work was first published in 1909 as one of the appendixes to K. P. Trivedi's edition of another manual on poetics, the *Pratāparudrayaśobhūṣaṇa*. The debate began slightly earlier, though, among scholars who had access to Trivedi's manuscript. The first full-fledged intervention was Narasimhiengar 1905, quickly followed by Barnett 1905 and Kane 1908. For the views of nineteenth-century scholars on Daṇḍin's dates, see Dimitrov (2002, pp. 12–14).

² See, for example, the comments of outside observers such as Mair and Mei (1991, p. 431), who call it "one of the most acrimonious" controversies in the history of Indian poetics.

³ An important and overlooked exception is Kunjunni Raja (1958–1959), discussed in Sect. 3.3 below.

⁴ Gerow (1977, pp. 225, 228).

the Pallava court in Kāñcī, including the 1954 publication of a second manuscript of the *Avantisundarī* and a pair of books on Daṇḍin's life and works by D. K. Gupta (Gupta 1970, 1972). Second, and equally important, the oldest extant commentaries on Daṇḍin's treatise, by Vāḍijaṅghālaḍeva and Ratnaśrījñāna, were published in 1936 and 1957, respectively. Both Gerow and Gupta were familiar with these commentaries, but Gerow never considered their potential relevance to deciding the chronological question whereas Gupta summarily dismissed it.⁵ This approach is not accidental and reflects a common mistrust of traditional testimony, especially in matters of historicity.

I do not share this a priori suspicion. In fact, I believe that the specific difficulties of the problem at hand call for reliance on these commentaries. One such difficulty is the loss of all the earlier treatises on poetics, texts that Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha knew and cited. This loss makes it impossible to determine with absolute certainty, in those cases where one of the authors is refuting a position upheld by the other, whether he is indeed taking issue with the position as it is stated in the other's work, or whether he is referring to it as postulated in some earlier text, no longer available. Another major difficulty is dating Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin relative to other authors of their period, because the dates of many of these authors are also uncertain, and because textual echoes between, say, Bhāmaha and another writer could be construed to prove borrowing in either direction, not to mention a more intricate relationship that involves additional parties, some of whose works are now lost. Clearly, then, we are faced with a daunting task of reconstructing a complex textual web primarily on the basis of two of its relics. Here is where deferring to the commentators' judgment strongly recommends itself. These scholars were also engaged in the task of reconstructing the textual relations of their root texts, but unlike us, they had access to portions of the older corpus that are no longer available, and they enjoyed a better vantage point by virtue of living at a time when personal information about Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha was more likely to be available. If we want to get closer to answering our difficult textual and chronological questions, why ignore the commentators' explicit and copious testimony about them?

The disregard of the commentaries on Daṇḍin's work is thus particularly baffling. Not only did they not receive any serious scholarly attention throughout the twentieth century, but some of them, particularly the oldest and, at least in this sense, most important, have become increasingly inaccessible.⁶ This amazing neglect seems indicative not just of the aforementioned mistrust of commentators, but also of a more general disinterest in the early history of Sanskrit poetics. As far

⁵ See Gupta (1970, p. 80) and also Sect. 2.3 below.

⁶ As noted by Pollock (2005, p. 637). A multivolume, multicommentary edition of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarṣa* by NAG Publishers may have sought to remedy this situation but has only made it worse by mixing up portions of the different commentaries. I hope that a reversal of this trend is heralded by the recent work of Dragomir Dimitrov, who has studied the manuscripts of the *Kāvyaḍarṣa* in Sanskrit (primarily those held in Nepal), as well as Tibetan. Dimitrov has prepared a critical edition of Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary on Daṇḍin's third *pariccheda* (Dimitrov 2011) and is in the process of writing a monograph on Ratnamati, as he is known in Lañkā (Dimitrov forthcoming). I am grateful to him for making some of these forthcoming materials available to me. I am also grateful to Sheldon Pollock for providing me with his personal copy of Vāḍijaṅghālaḍeva's commentary, which is otherwise unavailable in any North American library and extremely rare elsewhere. The dates of Vāḍijaṅghālaḍeva and Ratnaśrījñāna are discussed below.

as the Daṇḍin-Bhāmaha debate is concerned, the last three or four decades have not produced any major insights. The discussion of Daṇḍin's Pallava roots eventually found its way into some Indological circles.⁷ Likewise, a few new arguments for one relative chronology or the other, typically in connection with comparisons of specific passages in both texts, were made,⁸ and new information regarding Bhāmaha's and Daṇḍin's other conversation partners occasionally surfaced, though typically outside the discussion of poetics per se, as in the case of recent studies concerning Jinendrabuddhi, which took place almost exclusively in publications on Buddhist logic and Sanskrit grammar. But no attempt has been made to revisit this debate as a whole and incorporate the new evidence and arguments.

Such a new synthesis is the goal of this essay. To avoid the all-too-subjective judgments that dominated the earlier scholarship, I propose to examine new and old evidence in the following tripartite scheme: (1) Highest priority is given to external biographical evidence about Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha, either independently of each other, or, failing that, about their relative dating. This evidentiary category includes commentarial works that weigh in directly on these authors' relative chronology. (2) Secondary priority is given to reviewing the comparison of passages from Daṇḍin's and Bhāmaha's texts, on the one hand, and, on the other, parallel passages in the works of their predecessors, contemporaries, and successors (to the degree we can decide these matters), in order to determine the direction of borrowing and arrive at the lower and upper limits for their dates. Within this category, I prioritize cases where borrowing can be proved decisively and where the outside sources can be dated, at least with some certainty. (3) Finally, I revisit the comparison of parallel passages in Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa* and Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷamkāra* in an attempt to postulate the most plausible pattern of their interaction. Here too, I try to formulate objective criteria for deducing the direction of textual exchange.

This scheme is not without its problems, partly because the distinction between the categories is occasionally fuzzy, and partly because the relative priority accorded to the evidence may be questioned. Thus in cases where the evidence from a lower category unmistakably contradicts that of a higher one, I will be willing to reconsider my scheme of relative priority. But, as I hope to demonstrate, the evidence is quite congruous, and hence these problems may not be as difficult as they initially seem. Let us, then, turn to the evidence in the order proposed above.

2. External Evidence

2.1 Daṇḍin

Daṇḍin is one of the best-known writers in all of Asian history. His *Kāvyaḍarśa* traveled widely, was translated and adapted into Kannada, Sinhala, Pali, Tamil, and

⁷ See, for example, Singh (1979, pp. 29–39). The suspicion about the data found in the *Avantisundarī*, however, still lingers (e.g., Francis 2009, p. 104), as I discuss below.

⁸ Examples include Sohnen (1995), where Daṇḍin's priority is postulated on the basis of an analysis of the early discussion of *yamaka*, and Bronner (2009), where a study of the early discussion of *vyāḷastuti* is taken to support the reverse chronology.

Tibetan, and may even have exercised influence on the formation of Recent Style Poetry in China.⁹ The work also attracted a large number of premodern Sanskrit commentators and was quoted profusely by many writers on Sanskrit poetics, including King Bhoja of Dhār (r. 1011–1055), who incorporated almost the entire *Kāvyaśāstra* into his treatises on poetics, and Appayya Dīkṣita (1520–1592), who showed a similar tendency in his relevant works.¹⁰ Only in the valley of Kashmir, which, starting in the ninth century, fashioned itself as the capital of the Sanskrit world and the headquarters of Sanskrit literary theory, was the *Kāvyaśāstra* rarely mentioned, a fact that reflects more a bias against Daṇḍin than a lack of familiarity with his work, which was clearly studied there as well.¹¹

Daṇḍin's reputation as a poet is equally impressive, and he is one of a handful of poets placed, as a sign of esteem, in the legendary assembly of King Bhoja by late medieval and early modern writers.¹² There are also quite a few popular verses praising his literary skills. Every Sanskrit student knows the floating verse mentioning Kālidāsa's simile, Bhārvī's weighty meanings, and Daṇḍin's dancing words (*padalālitya*) as a prelude to Māgha's masterful combination of all three.¹³ Another famous anonymous verse singles Daṇḍin out from the company of Kālidāsa and his ilk by placing him in an exclusive triad with the tradition's two founding fathers:

⁹ For a general discussion of Daṇḍin's wide impact as a theoretician, see Eppling (1989, pp. 1393–1394), Pollock (2005, p. 637, 2006, p. 163). For specific studies of his adaptation into different languages, see Monius (2000) for Tamil; Eppling (1989, pp. 1435–1545), van der Kuijp (1996), Dimitrov (2002, pp. 25–60), Kapstein (2003, pp. 781–782, 788–789), and Gold (2007, pp. 117–119, 135–139) for Tibetan; Dimitrov (forthcoming), Eppling (1989, pp. 1406–1418), and Hallisey (2003, pp. 729, 738, 742–743) for Sinhala; Eppling (1989, pp. 1419–1434), Wright (2002) and Jaddipal (2010, pp. 378f.), who argues that the *Subodhālamkāra* was not based on Daṇḍin's model, for Pali; and Eppling (1989, pp. 1395–1405), and Pollock (2006, pp. 338–356) for Kannada. On Daṇḍin's possible influence in T'ang China, see Mair and Mai (1991). For his influence on the literary traditions of South East Asia, see Hooykaas (1958, pp. 40–46) and Hunter (2001, pp. 6, 9–10). Note that Bhāmaha's influence is also felt in many of these literary cultures (although in the Tibetan case, for example, Bhāmaha was known through quotes in the commentarial literature on Daṇḍin, as noted in van der Kuijp 1986), but his *Kāvyaśāstra* was never used as the main source for adaptations and translations, as was the *Kāvyaśāstra*.

¹⁰ On Bhoja's treatment of Daṇḍin, see Raghavan (1978, pp. 656–657), whose discussion begins with the following statement: "It is not possible to draw a list of Bhoja's borrowings from Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaśāstra*; for, there is not anything in the *Kāvyaśāstra* that has not been completely incorporated into the texts of Bhoja's *Sarasvatikanṭhābharaṇa* and *Śrīngāraprakāśa*." For Appayya Dīkṣita see Bronner (2004, pp. 60–65).

¹¹ Of the subsequent Kashmiri writers, only Ruyyaka (in his commentary on Mahimabhaṭṭa's *Vyaktiviveka*, p. 372) and Abhinavagupta (ad *Dhvanyāloka* 3.7, and also in his *Abhinavabhāratī*, where he mentions him as an example for the ancient thinkers, *Nāṭyaśāstra* p. 266) seem to mention and quote him by name. Unnamed quotes from Daṇḍin and indirect references to his work are found more frequently in the Kashmiri corpus from Vāmana to Kuntaka (the latter quotes Daṇḍin frequently in *unmeṣa* 3 of his *Vakroktijivita* ad 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.24, 3.32, 3.63; I am grateful to Lawrence McCrea for these references).

¹² Some of the anecdotes and poems associated with this imagined assembly, where Daṇḍin was involved in a three-way competition with Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti, are discussed by Kale (1966, pp. xii–xiv). See also Narayana Rao and Shulman (1998, pp. 160–161). It is true that, as shown in Sternbach (1978, pp. 395–400), most of the verses ascribed to Daṇḍin in the anthologies come from the *Kāvyaśāstra*, but one has to remember that his main claim to fame as an author was his prose, which the anthologies typically do not record.

¹³ *upamā kālidāsasya bhāravera arthagauravam / daṇḍinaḥ padalālityaṃ māghe santi trayo guṇāḥ //*

*jāte jagati vālmīkau śabdaḥ kavir iti sthitaḥ /
vyāse jāte kavī ceti kavayaś ceti daṇḍini //*
Upon the birth of Vālmīki
the word “poet” was coined.
With Vyāsa it was first used in the dual.
And “poets,” in the plural, first appeared
along with Daṇḍin.¹⁴

Indeed, a verse attributed to the theorist and poet Rājaśekhara (fl. 920 CE) puts Daṇḍin in a class by himself by speaking of yet another triad, that of his works, and comparing it, among other things, to the trinity of gods and the trilogy of Vedic scripture:

*trayo 'gnayas trayo devās trayo vedās trayo guṇāḥ /
trayo daṇḍiprabandhās ca triṣu lokeṣu viśrutāḥ //*
There are three fires, three gods,
three Vedas, three qualities,
and three works by Daṇḍin.
Everything that is great in this triple world
comes in threes.¹⁵

Daṇḍin's celebrity notwithstanding, his actual corpus has been rather poorly preserved, so much so that it is not entirely clear what list of three books Rājaśekhara actually had in mind. There is, of course, the *Kāvyaḍarśa* itself, a work that seems to have reached our hands in a complete form.¹⁶ A second work by Daṇḍin, which seems to have pioneered the genre of poems narrating the two great epics simultaneously, was lost in its entirety; we know about it from a discussion of this genre in Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, where one relic verse from Daṇḍin's lost poem is given as an example.¹⁷ Then there is the *Daśakumāracarita* (What Ten Young Men Did), a prose work that has come to us in a highly incomplete form and whose “headless, tailless torso” is now “sandwiched between two secondary paraphrases of the missing sections of [Daṇḍin's] original work.”¹⁸ Finally, there is the *Avantisundarī*, or *Avantisundarīkathā* (The Story of the Beautiful Lady from Avanti), also in prose, whose transmission is even poorer. Only a couple of fragmentary manuscripts of this work have survived, both of which break off at a relatively early stage, after the author introduces himself, describes the context and inspiration for the work's composition, and begins to lay out the frame of a highly expansive narrative. There exists, however, a later Sanskrit work that sums up the larger prose narrative of the *Avantisundarī* in verse. This *Avantisundarīkathāsāra* (Gist of the Story of the

¹⁴ *Sūktimuktāvalī* 4.75; anachronistically ascribed to Kālidāsa.

¹⁵ *Sūktimuktāvalī* 4.74.

¹⁶ Some scholars believe that despite its Asia-wide popularity, the work must have included a fourth section in addition to the three found in all the known manuscripts. This is because several verses that some writers attributed to this work do not appear in any known edition (Katre 1948, 1951; Singh 1979, pp. 56–61). Raghavan (1978, p. 824) calls these “wrong quotations” and does not believe that the *Kāvyaḍarśa* included any additional text. See also the discussion in Dimitrov (2011, pp. 535–536).

¹⁷ *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, p. 494. See also Raghavan (1978, p. 823) and Bronner (2010, pp. 99–102).

¹⁸ Onians (2005, pp. 23, 22–23).

Beautiful Lady from Avanti) is also incomplete, as is a thirteenth-century Telugu translation, but both go well beyond the point where the fragmented *kathā* manuscripts stop and significantly overlap with the main part of Daṇḍin's other prose work, the *Daśakumāracarita*.¹⁹

This confusing state of affairs has naturally left scholars puzzled about the size and exact nature of Daṇḍin's oeuvre. Given the intriguing overlap between the two fragmented prose works, some scholars have suggested that the two were parts of the same whole and that the *Avantisundarī* supplied the missing head of the truncated *Daśakumāracarita*.²⁰ But many initially treated the *Avantisundarī* with suspicion and even resentment.²¹ Scholars in this second camp argued that the prose works attributed to Daṇḍin could not have been authored by the same person, and hence that there were two Daṇḍins or perhaps, like everything else that is great in this world, even three.

In fact, the idea of multiple Daṇḍins preceded the discovery and first publication of the *Avantisundarī*. In a brief note published in 1915, G. J. Agashe argued that an unbridgeable gap separates the *Daśakumāracarita* from the *Kāvyaḍarśa*. The texts, he believed, were so different in their moral and literary values that it was simply inconceivable that they were by the same hand. Otherwise, one would have to accept "that an author, who, as an authority on Rhetoric, wrote like an angel of righteousness, should or could, as a poet, have been a veritable devil rolling in the mire of obscenity."²² In his 1919 edition of the *Daśakumāracarita*, Agashe reiterated his thesis that Daṇḍin the "purist," author of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, could not have been the same as the Daṇḍin who penned many "lewd" passages in the *Daśakumāracarita*.²³ The main problem with this argument is that the gap Agashe posits between the two texts is imaginary. It is based, on the one hand, on an entirely anachronistic attribution of Victorian values to Daṇḍin the theoretician, who, counter to Agashe's claims, was not at all opposed to sexual come-ons in literature so long as these involved a poetic twist, and, on the other, on a fundamental misapprehension of Daṇḍin's prose as indecent or vulgar.²⁴ In truth, when Agashe

¹⁹ The best explanation of the different manuscripts and the narrative overlap is in Harihara Sastri's introduction to his 1957 edition of the *Avantisundarīkathāsāra*, pp. i–xv.

²⁰ The first to suggest this, I believe, was Ramakrishna Kavi, in his introduction to the publication of *Avantisundarīkathā and Avantisundarīkathāsāra* in 1924, pp. 13–15.

²¹ Keith (1928, p. xvi) even argued that the work "should never have been published from one mutilated manuscript, whose readings, even if correctly stated, have already been proved wrong by other manuscript evidence."

²² Agashe (1915, p. 68), perhaps taking a hint from K. P. Trivedi, who in 1909 said, in passing, that the two works are "widely divergent in style and purity of language," and hence their common authorship is "doubtful" (*Pratāparudrayaśobhāṣaṇa*, p. xxxi).

²³ Agashe (1919, pp. xxviii–xxix), under the heading "Bad taste."

²⁴ Agashe has argued, for example, that Daṇḍin the theorist demonstrates an uncompromising intolerance of impropriety "by condemning even such an apparently harmless sentence as 'How dost thou, O Girl! not love me, who love thee?'" (Agashe 1919, p. xxix). The reference is to *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.63, where Daṇḍin is indeed opposed to such a direct demand to be loved, although not because of its moral impropriety but rather because of its prosaic and unsophisticated nature; in the next verse he shows that this problem can be remedied if the same demand is expressed in a clever way that involves irony and indirection (1.64). This fallacy of Agashe was already noted by Gupta (1970, p. 7).

speaks of passages in the *Daśakumāracarita* that are “so outrageously obscene” that they must “bring a blush to the cheek of every cultured reader,” he speaks about himself rather than about the work’s intended readers.²⁵

In addition to arguing for their alleged socioaesthetic incompatibility, Agashe cites “external evidence” for a vast chronological gap separating the two texts ascribed to Daṇḍin. He places the *Daśakumāracarita* in the eleventh or twelfth century, much later than the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, which he accurately locates in the Pallava capital of Kāñcī around the year 700 CE.²⁶ This evidence consists of a mixture of conjectures based on silence (primarily the paucity of early references to the *Daśakumāracarita*)²⁷ and far-fetched claims, such as that the work’s use of the word “Ionian” (*yavana*), which later referred to any newcomers from the west, including Muslims, indicates a time when Islam was already a dominant political force in South Asia, or that its mention of a bag containing betel nuts is a giveaway because “the practice of habitually chewing betel-nut is itself very modern.”²⁸ Finally, because Agashe found neither the “purist rhetorician” nor the author of “lewd” prose as deserving praise by the tradition, he deduced a third Daṇḍin, about whom nothing whatsoever is known.²⁹

I mention some of these absurd arguments because, as we shall see, Agashe is still invoked as an authority on the existence of multiple Daṇḍins. Indeed, rather than settling the debate, the publication of the *Avantisundarī* in 1924, shortly after Agashe’s interventions, further fueled argumentation of the sort he made. In the late 1920s scholars such as Keith and De argued for the existence of wide stylistic gaps between the *Avantisundarī* and the *Daśakumāracarita* and claimed that the two could not have been by the same author, let alone parts of the same work.³⁰

I find all this odd and indicative of a deep-rooted suspicion of any biographical testimony supplied by the relevant texts and later tradition. Indeed, this suspicion

²⁵ Agashe (1915, p. 68). As an “offensive verse” from the *Daśakumāracarita*, which presumably violates the theoretician’s stipulation, Agashe cites Prince Apahāravarma’s love note: *tvām ayam ābaddhāñjali dāsajanās tam imam artham arthayate / svapihi mayā saha suratavyatikarakhinnaiva mā maivam //* “Here I am—your slave, / hands folded in subservience. / I beg of you this one thing: / that you should sleep with me beside you, / and only exhausted after erotic union, and not, / not tired in the way you are now” (*Daśakumāracarita*, p. 63; translation by Onians 2005, p. 269). The explicit mention of lovers exhausted by lovemaking and sleeping together on the same bed seems to have offended the sensibilities of Agashe, but it comes as no surprise to readers of *kaṅvya* and contradicts none of Daṇḍin’s rules.

²⁶ Agashe (1919, pp. xxxv–li). For his dating of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, see pp. lvii–lviii, lxii.

²⁷ Although Agashe himself acknowledges that a verse from this work is cited in Bhoja’s *Saravaiṭkañṭhābharana*, composed in the first half of the eleventh-century (Agashe 1919, pp. xxxv–xl).

²⁸ Agashe (1919, p. xlvi). For the argument about Muslim presence, see p. xlv; actually the text betrays no awareness of Islamic culture. Other “evidence” includes judgments about literary borrowing based on general similarities between texts, not unlike those judgments that have haunted the Daṇḍin–Bhāmaha debate in general. For example, Agashe concluded on the basis of some affinities between Kṣemendra’s *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and the *Daśakumāracarita* that Daṇḍin must have borrowed from Kṣemendra (pp. xli–xlili), ignoring the possibility of the reverse scenario and of more complex textual relations.

²⁹ It is this Daṇḍin, Agashe believes, who must have authored the three works mentioned by Rājaśekhara, works that, he argues, are now lost except for the few stray verses ascribed to Daṇḍin in the anthologies (Agashe 1919, pp. liii, lxiii–lxiv).

³⁰ De (1927), Keith (1929, p. xvi). Of the two, De seems more cautious than Keith and allows room for the data in the text to be validated.

paradoxically stands in inverse relationship to the elaborateness and dependability of the testimony, so that the richer and better the data, the more profound the doubts. But the fact is that in the *Avantisundarī*, a work unmistakably ascribed to Daṇḍin by its colophons and by later sources,³¹ the author provides uniquely ample information about himself and his surroundings. With the exception of Bāṇa, whose *Harṣacarita* likely served as Daṇḍin's model here, no early Sanskrit writer ever provided such a detailed autobiographical account. Daṇḍin begins with a lengthy description of the city of Kāñcī and of a Pallava king named Siṃhaviṣṇu. When Siṃhaviṣṇu holds court one day, a musician sings a beautiful verse blessing the presiding king; the singer of the verse then informs the king of its author, Dāmodara, hailing from the city of Ānandapura. This up-and-coming poet, the king is told, came in contact with the great poet Bhāravi. He also received patronage from a prince named Viṣṇudharma. This relationship ended on a sour note, however, when the prince offended the vegetarian Dāmodara by offering him meat during a hunting expedition, after which incident Dāmodara joined the services of King Durvinīta from the Gaṅga lineage. On the basis of this recommendation, which included a sample verse and a short but impressive résumé tying Dāmodara to some of the leading poets and royal houses of his time, Siṃhaviṣṇu invites Dāmodara to join his court in Kāñcī. The 20-year-old Dāmodara is promptly recruited and enjoys a successful and fruitful tenure under Siṃhaviṣṇu's generous patronage.³² At this point in the narrative, Daṇḍin turns to detail his own ancestry as the great-grandson of the young court poet: Dāmodara was married in Kāñcī and fathered three sons; his middle-born, Manoratha, had four sons; Manoratha's youngest son, Vīradatta, married a Brahmin woman, Gaurī, and they had several daughters and, eventually, a son, Daṇḍin. Daṇḍin then reports that he lost his mother at the age of seven and his father shortly thereafter, and that as an orphan, he had to flee Kāñcī because of an enemy invasion and was able to return only once peace was restored.³³

Although the story continues with many additional details about Daṇḍin's friends and adventures in the port city of Mahāmallapuram, during a visit to which he was inspired to compose his work,³⁴ it is the information provided thus far that is most crucial for dating and locating the author. Particularly important is the fact that Daṇḍin was four generations removed from Dāmodara, a contemporary of Kings Viṣṇudharma, Durvinīta and Siṃhaviṣṇu, all of whom can be dated with relative accuracy from inscriptional evidence and whose dates converge at the concluding decades of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh.³⁵ Also significant is the mention of a disruptive invasion of the Pallava kingdom, which is likely the

³¹ For works and colophons of the *Avantisundarī* that specifically refer to it as Daṇḍin's, see Raghavan (1939, p. 294, 1940–1941, pp. 4–5), and Pillai in his introduction to his edition of the *Avantisundarī* (reprinted in Pillai 1954, p. 88).

³² *Avantisundarī*, pp. 1–10; cf. *Avantisundarīkathāsāra* 1.1–28.

³³ *Avantisundarī*, pp. 11–12; cf. *Avantisundarīkathāsāra* 1.29–36.

³⁴ *Avantisundarī*, pp. 12ff.; cf. *Avantisundarīkathāsāra* 1.37ff.

³⁵ For a good summary of the convergence of their dates on the basis of epigraphic materials, see Singh (1979, pp. 37–39). We know less about Bhāravi's date from other sources, but his mention as a famous poet in a Cālukya inscription from 634 CE certainly allows for the possibility of his being Dāmodara's senior contemporary at the close of the seventh century.

Cālukya sacking of Kāñcī described in the Gadval inscription of Vikramāditya I Cālukya (dated to 674 CE).³⁶ These details all suggest that Daṇḍin's active career took place around 680–720 CE under the auspices of Narasiṃhavarman II Rājasimha in Kāñcī (r. 690/1–728/9).³⁷ In all the scholarship written on this topic, I have not found a single good reason that we should dismiss this godsend of good and rich data.

Moreover, this autobiographical account strongly resonates with several hints from Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa*, the same hints that initially led Agashe to assign Daṇḍin's theoretical treatise to this very place and time. First, in explaining his concluding illustration of the poetic expression of joy (*preyas*), Daṇḍin explicitly states that the joyous response just expressed was that of King Rājavarman or Rātavarman upon seeing Śiva.³⁸ The fact that Daṇḍin here, outside any context, identifies a king as the author of this verse seems to me an obvious gesture to his patron. The question is, of course, who this patron is. The name is clearly Pallava-sounding (all Pallava regnal names invariably end in *-varman*), and if the reading Rājavarman is correct, then the identification that several scholars have suggested with Narasiṃhavarman II, also known as Rājasimha, seems likely, especially if we remember that this king is depicted in his inscriptions as a devotee of Śiva.³⁹ Second, one of Daṇḍin's more striking examples of *yamaka*, the device where the same sound is repeated with a different meaning, is a verse whose sole purpose is the repetition of the name *Kālakāla* as many times as possible in a single verse (24 times, to be precise). *Kālakāla* is another famous title of Narasiṃhavarman II.⁴⁰ Finally, the *Kāvyaḍarśa* contains a verse illustrating a "name-riddle" (*nāmapraheḷikā*) that reads as follows: "A city, five letters, the middle one is a nasal, the ruling lineage of which is an eight-letter word."⁴¹ The answer, as the oldest commentator explains, is Kāñcī, capital of the Pallava (Pallavāḥ) kings.⁴² As with the other hints, it is only natural to take the riddle as Daṇḍin's gesture to the kings who

³⁶ Hultzsch (1909–1910); cf. Rabe (2001, pp. 36–40).

³⁷ Gupta (1970, pp. 94–96), Gupta (1972, pp. 16–19), DeCaroli (1995, p. 672), Rabe (2001, 32–50), Onians (2005, pp. 24–25).

³⁸ *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.277, where the reading is Rātavarman, whom Ratnaśrījñāna identifies as a king of the Raghu lineage. The commentator Vādijaṅghādeva, however, reads Rāmavarman (ad 2.277 in the 1936 edition of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*). For a brief discussion of the different readings and their possible references, see Gupta (1972, p. 83 n. 1).

³⁹ His titles in inscriptions include Śankarabhakta, Devadevabhakta, Īśvarabhakta, Śivacūḍamaṇi, and Āgamānusāri (Mahalingam 1969, pp. 123–125, 1988, p. lvii). See also Gupta (1970, pp. 82–83) for this identification.

⁴⁰ *Kāvyaḍarśa* 3.50. For the title *Kālakāla* and its possible significance, see Mahalingam (1969, pp. 115–116).

⁴¹ *Kāvyaḍarśa* 3.114.

⁴² The still-repeated claim that only late commentators explain the riddle in this way is false and provides yet another example of the amazing disregard of Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary, where this geopolitical identification is made very clearly (*atra kāñcī purī pallavās ca tasyām nṛpā iti paramārthaḥ*; *Kāvyaḍarśa* of Daṇḍin, ad 3.114). However, the oft-repeated claim that this riddle echoes the Pallava cave inscription from Māmaṅṭūr is also false (see Sastri 1923: no. 136; cf. Francis 2009, p. 98 n. 241). I am grateful to Emmanuel Francis for pointing this out to me, because I have also elsewhere repeated as fact the false reading of Sankara (1919, p. 357).

supported him and to the hometown that he lovingly describes in his *Avantisundarī*.⁴³ Indeed, all three works by Daṇḍin seem to refer to the Tamil region: the *Avantisundarī* depicts Daṇḍin as living and working in the Pallava region, and the *Daśakumāracarita* evinces familiarity with the region's geography.⁴⁴ To this we may add the strong fascination of all three works with Vidarbha: this region is the birthplace of Daṇḍin's great-grandfather Dāmodara in the *Avantisundarī*, the location of several central stories in the *Daśakumāracarita*, and the place of origin of the best style of poetry in the *Kāvyaḍarśa*.⁴⁵

These biographical, geographic, and narrative convergences among all the works ascribed to Daṇḍin are undeniable. And although the *Avantisundarī* was initially greeted with some suspicion—as is perhaps understandable, given its fragmentary nature, unclear relationship with the verse summary, and puzzling overlap with the *Daśakumāracarita*, another incomplete work with an odd pattern of transmission—there is now a wide consensus that a single Daṇḍin authored all these works at the Pallava court in Kāñcī around the end of the seventh century.⁴⁶ Indeed, several eminent scholars now believe on stylistic and other grounds that, as suggested by the verse summary and its Telugu translation, both the *Avantisundarī* and the *Daśakumāracarita* originally formed a single massive prose work that was broken up at a relatively early age in its transmission; another view is that the two represent separate stages in the life and work of the same author.⁴⁷ Be that as it may, it should be noted that in the century since Agashe's first intervention, not a shred of evidence has been found that positively supports the notion of multiple Daṇḍins, and it is absolutely clear that in the eyes of posterity there never existed more than one.⁴⁸ If there were several authors named Daṇḍin, it would seem that they all lived in the same place and at the same time, wrote the same works, and were considered by everyone else to be one and the same person.

Despite all this, the ghost of Agashe has recently been resurrected as part of the ongoing debate concerning the history of the Ajanta caves. I will not try to summarize here Walter Spink's career-long efforts to provide a revised, short

⁴³ *Avantisundarī*, pp. 4–8. The connection between Daṇḍin and the Pallavas of Kāñcī was so strong in the eyes of posterity that a later composer of a geographic lexicon cites Daṇḍin's *Avantisundarī* as an authority for the entry “Pallavas” and their capital Kāñcī (Raghavan 1940–1941, pp. 4–5).

⁴⁴ For the *Daśakumāracarita*, see the story of Śaktikumāra, the merchant from Kāñcī who travels south to the Cola country in search of a wife who can cook a whole meal using just a kilo of rice (*Daśakumāracarita* 159–163; Onians 2005, pp. 421–433). See also Raghavan (1955, p. 104).

⁴⁵ On the centrality of Vidarbha to the *Daśakumāracarita*, see Collins (1907, pp. 27–48) and Mirashi (1945) (whose position on Daṇḍin's date was taken up by Spink, as we shall see below). On Vaidarbha as the best style of poetry in the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, see below.

⁴⁶ The only recent exception is Emmanuel Francis (2009), who calls the hypothesis that Daṇḍin was connected to the Pallavas “very fragile” (104). He tends to believe that the *Avantisundarī* was composed by a “pseudo-Daṇḍin” who belonged to the court of Narasiṃhavarman II (96–97) and reworked an earlier classic.

⁴⁷ For the first opinion, see Raghavan (1978, pp. 821–824), Warder (1983, pp. 166–169), and Khoroché (2005). For the second, see Gupta (1970, pp. 47–60).

⁴⁸ Agashe believed that traditional sources refer to the different Daṇḍins differently, and that only the Daṇḍin who authored the *Kāvyaḍarśa* was titled *ācārya* (1919, p. lxxviii). As has been shown by Gupta and others, no such pattern of reference exists: Daṇḍin's name appears with or without the title *ācārya* regardless of the book ascribed to him (Pillai 1954, pp. 88–89; Gupta 1970, pp. 10–11, 13).

chronology of this unique building project, which he believes was carried out in spurts from 460 to 477 CE, when it was finally stopped after the fall of the Vākāṭaka Empire.⁴⁹ It will suffice briefly to explain how Daṇḍin's date and identity became linked to his ingenious, albeit controversial, theory. Although the bulk of Spink's arguments is based on his innovative reading of Ajanta's physical remains, a main source of external support is his interpretation of the Viśruta story in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita* as a lightly disguised account of the political drama surrounding the reign of Hariṣeṇa, the last Vākāṭaka monarch.⁵⁰ Some of Spink's critics strongly doubt the historicity of the Viśruta story,⁵¹ although his interpretation is intriguing and certainly not implausible. But even if Spink's interpretation is accepted, what bearing does this have on the question of Daṇḍin's date and identity? Indeed, Spink himself originally concurred with Daṇḍin's accepted date and even used it to support his argument. Thus he refers to the "fall of the great Vakataka house, a trauma so important in India's history that it was recalled detail by detail, well over a century later in Dandin's quasi-historical Dasakumaracarita."⁵²

More recently, however, in responding to criticism that his "crown witness" lived "about 8 or 9 generations later, at the end of the 7th or early 8th century," and that therefore "his intimate knowledge of Vakataka history should be taken with a pinch of salt,"⁵³ Spink seized on Agashe's theory of multiple Daṇḍins and suggested that the Daṇḍin who authored the *Daśakumāracarita* must have lived much earlier, close to the events he allegedly describes.⁵⁴ Even aside from the obvious circularity of this argument and the fact that no serious scholar would place the *Daśakumāracarita* circa 500 CE—as we have seen, Agashe, whom Spink quotes as his authority on the position of multiple Daṇḍins, actually believed that the work was written as late as the twelfth century—I find the idea that Daṇḍin had to witness history in order to allude to it (if this, indeed, is what he does) strange, to say the least. As Spink originally and rightly argued, the story of King Hariṣeṇa was a famous one, and as we have seen, Daṇḍin's great-grandfather hailed from the very region of the erstwhile Vākāṭaka kingdom.⁵⁵ So even if Daṇḍin's Viśruta story is in some sense about the historical drama in Hariṣeṇa's court, I find nothing in Spink's arguments that seriously challenges the scholarly consensus about Daṇḍin's period, supported by the detailed testimony in his *Avantisundarī*, or, for that matter, the tradition's knowledge of only one Daṇḍin. At any rate, the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, Daṇḍin's text that is most relevant to the current discussion, can be safely assigned to the Pallava court in Kāñcī around the year 700.

⁴⁹ Five of the six planned volumes that summarize his argument and evidence have already appeared. The most relevant for our discussion is Spink (2005).

⁵⁰ Spink (2005, primarily 119–162), following Mirashi (1945).

⁵¹ Khandalavala (1990, p. 20), Deshpande (1992, p. 14), and Bakker (1997, p. 37), all of whom are reproduced in Spink (2005).

⁵² Spink (1990, p. 8).

⁵³ The quotes are from von Stietencron (2004, p. 108) and Deshpande (1992, p. 10), respectively.

⁵⁴ Spink (2005, pp. 120–121).

⁵⁵ As noted by DeCaroli (1995, p. 674), who also suggested reading this tale about the Vākāṭaka past as meant as a lesson with clear implications in Daṇḍin's Pallava context.

2.2 Bhāmaha

In comparison with Daṇḍin's celebrity and the relative wealth of information about him, we lack data about Bhāmaha. He mentions in his *Kāvyaḷamkāra* that his father's name was Rakrilagomin, and this is basically all we know about him.⁵⁶ Later Kashmiri writers often treat Bhāmaha as the founding father of Sanskrit poetics and, by the same token, make him stand for everything that is old school, a trend that must have begun with Udbhaṭa (c. 800) and his vast commentary on Bhāmaha's work. This Kashmiri connection has led many to assume that Bhāmaha, too, hailed from the northern vale. But if this is the case, then, unlike many of his followers, whose patrons, positions, and, in some cases, salaries are referred to by Kalhaṇa, Bhāmaha does not receive any mention in the famous chronicle of Kashmir's courts, the *Rājataranḡiṇī* (River of Kings).⁵⁷

Moreover, although his text was studied alongside Daṇḍin's, Bhāmaha never enjoyed anything like the impact of his colleague. His work did not serve as the dominant model for nascent vernacular literary cultures, nor did it attract many commentators; the only premodern commentary known to us is Udbhaṭa's, and this learned and important work is now lost save for a few fragments published by Gnoli in 1962 and some stray quotes in later works. Neither was Bhāmaha a famous poet—there are only a handful of verses ascribed to him in the anthologies—and there are certainly no praise verses of the type dedicated to Daṇḍin.⁵⁸

However, it is possible that Bhāmaha was known in the scholarly circles of grammar and logic, to each of which fields he dedicated a chapter in his manual on poetics. Indeed, it is often Bhāmaha's chapters on these other disciplines that engaged other texts in discussion and were cited by later authors in a way that is crucial to fixing his date. Thus Bhāmaha's views on the philosophy of language merited the attention of Śāntaraḡṣita, a Buddhist logician writing in the middle of the eighth century, and his discussion on grammar refers to a certain Nyāsakāra. Speaking of grammar, a commentary on Vararuci's *Prākṛtaprakāśa*, a Prakrit

⁵⁶ *Kāvyaḷamkāra* of Bhāmaha 6.64. On the basis of this name, as well as Bhāmaha's benediction to *sārvam sarvajñam* (ibid. 1.1) and his familiarity with Buddhist logic, it has been argued that he must have been a Buddhist (starting with Narasimhiengar 1905, pp. 535–536). The most detailed refutation of this speculation is found in Śarmā and Upādhyāya (1928, pp. 2–11), where the authors detail the clearly non-Buddhist set of examples given by Bhāmaha and note that he is mostly hostile to Buddhist logic. According to Alexis Sanderson, the name and benediction supplied by Bhāmaha actually indicate that he may have been a Māheśvara. Sanderson notes that the use of *sarvajña* for the highest being is also seen outside Buddhist texts in a variety of Pāñcārthika Pāśupata works. He also notes that names with Bhā- are attested as Pāśupata names, even if, in practice, we occasionally come across non-Pāśupatas with such names (Sanderson, personal communication, March 2010).

⁵⁷ See, for example, *Rājataranḡiṇī* 4.495, which specifies the astronomical per diem of 100,000 dinars awarded to Udbhaṭa, Bhāmaha's main follower and commentator. If Bhāmaha was nonetheless a resident of Kashmir, perhaps Kalhaṇa's failure to mention him indicates that he was not situated at the court.

⁵⁸ Sternbach (1980, p. 161) mentions only five verses ascribed to Bhāmaha in the anthologies, only one of which is not from the *Kāvyaḷamkāra*. That one verse, by the way, is in praise of sandalwood, perhaps allegorically.

grammar, was written by a Bhāmaha who may or may not be the same as the author of the *Kāvyaḷamkāra*.⁵⁹

2.3 Relative Chronology

One important piece of evidence that was available from the start of the debate, but that many of its participants either overlooked or were quick to dismiss, is that Taruṇavācaspati, a mid-thirteenth-century scholar who worked at the Hoysala court and who wrote a commentary on Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḷadarśa*, highlighted several passages where he believed that Daṇḍin was engaged in direct refutation of Bhāmaha's older views.⁶⁰ Kane argues that this proves nothing, because it is unsafe to trust someone who lived six centuries later than the author in question, and who simply "found conflicting views and thinks that Daṇḍin criticizes Bhāmaha."⁶¹ Kane's warning is, of course, not entirely without merit, although it is clear that he did not pause to ponder what caused Taruṇavācaspati to posit this directionality rather than the other. But the real problem with Kane's dismissal is that Taruṇavācaspati is not alone, and that other commentators whose works were published after Kane's book appeared posit the same chronology. Particularly important in this context are the commentaries of two erudite scholars who lived significantly closer to Daṇḍin's time: Vādijaṅghāladeva and Ratnaśrījñāna.

Although Vādijaṅghāladeva provides no autobiographical information in his commentary, titled *śrutānupālīnī* (Tradition's Keeper), Sheldon Pollock has convincingly proposed to identify him with Vādighaṅgala Bhaṭṭa, a recipient of gifts praised in a 963 inscription by a Gaṅga vassal of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa III (r. 939–967) as "an expert in the exegesis of the science of literature" (*niravad-yasāhityavidyāvyaḷkhyānanipuṇa*) and as a successful political adviser to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch.⁶² On several occasions in his commentary, Vādijaṅghāladeva quotes from Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷamkāra* to show not only that Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha were in disagreement but that Daṇḍin intentionally crafted his work as a rejoinder to Bhāmaha's. An example is Daṇḍin's discussion of the division of prose into the subgenres of *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā*, a distinction that Bhāmaha upholds, but one that Daṇḍin views as useless. In commenting on Daṇḍin's text, Vādijaṅghāladeva quotes the parallel passage from Bhāmaha and explains that Daṇḍin's discussion was deliberately worded so as to refute Bhāmaha's criteria for distinguishing the genres (*tad uktam bhāmahena ...iti niyamaṃ nirākartum idam āha*).⁶³ Another example is

⁵⁹ See Lele (1999, p. 15) on this and other works that some have ascribed to Bhāmaha.

⁶⁰ The first to note this was M. Rangacharya in the introduction to the 1910 edition of the *Kāvyaḷadarśa* (p. 4), followed by Narasimhachar (1912, p. 91) and Trivedi (1913, p. 264).

⁶¹ Kane (1971, p. 105). This view is widespread. For example, Keith argues that it is "clear that, apart from the fact that the commentators are of late date, and are often clearly wrong in their explanations of Daṇḍin, no stress can be laid on such assertions as evidence of date. What the commentators were interested in was not the chronological sequence of the doctrines" (Keith 1929, p. 171). For Taruṇavācaspati's date and place, see Raghavan (1939, pp. 305–306), Dimitrov (2002, pp. 300–301), and Pollock (2005, p. 638).

⁶² Pollock (2005, pp. 637–638).

⁶³ Vādijaṅghāladeva ad *Kāvyaḷadarśa* 1.24, pp. 22–23. See also the repeated quote from Bhāmaha on p. 24 apropos of the criterion of interspersed *vaktra* and *apavaktra* verses.

Daṇḍin's explanation, just when he is about to wrap up his exposition of individual tropes and turn to discuss their possible combinations, of why he did not mention *ananvaya* (an expression of incomparability) and *sasandeha* (an expression of doubt about the identity of X, given its great similarity to Y) as independent literary devices (he reminds his readers that he has already treated these as subspecies of the simile). Clearly, this explanation is necessitated by some other text, where the two have been treated as freestanding tropes, and Vādijaṅghālaḍeva identifies Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* as this intertext. He quotes Bhāmaha's definitions and examples for both devices, found, by the way, at exactly the same position in the treatise, just before speaking of combinations of tropes, and notes that Daṇḍin's comments have to be interpreted as highlighting his differences from Bhāmaha (*ity etāvad ananvayasasandehālaṅkārau bhāmahena pṛthag udāhṛtau yau tāvad asmābhir upamāsv eva darśitau*).⁶⁴ Vādijaṅghālaḍeva offers a similarly decisive view on the direction of the debate over the poetic value of statements of causation (*hetu*), where the two authors express diametrically opposed views using the same example (Bhāmaha says that it is the epitome of prosaicness, while Daṇḍin argues that it is a perfectly legitimate trope). It is Daṇḍin, he says, who "refutes what Bhāmaha has said" (*yad uktaṃ bhāmahena tad apākaroti*).⁶⁵

An even more detailed discussion of the relationship between Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin is offered in the extremely erudite commentary of the Sinhalese Buddhist scholar Ratnaśrījñāna. As Sheldon Pollock has convincingly shown, Ratnaśrījñāna, who came to the mainland and left a donative inscription in Gayā, also attended the court of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa monarch Kṛṣṇa III.⁶⁶ His commentary on Daṇḍin's treatise, published in 1957 by Anantal Thakur and Upendhra Jha, stands out for its systematic treatment of Bhāmaha's work and the bearing it has on Daṇḍin's. All in all, Ratnaśrījñāna quotes from Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* on thirty-two occasions, with a total of 35 quoted verses (nearly 10% of Bhāmaha's original text), far more than from any other source.⁶⁷ Indeed, several portions of Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary

⁶⁴ Vādijaṅghālaḍeva ad *Kāvyaḍarṣa* 2.358, p. 209. See also his similar point on *upamārūpaka* in the next page, where he again quotes Bhāmaha. Taruṇavācaspatī, whose commentary is also printed in this edition, is of exactly the same opinion.

⁶⁵ Vādijaṅghālaḍeva ad *Kāvyaḍarṣa* 2.244, p. 151; cf. *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 2.87.

⁶⁶ Pollock (2005, pp. 638–641). Dimitrov, however, doubts the association with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa court of Kṛṣṇa III. He argues that Ratnaśrījñāna remained in Northern India and most likely stayed at Vikramaśīla (Dimitrov, forthcoming). It is possible that Ratnaśrījñāna is identical with Ruvan-mī, also known as Ratnamadhu and Ratnamati, the Sri Lankan author of a paraphrase (*sannaya*) of the *Siyabaslakara*, a text that adapts Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarṣa* into Sinhala (Pollock, 2005, 641). This is the conclusion of Dimitrov, who has studied the entire corpus of Ratnaśrījñāna aka Ratnamati (Dimitrov 2010, p. 25; the detailed argument is supplied in Dimitrov, forthcoming).

⁶⁷ The Bhāmaha quotes fall under the following broad topics (verse numbers in parentheses refer to Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*, page numbers to the 1957 edition of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarṣa* with Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary): plot design in a *mahākāvya* (1.22–23, p. 14), the genres of prose poetry (1.25–29, pp. 15–22), the different paths of poetry (1.31–32, p. 28), *upameyopamā* (3.37, p. 73), *ācikyāśopamā* (2.34, 2.37–38, pp. 77–78), *upamādoṣas* (2.39–40, p. 85), *hetu* (2.86–87, p. 145, 149), *apahnuti* (3.21–22, p. 173), *ananvaya* and other figures as independent devices or simile subtypes (3.35–46, 3.43–48, pp. 192–194), *prahelikā* (2.19–20, p. 240), *pratijñāhetudṛṣṭāntahānidoṣa* (5.1, 5.13, 5.20–21, pp. 251–254), and *visandhidoṣa* (4.23, p. 267).

can be seen as close comparative studies of both works that anticipate much of the twentieth-century scholarship on the relationship between the two and surpass it in both erudition and philological virtuosity.

A case in point is Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary on Daṇḍin's aforementioned rejection of the two distinct genres of prose, *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* (*Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.23–30). An extended passage in Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary (pp. 15–22 in the printed edition) is nothing but a detailed meditation on the manner in which Daṇḍin reports, belittles, and refutes each and every criterion that Bhāmaha has adduced to differentiate the two genres. For Ratnaśrījñāna, Daṇḍin's systematic refutation of Bhāmaha's criteria involves demonstrating that some of them are not unique, others are insignificant, and still others contradict the empirical evidence, run counter to socioaesthetic values, or are logically inconsistent. To make his point clear, Ratnaśrījñāna repeatedly cites Bhāmaha—he quotes from the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* eleven times in this passage alone—in a highly sophisticated demonstration of how each and every lexical choice in Daṇḍin's discussion is made with Bhāmaha's text in mind, including several indirect gibes (*a[nena] caitan niraṣtaṃ bhaṅgyā yad uktaṃ bhāmahena*) and silent “digs” (*anuktopāḷambho 'yam*).⁶⁸

An additional example involves another well-known disagreement between Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin that concerns the status of *prahelikās* (riddles). Bhāmaha famously mistrusts the poetic value of such brainteasers, which, he notes, others before him have discussed. He brings this topic up at the end of his discussion of *yamaka* (twinning), where the same string of sounds is repeated, each time with a different meaning. The aesthetic value of *yamakas*, too, is somewhat controversial, but Bhāmaha nonetheless includes them in his catalog of legitimate devices and endorses their use, so long as authors follow his stipulations (2.9–18). But he is not as amenable to *prahelikās*:

*nānādhātvarthagambhīrā yamakavyapadeśinī / prahelikā sā hy uditā
rāmaśarmācyutottare // kāvyāny api yadīmāni vyākhyāgamyāni śāstravat /
utsavaḥ sudhiyām eva hanta durmedhaso hatāḥ //* (*Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha
2.19–20)

Also going by the name *yamaka*, and inscrutable on account of its dependency on polysemic roots, is what Rāmaśarman in his *Acyutottara* has called *prahelikā*. The intelligibility of such verses, not unlike scientific jargon, depends on a running commentary. Were they to be accepted as poetry, this would be a celebration to the quick-witted only. But boy, would it knock the half-wits dead!

Bhāmaha's sympathy is clearly not with the blockheads who would be knocked dead by such riddles. Still, the whole scenario is quite hypothetical for him, in the sense that if language is difficult to the point of necessitating a commentary, it is strictly outside the realm of poetry.⁶⁹ Appropriately, Bhāmaha keeps such riddles out of his book, and immediately following this comment he moves to discuss an entirely different topic.

⁶⁸ Ratnaśrījñāna ad *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.24, 25, p. 17. See van der Kuijp (1986, pp. 34–36) for the reproduction of this debate in Tibetan sources.

⁶⁹ A point he has already made in the definition of grand poems (*mahākāvya*s) as “not overly dependant on a commentary” (*nātivyākhyeyam; Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 1.20).

Daṇḍin, by contrast, is far more lenient. He, too, addresses *prahelikās* after dealing with the complex sound patterns of the *yamaka* (but also with pattern poems, or *citra*) and apropos of the question of difficulty in poetry:

*iti duṣkaramārgo 'pi kiñcid ādarśitakramaḥ / prahelikāprakārāṇāṃ punar
uddīsyate gatiḥ // krīḍāgoṣṭhīvinodeṣu tajjñair ākīrṇamantraṇe / paravyāmo-
hane cāpi sopayogāḥ prahelikāḥ // (Kāvyaḍarśa 3.96–97)*

Now that I have briefly introduced you also to poetry's difficult path, let me take you on a tour of the different varieties of the *prahelikā*. This device comes in handy when poets and scholars get together to have fun, when the wise are in the midst of a crowd and need to exchange coded messages, and as a means of baffling a rival.

Like Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin views *prahelikās* as particularly difficult and hence the prerogative of the wise, but unlike Bhāmaha, he finds this difficulty to be of value in a variety of situations. If this is a somewhat apologetic endorsement, it is an endorsement nonetheless, and Daṇḍin proceeds to run his readers through no less than 16 *prahelikā* varieties, which, he reports, were sanctioned by earlier writers. His predecessors, he adds, also came up with an additional list of 14 flawed *prahelikās*, but Daṇḍin believes that there is little point in this enumeration because the number of flaws is infinite.⁷⁰

It should be clear from the preceding discussion not only that Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin are of different opinions on the question of *prahelikās*, but also that the ambivalence about this device is rooted in earlier texts that were engaged in conversation on this topic. But can we reconstruct this early conversation? Here Ratnaśrījñāna offers critical help. He identifies the *Acyutottara* of Rāmaśarman, the text Bhāmaha also mentions in connection with riddles, as one source of the *prahelikās* mentioned by Daṇḍin (*etā yathoktalakṣaṇāḥ ṣoḍaśa prahelikā nirdiṣṭā uktāḥ pūrvair ācaryai rāmaśarmādibhiḥ; ad Kāvyaḍarśa 3.106*), and he argues that Daṇḍin worded his text so as to refute Bhāmaha's position that *prahelikā* is not a legitimate device (*tatas tā apy alaṃkāravat kāvyalakṣaṇe cintanīyāḥ. tataś ca yad uktaṃ bhāmahena... [Kāvyaḍarśa of Bhāmaha 2.19–20, quoted above] ...iti tad apahastitam. upayogavattayā avāśyavaktavyatvāt prahelikānām alaṃkāravad iti; ad Kāvyaḍarśa 3.97*). Through the magnifying lens of this tenth-century scholar, the landscape of early Sanskrit poetics momentarily emerges from the mist, and a thread of the discussion becomes traceable: Rāmaśarman coined the *prahelikā* and promoted some of its varieties in his *Acyutottara*; Bhāmaha referred to him and his work when he denied *prahelikā* a place in his own treatise; and Daṇḍin discarded (*apahastita*) Bhāmaha's arguments and reintroduced *prahelikās*, including those varieties that were earlier sanctioned by Rāmaśarman.

Even this limited selection from Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary suffices to show that his approach to the ideational, methodological, and chronological relationship

⁷⁰ *etāḥ ṣoḍaśa nirdiṣṭāḥ pūrvācāryaiḥ prahelikāḥ / duṣṭaprahelikāś cānyās tair adhītas caturdaśa // doṣān aparisaṃkhyeyān manyamānā vayaṃ punaḥ / sādhrīv evābhīdhāsyāmas tā duṣṭā yās tv alakṣaṇāḥ // (Kāvyaḍarśa 3.106–107).*

between Bhāmaha's and Daṇḍin's works is a far cry from the ad hoc and careless attitude we have seen Kane attribute to Taruṇavācaspati. Rather, one of his main objectives as a commentator is to compare the two treatises closely on a variety of issues, ranging from seemingly minor points of difference (whether a certain device merits being considered an independent trope or a subcategory of another) to those pertaining to the scope and independence of the discipline as a whole (Ratnaśrījñāna interprets Daṇḍin's rejection of poetic flaws that consist of logical fallacies as a more general criticism of Bhāmaha's sojourn into the field of logic; more on this later). Indeed, Ratnaśrījñāna directly addresses the general intellectual problem posed by the disagreement between authorities in the field.⁷¹ And, coming back to the main concern of this article, on each and every point of disagreement, Ratnaśrījñāna makes it absolutely palpably clear that Daṇḍin is responding to Bhāmaha.

Anantalal Thakur and Upendhra Jha, in their introduction to the edition of Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary, have already noted that the Sinhalese scholar "unambiguously maintains the priority of Bhāmaha over Daṇḍin" and that his commentary shows that during his time both texts were "studied side by side."⁷² It can actually be stated more strongly that Ratnaśrījñāna understood Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* as Daṇḍin's primary intertext and believed that Daṇḍin set out to systematically denounce Bhāmaha's positions on a range of topics. As we have seen, a similar picture of the relationship between the authors—both in terms of their relative chronology and in terms of the combative nature of their discussion—can be derived from his tenth-century fellow southerner, Vādijaṅghādeva, even if the comparative approach is not a priority for him as it is for Ratnaśrījñāna. In fact, as has also already been noted by Thakur and Jha, Ratnaśrījñāna "has been supported by all the extant commentaries" on Daṇḍin's work in positing the priority of Bhāmaha.⁷³ I should hasten to say that the commentarial literature on Daṇḍin is still embarrassingly understudied, and some of the commentaries still await publication.⁷⁴ Still, the complete unanimity among all the premodern commentators I have been able to consult is revealing. It should also be

⁷¹ See, for example, his discussions on pages 19 and 22 apropos of Daṇḍin's calling into question the validity of Bhāmaha's differentiating criteria between the genres of prose. In the first of these examples he says: *nanu bhāmahaḥkṛto niṣedho 'sti...nanu daṇḍikṛto vidhir asti...tat pramāṇam iti cet. bhāmahaḥkṛto niṣedhaḥ pramāṇam iti koṣapānam atra kāraṇīyaṃ syāt. dvayor api śāstrakāratvāt prāmānyam, na vā kasyāpi. matabhedas tatra bhavatu iti cet? astu tat kim asthānābhīniveśaḥ kriyate. yuktipuraskṛtaṃ tu daṇḍimataṃ dr̥śyata iti.* "Now on this point Bhāmaha authored a proscription...[quotes *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* 1.28] and Daṇḍin a prescription...[paraphrases *Kāvyaḷadarśa* 1.27]. If we regard this [Daṇḍin's prescription] as an authority, what do we do with the authority of Bhāmaha's proscription? Should we settle this case by resorting to a drinking ordeal? Should we consider both as authorities insofar as they are authors of *śāstra*, or should neither author be considered an authority? Or perhaps this is just a matter of difference in opinion, in which case why dwell on something that is not worthy of attention? Still, [if we apply our judgment here], Daṇḍin's opinion appears to be well reasoned."

⁷² Thakur and Jha (1957. p. 24).

⁷³ Thakur and Jha (1957. p. 24).

⁷⁴ Although it does seem that all the important extant commentaries have been published. For a review of the commentarial literature see Dimitrov (2002, pp. 297–304). For the possible existence of earlier lost commentaries see note 78 below.

noted that not a single premodern author has ever postulated an inverse chronology, according to which Daṇḍin would have antedated Bhāmaha.⁷⁵

Still, it is possible to argue that the jury of commentators derived its unanimous verdict purely from a textual comparison of Daṇḍin's and Bhāmaha's work, without any additional evidence about the two and their predecessors. It is possible, for example, that Ratnaśrījñāna reconstructed the discussion of *prahelikā* from the same texts that we have in our possession today and deduced Rāmaśarman as Daṇḍin's source solely on the basis of Bhāmaha's reference to him, without being able to consult a copy of the *Acyutottara* himself. If this is so, then relying on the testimony of Ratnaśrījñāna and his colleagues is tantamount to a contamination of external evidence with conclusions derived solely from comparative analysis. There are, however, several factors that reduce the likelihood of this scenario. The first is the temporal and geographic proximity of these earliest commentators to the author of their root text. Ratnaśrījñāna and Vādijaṅghādeva postdated Daṇḍin by two and a half centuries and worked in the vicinity of Vidarbha, his family's place of origin. Theirs was also a period when Daṇḍin's text was nearing the height of its influence, with the first adaptation into Kannada basically coinciding with the two commentators,⁷⁶ and information about Daṇḍin, at least—including the autobiographical account in the *Avantisundarī*, perhaps still available in its original and complete form—was, in all probability, still afloat in this region. Second, we know that some of the earliest texts on Sanskrit poetics that are now lost were still in circulation during the tenth century. Specifically, Rāmaśarman's text seems to have been available in Ratnaśrījñāna's homeland of Laṅkā even in the thirteenth century, judging from the way it is referred to in the Pali *Subodhālaṅkāra* of Saṅgharakkhita.⁷⁷ Third, Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary makes clear that the library at his disposal was vast and included a variety of treatises on poetics, from the new theory of *dhvani* (suggestion) that was just emerging in Kashmir to other works that he quotes but are no longer extant, quite possibly the very works that were needed in order to put the

⁷⁵ One premodern statement that has been taken to support the opposite chronology is found in Namisādhu's tenth-century commentary on Rudraṭa's *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*. Namisādhu raises and counters the objection that Rudraṭa's book is redundant, given the availability of treatises on poetics by "Daṇḍin, Medhāvīrudra, Bhāmaha, and others" (*daṇḍimedhāvīrudrabhāmahādīkṛtāni santy evāḷaṅkāraśāstrāṇi*, ad *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra* of Rudraṭa 1.2). Some scholars have taken this as evidence in favor of Daṇḍin's priority because "the order of such a passage is naturally that of historical order" (Keith 1929, p. 180). I find it difficult to accept Namisādhu's list as an explicit statement about chronology. Note, moreover, that in two of the manuscripts of the ninth-century Sinhala text, the *Siyabaslakara*, we find another list of authors where the order is Brahma, Indra, Bṛhaspati, Kāśyapa, Bhāmaha, and, finally, Daṇḍin. This list was mentioned already by Barnett in 1905, and both Barnett and Dimitrov prefer it to the reading "Vāmana" that is probably a result of a later error (Barnett 1905, p. 842, Dimitrov, forthcoming). At any rate, such lists, although noteworthy, cannot be taken as necessarily meant to posit this or that chronology.

⁷⁶ As noted by Pollock (2005, pp. 639, 2006, pp. 343–344).

⁷⁷ *rāmasammādyalaṅkāra santi santo purātanā / tathāpi tu valāñcenti suddhamāgadhikā na te //* "Although there are excellent ancient treatises on Rhetoric by Rāmasamma and others, yet they are not adapted for the Māgadhā people [or, perhaps, for the community of users of pure Pali]" (text and translation are taken from Fryer 1875, pp. 106 and 93, respectively). If I understand this verse correctly, Rāmaśarman's text was extant and available. Another text that Ratnaśrījñāna mentions and that may have been in circulation during his time is by Medhāvīn (also known as Medhāvīrudra); Rājaśekhara, who preceded Ratnaśrījñāna and Vādijaṅghādeva by a few decades and who hailed from Kanauj, refers to Medhāvīrudra's poetry (*Kāvyaṃimāṃsā*, p. 12).

differences between Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin in their theoretical and historical context.⁷⁸ Finally, it should be noted that the manner in which Ratnaśrījñāna refers to Rāmaśarman and older authorities elsewhere in the book seems to be determined by the topic and cannot be reduced to references in Bhāmaha's work.⁷⁹

Even if we accept the notion that the commentators' posited chronology was based purely on philological analysis, and that they were entirely ignorant about the personal, social, and historical realities informing their area of specialty, the fact that they all reached the same conclusion, quite possibly independently of each other,⁸⁰ should at least give us pause. We simply can no longer ignore the large body of commentarial literature on Daṇḍin, coming from highly erudite scholars who had access to a much larger library than ours, and we must discard the still-prevalent arrogant image of the Sanskrit commentator as a philologically challenged reader who is caught off guard by intertextual discrepancies and posits clumsy ad hoc explanations to make sense of them.⁸¹ Thus, in keeping with the methodology outlined earlier, I provisionally accept the traditional chronology, and unless the evidence in the following sections forces me to revise this, I maintain that Daṇḍin, who, as we saw, worked and lived in Kāñcī around 680–720, was responding to Bhāmaha's earlier text.

3. Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin Relative to Other Authors

A copious discussion of the interrelations among Bhāmaha, Daṇḍin, and a host of other writers has, for the most part, done little to solve the problem of their dates. This is partly the result of deference to data that are inherently inconclusive. For example, Jacobi, Kane, and Keith all heard in Bhāmaha's discussion of inference unmistakable echoes of the Buddhist logician Dharmakīrti (c. 600–660), which

⁷⁸ For a quote of Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* 1.13, see Ratnaśrījñāna ad *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.203, apropos of *samāsokti*. For a quote from a treatise on tropes unknown to us, see the alternative definition of *vibhāvana* cited ad 2.202. See also his quotes of Harivṛddha's lost Prakrit grammar (ad 1.33–35; cf. Pollock 2006, p. 102 n. 61). Ratnaśrījñāna may have also had access to earlier commentaries on Daṇḍin's treatise that are no longer extant. He appears to be referring to one such commentary ad 2.116 ("*anye tu...tataḥ śāstraviruddham eva vyākhyānam*").

⁷⁹ Ratnaśrījñāna mentions Rāmaśarman one more time, apropos of Daṇḍin's reference to a list of *alaṅkāras* that was provided by the field's first teachers (*pūrvasūribhir ādyair ācāryai rāmaśarmādibhiḥ kāvyālaṅkārakāraiḥ*; ad *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.7, p. 69). Here there is no prior quote from Bhāmaha that could have served as the basis of his identification. It is interesting that just a few verses earlier, apropos of Daṇḍin's framing of this whole discussion as expanding on the gist provided by earlier scholars, Ratnaśrījñāna refers his readers to the works of Medhavin and Śyāmaśarman, but not Rāmaśarman (*pūrvācāryaiś cirantanaiḥ kāvyalakṣaṇakāraiḥ medhaviśyāmaśarmaniḥ*; ad *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.2; Thakur and Jha 1957, p. 24 think that the correct reading may actually be *medhāvibhāmahādibhiḥ*). Thus there is reason to believe that Ratnaśrījñāna cites Rāmaśarman only when Rāmaśarman's actual text is pertinent to the context of Daṇḍin's discussion.

⁸⁰ Despite their proximity in time and place, the commentaries of Ratnaśrījñāna and Vādiyaṅghaladeva do not provide any reason to think that they were familiar with each other's texts, and there is certainly no reason to believe that Taruṇavācaspati, who was following a different manuscript tradition, had read their commentaries.

⁸¹ E.g., (Gupta 1970, p. 80).

Keith took as “proof of a very strong kind that Bhāmaha knew Dharmakīrti’s work.”⁸² But as Batuk Nāth Śarmā and Baldev Upādhyāya have demonstrated, the same notions that these scholars saw as deriving from Dharmakīrti were actually widespread and, in fact, more readily traceable to Dharmakīrti’s predecessor, Dignāga (c. 480–540), and as Giuseppe Tucci decisively showed already in 1930, “No trace of Dharmakīrti can be found in *Kāvyaḷamkāra*.”⁸³ Indeed, the prevailing consensus among scholars of Buddhism today is that “Bhāmaha does not show any familiarity with Dharmakīrti’s elaboration upon Dignāga’s logic,” so much so that scholars who wish to maintain Bhāmaha’s posteriority to Dharmakīrti have to bend over backward to explain this lack of familiarity.⁸⁴ In short, similarities may be misleading.⁸⁵

Even when a similarity could reasonably be taken as proof of direct conversation, there is always the question of directionality. For example, the fact that both Kālidāsa and Bhāmaha explicitly address the choice of clouds as love messengers—Bhāmaha cites this as an example of poetry that does not stand to reason (*ayuktimat*) and is hence defective, whereas Kālidāsa, who admits that a cloud is an unlikely candidate for the post, nonetheless defends the choice of his exiled hero in the *Meghadūta* (Cloud Messenger)—is probably not a coincidence.⁸⁶ But a decision about who responds to whom purely on the basis of comparing these passages is entirely subjective, and it is no wonder that different scholars have postulated different chronological scenarios.⁸⁷

The discussion of Daṇḍin’s dates relative to Bāṇa’s offers another important lesson about the dangers of following subjective judgments and preferring them to the explicit testimony of various sources. Consider one of Daṇḍin’s examples of *vyatireka* (distinction) that shares its imagery and vocabulary with a line from Bāṇa’s *Kādambarī*.⁸⁸ Keith has noted that “if there is the relation of borrowing”

⁸² Jacobi (1922, pp. 211–212), Kane (1971, pp. 124–128). The quote is from Keith (1929, p. 167).

⁸³ Śarmā and Upādhyāya (1928, pp. 40–55); Tucci (1930, p. 145). See also Diwekar (1929, pp. 837–841), Kunjunni Raja (1958–1959, p. 42), and Tëmkin (1975, esp. pp. 20–22).

⁸⁴ Kobayashi (1978, p. 470), Steinkellner (2005, p. xlii). For Tucci, however, “The priority of Bhāmaha to Dharmakīrti must be considered as a well established fact, and not as a debatable hypothesis” (Tucci 1930, p. 146). See also Sect. 3.2 below.

⁸⁵ Consider, in this context, the attempt to use a possible echo between *Kāvyaḷamkāra* 1.16 and the *Śiṣupālavadhā* of Māgha 2.86 (Pathak 1914, p. 31; cf. Nobel 1925, pp. 15–17, who sees Pathak’s efforts as futile).

⁸⁶ Compare *Kāvyaḷamkāra* of Bhāmaha 1.42–43 (*ayuktimat yathā dūtā jalabhṛn-mārutendavaḥ... katham dūtyaṃ prapadyeran*) with *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa 1.5. Note, likewise, the exception that Bhāmaha is willing to make in cases where the speaker is out of his mind in longing (*yadi cotkaṇṭhayaḥ yat tad unmatta iva bhāṣate / tathā bhavatu bhūmmedaṃ sumedhobhiḥ prayujyate*, 1.44), possibly a begrudged nod to Kālidāsa.

⁸⁷ For a summary of the different opinions on this question, see Śarmā and Upādhyāya (1981, pp. 27–29).

⁸⁸ Compare *Kāvyaḷadarśa* 2.195 with *Kādambarī*, p. 102. The first to notice this resemblance was Maheścandra Nyāyaratna, in personal communication with Peterson, as the latter notes in p. xi of his preface to Agashe’s 1919 edition of the *Daśakumāracarita*.

here, then “every consideration suggests that Bāṇa is the person indebted, and that he has endeavored and elaborated to improve on his model.”⁸⁹ There are, however, several considerations that Keith chose to overlook. First, the commentators maintain that Daṇḍin was familiar with Bāṇa’s works. Taruṇavācaspati, for instance, implies that Daṇḍin’s aforementioned rejection of the differentiae between the prose genres of *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* is informed by his familiarity with Bāṇa’s *Harṣacarita* (Life of Harṣa).⁹⁰ Second, Daṇḍin himself unambiguously praises Bāṇa in the opening verses of the *Avantisundarī* (as Taruṇavācaspati very likely knew).⁹¹ Keith, however, treats Taruṇavācaspati’s testimony as suspect and rejects outright the ascription of the *Avantisundarī* to the author of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*. All this helps him reach a rather impossible conclusion that Daṇḍin antedated Bāṇa, the court poet of Emperor Harṣa (r. 608–645), and that Bāṇa is therefore indebted to Daṇḍin’s example of *vyatireka*.⁹²

Added to the subjectivity inherent in such judgments is the difficulty of dating many of Bhāmaha’s and Daṇḍin’s forerunners and successors. Consider, for example, Bhāmaha’s aforementioned warning against poetry whose intelligibility is contingent on a running commentary. There is an almost identically worded note to the opposite effect in the *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, where the poet Bhaṭṭi boasts that his poem is “intelligible only with the help of a commentary” and therefore amounts to “a celebration to the quick-witted and death to the half-wits” (*vyākhyāgamyam idaṃ kāvyam utsavaḥ sudhiyām alam / hatā durmedhasaś cāsmīn*).⁹³ This striking similarity may well be the result of a direct and pointed rejoinder on the part of either author. Some scholars, such as Trivedi, saw Bhaṭṭi as responding to Bhāmaha, while Keith and others viewed this as a proof of the opposite scenario.⁹⁴ But even were we to accept Keith’s reconstruction, it still offers us little help in dating Bhāmaha, because nothing certain is known about Bhaṭṭi and his dates.⁹⁵

Clearly, then, if anything is to be gained from analysis of Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin relative to other writers, we have to move away from decisions based on suspect data and subjective judgments to a discussion informed by reliable references to reasonably datable sources. We should begin by noting that Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin differ in their method of referring to other texts. Most notably, as Trivedi has

⁸⁹ Keith (1929, p. 169). To be fair, Keith does not see this resemblance as conclusive proof of his chronology.

⁹⁰ Taruṇavācaspati ad *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.25, p. 17 of the 1910 edition (*sandhi* added): *tatrāpy ākhyāyikāyām apy anyair nāyakād anyair harṣacaritādaṃ bhaṭṭabāṇādibhir apy udīraṇasya dṛṣṭavāt*.

⁹¹ *Avantisundarī* verse 19.

⁹² Keith (1929, pp. 182–183 (on Taruṇavācaspati) and, p. 184 (on the authorship of the *Avantisundarī*). For the relative chronology of Bāṇa and Bhāmaha, see Sect. 3.4 below.

⁹³ *Bhaṭṭikāvya* 22.34; cf. *Kāvyaḍarśa* of Bhāmaha 2.20, quoted in Sect. 2.3 above.

⁹⁴ Trivedi (1913, p. 264), Keith (1929, p. 170). See Diwekar (1929, pp. 825–837) for a detailed comparison of the two texts that concludes that Bhāmaha antedated Bhaṭṭi.

⁹⁵ On the basis of different identifications of the poet’s patron, one Dharasena, Krishnamachariar (1937, p. 142) places Bhaṭṭi in the fourth or fifth century, while Warder (1983, p. 118) puts him in the middle of the seventh. Lienhard (1984, p. 180) places him in the sixth.

already observed, Bhāmaha mentions several of his predecessors by name, whereas Daṇḍin always alludes to his forerunners anonymously.⁹⁶ Moreover, Bhāmaha occasionally departs from the textbookish *anuṣṭubh* meter when he is citing examples from the praxis that happen to be in other metrical forms. Daṇḍin, by contrast, adapts his poetic sources into *anuṣṭubhs* of his own making; only in the rare case of a verse that is originally in *anuṣṭubh* does he borrow verbatim, although again without marking such instances as quotes.⁹⁷ Bhāmaha's explicit mode of reference, then, makes the possibility of dating him relative to his sources more promising, which is fortunate, given the otherwise dire dearth of information about him. In particular, Bhāmaha's criticism of a certain grammarian he dubs Nyāsakāra (the author of *Nyāsa*) seems key to dating him and has figured prominently in the scholarly discussion. But first, let us begin with one unmistakable quote from Bhāmaha by the Buddhist scholar Śāntarakṣita.

3.1 Śāntarakṣita Attacks Bhāmaha

It has long been known that a passage from Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷamkāra* is quoted verbatim in Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṅgraha*. The size of the citation, three whole verses, obviates the need to rely on subjective judgments in this case: although Śāntarakṣita does not mention Bhāmaha by name, he is clearly quoting his work. Indeed, Kamalaśīla, Śāntarakṣita's pupil, identifies the verses as Bhāmaha's in his commentary on his teacher's text. Records of the Tibetan visits of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, both of whom were based in Nālandā, allow us to date their lifetimes with rare accuracy to around 725–788 and 740–795, respectively, and to ascertain that the *Tattvasaṅgraha* was written no later than 760 CE.⁹⁸ Taken together, this evidence proves decisively that Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷamkāra* was composed before c. 760.

Unfortunately, this bit of information does not really narrow down Bhāmaha's dates if we are right in placing him before Daṇḍin, as the commentators maintain, and if we are right about the dates of Daṇḍin's career (c. 680–720). Thus what is perhaps significant about Śāntarakṣita's citation is not the chronological calculations that it enables but the fact that the Buddhist logician actually bothered to quote Bhāmaha's views in his treatise. The cited passage of Bhāmaha appears in the sixth and last chapter of the *Kāvyaḷamkāra*, where the author addresses grammar. Although the bulk of the chapter is dedicated to sanctioning and prohibiting various

⁹⁶ Trivedi (1913, p. 264). Trivedi uses Bhāmaha's method of direct referencing to support the argument of Bhāmaha's priority. The argument is that Bhāmaha could not possibly have failed to mention Daṇḍin if Daṇḍin was an important predecessor. I cannot accept such arguments from silence. After all, Bhāmaha may have elected to snub Daṇḍin, as did many of his Kashmiri successors. And, of course, Bhāmaha can be shown to have engaged in a more oblique method of referencing as well, as noted already in Keith (1929, pp. 170–171).

⁹⁷ An example is a famous verse describing nightfall (*limpatīva tamo 'ṅgāni*) from the *Mṛcchakaṭīka* 1.34, which Daṇḍin uses as an illustration of *utprekṣā* (*Kāvyaḷadarśa* 2.224). Only in his third chapter, in illustrating more complex phenomena such as extended sound repetition and pattern poems, does Daṇḍin occasionally introduce an illustration that is not in *anuṣṭubh* (e.g., *Kāvyaḷadarśa* 3.50, mentioned in note 40 above). For an analysis of the metrical structure of the *Kāvyaḷadarśa*, see Dimitrov (2011, pp. 32–36).

⁹⁸ Frauwallner (1961, pp. 141–143). Bhattacharyya gives a slightly different chronology in his forward to *Tattvasaṅgraha*, pp. iii–xiv, according to which Śāntarakṣita's dates are 705–762.

grammatical forms, the first twenty-plus verses deal more generally with the importance of learning grammar and with some basic questions about the philosophy of language, such as the relationship between words and the knowledge they produce. Bhāmaha subscribes to the view that words denote abstracted universals (e.g., the word “cow” denotes cowness) and rejects the Buddhist theory of *apoha*, according to which a word communicates its referent through the elimination of everything other than it (“cow” eliminates everything that is not a cow). Bhāmaha points out that each word can give rise to only one cognition, whereas the *apoha* theory requires us to postulate a pair of cognitions: the negation of all nonreferents (noncows) followed by the realization of the intended referent (cow). It is this rejection of the *apoha* theory that Śāntarakṣita quotes as part of a large catalog of objections, which he then refutes one by one.⁹⁹ As far as I can see, Bhāmaha is the only literary theorist quoted in the *Tattvasaṅgraha*.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, it is extremely rare to find writers on logic or grammar critique experts on poetics, at least until much later in Indian intellectual history. Why, then, does Śāntarakṣita cite Bhāmaha’s incidental criticism of *apoha* almost in the same breath as citing the theory’s heavy-weight critic, Kumāriḷa Bhaṭṭa, clearly his main opponent in this section?¹⁰¹

Several explanations suggest themselves here. First, Bhāmaha’s criticism of *apoha*—in terms of the point he raises, the straightforwardness of his comment, and its form (*anuṣṭubh* is also the carrying meter of the *Tattvasaṅgraha*)—fits Śāntarakṣita’s mode of presentation and serves as a convenient transition to the more important attacks of Kumāriḷa. Second, Śāntarakṣita may have wanted to be as comprehensive as possible and counter every available criticism of *apoha*. Third, it is quite plausible that scholars and students in mid-eighth-century Nālandā studied Bhāmaha’s *Kāvyaḷamkāra* as their primary textbook on poetics, so that Śāntarakṣita felt that even its criticism in passing of the Buddhist doctrine could not be left unanswered. Finally, it is possible, although this is more speculative, that Śāntarakṣita was bothered by Bhāmaha’s criticism of another Buddhist scholar, the grammarian Jinendrabuddhi, who is discussed in the next section.

3.2 Bhāmaha Attacks Nyāsakāra

Perhaps the most acrimonious exchange in the entire century-long debate concerns the identity of a certain Nyāsakāra, whom Bhāmaha criticizes in his aforementioned chapter on grammar. As part of a minicatalog of illegitimate and legitimate grammatical forms, Bhāmaha addresses the topic of compounds that combine nouns ending with the agentive suffix *ṭṛc* with objects in the genitive. Such combinations are explicitly prohibited by Pāṇini but are nonetheless not uncommon.¹⁰² Bhāmaha makes it clear that this practice is strictly unacceptable:

⁹⁹ *Kāvyaḷamkāra* of Bhāmaha 6.17–19. Cf. *Tattvasaṅgraha* 912–914 (quote) and 1019–1021 (refutation).

¹⁰⁰ For a list of authors cited by Śāntarakṣita see *Tattvasaṅgraha*, pp. xxxvii–lxxi.

¹⁰¹ See Hattori (1980, pp. 68–70) on Śāntarakṣita’s defense of *apoha* against Kumāriḷa’s criticism and on his modification of the notion in the process.

¹⁰² For the prohibition, see *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.2.15 (*ṭṛjakābhyāṃ kartari*), discussed below. Pāṇini himself uses a form that is suspiciously similar to the prohibited form (*janikartuḷi*) in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.30.

śiṣṭaprayogamātreṇa nyāsakāramatena vā | trcā samastaśaṣṭhikam na kathaṃcid udāharet || sūtrajñāpakamātreṇa vṛtrahantā yathoditah | (Kāvya-lamkāra of Bhāmaha 6.36–37)

Under no circumstances should [a poet] compound a noun in the genitive with an agent ending in *trc*, as in the example *vṛtrahantā* (Vṛtra's killer), merely because such combinations were used by the learned, or based on the authority of Nyāsakāra, simply by rescuing some implication from Pāṇini's rule.

Poets must avoid compounds like *vṛtrahantā* because they contradict Pāṇini's injunction. As Nobuhiko Kobayashi has noted, Bhāmaha may have deliberately designed this example to rule out three alternatives to Pāṇini's authority: (1) language use by the learned, (2) the stance of grammarians other than Pāṇini himself (or his immediate followers, Kātyāyana and Patañjali), and (3) creative interpretations of Pāṇini's *sūtras* (through *jñāpakas* or *yogavibhāgas*). In Bhāmaha's view, none of these could ever overrule an explicit Pāṇinian injunction.¹⁰³

Already in 1912, shortly after the first publication of Bhāmaha's work, K. B. Pathak identified a passage in Jinendrabuddhi's *Kāśikāvivaraṇapañjikā* that concerns the same Pāṇinian *sūtra* and that echoes the language used by Bhāmaha. Citing this textual affinity and noting that the *Kāśikāvivaraṇapañjikā* often goes by the alias *Nyāsa* (and its author by Nyāsakāra), Pathak concluded that Jinendrabuddhi was Bhāmaha's target of criticism. He used this to support a chronology according to which Bhāmaha postdated Daṇḍin, because he believed that Jinendrabuddhi lived at the beginning of the eighth century.¹⁰⁴ Pathak's argument was immediately contested, and the following two years witnessed a particularly heated debate wherein Pathak, Trivedi, and Kane accused each other not only of getting the facts wrong but also of deliberate falsification of the data.¹⁰⁵ There is no need for us to summarize this exchange in detail. It suffices to extract from it the evidence on the following three questions: (1) Does Bhāmaha refer to Jinendrabuddhi's *Kāśikāvivaraṇapañjikā* when he speaks of a text called *Nyāsa*? (2) Is this Jinendrabuddhi identical with the author of the *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā*, a commentary on Dignāga's treatise on logic? (3) What is Jinendrabuddhi's date? I examine each of these questions separately, considering Kane, Pathak, and Trivedi's work together with more recent interventions.

Regarding the first question, the referent of the title *Nyāsa* itself has been the subject of controversy. Pathak famously insisted that in the early grammatical discourse it designates only the *Kāśikāvivaraṇapañjikā*. This claim is inaccurate: *Nyāsa*, as a term for a commentary, is documented before Jinendrabuddhi.¹⁰⁶ George Cardona has pointed out, "There were other texts called *nyāsa*," and "Bhartṛhari referred to such a text." But Cardona also notes, "The famous *Nyāsa* of

¹⁰³ Kobayashi (1978, pp. 467–468).

¹⁰⁴ Pathak (1912).

¹⁰⁵ See Pathak (1912, 1914), Narasimhachar (1913), Trivedi (1913), and Kane (1914).

¹⁰⁶ Trivedi (1913, p. 261).

Pāṇinian grammar after Bhartṛhari was clearly Jinendrabuddhi's."¹⁰⁷ On this count, then, Pathak's identification seems plausible but not certain.

More important, Jinendrabuddhi's *Kāśīkāvivarāṇapañjikā* does reinterpret *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.2.15 (*trjakābhyāṃ kartari*)—a *sūtra* that literally forbids the compounding of agents ending in *trc* (and *aka*) with objects in the genitive¹⁰⁸—by rescuing from it an implication (*jñāpaka*) that nouns ending in *trn*, *trc*'s identical twin, are permissible in such compounds.¹⁰⁹ We need not delve deep into the grammatical discussion because its exact interpretation is not contested and lies outside the scope of this article.¹¹⁰ Suffice it to say that there is a close affinity between Jinendrabuddhi's commentary and Bhāmaha's passage. In particular, both focus on a possible implication (*jñāpaka*) of the relevant *sūtra*, according to which some suspect compounds become legitimate, and both use similar (but not identical) examples: Jinendrabuddhi's is "killer of fear and dejection" (*bhayaśokahantā*), and Bhāmaha's is "Vṛtra's killer" (*vṛtrahantā*).¹¹¹ At the same time, there are also some differences between the two passages, primarily the fact that Bhāmaha warns against the use of agent nouns in *trc*, whereas Jinendrabuddhi really only allows the use of *trn*.¹¹² It is thus not entirely impossible that Bhāmaha was referring to another commentary on grammar that went by the name *Nyāsa* and that made an argument for the permissibility of compounds with *trc*. After all, many were troubled by Pāṇini 2.2.15 and its incompatibility with actual practice.¹¹³ Still, as Pathak has already demonstrated, in the eyes of posterity it was Jinendrabuddhi's text that was associated with rescuing an implication from Pāṇini 2.2.15.¹¹⁴ In addition, Kobayashi believes that Bhāmaha was familiar with Jinendrabuddhi's view on

¹⁰⁷ Cardona (1976, p. 281). Cardona thus leans in favor of identifying the *Nyāsa* mentioned by Māgha with Jinendrabuddhi's text, in an attempt to solve another problem that has occupied researchers for nearly a century (ibid., 280–281; cf. *Śīsupālavadha* 2.112).

¹⁰⁸ More accurately, the prohibition of a genitive combination with agents in *trc* is completed in the following *sūtra* (2.2.16 *kartari ca*).

¹⁰⁹ Jinendrabuddhi's relevant passage runs as follows: *atha kim arthaṃ trcaḥ sānubandhakasyoccarāṇam? trno nivr̥tyartham. naitad asti. tadyoge na lokāvyayetyādinā ṣaṣṭhīpratiṣedhāt. evaṃ tarhy etad eva jñāpakam bhavati tadyoge 'pi kvacit ṣaṣṭhī bhavati. tena bhīṣmaḥ kurūṇāṃ bhayaśokahante 'ty evamādi siddham bhavati* (quoted in Pathak 1912, p. 234).

¹¹⁰ For a good explanation of this passage, see Trivedi (1913, p. 259–260). Pathak originally offered a different explanation but later incorporated Trivedi's exposition into his argument (compare Pathak 1912, p. 234 with Pathak 1914, pp. 20–25).

¹¹¹ Pind (2009, p. 27) views the difference between the examples as one important indication that Bhāmaha is referring to another *Nyāsa*.

¹¹² This difference is at the heart of Trivedi's attempt to refute the identification of Jinendrabuddhi with Bhāmaha's *Nyāsakāra* (Trivedi 1913). But it is possible that Bhāmaha deliberately mentioned *trc* here if he found Jinendrabuddhi's distinction between *trc* and *trn* invalid and considered him to be allowing *trc* by another name.

¹¹³ Kobayashi (1978, pp. 465–468) lists three possible ways in which commentators have tried to solve the seeming contradiction between theory and practice on this point.

¹¹⁴ Pathak (1914, p. 25). These later authors, however, do not fail to mention Jinendrabuddhi's permission of *trn* instead of *trc*.

another grammatical sticking point.¹¹⁵ All in all, the identity of Bhāmaha's *Nyāsa* and Jinendrabuddhi's *Kāśīkāvivaranaṇapañjikā* appears likely, although not certain.¹¹⁶

Assuming for now the correctness of Pathak's identification, I come to my second question, the identity of the two Jinendrabuddhis: the grammarian who authored the *Nyāsa* and the logician who commented on Dignāga's text, both of whom were Buddhists. When this discussion began some one hundred years ago, the participants had access to the latter's work only in Tibetan translation. But the recent discovery of two manuscripts of Jinendrabuddhi's *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* (as part of a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts on *pramāṇa*) and the publication of its first chapter by Ernest Steinkellner, Helmut Krasser, and Horst Lasic—an event that marks “a new era in Buddhist philosophical studies, comparable in its importance to the one that began with the sensational discoveries of Buddhist manuscripts by Rahula Sankrityayana and Giuseppe Tucci in the 1930s and 1940s”¹¹⁷—may alter our knowledge on this matter. Even before this discovery, several scholars had concluded that Jinendrabuddhi the logician was an expert on grammar. On the basis of this and several textual practices shared by the two Jinendrabuddhis, they very tentatively conjectured their identity.¹¹⁸ But it is one of the newly discovered Sanskrit manuscripts that supplies a first sliver of evidence for this conjecture, because a scribe by the name of Gahana, who worked at the close of the eleventh century, speaks of the logician Jinendrabuddhi as an expert on grammar (*śabdavidyā*) who has now taken on a new field (*navīnaviśaya*). This may indicate that this scribe viewed Jinendrabuddhi the logician as the author of the *Nyāsa* who now branched into the field of logic.¹¹⁹ Thus the possibility that the *Nyāsa* and the *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* were composed by a single author seems more likely than ever, although again, not certain.

Let us now turn to the difficult third question, the date of Jinendrabuddhi. Unfortunately, we have no concrete knowledge about the context of either the *Nyāsa* or the *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā*, and all current estimates are based on speculative conjectures. Estimates for the *Nyāsa* range widely. Hartmut Scharfe suggested the eighth, ninth, or even the eleventh century as the date of this grammatical commentary, and obviously the second or third options would make it entirely impossible for Jinendrabuddhi's *Nyāsa* to be identical with Bhāmaha's. Cardona proposed a date of c. 700 on the basis of several potential references to the *Nyāsa*, all of which, if confirmed, make it difficult to assume that the text was composed much later. But Cardona himself admits that the date is rather arbitrary, and he offers no evidence why an earlier date would not be possible. As Cardona and others have noted, I-Tsing mentions that Jayāditya, one of the coauthors of the

¹¹⁵ The position in question is the sanctioning of the *dvigu* compound *pañcarājī* in the very next verse (*Kāvyaṭīkā* of Bhāmaha 6.38), which Kobayashi thinks could have been gotten only from Jinendrabuddhi's commentary (Kobayashi 1978, pp. 468–469).

¹¹⁶ Pace Gerow, who says that Bhāmaha quotes Jinendrabuddhi unmistakably (1977, p. 228).

¹¹⁷ Franco (2006, p. 221).

¹¹⁸ Hayes (1983), Funayama (1999).

¹¹⁹ Steinkellner (2005, p. xxxvii).

Kāśikā (on which the *Nyāsa* is a subcommentary), died c. 660. If this information can be trusted, which is uncertain, the *Nyāsa* can hardly be earlier than this date.¹²⁰

As for the *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā*, Toru Funayama has tried to date it relative to several eighth-century texts on Buddhist logic. Funayama compares the texts on their stances on the aim of a treatise, where he finds that Jinendrabuddhi's argumentation "is very concise, and hence it is not easy to understand its significance if one has no knowledge of Arcaṭa's argument," and on their interpretation of Dignāga's use of the term *sataimira*, where he finds Śāntarakṣita's argumentation "possibly more developed" and hence likely later than that of Jinendrabuddhi.¹²¹ On the basis of these and a few similar conjectures, he believes that the *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* is later than Arcaṭa's *Hetubinduṭīkā*, which he dates to c. 740–750, and slightly earlier than Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṅgraha*, which he dates to about 760.¹²² All this makes for a very tight chronology, if not a temporal Möbius band, wherein Jinendrabuddhi is Śāntarakṣita's senior contemporary (possibly familiar with his views on the aim of a text),¹²³ Śāntarakṣita is Bhāmaha's senior (whom he cites), and Bhāmaha is Jinendrabuddhi's senior (assuming that the grammarian and the logician are the same person). Funayama is aware of this difficulty and proposes that Jinendrabuddhi "might also have belonged to the same academic group in Nālandā" as Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla.¹²⁴ He likewise has to assume that Bhāmaha, too, belonged in the same period with all these authors, and that all of them were in direct conversation with each other. This is, of course, possible (especially if we also assume some gap between Jinendrabuddhi's grammatical treatise and his work on logic), although highly speculative. Moreover, this hypothesis creates as many problems as it solves. For example, if Jinendrabuddhi and Bhāmaha were contemporaries and familiar with each other's works, how do we explain the fact that Jinendrabuddhi was so thoroughly versed in Dharmakīrti's ideas and his improvements over Dignāga, whereas Bhāmaha, who otherwise shows a keen interest in Buddhist *pramāṇa* discourse, "does not show any familiarity with Dharmakīrti's elaboration upon Dignāga's logic"?¹²⁵

Where does this confusing set of data and conjectures leave us? As far as I can see, the only fact we know for certain about the author of the *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* is that he knew Dharmakīrti's work, and that he therefore could not have

¹²⁰ Scharfe (1977, pp. 174, 104), Cardona (1976, pp. 280–281), cf. Hayes (1983, p. 716). As noted by Brough, I-Tsing's data on the *Kāśikā* are particularly confused (Brough (1973, pp. 255–257).

¹²¹ The quotes are from Funayama (1995, p. 194) and Funayama (1999, p. 91), respectively.

¹²² Funayama (1999, p. 92). Pind (2009, p. 25) believes that Jinendrabuddhi quotes Śāntarakṣita and that the two were contemporaries.

¹²³ Funayama (1995, p. 195).

¹²⁴ Funayama (1995, p. 196). Steinkellner (2005, p. xlii) approves of this view.

¹²⁵ Steinkellner (2005, p. xlii), where the proposed notion that Dharmakīrti was initially not widely known does little to solve this question, because clearly Jinendrabuddhi knew him quite well. Funayama (1999, p. 92) merely acknowledges that his hypothesis "is not compatible with the previous studies which place Bhāmaha before Dharmakīrti." Pind, however, rejects the notion that Bhāmaha was contemporaneous with Jinendrabuddhi and Śāntarakṣita. Rather, he believes that Jinendrabuddhi, not unlike Śāntarakṣita, quotes a "slightly edited version" of Bhāmaha's criticism of *apoha*, and that Jinendrabuddhi understands Dharmakīrti, too, to be responding to Bhāmaha on this point (Pind 2009, p. 28). If this is correct, Bhāmaha must have antedated Jinendrabuddhi.

composed his work much earlier than 660, if the estimated date of Dharmakīrti's death is correct. Likewise, the author of the *Kāśīkāvivarāṇapañjikā* could not have composed his work much earlier than 660, if I-Tsing's information about the death of the coauthor of his root text is reliable. If we accept the argument that when Bhāmaha speaks about Nyāsakāra, he refers to Jinendrabuddhi, the author of the *Kāśīkāvivarāṇapañjikā*, if we accept the argument that this Jinendrabuddhi also authored the *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā*, and if we accept the commonly assigned dates to both Dharmakīrti and the *Kāśīkā*, then Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* could not have been earlier than, say, 650 at the latest. But it is important to stress that my lengthy discussion of Nyāsakāra and his possible identity with either or both Jinendrabuddhis has yielded nothing that forces me to revise my earlier conclusion, based on the unanimous verdict of the commentators, according to which Bhāmaha preceded Daṇḍin. If we combine the above set of hypotheses about Jinendrabuddhi with my earlier conclusions, it would place Bhāmaha in the second half of the seventh century, before Daṇḍin's productive period at its close. This, however, contradicts other pieces of the evidentiary puzzle, which indicate that Bhāmaha's work was composed earlier, around the beginning of this century.

3.3 Maheśvara Quotes Bāṇa

Some 50 years ago, K. Kunjunni Raja published a short and largely overlooked essay in which he identified two verse-long quotes from Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* in Maheśvara's commentary on Yāska's *Nirukta*. Assigning Maheśvara's work to around 638 CE, Kunjunni Raja concluded that Bhāmaha must have composed his *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* close to the onset of the seventh century.¹²⁶

As in the case of Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṅgraha*, the length and verbatim quality of Maheśvara's quotes leave little doubt about their source, even if Bhāmaha's name is not mentioned. And here too, we see Bhāmaha quoted by a scholar who is not a literary theorist, although in this case he is cited ex officio, as it were, as an authority on literary devices. One of the quotes is apropos of a *Ṛgveda* passage (4.57.2) where the word *madhu* appears twice. Maheśvara explains that this does not amount to redundancy because each has a different meaning. To substantiate this point, he quotes Bhāmaha's definition of *yamaka*, a device in which the same set of sounds is repeated twice, but each time with a different sense.¹²⁷ The other quote is apropos of what Maheśvara views as a simile whose standard of comparison is concocted. Here he cites verbatim Bhāmaha's example of cases where manufactured standards are permissible.¹²⁸

There can be no dispute, then, that Maheśvara knew Bhāmaha's text. The only question is when Maheśvara lived. Kunjunni Raja's three-step method for dating Maheśvara builds on the earlier scholarship of C. Kunhan Raja. First, he notes that

¹²⁶ Kunjunni Raja (1958–1959).

¹²⁷ *Niruktabhāṣyaṭīkā* 10.16: *tulyaśrutinām [bhinnānām] abhidheyaiḥ parasparam / varṇānām yah punarvādo yamakaṃ tan nirucyate ||*. Compare *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 2.17, where the syllables *bhinnānām*, which are missing from the single manuscript of the *Niruktabhāṣyaṭīkā*, are supplied, and where the verse ends with *nigadyate* rather than *nirucyate*.

¹²⁸ *Niruktabhāṣyaṭīkā* 3.10; *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 2.51.

Maheśvara's teacher was Skandasvāmin, author of a commentary on the *Ṛgveda* and, according to the colophons of the *Niruktabhāṣyaṭīkā*, also his coauthor. This tutelage is established by the fact that in several places in his *Niruktabhāṣyaṭīkā* Maheśvara quotes the opinion of his teacher (*upādhyāyas tv āha*), and one of these quotes agrees verbatim with a line from Skandasvāmin's *Ṛgveda* commentary.¹²⁹ Second, Harisvāmin, author of a commentary on the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, also names Skandasvāmin, the author of the commentary on the *Ṛgveda*, as his teacher. Third, Harisvāmin's commentary is one of these rare Sanskrit works that not only provides concrete information about the author's place and patron but actually gives its own date, Kali 3740, the equivalent of 638 CE. So Maheśvara and Harisvāmin seem to have belonged to the same cohort of students in the early decades of the seventh century, and Bhāmaha must have antedated them.¹³⁰

All this seems compelling, but because the history of the early commentarial literature on the Vedas and the *Nirukta* is hazy, Eivind Kahrs preaches caution. In particular, he maintains that there is no clarity about the exact relation of Maheśvara to Skandasvāmin: pupil, coauthor, or subcommentator who may not necessarily have been a contemporary. After all, Maheśvara could have referred to Skandasvāmin as his *upādhyāya* even if the latter was not his direct teacher. The jury is likewise still out on whether to trust the data supplied by Harisvāmin, despite, or perhaps because of, its wealth and quality, and it seems that the discussion has not fully recovered from an unnecessary muddying of the chronological water by Lakshman Sarup, the editor of the *Niruktabhāṣyaṭīkā*.¹³¹ Given this lack of scholarly consensus, I hesitate to take Kunjunni Raja's discovery of the *Kāvyaḷamkāra* verses in Maheśvara's commentary as supplying the year 638 as a terminus ante quem for Bhāmaha. Nonetheless, his hypothesis is corroborated by the final testimony I will address in this section, according to which Bhāmaha antedated Bāṇa, who indubitably worked during the first half of the seventh century.

3.4 Bāṇa Reacts to Bhāmaha?

As with most of the instances discussed in this section, Ānandavardhana's juxtaposition of a verse from Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷamkāra* with a passage from Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* was noticed shortly after the discovery of Bhāmaha's text. This juxtaposition is significant because of its possible implication that Bāṇa improved on Bhāmaha's text, and because the *Harṣacarita* can be dated with certainty to the first decades of the seventh century. Ānandavardhana's interest in relative chronology here has to be understood in the context of his discussion of innovation in poetry. To prove his point that it is suggestion (*dhvani*) that enables a familiar subject matter

¹²⁹ Kunhan Raja (1936, pp. 264–265), Kunjunni Raja (1958–1959, p. 39).

¹³⁰ Kunjunni Raja (1958–1959, pp. 40, 43). For the chronology of the Veda commentators, see Kunhan Raja (1936, pp. 267–268).

¹³¹ See Kahrs (1998, pp. 14–18) for a good summary. One additional problem he raises is that Harisvāmin mentions a King Vikrama of Avanti as his patron, and that such a king has not been identified for the year 638 CE.

(*pūrvārtha*) to appear afresh (*navatvam āyāti*), Ānandavardhana provides several pairs of examples wherein the second forms an innovative reworking of the first.¹³² This, then, is one case where the historical sequence seems pertinent to the theoretical argument. Given the potential importance of this citation, it merits a detailed examination.

The verse in question is Bhāmaha's example of *tulyayogitā*, a trope that he defines as the shared function or action (*tulyakāryakriyāyoga*) that is stated in order to establish similarity (*guṇasāmyavivakṣayā*) between an inferior (*nyūna*) and a superior (*viśiṣṭa*).¹³³ His example pairs a mortal king with the cosmic serpent śeṣa and the monumental mountain-king:

*śeṣo himagiris tvam ca mahānto guravaḥ sthīrāḥ | yad alaighitamaryādās
calantīm bibhr̥tha kṣitim ||* (*Kāvyaḷamkāra* of Bhāmaha 3.28)

Śeṣa, the Himalaya, and you
are gigantic, weighty, and firm:
All three of you never go astray
and bear this volatile world.

The semantic field of Sanskrit's laudatory vocabulary is often capable of simultaneously signifying the natural, mythical, and political orders. This is true of all the modifiers in the second and third metrical quarters of this verse ("gigantic," "weighty," "firm," and "never go astray"), but, more important, of the action that all three entities are said to perform at the verse's end: "bear this volatile world." For the cosmic serpent this means, quite literally, underpinning the earth. In the case of the Himalaya, it refers to pinning it down. The king, for his part, is in charge of supporting and providing for his country; he is also wed to the earth and bears her in that sense as well. There is nothing unusual in any of this: the topoi and vocabulary in Bhāmaha's example are run-of-the-mill. Indeed, it is precisely this rather pedestrian quality of the verse that is pertinent to Ānandavardhana's point, which is that suggestion has the potential to reinvent *kāvya*'s worn-out clichés.

As an example of an innovative reworking of this verse, Ānandavardhana invokes a line from Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* that he had already cited in his discussion while presenting the different types and subtypes of suggestion.¹³⁴ Bāṇa's line was used as an example of a category of suggestion where the suggested meaning supplements the manifest import thanks to a second layer of signification and where the suggestion is on the level of the sentence as a whole.¹³⁵ Ānandavardhana now

¹³² *Dhvanyāloka* 4.2, p. 422.

¹³³ *Kāvyaḷamkāra* of Bhāmaha 3.27. For Bhāmaha, then, *tulyayogitā* is different from the Sanskrit zeugma (*dīpaka*) syntactically (because here both *upameya* and *upamāna* construe directly with the shared predicate) and logically (given the stipulated disparity between a superior and an inferior in *tulyayogitā*). For Daṇḍin, the distinction is also pragmatic in the sense that *tulyayogitā* can amount to either praise or reproach (*Kāvyaḷadarsā* 2.328). Later thinkers revised the understanding of this trope considerably.

¹³⁴ Note that in the original quote of this line, explicit reference was made to the source and even the passage in question: *yathā harṣacarite śiṃhanādavākyeṣu* (*Dhvanyāloka*, p. 297).

¹³⁵ *Dhvanyāloka*, pp. 296–297: *vivakṣitābhidheyānuraṇānarūpavyaṅgyasya sabdaśaktyudbhave...vākyaprakāśatā*.

returns to this illustration in order to prove his point about innovation. To fully replicate the effect of the doubled signification, I have to resort to a pair of translations, consisting first of the manifest meaning and second, in smaller type, of the suggested import:

vṛtte 'smin mahāpralaye dharaṇīdharaṇāyādhunā tvam śeṣaḥ.

In this great disaster you alone are now left to support the land.

In this cosmic destruction you are now the world-serpent Śeṣa for holding up the earth.

(Translation adapted from Ingalls et al. 1990, p. 381)

This line is taken from one of the most dramatic moments in the plot of the *Harṣacarita*, when General Siṃhanāda pleads with Prince Harṣa that he become king following the death of both Harṣa's father and older brother. As we can see, the correlation between the king and the cosmic serpent is retained here, as is the notion that both support the earth. But the analogy is taken one step further, primarily through Bāṇa's clever play on the dual senses of the word *śeṣa*, whose literal meaning is "remainder." This meaning, indicating that Harṣa is the sole remaining protector of his country now that his father and brother have died, is uniquely reinforced by the second, suggested layer, according to which Harṣa is the world-serpent Śeṣa, who alone supports the earth following doomsday.¹³⁶ Bāṇa, then, has charged a stock comparison with new powers by his use of a double meaning, and he has done so in a way that is particularly suitable for the plot and for his political and aesthetic program of portraying Harṣa as a reluctant king.¹³⁷

For Śarmā and Upādhyāya, it is eminently clear that "Ānandavardhana had positive belief which must have been based on traditions prevalent among the Kāśmirian Pandits of his day that Bhāmaha was an old and popular predecessor of Bāṇa so that the latter could safely and honorably borrow ideas from the former."¹³⁸ If we agree with this conclusion, it would place Bhāmaha in the early decades of the seventh century at the very latest. Others have maintained that Ānandavardhana was not really interested in historical progression here and was concerned only with showing that the same idea could receive fresh treatment through suggestion.¹³⁹ Note that by way of introducing this pair of examples, Ānandavardhana seems to reiterate the importance of temporality to his argument by speaking of the ability of "topics already seen in the past" (*dr̥ṣṭapūrvā api hy arthāḥ*) to "appear as new, like trees during springtime" (*navā ivābhānti madhumāsa iva drumāḥ*).¹⁴⁰ Again, it is possible to argue that what Ānandavardhana had in mind was not a chronology per se but the greater intensity of Bāṇa's line when compared with Bhāmaha's worn-out (another possible meaning for *dr̥ṣṭapūrvā*) language. Alternatively, it has been

¹³⁶ For Ānandavardhana, this is an example of suggestion that, although based on the power of the words, is located on the level of the sentence as a whole rather than on the dual power of a single word. Thus his commentator Abhinavagupta tries to tease further meanings out of the other words in the sentence (*Dhvanyāloka*, pp. 297–298; cf. Ingalls et al. 1990, pp. 381–382). But in my reading of it, the crucial focus of the second meaning and of Bāṇa's innovation is on the use of the word *śeṣa* itself.

¹³⁷ For a similar example, also involving double meaning, see Bronner (2010, pp. 53–55).

¹³⁸ Śarmā and Upādhyāya (1928, p. 39).

¹³⁹ Kane (1971, pp. 124–125).

¹⁴⁰ *Dhvanyāloka*, p. 428.

argued that Ānandavardhana simply had his chronology wrong.¹⁴¹ This is possible, of course, although from all the examples he could choose from, one has to assume that if Ānandavardhana was interested in making a point about chronological progression, he would have chosen those authors whose timeline he knew well.

3.5 Evaluating the Evidence Presented Thus Far

My juxtaposition of Bhāmaha with Śāntarakṣita, Jinendrabuddhi, Maheśvara, and Bāṇa has yielded conflicting results. These contradictions aside, though, it is important to reiterate that I have not come across any concrete evidence that would force me to reverse my main findings about Daṇḍin's posteriority to Bhāmaha. Maintaining the position that Daṇḍin (c. 680–720) postdated Bhāmaha, we are thus faced with two possible scenarios: (1) If we accept the identification of Bhāmaha's Nyāsakāra with the logician Jinendrabuddhi, who undoubtedly knew Dharmakīrti's text, we have to assume a short chronology, according to which Bhāmaha lived in the second half of the seventh century and preceded Daṇḍin by a few decades at most. (2) If we reject the Jinendrabuddhi identification and accept Ānandavardhana's discussion of innovation and/or the dating of Maheśvara to 638 as historical evidence, then the chronological gap between Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin widens considerably to close to a century, if not more.¹⁴² Neither of these scenarios is problem free, and one can only hope that future discoveries, perhaps emanating from the Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts being discovered in China, will shed more light on this question.

4. Comparing the Texts of Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin

The most subjective component of the century-old debate consists of the attempts to deduce succession from comparing Daṇḍin's and Bhāmaha's texts. By subjective I refer, first, to the use of judgments about whose approach to a certain topic is more "advanced" as proof of his relative posteriority. Thus some have adduced the assessment that "the view of *guṇas* adopted by Bhāmaha is far more advanced than that of Daṇḍin" as proof that Bhāmaha came later, while others cited Daṇḍin's "numerous divisions" of certain tropes into subtypes and his more "detailed treatment" of ornaments of sound (*śabdālaṃkāras*) as corroborating the opposite succession.¹⁴³ I do not wish to discount the value of such observations entirely, but surely they prove neither chronology. We have no all-purpose criterion to evaluate progress: in some cases an advance is marked by a more rigorous and extensive analysis, while in others it is marked by parsimony or by a silent realization that phenomena that were once thought prominent no longer deserve much attention.

¹⁴¹ Kane (1971, p. 125).

¹⁴² Warder (1958) suggests placing Bhāmaha even earlier, before 400 CE. The grounds for this suggestion, however, are entirely speculative, and I need not entertain it here.

¹⁴³ The quotes are from Keith (1929, p. 179) and Trivedi (1909, p. xxxiii).

Moreover, each of the two authors deals with some topics in more detail than the other, so that arguments of this sort tend to cancel one another.

Second, as we have seen in Sect. 3, deciding the direction of a discussion on the basis of textual similarities is extremely risky. It is well known that there are many affinities between Daṇḍin's and Bhāmaha's treatises, and that there are even occasions where they use the same language in defining or exemplifying certain devices. Not surprisingly, these passages have been taken to prove borrowing in either direction, whereas, in fact, the mere occurrence of such parallels proves neither conclusively.¹⁴⁴ The same holds true with respect to deciding directionality in cases where the two authors are in disagreement or even appear to dispute each other directly. How can we determine the identity of the textual referent when, say, Bhāmaha is taking issue with a position upheld by Daṇḍin? Scholars who believe that Daṇḍin antedated Bhāmaha invariably take this as proof of their view, whereas scholars subscribing to the opposite chronology explain it away by maintaining that Bhāmaha is arguing here with some earlier intertext that is no longer available and that served as Daṇḍin's source. In the opposite case, when Daṇḍin is critical of a position that Bhāmaha postulates, the explanations are reversed mirrorlike: those who believe that Bhāmaha antedated Daṇḍin take this to ratify their position, while their opponents explain that Daṇḍin must have had an earlier intertext in mind.

If textual comparisons can be adduced at all as evidence here, we must produce some objective criteria for preferring one directionality to the other. One criterion that suggests itself in cases of explicit disagreements between the authors is the extent to which one of them can be shown to be familiar not so much with the other's basic position as with the exact way it is worded in the other's text or, at the very least, with its specifics. If we reexamine the paired passages that have long been at the heart of the discussion with this criterion in mind, I believe that we will discover many cases where Daṇḍin is unquestionably familiar with a "Bhāmaha position" as it is actually worded or specified in the *Kāvyaḷamkāra*, but none in which Bhāmaha's refutation of a "Daṇḍin position" reflects knowledge of the vocabulary and specifics of the *Kāvyaḷadarśa*.

There are several instances where Daṇḍin's acquaintance with the language of Bhāmaha's position is, to my mind, beyond any doubt. One example is the discussion of poetic flaws (*doṣas*). Bhāmaha lists eleven such poetic flaws at the outset of his fourth chapter, whereas Daṇḍin lists only the first ten. It is quite plausible that Bhāmaha was familiar with a tradition of presenting only ten flaws. After all, he sees a difference between the first set of ten, to which chapter 4 of his work is dedicated, and the eleventh flaw of imperfect reasoning (*pratijñāhetudrṣṭāntahīna*), which

¹⁴⁴ A case in point is the identical illustration that both authors provide for *preyas*. For Trivedi this identity supports Bhāmaha's priority, because only Daṇḍin "does not acknowledge the source where he has borrowed" (1909, p. xxxiv). But according to Kane, who contests Trivedi's understanding of Daṇḍin's pattern of textual reference, "One may perhaps more plausibly argue that Bhāmaha borrows from Daṇḍin" (1971, p. 109).

really consists of a whole gamut of logical fallacies that forms the subject of his fifth chapter.¹⁴⁵ But whether or not Bhāmaha is familiar with the Daṇḍin position that there are only ten flaws, he shows no awareness of its specifics and justifications. Daṇḍin, however, is surely familiar with an exposition of flaws exactly as it is done in Bhāmaha's work, for he lists the same ten flaws given by Bhāmaha—following the exact same order and using exactly the same words (the texts agree verbatim for six metrical quarters)—only to add, exactly at the point where Bhāmaha introduces the logical fallacy:

iti doṣā daśaivaite varjyāḥ kāvyeṣu sūribhiḥ // pratijñāhetudrṣṭāntahānir doṣo na vety asau / vicārakarkaśaprāyas tenālīḍhena kiṃ phalam // (Kāvyaḍarśa 3.126–127)¹⁴⁶

According to the experts, these ten, and only they, are flaws that poets should shun. As for imperfect reasoning, it may or may not be a flaw, but this whole line of argumentation is so extremely pedantic that one wonders what the point in introducing it is.

Here, as Ratnaśrījñāna, Vāḍijaṅghādeva, and Taruṇavācaspati all point out, Daṇḍin is showing his familiarity with the peculiarities of Bhāmaha's discussion, where this eleventh flaw is given (Daṇḍin pointedly accepts “these ten, and only they”), and which indeed opens the door—or offers the readers a “sip” (*ālīḍha*); note that Bhāmaha uses this very word in justifying the introduction of logic in the parallel passage (*Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* 5.3)—to a highly pedantic and elaborate exposition of the syllogism and its potential deficiencies.¹⁴⁷

The same trend is evident even in Daṇḍin's exposition of the flaws he does accept. In discussing defective or absent euphonic combinations (*visandhi*), Daṇḍin specifically rejects the scope of this flaw as exemplified in Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*. Bhāmaha's sole example of *visandhi* consists of the absence of vowel combinations between words in the dual. According to the grammarians, such endings are exempt (*pragr̥hya*) from *sandhi*, but although this lack of vowel combination is not ungrammatical Bhāmaha finds it unsavory in poetry. Daṇḍin, however, explicitly states that confusing the flaw of *visandhi* with cases that are exempt from *sandhi* is wrong (*tad visandhīti nirdiṣṭam na pragr̥hyādihetukam*). Ratnaśrījñāna again sees this as a case where Daṇḍin directly refutes Bhāmaha, whose example he is quick to quote. In the parallel passage Bhāmaha never evinces any familiarity with the particulars of Daṇḍin's illustrations or, for that matter, with a view that *sandhi*-exempt endings fall outside the scope of this flaw.¹⁴⁸

Another example, already mentioned above, concerns the division of prose into the genres of *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā*. Bhāmaha provides several criteria to distinguish between the two, whereas Daṇḍin rejects the distinction. There is no need to go into

¹⁴⁵ Bhāmaha openly uses this eleventh flaw as an excuse to give his readers a crash course in logic (as he explains in *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* 5.1–4, 32–33). Only after a while does he return to show the fallacies' relevance to poetic praxis (ibid. 5.34f.).

¹⁴⁶ See Dimitrov (2011, p. 515) for a discussion of a slightly alternative reading of this passage.

¹⁴⁷ The first to adduce the comparison of these passages as proof of Daṇḍin's familiarity with Bhāmaha's text were Trivedi (1913, pp. 263–264) and Jacobi (1922, pp. 222–223).

¹⁴⁸ *Kāvyaḍarśa* 3.159; *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 4.28.

this passage in great detail here.¹⁴⁹ Suffice it to say that although the two authors hold diametrically opposed views, Bhāmaha evinces no familiarity whatever with a text in which the distinction between the genres or its criteria is challenged, whereas Daṇḍin shows unmistakable familiarity with each and every aspect of the Bhāmaha position exactly as it is stated in Bhāmaha's text. To give but one example, Bhāmaha notes that in *kathās* the hero cannot be the narrator, for otherwise a man of good breeding would run the risk of sounding self-congratulatory (*svaguṇāviṣkṛtiṃ kuryād abhijātaḥ katham janah*). But Daṇḍin specifically notes that no such restriction applies because "sounding self-congratulatory is not a flaw here so long as one is telling the truth" (*svaguṇāviṣkriyādoṣo nātra bhūtārthaśamsinah*).¹⁵⁰

Other examples are less obvious and demand more careful evaluation. Consider the dispute concerning the value of three poetic devices: *hetu* (causation), a statement of cause and effect; *sūkṣma* (subtlety), which describes cleverly coded communications; and *leśa* (trace), which involves an attempt to conceal or deny a giveaway sign. Both Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin bunch these three devices together, but whereas Bhāmaha strongly rejects their aesthetic value, Daṇḍin endorses them in equally strong words. Here is Bhāmaha's rejection of the entire triad:

hetuś ca sūkṣmo leśo 'tha nālaṃkāratayā mataḥ | samudāyābhidheyasya vakroktyanabhidhānataḥ || gato 'stam arko bhātīndur yānti vāsāya pakṣiṇaḥ | ity evamādi kiṃ kāvyam vārttām enām pracakṣate || (Kāvyaḷaṃkāra 2.86–87)

We do not consider causation, subtlety, and trace ornamental devices, because these are cases in which the overall meaning does not depend on a statement that involves indirection. "The sun has set. The moon is up. The birds return to their nests." Is this stuff poetry? It reads more like a report.

Bhāmaha's rejection is perfectly consistent with his overall exposition of ornaments. For him, direct, matter-of-fact statements have no aesthetic value. This is why he never embraces factual descriptions (*svabhāvokti*) as ornaments as well. Rather, as he says repeatedly, an ornament has to involve some indirection or crookedness of speech (*vakrokti*), which he identifies with intensification (*atiśayokti*).¹⁵¹ Hence he denies the ornamental value of, say, a mere statement of cause and effect that is expressed in a direct and straightforward manner.

Daṇḍin presents his diametrically opposed opinion at great length. He dedicates twenty-seven verses just to the discussion of causation and eleven more to the pair of subtlety and trace. For the sake of brevity, I will examine only six of these verses here:

hetuś ca sūkṣmaleśau ca vācām uttamabhūṣaṇam | kārakajñāpakau hetū tau ca naikavidhau yathā || ayam āndolitapraudhacandanadrūmapallavaḥ | utpādayati sarvatra prītiṃ malayamārutaḥ || prītyutpādanayogyasya rūpasyā-tropabrṃhaṇam | alaṅkāratayoddiṣṭam nirvṛttāv api tat samam ||

¹⁴⁹ See De (1924) for a good summary.

¹⁵⁰ Pace Gupta (1970, p. 74), who views Daṇḍin's statement as a "casual remark." The quotes are from *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 1.29 and *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* 1.24.

¹⁵¹ For their different treatment of *svabhāvokti*, compare *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 2.93 with *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Daṇḍin 2.8–13. For Bhāmaha's notion of *vakrokti*, see *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* 2.81–82, 2.85. For further discussion, see Bronner (2010, pp. 214–217).

candanāraṇyam ādhūya sprṣtvā malayanirjharān / pathikānām abhāvāya pavano 'yam upasthitah // abhāvasādhanāyālam evaṃbhūto hi mārutaḥ / virahajvarasambhūtamanojñārocake jane // ...gato 'stam arko bhātīndur yānti vāsāya pakṣiṇaḥ / itīdam api sādheva kālāvasthānivedane // (Kāvya-darśa 2.233–237, 242)

Both causation and the pair of subtlety and trace are first-class ornaments. Causation is of two types, depending on whether the cause generates an effect or knowledge, and each type can be further divided into a multitude of subtypes. An example of the first type of causation is “Rocking the leaves of the lush sandal trees, / the southern wind generates pleasure for everyone.” Here the magnification of the nature of an entity that is capable of generating pleasure is what makes this an ornament. And the same holds true for cases where the effect is an absence [rather than a presence]: “Brushing through a forest of sandal trees / and caressing the cascades of Mount Malaya, / this breeze is about to annihilate the travelers.” Again, it is a breeze so described that is capable of bringing about an elimination of people who suffer from the predicament of separation and who therefore become vulnerable to anything pleasurable... “The sun has set. The moon is up. The birds return to their nests.” This, too, is beautiful indeed, insofar as it communicates a certain moment in time.

At first glance we are struck by the undeniable parallelism between Bhāmaha’s two-verse statement and the first and the last stanzas in the above quote from Daṇḍin. In the first of these two mirroring passages, both authors list the same triad of devices in the same order, and in the second, both cite the same example verbatim, although whereas for Bhāmaha the three devices are nonornaments and the example is nonpoetry, for Daṇḍin they make for first-class ornaments and first-rate poetry. My objective criterion could be said to be of little help here: Bhāmaha is clearly aware of the Daṇḍin position, according to which causation and the like are ornaments, for otherwise it would make little sense to deny this. Daṇḍin, for his part, is surely familiar with the Bhāmaha position of denying these devices their status, for otherwise it makes no sense for him to highlight them as “first-class” ornaments (there is nothing in his own system of poetic devices that justifies such singling out). The same is true with respect to the contested example. Bhāmaha is aware of a text where a verse like “The sun has set,” and perhaps even this very verse, is given as poetry, because this is the position he sets out to ridicule; Daṇḍin, for his part, is familiar with a theoretical treatise where the poetic value of this verse has been denied, for otherwise how can we explain his statement that “this, *too*, is beautiful *indeed*” (emphasis added)? It would thus seem that this parallelism can be used to support either directionality, as indeed it has been.

Still, here too, I believe, Bhāmaha demonstrates his familiarity only with a relatively generic version of Daṇḍin’s position, whereas Daṇḍin shows his acquaintance with the particulars of the Bhāmaha position as argued for in the *Kāvyaśaṅkārā*. Bhāmaha seems to refer to a text where the three devices are seen as ornaments, but not as first-class ornaments, and where the verse “The sun has set” (or one similar to it) is seen as poetry, but not an especially beautiful specimen.

Daṇḍin, by contrast, is aware not just of the dismissal of the aesthetic value of the three devices and of the example found in Bhāmaha's text, but also of the reason Bhāmaha cites for this dismissal, namely, the absence of any indirection (*vakrokti*), which Bhāmaha elsewhere defines as intensification (*atiśayokti*). As Ratnaśrījñāna ably shows, the bulk of Daṇḍin's discussion of causation is meant to counter this claim in detail.¹⁵² Ratnaśrījñāna points out that Daṇḍin repeatedly refutes the position that instances of causation consist merely of stating some cause and effect. Rather, Daṇḍin maintains, these devices necessitate the magnification or, indeed, intensification (*upabr̥mhaṇa*) of the cause. The intensification in the first example is in describing the southern breeze as "rocking the leaves of the lush sandal trees," which, Ratnaśrījñāna explains, suggests the wind's being scented, cool, and tender. It is this intensification, Daṇḍin argues, that makes an otherwise factual description of causality an ornament (*alaṅkāratayoddiṣṭam*). Daṇḍin, then, shows that causation entails precisely what Bhāmaha denies, namely, the aesthetic criteria of indirection and intensification. The same is true with respect to his second example. It is not just any breeze that threatens to annihilate the lonely travelers, but one that is "so described" (*evambhūta*), that is, one that is "brushing through a forest of sandal trees / and caressing the cascades of Mount Malaya," with the same suggestion of scent, coolness, and tenderness intended, as Ratnaśrījñāna explains. Finally, Daṇḍin repeats the same point also apropos of the example "The sun has set." As a factual description in and of itself, Daṇḍin does not claim that this half of a verse is poetic. But the objection, as found in Bhāmaha's text, misses the point. These short sentences do not merely report the situation of the sun, moon, and birds, but rather indirectly allude to the coming of a certain moment in the night (*kālāvasthānivedane*).

Another interesting example is the disagreement about the overall structure of the plot. Bhāmaha advises poets not to glorify the antagonist at the outset:

*nāyakaṃ prāg upanyasya vaṃśavīryaśrutādibhiḥ / na tasyaiva vadhaṃ brūyād
anyotkarṣavidhitasayā // yadi kāvyasārīryasya na sa vyāpitayesyate / na cāb-
hyudayabhāk tasya mudhādau grahaṇaṃ stave //* (*Kāvyālaṅkāra* of Bhāmaha
1.22–23)

Do not begin by introducing someone as a leading character in terms of his ancestry, mettle, erudition, etc., only to kill him off later on just to underscore the greatness of his foe. If he is not meant to dominate the poem, and does not win at the end, there is no point in uselessly praising him as a star from the outset.

Daṇḍin, however, is open to other possibilities as well:

*guṇataḥ prāg upanyasya nāyakaṃ tena vidviṣām / nirākaraṇam ity eṣa
mārgaḥ prakṛtisundaraḥ // vaṃśavīryaśrutādīni varṇayitvā ripor api tajjayān
nayakotkarṣavarṇanaṃ ca dhinoti naḥ //* (*Kāvyādarśa* 1.21–22)

¹⁵² It should be noted that Ratnaśrījñāna mentions and quotes Bhāmaha only twice in this section, apropos of the two sets of parallel verses, but it is eminently clear that he has Bhāmaha on his mind throughout his careful exposition.

If you first introduce the hero as virtuous and then describe his victory over his enemies, this is one path that is intuitively pleasing. But if you describe the ancestry, mettle, erudition, etc., of the antagonist as well before having him defeated so as to underscore the protagonist's greatness, we like this too.

Notice the verse numbers of these passages: not only do they share the same vocabulary, but they are also found at the same place in their respective works. Such striking parallels and diametrically opposed views seem hardly coincidental, although, again, they may allow us to reconstruct the conversation in either direction. But if we stick to our criterion, we must conclude that although Bhāmaha may or may not have been familiar with a theoretical treatise voicing the Daṇḍin position (it seems likely that he had an example from the praxis in mind), Daṇḍin is almost surely familiar with the Bhāmaha position as it is worded in the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*. He indicates his familiarity by his framing of this position—whose distinctive elements are quoted to the letter—with the emphatic conjunctions “as well” (*api*) and “too” (in “we like this too,” *ca dhinoti naḥ*). Thus it seems to me that, as Ratnaśrījñāna has suggested, Daṇḍin deliberately sets out to expand the horizon of possibilities at the poet's disposal by endorsing the very plot sequence that Bhāmaha detested (*dvitīyaṃ kramam āha, yo bhāmahena dviṣṭaḥ*). Or, to quote Vādijaṅghādeva: “Speaking in this way, Daṇḍin dismisses Bhāmaha's position” (*iti vadan bhāmahamatam ākṣipati*). To drive the point home, both commentators supply Bhāmaha's passage.

I cannot say that in every single case of explicit disagreement between the two authors, Daṇḍin demonstrates a similarly distinctive familiarity with the vocabulary and specifics of Bhāmaha's position. As an example where applying my criterion provides no conclusive results, consider the authors' difference of opinion on the existence and relative value of different regional styles: Vaidarbha in the south central part of the Indian subcontinent and Gauḍīya in the northeast. For Bhāmaha, this distinction is meaningless, and he feels that the designation of regional varieties as a whole serves no purpose: poetry that involves indirection, sophistication, ornamentation, and the like is good regardless of any regional label, and what lacks these is anyhow outside the scope of poetic theory. For Daṇḍin, by contrast, this distinction is crucial: he views Vaidarbha-style poetry, named after his ancestral homeland, as vastly superior to the Gauḍīya variety.¹⁵³ On this question, each author is unquestionably familiar with the view upheld by the other. Bhāmaha knows that some “smart folks” (*sudhiyaḥ*), a term he clearly uses ironically, believe that Vaidarbha poetry is “something else” (*vaidarbham anyad astīti*) and “better” (*jyāyan*) than the other variety, but he argues that actually “there is little or no difference” between the two (*gauḍīyam idam etat tu vaidarbham iti kiṃ pṛthak*). Daṇḍin, for his part, knows of a position according to which the difference between the two is trifling. This is why he concedes that the variance among numerous other regional styles is negligible (*asty aneko girāṃ mārgaḥ sūksmaḥ bhedaḥ parasparam*) but insists that the differences between the Gauḍīya and Vaidarbha varieties are unmistakable (*prasphuṭāntarau*).¹⁵⁴ I can see why Ratnaśrījñāna explains that in saying this Daṇḍin refutes Bhāmaha indirectly (*evaṃ ca kṛtvā yad uktaṃ*

¹⁵³ *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 1.34–35; *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.40f.

¹⁵⁴ *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* of Bhāmaha 1.31–32, *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.40.

bhāmahena . . . iti tad bhaṅgyā nirastam).¹⁵⁵ But on the basis of comparing these passages alone, one could have just as easily come to the opposite conclusion.

Indeed, a closer inspection reveals that on this topic the disagreement between the two authors is deceptive, because each of them is primarily engaged in conversation with additional parties. Bhāmaha speaks of the nomenclature of regional styles as stemming from a long tradition that people have followed blindly, without applying any judgment (*gatānugatikanyāyān nānākhyēyam amedhasām*). He also argues against texts where works such as the lost *Aśmakavaṃśa* (Dynasty of the Aśmakas) were labeled “Vaidarbha” (*nanu cāśmakavaṃśādi vaidarbham iti kathyate*).¹⁵⁶ None of this applies to Daṇḍin’s work, where we find a comprehensive theory of regionality that is laid out in terms of the different regional preferences for a set of ten poetic qualities (*guṇas*) and where no poems are classified according to their regions. Daṇḍin does not directly challenge the charge that the upholders of Vaidarbha are blind followers and does not care to reaffirm the regional labeling of works such as the *Aśmakavaṃśa*. Bhāmaha, for his part, shows no awareness of Daṇḍin’s elaborate theory, which occupies a significant chunk of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, or, for that matter, of his set of ten qualities.¹⁵⁷ In fact, as has already been noted by Raghavan, in their understanding and enumeration of poetic qualities, each of the authors continues one of two different traditions that can be shown to have antedated both of them. The fact that Bhāmaha knew of a set of three qualities, whereas Daṇḍin was familiar with a different list of ten, thus has to be understood primarily in the context of these older traditions.¹⁵⁸ Given this history, the presentation of Daṇḍin’s ten qualities as an expansion of Bhāmaha’s more exclusive batch, or of Bhāmaha’s three qualities as a reduction of Daṇḍin’s inflated set, muddies the waters unnecessarily.¹⁵⁹ At any rate, Bhāmaha shows no familiarity with Daṇḍin’s position on poetic qualities, let alone of its particulars, and it should be clear that his quarrel here is with altogether different texts.

Indeed, although Daṇḍin does not always betray a familiarity with the language and specifics of a Bhāmaha position as stated in the *Kāvyaḍarśa*—which is only to be expected, given stylistic considerations and the existence of other intertexts—Bhāmaha never exhibits an intimate knowledge of the wording and particulars of the *Kāvyaḍarśa* when criticizing a Daṇḍin position. Before concluding this section, let me examine one final example that comes deceptively close to being an exception to this rule. Having defined and discussed the nature of simile (*upamā*), Bhāmaha turns his attention to the views of some predecessor(s):

*yad uktaṃ triprakāratvaṃ tasyāḥ kaiścin mahātmabhiḥ | nindāpraśamsāci-
khyāsābhedād atrābhidhīyate || sāmānyaguṇanirdeśāt trayam api uditam
nanu | mālopamādiḥ sarvo ‘pi na jyāyān vistaro mudhā ||* (*Kāvyaḍarśa*
2.37–38)

¹⁵⁵ See his comments ad *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.40.

¹⁵⁶ *Kāvyaḍarśa* of Bhāmaha 1.32–33.

¹⁵⁷ Bhāmaha may be aware of a more basic attempt to associate three *guṇas*—clarity (*prasanna*), straightforwardness (*rju*), and tenderness (*komala*)—with Vaidarbha poetry, as is perhaps implied by *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.34; cf. Raghavan (1978, pp. 275–276).

¹⁵⁸ Raghavan (1978, pp. 275–278).

¹⁵⁹ For such views, see Jacobi (1922, pp. 223–224) and Keith (1929, p. 179), respectively.

Some great souls have said here that simile has three subtypes: “blame,” “praise,” and “value-neutral” [*ācikyāsā*, literally, the (mere) desire to state (that X is like Y)]. But, surely, insofar as I defined it as “similarity in attributes,” I have already included these three too. The same is true for the whole group of “chain simile” and its ilk: it is no better, and elaboration would be pointless.

There is no question that Bhāmaha is criticizing at least one prior text here. He refers to his opponent(s) sarcastically as “some great souls,” and he clearly knows a work that lists the subtypes whose very mention he deems futile. As it happens, Daṇḍin dedicates a verse to each of the first three subtypes and in exactly the same order. Moreover, Daṇḍin merely goes through these subcategories without showing any explicit awareness of a view that denies their value.¹⁶⁰ Slightly later in his discussion Daṇḍin also defines chain simile, again without countering any argument about the futility of its being mentioned. It is little wonder, then, that proponents of Daṇḍin’s priority argued that, at least in this instance, Bhāmaha is directly criticizing Daṇḍin’s work.¹⁶¹

But in actuality, the similarity between the two texts is at best superficial. To begin with, some have noted that the way Bhāmaha words his remark (*yad uktaṃ triprakāratvaṃ tasyāḥ*) most readily indicates an intertext that lists only these three simile subtypes; this would immediately exclude the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, where Daṇḍin goes through no less than thirty-two varieties.¹⁶² However, it is also possible to understand Bhāmaha as referring to a general analysis of the complimentary value (positive, negative, or zero) of similes without excluding other classifications. Still, this is not what we find in the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, where “blame,” “praise,” and the “I just wanted to say” similes form a highly specific set of interrelated devices, all of which are, in fact, crafty compliments to an addressee.¹⁶³ Even if this is exactly what Bhāmaha criticizes, the discrepancy between his wry dismissal of this set and of the “whole group of ‘chain simile’ and its ilk,” on the one hand, and Daṇḍin’s unique and extensive discussion of the simile, on the other, is far greater than any similarity.

To realize this, we have to consider Bhāmaha’s comment in its context. Whereas all later thinkers consider simile at least as the *primus inter pares* of tropes, Bhāmaha follows an older tradition that makes it neither the first nor the quintessential device. He places simile after *rūpaka* and *dīpaka* and indeed, as the last member in a primeval set of five devices given by ancient writers.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Bhāmaha’s discussion is decidedly conservative. As his criticism, quoted above, and actual

¹⁶⁰ Ratnaśrījñāna, however, sees Daṇḍin’s decision to include and illustrate the three subtypes as dealing a deliberate blow to Bhāmaha’s view (*nindopamādyudāharaṇena cānena ...*[text of *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.37–38, quoted above] *...iti matāntaraṃ nirastam*, ad *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.32). This conclusion, of course, is possible, but it cannot be said to derive from this passage alone.

¹⁶¹ For the first time this argument was made, see Pathak (1912, p. 236).

¹⁶² As noted by De (1960, p. 66n).

¹⁶³ *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.32–34: “Even though it is similar to the moon, which fades away, you face goes proud” (blame); “Your face is equal to the moon that Śiva carries on his head” (praise); “Maybe it’s good, maybe it’s bad, but my heart just wants to say ‘your face is like the moon’” (value neutral).

¹⁶⁴ *Kāvyaḍarśa* of Bhāmaha 2.4: *anuprāsaḥ sayamako rūpakaṃ dīpakopame / iti vācām alaṃkārah pañcaivānyair udāhṛtaḥ //*

treatment of the device both indicate, Bhāmaha refuses to expand the horizons of simile beyond what he inherited from the grammarians, namely, the analysis of the morphology, the vocabulary, and the elliptical compounding techniques for expressing similitude in Sanskrit.¹⁶⁵ His rather hurried exposition of simile—nine verses, including the two attacking those “great souls”—is followed by a more leisurely discussion of simile’s flaws, a special subgenre of Sanskrit poetics, but here too nothing new is offered. Bhāmaha explicitly attributes all the flaws he examines to his predecessor Medhāvin (2.40) and even references some of his examples to Śākhāvardhana and Rāmaśarman (2.47, 57).

Daṇḍin, by contrast, takes his readers, perhaps for the first time in the history of Sanskrit poetics, on an extended and breathtaking tour of simile’s endless possibilities. He also allots simile a prominent position as the first poetic device that transcends factual description (*svabhāvokti*). And just as Bhāmaha’s discussion is decidedly conservative, Daṇḍin’s is self-consciously innovative. Everything from his announcement that he plans to demonstrate simile’s full range (*tasyāḥ prapañco ‘yaṃ pradarsyate*, 2.14) to his taking credit for folding into its scope what other thinkers have deemed separate literary devices (2.356, which comes, as already noted, at the end of his survey of tropes) breathes the air of ingenuity. More specifically, Daṇḍin envisions a dramatically expanded investigation of simile that incorporates, in addition to a grammatical taxonomy (which, by the way, is far more elaborate than what we find in Bhāmaha), a whole variety of other analyses: the propositional structure of similitude with its many permutations (e.g., *dharma*, *vastu*, *viparyāsa*, *niyama*, *anīyama*, *ananya*, *samuccaya*, and *bahu* similes), the possibility it entails for punning (*śleṣa*, *samāna*), and its social functions (including flattery, as in the aforementioned triad of “blame,” “praise,” and “value-neutral”). But what stands out most in Daṇḍin’s discussion, especially when it is compared with Bhāmaha’s parallel passage, is that he is interested not only in simile’s basic proposition—X is like Y—and its many variations and applications, but also in a whole range of propositions that *imply* a resemblance between X and Y: rivalry between a set of entities, doubt about their identity (“Is this a lotus, or is it your face?”), delusion, the resolution of doubt, correct realization (“This is not a lotus, it is your face indeed”), and so on.¹⁶⁶

Let me clarify that my comparison of the two approaches to simile is not meant to establish Daṇḍin’s posteriority on the grounds that his approach is more innovative or “advanced.” As history has often shown, conservatism and ingenuity can each be a reaction to the other. My point is simply that Bhāmaha’s remark cannot be said to evince familiarity with the language and particulars of Daṇḍin’s parallel discussion. It is true that the names of the subtypes that Bhāmaha criticizes appear in Daṇḍin’s vast and deliberately inclusive catalog. It also is clear that Bhāmaha is aware of some attempts to expand the investigation of simile beyond the strictly grammatical analysis. But his wry remark about the division of simile into three

¹⁶⁵ Thus it is indicative that the only simile subtype that Bhāmaha defines and names, *prativastūpamā*, is really a footnote to his point about ellipsis: *samānavastuṇyāsenā prativastūpamocyate / yathevānabhidhāne ‘pi guṇasāmyapratītiḥ* // (*Kāvyaśāstrakāra* of Bhāmaha 2.34).

¹⁶⁶ For a study of Daṇḍin’s analysis of the simile, see Bronner (2007, 2010, pp. 217–224).

varieties of blame, praise, and value-neutral, as well as about “the gamut of chain simile and its ilk,” is a far cry from Daṇḍin’s bold and dramatic expansion of simile’s scope in the *Kāvyaḍarśa*. Bhāmaha’s comment thus makes far better sense when it is understood as a rejoinder to a more rudimentary attempt, where the triad of “blame,” “praise,” and “value-neutral” features more prominently, and perhaps to another text that provides an actual list (or set) of subtypes that begins with “chain simile” (no such list is found in the *Kāvyaḍarśa*).

By way of conclusion, let me restate that the pattern of textual behavior described in this section does not decisively prove that Daṇḍin knew the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*. After all, whenever Daṇḍin demonstrates his familiarity with the vocabulary and peculiarities of the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*, this could be explained by postulating a third text that is no longer extant: Bhāmaha could have borrowed his positions pretty much verbatim from such a lost text, whereas Daṇḍin may have criticized that third text directly. Likewise, whenever Bhāmaha neglects to deal with the details of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, this could be said to reflect a conscious stylistic choice. But it becomes considerably more difficult to defend such claims if we consider the regularity with which Daṇḍin demonstrates his familiarity with a Bhāmaha position as stated in the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* and the constancy with which Bhāmaha fails to evince familiarity with the specifics and language of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*. This consistent pattern strongly corroborates the chronology postulated here and confirms the commentators’ view that Bhāmaha’s *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* was Daṇḍin’s primary intertext.

5. Concluding Remarks

Reconstructing chronology in premodern South Asia often feels like solving an equation with an impossible number of unknowns and where no solution can be final before the value of some of these is independently ascertained. In the case of early Sanskrit poetics, a comprehensive and indisputable historical narrative will have to await the unearthing of concrete knowledge about some of the lead characters, beginning with the elusive figure of Bhāmaha himself. Nonetheless, I believe that the surprisingly coherent evidentiary picture presented in this article can actually put the century-old debate about the sequential relation of Daṇḍin and Bhāmaha to rest. As we have seen in Sect. 2.3, a number of erudite and highly informed expert witnesses who lived in relative temporal and geographic proximity to Daṇḍin and who likely had access to key works that are no longer extant emphatically and unanimously decreed that Bhāmaha antedated Daṇḍin and that the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* served as the *Kāvyaḍarśa*’s primary intertext. This verdict is strongly corroborated by the pattern of textual behavior presented in Sect. 4, where I took a fresh look at those instances in which at least one of the two writers explicitly expresses his disagreement with a position upheld by the other. As I have shown, Daṇḍin regularly refutes the views of Bhāmaha as worded or specified in the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*, whereas Bhāmaha never evinces familiarity with the language and particulars of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, even when he criticizes stances that Daṇḍin endorses.

Although we know nothing about the life of Bhāmaha, the biographical data that Daṇḍin himself supplies in the *Avantisundarī*, as discussed in Sect. 2.1, are almost

without parallel in premodern India in terms of their wealth and quality. This plethora of personal information, which agrees with important clues found in Daṇḍin's other works, allows us to place him at the Pallava court in Kāñcī and to date his active career to the last decades of the seventh century or the early decades of the eighth. As I hope to have demonstrated, lingering doubts about this data and, more specifically, about the single authorship of the works attributed to Daṇḍin have no evidentiary basis whatsoever and are primarily rooted in misbelief (as in Agashe's notion that the author of the *Kāvyaḍarśa* was an "angel of righteousness") and plain wishful thinking (as in Spink's placement of the *Daśakumāracarita* close to the historical facts he believes it records). There is no indication that anyone in South Asia ever doubted the single authorship of the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, the *Daśakumāracarita*, and the *Avantisundarī* (whether or not the last two are parts of a larger whole), and there is no good reason to doubt this received knowledge that the texts support. We can safely assume, then, that Daṇḍin composed his *Kāvyaḍarśa* around the year 700, and that Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra* must have antedated it.

The one incongruous part of the picture is found in our discussion of Bhāmaha's chronology relative to other writers of his age (Sect. 3): Bhāmaha either postdates Jinendrabuddhi (as his reference to Nyāsakāra may indicate) or antedates Bāṇa (as Ānandavardhana seems to imply and Kunjunni Raja's calculations about Maheśvara's date indicate). If the latter alternative is correct, this would place Bhāmaha no later than the early 600s, thereby decisively corroborating his priority to Daṇḍin. But even if the former is true, as some scholars believe, there is no evidence that pushes Bhāmaha beyond Daṇḍin's active period. Thus, although the current data do not allow us to decide between a short and a long chronology, this by no means diminishes the previously stated conclusion about the *Kāvyaḷaṃkāra*'s priority to the *Kāvyaḍarśa*.¹⁶⁷

With this basic chronological problem hopefully settled, scholars of Sanskrit poetics may now raise questions that the century-long debate has obscured and plot historical narratives that are potentially far more interesting than those currently available. One important avenue that is worth exploring concerns the odd fact that Sanskrit poetics comes with a squabbling couple in the role of a founding father, a position for which all other Sanskrit knowledge systems appoint one patriarch of unquestioned authority. As should be obvious, Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin were not the first to compose texts on poetics, and we know the names of several of their predecessors. In debating the relative sequence of the two authors, researchers often bemoaned the nonavailability of prior works but never asked why the entire early corpus has vanished. If we inspect the actual textual behavior more closely, we will discover that this loss is not random, and that Bhāmaha is the last poetician to seriously quote Rāmaśarman, Medhāvin, and their colleagues. All later thinkers, beginning with Daṇḍin himself, *chose* not to tap into this early textual pool, even when the works were probably still available: Saṅgharakkhita, like other southern writers, relies heavily on Daṇḍin, despite the still-extant treatises of "Rāmaśarman

¹⁶⁷ Alternatively, new discoveries about the dates of Dharmakīrti may solve this contradiction by allowing us to assign an earlier date to Jinendrabuddhi. For arguments for pushing the time of activity of Dharmakīrti and Kumārila back to the middle of the sixth century, see Krasser (2011).

and the others,” just as Udbhaṭa enshrines Bhāmaha as the sole founder of the poetic lineage in Kashmir. Would it be unreasonable to assume that something about the *Kāvyaśāstra* and the *Kāvyaadarśa*—both separately and as a set pair, with their distinct stylistic, ideational, and perhaps regional differences—must have eclipsed the early discussion so decisively that tradition decided never to look back? And if this is so, why did it happen, and what may have been the consequences of such an unusual beginning for the later discourse on poetics?

These are large questions that I cannot fully explore here. But it is worthwhile briefly to follow some threads that derive directly from the findings presented above. Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaśāstra*, with its large-scale incorporation of the earlier sources and its historical mode of presentation—rather than organizing tropes thematically, Bhāmaha starts with a primeval list of five *śāstras* and proceeds to devices added by later thinkers—may be seen as a conscious attempt to provide a summa of the received views in an emerging discipline. This summa, moreover, is deliberately and consistently conservative in its outlook. First, consider Bhāmaha's deference to the older and more prestigious disciplines of grammar and logic, to each of which he devotes a full chapter in his manual for aspiring poets, and his uncompromising objection to the slightest expansion of the grammatical analysis of simile. Second, even in his selection of tools from these disciplinary workshops, Bhāmaha demonstrates a dogged conservatism. Recall, for example, his repeated rejection of any grammatical notion that smells non-Pāṇinian or his dismissal of the new theory of *apoha*. Finally, with regard to poetry itself, Bhāmaha consistently rejects a whole slew of new trends from acceptable literary practice: the choice of clouds as messengers makes no sense, *prahelikās* are too difficult, causation (*hetu*) and factual descriptions (*svabhāvokti*) are prosaic, and unorthodox plot structures unnecessarily upset readers' expectations.

One may argue that these are merely the grumblings of a cranky critic, but, in fact, they may stem from Bhāmaha's conscious attempt to fashion his work as the orthodoxy that his nascent discipline was lacking. This, I believe, is related to his most important innovation, namely, the fashioning of a strict criterion that placed many of his aesthetic judgments on a solid theoretical footing. I refer, of course, to the notion of indirection (*vakrokti*), which Bhāmaha further modifies as entailing intensification. If a poetic device contains such indirection, it merits recognition as aesthetically pleasing (*śāstra*), just as, on a more general level, the presence or absence of *vakrokti* in a poem, rather than its area of origin, is what decides whether it is worth taking up, thereby obviating any discussion about the relative importance of regional styles.

In its digest-style organization, avowed conservatism, and theoretical orientation, Bhāmaha's book may be seen as a self-fashioned foundation of a fledgling discipline, and certainly it was so received. It seems to have been *the* reference book on poetics in the seventh and eighth centuries, so that when a scholar like Maheśvara (if we are to trust Kuṅjunni Raja's date for him) needed a definition of *yamaka*, he turned to it, and a logician like Śāntarakṣita could not ignore its views on *apoha*. It was also the book to attack if one held unorthodox views, which is exactly what Daṇḍin does. Daṇḍin never doubts the basic aesthetic phenomena endorsed by

Bhāmaha and, in fact, shares with his important predecessor a common set of values.¹⁶⁸ But envisioning an independent and far more inclusive theory, Daṇḍin opens the gates of Sanskrit poetics to a flood of additional phenomena: realistic descriptions (*svabhāvokti*, which he pointedly dubbed the “number one ornament,” *ādya sālaṃkṛtiḥ*);¹⁶⁹ a breathtaking variety of ways to analyze simile, now viewed as the quintessential *alaṃkāra*; causation, subtlety, and trace, each with its numerous subcategories; and an equally staggering array of riddles, to mention only the examples I discuss in this article. Indeed, his innovation in these areas is minor relative to his more dramatic recasting of Bhāmaha’s *vakrokti* itself, now centered on the linguistic disguise of the pun (*śleṣa*), a phenomenon that Bhāmaha tried his best to marginalize.¹⁷⁰

It did not take long for the restrictive “parent” text and its defiant “offspring” to be conceived as a set pair and to be studied together by tenth-century authors such as Ratnaśrījñāna and Vādijaṅghādeva. Their encompassing polarity, combined with Bhāmaha’s claim to epitomize the core of the previous tradition and Daṇḍin’s attempt to reintroduce all that Bhāmaha excluded and more, is one of the factors that rendered the earlier corpus less relevant. And although the two works combined to create a single trunk for their discipline, each also generated a largely independent branch. Even as Ratnaśrījñāna and his colleagues were closely comparing passages from the *Kāvyaṃkāra* and the *Kāvyaḍarśa*, the former evolved as the root text of an intense theoretical discourse in Kashmir, whereas the latter was becoming the bedrock of vernacular poetics far to the south.

This peculiar spatial distribution must be meaningful and may be rooted in the pair’s own relationship to the question of region. First, Daṇḍin was clearly a southern patriot who championed the Vaidarbha style, and it may be true that Bhāmaha hailed from Kashmir. If this is so, Daṇḍin’s southern favoritism and his biting criticism of Bhāmaha may have paradoxically contributed to the ultimate enshrinement of the latter in Kashmir. Second, we have no reason to doubt that some of the stylistic features on which the two authors locked horns actually had some regional basis. Indeed, it is not impossible that local patriotism partly influenced not only their aesthetic judgments on certain topics but also those of Daṇḍin’s vernacular successors in the south, although the demonstration of such a pattern is still a desideratum. Finally, as Pollock has already suggested, Daṇḍin’s full-fledged theory of regional styles, even beside its specific southern inflection, may have helped the first vernacular intellectuals conceive of their own nascent traditions as distinct regional styles.¹⁷¹

Beyond all this, we must consider the place occupied by matters of taste—regional as well as personal—in shaping this fascinating textual exchange. As Ratnaśrījñāna himself felt, there is something unsettling about the way Bhāmaha

¹⁶⁸ As Gerow has noted, “Modern scholarship, attempting to sort out the chronological relation of the two texts, has emphasized the differences rather than the fundamental agreement” (Gerow 1977, p. 227).

¹⁶⁹ *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.8.

¹⁷⁰ Bronner (2010, pp. 216–217).

¹⁷¹ Pollock (2006, pp. 338–356).

and Daṇḍin each canceled categories and views the other endorsed.¹⁷² It is not the mere existence of controversy that caused his discomfort. After all, other knowledge systems never suffered from a lack of disputation, although there the debates typically took place between commentators or subcommentators and rarely involved criticizing the root texts. In Sanskrit poetics, however, there is no clear source of authority, and this is directly related to the fact that authors constantly appealed to personal or societal preferences and used statements such as “we like this too” as clinching arguments. If the striving for systematization along the lines of the older, more prestigious disciplines—seen already in Bhāmaha’s work and brought to new heights by successive generations of thinkers, particularly in Kashmir—was one major vector in the development of Sanskrit poetics, the appeal to the immediate and irreducible aesthetic judgment of the individual critic was an important countervector.

The tension between these two forces is exacerbated by the fact that the subject matter of the discipline, namely, the practice of poetry, not only continued to evolve but also had an ethos of innovation, so that, counter to the hegemonic śāstric view that practice lies outside history, Sanskrit literary theorists were acutely aware of the fact that taste is subject to change.¹⁷³ Indeed, from the very beginning of the tradition there is a strong sense of theoretical open-endedness, as is exemplified by Daṇḍin’s statement that *alaṃkāras* are endless, “because new types are being coined even as we speak,” and by Ratnaśrījñāna’s explanation that “because each person finds different poetic expressions appealing, the process by which critics identify more and more categories will never come to an end.”¹⁷⁴ At the same time, Daṇḍin himself strives to limit the number of ornamental devices to a core set (*bīja*), which, as Ratnaśrījñāna explains, encapsulates the general principle that all additional devices have in common.¹⁷⁵

This tension between judgments that are personal and always subject to change and theoretical foundations that are all-encompassing is found in each and every treatise in Sanskrit poetics and figures prominently in every single controversy. It is perhaps not by chance, then, that this tradition’s first memorable moment is the intense and occasionally bitter argument between Bhāmaha and Daṇḍin, just as its last hurrah, some one thousand years later, is marked by the intense disputation of another pair, Appayya Dīkṣita and Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, many of the theoretical, subjective, and regional differences of the early discussion surprisingly reincarnate in this later duo, although to trace these, we need an altogether different study.

¹⁷² See note 71 above.

¹⁷³ For a discussion of the distinct historical and theoretical awareness in Sanskrit poetics, see McCrea (forthcoming). For the ethos of innovation in Sanskrit poetry, see Bronner et al. (forthcoming).

¹⁷⁴ *Kāvyaadarśa* 2.1: *te cādyāpi vikalpyante kas tām kārtsnyena vakṣyati*, on which Ratnaśrījñāna comments: *te cālaṃkārah kimapi dīrghaṃ kālam ārabhyādyāpi, idānīm yāvad vikalpyante prabhidyante, abhiyuktair ayam ayam iti pratipurūṣam aparāparoktiviśeṣānivr̥tteh, na tv iyatā labhyate.*

¹⁷⁵ *bījaṃ pratiniyatam sakalavyaktivyāpi sāmānyam rūpam* (ad *Kāvyaadarśa* 2.2).

¹⁷⁶ In between there were other such pairs, as Gerow (1977, p. 233) has already noted. On this last pair, see Bronner and Tubb 2008.

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