A NOTE ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE

BHĀMAHAVIVARAṆA ATTRIBUTED TO UDBHATA

by

J. L. MASSON
University of Toronto

Recently Professor Raniero Gnoli has published a volume entitled
Udbhaṭa’s Commentary on the Kāvyālaṃkāra of Bhāmaha (Dept. of
Archaeology of Pakistan & Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo
Oriente, Rome, 1962). In the Introduction (XIII) he writes:

Two years ago, there have come to light in the vicinity of Kafirkoth a certain
number of fragmentary leaves and minor fragments (many of them extremely
minute and containing only a few aḵṣaras) of a manuscript in birch-bark,
written in Śāradā characters. The period to which this MS. belongs is probably
the 9th-11th cent.

On p. XVI he says:

... the work contained in this MS. is a commentary on Bhāmaha’s Kāvyālaṃkāra,
to be identified, to my mind, with the lost Vivaraṇa of Udbhata, who, so far
as we know, was Bhāmaha’s only commentator.

There are in all fifty-three fragments with writing on both sides. From
these, Gnoli considers three fragments to offer evidence that this work
is indeed the lost Vivaraṇa of Udbhata. Again, of these three, by
far the most important fragment is the first one that comments on
Bhāmaha I, 9 (fragment number 10). It is primarily on the basis of this
fragment that Gnoli has based his contention that we have here Udbhata’s
lost work. Now this identification has been doubted by Professor Raghavan
at the time of the twenty-first session of the All-India Oriental Conference,
held in Srinagar in 1961. At the time he said:

... here in Swat valley, the old Udḍiyāna, the expedition conducted by Prof.
Tucci and his pupil Dr. Gnoli in 1959 has brought out a most surprising set of
fragments in partly burnt-out birch-leaves, in the local Śāradā script of about
the 11th or 12th centuries. These fragments, photos, transcriptions and print-
proofs of which have been seen by me, contain Bhāmaha’s Kāvyālaṃkāra
together with a commentary. This is the only commentary on Bhāmaha found
anywhere and from our available Alamkāra-literature we know there was only
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one commentary on Bhāmaha and that by Udbhata of Kashmir. One is therefore inclined to take this commentary as Udbhata’s and Gnoli claims that this is “without any doubt the lost vivaraṇa of Udbhata.” If it is so, this would be perhaps one of the foremost discoveries of our times. But having examined all the fragments, I find it is not possible to assert that it is Udbhata’s. There are some clear tests to identify Udbhata’s Bhāmahavivaraṇa, and as these fragments are meagre, we can apply only one of these tests. In one of the fragments, numbered 4 [the present No. 10] by Gnoli, we have Bhāmaha I.9:

\[
\text{sa}b\text{da} \text{sa} \text{ch} \text{an} \text{do} \text{bhidhānārthāḥ itihāsāśrayāḥ kathāḥ}
\]
\[
\text{loko yu} \text{kti} \text{ḥ kalāḥ ceti manta} \text{tavāḥ kāvyahetavāḥ}
\]

This is a crucial verse so far as Udbhata’s commentary is concerned. Students of the Dhvanyāloka know that when elucidating at the beginning of the work the text bhāktam āhūs tam ane and its vṛtti, Abhinavagupta quotes from Udbhata’s Vīvaraṇa on the verse given above. He says here that to explain why Bhāmaha after saying sabdaḥ first, said again abhidhāna in abhidhānarthāḥ, Udbhata interprets the second abhidhāna not as ‘word’ but as abhidhāna-vyāpāra, the significatory capacity of a word, which, Udbhata adds, is of two kinds: mukhya and guṇavṛtti. This is a very vital context as Udbhata shows here his acceptance in Kāvya of a Vṛtti other than mukhya. Unfortunately in the fragments discovered in the Swat valley, the gloss on this verse does not offer this well-known comment of Udbhata. Instead, the commentary in the fragment says the opposite, i.e. taking abhidhāna normally as sabda “abhidhānārthāḥ sabdānām arthaḥ” which is a serious obstacle to Gnoli’s proposed identification. But if Udbhata had first given the straight meaning and then given as an alternative or better interpretation what Abhinavagupta has quoted, and if in the broken-up portion of the leaf we have lost this second interpretation, we may then, at least tentatively, take this as the Bhāmahavivaraṇa of Udbhata. (op. cit., pp. 27-28)

I cannot agree with Professor Raghavan’s arguments, as will become clear in an examination of the actual passage. For easy reference let me give the Locana passage:

Here first, is the stanza from Bhāmaha as quoted by the Kaumudi:\(^1\)

\[
\text{sa}b\text{da} \text{ṣa} \text{ch} \text{andi} \text{bh} \text{d} \text{dhānārth} \text{ḥ iti} \text{hāsāśray} \text{āḥ kathāḥ}
\]
\[
\text{lōko yu} \text{kti} \text{ḥ kalāḥ ceti manta} \text{tavāḥ kāvyahetavāḥ}
\]

Here is the Locana: bhāmahanoktam — “śabdaḥ chando bhidhānārthāḥ” ity abhidhānasya sabdāḥ bhedam vyākhyātaṃ bhaṭṭodbhaṭo babhāsē — “śabdānām abhidhānām abhidhāvāpāro mukhyo guṇavṛttiś ca” iti.

Now the fragment edited by Gnoli as number 10 (pp. 7-8) reads:

\[
1 \times \times \times p\text{arijś} \text{nē p\text{ra}y\text{at}\text{i}t\text{a}v\text{y}a\text{m ity ala} m a\text{t}i\text{p\text{r}a\text{s}a\text{n\text{g}e}n}a} \times \text{tra śa} \times \text{su}
\]

\(^1\) References to the Kaumudi and Locana commentaries are from the edition of the first Uddyota of the Dhvanyāloka edited by S. Kuppuswami Sastri (Madras, 1944).