

Abhinavagupta on the Kashmirian *Gītā*

Announcement of the First Critical Edition of the *Gītārthasaṃgraha*, with the Reconstruction of the Text of the Kashmirian *Gītā* as Abhinavagupta Probably Read It and a French Translation of Both Texts

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Abstract This paper announces the first critical edition of Abhinavagupta's commentary (entitled *Gītārthasaṃgraha*) on the *Bhagavadgītā* in its Kashmirian recension, based on one Kashmirian Devanāgarī and seven Śāradā manuscripts in addition to two existing non-critical editions. The volume will also include a new edition of the Kashmirian recension of the *Bhagavadgītā* and a full French translation. After a short presentation of Abhinavagupta's commentary and a discussion of previous work on the subject, the manuscripts used are listed and briefly described. The question and importance of the Kashmirian recension of the *Bhagavadgītā* and problems of its edition are discussed in detail, with several textual examples. In order to give a sample of the *Gītārthasaṃgraha*'s contents, some of Abhinavagupta's remarkable interpretations are also highlighted, in particular tantric or esoteric ones. An Appendix deals with the closely related question of Bhāskara the Vedāntin, his date, his provenance and the *Gītā* recension he probably used for his commentary.

Keywords Abhinavagupta · Kashmirian recension · *Bhagavadgītā* · *Gītārthasaṃgraha* · Śaivism · Bhāskara · Rāmakaṇṭha · Critical edition

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Introduction

This paper announces the first critical edition of Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* entitled 'The Summary of the Meaning of the *Gītā*' (*Gītārthasaṃgraha*, henceforth GAS), which will be accompanied by a French translation based on the critically edited text. This commentary is probably an early work of the young Abhinavagupta (Sanderson 2007, pp. 359–60), and as the title shows, it is a short commentary (*saṃgraha*), sometimes glossing only a few expressions in the verses and sometimes not commenting on them at all. It is nevertheless a unique work in several respects.

First, it gives us a Śaiva interpretation of a fundamentally Vaiṣṇava work and therefore reveals the ways in which Śaivas, or at least certain Śaivas, appropriated this text. It thus shows us how much so-called 'sectarian boundaries' within the Hindu fold were not very rigidly understood, at least not in Abhinavagupta's Kashmir.

Second, given Abhinavagupta's tantric background, his commentary also provides us with numerous instances in which he gives particularly esoteric interpretations of some passages. He often introduces such interpretations by saying that he now gives the meaning of the verse according to 'secret teachings' (*rahasya*, *rahasyopadeśa*),¹ which mostly introduces esoteric Krama exegesis (Sanderson 2007, pp. 357ff.). These passages reveal that the text of the *Gītā*, which was certainly not meant to be particularly esoteric in the first place,² was nevertheless the object of esoteric exegesis, which could have been a means for certain esoteric schools to connect with more mundane (*laukika*) forms of religion. This remains hypothetical of course, but the existence of such highly speculative understanding of the *Gītā*, whether it circulated among members of esoteric schools³ or was Abhinavagupta's own personal interpretation, is itself remarkable.

Third, Abhinavagupta's commentary provides us with what is one of the earliest⁴ testimonies of the Kashmirian recension of the *Bhagavadgītā*. Even if he does not comment on every verse or every single word, it is clear that he used what we can call the Kashmirian recension, which diverges from the so-called Vulgate and from

¹ See for instance his fifth *maṅgala* verse (*udyamo me tadgūḍhārthaprakāśakaḥ*) and his commentary on 3.11, 3.48, and 11.18, also cited in Sanderson (2007, pp. 357ff.).

² See e.g. the often-cited passage saying that even women, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras* can have access to it and obtain final release: *mām hi pārtha vyapāśrītya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpayonayah | striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās te 'pi yānti parām gatim | 9.32.*

³ Abhinavagupta himself states in his invocation (verse 6) that he follows Bhaṭṭendurāja's tradition of interpretation, to which he adds his own thoughts (*bhaṭṭendurājād āmnāya vivicya ca ciraṃ dhiyā*). This suggests that he bases his interpretation on an existing (perhaps esoteric) tradition, but he does not refrain from providing his own personal understanding either (see e.g. his commentary on 3.11). Let us note that Vasugupta, founder of the Spanda school and belonging to the same *guruparamparā* as Bhaṭṭendurāja, is also known to have written a commentary on the *Gītā*, called the *Vāsavi Ṭīkā* (now lost); see J.C. Chatterji (1914, p. 37), Schrader (1935, p. 354, n. 20), Chintamani (1941, pp. xxi and xxxviii).

⁴ In addition to Rāmakaṅṭha's (950–1000) and, probably, Bhāskara's (9th c.?) works, the *Sarvatobhadra* and the *Bhagavadśāyānusaraṇa* respectively. For a more detailed discussion of these and the question of the Kashmirian recension, see below 'The Kashmirian *Gītā* and Its Relation to the Vulgate' and our Appendix.

the critical edition of the epic (Sukthankar et al.) in many respects.⁵ The evaluation of the differences is not at all straightforward. For the moment, we can only affirm that the majority of variants seem to show that the Kashmirian recension often retains the primary reading, but there are ambiguous cases and several additional verses in the Kashmirian *Gītā*, which may point to it being secondary, at least in some passages, as pointed out below.

No matter how we evaluate the relationship of the *Gītā* recensions, it is certainly an important task for us to provide the text of the *Gītā* as Abhinavagupta probably read it. Because of the concise nature of the commentary, it is often impossible to know what Abhinavagupta read exactly. We have nevertheless attempted to provide a full reconstruction of the Kashmirian *Gītā*, wherever possible on the basis of Abhinavagupta's commentary, and wherever his commentary could not help, on the basis of manuscripts containing his *mūla* and other Kashmirian testimonies.⁶

Previous Work and Our Task

We know of three previous editions of the *Gītārthasaṃgraha*, none of which is a critical one for several reasons. None of them has attempted to consult all available sources, no appropriate description of the manuscripts is given and editorial policies are not explained. Moreover, having consulted some MSS used by these editors and looking at their apparatus, it is also obvious that not all variant readings are reported.⁷ In spite of these common drawbacks of traditional Indian editions, one of them (Pandit Lakshman Joo's) is an outstanding contribution.

The first edition of the *Gītārthasaṃgraha* was published in Bombay by the Nirnaya Sagar Press in 1912, edited by Wāsudev Laxman Shāstrī Pansīkar (henceforth called the Pansīkar edition). In this thick volume, several other commentaries on the *Gītā* are also included, along with the text of the *Gītā* printed on top of each page. From this format, it is obvious that the editor did not intend to reproduce the variations in the text of the *mūla* as read by the different commentators. Indeed, Abhinavagupta's commentary very often does not correspond to what is printed as the *mūla*, which basically agrees with the Vulgate.⁸

This is, however, not the most serious problem. In many cases, Abhinavagupta's text does not yield any sense at all as printed, which renders this edition of his

⁵ For a discussion of the possible definitions of the Vulgate, see below 'The Kashmirian *Gītā* and Its Relation to the Vulgate.'

⁶ As explained below, these include most importantly Rāmakaṇṭha's and Bhāskara's commentaries as well as Kashmirian citations of the *Gītā*. Summaries such as Kṣemendra's *Bhāratamañjarī* are also helpful on some occasions.

⁷ Usually only one or two variants are reported on each page, often none at all, which in itself shows that only select variants have been included.

⁸ This is obvious from the very beginning, for Abhinavagupta reads and comments *sarvaḥśatrasamāgame* in the first verse instead of the well-known *samavetā yuyutsavaḥ*. Schrader (1930, p. 1) already pointed out this inconsistency.

commentary and any translation based on it of limited use.⁹ The editor states that he used a corrupt (lit. ‘not too accurate,’ *nātiśuddha*) MS allegedly from Kashmir¹⁰ and another one, said to be generally correct (*prāyaḥ śuddham*), which seems to be close to, but not necessarily identical with, our MS B.¹¹ Because the edited text is extremely corrupt, we have decided not to report any variant of this edition.

The second edition came out in 1933, in Shrinagar, produced by the young Swami Lakshman Joo, under the name of Pandit Lakshman Raina. He used several Śāradā MSS, without describing them in detail.¹² From the notes on variant readings (using four sigla: Ka Kha Ga and Gha), it can be inferred that he must have used more than the three main MSS he claims to in his introduction, but no matter how many MSS he used, he reports variants very sporadically. Moreover, he introduces his own emendations and conjectures without signalling them as such. Although most of these conjectures are rather ingenious, they mostly prove to be unjustified when looking at the manuscript evidence at our disposal.¹³ It is the edition of a learned pandit, who sometimes interferes with the text according to his personal taste. This is, nevertheless, the best available edition by far and was used, without any acknowledgement, by B. Marjanovic in his translation (2002).¹⁴

⁹ The editor himself remarks the incoherence of the text in a footnote at 2.48: *upalabdihobhayādarśapu-stakayor apīyam vyākhyā sambaddhātraiva dṛśyate*. [‘This incoherent/unconnected commentary is seen right here in both manuscripts we have obtained.’] Arvind Sharma’s English translation (1983), which is unfortunately based on Pansīkar’s edition, is problematic in several places, although he occasionally consults Kashmirian variants given in the critical edition of the *Gītā*. For instance in 1.1 Sharma does not seem to notice that Abhinavagupta’s *mūla* is different from Pansīkar’s text, the former reading *sarvakṣatra-* (with all the Kashmirian sources), the latter *sarvakṣetra-* (with the Vulgate). Therefore, Sharma fails to translate the explanation of *kṣatra* derived from the root *kṣad-* according to Abhinavagupta’s commentary. Similarly, it is unclear whether Gnoli’s Italian translation (1976) is based on Pansīkar’s or Lakshman Joo’s text of the *Gītā*, although his translation of the GAS is certainly based on Lakshman Joo’s edition. Nevertheless, it is possible that Gnoli follows Pansīkar, at least occasionally, since he seems to elude the difficulty already noticed about Sharma’s translation of GAS ad 1.1 for instance; Gnoli also appears to translate *sarvakṣetra-* instead of *sarvakṣatra-*, which is the variant supported by our MSS and by the semantic analysis given by Abhinavagupta.

¹⁰ This MS was provided by Pandit Kedāranāth, Durgāprasād’s son. It is possible that this MS is the same as our S₅ in Śāradā script, found in the BORI and also used in the Tirupati edition by Sankaranarayanan (discussed below), but the editor does not provide any information about the script.

¹¹ It is said to come from Deccan College, Pune. Since variants are rarely reported in the Pansīkar edition, we cannot be certain that our MS B in Devanāgarī (from the BORI) is identical with this. See also Schrader (1930, p. 4).

¹² He states to have used three Śāradā MSS, but also to have made a copy of the first one ‘with the help of many other manuscript copies’, which suggests that his so-called first MS (= Ka?) is the result of conflating several ones.

¹³ See for instance his conjectural reading *samaśīrṣakatayā* for *samatayā* in the *avataṛaṇikā* to 1.1, which is not supported by any evidence in the MSS at our disposal; or the reading *anabhāvāt* (*anabhāva* as a word being a hapax) for *abhāvāt* in 2.16, again without any manuscript support. The latter conjecture is probably due to the omission of a previous negation in his edition.

¹⁴ The Sanskrit text given in this translation agrees with Lakshman Joo’s edition, with the addition of typographic errors, which, surprisingly, often agree with those of the e-text (dated 2011) of the Muktabodha Indological Research Institute, also based on Lakshman Joo’s edition. See e.g., in *maṅgala* 2, *mādhānyataḥ* for *prādhānyataḥ*; in *maṅgala* 3, *ākāṅkṣya* for *ākāṅkṣayā* and *prathih* for *prathitaḥ*; GAS ad 1.1: *sarvakṣetrāṇām* for *sarvakṣatṛāṇām*; BhG 1.9, where he adds (agreeing with the Muktabodha e-text) a ‘*nāsti*’ in the second hemistich, which produces faulty metre; BhG 1.26, where he reads *piṭṛn atha* instead of *piṭṛn atha*; BhG 18.62, where he reads *tatprasādāt*, which is the text of the Vulgate,

Another great merit of Lakshman Joo's edition is that he includes the text of the *Gītā* as probably read by Abhinavagupta.¹⁵ He does not say so, but his readings often (though not always) seem to agree with the Kashmirian recension of the *Gītā*,¹⁶ and it certainly corresponds on the whole to what Abhinavagupta probably read. Indeed, so much so that occasionally Lakshman Joo even changes the text of the *Gītā* in accordance with what he thinks Abhinavagupta had in front of him.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Lakshman Joo is silent on how he constitutes the text of the *Gītā*, which manuscripts he used for it and what editorial principles he adopted. This, however, did not deter the editors of the *Mahābhārata* from using this edition of the *Gītā* as if it were a manuscript, saying that 'the printed text can reasonably be taken to represent Raina's best MS' (Belvalkar 1947, p. lvii). Therefore, the siglum S₃ in the *Gītā* as printed in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* does not represent a manuscript, but Lakshman Joo's text, which is a methodological problem.¹⁸ Moreover, the siglum C_g represents exactly the same text, for it is meant to stand for what Abhinavagupta read according to Lakshman Joo's edition.¹⁹

Although it is evident from the small number of variants in the footnotes that Lakshman Joo did not report all the variants, he did so on a number of occasions, especially when the reading was somewhat problematic.²⁰ Some of these variants are helpful for us in establishing the reading, therefore we have decided to report all

Footnote 14 continued

whereas the GAS comments on *matprasādāt*, with all the philosophical implications of that variant; GAS *ad* 18.62: *hiraṇapotakāḥ* (for *harinapotakāḥ*) and so on. See also *ṣetrajñāḥ* (obviously a barbarism) in his translation of GAS *ad* 13.3, which is but what he must have heard or grasped of his master's pronunciation of the *visarga* in *ṣetrajñāḥ*. This last error shows that Marjanovic must have based his translation on his notes reproducing his master's (Prof. Shri Narayana Mishra's) oral teaching. Another proof of this is his translation of *pratiṣṭhā* in GAS *ad* 14.27, which he translates as 'seed' instead of 'seat' (*in aham eva hi brahmaṇaḥ pratiṣṭhā*), a result of having misheard his master.

¹⁵ He reports variants of Ka, Ga and Gha for the text of the *Gītā* (e.g. p. 32 Ka, p. 33 Ga and once p. 111 Gha), which means that he had at least three manuscripts to constitute the *mūla*.

¹⁶ The question of what can be called the Kashmirian recension of the *Gītā* is discussed below 'The Kashmirian *Gītā* and Its Relation to the Vulgate.'

¹⁷ This results in a completely unsupported reading of *mūḍhācāraḥ* for *mīthyācāraḥ* in 3.6d. Here, Abhinavagupta probably summarizes the verse by contracting two adjectives of the *Gītā*, *vimūḍhātmā* and *mīthyācāraḥ*, into one *mūḍhācāraḥ* (the reading of all our MSS). Lakshman Joo, however, seems to assume that Abhinavagupta must have read *mūḍhācāraḥ* in the text of the *Gītā* itself, and replaces the received reading of *mīthyācāraḥ* (read by all the Kashmirian sources as well as the Vulgate) by *mūḍhācāraḥ* in the text of the *mūla*. Later on, the commentary on verse 12 cites this compound once more, and all MSS read *mīthyācāraḥ* in the commentary. This is changed again into *mūḍhācāraḥ* by Lakshman Joo, this time to be consistent with his previous conjecture. We are grateful to Yuko Yokochi who contributed to solving this problem.

¹⁸ Another 'error of method' in Belvalkar's treatment of the *Gītā* recensions is pointed out by van Buitenen (1965, p. 103); for Belvalkar simply uses T.R. Chintamani's select extracts to report Bhāskara's readings. For these problems, see below 'The Kashmirian *Gītā* and Its Relation to the Vulgate.'

¹⁹ This results in such readings in the apparatus of the critical edition as *mūḍhācāraḥ* for *mīthyācāraḥ* in 3.6d (see note 17), which is in fact Lakshman Joo's conjecture, but appears as supported by S₃ and C_g in the critical edition.

²⁰ At least this is our impression, see e.g. in the commentary on 3.15, p. 36, where he rejects the reading of all his available MSS (probably considering a citation from Manu an interpolation); or in the *mūla* at 3.39b, in which he rejects his MS Ga (*indriyeṣu ha*), although this is what Abhinavagupta seems to read (*utpattisamayē 'lakṣya indriyeṣu*), and adopts *indriyaiḥ saha* of the Vulgate (agreeing with our S₁ and S₂).

the variants found in Lakshman Joo's edition, in addition to report of course the readings Lakshman Joo adopted, both for the commentary and for the *Gītā*.

The third edition was published in 1985, in Tirupati, by Sankaranarayanan at the Sri Venkateswara University. In addition to Lakshman Joo's edition, the editor also uses a Śāradā manuscript (the same as our S₅) and a rather corrupt Devanāgarī one (our B), both from Pune. As we shall see, the additional manuscript evidence used here consists of two sources that are certainly not among the most useful ones. But more importantly, this edition does not question most of Lakshman Joo's unmarked conjectures²¹ and reproduces them often without any sign to show that they are actually conjectures. In fact, the text of the commentary as given by Sankaranarayanan deviates very rarely from Lakshman Joo's edition, except for the fact that *pratīkas* are used particularly generously. This overuse of the *pratīkas* is not based on manuscript evidence, but is a personal decision of the editor, 'for the sake of convenience' (p. liii). Similarly to Lakshman Joo, Sankaranarayanan also seems to interfere with the text of the *Gītā* when he deems it necessary, without any support from the manuscripts.²² Because of the heavy reliance of this edition on Lakshman Joo's, and because we have consulted the MSS used in it ourselves, we have decided not to include the variants of this edition, unless they deviate from Lakshman Joo's.²³

From the description of the available editions, the need for a critical edition seems to be rather obvious. We have thus collected all manuscript sources we were aware of, out of which the most important ones seem to be the Śāradā manuscripts.

Manuscript Sources of the Edition

We have identified altogether ten manuscripts containing the *Gītārthasaṃgraha*, out of which five (S₁, S₂, S₆, S₇ and J) also contain the text of the *Bhagavadgītā*. All the ten manuscripts consulted are on paper, seven of them are written in Śāradā characters (under the siglum S) and three in Devanāgarī. Out of these ten manuscripts, only eight have been fully collated and used to constitute the text. This was done because after collating the introductory verse and the first chapter, it turned out that two of the Devanāgarī manuscripts are not particularly useful: one of them (from Jammu, see J₂ below) is very corrupt and transmits a large number of

²¹ See e.g. at *avataraṇikā* to 1.1 cited above (accepting Lakshman Joo's *samaśīrṣakatayā* for *samatayā*, or rather, correcting it to [or misprinting it as?] *samaśīrṣatayā*); see also in the commentary on 3.12 printing *mūḍhācārah* following Lakshman Joo rather than the MSS' *mīthyācārah*. Neither of these is identified as a conjecture.

²² Sankaranarayanan had no additional evidence for establishing the text of the *Gītā*, therefore wherever his text reads differently, it is because of his (often silently made) conjectural emendations. They are sometimes very little supported (e.g. in 3.3a conjecturing *puraikoktā* for *purā proktā* without any MS evidence), but sometimes appear to be justified on the basis of Abhinavagupta's text (such as *indriyeṣu ha* in 3.39b cited in note 20).

²³ It does happen occasionally that the editor provides a very good conjecture or insight. At 3.39b cited above (note 20), *indriyeṣu ha* is what Abhinavagupta seems to read, but Lakshman Joo adopts the Vulgate's *indriyaiḥ saha* for some unaccountable reason. Sankaranarayanan's edition adopts, rightly, *indriyeṣu ha* (which is also the reading of Lakshman Joo's MS Ga), without, however, noting whether it is a conjecture or MS reading.

obvious errors; the other one (from the BORI, see B below), although it contains fewer minor mistakes, often transmits corrupt or secondary readings (e.g. *akṣāder* for *kṣader* in 1.1, *pāṇḍavaḥ* for *pāṇḍavāḥ* in 1.1, *śeṣabuddhā* for *viśeṣabuddhyā* in 1.35). If the readings of these two manuscripts had been included in the edition, it would have resulted in an inflated apparatus, which is already rather voluminous as it stands, and would have slowed down the collation procedure considerably. The variants in these two MSS for the introductory verse and the first chapter shall be made available in an appendix, which will show that sometimes both manuscripts transmit the same secondary reading. Furthermore, their readings also often agree with those of Pansīkar's edition, which suggests that the manuscripts used in Pansīkar's edition may also belong to this relatively corrupt subgroup. In fact our B and Pansīkar's edition agree so often that initially we thought that Pansīkar used B, but this hypothesis is contradicted by some disagreements of variants. It must also be pointed out that this B is identical with manuscript B of the Tirupati edition published by Sankaranarayanan; one could therefore also consult that edition to see what B reads. However, comparing our collation of the first chapter with that of Sankaranarayanan's edition, it seems that the latter omits to report a large number of small variants found in B, thus, it cannot be taken to represent B faithfully. Our list of MSS with the abbreviations used is as follows:²⁴

S₁ = Śāradā on paper, Banaras Hindu University acc. no. C 42 (S. no. 3G/3425). 88 folios. Very clear and neat handwriting. Marginal additions by a second hand. Small vertical lines to separate words and *avagraha* signs to mark various elisions of the *a* are added in a less thick ink and probably by a second hand (these marks are not reported). Also contains the text of the *Gītā*, usually according to the Vulgate. A lot of insertions and glosses are seen in the margins, both in the original hand and in a second hand, whose *akṣaras* are thinner and whose writing is less regular. No date, but the writing was commissioned by a *śaiva* devotee called Nārāyaṇa. Catalogued in Tripāṭhī (1971, pp. 334–5).

S₂ = Śāradā on paper, Banaras Hindu University acc. no. C 1016 (S. no. 3G/3446). 79 folios. Also contains the text of the *Gītā*. The text of the *Gītā*, when it runs through several verses, is usually indented. This *Gītā* follows mainly the Vulgate, but occasionally it is the only MS that has the good Kashmirian *Gītā* reading (in e.g. 1.10). Dated 1906–7 AD. Catalogued in Tripāṭhī (1971, pp. 336–7).

S₃ = Śāradā on paper, Banaras Hindu University acc. no. C 1099 (S. no. 3G/3297). 34 folios. Contains only the commentary. Dated *saṃvat* 82. Catalogued in Tripāṭhī (1971, pp. 332–3).

S₄ = Śāradā on paper, Banaras Hindu University acc. no. C 3981. (S. no. 3G/3444) 117 folios, bound as a book. Very clear and neat hand, but several small errors. Contains only the commentary. The MS starts with other texts, such as a certain *Bhuvanamālinīkalpavaraṇa*. Lots of marginalia and sometimes very idiosyncratic readings (in e.g. the commentary on 1.1 *aparīhartavyāni* for *apahartavyāni*). Ends

²⁴ Note that we use digital photos for the collation of these MSS.

abruptly in the middle of the *Stavacintāmani* with commentary, page 126 of KSTS ed. Not dated. Catalogued in Tripāthī (1971, pp. 336–7).

S₅ = Śāradā, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 163/1883–84. (New no. 1517.) The same as MS S in Sankaranarayanan's Tirupati edition. Not catalogued. For a detailed description, see Sankaranarayanan (1985 part 1, pp. xlix ff.). Contains only the commentary. Several marginal glosses. No date. Many small errors.

S₆ = Śāradā, Shrinagar, Oriental Research Library, n. 2308. Bound as a book. Large, thickly written pages. Contains only the commentary with *pratīkas* till verse 2.11. Verse 2.11, which is missing in the Vulgate, is found in S₆, which has its first citation of the *Gītā* at this point including the preceding speaker indication. It then omits the subsequent verses till 14 and gives the full text of the *Gītā* from verse 15 onwards. Dated 1896–7. Written by a certain Kṛṣṇadāsa.

S₇ = Śāradā, Shrinagar, Oriental Research Library, no. 1612. This manuscript also contains extracts from Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on the *Gītā*. Includes the text of the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* is written in larger characters on each page with a wide margin, and extracts from the commentaries are copied in the margins at the appropriate places. There are numerous omissions in Abhinavagupta's commentary, the scribe (or a scribe somewhere in the transmission) perhaps made a deliberate choice of copying only certain passages. Given the format, it seems that first the text of the *Gītā* was written in full, and then the commentaries were added to it, i.e. this *Gītā* may have come from outside the transmission of the commentary. Whatever the case may be, this *Gītā* seems to represent the Kashmirian recension and, in addition to being conform to Abhinavagupta's commentary, it also agrees mostly with Rāmakaṇṭha's and Bhāskara's readings and Schrader's edition of the Kashmirian *Gītā*. Incomplete, stops at 16.11c, no date.

J = Jammu, Shri Ranbir Sanskrit Research Library Jammu Tawi, N. 209. 64 folios. Devanāgarī. Contains the text of the *Gītā*. A lot of obvious mistakes, but often seems to retain original readings going with the Śāradā MSS. Seems to transmit the Kashmirian recension of the *Gītā* on the whole. No date. Catalogued in Stein (1894, p. 195) as *Bhagavadgītārthasaṃgraha* under no. 930, said to be written in modern Kashmirian writing (*navīnā kāśmīrikī lipiḥ*).

Manuscripts consulted but not collated for the edition:

J₂ = Jammu, Shri Ranbir Sanskrit Research Library Jammu Tawi, N. 250. Devanāgarī. Contains only the commentary. Often agrees with B, both having secondary readings. Incomplete. Stops at commentary on 18.67. No date.

B = Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute MS no. 422/1875–76 (new no. 28), in Devanāgarī. Same as MS B in Sankaranarayanan's 1985 edition described in part 1, pp. xlix ff. Contains only the commentary. With many secondary readings, often agreeing also with J₂. Dated 1895.

The Kashmirian *Gītā* and Its Relation to the Vulgate

While preparing the edition of the commentary, it became increasingly apparent that a new edition of the *mūla*, i.e. the Kashmirian *Gītā*, was inevitable. Five of our manuscripts also include the text of the *Gītā*, but in spite of this evidence, it is sometimes very difficult to decide what Abhinavagupta could have read, given the concise nature of the commentary and because the Kashmirian manuscripts also seem to have been influenced by the Vulgate.²⁵ We therefore realized that external sources also needed to be consulted to reproduce Abhinavagupta's Kashmirian *Gītā*, which led us to consider various questions concerning the Kashmirian recension and its status as compared to the Vulgate.

The textual reconstruction of the *Gītā* should certainly start with that of the *Mahābhārata*, since, no matter how we try to establish the different layers of composition of the epic, the *Gītā* is part of it. For a start, a definition of what the Vulgate consists of should be found. Now, the Vulgate of the epic itself is considered, by scholarly consensus, to be identical with the Poona edition by Kinjawadekar (1929–1936), which includes Nīlakaṇṭha's commentary. One could therefore identify the Vulgate of the *Bhagavadgītā* with what is printed in the Poona edition, which is what Belvalkar (1941, p. 18, note 3) and Biardeau (2002 I, pp. 18–20) do.

Next to this edition, however, we also have the text of the *Gītā* that Śāṅkara (and his school, as emphasized by Schrader 1935, p. 148) comments upon.²⁶ Because of Śāṅkara's importance in Indian thought, and because he is perhaps the earliest known commentator of the text,²⁷ his *mūla* (Āpaṭe 1936; Gokhale 1950) has come to be seen as *the Gītā* by several scholars, such as Schrader (1930, p. 18, 1935, p. 148, 1934, p. 352), T.R. Chintamani (1941, p. xx), van Buitenen (1965, p. 104) and Kato (2014, p. 1146). Let us note that Śāṅkara does not comment on the first 57 stanzas, which includes the entire first chapter.²⁸ It is interesting to observe in this context that Tadpatrikar in his edition of Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on the Kashmirian *Gītā* gives Śāṅkara's variants for comparison (*śāṅkarapāṭhaḥ*) at each

²⁵ The strong influence of the Vulgate even on Kashmirian sources was already pointed out by Schrader (1930, p. 2). Belvalkar (1945) expressed doubts about the existence of a Kashmirian recension and the rather overpowering influence of the Vulgate, maintaining that in fact no real Kashmirian recension had ever existed. We can prove at least part of Schrader's argument, namely that variants from the Vulgate influenced the copyists: for when we consulted and checked the e-text of Lakshman Joo's edition prepared at the Muktabodha Institute, it turned out that the copyist of the e-text replaced several times the Kashmirian readings of Lakshman Joo's edition with those of the Vulgate. Thus, the overpowering influence of the Vulgate can be felt even to this day. E.g. in 2.1c the e-text reads *viṣīdantam* (Vulgate) for *sīdamānam* (Kashmirian/Lakshman Joo); 2.12 [= 2.11 Vulgate] reads *aśocyān anvaśocas tvam* (Vulgate) for Lakshman Joo's Kashmirian *aśocyān anuśocaṃs tvam*; 2.55 [= 2.53 Vulgate] reads *yadā sthāsyati niścalā* (Vulgate) for *yadā sthāsyati niścitā* (Kashmirian/Lakshman Joo).

²⁶ We take Śāṅkara to be the author of the *Gītā* commentary attributed to him, although the authenticity of this text has been questioned several times (see e.g. Sarma 1933a, Chintamani 1941, p. xxiv, Mayeda 1965).

²⁷ This depends on the identification and date of Bhāskara, who may have been Śāṅkara's immediate successor or even his contemporary. For a discussion, see the Appendix.

²⁸ This implies that one cannot speak of the Vulgate for this chapter before Rāmānuja (11th–12th c.), as van Buitenen (1965, p. 103) observes. For more on this question, see Bansat-Boudon (2015, p. 93).

verse, below the Kashmirian reading. He thus also appears to consider Śāṅkara's text the Vulgate.

What may be called the third Vulgate was edited as part of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* and reprinted in 1945 separately by Belvalkar. This text corresponds mostly to Śāṅkara's text except for 14 minor variants and has been considered the Vulgate by some scholars such as Gnoli (1976, pp. 39–40) and even, somewhat surprisingly, by van Buitenen in his translation of the *Gītā*, published in 1981.²⁹ Since this text has become regarded as the received text of the *Gītā*, we refer to this edition in our apparatus. Let us remark here, nevertheless, that in this part of the *Mahābhārata*, the editors did not maintain their general principle of following the Kashmirian recension on the whole.³⁰ As has been suggested,³¹ this is perhaps due to the importance of Śāṅkara and his version of the *Gītā*, which was too well-known to replace, even if Belvalkar seems to argue otherwise.³² Whatever the reasons were for this choice, here we have, by and large, Śāṅkara's *Gītā* again.

Next to these three, which are slightly different versions of what we may call the Vulgate of the *Gītā*, the existence of a distinct Kashmirian recension was noticed early on.³³ Otto Schrader's study (Schrader 1930) of the Kashmirian recension is a very valuable source for us, for he notes all the variants compared to the Vulgate, on the basis of a birch-bark manuscript of Śāradā characters (dated 1750) and on the basis of what he manages to reconstruct as the Kashmirian readings from Rāmakaṅṭha's and Abhinavagupta's commentaries.³⁴ Schrader did remark that the Kashmirian readings appeared to be primary at several places.³⁵ His opinion started a heated debate³⁶ that has flared up even recently, but contrarily to the original debate, without any actual philological arguments and purely on a moral-political basis.³⁷

²⁹ See van Buitenen (1981, p. xii): 'The text reproduced is that presented by S.K. Belvalkar as part of the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* [...]. For the *Gītā* itself this is virtually the vulgate.' It is surprising that van Buitenen bases his translation on the Vulgate after showing the numerous problems it contains in his paper of 1965. See below.

³⁰ See van Buitenen (1965, p. 101): 'In the critical edition of the Bhagavadgītā the remarkable fact emerges that, while the MSS. of the Śāradā Kashmir tradition are generally the most authoritative for the earliest text of the epic, including the Bhīṣmaparvan where the Gītā is found, nevertheless they are found to be late and secondary as far as the text of the Gītā is concerned.'

³¹ This is not explicitly stated by van Buitenen, who writes (1965, p. 102): 'The earliest testimony concerning the Gītā is that of Śāṅkara, and the Gītā text adopted by the Editor is really Śāṅkara's text with but 14 highly insignificant variants.'

³² As pointed out above, his argument is that no real Kashmirian recension ever existed.

³³ Note that Belvalkar (1941, pp. 25–6) does not consider the Kashmirian recension a regional one, but a Śāiva sectarian one. For more on this question, see Bansat-Boudon (2015, pp. 94–5).

³⁴ On the history of this discovery, see Bansat-Boudon (2015, p. 92).

³⁵ For numerous examples, see Schrader (1930, pp. 12ff.).

³⁶ See Schrader (1930) and (1935), Edgerton (1932) and Belvalkar (1939, 1941, 1945). For more on this debate, see Bansat-Boudon (2015, pp. 93–5).

³⁷ See Adluri-Bagchee (2016). The authors do admit that 'a complete evaluation of Schrader's claims is only possible by re-examining all his sources and comparing these with the editor's decisions in the Critical Edition.' Perhaps because they do not intend to take up such a time-consuming task, they do not discuss any textual passages thoroughly from a philological point of view, and when they mention

We do not consider it our task to take sides in this controversy, but, as we shall point out, we do think that at certain places the Kashmirian recension offers what appears to be an earlier version of the text than the Vulgate, without this being the case everywhere. What is certainly important for us is the existence of Schrader's work, which, in addition to Lakshman Joo's *Gītā*, gives us support when considering certain variants to be Kashmirian and helps us to reconstruct Abhinavagupta's *mūla*.

In addition to Schrader's invaluable work on the Kashmirian recension, several other editions have proved to be helpful for the reconstruction of Abhinavagupta's *Gītā*. Most importantly, the texts of two other early commentators who were Kashmirian or at least used some form of the Kashmirian *Gītā* must be taken into account. One is Bhāskara's *Bhagavadāśayānuseraṇa* (available only for the first nine chapters), which may tentatively be dated to the 9th century. This Bhāskara is certainly identical with the one who also wrote a commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* (Kato 2011), and it seems that his *Gītā*, although perhaps not fully agreeing with what may be called the Kashmirian recension, was certainly close to it in many important respects (for more discussion, see our Appendix).³⁸ Because of Bhāskara's relatively early date, and since he was possibly Kashmirian, his testimony is very important when reconstructing the Kashmirian recension. Unlike Abhinavagupta's, his commentary is quite detailed and fills in the gaps wherever Abhinavagupta's commentary is lacking or too concise to reconstruct his reading. We have consulted the only edition of the text published by Subhadra Jha (Benares, Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, 1965), of which a preliminary study had been provided by van Buitenen in the form of an article dated 1965. Curiously, although van Buitenen examined Bhāskara's commentary on the Kashmirian *Gītā* and showed that its readings were better than those of the Vulgate, he adopts an ambiguous position when he translates the BhG (1981). He claims (p. xii) to follow Belvalkar's critical edition, but to 'have added occasional variant readings, for which there is better authority' and to 'have appended in [his] textual notes a further list of readings based on the early commentary of Bhāskara.'³⁹

Footnote 37 continued

variants, they dismiss them as irrelevant for the reader 'using the text for self-reflection and self-transformation.'

³⁸ On the question of the relation of Bhāskara's *Gītā* and the Kashmirian *Gītā*, see van Buitenen (1965, p. 104), which, however, does not solve all the problems. He concludes that 'for the Bhagavadgītā too the K[ashmirian] tradition carries on a text, however deteriorated here and there, that was authentic and of which we have the earliest record in Bhāskara's *bhāṣya*.' See also our Appendix.

³⁹ In fact, in his textual notes (p. 161) van Buitenen does not give any list of Bhāskara's readings, but only refers to his 1965 paper 'A Contribution to the Critical Edition of the Bhagavadgītā' and adds: 'I have accepted into the text only those readings that make any difference in the translation.' However, in reality, van Buitenen retains very few of Bhāskara's readings even when they would make a difference in the translation. He accepts, for instance, the transposition between Bhīṣma and Bhīma in 1.10, *ta eva naḥ sthitā yodhūṃ prāṇāṃs tyaktvā sudustyajān* (for the Vulgate's *ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe prāṇāṃs tyaktvā dhanāni ca*, on this reading, see below, note 46) in 1.33cd, *paradharmodayād api* (for the Vulgate's *paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ*) in 3.35d, and *vā* 'in the sense of *iva*' (for the Vulgate's *ca*) in 3.39d. It is nevertheless rather puzzling that in his translation, van Buitenen does not retain the very first 'Kashmirian' variant (1.1b), which is also read by Bhāskara, namely *sarvakṣatrasamāgame* (for the Vulgate's *samavetā yuyutsavaḥ*), although van Buitenen (1965, p. 103) starts his list of Bhāskara's variants with this one, observing that it is stylistically superior to the Vulgate's version.

The other commentary is Rāmakaṇṭha's⁴⁰ *Sarvatobhadra* (950–1000), which is unambiguously of Kashmirian origin and is equally indispensable. Schrader was the first to have identified it in the form of a MS (MS 3271, Library of the India Office), dated 1750, written in Kashmirian *nāgarī*, and copied from an even older Śāradā original (Schrader 1930, pp. 1–4, Chintamani 1941, p. xiii); and with the discovery of this commentary, he also launched the debate on the Kashmirian *Gītā*. We have consulted three editions of this text, published by S.N. Tadpatrikar (Poona 1939), T. R. Chintamani (Madras 1941), and Madhusudan Kaul Sastri (Srinagar 1943), of which Chintamani's has proved to be the most faithful to Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary as well as to the Kashmirian *Gītā* (see at 2.5 discussed in note 59.) Rāmakaṇṭha's text is available for the whole *Gītā*, although his commentary is very succinct on the first chapter. His testimony is as valuable for the constitution of the Kashmirian recension as Bhāskara's.

There exists a third published commentary on the Kashmirian *Gītā*: the *Ānandavardhinī*, written by Ānandavardhana in Kashmir, in the 17th century. He should not be confused with the famous author of the *Dhvanyāloka* (9th century). Belvalkar published his commentary in 1941, which made him change his mind concerning the Kashmirian recension of the *Gītā*: he admits in his introduction that another version of the *Gītā* did exist, which was different from the Vulgate. He nevertheless sees it as a sectarian, Śaiva version rather than a regional, i.e. Kashmirian one. Since this commentary is much later than Abhinavagupta's and was certainly more exposed to the influence of the Vulgate, we have decided not to use it for our edition in general, but to consult it only occasionally, to be in a better position to evaluate the transmission.

After establishing the external sources we may use in addition to Abhinavagupta's commentary and the manuscript sources thereof, let us look at the different cases in which an editorial decision must be made as to which reading to accept.⁴¹ We have thus far encountered three different situations.

1. Firstly, when a reading differs from the Vulgate and is supported by Abhinavagupta's commentary, it evidently needs to be adopted, for our primary aim is to reconstruct Abhinavagupta's *Gītā*. In such cases, there are three different ways in which the readings of our MSS may be distributed.

(a) In several cases, most or all of our MSS follow Abhinavagupta's reading, thus fully supporting our choice against the Vulgate.⁴²

⁴⁰ Rāmakaṇṭha, the author of the *Sarvatobhadra*, is probably identical with the author of the *Spandavivṛti* (1913, KSTS 6) and of one of the commentaries on the *Stavacintāmaṇi*, known from citations. See Bansat-Boudon–Tripathi (2011, p. 257, n. 1168). Note that Kaul's edition (1943) uses three MSS, among which 'one transcript by Rājānaka Lakshmaṇa Brahmachārin of Srinagar,' that is Lakshman Joo, first editor of the *Gītārthasaṅgraha*, which shows Lakshman Joo's interest for other commentaries of the Kashmirian *Gītā* in addition to the GAS.

⁴¹ We have decided not to provide a stemma of our manuscripts, neither for the commentary nor for the *mīla*, for the transmission is clearly cross-contaminated. We shall nevertheless provide some indication as to the relationship of the manuscripts, as far as such a relationship can be determined.

⁴² One such case is in 2.19b, where we have adopted *vināśīno* 'prameyasya' against the Vulgate's *anāśīno* 'prameyasya'. Here, the change seems to have been made from *vināśīno* to *anāśīno*, in other words, the Kashmirian version seems to be primary. *Vināśīno* describes bodies (nom. plural *dehāḥ* in the verse), but

- (b) In a number of cases, only some of our MSS agree with what Abhinavagupta reads, most commonly S₂ and S₇ (usually also followed by J), while S₁ and S₆ reproduce the Vulgate.⁴³
- (c) It also happens that none of our MSS reads what Abhinavagupta does. In these cases, we still have the evidence of Lakshman Joo's edition and Schrader's Kashmirian *Gītā* in most cases, which often confirm that Abhinavagupta's reading did survive in the Kashmirian transmission at least somewhere.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it can also happen that we decide against the readings of these editions if Abhinavagupta's commentary clearly reads differently, and opt for Abhinavagupta's reading.⁴⁵

The cases (b) and (c) are important in that they show the overwhelming influence of the Vulgate, which must have been strong enough for the scribes to go even against the commentary's reading they copied.

2. Secondly, there are variants at places that Abhinavagupta left uncommented, therefore we cannot be sure what he read. Our manuscripts may have various distributions of variants, some agreeing with the Vulgate, others not; and it may even happen that all or almost all agree with the Vulgate. In such cases, we primarily considered the testimony of other commentaries of Kashmirian origin,

Footnote 42 continued

because of the adjective qualifying the soul in the genitive right next to it (*'prameyasya... i.e. śarīraṅḥ*), it must have been felt more appropriate to have another adjective of the soul here too, in the genitive. Only S₁'s version before correction agrees with the Vulgate. Note that this variant was not listed by Schrader, although Rāmakaṅṭha clearly reads *vināśino* in his commentary (*vināśino vīnaśvarasv-abhāvāt*) and this is what Chintamani prints in his edition (although Tadpatrikar's edition retains *anāśino* without any variant or note).

Similarly, in 2.63, we have adopted *yattasyāpi/yat tasyāpi* against the Vulgate's *yatato 'pi*. Abhinavagupta's gloss is clear, for he interprets both *yattasya* and *yat tasya*. Our MSS are unanimous on this reading, and Rāmakaṅṭha's commentary also supports it in the editions. The Vulgate may again be secondary, possibly to disambiguate *yat(-)tasya*.

⁴³ In 2.71d, for instance, we have the very minor variant *sā rātriḥ* in Abhinavagupta's commentary and our S₂, S₇, J as well as in Lakshman Joo's edition and in Schrader's text against the Vulgate's *sā niśā*, followed by our S₁ and S₆. Note that although both Chintamani and Tadpatrikar print *niśā* here in their editions, Rāmakaṅṭha must have read *rātriḥ*, as he glosses it with *niśā*. In this case, one could argue both ways to explain the variant.

Incidentally, the same distribution of the MSS readings can be observed in 2.12b, which reads *prājñāvan nābhībhāṣase* in the Kashmirian version for the Vulgate's *prajñānvādāmś ca bhāṣase*, but here, we have not got Abhinavagupta's gloss (only Rāmakaṅṭha's). For a discussion of these two variants, of which the Kashmirian seems to us certainly primary, see Schrader (1930, pp. 13–4, under II.11). Schrader (1930, p. 13) remarks that Speijer 1902 already noticed the textual problem. For a different opinion, see Adluri-Bagchee (2016, p. 11).

On the basis of this common distribution of readings, and because our S₇ seems to be the closest to the Kashmirian recension, we have opted for S₂ and S₇ when they went against S₁ and S₆ and the Vulgate, such as in 2.60d *sthiraprajñas tadocyate* (supported by Rāmakaṅṭha again) for the Vulgate's *tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā*.

⁴⁴ We also assume that Lakshman Joo had some manuscript evidence for what he printed. In 2.63a, for instance, all our five available MSS read *tāni sarvāṇi samyamya* with the Vulgate, but Abhinavagupta clearly reads what is transmitted in Schrader's and Lakshman Joo's editions: *tāni samyamya manasā*; for he glosses it with *ya evaṃ manasā indriyāṇi niyamayati [...]*.

⁴⁵ See the example cited above of 3.39b in notes 20 and 23.

most importantly Rāmakaṅṭha's and Bhāskara's readings, whenever they were available.⁴⁶

It must be noted that we looked first of all at the commentaries themselves for support, and not the readings of the editions, which in some cases proved to go against the commentator(s).⁴⁷ For a commented word, especially if there is more than a mere gloss, has more chance to survive intact in the transmission of the commentary; and the two commentators mentioned were certainly much closer to Abhinavagupta in time than any of our manuscripts. Sometimes we needed to take into account (and adopt) even simple glosses, although they are more likely to get corrupted, for they provided at least some commentarial support.⁴⁸

Similarly, if a variant is supported by other Kashmirian citations or summaries of the *Gītā* (even if outside the commentarial tradition of the text), we have decided to accept it as belonging to the Kashmirian recension.⁴⁹

3. Thirdly, there remain a number of instances in which Abhinavagupta is silent, and we have not got any unambiguous support from the other Kashmirian commentators, nor from Kashmirian citations. We have established two guiding principles for these cases.

(a) If the reading of the Vulgate appears slightly more correct grammatically or syntactically, we assume that it results from standardization, as is the case in

⁴⁶ In 1.33d, for instance, three of our four available MSS (S₁, S₂ and J) agree with the Vulgate in reading *prāṇāms tyaktvā dhanāni ca*, and this is also what Lakshman Joo adopts. Abhinavagupta does not comment this expression, and we only have one of our MSS (S₇) and Schrader's *Gītā* that read *prāṇāms tyaktvā sudustyaṅ*. Unfortunately, Rāmakaṅṭha has no commentary on this part of the text, but both Chintamani and Tadpatrikar print the latter reading, therefore this is what appears to be transmitted with Rāmakaṅṭha's commentary in MSS having both his commentary and the *mīla*. Luckily, Bhāskara's commentary is available and it further confirms that the Kashmirian reading is *prāṇāms tyaktvā sudustyaṅ*, for it says *sudustyaṅ prāṇāms tyaktvā*. This example also shows that our S₇ is often more faithful to the Kashmirian reading than our other MSS. Let us remark here that the expression *prāṇāms tyaktvā sudustyaṅ* or *tyaktvā prāṇāms sudustyaṅ* is a typical expression of the *Mahābhārata* (5 occurrences in the critical edition).

⁴⁷ Let us consider the case of 2.6d. The Vulgate as well as our S₁ and S₂ have *te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*, against which our S₇ and J, together with Lakshman Joo and Schrader, have *te naḥ sthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ*. Neither Abhinavagupta, nor Rāmakaṅṭha glosses the word, although the editions of Rāmakaṅṭha's commentary read *naḥ*. Looking at Bhāskara's text, the edition reads *te 'vasthitāḥ*, going with the Vulgate. However, Bhāskara gives the following gloss: *ta evāsmākaṃ pramukhe saṃmukhe sthitā iti*—which shows with the word *asmākaṃ* that he certainly read *naḥ* in the text. Therefore, we have adopted *naḥ* in our edition.

⁴⁸ In 1.47c, we only have our S₇ and Schrader's text that read *utsṛjya*, against the rest of our MSS (S₁, S₂ and J), Lakshman Joo and the Vulgate, which give *visṛjya*. If we look at the other Kashmirian commentaries, Rāmakaṅṭha gives no gloss (although the editions give *utsṛjya*), but Bhāskara has *dhanur utsṛjya* in his commentary, supporting the variant *utsṛjya*, albeit without giving a synonym.

⁴⁹ We have not yet met particular cases; but works that we intend to consider include for instance the *Mokṣopāya*, Kṣemendra's *Bhāratamañjarī* (see Schrader 1935, p. 147), Yogarāja's (11th c.) commentary on the *Paramārthasāra* of Abhinavagupta, and Jayaratha's (13th c.) commentary on the *Tantrāloka*. It is worth noting that Yogarāja appears to quote the Vulgate text; yet, out of this, no definitive conclusion can be drawn, for Yogarāja's *Gītā* citations may well have been assimilated to the Vulgate in the transmission. More than a century later, Jayaratha still cites only the Kashmirian recension. On this point, see Schrader (1930, p. 2, n. 1 and 1935, pp. 147–8), Bansat-Boudon (2015, p. 95). We also intend to take into account the *Parimala ad Mahārthamañjarī*, which quotes the Kashmirian text (see *ad* 70).

a number of unambiguous examples given below. Therefore, we accept the reading that is potentially perceived as less correct, for the direction of change from less to more correct forms is the general rule in the transmission of epic and purāṇic sources.

- (b) If it is not possible to establish a clear difference of grammar or syntax, then we assume that the reading that does not agree with the Vulgate is more likely to be the Kashmirian reading, therefore we accept it as such. This principle of going for the ‘deviant’ reading is based on the following two observations:

First, it is more likely that such ‘deviant’ readings are primary in the Kashmirian recension, simply because it is much more likely that the influential Vulgate became dominant against such readings (and contaminated the Kashmirian transmission) than that ‘deviant’ readings arose against the widely accepted Vulgate. This principle was also used in the reconstruction of the *Mokṣopāya*, whose editors chose to prefer readings that were not those of the widely circulating *Yogavāsiṣṭha*.⁵⁰

Second, readings not agreeing with the Vulgate have been confirmed as Kashmirian by the other Kashmirian commentators on several occasions.⁵¹ We have concluded from this, too, that it is much more likely in general that the ‘deviant’ version is the Kashmirian one.⁵²

Therefore, in such ambiguous cases we consistently adopt all deviations from the Vulgate as Kashmirian and thus apply an ‘extremist’ point of view whereby we reconstruct, in the end, the most deviant Kashmirian version as compared to the Vulgate.⁵³

Some Interesting Examples of Abhinavagupta’s Interpretation

Abhinavagupta provides us with a rather unusual interpretation of the text from the very beginning. He tells us that some people understand the place name ‘Kuruṣetra’ to mean the field of the sense organs (*kuru* = *karaṇa*) and this is where the battle takes place, i.e. in the body. Although he first presents this interpretation as if it belonged to others (*kecit*), he then continues his own

⁵⁰ See Krause-Stinner in *Mokṣopāya* vol.1, pp. xxviii ff. and Hanneder in *Mokṣopāya* vol. 2. p. ix.

⁵¹ See, for instance, the examples cited in parts 1 and 2 in this section.

⁵² In 2.9c, all our manuscript sources and the Vulgate read *na yotsya iti*, against Lakshman Joo’s *na yotsyāmīti*. Schrader does not mention a variant here, from which we must conclude that his text agreed with the Vulgate. Looking at the other commentaries, Chintamani prints *yotsye*, while Tadpatrikar gives *yotsyāmi* for Rāmakaṇṭha’s *mūla*, but Rāmakaṇṭha does not say anything at this point. Bhāskara’s *mūla* has *yotsyāmi* printed and here we seem to have a confirmation from the commentary, which also has *yotsyāmīti*. However, at this point, the commentary has a variant, which is *yotsye*—thus, no conclusion can be drawn from it. In this case, we have more support for the variant of the Vulgate, at least in numbers. Our policy is nevertheless to choose what differs from the Vulgate, i.e. we adopt *na yotsyāmīti*.

⁵³ In this, our conclusion and method agree in principle with Schrader’s way of reconstructing the Kashmirian recension, for he also opts for an ‘extremist’ position by going for the ‘deviant’ readings as Kashmirian. Our main aim is, however, to reconstruct Abhinavagupta’s *mūla*, and for this reason, our choices need not agree with his, nor with those of editors who edited other Kashmirian commentaries.

understanding in the same vein, explaining that the battle is fought between the forces of knowledge, represented by the Pāṇḍavas, and ignorance or mistaken thought constructs (*saṃkalpāḥ*), embodied by the Kauravas. Similarly, *dharma-kṣetre* is understood to mean ‘in field of the [supreme] *dharma*’, which, according to Abhinavagupta, is seeing one’s self truly; and the locative *sarva-kṣatrasamāgame* (which is the Kashmirian reading for the *pāda* in which the Vulgate reads *samavetā yuyutsavaḥ*) denotes for him the conflict of all internal forces such as passion and lack of passion, anger and patience etc.

After this interpretation, which places the whole battle inside the self, it does not come as a surprise in 3.11 that he glosses the word ‘gods’ (*devāḥ*) by ‘goddesses of the senses’ (*karaneśvaryāḥ*), remarking that they are well-known in secret teachings (*rahasyaśāstraprasiddhāḥ*, referring to Krama teachings). Propitiating deities (*devān bhāvaya-*) thus denotes, according to this understanding, making the goddesses of the senses devour the objects of the senses (*viśayān bhakṣaya-*). If one performs their propitiation, those deities shall assimilate one to the Self (*tadātmasādbhāvana*) and one shall obtain final release.

This idea of liberation is further elaborated in the commentary on verses 3.14–15. These verses of the *Gītā* describe the way in which creatures are nourished by food (*anna*), which is produced thanks to rain (*parjanya*), rain being secured by sacrifice (*yajña*), which in turn is offered in ritual (*karman*). Ritual then has its origin in Brahman/Vedic injunction, which comes from the Imperishable (*akṣara*).

This passage is again given an esoteric interpretation in Abhinavagupta’s commentary. For him, food stands for the objects of enjoyment or of experience (*bhogyā*), rain is the enjoyer or subject of experience (*bhoktr*) and sacrifice is the act of enjoyment (*bhogakriyā*). Ritual act (*karman*) in turn means the autonomy of the power of action (*kriyāśaktiśvātantrya*), and this autonomy derives from the supreme Self (Brahman) that manifests itself out of its free will. The supreme Self is an active entity, which comes from the Eternal One (*akṣara*), i.e. from pure, undisturbed (*praśānta*) consciousness (*saṃvit*). In Abhinavagupta’s understanding, these six elements enumerated form a six-spoked wheel, which revolves and may lead, depending on its construction, to the maintenance of mundane existence or to the attainment of final release.

At the end of this chapter, Abhinavagupta proposes another secret teaching about the last verses. These verses (3.47–8) mention the Ātman as the ultimate entity beyond intellect (*buddhi*); but Abhinavagupta suggests that for those who know the secret teachings (*rahasyaavid*) it is not Ātman but the ultimate (*para*) ‘I’ (*ahaṃkāra*) that is referred to here, which is an affirmation of the identity of the self and the universe in the form of ‘I am everything’ (*sarvam aham*). The term *ahaṃkāra* here does not refer to the limited and limiting *ahaṃkāra* of the Sāṃkhya, the ego, which belongs to the bound soul (*paśu*). Rather this *para* ‘*ahaṃkāraḥ*’ stands for the pure, absolute *aham*, ‘I’, from which the central Śaiva notion of *ahantā* is constructed.⁵⁴ With such awareness of non-duality, it is not possible to be split up and experience feelings such as anger, which is based on duality. Thus, it is this ‘I’ of nondual

⁵⁴ *buddher yaḥ paratra vartate paro 'haṃkāraḥ sarvam aham ity abhedātmā sa khalu paramo 'bhedaḥ.*

consciousness that one must fully grasp, in order to annihilate anger that comes from ignorance with it.⁵⁵

Some Interesting Cases of Variants in the Kashmirian Recension of the *Gītā* Compared to the Vulgate

In what follows, two kinds of variants shall be discussed. First, those that affect the meaning of a verse, second those that do not change the meaning as compared to the Vulgate, but which show some form of language variation. Belvalkar (1945) argued that the variations found in the so-called Kashmirian recension are too trifling to consider it an actual recension and that no major variations can be found in the different recensions or rather, versions, of the *Gītā*. Although we agree that these versions do not constitute fundamentally different texts, the differences are important enough to speak of recensions. In some places the readings are different enough so that readers, whether specialists or not, may want to know about their existence. As our example of verse 2.5 shows below, it is not the same whether it is Arjuna who is said to desire wealth or his elders.

Variants Affecting the Meaning

In the following three examples, the Kashmirian recension appears to yield better sense in our opinion. Moreover, it seems that in each case, the change from the Kashmirian version to the Vulgate is easier to explain than the other way round.

Verse 1.10

The first one was already discussed in detail by van Buitenen (1965, pp. 99ff.) in the context of Bhāskara's commentary:⁵⁶

Kashmirian recension

aparyāptaṃ tad asmākaṃ balaṃ bhīmābhirakṣitaṃ |
paryāptaṃ tv idam eteṣāṃ balaṃ bhīṣmābhirakṣitaṃ ||

Vulgate

aparyāptaṃ tad asmākaṃ balaṃ bhīṣmābhirakṣitaṃ |
paryāptaṃ tv idam eteṣāṃ balaṃ bhīmābhirakṣitaṃ ||

As van Buitenen also argues, the Kashmirian version⁵⁷ yields good meaning (NB it is Duryodhana who speaks): 'That army protected by Bhīma is not large for us; but this army [of ours] protected by Bhīṣma is large for them.'

⁵⁵ For some other examples of a Śaiva interpretation, see Bansat-Boudon (2015, pp. 98–101).

⁵⁶ Let us remark that Abhinavagupta's commentary also supports this reading.

⁵⁷ Van Buitenen (1965) argues for Bhāskara's version, which he considers different from and earlier than the Kashmirian recension (see Appendix); in any case these versions or recensions agree on the reading of this verse.

The Vulgate, which swaps Bhīma and Bhīṣma, requires the reader⁵⁸ to interpret *aparyāpta* and *paryāpta* in an unnatural way: ‘Our army protected by Bhīṣma is not limited in number; but this army of theirs, protected by Bhīma, is limited in number.’ For *paryāpta* normally means ‘abundant, copious, full’; but here, if we take the Vulgate, it must be interpreted to mean ‘limited in number’ in order to yield the required meaning. Indeed, it seems to us that the meaning of *paryāpta* recorded in dictionaries in the sense of ‘limited in number’ is only to be found at this place, in other words, this meaning was invented only to explain this passage.

In addition to the fact that the Kashmirian reading yields better meaning, the direction of change is easy to explain from the Kashmirian recension to the Vulgate. For *asmākaṃ* and *eteṣāṃ* were probably wrongly understood in the possessive sense (‘our army/their army’ rather than ‘for us/for them’), which triggered the exchange of the two names.

Verse 2.5

Kashmirian recension:

*gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvāñ chreyaś cartuṃ bhaiḥṣyam apīha loke |
na tv arthakāmas gurūn nihatyā bhuñjīya bhogān rudhirapradigdhān ||*

For it is better to live on alms in this world without killing one’s noble elders than to kill one’s elders due to one’s desire for wealth in such a way that I would enjoy pleasures tainted with blood.

Vulgate:

*gurūn na hatvā hi mahānubhāvāñ chreyaś bhoktuṃ bhaiḥṣyam apīha loke |
hatvāarthakāmāms tu gurūn ihaiva bhuñjīya bhogān rudhirapradigdhān ||*

For it is better to live on alms in this world without killing one’s noble elders. Having killed my elders who desire wealth, I would enjoy pleasures tainted with blood.

The first line does not create any difference in meaning, although it may be remarked that the Kashmirian recension has a more idiomatic version (*bhaiḥṣyam car-*). The second line is also more idiomatic in that *śreyaś* or *varam* commonly stands with *na (tu)*, but there is an asymmetrical construction there in that instead of a second infinitive, the text has an optative of the first person singular. Indeed, it may be this asymmetrical syntax that triggered the change in the Vulgate.

The real difference in meaning, however, lies in that the Kashmirian variant in the nominative singular, *arthakāmas*, attributes the desire for wealth to the subject (Arjuna/ the general subject), while the Vulgate makes the elders desire wealth (*arthakāmāms tu*). The latter version seems less satisfactory, for the question is not so much whether one is to kill greedy elders, but rather whether one is to kill one’s elders for wealth, a question that is also referred to in 1.35.

The Kashmirian reading is indirectly supported by Abhinavagupta’s commentary, for he identifies this part of the verse as pointing out a plan for a particular

⁵⁸ Van Buitenen (1965) shows that commentators also struggled to find an appropriate meaning here. Oddly, Schrader (1930, p. 23) does not point out this variant.

result (*phalaviśeṣānusaṃdhāna*), which would be wealth here. The nominative singular is clearly supported by Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary, who glosses the word in question with *dhanalipsuḥ* 'wishing to obtain wealth' in the nominative singular.⁵⁹ Bhāskara's gloss also agrees with the Kashmirian reading, paraphrasing *arthakāmas* with *dhanābhilāṣī san*.

Verse 3.35cd

Kashmirian recension:

svadharme nidhanaṃ śreyaḥ paradharmodayād api ||

Vulgate:

svadharme nidhanaṃ śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ ||

The Kashmirian recension has a comparative with an appropriate complement in the ablative: 'death according to one's own *dharma* is better even than prosperity according to another person's *dharma*.' The Vulgate lacks this ablative and stresses more the disastrous consequences if one follows someone else's *dharma*: 'death according to one's own *dharma* is better, another person's *dharma* brings disaster.' The Kashmirian recension has, once again, a variant that reads smoother with a comparative complete with the ablative. It also brings out the contrast death-prosperity *nidhana-udaya*. The Vulgate gives the impression of trying to insist more on how bad it is to follow someone else's *dharma*, for it excludes the possibility of prosperity in that case and states more categorically that following another's *dharma* can only be wrong. This normative and ethical intention, namely to reject more categorically the moral fault of observing another's *dharma*, seems to be the reason for which the Kashmirian version could have been changed into the Vulgate's reading.

Slightly Irregular Forms and/or Usage

As pointed out above, the Kashmirian recension seems to use slightly incorrect forms or syntax at several places. These all seem to be primary compared to the readings of the Vulgate, the direction of change being more likely to go towards the (hyper-)correction of such irregularities.

In particular, the Kashmirian recension uses the middle form of verbs that commonly exist only in the active, most notably, the middle participle *sīdamāna-* in 1.28ab, 2.1c, 2.10d, which are always hypercorrected in the Vulgate to *viśīdant-*. Similarly, in 3.36c the Kashmirian recension uses the middle participle *anicchamāna* (*anicchamāno 'pi balād ākrāmyeva niyojitaḥ*), which is duly corrected in the Vulgate to *anicchan* (*anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ*). In the famous sentence (2.3), which in the Vulgate reads with the injunctive *klaibyaṃ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha* ('do not be unmanly, O Pārtha'), the Kashmirian recension uses the

⁵⁹ Note that this reading is given by Chintamani, who rejects the variants *dharmalipsuḥ* and *arthalipsuḥ*, while Tadpatrikar retains the Vulgate's *arthakāmāns* in the *Gītā* and *dharmalipsuḥ* in the commentary, rejecting *dhanalipsuḥ*. In our opinion, this is among the examples that show that Chintamani's edition is more reliable.

plain imperative (*mā klaibyaṃ gaccha kaunteya*), which is of common usage in more popular genres such as the epic (for the epic usage, see Oberlies 2003, p. 185 and references), but is frowned upon by grammarians. Although these slight irregularities do not affect the meaning, they are interesting to note, for they may give us a somewhat different picture of the composition of the text.

In all these instances, both concerning change of meaning and grammatical differences, our conclusion is that the Kashmirian recension represents an earlier version of the text compared to the Vulgate. This, however, does not mean that we can affirm the priority of the Kashmirian recension. At several places, the Kashmirian recension includes extra verses not found in the Vulgate.⁶⁰ Additional verses usually attest chronologically later accretion, but the evaluation of the additional verses in the Kashmirian recension is not straightforward. For this reason, and because we have not yet examined all the variants thoroughly, we cannot say anything definitive at this point about the relationship of the two recensions.

Conclusion

We hope that the descriptions and examples given above have shown convincingly that Abhinavagupta's commentary as well as his Kashmirian *Gītā* merit a critical edition. We believe that the *mūla* and the commentary are crucial for our understanding of the history of Indian religious thought and that they cannot be fully grasped if they are not reconstructed on a sound philological basis. Although collating all the sources and weighing the evidence carefully in every case may not always appear labour efficient enough, we hope that the result of our work will be useful both for scholars working on Śaivism and for those who study the textual history of the *Bhagavadgītā* and the ideas it conveys.⁶¹

Appendix: Bhāskara on the Kashmirian *Gītā*: A New Hypothesis

Bhāskara's Testimony

Bhāskara is a very important witness for our edition, no matter how his exact identity and date are determined, for, as shown by his readings, he comments on the Kashmirian *Gītā* or on a version of what can be identified as the Kashmirian *Gītā*, and gives a detailed commentary which allows us to reconstruct his *mūla*. It is generally taken for granted that he was a Vedāntin who also composed a *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* [BSBh]⁶² and that therefore he must have preceded

⁶⁰ For instance in chapter 2 between verses 10 and 11 and between verses 48 and 49 of the Vulgate. (These are verses 11 and 50 in our edition of the Kashmirian recension.)

⁶¹ For some notable studies, see Malinar (2007) and Ježić (1979, 1986, 2009).

⁶² That the Vedāntin Bhāskara, who belongs to the *jñānakarmasamuccayavāda* school comments on the Kashmirian *Gītā* is taken for granted by all scholars having worked in one way or the other on the *Bhagavadāśayānusaraṇa*, although van Buitenen has a rather unique opinion on the status of Bhāskara's *Gītā*, as we shall see. See also Ingalls (1967).

Abhinavagupta, who may even refer to him in his GAS as a previous commentator of the *Gītā* (GAS on 18.2).⁶³

Indeed, it is obvious from the edition of Bhāskara's *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* [GBh] also entitled *Bhagavadāśayānusaraṇa* (Subhadra Jha 1965, see also van Buitenen 1965, which is a preliminary text published as an article,⁶⁴ and Raghavan 1968) that it has Kashmirian variants from the very first verse, in which Bhāskara reads, with Abhinavagupta and Rāmakaṇṭha, *sarvaśatrasamāgame* for the Vulgate's *samavetā yuyutsavaḥ* (1.1b). Note also Bhāskara's reading of 6.7 (after Jayatīrtha's testimony, since the verse is missing in the MSS), which again agrees with that of Rāmakaṇṭha, Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana. Moreover, he also includes the 'additional' verse starting with *tvaṃ mānuṣenopahatāntarātmā* after Vulgate 2.10, characteristic of the Kashmirian recension.

Van Buitenen (1965), Subhadra Jha (1965), Raghavan (1968) and Kato (2011, 2014) have dealt with Bhāskara's so-called Kashmirian version, which appears (see, notably, van Buitenen's study, 1965) to be an 'extremist' version of the Kashmirian *Gītā*,⁶⁵ and, most probably, the most ancient evidence of its existence.

Which Bhāskara?

Yet, the very identity of this Bhāskara has been much debated, especially because the question of Bhāskara's identity is tightly linked with the question of the *Gītā*'s two recensions, the Kashmirian *Gītā* and the Vulgate, as we shall see. The rediscovery of Bhāskara's GBh and its tentative reconstruction from two fragmented MSS were a milestone in this debate.

As pointed out by previous scholars,⁶⁶ the name Bhāskara appears three times in the tradition as a commentator of the *Gītā*, mainly in a Vedāntin context, with the notable exception of Abhinavagupta's GAS. In the GAS, Bhāskara is merely mentioned as a previous eminent (*tatrabhavant*) exegete,⁶⁷ whereas in Vedāntin literature his name occurs in discussions of arguments proper to the Vedānta.

One of the two Vedāntin references is found in Vedāntadeśika's (1268–1370) commentary on the *Gītā*, the *Tātparyacandrikā*, which discusses several interpretations of Bhāskara's GBh from the perspective of the Viśiṣṭādvaita. These include

⁶³ GAS ad 18.2: *atra cādhyāye yad avāśiṣṭaṃ vaktavyam asti tat prāktanair eva tatra-bhavadbhaṭṭabhāskarādibhir vitatya vimṛṣṭam iti*, 'Whatever remains to be said on this chapter has been discussed at length by previous [exegetes] such as the revered Bhaṭṭabhāskara, etc.' We shall discuss the question below.

⁶⁴ Van Buitenen (1965, pp. 106–109) discusses the variants in the first chapter and lists them from the second chapter to the fifth. Although he gives the variant *sarvaśatrasamāgame* (1.1b), he does not retain it in his 1981 translation, see above, n. 39.

⁶⁵ 'Extremist' for it differs on most points from the Vulgate whenever one of the Kashmirian versions differs. However, Bhāskara's *mūla* does not record all the 'additional' verses read in Rāmakaṇṭha's and Abhinavagupta's *mūlas* and also 'shows differences from accepted Kashmirian readings' (Raghavan 1968, p. 282, n. 10).

⁶⁶ See Schrader (1934, p. 350, n. 8), Sarma (1933), Raghavan (1968, p. 282), and Kato (2011, p. vii).

⁶⁷ See also Sarma 1933, p. 670.

his understanding of BhG 18.64 (66 in editions of Vedāntadeśika's text), from which we may infer that Bhāskara's GBh was complete.⁶⁸

The second one occurs in Jayatīrtha's work (14th century), whose *Prameyadīpikā*, *dvaita* subcommentary on Madhva's *Gītābhāṣya*, criticizes Bhāskara's interpretations and even refutes Bhāskara's reading of 6.7b (*parātmāsu samā matih*) as a 'conjecture' (*kṛtrimaḥ pāṭhaḥ*). To do so, he uses two main arguments: 1. that Bhāskara rejects the traditional reading (*sampradāyagataṃ pāṭhaṃ visṛjya*), which has *paramātmā samāhitah* (that of the Vulgate commented upon by Madhva), and 2. that Bhāskara's reading creates redundancy (*punarukti*) with verses 9 and 32 of the chapter.⁶⁹ A *kṛtrimaḥ pāṭhaḥ* for which, unfortunately, there is no direct evidence from Bhāskara's GBh lacunary MSS, but which has proved, nevertheless, to be a Kashmirian reading: that of Rāmakaṇṭha (all editions) and that of Abhinavagupta (all editions). For here, Abhinavagupta does not only quote the *pratīka* as he usually does, but the first three *pādas*, 'as though to ensure the correct reading of *pāda* 2,' as Schrader (1930, p. 16) observes, before he rightly concludes: 'There seems to have been an early dispute on this śloka.'⁷⁰

The discovery of Bhāskara's GBh confirmed the existence of a Bhāskara, author of a commentary on the *Gītā*, who is attested by the Vedāntin tradition (and perhaps by Abhinavagupta, a question which we examine below), and who is also the author of a BSBh.

The discovery was made by V. Raghavan, who first found a fragmentary MS in the Banaras Sarasvati Bhavan in the forties, which preserved chapter 1 to chapter 7, although with a few lacunae. In 1953–4, the same scholar found another fragment in Śāradā in the Wellcome Library, London, which ran from ch. 4 to ch. 9, 'with a gap in chapter 6 coinciding more or less with the one in this chapter in the Banares ms.' (Raghavan 1968, pp. 281–2). This rediscovered but incomplete text was then published in Subhadra Jha (1965), by collating both fragmentary MSS.⁷¹

It should be noted, however, that Bhāskara's commentary on the *Gītā* had already been known to Chintamani (1941, p. xxviii),⁷² the editor of Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on the Kashmirian *Gītā*. In his edition, he speaks of a 'fragmentary copy,' breaking off after chapter 7 verse 16, which is undoubtedly the same incomplete manuscript that was found by Raghavan (1968, p. 281) in the Sarasvati

⁶⁸ See Sarma (1933, pp. 669–70).

⁶⁹ Six passages of the *Prameyadīpikā* refer polemically to Bhāskara's GBh (*prastāva*, 2.54, 6.7, 3.4, 3.42, 2.47; see Schrader 1934, p. 350); on Bhāskara's reading of 6.7b, see Schrader (1930, p. 16 and 1934, p. 350, n. 8), Sarma (1933, pp. 672–73), Raghavan (1968, p. 282) and Kato (2011, p. vii).

⁷⁰ Even Ānandavardhana's commentary confirms this Kashmirian reading, despite the somewhat arbitrary decision of Belvalkar's edition to retain *paramātmāsamā matih*. For Belvalkar himself notes that *parātmāsu samā matih* is the reading of his two MSS for the Kashmirian *Gītā* and of all the Kashmirian commentaries, including that of Ānandavardhana.

⁷¹ On this rediscovery, see notably Raghavan 1968, pp. 281–2. For details on this edition, see Kato 2011, pp. vi–vii.

⁷² Despite Raghavan's assertion (1968, p. 281): 'Bhāskara's Bhāṣya on the third Vedānta Prasthāna, the Bhagavadgītā, although found in the Banares fragment, had not become known among scholars.'

Bhavan, Banares, and was later used by Subhadra Jha along with the newly discovered MS of the Wellcome library, London. Chintamani (xlili–lxi) even establishes a comparative chart of the Kashmirian readings, which includes Bhāskara's readings up to the place where the MS breaks off.⁷³ He also compares parallel passages of Bhāskara's and Śāṅkara's commentaries on the *Gītā* (xxviii–xxx). This comparison is later completed by Raghavan's examination of the edited text (1968, pp. 283–292), which shows the way in which Bhāskara's and Śāṅkara's commentaries interact.

From the references Vedāntadeśika and Jayatīrtha make to Bhāskara's GBh, it was natural to infer that Bhāskara was most probably a *jñānakarmasamuccayavādin* (see Sarma 1933, p. 669; Chintamani 1941, pp. xxvii, xxx). The discovery of the actual text, albeit lacunary, confirmed the hypothesis.

Nevertheless, there remains a riddle: Abhinavagupta also mentions in the GAS (*ad* 18.2, see above) a previous eminent exegete, named Bhaṭṭabhāskara. Who is he? Is he Bhāskara, the Vedāntin, or another Bhāskara, the Kashmirian Śaiva, son of Divākara (hence his other name of Divākaravatsa), well-known as the author of the *Śivasūtravārttika* (published in the KSTS 4), of the lost *Kakṣyāstotra* (a hymn to the Goddess only known from citations),⁷⁴ and of the lost *Vivekāñjana* (also known by a citation in the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*, vol. I, p. 10, saying: *yad āha bhaṭṭadivākaravatsa vivekāñjane*).

At a time when nothing was known of the fragmentary MSS of Bhāskara's GBh, Schrader (1935, pp. 351–2) asserted that the Bhāskara Abhinavagupta speaks of must undoubtedly be a Kashmirian. Schrader's demonstration is based on four main arguments: 1. Abhinavagupta cannot have referred, especially with such reverence, to a scholar who was not Kashmirian, to an 'outsider';⁷⁵ 2. the title 'Bhaṭṭa,' which Abhinavagupta adds to Bhāskara's name,⁷⁶ is hereditary in Kallaṭa's line of pupils (and nowhere is the Vedāntin Bhāskara thus designated); 3. Abhinavagupta cannot have explicitly referred to a Vedāntin, since he clearly makes the point in the *avatarāṅikā* of 1.1 that the *Gītā* is not meant to teach *jñānakarmasamuccaya*;⁷⁷ 4. moreover, it is impossible that Abhinavagupta 'recommended a commentator whose

⁷³ Editing the *Ānandavardhinī*, Belvalkar (1941) also gives Bhāskara's Kashmirian readings, probably from Chintamani's table.

⁷⁴ The title *Kakṣyāstotra* is referred to in *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtivimarśinī*, vol. 2, pp. 301, 328, and vol. 3, p. 388 and in Yogarāja's commentary *ad Paramārthasāra* 51.

⁷⁵ A point which could be corroborated by a traditional legendary narrative, recorded by the *advaitin* Ānandānubhava, which shows Kashmirian pandits to be rather intolerant to outsiders from the South (Raghavan 1968, pp. 282–3).

⁷⁶ This honorific is confirmed in various sources such as in Bhāskara's *Śivasūtravārttika*, in which his name is repeatedly prefixed by *bhaṭṭa*. See the colophon to the first section: *śrīmadbhaṭṭadivākarātmaja-śrīmadācārya-bhaṭṭabhāskaraviracite śivasūtravārtike* [sic] [...] (KSTS 4: 28). Abhinavagupta also refers to him as Bhaṭṭadivākaravatsa (see *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtivimarśinī* vol. 2, pp. 13, 14, 145) as well as Yogarāja *ad Paramārthasāra* 35.

⁷⁷ Against Lakshman Joo's *na tu jñānakarmaṇī samaśīrṣakatayā* [unmarked conj.] *samuccyete ity atra tātparyam*, Schrader reads here, as we do in our edition in progress: *na tu jñānakarmaṇī samatayā samuccyete ity atra tātparyam* (see above, n. 13). We have nevertheless a different understanding of the sentence in the translation of ch. 1, on which Lyne Bansat-Boudon is working.

authorities (Brahmasūtra and Vedas) ignore, if not reject, his own sources of inspiration (Śivasūtra and Āgamas).’

Indeed, as suggested by some, Abhinavagupta could well have vehemently criticized Bhāskara’s views at some places such as *ad* 9.33–5 (Sankaranarayanan 1985 part 2, p. 203, n. 40 and 41, Gnoli 1976, p. 29, n. 23, and pp. 180–1, n. 14), although without naming him,⁷⁸ yet it does not follow that the Bhāskara to whom Abhinavagupta refers as *tatrabhavant* in GAS *ad* 18.2 (and whom he recommends to his readers for a more detailed exegesis than his own) is the same as the Bhāskara whose views he denounces.

Therefore, we believe that Schrader’s arguments are valid, and remain so even after the rediscovery of the GBh by Bhāskara, the Vedāntin.

Later on, Chintamani (1941, p. xxvii) was apparently of the same opinion, although less explicitly, on the mere basis of Bhāskara’s being referred to by Abhinavagupta as a commentator of the *Gītā*.⁷⁹

Thus, there may have been two exegetes of the BhG with the name Bhāskara: the Vedāntin, whose text has been rediscovered, and who is also referred to in some Vedāntin witnesses and the Kashmirian Śaiva, of whom the only evidence would be Abhinavagupta’s assertion, the difficulty being that not only is his *Gītābhāṣya* lost, but we do not even have any mention of its title.

The one with whom we are concerned in the process of editing and translating the Kashmirian *Gītā* is the Vedāntin Bhāskara, who, we believe,⁸⁰ is not the Bhāskara referred to by Abhinavagupta in the context of the *Gītā*.⁸¹

Nevertheless, it is not impossible that Abhinavagupta knew (see above, n. 78) of the Vedāntin Bhāskara and of his commentary on the *Gītā*. If this were the case, it could speak in favour of the Kashmirian origin of Bhāskara, as we will propose below. Indeed, it could explain that, as a man from Kashmir, Abhinavagupta, although disagreeing with Bhāskara, could have referred to his commentary on the *Gītā*. At the same time, in Abhinavagupta’s GAS no trace is found of a criticism of Śaṅkara’s *Gītā* interpretation, even covertly, thus Abhinavagupta does not appear to be aware of Śaṅkara’s commentary.

In any case, it hardly needs to be demonstrated that Bhāskara the Vedāntin is also the author of the well-known BSBh. First, it is expected of a Vedāntin to comment

⁷⁸ According to this view, Abhinavagupta’s detailed refutation is often directed against what seems to echo the very words of Bhāskara’s GBh as it has come down to us (see Sankaranarayanan 1985 part 2, p. 203, n. 40 and 41).

⁷⁹ Chintamani (1941, p. xxvii): ‘We know of the Kashmirian author Bhāskara [...]. To this Bhāskara and his commentary on the *Gītā*, reference is made by Abhinavagupta.’ Raghavan (1968, p. 283, and n. 9) is therefore wrong when attributing the identification of the two Bhāskaras to Chintamani: ‘The Bhāskara cited by Abhinavagupta here [*ad* BhG 18.2] had been taken as our Bhāskara [the Vedāntin] by some other scholars too.’ Note that Kato (2011, p. xxvi) eludes the difficulty, since he appears to consider silently the mention of Bhāskara by Abhinavagupta to be among the proofs of a Vedāntin Bhāskara.

⁸⁰ After Schrader, Chintamani and Raghavan (1968, p. 282).

⁸¹ As opposed to van Buitenen’s assertion (1965, p. 105): ‘Of the Bhaṭṭabhāskara mentioned by Abhinavagupta we know only that he had commented on the *Gītā*, but unless we assume that there were two Bhāskaras who commented on the *Gītā* we may safely conclude that Jayatīrtha’s Bhāskara and Abhinavagupta’s were the same person.’

upon the three *prasthānas* of the Vedānta, namely the BS, the BhG and the Upaniṣads, just as Śāṅkara does. Now in addition to Bhāskara's BSBh discovered in 1915 (even though the text is poorly edited, see Kato 2011, p. x),⁸² an internal reference by Bhāskara points to the existence of a commentary on the Upaniṣads (or at least on the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, see van Buitenen (1961, pp. 269ff.) and Kato 2011, pp. v–vi) written by him (BSBh ad 3.1.8). It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that Bhāskara also commented upon the *Gītā*, following Śāṅkara's example. Furthermore, it is beyond doubt that Bhāskara's two commentaries support the same doctrine belonging to the *jñānakarmasamuccaya* school, and that both give their author an opportunity to criticize Śāṅkara's interpretations.

Finally, as pointed out by Kato, the BSBh itself offers an additional clue: BhG 18. 61ab, as quoted in the BSBh 1.2.6, has the Kashmirian reading which is attested in Rāmakaṇṭha's and Abhinavagupta's commentaries on the *Gītā*, and which can be considered to be also the reading of Bhāskara, in spite of the absence of the actual passage in the MSS of his GBh (Kato 2011, p. xxviii [with a typo: xiii for xvii] and 2014, p. 1148).⁸³

Date

Since Bhāskara criticizes Śāṅkara's interpretations of both the *Gītā* and the BS, it is reasonable to consider Bhāskara posterior to Śāṅkara but anterior to Vācaspatimiśra (second half of the 9th century), whose *Bhāmatī* on 1.1.4 and elsewhere criticizes the views of Bhāskara's BSBh (see Schrader 1935, p. 348, van Buitenen 1961, pp. 268–273 and 1965, p. 105 and Raghavan 1968, p. 292).⁸⁴ Alternatively, one may assume that the debate is reciprocal between the two Vedāntin thinkers, and that Bhāskara could have been more or less contemporary with Śāṅkara.⁸⁵ In that case, Bhāskara's *mūla* would be the earliest evidence (c. 9th century) of the Kashmirian *Gītā*, Rāmakaṇṭha (or Rājānaka Rāma or Rāmakavi) being tentatively dated in the second half of the tenth century (ca. 950–1000 CE, see Sanderson 2007, p. 411),⁸⁶ Abhinavagupta at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries (c. 975–1025 CE, see Sanderson 2007, p. 303) and Ānandavardhana (not to be confused with the author of the *Dhvanyāloka*) in the 17th century.

⁸² Since then van Buitenen worked on a preliminary text of a revised edition, which Kato 2011 completed.

⁸³ The BSBh quoting BhG 18.61ab reads (against the Vulgate: *īsvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ hr̥ddeśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*): *īsvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ hr̥dy eṣa vasate 'rjuna*, which is the Kashmirian variant given by both Abhinavagupta and Rāmakaṇṭha (see Kato 2014, p. 1148).

⁸⁴ He would also be anterior to Abhinavagupta, if we accept that Abhinavagupta silently refutes Bhāskara's interpretations at some places.

⁸⁵ See Sarma (1933, pp. 666, 668) refuted by Schrader (1935, pp. 349–350), van Buitenen (1961, pp. 268ff.) refuted by Ingalls (1967, p. 61, n. 2). See also van Buitenen (1965, p. 105, n. 26). For a summary of the question, see Kato 2011, pp. xxiv–xxv.

⁸⁶ He claims himself to be the direct pupil of Utpaladeva (Sanderson 2007, p. 352).

Provenance: Is Bhāskara from the South?

Bhāskara's provenance seems to be at least as controversial as his date.

One may wonder why he should hail from the South, as assumed by Raghavan and others such as van Buitenen (1965, p. 105)⁸⁷ and Gnoli (1976, p. 29 and n. 23). One of the main arguments for his Southern origin comes from Ānandānubhava's assertion, himself from the South (Kanchipuram), according to which Bhāskara is from Karnataka (Raghavan 1968, pp. 282–3).

Now, although Bhāskara is a Vedāntin and knows Śāṅkara's works (the two commentaries on the BS and the BhG), this is not enough to conclude that he is of Southern origin, as is Śāṅkara; for, in that case, it remains unexplained why Bhāskara retains Kashmirian readings for his GBh.⁸⁸ Moreover, Abhinavagupta seems to criticize exegetic views that resemble Bhāskara's (see above). If those views can be shown to be Bhāskara's own (rather than more general views of *samuccayavādins*), then this could be an additional argument for Bhāskara's Kashmirian provenance.

Is Bhāskara's Gītā Kashmirian?

Before the discovery of Bhāskara's GBh, Schrader (1930, p. 16, 1934, p. 350, n. 5) deduced from the testimony of Bhāskara's reading of BhG 6.7 (as quoted and discussed by Jayatīrtha at the same verse) that Bhāskara may have had before him the Vulgate of the *Gītā* with only one or two Kashmirian readings.

Jayatīrtha himself, unaware of the existence of any Kashmirian *Gītā*, takes a Kashmirian reading for a conjecture (*kr̥trimah pāṭhah*), as mentioned above.

Nevertheless Schrader's conclusion and Jayatīrtha's hypothesis have been refuted by the discovery of Bhāskara's GBh MSS and their examination: the *Gītā* which Bhāskara comments upon is indeed the Kashmirian *Gītā*, or in any case a *Gītā* with readings that are mainly Kashmirian or agree with those of the other commentators of the Kashmirian recension.

In his edition of Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary, Chintamani (1941, pp. xxxi ff.), who had an incomplete MS of Bhāskara's commentary before him, already showed that the GBh by Bhāskara mostly conforms to the Kashmirian version, at least as far as the first seven chapters are concerned.

This was further shown in detail by van Buitenen (1965), although in a rather twisted way, as we shall see.

⁸⁷ He does so on the basis of a somewhat surprising argument: 'Elsewhere I have raised the question whether Śāṅkara and Bhāskara were not contemporaries—there is a bit of evidence to suggest that, in which case his home would be likely to be South-India.' Here van Buitenen refers (105, n. 26) to his 1961 paper (note the typo: he dates his paper to 1962).

⁸⁸ As Chintamani (1941, p. xxxi) lucidly puts it about Bhāskara, author of the GBh: 'The most interesting feature of this commentary is that it follows the Kashmirian Recension in most of the places. [...] Is this Bhāskara identical with the Kashmirian author or is he the same as the Vedāntin? If he is the Kashmirian, he shows himself to be aware of the works of Śāṅkara. *If he is not, how did Kashmirian readings find a place in his commentary?* [our emphasis]'

For, in order to reconcile, we suspect, Bhāskara's alleged Southern origin and the Kashmirian character of his *Gītā*, van Buitenen proposes an ingenious yet contrived thesis. He takes it for granted that the author of the GBh is a Vedāntin from the South, who lived in the 9th century, and that he commented on a *Gītā* different from Śāṅkara's Vulgate but of equal authority, while also having Śāṅkara's Vulgate before him. This hypothesis was already made by Schrader, although in a very limited context, that is on the sole basis of Jayatīrtha's remark, since Bhāskara's GBh was still unknown (1930, p. 16, n. 1 and 1934, p. 350, n. 5; see above). It was then also confirmed by Raghavan (1968, pp. 283ff.), through a meticulous examination of parallel passages in Śāṅkara's and Bhāskara's commentaries.

In the context, van Buitenen's conclusion (1965, pp. 104–5) is quite audacious and surprising: Bhāskara's *Gītā* would have thus been the 'prototype' of the Kashmirian *Gītā*, in other words, van Buitenen considers it to predate the so-called Kashmirian *Gītā*:

'[...] Bh.[āskara] had, besides Śāṅkara's Vulgate, another text which must be considered a Vorlage of what now survives as the Kashmir version. It is, however, not identical with it, an important fact not recognized by Belvalkar. [...] We do not know whether Bhāskara was a Kashmirian. We do know he had a text different from, sometimes superior to, the Vulgate of Śāṅkara and prior to, and consistently superior to, a version of the *Gītā* now known from Kashmir sources. [...] I believe that the conclusion is unavoidable that in the ninth century there existed a text of the Bhagavadgītā which had equal authority with that used by Śāṅkara; that it existed outside Kashmir; and that it is the prototype of the so-called Kashmir version. The consequence of this conclusion is that the Kashmir version is late and secondary not to the Vulgate, but to Bhāskara's text.'

One can see that van Buitenen's implicit conclusion is that there were three versions of the *Gītā*: the *mūla* commented upon by Śāṅkara and the *mūla* commented upon by Bhāskara (both authors, therefore both texts, from the South), as well as a third one, the so-called Kashmirian recension, whose prototype had been Bhāskara's *Gītā*.

In that case, a number of queries may arise:

1. How come the version of the *Gītā* van Buitenen identifies as a 'Vorlage' or a 'prototype' of the later Kashmirian recension was known only from that unique example of Bhāskara's *Gītā*? Why did it disappear from the South and elsewhere?
2. Where does the Kashmirian *Gītā* come from exactly? For it follows from van Buitenen's argument that Bhāskara's *Gītā* travelled to Kashmir in one way or another, and that it was adopted there and transmitted as a Kashmirian version up to Ānandavardhana. This is particularly improbable in the Kashmirian context, which is known to be rather conservative and resistant to external intrusion.

Furthermore, such a sequence of events would imply that the Kashmirian *Gītā* is a version without much regional peculiarity,⁸⁹ which would be rather difficult to maintain, since it came to be the current version among Kashmirian commentators of the *Gītā*, and since (with the notable exception of Jayatīrtha in 14th century) it has not been referred to by non-Kashmirian authors.

In other words, why should one take the Kashmirian version of the *Gītā* away from Kashmir, unless one tries to take Bhāskara away from Kashmir on the mere assumption that he was from the South?⁹⁰

We propose the following hypothesis: since Bhāskara has the Kashmirian readings on the whole and since one of the two MSS of his GBh is in Śāradā, he may well have come from Kashmir, whether he was Kashmirian by origin or not. At the same time, if we assume he comes from Kashmir, how could he have known Śāṅkara's Vulgate, of which no other Kashmirian commentator of the *Gītā* appears to be aware (Schrader 1930, pp. 7–8)?

There may be at least two possibilities:

1. either Bhāskara remained in Kashmir and Śāṅkara's Vulgate somehow reached him there,
2. or Bhāskara came from Kashmir (hence his attachment to the Kashmirian readings), but may have travelled to the South or at least somewhere considerably south of Kashmir. This may be attested by the geographical origin of some of the BSBh MSS (see Kato 2011, and below). He could have become acquainted there with both Śāṅkara's GBh and BSBh, therefore he had both the Kashmirian *Gītā* as his main text before him and Śāṅkara's GBh with its own *mūla* (hence his quotations or *anuvāda* from Śāṅkara, see Raghavan 1968, pp. 283ff.). Then Bhāskara himself or his text may have gone back to Kashmir.

Our hypothesis is almost identical with van Buitenen's scenario, according to which Bhāskara had two texts before him, the so-called prototype of the Kashmirian *Gītā* and Śāṅkara's Vulgate. Nevertheless, in our hypothesis there is no need to postulate Bhāskara's *Gītā* as the prototype of a third, Kashmirian one. Bhāskara had the Kashmirian *Gītā* in one particular form and Śāṅkara's Vulgate before him. We thus consider the Kashmirian character of Bhāskara's *Gītā* to be original.

Note that the hypothesis that he travelled to the South, or at least somewhere considerably south of Kashmir, could be corroborated by the fact that he is well-known in the South, as witnessed by Jayatīrtha and Ānandānubhava, and that for his BSBh, there are MSS from every part of India. While van Buitenen mainly used BSBh MSS in Southern scripts (perhaps because he assumed that it was a text from the South), Kato (2011, pp. xiii–xviii) discovered one MS from Bengal and one from the North (*nāgarī*). The existence of Bhāskara's BSBh MSS from the North may throw a different light on the question of Bhāskara's origin, even if no firm conclusion can be drawn from the mere distribution of manuscripts.

⁸⁹ This is, notably, Belvalkar's thesis (1941), see below.

⁹⁰ This is indeed a long-lasting supposition that most scholars who studied the question share and maintain as a fact, namely that Bhāskara was not a Kashmirian (for a summary, see Kato 2011, pp. xxvi–xxvii).

In any case, it is easier to imagine such a scenario rather than that the whole of Kashmir came to adopt a *Gītā* from the South (as implied by van Buitenen's thesis), only to replace it later by the Vulgate.

It is obvious that Bhāskara knew Śaṅkara's Vulgate of the *Gītā*. Nevertheless, due to much uncertainty about the author and his text, the question raised by Schrader (1930, p. 8 and 1934, p. 352), namely whether the Vulgate was known or not in Kashmir by the time of Abhinavagupta, remains unanswered.⁹¹

Here again, several assumptions are possible. Either Bhāskara's *Gītā* commentary criticizing Śaṅkara and his Vulgate never came back to Kashmir, or it came back to Kashmir but for some reason Abhinavagupta did not refer to Śaṅkara's Vulgate thus criticized. It may have been because he did not accept this line of transmission or because it was not yet wide-spread or well-known (and let us not forget that Abhinavagupta wrote his GAS when he was still something of a fresher, see Sanderson 2007, p. 359) or perhaps because he did not intend to argue with it at length in a short commentary (*saṃgraha*).

Yet, it can also be assumed that, although Bhāskara's *Gītā* and his commentary must have come back to Kashmir (after all, we have a MS of his GBh from Kashmir), his criticism of Śaṅkara and Śaṅkara's variants were simply not known or wide-spread in Abhinavagupta's time and even thereafter. It must have taken some time for the Vulgate to become the dominant version of the *Gītā* in India in general, and perhaps even more time to usurp the place of the Kashmirian *Gītā* in Kashmir.

It follows that, if Bhāskara, author of the GBh entitled *Bhagavadāśayānusaraṇa* in its colophon, is identified as a Kashmirian Vedāntin, he is not Bhāskara, the Kashmirian Śaiva, author of the *Śivasūtravārttika*, the *Vivekāñjana* and the *Kakṣyāstotra*.

Thus, provided our hypothesis is admitted, Bhāskara would represent a unique example of a pandit being acquainted with both traditions of transmission of the *Gītā*. Although the Kashmirian tradition seems to have had a fairly independent life, Bhāskara would have provided a rare example of a point of contact.

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⁹¹ According to Schrader (1930, p. 2 and 1935, p. 352), there was no sign of acquaintance with the Vulgate in Kashmir before the decline of the Pratyabhijñā school. Schrader's position is contested by Chintamani 1941, pp. xxii–xxiii, saying that Abhinavagupta usually adopts Rāmakaṇṭha's readings but sometimes also agrees with the Vulgate. Chintamani then states: 'So the vulgate must have been current in Kashmir in the days of Abhinavagupta.' He subsequently adds two arguments: 1. the traditional accounts of Śaṅkara's travels to the North: 'for the tradition is persistent that Śaṅkara travelled up to Nepal. And one of the traditions refers to the visit of Śaṅkara to Kashmir itself. However much we may discountenance these traditions, there is nothing inherently against the spread of the works and fame of Śaṅkara in Kashmir' (xxii–xxiv); 2. the fact that some passages of Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary seem to refer to Śaṅkara's interpretations of the *Gītā* (xxv–xxvii). Finally, Chintamani concludes (xxviii): 'It will be therefore difficult to regard Rāmakaṇṭha as unacquainted with Śaṅkara and authors of his school of thought.' The first argument is based on a legend, which does not need to be taken for a fact. Now the question of Rāmakaṇṭha's alleged references to Śaṅkara is difficult to confirm or refute without examining them in great detail, which would be beyond the scope of this study. Let us note, however, that Tadpatrikar (1939, p. 5), who edited Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary, did not find any explicit mention of the two *Gītā* recensions, which suggests that Śaṅkara and his commentary were not known in Kashmir.

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Abbreviations and Bibliography

Authors and works

BhG: *Bhagavadgītā*
 GBh: *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya*
 BS: *Brahmasūtra*
 BSBh: *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*
 GAS: *Gītārthasaṃgraha*

Institutions, journals and series

ABORI: Annals of the BORI
 ALS: Adyar Library Series
 ĀSS: Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series
 BORI: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
 CSS: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series
 EFEO: École française d'Extrême-Orient
 HOS: Harvard Oriental Series
 IFP: Institut français de Pondichéry
 IHQ: *Indian Historical Quarterly*
 JAOS: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
 JRAS: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* [of Great Britain and Ireland, Londres
 KSTS: Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies
 TSS: Trivandrum Sanskrit Series
 WZKS: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*

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Text [BhG + GAS]

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