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## The Rājapur Manuscript of Bhaṭṭoji's *Vedabhāṣyasāra*

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In his remarkable essay of 1928, Louis Renou wrote that the Vedic philology of his time had been made by a few extraordinary personalities (*Quelques hommes remarquables ont fait la philologie védique*).<sup>1</sup> Roth, Bergaigne, Oldenberg, to name a few. It was their personalities and passions rather than methods and tendencies — argued Renou — that left their stamp on the development of the Vedic studies of the period. For Renou, they were the Masters (*les Maîtres*) of Vedic philology. And in 1928 he believed that already in the time of E. Burnouf's seminar it was clear what made a Master in Vedic philology: *sur le domaine du Veda comme ailleurs on reconnaît la marque du maître : largeur de vues dans la conception, rigueur minutieuse dans l'exécution*.<sup>2</sup> While we may probably still agree with Renou's view on what makes a rigorous study rigorous today, we may not find it as easy to decide what it is that makes a profound and large concept of a contemporary philological study. Renou admits that for the type of survey attempted by his essay, he used not only the texts proper penned by Bergaigne, Rosen, Roth, Pischel, Max Müller, Oldenberg, or Geldner, but also prefaces, introductions and conclusions to their works, where — he believed — they had left formulations of their academic beliefs (*les professions de foi*).<sup>3</sup> Each and every *maître* had a concept of the Veda which, according to Renou, had to be retrieved and articulated: *resterait à définir la conception que Roth se faisait du Veda dans la mesure où sa philologie en a subi l'influence*. For Roth and others this concept apparently had, among

1. Renou (1928: 1).

2. *Ibidem*, p. 2.

3. Cf. Slaje (2008) — a volume of studies concerned with the meaningful reading of preambles and introductions, especially Minkowski (2008) and D'Intino (2008). See also Slaje (2010) and Galewicz (2010: 159-167). On the conceptualization of the study of introductions and other paratextual elements, see Genette (1997).

other things, something to do with the attitude they took towards the indigenous exegetical tradition, especially that embodied by the mediæval commentary attributed to Sāyaṇa. *Ce n'est pas à dire qu'il faille avec Oldenberg rejeter absolument l'autorité de Sāyaṇa* — says Renou — *là où il n'est à la merci ni d'une étymologie préconçue ni d'un usage de son temps, il a pu puiser à quelque source authentique*. This mixed attitude towards Sāyaṇa as an indigenous philologist needs perhaps a study in its own but I am not aiming at one here.

*Les Maîtres de la philologie védique* by Louis Renou appears to conceptualize a history of Vedic philology as an independent knowledge discipline and Renou must have been aware in 1928 that he himself had been continuing and “prolonging”, not re-copying, this current distinctly marked by the Masters, but also made in his own new way.

The present essay focuses on a cultural parallel to the concept of a rigorous textual study with broad horizons as taken by Renou to form a founding principle of the *philologie védique*. The parallel concerns a concept of a textual, if not philological, study in the form of a commentary pertaining roughly to the same object, namely the Ṛgveda, and arguably visible in a little studied work by Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita better known by his works on Sanskrit grammar and philosophy of language. The work in question had been composed toward the end of 16<sup>th</sup> or beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century and apparently forgotten until discovered and published in 1947 under the title of *Vedabhāṣyasāra*. The parallel is drawn here in an attempt at identifying a specific idea of a commentary behind the composition of this work as derived from a specific scholarly tradition and according to conventions and conceptual frames that developed in the particular socio-historical situation of Bhaṭṭoji and his intellectual milieu as well as from his way of appropriating his intellectual past. This composite approach is adopted here in order to make sense of a work (and its concept) through situating it and its author against their immediate social and intellectual context.<sup>4</sup> Several recent studies<sup>5</sup> have indicated

4. The present essay seeks to put into relief the problem of method in historical reconstruction pertaining to early modern India. For a more elaborate outline of parallel problematics, see Minkowski–O'Hanlon (2015: 1), especially their arguments in the possibility of adopting “Skinner's model” for the study of the “interventions of individual authors in these structured ‘inter-textual’ settings” after the guidelines put on in Ganeri (2011: 63-7). For the “Skinner's model,” see Skinner (2002: 115).

5. A series of essays of the recent two decades by, among else, S. Pollock, J. Ganeri, M. Deshpande, J. Houben, J. Bronkhorst or Ch. Minkowski.

that a community of scholars that formed itself towards the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century AD in the North Indian city of Banaras (Vārāṇasī or Kāśī) betrayed characteristics of a historical self-consciousness of a generation of new scholars who more often than not aspired to the status of masters (*maîtres*) in the sense functionally not far from that outlined by Louis Renou. One such was Bhaṭṭoji Dikṣita. The three masters who in his view had made the discipline of *vyākaraṇa* which he primarily identified himself with, namely the *munayaḥ trayah*, or the three founding sages Pāṇini, Kātyāyana and Patañjali, should enjoy an exceptional stature. In his works Bhaṭṭoji took their words as utterances of an altogether different epistemological status than the words of any of later authors.<sup>6</sup> By the same token, any statement in conflict with the words of the three Munis was bound to be rejected, passionately opposed or mercilessly ridiculed by Bhaṭṭoji. In his time and place this attitude did not always bring friendly reactions. Bitter criticism of his opinions added to the flavor of the Banaras intellectual milieu of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The city of Banaras of the time appears to have attracted Hindu, Jaina and Muslim intellectuals from across the Indian subcontinent and apparently offered a unique space of intellectual exchange as well as livelihood and career opportunities.<sup>7</sup> Its new urban intellectual space epitomized an accelerating process of transformation in communication patterns across the subcontinent which culminated by mid-century in the faster circulation of ideas that some modern scholars think to have profoundly influenced the global coming of modernity.<sup>8</sup> We have enough evidence to suppose that much of this new intellectual ferment took place within a network of *dākṣiṇātya* brāhmaṇa households that linked their family scholarly traditions with home education and services for a newly formed clientele and its demand for expert opinions in legal proceedings concerning caste identity and claims for social status.<sup>9</sup> Many of them had regular relations with family members and original communities in their homeland creating a communication web that linked Banaras to other centers of learning in which people, ideas, texts and

6. Bhaṭṭoji would say: "People like 'us' are not equal to the founding grammarian Munis in stature." Deshpande (2014: 119). For a traditional account of Bhaṭṭoji's life and career, see the Sanskrit text of *Laghutrimunikalpataru* in Shastri (1932: 1-32).

7. See Ganeri (2011), Pollock (2001).

8. See Ganeri (2011: 13-18).

9. On *dākṣiṇātya* families, see Shastri (1912), Aryavaraguru (1912), O'Hanlon (2012).

expert documents circulated over trans-regional distances.<sup>10</sup> While we are almost sure that Bhaṭṭoji must have spent most of his active years in Banaras, there is no consensus as to the exact dates of his life. According to a recent study he must have flourished in Banaras around A.D. 1590.<sup>11</sup> Other approximations point to either a slightly later period of A.D. 1620-1680 or “the last quarter of sixteenth century to the early quarter of the ensuing century.”<sup>12</sup>

The parallel outlined here draws from the interest in the text that seems to link almost mysteriously Louis Renou and his master philologists with Bhaṭṭoji and his intellectual tradition: the late 14<sup>th</sup> century imperial commentary on the Ṛgveda. For Renou and his *maîtres de la philologie védique*, and indeed the majority of later European scholars, the *bhāṣya* on the *Ṛksaṃhitā* had been taken to be the work credited to the imperial commentator Sāyaṇa, however not necessarily understood in terms of a single-person authorship.<sup>13</sup> For each one of them the way they read the hymns of the *Ṛksaṃhitā* depended largely on how they saw this commentary's historical status and, in consequence, how they made sense of the textual history of the Ṛgveda.<sup>14</sup> As I shall try to show below, Bhaṭṭoji's own concept of a Vedic commentary proves also to be very much inscribed in the wording of the introductory part of his work. It would be risky to call it historical, but, as I try to argue here, Bhaṭṭoji appears to have fashioned the architecture of his *Sāra* in the way that mobilized the associations with the cultural memory of the Vijayanagara imperial Vedic commentaries. For some reason Bhaṭṭoji resolved to involve, if not emulate, in his own introduction, the idea of the commentary as it appeared in the architecture and rhetoric of the versified preamble of the acknowledged imperial *bhāṣya* apparently credited in Bhaṭṭoji's times to the name of Mādhava.<sup>15</sup>

10. See O'Hanlon (2010).

11. Minkowski (2015).

12. Bali (1976: 4). Cf. K. Potter, ed. *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* (online version), which gives Bhaṭṭoji's life as AD 1547-1633. Gode (1956: 206) proposes AD 1550-1630.

13. For an alternative view, see, for instance, Slaje (2010). For a “middle way” in understanding this authorship, see Galewicz (2010: 26). I adopt here, for the purpose of this essay, a doubled formula of Mādhava-Sāyaṇa in order to retain the perspective of Bhaṭṭoji who uses only the name of Mādhava in his commentary.

14. For how Renou understood the difference between the way of reading Sāyaṇa by Wilson and Roth as constitutive for their respective visions of what the Ṛgveda was, see Renou (1928: 5-6).

15. An interesting dimension of the problem is that the only extant manuscript of

Bhaṭṭoji leaves us no clue as to his knowledge of the person by the name of Sāyaṇa. He may have either not been aware of the two brothers' involvement in the project of commenting on the Veda under the patronage of the early Vijayanagara kings. This kind of predicament had probably no meaning for his *Sāra*. After all, what was important was that Mādhava had been probably remembered as an influential religious figure and in some circles perhaps also as a paragon of Advaita ascetic intellectual (under his post-initiation name of Vidyāraṇya). This does not mean, however, that the cultural memory associated with his name looked homogenously identical across the Indian subcontinent and probably differed between Bhaṭṭoji's homeland in Maratha country and Banaras.<sup>16</sup> Bhaṭṭoji connected his name also to the ideas expressed in the *Dhātuvṛtti*, on which Bhaṭṭoji commented elsewhere in his own writings. The *Vedabhāṣyasāra*, or the *Essence of the Commentary on the Veda*, seems to have remained forgotten only to surface not long ago in the shape of a single manuscript discovered near Rājapur, a town in coastal Mahārāṣṭra. Published in 1947 in Bombay (at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) the *Vedabhāṣyasāra* of Bhaṭṭoji Dikṣita, appeared as a rather short (perhaps incomplete) text with an English introduction of P.K. Gode and a Sanskrit preface (*Prāstāvika*) in verse by Pandit R.N. Pātankar, who found the manuscript and who features on the title page as the text's editor. Judging by its publishing title, and even more so by the headline introducing the text proper, the work must have claimed in its time the status of a Vedic commentary, albeit in an abridged, or rather a condensed (*sāra*) form.<sup>17</sup> In his introduction included in the edition, Gode admitted to have seen the single manuscript discovered a few years earlier (1941?) by the editor, and which Gode believed at the time of publication to have been deposited in the "Sanskrit

Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra* testifies to a stabilized tradition of Mādhava's authorship of the *Vedabhāṣya* rather than that of Sāyaṇa as it is taken for granted and established in contemporary scholarship. It may seem somewhat awkward for a *saṃnyāsī*, whom Mādhava eventually became, to produce scholarly commentaries on *saṃhitās*. Perhaps his later initiation and subsequent adoption of the name Vidyāraṇya may account for the name of Sāyaṇa substituting that of Mādhava in introductions to later *bhāṣyas*. I comment on this problem in Galewicz (2010). On the other hand, we find a tradition of *saṃnyāsī*s claiming descent from Śaṅkarācārya writing scholarly Vedic commentaries up to the modern times in Kerala. This was also probably the case of Kavīndrācārya, a 17<sup>th</sup> century polymath said to be a *saṃnyāsī* and rumored to have written a *bhāṣya* on the Ṛgveda.

16. For an assessment of the former case, see Guha (2009).

17. P.K. Gode speculates on a possible incomplete form of the manuscript in Gode (1947: 6).

Pāthashala” of Rājapur.<sup>18</sup> However, when I happened to have visited the site in 2006, I failed to locate the said manuscript among the works stored in the manuscript library of the still operating *pāṭhasālā* of Rājapur. The manuscript referred to by Gode was described by him as a rather modest in size and in a decaying state.<sup>19</sup> A search for other manuscripts produced no results and Gode was left assuming that what Pandit Pātaṅkar found was not only the unique extant manuscript, but also that it was not known to the scholarly world before. To the best of my knowledge, there is but one voice arguing to the contrary.<sup>20</sup> No manuscript of the work was mentioned in Aufrecht’s Catalogue and the work is listed in the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* [NCC] (III: 20) with a single indication of its Bombay printed edition of 1947. The NCC classifies Bhaṭṭoḥji’s *Sāra* under Ṛgveda commentaries and glosses it as an “epitome of Sāyaṇa on a few hymns [of the *Ṛksaṃhitā*].”<sup>21</sup>

My own interest in this work concerns, as mentioned above, a basic concept behind this type of work or — as I would prefer to say — this type of textuality and remains inspired partly by the theoretical considerations of the so called *Begriffsgeschichte*, or conceptual history, of Reinhard Koselleck (2002). The kind of historical thinking that feeds on a distinction between the natural and the historical temporality, as well as on the change in the meaning and function of basic socio-cultural and political concepts over time.<sup>22</sup> For this kind of historical understanding of Bhaṭṭoḥji’s work the crucial attention should be focused on such concepts as *bhāṣya* and *sāra* with an eye to how they interplayed and changed over time. I am not going, however, to survey how the concepts of *bhāṣya* and *sāra* changed

18. Gode (1947: 3 and 5). For a vivid description of the vibrant brahmanical milieu and cultural environment of the city of Rājapur in 17<sup>th</sup> century, see O’Hanlon-Minkowski (2008).

19. Gode (1947: 4).

20. Bali (1976: 7) indicates Shivadatta Shastri (1932: 30) as the location of the evidence that the work had actually been known to traditional scholars at least before 1932. However, I fail to see any mention of it in the location provided by Bali. A list of works attributed to Bhaṭṭoḥji can be seen there, however with no mention of the *Vedabāṣyasāra*. For Vedic quotations in *Siddhānta-kaumudī*, see Gopal (1968).

21. NCC (III: 20).

22. Though the choice of critical concepts may and has to differ in our case, the following formulation approximating Koselleck’s ideas holds true: “The critical historian must proceed on the basis of the realization that she has to invent a language adequate to the representation of historical reality for her own time and place of work.” Hayden White on Koselleck in White (2002: xiii).

over the long history of their use, a topic worth considering in itself, but only what can be inferred from Bhaṭṭoji's *Vedabhāṣyasāra* and its historical situation. Renou's work quoted above shows the mixed attitude of the classical masters of European philology towards the *bhāṣya* of Sāyaṇa (or Mādhava-Sāyaṇa) and their indifference towards the implications of the concept of *bhāṣya* at the same time. Now, from the perspective indicated here, we may ask: did it mean the same thing to write a Vedic *bhāṣya* in the 16/17<sup>th</sup> century Mahārāṣṭra or Banaras as it did in the 14<sup>th</sup> century kingdom of Vijayanagara? For the latter case we have a relatively well preserved memory of the huge commentarial project of imperial design, size and patronage, a project of commenting on the whole of the Veda backed by the ambitious early Vijayanagara rulers and made into a series of commentaries given a pronounced, royal as well as religious, backing. We may almost precisely locate it in time and place.<sup>23</sup> In the case of Bhaṭṭoji, however, we know next to nothing as concerns why, with what suppositions, against what background, and for whom his *Vedabhāṣyasāra* could have been composed. What we are left with is speculation: was it perhaps a matter of showing off as a versatile polymath in order to prove also his proficiency in the genre of Vedic commentary in the way that probably his somewhat later peer intellectual and recognized author Kavīndrācārya did?<sup>24</sup> Or, an act of asserting his intellectual superiority despite the criticism that his work and person must have met with, as can be seen in the works of another Banarsi intellectual, Jagannātha Paṇḍita, Bhaṭṭoji's declared adversary?<sup>25</sup>

With a vast knowledge and an inclination towards polemics with his contemporaries, Bhaṭṭoji, probably a Sārasvata brāhmaṇa by birth, took part in and contributed to the most fascinating network of intellectuals

23. I discuss it in Galewicz (2010).

24. See Sastry's Preface to *Kavīndracaryasucipatram* (p. IX) in which he admits such possibility while indicating a fragmentary manuscript of an unknown Vedic *bhāṣya* by Kavīndra allegedly seen by Haraprasāda Sāstry. He probably refers to the report of the latter addressing his finds during the "...operations in search of Sanskrit Manuscripts in private libraries in the Lower Provinces of Bengal, since 28<sup>th</sup> September 1888" (*Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, vol. X, 1911: 5).

25. Jagannātha may have belonged to the immediately next generation of scholars, as suggested in O'Hanlon (2012: 126), what does not preclude their intellectual rivalry in the form of polemical works and opinions defended by their respective family members and followers. On the criticism of Bhaṭṭoji on the part of Jagannātha, see, for instance, Deshpande (2014: 117-118). According to Sastry, Bhaṭṭoji was "a bitter literary antagonist of Jagannātha Paṇḍita." Sastry (1942: 3).

and a web of vivid exchange of ideas across a newly formed trans-regional space of northern India that culminated later in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It benefitted from connections with influential progressive figures within the political frame of the Mughal empire, only to be hampered by the violent act of pulling down the city's Visveśvara temple by Aurangzeb towards A.D. 1668 and resume in a new way under the influence of the rising Maratha confederation after A.D. 1674 and the growth of pilgrimage.<sup>26</sup> Some of his works must have circulated even in wider space reaching the far South as proved by their mention in the work of his probable contemporary Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa of Mēlpatūr in Kerala.<sup>27</sup> His best known works fall into the fold of Sanskrit grammar and philosophy of language and in this respect have drawn attention in an array of recent studies.<sup>28</sup> However, a number of other, non-grammatical works is also ascribed to him. Suryakant Bali enumerates as many as thirty-two of them.<sup>29</sup> Besides the *Vedabhāṣyasāra*, which comes as no. 27 on the list other titles suggesting some relation to Vedic subjects seem to pertain to *gṛhya* ritual matters only.<sup>30</sup> While we know his main *vyākaraṇa* guru to be Śeṣa Kṛṣṇa, as far as his Vedic education is concerned we may infer only that, apart from his basic family education, he might have gotten some initiation into Vedic *gṛhya* literature through his apprenticeship to Appayyadīkṣita. The latter must have influenced also his ideas concerning Advaitavedānta, which can be seen in his *Tattvakaustubha*. But for his *Vedabhāṣyasāra* we have no clue as to its possible date of composition, or whether it could have been written before, or already after Bhaṭṭoji moved to Banaras. Against the background of his other works, this one appears somewhat surprisingly as a work claiming to be a Vedic *bhāṣya*, or even the very essence (*sāra*) of such a one. It seems that hardly any of his immediate contemporaries in Banaras or Maratha country could boast of a Vedic *bhāṣya* to their name.<sup>31</sup> The one exception might be his somewhat later

26. See Glushkova (2016).

27. *Apāṇinīyaṇḍamāṇatā* (1942: 2).

28. Bali (1976), Pollock (2001), Bronkhorst (2005), Houben (2008), Deshpande (2011; 2012; 2014).

29. See Bali (1976: 8). Bali notes that not all of the works on his list are available.

30. For some reason which he does not share with his readers, Bali chose to put on the list the name of the work with its third element (*sāra*) taken in parenthesis. See Bali (1976: 8).

31. The *Ṛkārthasāra* by Dīnakārabhāṭṭa comments only on selected *mantras* and gives an unaccented text of the *saṃhitā* with no *pada* version. See ms. no. 12695 in Descriptive

alleged antagonist Kavīndrācārya of Banaras. It is rather difficult to imagine what sort of patronage could provide the immediate context of a work of this kind. What we may surmise, however, is that to compose a work that claimed to offer an essence of the apparently famous Vedic *bhāṣya* of Mādhava-Sāyaṇa at the time of Bhaṭṭoji must have been an act of asserting one's position as a versatile author, someone aspiring to a status deserving the title of *sarvavidyānidhāna* ("a receptacle of all knowledge"). This title was conferred, among others, to the somewhat later Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī, a successful polymath as well as a man of wealth and influence with connections to the Mughal court. Can we judge the decision to write a Vedic *bhāṣya* to be an act of historical thinking on the part of Bhaṭṭoji? Was his concept of a Vedic *bhāṣya*, in a sense, a historical one?

Bhaṭṭoji wrote his *Vedabhāṣyasāra* some two and a half centuries after the inception of the state of Vijayanagara and its unique Vedic commentarial project. In his time, the ruins of the plundered City of Victory slowly turned into a legend and the Vijayanagara empire dwindled to its Eastern territories overseen by the kings referred to as the Aravidu dynasty (from the hills of Penukonda). He could have composed it while already in Banaras or still when in the western coastal Mahārāṣṭra, towards the end of 16<sup>th</sup> or beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century. To the far south, beyond the shifting Mughal frontier, the heirs of the last Vijayanagara dynasty rulers with almost no land of their own may have continued to receive imperial respect from their former commanders and local governors, the Nāyakas, now independent rulers on their own. We know one of them to be a patron of a work by Bhaṭṭoji.<sup>32</sup> This could count among the circumstances of Bhaṭṭoji's cultural memory of the *Vedabhāṣya* by Mādhava connected to Vijayanagara's past, provided it happened before Bhaṭṭoji penned his *Sāra*. On the other hand, we must take into account that the cultural memory of Vijayanagara among intellectuals of the Maratha country on the verge of 17<sup>th</sup> century must have been rather feeble, if not entirely "slighted" in

Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts at Baroda, p. 107.

32. On the patrons of Bhaṭṭoji's works, see Bronkhorst (2005: 30): "Bhaṭṭoji, his brother Raṅgoji and his nephew Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa appear to have received patronage from two rulers belonging to the Keladi royal family, Veṅkaṭappa Nāyaka I (1592-1629) and his grandson Virabhadra (1629-1645); these were rulers of the Ikkeri kingdom, one of the fragmented heirs of the Vijayanagara state." The introduction and colophon to *Tattvakaustubha* is one of the direct sources on this patronage. See Minkowski (2012: 97, n. 81). See also invocatory verses to *Tattvakaustubha* in the Kumbhakonam 1990 combined edition of *Siddhānta-kaumudī* with *Tattvakaustubha*, p. 44 and Gode (1956).

favor of the power of the Mughal empire of the north.<sup>33</sup>

Bhaṭṭoji happens to be counted as one of the so-called New Intellectuals on the pan-Indian 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century intellectual scene. In what sense could the *Vedabhāṣyasāra* be taken to be new in his time and his intellectual and social context? Could a curious remark by Patankar, which Gode quotes in his introduction,<sup>34</sup> be a hint towards a somewhat hidden criticism of Mādhava's idea of a Vedic *bhāṣya*? Some moments in the *Sāra* itself seem to ring the memory of his otherwise known devotion to the authority of *Pātañjalabhāṣya* and the authority of the three *munis* expressed in his grammatical works.<sup>35</sup> We need to note first that the title under which his *Sāra* reached us may be somewhat misleading. It should probably, and more fittingly, be named *Ṛgvedabhāṣyasāra* as it actually had been addressed by the guardian of its only single surviving manuscript, Pandit Pātankar of Rājapur.<sup>36</sup> What Bhaṭṭoji himself says in his introductory verses is only that he is presenting a *Sāra*, or an “essence,” of Mādhavācārya's *vedabhāṣyamahārṇava*, or an “ocean of Vedic commentaries,” which appears to be a rhetorical device of respect that may refer

33. See Guha (2009). In the opinion of the latter, the cultural memory of Vijayanagara empire was either altogether obliterated or slighted by the early modern Marathas in favor of the Mughal empire, and even the attitude of the most learned was marked by “profound indifference.” According to Guha (2009: 279) it is “reflected in an entry in the list of Sanskrit law books known to the Pandits of Pune as prepared by Vamana Sastri Satya ‘and corrected by reference to the Hindoo College and other Brahmuns who attended the distribution of the Dukshuna in 1825’. The entry features a text named ‘Madhwu’, said to have been written by Sayunacharya or Widyaruneswamee [Vidyaranya svami], a Sunyasee Brahmun of Anagoondy about 1000 years ago...” The quotation comes from Steele 1827 which in the edition I use (Steele 1868: 3) reads: “Madhwu (no. of Grunth, &c., 8,000). — The author is said to have been Sayunachary or Widyaruneswamee, a Sunyasee Brahmun of Anagoondy. It is a commentary on Munoo, of general authority, especially in the Carnatic; and supposed to have been composed 1,000 years ago.” The list mentions one more “law book” by an author named Madhwu-Sayunachary with similar details (Steele 1868: 16).

34. See Gode (1947: 4 n. 1): *dīkṣitaiḥ svīyavyākaraṇagranthe śrīvedabhāṣyakārāṇām mādhavācāryāṇam yatra svamatasaṁmardhane samullekha kriyate tatra ‘vedabhāṣyakārāḥ’ iti sādaram ucyate, yatra teṣāṁ khaṇḍanaṁ tatra ‘yattu mādhavenoktaṁ’ iti āmānyato hyekavaca-  
naṁ vidhīyate.*

35. His predilection for strict adherence to the authority of the three *munis* in his grammatical work, and to Śaṅkara in his Vedāntic works, has been explained by Deshpande through his connections to Appaya Dīkṣita. “Appaya Dīkṣita's pattern of single-minded dedication to an early authority may have inspired Bhaṭṭoji greatly... .” Deshpande (2014: 120).

36. See the Sanskrit title line of *Vedabhāṣyasāra* in Patankar (1947: 9).

as well to Mādhava's *bhāṣya* on the Ṛgveda as to any other of the *bhāṣyas* ascribed to him. It is true that out of as many as eighteen commentaries allegedly composed by Sāyaṇa working under and within the intellectual influence of his brother Mādhava, the manuscripts of the earlier ones (*Taittirīyasamhitā*, *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa* and *Ṛksamhitā*, usually give Mādhava in the introductory stanzas as the initiator of the commentary (*vyākhyā*). Only some insert a stanza referring to a transfer of the task from Mādhava to Sāyaṇa.<sup>37</sup> At the same time the colophons use either the term *prakāśa*, or *bhāṣya* qualified by the adjective *mādhavīya* and the name Sāyaṇa.<sup>38</sup> Is it that the term *bhāṣya* appears in Bhaṭṭoji with double reference, both to the Vedic commentary and to the *bhāṣya* that remains for Bhaṭṭoji, the Grammarian, a sort of authority of an utmost reference: the *Pātañjala Mahābhāṣya*? For the reasons that we can only speculate upon, Bhaṭṭoji's *Vedabhāṣyasāra* features an introduction headed by a versified preamble which happens to begin with a verse which I proposed elsewhere to name "Mādhava's sealing stanza." This very stanza, with the exact same wording, appears to have stamped with its recognized authority all the *bhāṣyas* attributed to Mādhava-Sāyaṇa and legitimized by Mādhava's religious charisma.<sup>39</sup> In Bhaṭṭoji's case it is combined with a self-reflective second stanza. Furthermore, the third and last stanza of the same preamble sounds purposefully fashioned upon one to be seen as concluding the versified preamble to Mādhava-Sāyaṇa's *Ṛksamhitābhāṣyabhūmikā*, or the *Introduction* to the *Bhāṣya*-commentary on the *Ṛksamhitā*. The beginning of Bhaṭṭoji's preamble reads (Patankar 1947: 9):

vāgīśādyāḥ sumanasah sarvārthānām upakrame |  
 yaṃ natvā kṛtakṛtyāḥ syus taṃ namāmi gajānanaṃ || 1 ||  
 mādhavācāryaracitād vedabhāṣyamahārṇavāt |  
 śrībhaṭṭojidīkṣitena sāra uddhriyate 'dhunā || 2 ||  
 etasmin prathamō 'dhyāyāḥ śrotavyāḥ sampradāyataḥ |  
 vyutpannas tāvatā sarvaṃ boddhuṃ śaknoti śuddhadhīḥ || 3 ||

I bow before that Elephant-faced God whom the Lord of Speech  
 and other gods well-disposed praise.

37. For instance ms. no. 675 of the KYSBh in DCMSML, p. 457: *mādhavīya: iti śrīśrīmad-divyayogindraśrīvidyātīrthamaheśvarāparāvataśāra ājñāparipālakena śāyaṇācāryeṇa viracite mādhavīye vedārthaprakāśe yajuḥsamhitāyām*. See Galewicz (2010: 69, 26, 79). Cf. Slaje (2010).

38. For a discussion, see Galewicz (2010: 79).

39. All the eighteen *bhāṣyas* attributed to Sāyaṇa and a number of other work attributed to Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya (especially the *Jaiminīyanyāyamālavistāra*) appear to be "crowned" with the same *signum*-like stanza. See Galewicz (2010: 129, 169-170).

May all their undertakings become fulfilled as a result.  
 From the mighty ocean of the Veda-*bhāṣya* compiled by Mādhavā-  
 cārya.  
 The very essence is now to be extracted by respected Bhaṭṭoji-  
 dikṣita.  
 Let the first Adhyāya in this book be listened to in accordance with  
 tradition.  
 Instructed by only so much, a pure-minded person shall be able to  
 apprehend the rest.

Since we have no external evidence, and neither the short preamble nor the text proper of the preserved *Sāra* state it directly, we are left to guess the reasons of Bhaṭṭoji's composition of this work. The basic question concerns the motive for engaging in writing a commentary-like work on the *Ṛksaṃhitā* at all. Especially, when we realize that what we possess in the preserved manuscript is not only the text of the commentary (*Sāra*) but also a regular "edition" of the initial twelve vargas of the first "lesson" (adhyāya) of the *Ṛgveda* in its two properly accented *saṃhitā* and *pada* forms.<sup>40</sup> This seems to suggest that the initial idea for composing the work was to fit the convention for a regular Vedic commentary of a *bhāṣya* kind. Bhaṭṭoji does not mention any patron, nor does the manuscript of the *Sāra* include any colophon with a formula that might indicate a convention according to which the manuscript had been committed to writing. It is rather difficult to imagine that Bhaṭṭoji undertook the composition for his own *divertimento* only. There must have been a context within which we should make sense of his decision to compose a Vedic commentary as such. Unfortunately not much is known for sure about his life. His family belonged probably to a Sārasvata community of brāhmaṇas from the Konkan region where they professed as Vaiṣṇava temple priests as Bhaṭṭoji himself was believed to have done before moving to Banaras.<sup>41</sup>

40. Neither the editor nor P.K. Gode includes any remark on the presence or absence of accentuation in the manuscript upon which the Patankar's edition was prepared. One should therefore presume that the manuscript discovered by Patankar included proper accentuation marks. If this be the case we may presuppose further that the manuscript had been produced as a complete and ready to use manual with Vedic *svaras* as a result of an editorial work that must have included a professional check by a Vaidika scholar. We must remember that a considerable number of the preserved *Ṛgveda* manuscripts does not include Vedic *svaras*.

41. The sources for this tradition seem, however, limited: the introduction to *Vaiṣyākaraṇa Bhūṣaṇa Sāra* by his nephew Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa and a tradition registered in Shiva Datta Shastri (1932: 31). See also Bali (1976: 2).

If there is some amount of truth in this tradition, why did a Sārasvata brāhmaṇa who was active first as a Vaiṣṇava temple priest and later on as a grammarian and philosopher of language take to Vedic commentary with no apparent incentive from his immediate environment? It seems that none of his immediate contemporaries did so, with perhaps one, hitherto doubtful, exception of Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī, probably slightly younger than Bhaṭṭoji. R. Anantakrishna Sastry in his Introduction to *Kavīndrācāryasūcīpatram* makes an interesting remark: “The word Sarva-vidyānidhāna [by which he used to be addressed] indicates possessing knowledge in all departments of Sanskrit. He might have written commentaries on Veda down to Kāvya like the Vidyāraṇya of the fourteenth century.” To corroborate this opinion he cites a colophon to a manuscript of a commentary by Kavīndra on the *Daśakumaracarita*<sup>42</sup> and, what is even more interesting for this case study, indicates a trace of an unknown *bhāṣya* on the *Ṛksaṃhitā* supposedly written by Kavīndra as attested by Haraprasāda Sāstry.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps some meaning can be attached to the fact that the only extant manuscript of the *Sāra* has been preserved around the city of Rājapur in contemporary South-West Mahārāṣṭra, an area known to be a traditional region of Gauda Sārasvata brāhmaṇas, a community which Bhaṭṭoji allegedly hailed from. Apparently no copy of the work has been preserved in Banaras, which might be taken as a clue indicating Mahārāṣṭra as the region of composition rather than Banaras. The rather composite community of Gauda Sārasvatas, usually believed to have been originally connected to Goa, appears to have been in a process of intense migration following the Portuguese conquest of Goa in 16<sup>th</sup> century and continuing in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> P.K. Gode thought the manuscript he

42. See *Kavīndrācāryasūcīpatram*, Introduction by Ananta Krishna Sastry, p. IX.

43. *Ibidem*, p. IX, footnote marked with an asterisk. The author gives a somewhat imprecise reference to “vol. X of Asiatic Society of Bengal List” by Haraprasāda Shāstry who was supposed to have seen a fragmentary manuscript of this *bhāṣya*. See *Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts* vol. X, ed. by Rajendra Lala Mitra and Haraprasada Shastri, Introduction, p. 5, where a report by Haraprasada Shastri has been reproduced with an account of his manuscript purchases including a fragmentary manuscript of a *Vedabhāṣya* by Kavīndra.

44. Inscriptional evidence indicates a substantial presence of Sārasvata brāhmaṇa communities with their own monastery centers in Banaras of early modern period and a growing influence of Sārasvata communities in other regions, also in the South, like in Kochi, Kerala. For the possibility of locating Sārasvatas’ early modern history against the broader context of other Western India brāhmaṇa groups in the process of migration, see

had in his hands around A.D. 1941 to be “some 250 years old and [to] belong to 17<sup>th</sup> century,” so it could even be an author copy of Bhaṭṭoji's work.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately there is no mention of a work under this title in the *Kavīndrācāryasūcipatram* — a list believed to represent a collection of manuscripts formed in Banaras probably sometime by the end of his's life and seen by F. Bernier who travelled to North India in 1656-68.<sup>46</sup> While a wide circulation of manuscript copies must have been a common practice of the time (we learn from the *Kroḍapatra* or *Apāṇinīyapramānatā* from the far off Kerala that the ideas on *traimunya* grammatical authority ascribed to certain *Vainata*, and quite close to those of Bhaṭṭoji's, were relatively widely diffused over the subcontinent) nothing sure can be said about the circulation of Bhaṭṭoji's works in his time, but they must have gained some popularity by the end of Bhaṭṭoji's life.<sup>47</sup> Some other possibility cautiously suggested here is that the *Sāra* had been composed in order to provide an occasion for refuting some of the Mīmāṃsākas' instances of understanding and using Pāṇini in their *śabdabodha* strategy of rephrasing Vedic sentences in order to elucidate their meanings.<sup>48</sup>

But let us come back to the introductory stanzas of Bhaṭṭoji's Vedic

Gode (1956) and Conlon (1974). The community's network of *maṭha* monasteries might be helpful, if not instrumental, in facilitating the movement of individuals like Bhaṭṭoji as well as their ideas and manuscript books that carried them. For a recent study on the networks of communication and patronage highlighting the role of Vaiṣṇava *maṭhas* in 16<sup>th</sup> century South India, see Stoker (2016).

45. Gode's own search in other collections of manuscripts and centers of brahmanical knowledge failed to procure any other manuscript. See Gode (1947: 6). It is interesting to notice that Georg Bühler does not indicate the area of Rājapur in his Report from the Tour in Search of Sanskrit Manuscripts to Southern Mahārāṣṭra. See Bühler (1868: 315).

46. I managed to locate only three of Bhaṭṭoji's works on the list. For Bernier's allegedly eyewitness' account of the library, see Bernier (1699: 148): “... quantité d'autres Livres dont j'ay veu une grande Sale, toute pleine dans Banaras.” For the location of this library, see also Gode (1945). For ideas concerning historical Sanskrit collections and libraries, see Minkowski (2010).

47. *Apāṇinīyapramānatā* by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. See also Gode (1947). For translation of the passage, see Sarma (1968: 31). For evidence of the links of Bhaṭṭoji and his ideas to the southern kingdom of Keladi, see Gode (1956). On circulation of Bhaṭṭoji's works, cf. Bronkhorst (2005). On the important southern nexus between Bhaṭṭoji and Appayya Dīkṣita, see Bronner (2015) and Deshpande (2014). A good number of extant manuscripts of *Siddhānta-kaumudī* in Kerala's collections may indicate a thorough transregional circulation of Bhaṭṭoji's works on grammar: Calicut University Manuscripts Library: 6 copies + 4 copies of *Siddhānta-kaumudī Tattvabodhinī*, a commentary by Jñānendrasarasvatī, a Gauda Sārasvatā.

48. See Bronkhorst (2012: 76).

commentary. Here Bhaṭṭoji declares to compose a *sāra*, or “essence,” out of the “work” of Mādhavācārya described as *vedabhāṣyamahārṇava*. Whether what he means by the term *mahārṇava* is a particular commentary or a general spirit of a group of Vedic commentaries produced by Mādhava-Sāyaṇa we cannot easily decide, though the structure and content of the extant work situate it rather on the side of the particular commentary to the *Ṛksaṃhitā*. This suggestion seems to be supported by the head title of the edition which markedly presents it in the convention of traditional commentaries on the *Ṛksaṃhitā*. The headline introducing the extant text of Bhaṭṭoji reads:

*ṛksaṃhitā sapadapāthā śrībhaṭṭojidīkṣita praṇītā  
vedabhāṣyasārasamanvitā*

(Ṛksaṃhitā with *pada* version, supplied with the *vedabhāṣya*  
composed by Bhaṭṭojidīkṣita)

However, we cannot be sure whether this statement comes from Bhaṭṭoji himself or from a later editor/scribe’s hand. Whatever be the case, the actual structure of the extant text fully corroborates such a head title since what we get is exactly this: each and every hymn (*sūkta*) presented in its *saṃhitā* and *pada* form, introduced and interspersed with the commentary. But before we proceed to the *bhāṣya* proper it is interesting to see how Bhaṭṭoji conceives of his own “intervention” into the tradition of Vedic commentary. Though Bhaṭṭoji mentions the name of Mādhava, not of Sāyaṇa, who is usually, albeit not without doubts, credited with it by modern scholarship, it is the model set by the Vijayanagara Vedic *bhāṣyas* that Bhaṭṭoji apparently follows or emulates. However, we must keep in mind that Bhaṭṭoji’s apparent respect for Mādhava and his ideas visible in the wording of the preamble was not necessarily always confirmed in his writings on grammar. Quite the opposite was the opinion of his probable contemporary rival Melpattūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa from Kerala. The *Apāṇinīyapramāṇatā* penned by the latter argued for acknowledging the authority of the *Dhātuvṛtti* and its author Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya (Sāyaṇa again omitted) beside that of the three Munis (*munayas trayah*) of the venerated tradition of *pāṇinīya vyākaraṇa* and authors of other schools of grammatical science.<sup>49</sup>

With no colophon preserved we have no choice but to suppose that the text of Bhaṭṭoji’s Vedic commentary has been preserved in its ini-

49. See *Apāṇinīya Pramāṇata*, p. 2.

tial part only (commentary on the first 12 out of 37 vargas of adhyāya 1) and maybe had never been completed. This may in itself be a hint to the contextual logic of its appearance. In other words, the problem of the historical sense of the fact that a commentary opening in this specific way has been conceived by a Sārasvata brāhmaṇa intellectual from the Maratha country and penned either in his homeland or in his adopted motherland – the new intellectual milieu of Vārāṇasī. We can say next to nothing in the former case. If the latter was the case it took place in the political frame of the Mughal empire with its new economic and societal points of reference : a very particular time, place and circumstances. In both cases writing a Vedic commentary seems to have been rather against the spirit of the time and the immediate socio-political context of Bhaṭṭoji's professional career. It is rather difficult to imagine a contemporary Indian ruler, not to say a Mughal one, ready to patronize a regular Vedic commentary, nor do we know of any sectarian affiliation to a religious center powerful enough to supply a rationale for understanding this initiative in a more immediate religious context. Neither can I find any contemporaneous intertextual context that could supply a direct background for his Vedic commentary to be an intellectual “intervention” into one of the established conventions of Vedic exegesis.<sup>50</sup> As for Bhaṭṭoji's immediate predecessors in commenting on the Ṛgveda along the line of the paradigms set by the Vijayanagara *bhāṣyas*, we can indicate two names: Rāvaṇa and Mudgala. Unfortunately the works of both of them did not survive, with only fragments of the latter one published.<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that, in contradistinction to Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra*, the

50. I take the term “intervention” after Ganeri (2011: 7) as a useful category in attempting to assess the impact and to understand what illocutionary force an intellectual production might actually have in a given socio-political context of its author. The category was used in an adaptation of Austin's concept of illocutionary force of speech utterance in Skinner (2002: 115). On the other hand, it is tempting to speculate on the nature and intellectual value of the type of textual, if not philological, practice represented by Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra*. Especially on its predominately grammatical instruments used to make sense of the Vedic textuality. For an idea of philology as an art of “making sense of texts” and its historical disciplinary context, see Pollock (2015: 15-17).

51. See Vishva Bandhu edition of the the *Ṛksamhitā* with surviving fragments of commentaries: Vishva Bandhu (1965). For the relation between Mudgala and Sāyaṇa, see Galewicz (2010: 45-46, 165). Mudgala's *bhāṣya*, considered usually to be an abridgment of Sāyaṇa's, belongs probably to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and must have been composed in South India, within the political cultural influence of Vijayanagara state and at least one extant manuscript of this work is written in Kannaḍa script. See Vishva Bandhu (1965: xviii).

versified preamble in the preserved text of Mudgala's *bhāṣya* makes no effort at all to formally link itself to that of Mādhava-Sāyaṇa by adopting a cognate rhetorical strategy. While referring to his own work also by the term *sāra* Mudgala does not even mention the name of either Mādhava or Sāyaṇa limiting his acknowledgment to the impersonal formulation of "scrutinizing the previous commentaries" (*ālocya pūrvabhāṣyaṃ*).<sup>52</sup>

One cannot fail to notice that Bhaṭṭoji chose to open his "essential" (*sāra*) commentary with a very specific stanza (verse 1 in the passage quoted above beginning with *vāgīśādyāḥ...*) and I am inclined to insist that he had done it on purpose.<sup>53</sup> I fail to see any other reason behind including this verse by Bhaṭṭoji than this: the stanza must have been recognized by his contemporaries as one signaling a work that claims its place in relation to commentarial works professed or supervised by Mādhavācārya Vidyāraṇya of Śrīṅgeri Maṭha, a pontiff to an influential center of religious (Advaitavedānta) authority based on a lineage of Advaita teachers, a *maṭha*-monastery that rose to a considerable position influencing the early Vijayanagara rulers by the end of 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> Among the works (all editions and most manuscripts known to me) that open with this very same verse there are all the eighteen *bhāṣyas* composed or attributed to Sāyaṇa, most of other works attributed to Sāyaṇa, works probably authored and traditionally held to be authored by Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya, the elder brother of Sāyaṇa. This peculiar stanza happens to be commented on by Vidyāraṇya himself in his auto-commentary named *Vistāra* to his *Jaiminīyanyāyamālā*. In a short gloss he refers to this very stanza opening his own work in the following words: *svamudrārūpam anekārthagarbham ślokaṃ paṭhati* — apparently meaning that he not only voices a verse of more than one single sense but also that he takes it to be his own seal, a *signum*, so to say. And the verb *paṭhati* may suggest that it is not a verse composed by Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya. And indeed we find several interesting occurrences of it: it happens to make part of the so called "star verses"

52. Vishva Bandhu (1965: 6).

53. By principle one cannot rule out that a versified preamble like the one featuring at the head of Bhaṭṭoji's *Vedabhāṣyasāra* could be attached by a copyist or an editor, however, I believe that in this case the logic of its wording would not make much sense if the preamble was not Bhaṭṭoji's work. For a discussion on the role of *maṅgala* verses in general, see Minkowski (2008). For an interpretation of introductory verses in Skandasvāmin's commentary to the *Ṛksaṃhitā*, see D'Intino (2008). I discuss problems with understanding the status, authorship and function of introductory verses in Galewicz (2010: 159-167).

54. See Kulke (1985), Galewicz (2010).

or supplementary stanzas of the first Book or *Ādiparvan* of *Mahābhārata* and is not included in the Poona critical edition. Also some local renderings of abridged versions of *Rāmāyaṇa* tend to insert this very stanza in what they call *dhyāna* or meditation verses. We find it also in a number of opening *praśasti*-verses of royal inscriptions preserved from Vijayanagara period, and some of these latter ones could indeed have connection with the person and ideas of Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya.<sup>55</sup>

There are other moments in the introductory verses that seem to be intentionally linking Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra* to the great Vijayanagara imperial project of composing *bhāṣyas* to all the Vedas headed by Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, even though the cultural memory of the Vijayanagara and its intellectual traditions must have been rather weak even among brāhmaṇa communities of Maratha origin in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>56</sup> Except for the *maṅgala* formula recognizable as a *signum* of Mādhava mentioned already we have an explicit declaration on the part of Bhaṭṭoji stating solemnly that he is "drawing the essence" (*sāram uddhriyate*) from the immense ocean of the *Vedabhāṣya* by Mādhava (*vedabhāṣyamahārṇavāt*).<sup>57</sup> Another link that looks intentional is a conventional formula pronouncing the scope of the work and the concept behind its textual engagement. It would be difficult not to see that it too was fashioned after or presented in the way to resemble that of the *Ṛgvedabhāṣya* by Mādhava. This formula positioned as the concluding verse to the preamble introduces the reader to the idea of a piece of quite an exemplary sort of commentary, namely one that is going to suffice as a guide for further reading. Thus, in the manner of the declaration once proclaimed by Mādhava also Bhaṭṭoji says that what he is offering is not a commentary to the whole of the *saṃhitā* but to the first *adhyāya* only.<sup>58</sup> Guided by this, an intelligent reader (here

55. The Mādhava's "sealing verse" can be seen also in the preamble to *Vedāntaśikhamaṇī*. See Winternitz (1902: 147, Whish no. 105, 5) and in a commentary by a pupil of Vidyāraṇya in Winternitz (1902: 218). A parallel example of recurring stanza can be seen in epigraphical sources, mostly in royal inscriptions of the early Vijayanagara period. It was noticed some time ago by Derrett (1959: 122) according to whom "this verse commences about seven out of every ten inscriptions ... now standing in the villages and fields of Karnāṭaka." The verse in question reads: *namas tuṅga-śiraś-cumbi-candra-cāmara-cārove | trailokya-nagarāmbha-mūla-stambhāya śambhave ||*.

56. See Guha (2009).

57. If the remark of Patankar quoted by Gode has some probability, we could read this statement as an ironical rebuke towards the overextended commentary which might be put before eyes of the readers in more succinct form, and to the same, if not better, effect.

58. For the wording of the "original" introductory verses by Mādhava-Sāyaṇa, see

a reader with pure mind) will make his own way through the rest:

*etasmīn prathamō 'dhyāyāḥ śrotavyāḥ saṃpradāyataṃ |  
vyutpannas tāvatā sarvaṃ boddhuṃ śaknoti śuddhadhīḥ || 3 ||*

In this (*i.e.*, the commentary on the Ṛgveda) let the first adhyāya  
be heard according to the tradition.

Having gone that far, a pure-minded person shall be able to apprehend the rest

The only difference between Bhaṭṭoji's wording and that of his famous predecessor is the concluding word: in place of *buddhimān*, or "the wise one," in Mādhava-Sāyaṇa, Bhaṭṭoji decided to put *śuddhadhī*, or the "pure-minded one."<sup>59</sup> And this perhaps not without purpose.

Now, the formulation presenting the idea of his Vedic commentary as that of a *sāra*, or essence, resembles in its tenor other wordings by Bhaṭṭoji through which he chose to present his other works as essential while calling them the "jewels lifted up from the ocean" of the sayings of previous authors. This is the case of *Tattvakaustubha* and *Śabdakaustubha* as shown recently by Madhav Deshpande (2014):

*phaṇibhāṣita bhāṣyābdheḥ śabdakaustubha uddhṛtaḥ |  
śāṅkarād api bhāṣyābdhes tattvakaustubham uddhare ||*

I have [already] lifted the Jewel of Grammar from the ocean of the Great Commentary of Patañjali. Now I will lift the Jewel of Truth from the Great Commentary of Śāṅkara.

Let us try to see how Bhaṭṭoji understands what he declares in the preamble to his *Vedabhāṣyasāra* to be a *sāra*, or an essence, of the "ocean of the commentary" composed by Mādhava. As already mentioned, at first we notice a purposeful mimicry in the rhetoric of the preamble which recommends to its listeners (*śrotavyāḥ*) that they try to comprehend the first adhyāya only, while promising that the rest shall be easily understood by the one who is a *śuddhadhī* (in contradistinction to *buddhiman* of Sāyaṇa).<sup>60</sup> While for reasons unclear to me Sāyaṇa did not keep his word and did complete his *bhāṣya* to all eight adhyāyas of the *Ṛksamhitā* (however, we

Galewicz (2010: 161-165).

59. The concluding verse of the preamble to Mādhava-Sāyaṇa reads: *etasmīn prathamō 'dhyāyāḥ śrotavyāḥ saṃpradāyataṃ / vyutpannas tāvatā sarvaṃ boddhuṃ śaknoti buddhimān//*

60. We should not fail to notice that Mudgala's *Bhāṣya* (sometimes referred to as *vṛtti*) does not resort to any similar strategy of presentation, and any intention in its own preamble to imitate this strategy of Mādhava-Sāyaṇa is conspicuously absent. See Vishva Bandhu (1965: 6).

must admit that the first adhyāya stands out as most elaborated of all to follow), Bhaṭṭoji, at least in what has come down to us, never completed even the promised first adhyāya. Out of its thirty vargas he commented only upon the initial twelve. Although this rather short form may look disappointing it remains in principle true to the idea of its paradigm. When we take a closer look at the initial part of the *bhāṣya* attributed by Bhaṭṭoji to Mādhava we find that not only does it announce in the versified preamble that the commentary shall limit itself to the first adhyāya but we can see also that the detailed word by word commentary on the very first verse (RV I.1.1) ends with the following declaration on the part of the commentator:

*vedāvatāra ādyāyā ṛco' rthaś ca prapañcitaḥ | vijñātaṃ vedagāmbhīryam  
atha saṃkṣīpya varṇyate*<sup>61</sup>

Thus we have commented extensively on the meaning of the first verse as pertaining to the handing down of the Veda. From now on, we shall [continue to] comment while explaining the celebrated profoundness of the Veda in brief [only].

So, we can see that the disproportionately long explanation of the first verse by Bhaṭṭoji in his truly brief *Sāra* appears to remain true to the spirit of its famous predecessor's *bhāṣya*.<sup>62</sup> There are a few disturbing points in this very brief — at least in what came down to us — “essence” of the *Veda-bhāṣya* in comparison to its more famous paradigm. First and foremost is a discrepancy between Bhaṭṭoji's declaration of his following Mādhava's *bhāṣya* and his actual straying from the latter as well as his rather surprising readiness to accept *Ṛgvidhāna* as an authoritative *pramāṇa* for supporting his views. We must keep in mind that Mādhava-Sāyaṇa seems never to have declared *Ṛgvidhāna* as any point of reference, not to say an authoritative tool for exegesis. We should not forget that Bhaṭṭoji hailed from Mahārāṣṭra, whose brāhmanical milieu, whether in motherland or in Banaras, actively continued Vedic exegetical literature down to modern times in distinctive relationship towards the tradition cen-

61. Müller (1890, I: 25).

62. For a discussion of this feature in Sāyaṇa's *bhāṣya*, see Galewicz (2010: 165-167). It is interesting to note, that this focus on the first adhyāya is somehow indirectly supported also by the extant manuscripts: the manuscripts of the first adhyāya (with the *bhūmikā* introduction and *bhāṣya* attached) were most numerous, at least in Max Müller's times. See Müller's Introduction in Müller (1890, I: xvi).

tered on the *Ṛgvidhāna*.<sup>63</sup> What is also perhaps not without importance, these Mahārāṣṭrian brāhmaṇa intellectual milieus (whether Deśasthas, Cītpāvans, Sāraswats or others) were predominantly Ṛgvedic while Sāyaṇa and his brother Mādhava must have been (*kr̥ṣṇa*) Yajurvedins. And this makes a difference.

Of the long *Bhāṣyabhūmikā* which makes a theoretical introduction in Sāyaṇa-Mādhava's *bhāṣya* and which comes down to 23 full A4 printed pages in F. Max Müller's second edition, the introduction to Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra* could be represented in print by one single page only. The whole bulk of Sāyaṇa's argumentation in his *Bhūmikā* follows the conventions of scholarly debate and remains contextualized by two sets of source texts in the form of the *sūtras* of Jaimini and the *sūtras* of *Puruṣārthānuśāsana*. In Bhaṭṭoji's introductory part to his *Sāra* there remains only one line referring to the recommendation of the Vedic study according to Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, a quotation from *Mahābhāṣya* concerned with the idea of a disinterested study of the Veda with the six ancillary sciences (*vedāṅgas*) as a duty (*dharma*) for a true brāhmaṇa, and one from Yāska concerning the futility of any study of the Veda which does not aim at making sense of its contents. This is quickly crowned with a citation from both *śruti* and *smṛti* concerning the inescapable need for the proper identification and knowledge of the deity (*devatā*), the *ṛṣi* and the metre (*chandas*) for each of the stanza to be studied. All these quotations are indeed present in Sāyaṇa's introductory *bhūmikā* but make a somewhat different sense against the views of opponents that are conspicuously absent from the introduction to the *Sāra* of Bhaṭṭoji. What is more, Bhaṭṭoji takes as guiding principles two of the quotations which appear indirectly in Sāyaṇa as *pūrvapakṣa* or *prima facie* arguments.

Now, in the portion that in the standard editions of Sāyaṇa's *Bhāṣya* does not belong to the introductory *bhūmikā* but opens the commentary on the first *sūkta*, or ṚS I.1, we stumble upon a difference that might seem misleadingly minor: While Sāyaṇa introduces his readers to the idea of the application of the *mantras* of the Ṛgveda, he points, at first, to a general application with respect to the whole compendium (he calls it *grantha*) delimited by its very first and last words as well as the calculated number of verses, in the ritualized personal recitation saying:

63. See Galewicz (2014 and 2017). For a commentarial tradition connected to *Ṛgvidhāna*, see Patton (1997).

“*tasya ca granthasya kṛtsnasyāpy āmnātakrameṇaiva sāmānyaviniyogo brahmayajñajapādaḥ pūrvam evābhīhitaḥ*”<sup>64</sup> Bhaṭṭoji does not speak of the application (*vinīyoga*) of a clearly delimited textual compendium but of the bulk of memorized tradition (*āmnāyasya kṛtsnasya*) in the ritualized personal recitation (*brahmayajñe*) as well as in another kind of ritualized recitation that he calls *pārāyaṇa*.<sup>65</sup> Instead of *abhīhita* of Sāyaṇa indicating a back reference to the practices regulated by *śruti*, Bhaṭṭoji uses *prasiddhaḥ*, which suggests rather an accomplished arrangement that is visibly acknowledged in the professed practice of Ṛgveda-*pārāyaṇa*. What could he have in his mind is not clear but a hint to a possible meaning may be cautiously projected back from the relatively widespread use of the concept of *vedapārāyaṇa* among Mahārāṣṭra brahmin groups and attested by late technical manuals and tracts pertaining to the application of Vedic *mantras* that appeared in early print circulation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Mumbai and Poona. A handwritten list of manuscripts from the Rājapur *pāṭhaśāla* where the manuscript of Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra* was to be deposited features a range of manuals of this sort. Also other collections emerging from the milieu of brāhmaṇa communities along the Konkan littoral (for instance the preserved Joglekar family collection) show texts regulating the *pārāyaṇa* of the Ṛgveda (*pārāyaṇavidhi*). The regulation, generally speaking, takes a form of an arrangement of specific portions to be recited in a specific sequence in a ritualized form and accompanied by personal rituals.<sup>66</sup> A number of such manuals regulating the practice of *pārāyaṇa* recitation is testified in a manuscript of the *Ṛgvedakalpadruma* dating probably from the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>67</sup> An arranged series of them had been edited by Vasudeva Lakṣman Panshikar for the legendary Bombay publisher Nirnaya Sagara Press and published in a *pothi* shape first separately by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and then in a form of com-

64. Out of the three occurrences of *pārāyaṇa* in Sāyaṇa's *Bhāṣya* one refers to another context, one belongs to *pūrvapakṣa*, or makes a *prima facie* argument, and the last amounts to a reluctant acknowledgment of the function of *kṛtsnapārāyaṇa* as an expiatory rite: *prayaścittarūpam vedapārāyaṇa vihitam*, enjoined by the authority of TĀ 2.16.

65. Both concepts, though the former shows its roots in the Yajurvedic tradition also, appear to have gained prominent circulation among the Ṛgvedic milieus apparently due to their promise of the independent ritual action that does not require Śrauta experts.

66. Specimen of manuals of this kind belonging to the collection of the Joglekar family from Gokarna can be seen at [http://muktalib5.org/digital\\_library.htm](http://muktalib5.org/digital_library.htm) [last accessed Nov. 21, 2016].

67. For an unedited manuscript of the *Ṛgvedakalpadruma*, see Galewicz (2017).

pendium named *Ṛgvedadaśagrantha* in 1910 and 1930.<sup>68</sup> What features prominently in all these late Mahārāṣṭrian compendia of Ṛgvedic manuals is *Ṛgvidhāna* and *Ṛgvedaprātiśākhya*. We may not be surprised that we find both in Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra*. In sharp contradistinction to the *Bhāṣya* of Sāyaṇa-Mādhava of which the *Sāra* claims to be an essence, Bhaṭṭoji declares the *Ṛgvidhāna* as an authority next to that of the *Sūtrakāra* as far as the *viśeṣavinīyoga* is concerned (*ṛgvidhānādīto 'py avagantavyaḥ*).<sup>69</sup> This seems to be a significant departure from the Sāyaṇa's *bhāṣya*, where *śrauta vinīyoga*, or public ritual application, appears as the only acknowledged use of Ṛgvedic *mantras* worth mentioning. We should perhaps not forget that Sāyaṇa was a Taittirīya Yajurvedin while Bhaṭṭoji, Sārasvata brāhmaṇa, would probably belong to the Āśvalāyana Ṛgveda fold. Thus a family and a particular brāhmaṇa community tradition may have influenced the concept of the work of a commentator as well as his religious affiliation may have done. Furthermore, the longish *bhāṣya* on the first hymn of ṚS 1.1. by Sāyaṇa-Mādhava, replete with quotations from Yāska's *Nirukta* and Pāṇini finds only scant reflection in the *Sāra*, which offers a few different etymologies and highlights different points. Also in its grammatical portion Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra* differs from Sāyaṇa-Mādhava's *Bhāṣya* by, among other things, including quotations from the *Ṛkprātiśākhya*. And perhaps the most striking difference between the two is their handling of their important points of reference and constructing textual authority. One thing that stands out conspicuously in contradistinction to Sāyaṇa is Bhaṭṭoji's mention of the *Ṛgvidhāna* as an apparently valid means of cognition with reference to the quest for the meaning and purpose (*artha*) of the *mantras*. This feature seems to correspond to the already mentioned marked predilection of later class of minor Ṛgvedic manuals from Mahārāṣṭra to accept *Ṛgvidhāna* along with *Ṛkprātiśākhya* as the most important sources of textual authority.<sup>70</sup>

Both Sāyaṇa-Mādhava and Bhaṭṭoji end their respective *bhāṣyas* on the ṚS I.1.1 with a formulation that appears to remain functionally parallel in both cases. It received a form of a highlighted verse in Patankar's edition. The first half of it looks almost identical in the two. In Mādhava-Sāyaṇa it reads: *vedāvatāra ādyāyā ṛco 'rthas ca prapañcitaḥ*; in Bhaṭṭoji it reads: *vedāvatāra ādyāyā ṛco 'rthas tu prapañcitaḥ*. But the second half proves en-

68. See Galewicz (2014 and 2017).

69. Patankar (1947: 10).

70. See Galewicz (2017).

tirely different: Mādhava-Sāyaṇa: *vijñātaṃ vedagambhīryam atha saṃkṣīpya varṇyate*; Bhaṭṭoji: *autsargikam ito jñeyaṃ viśeṣas tu pravakṣyate* (the general sense can hence be understood ; now the particular...). By this Bhaṭṭoji seems to frame the relationship between the long explanation of the first stanza (ॠ) and the rest of the commentary as mirroring the declaration announced in the concluding verse of the preamble which remains true to the rhetoric of Mādhava-Sāyaṇa. Yet, for some reason he chose to put it in a different formulation, suggesting perhaps a more detailed and down-to-the fact explanation, probably having in mind the grammatical one. One more general difference between the two: Bhaṭṭoji's *Sāra* lacks the formal structure of a debate with opponents' views clearly marked as such in Sāyaṇa-Mādhava's *bhāṣya*. We must remember that Sāyaṇa himself seems never to call his commentaries by the name of *bhāṣya*, preferring *vyākhyā/vyākhyāna* instead. The colophons may have come from the hands of the editors. The name of *bhāṣya*, however, features prominently in conspicuously standardized colophons to most of the Vedic commentaries produced in early Vijayanagara and apparently successfully established itself as the one through which future generations came to refer to Mādhava-Sāyaṇa's commentaries.<sup>71</sup>

It would be probably too naïve to simply take for granted a general pan-Indian recognition for the commentarial works of Sāyaṇa-Mādhava, which may not have been necessarily well known to the North of the area of political and cultural influence of once powerful Vijayanagara and influential lineage of Śrīṅgeri pontiffs. Now, we must remember an important link between the early career of Bhaṭṭoji and the kings of Keḷadi-Ikkeri (so called Keḷadi Nāyakas). As we know from the invocatory verses to the *Tattvakaustubha*, Bhaṭṭoji had composed this work at the request of King Veṅkatendra, a ruler of Keḷadi (1604-1626) in western Karnataka, one of

71. Another concept worthy of attention with respect to Bhaṭṭoji's world and its possible connections to the cultural memory of Vijayanagara is the qualification to the name of Sāyaṇa that we meet in some of the colophons to his works. A number of them call him *sudhānidhi* — the treasure trove of the nectar of a doctrine, and we meet it in several non-Vedic works of his like *Alaṃkārasudhānidhi*, *Subhāṣitasudhānidhi*, etc. Another interesting qualification to the name of Sāyaṇa can be seen in a colophon to his *Alaṃkārasudhānidhi* where he is said to be *sakalavidyānidhānabhūta*, i.e. "the one who is a treasure-trove of the concluding form of all knowledge" — an appellation highly suggestive of a scholarly attitude of final synthesis. I am reminded by this of a title conferred to Kavīndrācārya, who used to be styled *sarvavidyānidhāna* and who perhaps also composed a *Bhāṣya* to the *Rgveda*.

the successor states to the erstwhile empire of Vijayanagara which at this time must have been reduced to its eastern provinces.<sup>72</sup> Now, we know the kings of Ikkeri to have been especially generous to Śṛṅgeri Śāṅkarācārya gurus,<sup>73</sup> the same lineage of spiritual leaders to which Mādhava (Vidyāraṇya) belonged. And where but not in Śṛṅgeri could the respect for Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya and his ideas have been more alive? As for Bhaṭṭoji, he may have never visited Śṛṅgeri itself but it is quite probable that he spent some time in Keḷadi along with his brother, who is believed to have won debates against Mādhvas at the Keḷadi kings' court.<sup>74</sup> It is beyond doubt that Bhaṭṭoji must have enjoyed some form of patronage from Keḷadi kings while already in Kāśī, which was very much the custom of the day with his contemporaries benefitting from support by Hindu royal patrons who inscribed themselves within the political context of the Mughal empire. On the other hand, it was noticed that in a number of his works Bhaṭṭoji shows a considerable amount of distrust towards the Dvaita Vedānta ideas of Mādhva authors while launching criticism against their strategies of textual exegesis.<sup>75</sup> In this, he might have been influenced by his teacher Appaya Dīkṣita, whose enmity towards Mādhvas is relatively well known.<sup>76</sup> If only we knew more than we do of Bhaṭṭoji's communal identity we might add some possible bias deriving from his probable connection to one of the Sārasvata *maṭhas*.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps also his Advaita predilections and enmity towards Dvaita Mādhva authors stemmed as much from his personal history, education (his guru Śeṣa Kṛṣṇa is believed to have "belonged to the Advaita sect"<sup>78</sup>) and choice, as they did, at least to some extent, from his community roots: as a [Gauda] Sārasvata brāhmaṇa he derived from a community originating from the Konkana littoral and divided among groups affiliated to several differ-

72. See the invocatory verses to *Tattvakaustubha* in the Kumbhakonam 1990 edition, p. 44. See also Hultsch (1896: xii) and Dasgupta (1932: 219).

73. See Gode (1956), Bronkhorst (2012).

74. See O'Hanlon (2012: 126).

75. See, for instance, Deshpande (2014).

76. See Deshpande (2014: 117): "In all probability, he [Bhaṭṭoji] was already under the influence of Advaitic philosophy in general, and of the works of Appayya in particular." These circumstances betray a complex identity of Bhaṭṭoji whose alleged Sārasvata origins might otherwise suggest a closer affinity to Mādhva Vaiṣṇava traditions.

77. One may only speculate on the probability of Bhaṭṭoji's connections to a Sārasvata *maṭha* center which has been known for its Advaita orientation, like the Sri Kavale Maṭha in Goa.

78. See Aryavaraguru (1912: 247).

ent spiritual leaders and religious centers (*maṭha*) of which one has been known for its non-dualist orientation (Śrī Kavale Maṭha in Goa). Be it as it may, for the immediate focus of this essay a more important problem is that of how to understand Bhaṭṭoji's intention to highlight his work's relationship to Mādhava-Sāyaṇa, the author of the *Ṛgvedabhāṣya* whose conventions Bhaṭṭoji appears to interfere, if not play, with. And this against the background of Bhaṭṭoji's works on *vyākaraṇa* in which the ideas of Mādhava the grammarian, the alleged author of the *Dhātuvṛtti* happen to be opposed or criticized.

In this respect we should perhaps take more seriously a remark by Pt. Pāṭankar, the custodian of the Bhaṭṭoji's *Vedabhāṣyasāra* manuscript, reproduced in Gode (1947). The remark concerns the allegedly ambiguous attitude of Bhaṭṭoji towards the authority of Mādhava in matters of grammar: According to Pāṭankar, Bhaṭṭoji would tend "in his *Vyākaraṇagrantha*" to resort to the honorific plural of *vedabhāṣyakārāḥ* when he needed to corroborate his own views while preferring singular *mādhavoktam* when he chose to voice a different opinion.<sup>79</sup> An attitude of this kind could be seen as one of the distinguishing marks of Bhaṭṭoji and, more generally, also of the new formation of premodern Sanskrit intellectuals that not only transformed the cultural scene of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Banaras but also redefined the emerging communication network linking the intellectuals of the North and the South of the Indian Subcontinent in a new way.<sup>80</sup> However, the perspective adopted in this essay reflects an attempt at historicizing our own attitude towards the puzzle of the fragmented archive and contradicting evidence. An attitude necessitated not only by scant evidence and the factual construction of the past but also one including a conscious look back and behind in an attempt to trace the transformations in the meaning of key concepts along with the changing historical circumstances. Authoring a commentary on the Veda in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Banaras must have meant an altogether different thing than writing a Vedic *bhāṣya* in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century Vijayanagara. While the latter case must have meant a gesture of participation and inclusion within the large-scale imperial project of a totalizing political ambition, the former must have remained an individual act of asserting competence in the rules and conventions of a particular type of commentary

79. See Gode (1947: 4, n. 1).

80. See Stoker (2007), Minkowski-Hanlon (2015), and Fisher (2017).

situated within the grammatical tradition and subject to exigencies and circumstances of the newly formed brahmanical ecumene within the broader horizon of the Mughal imperial formation. While the latter set new patterns for the legitimation of political power, the former looked back to the latter in order to find a point of reference in the form of an established genre probably in order to mobilize it for the new sense of the intellectual expertise arising in the early modern period.

All in all, if we agree with Skinner and Ganeri that, especially in the early modern Indian context, a form of authorial intervention worth considering in addition to a socio-political one can be imagined to be the “intertextual intervention,” the one embodied in the text of Bhaṭṭoji’s *Sāra* should be understood as directed towards the discipline of Vyākaraṇa rather than that of Mīmāṃsā or any sectarian religious tradition of understanding the Vedic textuality. The rhetoric of representing his relationship to the Vedic commentarial tradition should be taken as a way of mobilizing the resources of such relation for the act of ascertaining one’s superior position as a linguist and expert in deploying the Pāṇinian apparatus for the sake of effective analysis of Vedic language — a visible proof of expertise in a new competitive world of premodern intellectuals of Banaras and their new clientele in the city and beyond.

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