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GRANTHĀLAMKĀRA

In Sanskrit manuscripts, colophons play an important role, for they provide the name of the text, that of its author, the date of composition and similar information necessary for the identification of the text. Colophons are generally called *puṣpikā* in Sanskrit, though this word is not attested in any early source. By convention, *puṣpikā* refers to the last line of the work, usually in prose, that commences with *iti*.

An analogous expression is *praśasti* but it has wider connotation. It refers to the entire material — be it at the beginning of the work or at its end — that supplies the genealogical information about the author, the scribe of the manuscript, their respective patrons and so on. Such *praśasti* is found in abundance in Jaina manuscripts of the medieval period and is collected in modern anthologies for its historic value.¹ The expression *praśasti* in the sense of eulogy of a person and his lineage is attested in early records,² but its application to manuscripts in the sense of *granthapraśasti* appears to be a recent practice.

The conclusion of a book can, of course, be termed *upasaṃhāra* and there are cases where this word is used in the limited sense of 'conclusion of a book'. Thus, for instance, the concluding chapter of Gaṇeśa

Daivajña's well-known work *Grahalāghava* (dated AD 1520) is styled *Upasaṃhārādhikāra*.³ Another author named Kamalākara also concludes his *Siddhāntatattva-viveka* (AD 1658) with a final section styled *Granthopasaṃhāra*.⁴ Both Gaṇeśa and Kamalākara offer in these sections an account of their respective families and praise of their works. Thus the *granthopasaṃhāra* comes close to what in later times came to be called *granthaprasāsti*.

While going through Sanskrit texts on astronomy and mathematics recently in some other connection, I was struck by the repeated use of a new expression which is analogous to *puṣpikā*, *prasāsti* and *upasaṃhāra* but not exactly synonymous with any of these terms. This expression is *alamkāra*; it occurs also in combinations like *granthālamkāra* and *granthasamāptyalamkāra*. While the other meanings of the word, 'embellishment', 'ornament' and 'poetic figure of speech' are well known,⁵ the use of *alamkāra* for the conclusion of a book is not recorded in traditional lexicons like the *Amarakośa* or the *Medinikośa*, or in modern dictionaries such as Böhtlingk-Roth's *Sanskrit Wörterbuch* or V.S. Apte's *Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Therefore, I list below the occurrences of this usage. This list is only illustrative and is not meant to be exhaustive.

The earliest occurrence I could find is in Gaṇeśa Daivajña's⁶ commentary *Buddhivilāsinī* (AD 1545) on Bhāskarācārya's *Lilāvati*. Gaṇeśa introduces the

concluding verse (no. 272) of the *Lilāvati* with these words :

*athāṅganāsleṣeṇa svakṛtapātīstavanarūpaṃ gra-
anthasamāptyalamkāraṃ śimhoddhatayāha.*⁷

In this concluding verse, Bhāskara employs a paronomasia between *Lilāvati*, a graceful woman (*aṅganā*), and *Lilāvati*, his own work on arithmetic (*pāṭī*), and expresses the hope that those who study his graceful composition may attain happiness and wealth in abundance. Therefore, this verse can also be considered also an auspicious utterance (*maṅgala*, *maṅgalā-carana*) of the class of benediction (*āśiḥ*). Tradition requires that such auspicious utterances should occur at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of a composition.⁸ But when Gaṇeśa designates this verse as *alamkāra*, he is not treating *alamkāra* as a synonym for *maṅgalācarana*⁹ nor is he using the expression in the generic sense of embellishment or ornament. That he imbues the word with a specific connotation, which is analogous to colophon but not synonymous with it, becomes clear when we consider the other occurrences of this usage.

We have seen that Gaṇeśa's own work *Graha-lāghava* has a concluding chapter called *Upasamhāradhikāra*. There are five verses in this section. The fourth verse declares that, although he teaches certain operations in the same manner as Bhāskara and others did, he does not share their arrogance. The fifth and final verse refers to his native Nandigrāma and to his

father and teacher Keśava. Mallāri, in his commentary on the *Grahalāghava* composed towards the close of the sixteenth century, treats these two verses as *granthālamkāra*. Thus he introduces the fourth verse with the words *atha granthālamkāram āha, pūrve bhāskarādy ācāryāḥ . . .*¹⁰ Then after commenting on the fifth verse, he goes on to say : *iti śrīmadgaṇakacūḍāmani-divākaradaivajñasuta-mallāridaivajñaviracitāyām grahalāghavaṭīkāyām granthasamāptyalamkāra-vyākhyānam samāptam.*¹¹

Mallāri's younger brother Viśvanātha also wrote in 1612 a commentary called *Siddhāntarahasyodāharaṇa* on the *Grahalāghava*. He considers only the fifth and final verses of the *Upasamhārādihikāra* of the *Grahalāghava* as the *alamkāra* ; for he says : *athālamkāraślokaṃ āha — nandigrāma iti.*¹²

Thus, the two brothers agree that some concluding verse or verses carry the designation *alamkāra* but they disagree as to which verses constitute *alamkāra*. For Mallāri, the fourth verse containing a kind of *pratiḥṇā* and the fifth containing the author's lineage together constitute the *alamkāra*. For Viśvanātha, on the other hand, only the final verse containing the genealogy is the *alamkāra*.

The next example is from Nṛsiṃha who wrote a voluminous commentary *Vāsanāvārttika* on Bhāskara's *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi* (AD 1621). The final chapter of the latter contains 64 verses. Verses 59 and 60 seek the indulgence of the learned readers for the audacity of

self-assurance expressed in the work. These correspond to the fourth verse of the *Grahalāghava*. Verses 61-2 refer to Bhāskara's place of origin and his genealogy ; 63 and 64 explain the purpose of the final chapter called Praśnādhyāya. Interestingly, Nṛsiṃha treats only the verses 61-4 as the *alamkāra*. He says *atha grantha-samāptyalamkāram āha — āsīd iti*.¹³ It may be noted that verse 61 begins with the word *āsīt*.

Nṛsiṃha too concludes his commentary with his own genealogy, which he terms as *alamkāra* in the following words : *iti gaṇakacakracūḍāmaṇi-nṛsiṃha-kṛte siddhāntaśiromaṇi-vāsanāvārttike granthasamāptyalamkārah*.¹⁴

In 1653, Kṛṣṇa Daivajña composed *Karaṇa-kaustubha* in 14 chapters. The last chapter contains a description of the author's family (*svavaṃśakīrtana*) and praise of the work. This entire chapter is termed Granthālamkāra in what we today call the colophon : *iti śrīmanmahādevadaivajñātmaja-kṛṣṇadaivajña-vira-cite svakṛta-tantraratanād uddhrīte karaṇakaustubhe granthālamkāraś caturdaśah*.¹⁵

The last occurrence I noticed is from the arithmetical treatise *Gaṇitalatā*, composed by Vallabha Gaṇaka in Samvat 1898 (AD 1841).¹⁶ This work is divided into five chapters, called Stabaka-s, which are further subdivided into 26 sections termed Kusuma-s. The entire final section is designated as Granthālamkārukusuma. The section commences with the words : *atha granthālamkārah* (f 126). There are six verses in this section.

The first two furnish information about the author Vallabha, who hailed from Jayanagara (modern Jaipur) and was the grandson of Mādhava Dīkṣita and the son of Ambāśamkara. The next two verses praise his work ; the date of composition is given in verse five. The last verse contains the author's prayer to Śiva for conferring happiness on the author. This is, of course, a *maṅgalācaraṇa* and is recognized as such, for it was introduced with the words *atha granthāvasāna-maṅgalam*. This verse is followed by another one which functions as the colophon to this section and reads as follows :

*iti kalakomalavṛttaiḥ
patraiḥ sarasair alaṃkṛtāṅgāyām /
gaṇitalatāyām uktam
granthālaṃkāravatkusumam // (f 126)*

Thus, in this *Gaṇitalatā*, the whole concluding section forms the *granthālaṃkāra* and this includes even the *maṅgalācaraṇa*.

The occurrences listed above suggest that the convention of designating the concluding portion of a book as *alaṃkāra* or *granthālaṃkāra* may have come into vogue in the sixteenth century. This portion consisted of one or more verses, or an entire section, containing the author's genealogy (*vaṃśakīrtana*) and occasionally also praise or eulogy of the work. However, the convention seems to be rather fluid about the extent of *alaṃkāra* : as we witnessed, even the brothers Mallāri and Viśvanātha could not agree which verses of the

Grahalāghava constituted the *granthālamkāra*. Even so, this convention provides us with a new meaning for the word *alamkāra*, namely, 'embellishment of a work composed'.

Interestingly enough, most of the authors mentioned above were members of a single family. We have noted that the two commentators on the *Grahalāghava*, namely Mallāri and Viśvanātha were brothers. Their father Divākara was Gaṇeśa Daivajña's direct pupil. Again Mallāri was the uncle and teacher of Nṛsimha, who was the father of Kamalākara.¹⁷ Is it then possible that this family relationship was responsible for the spread of this convention of *granthālamkāra*.¹⁸

Notes

1. Jina Vijaya Muni brought out an anthology entitled *Jaina Pustaka Praśasti Saṃgraha* (A Collection of Praśasti-s and Colophons of Ancient Manuscripts preserved in the Jain Bhandars at Patan, Cambay, Jaisalmer, and other Places), First Part, ed. Jina Vijaya Muni, Bharatitya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay 1943 (Singhi Jain Series, no. 18). See also *Jainagrantha-praśasti-saṃgraha*, ed. Jugal Kishor Mukhtar, part 1, Vira Seva Mandir, Delhi 1954.
2. On the use of this expression in epigraphs, see D. C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, Delhi 1965, pp. 3-5 et passim.
3. *Grahalāghava* of Gaṇeśa Daivajña, with the commentaries of Mallāri, Viśvanātha and Sudhākara Dvivedin, ed. Sudhākara Dvivedin, Bombay 1925, p. 367.
4. *Siddhāntatattvaviveka* of Kamalākara, ed. Sudhākara Dvivedin; second edition revised by Muralidhara Jha, Benares 1924-1935, pp. 600-4.
5. cf. *Medinīkośa* : *alamkāras tu hārādāv upamādāv alamkṛtau*.
6. For the lives and works of Gaṇeśa and other astronomers referred

- to below, see the appropriate places in : David Pingree, *Census of Exact Sciences in Sanskrit*, A 1-5, Philadelphia 1970-1994 ; idem, *Jyotiḥśāstra : Astral and Mathematical Literature*, (= *A History of Indian Literature*, ed. Jan Gonda, vol. VI, Fasc. 4), Wiesbaden, 1981.
7. *Lilāvati* of Bhāskarācārya, with the commentaries *Buddhivilāsinī* of Gaṇeśa Daivajña and *Lilāvativivaraṇa* of Mahīdhara, ed. Vināyaka Gaṇeśa Apāte, Poona (Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, no. 107), p. 285.
 8. Patañjali proclaims in his *Mahābhāṣya* : *maṅgalādīni maṅgalamaḍhyāni maṅgalāntāni ca śāstrāṇi prathante vīrapuruṣāny āyusmatpuruṣāṇi ca bhavanti adhyetāraś ca pravaktāro bhavanti.*
 9. While concluding his commentary, Gaṇeśa writes a verse of benediction : May the lord Viṣṇu erase inauspiciousness in the readers. This verse is introduced with the following words : *atha granthasamāptāv āśīrlakṣaṇamaṅgalam ācaratā hārabandhaślokena viṣṇur guruś ca mayā stūyate.* It is intriguing why Gaṇeśa does not designate this verse as *alaṃkāra*.
 10. *ibid*, p. 367.
 11. *ibid*, p. 370.
 12. *ibid*.
 13. *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi* of Bhāskarācārya with his own commentary *Vāsanābhāṣya* and *Vāsanāvārttika* of Nṛsiṃha Daivajña, ed. Murali Dhara Chaturvedi, Varanasi, 1981, p. 525.
 14. *ibid*, p. 536.
 15. *Karaṇakaustubha* of Kṛṣṇadaivajña, ed. Dattātreyā Viṣṇu Apāte, Poona, 1929, p. 39.
 16. This work is unpublished. I have used the *Jyotiḥśāstra* manuscript no. 46 of the Department of Sanskrit, Aligarh Muslim University.
 17. cf. David Pingree, *Jyotiḥśāstra*, op. cit., p. 125, table 11.
 18. This article is dedicated to the memory of Professsor David Pingree (Brown University) whose sad demise on 13 November 2005 is a great loss to the historiography of science.