

On the Course of Sage Agastya (Canopus). A Literary Study of *Brhatsamhitā*'s Twelfth Chapter¹

Ariadna Matyszkiewicz

(Jagiellonian University)

Abstract

Varāhamihira's Sanskrit astrological and divinatory compendium, *Brhatsamhitā* (6th century CE), is distinguished for its adaptation of the *kāvya* style and aesthetics to several divinatory prognostications. Accordingly, the entire work may be classified as *kāvyaśāstra*, a scholarly treatise that incorporates elements of poetry. The uniqueness of its twelfth chapter, *Agastyacārādhyāyah* 'On the course of sage Agastya' lies in the fact that the astrologer fashions it into a deliberate display of his poetic proficiency. In this chapter, the practical instructions concerning the observation and divinatory import of the star Agastya (Canopus) merge with poetic stanzas meant to demonstrate Varāhamihira's acquaintance with various constituents of the *kāvya* style. The first aim of this study is to specify the poetic devices employed in the chapter, including a variety of classical Sanskrit metres, canonical themes, figures of speech, plot construction and intertextual references. The second aim is to recognise the purpose and significance of the chapter within the context of the entire work.

Key Words – Varāhamihira's *Brhatsamhitā*; Agastya; *kāvya*; Canopus (star)

¹ This paper is based on the unpublished part of my MA thesis (Matyszkiewicz 2016).

1. Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*

Varāhamihira's (6th century CE) *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (BS) is a Sanskrit para-encyclopaedic divinatory compendium, representing the traditional branch of Indian knowledge known as *jyotiṣa* or *jyotiḥśāstra*, which may be defined as a synthesis of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, and divination (Matyszkiewicz 2017: 106)². *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* is the most versatile of the several Sanskrit works on *jyotiṣa* written by Varāhamihira and the one that earned him a reputation of a great Indian polymath. It may be proposed that the para-encyclopaedic scope of *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* was to a large extent determined by Varāhamihira's broad understanding of divinatory signs. Its vast contents are constructed around the notion of a *sign* both in its fate-revealing and fate-determining aspects which can be inferred from various elements of nature and the cosmos (Matyszkiewicz 2017: 107). This is the reason why apart from astrological, astronomical and divinatory prognostications the text contains a wealth of information on a variety of subjects such as astronomy, weather forecasting, taxonomy of plants and animals, gemmology, architecture, human and animal physiognomy, preparation of perfumes, instructions on how to win a woman's affection, build an auspicious house, choose an auspicious gem, horse, or elephant. As an expert on signs, the professional astrologer, thoroughly characterised in the second chapter of *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, is appointed here as the one who can both interpret natural and celestial objects in terms of fate and design auspicious cultural objects meant to confer pleasure or success in life. Accordingly, in his role of a sage, the astrologer interprets natural signs, and in his role of a scholar-connoisseur, he designs cultural signs³. These broad competences and the scholarly authority of the astrologer were not mere propositions of Varāhamihira, but actual reality. The author himself served as a court astrologer, most probably as a personal advisor to king Yaśodharman, the ruler of the Malwa region (Pingree 1981: 32), and is known to have had a significant impact on the courtly community in spite of the foreign origin of his ancestors⁴.

2. The literary style of *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*

Apart from its para-encyclopaedic contents, another aspect that distinguishes *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* from the majority of Sanskrit works on traditional branches of knowledge and various technical subjects (Skt. *śāstra*) is the literary form of Sanskrit in which it is written (Matyszkiewicz 2017: 11-12). This literary style known as *kāvya*, which flourished at Indian courts between the 2nd and 13th centuries CE, is characterised by sophisticated figurative language, use of classical syllabic metres, a fixed set of themes delivered in a conventional manner and its own peculiar aesthetics based on emphasising the beauty of objects regarded as valuable by the courtly community. As is well known, composing *kāvya* poetry was considered as an art requiring not only skill but also professional training acquired through the study of Sanskrit grammar, poetics, prosody, erudite learning, and acquaintance with the traditional lore and sacred texts. The main objective of a *kāvya* poetic composition was as simple as its prerequisites were complex, since it was meant to please the audience. Nonetheless, this prior objective was often combined with other, more practical ones such as praising a royal patron in *praśasti* 'eulogies', supporting ideologies, philosophies, or religions, and even teaching practical subjects such as grammar (Matyszkiewicz 2018: 57). In terms of chronology, Varāhamihira postdates

² All the Sanskrit stanzas quoted from the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (Sastri and Bhat 1946) are presented here in my own English translations.

³ By cultural signs I mean signs allotted to various elements of human culture (from body-language through poetry to furniture) and by natural signs I mean signs inferred from nature and the cosmos.

⁴ Varāhamihira belonged to a line of sun-worshipping Persian magi who assimilated into the Indian culture, acquiring the name and high status of *Śākadvīpa* brahmins (Shastri 1991: 9-10; Bronkhorst 2014-2015: 459-486). He was born in Kāpithhaka near Ujjain as a son of Ādityadāsa and received formal education in Ujjain (Pingree 1981: 32).

two renown authors of *mahākāvya*s ‘ornate epics’, namely Aśvaghoṣa (2nd century CE) and Kālidāsa (5th century CE) and two Sanskrit works of compilatory character that contain elements of poetics, namely Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra* (2nd century BCE/2nd century CE) and *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (3rd *khaṇḍa*, 5th century CE). At the same time, he antedates all known authorial works on ‘poetics’ proper (Skt. *ālankāraśāstra*), the earliest known examples of which are Bhāmaha’s *Kāvyaḷamkāra* (7th century CE) and Daṇḍin’s *Kāvyaḷarśa* (7th/8th century CE). As is the case with other early *kāvya* works, several constituents of *Bṛhatsamhitā*’s literary style that are not recognised in the above-mentioned earlier compilatory works may be identified and analysed with reference to later authorial works on poetics and literary theory.

Varāhamihira explicitly acknowledges the persuasive power of *kāvya* in the 104th chapter of *Bṛhatsamhitā*, titled *Grahaḡocarādhyāyaḡ* ‘On the Transits of Planets’. The chapter itself may be regarded as the most inventive treatise on Sanskrit and Prakrit *chandas* ‘prosody’, where the author simultaneously discusses the topic of planetary transits, provides theoretical guidelines on prosody, and illustrates 47 classical syllabic metres, *daṇḍakas* or metres with more than 26 syllables per quarter, mixed metres, and a variety of *mātrikā* or moraic metres⁵. Here, Varāhamihira justifies the literary form of his treatise in a way which is both artful and witty:

*prāyeṇa sūtreṇa vinākṛtāni prakāśarandhrāṇi cirantanāni / ratnāni śāstrāṇi ca yojitāni navair
gunair bhūṣayituṃ kṣamāni // (104.1)*

Antiques devoid of proper binding have visible cracks. This concerns both gems and treatises, which can adorn only when bound by new merits.

The stanza is based on the figure of speech known as *śleṣa*, which may be translated as ‘pun’ or ‘paronomasia’. The word *sūtra* denotes here both a thread used for binding and a class of texts known under the same name. *Sūtras* consisted of cumulative series of short, mnemonic verses relating to a specific topic such as ritual or grammar. They were the earliest traditional way of transmitting Indian sciences. In the above quotation, Varāhamihira may suggest that his objective is to replace the minimalistic, practical form of a *sūtra* with classical Sanskrit verse appealing to senses like a polished precious stone and, by doing so, teaching through pleasure. This idea is continued in the following stanza, in which the author compares the literary form of his treatise to an attractive courtesan, contrasting it with the modest *sūtra* form of the oldest preserved work on Sanskrit and Prakrit prosody, Piṅgala’s *Chandaḡśāstra* (4th/3rd century BCE), which mentions Māṇḍavya as an authority on the subject:

*māṇḍavyagiraṃ śrutvā na madīyā rocate’thavā naivam / sādhvī tathā na puṃsāṃ priyā yathā
syājjaghanacapalā // (104.3)*

Or, my [words] will certainly enlighten those who once have heard the voice of Māṇḍavya, for faithful wives are not as dear to men as are courtesans.

According to the classification developed by Sanskrit literary theory at least three centuries after Varāhamihira, *Bṛhatsamhitā* should be categorized as a *kāvyaśāstra*, or a scholarly work whose parts are written in the *kāvya* style but which is not bound by any uniform poetic narrative in its entirety⁶.

⁵ Metres regulated not by the number and type of syllables in each quarter, but by the number of *mātra* ‘moraes’ per quarter. In this system, one short syllable equals one *mātra* and one long syllable equals two *mātras*. Moraic metre is represented by a variety of *āryā* metres, the regular type of which has 12, 18, 12, and 15 *mātras* in the first, second, third, and fourth quarter respectively.

⁶ This genre is recognized by Rājaśekhara (9th/10th century CE), Kṣemendra (11th century CE), Bhoja (11th century CE). See Sudyka (2006: 65-66).

Kāvyaśāstra is distinguished from *śāstrakāvya*, or a complete poetic composition with its own plot that has additional didactic aims (Lienhard 1984: 225). Nonetheless, there is one chapter of *Brhatsamhitā* which apart from the authorial display of the poetic technicalities contains a sort of a rudimentary narrative: the twelfth chapter, titled *Agastyacārādhyāyaḥ* ‘On the course of sage Agastya’.

3. Astrologer’s poem: *Agastyacārādhyāyaḥ* (BS 12)

The title of the chapter is based on a pun. The Sanskrit word *cāra* ‘going’, ‘course’ denotes both the course of the star Canopus, which in Indian tradition is identified with the mythical sage Agastya, and the travel or the *heroic progress* of the sage. Both topics are simultaneously narrated in BS 12.

The reason why Agastya was identified with Canopus, the brightest star in the Carina constellation and in the southern night sky, lies in traditional lore. The rise of Canopus was observed in India at the end of the rainy season (August – September) on the southern horizon. The full visibility of the star was traditionally connected with the end of rains and the beginning of the dry autumn season, when waters retreat and clarify (Hiltebeitel 1977: 342). According to the story told in the third book of the *Mahābhārata* (101.1-103.7), Agastya helped the gods to conquer the army of demons by drinking up the entire ocean in which they were hiding. In another story, told in the fifth book of the *Mahābhārata* (17.1-15), Agastya expels a tyrant ruler of gods Nahuṣa from heaven and condemns him to crawl on the Earth in the form of a giant serpent for 10 thousand years (Hiltebeitel 1977: 337, 342). In both stories Agastya is presented as the conqueror of the aquatic element represented by the ocean and the serpent, which explains identifying him with the star announcing the end of rains. Varāhamihira refers to this story in the first five stanzas describing the ocean drunk up by the sage by means of the canonical imagery. It is a mysterious, unsettling reservoir of both precious and dangerous entities such as precious stones, corals, shells, poisonous snakes, sea monsters, whales, fish, sea elephants, but also the husband of rivers and a metaphor of a noble character capable of enduring various toils (Boccali 2005: 115-123; Matyszkiewicz 2018: 64). All these canonical constituents of the ocean theme appear in *Rāmāyaṇa* (6.4.73-88) and *mahākāvya*, Sanskrit ornate epic, works such as Kālidāsa’s *Raghuvamśa* (5th CE, cf. 13.4-13) or Bhaṭṭi’s *Bhaṭṭikāvya* (6th/7th CE, cf. 10.52-63, 13.4, 13.12)⁷.

*samudro’ntaḥ śailair makaranakharotkhātaśikharaiḥ kṛtas toyocchityā sapadi sutarām yena
ruciraḥ / patan muktāmiśraiḥ pravaramaṇiratnāmbunivahaiḥ surān pratyādeṣṭum mitamukuṭaratnān
iva purā // yena cāmbuharaṇe’pi vidrumair bhūdharaḥ samāṇiratnavidrumaiḥ / nirgatais
taduragaiś ca rājitaḥ sāgaro’dhikataraṃ virājitaḥ // (12.1-2)*

It was him [Agastya] who once suddenly removed all the water, increasing the splendour of the ocean with its own lofty peaks scratched by paws of sea-monsters, overflowing with streams of choicest gems mixed with pearls as if to demonstrate the scarcity of jewels in the crowns of gods. Once deprived of water, the ocean became even more brilliant, adorned with the mountains that had corals crowned with jewels in place of trees.

The following fifth stanza of the chapter not only elaborates on the ocean theme, but also artfully encapsulates the first principle underlying the variegated contents of the entire compendium, which is the belief in a magical bond between objects and beings from various levels of reality (Matyszkiewicz 2017: 107-111). This bond, which enables the astrologer to formulate prognostications regarding the future, is often established on the basis of one or multiple features shared by two or more different objects. Thus, for example, the moon, which is identified with the

⁷ See Matyszkiewicz (2018: 63-66).

quality of whiteness, informs about the state of other objects that are either naturally white (e.g. conch shells) or symbolically associated with that colour (e.g. brahmins)⁸. Analogically, Mars, which is identified with the quality of redness, informs about red objects such as rubies, reddish flowers of *Kimśuka* (lat. *Butea frondosa*), but also about kings or warriors associated with vigour and force. In the fifth stanza quoted below, the magical identification merges with the metaphorical identification:

timisitāmbudharam maṇitārakam sphaṭikacandram anambuśaraddyutiḥ /
phaṇiphaṇopalaraśmiśikhigrahaṃ kuṭilageśaviyac ca cakāra yaḥ // (12.5)

He [Agastya] has created the oceanic-sky with wale-clouds, jewel-stars, crystal-moon, autumnal lustre made of drought, planets and comets made of glittering snake jewels.

On the mythological level, the compounds ‘oceanic-sky’, ‘jewel-stars’ etc. connote an actual transformation conducted by the sage. On the level of the magical divinatory rule of sympathy, we get an actual, real connection between the elements mentioned. And finally, on the level of classical Sanskrit poetry, we get *rūpaka* ‘metaphorical identifications’ meant to establish an aesthetic correspondence between seemingly unrelated objects, the perception of which creates a sense of pleasure.

This multidimensional stanza may be interpreted as a kind of an implicit authorial manifesto, in which Varāhamihira reveals himself through the character of the mythical sage Agastya. The former wants to be seen as an individual endowed with the power to decipher the hidden bonds that tie the universe, but also as the one who is able to transform the reality according to his wish. The transformation of the primeval natural objects belonging to the unsettling oceanic depth into glittering, polished jewels which, as aesthetic entities, represent a refined, pleasure-oriented culture, should be considered as the perfect metaphor of creating *kāvya* poetry. In this stanza, sage Agastya (present explicitly) and Varāhamihira (present implicitly) may be seen as a sage, magician, astrologer, creative author in general, and an author of classical Sanskrit *kāvya* in particular (Matyszkiewicz 2017: 110-114). Once we properly grasp the message hidden in the fifth stanza, we can understand the entire twelfth chapter of *Brhatsamhitā* as a kind of an authorial manifesto embedded in an artful display of poetic skill in which the author demonstrates in a concise manner his acquaintance with various constituents of the *kāvya* poetic style.

The following sixth stanza, written in a lengthy *daṇḍaka* metre, refers to another famous accomplishment of Agastya, which is the subduing of the Vindhya mountain⁹. According to the story told in the third book of the *Mahābhārata*, Vindhya started to grow out of jealousy of the attention given to Mt Meru by the Sun, reaching an immense size that blocked the path of the luminaries. In its constantly enlarging form Vindhya was posing a threat to the universe until sage Agastya persuaded it to postpone further growth until his return from the South, from where he never returned (102.2-3, 102.14c). In his description of Vindhya, Varāhamihira condenses all the canonical constituents of the theme that trace back to the Sanskrit epics, such as *vidyādharas* ‘amorous celestials’, humble ascetics practising penances, animals such as lions, humming bees, and elephants, water springs, caves, waterfalls, and fragrant breezes (Boccali 2003: 59-60). As in any *mahākāvya* composition written before and after *Brhatsamhitā*, the mountain is imagined as a liminal space connecting the Earth with the celestial domain, where supernatural wonders are wrapped in an aura of sensuousness mixed with serenity¹⁰.

⁸ See Matyszkiewicz (2017: 110-111).

⁹ Vindhya is a mountain range in the central India. In the abovementioned story, it is presented as a singular personalised mountain for the narrative purposes.

¹⁰ All those elements can be found also in *Rāmāyaṇa* (2.50, 87-88) Aśvaghōṣa’s *Saundarānanda* (10.5-14), the opening stanzas of Kālidāsa’s *Kumārasambhavam* (*sargas* 5-6), Bhāravi’s *Kirātārjunīya* (ch. 5-6), Bhaṭṭi’s *Bhaṭṭikāvya* (13.18-43). See Boccali (2003: 57-71); Matyszkiewicz (2018: 59-60).

In the following stanzas, the author moves on to the depiction of the autumn season, which is also composed of canonical motifs customarily employed by *kāvya* poets. The autumn is expressed here through a combination of white and reddish or tawny colour of geese and *cakra* birds, as well as through images of lakes and rivers metaphorically identified with women. The autumnal river full of water lilies, bees, lotuses, and birds is likened to an impassioned lady with white teeth reddened by betel, giving coquettish glances¹¹. The tenth stanza portrays an autumn lake at night and is based on a figure of speech known as *utprekṣā* or ‘ascription’, in which a lake, implicitly identified with a woman, opens its lotuses. All the characteristics of the lake here have corresponding female body features as their counterparts. The stanza contains also a subordinate *rūpaka* contained within the *utprekṣā*, *taraṅga-valayā* ‘waves-bracelets’:

*indoḥ payodavigamopahitām vibhūtiṃ draṣṭuṃ taraṅgavalayā kumudaṃ niśāsu / unmīlayaty
alinilīnadalaṃ supakṣma vāpī vilocanam ivāsitatārakāntam // (12.10)*

At night, the lake in its waves-bracelets opens white water lilies as if they were eyes with regular eyebrows, in order to present to the bees-eye-pupils the splendour of the moon acquired at the retreat of clouds.

Another *utprekṣā* is used in the following, eleventh stanza, in which the Earth is depicted as welcoming Agastya, imagined here as the herald of the autumn season (September till mid-November) with lakes full of white geese, ducks, lotuses, and water lilies, which are identified with welcoming hands full of fruit, flowers, and gems. In the next two stanzas (12.12-13), Varāhamihira invokes the legendary image of Agastya as the purifier of waters poisoned by snakes. The remaining eight stanzas of the chapter are of a more informative nature. They provide the instructions concerning the observation of the star Agastya (informing that in Ujjain it can be observed when the sun is seven degrees short of sign *kanyā* ‘Virgo’), and the methods by which it should be worshipped by different social classes and the king in order to bring auspiciousness to its worshippers. The remaining three stanzas of the chapter present prognostications based on the observable features of the star:

*śātakumbhasadrśaḥ sphaṭikābhas tarpayann iva mahīm kiraṅgraiḥ / dṛśyate yadi tadā
pracurānnā bhūr bhavaty abhayarogajanādhyā // ulkāyā vinihataḥ śikhinā vā kṣudbhayaṃ
marakam eva vidhatte / dṛśyate sa kila hastagate rke rohiṇīm upagate stam upaiti // (12.20-21)*

Spotted Agastya causes diseases, tawny-drought, grey-harm to cows, pulsating a reason to be afraid, red like madder famine and wars, and the tiny one he siege of a town. [But] when he resembles gold or crystal and seems to be tickling the Earth with the tips of his rays, the Earth abounds in food and people are free from fear and diseases.

The features illustrate the second, along with the magical correspondence, principle of interpreting reality employed in *Brhatsaṃhitā*, which is deducing fortunate outcomes from aesthetically pleasing qualities of objects and things (Matyszkiewicz 2017: 111-112). Owing to the fact that the *kāvya* poetic style, to which Varāhamihira successfully aspires, programmatically gathers, intensifies, and refines aesthetically pleasing objects, these and many other prognostications contained in *Brhatsaṃhitā* appear to be formulated on the basis of the established poetic canon or the poetic fancy of the astrologer (Matyszkiewicz 2017: 113).

¹¹ BS 12.8 *pārśvadvayādhiṣṭhitacakraṅkāṃ āpuṣṇatī sasvanahamsapāṅktim / tāmbūlaraktokaṣītāgradantī vibhātī
yoṣeva śarat saḥāsā //* ‘the autumn feeding a flock of cackling geese surrounded by *cakra* birds on both sides, shines like a smiling wanton lady, the tips of her teeth reddened by betel’.

A further survey of all the formal literary constituents that allow to consider the above-interpreted twelfth chapter of *Bṛhatsamhitā* a display of poetic skill may be expressed as follows. Firstly, unlike the other 106 chapters, this one is endowed with a rudimentary plot which binds a series of canonically realised literary themes including the mountain, the ocean, and the season of the year (autumn season). Since the chapter employs the canonical themes and treats about the progress of a hero whose story is taken from traditional lore, it may be assumed that Varāhamihira attempts to fashion it into a small *mahākāvya*, which, according to the definition of the genre provided by Daṇḍin in his *Kāvyaśāstra* (composed around 700 CE), is distinguished from other genres of narrative poetry by these very characteristics¹². What is more, just as dictated by Daṇḍin's definition, provided well over a century after the *Bṛhatsamhitā*, Varāhamihira composes his stanzas in a variety of classical metres and infuses them with *rasas*, or 'aesthetic tastes'¹³.

For example, in the depiction of the mountain (12.6) one can sense the *śṛṅgāra rasa* 'erotic taste' mixed with the *adbhuta rasa* 'taste of marvel'. The same stanza is endowed with the 'stylistic quality' *guṇa* known in the Sanskrit literary theory under the name *ojas* 'force', which creates a sense of grandeur by means of forceful, variegated words forming long compounds (Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* 16.106-107; Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaśāstra* 1.80-84; Vāmana's *Kāvyaśāstra* 3.1.5-10)¹⁴. Contrastively, the sound of the tenth stanza incorporates the *guṇa* known as *mādhurya* 'sweetness', which relies on the absence of long compounds and uniformity of sounds in order to convey a sense of sweetness and ease (Vāmana's *Kāvyaśāstra* 3.1.21; Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaśāstra* 1.51-53). While *ojas* in the sixth stanza highlights the grandeur, weightiness, and complexity of the mountain range, *mādhurya* in stanza 10 harmonises with the calmness, softness, and delicate beauty of the lake at night and the female face with which it is identified.

The chapter is packed with relatively simple but elegant and artful figures of speech, such as already discussed *utprekṣa*, *upamā* 'similes' – such as the autumn season compared to a wanton woman (12.9) –, and *rūpaka* – such as those from the stanza 12.5. Among other figures of speech based on *artha* 'meaning' it is worthwhile to mention a *vyatireka* 'distinction' figure from the earlier-cited stanza 12.1, in which two things are compared in such a way that one is declared to surpass the

¹² According to Daṇḍin definition of *mahākāvya* from *Kāvyaśāstra* 1.14-20 'the composition in cantos (*sargabandha*) is a great (or extended) poem (*mahākāvya*). Its definition is as follows. Its beginning is a benediction, a salutation, or an indication of the plot. It is based on a traditional narrative, or on a true event from some other source. It deals with the fruits of the four aims of life. Its hero is skilful and noble. Adorned (*alamkṛtam*) with descriptions of cities, oceans, mountains, seasons, the rising of the sun and moon, playing in pleasure-parks and in water, drinking-parties and the delights of love-making, the separation of lovers, weddings, the birth of a son, councils of war, spies, military expeditions, battles, and the victory of the hero; not too condensed; pervaded with *rasa* (aesthetic mood) and *bhāva* (basic emotion); with cantos that are not overly diffuse, in meters that are pleasing to hear, with proper junctures, and ending with different meters (that is, meters different from the main or carrying meter of the canto); – (such a) poem, pleasing to the world and well ornamented (*sadalamkṛti*), will last until the end of this creation. Even if it lacks some of these features, a *kāvya* does not become bad, if the perfection of the things that are present delights the connoisseurs' (trans. Peterson 2003, cf. Matyszkiewicz 2018: 58). For the date of composition of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaśāstra*, see Bronner (2012: 74).

¹³ It should be noted here that the Indian aesthetic theory, as preserved in the Sanskrit treatise on performing arts, Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (200 BCE/200 CE), and further developed by later Sanskrit literary theorists, is structured upon the set of aesthetic categories identified with aesthetic 'tastes' or, in other words, aesthetic sensations or sentiments. The most prevalent is the set of eight *rasas*, including: 1. *śṛṅgāra* 'erotic'; 2. *hāsyā* 'comic'; 3. *karuṇā* 'pathetic'; 4. *raudra* 'furious'; 5. *vīra* 'heroic'; 6. *bhayānaka* 'terrible'; 7. *bibhatsa* 'odious'; 8. *adbhuta* 'marvellous'.

¹⁴ The notion of *guṇa* or stylistic quality, which can be traced back to Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (NŚ), is central to the Rīti school of Sanskrit poetics, presented in its full form in Vāmana's *Kāvyaśāstra* (8th century CE). Both the *mārga* system contained in Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaśāstra* (7/8th century CE) and the *rīti* system of Vāmana's *Kāvyaśāstra* are based on the set of ten *guṇas* already present in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The set of ten *guṇas*, as presented in NŚ, consists of: 1. *śleṣa* 'coalescence'; 2. *prasāda* 'lucidity'; 3. *samatā* 'symmetry'; 4. *mādhurya* 'sweetness'; 5. *saukumārya* 'smoothness'; 6. *arthavyakti* 'explicitness of sense'; 7. *udāra* 'exaltedness'; 8. *ojas* 'force'; 9. *kānti* 'loveliness'; 10. *samādhi* 'superimposition'. *Guṇas* are differently interpreted by Daṇḍin, Vāmana, and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Vāmana traces each of them on the level of 'sound' *śabda* and on the level of 'meaning' *artha*. See Lahiri (1987: 1-111).

- 12.9: half-equal metre, *vaṁśasthā* [V — V — — V V — V — V —] (second and fourth quarter) and *indravaṁśa* [— — V — — V V — V — V —] (first and third quarter)
 12.10: *vasantatilakā* metre: (4x14) [— — V — V V V — V V — V — —]x4
 12.11: *indravajrā*
 12.12: half-equal metre, *puṣpitāgrā* [V V V V V V — V — V — — V V V V — V V — V — V — — / V V V V V V — V — V — — V V V V — V V — V — V — V //]
 12.13: *toṭaka*
 12.14-15: *indravajrā*
 12.16: *vasantatilakā*
 12.17: *nāndīmukhī* metre: (4x15) [V V V V V V — — — V — — V — —]x4
 12.18: *upajāti*
 12.19: *indravajrā*
 12.20: *svāgatā* metre [— V — V V V — V V — —]x4
 12.21: *svāgatā*

The fact that the author was an expert in the field of prosody is further proved not only by the already mentioned chapter devoted to the subject (12.104), but also by the great variety of metrical schemes used in the entire work, many of which represent different varieties of metres.

5. Conclusion

A close literary study of *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*'s twelfth chapter seen within the context of the early, formative stage of *kāvya* poetic canon reveals Varāhamihira's conversance with the early *mahākāvya* compositions along with their epic sources, and the essential constituents of ornate literary style, some of which were thoroughly conceptualised only by the later Sanskrit literary theory. Moreover, the chapter provides a valuable perspective on the author's personality and the role he assigns to the *kāvya* style. Varāhamihira, who in the first stanzas of the 104th chapter (quoted earlier) openly appoints the literary form of *kāvya* to be the new, more effective medium of transmitting knowledge on the *laukika* 'profane' subjects, in the twelfth chapter implicitly reveals himself through the figure of a profane sage, able to control, measure, and transform the material world. Finally, the *kāvya* poetry, which is recognised in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* as the medium of transmitting knowledge by appealing to the sense of pleasure, in the fifth stanza acquires a philosophical dimension.

Bibliography

- Boccali, Giuliano (2003), 'The Image of Mountains between *Itihāsa* and *Kāvya*', *Cracow Indological Studies* 4-5, 57-71.
 Boccali, Giuliano (2005), 'The Sea in Ancient India's Literary Landscape: Pravarasena's *Setubandha* II, 1-36', *Cracow Indological Studies* 7, 115-123.
 Bronkhorst, Johannes (2014-2015), 'The *Magas*', *Brahmavidyā: The Adyar Library Bulletin* 78-79, 459-486.
 Bronner, Yigal (2012), 'A Question of Priority: Revisiting the Bhāmaha-Daṇḍin Debate', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40 (1), 67-118.
 Hahn, Michael (1981), *Indian Metrical Literature*, Lecture held at The Reiyukai Library, Tokyo.
 Hildebrandt, Alf (1977), 'Nahuṣa in the Skies: A Human King of Heaven', *History of Religions* 16 (4), 329-350.
 Gerow, Edwin (1971), *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*, Paris-Hague, Mouton.

- Ghosh, Manomohan (1951), *The Nāṭyaśāstra ascribed to Bharata Muni. Completely translated for the first time from the original Sanskrit with an Introduction and Various Notes by Manomohan Ghosh*, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- Lahiri, Prakas Chandra (1987), *Concepts of Rīti and Guṇa in Sanskrit Poetics in their Historical Development*, Delhi, V. K. Publishing House.
- Lienhard, Siegfried (1984), 'A History of Classical Poetry. Sanskrit-Pali-Prakrit', in Gonda, Jan (ed.), *A History of Indian Literature*, 3.1, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz.
- Matyszkiewicz, Ariadna (2016), *Wymiar literacki dwunastego rozdziału Brihatsamhity w kontekście ontologii dzieła oraz relacji kawji i śastry* [The Literary Dimension of *Bṛhatsamhitā*'s Twelfth Chapter in the Context of Work's Ontology and Relations between *kāvya* and *śāstra*], Kraków, Jagiellonian University MA thesis.
- Matyszkiewicz, Ariadna (2017), 'Magia uczonego poety, czyli odczytywanie świata w *Brihatsamhicie* Warahamihiry' [The Magical Image of the World in *Varāhamihira's Bṛhatsamhitā*], *Magazyn antropologiczno-społeczno-kulturowy MASKA* 33, 105-115.
- Matyszkiewicz, Ariadna (2018), 'Are Great Natural Objects in Sanskrit *mahākāvya* Sublime? A Preliminary Study on the Longinian Notion of the Sublime and the Practice of Sanskrit Classical Poets', *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture* n.s. 7, 55-76.
- Morgan, Les (2011), *The Croaking Frogs. A Guide to Sanskrit Metrics and Figures of Speech*, Columbia, SC, Mahodara Press.
- Peterson, Indira Viswanathan (2003), *Design and Rhetoric in a Sanskrit Court Epic. The Kirātārjunīya of Bhāravi*, Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Pingree, David (1981), *Jyotiḥśāstra. Astral and Mathematical Literature*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz.
- Sastri, V. Subrahmanya; Bhat, M. Ramakrishna (1946), *Varahamihira's Brihat Samhita with an English Translation and Notes*, Bangalore City, Soobbiah and Sons.
- Shastri, Ajay Mitra (1991), *Varāhamihira and his Times*, Jodhpur, Kusumanjali Prakashan.
- Sudyka, Lidia (2006), *Od Ramajany do dydaktyki, czyli zagadki poematu Bhattiego* [From the *Rāmāyaṇa* to Didactics or the Riddles of the *Bhaṭṭikāvya*], Kraków, Księgarnia Akademicka.

Ariadna Matyszkiewicz
 Jagiellonian University in Kraków (Poland)
amariadnaam@gmail.com