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Bhattotpala: His Date, Life and Writings

Bhattotpala is well-known as an astronomical writer and as an erudite scholiast of Varāhamihira's works. But no particulars of his personal life are known and the question of his date still awaits a final solution. The fixation of Utpala's date has an important bearing on the dates of several Sanskrit writers quoted by him. In the present paper, therefore, it is proposed to dwell on these problems at some length with a view to arrive at some satisfactory conclusions.

In one of the concluding verses¹ occurring in the manuscripts of his commentary on the *Brhajjātaka*, Utpala informs us that he finished it on Thursday, coupled with the 5th day of the bright half of Caitra, in the Śāka year 888²:

चैत्रमासस्य पञ्चम्यां सितायां गुरुवासरे ।
वस्त्राष्टमिते³ शाके कृतेयं विवृतिर्मया ॥

1 This is the 5th out of seven concluding stanzas.

2 This verse occurs in Ms. No. 413 of 1881-82, 872 of 1887-91, and 279 of Viśrāmbāg collection in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, in a Ms. noticed in R. L. Mitra's *Notices of Skt. Mss.*, vol. II (1874), p. 166, and in a Ms. in the Bodleian Library; but it is absent in No. 177 of A1882-83, 951 of 1886-92, dated Śaivvat 1855, and in 278 of Viśrāmbāg collection in B. O. R. Institute. My thanks are due to Shri V. M. Bedekar of Poona for supplying this information.

3 The Ms. noticed by R. L. Mitra gives the reading '*Vasvaśāśvamite*' or A. D. 788. The statement of D. C. Bhattacharya that Śāka 888 current Caitra śukla 5 ended at about 10 hours, Wednesday, 28th February, A. D. 966 is incorrect and his suggestion to amend the reading as '*Vasvaśāśvamite*' (i. e. Śāka 778) is quite unwarranted. For his view vide *Indian Culture*, XII (1945-46), pp. 81-82. —

A similar couplet found at the end of his gloss on the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* gives the date of its completion as Thursday, the 2nd day of the dark half of Phālguna, again in the Śāka year 888⁴ :—

फाल्गुनस्य द्वितीयायामसितायां गुरोर्दिने ।

वस्त्राष्टमिते शाके कृत्यं विवृतिर्मया ॥

Now, if as usual, the Śāka year 888 is referred to the Śāka era with A.D. 78 as its epoch and is regarded as current (887 expired), we get satisfactory results. Thus, in Śāka 888 current, Caitra śukla 5 began on Thursday, 9th March, A.D. 965, at about 58 *ghaṭīs*. 22 *palas* since mean sunrise at Ujjain, and ended on Friday, at about 53 *ghaṭīs*, 52 *palas*. And the *Pūrṇimānta* Phālguna kṛṣṇa 2 in that year began on Wednesday 10th January, A.D. 966, at about 41 *ghaṭīs*, 2 *palas* and ended on Thursday, 11th January, at about 34 *ghaṭīs*, 48 *palas*. Thus we get Thursday, 9th March, A.D. 965 and Thursday 11th January, A.D. 966 respectively for the completion of his scholia on the *Bṛhajjātaka* and the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*⁵.

But some scholars have tried to interpret this date in fantastic ways. It has, for instance, been held by some that the Śākā-kāla mentioned by Utpala is identical with the so-called Cyrus Era which is supposed to have commenced in B.C. 551-550⁶ in

4 This verse is found in Mss. Nos. 415 of 1881-82 in the Deccan College Collection and 305 of Viśrāmbāg Collection in B. O. R. Instt., Poona, in No. 247 in the collection of the Bombay Branch of the Asiatic Society (*Catalogue*, vol. I, pp. 82-83), and in No. 364 of Bombay University collection (*Catalogue*, vol. I, p. 149). Also vide *IA*, XIX, p. 41; *JRAS*, First Series, XX, p. 372 note; *JRAS.*, N. S. vol. I, p. 410.

5 A list furnished by astronomers of Ujjayini to Hunter and published by Colebrooke (*Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. II, pp. 461-63) assigns Bhaṭṭotpala to Śāka 890, which is only two years later than these dates.

6 Cf. *JAHRS*, XX, (1949-50), pp. 39-82; *JH.*, XXVIII (1950) pp. 103-110; *JAHRS*, XXI, pp. 1-40; *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, Vol. I, pp. 61-73, 123-136. Mr. Rangarajan (*Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, Fifth Session (1941), p. 164) suggests that Śāka era began in B. C. 523/22 with the first viceroy of India appointed by the Persian emperor.

commemoration of the foundation of the great Persian empire by Cyrus or the latter's incursions into Indian borderland and that consequently Utpala composed his gloss on the *Bṛhajjātaka* in A.D. 339 or 338⁷. But as we have shown elsewhere⁸, this theory is quite absurd. There is no evidence to show that Cyrus started any reckoning; and even admitting its existence for a moment, we fail to understand how it came to be known as Śaka-kāla. It is equally inexplicable why this era became so very popular with Indian astronomers whereas it was totally ignored in its founder's home state and even by his own descendants. Moreover, it has been pointed out quite plausibly that the particulars of dates specified above do not agree with the week-day (Thursday) either in A.D. 338 or 339⁹.

In the introductory portion of his scholium on the *Bṛhajjātaka*, Utpala quotes four stanzas from what he calls *Bhāskara-siddhānta*, which are identical with *Siddhānta-śiromaṇi*, 1.9-12. He cites another verse from the same work on *Bṛhajjātaka* I. 1. Bhāskarācārya wrote his *Siddhānta-śiromaṇi* in Śaka 1072 or A.D. 1150. Now, if Utpala actually extracted these verses from Bhāskara's work, he must have flourished considerably after A.D. 1150, which is incompatible with the concluding verses of his commentaries on the *Bṛhajjātaka* and the *Bṛhatsambhitā*. Some account for this discrepancy by emending the reading 'Vasvaṣṭāṣṭamite' into 'Vasvaṣṭāṣṭimite', which latter will give us Śaka 1688 as the date of the composition of his commentaries¹⁰. Absurdity of this suggestion is obvious from the

7 *JIH*, XXVIII, p. 106; *Punjab University Historical Society Journal*, I, pp. 61-73, 123-36. In his *Popular Astronomy*, V. Thiruvengkatachar gives Utpala's date as A. D. 340.

8 My paper read before 1961 session of Indian History Congress. It is published in *Vidarbha Research Society's Annual*, 1961, pp. 26-46.

9 *JIH*., XXXVI, p. 364.

10 Sitaram Jha (*Bṛhajjātaka* with Utpala's gloss, Banaras 1934) gives the reading as 'Vasvaṣṭāṣṭimite' and argues:—यतो भास्कराचार्योत्पत्त्यनन्तरं भट्टोत्पलस्योत्पत्तिरिति.....तेन वखष्टाष्टिमिते १६८८ शाके कल्पयितुं शक्यते, बहुधा लेखकाध्यापकाच्येतदोषादिकारो भ्रष्ट इति विबुधैर्भ्रंशं विभाव्यम् ।

fact that Alberuni, who wrote his account of India in A.D. 1030, repeatedly refers to Utpala¹¹ and quotes a passage from his gloss on the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*¹². Again, Utpala is mentioned by Varuṇabhaṭṭa (Śaka 962) in his gloss on the *Khaṇḍakhādya-karaṇa* of Brahmagupta¹³. References to Utpala are also to be found in another commentary on the *Khaṇḍakhādya* composed in Śaka 1564 and in the *Pañcāṅgakaṇṭika* written in Śaka 1567¹⁴. Mm. P. V. Kane reconciles this discrepancy by suggesting that either Bhāskarācārya took these verses from an older homonymous writer¹⁵ or these verses were really marginal ones noted by some scribe or reader and were later incorporated by copyists in Utpala's commentary itself¹⁶.

Thus there is no inherent difficulty in admitting that Utpala lived in the second half of the tenth century A.D. Prof. Otto Naugebauer has, however, recently pointed out in his paper entitled Variants to the Greek translation of Abu Ma'shar's version of the Parantellonta¹⁷ of Varāhamihira and Teukros,¹⁸ that Abu Ma'shar, who died in A.D. 886, cites a passage concerning the third *decan* of Aries, which belongs to Utpala's commentary and that one must assume that the above date of the composition

There is nothing to commend V. Subramhanya Sastry's view (*Sārāvali* of Kalyāṇavarman, Bombay 1928, Preface, pp. 1-2) that Utpala lived at the time of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (A. D. 1605-1627).

11 E. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, pp. 157-58, 298, 334, 336-37, 361, 367.

12 *Ibid.* p. 298.

13 S. B. Dikshit, *History of Indian Astronomy* (Marathi), p. 235.

14 *Ibid.*

15 We know another Bhāskara who was a direct pupil of Āryabhaṭa and composed *Mahā-Bhāskariya* and *Laghu-Bhāskariya*, Vide, P. C. Sen-gupta, *Khaṇḍakhādya* (Engl. tr.), Calcutta, 1934, Preface pp. xiii-xiv.

16 *JBBRAS*, 1948-49, pp. 30-31. Dr. Kane informs us that these verses are not found in some manuscripts of the commentary.

17 i. e. arrangement of constellations according to zodiacal signs and *decans* which rise simultaneously or set or culminate simultaneously.

18 *Bulletin of the Royal Academy of Belgium*, for 1957-58, pp. 133-140.

of Utpala's commentary (Caitra śukla 5, Śaka 888) is incorrect or that Utpala used for this chapter (Ch. 27 of *Bṛhajjātaka*) an older gloss.¹⁹ If Utpala is really quoted by a writer who lived before A.D. 886, the former must have flourished much earlier. Dr. Kane, therefore, rejects the authenticity of this date and states that Utpala cannot be placed later than A.D. 850.²⁰

There are, however, good reasons to differ from this last suggestion. The two verses giving the dates in question are found in a large number of manuscripts and cannot therefore be regarded as spurious. Moreover, the date of his commentaries, Śaka 888, is only two years earlier than the one attributed to him (Śaka 890) in a list of astronomers which Hunter procured at Ujjain and was later published by H. T. Colebrooke.²¹ The only way of reconciling these discrepant facts is to refer these dates to Vikrama Samvat commencing B.C. 58-57. In Vikrama 888 current, Caitra śukla 5 ended on Thursday, 3rd March, A.D. 830, at about 17 hours, zero minutes, while *pūrṇimānta* Phālguna kṛṣṇa 2 ended on 2nd February, A.D. 831, at about 48 *gh.* and 11 *palas*. The words Śaka and Śāka were used in two senses, viz. (1) the reckoning known after the Śakas, and (2) time-reckoning in general.^{21a} And we have instances of the use of the word Śāka to denote Vikrama era.²² If there still remains some doubt in the validity of our suggestion, it will be eliminated by what Utpala states about the commencement of the Śaka era.²³ 'That time', says he, 'when the barbarian rulers called Śakas were destroyed by the illustrious Vikramāditya is known by the

19 Prof. Naugebauer's arguments are summarised in *JAS.*, Bombay, 1958, pp. 147f.

20 *Ibid.*

1 *Miscellaneous Essays*, Vol, II pp. 461-63.

21a Cf. *Jyotirvidābharaṇa*, IV. 53, X. 110, 111, XXII. 13.

22 In the Charwa stone inscription of the reign of Devapāladeva of Dhara, line 7, the word Śāka is used to denote Vikrama samvat. It belongs to A. D. 1217-18. For some more examples see *IA*, XIX (1890), pp. 24-25, No. 11.

23 On *Bṛhatsamhitā*, VIII. 20.

name Śaka'.²⁴ Thus there can be no doubt whatever that Utpala confused Śaka and Vikrama eras with each other and that he employed the term Śaka to mean Vikrama era.²⁵ It seems there were several theories in vogue about the origin of the Śaka era in ancient India. In inscriptions dating from Śaka 500 (A.D. 578) onwards it is described as 'the era of the coronation of the Śaka king',²⁶ 'the era of the Śaka king'²⁷ (or kings)' or simply 'the era of the Śakas'.²⁸ Brahmagupta²⁹ and Bhāskara³⁰ state that the Śaka era started after the end of the Śaka king, although they regard Kali 3179 expired or A.D. 78 as its epoch. Utpala agrees with them in so far as the event which this reckoning commemorates is concerned ; but he is reticent about its epoch. Long ago Dr. H. Kern discussed the aforesaid statement of Utpala and argued that as the above-mentioned dates (Caitra śukla 5, Śaka 888 and Phālguna kṛṣṇa 2, 888) will agree with the week-day, i.e. Thursday, only if they are referred to the Śaka era commencing A.D. 78, the initial point of Utpala's Śaka-kāla must be the same year.³¹ But we have seen above that these dates when referred to the Vikrama era yield quite satisfactory results and hence Kern's arguments cannot be taken very seriously.

24 शका नाम म्लेच्छजातयो राजानस्ते यस्मिन् काले विक्रमादित्यइवेन व्यापादिताः
स कालो लोके शक इति प्रासदः । तस्माच्छकेन्द्रकालात् शकनृपवधकालादारभ्य...

25 Also vide Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, II, p. 478.

26 शकनृपतिराज्याभिषेकसंवत्सरेष्वतीतेषु पञ्चसु शतेषु *IA*, Vol. X, p. 58.

27 *Śaka-nṛpati-saṃvatsareṣu*, *IA*, VI, p. 73; *Śaka-nṛpa-saṃvatsareṣu*, *IA.*, XII, p. 16; *Śaka-nṛpa-kāla*, *El*, III, p. 109.

28 *Śaka-saṃvat*, *El*, I, p. 56; *Śaka-varṣa*, *IA*, VI, p. 86; *Śaka-kāla*, *IA*, XI, p. 112, etc. See also G. H. Ojha, *Indian Palaeography* (Hindi), p. 171.

29 *Brāhmasphuṭasiddhānta* :—क्षीणि कृतादीनि कलेर्गौर्गैकगुणाः
शकान्तेऽब्दाः ।

30 *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi* :—नन्दाद्रीन्द्रगुणास्तथा शकनृपस्यान्ते कलेर्वत्सराः ।

31 Kern, *Bṛhatsambhitā*, Preface, pp. 6 ff.

It would be clear from the foregoing discussion that Utpala means by Śāka the era commencing B.C. 58-57 and that he finished his commentaries on the *Bṛhajjātaka* and *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* on 3rd March, A.D. 830 and 2nd February, A.D. 831 respectively. And as such he could have well been referred to by Abu Ma'shar who died in A.D. 886.³²

II

Alberuni informs us that Utpala was a native of Kashmir³³ and a similar statement is made by Varuṇabhaṭṭa (Śaka 962) in his commentary on Brahmagupta's *Khaṇḍakhādya*.³⁴ Utpala paraphrases the word 'kośa'³⁵ or 'kośabbavana'³⁶ as 'gañja'. Gañja as the designation of a high state official occurs in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* (V. 177) ; gañjavara and gañjapati in the sense of a treasurer are found in the Mathura inscription of Śoḍāsa³⁷ and in the Taleśvara CP inscription.³⁸ Again, he explains 'jānu-kapicche' by 'ekkalake',³⁹ 'mṛdaṅga' by 'maṇḍala',⁴⁰ 'kṣvedā' by 'śoḍanikā',⁴¹ 'bhṛṅgāra' by 'dāmdāni-damanī',⁴² 'mokṣaka' by 'mañivaka',⁴³ 'śaṅku' by 'aṅga',⁴⁴ and 'bharadvāja' (a bird) by

32 The possibility of referring these dates to Vikrama era was hinted at by Fleet, *IA*, XIX (1890). pp. 41-43; but he left the question open. In the light of the above discussion there can be no doubt that Utpala used 'Śāka' in the sense of Vikrama era; but astronomers of Ujjayini confused it with the Śaka era with A. D. 78 as its epoch and assigned him to Śaka 890.

33 Sachau, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 157, 298, 334, 336, 367.

34 S. B. Dikshit, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

35 *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (hereafter referred to as *BS*), XXXIV. 19; LXXXV. 29; XCII. 2; CIII. 61; *Yogayātrā*, I. 17.

36 *BS*, LII. 14.

37 *El*, IX, p. 247.

38 *El*, XIII, p. 115.

39 जानुकपिच्छे ये लोके एकलके इति प्रसिद्धे, on *BS*, LVII. 17.

40 मृदङ्गो वादिभो मण्डलेति प्रसिद्धः, on *BS*, LXVII. 96.

41 श्वेडा मुखशब्दः शोडनिकेति प्रसिद्धः, on *BS*. LXXXV. 39; *Yogayātrā*, XIV. 3.

42 on *BS*, LXXXVII. 6.

43 यश्च मणीवक इति प्रसिद्धः, on *BS*, LIII, 113.

44 शङ्कुः अङ्ग इति प्रसिद्धो लोके, on *BS*, LIX. 6.

'lāṭa'.⁴⁵ If these terms could be shown to have been in use in Kashmir in the ninth century A.D., it would lend additional support to Alberuni's statement. We know nothing about Bhaṭṭotpala's parentage. The statements found in the colophons of certain manuscripts that he was a son of Varāhamihira himself⁴⁶ and father of Pṛthuyāśas,⁴⁷ really the son of Varāhamihira, are quite erroneous. The opening stanza of his commentary on the *Laghujātaka* containing an invocation to Mahādeva shows that he was Śaiva by religion.⁴⁸

III

The *Āryā-saptati*, apparently so called because it contains seventy verses in Āryā metre, is his only extant original work. There is, however, internal evidence to show that its real title was *Praśnajñāna*. Utpala calls it by this name both in the

45 भरद्वाजः पञ्चविंशोऽष्टौ लोकेषु प्रसिद्धः on BS, LXXXV. 41. Besides, Utpala employs the word 'niṭāla' for threshold (on BS, LII. 26) which must have been in use in Kashmir in Utpala's time.

46 Cf. the colophon of a manuscript of *Praśnajñāna* noticed by A. Banerji-Sastri in *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Mithilā*, Vol. III. p. 213, No. 184 :—इति श्रीवराहमिहिरात्मजभट्टोत्पलेन विरचितं भट्टोत्पलो नाम प्रश्नज्ञानं समाप्तम्. Sir John William's view that Utpala was a son of Varāhamihira seems to have been based on such a misleading statement, cf. *Asiatic Researches*, II, p. 390. For its criticism see Colebrooke, *op. cit.*, II, p. 479.

47 Some manuscripts of the *Praśnamahodadhi* or *Saṭpañcāsikā* state in their colophons that its author Pṛthuyāśas was a son of Bhaṭṭotpala. Cf. *Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in Government Oriental Manuscripts Library*, by Kuppuswamy, Madras, 1918, Nos. 13954, 13957, 13959.

48 प्रणिपत्य महादेवं भुवनगुरुं च लोकेशम् ।

भट्टोत्पलो लघुतरां जातकटोकां करोति शिष्यहिताम् ॥

Colebrooke is wrong in taking the name Utpala to mean stone and his following remarks are unjustified :—"who (Utpala) in several places of his commentary names himself Utpala 'quibbling with simulated modesty on his appellation,' for the word signifies stone;" and "stone (Utpala) frames the raft of interpretation to cross the ocean composed by Varāhamihira." Vide *Misc. Essays*, II, pp. 478-79 and fn. 1.

opening⁴⁹ and concluding⁵⁰ verses of this work as also in his commentary on the *Ṣaṭpañcāśikā* of Varāhamihira's son Pṛthuyāśas (II. 2). It was also known as *Praśnāryā*⁵¹ or *Praśnāryā-saptati*⁵² and *Praśnagrantha*.⁵³ We know from the colophons of some manuscripts that it formed part of Utpala's larger work, the *Jñānamālā*.⁵⁴

In his commentary on the *Bṛhatsambhitā*,⁵⁵ Bhaṭṭotpala introduces some verses from one of his own works with the words *tathā cāsmadīya-vacanam*. On *Bṛhatsambhitā*, LII. 57, he quotes 2½ verses from his own work on architecture with the words *tathā cāsmadīya-vāstuvidyāyām*. These works are no more extant.

Besides, Alberuni attributes some more works to Utpala, viz. (i) *Rāhu-nṛākarana* (probably an error for *Rāhu-nirākarana*), i.e. breaking the Karaṇas, (ii) *Karaṇa-pāta*, i.e. killing the Karaṇas, (iii) *Praśna-gūḍhāmaṇi* (perhaps an error for *Praśna-cūḍāmaṇi*) dealing with *Praśnavidyā*, and (iv) *Srudhava*.⁵⁶ But in view of the convention of an astronomer writing only one *Karaṇa*, it seems improbable that Utpala composed two works of this class. The *Praśnagūḍhāmaṇi* may be the same as the *Praśnajñāna* mentioned above. From the *Srudhava* Alberuni has taken some meteorological and chronological notes. But its title is quite strange; it seems Alberuni's account is somewhat confused. All these works except that no *praśna* are now lost.

49 वक्ष्येऽहं स्पष्टतरं प्रश्नज्ञानं हिताय देवविदाम् ।

50 आर्यासप्तत्येदं प्रश्नज्ञानं समासतो रचितम् ।

51 *Triennial Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS. in Govt. Oriental MSS. Library, Madras, Vol. II, Pt. 1, Sanskrit-A, 1917, p. 1294; Vol. VI, Pt. 1, p. 7197.*

52 *Ibid.*

53 MS. No. 910 in Sarasvati Bhavan, Banaras, is *Praśnagrantha* of Bhaṭṭotpala. But it is said to contain 100 śloka. Also BORI, MS. No. 346 of 1879-80; *JBBRAS*, 1948-49, p. 29, fn. 57.

54 इति श्रीभट्टोत्पलविरचितायां ज्ञानमालायां प्रश्नग्रन्थः समाप्तः, *ibid.*

55 Ch. II, pp. 35, 64, 65 of Sudhakara Dvivedi's edition.

56 Sachau, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 157-58, 334, 336, 361.

IV

But Utpala's reputation as an astronomical writer mainly rests on his commentaries, particularly on Varāhamihira's works. He is to Varāhamihira what Mallinātha is to Kālidāsa.⁵⁷ His commentaries on both the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* and the *Bṛhajjātaka* are styled *Viṃśti*;⁵⁸ but the latter gloss is also known as *Cintāmaṇi*⁵⁹ and *Jagaccandrikā*.⁶⁰ If we suppose that Utpala began to write his scholium on the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* immediately after that on the *Bṛhajjātaka*, the former would appear to have taken about eleven months for its completion. His gloss on the *Laghu-jātaka* is known as *Hitā* or *Śiṣyabitā*. His commentaries on Varāhamihira's *Yogayātrā*⁶¹ and *Vivāhapaṭala*, on the *Śatpañcāśikā* of Pṛthuyāśas, and on Brahmagupta's *Khaṇḍakhādya* are still extant. Alberuni refers to his commentary on the *Bṛhanmānasa* attributed to Manu,⁶² and his gloss *Cintāmaṇi* on the *Bādarāyaṇa-prāśna* still exists in manuscript form.⁶³ On *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, V. 19, Utpala quotes two verses from his commentary on the *Khaṇḍakhādya* with the words *tathā ca Khaṇḍakhādya-karaṇe smadīyavacanam*, indicating that he had finished the *Khaṇḍakhādya* commentary before undertaking the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* gloss.

57 The severe criticism levelled against Utpala by A. N. S. Aiyangar in Introduction to his *Varāhamihirahorāśāstram* (*Bṛhajjātaka*, Chs. I-X, Adyar Library, pp. XXI-XXV) is quite unjustified and motivated by the desire to prove superiority of his own gloss.

58 Introductory verse No. 3, of the commentaries.

59 चिन्तामणिरिति ख्याताटीका शास्त्रज्ञवृत्तभा, concluding verse No. 2.

60 R. L. Mitra, *Notices of Sanskrit MSS.*, Vol. II, p. 166; Aufrecht, *Catalogus Catalogorum*, Vol. I, p. 64.

61 *Notices of Skt. MSS.*, I, p. 28, No. XLVII; *Catalogue of Skt. and Prakrit MSS in Library of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp. 128-29, No. 389.

62 Sachau, *op. cit.*, I, p. 157.

63 *Notices of Skt. MSS.*, IV, p. 113, No. 1522; *Report on Skt. MSS. in Bombay Province*, No. 837. It deals with the span of animal life and divination by means of putting questions to persons whose future life has to be foretold.

Utpala was undoubtedly one of the most learned and erudite commentators, and his merits as such are deservedly held high. His commentary on the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* shows his exceptionally wide range of learning combined with a stupendous memory. He quotes a large number of old texts, both in Sanskrit and Prakrit, most of which are no more extant. He possessed a remarkable critical faculty rarely met with in other scholiasts. In order to settle original and correct readings and interpretations of the text he follows scientific methods far in advance of his age: at a number of places he mentions variant readings and refers to the views of earlier commentators; in order to arrive at correct interpretation of ambiguous passages he followed the sound method of comparing them with the corresponding extracts from the *Saṃhitā* works of more ancient writers; such citations prove that the *Saṃhitās* attributed to semi-divine personages like Garga, Parāśara, Ṛṣiputra and others, which are no more extant, were still available in Utpala's time. Thus Utpala's commentary on the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* forms the sole source of our knowledge about these and other works.⁶⁴ He declares some chapters and verses of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* to be spurious and later forgeries⁶⁵ and gives reasons for doing so. He does not hesitate in confessing his ignorance with a candour scarcely met with in others. Thus, while commenting upon the Gandhayukti section of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (Ch. LXXVI), Utpala says that he confines himself only to word-for-word explanation of the text and that he is not quite

64 Many old works like the *Kiraṇākhyatantra* on architecture and Siddhasena's anonymous work on meteorology are known to us from Utpala's commentary alone.

65 Utpala declares *BS*, XXV. 6, XXVII. 9-10 XXVIII. 17, to be spurious (*anārṣa*). *BS*, XXVIII. 23-24 are left uncommented by him and must be regarded as later addition. He also states that Ch. 27 on Wind-circle (*Vātacakra*) is not of Varāhamihira. He regards Chs. 50 (*Āṅgavidyā*) and 51 (*Piṭaka-lakṣaṇa*) as forgeries. Ch. 102 on Marriages is, according to him, composed by Vindhyaśāsin. Ch. 38 of V. Subrahmanya Sastry's edition is not found in Dvivedi's edition and is spurious.

adept in the art of hair-dyes (*keśa-rāga*) and cosmetics and therefore these matters should be learnt from people skilled in the science.⁶⁶ Utpala's commentary is thus extremely helpful in settling the original text and a correct understanding of the *Brhatsaṃhitā*.

While the value of Utpala's commentary cannot thus be exaggerated, there are certain deficiencies which should be mentioned in this connection. There were certain institutions current at the time of and consequently familiar to Varāhamihira which had become obsolete in Utpala's time and consequently he could not understand them in a correct perspective. This point may be illustrated by the institution of republican states or *gaṇas* known to Varāhamihira but wrongly interpreted by Utpala as *samūha* or *saṅghāta*, i.e. a group.⁶⁷

Alberuni attributes the following statement to Utpala's commentary of the *Saṃhitā*: —“the names of countries change, and particularly in the *yugas*. So Multan was originally called Yavanapura, then Haṃsapura, then Bagapura (?), then Sāmbapura, and then Mūlasthāna, i.e. the original places, for ‘*mūla*’ means ‘original’ and ‘*sthāna*’ means place”.⁶⁸ This statement cannot be traced in the extant text of the commentary. It is possible, therefore, that Utpala's gloss on the *Saṃhitā* has suffered some alteration at the hands of the copyists.

Utpala's commentary on the *Brhatsaṃhitā* is the only one that is still extant. But at several places in his gloss Utpala refers to older commentaries with the words *iti kecit, kecid evaṃ vyācakṣate, anya evaṃ vyācakṣate, atra kecid vyākhyāvīprati-pattiṃ codayanti, kecid iṣṇanti, atra kecid anyathā vyākhyānaṃ kurvanti, kecid evaṃ manyante, kecid vikalpāṃścodayanti, atra kecin manyante, kecid viśeṣaṃ icchanti, anye punar*

66 on BS, LXXVI, 4:—पाकवेधगन्धधूपनानि लोकतो ज्ञेयानि । आचार्येण नोक्तानि । अस्माभिर्विस्तरभयान्न प्रदर्शितानि । यतः सकलसंहितास्माभिर्व्याख्यातु-भारब्धा केवलमत्रा चरणां व्याख्या क्रियते । न चास्माकमत तथाविधं प्रावीरयाम् ।

67 e. g. on BS, IV, 24; V, 39, 67; X, 13, etc.

68 Sachau, *op. cit.*, I, p. 298.

vyākakṣate, etc.⁶⁹ These references testify to the existence of a large number of commentaries on the *Vārāhī Saṁhitā* in the ninth century A.D. None of these scholia is now available. Several MSS. preserve an abridged version of Utpala's gloss, *Utpala-parimala*, composed by Bhāskara of Naidhruva Kāśyapa gotra, son of Kumāra of Vārṣagaṇya family.⁷⁰

Apart from the original works and commentaries mentioned above, it must be said to the credit of Bhaṭṭotpala that he completed Kalyāṇavarman's *Sārāvalī* which had remained incomplete for at least three hundred years. This is clearly stated in a verse found at the end of some manuscripts of the *Sārāvalī*.⁷¹

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69 Cf. Utpala on BS, Ch. II, pp. 20, 66; V. 25; VI. 13; VIII. 2; XI. 7; XXIV. 10; XXVIII. 5; XXXII. 7; XXXV. 3; LII. 73; LXXV. 11; LXVII. 1, 36, 63; LXXXV. 12, 35, 68, 79; LXXXVII. 6; XCV. 16; XCVII. 13.

70 *Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS. in Govt. Oriental MSS. Library, Madras, 1918, p. 9173. Nos. 13585-89; Cat. of Skt. MSS. in Govt. Oriental Library, Mysore 1922, pp. 329, 643.*

71 वर्षशतानां मध्ये केनचिदित्यं न पूरिता वृत्ता च जनैः ।

भट्टोत्पलस्तु पूर्णा चकार सारावलीं सकलाम् ॥

Cat. of Skt. & Prakrit MSS. in Bombay University Library, Vol. I, 1944, p. 198, No. 476.