

CHAPTER III

COMMENTARIES ON *VIKRAMORVAŚĪYAM*

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- (1) “The commentaries on the Sanskrit dramas are therefore very important and the contribution that the commentators make to our knowledge and understanding of dramaturgy, poetics, history of Sanskrit classical and lexicographical literature and finally to textual criticism is really considerable.”¹ The dramatists present to us the dramatic works. The dramaturgists base their concepts of the development of action, the characteristics of the characters, the sentence structures into figures of speech etc. on the basis of their observations of these dramatic works; we have on the one hand the dramas, on the other the dramatic theories. Though the latter derive from the former, yet there is no link between the two classes of literatures. It is the commentaries that provide us the link between them. They try to analyse and understand the play in the light of the theories and analytical principles of the dramaturgists. For example, the commentator would indicate the principles of particular elements like *Samidhyāṅgas* or *Bhāvas* or *Nāṭyabhuṣaṇas* or *Alaṅkāras* etc. in this or that part or sentence or dialogue or verse or situation in a drama. All the commentaries on *Vik* reveal this characteristic in one way or the other.
- (2) *Vik* is not as popular as *Śāk*. It is considered to be an early play of K, also it is not as artistic and great as *Śāk*. Therefore, it has not commanded many commentaries. Nor famous commentators like Vīrarārhava or Mallinātha choose this play to comment upon.
- (3) When we look into catalogues and other sources to collect data we find names of about 18 commentaries mentioned. The data of commentaries is presented in tabular form below:

ANCIENT COMMENTARIES

Sl. No.	Author	Comm. Name	Sources / Available data
1	Kāṭayavema	<i>Kumārāgiriṛājīya</i>	<p>i) <i>Catalogus Catalogorum</i> of Theodor Aufrecht, Published, DC. xxi 8510. GOL. Madras 84. Burnell 172a. Rice 264.</p> <p>ii) NCC. K. Kunjunnī Raja, Adyar Library and Res. Centre, Chennai, Desc. Cat. Vol II. P. 30(b) (inc.), Vol. V. 1549, 1550 (inc.), 1551. Vol XIII. 1341. Mad. Uni. 350 b. GOML, Chennai MD. 12675. OML, Mysore University, New Desc. Cat. VIII. 27810. Tailor. II. 42. Trav. Uni. L. 407 c. Triv. Cur. IV. 137.</p> <p>iii) Ed. Shastri Charudeva, Lahore, 1929</p> <p>iv) Ed. The Sanskrit Academy, Osmania University, Hyderabad-7, 1966.</p>
2	Rāṅganātha	<i>Prakāśikā</i>	<p>i) C C. Aufrecht. Published. DC. xxi. 8511. Oxf. 135 b. k. 74. Buhler 542. fl. 444, GOL. Madras 84. I.O. 699.</p> <p>ii) NCC. IOL, London. 4121. 7347. GOML, Chennai, MD. 12676.</p> <p>iii) Ed. Wasudev Laxmana Shastri Panshikar, Bombay. 1914.</p> <p>iv) Ed. Sanskrit Academy Osmania University, Hyderabad-7, 1966</p>
3	Koneśvara	<i>Koneśvarī / Vīveka</i>	<p>i) NCC. Vol. V, <i>Vīveka</i> on <i>Vikramorvaśyam</i> RASB. VII. 5285.</p> <p>ii) <i>Kālidāsa Bibliography</i>, Narang S.P. Delhi. 1976. p. 156. Published.</p> <p>iii) Ed. Velanker H.D. ABORI Vol. XXXVIII 1958. p. 251-260, p.261-298.</p> <p>iv) Ed. The Sanskrit Academy, Osmania University, Hyderabad-7, 1966.</p>
4	Rāmamaya	-	<p>i) C C. I. 569 II. 134. III. 120 NW. 626. Unpublished.</p> <p>ii) Narang <i>op.cit.</i> No. 1511</p>
5	Ghanaśyāma	<i>Vikramorvaśya-vyākhyā</i>	<p>i) NCC. mentioned in T.D. 4678, Verse 14, Unpublished.</p> <p>ii) Mentioned in <i>Abhijñānaśākuntalam</i>, Poonam P. Raval (ed.) Ahmedabad, 1997. p. 12</p> <p>iii) Mentioned in Hist. of Class. Skt. Lit., M. Krishnamachariar, sr. 166, p. 248.</p>
6	Abhirāma	<i>Vyākhyā</i>	<p>i) NCC. PUL II. 285, Unpublished.</p>

EDITIONS WITH ONLY PRAKRIT PASSAGES EXPLAINED

Sr. No	Title	Year of Publication	Author/Editor
1	<i>Vikramorvaṣī</i> or <i>Vikrama and Urvāṣī</i>	1830	Not mentioned
2	<i>Urvāṣīā Fabula Cālidāsi</i>	1833	Robertus Lenz Dr. Ph.
3	<i>Vikramorvaṣī</i> with interpretation of Prakrit passages	1883	P.C.N. Charya

MODERN COMMENTARIES

Sr. No.	Author	Comm. Name	First Pub.	Sources/ Available data
1	Abhayācaraṇa	<i>Vikramorvaṣīya-vyākhyā</i>	1872	i) <i>Catalogus Catalogorum</i> of Theodor Aufrecht, oppert II. 8351. ii) Mentioned in <i>Studies in Sanskrit Dramatic Criticism</i> , By T.G. Mainkar, p. 131. iii) Ed. Mentioned in <i>Printed Books Catalogue</i> , India Office Library, London. (Vol. II, Part-I, Section-IV, p.2994) No. 6. D. 24.
2	Jībānanda Vidyāsāgara	<i>Ṭikā</i>	1873	i) <i>Printed Books Catalogue</i> , IOL. London. Vol. II. Part-I, Section IV, p. 2993 6. C. 28 ii) Ed. Bhaṭṭācārya, Jībānanda Vidyāsāgara, Calcutta, 1873.
3	Mṛtyuñjaya Bhūpāla	<i>Viśiṣṭaratnadīpikā</i>	1884	i) <i>Printed Books Catalogue</i> , IOL, London, Vol. II, Part-I, Section IV, p. 2994. 6.I.28 ii) Ed. Vartamānatarāṅginī Press, Madras, 1884.
4	M.R. Kale	<i>Arthaprakāśikā</i>	1898	i) Mentioned in Mainkar T.G., <i>op.cit.</i> , p.131. ii) Ed. Sāradākṛīḍana Press, Bombay, 1898.
5	Āśānanda Varman	<i>Ṭikā</i> (<i>Sanskrit-Hindī</i>)	1926	i) <i>Printed Books Catalogue</i> , IOL. London. Vol. II. Part-I, Section IV, p. 2993 San. D. 796 (f)
6	Chakradhara Shastri	<i>Candra-kalā</i>	1926	i) Narang <i>op.cit.</i> , No. 1584. Published. ii) Mentioned in IOL. London. No. San. D. 466
7	Surendranath Shastri	<i>Kalpalatā</i>	1942	i) Narang <i>op.cit.</i> , No. 1558. Published. ii) Ed. Nirayāsagar Press, Bombay, 1942
8	Ramachandra Mishra	<i>Prakāśa</i> (<i>Sanskrit-Hindī</i>)	1953	i) Narang <i>op.cit.</i> , No. 1586. Published. ii) Ed. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Benaras, 1953
9	Vindhyeshwari Prasad Mishra	<i>Vinoda</i> (<i>Sanskrit-Hindī</i>)	1984	i) Ed. Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi-221001, 1984.

When we actually try to locate these commentaries, we find that there are some inaccuracies in the information so received. For example:

- (4) ABHAYĀCARAṆA: This commentator is mentioned in *CC*. from the catalogues of *Oppert*. *Vide* : Entry No. 8351. Vol II (Name of the MS. in roman- *Vikramorvaśīyavyākhyā*, Subject matter-*Nāṭaka*, Author's name – *Abhayācaraṇa*) but *Oppert* has listed many works without identifying their sources. Many of them were noted from private possessions etc. and after *Oppert* (1885), there has been now a gap of 114 years. It is, therefore, next to impossible to find this commentary in a manuscript form. *Vyākhyā* by *Abhayācaraṇa Vidyāratna*, *Saṁvāda-jñāna-ratnākara Press: Calcutta, 1872* is noticed by the India Office Library, London in their Printed Books Catalogue (Vol.II, Part - I, Section IV, p.2994).
- (5) RĀMAMAYA : This commentator is mentioned by Theodor Aufrecht from *NW*, which also is a catalogue of Sanskrit manuscripts from private libraries. This *NW* Catalogue is even older than that of *Oppert* i.e. 1874. The remarks made above about *Abhayācaraṇa* apply *mutatis mutandis* to this author and his commentary also. One edited by *Rāmamaya Śarmā*, Calcutta, 1870 is mentioned by *SPN*. 1511. But we are not sure whether they are the same or not.
- (6) GHANAŚYĀMA: *Vikramorvaśīyavyākhyā* of *Ghanaśyāma* is only mentioned in *Camatkāra-taraṅginī*, a commentary on *Viddhasāla-bhañjikā* by *Sundarī* and *Kamalā* (wives of *Ghanaśyāma*).

prabodha -candrodayavad-bhoja-bharata-campūvat/

kādambarī- vikramorvaśīyayorveṇī-saṁhṛteḥ// ²

We inquired with the Saraswati Mahal Library, Tanjavur. But they do not possess this commentary.³

- (7) ABHIRĀMA : This commentator is mentioned in *NCC*. The ms of this commentary is mentioned as lying in Punjab University Library. We have tried to collect the ms through correspondence with three Libraries. Punjabi University Library, Patiala, Punjab University Library, Chandigarh and Punjab University Library, Lahore. The Indian University libraries have replied that they do not possess this manuscript.⁴ We have also tried to contact the Punjab University, Lahore but it also does not respond. It seems that this Abhirāma has also commented upon Śāk but there is no reference in it to his commentary on *Vik*.

“nāṭakam yadabhijñānaśākuntalam iti śrutam /

*tatr’ abhidheyadinmātram abhirāmeṇa likhyate//”*⁵

- (8) JĪBĀNANDA VIDYĀSĀGARA: Prof S.P. Narang mentioned Tārānātha as the commentator in his *Kālidāsa Bibliography*. His full entry (*op.cit.*, No.1512) reads: “BHATTACHARYA, Jībānanda Vidyāsāgara, edited with the commentary of Tārānātha Śarmā, Culcutta, 1873.” However, when we looked at the publication itself, it showed that the Sanskrit commentary given here does not mention the name of Tārānātha Śarmā but says: “Edited with a commentary by Paṇḍit Jībānanda Vidyāsāgara” himself. This is clearly mentioned on the title page. Even the text of the commentary nowhere mentions

anything about any author, much less about Tārānātha. In nature, it is more like explanatory notes rather than a running commentary. There is no invocation, hardly any quotations in the running manner. We do not know from what source Prof. Narang has given the name of Tārānātha as its author. However, we can enumerate Jībānanda himself as a commentator and include him in the group of modern commentators.

- (9) **CAKRADHARA SHASTRI** : *Candra-kalā* by CAKRADHARA SASTRIN. The *Vikramorvaṣīya* of Kālidāsa with the Sanskrit Commentary and Hindi translation by Kaviratu Chakradhar Shastri "Hans", Revised by Pandit Parameshwaranand Shastri, ... Anglo-Oriental Press: Lahore, 1926 is mentioned by India Office Library, London in their Printed Books Catalogue (Vol. II, Part-I, Section-IV, p.2993) (S.P. Narang called it *Candrikā* in his *Kālidāsa Bibliography op.cit.* No.1584). We have not been able to trace the text of this author, Pt. Chakradhara Shastri, in spite of our best efforts. But it appears that this would be a commentary by a modern author, much in the line of one written by Āśānanda Varman, written for being used as a help to the students and much of the nature of a text-book.
- (10) Of the three anonymous commentaries the first (SPN NO.1506) one entitled *Vikramorvaṣī* ; or Vikrama and Urvaṣī: A drama by Kālidāsa with a commentary, Explanatory of the Prakrit passages. Published under the authority of the committee of public instruction, Calcutta, Printed at the Education Press, Circular Road, 1830" has been looked into by the present writer. It is lying in the BORI, Pune and in the GOML, Chennai. The pages are extremely brittle. Xeroxing of it also could not be permitted, but from what could be seen, it appears that it

is not a regular commentary. It comments only on Act IV, and explains only some technical and musical terms. Again it is more like very brief explanatory notes and not a commentary.⁴

Prākṛtabhāṣāvyākhyā with Latin Introduction mentioned in “Printed Indic Material in American Libraries, *op.cit.* No.1553, p.152, is the second anonymous commentary entitled “URVASIA FABULA CALIDASI, Textum Sanscritum Edidit, Interpretationem Latinam et Notes illustrantes Adiecit, Robertus Lenz Dr. Ph. “*coyate balisasya'pi satkṣetrapatinā kṛṣiḥ*” *Mudrārākṣḥ* p.2, Berolini Typis Academicis MDCCCXXXIII, Venditur Apua Ferdinandum Dummler. This book is edited with Sanskrit texts with Latin interpretations and explanatory notes, by Dr. Robertus Lenz, published by Venditur Apua Ferdinandum Dummler, Berolini typis Academy, 1833 C.E. “*Śrīkālīdāsa- mahākaviviracitaṁ vikramorvaśīnāma troṭakam prākṛta bhāṣāvyākhyā sahitam //*” It is lying in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras University, Chennai. Xeroxing of this book also could not be permitted. It appears that this also is not a regular commentary. It comments only on Act IV and explains only some technical and musical terms⁷ which are for the most part the same as those given in the edition mentioned prior to this.

The third anonymous commentary (SPN No. 1516) is entitled “*Vikramorvaśī* with interpretation of Prakrit passages,” Edited by Charya, P.C.N., Ārsā Press Vizagapaṭam, 1883, which is not available now.

- (11) Thus, there are only three commentaries available which can be called ancient and standard commentaries in the real sense of the term which

are available in print and which lay themselves to a close study. They are: Kāṭayavema's *Kumāragirirājīyam*, Raṅganātha's *Prakāśikā* and Koneśvara's *Koṇeśvarī*.

Therefore, we are finally left with three ancient commentaries out of six, two explanatory notes of Prakrit passages only in the fourth Act of the play and eight modern commentaries out of nine are mentioned in various catalogues etc. The ancient commentaries are analysed in the chapter IV. The explanations of the Prakrit passages of the two available editions are entirely reproduced in Appendices I & II at the end of this chapter. The modern commentaries are analysed in the chapter V.

REFERENCES.

1. Mainkar, T.G., *Studies in Sanskrit Dramatic Criticism*, Varanasi, 1971, p.16.
2. *Vide* Chaudhuri Jatindra Bimal, *The Contribution of Women to Sanskrit Literature*, Vol. I (Drama), Calcutta, 1943, p.5; Rāval, (Mrs) Poonam Pañkaj (ed.), *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, Saraswati Pustak Bhandar, Ahmedabad, 1997, Verse 14, p. 9
3. “The Commentary on *Vikramorvaśīyam* by Ghanaśyāma is not available in the Library.” Letter No. RC.826/99/dt.28.8.99
4. *Vide* the Letter dated 5.2.2000 of Dr. K. K. Dhavan, Honorary Director, Lalchand Research Library (Lahore), D.A.V. College, Chandigarh-160011. “We do not have Abhirāma’s Commentary on Kālidāsa’s *Vikramorvaśīyam* in our collection.”
5. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* with the commentary of Abhirāma, Śaivāni Vilās Press, Śriraṅgam. p.1
6. The entire text of this commentary given in the *fn* to Act IV of that edition is reproduced in Appendix I at the end this chapter.
7. The commentary of this edition which mentions only the technical and musical terms of the fourth Act is entirely reproduced in Appendix II at the end of this chapter.