



The Authorship of the *Sanatsujātīya*- and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* Attributed to Śaṅkara

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Abstract The *Sanatsujātīya*- and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* are traditionally attributed to Śaṅkara. However, a recent computational stylometric study conducted by Ivan Andrijanić and Jacek Bąkowski using the General Imposters authorship verification method challenges the traditional authorship attribution to Śaṅkara. In this paper, the authorship of these two works are re-examined from a more traditional perspective. The analysis of doctrinal and terminological peculiarities reveals the presence of later Vedāntic concepts and citation practices unusual for Śaṅkara. Moreover, in both commentaries, there is a quotation of two verses from the *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā*, which could be dated to the twelfth century, serving as a key argument against Śaṅkara's authorship. On the other hand, the General Imposters algorithm detected significant similarities between both texts, suggesting that they share a common authorship. Notably, the commentary on the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, a text that includes the same two quotations from the *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā*, is also attributed, through the General Imposters method, to the same author responsible for the commentaries on the *Sanatsujātīya* and *Viṣṇusahasranāma*. Hence, the second, and most crucial, part of this paper will analyse these three texts, unveiling striking correspondences among them and proposing the possibility that a single author crafted all three. Furthermore, thanks to the critical apparatus of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* can even be geographically located in the southwest of India, which suggests a place of origin for all three *Bhāṣyas*, assuming they do indeed share authorship.

Keywords authorship verification · General Imposters · Advaita Vedānta · Śaṅkara

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Introduction

Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya (in some manuscript colophons called *Sanatsujātīya-Vivāraṇa*) and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* are prose commentaries on two sections of the *Mahābhārata*; in manuscript colophons and in the Advaita Vedānta tradition, both are attributed to Śaṅkara.¹

Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya is a commentary on *Mahābhārata* 5.42–54. The *Sanatsujātīya* text that appears in the commentary is much larger than the reconstituted text of the BORI critical edition. According to the critical apparatus and S. K. De's (1940: 192) description of the text's constitution, the commented text belongs to the Telugu/Grantha manuscript tradition within the Southern recension. This tradition significantly differs from the Malayalam manuscript tradition within the Southern recension, characterized by numerous repetitions and expansions. The extended Telugu/Grantha text served as the source for Nīlakaṇṭha's seventeenth-century vulgate *Mahābhārata*.

Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya is a commentary on *Mahābhārata* 13.135.1–142. The *Mahābhārata* text in the commentary is almost identical to the critically constituted text. In the critical edition, some variant readings are indeed noted, but R. N. Dandekar (1966: 705) attributes them to scribal whims and errors in transmission. It should also be noted that the vast majority of variant readings, differing from the commented text, belong to northern manuscripts.

Both *Bhāṣyas* are included in most of Śaṅkara's printed collected works. They appear in *Sri Sankaracharya's Miscellaneous Works* (volume 1),² which is the oldest printed collected works of Śaṅkara. They are also found in the Vani Vilas Press edition (volume 13),³ *Śrīśaṅkaragranthavālīḥ* (volume 9),⁴ *Complete Works of Sri Sankaracharya in the Original Sanskrit* (volume 5),⁵ and *Works of Shankaracharya in Original Sanskrit* (volume 4).⁶

Both of these commentaries are traditionally attributed to Śaṅkara, although this paper will try to present arguments that the later doctrines and quotes from works belonging to the time after Śaṅkara are present in them. On the other hand, these commentaries share many commonalities, and they have numerous shared characteristics with the pseudo-Śaṅkara commentary on the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*.

¹ Except for one manuscript, noted by Hacker (1978: 51), which is attributed in the colophon to *śaṅkarabhagavatpāda-śiṣya* "Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda's pupil" (Cf. Mitra 1877: 90, No. 1494).

² Śaṅkara, *Sri-Sankaracharya's Miscellaneous Works* (eds. A. Mahadeva Sastri and K. Rangacharya). Government Oriental Library Series, Biblioteca Sanskrita, 19–22. 4 volumes. Mysore: Government Branch Press, 1898–1899.

³ Śaṅkara, *The Works of Sri Sankaracharya*. Memorial Edition. 20 volumes. Srirangam: Sri Vani Vilas Press, 1910.

⁴ Śaṅkara, *Śrīśaṅkaragranthavālīḥ*. 11 volumes. Śrīraṅgam: Śrīrāṅgīvilāsamudrāyantrālayaḥ, No Date (1952?–1962?) [1910].

⁵ Śaṅkara, *Complete Works of Sri Sankaracharya in the Original Sanskrit*. 10 volumes. Madras: Samata Books, 1981–83 [1910].

⁶ Śaṅkara, *Works of Shankaracharya in Original Sanskrit* (ed. Hari Raghunath Sastri). 4 volumes. Poona: Ashtekar & Co., 1925. Volume 4 was reprinted in 1952 as *Minor Works of Sri Śaṅkarācārya* (ed. Hari Raghunath Sastri). Poona Oriental Series, 8. Poona: Oriental Book Agency.

This is why a crucial part of this article will be dedicated to arguments indicating that it is possible that the same author stands behind all three works.

The Authorship Question

Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya is included in the list of Śaṅkara's works in *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* 6.61–63,⁷ Śaṅkara's hagiography composed between 1650 and 1789 (Bader 2000: 55). In *Śaṅkaravijaya-Vilāsa* (10.2–3), Śaṅkara's hagiography composed by Cidvilāsa, *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* is mentioned as one of Śaṅkara's works.⁸ However, both of these biographies are relatively late, which is why they are regarded as unreliable sources for questions of authorship. Nevertheless, they do offer evidence that both works were attributed to Śaṅkara within the monastic tradition of Advaita Vedānta in the seventeenth century.

In the field of Indological scholarship, scholars have expressed various opinions on the question of authorship. It is evident that the editors of Śaṅkara's collected works considered both commentaries to be the work of Śaṅkara, although they did not explicitly comment on this. According to S. K. Belvalkar's early assessment, Śaṅkara's authorship of both *Sanatsujātīya-* and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* is "more or less debatable" (1929: 219). Paul Hacker (1978: 50–51) and Govind Chandra Pande (1994: 109, 113) argued against Śaṅkara's authorship of the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*. Hacker pointed out that in the first sentence of the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* the *ātman* is characterized as *ānanda* "bliss." Further, *āśraya* "bearer" and *viṣaya* "object" of *avidyā* "ignorance" are mentioned in the same sentence. These elements are features of later Advaita Vedānta doctrine, as argued by Hacker (1950: 255).⁹

Hacker also notes that in the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, there is a frequent indication of the sources of quotations, which is not characteristic of Śaṅkara's literary habits. However, Hacker's key piece of evidence against Śaṅkara's authorship is found in the last passage of the commentary on *Sanatsujātīya* 1.8, where two quotations appear. One is a quotation from Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* 2.1.14, introduced with the words *uktam hi* meaning "as it is said." Self-citations are not typically found in works reasonably attributed to Śaṅkara. The other quotation is from one of Sureśvara's works, introduced with the words *iti sureśvarācārye*. Considering that Sureśvara, by his own admission,¹⁰ was a disciple of Śaṅkara, it is highly unlikely that Śaṅkara would address him in this manner.

However, the passage containing both quotations is present only in Hari Raghunath Sastri's edition (Poona: Ashtekar) from 1925, on page 447. Strangely, this same passage cannot be located in the 1910 edition from Vani Vilas Press, nor

⁷ Together with *Upadeśasāhasrī*, *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya*, commentaries on unspecified Upaniṣads, *Bhagavadgītā-Bhāṣya*, and *Nṛsiṃhatāpanīyopaniṣad-Bhāṣya*.

⁸ Together with *Brahmasūtra-* and *Bhagavadgītā-Bhāṣya*, commentaries on ten Upaniṣads, and *Rudra-Sahasranāma*.

⁹ Pande briefly reviews Hacker's arguments and agrees with them.

¹⁰ Compare *Brhadāranyakopaniṣadbhāṣya-Vārtika* 6.5.25; *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* 4.74 and 4.76.

in the 1924 edition from Vidya Vilas Press,¹¹ which includes the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* along with a sub-commentary by Nīlakaṇṭha. As these editions also exhibit variations in other readings, it is evident that they are based on different manuscripts, some of which may not include these contested quotations. Another possibility is that the editors intentionally omitted the disputed quotations. However, we currently lack information on this matter, at least until a more detailed examination of the manuscripts is conducted.

In the case of *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, Anantakrishna Sastry (1980: xxi–xxii) has advocated for its authenticity. His arguments, however, lack philological detail and are somewhat vague. He firmly believes that Śaṅkara is the author, primarily citing features like the “profound depth of the author’s knowledge” and the “sublime style” as evidence.¹² Belvalkar (1929: 219) considered Śaṅkara’s authorship to be “more or less debatable,” while Pande (1994: 109) opposes Śaṅkara’s authorship, pointing out the use of benedictory verses and lengthy quotations from Purāṇas, which are atypical of Śaṅkara.

Many arguments both for and against the authenticity of these two works have thus far been cursory and lacking in detail. This paper seeks to provide a more comprehensive investigation into the authorship of both works. This is particularly relevant today as we have access to new computational and statistical tools, and even traditional methods have been refined. The question of authorship will be analysed from two different angles: first is a more traditional philological and historical perspective, which includes two methods for authenticity verification developed by Paul Hacker and further refined by Sengaku Mayeda. The second method is a statistical stylometric approach called the “General Imposters framework,” which has demonstrated sufficient reliability in determining the authenticity of works for which authorship is uncertain.¹³

Hacker’s Colophon Analysis

According to Hacker’s analysis of manuscript colophons (Hacker 1947, revised in 1978), works bearing the title “Śaṅkara-bhagavat(-pūjya[-pāda])” in manuscript colophons are more likely to be regarded as authentic than those bearing the title “Śaṅkara-ācārya,” which indicates potentially spurious or more recent works.

The authorship of *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* is in manuscript colophons attributed either to Śaṅkara-bhagavat(-pūjya[-pāda]) or to Śaṅkarācārya (Hacker 1978: 50–51). Notably, one manuscript¹⁴ even attributes it to *śaṅkarabhagavatpāda-śiṣya*

¹¹ *Sanatsujatīyam with Bhāṣya of Śrīmad Shankar and a Commentary by Nīlakaṇṭha* (ed. Pandit Bhau Shastri Vajhe). Benares: Vidya Vilas Press, 1924.

¹² Sastri (1980: xxi) initially doubted Śaṅkara’s authorship until he began working on the edition and translation. He suggests the presence of remarkable coincidences with other works of Śaṅkara, but regrettably, he does not provide specific citations for these coincidences.

¹³ Compare Andrijanić and Bąkowski 2023.

¹⁴ Mitra 1877: 90, No. 1494.

“Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda’s pupil” in the colophon. This indicates that *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* does not meet Hacker’s colophon criterion.

In his 1947/1978 paper, Hacker did not apply the colophon criterion to *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*. However, even a cursory examination of several descriptive catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts reveals that the titles Śaṅkarācārya and Śaṅkara-bhagavat(-pāda) are commonly mentioned in colophons. This observation alone is enough to disqualify it from meeting Hacker’s colophon criterion. The following catalogues contain manuscripts with Śaṅkarācārya in the colophon: (1) *Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Library of the Calcutta Sanskrit College* (volume 4, no. 245, pages 153–54);¹⁵ (2) *Reports on Sanskrit Manuscripts in Southern India* (Issue 2, no. 1124, page 38);¹⁶ (3) *Descriptive Catalogue of the Government Collection of Manuscripts* (volume 13, part 3, nos. 1071–1073, pages 249–52).¹⁷

It is evident that neither the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* nor the *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* meets Hacker’s criterion because the manuscript colophons include the title Śaṅkarācārya.

Hacker’s Terminological Analysis

In his 1950 article, Hacker identified a set of distinctive terminological and doctrinal features in the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* that sets Śaṅkara apart from his followers. Hacker’s criteria were later expanded upon by Mayeda and further reworked in Andrijačić (2022). It is argued in Andrijačić’s paper that, when compared to other genuine works of Śaṅkara and his immediate disciples, some of Hacker’s criteria fail to distinguish Śaṅkara from Sureśvara and Padmapāda, and in certain cases, even from later Advaita Vedāntins.

It has been previously mentioned that both Hacker and Pande reject the attribution of the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* to Śaṅkara due to the mention of the locus/bearer (*āśraya*) and object (*viśaya*) of ignorance (*avidyā*) in the first sentence. Hacker (1950: 255) underscores that speculating about the locus and object of ignorance contradicts Śaṅkara’s teachings. In Andrijačić (2022: 91), Hacker’s assertion is substantiated for two main reasons: (a) Neither the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* nor the *Taittirīyopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* (as well as other presumably authentic works analysed by Mayeda) makes any effort to define either the locus/

¹⁵ *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Library of the Calcutta Sanskrit College* (eds. Hṛīshikeśa Śāstrī and Śiva Chandra Guī). Volume 4: *Purāṇa Manuscripts*. Calcutta: J. & N. Banerjee & Son (Banerjee Press), 1908.

¹⁶ E. Hultsch, *Reports on Sanskrit Manuscripts in Southern India*. No. 2. Madras: Government Press, 1896.

¹⁷ *Descriptive Catalogue of the Government Collections of Manuscripts Deposited at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* (ed. Parashuram Krishna Gode). Volume 13, Part 3: *Ślotras etc.* Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1950. This catalogue lists three manuscripts, one with Śaṅkarācārya, one with Śaṅkarabhagavat, and one with Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda. Notably, the first manuscript, which has Śaṅkarācārya, is named *Vivāraṇa* instead of the more common *Bhāṣya*.

bearer or the object of ignorance. (b) Furthermore, Sureśvara, in all three of his works, provides definitions for both the locus/bearer and the object of ignorance.

This implies that this particular feature is unique to Śaṅkara's works and is not even shared with his closest followers, although the teaching of the locus/bearer of *avidyā* would reach its full form only after Sureśvara and Padmapāda.

Another distinctive feature, seemingly at odds with Śaṅkara's typical stance, is found in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20, where individual souls (*jīva*) are portrayed as manifold due to their association with beginningless ignorance (*anādyavidyā*). Hacker (1950: 255) observes that the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* never characterizes ignorance as "beginningless" (*anādi*). This uniqueness in terminology is further supported by the fact that it does not appear in his commentaries on the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavadgītā*, or even in *Upadeśasāhasrī*. Conversely, both Sureśvara and Padmapāda describe ignorance as *anādi*.¹⁸

In several passages, *avidyā* "ignorance" is depicted as one among a series of afflictions,¹⁹ a characteristic feature in Śaṅkara's usage of the term as noted by Hacker (1950: 249–50). According to Andrijačić (2022: 88), for Padmapāda (unlike Śaṅkara) *avidyā* is already unique. In Sureśvara's *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya-Vārtika*, *avidyā* appears as a single link in the chain of afflictions only when the text is directly related to the Śaṅkara text that Sureśvara is commenting on. In the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, attributed to Śaṅkara but certainly not authentic (as discussed in Andrijačić 2019), *avidyā* is also included in a group of afflictions and is portrayed as an efficient, rather than as a material cause.

Hacker (1950: 269) observes that the concept of *māyā* "illusion" in the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* is not a fully developed philosophical concept and is not as central as it becomes in later Advaita. Furthermore, the word *māyā* is less frequent in the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* compared to *nāmarūpa* "name and form" and *avidyā* "ignorance."

This criterion is largely validated in Andrijačić (2022: 94–96), as it is observed that *māyā* is used similarly in other works of Śaṅkara. Padmapāda begins to impart more philosophical connotations to the term, while Sureśvara still employs it in a manner consistent with Śaṅkara.

In the usage of the term *māyā*, we encounter another significant deviation between both of our commentaries and Śaṅkara's authentic works. This becomes apparent in the example found in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20, where "One" appears as "many" through *māyā*, and similarly, the highest Lord (*paramēśvara*) appears as distinct from the individual Soul (*jīva*) also through *māyā*. Furthermore, *māyā* is described as *anādi* "beginningless," which are all characteristics that deviate from Śaṅkara's typical usage of the term. In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.21, *māyā* is posited as the material cause of the world (*jagadupādāna*). In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 2.7, the world's manifestation occurs through *māyā*, and this erroneous projection is expressed by the compounds *māyā-parikalpita* "assumed by *māyā*" and *māyā-nirmita* "effected by *māyā*." Comparable constructions, characteristic of Śaṅkara's

¹⁸ Sureśvara's *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya-Vārtika*, Introduction, verse 1090; chapter 4, *brāhmaṇa* 3, verse 1409. Padmapāda's *Pañcapādikā*, page 15 (line 1), page 16 (line 13), page 20 (line 15), page 75 (line 3).

¹⁹ In *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 58, *avidyā* is even referred to as *kleśa*, as in *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya*. In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.7–8, 1.19, and 4.1, *avidyā* is categorized as one of the *doṣas* or "faults."

authentic works, consistently include *avidyā*- as the first part of the compound.²⁰ *Māyā* is never considered the cause of the illusory appearance of the world in these works. This transition represents a later development in Advaita Vedānta doctrine, where *avidyā* assumes the role of the world's material cause, while *māyā* is often used in the same sense as *avidyā*.²¹

In *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, *māyā* is mentioned less frequently. In the commentary on verses 16 and 29, *māyā* is referred to as *prakṛti* and *pradhāna*, while in the commentary on verse 101, Viṣṇu is depicted as veiling himself with *māyā*.

Understanding *māyā* as *prakṛti* and *pradhāna* is certainly not a characteristic of Śaṅkara's philosophy, especially because he does not treat *māyā* as a philosophical concept. However, when the commented text contains such terms and concepts, as in the case of the *Bhagavadgītā*, comparable statements can be found.²²

As for the interchangeable use of (*parama*-) Īśvara with (*param*) Brahman and (*parama*-) Ātman, both works maintain a degree of consistency with genuine works. In both the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* and the *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, Īśvara is not exclusively used to refer to the conditioned Brahman.

In the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.21, it is explained that the highest Self (*paramātmā*) is not the creator of the universe; instead, it is the power of *māyā* that holds this role or the highest Self veiled by the power of *māyā*. In the same passage, Īśvara is described as *aja* "unborn" and *avyayātmā* "imperishable." In the *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 17, Īśvara is *nirupadhi* "without limiting adjuncts," and in 18, Parameśvara is *svatantra* "self-dependent" and *na paratantra* "non-dependent," all of which imply the highest Brahman. More often, however, Īśvara represents the conditioned Brahman; for example, in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 22, Īśvara is *sarvaśaktimat* "possessor of all powers,"²³ and in 42, Īśvara is Indra. In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20, *parameśvara* is directly described as *kāraṇātmā* "causal self" that effects the active self of the individual soul. In 2.33, Īśvara is Dhātṛ "Placer" or the creator God. This terminological inconsistency, resembling Śaṅkara's usage and the usage in earlier Advaita Vedānta, argues in favor of an earlier dating of these texts.

²⁰ For example, *avidyā-kalpita* in *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* 1.1.17, 1.3.19, 1.4.6, etc.; *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 2.4.14, 4.3.32; *Taittirīyopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 2.8.5. Cf. Hacker 1950: 250–54 and Andrijanić 2022: 89–90.

²¹ Jñānaghana in *Tattvasūddhi* (for example, page 244, lines 8–9) and Sarvajñātmā in *Samkṣepaśārīraka* (for example, 1.318, 2.127) equate *māyā* with ignorance, both of which they denote as a substance out of which the illusory phenomena is made of. In Prakāśātman's *Pañcapādīkāvivaraṇa* (pages 31–32), the idea of the sameness of ignorance and *māyā* is discussed in detail and defended against a number of possible objections to their identity.

²² For example, in the Introduction to the commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, Śaṅkara speaks of Īśvara, who holds *māyā* under his control, and equates *māyā* with *mūlaprakṛti*. In *Bhagavadgītā-Bhāṣya* 5.14, referring to *Bhagavadgītā* 7.14, *māyā* and *prakṛti* are identified. Also, an interesting discussion can be found towards the end of *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* 2.1.14, where it is stated that name and form (*nāmarūpa*) are called *māyā* and *prakṛti* in the *śruti* and *smṛti*. Many later teachings of Advaita Vedānta have their foundation somewhere in Śaṅkara himself. For these excellent examples, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer who pointed them out to me.

²³ Śaṅkara indeed sometimes defines Īśvara as *śaktimat*, compare the Introduction to the *Bhagavadgītā-Bhāṣya* and the commentary on verse 10.15 or *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* 1.1.3. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out these references from the *Bhagavadgītā-Bhāṣya*.

In Andrijačić (2022: 101–2), it is argued that this terminological inconsistency is not unique to Śaṅkara. In fact, Sureśvara, Padmapāda, and Vācaspatimiśra also interchangeably use these terms. However, in Jñānaghana's *Tattvaśuddhi*, a consistent distinction seems to be made between the highest Brahman, on one hand, and his reflection in *avidyā/māyā*, referred to as Īśvara and *jīva* respectively. Such a distinction is notably prominent in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20, where the highest Self, under the influence of *māyā*, is explicitly referred to as Īśvara. Furthermore, in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 4.3, one can observe the juxtaposition of *jīva* and Īśvara, which appears to be a later terminological development, most likely first attested in Jñānaghana's work.

This terminological development did not, however, immediately impact all Advaita Vedānta authors. In the commentary on the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*, most likely dating from a period after the twelfth century (Andrijačić 2019), the terms (*parama*-) Īśvara are also used interchangeably with (*param*) Brahman / (*parama*-) Ātman. This suggests that interchangeability alone cannot serve as proof of the work being authentically attributed to Śaṅkara. However, it can still be used as a disqualifying criterion if the work consistently distinguishes between the two terms. Both of the works under consideration here exhibit terminological ambiguity in the use of the term Īśvara, but indications of later systematization are also evident, as seen in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20 and 4.3, where *paramātmān* under the influence of *māyā* is referred to as Īśvara. Such ideas are absent in the authentic works.

Another terminological (and doctrinal) peculiarity that points against Śaṅkara's authorship is the frequent use of the compound *saccidānanda* (and *citsadānanda*) "existence-consciousness-bliss" to describe the highest Brahman.²⁴ This term is frequently employed in both *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* but is absent in the works of Śaṅkara and his successors. Furthermore, Śaṅkara refrains from qualifying Brahman as *ānanda* "bliss." The earliest dated use of *saccidānanda* can likely be traced back to Sarvajñātman's *Samkṣepaśārīraka*.²⁵

Quotations

To Hacker's criteria, Mayeda (1965a: 187, 1965b: 187) added the selection and frequency of quotations. In this regard, both of our commentaries deviate from Śaṅkara's approach, as already observed by Pande (1994: 109).

Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya, with a total volume of around 22,300 words,²⁶ contains roughly 600 quotations, a substantial portion of which were not identified

²⁴ *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* Introduction, 1.1, 1.5, 1.8, 1.16, 2.9, 2.37, 2.39, etc. In *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, however, only twice, in benedictory verse and in commentary on the first verse.

²⁵ *Samkṣepaśārīraka* 1.174 and 1.540 *sac-cit-sukha*; in 1.226, 1.235, and 1.544 *sac-cid-ānanda*. The phrase *saccidānanda* also appears in the Vaiṣṇava *Nṛsiṃha(pūrva)tāpanīya-Upaniṣad*, which is not securely dated.

²⁶ The word count was estimated based on electronic texts downloaded from the GRETEL repository or prepared by the author himself. Words were separated and *sandhi* was resolved using the method developed by Hellwig and Nehrdich (2018). I would like to thank Jacek Bąkowski, who implemented the Hellwig and Nehrdich method on the texts mentioned here.

in Anantakrishna Sastry's edition. *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, spanning 18,700 words, includes around 250 quotations. When it comes to the editions of *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, it is a bit more challenging to count these because the quotations are often unmarked, and none of the editions has identified their sources. I have identified approximately 250 quotations, with the possibility that there may be more.

When comparing these figures to Śaṅkara's original works, such as the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* with over 100,000 words and 2,523 quotations, it becomes apparent that the number of quotations matches that of the *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*. It is important to note, though, that most of the quotations in the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* are relatively short Upaniṣad quotations, whereas the *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* and *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* feature extensive multiple-*śloka* quotations from a wide range of Epic and Purāṇic literature.

The author of *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* is especially fond of quoting Purāṇic sources. Among the Purāṇa quotations, *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* stands out with as many as 80 quoted *ślokas*. Furthermore, 31 *ślokas* from the *Harivaṃśa* and 16 from the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* are quoted.

Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* contains only a few Purāṇic quotations, not including any *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* and *Harivaṃśa* quotes. Regarding the Purāṇic quotes, *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* has one citation that appears in *Viṣṇu-* and *Garuḍa-Purāṇa*,²⁷ and *Bhagavadgītā-Bhāṣya* has two *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* quotations. *Gauḍapādīya-Bhāṣya*, *Kenopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* (both *vākya* and *pada*) and *Upadeśasāhasrī* have no Purāṇic quotes.

In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, there is also a preference for citations from Purāṇas, with 30 *ślokas* quoted from the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*. In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20, there are 28 *ślokas* from the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* in a row, and in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.6 (page 137), four and a half *ślokas* in a row are quoted from the *Kūrma-Purāṇa*.²⁸

In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* and in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, *Mahābhārata* and *Bhagavadgītā* are quoted very frequently, much more than in genuine works. In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.42 and 2.17, we also find two quotations from the *Hiraṇyagarbha-Saṃhitā* (introduced with *uktaṃ ca hiraṇyagarbhe*), which is unattested in authentic works. Unfortunately, the dating for this Pāñcarātra text is not available. In the *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* a quotation from *Viṣṇutilaka*, also a Pāñcarātra *saṃhitā*, occurs but dating for this work is not established either.

However, the most significant issue revolves around two quotations found in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.8 (page 187), originating from *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā* (*Prakīrṇādihikāra*) 30.128 and 30.131. The quotation from *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā* 30.128 also appears in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 96 (page 132). This is of utmost importance because the Vaikhāṇasa text *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā* is dated to approximately

²⁷ *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 6.2.15 quotes a half-verse that appears as *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* 1.6.36ab and *Garuḍa-Purāṇa* 1.4.26cd.

²⁸ Even some rather unusual procedures are attested in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, such as an untraceable quotation identified as coming from the *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa*, which appears twice in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*.

the twelfth century (Gonda 1977: 145), with a note that *Prakīrṇādhikāra* is one of the more recent Bhṛgu-texts (151).²⁹ This serves as a clear indication that both commentaries were composed after the twelfth century. Furthermore, these two quotations are also found in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 2.7 (page 41), a fact that will later in this paper be used as an argument for the possible shared authorship of all three commentaries.

Another distinctive feature in both *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* and *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* is the frequent mention of the sources of quotations, which occurs more often than in genuine works. In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* is referenced seven times (twice in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*), *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* is mentioned five times (four times in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*), and *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* is mentioned six times (once in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* with *kaṭhavallīṣu*, same as in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*).³⁰

In *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* is identified as a source 22 times, and the *Harivaṃśa* 13 times. Additionally, the *Liṅga*, *Brahma*, *Nārasimha*, and *Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa* are each mentioned once or twice. This pattern is reminiscent of the commentary on the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*, where sources of quotations are also frequently identified in same manner.

Stylometric Analysis

The General Impostors framework is a statistical stylometric method designed to measure the statistical distance among (a) a disputed text, (b) candidate texts, which are texts authored by individuals suspected of being the author of the disputed text, and (c) a selection of “imposters,” representing authors who could not have written the text under assessment.

In this experiment, the texts are initially converted into numerical vectors, capturing the relative frequency of word occurrences within them. The algorithm is tuned to perform 100 iterations, during which it randomly selects a proportion of word frequencies. In each iteration, it evaluates whether the word frequency patterns of the disputed text are closer to those of the candidates or the imposters.

The final attribution is determined based on the percentage of iterations, ranging from 1 to 100, in which the disputed text exhibits greater similarity to the candidates than to the imposters. Experiments (Andrijanić and Bąkowski 2023) conducted on the corpus which comprises 82 Sanskrit philosophical texts authored by 36 individuals, yielded promising results. Among the 40 works analyzed, 32 were successfully attributed to their respective authors. This indicates that the method

²⁹ Goudriaan (1969–70: 162) estimates that the entire Vaikhāṇasa corpus of texts ascribed to Atri, Kāśyapa, and Marīci is a millennium old.

³⁰ Śaṅkara occasionally references Upaniṣadic sources by name. In the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya*, the *Brhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* is mentioned as a source for quotations three times, while the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* is cited approximately a dozen times. In the *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* is referenced three times.

achieved an 80% success rate in identifying known authors when utilizing the statistical distance measure known as Cosine Delta.

The results of the General Imposters method experiment conducted by Andrijačić and Bąkowski indicate that the author(s) of the *Sanatsujātīya*- and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* differ from the author of the *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, *Taittirīyopaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, and the prose section of the *Upadeśasāhasrī*. This difference is reflected in a significant disparity in word usage frequency, as detected by the General Imposters algorithm. Given the algorithm's reliability (80%), this outcome suggests that Śāṅkara is not the author of these two works.

The cumulative evidence, which includes differences in the colophons, the subsequent development of doctrinal elements and terminology, along with a quotation from a twelfth-century text, strongly supports the assertion that these two *Bhāṣyas* were not authored by Śāṅkara.

However, a more in-depth analysis using the General Imposters method reveals an interesting phenomenon. Upon conducting an examination of the works within the corpus, the algorithm detected a significant relative similarity between the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*- and *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*. Furthermore, it detected their mutual proximity to the commentary on the *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*. This suggests that the algorithm consistently identified all three works as if they were authored by the same author, as in nearly all iterations, the randomly selected word frequency samples exhibited greater similarity to one another than to all other works represented in the corpus.

Even if we do not regard the General Imposters experiment as the conclusive verdict, it can still serve as a valuable indication and motivation for further research. Therefore, in the concluding section of this paper, more traditional philological methods will be employed to investigate the possibility that these works were indeed authored by the same individual.

Features Common to *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*

Important Śāṅkarite terms like *adhyāśa/adhyāropana* “superimposition” and *mithyājñāna* “false cognition” do not appear in any of the three works. In Śāṅkara's works, these terms appear quite frequently, often used interchangeably with *avidyā*.³¹ On the other hand, unlike in the later Advaita Vedānta tradition, where *avidyā* is considered unique, all three of our commentaries mention *avidyā* as part of a group of related factors, similar to how it is presented in authentic works. Thus, in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 58, *avidyā* and other afflictions (*avidyādi*) are referred to as *kleśas*, the same as in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 1.5 and 1.11. The term *avidyādi* also frequently appears in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* (1.10–11, 2.15,

³¹ Compare Hacker 1950: 248–49.

4.20, 6.13–14). In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.7, the compound *avidyākāmakarmāṇi* “ignorance, desire, and actions” is used, and the same compound appears in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 2.8.³² There is no systematic theorizing about the *āśraya* and *viśaya* of *avidyā* in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, or *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*. However, *avidyā* is characterized as having its own locus (*svāśraya*) in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* (Introduction) and *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* (Introduction). Furthermore, in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, just as in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, *avidyā* is also considered its own object (*svaviśaya*). When we compare the following two sentences,³³ it becomes evident that we are dealing with nearly identical statements in both commentaries.

Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya	Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya
citsadānandādviṭīyabrahmasvarūpo ‘py ātmā svāśrayayā svaviśayayāvidyayā svānubhavadagamyayā sābhāsayā pratibāddhasvābhāvikāśeṣapuruṣārthaḥ prāptāśeṣānartho ‘vidyāparikalpitair eva sādhanair iṣṭaprapṭim cāpuruṣārthaṁ puruṣārthaṁ manyamāno mokṣārthaṁ alabhamāno makarādibhir iva rāgādibhir itaratataḥ samākṛṣyamāṇaḥ suranaratiryagādiprabhedabheditanāyō-niṣu saṃcarankenāpi sukrṭakarmāṇā brāhmaṇādyādhikāriśarīraṁ prāpta īśvarārthakarmānuṣṭhānenāpagatarāgādimalo ‘nityādidarśanenotpannehāmutrārthabho-gavirāga upetyācāryam ācāryadvāreṇa vedāntāśravaṇādīnā “ahaṁ brahmāsmi” iti brahmātmataṭtvam avagamya nivṛttājñānatatkāryo vītaśoko bhavāti	svataś citsadānandādviṭīyabrahmasvarūpo ‘py ātmā svāśrayayā svaviśayayāvidyayā svānubhavadagamyayā sābhāsayā svābhāvikācitsadānandādviṭīyabrahmātmabhāvat pracyuto ‘nātmani dehād āvātmabhāvam āpanno ‘prāptāśeṣapuruṣārthaḥ prāptāśeṣānartho ‘vidyākarmaparikalpitair eva sādhanair iṣṭaprapṭim aniṣṭaparihr̥tīm cākāṅkṣan laukikavaidikasāadhanair anuṣṭhitair api paramapuruṣārthaṁ mokṣākhyam alabhamāno makarādibhir iva rāgadvēṣādibhir itastata ākr̥ṣyamāṇaḥ suranaratiryagādiprabhedabhinnāsu nānāyonīsu parivartamāṇaḥ muhyamāṇaḥ saṃsaran kathamcītpunyava śādvēdoditena īśvarārthakarmānuṣṭhānenāpagatarāgādimalo ‘nityādidosaḍarśanenotpannehāmutraphala- bhogavirāgo vedāntebhyaḥ pratiya mānam brahmātmabhāvaṁ bubhutsuḥ vedoditāsamadamādisādhanasampannaḥ brahmavidam ācāryam upetya ācāryānusāreṇa vedāntāśravaṇādīnā “ahaṁ brahmāsmi” iti brahmātmataṭtvam avagamya nivṛttājñāna-tatkāryo brahmarūpaḥ ‘vatiṣṭhata itīyaṁ vedāntānām maryādā

The passage in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* is a little bit expanded, but the direction of borrowing is not clear; it could either be an expansion of the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* passage or *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* could be an abbreviation of the former passage. It is reasonable to assume that an author reused his own introduction for another work. However, considering how Bhāskara copied Śāṅkara’s expressions

³² This compound also appears in some of Śāṅkara’s works, for example in *Brahmasūtra-Bhāṣya* (once, in 1.2.17); *Taittirīyopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* (Introduction and 2.8.4); *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad-Bhāṣya* (3.8.12, 4.3.21–22, 4.3.34).

³³ *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, Introduction (page 1, lines 4–11), and *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, Introduction (pages 1–2).

and entire passages and given that the reuse of material was a common practice in Indian philosophical circles,³⁴ this cannot be considered conclusive evidence.

Concerning distinctive terminology, all three works exhibit shared peculiarities. Of particular note is the use of *sac-cid-ānanda* to describe the highest Brahman. Additionally, a variation, *cit-sad-ānanda*, appears in *Sanatsujātīya-* and *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, which could suggest a relatively early date for these works, as the formula had not yet become fully established.

As mentioned earlier, (*parama-*) *Īśvara* is also used interchangeably with Brahman/Ātman to denote the absolute in the highest sense in all three works. An interesting common feature among all three works is the inclusion of lengthy Purāṇic quotations. For instance, we can once again consider the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, which is the most frequently quoted Purāṇic source in all three *Bhāṣyas*. In *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, 80 *śloka*s from the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* are quoted; in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, 47 are quoted; and in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, 30 are quoted.

In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20, there are 46 consecutive *pāda*s from *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*,³⁵ while in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* (Introduction, pages 12–13), there are 56 consecutive *pāda*s.³⁶ Out of these two sets of verses, 17½ *śloka*s (35 *pāda*s) are identical,³⁷ and they are even presented in the same order. Additionally, in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*, five of these 17½ *śloka*s can be found. The sequence from *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* 2.16.22–24 is also arranged in the same order in all three *Bhāṣyas*.³⁸

A total of eight verses from the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*³⁹ is quoted in all three commentaries.⁴⁰ The table below also illustrates that, in addition to these common *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* verses, there are several other verses from the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* that are shared by two out of the three commentaries.

³⁴ Compare Freschi and Maas 2017.

³⁵ *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.2.6, 1.4.40–41, 2.12.39–45, 2.14.28cd–31, 2.16.18, 2.16.22–25, 6.7.95, 6.7.94, 2.6.50, 1.22.73.

³⁶ *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 1.4.38–41, 1.22.85, 1.2.6, 2.12.39, 2.12.41–45, 2.13.66cd–2.13.67cd, 2.13.96, 2.13.86–88, 2.13.95, 2.13.66cd, 2.13.67ab, 2.13.67cd, 2.13.96, 2.13.86, 2.13.87–88, 2.13.95, 2.14.24ab, 2.14.28cd–31, 2.15.35, 2.16.19cd, 2.16.20ab, 2.16.20cd, 2.16.22–24.

³⁷ 1.2.6, 1.2.38–41, 2.14.28cd–31, 2.12.39, 2.12.41–45, 2.16.22–24.

³⁸ *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 10; *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*, Introduction (page 13); *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20 (page 212).

³⁹ 1.2.6, 2.12.43–44, 2.16.22–24, 6.7.53, 6.7.95.

⁴⁰ *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 84; *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* Introduction (pages 15–16); *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 2.7 (page 189).

Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya	Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya	Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya
1.2.6	1.2.6	1.2.6
1.2.65		1.2.65
1.4.40	1.4.40	
1.4.41	1.4.41	
	1,17.84	1,17.84
1.22.87		1.22.87
2.12.38		2.12.38
2.12.39	2.12.39	
2.12.41	2.12.41	
2.12.42	2.12.42	
2.12.43	2.12.43	2.12.43
2.12.44	2.12.44	2.12.44
2.12.45	2.12.45	
	2.13.42	
2.13.91		2.13.91
2.14.28cd	2.14.28cd	
2.14.29	2.14.29	
2.14.30	2.14.30	
2.14.31	2.14.31	
2.16.22	2.16.22	2.16.22
2.16.23	2.16.23	2.16.23
2.16.24	2.16.24	2.16.24ab
6.5.74		6.5.74
6.7.53	6.7.53	6.7.53
6.7.95	6.7.95	6.7.95

Of particular interest is the sequence *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* 2.14.28cd, 2.14.29–31, which appears in both the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*- and the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*. In both commentaries, this sequence is identical and includes only half of verse 2.14.28. This highlights a remarkable similarity in their choice of quotations.

Besides the eight verses from *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* that are quoted in all three commentaries, there are other quotations that are common to all the texts. These include *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* 2.2.8,⁴¹ *Agni-Purāṇa* 375.14,⁴² *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā*

⁴¹ *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* Introduction (page 1); *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 2 (page 3); *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.8 (page 190). This verse is quoted twice in *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* (pages 190 and 219) and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 2 and 10 (page 10).

⁴² *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* Introduction (page 16); *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 10 (page 22); *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.20 (page 208).

30.128 and 30.131,⁴³ *Mānavadharmasāstra* 12.104cd,⁴⁴ and *Mahābhārata* 12.233.7.⁴⁵

The critically constituted text of *Mahābhārata* 12.233.7 reads in *pāda* b *tu pramucyate*, but *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*- and *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* cite *ca vimucyate* (*vimucyate* in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya*), and this reading belongs to the southern recension according to the critical apparatus. The quotation from *Mānavadharmasāstra* 12.104d reads *kalmaṣaṃ* in all our three commentaries, while in the northern recension *kilbiṣaṃ* appears, thus pointing towards a southern origin of the cited text.

The case of *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2.91, cited in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 10 (page 17) and *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 1.11 (page 35) is unusual. Both commentaries feature the reading *sarvabhūtaṣṭham ātmānaṃ*, which in the critical apparatus belongs only to three manuscripts, but of the northern recension, while the majority of manuscripts, and thus the critically established text, read *sarvabhūteṣu cātmanāṃ*. However, in 2.91c, which is cited only in *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 10, the reading *saṃpaśyann ātmayājī vai* occurs. This reading is confirmed in two manuscripts of the southern recension, as well as two of the northern recension. These examples make it challenging to pinpoint the source of the quotations that appear in the text. In the case of *Mānavadharmasāstra*, none of the manuscripts used by Patrick Olivelle to constitute the archetype contains both variants (*sarvabhūtaṣṭham ātmānaṃ* in *pāda* a and *saṃpaśyann ātmayājī vai* in *pāda* c), leaving the question open regarding which text the author of the commentary was using when quoting.

For the question of authorship and the date, more important are the previously mentioned quotes from the *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā* which also appear in the *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya*. In Andrijanić (2019), this particular citation serves as one of the key arguments against Śaṅkara's authorship. Furthermore, quoting the same set of verses from a work of considerable length in all three commentaries is quite astonishing, especially considering that quotations from other works uncommonly cited in Vedāntic texts appear in all three commentaries.

Now that it is evident that all three commentaries exhibit similar patterns in selecting, arranging, and sequencing quotes,⁴⁶ let us consider the implications for authorship.

On the one hand, it could suggest the same author who follows a particular citation practice or has access to a specific repository of quotations. On the other

⁴³ *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 2.7 (page 41); *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 96 (page 132); *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.8 (page 187). *Bhṛgu-Saṃhitā* 30.131 also appears in *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* 2.7 (page 41) and *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.8 (page 187).

⁴⁴ *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* Introduction (page 6); *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.8 (page 186) *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 123 (page 162).

⁴⁵ *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya* Introduction (page 2); *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* 1.5 (pages 182–83), 1.20 (page 215); *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* 123 (page 162). This verse also appears in *Brahma-Purāṇa* 237.7. In *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya*, the words *tathā ca mokṣadharme* clearly indicate that the verse is quoted from the *Mahābhārata*.

⁴⁶ In this analysis, quotations from the major Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavadgītā* were deliberately not taken into consideration because they are generally very common in Vedāntic literature and are less indicative of the author's writing habits.

hand, it could also mean that one of the three works was used as a source for quotes. This would imply that authors of later generations may have utilized exemplary works as sources for selecting quotations, drawing their material from them. Unfortunately, the quotations do not provide a clear answer as to which of the three commentaries could be the source, as all of them, at times, have a few more or fewer verses in some sequences.

The similarities in quoting may not be sufficient for determining authorship, but they are still indicative, especially when we encounter a situation where the same few citations from extensive literature appear in all three works. Furthermore, when combined with other evidence, they can collectively establish a stronger basis for asserting shared authorship.

Concluding Remarks

All three commentaries exhibit a notable similarity in terminology. *Māyā* is a developed philosophical term. *Saccidānanda* is formulated as a philosophical concept for the positive qualification of Brahman. *Īśvara* is still partially used to refer to the Supreme Brahman but is also associated with the concept that the Supreme Brahman, limited by *māyā*, manifests as both *Īśvara* and *jīva*. *Avidyā* is not presented as a unique phenomenon, but rather as a member of a group of afflictions.

Śvetāśvataropaniṣad-Bhāṣya and the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* share the same beginning and all three share a remarkable similarity in selection and sequences of quotation.

If we add to this the results of the General Imposters method experiment, along with the absence of counter-arguments against shared authorship, we can assert that there is a foundation, supported by cumulative circumstantial evidence, to suggest that all three commentaries might be the work of a single author. Even if we exercise caution, it can still be confidently asserted that they likely originated within the same scholarly circles, both spatially and temporally close.

According to the critical apparatus of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* manuscripts belong to the Southern recension, particularly within the Telugu/Grantha manuscript tradition. The text of *Viṣṇusahasranāma* within the commentary also aligns with the southern recension, leading to the conclusion that both texts likely originated in the southern region. If we operate under the assumption that all three commentaries were written by the same author, we can infer that this author, whose name has been lost to the passage of time, was active in southwestern India.

It appears that due to later terminology and concepts, as well as quotations from a work belonging to the twelfth century, we have eliminated the possibility that any of the three commentaries was written by Śāṅkara. This is further supported by the concept of *saccidānanda*, which could belong to a time after Sarvajñātman. Since the commented text of *Sanatsujātīya* was a source for Nīlakaṇṭha's text from the seventeenth century, *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* (and the other two if they are from the same author) could have been composed between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries. This is further confirmed by Śāṅkara's

hagiographies from the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries, which already mention *Sanatsujātīya-Bhāṣya* and *Viṣṇusahasranāma-Bhāṣya* as works of Śaṅkara. It seems necessary to give preference to the earlier date here, considering that the concept of Īśvara as conditioned Brahman had not yet fully developed. Furthermore, if the true authorship of these works remained forgotten until the seventeenth/eighteenth century, it is important to consider that a considerable amount of time must have elapsed before the works were finally attributed to Śaṅkara.

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