

Full Length Paper

Master of Arts Thesis Summary Part 2: The Classic Literature of India - Antiquity of the *Srîmad-Bhâgavatam* - or *Bhâgavata-Purâna*

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In this final part, multi-disciplinary evidential submissions are provided in support of the thesis that both the *Srîmad-Bhâgavatam* and its concept of the four ages comes from a time previous to the Ice Age.

Keywords: Language Type; Epigraphy; Numismatic Evidence; Discovery Variables

PART TWO

4.1.3 Astronomical evidence

The percentages vary in each Canto although a proportional tendency is seen of 50 to 75% in some Cantos in favor of the cosmographic model called Bhumandala. Parallel models are found in other cultures both in Asia and in America, which suggests that it was widely accepted in a period before the Ice Age. Also, although to a lesser degree, there are mentions of the seven-planet system, the constellation called Sisumara, the constellation of the Seven Rishis (the Great Dipper), the astronomical model of the Jyotir Veda, the conjunction of the star Rohini or Aldebarán (Alpha Tauri) dated 3162 BC, together with the concept of the Milky Way as a Heavenly River and the system of Nakshatras or lunar mansions, all found parallels in China and Egypt of 3000 - 2000 BC. The highest percentage is 97.5% in favor of Dhruvaloka as the Pole Star, known as Alpha Draconis up to 2600 BC, and absent from then on until the 14th century CE. These references do not correspond to the period of the first millennium of the Christian era, since the Hindu astronomers of the first millennium state that the puranic model contradicts their observations. (Bhaskara XI and Paramesvara XVI cited in Thompson, 1991: 2-3)

This means that the astronomical observations in the *Bhâgavata-Purâna* coincide with the age of the *Mâhabhârata* and other archaic cultures.¹

4.1.4 Intertextuality

This applies to the conscious or unconscious influence of other books on the specific work studied. Scholars say that even one single line can give evidence of such influence. The results of this variable are different in each Canto, although there is a tendency oscillating from 80% to 27% in favor of *Mâhabhârata*, and also for different texts like the Vedas and *Upanishads*, and in smaller degrees for the *Brâhmanas*, *Upavedas*, *Ramayana*, *Manu-samhita*, and *Pancharatras*. The percentages confirm a period that is at the end of the Vedic Era and that coincides with the *Mâhabhârata* war.

4.1.5 Social Contexts

A variable that registers growing values is the prominent glorification of the priestly class or *brâhmanas*. In all the Cantos of the text up to the 60.4% about the description of the four social classes is found and the four spiritual orders - the *varnasrama*, or qualified caste-ism that is not hereditary and has a minimum degree of brahmical corruption, etc. This social scenario is in accordance with the *Rig Veda*, the *Briharanyaka Upanisad*, etc. The same applies to other categories that were prevalent in the cultures of the Sindhu Valley; while the use of the silk and the *canabis indica* flourished in China around 2700 BC. This demonstrates an obvious difference in the first millennium CE, with a society divided into many castes determined by birth, and non-estimation from the *Bhâgavatas* of the south toward the Brahminical class. (Buitenen, 1996: 227)

4.1.6 Economic Contexts

One of the general characteristics that define the percentage from 45 to 79% in the text is cattle raising. There are also indications on the use of elephants, horses, donkeys and mules, goats, buffaloes, sheep and camels, on the practice of hunting and consumption of meat, on gold and mining, on agriculture, ships and sailing, iron, silver, ivory and pearls, stones like marble, coral, diamond, lapis lazuli, emerald, sapphire, ruby etc. This evidence points toward a parallelism with the Cultures of Sindhu and in a certain measure with the period of the *Mâhabhârata*.

4.1.7 Philosophical Context

The text shows a percentage between 61.4% and 31.6% in favor of the theistic Sankhya school, followed by the schools of Yoga and other schools like Vaiseshika atomism, Gautama's Nyaya logic, the Karma mimansa, ahimsa, proto-buddhism and other atheistic (pasandas) movements such as Jainism, the Lokayatas School, etc. But there are no mentions of the treatises or

¹ Eliade, Mircea: "The Pillar of the world (Mount Meru) symbolism is also common in great civilizations such as Egypt, India, China, Greece, Mesopotamia..." See *Chamanismo*. Fondo de Cultura Económica 2° edit. Cap. VIII. México D. F. 1982, p213-214.

philosophers from the 6th to the 10th century CE, such as Isvara Krishna, Gaudapada, etc. This is why the evidence of the philosophical context tends toward the times of the *Mâhabhârata*.

4.1.8 Religious Context

Through all the Cantos there is a tendency in favor of the worship of Brahma and Siva varying between 39% and 19%, followed by the pantheon of the *Rig Veda*, and Indra stands out, together with the ceremonies connected to him. In the 10th Canto we see a tendency in favor of Krishna, who subdues the main gods of *Rig Veda* such as Indra, Varuna, Yama and even Siva and Brahma, the most universally worshiped. In the 12th Canto we see King Janamejaya, a *Bhâgavata* devotee, who tries to stop the cult of Indra and the *brâhmanas* that strive to defend him. These indications suggest the end of the Vedic age and the *Mâhabhârata* period, as opposed to the predominant religious context in the first millennium CE, when the cult to Brahma was almost extinct.

4.1.9 Political Context

The text shows a rivalry for political power between the Vedic monarchy and the anti-Vedic kings. There is also a presence of kings that were corrupt but not opposed to the Vedic culture, as the chiefs of the cowherd villages. Vedic monarchy had a tendency, shown through 11 Cantos of the text that varies between 100% and 46.4%, while in the 12th Canto we see the increase of corrupt regimes. In the 7th Canto we only see a predominance of 92.2% for the anti-Vedic dictatorship. It is interesting to see how the *Bhâgavatam* uses the word *râjâ* to designate the king, just like in *Rig Veda* and other old texts, together with *nripa*, *naradeva*, *maharâja* and *rajendra*. There is a serious difference in the centuries from 9th to 10th CE, when the kings were called by titles like *mahasamanta*, *mahamandalesvara*, etc. while the feudal chiefs of lower categories had titles such as *râjâ*, *samanta*, *ranaka*, *thakura*, *bhoga*, etc. (Thapar, 1967: 218) In the centuries from the 5th to the 10th CE in south India kings were called *maharadhirajam*, *dharma maharadhiraja*, *agnistoma-vajpey*, *asvamedhayaji*, *daivaputra*, *shahanushai*, used by the Kushans, Sakhas and the Sri Lanka dynasties in the Gupta period.² So the data coincide with the period of *Mâhabhârata*.

4.1.10 Language Type

The results of the language analysis indicate an archaic form of Sanskrit, because apart from the particular style (*modus escribedi*) we see a metric pattern with a prevalence (71.5%) of verses of type *anustubh*, followed by verses composed of four lines or *padas* of twelve syllables, the *tristubh* of four *padas*/eleven syllables, some paragraphs written in prose, the *shakaii* verses, the four *padas*/six syllables, the *anustubh* variants, the variants of *tristubh*, the type *prateanpankti* together with the type of two *padas* of 24-24 syllables. As we see from these results, the data suggest the period of the *Upanishads*, *Rig-Veda*, *Brâhmanas* and *Mâhabhârata*, and quite

² Conflictos de los Reinos Meridionales (c. A.D. 500-900) en Ibid. p.218. In: Thapar, R. (1966). Conflict in the Southern Kingdoms c. A.D. 500-900. *History of India*. Part I. England: Penguin Group

different from the Dravidian poets of the 9th to 11th century CE. King Kulasekara, for example, used brief *anustubh* and more often the metrics 14-15-14-14; 15-14-14-15; 19-19-19-19.21-21-21-21 and longer. In his poems Yamuna Albandar he used the metric of the *Rig-Veda sakvari* 14-14-14-14; but also a variant of 15-15-15-15.

4.2 External evidence

4.2.1 Documented Records

The records of documents indicate that the text left a strong mark through history. It is also noticed that until today, the earliest direct mention of the title of the *Bhâgavatam* has been found in the *Uttara-gîta* of the 5th century BC, followed by the *Nandî-sutrâ* of the 1st century CE. However, the Buddhist literature and especially the works of Chanakya shift the period of the compilation to a much earlier date, (Arganis Juárez, 2001) although the entire body of evidence shows a tendency of 19.2% in favor of the period of *Brâhmanas* and *samhitas*, followed by the *Upanishads* 14.1%, that mention important characters such as Krishna, the gopis, Pariksit and Janamejaya, etc. While in the 8th and 10th centuries CE the relative frequency is of 2.6%, a smaller percentage of probability in favor of the theory of the origin in the first millennium. Besides, in all the data that are consistent with a possible compilation in the first millennium, there is no direct proof that shows a later origin of the *Bhâgavatam*, an idea that was created only in the 17th century under the influence of the British. (Wilson, 1980: xxxix)

4.2.2 Epigraphical Evidence

Epigraphical evidence tends to confirm that the text and its contents had a profound influence from the 9th to the 10th centuries CE, while the value of the higher index with 24% is related to the 1st century BC, with two epigraphical pieces of evidence that mention the title of the *Bhâgavatam*.³ Another influence is observed in the concurrence of 13.8% with the epigraphy of the 5th, 7th, 8th and 9th CE, followed by that of the 4th century CE, with 10.3% and 3.4% for the 5th and 2nd centuries BC. The percentage of these finds suggests that there was a revival of the *Bhâgavatam* in the first millennium, but it does not indicate that the text was composed in that period.

4.2.3 Sculptural Evidence

The sculptural evidence shows the signs of the stories from this *Purâna*, from the 38th century BC until the 10th century CE, with a particularly high presence of 33.3% in the 7th and 6th centuries BC. Sculptures have an incidence of 13.3% between the 4th and the 10th centuries BC, especially with the figures of cows and bulls from the Sindhu Valley, including an image of child Krishna from Mohenjo dharo. Another 10% is found between the beginning of the Kali-yuga and the 4th and 5th centuries CE, which tends to confirm the ancient datation, as the index in the 9th

³ The Mora inscription from Mathura UP said: *bhagavatâm vrisninam panchavîranam*. In: Gomati inscriptions: *gomati (...)* *putena bhâgavatena...*

to 10th centuries CE is 8.9%, reducing the probabilities of compilation during the first millennium.

4.2.4 Numismatic Evidence

The numismatic evidence shows, (where the testimony of seal was included) that the impression of the stories and topics of the *Bhâgavatam* had indices of 57% in the time from the 4th to the 2nd BC. Nevertheless that the stamps of bovine cattle from Mohenjo-Daro, mark 21% continued by the 1st Century BC with 10.5% while that of the *Mâhabhârata* Age and the 3rd century BC, forms an ambivalence of 5.3%. The tendency is to corroborate the antiquity of the *Purâna*, because until the present investigation, the numismatist's result is 0% in favor of the IXth and Xth Centuries AD.

4.2.5 Further Discoveries Variable

The variable on further discoveries tend to confirm the *Bhâgavatam* context, pointing out a 13.9% in the discoveries between the 16th and the 15th centuries BC and a 1.4% for the XVIII BC. The motif of the Great Flood is also found in this *Purâna*; as we have already seen, this story is found in many ancient cultures from the Old World, in a period from the 30th to the 14th centuries BC. Scholars have concluded that this story refers to a geologic cataclysm of 10,000 years ago. (Goodman, 2001: 50-51.) The cosmographic concept of *Bhumandala* is one of the common records of the Old World, a trans-cultural concept in a period from the 30th to the 16th centuries BC, which is specifically different from the astronomical beliefs prevalent in India in the 1st millennium.

Among the most important indications in *Bhâgavatam*, we find the river *Sarasvati* and the Polar star (Alpha Draconis), and as has been already demonstrated, these were observed before the 20th century BC only, the period when the river dried up, and 600 years before this Polar star ceased to shine in the Polar Axis: this contradicts the theory of the compilation of the *Bhâgavatam* in the first millennium.

Regarding this variable, the third place in the text is for the *Sarasvati* River and up to 90% to this Polar star. The studies indicate the *Mâhabhârata* age, which is in accord with what the *Bhâgavatam* itself says, and according to the archaeological and astronomical data this period corresponds to the 30th century BC.

As have been shown in this presentation from the examination of the various theories; many experts have confirmed the mathematical calculations of astronomy, establishing the beginning of Kali-yuga Era on February 18th 3102 BC. According to the Hindus, this is when Krishna, the *Bhâgavatam*'s hero, disappeared from this world, a date that marks the beginning to their calendar, exactly like the Muslims calculate their years from the Hegira or the Christians from the birth of Jesus.

All these discoveries, the studies of various researchers, including the conservative scholars like Max Müller and the liberal ones as well, lead to the conclusion that the Vedic Age described in

the Vedic texts, with a final phase described in the *Bhâgavatam*, went from the 8000 to 2000 BC.

CONCLUSION

Based on all the records of the evidence analyzed, one can thus disprove the other theories on the datation of the *Bhâgavatam*. As specialist Klaus Klostermaier pointed out about the liberal objections in this field:

The new element that has entered the debate is scientific investigation. While the previous theory was based exclusively on philological arguments, the new theory includes astronomical, geological, mathematical and archaeological evidence. In all, this new theory seems to be built on better foundations. (Klostermaier, 1998)

Thus the most recent established thesis demonstrates that the *Bhâgavatam* was compiled in a period that goes from the end of *Mâhabhârata* age, at the beginning of Kali-yuga (3102 BC) and at the latest around 2600 BC, when the star Alpha Draconis was still in the Polar Axis and the Sarasvati still flowed. However, in spite of all the scientifically rigorous analysis presented in this investigation, mainstream scholars are still very much opposed to this demonstration, As Max Planck observed:

A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing [...] its opponents, making them see the light, but rather with the death of such opponents and the rise of a new generation that is able to accept it. (Planck, 1971: 235)

Discoveries in the Investigation

It is considered appropriate to present a brief report on the casual discoveries that appeared in the investigation: In 1992, Alf Hiltebeitel established that *Mâhabhârata* shows the workmanship of a single author; (Hiltebeitel, 1992: 50) and V. G. Tagare confirmed the same about the *Bhâgavatam*. Bruce M. Sullivan has examined the old texts, concluding that these sustain Dvaipayana Vyasa as the compiler of the canon in study.⁴ S. Piggot reports that in the Hittite manuscript of Kikkuli there are mentions of *marianu*, which suggests the name of the Maurya kings. (Piggot: 211) According to evidence, this dynasty ruled around 1534 BC, as confirmed by the *Bhâgavatam*. P. Gokhale verified that the Kings mentioned in the pillar attributed to Asoka are not Greeks, but other rulers that he identifies with the Hindu kings Jana-rajyas of 1475 BC⁵ (Gokhale, 1998; Agarwala, 1979) Dimock has confirmed that the word *yavana* only means "foreigner"; and non *yono* or *ionic* as some have theorized in order to identify them with the Greeks. The *Bhâgavatam* describes the Gomgeterio elephant, characterized by four tusks that

⁴ *Taitiriyaranyaka* 1.9.2; *Samavidhana brâhmana* 3.9.8; *Gopatha brâhmana* 1.1.29, *Budacharita* 1.42.4.16; *Saundarananda* 7.29-30; etc. Sullivan, B. M. (1990). *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa and the Mahābhārata: A New Interpretation*. Netherlands

⁵ Vid. VII rock Edict. Gokhale, P. (1996). 13. Ashoka Priyadarshi Loc. Cit. in Agarwala, G. C. (1979) ed. *Age of Bharata War*. Delhi Montilal Barnasidass.

existed for 14 up to 2 million years in the Pliocene. In the 20th century some geologists theorized that the desert of Rajasthan had developed recently, and later paleontologists discovered evidence that this desert was a fertile plain in Miocene. This data agrees with Bhâgavatam, that this desert existed in old times.

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