

Clooney, F. X.: Thinking ritually. Rediscovering the Pūrvā Mīmāṃsā of Jaimini. Wien [Sammlung De Nobili] 1990. 293 S. gr. 8° = Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, ed. by G. Oberhammer, XX. Kart. – Bespr. von H. Scharfe, Los Angeles.

Clooney's book is a bold and thorough attempt to rediscover the central vision of the Mīmāṃsāsūtra-s through a wide ranging interpretation of the text itself. No such attempt had been made so far, partly due to the size of the text (it is more than five times as long as the Vedāntasūtra or the Nyāyasūtra) and the obscurity of many of its formulations. Earlier researchers have relied heavily on Śābarasvāmin's commentary, and they have dealt mostly with short passages in the introductory chapters. For all practical purposes the study of the Mīmāṃsā as a philosophical system began for modern scholars – both Indian and Western – with Śābarasvāmin's Bhāṣya (and the fragment of an old Vṛtti contained in it). Clooney breaks new ground with his formal analysis of the composition of the sūtras and with his systematic investigation of crucial terms. Clooney's research virtually gives us a new philosophical text – a text that always was there but was blocked out in philosophical studies because it was approached wrongly. It is neither just a manual of useful interpretative devices nor a summary account of Vedic ritual, but rather offers a "ritual ontology."

The primary concern of the MS is the relation of word, purpose, and action as the *dharma* of ritual, where word is the driving force. The supreme position of speech (*vāc*) can be traced back to the Ṛgveda (X 71, etc.) and is referred to in the Mahābhāṣya where the list of sounds is called

a *brahma-rāṣi* possessed of great power (comment on the last Śiva-sūtra); it is expressed as the *śabda-brahman* in Bhartrhari's Vākyapadīya and is extolled by tantric philosophers like Abhinavagupta. This trend contrasts with that prevailing, e.g., in Buddhism where speech is regarded as a "derived" activity, a product of convention.

Clooney concedes that Śabaravāmin's Bhāṣya is often indispensable for giving us the background of the discussion and for indicating the Vedic passages hinted at in the sūtras, but he tries to reach an independent understanding of the sūtras. In fact, Śabaravāmin usually does not give us a literal commentary of any sūtra he explains. Even modern interpreters of the sūtras are often vague and mix their elaboration with the translation of the sūtra itself. *na hy aśabdāṃ pratiyate* is arbitrarily rendered as if the verb was given in the optative ("For what is not actually spoken of in the text should not be recognized": G. Jhā, followed by Clooney on p. 140). Clooney himself has not quite escaped this tendency: *śabdārthas* in XI 1 23 is left out in his translation (p. 135), and his translation of VI 1,37 on p. 192) ends in "We see other texts in support of this view" which has no equivalent in the sūtra. Could it be a free rendering of the next sūtra VI 1,38? The strict interpretation of sacred texts pursued by the Mīmāṃsā stands in strange contrast to its casual attitude towards philology regarding its own tradition. Sūtra IX 4,23 proposes that *praśāsā* in the Vedic phrase *praśāsā bāhū [kṛṇutāt]* (MS, KS, AB, TB) contains the instrumental of *praśās* "sword": "He should cut off the arms with a sword." The proposal is rejected in IX 4,24 as containing a redundancy (How else could the victim's arms be cut off?), and *praśāsā* is regarded as a dual modifying *bāhū*: "the praiseworthy arms." The practical consequence of the decision is that *praśāsā* need not be modified (i.e., put into a dual or plural instrumental case) if more than one sword is used in the process. No thought is given to the grammatical problem, that the correct form of the word denoting "praiseworthy" should be *praśā[m]syā*.

Jaimini shares with Pāṇini a practical approach in which many underlying principles are not made explicit but can only be deduced from their procedure. But the works also greatly differ in their presentation. The MS often adopts the style of debate, comparable to Kātyāyana's vārttikas, whereas the authentic sūtras of Pāṇini never argue or reason. Different viewpoints are indicated by particles such as *tu*, *iti ced*, *na*, *vā*. The use of *vā* "or" is worth noting: Clooney (p. 44) describes its meaning with the words "refutation, negation, rarely does it mean 'option' in Jaimini's system." This use calls to mind P. Kiparsky's thesis that *vā* in Pāṇini's grammar denotes not just any option but the preferred option. I would propose, therefore, for the MS a translation "or rather" instead of Clooney's simple "no", e.g. IX 4 24 *bāhu-praśāmsā vā* "Or rather [it is]

a praise of the arms" (Clooney, p. 58: "No. It signifies 'praise of the arms.'").¹

The core of Clooney's study is devoted to key terms in Jaimini's sūtras: *prakṛti*, *vikṛti*, *vikāra* (referring to the relation of archetype and ectype of rituals); *pradhāna*, *mukhya*, *guṇa*, *śeṣa*, *aṅga* (ancillary procedures); *ānantarya*, *samnidhāna*, *samyoga*, *sambandha* (relationship); *prayojana* (motivation); *utpatti*, *niṣpatti*, *pratipatti* (origination); *pravṛtti*, *nivṛtti*, *nirvṛtti* (actualization); *sat*, *bhāva*, *kriyā* (being and making); *prayoga* (the event) (p. 96). The most important term is *dharma*; after all, sūtra I 1,1 recognizes *dharma-jijñāsā* "inquiry into *dharma*" as the central topic of the MS. Clooney's view of *dharma* differs from those of earlier scholars who relied basically on Śabaravāmin. Rice, gold, texts, and words have their *dharms* (p. 153), and so do actions and rituals. "Every element of the sacrifice has its own *dharma*, which is its ritual description, its functional identity in the whole of the sacrifice ... To undertake the investigation of *dharma* in the Sūtras does not mean to discourse on the 'philosophy' attached to Mīmāṃsā, but to inquire into the smallest details of the ritual, the fine point of the rubrics." (p. 158) "The properties of a thing are known through perception; its *dharma* is known through the Vedic text." (p. 155) Clooney comes close to P. Hacker's view who called the Indian definition of *dharma*² "radically empirical".

Clooney proposes the thesis that Jaimini "removes *ṛṣis*, *śākhā*, and caste distinctions from central focus." (p. 163) Even though, from a human point of view, a man's desire for heaven or offspring may motivate him to undertake a costly ritual, this desire is only incidental to the ritual itself. Jaimini's thought is centered on the ritual action. Men as well as things have their *adhikāra* which is sometimes translated as "capability" or "opportunity", "relevance", etc. "For Jaimini *adhikāra* is not so much one's right or personal qualification, but rather one's sphere or domain of competence in intersection with other such domains." (p. 182) This definition fits well with the translation "charge" that I have proposed for *adhikāra* in Pāṇini I 3 11 *svaritenādhikārah*.³

In his attempt to place the MS in a historical and intellectual context, Clooney follows suggestions by P. Mus and L. Silburn, who pointed out that the Brāhmaṇas stress the impermanent nature of the Vedic sacrifice; regular repetitions of it bestow some permanence on it and on the self of the performer symbolized by the sacrificial altar (pp. 196f.). In

¹ I note as a stylistic peculiarity that qualifications often follow rather than precede: a genitive in II 4,33 (*tat-samyogād vidhīmām*), IV 1,2 (*prītiḥ puruṣasya tasya*), VI 1,4, IX 1,37, X 6,79, and an instrumental in III 2,1 (*arthena*).

² In Āpastamba-dharmasūtra I 7.20,6–8: what Aryans praise is *dharma*, and what they condemn is *adharmā*.

³ H. Scharfe, Pāṇini's Metalanguage, Philadelphia 1971, p. 39a.

contrast to this initial impermanent emptiness, “the Upaniṣads situate themselves from the beginning in fullness, and choose to know that alone.” (p. 200) Buddhism refuses to posit eternal substantial realities such as the *ātman* and *brahman* and sides in this respect with the Brāhmaṇas and the MS. The Buddhist conception of *dharma*s as the ultimate realities has similarities with Jaimini’s use of the term, both remaining “stubbornly reliant on the irreducible plurality of actions and events ... Like Buddhism, Mīmāṃsā gives primacy to the notion of *dharma* as the proper object of inquiry.” (p. 208) “Duty, law, moral norm, righteousness” etc. are obviously inadequate translations in this context; “functional identity” would come closer and can elucidate even the usage of *dharma* in texts like the Dharmasāstras. *dharma* and *artha* “goal” are closely linked both in Buddhism and in the MS. Buddhism regarded Vedic ritual as essentially worthless and stressed instead the importance of moral action; reliance on the Veda was considered to be without reason, because the Vedic authors lacked verifiable authority. Jaimini, possibly to counter this challenge, acclaimed the word, especially the word of the Veda, as an ultimate irreducible component of reality, not created but eternal; this word generates ritual action. Its central position cannot be ceded to the morality of Buddhism or the spiritual knowledge of Vedānta.

The attempt to read the MS as a text by itself confirms an earlier observation made by W. Halbfass that *apūrva* which occurs several times in the original meaning “new”, never denotes in the MS the unseen link between the sacrifice and its anticipated blessings as it does in the works of Śabarasvāmin and Kumārila. Clooney suggests that in the intervening centuries the impermanent action of sacrifice was devalued and a more permanent basis was sought for the significance of the sacrifice. Śabarasvāmin introduced *apūrva* as a necessary device to explain the delayed effect of sacrifice, without offering any explanation of its ontological status, and he expanded its application to other areas, e.g., claiming “that verbs, being expressive of activity, express the *apūrva*.” (p. 228) In fact for Śabarasvāmin *apūrva* became the center and meaning of the sacrifice, and man for whom the *apūrva* arises, assumed a central position in the sacrifice. Kumārila developed this theory further by locating *apūrva* as a potency (*śakti*) in the soul (*ātman*) of the performer. Prabhākara who may have been a contemporary of Kumārila, reverted largely to the thought of Jaimini for whom the sacrificial action itself was central, so much so that Jaimini did not bother to ask how the ashes left over at the completion of a sacrifice could lead to heaven, abundant crops, etc.

It is a pity that the reading of this rich and rewarding study is marred by so many annoying mistakes and oversights. *varṇa* in Indian grammatical texts is never “letter” (p. 78) but “sound”, and

Pāṇini’s *kāraṅkas* are not “case relations” but relations between the factors of an action that may, inter alia, be expressed by case forms but cannot be put in fixed one-on-one relations to the cases (p. 42). In several places the Sanskrit text of discussed passages is missing, *paribhāṣā* is misspelled frequently, as is *attattha* (p. 209). The wrong sūtra is quoted on pp. 182 and 265 (VI 1,40 instead of VI 1,39), and a word is missing (‹subsequent›) in the quote from Halbfass (p. 243). In IX 4,23 (p. 267) Clooney copies the misprint found in several Indian editions (*asyābbhidhānam* instead of *asyabhidhānam*), and in X 7,58 (p. 109) he constructs the feminine *sarvāsām* with the masculine *guṇānām* instead of *codanānām* (as Śabarasvāmin correctly does). The flimsy binding of the book provided by the publisher did not survive this reviewer’s reading, giving a new meaning to the Indian expression *pañcatvam gataḥ*. In spite of these occasional flaws, this is a remarkable book.

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