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MESQUITA, Roque: *Madhva und seine unbekannten literarischen Quellen*. Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, Volume XXIV. Wien: University of Vienna, Institute of Indology, 1997. 151pp.

The argument presented in this small but significant publication is, in my view, completely convincing. At the same time, its conclusion is not as indubitable as the author suggests.

The author addresses an old problem in the study of Madhva (13th century C.E.) and his Dvaita-Vedāntic treatises which abound in supportive citations from a large number of entirely unknown sources. On the basis of a fresh study of the textual evidence and of the religious background and context of Madhva, Roque Mesquita now concludes that the passages cited from "unknown sources" are mainly composed by Madhva himself. This, according to Mesquita (p. 12, 143), does not mean that Madhva was a fraud and forger, as was claimed by his opponents from the roughly contemporaneous Varadaguru and Veṅkaṭanātha (13th cent.)

onwards. In the light of his religious background and on the basis of his own statements it can be inferred that Madhva sincerely believed that he wrote the passages in question under direct inspiration of Viṣṇu, as he regarded himself as an incarnation of Vāyu, Viṣṇu's son. Madhva's "unknown sources" were not finished works, but rather "working titles" to which he contributed at various places in his work. Mesquita considers his conclusion to be a solid, final result of his research rather than just a working hypothesis (143f). It is based on a study of a large number of Madhva's references to important "unknown sources" in his works, with a special emphasis on the so-called Brahmatarka. Still needed from now on, according to Mesquita, is a comprehensive investigation of references to other important "unknown sources".

The main outline of the argument as it appears in Mesquita's book is as follows. In the Introduction (pp. 15-22) the problem and the thesis to be demonstrated are briefly explained. A fundamental point of criticism on Siauve (*Doctrine de Madhva,* Pondichéry, 1968), Mesquita's main predecessor with whom he disagrees, is already mentioned here (p. 21, note 19): she relied too much on the views expressed in the hagiographical work Sumadhvavijaya from the author Nārāyaṇa, the son of a direct disciple of Madhva (on which cf. Glasenapp, *Madhva's Philosophie des Vishnu-Glaubens,* Leipzig und Bonn, 1923, p. *7). The chapter "Madhva und seine Kritiker" (pp. 23-27) deals with the earliest critics of Madhva, esp. Appayadīkṣita (ca. 16th cent. C.E.). Two major points are derived from Appayadīkṣita's criticism: (1) there is a close connection between on the one hand the peculiar points in doctrine of Madhva which deviate from the Brahminical tradition so far, and on the other hand the unknown sources; also other researchers have remarked this connection, apart from Appayadīkṣita; (2) Madhva made clear statements showing that his claim to be a partly *avatāra* of Viṣṇu serves to prove that no fraud is involved in the citation of the "unknown" works, but that Viṣṇu himself is the author.

In connection with the second point, the next chapter (pp. 29-49) deals with "the theological basis of the claim to be an *avatāra*". In Viṣṇuite religion the belief that Viṣṇu at times incarnates in *avatāra*s had been common since long; also the belief that Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are among the *avatāra*s was already well established in Madhva's time. Madhva adds to this several peculiar points. Thus, for instance, through citations from unknown sources, Ṛgveda 1.141.2-3 is presented as a prediction of his

own birth as helping *avatāra*. From this it follows that Madhva's activities as composer of canonical works is fully authorized by Viṣṇu. This is the topic of the subsequent chapter (pp. 51-69).

The longest chapter (pp. 71-135, 64 pages), deals with the way the citations from various "unknown sources" have been composed, and the implications for Madhva as author of these citations. Existing and well-known works such as the Brahmasūtra and Mīmāṃsāsūtra are mentioned together with otherwise completely unknown sources as works by Viṣṇu. The so-called Brahmatarka appears as a crucial text ("Schlüsseltext", p. 73) in Madhva's philosophical system. But even Madhva's pupils do not know it, and refer to it as an old and lost work (p. 74-75). It can be shown, however, that it is written in ca. the 12th century, i.e., in Madhva's time: it polemizes against a statement of Vimuktātman (10th cent.), *durghaṭatvam avidyāyā bhūṣaṇam na tu dūṣaṇam* or "its irrationality embellishes (our concept of) ignorance, it does not detract from it". For its logic the Brahmatarka is moreover indebted to the Pramāprameya of the Jain author Bhāvasena, who is a contemporary of Madhva.[1]

In this chapter Mesquita formulates (p. 79) three criteria for deciding that an unknown work is written by Madhva himself: (1) it defends peculiar doctrines of Madhva which occur only with him; (2) Madhva attributes the work directly to Viṣṇu; (3) the work refers to or cites other works which are unequivocally written by Madhva. To some of the unknown works the first two criteria apply, to others only the first or only the third.

Several text-parts are next investigated, and it is found that their content is very typical for Madhva's peculiar doctrines; hence they must be his own works. Occasionally, the different texts show certain contradictions; apparently, Madhva wanted to create the impression that he is referring to several mutually independent traditions.

According to Mesquita, further investigations in the same direction are needed to work out more details of Madhva's composition of unknown sources. He does not anticipate any objections or criticism of his thesis, at least not explicitly. However, although he does not want to call Madhva a fraud or forger, from his representation of Madhva's art of composition

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1    For this point reference is made to an article of R. Zydenbos "On the Jaina background of Dvaitavedānta," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 1991:249-271.

one has to infer that the latter was involved in nothing less than a very complex and protracted, though "pious" fraud, which was successful in even convincing his closest disciples that he had access to some textually established sources.

It is therefore easy to predict that some scholars strongly sympathizing with Madhva's religion—perhaps others as well—will seek to contradict Mesquita's main thesis. And it is to be admitted that, on the one hand, the argumentation could have been formulated more rigorously, and, on the other hand, that moments where certain pieces of evidence are weighed and evaluated also allow for alternative judgments (unavoidably influenced by one's cultural and religious or non-religious background). A few helping hands to these scholars may be given here: The references to the 16th century Appayadīkṣita form a non-supportive loop in the argument. The decision to consider "unknown sources" to be the work of Madhva is to be derived from chronologically less remote data—as Mesquita indeed attempts to do. Even if one admits with Glasenapp that Nārāyaṇa's Sumadhvavijaya abounds in incredibilities and legendary matter (Glasenapp, *op. cit.:* *7), it is much closer in time and may contain also historically reliable accounts, for instance the one on Madhva's performance of a Vedic ritual with a "dough animal" which enraged the orthodox Brahmins in his region. This practice is followed till the present day by Mādhva Brahmins; since Madhva did not advocate it in his written work this practice may very well derive from an example Madhva gave in his practical life.[2] The three criteria mentioned by Mesquita for regarding a text as written by Madhva are valid only if one has already accepted on other grounds that an important "unknown source" such as the Brahmatarka is from his hand. While the case for the existence of a large number of *genuinely* old texts and passages which have all disappeared precisely when they are supportive of Madhva's peculiar doctrine has indeed become very weak with the present stage of research and esp. with Mesquita's book, the case for Siauve's "Madhva-sympathetic" view that Madhva had at least access to texts which he sincerely believed to be old is

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2    Somewhat astonishingly, Madhva joins in the traditional interpretation of the Brahma-Sūtra *aśuddham iti cen na, śabdāt,* and defends the killing of an animal in Vedic ritual; cf. my "to kill or not to kill the sacrificial animal" in *Violence Denied,* Brill 1999, p. 156ff.

strictly speaking not yet entirely lost. The distance between the date of Madhva and the date after which his Brahmatarka originated in the light of the references to Vimuktātman still leaves some room for a pre-Madhva composition of this major "unknown source". And how incontrovertible is the dependence of the Brahmatarka on Madhva's contemporary, the Jain logician Bhāvasena? Is a dependence in a different direction entirely excluded, or a common dependence on a third source? The philological method can restrict the range of reasonable possibilities, but moments of weighing, evaluation and judgement will always remain. Philology is not mathematics or physics, and even these two attained maturity only when they could accept to work with uncertainties and indeterminable entities.

The great value of Mesquita's work[3] is (1) that it consistently and quite convincingly elaborates the thesis that Madhva's "unknown sources" are all made up by himself; and (2) that he has placed Madhva's intricate "pious fraud" (or something which looks very much like it) in the context of Madhva's religious background and his conviction to be a partial incarnation of Viṣṇu. Mesquita's thesis—which, in spite of my criticism, I consider a well-argued one—will no doubt give a new direction to the study of Madhva, of Dvaita Vedānta and of a most interesting chapter in the religious history of India, and even in the early history of philology—see Madhva's statements regarding his work on the Mahābhārata which he considered to be textually dilapidated, and for the restoration of which he claimed to rely not only on the grace of Lord Viṣṇu but also on a large number of manuscripts which he found in many places (p. 60f).

The scholarly discussion with those who may be expected to attempt to controvert Mesquita's thesis will be fruitful for different parties if

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3    Without searching for them I came across a small number of minor and mostly self-correcting printing errors. Not immediately clear for someone not having Govindacharya's edition at hand (*Sarvamūlagranthāḥ,* pt. 1, Udipi 1969, p. 242) may be page 44 line 17: *madhv ānandatīrthaḥ syāt* (first pāda of śloka, after *madhv ity ānanda uddiṣṭo* in the previous śloka): this should be *madhva ānandatīrthaḥ syāt.* In the representation of the last line of the previous śloka the *ve* in *veti* should have been underlined since it is the word *mādhva* in ṚV 1.141.3 that Madhva interprets, in accordance with contemporary techniques of word-interpretation *(nirvacana),* as *madhu = ānanda + va = tīrtha.* Regrettably, the work lacks an index.

discussants do not lock themselves up in rhetorics of certainty but try to separate clearly the direct data and bare argumentations from moments of judgement which are unavoidably influenced by a scholar's context. The scholarly dynamism thus arising from the opposed perspectives may not give rise to quick scholarly unanimity regarding the major point at stake, the authorship of passages from "unknown sources" cited by Madhva; but it may very well result in a narrowing down of the room for speculation and estimates regarding crucial points such as the relation between Madhva and Jainism, and between Madhva's and Bhāvasena's logic.

Jan E.M. Houben