

## Bāṇas' Death in the *Kādambarī*

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### A. Introduction

Following literary tradition, Bāṇa died while composing the *Kādambarī*. The text, which was completed by his son, is as a result divided into two parts, a *pūrvabhāga* and *uttarabhāga*. On closer consideration, however, there is something strange about Bāṇas' death. In the first place, the point in the text where Bāṇas' death is supposed to have taken place is almost too good to be true. Secondly, the idea of the completion of the text by the author's son appears to have strong echoes in events narrated in the text itself. Thirdly, the division of the text, which is said to have been caused by the author's death, seems to have been known from the very beginning. All this raises the question if with Bāṇas' death we might not be dealing with a literary fiction. If so, we might ask what could have been the function of this fiction. In this essay, I intend first to have a closer look at the information provided in the text about Bāṇas' death as well as its completion by his son. After that an attempt is made to explain what might have been behind the "story" of the author's death.

### B. His Father's Voice

The greater part of the first three *ucchvāsas* of Bāṇas' *Hārjatarita* is taken up by the author's autobiography, which relates in detail his youth, his relationship with Harṣa, and how he was persuaded by

his relatives and friends to relate this king's adventures. In a certain way Bāṇa might well be considered the protagonist of the story, which is basically about telling stories.<sup>1</sup> Bāṇa does not appear in the story of his other composition, the *Kādambārī*. This is also not to be expected, as the tale is almost entirely set in a fictional world, the protagonists commuting between Ujjayinī and the world of the Gandharvas. At the same time, however, the author has had a great effect on the form of the text, as he has happened to die after he had finished only approximately two-thirds of it. The text has been completed by his son and is conformingly divided into two parts, the *pūrvabhāga* and *uttarabhāga*, written by the father and the son respectively. Of Bāṇa's death and the son taking over his work we are informed at the beginning of the *uttarabhāga*, which has an introduction in a verse of its own. Thus, verse 4 on p. 239 reads:

*yāte divaṃ pitari tadvacasaiva sārḍham  
vicheḍam āpa bhūvi yas tu kathāprabandhabh  
dubhkhāṃ satāṃ tadāsamāptikṛtam vilokya  
prārabdha eva sa mayā na kavituadarpat*

When my father went to heaven

The flow of his story

Along with his voice

Was checked on earth.

I, considering the unfinished work to be

A sorrow to the good,

Again set it in motion—

But out of no pride in my poetic skill.<sup>2</sup>

It is as if before taking over the task of finishing the story of the *Kādambārī*, the son had been able to discuss with his father how the story was to end. For there is no clear break nor are there contradictions between the two parts. In fact, attempts to distinguish between the styles of father and son have not yielded any verifiable conclusions.<sup>3</sup> The smooth transition is also the gist of the story, admittedly of doubtful authenticity, of how Bāṇa selected the son who was to finish the *Kādambārī*. Apparently Bāṇa had a premonition that he would not be able to complete the story. He called in his sons and asked them who would be willing to undertake the task of finishing the text. The first son who volunteered, failed

1. Tiekens 2001b.

2. The translation is by Layne 1991, 237.

3. Hueckstedt 1985, 149ff. Note that the criteria put forward by Hueckstedt are mostly of a highly impressionistic nature and as such prove little. In fact, the chapter in question is not the most convincing in this otherwise useful and interesting book.

to pass the test put to him by his father, which was to describe a pile of wood. In fact, his description almost killed Bāṇa by its dryness and lack of imagination. Fortunately, the next son fared better and could be entrusted with the completion of the *Kādambārī*. However, it is clear that we are dealing with an apocryphal story here, which was fabricated to explain, among other things, precisely the smooth transition in the *Kādambārī* from the father's part to that of the son.<sup>4</sup>

### C. Speaking of Death

Even if, as is assumed in the story just quoted, Bāṇa's death might not have been unexpected, it is unlikely that this also applied to its exact moment. However, if we look at Bāṇa's final sentence, the break appears to be strikingly neat and even has a poetic side to it. It is almost as if it was decided by father and son that the break was to be at that particular point in the story even if Bāṇa would be still alive and working after that. To begin with, while we are made to believe that Bāṇa's death took place while he was writing the *Kādambārī*, he did not die in the middle of a sentence. In fact, Bāṇa's last sentence is complete, his last (written) word is *iti* "thus" and the first words of his son are *api ca* "and next." As said, but for the interruption it creates, the caesura is remarkably neat. In addition to that, if we turn to the content of the final sentence written by Bāṇa, it cannot be denied that there is some kind of coincidence between this and Bāṇa's subsequent death.

The passage concerned contains Patralekhā's report to Candrāpīḍa of a conversation she had with Kādambārī. The situation is the following. During his *dig-vijaya*, Candrāpīḍa, the son of the king of Ujjayinī, had fallen in love with Kādambārī, a princess in the Gandharva capital Hemakūṭa. Their love is mutual. However, letters arrive from Candrāpīḍa's father urging him to come home. He leaves his servant Patralekhā behind with Kādambārī, expecting her to join him later. At home in Ujjayinī Candrāpīḍa is anxiously waiting for the arrival of Patralekhā, who might provide him with news about his lover, Kādambārī. As soon as Patralekhā arrives in Ujjayinī Candrāpīḍa takes her aside and interrogates her about Kādambārī. Patralekhā relates to him a long conversation she had with Kādambārī in which the latter expressed her love for the prince and asked herself if it is proper to send him a message through Patralekhā and, if so, what kind of message. It is the report of these considerations by Kādambārī which is interrupted by Bāṇa's death. Bāṇa's last words concern Kādambārī's

4. The story is told by Hueckstedt 1985, 140–41, who had found it in the Sanskrit introduction to Krishnamahana Śāstrī's edition of the *pūrvabhāga*.

rejection of the possibility of sending a message, saying that following her “death” [*sic*] Candrāpīḍa would know the extent and depth of her love for him. Below I quote Layne’s translation of the last paragraph written by Bāna:

[Pattalekhā to Candrāpīḍa:] Although her heart was aflutter with joy, she still seemed to take recourse to bashfulness, which is natural to maidens, and very softly spoke: “I know you have great affection for me, but how can maidens whose nature is tender as young acacia blossoms be so brazen, especially those who are still so very young? They act rashly who themselves send messages or approach their lovers. I am a young maiden and ashamed to send a bold message myself. Besides, what message can I send? ‘You are dear to me,’ is superfluous. ‘Am I dear to you?’ is a silly question. ‘I am deeply in love with you,’ is the talk of a harlot. ‘I cannot live without you,’ is contrary to fact. ‘The Bodiless God overpowers me,’ is excusing my own fault. ‘I am given to you by the Mind-born God,’ is too obvious a means of approaching him. ‘I have forcibly possessed you,’ is the boldness of an unchaste woman. ‘You must come, by all means,’ is the pride of beauty. ‘I will come myself,’ is a woman’s fickleness. ‘This one is your servant and has no other passion than you,’ is frivolously expressing total devotion. ‘Through the fear of rejection, I send no message,’ is an attempt to awaken him who sleeps. ‘I shall know severe grief in living apart from you, for that is undesired by me,’ is displaying too much love. ‘You will know my love by my death (*jñāyasi maraṇena prītim*),’ is simply impossible.”

Admittedly, this is not the only passage in the text in which people speak about death or, for that matter, die. In the text several persons actually die, among whom are Puṇḍarīka, his reincarnation, Vaiśampāyana, and the latter’s reincarnation, the parrot Vaiśampāyana. Furthermore, there are Candrāpīḍa, who dies after he has heard that his friend Vaiśampāyana has died, his reincarnation, King Śūdraka, and the parrot Vaiśampāyana’s father, who was killed by an old hunter. Finally, Mahāśvetā as well as Kādambārī express the desire to die after having seen their dead lovers, Puṇḍarīka and Candrāpīḍa respectively. Nevertheless, it seems significant that Bāna’s death takes place at the very place it does, immediately after Kādambārī has used the word *maraṇa*, or “death.”<sup>5</sup>

5. The translation is by Layne 1991, 236. The corresponding text is *Kādambārī*, pp. 236–37 (§ 225 and 226).

#### D. Fathers and Sons

In addition to this “coincidence” it should be noted that the idea of Bāna’s son taking over his father’s task has several echoes in the story itself, in which the relationship between fathers and sons plays an important role. A case in point is formed by the old parrot and his son Vaiśampāyana. Apart from the author of the text, the parrot Vaiśampāyana is the first and most “inclusive” narrator in the story. However, we are told that he got that far only through the help of his father, who actually gave his life to save that of his son. For, when Vaiśampāyana was still a fledgling, the forest in which he was living with his father—his mother had died almost immediately after his birth—was visited by a group of hunters. An old hunter, who was no longer capable of chasing bigger game, started killing the defenseless birds in the trees. The young Vaiśampāyana hid among his father’s wings. While his father was killed and thrown on the ground his son remained unnoticed and managed to escape to become, *nomen est omen*, a great storyteller.<sup>6</sup>

Another father-and-son pair is formed by King Tārāpīḍa and the *yuvavijā*, or crown prince, Candrāpīḍa. A particular striking incident in their relationship is when Candrāpīḍa has died and his father and mother come and sit around the dead son’s body to protect it in order that his soul might use the body a second time.

In fact, the relationship between Tārāpīḍa and Candrāpīḍa in many respects resembles that between Bāna and his son. As we have seen, Bāna’s son is quite modest about his ambitions as a poet. It was not arrogance (*dārpā*) which made him complete his father’s work. In fact, he even anticipated the question why in the light of his father’s achievements in the field of prose *kāvya* he so much as dared to write such a poem himself: “That the syllables flow from my mouth undaunted by the prose composition of my elder is due to the power of my father and of nobody else.”<sup>7</sup> He almost literally admits that he has got a free ride by being allowed to finish the work begun by his father: “Even lesser rivers here on earth become big before reaching the ocean by joining the Ganges.”<sup>8</sup> If he is not afraid to complete the work in his own colorless words it is because he is

6. In fact, the fate of Vaiśampāyana rather resembles that of Bāna himself, whose mother died young.

7. *Kādambārī*, p. 240:

*gadye kṛte ’pi gururṇā tu tatbāḥśarāṅgi /  
yan nigatātāni pitṛveṇa sa me ’nubhāvah / 51.*

8. *Kādambārī*, p. 240:

*gaigām pravaiśya bhuvī namnayatām upetya /  
sphītāḥ sanudhram itarā api yānti nadyah / 61.*

actually intoxicated by the wine of Kādambarī (p. 240, verse 7). Finally, he notes that, as it takes some time for seeds to ripen and grow into plants, he cannot help it when he reaps the harvest sown by his father (p. 240, verse 8).

Similar sentiments concerning father and son are expressed in the story itself as well, in particular in connection with the *yuvarāja* Candrāpīḍa and his father. After being anointed as *yuvarāja* Candrāpīḍa is sent out on a *dīgviyāya*, “conquest of the quartes.” In this connection, however, it is said that he is merely stepping in the footsteps of his father: “After your inauguration, begin conquest of the directions, and in the course of your marches again subdue the earth with its ornament of seven continents, as it was once conquered by your father.”<sup>9</sup> The same idea is met with again somewhat later, where it is said that during the *abhiṣeka* royal glory passed on to Candrāpīḍa without leaving his father Tārāpīḍa.<sup>10</sup> Still later Candrāpīḍa's friend Vaiśampāyana asks him what has actually been left by his father for him to conquer.<sup>11</sup>

With all this it is to be noted that the name of Bāṇa's son is nowhere mentioned, neither in the introduction to the *pūrvabhāga* nor in that to the *uttarabhāga*. Since Bühler's time the son is known as Bhaṭṭa Bhūṣaṇa, though where Bühler has found this information is not clear.<sup>12</sup> Apart from that, an attempt has been made to abstract his name from a verse in Dhanapālāś *Tilakamañjarī*, in which apparently a pun is made on the name Bāṇa, which also means “arrow,” and the tribal name Pulind(h)ra, which is supposed to be the name of the son.<sup>13</sup> The same name is indeed found in some manuscripts as well, which have Bhaṭṭa Pulina or Pulinda.<sup>14</sup> The son's anonymity might be a matter of modesty on the son's part, or, to recycle an image used by the son himself, the Ganges does not change its name after smaller rivers have poured their water into it. However, if Bāṇa's intention was to give his son a good start in life as a poet, it was not very practical of him not to mention his son by name.<sup>15</sup>

9. Kādambarī, p. 109: *abhiṣekānantaram ca pūrvabhāgavijayāḥ paribhrāman vijitām api tava pitrā sapradāpabhūṣitaṁ punar vijeyasva vasaṇḍharām* (§ 109). The English translation is by Layne 1991, 112.

10. Kādambarī, p. 110: *anuṣācayāpi tānāpīḍaṁ tatkaṣṇameva saṅkavāṇma vājālakṣmīḥ* (§111).

11. Kādambarī, p. 117: *yuvarāja kiṁ na jitaṁ devena mahārājādhrājeṇa tānāpīḍeṇa yoj jesyasi* (§ 122).

12. See Scharpé 1937, 20.

13. Scharpé 1937: 18.

*kevalo 'pi sphuran bāṇāḥ karoti vimadān kavīn / kiṁ punaḥ kṛpasamudhānapulindmuktasannidhīḥ //*

14. Scharpé 1937, 19.

15. As such the situation in the *Kādambarī* differs markedly from that in the *Anudānukāḥalātā* of Kṣemendra, which was completed by his son Somendra. The latter also wrote the introduction to the text.

Whatever might be the case here, the fact remains that it is strange that the son's name is not mentioned, especially where in the verse-introduction to the *pūrvabhāga* Bāṇa's immediate ancestors are all mentioned by name.

#### E. Breaking the Rules of the Genre

Finally I would like to draw attention to verse 20 of the introduction of the *pūrvabhāga*, and in particular the meaning of the compound *atidvayī* occurring in it. From this verse it would appear that the division of the text into two parts was planned from the very beginning. In the same verse, however, not a word is said about the cause of the division, namely the author's untimely death. Verse 20 (p. 5) reads as follows:

*duvijena tenākṣatakantḥakauṇṭhyayā  
mahāmanomohamālimasānubhaya  
alabdhuvaiddagbhyavilāsamugbhaya  
dhrīyā nibaddheyam atidvayī kathā.*

In the first three *pādas*, Bāṇa is described as an immature poet whose dull choice of words was not yet broken, who was deluded, lacked quick-wittedness, and was naïve in matters of charm. This negative picture of the poet has generally been taken as a trope, contrasting with the positive description given in the fourth *pāda*. Thus, Ridding provides the following translation:

By that Brahman, albeit with a mind keeping even in his unspoken words its original dullness blinded by the darkness of its own utter folly, and simple from having never gained the charm of ready wit, this tale, surpassing the other two, was fashioned, even Kādambarī.<sup>16</sup>

The more recent translation by Layne reads as follows:

By that Twice-born one,  
With his intellect as dull as ever,  
Blinded by the utter darkness of arrogance,  
And naive from a lack of lively cunning,  
This story  
—to which there is no second—  
Was composed.<sup>17</sup>

16. Ridding 1896, 3.

17. Layne 1991, 6.

In her translation of *atidvayī* Riddling follows the commentator Bhānucandra, according to whom the *Kādāmbarī* surpasses (*ati*) the pair (*dvaya*) consisting of the *Bṛhathkathā* and *Vāśavadattā*.<sup>18</sup> According to Riddling *atidvayī* could also be a kind of synonym for *advitīyā*, “without a second,” and this is how the compound is translated by Layne.

As far as I know, the type of compound is otherwise unknown. It would seem that we are dealing with an *ad hoc* formation here, devised for the occasion. In this connection I would like to note that the word *dvaya* does not only mean “pair” but also, if not regularly, “two-fold, coming in two (parts).”<sup>19</sup> For *atidvayī kathā* this should result in a translation something like “a story which in an *ati*-way is divided into two.” As to the word *ati*, it might refer to the highly exceptional circumstances, namely the author's death, which caused the division of the text. However, this does not really fit the context of the verse. On the basis of the first three *pādas* we would expect a reference to some literary blunder. Another possibility therefore is that *ati* refers to the breach of the literary convention involved in the division (like *ati* in *atipāta*). In this connection we should keep in mind that Subandhu's *Vāśavadattā*, which probably was the very work which Bāṇa tried to emulate in his *Kādāmbarī*, presents one long, continuous story, uninterrupted by any division into chapters.<sup>20</sup> Note also the early *alamkārika* Bhāmaha, according to whom the *ākhyāyikā* is divided into *ucchvāsa*s, which in the given context meant that the *kathā*, to which type the *Vāśavadattā* as well as the *Kādāmbarī* belong, was not divided in this way.<sup>21</sup> Thus, in verse 20 it is said that in the *Kādāmbarī* the author has produced a work, which goes against the rule of the genre by being divided into two parts.

If the interpretation of the compound *atidvayī* given just now is correct it would indeed appear that the division of the text was indeed planned from the very beginning.<sup>22</sup> However, it is a strange if not absurd experience to find out later that the cause of the division is the author's death. After all the points

discussed above one may ask if the author's death is not a literary fabrication, the purpose of which was to divide the text into two in a convincing way. In this connection it should be noted that there is evidence to suggest that for a work to be recognized as written by Bāṇa it should indeed have been divided into two parts. However, before presenting this evidence, I would like to return briefly to the verse introductions to the *pūrvabhāga* and *uttarabhāga*.

#### F. Bāṇa's Genealogy

As has already been noted by other scholars, there is a discrepancy between Bāṇa's genealogy in the introductory verses of the *Kādāmbarī* and the one provided in the first *ucchvāsa* in his *Harsacarita*.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the *Harsacarita* starts with Kubera, born in the family of the Vātsyāyanas. This Kubera had four sons, who included Pāsupata. This Pāsupata had a son Arthapati, who, in turn, had eleven sons. Bāṇa was the son of one of these eleven, namely Citrabhānu. In the *Kādāmbarī* one generation—that of Pāsupata—is skipped and Arthapati is made into Kubera's son. The result of the abridgement is interesting, consisting as it does of “ego” plus three ancestors. As such it is reminiscent of the genealogies often found in inscriptions, which are ultimately grafted on the *śvādāha* ritual.<sup>24</sup> The motive behind the abridgement might well have been to make the genealogy agree with this pattern. If so, this would suggest that we might be dealing with a later addition to the text, made by someone who was sufficiently far removed from the persons concerned to have no qualms about a little deceit. The question then arises if this also affects the status of the verse introduction of the *uttarabhāga*, in which we are informed that the author had died while writing the text. On the other hand, if the intention of the addition was to pass off, or to reaffirm, the *Kādāmbarī* as a work by the same Bāṇa who wrote the *Harsacarita*, would the person responsible for it not have been extra careful in sticking exactly to the genealogy as presented in the *Harsacarita*?

Given this uncertainty about the authenticity of the verse introductions to the *Kādāmbarī* we should reckon with the possibility that the division of the text

verse and the lack of piety towards Bāṇa emanating from it cannot hail from the same son who next, ostensibly as a tribute to his father, completed the text. Coming from Bāṇa himself the same words can be read as feigned modesty or even a cynical anticipation of imagined criticism. Apart from that, as I have tried to show earlier, there is too much coincidence involved in the author's death to accept it as a fact.

23. Scharpé 1937, 14. Scharpé refers to P. Peterson, the first editor of the text.

24. See Triken 2001c, 136.

18. See Hucksredt 1985, 156, note 5. For all we know, the *dvaya* “pair” might also refer to Bāṇa's own two works, the *Harsacarita* and the *Caṇḍīsataka*, which form a “pair” in the sense that they are written by the same author.

19. See *trayī vāhyā* for the Veda.

20. The relationship between Subandhu's *Vāśavadattā* and Bāṇa's *Kādāmbarī* has been investigated by Cartellieri 1887; Thomas 1898; Mankowski 1900 and 1902; and Scharpé 1937, 60–71.

21. See Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaalankāra* I 25. Note, however, that according to Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa* I 26 the division into *ucchvāsa*s is occasionally (*prasaṅgena*) also found in *kathā*s. On the *kathā-ākhyāyikā* controversy, see, for example, De 1924.

22. It is theoretically possible that verse 20 of the introduction to the *pūrvabhāga* had been written and added to the text only after the completion of the text by the son. However, it is highly unlikely that the verse had indeed been composed by the son. The utterly critical tone of the

into two parts is not original but something introduced only secondarily.<sup>25</sup> However, it should be mentioned here that for the question as to what might have been the intention of the division it probably does not really make a difference whether it was introduced by the author himself or by some later editor.

#### G. Bāṇa's Trademark

Above, it has been suggested that *ati* in *atidūvayī* might refer to the breach of the tradition involved in the division of the *Kādambarī* into two parts. Otherwise, if not unexpected, the division is at least exceptional, being caused by the author's death. Something like this, but definitely less dramatic, is found in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* as well. The latter text is formally divided into eight chapters, or *ucchvāsas*. However, apart from this division there is another division into two parts. Typically (that is, typically for Bāṇa) this division cuts through the one into *ucchvāsas* as it takes place somewhere in the middle of an *ucchvāsā*, in case the third. Thus, as already indicated above, the first part of the *Harṣacarita* consists of the so-called autobiography of the author. The story of King Harṣa's adventures starts only somewhere in the middle of the third *ucchvāsā* with the words *śrīyajātām, asti...*<sup>26</sup> Apparently compositions by Bāṇa were in some striking or irregular way divided into two parts. In fact, something similar may be found with other authors as well, who likewise seem to have developed special features, which as such have come to serve as their signatures. In this connection I suggest that we have a quick look at the works of some of the early *kāvya* authors.

A clear instance of the phenomenon I referred to just now is found in the works of Harṣa. In his *Priyadarśikā* the eponymous heroine gets lost on her way to King Udayana, to whom she is to be married. The girl is "found" in a forest and brought to Udayana's court where she is living for some time without anybody realizing who she actually is. To the courtiers she is known as Aranyikā after the forest (*aranya*) where she was found. The plot of Harṣa's *Ratnāvalī* is almost identical. In this play, however, the girl has suffered shipwreck on the sea (*saagara*). Accordingly, she is known by the name Sāgarikā. Harṣa's third play, the *Nāgānanda*, is completely different from the two referred to just now, which,

25. In that case, however, the question might arise why the *Caṇḍīśātaka*, which is generally attributed to Bāṇa, has not been divided into two parts as well.

26. *Harṣacarita*, p. 94.

like Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra*, represent the so-called *nāṭikā* type of play. The plot of the *Nāgānanda* is also found in Candragomin's play, the *Lokānanda*.<sup>27</sup> One of the changes brought about by Harṣa compared to his predecessor's *Lokānanda* concerns the name of the protagonist. In the *Lokānanda* he is called Manicūḍa after the crest-jewel (*cūḍamāni*) he is born with.<sup>28</sup> Though the same crest-jewel plays an important role in the *Nāgānanda* as well, in that version the hero is called Jimūtavāhana, or "He who rides the clouds." The reason behind the change of the name may be found in the story itself. For, after Jimūtavāhana had substituted himself for someone else as a victim at a human sacrifice, he is carried off into the sky by the bird Garuḍa. So, in the same way as in the *Priyadarśikā* and *Ratnāvalī* the heroines are renamed Aranyikā and Sāgarikā after the settings in which they had disappeared, a forest and the sea respectively, the protagonist of the *Nāgānanda* is named Jimūtavāhana after the fact that he had disappeared into the sky.<sup>29</sup>

Harṣa's three plays thus appear to share a similar development in their stories. Apparently, this is not something coincidental but something intended, as becomes clear from the names given to the protagonists. We seem to have to do with a kind of signature of the author.

Something like this is to be found in the three plays by Bhavabhūti as well. His *Mahāvīracarita* and *Uttaravīracarita*, taken together, cover the complete *Rāmāyaṇa*, namely books 1–6 and the *Uttarakāṇḍa* respectively. An important element in both plays is Sītā's absence. In the *Mahāvīracarita* she is kidnapped by Rāvaṇa, and in the *Uttaravīracarita* she is residing in heaven without the knowledge of Rāma, who had been forced to banish her. Interestingly, in Bhavabhūti's third play, the *Mālatīmādhava*, the female protagonist, Mālatī, is kidnapped twice, the first time by the *kāpālika* Aghoraghaṇṭa and the second time by the latter's pupil Kapālakuṇḍalā. As far as the wife's or lover's absences is concerned it is almost as if the two Rāma plays have been compressed in the *Mālatīmādhava*.

And what about Kālidāsa? All but one of the compositions of this author which have come down to us, his *mahākāvya*s, his plays, and his one lyric poem,

27. However, the plot of the *Nāgānanda* does not seem to have been borrowed from the earlier *Lokānanda*. For a source Harṣa himself refers to a *vijyādharaśātaka*; see Zin 2004, 143.

28. After Jimūtavāhana had been carried off into the sky by Garuḍa, his blood-stained crest-fell down into Malayavati's lap. In this way she came to realize that her husband was in serious danger.

29. As argued by Monika Zin, the name Jimūtavāhana in the *Nāgānanda* was probably "invented" by Harṣa and it might well be from this playwright's drama that the name has found its ways into, among other texts, the *Bīhārikāhīmanjari* and *Kābhāsaritāsāgara* (Zin 2004).

are set in a mythic or epic world and one way or the other deal with the effects of a curse.<sup>30</sup> The only exception is the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, which is set in a historical period, tells a realistic story and does not refer to a curse. Typically, in the prologue this play is expressly said to be the work of a contemporary (*varṭamāna*) poet. At the same time, in the *Mālavikāgnimitra* we have a play within a play, which as such, we may assume, is supposed to represent the “classical” genre. It may not be surprising to note that this so-called *garbhāṅka* deals with the story of Śarmiṣṭhā, which is borrowed from the *Mahābhārata* and presents characters whose lives are in a high degree determined by curses.

#### H. Inventing One's Own Death

Each of the above authors seems to have developed his own specialty, which has come to serve as a kind of signature.<sup>31</sup> As suggested above, it might be argued that in the “irregular” division in the *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* we are dealing with this very same phenomenon. Bāna apparently liked to experiment with dividing stories into two.<sup>32</sup>

However, why was in introducing the division in the *Kādambarī* recourse taken to such a dramatic means as the invention of the author's death? I would like to suggest that he simply did not have a real, good alternative. In trying to make this clear I would like to turn to the *Harṣacarita* first. As already noted above, this text is basically about storytelling, or rather about a poet relating a king's adventures. In fact, the king's adventures proved to be too many for one session of storytelling. The story ends with the appearance of the evening and the rising of the moon. The audience will have to wait till the next morning for the story to be continued. As a result the main purpose of the king's campaign, namely the killing of the king of Gauḍa, remains untold. However, we seem to be dealing with a literary ploy here. In any case, in this way we, the readers, are

30. Tietken 2001a.

31. In this connection it might be interesting to refer to Aśvaghoṣa as well, whose *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda*, the only two works which have been preserved completely, are connected in much the same way as the works discussed earlier. Thus, in the *Buddhacarita* the Buddha's qualms about a life in the ordinary world are triggered by the ugly and distressing sight of an old, a sick and a dead man. In the *Saundarananda*, I would say almost by contrast, the Buddha's brother's conversion is set in motion after he has discovered that there are women even more beautiful than his own wife. His conclusion is: why chase after beauty if there always is someone or something more beautiful than what one has.

32. As far as I could make out, this is, however, not the case in the *Caṅgīśāntaka* attributed to Bāna.

made to believe that Harṣa was such a great king that his success in this military campaign was self-evident and did not need to be spelled out.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to the *Harṣacarita*, in the *Kādambarī* Bāna is relegated to the role of external narrator. He had no role in the story and could not legitimately interfere in its course. All he could do was to interrupt the writing down of the story. One of the ways, if not the only way open to him was to invent his death, after which the task fell to his son and literary heir.

To invent one's own death may be quite a dramatic gesture. On the other hand, one may ask how personal all these details about Bāna actually are? In order to try and find this out we might turn to the story, or history, of Harṣa in the *Harṣacarita* and ask how “personal” this story actually is. For one thing, the story of Harṣa is not finished. It breaks off before the king begins what is the main purpose of his military campaign, namely the killing of the king of Gauḍa. However, as suggested above, we might be dealing with a literary ploy here, the purpose of which was to praise Harṣa. It seems that in the *Harṣacarita* the historical and the personal facts are sacrificed to a literary trope. As I have argued elsewhere, in the *Harṣacarita* Harṣa is indeed depicted as an actor in a dynastic myth rather than as a historical person.<sup>34</sup> Could Bāna's so-called autobiography at the beginning of the *Harṣacarita* not be some kind of literary topos as well?<sup>35</sup> In any case, it has developed into a standard feature of the genre, as is shown by the later *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, the final chapter of which relates how the poet Bīlhaṇa came to be connected with Vikramāditya's court. If we are indeed dealing with a kind of standard feature of the genre, this would reduce the personal element in the autobiography. This finding concerning Bāna's *Harṣacarita* might also affect the story of his death in the *Kādambarī*. Are we dealing with a real incident from the personal life of the author here or indeed merely with a fabrication introduced to link the text with the *Harṣacarita*? For a later editor it might not have been difficult to invent the author's death, as he dealt with an audience which he could make believe anything as long as it was convincing or consistent with what they already knew about the author. For Bāna himself or his son it is more difficult. One cannot fool one's colleagues and contemporaries. But how can we be so certain that the author of the *Kādambarī* or the *Harṣacarita* was indeed

33. See Tietken 2001b. The audience will have to wait till the next morning for the story to be continued. Note in this connection that Bāna has begun his storytelling in the first place only the next morning, see Cowell and Thomas 1963, 78–79 and 260.

34. Tietken 2001b, esp. p. 200.

35. As to Bāna's problematic relationship with Harṣa, note that the *Bīlhaṅkathā*, the archetypal *kaṭhā*, was at first rejected by the Śatavāhana king as well.

writing with a concrete audience in mind? Could we not be dealing with an author working at home and on his own, aiming at a more or less abstract reading public? If Bāna's death in the *Kādambarī* is a literary fabrication, this would indeed most likely have been the case.<sup>36</sup>

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36. The same may be the case with Śūdraka, the author of the *Mrechakatika*, who in the prologue of the play, which is supposedly written by himself, is said to be dead.



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