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**Book review: G.Cardona.Recent research in Paninian studies.Delhi,1999**

Kulikov, L.I.

**Citation**

Kulikov, L. I. (2004). Book review: G.Cardona.Recent research in Paninian studies.Delhi,1999. *Canadian Journal Of Linguistics*, 49. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/15681>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

**George Cardona.** *Recent Research in Pāṇinian Studies.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 1999. Pp. xi + 371. Rs. 395 [approx. \$9.00] (hardcover).

Reviewed by Leonid Kulikov, *University of Nijmegen*

The book under review surveys the studies on Pāṇini, a great Old Indian grammarian (around 600–500 B.C.), one of the most outstanding linguists who ever lived, whose contribution to language science cannot be overestimated. His grammatical treatise *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (lit. ‘consisting of eight chapters/books’), representing in a very condensed form the rules of the Sanskrit grammar, is an impressive specimen of the use of several sophisticated descriptive techniques, anticipating a number of theoretical notions (such as zero morpheme, semantic roles, etc.), which modern linguistics has only developed in the last century. No wonder Pāṇini’s work constantly draws the attention of scholars both in and outside India, and not only that of Sanskritists, so that Pāṇinian studies can be said to represent a solid separate branch of research on the history and theory of linguistics.

The author of this survey, the American linguist George Cardona (GC), is one of the most authoritative modern Pāṇinian scholars, who happily combines the achievements of

modern Western linguistics with the indigenous tradition of the study of Pāṇini's grammar, preserved in India for two and a half thousand years, as attested in detailed commentaries and sub-commentaries on Aṣṭādhyāyī.

Cardona's book continues his earlier survey of Pāṇinian studies (1976), surveying the research in the field over the last quarter of the twentieth century (1976–1997) and essentially reproducing the scheme of the 1976 book. It divides into two large parts, an extensive bibliography (pp. 7–93) and the survey properly speaking (pp. 97–322). The bibliography not only covers the period under survey (1976–1997), but also includes almost thirty forthcoming works by GC himself and by a few other Indologists (A.N. Aklujkar, M.M. Deshpande, J.E.M. Houben).

Chapter 1 of the survey deals with the histories of Sanskrit grammar (that is, of the studies on Sanskrit as well as, to some extent, on the descendant Middle Indo-Aryan languages), surveys and bibliographies. The most extensive chapter, Chapter 2 (pp. 106–240), is devoted to the works of the three most eminent figures in Old Indian linguistics, to Pāṇini himself, as well as to his two main commentators: Kātyāyana, who commented on Aṣṭādhyāyī in the form of short notes (*vārttikas*); and Patañjali, the author of an extensive treatise Mahābhāṣya (lit. 'Great Comment'), commenting both on Pāṇini and Kātyāyana. Section 2.1 discusses studies of Pāṇini and Kātyāyana, starting with editions and textological works on Pāṇini and his hypothetical predecessors, the system of rules of the Aṣṭādhyāyī and Pāṇinian metalanguage. The survey of the studies on the Pāṇinian description of the various language levels is arranged according to the traditional hierarchy: phonology and morphophonemics, morphology, syntax and semantics. The much shorter Chapter 3 deals with later commentaries. Chapter 4 concentrates on treatises on semantics and philosophy of grammar. There are also two very short chapters: 5 "Pāṇinian studies on cognitive studies and technology" and 6 "Literary works illustrating grammatical rules". Finally, in the concluding half-page Chapter 7 "A summary of trends", GC determines one of the main tendencies in the studies of Old Indian grammar as "an ever increasing interest in works on semantics and philosophy of grammar" (p. 275) and concludes that the history of the Indian grammatical tradition constantly draws the attention of numerous scholars in all parts of the world. The book closes with an index of names and an index of primary sources (passages from Old Indian texts quoted and discussed) conveniently supplemented with an index of passages quoted and discussed in Cardona (1976).

The coverage of the surveyed works is quite large: the bibliography counts almost 1000 titles, although not all of them are of course dealt with in an equally detailed way. Some books and articles which GC considers most important become the subject of detailed discussion, while some others are only briefly mentioned in the notes. In many cases GC's book is more than mere survey, rather approximating a review, which contains extensive commentaries, criticism and evidence advocating GC's own position. Thus, GC devotes 6 pages (pp. 99–104) to a discussion of Bronkhorst's major study on the history of Pāṇinian grammar after Patañjali (1983) and 11 pages (pp. 254–265) to a detailed polemic with J. Houben (1998 = forthcoming-a in GC's bibliography), dealing with the Old Indian grammarian Bharṭṛhari. In fact, this makes GC's book both a survey and a collection of reviews.

To conclude this review, I will touch upon an important theoretical issue which seems to have received little attention from Pāṇinian scholars. What strikes a non-Pāṇinian linguist (as is the case with the reviewer) who reads works on Pāṇinian and other Old Indian

grammatical descriptions is the lack of interest in the question of how exactly the description of Pāṇini and other Sanskrit grammarians matches with the real linguistic evidence available from Sanskrit (Vedic) texts. In other words, we observe a remarkable gap between the studies on Pāṇini and linguistic studies on Sanskrit, which sometimes may even produce the impression that these two domains of research have different subjects. The rules formulated by Pāṇini, Patañjali and other grammarians are discussed at length as an autonomous and self-sufficient construction, with (almost) no comparison with the real evidence from Sanskrit texts.

It was W.D. Whitney, one of the greatest linguists and Sanskritists of the nineteenth century, who most explicitly expressed skepticism concerning the linguistic reality of the Pāṇinian Sanskrit, in his seminal article (1884). On the basis of a study of the verbal roots mentioned in the Pāṇinian root list (Dhātupāṭha), but not attested in Sanskrit texts, as well as of the morphological formations which are taught by Pāṇini, but do not occur in texts either, he has concluded that “the grammarians’ Sanskrit, as distinguished from them [= forms of Vedic and post-Vedic Sanskrit – LK], is a thing of grammatical rule merely, having never had any real existence as a language, and being on the whole unknown in practice to even the most modern pandits [i.e., traditional Indian scholars – LK]” (Whitney 1884:282, 1971:290). The Whitneyan extreme position has been repeatedly criticised by later scholars, including Cardona (1976:238ff). By now, it has become the *communis opinio* that the language described by Pāṇini approximates to the middle and late Vedic Sanskrit (also known as the language of the Vedic prose), attested in the Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras (the oldest can probably be dated to the second half of the first millennium BC). This view, widely shared by many modern Sanskritists, essentially goes back to the authoritative opinion formulated by B. Liebich (1891:47 et passim), responding to Whitney 1884 and based on the studies by Liebich himself as well as by some other scholars on the use of cases in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa and other Vedic prose texts.<sup>1</sup> The same opinion is advocated in the book under review (pp. 215-216). GC represents an extreme opposition to Whitney’s skepticism. Not only does he believe that Pāṇinian Sanskrit is essentially identical with that attested in the Brāhmaṇas, he also severely criticises Joshi’s (1989:274) opinion (shared by many modern Sanskritists) that “Sanskrit [had] stopped being a generally spoken language before 600 or 700 B.C.”. GC does not doubt “that Pāṇini describes a living language which at his time and in his area was used for ordinary discourse” and that “this language continued to be used currently in certain kinds of discourse at the times of Kātyāyana and Patañjali” (p. 274). Unfortunately (and like many other Pāṇinian scholars), when discussing particular forms and constructions prescribed by Pāṇini, Patañjali and other grammarians, GC is (almost) never concerned with the question of whether these

<sup>1</sup>This criticism did not shake Whitney’s skeptical attitude towards the linguistic reality of Pāṇinian Sanskrit. Responding to Liebich (1891), as well to some other recent studies on Pāṇini, he admitted that “there is a good degree of general agreement” in syntax between the Brāhmaṇa language and Pāṇinian Sanskrit and that “[a]longside of this agreement are met with just the differences that could not fail to appear: constructions in the [Aitareya-]Brāhmaṇa that are unnoticed in Pāṇini, as they are wanting in classical Sanskrit; and especially a host of details in Pāṇini of which the Brāhmaṇa exhibits no examples” (Whitney 1893:172). To summarise the results of Liebich’s study, “it is simply that Pāṇini has been tested by a bit of real language, and the test has turned out not to his disadvantage” (p. 173).

forms and constructions have in fact occurred in texts, which is often not the case. One example will suffice: on pp. 102–104, in a detailed discussion of Bronkhorst’s interpretation of a Pāṇinian rule and Patañjali’s commentary on it, he writes: “[i]n the language of Patañjali’s time and place, the following were also possible: ... *srjyate mālām* ‘... is respectfully making a garland’[;] ... *yuḥyate brahmacārī yogam* ‘The brahmacārin attains yoga’”. A detailed study of the Vedic present tense formations with the suffix *-ya-* reveals, however, that such forms and constructions are absolutely impossible in Vedic prose: we only find passives (*srjyate* ‘is created’, *yuḥyate* ‘is performed’), but not transitives with this suffix. Examples of such unattested (and fairly strange) forms and constructions (some of which have been noticed already by Whitney) are easy to multiply. The fact that some of them can be found in texts of the classical (post-Vedic) period is of no demonstrative value for our problem, since it was exactly under the uncontested authority of the Pāṇinian grammar that these texts have been created—anything taught by Pāṇini (or, to some extent, by later grammarians) was considered “good Sanskrit”.

Obviously, for a definitive answer to the question about what Pāṇinian or Patañjali’s Sanskrit actually was, we have to thoroughly check each of their rules against the evidence from different Vedic and (early) post-Vedic texts in order to find the closest approximation (if any!) to the Pāṇinian inventory of forms and constructions. This task still remains a desideratum.

The weight of the remaining problems and unanswered questions does not of course diminish the importance and value of the book under review. GC’s survey conveniently summarises the relevant literature, being rich in detailed discussion as well as in new evidence and argumentation, which the author furnishes when advocating his own position (as, for instance, in his criticism of the above-mentioned article by Houben). This is an excellent guide to modern Pāṇinian studies, which helps to find the way in the ocean of the indological literature. The book is highly recommended for linguists and should be on the desk of any Sanskritist.

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