Abstract
This paper discusses a series of sūtras of Patañjali’s Yogasūtra, namely 1.10, 1.21–23, and 2.9, in the light of their paraphrase and/or interpretation found in the Dharma Pātañjala (‘Book/System of Patañjali’), an Old Javanese-Sanskrit Śaiva scripture retrieved from a rare West Javanese codex unicus dated ca. 1450 AD.

Besides a philosophical exposition of the tenets of a form of Śaiva Siddhānta, the Dharma Pātañjala contains a long presentation of the yoga system that apparently follows the first three chapters of Patañjali’s Yogasūtra, either interweaving Sanskrit excerpts from an untraced versified version of the latter text with an Old Javanese commentary, or directly rendering into Old Javanese what appears to be an original Sanskrit commentary. Although the Old Javanese prose often bears a strong resemblance with the arrangement and formulation of the topics treated in the Yogasūtrabhāṣya, it diverges from that commentary in several respects. The Dharma Pātañjala often presents specific doctrinal details that are found in other (sub)commentaries or in the Arabic rendering of the sūtras-cum-commentary composed by al-Bīrūnī before 1030 AD, or adds original elements that are unattested elsewhere. The testimony of the Dharma Pātañjala turns out to be useful in order to solve some of the dilemmas posed by the selected sūtras. It may also help us to better understand the textual cultural transmission and cultural reception of Patañjali’s work in both South and Southeast Asia, for its author, rather than freely borrowing from different Sanskrit commentaries, appear to have drawn upon an as yet unidentified, and possibly lost, ‘common source’.

Keywords Yogasūtra · Yogasūtrabhāṣya · Patañjali · Dharma Pātañjala · Old Javanese · al-Bīrūnī
Introduction

This paper discusses a series of problematic sūtras of Patañjali’s Yogasūtra, namely 1.10, 1.21–23, and 2.9, in the light of the paraphrase and/or commentary thereof found in the Dharma Pātañjala, an Old Javanese-Sanskrit Śaiva scripture of uncertain date retrieved from a West Javanese palm-leaf codex unicus last copied in 1467 AD.¹

The Dharma Pātañjala, arranged in the form of a dialogue between the Lord Śiva (bhatāra) and his son Kumāra, presents a detailed exposition of the doctrinal and philosophical tenets of an Indo-Javanese form of Śaiva Siddhānta. Yet it devotes a long section (ca. one third of its length) to Pātañjala yoga, thereby providing the unique testimony for the knowledge of this system in premodern insular Southeast Asia. This yoga section, which the text calls Yogapāda, apparently follows the first three chapters of the Yogasūtra, either interweaving a few Sanskrit ślokas from an untraced versified recension of the sūtras with an Old Javanese commentary, or directly rendering into Old Javanese what might have been a likewise unknown Sanskrit commentary. Although the prose section often bears a strong resemblance with the arrangement and formulation of the topics treated in the Yogasūtrabhāṣya,² it diverges from that commentary in several respects, either presenting specific doctrinal details that are found in other (sub-)commentaries, including the Arabic rendering of the sūtras-cum-commentary composed by al-Bīrūnī before 1030 AD, or adding seemingly original elements that are as yet unattested elsewhere. Being influenced by theistic undertones, and imbued with a Śaiva (Tantric) ideology, the Dharma Pātañjala aims at attuning Pātañjala yoga (and philosophy) to Śaiva yoga (and philosophy).

While I have already compared the yoga section of the Dharma Pātañjala to the Yogasūtra and the Bhāṣya in another study (Acri 2011a), here I would like to single out a few selected sūtras to discuss them in greater detail. What makes these sūtras significant is mainly the discrepancy between their prima facie meaning and the interpretation they are made object of in the Yogasūtrabhāṣya. Being arguably based upon an as yet unidentified Sanskrit exegetical tradition on the Yogasūtra, the testimony of the Dharma Pātañjala allows us to read these sūtras from a fresh perspective. In so doing, the Old Javanese text may provide us with new insights into the textual transmission and cultural reception of Patañjali’s work both within and without the boundaries of South Asia.

¹ The codex of the Dharma Pātañjala, now kept in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek (MS Schoemann I 21, 89 leaves), has been edited, translated into English and studied by myself (cf. Acri 2011a); passages quoted here refer to the page and line numbers used in my edition. A discussion of the title of the text, meaning either (or both) ‘Book/System of Patañjali’ (referring to the semi-historical Sanskrit author Patañjali) or ‘Book/System of Pātañjala’ (referring to the divine character Patañjala, the probable Javanese alter-ego of the Pāṣupata master known in South Asian Sanskrit sources as Lakulīsa), may be found in Acri (2011a, pp. 16–17, 2011b, pp. 224–226).

² Here I will simply call it Bhāṣya. Philological and interpretive work by Bronkhorst (1985) and Maas (2006, 2009) has demonstrated that the ‘original’ denomination of the Yogasūtra, which formed an inseparable whole with the embedded Bhāṣya (traditionally, yet fictitiously, attributed to Vyāsa), was Pātañjalyogasāstra. I concur with Bronkhorst and Maas in attributing the authorship of the Bhāṣya to the same author—be it Vindhyavāsin or Patañjali—who brought a pre-existing corpus of sūtras together in the form we know them.