The earliest textual attestation of ‘dharmaśāstra’ and more:  
An analysis of chronology in ‘A Dharma Reader’

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Abstract

Which is the earliest extant textual attestation of the word ‘dharmaśāstra’? Is the birth of the Dharmaśāstra genre causally linked, and incontrovertibly indebted, to the Buddha and emperor Aśoka? Patrick Olivelle’s 2017 book ‘A Dharma Reader - Classical Indian Law’\(^1\) contains statements that appear to be pointed answers to the above questions, a pointedness that I find pregnant with serious revisionist implications of profound consequence not just to the textual history of the term ‘dharmaśāstra’ and the origins of the Dharmaśāstra genre but also to the history of the idea of Dharma itself and perhaps to some people of those traditions in which Dharma is seen as Sanātana. In this paper, I foreground aforementioned statements of Olivelle (who has been hailed by Dominik Wujastyk as the world’s leading authority on the history of Indian dharma), delineate some of their revisionist implications and present a critical analysis of some of his reasoning and conclusions thereof. In doing so, a case is made for the need to pay attention to attempts at altering chronology, particularly those that enable tendentious attributions through imagined cause-and-effect hypotheses accompanied by sweeping consequences.

**Keywords:** Dharma, dharmaśāstra, dharmasūtra, Gautama, Chronology, Semantic history


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I Background

In *An analysis of some aspects of 'Chronology' in 'The Early Upaniṣads' and some observations of consequence to the Global History of Philosophy before c. 500 BCE*, I had instantiated at least four types of issues in Dr. Olivelle’s *The Early Upaniṣads*:

1) TYPE 1 issue: internal inconsistency in his chronological framework {pp. 1-7}
2) TYPE 2 issue: insufficiently substantiated assertions {Table 1}
3) TYPE 3 issue: incomplete translation {Table 3, row 19}
4) TYPE 4 issue: contentious translations {Footnote 19}

If even one of the above four is robust, and given Dr. Olivelle’s pedigree, the fact that these issues have surfaced nearly 22 years after *The Early Upaniṣads* was first published is, to put it mildly, disconcerting. Such being the case, that the analysis in this paper comes within 4 years of the publication of *A Dharma Reader - Classical Indian Law* (ADR henceforth) is, at best, an extremely thin but ultimately only a desperate consolation, if it is one at all. Before getting straight to the questions in the abstract, it does not at all seem out of context to note, as background, some of the endorsements of *ADR* and Dr. Olivelle:

“Only Patrick Olivelle's unparalleled erudition could have assembled such an amazing range of dharma texts and commentaries, ranging from the most basic to the most esoteric. The translations are clear and vivid, and the more obscure points are illuminated by full and explicit introductions and notes. Particularly valuable is the attention paid to the legal aspect of dharma and to its history in Indian law. A perfect complement to Olivelle's definitive translations of the major dharma texts, this will be an essential volume in the library of every Sanskritist or student of Indian religion or law.

**Wendy Doniger, author of The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth**

*A Dharma Reader* is an outstanding and innovative work from the world's leading authority on the history of Indian dharma.

**Dominik Wujastyk, University of Alberta**

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2 Dr. Olivelle’s biography and CV, as found on the website of The University of Texas at Austin can be accessed from here: [https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/asianstudies/faculty/olivelle](https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/asianstudies/faculty/olivelle). Accessed on Nov 10 2020.

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A Dharma Reader is peerless because it presents more than just basic texts in the tradition. It provides nuance and depth that reveal the sophistication and cogency of India's intellectual history in ways that no previous work has done.

Donald R. Davis, University of Texas at Austin

For students of Indian law, religion, ethics, politics, and social propriety, the matter of dharma is everywhere. Now, at last, one does not have to go everywhere to ascertain its many meanings or the intricate textures of its theorization over time. This volume is a massive contribution to a field in which Olivelle's reputation is no less massive.

Jack Hawley, author of A Storm of Songs: India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement

With his characteristic lucidity and verve, Olivelle leads us through nearly two millennia of lively scholastic debates in multiple genres on central issues of Classical Indian law, from the most abstract and sweeping—the sources of law: what makes law law—to the most minute and practical—legal procedure and the conduct of courts. His detailed introduction and his illuminating headnotes to the source types and to individual texts deftly guide even the neophyte through complex intellectual tangles and have much to teach even the expert.

Stephanie W. Jamison, Distinguished Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures and of Indo-European Studies, University of California, Los Angeles

This book would serve well for courses on comparative legal study, Hindu religion and politics, and would help interested general readers to understand “dharma”—one of the most complex terms in Hindu tradition.

Reading Religion

No one is better qualified to write a summa on Dharmaśāstra than Patrick Olivelle . . . It is difficult to overstate the value of this work, for all who seek to connect with the intellectual debates over dharma in ancient India.


A precious resource for making accessible to non-specialists India’s sophisticated tradition of law and legal thought, spanning antiquity up to about 1200 CE. . . . Olivelle gives us substantial passages, in clear, accurate, original translation, with ample contextualization, thus conveying the trajectory of the tradition and making it fully accessible for comparative studies.

Timothy Lubin, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies

From the most eminent scholar of dharma in South Asian thought comes this magisterial compilation and translation of primary texts from the third century BCE through the medieval period. . . . Highly recommended.

Choice™

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Dr. Olivelle being hailed as the “world’s leading authority on the history of Indian dharma,” as has been done by Dr. Wujastyk, does particularly stand out not only for reasons included in this footnote\(^4\), but also because he is thanked, along with Don Davis, for having read the ‘entire manuscript’ (Olivelle 2017.ix).

**ADR** is presented to its prospective reader as thus:

“Whether defined by family, lineage, caste, professional or religious association, village, or region, India’s diverse groups did settle on a concept of law in classical times. How did they reach this consensus? Was it based on religious grounds or a transcendent source of knowledge? Did it depend on time and place? And what apparatus did communities develop to ensure justice was done, verdicts were fair, and the guilty were punished?

Addressing these questions and more, A Dharma Reader traces the definition, epistemology, procedure, and process of Indian law from the third century B.C.E. to the middle ages. Its breadth captures the centuries-long struggle by Indian thinkers to theorize law in a multiethnic and pluralist society. The volume includes new and accessible translations of key texts, notes that explain the significance and chronology of selections, and a comprehensive introduction that summarizes the development of various disciplines in intellectual-historical terms. It reconstructs the principal disputes of a given discipline, which not only clarifies the arguments but also relays the dynamism of the fight. For those seeking a richer understanding of the political and intellectual origins of a major twenty-first-century power, along with unique insight into the legal interactions among its many groups, this book offers *exceptional detail, historical precision*, and *expository illumination.*”\(^5\) [Emphasis added]

*Exceptional detail. Historical precision. Expository Illumination.* These will be revisited at the end of this analysis, which is intentionally confined to only some aspects of the Introduction\(^6\) for

\(^4\) On March 13 2020, @IIASShimla, the verified Twitter handle of *Indian Institute of Advanced Studies*, had put out a tweet (https://twitter.com/IIASShimla/status/1238414020207464448?s=20) which contained the following: “Dr. Dominique Wujastyk, Participant of the Round-Table on "Rethinking Indology" made the presentation on "Revolutions in Indology…". Incidentally, an item listed by him as a tectonic shift (in a 2017 presentation *Revolutions in Indology*) has been critiqued in Sastry and Kalyanasundaram (2019a).


\(^6\) i. The introduction contains the following sections: LAW AND TRADITION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, THE SEMANTIC HISTORY OF DHARMA, TEXTUAL TRADITION OF THE SCIENCE OF DHARMA, EPSEMOTLOGY OF DHARMA, ACCOUNTING FOR CHANGE, DHARMA AND LEGAL PROCEDURE, THE ORGANIZATION OF TITLES OF LAW, DEFINING AND DELIMITING LAW WHILE ADMINISTERING JUSTICE [Capitalization retained as found in the book].

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now. Let me close this background with the name of the scholar credited by Olivelle for the series to which ADR belongs: Sheldon Pollock⁷.

II Analysis

II.1 Pūrva-pakṣa (Pp.)

I begin this analysis by stating as-is, Olivelle’s statements that appear to me to be pointed answers to the questions in the abstract:

ii. The analysis in this paper is intentionally not a comprehensive treatment of even the Introduction. Outside of what is dealt with in this paper, there are other (at least TYPE 2) issues in the introduction itself. To cite only one example: “Although his text is later than the earliest documents of science of dharma, it nevertheless taps into an alternate intellectual history that probably ran parallel to the one represented by the science of dharma.” (Olivelle 2017:4) [Emphasis added]

⁷ i. For the limited purpose of being part of the background for the analysis in this paper focused on dharmaśāstra, I will cite here only two excerpts, relevant to the remit of this paper, from ADR in which Olivelle invokes Pollock: 1) for a definition of śāstra and 2) Pollock’s view of what the intellectual tradition of dharmaśāstra is--

“Pollock’s several studies on the nature and history of the concept of science have done much to elucidate this uniquely Indian form of discourse.[24] He defines the term: ‘śāstra was thought of generally as a verbal codification of rules, whether of divine or human provenance, for the positive and negative regulation of particular cultural practices” (Pollock 1989a: 18).” (Olivelle 2017:13) [Emphasis added]

“The restriction of the epistemic source of law to the Veda, however, by an elite segment of the population, male Brahman intelligentsia, had much to do with the arrogation and legitimation of power within society. This was carried out principally within the intellectual tradition of the science of dharma which Pollock (2005:57) has called “the explicit program of domination of Sanskrit culture.” (Olivelle 2017:19)

ii. Seen in isolation, Pollock’s above definition of śāstra, which Olivelle has cited, may perhaps seem benign to many, especially to those who may not have engaged substantively with Pollock’s influential and vast scholarship. Śāstra-s Through the Lens of Western Indology - A Response, a proceedings volume (https://infinityfoundationindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/RSS_Vol2.pdf) published in 2018 containing seven papers, digs deeper into his scholarship and foreground several problematics in his treatment of śāstra-s. Western Indology & Its Quest for Power, another proceedings volume from the same set of conferences, containing eight papers (https://infinityfoundationindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/RSS_Vol1-1.pdf), would make for, arguably, the most substantive and voluminous academic critique of use of the lens of ‘Power’ deployed in neoriental academic pursuits, such as Pollock’s, which surfaces in Olivelle’s book when he cites Pollock’s branding of the intellectual tradition of dharmaśāstra as “the explicit program of domination of Sanskrit culture”.

Note: While the above two proceedings volumes (and the 15 papers therein) make for, in my view, relevant background reading, given Pollock’s relevance to ADR, the analysis of this paper is not dependent in any way on the veracity of the methods, arguments, results and conclusions of any of the above 15 papers.

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Pp.1 Statements related to question 1:

“The term dharmasāstra is used for the first time by grammarian Katyayana, who may be assigned to the late third or early second century B.C.E[27], and Patanjali, who wrote a commentary on Katyayana’s work probably in the middle of the second century B.C.E, refers specifically to dharmasūtra, aphoristic tradition on dharma. So, the beginnings of this literary tradition go back to at least the third century B.C.E.” (Olivelle 2017:14) [Emphasis added]

Pp.2 Statements related to question 2:

“More than any of the other ascetic religions, however, it was Buddhism that adopted dharma as the most central concept in its doctrine and ethics. It came to define the substance of what Siddhartha the Buddha, the Enlightened One; it constituted the content of his enlightenment. … The Buddhist dharma in a special way referred to the ethical precepts known as śīla, ten of which pertained to monks and nuns and five to laypeople. The latter consisted of an abstention from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and liquor. It was this dharma, mediated by its appropriation into Buddhism and with deep ethical connotations, that the emperor Asoka (c. 268-233 B.C.E), a convert to and ardent supporter of Buddhism, took up and made the cornerstone of his imperial ideology.[22] … In a series of inscriptions on rocks and exquisitely carved pillars, the earliest examples of writing in India⁹, Asoka articulated an imperial ideology.[23] From the major Asokan inscriptions¹⁰, if we exclude outliers such as the

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8 Note: All reference numbers that appear in ADR have been included as found in the book but within ‘[]’. For example, superscripts ‘9’ & ‘10’, which are footnotes 9 & 10 of this paper, are not found in ADR. They are added by me into the quoted text, to enable more effective contextual referencing and reading.


10 The description of this Youtube video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzHi4xpa3Yc], which is a lecture by Dr. Ashok Aklujkar (Professor Emeritus in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia), includes this:

“Going into the specific details of his own research, Prof. Aklujkar touched upon the subject of the Ashokan major and minor edicts, tried to narrow down the age of these inscriptions by means of the information provided in the edicts as well based on the geographical location of these edicts.”

I add below a transcribed excerpt from the video:

~53:26 “That will be my last point: Yona kings mention gives us the lower limit for these inscriptions. The inscriptions could not have been carved after 320 B.C. or so. They could not have been later than that. Roughly, 300 BC. That is the date for Yona kings, and since they are mentioned, these inscriptions must be coming after them but not far, too far, from them. So, it has to be contemporary in that sense. So, inscriptions belong to one time--we don't have to rely on the mention of Yona kings to decide Ashoka’s dating--there are several other independent pieces that indicate that Ashoka must be older than these inscriptions, and this is also supported by the 14th edict where someone is saying: this is a great area, I have to collect inscriptions from different parts, I am giving you one list, I will make another effort sometime.

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explicitly Buddhist texts and records of donations, it becomes clear that the core of Asoka’s effort consisted in preaching dharma to his subjects and in organizing the state bureaucracy to further his mission. … The centrality that dharma now occupied within both the theologies of the new religions and the imperial ideology of the most powerful emperor of the ancient period made it impossible for the theologians and systematizers within the Brahmanical scholarly community to ignore them any longer. They too made it the central concept of their own theological discourses, presenting the Brahmical way of life, norms of society, ethics, duties of the king, and civil and criminal law as dharma. Further, they started a brand-new genre of literature, dharmaśāstra or treatises on dharma, devoted to this concept. We can only speculate here, but we cannot be far wrong in assigning a date of around the third century B.C.E, perhaps a bit earlier, to the beginning of this genre.” (Olivelle 2017:11-13) [Emphasis mine]

II.2 Uttara-pakṣa (Up.)

Up.1 Volume I of Pandurang Vaman Kane’s five-volume HISTORY OF DHARMASAstra (Ancient and Medieval Religious and Civil Law) begins with a 467-page chapter on the History of Dharmaśāstra. The first 4 sections of this chapter are 1. Meaning of Dharma (pp. 1-4), 2. Sources of Dharma (pp. 4–7), 3. When Dharmaśāstra works were first composed (pp. 8-10) and 4. The Dharmasūtras (pp. 10-12). In section 3, one finds the following:

“The foregoing discussion establishes that works on the dharmaśāstra existed before Yāska\textsuperscript{11} or at least prior to 600-300 B.C. and in the 2nd century B.C. they had attained a position of supreme authority in regulating the conduct of men.” (Kane 1930:9)\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} See Kalyanasundaram (2020a) for a recent analysis of the chronological epoch of Yāśka’s Nirukta

\textsuperscript{12} Sures Chandra Banerji’s view on the relationship between Dharmasūtra-s (DS) and Dharmaśāstra-s:

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“It will be seen later on that the extant dharmasūtras of Gautama, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba certainly belong to the period between 600 to 300 B.C. Gautama[48] speaks of dharmasūstras and the word dharmasāstra occurs in Baudhāyana also (IV.5.9).” (Kane 1930:8)¹³

Kane’s footnote [48], which is attached to Gautama, contains text that can be inferred to be the earliest textual attestation of dharmasāstra, at least according to Kane:

‘तत्त्वं च भविष्यद्रो धर्मशाश्नाण्यकालि उपवदेदः पुराणम् ’ (Kane 1930:8)

Georg Bühler and Olivelle’s translations of the above text appear to be the following:

“His administration of justice (shall be regulated by) the Veda, the Institutes of Sacred Law, The Āṅgas, and the Purāṇa.” (Bühler 1879:234)

“His administration of justice shall be based on the Veda, the Legal Treatises, the Vedic Supplements (A 2.8.10–11), and the Purāṇa.” (Olivelle 1999:97)

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¹. “P.V. Kane has expressed the most balanced view on this controversy[6]. The presence of a large number of verses on legal matters in the extant DS. leads him to postulate the existence of a versified legal literature before the DS.” (Banerji 1962:37)

ii. “From such passages the conclusion seems irresistible that a metrical Dh. S. literature did exist before the DS. came into being, and that the authority of the former was too great to be shaken off by the authors of the latter. Thus, on the question of the relative priority of these two species of literature, the most unbiased view seems to be that metrical Dh. S. literature, meant for the society in general, not acknowledging the authority of any particular Vedic school, existed before the DS. which were composed, at a later date, to regulate the conduct of the people affiliated to different Vedic schools.” (Banerji 1962:39)

¹³ Ram Gopal’s relative chronology would make for a meaningful, more detailed, complementary read:

i. “In light of the above relative chronology discussed above the Sūtras may be classified into the following groups:


(2) The second stratum of Sūtra literature is consisted by the Sankh. S.S., the Sankh G.S., the Bhar. S.S., the Bhar. G.S., the Ap. S.S., the Ap. G.S., the Ap. D.S., the Kat. S.S., the Par. G.S., and the Kath G.S., which are later than the Sūtras placed in group 1

(3) The Drāhyāyaṇa Sūrutasūtra, the Kh. G.S., the Jaim S.S., The Jaim. G.S., The Hir. S.S., the Vaitāna Sūtra, and the Vas. D.S. (sūtra-portion) form the third stratum of Sūtra literature and are later than the Sūtras included in the first two groups.” (Gopal 1959:84)

ii. “In the light of the foregoing discussion it is neither improbable nor fantastic to assign the composition of Sūtra literature to a period between circa 800 B.C. and 500 B.C. These are, however, the lowest limits of the Sūtra period,...” (Gopal 1959:90)

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At this point, particularly given Olivelle’s own translation included above (which clearly betrays his knowledge of the textual attestation of dharmaśāstra in Gautama Dharmasūtra), a question that may naturally arise would be why Olivelle has written that the “...term dharmaśāstra is used for the first time by grammarian Katyayana who may be assigned to the late third or early second century B.C.E...” (Olivelle 2017:14) [seen earlier in p. 6]. At least part, if not the whole, reason for the same can be inferred from the following 14 sentences\(^\text{14}\) that contain Olivelle’s view on the epoch of Gautama and his reasoning for the same:

1. “One piece of internal evidence, I believe, is central to establishing a somewhat reliable chronology of these documents.”
2. “Gautama (4.21) presents the opinion of some according to which yavana is the progeny of a Kṣatriya father and a Śūdra mother.”
3. “Now, yavana is probably the Sanskritized version of the middle-Indic (Prakrit) yona derived from the Old Persian yauna.”
4. “This term refers directly to Ionia, an area conquered by the Persian King Darius I (522–486 BCE), but which became a more general term for Greeks.”
5. “The Archaemenid Empire in the late sixth and early fifth centuries BCE stretched from Greece to the north-western parts of India.”
6. “The question is, when did the Indians come to designate the Greeks or people of Greek origin by the term yavana?”
7. “It certainly could not have been before Darius I, that is, not earlier than about 500 BCE.”
8. “The earliest datable record for the term yona is in the 5th Rock Edict of Asoka of 256 BCE, which comes from the north-western region in what is today Pakistan.”
9. “Pāṇini (4.1.49) uses the term, but his use is merely linguistic and does not necessarily indicate that he knew or was in contact with Greek settlers.[13]”
10. “The case of Gautama is very different. His reference is to a group of people who, according to some experts on Dharma, originated through the mixed union between Kṣatriyas and Śūdras.”
11. “Now, it is very unlikely that he is trying to explain the origin of a people he had merely heard about; he must be referring to a people to whom he and his audience had some connection.”
12. “It is very unlikely that people of Greek origin in sufficient numbers to attract attention would have lived in north-western India before the invasion of Alexander.”
13. “The Edict of Asoka (256 BCE) calls the yavanas a border people.”
14. “I think the use of yavana places the upper limit of Gautama in the middle of the third century BCE.” (Olivelle 1999:xxxii-xxxiii) [Emphasis added]

\(^{14}\) The following 14 sentences from Olivelle (1999:xxxii-xxxiii) occur as a single paragraph without any enumeration. Enumeration has been added by me to facilitate subsequent referencing in the paper.
Sentences 9 and 12 above are clearly critical to Olivelle’s conclusion in 14 and at least those two sentences are, at the very least, seriously contestable for the following reasons:

**Reason 1:** Olivelle, in statement 9 above, argues that the usage of *yavana* in 4.1.49\(^{15}\) of Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī*—इंद्रवर्षणभव्यशिरङ्गगृहिणारण्यवर्षणमाँताचार्याणामानुक—is “merely linguistic” and that it “does not necessarily indicate that he knew or was in contact with Greek settlers.” At least the following questions follow:

R1.Q1: So what if the usage is “merely linguistic”?

R1.Q2: Is it Olivelle’s argument that because it is merely linguistic, it could mean anything other than a term for people of Greek origin?

R1.Q3: Is his answer to R1.Q2 is a yes, or even a maybe, does he have any subsequent textual basis to argue for an alternate interpretation of the term *yavana* in 4.1.49?

R1.Q4: In Pāṇini’s *Gaṇapatha* 4.1.175\(^{16}\), isn’t *yavana* listed along with words which are all, undoubtedly, place names?

Notwithstanding R1.Q1-3, when *Gaṇapatha* 4.1.175 is accounted for, the doubt Olivelle injects, through the phrase “…does not necessarily indicate that he knew…” (in statement 9 above), is, in my view, reasonably addressed with textual basis from the Pāṇinian tradition itself. The other phrase in statement 9—“…or was in contact with Greek settlers”—is not, in my view, a necessary condition at all, to account for the usage of *yavana* as a place name in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 4.1.49.

**Reason 2:** In addition to Reason 1—primarily that *Gaṇapatha* 4.1.175 contains a list of names which are all place-names and includes *yavana* in it—here is a second: V.S. Agarwala has, in a book over 60 years ago (and over 40 years before Olivelle’s book with

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\(^{16}\) [https://ashtadhyayi.com/ganapath/](https://ashtadhyayi.com/ganapath/) Accessed on Nov 10 2020

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the Statement 12 above was published), not only explained how Pāṇini could have known of yavana-s, but also addressed how that could have been possible well before the supposed invasion of Alexander:

“Pāṇini’s reference to Yavana and Yavanānī writing, possesses a distinct value for his date. ... In fact the Yavanas had been known much before Alexander who already found in the Kabul valley a colony of Nysian Greeks. In the Old-Persian Inscriptions of Darius (521-485 B.C.) we first find the term Yauna denoting Ionia and an Ionian, and Yaunā, Ionians, corresponding to Sanskrit Yavanaḥ and Yavanāh (Sukumar Sen, Old Persian Inscriptions, p. 223). Both Ionia and Gandhāra, the home of Pāṇini, formed part of the empire of Darius and also continued under the reign of Xerxes, who recruited to his army a contingent of Indians from Gandhāra in his expedition against Greece about the year 479 B.C. Thus furnished a firsthand opportunity for the Indians to become acquainted with the Greeks even before Alexander. As Prof. Keith has observed: ‘If it is borne in mind that Pāṇini was a native of Gandhāra according to Hiuen Tsiang, a view confirmed by the references in his grammar, it will not seem far-fetched to consider that it was most probably from the older tradition that the Yavanānī was derived.’” (Agarwala 1953:465-6) [Emphasis added]

If, for reasons seen above, a) the doubts injected by Olivelle vide points 9 and 12 can be seen as reasonably resolved and b) the existence of a pre-256 BCE, pre-Alexander-visit attestation of yavana—one that is not just “merely linguistic”—does not have to be impossible, why should Gautama Dharmasūtra necessarily be only after 256 BCE? Why can’t the attestation of yavana in Gautama Dharmasūtra refer to either border people or people just beyond the border despite the difference perceived by Olivelle in the context of its usage in Gautama Dharmasūtra and Pāṇini’s Aṣṭādhyāyī? Following from all the above reasoning, I conclude, at least for now, that the attestation of yavana in Gautama Dharmasūtra need not imply that it has to therefore be dated to a time after Alexander’s visit and after 256 BCE. If Olivelle’s reasoning constitutes the best explanation to place Gautama Dharmasūtra after Alexander and after 256 BCE [Olivelle assigns “Late Second Century B.C.E” (Olivelle 2017:v) to Gautama, which means closer to 100 BCE], and is also the best reasoning to refute Kane’s view, then, in light of the reasons spelt out earlier, I believe Olivelle’s explanation will need to at least be seriously reconsidered and substantially revised, if it not to be discarded that is17.

17 Note that in this Wikipedia entry https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gautama_Dharmasutra for Gautama Dharmasutra, Olivelle’s view is featured quite prominently:

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**Up.2** At this point, let us pause to ask a couple of questions: why is the above chronological analysis even important? Does it matter at all, to have noted the fact that Olivelle has moved Gautama Dharmaśāstra from being pre-256 BCE\(^{18}\) to being post-256 BCE? One could have perhaps understood an argument—that this shift makes little or no difference—if no new revisionist cause-and-effect idea has been theorised that is contingent upon the result of this chronological shift. That, however, is already not the case. For a clear instantiation of a new theorisation that impacts not just the history of the textual attestation of the word dharmaśāstra but, and perhaps more significantly, the history of the idea and evolution of dharma itself, one need not look beyond statements of Olivelle included in *Pp.2* “Statements related to question 2” in page 6 of this paper. The new cause-and-effect can be roughly summarised as follows:

**Cause:** Higher centrality accorded to Dharma in Buddhism, which was propagated widely by Aśoka

**Effect:** Brahmanical scholarly community, as an effect of the above cause, supposedly responded to the above cause by making Dharma more central—as though it was not so before Aśoka—to their own theology and “...started a brand-new genre of literature, dharmaśāstra or treatises on dharma, devoted to this concept.” (Olivelle 2017:14)

When laid out as above, it should become easier to see why a pre-256 BCE Gautama Dharmaśātra, containing the word dharmaśāstra, would be a problem for the above new (invented cause-and-effect) theory that can be seen as, in effect, crediting Buddhism for

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"Kane estimated that *Gautama Dharmaśāstra* dates from approximately 600-400 BCE[11]. However, Olivelle states that this text discusses the progeny of Greeks with the word Yavana, whose arrival and stay in substantial numbers in northwest India is dated after Darius I (~500 BCE). The Yavana are called border people in the Edict of Ashoka (256 BCE), states Olivelle, and given Gautama gives them importance as if they are non-border people, this text is more likely to have been composed after the Ashoka’s Edict, that is after mid 3rd century BCE.”

\(^{18}\) Kane’s pre-256 BCE position appears to be closely followed in Singh (2008), which is a standard reference text for undergraduate and graduate students of History in several Indian universities. In Figure 1.1. of that book (p. 15), Upinder Singh has placed “Dharasutras” in the 600 BCE to 300 BCE range.
the genesis of the entire genre of dharmaśāstra. So, how does one solve this problem posed by pre-256 BCE Gautama Dharmasūra? Simply alter the chronology by shifting it to after 256 BCE on the basis of a thin subjective theory premised on the presence of the word yavana laced with conjectures. The analysis thus far instantiates how changing the chronology can facilitate inventing new, but only imagined, cause-and-effect scenarios which in turn can then enable questionable anachronistic attributions. In the case just discussed, altering the chronology of Gautama Dharmasūra has facilitated attribution of the very genesis of the entire genre of Dharmaśāstra-s—seen for multiple millennia as an upāṃga (upāmga) of the Veda-s—to Buddhist traditions, a view that is perhaps foreign to even the texts of Buddhist traditions!

19 Another chronological revision pertinent to the textual history of the term dharmaśāstra is a new dating, and a new history, of Viṣṇugupta’s Arthaśāstra. While the scope of this paper does not permit engaging in detail with Olivelle’s student Mark McClish’s revisionist views of the chronological history of Viṣṇugupta’s Arthaśāstra, the presence of the word dharmaśāstra in it warrants a very brief treatment. dharmaśāstra is attested at least twice in Viṣṇugupta Arthaśāstra:

1.5.14 पूरणनिःसतमावधीशिकौहरणं धर्मशास्त्रं शस्त्रं पत्रितिहासिः।। (Kangle 1960:7)

“Lore consists of Purāṇas, Reports (ittivṛttta), Narratives (ākhyāyikā), Illustrations (udāharana), Treatise on Law (dharmaśāstra), and Treatises on Success (arthaśāstra).” (Olivelle 2013:70)

3.1.44 संस्था या धर्मशास्त्रः शस्त्रः वा व्याख्याकिन्म।। पद्मिनिः विषयेच धर्माङ्गां विनिलेवतु॥। (Kangle 1960:98)

“When, with regard to a lawsuit, the law treatise contradicts a canon or the conventional treatise,* he should decide the case according Law.” (Olivelle 2013:182)

Now, anyone who reckons that Viṣṇugupta Arthaśāstra dates back at least to (pre-Aśokan) fourth century BCE and is also familiar with at least the above two occurrences of dharmaśāstra in Viṣṇugupta’s Arthaśāstra (AS) may be tempted to invoke these occurrences of dharmaśāstra to question, on textual grounds, the post-256 BCE genesis of Dharmaśāstra genre posed by Olivelle. Such an invitation might be met with a response that the very quest of the date or the author of the AS is “moot” (Olivelle 2013:25) and that one has to “...instead seek dates and authors in the plural[48] for the three major phases of its composition: the sources used by Kauṭilya, the original Kauṭilya composition, and the subsequent Śāstric Redaction” (ibid.). In Olivelle’s scheme of things, 1.5.14 and 3.1.44 might belong to, if my inference is correct, 'The Kauṭilya Recension' which, according to him, was composed “...sometime between 50 and 125 C.E.” (Olivelle 2013:29), therefore not breaching his 256 BCE ceiling. It is also for reasons closely associated with the contents of this footnote that the footnote 6 ii exists. shorturl.at/yLR58 is the first time I had flagged the issue of chronology of Arthaśāstra as found in Olivelle (2013).

20 1.3 पुराणव्यासान्मान्सर्वदर्शायायामिष्टाः।। वेदाः स्त्रानाति विद्यानां धर्मस्य च चुदाँधूस॥। (Setlur 1912:6)

“The Vedas coupled with Puranas, logic, hermeneutics, legal treatises and supplements—these are the fourteen sites of the sciences, and of dharma.” (Olivelle 2019:3) [Note: The Sanskrit text accompanying this translation in Olivelle (2019) appears to deviate from what is observed more commonly, as in Setlur (1912)].

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II.3 An initial analysis of Olivelle’s semantic history of Dharma before Buddha

In this subsection, the last before Conclusion, I analyse aspects of Olivelle’s pre-Buddha narrative about Dharma, found in ADR Introduction’s second subsection THE SEMANTIC HISTORY OF DHARMA (Olivelle 2017:8). Recall here that his new theory about the genesis of Dharmaśāstra genre—“Further, they started a brand-new genre of literature, dharmaśāstra or treatises on dharma, devoted to this concept” (Olivelle 2017:12)—hinges upon what he presents as a new-found centrality for Dharma after new religions (that included Buddhism) and Aśoka’s imperial ideology: “The centrality that dharma now occupied within both the theologies of the new religions and the imperial ideology of the most powerful emperor of the ancient period made it impossible for the theologians and systematizers within the Brahmanical scholarly community to ignore them any longer. They too made it the central concept of their own theological discourses,...” (Olivelle 2017:12) [Emphasis added; Both statements cited just above have already appeared under Pp. 2 in pp. 6-7 above]. In what follows, I demonstrate multiple issues (of multiple types) in the 52 sentences21 (of the subsection THE SEMANTIC HISTORY OF DHARMA) that precede the beginning of the excerpt under Pp. 2. It would be convenient to divide the 52 sentences into 4 groups:

21 This count does not include individual sentences found within citations, of which there are at least three instances:

i) 5 sentences that follow (Brereton 2009: 55): “For the most part, when it is linked to Mitra and Varuṇa, dhārman carries the sense of a foundational authority. The reason for this rests not so much in the semantic resonance that dhārman independently possesses, but rather in the character of the Ādityas. These are the gods most closely associated with the principles that govern the actions of humans. Varuṇa is the god of alliances. The distinct characters of these gods that give color to the more neutral dhārman and define the kind of ‘foundation’ it describes, and thus, dhārman becomes ‘the foundation of authority’ that structures society.” (Olivelle 2017:8)

ii) 4 sentences attributed to Śatapatha (5.3.3.9): “Then to Varuna, the lord of dharma, he offers a cake made with barley. Thereby Varuna himself, the lord of dharma, makes the king lord of dharma. That, surely, is the highest state when one becomes the lord of dharma. For when someone attains the highest state, people come to him in matters relating to dharma.” (Olivelle 2017:9)

iii) 6 sentences attributed to Brhadāraṇyaka (1.4.14): “Dharma is here the ruling power standing above the ruling power. Hence there is nothing higher than dharma. Therefore, a weaker man makes demands of a stronger man by appealing to dharma, just as one does by appealing to the kind. Now, dharma is nothing but the truth. Therefore, when a man speaks the truth, people say that he speaks dharma; and when a man speaks dharma, people say that he speaks the truth. They are really the same thing.” (Olivelle 2017:10)

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To substantiate his point about the new-found “centrality” of dharma in new religions, the method Olivelle adopts, and his arguments thereof, seem underpinned primarily by two vectors:

**Vector 1**: Relative frequency of occurrence of the word dharma (and some of its forms) and the perceived *change in that frequency* between texts he has considered, of the texts he thinks belong to c. 1500 BCE to 500 BCE.

**Vector 2**: Evolution of the semantic range of dharma during the above-mentioned period

Table 1 captures most (if not all) Vector 1 related data dispersed in sentences of Group 2-3:

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Of the word ‘dharma’</th>
<th>No. of occurrences (NOO)</th>
<th>NOO in ‘separate passages’</th>
<th>NOO in ‘passages’</th>
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<tr>
<td>In Rig Veda*</td>
<td>‘Four’ (p. 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>In four hymn collections of the Yajur Veda: Maitrāyaṇi, Kāthaka, Taittirīya, and Vājasaneyi</td>
<td>‘only Twenty-two’ (p. 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In three major Brāhmaṇas: Aitareya, Taittirīya, Śatapatha</td>
<td>‘just Eleven’ (p. 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Āraṇyakas</td>
<td>‘just Three’ (p. 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Early Upaniṣads: Bṛhadāranyaka, Chāndogya, and Taittirīya</td>
<td>‘just Nine’ (p. 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In ten texts of aphorisms on the Vedic ritual</td>
<td>‘just Thirty-nine’ (p. 10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: He mentions that dhárman & dharma, counted together, occur ‘sixty-seven times’ (p. 8) and that dharma occurs 4 times. He asserts that dhárman is the oldest form of the word dharma.
From the issues identified pertaining to Vector 1 and Table 1, I elaborate on some below:

A Issues due to omissions (partial):

Sentences in Group 2-3 above seek to provide a semantic history of dharma before c. 500 BCE. In attempting to do so though, a lot of the known literature from that period, other than what has been captured in Table 1 above, seems to have been omitted. An exhaustive listing of omissions is not required to make the point and hence only two examples follow: what about dharma in Sāmaveda and Atharvaveda? I will, here, cite only some attestations and allow the reader judge for herself whether dharma really appears like a term with little/no centrality:

1. Atharvaveda [Text from Ram (2013). Numbers in {} indicate Volume number/Page number]

1. यदुवकथानुस जिन्नया चूजिनं बहू। राजस्त्वा सत्यधर्म्यो मुनामि वर्त्तावदहात्। I.10.3 {I.21}
2. आ यो धर्माणि प्रधमः ससदा ततो वर्षोऽकुर्म प्रहुणि। धार्माणिनि प्रधमा आ विवेशा यो वाचमनुदितां चिकेत। V.1.2 {I.380}
3. यस्येद प्रबधिशी यं हीतोत्ते प्रधाति वि च चतेश रासीमि। पुरा देवस्य धर्मणा सोभिविशुिन्तामलोगृणूं पूर्वनुत्कृतः। VII.25.2 {I.740}
4. शीणी पदा वि चक्रमे विषुणोपया अदात्मः। इतो धर्माणि धारण्यृ. VII.26.5 {I.742}
5. रूजत सत्यो राहू श्रमो धर्मक्ष च। भूतं भविष्यदुच्छि दीर्घी लक्ष्मीवलं बले। XI.7.17 {II.95}
6. विक्ष्रवं मातसबोधीनं धूमर्र्वो मृतीम धर्मणा हृद्यात्म। शिवाश्ब्योणामनु चरेम विक्ष्रव। XII.1.17 {II.138}
7. रूजन्त मा वेमक्ष मा हसिष्ठिम् पूर्वचं मा विधर्मण च मा हासिष्ठम्। XVI.3.2 {II.443}
8. असांतायं मे हथमवृण्णी गव्यूषतः समुदो असि विधर्मणा। XVI.3.6 {II.444}
9. इयं नारी पतिलोक सृणाना नि पितव यथा मत्र्य प्रतेत। धर्म पुराणामनुपालयनी तथै प्रज्ञां द्विविण चेह पेघि। VIII.3.1 {II.552}
10. श्लोको वाचमनुपर्युसो धार्मर्यम् वि राजवित। विमदरु बहिररसत्र। XX.49.3 {II.917}
11. इद्द्राय साम गायं विमाय बृहत बृहत। धर्मक्षणों विपश्चिते पनस्यवे XX.62.5 {II.944}

22 In view of the identified issues that follow, both due to omissions and those found in whatever has been commissioned, some conclusions that Olivelle comes to, about semantic range of dharma, seem hasty.

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B Issues in what has been commissioned (partial):

B.1 Verifiable

B.1.i Logical reasoning / Argumentation related (pertaining to “centrality”)

B.1.i.1 Conflating relative modest frequency with absence of centrality: How methodologically sound is it to reach conclusion about the centrality of a concept in a lexicon, and then in a living culture, based purely on a relative frequency analysis of the word for that concept vis-a-vis other words in the same lexicon? Perhaps a case can be made to undertake such an analysis in the case of positive evidence, that is, when there is plentiful attestation of a particular word. To be clear though: relatively higher frequency of a word in itself need not translate to centrality. It does, however, provide an opportunity to undertake a semantic analysis to evaluate if any conclusion about centrality is even possible, which might not be possible in every case. But can a relatively modest frequency (RMF) of a word, by itself, indicate absence of centrality? In my view, RMF, by itself, can indicate nothing conclusive about centrality (or its lack). Yet, RMF is used to arrive at a conclusion about the absence of centrality of dharma, not just in the Ṛgvedic lexicon but also in the Indian culture of Ṛgvedic period itself:

“Although this is not an insubstantial number, as Brereton (2009: 27) points out, the word’s relatively modest frequency “implied that it was not a central term in the Ṛgvedic lexicon or in the Indian culture of Ṛgvedic period.”” (Olivelle 2017:8)

B.1.i.2 Contrary evidence cited by the author himself: Consider the following statements that Olivelle presents as part of his translation of Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1.4.14):

“Dharma is here the ruling power standing above the ruling power. Hence there is nothing higher than dharma.” (Olivelle 2017:10) [Emphasis added]

Remember that the above is Olivelle’s own translation. If, as translated by Olivelle himself, nothing is higher than dharma, is it possible to argue that dharma could have lacked significant centrality in the society it belonged to? Without some convoluted text torturing, I fail to see how. Further, consider the following:
“वै स धर्मः सत्यं वै तत् । तस्मातस्तयं वदन्तमाहूर्धर्मं वदत्तीति । धर्मं वा वदन्त सत्यं वदत्तीति । एतद्धेतेवैतदुभयं भवति ॥१४॥” (Olivelle 1998:50)

“Now, the Law is nothing but the truth. Therefore, when a man speaks the truth, people say that he speaks the Law; and when a man speaks the Law, people say that he speaks the truth. They are really the same thing.” (Olivelle 1998:51)

“Now, the Law is nothing but the truth. Therefore, when a man speaks the truth, people say that he speaks dharma; and when a man speaks dharma, people say that he speaks the truth. They are really the same thing.” (Olivelle 2017:10)

Authors of The Meaning of Dharma in the Rgveda state the centrality of Dharma (in addition to other terms, one of which is Satya) and cite three attestations of ‘satya-dharma’ from Rgveda:

“Four words are closely interwoven, almost identical, throughout the scriptural traditions: Ṛtam (order, law, truth), Satya (truth), Dharma (order, truth, law, justice), Vrata (pledge, commitment, decree) – four words that have continued to be central to Hindu Dharma down through the ages, whatever their developments and archaic changes in meaning may be.” (Kṛṣṇa et. al 2016:1)

“The Ṛgveda also speaks of the ‘satya-dharma’ (‘one whose law is truth’ or ‘one whose laws are true’) in 1.12.7; 5.51.2; 5.63.1” (Kṛṣṇa et. al. 2016:2) [Emphasis added]

Like Olivelle, Kṛṣṇa et. al. also invoke the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa but they invoke a different part of it, an excerpt that should enable anyone see a clear thread running from the Ṛgveda through the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa to the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad on some facets of the interplay between Dharma and Satya:

“Here we get a clearer picture as to what the author of the Śatapatha means by dharma. It has to do with matters regarding which people come to the king and in all likelihood refers principally to legal disputes.” (Olivelle 2017:9)

“...‘yo vai sa dharmaḥ satyam vai tat tasmāt satyam vadantam āhur dharmam vadaṭṭī dharmam vā vadantam satyam vadaṭṭī” (14.4.2.26), “That which is Dharma is indeed Satya, hence they say that ‘One who expresses Satya is expressing Dharma’ or ‘One who expresses Dharma is expressing Satya’.”” (Kṛṣṇa et. al. 2016:3)

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23 In the Ṛgveda, I found at least three more attestations (10.034.08, 10.121.09, 10.139.03)—in addition to the three cited by Kṛṣṇa et. al. (1.12.7; 5.51.2; 5.63.1)—of the string satyadharma.

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I will end this subsection B1i2 ‘Contrary evidence cited by the author himself’ with one more example. It was seen earlier how Olivelle cited Brereton to make a point about Dharma not being a central term in Rgvedic lexicon and the Indian culture of Rgvedic period. Curiously, two sentences thereafter, he includes this:

“Brereton takes the basic meaning of dharma in the Rig Veda to be “foundation”: foundation of the world, gods, humans, human society, ritual and the moral and legal order.” (Olivelle 2017:9)

I don’t wish to wade into the discussion about the accuracy and precision of the assertion of “foundation” as the basic meaning of Dharma in the Rgveda. To only facilitate an appraisal of the consistency in logic, if one were to admit the aforementioned assertion, how logical is it, on the one hand, to interpret Dharma semantically as “foundation”—and foundation of the world, gods, humans, human society, ritual and the moral and legal order no less—but at the same time uphold a view that the Dharma not central to the Rgvedic lexicon and the Indian culture of Rgvedic period, based on, of all methods, just a relative frequency analysis of the occurrence of the word? Is it just me or is the lack of consistency glaringly conspicuous?

B.1.ii  Issues of types other than argumentation related

B.1.ii.1 Count discrepancy: About occurrences of dharma in what Olivelle terms as major texts of the early upaniṣads, he writes thus:

“It is in the early upaniṣads that one would expect dharma, so common and so central in later theological discourse, to be accorded a prominent place. Yet, in the three major texts of the genre—Bṛhadāranyaka, Chāndogya, and Taîtirīya—it occurs in just nine passages.” (Olivelle 2017:9) [Emphasis added]

Unless there is some nuance to the word “passages” which I am missing, in my assessment, Olivelle’s 9 needs to be revised to at least 12\(^2\). About occurrences of dharma and dhārman in the Rgveda, Olivelle writes that “the two forms of the term together occur sixty-seven times in that

\(^2\) Bṛhadāranyaka: 6 (1.4.14, 1.5.23, 2.5.1, 4.4.5, 4.5.14, 5.15.1), Chāndogya: 5 (2.1.4, 2.3.1, 7.2.1, 7.7.1, 8.15.1), Taîtirīya: 1 (1.11.1). Courtesy, https://upanishads.org.in/. Accessed on Nov 10 2020.

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text” (Olivelle 2017:8) and that *dharma* “...already occurs four times in the *Rig Veda*” (ibid.). I found at least 81 occurrences of the string *dharma* in the *Ṛgveda*.


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25 At least 81 attestations of the string *dharma* is found in the *Ṛgveda*. Also note that just *dharma* (bolded below) occurs at least 5 times and not 4.

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<tr>
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<td>dharmaeva</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.007.05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>9.097.40</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>10.046.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** 81

Any view on semantic range needs to account for this diversity. Adding this view: “Ṛta returns dharma to its origins as a cosmological principle and restores a sense of dharma as something applying to more than just interpersonal relations. Without understanding Ṛta, we run the risk of having the dharma become just another term for Kantian concepts of duty, which are, in many ways antithetical to Vedic concepts.” (Dillard-Wright 2020:173)

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using sophisticated astronomical software in conjunction with attested textual astronomical markers. Footnote 22 in Kalyanasundaram (2020a) highlights results from Bag (2015) regarding *Yajurveda Samhita* while Bag’s paper has furnished results for even *Rgveda Samhita*. Earlier this year, Springer published Amitabha Ghosh’s *Descriptive Archaeoastronomy and Ancient Indian Chronology*. All results in Ghosh (2020) and Bag (2015) may not be the last word with regard to epochs they concern themselves with but to not engage at all with results from archaeoastronomy, even in a supposedly postcolonial 21st century, betrays a dogma unbecoming of an open yet critical approach that is truly multidisciplinary.

### B.2 Hard to verify

#### B.2.i Cross-verification difficulty due to lack of specificity: “In ten texts of aphorisms on the Vedic ritual I have examined, the term occurs in just thirty-nine passages.” (Olivelle 2017:10)

Unless I have missed something or there is some additional information in the print version, it is simply hard to verify this information. Which ten texts of aphorisms? Which 39 passages?

#### B.2.ii Comparability issue due to differing categories: Part of the reason Table 1 was put together was to be able to make this point visually. For *Rgveda, Brāhmaṇa*-s, *Āraṇyaka*-s, the data is presented simply in terms of occurrences; for *Yajurveda*, in terms of ‘separate passages’ but for Early *Upaniṣads* and aphorisms, in terms of occurrences in ‘passages’. This further confounds the task of comparative verification, already made difficult by a lack of specificity.

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III Conclusion

Based on everything in the Analysis section (pp. 5-21) above, I conclude that Olivelle’s statements (under *Pp.1-2*; see pp. 6-7 above), which appear to contain answers to the two questions raised in the abstract—Which is the earliest extant textual attestation of the word ‘dharmaśāstra’? Is the birth of the ‘dharmaśāstra’ genre causally linked, and incontrovertibly indebted, to the Buddha and emperor Aśoka?—are shown to be on highly infirm grounds. His reasons for shifting the chronological epoch of Gautama Dharmasūtra to the late second century BCE have been closely studied (*Up. 1*, pp. 7-11) and found to be both insufficiently reasoned and simply unwarranted. Some of the doubts he injected to make his case for the above shift were specifically analysed and addressed, in some cases, by invoking research published well before Olivelle’s *ADR*. Assuming his own alteration in chronology to be a proven fact, his new hypothesis—about some Brahmanical scholarly community having started a brand-new genre of literature called *Dharmaśāstra*-s after 268 BCE in response to, and as an inescapable reaction to, a greater centrality of *Dharma* in Buddhism, and the imperial efforts of emperor Aśoka to propagate *that* *Dharma*—while clearly innovative, is simply imagined (with no direct verifiable historical evidence) and has been presented as a plausible induction. Some of the reasons to support that induction have been pointedly analysed (*Up. 2, II.3*, pp. 7-21) and have been shown to contain issues—those arising from omissions (see *A* in p. 16) and those found in what has been commissioned (*B*, pp. 17-21)—thereby presenting a case for this revisionist invention, with startling consequences, to be seriously reconsidered. At least aspects of *ADR* included studied in this paper do not live up to *Exceptional detail, Historical precision, Expository Illumination* and evidence has been provided for where details are missing (p. 16, 19), where bases for historical precision appear questionable (p. 17-19) and where there is more confounding than illuminating (p. 21). It appears fitting to close this paper by citing: 1) Olivelle’s own translation of Gautama *Dharmasūtra* 1.1.1—वेदो धर्ममूलम् —“The source of Law” (Olivelle 1999:78), and 2) Kane’s translation of *Ṛgveda* III.3.1—धर्माणि सन्ता—“Ancient Ordinances” (Kane 1930:1).

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27 The word ‘Law’, in a sense other than mother-in-law, brother-in-law etc, does not feature at all in the (translated-into-English) verses of ‘*The Rig Veda*’ [Jamison and Brereton (2014)].

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The_Early_Upaniṣads_and_some_observations_of_consequence_to_the_Global_History_of_Philosophy_before_c_500_BCE.


https://www.academia.edu/43654238/Initial_response_to_the_Springer_published_July_2020_book_Descriptive_Archaeoastronomy_and_Ancient_Indian_Chronology_.


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https://archive.org/details/YajnavalkyaSmritiWithThreeCommentaries/mode/2up.


A general note: Citing any author favorably, even if on many instances, is not to be construed as acceptance of everything published by her/him, unless the latter has been expressed explicitly. Similarly, a focused analysis and subsequent critique (if so) of some aspects of any individual’s scholarship, presented in a verifiable manner, is not to be construed as a criticism of everything that individual has published, or a statement about the individual herself/himself. An attempt has been made to be as specific as one can, minimize paraphrasing so as to maximize fairness in representation of the point being responded to, and strive to provide focused, detailed and pointed responses in an accessible and transparent manner. I would be grateful to anyone who brings to my notice, inadvertent typographical errors, if any.

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