The word śāstra has a long history in Brahmanical literature. While there is a great deal of work on śāstra, little has been done on the history of the term itself. This essay lays the groundwork for a better understanding of that history. Scholars have detected primarily three distinct meanings of śāstra throughout Sanskrit literature: instruction,1 system of instruction (either codified in a text or more generally the system as a whole), and scripture (most often Veda).2 I believe that the first of these three meanings is the older, more general meaning of the term—command, instruction, or precept. śāstra occurs already in the RV, where it has the meaning “command,” but did not become common until the later half of the first millennium BCE. By that time, śāstra had already taken on the meaning of “system of instruction.” I will show that there were two significant shifts in the use of this term in this time frame: first, the consciousness of śāstra as a genre of literature common to different disciplines, and second, the use of śāstra to refer to the Veda. These shifts in meaning occur in this period and can be traced in the extant literature. I will demonstrate the meaning of śāstra in its earliest occurrences, then highlight the passages where newer meanings are employed in order to show the diversification of meaning.

**METHODOLOGY**

The time frame of this study is arguably one of the most active periods of intellectual development in the sub-continent, roughly from the seventh century BCE to the fifth century CE. In this period a considerable number of

---

1 The English translations do not clearly express the dual sense conveyed by the root śās, command or instruction. Instruction is best, if considered to have both the sense of command and teaching. Both order and instruction convey a sense of authority.

2 The sense of instruction, or command, is seen in Ādīṣā 2.10.13; system of instruction, or science, is seen in VJ 36; and scripture is seen in MS 1.3.9. Each of these selections is quoted later in this paper.
the most influential works in the history of Indian literature were composed and many genres of Indian literature originate, at least in the form of a cohesive, enduring, textual form. Without delving into the details of dating ancient Indian texts, I will employ a relative chronology drawn from

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Text Tile</th>
<th>Tot.</th>
<th>Dharma-</th>
<th>Other-</th>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1 (kālavidhāna)</td>
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<td>Āpastambhadharmasūtra</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>17 (artha-8, aśruta-1, kutsita-karma-1, calita-3, niti-1, prajñā-1, śulba-dhatu-1, sarva-1)</td>
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<td>Nāradasmṛti</td>
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<td>6 (artha-3, nyāya-1, vastu-1, sabhya-1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rāmāyanā</td>
<td>63</td>
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</table>

Table 1: Occurrences of śāstra in texts, with occurrences of dharmaśāstra and other compounds with śāstra as last member. Texts are listed in relative chronology.
secondary sources. I will restrict myself to the period from the first occurrence to a period in which sāstra is a well-developed tradition.

RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE TEXTS

The relative chronology represented in Table 1 will serve as the framework for this study. Additionally, the table shows the number of times the term dharmasāstra appears and the number of times sāstra appears as the last member of a compound.

As the table demonstrates, sāstra is frequent in both epics. The epics represent a different type of literature than most of the other extant literature. The composition of the epics also differs in style from most of the other Brahmanical literature. The frequent occurrence of the term in the epics seems to merit a separate study. Thus, neither epic will appear in this analysis.

SĀSTRA IN THE RG VEDA

The one exception to the circumscribed time frame of this study is the inclusion of the RV, which clearly belongs to a much earlier period. It is included because it demonstrates an awareness of sāstra in the earliest layers of Sanskrit literature, and it may show the original meaning of the word. Sāstra first occurs in the extant literature in the RV. Its appearance in the RV 8.33, which praises Indra as a drinker of Soma, is its only occurrence in all of the RV. The first fifteen verses clearly laud Indra in many ways; the last four verses are puzzling (See Geldner 1951).

RV VIII.33.16-19

nahī sās tāva nó mama /
śāstrē anyāsyā rányati /
yó asmān virā ānayat // 16
índraś cid ghā tád abravīt /
striyā aśāsyām mānāh /
utó áha krātuṃ raghūm // 17
sāptī cid ghā madacyūtā /
mithunā vahato rātam /
evēd dhūr vyṣṇa úttarā // 18
adhāḥ paśyasva mopārī /
saṃtarām pādakād hara /
mā te kaśapakād drśan //
strī hi brahmā babhū vitha // 19
Indeed he does not take pleasure in the instruction of you, nor of me, (nor/but) of the other, He who as a hero led us hither. 16
Even Indra said this: “the mind of woman is not to be instructed, And her will is fickle.” 17
Paired, even the two-horse team, arousing exhilaration, convey the chariot; Just so is the chariot pole of the bull higher. 18
Look below, not above. Bring your two little feet closer together. Let them not see your two kaśapalakas. For you Formulator have become a woman. 19

While the meaning of this section is unclear, śāstra here may mean instruction. The sense is clearly related to the derivation of the word from the root √śās—to instruct, command—with the instrumental ending –tra, thus precept, command, or instruction. That the meaning here of śāstra is “instruction” is clear, because of the use of the term aśāya in verse 17. This is the gerundive of √śās and means not to be instructed, either because of inability or intractability. Though the ambiguity of the passage makes it impossible to determine the referent of the instruction, śāstra does here refer to some form of “instruction.”

ŚĀSTRA IN OTHER EARLY VEDIC LITERATURE

The word śāstra does not occur in any of the vast literature that spans the time from the RV to the next occurrence that I was able to locate, in the Yāsāyanirukta. If we accept the notion that the RV was “canonized” by the beginning of the first millennium BCE, as Witzel suggests, then the term is absent from the texts for almost 500 years. The term does not occur in any other Samhitā, in the Brāhmaṇas, or in the Upaniṣads. One might expect to find this term somewhere in these texts, because of their nature. The Brāhmaṇas instruct the reader about the ritual, both teaching about the meaning and commanding with respect to the proper actions to be taken. The Upaniṣads represent a tradition of teaching and, to some degree, embody the

3 This translation belongs to Stephanie Jamison (private communication), albeit with modification on my part which eliminates ambiguity on her part. I do not translate kaśapalakau, whereas Jamison tentatively offers labia. The sexual imagery here is clear enough, but not of direct interest to my purposes here.
teacher pupil relationship. If the term šāstra has any significance in the relationship between a teacher and a pupil, then its absence in this literature is significant. While it is possible that the authors of those texts employed a different vocabulary, verifying this fact would require a more thorough examination and comparison of terms. The verb नेश is rare in the Upaniṣads.

One factor in this absence may be the influence of the sākhā on the notion of education. The literature in which šāstra occurs generally crosses sākhā boundaries and indicates a different notion of the transmission of knowledge. The rise of pan-sākhā literature certainly changed the notion of authority; it may have called for a change of vocabulary as well.

**SĀTRA IN THE VEDĀNGAS**

Based on the relative chronology seen in Table 1, the earliest occurrence of the term šāstra outside the RV appears in the Nirukta of Yāska.

Nir 1.2
śāstrakṛto yogas ca

And the grammatical connection is found in the śāstra.

Nir 1.14
yatho etatpadebhyaḥ padetarārdhānt saṃcaskāreti yo 'nanvite 'rthe saṃcaskāra sa tena garhyaḥ | saīṣa puruṣaṅgarhā na śāstraṅgarhā |

As to (the point) that a certain individual derived parts of one word from different verbs, (we reply that) the person who made such a derivation in spite of the meaning being irrelevant should be blamed; it is the fault of an individual, not of the science (of etymology) (Sarup).

These two passages make clear the meaning of śāstra to the author of this text; both instances support the notion that śāstra refers to a system of instruction or a specific teaching, be it a text or a lesson. In the second example, the author tries to locate blame for an incorrect derivation. The blame does not lie in the text, but with the grammatical offender. Sarup is justified here in adding to his translation the phrase “(of etymology)” The author/etymologist wants to shift the blame from the śāstra to the offending individual. The discussion in both examples above is concerned with the instruction in etymology. The author does not need to specify the type of
śāstra, since the context makes it clear. The meaning of śāstra here is a system of instruction, or a specific text. Śāstra is also found in the Rgvedaprātiṣākhya, another text which interprets the Vedas.

RPrāt 11.69
viparyayāc chāstrasamādhidarśanāt purāprasiddher ubhayor
anāśrayāt

In the contrary case, on the basis of the teaching of the summation of the śāstra, from the earlier argument, and from the independence of the two.

RPrāt 14.68
śāstrāpāvādāt pratipattibhedān nindanty akṛṣṭaṇi ca vaṇaśikṣām

From their rejection of the śāstras, they condemn differences of understanding, and because it is incomplete, the training in sounds.⁴

In both of these examples, the author refers to the śāstras. Most likely he refers here to the Rgvedaprātiṣākhya itself or to the prātiṣākhya tradition more generally. In RPrāt 11.69 the contrast is between the summation of the śāstra and previous argumentation. It seems this refers to the scholarly tradition of Vedic interpretation, not to the Vedas themselves. RPrāt 14.68 supports this reading, since rejection of the śāstra most certainly means one who disagrees with this interpretation or interpretive mode, not a rejection of the Vedas.⁵ While the commentary of Uvaṭa is significantly later, his reading of śāstra as kramaśāstra, śāstra of recitation, supports this reading. As with the Nirukta, the author did not need to specify to which śāstra he was referring; the context made it clear. For the commentator, however, there was a need to differentiate between śāstras, a development whose origin will be addressed later. Uvaṭa clearly thought śāstra here referred to the Rgvedaprātiṣākhya. Even without placing undue weight on the opinion of the commentator, these examples support the notion that the term śāstra refers to a system of instruction, or perhaps even a specific text.

The oldest occurrence of śāstra outside the Vedic interpretive tradition is in the Vedāṅga jyotiṣa. The Rg Vedic recension of this text appears to be

⁴ I am indebted to Joel Brereton for helping make sense of these passages; however, all mistakes are mine alone.
⁵ The use of śāstra in RPrāt 14.64 seems to have the same sense.
older than the Yajur Vedic recension, but the material in both recensions is nearly identical. Šāstra appears in the Rg Vedic recension three times.\(^6\)

VJ 25
nakṣatradevātā etā etābhīr yajñakarmanī l
yajamāṇasya śāstrajair nāma nakṣatrajāṃ smṛtam l

These are the Devatās of the nakṣatras; in accordance with these in the sacrificial act, the śāstra-knowers mention the name of the yajamāṇa, the name that comes from his nakṣatra.

VJ 36
vedā hi yajñārtham abhipraavyttāh kālānupūrvvā vihitāḥ ca yajñāḥ l
tasmād idam kālavīdhāṇaśāstraṃ yo jyotiṣaṃ veda sa veda yajñān l

The Vedas have indeed been produced for the sake of the performance of the sacrifices. And the sacrifices have been prescribed for regularly ordered times. Therefore, he who knows Jyotīsa, the śāstra of the enumeration of time, he knows the sacrifices.

These passages demonstrate the meaning of śāstra, an astronomical science. VJ 25 refers to those who know the śāstra in the context of preparing for the ritual; they are astronomers. In the ritual the śāstra-knower recites the nakṣastra name of the yajamāṇa, a secret name used in ritual contexts. Šāstra here refers to the astronomical literature. VJ 36 makes the case even more clear, equating jyotīsa and kālavīdhāṇaśāstra, the śāstra of the enumeration of time. The primary function of jyotīsa is to measure time and mark the correct time for performing the ritual. Thus, the identity is clear.

In his translation, Sarma often reads śāstra to mean Vedas. This interpretation of śāstra as Veda is anachronistic in this context. Reading śāstra here as treatise requires a less forced reading.\(^7\)

In the last passage from the VJ the author makes a reference to the śāstras in the context of a larger genre of literature, the Vedāṅgas.

\(^6\) RVJ 25, 36, and 35 correspond to YVJ 35, 4, and 3, respectively.

\(^7\) For example, he translated VJ 25 thus: "People learned in the religious lores say that these deities’ names are to be substituted for their own names in the (sankalpa of) the yāga (of the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is performed, viz.) the yajamāṇa.” In his translations of VJ 35 he translates śāstra as Vedas.
VJ 35
\[
\begin{align*}
tadvad \text{ śikhā mayūrāṇāṁ nāgāṇāṁ maṇayo yathā ļ} \\
yathā vedāṅgaśāstrāṇāṁ jyotiśaṁ mūrdhani sthitām ļ
\end{align*}
\]
Like the combs of the peacocks and the crest jewels of the serpents, so does Jyotiṣa stand at the head of all śāstras that are auxiliaries to the Vedas.

Vedāṅgaśāstra is not here a tatpurusa compound; a reading of śāstra of vedāṅgas will not do, because the śāstras in question each address different disciplines, not just vedāṅga. In short, the Jyotiṣa stands at the head of the śāstras that are vedāṅgas, not the śāstras concerning vedāṅga. Vedāṅgaśāstra here is a karmadhāraya compound; thus vedāṅgaśāstra is the śāstra that is a vedāṅga. The author is setting Jyotiṣa at the head of the other śāstras that are the vedāṅgas.

While the previous examples support the notion that śāstra could have been a genre already, this occurrence is the first clear evidence that śāstra was already a genre. The author implies there is a class of śāstras by placing his own śāstra at the top of the pecking order. The fact that vedāṅga refers to multiple disciplines—all of whom contribute to the success of the ritual, each in a different way—corroborates the idea that śāstra is understood to be a genre. In the previous passages, the author knew that the context would make clear the śāstra to which he is referring. Additionally, the term kālavidhānaśāstra, used in VJ 36, may also indicate a distinction between this śāstra and other śāstras.

**ŚĀSTRA IN THE EARLY SŪTRA LITERATURE**

The author of the Āpastambaśadvatamasūtra uses śāstra eight times. Olivelle reads all but one as scripture. This is the one passage that Olivelle does not translate as Veda.

āDhŚ 2.5.10.13
\[
tasya cet śāstram atipravarteran rājānaṁ gamayet ļ
\]
If a guilty person refuses to follow his order, he should send him to the king. (Olivelle)
Here Olivelle does not divorce śāstra from the original sense of instruction. This example is typical of the majority of the occurrences. 

\[
\text{ĀDhS 2.14.10-11}\\
\text{tac cāstraip vipratiṣiddham I}\\
\text{manuḥ putrebhyo dāyaṣ vaṣhad īty aviṣeṣaṣ śrūyate I}
\]

That is forbidden by the scriptures, for in the Veda we find the statement, which makes no special allowance, “Manu divided his estate among his sons” (TS 3.1.9.4). (Olivelle)

This example, as well as those not quoted here, suggests a close relationship between śāstra and Veda. In ĀDhS 2.14.10 the failure to divide the estate is forbidden by śāstras. In the section immediately preceding this, regional variations in inheritance law are forbidden by śāstra. The term vipratiṣiddha, forbidden, appears seven times in ĀDhS; six of those occurrences are related to some scriptural injunction. The last is related to dharma more generally. Three of these occurrences appear with śāstra in the instrumental plural, and can be read as “forbidden by the śāstras.”

I believe that the occurrence of vipratiṣiddha and śāstra together in such a specific context illuminates the relationship of śāstra to scripture. In each instance Āpastamba indicates that a certain behavior is forbidden by the śāstras, then supports his claim with a reference to a Vedic injunction. The śāstra is an instruction not to engage in a particular behavior and the support for such an instruction is the Vedic scripture. I believe that Āpastamba is using śāstra in its original sense, an instruction. That this sense was understood is clear from ĀDhS 2.5.10.13. The moral weight used to justify the śāstra was not seen in earlier texts examined here. I believe this is for two reasons. First, the topic of the Dharma Śūtras introduces a moral factor that was not present in the disciplines in which śāstra previously occurred. Second, the notion of the Veda as the basis for all śāstra is central to Mīmāṃsā thought, a constant theme in Āpastamba’s work. For Āpastamba, the use of śāstra as an instruction overrode the newer technical sense evidenced in the texts examined thus far.

Using the term śāstra in such a relationship to the Vedas has a specific function. I believe that the impetus for this usage is evidenced more clearly in

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8 See also ĀDhS 1.12.11, 1.13.21, 2.10.12, 2.15.23, and 2.21.15.

9 ĀDhS 1.45, 1.12.6, 1.13.21, 2.8.12, 2.14.10, and 2.21.15.

10 ĀDhS 2.20.22.
another, later, text, the Mīmāṃsāsūtra. I will address this issue later in the essay.

Roughly contemporaneous to ĀdhS was the Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra. In the KŚS we find the term only once, the only occurrence in all the Śrauta Sūtras. The context of this passage is a discussion of the Sattra sacrifice. The debate concerns the purpose, actors, and duration of the sacrifice. Several opinions appear, some ascribed to individuals, others not. In the debate over the length of the Sattra sacrifice, the opinion is stated that a life of 1,000 years is impossible for humans. The author then refers to the opinion of Bhāradvāja.

KŚS 1.6.21
śāstrasamḥavād iti bhāradvajah

Bhāradvāja says: (It is possible) because there is a śāstra.

The ambiguity of the passage makes it difficult to understand the referent of śāstra in this passage. The passage indicates that there must be a possibility of living for 1,000 years because there is a śāstra that presupposes the possibility. The śāstra enjoins a rite, and to complete the rite one must live 1,000 years. Therefore, the possibility of living 1,000 years must exist, otherwise the rite would not be enjoined.

Ranade’s translation tries to erase the ambiguity inherent in the passage. “According to the opinion of Bhāradvāja, living for thousand years seems to be possible in view of the evidence in the ritualistic works (which lay down “mitravindā … āyuṣkāmasya” KŚS 5.13.1)” (Ranade 1978). Ranade seems to think that Bhāradvāja refers to another section of the same text, the Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra. Why would Kātyāyana quote Bhāradvāja quoting Kātyāyana, only to reject his opinion shortly thereafter?

Another possibility is that Bhāradvāja is referring to his own Śrauta Sūtra. I was unable, however, to find any reference that reflects this passage. The reference could with equal plausibility refer to the Vedas, possibly a single statement in the Vedas, as a call to a higher authority, except that it does not exist. Most likely, this represents another example of the older meaning of śāstra, command or precept. Since there is an instruction to perform the ritual, the possibility of completing it, i.e. living for 1,000 years, must be possible.

ŚĀSTRA IN THE GRAMMATICAL TRADITION

The first occurrences of śāstra in the grammatical tradition are in the Vārttikas of Kātyāyana. In these critical annotations to Pāṇini’s Aśṭādhyāyi,
Kātyāyana uses śāstra twelve times. All but one of these instances, I believe, are references to Pāṇini’s work.

Kātya 1.1.62.1
pratyayalope pratyayalakṣaṇa vacanam sadanvākhyānāc chāstrasya ā

When there is an elision of an affix, there is an indication of the affix, because there is a specific statement in the śāstra.

Kātya 6.1.1.12-13
śāstrahānīś ca ā
siddham tu tat samudāyaikāctvāc chāstrāhāne ā

And (in the case of) something that would undermine the śāstra.

So it is established, because there is not a thing that would undermine the śāstra and because of the fact that the vowels are in combination.11

In the first example Kātyāyana clarifies a rule in the Aṣṭādhyāyī. In the second he resolves an apparent contradiction in the rules. Kātyāyana’s work often tries to explain apparent flaws in Pāṇini’s work; this is one example.

The meaning of śāstra here is a specific instructional work, the Aṣṭādhyāyī itself. In this example the use of śāstra clearly refers to a specific text. It is worth noting here that for Kātyāyana the notion of śāstra as a system of instruction, and śāstra as a text encapsulating a system of instruction are synonymous. That is, Pāṇini’s work is the encapsulation of the grammatical tradition, where in other disciplines the two are not necessarily exactly the same.

The one exception to Kātyāyana’s use of śāstra to refer to Pāṇini is the first occurrence of the word dharmaśāstra in the extant literature.

Kātya 1.2.64.39
dharmaśāstraṃ ca tathā ā

And thus there is a dharmaśāstra (which is relevant to this).

Kātyāyana uses dharmaśāstra as an example. Here the term indicates the awareness of śāstra as a genre of literature. Its use previous to this occurrence

11 See also: KV 1.1.38.4, 6.1.85.4, 6.1.86.5, 6.1.158.12, and 7.1.96.1.
has been restricted to the genre in which the author is writing. No author has shown a need to refer to a śāstra outside of his own purview. This is not the first passage to explicitly demonstrate the knowledge of another genre of scientific literature. In the Vedāṅgajyotiṣa, the author used the word vedāṅgaśāstra, which implies other śāstras. But Pāṇini explicitly refers to another śāstra. His use of an example necessitated his differentiation of his śāstra—his own genre generally and the grammar specifically—from another śāstra. While it is curious that Āpastamba did not use the term dharmaśāstra, it is not too surprising. Āpastamba was addressing concerns of dharma and did not need to address different śāstras.

Next is Patañjali, who lived, most likely, in the time between the first two Dharmasūtras and the later two. His commentary on Kātyāyana’s Vārtikas sheds considerable light on the development of this term outside the dharma literature. His opening two sentences reflect the use of this term throughout his work.

Pat (1)

athety ayaṁ śabdo ‘dhikārārthaḥ prayujyate | śabdānuśāsanam śāstram adhikṛtaṁ veditvayam ||

This word “atha” is utilized for establishing the authority (of the text). The śāstra, Instruction on Words, which is authorized, is understood.

Instruction on Words is the title of Pāṇini’s Aṣṭādhyāyī. Two passages, however, show different usage. In his commentary on Kātyā 6.1.84.5, which raises an issue about different types of rules, Patañjali brings several examples to bear on the problem.

Pat 6.1.84 (57)

siddham etat | katham | dhammadāśanaṁ idaṁ śāstram dharmopadeśane cāsmin śāstre ‘navavaväna śāstrārthaḥ saṃpratīyate yathā laukikeśu vaidikeśu ca kṛtanteśu ||

This is established. How? This śāstra is ‘dharma-instruction.’ And in this śāstra, that is a ‘dharma-instruction,’ the meaning of śāstra agrees with the anavayava (a rule which is not a rule to be done only once), just as in secular and Vedic precepts.

12 This is clear elsewhere, e.g. Pat 1.1.38.4, 6.1.85.4, 6.1.86.5, 6.1.158.12, and 7.1.96.1.
Patañjali gives us examples of both secular and Vedic precepts, giving a glimpse of normal language. Grammarians do not give fanciful examples; they use examples from both secular and Vedic language, just as he states in this commentary. In this passage, Patañjali explains anavayava in opposition to its antonym, avayava. An avayava is a rule that needs to be fulfilled only once. Patañjali informs us that an anavayava is a rule that must be obeyed perpetually. The injunctions of sāstra are given as common examples. One should not kill a Brahman. This does not mean that if one avoids the opportunity to kill a Brahman once the obligation is fulfilled. It is an anavayava, and must be followed perpetually. He gives the establishment of the ceremonial fire as a Vedic example of an avayava. Once established, it does not need to be established again. Clearly for Patañjali, sāstra was distinct from Vedas. His use of the term sāstra to gloss dharmopadeśanam makes it clear that the meaning of sāstra is teaching, or instruction. This demonstrates that sāstra had, by this time, become a common term for a system of instruction. Additionally, it shows that sāstra is understood to be a genre, that is, a way of writing that is employed in different disciplines. There are different types of sāstra and Patañjali assumed that his audience was, at the very least, aware of them.

Reference to the dharma tradition is explicit elsewhere. In his commentary on Kātyā 1.2.64, Patañjali uses the term dharmasāstra twice (Pat 1.2.64 (242) and 1.2.64 (243)). His use of the term here follows his use of the term in his commentary on 6.1.84 quoted above. He even uses the same examples of killing a Brahmin and drinking alcohol. Since Kātyāyana knew this term, it should not surprise us that Patañjali knew and used it.

In another passage we see something more interesting. In Pat 1.1.47 (115) Patañjali uses the term dharmasūtra.

Pat 1.1.47 (115)
naiveśvara ājñāpayati nāpi dharmasūtrakārāḥ paṭhanty apavādair utsargā bādhyanām iti ।

The lord does not command, nor do the composers of dharmasūtras proclaim that the general rule is suspended by an exception.

As previously stated, Patañjali draws his examples from real life. He must have known that people composed and recited dharmasūtras. He follows this statement with an example from the world: a Brahmin giving coagulated buttermilk mixed with water to a Kauṇḍinya is possible, but it is prohibited. The gist is that simply because something is possible does not mean that it is
permitted. The significance for my argument lies in Patañjali’s use of the dharmasūtrakāra as an example. That Patañjali was aware of the dharma tradition of śāstra is seen in the earlier passages and evidenced by Kātyāyana’s use of the term. This passage demonstrates that he also knew of composers and reciters of the dharmasūtras.

Such explicit recognition of other śāstra technicians, I suggest, was not necessary before. Since there was no need to refer to the śāstras of other disciplines, there was no need to refer to the technicians of those other disciplines. That there was a need to differentiate one’s own śāstra from someone else’s can easily be inferred.

In the earlier literature there are few instances of śāstra used in compound. It makes sense from the narrowly focused subject matter that the people hearing such lessons would understand the meaning of the term in its context. Śāstra is later used in compounds, a use that specifies the topic of the śāstra. It can reasonably be inferred from this that there was no need to specify to which śāstra one was referring, just as when speaking with a sibling one does not say “our mom,” but simply “mom.” In fact śāstra only appears in compound in Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya because his subject matter requires examples, examples he draws from language of the world, common speech, and from Vedic language. It is in this broader scope that one must be more specific as to the subject of śāstra. The contextual use of śāstra is also seen in the Mahābhāṣya when Patañjali, following Kātyāyana, refers to Pāṇīni’s Aṣṭādhyāyī as the śāstra, Pat (1), quoted above.

Elsewhere Patañjali compares the śiṣṭa and the śāstra:

Pat 3.3.101 (174)
ke punaḥ śiṣṭāḥ | vaiyākāraṇāḥ | kuta eetat | śāstarpūrvikā hi śiṣṭir vaiyākāraṇāś ca śāstrajñā | yadi tarhi śāstarpūrvikā śiṣṭiḥ śiṣṭapūrvaḥ ca śāstraṃ tad itaretarāśrayaṃ bhavati | itaretarāśrayaṃ ca na prakalpante |

Who are śiṣṭas? They are grammarians. Why is this? Because learning presupposes śāstra and grammarians know śāstra. If learning presupposes śāstra and śātra presupposes learning, then this is a circular argument. And circular arguments are not proper. (Brick)

In this passage, śiṣṭa, another derivative of the root śās, is defined. Here the śiṣṭa is a grammarian. Grammarians are those who know śāstra. In this context it seems safe to assume that Patañjali is arguing that a śiṣṭa is a
grammarians and the śāstra is the grammar. This passage does suggest that the learned person is knowledgeable of śāstra.

While I have shown that Patañjali was aware of śāstra as text—he knows of Pāṇini and Kātyāyana—he also knows of śāstra as a tradition of learning. The term dharmasūtrakāra implies as much. It also implies that he was aware of śāstra texts in other traditions. His use of the root paṭh with the dharmasūtrakāra implies that they are reciting something, namely a text on dharma. Śāstra can apply to different disciplines. Both śāstra and śiṣṭa are used in the specific context to mean grammar and grammarian, but in different contexts would refer to any treatise and anyone learned in that science. Clearly by the time of Patañjali, śāstra is a well-developed tradition, with established schools in different disciplines.

ŚĀSTRA IN THE LATER DHARMASŪTRA LITERATURE

In the Gautamadharmasūtra, we find the first use of the term dharmaśāstra within the dharma tradition.

GDhS 11.19

tasya vyavahāro vedo dharmaśāstraṁ aṅgāṁ upavedāṁ purāṇam ।

His administration of justice shall be based on the Veda, the Legal Treatises, the Vedic Supplements, Subsidiary Vedas, and the Purāṇa.

(Olivelle)

This passage refers to the dharma literature with the term śāstra. The reference to a tradition of legal instruction is unmistakable. Āpastamba did not need to use the term dharmaśāstra, because he did not have the occasion to differentiate between different śāstras. Gautama, however, demonstrates such a need in this passage.

The other occurrence of śāstra in the GDhS is less obvious, but I believe it refers to the same legal tradition:

GDhS 13.26

rājā praḍvivāko brāhmaṇo vā śastraṁ vā

The judge is either the king or a learned Brahmin.

The author says that ideally the king should act as judge; if he is unable, then the substitute must be a Brahmin who is learned in the śāstra. The position of judge requires an awareness of legal matters. It seems logical to assume that
the śāstra of which he must be aware is either the dharmaśāstra or the Arthaśāstra. In the first passage the referent is clearly a text, since the other items in the list are texts. In the second passage, the referent is not as clear, but probably refers to a text as well. Additionally, the learned Brahmin may need to be well-versed in many śāstras: political, legal, and religious.

In the Baudhāyanadharmaśūtra the author used śāstra in the same way that Āpastamba did.13 In BDhS 1.1.13, however, we see a distinction between śāstra and Veda, just as in GDhS 11.19 quoted on the previous page.

BDhS 1.1.13
dharmaśāstrarathārūdhā vedakhadgadharā dvijāḥ ।
kṛḍārtham api yad brūyuḥ sa dharmāḥ paramāḥ smṛtāḥ ॥

When twice born men, riding in the chariot of Legal Treatises and wielding the sword of the Veda, make a pronouncement, even in jest, that the tradition tells us, is the highest law. (Olivelle)

This passage also indicates the conception of śāstra as a genre. The author uses the word in such a way to be clear as to its referent, distinguishing it from other śāstras on other topics. More significantly, the author distinguishes śāstra from the Veda. The author uses śāstra to refer to a scientific treatise in some places and the Veda in other places; this reflects the complicated nature of the influence on the author. In addition to the underlying perspective shared with Āpastamba, which I will address briefly, Baudhāyana is aware of dharmaśāstra as a term that refers to works on dharma. Baudhāyana tried to incorporate into his text, both Āpastamba’s use of śāstra as Veda and the tradition seen in the other dharmasūtras, where śāstra refers to a scientific treatise.

Śāstra appears only four times in the Vasiṣṭhadharmaśūtra, and all four times it shows a differentiation between different types of śāstra. VDhS 24.6 and 27.19 both use the term dharmaśāstra. VDhS 24.6 is a self-referential use of the term.

VDhS 24.6
sātā yattūditaṁ dharmaśāstraṁ nāputrāya nāśiṣyāya
nāsaṃvatsaroṣītāya dadyāt ॥

13 See BDhS 1.10.8, 1.6.36, and 2.4.7.22.
A man should impart this Treatise on Law proclaimed by the holy one to no other than a son or a pupil who has lived with him for at least a year. (Olivelle)

For the author of this Dharmasūtra his work is a śāstra.

More significant is the author’s use of specific terms for different types of śāstra. We find the use of the term śāstra in compound with other words in the other two passages in the VDhS.

VDhS 10.20
athāpyudāharanti
na śabdaśāstrābhiratasya mokṣo
na cāpi lokagrahanē ratasya l
na bhojānācchādanatatparasya
na cāpi ramyāvasathapriyasya l

Now, they also quote:
Liberation is not achieved by a man who takes delight in verbal sciences and in captivating the folks, has his heart on food and clothe, and loves beautiful residences. (Olivelle)

VDhS 21.33
bhikṣukair vānapraśthavat somavṛddhivardhanaṃ svaśāstrasaṃskāraś
cā svaśāstrasamśākaraścetē l

Mendicants violating in the same manner as hermits should perform a lunar penance and undergo initiation in the manner prescribed in their respective texts. (Olivelle)

The first passage occurs in the context of asceticism. The second occurs in a section entitled, by Olivelle, Miscellaneous. Both passages demonstrate the author’s need to differentiate one śāstra from another. However, it seems important here to consider the trend of later additions discussed in regard to BDhS. Olivelle pointed out that the later additions to BDhS concern primarily asceticism, and may represent a later addition from a renunciatory handbook (Olivelle 2000, 191). Thus these passages, despite occurring in the VDhS, must be considered with due skepticism.
ŚĀTRA IN THE DHARMA LITERATURE

The relative chronology becomes more troublesome as we move to the next few texts in our period. I believe that a brief overview of the occurrences in a few key texts will show that the dramatic increase in different śāstras required authors to specify to which śāstra they were referring. The increased number of disciplines that boasted śāstras is central to this trend. The earlier texts do not need to address different śāstras, since their scope of inquiry was narrow. Later authors addressed broader issues, so they needed to address different sciences. In doing so they needed to differentiate one śāstra from another. This need is most evident in the Arthaśāstra and the Mānavadharmaśāstra.

In the AŚ the word śāstra appears forty-three times. Among those dharmaśāstra appears twice, arthaśāstra appears eight times, and nitiśāstra appears once.14 Of the thirty-four remaining occurrences, seventeen are in compound as the last member with another word, e.g. kutsitakarmaśāstra; of these there are six different terms.15 In the MDhŚ the term appears thirty-four times. Dharmaśāstra appears twice. There are twelve other occurrences of śāstra, in which it appears in compound with six different terms; arthaśāstra is conspicuously absent.16 The later dharma texts show a similar increase in the use of terms that indicate that śāstra had diversified and represented a diverse instructional genre, encompassing different disciplines, as seen in Table 1.

ŚĀTRA AS VEDA

The passages discussed thus far show that the term generally does not refer to the Veda. However, in some instances the term śāstra clearly refers to the Vedas. At times Manu makes this identification explicit by using the compound vedaśāstra—the śāstra that is a Veda.17 However, in the Mīmāṃsāśātra and the Brahmāsūtra we find a very specialized meaning of

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14 The dating of the Arthaśāstra is difficult. Among the most relevant difficulties is the concern that many of the passages in which the term arthaśāstra appears could possibly be later additions. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address such issues. It is clear though that the extant version we have probably dates sometime near Mānavadharmaśāstra.

15 aśrutaśāstra, 1 time; kutsitakarmaśāstra, 1 time; calitaśāstra, 3 times; prajñāśāstra, 1 time; śulbadhāśāstra, 1 time; and sarvaśāstra, 1 time.

16 asaśāstra, 1 time; maulānśāstra, 1 time; yajhaśāstra, 1 time; vedaśāstra, 7 times; sarvaśāstra, 1 time; and hetuśāstra, 1 time.

17 MDhŚ 12.94, 12.99, 12.100, 12.102, and 12.106.
the word śāstra. These passages and their context, I believe, shed light on the use of śāstra with reference to the Veda.

Śāstra appears in the MS fourteen times. Of these twelve clearly refer to the Vedas.

MS 1.2.2
śāstradrṣṭavirodhācca ||

And also because of the contradiction of the scriptures and the directly perceived facts. (Jha)

MS 1.3.9
śāstrasthā vā tannimittatvāt ||

In reality, that which is based on the scriptures (is to be regarded as more authoritative); because the scriptures are the basis of authority. (Or, that sense in which the word is used by persons who take their stand upon the scriptures is to be accepted as the more authoritative; because it is more reliable than any other.) (Jha)

MS 4.1.3
tadutsarge karmāṇi puruṣārthāya śāstrasyaṇatiśaṅkyatvān na ca dravyaḥ cikīryate tenārthe nābhisambandhāt kriyāyāṃ puruṣāsrutīḥ ||

Even though they involve the renunciation [of happiness] yet the actions (in question) should be taken as ‘subserving the purposes of Man;’ because the authority of the scriptures is not to be doubted. Nor is any substance meant to be made (or embellished, by the actions). Consequently, on account of their connection with the purpose of Man, it must be admitted that it is the Man that is spoken of in the text as connected with the actions on question. (Jha)\textsuperscript{18}

MS 1.2.2 addresses the verification of a logical conclusion, and MS 1.3.9 demonstrates that the author draws his authority from the Vedas. In MS 4.1.3 the author argues about the difference between vidhis to determine which are puruṣārtha and which are kratvārtha. One reason for the use of śāstra to refer to the Veda lies in the relationship of the MS to the Vedas. As a result

\textsuperscript{18} See also MS 1.3.6, 3.3.43, 3.7.18, 6.2.17, 6.2.18, 6.4.19, 6.6.34, 9.2.32, and 11.3.39.
of Mīmāṁsā speculation on the nature of reality, and particularly the relationship of the Veda to reality, the Veda is the source of all instruction. For the author of the MS, the Veda is their śāstra, their source of precepts—that is, commands and instructions.

In the texts I have surveyed here the term śāstra refers to the instructional system or text that is under discussion or under construction. All the authors refer to the śāstra as the authority, according to which things are done or understood. This captures the dual sense of the root śās; the teacher has the authority to teach or to command, that is instruct. The Vedas are the intellectual heritage of the MS in the same way that the tradition of astronomy that predates the VJ is its intellectual heritage. Both texts employ the term in the same way. Śāstra is an instructional system, sometimes a specific text.\

Of the fourteen passages in which śāstra appears in the MS, twelve refer to the Veda, but the other two are found in the compound dharmaśāstra.

MS 6.4.25
ubhābhyaṁ vā na hi tayor dharmaśāstram ||

With respect to both, for there is indeed no śāstra with regard to the dharmas (of the rituals) for those two.\(^\text{19}\)

MS 6.7.6
śūdras ca dharmaśāstratvāt ||

And the Śūdra (should not be given away), because there is a śāstra of dharma.\(^\text{20}\)

In both of these passages śāstra could mean “instruction” or “system of instruction.” In MS 6.4.25, the eating is contingent because there is no śāstra with regard to the dharmas, the elements of the ritual. It could mean a specific instruction with regard to this dharma of the ritual, though this interpretation rests largely on the singularity of the example. In this context, śāstra could also refer to a system of instruction whose topic is the dharmas.

\(^\text{19}\) The Brahmāsūtra passages use śāstra in the same manner, that is, śāstra is Veda, see BS 1.1.3, 1.1.30, 2.3.33.

\(^\text{20}\) In reality, the “eating” should be contingent upon both acts; because it has not been laid down as an accessory of the acts. (Jha)

\(^\text{21}\) The Śūdra also (should not be given away); because he is there for being instructed in his duties. (Jha)
of ritual, that is, ritual performance. There is no ritual śāstra that refers to this particular instance. In MS 6.7.6, the author adds the Śūdra to a list of things inappropriate to give away in the ritual. The reason for not giving the Śūdra away is the existence of a dharmaśāstra. While this could potentially refer to a specific instruction with regard to dharma, this is highly unlikely. First, the author must certainly have been familiar with the dharmaśāstra as a genre by this time. Second, and more relevant, is that the common use of śāstra in the MS is to refer to a textual embodiment of a system of instruction generally, and the Veda specifically.

The more common use of the term śāstra in the MS bears directly on the Dharmasūtra of Āpastamba. With reference to ĀDhS 1.12.11, cited above, Olivelle suggests comparison to MS 4.1.2. This passage appears in the middle of a discussion of the exegesis of rules from the Vedic corpus. The Āpastamba passage is also located in a section on rules, rules on the recitation of the Vedas and other rites. It seems that Āpastamba understood the world through a Mīmāṃsā lens. He drew upon the authority of the Vedas as the author of the MS did, a fact demonstrated by his use of śāstra in the passages I discussed. Thus, instructions—that is śāstras—draw their authority from the Vedas and Āpastamba’s use reflects the notion that all śāstra—all instruction, but specifically instruction on dharma—is directly related to the Veda. The Mīmāṃsā philosophy certainly preceded its codification in a text, thus the later date of the MS does not pose a problem for understanding a Mīmāṃsā view of Āpastamba. Āpastamba had a Mīmāṃsā world-view and the influence of that attitude is evidenced throughout the ĀDhS.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to draw very clearly the picture I have tried to sketch in this essay. Scholars have detected three distinct meanings for the term śāstra: instruction, system of instruction, and scripture, namely the Veda. I argue that the second meaning, system of instruction, has two shades of meaning. The authors in earlier texts use śāstra to refer to the system embodied in their text. It is not clear however, if the term also refers to the text itself. Later works demonstrate that śāstra also referred to a genre of literature, a common enterprise employed by many different disciplines.

The first meaning, instruction, is the oldest, and persists in varying degrees throughout the period. Despite its singularity and troubling context the one occurrence of śāstra in the RV may be safely interpreted in that context with the meaning of instruction.

In earlier texts the author used the term śāstra in a restricted sense, referring only to the system of instruction specific to that text. The context
indicates the referent of śāstra: in an astronomical text, it refers to the VJ; in a grammatical text it refers to Pāṇini’s work. Śāstra as a system of instruction had become common by this time.

Āpastamba uses śāstra in its older sense, but in a new context. His work reflects the Mīmāṃsā attitude about the Veda. For him, the śāstras are simply instructions, but the authority of the instruction is more intimately tied to the Veda. He does not apply the term to whole systems, i.e. dharmasūtras; this is evidenced by his frequent use of śāstra in the plural.

The subtle shading of śāstra’s second meaning, that is the use of śāstra to refer to the genre of texts, is not seen in Āpastamba. In Gautamadharmasūtra and the Mahābḥāṣya of Patañjali, however, śāstra is often used in compound, indicating that the authors needed to specify to which śāstra they were referring. Patañjali knew of a śāstra of grammar and a śāstra of dharma. He also knew about the Dharmasūtra as a particular expression of the dharmaśāstra tradition. By the time of Patañjali, perhaps before, there was a clear notion that śāstra was a genre, the literature of that well-developed intellectual tradition with established schools in different disciplines.

In the later śāstra tradition, the Arthaśāstra and the Mānavadharmaśāstra for example, the authors need to differentiate śāstras on different topics from one-another. This is done by using compounds that differentiate one śāstra from another śāstra. Authors needed to specify which śāstra they intended. The time when context alone made clear the referent of the śāstra had passed. This need had already arisen in the time of Patañjali, in the second century BCE. By the second century CE it was assumed.

The development of the idea that the Veda is a śāstra came after the acceptance of śāstra as a genre of literature. In the MS we see the fully-developed form of a philosophical outlook, the genesis of which is glimpsed in Āpastamba’s work. I suggest that the idea of the Veda as śāstra developed from the combination of a Mīmāṃsā world view and the conception of a treatise that propounded instructions, a śāstra. Śāstras are instructions on many different sciences. The Mīmāṃsā philosophers held the belief that the Veda was an infallible instruction. These ideas were married and the Veda as śāstra was born.
**ABBREVIATIONS**

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<td>RV</td>
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<td>Nir</td>
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<td>RPrāt</td>
<td>Ṛgvedaprātiśākhya</td>
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<td>RVJ</td>
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CITATIONS OF OCCURRANCES

Ṛgvedasamhitā: RV 8.33.16
Yāṣkīyanirukta: Nir 1.2 and 1.14
Ṛgvedapratiṣākhya: RPrāt 11.69, 14.64, and 14.68
Vedāṅgajyotiṣa (Ṛg Veda): VJ 25, 35 and 36
Vedāṅgajyotiṣa (Yajur Veda): VJ 35, 4, and 3
Āpastambaḥarmasūtra: ĀDḥS 1.12.11, 1.13.21, 2.10.12, 2.10.13, 2.13.1, 2.14.10, 2.15.23, and 2.21.15
Kātāyānaśrautasūtra: KŚŚ 1.6.21
Kātāyānaśūlbasūtra: KŚSuŚ 1.17, 7.6, and 7.19
Atharvapratiṣākhya: According to Śāṭrī (1942), the term sāstra also appears three times in AP 3.3.2, 3.3.19, and 3.4.1, although in my search of two copies of the text, I was unable to find any of these occurrences. In those cases where Śāṭrī was mistaken, there was a similar word, e.g. śastra; in this case, I found no such obvious mistake. Kanta places this text between Pāṇini and Patañjali, so if these occurrences are not erroneous they may have some impact on my argument. The extent of that impact is impossible to measure, unless I am able to locate the passages in the future.
Kātāyana’s Vārttikas: Kāty 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.9, 1.1.1.10, 1.1.62.1, 1.2.64.39 dharmasāstra, 1.1.68.4, 6.1.1.12, 6.1.1.13, 6.1.84.4, 6.1.86.5, 6.1.158.12, and 7.1.96.1.
Gautamadharmaṃśūtra: GDḥS 11.19 and 13.26
Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya: Pat. 1.1.1 (1), 1.1.1 (5), 1.1.1 (7) 2x, 1.1.1 (8) 2x, 1.1.1 (9) 3x, 1.1.1 (10) 2x, 1.1.1 (13), 1.1.1 (20) 3x, 1.1.1 (40), 1.1.8 (60) 3x, 1.1.44 (104), 1.1.45 (112), 1.1.47 (115) dharmasāstra, 1.1.49 (119), 1.1.57 (147), 1.1.62 (161) 4x, 1.1.62 (164), 1.1.68 (176), 1.1.69 (176), 1.2.9 (196) 2x, 1.2.43 (214), 1.2.64 (242) dharmasāstra, 1.2.64 (243) dharmasāstra, 1.3.1 (253) 3x, 1.3.2 (260), 1.4.2 (304), 1.4.2 (305) 3x, 1.6.1 (253), 2.1.1 (359), 2.1.1 (360), 2.1.1 (369), 2.1.58 (400), 3.1.2 (3), 3.1.85 (65), 3.1.91 (74), 3.3.1 (138), 4.2.94 (392), 6.1.1 (3) 5x, 6.1.1 (5) 3x, 6.1.77 (54), 6.1.84 (57) 14x, 6.1.84 (58) 5x, 6.1.86 (66) 4x, 6.1.108 (82), 6.1.127 (89) 2x, 6.1.135 (92), 6.1.157 (100), 6.1.158 (100), 6.3.74 (146), 6.3.109 (174) 2x, 6.4.41 (197), 6.4.42 (197), 6.4.104 (214), 7.1.93 (263) 2x, 7.1.96.1 (273) 3x, 7.3.54 (330) 2x, 8.1.1 (364), 8.2.38 (405) 3x, 8.3.37 (431), and 8.3.93 (425) 4x.
Baudhayanadharmasūtra: BDḥS 1.1.13, 1.10.8, 2.6.36, 2.7.22, 2.11.14, 3.3.16, 3.3.18, 4.1.3, 4.2.3, and 4.4.9
Vasiṣṭhadhammasūtra: VDḥS 10.20, 21.33, 24.6, and 27.19
Mīmāṃsāsūtra : MS 1.2.2, 1.3.6, 1.3.9, 3.3.43, 3.7.18, 4.1.3, 6.2.17, 6.2.18, 6.4.19, 6.4.25, 6.6.34, 6.7.6, 9.2.32, and 11.3.39.
Brahmasūtra: BS 1.1.3, 1.1.30, and 2.3.33
Yājñavalkyaśikṣā: YajŚ 1.21
Brhaddevatānukramaṇī: BD 3.48
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