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**[87] *Constituent-order in Sanskrit dvandva compounds. Linguistic habits and grammatical prescriptions: a look over textual facts and historical readings.***

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The explanation of word-order in Sanskrit dvandvas traditionally relies on Pāṇini's rules A 2.2.32-34, which crucially concern the pūrva pada, i.e. the constituent to which the first slot in the compound is assigned. This constituent has basically to end in -i and -u, or begin with a vowel and end in -a, or contain the lower number of vowels. Kātyāyana goes deeper into the analysis of these characteristics by adding more provisions in his comment on A 2.2.34. He intriguingly stresses not only the sound features of that word which goes first in the copulative compound, but also cultural reasons. However, as Whitney pointed out in his Sanskrit Grammar, "violations of them all are not infrequent." Now, what about those cases which seem to lay outside the rules of grammar? How do they work in the language? An interesting contribution by Cooper and Ross dating back to 1975 starts by asking "why the ordering of certain conjoined elements is fixed", and in its development detects systematic models followed by nouns in coordination. With regard to the Sanskrit, is it possible to single out an analogous behaviour? The present paper reflects on textual facts mainly about non ruled copulative compounds and matching syntactic strings; from the analysis of the given section of the Aṣṭādhyāyī onward, its aim is to go through modern and ancient interpretations for constituent-order in the copulative phrase, to focus on possible influences of the earliest indigenous theory over modern principles.

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