The Sanskrit literature abounds in Mahākāvyas. Some of them rank as poetical compositions of high merit. Mahākāvyas like Kumārasambhava, Rāghuvamsa, Kirātarjunīya, Mṛgākāvyva and Naisadhacharita are studied minutely, but several other mahākāvyas are hardly studied in detail.

Mahākāvyas composed with a double purpose deserve special notice. Bhattikāvyya represents the earliest example of this type of Mahākāvyva. The interweaving of illustrations with the narration of the story would not be necessarily appreciated from the purely literary point of view. The combination certainly facilitated the memorisation of tough rules of sciences (like Grammar and Poetics) through illustrations interwoven in the interesting narration of the story. Anyhow the successful combination of the narrative and the illustrative aspects required great ingenuity in addition to poetic insight as well as dexterity in the science or sciences concerned. From this point of view, Bhattikāvyya forms an important subject for special study.

The thesis is divided into four sections. In the Introductory section, I have dealt with the title of the work and the personal account of its author.
In section II, I have presented a study of Bhättikāvyam as a Mahākāvyam with emphasis on the poetic aspect of the composition.

In section III, I have analysed the contents and treatment of the illustrative aspect of the composition, especially with respect to Poetics and Grammar.

Here I have added an Appendix of examination of the alleged irregularities on the kāṇḍas on grammar.

In the concluding section, I have examined the different views about the poetic merits and demerits of the composition and given a general estimate of Bhättikāvyam with a double purpose.

The thesis is supplemented by five Appendices bearing on the critical study of Bhättikāvyam and its popularity.

Indices of the forms of verbs in the different Tenses and Moods illustrated in cantos of Tīnāntakāṇḍa are given at the end.

Bhättikāvyam represents not only the earliest known example of this type of mahākāvyam, but also the earliest example of a unique type innovated by Bhätti. Bhätti's example was followed by a number of other poets as indicated in Appendix C.

On account of its unique character, Bhättikāvyam has a number of commentaries written on it. Among them, the commentaries of Jayamaṅgaḷa and Mallinātha have proved very helpful comparatively. The MSS and the printed editions of Bhättikāvyam contain a few variations in numbering verses. Generally (i.e., unless
stated otherwise) I have followed the numbers given in Bhattikāvya with the commentary by Jayamaṅgala published by Venkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay.

Among printed editions, prefaces and notes by Prof. K.P. Trivedi and Prof. M.R. Kale have been very helpful in my initial studies. The other works on the Sanskrit literature bearing on Bhattikāvya have been referred to as far as possible. The relevant works and articles used for reference are enumerated in the bibliography.

I record here, with a profound sense of gratitude and pleasure, my indebtedness to Dr. Hariprasad G. Shastri for his inspiration, constant guidance and unfailing encouragement towards all the aspects of work for the present thesis. But for his help it would have been hardly possible for me to complete this work satisfactorily.

I also owe thanks to the authorities of (i) Gujarat College, Ahmedabad, (ii) Gujarat Vidyapitha, Ahmedabad and (iii) L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad for kindly permitting library facilities for my studies. The members of the library of B. J. Institute of Learning and Research deserve special thanks for their constant cooperation.

I acknowledge great indebtedness to Pt. Chimanalal J. Pandya, Vyakaranacharya (Benares) of Brahmachari Vadi. Sanskrit Pathashala, Ahmedabad for giving me valuable guidance in problems on Grammar.

I also express my sincere thanks to Dr. C. Hooykaas for sending me offprints of his contributions bearing on Bhattikāvya.

Ahmedabad,
8th July 1969. 

N.S. Shankar