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CHAPTER 7

Yājñavalkya as ritualist and philosopher, and his personal language

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§ 1 Introduction

All¹ early information on Yājñavalkya² stems almost exclusively³ from ŚB and from the slightly later BĀU, both of which have been transmitted in two recensions, the Kāṇva and the Mādhyandina. These four versions, thus, are a welcome means of checking the tradition.⁴ Major redactional

¹ I thank my discussants at Kyoto (Nov. 30, 2000), notably T. Gotō and W. Knobl, for their corrections and suggestions. Any remaining mistakes are, of course, mine.—The translations from ŚB are those of Eggeling, unless specified.

² One of the most interesting figures of Archaic India and Iran, next to Vasiṣṭha, the Buddha, and Zarathustra; see section 2.

³ Barring some JB passages: JB 1.19-20 ~ ŚB 11.3.1.1-4/5-8 (and the beginning of JB 1.19 ~ ŚBK 3.1.4.1-2); JB 1.22-26 ~ ŚB 10.6.1 (cf. ChU 5.11-18); JB 1.51-65 ~ ŚB 12.4.1-4 and JB 1.49 ~ ŚB 12.4.1.10; JB 2.76-77 ~ ŚB 11.6.3 (cf. BĀU 3.9); JB 2.228-299 ~ ŚB 2.5.1-5; note further Vādh Br. Caland 3: 40 (mentioning Vājasaneyā) ~ JB 1.19; they all have close parallels to ŚB, while Sāṅkhāyana Ār. 9.7 quotes VS 5.43, and ŚĀ 13.1 ~ BĀU 4.4-5. See the discussion of these parallels in Tsuji 1981: 350-352. It is notable that most of these passages come from the late additions to the JB dealing with the Agnihotra, JB 1-65; the same is true for the VādhB story.

⁴ Unfortunately, none of the texts is available in a really critical edition. D. Maue has made a start with the critical edition of the N. and S. versions of BĀUK 1, followed by C. Perez-Coffie (Harvard PhD 1994); BĀUM is available only in Weber's ŚB semi-critical edition and in Boethlink's conjecture-filled ed.; ŚBK (ed. Caland) extends only up

tampering⁵ should show up, given the competition between the various Vedic schools, in one of these recensions, and in some of the ŚB stories taken over into JB, ŚĀ and VādhB.

In view of the generally good transmission of ŚB, the text contains authentic or *almost* authentic materials from the period in question, though such information may, of course, be shaped and motivated by various contemporaneous interests. The Vedic statements be better taken at face value first, in spite of the twists and turns of contemporary fashions of interpretation of ancient texts.⁶

As will be seen below, the very texts supposedly composed or spoken by Yājñavalkya exhibit a particular style, which justifies the statement that we are dealing with authentic materials.

§ 2 Materials about Yājñavalkya

Yājñavalkya has been discussed several times and scholars have been fascinated by him, and several have contributed investigations about him, more recently Tsuji (1943/1981), Renou (1948), Horsch (1969), Fišer (1984), Witzel (1987, b, c), and Brereton (1997).

Why this fascination? I believe because he is one of the few *lively* people in the oldest strata of Indian literature. There are but a few such fascinating characters about whom we know more

to ŚBK 7 ~ ŚBM 5, has some notes for the rest of the text, but does not include any for the Upaniṣad.

⁵ Wilhelm Rau (1955) once briefly mentioned that he believed it was possible to show an archetype for both the BĀU versions. Cf. now Joel Brereton (1997) and especially C. Minkowski (1996) on the relationship JB ~ ŚB ~ BĀU, which points to an archetype for all *three* versions of a particular story that involves an old mistake; for more examples, see below.—In general, note that ŚBM and ŚBM usually differ only in small syntactic details (and ideal, but largely unexplored field of study!). In the Yājñavalkya quotes, too, there is little difference between the two versions.

⁶ The pendulum shifts every few decades between blind credulity in statements made in ancient texts to absolute denial of the existence of such figures as Yājñavalkya, the Buddha or Zarathustra,—a trend very much seen these days. Methodologically, it is better to take the information provided by the older texts at face value, and *then* investigate whether they contain internally consistent or contradictive materials, anachronistic information and some clear divergence in language (see below).

than sketchy details: Vasiṣṭha of RV 7, Yājñavalkya of ŚB and BĀU and, of course, the Buddha. Indeed, Yājñavalkya is *always* interesting, innovating, witty, ready with his puns. He is not just a ritualist but also a thinker, and sometimes, a mystic, especially so in the passage studied in some detail below, BĀU 4.3.

As is well known,⁷ the materials dealing with Yājñavalkya can be divided into three parts:⁸

- the “early” Yājñavalkya of ŚB 1-5—a ritualist, often innovative and witty;
- the “later” Yājñavalkya of ŚB 11-13—still a ritualist, but often a discussant in brahmanical disputes as well, all in sources that are slightly later than ŚB 1-5;
- and, finally, the Upaniṣadic thinker and, occasionally the mystic, of BĀU.

One might think, following the later Indian penchant for sectioning one’s life into several *āśramas*,⁹ that the Upaniṣad

⁷ See Tsuji 1981: 347 for details.

⁸ Some have doubted that we deal with the same Yājñavalkya here (Horsch, Ruben), or some suppose that the texts in BĀU represent altogether later developments; for this see below. I agree with Tsuji in regarding Yājñavalkya as *one* person, see Tsuji 1981: 347 sqq., and 1969: 32. But I do see serious editorial changes (and therefore additions to his image) in BĀU. The history of the redaction of ŚB, however, is complex and remains in the balance (see Caland 1990, introduction p. XIV).—Some have thought that the Yājñavalkya of BĀU is a different person from the Yājñavalkya of ŚB, especially when taking into account the seemingly different character of the *ritualist* versus the *philosopher* perceived in both texts. However, as will be seen below, the texts indicate that we have just one person; the same position is held by Tsuji, 1981: 347 sq. He stresses that especially in ŚB 11-13 there is no difference in character between the ritualist (ŚB 11.4.217; 12.4.1.10; 13.5.3.6) and the philosopher (ŚB 11.3.1.2-4; 11.6.2-3); also, he correctly remarks, if we were to admit more than one Yājñavalkya, we would also have to ‘split’ his contemporaries Uddālaka Āruṇi, Barku Vārṣna Āgniveśya and Buḍila Āsvataraśvi Vaiyāghrapadya and all other persons met with in the early and later parts of ŚBM and in BĀU. His (correct) conclusion is to give up the traditional ‘split’ between the Brāhmaṇa and Upaniṣad “periods.”

⁹ In the early period, just two stages: studentship, *grhastha*, and maybe old age (staying at the *antigrha* RV 10.95.4); later on, three stages: starting with Yājñavalkya who is the first to leave home attested in a text (in BĀU) as a kind of proto-*samnyāsin*; the *vānaprastha* is a still later development (see Sprockhoff 1979, 1981, 1984).

notices are of a later period in his life,—but Yājñavalkya is not seen in the texts as growing old following this pattern; at ŚB 3.8.2.24, for example, he is an old, gray-haired ritualist. And, the BĀU chapters (1-2, 4-6) do not *always* show him as a philosopher.¹⁰ In the discussion with his wife, Maitreyī, he speaks about the last questions to be asked, but he still is portrayed as a householder, be it that he—as the first person recorded in the texts—is preparing to go into homelessness. All these passages describe his various activities occurring simultaneously during the several stages of his life. We therefore have to treat all available passages as describing the *whole* person, and cannot compartmentalize Yājñavalkya into a separate ritualist or philosopher, or divide him up into several real life persons, and certainly not so according to a split into ŚB and BĀU.¹¹ It should also be noted that the “different” types of Yājñavalkyas appearing in the early part of ŚB (1-5) and the later one (ŚB 11-13) are due to the content of the texts, not to a difference in personality. The later parts clearly deal with additional material and discuss it in a more speculative way, often in form of dialogues (*brahmodya*), than the ritualistic sections in ŚB 1-5.¹²

The period he lived in is, of course, uncertain, but a few hints are provided by the names of his contemporaries, Uddālaka Āruṇi, Ajātaśatru Kāśya and Janaka Vaideha.¹³

¹⁰ In BĀU 6.3-4, instead, we also find (him?) the typical Veda teacher, giving final advice to his departing students, some of them of a peculiar nature, such as secret conception rites, or how to get a yellow-eyed son; note P. Thieme’s lecture about this section of BĀU in Kyoto 1989, on receiving the Kyoto Prize (unpublished).

¹¹ See Tsuji; cf. Ruben 1947,—the non-existence of a split would allow that even more passages in the early ŚB that state the opinion of Yājñavalkya could be regarded as interpolations, for which see n. 78, cf. n.10. On the late redaction of BĀU, and three levels in BĀU, see now Olivelle 1996: 3.

¹² The redaction of ŚB will have to be taken into account here. While most references to Yājñavalkya in ŚB 1-5 cannot be late additions, some may indeed have been inserted. Note for example the occasional differences with regard to ŚBK. Clearly, a thorough study of the redaction of this text is a high priority!

¹³ We can discern (however, see now Kasamatsu, MA thesis, Sendai) the following family tree:

*Upaveśi (BĀUK/M 6.5.3) → A/Āruṇa Aupaveśi (KS 26.10, TS 6.1.9.2; 6.4.5.1; TB 2.1.5.11, ŚB 2.2.2.20; note that MS 1.4.10 has Āruṇa Aupaveśi!) → Uddālaka Āruṇi Gautama (KS 13.12 pl.

Āruṇayah!; JB, JUB, AĀ) → Śvetaketu Āruṇeya (ŚB, BĀU, JB, KauṣU 26.4, ChU, KauṣU; ĀpDhS 1.2.5.40-6 regards him as more recent or younger (*avara*). Clearly, the Aruṇa/Āruṇa/Āruṇi overlap with the later YV Saṃhitā (prose) period.

Janaka is a contemporary of Ajātaśatru of Kāśi (BĀU 2.1.1, cf. KauṣU 4.1, for the Kāśi see also ŚB 13.5.4.19 sqq.); he already is a legendary figure (Mahājanaka) in the Pāli texts; similarly at also BĀU 2.1.1 (*Janako, Janakah*), and in the Kāthaka section, TB 3.10.9.9. It would be wrong to identify him with the famous Ajātaśatru of the Pāli texts, a contemporary of the Buddha, as the Upaniṣadic Ajātaśatru simply is king of Kāśi, not of Magadha; in addition, Kāśi (of the Pāli canon) had been given by Pasenadi of Kosala to his daughter who had married Ajātaśatru’s father, Bimbisāra, and it was taken away when Ajātaśatru murdered his father.

In addition, there is another Ajātaśatru, a Kuru King, (VādhB, see Witzel 1989/97). Note also that Āruṇi bewitched a descendent of Ajātaśatru, Bhadrāsena Ājātaśatrava, ŚB 5.5.5.14.

It seems unlikely that the Kāśi king Ajātaśatru could be identical with the Maghada king Ajātaśatru as Maghada is not (yet) mentioned as an important country in the Vedic texts (and an *Ajātaśatru of Maghada is simply unknown in the Veda).

However, there also is a Brahmadata Prāsenajita of Kosala, JB § 115, obviously the Kosala king Pasenadi found in Pāli; apparently both names were common in late Vedic as well as at the time of the Buddha. Pasenadi’s father is called Mahākosala, and this has a parallel in the Pāli texts with the Videha king Mahājanaka. All of this points to an earlier tradition, (well) before that of Ajātaśatru and the Buddha, c. 400 B.C.E. While Janaka is a contemporary of the pre-Buddha kings Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru of Kāśi, he is already regarded, at TB 3.10.9.9 in one of the older Kāthaka sections in the Taitt. school, as a king of the past. Cf. the discussion in Tsuji 1981: 353-354.

Finally, it should be noted that the late/post-Vedic theory (in TĀ and Pāṇini) known of YV teacher Vaiśampāyana—but not yet mentioned in the Vamśas—does not contain any clue for (near-) contemporaneity of Vaiśampāyana, his students Yājñavalkya and Pāṇini (cf. Tsuji 1981: 359). Note also that while Pāṇini knows of Vaiśampāyana and Tittiri, but does not even teach typical features of the prose sections of TS, not to speak of VS and ŚB. Both were beyond his interest and purview (Witzel 1989, Thieme 1935).

Tsuji adds some speculative notes based on the name Brahmadata Prāsenajita, king of Kosala, who is mentioned in BĀU 1.3.24, JUB 1.38.1, 1.59.1-3, (cf. ChU 1.8) who must have been a contemporary of Uddālaka, Śvetaketu and Yājñavalkya. (ChU 5.3.1, BĀU 6.2.1, JB 1.337-338, JB 1.316, JUB 1.38.4). On the other hand, his presumed father, Prasenjit (Pāli: Pasenadi) was a contemporary of the Buddha.

§ 3 ŚB texts by and about Yājñavalkya

What then does the ŚB tell us about Yājñavalkya? He occurs only in ŚB 1-5 and 11-13 as well as in the BĀU part of ŚB (14.4-9). But he is completely absent from the Śāṅḍilya section of ŚB (6-10), which, as A. Weber has shown long ago, is of more western origin than Yājñavalkya sections.¹⁴

Yājñavalkya thus appears to be a figure of the East, of Videha. However, he is clearly reckoned among the Kuru-Pañcāla Brahmins according to BĀU 3.1.1, in other words, he is an immigrant to the East that was quickly Sanskritizing in the last centuries before the Buddha.¹⁵ Just as his colleagues in BĀU 3, Aśvala (Āśvalāyana), Kahoḷa Kauṣītakeya,¹⁶ Uddālaka Āruṇi, he is one of the persons who were driving this process; he may indeed be responsible for redacting the VS, as reflected in the final sentences of ŚB.¹⁷

When we study Yājñavalkya of ŚB in context, he appears, variously, as a ritualist, a discussant, a philosopher.

Tsuji's observation, hesitatingly put forward and only for argument's sake, would countermand all evidence listed above and would make many Br. and Up. texts contemporaneous, or even slightly later, than the Buddha. One way out of the dilemma may be to assume that Brahma-datta is not the son of Prasenjit/Pasenadi, but of one of his ancestors, also called Prasenajit (cf. Āruṇa- Āruṇi- Āruṇeya). Indeed, there is a king Brahmadata of Kāsi (Pāli Vinaya i.342 sqq., DhA 1.56 sq.) who conquered Kosala, murdered his king Dīghiti but later on gave the kingdom back to Dīghiti's son Dīghāvu.

Obviously, the dynastic history of Kosala and Kāsi is more complicated than the Vedic texts allow us to see, and we cannot put too much faith into the coincidence of the name Prasenajit of Kosala and of Brahmadata Prāsenajit. (Note that there are other Brahmadata, kings of Assaka and of Hatthipura at Kapilānagara).

¹⁴ Cf., now Witzel 1989 on dialects.

¹⁵ See Witzel 1997. On Uddālaka see now Kasamatsu (MA thesis, Sendai University).

¹⁶ ŚĀ 15 (Vamśa) makes him a student of Uddālaka Āruṇi; cf. Tsuji 1981: 355).

¹⁷ ŚB 14.9.4 *ādityānīmāni śuklāni yajūṃsi vājasaneyena yājñavalkyenākhyāyante*; cf. Witzel 1987c (see below).

§ 4 Yājñavalkya, the ritualist

Most prominently, Yājñavalkya appears as the typical YV ritualist who discusses (in about a dozen cases) the minute details of the complicated Śrauta ritual. His opinions are sometimes clever, sometimes innovative, but they are not always followed even by his own school, the Vājasaneyins. Many of them are too detailed and outwardly obscure to be of particular interest here. They are, nevertheless, given here in detail as to provide an impression of Yājñavalkya, the ritualist.

§ 4.1 Discussion of ritual details

At ŚB 1.1.1.9 he discusses such a technical point, the eating on the Upavasatha (fasting) day; when the gods are guests in one's house, one cannot eat before them, and therefore should fast; Yājñavalkya, however, proposes to eat that part of the offerings (*havis*) which are not regarded as regular food. The point is to eat and, at the same time, not to, that is to do neither/nor.¹⁸

ŚB 1.9.2.12 refers to a traditional custom and ritual: one conceals the offerings from the place where the wives of the gods are fed by offerings: "and accordingly, Yājñavalkya says,¹⁹ 'whenever human women here wish to eat (they do so) apart from men.'" (discussion below 4.4).

At 2.3.1.21, there is a technical discussion on a point of the Agnihotra ritual, again referring to eating the remnants of the offering. Here the excuse to eat them is motivated by the sub-

¹⁸ "Yājñavalkya, on the other hand, said: 'If he does not eat, he thereby becomes a sacrificer to the Manes; and if he does it, he eats before the gods have eaten: let him therefore eat what, when eaten, counts as not eaten.'"

tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ | yadi nāśnāti, pitṛdevatyō bhavati; yady u aśnāti devān atyaśnātīti. sa yad evāśitam anaśitam tad aśnīyād iti. - - - A similar point is made at KathĀ 2.143 and KS 29.2 *prāśyā3 na prāśyā3 iti mīmāṃsante: yat prāśnīyāt, prākārukas syād. yan na prāśnīyād, ahavis syād. avajighred. ubhayam eva karoti*, where the solution is just to smell: thereby one eats and does not eat at the same time; cf. C. Lopez in *EJVS* 3, October 1997. Other positions are given in the ŚB passage as well.

¹⁹ *tasmād imā mānuṣya striyas tira ivaiva pumāṃso jighatsanti, yā iva tu tā iveti ha smāha Yājñavalkya.*

mission that the Agnihotra is to be looked upon as a domestic sacrifice (*pākayajña*) and when one, “after the offering into the fire, sips water and licks up (the milk), then this is indeed (characteristic) of the domestic offering.”²⁰

At 3.1.1.4, there is a discussion about the nature of the offering ground. Yājñavalkya tells a story about his and Sātyayajña’s going to offer a certain Vārṣṇya: Sātyayajña thinks that the whole earth is divine and hence an offering ground. Yājñavalkya, however, argues that it is the *offering priests* who constitute the place (or medium) of worship (for a discussion, see below, 4.6).²¹

At 4.2.1.7, Yājñavalkya speculates, but his actual praxis differs: The two Soma cups, the Śukra and Manthin *grahas*, are supposed to be drawn for the Asura-Rakṣas, Ṣaṇḍa and Marka, as was done previously by the gods who drove them away; however, in ritual the cups are actually offered to the deities. “Yājñavalkya said: ‘Should we not rather draw them for the deities, since that is, as it were, the sign of conquest?’ In this, however, he merely speculated, but he did not practice it.” In other words, in this particular case, he is rather conservative.²²

At 4.6.1.10, there is a discussion about the Aṃśu cup, that is whether it should involve actual pressing or not, as Budila Āśvatarāśvi thinks. Yājñavalkya says: “nay. Let him press (quoting RV 7.26). For no other deity he strikes but once: thus he does

²⁰ *tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ | na vai yajña iva mantavai pākayajña iva vā itīdam hi yad anyasmin yajñe srucyav adyati, sarvaṃ tad agnau juhoty. athaitad agnau hutvotsrpyācāmati nirleḍhi, tad asya pākayajñasyeveṭi; tad asya tat paśavyaṃ rūpam. paśavyo hi pākayajñaḥ.*

²¹ *tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ | vārṣṇyāya devayajanaṃ joṣayitum aima. tat sātyayajño 'bravīt: sarvā vā iyam prthivī devī devayajanaṃ. yatra vā asyai kva ca yajuṣaiva pariḡrhya yājayed iti rtvijo haiva devayajanaṃ | ye brāhmaṇaḥ śuśruvāṃso 'nūcānā vidvāṃso yājyanti, saivāhvalaitan nediṣṭhamām ivā manyāmaha iti—The Kāṇva version (ŚBK 4.1.1.4) differs slightly: tad u hovāca yājñavalkyo vārṣṇo 'ayakṣateti. tasmai devayajanaṃ īkṣitum ayameti ...“Accordingly, Yājñavalkya spoke, ‘Vārṣṇa intended to sacrifice (ayakṣata). Thus we went (ayama!) to look for a place of worship.’ ...”*

²² *api hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ | no svid devatābhya eva grhṇīyāmā3, vijitarūpam iva hīdam iti. tat vai sa tan mīmāṃsām eva cakre, net tu cakāra.*

different from what he does for other deities: therefore let him press.”²³

At 4.6.8.7, Yājñavalkya explains why one has to take out a fire brand and disperse it to the various *dhiṣṇya* hearths: “they who do so, said Yājñavalkya, slay with those fire-brands of theirs.”²⁴ But again, ŚB does not agree fully with Yājñavalkya but offers a second possibility, that of taking the fire brands and proceeding to the animal sacrifice for Prajāpati.

§ 4.2 Discussion of myth and ritual

In a few cases, Yājñavalkya does not simply argue his case but he uses traditional myth, though—as always in the post-Ṛgvedic texts—shaped by sacrificial practice.

At 2.4.3.2, one such sacrificial myth is told by Yājñavalkya and Kahoḍa Kauṣītaki. It deals with the offering of first fruits (*āgrayaneṣṭi*). While Kahoḍa, the main proponent of KB, thinks that the sap of the plants belongs to Heaven and Earth, is offered to the gods and then eaten by humans, Yājñavalkya ventures into a long mythological tale²⁵, interspersed by (his own?) Brahmana style explanations that stretches from 2.4.3.2-11. His tale and his explanations stress the fact that it was the sacrifice by the gods

²³ *tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ | abhy eva ṣuṇuyān na soma indrama-suto mamāda nābrahmāṇo maghavānaṃ sutāsa ity rṣiṇābhyanūktaṃ na vā asnyasyai kasmai cana devatāyai sakṛd abhiṣunoti, tad anṣyathā tataḥ karoti, yathā cānyābhya devatābhyaḥ tasmād abhyeva ṣuṇuyād iti.*

²⁴ *tair eva teṣām ulmukaiḥ praghnaitīti ha smāha Yājñavalkyo ye tathā kurvanti.*

²⁵ 2.4.3.2 *tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ / (non-mythological sections in { }) devās ca vā asurās cobhaye prājapatyāḥ pasprdhire ... tasmīn ājim ājanta. 2.4.3.5 tāv indrāgnī udajayatām / tasmād aindrāgnau dvādaśa-kapālaḥ purodāso bhavatīndrāgnī hy asya bhāgadheyam udajayatām. tau yatrendrāgnī ujjigīvāṃsau tasthatus. tad viśve devā anvājagmuḥ. 2.4.3.6 {kṣatram vā indrāgnī / viśo devā yatra vai kṣatram ujjayaty. anvābhaktā vai tatra viṣṭ tad viśvān devān anvābhajatām. tasmād eṣa vaiśvadevaś carur bhavati} ... 2.4.3.11 etena vai devāḥ / ya-jñeneṣṭvobhayaṇām ośadhīnām, yās ca manuṣyā upajīvanti, yās ca paśavaḥ kṛtyām iva tvad viṣam iva tvad apajaghrus. tata āśnan manuṣyā āliśanta paśavaḥ.*

that made the plants, poisoned by the Asuras, eatable both for humans and cattle, in other words, this is another myth about the establishment of the world and of culture.

At 2.5.1.2, Yājñavalkya, in connection with another sacrificial myth, quotes the R̥gveda, but ultimately insists on his own opinion in a myth dealing with the repeated creation²⁶ by Prajāpati: birds, reptiles other than snakes, then snakes are “emitted” by him all of which “vanished (*parā bhū*)”. “Yājñavalkya, on his part, declared them to be of two kinds only; but they are of three kinds according to the R̥k.” (RV 8.90.14, see ŚB 2.5.1.4, JB 2.228-229). ŚB 2.5.1.3, 5 actually adds a fourth creation, the mammals including humans, whose offspring does no longer die because of the mother’s milk provided for them.²⁷ Unfortunately, it is not clear whether Yājñavalkya wanted to include, in his two classes, the “perished” beings and humans, or whether he simply “rationalized” and combined the various “perished” beings into two classes, birds and reptiles.²⁸ In both passages quoted here, he shows himself as the typical Brāhmaṇa “theologian” who uses a mixture of prose exposition and ready-made mythology to drive home his point.²⁹

²⁶ A common topic in many mythologies, e.g., the Popol Vuh of the Quiché Mayas. Only the last creation is viable.

²⁷ *prajāpatir ha ... prajā asrjata. tā asya prajāḥ sṛṣṭāḥ parābhūvus. tānīmāni vayāmsi. puruṣo vai prajāpater nedīṣṭhaṃ. dvipād vā ayam puruṣas. tasmād dvipādo vayāmsi. sa aikṣata prajāpatiḥ / yathā nv eva puraiiko 'bhūvam evam u nv evāpy etarhy eka evāsmīti. sa dvitīyāḥ sasrje. tā asya paraiva babhūvus. tad idaṃ kṣudraṃ sarīsrpaṃ, yad anyat sarpebhyas. tritīyāḥ sasrja, ity āhus. ta asya paraiva babhūvus. ta ime sarpā. etā ha nv eva dvayīr. yājñavalkya uvāca trayīr u tu punar rcā ... 2.5.1.4 tasmād etad ṛṣiṇābhyanūktam / prajā ha tisro atyāyamīyur iti ...*

JB 2.228 *prajāpatiḥ prajā asrjata. tā asya sṛṣṭāḥ parābhavan. tad idaṃ sarīsrpaṃ abhavad yad anyat sarpebhyah. sa dvitīyā 'asrjata. tā asya paraivābhavan. te matsyā abhavan. sa tritīyā asrjata. tā asya paraivābhavan. tāni vayāmsy abhavan. sa aikṣata yā imās trayīḥ prajā 'asrkṣy rte brahmana rte 'nnādyād rte yajñāt parā tā abhūvan.*

²⁸ This is an interesting classification, see H.-P. Schmidt (1980) on Indo-Iranian animal categories.

²⁹ K. Hoffmann, Die Komposition eines Brāhmaṇa-Abschnittes, 1975-6, 208-220, and Witzel 1996.

§ 4.3 Brahmodya discussion in later parts of ŚB

Turning now to the added sections of ŚB, 11-13, we find, at 11.3.1.4 an esoteric explanation of Agnihotra. King Janaka of Videha,³⁰ obviously one of the major figures that Sanskritized the East, once asked Yājñavalkya about the Agnihotra; he explains it variously as water, truth, and fervent belief in the efficacy of a ritual (*śraddhā*) (see below 4.4 and n.36, on ŚB 1.31.26):

“... ‘If there were no water, wherewith wouldst thou offer?’ He spake, ‘Then indeed, there would be nothing whatsoever here, and yet there would be offered the truth in faith.’”³¹

At 11.4.2.17, Yājñavalkya supports a ritualistic detail, the cutting of the four or five cuttings of the offered cake and the use of ghee: (cf. ŚB 1.7.2.7 sqq.) “Concerning this Yājñavalkya said: ‘When after making an underlay (of ghee), and cutting portions (from the sacrificial dish), he bastes them (with ghee), then indeed he satisfies them, and they being satisfied, the gods fill (for him) gold cups.’”³² The support for a ritualistic detail is justified with myth or popular beliefs: the rewards one expects after death, in the realm of the ancestors or even that of the gods.

At 13.5.3.6, he discusses the Vapā offerings and which one of them is to be offered first. Various Brahmins give their opinion, “but the established practice is different from that. Now Yājñavalkya said: “They should proceed simultaneously with the (omenta) of Prajapāti’s (victims) and simultaneously with those consecrated to single gods: it is in this way he gratifies them deity after deity, that he goes straightforwardly to the completion of the sacrifice and does not stumble.”³³

³⁰ See Witzel 1997: 319 sq.

³¹ ... *yad āpo na syuh, kena juhuyā iti?*

sa [Yajn] hovāca: na vā iha tarhi kiṃ canāsīd (!).³¹ athaitad ahūyataiva satyaṃ śraddhāyām iti.

³² *tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ / yad vā upastāryāvadāyābhighārayati, tad evaināḥ saṃtarpayati, tāsām saṃtrptānām devā hiraṇmayāms camasān pūryayante.*

³³ *atha hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ / sakṛd eva prajāpatyābhiḥ pracareyuh, sakṛd eva devatābhis; tad evainān yathādevataṃ pṛiṇāty, añjasā yajñasya samsthām upaiti, na havalatīti.*

§ 4.4 Yājñavalkya's witty style in discussing innovations

While all of the preceding discussions are in the traditional mold of Yajurvedic deliberations of ritual that lead to its explosive spread in so many ritual schools, Yājñavalkya also can be quite innovative.

At 1.9.3.16, he even changes a Mantra³⁴—something one should not be allowed to do at all outside the required changes of number and gender in applying certain mantras. His Mantra and that mentioned by Aupoditya actually differ in their wording. And, Yājñavalkya makes his point *ex cathedra*, using the expressions *aham + eva* here, and elsewhere: “Light-bestowing art thou, give me light (*varcas*)! so I say, said Yājñavalkya.”³⁵

This innovative and authoritarian tendency is especially visible in many of the quotations on ritual (see above).

His actual quotations frequently are witty, sarcastic and even derisive of the ritual, of others, and even of himself. Self-deprecating humor is not exactly a characteristic of Vedic personalities. However, in judging such statements, it must be observed that, like all trans-cultural sarcasm and joking, such sentences are difficult to understand. A lot of explaining is necessary before they can be appreciated.

There are a number of sarcastic remarks about his mainstay, the ritual, and its social underpinnings.

At 1.3.1.26, Yājñavalkya raises an interesting, “rationalistic” point: “why do not the (sacrificers) themselves become Adhvaryu priests? And why do not they themselves recite when far higher blessings are prayed for? How could these (*yajamānas*?) possibly have faith in this?”³⁶ Whatever the officiating priests in-

³⁴ The corresponding Mantra VS 2.26 is: *svayambhūr asi śreṣṭho raśmīr, varcodā asi, varco me dehi. sūryasyāvṛtam anvārtate.*

³⁵ *svayambhūr asi śreṣṭho raśmīr ity. eṣa vai śreṣṭho raśmīr, yat sūryas. tasmād āha: svayambhūr asi śreṣṭho raśmīr iti. varcodā asi, varco me dehīti tv evāhaṃ bravīmīti ha smāha yājñavalkyas.*

³⁶ Such sentences, just like the one about the non-existence of Indra RV 2.12.5, and especially RV 8.100.3, or in the YV Saṃhitās such as “who knows what is there after death?” point to real doubts at the time these texts were composed. Note also some of the Buddhist criticism of Brahmins: if the gods like valuable offerings, why don't the humans sacrifice their parents?

voke during the sacrifice that is for the benefits of the sacrificer alone.”³⁷

An important, a real life question, “how could these (*yajamānas*?) possibly have faith in this?”, that may have been asked by many of his and his colleagues' Kṣatriya or royal employers, is turned around and answered in a traditional manner. It must be noted, however, that this kind of questioning strikes at the heart of Brahmanical ritual, for as the seldom stated Śrauta theory goes,³⁸ without a *yajamāna*'s *śraddhā*, the ritual will not work.

At 5.5.5.14 a question of the frequent, but socially deprecated magic is discussed. The Sāutramaṇī ritual can be used for magic; for example, Āruṇi bewitched Bhadrāsena Ājātaśatrava³⁹ with it. Yājñavalkya simply says:

kṣipraṃ kilāstrṇute! ha smāha Yājñavalkyo ...

“Quick, then spread (the *barhiṣ*)! this Yājñavalkya, used to say.”

In other words, just perform a bewitching ceremony! The “joke” is in the simple statement: go ahead, just spread it out, no matter what people might think about sorcery. Sorcery, especially black magic, has been looked down upon socially, from RV 7.104 onwards.⁴⁰

The same is seen in more personal remarks. At 3.1.3.10 he offers a rather proud statement about his own health (cf. also the

³⁷ *kathaṃ nu na svayam adhvaryavo bhavanti? kathaṃ svayaṃ nānv āhur yatra bhūyasya ivāśiṣaḥ kriyate? kathaṃ nv eṣāṃ atraiva śraddhā bhavatīti?*

yāṃ vai kām ca yajña rtvija āśiṣam āśāṣate, yajamānasyaiva sā tasmād adhvaryur evāvekṣeta.

³⁸ See Koehler 1948/1973, and Witzel, on ritual (forthc.); this is just one of the many items that need further discussion, see Witzel in Hara-Fs. (forthc.), and cf. a brief summary of such items in Witzel 1998.—Note that Manu *śraddhādeva* in MS 4.8.1 acts only when invoked so by Indra, that is as one who always follows *śraddhā*, and cf. the famous Naciketas story, TB 3.11.8 and KaṭhUp. 1.2 (*tam ha kumāram santam ... śraddhāviveśa*).

³⁹ Son of Ājātaśatru, king of Kāśi?—Note Bharata dynastic names in *-sena*, such as Ugrasena, see Witzel 1995, and note the Epic and Buddhist tribal name Sūrasena; cf. Morton-Smith 1966.

⁴⁰ Cf. below on Śākalya, and note even the modern attitudes directed against Orissa AV Brahmins (Witzel 1985).

confident description of his old age, ŚB 3.8.2.24, below 4.5). The context is the one of anointing one's eyes, and ŚB tells us that human eyes were sore before, and had secretion. Yājñavalkya, however, simply states: "Sore indeed is the eye of man; mine is sound",⁴¹ so spake Yājñavalkya."⁴²

Several times, he is, in perennial Indian tradition, quite sarcastic about women.⁴³ At 1.3.1.21,⁴⁴ some ritualists opine that by placing the ghee⁴⁵ inside the Vēdi, one would deprive the gods from the company of their wives,⁴⁶ and (in the same way) the sacrificer's wife would become dissatisfied with her husband. "Yājñavalkya says: 'Let it be so as it has been prescribed

⁴¹ For *pra-śām* see J. Narten 1980: 161, n. 27.

⁴² *arur vai puruṣasyākṣi, prāśān mameti ha smāha Yājñavalkyo.*

⁴³ This attitude does not quite fit with that shown by Yājñavalkya in the Maitreyī story of BĀU 4.5.1. However, his other wife, Kātyāyanī, is said to know "only what women know (*striprajñāiva*)", which exemplifies not exactly the same derisive attitude met with in some of the ŚB texts attributed to Yājñavalkya. What he really strives after, also in his talk with the *brahmavādinī* Maitreyī, is to be *brahmiṣṭha*; it is therefore that he respects her as intellectual partner.

⁴⁴ *tād āhuḥ / nāntarvedy āsādayed. āto vai devānām pātnīḥ sāmyājayanty. āvasabhā āha devānām pātnīḥ karōti.*

paraḥpumsā (sic!) hāsya pātnī bhavatīti.

tād u hovāca yājñavalkyo: yathādiṣṭām pātnyā astu! kās tād ādriyeta, yāt paraḥpumsā vā pātnī syād?

yāthā vā yajño vēdir, yajña ājyaṃ yajñād yajña nirmimā iti. tāsmād antardedy evāsādayet.

⁴⁵ This is part of a discussion about the clarified butter from which oblations for the wives of the gods are made. It must be looked at by the wife of the Yajamāna "as not to exclude her" from the ritual (the wife is identified with ghee, ŚB 1.3.121, cf. also the introductory chapter to the new edition of the VādhB, ed. Y. Ikari), and ghee is then put inside the Vēdi, between the three sacred fires. That is, not too close to the wife, who sits outside the Vēdi, between the Gārhapatyā and Dakṣiṇāgni, cf. ŚB 1.3.1.12, 17. Cf. below.

⁴⁶ This clearly refers to the origin in butter of some primordial women, such as Mānāvī (MS 1.6.13, cf. Krick, *Agnyādheya*, Wien 1982: 368sq.). Does this also apply to the wives of the gods? There certainly is a close link between Aditi and the wife in ŚB 1.3.1.—Another reason is the identification of the participants in the sacrifice with the deities, for example, the Brahmins clearly are 'human gods' at ŚB 2.4.3.14.

for the wife!⁴⁷ Who would care whether his wife may consort with other men?" (Eggeling).⁴⁸

This translation, however, is not correct. As Wackernagel (*Ai. Gramm.* II 2, pp. 111, 134) has pointed out, *paraḥpumsā*⁴⁹ means "excluded from the circle of men" (aus dem Kreise der Männer entfernt) and is to be taken as a compound with governing preposition in the first member,⁵⁰ cf. also, in the present context a compound such as AV *tiro-janām* "distant from men (abseits von Menschen)." The goddesses thus would remain outside the group of the gods (*āvasabha*-).⁵¹ There is no referring to having sex with other men in this passage.⁵²

The Kāṇva version,⁵³ in one of its few real divergences, lets Yājñavalkya speak somewhat differently: "Yājñavalkya, how-

⁴⁷ That is, putting the ghee near the wife, making her look at it and then placing it inside the Vēdi (*antarvedī*).

⁴⁸ On this point, cf. the "confession ceremony" in Cāturmāsya ritual, Einoo 1986.

⁴⁹ In the sentence *paraḥpumsā* (sic!) *hāsya pātnī bhavatīti*, *paraḥpumsā* has the wrong accent; not, however, in the correct Kāṇva version.

⁵⁰ Such as those with *para-* 'dar über hinaus', e.g. RV *paró -mātra* 'übermässig', AV *paró 'kṣa* 'über den Gesichtskreis hinausliegend' etc.—Note that adverbial compounds seem to have final accent: RV *parogavyūti* 'über das Weideland hinaus', cf. in this passage also *antarvedī*.

⁵¹ Note the Bahuvrīhi accent, taken from *ava-sabhā-*, a compound governed by its first member, though we have the collocation, e.g., RV, AV *āva divāḥ*.

⁵² Though relatively lax contemporaneous *mores* are seen elsewhere. As is well known, the authors of some YV texts thought it necessary to include a yearly "confession ceremony" for wives in Cāturmāsya ritual (Einoo 1986). This would have been necessary for the lineage-obsessed men of the period (see H.-P. Schmidt 1987; Witzel, Hara-Fs, forthc.) who must exclude, just as effected by the later custom of child marriage (Thieme, *Jungfrauengatte*, 1963 = 1984: 426sq.), the intrusion of outside lineages among their children.

⁵³ Cf. Caland 1989: XIV on the history of the ŚB and its redaction; ŚBK 2.2.4.17: *tād ahur nāntarvedy āsādayed ity. āto vai devānām pātnīḥ sāmyājayanty. āvasabhā ha devānām pātnīḥ karōti. paraḥpumsā hāsya pātnī bhavati, yasyāntarvedy āsādāyanīti.*

tād u hovāca yājñavalkyo: 'ntarvedy evāsādayed iti hovāca. yathādiṣṭām pātnyā astv iti. yat sá (+sā) paraḥpumsā vā syād, yād vā kās táy ārtha iti hovāca.

yajño vēdir yajña ājyaṃ yajñād yajña nirmimā itj tāsmād antarvedy evāsādayet.

ever, said: 'Let him place it within the altar!' thus he said. "Let it be so as it has been prescribed for the wife,' thus (thinking) 'let him place it, whether or not she consort with other men.'" (Eggeling, footnote *ad. loc.*, read, however: "whether she is outside the circle of men").

At 1.9.2.12, a traditional custom is discussed, but the derisiveness is more hidden here. In ritual, one conceals the offerings from waiting deities while the wives of the gods eat, and this is explained by the -old- custom,⁵⁴ in the words of Yājñavalkya. Eggeling wrongly has "whenever human women here eat (they do so) apart from men." However, the desiderative requires "when-ever human women wish to eat"⁵⁵

The derisiveness lies in *jighatsanti*, which generally functions as regular suppletive desiderative of *ad* "to eat", thus: "they wish to eat, long to eat, look out to eat." The expression becomes understandable if we observe that women normally have to wait for men to finish eating to get their share, technically the "rest".⁵⁶ The passages describing the custom of eating separately, in the KaṭhB (Agnyādheya) and in the Aditi story (MS 1.6.12, KS 11.6, TS 6.5.5, ŚB 3.13.3-4; cf. ŚB 1.9.2.12, 10.5.2.9), simply state, matter of fact, that women 'eat' separately.

Yājñavalkya also is sarcastic about himself, his colleagues, and the whole class of Brahmins. At 11.6.3.2, King Janaka is reported to have performed a sacrifice; setting apart 1000 cows as prize, he said:

⁵⁴ That the custom of men and women eating separately (and women only after men) is an old one is clear from the Aditi story in Yajurveda prose (MS, KS, TS, ŚB), see Witzel, Hara Fs. (forthc.), K. Hoffmann 1975-6/1991 (Mārtāṇḍa), C. Lopez 1997. Cf. also KaṭhB (Agnyādheya Br.) *yā devapatnayas, tā hi [tiro ivaiva nila]yantīr na prāśnantīti*.

⁵⁵ *tasmād imā mānuṣya striyas tira ivaiva pumāṃso jighatsanti, yā iva tu tā iveti ha smāha Yājñavalkya*; cf. the shortened Kāṇva version: 2.8.3.11 (without mentioning Yājñavalkya!): *tasmād pumśo 'pīmā mānuṣyāḥ striyas tirā ivaivā jighatsanti* "Hence women also here swallow their food apart from men." (Egg.)

⁵⁶ Cf. Fišer 1984: 68sq. with criticism of Eggeling's translation. He adds that *ghas* is used more often for the eating by the women and compares ŚB 10.5.2.9, where the husband is admonished not to eat in the presence of his wife (*tasmā jīyāyā ante nāśnīyād*).

"he who is the most learned in sacred writ among you O Brahmins, shall drive away (these cows)".

(*etā, vo brāhmaṇā yo brahmiṣṭhaḥ, sa udajatām iti*) Yājñavalkya said: This way (drive) them! *sa hovāca Yājñavalkyo: 'rvacīr etā iti*.

"They said: 'Are you really the most learned⁵⁷ among us, Yājñavalkya?' He said: 'reverence to him who is the most learned in sacred writ! We are but hankering after cows!'"

(*so hovāca: namo astu brahmiṣṭhāya! gokāmā eva vayam sma iti*)

which describes the sentiment of Brahmins well, ever since the *dānastutis* of the RV, and since they appropriated the identification of speech (*vāc*) = cow, and turned *vāc* into a *real* cow in the Atharvadeva: the Brahmins denounce any injury made to a Brahmin's cow, its killing and also the lack of its presentation to Brahmins: AV 5.18; 5.19; 12.4-5.⁵⁸ (Witzel 1991).

§ 4.5 Yājñavalkya's style in rejecting some ritualistic details.

At ŚB 3.8.2.24, the basting of the omentum, followed by that of clotted ghee is discussed. A ritualist from the neighboring, rival Caraka school of the Black Yajurveda,⁵⁹ simply called a Caraka-Adhvaryu, happens to be present and challenges Yājñavalkya. He prefers the opposite order, arguing that clotted ghee is the same as breath.

"A Caraka-adhvaryu forsooth, cursed Yājñavalkya for doing so, saying: 'That Adhvaryu has shut out the breath; the breath shall depart from him!' But he (Yājñavalkya), looking at his arms, said: 'These hoary arms—what in the world has become of the Brahman's words!'"

sa ha sma bāhū anvekṣyāha: imau palitau bāhū, kva svid brāhmaṇasya vaco babhūveti?—na tad āhriyeta ...

The subtext is obvious: "I have performed the ritual all my life in the manner prescribed by the White Yajurveda; I am quite old

⁵⁷ For this expression see n. 82.

⁵⁸ At 12.4-5, the evil results of killing the Brahmin's cow and eating it are described. 12.4.31 "... she (*vaśā*) goes to the gods; therefore the Brahmins go on to ask for the cow". 33: "the cow is the mother of the Kṣatriya."

⁵⁹ For a discussion, see Witzel 1982.

now, and breath still has not yet left me.” This kind of one-liner put-downs are quite typical, as we have seen, for Yājñavalkya.

Most interestingly, while Yājñavalkya is reported at BĀU 3.2.13 to be one of the major early proponents of the new *karma* theory that revolutionized the older concept of simple rebirth,⁶⁰ he ridicules, at ŚB 3.1.2.21, the more radical aspect of the new, combined theory, that is the rebirth in animals and makes fun of the (new) custom of the avoidance of cow meat.⁶¹

“Let him not eat of either the cow or ox; for the cow and the ox doubtless support everything here on earth ... Hence, were one to eat (the flesh) of a cow, there would be, as it were, an eating of everything, or as it were, a going to the end (or to destruction). Such a one indeed would be likely to be born (again) as strange being, (as one of whom there is) evil report, such as ‘he has expelled an embryo from a woman’, ‘he has committed a sin’, let him therefore not eat (the flesh) of the cow and the ox. (*tasmād dhenv-anaḍuhayor nāśnīyāt*).

Nevertheless, Yājñavalkya said, “I, for one, eat it, provided it is tender!” (better: “fatty”)⁶² (*tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyo: ‘śnāmy evāham, aṃsalam ced bhava-tīti*).

Obviously, Yājñavalkya does not take this identification seriously; his matter-of-fact attitude towards cows is well reflected in his “hankering after cows” (see above) and further supported by his actual treatment of cows, at ŚB 12.4.1.10. The ritual question here is what to do if one’s Agnihotra cow lies down while being milked. Some of his colleagues make her get up with Mantras, and then give the cow to a Brahmin whom one does not intend to visit, thereby “fastening the suffering and evil on the Brahmin” in question. Yājñavalkya, however says, matter of fact: “... let him rather do it in this way: Let him make her get up by pushing her with a staff!”⁶³

⁶⁰ For the development of the concept of rebirth, see, in detail, H.-P. Schmidt, 1969, 1997; cf. also Witzel 1984a, b, 1998.

⁶¹ Details in Witzel 1991.

⁶² See discussion by Mehendale 1977 who adds: “secondarily, ... through the Brahmanical identification of *médas* [‘fat’] with *médha* ‘full of sacrificial essence’. The word is a near-hapax, see Fišer 1984: 69.

⁶³ (*tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ: aśraddhadhānebhyaḥ haibhyaḥ gaur apakrāmaty ārtyo vā āhutim vidhyanti- ittham eva kuryād: daṇḍenaivainām vipiṣyothāpayed iti,—*

Typical for him are, thus, the Gordian knot solutions, with the expressions, though not necessarily the actual words, often taken from daily life:

- “Just push (the cow) with a stick ...—
- “Drive (the cows) here! —
- “We are but hankering after cows! —
- “I, for one, eat (cow meat), provided it is fatty! —
- “Quick, then, spread (the *barhiṣ*)! —
- “Who would care whether his wife may be outside the circle of men?”

§ 4.6 some further insights into his personality

Finally, these quotes provide some further insight into his personality. While he criticizes general human behavior and especially that of his colleagues, he does not exclude himself from such observations. In fact, he does not care so much about his own “face” but rather about being *brahmiṣṭha* “the best of the brahmans.”⁶⁴

At 11.6.2.2-10, King Janaka and some traveling Brahmins discuss how best to perform the Agnihotra. Yājñavalkya is lauded by the king for the best understanding and given 100 cows; but the king tells him that not even Yājñavalkya knows the details of the two libations of the Agnihotra. The Brahmins then deliberate whether to challenge the King, a Rājanya, to a disputation, (*brahmodya*). Yājñavalkya, however, says, rather sophistically: “We are Brahmanas and he is a Rājanya: if we were to vanquish him, whom would we say we had vanquished? But if he were to vanquish us, people would say of us that a Rājanya had van-quished Brahmans: do not think of this!” The other

(*tad yathavādo dhāvatyato ‘śvo vāsvatāro vā gadāyita balīvarado vā yuktas, tena daṇḍaprajitena tottraprajitena yam adhvanam samīpsyati, tam samaśnuta evam evaitayā daṇḍaprajitayā yam svargaṃ lokam samīpsyati tam samaśnute ...*) “And just like horse, mule, ox yoked ... The cow being urged forward by staff or goad, attain that heavenly world which he desires to reach.” Āruṇi offers another solution: keep the cow to yourself, which is ŚB practice. JB 1.59 has shortened the quotation of this saying: *tad u hovāca vājasaneyo ‘śraddadhānebhyaḥ haibhyaḥ gaur apakrāmati. ārtyo vā āhutim (?) vidhyanti. ittham eva kuryāt. daṇḍam eva labdhvā tenainām vipiṣyothāpayet.*

⁶⁴ Cf. the idea of the “good Brahmin” of the Buddha, Dīghanikāya 13.

Brahmins agree, but Yājñavalkya drives after the king on his own chariot, overtakes him, and the king asks him: “Is it to know the Agnihotra, Yājñavalkya?”—“The Agnihotra, O King!” Yājñavalkya replies. The King then explains the Agnihotra to him and Yājñavalkya grants him a wish to be asked for later on (cf. ŚB 14.7.1.1 *samenena vadiṣya ity*).⁶⁵ ŚB concludes “Thenceforth Janaka was a Brāhmaṇa.”⁶⁶

It is interesting to observe that Yājñavalkya thinks of the Brahmin’s position in the society and tells his fellow Brahmins not to accept the challenge of a Kṣatriya, but then, in secret, does precisely that by approaching Janaka and becoming, in fact, his student.⁶⁷ In other words, Yājñavalkya strives after secret knowledge (appropriate for a *brahmiṣṭha*) even in spite of his colleagues and outwits them and does not let them know that he went against his own advice. Nevertheless, in this way, he keeps up being a *brahmiṣṭha* ‘the most qualified, highest ranked Brahmin’ (see n. 82, cf. above 4.4 on ŚB 11.6.3.2) in the eyes of the society.

He expresses this sentiment differently at 1.9.3.16, in the context of a mantra (VS 2.26, *svayambhūr asi śreṣṭho raśmīr ity*) that speaks about the light of the sun “self-existent are you, the best ray of light (*varcas*)”⁶⁸ “for at this indeed the Brāhmaṇa should strive, that he be a *brahmavarcaśin*.”⁶⁹

⁶⁵ With various interpretations, in the tradition, of *samenena vadiṣye* as *sam enena vadiṣye* “I will talk with him” or *sa mene: na vadiṣye* “he thought, ‘I will not talk (with him).’” Even the accented MSS of ŚB/BAU vary here and allow both interpretations. Interestingly, in a discussion I had in a Veda school at Kapileshvarapuram (Andhra) in 1992, the Paṇḍit at first could not resolve this very question put to him, thought about it for a day, and came back with the internally consistent solution: since Yājñavalkya granted Janaka a wish earlier, at ŚB 10.6.2.6, *samenena vadiṣye* in ŚB 14.7.1 was therefore to be interpreted as *sam enena vadiṣye*.

⁶⁶ *tato brahmā janaka āsa*. Does that mean ‘a real (*varṇa*, class) Brahmin’ or a *brahmiṣṭha* in the sense of Yājñavalkya? Taking into account the rankings we have to observe among the Brahmins (see n. 82), likely, only the first.

⁶⁷ Normally, one does so by approaching one’s new teacher with fuel in one’s hand, see the discussion in Witzel 1987.

⁶⁸ *svayambhūr asi śreṣṭho raśmīr ity—esā vai śreṣṭho raśmīr yāt sūryas. tāsmād āha: svayambhūr asi śreṣṭho raśmīr iti varcodā* (sic!) *asi varco me dehūti tv evāhām bravīmīti ha smāha yājñavalkyas*.—On

This is in line with his general approach to being a Brahmin. At 3.1.1.4, he argues that the offering priests constitute “the place [or, the medium] of worship; wheresoever wise and learned Brahmins,⁷⁰ versed in sacred lore, perform the sacrifice, there no failure takes place: that (place of worship) we consider the nearest (to the gods)”⁷¹

However, Yājñavalkya is, as was seen above, quite concerned about his own image *vis à vis* his colleagues. At 11.6.3.2, he wins in a discussion. His colleagues then discuss who shall challenge him. Finally, it is the “shrewd” Śākalya who is threatened with a split head if he cannot answer Yājñavalkya, and who actually loses his head in the end (Witzel 1987). In fact, Yājñavalkya is generally regarded as an authority (see above) and ŚB describes him as such: At 11.4.3.20, it is told how the mythical (Ṛgvedic) Ṛṣi Gotama Rāhūgaṇa⁷² discovered the Mitravinda (“find a friend!” or “find Mitra!”)⁷³ sacrifice: it went away to Janaka of Videha, he searched for it in the Brahmins versed in the “limbs” (*aṅga*) of the Vedas, and finally found it in Yājñavalkya.⁷⁴ In other words, it again is Yājñavalkya who is more learned than his colleagues.

the meaning of the difficult *varcas*, note the Śvetaketu story (ChU 6) and see the discussion by Tsuchiyama 1990.

⁶⁹ ...*iti ha smāha Yājñavalkyas. tad dheva brāhmaṇena iṣṭavyam yad brahmavarcaśi syād ity...*

⁷⁰ Note that Yājñavalkya’s hidden point here may be that he advocates his colleagues, the learned Brahmins from the western countries (Kuru and Pañcāla), who are needed to recite the texts and to perform the rituals properly (see Witzel 1997: 327sq.).

⁷¹ *tad u hovāca yājñavalkyah / vārṣṇyāya: devayajanam joṣayitum aima.*

tat sātyayajño ’bravīt. sarvā vā iyam pṛthivī devī devayajanam, yatra vā asyai kva ca yajusaiva pariṅhaya yājayed iti.

ṛtvijo haiva devayajanam. ye brāhmaṇāḥ śuśruvāṃso ’nūcānā vidvāṃso yājyanti, saivāhvalaitan nediṣṭhamām iva manyāmaha it.

⁷² A RV poet, otherwise—anachronistically—known from the story of Videgha Māthava at ŚB 1.4.1 (Witzel 1997: 308).

⁷³ Word play involving *mitra* “friend” and *Mitra* ‘god Mitra, agreement’ is frequently found.

⁷⁴ See below on *aṅgajid/aṅgavid*, Fišer (1984: 72) proposes to emend to *aṅga-vid-brahmaṇa*). The text continues: “thus one finds Mitra, his kingdom prospers, he conquers recurrent death, gains all life ...” Is this wish instigated by the need to find friends and allies against the (admittedly later attested) Vajji confederation in N. Bihar?

In passing it may be added that BĀU provides some more lively details about his private life, such as his dialogue with one of his wives, Maitreyī (BĀU 2.4., 4.5) when he had decided to leave her and his other wife, Kātyāyanī, for homelessness⁷⁵; it also sheds some further light on Yājñavalkya's relationship with his fellow Brahmins at the court of king Janaka of Videha, as well as Janaka himself.

§ 5 Authorship of the Yājñavalkya quotations

This concentrated praise of Yājñavalkya raises the question whether such characterizations can be regarded as true, and whether his words were actually spoken by him or were only later on attributed to him, as one step in his Rṣification.⁷⁶ It therefore is instructive to take a look at the linguistic peculiarities of the words reportedly spoken by Yājñavalkya. A number of Yājñavalkya's quotes share some peculiarities of expression.

1. He likes to stress his opinion with the mentioning of *aham*, followed by *eva* "I, for one"

tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyo:

'śnāmy evāham, amśalam ced bhavatīti. 3.1.2.21

iti tv evāham bravīmūti ha smāha Yājñavalkyas. tad dheva brāhmaṇenaiṣṭavyam yad brahmavarcaṣī syād ity. 1.9.3.16

11.4.3.20 *tam haitam gotamo rāhūgaṇah vidām cakāra. sā ha janakam vaideham pratyutsasāda. tām hāṅgijid brāhmaṇeṣv anviyeṣa. tām u ha yājñavalkye viveda sa hovāca: sahasram bho yājñavalkya dadmo yasmin vayam tvayi mitravindām anvavidāmeti.*

vindate mitram rāṣtram asya bhavaty, apa punarmrtyuṃ jayati, sarvāyam āyureti, ya evaṃ vidvān etayestyā yajate, yo vaitad evam veda.

⁷⁵ Yajnavalkya is the first person mentioned in the Vedic texts who leaves home, more clearly in BĀU 4.5.1 than in 2.4.1; whether he can actually be called an early *saṃnyāsin* is another question, also for the later developments see Sprockhoff 1976, 1981, 1987.

⁷⁶ See Fišer 1984: 56sq. and especially on language, p. 60 sq., and *passim*. He stresses, correctly, that "some of the words in Yājñavalkya's quotations are not attested anywhere else in the Brāhmaṇas, others are not registered in any other *śruti* text, and, in some cases, in any other Vedic work". For more examples, see below.

2. Yājñavalkya likes to use the particle *svid*:
api hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ / no svid devatābhya eva grhṇīyāmā3 4.2.1.7
sa ha sma bāhū anvekṣyāha: imau palitau bāhū, kva svid brāhmaṇasya vaco babhūveti? (cf. also 3.8.2.24.⁷⁷)

In both cases, the use of *svid* is a typical feature of the eastern language, and also of some sections of JB (Witzel, 1989: 196). However, it is important to notice that this is not so in the older sections of ŚBM (6%) and ŚBK (19%)—there is no case at all in ŚB 6-10!—as compared to the increase in ŚB 11-13 (138%) and especially in the Upaniṣad (285%). This obviously raises the question whether these quotes were added later.⁷⁸

However, among the quotations attributed to Yājñavalkya in ŚB 1-5, they stand out as a feature that is typical for the later parts of ŚB/BĀU where Yājñavalkya figures prominently. In other words, the idiosyncratic use of *svid* may point to a feature of Yājñavalkya's and the easterner's language. The use of particles is, as is well known, easily influenced by geographical and temporal factors.

3. However, Yājñavalkya's use of some *hapax* or rare words stand out as well. This feature applies to all levels of ŚB and BĀU texts, from ŚB 1-5 onwards.

To begin with, the uncertain formation ŚB 3.1.3.10 *prāsām* (?) "sound, well-sighted" is a *hapax* ("sore indeed, is the eye of man; mine is sound", *arur vai puruṣasyākṣi, prāsān mameti*), and in the same passage we find *an-arus*. Both are rare words; the simple *arus* "sore, wound" also occurs at ŚB 3.1.3.10 "weak-eyed, indeed, he was, and the secretion of his eyes was pus; he now makes it sound by anointing them." (foll. Fišer).⁷⁹ Fišer who has paid attention to the attestation of the words used in the

⁷⁷ Obviously a *śloka*, not part of the original speech of Yajnavalkya.—There are these verses: *kim svid vidvān pravāsati? ... 11.3.1.5 tad apy ete ślokāḥ: kiṃ svid vidvān pravāsaty / agnihotrī grhebhyaḥ / katham svid asya kāvyam / katham saṃtato agnihir iti katham svid asyān apaprositam bhavatīty evaitad āha.*

⁷⁸ Note, for example, such points of 'doctrine' as the early (?) discussion of *punarmrtyu* in ŚB 2.3.2 (cf. Witzel 1989). They should be investigated in larger context.

⁷⁹ *durakṣa iva hāsa pūyo haivasya dūśikā te evaitad anaruṣ karoti yad akṣyāv ānakti.*

Yājñavalkya passages underlines that *arus* occurs only once in AV and GB.⁸⁰

Another hapax is found at ŚB 1.1.1.10 *vrkṣya* “fruit(s) of trees”, cf. Fišer, 1984: 64.⁸¹

The following three words probably are rare as they all occur in the specialized context of Brahmodyas, which are not all too frequently mentioned in earlier texts though we can trace them back to the RV (Witzel 1987b).

ŚB 11.4.3.20 *aṅga-jid-brāhmaṇa* “a Brahmin learned in the *aṅga* (the limbs of the sacrifice),” which Fišer (1984: 72) proposes to emend to *aṅga-vid-brāhmaṇa*.

ŚB 11.6.2.10 *kāma-praśna* “a question (allowed) according to one’s wish” which is otherwise found only at BĀU 4.3.1, in the same context,⁸² cf. Fišer, 1984:73.

ŚB 11.6.3.11 *anatipraśnya (devatā)* “(a deity) not to be further pursued in questioning” occurs in the same context at ŚB 3.6.1; cf. also JB 2.77, Witzel 1987, Fišer 1984:76.

ŚB 12.4.1.10 *a-śrad-dhā (a-śraddadhāna)* “not trusting, believing”; though not an unusual form at all, it is found only here and at JB 1.43, 2, 384; see Fišer 1984:66.

Other words used by Yājñavalkya occur first, at least almost all of them, in ŚB and remain rare:

ŚB 1.3.1.21, ŚBK 2.2.4.17 *paraḥ-puṃsa* “being outside the circle of men” (see above);

⁸⁰ As in AV 5.5.4, GB 2.3.1; it has the compounds *arus-cit*, *arus-pāna*, *arus-srāṇa* (occurring once each, Fišer 1984: 61, with note 14-16 and Narten 1980: 161, n.27).

⁸¹ On the ‘ghost’ quotation from PW on KŚS 2.1.13.

⁸² T. Gotō (oral comm.) thinks that this is a question that one is allowed and entitled to ask only when one has reached a certain high level as poet, with an “official” certification (a quasi-“Meisterbrief”) or as a learned priest (Priestergelehrter), cf. his seminal discussion of the status of Vasiṣṭha as such a poet, see Gotō 2000: 153. Note, in addition, that similar stages in the education of poets, including actual exams, were common in Old Ireland. This is, again, a trait that the extreme west and the extreme east of the Indogermania share. From this point of view, the long discussed question of the “brahminhood” of Janaka, conferred by Yājñavalkya as ŚB 11.6.2.2, assumes a new meaning: Janaka could answer a difficult question and is now ‘promoted’ by Yājñavalkya to Brahmin rank (ŚB 14.7.1.1, see n. 66). The highest one would be the *Brahmiṣṭha* (ŚB 11.6.3.1, cf. n. 69) rank, which is claimed by Yājñavalkya himself at another occasion.

ŚB 3.1.2.21 *aṃsala* “fatty, stout” (otherwise found only ŚB 3.8.4.6, JB 2.270, TB 3.4.17; cf. Fišer 1984: 69 sq.);

ŚB 11.6.2.4 *dhenu-śata*, otherwise JB 2.151 (same contexts, where ŚBK and JB 1.19 have “1000” instead) cf. Fišer 1984: 71.

ŚB 11.6.3.11, *parimoṣin* “robber” (otherwise only BĀU 3.6.1, ŚB 13.2.4.2, 4; TB 3.9.13, 4) cf. Fišer 1984: 80.

ŚB 12.4.1.10 *vi-piṃś*; this is otherwise only ŚB 4.1.5.21, 5 and ŚBK 3.1.10.1, see Fišer 1984:66.

The word *hvalati* ŚB 13.5.3.6 is a late form, for older *hvarate* RV+. It is typical for ŚB and is found, for example, at ŚB 4.5.7.4; 5.1.2.6, 14; 6.2.2.20; 11.5.8.5; 12.6.1.2; 13.5.2.6; *hval* is otherwise common in Epic and Classical Skt. (cf. also *hvalā*, f., again typically ŚB+). While it cannot be said that it is altogether typical for Yājñavalkya, his use of the verb and noun with the popular *-l*-form is a characteristic of the early and late ŚB, and therefore can be in tune with his other peculiarities agreeing with late Vedic eastern speech.

Outside the immediate scope of this paper we must also compare *ardhabṛgala* BĀU 1.4.3: “Yājñavalkya used to say: ‘Here, the two of us are like a half-fragment. Therefore this space is filled by a woman’.”⁸³ Fišer (1984: 78) underlines that this is the only independent pronouncement ascribed to him in the whole of BĀU; it concerns the primeval self. Further, note BĀU 3.9 *ahallika* probably meaning something like “idiot” (cf. Fišer, 1984: 80).

There also are some other words allegedly used by Yājñavalkya which are quite rare.⁸⁴

4. Yājñavalkya’s quotations share one frequent characteristic: they are *ex cathedra* sayings: “I for one, say ...; I, for one, eat ...; this is just ...; let him just do so; who would care ...?” It is clearly a person of great, acknowledged authority who speaks here (even though ŚB does not always follow his ritual advice and solutions, see above).

Even then, the question remains whether certain stories may have been attributed to Yājñavalkya by the redactors of ŚB: For

⁸³ *tasmād idam ardhabṛgalam iva sva iti ha smāha yājñavalkya. tasmād ayam ākāśaḥ striya pūryata eva.*

⁸⁴ BĀU 4.1.2 *māṛmant* ‘someone having a mother’, and *ācaryavant* ‘having a teacher are rare; they occur only at AV 12.1.60 and ChU 6.14.2 respectively. (Fišer 1984: 82).

example, every witty remark by an important Upaniṣad teacher may have been attributed to him. One should compare some other sages such as Āruṇi, etc. and investigate, for example, a possible similarity in expression of their ŚB quotes with other inside and outside ŚB. This is beyond the scope of this study, which is limited to Yājñavalkya. Such studies have not yet been carried out, even by those scholars who have stated that there are two or three Yājñavalkyas (Horsch, 1966: 380-401) or who think that he clearly is one person (N. Tsuji), or who assume that a large amount of legend forming has taken place by the time of BĀU (Fišer).

In this situation, an investigation of Yājñavalkya's language, also outside ŚB proper, is of great importance. First of all, to find out whether the Yājñavalkya of ŚB and the slightly later BĀU are the same person or not. To prepare the ground, a survey of the language of BĀU 4.3, a text clearly attributed to Yājñavalkya, is given below.⁸⁵

§ 6 The language of BĀU 4.3

This chapter of BĀU (esp. 4.3.9-33) deals with the dream state and it is, I believe, the first in Indian literature which explores the realm of sleep and dreams in detail.⁸⁶ As it deals with new ideas, or as it gives the first available description of these new ideas, we may expect many new formulations and words. This, indeed, is precisely what we will discover.

Yājñavalkya tries to express these new ideas in various ways:

- by using old expressions in a new meaning,
- by forming new compound nouns, not used before,
- by coining completely new words.

(a) Among the old words used in a new meaning we find the following:

- BĀU 4.9.3 *sandhya-* normally means "point of sunrise, sunset", *sandhyā* "dawn/dusk ritual". The adjective *sandhya* is used here for the first time (and rarely afterwards, BŚS, VaikhGS) in the meaning of "intermittent

⁸⁵ Cf. already Witzel 1987c: 200, n. 92.

⁸⁶ Cf. the dreams discussed by Stuhmann 1982.

point" or "liminal point" between waking and being in the other world (of heaven), between *loka*, "this world", and *para-loka* "the other world, reached in dream."

- BĀU 4.3.20 *hitā-* (fem.) normally means "placed, put; friendly" etc. Here, *hita-* refers to the *nāḍyāḥ*, the channels, or imagined capillary arteries stretching out from the heart.⁸⁷ They are *śukla*, *nīla*, *piṅgala*, *harita*, *lohita* "white, black-blue, tawny, yellowish-greenish, golden, red".⁸⁸

(b) New compounds.

- BĀU 4.3.32 *a-dvaita-* *dvaitā-* is found earlier in the sense of "duality" (*"Doppelheit"*, Thieme). Its occurrence as *a-dvaita* in BĀU is a Vedic hapax; it occurs only at ŚB 14.7.1.31, BĀU 4.3.32, and clearly is a word coined by Yājñavalkya.⁸⁹

- BĀU 4.3.10, 14 *svayām-jyotiḥ*, cf. 4.3.7 *antār-jyotiḥ* "having light for itself," viz. "in itself". Since the "inner light" is referred to here, this is a new concept (similar to the light apparition at the moment of death, BĀU 4.4.2).⁹⁰

- BĀU 4.3.7 *vijñāna-maya-* "made of knowledge". The noun *vijñāna* is well attested before, from AV onwards, but the new compound, not an unusual formation at all by itself, nevertheless, is new and is, in addition, only found in ŚB, Up (MU +).

⁸⁷ They are set up, arranged like a *setu* "dike, bridge" or, like hair, they are strands and capillaries at the same time. The later meanings of the word in Middle and New Indo-Aryan are "tubular stalk or organ, pipe, vein" (Turner, CDIAL 7047) and have the same range; cf. also *hita-baṅga* 'breaking of dikes' (Manu).

⁸⁸ Cf. the traditional colors of the directions of the sky in ancient Iran: blue = E, red = S, white = W, black = N (and similarly, in ancient China: E = green/light blue, S = red, W = white, N = black, and also in native North America); see Witzel, 1972: 183, n.19.

⁸⁹ On the term see T. Vetter 1978 (2. part); cf. also BĀU 4.3.26 *na tad dvitīyam asti*.

⁹⁰ Cf. *svar-jyotiḥ* (Samh.+).

• BĀU 4.3.10 *ratha-yoga*-
“yoking of the chariot” is, a *prima facie* simple Tatpuruṣa compound, hardly worth mentioning, if it were indeed attested *before* this passage. However, it is not, and even after BĀU, it is found only in Mbh+. Thus, again, it is a coinage made by Yājñavalkya.

It is true that a word such as *rathayuj-* ‘yoked to the chariot’ is found in RV+; however, the Tatpuruṣa compounds such as *ratha-yoga* (next to *rathāḥ*, *panthānaḥ*), are rare in earlier Vedic literature though⁹¹ it is not altogether unusual: cf. *aśvamedha*, *rājasūya*, *agnihotra* (KS) etc.

In short, it remains a strange fact that such an easily made compound had to be coined by Yājñavalkya.

• BĀU 4.3.11 *eka-haṁśá*-
“the one-goose, superior goose”, is again not an unusual compound, but it is found here for the first time: ŚB 14.7.1.12-13. Similar compounds are *eka-rāj* AB 8.15, *eka-rāja* TB 2.8.3.7, KauśS “the only king, superior king”, *eka-vrātyá* “the only Vrātya, leader of the Vrātyas” AV 15.1.6, *eka-rtú*, *eka-cará*, *eka-dhaná*, *eka-nakṣatrá*, etc.

• BĀU 4.3.10 *para-loka*-
“the higher world, the other world”, i.e., the Vedic heaven or, later on, “the world of Brahman”. It is situated between: *idam (sthāna)* — *sandhya* — *paraloka*, identified with: “this world — sleep — the otherworld.”
Again, this is one of the quite common Karmādhara compounds, but it is found only here, and much later on, in VkhGS, Viṣṇu Smṛti, etc.

• BĀU 4.3.14 *jāgarita-deśa*-
“the waking state”; cf. *jāgarita-anta* KU 4.4, *jāgarita-sthāna*-MaṇḍU 3, *jāgarita-* ŚB 12.9.2.2, 14.7.1.

Again, this is not an unusual compound; in fact, there are dozens of compounds in *-deśa*, but the combination with *jāgarita-* is unusual, and it is imitated later on in KU, MaṇḍU by *jāgarita-anta/sthāna* (doubtless modeled on this passage).

While this word is found in the general context of a Yājñavalkya passage, the actual sentence is attributed to “some”: *atho khalv āhuh* “Some say, as you know (*‘doch, donc’*) ...”.

⁹¹ Wackernagel–Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, II 2, 243 3qq.

Such a quote can be a generally held opinion, a popular saying, or the opinion of some ritualists and philosophers.⁹² We may attribute the general opinion to ‘some’; however, the formulation must be Yājñavalkya’s as the usual way of popular quotations is *tad āhuh*.

(c) Hapax, newly coined words.

• BĀU 4.3.19 *sallayāya (saṁlayāya BĀUM) dhriyate*
‘is borne to his nest’.

This is a real hapax, only found in BĀU/ŚB. The Mādhyandina version, *saṁlayāya* is perhaps related to Pāli *prati-saṁlayana* “deep trance”. Should we translate: “a falcon, folding his wings, is borne to his resting/sleeping place”?

The Kāṇva version may go back to the same origin: **saṁllaya-* and belong to *saṁ- lī-*, *-lī līyate* “cling to” (Mbh).

• BĀU 4.3.9 *sarvāvanta-*
“containing all”, is a simple formation, like so many others in *-vant*: *somā-vant*, *devā-vant*, etc.; however, contrast RV *maujavanta*, from post-RV *mūjavanta*.

The word is a real hapax that occurs only in ŚB 14.7.1.11 and in BĀU. It is also interesting to note that the vowel *-a-* is length-ened before *vanta*.

(d) Some near-hapax words.

BĀU 4.3.20 *sarvo ’smi K*: *sarvam asmi M* “I am the overlord of all”⁹³ or “I am all” = “Universe”, which here comes to the same. Further, note: BĀU 4.3.10: *veśantāḥ* “ponds” (next to: *puṣkarīṇya sravantyo ...*) :: *veśantīḥ* AV 1.3.7, PS, 1.4.7; *veśantā* AV 11.6.10, *veśantā* TB 3.4.12.1; *veśanta* SB 14.7.1.11/BĀU 4.3.10, *vaiśanta* RV 7.33.2, *vaiśantā*, VS, ŚBK 7.2.14, *vaiśanti* ŚB 5.3.3.14, TB 3.1.2.3, 3.12.7.4—Note the many variants, the unclear etymology (EWA II 585) and varying

⁹² Such quotes (*tad āhuh*) are common from YV prose onwards (MS+); in the AV, however, we find *ta-* or *ya-* or acc.+ *āhuh*, but only rarely the expression *tad āhuh*: AV 10.8.33 *vadanīr yatra gachanti*, *tad āhur brāhmaṇam mahat*, and the late Mantra AV 20.128.2 *jyeṣṭho yad apracetās*, *tad āhur adharāg iti*.

⁹³ See K. Hoffmann, *idam bhū*, 1975-6: 557-559.

accentuations; the next sentence in BĀU has: *veśāntān, puṣkariṇīḥ, sravantīḥ*

§ 6.2 A Counter-check

These preliminary linguistic observations leave some questions to be answered, some of them by way of counter-check of the evidence. They include such as the following:

- in how far are these features not just Yājñavalkya's but generally eastern Vedic?
- in how far typical for all early Upaniṣads?
- in how far typical of late Vedic (e.g., AB 6-8, parts of JB/JUB, VādhB, etc.)?
- in how far are they reflected in early Middle Indo-Aryan, such as in Pāli?

The answer is fairly straightforward: Most of these features are hapax, or not used before Yājñavalkya while they are common after him, even in the Upaniṣads, and later on (also in Pāli). They are *not* typical Eastern (little found in the late AB, VādhB, etc.), but they are late Vedic, in the sense that other Up.s have copied these phrases. The relationship with Pāli would need more investigation.

In short, what we see in BĀU 4.3 is the very *personal* language of Yājñavalkya. This is especially so in the present, difficult chapter dealing with the dream state, where he had to deal with new, not easily described and expressed concepts. Yājñavalkya chose to present his new ideas with newly coined words, with older words used in a new meaning, with unusual, new nominal compounds, or with a combination of words that had not been used before.

In short, his way of expression is a very *personal* one, fit for this quasi-mystical chapter.

§ 7 A Comparison of the language of the Yājñavalkya quotes in ŚB and BĀU

We can now proceed to compare, briefly, the state of affairs found in BĀU 4.3 with his *dicta* in the ŚB. The following picture emerges:

In the ŚB quotations, just as in BĀU, a number of hapax, "first" or very rare expressions are found: ŚB *an-arus / prāśām*,

aṃśala, vipiṃś, hvalati, parimoṣin, vṛkṣya :: BĀU 4.3 *sandhya, hitā, sallaya, sarvāvānt*.

Again, both texts have a number of unusual nominal compounds: *paraḥ-puṃsa, dheṇu-śata, aṅga-jid-brāhmaṇa, kāma-prāśna, anatipraśnya, a-śraddadhāna* :: BĀU 4.3. *a-dvaita, ratha-yoga, eka-haṃsa para-loka*; cf. also *ardhabṛgala* BĀU 1.4.3, *ahallika* BĀU 3.9.

The number of new items probably is comparatively higher in BĀU 4.3 as this section deals with altogether new concepts, if not with a mystical vision by Yājñavalkya. Both texts agree in that they contain a large number of new, rare, or hapax words (first) used by Yājñavalkya. He emerges a provocative thinker and innovator.

§ 8 Conclusions

In sum, both sets of texts coincide in a few points. As far as the content of these passages are concerned, both present new materials, and both do this in a new, personal language that is not encountered before Yājñavalkya. In other words, we discern the *same* teacher and philosopher, whether he acts as a priest (mostly in ŚB 1-5, partly 11-13) or as a thinker and mystic (mostly in BĀU). However, as has been indicated above, the border line between such compartments of the mind of Yājñavalkya as a single person does not exist.

The very nature of famous sayings predestines these hapaxes, sayings and teachings to have, potentially, multiple origins. They could be the famous sayings of Yājñavalkya *and* of other great seers or philosophers of the early Upaniṣad period and might have been copied from one teacher to another, or appropriated by their schools. However, there is hardly anyone of equal stature in sight: One may think of Uddālaka Āruṇi, or perhaps of Śvetaketu Āruṇeya, yet, none of them is regarded as highly as Yājñavalkya.⁹⁴ And, it is obvious by now that the selection of quotes, new expressions and hapaxes listed above is

⁹⁴ Politics may have played a role here: just as Vasiṣṭha, because of his connection with king Sudās, is highly regarded in RV, so is Yājñavalkya, due to King Janaka, in the Upaniṣads; they function as emblems of Ṛgvedic/Upaniṣadic texts. Others (like Viśvāmitra, Āruṇi, etc.) have been pushed more into the background.

limited to Yājñavalkya and has not been copied by the more or less contemporaneous teachers just mentioned.

However, it will be interesting, though leading beyond the scope of this paper, to follow up the individual ways of these teachers expressing their new insights, as met with in BĀU/ChU, and to compare their Upaniṣadic language with the few quotations attributed to them outside these texts. In addition, it would be instructive to study in detail the colloquial speech of Śveta-ketu and his father in ChU 6.⁹⁵

Separately from this, we must finally take a closer look at the charge that Yājñavalkya is presented in ŚB/BĀU as *more* than a famous teacher and Ṛṣi,—and that therefore, the statements about him have to be taken *cum grain salis*.

§ 9 The beginnings of a hagiography

There are indeed a number of features which point, as Fišer stresses, to a beginning hagiography that was begun in late Vedic times, when the Vedic texts, including the Upaniṣads, were redacted.

In principle, this is not surprising, as important figures are apt to receive special attention. For example, we know about Yājñavalkya's contemporary, Mahidāsa, that he lived 116 years. And there are interesting stories about Satyākama Jābāla, etc. When did they originate and when were they put together? Small items such as mentioning the age of a person could easily be inserted. In the case of Yājñavalkya, however, we have a large body of texts, sayings, anecdotes which are attributed to him. How to distinguish original material from later accretions? When was this material collected and when was it redacted?

This type of argument and research into it is clearly important. Unfortunately, the question of canon formation and redaction of Vedic texts, particularly of late Vedic texts, has hardly been taken up.⁹⁶ Especially as far as the ŚB/BĀU complex is concerned, it is complicated and not much studied.⁹⁷ The Vaṃśas of the ŚB, BĀU (and JUB 4., ŚĀ 15) provide some idea

⁹⁵ See K. Hoffmann 1975-6:370sq., cf. Kuiper *IJ* 2, 1958, 308 sqq., Morgenroth, *History and Culture of Ancient India*, Moscow 1963, 223 sqq.

⁹⁶ See now Witzel 1997, for a beginning.

⁹⁷ Cf. Caland, 1990: xxiv and cf. Tsuji 1981: 358-361.

of the complicated lines of transmission of these texts and of the difference in time at which their 'last' teacher (before redaction) would have lived.⁹⁸ The matter is further complicated by the fact that ŚB/BĀU have been transmitted both in the Kāṇva and in the Mādhyandina schools and that, in addition to this, BĀU itself seems to be split into a Yājñavalkya and a non-Yājñavalkya part, both again transmitted by both schools, each with their own Vaṃśa.

The frequent Vājasaneyi quotations in a slightly later text, ĀpŚS, seem to indicate that there was a ŚB text (the *Vājasaneyaka*) preceding our present ŚB.⁹⁹ Tsuji (1981: 358) is of the opinion that it was Yājñavalkya who separated a proto-Vājasaneyi, traditional style YV text with mixed Mantras and Brāhmaṇas (as in the Black YV). This is entirely possible; one must add, however, that he decided to model his VS on western pronunciation (see immediately).¹⁰⁰

In short, a variety of traditions have been incorporated into the complete text of ŚB/BĀU, and have been redacted at a comparatively late time (200-100 BCE?).¹⁰¹

Leaving aside this rather complex issue, it may be pointed out, however, that at the very end of ŚB the authorship of the Mantras of the Vājasaneyi schools is depicted as having been

⁹⁸ See Morton-Smith, 1966.—There are 12 generations between the Sun deity and Yājñavalkya in the Vaṃśa of BĀU 6.5.3. Tsuji 1981: 350 explains the non-occurrence of Yājñavalkya's name in the genealogy of both the Madhu-Kāṇḍa and the Yājñavalkya-Kāṇḍa (!) of BĀU by the fact that the Yājñavalkya-Kāṇḍa may be a late collection of Vājasaneyi doctrines redacted long after Yājñavalkya's time.

⁹⁹ Caland, 1990: xiv; cf. Witzel 1997; Tsuji 1981: 361 assumes a date of c. 650-550 BCE for the formation of the ŚB and the newly extracted VS, see Caland *AO* X, 132 sqq.

¹⁰⁰ Tsuji thinks that Yājñavalkya is the "author" of VS 1-10, and of ŚB 1-5 (1981: 358). He notes, in addition, that certain sections of VS presuppose ŚB; see earlier, Caland *AO* X, 132 sqq., and cf. Witzel 1997: 324.

¹⁰¹ Note the new fashion of giving metronyms in ŚB *vaṃśa* lists (compounds of mother's name + *putra*) and the similar usage beginning in royal records of the Maurya dynasty, followed by evidence from the Mathura inscriptions, the Śātavāhana and Gupta dynasties, see Witzel 1988: 172/1997: 327, 315. — Did the Brahmin Śuṅga and Kāṇva dynasties have the Vājasaneyi texts (especially the VSK?) redacted in E. India at that time? For this assumption, note some late features in VSK, see Witzel 1989: 358.

obtained by Yājñavalkya directly from the sun (and therefore they are *śukla* “bright”).¹⁰² Such a “revelation” is a feature that is not found in any of the traditions of other YV schools.¹⁰³ Interestingly, this statement is still given in accented Vedic Sanskrit.

The important point is that Yājñavalkya is portrayed as receiving the Mantras not from a long line of teachers before him—some of whom are indeed mentioned in other Vamśas—but directly from the Sun. Normally, this lineage is reserved for the descent of the Kṣatriya rulers who ultimately all stem from the sun-god Vivasvant and his son Manu.¹⁰⁴ Instead of Agni who inspires at least one Ṛṣi,¹⁰⁵ or some other Vedic deity such as Bṛhaspati or Soma, it is the Sun, humankind’s ultimate ancestor, who figures as the source of the VS text.¹⁰⁶ The reasons for this strange feature have been discussed elsewhere.¹⁰⁷ Here it may suffice to mention that our present (and medieval) VS is not recited with the standard eastern Bhāṣika accent like the ŚB but with standard western (Kuru-Pañcāla) accent, while it differs widely in form and content from the western (Black YV) texts. The only recourse for a respectable *paramparā* was to claim divine origin, which ensued.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Though the Sun is said to have revealed the ŚYV to Yājñavalkya, there are in fact 12 generations between the Sun and Yājñavalkya in the Vamśa; cf. Tsuji 1981: 358.

¹⁰³ There is a late, unedited Chārdī Brāhmaṇa (in Epic-Purāṇic style Sanskrit) that reflects the later, Purāṇic idea of Yājñavalkya’s vomiting the Veda and Tittiri’s picking up the bloody, black-stained vomit; hence, the name Taittirīya and “Kṛṣṇa” Yajurveda.

¹⁰⁴ Note that at this time we do not yet have the Epic (and later) Lunar and Solar dynasties, just as a descent from the solar figure Vivasvant and his son Manu; cf. now, however, the very beginning of VādhB (ed. Y. Ikari 1990) with its complicated scheme of incestual relationship between males and mothers and daughters that sets the conceptual frame for the Epic: the lunar Bharata (Mbh.) and solar Ikṣvāku lineages (Rām.). Cf. Witzel (in prep.).

¹⁰⁵ See RV 6.5.9 with its vision of Agni: *vi me karṇā patayato vi cakṣuh...*

¹⁰⁶ Based on the last sentence of ŚB; cf. Tsuji 1981: 359.

¹⁰⁷ Witzel 1997: 324 sq.

¹⁰⁸ Note that similar claims of divine help are made for Videgha Māthava who moved eastwards with the help of Agni Vaiśvānara. Divine origin is claimed right from the RV onwards: note the cases of

Other items that point to a redactional intrusion of hagiography are the following:

* He always wins in the discussions/contests (*brahmodya*). In the case of the elaborate discussion with Śākalya (see Witzel 1987b, Brereton 1997) he is deliberately made the winner, even though he just barely gets out of this discussion better than a woman, Gargī, and his Ṛgvedic rival Śākalya.

* Once he even wins “all of Videha” (BĀU 4.3) from his king, Janaka. Since there was no personal ownership of land during the Vedic period, this is, typically, out of proper historical context. However, the king was the nominal owner of the land and had to agree, for example, to sacrifices being carried out on a certain plot of land: the sponsor of the ritual (*vajamāna*) had to ask the king for permission to perform it. Though a very suspicious fact indicating a late redactional activity, the wording may be taken as metaphorical.

* There is a clear addition of some materials by the redactions, such as the concluding verses in BĀU 3.9.28, see Brereton 1997: 4sq.,¹⁰⁹ and there is the probable re-arrangement of some sections. Note also the doubling of the Panjab story, BĀU 3.4 and 3.7 (Witzel 1989). This is in line with the assumption, made above, that the ŚB/BĀU texts were redacted late. Clearly, a detailed study of late Vedic redactional activities is a desideratum.¹¹⁰

In post-Vedic texts, Yājñavalkya gains very much in status. The reasons for this remain to be investigated as well. It is noteworthy that Megasthenes (c. 300 B.C.E.) mentions a sub-school of Yājñavalkya’s Veda text, the adherents of the Mādhyandina version of the VS, as *Maduandinoi* just south of the Ganges (Witzel 1987c, 1989, 1997). As an eastern Veda school, the Vājasaneyins may have been the most important *Śākhā* during the Maurya realm and most probably were so under the Brahmin dynasty of the Śunga (Puṣyamitra, 150 B.C.E., mentioned by Patañjali). It is almost certain that they were most important under the Brahmanical Kāṇva dynasty, who not unsurprisingly,

Vasiṣṭha or Trasadasyu, both derived from (the semen of) Mitra and Varuṇa combined.

¹⁰⁹ Note the parallel in BĀU 6.3.7.

¹¹⁰ For some initial steps, see Witzel 1989, 1997.

carry even the name of the other sub-school of the Vājasaneyins, the Kāṇva. These are sufficient reasons to explore the various stages of late YV redaction under these kings.¹¹¹

Yājñavalkya is, even according to the last (still accented!) sentences of ŚB, 14.9.4.33, the redactor of the White YV which stems from the sun (Āditya): *ādityānīmāni śuklāni yājūṃṣi vājasaneyēna yājñavalkyenākhyāyante* (cf. also ŚS 6.108.5, PS 10.17.9).

Later texts see him as independent of his teacher Vaiśampāyana, who is a late figure in the Veda, occurring first at TĀ 1.7.5 (a very late passage, see Witzel 1972, 1997), Pāṇini 4.3.104, BŚS Pravara 41: 13 = 451.4, and more often in the GS.

According to Epic tradition as well, Yājñavalkya receives the Yajus of the white Yajurveda and the ŚB from the sun (Mbh. Vulg. 12.319/11724-8, 11790).

Though he is often mentioned in the Epic (predominantly in late portions, Mbh 12, 13), it is notable that Yājñavalkya is *not* an ancestor of the Bharata clan as so many other Brahmins: Bhṛgu, Uśanas Kāvya, Viśvāmitra ~ Menakā, Bharadvāja; note also Parāśara as ancestor of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana. However, according to Mbh 13.18.52, it is the famous Ṛṣi Viśvāmitra who is the father of Yājñavalkya, Nārada, Āśvalāyana, etc. (cf. Hari-vaṃśa 1466, Viṣṇu Pur. 279, Bhāg Pur. 6.15.13).

According to Viṣṇu Pur. 3.5.1-29: 279, Vaiśampāyana accidentally killed a Brahmin child (cf. Mbh Vulg. 13.331 *ājñānād brāhmaṇam hatvā, sprṣṭo balavadhena ca...vipraṃsir... = Poona ed. 13.60.37*); he asked his students to perform an atonement for him, but Yājñavalkya refused. Vaiśampāyana therefore asked him to regurgitate all he has learnt, upon which Yājñavalkya brought up the Veda, soiled with dark blood, from his stomach. The other students of Vaiśampāyana picked it up, having taken the form of partridges (*tittiri*); Yājñavalkya then addressed the sun-god who appeared in form of a horse (*vājīn*) and granted him a wish (cf. Mbh Vulg. 12.318.6) and the new (*śukla*) Yajurveda, the students of which therefore are called Vājīs (= Vājasaneyin). A similar story is told, however, from a Taittirīya point of view,

¹¹¹ As has been mentioned above, there are indications that point to certain aberrant forms, perhaps influenced by an early attempt of the introduction of writing in Veda texts, see Witzel 1989. Some Dharma texts disallow the writing down of the Veda—clearly a reaction to early attempts to do so! This is in need of further and detailed investigation.

in the unedited short South Indian epic piece, called Chārdi Brāhmaṇa. However, Vaiśampāyana is also seen as a student of Vyāsa, Viṣṇu Pur. 275, 279, Bhāg. Pur. 1.4.21.

Later on, Yājñavalkya is the supposed author of the Yājñavalkya Smṛti which has become very influential through its medieval commentary Mitākṣara.

§ 10 Summary

In sum, if the strands of traditions visible in the Vedic texts are carefully screened, a nucleus emerges of texts composed by Yājñavalkya, of his sayings and one-liners, and of reports dealing with him as an exceptional person: someone who is, at the same time, a late Vedic priest, a teacher, a philosopher, and a mystic. These traditions represent the same person, with the same linguistic background and with peculiar, idiosyncratic habits of speech.

It is only at the time of redaction (150 B.C.E.?) that some aspects of an incipient hagiography—such as giving all of Videha to Yājñavalkya—emerge; they are so obvious and intrusive that they can be discerned easily. The same applies to some texts portions that have been added to the BĀU corpus.¹¹²

In sum, we see the beginnings of the legend of Yājñavalkya arise before our eyes: the always victorious discussant of the rearranged section BĀU 3 (Brereton 1997), who also becomes one of the first persons mentioned in the texts that leaves mundane concerns behind him and becomes a Saṃnyāsin. It is this personality that receives the close attention, at first only as his school, the Vājasaneyins who are named after his family name Vājasaneyya, of other Upaniṣadic and Epic circles. He is already quite prominent in the Epic, and in other post-Vedic texts. Finally, in the Purāṇas, he is the pupil of Vaiśampāyana¹¹³ and the story of his

¹¹² See above, and cf. Brereton 1997 on the final verses of BĀU 3.9.

¹¹³ First mentioned in late passages of the Kāthaka section of the Taitt. school, TĀ 1.7.4, which is full of late, Purāṇic elements, see Witzel 1972, 1997: 317; otherwise in Pāṇini 4.3.104, as YV teacher; Tsuji 1981: 346 also discusses his lineage in the Purāṇas and in medieval commentators: he is the son of one Brahmarāta (Viṣṇu Pur. 3.5.2) or Devarāta (Bhaga. Pur. 12.6.64), and – predictably – a descendant of Vājasani (according to Mahīdhara), or of one otherwise completely unknown Yājñavalkya (in Śaṅkara). The name as such probably is a popular nickname (with -l-). Yājñavalkya's family name, Vājasaneyya,

receiving Vedic teaching directly from the sun—instead of his nominal teacher Vaiśampāyana¹¹⁴—makes him a latter-day Ṛṣi.

is based on older Brahmanical (not necessarily Kṣatriya!) names including *-vāja-* and *san*, such as that of the Ṛgvedic Ṛṣi *Bharad-vāja*, note RV 6.60.1 *vājam sanoti*, etc. cf. now Hintze 2000.

¹¹⁴ According to Viṣṇu Pur. 3.5.1-29, Yājñavalkya has received his text only *after* having vomited the original YV text of Vaiśampāyana; it is therefore, in a way, later than Tittiri's, the "author" of part of the Black YV. There was a strong antagonism between the two schools. This is also reflected in the unedited post-Vedic Chārdi-Br. tale (ms. Caland, Utrecht and Madras, GOL).—For more on the various Veda schools found in the YV-Vṛkṣa, see Witzel 1982, and cf. Tsuji 1981: 345 on the interpretation of the Purāṇic tales.

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