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Yājñavalkya as ritualist and philosopher, and his personal language

§ 1 Introduction

All¹ early information on Yājñavalkya² stems almost exclusively³ from the 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 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

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 interstimng 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 Śāṅkhāyana 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 BAUK 1, followed up by C. Perez-Coffie (Harvard PhD 1994); BĀUM is available only in Weber's ŚB semi-critical edition and in Boethlingk's conjecture-filled ed.; ŚBK (ed. Caland) extends only up 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 again 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 divergences in language (see below).

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: 200, 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 than sketchy details: Vasiṣṭha of RV 7, Yājñavalkya of ŚB and BĀU and, of course, the Buddha. Indeed, Yājñavalkya is *always* interesting, innovative, 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 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

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: 347sq. He stresses that especially in ŚB 11-13 there is no difference in character between the ritualist (ŚB 11.4.2.17; 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 Āsvatarāśvi 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 2 stages: studentship, *gṛhastha*, and maybe old age (staying at the *antigṛha* RV 10.95.4); later on, three stages: starting with Yājñavalkya who is the first to leave home in a text in BĀU as a kind of proto-*saṃnyāsin*; the *vānaprastha* is a still later development (see Sprockhoff 1979, 1981, 1984).

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).

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

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.

¹²The 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, KauṣB 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, Janakaḥ*), and in the Kāṭhaka section, TB 3.10.9.9. It would be wrong to identify him with the famous Ajātasattu 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 Ajātasattu's father, Bimbisāra, and it was taken away when Ajātasattu murdered his father.

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

It seems unlikely that the Kāśi king Ajātaśatru could be identical with the Magadha king Ajātaśatru as Magadha is not (yet) mentioned as important country in the Vedic texts (and an *Ajātaśatru of Magadha 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 BCE. 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 Kāṭhaka 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) knows of a YV teacher Vaiśampāyana -- but not yet mentioned in the Vaṃśas-- does not contain any clue for (near-) contemporaneity of Vaiśampāyana, his student Yājñavalkya and Paṇini (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, Prasenajit (Pāli: Pasenadi) was a contemporary of the Buddha. 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

§ 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 Śaṅḍilya section of ŚB (6-10), which, as A. Weber has shown long ago, is of more western origin than the 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 that 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.

§ 4 Yājñavalkya, the ritualist

Most prominently, Yājñavalkya appears as the typical YV ritualist who discusses (in 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

to assume that Brahmadata is not the son of Prasenajit/Pasenadi, but of one of his ancestors, also called Prasenajit (cf. Aruṇa- Āruṇa- Āruṇi-Āruṇeya). Indeed, there is a king Brahmadata of Kāśi (Pāli Vinaya i.342 sqq., DhA 1.56 sq.) who conquered Kosala, murdered his king Dīghiti but later on gave the kingdom back Dīghiti's son Dīghāvu.

Obviously, the dynastic history of Kosala and Kāśi 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 Brahmadattas, 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 Univ.)

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

¹⁷ ŚB 14.9.4 *ādityānīmāni śuklāni yajñmṣi vājasaneyena yājñavalkyenākhyāyante*; cf. Witzel 1987c, 1997 (see below).

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

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 submission 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 for a certain Vārṣṇya: Sātyayajña thinks that whole earth is divine and 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 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 Āsvatarāśvi thinks. Yājñavalkya says: 'nay. Let him press (quoting RV 7.26). For no other deity he strikes but once: thus he does 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

tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ | yadi naśnati, pitṛdevatyō bhavati; yady u aśnati devān atyaśnatīti. sa yad evāśitam anaśitam tad aśnīyād iti. --- A similar point is made at KāthĀ 2.143 and KS 29.2 *prāśya3 na prāśya3 iti mīmāṃsante: yat prāśnīyāt, prakārukas syād. yan na prāśnīyād, ahavis syād. avajighred. ubhayaṃ 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, 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*

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 hutvotsṛpyācāmati nirledhi, tad asya pākayajñasyeveti; tad asya tat paśavyaṃ rūpam. paśavyo hi pākayajñāḥ.*

²¹*tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ | vārṣṇyāya devayajanaṃ joṣayitum aima. tat sātyayajño 'bravīt: sarvā vā iyaṃ pṛthivi devī devayajanaṃ. yatra vā asyai kva ca yajuṣaiva pariḡrhya yājayed iti ṛtvijo haiva devayajanaṃ | ye brāhmaṇāḥ śuśrūvāṃso 'nūcāna vidvāṃso yājyanti, saivāhvalaitan nediṣṭhamām iva 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 ḡṛṇīyāmā3, vijitarūpam iva hīdam iti. tad vai sa tan mīmāṃsām eva cakre, net tu cakāra.*

²³*tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ / abhy eva ṣuṇuyān na soma indramasuto mamāda nābrahmāṇo maghavānaṃ sutāsa ity ṛṣiṇābhyanūktaṃ na vā asnyasyai kasmai cana devatāyai sakṛd abhiṣuṇoti, tad anyathā tataḥ karoti, yathā cānyābhyo devatābhyas tasmād abhyeva ṣuṇuyād iti.*

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 tale,²⁵ interspersed by (his own?) Brāhmaṇa 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 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 Ṛgveda, 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 Ṛk." (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

²⁴ *tair eva teṣāṃ ulmukaiḥ praḥnatīti ha smāha Yājñavalkyo ye tathā kurvanti*

²⁵ 2.4.3.2 *tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ | (non- mythological sections ins {}) devāś ca vā asurāś cobhaye prajāpatyāḥ paspr̥dhire ... tasminn ājīm ājanta. 2.4.3.5 tāv indrāgnī udajayatām | tasmād aindrāgnau dvādaśakapālah purodāśo bhavatīndrāgnī hy asya bhāgadheyam udajayatām. tau yatrendrāgnī ujjigvāṃsau tasthatus. tad viśve devā anvājagmuḥ. 2.4.3.6 { kṣatram vā indrāgnī | viśo viśve devā yatra vai kṣatram ujjayaty. anvābhaktā vai tatra viṭ tad viśvān devān anvābhajatām. tasmād eṣa vaiśvadevaś carur bhavati}... 2.4.3.11 etena vai devāḥ | yajñeneṣṭvobhayīnām oṣadhīnām, yāś ca manuṣyā upajīvanti, yāś ca paśavaḥ kr̥tyām iva tvad viṣam iva tvad apajaghrus. tata āśnan manuṣyā alīśanta paśavaḥ.*

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

²⁷ *prajāpatir ha ... prajā asṛjata. tā asya prajāḥ sṛṣṭāḥ parābhūvus. tānīmāni vayāṃsi. puruṣo vai prajāpater nedīṣṭham. dvipād vā ayam puruṣas. tasmād dvipādo vayāṃsi. sa aikṣata prajāpatih | yathā nv eva puraiko 'bhūvam evam u nv evāpy etarhy eka evāsmīti. sa dvitīyāḥ sarje. tā asya paraiva babhūvus. tad idaṃ kṣudram sarīṣpam, yad anyat sarpebhyas. tṛtīyāḥ sarja, ity āhus. tā asya paraiva babhūvus. ta ime sarpa. etā ha nv eva dvayīr. yājñavalkya uvāca trayīr u tu punar ṛcā. 2.5.1.4 tasmād etad ṛṣinābhyanūktam | prajā ha tisro atyāyamīyur iti ...*

JB 2.228 *prajāpatih prajā asṛjata. tā asya sṛṣṭāḥ parābhavan. tad idaṃ sarīṣpam abhavad yad anyat sarpebhyah. sa dvitīyā 'asṛjata. tā asya paraivābhavan. te matsyā abhavan. sa tṛtīyā asṛjata. tā asya paraivābhavan. tāni vayāṃsy abhavan. sa aikṣata yā imās trayīḥ prajā 'asṛkṣy ṛte brahmaṇa ṛte 'nnādyād ṛte yajñāt parā tā abhūvan.*

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

himself as the typical Brāhmaṇa 'theologian' who uses a mixture of prose exposition and ready-made mythology to drive home his point.²⁹

§ 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 the Agnihotra. King Janaka of Videha, obviously one of the major figures that Sanskritized the East,³⁰ 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 1.3.1.26):

" ...'If there were no water, wherewith woulst thou offer?' He spake, 'Then indeed, therw 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 details is justified with myth or popular belief: 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 Prajāpati'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

§ 4.4. Yājñavalkya's witty style in discussing innovations

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

³⁰ See Witzel 1997: 319 sq.

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

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

³² *tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ / yad vā upastāryāvadāyābhighārayati, tad evaināḥ samṭarpayati, tāsāṃ samṭrptānāṃ devā hiraṇmayāṃś camasān pūryayante*

³³ *atha hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ / sakṛd eva prajāpatyābhiḥ pracareyuḥ, sakṛd eva devatābhis; tad evainān yathādevataṃ prīṇāty, añjasā yajñasya saṃsthām upaiti, na hvalatīti.*

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 and that mentioned by Aupoditya actually differ in the 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 invoke during the sacrifice that is for the benefit 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.

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

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 Samhitās 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?

³⁷ *kathaṃ nu na svayam adhvaryavo bhavanti? kathaṃ svayaṃ nānv āhur yatra bhūyasya ivāśiṣaḥ kriyate? kathaṃ nv eṣāṃ atraiva śraddhā bhavātīti? yāṃ vai kāṃ ca yajña ṛtvija āśiṣam āśāsate, 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

At 5.5.5.14 a question of the frequent, but socially deprecated magic is discussed. The Sautrāmaṇī ritual can be used for magic; for example, Āruṇi bewitched Bhadrasena Ājātaśatruva³⁹ with it. Yājñavalkya simply says:

kṣipraṃ kilāstrṇuteti! 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 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 Vedi, one would deprive the gods from the company of their wives,⁴⁶ and (in the same way) the sacrificer's

Manu, *śraddhadeva* in MS 4.8.1 acts only when invoked so by Indra, that is as one who always follows *śraddha*, and cf. the famous Naciketas story, TB 3.11.8 and KaṭhUp. 1.2 (*tam ha kumāram santam ... śraddhāviveśa*).

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

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

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

⁴² *arur vai puruṣasyākṣi, praśān 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 (*striprajñaiḥ*)", 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 āhuh | nāntarvedy āsadayed. āto vai devānām pātnīḥ sāmyajayanty. āvasabhā āha devānām pātnīḥ kar ṓti. paraḥpūṃso(sic!) hāsyā pātnī bhavatīti.*

tād u hovāca yājñavalkyo: yathādiṣṭām pātnyā astu! kās tād ādriyeta, yāt paraḥpūṃsā va pātnī syad? yātha va yajño vēdir, yajña ājyaṃ yajñād yajña nīrmimā iti. tāsmād antarvedy 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 1.3.1.21, cf. also the introductory chapter to the new edition of the VādhB, ed. Y. Ikari.), and ghee is then put inside the Vedi, between the three sacred fires. That is, not too close to the wife, who sits outside the Vedi, between the Gārhapatya 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

wife would become dissatisfied with her husband. Yājñavalkya says: 'Let it be so as it has been prescribed 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, p. 111, 134) has pointed out, *paraḥpuṃsá*-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-janám* 'distant from men (abseits von Menschen).' The goddesses thus would remain outside the group of the gods (*ávasabha*-).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 Yajñ speak somewhat differently: "Yājñavalkya, however, 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

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.

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

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

⁴⁹ In the sentence *paraḥpuṃso(sic!) hāsya pátnī bhavatīti*, *paraḥpuṃsá* 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 *paro-gavyūti* '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 (Rektionskompositum). Wackernagel II 2,311 notes that *ava-* does not enter into such (Rektionskomp.) composition, though we have the collocation, e.g., RV, AV *áva diváḥ*.

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 the "confession ceremony" 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: 426qq.) 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: *tád ahur nāntarvedy áśādayed íty. áto vái devánāṃ pátnīḥ sámyajayanty. ávasabhā ha devánāṃ pátnīḥ kar óti. paraḥpuṃsá hāsya pátnī bhavati, yásyantarvedy áśādayantīti.*

tád u hovāca yājñavalkyo: 'ntarvedy evásādayed íti hovāca. yathādiṣṭám pátnyā astv íti. yat sá (+sá) paraḥpuṃsá vā syād, yád vā kás táy ártha íti hovāca.

yajño védír yajña ājyaṃ yajñád yajña nírmimā íti tásmád antarvédy evásādayet

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 KāthB (Agnýādheya Br.) *yā devapatnayas, tā hi [tiro ivaiva nila]yantīr na prāśnantīti.*

'whenever human women here eat (they do so) apart from men.' However, the desiderative requires: "whenever 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 the 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 6.5.6, ŚB 3.1.3.3-4; 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:

"he who is the most learned in sacred writ among you O Brahmans, 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!"

sa hovāca: namo astu brahmiṣṭhāya! gokāmā eva vayaṁ 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 Atharvaveda: 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 Brāhman's words!"

⁵⁵ *tasmād imā mānuṣya striyas tira ivaiva pumāṁso jighatsanti, yā iva tu tā iveti ha smāha Yājñavalkya;* cf. the shortened Kaṇva version: 2.8.3.11 (without mentioning *Yājñavalkya!*): *tasmād puṁśó 'pimā 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 women and compares ŚB 10.5.2.9, where the husband is admonished not to eat in the presence of his wife (*tasmā j jāyā ante nāśnīyād*).

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.

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 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, aṁsalam ced bhavatīti.*)

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

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! --

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 *mēdas* ['fat'] with *mēdha* 'full of sacrificial essence'. The word is a near-hapax, see Fišer 1984: 69.

⁶³ *tad u hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ: / śraddadhānebhyo haibhyo gaur apakrāmaty ārtyo vā āhutiṁ vidhyanti-)*

ittham eva kuryād: daṇḍenaivaināṁ vipiṣyotthāpayed iti, --

*tad yathavādo dhāvatyato 'śvo vāśvataro vā gadāyita balivardo vā yukta, tena daṇḍaprajitena tottraprajitena yam adhvānaṁ samīpsyati, taṁ samaśnuta evam evaitayā daṇḍaprajitayā tottraprajitayā yaṁ svargaṁ lokaṁ samīpsyati taṁ 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 'śraddadhānebhyo haibhyo gaur apakrāmati. ārtyāhutiṁ (?) vidhyanti. ittham eva kuryāt. daṇḍam eva labdhvā tenaināṁ vipiṣyotthāpayet.* For the relative novelty of this custom, see Witzel 1991.*

- "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 do you 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 sophisticatedly: "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 vanquished Brahmanas: do not think of this!" The other 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 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 private loss of face in front of an (unlearned) nobleman, but he also hides that from 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 society.

He expresses this sentiment differently at 1.9.3.16, in the context of a mantra (VS 2.26, *svayambhūr asi śreṣṭho raśmir ity*) that speaks about the light of the sun "self-existent are you,

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

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/BĀU 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 enene 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 now 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 sticks in one's hand, see the discussion in Witzel 1987.

the best ray of light (*varcas*)⁶⁸ 'for at this indeed the Brāhmaṇa should strive, that he be a *brahmavarcaśin*.'⁶⁹

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.

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 shed some

⁶⁸ *svayambhūr asi śrēṣṭho raśmīr ity -- eṣā vai śrēṣṭho raśmīr yāt sūryas. tāsmād āha: svayambhūr asi śrēṣṭho raśmīr iti varcodā* (sic!) *asi varco me dehīti tv evāhāṃ bravīmīti ha smāha yājñavalkyas.* -- On the meaning of the difficult *varcas*, note the Svetaketu story (ChU 6) and see the discussion by Tsuchiyama 1990.

⁶⁹ *...iti ha smāha Yājñavalkyas. tad dheva brāhmaṇena iṣṭavyaṃ 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: 327 sq.).

⁷¹ *tad u hovāca yājñavalkyaḥ | vārṣṇyāya: devayajanaṃ joṣayitum aima.*

tat sātyayajño 'bravit. sarvā vā iyam pṛthivī devī devayajanaṃ, yatra vā asyai kva ca yajuṣaiva pariḡṛhya yājayed iti. ṛvijō haiva devayajanaṃ. ye brāhmaṇāḥ śuśruvāṃso 'nūcānā vidvāṃso yājayanti, 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-brāhmaṇa*). The text continues: "thus one finds Mitra, his kingdom prospers, he conquers recurrent death, gains all life..." Is this wish instigated by need to find friends and allies against the the (admittedly later attested) Vajji confederation in N. Bihar? 11.4.3.20 *tāṃ haitāṃ gotamo rāhūgaṇaḥ vidāṃ cakāra. sā ha janakaṃ vaideham pratyutsasada. tāṃ haṅgijid brāhmaṇeṣv anvīyeṣa. tāṃ u ha yājñavalkye viveda. sa hovāca: sahasram bho yājñavalkya dadmo yasmin vayaṃ tvayi mitravindam anvavidāmeti.*

vindate mitraṃ rāṣṭram asya bhavaty, apa punarmṛtyuṃ jayati, sarvam āyureti, ya evaṃ vidvān etayeṣṭyā yajate, yo vaitad evaṃ veda.

⁷⁵ Yājñavalkya 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, see, also for the later developments see Sprockhoff 1976, 1981, 1987.

further light on Yājñavalkya's relationship with his fellow Brahmins at the court of king Janaka of Videha as well as with 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 the his R̥ṣification.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, aṁsalaṁ ced bhavatīti. 3.1.2.21

iti tv evāham bravīmīti ha smāha Yājñavalkyas. tad dheva brāhmaṇenaīṣṭavyaṁ yad brahmavarcaṣī syād ity

1.9.3.16

2. Yājñavalkya likes to use the particle *svid*:

api hovāca Yājñavalkyaḥ / no svid devatābhya eva gr̥hṇīyāmā3 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

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.

⁷⁷ Obviously a *śloka*, not part of the original speech of Yājñavalkya. -- There are these verses: : *kiṁ svid vidvān pravāsatī?...11.3.1.5 tad apy ete ślokāḥ: kiṁ svid vidvān pravāsaty / agnihotrī gr̥hebhyaḥ / kathāṁ svid asya kāvyam / kathāṁ saṁtato agnibhir ity kathāṁ svid asyān apaprositam bhavatīty evaitad āha.*

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

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 *svīd* 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 *prāśām(?)* 'sound, well-sighted' is a hapax ("sore indeed, is the eye of man; mine is sound", *arur vai puruṣasyākṣi, prāśān 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 eye 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 Yājñavalkya passages underlines that *arus* occurs only once in AV and GB.⁸⁰

Another hapax is found at ŚB 1.1.1.10 *vṛkṣya* '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 BĀU 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 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);

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.);

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

⁸⁰ As in AV 5.5.4, GB 2.3.1; it has the compounds *aruś-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-'Meisterbief') or as a learned priest (Priestergelahrter), 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 at 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 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 example, everything 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 others 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, as 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

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

⁸⁴ BĀU 4.1.2 *mātrmant* '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)

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

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:

- a. by using old expressions in a new meaning,
- b. by forming new compound nouns, not used before,
- c. 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 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 *svayám-jyotiḥ*, cf. 4.3.7 *antár-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-*

⁸⁶ Cf. the dreams discussed by Stuhmann 1982.

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-bhaṅga* '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, esp. p.112 sqq; cf. also BĀU 4.3.26 *na tad dvitīyam asti*.

⁹⁰ Cf. *svar-jyotiḥ* (Samh.+).

'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 is only found in ŚB, Up (MU +).

• 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 Yājñavalkya.

It is true that a word such as *rathayuj-* 'yoked to the chariot' is found RV+; however, the Tatpuruṣa compounds such as *ratha-yoga* (next to *rathāḥ*, *panthānaḥ*), is rare in earlier Vedic literature⁹¹ though 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-haṁsa-*

'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 other world.

Again, this is one of the quite common Karmadhāraya 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 passage is found in the general context of a Yājñavalkya passage, the actual sentence is attributed to "some": *atho khalv āhuḥ* "Some say, as you know ('*doch, donc*')...". 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 āhuḥ*.

(c) Hapax, newly coined words.

⁹¹Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, II 2, 243 sqq.

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

- BĀU 4.3.19 *sallayāya* (*saṃlayāya* BĀUM) *dhriyate* 'is borne to his nest'.

This is a real hapax, only found in BĀU/ŚB. The Mādhyandina version *saṃlayāya* is perhaps related to Pāli *prati-saṃlayana* '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: **saṃ-llaya-* and belong to *saṃ -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 *mauja-vant*, from post-RV *mūjavant*.

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

(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* ŚB 14.7.1.11/BĀU 4.3.10, *vaiśanta* RV 7.33.2, *vaiśantā*, VS, ŚBK 7.2.14, *vaiśantī* 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 accentuations; the next sentence in BĀU has: *veśantān, puṣkarīṇīḥ, 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 BAU 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.

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

§ 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, sarvavant*.

Again, both texts have a number of unusual nominal compounds: *paraḥ-puṃsa, dhenu-śata, aṅga-jid-brāhmaṇa, kāma-praśna, anatipraśnya, a-śraddadhāna* :: BĀU 4.3 *advaita, ratha-yoga, eka-haṅsa, 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 a Yājñavalkya as a single person does not exist.

The very nature as 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 in the texts as Yājñavalkya.⁹⁴ And, it is obvious by now that the selection of quotes, new expressions and hapaxes listed above is 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 of 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 Śvetaketu and his father in ChU 6.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Politics may have played a role here: just as Vasiṣṭha, because of his connection with king Sudās, is highly regarded in the 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 into more into the background.

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

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, on the other hand, 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, Kauṣītaki, that he lived 116 years. And there are interesting stories about Satyakāma 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 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 BC?).¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ See now Witzel 1997, for a beginning.

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

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 in 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 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 metonyms in ŚB *vaṃśa* lists (compounds of mother's name + *putra*) and the similar usage in beginning in royal records of the Maurya dynasty, followed by evidence from the Mathura

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 Vājasaneyin schools is depicted as having been 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

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 better gets out of this discussion 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 (*yajamāna*) 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.

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 speak some late features in VSK, see Witzel 1989, 1997: 326.

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 Chārdi Brahmaṇa (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 a descent from the solar figure Vivasvant and his son Manu; cf. now, however, the very beginning of VādhB (ed. Y. Ikari 1999) with its complicated scheme of incestual relationship between males and their 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 cakṣuḥ...*

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

* There is clear addition of some materials by the redaction, 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 Śuṅga (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, 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 yājūrṁṣi vājasaneyēna yājñavalkyenākhyāyante*.

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: Bhr̥gu, 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. Harivaṃśa 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, spr̥ṣṭo balavadhena ca ... viprarshir...* = 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 had 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 (*vājin*) and granted

¹⁰⁹ Note the parallel in BĀU 6.3.7.

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

¹¹¹ As has been mentioned above, there are indications that point to certain aberrant forms, perhaps influenced by an early attempts 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 complex is in need of further and detailed investigation.

him a wish (cf. Mbh Vulg. 12.318.6) and the new (*śukla*) Yajurveda, the students of which therefore are called called Vājis (= Vājasaneyin). A similar story is told, however from a Taittirīya point of view, 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 as become very influential through its medieveal commentary Mitākṣara.

§ 10. Summary

In sum, if the strands of tradition 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 BCE?) 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 re-arranged 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 Saṃnyāsīn. It is this personality that receives the close attention, at first only as his school, the Vājasaneyins who are named after his family name Vājasaneya, 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 receiving Vedic teaching directly from the sun --instead from his nominal teacher Vaiśampāyana¹¹⁴-- makes him a latter-day Ṛṣi.

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

¹¹³ First mentioned in late passage of the Kāṭhaka section of the Taitt. school, TĀ 1.7.4, which is full of late, Puraṇic 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 (Bhāg. Pur 12.6.64), and - predictably - a descendent of Vājasani (according to Mahidhara), or of one otherwise completely unknown Yajñavalka (in Śaṅkara). The name as such probably is a popular nickname (with -i-). Yājñavalkya's family name, Vājasaneya, 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.

¹¹⁴ According to Viṣṇu Pur. 3.5.1-29, Yājñavalkya's 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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