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*How the Yogavāsiṣṭha Got its Name
With an Excursus on the Yogabhūmis*

Thirty years ago, in 1994 to be precise, a study appeared under a title consisting essentially of two titles: “Vom *Mokṣopāya-Śāstra* zum *Yogavāsiṣṭha-Mahārāmāyaṇa*” (“From the *Mokṣopāya-Śāstra* to the *Yogavāsiṣṭha-Mahārāmāyaṇa*”).¹ While the first of these two titles was largely unknown to Indological scholarship at the time, the opposite is true of the second: everyone would have entertained an association with the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, but practically no one had any idea of the *Mokṣopāya*. This is also noteworthy from the point of view of the history of our discipline. Indology has a reputation – now increasingly negative – for focusing on a historical approach, which inevitably presupposes research into origins and the ensuing chains of causation. The result of the above investigation was anticipated in the title “From the *Mokṣopāya-Śāstra* to the *Yogavāsiṣṭha-Mahārāmāyaṇa*”, which implies a historical development. This is clearly expressed in the subtitle “zur Entwicklungs- und Überlieferungsgeschichte” (“on the history of development and transmission”). Why do I mention this? If Indology, as it has been criticised, is overly interested in origins, why was it that the original name of *Mokṣopāya* was not familiar to the discipline of Indology, while the name of *Yogavāsiṣṭha* of a much later, indeed very recent, date was so well known as to be considered original?

Anyone who opens it and studies the work closely will come across the title *Mokṣopāya*, and several times in fact. It is far from secret. The later title of *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, however, is nowhere to be found, least of all as a self-designating title. The remarkable point here is the recurrent pattern of ignoring authorial self-references in primary sources as soon as *printed* works are available that claim otherwise. Thus, although the unfortunate Mādhava took great pains to inform future generations that he was the author, in our field Sāyaṇa will remain the commentator of the Ṛg- and Yajurveda. The fact that Max Müller placed Sāyaṇa’s name on the title page of his printed edition, although he was not convinced of this authorship, was taken as sufficient evidence.² To give another

¹ Slaje 1994. ² Slaje 2010, pp. 385–389.

example, the same pattern is also found in relation to the *Mahāvastu*, where Jayamuni had arbitrarily inserted the term “*avadāna*” in a copy he revised in the 17th century. From there it made it onto the title page of Senart’s printed edition (1882–1897), “in spite of the remark at the original beginning of the text”. As von Hinüber summarises, a single word added by Jayamuni was enough to change the literary genre and make a *Vinaya* text appear to be an *Avadāna* text.³

The unwavering belief in the printed word and an unchanging canon of knowledge, seemingly established once and for all since the late 19th century, has continued to prove almost irrefutable in Indology. A dictum by Hermann Goetz sums up this fact in a sentence that has timeless validity: “in scholarship, there are sometimes certain theories which, having arisen out of an inadequate knowledge of the material at the beginning of the research, seem ineradicable in spite of the experience gained in the meantime.”⁴

With this in mind, let me address the question of the origin of the title *Yogavāsiṣṭha*. This name was given to the first printed edition. But this one was based on a much later version of the text which had seriously distorted⁵ the intent, wording and spirit of the original *Mokṣopāya*. As a consequence, “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*” was, and still is, widely considered to be the original title. The fact that “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*” was found on the title page of printed editions, from where it entered manuals and literary histories as apparently verified, was

³ “The far reaching consequences of Jayamuni’s addition to the title are described in detail. Because the text became a *Mahāvastu-avadāna*, it was considered as a text similar to the *Divyāvadāna* and thus was transformed into an extract from the *Vinaya*, rather than being taken as a genuine *Vinaya* text, in spite of the remark at the original beginning of the text and of the *Nidānavastugāthā vinayaṭīkasya mahāvastuṣe ādī*, Mvu i 2,13 = Mvu (T) 411,3, already quoted above. This leaves no room for doubt that the *Mahāvastu* was a *Vinaya* and not an *Avadāna* text. One word added by Jayamuni thus changed the literary genre that is sometimes allotted to *Mahāvastu* in western research considerably, as convincingly argued by V[incent] T[ournier] (p. 8 foll.).” (von Hinüber 2023, pp. 41f.). ⁴ “Es gibt in der Wissenschaft manchmal gewisse Theorien, die, zu Anfang der Forschung aus ungenügender Materialkenntnis entstanden, trotz der inzwischen gesammelten Erfahrungen unausrotbar scheinen” (quoted from Slaje 2010, p. 383). ⁵ “Since the printed text of the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* edition represents ultimately only another, albeit severely distorted, recension of this work, one could also correctly call this version a *Mokṣopāya* recension, but this is not advisable for purely practical reasons: The title of the work that is probably still the most common is ‘*Yogavāsiṣṭha*’, which is associated with the work that is available in print [...]” Steiner 2014: 171 [“Da nun der gedruckte Text der *Yogavāsiṣṭha*-Ausgabe letztlich nur eine andere, wenn auch arg entstellte Rezension dieses Werkes repräsentiert, könnte man auch diese Fassung richtigerweise eine *Mokṣopāya*-Rezension nennen, was sich aber aus rein praktischen Gründen nicht empfiehlt: Der wohl immer noch geläufigste Werktitel ist nun einmal “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”, mit dem das in Druckausgaben zugängliche Werk assoziiert wird [...]”].

accepted as sufficient evidence according to the pattern just described. On the other hand, what the primary sources had to say about its title proved less relevant. To say that Advaitavedānta authors such as Vidyāraṇya, Prakāśānanda, or Madhusūdana Sarasvatī quote “from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*”⁶ suggests that they used that very name. However, all these authors quote from a work *printed centuries later under this title*. It was the scholars who have been treating it under this name ever since, as if it were the original one. In truth, the attribution of quotations by the above-mentioned and other pre-modern authors is made under different names, and – up to a certain point in time – never as “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”. Such a habit of identifying pre-modern quotations in an anachronistic way reinforces the belief in an originally so-called “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*” and thus contributes to the perpetuation of a fundamental error. Another reason may lie in the attractive concept of *yoga*, which opens up the questionable title in a striking way, and as such – due to the current spirit of the times and research – has a much greater appeal and charisma than titles without such a tempting element.

⁶ Cp., e.g., “Prakāśānanda (c. 1500)–citing the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as one of the source texts for his position [...]” (Nair 2020, p. 64). “Vidyāraṇya (d. 1386), Prakāśānanda, and other Advaitin thinkers had already inaugurated the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as an authoritative text for Advaita Vedānta, while also signalling the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as a source-text for the doctrine of *drṣṭi-srṣṭi-vāda*. An Advaitin interpretation of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in the style of Madhusūdana [...]” (Nair 2020, p. 65). Tīrtasīna is a laudable exception when he notes, “in their writings Prakāśānanda, or Madhusūdana refer to this text as *Vāsiṣṭha*, and Vidyāraṇya identifies it as *Vāsiṣṭha-rāmāyaṇa*” (2006, p. 130, n. 119).

Authorial title (*Mokṣopāya*)

The original title of the work in question, “*Mokṣopāya*”, has been sunk into oblivion. This has been written about in detail.⁷ Here is a summary of passages, where “*Mokṣopāya*” is used in a self-referential manner as the original name:⁸

vaśiṣṭharāmasaṃvādaṃ mokṣopāyakathāṃ śubhāṃ [...] (YV I.1.53ab)

mokṣopāyamayīm vakṣye saṃhitāṃ sārasammitāṃ (MU II.10.3 = YV 2.10.4)

mokṣopāyam ito rāma vakṣyamāṇam imaṃ śṛṇu (MU II.10.6ab = YV 2.10.7)

mokṣopāyābhīdhāneyaṃ saṃhitā sārasammitā (MU/YV II.17.6ab)

mokṣopāyāvabodhena śuddhāntaḥkaraṇaṃ janam (MU/YV II.18.28)

mokṣopāyakṛtā granthakāreṇānye 'pi ye kṛtāḥ | granthās (MU/YV II.18.60a–c)

nānyataḥ prāpyate jñānaṃ mokṣopāyavicāraṇāt |

ṛte tasmāt prayatnena mokṣopāyo vicāryatām (MU VI.297.8 = YV 7.139.8)

na mokṣopāyakathanaṃ na ca jñāmi tatsthitim (MU VI.331.29cd = YV 7.172.32ab)

mokṣopāyābhīdhaṃ śāstram idaṃ vācayatānīśaṃ (MU VI.333.23ab = YV 7.174.23ab)

ātmajñānamayaṃ mokṣopāyād eveha nānyataḥ (MU VI.333.27cd = YV 7.174.27cd)

vaśiṣṭhākhyo munīśreṣṭhaḥ kathayiṣyati saṃsadi | |

mokṣopāyakathāṃ divyāṃ tām śrutvā suciraṃ dvija | (MU VI.344.12c–13b = YV 7.185.13ab)

śrutavān saṃhitāṃ etām mokṣopāyābhīdhāṃ iha (MU VI.344.17cd = YV 7.185.17cd)

⁷ Slaje 1994. Furthermore: “[...] unter welchem Namen [der *Mokṣopāya*] z.B. auch von dem in der Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts wirkenden Kṣemendra in seinem *Kavikaṇṭhābharaṇa* angeführt und auch noch gegen Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts von Śrīvara bestätigt wird” (Steiner 2014, p. 170). Śrīvara’s teacher Jonarāja (d. 1459) may also have had the *Mokṣopāya* in mind when he explained that when Maṅkha mentioned “secret teachings” (*upaniṣadām*) in his *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita* (composed in c. 1140/1144), he meant to say: “*mokṣopāyaśāstrāṇām*” (ŚKC 25.121). An honorific plural usage for a work of high repute such as “*mokṣopāyeṣu*” in colophons to works and in Bhāskarakaṇṭha’s *Cittānubodhaśāstra* (*uktaṃ śrīvaśiṣṭhena mokṣopāyeṣu* [CĀŚ(J) 2.70ab]; *vaśiṣṭhena vinirṇīto mokṣopāyeṣu* [CĀŚ(P) 5.326cd]) would not be at all surprising in analogy with the well-attested usage elsewhere, as, e.g., “*bhagavadgītāsu*”. Cf. ŚKC 25.121 (commentary on p. 266). ⁸ Hanneder/Slaje 2005, p. 522.

anena mokṣopāyena tiryañco vigatāmayāḥ (MU VI.359.21ab = YV 7.200.21ab)
kiñcitpadapadārthajño mokṣopāyavicāraṇāt [...] *bhūyo na śocati* (MU Kh.6.26)
idaṃ duḥkham anantātma mokṣopāyāvicāriṇām |
sthitam āsū śamaṃ yāti mokṣopāyavicāraṇāt (MU Kh.6.29)

Textual self-designations of a literary work cannot be understood otherwise than as the title given by the author. “*Mokṣopāya*” was also known to commentators and other writers, who continued to cite it under this name until the 18th century. It should be noted that not only Bhāskarakaṇṭha (ca. 1725–1775⁹) in his *Mokṣopāya-Ṭīkā* (MṬ) as well as in his *Cittānubodhaśāstra* (CĀŚ), but also Ānandabodhendra in his commentary printed under the title *Vāsiṣṭhatātparyaprakāśa* (VTP, AD 1710) were still fully aware of this fact. As an aside, Ānandabodhendra entitled his commentary “*Vāsiṣṭhārthaprakāśa*”,¹⁰ but not “*Vāsiṣṭhatātparyaprakāśa*” as the printed edition suggests. In this case again, the editors may have acted as they saw fit, or they may have followed colophons with no evidential value,¹¹ thus misdirecting the reception of the title of also the commentary. At the beginning of the 18th century, even Ānandabodhendra was aware that the name (*ākhyā*) of the text was *Mokṣopāya*, that it was a *Śāstra* and in that sense served as an instruction (*upadeśa*):

ayaṃ mokṣopāyākhyo grantha[h] (VTP ad MU VI.333.22 = YV 7.174.22)¹²
asya mokṣopāyasya śāstrasya (VTP ad MU VI.334.68 = YV 7.175.68)
mokṣopāyasyopadeśasya siddhāntaṃ (VTP ad MU IV.39.9 = YV 4.57.9)
mokṣopāyarāmāyaṇa (VTP ad MU I.1.19 = YV 1.2.19)

Metonymic title (“Vāsiṣṭha”)

In addition to the undoubtedly authorial designation of *Mokṣopāya*, there are a number of names that are not authorial, but were coined by third parties, in which case the dominant figure as teacher and philosopher in the story, Vasiṣṭha, is placed in the centre. As the proclaimer of these teachings, he came to be regarded as having authored them as well, notwithstanding intermittently

⁹ Jager 2018, p. 15; 2023, p. 462. ¹⁰ *vāsiṣṭhārthaprakāśo 'yaṃ yathāmati vitanyate ||* VTP, introd., 19cd || ¹¹ “*Vāsiṣṭhatātparyaprakāśa*” is found only in some colophons (Ms N₂ Ś₂ [Slaje 1994, pp. 32; 39]). ¹² See also: *ḍṛḍhataratattvajñāne tv ayaṃ grantha evopāya ity āha* (VTP ad MU VI.297.8 = YV 7.139.8).

occurring superordinate narrators (such as Vālmīki). R. Steiner's contribution to this volume shows that such a narrative superstructure characterises the literary body of the work from its inception. Accordingly, his name appears in the form of a nominalised adjective *vāsiṣṭha* (derived from *vasiṣṭha*), sometimes forming compounds as, e.g., when the *Mokṣopāya* is spoken of as “a work composed by / relating to Vasiṣṭha”:¹³

vāsiṣṭham [...] *etat* [...] || VTP, introd., 22cd ||

I take the liberty of speaking here of a metonymic usage, in that the name of the author or literary protagonist stands for the whole work: when one reads Homer, Shakespeare or Goethe, one reads their works, not the persons. Thus the term *vāsiṣṭha* was used to denote a work whose teachings were related to Vasiṣṭha.

From the 14th century, *Vāsiṣṭha* appears alongside the original title *Mokṣopāya*, or replaces it as a metonym.¹⁴ Moreover, extended titles start to appear compounded with “*vāsiṣṭha*”, such as *Vāsiṣṭha-Brahmadarśana*, *Jñāna-Vāsiṣṭha* and *Vāsiṣṭha-Rāmāyaṇa*.¹⁵ From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century there were still writers who distinguished between “a treatise *related to*/a treatise *by* Vasiṣṭha” (*vāsiṣṭha*) and the authorial title of “*Mokṣopāya*”, as the examples of Śrīvara and Ānandabodhendra show:

Mokṣopāya iti khyātaṃ Vāsiṣṭham brahmadarśanam (ŚRT I.5.80ab)

“The philosophy of *brahman* related to (/ composed by) Vasiṣṭha (*vāsiṣṭha*) [and] called (/ known as) “*Mokṣopāya*”.”

The various references made by Ānandabodhendra illustrate the move from authorial titling to metonymic naming by third parties. The latter gradually takes the place of the original title, and eventually replaces it almost entirely.

As shown, Ānandabodhendra was still familiar with the original title *Mokṣopāya* (*°ākhyā grantha*), but refers to it mainly by using the preceptor's personal name Vasiṣṭha or *Vāsiṣṭha* as an adjective. He points out the connection between the title and our philosopher's name as follows:

¹³ Cp. Pāṇ 4.3.116 (*kṛte granthe*). For a list of titles see Lo Turco 2002, p. 59. ¹⁴ “The *Śārṅga-dharapaddhati* by Śārṅgadhara (14th century) contains passages from *prakaraṇas* 1–5 (cf. Slaje 1994, p. 67). Śārṅgadhara calls the work *Vāsiṣṭha*. Therefore, the title *Vāsiṣṭha* first appears in the 14th century”. (Slaje 1990, p. 147, n. 1). See Lo Turco 2002, p. 62. ¹⁵ The *Mahārāmāyaṇa*, also used as a title, lacks a personal name. It remains to be seen whether *Vasiṣṭha-Rāma-Saṃvāda* should be understood as a title or merely as a reference to content.

MokṣopāyapravartakaVasiṣṭhavadhana (VTP ad MU II.6.26 = YV 2.6.29)

“Words of Vasiṣṭha, the originator of the *Mokṣopāya*”, or “Words of Vasiṣṭha, who initiated the means of salvation / the *Mokṣopāya*”.¹⁶

Already in his introduction, Ānandabodhendra states that he knows the *Mokṣopāya* as a work of human authorship (*grantha*):¹⁷

ananyapūrvavyākhyātam grantham me vyācīkīṣataḥ (VTP, introd., 24ab)

ayam grantha evopāya[h] (VTP ad MU VI.297.8 = YV 7.139.8)

“This work alone is the means [to a uniquely unshakable knowledge of reality (*dr̥ḍhataratattvajñāne*)].”

It is thus understandable how the original title *Mokṣopāya* and the metonym *Vāsiṣṭha* could fit together for the Indian reader, since Vasiṣṭha, as the main orator in the guise of Rāma’s teacher, was believed to be the creator of the philosophy presented in the *Mokṣopāya* and thus its author.

From this perspective, original title and metonym were conceived as interchangeable:

mokṣopāyasyopadeśasya (VTP ad MU IV.39.9 = YV 4.57.9)

vāsiṣṭhopadeśarahasya (VTP ad MU VI.158.11 = YV 6.126.94 [= 7.1.11])¹⁸

The original title of the work gradually receded into the background until, by the 19th century at the latest, which coincides curiously with the start of scholarly

¹⁶ In one passage Ānandabodhendra declares the author of the work to be Vālmīki: ***mokṣopāyākr̥tā*** = *vālmīkinā* (VTP ad MU/YV II.18.60). However, he probably had in mind the fictional role of Vālmīki as rapporteur of the dialogue between Vasiṣṭha and Rāma, as it inevitably follows from the myths contained in the frame stories E and D, which were added later (cf. Slaje 1994, pp. 100f.).

¹⁷ The term *grantha* (“an artificial arrangement of words” [“ein künstliches Gefüge von Worten”, pw]) normally precludes the assumption of an authorless revelation (*śruti*) or time-honoured tradition (*smṛti*). Bhāskarakaṇṭha still knew about the “secret” (*rahasya*) that the *Mokṣopāya* had actually been composed by an ordinary human author, see Slaje 2020, pp. 168–170, n. 5. ¹⁸ This is one of those stanzas that are transmitted twice, in YV 6.126 and 7.1. That the passages in question actually come from different textual traditions is conclusively demonstrated by their double presence in the YV (cp. Steiner 2014, pp. 187f.).

research into the text, it had apparently fallen into complete oblivion and was no longer taken into account. However, a title such as “*Vāsiṣṭha*” with “*Yoga*” added as a first member does not appear anywhere before the 17th century. Texts called “*Yoga*–”, or even “*Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*” – the prefixed “*laghu*” presupposes the existence of a *Yogavāsiṣṭha* – simply did not yet exist, according to the available sources. What we do find, as noted above,¹⁹ is *vāsiṣṭha* as a standalone adjective expressing an “oeuvre related to / composed by Vasiṣṭha”, the subject of which was only centuries later determined to be “*yoga*”.²⁰

The Role of the so-called “*Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha*”

A comparable phenomenon can be observed in the naming of the “*Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha*” (LYV). Ātmasukha calls his commentary on this text the “*Vāsiṣṭha-Candrikā*,” still without any additional elements such as “*yoga*” or “*laghu*”. What he comments on is actually an abridged version of the *Mokṣopāya*, with about three quarters of it cut out.²¹ Strictly speaking, it is an abstract presentation that is faithful to the structure of the original. The excerpt was never completed. Therefore, some chapters (LYV 6.17–18) had to be added to the truncated text in order to provide a concluding framework to match the opening story. A first additional chapter (LYV 6.16) preceding the concluding frame stories preserved the awareness at the time that this text was in fact an extract (*sāra*) from the *Mokṣopāya*:

mokṣopāyasya sāro 'yam (LYV 6.16.31C)²²

The character of this version as an abstract is also made clear elsewhere in these words:

idānīm śrotum icchāmi vasiṣṭhenopapāditam |
jñānasāram aśeṣeṇa granthenoktam yad ātmanā || LYV 6.18.2 ||

“I would now like to listen to the gist of the knowledge expounded by Vasiṣṭha, which he personally taught in a work in toto (/ personally taught in a complete work).”

¹⁹ See p. 28. ²⁰ See pp. 37ff. ²¹ On the ratios of the abridged version (LYV) in comparison with the *Mokṣopāya* and the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, cf. the detailed study of Steiner 2014, pp. 189f. On abstract versions of the *Mokṣopāya*, cf. Hanneder 2005; Stinner 2005. ²² On the original title, cp. also: *mahārāmāyaṇākhyaṇaṁ yan mokṣopāyāparābhidham* (LYV 6.16.24ab).

The state of transmission and the structure of the final sequential chapters thus suggest a clear understanding of the fact that this was an incomplete extract from a larger work. Thus, the earliest term used so far to denote this abridgement is “*Mokṣopāya-Sāra*” as quoted above (LYV 6.16.31c).²³

Quite similarly to Ānandabodhendra, Ātmasukha also speaks metonymically of the text he is expounding as “*Vāsiṣṭha*”, i.e., a work originating from or related to Vasiṣṭha:

vāsiṣṭhacandrikā (VC 8d)

vāsiṣṭhābdhi (VC 9a)

vāsiṣṭhasamudra [...] *idaṃ vāsiṣṭhaṃ* [...] (VC 2, 20–3, 1 *ad* LYV 1.1)

Ātmasukha’s point in his introduction about the abridged nature of his source text²⁴ is also indirectly confirmed by the fact that he often quotes from what he calls a ‘comprehensive *Vāsiṣṭha*’ (*brhadvāsiṣṭha*),²⁵ which only makes sense if he knew he was commenting on an abstract version.²⁶ It is probably for this reason

²³ Slaje 1994, p. 131. So also Ms LN₅ (Slaje 1994, p. 46). ²⁴ *tam imaṃ vāsiṣṭhasamudraṃ* [...] *mandamatidustaram ālakṣya paramakāruṇikaḥ kāśmīrapaṇḍito ’bhinandanāmā ślokānām ṣaṭṣa-haśrīṇ tasmād ujjahāra* (VC 2, 20–3, 1). ²⁵ The following compilation of “*Brhadvāsiṣṭha*” quotations is from Roland Steiner (e-mail of 21 Dec. 2020): VC *ad* LYV I.1.4: MU I.1.20; VC *ad* LYV II.1.51: YV II.12.11 ≈ MU II.12.11 [prose]; VC *ad* LYV III.1.14 (MU III.1.13): YV III.13.2–4 ≈ MU III.13.2.4; VC *ad* LYV III.1.52: MU III.3.6; VC *ad* LYV III.2.100 (MU III.2.1.41): MU III.2.1.37; VC *ad* LYV III.3.39 (≈ MU III.70.36): ≈ YV III.70.24 ≈ MU III.70.23; YV III.70.28–29 ≈ MU III.70.27–28; VC *ad* LYV III.3.97 (≈ MU III.78.39): YV III.78.40 ≈ MU III.78.38; VC *ad* LYV III.4.40 (≈ YV III.87.9cd–10ab ≈ MU III.87.8cd–9ab): YV III.81.34 ≈ MU III.81.30; VC *ad* LYV III.6.9 (≈ YV III.98.6 = MU III.98.3): MU III.99.32; VC *ad* LYV III.6.29 (MU III.98.23): ≈ YV III.99.32 ≈ MU III.99.31. ²⁶ The term *brhadvāsiṣṭha* is also found in Dhunḍhukanātha’s *Rasendracintāmaṇi* (c. 15th/16th century): “Meulenbeld (A History of Indian Medicine, Vol. IIA, S. 705) datiert den Text “between the middle of the fifteenth century and the second half of the sixteenth century.” [...] *nanu katham eṣāṃ tulayatety apekṣāyāṃ brūmaḥ mokṣopāye brhadvāsiṣṭhādau bhuṣuṇḍopākhyāne vasiṣṭhavākyaṃ* | (*Rasendracintāmaṇi* I.12.1). [...] Es folgt: *asādhyah kasyacid yogaḥ kasyacij jñānaniścayaḥ* | (= MU VI.13.7ab = YV VI.13.8ab = LYV VI.1.60ab); *dvau prakārau tato devo jagāda paramaḥ śivaḥ* | (= LYV VI.1.60cd; fehlt in MU und YV); *prāṇānām vā nirodhena* (= MU VI.48.24c) *vāsanānodanena vā* | *no cet saṃvidam ucchāṇāṃ karoṣi tadayogavān* | *dvāv eva hi samau rāma jñānayogav imau smṛtau* | (vgl. VI.13.10ab ≈ YV VI.13.11ab: *dvāv eva kila yatnotthau jñānayogau raghūdvaḥ*; fehlt in LYV). [...] Ein weiterer Beleg für den Titel “*Mokṣopāya*”, den man bei Unkenntnis des Werktitels u. U. gar nicht als solchen erkennt” (Roland Steiner, e-mail of 17 July 2016).

that modern editors have fabricated an appropriate title by using ‘*laghu*’ as the first member.²⁷

Other abstract versions and their names as popular in South India, especially the one commonly going by the name of *Jñāna-Vāsiṣṭha*²⁸ as well as the 17th century Tamil translation of the same (Ālavantār Muṇivar’s *Ñāṇavāciṭṭam*²⁹) deserve separate studies.

Moreover, there is no good reason not to see in Abhinanda, whom Ātma-sukha mentions as the author of the abridgment he expounds, an emigrated Kashmiri Paṇḍit.³⁰ A Persian translation and several colophons follow this identification.³¹ Attempts to identify him with two other Abhinandas, one the son of Bhaṭṭa Jayanta and the other the eponymous author of the *Rāmacarita*, can now

²⁷ The book title *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha*, never used for the *Mokṣopāyasāra* in the primary sources, owes its existence to the decision of the editor, Paṇṣīkar (1888), following the 1st edition of the “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*” (1880). Occasionally, however, there are manuscript colophons showing *laghu-* as the first member of the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra*, cf. below, n. 89. ²⁸ “Though this title, *Jñānavāsiṣṭha*, seems to be attributed to an abridged version, the same version is also known by the title *Laghujñānavāsiṣṭha* (CC I: 479), which leads one to conclude that the form *Jñāna°* may also refer to a longer work. We also have information on the title *Gurujñānavāsiṣṭha*; a manuscript thus entitled is held by the Adyar Library (MS 1887)” (Lo Turco 2002, p. 45). ²⁹ On the composition of the *Ñāṇavāciṭṭam* see the contribution of Eric Steinschneider in this volume. Cp. also Peres 2021. ³⁰ *kāśmīrapaṇḍito ’bhinandanāmā* (for the full quotation cp. above n. 24). ³¹ Cp. Pānīpatī’s introduction: “The Kashmiri paṇḍit Abhinanda, who is the author of the text of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (*Jūg Bāsisht*), at the commencement of this abridgment [...]” (Nair 2020, p. 50). – “If there is a final colophon after the shortest end of the text, it tells of the said Paṇḍit from Kashmir. A Gauḍa-Abhinanda is transmitted by the colophons only from the frame *Nirvāṇa* 16 onwards. This corresponds to the fact that only the secondary closing frame (from *Nirvāṇa* 17.11) contains parts of the *Rāmacarita* composed by Abhinanda. [...] however, this author cannot be dated with sufficient certainty to the time of the composition of the LYV, nor can he be associated with Kashmir at all.” (Stinner 2005, p. 103 [“Wenn nach dem kürzesten Abschluß ein Schlußkolophon vorhanden ist, berichtet dieser von dem besagten Paṇḍit aus Kaschmir. Ein Gauḍa-Abhinanda ist erst ab dem Rahmen *Nirvāṇa* 16 von den Kolophonen überliefert. Damit korrespondiert, daß allein der sekundäre Schlußrahmen (ab *Nirvāṇa* 17.11) Teile des von Abhinanda verfaßten *Rāmacarita* enthält. Wie zu Beginn bereits bemerkt, läßt sich dieser Autor hingegen weder mit hinreichender Sicherheit in die Entstehungszeit des LYV datieren noch überhaupt mit Kaschmir in Verbindung bringen.”]). One such colophon is dated 1674 (cf. below n. 89). Dating from the end of the 17th century, it has other elements that are characteristic of that century and, in this respect, suspicious, since they combine elements of different origins, such as *yogavāsiṣṭhapustaka ... gaṇḍamaṇḍalālamkārapaṇḍitaśrīabhinandasamuddhṛte ... mokṣopāyasāre ... | sūkṣmayogavāsiṣṭham* (Ms LN₅ [Slaje 1994, p. 46]; cf. also Ms LG₃ (1994, p. 129).

be regarded as unsuccessful.³² They may continue to be considered unsuccessful, given the well-known willingness of Kashmiri scholars to travel,³³ but also because of several waves of religiously enforced emigration from Kashmir since the 14th century, which had led to a mass exodus of Paṇḍits.³⁴ It follows that the abridged version must have been written before the last quarter of the 14th century, since Vidyāraṇya, who is believed to have died in 1386,³⁵ quotes from it. In fact, the first *systematic* persecution of Hindus in Kashmir began precisely at this time under the rule of Sulṭān Sikandar (r. 1389–1413) and, driven to excess by Sikandar’s prime minister Bhaṭṭa Sūha, continued for nearly three decades until 1417. Historiographical sources testify that Kashmiri Paṇḍits fled the Kashmir valley in droves in terror, taking their texts with them. It cannot be ruled out that among the emigrants there was a Paṇḍit called Abhinanda, who took the *Mokṣopāya* with him to the plains of India and then circulated it there in the condensed form he had given it. Significantly, this abridgement has remained unknown in Kashmir – apparently there was no return flow, as there is no manuscript evidence to be found there – and conversely, no versions of the complete *Mokṣopāya* (MU) are known to have ever reached the Indian south.³⁶ Moreover, the full version going by the title of “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*” (YV)

³² Cf. Stinner 2005, pp. 91–104. Statements such as “the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (hereafter “*Laghu*”) was composed by the Kashmiri paṇḍit Gauḍa Abhinanda–of probable Bengali ancestry, based upon his name–likely in the tenth century, though possibly as late as the mid-thirteenth” (Nair 2020, p. 31) are not tenable. They are anachronistic, as the results of the layered transmission show. The Kashmiri Paṇḍit Abhinanda can be clearly distinguished from the Gauḍābhinanda mentioned in a colophon of the sarga that concludes the outermost frame, which was added later. Cf. moreover “[...] the epithet *gauḍa* [...] does not necessarily indicate an association with Bengal [...]” (Lo Turco 2002, p. 48). ³³ On the high mobility of Kashmiri Paṇḍits and the concomitant migration of their texts to southern India, cf. Cox 2010, esp. pp. 12–17 (“Mobility and its Discontents”). On the emigration of Kashmiri Paṇḍits to South India cf. ViK 53; 61; 119. ³⁴ Slaje 2012, p. 26 [= KSKKG 630]; 2019, pp. 32ff. ³⁵ “[...] von 1331 bis zu seinem Tode im Jahre 1386 Klostervorsteher in Śṛṅgerī” (Sprockhoff 1976, p. 14). Cf. Heras 1929, p. 16; HDhŚ I, 2, pp. 781f.; Goodding 2013, p. 84, n. 6. The alternative year of death, 1391, given elsewhere for Vidyāraṇya (ASM 1908, p. 15) may be based on the homonymy of two different persons with the same name Mādhava (HDhŚ I, 2, p. 791). However, such an assumption would only be valid on the condition that Vidyāraṇya and Mādhava were in fact identical persons (“my own view here is that they are the same, but Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya’s political role is less clear than the historians of the twentieth century want to ascribe to him” [Goodding 2013, p. 86, n. 9]), which can be practically ruled out due to a lack of reliable evidence (Slaje 2010, pp. 390; 393, n. 40 and 43; p. 408, n. 85; p. 410), and because the inscriptions used to determine his year of death as 1386 are not among the forgeries produced on a large scale by the Saṃnyāsins of Śṛṅgerī in the 16th century (Heras 1929, pp. 32ff; HDhŚ I, 2, p. 782). ³⁶ “To date, no South Indian YV or MU Mss. have become known” (Stinner 2005, p. 103 [“Bis heute sind keine südindischen YV- oder MU-Hss. bekannt geworden”]).

in northern India presupposes the existence of the abstract version, since the sargas (LYV) 6.13–15, together with the added concluding frame stories (LYV) 6.17–18, had been incorporated into it. As a result, the frames that now represent there sargas (YV) 6.116–128 have created an artificial divide that separates the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa* into two halves (*pūrva-* and *uttarārdha*). In contrast, in the Kashmirian version of the *Mokṣopāya* there is no such interruption which divides the text.³⁷ This again shows that the *Mokṣopāya* was initially received in the regions outside Kashmir only in the form of Abhinanda's abstract, the *Mokṣopāyasāra*, until a version was produced in the plains which happened to be merged with chapters (LYV) 6.13–18, corresponding to sargas YV 6.116–128 of the printed *Yogavāsiṣṭha* vulgate. In this regard, on the one hand, this version is over-complete; on the other hand, about 1000 stanzas from the Kashmirian *Mokṣopāya* were lost in the process of this replacement. If primary source testimony is considered more reliable than the title page of a printed edition, the name of Abhinanda's abridged version should be "*Mokṣopāyasāra*" rather than "*Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha*".³⁸ At the same time it is clear that Vasiṣṭha's teachings in the second half of the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa* after the sarga where Abhinanda's *Sāra* breaks off,³⁹ did not reach the regions outside Kashmir before the 17th century. This is why they are also missing in the Persian translations. In this way, this unfinished abstract represents a kind of literary fragment. It was probably the result of an unfavourable transmission, or, more likely, by the untimely death of Abhinanda, the Kashmiri Paṇḍit.⁴⁰ With the notable exception of Kashmir, the *Mokṣopāyasāra* subsequently spread throughout West Asia and the entire Indian subcontinent, exerting considerable influence and producing a rich body of literature in a variety of textual and ideological forms.

On the Element *yoga-* in the title "*Yogavāsiṣṭha*"

By now the intellectual authorship (Vasiṣṭha) and authorial title (*Mokṣopāya*) under which this text was initially perceived, and the conventional metonym (*Vāsiṣṭha*) under which third parties subsequently associated it with Vasiṣṭha, the fictitious author and the actual source of the philosophical ideas set forth in it, should have become clear. Let us now turn to the question of when, where and why the compound *yoga-vāsiṣṭha* occurs and what it was supposed to mean.

³⁷ Slaje 1994, p. 132; for greater detail and additional findings cp. Steiner 2014, pp. 178–186.

³⁸ See above n. 22. ³⁹ MU VI.158 = YV 6.126 = LYV 6.15. ⁴⁰ Cf. Slaje 1994, p. 130.

Yoga- as the first member of this title does not appear in the root text, nor was it known to pre-modern commentators.⁴¹ The earliest evidence for the Sanskrit-title ‘*Yogavāsiṣṭha*’ is invariably from the relatively late 17th and 18th centuries,⁴² until it appears in print under this title in the 19th century (1880).⁴³

Against this background, one wonders where the name suddenly came from. Until the turn of the 17th century, only “*Vāsiṣṭha*” was in use (in addition to *Mokṣopāya*), which is attested from the 14th century onwards. It is here, at the very latest, that Abhinanda’s abstract *Mokṣopāyasāra* (LYV) comes into play again. This extract, as has already been mentioned, must have been in existence before Vidyāraṇya wrote his *Jīvanmuktiviveka*. Vidyāraṇya quotes from this version, but does not mention its title as *Yoga-*, or even *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*. Rather, he refers to his source as the *Vasiṣṭha-Rāma-Saṃvāda* or *Vāsiṣṭha-Rāmāyaṇa*.⁴⁴ There is nothing to suggest that he was familiar with any of the prefixed elements such as *laghu-* and *yoga-*, but it was clearly part of his agenda to bring Vasiṣṭha’s philosophy closer to yoga.⁴⁵

A comparable picture is provided by Ātmasukha’s *Vāsiṣṭha-Candrikā* on Abhinanda’s abstract. There is a terminus post quem for his commentary in the 12th century,⁴⁶ and a terminus ante quem in the year 1597/98 of the first Persian

⁴¹ *Vāsiṣṭha* compounded with a first member is found only in the abridged versions known as *Jñāna-Vāsiṣṭha* or Tamil *Ñāṇa-Vāciṭṭam*, which are widespread in South India, but which have neither been critically edited nor sufficiently studied to make reliable statements about them. ⁴² “The widespread book-title *Yogavāsiṣṭha* occurs nowhere in the text itself save for a tiny number of manuscripts, where it is to be found only in colophons in addition to the title of *Mokṣopāya* (sg./pl.) or *Mokṣopāya-Saṃhitā* immanent in the work [...]. The earliest testimonies of a denotation that approaches the meaning of “*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*” occur in the shape of Persian adaptations in the 16th century (*Jog-Bāsiṣṭh*) and in Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja’s 17th century-*Rasagaṅgādhara* (written under Śāh Jahān) [...]” (Slaje 2020, p. 169, note 6). ⁴³ The arrangement of the members of the compound *yoga-vāsiṣṭha* can be satisfactorily explained with Pāṇ 4.3.87 (*adhikṛtya kṛte granthe*) as an accusative tatpuruṣa expressing “a work of Vasiṣṭha” that “concerns *yoga*” (cf. Levitt 2005, esp. pp. 209; 219). The masculine gender of (*Laghu-*)*Yogavāsiṣṭhaḥ* used by the editors on their respective title pages (YV and LYV) is best understood by assuming that they added [*granthaḥ*] elliptically as an antecedent. The title appearing in the masculine would thus represent a bahuvrīhi compound. This is clear from the title page of LYV (*Laghuyogavāsiṣṭhaḥ* [...] *grantho ’yam* [...]) and from the introduction (pp. 3, 13): *laghuyogavāsiṣṭha iti vyavahṛto granthaḥ*. ⁴⁴ For details see Slaje 1997, p. 388, note 8. ⁴⁵ Slaje 1998. ⁴⁶ “[...] written at Varanasi by Ātmasukha [...] (cf. CC I: 42; NCC II: 59). [...] mentions Kṣīrasvāmin (11th–12th centuries) and therefore cannot be earlier than the 12th century. It also mentions Sarveśvara, known as the author of a *Sāhityasāra* [...] though I do not know the date of this work. [...] *Vāsiṣṭhatattvabodhinī* by Rāmaabrahmendra (Yogin) or Rāmendrayamin, a *sannyāsin* from the south, disciple of Upendrayogin ...” (Lo Turco 2002: 54, n. 37).

translation, since the latter paraphrases the wording of Ātmasukha's introduction.⁴⁷ This is also consistent with the hypothesis that the *Mokṣopāyasāra* was composed in the Indian plains before the end of the 14th century by a Paṇḍit named Abhinanda, who may have travelled or fled from Kashmir.

The Eponymous Role of the Persian translations

The emergence of the new name coincides with the first Persian translation of the *Mokṣopāyasāra* by Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī in AD 1597/98 under the title of *Ġōg Bāsišt*.⁴⁸ Abhinanda's *Sāra* was available to Pānīpatī and his team of translators largely in the form of the 1888 edition with the commentaries of Ātmasukha and Mummaḍideva (LYV).⁴⁹ The introduction to the Persian translation, though not found in all manuscripts,⁵⁰ irrefutably refers to Ātmasukha's wording in his Sanskrit introduction (VC 1, 5–3, 4): "The Kashmiri Paṇḍit named Abhinandan [...] made the selection of the copy (*nusha*) of the *Ġōg Bāsišt* (*ṣāhib-i intiḥāb-i ... Ġōg bāsišt ast*) [...] And this Kashmiri Paṇḍit is a worshipper of the name Narasimha (*narsang*) – (that) is one of those special manifestations that appears in the form and character of a man [and lion]. Therefore he says that that being (*zāt*) (is) Brahma and [at the same time] that absolute light and pure mind, which is entirely joy and pleasure, happiness and well-being (*rāḥat*), and (that) Narasimha is one of his great names. *Nara* (means) man, and *simha* (*sang*) lion – that means: that manifestation which unites [in itself] the form and character (*sīrat*) of a lion and a man. [...] And Vālmīki, whose heart was a mirror of the divine mysteries, and in whom the states of the world are revealed from the past and the future, one after another, had brought the instruction of Vasiṣṭha in

⁴⁷ Cf. below pp. 36f. ⁴⁸ On the Persian translations see Franke 2005 and 2011 as well as Alam 2016, Nair 2020: 30ff., Kotler 2022 (all unaware of Franke's studies). ⁴⁹ "Since the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht* is not a literal, word-for-word rendition, we cannot be certain, with philological exactitude, precisely how closely the version(s) known to the Mughals correspond with the printed edition as we know it today. In a general sense, however, we can say that, so far as can be determined through a textual comparison of the modern printed *Laghu* and the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht*, the version of the *Laghu* Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī used appears to be in overall close accordance with the modern printed Motilal Banarsidass *Laghu*, as the sequences of vocabulary, teachings, and narrative tales line up quite consistently" (Nair 2020, p. 45). A little caution is in order here, because "it should be noted, however, that some copies of the Pānīpatī translation end with the 43rd sarga, while others [...] also include sargas 44 to 46" (Franke 2005, p. 120 ["Zu bemerken ist jedoch, dass einige Kopien der Pānīpatī-Übersetzung mit dem 43. sarga enden, während andere [...] auch die sargas 44 bis 46 einschließen"]). ⁵⁰ See preceding n. 49 and Franke 2011, p. 364.

32,000 Ślōkas, and Bhṛgu read it out; and Bhṛgu wrote that down and put it into the form (*qayd*) of a book. And seeing now that sea of 32,000 Ślōkas of Vālmīki without a shore and knowing that the comprehension of that is troublesome for a seeking person, and no one can put it in fetters, I thought it necessary (*ma-rā žarūrat šud*) to remove the difficult and problematic in it, which one cannot easily (*zūdtar*) understand, and the repetitions and the superfluous in it. I have expressed the summary (*māḥaṣal*) of Vasiṣṭha's instruction (*farmūda*) in words and terms of 6,000 Ślōkas and arranged this book as an epitome (*muḥtaṣarī ḡāmī^c muštamil*) containing six chapters".⁵¹

The choice of the title “*Ġōg Bāsišt*” can only have been caused by a persophone rendering of either the Sanskrit “*Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*” or a Persian transcription of the Hindustānī⁵² of this period, which was pronounced as *Jog Vāsiṣṭh* or *Bāsiṣṭh*.⁵³ It is therefore hardly a coincidence that terms such as *Yogavāsiṣṭhapustaka* and *Sūkṣmayogavāsiṣṭha*⁵⁴ do not appear until the late 17th century. This is the

⁵¹ Quoted with permission by Heike Franke from her written communication, 30 June 2005 (based on ĠB pp. 5–9): “Der kaschmirische Pandit namens Abhinandan, der die Auswahl der Abschrift (*nusḥa*) des Ġōg Bāsišt vorgenommen hat (*ṣāḥib-i intiḥāb-i ... Ġōg bāsišt ast*) [...] Und dieser kaschmirische Pandit ist ein Anbeter des Namens Narasimha (*narsang*) – (das) ist einer von jenen speziellen Manifestationen, die in der Form und im Charakter eines Menschen [und Löwen] in Erscheinung tritt. Deswegen sagt er, dass jenes Wesen (*zāt*) Brahma und [gleichzeitig] jenes absolute Licht und der reine Verstand (*ist*), das ganz und gar Freude und Vergnügen, Glück und Wohlergehen (*rāḥat*) ist, und (dass) Narasimha einer von seinen großen Namen ist. *Nara* (bedeutet) Mensch, und *simha* (*sang*) Löwe – das bedeutet: jene Manifestation, die die Form und den Charakter (*sūrat*) eines Löwen und eines Menschen [in sich] vereinigt. [...] Und Vālmīki, dessen Herz ein Spiegel der göttlichen Geheimnisse war, und in dem die Zustände der Welt aus dem Vergangenen und dem Kommenden, einer nach dem anderen, offenbar werden, hatte die Weisung des Vasiṣṭha in 32.000 Aślōkas (Variante: Ślōka) gebracht und Bhṛgu las sie vor; und Bhṛgu hat jenes aufgeschrieben und in die Form (*qayd*) des Buches gebracht. Und da ich jetzt jenes Meer von 32.000 Aślōk des Vālmīki ohne Ufer sehe, und weiß, dass die Erfassung von jenem für einen suchenden Menschen mühsam ist, und niemand es in Fesseln legen kann, hielt ich es für notwendig (*ma-rā žarūrat šud*), das Schwierige und Problematische in ihm, das man nicht so leicht (*zūdtar*) verstehen kann, und die Wiederholungen und das Überflüssige darin zu entfernen. Ich habe die Zusammenfassung (*māḥaṣal*) der Weisung (*farmūda*) Vasiṣṭhas in Worten und Begriffen von 6.000 Aślōk ausgedrückt und dieses Buch als eine Epitome (*muḥtaṣarī ḡāmī^c muštamil*), die sechs Kapitel enthält, angeordnet.” According to Nair (2020, p. 157), the Persian translators were also familiar with Mummaḍīdeva's commentary *Ṣaṃsāratarāṇi* on *Prakaraṇas* LYV 3–6. ⁵² I use the term “Hindustānī” following Śrīvara, who was an almost contemporary since he remained active until 1505 (ŚRT, introd. p. 24f.). He contrasted the “Persian language” (*pārasibhāṣā*) with *hindusthānāvāc* as the Indian vernacular of his day (ŚRT II.214). Islamic authors use “Hindavī” instead (Nair 2020, p. 189; cf. also p. 220, n. 1). ⁵³ Cf. below pp. 62f. ⁵⁴ As a conceptual equivalent of *laghu*–? For manuscripts that use *laghu*– to refer to the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra* (VāS), see below n. 101.

case in the colophon of a scribe (dated 1674) to Abhinanda's abstract, which also mentions the title *Mokṣopāyasāra*.⁵⁵ In any event, this Persian and at the same time first translation, which goes by the name of *Ġōg Bāsišt*, is the earliest known evidence of a name approximating “*Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*”. This was followed by a series of Persian translations under the same title. The addition of *Ġōg/Jog* [= *yoga*] to the title is a common feature of Persian renderings from the turn of the 17th century.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ See above, p. 31. ⁵⁶ According to the titles listed in Franke 2005, p. 126–129; 2011, p. 366. “Fathollāh Mojtābā’ī, in his own admittedly incomplete survey of Persian manuscripts related to the *Laghu*, lists at least ten renditions produced at the Mughal court, not to mention the several *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*-related works produced independently of court patronage” (Nair 2020, p. 44).

1597/98

Translator Pānīpatī: *Ġōg Bāsišt*⁵⁷ (commissioned by Prince Salīm [Ġahāngīr])⁵⁸

1602

Translator Farmulī: *Ġōg Bāsišt* (commissioned by Akbar)⁵⁹

1656/57

Anonymous translator: *Ġōg Bašist* (commissioned by Dārā Šikōh)⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Commented on before 1640 by Mīr Findiriskī under the title “*Muntaḥab-i Ġōg Bāsišt*” and after that compiled into a selection by an anonymous writer (Franke 2005, p. 124). On Pānīpatī, see Alam 2016, pp. 435–438; on Findiriskī, pp. 439–442, as well as Nair 2020, p. 119. “[...] his Persian commentary on the *Jūg Bāsišt*, the *Sharḥ-i Jūg*, taking the form of a running marginal gloss (*ḥāshiyah*); and his condensed recension of the *Jūg Bāsišt*, the *Muntakhab-i Jūg Bāsišt*, in which Findiriskī had stitched together selections from the *Jūg Bāsišt* interspersed with selections from the corpus of classical Persian Sufi poetry. The *Muntakhab* also includes a glossary of Sanskrit terms explained in Persian, typically utilizing the lexicon of the *wujūdī* and Peripatetic traditions” (Nair 2020: 122f.; cf. also p. 128). ⁵⁸ Franke 2011, p. 364. “At the very beginning stages of this chain of scholarship, thus, stands the Mughal prince Salīm, the soon-to-be-emperor Jahāngīr, whom Nizām al-Dīn Pānīpatī describes as the facilitator of this early Persian translation of the (*Laghu*-) *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*” (Nair 2020, p. 44). ⁵⁹ Franke 2011, pp. 361; 366; 373; D’Onofrio 2007, p. 280. ⁶⁰ Franke 2011, p. 366. “In the further course of this preface, Dārā Šikōh himself reports that he met Vasiṣṭha and Rāma one night during a “meeting in reality (*dar wāqīʿ*)” – not in a dream! – and, together with Rāma, ate sweets offered by Vasiṣṭha. Both Rāma and Dārā are, as the reader is presumably supposed to infer from this ritual feeding, equally disciples of Vasiṣṭha” (Franke 2005, p. 117 [“Im weiteren Verlauf dieser Vorrede berichtet Dārā Šikōh selbst, dass er eines Nachts bei einer “in der Realität (*dar wāqīʿ*)” stattfindenden Begegnung – nicht im Traum! – mit Vasiṣṭha und Rāma zusammengetroffen sei und er gemeinsam mit Rāma von Vasiṣṭha gereichte Süßigkeiten gegessen habe. Sowohl Rāma als auch Dārā sind, das soll der Leser vermutlich aus dieser rituellen Speisung schließen, gleichermaßen Schüler Vasiṣṭhas”]). In contrast, Alam (2016, p. 456) translates “one night [in a dream]”. “In a dream,” as added by Alam in brackets, was turned into a speculation about a dream vision, but one which he himself had constructed (457f.). “In a dream” has become a matter of course for Nair and is no longer in parentheses (2020, p. 44; so also Kotler 2022, p. 412). But Dārā may well have had a night vision which he described as a real encounter with Vasiṣṭha and Rāma. However subjective, such an apparition must be judged differently from an illusory dream, which was certainly not what he meant. Alam, Nair, Gandhi (2020, p. 81) and Kotler have overlooked Heike Franke’s analyses of the Persian translations (2005 and 2011 respectively), which is particularly detrimental to their treatment of the Farmulī translation (1602), for the latter was most likely commissioned by Akbar. On Dārā Šikōh’s translation, see also Alam 2016, pp. 446–450; Gandhi 2020, p. 81 (“It is therefore possible that Banwālīdās Walī [d. 1674] collaborated in some way on this project.”).

These translations were usually made by a team of Persian-speaking Muslim court scholars, assisted by Sanskrit paṇḍits who communicated in a Hindustānī idiom.⁶¹ Two Hindus working at the Mughal court were involved in the translation of Nizām al-Dīn Pānīpatī, namely Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī and Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī.⁶² The presence of recognised Hindu scholars at the Mughal courts at the time of these translations will have played a role in the classification and titling of Abhinanda's abstract version of the *Mokṣopāya*. In this context, the fact that Ātmasukha is said to have written his commentary in Benares,⁶³ from where Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī also came as a member of the translation team, is perhaps of some significance.

⁶¹ “As Findiriskī mentions in his commentary on the *Jūg Bāsisht*, he did attempt to learn Sanskrit himself, and also expressed great frustration at the inaccuracies in the translation, lamenting that the *paṇḍits* of his time no longer knew Sanskrit properly and that the translations were not directly from Sanskrit to Persian, but rather, typically occurred through an oral Hindavī vernacular as intermediary” (Nair 2020, p. 122). “Findiriskī [...] says that the *paṇḍits* would first translate the Sanskrit passage into a Hindavī vernacular, at which point the Persianist would render the Hindavī into Persian—we can guess that Pānīpatī likely did not himself know Sanskrit. Accordingly, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra would have supplied an oral, Hindavī vernacular rendition of the Sanskrit *Laghu*, at which point Pānīpatī would presumably have taken over to supply the final Persian textual product. [...] probably that Pānīpatī was the sole direct author of the final Persian text, though produced in back-and-forth conversation with the two Sanskrit *paṇḍits*, whose “fingerprints” can be carefully gleaned from the Persian text [...]” (Nair 2020, p. 47). ⁶² Nair 2020, pp. 43; 47ff. Identical with Miśra Haḡḡipūrī? Cf. Franke (2011, p. 366, note 25): “It is noteworthy that Akbar’s translator Farmulī cooperated with the same authority, namely *pathan* Miśra Haḡḡipūrī (Farmulī fol. 3a), who had already lent his support in rendering the text to Nizām ad-Dīn Pānīpatī, [...]”. ⁶³ Lo Turco 2002, p. 54, note 37.

Exponents of Kevalādvaitavedānta at the Mughal Court

Let us take a closer look at some of the influential representatives of Hindu scholarship who gathered at the Mughal court at the transition from the sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, which was the period of the first and major translations of the Persian *Ġōg Bāsišt* there. The discussion circles established by Akbar in the 1570s and continued by Šāh Ġahān also included eminent personalities who represented the Hindu worldview. As mentioned earlier, Hindu scholars were also involved in the translation academy founded by Akbar.⁶⁴ Some of the names that come up in this context deserve attention.

First, there is the Bengali Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, an influential and prominent character representing the Kevalādvaitavedānta in the early modern period. He was educated in Vārāṇasī, a stronghold of this philosophical current, and was present at the evening gatherings at the courts of Akbar (1556–1605) and his successor, Ġahāngīr (1605–1627), as well as, until the early years of his reign, of Šāh Ġahān (1627–1658).⁶⁵ It should be noted that Madhusūdana, for his part, attached so little value to the worldviews of non-Hindu doctrines that he considered their consideration superfluous.⁶⁶ Madhusūdana is mentioned by Abū 'l-Faẓl as one of the authorities present at the court in the same year (1597) that Pānīpatī finished translating the *Ġōg Bāsišt*.⁶⁷ It is hard to imagine that the

⁶⁴ “Akbar established his “house of religious discussion” (*‘ibādatkhānah*) in the mid-1570s, where he would host religious discussions between Muslims, Brahmins, Jains, Christians, and others. The practice lasted into Jahāngīr’s reign, if not longer. Akbar also established the institution of the *maktabkhānah* (“house of writing”), which served as a “translation bureau” of sorts” (Nair 2020, p. 200, n. 21). ⁶⁵ Cp. Nair 2020, p. 56. ⁶⁶ *vedabāhyatvāt teṣāṃ mlecchādīprasthānavat paramparayāpi puruṣārthānupayogitvād upekṣaṇīyam eva* (PrBh 2, 14f.): “the *prasthānas* [of the *nāstikas*] should be disregarded because, like the *prasthānas* of the barbarians (*mlecchas*), etc., they are not conducive to the proper ends of humankind (*puruṣārthas*) even indirectly, since they are external to the Veda” (Nair 2020, p. 201, note 48). This Hindu-centrist attitude, a historical and contemporary phenomenon discussed in detail by Witzel (2004; 2005), tends to reject everything outside one’s own so-called “Vedic” tradition as irrelevant to the goals of life. However, there is a counterexample in Śrīvara, who translated Persian literature, specifically Ġāmi’s *Yūsuf-o Zoleiḥā* into Sanskrit under the title *Kathākautuka* (cf. Obrock 2019). See also Nair’s quote of Wilhelm Halbfass: “The Indocentrism developed in ‘orthodox’ Hindu thought transcends by far what is ordinarily called ‘ethnocentrism.’ It is not simply an unquestioned perspective or bias, but a sophisticated theoretical structure of self-universalization and self-isolation. Seen from within this complex, highly differentiated structure, the *mlecchas* are nothing but a faint and distant phenomenon at the horizon of the indigenous tradition. They do not possess an ‘otherness’ against which one’s own identity could be asserted, or in which it could be reflected. They are neither targets of possible conversion, nor sources of potential inspiration.” (Nair 2020, p. 202, note 51). ⁶⁷ Cp. Nair 2020, p. 60f.

translating team and Madhusūdana did not know each other.⁶⁸ Especially since the latter quotes from the *Vāsiṣṭha* – but not yet from a “*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*” – and uses the instructions of Vasiṣṭha as an authoritative source for his concept of the *ekajīva*-, or *drṣṭi-srṣṭi-vāda*.⁶⁹ The relationship between the Persian *Ġōg Bāsišt* and the Kevalādvaitavedānta also takes shape – in regional terms – in the figure of Madhusūdana and his personal acquaintance with Akbar,⁷⁰ since Benares and the Mughal court at Agra played a central role.⁷¹ Moreover, Madhusūdana was an anchorite of the Sarasvatī branch of the Daśanāmī order,⁷² and by no means the only one of this order to trace their origins to Śaṅkara. He was involved in the dissemination and adaptive integration of the “(Yoga)-Vāsiṣṭha” into the late scholastic traditions of Advaitavedānta philosophy. Madhusūdana’s pronounced *bhakti* orientation⁷³ invites speculation as to whether or not he was responsible – in a way that cannot be precisely determined – for the addition of two chap-

⁶⁸ “Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra—who, as trained *paṇḍits* (at least one of them associated with Banaras), would have had access to the contemporaneous Sanskrit discussions taking place in Banaras and perhaps other intellectual centres—brought their knowledge of recent Advaitin debates concerning *drṣṭi-srṣṭi-vāda* and *eka-jīva-vāda* to bear upon the Persian translation project, leaving a distinct mark on the *Jūg Bāsišt* in the peculiar manner in which the text treats the subject of the *jīva*” (Nair 2020, p. 152). ⁶⁹ *mukhyo vedāntasiddhānta ekajīvavādākhyah | imam eva ca drṣṭisrṣṭivādam ācakṣate* (SB(A) 49, 2). “[...] the paired notions of *eka-jīva-vāda* (“doctrine of one soul”) and *drṣṭi-srṣṭi-vāda* (“doctrine of creation through perception”). Madhusūdana inquired into these two notions by way of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, citing the work as an authoritative source for the doctrines and thus proffering his articulations of these doctrines as the right interpretation of the treatise” (Nair 2020, p. 57). “Significantly, this homology comprises a meeting of philosophical currents far more complex than simply an encounter between Sufism and Vedānta in the Mughal court [...]. In the first place, we find Madhusūdana’s Advaitin conceptualization of the *jīva* as the universal principle of ‘I-ness’” (Nair 2020, p. 166). See also Timalšina 2006, p. 127ff. ⁷⁰ “[...] no doubt that Madhusūdana was known to Akbar and the imperial court, and that he was held in the highest esteem among some of its innermost circles. This observation lends some credence to the various oral traditions depicting several encounters between Madhusūdana and Akbar” (Nair 2020, p. 61). ⁷¹ “Jagannātha Miśra Banārāsī [...] his association with Banaras, which would, again, render him a feasible channel for the transmission of the sort of Advaitin learning represented by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī into the jet streams crisscrossing the Mughal court” (Nair 2020, p. 48). On the close relationship between the Mughal court and the Hindu communities of Benares and the key roles Paṇḍits played as intermediaries between the “Brahmanical intelligentsia and the Mughal circles” cp. Lefèvre 2022, pp. 398f. (with further references). ⁷² On this order, see Clark 2006. ⁷³ “One especially noteworthy feature of Madhusūdana’s scholarly career was his considerable investment in the articulation and defence of *bhakti* (devotion to a personal deity) as a valid means to *mokṣa* (liberation)” (Nair 2020, p. 62). On the actual attitude of the *Mokṣopāya* towards *bhakti* as a means of liberation cf. R. Steiner p. 97.

ters concluding Abhinanda's *Mokṣopāyasāra* (LYV 6.17–18), since they show a marked tendency towards Rāmabhakti.⁷⁴

Yet, Madhusūdana never mentions the name “*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*”. The same is true of Vidyāraṇya and Prakāśānanda, as well as of some of their successors⁷⁵ in attempting to incorporate the philosophy of the *Mokṣopāya* (as conveyed by Abhinanda's abstract) into the Vedānta in a form suited to their own tradition.⁷⁶ None of them quote the text as “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”, but always only under different names.⁷⁷ The situation is as follows:

- Vidyāraṇya (c. 1386): *Vasiṣṭha-Rāma-Saṃvāda* or *Vāsiṣṭha-Rāmāyaṇa*.⁷⁸
- Prakāśānanda (c. 1500): *Vasiṣṭha (uktaṃ bhagavatā vasiṣṭhena)*.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ “What makes D₂L [=the concluding frame story] particularly suspicious in this context is the unmistakable fact that nowhere in the entire YV does one come even close to encountering such an accumulation of Śruti-related passages. [...] The integration of passages from Abhinanda's *Rāmācarita* into D₂L makes it indubitable that these two sargas owe their existence to brahmanical orthodox Rāmabhaktas. [...] Thus, the later YV reception (Madhusūdana Sarasvatī) draws on a verse from this passage (YV 6.127.20 = RC 31.108) as characteristic of the YV and its teaching, according to which phenomena are the result of mere subjective illusion” (Slaje 1994, p. 119: “Was D₂L in diesem Zusammenhang besonders verdächtig macht, ist das unübersehbare Faktum, daß nirgendwo im ganzen YV auch nur annähernd eine derartige Häufung von Śruti-bezogenen Stellen begegnet. [...] Die Integration von Abschnitten aus Abhinandas *Rāmācarita* in D₂L macht es unzweifelhaft, daß diese beiden Sargas ihre Existenz brahmanisch-orthodoxen Rāmabhaktas verdanken. [...] So zieht die spätere YV-Rezeption (Madhusūdana Sarasvatī) einen Vers aus diesem Abschnitt (YV 6.127.20 = RC 31.108) als charakteristisch für das YV und seine Lehre heran, daß die Phänomene Ergebnis bloß subjektiver Illusion seien”). ⁷⁵ See Nair 2020, pp. 33; 64. ⁷⁶ Cf. Slaje 2001. Thus it is significant that the editor of Kavīndra's “*Bhāṣāyogavāsiṣṭhasāra*” (cp. below, pp. 46f.) holds “the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* [...] is ‘Vedāntarūpa’, i. e. [...] explains the Vedānta by interesting appropriate tales, illustrations and similes adopted from practical life [...]” And although he continues, “the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* propounds the Advaita philosophy which is in consonance with that of Śaṃkarācārya [...],” it has not escaped even him that “it differs in some contents and the use of technical words [...]” (Rahurkar 1956, p. 13). ⁷⁷ Cf. Slaje 1994, p. 92, note 63f. ⁷⁸ Cf. Slaje 1997 (above n. 44); 1998. ⁷⁹ VSM 35, 7f. = LYV 6.17.20 = YV 6.127.20 (missing from the MU). This stanza (*avidyāyonayo bhāvāḥ sarve 'mī budbudā iva | kṣaṇam udbhūya gacchanti jñānaikajal-adhau layam*) comes from a sarga that was added at a later date and which only entered the YV after a special editing step. The stanza that reads *bhedāḥ* (LYV, YV) instead of *bhāvāḥ* in pāda a must therefore be regarded to be unoriginal. It was taken from Abhinanda's *Rāmācarita* and incorporated into the LYV from there (RC 31.108, cf. Slaje 1994, p. 92, n. 64; p. 120). It was apparently known to the Vedānta authors from its presence in the LYV, since they attribute the authorship directly to Vasiṣṭha (cp. also Timalšina 2006, pp. 89; 115f.; 136). VSM 52, 9–53,1 = LYV 5.10.97 (= YV 5.9.1.13 = MU V.92.112); LYV 3.3.118c–119b (= YV 3.81.4c–5b = MU III.81.1 [App.]); VSM 178, 5–10 = LYV 3.9.66 (= YV 3.114.65a–c = MU III.114.62b [App.]); LYV 3.9.69 (= YV 3.115.4 = MU III.115.4).

- Commentaries on the *Vedāntasiddhāntamuktāvalī*: *Vāsiṣṭha* or *Vasiṣṭha*.⁸⁰
- Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (between 1570 and 1630): *Vāsiṣṭha* or *Vasiṣṭha*.

Advaitasiddhi

[...] *SiddhāntabinduKalpalatikādāv asmābhir abhihitam, Vāsiṣṭha-Vārttikāmṛtādāv ākare ca spaṣṭam evoktam, yathā: “avidyāyonayo bhāvāḥ sarve ’mī budbudā iva | kṣaṇam udbhūya gacchanti jñānaikaladhaḥ layam”* [LYV 6.17.20]⁸¹ (AS 537.5f.).

“We have [already] put this forward in the *Siddhāntabindu*, the [*Vedānta*]-*Kalpalatikā* and elsewhere [in the BhG(GD)]. Moreover⁸² it is abundantly enunciated in the treasure trove that are the ambrosia of the *Vāsiṣṭha* and the [*Bṛhadāraṇyakabhāṣya*]-*Vārttika*,⁸³ as well as other [sources].”⁸⁴

Gūḍhārthadīpikā

A noticeable accumulation of quotations from the *Vāsiṣṭha* is found in Madhusūdana’s *Gūḍhārthadīpikā* commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*. Alongside “*Vasiṣṭha*”, “*vasiṣṭhavacana*” and “*vasiṣṭhenopākhyāyate*”,⁸⁵

⁸⁰ VS(N) 52, 21–27 = LYV 5.10.1–3; 5; 7 ≈ 5.89.9; 12–14; 31 ≈ MU V.90.9; 12–14; 31; VS(N) 57, 22f. = LYV 3.1.98 = YV 3.9.14 = MU III.9.16; VS(R) 134, 1–2 = LYV 5.2.34cd = YV/MU V.16.19cd. ⁸¹ Cf. also above, n. 79 *ad* VSM 35, 7f. ⁸² Unlike Timalsina, I interpret *ca* as linking two clauses (*abhihitam* and *uktam*), and *vāsiṣṭhavārttikāmṛtāḍau* as a possessive dvandva compound with *ākare* as its antecedent. Timalsina, in contrast, construes *vāsiṣṭhavārttikāmṛtāḍau ākare ca*, whereby he is confronted with the (unresolved) problem of having to take *ākara* for an additional, as yet unidentified source: “[...] ‘this is clearly mentioned in the *Vāsiṣṭha*, *Vārttika* nectar, and also in the source’, without explicit clarification of what is meant by *Vārttikāmṛta* and *Ākara*” (Timalsina 2006, p. 129). He even places this unknown source close to Śāṅkara (Timalsina 2006, p. 57). The *Laghucandrikā* of Gauḍabrahmānanda also suggests that *ca* has the function of linking sentences: *gauḍapādīyabhāṣyatadānandagirivāsiṣṭhasaṃkṣepasārīrakāḍau cāyam arthaḥ prapañcitah* (AS 537, 18f.). ⁸³ Since Madhusūdana clearly refers to Sureśvara by “*Vārttikakāra*” in the *Siddhāntabindu* and quotes from this *Vārttika* (e.g. SB 137, 1–5), it is obvious that just a few lines later he must have had Sureśvara’s *Vārttika* in mind when forming the compound “*vāsiṣṭhavārttikāmṛtāḍau*” (SBD) 76, 5f. = SB(A) 139, 5 = AS 537, 5; cf. also Divanji’s note SB(D), p. 197. The metaphor of *vārttikāmṛta* is also used by Gauḍabrahmānanda in his *Gurucandrikā* (AS(GC) II, p. 345, 3). ⁸⁴ This statement concerns Madhusūdana’s substantiation of the *Drṣṭisṣṭivāda* and the sources he claims for it, primarily the *Vāsiṣṭha* (Timalsina 2006, p. 129f.). ⁸⁵ By *upākhyāyate* (BhG(GD) *ad* 6.15: *tathā coddālako [...] nirvikalpakam eva samādhim akarod [...]*) allusion is made to the *Uddālaka-Ākhyāna* (LYV 5.6.25–166; MU V.51–55).

reference⁸⁶ is made to it there also under the title of *vāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇa* (BhG(GD) *ad* 6.32).

– Mahīdhara (1597): Commentary (*vivṛtti*) on the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra*. This is a Sanskrit abstract of the *Mokṣopāyasāra* vulgo “*Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha*” (LYV) in 10 chapters. It was known to Mahīdhara, who lived in Benares between 1540 and 1610.⁸⁷ He wrote his commentary in 1597,⁸⁸ giving it the title of *Vāsiṣṭhasāra-Vivṛtti*. However, some colophons from the 17th century onwards sometimes refer to the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra* also as “*Yogavāsiṣṭhasāra*”.⁸⁹ Modern editors have decided to adopt the title given by the scribes in their colophons as “*yoga-*”, thereby eliminating the title given by Mahīdhara in his commentary.⁹⁰

– Sadānanda (c. 1650): “*Vasiṣṭha*” and, as the first in the series of the authors treated here, in one place “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”.⁹¹ Sadānanda is demonstrably still quoting from the abstract version (LYV), which shows that even in the seventeenth century it was Abhinanda’s abridged text that was understood under the title “*yoga-vāsiṣṭha*”.⁹² This suggests that the complete version, which Ātma-sukha, who must have known about it and had referred to it as *brhad-*,⁹³ had not reached the plains of India by this time. In fact, it was virtually unknown there.

From the above it is clear that all these authors were quoting only from Abhinanda’s *Mokṣopāyasāra* (LYV) until the mid-seventeenth century, and that the second half of the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa* of the full *Mokṣopāya* version had never

⁸⁶ BhG(GD) *ad* 3.18: LYV 3.9.113f. = YV/MU III.118.5f.; BhG(GD) *ad* 6.29: LYV 5.9.72 = YV/MU V.78.8; LYV 6.1.60 = YV 6.13.8ab = MU VI.13.7ab; BhG(GD) *ad* 6.32: LYV 5.10.113f. = YV 5.92.14f. = MU V.93.12f.; LYV 5.10.48 = YV 5.91.29 = MU V.92.29; BhG(GD) *ad* 6.35: LYV 5.10.126–129b; 5.10.130 ≈ YV 5.92.32cd–33ab; 34cd–39ab = MU V.93.31; 33–36; BhG(GD) *ad* 6.36: LYV 2.1.1f. ≈ YV/MU II.4.8; II.5.4; LYV 2.1.9f.; 13 = YV/MU II.9.30f.; 35; BhG(GD) *ad* 6.43: LYV 6.15.53 = YV 6.126.44 = MU VI.142.2; LYV 6.15.57–61 ≈ YV 6.126.47cd–51f. ≈ MU VI.143.1–VI.148.5.

⁸⁷ Gode 1939–40, pp. 258; 261. ⁸⁸ This dating of the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra* according to Kielhorn: A. D. 1597 (cited in Thomi 1999, 1: 22). Cf. *tatrādaṁ vāsiṣṭhasārākhyam grantham āriṣus [...] maṅgalam ācarati* (Slaje 2005, p. 50). Exclusively expressed as *vāsiṣṭhasāra*[*vivṛtti*]/*vivaraṇa*] also in Ms M₁ (copied in 1637). ⁸⁹ *yogavāsiṣṭha-* appears in some colophons as an alternative to *vāsiṣṭha-* only in manuscripts between AD 1641 and the 19th century (cf. the manuscript descriptions in Thomi 1999, 1: 22f.). Another such manuscript is dated 1674 (Gode 1939–40, p. 259). Cf. also the manuscripts described in Slaje 2005, pp. 48–51. ⁹⁰ So also Thomi 1999 (throughout the text and on his title page), although at one point he explicitly speaks of the “*Vāsiṣṭhasāravivṛtti* of Mahīdhara” (1999, 1, p. 21). ⁹¹ *tad uktaṁ yogavāsiṣṭhe* (ABS 358.6). ⁹² ABS 54, 12–55, 2 = LYV 4.4.27 = YV 4.39.24 = MU IV.21.19; ABS 254, 10f. = LYV 6.17.20 = YV 6.127.20 (missing from the MU); ABS 358, 6–10 = LYV 5.10.9 ≈ YV 5.89.33ab ≈ MU V.90.33ab. ⁹³ Cp. above notes 25f.

before been received outside Kashmir.⁹⁴ As with Vidyāraṇya, we do not find anyone quoting beyond Sarga LYV 6.17 = YV 6.127.⁹⁵ The same dependence on Abhinanda's *Mokṣopāyasāra* can also be seen in the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra*, whose stanza selection also extends only to LYV 6.15.79 (= MU VI.155.25 = YV 6.126.68cd–69ab).⁹⁶ Passages which Abhinanda had edited out of the complete *Mokṣopāya* are correspondingly missing from quotations in the early modern Advaitavedānta tradition.⁹⁷ Also, the title *Yogavāsiṣṭha* still occurs in reference to this abstract around 1650. The full (*bṛhad*) version of the *Vāsiṣṭha* can therefore hardly have entered the circles of the Saṃnyāsins of Benares before the second half of the 17th century. It must however have happened before 1710, the date of Ānandabodhendra Sarasvatī's, the Sarasvatī monk's, commentary on the "*Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*". The background to this is almost certainly the fact that the Sultanate of Kashmir had in the meantime (1586) been annexed by the Mughals, which had facilitated contacts with the Indian plains, and that the new rulers, who expressed considerable interest in the text, had Persian translations made of it.

Among the circle of influential Sarasvatī monks at the Mughal court was

⁹⁴ It also ties in nicely that "a series of verses of the Minor Upaniṣads [...] have their exact literal counterpart not in the Yogav[āsiṣṭha] but in the Laghu-Yogav[āsiṣṭha]" (cp. Sprockhoff 1976, p. 17), and that "one can therefore assume with some certainty that the collection of 108 Upaniṣads was in existence in the 17th century. However, it remains uncertain whether this can already be assumed for the 16th century" (cp. Sprockhoff 1976, p. 20). ⁹⁵ Slaje 1998, p. 117, note 11. According to Sprockhoff's list of quotations (1960, Appendix T. 2: 418), Vidyāraṇya's YV quotations extend only to YV 6.126.69 = LYV 6.15.79cd–80ab. This shows that his exemplar must have coincided with the shortest LYV version (without the final frame stories) as represented by the Mss group CG₁ [Slaje 1994, p. 128]. ⁹⁶ As can be judged from Thomi's concordance (1999, 1, p. 42). The anonymous compiler must therefore have had the earliest stage in the redaction of Abhinanda's *Mokṣopāyasāra* in front of him, which, according to the manuscript tradition cited above (n. 95), extended only as far as Sarga LYV 6.15. ⁹⁷ This can be seen from, among others, the following passages: AS(GC) II: 345, 11f. = (only) LYV 3.1.57cd; BhG(GD) ad 6.29 = LYV 6.1.60; ad 6.35 = LYV 5.10.126–129b; ad 6.36 = LYV 2.1.1–2; ad 6.43 = LYV 6.15.57–61; VS(N) 52,21–27 = LYV 5.10.1–3; ABS 358,6–10 = LYV 5.10.9.

Kavīndrācārya,⁹⁸ a noted scholar from Mahārāṣṭra, who also resided in Benares. It is of particular significance in the present context that Kavīndrācārya produced a Hindustānī translation of the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra* (10 *prakaraṇas* with 222 stanzas) in 1657.⁹⁹ The edition of Kavīndra's translation (BhYVS) has *-yogavāsiṣṭha-* in the book title, and *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha-* in the subtitle.¹⁰⁰ The Hindustānī introductory stanzas to the translation, however, refer to the source text as *laghuvāsiṣṭhaka sāraka* (1c),¹⁰¹ *jogavāsiṣṭha* (5c),¹⁰² and *jñānasāra* (13a). The title *Bhāṣayogavāsiṣṭhasāra* appears solely in the colophon.¹⁰³ As for Kavīndra, he is celebrated as “*yogavāsiṣṭhayogavid*” and “*yogavāsiṣṭhavid*” in the *Kavīndra-candrodaya*, a “*festschrift*” – aptly so called by Bergunder¹⁰⁴ – presented to him

⁹⁸ “Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī (fl. mid-17th c.) [...] a learned Vedāntin *paṇḍit* in his own right, a prominent Mughal courtier, a scholar of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* (though almost certainly too late to have been an influence on the *Jūg Bāsisht*), and a highly regarded representative of Banaras Advaitins—could very well have served the function of transmitting recent names and developments in Sanskrit Advaita philosophy to the imperial court. Similarly, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja (fl. early- to mid-17th c.; again, not to be confused with the *Jūg Bāsisht* translator, Jagannātha Mīśra) is another such potential connection between the scholastic Sanskrit activities of the Advaitin *paṇḍits* of Banaras, on the one hand, and the elite of the Mughal court, on the other, although his arrival at the court also most likely postdates the composition of the *Jūg Bāsisht*” (Nair 2020, p. 61f). – “Kavīndra spent time in Mughal company teaching Sanskrit texts to both Shah Jahan and Dara Shikuh. Among other works, he instructed them in Śaṅkara's *Bhāṣya*. *Kavīndracandrodaya* v. 92. This emphasis on Sanskrit philosophy makes good sense given Shah Jahan's interest in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* and Dara Shikuh's attraction to the *Upaniṣads*” (Truschke 2012, p. 52, n. 87). In 2016, Truschke no longer believed in Śaṅkara, but thought that the aforementioned *Bhāṣya* “here more likely refers to philosophical commentaries generally. The verse is a *śleṣa*, and in its second meaning, *bhāṣya* likely refers to Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*” (Truschke 2016, p. 266, n. 133). However, the actual wording of the passage KC 92 referred to by Truschke (*kavīndra prthvīndrakaragrahāt tvayā vimocitā bhāṣya-subhāṣitādbhiḥ | śrīkāśikā sādhipadaparakāśikā śabdāpaśabdottamabodhakārikā*) does, in the light of the *Kāśikā* explicitly mentioned there, not support the view that Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* or Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* was the subject of this instruction. ⁹⁹ Cf. Rahurkar 1956, p. 3; BhYVS, introd., pp. 33; 43, for the extent and date of this translation. ¹⁰⁰ Cp. BhYVS, introd., p. 30. I am grateful to Dr Samuel Wright for providing me with a scan of this edition. It is worth noting that it is based on a single manuscript that was copied only in 1833 (Rahurkar 1956, p. 4; BhYVS, introd., p. 34). ¹⁰¹ “*laghuvāsiṣṭha*” is also found once (“einmal [...] im] Kol. des Komm. zu Kap. 2” of Ms P of the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra* – Thomi 1999, I, pp. 22f.). ¹⁰² A 19th century manuscript (dt. 1831) from Nepal also has *joga-* in colophons: *jogavāsiṣṭha*, *jogavāsiṣṭhasāra*, *vāsiṣṭhajogāsāra* (Ms N₁ in Thomi 1999, I, p. 23). ¹⁰³ Rahurkar 1956, p. 3; BhYVS, introd., p. 33. ¹⁰⁴ “[...] eine zeitgenössische *Festschrift* für Kavīndra in Sanskrit und Hindustani (Sanskrit-Titel: *Kavīndracandrodaya*/Hindustani-Titel: *Kavīndracandrikā*) mit Gedichten von brahmanischen Gelehrten, die zum einen Kavīndracarya Sarasvatī für seinen Erfolg loben, zugleich aber auch Shah Jahan und Dara Shukoh für ihre Gelehrsamkeit und Patronage der Sanskrit-Dichtung preisen” (Bergunder 2016, p. 60). I am indebted to Nils Jacob Liersch for providing me with the articles of Bergunder and Burger cited in this paper (12 Dec. 2023).

by 69 learned contributors during the reign of Śāh Ġahān (r. 1628–1658).¹⁰⁵ A Marathi translation of the ten-chapter *Vāsiṣṭhasāra*, apparently misattributed to Jñāndev, was preserved by Portuguese missionaries of the 17th century under the title of *Vāchisttā yougu* (“*Vasiṣṭha yoga*”).¹⁰⁶

In 1784, John Shore (1751–1834), 1st Lord of Teignmouth, translated “the Persian version of an Abridgment of the *Jôg Bashust*, or “Instructions of Bashust,” composed, like its original, in Sanscrit” into English.¹⁰⁷

Re-sanskritisation of Ġôg/Jog in the title as *Yoga-* from the 17th century onwards

Thus, from the 17th century onwards, not only do titles prefixed with *yoga-* appear, in Hindustānī also in the form of *joga-*, to which the Persian *ġôg* corresponds, but the element *laghu-* also appears sporadically, albeit always with reference to the *Vāsiṣṭhasāra*, but *not* the *Mokṣopāyasāra* abstract of Abhinanda, which the editors have given the title “*Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha*”. At the beginning of the 18th century, in 1710 to be precise,¹⁰⁸ Ānandabodhendra, another Sarasvatī monk,¹⁰⁹ finally integrated the text into the escapist tradition of the Kevalādvaitavedānta Saṃnyāsins through the interpretation of the wording that had been subjected

¹⁰⁵ KC 12b; 175c. On his life and date cp. Rahurkar 1956, pp. 5–12. ¹⁰⁶ “[...] the author of this work has a guru called Nivṛttināth [...] someone writing under the name of Jñāndev but not identical with the original Jñāndev. [...] he was probably a Goan poet. That the author is not identical with Jñāndev’s elder brother and guru Nivṛttināth, who lived in the 13th century, is betrayed by the relatively modern language of both works. [...] The VY [= *Vāchisttā yougu*, WS] of Braga Cod. 773 is not the same work as edited in 1914 as *Srījñāneśvaramahārājāmce Yogavāsiṣṭha* and presented as a [...] work of the original Jñāndev. Compared to the classical Sanskrit *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, the Marathi VY in Braga Cod. 773 ff. 102r–130v is a short version of ten chapters” (Eliasson 2022, p. 150f.). “Braga Cod. 771–773 are three manuscript codices with Hindu texts in Konkani prose (Cod. 771 and 772) and Marathi verse (cod. 773), held at the Arquivo Distrital de Braga in Portugal. These codices are extremely important for understanding how missionaries formed their knowledge and views about Indian literature and religion, how they gained literary skills in the Marathi and Konkani languages, and why they wrote as they did” (Eliasson 2022, p. 140). – “A number of works in Marathi aiming at elucidation of the original Sanskrit *Yogavāsiṣṭha-sāra* or the *Lāghu-yogavāsiṣṭha-sāra* have been referred to by S. G. Date in his *Marathi Grantha Sūcī* (p. 503)” (Rahurkar 1956, p. 2). On some evidence that Kavīndra originally came from Mahārāṣṭra, cp. Rahurkar 1956, p. 9, n. 17b. ¹⁰⁷ “It consists of an eloquent exposition [...] of the Vedānti School of Brahminical Hindooism” (quoted from Hanneder 2012a, p. 149). On the fate of this lost translation and its implications for Indological research, see Hanneder 2012a, pp. 145–152. ¹⁰⁸ Golzio 2004. ¹⁰⁹ Referred to as a *bhikṣu* in the colophons (N₁ Ś₂ [Slaje 1994: 32; 39]).

to substantial changes.¹¹⁰ This resulted in the North Indian version known as “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*” with the specific character that is still considered authoritative by scholars today. We therefore have every reason to believe that the process of Vedānticising the *Mokṣopāya* was initiated under the new name of *Yogavāsiṣṭha* at the beginning of the 17th century and took its present form at the beginning of the 18th century. It is also fitting that another outstanding personality, Jagannātha Paṇḍita, was also active at the court of Šāh Ġahān from 1628 onwards. It is not surprising, then, that in the *Rasagaṅgādhara* we find him using the name of *Yogavāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇa*. The transition to the new name has therefore not been as gradual as one might have thought. The title of the Persian translation, *Ġög Bāsiṣṭ* of 1597/98, is and remains the pivotal point. Before that, as far as we know at present, there is no evidence of a title corresponding to “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”. After that, however, there is plenty of evidence:

- Bhavadevamiśra’s *Yuktabhavadeva* (1623):¹¹¹ *Yogavāsiṣṭha*.
- Sadānanda’s *Advaitabrahmasiddhi* (1650): *Yogavāsiṣṭha*.
- Kavīndra’s *Bhāṣāyogavāsiṣṭhasāra* (1657): *Jogavāsiṣṭha*.
- Kavīndracandrodaya (c. 1628–1658): *Yogavāsiṣṭha(yoga)vid* [= Kavīndrā-cārya].
- Colophon to Mahīdhara’s *Vāsiṣṭhasāravivṛtti* (1674): *Yogavāsiṣṭhasāra*.
- Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja’s *Rasagaṅgādhara* (17th century): *Yogavāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇa*.¹¹²
- Nārāyaṇatīrtha’s *Yogasiddhāntacandrikā*: *Yogavāsiṣṭha*.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Cp. Slaje 2001. The version commented on by Ānandabodhendha has undergone a thorough textual revision. It is not known under whose responsibility this was done. ¹¹¹ “The earliest reference to a citation attributed to the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* (by that name) is, as far as I know, the *Yuktabhavadeva* of Bhavadevamiśra, an author whom I discuss in some detail in Birch, *Haṭhayoga’s Floruit*, 2020: 468–469. The *Yuktabhavadeva* is dated to śaka 1545 [= 1623 AD]” (Email by Jason Birch, 14 Dec. 2020). ¹¹² RGDh 109,6. *prabandhasya tu yogavāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇe śāntakaraṇayoḥ, ratnāvalyādīni ca śṛṅgārasya vyañjakatvān nidarśanāni prasiddhāni* (cf. Slaje 2020: 169, note 6). “Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja was a Sanskrit intellectual, poet, and Hindi musician patronized by Emperor Šāh Jahān (r. 1627–58) for a variety of projects, and also, perhaps, the last scholar to compose a significant work in the classical mould of Sanskrit aesthetic theory, *alaṃkāraśāstra*. [...] the relatively late dates of Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja’s well-recorded years at the Mughal court–commencing around the year 1628 [...]” (Nair 2020: 48). ¹¹³ “*etāsām eva ca phalaṃ bahukālajīvitvādirūpaṃ bhuṣṇādīnāṃ yogavāsiṣṭhe pratipāditam* | page 134, *Pātañjalayogasūtravyākhyā paramahansa-parivṛjākācāryaśrīnārāyaṇatīrthaviracitā yogasiddhāntacandrikā*, Chowkhambā Sanskrit Series Office (No 108), edited by Dr. Vimalā Karnāṭak (BHU Varanasi), 2000)” (J. Birch, communication as above).

– *Yogasārasaṅgraha*:¹¹⁴ *Yogavāsishṭha*.

– Hamsamīṭṭhu's *Haṃsaviḷāsa* (18th century): *Bṛhadyogavāsishṭha*.¹¹⁵

– Occasionally, “*yogavāsishṭha*” is also found in colophons of *Mokṣopāya* manuscripts, although all dated manuscripts belong significantly to the 18th or 19th centuries.¹¹⁶

Why Ĝōg/Jog?

When we ask why the Persian translation, which was the first to add the element “*yoga*”, was given this title, the explanation becomes difficult. The title *Ĝōg Bāsišt* is made up of two words that are foreign to the Persian ear (as a compound or as an Ezāfe construction¹¹⁷). The Persian translators do not comment on this. For someone unfamiliar with Indian languages such as Sanskrit or Hindustānī, the title would have been incomprehensible. There is much to suggest that the adoption of Indian terms in the title refers to an Indian form of Sufism as understood by the translators or by their imperial patrons. With reference to Arabic translations, Carl W. Ernst states that “in an intermediate stage of translation, Indic names and terms are retained alongside their Islamic ‘translations’. Yet there is a certain residue that remains untranslatable [...]”.¹¹⁸ And he adds, “curiously, the term ‘yoga’ is only mentioned by implication once in the text [**Amṛtakuṇḍa*,

¹¹⁴ “Undated (but probably 17–18th c.) (*yogavāsishṭhe* – *mano hi jīvanāj jīva iti*: p. 29, Manuscript: IFP To859 copied from D belonging to the GOML, Madras)” (J. Birch, communication as above). ¹¹⁵ Another reference by Jason Birch. Cp. HV 17, 5: *bṛhadyogavāsishṭhe śrīrāmacandram prati śrīvasishṭhaḥ*. After that (HV 17, 6–18, 7) the following passages are quoted and explained: LYV 3.9.97 = YV 3.117.11cd–12ab = MU III.117.11; LYV 3.9.99–100b = YV 3.117.13c–14 = MU III.117.13–114b; LYV 3.9.101 = YV 3.117.15c–16b = MU III.117.15; LYV 3.9.102–103 = YV 3.117.16c–18b = MU III.117.17–17. All these stanzas are common to all three versions (MU/YV/LYV). It is therefore impossible to say with certainty which source Hamsamīṭṭhu may actually have used, although the designation *Bṛhad-Yogavāsishṭha* – possibly taken from Ātmasukha's commentary (VC) – points to the *Yogavāsishṭha* (YV). Unlike LYV and MU, however, the strophic quotations in the YV always begin with Pāda c).

¹¹⁶ *śrīyogavāsishṭhe mokṣopāyasaṃhitāyām*: Wednesday, 18 January 1741 (Ms N₆ [Slaje 1994: 33]); *śrīmokṣopāyeṣu yogavāsishṭhe brahmadārśane*: 1867 (Ms Ś₃ [Slaje 1994: 40]); *yogavāsishṭhe mokṣopāye*: ca. 1720 (Ms LN₁ [Slaje 1994: 45]). *vāsishṭhe vālmikiye mokṣopāye* or *vāsishṭhe* or *śrīyogavāsishṭhe*: undated (Ms N₂ [Slaje 1994: 32]). ¹¹⁷ There is no indication of an Ezāfe construction in the title of the early translations which appear to have merely imitated the Sanskrit compound in Persian pronunciation. A little later, however, the title could have been read and understood with an Ezāfe. For example, Banwālīdās Walī did this [died 1674]: “Thus spoke the guide (*murshid*) of Hindustān, The yoga of Vasiṣṭha is the yoga of the head of yogis (*guft chunīn murshid-i Hindustān / jog-i Bashisht jog-i sar-i jogiyān*)” [Gandhi 2020: 94].

¹¹⁸ Ernst 2003, p. 221.

WS]. [...] there it is represented by the Arabic term *riyada* or ‘exercise’,¹¹⁹ which is from the same root as found in the Arabic word (*murtad*) used as a translation of “yogi”.¹²⁰ Now, Arabic *riyāḏat* (= Ernst’s *riyada*) means “hardship, exercise, mortifying the flesh, austerity”. It is “the standard Arabic-Persian translation for yoga”.¹²¹ While *riyāḏatī* means “one who exercises himself, [...] a devotee, an ascetic” in Persian (and Urdū),¹²² the key term *yogi* (in its north Indian form *jogī*) is *murtad* or “person of discipline”.¹²³ The meaning of Arabic *murtadd* is however given as “an apostate, renegade” in the Persian,¹²⁴ and as “an apostate (esp. fr. Muḥammadanism to disbelief), a renegade” in the Urdū¹²⁵ dictionaries. In the present case, however, as already mentioned, it is not a translation. It is the reproduction of a foreign-language title containing the element *jog*. On the latter, Ernst remarks that “although descriptions of jogis are relatively common in Islamicate literature, the word ‘yoga’ (*jog*) hardly ever occurs, but it appears to be regularly represented by the term for ascetic practice, Arabic *riyada* or Persian *riyazat*.”¹²⁶ The determination of the meaning of the word *jog* in an Islamic text is also difficult because, to quote Speziale, “[...] we should avoid the assumption that Muslims had a homogeneous and unchanging view of yogis. The many and varied accounts of yogis extant in Arabic, Persian and Urdu writings suggest that different perceptions coexisted, and that different types of texts and writers contributed to shaping and reflecting those views.”¹²⁷ But the meaning can probably be narrowed down to some extent. For, there can be no doubt, as Heike Franke and Muzaffar Alam have shown independently of each other, that Prince Salīm – the later Mughal ruler Ġahāngīr and the first commissioner of a Persian translation – saw this work in the spirit of Sufism. This is exactly what Niḏām Pānīpatī makes clear in prefacing his translation:

“[...] the book *Ġōg Bāsišt*, which contains the exposition of Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), [...]”

Heike Franke comments on this that “it is a very significant indication, especially at this point in the preface to the translation, that the Muslim side basically as-

¹¹⁹ Cp. also Ernst 2016, p. 225: “[...] al-Bīrūnī [...] never transliterates the word yoga in the context of the Indian philosophy, in both the *Kitāb Pātāṅāl* and the *Tahqīq mā li-l-Hind*.” (Verdon 2024, pp. 120f.) ¹²⁰ Ernst 2003, p. 222. ¹²¹ Ernst 2003, p. 218. ¹²² Steingass 1892, p. 600; cp. also Platts 1884, p. 610. ¹²³ Ernst 2003, pp. 208; 211; Ernst 2016, p. 199. In al-Bīrūnī’s Arabic translation of the *Yogasūtras* the yoga practitioner is referred to as a “renunciant” (Kozah 2020, p. XIX). *yogi* = “ascetic” (Verdon 2024, p. 252). ¹²⁴ Steingass 1892, p. 1209. ¹²⁵ Platts 1884, p. 1020. ¹²⁶ Ernst 2016, p. 424. ¹²⁷ Speziale 2022, p. 424.

sumed that the Sanskrit work at hand was a form of Sufism.”¹²⁸ Muzaffar Alam’s assessment of the Islamic understanding of the source text¹²⁹ is along the same lines. And Shankar Nair, on the basis of an analysis of the translation terminology used by Pānīpatī, concludes that it specifically allows the metaphysics of a *wuḡūdiyya* Sufism to shine through.¹³⁰ In particular, he recognises the influence of Islamic peripatetics. According to peripateticism, a single divine essence reveals its intrinsic qualities in the form of the phenomenal world:¹³¹ consequently, everything that exists is a part of God. It thus represents a kind of pantheistic approach,¹³² that is well suited to the ontological monism of pure consciousness (*cidadvaita*) of the *Mokṣopāya*. Apparently, there was a consensus at the time that everything that could broadly be subsumed under the Indian term Vedānta had its equivalent in Islamic Sufism (*taṣawwuf*): “what did the term Vedānta mean to the many Muslims and Hindus in the subcontinent who used Persian as their primary literary language? In 1617, the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–28) had the first of several encounters with the ascetic Chidrūp (Cidrūpa). Describing these meetings, the emperor’s courtier Mu‘tamid Khān writes that the ascetic “equated the vocabulary of the *taṣawwuf* of the people of Islam with

¹²⁸ “Es ist ein sehr bedeutsamer Hinweis gerade an dieser Stelle im Vorwort zur Übersetzung, dass man von muslimischer Seite grundsätzlich annahm, es bei dem vorliegenden Sanskritwerk mit Sufik zu tun zu haben” (Heike Franke, written communication from 30 June 2005, based on ĞB p. 2). Cf. also Nair 2020, p. 44. ¹²⁹ Alam 2016, pp. 443–446 (“The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* in Persian as a Sufi text”).

¹³⁰ “[...] the *Jūg Bāsisht*’s second main philosophical influence, namely, the tradition of Islamic Peripatetic (*mashshā’ī*) philosophy” (Nair 2020, p. 49). “On the basis of the text of the *Jūg Bāsisht*, it is clear that, in Pānīpatī’s case, his formation was prevalingly Sufi and *wujūdī*, as the perspective on religious diversity reflected within the Persian text owes a great deal to the sort of Islamic discourse exemplified by Muḥibb Allāh. [...] the *wujūdī* tradition had already assimilated a great deal of the terminology and conceptual framework of Islamic Peripatetic philosophy. [...] the evidence of the translation team’s (particularly Pānīpatī’s) debt to the philosophical Sufi *wujūdī* tradition is unmistakable: from the very first pages of the *Jūg Bāsisht*, we witness a litany of technical terms that come straight from *wujūdī* discourse in ways that mirror Muḥibb Allāh’s representative deployment of them. [...] This “Peripateticized” *wujūdī* Sufism, in other words, formed a large part of the Arabo-Persian intellectual heritage that the translation team (specifically Pānīpatī) brought with them to their reading of the *Laghu*, and which underlay the particular processes of thought and interpretation that informed the team’s translation choices and conduct” (Nair 2020, pp. 134f.).

¹³¹ “[...] the hallmarks of a *wujūdī* metaphysics, wherein a singular Divine essence discloses its intrinsic qualities and attributes, voluntarily adopting lesser and lesser manifestations to project itself forth in the form(s) of the phenomenal world” (Nair 2020, p. 146). ¹³² Cf. Bergunder 2013, pp. 51–55; Nagel 2018, p. 455.

the practice of his own *taṣawwuf*.” He adds that the two discussed the “science of Bedānt (Vedānta).”¹³³

Apart from the Sufi currents that experts in Islamic studies say are reflected in the terminology of the Persian translation, I think there is something else that is important: the Sufi spiritual path is not one of seclusion determined by a *vita contemplativa*. In contrast, it focuses on the *vita activa*. The fact that parable-like lectures to a circle of disciples were a popular way of emphasising the importance of practical life should not be underestimated in this context.¹³⁴ The *Mokṣopāya* combines two fundamental aspects that were also characteristic of Sufism:¹³⁵ use of educational parables with the aim of proving oneself in an active life in accordance with the duties inherited from birth, but in a spirit of total detachment. This could be one of several possible reasons¹³⁶ for having been chosen to be translated into Persian. The Mughal patrons’ expectations of the *Mokṣopāya* in terms of practical philosophy were historically more accurate than the ultimately successful attempt by Hindu Saṃnyāsins to incorporate it into

¹³³ Gandhi 2020, pp. 79f. Gandhi continues: “This equation of *Vedānta* and *taṣawwuf*, a word of Arabic origin denoting Islamic mysticism, both illuminates and elides the manifold ways in which Indo-Persian authors and readers engaged with and understood Vedānta. For the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr, the systems of Vedānta and Islamic mysticism may indeed have been equivalent and commensurable. In his view, and that of his eldest grandson, Dārā Shukoh (d. 1659), *Vedānta* and *taṣawwuf* could well be conceived as two different means for comprehending the essential oneness of being, and ultimately, attaining liberation” (p. 80). – However, parables of the *Mokṣopāya* were also made the subject of isolated Persian adaptations with philosophically specific objectives: “What does Bedil [1645–1721] do to accommodate the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*’s teachings on the illusory nature of the world, as exemplified by the story of King Lavaṇa, to the Neoplatonist-Sufi scheme of emanatory descent and spiritual ascent that underlies the *Muḥīt-i a‘ẓam*?” (Kovacs 2019, p. 80). ¹³⁴ “To all outward appearances, one attends to one’s daily business, but in reality, one is unwaveringly mindful of Allah” (Nagel 2018, p. 446 [“Dem äußeren Anscheine nach besorgt man seine Tagesgeschäfte, in Wirklichkeit gedenkt man unverwandt Allahs”]; cf. also p. 449). ¹³⁵ Incidentally, Sufism was brought to Kashmir in the early 16th century, mainly as a branch of the Nūrbahāṣiyya by Mīr Šams ad-Dīn, and spread there with considerable violence and atrocities. On Nūrbahāṣiyya-Sufism in Kashmir cf. Bashir 2003, pp. 198–243. “Jihad as the armed struggle for the cause of Islam is [...] very much connected with the Sufi way of life. In particular, “border warfare” (Arabic: *ar-ribāṭ*) cultivated Sufi ways of life in order to train hardened warriors who used their weapons against “infidels”” (Nagel 2018, pp. 458f. [“Der Dschihad als der bewaffnete Kampf für die Belange des Islams verbindet sich [...] sehr wohl mit sufischer Lebensführung. Insbesondere das “Grenzkämpfertum” (arab.: *ar-ribāṭ*) pflegte sufische Lebensformen, um hierdurch gestählte Krieger heranzubilden, die ihre Waffen gegen “Ungläubige” einsetzten”]). ¹³⁶ Other possible reasons may have been that, as shown above, the work was held in high esteem by the Brahmins at the Mughal court, especially the Advaitavedāntins.

their escapist ideology through tendentious reinterpretations. Moreover, Sprockhoff has shown that the so-called *Laghu* version, that is, the *Mokṣopāyasāra*, was the source for a number of the – again only so-called – Minor Upaniṣads.¹³⁷ The Mughals, however, seem to have understood very well that the text they were interested in was a kind of Indian mirror for princes to guide them in fulfilling their responsibilities as active rulers, without having to renounce salvation in the hereafter. This can be seen from the recitation of the *Mokṣopāya* at Indian courts up to the 19th century.¹³⁸ The Mughals' translation project, therefore, cannot be seen in isolation from their political agenda.¹³⁹ It is very revealing that in the 19th century the founder of Bahaism, the Iranian Bahā' Allāh, was influenced by translations of the *Ĝōg* that had made their way to Persia, where they were widely read by scholars.¹⁴⁰ Some of the *Mokṣopāya* is therefore contained even in the Bahā' religion.

But then again, why *Ĝōg*? The reasons for this choice are still a matter of speculation. It is far from clear what exactly was understood by it in the circles of the translators in Persian-speaking India from the early 17th century onwards. In the Indo-Persian context of those days, was it the Hindu or the Islamic point of view that gave it its meaning? To begin with the latter in the Sufi context, which is what one might assume in the light of the above, Ernst holds that “there is no Sufi concept of yoga as a completely separate system. It would probably be safe to say that there was likewise no hatha yoga concept of Sufism as a separate entity” as “the discursive tradition of Sufi teaching was powerful enough to make the independent existence of something called yoga completely irrelevant

¹³⁷ Sprockhoff 1976: 17; 312–377. ¹³⁸ For examples, see Hanneder 2006: 132ff. and Hanneder 2012b: 141ff. ¹³⁹ As a comparative study of the Persian translation projects initiated by various princely patrons has clearly shown (Alam 2016: 450–456). Thus already Franke (2011: 361): “The union of spiritual enlightenment and temporal duties, as it was presented in the *Laghu-Yogavāsishtha*, was completely congruent with the public image promoted of Akbar, and at least in part of his immediate successors.” Cp. also: “[...] the Mughal rulers' choice of the *Laghu* for translation into Persian fits very well with Richards's and Alam's analyses of the translation movement: the *Laghu*, besides being a popular South Asian work, also contains a great deal of commentary on the nature and qualities of the ideal king. Its translation could thus serve the double purpose of broadening the appeal of the Mughal court among indigenous Indian peoples, while also providing a rich resource for native South Asian theories of good governance” (Nair 2020: 46). ¹⁴⁰ “Baha'u'llah's wording makes it clear that he was familiar with the Yoga Vasistha, and it is remarkable that he felt no need to explain the reference to his readers, suggesting that many literate Persian-speaking intellectuals read this work as late as the nineteenth century. Even more remarkable, Baha'u'llah clearly prefers the Yoga view of cosmology to a literal reading of the biblical-quranic short chronology [...]” (Cole 1995).

precisely because yogic practices could be assimilated into a Sufi perspective without much effort.”¹⁴¹

If it is the case that “nowhere in all this Sufi literature [...] is the term *yoga* ever mentioned” and that “critical terms for yogic practice are completely subordinated to Islamicate categories and represented by Arabic terms,”¹⁴² then the meaning of “*gōg*” in the title is more likely to be attributed to the Hindu understanding of it. Judging, however, by the subject matter of the *Mokṣopāya* or *Vāsiṣṭha*, any form of yoga that could be assigned to one of the traditional yoga systems is virtually excluded.¹⁴³ Classifications of yoga disciplines, such as the *Sarvāṅgayogapradīpikā* of Sundardās (1596–1689), written in *Brajbhāṣā*, are also of no help here. Although, as regards content, the term *advaitayoga*, as coined by Sundardās as late as in the 17th century, might indeed have some justification when used in reference to the *Mokṣopāya*, since Sundardās’ definition in some ways reflects the *Mokṣopāya*’s fundamental teaching of taking an inner distance from the affairs of an active life.¹⁴⁴

Was the *Mokṣopāya* intended to be a text on yoga?

In its own self-conception, the *Mokṣopāya* was not a textbook on yoga in the sense of any of the conventional pre-modern meanings that are associated with that term. This also rules out the possibility that it might be a work on Haṭhayoga.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand it is by no means the case that the *Mokṣopāya* lacks descriptions of yogic practices. There are even definitions of yoga. But the practice of yoga is usually presented within the framework of *Ākhyānas*, whose

¹⁴¹ Ernst 2016, p. 303. ¹⁴² Ernst 2016, pp. 302f. ¹⁴³ Therefore, it would be difficult to accept Bergunder’s (2013, p. 50) statement in the present case: “When contemporary texts of the 15th to 17th centuries speak of “yogis” (Hind. *jogī/yogī*), they usually mean Nath yogis” [“Wenn in zeitgenössischen Texten des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts von “Yogis” (Hind. *jogī/yogī*) die Rede ist, sind in der Regel Nath-Yogis gemeint”]. “Indian Sufis and Nath jogis regarded each other as distinguishable groups, with overlapping interests in psycho-physical discipline and with often competing roles as spiritual leaders. [...] some yogic practices were, to a certain extent, compatible with Sufi disciplines [...] there is a variable spectrum among Sufis, ranging from complete appropriation of certain yogic material (breath control, chants, meditation techniques, jogis, and even goddesses) to wary approval and even complete rejection; it is not possible to reduce this range of reactions to a single formula” (Ernst 2016, pp. 301ff.). ¹⁴⁴ “Sundardās [...] opte également, en dernier lieu, pour un type d’*advaitayoga* (son terme) qui, une fois obtenu, caractérise un détachement complet du monde et l’entrée dans un silence indifférent à toute forme existante, sans la nier” (Burger 2014, p. 705). ¹⁴⁵ *haṭhayogo hi duḥkhadaḥ* MU V.54.8d; 15d.

function is, among other things, to present characteristic ideas of certain philosophical schools as provisional and of limited validity, in order to subordinate them inclusivistically to the final position (*siddhāntasiddhānta*) presented by the *Mokṣopāya*, which encompasses all other doctrinal positions.¹⁴⁶ The presence of the yoga of breath control¹⁴⁷ in this text, where the term *yoga* seems to have been used primarily in the sense of *prāṇāyāma*, is to be seen under the same inclusivistic aspect: Vasiṣṭha does not argue against it. He just shows how its value is limited and can be subordinated to the meta-aspect of his all-embracing philosophy of consciousness. It is worth noting that the narratives, which are usually lengthy and highly detailed, are primarily focused on representatives of popular faiths or specific traditions of thought. The broad ideological spectrum ranges from strains of Buddhism, Śivaism, Viṣṇuism, etc., to the skilful integration of the *Bhagavadgītā* under completely new aspects of interpretation (“*Arjunopākhyāna*” [MU VI.56–62]), or even to the bhakti and to techniques of haṭhayoga, such as breath control (e.g., MU VI.25–26; 84–86). One gets the impression that the author was careful not to omit any of the contemporary concepts for explaining the world and salvation without, however, clumsily naming or directly attacking them. Rather, Ākhyānas form the unspoken framework of the given plot, which, nevertheless, can easily be identified ideologically or philosophically, given the clearly recognisable characters in the stories, as can be seen very clearly from the case of Prahlāda, as shown by Roland Steiner in this volume. The author’s aim is to subject all other doctrinal positions to his own philosophy in an inclusivistic manner. Any follower of such a tradition could find himself credibly represented and convincingly subsumed in a parable-like doctrine, lose himself in the ingeniously interwoven and authentically narrated stories, only to come to the conclusion in the end that he had hitherto been following a doctrinal system of only limited validity, which, from a superior point of view of knowledge, is subject to the absolutely valid standpoint of the *Mokṣopāya*’s monism of pure consciousness and thus indirectly proves its validity. These Ākhyānas, which are distributed throughout the work in a varying density according to as yet unrecognised principles, are in fact artfully constructed traps of inclusivism into which even modern scholarship occasionally falls when one attempts to determine the philosophical orientation of the

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Slaje 1993. ¹⁴⁷ Especially in the story of the raven Bhusuṇḍa (cf. MU (Ü) VI.14–28).

Mokṣopāya by confusing its inclusivist method with the author's own position.¹⁴⁸ But the *Mokṣopāya*, as the source text for all subsequent versions, was never a textbook on yoga, and we do not know what exactly was meant by the term *yoga* when it was added to the metonymic title *Vāsiṣṭha* more than 700 years after the inception of the *Mokṣopāya*. This late and superficial addition is not enough to allow the work to be re-interpreted in retrospect as a text on yoga. And had it not been for this addition, no one would have been easily misled into thinking that this work was on yoga.

Vasiṣṭha makes some important statements about his and the general use of *yoga* in his time.¹⁴⁹ The following definitory passages are of relevance in this regard:

dvau kramau cittanāśasya yogo jñānaṃ ca [...] |
yogas tadvyrttirodho hi jñānaṃ samyagavekṣaṇam || (MU/YV V.78.8
 = LYV 5.9.72)

“There are two ways to quench the [cognitive functions of the] mind: *yoga* and *jñāna*. [...] *yoga* [consists in] suppressing the functions of the [mind]. *jñāna* [consists in the] appropriate consideration [of one's true essence].”¹⁵⁰

The techniques of *yoga* in the given context are described in the following stanzas¹⁵¹ as the practice of breath control (*prāṇāyāma*). Elsewhere, Vasiṣṭha takes up the subject of this conceptual dichotomy again:

saṃsārottaraṇe yuktir yogaśabdena kathyate |
tām viddhi dviprakārām tvam cittopāśamadharmiṇīm ||
ātmajñānaṃ prakāro 'syā ekaḥ prakathito bhuvi |
*dvitīyaḥ prāṇasaṃrodhaś [...] ||*¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ One current example is Tamara Cohen, who sees the *Mokṣopāya* as a yogic work (“the MU is clearly a Yoga text” – Cohen 2023, p. 2) because of the inclusion of yogic narratives: “the Cūḍālā story also provides further evidence to suggest that the MU is a Sāṃkhya-Yoga text composed within a Kaula social context” (p. 250); “the MU seems to present to the reader whatever they seek to find within its verses depending on what is highlighted in the text, and since I have looked for Yoga in the MU, I have found it” (p. 387). Cp. also: “since I have looked for Yoga in the MU, I have found it” (Cohen 2023, p. 2). ¹⁴⁹ On these passages, cp. Slaje 1997, pp. 391–394. Cohen 2023, pp. 69ff., ignores this study. ¹⁵⁰ Cp. “[Es gibt] zwei Verfahrensweisen zur Vernichtung des Denkens (*citta*), [...]: Befreiungspraxis (*yoga*) und Erkennen, denn die Befreiungspraxis [besteht in der] Unterdrückung der Funktionen des [Denkens], das Erkennen [im] rechten Betrachten” (MU (Ü) V.78.8 [p. 492]). ¹⁵¹ MU V.78.9ff. ¹⁵² MU VI.13.2–3 = YV 6.13.3–4 ~ LYV 6.1.58.

“The method (*yukti*) for being rescued from the cycle of existence is called ‘yoga’. Understand that this [method], which has the calmness of the mind (*citta*) as its property, is of two kinds: its first kind is called on earth ‘knowledge of one’s true essence’ (*ātmajñāna*), [its] second [kind] ‘controlling of the breath’ (*prāṇasaṃrodha*). [...]”¹⁵³

*prakārau dvāv api proktau yogaśabdena yady api |
tathāpi rūḍhim āyātaḥ prāṇayuktāv asau bhṛṣam | |
evaṃ yogas tathā jñānaṃ saṃsārottaraṇakrame |
samāv upāyau dvāv eva proktāv ekaphalapradau | |
asādhyaḥ kasyacid yogaḥ kasyacij jñānaniścayaḥ |
mama tv abhimatas [...] susādhō jñānajaḥ kramaḥ |* ¹⁵⁴

“Although both of these types are designated by the word ‘yoga’, the [second type] in particular, regarding the breathing method (*prāṇayukti*), has become the conventional meaning (*rūḍhi*) [of the word ‘yoga’]. In this way, *yoga* [and] *jñāna* are designated as the only two means [which] serve the path of being rescued from the cycle of existence [and] lead to the same result. For some, Yoga is out of reach; for others, it is the certainty of knowledge (*jñāna*). But I, [Vasiṣṭha], cherish the easy path arising from knowledge (*jñāna*), [...]”¹⁵⁵

What does this tell us? Vasiṣṭha could not state more clearly that *yoga* as a generic term may be applied indiscriminately to any method (*yukti*) of transcending the cycle of existence (*saṃsārottaraṇa*). However, *yoga* in the narrower sense is conventionally restricted to techniques of controlling the breath (*prāṇayukti*).

¹⁵³ Cp. “Die Methode (*yukti*) zur Rettung aus dem Daseinskreislauf wird mit dem Wort “Yoga” bezeichnet. Wisse, [daß] diese [Methode, die] die [kognitive] Ruhe des Denkens (*citta*) als [charakteristische] Beschaffenheit besitzt, von zweifacher Art ist: Ihre erste Art wird auf Erden ‘Erkennen des Wesenskerns’ (*ātmajñāna*), [ihre] zweite [Art] ‘Unterdrückung des Atems’ (*prāṇasaṃrodha*) genannt. [...]”. (MU (Ü) VI.13, 2–3 [p. 87]). ¹⁵⁴ MU VI.13.5–7 = YV 6.13.6–8 = LYV 6.1.59–60ab. Significantly, pādas cd “*mama tv abhimatas sādho susādhō jñānajaḥ kramaḥ*” have been omitted in the LYV. ¹⁵⁵ Cp. “Obwohl alle beiden Arten mit dem Wort ‘Yoga’ bezeichnet werden, ist dennoch insbesondere (*bhṛṣam*) die [zweite Art] in Bezug auf die Atemmethode zur konventionell gebrauchten Bedeutung (*rūḍhi*) [des Wortes “Yoga”] geworden. Auf diese Weise [werden] der Yoga [und] ebenso das Erkennen als die beiden einzigen (*dvāv eva*) Mittel bezeichnet, [die] in gleichem [Maße] dem Weg der Rettung aus dem Daseinskreislauf [dienen und] zu dem einen [selben] Ergebnis führen. Für den einen [ist] der Yoga, für den anderen die Gewißheit des Erkennens nicht zu bewerkstelligen. Mir aber [ist] der leicht bewerkstelligte, aus dem Erkennen erwachsene Weg lieb, [...]” (MU (Ü) VI.13.5–7 [pp. 87f.]).

And Vasiṣṭha clearly distinguishes this latter, conventional meaning of the word *yoga* from the second method of liberation, that of knowledge (*jñāna*), which he personally endorses and substantiates. If one were to claim that the *Mokṣopāya* is a yoga doctrine against this background,¹⁵⁶ one could do so only with reference to the above meaning of *yoga* used as a generic term for any method of escaping the cycle of existence. But then every philosophical tradition in India, insofar as they all—with the exception of the materialists—promise liberation, would have to be categorised as a yogic teaching. However, as Vasiṣṭha explicitly points out, the *Mokṣopāya* can by no means be subsumed under the works of yoga in terms of the conventional meaning of *yoga* in the narrower sense of breath control techniques. Vasiṣṭha does not favour this kind of yoga and does not make it the subject of his teaching, although he does go into some depth on the topic from time to time in thematically appropriate Ākhyānas (e.g. MU VI.84.34–51; 85.1ff.).

An approach to a possible solution

To return to the late and secondary addition *Yoga-* to the title *Vāsiṣṭha*, the semantics of *yoga* include also notions ranging from “mysticism” to “practice” anyway, so that an intended meaning like “the mysticism/practice of Vasiṣṭha” would also be conceivable. If one were to apply the equation of the generic term *yoga* and *jñāna* as principally equally effective methods¹⁵⁷ to the name *Jñāna-Vāsiṣṭha*, which prevails over *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in the southern parts of India, it might give a new perspective to the title, since in both cases the meaning would amount to “the gnosis of Vasiṣṭha”. Could the Nāth yogis,¹⁵⁸ who were close to the Sufis in terms of worldview, have acted as the catalyst? The answer is rather no, for neither the philosophy of the *Mokṣopāya* nor that of the Kevalādvaitavedānta seem to justify assuming that the Nāth had influenced the text. Had such an influence indeed been exerted, the Nāth yogis would have had to appropriate the *Mokṣopāya* so authoritatively that they were given interpretive sovereignty over it. But in view of the quotations attributed to Vasiṣṭha in sixteenth and seventeenth century Vedānta texts, it seems more likely that the person who went by the name of Vasiṣṭha was generally believed to be the same in all the works in which his name was encountered. Thus, Vasiṣṭha is also found elsewhere as an authority on matters of yoga. It is noticeable that quotations are occasionally

¹⁵⁶ See above, n. 148. ¹⁵⁷ Cp. above n. 155. ¹⁵⁸ Bergunder 2013, pp. 51–55. Cp. also n. 143.

linked by the use of “*vasiṣṭha uvāca*”, where in one place Vasiṣṭha speaks as the author of the *Mokṣopāya*, and immediately following Vasiṣṭha is quoted with an authoritative statement from a yoga text. A pre-modern mind with a firm belief in the Ṛṣi of that name as the author’s name would probably not have been able to conceive that there could be different authors behind different texts, all of which were attributed to the formal authorship of one Vasiṣṭha. It cannot be ruled out, therefore, that from the 17th century onwards, different textual traditions such as those of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* and the *Vāsiṣṭha* (alias *Mokṣopāya*) began to merge, leading to the assessment that Vasiṣṭha was also an authority on yoga. This belief might have found its expression by adding *Yoga-* to *Vāsiṣṭha*, following the example of the Indo-Persian usage. The *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā*, after all, adheres to the ideal of liberation while still alive (*jīvanmukti*).¹⁵⁹ It is even alternatively called “*Vasiṣṭhayoga*”.¹⁶⁰

A certain proximity to Vasiṣṭha’s account of yoga in the *Mahābhārata* cannot be denied for the *Mokṣopāya*.¹⁶¹ There, in the *Mahābhārata*, Vasiṣṭha (*vasiṣṭha uvāca*) gives an outline of yogic theory (*yogadarśana*) and practice (*yogakṛtya*):

hanta te saṃpravakṣyāmi [...] yogakṛtyaṃ [...]
yogakṛtyaṃ tu yogānāṃ dhyānam eva paraṃ balam |
tac cāpi dvividhaṃ dhyānam āhur vedavido janāḥ ||
ekāgratā ca manasaḥ prāṇāyāmas tathaiva ca |
prāṇāyāmas tu saṃguṇo nirguṇo manasas tathā || (MBh 12.294.6–8)

[...]

yogam etad dhi yogānāṃ manye yogasya lakṣaṇam |
evaṃ paśyaṃ prapaśyanti ātmānam ajaraṃ param ||
yogadarśanam etāvad uktaṃ te tattvato mayā | (MBh 12.294.25–26b)

¹⁵⁹ “The *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* and the *Yogayājñavalkya* claim that liberation-in-life (*jīvanmukti*) can be achieved by the practice of yoga” (Birch 2020, p. 211). ¹⁶⁰ “the *Vasiṣṭhayoga* = *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* 2.56–69, 3.22 respectively” (Birch 2013, p. 147, n. 623). ¹⁶¹ “In the *Mahābhārata*, there are several explanations of yoga involving both *Prāṇāyāma* and meditation (*dhyāna*). In one instance, Vasiṣṭha teaches that meditation is of two kinds; *Prāṇāyāma* and one-pointedness of mind. Although it is unusual to see *Prāṇāyāma* referred to as a type of meditation, it does suggest the practice of manipulating the breath to achieve a meditative state. [Note 471: The *Mahābhārata* 12.294.7c–d and 8a–b: ‘Men who know the Vedas say that the meditation [mentioned earlier] is also of two kinds: [the first is] one-pointedness of mind and [the second,] *Prāṇāyāma*’ (*tac cāpi dvividhaṃ dhyānam āhur vedavido janāḥ | ekāgratā ca manasaḥ prāṇāyāmas tathaiva ca*)]” (Birch 2013, p. 114; cf. also pp. 70f., n. 264f.).

However, Vasiṣṭha is also repeatedly quoted in connection with the authorship of a “*Yogaśāstra*” (*vāsiṣṭhe yogaśāstre*) attributed to him, for example in the *Svetāśvataropaniṣadbhāṣya*.¹⁶² The quotations introduced there with *tathā ca vāsiṣṭhe yogaśāstre prāśnapūrvakam darśitam*¹⁶³ are not traceable in any of the MU/YV/LYV versions,¹⁶⁴ but correspond to *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* 5.2–3.¹⁶⁵ The expression *vāsiṣṭhe yoge* (Var. *vāsiṣṭhe yogaśāstre*) used by Sāhib Kaul (AD 1676) may be consistent with this.¹⁶⁶ In fact, the title *vāsiṣṭhe mokṣopāye*, as it appears in the colophons of the *Mokṣopāya*,¹⁶⁷ marks the clearest possible distinction from another work entitled “*vāsiṣṭhe yogaśāstre*”, which has yet to be reliably identified.

Elsewhere, too, Vasiṣṭha is credited with statements on *yoga* taken from other relevant texts, such as the *Amanaska*.¹⁶⁸ A similar picture is presented by the *Om-nāma*, a text which can be associated with Banwālīdās Walī (17th century),¹⁶⁹ where the blending of originally independent textual traditions leads to the emergence of the name “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”.

¹⁶² Cf. Lo Turco 2002, p. 53, n. 32. See also Madhusūdana Sarasvatī: “*ṛṣibhir*” [=] *vāsiṣṭhādibhir yogaśāstreṣu dhāraṇādhyānaviśayatvena “bahudhā gītaṃ”* [=] *nirūpitam. etena yogaśāstrapratipādyatvam uktam* (BhG(GD) ad 13.4). ¹⁶³ ŚvUBh 29, 25–26, 6 ad ŚvUBh 1.8. ¹⁶⁴ Only “*eka eva hi bhūtātma bhūte bhūte vyavasthitaḥ*” can be identified as *Brahmabindūpaniṣad* 12 and is quoted in the commentary VTP ad YV 7.96.15 = MU VI.253.15 as well as by Ātmasukha ad LYV 3.1.45ab = MU III.2.45ab = YV 3.2.43cd. ¹⁶⁵ Birch 2013, p. 96, note 391. On the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā*, cf. Birch 2020, pp. 210–212. ¹⁶⁶ *etad eva nirūṇitaṃ vāsiṣṭhe yoge* (“This is propounded in Vasiṣṭha’s treatise on the Yoga ...”) (KV, p. 17). The accepted reading here is *vāsiṣṭhe yoge* [Ms G₂], but there is also a variant reading *vāsiṣṭhe yogaśāstre*. The *pratīka* “*tvam aham*” cited by Sāhib Kaul, which according to one manuscript (B₄) is supposed to open seven interconnected stanzas (*ślokaśaptaka*), cannot be traced in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*/ *Mokṣopāya* (KV 99, 16; cf. commentary p. 90, n. 4). ¹⁶⁷ Slaje 1994, p. 31 [Ms N₁]. ¹⁶⁸ *uktaṃ bhagavatā vāsiṣṭhena* (ABS 295, 12–13) = *Amanaska* 2.63 (“a late addition”: Birch 2013, pp. 318; 374f., notes 85f.). ¹⁶⁹ “Libraries in Srinagar and Lahore hold manuscripts of a Persian narrative poem, entitled *Om-nāma* [Book of *Om*]. [...] The poem eventually adopts the loose structure of a dialogue between Vasiṣṭha and the prince Rāma (adapted from the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*), during which it outlines breathing and auditory practices from the *haṭhayoga* tradition. [...] In the course of the Vasiṣṭha-Rāma dialogue, the *Om-nāma* also invokes several other texts and authorities. The *Om-nāma* thus reconceives and retells the *Yogavāsiṣṭha* as a manual of liberation, in which *haṭhayoga* plays an important role. It is also throughout suffused with *wujūdī* Sufi concepts of divine gnosis. While deploying the vocabulary of Islamic gnosticism, the *Om-nāma* also assimilates the yogic practices it outlines into the non-dualist framework of Advaita Vedānta. [...] If Banwālīdās Walī indeed composed the *Om-nāma*, we might imagine that he became acquainted with the poetry of Lal Ded while living in Kashmir as Mullā Shāh’s disciple” (Gandhi 2020, p. 91). For details, according to which yogic breath control and the idea of *jīvanmukti* are particularly prominent in this work, cf. Gandhi 2020, p. 92ff.

However, the exact meaning assigned to *ḡōg* or *jog* in the choice of the Persian title remains unresolved. An alien concept like this, introduced as a loanword into the Indo-Persian milieu, must in any case be seen as the result of a dialogue conducted with Paṇḍits paraphrasing and explaining the text orally in a vernacular language. It will therefore be difficult to resolve conclusively why a decision was made in favour of choosing *jog*/*ḡōg*. It is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose that the *Mokṣopāyasāra* was understood at the Mughal court as a kind of Vedānta scripture, as claimed by the Vedāntins present there. This might have given the impression that they were dealing with Indian *taṣawwuf* (Sufism). Thus, for the translation team, the term *ḡōg* may have represented the point of convergence,¹⁷⁰ expressing Indian Sufism as esoteric knowledge rooted in life as succinctly as possible – unless the *Mokṣopāyasāra* went already by *ḡōg* in common parlance at court. This, in turn, may have been due to the coincidence of yoga teachings from related Śāstras with the *Mokṣopāya* under one and the same author, Vasiṣṭha, who, as discussed above, was thought to be identical.

Thus, while the clarification of the semantics of *jog*/*ḡōg* in the Indo-Persian context of the period under consideration must remain open,¹⁷¹ we may have come at least one step closer to determining the genesis of the name *Yogavāsiṣṭha* in terms of place, time and intellectual milieu.

¹⁷⁰ The Persian translations should be seen as cultural approximations rather than philological translations: “[...] perfectly synonymous theological concepts for Sanskrit terms simply did not exist in the Persian language, and so [...] Pānīpatī would have instead sought overtly similar but imprecise approximations from within his own Islamic tradition, in this manner communicating a thoroughly Islamic worldview through an ostensibly Sanskrit or Hindu terminology” (Nair 2020, p. 144); “[...] the translation team had to stretch and bend the Persian language in such a way that it could accept an influx of a tremendous volume of new vocabulary whose roots lay in a predominantly foreign source, namely, Sanskrit and its literary and conceptual world(s). As a result, nearly every page of the *Jūg Bāsiṣṭ* contains numerous Sanskrit terms—translated into Persian—relevant to an extremely wide range of topics” (Nair 2020, p. 143). ¹⁷¹ Perhaps Mīr Findiriskī’s as yet unpublished glossary of Indian terms translated into Persian, which was part of his dealings with the *Ḡōg Bāsiṣṭ*, could shed light on this: “A tali note, tuttora inedite, egli aggiunse anche un corposo glossario dei principali termini sanscriti del LYV, ordinati alfabeticamente e con le spiegazioni dei significati in persiano, generalmente tratte dal testo stesso; tale glossario, circolante in forma manoscritta sia come appendice alla traduzione di Nizām al-Dīn, sia separatamente da quella, risulta a tutt’oggi ugualmente inedito” (D’Onofrio 2007, p. 281). On the lamentable absence of an edition of Findiriskī’s important “*Sharḥ-i Jūg*” cp. also Nair 2020, pp. 133f.

Summary

Taken together, the circumstantial evidence presented above points to a scenario that looks like this:

In the 14th century at the very latest, a Paṇḍit named Abhinanda left Kashmir and migrated to southern India. The abstract of the *Mokṣopāya* that he had begun but never completed, spread throughout the subcontinent under various names such as *Mokṣopāyasāra*, *Vāsiṣṭha* and *Jñānavāsiṣṭha*. It soon fell under the prerogative of interpretation of Advaitavedānta monks. From the turn of the 17th century, the Mughal rulers commissioned Persian translations of Abhinanda's abstract. These translations bore the name of *Ġōg Bāsiṣṭ*, which is the earliest record in Indian literary history for a name corresponding to the Sanskrit “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”. At the same time, the ideological appropriation of the *Mokṣopāya* in the Śāṅkara lineage was successfully implemented by Sarasvatī monks from Benares. Nevertheless, at that time it was still only Abhinanda's abridged and truncated version, the *Mokṣopāyasāra* alias *Vāsiṣṭha*, which was known and quoted.

It was probably not until the 17th century that a copy of the complete Kashmirian *Mokṣopāya* was brought to Benares. There, through an unfortunate editorial intervention, the last chapters of Abhinanda's well-known and widely read abstract were incorporated into the full version, with the original text passages being “overwritten” by the wording of the abridgment and thus lost. This process is also the origin of the “two halves” of the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa*, a dichotomy that is missing from the *Mokṣopāya*. From then on, more precisely in the 17th and 18th centuries, “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*” gradually became the accepted name. The final breakthrough of the title did not happen until the global distribution of the printed book that was published under this name from the 19th century onwards.

Which brings us back to where we started.

Outline of original and secondary titles

– *Mokṣopāya (I.)*

Complete version from Kashmir (10th century).

Cited as *Mokṣopāya* and (*Brhad-*)*Vāsiṣṭha*.

Printed as *Mokṣopāya* (MU).

Commentary (*Ṭīkā*) by Bhāskarakaṇṭha (1725/1775).

Printed as *Mokṣopāyaṭīkā* (MṬ)

– *Mokṣopāya-Sāra* / “*Laghu-Yogavāsiṣṭha*”

Unfinished/truncated abstract of the *Mokṣopāya*, probably by Abhinanda from Kashmir.

Cited as *Vāsiṣṭha*.

Printed as *Laghuyogavāsiṣṭha* (LYV).

Commentaries by Ātmasukha (*Vāsiṣṭha-Candrikā*, sargas I–III, c. 14th century) and Mummaḍideva (*Samśāratarāṇi*, sargas IV–VI).

Printed as *Vāsiṣṭhacandrikā* (VC) and *Samśāratarāṇi* (ST).

– *Vāsiṣṭha-Sāra*

Abridgement of the *Mokṣopāya-Sāra* in 10 chapters.

Cited as *Vāsiṣṭha-Sāra*.

Printed as *Yogavāsiṣṭha-Sāra* (VāS).

Commentary (*Vāsiṣṭhasāravivṛtti*) by Mahīdhara (A.D. 1597).

– *Mokṣopāya (II.)* = “*Yogavāsiṣṭha*”

Incomplete version with some additions in comparison to *Mokṣopāya* (I.) from Benares (c. 17th/18th centuries), partly conflated with the *Mokṣopāya-Sāra* (LYV).

Cited as *Mokṣopāya* and *Vāsiṣṭha*.

Printed as *Yogavāsiṣṭha* (YV).

Commentary (*Vāsiṣṭhārthaprakāśa*) by Ānandabodhendra Sarasvatī: A. D. 1710.

Printed as *Vāsiṣṭhatātparyaprakāśa* (VTP).

Excursus on the Yogabhūmis in the Light of Vasiṣṭha's Preference for *jñāna* over *yoga*

The following is not about the history of the *yogabhūmis*, nor about the structure and terminological variance of their individual levels (*bhūmi*).¹⁷² It is only about Vasiṣṭha's attitude towards them, given as a personal statement. A quick look at the passages dealing with this issue¹⁷³ yields the following picture:

tvāḍṛḡvivekavati saṅgalitābhimāne
puṁsi sthite vimalasattvamayāḡṛyajātau
saptātṁikāvatarati kramaśaś śivāya
*cetaḥprakāśanakarī nanu **yogabhūmiḥ*** (MU III.116.15)

15a tvāḍṛḡ° Ś₃ [...] saṅgalitā° Ś_{3.7}] tādṛḡ° [...] saṅkalitā° (Ed.)

In contrast to what is presented as prose in the edition, the metre here is Vasantatilaka (personal communication by Roland Steiner). The line breaks have been adjusted here accordingly.

“When a man who is ranked eminent (*agryajāti*)¹⁷⁴ by his stainless personality (*sattva*),¹⁷⁵ [and] whose sense of [misguided] egocentricity has ceased, has become able to discriminate like you,¹⁷⁶ [Rāma], the sevenfold *yogabhūmi* that enlightens the mind certainly descends upon [him] gradually for the purpose of liberation (*śiva*).”

In response to Vasiṣṭha's statement, Rāma asks for a concise explanation of the seven *yogabhūmis* just mentioned.¹⁷⁷ By fulfilling his wish, Vasiṣṭha changes the terminology to *jñā-*, *jñāna-* and *ajñāna-bhūmi*, i.e. essentially from *yoga-*

¹⁷² The history of scholarship on the Yogabhūmis before and after the publication of the critical edition of the *Mokṣopāya* has been discussed by Jürgen Hanneder (2009). He has carried it a considerable step further in the present publication. See his *The Way to Liberation according to the Mokṣopāya* in the present volume for detailed information pp. 104ff. ¹⁷³ MU III.116.15–118.30; III.122.1–2; VI.125.29–37; VI.140–156. ¹⁷⁴ *agryajāti* can also be understood to mean the high born status of a prince, as Rāma was one. ¹⁷⁵ Because the mentally purified seeker has not yet entered the seven *bhūmis*, I understand *sattva* here in the translated sense of ‘character’. ¹⁷⁶ Cp. *tvatsaḍṛśacittavṛtteḥ puruṣasya heyopādeyavicāra utpadyate* (III.116.14). With the critical edition's accepted reading *tādṛḡ°* it would mean: “when a man is able to discriminate in this way [between what is acceptable and what should be avoided].” Cp. *vivekavataḥ puruṣasya heyopādeyavicāra utpadyate* (III.122.1, l. 4). ¹⁷⁷ *kīḍṛśyo* [...] *yogabhūmikāḥ sapta siddhidāḥ | samāseneti me brūhi* [...] || (III.117.1).

to *jñāna*-. In expounding the *ajñāna-bhūmis* first (III.117), he sets the number of levels clearly at ‘seven’ (*sapta*), accepting countless intermediate stages (*padāntara*) in a wide range of modifications within them.¹⁷⁸ It is presented as a direct teaching of Vasiṣṭha, without reference to competing doctrines.

However, in introducing the *jñāna-bhūmis* (III.118) with the words:

imāṃ saptapadāṃ jñānabhūmim ākarṇayānagha (III.118.1ab)

Vasiṣṭha still uses *jñāna*- but switches to *yoga*- in the following stanza when referring to cognate *bhūmis* advocated by disputants (*vādins*):

vadanti bahubhedena vādino yogabhūmikāḥ (III.118.2ab)

“Contestants teach *yogabhūmis* in various ways”

But when Vasiṣṭha goes on to emphasise his preference for only the following levels as the ones that bring about liberation:

mama tv abhīmatā nūnam imā eva śubhapradāḥ (III.118.2cd)

he makes it absolutely clear that he is referring to seven levels of knowledge (*jñānaṃ saptabhūmikam*):

avabodhaṃ vidur jñānaṃ tad idaṃ saptabhūmikam
(III.118.3ab)

and adds that final liberation (*mukti*) does not take place until the completion of the set of all the previous seven levels:¹⁷⁹

muktis taj jñeyam ity uktā bhūmikāsaptakāt¹⁸⁰ param
(III.118.3cd)

¹⁷⁸ *saptātmikā* [...] *yogabhūmiḥ* (III.116.15); *yogabhūmikās sapta* (III.117.1); *ajñānabhūs saptapadā jñābhūs saptapadaiva ca* | *padāntarāṇy asaṅkhyāni bhavanty anyāny athaitayoḥ* (117.2); *tatra saptaparakāratvaṃ tvam ajñānabhūvaś śṛṇu* | *tatas saptaparakāratvaṃ śroṣyasi jñānabhūmijam* (117.4); *saptāvasthā iti proktā mayājñānasya* [...] (117.24); *ajñānabhūmir iti saptapadā mayoktā nānāvikāradapadāntarabhedabhinnā* (117.30). ¹⁷⁹ Cp. also III.118.7a: *āsām ante sthitā muktis*. ¹⁸⁰ *bhūmikāsaptakāt conī*. (R. Steiner)] *bhūmikā saptakāt* (Ed.)

“So it must be known that what is called [final] liberation [comes only] after the set of [all] the seven levels.”¹⁸¹

The seventh and final stage prior to liberation is what Vasiṣṭha calls the *turyāvasthā*. It is the level of embodied *jīvanmuktas*.¹⁸² Then follows *turyātīta*, the state of their disembodied liberation:

*eṣā hi jīvanmukteṣu turyāvastheha vidyate |
videhamuktaviṣayaṃ turyātītaṃ ataḥ param* (III.118.16)

This reads like an authentic teaching of Vasiṣṭha.¹⁸³ He does not contrast the *yoga*- and *jñāna-bhūmis*, but rather uses *yoga*- as an umbrella term from which he singles out the *jñāna-bhūmis*, as he calls them, as a semantically and content-related independent concept. It is essentially the same treatment of the term *yoga* as in Vasiṣṭha’s definition of *yoga* (VI.13.2ff.) as discussed above,¹⁸⁴ where he favoured *jñāna* over *yoga* in almost identical words:

*asādhyah kasyacid yogah kasyacij jñānaniścayaḥ |
mama tv abhimatas sādho susādho jñānajaḥ kramaḥ*
(VI.13.7)

In the above context, too, Vasiṣṭha initially treats *yoga* as a generic term for almost any method of transcending the cycle of existence. In its narrower sense, however, he restricts it to its conventional meaning of techniques of breath control (*prāṇayukti*). He clearly distinguishes this latter, conventional meaning of the word *yoga*, from another method of liberation, that of knowledge (*jñāna*), which he personally endorses and substantiates. It can hardly be a coincidence that these two almost identical preferences of Vasiṣṭha both concern the concepts

¹⁸¹ Compounding *bhūmikā* with *saptakāt* is suggested not only in the light of ‘*bhūmikāsaptaka*’ in III.118.21a, but also because *mukti* (“final liberation”) is nowhere defined as a preparatory stage (*bhūmi*), but is of course to be taken as the ultimate goal. ¹⁸² *saptamī turyagā smṛtā* (III.118.6d); *bhūmiṣaṭkacirābhyāsād [...] yat svabhāvaikaṇiṣṭhatvaṃ sā jñeyā turyagā gatīḥ* (III.118.15); *eṣā hi jīvanmukteṣu turyāvastheha vidyate* (III.118.16ab); cp. also *turyātmā bhavati. tato jīvanmukta ity ucyate* (III.122.2, l. 8f.). ¹⁸³ Cp. *jīvaprabodho muktir hi sā ceha dvividhocyate | ekā jīvanmuktateti dvitīyādehamuktatā || jīvanmuktir hi turyatvaṃ turyātītaṃ paraṃ tataḥ* (VI.55.58–59b). ¹⁸⁴ Cp. above, p. 57, and Roland Steiner’s contribution in this volume, who shows that the *yoga* of Bhusuṇḍa actually turns out to be a “cognition” (*jñāna*) that arises from the continuous observation of one’s own breath [...]. This kind of Bhusuṇḍa’s “breath regulation” (*prāṇāyāma*), determined as *uttama*, “is practised by the “knowers of reality” (*tajjñā*)” (pp. 88). The conceptual proximity of *yoga* and *jñāna*, *yoga* initially understood in the conventional sense, leading to a new understanding of *yoga* practised as *jñāna*, becomes evident again.

of *yoga* and *jñāna*. Nor can it be a coincidence that Vasiṣṭha favours *jñāna* over *yoga* both times. The synopsis makes this particularly clear:

vadanti bahubhedena vādino yogabhūmikāḥ |
mama tv abhimatā nūnam imā¹⁸⁵ *eva śubhapradāḥ*
 (III.118.2)

asādhyah kasyacid yogah kasyacij jñānaniścayaḥ |
mama tv abhimatas sādho susādho jñānajaḥ *kramaḥ*
 (VI.13.7)

This leads me to conclude that it may be methodologically advisable to take the presentation of the *jñāna*- and *ajñāna-bhūmis* in the *Utpattiprakaraṇa* (III.117–118; 122) as the yardstick for comparative research on the *yoga-bhūmis* from the author's point of view. These are completely identical in content. The prose version, of course, uses a different idiom and has *viveka-bhū(mi)* instead of *jñāna-bhūmi*. This is the common structure of the seven levels:

- 1) *śubhecchā* [118.5] = *śubhecchābhīdhā vivekabhū* [122.1, l. 5]
- 2) *vicāraṇā* [118.5] = *tato* [...] *vicāraṇayā* ... [122.1, ll. 5f.]
- 3) *tanumānasā* [118.5] = *tanumānasī vivekabhūmi* [122.1, ll. 7f.]
- 4) *sattvāpatti* [118.6] = *sattvāpatti* [122.1, l. 9]
- 5) *asaṃsakti* [118.6] = *asakta* [122.1, l. 10]
- 6) *padārthābhāvanī* [118.6] = *bhāvanātānava, abhāvanī yogabhūmi,*
bāhyapadārthabhāvanāṃ tyajati [122.2, ll. 1–8]
- 7) *turyā* [118.6] = *turyātman, jīvanmukta* [122.2, ll. 8f.]

Seen from this background, it becomes clear that the first account of *yogabhūmis* in the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa* (VI.125.29–37) cannot be authentic. In addition to the inconsistencies noted by Hanneder,¹⁸⁶ especially the fact that the *jīvanmukta* is assigned to the fifth level (VI.125.31), there is also the detail that this brief passage places an uncommon emphasis on experiencing bliss (*ānanda*)¹⁸⁷ in the context of liberation that is quite unusual for the author of the *Mokṣopāya*. The last and most comprehensive description of *yogabhūmis* in the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa*

¹⁸⁵ Used as an antecedent of the *jñānabhūmis* expounded immediately afterwards, see above p. 66.

¹⁸⁶ pp. 107. ¹⁸⁷ VI.125.31; 32; 36.

(VI.140–156)¹⁸⁸ does neither agree with the previous one (VI.125), nor with those given in the *Utpattiprakaraṇa*. It assigns the *jīvanmukta* to the sixth level (VI.155.1–3), just as disembodied liberation, assigned there to the seventh level (VI.156.2; 13), contradicts the model preferred by Vasiṣṭha. Compared with the author's personal commitment to the cause, as is evident from the relevant passage in the *Utpattiprakaraṇa* (III.118.2), the detailed account under consideration (VI.140–156) moreover ends with an uninspired formulaic triteness.¹⁸⁹ Thus I have the impression, albeit a subjective one, that the latter version could not have been written by the author, at least with regard to the nomenclature and gradation of the *yogabhūmis*. In this respect it is not consistent with his teaching of the gradual progression of liberating insight in the *Utpattiprakaraṇa*. It is this one which appears to be original, because the author expresses his strong commitment to it in a very personal way.

What does this imply for the textual history of the *Mokṣopāya*? If the two congruent accounts of the *jñānabhūmis* in the *Utpattiprakaraṇa* and Vasiṣṭha's preference for them are taken to be authentic in an authorial sense, we may well have stumbled upon further traces of the real author which have been preserved and handed down in the teachings of the received *Mokṣopāya*. The two *yogabhūmi* versions in the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa* (VI.125; VI.140–156), however, are neither consistent with each other nor with the *Utpattiprakaraṇa* versions. They may have been included on the occasion of early editorial revisions, when the *Mokṣopāya* was still taking its textual shape in Kashmir as handed down to us. Neither of these need necessarily be a late interpolation. The *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa* versions may as well represent two out of a larger number of *yogabhūmis* which Vasiṣṭha says were taught “in different ways” (*bahubhedena*). Nowhere does he suggest that they are fundamentally wrong, or that they should be rejected, but simply that they are not quite to his taste ...

Seen in this light, it is not unlikely that later transmitters would have found it plausible to include all this in the corpus of the *Mokṣopāya*. If my proposition is tenable, then we would have regained not only the authorial and authentic *bhūmis* (significantly *jñāna-bhūmis*), but also two individual versions of *yogabhūmis* that were in existence at about the author's time. It follows that, since the two accounts in the *Nirvāṇaprakaraṇa* are independent due to their

¹⁸⁸ Cp. Hanneder pp. 109ff. ¹⁸⁹ *etās tā bhūmikāḥ proktā mayā tava raghūdvaḥ | āsām abhyāsaya-
gena na duḥkham anubhūyate* (VI.156.14).

different design, any attempt to harmonise all four *yoga-* and *jñāna-bhūmi* versions in the *Mokṣopāya* are bound to fail. For this reason, they should be studied separately and in their own right.

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VSM (Prakāśānanda, *Vedāntasiddhāntamuktāvalī*). The *Vedānta Siddhāntamuktāvalī* of Prakāśānanda. With English transl. and notes by Arthur Venis. Benares 1898.

VSJ (*Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā Yogakāṇḍa*). *Vasiṣṭha Saṃhitā (Yoga Kāṇḍa)*. Ed. [...] Swami Digambaji, Pitambar Jha, Gyan Shankar Sahay. Rev. ed. repr. Lonavla 2022.

VTP (Ānandabodhendra, *Vāsiṣṭhatātparyaprakāśa*), s. YV.

Witzel 2005 Michael Witzel, “Indocentrism: autochthonous visions of ancient India.” In: Edwin F. Bryant and Laurie L. Patton (eds.), *The Indo-Aryan controversy: evidence and inference in Indian history*. London, New York, pp. 341–404.

Witzel 2006 id., “Brahmanical Reactions to Foreign Influences and to Social and Religious Change.” In: Patrick Olivelle (ed.), *Between the Empires. Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*. Oxford, pp. 457–499.

YV The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* of Vālmīki. With the Commentary *Vāsiṣṭhamahārāmāyana-tātparyaprakāśa*. Third Edition. Revised and re-edited by Nārāyaṇ Rām Āchārya “Kāvya-tīrtha” with the co-operation of Sāstrīmaṇḍal. Part I–II. Original ed. by Wāsudev Laxmaṇ Śāstrī Paṇṣīkar. Bombay 1937.

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I don clothes fashioned of illusion,
And tread in shoes made of tortoise fur.
In my hand I grasp a bow of rabbit horn,
Planning to shoot the demons of ignorance.

Hanshan

(The Poetry of Hanshan (Cold Mountain), Shide, and Fenggan.
Translated by Paul Rouzer. Berlin: De Gruyter 2017, HS 299, p. 321.)

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