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The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda : a new critical edition of the three 'new' Anuvākas of Kāṇḍa 17 with English translation and commentary

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APPENDIX I

The Indo-European and Vedic Vrātya origins of the *pāśupatavrata*

This chapter¹ aims at identifying the cultural models that account for the origins of two specific features of the Pāśupata cult, namely the practice of imitating a bull/ox, and the idea of stealing merit from detractors. After an introduction to the Pāśupata cult, the starting point will be ACHARYA'S 2013 theory according to which the original Pāśupata *vrata* was essentially a *govrata*. I shall adduce texts illustrating that the purpose of the *govrata* is to steal merit (*iṣṭāpūrta*), in particular a newly edited passage from Atharvaveda Paippalāda, book 17, chapter 6, a text likely conceived in a Vrātya environment. Along the lines of other studies that have identified the Vrātyas as predecessors of later cultural phenomena, I shall propose to explain the *pāśupatavrata* as historically informed by cultural models going back to the institution of the Indo-European *Männerbund* via the mediation of Vrātya culture. A list of cultural traits typical of the IE *Männerbund* will be provided. This will be followed by a comparison with matching cultural traits from the Indian Vrātya culture, as well as from early Śaiva cults. I will then try to 1) trace the Pāśupata practice of imitating the bull back to the IE *Männerbund*'s practice of parading in animal masks, viz. by identifying Vrātya animal *vratas*, and 2) trace the Pāśupata idea of stealing merit back to the IE *Männerbund*'s claim of a *sakraler Stehlrecht*, namely by reinterpreting three famous Vrātya texts that show both the Vrātyas' great concern with receiving proper hospitality and respect, as well as the curses that the Vrātyas cast on anyone who fails to provide such proper treatment. Special attention will be given to the socio-economical aspects of this reinterpretation.

1. The Pāśupata cult

Research on the Pāśupata cult, the worship of Rudra/Pāśupati ('lord of cattle') and Lakulīśa ('lord of the club'), is of central importance for the study of the history and the development of Indian religion, because the Pāśupatas (or Māheśvaras) are the earliest known Śaiva sect.² Our knowledge of this cult relies on a series of classical and medieval literary sources and inscriptions, the main source being the Pāśupatasūtra,³ preserved with Kauṇḍinya's commentary, the Pañcārthabhāṣya.⁴ This commentary has been dated to around the fourth century AD, a time when the cult had become

1 I am grateful to Velizar Sadovski for inviting me to present some of the early ideas contained in this paper during his 2016 course "Indo-European poetry, religion and society: priesthood, royal and social ideology in ancient IE texts, myths and rituals" at the Leiden Linguistics Summer School in Languages and Linguistics (11–22 July 2016). A first version of this paper was then presented at the Indology Nowadays winter school in memory of Paul Thieme, Tübingen, 21–22 February 2017, and an updated version at the 33rd South Asian Languages Analysis Round Table (SALA 33), Poznań, 15–17 May 2017. I am very grateful to Renate Söhnen-Thieme, Frank Köhler and Elena Mucciarelli for inviting me to Tübingen, as well as to Tiziana Pontillo, Maria Piera Candotti and Velizar Sadovski for inviting me to Poznań. I thank them and all the participants of these two conferences for their valuable feedback and support.

2 For a general overview on the Pāśupatas, one may consult ACHARYA 2011, SANDERSON 1988: 664–667, HARA 1966, 2002, BISSCHOP 2006a and BAKKER 2011.

3 Other relevant textual sources are the Nakulīśapāśupatadarśanam (ch. 6 of the Sarvadarśanasamgraha of Sāyaṇa Mādhava, 14th c. AD; see HARA 1958); the Gaṇakārikā of Haradatta with the 10th c. AD commentary Ratnaṭikā by Bhāsarvajña; the original Skandapurāṇa (ca. 7th c. AD) (see BISSCHOP 2006a); the Atharvavedapariśiṣṭas (see BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003, 2007); and various references in the Mbh. (see BAKKER 1997) etc. Other minor sources are mentioned in ACHARYA 2013; on the epigraphical evidence (e.g. the Mathurā pillar, 4th c., and Malhar, 7th c.), see HARA 1966: 35–70, PATHAK 1960: 4–19 and BAKKER 2000, 2011.

4 The reference edition of both the sūtra and Kauṇḍinya's commentary is SASTRI 1940, which is also the *editio princeps*. A translation of the text and the commentary can be found in HARA 1966. BISSCHOP 2006b contains an edition of the *sūtrapāṭha* text; a new edition of PāśS 1.7–9 can be found in BAKKER & BISSCHOP 2018.

quite widespread, eventually leading to the institution of temples with the patronage of rich merchants and kings, and involving both groups of ascetics as well as larger communities of lay devotees. However, the sūtra itself must be older than the commentarial redaction, and of course the cult must predate the text.

In fact, ongoing research on the textual sources of the Pāśupatasūtra has been tracing its roots to the Vedic period.⁵ In particular, ACHARYA (2013) claimed that we should distinguish an original pre-philosophical/pre-Kauṇḍinya Pāśupatism, with roots going back to Vedic times, from a more moderate and philosophical post-Kauṇḍinyan version; and secondly, that in its original form, the *pāśupatavrata* was fundamentally a *govrata* or *godharma*, that is, an observance essentially consisting of the imitation of the behaviour of a bull or an ox.

“*The Pāśupatas ritually adopted the bull’s behaviour, regarding themselves as the cattle of their Lord, and thus cultivated devotion to Rudra, ‘the Lord of Cattle’ (paśupati). Originally, this must have been their intention in all ways and throughout all phases of their life after accepting Pāśupatism. This was true at the time of composition of the Pāśupatasūtra. But by the time of Kauṇḍinya the Pāśupata vow had somehow become moderated and divided into stages, and the godharma observance was circumscribed and attached only to the final stage of Pāśupata practice. The prescriptions requiring one to adopt the bull’s behaviour were transformed into something suitable to the modified notion of Pāśupatism. Consequently, what was practised in the initial and intermediate stages was no longer recognised as godharma*” (ACHARYA 2013: 112; emphasis mine).

The *pāśupatavrata* as described in the PāśS consists of five stages, most of which can be shown to involve the imitation of the behaviour of a bull or ox:

(1) In the first stage, the ascetic lives by a temple of Śiva, and imitates the god. He smears his body with ashes, worships Śiva with dancing, singing, laughter, the drumming sound *huḍḍuṅ*, silent meditation, five YV *mantras*, and five *brahmamantras*; Kauṇḍinya’s comment on the relevant passage (PāśS 1.8⁶) points out that *huḍḍuṅ* “is the sacred sound like the bellowing of a bull, produced by the contact of the tongue-tip with the palate” (HARA 1966: 183; emphasis mine).

(2) The second stage represents the very core of the observance. In this stage, “throwing off all the outward signs of his observance he [i.e. the ascetic] moved about in public pretending to be crippled, deranged, mentally deficient, or indecent. Passers-by being unaware that these defects were feigned spoke ill of him. By this means the Pāśupata provoked an exchange in which his demerits passed to his detractors and their merits (*iṣṭa-pūrta-*) to him” (SANDERSON 1988: 665). According to ACHARYA, the relevant passage describes the behaviour of a bull:

(PāśS 3.11–15⁷) *preva caret | krātheteva | spandeteva | maṇṭeteva | śṛṅgāyeteva* |, “[The ascetic] should enact thrashing about, he should enact injuring [others], he should enact kicking or twitching of his limbs, he should enact getting agitated/hobbling, he should enact butting” (ACHARYA 2013: 110).

5 OBERLIES 2000, ACHARYA 2013, BISSCHOP & SELVA 2016 and BISSCHOP 2018.

6 PāśS 1.8 *hasitagātāṅṛtyaḍuṃḍuṃ[huḍḍuṅ]kāranamaskārajapyopahāreṇopatiṣṭhet* |. On the vocalisation *huḍḍuṅ*, see SANDERSON 2002: 30 fn. 32.

7 I quote ACHARYA’S 2013 reconstruction, which involves a series of emendations. The text of the *editio princeps* (i.e., before ACHARYA’S 2013 emendations) reads as follows: PāśS 3.11–19, *pretavac caret | krātheta vā | spandeta vā | maṇṭeta vā | śṛṅgāreta vā | api tat kuryāt | api tad bhāset | yena paribhavam gacchet | paribhūyamāno hi vidvān kṛtsnatapā bhavati* |, “He should go about like an outcaste; at times he should snore; or he should tremble; or he should limp; or he should play the lecher; he should act improperly; he should speak improperly; by means of which he may come to be ill-treated; for a wise man, being ill-treated, accomplishes all asceticism” (HARA 1966: 319–329).

(3) In the third stage, the ascetic dwells in a remote location (cave, deserted building, etc.) in order to practise meditation with repetition of the five mantras. Here the PāśS itself is explicit:

PāśS 5.18–20 (~ Sūtrapāṭha 5.9–12), *godharmā mṛgadharmā vā | adbhir eva śucir bhavet | siddhayogī na lipyate (~ lipyeta) | karmaṇā pātakena vā |*, “Following the attribute of a bull or the attribute of a wild animal, he should become pure as though [washed] by water; the perfected yogin is stained neither by [good] karma nor by mortal sin” (transl. HARA 1966: 405–7).

Kaunḍinya interprets the passage as referring to ascetic skills: “[...] what is meant is their common attribute, which is the ability to bear the pain of opposites [heat and cold, etc.] [...]” (HARA 1966: 406). However, originally, the reference to cattle and wild animals was not merely a metaphor, but the core of the practice, which involved the full identification of the ascetic with such animals.

(4) In the last two classical stages, this identification is less explicit. In the fourth stage, the ascetic moves to a cremation ground, lives off alms, and awaits death.⁸

(5) Finally, in the fifth stage, the ascetic experiences the end of suffering (*duḥkhānta*), liberation, and assimilation with Rudra (*rudra-sāyujya*⁹).

ACHARYA (2013: 112ff.), and INGALLS (1957: 223) before him, found indications of the existence of a bull observance in various sources¹⁰. In particular, Mahābhārata 5.97.12–14 describes a Maheśvara ascetic as a performer of the *govrata*, and claims that such an ascetic “is invariably lying just anywhere, is fed with just anything [by way of food], and covered with anything [by way of clothing]” (ACHARYA 2013: 113). More details can be found in Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa II.74.46ff., which recounts the story of the blind sage Dīrghatamas, who is instructed by a bull to behave according to the nature of bulls, *godharma*. This, incidentally, involves the breaking of sexual restrictions with a female relative, which causes Dīrghatamas to be banished by his host.¹¹ Finally JB 2.113 describes the *gosava*,¹² an observance to win the world of the draft-ox (*anaḍuho ha lokam jayati*). “He [i.e. the ascetic] should [sexually] approach his mother, sister, or a lady of his own clan. Having leaned down close [to the source] he should sip water [directly with his mouth], and having leaned down close [to the ground] he should cut grass [with his teeth]. Wherever he feels the urge to evacuate faeces, right there he should evacuate” (ACHARYA 2013: 116–117). According to the text, Puṇyakeśa, the king of the Śibis, performed it once by defecating in his assembly hall; conversely, King Janaka Vaideha refused to do it, deeming the practice as suitable only for elderly men (*sthavira*).

ACHARYA also identifies two more sources from the Atharvaveda,¹³ namely the rather obscure

8 As we will see below, however, this connection with the realm of death, as represented by the prescription of dwelling in a cremation ground, is just as important a trait for tracing the Pāśupata cult back to earlier cultural models.

9 On this expression, see footnote 58 below.

10 One source neglected by ACHARYA but mentioned by INGALLS (1957: 223 fn. 9, 225) is the episode in Kālidāsa’s Raghuvamśa, ch. 1–2 in which king Dilīpa, unable to obtain a son, is instructed by the sage Vasiṣṭha to follow and imitate the behaviour of the cow Nandinī—rest when she rests, drink when she drinks, etc.—in order to break a curse that had been laid on him by the cow’s mother, Surabhī, when Dilīpa had neglected to circumambulate around her and thus disrespected her.

11 See footnote 53 below.

12 On the *gosava*, see Appendix II and MYLIUS 1975.

13 Noting how all of the AVParīś mss. hail from Gujarat, BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS (2003: 320) have argued that the knowledge on the Pāśupata cult among Atharvavedic brahmins could be explained by the fact that the early medieval Atharvavedic tradition was centred in Western India, around Gujarat and Malwa, which is the same region where the Pāśupata cult emerged. Note that this is also the region where the supposed written archetype of the AV Paippalāda (*G) was realised. However, the presence of texts like AVŚ 4.11 ~ AVP 3.25, and AVP 17 ch. 6 (17.27–43) in the AV saṃhitās, seemingly dealing with a pre-Pāśupata *govrata/anaḍudvrata*, suggests

AVŚ 4.11 ~ AVP 3.25, the so-called Anadutsūkta¹⁴, ‘hymn to the draft-ox’, and AVP 17 ch. 6 (17.27–43)¹⁵, a long prose chapter that deals with an *anaḍudvrata*, ‘vow of the draft-ox’. In these texts, the protagonist is Indra. Indeed, ACHARYA is mostly interested in using these texts to show that the original *govrata* was performed by Indra—as in fact stated in PāśS 4.10 (see below)—and thus that the original observance belonged to the cult of Indra, which was later replaced by Rudra/Śiva once the latter became identified as the ‘lord of cattle’ (Pāśupati).

In what follows and in Appendix II, I will try to question this hypothesis (or rather go further beyond it) by showing that both Indra and Rudra are an integral part of this original cult, in that they represent two aspects of the mythological discourse around the initiation practices of Indo-European and later Indo-Aryan young warriors. However, in order to do so, we must first dwell on the above-mentioned two AV texts, and focus on what they can tell us about the core purpose of the observance of the bull.

2. The purpose of the *anaḍudvrata/govrata*: stealing merit

As referred to in relation to the second stage of the *pāśupatavrata*, from the description of the PāśS it clearly emerges that the Pāśupata ascetic intentionally sought the censure of the common people by behaving in a deranged way in order to provoke a magical exchange of merit between the slanderer and himself, thus purifying himself at the expense of the slanderer:

PāśS 3.1–9: *avyaktalingī | vyaktācāraḥ | avamataḥ | sarvabhūteṣu | paribhūyamānaś caret | apahatapāpmā | pareṣāṃ parivādāt | pāpaṃ ca tebhyo dadāti | sukṛtaṃ ca teṣāṃ ādatte |*

“Without displaying his sectarian marks, acting in full view, despised among all beings, he should wander whilst undergoing scorn. His evil is destroyed because of the censure of others. And he gives [his] evil to them. And he takes the merit of their good deeds from them” (BISSCHOP & SELVA 2016).

The PāśS further restates this idea, claiming that Indra was the first to perform this observance:

PāśS 4.2–13: *gūḍhavrataḥ | gūḍhapavitravāṇiḥ | sarvāṇi dvārāṇi pidhāya | buddhyā | unmattavad eko vicareta loke | kṛtānnaṃ utsṛṣṭam upādadīta | unmatto mūḍha ity evaṃ manyante itare janāḥ | asaṃmāno hi yantrāṇāṃ sarveṣāṃ uttamaḥ smṛtaḥ | indro vā agre asureṣu pāśupatam acarat | sa teṣāṃ iṣṭāpūrtam ādatta | māyayā sukṛtayā samavindata | nindā hy eṣānindā tasmāt |*

(2–9) “With concealed religious practice; with pure speech [i.e. Sanskrit] concealed; closing all doors; by means of the organs of judgement; he must wander about himself like a madman; he should take food which has been prepared and which is left over; other people will think ‘he is a stupid madman’; dishonour indeed is said to be the best of all stratagems” (transl. HARA 1966: 342ff.).

that the historical connection between the AV and the Pāśupata cult is much older, and that the Pāśupata observance proper might have stemmed from a practice that was more closely related to Atharvaveda circles before becoming an independent cult.

14 On this text, see Appendix II.

15 On this text, see Part III above.

(10–13) “Indra, in the beginning, practised the Pāśupata [observance] among the Asuras. He took the merit gained from worship and donations (*iṣṭāpūrta*) from them. He obtained [it] with well-performed magic (*māyayā*). For this censure is without censure, that’s why!”

The AV furnishes a model to this idea of merit transfer. In particular, AVP 17 ch. 6 (17.27–43) contains a prose narrative according to which Indra wished to use the *vajra* but could not bear its power and wield it; when Indra tries to hold it, the weapon slips from his hands and falls into the sea in the form of a lightning bolt, burning the sea, and making the sea water undrinkable. Thus, Indra decides to perform a *vrata* to rob the Devas and the Asuras of the power necessary for bearing the *vajra*. He fails to complete his observance and wield the *vajra* until he resorts to the help of the draft-ox, the animal that is most accustomed to hauling heavy burdens. Only then Indra is able to reach his goal. Finally, with the *vajra*, he is able to slay Vṛtra. His observance closely resembles that of the Pāśupatas:

AVP 17.28.27, *tam *upāmantrayantāpunyayā vācā krūrayā ca [...] so (')śāmyat*

“Him, they (i.e. the Asuras) called near with a harsh and cruel speech [...] he remained calm.”

AVP 17.35.1–4, *athāhīnā āśvatthir abravīn na tād brāhmaṇaṃ nindāni yād enam aśṛṇon ned iṣṭāpūrtena vi bhavānīti || kṛtyā vā eṣā manuṣyeṣu carati yad anaḍvān yad anaḍudvratī || ya evaṃ viduṣo (')sādhu kīrtayatīṣṭam evāsyā pūrtaṃ saṃvṛkte || indro vā *agre asureṣv anaḍudvratam acarat | teṣāṃ iṣṭaṃ pūrtaṃ māyā saṃvṛktānindan* hy enam ||*

“Then Āhīnas Āśvatthi said: ‘Therefore I will not censure [this/a] brahmin for having learned about him (i.e. Indra and his *vrata*), lest I should be deprived of [my] merit, gained from worship and donations (*iṣṭāpūrta-*)’. This is witchcraft, when, as a draft-ox, as one practising the observance of the draft-ox, one roams (/practises the observance) among human beings. He who speaks ill of the initiated one: his merit accumulated with worship (*iṣṭa-*), his merit accumulated with donations (*pūrta-*) are both completely wrested away. Indeed, in the beginning, Indra practised the observance of the draft-ox among the Asuras. Of them, the merit accumulated with worship, that accumulated with donations, the magical power was completely wrested away, for they censured him.”

As can be seen from the above quotation, the Paippalāda text describes the dynamics of the theft of merit in the observance of the draft-ox in the same way that the Pāśupatasūtra does for the Pāśupata observance. As first recognised by BISSCHOP (2018), not only is the theology the same, but the text preserves an almost exact textual parallel. In fact, we can safely say that the Paippalāda passage is the textual model for the Pāśupatasūtra passage, in which *pāśupatam acarat* has replaced an original *anaḍudvratam acarat*.

Thus, we can identify two elements as characterising this observance throughout its historical development: 1) the imitation of the behaviour of a bull or ox (as shown by ACHARYA) and 2) the idea of stealing merit. What is the origin of these ideas?

3. The transfer of merit

The idea of the transferability of merit and demerit (*sukṛta*, *punya*, *śubha*, *dharma*, *tapas*,

tejas vs. *apunya*, *duṣkṛta*, *enas*, *pāpa*, *pāpman*) *per se* is not problematic; it has been widely studied, and is not only restricted to Pāśupata circles, but has its roots in Buddhism and Vedic culture.¹⁶ In particular, in Vedic culture we frequently encounter the idea of the transferability of *iṣṭāpūrta*, ‘the merits gained from worship and donations’, which has been studied by SAKAMOTO-GOTŌ (1997).

We find an emic interpretation of how such transfer was conceived by the ascetics in the above-mentioned Bhrahmāṇḍapurāṇa passage. More precisely, we hear it from the very mouth of the bull that instructs Dīrghatamas:

“The bull replied to Dīrghatamas: ‘My dear, we have neither fatal sin nor theft. We do not distinguish at all what is to be eaten and drunk, and what is not. And, o brahmin, we truly do not [distinguish] what should be done and what not, nor who is fit for sexual relation and who not. We are not sinners, o brahmin, because all this is known from the tradition as the nature of the bull (*godharma*)’” (transl. ACHARYA 2013: 115).

Thus, the idea is that the performers of the observance are not to be considered sinners for behaving in a deranged way, just as bulls and oxen are not blamed for acting in their natural way. Such behaviour may not be suitable for a human, but it is natural for a bull. The performers identify themselves with bulls, so their bullish behaviour should be regarded as natural for them as well. As such, they are not guilty of sin for acting in such a way that would be considered sinful in the human realm, because, whilst they enact the observance, they are not really humans, but actual bulls.

Modern interpreters of the Pāśupata cult have mostly offered similarly synchronic (as opposed to historical) explanations to illustrate how the *vrātins* might have conceived the exchange of merit as a reality. SANDERSON (1988: 665) describes the rationale behind the deranged behaviour of the ascetic as follows:

“By acting this way he was simply making unorthodox use of a thoroughly orthodox principle. He was exploiting his ritual status as one who had undergone a rite of consecration (*dīkṣā*) to initiate an observance (*vrata*); for in the śrauta system one bound by the observance (*vrata*) consequent on consecration (*dīkṣā*) for the Soma sacrifice was similarly dangerous to anyone who might speak ill of him.”

HARA (1967–68) explains the rationale behind the transfer of merit by the Pāśupata ascetic in various ways: 1) as the consequence of a moral concern: the Pāśupata aspirants were brahmins, and “it was a general Brahmanical tenet that brahmins were not to be censured”; 2) by highlighting the great importance of non-anger (*akrodha*): an ascetic always had to be careful not to lose his *tapas* in anger. In his view, the Pāśupatas not only avoided losing merit by practising non-anger, i.e. by not reacting to the insults of the people who frowned upon their unusual behaviour, but they also invented a “positive method” for gaining merit by enduring false accusations they themselves provoked to put themselves in the situation of testing their own endurance and non-anger—thus they actually exploited the system of merit transfer; 3) as an inversion of the belief in the Act of Truth (*satya-kriyā*). Accordingly, the detractor’s accusations work as an “Act of Falsehood (**anṛta-kriyā*)”: just as the speaker of truth accomplishes his wish, the speaker of falsehood loses his merit (and the Pāśupatas gain it through endurance and non-anger).

Conversely, ACHARYA (2013: 126–127), having showed how the *govrata* was popular among peripheral peoples like the Śibis, approached the issue from a historical perspective:

“[...] we can guess that this vow of adoption of the bull’s behaviour was a well

16 See HARA 1967–68 and 1994 (repr. 2002: 105ff.) and WEZLER 1997 (with a list of works on the topic, many on Buddhism).

recognised if not actually commonplace phenomenon among certain people at the margins of Vedic society. The bull was a sort of totem of pastoral tribes, and by mimesis these people worshipped their god in the form of the archetypal bull [...] The origin of the Pāśupata praxis lies in an ancient *imitatio dei* practice in which the worshipper pleased the god, the archetypal, by mimesis.”¹⁷

In the *epilogue* of his 2013 article, ACHARYA points out the similarity of the Pāśupata practice to that of the Greek Cynics, whose acolytes also sought dishonour by imitating the behaviour of dogs. This similarity had also been recognised by INGALLS (1962), who was the first to attempt an investigation into the historical origin of this practice from a comparative perspective.¹⁸ ACHARYA accepts the idea of a common origin of the Pāśupatas and Cynics, but dismisses INGALLS’s idea that their practices could go back to some form of black shamanism. ACHARYA (2013: 128 fn. 76), in fact, hints at a possible Indo-European origin, although he only speaks in general terms of “an ancient *imitatio dei* practice”.

My contention is that it is indeed possible to identify Indo-European cultural models for the *pāśupataavrata* as regards both the practice of imitating the behaviour of bulls (and other animals) and the idea of stealing merit. As I will try to show, these cultural models have informed the Pāśupata cult via the mediation of the Vedic Vrātya culture.

4. Early Vedic Vrātya culture as a model for later cultural phenomena

Several scholars have recognised that multiple traits of later (both Vedic and post-Vedic) cultural phenomena seem to match elements of the early Vedic Vrātya culture, and have proposed considering the latter as prototypes on which the later phenomena are modelled or from which they are directly derived.

Most notably, in a very influential article, HEESTERMAN (1962) has recognised the similarities between the figure of the *dīkṣita*, the initiated patron of the Śrauta ritual, and the Vrātyas, both as far as their outfit (the turban, the belt, the black fur, the staff, etc.) is concerned, as well as with regard to the nature of their liminal status (more on this below); he further claims that the Vrātyastoma rituals and the Sattras, the ritual sessions performed by the Vrātya warriors, were in fact the archaic model for the classical Śrauta rituals. Along these lines, FALK (1986) has expanded on the similarities between Vrātyas, the *sattrins* and the *brahmacārin*, and studied how the Vrātya midwinter rituals involving a dice game have been adapted into the classical Śrauta rituals.

Moreover, as DAS (2000b: 115) writes, there is an increasing consensus on the fact that “much, possibly even most, of that which in so-called later Hinduism, and most probably also Buddhism and Jinism, goes back to Vedic times is not a descendant of the known Vedic sacrificial ritual, but of other Vedic sources”. Among these, the so-called “Vrātya culture” holds a prominent place: for instance, BOLLÉE (1981) and DUNDAS (1991: 173f.) have claimed that the early Jaina and Buddhist male communities derived their military attitude and vocabulary precisely from the warrior brotherhoods of the Vrātyas. In a series of works later collected in a posthumous volume in 1997, SONTHEIMER identified the Vrātya origins of the modern cult of Khaṇḍobā/Mallāri/Mailār/Murukan in Maharashtra, Andra Pradesh, Karnataka, and much of

17 Here ACHARYA refers in particular to the concept as treated in BAKKER 2010.

18 INGALLS also drew attention to the similarity between the name of Lakulīśa, the “lord of the club”, and Herakles, the Greek deity worshipped by the Cynics and likewise portrayed as carrying a club. Rather than the influence of the Greek cult on the Indian one, this similarity is best explained in terms of IE heritage. In particular, the couple Pāśupati/Lakulīśa is modelled on the old pattern of **korios* god/**teuteh*₂ god, which was discovered by McCONE (1987) and can be recognised in the Vrātya deity couple Rudra/Indra. On this matter, which I take for granted in my trait list below (trait **M3-V3-P3**), I refer the reader to a discussion in my Appendix II, §3.4.

Southern India (more on this below in §8). Before them, CHARPENTIER (1909, 1911) and HAUER (1927) regarded the Vrātyas as the prototype of the yogins and *śramaṇa* ascetics in general, or the Śaivite ascetics in particular. Finally, these ideas have recently informed SAMUEL'S (2008) research on the origins of Yoga and Tantrism.

However, to my knowledge, no one has systematically studied the Pāsupatas from this perspective. OBERLIES (2000) suggested that the the scandalous behaviour of the Pāsupata ascetics during the second stage of their observance might derive from the custom of warriors who employed battle tricks (*Kriegslisten*) to provoke their adversaries before the fight.¹⁹ In accordance to this hypothesis, OBERLIES also emphasised the role of Indra in the ideology that informed the Pāsupata cult. Nevertheless, he did not establish a connection between the latter and the Vrātyas or the Indo-European warbands. FALK (1994b), adducing descriptions of aggressive armed brahmins in later Vedic literature, has pointed out their similarities with depictions of the Vrātyas and the Pāsupatas.²⁰ He interprets this in light of the post-Mauryan socio-political changes that saw the rise of brahmin dynasties like the Śūngas: in his view, because of the success of non-Brahmanical cults, brahmins who lacked patronage were forced to embrace a warlike lifestyle to find a means of subsistence.²¹ This interesting hypothesis may well be correct, but, as I will point out in the following chapters, this social phenomenon is old, and is connected with what I will call the *Gefolgschaft* phase of the Indo-European warband. Indeed, DAS (2000 and 2002; after MICHAELS 1998: 299), commenting on OBERLIES'S and FALK'S articles, speaks of a *vīrya-marga*, and explicitly draws attention to the similarities between the phenomena described above and the Indo-European warrior sodalities, and advocates for “serious scholarly investigations” into the matter.

In fact, the Vrātyas themselves have their own precursors, namely the Indo-European warband. Thus, before we dive more deeply into the characteristics of the Vrātyas and analyse how these relate to the Pāsupatas, it is worth carrying out a survey of the characteristics of this older

19 Note that OBERLIES'S hypothesis is based on the text of PāśS 3.11–19 (*vis-à-vis* TB 2.3.9.9) before ACHARYA'S emendations (see footnote 7 above). Thus, the ascetics' demeaning behaviour would originate from tricks that the warriors used to deceive their enemies, making them believe that they were weak and unable to withstand combat; meanwhile, acting like a madman and behaving aggressively or obscenely would have been tricks to frighten an adversary. Commenting on this, DAS (2002: 144 fn. 35) aptly recalls a scene from the popular film *Braveheart* in which the Scottish warriors expose their genitals and buttocks to provoke the English soldiers.

20 Quite remarkable are some lexical similarities between the description of armed brahmins and *daivatas* in KauśSū 13.12–13[=104–105], who “tanzen, tröpfeln, lachen, singen, und andere Gestalt annehmen”, and the practice of the Pāsupata ascetics who laugh, sing, dance, and can assume any form, according to PāśS 1.8 and 1.24. The texts read as follows: 13.12[104], *atha yatrāitad brāhmaṇā āyudhino bhavanti tatra juhuyāt* (1). *yā āsurā manuṣyā āttadhanūḥ [puruṣamukhāś] carāṇ iha devā vayaṃ manuṣyās te (')devā pra viśāmasi. indro no astu purogava sa no rakṣatu sarvata. indrāya svāheti hutvā* (2). “*mā no vidan*” [ŚS 1.19.1], “*namo devavadhebhya*” [ŚS 6.13.1] *ity etābhyām suktābhyām juhuyāt* (3). *sā tatra prāyaścittiḥ* (4). 13.13[=105]: *atha yatrāitad daivatāni nṛtyanti cyotanti hasanti gāyanti vānyāni vā rūpāni kurvanti. ya āsurā manuṣyā [...], “mā no vidan*” [ŚS 1.19.1], “*namo devavadhebhya*” [ŚS 6.13.1] *ity abhayair juhuyāt* (1). *sā tatra prāyascitti* (2), “Jetzt, wo Brahmanen mit Waffen erscheinen, dort soll man (mit folgendem Spruch) opfern: ‘Wenn menschliche Dämoninnen [mit dem Gesicht von Männern], den Bogen genommen habend, herumziehen sollten: Wir sind menschliche Götter, als solche haben wir (keinen?) Verkehr mit Nichtgöttinnen. Indra gehe uns voran. Er soll uns überall beschützen.’ Mit ‘Für Indra, *svāhā*’ soll man (ins Feuer) opfern und mit den Liedern *mā no vidan* (AV 1.19) und *namo devadhebhyaḥ* (AV 6.13) spenden. Das ist dabei das Abwehrritual. Jetzt, wenn *daivatas* tanzen, tröpfeln, lachen, singen und andere Gestalt annehmen (soll man mit denselben Versen und Liedern) opfern. Das ist hierbei das Abwehrritual” (transl. by FALK 1994b: 315, 319). Compare PāśS 1.8, *hasitagītanṛtyaḍumḍum[or huḍḍuṇ]kāranamaskārajapyopahāreṇopatiṣṭhet* |, “One must serve with offering of laughter, song, dance, *ḍumḍumkāra*, inner worship and prayer” (transl. by HARA 1966: 181; as explained above, the alternative *huḍḍuṇ* would be the bellowing of a bull; see SANDERSON 2002: 30 fn. 31), and PāśS 1.24, *kāmarūpitvam*, “The possession of any form that he wishes” (transl. by HARA [1966: 240]). Cf. also AVParīś 40.1.11.

21 It might be added that groups of fighting ascetics also appear in later times, for instance the Akhārās and Nāgās (see CLARK 2011 and ALTER 2011). FALK himself has written on the Thugs in 2002.

cultural institution, which is commonly referred to as the Indo-European *Männerbund*.

5. The Indo-European *Männerbund*

Interest in the Indo-European *Männerbund* as a cultural institution was sparked by early ethnological studies on African male secret societies that often practised animal masking and dealt with the education of the youth (e.g. FROBENIUS 1894). The term *Männerbund*²² was first used by the ethnologist Heinrich SCHURTZ in his influential 1902 work *Altersklassen und Männerbünde*, which, by collecting evidence from all over the world, established this institution almost as a cultural universal. Furthermore, VAN GENNEP's (1909) research on the dynamics of the rites of passage has furnished a useful framework²³ for understanding the nature and sociological importance of these brotherhoods.

These works inspired European (initially especially German) scholars to investigate similar sodalities, first within the Germanic world—the works by Leopold VON SCHROEDER (1895, 1908), Lily WEISER (1927) and Otto HÖFLER (1934) deserve to be mentioned here—and then within the wider Indo-European world. We can now avail ourselves of a number of studies that deal with most of the cultures and literatures of the Indo-European family. The literature is immense. Among the most prominent works one may consult the following: for the Germanic world, besides the works already mentioned, see MEULI 1975, KERSHAW 2000, and HEIZMANN 2002; for the Celtic world, McCONE 1987; for the Iranian world, WIKANDER 1938, 1941, WIDENGREN 1938, 1969, and IVANCIK 1993; for the Vedic world, BOLLÉE 1981, FALK 1986, 1994b, 2002, KERSHAW 2000: 201–256, DAS 2002, and VASSILKOV 2015; for the Greek world, DUMÉZIL 1929, JEANMAIRE 1939, LINCOLN 1975, BREMMER 1978, and VON CIEMINSKI 2002; for the Italic world, HEURGON 1957, DUMÉZIL 1942, ALFÖLDI 1974, BREMMER 1982, 1987, and again VON CIEMINSKI 2002. See also PRZYLUK 1940, ELIADE 1956(1975), DUMÉZIL 1969 and 1983. Several of the above studies, although focusing especially on one branch, treat multiple cultural traditions at the same time.

The comparative evidence collected over more than a hundred years of work is enormous, and I can only scratch the surface here. The following typological classification of the material involved might perhaps be useful for the non-initiated reader to gain an idea of the kind of research that has been carried out by philologists, ethnologists, historians, students of comparative religion, and recently also archaeologists and geneticists.

Evidence for the reconstruction of the IE *Männerbund* comes from:

1) Mythical accounts of brotherhoods, such as Romulus's band of thieves, the Vedic Maruts who aid Indra in battle, and Jason and the Argonauts, as well as historical accounts of ancient sodalities such as the Roman *luperci*, the *salii*, the *fratres arvales*, the Italic *suodales*, the Irish *fian*, the Greek *κουρητες*, the *ἔφηβοι*, the Spartan *κρυπτεία*, the Iranian *mairiias*, the Mitanni *mariannas*, the Indian *vrātyās*, the Scandinavian *berserkir* and *úlfhednar*, the Vikings, etc.

22 FALK (1986: 11) prefers the term *Bruderschaft* over *Männerbund*, because, he remarks, it is not the adult married men with a family that join these sodalities, but rather the youth during their education, or frequently the "*Halbstarcken*" in the time after their formative period and before their marriage. As the term *Männerbund* has by now been established by a long tradition, I adopt it as a technical term for the whole phenomenon. I then distinguish between *Jugendbund* and *Gefolgschaft* (see below).

23 Especially important for the understanding of the *Männerbund* is the transitional period that marks the passage from one state to another, in particular from childhood to adulthood. This liminal period was further studied by Victor Turner (see i.a. TURNER, 1967: 93–111) who showed that it is often characterised by a reversal of status, which is enacted by the initiates who display a series of reversals both in their look (clothing, hairstyle, etc.) and in their behaviour (dwelling in the wilderness instead of at home, licentiousness, etc.). This also explains the nature of those festivals that are connected with the Indo-European *Männerbund* (see below) and during which social norms are suspended or turned upside down. Naturally these festivals often take place at the liminal period of the year, at the winter solstice (see Appendix II §3).

2) Coming-of-age stories and initiation stories involving male heroes, often raised by wolves, who then return home to reclaim the throne from a usurper: e.g., the legends of Romulus and Remus, that of the Persian king Cyrus (a historical account modelled on a mythological motif), the Germanic myth of Sigmund and his son Sinfjötli in the *Völsungasaga*, the deeds of the Irish hero Cú Chulainn (“Culann’s hound”) and the legend of King Cormac mac Airt, and possibly even a version of the myth of Zeus, according to which the god was hidden from his father Cronus (so as not to be eaten by him) and raised on Crete by a goat, whilst the Cretan *κουρῆτες* protected him with the clanging noise of their sword dances, etc..

3) Ethnogenesis / foundation stories or historical accounts involving an age-set, a generation of young boys who leave the community in search of wealth or new land (often because of famine or overpopulation). This may result in raiding for booty, as in the case of the Vikings, or in the foundation of new communities (more on this below). Here we may include the legend of the foundation of Rome, as well as that of other Italic *civitates*, in particular by means of the rite known as *ver sacrum*. This consisted in consecrating a whole generation to a totemic animal, who would then lead the youth away from the motherland to found a new community; hence the community of the Hirpini and that of the Lucani were founded brotherhoods consecrated to the wolf, and the Piceni to the woodpecker, whilst the Italii and the Mamertini followed Mars’s bull. We have similar accounts about the foundation of Greek colonies; we can also compare the legends of Indian tiger kings (see §8 below) and the legend of the Celtic migrations led by Bellovesus and Segovesus, as reported by Livius, as well as the accounts of the Germanic migrations (the so-called barbaric invasions) into the Roman Empire, which were conducted in large part by youth warbands. In particular, Tacitus’s observations concerning the armies of various barbarian peoples (the Chatti, the Harii, and others) had a great influence in inspiring research into the Germanic and IE Männerbund. Tacitus speaks of *pedites* and *equites*, the former being a band of bachelors that formed the frontline of the army: this was composed of youngsters who fought naked, with their bodies and faces often smeared with black paint, a *feralis exercitus* of *infernum aspectum* that instils terror in the enemies and fights as if possessed by fury.

4) Ancient festivals connected with brotherhoods and often involving licentious behaviour: the Roman Lupercalia, the Vedic Mahāvṛata, the Greek κῶμος, the Arcadian Λυκαία festival, Thracian and Cretan sword dances, etc.

5) Modern folk festivals and legends often involving masked male age-sets: Halloween, Todaustragen, Bettelumzüge, the Twelve Nights of Christmas, Rauhnacht, the Wild Hunt, the festivity of Sinterklaas, the figures of Harlequin and Robin Hood, other European winter festivals often subsumed under the denomination of “Carnival”, sword dances, Morris dances, mummers, etc.²⁴

6) Onomastics and toponymy: names meaning ‘thief’ or ‘wolf’ (e.g. Cangrande of Verona); god names and epithets (e.g. Lykaios); names of regions, cities, ethnonyms (e.g. Hirpinia, Simhapūra), etc.

24 Ethnologists and anthropologists have produced an enormous number of studies on these topics, rarely, however, from an Indo-European perspective. See e.g. MEULI 1975 and WOLFRAM 1932a, 1932b, 1937. An exception is KERSHAW 2000, which contains much information on these topics. Excellent recent works on modern European festivals—although lacking an Indo-European perspective—are: TESTA 2013, with copious bibliography; FRÉGER 2012, which is a collection of photographs of traditional carnival costumes from all over of Europe; and KEZICH 2015, which summarises the results of several years of ethnological studies carried out across Europe. On the latter project, see also KEZICH & MOTT 2011 and www.carnivalkingofeurope.it, as well as www.youtube.com/user/carnivalkingofeurope. On masking, see POLLOCK 1995. Save for the works of SONTHEIMER, which we will discuss in §8, the eastern side of Indo-Europa is almost completely neglected. Yet there is much to be learned, for instance from the comparison of ancient and modern European folk festivals with modern Indian folk festivities, and I hope to publish on the topic in the near future. After all, Indian folk festivals might reveal information on those strands of Vedic popular culture that did not enter the narrow perspective of Brahmanical Śrauta ritualism, but that informed cultural phenomena, such as Pāsupatism, that emerged later within what we call Hinduism.

7) Comparison of the myths and functions of IE deities specifically connected with warriors. McCONE (1987; see also KERSHAW 2000: 195f.), in particular, has highlighted the role of the two deities corresponding to the two main age sections of male societies that were allowed to bear arms: the **korios*, the youth warband who formed the frontline of the army, fought on foot, naked, wearing only their belt or a light armour and weapons, especially a bow; and the **teuteh₂*, the army of the adults, equipped with full armour, a spear and shield, and who fought on chariots or, later, on horseback.²⁵ To these two groups correspond a **korios* god, armed with a bow, who embodies the furious rage of the *Männerbund* and its connection with liminality, the wilderness, and death; and a **teuteh₂* god, armed with a spear or club, who represents the adult warrior. This duality is represented by couples like Óðinn/Týr, Quirinus/Mars, Rudra/Indra, Lug/Núadu and Enyalios/Ares.²⁶

8) Recently, archaeologists and geneticists have also provided new evidence that supports the reconstruction developed by philologists and linguists.²⁷

Here is not the place to review the great amount of data mentioned above. Useful overviews can be found in McCONE 1987, KERSHAW 2000, MEISER 2002, SERGENT 2003, and MALLORY 2006: 92–96. A critical voice is ZIMMER 2004. However, for the benefit of those Indologists who may not be familiar with this field of study, it may be useful to provide a summary of what this cultural institution looked like in its supposed historical form within Indo-European society, according to the reconstruction based on the above data.

I particularly wish to highlight that the *Männerbund* manifested itself in two different (though closely related) forms, which can also be seen as stages or phases. For the sake of distinguishing these two forms, I use the terms *Jugendbund* and *Gefolgschaft*. With the distinction between the ritual *Jugendbund* and the *Gefolgschaft* stage, which is to a certain extent artificial—as the two stages constantly overlap—I hope to provide a framework with which to analyse those aspects of the later cultural phenomena connected with the *Männerbund* that are more directly informed by institutional, codified religious elements, from those that are informed by socio-economical dynamics. Once again, the two sides of the story are inextricably intertwined.

Finally, I indicate single cultural traits with sigla (**M1**, **M2**, etc.), which I will later use to compare such traits with those of the Vedic Vrātya culture and of Pāśupata culture. A summary of these traits can be found in the table at the end of the appendix.

25 A third age group, that of the **gerh₂ontes*, the elders, has abandoned the military life.

26 Often the actual deities worshipped by the various IE cultures seem to carry a mixture of traits from both of the two original deities postulated by McCONE. In Appendix II §3.4, I argue that this might be explained by considering McCONE's **teuteh₂* gods not merely as representing the adult warriors, but also the young warriors on their way to becoming adults. I also argue that to the list above we should add Paśupati/Lākuliśa and Kṛṣṇa/Balarama (and perhaps even Kṛṣṇa/Arjuna).

27 BROWN & ANTHONY (2012, 2017) have identified the site of a possible Late Bronze-age midwinter festival in Krasnosamarskoe, Russia that involved dog sacrifices. I was also informed that archaeologist Philip Stockhammer, who has been working on the teeth of bodies found at burial sites from the Corded Ware and Bell Beaker cultures near Augsburg, has shown that males in their teenage years maintained a different diet from the rest of the population, which means that they would spend their teenage years away from their villages—most likely joining roaming initiatic brotherhoods (see below). Moreover, a team of archaeologists, geneticists and linguists led by Kristian Kristiansen has shown that the rise of the same Corded Ware Culture, identified with the Proto-Germanic culture, was the result of the admixture of the genetic pool of males (most likely *Männerbündler*) migrating from the Yamnaya culture of the Russian steppe, that is the Proto-Indo-European culture, with local European women (KRISTIANSEN et al. 2017). Similarly, there is evidence for a significant inflow of Y-DNA belonging to the haplogroup R1a into the Indian gene pool during the Bronze Age (ca. 2000 BC) which can only be explained by predominantly male migrations (see REICH 2018: 123ff.; NARASIMHAN et al. 2018; GOLDBERG et al. 2017; SILVA et al. 2017).

The ritualised *Jugendbund* stage

The ritualised *Jugendbund* was an institution concerned with the education of the Indo-European youth and their initiation into adulthood. It was brotherhood of males (**M1**), originally an age-set (**M2**) consisting of young boys²⁸ who would spend a period of time away from the community in order to undergo their initiation into adulthood (**M4**). Thus, they would identify with wild animals and live in the wilderness in a state of liminality (**M5**). Here they would learn the traditional sacred lore (**M6**), as well as hunting and fighting skills. In order to highlight their separation from normal society, they would wear special clothing—particularly black garments made of animal skins and a belt indicating their liminal status—until they were finally reintegrated into society by special rituals that probably involved a cleansing bath²⁹ (**M7**). They would worship a special **korios*, god (a hunter god armed with a bow), distinguished from the **teuteh₂* god (a riding god armed with a spear and shield) worshipped by the community and the army of the adults (**teuteh₂*) (**M3**). Their activity was seasonally organised (**M9**): half the year was spent on cattle raids; the other half on studying traditional poetry. Accordingly, they were in charge of organising seasonal (especially winter) festivals. During these festivals, which also involved the worship of a pole (the *axis mundi* upholding the heaven), as well as games (e.g. dice), races, and possibly dog sacrifices, certain social norms would be broken, and licentious behaviour (involving sexual freedom, alcohol, singing and dancing, and poetry) would be allowed in order to promote fertility (**M10**). During these festivals, the boys, whose marginalised status put them in contact with the world of the dead, would parade into the villages, wearing frightening animal masks (**M12**)³⁰ representing the dead ancestors (**M8**) and asking to be appeased by means of gifts. They would symbolically raid the village, claiming what has been defined as a *sakraler Stehlrecht* (Höfler), *Raubrecht* (Meuli), or *right of rapine* (Eliade) (**M11**). Especially on this occasion, but also in general, the villagers were supposed to give them gifts or incur their wrath. This gift-giving was necessary on a religious level, to appease the dead ancestors (impersonated by the boys), as well as on a practical level, not only in order to help the youth to support themselves in the wild, but also to help them gather enough wealth to start a family once they would be reintegrated into society.

The *Gefolgschaft* stage

Strictly speaking, the *Gefolgschaft* can be considered an evolution of the *Jugendbund* in

28 Some authors highlight the fact that only the offspring of the higher classes, or at least prominent families, was initiated into the brotherhood. This is indeed the case in many of the historically attested forms of the *Männerbund*. In fact, this seems to be the case of the Vṛātyas: this restriction might have been passed on to the Pāśupatas, since in AVPariś 40.1.2, we read *nāśrotriyāya nācaritavedavratāya nākṛtavapanāya dadīta* ||, “He [i.e. the guru] should not give [this instruction/observance] to one who is not conversant with the Śruti, nor to one who has not undertaken the Veda observance, nor to one who has not undergone the shaving ceremony” (BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003: 325). This is the profile of a *dvija*. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that this had to be the original situation, as we cannot be certain that Indo-European society (and nor early Vedic society) featured as clear a social hierarchy as we see in later times. It seems plausible to me that the ritualised *Jugendbund* was restricted to the higher classes in those cases in which an Indo-European group migrated and established themselves as the ruling elite over a subjugated population.

29 See footnote 31 below.

30 I would like to point out that, although the Indo-European tradition of animal masking mainly involved transformation into a wolf/dog (e.g. Romulus and Remus, Cyrus, Sigmund and Sinfjötli, Lupercalia, Hirpini, Apollo Lykeios, werewolves, many medieval and modern European masks, onomastics, etc.), we also find evidence for transformation into other animals, such as bears (*berserkir*, carnival masks), horses (centaurs, Germanic and Slavic masks, etc.), woodpeckers (cf. the name of the Picentes), deer and boar (medieval and modern Europe), as well as bulls (Italii, Samnites, etc.; for the Pāśupatas, see below). In truth, as can still be seen in modern carnival costumes, very often only a goatskin was used to fashion the masks, because it was easier to retrieve.

which admission was not restricted to initiated boys.

Reaching adulthood implied marrying. This was possible only if a young man had the economical means necessary for supporting the new family. In fact, the raids carried out during the period spent as a member of the *Jugendbund* also served the purpose of collecting enough wealth to claim a spot in the society of adults. However, it was not always the case that a young man would have accumulated enough wealth by the time his initiatory period had ended. This is made especially clear by the sources that describe the organisation of the Irish *fian* (McCONE 1987, 2002) or the demographic profile of the Indian Vrātyas (see below). Second-borns who did not inherit their family wealth, men with physical problems, etc. might be forced to live the lives of bachelors for a longer period of time.³¹

Moreover, as we have seen above, in case of adverse socio-economical conditions (e.g., in case of famine or when a community became too large to be sustainable), a group of young boys, particularly an age-set, would be sent away to find subsistence elsewhere. This would lead to the foundation of new communities or cities. Such roaming bands of warriors would often welcome other marginalised people who, for a variety of reasons, weren't able to be integrated into the community (again, second-borns who did not inherit family wealth, exiled people, thieves, prostitutes, etc.).

In fact, the social dynamics that saw the rise of brotherhoods welcoming marginalised people of all ages is at the basis of both the Indo-European expansion, as well as the origin of the rise of communities of monks and ascetics (which largely attracted marginalised people by offering an alternative means of subsistence) both in India and the West.

In many cases, these bands of thieves preserved the prestige and sacredness of the original *Jugendbund*, the institution in charge of transmitting the sacred lore to the new generation. Their sacredness granted them respect and the right to receive alms and hospitality from the community. On the socio-economical level, this was equivalent to a social-state measure aimed at reducing the number of indigents, and minimising their social danger. In my view, this phenomenon might also be at the origin of the practice of giving alms to ascetics in India, as well as the social reason for the ascetics's prestige.

6. The Vedic Vrātyas

The Vedic Vrātyas were recognised early on as one of the historically attested heirs of the Indo-European *Männerbund*. The matter has been studied in detail by FALK (1986); see also BOLLÉE 1981 and KERSHAW 2000.³² All of these authors are indebted to HEESTERMAN'S (1962) study of the

31 Vedic sources also refer to males who have completed their religious training (*brahmacarya*) but have not yet married with the term *snātaka* (see Lubin 2011, 2018). This term is a reference to the bathing ritual that marks the release of the *brahmacārin* from his guru's supervision. Note that a bath (the *avabhṛthā*) also concludes the Soma ritual and ends the liminal status of the *dīkṣita*. AVParīś 40.5.5–40.6.1 seems to imply that at the end of the Pāśupata observance (*mokṣakāle*; clearly in the case of an observance that does not last the *vratin*'s whole life—AVParīś 40.1.3 indeed allows shorter periods), the *vratin* should shed the ash remaining on his body and bathe in water. Note that the practice of bathing to mark the end of the initiatory period, the admission into adulthood and the reintegration into society might be an old IE trait. We may compare the episode from the Táin Bó Cúalinge (quoted in McCONE 1987 and 2002) according to which the hero Cú Chulainn returns home burning with such warrior fury that he threatens his own people. They thus send out a group of naked women, at the sight of whom, the hero, ashamed, lets himself be captured and immersed in three containers filled with water. Once his burning rage is cooled down, he is readmitted into the community. McCONE (ibid.) also interprets the famous carving on the side of the Gundestrup Cauldron as portraying a similar rite of passage, in which a host of *pedites* (possibly young bachelors) are immersed in a cauldron by a seemingly sacerdotal figure accompanied by a dog, and then turned into adult warriors who move away from the scene on horseback.

32 Recently, the Vrātyas have been the object of renewed attention: see PONTILLO 2007, forthc., PONTILLO & DORE

Vrātyastomas and of the similarities between the Vrātyas and the *dīkṣita*, the initiated patron of the Śrauta rituals. FALK (1986: 66ff.) has also highlighted the connection between the Vrātyas and the *brahmacārins* and the *sattrins*. The following summary largely draws from this scholarly tradition.³³

From the description of the Vrātya sodalities that we find in the Vedic texts, we can recognise elements of both the *Jugendbund* and *Gefolgschaft* forms of the *Männerbund*. As far as their social composition is concerned, the Vrātya sodalities comprised both young initiated boys (*Jugendbund* stage; cf. e.g. BŚS 18.26 in §10 (1) below) as well as other marginalised categories of adults (*Gefolgschaft* stage). FALK (1986: 51ff.) in particular has highlighted the following categories of people that were said to join the Vrātya bands: *kaniṣṭhās*, second-borns who did not inherit family property; *jyeṣṭhās*: first-borns (or other men) who however suffered erectile dysfunctions and thus could not start a family; and *nṛśamsās ninditās*, unsuccessful bards who failed to find patronage.

Originally, the sodality took care of the education of the youth (as can be seen from the many similarities with the lifestyle of the *brahmacārin*), whose activities were seasonally regulated: during the period from the summer to the winter solstice, the *brahmacārin* lives with the teacher; in the period from the winter solstice to the summer solstice, the war season, the brotherhoods would set off into the wilderness to perform cattle raids. Note that a similar seasonal pattern can be found in the lifestyle of ascetics in later times: they would roam during the cold season and seek refuge and hospitality from householders during the rainy season.

Around the time of the winter solstice (the night of Ekāṣṭakā, when Indra was born), new members would be initiated into the brotherhood, and Sattras (twelve-day fire rituals involving soma-drinking and poetical performances) would take place, involving poetic performances, verbal contests with poetical riddles, and chariot races, as well as a carnival-like festival, the Mahāvratā,³⁴

2013, PONTILLO et al. 2015, PONTILLO, DORE & HOCK 2016, and AF EDHOLM 2017.

33 It is possible to identify two main approaches to the Vrātya problem. A first approach goes back to HAUER (1927); it was then developed by PARPOLA (1983; cf. 2015) and is mostly followed by PONTILLO and her collaborators (see previous note). According to the various perspectives within this approach, the Vrātyas represent an unorthodox group of Indo-Aryans, a wave of Indo-Aryan migrants to be distinguished from the Ṛgvedic Indo-Aryans, or even a group of non-Aryans. Thus, the scholars who follow this approach seek to investigate how their unorthodox or foreign ideas have been readapted, appropriated, and transformed by the Vedic orthodox ritualists. The Atharvavedins would have had a particular role in this respect. Conversely, a second approach, which goes back to HEESTERMAN (1962) and was developed further by FALK (1986), sees a continuation between archaic pre-classical forms of Vedic ritual (in which the Vrātyas had a more prominent role) and the classical Śrauta ritualism. My work stems from this second tradition of studies. In particular, in my view, the Vedic texts preserve both the memory of ritual *Jugendbünde*, as well as that of *Gefolgschaften*, both ambiguously referred to with the term Vrātyas. I think that we should assume that each of the Indo-Aryan tribes that migrated to India initiated their youth in the traditional Indo-European manner (which is also at the origin of *brahmacarya*). At the same time, some of these tribes were, in fact, *Gefolgschaften*. The case of the Mallas discussed by BOLLÉE (1981), the foundation stories involving tiger kings treated by VASSILKOV (2015), the case of the Śibis illustrated by ACHARYA (2013)—these leave no doubt as to this interpretation (on the social composition of the Vrātyas, see FALK 1986: 51ff.). The bad reputation of Vrātyas in later texts becomes comprehensible if we imagine how, once the Indo-Aryan tribes settled down, new *Gefolgschaften* could have become socially dangerous. These bands were the frontline of the Indo-Aryan expansion, but would have been seen as dangerous and uncontrolled bands of thieves in a settled region. Some of the traditions of the *Männerbund* were certainly preserved longer in communities at the periphery of the Śrauta reform (communities themselves often founded by brotherhoods), but they stand, via the mediation of Vrātya culture, at the very basis of many aspects of classical Śrauta ritual. Thus, when we discover Vrātya elements in orthodox Brahmanical texts, we should not merely assume that the orthodoxy has re-elaborated traditions belonging to peripheral cultures in an inclusive or hegemonic way. In fact, most of these elements might simply be re-elaborations of older *Jugendbund* traditions that simply belonged to the very same culture within which Brahmanical orthodoxy emerged.

34 Another festival/ritual associated with the Vrātyas was the Pravargya/Gharma ritual. This and the Mahāvratā are the two main rituals that are discussed in the Āraṇyakas, the “wilderness books” of Middle and Late Vedic literature. On this topic, see Appendix II.

during which licentious behaviour was allowed (see GONDA 1961; ROLLAND 1973; KERSHAW 2000: 233ff; HEESTERMAN 1993: 55; HAUER 1927: 246ff.). In fact, the Vrātyas were also accompanied by prostitutes (the only women allowed in the *sabhā*) and were allowed to drink the *surā* liquor.

The leader of the brotherhood was also chosen at this time of the year,³⁵ by means of a dice game in which a cow was put at stake in the *sabhā*, the assembly area (later a hall) restricted to the male half of society and located in the wilderness to the south of the village (the direction associated with the dead ancestors, the Pitṛs), just like the cremation ground. The cow was an offer to Rudra and his host, and would grant the pious householder and the community welfare for the coming new year. The aim of the game was to find a loser, who would act like a dog (representing the wilderness and the world of the dead) and take on the task of dismembering the cow, leading the offering to the world of Rudra and the dead.³⁶ He would then be regarded as an incarnation of Rudra and function as the leader of the brotherhood. He would be considered dead and would lead the warband, although he would remain inactive (as represented by his unstrung bow) whilst being transported on a kind of hearse (*vipatha*).

The figure of the leader (*grhapati*, *sthapati*) is particularly interesting because of his special outfit: he wore a black³⁷ antelope-skin robe, a belt, and a turban (*uṣṇīṣa*), and carried an unstrung bow with three arrows and a cowherd's stick (*pratoda*).³⁸ This outfit is very similar to the one displayed by the later Veda student, the *brahmacārin*, especially during his intermediate initiation (*avāntaradīkṣā*), and that of the sacrificial patron (*yajamāna*) who undergoes initiation (*dīkṣā*) before a soma ritual, according to the Śrauta orthodoxy. Neither of them carries a bow, but they both carry a stick. Moreover, like the *brahmacārin*, the Vrātya leader refrained from sexual activities (whilst the other members were allowed licentious behaviour). Finally, like the Veda student, the Vrātyas did not shave their hair (and hence were called *keśin*, 'long-haired').

The Vrātyas worshipped both Rudra (the archer god, impersonated by their leader) and Indra (the god armed with a club/*vajra*, with which, in my view, the young warriors identified and whose deeds they aspired to replicate³⁹).

Summing it up, from the above we can abstract the following traits: the Vrātyas were brotherhoods of males (V1), boys or marginalised persons (V2); they worshipped a bow god, Rudra, and a god with a club, Indra (V3); they were initiated into a liminal status outside society (V4); they lived in the wilderness or frequented the *sabhā* outside the village (V5), where they learned the traditional poetic language and only spoke in riddles in public (V6); their leader (and, after him, the *brahmacārin* and the *dīkṣita*) wore special clothing, including black animal skins, a turban, and a belt (V7); their leader was considered dead and was transported on a hearse, whilst the troop received the offerings to the Pitṛs and was in contact with the world of the dead (V8); their activity was seasonally organised, and they were involved in seasonal festivals (V9) that also involved licentiousness (V10).

The late Vedic texts mention particular rituals, the Vrātyastomas, by which a group of men could abandon society to start a brotherhood and set off in search of wealth, and by which they could then be reintegrated into normal society. These texts bear witness to a time when these

35 This is also the time of the year when the Rājasūya should be performed and a new king enthroned. The matter is discussed by FALK (1986: 163ff.).

36 At the end of the game, a player could be left with one to four nuts (*kr̥ta*, *dvapara*, *treta*, and *kali* were the names of the results); the one-nut (*ekākṣa*) result (the *kali*) was the losing one.

37 The rest of the brotherhood wears red, the colour of warriors, that later characterises the flags that mark Śaiva cult sites. Note that in the Vrātyakaṇḍa, the Ekavrātya is said to sport the colour blue on his belly and the colour red on his back (AVŚ 15.1.7).

38 Further research is needed in order to uncover the connection between the three arrows and the stick of the Vrātya leader and Śiva's *triśula*, Indra's *vajra* (sometimes depicted as three-pointed), and other divine weapons, such as Lakulīśa's club or Balarāma's plough, that are also possibly manifestations of the same symbolism.

39 More on this in Appendix II.

brotherhoods were indeed mostly *Gefolgschaften* as I have defined them above. The expansion of the Vedic tribes into the Gangetic plain and the adoption of rice cultivation must have led to both an increase in population as well as an increase in the number of people who turned to a sedentary way of life. Yet, the traditional way of passing on the family wealth to the new generation persisted: only the first-born (*jyeṣṭha*) would inherit the homestead, cattle, and land (pastures and fields), whilst the other sons could decide to be dependent on him, find their own means of subsistence, or set off in search of wealth by plundering. The new sedentary lifestyle and the scarcity of free land must have both harshened the conditions of second-borns and other less fortunate categories, and at the same time made it harder for householders to deal with roaming bands of thieves. The *Gefolgschaften* must have increased in number and become a problem for social stability.

Some of the socio-political reforms carried out during the Kuru era (see WITZEL 1995b, 1995d, 1997a, 1997b) might also have been a response to this phenomenon: namely 1) the institution of a state organisation that could grant peace throughout the kingdom; 2) the introduction of the *varṇa* system, which established a more fixed hierarchical organisation of society, and forced the warrior-poets to specialise in either professional priesthood or professional warfare; 3) the institution of Śrauta ritualism, which granted priests with a means of subsistence through the performance of rites, and at the same time provided warriors with a peaceful means for climbing the social ladder through the patronage of solemn rituals; and finally 4) the collection of the most celebrated poems composed by the ancient *sattrins* during the winter festivals and their cattle raids (cf. KUIPER 1960, 1962a) into a “national anthology”, the Ṛgveda, so that they could now be used as mantras in the Śrauta rituals, in an effort to pacify the various Vedic tribes (which themselves were most likely warbands).

The fact that we find mention of *Vrātya Gefolgschaften* and *Vrātyastomas* in the late Vedic period suggests that the socio-economical situation must have remained unstable for a long time. It seems likely to me that the rise of ascetic movements should be ascribed to the same dynamic. This is also why early ascetic movements, from the Buddhists to the Jains to the Pāśupatas, as we will see, share so many traits with the warrior sodalities.

7. The persistence of cultural traits

If we compare the lists of cultural traits I report in the table at the end of this appendix, we cannot help but notice striking mutual resemblances between the Indo-European *Männerbund*, the *Vrātyas*, and the early Śaiva cults (especially the Pāśupatas).

The early Śaiva communities were sodalities of males (**P1**) who worshipped both Rudra, the archer god, as well as Lakulīśa, the lord with a club (**P3**),⁴⁰ and chose to lead an ascetic life; asceticism, in fact, attracted marginalised people in particular (**P2**) (see below). They lived outside society (**P4**), either in temples (in the *pāśupatavrata* stage 1), in a remote location (in stage 3) or on a cremation ground (in stage 4). Here they would smear their bodies with ashes, as if ritually dead (**P8**).⁴¹ No seasonal organisation of the *pāśupatavrata* is known, but we see an alternation between periods of isolation away from society, in temples, cremation grounds or remote locations, and a return to society in stage 2 (**P9**).⁴² In stage 2, the *vratins* also conceal their speech (**P6**).⁴³ During

40 On this particular aspect, see Appendix II §3.4.

41 Further similarities between early Śaivism and the Indo-European and Vedic sodalities with regard to their connection with the realm of the dead can be found by considering the traditions of the Kapālikas and the Aghoris. In particular, we find evidence of ritual cannibalism (see KERSHAW 2000: 207–208 fn. 19).

42 However, as I argue below, stage 2 rather resembles (structurally speaking) a raid, as this is the moment when the ascetics plunder the commoners, robbing them of their *iṣṭāpūrta*.

43 PāśS 4.3, *gūḍhapavitravāṇiḥ*. This aspect deserves a separate treatment for which there is no space here. The Pāśupata's practice of concealing speech recalls the habit of the masked age-sets involved in European traditional winter festivals to mumble unintelligibly in order to conceal their real identity and to appear as wild

their initiation, the Pāśupatas are given special garments, such as an animal skin, a belt, and a staff or a weapon (P7).⁴⁴ Finally, as shown by ACHARYA (2013), they imitate the behaviour of bulls (as well as other animals—see below) (P12), which involves breaking various social norms, including sexual restrictions (P10), in order to undergo scorn and steal the merit of their detractors (P11).

It seems reasonable to assume that the same set of traits characterising the Indo-European insitution of the *Männerbund* evolved into the Vedic institution of the Vrātya sodalities, and subsequently informed the communities of early Śaiva ascetics, the Pāśupatas, that developed out of them. The plausibility of this scenario is certainly strengthened by the co-occurrence of a multiplicity of traits.

Most of the elements in the list are, I believe, self-evident. There remains to discuss the two traits that are the central questions of our research, namely P10, the Pāśupata idea of stealing merit, and P12, the practice of behaving like a bull or ox.

8. Evidence for animal *vratas* of the Vrātyas and other animal *vratas* in Śaiva cults

FALK (1986), and KERSHAW (2000) after him, have stressed the connection of the Vrātyas with dogs—particularly in relation to the dice game. As I have described above, this rite used to take place during the midwinter festival (Ekāṣṭakā): the winner of the game, the player who gets the *kr̥ta* result, is called *śvaghnin*, ‘dog-killer’, whereas the loser will become the “dog”, Rudra, the killer of the cow. This also goes back to an Indo-European practice, as proven by the fact that in several Indo-European traditions, the losing dice result (connected with the number one: one nut left, or the side of a cube with only one eye) is called “dog”.

One possibly significant episode from Vedic literature is recounted in ChUp 1.12, which deals with the Śauva Udgītha, ‘the chant of the dogs’. The protagonist of the episode is Baka Dālbhya, whose Vrātya connection has been highlighted by KOSKIKALLIO (1999) and PONTILLO & DORE (2013), and whom we will encounter also in §10 (2) below. Here, a group of white dogs (possibly a metaphor for Vrātyas) ask him for alms:

*athātaḥ śauva udgīthaḥ | tad dha bako dālbhyo glāvo vā maitreyaḥ svādhyāyam
udvavrāja || 1 || tasmai śvā śvetaḥ prādur babhūva | tam anye śvān upasametyocuh |
annaṃ no bhagavān āgāyatu | aśanāyāma vā iti || 2 || tān hovācehaiva mā prātar
upasamīyāteṭi | tad dha bako dālbho glāvo vā maitreyaḥ pratipālyāṃ cakāra || 3 || te ha
yathaivedaṃ bahiṣpavamānena stoṣyamāṇāḥ samrābdhāḥ sarpanṭīty evaṃ āsaṣṣpuḥ |
te ha samupaviśya hiṃ cakruḥ ||4|| o3madā3moṃ3 pibā3moṃ3 devo varuṇaḥ prajāpatiḥ
savitā2nnamihā2haradannapate3'nnamihā2harā2haro3miti ||5||.*

“Next comes the High Chant of dogs. One day, while Baka Dālbhya—or it may have been Glāva Maitreya—was on his way to perform his Vedic recitation, there appeared before him a white dog. Other dogs gathered around the white one and said to him: ‘Please, sir, find some food for us by singing. We are really hungry.’ And he told them:

beings, as well as the habit of speaking in riddles. The notion that brotherhoods speak a secret language is very widespread, and it has the purpose of strengthening the bonds between the members of the group and of excluding non-members. However, in the case of the Indo-European *Männerbund*, we should also consider the great role that the learning of a special poetic language played in the education of the Indo-European youth. It was no different in Vedic culture: this ritual language was only used in certain circles. Only a skilful warrior-poet well-versed in such language could succeed in the ritual verbal contests. We see an aspect of this phenomenon in the tradition according to which the group of a hundred young princes (also modelled on the example of the brotherhoods) who accompanied the sacrificial horse in his wandering during the Aśvamedha ritual were supposed to test householders with riddles about the nature of the sacrifice.

44 See AVPariś 40.3.2, quoted in §9 below, and footnote 56.

‘Come and meet me at this very spot in the morning.’ So Baka Dālbhya—or it may have been Glāva Maitreya—kept watch there. Those dogs then filed in, sliding stealthily in just the same way as priests slide stealthily in a file holding on to each other’s back to sing the hymn of praise called Bahiṣpavamāna. They sat down together and made the sound ‘hum’. They sang: ‘Om! Let’s eat! Om! Let’s drink! Om! May the gods Varuṇa, Prajāpati, and Savitṛ bring here food! Lord of food! Bring here food! Bring! Bring! Om!’” (ed. and transl. OLIVELLE 1998).

However, more evidence for the connection between Indian sodalities and dogs comes from later traditions. SONTHEIMER (1997)⁴⁵ was the first to draw a connection between the Vedic Vrātya bands and the modern dog vow of the Vāghyās (Marathi) or Vaggayyas (Kannada), the dog/tiger men devoted to a form of Śiva that is known by the names Khaṇḍobā, Mallāri or Martāṇḍa Bhairava in Maharashtra, Mailār in Karnataka, Mallanna in Andhra Pradesh, and Murukan in *caṅkam* literature. To this day, the Vāghyas imitate the behaviour of dogs during seasonal religious festivals (*jatṛās*).

SONTHEIMER described, in particular, the observance connected with the Dasarā festival at Devaraguḍḍa (Karnataka). The devotees normally abide by a short-term vow on the occasion of the festival, but there are also performers from the Kuruba community, where families traditionally dedicate one or more children to serve Mailār as dogs in a life-long vow. They wear a special outfit: a long, black woollen overcoat, a colourful turban or big bearskin cap, and a tiger-skin or bearskin belt, and they carry a tiger-skin bag full of turmeric (sacred to the god), begging bowls, a *trisūla*, or a spear.

“These Vaggayyas act and bark like dogs when the pilgrims arrive at the temple. They have placed their wooden or brass begging bowls on the ground [...]. They would run to their bowls, howl, bark and quarrel among themselves, and would lie down on the ground like dogs. [...] At other *jatṛās* of Mailār and on the special request of devotees, the Vaggayyas perform a round-dance accompanied by drums and chants. In the middle of the circle devotees throw coins on a black woollen blanket and the Vaggayyas pick up the coins with their mouths [...]. If food is offered into the bowls, they will fight like dogs, trying to tear away food from each other’s mouths. [...] They make long begging expeditions within Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh [...] [they] are known to practise black magic, with which they try to intimidate people and extract money” (SONTHEIMER 1997:68-70).

Without knowing the prominence of the *govrata* among the Pāśupatas, as would only later be shown by ACHARYA (2013), SONTHEIMER brilliantly connects the Vaggayyas’ behaviour with Pāśupata worship through dance, songs, and *avitadbhāṣaṇa* (‘uttering senseless and contradictory words’), tracing both back to the Vrātyas, and with reference to INGALLS 1962, proposes to connect the Pāśupatas with the Vaggayyas⁴⁶ rather than the Cynics. In turn, KERSHAW (2000: 222ff.) has shown how this Indian dog *vrata* goes back to the Indo-European *Männerbund* masquerades.

However, this dog *vrata* is not the only animal *vrata* connected with the cult of Khaṇḍobā/Mallāri/Mailār. SONTHEIMER also describes the fraternity of the Kudurappas, who perform a horse *vrata*:

45 I refer here to SONTHEIMER’s posthumous collected works (1997), but his research was carried out and published several decades before this publication.

46 It should be noted that, according to a local legend, they were tigers whom Śiva ordered to behave like dogs (SONTHEIMER 1997: 67 fn. 22). Etymologically, the word might also be connected with Skt. *vyāghra*, ‘tiger’ or Ka. *baggu* ‘barking; tiger’.

“Like horses, the devotees gallop forward and backward, beating themselves mercilessly with whips. They loudly shout the name of Mallāri. Devotees feed them bananas etc. straight in their mouth, keeping the eatables on the open hand as one would feed horses” (SONTHEIMER 1997: 70).⁴⁷

Note that the followers of Mallāri at Ujjain explicitly base their faith on the authority of the Śatarudrīya (SONTHEIMER 1997: 68). In this text—which consists of a long list of categories of people—deities, entities presided over by Rudra, dog-keepers and masters of dogs are also mentioned:

VS 16.27–28, [...] *nāmo nāmaḥ śvanibhyo mṛgayūbhyaś ca vo nāmaḥ | nāmaḥ śvābhyaḥ śvāpatibhyaś ca vo nāmo nāmo bhavāya ca rudrāya ca nāmaḥ śarvāya ca paśupātaye ca nāmo nīlagrīvāya ca śitikāṅṭhāya ca |*

“[...] homage be to dog-keepers, to huntsmen, homage to you! Homage be to dogs and to masters of dogs, homage to Bhava and Rudra, and homage to Śarva and Paśupati, and to the blue-necked one and the white-throated one!”

More recently, VASSILKOV (2015) has written about ancient Indian warrior sodalities that identified with tigers. In particular, he focuses on the phenomenon by which Vrātya bands gave rise to *kṣatriya* oligarchies in North India⁴⁸ as well as in South India, such as the Siṃhāla (Pāli *sīmhala*), ‘lion people’ of Sri Lanka, highlighting the numerous figures of “tiger kings” and their involvement in the foundation of cities and communities. On the tiger as animal of choice, VASSILKOV writes:

“It is quite natural to suppose that the Aryas brought this kind of warrior societies to South Asia from their northern homeland. However on the Indian soil the image of dog/wolf as a symbol of battle fury and an emblem of warriors’ gangs began from the earliest time to merge with the image of the more dangerous and widespread local predator: tiger/lion, and was later practically replaced by it” (VASSILKOV 2015: 235).

VASSILKOV further provides various examples of the imagery of “tiger men” in Sanskrit literature, such as the *puruṣavyāghras*, who are mentioned in a Vedic list (ŚB 13.2.4.2,4) of dangerous forest creatures next to robbers (*parimoṣins*), men of assailing bands (*āvyādhinyah*), thieves (*taskaras*)—all categories that evoke Rudra and his marginalised devotees—as well as in a few other Vedic sources; similar terms are also frequent in the epics (*naravyāghra*, *naraśārdūla*, *nṛsiṃha*, etc.). This might perhaps shed light on the well-known image of Śiva as a *yogin* seated on a tiger skin.⁴⁹

VASSILKOV (2015: 232) also refers to a story contained in Mbh 9.35, according to which Trita’s elder brothers rob him of his wealth, whilst a wolf makes him fall into a well; later on, saved by the gods, he curses his brothers to turn into wolves and forever roam the forest. Vassilkov

47 SONTHEIMER stresses the idea that the god enters the person in the shape of wind, ‘playing wind’, and compares Ka. *vāru*, ‘war-horse’ with Skt. *vāyu*, ‘wind’. This might be relevant, as Vaiiū is the god of the Iranian *Männerbund* (see WIKANDER 1938, 1941).

48 On this see also BOLLÉE 1981.

49 The tiger skin is also a characteristic of the king; most notably, in the Rājasūya, during the consecration (*abhiṣeka*), the king stands on a tiger skin (HEESTERMAN 1957: 106ff.). Note, however, that at the *laghvabhiṣeka*, a bull’s hide is used (*ibid.*, fn. 1). The origin of this is most likely to be found precisely in the Vrātya origin of the royalty of much of ancient India. Incidentally, SONTHEIMER (1997: 69) mentions a pre-Vaiṣṇava, ‘Rudraic’ Narasiṃha cult in the Kurnool district (Andhra Pradesh), on which, see also SONTHEIMER 2004 and VASSILKOV 2015: 246f.; in my view, the figure of Narasiṃha should also be connected with the culture of Vrātya warrior bands (note the element of liminality and of feral fury). This could explain the presence of this *avatāra* in a Śaiva text such as the original Skandapurāṇa.

believes that this is a reference to thieving forest gangs. Certainly it evokes the rivalry between brothers contending for the family wealth, which is the social issue that pushed many to join the warrior bands in search of fortune (see below).

VASSILKOV (2015: 238), after BOLLÉE (1981: 173, 190), also refers to *ṛkṣikas* ‘bear men’ (with ref. to Mbh 10.7.16,21), and further (p. 245) mentions tribal chiefs with the element ‘boar’ (*varāha*) in their names, as well as an episode from the Padmapurāṇa about an expedition by Ikṣvāku, king of Kosala, against a warlike *varāha* tribe (possibly a brotherhood).

KOSAMBI (1956: 124), in a survey on early references to animal transformations, mentions a Kukkura (=dog) tribe, which his sources regard as dangerous, and which was most likely a community formed from a Vrātya band.

If we consider ACHARYA’S idea that the tribe of the Śibis might have known a cult of the bull—note that the bull is also Indra’s preferred animal in the RV—we might conclude that early Indian warrior sodalities would have identified with a number of different animals.

On top of this, we have references to animal *vratas* in Buddhist sources, which mostly mention them in order to characterise them as unsuccessful ascetic practices (as opposed to those taught by the Buddha). Some of these have already been quoted by ACHARYA (2013: 128). For instance, the Kukkuravatīyasutta of the Majjhimanikāya (II.1.7) preserves an account in which the Buddha converts a *govatika* and a *kukkuravatika* by warning them that their practices will lead them to be reborn as a bull and a dog. In Lalitavistara, Parivarta 17, it is said that “by means of the vow of taking on the behaviour of a bull, any wild animal, a dog, a boar, a monkey, an elephant ... stupid people understand that purity is achieved”. Finally, the Yogācārabhūmi (ed. BHATTACHARYA 1957: 517–518; my transl.) reads *kukkuravratena śuddhiṃ manyate govratena nakulavratena nagnavratena bhasmavratena*, “by means of a dog *vrata*, they think purity [is achieved], by means of the *nakulavrata*, of the *vrata* of nudity, of the *vrata* consisting of smearing themselves with ashes”. KOSAMBI (1956: 124) also refers to DN 24 and MN 57, according to which the Buddha came across a follower of the dog *vrata* called Acela Seniya who, after his death, was reborn as a dog, as predicted by the Buddha.

Moreover, KOSAMBI (ibid.) reports of bat, goat and elephant *vratas* mentioned in Pali sources, and further notes that the poet Bāṇa (7th c. AD) describes his ancestors of the Vatsyayana *gotra* as followers of the *kukkuta* (cock) *vrata* (perhaps a misinterpretation of *kukkura*?).⁵⁰

Finally,⁵¹ it should be considered that other animal *vratas* besides the bull/ox *vrata* may have existed within the Pāśupata cult itself. Above, I have quoted PāśS 5.18 (~ Sūtrapāṭha 5.9), which mentions a *mṛgadharma* next to the *godharma*. Moreover, Vasubandhu’s Abhidharmakośabhāṣya (4th c. CE), quoted but overlooked by ACHARYA (2013: 107f.), referring to the conduct of the Pāśupatas, writes: (3.28) *vrataṃ kukkuragovratādīni*, “‘observance’ means the observance of [behaving like] a dog, or a bull, or the like”. Moreover,

(5.8) *ye caivaṃdṛṣṭaya evaṃvādino yad ayam puruṣapudgalo gośīlaṃ samādāya vartate mṛgaśīlaṃ kukkuraśīlaṃ, sa tena śudhyati, mucyate, sukhaduḥkhaṃ vyatikrāmati, sukhaduḥkhavyatikramaṃ cānuprāpnoti,*

“[As soon as] this personal-soul lives, taking on a bull’s behaviour, [or] the behaviour of a wild animal, [or] the behaviour of a dog, with that he is purified, is liberated, [and] goes beyond happiness and sorrow, [namely,] attains transcendence beyond happiness and sorrow.”

50 KOSAMBI stresses the fact that one of the commentators points out that *vrata* also means an item of food in a ritual diet, and that this double meaning was essential for Bāṇa’s purpose. Nevertheless, this can be a late reinterpretation or a misunderstanding.

51 See also the great amount of data on dog transformations in WHITE 1991.

Thus, the Pāśupata cult itself may have involved other animal *vratas*. Mention of the dog in particular is remarkable because the dog is the IE *Männerbund* animal *par excellence*. In this new light, the similarity of the Pāśupata cult and the observance of the Cynics is even more striking.

In conclusion, I believe that we should assume the existence of at least a dog/tiger *vrata* next to a bull/ox *vrata* for the Vrātya warrior bands of the early Vedic period, although different animals might also have been chosen as the preferred totemic animals of individual brotherhoods. It seems evident that the animal transformation practice of the Indo-European *Männerbund* is the cultural model that, via the mediation of Vrātya culture, informed later Śaiva *vratas*, including that of the Pāśupata cult.

9. Trick or treat

We have yet to identify the remote cultural model of the Pāśupata's idea of stealing merit. My contention is that the dynamic of the Pāśupata's theft of merit is structurally very similar to that which underlies the IE *Männerbund*'s idea of a *sakraler Stehlrecht*:⁵²

1) just like the *Männerbund* parades into the village with animal masks, the Pāśupatas return to society (*manuṣyeṣu car-*) to perform their animal vows;

2) just like the parading *Männerbund* boys, frightening representatives of the dead, are supposed to be welcomed and propitiated despite their out-of-control behaviour, so too are the Pāśupatas, who are observing a *vrata*, not committing a sin with their scandalous behaviour;

3) welcoming the *Männerbund* brings fortune, and similarly, whoever does not censure the Pāśupatas preserves their *iṣṭāpūrta*;

4) failing to appease the *Männerbund* brings misfortune (one immediately thinks of the Halloween formula “trick or treat”, but this idea is ubiquitous; e.g., many age-sets in European folk festivals threaten to wreck the houses they visit, should the hosts not offer them gifts, etc.); if one censures the Pāśupata ascetic, their *iṣṭāpūrta* is stolen;

5) just as raiding (both in the form of the ritualised raids enacted in the seasonal parades, as well as in the form of actual cattle raiding) not only serves the purpose of providing martial training for the *Männerbund*, it is also a way to earn a means of subsistence, and similarly, the observance is a way for the Pāśupatas to proceed along their spiritual path by feeding on other people's merit, i.e., a means for them to find spiritual subsistence.

Once again, the notion of a development from the ritual *Jugendbund* to the *Gefolgschaft*, i.e. from an institution concerned with the education of the youth to the warband or the band of thieves, may help us here in understanding the socio-economical dynamic involved. As I have already mentioned above, joining a warrior brotherhood has a great appeal to marginalised people, as it offers them a chance to make a living. The *Männerbund* warriors steal because they have no property, and hence no place in the community.⁵³ Providing gifts and hospitality to the *Männerbund*

52 KERSHAW (2000: 125 and fn. 31), quoting Jettmar, discusses the possible origin of the idea of a right to steal as follows: “The *razzias* took place when the herds were out away from the village; at this times the youth would both guard the perimeters and make forays into the neighbouring territories. JETTMAR [1966: 20] found this lifestyle among living Indo-Iranian tribes of the mountainous region north of India. ‘Livestock-breeding is a man's affair among the Kafirs and Dards in contrast to the mountain Tadzshiks. The unmarried men go off with the herds, far from the village and for a long time. They also form an ever-mobile fighting force ... If we compare with this the archeologists' picture of the Andronovo Culture ... we find, here too, a combination of permanent villages and intensive livestock-breeding, which necessitated a distant movement of the herds. Grkaznov believes that this is the starting-point of the development towards pastoral nomadism. Perhaps the observation that substantially more women's than men's graves are found in many Andronovo cemeteries is explained by the continuous absence of a large part of the male population owing to their duties as herdsmen. The fact that age-sets are reported among many historically attested Iranian peoples may serve here as a further significant argument [...]”.

53 We may recall here that one of the performers of the *govrata*, according to Brahmanḍapurāṇa II.74.46ff., is the

is a social welfare service; it prevents social conflict, and is therefore institutionalised in the sacred right of rapine.⁵⁴ The ritual aspect and the socio-economical aspect inform each other.

Quite revealing with respect to this social dynamic is an apparent list of very concrete worldly goals contained in a mantra that was meant to be recited by the novice during the *pāsupatavrata* initiation ceremony, according to AVPariśiṣṭa 40—a text on the *pāsupatavrata* that was edited, translated and commented on by BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS (2003). After stating his name and resolving to undertake the observance (40.3.1),⁵⁵ the novice, wearing matted hair, is given a girdle of *muñja* grass and a wooden staff (or a knife, club, skull-staff or axe) (40.3.2).⁵⁶ Then, following a mantra in honour of Śarva (40.3.3), the novice makes an offering of ghee, kindles fuel and recites the following mantra:⁵⁷

AVPariś 40.3.4, *ya idhmā jātavedasaḥ samiddhasya tebhyo vardhayasva prajayā paśubhiḥ śriyā grhair dhaneneti* ||,

“The fuel sticks of Jātavedas who is kindled: increase [me (?)] from them in offspring, cattle, glory, homestead, wealth” (BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003: 333).

It is quite remarkable to find a statement of this kind at the very centre of the initiation ceremony, whilst a mystical goal is illustrated only near the end of the text, in AVPariś 40.6.14, where it is said that for those who undertake the observance, “there is no return here and now ... On dying they, as Rudras, reach union with Paśupati” (*paśupatisāyujyam*)⁵⁸ (BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003: 341).

sage Dīrghatamas. Dīrghatamas, who is blind due to a curse cast by his uncle, has no family of his own (he is *ūrdhvaretās*), and is hosted by his brother (*bhrātā pitṛvyah*), who eventually throws him into a river. Thus, being a marginalised male who, rivalled by his brothers/cousins, is unable to inherit the family wealth, and is thus forced to leave home, Dīrghatamas perfectly matches the demographic profile of a candidate for joining a *Gefolgschaft*.

54 Notice that there is frequently a thin line between legitimate violence and banditry. Cf. Lat. *latro* ‘warrior in service of a lord’ > ‘thief’ (ALFÖLDI 1974: 110); cf. also the frequency of names containing an element meaning ‘thief’ (e.g. *-Þjófr*) in Germanic onomastics (KERSHAW 2000: 116; etc.).

55 AVPariś 40.3.1, *brāhmaṇo ha vā aham amukasagotro bhagavato maheśvarasya vratam carissyamīti vācayitvā* ||, “He should make [him] say: ‘I, a brahmin of such and such a gotra, shall undertake the observance of Lord Maheśvara’” (BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003: 331).

56 AVPariś 40.3.2, *tato śya mauñjīm prayacchati* || *sāvitrīyā tu daṇḍam pālāśam bailvam āsvattham vāsiṃ lakuṭam khatvāṅgam paraśum vā* ||. “Then he gives him the *muñja*-girdle. And with the Sāvitrī verse [he gives him] a staff made of *palāśa*-, *bilva*- or *āsvattha*-wood, or [he gives] a knife, a club, a skull-staff or an axe” (BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003: 331–332). All of these items recall the outfit of the *Männerbundler*, the Vrātya, the *brahmacārin*, and the *dīkṣita*. The weapons in particular highlight the military character of the Pāsupata *vratin*; they evoke Indra’s weapons. At the same time, the skull characterises the liminality of the *vratin*’s status and his connection with the realm of death. This is also highlighted by the fact that the *vratin* has to bathe in ashes at the beginning of his observance (PāśS 1.2, AVPariś 40.3.9ff.); note that the practice of covering oneself in ashes is a form of masking, just as painting one’s face is equivalent to wearing a mask.

57 This mantra is preceded by another unidentified mantra, of which the text gives only the pratīka “*antara*” (BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003: 333 fn. 92).

58 A similar expression, *rudrasāyujyā*, is found in PāśS 5.33. OBERLIES (2000: 183) has commented on the fact that the assimilation with Rudra is expressed “mit einem Terminus also, der in älteren Texten regelmässig die ‘Gefolgschaft des yuj’, des Kampfgefährten—in allererster Linie Indras (vgl. etwa RV 10.84.4) -, benennt”. The formulation in AVPariś 40.6.14 is also interesting: *ye śraddhayedam paśupater vratam caranti* [...] *te rudrā viratau paśupatisāyujyam gaccha<n>ti*, “Those who undertake this observance of Paśupati with faith [...] On dying (*viratau*) they, as Rudras, reach union with Paśupati” (BISSCHOP & GRIFFITHS 2003: 341). Quite remarkably, the plural *rudrās* (or the variant *rudriyās*) is used in the RV as an epithet of the Maruts, the host of young warriors (N.B. all of the same age, i.e. an age-set! Cf. RV 1.165.1) led by Indra (MACDONELL 1897: 74, 77 n. 2 with ref., 78) Thus, here the *vratins* indeed appear as a *Männerbund* gathered around a leader, Paśupati, as the Rudras/Maruts around Indra, which supports the identification of Paśupati with Indra.

The coexistence of a mystical goal next to worldly goals recalls the situation in AVP ch. 6, the *brāhmaṇa* prose chapter on the *anaḍudvrata*, which we now know to be one of the textual models for the Pāśupatasūtra. Here we encounter both the idea that the *vratin*/Indra can gain merit by stealing (*vṛj-*) the *iṣṭāpūrta-* of his detractors (AVP 17.35.1–4), as well as indications that the successful performance of the observance can lead to ascension along the *pathin devayāna* (AVP 17.31.3–4) into the *bradhna-loka* (AVP 17.34.3), *brahmaloka* (AVP 17.39.2), or *svargaloka* (AVP 17.43.4);⁵⁹ we also find numerous refrains that illustrate the more concrete benefits of performing the *anaḍudvrata*:

AVP 17.42.7, *prathate prajayā paśubhir gṛhair dhanena ya evaṃ vidvān anaḍuho vratam bibharti ||*,

“He thrives with offspring, cattle, homestead, wealth, he who, being initiated, ‘bears’ the observance of the draft-ox,”

or AVP 17.43.8, *prati tiṣṭhati prajayā paśubhir gṛhair dhanena ya evaṃ vidvān anaḍuho vratam bibharti ||*,

“He takes a firm standing with offspring, cattle, homestead, wealth, he who, being initiated, ‘bears’ the observance of the draft-ox.”

The above passages contain the same items as the AVPariś mantra (with the exception of *śrī*, ‘glory’), but in the AVP we also read that the *vratin* “secures (*ava rundhe*) a real stream of wealth, success, imperishableness” (*vasor eva dhārām samṛddhim akṣitim*, AVP 17.37.4); “he finds a foundation, a base” (*pratiṣṭhām āyatanam vindate*, AVP 17.33.4); “the seasons are well-disposed towards him, he is not cut down by the seasons, he becomes dear to the seasons” (*kalpante asmā ṛtavo na rtuṣv ā vṛścata ṛtūnām priyo bhavati*, AVP 17.38.7); “[people] trust him, he becomes trustworthy” (*śraddadhate (')smai śraddhānīyo bhavati*, 17.36.3); “he lives for a long time, he enjoys a whole life-span, he does not die prematurely” (*jyog jīvati sarvam āyur eti na purā jarasaḥ pra mīyate*, AVP 17.41.6); and so forth. Thus, the *vratin* acquires economic stability, protection against natural calamities (“the seasons”), social respect (“[people] trust him”), and ultimately long life.

These wishes sound typically Vedic, and are no different from what one finds in prayers dedicated to Indra or Agni in the RV. They are the typical life goals of the Vedic men and warriors who move with their wagons and chariots in search of fortune. Even more understandably, these are the goals of the marginalised who join a *Gefolgschaft*. Thus, AVPariś 40.3.4 appears as a formulaic relic of a stage in the history of the *vrata*, in which such worldly goals were, in fact, the main reason for undertaking an observance that in its original form entailed the lifestyle of a warrior rather than that of an ascetic.

In the next section, I will discuss whether we can find textual evidence that the Vṛātyas also knew the idea of an institutionalised and sacralised right of rapine. This will provide the missing link between the Indo-European stage and the Pāśupata stage.

10. Evidence of an institutionalised *sakraler Stehrecht* in Vṛātya culture

Without a doubt, the Vṛātyas and related brotherhoods (also from later times) are considered robbers. We may recall the Vaggayyas’ use of black magic to extort money (as described in SONTHEIMER 1997; see §8 above), or the *puruṣavyāghras* being mentioned alongside thieves as

⁵⁹ On the idea of spiritual ascension by means of the *anaḍudvrata*, see Appendix II, §3.2, 3.3.

dangerous forest creatures in the ŚB (quoted in VASSILKOV 2015; see §8 above), but more explicit still is the Śatarudrīya, which includes robbers and similar categories in the long list of categories that are protected by Rudra:

VS 16.21 (cf. also 19, 20), *námo váñcate pariváñcate stāyūnāṃ pátaye námo námo niṣaṅgīṇa iṣudhimáte táskarānāṃ pátaye námo námaḥ sṛkāyībhyo jíghāmsadbhyo muṣṇatām pátaye námo námo simádbhyo náktaṃ cáradbhyo vikṛntānāṃ pátaye námaḥ|*

“Reverence be to the tricking arch-trickster, and to the lord of pilferers be reverence! Reverence be to the well-quivered swordsman, and to the lord of robbers be reverence! Reverence be to the slaying spearmen, and to the lord of pillagers be reverence! Reverence be to the night-walking sword-wielders, and to the lord of cut-throats be reverence!” (transl. by Eggeling).

Some more specific evidence of a *sakraler Stelrecht* can be retrieved by studying rituals that, in various ways, contain elements that are derived from Vrātya practices.

By comparing rituals such as the Śūlagava, the Agnyādheya, the Gopitṛyajña, and the Rājasūya, all of which involve a game of dice and the sacrifice of a cow, FALK (1986: 134ff.) has reconstructed an old Vedic (pre-Śrauta) ritual (mentioned above in §6) that prescribed that, once a year, on the night of the winter solstice, the Vedic householders should offer their best head of cattle to Rudra and his host as representatives of the dead ancestors. By means of this old ritual, the householder secured the benevolence of Rudra and a whole year without hunger:

MS 1.6.10: 103:16, *ákṣodhuko bhavati (...) tād asya saṃvatsarāntarhito rudāḥ paśūnā ná hinasti,*

“Ohne Hunger wird er sein (...) So tötet Rudra, in das Jahr eingesetzt, sein Vieh nicht” (transl. by FALK 1986: 135);

and also:

MS 4.2.3: 25:3, *yásya vaí jítam̐ yásya víjitaṃ tásyaiśá gṛhé hanyata eṣā vaí kṣút kṣúdham̐ vā etád dhate tád yá evám̐ vidván̐ ekāṣṭakāyām̐ gām̐ haté saṃvatsarāyaivá kṣúdham̐ hate,*

“Wem das Besiegte ist, wem das Ersiegte ist, in dessen Haus wird sie (die Kuh) getötet. Sie stellt den Hunger dar. Den Hunger fürwahr tötet er so. Wer deshalb als solches Wissender an der Ekāṣṭakā die Kuh tötet, tötet für das Jahr fürwahr den Hunger” (transl. by FALK 1986: 151).

This is the same idea that we find in a number of European folk festivals, from Halloween to the many masked winter processions in which young boys go from house to house, begging for gifts: if the villagers refuse to give, they are cursed.

In some of the domestic rites studied by FALK, like the Śūlagava, the Gopitṛyajña, and the Agnyādheya, I see the development of a ritual practice that belonged to the normal ritual life of an Aryan community, i.e., when the youth (the ritualised *Jugendbund*) paraded into their own village during the winter solstice celebrations begging for gifts. In this case, the cattle raid is institutionalised as a ritual in which all the characters involved are supposed to play their fixed role: the brotherhood and the householder. This guarantees both protection for the householder in the new year as well as a booty for the band without any need to resort to violence. Once the *Jugendbund* as

an institution disappeared from history, replaced by the *āśrama* stage of *brahmacarya*, the householders might have kept the ritual alive as a mere act of worship towards Rudra. The case of the Rājasūya, on the other hand, might be the result of a re-elaboration of the same ritual from the perspective of the successful *Gefolgschaft* whose leader managed to become king of a new community.⁶⁰

Another trace of a ritualised form of the right to steal can be found in the Aśvamedha. This solemn ritual, to be performed by a king who claimed universal domain, consists in the sacrifice of a horse who is, however, first left to wander freely around the kingdom for a year. The rationale of the ritual is that if, during this period, no rival will challenge the king by harming his sacred horse, the king will have proven the legitimacy of his absolute dominion.

Now, in his wandering, the horse is protected by four troops, each consisting of 100 young men, as well as by four divine armies (cf. DUMONT 1927: 37):

ŚB 13.4.2.5, 16: *rājaputrāḥ kavacīnaḥ śatām rājanyā` niṣaṅgīnaḥ śatām sūtagrāmaṇyām putrā iṣuparśīnaḥ śatām kṣātrasaṃgrahītṛṇām putrā daṇḍīnaḥ śatām [...] 'śvam médhāya prókṣitam rakṣatētyuktā mānuṣā āśāpālā áthaité daivā āpyāḥ sādhyā anvādhyā marútaśtámetá ubháye devamānuṣyāḥ saṃvidāná ápratyāvartayantaḥ saṃvatsaráṃ rakṣanti,*

“A hundred royal princes, clad in armour; a hundred warriors armed with swords; a hundred sons of heralds and headmen, bearing quivers filled with arrows; and a hundred sons of attendants and charioteers, bearing staves [...]. The (four kinds of) human guardians of the (four) regions have been told, and these now are the divine ones, to wit, the Apyas, Sadhyas, Anvadhya and Maruts; and both of these, gods and men, of one mind, guard it for a year without turning (driving) it back” (transl. by Eggeling).

Should this unusual army run into a brahmin, it is instructed to behave as follows:

ŚB 13.4.2.17, *yádyad brāhmaṇajātám upanigácheta táttat pṛcheta brāhmaṇāḥ kíyad yūyám aśvamedhásya vitthéti té yé ná vidyúr jinīyáta tánt sárvaṃ vā aśvamedháḥ sárvasyaisá ná veda yó brāhmaṇáḥ sánn aśvamedhásya ná veda só'brāhmaṇo jyéya evá,*

“And whenever ye meet with any kind of Brāhmaṇas, ask ye them, ‘O Brāhmaṇas, how much know ye of the Aśvamedha?’ and those who know naught thereof ye may despoil; for the Aśvamedha is everything, and he who, whilst being a Brāhmaṇa, knows naught of the Aśvamedha, knows naught of anything, he is not a Brāhmaṇa, and as such liable to be despoiled” (transl. by Eggeling).

Thus the army is allowed to plunder the brahmin who fails to respond to their riddle. FALK (1986: 44ff.) has connected this with the role of poetry and verbal contests in the life of the *Männerbund* and the Vrātyas.⁶¹ What concerns us here is the idea of a ritualised, institutionalised right of robbing on the part of the Vrātya *Gefolgschaft*, on behalf of their leader, that may have survived as a relic in the Śrauta version of the horse-sacrifice organised by a king.

Besides such ritual relics of an earlier time, however, it is also possible to find direct evidence of an institutionalised *sakraler Stehrecht* in Vedic texts that directly concerns the Vrātyas.

⁶⁰ A similar case of two rites emerging from one out of different perspective is perhaps that of the Anaḍutsava and the Gosava (see Appendix II §3.4).

⁶¹ Note that FALK (1986: 55ff.) also interprets in this light the episode of the Kuru boys' raid of the Pañcālas that I quote below.

Here we are often confronted with the fact that the Vrātyas were extremely concerned with receiving proper hospitality, and that whoever failed to provide them with it would incur great trouble.

A first example of this idea can be found in Baudhāyanaśrautasūtra 18.26. Here, among a series of instructions regarding the performance of *vrātyastomas*, we find a narrative text that recounts of a sortie of the Kuru Vrātya boys among their Pañcāla neighbours. The Kuru elders warn the boys that the Pañcālas are known to be slanderers (*upavādin-*). Nevertheless, the boys set off and, in fact, wind up getting insulted (*upa-vad-*) and rejected. In retaliation, they curse the offspring of their detractor:

BŚS 18.26:374.3–375.5 (ed. Caland, Kashikar), *sa eṣa jyeṣṭhānām agniṣṭomas, tasya catvāri ṣoḍaśāni dvau pavamānāv ubhe evācchāvākasya stotre, eṣa eva san kañīyasām ukthyas, tasya ṣaṭ ṣoḍaśāni sarve pavamānāḥ sarvāṇy acchāvākasya stotrāṇi, < tena haitena maruta ījire, teṣām viṣṇu sthapatir āsa | atho haitena daivyā vrātyā ījire, teṣām budhaḥ saumya sthapatir āsa | atho haitena kurubrahmaṇām putrā ījire, teṣām aupoditir gaupālāyano vaiyāghrapadya sthapatir āsa, tena heṣṭvā pañcālān vrātyā abhiprayayus, tān ha pītara ūcur, mā putrakāḥ pañcālān yāsiṣṭopavādinō vai pañcālā upa vo vadiṣyantīti tān hānādṛtyaiva prayayus, te ha keśino dālbhyyasyopavasatham ājagmus, tān ha śvo bhūte bahiṣpavamānam sarpato 'nvālebhire, pavitraṃ vai bahiṣpavamāna ātmānam pavayīṣyāmaha iti vadantas | atha ha pañcāleṣu gandharvāyaṇo vāleya āgniveśyo 'nūcāna āsa, tān ha saha sarpataḥ papraccha ke sarpanṭīti, vyaṃ maruta iti, teṣām vaḥ ka sthapatir iti | ahaṃ viṣṇur ity, aupoditir gaupālāyano vaiyāghrapadyaḥ pratyuvāca, yat kiṃ cakartha kas tac cacāretīti ha parokṣāvratam anunirdideśeti, tān hovācāvīduṣo va upāvādiṣmāpa vo hnumaha iti, pītā vai tat putrān upāvādīd iti, hainam ūcuḥ, pāpīyasī te prajā bhaviṣyatīti, tathā haivāsa, tato ha vā etat pañcāleṣu gandharvāyaṇā vāleyā āgniveśyāḥ pāpāyitā iva, mahākulam ha tat purā babhūva, sa yo vrātyam upavaded evam evainam upavadet | atha yo vrātyo 'laṃ prativacanāya syād evam evainam pratibrūyāt ||*

“The Agniṣṭoma for the *jyeṣṭhās* is the following: it is constituted of four [stotras] of sixteen-[stomas], two Pavamāna-stotras [and] both the *stotras* of the Acchāvāka. The Ukthya is the following, even though being for the *kañīyas*: it is constituted of six [stotras] of sixteen-[stomas], all Pavamānas, all *stotras* of the Acchāvāka. < The Maruts sacrificed by means of that. Their sthapati was Viṣṇu. Then the *daivya* Vrātyas sacrificed by means of that. Their *sthapati* was Budha Saumya. Then the sons of the Kuru brahmins sacrificed by means of that. Their sthapati was Aupoditi Gaupālāyana Vaiyāghrapadya. After sacrificing by means of that, the Vrātyas marched off for the Pañcāla land. Their fathers said to them: ‘O dear sons, do not go to the Pañcālas’, the Pañcālas are slanderers, they are going to slander you.’ Having disregarded this [advice], they went on. They arrived on the Upavasatha day of Keśin Dālbhya. On the next day, they grabbed [the back of] someone creeping to the Bahiṣpavamāna performance, saying ‘the Bahiṣpavamāna is a means for purification; we will purify ourselves. Now, among the Pañcālas there was a learned man, Vāleya Gandharvāyaṇa Āgniveśya. He asked to them who were creeping together [with him]: ‘Who are [these ones] creeping?’, ‘We, the Maruts,’ ‘Of such [Maruts], of you, who is the *sthapati*?’, ‘Me, Viṣṇu’ replied Aupoditi Gaupālāyana Vaiyāghrapadya. [V. G. Ā. added:] ‘By asking “what did you do, who did it [first]”, I exposed your secret vow.’ He told them ‘We have just insulted you as ignorant ones, we reject you.’ They [i.e. the Kuru boys] said ‘A father has just slandered his sons! Your offspring are going to become miserable.’ Since then, the family of Gandharvāyaṇa Vāleya Āgniveśya kind of

became ill-fortuned among the Pañcālas. It had been a great family before. He who should slander a Vrātya, really one should slander him. Now a Vrātya who should be capable of speaking back, really he should speak back to him.”

The Pañcāla host should have behaved like a father welcoming a son; as this did not happen, the Vrātyas consider themselves neglected offspring, and curse their detractor’s offspring to be miserable. Clearly, the text implies that, as rejected Vrātyas, they are entitled to speak back, cursing their detractors, and their curse proves effective, bringing their detractor’s family to ruin.

A second narrative text that reveals the Vrātyas’ preoccupation with proper hospitality and the consequences of not providing such hospitality is Kāthakasamhitā 10.6. According to the legend contained in this text, Baka Dālbhya left his Naimiṣya Vrātya companions to enjoy the gifts they obtained from the Kuru-Pañcālas after having performed a Sattrā, and visited a greater king looking for greater gifts. In the king’s court, he expects to be properly welcomed, but the king does not take good care of him (*na sūrks-*): instead, he gives him sick or dead cows. With these cows, Baka Dālbhya performs a sacrifice by which he makes the king’s kingdom and riches vanish (just like the sacrificed meat vanishes whilst being consumed by the fire). Only after the king pleases him does the Vrātya take back his curse.

KS 10.6 (based on the ed. of von Schroeder), *naimiṣyā vai sattram āsata, ta utthāya ssa pta vim̃ śatiṃ kurupañcāleṣu vatsatarān avanvata, tān vako dālbhir abravīd, yūyam evaitān vibhadjadhvam, imam ahaṃ dhṛtarāṣṭraṃ vaicitravīryaṃ gamiṣyāmi, sa mahyaṃ grhān kariṣyatīti, tam āgacchat, tan nāsūrksat, taṃ prākālayataitā gā brahmabandha ity abravīt, paśupatir gā hanti, tāḥ paraḥ pacamānaś careti, tāsāṃ devasūr me rājānnaṃ prāsuṣoditi, sakhāny utkartam apacat, tasmin pacamāne vyadasyat, so 'gnaye rudravate 'ṣṭākapālaṃ niravapat kṛṣṇānāṃ vr̥hīṇāṃ, tasya yatkiṃca dhṛtarāṣṭrasyāsīt, tat sarvam avakarṇaṃ [*avakīrṇaṃ?] vidrāṇam abhivyaucchat, tā vipraśnikā avindan, brāhmaṇo vai tvāyam abhicarati, tasmin nāthasveti, tam upāśikṣat, tasmai bahv adadāt, so 'gnaye surabhimate 'ṣṭākapālaṃ niravapac chuklānāṃ vr̥hīṇāṃ, tato vai tad vyadasyad [...]*

“The Naimiṣya [Vrātyas] performed a Sattrā seating. After standing back up they claimed and obtained twenty-seven young calves from the Kuru-Pañcālas. Vaka Dālbhi (=Baka Dālbhya) said to them: ‘you divide those among yourselves – I, instead, will go to this Dhṛtarāṣṭra Vaicitravīrya. He will make me a homestead!’ He went to him. He (the king) did not take good care of him. He made him drive these cows forth, and said ‘O pseudo-brahmin, Paśupati kills cows(/is killing [these] cows),⁶² go away and cook with them.’ ‘Their [the cows’] Devasū [i.e. Rudra; cf. FALK 1986: 59 fn. 166/the king?] has just conceded [them] to me as “king food”.’ After cutting [the meat], he cooked the shanks. Whilst it was cooking, [the meat] vanished. He offered to Agni Rudravant an oblation consisting of eight cups of black rice. Whatever [cattle, i.e. wealth] belonged to that Dhṛtarāṣṭra, that all appeared scattered [*avakīrṇaṃ]⁶³ and dispersed. The fortune-tellers (f.) found out: ‘This brahmin is putting a spell on you. Do approach him

62 HEESTERMAN (1962: 30 fn. 84) interprets this passages as follows: “The implication seems to be that the Naimiṣyas are devotees of Rudra Paśupati, kill cows and eat them, as they are indeed said to do in JB 3.332. The same may be true of the Vrātyas, though definite indications are wanting; according to BŚS 18.24:372.4 they apparently slaughter goats and cook them, which action is equated to the normal animal sacrifice. Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s contemptuous answer seems to mean: since you, as devotees of Paśupati, slaughter cows, take these that are already killed by Paśupati; which is another way of saying, cows that have perished somehow (cf. the parallel in Mbh 9.41: *yadr̥cchayā mṛtāḥ*).” On the interpretation of the text, see also the notes in FALK 1986: 58ff. as well as SONTHEIMER 1997: 96f.

63 The parallel in Mbh 9.40 reads *avakīrṇa-*.

respectfully.’ He (the king) offered him his service. He gave much to him. He (Vaka Dālbhi) offered to Agni Surabhimant an oblation of eight cups of white rice. Then, that [spell] vanished.”

Here the King insults the Vrātya by not providing hospitality, by giving him sick cows, and by misusing the name of Paśupati. The Vrātya uses a trick: he takes the cows as a gift of Paśupati (or the king, depending on our interpretation of Devāsu). By throwing ‘king food’ into the fire and causing it to be consumed by it, he causes the king’s wealth to vanish. Whatever belonged to the king “appeared” (?*abhi-vi-vas-*, according to FALK, indicates that it happened on the following day) scattered (**avakīrṇam*), just like he scattered (*nir-vap-*) the oblation on the fire, and dispersed (*vidrāṇam* < *vi-drā-*, lit. running away; perhaps the wealth intended is cattle). Thus, once again, failure to provide proper hospitality to a Vrātya leads to a curse.

The most striking evidence for this phenomenon, however, comes from the Vrātyakāṇḍa of the Atharvaveda (AVŚ 15, AVP 18.27–43), perhaps the most emblematic of Vrātya texts. This AV book, fully in prose, exalts the Ekavrātya as the Vrātya *par excellence* (most likely the Vrātya leader who got the result of “one” at the dice game; cf. KERSHAW 2000: 240ff., 269ff.) as he wanders through all the quarters of the universe.

In this text, the claim to proper hospitality is very prominent, although rarely stressed by scholars. Out of eighteen *pariyāyas*, this theme is found in seven. Such prominence in the most important Vrātya texts suggests the centrality of this theme to the Vrātya culture.

The preoccupation with being properly respected is the subject of the four following *pariyāyas* (10, 11, 12, 13). *Pariyāya* 10 deals with receiving hospitality from a king (the same situation as in the KS passage):

AVŚ 15.10.1–2 (~ AVP 18.36.1abc), *tād yāsyaivam vidvān vrātyo rājñō ’tithir gṛhān āgāchet || śréyāmsam enam ātmāno mānayet tātā kṣatrāya nā vṛścate tātā rāṣṭrāya nā vṛścate ||*

“Then, should an initiated Vrātya go as guest to the homestead of whatever king—he (the king) should consider him better than himself; in this way, he (the king) does not get cut down before royal power, he does not get cut down before kingship” (my transl.).

Pariyāya 11 is fully dedicated to how a householder should host a Vrātya:

AVŚ 15.11 (~ AVP 18.37), *tād yāsyaivam vidvān vrātyō ’tithir gṛhān āgāchet || 1 || svayām enam abhyudétya brūyād vrātya kvāvātsīr vrātyodakām vrātya tarpāyantu vrātya yāthā te priyām tātāstu vrātya yāthā te vāsas tātāstu vrātya yāthā te nikāmās tātāstv iti ||2|| yād enam āha vrātya kvāvātsīr iti pathā evā téna devayānān āva runddhe ||3|| yād enam āha vrātyodakām ity apā evā tēnāva runddhe ||4|| yād enam āha vrātya tarpāyantv iti prāṇām evā téna vārṣīyāmsam kurute ||5|| yād enam āha vrātya yāthā te priyām tātāstv iti priyām evā tēnāva runddhe ||6|| aīnam priyām gachati priyāh priyāsya bhavati yā evām véda ||7|| yād enam āha vrātya yāthā te vāsas tātāstv iti vāsam evā tēnāva runddhe ||8|| aīnam vāso gachati vaśī vaśīnām bhavati yā evām véda ||9|| yād enam āha vrātya yāthā te nikāmās tātāstv iti nikāmām evā tēnāva runddhe ||10|| aīnam nikāmō gachati nikāmé nikāmāsya bhavati yā evām véda || 11 ||*

“Then, should an initiated Vrātya go to someone’s homestead—he (the host) himself, having come towards him, should say, ‘O Vrātya, where have you just spent the night? O Vrātya, some water? O Vrātya, let them please you! O Vrātya, as you please—of

course! O Vrātya, whatever your command is—of course! O Vrātya, whatever you are eager for—of course!’ When he says to him ‘O Vrātya, where have you just spent the night?’ by asking that he secures the paths along which the gods ride. When he says to him ‘O Vrātya, some water?’ by asking that he secures the waters. When he says ‘O Vrātya, let them please you!’ by asking that he makes his life longer. When he says ‘O Vrātya, as you please—of course!’ by asking that he secures what is dear. What is dear comes to him; he becomes dear to his dear one (m.), if he knows so. When he says ‘O Vrātya, whatever your command is—of course!’ by asking that he secures his [own] authority. Authority comes to him; he becomes the commander of commanders, if he knows so. When he says ‘O Vrātya, whatever your wish—of course!’ by asking that he secures his [own] wish. His wish comes to him; he becomes in the wish of wish (?), if he knows so.”

Paryāya 12 claims the priority of hosting a Vrātya over the householder’s ritual duties of performing the Agnihotra:

AVŚ 15.12 (~ AVP 18.38), *tād yāsyaivāṃ vidvān vrātya údhr̥tesv agniṣu adhiśrite ’gnihotrē ’tithir gr̥hān āgāchet* ||1|| *svayām enam abhyudētya brūyād vrātyāti sṛja hoṣyāmīti* ||2|| *sā cātisṛjēj juhuyān nā cātisṛjēn nā juhuyāt* ||3|| *sā yā evāṃ viduṣā vrātyenātisṛṣto juhōti* ||4|| *prā piṭṛyāṇaṃ pānthāṃ jānāti prā devayānaṃ* ||5|| *nā devēṣv ā vṛscate hutām asya bhavati* ||6|| *pāry asyāsmīm̄l lokā āyātanaṃ śiṣyate yā evāṃ viduṣā vrātyenātisṛṣto juhōti* ||7|| *ātha yā evāṃ viduṣā vrātyenānatisṛṣto juhōti* ||8|| *nā piṭṛyāṇaṃ pānthāṃ jānāti nā devayānaṃ* ||9|| *ā devēṣu vṛscate ahutām asya bhavati* ||10|| *nāsyaśmīm̄l lokā āyātanaṃ śiṣyate yā evāṃ viduṣā vrātyenānatisṛṣto juhōti* ||11||

“Then, should an initiated Vrātya go to the someone’s homestead when the fires are set up [on the altar] and the Agnihotra is taking place, he himself, approaching him, should say: ‘O Vrātya, release me [from my duties towards you], I am about to make an oblation’; and should he (the Vrātya) give leave, he may make an oblation; should he not give leave, he may not make an oblation. He knows in advance the paths along which the fathers and the gods ride; he does not get cut down before the gods; his oblation becomes [effective]; in this world his *āyatana* is left intact, if he makes an oblation after having been given leave by an initiated Vrātya. Then, if he makes an oblation without having been given leave by an initiated Vrātya, he does not know in advance the paths along which the gods ride; he gets cut down before the gods; his oblation is nullified.”

Finally, *paryāya* 13 lists additional benefits gained from hosting Vrātyas for a number of nights, and explains what to do if a non-Vrātya asks for hospitality. The householder can reject him. If he does not reject him, he should treat him in a different way than one would do a Vrātya:

AVŚ 15.13 (~ AVP 18.39), *tād yāsyaivāṃ vidvān vrātya ekāṃ rātrim ātithir gr̥hē vāsati* ||1|| *yē pṛthivyāṃ puṇyā lokās tān evā tēnāva runddhe* ||2|| *tād yāsyaivāṃ vidvān vrātyo dviṭyāṃ rātrim ātithir gr̥hē vāsati* ||3|| *yē ’ntārikṣe puṇyā lokās tān evā tēnāva runddhe* ||4|| *tād yāsyaivāṃ vidvān vrātyas tṛtīyāṃ rātrim ātithir gr̥hē vāsati* ||5|| *yē divi puṇyā lokās tān evā tēnāva runddhe* ||6|| *tād yāsyaivāṃ vidvān vrātyas caturthīṃ rātrim ātithir gr̥hē vāsati* ||7|| *yē puṇyānāṃ puṇyā lokās tān evā tēnāva runddhe* ||8|| *tād yāsyaivāṃ vidvān vrātyo ’parimitā rātrir ātithir gr̥hē vāsati* ||9|| *yā evāparimitāḥ puṇyā lokās tān evā tēnāva runddhe* ||10|| *ātha yāsyaivā vrātyabruvó nāmabibhraty ātithir gr̥hān āgāchet* ||11|| *kārṣed enam nā cainam kārṣet* ||12|| *asyai devātāyā udakāṃ yācāmīmāṃ*

devātām vāsaya imām imām devātām pári veveṣmīty enam pári veviṣyāt ||13|| tásyām evāsya tād devātāyām hutām bhavati yá evām véda || 14 ||

“Then, [if] an initiated Vrātya spends one night in someone’s house as guest: whatever nice places [there are] on earth, thanks to that, he (the host) secures them. Then, [if] an initiated Vrātya spends a second night in someone’s house as guest: whatever nice places [there are] in the atmosphere, thanks to that, he (the host) secures them. Then, [if] an initiated Vrātya spends a third night in someone’s house as guest: whatever nice places [there are] in heaven, thanks to that, he (the host) secures them. Then, [if] an initiated Vrātya spends a fourth night in someone’s house as guest: whatever ‘nice of the nicest’ places [there are], thanks to that, he (the host) secures them. Then, [if] an initiated Vrātya spends innumerable nights in someone’s house as guest: whatever innumerable nice places [there are], thanks to that, he (the host) secures them. Now, should a non-Vrātya, calling himself a Vrātya, but carrying the name only, come to someone’s homestead as guest: he (the host) may reject him (lit., he may draw a furrow [before] him); should he not reject him—“I solicit some water for this deity here (i.e. the guest); I make this deity stay; I attend to this deity”—in such a way he should attend to him. His oblation to that deity becomes effective, if he knows this.”

Moreover, also in the first few *paryāyas*, which describe the Ekavrātya’s wandering, we find very numerous formulas containing curses addressed to whoever insults a Vrātya. At the same time, these formulas explain that whoever is initiated in the Vrātya knowledge and gets insulted is bound to become the *priyá dhāman* of various deities—a dynamic that clearly resembles that of the *sakraler Stehlrecht*.

For instance, *paryāya* 2 introduces a series of symbolic equivalences in connection with the Vrātya’s wandering in all directions (eastward, southward, etc). For each direction, the secret equivalences are given, and the following formulas, presenting two alternatives, are repeated:

AVŚ 15.2.3–4 (~ AVP 18.28.1cdef), *bṛhaté ca vai sá rathamtarāya cādityébhyaś ca viśvebhyaś ca devébhya ā vṛścate yá evām vidvāmsam vrātyam upavádati || bṛhatás ca vai sá rathamtarásya cādityānām ca viśveśām ca devānām priyām dhāma bhavati yá evām véda ||*

“He gets cut down before the Bṛhat and the Rathantara *sāmans*, before the Ādityas and all the gods (or the All-gods), he who insults an initiated Vrātya. He becomes the *priyá dhāman* of the Bṛhat and the Rathantara *sāmans*, of the Ādityas and all the gods (or the All-gods), he who is initiated.”

AVŚ 15.2.11–12 (~ AVP 18.28.3cdef), *yajñāyajñīyāya ca vai sá vāmadevyāya ca yajñāya ca yájamānāya ca paśúbhyaś cā vṛścate yá evām vidvāmsam vrātyam upavádati || yajñāyajñīyasya ca vai sá vāmadevyásya ca yajñásya ca yájamānasya ca paśūnām ca priyām dhāma bhavati yá evām véda ||*

“He gets cut down before the Yajñāyajñīya and the Vāmadevya *sāmans*, before the sacrifice and the patron and the animals, he who insults an initiated Vrātya. He becomes the *priyá dhāman* of the Yajñāyajñīya and the Vāmadevya *sāmans*, of the sacrifice and the patron and the animals, he who is initiated.”

AVŚ 15.2.17–18 (~ AVP 18.28.5cdef), *vairūpāya ca vai sá vairājāya cādbhyaś ca varuṇāya ca rájña ā vṛścate yá evām vidvāmsam vrātyam upavádati || vairūpásya ca*

vai sa vairājāsya cāpām ca varuṇasya ca rājñah priyām dhāma bhavati yā evaṃ véda ||

“He gets cut down before the Vairūpa and the Vairāya *sāmans*, before the waters and king Varuṇa, he who insults an initiated Vrātya. He becomes the *priyā dhāman* of the Vairūpa and the Vairāya *sāmans*, of the waters and king Varuṇa, he who is initiated.”

AVŚ 15.2.23–24 (~ AVP 18.28.7cdef), *śyaitāya ca vai sa naudhasāya ca saptarṣibhyaś ca sómāya ca rājña ā vṛścate yā evaṃ vidvāmsaṃ vrātyam upavādati || śyaitāsya ca vai sa naudhasāsya ca saptarṣiṇām ca sómasya ca rājñah priyām dhāma bhavati yā evaṃ véda ||*

“He gets cut down before the Śaita and the Naudhasa *sāmans*, before the seven seers and King Soma, he who insults an initiated Vrātya. He becomes the *priyā dhāman* of the Śaita and the Naudhasa *sāmans*, of the seven seers and King Soma, he who is initiated.”

In all these passages, it is said that whoever insults (*upa-vad-*) a Vrātya is cursed to incur the wrath (*ā-vṛśc-*) of various deities, whereas whoever knows the secrets expounded in this book (i.e. the initiated Vrātya) becomes the *priyā dhāman*⁶⁴ of such deities.

Note, moreover, that the lexeme *upa-vad-* occurs only in this book of the AV, and it is precisely the same expression found in BŚS 18.26, quoted above (the Kuru boys’ legend). Thus, it might belong to a specifically Vrātya lexicon.

Further, similar curses are added (only) in the AVP version of the kāṇḍa at the end of *paryāyas* 8 and 9 (the rest of the *paryāya* is the same in the two recensions). Notably, the lexeme *upa-vad-* is employed again.

AVŚ 15.8.3 (~ AVP 18.34.1cd), *viśām ca vai sa sábandhūnām cānnasya cānnādyasya ca priyām dhāma bhavati yā evaṃ véda ||* (in the AVŚ recension, the *paryāya* ends here, but AVP 18.34.1ef adds: *viḍbhyaś ca vai sa sabandhubhyaś cānnāya cānnādyāya cā *vṛścate ya evaṃ *vidvāmsaṃ vrātyam upavadati ||*

“He becomes the *priyā dhāman* of the settlements and the kinsmen and the food and the edibles, he who is initiated. He gets cut down before the settlements and the kinsmen and the food and the edibles, he who insults an initiated Vrātya.”

AVŚ 15.9.3 (~ AVP 18.35.1cd), *sabhāyās ca vai sa sámiteś ca sénāyās ca sūrāyās ca priyām dhāma bhavati yā evaṃ véda ||* [In the AVŚ recension the *paryāya* ends here, but AVP 18.35.1ef adds: *sabhāyai ca vai sa samitaye ca senāyai ca surāyai cā *vṛścate ya evaṃ vidvāmsaṃ vrātyam upavadati ||*].

“He becomes the *priyā dhāman* of the *sabhā* assembly, and of the *sámiti* assembly, and of the army, and of the *sūrā* alcoholic drink, he who is initiated. He gets cut down before the *sabhā* assembly, before the *sámiti* assembly, before the army, before the *sūrā* alcoholic drink, he who insults an initiated Vrātya.”

11. Conclusions

We may summarise our results as follows:

- 1) Receiving proper hospitality was a great concern for the Vrātyas: the Vedic texts preserve

64 On this expression, see GONDA 1967b and BODEWITZ 2002b.

stories about the curses one may incur if he disrespects the Vrātyas.

2) The immediate Vrātya cultural model for the Pāśupata idea of stealing *iṣṭāpūrta* is precisely this preoccupation with being properly respected. The Vrātyakāṇḍa formulas are explicit: whoever insults (*upa-vad-*) a Vrātya gets cut down (*ā-vṛśc-*), whereas the initiated Vrātya becomes the *priyā dhāman* of various deities. Similarly, whoever insults a Pāśupata loses his accrued merits (*iṣṭāpūrta*), whilst the initiated ascetic gains them.

3) Ultimately, this idea goes back to the Indo-European *Männerbund*'s conception of being entitled to a *sakraler Stehlrecht*.

4) As illustrated above, institutionalisation of this idea originally served a socio-economical goal, i.e. avoiding social conflict by allowing marginalised people to find a place in society. In my view, this same dynamic is at the origin of the traditional respect for the practice of asking for alms and the prescription to offer hospitality to ascetics.⁶⁵ As pointed out by DUNDAS (2002: 154):

“The Hindu philosopher Bhāsarvajña (c. 900 CE) speculated that one of the main attractions of religions such as Jainism for potential ascetic recruits was the possibility which they offered the poor and those of low caste of an escape from the harshness of society.”

This was the case for most ascetic groups, including the original Pāśupatas, in the epoch when the Vrātya *Jugendbünde* turned into ascetic *Gefolgschaften* and then gave rise to the *śramaṇa* orders.

(5) My contention is that some of these groups reclaimed the legitimacy of their marginalised status by requesting the same treatment their Vrātya predecessors were entitled to by a sacred right. The Śaiva ascetics, with their frightening outfits and unorthodox behaviour, are the marginalised *par excellence* (even by choice). The Pāśupatas may have re-elaborated this concept by internalising it within their religious practice. The efforts aimed at finding means of material subsistence were transformed into a path of spiritual purification. The transfer of *iṣṭāpūrta* (based on contemporary ideas of transfer of merit) in the Pāśupata system replaced the gifts of cattle or hospitality that the Vrātya would request.

⁶⁵ In the *dharma* literature, the *grhastha* is a *śeṣabhakṣa*, ‘eater of the leftovers’ of his guests. See ĀpDhSū II.4.11–12, II.8.2 and Manu III.94, III.116, cited in MALAMOUD 1994: 29–30.

12. Table: The development of cultural traits from Indo-European culture to Vedic culture and later Śaivism.

Indo-European <i>Männerbund</i>		Vedic Vrātyas		Śaiva cults (esp. Pāśupata)	
M1	Males.	V1	Males.	P1	Males.
M2	Originally: <i>Jugendbund</i> , youth age-set Later: <i>Gefolgschaft</i> (marginalised people, thieves, etc.).	V2	Initiated boys and marginalised categories (<i>kaniṣṭhās</i> , <i>jyeṣṭhās</i> , <i>nṛśaṃsās ninditās</i>)	P2	Ascetics (social category attracting marginalised people).
M3	Worship of a * <i>korios</i> god (riding god/hunter god; bow) vs * <i>teuteh</i> ₂ god.	V3	Worship of Rudra (bow) and Indra (<i>vajra</i>).	P3	Worship of Pāśupati and Lakulīśa.
M4	Status: in <i>marge</i> , initiated.	V4	Status: initiated (Vrātyastoma ritual).	P4	Initiated (<i>dīkṣā</i>); marginalised status especially if seeking dishonour.
M5	Living in wilderness.	V5	<i>Sabhā</i> , <i>araṇya</i>	P5	Living outside society, in temples, in cremation grounds, etc.
M6	Learning traditional lore and <i>Dichtersprache</i> (sacred, secret).	V6	Riddles, special secret <i>vrātya</i> language	P6	Concealing pure speech (<i>gūḍhapavitravāṇiḥ</i>).
M7	Special clothing: black garments, belt, animal skins/masks.	V7	Special clothing: black robes (animal skins), belt, turban, etc.	P7	Tiger skins (Śiva), smearing body with ashes, black robes of the Vaggayyas, etc.
M8	Representing dead ancestors, ghosts.	V8	“Dead” leader, <i>vipatha</i> , offerings to the Pitṛs	P8	Smearing body with ashes, living in cremation grounds, Kāpālikas, etc.
M9	Seasonal activities: mobility in winter (expeditions, cattle) vs. sedentary time in summer (learning); Winter festival (masked parade).	V9	- summer to winter solstice → <i>brahmacārya</i> - winter to summer solstice → raids - Mahāvratā festival / Gharma ritual	P9	Stage 1 in a temple, Stage 3 in a cremation ground, i.e. outside society. vs Stage 2 (<i>govrata</i>) among people (<i>manuṣyeṣu carati</i>).
M10	Licentiousness, ecstatic drinking.	V10	Accompanied by prostitutes; <i>surā</i> drink; licentious dialogue at the Mahāvratā.	P10	Breaking of sexual restrictions during the <i>govrata</i> .
M11	<i>sakraler Stehlrecht</i> (Höfler), <i>Raubrecht</i> (Meuli), right of rapine (Eliade).	V11	1) the Vrātyas are robbers. 2) Great concern with receiving proper hospitality.	P11	Stealing merit (<i>iṣṭāpūrta</i>).
M12	Animal transformation by wearing animal skins and masks.	V12	dog/tiger <i>vrata</i> and bull/ox <i>vrata</i> .	P12	<i>govrata</i> , <i>mṛgadharma</i> , <i>kukkuravrata</i> , <i>pāśupatavrata</i> , the Vaggayyas.

