

**THE VEDAS
IN INDIAN CULTURE AND HISTORY**

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
VEDIC WORKSHOP (AUSTIN, TEXAS 2007)

Edited by Joel P. Brereton

‘Alti Studi di Storia intellettuale e delle Religioni’ Series

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These studies are dedicated
to the memory of our colleague and friend,
Frits Staal

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*To Be Good is To Be vaidika.
On the Genesis of a Normative Criterion
in the Mānavadharmasāstra*

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In the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, the practice of calling upon “vedic” (*vaidika*) ideal types takes the form of a specific and rather innovative use of adjectives. Because of that work, the term *vaidika*—virtually unknown to the authors of the *dharmasūtras*—has gained wide use among brahmanical intellectuals, becoming a distinctive semantic taxon. By using the term *vaidika* as a means of value judgment, the author of *Mānavadharmasāstra* decreed the positive and normative character of a wide number of practices, customs, beliefs, and behaviours.

In this contribution I will provide examples that demonstrate that this use of the term *vaidika* is an invention of the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, and further, an invention that served to classify texts, practices, and ideas as possessing authority and legitimacy.

1. The discourse on “what is vedic”

As it has been recently said regarding the term *dharma* (which has to be treated as a signifier of a negotiable semantic field, rather than as a positively defined notion),¹ it is important to reflect upon the cultural and political presuppositions of the brahmanic discourse on what is “vedic.” Within brahmanical intellectual contexts, starting from the centuries that preceded Aśoka, saying that something is “vedic”—or that “it is stated in the Vedas”—

¹ This can be stated considering the results of a wide research recently published. See Olivelle 2004.

was tantamount to saying that it was “old,” “valuable,” “legitimate,” “authorized,” “appropriate,” or “good.” To indicate that something was related to the Vedas was a way of classifying and qualifying it positively.²

Such an attempt to profit from the “vedic” semantic taxon is not new to modern scholars, who are surely familiar with Louis Renou’s statement on the matter from the 1960s:

A y regarder d’un peu près, la révérence au Veda comporte plus d’une nuance. Sous les allusions génériques, imprécises (type “ainsi est-il dit dans la *śruti* ...”), comme en présentent d’ailleurs toutes les adorations, il se dissimule certains malentendus. Du fait même que le Veda est censé contenir toutes choses en son sein (*yad ihāsti tad anyatra, yan nehāsti na tat kva cid* “ce qui s’y trouve existe ailleurs, ce qui n’y est pas n’est nulle part”), à la façon d’un *avyaktaṃ brahma*, les auteurs en viennent à le citer pour légitimer des données qui sont visiblement anachroniques ou, ce qui est pire, subrepticement réinterprétées. On croit être toujours dans le sillage du Veda, alors qu’on lui tourne le dos. Le terme tend à servir de symbole et la notion qu’il couvre a été l’objet d’une véritable aliénation. [...] Même dans les domaines les plus orthodoxes, il arrive que la révérence au Veda soit un simple “coup de chapeau,” donné en passant à une idole dont on entend ne plus s’encombrer par la suite.³

In saying this, Renou appears to be aware that the resort to the symbolic *incrementum*—achieved by indicating that something is “Vedic”—was a central *topos* of the classical brahmanical intellectual discourse. Nevertheless, Sanskrit scholars have not devoted much attention to this issue.⁴ The question, then, remains: how, within later brahmanical intellectual production, have the content and the forms of symbolic legitimation been conceptualized?

Among these later conceptualizations, the invention and circulation of the term *vaidika* is one of the more significant and long-lasting accomplishments: a lexical novelty that can be fully understood only through the analysis of the social and pragmatic factors closely related to its genesis. Seen from this angle, the word *vaidika* appears as a novelty produced by a specific collective agency that was struggling to justify the primacy of its cul-

² See, on this ancient tendency, Smith 1994.

³ Renou 1960: 1-2. This metaphor has been largely employed in Indological studies. See Halbfass 1991: 1-3, Gonda 1997: 7-8, Smith 1998: 20, Patton 1994: 1. Nevertheless, the awareness of the symbolic power derived from the association with the Veda can be seen in the usage of the term *saṃvaraṇa* (“which cover,” “secret,” “hidden”) in Kautilya, *Arthaśāstra* 1,2,4-5.

⁴ The term *vaidika* is not present in Mayrhofer 1986-96.

tural and symbolic capital over against that of others producers of symbolic good.

Terminological novelties, neologisms, semantic coinages, and lexical innovations are generally the product of strategic intentions, strongly related to various forms of dialectical dispute. The lexical form *vaidika* is no exception. To the contrary: it exemplifies the idea that “something, to be good, has to be perceived and represented as having a thorough relationship with the Vedas.”

2. *The semantic field of vaidika: lexical and terminological notes*

The word *vaidika* derives from the word *veda*, indicating that something is “related to the Veda,” “derived from or in conformity with the Veda,” “prescribed in the Veda,” “Vedic,” or “knowing the Veda.” It can therefore be used in various ways: when masculine, it indicates “a Brāhman versed in the Veda”; when neuter, it can indicate “a vedic passage”⁵ or “a vedic precept.” It also appears in declensional forms (i.e. *vaidikāḥ*, *vaidikaṃ*, *vaidikāni*, *vaidikyaḥ*, etc.) and morphological variants (i.e., the many compounds like *vaidikalaukikānām*; see *infra*).

The compounds (*samāsa*) and derivatives (*pratyaya*) that contain the word *vaidika* exemplify the intentions behind the usage of this semantic indicator: here it is used to connote the quality of an action (*vaidikakarman*), to declare the level of conformity to the Veda (*vaidikatva*), to assert the *status* of a teaching (*vaidikasikṣā*), to indicate a convention that has been scrutinized (*vaidikācāranirṇaya*), to decree the poverty of ones “Vedic learning” (*vaidikapāśa*), and to connote the character of an intellectual *oeuvre* (i.e., *Vaidikacchandaḥprakāśa*, *Vaidikadharmanirūpaṇa*, *Vaidikasarvasva*, *Vaidikasubodhinī*, *Vaidikārcanamīmāṃsā*).⁶

3. *A short history of the usage of vaidika*

The term *vaidika* is absent from texts such as the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini and the *Nirukta* of Yāska.⁷ It then gradually begins to appear —albeit still rarely— in later ritual brahmanical literature and then in juridical texts. These early occurrences are rather scattered and rarely more than

⁵ As in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 11,96.

⁶ For other examples, refer to specific entries into technical and specialised dictionaries. See Kashikar 1994, Joshi 1937-2000, Vishva Bandhu 1935-65.

⁷ But then present in *Amarakośa* 3.5[1010] (*ardharcādaḥ gṛhṭādīnām puṃstvādyaṃ vaidikaṃ dhruvam*).

a singular case within a single text, as in *Baudhāyanagrhyasūtra*,⁸ from *Paraskaragrhyasūtra*.⁹

An example of the “dialectical antagonism” that constitutes the semantic ground for the genesis of our term appears in one of the ancient *dharmasūtras*, where the procedure for begging is prescribed:

[the *parivrājaka*, a wandering ascetic, has to go] 26. [...] claiming, “Rejecting vedic rites and cutting ourselves off from both sides, we embrace the middle course.”

*apavidhya vaidikāni karmāny ubhayataḥ paricchinnā madhyamaṃ padaṃ saṃśliṣyāmaha iti vadantaḥ ||*¹⁰

Later on, apart from few other occurrences in more recent *dharmasūtras*,¹¹ the term *vaidika* is used to foster a famous distinction: the binary opposition proposed by Patañjali to identify two different linguistic domains, the *laukika* and the *vaidika*. Right at the opening of his *Mahābhāṣya*,¹² Patañjali deals with the question of which words grammar is supposed to account for, stating that those are *laukikānām vaidikānām ca (śabdānām)*.¹³

The later commentator Kaiyaṭa develops these binary criteria applying them to the well-known couple *śruti/smṛti*. He identifies

⁸ See *Baudhāyanagrhyasūtra* 4,3,3 (3. *na jātu śyenakākādīn pakṣiṇaḥ pratiśedhayet tadrūpās tasya pitaras samāyantīti vaidikāḥ iti vijñāyate || iti bodhāyanīyaṃ grhyasēśasūtre caturthaprasne tṛtīyo ādhyaḃyāḥ ||*); 4,7,4 (4. *prathamam yat pibati tena ṛgvedam prīṇāti yad dviṭīyam tena yajurvedam prīṇāti yat tṛtīyam tena sāavedam prīṇāti prathamam yat parimṛjati tenāharavedam prīṇāti yad dviṭīyam tenetiḥāsapurāṇāni yan mukham tenāgniṃ yat savyam pāṇim abhyukṣati tena nakṣatrāni yat pādamaḥ abhyukṣati tena viṣṇum yac cakṣuṣī tena candradityau yan nāsike tena prāṇāpānau yac chrotam tena diśo yad bāhū tenendram yad dhṛdayam tena rudram yan nābhīm tena pṛthivīm yad aṅguṣṭhayaḥ sravanty āpaḥ kuberādayaḥ sarvā devatāḥ prīṇanty agnir vāyuh prajāpatir arkacandrau maghavāniti vaidikāḥ ||*).

⁹ See *Paraskaragrhyasūtra* 2,17,9 (9. [...] *sampattir bhūtir bhūmir vṣṭir jyaiṣṭhyam śraiṣṭhyam śrīḥ prajāṃ ihāvatu svāhā | yasyā bhāve vaidikalaukikānām bhūtir bhavati karmaṇām | indrapatnīm upahvaye sitām sā me vannapāyini bhūyāt karmaṇi karmaṇi svāhā | [...]*).

¹⁰ *Baudhāyanadharmasūtra* 2,11,26. Transl. from Olivelle 2000.

¹¹ See *Vaiṣṇavadharmasūtra* 1,30,43 (43. *laukikam vaidikam vā api tathā adhyātmikam eva vā ādadīta yato jñānam na taṃ druhyet kadā cana ||* 44. *utpādakabrahmadātror garīyān brahmadah pitā |*); 2,55,18 (18. *kṣaranti | sarvā vaidikyo juhōtiyajatikriyāḥ | akṣaram tv akṣaram jñeyam brahmā ca eva prajāpatih ||*).

¹² See Patañjali, *Mahābhāṣya* 1,1,1 (ed. Kielhorn v. 1, pp. 8-9). Furthermore, Deshpande 1993: 19-22. This same distinction between *laukika* and *vaidika* is employed also in other domains. See, for example, *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2,117; *Viṣṇusmṛti* 30,43; Śābara, *Bhāṣya ad Jaimini*, *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* 1,1,1-32. Furthermore, on *mīmāṃsā* and Śābara’s treatment of the distinction, Clooney 1990: 131-137; D’Sa 1980: 34-40.

¹³ Candotti 2005: 391-395.

instances of *laukika* with *smṛti*, and *vaidika* ones with *śruti*.¹⁴ The term *vaidika* is also used in such way within the epic, where it serves to qualify the status of textual materials.¹⁵

To say that something is *vaidika* is to say that it has a specific value. This brings us to the usage of the taxon *vaidika* in latest stratum of the *Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad*.

8. Now the obstacles of knowledge. O King, this net of delusion has its origin in that the godly associate with the ungodly [*asvargyaiḥ saha svargyā*]. And the others who, always jolly, always ajourney, always abegging, always living off skills — and the others, begging in towns, sacrificing improper substances [*ayājyayājakā*], accepting sūdras as pupils [*sūdrasīsyāḥ*], and sūdras that know the scriptures [*sūdrās ca śāstra vidvāmsaḥ*] — and the others, rogues, wearing braided hair, dancers, fighters, homeless, wanderers, who give shows, degraded to royal service etc. — and the others who, placing ahead the cause of yakṣas, rākṣasas, spirits, ghouls, demons, serpents, planets etc., are saying: “We must appease them,” — and the others who hypocritically [*vṛthā*] wear saffron [*kaṣāya*] robes, (glass) earrings, skulls, — and the others who wish to erect themselves as judges concerning Vedic matters [*vaidīkeṣu*] by weaving illusions with logic, illustrations and sophisms [*tarkadr̥ṣṭānta*] — with all those one should not have intercourse [*na saṃvaset*]. Indeed they are conspicuous thieves and ungodly [*asvargyā*]. Thus, the text says: erring because of the sophisms, false illustrations and grounds [*mīthyā dr̥ṣṭānta hetubhiḥ*] of the doctrine that holds there is no ātman [*nairātmanvāda*], the world does not know what the conclusion of Vedic wisdom is [*loko na jānāti vedavidyāntaram*]. 9. Bṛhaspati, having become Śukra, created this false knowledge [*avidyām*] for the security of Indra, and the ruin of the Asuras. Through it they point to what is auspicious as being inauspicious [*tayā śivam aśivam ity uddiśanti*], and say that one must ponder the injurious character of the scripture like the Veda etc. [*vedādiśāstrahimsakadharmā*]. Hence one must not learn that knowledge, else it is like a barren woman: its fruit is mere concupiscence; even one who has fallen away from his proper conduct [*vṛttacyutasyeva*] must not embrace it. Thus the text says: “Widely opposed and differently directed are what are known as knowledge and ignorance [*avidyā yā ca vidyeti jñātā*]. I believe that Naciketas is desired by knowledge; the many objects of desire do not hanker after thee. He who knows these two, knowledge and ignorance [*vidyām cāvidyām ca*], will, having crossed to death by ignorance [*avidyayā mṛtyum*], reach non-death by knowledge [*vidyayāmṛtam aśnute*]. Enveloped within ignorance,

¹⁴ See Patañjali, *Mahābhāṣya* 1,1,1 (ed. Kielhorn v. 1, p. 34, ad vt. 1 [*laukikaḥ smṛtyupanibaddhaḥ | vaidikaḥ śrutyupanibaddhaḥ* |]).

¹⁵ See *Mahābhārata* 1,117,26; 12,11,13; 12,67,5; 12,70,9; 12,70,21; 12,77,10; 12,78,2; 12,80,9 (*eṣā vaidikī śrutiḥ*); 12,80,13 (*eṣā vaidikī śrutiḥ*); 12,260,15; 12,262,23; 12,290,12; 12,324,4 (*vai vaidikī śrutiḥ*); 12,339,18; 13,107,1; 13,114,1; 14,13,9; 14,35,38 (*eṣā vaidikī śrutiḥ*); 14,36,17; 14,36,28 (*eṣā vaidikī śrutiḥ*).

the self-styled sages [*svayamdhīrāḥ*] who deem themselves learned run around in a rush, confused, like blind men led by blind man [*andheneva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ*].” 10. The gods and asuras, being desirous of the ātman, betook themselves to Brahman. Having bowed to him they said: “Reverend, we are desirous of the ātman: teach us.” Thereupon, having pondered awhile, he thought: “The asuras are after a different ātman.” Therefore something different was taught them. Those who are confused live according to that [*tad ime mūḍhā upajīvanti*], being attracted to it, assaulting the Veda [*taryābhighātināḥ*], they look upon untruth as truth — it is like an illusion. Hence that which is stated in the Vedas is the truth [*ato yad vedeṣv abhihitam 5 tat satyam*]. On that which is declared in the Vedas the wise live [*yad vedeṣūktam tad vidvāmsa upajīvanti*]. Therefore the Brahmin should not learn non-Vedic doctrines [*tasmād brāhmaṇo nāvaidikam adhīyāta*], that is the meaning.¹⁶

If in Patañjali the distinction between *vaidika* and *laukika* was related to the grammarians’ urge to establish clearly defined linguistic fields, for other authors the same distinction fulfils the hermeneutic need to fix the difference between ordinary language and verbal “vedic” precepts, as in the case of Jaimini.¹⁷ This prescriptive hermeneutic partition was enthusiastically received and broadly employed, as shown in the works of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.¹⁸

Medieval Sanskrit sources employ the notion of *vaidika* to confer value, purity, antiquity, and legitimacy to their points of view, to enforce and justify their ideological and exegetical innovations. Pertinent cases are those of the supplementary text *Atharvavedaparīṣiṣṭa*¹⁹ of Jayanta Bhaṭṭa’s *Nyāyamañjarī*,²⁰ or of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.²¹

¹⁶ *Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad* 7,8-10 (transl. from van Buitenen 1962 [the insertion of the relevant Sanskrit terms is mine]). A similar narration, although more ancient, can be found in *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 8,7-9. Furthermore, *Bṛhadāraṇyakoṇiṣad* 1,3,1-10; *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 1,2,1-7.

¹⁷ See Jaimini, *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* 1,1,4-31; 1,3,30-35. Further, D’Sa 1980: 19-33, Gachter 1990: 70-84, Bilimoria 1988: 84-162.

¹⁸ See Kumārila, *Tantravārtika* 1,3,6.

¹⁹ *Atharvavedaparīṣiṣṭa* 21,1,8 (*śuddhātmāno japair homair vaidikair vītamatsarāḥ* ||); 23,14,5 (*nīṣkāmeṇa tu yat kiṃ cit kartavyam iti vaidikam | tat sarvaṃ muktidaṃ jñeyam parāparaṇam sukham* ||); 70,2,3 (*ḷcchraṃ cāpi hitam kṛtvā kuryuḥ karma samāhitāḥ | śuddhātmāno japair homair vaidikair vītamatsarāḥ* ||).

²⁰ See, for detailed references, Freschi and Graheli 2005: 287-323.

²¹ See *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 1,4,19-20 (19. *cāturhotraṃ karma śuddhaṃ prajānāṃ vikṣya vaidikam | vyadadhā yajñasantatyai vedam ekaṃ caturvidham* || 20. *ṛgyajuḥsāmātharvākhyā vedāṣ catvāra uddhṛtāḥ | itihāsapurāṇaṃ ca pañcamo veda ucyate* ||); 7,15,47 (47. *pravṛtṭam ca nivṛtṭam ca dvividhaṃ karma vaidikam | āvartate pravṛttena nivṛttenāśnute ’mṛtam* ||); 8,6,9 (*rūpaṃ tavaitat puruṣarṣabhejyaṃ śreyo ’rthibhirvaidikatāntrikeṇa | yogena dhātāḥ saha nastrilokān paśyāmy amuṣminnu ha viśvamūrtau* ||). See, furthermore, Halbfass 1988: 359-367.

Interesting to note here that, later on, this use met with the disapproval of some intellectuals and religious reformers, who found it arbitrary. In 1818, for instance, Rāmmohan Rāy accused *gauḍīyavaiṣṇavas* of falsifying evidence by promoting the verses they composed as *vaidika* or *paurāṇika*.²² Nevertheless, due to its semiotic strength, the notion of *vaidika* eventually succeeded, as shown by its many appearances in later neo-Hindū publications.²³ Finally, the English version of *vaidika*, “vedic,” gained a widespread following amongst the neo-Hindū movements and missionary agencies in Europe and North and Latin America.

Having recounted the career of the term *vaidika*, let me come back to the text of the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, where it first gained its reputation.

4. From anonymity to celebrity: the usage of the notion of *vaidika* in the *Mānavadharmasāstra*

The introduction of the term *vaidika* is in accordance with the aims of a “universal grammar” underlying the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, a text eager to re-establish and defend specific interests. As Olivelle observed,

[...] Manu’s interest lay not in the lower classes of society, which he considered to be an ever-present threat to the dominance of the upper classes, but in the interaction between the political power and Brahmanical priestly interests, interests that were under constant threat ranging from the Aśokan imperial polity to the foreign invasions toward the turn of the millennium.²⁴

What now makes the defence of brahmanical interests a burning priority is the sociological and political situation, which radically changed after the spread of Buddhism and the rule of Aśoka, as a growing body of recent scholarship is convincingly demonstrating.²⁵

The author of the *Mānavadharmasāstra* wants to defend such interests by reconfiguring the ideological field. In reforming the normative and juridical classifications, he is trying to prompt a new phase of the old “vedification” and “brahmanization” processes.²⁶ The notion of *vaidika* meets his needs, since it is referring to something well known by many and highly considered by

²² See Rāmmohan Rāy 1982: 35-38.

²³ See, for example, Bhagavan Das 1917, Dayananda Sarasvati 1968, Harideva Arya 1996.

²⁴ Olivelle 2002: 547.

²⁵ See Bronkhorst 2007, Olivelle 2006, Bailey and Mabbett 2003.

²⁶ See Wezler 2004: 643-646.

the new patrons of the brahmanic elites. Those are, apparently, the main two targets of his ideological campaign, which had, in fact, a double agenda, as again stated by Olivelle:

Manu's agenda is two-fold: he wants to tell Brahmins how to behave as true Brahmins devoted to vedic learning and virtue, and he wants to tell kings how to behave as true kings, devoted to Brahmins and ruling the people justly. For this agenda he brings the authority of no less a person than the Creator himself, who is presented as the absent author of the text.²⁷

It is in this context that the term *vaidika* came to be used, rapidly rising from anonymity and absence to celebrity and fame. Within a short time, the word *vaidika* went from having the status of a mere adjective to having that of a powerful symbolic taxon, one essential for all those whose intention was to seal a new pact between traditional lore and new political and cultural needs.

What follows is the history of the textual career of the term *vaidika* within the *Mānavadharmasāstra*. Omitting the passages that refer directly to the Veda in order to highlight the relationship between practices or objects and the Vedic lore,²⁸ there are fourteen specific *ślokas* in which the term *vaidika* is used. All these occurrences share the following characteristics:

a) Except for 2,2, none occurs in one of the interpolated sections of the *Mānavadharmasāstra*;²⁹

b) none appears to be derived or quoted from previous *dharmasūtras* (a fact indicated, hereafter, with the acronym NPPDhS = “Not present in preceding *dharmasūtras*”), and thus can reasonably be considered lexical innovations of the *Mānavadharmasāstra*;³⁰

²⁷ Olivelle 2005: 41.

²⁸ See the index in Olivelle 2005: 1129-1130.

²⁹ It is important here to consider the rationale of textual interpolations —attributable to later redactors— that changed the original quadripartite structure of the text, and added excurses to it. The following is a synoptic synthesis of the strata of the *Mānavadharmasāstra* as indicated by the author of the critical edition: 1 (see Olivelle 2005: 52-54); 2,2-5 interpolation; 2,88-100 suspect of interpolation; 3,171-175 interpolation; 8,20-22; 8,27-40; 8,386-420 interpolation; 9,229-249; 9,294-311; 9,313-323 interpolation; 10,1-73 interpolation; 11,1-43 interpolation; 11,127-179 interpolation; 11,191-247 suspect of interpolation; 12,117-126 suspect of interpolation (although the entire chapter is awkward. See Olivelle 2005: 60-62). Consequently, of the 2680 verses of the *Mānavadharmasāstra* 329 —which constitute the 12% of the entire text— are indicated by Olivelle (2005: 62) as resulting from interpolations

³⁰ The innovative character of the *Mānavadharmasāstra* is clearly perceived by looking at the rate of “new” stanzas in it. While some chapters are full of quotes

c) except for 2,2, all have been quoted by later authors of *dharma* texts, suggesting the relevance of the new taxon *vaidika* within brahmanic discourse.

The following table summarizes these points. First of all, the verses that I have classified as NPPD*hS*:

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2,2
(interpolation) [NPPD*hS*, not re-quoted]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2,15
[NPPD*hS*, then quoted in Devaṅṅabhaṭṭa, *Smṛticandrikā* 2,426;
Mādhava, *Pārāsaramādhavīya* 1,288]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2,26
[NPPD*hS*, then quoted in *Yājñavalkyadharmasāstra* 1,10;
Devaṅṅabhaṭṭa, *Smṛticandrikā* 1,36]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2,67
[NPPD*hS*, then quoted in *Viṣṇudharmasāstra* 22,32; 27,14;
Yājñavalkyadharmasāstra 1,13 [Viśveśvara, *Bālakrīḍā* 1,15];
Devaṅṅabhaṭṭa, *Smṛticandrikā* 1,61; Aparāditya, *Aparārka* 908]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2,84
[NPPD*hS*, then quoted in *Viṣṇudharmasāstra* 55,18;
Lakṣmīdhara, *Kṛtyakalpataru* 3,99]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 4,19
[NPPD*hS*, then quoted in *Viṣṇudharmasāstra* 71,8;
Yājñavalkyadharmasāstra 1,99; Devaṅṅabhaṭṭa, *Smṛticandrikā*
1,132, 2,448]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 8,190
[NPPD*hS*, then quoted in Devaṅṅabhaṭṭa, *Smṛticandrikā* 3,423;
Mādhava, *Pārāsaramādhavīya* 3,208]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 11,97
[NPPD*hS*, then quoted in Viśveśvara, *Bālakrīḍā* 3,250;
Lakṣmīdhara, *Kṛtyakalpataru* 3,331]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 12,86-88
[NPPD*hS*, *śloka* 88 then quoted in Vijñāneśvara, *Mitākṣarā* 3,58;

and paraphrases from previous sources (up to 80%), others are rather original, quoting precedent texts only for the 20% of their length.

Aparāditya, *Aparārka* 1033; Lakṣmīdhara, *Kṛtyakalpataru* 14,146-147]

Then, the remaining verses:

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 2,117

[the author elaborates on preexistent *dictum* (*Āpastambadharmasūtra* 1,5,19-20; 1,14,7-9; *Gautamadharmasūtra* 6,1-5; *Baudhāyanadharmasūtra* 1,3,25-28; *Vasiṣṭhadharmasūtra* 13,41-43), while introducing the *vaidika* semantic *incrementum*; then quoted in *Viṣṇudharmasāstra* 30,43; Aparāditya, *Aparārka* 54; Devaṅṇabhaṭṭa, *Smṛticandrikā* 1,97; Mādhava, *Pārāśaramādhavīya* 1,296, 1,301; *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* 4,44-45]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 6,75

[the author elaborates on preexistent *dictum* (*Āpastambadharmasūtra* 2,21,14-16), while introducing the *vaidika* semantic *incrementum*; then quoted in Aparāditya, *Aparārka* 960]

vaidika° in *Mānavadharmasāstra* 7,97

[the author elaborates on preexistent *dictum* (*Gautamadharmasūtra* 10,20-23), while introducing the *vaidika* semantic *incrementum*; not re-quoted]

Let us now closely examine the *ślokas* that contain the word *vaidika*, starting from those from the second *adhyāya*.³¹

The first occurrence is in a section of the treatise devoted to the theme of desire:

2. To be motivated by desire is not commended, but it is impossible here to be free from desire; for it is desire that prompts vedic study and the performance of vedic rites. 3. Intention is the root of desire; intention is the wellspring of sacrifices; and intention triggers every religious observance and every rule of restraint — so the tradition declares.

*kāmātmata na praśastā na caivehāsty akāmata | kāmyo hi vedādhigamaḥ
karmayogaś ca vaidikah ||2.2||*

The second occurrence is in a section concerning textual study and how to deal with contradictions in Law. A “vedic” text is invoked as an authority to solve exegetical conflicts:

³¹ All the following English quotes of the *Mānavadharmasāstra* are from the translation presented in Olivelle 2005. I have inserted the Sanskrit text only for the more relevant passages

14. When there are two contradictory scriptural provisions on some issue, however, tradition takes them both to be the Law with respect to it; for wise men have correctly pronounced them both to be the Law. 15. After sunrise, before sunrise, and at daybreak—the sacrifice takes place at any of these times; so states a vedic scripture.

*udite 'nudite caiva samayādhyuṣite tathā | sarvathā vartate yajñaitīyaṃ
vaidikī śrutih ||2.15||³²*

A section devoted to consecratory rites invokes the sacral power of the vedic:

26. The consecration of the body, beginning with the ceremony of impregnation, should be performed for twice-born men by means of the sacred vedic rites, a consecration that cleanses a man both here and in the hereafter.

*vaidikaiḥ karmabhiḥ puṇyair niṣekādir dvijanmanām | kāryaḥ
sarīrasaṃskāraḥ pāvanaḥ pretya ccha ca ||2.26||*

Then another stanza from a section devoted to consecratory rites for women:

66. For females, on the other hand, this entire series should be performed at the proper time and in the proper sequence, but without reciting any vedic formula, for the purpose of consecrating their bodies. 67. For females, tradition tells us, the marriage ceremony equals the rite of vedic consecration; serving the husband equals living with the teacher; and care of the house equals the tending of the sacred fires.

*vaiivāhiko vidhiḥ strīṇām saṃskāro vaidikaḥ smṛtaḥ | patisevā gurau
vāso gṛhārtho'gniparikriyā ||2.67||*

What follows is at the end of an important portion devoted to the “vedic” recitation of *oṃ*:

81. The three inexhaustible Great Calls preceded by *OM* and the three-footed *Sāvitrī* verse should be recognized as the mouth of the Veda. 82. When a man recites this verse tirelessly for three years, becoming wind and assuming an ethereal form, he reaches the highest Brahman. 83. The highest Brahman is the monosyllable *OM*; the highest ascetic toil is the control of breath; nothing is higher than the *Sāvitrī*; and truth is better than ascetic silence. 84. Offering ghee while seated, offering oblations while standing

³² See note 15 of this essay about the reference to *vaidikī śrutih* in the *Mahābhārata*.

—all such vedic rites perish. The syllable (*akṣara*) OM should be recognized as imperishable (*akṣara*); it is Brahman, it is Prajāpati.

*kṣaranti sarvā vaidīkyo juhōtiyajatikriyāḥ | akṣaram duṣkaram jñeyam
brahma caiva prajāpatiḥ ||2.84||*

This stanza states the ways of salutation, showing the regulative role attributed to the observance of public and clearly visible *habitus*:

117. He should greet first the person from whom he received knowledge —whether it is the knowledge of worldly matters, of the Veda, or of the inner self. 118. A well-disciplined Brahmin, although he knows just the Sāvitrī verse, is far better than an undisciplined one who eats all types of food and deals in all types of merchandise, though he may know all three Vedas.

*laukikaṃ vaidikaṃ vāpi tathādhyātmikam eva vā | ādadāta yato jñānam
taṃ pūrvam abhivādayet ||2.117||*

Now the author of the text explains how to study *sāstras*, another practical way to control the level of observance and adherence to a norm:

19. Every day, he should explore the treatises —those that aid in the quick development of one’s mind, those that facilitate the acquisition of wealth, and those that promote well-being— as well as ancillary texts of the Veda; 20. for, the more a man studies treatises, the more he comes to understand and the more brightly shines his understanding.

*buddhivṛddhikarāṇy āśu dhanyāni ca hitāni ca | nityaṃ sāstrāṇy
avekṣeta nigamāṃś caiva vaidikān ||4.19||*

The following stanza deals with ascetic meditation, here delimited and controlled by the *vaidika* taxon:

74. When a man possesses right understanding, he is not fettered by actions; but when he lacks understanding, he enters the trans-migratory cycle. 75. By ceasing to harm living creatures, by withdrawing the organs from their attachments, by performing vedic rites, and by practicing fierce austerities, individuals do attain that state here on earth.

*ahiṃsayendriyāsaṅgair vaidikais caiva karmabhiḥ | tapasāś caraṇais
cograiḥ sādhyantīha tat padam ||6.75||*

Now the author talks about war and the warrior ethic (with specific reference to “war booty”), topics that are also to be monitored and approved as *bona fides*:

96. Whatever a man wins —chariot, horse, elephant, parasol, money, grain, livestock, women, all goods, and base metal— all that belongs to him. 97. A preemptive share, however, should be given to the king —so states the Vedic scripture; and the king should distribute among the soldiers anything that has not been won in single combat.

rājñe ca dadyur uddhāram ity eṣā vaidikī śrutih | rājñā ca sarvayodhebhyo dātavyam aprthagjitam ||7.97||

In these stanzas, which comes from a section on deposits —under the heading of grounds for litigation— our taxon appears again:

190. Using all the investigative methods as well as vedic oaths, the judge should examine anyone accused of appropriating a deposit or of demanding a deposit that has not been made. 191. A man who does not hand over a deposit and a man who requests the return of a deposit he has not made —both these should be punished like thieves and fined an amount equal to the deposit. 192. A man who has appropriated an open deposit, as well as a man who has appropriated a sealed deposit —the king should compel both without distinction to pay a fine equal to its value. 193. If a man appropriates the property of others by fraudulent means, however, he and his accomplices should be put to death publicly using diverse modes of execution.

nikṣepasyāpahartāram anikṣeptāram eva ca | sarvair upāyair anvicchech chapathaiś caiva vaidikaiḥ ||8.190||

The following quotation appears in a section devoted to drinks that can be consumed by *dvija*, a practice that must be regulated since it can easily cause unwanted effects:

94. Liquor is clearly the filth of various grains; sin is also called filth. Therefore, Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas must not drink liquor. 95. It should be understood that there are three kinds of liquor: one made from molasses, another from ground grain, and a third from honey. Just as drinking one of them is forbidden to Brahmins, so are all. 96. Intoxicants, meat, liquor, and spirits are the food of demons and fiends; they must not be consumed by a Brahmin, who eats the oblations to the gods. 97. When a Brahmin is intoxicated, he may tumble into filth, blabber vedic texts, or do other improper things. 98. If the *brahmins* resident in a man's body is drenched with liquor even once, his Brahmin nature departs from him and he sinks to the level of a Śūdra.

amedhye vā paten matto vaidikaṃ vāpy udāharet | akāryam anyat kuryād vā brāhmaṇo madamohitaḥ ||11.97||

Finally, while describing actions that lead to supreme good,

the author applies the notion of *vaidika* to distinguish “good” from “bad” acts:

84. Among all these splendid activities, a particular activity has been declared as the best means for a man here to secure the supreme good. 85. Among all these, tradition holds the knowledge of the self to be the highest; it is, indeed, the foremost of all sciences, for by it one attains immortality. 86. One should understand that acts prescribed by the Veda are always a more effective means of securing the highest good both here and in the hereafter than the above six activities. 87. All these activities without exception are included within the scheme of the acts prescribed by the Veda, each in proper order within the rules of a corresponding act. 88. Acts prescribed by the Veda are of two kinds: advancing, which procures the enhancement of happiness; and arresting, which procures the supreme good. 89. An action performed to obtain a desire here or in the hereafter is called an “advancing act,” whereas an action performed without desire and prompted by knowledge is said to be an “arresting act.” 90. By engaging in advancing acts, a man attains equality with the gods; by engaging in arresting acts, on the other hand, he transcends the five elements.

*ṣaṅṅāmeṣām tu sarveṣām karmanām pretya ccha ca | śreyaskarataram
jñeyam sarvadā karma vaidikam ||12.86|| vaidike karmayoge tu
sarvānyetānyaśeṣataḥ | antarbhavanti kramaśas tasmims tasmīn
kriyāvidhau ||12.87|| sukhābhyudayikaṃ caiva naiḥśreyasikam eva ca |
pravṛttaṃ ca nivṛttaṃ ca dvividhaṃ karma vaidikam ||12.88||*

In the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, then, the idea of the *vaidika* describes three kinds of behaviour: *to believe* “vedically” (in a specific soteriology, in a specific vision of ritual functioning [i.e., *śraddhā*], in a specific retributive and practical logic); *to behave* “vedically” (according to a specific set of norms); and *to belong* “vedically” (not only to a generally defined *Weltanschauung* but also to a specific clan or school [*śākhā*]). Due to the normative goals that rule the logic of the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, the term *vaidika* has gradually gained a broader and more inclusive significance. The old claim of “vedicity” enlarged its domain in order to exercise influence and suasion on a larger number of subjects and contexts.³³

This demonstrates, then, that the semantic history of the term *vaidika* follows the rule that any normative discourse has to obey:

³³ All the occurrences quoted indicates that the term *vaidika* has a larger symbolic meaning, as can be clearly seen in the case of *Mānavadharmasāstra* 11,96, where a drunk *brāhmaṇa* may dangerously “blabber vedic texts.” In this case, *vaidika* is not a simple adjective indicating “of the Vedas,” but stands out as the exact ethical opposite to a context in which *dvijas* drink liquors and “sink to the level of a *śūdra*.”

the larger the audience, the broader significance certain notions have to assume.

5. To conclude

In summary, a few pivotal issues show how innovative this use of the term *vaidika* is.

First, it is evident that when all was “vedic” —when the cultural system based on the Veda was majoritarian and stable— there was no need to speak of “vedicity.” A reasonable majority of the intellectual field shared a world view that came from the Vedas and as a quality it remained unspoken.

During the period of the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, by contrast, the role, content, and customs of the Vedas were threatened and jeopardized by competing religious actors. The author of the *Mānavadharmasāstra* faced social and religious rivals that threatened the very status of the *brāhmaṇas*. For this reason, he repeatedly points out the reciprocal bond between Veda and *brāhmaṇas*, stating that without the Veda there would be no *brāhmaṇas* and vice versa. While strategically embracing the criticisms presented by antagonistic religious leaders (in particular, the Buddha), he encourages *brāhmaṇas* to regain their symbolic and social primacy through strict adherence to the worldview that grants their strength, survival, and supremacy. In this way he reestablishes the old “vedic” *dictum* according to which the brahmanical scholar becomes the “preserver of the treasure of the Veda for men.”

This is why the author of the *Mānavadharmasāstra* rehabilitates this world and this culture in the eyes of brahmanical *sākhās* and political leaders. When everything was “vedic,” no one felt the need explicitly to qualify practices, behaviours, rituals, and textual materials as *vaidika*. When the socio-political context changed, the rhetoric asserting that “it has to be *vaidika* in order to be good” became the main tool for bolstering the identity of a specific group by calling upon their past.

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