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## pra-vargyà-, pari-vargyà-, vāsudeva-várgya-

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1.1 The Vedic Pravargya is a ritual that is optionally performed in connection with a Soma sacrifice. It is a unique Indo-Aryan development, without parallels in Iran or in areas of Indo-Europeans, and it can be traced back as far as 1500 B.C.E. (cf. Houben 2000a and b). The central object in the ritual is an earthenware pot that is placed on a fire until it is burning hot. At that moment the pot is identified with the sun, but also with the inner light of the inspired Vedic poet. As I argued recently (Houben 2006), the myths associated with the Pravargya do have Indo-European parallels, especially in Celtic stories on a magic cauldron (continued in the legend of the Holy Grail). Both in the Pravargya myths and in the Celtic and Arthurian stories there are recipients and cut-off heads identified or associated with the sun, and both are also associated with some (advanced) initiation or phase-transition in personal development. For the Pravargya the liturgies of all priests in a few distinct versions are available, and we also have quite elaborate descriptions both of the ritual and of the initiation (*avāntaradīkṣā*) to be undergone by the Veda-student when he wants to study the Pravargya-mantras.

1.2 We therefore have a reasonably detailed knowledge of the Pravargya, but the term used as its name has so far never been properly analysed and interpreted. *pravargyà-* may refer to the ceremony as well as to the heated pot. This pot has also other names, such as *ghárma-* 'heat' and *mahāvīrā-* 'great hero'.<sup>2</sup> The verb *pra-vṛj* is linked to the term *pravargyà-* and in appropriate contexts it means "to perform the Pravargya ritual" (e.g. TĀ 5.6.1-2). In a place such as KS 37.7: 88.2 *pravargya-* functions as the internal object of *pra-vṛj* (*pravargyaḥ pravṛjyate*). In Vedic ritual texts from the Ṛgveda onwards, *pra-vṛj* is also used in connection with placing and arranging the grass in the sacrificial area. However, with all the available indications for the structure and semantics of *pravargyà-* it is still far from clear what might be the underlying meaning of the term on the basis of which it was taken as a name for the ceremony and the pot. It is not easy to determine this. Difficulties are: (a) *pravargyà-* is from the beginning *exclusively* attested in connection with this ritual; moreover, (b) the semantics of the verb *vṛj* and of compositions of *vṛj* with preverbs are notoriously problematic; finally, (c) there is the broader difficulty of *ya*-affixes (with various accentual properties) in verbal and nominal word-formation.

2.1 In an earlier publication (1991: 3 n. 3) I proposed to understand *pravargyà-* as "to be placed [sc., on the fire]," and I noted that it is "from *pra-vṛj*." This suits the character of the Pravargya ritual, it generally suits the Ṛgvedic occurrences of *pra-vṛj*, and it suits the use of *pravargyà* and its occurrence with *pra-vṛj* in later ritual texts.

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article appeared in *Nyāya-Vasiṣṭha*, Felicitation volume of Prof. V.N. Jha (ed. by M. Banerjee, Calcutta 2006). No proofs of the article were received by the author. In view of the large number of misprints especially in the representation of the accents which are crucial in the argument (the signs for *udātta*, indep. *svarita* and for long vowel are generally mixed up), the article is here published in a corrected and updated version, with my best felicitations to Prof. V.N. Jha, scholar of Vedic Padapāṭhas and Indian logic, on the occasion of his retirement as Director of the Centre of Advanced Study of Sanskrit, Pune.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kashikar 1973, 1982.

2.2 It is moreover in accordance with Debrunner's discussion of the *ya-* affix and the future passive participle (gerundive<sup>3</sup>), AiG §§ 642-649. In § 642, Debrunner notes first (a) that, generally, *-ya-* (*-tya-* after brief vowels), in addition to having functions he discussed before, serves to form a gerundive; next (b), that in that case the root has very often zero grade; numerous examples are given, including, of direct interest to us, *an-apa-vṛjyá-* 'unfinishable', 'unending' (said of *ádhvān-*, roads, ṚV 1.146.3); (c) that the root is also often in *guṇa* grade; numerous examples are given, among them *bhógya-* 'to be enjoyed' (AV), *márjya-* 'to be cleansed' (only ṚV, and there only in the ninth *maṇḍala*), *pari-vargyà* 'to be avoided'; it is here that we find also mention of *pra-vargyà-* which Debrunner explains as 'a ceremony' ("e. Zeremonie"); the form is contrasted with *pra-vṛjya* which has the root in zero-grade; (d) the next category he mentions is those where the *guṇa* grade has *a* + simple consonant: here the *a* becomes long, e.g. *grāhyà-*, *kāryà-*; (e) verbs whose root ends in long *ā* (*ai*) have *-eya-*; finally (f, g, h), gerundives where *-ya-* is attached to the verbal present stem and a few problematic cases. In § 644 the fluctuation between palatal and "guttural" – i.e., velar – final consonant of the root is discussed. Here, *pra-vargyà-*, with velar final consonant of the root, is again mentioned together with the contrasting form *pra-vṛjya* where the final root-consonant has remained palatal. The accent of words with gerundival *-ya-* is not discussed until § 654 where these are dealt with together with words that have other types of *-ya-* affixes.

2.3 This is also the direction followed by Michael Witzel when in 2004: xxix he gives what he considers the "literal" meaning of *pravargyà-* as 'the one to be turned towards (the fire)'. With this translation and his insistence that it is literal he suggests that *pravargyà* is indeed a future passive participle (gerundive) of the verb *pra+vṛj* taken in the meaning 'to turn towards'. The preverb *prá* (which is 'forward', 'forth'; 'towards' would in fact be *pári*) is a point which will be addressed later. First, let us ask whether the analysis of the form as a gerundive is indeed the best option, and whether the semantics of *pra+vṛj* makes sense with respect to the details of the Pravargya ritual.

3.1 Taking *pravargyà-* as a full-fledged gerundive is well possible, though it is not the only possibility. Debrunner lists *pravargyà-* among full-fledged gerundives in § 642, but he also notes that the velar final root-consonant points to a connection with an agent or action noun.<sup>4</sup> In addition, he shows that the velar is still rare in the ṚV and the older literature, and that the forms with *-ya-* affix and velar final root-consonant can usually be paired with nouns in velar + *-a-* (e.g., *upa-vākyà* and *upa-vāká*).

3.2 According to Debrunner (AiG, p. 799), the velar is the general rule in the classical language. This statement he supports with a reference to Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī, A 7.3.52 *cajoḥ ku ghiṇṇyatoḥ* "instead of (the palatals) *ca* and *ja* there is a velar, if the affix has marker (*it*) *GH* or if the affix is *ṆyàT*." However, there are several exceptions to this rule

<sup>3</sup> The gerundivum, also called verbal adjective (of necessity).

<sup>4</sup> AiG II, 2 § 644.c, p. 799, Debrunner speaks of the "Zusammenhang der Gutturalformen mit dem Nomen ag. oder act," whereas there is "Zusammenhang der Palatalformen mit dem Verbum." Whitney 1889: 463 had already observed that in the later (classical) language "comes to be practically a primary one" but that many Vedic forms can be seen as secondary derivatives, and that in the case of, for instance, *parivargyà-* 'to be avoided' and *avimokyá-* 'not to be gotten rid of', "the guttural reversion clearly indicates primitives in *ga* and *ka*."

(mentioned by Debrunner), and the rule itself is limited in its application (only for affixes with *GH-* as marker and for the affix *ṆyàT*). Among the affixes indicated in this rule it is *ṆyàT* that would give *-yà-* with the desired accent, maintain the *guṇa* of the stem vowel produced by A 7.3.84, and would give velarization of the palatal by A 7.3.52, and thus lead to *pravargyà-*.

3.3 A different Pāṇinian way to derive *pravargyà-*, and hence a different way to analyse and understand the word, is by taking *-yà-* (*yàT*) as a secondary (*taddhita-*) affix. Added to *pravargá-*<sup>5</sup> it yields *pravargyà*, and the meaning would be 'belonging to *pravargá-*',<sup>6</sup> 'being in *pravargá-*' (A 4.3.53 *tatra bhavaḥ*), 'deserving *pravargá-*' (A 5.1.63 *tad arhati*). *pravargá-* itself can be derived from *pra-vṛj* with *GHaṆ* (which gives velarization of the palatal stop by A 7.3.52, the accent on the last syllable by A 6.2.143f).

4.1 For either of the two solutions we now need to know the exact meaning of *pra-vṛj*. While *pravargyà-* is attested only as term of the specific ceremony, *pra-vṛj* is used in different contexts and should hence be able to give some help. The ṚV, which does not have the term *pravargyà-* as such, compares the action done with regard to the *gharmá* pot (in a ritual that corresponds to what later becomes the Pravargya) with another action that concerns the sacrificial grass.

*nāsatyābhyām barhír iva prá vṛñje stómāñ iyarmy abhríyeva vātaḥ /  
yāv árbhagāya vimadāya jāyáñ senājúvā nyūhátū ráthena //* (ṚV 1.116.1)

I ... (*prá vṛñje*) for the two Aśvins, as one ... (*prá vṛj*) the sacrificial grass, I set in motion the praises as the wind sets in motion the rain clouds, for you two, who brought to the small Vimada a wife, with your chariot, swift as an arrow.

Geldner translated the first pāda as follows: "Für die Nāsatya's setze ich (den Milchtrank) ans Feuer wie das Barhis." Elsewhere, *prá vṛj* either refers to an action with sacrificial grass (ṚV 7.2.4, 7.39.2) or to the ritual with the Gharma pot (ṚV 5.30.15). ṚV 7.2.4, for instance, is as follows:

*saparyávo bháramāṇā abhijñú prá vṛñjate námasā barhír agnáu /  
ājúhvānā ghṛtápṛṣṭham pṛṣadvad ádhvaryavo havíṣā marjayadhvam //*

Geldner translates: "Sorgsam, indem sie es halb knieend bringen, legen sie unter Verneigung das Barhis um das Feuer. Begießet (das Barhis) und glättet das schmalzrückige, schmelzbutterige mit dem Opfer(schmalz), ihr Adhvaryu's!" Geldner's interpretation of *prá vṛñjate* as "um das Feuer ... legen" is problematic. "Put around (the fire)" is a meaning that is often mentioned for *vṛj*, but a critical confrontation with the ancient sources does not allow us to maintain that meaning, as demonstrated by Gonda 1985: 140-150.<sup>7</sup> In ṚV 7.39.2a *prá vāvṛje suprayá barhír eṣ ām*, he translates the same

<sup>5</sup> The word occurs in the ṚV compound *dāsá-pravarga-*, ṚV 1.92.8.

<sup>6</sup> Debrunner AiG, p. 776, on the *-ya-* affix: "Seine Grundbedeutung war gewiß die allgemeine der Zugehörigkeit oder Beziehung."

<sup>7</sup> Hoffmann 1967: 612 note "Im Vedischen heißt *vṛj* 'umwenden, herumlegen (*pra vṛj* an das Feuer setzen), abwenden, niederstrecken u.a.'"; Mayrhofer 1996: 516; Werba 1997: 236. In his footnote 26 on p. 128, Gonda (1985) still writes that "the first meaning of this verb (*pravṛj-*) is 'to pluck (break off, gather) and throw what has been plucked' (viz. the grass thrown round the fire, here called *barhis*, ṚV 7.2.4; 7.39.2; in a transferred sense in ṚV 1.116.24 of *Rebha*, who being tied (or covered with cords or strings) and pierced – verbs reminiscent of products of *muñja* grass, viz. strings and arrows – was thrown into the water but saved by the Aśvins); then the forms and derivatives of the verb appear to have been used also, in the same or a similar

verb as "(ans Feuer) legen" (cf. also above, ṚV 1.116.1): "Das Barhis ist (ans Feuer) gelegt, für sie angenehm zu betreten." In ṚV 1.116.24 mention is made of a certain Rebha whom some persons had thrown in the ocean; he is said to be floating (*vīprutam*) and *právr̥ktam* in the water.

4.2 After the ṚV which does not yet refer to *pravargyà-*, the early Yajurvedic texts are the first to mention the ritual by this name. If anywhere, we can expect that here the name was not yet a petrified label for the specific ritual, that it retained its perspicuity, and that style and context can clarify how the term was understood. Already we saw KS 37.7: 88.2 with *pravargya-* functioning more or less as internal object of *pra-vr̥j*: *pravargyaḥ pravṛjyate*. A text of the same tradition that is much more elaborate on the Pravargya is the KathĀ. Although it is an Āraṇyaka it is not necessary that it is much younger than the Saṁhitā of its branch. The Pravargya was in any case a ritual that was already quite developed in the time of the Ṛgveda. An edition and German translation of the KathĀ appeared in 1974 and was recently republished (with a new introduction) as Witzel 2004. KathĀ 207+ of this edition (p. 78) is as follows:

*rudrāṁ vái devá yajñān nīrabhajan. sá dhánur avaṣṭábhyaṭiṣṭhat. tásyéndro vamrirūpéna dhanurjyām aśchinat. sá gḥṛṇṇ akarot. tásyārtiś [árniś ?] síra útpipeśa. sá pravargyò 'bhavad. yán mahatír devatā vīryavatīś, tásmān mahāvīró. yád dhánur gḥṛṇṇ ákarot, tásmād gharmó. yát pravṛjyáte, tásmāt pravargyà[h].*

The gods excluded Rudra from the sacrifice. He stood leaning on his bow. Indra, in the form of an ant, cut the bow string. It (the bow string) made the sound "gḥṛṇṇ." The end of his bow beat his head upwards. That became the Pravargya. As the deities (here involved) are great and possess manly power, that is why (the pot in the ritual is called) Mahāvīra; as the bow did *gḥṛṇṇ*, that is why (the pot in the ritual is called) Gharma. As it is .... that is why it is called the Pravargya.

Witzel translates the last sentence: "Weil der (Gharmakessel) ans Feuer gestellt wird (*pravṛjyate*), deshalb der (Name) 'Pravargya'." However, "placing at the fire" does not have any support or resonance in the myth (*arthavāda*) that has just been told. After a lacuna in the manuscript the text continues (p. 80):

[... *tébhīr de]vāḥ purástād yajñásya právr̥ñjata. yát právr̥ñjata, tásmāt právargyāni, tásmāt pravargyàs. tásmād, yás sápravargyeṇa yajñéna yájate, múkhyo brahmavarcasí bhavat[i] ...*

With these (earlier mentioned formulae) the gods ... before the sacrifice. As they ... that is why (those formulae) are (named) Pravargya formulae, that is why (the ritual) is called Pravargya. That is why, if someone offers a sacrifice that is accompanied by the Pravargya, he becomes leader and full of the lustre of spiritual knowledge. ...

Before the (main) sacrifice, the gods did something that amounted to doing the Pravargya; the one who, with reference to this, sacrifices (a big sacrifice) together with the Pravargya, he becomes chief. Witzel's interpretation of *pra-vr̥j* as "putting on the fire" is again not very convincing.

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context, to indicate the throwing or placing of objects that have not been plucked." Apparently he wrote this note before having done the studies involved in the subsequent chapter X on Barhis (and section A on Barhis in the Ṛgveda).

4.3 Passages with a similar function are found in another Āraṇyaka, the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka. Here it is Viṣṇu who first becomes proud of his success at the sacrifice and leans on his bow. The other gods arrange its string to be gnawed through.

*tásya dhánur viprávamāṇaḥ śíra úd avartayat / tād dyāvāpṛthiví ánu právartata / yát právartata / tát pravargyàsya pravargyatvám / yád "ghrām̐3" íty ápatat / tát gharmásya gharmatvám ... (TĀ 5.1.6)*

Stretching up, his bow caused his head to fly off. It proceeded along heaven and earth. That it proceeded (*prāvartata*), that is why the Pravargya is called Pravargya. That it flew off with the sound "ghraam̐m̐," that is why the Gharma is called Gharma. ...

Here it is the preverb *pra-* that receives all emphasis in the explanation of the name Pravargya.

The TĀ also contains series of identifications of the pot used in the Pravargya-ritual that allow us to determine with more precision at which stage in the ritual the author applies *pra-vṛj*. The first series (TĀ 5.11.1) is: "Prajāpati (is its name) when it is being collected (*saṁbhriyāmāṇaḥ*); Saṁrāṭ when collected (*sāṁbhṛtaḥ*); Gharma when ... (*prāvṛktaḥ*); Mahāvīra when laying disposed (*údvāsitaḥ*)." The second series (TĀ 5.11.3-4) is: "Vaiśvadeva (is its name) when it is seated (on the throne). Vasus when ... (*prāvṛktaḥ*); Soma when being poured over (with ghee). Āśvina when the milk is poured in. Māruta when boiling. ... " etc.

4.4 The verb *pra-vṛj* is frequently used in connection with the Pravargya, from the Ṛgveda onwards where it refers to the Ṛgvedic predecessor of the Pravargya ritual. In the Ṛgveda it is also used in connection with grasses; there we have rejected the meaning "to put around (the fire)" that has frequently been attributed to it in that context. In post-Ṛgvedic sources *pra-vṛj* is also used in connection with the Pravargya and there it has been translated regularly as "to put on the fire," which, however, seems a rough approximation of its sense that is often not convincing. Post-Ṛgvedic sources also have *pra-vṛj* in other contexts, of which I choose a more or less arbitrary example, the placing of the *ukhā* or fire-pan in or at the Āhavanīya fire altar. Baudhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra 10.13 says about this moment in the ritual the following: *tasyāṁ śakṛt piṇḍān pūtitṛṇānīti saṁprakāryājyasruvaṁ pratyasyāhavanīyasyāntameṣv aṅgāreṣu pravṛṇakti ... [i]ti dvābhyām /* Kashikar's recent translation is as follows (2003: 569): "Having put into it [into the *ukhā* or fire-pan, JH] dried balls of horse's faeces and dried grass, and having poured a spoonful of clarified butter, he burns it over the bordering embers of the Āhavanīya with two verses ... " This translation gives a good idea of what is going on, but it is clear that "burns it over" is not a literal translation of *pravṛṇakti*. Āpastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra 16.9.4 deals with the same moment in the ritual in a slightly different statement, with less details: ... *iti dvābhyām āhavanīye pravṛṇakti*. According to Gonda 1985: 128f, referring to these two passages, the priest "places (*pravṛṇakti*) it in the embers in the proximity of the *āhavanīya*." It is more likely, however, that the *ukhā* is indeed placed within the space of the Āhavanīya fire altar, but at its border, on glowing coals that are kept or placed there, a little away from the heart of the altar where the flames may be bigger. A passage like this may tempt us to believe that *pravṛṇakti* means "put on the fire" and in many cases this seems to work. But at other places it does not work, from the Ṛgvedic reference to Rebha onwards whom the Āśvins saved from the ocean.

5.1 One way to have access at the current meaning of a verb as it was understood by contemporaries, is to have a look at the simplest action noun derived from it (in Pāṇinian terms, the affix *GHañ* in the sense of *bhāva-*). The root *tyaj* has thus *tyāga-* (alternatively *tyāgá-*), *pac* has *pāka-*, *stj* has *sārga-* and *vṛj* is accompanied, in the living language, by the action noun *vārga-*. The well-known word *vārga-* 'set', but also, more rarely, *vārga-* as agent noun in the Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad, "one who excludes or removes or averts," cf. MW s.v. *vārga*, point to a dimension of the meaning of *vṛj* which has been largely overlooked. Starting from a basic meaning 'bend' scholars have arrived at 'putting around' and 'putting on the fire'. More suitable it would be to go from 'bend' not to 'put around' but to 'inflect' and 'set apart', 'set aside', either in a positive sense, or in a negative sense: 'exclude', 'avoid' (esp. in the compound *pari-vṛj*). With this move, all obscure places from the Ṛgveda onwards till the myths and other places dealing with the Pravargya in the sources of classical Vedic ritual become instantly clear.

The Ṛgvedic Rebha (ṚV 1.116.24) was set apart and pushed away, forward (*prá-vṛkta*<sup>8</sup>), into the water (*udáni, apsú*), by his enemies and it was left to the Aśvins to save him from there (cf. ṚV 1.112.5, 1.117.4). With our new understanding of *pra-vṛj* the first pāda of ṚV 1.116.1 becomes now more convincingly: "I set apart or arrange separately, before or in advance (before the start of the main acts of the ritual) [viz., the Gharma pot], for the Aśvins, as one arranges separately or sets apart before or in advance (before the start of the main acts of the ritual, or in this case: in front, east of the Vedi, just behind the Āhavanīya<sup>9</sup>) the sacred grass (*barhís*) ... " Similarly, in ṚV 7.2.4b the priests "arrange separately or set apart in front (before the main ritual; or in front, just behind the Āhavanīya) the Barhis, at the (Āhavanīya) fire, with obeisance ... "

5.2 In the Kāṭhā-Āraṇyaka origin myth of the Pravargya (KāṭhĀ 207+), we have seen that "is placed on the fire" is not a fully satisfactory translation of *pravṛjyáte* in *yát pravṛjyáte, tásmāt pravargyàḥ*. Rather we translate: "As (the pot) is arranged separately before (the main ritual), that is why (the pot is called) Pravargya." This statement now suddenly resonates with the immediately preceding myth: in the ritual the pot – in accompanying mantras said to be the "head" of the sacrifice, and identified with the sun – is arranged separately, in the myth it was Rudra's head that was "set apart" and became the sun. Similarly, in the succeeding passage, *tébhīr devāḥ purástād yajñásya právṛñjata ... tásmāt právargyāni, tásmāt pravargyàḥ*: "With these (earlier mentioned formulae) the gods arranged separately the pot<sup>10</sup> before the sacrifice. As they arranged this separately in advance, that is why (those formulae) are (named) Pravargya formulae, that is why (the ritual) is called Pravargya." Here, *purástād yajñásya* explains the *pra-* in *pra-vṛj* and in

<sup>8</sup> Pirart's proposal (1995: 196) to emend *prá-vṛkta-* here to *prá-vṛta-* (against the metre!) is based on the acceptance of wrong meanings for *pra-vṛj*, and can be safely rejected.

<sup>9</sup> The passages discussed by Gonda suggest to me that after the general strewing (*stj*) on the Vedi some grass is arranged separately (*pra-vṛj-*), for instance just behind the Āhavanīya. Gonda 1985: 150 is more careful: "The information the Ṛgvedic texts give on the spot where the *barhís* is spread is scanty. There is only one place where it is most probably said to have been put on the *vedi* (2.3.4), but it does not follow that ... this was the only, or even the usual place ... [The texts do not] in spite of Geldner's translations, explicitly state that the *barhís* is strewn around the fire. ... In any case, ... it could be placed, for instance between the fire and the *vedi*."

<sup>10</sup> Because of the preceding lacuna it is not clear whether the gods are already involved with the Pravargya-pot or with something else.

*pravargyà*. Only with this interpretation it makes sense for the author to continue with the statement that "if someone offers a sacrifice that is accompanied by the Pravargya, he becomes the leader (*múkhya*) ..." The importance attributed by early contemporary authors to the *pra-* of *pra-vṛj* and of Pravargya is also clear from the discussed passage in TĀ 5.1.6. In the series of identifications in TĀ 5.11 the episodes where the Pravargya pot is said to be *právrktaḥ* corresponds with the moment it is placed on the fire, but this is also the moment it is placed apart, a little aside of the area where the main acts of the sacrifice are being performed, on the special *pravṛñjanīya-khara-*, the special mound for the pot when it is set apart.

In the case of the *ukhā* or fire-pan, it is said (BŚS 10.13 and ĀpŚS 16.9.4) that the priest *pravṛṇakti* this pan in the Āhavanīya (ĀpŚS) or, more precisely, on the bordering embers of the Āhavanīya as the BŚS explains (*āhavanīyasyāntameṣv aṅgāreṣu pravṛṇakti*). One misses the point if *pravṛṇakti* is understood as "to place in the fire": the pan is placed in a specific way, by keeping it apart, at the side of the altar-space, away from the center where higher flames can be expected. *pravṛṇakti* is then: arranged separately, placed and kept apart (at the fire).<sup>11</sup>

6. If the verb *vṛj* is 'to set apart', 'seclude' and *pra-vṛj* 'to set apart', 'arrange separately in front or in advance', what is then *pravargyà*? As we have seen, we have two possible routes to arrive at this form: as primary derivative from *pra-vṛj* it is "that which is to be set apart, to be arranged separately, before (the main ritual)"; as secondary derivative from *pravargá-* it is "that which belongs to, which remains in, or which deserves, an excellent (*pra-*) secluded class."<sup>12</sup> In both cases the name *pravargyà* directly expresses, to anyone familiar with Sanskrit and with Vedic ritual, the core of the Pravargya: the seclusion of the pot, and, in the Avāntaradīkṣā which the eligible priest has to have undergone in advance, the seclusion of the Veda-student. On the other hand, the meaning with which modern scholarship got stuck, "to be put on the fire" would be a platitude in a ritual system where all major offerings are usually prepared and almost always offered in the fire.

With regard to the word which differs only in the preverb, *pari-vargyà-*, the preceding discussion implies that it is either directly derived from *pari-vṛj* and means 'to be avoided', 'to be excluded'; or it is derived from *pari-vargá* 'avoidance' and means 'being in the category of exclusion', 'deserving avoidance'. On the other hand, a word such as *vāsudeva-várgya-* 'belonging to the group of (devotees of) Vāsudeva' (the grammarians' example to illustrate A 6.2.131) admits only of an interpretation as

<sup>11</sup> Other problematic passages with *pra-vṛj* become clear with 'set aside', 'set apart', 'seclude' as basic meaning of *vṛj*. In the Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa forms of *pra-vṛj* occur several times without reference to the sacrificial fires. Bodewitz, observing that "to put on the fire" does not suit in such places, proposed in a footnote "exclude or throw out" (1973: 119) if *sa kim vidvān pravṛñjyāt* (JB 1.46) says something about the Season, interrogating the deceased. Similarly, in JB 1.61 *pra-vṛ* apparently amounts to 'exclude', 'keep out' (Bodewitz 1973: 198f). Again, in JB 1.120 *na bṛhatyā vaṣaṭkuryāt pa śūnā[m] apravargāya / yad bṛhatyā vaṣaṭkuryād vajreṇa vaṣaṭkāreṇa paśūn pravṛñjyāt*, *pra-vṛj* is not 'ins Feuer werfen' with Caland (1919: 28), nor 'strike down' with Bodewitz (1990: 68, cf. 241), but 'to set apart, exclude'; similarly, *a-pravargāya* in the cited passage is "in order not to exclude, not to put aside (viz., the cattle)."

<sup>12</sup> *pravargá-* in exactly this sense occurs in ṚV 1.92.8 in the compound *dāsá-pravargā-* "(wealth) that has as its first class slaves," "(wealth) the first category of which is slaves," or "(wealth) consisting of slaves, to begin with."



secondary derivative. The presence of these words and these formations in the language ensure that the word *pravargyà-* was indeed understood as a meaningful name, not as an empty label for an obscure Vedic ritual.

#### Abbreviations

- AiG = *Altindische Grammatik* of J. Wackernagel and A. Debrunner (vol. II,2): see Debrunner 1954.  
ĀpŚS = Āpastamba Śrautasūtra  
BŚS = Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra.  
JB = Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa.  
KaṭhĀ = Kaṭha-Āraṇyaka.  
KS = Kāṭhaka-Saṁhitā.  
MW = Monier Monier-Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1899.  
ṚV = Ṛgveda.  
TĀ = Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka.

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