
Rest after War: *yóga* in the *R̥gveda* and Its Scholarly Understanding in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries

Il riposo dopo lo scontro: yóga nel R̥gveda e la sua interpretazione accademica nel XIX e XX secolo

Marianna Ferrara



Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/mythos/2643>

DOI: [10.4000/mythos.2643](https://doi.org/10.4000/mythos.2643)

ISSN: 2037-7746

Publisher

Salvatore Sciascia Editore

Electronic reference

Marianna Ferrara, « Rest after War: *yóga* in the *R̥gveda* and Its Scholarly Understanding in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries », *Mythos* [Online], 14 | 2020, Online since 31 December 2020, connection on 31 December 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/mythos/2643> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/mythos.2643>

This text was automatically generated on 31 December 2020.

Mythos

Rest after War: yóga in the Ṛgveda and Its Scholarly Understanding in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries

Il riposo dopo lo scontro: yóga nel Ṛgveda e la sua interpretazione accademica nel XIX e XX secolo

Marianna Ferrara

About the Word *yoga*

- In the field of Indological studies, the term *yoga* has been variously translated, from union, tension, conjunction, effort, attention, contemplation, spiritual concentration, meditation, ability to direct knowledge¹. Some of these interpretations of the term *yoga* are derived from the short texts in *sūtra* style attributed to Patañjali (3rd–4th c. CE)², known as the *Yogasūtra* or *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*³. The term *yoga* is also attested in the oldest strata of the literature composed in the Brahmanical and Buddhist circles, in particular within those collections that have been assembled in the *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*, and in the Pāli canon⁴. The presence of the term *yoga* in all these sources, decidedly older than Patañjali's, begs the question of what *yoga* meant before 3rd–4th c. CE.
- Current translations of the word *yoga* emphasize its connections to “mind actions”; nonetheless, the richness of meanings this term received in the Indo-European vocabulary invites us to consider a wider semantic domain for *yoga*, paying special attention here to “recruitment of forces and their release”. At the morphological level, *yoga* is an a-stem, derived from the verbal root **yuj*, ‘to yoke, join, fasten, harness’.⁵ The term *yoga* is, therefore, a nominal derivate indicating the act of yoking, joining, fastening, harnessing. This meaning of *yoga* is shared with other Indo-European

languages⁶. From them we may come back to the Proto-Indo-European root **ieu*, **ieuu*, **ieu-g*, meaning ‘to yoke, join, tie together.’ Despite displaying a strong linguistic consistency among the Indo-European languages, as Boris Oguibénine noticed⁷, the term *yōga* (with Vedic accent) is also employed by Indo-Aryan speakers of the language used in the *Ṛgvedic* poetry with the meaning of ‘conquest’ or ‘battle’⁸, ‘effort’ or ‘engagement’⁹, ‘achievement’ or ‘action’¹⁰. Some scholars argued that the purposes of the *Yogasūtra* explain the semantic shift from the idea of ‘yoke’ to that of ‘effort’. They, indeed, interpreted the aim of ‘yoking’ the body to the activity of the mind as being one of the main principles of Patañjali’s *yoga*.

- 3 What all these examples suggest is that the Vedic term *yōga* has been given different meanings within the early poetry of ancient India. At the time when the *Yogasūtra* and the *Yogabhāṣya* were composed, during the first centuries of the Common Era, the word *yoga* principally was used to mean ‘means, method for, way of.’ Within his works, Patañjali joined a discussion about the method and its object, mainly concerning the ‘means’ to liberation. One could thus infer the existence of an intra-textual network made of quotations, literary borrowings, and references, within which Patañjali entered in conversation with other authoritative masters on topics such as asceticism, meditation, knowledge, and much more¹¹. The above alluded intellectual network, to which Patañjali implicitly refers in his statements, indicates the existence of significant reflections on ‘the adequate methods’ as a part of a broader analysis of philosophical questions. Reflections on the effective or appropriate means to liberation can be dated back to the earliest Brahmanical and Buddhist works, before the *Yogasūtra*. There is thus evidence both that the word *yōga* was employed before Patañjali in different religious and philosophical circles, and that the technical use by Patañjali constituted a historical caesura. Of course, the purpose of the method was particularly at stake in the situations in which Patañjali was either attacked or followed by his contemporaries. To date, the discussion on *yoga* in the *Yogasūtra* constitutes a piece of a bigger and even older literary puzzle¹².
- 4 Despite the richness of the term *yoga*, above indicated, modern academic literature tends to privilege a rather narrowly focused understanding of *yoga*. From the end of the nineteenth century, a univocal interpretation of *yoga* has strongly impacted the scholarly understanding of the term in the oldest literary contexts. Scholars turned to searching the ‘original’ meaning of *yoga* and aimed to separate ‘Yoga philosophy’ from the ‘practice of *yoga*’¹³. Yet, the understanding of *yoga* as a philosophical approach (primarily, Advaita Vedānta) or a religious phenomenon (especially, Haṭha Yoga)¹⁴ does not take into account the meanings assigned to the term *yōga* in early texts, composed many centuries before Patañjali’s works in a social and political context where the word *yōga* was linked with the art of war.
- 5 The fact remains, however, that the composition of *Yogasūtra* and *Yogabhāṣya* has been set by some scholars as a chronological and thematic frame within which they identify a conceptual change in the use of the word *yoga*¹⁵. Evidence of this change has been isolated through the comparison between the oldest oral tradition belonging to the Brahmanical circles – later crystallized in the Vedic canons – and the post-Buddha Sanskrit traditions. The triangulation, however, between the early Vedic and post-Buddha Sanskrit sources and the Buddhist texts allow us to rethink the semantic development around the word *yoga* and to retrace the early stages of the intellectual history of *yoga* before and after Buddha¹⁶.

- 6 In the following, I shall investigate the oldest strata of the Vedic literature in order to unfold the semantic development associated with the word *yoga* in the *Yogasūtra* and the successive sources. From a diachronic perspective, I will pay close attention to the earliest hymns that the ancient Brahmins had composed to honour gods, since this textual data is considered as being one of the oldest witnesses in the Indo-Aryan languages. Scholars proposed many chronologies for the composition of the earliest Vedic literature, but the second half of the second millennium BCE is the most accredited¹⁷. Therefore, in order to test the hypothesis according to which the term *yoga* appeared in the oldest hymns, I shall refer to the canon of strophes named *Ṛgvedasamhitā* (*ṚV*).
- 7 In this article, I also address the question of historiography on *yoga* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I will show how some attempts to search for an original *yoga* answered to the attempts to forge ideologies and how they impacted the scholarly understanding of the word *yóga/yoga*.

Modal Meanings of *yóga* in the *Ṛgveda*

- 8 The occurrences of the term *yóga* in the *Ṛgveda* are not abundant. The stem *yóga-* appears in only 21 of the 1028 hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, scattered among the ten books of this collection. The order of the books is not chronological, nor is it the sequencing of the hymns in every book. We have good reasons, however, to hold that the diachronic disposition of the data should proceed from an older core – identified with the books II–VII – to the newer additions, comprising the books VIII, I and X¹⁸. The ninth book is often considered as a special collection because it includes a small group of hymns dedicated to the ritual practice for producing the liquid offered to gods, that is, the *soma* drink. Moreover, the so-called ‘*soma*-collection’ contains hymns that have been attributed to various poets in the circles of Brahmins who took part in composing the collection – this is given as the ‘official’ authorship, according to the late indexes of the *Ṛgveda*¹⁹.
- 9 The idea that textual stratification provides a diachronic disposition of the texts should not justify, however, the search for an ‘authentic’ meaning of the term *yóga*, or the identification of a ‘true’ and ‘original’ notion out of which the late ‘yogic methods’ developed. This attempt to locate a ‘pure,’ ‘true,’ ‘essential,’ or ‘original,’ *yoga* represents, indeed, the direction taken by many nineteenth and twentieth century scholars²⁰.
- 10 From the reading of the several available translations of the *Ṛgveda*, however, one has the impression that many modern scholars have difficulty in abandoning the ‘hypostatic and monothematic’ meaning of the term *yoga* as it was used in later texts, produced after the Vedic corpora. On the one hand, one could explain this attitude as the systematic projection of a more recent meaning of *yoga* retroactively over texts arguably by one millennium and a half older. Such anachronistic readings are not limited to the history of the term *yoga*. The history of ‘comparative religions’ is replete with chronologically backwards’ interpretations of concepts into more ancient texts. On the other hand, one could possibly identify a certain resistance in scholarly circles to unpacking the historical layers of *yoga*, which, coupled with the implicit consensus to treating *yoga* as a stable concept, resulted in its scholarly armature becoming connected rather to the later literary contexts.

- 11 The history of the use of the word *yoga*, both as a practice and as an intellectual method, covers an immense cultural landscape, which is rooted within the Brahmanical, Buddhist, Jain environments and stretches from South Asia to Central and East Asia. Nonetheless, only a restricted range of definitions, arisen in the colonial-like encounter between the West (European, North American) and the East (religious sources, commentaries, native practitioners), has oriented the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries academic writings about what is expected to be *yoga* and what is not. At odds with the position advocated by recent scholarship, on the historical use of the plural term *yogas*, which developed out of the focus on cultural transformation of *yoga*²¹, I suggest the word *yoga* be reconsidered within the Vedic literature by taking the *R̥gvedic* strata as a starting point. From this vantage point, I will break with the trend, extremely common, of understanding *yóga* in the *R̥gveda* and the oldest Vedic literature as an ascetic practice that presents the rudiments of *yoga* as a philosophical system or a religious discipline. Following a pragmatic approach to the study of the stem *yóga* in the Vedic corpora, I suggest that the word *yóga* should be interpreted in relation to two pragmatic processes that marked the life of the migrant people of the North-Western regions of ancient India: 1) the passage from the preparation of men to their ‘recruitment, regrouping, reunion, gathering’ (*yóga*) before the battle to the moment of the fight; 2) the passage from the end of battle to the period of ‘rest’ and ‘peace’ (*kṣéma*). At the moment of *yóga*, the forces previously spread within a unique, cohesive, close-knit body, take distance from their habitat and assemble against ‘the other.’ At that precise moment, the individual and the whole collectivity prepare for the fight. Only after the battle, the forces break up and disperse for a peaceful rest, *i.e.*, the time for *kṣéma*.
- 12 Taking the above examples as a basis will enable us to distinguish the term *yóga* in the early texts from later developments, such as the *Yogasūtra*. Evidence of this distinction has already been illustrated some decades ago by Louis Renou (1896–1966)²² and Boris Oguibénine²³, while a few among the early twentieth century’s scholars underestimated the semantic development of the word *yoga* in the attempt to seek the traces of the yogic practices in the earliest layers of the Vedic texts²⁴. In particular, Richard Garbe (1857–1927) aimed to explain the distinction between “der Begriff des Yoga und seine Herkunft”, going back to the “Indo-Germanic past”²⁵. Starting from the studies by the philologist Hermann Oldenberg²⁶, Garbe did not link the ascetic practice to the notion of *yoga*, but to that of *tapas*, meant here as the ‘heat’ produced in an ascetical state.²⁷ Jakob W. Hauer (1881–1962), who was supervised by Garbe during his *Doktorat* in 1918, argued that the term *yoga* means ‘tension,’ not in the ‘classical Yoga’ sense – with reference to the *Yogasūtra* –, but as the ‘effort’ due to the ritual labour or concentration²⁸. This interpretation of *yoga* was supported, in Hauer’s view, by the ‘primitive yogins’ (Keśin and the *vṛātyas*) who appeared in the *R̥gveda* as non-Brahmanical “ecstatic characters”. These two figures have peculiar characters compared to standard Brahmins. Because of this, Hauer and others suggested that they could not have belonged to Brahmanical circles. However, Hauer, in his interpretation of the ‘original Yoga,’ was fascinated by the figure of the *vṛātya*, whom he considered a “Wildestatiker der Kriegerkaste”²⁹. Hauer was convinced that the practice of *yoga*, albeit an *ekstatische Praxis*, derived originally from the milieu of warriors and only later it developed within the Brahmanical religion³⁰. Hauer’s interest in arguing the connection between the ‘yogic elements’ with the warlike nature supported another crucial point of his study on *yoga*: that is, the emphasis on *karmayoga* (‘*yoga* or path of

action') as the highest form of *yóga* which, in the poem of *Bhagavadgītā*, helped the prince Arjuna to choose for fighting when he hesitated in taking up arms against his relatives. Hauer's fascination for warrior-like *vr̥tyas* and his exaltation of the 'yoga of action' provided him with a certain religious basis which allowed him to advocate the notion of military heroism befitting his ideological purposes. Indeed, Hauer's correspondences up to 1937 demonstrate that secretly he was a strong supporter of the National Socialism before he publicly joined the SS³¹. The notion of *Yogapraxis* within the ideology of the new Indo-Aryan-Germanic religion helped Hauer forge "a faith based on *völkisch* experiences"³². Hence, from his works on *yóga*, published and partially re-published during and after the Nazi regime,³³ we have evidence of Hauer's manipulation of the sources according to his political and religious agenda. In the 1930s-40s' Europe, Hauer was one of the most influent scholars of Indology and experts on *yóga*. He collaborated with Heinrich Zimmer (1890–1943) and Carl Gustav Jung (1865–1961) at the 'Psychologischer Club' in Zurich; and in 1934, he took part in the second Eranos meeting with a paper on *yóga*³⁴. Still in 1947, in the section about "Les pratiques du yoga et de l'ascèse", Louis Renou and Jean Filliozat refer exclusively to Hauer's theses about the "antécédents du yoga" and the *vr̥tyas* as "une confrérie de mystères, porteurs de pratiques extatiques et magiques originales" to hold the non-Brahmanical origin of the "yogic practices" in the oldest literary contexts³⁵. Hauer contributed to shaping the European discourse about *yóga* that emphasizes the 'miraculous powers' (*Wunderkraft*) of *yóga* as the result of the encounter between the *vr̥tyas*' and the Brahmins' goals: "Erwerbung von Wunderkraft, Vereinigung mit den Göttern, Loslösung von der Welt der Erscheinungen und später Versenkung"³⁶.

- 13 From a position different from the psychological approach of Eranos speakers and the distortions of Hauer, however, Louis Renou was the first to rethink the meaning of *yóga* by taking into account exclusively the semantics suggested by the Vedic context in which the term appears. In his *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, Renou translated Vedic *yóga* as *attelage*, 'coupling, harness, yoke'³⁷, evoking the image of the draught animal tied to the yoke. The image of horses yoked together to the cart is frequently employed in the *R̥gvedic* verses to evoke movement, the act of running, the excitement of victory³⁸. The carts described in these verses are not those that are carried by animals for agricultural activities; instead, they are chariots for conquering with speed. Therefore, *attelage*, in Renou's words, is what prepares the chariots for the expedition, for enterprise, and action. This image is suggested in the authoritative translations from Vedic into German by Hermann G. Grassmann (1809–1877) and Karl F. Geldner (1852–1929), more recently, by Michael Witzel, Toshifumi Gotō and Salvatore Scarlata, in the translation into Russian by Tat'jana J. Elizarenkova (1929–2007) and in the English translation of Stephanie W. Jamison and Joel P. Brereton³⁹.
- 14 Renou's arguments derive their persuasive force from his focus on the context: through the *yóga* of horses, the gods *Aśvins* prepare themselves for the voyage (*R̥gV* I.34.9); with the determination of *yóga* the divine warriors place the chariot in position (VII.67.8); from the movement implied in the *yóga* of the chariot, the divine dawn rises as the goddess who confers luminous gifts (VIII.58.3; X.39.12). Renou shows that the condition of rest and peace (*kṣéma*) is required to start the activity of *yóga* due to the opportunities for new conquest and for acquiring new goods (V.37.5; VII.54.3; X.89.10; X.166.5)⁴⁰. One could identify in Renou's reading echoes of Hanns Oertel's work *The Syntax of Cases in the Narrative and Descriptive Prose of the Brāhmaṇas* (1926) about the meaning of *yóga* and *kṣéma*⁴¹. There are, however, some differences between these two

scholars. Renou agrees with Oertel's idea that the early Vedic adoption of the opposition between *yóga* and *kṣéma* expresses the general alternation of the "active life away from home on a journey" (*yóga*) and the "reposeful life at home" (*kṣéma*)⁴². Oertel doubted, however, that "down to the time of the Brāhmaṇas the terms *yoga* and *kṣema* had already acquired the narrow and specific meanings which the concurrent testimony of the native commentators ascribes to them viz. 'acquisition of property' for *yoga*, and 'conservation of this acquisition' for *kṣema*"⁴³. On the contrary, Renou suggests that, even in the *Ṛgveda*, there is an original connection between the idea of stability and the discipline of thoughts. It is precisely this link, according to Renou, which is concentrated in the meaning of *yóga*. Indeed, Renou uses the expression *attelage mentale* to distinguish the "*yóga* of the poetical thoughts"⁴⁴ (I.18.7: *dhīṅám yóga*), as the capacity to impose discipline to mind, from the "*yóga* of the horses well yoked to the chariot" which prepares the warrior to battle (V.43.5). One might be tempted to say that Renou was unable to completely abandon the idea, much more familiar, of *yoga* as an exercise for self-control. Indeed, at the moment to explain the *attelage mentale*, he affirms that *yóga* imposes 'discipline' to the thoughts, gives a direction and keeps them in position during the poetic inspiration⁴⁵. In this regard, Renou expresses his disappointment that his predecessor, Hermann G. Grassmann, did not notice this occurrence and excluded it from his lexicographic dictionary on *Ṛgveda*⁴⁶.

- 15 The *attelage mentale*, in Renou's arguments, is a point that deserves to be revisited. In the following sections, I therefore revisit the *yoga-kṣema* connection, but first I discuss Boris Oguibénine's translations and interpretations of the term *yoga* in the second half of the twentieth century.
- 16 The originality of the study by Oguibénine lies in his interpretation of *yoga* as the "capacity in keeping things tied, stable, in position". Oguibénine arrived at this meaning by examining the semantic range of the Sanskrit verbal root **yuj*, which other scholars, such as, previously, Renou and Geldner, have variously translated with "to tie together, link, connect, attach, subdue", but also "to prepare, mobilize".
- 17 Following the 'contextual' approach promoted earlier in the *Vedische Studien* (1889–1901) by K. F. Geldner and R. Pischel, Oguibénine proposes a reading of the term *yóga* in *Ṛgveda* different from Renou's, one that is closer to the efficacy of the ritual labour than to the ascetic or cognitive aspects of the of poetic activity. Oguibénine was interested in the ritual and the prescriptive nature of the Vedic poetry and, as a result, he focused on the features of the interrelated dual concept of *yoga* and discourse. Oguibénine noticed that the relationship between *yóga* and discourse should be interpreted in connection with the role of speech in the Vedic ritual context. As a Vedic term, *yóga* is a word that "goes through the space," which crosses beyond boundaries to "tie the extremities together and create a link between them" – a 'feature' he adds "that we recognize in the role of the officiant poet", that is, the officiant's skill in producing correlations and correspondences between divine and human, macro- and microcosmos⁴⁷.
- 18 However, this metaphor is not a specific feature of *Ṛgvedic* poets. Oguibénine, quoting the studies of Marcello Durante (1923–1992), shows that the idea of the poet as one who holds the reins of speech is common to the Greek context, with Pindar and Parmenides⁴⁸. Thus, Oguibénine illustrated the results of a comparison with the Indo-Iranian context. He noticed that the metaphor of the yoke is to be interpreted in the relationship between the one who is putting the yoke and what is yoked. This kind of relationship, it is suggested, can be interpreted as a specificity of the Vedic poetry only,

he clarifies, from the view of the expert officiant who can control with powerful speech and orientate the ritual action⁴⁹.

- 19 From this perspective, scholars have interpreted the meaning of the derivative *yogyá-*, a term which appears in a few occurrences in the *Ṛgveda*, as the ‘reins’⁵⁰ or the ‘strings’ (cords, ropes)⁵¹ that help to control stability and force⁵²:

ṚV III.6.5ad-6ad: *vratá te agne maható maháni táva krátvā ródasī á tatantha | tvám dūtó abhavo jáyamānas tvám netá vṛṣabha carṣaṇīnām ||*
ṛtásya vā keśínā yogyábhīr ghṛtasnūvā róhitā dhurí dhiṣva | áthá vaha deván deva vísvān svadhvará kṛṇuhi jātavedaḥ ||

Great are the commandments of you who are great, o Agni. Through your will you extend throughout the two world-halves.

You became the messenger as you were born. You are the leader of the different peoples, o bull.

Or place your own two long-maned (horses) of truth, sorrels bathed in ghee, on the yoke-pole with the harness ropes [by means of which they bend to their task].

Then convey all the gods here, o god. Perform good rites, Jātavedas.

ṚV VII.70.4ab: *caniṣṭám devā ósadhīṣv apsú yád yogyá asnávaithe ṛṣīnām |*

O gods, delight in the plants and waters when you will take on the harness cords [=the ritual acts?] of our seers.

ṚV X.53.11cd: *sá vísváhā sumánā yogyá abhí siṣāsánir vanate kārā íj jítim ||*

He, always benevolent, eager to gain, with the yoking strings [to bend things to their task] wins the victory just at the decisive moment⁵³.

- 20 On the one hand, the Indo-Iranian context provides some evidence for the arguments of Oguibénine; on the other hand, it offers a singular case that forces a reconsideration of Oguibénine’s position. This is the case of the Av. *yaox̥sti*, commonly translated as ‘perception’ or ‘promptness,’⁵⁴ which carries an evident resemblance to *yukti*. The Sanskrit term *yukti* was employed by ancient Indian grammarians to indicate ‘having its words fixed,’ that is, a proposition. It also appears in the lexicon of logicians to indicate the cognitive activity – from which ‘reason’ or ‘reasoning’ – that allows to establish and detail what happens under our eyes. Both Av. *yaox̥sti* and Skt. *yukti* are mentioned among the historical possibilities of the Proto-Indo-Iranian root **yaoḡ*. At the same time, *yaox̥sti* and *yukti* attest to a semantic development different from the poetic enterprises described by Ṛgvedic authors. Oguibénine left open the above question. Paring it down to minimal components, he noticed that the role of the agent who ‘harnesses, connects, ties’ is not always easy to distinguish. If the verbal root is employed in a transitive sense, the act of yoking can express both an active function (i.e., derivative stem *yoga-*) and a reflexive function (i.e., *yukti*). In this way, Oguibénine argued for the “identification of the yoke with the yoked”⁵⁵.
- 21 One needs to apply these arguments to the few occurrences of the term *yukti* in the *Ṛgveda*. Morphologically, *yukti* is an abstract noun formed by adding the suffix *-ti* to the zero grade of the root, denoting the act of linking, yoking, harnessing⁵⁶. In the *Ṛgveda*, the term *yukti* appears as the second member of the following compounds: *ṛtáyukti*, *práyukti*, *sváyukti*.
- 22 The compound *ṛtáyukti* can be interpreted as a substantive with the meaning ‘connection’ or ‘junction with the order, reality, truth’⁵⁷, or as an adjective⁵⁸ ‘well applied, proper, according to, conforming to the order, reality, truth’ – it might have

been intended as the order spoken through the word of the poet, an order which cannot be otherwise because it expresses the ‘natural’ order of things.

- 23 The term *ṛtá* expresses, in fact, the real state of things – from that it derives the commonly accepted translation with ‘truth’⁵⁹ –, which is replied in the physical and cosmic cycle – from which it derives the accepted translation with ‘law’⁶⁰. Nonetheless, the term *ṛtá* expresses also the order replied through the ‘good words’ of the poets; *ṛtá* being thus an ‘order’ which cannot be infringed. Speaking the *ṛtáyukti*, or words which can be so conformed to the order, means to adhere to this order through the poetic speeches, that is, through figures of speech and their capacity to represent the world.
- 24 The composite term *ṛtáyukti* appears in just one occurrence regarding the Navagvas (lit. ‘nine-fold’)⁶¹, part of the mythical ancestors with whom some poet families identify themselves. The Navagvas are called to protect the ritual on its path toward a successful performance, they are thus supposed to act according to the procedure which conforms to the real order:
- ṚV X.61.10ab: *maksú kanáyāḥ sakhyám návagvā ṛtám vádanta ṛtá-yuktim agman |*
Right away the Navagvas came to the fellowship of the maiden [= Dawn] and,
speaking the truth, to the yoking of truth [= *the established order*]⁶².
- 25 Taken with this meaning, *ṛtáyukti* becomes somewhat equivalent to the expression *ṛtásya yóge*, “in the union, in connection with order, with truth” – a sporadic expression in the Ṛgvedic collection⁶³ – which indicates the condition of being conformed to the established order, that is, the ‘truthful speech.’⁶⁴
- 26 In discussing the direct relationship between the words of poets and the efficacy of the ritual act, one cannot disregard the use of the compound *práyukti*, which is commonly interpreted as a substantive meaning ‘connection’⁶⁵ or ‘pulsation, setting in motion.’⁶⁶ The compound *práyukti* is interpreted as the moving force, which comes forth as soon as a good speech has been offered to gods.
- 27 Finally, the interpretation of the term *sváyukti* depends on the meaning given to the prefix *svá*, ‘self, oneself.’ Many scholars interpret *svá* as an adjective⁶⁷ which denotes the skill of agent in ‘self-yoke spontaneously’: this seems to be both the case of the mares bringing the chariot of god Sūrya and thus “with these of his own yoking he drives”⁶⁸ (ṚV I.50.9), and the case of the ‘self-yoked’⁶⁹ birds bringing on their back the gods Aśvin to Bhujyu (ṚV I.119.4).
- 28 Oguibénine was right in holding that both the stem *yukti*- and the compound that has it as a member suggest the idea of a spontaneous movement of the one who is yoked. In this sense, the reading of Oguibénine appears more neutral than that of Renou, because it is not affected by a cognitive reading of *yóga*, which is an aspect typically arising in later Sanskrit literature. Oguibénine focuses on the verbal root **yuj* and its derivatives and does not go beyond the descriptive value of these terms.
- 29 From a historical perspective, rather than linguistic, indeed, one still has to ask the question of what context has influenced the re-qualification of the term *yoga* and its derivatives in later texts. One has also to address the issue of what is the semantic ascent that affected the use of the term *yóga/yoga* from *Ṛgveda* to the *sūtras* attributed to Patañjali.

The pragmatics of the *yóga-kṣéma* paradigm

- 30 In order to investigate the flowing semantic net into which the ancient authors employed the term *yoga*, one needs to question about the advantages and disadvantages of understanding *yoga* as reflecting just one thematic meaning, and of consequently employing it in all occurrences in which *yoga* appears. To paraphrase Claude Lévi-Strauss, one has to wonder whether it is critically suitable to start from a particular object to interpret an absent ‘floating meaning’⁷⁰. Adapting Lévi-Strauss’s question to the topic of this article, one could ask how suitable is it to interpret the term *yoga* as the reference term of a leitmotif that occurs in various texts, each with their own nuances, interests, and aims.
- 31 The hypothesis that there is an intra-textual continuity in the use of *yoga* throughout time has led many scholars, both pioneers and experts, to hold that *yoga* has an exemplary function. As we have seen, the early works of Garbe and Hauer are characteristic for this approach, which originated in their attempt to find a continuity between the *Ṛgveda* and the discipline of *Yogasūtra*. The same attitude can be posited behind the standard resistance to abandon a mono-thematic reading of *yoga*, even among those who, such as Geldner and Renou, read the Vedic texts from a contextual perspective.
- 32 Evidence of such an approach occurs even in more recent studies. At the end of the 1970s, following the psychological approach to the study of religious phenomena, the Indologist Karel Werner drew the main lines of the scientific investigation into the meaning of the word *yoga* throughout the Indian traditions in a series of essays collected in two volumes, namely, *Yoga and Indian Philosophy* (1977) and *The Yogi and the Mystic: Studies in Indian and Comparative Mysticism* (1989). Like Garbe and Hauer, Werner also bases his thesis about the continuity of the term *yoga* on the hymn *ṚV X.136*. This hymn is a composition which the specialists consider singular because of the centrality of Keśín, a man ‘with’ (-in) long, abundant or beautiful ‘hairs’ (*kéśa*), who is also defined as a *múni* by the author (or authors?)⁷¹ of the hymn. The term *múni* means ‘the one who thinks, reflects’, thus, ‘the silent’ – a character, eventually, whom many scholars have become to define the prototype of the *yogin*, an ‘Ur-Yogin’ or a ‘mystic’ man.
- 33 It is undeniable that Keśín the *múni*, or ‘the silent with long hairs’, is quite similar to the figures of the *yogin* described in later literature. Mircea Eliade interpreted Keśín as a ‘shamanic’ figure based on the model of shamanism he systematized at the beginning of the 1950s. Recently, Guillame Ducoeur has stressed the connection between the horse-like features employed in the description of Keśín and some traits which he interprets as ‘shamanic’ on the basis of Eliade’s analysis.⁷² For the purpose of this article, it is worth noting that Eliade conceptualized his shamanism on the basis of the *Yogasūtra*, that is, the very texts which scholars consider the ‘proofing-texts’ of the yogic practices.⁷³ Nonetheless, the discussion about shamanism as a phenomenon connected to *yoga*, via the *Ṛgveda*, requires a multi-layered methodological investigation: first, identifying traces of shamanism (we will not delve into its definition here) in the *Ṛgveda* does not involve *ipso facto* the identification of traces of *yoga* (intended as an original stage of shamanism); secondly, shamanism is to be investigated as a notion that has been shaped by various contexts; thirdly, and related to the previous point, *yoga* also needs to be researched as a notion that has been shaped by various historical contexts.

- 34 Karel Werner's research on *yoga* and *yogin* does not quite elaborate much on the use of *yóga* in the *Ṛgveda* aside from the hypothesis that there are clues of yogic practices in the *Ṛgveda*. Werner never discusses references to the *Ṛgvedic* strophes where the term *yoga* has another meaning than 'mental' yoke, however. Werner suggests that one can identify in early Vedic texts the seeds from which the *yoga* as a philosophy has grown; yet such an idea had been previously expressed in other words elsewhere. Werner and the *Ur-Yoga* supporters agree that some of the ascetic and meditative practices described in the *Ṛgveda* did not belong to the Brahmanical milieu. Other than the poets who call themselves *ṛṣi* ('seers'), individual ascetic practitioners mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* are original characters who cannot be identified with the *brāhmaṇas* of the early Vedic literature. This sort of data, considered as 'evidence' also by other scholars, became the main argument in the position according to which the ascetic figures described in the *Ṛgveda* represent the archaic model of *yogin*. These *Ur-Yogins* would have been not only the *mūnis*, but also the *śramanas* and the *vrātyas*⁷⁴. Werner takes for granted the conventional use of the term *yogin* and describes him mainly as a 'practitioner of heat' (physical, internal). According to Werner, it follows that, in *Ṛgveda*, the *yogin* is called *tāpasvin* ('having, producing heat', 'practising austerities'). As such, Werner upholds the hypothesis according to which there is semantic continuity of the term *yoga* between early texts and late literature. He tries to reconstruct the historical development of the *yoga* as a discipline beginning with the ascetic practices mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* and up to the *yoga* as a method in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. The above development, however, is not explored at the linguistic level, a method which would entail the investigation of the semantic field within which the term *yóga* and its derivatives were qualified and then re-qualified. Today most scholars move in a different direction, as David Gordon White does in his book *Sinister Yogis* (2009), when he traces the "semantic shift in the use of the term 'yoga' – from its original sense of a chariot warrior's hitching up his rig and engaging with enemies, fortresses, or gods and other beings in this world or in heaven (the predicate objects of his advances: *prā-kram*, *ā-kram*, *ut-kram*, *ati-kram*) – to its opposite, disengagement from the world"⁷⁵.
- 35 I suggest not to regard the *yóga* evoked by the *Ṛgvedic* poets as a meditative technique or a practice of austerities. Instead, I advance that *yóga*, as it is employed in the *Ṛgveda*, indicates a concrete action that produces strength and stability in battle. As such, *yóga* appears among the wishes extolled in the eulogies the *Ṛgvedic* poets composed for their patrons and leaders. To return to Lévi-Strauss's dictum, above referred, the 'flowing' meaning of *yoga* and the difficulty to fix it mark a series of discontinuities rather than continuity⁷⁶.
- 36 Renou and Geldner already stressed the military context within the act *yóga* is achieved. As a result, they preferred translating it in a way that highlights the preparations before the battle with the purpose of managing the expedition's booty. In support of this interpretation one can refer to the semantic opposition between *yóga* and *kṣéma* ('tranquillity, peace, rest, security'). The use of these terms together, despite their semantic opposition, suggests the function of their alternation, designating the shift from the activity of the state of *yóga* and the inactivity of the state of *kṣéma*.
- 37 The verbal root **kṣi* (from which *kṣéma* derives) develops two meanings and suggests the semantics of *kṣéma*: 'to live, dwell' and 'to rule, possess'⁷⁷. One could further relate this to Thomas Oberlies's clarification, advanced few decades ago and recently resuscitated by Frank Köhler, according to which the twin *yóga/kṣéma* can be compared

to the two moments of the year when Ṛgvedic people migrated, probably in a group (yóga), in search for new lands in order to temporarily dwell (kṣéma)⁷⁸. In other words, the condition of being in a kṣéma time – a safe period, during which it was possible ‘to dwell’ and ‘to rule’ – was suitable only in the absence of any yóga, that is, the activity during which men were recruited for starting a new battle (cf. IV.24.4; I.5.3) or leaving in search of booty (cf. V.37.5; X.53.11). The kṣéma time allowed the group to establish a kṣéma place, that is a “habitable” place where to stay⁷⁹.

- 38 The above interpretation finds a consistent echo with one of the stanzas of the eighth book of the Ṛgveda where the term *prayújas* appears to be used in the same way as *yóga*:

ṚV VIII.37.5a: *kṣémasya ca prayújaś ca tvám iśiṣe* |

Over both peace and hitching up (for war) [at the time to bend to battle] you are master [...].

- 39 The above example brings my position closer to Tat’jana J. Elizarenkova’s translation of *kṣémasya ca prayújaś* as “peace and war” (МИРОМ И ВОЙНОЙ, *mir i vojna*).⁸⁰ Similarly, Renou adopted this interpretation in his translation of the Ṛgveda, considering a closely related meaning in his translation of *práyoga* and *prāyogá*. He understands *práyoga* as Agni, the one ‘who directs the yoke’ (“qui dirige l’attelage”), and *prāyogá* as the Aśvin, who are ‘heads of the yoke’ (“chefs d’attelage”), namely the twins leaders in the art of driving the chariot⁸¹:

ṚV X.7.5ad: *dyúbhir hitám mitráṃ iva prayógam pratnám ṛtvíjam adhvarásya jārám |
bāhúbhyām agním āyávo ’jananta vikṣú hótāraṃ ny āsādayanta ||*

To the one established throughout the days like an ally for the harnessing [that bends things to the order], the ancient sequential-sacrificer and lover of the rite, to Agni did the Āyus give birth with their arms and install among the clans as their Hotar.

ṚV X.106.2ab⁸²: *uṣṭāreva phārvareṣu śrayethe prāyogéva śvātryā śásur éthaḥ |*

Like plow-oxen [?] you are fixed in [/to] the pharvara; like brawny lead-horses [?] you follow instructions.

- 40 I would suggest that the above example offers us a precise prescription of what the activity of yoking implies: *to be able to yoke* is similar to *yoke in conformity with one’s own task*, that is, according to the established order of things⁸³. This is the order according to which the ‘one who is yoked’ conforms to his function of ‘being yoked,’ whereas the ‘one who yokes’ conforms to his function of ‘yoking.’ Maintaining this order of things requires the skill of the art of ruling⁸⁴. The yoke thus becomes a metaphor of steadfastness and dominance over the one who is yoked and of the relative order. This aspect also occurs in the poets’ description of the art of composing eulogies as the skill of yoking the words to the order (*ṛtá*) that precedes them, at the logical level, and that connects them at the cognitive level.

- 41 Indeed, the notion of order is at its most intense in the ‘well-spoken words’ – that is the very meaning of *sūktá*, the Sanskrit word commonly translated as ‘hymn’ or ‘eulogy’ – that are said to be ‘yoked’ or “conformed to the order” and that aim to create order when the poet, thinking and speaking words, puts them together. The spoken order (*ṛtá*) represents thus the sphere of the ‘well-spoken words.’ As a result, the poet – or his ‘esprit’ in Renou’s words – displays an intimate knowledge of these connections, or rather, of these combinations, provided that the language is understood as a process of linking, which domesticates the thought through (well-)composed words.

- 42 Like reins and tensioned ropes (*yogyā*), the ‘cognitive’ utensils of the poet enable him to rule and lead his thoughts, and also to lend them discipline, according to Renou’s interpretation. The poet is able to shape the train of thought precisely because the art of composition makes room for improvisation within canons of the ‘well-speaking’ (*sūktā*) in the manner of the elders.
- 43 The semantics of the ‘yoke,’ from which terms such as *yóga*, *yúkti* and relative compounds derive, occurs in the linguistic register which connotes the ritual labour par excellence, that is, the poetic speech in its more exacerbated form, in the *somayajña*, the ‘worship by means of *soma*’. The power of the ‘spoken speech’, which is central in the *Ṛgveda*, is a symbolical device which sets up the correspondences between the ‘one who yokes’ and the ‘one who is yoked’.
- 44 The above metaphor is efficacious: the poet rules by means of the yoke that ties or binds, or that bows things to the established order. One can appreciate the force of this metaphor by delving into the details of the *Ṛgvedic* poetry, which is partially based on the power of the ritual formulation (*bráhmaṇ*) and on the success of the ritual practice for honouring gods (*yajñá*). At the same time, the theme of the ‘yoke,’ as the representation of the perfect fit of the ‘one who yokes’ with the ‘one who is yoked’, highlights the social context within which this metaphor produced and reiterated a shared sense. The eulogies of the *Ṛgveda* were composed for patrons who were described by poets as warriors, leading members, rulers, that is, as very important persons who asked the favour of equally fighting deities such as Indra, Agni, *Aśvins*, in order to obtain victory, progeny, cattle, harvest, prosperity and success. The term *yóga* in the *Ṛgveda* can be fully understood if one keeps in mind the semantics of control and conformity; particularly in the context of the preparations before the battle and the disposition to excellence – all skills necessary to obtain victory, speed, prize, and that anticipate the optimal condition for the rest and peace settlement when people can enjoy the gained goods. The Paippalāda version of the *Atharvaveda* (PS) offers evidence for the same metaphor:
- PS 7.4.1: *indrasya bāhū sthavirau vṛṣāṇau citrā imā vṛṣabhau pārayiṣṇū |*
tau ‘yokṣye prathamau yoga āgate yābhyāṃ jitam asurāṇām s_uvar yat ||
 Indra’s two arms, stout, manly: these two are wondrous successful bulls. Now that the [time of] yoking has arrived, I am going to yoke first these two, by means of which the sun, which belonged to the Asuras, was won (tr. GRIFFITHS 2009; the italicized text between square brackets is mine)⁸⁵.
- 45 The time of *yoking* (*yoga āgate*) evokes the time when the sun (*s_uvar*) must be yoked and acquired. Comparing this stanza with the previous *Ṛgvedic* strophes, one may hypothesize that only the conservation of the acquired thing (sun = Agni = fire) provides a period of security, but this Atharvanic hymn deals exclusively with the *yoga* time when Indra’s men are ready to fight⁸⁶.
- 46 The importance of ‘yoking the sun’ is stressed in a parallel passage of some Yajurvedic texts regarding the ritual for the preparation of the ground of the fire (*agniciti*). The main explanation is that the sun must be yoked to provide the fire. Ancient brahmins explain such an enterprise as *agniyoga*, the ritual of the ‘yoking of the sun’. It is noteworthy that, according to most recensions of the *Yajurveda*⁸⁷, this ritual includes a ‘time of yoking’ (*yógā āgate; agnīm yunakti*) and a ‘time of unyoking’ (*vimokā āgate; vímuñcati*). To obtain the heavenly world, the Yajurvedic authors recommend the audience to behave like those who *yoke* and *unyoke* the sun, i.e. fire, at the right time.

- 47 I suggest that there is a substantial similarity between the time of unyoking and the *kṣéma* time. If we understand the unyoking as the shift into the state of *kṣéma*, we could interpret the time of rest as the condition to enjoy and conserve possessions. Like the twin *yóga/kṣéma*, the yoking/unyoking alternation seems to describe the dialectic process where the fruits of action can be enjoyed at the end of the action itself.
- 48 Similarly, the compound *yogakṣemá* also suggests the importance of the state of *yóga* as a necessary counterpart of *kṣéma*. Oertel discusses the nature of this compound in early Vedic texts, and he questions the reading of *yogakṣemá* as a *Dvanda* compound, i.e. *yoga* ‘and’ *kṣema*. Instead he holds, on the basis of the *Brāhmaṇa*-texts, that in most cases, *yogakṣemá* is a *Tatpuruṣa* compound that we can read as “*kṣema* connected with or accompanied by *yoga*”⁸⁸.
- 49 The relationship between *yoga* and *kṣema* should be regarded as the achievement of temporary peace, prosperity, and security, and as the labour required for gaining of goods and prizes. The terms *yóga* and *kṣéma* appear together a few times in the *Ṛgveda*: only twice in a couple, and once in compound. The compound *yogakṣemá* appears very frequently in late literature outside the body of *Ṛgveda* in order to indicate the quintessence of the patron’s prosperity, that is, the safe condition during which what has been gained cannot be taken away anymore:

Taittiriya Saṃhitā 7.5.18.1: *āsmín rāṣṭrē rājanya iṣavyāḥ sūro mahārathó jāyatām | dógdhri dhenús | vóḍhānaḍvān āsuḥ sáptiḥ púraṃdhir yóṣā jiṣṇú ratheṣṭhāḥ sabhéyo yúvā | āsyá yájamānasya viró jāyatām | nikāménikāme naḥ parjányo varṣatu phalínyo na ósadhayah pacyantām | yogakṣemó naḥ kalpatām ||*

In this kingdom⁸⁹ may a prince [who is bent on ruling] be born, an archer [who is able to shoot arrows], a hero [who is bent on excelling in battle], and a great chariot-fighter [who is bent on fighting]; a milk cow [who is bent on giving milk]; a draught ox [who is bent on plowing]; a swift racer [who is bent on running]; a prolific woman [who is able to give progeny]; a victorious warrior [who is bent on winning]; a youth fit for the assembly [who is bent on speaking well]. To this sacrificer be a hero born. May Parjanya rain for us whensoever we desire. May our plants ripen with fruit. May rest after battle⁹⁰ be ours (tr. KEITH 1914, the italicized text between brackets is mine).

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.6.4: [...] *tá enaṃ tṛptástarpayanti yogakṣeména prānéna rétasā sarvātmānā sárvaḥbhiḥ púnyābhiḥ sampádbhir*⁹¹ [...]

[...] and, being satisfied, they satisfy him by (granting him) rest after battle⁹², by life-breath, by seed, by his whole self, and by all auspicious blessings [...] (tr. EGGELING 1882-1900, with minor changes).

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 12.1.1.10: *yátra haivám vidvámso díkṣante díkṣamāṇā haivá té yajñám kalpayanti yajñásya kṣptim ánu sattrínám yogakṣemáh kalpate sattrínám yogakṣemásya kṣptim ánu ápi tásyárdhasya yogakṣemáh kalpate yásmim árdhe yájante ||*

[...] assuredly, only when, knowing this, they become initiated, they make ready the sacrifice even whilst being initiated, and along with the getting ready of the sacrifice rest after labour⁹³ accrues to the performers of the sacrificial session (*Sattra*); and, along with the accruing of rest after labour to the performers of the session, rest after labour also accrues to that district in which they perform the sacrifice (tr. EGGELING 1882-1900, with minor changes).

- 50 Arthur B. Keith translated *yogakṣemá* with “union and peace,”⁹⁴ stressing the positive function of the aggregation (*yoga*). Julius Eggeling rendered it with “security for possession” or “security of property”⁹⁵, referring to the following comment by *Sāyana* (14th c.): *apráptasya phalasya prāptir yogah tasya paripālanam kṣemah*, “*yoga* is the

obtainment of the fruit that has not (yet) been obtained, *kṣema* is its conservation.” As Oertel noticed, “according to them [Keith and Eggeling] *yoga* does not mean ‘the thing acquired’ but ‘the acquisition of new property’, while *kṣema* does not mean ‘conservation’ but ‘conservation of what has been acquired’.”⁹⁶ Eggeling employed the same translation also in other passages⁹⁷. We can find similar expressions in other texts:

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 9.8.12: *kl̥ptir asi diśām mayi devebhyaḥ kalpata | kalpatām me yogakṣemo bhayam me ’stv [...]*
Thou art the orderer of the quarters, In me be ye ordered for the gods; Mine be rest after battle, Freedom from fear be mine⁹⁸ (tr. KEITH 1920).

- 51 The compound *yogakṣemá* appears in other few passages about the request ‘to be well ordered or regulated, be well managed’ or ‘to set in order, arrange’ – these are possible translations of the verbal root **k̥lp* (*kálpate* or *kalpáyati*, respectively). This kind of request, phrased with *yogakṣemá*, expresses the wish to obtain the best results and the greatest prosperity; in other words, the optimal condition to properly enjoy the results.
- 52 I would finally suggest that the success of the term *yoga* in the Sanskrit literature of the exegetes should be sought in its semantic capability to evoke relations, norms and hierarchies and not in its ability of recalling any doctrine or standard *topos*⁹⁹. From this perspective, I advance that the crystallized meaning of *yoga* within the discipline connected to Patañjali represents the result of a later rethinking of *yoga* as a method or a strategy to provide a good life and prosperity.
- 53 The lack of a critical survey of the semantics of the term *yoga* produced the rather monolithic scholarly understanding of *yoga*, that can be understood as a religious phenomenon or a philosophical approach from a *longue durée* perspective. This approach, however, does not take into account the meanings assigned to the term *yóga/yoga* in early texts, many centuries before the composition of the *Yogasūtra*, in a social and political context where the art of winning the battle was a matter of life and death.
- 54 In conclusion, to paraphrase again Claude Lévi-Strauss, it is worth noticing that, while the term *yóga* and its derivatives apparently mark a discontinuity in early literary sources, its uses in the *Ṛgveda* offer new glimpses on the way the ‘floating signifiers’ work in a pragmatic space. If the role of the ‘semantic function’ is “to enable symbolic thinking to operate despite the contradiction inherent in it”¹⁰⁰, then we propose that, from this vantage point, the word *yoga* does not have a ‘zero symbolic value’. On the contrary, since the above paragraphs included the proof that, in the *Ṛgveda*, the word *yoga* floats within a pragmatic space, we can clearly infer when the act of *yóga* denotes the act of *kṣéma* and viceversa.

Conclusion

- 55 The different uses of the word *yóga/yoga* before Patañjali played an important part in the intellectual history of Asia. While Indian authors of the past (Brahmins, Buddhists, Jains) produced an intra- and inter-discourse around *yoga* as an intellectual instrument, modern scholars have mostly focused on the one-sided idea of *yoga* as union, conjunction, tension, effort. In the first half of the twentieth century, the lack of careful contextual readings produced an anachronistically projecting of later meanings back into the early (Vedic) texts. In this article, I tried to show that the different uses of the term *yóga* in the early layers of the *Ṛgveda*, should be principally understood in the

context of the warfare. The R̥gvedic yóga was meant to indicate the passage from the moment of ‘recruitment’ before the battle to the moment of the fight, when scattered forces assemble together against ‘the other’. The moment of the yóga might have been a recurrent moment in the life of the migrant communities of ancient India.

- 56 Yet, the above point is neither an exclusively philological concern about the semantic range of the word yóga nor a concern about how to adequately translate the word *yoga* in its long semantic history. It is, instead, about understanding what prompted modern scholars to search for an essential form of *yoga* in the past.
- 57 A preliminary answer, sketched in this article, is that every attempt to search for an original or pure *yoga* highlights a form of substantialism, shared by many European scholars. The above answer will raise the question about the consequences of word reification. To be more precise, the reification of the word *yoga* both influenced the birth of modern Indology and played a significant role in the formation of ‘deep orientalism’¹⁰¹, taking a strongly ideological shape before and during the Nazi regime. The second one is the role of the study of religions in the forging of ideologies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALLES 2002: G. Alles, «The Science of Religion in a Fascist State: Rudolf Otto and Jakob Wilhelm Hauer during the Third Reich», *Religion* 32 (2002), 177–204.
- AMBASCIANO 2014: L. Ambasciano, *Sciamanesimo senza sciamanesimo. Le radici intellettuali del modello sciamanico di Mircea Eliade. Evoluzionismo, psicoanalisi, te (le)ologia*, (Sapienza Sciamanica Series 1), Roma 2014.
- AMBROSINI 1981: R. Ambrosini, *Dal X libro del R̥g-Veda*, Pisa 1981.
- BAIER, MAAS, PREISENDANZ 2018: K. Baier, P.A. Maas, K. Preisendanz (eds.), *Yoga in Transformation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Göttingen 2018.
- BENAVIDES 2008: G. Benavides, «Irrational Experiences, Heroic Deeds and the Extraction of Surplus», in H. Junginger (ed.), *The Study of Religion under the Impact of Fascism*, Leiden–Boston 2008, 263–279.
- BODEWITZ 1973: H. W. Bodewitz, *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa I, 1–65. Translation and Commentary*, Leiden 1973.
- BÖHTLINGK, ROTH 1855–1875: O. Böhtlingk, R. Roth, *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (Grosses Petersburger Wörterbuch), 7 Theile, St. Petersburg 1855–1875.
- BOLLÉE 1981: W. B. Bollée, «The Indo-European Sodalities in Ancient India», *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 131 (1981), 172–191.
- BRERETON 2004: J. P. Brereton, «Dharmán in the Rig Veda» *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32, 5–6 (2004), 449–489.
- BRONKHORST 2007: J. Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India*, Leiden 2007.

- BRONKHORST 2011: J. Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism*, Leiden 2011.
- BURNOUF, LEUPOL 1866: É. Burnouf, L. Leupol, *Dictionnaire classique Sanskrit-Français*, Paris 1866.
- DAGMAR 2008: S. W. Dagmar et al., *Nomina im Indogermanischen Lexikon*, Heidelberg 2008.
- DITRICH 2011: T. Ditrich, «The typology of Āmreḍita compounds in the Ṛgveda», *Acta Linguistica Asiatica* 1, 1 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.1.1.71-84>.
- DORE, PONTILLO 2013: M. Dore, T. Pontillo, «What do Vrātyas have to do with long-stalked plants? Darbha, kuśa, śara and iṣikā in Vedic and Classical sources», in J. Vacek (ed), *Pandanus '13. Nature in Literature, Art, Myth and Ritual*, Vol. 4.1, Prague 2013, 35–61.
- DUCŒUR 2004: G. Ducœur, «Métaphore équine et pratiques chamaniques en Rgveda 10.136», *ARCHÆVS, Études d'Histoire des Religions* 8, 1–4 (2004), 11–24.
- DURANTE 1968 [1958]: M. Durante, «Epea pteroeonta. Die Rede als 'Weg' in griechischen und vedischen Bildern», in R. Schmitt (hrsg.), *Indogermanische Dichtersprache* ("Wege der Forschung", 165), Darmstadt 1968 [1958], 242–260.
- DURANTE 1976: M. Durante, *Sulla preistoria della tradizione poetica greca*, Vol. 2: *Risultanze della comparazione indoeuropea*, Roma 1976.
- EGGELING 1882–1900: J. Eggeling, *The Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa according to the text of the Mādhyandina school*, 5 Vols. (Sacred Books of the East, Vols. 12, 26, 41, 43, 44), Oxford 1882–1900.
- ELIADE 1951: M. Eliade, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase. 2e revue et augmentée*, Paris 1968 (or. ed. 1951).
- ELIADE 1954: M. Eliade, *Le yoga: immortalité et liberté. Nouvelle édition revue et corrigée*, Paris 1968 (or. ed. 1954).
- ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999: T. J. Elizarenkova, *Rigveda*, 3 Vols. (*Mandaly I-IV; Mandaly V-VIII; Mandaly IX-X*), Moskva 1989–1999.
- ELIZARENKOVA 1995: T. J. Elizarenkova, *Language and Style of the Vedic Rsis*, Albany 1995.
- FALK 1986: H. Falk, *Bruderschaft und Würfelspiel: Untersuchungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Vedischen Opfers*, Freiburg 1986.
- FRÖBE-KAPTEYN 1942: O. Fröbe-Kapteyn, «Eranos. A Survey», *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 9 (1942).
- GARBE 1896: R. Garbe, *Sāṃkhya und Yoga* (Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, III.4), Strassburg 1896.
- GELDNER 1951–1957: K. F. Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda. Aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt und mit einem laufenden Kommentar versehen*, 4 Vols. (Harvard Oriental Studies, Vols. 33, 34, 35, 36), Cambridge, Mass. 1951–1957.
- GELDNER, PISCHEL 1889–1901: K. F. Geldner, R. Pischel, *Vedischen Studien*, Stuttgart 1889–1901.
- GRIFFITHS 2009: A. Griffiths, *The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda, Kāṇḍas 6 and 7*, Groningen 2009.
- HAUER 1921: J.W. Hauer, *Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis im alten Indien. Eine Untersuchung über die Wurzeln der indischen Mystik nach Rgveda und Atharvaveda*, Stuttgart 1921.
- HAUER 1932: J. W. Hauer, *Der Yoga als Heilweg, nach den indischen Quellen dargestellt*, Stuttgart 1932.
- HAUER 1958: J.W. Hauer, *Der Yoga: Ein Indischer Weg zu Selbst*, Stuttgart 1958.

- HEESTERMAN 1962: J. C. Heesterman, «Vratya and Sacrifice», *Indo-Iranian Journal* 6 (1962), 1–37.
- IELEX: Indo-European Lexicon, The University of Texas at Austin Linguistics Research Center (LRC) at <https://lrc.la.utexas.edu/lex> (last access: 7 July 2020).
- JAMISON, BRERETON 2014: S. W. Jamison, J. P. Brereton (trs.), *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*, 3 Vols., New York 2014.
- JUNGINGER 1999: H. Junginger, *Von der philologischen zur völkischen Religionswissenschaft. Das Fach Religionswissenschaft an der Universität Tübingen von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende des Dritten Reiches*, Stuttgart 1999.
- KEITH 1914: A.B. Keith (tr.), *The Veda of the Black Yajus school, entitled Taittiriya saṁhita*, 2 Vols., Cambridge, Mass. 1914.
- KEITH 1920: A. B. Keith (tr.), *Rigveda Brahmanas: the Aitareya and Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda*, Cambridge, Mass. 1920.
- KLEIN 2003: J. Klein, «Āmreḍitas and Related Constellations in the Rigveda», *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, 4 (2003), 773–802.
- KÖHLER 2011: F. Köhler, *Kavī im Ṛgveda: Dichtung, Ritual und Schöpfung im frühvedischen Denken*, Aachen 2011.
- KOSKIKALLIO 1999: P. Koskikallio, «Baka Dālbhya: A Complex Character in Vedic Ritual Texts, Epics and Purāṇas», *Studia Orientalia* 85 (1999), 301–387.
- KUIPER 1960: F. B. J. Kuiper, «The Ancient Aryan Verbal Contest», *Indo-Iranian Journal* 4, 4 (1960), 217–281.
- LÉVI-STRAUSS 1987 [1950]: C. Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, Eng. transl. by F. Baker, London 1987 [1950].
- LINCOLN, GINZBURG 2020: B. Lincoln, C. Ginzburg, *Old Thiess, a Livonian Werewolf*, Chicago–London 2020. Kindle Edition.
- MAAS 2006: P.A. Maas, *Samādhipāda. Das erste Kapitel des Pātañjalayogaśātra zum ersten Mal kritisch ediert* (Geisteskultur Indiens. Texte und Studien), Aachen 2006.
- MAAS 2013: P.A. Maas, *A Concise Historiography of Classical Yoga Philosophy*, in E. Franco (ed.), *Periodization and Historiography of Indian Philosophy* (Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, 37), Wien 2013, 53–90.
- MACDONELL 1886: A.A. Macdonell, *Kātyāyana's Sarvānukramaṇī of the Rigveda*, s.l. 1886.
- MAHADEVAN 2011: T. P. Mahadevan, «The Ṛṣi index of the Vedic Anukramāni and the Pravara lists: Toward a Pre-history of the Brahmanas», *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies* 18, 2 (2011), 1–140.
- MAYRHOFFER 1956–1976: M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, 3 Vols., Heidelberg 1956–1980.
- MAYRHOFFER 1992–2001: M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, 3 Vols., Heidelberg 1992–2001.
- MONIER WILLIAMS 1899: Sir. M. Monier Williams, *A Dictionary, English and Sanskrit*, Oxford 1899.
- OBERLIES 1998: T. Oberlies, *Die Religion des Ṛgveda, Erster Teil: Das religiöse System des Ṛgveda*, Wien 1998.

- OERTEL 1926: H. Oertel, *The Syntax of Cases in the Narrative and Descriptive Prose of The Brahmanas*, Heidelberg 1926.
- OGUIBÉNINE 1984: B. Oguibénine, «Sur le terme yóga, le verbe yuj- et quelques-uns de leurs dérivés dans les hymnes védiques», *Indo-Iranian Journal* 27, 2 (1984), 85–101.
- OGUIBÉNINE 1998 [1984]: B. Oguibénine, «From Vedic Speculation to Indo-European Poetic and Religious Themes», in B. Oguibénine, *Essays on Vedic and Indo-European Culture*, New Delhi 1998 [1984], 223–249.
- OLDENBERG 1888: H. Oldenberg, *Die Hymnen des Rigveda*. Band I: *Metrische und textgeschichtliche Prolegomena*, Berlin 1888.
- OLDENBERG 1967: H. Oldenberg, *Kleine Schriften* (Glasenapp-Stiftung), Band 1, ed. by Klaus L. Janert, Wiesbaden 1967.
- OLIVELLE 2009: P. Olivelle (ed.), *Dharma: Studies in its Semantic, Cultural, and Religious History*, Delhi 2009.
- PAPESSO 1929–1931: V. Papesso, *Inni del Rig-Veda*, 2 Vols., Bologna 1929–1931.
- PARPOLA 1983: A. Parpola, «The Pre-Vedic Indian Background of the Śrauta Ritual», in F. Staal (ed.), *Agni. The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*, 2 Vols., Berkeley 1983, Vol. 1, 41–75.
- PIETIKÄINEN 2000: P. Pietikäinen, «The Volk and Its Unconscious: Jung, Hauer and the ‘German Revolution’», *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, 4 (2000), 523–539.
- PIETIKÄINEN 2008: P. Pietikäinen, «Future’s Past. C. G. Jung’s Psychoutopia and the ‘German Revolution’ of 1933», in H. Junginger (ed.), *The Study of Religion under the Impact of Fascism*, Leiden–Boston 2008, 591–611.
- POKORNY 1959: J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern–Munich 1959.
- POEWE 2006: K. Poewe, *New religions and the Nazis*, New York–London 2006.
- POEWE, HEXHAM 2005: K. Poewe, I. Hexham, «Jakob Wilhelm Hauer’s New Religion and National Socialism», *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 20, 2 (2005), 195–215.
- POLLOCK 1993: S. Pollock, «Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power Beyond the Raj», in C. A. Breckenridge, P. van der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, Philadelphia 1993, pp. 76–133.
- PROFERES 2007: T.N. Proferes, *Vedic ideals of sovereignty and the poetics of power*, New Haven, Conn. 2007.
- RENOU, FILLIOZAT 1947: L. Renou, J. Filliozat, *L’Inde Classique. Manuel des études indiennes*, vol. 1, Paris 1947.
- RENOU 1953: L. Renou, «Quelques termes du R̥gveda, d: yoga», *Journal Asiatique* 241 (1953), 177–180.
- RENOU 1955–1969: L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, 17 Vols., Paris 1955–1969.
- RIX *et al.* 1998: H. Rix *et al.*, *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*, Wiesbaden 1998.
- SANI 2000: S. Sani, *Le strofe della Sapienza*, Venezia 2000.
- SINGLETON 2010: M. Singleton, *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*, Oxford 2010.
- SMITH 2004: J.Z. Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*, Chicago 2004.
- SPARREBOOM 1985: M. Sparreboom, *Chariots in the Veda*, Leiden 1985.

- SQUARCINI 2008A: F. Squarcini, *Tradens, traditum, recipiens: studi storici e sociali sull'istituto della tradizione nell'antichità sudasiatica*, Firenze 2008.
- SQUARCINI 2008B: F. Squarcini, *Tradition, Veda and Law: Studies on South Asian Classical Intellectual Traditions*, Firenze–New Delhi 2008.
- SQUARCINI 2015: F. Squarcini, «Introduzione», in Patañjali, *Yogasūtra*, It. transl. by F. Squarcini, G. Pellegrini, Einaudi 2015, pp. vii–cxxv.
- STAAL 1975: F. Staal, *Exploring Mysticism: A Methodological Essay*, Berkeley–Los Angeles 1975.
- THIEME 1957: P. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, New Haven, Conn. 1957.
- WACKERNAGEL, DEBRUNNER 1896–1930: J. Wackernagel, A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, 2 Vols., 2 Parts (Vols. 1; 2/1; 2/2; 3), Göttingen 1896–1930.
- WERNER 1977: K. Werner, *Yoga and Indian philosophy*, New Delhi 1977.
- WERNER 1989: K. Werner, *The Yogi and the Mystic. Studies in Indian and Comparative Mysticism* (Durham Indological Series No. 1), London 1989.
- WHITE 2004: D. G. White, «Early Understandings of Yoga in the Light of Three Aphorisms from the *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali», in E. Ciurtin (ed.), *Du corps humain, au carrefour de plusieurs savoirs en Inde. Mélanges offerts à Arion Roşu par ses collègues și ses amis à l'occasion de son 80^e anniversaire*, Bucarest–Paris 2004, 611–627.
- WHITE 2009: D.G. White, *Sinister Yogis*, Chicago–London 2009.
- WITZEL 1997: M. Witzel, «The Development of the Vedic Canon and its Schools: The Social and Political Milieu», in M. Witzel (ed), *Inside the Texts, Beyond the Texts. New Approaches to the Study of the Vedas* (“Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora”, 2), Cambridge, Mass. 1997, 257–348.
- WITZEL, GOTŌ 2007: M. Witzel, T. Gotō, *Rig-Veda: das heilige Wissen (1. Erster und zweiter Liederkreis)*, Frankfurt am Main 2007.
- WITZEL, GOTŌ, SCARLATA 2013: M. Witzel, T. Gotō, S. Scarlata, *Rig-Veda: das heilige Wissen (2. Dritter bis fünfter Liederkreis)*, Frankfurt am Main 2013.
- WUJASTYK 2018: D. Wujastyk, «Some Problematic Yoga Sūtra-s and their Buddhist Background», in K. Baier, P. A. Maas, K. Preisendanz (eds.), *Yoga in Transformation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Göttingen 2018, 21–47.

APPENDIXES

In the following section, I will present all the Ṛgvedic occurrences of the term *yóga*. In order to reconsider the use and the semantic field of this term, I will sketch the relative chronology and the diachronic stratification of the books under consideration. I consider this a necessary step to indicate whether and how the semantic boundaries of this term changed over time. For the chronological order of the layers of the *Ṛgveda*, I will refer to Oldenberg’s and Witzel’s reconstruction of the history of the Ṛgvedic canon¹⁰². The translation is by Stephanie W. JAMISON and Joel P. BRERETON (2014), while the italicized text between square brackets is mine.

Book II

II.8.1ab: *vājayánn iva nú ráthān yógāṃ agnér úpa stuhi | yaśástamasya mīlhúṣaḥ ||*

As a prize-seeker (praises) his chariots, now praise the yok(ed teams) of Agni

the most glorious one, who grants rewards, [...].

Book III

III.27.11ac: *agnīm yantúram aptúram ṛtásya yóge vanúṣaḥ | víprā vājaiḥ sám indhate ||*

Agni, guiding (his horses) and crossing the waters – at the harnessing of the truth, the eager inspired ones kindle him with the prizes of victory.

Book IV

IV.24.4ab: *kratūyánti kṣítáyo yóga ugrásuṣāṅāso mithó árṇasātau |*

The settled people show their resolve at the hitching up (for battle), o powerful one, while they are gasping on opposite sides in the winning of the flood.

Book V

V.37.5ab: *púsyāt kṣéme abhí yóge bhavāty ubhé vṛtau saṃyatí sám jayāti |*

He will prosper in peace, and he will prevail at the hitching up (for war); (when) the two opponents are clashing together, he will entirely conquer.

V.43.5: *ásāvi te juṣāṅāya sómaḥ krátve dáksāya bṛhaté mádāya | hári ráthe sudhúra yóge arvág indra priyā kṛṇuhi hūyámānaḥ ||*

The soma has been pressed for you who have enjoyed (it) – for will and skill, for lofty exhilaration.

Indra, bring nearby the two dear fallow bays, those amenable to the chariot-pole at the yoking to your chariot, when you are being invoked.

Book VII

VII.54.3cd: *pāhí kṣéma utá yóge váraṃ no yūyám pāta svastíbhīḥ sádā naḥ ||*

Protect us at will in peace and war [= at the time to join the duty to fight]. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

VII.67.8ab: *ékasmin yóge bhuraṇā samāné pári vām saptá sraváto rátho gāt |*

In your single, joint trek [to which horses must bend to win], o energetic ones, your chariot encompasses the seven flowing streams.

VII.86.8cd: *sám naḥ kṣéme sám u yóge no astu yūyám pāta svastíbhīḥ sádā naḥ ||*

Let there be good fortune in peaceful settlement for us and let there be good fortune in war [= at the time to bend to the duty to fight] for us. – Do you protect us always with your blessings.

Book VIII

VIII.58.3ad: *jyótiṣmantam ketumántam tricakráṃ sukhám rátham suśádam bhūrivāram | citrámaghā yásya yóge dhijajñe tám vām huvé áti riktam píbadhyai ||*

Your light-filled, three-wheeled, well-naved chariot, providing a beacon, easy to sit in, bringing abundant valuables, at whose yoking (Dawn) of bright bounties [bent to victory] is born – that I call upon, for you two to drink the ‘left-over’ (soma).

Book I

I.5.3ac: *sá ghā no yóga ā bhuvat sá rāyé sá púraṃdhyām | gámad vājebhir ā sá naḥ ||*

Will he be here for us at our hitching up (for war) [= at the time to bend to the duty to fight], he for wealth, he in plenty?

Will he come to us with prizes of victory?

I.18.7ac: *yásmād ṛté ná sídhyati yajñó vipascítaś caná | sá dhinām yógam invati |*

Without whom the sacrifice even of one attentive to poetic inspiration does not succeed,

he [=Sadasaspati] drives the team of insightful thoughts [*bent to the established order*].

I.30.7ac: yóge-yoge¹⁰³ tavástaram vāje-vāje¹⁰⁴ havāmahe | sákhāya índram útáye||

At the very hitching up (for battle) [= *at the time to bend to the duty to fight*], at every prize-contest we call to the more powerful one – as his comrades (we call) to Indra for help.

I.34.9ad: kvà trī cakrá trivṛto ráthasya kvà tráyo vandhúro yé sánílāḥ | kadā yógo vājino rāsabhasya yéna yajñam nāsatyopayāthāḥ ||

Where are the three wheels of your triply turning chariot, where the three seats which are in the same nest [= chariot box]?

When is the [*time of*] yoking of the prizewinning donkey [*to victory*], with which, Nāsatyas, you drive up to the sacrifice.

I.56.1ad: eṣá prá pūrvīr áva tásya camrīśó 'tyo ná yóṣām úd ayamsta bhurvāniḥ | dáksam mahé pāyayate hiranyāyam rátham āvṛtyā háriyogam ṛbhvasam ||

This one has raised forth for himself the many dippers of this well (of soma), as a stallion, all aquiver, raises himself up to [= mounts] a young mare.

For the great (deed?) he gives himself golden skill [= soma] to drink, having turned his ingenious chariot here, hitched with his fallow bays [*for the race*].

I.186.7ad: utá na im matáyó 'śvayogāḥ síśum ná gāvas táruṇam rihanti | tám im gíro jánayo ná pátniḥ surab^h śṣtamam narām nasanta ||

And our horse-yoked-[*for winning*] thoughts lick him [*Indra*] like cows their tender young. Our songs approach him, the sweetest smelling of men, like wedded wives.

Book X

X.30.11ad: hinótā no adhvarām devayajyā hinóta bráhma sanáye dhánānām | ṛtásya yóge ví śyadhvam údhaḥ śruṣṭivárir bhūtanāsmábyam āpaḥ ||

Impel our ceremony by a sacrifice to the gods; impel our sacred formulation to gain the spoils.

At the yoking of truth loosen your udder. Grant us attentive hearing, o waters.

X.35.9 ab: adveśó adyá barhíṣa stárīmaṇi grāvñāṃ yóge mánmanaḥ sádha imahe |

Today at the strewing of the ritual grass, at the yoking of the pressing stones [*to their function*] we beg for lack of hatred and for the realization of our thought.

X. 39.12ad: ā téna yātam mánaso jávīyasā rátham yām vām ṛbhávaś cakrúr asvinā | yásya yóge duhitá jáyate divá ubhé áhanī sudíne vivásvataḥ ||

Drive here with your chariot swifter than thought, which the Ṛbhus made for you, o Aśvin,

and at whose hitching up the Daughter of Heaven [=Dawn] is born and both bright-lit day halves of Vivasvant.

X. 89.10ad: índro divá índra íše pṛthivyā índro apām índra ít párvatānām | índro vṛdhām índra ín médhirāñām índraḥ kṣéme yóge hávya índraḥ ||

Indra is master of heaven and Indra of earth, Indra of the waters and Indra of the mountains,

Indra of the strong and Indra of the wise; Indra is to be called upon in peace and Indra in war [= *at the time to bend to the duty to fight*].

X.114.9ad: kás chándasām yógam ā veda dhīraḥ kó dhīṣnyām práti vácam papāda | kám ṛtvjām aṣtamām sūram āhur hári índrasya ní cikāya káḥ svit ||

Who is the wise one who knows the yoking of the meters [*to the established order*]? Who has undertaken the holy speech?

What champion do they call the eight of the priests? Who indeed has discerned the two fallow bays of Indra?

X.166.5ad: *yogakṣemám va ādāyāhám bhūyāsam uttamá ā vo mūrdhānam akramīm| adhaspadān ma úd vadata maṇḍúkā ivodakān maṇḍúkā udakāā iva ||*

Having taken for myself your yoking up [= war] [at the time to bend to the duty to fight] and your peace, might I become the highest. I have trampled on your head.

NOTES

1. BÖTHLING, ROTH 1855–1875; BURNOUF, LEUPOL 1866; MONIER WILLIAMS 1899.
2. There is no consensus, but many scholars agree with the date of 3rd c. CE because of Patañjali's reference to Vijñānavāda Buddhism and Vasubandhu. It is well-known that Patañjali's work has been quoted by Bhartṛhari (5th c.–beginning 6th c.) and in the *Nyāyabhāṣya* (5th c.). Cf. MAAS 2006; WHITE 2009; SQUARCINI 2015.
3. According to Phillip MAAS (2006, 2013) the *Yogasūtra* and its commentary belong to the same work by a unique author. However, this thesis is still open. Cf. SQUARCINI 2015.
4. Cf. WHITE 2009; SQUARCINI 2015, esp. liii ff; WUJASTYK 2018; NERI, PONTILLO 2019.
5. Following the internal *sandhi* rules, the unvoiced guttural -j in front of vowels, which are considered voiced, changes into its voiced counterpart -g.
6. One example in Latin is the class of verbs connected to *iūgo* / *iūgāre* ('to bind, marry'), such as *subiūgo* / *subiūgāre* ('to bring under the yoke, subject, subjugate'), and *iungo* / *iungere* ('to join or unite together, connect, attach, fasten, yoke, harness'), *adiungo* / *adiungere* ('to add, join, annexe, or bind to anything'), *coniungo* / *coniungere* ('to bind together, connect, join, unite'). Another example in Greek is the relation between ζυγόν ('to yoke') with ζυγομαχέω ('struggle with one's yoke-fellow'), ζυγομαχία ('quarrelling, strife'). Cf. POKORNY 1959, 508–510; Rix *et al.* 1998, 316 (s.v. *jeug-*); DAGMAR *et al.* 2008, 398–404; WACKERNAGEL, DEBRUNNER 1896–1930, 1.20–22 (§ 19); IELEX, s.v. Yoke, to Join, Unite at <https://lrc.la.utexas.edu/lex/master/0785> (last access: 7 July 2020).
7. Cf. OGUIBÉNINE 1998 [1984].
8. GELDNER 1951–1957; RENOU 1953; OGUIBÉNINE 1984; 1998 [1984]; ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999; JAMISON, BRERETON 2014.
9. GELDNER 1951–1957; ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999; WITZEL, GOTŌ 2007.
10. GRASSMANN 1873, 1125–1126; PAPPESO 1929–1931; MAYRHOFER 1956–1976, 3.20–21; SANI 2000.
11. BRONKHORST 2011, 165–170; SQUARCINI 2015, xlix–lxxxix.
12. MAAS 2006; BRONKHORST 2011, 165–170; SQUARCINI 2015, xlix–lxxxix.
13. MAAS 2013, 53 ff; SINGLETON 2010, 4 ff.
14. Cf. MAAS 2006; WHITE 2009; SINGLETON 2010.
15. MAAS 2016, 2013.
16. MAAS 2006, 53 ff; WHITE 2009; BRONKHORST 2011, 165 ff; SQUARCINI 2015; NERI, PONTILLO 2019.
17. Cf. OLDENBERG 1888; WITZEL 1997.
18. Cf. WITZEL 1997, 257–348; OLDENBERG 1888. See the *Appendix* above.
19. Cf. MAHADEVAN 2011; MACDONELL 1886.
20. MAAS 2013.
21. WHITE 2009; SQUARCINI 2015; BAIER, MAAS, PREISENDANZ 2018.
22. RENOU 1953, 177–180.
23. OGUIBÉNINE 1984, 85–101.
24. Cf. GARBE 1896, 34–35; HAUER 1922, 1932.
25. GARBE 1896, 34.

26. GARBE refers to the book *Religions des Veda* (1888) by Hermann Oldenberg.
27. GARBE 1896, 35: “Damit wuchs der Begriff des Yoga (etymologisch »Anschirung«, d. h. Anspannung der geistigen Kräfte durch Concentration des Denkens auf einen bestimmten Punkt) aus dem des Tapas heraus. Das Tapas oder die leibliche Askese wurde zu einem Hilfsmittel zur Förderung des Yoga oder der geistigen Askese, wenn auch naturgemäß die beiden Begriffe nicht immer von einander geschieden sind. Das Wort *yoga* tritt in der angegebenen Bedeutung erst beträchtlich später auf als *tapas*”.
28. HAUER 1921, 190: “Yoga heißt ja Anspannung, und bedeutete in der ältesten Zeit der brahmanischen Zauber- und Opferpraxis Anschirung der Zauberkraft oder des Gottes durch Zauberspruch, Gebet (*bráhma*), Lied und Opferhandlung, und etwa noch durch angestrenktes Denken. Diese Übungen ziehen die Kraft oder die Gottheit herbei zum Zauber und Opfer, und zum Menschen, der die Handlung verrichtet, den Soma trinkt, das Opfer genießt, um ihn dann mit Kräften zu erfüllen, zur Verzückung und Unsterblichkeit zu erheben. Das Anjochen oder Anschirren drückt die ekstatische Erregung, das Erleben überirdischer Mächte beim Zauber oder Opfer am deutlichsten aus”.
29. HAUER 1921, 169. Cf. the representations of the “Aryan werewolf” in the critical analysis by LINCOLN, GINZBURG 2020, 6-7.
30. HAUER 1921, 156: “dieses Element der Yogapraxis, die von den Kriegern herkam, von der brahmanischen Seite zugeführt wurde”.
31. In 1933, Hauer joined Rosenberg’s *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* and *Hitlerjugend*. In 1934, he joined the SS (*Schutz-Staffel*) and SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*). Cf. JUNGINGER 1999, 128; POEWE, HEXHAM 2005, 207; POEWE 2006, 43 ff.
32. POEWE, HEXHAM 2005, esp. 208 (emphasis in the original; republished and developed in POEWE 2006).
33. BENAVIDES 2018, 263–264.
34. Cf. FRÖBE-KAPTEYN 1942, 1. Hauer was regular speaker at the Eranos meetings until he and Jung adopted different political ways during the 1930s. See ALLES 2002; PIETIKÄINEN 2000, 2008; BENAVIDES 2008.
35. RENOU, FILLIOZAT 1947, 356 (§722) and 371 (§ 752).
36. HAUER 1921, 19.
37. RENOU 1953, 177–178.
38. SPARREBOOM 1985.
39. GRASSMANN (1873, 1125) indicates the following meanings of *yóga* in the *R̥gveda*: 1) “das Anschirren des Zugthieres oder Wagens”; 2) “Anschirung, Fahrt”; 3) “das Anschirren [...] Zurüsten, in Thätigkeit setzen mit Gen.; 4) Unternehmung, Werk; 5) mit *kṣéma* Arbeit und Ruhe”. Geldner (1951–1957), it depends on the case, translates as follows: *Ausübung* (performance), *Anschirung* (harness), *Tätigkeit* (activity), *Unternehmung* (engagement, enterprise), *Anspannung* (effort), *Gespanne* (yoke). ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999 often describes *yóga* as ПОХОД, *pokhoda* (activity, journey, military campaign) or ВОЙНА, *voyna* (war), in a few times as УПРЯЖКА, *upryazhka* (team) or ЗАПРЯГÁНИЕ, *zapryaganiye* (yoke), rarely as ДЕЛО, *delo* (action). Witzel and Gotō (2007) mostly translate *yóga* as *Anspannung*, but they connote this word as *Unternehmung* (enterprise), *Fahrt* (journey), *Vorbereitung* (preparation), *Werk* (labor), *Tagesmarsch* (daily march), *Krieg* (war) or *Anschirung* (harness); WITZEL, GOTŌ, SCARLATA (2013) as *Unternehmung*, *Anschirung*, *Joch* (yoke) or *Notfall* (emergency) in opposition to *kṣéma* as *friedliches Siedeln* (peaceful settlement).
40. ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999 translates *kṣéme...yóge* as “В МИРЕ И В ПОХОДЕ”, *v mire i v pokhode* (“in peace and in the military campaign”). Cf. WHITE 2009, 64: “Before the term *yoga* came to be yoked to chariots of poetic thought, however, its earliest referent was the yoking of horses to war chariots in preparation for battle. In this regard, Geldner translates the term *yoga* in *ṚV* 4.24.4 as ‘Kriegsfahrt,’ while the verb **yuj*, employed without modifiers, often signified battle: ‘The jealous

[enemies] . . . have yoked themselves (*yuyujr̥é*) against us.’ In this regard, it is apposite to note that one of the English-language cognates of the Sanskrit ‘*yóga*’ is the word ‘joust’.

41. OERTEL 1926, 223 ff.

42. OERTEL 1926, 226.

43. OERTEL 1926, 226.

44. JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 111: “insightful thoughts.”

45. RENO 1953, 177–178.

46. RENO 1953, 178.

47. OGUIBÉNINE 1984, 86–87.

48. OGUIBÉNINE 1998 [1984], 223–244, esp. 224–226. Cf. DURANTE 1968 [1958], 242–260; DURANTE 1976.

49. OGUIBÉNINE 1998 [1984], 226–233.

50. RENO 1953; OGUIBÉNINE 1984; 1998 [1984]; AMBROSINI 1981, 58 (X.53.11); JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 235 (I.113.17).

51. GRASSMANN 1873, 1126; ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999, ПОСТРОМКИ, *postromki* (III.6.6); JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 477 (III.6.6), 971 (VII.70.4), 1462 (X.53.11).

52. All translations of the *R̥gveda* are by S. W. JAMISON and J. P. BRERETON (2014), while the italicized text between square brackets is mine, in order to stress the pragmatics of the word *yóga*.

53. This *pāda* has been much discussed with regard to the grammatical function and the meaning of the term *kārā-* (here *kārē* at the locative). Some scholars hold a derivation from the verbal root **k̥r̥*, ‘to extol,’ from which it follows that *kārā-* can be translated as ‘religious hymn’ (GRASSMANN 1873, 323, *Preislied, Gesang*) or ‘battle song’ (GRASSMANN 1873, 323, *Schlachtgesang*); others propose a derivation from *k̥r̥*, ‘to do’ (*k̥ṛnoti*) or ‘to celebrate’ (*ākārīt*) from which it follows the interpretations of *kārā-* as ‘doing, act, action’, thus, ‘the making together’ (OLDENBERG 1967, 407, *Zustandbringen*) of the poetic activity, that is, the ‘song’ (ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999, ВОСПЕВАНИЕ, *vaspevani*; AMBROSINI 1981, 58, *canto*), or ‘competition’ (GELDNER 1951–1957: *Kampf, Kampfspiel*; GELDNER, PISCHEL 1889–1901, 1.120, 122), in a broad sense the ‘victory’ (MAYRHOFER 1956–1976, 1.201, MAYRHOFER 1992–2001, 1–340; WACKERNAGEL, DEBRUNNER 1896–1930, 2/2.64, *Sieg*) that poets composed in verse for their patrons (cf. also KÖHLER 2011, 328). With a tinge of pragmatism, RENO interpreted *kārē* as “l’instant décisif” when one obtains the victory (RENO 1953, 180, fn. 1). This interpretation is shared by Jamison and Brereton: “at the decisive moment” (JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 1462).

54. With this latter meaning, cf. THIEME 1957, 31 fn. 17. With regard to the social principles underpinning the figure of Ahura Mazda, Thieme noticed that the notion of contract and its inviolability, synthesised in the concept of *miθra*, is represented with the image of god having thousands of eyes and ears, that is, the organs functional for the mental promptness and attention. In stressing this aspect, Thieme remarked that the god of contract knows to be ‘tied by’ or ‘ready for’ action (*yuxta-*) in many ways. Similarly, he is the king in charge of numerous spies, taking care that no one violates any agreements. The interpretation of *yóga* as ‘readiness to action’ also occurs among Oguibénine’s translations, in his reading of the *yóga* of poetical thoughts in relation with the officiant’s skill to bring together the ritual’s extremities in order to obtain positive results (cf. OGUIBÉNINE 1984).

55. OGUIBÉNINE 1998 [1984], 233–236.

56. WACKERNAGEL, DEBRUNNER 1896–1930, 2/2.622 (§465a).

57. BÖTHLING, ROTH 1855–1875, s.v. *ṛtayukti*: “f. *rechte Verbindung*”; GRASSMANN 1873, 286 (s.v. *ṛtáyukti*).

58. MONIER WILLIAMS 1899, s.v. *Ṛtá-yukti*: “*mfn.* well applied, proper [as a word or hymn]”.

59. Cf. ELIZARENKOVA 1995, 10–11, 17, 20–21.

60. *Ibidem*.

61. GRASSMANN 1873; BÖHTLINGK, ROTH 1855-1875.
62. GELDNER 1951-1957, 1.228: “Als bald kamen die Navagvas zur Freundschaft der Jungfrau, die die Wahrheit Redenden zum Bunde mit der Wahrheit”.
63. R̥V III.27.11; X.30.11.
64. Cf., on this aspect, the relationship between *ṛtá* and *dharmán* discussed in BRERETON 2004.
65. GRASSMANN 1873, 879, s.v. *práyukti*: “f. 1) *Gespann*”; OGUIBÉNINE 1984, 88: “attelage (de l’esprit)”, “attelage (de notre pensées)”.
66. GRASSMANN 1873, 879, s.v. *práyukti*: “f. 2) *Trieb, Antrieb*”; GELDNER 1951-1957: “Antriebe” (R̥V I.151.8; I.153.2; X.30.1); “Betreiben” (R̥V VI.11.1); OGUIBÉNINE 1984, 88: “impulsion;” WITZEL, GOTÖ 2007: “Vorspannung, Vorspannen” (R̥V I.151.8; I.153.2).
67. GRASSMANN 1873, 1629, s.v. *svá-yukti*: “a. *sich selbst anschirrend*”; *Idem* in GELDNER 1951-1957, 1.210, 212; 2.103; 3.175; OGUIBÉNINE 1984, 95: “s’attelant de lui-même, de son propre gré”, “désigner l’aboutissement de l’acte d’identification à un svá”; OGUIBÉNINE 1984, 96: “en rapport d’identité avec le svá”; ELIZARENKOVA 1995, 94: “one who yokes oneself in.”
68. JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 163; cf. SANI 2000, 113.
69. ELIZARENKOVA 1995, 94: “self-yoked”; JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 277: “self-harnessed”.
70. Cf. LÉVI-STRAUSS 1987, 63 [1950, L].
71. According to the tradition of the Indexes of the *R̥gveda*, this hymn has been composed by the seven sons of Vātaraśana. Cf. JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 1621.
72. DUCŒUR 2004, 20 ff. More specifically, Ducœur identifies as *shamanic* the elements that fit with the model of the cosmic fly.
73. ELIADE 1954. See AMBASCIANO 2014 for a critical discussion on the ‘theological’ and ‘teleological’ roots of the Eliadian shamanism.
74. Cf., about the different types of ‘ascetics’ mentioned in the *R̥gveda*, HEESTERMAN 1962; STAAL 1975; BOLLÉE 1981; PARPOLA 1983; FALK 1986; KOSKIKALLIO 1999; DORE, PONTILLO 2013.
75. WHITE 2004; 2009, 78.
76. Cf., on the epistemic function of the semantic discontinuity of the ‘floating’ terms, SMITH 2004, 117-144, especially 133-134.
77. MAYRHOFER 1992-2001, s.v. KSAY¹ and KSAY².
78. OBERLIES 1998, 333-337; KÖHLER 2011, 48; PROFERES 2007, 17.
79. MAYRHOFER 1956-1976, 1.293. The word *kṣéma* is often interpreted as “fixed settlement” (PROFERES 2007, 17; JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 55). One may interpret the condition of staying in a fixed habitation as the premise to dwell in a state of security of property. However, as Böhtlingk and Roth suggest, “Besitz des Erworbenen, Erhaltung des Vermögens” (BÖHTLINGK, ROTH 1855-1875, 6.186). Hence, it was the acquisition of a new property to provide a state of security.
80. ELIZARENKOVA 1989-1999: “ТЫ РАСПОРЯЖАЕШЬСЯ МИРОМ И ВОЙНОЙ, О ПОВЕЛИТЕЛЬ СИЛЫ, О ИНДРА СО ВСЕМИ ПОДДЕРЖКАМИ. ИЗ ПОЛУДЕННОГО ВЫЖИМАНИЯ, О УБИЙЦА ВРИТРЫ, О БЕЗУПРЕЧНЫЙ, ИСПЕЙ СОМЫ, О ГРОМОВЕРЖЕЦ!” *Ty rasporyazhayesh’sya mirom i voynoy, O povelitel’ sily, O Indra so vsemi podderzhkami. Iz poludennogo vyzhimaniya, o ubiytsa Vritry, O bezuprechnyy, Ispey somy, o gromoverzhets!* (R̥V VIII.37.5). I wish to thank Walter Montanari for helping me with the Russian language.
81. RENOU 1953, 178 and fn. 1.
82. The hymn containing this strophe is considered “the most frustrating hymn in the *R̥gveda*” (JAMISON, BRERETON 2014, 1560) for its peculiar lexicon and the strong presence of similitudes and *hapax legomena*.
83. Cf. SPARREBOOM 1985, 133.
84. Cf., on the metaphor of the chariot to express such concept, SPARREBOOM 1985, 25-26; RENOU 1953, 179-180.

85. GRIFFITHS 2009, 287.
86. Cf. ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999, R̥V IV.24.4: НАРОДЫ ЗАМЫШЛЯЮТ (ВОИНСТВЕННЫЙ) ПОХОД, О ГРОЗНЫЙ, / ВОЗБУЖДАЯСЬ ДРУГ ПРОТИВ ДРУГА ДЛЯ ЗАХВАТА ВОДНЫХ ИСТОЧНИКОВ. / КОГДА СОШЛИСЬ ДЛЯ БИТВЫ ВРАЖДУЮЩИЕ ПЛЕМЕНА, / НЕ ТОТ, ТАК ДРУГОЙ ПРИБЕГАЕТ К ИНДРЕ В РЕШАЮЩИЙ МОМЕНТ. *Narody zamyshlyayut (voinstvennyy) pokhod, o groznyy, / Vozbuzhdayas' drug protiv druga dlya zakhvata vodnykh istochnikov. / Kogda soshlis' dlya bitvy vrazhduyushchiye plemena, / Ne tot, tak drugoy pribegayet k Indre v reshayushchiy moment.*
87. *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* 3.4.5, *Kāṭha Samhitā* 22.6, *Kaṣiṣṭhala-Kāṭha Samhitā* 34, and, with some variations, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 9.4.4.1–17.
88. OERTEL 1926, 231.
89. Eng. transl. by KEITH 1914, 2.633, with minor change. Starting from the paradigm of the *yogaḥsemā* alternation, one can guess that the request for the kingdom is to give birth to new individuals adequate to their role and able to fulfil their task in the best way, that is, social members who know 'to bend' to their function: a prince to the command function, an archer to the skill to shoot arrows onto the right place, and so on.
90. KEITH (1914, 2.633) translates *yogaḥsemā* as "union and peace".
91. This passage is repeated like a refrain in the succeeding sections (5–8).
92. EGGELING 1882–1900, 5.96–97. EGGELING translates here *yogaḥsemā* as "security of possession". Cf. above fn. 79. Cf. also ELIZARENKOVA 1989–1999, R̥V X.166.5: ВЛАДЕНИЕ ИМУЩЕСТВОМ, *vladeniye imushchestvom* (possession of propriety).
93. Eggeling translates *yogaḥsemā* as "security of property" (EGGELING 1882–1900, 5.138).
94. KEITH 1914, 2.633 fn. 4.
95. EGGELING 1882–1900, 5.97, 138.
96. OERTEL 1926, 231.
97. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.4.2.2: "there is no question about this: it is good for (securing) cattle and life" (EGGELING 1882–1900, 5.57); *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 13.1.4.3: "And again when he offers the Dhṛtis in the evening, and the (Savitṛ) iṣṭis in the morning, it is security of possession the Sacrificer thereby brings about, whence security of possession is brought about for the subjects where this sacrifice is performed." (EGGELING 1882–1900, 5.285); *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 13.1.9.10: "may security of possession be assured for us! – where they perform this sacrifice there security of possession indeed is assured; whence wherever they perform this (Aśvamedha) sacrifice, security of possession becomes assured to the people" (EGGELING 1882–1900, 5.295) (emphasis mine).
98. Eng. transl. by KEITH 1920, 326 and fn. 5, with minor change (emphasis mine). Keith translates *yogaḥsema* as 'good fortune.' This passage has been discussed with regard to the term *kalpata*, that, according to some scholars, is a mistake in the transcription.
99. Among several examples, see the notion of fire (*agni*) in the discourse about sovereignty as it has been examined by PROFERES 2007; the essays on semantics of *dharma* collected in OLIVELLE 2009; the investigation about *karman* in early Brahmanical and Buddhist literatures by BRONKHORST 2007; the requalification of the term *prāṇa* in rituals and theories discussed by BODEWITZ 1973; the requalification of certain 'technical' terms of judicial language as discussed by SQUARCINI 2008a, 2008b.
100. LÉVI-STRAUSS 1987, 64.
101. POLLOCK 1993.
102. OLDENBERG 1888; WITZEL 1997.
103. Cf. KLEIN 2003, 773–802; DITRICH 2011.
104. "Den Anspannen um Anspannen" (WITZEL, GOTŌ 2007, 55, cf. 525). On *vāje-vāje*, cf. KUIPER 1960, 239–240.

ABSTRACTS

From a *longue durée* perspective, the term *yoga* has been scholarly understood as a philosophical system or a religious phenomenon. Such an approach, however, does not take into account the uses of the word *yóga* in the early Vedic texts, mainly the *Ṛgveda*, where this term is linked with the art of war. This article suggests that the term *yóga* should be understood in the social and political context of the mobility and warfare of the semi nomadic communities of ancient India. It also addresses the question of historiography of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is suggested that the scholarly understanding of the word *yóga* in the early Vedic literature has been impacted by many attempts to search for an original, pure or essential *yoga*. For the purposes of this articles, the invention of the *Ur-Yoga* will be discussed to show how they contributed to forge ideologies in the course of the twentieth century.

Da una prospettiva di *longue durée*, il termine *yoga* è stato interpretato dagli specialisti come sistema filosofico o fenomeno religioso. Un tale orientamento, tuttavia, non tiene in considerazione gli usi della parola *yóga* nei testi vedici più antichi, principalmente il *Ṛgveda*, dove questo termine è connesso all'arte della guerra. In questo articolo ci si propone di ricostruire la pragmatica di *yóga* nel contesto sociale e politico della mobilità e dell'attività di guerra delle comunità semi-nomadi dell'India antica. Si porrà all'attenzione la storiografia del XIX e del XX secolo, suggerendo che l'interpretazione moderna del termine *yóga* nella letteratura vedica più antica è stata intaccata dai molti tentativi di cercare uno *yoga* originale, puro ed essenziale. A tal fine, in questo articolo verrà discussa l'invenzione dello *Ur-Yoga*, mostrando come abbia contribuito a formare alcune ideologie del XX secolo.

INDEX

Keywords: Yoga, Ṛgveda, Warfare, History of Indology, peace

Parole chiave: Yoga, Ṛgveda, arte della guerra, storia dell'indologia, pace

AUTHOR

MARIANNA FERRARA

Dipartimento di Storia, Antropologia, Religioni, Arte, Spettacolo

Sapienza Università di Roma

Piazzale Aldo Moro, 5

00100 Roma

marianna.ferrara(at)uniroma1.it