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The Sanskrit -yet-Optative
A Formation Not Yet Recorded in Sanskrit Grammars*

To my first guru of Sanskrit,
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1. Introductory Remarks

“Kann kṣipyet überhaupt eine richtige Form sein?”
(Böhtlingk 1897: 92)

In the individual verbal systems of a few Sanskrit verbs which can build only middle -ya-presents, or no -ya-presents at all, we find isolated forms in -yet, which at first glance cannot be anything but 3sg. active optatives of -ya-presents (class IV): kṣipyet, -śisyet, sicyet, etc. Such forms are extremely rare and first appear in late Vedic and post-Vedic texts, and therefore are generally regarded as instances of late and erroneous diathesis replacement (middle → active). Accordingly, editions usually conjecture middle (passive) optatives instead (+śisyeta, +sicyeta, etc.). One should note, however, that in most such cases there are no other (non-optative) active forms based on a -ya-stem (**kṣipyati, **śisyati, etc.); in other words, forms like kṣipyet and -śisyet prove to be isolated and their explanation as resulting from diathesis confusion seems unconvincing. This account is even less probable if the root in question has no

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— The superscript symbol + shows that the following form is a conjecture; the double asterisk (***) indicates that the form does not occur in the texts and has probably never existed. m and p after the siglum of a Vedic text indicate that the passage in question appears in the mantra or prose portion of this text, respectively.

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-ya-presents (active or middle) or -ya-passives at all, as is the case with kṣip. All these facts require us to reconsider the paradigmatic status of such forms. To begin with, I will discuss a few such forms attested in Vedic prose.

2. -yet-Optative: A Preliminary Hypothesis

2.1. The form -śisyet occurs in the late GB (1.2.14: 47.11-12): na devayaja-namātram purastāt paryavaśisyet. The same sentence also appears (with minor modifications) in the ŚB (2.10.12): tasya na purastād devayajana-
mātram atiśisyāt. Bollée (1956: 63f.) translates:

East of it (the place of sacrifice) no space, wide enough for laying out another place of sacrifice, must be left.¹

The form -śisyāt² is likely to be a root aorist optative,³ often also called “precative”.⁴ The root śiṣ has no root aorist indicative forms beside the optative -śisyāt, but, as Narten (1982: 128f. [= 1995: 255]) rightly points out, many roots build precatives, but lack indicatives and other non-optative forms of the root aorist.

The parallelism of the two passages above, GB 1.2.14: 47.11-12 and ŚB 2.10.12, clearly indicates that -śisyet has the same value as the root aorist optative -śisyāt. In turn, the latter is probably functionally equivalent to the optatives based on the present stem with the nasal infix (also attested in late Vedic), which belong together with the transitive nasal present śināṣṭi, śiṃṣati Br. +, and thus can only be employed transitively,⁵ as in ŚB 7.4.2.18:

sā yād amāṁ evopadadhyaṁ, nēmāṁ apaśīṁṣyāt, kṣipre āśmāl lokād yāja-
mānah préyāt “Now were he only to lay down that (golden man), and not to let this dviya
us (brick) remain,⁶ the Sacrificer surely would quickly pass away from this world” (Eggeling III/382).

Intuitively, -śisyet, -śisyāt and -śiṃsyāt all belong together, but their exact relationship is unclear. Let us put -śisyet aside for a while and pass on

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¹ On this prescription, see Caland – Henry 1906: 7 with n. (9.3).
² Mentioned by Eelsingh in the introduction to his edition of the ŚB (p. xxxiv) among “merkwaardige verbaalvormen”.
³ Unless it is a scribal error for the present optative -śīṁsyāt (Ch.H. Werba, p.c.).
⁵ Cf. also Sāyaṇa’s gloss -śeṣayet.
⁶ This part of the passage should probably be understood as “Würde er dann/aber nur den (Ziegel) dort anlegen, ohne den hier übrigzulassen …” (Ch.H. Werba, letter of 26.06.2006).
to another form in -yet, attested in the ŚĀ (8.2): yad vā ṛte prānād retah sicyet, tat pāyen, na sambhavet. Keith (1908: 51) translates: "If without breath seed were effused, it would decay, it would not be productive."

Both ed. ĀnSS and ed. Keith read sicyet, but the active -ya-present *sicyati does not exist in Vedic; we only find the -yā-passive sicyáte. Correspondingly, in his translation, Keith (1908: 51, n. 4) notices the irregularity of the form; ed. Bhim Dev and VWC-Br. II/1590a (with n. a) conjecture *sicyeta, apparently following the passive interpretation suggested by Keith.

As in the case of the parallel forms -sǐṣyet and -ṣǐṣyāt, sicyet can hardly mean anything different from the root aorist optative (precative) sicyāt, which occurs, for instance, in JUB 1.1.3.8 [ed. Oertel 1.3.8]: ... yathā kṣīre kṣīram āsicyāt ...8 "... as one would pour milk into milk ..." (Oertel).

The syntax of the context poses no difficulties. The form āsicyāt, derived from the fundamentally transitive verb sic "pour", is undoubtedly transitive, and sicyet must be such as well. Likewise, one may suppose that both the unclear -sǐṣyet and its precative pendant -ṣǐṣyāt are employed transitively. This immediately raises a number of questions: are Bollée’s and Keith’s passive translations of -ṣǐṣyāt (in ŚB 2.10.12) and sicyet (in ŚĀ 8.2) correct? Do we actually have sufficient reasons for taking the passages in question as (unambiguously) intransitive? If not, why have Keith and Bollée interpreted these constructions intransitively (passively)?

In fact, the aforequoted sentences in which the forms -sǐṣyet, -ṣǐṣyāt and sicyet occur are syntactically ambiguous - by virtue of the morphological ambiguity of the nouns retah and devayajanamātram (nominative/accusative); i.e. all three can be interpreted either intransitively ("no space ... should be left", etc.) or transitively ("he should leave no space", etc.). Apparently, both Keith and Bollée have associated -y- in -ṣǐṣyāt and sicyet with the present (passive) suffix -ya-. Since y in the optative has nothing to do with the passive suffix -ya-, this analysis is certainly im-

7 "Sicyeta seems most probable, as sicyet is very irregular. Sicyāt, a precative form, is just possible, but not likely."

8 Narten (1964: 267, n. 845) conjectures an optative of the athematic nasal present ("wahrscheinlich Schreibfehler für sonstiges sǐcỹāt"); for this and other athematic forms of this nasal present, see Werba 1997: 254; for the athematic present optatives see also § 6.2 below. Oertel (p. 227, n. a.l.) hesitantly conjectures *āstĩcet. Böhtlingk (apud Oertel 1895: ccxliii [= 1994: I/27]), Caland (apud ed. Limaye – Vadekar, p. 380, n. i) and Sharma (see also p. 227, n. a.l.) suggest *sǐcỹeta. In my view, neither of these conjectures is in fact required.
possible for the root aorist optative -śisyaṭ and should be likewise rejected for -śisyet and sicyet: as it seems, -y- in -yet is of the same nature as in -yāt.

On the other hand, there are no good reasons to suppose that precatives (and “precative-like” forms) could not be employed transitively. Generally, root aorist optatives show the same syntactic pattern as other (primary) derivatives of the verb. In particular:

(i) root aorist optatives of fundamentally transitive verbs are employed transitively, cf. á-bhriyāt (ŚB 1.5.1.20) “he should bring” (not *“he should be brought”), vadhyāt (Yajurveda) “he should slay”, and other examples given by Narten (1964):

(ii) root aorist optatives of intransitive verbs are employed intransitively, cf. pusyāsam “may I prosper”, ġamyās RV “he should come”, etc.

Thus, since transitive interpretations are syntactically possible and even preferable for -śisyet, -śisyaṭ and sicyet, the corresponding passages should be translated transitively, contra Keith (1908: 51) and Bollée (1956: 63f.), i.e.: “East of it ... he should leave no space ...” (for GB and SB), and “If he were to pour seed without breath, it would decay ...” (for ŚĀ).

2.2. While the aforequoted passages containing sicyet and -śisyet are syntactically unclear, by virtue of the morphological ambiguity of the nouns involved (nominative/accusative), in the case of -dihyet, attested in the BhārŚS, the syntactic context leaves no choice. -dihyet can only be interpreted transitively (BhārŚS 11.17.10):

\[\text{yadi bhidyeta, vidhum dadrāṇam iti samdhāya, yāni dṛḍhārthe samśleṣaṇāni, tair enam abhidihyed, yad anjan māṣebhyo māṁśāc ca, yad rtē cid abhiśrisa iti} \]

“If [the Mahāvīra-vessel] would break, he should unite [its parts] with [the verse]: ‘[The grey-haired one has swallowed] the deadly hit [moon] which was walking [in the fight of many ones ...]’ (RV 10.55.5 = TĀᵐ 4.20.1, etc.) and besmear it with [things] which make [other things] cling together to [remain] (firmly) fixed (for some time), except beans and meat, with [the verse]: ‘When [the one who unites] without ligature ...’ [TĀᵐ ib.]”.

The parallel passage in ĀpŚS 15.17.8 clearly shows that abhi-dihyet in the BhārŚS replaces the optative abhi-dihyaṭ:

\[\text{yadi bhidyeta, vidhum dadrāṇam iti samadhāya, tato yāni dṛḍhārthe samśleṣaṇāni syus, tair enam abhidihyēt} \]

9 For this mantra, see Caland 1924: 76, n. 3 ad ĀpŚS 9.4.1; see also Tichy 1993: 15f. for the meaning of the hapax vidhā- (“tödlich getroffen”).
The form -dihyāt may belong to the system of the root present (degdhi, etc.); however, in formal terms, this form can also be taken as an instance of the root aorist optative (precative), a formation which has become functionally (almost) equivalent to present optatives by the late Vedic period (see Narten 1982: 129 [= 1995: 256]).

Thus, the preliminary conclusions on the function and status of the forms -dihyet, -śiṣyet and sicyet (hereafter labelled -yet-optatives) can be recapitulated as follows:

(i) -dihyet, etc. do not belong with -ya-presents, nor with -yá-passives;

(ii) these forms are employed in the same usage as root aorist optatives (precatives) in -yāt (sicyāt, etc.);

(iii) like the corresponding root aorist optatives, they can be employed transitively if the base verb is transitive.

3. Attested Forms

In what follows I will discuss forms in -yet which cannot be explained as optatives of active -ya-presents and thus may represent -yet-optatives.

kṣip “throw”: kṣipyet

ChU 8.6.5 [kṣipyet, ed. Böhtlingk +kṣiyeta, Böhtlingk (1876: 640) +kṣiyet, VWC-Up. I/261b +kṣipet]

The form kṣipyet, attested in an unclear ChU passage (8.6.5), has drawn the attention of Böhtlingk (see p. 27 above) and other interpreters. The passage runs:

atha yatraitad asmāc charīrād utkṛāmaty, athaitair eva raśmibhir ārdhvam ākramate. sa om iti +vāho +dvāram +īyate.10 sa yācet kṣipyen manas, tāvad ādityam gacchati.

Since neither (active) -ya-presents, nor -ya-passives can be derived in Vedic from kṣip,11 the form kṣipyet appears even more irregular than

10 Conjectures by K.F. Geldner; see Morgenroth 1981: 289ff. and Olivelle 1998: 569 (with bibliographical references) for a discussion of the initial part of the passage.

11 The passive of kṣip appears in post-Vedic texts. In particular, we find kṣipyanti (with the abnormal active inflexion, see Bharadwaj 1982: 113; VWC-Sū. II/953, n. 1 conjectures the metrically impossible middle form *kṣipyante) in ViśŚmr. 43.42cd: kvacit kṣipyanti bāṇaughair utkṛtyante tathā kvacit // “In some place they are shot (lit. thrown) with many arrows; in some place they are cut in pieces” (from a description of hell). Cf. also Epic Skt. part. act. ākṣipyant- “being pulled, thrown” (Mbh. 1.16.15b); see Kulkarni 1943: 239 and Oberlies 2003: 265, 411.
sicyet and -ṣisyet discussed above. Böhtlingk (1889) conjectures +kṣiyeta, but the meaning “disappear” makes little sense in the context (in Böhtlingk’s translation: “Während das Denkorgan verschwindet, gelangt man zur Sonne”);\(^{12}\) cf. ed. Senart 1930: 113, n. 3.\(^{13}\) In his edition Morgengroth (p. 506) accepts no emendation and interprets the form in question intransitively (“Der – wie schnell ein Gedanke ausschießt, so schnell gelangt er zur Sonne” [p. 368]), which is hardly possible for the fundamentally transitive verb kṣip.

In my view, the normal (transitive) interpretation of kṣip (“throw”) better suits the sense of the passage (VWC-Up. I/261b reads *kṣipet), which can be tentatively rendered as follows:

Now, when one exits from this body, then with those same rays one rises upwards. With the word “Om” this charioteer (?) drives to the gate. So long as he can direct [lit.: throw, send]\(^{14}\) his mind [thither], he comes to the sun.

Most likely, the form kṣipyet cannot be grouped with -ya-presents,\(^{15}\) nor with -ya-passives. The interpretation of this form as an instance of -yet-optative renders conjectures suggested by Böhtlingk (*kṣīyet, *kṣīyeta) and VWC-Up. I/261b (*kṣipet) unnecessary.

\[\text{gṛh “seize, grasp”; gṛhyet}\]

KauśSm\(^{22}\) 82.21 [gṛhyet, v.l. gṛhet, gṛhyot, duhyed]

The form gṛhyet occurs in an unidentified mantra quoted in the KauśS 82.21:

\[
yad-yat kravyād gṛhyed yadi ' kravyādā nānte 'paredynuh /
divo nabhaḥ śukraṁ payo ' duhānā iṣam ārjaṁ pinvamānāḥ //
\]

Pādas cd are found (with some modifications) in Atharvaveda-Paippalā-dasamhitā 19.52.1-3 (see Griffiths 2004: 77);\(^{16}\) the source of Pādas ab is

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\(^{12}\) The conjecture +kṣīyet, earlier suggested by Böhtlingk (1876 [= Mélanges asiatiques, p. 640]), retains the active ending, but the present kṣīya occures with active inflexion only exceptionally (twice in TĀ 1.14.2).

\(^{13}\) “Je n’ose pas décider quelle est la lecture exacte : kṣipyet n’est guère satisfaisant, et je crois moins encore à kṣīyeta qu’a conjecturé Böhtlingk. Je traduis donc un peu au hasard, d’après le sens que le contexte paraît suggérer avec beaucoup de vraisemblance.”

\(^{14}\) Thus already Deussen (1897: 194): “… rasch wie man den Geist darauf richtet” – the interpretation which Böhtlingk (1897: 92) rejected. Cf. also Olivelle’s (1998: 279) translation: “No sooner does he think of it than he reaches the sun.”

\(^{15}\) Although the influence of the synonymous -ya-present asyati “throws” cannot be ruled out (W. Knobl, p.c.).

\(^{16}\) Cf. also RV 9.74.4a: ātmanvān nābho duhyate gṛhetām páyah “The animated cloud is milked [for] ghee [and] milk.”
unknown. Pāda b is obscure and may require emendations, but the sense of Pāda a seems clear in the context of the funeral ritual to which this part of Kauśās is devoted: "Whatever the flesh-eater (i.e. funeral fire) would grasp ...."

**dih** "(be)smear": -dihyet

BhārŚŚ 11.17.10 [abhi-dihyet] (= ĀpŚŚ 15.17.8 [abhi-dihyāt])

The form -dihyet "he should besmear" has been discussed above (p. 30f.).

**dhyā** "think of, reflect, meditate": dhyāyēt

RVKh. 3.10².16 [dhyāyēt, VWC-Sa. III/1744a *dhyāyet] (= BD 6.145)

The form dhyāyēt (transmitted with a final accentuation, which is impossible for the class IV present dhyāya- and attested for this root) occurs in RVKh. 3.10².16; the verse is also quoted (with minor modifications) in BD 6.145:

\[ \text{pāvamānīṁ pavīṇī́ ādevān dhyāyēd yās ca sārasvatīṁ} / \]
\[ \text{pīṭrīṁ tāsyōpa tiṣṭheta kṣīrām sarpīṁ mādhūdakām} // } \]

"And who meditates on the Pāvamāṇī (stanza), on the fathers, on the gods, and on Sarasvatī, his fathers (only) milk, ghee, honey, (and) water may approach."

The verse is based on the Ṛgvedic stanza 9.67.32, which has undergone essential changes, however:

\[ \text{pāvamānīṁ yō adhyēti} yō śibhīṁ sāmbhiṁ rāsam } \]
\[ \text{tāsmāi sārasvatī duhe kṣīrāṁ sarpīṁ mādhūdakām} // } \]

"Who knows by heart the Pāvamāṇī [verses], the sap brought together by the Rśis, Sarasvatī gives him milk, ghee, honey, water."

*dhyaśayēd yās* seems to originate in Ṛgvedic *yō adhyēti*, and the awkward form *dhyāyēt* undoubtedly results from misunderstanding Ṛgvedic *adhyēti*, to which it may owe its unusual accentuation. Although the passage contains a few words with clearly corrupt accentuation (*yaś ca, sarāsvatīṁ, ādevān, pīṭrīṁ*), and the final accent in *dhyāyēt* might be treated likewise, it cannot be ruled out that introducing this accent placement could have been supported by the morphological model of the -yet-optative, which might inherit its final accentuation from precatives in -yāt. Under this analysis, the accent emendation (*'dhyāyēt*) becomes unnecessary.

\[ ^{17} \text{VWC-Sa. III/1744a and n. g (with question mark).} \]
This analysis is indirectly confirmed by the parallel of the root aorist optative in -yāt (*dhīyāyāt “he should think”), attested in Vedic prose – for instance, at KB 8.7.6 and 9.5.19.

**pad “fall”: +-padyet**

ĀrṣU 7.14 [vi ... *padyet (corr. Tsuji 1957: 21f); ed. Belvalkar, ed. Shastri °padyat; VWC-U. II/773a °padyan]

A -yet-optative may underlie the unclear form -padyat attested in the post-Vedic Ārṣeya-Upaniṣad (ed. Belvalkar, p. 7, 13-14): ... vīva padyad ārtim rcchet “... he would perish, he would run into misfortune.” Instead of the morphologically impossible -padyat, VWC-U. II/773a hesitantly conjectures act. part. +-padyan. An optative form is more appropriate in the context, however (cf. the adjacent rcchet), and, correspondingly, Tsuji’s (1957: 21f.) emendation *padyet seems more likely.

**bhañj “break”: -bhajyet**

MānGS 2.15.6 [prabhajyet, ed. Sastri °bhajet. Falk (1994: 323) °bhujet]

The -ya-present bhajya-² (the intransitive counterpart of the nasal transitive present bhanākti) first appears in post-ṛgvedic mantras (AV, RVKh.). By virtue of its semantic, syntactic and paradigmatic features, it seems to belong with the non-passive middle -ya-presents with fluctuating accentuation (cf. esp. bhīdyā⁻² and chīdyā⁻²; see Kulikov 1998 and 2001: 361, 533, 543). The earliest active occurrence is the post-Vedic optative -bhajyet attested in the MānGS (2.15.6):

*yady arcā dahyed vā naśyed vā prapated vā prabhajyed vā prahased vā pracaled vā ... “If the image of a god burns, or disappears, or falls down, or breaks,¹⁹ or laughs or trembles ...” (a list of omens).

Instead of -bhajyet (as in ed. Knauer), Sastri reads °bhajet (thus reckoning this form to the root bhaj “share, distribute”), but the meaning of pra-bhaj (“execute, accomplish”) makes no sense in the context. Falk (1994: 323, with n. 31) rejects both readings and hesitantly conjectures °bhujet (“[falls ein Verehrungsobjekt ...] sich beugt ...”), but his emendation seems too drastic; note also that the rare compound pra-bhuj occurs in the Śūtras only in the absolutive (prabhujya). In my view, the

¹⁸ Taken as an augmentless imperfect by Renou (1957: 129); see Tsuji’s (1957: 21) objections.

¹⁹ Rather than “is crushed” (passive) in Dresden’s (1941: 165) translation.
meaning of prā-bhañj (well-attested from the RV onwards) perfectly suits the context and the reading adopted in ed. Knauer is most likely. Although the active inflexion of the form prabhajyet can readily be explained as emerging under the influence of the adjacent active optatives (cf. the similar case of manyet discussed below), it cannot be ruled out that -bhañjyet represents a -yet-optative; note especially the lack of other (non-optative) active forms built on the stem -bhañya- in the Sūtras.

bhṛj(j) “roast”: bhṛj(j)yēyur

The plural optative form bhṛj(j)yēyur is attested in two Saṃhitās of the Black Yajurveda (MS 1.10.11: 151.6 ~ KS 36.6: 73.1-2):
yād bhṛjjyēyur [KS bhṛjjyēyur], ānaveṣṭam āṁhaḥ syāt “If they would roast [the grain], āṁhas (narrowness) would not be removed by sacrificing.”

The form in question cannot be the optative of an active -ya-present20 (otherwise unattested) because of the suffix accentuation. Already Roth (PW V/398) had conjectured the class VI present optative ‘bhṛjjyēyur (for the Kāṭhaka occurrence). Renou (1940: 7) noticed the secondary character of -y- in this form; Hoffmann (1985: 173 [= 1992: 814]) explained *bhṛjyāti as a hypersanskritized substitute for the class VI present bhṛjjāti (see also Werba 1997: 213).

Although the class VI analysis of this form is possible, it cannot be ruled out that bhṛj(j)yēyur is the plural pendant of the -yet-optative ‘bhṛj(j)yēt – which renders the emendation ‘bhṛjjyēyur unnecessary.

mṛ “die”: mriyet


The form mriyet occurs in the concluding verse of the late Amṛtanāda-Upaniṣad:

20 Thus Bartholomae 1925: 34 (followed by KEWA II/520 and EWAia II/278), according to whom bhṛjj can be traced to bhṛj-y- (cf. Av. -bhrjia-).
The irregular character of the form was noticed by Weber (1865: 38).\footnote{31} mṛj “wipe off, destroy”: -mṛjyet

GB 1.4.13: 104.13 [nir-mṛjyet, ed. Gaastra *nir-mṛityet] (= ŠBM 12.1.3.23 [vi-mṛityēt])

The form nir-mṛjyet occurs in the GB, probably replacing the original -yet-optative of mṛit, vi-mṛityēt (attested in the parallel passage of the ŠB). For a detailed discussion of the relevant passage, see below, s.v. mṛit (p. 37, n. 27).

mṛit (mṛit, mṛt)\footnote{32} “decay, rot; dissolve”: -mṛityēt, -mṛityeyur\footnote{33}

ŠBM 3.2.1.31 [*aṇa ... mṛityēt] ≈ ŠBK 4.2.1.22 [*aṇa-mṛtyēt (v.l. aṇamṛityēc, aṇamṛityēc)]; ŠBM 12.1.3.23 [vi-mṛityēt, vi-mṛityeyur] (= GB 1.4.13: 104.13f. nir-mṛjyet, nir-mṛjyēran, ed. Gaastra *nir-mṛtyēt, *nir-mṛtyēran); ŠBM 9.5.2.14 [vi ... mṛityēt] = ŠBK [vi ... mṛityēc (v.l. mṛtyēc)]\footnote{34}

The isolated optative forms mṛityēt and -mṛityeyur, which do not occur outside ŠB,\footnote{25} are treated in PW V/932 as forms of the intransitive active -ya-present *mṛitya- (“zerfallen, sich auflösen”). After Böhtlingk and Roth’s dictionary (PW), this analysis has been followed by all grammars and dictionaries\footnote{26} and adopted in Indo-Iranian and Indo-European scholarship; cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA II/695f.; EWAa II/387 (“zerfallen, sich auflösen”). In Avestan studies this intransitive -ya-present is taken as the counterpart of Avestan frištieiti; cf. Geldner 1896: 52; Kellens 1984: 120f. (“se décomposer”); Werba 1997: 220 (“verfaulen/rotten, sich auflösen”).

The semantics and syntax of mṛityēt and mṛityeyur pose no difficulties in the following two passages:

\footnote{31} “mṛjyet ist eine ungewöhnliche Form, Passivum mit der Endung des Actives.”
\footnote{32} For the relationship between the root variants mṛit and mṛt, see, in particular, Oertel 1926: 240ff.; 1927: 106 [= 1994: I/565].
\footnote{33} I have greatly benefited from discussing the interpretation of the relevant passages with W. Knobl and Ch.H. Werba. Of course all responsibility for possible mistakes and misinterpretations is mine.
\footnote{34} See ed. Caland II/470; for the numeration, see ed. Caland I/117 (ŠBM 9.5.2 = ŠBK 11.7.2).
\footnote{25} For occurrences in GB 1.4.13 (which is likely to be based on ŠB 12.1.3.23; see GB, ed. Gaastra, Einleitung, p. 21), see below, n. 27.
\footnote{26} Thus Whitney 1885: 127 (though with a question mark); Delbrück 1888: 340; 1897: 33 (with the tentative accent emendation *mṛityati); Uhlenbeck 1899: 233; Monier-Williams 837 (“decay, be dissolved”); Werba 1997: 220.
átha yá u hainam ápy etárhi táthopeyúr, yáthámapátúram udaká ásikte vímrityé,
eván haivá té vímrityeyuh (ŚB 12.1.3.23 [= GB 1.4.13: 104.12-14]
yá enam adya tathopeyur, yáthámapátram udaka ásikte nirmṛjyed, evam
yajamánnā nirmṛjyerau)27 “[B]ut if nowadays any (sattrins) were to perform
it [sc. the rite] on this wise, they assuredly w o u l d c r u m b l e a w a y28
even as a jar of unbaked clay w o u l d c r u m b l e a w a y if
water were poured into it.” (Eggeling V/144).29

ná táthā kuryād, yáthā sáśkam stháṇum udakénabhishiñcét tádik táti,
páyed vá vái sá vi vá mṛityeyuḥ (ŚB 9.5.2.14). “He should not act that way, [for] it
would be as if one were to besprinkle with water a withered trunk; it
w o u l d r o t o r f a l l t o p i e c e s (dissolve!).”

More problematic is the third occurrence of this formation, at ŚB 3.2.
1.31:
yó vái gárbhasya kāśṭhēna vá nakhēna vá kanḍūyéd ápāsyeyuḥ mṛityeyuḥ “and
were any one to scratch an embryo either with a chip of wood or his nail,
thereby expelling it, it would die” (Eggeling II/33).

This translation suggests quite an odd syntax in the complex sentence
(“who scratches ..., [it = the embryo (??)] dies”). The postposition of
āsyan, interpreted by Eggeling as participle of as “throw” in spite of
the lack of accent on the verbal form,30 is also unusual.

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27 Ed. Gaastra conjectures in both cases “mṛityuḥ” (“nirmṛityuḥ, nirmṛitēyerau) for the
reading “mṛjjyot (nirmṛjjey, nirmṛjjyerau) attested in mss. and adopted in ed. Mitra. The
reading attested in the GB must be secondary, based on the replacement of the forms of
the rare root *mṛi with those of the much more common mṛj (see Oertel 1926: 241 and
1927: 106 [= 1994: 1/565]; Patyal 1973: 255), which is most frequent with the preverb
nir-, meaning “wipe off, destroy” (Ch.H. Werba’s p.c., letter of 16.07.2006). Such replace-
ment could trigger the concomitant adjustment in the morphology and syntax of
the passage. Specifically, while nirmṛjyet may represent a -yet-optative of nir-mṛj (“one would
destroy (it”), nirmṛjyerau cannot be anything but the 3pl. pass. opt. form of the same
compound, replacing the original 3pl. form of the -yet-optative of vimṛityeyuḥ. The
fundamentally transitive syntax of (nir-)mṛj may be responsible for the passive syntax of
the resulting construction, replacing the original non-passive intransitive sentence.
Accordingly, the variant of the ŚB passage attested in the GB can be tentatively trans-
lated as follows (Ch.H. Werba, ibid.): “Wenn man heute an ihn so heranginge, würden,
wie [wenn man] ein rohes (Ton-)Gefäß mit Wasser begösse und es so vertilgte, so die
Opferherrn vertilgt werden” (emphasis is mine – LK).

28 The compound with the preverb vi- should rather be translated as “crumble asunder, fall to pieces”.

29 Likewise, Delbrück (1888: 340): “diejenigen aber, welche auch jetzt noch so zu ihm
kommen sollten, würden zerfallen, als ob ein rohes Gefäß zerfiele, nachdem Wasser hin-
eingegossen ist”; Oertel 1926: 240; Minard (1956: 178 [441]): “ceux qui, aujourd’hui en-
core, accompliraient ainsi ce (rite), comme un vase (d’argile) crue se délitterait si l’on (y)
versait de l’eau, tout ainsi se déliteraient-ils.”

30 In order to explain away this abnormal accentuation, Eggeling II/33, n. 2 suggests
a plausible conjecture, 3sg. opt. “ápāsyet “he would force it out”.
A different syntactic analysis of *mrityet* has been suggested for ŚB 3.2.1.31 by Caland (as well as by Lindner, in his unpublished translation of the ŚB, also quoted by Caland) in his “Kritisch-exegetische Bemerkungen zu den Brāhmaṇas” (1912: 116 [= 1990: 204]). Caland’s interpretation is based on the Kāṇva recension (4.2.1.22): ...

Caland conjectured ‘*āpāsya mrityet* for *āpāsyan mrityet* in the Mādhyandina recension and translates both versions as “so würde er ihm schaden (?)” or “die Haut desselben abschaben (?)”.

A more attractive interpretation of this passage has been suggested to me by W. Knobl (p.c., letters of 27.08.2001 and 20.01.2005), who adopts Caland’s conjecture ‘*āpāsya mrityet* for both recensions of the ŚB and translates the whole passage as follows: “Wer etwa das Kind im Mutterleib mit einem Stück Holz oder mit dem Nagel kratzen würde, dem (!) würde es abgehen (d.h. als Frühgeburt missraten).” Thus, the compound *āpa-mrit* is taken as synonymous with *srīv* or *āpa-pad* “be aborted”. Still, the syntactic structure of the passage remains not quite clear.

Finally, Ch.H. Werba (p.c., letter of 16.07.2006) suggested a plausible correction to the interpretation of the compound *āpa-mrit*, rendering it in the sense of German *ab-faulen*, i.e. “solange verfaulen/verrotten, bis der Embryo dann auch abgeht”. Accepting the above-mentioned conjecture ‘*āpāsya mrityet*, he offers the following interpretation of the passage in question (which, incidentally, accounts for the genitive *gārbhasya* in the subordinate clause): “Würde man an der Eihaut des Embryo schaben oder kratzen und diese damit beschädigen, so würde sich einem diese Eihaut und damit der Embryo selbst auflösen und schließlich als Totgeburt abgehen ….”

Another formation which belongs to this verb (made from the *l*-variant of the root, *mlit*) is the absolutive derived from the causative stem *mle*-

The final accentuation of *vimrityēt* in ŚB can be accounted for under the assumption that *mrityēt* does not belong with the -*ya*-presents, but represents a separate morphological formation, parallel with and functionally equivalent to the root aorist optative (preceptive) in -*yāt* and adop-

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31 V.lI. *āpamrityēt, āyaṃmṛityēt, ṣapamṛityēt*. Note that the ŚBK has preserved the root variant *mṛt*. 
ting its final accent. The form -mrityeyur can be identified as the plural counterpart of mrityét.

ram “stop”: -ramyet

BaudhŚŚ 24.7: 190.15 [vi-ramyet (ed. Caland, ed. Kashikar), v.ll. ⁰ramyet-
ta, ⁰rasyeta]

The optative vi-ramyet occurs in BaudhŚŚ 24.7: 190.14-15: na karmaṇo hetor mantro viramyet “The mantra should not stop for the sake of the rite.”

Caland (1903: 42) noticed this form as “merkwürdig”, mentioning that Venkateśvara’s commentary glosses it as na viramet. Since active -ya-
presents are not derived from this root, the form in question is likely to represent a -yet-optative.

vid “know”: vidyet

JābU 4: 66.6 [vidyet, v.ll. vidyāt, vindet, veda, ed. Schrader vindet]

The form vindet appears among variant readings in the late Jābala-
Upaṁsad:

yady agniṃ na vinded apsu jahuyāt. āpo vai sarvā devatāḥ. sarvābhyo de-
vatābhya juhomi svāhēt hutvoddhṛtya praśnīyat sājyaṃ havir anāmayam. mokṣamāntras trayī. evaṃ vidyet (JābU 4: 66.3-6). “If he cannot obtain fire, he should offer [the oblation] in the waters. All the deities verily are the waters. He should offer the oblation with the words ‘I offer to all the deities, hail!’; take [some from it] and eat that salubrious oblation mixed with clarified butter. The triple [Veda] is the mantra of liberation. Thus one should know” (cf. Olivelle 1992: 144).

Schrader adopts the reading vindet (attested in a number of mss.), but in Vedic the nasal present can only be derived from the homonymous root ¹vid “find, obtain” (vindāti, etc.), not from ²vid “know”. Although in post-Vedic texts (in particular, in Epic Skt.), when both roots become confused, the nasal present of ²vid “know” does occur, in our passage the form vindet seems to have been triggered by the present optative vindet[1] “he can(not) obtain” at the beginning of the passage. Among the attested readings only vidyāt (precative) can belong to ²vid “know” as a correct form, and vidyet may have arisen as its secondary variant.

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32 For this prescription, see Gonda 1977: 510.
33 Middle -ya-presents are rare, late and secondary, attested in the imperative abhi-
ramyatām (KauṣGS 3.14.16 ~ SGS 4.2.6 ~ GautPS 2.6.13, for which see Caland 1895:
108, 112 [= 1990: 18, 22]; but Hultzsch’s ms. reads ⁰ramate; see Appendix to Caland’s ed.
of the GautPS, p. 132); the parallel passage ViṣSmṛ. 73.26 reads abhi-ramantu.
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(on the relationship between precatives and optatives in -yet-, see below §5-6).

śaṁś “recite”: -śasyet

ŚŚS 17.9.6 [saṁ-śasyet]
The transitive -yet-optative -śasyet is attested in ŚŚS 17.9.6: ubhe sūkte pacchaḥ saṁśasyet “He should recite together both hymns by verse-quarters.”

śiṣ “leave, remain”: śiṣyet

GB 1.2.14: 47.12 [(tr.) paryava-śiṣyet] (= VaitS 11.5); VaikhŚS 21.4: 325.2 [(intr.) śiṣyet]; BhārŚS 7.3.9 [(intr.) uc-chiṣyet, VWC-Sū. I/628b °yeta]

In contrast to the transitive -yet-optative paryava-śiṣyet “he should [not] leave” (GB 1.2.14: 47.12), discussed above (p. 28ff.), both occurrences of śiṣyet in the Śrautasūtras are intransitive:

yat prokṣaṇīnāṃ ucchiṣyet ... (BhārŚS 7.3.9) “What of the sprinkling-waters remains ...”; yadi ... alpasomaḥ śiṣyet ... (VaikhŚS 21.4: 325.1-2) “If ... a little Soma remains ....”

For BhārŚS 7.3.9 ucchiṣyet, VWC-Sū. I/628b (with n. h) conjectures °yeta (with a question mark); likewise, in VaikhŚS, ed. Caland (Preface, p. xviii), śiṣyet is considered a secondary replacement of the regular middle optative śiṣyeta. Under the assumption that śiṣyet is a -yet-optative, both conjectures, albeit quite plausible per se, are unnecessary. The syntactic variability (transitive/intransitive) can be explained by the fact that both transitive and intransitive usages are equally basic for this verb (cf. śimṣáti, śináṣṭi “leaves” and śiṣyate/śiṣyáte “is left, remains”), which makes both transitive and intransitive usages of -yet-optatives possible.

sañj (sajj) “hang, attach”: (++)-sajjet

MānŚS 1.1.3.6 [(++)ava-sajjet (← °sajj° [?]), v.l., ed. van Gelder ava-sṛjet]

A -yet-optative may underlie the form -sajjet attested as a v.l. in MānŚS 1.1.3.6, which van Gelder reads as follows: darbhamayaṃ pavitraṃ tri-guṇarajju śākhāyām anulomam avasṛjet, granthim akurvan. The meaning of sṛj (“release, set free”) does not suit the context, however, and, in fact, van Gelder has translated the passage differently: “On (the top of) the

34 On the accent fluctuation in this present, see Kulikov 1998.
branch he shall fix three Darbha blades as a strainer, their tips on the top of the branch; he shall not make a knot.”

The original reading (on which van Gelder’s interpretation is apparently based) could have been preserved in one of the ms. sources used by Knauer, abbreviated in the critical apparatus as Kc (fragments from the Mānava-, Kāṭhaka- and other Sūtras collected by A. Weber from the commentary on the KātyāŚŚ). Kc reads the form in question as avasajjet, which can only be derived from the root sañj (/sajj/). This reading is hesitantly adopted by Caland (1902: 124 [= 1990: 604]) and mentioned by van Gelder (in crit. app.), who surmises a sporadic gemination (“perhaps °vasaje° is right”). In my view, the gemination can be readily explained as the Prakrit-like reflex of the cluster -jy-, attested, in particular, in pres. sajjate (← pass. sajyate), which occurs, for instance, in ŚB 14.6.9.28 (v.l.), NidānaS 9.8: 163.12, 18, 25, in some late Upaniṣads, Epic and Class. Skt. Although sajja- does occur with the active inflexion (from the Śrautasūtras onwards), and we cannot rule out that the form in question is the optative of the secondary present sajjati, an analysis in terms of -yet-optatives seems very likely; note that a non-optative form of this present occurs in the Śrautasūtras only once (VaikhŚŚ 18.6: 256.16 ā-sajjati).

sic “pour”: sicyet

ŚĀ 8.2 [sicyet, ed. Bhim Dev, VWC-Br. II/1590a +sicyeta]

The form sicyet “[if] one were to pour” has been discussed above, p. 29f.

sū “beget”: sūyet

AVPar. 71.7.1 [sūyet]

The form sūyet occurs in the Pariśiṣṭas of the Atharvaveda:

-yonivyatikaram yatra’ kuryur evamvidham striyah | gaur vā sūyet tathānyā- ni’ tatra rājyaṁ vinaśyati // (AVPar. 71.7.1) “Where females produce such [freaks] as a result of confusion of wombs, or a cow gives birth to other [kinds of offspring], there the kingdom perishes.”

35 “... ist vielleicht die Lesart von Kc richtig, da dem avasajjet oder avasajet bei Baudh. praveṣṭayati entspricht.”


37 Mss. read sājyate and sājjate; see ed. Weber, crit. app.

38 I am grateful to Ch.H. Werba for valuable clarifications on the meaning of this passage.
The transitive -ya-present sūya- “beget” (competing with the old root present sūte RV +) first appears in the post-Vedic period, in particular, in ViṣSmṛ. and AVPar.; cf. prā-sūyante at AVPar. 71.7.4, i.e. just a few verses after the aforequoted passage, sūyate at AVPar. 71.11.1, and, especially, the middle optative prasūyeta employed in a similar context (gaur aśvam … prasūyeta) at AVPar. 71.5.2. However, forms with active inflexion do not occur until Epic Skt.; Gotō (1991: 698) mentions only one attestation in Mbh. Although active forms frequently substitute for the regular middles in AVPar. (dīpyati for dīpyate, vāsyati for vāsyate), the lack of non-optative forms (**sūyati, etc.) makes the analysis of sūyet as a -yet-optative very likely. It is worth mentioning that the AVPar. quite often employs optative forms in indicative usages, in particular, in indefinite relative clauses (see Modak 1993: 467); the above-quoted passage (mentioned by Modak, ibid.) is a typical example of such a usage.

snā “bathe, swim”: snāyet, -snāyeyur

GB 1.5.2: 114.4, 6, 9, 12, 15 [pra-snāyeyur] (≈ ŚB 12.2.1.1ff. [pra-snānti40]); Mānavanugrāhikasūtra 23 [snāyet]

The plural optative form -snāyeyur occurs a few times (in the same syntactic context) in a GB passage:

gādhaṃ pratiṣṭhā caturviṁśam ahar yathopakāṣadaghnām vā kaṇṭhadaghnām vā yato viśramya praśnāyeyus, tādṛk tat (GB 1.5.2: 114.3f. = 5f. = 8f. = 11f. = 14f. [≈ ŚB 12.2.1.2=4 yathopapakāṣadaghnām vā kaṇṭhadaghnām vā yāto viśramya praśnānti]) “The Caturviṁśa-day is a ford, a foothold. As if having rested [where the water] reaches (only) to the arm-pits or to the neck, one would swim forth from there, so it is.”

Werba (1997: 329) records this form as the optative of the secondary -ya-present. Note, however, that, apart from one isolated middle form in a late mantra (MānŚŚm 8.20.8 snāyasva; see Kulikov 2001: 593), the -ya-present snāya- only occurs in post-Vedic texts (see Werba, ibid., and, for attestations in Epic Sanskrit, Oberlies 2003: 194, 538). Rather, the form -snāyeyur instantiates a -yet-optative (pl.), parallel to the root present optative snāyāti (which might equally be a precative), attested, in particular, in GB 1.2.2: 34.3 and TĀ 1.26.7.

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40 The form pra-snāyūr attested in ŚB 12.2.1.1 corresponds to the optative prātareyur at GB 1.5.2: 114.2.
The corresponding singular form occurs in Mānavānugrāhikasūtra 23 (quoted from Caland 1896: 83, n. 304), probably emerging under the influence of the adjacent active optatives:

śucivāsā notsavēṣu gachen, nākāle snāyen, na hṛṣyet “[His wife], clothed in pure garments, should not go to festivals, should not bathe at the wrong time, should not rejoice.”

4. The Morphology, Syntax and Semantics of -yet-Optatives
   A Recapitulation

4.1. Morphology

The -yet-optative can now be safely posited as a separate morphological type, albeit late, marginal and rare. Correspondingly, the forms in -yet / -yeyur discussed above need not be emended.

The rules of derivation are essentially the same as for the regular root aorist optatives (“precatives”), apart from é instead of á; i.e. -yét is attached to the zero grade root. The plural form in -yéyur is probably made by analogy with class IV present optatives. Thus, unaccented -yet-optatives are formally indistinguishable from 3rd person active optatives derived from -ya-present stems; in other words, a form in -yet can be identified for certain as a -yet-optative only in the cases where there are no active -ya-presents derived from the root in question.

Unlike root aorist optatives in -yāt, etc., the -yet-optative seems never to have developed a full paradigm, thus being similar to other isolated formations with defective paradigms, such as passive -i-aorist. I was unable to find forms beside 3sg. and 3pl. (for instance, a hypothetical 2sg. form might be *kṣipyēs).

4.2. Syntax and Transitivity

-yet-optatives follow the syntactic pattern which is typical of the base verb. It should be emphasized once again that y in -yet-optatives has nothing to do with y in (intransitive) -ya-presents and/or -yā-passives, so that transitive verbs do not become intransitive in -yet-optatives. That is, if a verb is (fundamentally) transitive, its -yet-optative is employed transitively: kṣipyet “he should throw”, bhrj(j)yéyur “they should roast”, -sasyet “one should recite”, sicyet “one should pour”, etc. On the contrary, if a verb is intransitive, its -yet-optatives are employed intransitively; cf. mriyet “he should die”, and -ramyet “he should stop”. The
-yet-optative šiṣyet can be employed both transitively ("one should leave") and intransitively ("it would remain"), since both syntactic patterns are well attested for the verb šiṣ.

In addition, one should note that the majority (approximately two-thirds) of -yet-optatives are transitive. This ratio does not necessarily represent a syntactic feature of -yet-optatives, but it may have influenced the choice of syntactic pattern in those cases where both transitive and intransitive usages were possible; see below, p. 52, § 7.1 on the post-Vedic optative trudyeyur. Incidentally, an unusual syntax (particularly, higher transitivity) may be the only criterion distinguishing unaccented -yet-optatives from the regular present optatives in the cases where active -ya-presents can be derived from a given root.42

4.3. Semantics

Evidence is too scant to assume any specific meaning for -yet-optatives, in contrast with the corresponding (far more common) regular present optatives. It seems that this formation is employed in the same usage as precautives in -yāt — which, in turn, have become functionally (almost) equivalent to present optatives by the late Vedic period (Narten 1982: 129 [= 1995: 256]) and, eventually, almost disappear by that time (Hoffmann 1970: 66f. [= 1976: 517f.], n. 2).43

5. PARADIGMATIC FEATURES AND THE ORIGIN OF THE -YET-OPTATIVE

In order to trace back possible sources of the -yet-optative, I give a synopsis of all forms in -yet / -yeyur, together with the corresponding

41 This disproportion can be partly accounted for by the fact that a good many fundamentally intransitive verbs build active -ya-presents, the optatives of which are indistinguishable from -yet-optatives in unaccentuated texts.

42 Such may be the case with the optative form krudhyey, constructed with the accusative in VaikhŚS 12.11: 141.4 (anyam na krudhyey; see VaikhŚS, ed. Caland, Preface, p. xix), in contrast to the forms of the -ya-present krúdhya, typically constructed with the dative.

43 Hoffmann’s claim that the precautive totally disappears in late Vedic seems too categorical. However, some rare forms (such as the aforementioned -śisyāt SB 2.10.12 and -śicyāt JUB 1.1.3.8 [ed. Oertel 1.3.8]) still occur in late texts; see also the list in Renou 1940: 13f., n. 1 and cf. the examples from Epic Sanskrit in §7.1.
present formations attested for the same root, and, for comparison, a selection of root aorist optatives (precatives):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-yet-optatives</th>
<th>present formations</th>
<th>thematic</th>
<th>athematic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| kṣip | kṣipyet | kṣipáti | (grhnate, etc.)
| gr(b)h | grhyet | gr(b)hṇāti | |
| dih | -dihyet | | degdhi |
| dhyā | dhyāyét | dhyāyati | |
| pad | +-padyet | pādyate | |
| bhaņj | -bhajyet | bhajyate | |
| bhrj(j) | bhrj(j)yēyur | bhrjāti | |
| mṛ | mriyet | mriyāte | |
| mṛj | mṛjyet | | |
| mṛlt | -mrityét | mrityeyur | |
| ram | -ramyet | rámate, -ti | |
| vid | vidyet | vidāti | |
| šaṃs | -sasyet | šāṃsati | |
| śiś | -śiṣyet | śiṃsāti | śināṣṭi |
| saņj | (⁺)-sajjet | sājati | |
| sic | sicyet | siṅcāti | |
| sūyet | sūyet | sūyate | sūte |
| snā | snāyet | -snāyeyur | snāti |

precatives (a selection)

| ad | adyāt, | adyāsam | | átti |
| aś | aśyās | | | aśnóti |
| āp | āpyās | | | āpnóti |
| ṛdh | ṛdhyaś | ṛdhyaśeś | ṛdhyate | ṛdhnóti, ṛnáddhi |
| kr | kriyāt | | kṛṇóti, karóti |
| gam | gamyāś | gācchati | |
| bhā | bhāyāś | bhāvati | |
| bhr | -bhrīyāt | bhārati | bibharti |
| yuj | yujyātām, | | yunákti |
| yujyāt, etc. | | |
| śak | śakyām | | śaknóti |

44 Thematic present formations are secondary and late (grhnate MundU, -grhasva ĀgnivGS, -grhet ĀgnivGS, late Up.; see Gotō 1987: 85f. with n. 53f.).
The main difference between the two lists is evident. All roots for which -yet-optatives are attested have thematic (classes I, VI, IV) presents (except diḥ and snā), whereas many roots of the second group do not. This correlation suggests the following simple explanation: -yet-optatives result from a contamination of precatives (root aorist optatives) (śisyāt, sicyāt, etc.) and thematic present optatives (śiṁset, siṅcet, kṣipēt, etc.), thus being, in a sense, ‘thematic precatives’. To put it differently, the rebuilding of the original root aorist optatives śisyāt, sicyāt, etc. has been triggered by the thematic present formations of the same root.

The identification of -yāt and -yet could be further supported by the parallelism of precatives and class IV present optatives derived from ā roots, noticed by Hoffmann (1967: 26ff. [= 1976: 466ff.]); cf. such pairs as -vāyāt (KS, Kauśa) : -vāyet (Taittirīya-Saṃhitā, Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa) (√vā “become extinguished, vanish”) and dhyāyāt : dhyāyet.

6. -yet-Optatives and Parallel Formations

There are two optative formations which are, in some ways, parallel to the -yet-optative and important for understanding its paradigmatic status.

6.1. -yet-Optatives and the Type gamema

The rare aorist type gamema has been discussed and explained by Insler (1975: 6ff.); see also Renou 1940: 6ff. and Hoffmann 1955: 91 (= 1976: 386). As is well known, alongside athematic root aorist optatives like gamyās, we find gamēma (RV) and games (Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā), alongside ṛdhyās, ṛdhyāma (RV) – ṛdhema (AV), ṛdhet (ŚB), etc. As Insler shows, these formations result from thematicization of the root aorist optatives.

In my view, -yet-optatives have arisen due to the same tendency, i.e. due to thematicization. Like the type gamema, -yet-optatives have adopted the accentuation of the underlying root aorist optatives (cf. Hoffmann 1955: 91 [= 1976: 386]; Insler 1975: 11f.). Both of these morphological types have been created on the basis of forms in -yāt, -yāma, etc. The difference between the type gamema and -yet-optatives is, in particular, of a chronological nature. While the type gamema arises already in the Mantra period, -yet-optatives appear in Vedic prose and post-Vedic texts (late Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, Sūtras).

Once these morphological types were rooted in the verbal system as separate formations, they could probably be derived without the inter-
mediary stage of the root aorist optative. Thus, for instance, we do not find the root aorist optative **kṣipyāt alongside kṣipyet, etc.

It should be noted that 3sg. forms like labhēt and ṛdhēt may both represent formations of Insler’s type gamema and – under the assumption that -yet-optatives could lose the suffixal y (see §7.2) – betray unattested -yet-optatives (*labhyēt, *ṛdhyēt).

6.2. -yet-Optatives and Athematic Infixed Nasal (Class VII)

Present Optatives

There is yet another late Vedic formation closely related to the preca-tives in -yāt, represented by such forms as nindyāt, vindyāt, sīncyāt. This type has been briefly discussed by Hoffmann (1970: 66f. [= 1976: 517f.], n. 2).45 From the formal point of view, such forms can only be treated as optatives derived from athematic presents with the nasal infix (class VII). The main problem about such an analysis is the absence of non-optative forms based on athematic stems (**vinātti, **sinākti, etc.). We only find thematic forms (vindāti, sīncāti), and the corresponding 3sg. optative must be vindēt and sīncēt, while vindyāt and sīncyāt prove isolated. Hoffmann was absolutely right in pointing out that vindyāt, etc. cannot belong with the unattested athematic nasal present (**vinātti, etc.), but his characterisation of such forms as “analogische Neubildung” does not clarify their origin. In my view, forms like nindyāt, vindyāt and sīncyāt exemplify yet another replacement of the regular root aorist optatives (precatives) with hybrid forms based on the infixed present stems. Obviously, the root aorist optatives had become unfamiliar by the late Vedic period and tended to be replaced by formations based on more common stems. Although the easiest option – thematic present optatives (vindet, sīncet, etc.) – was of course available, the authors/redactors of the texts may have been looking for forms more similar to root aorist optatives, thus creating athematic “pseudo-present” optatives of the type sīncyāt and -yet-optatives of the type sicyet (both incorporating y after the root) – in imitation of the authentic root aorist optatives in -yāt.

Thus, strictly speaking, forms like sīncyāt should also be regarded as a separate formation, built on the same model as root aorist optatives (and functionally equivalent to these), but based on present stems – “present precatives”. This analysis is also supported by their defective paradigms: like -yet-optatives, they lack other forms besides 3rd person singular – we

45 See also Oberlies 2003: 210 with n. 1.
do not find **siṇcyām, etc. Neither formation can belong to the present system, for neither athematic nasal presents (of the type **siṇákti), nor active -ya-presents (of the type **siṇyati) are derived from the roots in question. In a sense, -yet-optatives are even less regular than athematic nasal present optatives like siṇcyāt: the latter form is based on the nasal present stem, which is attested for this root – at least in its thematic variant; whereas (active) -ya-presents are not derived from the roots kṣip, sams, sic, etc. at all. Moreover, the final accentuation of mrityēt and bhṛjīyēyur shows that -yet-optatives cannot be grouped with -ya-presents even from the purely formal point of view.

6.3. The Paradigmatic Domain of Aorist Optatives in Late Vedic

The paradigmatic domain of aorist optatives in late Vedic and its origins can now be schematized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>root aorist optative:</th>
<th>(precative)</th>
<th>type gamema:</th>
<th>rdhet, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sacyāt, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-yet-optatives:</th>
<th>sicyet, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>athem. pres. opt.:</td>
<td>siṇcyāt, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[“them. precative”]

[“pres. precative”]

7. Further Development and Possible Traces of -yet-Optatives

7.1. Evidence from Epic and Classical Sanskrit

A number of forms in -yet can be found in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa:46

vanāc ca vāyuḥ surabhiḥ pravāyet [v.l. vāyāt]47 (Mbh. 1.65.42a) “And let a fragrant wind blow forth from the wood ...”

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46 Most of the relevant Mbh. forms I owe to Thomas Oberlies (see also Oberlies 2003: 143, 230f. et passim); a few forms (among which Mbh. 1.147.8 vyucchidyēt) are mentioned by Holtzmann (1884: 25, §774); most of the Rām. forms are taken from Sen 1949: 102.

47 In formal terms, the form -vāyet might also be taken as a regular class IV present optative. In early Vedic the root vā “blow” has only a class II present (vāti, etc.), being paradigmatically opposed to the root vāya “become deficient, extinguished, vanish”, which forms the class IV present vāya-ti. However, from the late Vedic period onwards, vāya- is also attested in the sense “blow” (in particular, in the SB, AĀ, JUB; see Kulikov 2001: 460), and Mbh. 1.65.42 -vāyet could belong with this secondary class IV present (see Sil 1961: 43; Oberlies 2003: 194, 510). The most important argument against this analysis is the precative form -vāyet, attested as a variant reading in a number of mss. (see crit. app. ad loc.), which indirectly supports the interpretation of -vāyet as a -yet-optative (= precative).
tāte ‘pi hi gate svargam’ vinaṣṭe ca mamānuje | piṇḍah pitṛnām vyucchidyet  
' tat teśām apriyam bhavet // (Mbh. 1.147.8) 
“Since, when [my] father has gone to heaven and my younger brother has perished, the offering to the fathers will be interrupted, [and] that will be unpleasant for them.”

kathām jāyān (v.l. jāyen) mamodare // (Mbh. 3.13.62d) “How (else) could he (sc. my husband) be born (again) from my belly!”

na cānuśisyed (v.l. °śisyād) rājānām ' aprccchantam kadā cana / (Mbh. 4.4.12ab) “One should never instruct a king who does not ask (for it).”

yo hy ādriyed (v.l. °driyād) bhakṣyam iti śvamāmsaṃ ' manye na tasyāsti vivarjanīyam // (Mbh. 12.139.83cd) “Since for the one who would accept dog’s meat as edible there will be nothing, I think, which should be avoided.”

api cet ... sarvān vedān ... / ... adhīyet (v.l. adhīyāt) ... (Mbh. 13.36.15) “Even if he will learn all the Vedas...”

nāvamaneyd abhigatam ' na pravrudyat (v.l. °nudyet) kathām cana / (Mbh. 13.62.1ab) “One should never despise or drive away a visitor.”

nākīrtayitvā gāḥ supyāt (v.l. supye°) (Mbh. 13.77.15a) “One should not go to bed without having recited [the names of the] kine.”

yas trāyet tridaśān api // (Rām. 3.57.11d) “(the one) who could protect all thirty (gods)”

setur atra yathā badhyet54 1 yathā paśyema tāṃ purīṃ / tasya rākṣasarājasya (Rām. 6.2.9abc) “that a bridge is bound up here, so that we could visit the city of the Rākṣasa king.”

rāghavasya yaśo hīyet (v.l. hīyāt) (Rām. 5.35.57c) “Rāghava’s glory would be diminished.”

\[48\] This form is taken by Oberlies (2003: 240 and 430) as a passive with the active inflexion.

\[49\] See Oberlies 2003: 430.

\[50\] Oberlies (2003: 449) prefers a precative analysis of this form, and, accordingly, the reading °driyāt. For another post-Vedic attestation of the form ādriyet, in Varāhamihira’s Yogayātrā, see below, p. 51.

\[51\] See Oberlies 2003: 208f., 392.

\[52\] See Oberlies 2003: 143, 460. – For another post-Vedic attestation of the form (-)manyet in Dharmasūtras (Śmrtaś), see below, p. 50f.


\[54\] V.l. badhyetātha yathā setur; setur badhyeta hi yathā. For this form see Sen 1964: 201 (where it is explained as “due to MIA [= Middle Indo-Aryan] influence”) and Oberlies 2003: 241, 469.
Strictly speaking, the argumentative validity of the Epic forms in -yet is somewhat weaker than for the evidence from Vedic. While in Vedic and (early) post-Vedic texts middle -ya-presents (passives) with the irregular active inflexion are exceptional, in Epic Sanskrit they become more common (albeit still fairly rare), and some forms quoted above can be explained as replacements of regular middle present (passive) optatives (i.e. *trāyeta, *badhyeta, etc. – which are indeed attested in some cases as variant readings) – sometimes for metrical reasons. Yet, this explanation does not work for all such forms. The strongest evidence for Epic -yet-optatives is furnished by occurrences for which mss. attest the regular precative form in -yāt alongside a form in -yet, as is the case with adhīyet // adhīyāt, jāyet // jāyāt, ādriyet // ādriyāt, prāṇudyt // prāṇudyet, pravāyet // pravāyāt, ośisyet // ośisyāt, supyāt // supyet, hīyet // hīyāt; cf. also Mbh. 4.47.9 khyāyāt, v.l. khyāyet.

Next to these supposed Epic -yet-optatives, there are a few forms in -yet attested in the Smṛti literature, which thus belong to approximately the same chronological level and can equally be explained as replacements of regular middle forms for metrical reasons:

$sanvīṣet tūryaghoṣena 'pratibudhyet tathaiva ca / (YājñSmṛ. 1.330ab [ed. Pāndey 1.331ab])$ “He should go to bed to the music of instruments, and so should he wake up.”

The middle -ya-present būḍhya-te “wake” is well attested from the RV onwards. Apart from the unclear atharvavedic form *būḍhyema (Roth – Whitney’s conjecture for AV 19.67.3, mss. bū(d)hema, būḍhrema), which may have emerged under the influence of the adjacent active optatives pāśyema, bhāvema, etc.,55 active forms of the -ya-present būḍhya-te do not occur in the Vedic period. In the Sūtras we only find the active participle pra-budhyant- in MānŚS 2.1.3.11.

Another Smṛti form in -yet which is relevant for our discussion is man-yet:

$tam vai manyet pitaram mātaram ca 'tasmai na druhyet kṛtam asya jānan // (ViśSmṛ. 30.47cd ~ VāsDhS 2.10 = HirDhS 1.1.18)56 "$[The student], indeed, should consider him (sc. his teacher) as (his true) father and mother; he should not grieve him, acknowledging what he (sc. his teacher) has done [for him].”


56 The parallel verses in the VāsDhS and HirDhS use the corresponding middle form instead (tam manyeta ...; see, for instance, Olivelle 2000: 356 and 637), and this reading is adopted by Krishnamacharya.
The -ya-present mánya-Ś “think” is well attested from the RV onwards, but does not occur with the active inflexion until the Upaniṣad and Sūtra period (see Gotō 1997: 1016).

Although both -budhyet and manyet could be explained as built under the influence of the adjacent active optatives (-viśet and druhyet, respectively), we cannot rule out that they are -yet-optatives.

One more form, which may represent a -yet-optative, and is also attested in a post-Vedic metrical text, Varāhamihira’s Yogayātrā (ed. H. Kern), is -driyet:

\[ \text{daivajñamantrisuhṛdāptavacāṃsi rājā yo nādriyet svamaitaduṣṭabudhiḥ} / (Yogayātrā 2.9ab; see Kern 1868: 168 [= 1913: 104]) “Ein König, der die Worte seiner Astrologen, Minister, Freunde und Vertrauten nicht beachtet, indem er eigensinnig verfährt und unrichtig urtheilt ...” (Kern 1868: 183 [= 1913: 126]).

Kern (1868: 201 [= 1913: 156]) noticed the irregularity of the active ending in ā-driyet. Although one of the mss. has the middle optative instead (°yeta mati°), the editor has adopted the reading °driyet, since the absence of sva° in the following word renders the whole compound meaningless.

On the Epic attestation of ādriyet (Mbh. 12.139.83), see above.

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57 The two active forms attested in the Upaniṣads and Sūtras are abhimanyanti MunḍU 1.2.9 “they think, imagine” (see Salomon 1981: 97; Olivelle 1998: 441) and part. ava-manyant- BaudhŚS 29.8: 380.13. The form ava-manyet, quoted in VWC-Sū. I/394b as attested in VaikhDhŚ 3.3.6 and mentioned by Bharadwaj (1982: 108), may be based on a misunderstanding. Ed. Caland (3.3: 134.12) has the regular middle optative (devān vedān rājagurumātāpitānān nāvamanyetāna na nindet “He should not despise, nor blame the gods, the Vedas, the king, his teacher, his mother and father, learned Brahmanas”), with no variant readings (note that in Bharadwaj’s [1982] bibliography only Caland’s ed. is mentioned). The two Indian editions used by Caland, as well as the Madras edition, to which VWC-Sū. refers, were unavailable to me. Active forms of mánya-Ś become more common in Epic Sanskrit (see Gotō 1997: 1016; Oberlies 2003: 163); cf., in particular, Mbh. 13.62.13 avamanyet quoted above, p. 49.

58 Yet another form attested in a metrical text, which may be worthy of discussion, is 3pl. opt. -liyeyur met with in the relatively late Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa: tasmāc chyenādayo yasya nilīyeyuḥ śirasy atha (MārkP 51.69ed) “therefore he, on whose head a hawk and other [birds] would alight”. Although active forms of the -ya-presents ‘liya-Ś “adhere, cling” and ‘liyā-Ś “dissolve, disappear” (see Werba 1997: 315) do occur from the post-Vedic period onwards (on one attestation in the “principal” Upaniṣads, MunḍU 3.2.2 pra-evi-liyanti, see Salomon 1981: 98; a few forms occur in later texts, e.g. Rām. 6.102.33a ava-liyantī “hiding oneself”, and MärK P 61.19b vi-liyātā “with melting [snow]”), they remain very rare. Furthermore, -liyeyur cannot be explained as a replacement metri causa of the middle optative -liyeyan (which has the same metrical scheme). Note, incidentally, that both active forms of the -ya-present of the compound nī-li quoted in PW VI/551 are 3rd person optatives: nī-liyeyur, nī-liyet.
Besides a few forms from metrical texts listed above, worthy of mention is 3pl. opt. *vi-trudyeyur*, with which an indigenous commentator glosses the transitive *virujeyur* at Kātyāśā 22.3.22 *dakṣiṇākāle kaṇṭakair enā virujeyuḥ* “[the priests] should prick them (sc. the cows) with thorns at the time of *dakṣiṇā*-distribution]”. The active -ya-present of the late (Class. Skt.) root *truṭ* is employed intransitively (“break, come into pieces”). The transitive syntax of *-trudyeyur* (derived from the root variant *truḍ*) can be explained under the assumption that this form belongs with the -yet-optatives, not with the -ya-presents; see §4.2.60

7.2. Possible Indirect Reflexes of -yet-Optatives

Both in late Vedic and post-Vedic periods, -yet-optatives remain extremely rare. Most likely, this formation was considered too awkward to become a productive morphological type. Being morphologically indistinguishable (in unaccentuated texts) from -ya-present optatives and lacking any specific function different from that of present optatives, it had little chance to survive. What could become of these forms? On the one hand, some -yet-optatives may have been replaced with much more familiar and productive -ya-passives, with the concomitant restructuring of the syntax of the corresponding sentence; cf. the discussion of the passive optative form *nir-mṛjyeran* in GB 1.4.13: 104.13f., where the passive construction *yajamānā nirmṛjyeran* “the sacrificers would be wiped off” is based on SB 12.1.3.23 *té vimrityeyuḥ* “they would fall to pieces” (see above, s.v. *mṛt* [p. 37, n. 27]). On the other hand, in some -yet-optatives, the segment *y* could have been assessed as a secondary insertion, especially if the root in question also formed class VI presents (as in the case of *bhṛj(j)eyur // bhṛjjáti*; see s.v. *bhṛj* above, p. 35). The co-existence of -yet-optatives (√-yet, √-éyur) with forms without *y* (i.e. class VI present optatives: √-ét, √-éyur) could favour the secondary association of -yet-optatives with class VI presents. The √-yet // √-ét model could probably trigger the loss of *y* also in the individual verbal systems where, originally, class VI presents were lacking. In particular, traces of -yet-optatives can possibly be found among active optatives:

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60 For this present, see PW III/451f.; Tedesco 1953: 80f.; Balbir 1982: 66.

60 The very rare irregular forms in -yet in Classical Sanskrit, mostly attested as variant readings (for instance, Pañc. 2.118: 154.18 *na parityajyet*, for the correct -tyajet “[he] should not quit ...”, see Hertel 1912: 143 and Sternbach 1956: 124; KubjT 23.134 *prapājyet* [ms. D], for the correct prapājyeta, see ed. Goudriaan – Schoterman, p. 81), are likely to result from scribal errors.
built on thematic root present stems (classes I and VI) which are unattested or exceptional with the active inflexion; cf. the list of such forms in Gotō 1987: 396f. This may be the case for graset SVB 2.3.11 (~ middle pres. grásate), saheyr ŠĀm 12.7 (32) (~ middle pres. sāhate), which may betray unattested -yet-optatives (*grasyet, *sahyeypur). In some cases the loss of y in hypothetical -yet-optatives may have given rise to secondary thematic root presents (class VI). Such may be the origin of the class VI present -usaha-“burn”, which appears in late Vedic (GB) and in the Sūtras alongside the old class I present ósa-. Gotō (1987: 109f.) accounts for this formation as resulting from the reanalysis of imperfect forms in compounds with upa (*uposat << upa-auṣat). This assumption is plausible but does not explain why the majority of the attested forms are 3sg. and pl. optatives in -et and -eyur. Assuming that -uṣet, -uṣeyur go back to hypothetical -yet-optatives (*-uṣyet, *-uṣyeyur), we are able to account for this imbalance of moods.

7.3. Evidence from Middle Indo-Aryan

Although -yet-optatives have not become a productive formation, it makes sense to look for their traces in later texts and in Middle Indo-Aryan. In particular, here probably belongs the much debated form haṃñeyasu/haṃñeyu, attested in the famous Aśokan Rock Edict XIII (N). Most interpreters noticed the morphological irregularity of this form and translated the end of the sentence (in the Shāhbāzgārhī version: ... na ca [ha]ṃñeyasu) as a passive construction: “in order that

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61 Some of the 3sg. forms in -et, such as RVKh. 3.172.2 labhēt (which cannot be a correct optative form of the middle I present lābhate; note especially the abnormal final accentuation, see Gotō 1987: 262), can be accounted for otherwise – as belonging to Insler’s type gamema (see above, §6.1). In general, this analysis is more probable for forms attested in the mantras, where the type gamema first appears; on the contrary, for late Vedic and post-Vedic forms an explanation in terms of -yet-optatives seems preferable.

62 The loss of y before e is also attested (from the Sūtras onwards) in 3sg./pl. optatives of syati (√sā “bind”) and asyati (√as “throw”); cf. -set (in adhyava-set BaudhŚS 21.11: 88.18-19, KauŚ 137.1, Mbh.), -aset (e.g., in ny-aset MānŚS 10.3.5.22, 11.7.1.6x, ManuSmr. 6.46, YājŚmr. 2.103, 3.35, BhāgP 7.12.24; abhy-aset ĀpDhS 1.27.8 [= HirDhŚ 1.7.33 abhy-asyet, cf. Renou 1947: 193; etc.]; see also Böhtlingk 1896: 249f.; Leumann 1968: 58: Biswas 1968: 74, 171. The loss of y in compounds has probably been supported by dissimilation processes after preverbs in -i/-y: see Leumann 1968: 58, Gotō 1987: 85, Oberlies 2003: 197 with n. 3, and Kulikov 2005: 307f. for details. In Epic Sanskrit we also find non-optative forms for both of these newly-built class I presents; see Whitney 1885: 5, 185 and Oberlies 2003: 197, 202, 390, 531.

63 For a synopsis of versions, see Schneider 1978: 75 and 116.
they may not be killed" (Hultzsch 1925: 69) – which makes little sense in the context, however. Caillat (1991: 11; 1992) has convincingly demonstrated that Bloch’s (1950: 129) transitive translation “qu’ils cessent de tuer” is more attractive, and that haṃñeyasu/haṃneyu is a “mixed” optative form. Thus, the gemination betrays y of the optative suffix (cf. Skt. hanyāt), not of the -yá-passive, while e must be yet another mark of the optative (whence Caillat’s term “double optative suffix”). In my view, Sanskrit -yet-optatives can further clarify the morphological status of the Aśokan form in question, which can readily be explained as a trace of (or a formation parallel to) the plural -yet-optative of han, i.e. Skt. *hanyeyur. The most direct reflex of the supposed Old Indo-Aryan form would be haṃneyu (haṃñeyu), which seems to have been preserved in two versions (Ēṛṛaguḍi and Kālsī) and is adopted by Schneider (1978: 75 and 116) for the prototext. To the same morphological type must belong Pāli optative haññe (< Skt. *hanyet) “one should kill”, which thus supports the transitive analysis of Aśokan haṃneyu/haṃñeyasu. The Pāli 3sg. optatives pakampiye “he will bend”, maddiye “he shall crush” and haññe “he should kill” have been correctly evaluated already in CPD I/517, s.v. asnāti as “mixed pot.[ential]s”; see also Smith 1951: 4 (“formes contaminées du type -kampiye (< -kampet × -kampyāt)”) and Oberlies 2000: 227f. In my view, these forms point to the Pāli formation, corresponding to the Skt. -yet-optative.

8. SYNOPSIS OF FORMS AND CONCLUSIONS

For the sake of convenience I list all forms discussed above as well as hypothetical -yet-optatives:

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64 Likewise Edgerton (1952: 117), contra Bloch (1950: 129) and Schneider (1978: 117): “damit sie ... nicht getötet werden”; cf. also Schneider’s comments on p. 150.

65 I would like to thank Thomas Oberlies for having drawn my attention to these Pāli and Aśokan forms.
I. Attested Forms

1. i “go” -īyet Mbh.
2. kṣip “throw” kṣipyet ChU
3. chid “break, hurt” chidyet Mbh.
4. grh “seize” grhyet KauśŚ
5. trā “rescue” trāyet Rām.
6. ṭrā (ṭrāḍ) “break” -trudyeyur KātyŚSBh.
7. dih “besmear” -dihyet BhārŚŚ
8. dp “heed” -driyet Mbh., Yogayātrā
9. dhyā “think” dhyāyet RVKh.
10. nād “push” -nudyet Mbh.
11. pad “fall” -padyet ĀrśU
12. bandh “bind” badhyet Rām.
13. budh “wake” -budhyet YājŚSmṛ.
14. bhañj “break” -bhajyet MānGS
15. bhrī(j) “roast” bhrī(j)yeyur M/KS
17. mṛ “die” mriyet AmṛU
18. mṛj “wipe off, destroy” -mrjyet GB
19. mrīt “decay” -mrīyet ŚB (= GB) -mrīyet ŚB
20. ram “stop” -ramyet BaudhŚŚ
21. lī “adhere” -līyeyur MārkP
22. vā “blow” vāyet Mbh.
23. vid “know” vidyet JābU
24. śaṁs “recite” -śasyet ŚŚŚ
25. śās “teach” -śisyet Mbh.
26. śīṣ “leave” śīṣyet GB (= VaitŚ), Vaikh/
   BhārŚŚ
27. sañj “attach” (-)sañjyet MānŚŚ
28. sic “pour” sicyet ŚA
29. sū “beget” sūyet AVPar.
30. snā “bathe” snāyet Mānāvānugrāhika -snāyet GB
   sūtra
31. svap “sleep” supyet Mbh.
32. hā “abandon” hīyet Rām.

II. Hypothetical Forms

33. uṣ “burn” *usyet (→ uṣet, class VI pres.
   uṣati GB, Sū.)
34. kamp “tremble” *kampyet (> Pāli pakampiye)
35. gras “devour” *grasyet (> graset SVB)
36. mṛd / mard “crush” *mṛdyet (> Pāli maddiye)
37. sah “prevail” *sahyet (> Pāli haṃṇiye)
38. han “kill” *hanyet (> Pāli haṃṇiye)
   *hanyet (> Aśoka haṃṇeyu, etc.)
Let us recapitulate the main arguments pro and contra -yet-optatives as a separate morphological formation. Of course, from the formal point of view, forms in -yet- could be regarded simply as active optatives based on class IV presents; but in most of the cases discussed above this analysis is impossible.

The strongest evidence for positing -yet-optatives as a separate formation is furnished by the verbs which have no non-passive (class IV) -ya-presents at all: forms like -sasyet or kṣipyet can by no means be grouped with -ya-passives and therefore prove to be isolated within the corresponding verbal systems.

Evidence for -yet-optatives of those verbs from which class IV (non-passive) presents do derive – albeit with the middle inflexion – is somewhat weaker. Forms like -driyet, manyet, mriyet and sīyet can of course be (and usually are) explained as instances of diathesis confusion (middle/active) in late Vedic and post-Vedic texts – i.e. as replacements of the original middle optatives +manyeta, +mriyeta, +sūyeta, etc. Such an explanation is possible, particularly, in the cases where non-optative forms are attested already from the late Vedic or early post-Vedic periods onwards. However, this analysis does not account for the total absence of other active forms (**mriyati, **sūyati; part. **mriyant-, **sūyant-, etc.) from the paradigm or the unusual imbalance of moods.

Finally, positing -yet-optatives as a separate formation renders a number of emendations unnecessary:

- +kṣīyeta or +kṣīyet (Böhtlingk) and +kṣipet (VWC-Up. I/261b) for ChU 8.6.5
- +dhyāyet (VWC-Sa. III/1744a) for RVKh. 3.10².16
- +padyan (?) (VWC-Up. II/773a) for ĀrsU
- +bhajet (ed. Sastri) or +bhujet (Falk) for MānGS 2.15.6
- +bhṛjjéyur (PW) for MSᵇ 1.10.11: 151.6 ~ KSᵇ 36.6: 73.1
- +mríty (Delbrück) for ŚB -mrítyét
- +śisyeta (Caland) for VaikhŚS 21.4: 325.2
- +śisyeta (VWC-Sū. I/628b) for BhārŚS 7.3.9

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66 Thus I do not include into my corpus the form dahyet (MānGS 2.15.6, late Up.), which belongs with the middle present dahya-*, since the active non-optative forms are attested from the late Brāhmaṇas onwards (dahyanti ŚB 5.9.2) and become quite common in Epic Skt.; see Holtzmann 1884: 25f.; Kulkarni 1943: 239. Likewise, vāśyet (mss. vāśya*) in APRāyaśc. 2.4 (cf. also Caland’s conjecture *vāśyeta[l] for JGS 2.7: 32.7 [ms.] vāśyeta*, which corresponds to the middle optative vāśyeta (vāśya*, “low, bellow”) in the parallel Brāhmaṇa passages ŚB 12.4.1.12 ~ AB 5.27.6 = 7.3.3, occurs adjacent to the indicative form vāśyati, being therefore of lesser value for our purpose.
The Sanskrit -yet-Optative

- ^-sajet (ed. van Gelder) for MānŚŚ 1.1.3.6
- ^sicyeta (Keith, ed. Bhim Dev, VWC-Br. II/1590a) for ŚĀ 8.2.

To sum up, evidence for -yet-optatives appears rather scant: thus far I have found about 30 forms. It should be noted, however, that the unusual morphological character of -yet-optatives may have caused editors and interpreters of texts to emend most such forms, treating them either as class IV optatives with the irregular active ending, or as class VI optatives (with a secondary y). Thus, some -yet-forms may merely have been emended, leaving no traces in editions with minimal critical apparatus. A thorough search into the ms. sources and into variant readings adduced in critical apparatuses will probably furnish further evidence for -yet-optatives.

Literature

Primary Literature – Text Editions

AĀ


AB


ĀgnivGS


AmṛtU


ĀpDhS


APrāyaśc.


ĀpŚŚ


ĀrṣU

AV  

AVPar.  

BaudhŚS  


BhāgP  

BhārŚS  

Br.  
Brāhmaṇa(s)

BD  
_The Brhaddevatā Attributed to Śaunaka_. A Summary of the Deities and Myths of the Rig-Veda, critically ed. in the original Sanskrit with an introduction and seven appendices, and transl. into English with critical and illustrative notes by A.A. MacDonell. [HOS 5-6]. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1904.

ChU  


GautPS  

GB  

HirDhŚ  
_Hiranyakesī-Dharma-Sūtra_, in: HirŚŚ, Pt. 10 (= HirŚŚ XXVI-XXVII).

HirŚŚ  

JābU  
JGS

JUB
The Jáiminīya or Talavakāra Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa. Text, Translation, and Notes, ed. H. Oertel. JAOS 16 (1896) 79-290.

KātyŚS

KātyŚSBh.
Bhāṣya (Commentary) on KātyŚS, in: KātyŚS, ed. Weber.

KauŚS

KauŚGS

KB

KŚ

KubjT

MānGS

MānŚS

ManuSmṛ.

MārkP


Sa. Saṃhitā(s)

Sū. Sūtra(s)


ŚBS The ĀnSS Das Çân ¯khâyanagṛihyam, hrsg. von H. Oldenberg. Indische Studien 15 (1878) 1-166.
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ŚŚS


ŚB


TĀ


Up.

Upaniṣad(s)

VaikhDhS


VaikhGS


VaikhŚS


VātS


VāṣDhS

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YājSmṛ.


YogaU


120Up.


18Up.

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