A surplus of meaning : the intent of irregularity in Vedic poetry
Knobl, W.F.

Version:	Not Applicable (or Unknown)
License:	
Downloaded from:	

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

THE NONCE FORMATION
A more-than-momentary look at the
Augenblicksbildung[1]

By Werner Knobl, Kyoto[2]

In memoriam Paul Thieme[3]

priyād u cin mánmanaḥ préyo astu te

A. In the history of Vedic Studies, certain exceptional forms, mostly verbal, have been styled *nonce*. This designation has all but acquired the status of a technical term, and it stands in danger of being used as a kind of label stuck

---

1 This is the second instalment of a series of articles on Vedic poetry, and the sequel to my as yet unpublished paper "Mind-Reading the Poet. Cases of Intended Irregularity" read at The Second International Vedic Workshop, 31 October — 2 November, 1999, Kyoto University. There I discussed in great detail the method that is applied also here. A third instalment, "The Mid-Word Cæsura in the Ṛgveda: Degrees of Metrical Irregularity," was read at the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, 14 — 19 July, 2003, Helsinki.

2 It is due to Arlo G r i f f i t h s' friendly insistence that I have agreed to break, if only for the nonce, my vow of silence observed with almost religious obstinacy for nearly twenty years. In the name of those who might benefit from what I have to say, I wish to thank him as well as Jared S. K l e i n, whose kind, encouraging words lavished on me at the 2nd and 3rd Vedic Workshops did much to make me pursue this line of research with greater confidence, Catherine L u d v i k (Kyoto/Toronto) for her constant advice, Masato K o b a y a s h i for his expert technical assistance, Jan H o u b e n and Arlo G r i f f i t h s for their valuable critical comments on an earlier draft of my Nonce Formation.

3 With love and reverence I dedicate this paper to the memory of my unforgettable teacher, the late Tübingen professor emeritus **Paul Thieme** (18.3.1905 — 24.4.2001), who, though being himself the great grammarian that he was, felt free enough to express his doubts about grammar having the last word *vis-à-vis* poetry: "Natürlich denke ich nicht daran, die Notwendigkeit sorgfältiger grammatischer Analyse eines Denkmals verschollener Sprache zu bestreiten. Daß aber die Grammatik ... das letzte Wort haben soll, wenn es sich um das Verstehen von in solcher Sprache geformter Dichtung handelt, daran habe ich meine gründlichen ... Zweifel." (Paul T h i e m e, "Sprachmalerei." Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 86, 1972, 75 n.14)

onto a basket filled with waste words. This waste-word basket was meant, I suppose, for temporary storage only, and has not yet been shut tight, I hope. It may be vain to expect that all the refuse contained in it can be saved, but I shall try and retrieve at least some of the cast-away forms by reclaiming them for a *poetically* open grammatical system. For, my contention is that this poetical *openness* of the system is to be accepted as characteristic of a living language. And Vedic must have been eminently alive at the time of the poets — it may be so even today, at least for some of us. The more rigid, however, our understanding of the Vedic verbal and nominal system tends to become, the more exclusively we will behave towards those exceptions, which sometimes seem fated to be treated by the grammarian as misfits and outsiders of what can be called the society of words. Some of the forms labeled *nonce* may turn out to be left-overs of an older system, remnants that have run out of general use, but whose specific value lies in their precious rareness.[4] Some others, rarities of a different kind, which could have become the starting-point of a new system if they had happened to be joined by fellow forms, were just not lucky enough at the time, but still may prove fortunate now to be appreciated as *forerunners without a following.*

To be sure, some of the nonce formations may border on nonsense-forms, regarding which Leonard Bloomfield, Language, 1933, 157 said: "Any speaker is free to invent nonsense-forms; in fact, any form he invents is a nonsense-form, unless he succeeds in the almost hopeless task of getting his fellow speakers to accept it as a signal for some meaning."

Can I hope to succeed in the almost hopeless task of getting my fellow researchers to accept the nonce formation — even if, at first glance, it looks nonsensical — not only as a signal for some meaning but as an apt expression of heightened significance?

B. In order to show how some of the greatest scholars in our field treated certain irregular verb-forms, I shall first quote a few characteristic comments on representative examples chosen from the Ṛgveda:

---

4 This is the case, for example, with *vavákṣi* occurring once in the RV, at 8.45.6b *yás te váṣṭi vavákṣi tát* "Wer von dir [Indra] etwas will, so bestimmst du es." (Geldner) The form was qualified as a nonce by Alexander Lubotsky, A Ṛgvedic Word Concordance, 1997, II 1246b s.v. *vaś*, but it may be an inherited formation; see Manfred Mayrhofer, Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen II (Lieferung 17, 1995) 527 f. with literature.

1. RV 10.126.2 *tád dhí vayáṃ vṛṇīmáhe váruṇa mítr[a á]ryaman / yénā nír áṃhaso yūyám pāthá* **nethá** *ca márt₁yam áti dvíṣaḥ* "Diese (Hilfe) ja erbitten wir uns, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, durch die ihr vor Not bewahret und den Sterblichen geleitet — über die Anfeindungen hinweg." (Geldner) With respect to the curious verb-form **nethá** in place of a regular **náyatha,* from which it diverges both by its stem and by its intonation, Berthold D e l b r ü c k, Das Altindische Verbum, 1874, 85, had said: "Offenbar ist nethá eine Geburt des Augenblicks, die in unwillkürlicher Anlehnung an das unmittelbar vorhergehende pāthá gebildet ist ... nethá kommt also für die Erörterung des grammatischen Organismus des Verbums nicht in Betracht." This may have been the first mention in scholarly literature of that strangely ubiquitous *moment* which has given birth to so many freaks of the Vedic verbal system. Although, for Delbrück, forms like *nethá* fell outside the system, that system was seen as an organism. And as such it would be a living thing that expresses itself, if only involuntarily, with a certain degree of spontaneity. To be sure, the voluntary intent of the poet, his never fully appreciated *Willkürlichkeit,* had not yet come into sight.

2. RV 1.141.12cd *sá no neṣan* **néṣatamair** *ámūro* ₐ*gnír vāmáṁ suvitáṃ vásyo ácha* "Er führe uns mit den besten Führern, der nie irrende Agni zum Guten, zum Wohlergehen, zum Glück." (Geldner) The superlative *néṣa-tama-* 'best leader' — or maybe rather 'best leading'[5] — obviously depends on the immediately preceding aorist-stem *neṣa-,* and was given by Jakob W a c k e r n a g e l, Altindische Grammatik I, 1st edition 1896, Einleitung XVII, as one of several examples of *Augenblicksbildung* that poets would permit themselves on occasion, and which are said to be characteristic of a *Kunstsprache.* While this ambiguous word "Kunstsprache" was rendered by Louis R e n o u in his Introduction Générale to the 2nd edition of AiGr I, 1957, 6, with *langue artificielle,* W a c k e r n a g e l himself must have taken it in the sense of *langue artistique,* as becomes clear from what he says about the same form in AiGr II 2, 598 § 449 d note: "*néṣatamaih* ... ist d i c h t e r i s c h e Augenblicksbildung aus dem Konj. *neṣat.*" The difference in meaning may seem negligible. It is, however, sufficiently important for my argument to be insisted upon.

---

5   See, for example, Alfred L u d w i g, RV I, 1876, 311: "er füre uns mit bester **fürung,** der unbetörte, Agni ... "

3. ḎV 1.80.12ab *ná vépasā ná tanyat[ā́ ṯ]ndraṃ vṛtró ví bībhayat* 'Not with [his] trembling and not with [his] thundering did Vṛtra frighten off Indra.' This example is chosen in order to show that one particular scholar might consider an apparently irregular form a *nonce*, while others may take it rather to be regular. Oldenberg, Noten I, 1909, 82, said: "In *tanyatā́* sehe ich ... Augenblicksbildung eines Instrum[entalis], basierend auf Stamm *tanyatū́*, aber abgelenkt durch das metrische Bedürfnis und das daneben stehende *vépasā*." This metrical as well as morphological interpretation of *tanyatā́* was qualified by Renou, Etudes de grammaire Sanskrite 1, 1936, 33, as "hypothèse inutile" in view of his own explanation of the word as a participle used substantively in the sense of 'tonnerre.' Obviously, he assumed a nominal stem **tanyát-*. Wackernagel, GN 1902,[6] 742 (= Kleine Schriften I, 132) n.1, interpreted the form as an adverb in *-tā́* based on the unattested verbal adjective **tany-atá-* 'donnernd.' (Cf. also Wackernagel & Debrunner, AiGr II 2, 168 § 71 α n.) Johanna Narten, Festschrift Rix, 1993, 322 = Kleine Schriften I, 1995, 404, emphasized that both in the case of an adjective **tanyatá-* (Wackernagel) and of a participle **tanyát-* (Renou), an ellipsis of, for example, *vācā́* must be reckoned with. It appears that she did not take into account the interpretations of *tanyatā́* either as an a d v e r b, as was proposed by Wackernagel, or as a s u b s t a n t i v e, as was suggested by Renou.[7]

C. As regards method, let me but briefly hark back to my Mind-Reading paper,[8] where I have said that in every single case of supposedly intended irregularity, it would be incumbent on me **1.** to specify the **kind** of irregularity we are confronted with by describing it with all necessary precision, **2.** to determine the exact **degree** of deviation from the norm, **3.** to demonstrate that this degree is so **high** as to exclude a coincidental occurrence of the aberrant form, and **4.** to detect the **motive** the poet may have had when intentionally offending against a well-established metrical, or even grammatical, convention. Evidently, the difficulty of the task increases *yathāsaṃkhyam.*

Although it could be desirable in each case to take all four of these steps with equal care and mark them with an emphatic foot, it would also be pedantic. And standing firmly on four feet of about the same size should make me

---

6 GN (or NG) 1902 = Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse. Aus dem Jahre 1902.

7 For a brief treatment of the class IV stem *tanya-*, see Leonid Kulikov's 2001 Leiden Proefschrift The Vedic *-ya*-presents, p. 404–405 of the preprint edition.

8 Referred to above in footnote 1.

feel just a little *bête*. Sometimes I may prefer to proceed by leaps, or to skip a step, in order to get all the more nimbly to the fourth and final stage of the argument, which to me is by far the most important one. Occasionally, the critical discussion of alternative explanations offered by other scholars may seem to detain me and distract from my main concern. I am confident, however, that my argument, although delayed, will profit from the debate.

In the present case, it is not enough simply to say of a given word-form occurring in a poetical text that it is an *ad hoc* formation. I would like to ask for an accurate description of that *hoc* which it was formed *ad*. If we call this formation a *nonce*, all about the character of that *one* occasion it was coined for just *once* should be clearly revealed. Or if we choose to speak of it as an *Augenblicksbildung*, then that spur of the moment, that inciting momentum of the instant which led to the creation of this of all words should awaken our keenest curiosity, and k e e p it awake by making us look at the word with more-than-momentary interest. To say of an aberrant form that it came about m e t r i c a u s a, or by a n a l o g y, or by c o n t a m i n a t i o n, and leave it at that, is not only poetically unsatisfying — it is methodologically insufficient, nay, inadequate. Responding to the challenge of deviation by giving snap answers like those would mean refusing sympathetically to think along the sometimes tortuous, sometimes abrupt lines a poet's mind is wont to trace.

D. Although some forms declared nonce may have to be taken rather as regular representatives of the grammatical system, the remaining material is abundant enough to allow for a fairly systematic re-examination of the so-called *Augenblicksbildung* from a poetological point of view. Among the many cases in Vedic poetry of demonstrably intended nonce formation, certain categories can be detected.

1. CROSS-BREEDS OF TENSES AND MOODS

a. Blends of Different Tenses

Two examples of this kind of nonce formation were already discussed by Paul T h i e m e, KZ 86, 1972, 73 ff. One is *sísratur* in ṚV 8.59.2c *yā́ sísratū rájasaḥ pāré ádhvanaḥ* '[Indra and Varuṇa] who have run their paths to the opposite shore of space.' According to Thieme, this cross-breed of the weak present-stem *sísr-* and the perfect-ending *-atur* was artistically motivated: the

hybrid verb-form, which starts speaking of the present but ends with a reference to the past, symbolically represents an action that is already concluded when it has scarcely begun. Apparently, two dual forms — a present *sisṛtás* 'the two are running' and a perfect *sasrátur* 'the two have run' — are telescoped into one another in order to suggest the action of a gigantic leap through space that takes less time for its fulfilment than either of the two tenses could have adequately expressed.

The other example, an exact formal counterpart of the 'present-perfect' *sísratur*, is the 'perfect-present' *sasṛmāṇám* in ṚV 4.17.14b *ní etaśaṁ rīramat sasṛmāṇám* '[Indra] made/makes[9] Etaśa, being in the course of having run, stop.'[10] By this blend of the perfect-stem *sasr-* with the present participle suffix *-māna-* an action that started in the past is described as prevented from completion while it is still going on. Only the regular perfect participle *sasrāṇám* would have, according to Thieme, appropriately expressed the action as being fully achieved.[11]

Martin Kümmel, Das Perfekt im Indoiranischen, 2000, 552, apparently unaware of the sophisticated treatment *sasṛmāṇám* had received at the hands of Paul Thieme, op. cit., seems to think it a good idea to suggest, by ironically quotation-marking the poet of ṚV 4.17 as "original," that from the ostensibly superior standpoint of grammar this form, thematic only in outward appearance, really belongs to the perfect. Why? Well, because it is used in a resultative sense, characteristic of the perfect. The poet could as well have said *sasrāṇám*, and spared us his factitious "originality." However, the alleged resultative sense does not make sense at all in this context. Kümmel's rendering, "zur Ruhe bringt er Etaśa, **wenn er seinen Lauf gemacht hat**," strikes

---

9 In form, *rīramat* can be an injunctive as well as a subjunctive of the reduplicated aorist, cf. Karl Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda, 1967, 239. If *rīramat* were taken as the subjunctive, the translation of the whole sentence would have to change into: '[Indra] will make Etaśa, being in the course of having run, stop.'

10 Cf. Paul Thieme, Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 86, 1972, 75 n. 14 = Kleine Schriften II, 1995, 1005 n.14: " ... 'den Etaśa, der dabei ist (-*māná-*) losgesprungen zu sein (*sasṛ-*), bringt er zum Stehen', d.h. das 'Losgesprungensein' kommt nicht dazu, vollendete Vergangenheit zu werden ... , es wird noch in dem Moment, in dem es vor sich geht, zum Stillstand gebracht." The "Zwitterform" *sasṛmāṇám* represents, according to Thieme, a logically as well as grammatically impossible "Präsensform perfektiven Aspekts."

11 Geldner, however, renders ṚV 1.149.2c *prá ... sasrāṇáḥ* as "hervordringend" (cf. Narten, Kleine Schriften I 351 = Kümmel, Perfekt 528: "obwohl er hervorläuft") and ṚV 6.37.3a *āsasrāṇā́saḥ* as "hereilend."

me as quite nonsensical. Nor does Geldner's translation, ṚV I, 1923, 396 = 1951, 439, "den Etaśa, der seinen Lauf gemacht, hält er an," make any better sense. Yet, this very translation of Geldner's is quoted — approvingly, it seems — by Johanna Narten, MSS 26, 1969, 81 = Kleine Schriften I, 1995, 128, who qualifies the strange participle *sasṛmāṇá-* as a "derailment" (Entgleisung) of the familiar *sasrāṇá-*: op. cit. 82=128. And the reason why the poet — Vāmadeva, according to tradition, not *Mānadeva, mind you — would so "derail" is that he had an individual predilection for suffix *-māna-* in place of *-āna-*, not only here but also in other hymns nearby. [12] Now, why he should have this idiosyncratic liking, which would make him use *-māna-* in preference to *-āna-*, is anybody's guess. Did he by any chance have a son called Māna? Or was his wife perhaps given to sulking?

b. Blends of Different Moods

The apparent 'subjunctive-imperative' *pipráyasva* in ṚV 8.11.10c may serve as example of a verbal form in which two moods are blended. This hybrid is one of those imperatives of the perfect that Whitney, Sanskrit Grammar, [2]1889, 294 § 814, thought may be reckoned as irregular because they "show a union-vowel a, or have been transferred to an a-conjugation." [13]

In Whitney's list, loc. cit., we find the 2nd duals *jujoṣatam* ṚV 1× (as against a regular *jujuṣṭam; cf. the 2nd plural *jujuṣṭana* ṚV 2×) and *mumócatam* ṚV 5× (: *mumuktam* ṚV 2×), the 2nd plural *mumócata* ṚV 1× (: *mumuktá) of the active; and of the middle, besides *pipráyasva* ṚV 1×, there are the 2nd singulars *māmahasva* ṚV 2×, *vāvṛdhásva* ṚV 1×, *vāvṛdhasva* ṚV 3×, *vāvṛsasva* ṚV 1×, and the 3rd plural *māmahantām* ṚV 20×. [14] For our discussion, *pipráyasva* seems to me the most promising form of the list. [15] Let me first quote the pāda in which it occurs, ṚV 8.11.10c:

---

12 Cf. Narten, loc. cit.: "dass nämlich der Dichter dieser und der umgebenden Lieder ... offenbar eine individuelle Vorliebe für das Suffix *-māna-* statt *-āna-* hatte."

13 Cf. also A. A. Macdonell, Vedic Grammar, 1910, 362 § 490, who speaks of these irregular imperatives as "being transfer forms which follow the analogy of the a-conjugation," and Renou, Grammaire de la langue védique, 1952, 280 § 336: "Quelques désinences, notamment *-sva*, s'attachent à une voyelle thématique ... , amorçant vaguement ... un mouvement de thématisation du parfait par les modes."

14 Compare also Thomas Krisch, Zur Genese und Funktion der altindischen Perfekta mit langem Reduplikationsvokal, 1996, who considers the imperatives with long reduplication vowel to be based on a new thematic present stem; for *māmahasva* and *māmahantām*, see op. cit. 72 s.v. *maṁh*; for *vāvṛdhásva* and *vāvṛdhasva*, 76 s.v. *vardh*; for *vāvṛsasva*, 76 s.v. *varṣ*.

15 Interestingly, Lubotsky, A Ṛgvedic Word Concordance 951b, qualifies *pipráyasva* as

s_uvā́m cāgne tan$_ú$vàm piprā́yasva

    Please yourself your own self, O Agni![16]

As 2nd singular of the perfect middle, *piprīṣvá would have been the regular form of the imperative, *piprā́yase of the subjunctive. Obviously, the hybrid piprā́yasva is based on the stem of the subjunctive, which occurs three times in the ṚV: once as piprayas at 2.6.8a, twice as piprā́yat at 7.17.4b and 8.39.9d.

Now, if I wanted to argue from a purely paradigmatical point of view, I would perhaps suggest that piprā́yasva was substituted for an imaginable regular *piprā́yase because the 2nd person of the subjunctive middle does not seem to have occurred at all in Vedic. But then, who would dare to maintain that the poet was so poor a grammarian as not to know how to form the 2nd person of the subjunctive, which happens to be unattested, in compliance with the rules of Vedic grammar?

If, on the other hand, I decided to look at the problematic form from a merely metrical point of view, I could say with Jadwiga B e n d a h m a n, Der reduplizierte Aorist, 1993, 175, that it is a surrogate of *piprīṣvá, because this regular imperative[17] would not fit neatly into the triṣṭubh cadence.[18] But are we to think that the poet was unable to recite this verse in such a way as to make *piprīṣvá fit in, had he wished to use this form? Even I could reformulate the line to your metrician's satisfaction by saying, for example, piprīṣvá cāgne tan$_ú$vàm táva svā́m.[19]

Once again viewed from the angle of form, the middle was not strictly indispensable, and the active piprīhí — which occurs twice in the ṚV, at 5.33.7d and 10.2.1a — would have served the purpose, since reflexivity of the action is already expressed by tan$_ú$vàm, and further emphasized by s_uvā́m. The active

---

       a nonce, whereas all the other irregular imperatives formed to subjunctive stems of the perfect are not qualified thus.

16   Cf. the translations of L u d w i g, Rigveda I, 1876, 423 § 400: "lasz uns freundlich sein deinen leib" ('let your body be friendly to us'), who apparently took the perfect in a factitive sense, G e l d n e r, Rigveda II, 1951, 307: "Stelle dich selbst zufrieden," R e n o u, EVP XIII, 1964, 65: "Satisfais ton propre corps," Jared S. K l e i n, Toward a Discourse Grammar of the Rigveda I 1, 1985, 158: "Make pleasure for thy own body," and K ü m m e l, Perfekt 323: "Erfreue ... dich selbst."

17   See, for example, dadhiṣvá (ṚV 7×) or vavṛtsva (ṚV 9×).

18   B e n d a h m a n, loc. cit.: "med. them. piprā́yasva ... [ist] wohl eine metrische Ersatzform für athem. *piprīṣva am Ende des 11-Silblers."

19   For a similar formulation, see ṚV 6.11.2d ágne yájasva tan$_ú$vàṃ táva svā́m 'offer worship, O Agni, to your own self !'

pluperfect *apipres* in the parallel phrase at KS 6.8: 58.8 = KpS 4.7: [1]46.10 = [2]55.4–5 *apiprer agne svāṃ tanvam* 'You have pleased, O Agni, your own self' shows clearly enough that the middle, although preferred in the RV, is not absolutely necessary with *svā́ṃ tanvàm* from the viewpoint of Vedic syntax.[20]

However, not only in other Saṃhitās, but also in the RV, *tan₀vàm* may be governed by a verb in the active voice; see, for example, the words of Yamī the seductress addressing her reluctant twin-brother in RV 10.10.7c *jāyéva pátye tan₀vàṁ riricyām* 'as a wife [giving herself with abandon] to her husband would I have yielded my body [to you]' and Yama's refusal of his sister's injunction to mix his body with hers, RV 10.10.12a *ná vā́ u te tan₀vā̀ tan₀vàṁ sám papṛcyām* 'I would not have mingled my body with your body.'[21] Cf. also RV 10.120.9ab (= ŚS 5.2.9ab = 20.107.12ab = PS 6.1.9ab) *evā́ mahā́n bṛhaddivo átharv[ā á]vocat svā́ṃ tan₀vàm índram evá* 'Thus the great Atharvan Bṛhaddiva has spoken to his own self, [which is] none other than Indra.'[22]

Could we perhaps bring ourselves to realize that the poet as a competent speaker of Vedic had before him in his mind several grammatically correct forms — all of them regular for him, though partly unattested to us — and that, in spite of their handy presence, he deliberately reached out for an odd irregularity, the 'imperative-subjunctive' *pipráyasva* ? If so, then we may as well also consider the possibility that he might have made this choice, not out of waywardness, or because he would try to be original, but rather with the purpose worthy of a poet. That purpose can be called a s u r p l u s ́ of s e n s e. And a poet is prone to aim at that. If **pipráyase* already means 'you **will** please' / 'you **shall** please,' the substitution of the imperative ending *-sva* for that of the subjunctive *-se* cannot fail to change the meaning of the verb towards a more e m p h a t i c '**shall**' in 'you **shall** please.' If it were acceptable in English to put 'shall' in the imperative, the adequate rendering of *pipráyasva* would be 's h a l l   p l e a s e !'

As an afterthought I should perhaps mention that the imperative ending *-sva* may have been preferred to that of the subjunctive *-se* for yet another

20 Cf. D e l b r ü c k, Altindische Syntax 262 f., on the post-Ṛgvedic reflexive usage of synomymous *ātmā́nam* with the governing verb not only in the middle but also in the active; see, for example, TS 1.7.5.2 *ātmā́nam evá prīṇāti* as against TS 5.1.8.3 *sá ātmā́nam ā́prīṇīta.*

21 For a detailed discussion of this hypermetrical line as an example of intended irregularity, see my paper "Mind-Reading the Poet" — referred to above, in footnote 1 — pp. 24 ff. of the unpublished manuscript.

22 These two pādas belong to an intriguingly difficult stanza that patiently waits for judicious treatment in an article jointly to be written by Arlo Griffiths and myself.

reason: -*sva* offered itself most naturally to stress the *svatvám* of Agni's body as affected by the action of pleasing himself.

sūktám etád anādhṛṣyáṃ dvír vā trír vā yád ucyáte.

c. Moods of the Future

"Mode-forms of the future," W h i t n e y, Grammar 333 § 938, had said, "are of the utmost rarity." They may, in fact, prove even rarer than he had thought. The oldest known example of this kind of nonce formation is the 2nd person singular subjunctive *kariṣyā́s*, "occurring once (or twice) in RV" according to Whitney. It certainly occurs once at ṚV 4.30.23:

> *utá nūnáṃ yád indriyáṃ*
> *kariṣyā́ indra páuṃsïyam /*
> *adyā́ nákis ṭád ā́ minat //*

And now that **you will decidedly do**
a manly deed worthy of you, O Indra,
no one shall foil that today.

It is very likely that the same subjunctive of the future occurs a second time, at ṚV 1.165.9d: *yā́ni kariṣyā́ḥ kṛnuhí pravṛddha* 'Do, [Indra] O strongly grown one, [those Indra-like deeds] which **you will decidedly do**!' Already B ö h t l i n g k & R o t h, PW II 115, s.v. *kariṣyā́*, suspected that the visarga of an original *kariṣyā́ḥ* had got lost here; cf. also O l d e n b e r g, Noten I, 1909, 162: "Sehr wahrscheinlich *kariṣyā́ḥ* ... , [the immediately preceding] *yā́ni* führte zu der scheinbaren Neutralform [*kariṣyā́*]."

Compared with the other ten Ṛgvedic future forms of this verb, including seven participles, the subjunctive *kariṣyā́s* seems to emphasize the voluntative shade of meaning that is, if only implicitly, present in the indicative. Although, to be sure, *kariṣyási* of ṚV 1.1.6ab *yád aṅgá dāśúṣe tᵤvám ágne bhadráṃ kariṣyási* 'If in fact **you will do** good to the worshipper, O Agni' can be understood as more than a mere future in which the ingredient of will would be irrelevant,[23] the additionally, yet not redundantly, characterized *kariṣyā́s* of

---

23 Cf. G e l d n e r's translation "Wenn du wirklich dem Spender Gutes tun willst, Agni," as against 'Wenn du tun wirst.' R e n o u's renderings, on the other hand, EVP XII, 1964, 2: "En vérité, quand tu décideras toi(-même), ô Agni, de faire du bien à l'adorateur," and op. cit. 71: "le jour où tu te décideras à faire ... ," strike me as over-translations (Über-Übersetzungen).

4.30.23b and 1.165.9d may be interpreted as emphatically expressive of a will
that is powerful enough to bring about future realization. And considering that
in both of these occurrences of the future subjunctive **Indra** is the agent of the
action, it seems likely that the poet, by addressing the divine agent with this
verb-form, intended to say: if strong-minded-you are decided to act, then the
action will certainly come true.

POSTSCRIPT: In my discussion of *kariṣyás*, I started from the assumption
that what we call the future is, synchronically speaking, really a tense, even
the only real tense.[24] Although I have spoken above of a "voluntative shade of
meaning" and an "ingredient of will," I am also careful to stress that these are
no more than "implicit in the indicative" and have come to be — even at an
early stage of the Vedic language — less relevant than the temporal element. It
is mainly for historical reasons that we may consider the future an old present
tense expressive of an intentional mood, or else, a kind of desiderative.[25] Only
if this historical background of the future is taken into due account, can the
subjunctive be fully appreciated in its poetic quality: The voluntative shade
of meaning, inherently present in the future tense, receives a deeper hue, and
is thus put into greater relief, by this hyper-characterization of the future as
a subjunctive mood. Here, too, we must say what will have to be said below
about the re-reduplicated perfect participle *vavavrúṣas*. The poet may feel free
to charge a form with more meaning than seems to be allowed for by regular
grammar, and thus he may save, by means of an irregularity, a semantic ele-
ment from extinction that otherwise would have been lost. By this poetic act
of over-characterizing a grammatical form, the poet proves not only more sen-
sitive than his contemporary speakers, but also more conscious of a diachronic
dimension of his language that even we, who take so much pride in our histor-
ical sense, sometimes lose sight of.

If, on the other hand, we were to assume that what we call 'subjunctive'
is in reality a future tense — and not the prospective or voluntative mood as
we have come to know it — we would find ourselves on the horns of the
following d i l e m m a: either we choose a blend of two forms that are equally
expressive of the future, *káras* and *kariṣyási*, or we prefer the future of an

---

24 See Karl H o f f m a n n, Der Injunktiv im Veda, 1967, 276 Anm. 21: "Im synchronen Ver-
    balsystem des Veda ist der Futurstamm der einzige T e m p u s s t a m m, der als solcher eine
    Zeitstufe ("Zukunft") bezeichnet."
25 See again H o f f m a n n, op. cit. 276 Anm. 21: "Es liegt wohl eigentlich ein Präsensstamm
    vor, etwa mit der Bedeutung: 'er hat die Absicht (zu tun)'."

original 'desiderative.' The former choice is a grammatical absurdity;[26] the latter, though appearing to be a possible alternative, sounds not only too weak of meaning in this context — after all it is Indra who would thus be addressed with 'you will wish to do' — but also seems an improbable cross-breed of two unproductive forms: a moribund 'desiderative' in *-iṣyá-* and an obsolescent 'future' in *-a-*. The unwelcome thrust of both of these h o r n s can be avoided if the more synchronic interpretation of *kariṣyā́s* as a form of the future **tense** additionally characterized as a subjunctive **mood** is accepted as more likely.

2. BLENDS OF VERBAL AND NOMINAL FORMS

This kind of nonce formation is particularly rare and therefore all the more precious. It is, however, not easy to appreciate it in a way that would satisfy the poet as well as the grammarian. But let me try and please them both.

As an example, let us consider *cániṣṭhat* in ṚV 8.74.11b. This highly controversial verb-form[27] is unique not only because it occurs but once. It is also unique by reason of its more-than-verbal character. The interpretation history of this nonce formation reveals a typical weakness in the way grammarians — and even some of the greatest — have a tendency to treat Vedic poetry.

W h i t n e y, Sanskrit Grammar, [2]1889, 323 § 906 b, despaired of this word saying that it "seems hopelessly corrupt." Similarly, R e n o u, Grammaire de la langue védique, 1952, 51 § 54 n. 2, called *cániṣṭhat* a "corruption d'un subjonctif *cániṣat* d'après l'adjectif *cániṣṭhā* voisin."

O l d e n b e r g, Noten II, 1912, 137, was the first to recognize not only that a subjunctive of the *iṣ*-aorist was at the basis of this problematic form, but also that the corruption was brought about by the superlative *cániṣṭha-* in verse 8b.

W a c k e r n a g e l, Festgabe Jacobi, 1926,[28] 4 = Kleine Schriften I, [2]1969,[29] 420, referring to Oldenberg, op. cit., quoted our word as a candidate for "evident emendation" because a supposedly original *cániṣad* at the

---

26 An absurdity that would become poetically meaningful only if it could be shown that such a 'double future' makes sense in this context. But does a hypothetical 'you will will do' — in which by supposition neither the first nor the second "will" is allowed to be expressive of a will, let alone of Indra's most willful will — sound in any way likely?

27 Is this still a v e r b-form, we may ask, since a n o u n is involved in its making, or even a f o r m at all, and not rather an "U n f o r m," as Hoffmann, see below, preferred to call it?

28 W a c k e r n a g e l, "Kleine Beiträge zur indischen Wortkunde. 1. Grammatische Perseverationserscheinungen in alten indischen Texten." Beiträge zur Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte Indiens. Festgabe Hermann Jacobi, 1926, 1–10.

29 W a c k e r n a g e l, Kleine Schriften I, [[1]1953] 1969, 417–426.

beginning of the second pāda of stanza 11 would not have been "corrupted to the meaningless *cániṣṭhad*" if the second pāda of stanza 8 did not also start with the equally anlauting correct *cániṣṭhā*. Wackernagel considered this a case of the widespread phenomenon called "perseveration," apparently taking it for granted that a poet is not different in kind from a scribe, who is prone even at the best of his times — and especially then — to make clerical errors.

Hoffmann, too, takes up this verb form. In MSS 2, [2]1957, 131 f. = Aufsätze II, 1976, 367, he gives the best translation as yet of ṚV 8.74.11:

> *yáṃ tvā gopávano girā́*
> *cániṣṭhad agne aṅgiraḥ*
> *sá pāvaka śrudhī́ hávam*

> du, den der Gopavana mit seinem Lied
> am meisten erfreuen soll, Aṅgiras Agni,
> hellstrahlender, höre den Ruf ![30]

Hoffmann's excellent rendering of the composite meaning of this hybrid word-form *cániṣṭhat* as "shall rejoice best" is, however, not exactly matched in excellence by the description of the process that led to the formation of this "Unform," this uniquely anomalous "abnormity," as he calls it. In addition to what Wackernagel and Oldenberg had already noticed,[31] Hoffmann tries to give what look like psychological reasons for the poet's slip — if not of the mind — of the tongue; of a tongue that is renowned for its e l o q u e n c e. And here we have occasion to detect a certain helplessness in the grammarian's attempt at explaining what happened to the poet. On the one hand, the nonce formation *cániṣṭhat* is supposed to have taken the extravagant poet by surprise, to have come upon him u n a w a r e s, as it were, while he was being

---

30 For other translations, cf. for example H. G r a s s m a n n, Rig-Veda I, 1876, 493: "Du, den Gopavana durch Lied, erfreut hat, Agni, Angiras," or K. F. G e l d n e r, ṚV II, 1951, 401: "Du, dem Gopavana mit seiner Lobrede gefallen (?) möchte, o Agni, Aṅgiraside." L. R e n o u, EVP XIII, 1964, 78, renders: "Toi, ô Agni, que Gopavana est apte à réjouir de son chant, ô Aṅgiras," but in his note ad loc., op. cit. 156, he specifies, apparently under the influence of H o f f m a n n's [1952/[2]1957] interpretation, the meaning of *cániṣṭhat* as "qui est en mesure de réjouir (plus que tout autre)."

31 See also Johanna N a r t e n, Die sigmatischen Aoriste im Veda, 1964, 111 s.v. *can* 'sich erfreuen': "Der zweite Verbalbeleg von *can* [apart, that is, from the isolated imperative *caniṣṭám* in ṚV 7.70.4a *caniṣṭám devā óṣadīṣ_uv apsú* "erfreut euch an den Kräutern und Wassern, ihr beiden Götter" (Narten)], *cániṣṭhat* VIII 74, 11, ist eine deutliche A u g e n b l i c k s b i l d u n g nach dem Superl[ativ] *cániṣṭha-* [in 8.74.8]."

carried away by the profusion and exuberance of his speech.[32] On the other hand, m e m o r y is said to have led the poet astray. With *cániṣṭhā* of stanza 8[33] still lingering in his mind, the poet was tempted to contaminate the "probably intended" subjunctive *cániṣat* 'shall please' with the recollected superlative *cániṣṭha-* 'most pleasing.'[34]

I feel that the poet is made too much of a victim by Hoffmann's account — an almost sacrificial animal offered to the deity of grammatical correctness. Memory, the seductress, is thought to distract and mislead the poet, drawing his attention away from what he had in mind and redirecting it toward something unintended. Memory, remember, is also Μνημοσύνη, mother of the Muses. Hoffmann's "Erinnerung," if taken seriously, may well be the source of the poet's intuition. And rather than hold her responsible for a morphological monstrosity that slipped in among all the other grammatically correct word-forms of this poem, it could be that we have to praise her for inspiring the poet to the conscious creation of a new word, the uncontaminated portmanteau *cániṣṭhat* 'shall be most pleasing.'

3. RE-REDUPLICATION

While cases of de-reduplication have to be acknowledged as occurring with tolerable frequency,[35] r e - r e d u p l i c a t i o n[36] — for all our readiness to accept the exceptional — will always remain extremely rare.[37] In fact, this kind of nonce formation has scarcely been recognized, let alone explained. There is, however, the undeniable, if quite intriguing, participle form of *vavavrúṣas* in ṚV 1.173.5d:

> *vavavrúṣaś cit támaso vihantá*
>
> [Indra is] the dispeller of even the darkness
> that has re-re-covered [Vṛtra / the waters].

---

32 H o f f m a n n, loc. cit.: " ... ist dem Überschwang des Dichters von VIII 74,11 die Unform *cániṣṭhat* unterlaufen."

33 ṚV 8.74.8ab *sā́ te agne śáṃtamā cániṣṭhā bhavatu priyā́* "O Agni, let [this newer thought for you (7a *iyáṃ te návyasī matíḥ*)] be most wholesome, most pleasing, dear to you."

34 See H o f f m a n n, loc. cit.: "Die Erinnerung ... hat den Dichter zu der Kontamination des wohl beabsichtigten Konj[unktivs] *cániṣad* mit dem Superlativ *cániṣṭha-* verleitet."

35 Take, for example, *skambháthur* at ṚV 6.72.2c, or *skambhur* at ṚV 10.65.4b.

36 Or 'r e t r i p l i c a t i o n,' as we may also call it.

37 Reduplicated forms of secondary roots, as, for example, the perfect *mamand-* (ṚV 4×) of *mand-* from **ma-md-*, do not concern us here.

Here another *va-* seems to be added to the already reduplicated stem of the perfect *va-vr-*. The first critical comment on this curiosity may be that of Friedrich B o l l e n s e n, ZDMG 22, 1868, 605, who considered the allegedly corrupt *vavavrúṣas* a "false form" for the correct *vavrúṣas* and suggested, in order to regain the missing syllable, that *-vr-* be "split" to *-var-*, and the whole participle be read as **vavarúṣas*.[38]

Hermann G r a s s m a n n, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda, 1873, 1322, doubt-fully defined *vavavrúṣas* as "Part. Perf. des Int[ensivums](?)." The form was later mentioned by Hermann B r u n n h o f e r, KZ 30, 1890, 512, as a case of "triplication" together with the, as he called it, "quite monstrous" YAv. *zaozīzuiiē* (Gāh 1.6)[39] and late Sanskrit *pipīpṛhi* (Bhāgavata-Purāṇa [BhP] 4.19.38).

E x c u r s u s: Franz Josef M e i e r, "Der Archaismus in der Sprache des Bhāgavata-Purāṇa mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verbalflexion." Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik 8, 1931, 61f., comments on *pipīpṛhi* in BhP 4.19.38 *saṃkalpanāṃ viśvasṛjām pipīpṛhi* "erfülle den Wunsch der Weltenschöpfer" that this is a form "mit spontaner Verdoppelung der Reduplikation." After stating that "[d]ie Erscheinung einer T r i p l i k a t i o n (Śr[īdharasvāmin] an dieser Stelle: *ārṣaḥ prayogaḥ*) ist nicht ohne Paral-lele," he gives as one of three Vedic examples the strangely reduplicated aorist *āpīpipat* in BĀU-K 4.5.14 *atraiva mā bhagavān mohāntam āpīpipat* with the comment: "Die Form ist auch von Śaṅkara bezeugt, der sie mit

---

38 B o l l e n s e n, loc. cit.: " ... vavavruṣas, eine falsche Form für vavruṣas. Da aber so eine Silbe fehlt, so spalte man vr in var und lese vavaruṣas, worauf auch die verdorbene Lesung hinweist."

39 On YAv. *zaozīzuiiē*, Chr. B a r t h o l o m a e, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, 1904, 1668 n. 2, had remarked: "Ist die Form ächt ... , so muss sie durch Kontamination von *zaozu-* ... und **zīzu-* ... entstanden sein." Jean K e l l e n s, Le verbe avestique, 1984, 195 n. 8, objected to this explanation by pointing out that the reduplicated primary present **zīzū-* "n'est ja-mais attesté et que son équivalent indien a u dans la syllabe de redoublement (*juhūmasi*)." Jean Kellens thinks that the middle syllable *-zī-* in the apparently triplicated *zaozīzuiiē* "représente nécessairement un bégaiement graphique," and therefore emends the transmit-ted form to **zaozuiiē*, 3rd singular of the intensive with the ending of the perfect used in a passive sense, setting aside the syllable *-zī-* altogether. Martin K ü m m e l, Stativ und Pas-sivaorist, 1996, 155, follows suit, agreeing with Kellens that the form as it is transmitted in the manuscripts cannot be correct. Both these scholars, by athetizing a whole syllable, are willing to swallow the camel of drastic emendation while straining at the gnat of dou-ble reduplication. It would seem easier to accept Brunnhofer's triplication, and account for *-zī-* by considering one of the following two possibilities: the *ū* of an originally triplicated **zaozūzuiiē* was either dissimilated in pronunciation, or misrepresented as *ī* in writing.

dem *apīpadat* der Mādhy[andina] Rez[ension] glossiert."[40] See, however, Böhtlingk & Roth, PW I 650, s.v. *āp*, lines 19–20, who qualify *āpīpipat* as an "ungrammatical aorist for *āpipat*."

Now, if you will remember that this is the spontaneous reaction of nonplussed Maitreyī, the wife of Yājñavalkya, to her husband's statement *na pretya saṃjñāsti* 'after death, there is no consciousness,' and that she finds herself at a loss because she does not understand this: *na vā aham imaṃ* (M *idám*) *vi jānāmi*, you may want to ask with me: Could it be that the author of this Upaniṣadic passage, who himself should have been able to use the grammatically correct *āpipat* — the corresponding plural form of which is actually attested in the same text-corpus at ŚB-K 1.2.2.5[41] — has intentionally placed into Maitreyī's puzzled mouth the s t u t t e r i n g verb-form *āpīpipat* in order to express her bewilderment? So that we may translate her s t a m m e r i n g into English as 'that's where you have made me **attattain** [a state of] extreme confusion'?[42]

Bartholomae, IF 1, 1892, 490 n.1, after confessing to his disbelief in Brunnhofer's triplicated forms,[43] suggested in turn ("Ich setze *va = ava*") that the first of the two *va-* is the preposition *ava-* with a p h a e r e s i s. Against this explanation, Wackernagel, AiGr II 1, 1905, 72 § 29 b δ n., objected that *ava-* does not occur with root *var/vṛ*, and that it does not fit the meaning of this passage.[44]

---

40 The parallel passage in BĀU-M 4.3.14 = ŚB 14.7.3.14 reads: *átraivá mā bhágavān mohāntám ápīpadat* 'There you have made me fall into [a state of] extreme confusion.'

41 The phrase in which *ápipan* occurs, ŚB-K 1.2.2.5 = ŚB-M 2.2.2.7, expresses the thought of a sacrificer at the time of presenting the officiants with a sacrificial fee: *yé medáṃ samprápipann íti* '[The priests] who have made me reach [the world of heaven] here (now).' For this type of reduplication in the red. aorist of roots with a- or ā-anlaut, extremely rare in Vedic, see also ŚS 12.1.35d *mā́ te hṛdayam arpipam* 'let me not make your heart be hit (hurt) [by my digging into you, O Earth].' PS-K 17.4.4d *mā́ ... arpitam* in place of ŚS *mā́ ... arpipam* does not seem credible because *arpitam* cannot be construed with *mā́*. Arlo Griffiths was so kind as to inform me that one of his Orissa manuscripts, V/122, reads *arpiṣam*, which could be interpreted as *arpipam since "*pa* is very similar to *ṣa* also in Or. script."

42 For the other two Vedic examples of triplication which M e i e r, op. cit. 62, adduces, i. e. *dīdidāya* at ĀśvŚS 2.4.19 and *dīdidāsi* at ĀpŚS 6.13.10,11, see Johanna N a r t e n, Kleine Schriften I, 1995, 375 ff.

43 "An triplizierte Formen, von denen Brunnhofer KZ. XXX 512 spricht, habe ich keinen rechten Glauben, trotz des Hinweises auf av. *zaozīzuiiē* G. 1. 6 und ai. *pipīpṛhi* im BhP."

44 What Wackernagel must have had in mind here is that, even if a verbal compound *ava-var really occurred in Vedic, it would mean nearly the same as *apa-var* 'abdecken, enthüllen,

Oldenberg, Noten I, 1909, 172, equally unconvinced by Bartholomae, considered the possibility that *vavavrúṣas* is a contamination of the correct weak form of the participle *vavrúṣas* with strong finite verb forms like *vavartha*.[45]

Macdonell, Vedic Grammar, 1910, 363 n. 6, however, seemed to see eye to eye with Brunnhofer when he described *va-va-vrúṣ-as* as an "anomalous gen. sing. with an additional reduplicative syllable."

The translations of Ludwig (RV II, 1876, 46: "zerstreuer der umhüllenden finstre") and Geldner (RV I, [1]1923, 225 = 1951, 250: "der auch die verhüllende Finsternis zerstreut") do not give any clue as to how exactly these two scholars interpreted the form.[46] Eva Tichy, Nomina agentis auf *-tar-*, 1995, 190, makes no explicit comment, but indicates, by the use of the adverb *dicht* in her rendering "er vertreibt auch die Finsternis, die (alles) *dicht* bedeckt," that she takes the participle in an i n t e n s i v e sense; she may have thought, therefore, that *va-va-* is expressive of intensity — or rather, density — in about the same way as *vā-* would have been.[47]

Martin Kümmel, Das Perfekt im Indoiranischen, 2000, 456 — unwittingly retrieving Brunnhofer's lost idea, and tacitly agreeing with Macdonell's definition of the form — explicitly speaks again of "doppelte Reduplikation." Tichy's intensive sense, "densely covering," he would have replaced with an i t e r a t i v e meaning of his own if the adverb *jeweils* in his translation of RV 1.173.5d — "[Indra,] der *jeweils* die hemmende Finsternis zerschlägt" — could be made to refer, though only indirectly, to the participle "hemmende" as well; as if he had also wanted to say **'der die *jeweils* hemmende Finsternis zerschlägt.' On the surface, however, the adverb can only be construed with the verb-form that renders the agent-noun *vihantá*, "zerschlägt."

Partly following Oldenberg's suggestion, Kümmel makes two different attempts at giving an account of the process that may have led to this dou-

---

erschliessen,' and that uncovering is an action we should expect darkness passively to suffer, rather than actively to perform.

45 Oldenberg, loc. cit.: "*vavavrúṣaḥ* ... scheint Kontaminationsbildung aus *vavrúṣaḥ* und Formen wie *vavártha vavára*."

46 Hermann Grassmann, Rig-Veda II, 1877, 168, renders the line as "vertreibend auch das festumschlossne Dunkel," giving the participle an intensive sense ('tightly') — in accordance with what he had said in his dictionary (see following footnote) — and strangely taking it as a passive ('enclosed').

47 Cf. Grassmann, Wörterbuch 1322, quoted above, who seemed to think that this participle may be an intensive even in form.

bly reduplicated form.[48] Either there existed in pre-Ṛgvedic poetry a formula
with a s t r o n g form of the participle, which would have been a trisyllabic
vavrivā́ṁs-, and the number of syllables of a merely disyllabic **vavrúṣ-* had to
be "a s s i m i l a t e d" to that form in a variation of the original formula.

Or else, vis-à-vis the indicative *vavára*, the weak stem of the perfect **vavr-*
might have made the impression of being reduplicated but not clearly enough,
so that another *va-* had to be added — for the sake of c l a r i f i c a t i o n.[49]

To the first attempt, it can be objected that nowhere is there any trace
of an original formula with *vavrivā́ṁs-* in the company of *támas-* and *vihan-
tár-*. Nor would we so much as expect the strong form of the participle to be
used as an attribute of the neuter *támas-*. The only position where it could be
imagined to have occurred in the paradigm is the nominative/accusative plural.
However, although **vavrivā́ṁsi* is theoretically possible, it seems unlikely that
such a form — it being secondary anyway — would actually have been used
in an "original formula," since not a single neuter participle ending in *-vā́ṁsi* is
attested for the Vedic language; see W a c k e r n a g e l, AiGr III 301 § 156e.[50]

And the obvious objection to Kümmel's second attempt at an explanation
is this: If **vavr-* as the weak stem of the participle was felt to be insufficiently
reduplicated, why then were finite verb forms like *vavrur* (ṚV 4×) or *vavre*
(ṚV 2×) not also "clarified" by double reduplication?

It never fails to amaze me how our grammarian will snatch at every straw
of a formal explanation, avoiding all the while to take hold of the tree that
floats nearby, for fear it might turn — into a m o n s t e r. But let's have a look

---

48 Actually there is a third attempt, which K ü m m e l himself, however, qualifies as "prob-
ably too audacious." See Perfekt 456, n. 858: "Die Annahme, dass auch hier eine uralte,
lautgesetzlich viersilbige Form **vavurúṣas* < **Hua-Hur-úṣ-as* ... sekundär ersetzt wurde,
wäre wohl zu kühn." Here, too, we have occasion to say: One good attempt would have
been more than three not so good ones.

49 K ü m m e l, Perfect 456: "Die doppelte Reduplikation könnte sich so erklären, dass der
zweisilbige schwache Stamm **vavrúṣ-* dem starken in der Silbenzahl angeglichen werden
sollte, ursprünglich wohl in einer Formelvariation; gegenüber dem Ind. Perf. *vavára* wirkte
*vavr- vielleicht auch nicht deutlich genug redupliziert und wurde zu *vavavr-* verdeutlicht."

50 We could, for the sake of an argument in favour of Kümmel's thought, imagine an original
formula with a masculine accusative singular *vavrivā́ṁsam*, this being the only strong form
of the perfect participle attested in the ṚV. Occurring five times, mainly in the family books
(2.14.2a, 3.32.6d, 4.16.7a, 6.20.2c, 9.61.22c), it always refers to *vṛtrá-*. We could thus
imagine a triṣṭubh-pāda like **vavrivā́ṁsaṃ vṛtrám índro vīhantā**, and argue that *támas-*
'darkness,' c o v e r i n g t h e l i g h t, is close enough in its mythological significance to
vṛtrá- 'obstacle,' b l o c k i n g t h e w a t e r s, as to allow for a substitution of the one by
the other in a variation of the original formula.

at this trunk, and see if it proves as m o n s t r o u s as it is feared to be.

Let us start from the assumption[51] that every reduplication of a verbal form was originally meant to be expressive of a repeated, or continued, action. This is obviously true of the so-called intensive, which more often than not functions as an i t e r a t i v e, and therefore could be renamed in accordance with its repetitive function.[52] It is also true of the desiderative, which conveys not only the meaning of 'w i s h to do' but also — and predominantly so in Vedic prose — of 't r y to do,'[53] a meaning that implies the repetition of at least the initial stage of an action. It is true of the non-causative reduplicated aorist as represented by forms like *ávocat* 'has spoken' or *ápaptat* 'has flown.' It is true of forms of the reduplicated present such as *bibhárti / bíbharti* 'carries' in contrast to *bhárati* 'brings.' And it is true of the oldest type of the perfect, which designates not only a past action, but rather the c o n t i n u e d result of that action in the guise of a present s t a t e. You might be prepared to agree that when we speak of a 'state' or of 'continuation,' what we mean are forms of r e i t e r a t i o n.[54]

Now, unless we believe that the Vedic poet was less conscious of his language than we are — and some of us seem to believe just that — he whose very name *kaví* suggests intent and cautious attention to detail, may well have been aware of the fact that the weak stem of the perfect *vavr-* was reduplicated c l e a r l y enough, and stood in no need of further clarification by an additional *va-*. If he d i d, however, add another *va-*, the poet may have wished

---

51 Some scholars may not yet feel ready to make this assumption. For others, it may amount to evidence that is based on repeated observation and comparison. In what follows, I can only draw a few sketchy outlines of a principle that would need the painstaking hand of a painter in order to be fully defined and generally acceptable. I am also well aware that by my sketchiness I may seem like a traveller who enters an area abounding in quicksand and quagmire with too light a foot.

52 It actually w a s called "frequentative" sometimes.

53 Accordingly, we might prefer to use the term 'conative' in place of 'desiderative.'

54 I suppose I am one of those scholars whom Y ā s k a had in mind when he said, although with regard to a different kind of repetition, in Nirukta 10.42: *abhyāse bhūyāṁsam arthaṃ manyante* 'they think that in repetition the meaning is richer' — or multiple and more numerous, as it were, than it is in the unrepeated word or phrase. The richness brought about by reduplication may vary according to the lexical meaning of the verb, and the grammatical category the form belongs to, but through a wide variety of cases something that all of them have in common may gradually become transparent and finally acquire for us the status of established fact if an ever-increasing number of convincing examples can be given in proof of the basic principle, which for the time being has to be called an assumption.

to e m p h a s i z e what was already sufficiently clear in its grammatical form, by using the element *va-* once again, but this time with p o e t i c a l purpose, and thereby — as a welcome side-effect — restoring reduplication itself to the original value it must have had in the mind of those who first introduced it as a means to express reiterated action.[55]

In order to push the argument a little further still, I will refer you to ṚV 10.113.6cd *vṛtráṃ yád ugró vṛ ávṛścad ójasā ₐpó bíbhrataṃ támasā párīvṛtam* 'when [Indra] the strong one hewed Vṛtra apart with his strength, [Vṛtra] bearing the waters [in his belly], [Vṛtra] enveloped by darkness.' Cf. also, in the following stanza, 10.113.7c *dhᵤvāntáṃ tám[o á]va dadhvase hat[é]* 'smoky darkness has powdered down on the slain [Vṛtra] (is lying densely on him).' With such passages in mind, I am tempted to think that the poet of ṚV 1.173.5, speaking of darkness (*támasas*) as re-re-covering (*vavavrúṣas*), was trying to express in a c o v e r t way, by means of a single verbal form, t w o c o n c e n t r i c a c t i o n s : not only does darkness cover **Vṛtra**, but also Vṛtra covers the **waters** he bears in his body. If I were to express in an o v e r t way this d o u b l e a c t i v i t y of re-re-covering, by the use of two participle forms, I would choose the following phrase describing darkness as *apó vavrivā́ṁsaṃ vṛtráṃ vavrivát támaḥ*. I am well aware that, by thus d i s c l o s i n g the twofold action of covering, I run the risk of being over-explicit. What I intend to suggest, however, is that the poet might have wanted to convey this meaning i m p l i c i t l y — not in a strictly grammatical fashion, but by poetically taking us one step beyond.

W h o i s s t i l l a f r a i d o f t h e m o n s t e r ?

4. DOUBLE ENDING

The *hapax* locative plural *pṛtsúṣu* in ṚV 1.129.4e is quite unique, not because it happens to occur only once, but by reason of its being a n o n c e formation. Let us have a closer look at this singularity, and try to find out why the poet may have wanted to venture it. It stands in the following sentence, 1.129.4de:

---

55 For a comparable case of creating a surplus of meaning by over-characterizing a grammatical form with a semantic element it implicitly contained but might have lost in the common consciousness, see my above discussion of the subjunctive *kariṣyā́s* in section 1. c. Moods of the Future.

asmā́kam brā́hm[a ū́]tā́y[e
á]vā pṛtsúṣu kā́su cit /

Favour our slogans [calling] for help [O Indra]
in whatever battles [we may fight].[56]

Although, at first sight, it seems safe to say that by its formation *pṛtsúṣu* is
the root-noun *pṛt-* with the locative plural ending added twice, scholars have
had — for obvious reasons[57] — some difficulty in accepting the addition of
the same ending two times over as a c o n s c i o u s   a c t   o f   t h e   p o e t.

Adalbert K u h n, KZ 15, 1866, 397 f., may have been the first to charac-
terize *pṛtsú-* in *pṛtsúṣu* as a "new stem."[58] Ernst F r a e n k e l, KZ 42, 1909,
235, further explained that the t e m p t a t i o n occasionally to attach once again
the same suffix to the ready-made case-form was all the greater since of root-
noun *pṛt-* only the locative *pṛtsú* is attested.[59] *pṛtsu-* occurs in the compound
pṛtsutí- ("Kampferregung, feindlicher Angriff") as well as in *pṛtsutúr-* ("in
den Kämpfen siegreich"), and this fact, too, Fraenkel continued, could have
favoured an occasional m i s u n d e r s t a n d i n g of the form *pṛtsú* as a new
stem.[60] In addition to that, W a c k e r n a g e l, AiGr III, 1930, 73 § 29 b note,
suggested that the word sequence *pṛtsúṣu kā́su cit* at the end of line 1.129.4e is
a free variation of 8.31.15b *pṛtsú kā́su cit* also standing in pāda-final position
— a variant that may have been conditioned by metrical convenience.[61]

---

56 Cf. the translations of L u d w i g, ṚV II, 1876, 38: "unserm brahmagebet zur hilfleistung sei
    günstig in allen schlachten," G r a s s m a n n, ṚV II, 1877, 133: "In allen Kämpfen fördre
    du / zu unsrer Hülfe das Gebet," and G e l d n e r, ṚV I, 1923, 163 = 1951, 180: "Unser
    Segenswort bevorzuge zum Beistand in jedweden Kämpfen!"

57 To be sure, these reasons are obvious only to those who try to see with the eyes of the poet,
    to think with his mind, and to follow a method of reasoning that may appear to be lacking
    in that reason which the scholar has a tendency to consider the only one. Mais la raison du
    poète, elle aussi, a ses raisons.

58 K u h n, loc. cit.: "in diesem falle ist aber *pṛtsu* wohl als neues thema behandelt, wie aus
    den bildungen *pṛtsudha = saṅgrāma, pṛtsuti* f. feindlicher angriff hervorzugehen scheint."

59 F r a e n k e l, loc. cit.: "Da von dem Wurzelnomen *pṛt-* nur der Loc. *pṛtsú* belegt ist, so war
    die V e r s u c h u n g, an den fertigen Kasus gelegentlich noch einmal das gleiche Suffix
    heranzuhängen, natürlich noch um so grösser."

60 F r a e n k e l, loc. cit.: "und auch dieser Umstand konnte ein gelegentliches Missverständnis
    der Form *pṛtsú* unterstützen."

61 W a c k e r n a g e l, loc. cit.: "Wahrscheinlich ist *pṛtsúṣu kā́su cit* ... freie durch metrische
    Bequemlichkeit veranlasste Variation von *pṛtsú kā́su cit.*"

I can understand that for our forbears this was all they could imagine. But shall we, their loyal followers, carry our loyalty to the excess of willfully never exceeding the somewhat narrow limits of their fancy? Though I am aware that what I am about to say may sound audacious, even speculative, to some of you, I shall try also to sound convincing. My argument is this: The indefinite pronoun *ká- cid / ká- ca / ká- caná*, although it is very often used in a distributive function, *vīpsāyām*, does not always convey an all-pervasive distributive meaning. Take, for example, ṚV 5.74.10ab *áśvinā yád dha kárhi cic chuśrūyā́tam imā́ṁ hávam* 'O Aśvins, if you should ever have listened to this call [of ours],'[62] or ṚV 8.73.5ab *yád adyá kárhi kárhi cic chuśrūyā́tam imā́ṁ hávam* 'if you should have listened to this call at any time today,'[63] and again ṚV 8.102.20ab *yád agne kā́ni kā́ni cid ā́ te dā́rūṇi dadhmási* 'If we place any pieces of wood at your [hearth], O Agni.'[64]

In order to preclude an undesired indefinite understanding of the phrase *pṛtsú kā́su cid* as meaning 'in some, in certain battles,' the poet hit upon the highly unorthodox device of repeating the ending *-sú* of *pṛtsú* in an āmreḍita kind of way, almost treating *-sú* as an independent word. Instead of repeating an unattested singular by saying **pṛtí pṛti* 'in each and every battle,' and because the reiteration of a substantive in the plural — such as an imaginable *pṛtsú pṛtsu** — does not seem to have been possible in Vedic,[65] the poet used *pṛtsúṣu* as what looks like an ingenious compromise between the apparently conventional phrase *pṛtsú kā́su cid*, which might, however, be taken in an indefinite sense, and a clearly distributive, yet uncustomary, **pṛtí pṛti*. Only an āmreḍita-like repetition of the ending could assure that the traditional phrase

---

62 Cf. G e l d n e r, ṚV II 80: "O Aśvin, wenn ihr **jemals** auf diesen Ruf hören solltet" (not **jeweils*) and. K ü m m e l, Perfekt 531: "Aśvins, wenn ihr **irgendwann** hören solltet diesen Ruf hier" (not **jedesmal*).

63 Cf. G e l d n e r, ṚV II 400: "Wenn ihr heute **zu irgend einer Zeit** diesen Ruf hören solltet" (not **zu jeder Zeit*) and W a c k e r n a g e l, AiGr III 574 § 259 f: "**irgendwann**." Curiously interesting is K ü m m e l's translation, Perfekt 531: "Wenn ihr heute — wann? irgendwann — hören solltet diesen Ruf hier"

64 Cf. G e l d n e r, ṚV II 434: "Wenn wir dir **irgend welche** Hölzer zulegen, Agni," W a c k e r n a g e l, AiGr III 574 § 259 f: "**alle möglichen** Holzarten" and R e n o u, EVP XIII 82: "Si, ô Agni, nous plaçons pour toi **tels ou tels** (morceaux de) bois."

65 Cf. W a c k e r n a g e l, Altindische Grammatik II 1, 145 § 59 d: "Das Āmreḍita-Wort steht ursprünglich konstant im Singular. Aber weil durch die Wiederholung eine Mehrzahl zu Stande kommt, dringen allmählich Pluralendungen ein. So ... bei wiederholtem attributivem Adjektiv AB. 3, 25, 2 *caturakṣarāṇi-caturakṣarāṇi chandāṃsi* "Metren, jedes viersilbig" ... Ausser bei Zusammengehörigkeit mit einem pluralischen Wort scheint ein Nomen im Āmreḍita nie Plural zu haben."

pṛtsú kā́su cid, by being unusually extended to *pṛtsúṣu kā́su cid*, conveyed the p e r v a s i v e l y distributive meaning 'in whatever battles.'

To conclude, let me quote an aphorism of G o e t h e's: "*Was hat ein Mahler zu studiren, bis er eine Pfirsiche sehen kann wie [Jan van] Huysum, und wir sollen nicht versuchen ob es möglich sei den Menschen zu sehen, wie ihn ein Grieche gesehen hat?*"[66] Would it be out of place if I in turn should ask: **Could we not try to look at language in the way a Vedic poet may have seen it ?** At language as a grammatically correct, even perfect, system — and also as the work of an artist who, if fancy strikes him, chooses to deviate from the norm for the sake of his art and that s u r p l u s o f m e a n i n g which is its main characteristic. The form he happens to find on the spur of the moment — a moment that is creative — is bound to be a nonce formation. But such a seemingly ungrammatical, borderline instance of grammar, beyond being the sudden expression of one particular poet and his art, also reveals a hidden proclivity of language itself — of language as verging on the e c c e n t r i c.

---

66 Johann Wolfgang G o e t h e, Werke, I. Abtheilung, 48. Band, Weimar: Böhlau, 1897, 206 [Maximen und Reflexionen zur Kunst. Aus dem Nachlass.]

Werner Knobl

MIND-READING THE POET

CASES OF INTENDED
METRICAL IRREGULARITY
IN VEDIC POETRY [*]

> *L'espace entre les arbres*
> *est l'arbre le plus beau*

Between the scholar and the poet, there is something like a pre-established harmony. As the former has a predilection for laws and rules, so the latter appears to dislike what is unruly and lawless. Having undergone a similarly severe training in discipline, the two of them seem to be made for each other. The scholar, used to formulating order, may sometimes try to find it where it cannot be found. He may be tempted to cry *eureka* even when he is all at sea. The poet, too, is used to formulating, but to formulating a different kind of truth. He too is all at sea, but he knows it. And knowingly he tries to establish an instant of order in the middle of that incorrigibly creative chaos which is the source of his inspiration. The scholar, if he is favoured by Luck,[1] can respond to that instant of order in a moment of recognition.

Vedic meter and grammar are so overwhelmingly regular that every exception to the rule requires an explanation. Many irregularities are only apparent and allow for easy restoration, by anyone who knows the rules, to metrical and grammatical normalcy. They need not detain us. Only those cases that defy every attempt at reduction to regularity deserve all our critical interest.

---

[1] Or by Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Luck.

The cases I have chosen for a detailed study in this paper belong to two different types. They are **A.** The Catalectic Line and **B.** The Hypermetrical Line.[2] Many more cases belonging to these and to other types might be considered. They must wait to be taken up in the future.[3]

The principle at work in all the cases I treat may be called "Sprachmalerei."[4] This term was coined by Thieme in analogy with the well-known expression 'Lautmalerei,' and was meant to cover a particular poetical technique — that of symbolically representing the intended meaning by means of a *Sprachbild*. The parallelism that was aimed at is not the familiar relation between sense and sound, but the far less noticed correspondence between sense and image. After Thieme's innovative article of 1972, "Sprachmalerei" as a technical term has come to be used indiscriminately, as if it had not been designed clearly to distinguish this from other forms of onomatopœia. Because of that misuse and confusion I should prefer to speak of the *ut-pictura-poesis*[5] principle.

In every single case of supposedly intended irregularity, it would be incumbent on us:

1. to specify the *kind* of irregularity we are confronted with by describing it with all necessary precision,

2. to determine the exact *degree* of deviation from a norm that was much used by the poets and is well known to us,

3. to demonstrate that this degree is so exceptionally *high* as to exclude any coincidental occurrence of the aberrant form, and

4. to detect the hidden *motive* the poet may have had in mind when intentionally offending against a well-established metrical convention.

Evidently, the difficulty of the task increases *yathāsaṃkhyam*.[6]

---

[2] Each of the two types will be illustrated by two examples.

[3] Several cases pertaining to four categories of a different type have been discussed by me in the meantime. See Werner Knobl, "The Nonce Formation. A more-than-momentary look at the *Augenblicksbildung*." The Vedas: Texts, Language & Ritual. Proceedings of the Third International Vedic Workshop, Leiden 2002. Edited by Arlo Griffiths & Jan E.M. Houben. (Groningen Oriental Studies: Volume XX). Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004, 261–283. The four categories are: 1. Cross-Breeds of Tenses and Moods, 2. Blends of Verbal and Nominal Forms, 3. Re-Reduplication, and 4. Double Ending.

[4] Paul Thieme, "Sprachmalerei." Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 86, 1972, 64–81 = Kleine Schriften II. Herausgegeben von Renate Söhnen-Thieme. (Glasenapp-Stiftung: Band 5, II). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995, 994–1011.

[5] This oft-quoted phrase is taken from Horatius, De Arte Poetica 361: *ut pictura poesis* …

[6] For these and a few further desultory remarks on method, see my 2002 Leiden paper "The Nonce Formation" referred to above, in footnote 3, especially pp. 264–265 of the published article.

None of the examples discussed is an open-and-shut case. Sometimes the sagacity and resourcefulness of an eminently gifted detective would be needed to satisfy even the exquisite taste of him who committed the offense. And that might never be the case. For, the offender is always ahead, not only in time. Were he ever to be caught and brought to *justice*, that justice would have to be a *poetical* one.

In what we have come to call 'poetic licence' — a term that is redolent of licentiousness and moral laxity — cases of a higher necessity are included. It is this necessity that must have compelled the poet to sin against metrical, and even grammatical, regularity in order to express something he could not have expressed with equal cogency by using a regular form. We have to feel this cogency. Once felt, it will make us try to find a plausible motive for the poet's deviation from the norm. It will cause us to ask: What may have induced him to choose an apparent mistake in preference to a correct form that should have come easy to him? After all, though being a poet, he is still a competent speaker of his language. And before aspiring to be original he must have been conventionally learned. He must have learnt the tradition of his trade before daring to use its tricks.

Once again: What may have made him make mistakes? Did sudden drowsiness cause him to doze off for a wink, as even great Homer is said to have taken a nap sometimes? Or is it, on the contrary, a state of heightened wakefulness, an out-of-the-common alertness that incited him to venture extraordinary forms of the language? If we were to be noble, we would give our poet the benefit of the doubt and opt for the second alternative. However, noble-mindedness is not needed. Mere insight into necessity will do.

Sometimes you may wonder whether the Vedic poet is really as conscious as I would make him out to be. But is it not preferable to err on the side of lucidity? Much greater is the danger that our *poeta doctus* has wasted his learning on us, that his efforts have been lavished in vain, that we have proven unable to sound the depths of his mind — while floating on the surface of its expression — with the most excellent tool at our disposal.

No Case: But a Cage

Without *mind-reading* the poet we cannot expect to reach the center of his poetry. By mind-reading I mean: reading *his* mind with *our* mind. The poem is a cage. Description of that cage, after it has been left open and the bird has flown away, is not the only task imaginable. As it happens, our bird

has a habit of secretly returning to its cage, and we may, if we are cautious enough, sometimes catch a glimpse of it. The bars are not to be broken. Nor shall we neglect the work of the descriptionists, who like to think of their results as 'hardware.' (To be sure, the prisoner is softer than the metal that shuts him in.) The object of our understanding shines only intermittently, it glimpses. And we must patiently learn how to read between the lines that are the bars of the cage before we may hope to discern with ever-growing clarity, in the dimmer light on the other side of the bars, the shining figure of a shy inhabitant. It is a worthwhile task for the human intellect also to understand in *this* way.

In order to make quite clear what I mean by *mind-reading* and *intended irregularity*, I shall first give two examples — one imagined, the other one real — before discussing four potential cases taken from Vedic poetry.

A Case of No's: Nine Times 'Nein'

Imagine someone in a negative mood shaking his head from left to right to left like a mechanical manneken and saying, for emphasis' sake, nine times *no*. Then imagine someone intending to write down his ninefold negation in a square of three times three *no*'s, filling in eight but leaving the ninth position empty, in the following graphic manner:

<div align="center">

no   *no*   *no*

no   *no*   *no*

no   *no*

</div>

Could we be certain that the ninth *no* was left out on purpose? You will agree that we cannot be certain of that. The omission may have been caused by negligence. And, secondly, imagine someone who draws the same square of repeated *no*'s, but leaves an open space in the `fifth` position, right in the center of the square written thus:

<div align="center">

no   *no*   *no*

no   *no*

no   *no*   *no*

</div>

Do you think it would be possible to deny that this time the omission was brought about with a conscious effort on the part of the author? Here we have no choice but to say: That is certainly not possible. What we *are* still free to imagine is the meaning this clearly intended lacuna may have. Does the author want to express a negation of a higher degree? Or does he, on the contrary, suggest with a silent *yes* the exact opposite: an unspoken affirmation?

A Real Case: The Poet Behind The Poet

In Johann Wolfgang Goethe's work West=östlicher Divan, VIII. Buch: Suleika,[7] we find a poem which is entitled *Hatem*. Its third stanza deserves being quoted in our context,[8] because it exhibits an irregularity that nobody, I am confident, will deny is intended:

> *Du beschämst wie Morgenröthe*
> *Jener Gipfel ernste Wand,*
> *Und noch einmal fühlet **Hatem***
> *Frühlingshauch und Sommerbrand.*

In the other three stanzas of this poem, as well as in many other poems of this book, the rhyming scheme is *a b a b*. However, in the stanza just quoted, the scheme is *a b c b*, an irregular *c* coming up in the third line in place of the expected *a*. Instead of *Hatem*, we were prepared for a word rhyming with -*röthe* of the first line. That unspoken word, we may suppose, was even more immediately present in the mind of the author than it is now in our mind, but he chose to set it aside and replace it with another word, the name of the Arabian poet Hatem, in preference to his own. As lover of Marianne, alias Suleika, whom he addresses with this poem, Goethe, alias Hatem, hides himself behind the adopted name. His presence, however, is all the more strongly felt underneath the disguise.[9]

---

[7] Goethes Werke. Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Grossherzogin Sophie von Sachsen. I. Abtheilung, 6. Band. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1888, p. 168.

[8] And its oriental beauty might tempt another Cappeller to translate it into Sanskrit. See the genuine Cappeller's sometimes rather successful attempts at rendering the poetry of Goethe and others, originally published between 1903 and 1905 in The Indian Antiquary and reprinted in: Carl Cappeller, Kleine Schriften und Sanskrit-Gedichte. Herausgegeben von Siegfried Lienhard. (Glasenapp-Stiftung: Band 14). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977, 371–419.

[9] Compare the editorial notes in Goethes Werke I. 6. Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1888 = München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1987, 421 on *Hatem* (168, 11): "Ersatz für das auf Morgen-

We may also take a hint from the first two lines of this stanza and guess at the reason why Goethe prefers to hide his name behind an alias. Just as Dawn suffuses the face of that mountain over there with a blush, so his beloved puts him to shame. He would rather withdraw and masquerade as another person, only just intimating his own identity, than stand confronting her face to face.

TYPE A: THE CATALECTIC LINE

<div align="right">

complete

is an incomplete

form of incomplete

</div>

Case One: The Twin Sister's Tantrum

Hymn ṚV 10.10 is a highly dramatic dialogue between the primordial twins Yama and Yamī, a brisk altercation in which the incest-obsessed sister insistently tries to convince but ultimately fails to seduce her brother. Argument and counter-argument, spirited attack and witty repartee succeed each other in quick succession all along this lively exchange. Yamī's last words in the last-but-one stanza of this hymn are fully expressive of her final disappointment with Yama's cowardly refusal to cohabit with her.[10] The first two lines of that paroxysmal stanza, ṚV 10.10.13ab (= ŚS 18.1.15ab), if written continuously, run as follows:

bató batāsi yama náivá te máno hṛ́dayaṃ cāvidāma

---

röthe reimende Goethe, wie wohl schon [Friedrich] Rückert sah, Östliche Rosen. Leipzig 1822 S[eite] 2: "Abendröthen Dienten Goethen Freudig als der Stern des Morgenlandes; Nun erhöhten Morgenröthen Herrlich ihn zum Herrn des Morgenlandes", ausdrücklich ausgesprochen von K[arl] Simrock 1831 (Goethes West-östlicher Divan herausgegeben von K. Simrock. Heilbronn 1875 S[eite] VII)."

10 The perfect optative [*ā́*] *vavṛtyām* in the very first stanza of this hymn — if indeed it can be taken, and I think it can, as referring to an *unreal* possibility — could be considered precociously to anticipate Yamī's final regret and resignation. See 10.10.1a *ó cit sákhāyaṁ sakhᵢyā́* **vavṛtyām** 'And yet I would have liked to make the companion turn towards [acts of] companionship.' The other three perfect optatives used by Yamī in the course of her conversation with Yama only serve further to enhance the disappointment she was fated finally to feel in failing to seduce her twin brother. Cf. 3d *ā́ viviśyāḥ* 'You might have entered [my body],' 7c **riricyām** 'I would have yielded [my body to you],' and 9b *ún mimīyāt* 'She (your sister) would have dimmed [the Sun's eye(sight) for a divine moment, so that the two of us could have made love unwitnessed by a watchful god as long as we lovingly would have liked].'

A LAS, *alas*, you are, Yama! We have not found your heart and spirit.

Excursus 1: Whitney, Atharva-Veda ... Translated, II[11] 819, renders ŚS 18.1.15ab with: "A weakling (? *batá*), alas, art thou, O Yama; we have not found mind and heart thine" and comments: "If *batás* is a genuine word (the metrical disarray intimates corruption), it looks like being the noun of which the common exclamation *bata* is by origin the vocative." Similarly Geldner, Der Rig-Veda ... übersetzt, III[12] 136, note ad 13a: "*bata* als Interj[ektion] ist wohl nichts anderes als der Vok[ativ] des daneben stehenden Subst[antivs] *batá*, vgl. *are* Vok. des veralteten *arí*."[13]

However, it may be just the other way round, as was suggested by Wackernagel, AiGr II 1, [1]1905,[14] 5 § 1 d Anm.: "RV 10, 10, 13[a] *batáḥ* 'Schwächling' ist vielleicht substantiviert aus v[edisch] und sp[ät] *bata* 'ach! weh!' Johansson KZ. 36, 3[4]3 A[nm]. 2"[15] and accepted by Oldenberg, Noten II, 1912,[16] 207: "*batáḥ* sehe ich mit Wack[ernagel, AiGr] 2, 5 [= II 1, 5] als

---

[11] Atharva-Veda Saṁhitā, Translated With a Critical and Exegetical Commentary by William Dwight Whitney, Revised and Brought Nearer to Completion and Edited by Charles Rockwell Lanman. Second Half: Books VIII to XIX. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volume 8). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1905.

[12] Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt und mit einem laufenden Kommentar versehen. I–III. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volumes 33–35). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951.

[13] The meaning "Schwächling" for *batá*-, as posited by Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolf Roth, Sanskrit-Wörterbuch, Fünfter Theil (1865–1868), 3 s.v. **batá** m., and adopted bei Hermann Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda (1872–1875) 897 s.v., can be traced back to Yāska, Nirukta 6.28, where **bataḥ** at ṚV 10.10.13a is glossed with **balād atītaḥ** (!) and *durbalaḥ*; cf. also the commentaries on ṚV 10.10.13a (Max Müller's edition, IV [21892] 24) and on ŚS 18.1.15a (Vishva Bandhu's edition, III [1961] 1642), both of which literally repeat Yāska's 'pseudo-etymo-logical' interpretation.

[14] Jakob Wackernagel, Altindische Grammatik [AiGr]. Band II, 1: Einleitung zur Wortlehre. Nominalkomposition. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, [2]1957 (= [1]1905).

[15] See K. F. Johansson, "Anlautendes indogerm[anisches] *b*-." Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 36, 1900, 342–390; 343 Anm. 2: "Es (= the word *bata*) wäre ein unflektiertes geschlechtlich indifferentes satzwort, das später ins paradigma eingeordnet als v o k a t i v oder i m p e r a t i v erscheint." We may no longer be allowed to presuppose for the parent language such 'uninflected gender-indifferent sentence-words,' which would be used both as nouns and as verbs. But occasional blends, or cross-breeds, or portmanteau-like contaminations of verbal and nominal forms can, none the less, be found in the Ṛgveda. Some of these highly irregular word-(de)formations may well have been poetically intended, as in the case of the Augenblicksbildung *cániṣṭhat* 'shall-please-most-pleasingly' at ṚV 8.74.11b, which "Unform" and "Abnormität" (Hoffmann) I have treated — with due respect for the poet, and trying to do him justice — in my article "The Nonce Formation" (pp. 272–274) referred to above, in footnote 3.

[16] Hermann Oldenberg, Ṛgveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten. [II:] Siebentes bis zehntes Buch. (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse. Neue Folge: Band XIII. Nr. 3). Berlin: Weidmannsche

Substantivierung aus Interj[ektion] *bata* an (umgekehrt Wh[itney] zu Av., nicht überzeugend)."

Whole-heartedly adopting Wackernagel's plausible explanation of the nonce-noun *batá-* m. as a substantivization of (the exclamation or interjection) *bata* ventured only here, for this special occasion, by Yama's twin sister Yamī, I have tried to imitate the Sanskrit *hapax* using in my translation a similarly conditioned nonce-form: "*A LAS*, *alas*, you are, Yama!" The reader may feel called upon freely to associate with *LAS* the same French and English vocables I myself seem to have had in mind when I coined this phrase.

Hymn ṚV 10.10 consists of 14 stanzas, and it is composed in the triṣṭubh metre. Out of the total number of 56 pādas, 52 are regular triṣṭubh lines. Of the remaining four, one (14c) is a jagatī verse of the kind so frequently interspersed among triṣṭubh verses that it may be superfluous to speak of irregularity.[17] One (12a) is a hypermetrical line of no less than 14 syllables, for the discussion of which see below.[18] And two (13ab) of the four more or less exceptional pādas are the ones quoted and translated above.

Scholars studying the metre of the ṚV have thought of six different ways to deal with the defective character of our two verses.[19]

[1] Arnold, Vedic Metre, 1905,[20] 318, felt that these seemingly corrupt lines "require emendation," and he suggested as original version of the text up to the cæsura of pāda b: "perhaps read *bató bata* ‖ *asi yama ná evā̀* ⋮ *táva*

Buchhandlung, l912.

[17] In case the slight irregularity should have been intended, we could try to 'justify' the triṣṭubh cadence of verse 10.10.14c *tásya vā tvám mána ichā̀ **sá vā táv[a*** in the following tentative way: Simply to substitute the enclitic pronoun *te* for *táva*, its orthotone partner, would certainly have been an easy task for the poet, if creating another regular triṣṭubh line (by replacing the iambic cadence with a trochaic one) had had a greater importance in his mind than accentuating the *tvattvám of 'you.' After all, *tvám* in the former part of this antithetic construction has an equally emphasizing effect — since the imperative *ichā̀* already implies the second person — as *táva* in its latter part. Thus the two forms of the pronoun support each other. Also, the quadrisyllabic sequence *sá vā táva* constitutes a fuller syntactic and rhythmical parallel to *tásya vā tvám* than *sá vā te* would have done.

[18] Type B: The Hypermetrical Line. Case One: The Twin Brother's Reluctance.

[19] I may be excused if I do not consider Whitney's offhand remark cited in the above excursus ("the metrical disarray intimates corruption") to be a way of seriously dealing with either the assumed disarray or the suspected corruption.

[20] E. Vernon Arnold, Vedic Metre in its Historical Development. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905. (= Delhi / Varanasi / Patna: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967).

mánaḥ ‖ ” — thus undoing two sandhis and replacing the enclitic *te*, which could not possibly stand in line-initial position, with its orthotone counterpart *táva*.

[**2**] Without mentioning Arnold's 'emendation,' Schneider, IIJ X, 1967–1968, 10 = Opera minora, 2002,[21] 157, would have us read the first two verses of stanza 13 in a similar way as: "*bató bata asi yama ná evá te máno hṛ́dayaṃ ca avidāma,*" not only resolving all the three vowel-contractions of the two lines, but even allowing the enclitic pronoun *te* to stand in the first place of line two — a liberty no Vedic poet, however free and unbound by rules, would have had the foolhardy audacity to take.

Of the text thus resolved Schneider himself has to say that it is "ungewöhnlich holperig, eigentlich sogar metrisch unmöglich." In an attempt to make this unusual rhythmic raggedness and metrical impossibility look less unusual and impossible, he suggests that "die Worte [sind] bewußt so gesetzt, um das hilflose Gestammel der abgewiesenen Yamī ... zum Ausdruck zu bringen."[22] The words as put by Schneider, mind you, and not by the poet himself, who would certainly not have dreamt of neglecting three vowel-contractions for the sake of achieving the deceptively regular eleven of a hendecasyllabic triṣṭubh line, if a line with no less than *nine* out of eleven metrical units being light may still be called 'regular' at all.[23] This sartorial unstitching of all the sandhi seams, just in order to obtain a suspiciously complete number of patchwork syllables — and nothing more than that [24] — is a mere-

---

[21] Ulrich Schneider, " Yama und Yamī (ṚV X 10)." Indo-Iranian Journal, Volume X. The Hague: Mouton, 1967–1968, 1–32 = Ulrich Schneider, Opera minora. (Beiträge zur Indologie: Band 39). Herausgegeben von Marion Meisig. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002, 150–175.

[22] It seems that Schneider, loc. cit., laboured under the impression that what he thought he saw very clearly was what Oldenberg, Noten II, 1912, 207, had 'already' dimly seen ("geahnt") before him. If we care to read the master's notes with all the attention they deserve, we will realize how acute and lucid his understanding of the metrical structure — as well as of the emotional content — of these two lines was. Dimness of insight is certainly not *his* defect.

[23] The highest number of consecutive light syllables I have as yet come across in the Ṛgveda, is at 10.71.2a *sáktum iva títaünā punánto*. In this triṣṭubh verse, we find an exceptionally long sequence of no less than six minimal (C)V units: *-tu-mi-va-tí-ta-ü-*. This outstanding string of sounds, which has the strange ring of a 'primitive' language about it, will be treated elsewhere as a poetically significant example of rhythmical irregularity, together with a similar hexasyllabic sequence I have happened upon at 1.118.10c *ā́ na úpa vásumatā ráthena*, and any other such verse-line that I may still be so lucky as to find, either by chance or through systematic search.

[24] Unless Yamī's alleged stammering is conceived of as an expression of helplessness, her 'helpless stammering' (Schneider) does not transcend the expression itself. What we, in any case, would want to know is the reason why Yamī should stammer so helplessly. (As a

ly numerical solution. Metre, I should think, is not a matter of counting but of measuring, and not of measuring the length of syllables but of measuring their weight. If anything counts, it is the well-weighed balance of light and heavy syllables within the line brought into a relative equilibrium.

[**3**] A different solution to the problem posed in these two verses was offered by Elizarenkova, Language and Style, 1995,[25] 117. She declares that in 13ab, "the exact limits of the *pādas* are not clear." And in view of Arnold's proposal to emend as quoted above, she assumes: "It seems more likely that metrical confusion should symbolize Yamī's muddled emotions after hearing Yama's outright rejection." I cannot hope to know a woman's psychology better than she does. Her interpretation, however, will stand *or fall* with the supposition it is based upon. And as the emotional confusion is inferred from an alleged metrical one, the former must dissolve as soon as the latter is de-confused. Once the prosodic situation is clarified, the exact limits between the two lines being determined, Yamī's feelings, too, will become clear, and we shall have to look in a different direction for the symbolism that is at work here.

[**4**] In 1888, Oldenberg, Prolegomena[26] 85 f., considered taking *náivá* into the first of the two pādas, since it has the prosodic character that is to be expected after *yama*, and imagined — without, however, daring to fill the lacuna after *náivá* — that the meaning of the whole line may originally have been something like: "You are a [wretched] wight and not such-and-such,"[27] resignedly adding: "Which word was standing there can of course not be made out."[28]

---

matter of fact, she does not stammer, let alone helplessly.)

[25] Tatyana J. Elizarenkova, Language and Style of the Vedic *Ṛṣis*. Edited with a Foreword by Wendy Doniger. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

[26] Hermann Oldenberg, Metrische und textgeschichtliche Prolegomena zu einer kritischen Rigveda Ausgabe. Berlin: Hertz, 1888 (= Koelner Sarasvati Serie [Editor: Klaus Ludwig Janert]: Volume 3. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1982). Cf. the recent English translation of Oldenberg's work by V. G. Paranjape & M. A. Mehendale, Prolegomena on Metre and Textual History of the Ṛgveda. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005, 82f..

[27] Oldenberg, loc. cit.: "du bist ein Wicht, und nicht bist du das und das."

[28] Oldenberg, loc. cit.: "Welches Wort dastand, ist natürlich nicht auszumachen." Yes, it cannot be made out, but for a reason — as Oldenberg himself came to realize later on (see below, under [6]) — which is different from the one he seems to have had in mind at the time of his Prolegomena: that word cannot be made out because, in this place, there was no word at all.

[**5**] Taking up Oldenberg's skeptical considerations, but venturing beyond them, von Schroeder, Mysterium und Mimus, 1908,[29] 284 n. 1, had the n a i v e courage to complete the incomplete by introducing *vīrás* after *náivá* in the first line, and another *ná* before *te mánas* in the second.

[**6**] In 1912, Oldenberg, Noten II, 207, turned away from the direction that he had indicated in his Prolegomena, and which Schroeder, loc. cit., had let himself be tempted to follow through. He now points out what is, in my view, the solution to the problem posed by the metrical irregularity of our two lines. Here we are granted one of the rare opportunities to witness what happens when Oldenberg, the inimitable master of Vedic exegesis, suspends for once his self-imposed ἐποχή of a skeptic. What might have happened in the history of our science if critical minds like Oldenberg had given up their somewhat compulsive self-restraint more often can only be imagined. Certainly, we would have less difficulties now in trying to reveal the hidden expressionism of the Vedic poets.

Oldenberg, loc. cit., takes *náivá te* as a credible opening of 13b, and the whole pāda as a typically hypermetric triṣṭubh line. He then goes on to ask: "Kann nicht davor *bató batási yama* als abgerissener, nur einen Teil des Pādaschemas füllender Ausbruch der Leidenschaft stehen bleiben?" The obvious answer to this rhetorical question is: Yes, it can. And since it can, it *must* remain standing as it is. If the text is accepted in its actually attested state, it will prove a challenge to our understanding, and may provoke a deeper insight into the working of the poet's mind.

Yamī's emotions, far from being "muddled" (Elizarenkova), erupt into a sudden "outburst of passion" (Oldenberg), a fit of anger that comes to an abrupt end in the break of the line.[30] She then has all the time of the *c a d e n c e*, empty of words, for calming down to a cool indifference. On her own count of four, she is now collected enough to state as a matter of fact, typically using the aorist:

n á i v á   t e   m á n o   h ṛ d a y a ṃ   c ā v i d ā m a

---

[29] Leopold von Schroeder, Mysterium und Mimus im Rigveda. Leipzig: H. Haessel, 1908.

[30] As a result, this heptasyllabic — yes, t r i ṣ ṭ u b h — line is catalectic by four syllables. To my surprise, the prosodic character of our verse was correctly defined by van Nooten & Holland in the Metrical Notes on their ṚV edition. See Rigveda. A Metrically Restored Text with an Introduction and Notes. Edited by Barend A. van Nooten and Gary B. Holland. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volume 50). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994, 652: " 13a Tr[iṣṭubh] 7 syllables."

<div align="center">We have not found your heart and spirit,[31]</div>

implying by the use of the plural a multitude of divine peers who would have approved of her more-than-sisterly love.[32] In her words, a crowd of fellow immortals far outnumbering the wilful human individual, who foolishly refuses to cohabit with her, seems to pass judgement on him: We have found you guilty of heartlessness and lack of spirit. She thus puts all the *generic* distance that there is between him and herself.[33]

Now she is even able to poke fun at his future love, the clinging type, comparing the other woman to a 'cinch' holding him, the harnessed horse, in a tight grip, or to a creeper that will entwine him closely. These two derisory comparisons, cleverly calculated to ridicule the anticipated rival by likening

---

[31] I trust that no scholar sensitive to syntactic tactics will mind my neglecting the Sanskrit word order, in putting 'h e a r t' before 's p i r i t.' This is done not because I would injudiciously give precedence to the seat of emotions over the mental faculty — after all, reason should reign supreme — but for the sake of abiding by Otto Behaghel's (slightly indecent-sounding) "Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder." The original, in placing *hŕdayam* after *mánas*, seems to follow the same stylistic (3σ) and syntactical (4σ) rule.

[32] Yamī resorted to the gods already earlier in this dialogue, with the apparent intention to claim their 'moral' support for her own seductive efforts. Briskly reacting to Yama's blunt refusal as formulated in verse 10.10.2a *ná te sákhā sakh₍ᵢ₎yám vaṣṭ₍ᵢ₎y etát* 'Your companion does not want that [immoral] companionship of yours,' Yamī has recourse, in the following stanza, to a will of higher authority, one that can be expected to carry greater conviction than her own desire, however suggestive of divine origin this wish may be. See 10.10.3ab *uśánti ghā té amŕtāsa etád ékasya cit tyajásam márt₍ᵢ₎yasya* 'They, the Immortals, do want [just] *that* ([namely] *this*): an heir of the one and only mortal [on earth]. [And progenitive love is precisely the sort of companionship which I, Yamī, desire to enjoy with you, Yama].'

　Thus, as we may interpret, both 't h i s' and 't h a t' ultimately point at one and the same thing, no matter how ambiguously the uniform pronoun *etád* may refer to it, in what could be called a 'split' or 'double reference.' The intricate ambiguities of *e t á d* are being treated in several papers-in-progress, the first of which I have read at the XXX. Deutscher Orientalistentag, Freiburg i. Br., 24.–28. September 2007.

[33] It is true that Yama and Yamī are both of (demi-)divine descent. See ṚV 10.10.4cd *gandharvó aps₍ᵤ₎v áp₍ᵢ₎yā ca yóṣā sā́ no nā́bhiḥ paramáṃ jāmí tán nau* 'The Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman: t h e y are our origin, t h e y are the supreme kinship of us two.' Although, in this distich, it is Yama who refers — for reasons of his own — to their common (half-)heavenly nature, only Yamī dares to try and act it out, at least to some (semi-)celestial extent. True daughter of an Apsaras, she appears to feel sufficiently free from restraining rules and unbound by mor(t)al fetters, so as to challenge her law-abiding brother to an act of immor(t)ality.

　According to ṚV 10.14.5 and 10.17.1–2, Yama-and-Yamī's father is called *vívasvant-* and said to be mortal, while their mother, *saraṇyū́-*, is considered immortal. Cf. Maurice Bloomfield, "The Marriage of Saraṇyū, Tvaṣṭar's Daughter." J A O S 15, 1893, 172–188.

her to squeezy-squashy or creepy-crawly things, are formulated in distich 10.10.13cd:

> *anyá kíla tvā́ṃ* **kakṣ₍yèva** *yuktám*
> *pári ṣvajāte* **líbujeva** *vr̥kṣám*
> Another [woman] is likely to embrace you,[34]
> as the girth [encircles] the harnessed [horse],
> as the creeper [surrounds] the tree.[35]

Her idea of love-making is of a different kind. In 5a, she had evoked the intrauterine intimacy of twin embryos by reminding her brother of the fact that

> *gárbhe nú nau janitā́ dámpatī kar*

the creator has made [36] the two of us
husband-and-wife [37] already in the womb [38]

---

[34] The co-occurrence in this sentence of particle *kíla* and subjunctive [*pári*] *ṣvajāte* is quite revealing, I should think. It seems to suggest that the meanings of the two words may be understood as mutually determinative. Just as *kíla* cannot mean 'surely' if the verbal mood of *svajāte* does not allow for certainty, so nothing more than a certain degree of p r o b a b i l i t y could be expected from the verb-form, should the particle have to be taken in the sense of 'likely.'

[35] By their gender, the feminine nouns in these two comparisons, namely, *kakṣ₍yà̀-* 'girth' (R̥V 4x) and *líbujā-* 'creeper' (R̥V 2x), suit the other woman just as nicely as the masculines *yuktá-* 'harnessed' (R̥V 43x) and *vr̥kṣá-* 'tree' (R̥V 30x) are generically suitable for her prospective male 'partner in crime.' And so, all four of them are as closely fitting as the close-fitting embrace of the two.

[36] With the aorist injunctive *kar*, Yamī seems to intimate: You, Yama, will be aware of this fact (that the creator has made us husband-and-wife already in the womb of our mother, the water-woman), as much as I am. Surely, you only need to be reminded of our pre-natal wedlock, in case you do not remember it spontaneously yourself. But then you men are proverbially forgetful of weddings and the like.

[37] Literally, 'master' (*páti-* m.) and 'mistress' (*pátnī-* f.) of the 'house[hold]' (*dám-* m.[?]).

[38] In this single verse-line, Yamī nicely combines, for the sake of a would-be convincing argument, two well-known functions of *dhātár-* 'creator': [1] he provides the future wife [a] with a husband and [b] with a new home, [2] he places the embryo (*gárbha-*) into the uterus (*gárbha-*). See, for instance, ŚS 6.60.3cd *dhātā́syā́ agrúvai* **pátiṃ dádhātu** *pratikām₍yàm* 'Let Dhātar appoint to this unmarried woman a husband that is up to her desire,' ŚS 14.1.59c *dhātā́ vipaścít* **pátim** *asyái* **vivéda** 'Eloquently [speaking on her behalf] has Dhātar found a husband for this [woman],' ŚS 14.2.13ab *śivā́ nā́r[ī i]yám* **ástam ā́gann** *imáṃ dhātā́* **lokám** *asyái* **dideśa** 'Luckily has this woman come home. Dhātar has allotted to her this [household] world,' or R̥V 10.184.1d *dhātā́* **gárbhaṃ** **dadhātu** *te* 'Let Dhātar place a child [into] your [womb].'

of Yama-and-Yamī's mother, the 'water-woman,' *áp*ᵢ*yā … yóṣā*, as we are, no doubt, allowed to supply from verse 4c of the previous stanza.[39] Thus, a fluid element is suggested in which they may float even now.[40] And in 7ab, she states as a recent event that suddenly happened upon her:

> *yamásya mā yam*ᵢ*yàṃ kā́ma ā́gan*
> *samāné yónau sahaśéy*ᵢ*yāya*

Desire for Yama[41] has come to me, Yamī,[42]
to be lying there with [him] in the same lair,

Now, was it only for metrical reasons that the poet substituted *dhātā́* with *janitā́*, which by its prosodic character as an a n a p æ s t fits so much better into the break of this trimetrical verse than the disyllable? Or was it also the fact that *jani-* in *janitár-* evokes, if only by similarity of sound, *jáni-* 'wife' — almost as cogently as *-pati-* in the neighbouring *dámpati-* suggests, this time with r h y m e a n d r e a s o n, *páti-* 'husband'?

The evocative suggestion of both *jáni-* 'wife' and *páti-* 'husband' — standing (or, rather, l y i n g) as they are, half hidden under the cover of two hospitable words, whether cognate or not, so closely together in this line — is apt to u n d e r l i n e Yamī's more explicit statement to the effect that the twins were made husband-and-wife through being placed cheek by jowl within the same motherly womb.

[39] See ṚV 10.10.4c *gandharvó aps*ᵤ́*v áp*ᵢ*yā ca yóṣā* 'the Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman.' Cf. also *áp*ᵢ*yā … yóṣaṇā* in the next hymn, at ṚV 10.11.2a *rápad gandharvī́r áp*ᵢ*yā ca yóṣaṇā* 'If she, the Gandharvī and Water-Woman, babbles' as well as *áp*ᵢ*yā* alone, but again in the sense of 'water-woman,' or 'nymph,' or 'nixie,' and referring to one particular Apsaras, namely Urvaśī, at ṚV 10.95.10b *bhárantī me áp*ᵢ*yā kā́m*ᵢ*yāni*, for which line see below, Type A. Case Two: The Nymph's Evasiveness.

The plural *yóṣaṇās … ápyās*, on the other hand, as it occurs in ṚV 3.56.5c *ṛtā́varīr yóṣaṇās tisró ápyās* 'the three truthful water-women,' does not seem to refer to Apsarases. If we are to believe Sāyaṇa, the three sacrificial goddesses of the Āprī hymns: Iḷā, Bhāratī, Sarasvatī are referred to in this verse; cf. Geldner's note on 5cd, Der Rig-Veda ... übersetzt, I 403-404. As personification of an original river, Sarasvatī could have been called *ápyā- yóṣaṇā-*, if not actually *apsarás-*, with greater, more natural ease than any of the two other deifications.

In the same Book Three, Viśvāmitra addresses the rivers, *nad*ᵢ*yàs*, of the Punjab (principally Vipāś and Śutudrī, but also — by implication in the plural form of *nadī́-* f. — at least one more river of 'Pentapotamia') in the vocative *ṛtā́varīs* at ṚV 3.33.5ab *rámadhvam me vácase som*ᵢ*yā́ya ṛtā́varīr úpa muhūrtám évaiḥ* 'Stand still for an instant, you truthful ones, with your [rushing] movements, on behalf of my soma-like word.' Cf. also ṚV 4.18.6, in which stanza the waters, *ā́pas*, are compared to righteous and trustworthy women, *ṛtā́varīs*.

[40] Compare the 'floating,' ship-like movement of a speeding chariot as it is suggestively evoked by Yamī and Yama later on in this hymn, at ṚV 10.10.7d and 8d respectively, as well as my somewhat speculative comments on it in footnote 47.

in a bed that recalls the common womb in which they once were embedded side by side.

Excursus 2: The predominant meaning of root *śay / śi* (or *śay^i / śī*?) in the Ṛgveda is not only a stative 'to be lying' but, more specifically, a quasi-deictic 'to be lying t h e r e' ('daliegen'). Does the supposedly purposeful implication of root *śay$^{(i)}$* in the making of this hapax compound *saha-śéy̭ya-*[43] again indicate, as did quadruply repeated *yam* of the preceding line,[44] that

---

[41] In her desire *for* Yama, lovesick Yamī cannot but also desire *from* Yama what any woman may naturally desire from a man: the offspring that is meant to guarantee continuity. She clearly expresses, although in a somewhat roundabout way, her wish for a son from him at the very outset of their dialogue. Even before Yamī confesses her love, she refers to progeniture as Yama's obligation. In order to understand the procreative depth of her love, we only need to hark back to the words she directs at her brother with demanding urgency in the first stanza of this hymn, at 10.10.1cd *pitúr nápātam ā́ dadhīta vedhā́ ádhi kṣámi prataráṃ dī́dh̭yānaḥ* 'A purposeful man, if he [seriously] considers the future [of his family] on earth, should beget a grandson of his father (= *a son of his own*).'

In immediate answer to the spurning rejection pronounced by Yama at 10.10.2a *ná te sákhā sakh̭yáṃ vaṣ̭ṭ̭y etát* 'Your companion does not want that [immoral] companionship of yours,' Yamī renews her attempt at convincing him, now by resorting to divine authority, in distich 10.10.3ab *uśánti ghā té amŕ̥tāsa etád ékasya cit tyajásam márṱyasya* 'But they, the immortals, do want [just] that ([namely] this): *an heir* of the one and only mortal [on earth].'

[42] The quadruple repetition of **yam** in this line: **yam**ásya mā **yam**̭y**àṃ** kā́ma ā́gan is not only rhythmically quite effective — four sequences of the same three phonemes are each time separated from one another by a single vowel (…**á**s…**ā̀**…**í**…) — it also seems to suggest a twinning of the twins, their multiplication by another two. Yamī's love for Yama and her desire to reproduce with him is thus very strongly expressed indeed. And yet, for all her sisterly insistency, she fails to convince him even with this emphatically r e - r e - iterated reference to their *common root*.

At the same time, the stress Yamī lays on **yam**, the root that pairs her with Yama (although this pairing may be without etymological reason), ironically contradicts her own lack of self-restraint. Root **yam** means 'to hold, retain, control,' but to refrain from tempting her brother is not exactly the action she has chosen to exercise with him, her pro-(and retro-)spective husband, in preference to letting herself go.

By the fourfold use of **yam**, the poet — who should naturally be inclined to side with Yama — seems indirectly to admonish unrestrained Yamī: Get a grip on yourself.

[43] That implication would naturally disappear, were we to follow the covert suggestion made by Otto Böhtlingk & Rudolf Roth, PW VII 866 s.v. *sahaśéyya*, who seemed to think — or even wish — that we may have to read *sahaśép̭yāya* instead of *sahaśéy̭yāya*, if only the ṚV manuscripts allowed for it. To be sure, a reference to *śépa-* (ṚV 4x) could not be deemed entirely out of place in this intimate, would-be nuptial situation. Yet any direct mention of the delicate implement might prove too much of an indecency, one we should perhaps hesitate to expect from Yamī. Although, as daughter of an Apsaras, she can be thought to have inherited a fairly liberal share of shamelessness, still, as a woman, she must be granted a seemly measure of ladylike decorum.

[44] See my above footnote on 10.10.7a **yam**ásya mā **yam**̭y**àṃ** kā́ma ā́gan.

the poet prefers to take — in continued solidarity with Yama — an ironical distance to Yamī's all-too-serious intentions?

For the often rather markedly depreciatory sense of *śay*[(i)] 'to be lying there [in an awkward, or shameful, or downright abject kind of state],' see, in particular — since, in our context, the cohabitation of a *couple* is concerned — the only two *dual*-forms among a total number of 51 occurrences of this verb in the ṚV: [45] [**1**] at 4.33.3ab *púnar yé cakrúḥ pitárā yúvānā sánā yū́peva jaraṇā́ **śáyānā*** '[The Ṛbhus] who have rejuvenated their parents *lying there* old and decrepit in the likeness of sacrificial posts [fallen into disuse]' and [**2**] at 7.104.13cd *hánti rákṣo hánt$_i$y ā́sad vádantam ubháv índrasya prásitau **śayā́te*** ' He (Soma) strikes the noxious spirit, he strikes the one who speaks untruth. Both [of these two, being Soma-stricken,] are *lying there* [defeated] in Indra's snare.' [46]

Then, in verse 7d, Yamī gives provocative sting to her desire by expressing the curious wish of a woman apparently familiar with the horse-drawn Vedic vehicle, and intimately acquainted with its characteristic movement: [47]

---

[45] If all the 51 ṚV attestations of *śay*[(i)] were to be examined in their respective context, it could be shown beyond any reasonable doubt that in the great majority of cases the meaning of the verb is in fact 'to be lying there [in a rather unpleasant state].' A detailed examination of all the ṚV — and, possibly, other Saṃhitā — occurrences of this root may indeed be a worthwhile task for the future.

[46] The phrase *índrasya prásiti-* 'Indra's snare,' by the way, seems to forebode the ominous *indra-jālá-* 'Indra-net,' first mentioned as a compound in the Atharvaveda, at ŚS **8.8.8** *ayáṃ lokó jā́lam āsīc cakrásya maható mahā́n / ténāhám **indrajālén[a a]mū́ṃs** támasābhí dadhāmi sárvān* "This great world was the net of the great mighty one; by that net of Indra do I encircle all yon men with darkness" (Whitney, II 504). Compare the variant of this AV stanza at PS 16.29.8, where we find a less irregular second distich (of 8+11 syllables): *tenāhaṃ indrajālena tamasāmūn api dadhāmi sarvān*.

[47] The same familiarity and intimate acquaintance would be required if we were to understand Yamī's expression as physically as she seems to mean it. Sufficient momentum appears to be the necessary condition for that characteristic motion of the vehicle fully to set in. Only when the chariot runs *at top speed* would the rhythmical rocking-and-rolling, the gently-powerful swing-and-sway — in sharp contrast to the rough rumble-tumble of an ox-cart — naturally offer itself, I should (for lack of experience) imagine, to being compared with the involved movements of love-making.

Yama's reply to his sister's insistent appeal is revealing in this respect, because his direct command *yāhi tū́yam* 'go driving fast!' metaphorically refers to the chariot-like *speed* of sexual intercourse. See the distich ṚV 10.10.8cd, where he puts Yamī off with the discouraging request: *anyéna mád āhano yāhi tū́yaṃ téna ví vṛha ráth$_i$yeva cakrā́* 'With another [partner] than me, you voluptuous one, go driving fast! With him do the pulling to and fro in the manner of two chariot-wheels.'

Also, if I may add, the pair of reeling chariot-wheels suggests the connecting **rod**: axle-

ví cid vṛheva ráth₍ᵢ₎yeva cakrā́

May we pull to and fro[48] like the wheels[49] of a chariot![50]

Or does she perhaps use the optative, already half-resigned, as a potential mood, only considering the possibility: we *may* pull to and fro like the two wheels of a chariot? The possible could even be bordering on the unreal: we *might have* pulled to and fro ...[51] If Yama had fallen in with her, Yamī

---

tree and rotation axis about which the two bodies 'revolve.'

[48] The particular meaning 'to and fro' or 'back and forth' of preposition *ví* has not been sufficiently accounted for by Bertold Delbrück, who could have given it greater prominence in the pertinent section of his Altindische Syntax (Syntaktische Forschungen: V). Halle an der Saale: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1888; Reprint, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968 (= 1976), 464–467, where we find scarcely any good example for the meaning 'hin und her.'

The rare but sufficiently well-attested use of *ví* in the sense of 'to and fro' can be found — to quote just one instance that nicely fits in with our context — at ṚVKh 5.22.3cd **vā́santikam ⁱva téjanaṃ yábhyamānā ví namyate* 'like a reed in springtime, she bends back and forth when making love.' Cf. Karl Hoffmann, "Ved. *yabh*." Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik, herausgegeben von Johanna Narten, Band 2, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1976, 570–571. [For a different interpretation of this passage, see Leonid Kulikov, The Vedic -*ya*-presents. Proefschrift, Universiteit Leiden, 2001, (preprint edition) 366–368, s.v. *yabh*].

[49] Since the noun *cakrá-* (ṚV 56x) is predominantly neuter in Vedic — it is exclusively that in later Sanskrit — the form *cakrā́* (ṚV 9x) could theoretically be considered a neuter plural also in verses 7d & 8d of our hymn. However, we find *cakrā́* being used as an incontrovertible masculine dual in at least two other ṚV passages, namely, at 1.166.9d *á]kṣo vaś cakrā́ samáyā ví vāvṛte* 'Your [chariots'] axle is turning round right through the middle of your [chariots'] two wheels [O Maruts]' and at 8.5.29c *ubhā́ cakrā́ hiraṇyáyā* 'Both the wheels [of your (O Aśvins) chariot] are golden.' In any case, the present Yama-and-Yamī context strongly suggests the more natural alternative of taking *cakrā́* as a masculine dual at 10.10.7d & 8d, and understanding it not in the sense of 'many' but of only 'two chariot-wheels.'

[50] Cf. Geldner, III 135: "Wir wollen hin und her schieben wie die Wagenräder" and his note ad loc.: "*vi-vṛh* offenbar mit erotischem Nebensinn." Cf. also Renou, EVP XV 54, note on ṚV 2.23.13d, with reference to 10.10.7d & 8d: "'Arracher' les roues, en image érotique (argotique?) ... ('tirer ho! hisse!')." I very much doubt, however, if 'pulling it off' is the idea the poet had in mind when he made Yamī use this verbal compound.

[51] I imagine that Yamī could have replaced the present optative with its perfect homologue: **vavṛhyāva*. She could thus have produced, if only by leaving out the enclitic particle *cid*, the metrically fitting line-opening *ví vavṛhyāva*, had this 1st dual verb-form been easily available in her language. Although for the three immediately neighbouring positions of the optative paradigm — the 1st singular, the 2nd dual, and the 1st plural — forms like *jagamyām* (ṚV 1.116.25d), *jagm₍ᵢ₎yātam* (ṚV 6.50.10a) or *śuśrūyā́tam* (ṚV 5.74.10b = 8.73.5b), and *vavṛtyāma* (ṚV 7.27.5b) are attested, the whole of the Vedic language does not seem to provide a single representative of *any* verb for the position of the 1st dual.

Notice, however, Yamī's remarkable liking for the perfect optative. There are no less

seems to say, the two of them, both moved by the same desire, *kā́mamūtā*, would have been on a par with each other in an equally shared mutual motion like that of a two-wheeled racing-chariot rocking-and-rolling along at full speed. There would not have been any one-sided clinging — as of a girth to the horse, or of a creeper to the tree — between the twin lovers.

But, *alas*, the kind of love she imagined for the two of them (as something quite natural and therefore almost necessary) was never to be. Her regret and the disappointment not only with her brother, who proved too *square*, but also with herself, for failing to make him turn *round*, is the exact psychological moment at which she throws her *tantrum*.

Case Two: The Nymph's Evasiveness

The Apsaras Urvaśī, immortal prototype of the woman whose bite is mortal, meeting her grieved ex-lover King Purūravas, the exemplary male, who, foolishly sentimental and headstrong, is given to indulging in regret and refuses to let bygones be bygones, confronts him with the cruel fact that she has left him for good. We humans would have liked her to console him in his grief, but she only makes matters worse by ironically taking him back, well beyond their own time, to a remote mythical past, and comparing herself with the first of all dawns that ever r o s e — and f a d e d soon after. This is how she distances herself from him at ṚV 10.95.2b (= ŚB 11.5.1.7):

> *p r ā́ k r a m i ṣ a m   u ṣ á s ā m   a g r i y é v a*

> I have departed [as finally][52] as the foremost of dawns.[53]

---

than f o u r examples of it being used by her in this hymn, (**1**) at 1a *ó cit sákhāyaṁ sakh_iyā́* **vavṛtyā́m** 'And yet, I would have liked to make the companion revert to [acts of] companionship,' (**2**) at 3d *jányuḥ pátis tan_uvàm ā́* **viviśyāḥ** 'as husband you may have entered the body of [me as] your wife,' (**3**) at 7c, the line just preceding our verse, *jāyéva pátye tan_uvàṁ* **riricyā́m** 'as a wife [giving herself with abandon] to her husband would I have yielded my body [to you],' and, finally, (**4**) at 9b *sū́ryasya cákṣur múhur ún* **mimīyāt** 'she (your sister = I, Yamī) would have dimmed the Sun's Eye[sight] for a short spell' (for a span of time that is, to be sure, brief from a god's point of view, but long in human terms, so that the dimming could have lasted all the while it would have taken us to make love).

Yamī's strange predilection for the hypothetical mood has almost the nature of a 'double-hearted' *dohada-* [*kā́ma-*] "Schwangerschaftsgelüste." It seems vaguely to anticipate the unpredictable cravings characteristic of pregnancy, of that wished-for condition in which she would hopefully carry a child — or, maybe, t w i n children? — to be conceived from her beloved brother.

Though irretrievably lost and as far away as that rosy daybreak of the first beginning, she is also intriguingly near, seeming as palpable as the wind one might be tempted to try to catch. Yet, this tantalizing sense of her closeness is not given any time to develop into a feeling of some relief and comfort. Even the faintest of hopes that may have been caused to rise in his heart by the flitting impression of her proximity would have been thwarted as soon as it rose, nipped in the bud by the beautiful but inhuman words that follow in the same stanza, at verse 10.95.2d:

d u r ā p a n ā́ ***v ā́ t a   i v ā́ h á m*** *a s m i*

Difficult to catch — I [am] like the wind — I am.[54]

---

[52] It is the proper aspectual nature of the aorist that accounts for the final and definitive character of the verbal action expressed by *pra-kram* 'to depart.' The implied meaning of *prā́kramiṣam* could be explicated with the following paraphrase: 'I have definitely and irrevocably gone away [and will therefore never come home to you again, no matter how desparately you may wish me back].'

[53] This comparison of Urvaśī with primeval Uṣas evidently alludes to a mysterious mythological event that is also referred to — with the same verbal compound *pra-kram*, albeit in a different tense: imperfect *prā́kramat* in the place of aorist *prā́kramiṣam* — at ṚV 10.138.5cd *índrasya vájrād abibhed abhiśnáthaḥ* ***prā́kramac*** *chundhyū́r ájahād uṣā́ ánaḥ* 'She was afraid of Indra's club, of the [club's] prodding. The pretty one escaped. Uṣas abandoned the cart.' Does Urvaśī, by comparing herself with Dawn the primordial fugitive, indirectly confess to her fear? Has she been as apprehensive of Purūravas as Uṣas once was of Indra?

For a longer, though not less enigmatic, reference to this strangely suggestive Indra-striking-Uṣas (or, club-hitting-cart) myth, see ṚV 4.30.8−11 *etád ghéd utá vīrˌyàm índra cakártha páuṁsˌyam …*

[54] Cf. Paul Thieme, "Drei rigvedische Tierbezeichnungen." [Kuhn's] Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 79, 1965, 221f. n. 4 = Paul Thieme, Kleine Schriften. Teil 1 [Herausgegeben von Georg Buddruss]. (Glasenapp-Stiftung: Band 5,1). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1971 (= ²1984), 224 f. n. 4: "*vā́ta ivāhám* ist parenthetischer Nominalsatz: 'schwer einzuholen — ich [bin] gleichsam ein Wind — bin ich.' *durāpanā́* kann nicht mit *vā́ta* und *ahám* nicht mit *asmi* (dies würde eine gar nicht passende Emphase auf die Vorstellung 'ich' legen) konstruiert werden."

One may ask, however, why Urvaśī should not have laid some stress on *ahám*. If she had wanted to mark any contrast to the 'you' of Purūravas, she would have been free to emphasize her 'I,' and that emphasis would then have been "passend," namely, 'fitting' her own intention. See how appropriate the use of *ahám* proves to be in another verse of the same hymn, at ṚV 10.95.2a *kím etā́ vācā́ kṛṇavā távāhám* "What shall I (an immortal woman like me) do with that speech of yours (of a mortal man like you)?!" Cf. Eva Tichy, Der Konjunktiv und seine Nachbarkategorien. Studien zum indogermanischen Verbum, ausgehend von der älteren vedischen Prosa. Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2006, 272, Example 270: "(Was erwartest du, daß ich →) Was soll ich mit dieser Rede von dir anfangen?"

Thieme's interpretation of this line is attractive in our mind-reading context for yet another reason, one that he does not give in his article, but which he might have seen quite easily himself, since it would offer a good additional example of "Sprachmalerei." By splitting

We should expect the king to have given up all human hope by now. Instead, he obstinately insists on hoping against all hope that she might come back after all. As if to demonstrate his weakness and dependence on her, and, at the same time, the vanity of his expectation dictated by desire, he makes bold, encouraged by her comparisons, to offer a few of his own. We can feel his anxious eagerness to please when, in 10ab, he likens the nymph to lightning and reminds her (as if she needed to be reminded) — with the injunctive *dávidyot* used in its characteristic 'memorative' function[55] — of the fact that she disappeared *in a flash*. Distich 10.95.10ab describes this unwished-for fatal event, which befell him all of a sudden:

> *vidyún ná* yā́ *pátantī dávidyod*
> *bhárantī me áp*ᵢ*yā kā́m*ᵢ*yāni*

[She] who, rushing like a flash of lightning, flashed,
taking away[56] [all] things desirable to me,

---

the sentence *durāpanā́ asmi* up into two and inserting, right in the middle of it, the nominal phrase *vā́ta ivāhám* as a parenthetical clause, the poet may have intended to symbolize the fact that Urvaśī's r e a l existence as expressed in *asmi* is unattainably removed — by the intervention of her alluring but illusive wind-like being — from Purūravas' vain attempts at catching up with it.

[55] The only other occurrence of this rare injunctive in the ṚV is at 6.3.8b *vidyún ná davidyot* sᵤ*vébhiḥ śúṣmaiḥ* 'like lightning [Agni] flashes with his own [spirited] spirts.' Here, the injunctive is used, however, in a different function, namely, as a general present describing the god's characteristically flashing behaviour. For this function of the injunctive, the so-called 'extratemporal' attribution of a quality ("Beeigenschaftung"), especially to divine beings, see Karl Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda. Eine synchronische Funktionsuntersuchung, Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1967, 167 f. and *passim*.

And for the rare kind of semi-incisive cæsura falling in the middle of an uncompounded word, as here, at ṚV 6.3.8b, within the intensive verb-form *davidyot*, see the pertinent section (II. 2. Fourth Degree of Mid-Word Cæsura) of my recent paper "The Mid-Word Cæsura in the Ṛgveda: Degrees of Metrical Irregularity," a smaller part of which was read at the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, 14–19 July, 2003, Helsinki. A considerably extended version of that paper is presently being prepared for publication.

[56] Against all previous interpretations, Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda, 1967, 204, argues that *bhárantī* in b is to be understood not as 'bringing' but as 'carrying off.' For this meaning, Hoffmann, Injunktiv, 1967, 204 n. 187, refers to RV 10.87.16c *yó aghnyā́yā bhárati kṣīrám agne* 'He who takes away the milk of the cow, O Agni,' and RV 5.32.9b *éko dhánā bharate ápratītaḥ* 'He alone carries the prizes, unchallenged.'

Compare also the Indo-European agent-noun that belongs to the same root *bʰer*, namely *bʰôr (Greek φώρ, Latin *fūr*) 'the one who takes away; thief.' See Jochem Schindler, "L'apophonie des noms-racines Indo-Européens." Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique 67, Paris 1972, 36: "Noms d'agent (substantifs et adjectifs), souvent avec une nuance itérative."

[she,] the water-woman[57] [flashed].[58]

Excursus 3: Paul Thieme, "Sprachmalerei." KZ 86, 1972, 71 f. = Kleine Schriften II, 1995, 1001 f., thought that the *one* lacking syllable of this triṣṭubh line is missing immediately after the cæsura. It was, no doubt, ingenious of him to suggest a short pause in this place, symbolizing the momentary shock reaction triggered as if by real lightning — an instant of frightened surprise ("Schrecksekunde"). Or else, he suggested, we could consider the insertion of a "Schreckton" ā, sounded with indrawn breath, as it is referred to in Kena Upaniṣad 4.4 *yad etad vidyuto vyadyutad ā3 itīn ny amīmiṣad ā3 iti* "was da als des Blitzes [Licht] aufgeblitzt hat: [so daß man] 'ā' [sagt], was da die Augen hat schließen lassen: 'ā' " (Thieme). This, strictly speaking, 'extra-linguistic element,' as Thieme calls it, should, however, not be pronounced, as I may add for the sake of clarity. The insertion would have to be merely mental.

Most of us will certainly have to go a long way before we can hope to be allowed similar audacities of interpretation. And those among us who, for the time being, prefer to err on the safe side, turning a deaf ear to the fanciful suggestions of scholars so dangerously imaginative as Thieme, may feel free to take ṚV 10.95.10a as a typically catalectic triṣṭubh line, for example, which — in addition to its catalexis — suffers from the prosodical defect that the second syllable after the cæsura is heavy: *pátantī*. Hard pressed, we could even consider the possibility that *yā́* before the cæsura has swallowed the preposition *ā-/ā́* — either to be read with the following participle as *ā́pátantī*, or to be taken as standing 'in tmesis' with the injunctive as *ā́* …

---

[57] For *áp{i}yā* in the sense of *áp{i}yā yóṣā / yóṣaṇā* 'water-woman' or 'nymph' and referring to an Apsaras, see also ṚV 10.10.4c *gandharvó aps{u}v áp{i}yā ca yóṣā* 'the Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman' and ṚV 10.11.2a *rápad gandharvī́r áp{i}yā ca yóṣaṇā* 'If she, the Gandharvī and Water-Woman, babbles."

[58] Should it not strike us as curious that Urvaśī, although she is an Apsaras or 'Water-Woman' by nature, behaves as a flash of lightning? After all, lightning is a form of fire. And is fire not supposed to be in conflict with water? In the Vedic view of things, however, fire is as naturally in the waters as interspace among the trees, fighting spirit in racing-horses, milk in cows, courage in human hearts, sun in the sky, and soma on the mountain. And it is heavenly Varuṇa who placed fire into water. See ṚV 5.85.2 *vanéṣu v{i}y antárikṣaṃ tatāna vā́jam árvatsu páya usríyāsu / hṛtsú krátuṃ váruṇo aps{u}v agním diví sū́ryam adadhāt sómam ádrau.*

Cf. also ṚV 10.121.7ab *ā́po ha yád bṛhatī́r víśvam ā́yan gárbhaṃ dádhānā janáyantīr agním* 'When the high Waters had come to the All in order to conceive [it as] their embryo and give birth to [it as] Fire.' For the whole of stanza 7, but especially its irregular pāda c, see below, Type B: The Hypermetrical Line, Case Two: The Gods' Unique Existence.

dávidyot. In both these cases, *bhárantī* of the next line would then have to mean 'bringing,' rather than 'taking away,' as a result of which lines 10a and b could no longer refer to Urvaśī's sudden d e p a r t u r e — an undesirable result, if you ask me.

A few stanzas earlier, Urvaśī found herself serving as target of even three precipitated similes[59] aimed at her in quick — and almost simultaneous — succession. For this is how Purūravas eagerly drew and hastily shot three keen comparisons at the evasive object of his unrequited love in distich 10.95.3ab:

> *íṣur ná śriyá iṣudhér*
> *asanā́ goṣā́ḥ śatasā́ ná rámhiḥ*

[She left] like an arrow [drawn] from the quiver [and shot] for glory, [like] a missile gaining cattle, like a race gaining a hundred [head of cattle].

Oldenberg, GGA 152, 1890,[60] 422 with n. 1 = Kleine Schriften III, 1993,[61] 1929 with n. 1, argues — if argue is what he does — that these words "do not look like" they have anything to do with Urvaśī's sudden disappearance, and that they might rather refer to the quick reaction of Purūravas rushing forth and throwing himself upon "the unknown enemy, who seemed to intimate his presence" at the moment of crisis, because "different expressions" would fit the nymph better, says Oldenberg, words like *uṣás-* 'dawn' in 2b or, as we may add, *vā́ta-* 'wind' in 2d.

The fact, however, that the king uses the nouns *íṣu-* 'arrow,' *asanā́-* 'missile,' and *rámhi-* 'race' — all three of which significantly happen to be feminines,[62] and thus are of the same fair gender as *uṣás-* 'dawn' in 2b and

---

[59] The comparisons are usually considered to be only two. The noun *asanā́* is either taken with *íṣuḥ* and rendered as, for example, "Pfeilschuß" (Geldner, Der Rig-Veda III 299; cf. Geldner's remark, Vedische Studien I 266, that *íṣuḥ … asanā́* are a hendiadys ["Hendiadyoin"]), or with *rámhiḥ* and translated as, for instance, "das schnelle geschosz" (Ludwig, Der Rigveda II 634 § 991). But see Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv, 200: "Wie ein Pfeil ..., ein Geschoss ..., wie ein ... Rennen."

[60] Hermann Oldenberg, "[Book Review of] Richard Pischel und Karl Friedrich Geldner, Vedische Studien [I. Band], II. Heft, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1889." Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen 152, Göttingen, 1890.

[61] Hermann Oldenberg, Kleine Schriften. Teil 3. Herausgegeben von Hanns-Peter Schmidt. (Glasenapp-Stiftung: Band 34). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993.

[62] Among the eleven occurrences of *íṣu-* [m. / f.] in the R̥gveda, only one is clearly masculine, namely, *íṣus* at 8.77.7 *śatábradhna íṣus táva sahásraparṇa éka ít / yám indra cakr̥ṣé yújam*, where three adjectives and a pronoun agree to proclaim in unison the ex-

vidyút- 'lightning' in 10a — may be conditioned entirely by his calling, that of a warrior, and need not indicate at all that they describe his own velocity at the critical moment. To be sure, he *might* have shot up from their common couch with the swiftness of an arrow, he *might* have run forth with the rapid rush of a missile, and he *might* have chased after a vividly imagined enemy with the speed of a racehorse, however evanescent that enemy's presence may have been. But it is much more likely, and so it appears not only to me,[63] that Purūravas follows the line of thought Urvaśī has introduced in the preceding stanza with her two comparisons, which seem to have set the pace for him,[64] in that he, too, refers to the lightning-like suddenness of *her* disappearance from the scene, and not his own.

Oldenberg, op. cit. 422 = 1929 n. 1, suspected that "Ein Verbum, das die Frage [as to whether the similes of 3ab refer to Purūravas or to Urvaśī] entscheiden würde, scheint in der metrischen Lücke gestanden zu haben," in the metrical lacuna, that is, at the end of line 3a.

Ludwig, Der Rigveda V, 1883,[65] 517, imagined that a finite verb form may have been lost before *asanā́*, to wit, a rather implausible **asakta*.[66]

---

ceptional gender.

[63] See, for instance, Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv, 1967, 200: "In 3 a b setzt Purūravas den Vergleich von 2 d, daß Urvaśī 'schwer zu erlangen wie der Wind' sei, mit weiteren Beispielen fort." Cf. also Geldner's remark in Richard Pischel & Karl Friedrich Geldner, Vedische Studien. I. Band. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1889, 266: "Purūravas bestätigt die Worte der Urvaśī, dass sie schwer zu fangen sei wie der Wind, durch zwei weitere Gleichnisse." And K. F. Geldner, Der Rigveda in Auswahl, Zweiter Teil: Kommentar. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1909, 191: "Purūravas bestätigt zunächst die letzten Worte der U[rvaśī] und veranschaulicht ihre schnelle Flucht durch weitere Bilder."

[64] Her pace-setting pace proves almost too fast for him, as can be gathered from the fact that, in his attempt at keeping up with her, he tries to crowd no less than three (partly incomplete) similes into no more than two lines, and even has to skip a few syllables at the right side of the first line, in order not to be left behind in the second.

For an attempt at a deeper understanding of the skipping, one that is poetically better justified and scholarly more satisfying, see further below — towards the end of this section (Type I: The Catalectic Line, Case 2: The Nymph's Evasiveness) — my mind-reading efforts in the last two paragraphs, starting with: "In causing a syntactically necessary word to disappear from the scene ..."

[65] Alfred Ludwig, Der Rigveda oder Die heiligen Hymnen der Brāhmana. Fünfter Band: Commentar zur Rigveda-Übersetzung. II. Teil. Prag: F. Tempsky / Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1883.

[66] The 3rd person middle of the root-(and not yet *s-*)aorist of *saj / sañj* occurs only once in the ṚV, in a verse that contains also a form of *iṣudhí-* 'quiver,' namely, at 1.33.3a *ní sárvasena iṣudhī́m̐r asakta* "Panoplied, he has hung his quivers into [position] down [his back]." In this triṣṭubh line, the accusative plural *iṣudhī́n* occupies exactly the same metrical position after a late cæsura as the ablative/genitive singular *iṣudhés* at 10.95.3a. It seems that this fact alone has inspired Ludwig to supplement *asakta* also here. However, even if *asakta* should be given the passive meaning 'has been hung,' it would not fit into our verse, either by syntax or by semantics, since only a q u i v e r can be hung, not an arrow,

Much luckier than Ludwig's guess was that of Pischel, Vedische Studien I, 1889, 17, who completed this defective line in the following imaginative way:

*íṣur ná śriyá iṣudhér [**a s ā n ā́**]*

[She left] like an arrow [drawn] from the quiver
[and **shot**] for glory.[67]

The conjecture is ingenious because this passive participle of the root-aorist[68] is so similar in appearance to the following feminine noun (**asānā́ ≈ asanā́*) that its disappearance can be explained as being brought about by 'word haplology,' as Pischel's friend Geldner could have done many years later when he had invented the term *Worthaplologie*.[69] Alternative words that would function as possible stopgaps are other metrically fitting verbal adjectives, such as *prásūtā*[70] or *vísṛṣṭā*.[71] But Pischel's **asānā́* is certainly the luckiest guess.

Oldenberg, on the other hand, gave up his earlier idea, expressed in the 1890 book review (GGA 152, 422 n. 1) quoted above, that a verb seems to have stood in the metrical lacuna of 3a, naturally presupposing that this is a triṣṭubh line like almost all the other 72 (18x4) verses of our hymn, and by 1912, Noten II 305, had come to assume that maybe nothing was lost in 3a: "[a]usgefallen wird nichts sein," now considering this line of eight syllables a complete gāyatrī pāda.

It happens to be that, I agree, but only *after* a word had disappeared did 3a become a metrically complete octosyllabic line. What matters more

---

and an arrow is shot, not hung.

[67] Pischel, loc. cit.: "Wie ein Pfeil, der aus dem Köcher [geworfen wird] zum Glück." I should think it rather unlucky, though, if the arrow were 'thrown' directly from the quiver. An archer would not throw arrows, I suppose, even when fighting at close quarters, or *muṣṭāmuṣṭí*. Only in case he took to flight, and wanted to get rid of some weight, would he be throwing arrows, I guess.

[68] Although, in the ṚV, we find only one form of the aorist of root *as* (*ásyati*) 'to throw, to shoot,' viz. the root-aorist injunctive *asan* at 4.3.11a *ṛtén[a á]driṃ vᵢ̯y àsan bhidántaḥ* 'With truth they (the Aṅgiras) throw the rock asunder, splitting it [into two]' — against 24 forms of the class IV present *ásya-*, and two of the perfect, i. e. *parā́sa* at 4.18.8a and *vᵢ̯y ā̀sa* at 7.20.3c — the passive participle of the root-aorist could have been formed as easily as the once-occurring perfect participle -*asta*- in the compound *vᵢ̯yàstaḥ* at 1.32.7d.

[69] Karl [Friedrich] Geldner, "Die Worthaplologie im Rigveda." Festgabe Adolf Kaegi, von Schülern und Freunden dargebracht ... Frauenfeld: 1919, 102–106.

[70] See, for example, ṚV 6.75.11b *patati prásūtā* 'it (the arrow) flies sent forth.'

[71] See, for instance, ŚS 2.3.6d *ārā́d vísṛṣṭā íṣavaḥ patantu rakṣásām* "far away let the discharged arrows of the demoniacs fly" (Whitney).

than metrics here is the fact that the verse is still defective — incomplete in its meaning as well as syntax. A word is definitely missing. And if a word, it must be a word of three syllables, preferably a verbal adjective. The trisyllabic *asāná* suggested by Pischel would be ideal. Not so much because its disappearance can conveniently be explained by the exegete using the technical term 'word haplology' more or less mechanically,[72] but, rather, because *asāná* qualifying *íṣuḥ* — in parallel to *goṣáḥ* qualifying *asanā́*, and to *śatasáḥ* qualifying *rámhiḥ* — may have been dropped on purpose by the poet himself for the very good reason that adjective *asāná* is almost identical in form with the following substantive *asanā́*, and that therefore it can be left out — if, and only if, through the empty space it leaves behind as its shadow a surplus of meaning is apt to be obtained.[73]

In causing a syntactically necessary word to disappear from the scene — and making its absence acutely felt in proportion to its necessary presence — the poet may have intended to convey a meaning that the word, had it remained, could not have expressed. An arrow that has been shot, *íṣur … *asāná*, is certainly flying fast. But an arrow that is **not** said to have been *shot* — because that would take too much time, the time of three syllables — appears to be faster: **un**shot, it has already flown away, far from the quiver, skipping all the intermediary actions that need to be performed by an archer — with mental speed, *manojavéna*.[74]

Mental speed is required in order to catch up with the meaning the poet had in mind[75] when he *cut* this line *short*. The gāyatrī Oldenberg saw is a *short cut* to the triṣṭubh we others have to see. What should have taken ele-

---

72   Let us try always to keep in mind what Louis Renou, Études védiques et pāṇinéennes, Tome I, Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955, 39, judiciously said about this supposedly convenient device of Vedic exegesis: "La 'Worthaplologie,' si elle ne tombe pas à l'état d'un simple expédient, sera utile pour expliquer quelques formules." That device will prove useful in every discussion of this kind, without degenerating into a 'simple expedient,' if we heed the French scholar's implicit warning.

73   The creation of a meaning that exceeds the immediate and most obvious sense, even if the excess may at first seem nonsensical, is what poetry is all about. Nothing more than *litteral* reading, and nothing less than *spirited* understanding are required if we wish to catch up with that poetical surplus.

74   *purástād vái prajñā́ purástān manojaváḥ* (ŚB 3.7.1.27).

75   That there are different degrees of mental speed in poets (as well as in scholars) is acutely pointed out in the distich ṚV 10.71.7ab *akṣaṇvántaḥ kárṇavantaḥ **sákhāyo manojavéṣᵤv ásamā** babhūvuḥ* '[Although] they are [all equally] provided with eyes and ears, the [poet-]companions have turned out to be unequal in [their acts of] mental swiftness (to wit, in their varying responses to the challenge of competitive poetical production).'

ven metrical units took only eight. And so, the hendecasyllabic verse came to an end before its proper time. Not only arrow-swiftness is expressed by the presence of the substantive *íṣuḥ*, but also more-than-arrow-swift disappearance of evasive Urvaśī is pictorially conveyed by the absence of the adjective **asā́nā́*.

TYPE B: THE HYPERMETRICAL LINE

Simply to say of a given hypermetrical line that it is too long, by two, or three, or more syllables, falls short — by just as many prosodic units — of an adequate answer to the question as to *why* it is too long.

In the next sections, we will discuss two cases of hypermetricality in certain triṣṭubh stanzas of the 10th maṇḍala, namely, at ṚV 10.10.11–12 and 10.121.7. The aberrant verses found in these contexts are clearly meant to be triṣṭubh pādas. But they seem to run wild somewhere along the line, and end up counting more than the regular number of eleven syllables — fourteen in the first, thirteen in the second case.

Case One: The Twin Brother's Reluctance

In two successive stanzas of the same hymn that has already provided us with an example of intended catalexis,[76] the primordial twins Yama and Yamī exchange the following words at ṚV 10.10.11cd (= ŚS 18.1.12cd) and ṚV 10.10.12ab (= ŚS 18.1.14ab):

kā́mamūtā baháv etád rapāmi
tanúvà me tanúvàṁ sám pipṛgdhi

ná vā́ u te tanúvà tanúvàṁ sám papṛcyām
pāpám āhur yáḥ svásāraṁ nigáchāt

---

76 See above, Type A: The Catalectic Line, Case One: The Twin Sister's Tantrum.

[Yamī:] Moved by desire, I keep babbling[77] that ([namely] this):[78]
Do commingle your body with my body!

[Yama:] No, I would never commingle my body with your body.[79]
Evil they call [him] who should come down on his sister.

Verse 12a is too long by three syllables,[80] and yet, for all its being hypermetrical, it has to be considered a triṣṭubh line, though of a rare type. If

---

[77] Literally, *bahú … rapāmi* means 'I babble much,' the adverb 'much' taken in the iterative sense of 'repeatedly.' According to Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda, 902 s.v., the neuter *bahú* is used adverbially in three ṚV passages: (1) at 2.24.4d **bahú sākáṁ sisicur útsam udríṇam**, (2) at 10.10.11c *kámamūtā* **bah̯v etád rapāmi**, and (3) at 10.34.13b *vitté ramasva* **bahú mányamānaḥ**. However, in the third sentence — if it is understood as meaning 'Be quietly contented [O gambler!] with what you have got, thinking [it] (to be) much.' — *bahú* is an adjective, not an adverb, and functions as a predicate qualifying *vittám*, the implied object of 'thinking.' Similarly, *bahú* in the first sentence may qualify an unexpressed *udakám* (ṚV 8x) suggested by *udrín*- (ṚV 7x) — and by *útsa*- (ṚV 29x) as well — so that we could translate 2.24.4d '[acting] together, they have poured much [water] from the [water-]well rich-in-water.' (Notice the rare double accusative construction [of vessel and liquid, both treated as object of the action] with *sec/sic* 'to pour'!) Only in our passage, at 10.10.11c, does it seem necessary to take *bahú* in an adverbial sense.

[78] The demonstrative pronoun *etád* appears to have a split (or double) reference here. On the one hand, as 'that' it anaphorically refers back to what was meant by the same *etád* in verse 2a *ná te sákhā sakh̯yáṃ vaṣṭ̯y* **etát** 'Your companion does not want that [immoral] companionship of yours [O Yamī].' On the other hand, as 'this' it cataphorically refers forward to the following request ('Do commingle your body with my body₁'), which explicitly states, for clarity's sake, the contents of 'that.'

A similar ambiguity of reference was already pointed out above, in my footnote 32, with regard to *etád* at 3ab *uśánti ghā té amṛtāsa* **etád** *ékasya cit tyajásam márt̯yasya* 'They, the Immortals, do want [just] *that* ([namely] *this*): an heir of the one and only mortal [on earth].' [And love-making with procreative intention is exactly the kind of companionship that I, Yamī, wish to have with you, Yama.]

[79] Cf. Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda, 1967, 47: "nicht würde ich meinen Leib mit deinem vereinen" and n. 8: "Der Satz ist wohl irreal, da etwa der Gedanke zu ergänzen ist "wenn das alles so wäre, wie du sagst"." Or, as I should prefer to formulate: "I would not *have united* my body with your body [*even if* what you say were true]."

[80] Elizarenkova, Language and Style, 1995, 117, thinks that there is only *one* superfluous syllable in this line — she doesn't say where exactly it is *de trop* — and also that "in the middle of the *pāda*, between the cæsura after the fourth syllable and the cadence, the line contains [four] exclusively long syllables." The line, however, is said to be "heavy and slow" only because she decides to read "*tanvà tanvàm*" against the overwhelming practice of the Ṛgveda itself: Out of a total number of **153** occurrences of case-forms in *tanv-*`, all but **four** are to be read as *tan̯v-*. The extremely rare sound sequence *tanv-*` is warranted by the metre only in the following exceptional cases: [1] *tanvàm* in one gāyatrī line, at 8.76.12c *índrāt pári tanvàm mame*, and [2] *tanvàs* in three triṣṭubh pādas: [a] at 1.162.20b *mā́ svádhitis tanvà ā́ tiṣṭhipat te*, [b] at 10.51.2b *yó me tanvò bahudhā́ paryápaśyat*, and [c] at 10.51.4c *tásya me tanvò bahudhā́ níviṣṭāḥ*. Also, it is to

we are to describe the 'defect' in technical terms, we have to say that it lies in a repeated *anapæst* after the cæsura. Now, it would have been an easily accessible expedient for the poet to draw on the device of *Worthaplologie* — rediscovered by Geldner, Festgabe Adolf Kaegi, 1919, 102ff., but invented as well as abundantly used by the Vedic poets themselves — and produce a regular triṣṭubh line by simply reading: *ná vā́ u te tan₍ᵤ₎vā̀ sám papṛcyā́m**, provided metrical regularity had been the aim ranking highest in the poet's mind.

Or else, in a less likely case, the poet could, hypothetically, have left out *vā́ u*, as Arnold, ever eager to reduce irregularities to normalcy, suggested in his Vedic Metre, 1905, 318 ad 10.10: "12a requires emendation: perhaps *ná te tanvàm ‖ tanúā*."[81] Klein, The Particle *u*, 1978,[82] 156 f., approves of this 'emendation,' calls it even "felicitous," not only because it restores a metrically correct line, "but also on structural grounds, for it would make Yama's rejection of Yamī's command to him to make love with her a simple restatement in which her very words (with changes only in the pronoun and the verbal mood) are hurled back at her unembellished."

It may be pointed out, however, that the changes do not only affect the enclitic pronoun: *me* versus *te*, and the verbal mood: -*dhi* (imperative) vs. -*yā́m* (optative),[83] but also the tense: *pipṛc*- (present) vs. *papṛc*- (perfect).[84]

---

[81] be noticed that in our hymn, ṚV 10.10, there occur no less than four indisputably trisyllabic case-forms of *tan₍ᵤ₎v*- before line 12a: three times *tan₍ᵤ₎vàm* at 3d, 7c, 11d, and once *tan₍ᵤ₎vā̀* at 11d.

[81] Arnold's "perhaps," which expresses possibility, seems to detract something from the necessity of emendation as it is alleged with "requires."

[82] Jared S. Klein, The Particle *u* in the Rigveda. A Synchronic and Diachronic Study. (Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung, Ergänzungshefte: Nr. 27). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978.

[83] That the *person* of the verb (2nd vs. 1st) is equally affected should go without saying.

[84] The present-stem ***pipṛc***- is attested once again in the plural form *pipṛkta* at ṚV 3.54.21b *mádhvā devā óṣadhīḥ sám pipṛkta* ('Do mix, you heavenly ones, the herbs with honey'), whereas another four occurrences of the perfect-stem ***papṛc***- can be counted in the ṚV: *papṛcānásas* at 1.141.6b, *papṛcāsi* at 1.141.11b, *papṛcyāt* at 4.24.5c, and *papṛcānásya* at 9.74.9a.

Our poet may have had very good reasons for substituting ***pipṛc***- with ***papṛc***-. While any wished-for action of 'mixing' expressed in the present optative *pipṛcyām would refer to a *real* possibility, the same action, if expressed in the perfect optative *papṛcyām*, could be understood as referring to an *unreal* one. By preferring, in his negative answer to Yamī's request, the *perfect* to the present optative, Yama seems to deny the very possibility of commingling with her.

Also, and not less suggestively, the verb-form ***papṛcyā́m***, by preluding all five phonemes of the immediately following adjective ***pāpám***, ominously foreshadows the 'evil' character of a man who would wish to 'come down upon' his sister.

And, above all, the fact that Yama's response is in the negative, that the particle expressive of negation is emphasized by *vái* — in much the same way as *ná* is stressed by *evá* in verse 13b[85] — and that *u* is not a redundant little particle, nor solely a sentence connective, but marks opposition,[86] here as in so many other contexts,[87] all this is highly significant. Now, to consider these changes unimportant or merely ornamental, and to think that some of them may as well be cancelled, as Arnold suggested, or to call, as Klein did, Yama's rejection "a simple restatement" of Yamī's words "hurled back at her unembellished" strikes me as just so many ways of not exactly measuring up to the exacting challenge of this highly poetical text.

Against the 'emendation' proposed by Arnold, and greeted with approval by Klein, yet another objection — one of a more poetological nature — may be raised: The sound sequence **n a v ā u t** as it happens to occur before the cæsura of line 12a up to and including the *t* of *te* represents — if we, for once, disregard the intonation — a complete rearrangement, or, technically speaking, permutation, of the phonemes **t a n u v ā** in the exactly parallel

---

[85] For a fittingly fitful discussion of this and the defective verse preceding it, see above, Type A: The Catalectic Line, Case One: The Twin Sister's Tantrum.

[86] However slight the oppositional sense of this particle may sometimes seem, it can always be felt, I think, and often rather strongly. See, for instance, how *u* (*ū*) works in other places of our hymn alone, (1) at 1a *ó* (*ā́ u*) *cit sákhāyaṁ sakh*ⁱ*yā́ vavṛtyām* [Yamī, speaking with (anticipated) regret and resignation:] 'And yet, I would have liked to make the companion turn towards [acts of] companionship,' (2) in distich 6cd *bṛhán mitrásya váruṇasya dhā́ma kád u brava āhano víc*ⁱ*yā nṛ́n* [Yama:] '[Towering sky-]high is Mitra's and Varuṇa's Law. Should you, voluptuous one, in opposition [to that Law], speak to [us] men in [such] a perverse way,' or (3) at 14ab *anyám ū́ ṣú tvám yam*ⁱ*y anyá u tvā́m pári ṣvajāte líbujeva vṛkṣám* 'You, O Yamī, [will] tightly [embrace] another [partner than me] — and, in return, another will [tightly] embrace you — as a creeper (*líbujā-* **f.**) [embraces] a tree (*vṛkṣá-* **m.**).'

[87] In the ṚV, we find three comparable particle sequences starting with *ná*. They are (1) *nó* — to be read as [*ná u*] — 2x, (2) *ná vái* 3x, (3) *ná vā́ u* 6x. Klein, The Particle *u* in the Rigveda, 1978, 156, argues: "The occurrence of both *vaí* and *vā́ u* in iterative sequences involving negatives is significant, since *u* alone occurs only twice following *ná* in the Rigveda ... The frequency of both *vaí* and *vā́ u* following negatives is therefore most easily explained by assuming that *vā́ u* is merely a formulaic variant of *vaí* in which *u* has no value. The presence of *vā́ u* following *ná* is thus a consequence of the frequency of *vaí* in this position."

My argument would run quite differently: Since *ná vā́ u* (6x) is twice as frequent as *ná vái* (3x), why should we not consider that sequence the original one, of which *nó* [= *ná u*] (2x) would then be the abbreviated, less emphatic variant? And is it not significant that *u*-less *ná vái*, two times out of three, occurs before a vowel, at ṚV 2.33.10d *ná vā́ ójīyo rud*ⁱ*ra tvád asti* and at ṚV 10.146.5a *ná vā́ araṇyānír hanti*, whereas *ná vā́ u* stands before a consonant in five out of six occurrences? (The only exception is ṚV 1.162.21a *ná vā́ u etán mriyase ná riṣyasi* '[Although dissected] in this [sacrificial] way, you do, however, not die, nor do you come to harm [O horse].')

position of line 11d. Could this phonemic parallelism possibly be nothing more than a lucky but negligeable coincidence? Should it really not exceed a casual and irrelevant accident which may safely be overlooked when it comes to the serious business of restoring metrical regularity?

Even if such a thing as meaning independent of words did exist, would that hypothetical meaning not be affected by the deletion of the two syllables *vā́ u* — which happen to be, although they are only particles, two entire words with a meaning of their own? The least that can be said is this: It would mean wilfully to reduce the poetic quality of our poem, if the anagrammatic variation of ***t a n u v ā*** were to be destroyed by deleting half of the sequence ***n a v ā u t***, as Arnold thought was required.[88]

Once the irregularity is stated in metrical terms, we have to say more than just *how* it came about. That is the easier part. In our case, we are able to spot the culprit at once and detect the word that is responsible for the surplus of syllables in this line. It must be *tan_ú_vàm*, the second and seemingly redundant *anapæst* after the cæsura. But we should also try, and this is the more arduous task, to find out the reason *why* the poet may have repeated this word from the previous pāda, and *why* in this particular position.

In order to see at a glance, with truly visual intuition, the *reason* for the repetition together with the *way* it could have been realized in the mind of the poet as well as of those who memorized his poem, it might be convenient graphically to present the two lines, 11d and 12a, in the following somewhat unconventional manner:

t a n _ú_ v ā̀ m e   t a n _ú_ v à ṁ   s á m   p i p ṛ g d h i

n á   v ā́   u   t e   t a n _ú_ v ā̀

t a n _ú_ v à ṁ   s á m   p a p ṛ c y ā m

Let us imagine for a moment that Yama had yielded to Yamī's instigation and given the positive answer: Yes, I would gladly have united with you. And that the poet had succinctly expressed this hypothetical surrender to Yamī, leaving the keyword *tan_ú_vàm* out of Yama's reply and formulating:

---

[88] Even less satisfying than the 'emendation' suggested by the metrician — which I felt it was necessary to argue against with a pinch of acerbity in the preceding sections — is the remark made by van Nooten and Holland, Rig Veda, 1994, 652 (Metrical Notes), on 10.10.12a: "Tr[iṣṭubh] 14 syllables. The repetition of part of the preceding line accounts for this irregularity." Exactly which part, we would like to know, is repeated? And what, if I may ask, accounts for the repetition itself? Or shouldn't that also be accounted for?

nā́ vā́ u te tan_uvā̀ sám papṛcyām "As a *man* [and not as your brother] could I have commingled with you". Would he by this syntactical trick not have suggested — apart from producing an impeccable triṣṭubh line — that Yama's body, in anticipation of the act, is already absorbed by hers, and that it has lost its own independent identity?

But this is not what happens. Yama, far from complying with his sister's urgent demand, answers emphatically in the negative: No, not at all would I be willing to do what you ask of me. Preferring to sin against the metre — rather than against [his idea of] the Law — he goes out of his way to affirm the independence of his bodily self. Instead of causing it to disappear for merely *metrical* reasons, he makes its presence felt all the more strongly by stepping, with a vengeance, outside the line, and forcefully putting his foot down, on *moral* grounds.[89]

And if he keeps his sister — with another extremity of his body — at arm's length, that length has the exact metrical measure of an *anapæst*.

Case Two: The Gods' Unique Existence

The second hypermetrical line to be taken up for discussion occurs in a stanza that is repeated with some significant variations in almost all the other Saṁhitās. It is the triṣṭubh ṚV 10.121.7 (= VSM 27.25 ≈ MS 2.13.23:169.2–3 ≈ KS 40.1:135.13–14 ≈ TS 4.1.8.5–6):[90]

> *ā́po ha yád bṛhatī́r víśvam ā́yan*
> *gárbhaṃ dádhānā janáyantīr agním*
> ***táto devā́nāṃ sám avartatā́sur ékaḥ***
> *kásmai devā́ya havíṣā vidhema*

When the high Waters had come to the All,[91]

---

89 Let us suppose, for the frivolous fun of it, that the foot he puts down on the ground is his right and more righteous one.

90 MS=KS=TS read *yán mahatī́r* for *yád bṛhatī́r* in pāda a, TS reads *dákṣaṃ* for *gárbhaṃ* in b, MS=KS=TS have *nír avartata* instead of *sám avartata* in c, and MS drops the metrically redundant *ékaḥ* at the end of the line. For this normalizing athetesis of the last and hypermetrical word by the author of MS 2.13.23, see below.

91 Although *ā́yan* — or, rather, *ā-ā́yan*, as we may have to understand (in defiance of the Pada-Pāṭha interpretation) these two syllables, without, however, scanning them as three — is an imperfect in form, it can be taken as pluperfect in meaning: '[when = after] they had come,' because the action of c o m i n g expressed in the subordinate *yád*-clause logically precedes that of f o r m i n g (*sám avartata*) as it is referred to in the main sentence.

in order to conceive [it as] their embryo and give birth to [it as] Fire,[92] then the existence of the gods[93] formed[94] from that[95] as the only one. To which God could[96] we give a sufficient share[97] with our oblation?[98]

---

[92] For the rare but undeniable *final* meaning of the present participle, as well as the limiting conditions of its possibility in Vedic texts — with a detailed discussion of 26 examples chosen from ṚV (11), ŚS (13), BĀU (1) and ŚvetU (1) — see Werner Knobl, "Studies on the Present Participle: 1. The Present Participle Expressive of Intentionality." Journal of Indological Studies 16 & 17, Kyoto University, Graduate School of Letters, Department of Indological Studies, 2004/2005, 65–108.

[93] Cf. Bernfried Schlerath, "Altindisch *asu-*, Awestisch *ahu-* und ähnlich klingende Wörter." Pratidānam. Indian, Iranian and Indo-European Studies Presented to Franciscus Bernardus Jacobus Kuiper on His Sixtieth Birthday. Edited by J. C. Heesterman, G. H. Schokker, V. I. Subramoniam. (Janua Linguarum, Series Maior: 34). The Hague / Paris: Mouton, 1968, 142–153; 147 = Bernfried Schlerath, Kleine Schriften, Band II. Dettelbach: J. H. Röll, 2000 [2001], 483–496; 489: "Der *éka- ásu-* der Götter: das sind natürlich die Götter selbst; *éka- ásu-* ist nicht eine Art Kollektivseele, sondern heißt, daß die Götter nach der Urmaterie allein auf der Welt waren. Man könnte an dieser Stelle keinesfalls *ásu-* durch *prāṇá-* ersetzen. RV 10, 121, 7 läßt eher an "Existenz" als an "Lebenshauch" denken."

[94] The same compounded finite verb-form *sám avartata* occurs also in the first distich of this hymn: ṚV 10.121.1ab *hiraṇyagarbháḥ sám avartatā́gre bhūtásya jātáḥ pátir éka āsīt* 'In the beginning, a golden embryo formed. Once born, it existed as the only owner of being.' Here, too, *sám avartata* co-occurs (1) with *éka-* 'one' and (2) with *gárbha-* 'embryo,' the second member — notice the compositional shift of accent to the suffix! — in the karmadhāraya *hiraṇya-garbhá-*.

Apart from the two occurrences in our hymn, *sám avartata* is further attested only in two other cosmogonic contexts, at ṚV 10.90.14b *śīrṣṇó dyáuḥ sám avartata* 'From the head [of *púruṣa-*, the giant primordial man] the sky formed' and at ṚV 10.129.4a *kā́mas tád ágre sám avartatā́dhi* 'In the beginning, Desire formed upon that [viz. upon the Germ (*ābhú*) which had been born (*ajāyata*) as the only one (*ékam*) by the power of Heat (*tápasas … mahinā́*); cf. 3cd].'

[95] The anaphoric demonstrative *tátas* corresponds to the conjunction (and relative pronoun) *yád*, but it may also refer back to *víśvam / gárbham / agním*. I have, therefore, translated it twice: once as "then" (viz. "When the Waters had come") and again as "from that" (viz. "the All" / "their embryo" / "Fire"). Thus, the pronoun serves a double purpose: it sheds an illuminating light in two different directions, *dehalī-dīpa-nyāyena*.

[96] For the meaning 'could' of the optative in interrogative sentences, see Delbrück, Altindische Syntax, 1968 (= 1976), 336 f. § 190: Der Optativ in Fragesätzen; esp. 336: ṚV 10.121.1d "Welchem Gott könnten wir mit Opfer dienen."

[97] For the original meaning 'give a share to' of secondary root *vidh*, see Paul Thieme, Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda. (Hallische Monographien: Nr. 7). Halle / Saale: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1949, 36 f.; esp. 37: ṚV 10.121.1d "Welchem Gott sollen wir durch Opferguß zuteilen."

For the more specific meaning 'give a sufficient share to, satisfy,' see Karl Hoffmann, Die Sprache 15, 1969, 1 ff. = K. H., Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik, herausgegeben von Johanna Narten, Band 1, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1975, 238 ff.; esp. 239 n. 4: ṚV 10.121.1d "wer ist der Gott, den wir mit Opferguß zufriedenstellen könnten."

[98] Or else, 'Who is the God that we may be able to satisfy with our oblation?'

[**1**] Oldenberg, Prolegomena, 1888, 77, lists line c of this stanza as an example for the thirteen-syllable type of the triṣṭubh pāda. In Prolegomena 76, he thinks we may venture with confidence to judge this verse together with similar verses in which the trochaic cadence was extended by another trochee as resulting from "eine Nachlässigkeit, die nicht das mindeste Befremdende hat." On the contrary, this alleged negligence is rather *apt* to estrange, and before it *does* estrange, it should make us think twice.[99]

[**2**] Lanman, Sanskrit Reader, Part III, 1889,[100] [393]a, in a note to Part I, 1884, 92, line 17 = MS 2.13.23:169.3 — the MS being the only Saṁhitā that does not read *ékaḥ* at the end of line c — remarks, with respect to the reading of ṚV, VS, TS [and KS[101]]: "The athetesis of the hypermetric **ékaḥ**, made by Bollensen, *Orient und Occident*, ii. 485 (1864), and again by Grassmann [Wörterbuch (1875)[102]], is here beautifully confirmed [!] by the MS."

The fact that in the MS the supernumerary *ékas* was dropped, apparently *metrī caussā*, while it remained untouched in the other Saṁhitās, only shows that as early as in the Vedic age well-intentioned *Verschlimmbesserungen* were popular with scholars. And if anything is "beautifully confirmed," it is the ubiquitous tendency towards normalization. However, normalcy is not exactly uppermost in the poet's mind, nor should it be so in the poet's mind-reader's mind.

[**3**] Arnold, Vedic Metre, 1905, 324 ad loc., qualifies line 7a as a "hypersyllabic verse." Of hypersyllabic verses in general, he says, op. cit. 208 f. § 224, that they "are usually formed by an extension of the rhythm of the cadence." Trying to go beyond a mere description of how the irregularity was brought about, he affirms, op. cit. 102 § 152 (i): "Where a verse includes too many syllables it is a ready method to throw out some word as having been added as an aid to intelligence or devotion," and refers to the *ékas* of our line as one of some twenty "probable instances of glosses or other additions

---

[99] As it happens, Oldenberg himself seems to have had, if not clearly expressed, second thoughts about this alleged negligence; see below, under [4].

[100] Charles Rockwell Lanman, A Sanskrit Reader: With Vocabulary and Notes. 1st Edition [1884: Part I. Text, Part II. Vocabulary; 1889: Part III. Notes], 5th Issue. Boston: Ginn, 1906.

[101] A complete edition of the Kaṭha-Saṁhitā was published only years later, 1900–1910.

[102] Hermann Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda (¹1875). 6., überarbeitete und ergänzte Auflage von Maria Kozianka. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996, 296a, s.v. ékas 10: "in 947, 7 [=10.121.7] ist ékas zu tilgen."

to the text."[103] This seemingly convenient device of throwing out words, which was recommended by Arnold as "a ready method," is much too easy an expedient as to be seriously considered a text-critical and exegetic tool of great value. To accept the text as it stands and make the best of it — but really *the best* — would seem the sounder critical principle. And Vedic exegesis can only gain from the close adherence to text tradition.[104]

[**4**] Oldenberg, Noten II, 1912, 341 ad loc., apparently reluctant to accept the Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā's tacit emendation, Bollensen's, Grassmann's and Lanman's reasoned athetesis, or Arnold's "ready method" of whole-heartedly throwing out entire words, simply states without further discussion: "Gegen Tilgung des *ékaḥ* ... wird man ... Bedenken haben." We might have wished Oldenberg had been as little guarded in this case as he used to be in other cases of the kind, and that he had been more outspoken in his criticism of the *Textkritik* that predominated not only at h i s time. Also, we will have to take a step beyond Oldenberg, whose immortal merit it is to have defended *the word* — here by expressing his critical doubts about the suppression of *ékas*.

And what exactly is this extra step, which we ought to take beyond Oldenberg's skeptical self-restraint, a step that may lead from the last of a flight of stairs to the following floor? The necessary step beyond is to ask and try to answer the question: Why did the poet add another two syllables to a line that contained already the full number of syllables? Why did he extend the trochaic cadence with a third trochee? What r e a s o n may he have had to *single out* this of all words, the cardinal number *ékas*, first and foremost among its fellow numerals?

In asking these questions, the answer is half given. If a word meaning '*one* and *only*' and qualifying the existence of the gods as 'unique' is the *only one* exceeding the regular metrical measure of eleven syllables, then that cannot be an unintentional coincidence. Not only does this excess help to

---

[103] How could *ékas* possibly be considered a gloss or addition if we take it in the sense of 'as the only one'?! For this meaning, see my above translation of line ṚV 10.121.7c: 'the existence of the gods then formed from that [Fire] a s t h e o n l y o n e.' Far from being a mere ornamental epithet, which may as well be left out (and no harm done to the message of the sentence as a whole), adjective *ékas* 'one and only' makes a point of qualifying *devā́nām ásus* 'the existence of the gods' as essentially unique. Unless I am very much mistaken, the hypermetrical *ékas* is in fact used predicatively.

[104] Only if we stick to the *letter* of the word may we hope that its *spirit* is revealed to us. Patañjali's motto *śabdapramāṇakā vayam / yac chabda āha tad asmākaṃ pramāṇam* (Mahābhāṣya, ed. Kielhorn / Abhyankar, 1.11.1–2 = 1.366.12–13) expresses the credo of a true philologist, of one who loves the word for its own sake and in its own most 'l i t t e r a l' meaning. And there is no need for us to be ashamed of our love.

express the transgression of a previous stage in the creation process, but the *singular* position of ***ékas*** outside the line, the *unique* conspicuousness of this word, faithfully reflects, with mirror-like precision, its litteral meaning.

Werner Knobl
Ausländischer Lektor im Ruhestand
9-4 Shibuse-cho
Kitashirakawa
Sakyo-ku, Kyoto
606-8283 Japan
wernerknobl@hotmail.com

Conspicuous Absence

A New Case of Intended Metrical Irregularity:
The Catalectic Line ṚV 10.129.7b[1]

Werner Knobl

(Kyoto University)[2]

complete
is an incomplete
form of incomplete

It is a particularly enigmatic stanza that concludes the profound and partly obscure Creation Hymn of the Ṛgveda. This stanza, ṚV 10.129.7 (= MS 4.12.1: 179.1–2 = TB 2.8.9.6), reads as follows:

> iyáṃ vísṛṣṭir yáta ābabhū́va
> **yádi vā dadhé yádi vā ná**
> yó asyā́dhyakṣaḥ paramé v₍yòman
> só aṅgá veda yádi vā ná véda

> This emission: from where it has come to be—
> **if it has been founded, or if not …**
> He who of this [world] is the surveyor in the highest heaven,[3]
> he does know—or if he does not know?!

---

[1] Two cases of catalexis in Book X of the Ṛgveda—in the metrically defective triṣṭubh lines 10.10.13a *bató batāsi yama* **....** and 10.95.3a *íṣur ná śriyá iṣudhér* **…**—have already been discussed in a recent article. See Werner Knobl, Mind-Reading the Poet. Cases of Intended Metrical Irregularity in Vedic Poetry. *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 24, Bremen: Ute Hempen Verlag, 2007: 105–139; especially 110–130.

[2] It was at Kyoto University, on the occasion of The Second International Vedic Workshop, 31 October — 2 November, 1999, when I read my paper "Mind-Reading the Poet", that I first met Tat'jana Jakovlevna Elizarenkova and was deeply impressed by her human and scholarly personality. My modest contribution to this Gedenkschrift is dedicated to her memory with the greatest respect and admiration.

Also, I am very grateful to my dear friends Diwakar Acharya, Masato Kobayashi, and Leonid Kulikov for the technical help they have so generously given me in formatting this article.

[3] In all the other ṚV passages where *ádhy-akṣa-* m. occurs, it always refers to Agni: **1**. at 8.43.24 *viśā́ṃ rā́jānam ádbhutam* **ádhyakṣaṃ** *dhármaṇām imám / agním īḷe sá u śravat* 'I reverently call Agni, the undeceivable king of the settlements, this *guardian* of the laws. And he shall hear [my call] in return [for my reverence],' **2**. at 10.88.13b/d *a]gním devā́*

In this stanza, pāda b is as undoubtedly a triṣṭubh line as almost all the other verses of this hymn, but it is defective by two syllables. Oldenberg, Prolegomena[4] 85, considered it as very likely that the missing two at the end of the pāda have to be restored by conjecture. Because of the parallelism between lines b and d, the obvious choice would seem to be *dadhé*.

The fact, however, that this word, with its apparently light first syllable, does not appear to fit so well into the typically trochaic cadence of a triṣṭubh line as metrical regularity would require, made Grassmann, Wörterbuch[5] 1089, s.v. *yádi* 10, suggest the reading "*yádi vā* (*dadhé*) *ná*." Oldenberg, Prolegomena 85, took exception to this reading, as it would result in a word order that is said not to occur in the ṚV.

More than two decades later, Oldenberg, Noten II[6] 347, realized that he had unjustly rejected Grassmann's suggestion to read *dadhé ná* for the alleged reason, because this sequence—finite verb form with the negative particle following it— does occur in the ṚV, namely, for example, at 4.13.5ab *ánāyato ánibaddhaḥ kathā́yáṃ nₐyàṅṅ uttānó ₐva padyate ná* 'Why does this [Sun-God], though being unheld and unbound, not fall down on his back?'

The parallelism, on the other hand, between lines b and d—*yádi vā ná* … / *yádi vā ná véda* //—still holds good as an argument against Grassmann's conjecture. One could therefore think, Oldenberg, Prolegomena 85, went on to say, of emending line b to *yádi vā ná* **dadhé**, "against which reading the shortness of the last-but-one syllable constitutes no decisive objection", since a similar sequence

---

ajanayann ajuryám / ... *yakṣásyá́dhyakṣaṃ taviṣám bṛhántam* 'The gods created Agni [Vaiśvānara], as an unaging, powerful, and elevated *overseer* of [their] secret miracle,' and **3**. at 10.128.1d *tváyá́dhyakṣeṇa pṛ́tanā jayema* 'May we win [all] battles with you as [our] *supervisor*.'

This threefold reference to Agni as *surveyor* could suggest that also in our passage, at 10.129.7c, *ádhyakṣa*- refers to Agni, namely, the *heavenly* Fire, to Fire in its *celestial* form: the Sun.

[4] Hermann Oldenberg, Metrische und textgeschichtliche Prolegomena zu einer kritischen Rigveda Ausgabe. Berlin: Hertz, 1888; = (Koelner Sarasvati Serie [Editor: Klaus Ludwig Janert]: Volume 3). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1982. Cf. the recent English translation of Oldenberg's work by V. G. Paranjape & M. A. Mehendale, Prolegomena on Metre and Textual History of the Ṛgveda. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005.

[5] Hermann Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda ([1]1875). 6., überarbeitete und ergänzte Auflage von Maria Kozianka. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996.

[6] Hermann Oldenberg, Ṛgveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten. [II:] Siebentes bis zehntes Buch. (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse. Neue Folge: Band XIII. Nr. 3). Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, l912.

of words occurs as cadence in the triṣṭubh line ṚV 1.103.4d *yád dha sūnúḥ śrávase nā́ma* **dadhé**.[7]

Now, if it is that easy for us to complete the line, why did the poet not do so himself? Would he leave out the missing word by negligence? Most certainly not. It may seem strange, but only very few scholars have considered the possibility that the space of two syllables at the end of the second line might have been left open on purpose. As one of the few, Oldenberg, Noten II, 1912, 347, now refraining from any conjecture, asked: "Kann nicht Wunsch nach prägnanter Kürze über die metrische Norm gesiegt und überkurzen Pāda herbeigeführt haben, indem man in der Silbenfolge ⏑⏑–⏑–⏒ mit einer Art metrischer Haplologie von der ersten Länge zur zweiten übersprang? Anapäst nach Cäsur und Schluss ⏑–⏒ ist beides vorhanden, nur in einander geschoben." The process as described by Oldenberg, though it may be based on a poetically rather unconvincing "wish for dense brevity", would seem entirely mechanical should it really have proceeded without any ulterior motive on the part of the poet.[8]

Also, the author of this alleged skipping of syllables and telescoping of the line, an anonymous "man", if he is meant to be the poet himself, does not strike me as a plausible person. The Vedic ṛ́ṣi, I should think, has to be granted greater consciousness and determination—let alone in a hymn so sophisticated as this one—than Oldenberg deigned to endow him with.

---

[7] However, the "shortness" of the first syllable in *dadhé* is only apparent. We are now in a better position than Oldenberg in order to know that the historical preform of *dadhé* has to be posited as **dadhHái*, with the **a** scanning 'long by position.' And so, it is fairly reasonable to suppose that the poet, who used this word in a place where two heavy syllables were required by the metre, still pronounced it as a spondee.

Cf. the quite similar case of certain disyllabic forms of the noun *jána-* < **jánHa-* in triṣṭubh cadences: all of the four line-final *jánās* (1.89.10c, 4.38.9a, 6.11.4d, 6.51.11b), and all of the nine line-final *jánān* (1.173.8d, 2.20.2b, 3.46.2d, 5.33.2d, 6.10.5d, 6.20.1b, 6.49.15c, 6.67.3c, 6.68.5d) are to be scanned spondaically.

The relevancy of historical preforms containing laryngeals to the correct metrical restitution of the original text of the Ṛgveda was recently demonstrated by Jost Gippert in two important publications of his: **1**. "Laryngeals and Vedic metre." *Sound Law and Analogy*. Papers in honor of Robert S. P. Beekes on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Edited by Alexander Lubotsky. Amsterdam / Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1997, 63–79, and **2**. "Neue Wege zur sprachwissenschaftlichen Analyse der vedischen Metrik." Compositiones Indogermanicae in memoriam Jochem Schindler. Herausgegeben von H. Eichner und H. C. Luschützky. Praha: enigma corporation, 1999, 98–125.

[8] Or is the Vedic poet and **sūkta**-*kārá-* perhaps to be considered a precursor of the parsimonious **sūtra**-*kārá-*, who rejoices at the saving of one or two syllables as much as at the birth of a son?

Macdonell, Vedic Reader, 1917: 211, suggested that with the empty space after *yádi vā ná* "possibly a metrical pause expressive of doubt may have been intended."[9]

And with respect to the same lacuna, Geldner, Der Rig-Veda III, 1951, 361, note ad 7 b, cautiously asked: "Ob beabsichtigte Aposiopese?" Although this hesitating question keeps strictly in line with our poet-philosopher's skeptical frame of mind, I think it is safe to say, with greater confidence than Geldner dared to have: This could quite easily be a case of intended *aposiopesis*.[10]

As to the word, however, whose sound was *silenced* by the poet intentionally, we ought to keep our doubts alive. For it is *not* necessarily another *dadhé* that was caused to turn *tacit*.

Before deciding what word the poet has dropped on purpose at the end of the line, we may want to know how its unsilent *dadhé* is to be understood. In the long history of Vedic exegesis, this middle of the perfect was taken in three different ways. All three of them are more or less possible, and have actually been chosen, more or less freely, by scholars of the past.[11]

A. The unsilent middle *dadhé* was understood as having an *active* ('*agentive*' or '*factitive*') sense by the following large group of scholars:

1. Sāyaṇa, Rig-Veda-Saṃhitâ. The Sacred Hymns of the Brâhmans, together with the Commentary of Sâya*nâk*ârya, edited by F. Max Müller. Second Edition. Volume IV. London: Henry Frowde, 1892, 426: "*yadi vā dadhe **dhārayati** yadi vā na dhārayati*", and 427: "*yadi vā dadhe vidadha idaṃ jagat **sasarja** yadi vā na sasarja*."

2. Max Müller, A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature so far as it Illustrates the Primitive Religion of the Brahmans. Second Edition, Revised. London: Williams and Norgate, 1860 ([1]1859), 563: "whether *he* [the overseer, contemplator] *made* it [this creation] or not."

---

[9] For the exact reference, see below, in Section A.13.

[10] Recently, Joel P. Brereton, JAOS 119, 1999: 249b, prudently suggested: "Whether created by accident or intention, this metrically unresolved cadence is a verbal image of the unresolved cosmogony." Cf. 249b fn. 8: "Most interpreters have treated it as defect …; but this view may underestimate the creativity of Vedic poets. In any case, it is a potentially meaningful irregularity."

[11] If I try to be fairly exhaustive in the following tripartite list of translations, it is also in order to show how (predictably) dependent on certain of their predecessors most scholars are. Veritable schools of thought can be detected. There is, for instance, what may be called the Whitney branch represented by the few that have chosen the second possibility. Being as little independent as others, I find myself belonging to the Grassmann–Bergaigne tradition.

3. Rudolf Roth, Sanskrit-Wörterbuch, herausgegeben von der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, bearbeitet von Otto Böhtlingk und Rudolf Roth. Dritter Theil. St. Petersburg: 1859–1861, 903 s.v. *dhā* 7: "ob *Einer* sie *schuf* oder nicht."

4. J[ohn] Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts on the Origin and History of the People of India, Collected, Translated, and Illustrated. Volume Fourth (Second Edition, Revised) and Volume Fifth. London: Trübner, [2]1873, 5 and [1]1870, 357: "whether [*any one*] *made* it (this creation) or not."

5. Alfred Ludwig, Der Rigveda oder Die Heiligen Hymnen der Brāhmana. Zweiter Band. Prag: F. Tempsky, 1876: 573: "sei's dasz *er* [von dem dise schöpfung herrürt] sie *gegründet*, sei's dasz er sie nicht gegründet."

6. Alfred Ludwig, Der Rigveda … Fünfter Band. Commentar zur Rigveda-Übersetzung. II. Teil. Prag: F. Tempsky / Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1883: 436: "sei es dasz *er* [von welchem dise schöpfung auszgegangen] dieselbe *geschaffen* oder nicht [im eigentlichen sinne des wortes] geschaffen."

7. Lucian Scherman, Philosophische Hymnen aus der Rig- und Atharva-Veda-Sanhitâ, verglichen mit den Philosophemen der älteren Upanishad's. Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1887: 4: "ob *er* [von dem sie entstanden] sie [diese Schöpfung] *geschaffen* oder ob nicht."

8. Ralph T. H. Griffith, The Hymns of the Ṛgveda Translated with a Popular Commentary. Volume II. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963 (= [2]1897): "whether *he formed* it all or did not form it."

9. M[oriz] Winternitz, Geschichte der indischen Litteratur. Erster Teil. Einleitung und erster Abschnitt: Der Veda. (Die Litteraturen des Ostens in Einzeldarstellungen: Band IX). Leipzig: C. F. Amelang, 1905: 88: "[Er, der die Schöpfung hat hervorgebracht,] *Der* sie *gemacht hat* oder nicht gemacht."

10. Karl Friedrich Geldner, Zur Kosmogonie des Rigveda, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Liedes 10,129. (Universitätsprogramm l908). Marburg: N. G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1908: 23: "ob *er* [der Lenker der Welt] (sie [diese Schöpfung]) *gemacht hat*, ob nicht."

11. Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rigveda in Auswahl. Zweiter Teil: Kommentar. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1909: 214: "Ob *er* [der Aufseher] diese Welt *erschaffen hat* oder nicht."

12. Alfred Hillebrandt, Lieder des Ṛgveda. (Quellen der Religions-Geschichte: Band 5). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913: 134: "sei es dass *er* [der über sie wacht] sie [diese Schöpfung] *schuf* oder nicht."

13. Arthur Anthony Macdonell, A Vedic Reader for Students. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917: 211: "whether *he* [its surveyor] *founded* it [this creation] or did not."

14. Paul Deussen, Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Religionen. Erster Band, Erste Abteilung: Allgemeine Einleitung und Philosophie des Veda bis auf die Upanishad's. Vierte Auflage. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1920: 126: "mag *Er* [von welchem her ursprünglich diese Schöpfung … geworden ist] sie nun *geschaffen* oder nicht geschaffen … *haben*" and 127: "*Der* sie *gemacht hat* oder nicht gemacht."

15. Karl Friedrich Geldner, Vedismus und Brahmanismus (Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch: 9). Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1928: 89: "ob *er* (der Gott) sie [diese Einzelschöpfung] *gemacht hat* oder nicht?"

16. Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt und mit einem laufenden Kommentar versehen. Dritter Teil. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volume 35.) Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951: 361: "ob *er* [der Aufseher dieser (Welt)] sie [diese Schöpfung] *gemacht hat* oder nicht."

17. Herman Lommel, Gedichte des Rig-Veda. ("Weisheitsbücher der Menschheit"). München-Planegg: Otto-Wilhelm-Barth-Verlag, 1955: 120: "wenn *er* [der sie überschaut] sie [diese Schöpfung] *geschaffen hat* oder wenn nicht."

18. Walter Ruben, Beginn der Philosophie in Indien. Aus den Veden. (Philosophische Studientexte). Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955: 28: "ob *er* [n. 8: "Oder: Es, das Eine, das Denken, das Weder-seiende-noch-nichtseiende"] sie [diese Schöpfung] *geschaffen hat*, oder ob nicht."[12]

19. Riccardo Ambrosini, "Contributi all'interpretazione di RV. X.129." Studia classica et orientalia Antonio Pagliaro oblata. I. Roma: Herder editrice e libreria, 1969: [95–136] 100: "sia que [quell'essere supremo (*ádhyakṣaḥ*)] l'*abbia posta* [la creazione] o non."

20. Paul-Émile Dumont, Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 113, No. 1, 1969: 66 (Translation of TB 2.8.9.6b): "whether *he* [its surveyor] *founded* it [this creation] or not."

21. Annemarie Etter, Die Fragesätze im Ṛgveda. (Untersuchungen zur indogermanischen Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft: 1). Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985: 206: "ob *er* [ihr Aufseher] sie [diese Schöpfung] *geschaffen hat* oder nicht."

---

[12] Interestingly, Ruben is the only scholar who considered the possibility that the agent of creation may be an impersonal "Es", namely, "das Eine", the mysteriously anonymous ONE (*ekám*) and ALL (*víśvam*) in the form of which this world did exist somehow, and somehow did not exist, and about which it is said, at the very beginning of our hymn, that 'then' it was *neither* real, *nor* unreal: ṚV 10.129.1a **nā́sad āsīn nó sád āsīt tadā́nīm**. And this ambiguous statement about IT was interpreted by the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa as referring to none other than *mánas* "das Denken". Cf. ŚB 10.5.3.1 *ásīd iva vā́ idám ágre nèvāsīt tád dha tán mána evàsa* 'In the beginning, this [ALL] seemed to be real, and it seemed not to be real. That (this ALL) was then nothing but MIND.'

22. Johannes Mehlig, Weisheit des alten Indien. Band 1: Vorbuddhistische und nicht-buddhistische Texte. Herausgegeben von J. M. ("Orientalische Bibliothek"). München: C. H. Beck, 1987: 68f.: "ob *er* sie *gemacht hat* oder nicht."

As can be seen, all of these scholars translated line b—by and large identically—as 'he (has) made / created / founded [it (this creation)].'

B. The middle *dadhé* was considered to be *non-passive* ('*fientive*' or *reflexive*) in meaning by a small group of scholars who all understood it in the sense of 'it (this creation) made itself / was made by itself / formed itself [spontaneously].'

1. William Dwight Whitney, "The Cosmogonic Hymn, Rig-Veda X.129." Journal of the American Oriental Society 11, New Haven: The American Oriental Society, 1885: cx (Proceedings of the Society at Boston, May, 1882): "Whether *it* [this creation] *made itself*, or whether not."[13]

2. Arthur Berriedale Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volumes 31 and 32). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925: 436: "whether the creation *was made by itself* or not."

3. W. Norman Brown, "The Rigvedic Equivalent For Hell." Journal of the American Oriental Society 61, 1941: 80 and "Theories of Creation in the Rig Veda." Journal of the American Oriental Society 85, 1965: 34 = W. Norman Brown, India and Indology. Selected Articles. Edited by Rosane Rocher. Published for the American Institute of Indian Studies. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978: 18 and 52: "whether [this creation *came into being*] *spontaneously* or not."

4. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, The Rig Veda. An Anthology. One Hundred and Eight Hymns, Selected, Translated and Annotated. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981: 25: "perhaps *it* [this creation] *formed itself*, or perhaps it did not."

5. Tatyana Jakovlevna Elizarenkova, Language and Style of the Vedic Ṛṣis. Edited with a Foreword by Wendy Doniger. (SUNY Series in Hindu Studies). Albany: State University of New York, 1995: 142: "Perhaps *it* [this creation] *formed itself*, or perhaps it did not."[14]

---

[13] Compare Whitney's note on *dadhé*: "the subject and meaning of the verb *dadhe* are unclear; it must be either '*it set* (or *made*) *itself*,' or '*he set* (or *made*) it *for himself*': i.e. the "overseer" of the next line. I have thought the former more acceptable; but whether the middle can have so pregnantly reflexive a sense admits of doubt."

[14] Rather than follow Elizarenkova's original idea about *dadhé*, as it is clearly expressed in her ṚV translation of 1999 (for which see below, section C.18.), the editress seems to have adopted in its place her own 1981 rendering, and quite literally at that.

C. Or is *dadhé* perhaps preferably to be taken in a *passive* ('*patientiv*e') sense, as it has been understood by the following large group of scholars?

1. Hermann Grassmann, Rig-Veda. Übersetzt und mit kritischen und erläuternden Anmerkungen versehen. Zweiter Theil. Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1877: 406: "ob *sie* [diese Schöpfung] *geschaffen* oder unerschaffen."

2. Adolf Kaegi, Der Rigveda, die älteste Literatur der Inder. Zweite, umgearbeitete und erweiterte, mit vollständigem Sach- und Wortregister versehene Auflage. Leipzig: Otto Schulze, 1881: 121: "Ob *sie* [diese Schöpfung] *geschaffen* oder unerschaffen."[15]

3. Abel Bergaigne, La Religion Védique d'après les hymnes du *R*ig-Veda. Tome IIIe, Paris: Vieweg, 1883 = deuxième tirage (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, IVe Section — Sciences historiques et philologiques: 36e fascicule) = Paris: Honoré Champion, 1963: 214: "s'*il* [ce monde (littéralement cette émission ...)] *a été créé* … ou non."

4. Louis Renou, La valeur du parfait dans les hymnes Védiques. Paris: Edouard Champion, 1925: 25: "si *elle* [cette création du monde] *a été créée* ou non."

5. Louis Renou, La poésie religieuse de l'Inde antique. (Mythes et Religions). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942: 122: "si *elle* [cette création (émanation)] *a été fabriquée* ou ne l'a pas été."

6. Louis Renou, Hymnes spéculatifs du Véda. 6e édition. (Collection UNESCO d'œuvres représentatives. Série indienne: Volume 3).   Paris: Gallimard, 1956: 126: "si *elle* [cette création secondaire] *a fait l'objet* ou non *d'une institution*."

7. Paul Thieme, Gedichte aus dem Rig-Veda. Aus dem Sanskrit übertragen und erläutert von P. Thieme. (Universal-Bibliothek: Nr. 8930). Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1964: 67: "ob *sie* (diese Emanation) *getätigt worden ist* [von einem Agens] oder ob nicht."

8. Jan Gonda, "De kosmogonie van Ṛgveda 10, 129." Tijdschrift voor Philosophie 28, 1966: 693 = Selected Studies III, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975: 430: "of *ze* [deze schepping] *object* (*resultaat*) *van een instelling* (*inzetting*, *fundatie*) *is* of niet" and ibid. 696 = 433: "whether *it* [this creation] *is the result of an act of founding* or *establishing* or not."[16]

---

[15] Cf. Adolf Kaegi, The Rigveda: The Oldest Literature of the Indians. Authorized Translation with Additions to the Notes by R. Arrowsmith. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1886: 90: "whether *it* [the source] *was made*, or uncreated."

[16] Cf. also J. Gonda, The Medium in the Ṛgveda. (Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina, 24). Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979: 19: "whether *it* [this creation (emanation-)in-differenciation] *is the result of an act of founding* (*establishing*…) or not."

9. Louis Renou, Études védiques et pāṇinéennes, Tome XVI. (Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, Série in-8°: Fascicule 27). Paris: E. de Boccard, 1967: 169: "si *elle* [cette création] *a été instituée* (par un Être) [ou non]."

10. Naoshirō Tsuji, Rigu-Vēda Sanka ([Selected] Hymns of the RV). Tokyo: Iwanami, [17]1987 ([1]1970): 323: "この創造は ... そは[誰によりて]実行せられたりや、あるいはまたしからざらしや ..." ["Kono sōzō wa … *So wa* [dare ni yorite] *jikkō seraretari* ya, arui wa mata shikarazarishi ya, …"] ("This creation… Whether *it has been realized* [by someone], or else, has not been [realized]").

11. Walter Harding Maurer, "A Re-examination of Ṛgveda X.129, the Nāsadīya Hymn." The Journal of Indo-European Studies, Volume 3, Number 3, 1975: 233: "whether *it* [this world] *was made* or whether not."[17]

12. Jean Varenne, Cosmogonies Védiques. (Bibliothèque de l'Unicorne / Collection "Le Monde Indien"). Milano: Archè / Paris: Belles Lettres, 1982: 226: "si *elle* [cette création] *a été fondée*, ou non."

13. Jared S. Klein, Toward a Discourse Grammar of the Rigveda. Volume I: Coordinate Conjunction, Part 2: u; áthā, átho, ádha, ā́d; vā; ápi. (Indogermanische Bibliothek: Reihe 1). Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1985: 161= 206=208: "whether *it* [this creation] *has been created* or not."

14. Walter Harding Maurer, Pinnacles of India's Past: Selections from the Ṛgveda. (University of Pennsylvania Studies on South Asia: 2). Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1986, 284: "whether *it* [this world] *was made* or whether not."

15. Paul Thieme, "Zu RV 10.72." *o-o-pe-ro-si*. Festschrift für Ernst Risch zum 75. Geburtstag, herausgegeben von Annemarie Etter. Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986, 159 = Paul Thieme, Kleine Schriften II, herausgegeben von Renate Söhnen-Thieme. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1995: 939: "ob *sie* (diese Schöpfung) *getätigt worden ist* [von einem Agens] oder ob nicht."

16. Thomas Oberlies, Die Religion des Ṛgveda. Erster Teil: Das religiöse System des Ṛgveda. (Publications of the De Nobili Research Library: Volume XXVI). Wien: Institute of Indology, University of Vienna, 1998: 376: "ob *sie* (diese Emanation) [von einem Schöpfer] *getätigt ist* oder ob nicht."

17. Joel P. Brereton, "Edifying Puzzlement: Ṛgveda 10.129 and the Uses of Enigma." Journal of the American Oriental Society, Volume 119, 1999: 249b, note 7: "if *it* [this creation] *was produced* or if (it was) not (produced)," and 258: "if *it* [this creation] *was produced* or if not."

---

[17] Cf. Alfred Collins, "Reflections on Ṛg-Veda X.129: Stimulated by Walter Maurer's Paper." JIES 3, 1975: 279: "whether the world *was* "*put in place*" (*dadhé*) [or not]."

18. Tat'jana Jakovlevna Elizarenkova, Rigveda. Mandaly IX–X. Perevod i kommentarii. Moskva: Nauka, 1999: 286: "*Было ли оно* (это творение) *создано или же нет —*."

19. Martin Joachim Kümmel, Das Perfekt im Indoiranischen. Eine Untersuchung der Form und Funktion einer ererbten Kategorie des Verbums und ihrer Weiterentwicklung in den altindoiranischen Sprachen. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2000: 273: "ob *sie* [diese Schöpfung] *geschaffen worden ist* oder nicht?"

All the (19) scholars of this third group are agreed in taking *dadhé* as a passive and in translating it as 'it (this creation / emanation) was / has been made / founded / created / instituted.'

I think Renou was quite justified in deciding without any hesitation, EVP XVI 169, that *dadhé* is "sans doute passif."[18]

What is mentioned as 'subject' in line a is *iyáṃ vísṛṣṭiḥ*, and it would seem more natural to refer the verbal action of *dhā* to 'this emission' as its object or *kármaṇ-*, rather than to the supreme observer, to him *yó asyā́dhyakṣaḥ paramé vᵢyòman* 'who is of this [universe] the surveyor in the highest heaven.'[19]

That cosmogonic onlooker is about to appear on the scene only in the following line. Nor does he show up before the subsequent stage of world creation. Apparently, he is a different 'subject', namely, the agent of *looking*—and, just possibly, of *knowing*—but certainly not of *founding*.[20]

Once we have decided that *dadhé* is a passive and means 'has been founded', we are then in a position to treat the open space at the end of the line in a manner different from the way Grassmann and others have treated it: not by rushing in

---

[18] Cf. also Elizarenkova, Rigveda, 1999: 526, in a note on ṚV 10.129.7b: "Как отмечает Рену, медиальная форма имеет здесь пассивное значение" and Kümmel, Das Perfekt, 2000: 273, who considered *dadhé* in this place to be one of the few "Beleg[e] mit sicher patientiver Bedeutung."

[19] The looker-on may be seen as a mere spectator, as one who has not actively taken part in the *making* of what he is *watching*. Since *ádhy-akṣa-* refers to Agni in all the three other ṚV passages (at 8.43.24b; 10.88.13d, 10.128.1d)—as has been shown above, at the beginning of this paper, in footnote 3—it may mean that Fire, namely, the element in its celestial form, is referred to also here. And the Sun, whom the poet repeatedly calls, in a phrase which contains a unique genitive of identity, **sū́ryasya cákṣus** (at ṚV 1.164.14c; 5.40.8c, 5.59.5d; 10.10.9b), is the Eye and Witness *par excellence*.

[20] To be sure, some scholars who understood this verb-form in the active sense of 'has made / created / founded / established' obviously thought that the agent of *dadhé* is none other than the *ádhyakṣas* of pāda 7c. See the above-quoted translations by Müller 1860; Geldner 1909; Hillebrandt 1913; Macdonell 1917; Geldner 1951; Lommel 1955; Ambrosini 1969; Dumont 1969; Etter 1985: in sections A. 2, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, respectively.

with a conjectured second *dadhé*, but, fearing to tread, by only *mentally* supplying an unpronounced word, the noun expressive of the *agent* of the action indicated by the passive *dadhé*, an agent grammatically implied anyway. And the case-form of that agent-noun, if it were to be pronounced, would have to be the instrumental *dhātrā́* 'by a founder'.

The only two scholars who have ever made explicit allowance for the possibility that a *noun* might have been dropped in this place are Karl F. Geldner and Walter H. Maurer.

1. In his Kosmogonie, 1908: 23, Geldner said: "[E]in den Sinn bestimmendes Substantiv scheint ausgefallen zu sein." For Geldner, however, that substantive would have had to be the *object* of the action expressed in *dadhé*, since he rendered this verb-form as an active "gemacht hat."[21]

As object we could imagine a noun like *víśvam* '[this] all', which would refer to the same universe as *vísṛṣṭiḥ* 'emission' in line a, and which is referred to by *asyá* 'of this [all]' or, in my view less likely, *asya* 'of it (this all)' in line c.[22]

2. Maurer, JIES 3, 1973: 233 with fn. 42, in view of the fact that "no subject of *dadhé* is expressed" and that   "*dadhé* may be translated '(it) was made' or '(he) made (it)'", carefully considered: "it may be that the object of *dadhé* (if taken as a middle without passive sense) has been deliberately suppressed—what Geldner, H.O.S. III, p. 361, calls 'intentional aposiopesis…' But, on the other hand, would it not be better to suppose that it is not the *object* (which, in any case, can easily be supplied), but the *subject*, which has been omitted, since this omission would more conduce to heightening the sense of wonder [?]"[23]

Now, after deciding that the instrumental **dhātrā́*, expressing the *agent* of the action indicated by the middle *dadhé*, if understood as a passive, is the missing word—rather than the accusative suggested by Geldner and accepted as an alternative by Maurer, or the nominative **dhātā́* supposed to be the better alternative

---

[21] See Karl F. Geldner, Kommentar, 1909: 214: "Es fehlen zwei Silben, wohl das eigentliche Objekt zu *dadhé*."

[22] Because of the sandhi in *asyā́dhyakṣaḥ*, it is impossible to decide with certainty whether the pronoun is an elliptically used deictic adjectival **asyá** "of *this* [universe]" as in pāda 6c *arvā́g devā́ asyá visárjanena*, or else, an anaphoric substantival **asya** "of it (this universe)" as the Padapāṭha opts, and as Oldenberg, Noten II 347, thinks is more likely: "M[eines] E[rachtens] *asya* wahrscheinlicher." Personally, I would prefer the first alternative.

[23] Since Walter H. Maurer does not fully reveal his thoughts, we are left with guessing at what he *may* have had in mind, viz. that the omitted *agent* of the action expressed by *dadhé*, "if taken as a middle without passive sense," is the metrically fitting nominative **dhātā́*. Has this word been "deliberately suppressed" by the scholar in imitation of the poet?

by Maurer, or a second *dadhé* taken for granted by Grassmann, Oldenberg, and by most other Vedic scholars, though often only implicitly[24]—we are bound to ask: Why should the poet have silenced this word?

There is, I think, only one possible answer to that question: The poet fell silent in the middle of his speech because he had something in mind that *called for* silence. Unless our poet was a blundering fool unable to keep his mind on the task of completing the metrical line together with the line of his thought—a possibility we should have the good grace not even to consider—he must have been aware, even highly conscious, of what he was doing.[25]

There is no real alternative to thinking that he *intended* to express what he *did* express in this tacit way: There was no agent—and therefore no action—of founding. All that can be said is that this universe 'has come into being', *ā́ ba-bhūva*, from somewhere, but not through *someone*. He who could be imagined as having set up this world is himself set aside, athetized by the poet. The very action it would have been his specific function as a *Sondergott* to perform is denied to the god.[26]

The real existence of him whose name is 'founder' is unfounded. He who is called 'placer' finds no place for himself. Or, rather, there *is* a place, but that place is left empty, free for us to fill in. It is up to our intelligent imagination to complete the void with the well-defined *picture* the poet must have envisaged when he depleted that place of all presence. We only need to realize his intention, suggested by the open space, of symbolically reflecting in the absence of the *word* meaning 'crea-tor'—as in a mirror held up against it—the creator's *own* absence.

---

[24] Brereton, JAOS 119, 1999: 249b—after giving an exact, and partly funny, description of the metrical deficiency of pāda 7b—explicitly says: "The rhythmic incompleteness of the line stands out particularly strongly because it could so easily be corrected. We can have the expected eleven-syllable line by supplying a second *dadhé*, a word that must be assumed in the translation anyway."

[25] Brereton, JAOS 119, 1999: 249b, though accurately describing what happened in pāda 7b, seems to assume, be it but jocularly, a certain awkwardness in the author when he suspects: "The line stops short, as if the poet had suddenly stepped on his own metrical shoe-laces." Are we to suppose that the poet was trying—if only "as if"—to stumble i n-t e n t i o n a l l y? May he be said to have reached so high a degree of conscious *n a ï v e t é* as to suffer an accident, however casual, on p u r p o s e? What might have made him a g o o d a c t o r would have made him a p o o r p o e t.

[26] The term *Sondergott* as introduced by Hermann Usener, Götternamen. Versuch einer Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung. Bonn: Cohen, 1896 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, ³1948 = ⁴2000) was referred to by Hermann Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda. 3. und 4. Auflage. Stuttgart und Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1923 (= ²1917): 60ff., and Eva Tichy, Die Nomina agentis auf -*tar*- im Vedischen. Heidel-berg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1995: 201f.

It could be that the poet, whose skepticism is so obvious, did not wish to reveal himself too outspoken an agnostic, and preferred to be ambiguous. Asking whether this 'creation' has been created or not is audacious enough. But daring to affect with an open expression of disbelief the very creator—or to embrace with a sweeping *mise en question* even the divine agent—would have exposed the poet to the danger of being held an *ádeva-* and atheist in the eyes of those who firmly believed in a personal *creator* god.

By leaving out the *dhātár*'s name in the formulation of his doubt, our poet-philosopher achieved two aims at once: He kept the suspension of his belief secret from the naïve believers. And, at the same time, he conveyed it in a hidden way to the refined reader, who is able to read not only *between* the lines, but also in the open space *within* the lines. It is as if he said, with a mischievous twinkle: *sapienti sat*.

Portmanteau Words in the Ṛgveda*

WERNER F. KNOBL

*Kyoto University***

Prologue

my name means the shape I am

Although I would not mind being another Humpty Dumpty who could say of himself: "I can explain all the poems that ever were invented — and a good many that haven't been invented just yet", I cannot seriously hope really to become one by merely taking a few hints from him at the way in which certain unfamiliar words may be understood.

In Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking-Glass (1871/72), Chapter Six, Alice asks Humpty Dumpty kindly to tell her the meaning of the poem "Jabberwocky", whose first line runs: *'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves*. Humpty Dumpty explains, to begin with, that **slithy** means "**lith**e and **slimy**", and he adds: "You see it's like a portmanteau — there are two meanings packed up into one word".[1] Actually, it is also two *words*, not only two meanings, that are telescoped into each other. A second example, taken from the same stanza, is **mimsy**, which means "**fl**imsy and **mis**erable", yet another, taken from stanza six of the same poem[2] — and representing a different, more sophisticated type — is **chortle**, a perfect cross of **chuck**le × **snort**.[3]

---

* This article is dedicated, with all the gratitude and devotion I am capable of, to my beloved wife Chizuko, whose lively and vivifying company has made me wonder whether *life* is not a perfect portmanteau word of *love* and *wife*.

** I am deeply grateful to Kazuhiko Yoshida, the convener of the 2007 Indo-European Conference at Kyoto University, for his engaging kindness, to several of the participants for their thought-provoking comments, most especially to Brent Vine for many highly helpful critical remarks on a revised draft of my paper, and to Masato Kobayashi for his expert assistance in formatting the final version.

This paper was also read in the evening programme of the Leiden Summer School in Languages and Linguistics 2008, on August 1st. I feel bound by gratitude to Frederik Kortlandt and Alexander Lubotsky for their friendly interest and obliging appreciation.

[1] The Works of Lewis Carroll. Edited and Introduced by Roger Lancelyn Green. (Spring Books). London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965, 175. Or else, The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll. With an Introduction by Alexander Woollcott. London: The Nonesuch Press, s.a., 215.

[2] The complete "Jabberwocky" can be found at the end of Chapter One of "Through the Looking-Glass".

[3] English in general is rather rich in words of the portmanteau type. Examples of a particu-

In view of "The Third Case: Blind Darkness", which will play a prominent role below, I would like to clarify right away that various kinds of portmanteau formation should be distinguished. Among them, there are those formations whose factitious make-up may be closest to the structure of the original 'porte-manteau' or 'cloak-carrying' trunk, in so far as they are based on two words that have some phonetic overlap; *motor* and *hotel*, for instance, which result in *motel*, share their *ot* [oʊt]. Although this type of portmanteau is perhaps best known and most popular, other kinds are of greater poetical interest.

Phonetically speaking, *smoke* and *fog* have very little in common — for the jointly owned grapheme <*o*> represents two different phonemes ([oʊ] :: [ɔ]) — and yet, the result of their blending, which is *smog*, can be called a portmanteau in the true C a r r o l l i a n sense of the word.

Its higher artistic value is therefore the reason why I have styled **chortle** "a perfect cross" of **chuckle** and **snort**. Here, not even the i l l u s i o n of a phonetic overlap is created by the spelling.[4]

The question I would like to ask is this: Are we allowed to apply the method of blending and cross-breeding different words as a serviceable tool of Vedic exegesis, or even, to suppose that it was consciously employed by the Vedic poets themselves as a means of generating new meanings? I am inclined to think that, yes, we are allowed to do so, if the three illustrative cases I have chosen from the Ṛgveda should prove convincing examples of that ingenious device invented — or rather, rediscovered — by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, alias Lewis Carroll, alias Humpty Dumpty: the Portmanteau Word.

Case One: Shall Be Most Pleasing

A first case has already been discussed by me in the second section "Blends of Verbal and Nominal Forms" of my 2002 Leiden paper "The Nonce Formation".[5]

---

larly interesting kind are **smog** (= **sm**oke × f**og**), or **brunch** (= **br**eakfast × l**unch**), or **squarson** (= **squ**ire × p**arson**), or, perhaps, **slash** in the sense of **sl**anting d**ash**.

[4] The bold-face I use in cases of this type is meant to highlight only those sounds that the base-words individually contribute to the portmanteau they concur in producing (as will also be clear from the examples given in the foregoing footnote).

Ideally, the two contributions are of equal weight, as in cases like *chortle* and *smog* — or as in my Third Case, for which see below, Chapter Three, Conclusion: The Formula.

[5] See Werner Knobl, "The Nonce Formation. A more-than-momentary look at the *Augen-blicksbildung*". The Vedas: Texts, Language & Ritual. Proceedings of the Third Interna-tional Vedic Workshop, Leiden 2002. Edited by Arlo Griffiths & Jan E. M. Houben. (Groningen Oriental Studies, Volume XX). Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004, 261-83. This

If I may briefly hark back to that discussion, I would summarize it thus: The unique nonce form *cániṣṭhat* occurring at ṚV 8.74.11 *yáṃ tvā gopávano girā́* **cániṣṭhad** *agne aṅgiraḥ | sá pāvaka śrudhī hávam* 'You [O Agni] whom Gopavana [the Atrid] shall greatly please with his song-of-praise: do listen to his call, O Pāvaka!' can be interpreted as an intentional — and poetically most effective — portmanteau-like packing up of two words and their meanings: **1**. of the unattested *iṣ*-aorist subjunctive[6] *cániṣat 'shall please'[7] and **2**. of the well-attested superlative *cániṣṭha-* 'most pleasing' (ṚV 7x) into one emphatically meaningful word: *cániṣṭhat* 'shall-please-most-pleasingly', as I may be permitted to formulate its sense in a single hyphenated phrase-word.

Case Two: Clear Away As Best You Can

There is a similar blend which I could have treated together with the nonce formation just mentioned, and it deserves to be discussed now as a new example of portmanteau word-formation: the apparently 'hybrid' *s*-aorist (or fake *iṣ*-aorist) *ví cayiṣṭam* at ṚV 6.67.8d *yuváṃ dāśúṣe* **ví cayiṣṭam** *áṃhaḥ* '*Do remove distress* — [O Mitra and Varuṇa!] — for [the relief of] the worshipper!'

This verse closely resembles one that occurs in an older book, namely, at ṚV 4.20.9c *purú dāśúṣe* **vícayiṣṭho** *áṃhaḥ* 'For the worshipper, he (Indra) best removes much distress', and it may even depend on that other verse; all the more so since *ví cayiṣṭam* occupies exactly the same metrical position as the superlative *vícayiṣṭhas*. The prosodic pressure on the second syllable after the cæsura requiring it to be light is so strong that an expected *ví caiṣṭam — with its heavy **caiṣ** — would have meant a very noticeable *breach* of the rule in the *break* of the trimeter verse.

Narten, 1964, 113-4, n. 305, called *ví cayiṣṭam* "eine auf dem Superl[ativ] *vícayiṣṭha-* beruhende Kunstbildung",[8] and referred to Hoffmann, MSS ²2,

---

[6] Or rather, *s*-aorist subjunctive of the *seṭ*-root *cani* 'please'.

[7] Unattested though this particular form may be, it could have been formed as naturally as the parallel 2nd and 3rd singular subjunctives of the *seṭ*-root *avii/ū* 'further, favour': **aviṣas** at ṚV 3.13.6a *utá no bráhmann aviṣa[ḥ* 'And you [O Agni] shall help us in [formulating] the poem' and **aviṣat** at ṚV 1.81.1e *vā́jeṣu prá no ̥aviṣat* 'He (viz. Indra) shall assist us in [winning] the prizes'. Compare also the 2nd dual of the *iṣ*-aorist injunctive or imperative **caniṣṭám** at ṚV 7.70.4a *caniṣṭáṃ devā óṣadhīṣ̥v apsú* 'Take delight, O you two heavenly [Aśvins], in herbs and waters'.

[8] See Johanna Narten, Die sigmatischen Aoriste im Veda. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964.

1957, 131,[9] who had interpreted *cayiṣṭam* as an "Unform" that adapts itself to other verb forms — regular 2nd dual *s*-aorist injunctives or imperatives, he meant to say, of *seṭ*-roots such as *av^i* (*aviṣṭám* [R̥V 5x], *aviṣṭam* [R̥V 4x]), *kan^i* (*caniṣṭám* [R̥V 1x: 7.70.4a]), *kram^i* (*kramiṣṭam* [R̥V 1x: 1.182.3c]), *vadh^i* (*vadhiṣṭam* [R̥V 1x: 4.41.4b]), or *śnath^i* (*śnathiṣṭam* [R̥V 1x: 7.99.5b]) — and through this mimicking assimilation succeeds, according to Hoffmann, in 'veiling' its own true nature, which is but that of an 'abnormity'.[10] *As if the poet had no say in it*.[11]

　　To be sure, the grammatically correct *s*-aorist injunctive or imperative of the *aniṭ*-root *cay/ci* 'gather' for the 2nd dual would have been none other than disyllabic ***caiṣṭam*.[12] The actually occurring trisyllabic nonce form ***cayiṣṭam*** is removed from the norm by just one step. Synchronically, this step could be described as dissociation of the diphthong *-ai-* into its component parts and, with equal pace, reassignment of the separate monophthongs *-a-* and *-i-* to two different syllables resulting in the attested *-ayi-* (which is likely to have been

---

[9]   Reprinted in Karl Hoffmann, Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik herausgegeben von Johanna Narten, Band 2, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1976, 367.

[10] Cf. Hoffmann, loc. cit.: "sich an andere Verbformen ... anschließt und dadurch seine Abnormität verschleiert".

[11] Our scholar appears to prefer that this form — once it is thoroughly seen through with severely corrective eyes and declared to be what he considers an abnormal 'unform' — has emancipated itself from the poet's control and is free to act on its own, perversely taking the *veil* of dissimulation. The grammarian seems to believe that a form worthy of its name must wear an ***uni***form, or else it is an ***un***form.

[12] See the 2nd dual *s*-aorist injunctive of *aniṭ*-root *yav/yu* 'separate', which occurs 6 times in 2 different verses of the R̥V, namely, at 8.86.1d = 2d = 3d = 4d = 5d *mā́ no ví* ***yauṣṭam*** *sakh_iyā́ mumócatam* "Löset nicht unsere Freundschaft! Spannet aus!" (Geldner, II 411) and at 10.85.42a *iháivá stam mā́ ví* ***yauṣṭam*** "Bleibet immer hier, trennet euch nicht" (Geldner, III 273).

      Cf. also the 2nd and the 1st singular indicative of *cay/ci* at KS 22.6:62.13-4 *etad dha vā uvāca śaṅkhaḥ kauṣyaḥ putram agniṃ cikivāṃsam* **acair** *agnī3m ity* **acaiṣaṁ** *hī3ti* 'This [is what] Śaṅkha Kauṣya said to his son who had built the fire: "Have you built the fire?" — "[Yes,] I have built [it]!" [replied his son]'.

      Cf. further the five occurrences of *s*-aorist indicatives of the structurally parallel *aniṭ*-root *jay/ji* 'win, conquer' that can be found in the R̥V: *ajaiṣam* (10.159.6a), *ájais* (8.40.11e), *ajais* (9.72.5c), *ájaiṣma* (8.47.18a = 10.164.5a).

      An injunctive of this root is attested at ŚS 4.38.3f *mā́ no jaiṣur idáṃ dhánam* 'Let them (the other gamblers) not win this stake of ours'.

pronounced as [aï]),[13] through a process that may be designated with the technical term *diaeresis*.[14]

Nor can it be denied that this single deviating step is taken in the direction of the superlative -*cayiṣṭha*-. However, no more digressive steps are taken. The poet's poetical *démarche* stops short in the middle of the suffix -*iṣṭha*-. Had he gone any further, getting even closer to the form of the superlative, and venturing an a s p i r a t e d *cayiṣṭham, he would have run the risk of losing the celestial addressees, in spite of his pronounced a s p i r a t i o n to attract their attention. Mitra and Varuṇa might not have been able to guess, for all their d i v i n a t o r y power, that *they* were intended as agents of the desired verbal action.

If the two Ādityas were not unambiguously informed with a dual verb-form that could still be recognized as an aorist injunctive or imperative, however irregular it may otherwise appear, they might have missed the all-important point that the wished-for action of removing the worshipper's distress was meant to be *theirs*. Even gods have to be told in so many words, or syllables, or sounds.

In every other respect, their intuitive understanding of the irregular form could be counted upon. On hearing the poet's urgent — and yet, not t o o arrogant — request expressed in the verbal compound *ví cayiṣṭam*,[15] Mitra and Varuṇa right away knew that it was *they* who were asked to join forces in clearing away distress *to **the best of** their divine ability*.

Narten's qualification, by the way, of *ví cayiṣṭam* as a "Kunstbildung" need not be understood in the somewhat depreciatory sense of '*artificial* formation'. It could also be taken to mean — even if this should go against the grammarian's own intention — a more appreciative '*artistic* formation'.

The **brahmáṇ**-, after all, is an *artist* specialized in poetic *word formation*. On occasion, his activity may include conscious acts of word **de**formation as well.

---

[13] For a nice parallel to *cayiṣṭam* ← *caiṣṭam, see the comparable case of TS = TB *ajayit* ← *ajait* referred to in the following footnote.

[14] The same kind of synchronic *dissociation* and *resyllabification* of the diphthong -*ai*- is attested in the Vājapeya formula cited at TS 1.7.8.1c (= TB 1.3.6.3) *i]ndraṃ vā́jaṃ jāpayat[a í]ndro vā́jam* **ajayit** 'Make Indra win the prize. Indra has won the prize'. Here, trisyllabic *ajayit* replaced disyllabic *ajait*, which in turn was substituted for the 3rd person singular *ajais* [R̥V 2x] from *ajaist 'has won'.

As regards the more regular *ajait*, see R̥VKh 5.7.2.1a, MS 4.13.4:203.5, KS 16.21:244.7, TB 3.6.5.1 etc.: **ájaid** *agnír ásanad vā́jam* "Agni has won; he has gained the prize".

[15] An imperative or modal injunctive cannot help sounding urgent. The equally audible overtones of arrogance any human request necessarily acquires in divine ears may have been mitigated by the slightly ridiculous ring a grammatically incorrect form is bound to produce — not only in the hypersensitive sense-organs of a mortal purist.

And such a highly *artistic* act of word deformation has been performed, I believe, by the poet of this poem.

The Third Case: Blind Darkness

   A. Since the early days of Western Veda exegesis, a controversy has persisted about the neuter noun *ándhas-*. Roth, PW I (1852-1855)[16] 258, split the word up into two homonyms: the first ("**1. *ándhas***") meaning "Dunkel, Finsterniss", the second ("**2. *ándhas***") 'Soma'.[17]

   The meaning 'darkness' was posited by Roth for only *three* passages of the R̥V: two in the First Maṇḍala: at 1.62.5b and 1.94.7c, and one in Song-Cycle Seven: at 7.88.2c.

   Grassmann, Wörterbuch, (1875 =) [6]1996, 67, did not diverge from Roth's position.[18] Ludwig, although rendering *ándhas-* in two places, that is, at 7.88.2c and 1.94.7c, with "finsternis" and "dunkel" respectively (Rigveda I 104 § 87 and I 301 § 275), translated *ándhas-* in the third passage, namely, at 1.62.5b, as "das flüszige" (Rigveda II 20 § 458), apparently intending with this neuter noun not just any fluid or liquid, but the s o m a - j u i c e in particular.[19]

   Bergaigne, who on principle severely opposed the splitting of words and their meanings as practised by "l'école allemande" of Roth, Müller, Grassmann, spoke out against their "interprétation pittoresque" of the R̥V with particular clarity when he discussed this word. In his Études, 1884, 81-2, s.v. **1. *ándhas***, he calls "le dédoublement du mot *ándhas* en deux homonymes ... une hypothèse gratuite" because the meaning "obscurité" is, according to him, not at all necessary in the three verses where it was admitted by Roth and Grassmann. The interpretation of *ándhas-* as 'Soma' also in these three places does not raise

---

[16] Sanskrit-Wörterbuch [PW]. Herausgegeben von der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, bearbeitet von Otto Böhtlingk und Rudolf Roth. Erster Theil (1852-1855). St. Petersburg (= "First Indian Edition", Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990).

[17] For the time being, I do not intend to discuss the problem of yet another split meaning, now *within* **2. *ándhas***: Does this neuter only denote the Soma *juice*, as Ludwig, Der Rigveda I & II, and Bergaigne, Études 82 ff., thought, or also the Soma *plant*, as has been assumed by Böhtlingk & Roth, PW I 258, Grassmann, Wörterbuch 67, and so many other scholars? A discussion — and, perhaps, solution — of this problem will be presented elsewhere.

[18] Hermann Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda ([1]1875). 6., überarbeitete und ergänzte Auflage von Maria Kozianka. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996.

[19] Alfred Ludwig, Der Rigveda oder Die Heiligen Hymnen der Brâhmana. Erster und Zweiter Band. Prag: F. Tempsky, 1876.

difficulties serious enough to warrant the splitting of the word into two homonyms, he thinks.[20]

Geldner, Vedische Studien III, 1901, 53 and n. 3, agrees with Bergaigne on *ándhas-* in 1.62.5b, accepting that here it means 'Soma', but thinks Bergaigne is not justified in denying the meaning 'darkness' for the same neuter at 1.94.7c.[21]

1. Some twenty years later, Geldner, Der Rigveda I, 1923, 73, translated the first occurrence of the word at ṚV 1.62.5ab *gṛṇānó áṅgirobhir dasma ví var uṣásā sū́r̥yeṇa góbhir **ándhaḥ*** as "Von den Aṅgiras' besungen hast du Meister *das Dunkel* aufgedeckt samt der Morgenröte, der Sonne, den Rindern".[22]

In the second edition of the first part of Geldner's Übersetzung, Der Rig-Veda I, 1951, 81, we find an almost identical translation of these two lines ("Von den Aṅgiras' gepriesen ..."), but also a new note on 5b, suggesting an alternative rendering: "Oder: 'er deckte *den Somatrank* samt der Uṣas, dem Sūrya, den Kühen auf' ".[23]

This is what Bergaigne, Études 81, had called "l'interprétation très naturelle" of the passage, quoting Ludwig's translation in support: "il a découvert l'*ándhas* en même temps que l'aurore, etc." (Études 81-2).[24]

[20] Abel Bergaigne, Études sur le lexique du Ṛig-Veda. I. [= Extrait du Journal Asiatique, 1883]. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1884.

[21] Richard Pischel und Karl F. Geldner, Vedische Studien. Dritter Band. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1901.
Walter Neisser, Zum Wörterbuch des Ṛgveda. Erstes Heft. (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes: XVI. Band, Nr. 4). Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1924, 45 s.v. 1. *ándhas* n. 'Dunkel', refers to Geldner without having anything new to add.
Manfred Mayrhofer, Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen [EWAia], I. Band. (Indogermanische Bibliothek: Reihe 2, Wörterbücher). Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992, 78f. s.v. *andhá-* 'blind' mentions *ándhas-* n. 'Finsternis, Dunkel' as occurring in the ṚV "[1, 94, 7 u.a.]" as well as later ("MS +") and refers, in his turn, to Neisser. This is the retro-progressive way our science sometimes advances!

[22] Karl F. Geldner, Der Rigveda übersetzt und erläutert. Erster Teil. (Quellen der Religionsgeschichte: Band 12). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923.

[23] Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt und mit einem laufenden Kommentar versehen. Erster Teil: Erster bis vierter Liederkreis. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volume 33). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951.
The surprising change in Geldner's translations of the verbal compound — from "hast du ... aufgedeckt" to "er deckte ... auf " — seems, however, unjustified, since, in this context, *ví var* ought to be taken as a 2nd person (because of the adjacent vocative *dasma*) of the root-a o r i s t injunctive.

[24] Compare Alfred Ludwig, Der Rigveda II, 1876, 20 § 458: "besungen von den Aṅgiras, o wundertäter, decktest du mit der Uṣas, der Sonne[,] den rindern zugleich *das flüszige* auf ".

Oldenberg, Noten I 62, ad loc. argues: "Bergaigne's (Études) Leugnung von *ándhas* "Dunkelheit" ... ist unberechtigt. Mit der vorliegenden Stelle vgl. I, 68, 1; 91, 22; 92, 4; IV, 52, 6; V, 31, 3.[25] Sichere Belege aus Yajustexten bei Geldner, Glossar".[26]

2. Left to ourselves, we would confidently render the second Ṛgveda passage that was thought to contain *ándhas* 'darkness', namely, RV 1.94.7a-c *yó viśvátaḥ suprátīkaḥ sadṛ́ṅṅ ási dūré cit sán taḷíd ivắti rocase / rắtryāś cid **ándho** áti deva paśyas[i*, in the following way: 'You [O Agni] who are fair-faced and looking alike from all sides, you shine across, though being even far away,[27] [to appear] almost [as close as] a flash of lightning. You see, O Heavenly [Fire], even across the night's darkness'.[28]

---

[25] These are only five Ṛgvedic instances for the co-occurrence of the verbal compound *ví-var* 'disclose, uncover' with words for 'light' and (or) 'darkness': 1.68.1b *sthātúś carátham aktū́n **vᵢy ū́rṇot***, 1.91.22d *t*ᵤ*vám jyótiṣā **ví** támo vavartha*, 1.92.4cd *jyótir víśmasmai bhúvanāya kṛṇvatī́ gắvo ná vrajáṃ **vᵢy** uṣắ **āvar** támaḥ*, 4.52.6b ***vᵢy āvar** jyótiṣā támaḥ*, 5.31.3d ***ví** jyótiṣā saṃvavṛtvát támo **vaḥ***.
A few further examples could be added, for instance: 4.51.2cd ***vᵢy ū** vrajásya támaso d*ᵤ*vắr[ā u]chántīr **avrañ** chúcayaḥ pāvakắḥ* or, with the near-synonymous preposition *ápa* in place of *ví*: 2.11.18c ***ápāvṛṇor** jyótir ắr*ᵢ*yāya* and 10.73.11c ***ápa** dhvāntám **ūrṇuhí** pūrdhí cákṣuḥ*.

[26] Hermann Oldenberg, Ṛgveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten. [I:] Erstes bis sechstes Buch. (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse. Neue Folge: Band XI. Nro. 5). Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1909.
Further below, in Sections **B.1.**, **B.2.**, and **B.3.**, we shall examine those "sichere Belege" — namely, the three occurrences of *ándhas-* purported to mean 'darkness' in passages from the Black Yajurveda: MS, KS, and TĀ — in order to find out e x a c t l y h o w c e r t a i n they are in their respective contexts.

[27] For the predominantly a d v e r s a t i v e sense of the present participle of the root *as/s* 'to be, to exist [as]', I may perhaps precociously refer to my paper "On the Concessive Meaning of ***sánt-*** in Vedic" (Studies on the Present Participle: 2), a small part of which was read at the 13th World Sanskrit Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, 10th-14th July, 2006. The entire article is now being prepared for publication.

[28] Compare Geldner's translation, I I 122: "Der du nach allen Seiten ein schönes Angesicht, den gleichen Anblick bietest, du leuchtest, auch wenn du in der Ferne bist, herüber, als wärest du nahe. Du Gott blickst auch durch das Dunkel der Nacht". And the rendering by Renou, EVP XII 24: "Toi qui as un beau visage en toutes directions, (étant toujours) pareil, tu brilles à l'extrême, même quand tu es au loin, comme (si tu étais) près. | O dieu, même à travers les ténèbres de la nuit tu vois".

But we should let ourselves be warned again by Bergaigne, Études 82, who asks the following, apparently rhetorical question: "Enfin, pourquoi ne serait-il pas dit ... qu'Agni « découvre le Soma », c'est-à-dire peut-être la lumière, « hors de la nuit », cf. I, 50, 10?"

For this idea, Bergaigne refers to ṚV 1.50.10 *úd vayáṃ támasas pári jyótiṣ páśyanta úttaram / deváṃ devatrā́ sū́ṛyam áganma jyótir uttamám* 'Up from out of the darkness around [us] watching the upper light [arise], we have come to [see] the uppermost light: Heavenly Sun among the Heavenly'.[29]

Interestingly, Lüders, Varuṇa I 319, after rendering ṚV 1.94.7c with "Du, Gott (Agni), schauest selbst durch das *ándhas* der Nacht", comments: "Hier scheint allerdings die Bedeutung "Dunkel" am nächsten zu liegen; aber könnte nicht auch hier etwas wie "die trübe Flut der Nacht" gemeint sein?"[30]

In asking thus, the German scholar seems to be on the point of graduating from "l'école allemande", which had been so openly exposed to severe criticism from outside that school by Bergaigne the Frenchman. As we shall see, Lüders will prove to have freed himself fully of this *Schulzugehörigkeit* at the next stage, when interpreting the last of three alleged 'darkness'-attestations of *ándhas*-.

3. Belonging just half-heartedly to "The German School" myself, I cannot help thinking that it is in the third ṚV passage at least — namely, at 7.88.2c — that the neuter noun *ándhas*- is most likely to be intended in the sense of 'darkness'. This undeniably *obscure* passage occurs in the 7th Maṇḍala, which is the Song-Cycle of the Vasiṣṭhas. The entire stanza 88.2 runs as follows:

> *ádhā nᵤ̄v àsya saṃdṛ́śaṃ jaganvā́n*
> *agnér ánīkaṃ váruṇasya maṃsi*
> *sᵤ̄vàr yád áśmann adhipā́ u **ándho***
> *ₐbhí mā vápur dṛśáye ninīyāt*
> Now that I have come to **see** him all at once,
> I consider the **face** of Fire to be that of Varuṇa.

> When ***Sun*** was in the rock *and yet* master over ***darkness***,
> may he have led me[31] to the ***sight*** of his wonderful ***form***.[32]

If, for once, we were allowed to neglect Renou, whose translation of this stanza follows so closely the rendering by Lüders as to be a French version of it,[33] the German scholar would stand out as The One who has seen eye to eye with Bergaigne, in that he, too, denies the necessity of assuming more than one meaning for *ándhas-*.[34]

As can be gathered from my own translation of the stanza quoted above, I choose to disagree.[35]

---

[31] My rendering of *ninīyāt* with '***may*** he have led [me]' — but I should perhaps prefer to say: 'he ***might*** have led [me]' because the wished-for vision of his god is well beyond even the most fervent wish of the poet, who can never be sure whether it has been graciously granted to him or not — could constitute an all-too-literal translation of the perfect optative, and is predictably apt to make the skeptical reader raise an eyebrow or two. For a less 'literal' understanding of this mood, see Stephanie W. Jamison's contribution to the present volume, "Where Are All the Optatives? Modal Patterns in Vedic".

[32] Here are a few representative translations of the second distich of this stanza:
Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda übersetzt, 1951, II 259: "Die Sonne, die im Fels(verschluß) <u>und</u> die ***Finsternis*** möge mir der Oberaufseher [Varuṇa] vorführen, um das Schauspiel zu sehen".
Heinrich Lüders, Varuṇa I, 1951, 320: "Möge er mich zu der Sonne, die im Felsen ist, <u>und</u> der schützenden ***Somaflut*** führen, daß ich die Wunderdinge schaue".
Karl Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1967, 145 n. 75: "die Sonne, welche im Felsen <u>trotzdem</u> Herr über die ***Finsternis*** ist".
Jared S. Klein, Toward a Discourse Grammar of the Rigveda. Volume I: Coordinate Conjunction. Part 2. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1985, 29: "When the sun is in the rock, <u>and</u> ***darkness*** is master, may he lead me out to see (his) wondrous (appearance)".
Toshifumi Gotō, "Vasiṣṭha und Varuṇa in ṚV VII 88 ..." Indoarisch, Iranisch und die Indogermanistik. Arbeitstagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft vom 2. bis 5. Oktober 1997 in Erlangen. Herausgegeben von Bernhard Forssman und Robert Plath. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2000, 150: "Wenn das Sonnenlicht im Felsen [ist], ist <u>nun</u> die ***Finsternis*** der Oberaufseher. Zur Wundergestalt möge er mich [unbedingt] hinzuführen, um [sie] zu sehen".

[33] See Louis Renou, EVP V, 1959, 71, for the rendering of ṚV 7.88.2cd: "Le soleil qui est dans la roche <u>et</u> la ***plante*** (de *soma*) gardienne, veuille (Varuṇa) m'y conduire pour que je voie la forme-merveilleuse!" and EVP VII, 1960, 25, for his explanatory notes on it.

[34] Of all the scholars whose interpretations I have compared, Hoffmann is the only one who has duly rendered to the particle *u* the *adversative* value it deserves as its own. See, in the second-last footnote, his translation of *u* with 'nevertheless' ("*trotzdem*").

[35] Stephanie W. Jamison kindly drew my attention to the noteworthy fact that an 'obscurity'-meaning of *ándhas-* n. in this stanza is made all the more likely since by the double occur-

B. The existence of a second, homonymous *ándhas-* signifying 'darkness' is made certain — Geldner, Vedische Studien III, 1901, 53 n. 3, believed — by its appearance in two other Saṃhitās, both belonging to the Black Yajurveda, namely, in the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (MS) and the Kāṭhakam or Kaṭha-Saṃhitā (KS),[36] where the meaning 'Soma' does not seem to have made any intelligible sense to the scholar.

1. The first of these two Saṃhitā passages, MS 4.6.7:89.17-8, runs thus: *ándho vā́ idám āsīd ávyāvṛttam áhar ā́sīn ná rā́tris tád devā́ ṛtugraháir vyā́vartayan yád ṛtugrahā́ gṛhyánte 'horātráyor vyā́vṛttyai* 'This [All] was [all] indistinct *ándhas*; day it was, not night. The gods made *that* (that is, *ándhas* or, rather, *áhar* 'day') distinct by the draughts of the seasons. That the draughts of the seasons are drawn serves for the distinction of day and night'.

It is difficult to see how *ándhas-* n. in this cosmogonic context could possibly have the straightforward meaning of 'darkness', since it appears to be identified with *áhar-* n. 'day', and not, as one might have expected, with *rā́tri-* f. 'night'.[37]

Therefore, we may have to decide that here *ándhas-* n. is used in the sense of 'Soma-like liquid', something similar to the old juice: half *clear*, half *obscure* — a cosmic, or else, atmospheric kind of fluido *c h i a r o s c u r o*.[38]

---

[36] rence of the root *darś/dṛś* 'to see' showing up on either side of it — once in *saṃdṛ́śam* of line a, and once in *dṛśáye* of line d — the dark word *ándhas-* n. is set off as distinctly v i s i b l e. Darkness is thus antithetically highlighted by a repeated reference to e y e s i g h t. Emphasis is further brought to bear on Vasiṣṭha's Varuṇa-inspired v i s i o n a r y p o w e r — which enables him to see what is hidden thrice (((an arcane triad of things kept secret: in the fire, in the rock, in the dark))) — by the neuters *ánīka-* 'face, front' in b and *vápus-* 'miraculous appearance' in d, since the luminous phenomena meant by these two nouns are both eminently v i s u a l.

[36] Actually, it is also attested in a third Saṃhitā, one that has close ties with the second (KS), namely, the Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha-Saṃhitā (KpS), for which see below.

[37] Apart from the fact that it would not befit a neuter like *ándhas-* to be the same or similar in meaning as compared with a noun so eminently feminine in gender as *rā́trī-/rā́tri-*. Cf. Wilhelm Schulze, Kleine Schriften, 2. Auflage, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966, [Nachträge zur 1. Auflage von 1934] 794 ff. See especially Schulze's critical comment on Böhtlingk's 1889 translation of ChU 8.4.2 *tasmād vā etaṃ setuṃ tīrtvāpi* **naktam** *ahar evābhiniṣpadyate* ("Darum wird auch die Nacht, wenn sie diesen Damm überschritten hat, zum Tag"), op. cit. 798: "Freilich bin ich nicht sicher, ob Böhtlingk richtig konstruiert, indem er *naktam* als Subjektsausdruck nimmt. [...] Das führt auf die Möglichkeit einer ganz anderen Übersetzung: "Zur Nachtzeit entsteht Tag(eshelle)". Jedenfalls hätte das PW der Upaniṣad-Stelle keinen neutralen Nominativ *naktam* entnehmen sollen ... D e n n n e u t r a l - es G e s c h l e c h t d a r f m a n f ü r e i n e i n d i s c h e B e n e n n u n g d e r N a c h t getrost als U n g e h e u e r l i c h k e i t bezeichnen ...".

[38] Compare the aforementioned rendering of *ándhas-* at ṚV 1.94.7c, which was tentatively

One is reminded of poetical expressions such as **Milch** *der Frühe* (Paul Celan) for 'early dawn'. Compare also the Homeric formula νυκτὸς **ἀμολγῷ** (Ilias 4x, Odyssea 1x, Hymni 1x),[39] recently treated by L. Melazzo.[40]

2. The second Saṁhitā passage, KS 7.6:67.13-4 (= KpS 5.5:64.1-2), on the other hand, reads: *ahar vai devānām āsīd rātry asurāṇāṃ te devās tamaso* **'ndhaso** *mr̥tyo rātryā abhyāplavamānād abibhayuḥ* 'Day belonged to the gods, night to the demons. The gods were afraid of *darkness*, **andhas**, *death*, *night*, as IT [!!] came floating towards [them]'.[41]

In this enumeration of four nouns, *andhas-* n. would seem, at first (and most superficial) blush, simply to be used as a gloss and synonym of the immediately preceding *tamas-* n. 'darkness'. But then these two neuters could just as well be different from one another, even as different in meaning as the following two non-neutral nouns — *mr̥tyu-* m. 'death' and *rātrī-* f. 'night' — obviously are.

3. Whether *ándhas-* in the somewhat unreliable Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, namely, at TĀ 1.11.3 *ápāgūhata savitā́ tŕ̥bhīn / sárvān divó* **ándhasaḥ** can mean 'darkness' seems very doubtful at first glance. Geldner, Vedische Studien III, 1901, 53 n. 3, does call the occurrence "unklar".[42]

---

considered by Lüders as a possible alternative to "Dunkel", namely, "*die* **trübe Flut** *der Nacht*".

[39] It would seem to me that Celan's **der Frühe** on the one hand and Homer's **νυκτὸς** on the other represent two different *kinds* of genitive, and that only the first is a *genetivus identitatis*.

[40] Lucio Melazzo, "Nachtmilch". Arbeitstagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft 1997 in Erlangen, 2000, 349-59. See also Calvert Watkins' contribution to this volume, "The Milk of the Dawn Cows Revisited".

[41] The ablative singular of the present participle *abhy-ā-plavamāna-*, on account of its ending in -*āt* (m. or n.), does not agree in gender, as could have been expected, with the last-mentioned feminine *rātrī-* 'night'. It must, therefore, collectively refer to the group as a whole. Since, in this set of four nouns, all three genders are represented, and because t h e t h i r d g e n d e r regularly predominates in such combinations, the adjectival ablative *abhyāplavamānād* has to be taken as a neuter.

But also, this attributive participle may be said to qualify that floating and fluctuating thing of the demons — that dark-ness-death-and-night conglomerate — which is so aggressively closing in on the gods, as something uncannily threatening, as a *monstrum horribile* deprived of both male and female characteristics. The more familiar genders of *mr̥tyu-* **m**. 'death' and *rātrī-* **f**. 'night' are thus effectively n e u t r a l i z e d.

[42] In their metrically quite regular environment, the apparently irregular verses of this distich could easily be mended to the two octosyllabic lines *ápāgūha**ta** savitā́ / tŕ̥bhīn¹ sárvān divó 'ndhasaḥ*, with a **na**-*vipulā* sequence of syllables (◡ ◡ ◡ —) in the second half of the first, and an expected iambic cadence (◡ — ◡ —) in the second pāda.

But let us examine this TĀ passage — with all the careful attention to detail that every Vedic text deserves, and especially a "somewhat unreliable" one — on the following two pages, in order to see if *ándhas-*, which occurs in the equivocal form of *ándhasas*, really is as obscure and uncertain as it may appear on first impression. And in case it does prove to be dark and ambiguous, then let us find out in what *clearly distinguishable double sense* it has to be taken.

If we are willing to accept, for the time being, that the unique *i*-stem *tŕ̥bhi-* m. may have been abstracted from an *s*-less *stŕ̥bhis* (ṚV 8x), the instrumental plural of *stár-/stŕ̥-*,[43] and that therefore it should be taken to mean 'star' — not 'ray', as the TĀ commentators thought, who glossed *tŕ̥bhīn* with *raśmīn*[44] — our passage could be rendered in the following, possibly satisfying way:

'[Heavenly] Savitar hid (= outshone) all the stars *of* heaven's darkness (= surpassed in splendour their [astral] light with his own [solar] light)'. Alternatively, it could equally well be translated like this:

'[Heavenly] Savitar hid (= saved, protected) all the stars *from* heaven's darkness [so that, though being invisible during daytime, they would shine again in the next night as bright and twinkling as in the last]'.

Since the case-form *ándhasas* need not be a genitive, and *apa-gūh* 'hide away' can naturally be construed with an ablative, the latter rendering of the sentence may seem an even better possibility.[45]

The hiding away of the stars by the sun — whether it was meant as eclipsing or preserving their light, or as both of these in one and the same act of hiding — must have taken place in the early morning, even before actual sunrise, that is to say, at daybreak.

---

[43] Thomas Burrow, Archivum Linguisticum 9, 1957, 136, remarks on what he calls the "curious" stem *tŕ̥bhi-*, occurring at TĀ 1.11.3 and allegedly meaning 'ray', that it "looks like a creation based on a misunderstood instrumental plural (**tŕ̥bhis* = RV *stŕ̥bhis*, which we can assume as a variant form since the *s*- of this word is movable)".

[44] In obvious dependence on the indigenous Indian tradition, Otto Böhtlingk, Sanskrit-Wörterbuch in kürzerer Fassung. Dritter Theil. Sankt Petersburg: 1882 (= "First Indian Edition" Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 41c, s.v. *tŕ̥bhi*, posited "S t r a h l" as the meaning of this noun.

[45] For the construction of *apa-gūh* with the ablative in the sense of 'hide away from', see the following three oldest Vedic examples: **1**. ṚV 7.100.6c *mā́ várpo **asmád** ápa gūha etád* 'Do not hide [any more] that form [of yours] from us', **2**. ṚV 10.17.2a *ápāgūhann amŕ̥tām **márt₍ᵢ₎yebhyaḥ*** 'They (the gods) hid the immortal [woman] from the mortals', and **3**. ŚS 19.56.2cd (≈ PS 3.8.2cd) *tátaḥ svapnedám ádh₍ᵢ₎y ā́ babhūvitha **bhiṣágbhyo** rūpám apagū́hamānaḥ* 'Out of that (Yama's Kingdom of Death) you have come to be here [as a manifestation of the Otherworld], O Sleep, hiding your [dream-]form from the physicians'. Translated thus, this sentence has an attractive anti-'T r a u m d e u t u n g' ring about it.

The above-quoted TĀ distich is immediately followed by an octosyllabic metrical line that ends in an iambic cadence; and this line would then refer back to the time preceding dawn: *náktaṃ tā́ny abhavan dṛśé* '*During* the night,[46] they *had been* visible'.[47]

With the neuter pronoun *tā́ni* either the night's heavenly luminaries, *jyótīṃṣi*, or the constellations, *nákṣatrāṇi*, may be intended. Although the gender of *tā́ni* does not agree, I should think that, nevertheless, the author means the masculine (or feminine?) *stars*, **stā́ras*.[48]

Conclusion

Bergaigne's critical principle to accept only *one* meaning for *one* word — beneficial as it can be in all cases of unnecessary multiplication of meaning — must prove inappropriate wherever the exegete is confronted with irrefutable homonymy. Or, more specifically, when he is faced with a newly-coined word that enters, at least for some time, into competition with an old, well-established one. We may consider *ándhas-* n. 'darkness' to be such a competitor. It makes its first, sporadic appearance some time in the R̥V and withdraws again from the contest in late Vedic prose at the latest, virtually leaving the field to its superior namesake, *ándhas-* n. 'Soma'.

Virtually, I say, because in the meantime, that combatant had also withdrawn from the battle, and was destined to die from its wounds soon after the confrontation: *Et le combat cessa faute de combattants*. To be sure, this is not what usually happens in a case of *Homonymenkampf*, where one of the two fighters survives the fight. Rather, the victory that was won by *ándhas-* n. 'Soma' over *ándhas-* n. 'darkness' was one that may fittingly be called a *Pyrrhussieg*.[49]

---

[46]   The 'adverb' *náktam*, if taken in its original sense, that is, as an accusative of temporal *extent*, does not simply mean '[some time] at night' but 'all night long, all through the night (= from dusk to dawn)'. It is as clear as the starlit night sky that in our TĀ passage, *náktam* has to be understood in its earlier *extensive* meaning — or else, in the sense of Pāṇini's *atyanta-saṃyoga-* (Aṣṭādhyāyī 2.3.5) "ununterbrochene Fortdauer" (Otto Böhtlingk, Pânini's Grammatik. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1887, 56).

[47]   In Vedic, the imperfect may function as a pluperfect *in meaning*; and often the context calls for taking it in that sense. The pluperfect *in form*, on the other hand, need not be one in meaning.

[48]   The 'original' gender of the 'star'-word will be discussed elsewhere, together with the problem posed by the hapax *i*-stem *tṛ́bhi-* m. 'star' as a *de-casuative* derivation.

[49]   And if the Romans at Asculum had known about it, they could have drawn not a little comfort and consolation from the earlier defeat of Darkness by King Soma.

Now, I suspect that our dark word — fighting bravely, but ever so briefly — was invented by the poet of RV 7.88, the seer Vasiṣṭha, a particularly visionary *ṛ́ṣi*, and that it was made up in the same way as portmanteau words generally are made up: by deliberately blending two words and their meanings into one.[50]

There cannot be any doubt, I should think, as to the two words that went into the making of this second *ándhas-* n., different not in form but in meaning from *ándhas-* n. 'Soma'. They must have been the adjective **andhá-** 'blind'[51] and the neuter noun **támas-** 'darkness'.[52]

The Formula

In the operation of their cross-breeding, the bulk of the body for the new word to be fashioned was donated by *andhá-*, intonation and suffix by *támas-*, in a manner that can be formulated thus:

---

[50] For three extreme metrical examples of Vasiṣṭha's inventiveness, see RV 7.88.6c *mā́ te énasvanto yakṣin bhujema*, discussed in section I. 2. ("Second Degree of MWC"), and RV 7.20.6a *nū́ cit sá bhreṣate jáno ná reṣan* as well as RV 7.88.3d *prá preṅkhá īṅkhayāvahai śubhé kám*, discussed in section II. 2. ("Fourth Degree of MWC") of my paper "The Mid-Word Cæsura in the Ṛgveda: Degrees of Metrical Irregularity", part of which was read at the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, 14-9 July, 2003, Helsinki. A considerably extended and elaborated version of that paper is now ready for publication.

[51] Even though, out of the 19 occurrences of *andhá-* in the RV (I:8x, II:1x, IV:4x, VIII:1x, X:5x), none is attested in Song-Cycle Seven, no student of the language will seriously suppose, I suppose, that Vasiṣṭha the Seer got so rapt and wrapped up in his visions that he became blind to the existence of the common Sanskrit word for 'blind'.

[52] The adjective **andhá-** (RV 19x) as epithet of **támas-** (RV 113x) occurs in four places of the RV, at 1.100.8c *andhé ... támasi*, 4.16.4c (= ŚS 20.77.4c) *andhā́ támāṃsi*, and 10.89.15c = 10.103.12d (= VS 17.44d) *andhéna ... támasā*, as well as in several new passages of the AV: at ŚS 9.2.10b (≈ PS 16.76.9b) *andhā́ támāṃsi*, at ŚS 18.3.3c (= TĀ 6.12.1c) *andhéna ... támasā*, and at PS 10.12.12b = 15.19.4b *andhena tamasā*.

Cf. also VS 40.3b (= Īśopaniṣad 3b) = ŚB 14.7.2.14b (= BĀUM 4.2.14b = BĀUK 4.4.11b) *andhéna támasā*, VS 40.9a = 12a (= Īśopaniṣad 9a = 12a) = ŚB 14.7.2.13a (= BĀUM 4.2.13a = BĀUK 4.4.10a) *andhám támaḥ*, and *andhé támasi* in MS 1.6.6:96.2, ŚB 1.2.4.16 & 1.9.2.35, JB 3.350:1, PB 16.1.1.

Pāṇini, by the way, knew a compound *andha-tamas-á-*, as is clear from the fact that he provided for its formation by introducing in his grammar the so-called *samāsānta-pratyaya-*, or compositional suffix, *aC /-á-/* after *tamas-*; see Aṣṭādhyāyī 5.4.79 *ava-sam-andhebhyas tamasaḥ* [75 *aC* 68 *samāsāntāḥ*].

Although not a single member of this little *-tamas-á-* group-of-three thus provided for by the late-Vedic grammarian appears to be attested in any extant Vedic text, the oxytone **á**-compounds **ava-tamas-á-**, **saṃ-tamas-á-**, and **andha-tamas-á-** must have existed in the language described by Pāṇini — or else he wouldn't have taken the trouble to 'teach' their composition as a regular grammatical operation.

$$a\mathbf{ndh}\acute{a} \times t\acute{a}\mathbf{mas} = \acute{a}\mathbf{ndhas}$$

The *one meaning* that resulted from the crafty combination of the *two words* was 'b l i n d = d a r k n e s s' ('blin**d**arkness'), a meaning not entirely new, you may object, but new enough, I would retort, to provoke me to try and capture it by means of an equally, or even more, factitious, if not facetious, noun that I may be allowed to coin for the nonce in English, the portmanteau word — *sit venia verbo* — '***blark**ness*'.[53]

Epilogue

To be sure, there has been an (almost effortless) attempt at explaining *ándhas-* n. 'darkness' as being directly derived from *andhá-* 'blind', an attempt that seems to have, in addition to its easiness, the advantage of being more 'grammatical' than my own — rather, poetically oriented — effort. That alternative explanation is implicit in Sāyaṇa's (or else, Mādhava's) commentary on two ṚV passages, 1.62.5b and 1.94.7c. There, the neuter *ándhas* is glossed with *andhakāram* 'darkness' (literally, 'that which makes b l i n d').

The alternative is made more explicit by Böhtlingk & Roth, PW I 258 s.v. ***ándhas***, where we find a reference to PW I 257 s.v. ***andhá*** 1, b.[54] The meaning indicated in that other place is "*blind machend, wobei das Auge nichts sieht*, von einer dichten Finsterniss", and a number of Vedic passages are adduced in support of that transferred meaning. Significantly, it is always *támas-* n. 'darkness' that co-occurs with *andhá-* 'blind' in those text-places. See the numerous examples quoted above, in footnote 52, from ṚV (4x), ŚS (2x), PS (3x), VS (3x), and a few other Vedic sources.

---

[53] For clarity's sake, let me refer the critical reader back to the prologue of this paper, where I have mentioned various types of portmanteau words. The formative process that led to ***ándhas*** is very close in character to the one that resulted in ***chortle***. As explained above, *chuckle* and *snort* show no phonetic overlap at all — in sharp contrast to the conflicting n o i s e s indistinguishably commingled in the v o i c e of one who would daringly attempt to imitate, by trying simultaneously to produce a chuckle and a snort, the jubilant exultation (*Callooh! Callay!*) of the father of that brave *beamish* boy, who, having killed the Jabberwock with his *vorpal* sword and proudly holding the *manxome* foe's chopped-off head in his hand, went *galumphing* back home.

Nor do *andhá* and *támas* share any sounds. If, for once, we follow Sanskrit phonetics, then the one 'generic' short *a*-vowel is tonally differentiated into three basic realizations (*anudātta **a*** [1], *udātta **á*** [2], *svarita **à*** [3]), so that the sound sequence ***a...á*** of ***andhá*** ([1]...[2]), if held against the — only just seemingly same — sequence ***á...a*** of ***támas*** ([2]...[3]), cannot be considered identical with it.

[54] Cf. also M. Mayrhofer, EWAia I 79: "***ándhas-***[2] n. Finsternis, s. *andhá-*".

There is certainly nothing wrong with the metonymical use of an adjective that means 'blind' in the sense of '*making* blind'. In fact, semantic shifts of this kind may occur in any language, and they are particularly popular with poets, who are prone to employ them in preference to naïvely straightforward expressions.[55]

It is w o r d   f o r m a t i o n, however, which could give us pause. And should it not strike us as strange that for Wackernagel & Debrunner, AiGr II 2, 227-9 §127a, "*ándhas-* 'Dunkel' : *andhá-* ‘f i n s t e r, b l i n d’ "[56] seems to have been the sole example of a neuter *as*-stem standing, if only obliquely, side by side with an oxytone adjective in -*á*- which happens to display the same ablaut of the root — namely, the full-grade — although that root itself is as yet unknown?[57]

---

[55]   In view of the argument formulated in the latter half of the following footnote — to the effect that here we are confronted with a semantic gap that yawns, if only suppressedly, between 'blind' and 'darkness' — I would fain set no great store by this general linguistic fact.

[56]   Jakob Wackernagel, Altindische Grammatik, Band II 2: Die Nominalsuffixe von Albert Debrunner. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954 (= 1987).
The meaning-indication "f i n s t e r" which has been given for *andhá-* in addition to ‘b l i n d’ is not justified at all. I doubt if any Vedic poet in his right mind (in a mind worthy of being mind-*read*) would have taken the superfluous trouble pleonastically to qualify darkness as 'dark' when he used the expression *andhá- támas-* in one of its various case-forms. Or should he, by any chance, have seriously chosen — from among the many eligible adjectives at his disposal, and in preference to all the other (by far more telling and meaningful) epithets — the most tautological and unimaginative one?
The additional "f i n s t e r"-meaning, purported to be primary, was apparently meant to make the assumed etymological relation of noun and adjective look more likely by building a seemingly passable bridge across the semantic gap that yawns, even though it is narrow, between ‘b l i n d’ and ‘d a r k n e s s’ — irreparably separating the two brinks of the chasm from each other. Anyone bold enough to take a brave stand on either side of the abyss — whether it is the ‘b l i n d’ edge or that of ‘d a r k n e s s’ doesn't really matter — and to open *both eyes*, would **see** the discrepancy.

[57]   As Calvert Watkins reminded me, a relative of *andhá-* 'blind' may be attested in Latin *andabata-* 'blindfolded gladiator'. See C. Watkins, "'Blind' in Celtic and Romance". Ériu 34, 1983, 113-6 = Selected Writings, Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1994, 691-4, especially 115 = 693: "The first element of this compound is very plausibly cognate with Ved. *andha-* and Av. *anda-* 'blind'. It represents another marginal conservation in Celtic and Indo-Iranian of what is apparently a, perhaps even the Indo-European primary vocable for 'blind'".
Cf. also M. Mayrhofer, EWAia I, 1992, 79 s.v.: "Gall. **anda-* 'blind' in lat. (< gall. ?) *andabata* m. Gladiator mit geschlossenem Visier (*Blind-Kämpfer) bleibt hypothetisch; dazu C.-J. Guyonvarc'h, Ogam 15 (1963) 107 ff.".

The suggestion made by Wackernagel & Debrunner, AiGr II 2, 229 §127bα, that the abstract noun *ándhas-* 'darkness' is a derivation ("Ableitung") from the adjective *andhá-* 'blind', does not exactly make it easy for us to understand *ándhas-* as a r e g u l a r formation. For we do not seem to have any convincing parallels i n S a n s k r i t that would support this supposedly plausible process. Nor did I think it likely that, from the morphological point of view, an adjective formed with the primary or *k̥t*-suffix *-á-* should belong to the Caland *Formen-verband* — until I was told by Brent Vine that this is precisely what recent research has revealed with respect to the 'Caland system' i n I n d o - E u r o p e a n.[58]

A close Sanskrit parallel could perhaps be seen, as Alan Nussbaum kindly pointed out to me at the conference, in *dákṣas-* 'Geschick' (R̥V 4x) vis-à-vis *dákṣa-* 'geschickt' (R̥V 93x). However, if we put this pair to the test, it may prove disparate. To begin with, the one that seems to be an original adjective is accented differently from *andhá-* 'blind'. Also, *Wortart* and *Bedeutung* of these two words are not as clearly opposed to one another as the indication 'Geschick' :: 'geschickt' would make us believe, since, in the great majority of its ninety-three occurrences, *dákṣa-* is unmistakably used as a noun in the abstract sense of 'Tüchtigkeit' and the like.[59] As a matter of fact, there are not even t w e n t y places in the R̥gveda where this word seems to have an adjectival meaning; and that smallish fraction amounts to no more than a meager f i f t h part of the total number of *dákṣa*-occurrences.[60]

---

[58] It is, above all, Alan Nussbaum who, treading in the trailblazing footsteps of his Harvard teacher Jochem Schindler, has been active, for some thirty years, in this new (battle?)field of research. Any belated antagonism that I might be so foolhardy as to direct, in dead earnest, against the protagonist(s) could prove, I am painfully aware, not only epigonal, but also suicidal. If, in what follows, I dare, nevertheless, playfully to polemize (or agonize?) by raising a few wayward objections that would seem to militate in favour of my conclusion, then this will be done mainly on the basis of Vedic evidence (or rather, of its absence), though also in the spirit of Greek eristic and Germanic *Streitlust* — not to mention the Irish *Shandeism*.

   What may be considered an extremely extended Caland system, which would include even root-nouns and *o*-stems, is described by Alan J. Nussbaum in, for instance, "**JOCIDUS*: An Account of the Latin Adjectives in *-idus*". Gedenkschrift Schindler, 1999, 377-419.

[59] See PW 3, 480-1 s.v. *dákṣa* **2**. m.: meanings *a* - *e*. Apart from the use of the masculine noun *dákṣa-* as proper name — that is, as theonym of Dakṣa the Āditya, son (and, paradoxically, also father) of Aditi — quite a motley crew of heterogeneous words supposed to be synonyms can be recruited from the Sanskrit-Wörterbuch and, even more motley, from Geldner's Rigveda-Übersetzung. Both this translation and, to a lesser degree, that dictionary, regale us with a choice assortment of variegated vocables that seem to pay tribute to a diversity of expression so richly polychrome and picturesque as could have made Bergaigne wish he were blindfolded or, at the very least, colour-blind.

[60] Brent Vine, as if to give voice to my own subdued doubts, has alerted me that the same

Wackernagel, more than one hundred years ago,[61] suggested, albeit very hesitantly ("??"), that the adjective *dákṣa*- may have been substituted for (or, as he prefers to put it, "phonetically transformed" from) an original *dakṣrá- < *deksró-, which he thought belonged — together with *dakṣi*- (as in Vedic *dákṣiṇa*- [ṚV 57x]) < *deksi- (as in Greek δεξιτερός) — to the new-born, and by then (1897) already well-known, Caland system.[62]

Although it just m i g h t be true that in the formation of *dákṣa*- and *dákṣiṇa*- two different roots are involved — *deks (or *dekᵘs) 'to be able' on the one hand, and **dek̂s* 'to be dexterous (?)' on the other[63] — Wackernagel must be granted the intuitive (and, quite possibly, also well-founded) feeling that the adjective *dákṣa*- does not fit in with the abstract noun *dákṣas*- in the assumed way.[64]

———————

'fraction' — however 'smallish' it may appear when compared with the total number of ninety-three *dákṣa*-occurrences — could be turned into an argument against my reasoning and in favour of the alternative view that, initially, there existed only an oxytone *dakṣá- 'geschickt' (which may, or may not, reflect an original *dakṣrá-), and that, secondarily, this adjective was then substantivized, with accent retraction, as the actually attested *dákṣa*- 'Geschick'. While, in that view, the intonation of the old but original word has completely died out, its meaning has survived, to an extent that cannot be neglected, under the guise of the new. After all, the noun does seem to have an adjectival sense in almost *twenty* passages. And with such a respectable figure — even though this amounts to no more than a 'meager' one-fifth minority — the adjective has succeeded in making a fairly good *score*.

[61] Jacob Wackernagel, Vermischte Beiträge zur griechischen Sprachkunde, Programm zur Rektoratsfeier der Universität Basel, 1897, 3-62 = Kleine Schriften ²I, 1953, 764-823. The chapter we are interested in here ("3. ΑΡΓΙΚΕΡΑΥΝΟΣ und Genossen", 8-14 = 769-75) discusses Greek b a h u v r ī h i compounds, such as ἀργι-κέραυνος, the first members of which are Caland forms in -*i*- regularly substituted for non-compositional forms in -*ro*-.

[62] See J. Wackernagel, loc. cit. 11 = 772: "Dem *deksi*- aller dieser Formen [i.e. of δεξι-τερός etc.] entspricht vielleicht vedisch *dákṣa*- »geschickt« als phonetische Umwandlung von indog. *deksro*- ??"
W. Caland published his highly influential discoveries in 1892 (KZ 31, 266-68) and 1893 (KZ 32, 592) [= "Beiträge zur kenntniss des Avesta" 19. and 26. respectively]. In the first of these two 'contributions to [our] knowledge' (Beitrag 19.), evidence for the apparently regular substitution of -*ra*- (and -*ma*-) with -*i*- was adduced from Avestan, in the second (Beitrag 26.), from Vedic.

[63] Mayrhofer, EWAia II 689-91 s.vv. **DAKṢ** and **dákṣiṇa**- (with literature) and ¹LIV 95-6 s.v. "?***deks**' 'fähig sein, es jmdm. recht machen' are in favour of the difference, whereas the more recent ²LIV 112 s.v. **dek̂s* 'taugen, tüchtig sein' prefers to posit only one unitary root for both Vedic *dákṣiṇa*- (cf. Av. *dašina*-, Greek δεξιός, δεξιτερός 'rechts') and *dákṣate* 'taugt, ist tüchtig' (keeping Av. *daxš*- [< *deks or *dekᵘs] separate from that root).

[64] The actual employment in the Ṛgveda of *dákṣa*- and *dákṣas*- suggests that we may have to

There is perhaps another potential candidate for the alleged morphological parallelism. And that is *máhas-* n. 'greatness' :: *mahá-* 'great'. This pair is not quoted by W. & D., AiGr II 2, 227-9 §127a. Instead, we find, loc. cit. *β*, a reference to "v. *máhas-* 'Größe' (: v. *mah-* 'groß')".

The abstract noun *máhas-* n. 'greatness' (RV 27x) is obviously old; cf. YAv. *mazah-* 'Größe, Fülle' (attested at Yasna 58.7 and Vendidad 7.51). As regards, however, the adjective *mahá-* 'great' — which occurs, according to A. Lubotsky, Concordance II 1052b-1053a, 42 times in the R̥gveda (***maháḥ*** 18x, *mahásya* 1x, ***mahé*** 6x, etc.), as against hundreds of occurrences of the original *máh-* (*máhi* 118x, *mahā́m* 25x, *mahā́* 6x, ***mahé*** 89x, ***maháḥ*** 142x, etc.)[65] — Wackernagel, AiGr III 251 § 138, remarks: "Ausweichungen in die Flexion nach dem bequemern Stamm *mahá-* sind v. [= r̥gvedisch] ziemlich häufig: NSg. m. *maháḥ* oft (für **mahā́ḥ*), LSg. *mahé* [RV 6x] (für *mahi), GSg. *mahásya* nur [RV] 1, 150, 1c [für *maháḥ*], GPl. *mahā́nām* [RV 5x] (für *mahā́m* [RV 2x])".

A certain degree of uncertainty is created by ambiguous forms like ***mahás*** and ***mahé***, which may belong either to the original *máh-* or to the secondary *mahá*-paradigm. The context of such forms does not always help to remove the ambiguity:

mahás is doubtful in at least **5** of the **18** attestations traditionally counted as nom.sg. (at 1.61.7b, 1.133.6a, 1.146.5b, 6.17.10a, and 8.26.23c), while ***mahé*** is similarly dubious in **2** of the **6** text-places where it has been alleged to occur as a loc.sg. (at 1.116.13b and 9.66.13a). Thus, a full third of the conventionally adduced instances is affected by doubt.[66]

---

do with two abstract nouns formed with different suffixes but of one and the same kind, the form of the former occasionally functioning as an adjective.

Yet, it is also possible to assume — and this assumption, I am bound to admit, would be apt somewhat to weaken, even in my own judgement, the probative power of my ostentatiously strong position on the matter — that two words, originally different in kind, had coalesced in *dákṣa-*: the barytone noun *dákṣa-* and an oxytone adjective **dakṣá-* (← **dakṣrá-* [?]), that the adjective got gradually absorbed by the noun, and that finally, when the prehistory of the two words came to a literary halt in the R̥gveda, the noun ended up being used five times more frequently than the adjective.

[65] Alexander Lubotsky, A R̥gvedic Word Concordance, Part I: A-N, Part II: P-H. (American Oriental Series: Volumes 82 and 83). New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1997.

[66] Of the older paradigm, nom.sg. *mahás and loc.sg. *mahi are thought not to have survived into Vedic. *mahás, however, may be lurking under some of the 80 *mahā́n* instances that are attested in the R̥gveda. They include 47 pre-vocalic occurrences of *mahā́m̐* (with nasalized [*anunāsika*] *ā́*), where the nasalization could perhaps be seen, at least in certain cases, as a device to prevent secondary vowel contraction. These forms may all belong to the *mahā́nt-*

For a possibly parallel pair of words to be fully convincing — semantically as well as morphologically — at least four necessary conditions would have to be fulfilled:

1. same *ablaut* of the root (full-grade),[67]
2. different *intonation* (*ándhas-* :: *andhá-*),[68]
3. different *function* (abstract noun :: adjective),[69]
4. different *meaning* ('darkness' :: 'blind').

By virtue of the last condition, the other aforementioned hypothetical candidate for comparison[70] — namely, *máhas-* n. 'Größe' :: *mahá-* 'groß' — is destined to fail us as well, falling short of our all-too-great expectations. For even if we do not consider the morphological problems indicated above (perhaps with too sharply-pointed a finger) as probative adverse reasons for a fully justified objection to the intended formal parallelism, this second pair could claim to be a valid parallel only in case the abstract noun *ándhas-* n. meant *'**blind**ness' — which is exactly what it does ***not*** mean.[71]

---

paradigm, to be sure; but see AiGr III 251 § 138: "NSg. m. **mahā́-s* ist aus dem v. Neutr. *maháḥ* zu erschließen und verbirgt sich wohl an manchen Stellen hinter *mahán* vom St. *mahát-* [i.e. *mahā́nt-*]". Cf. also Chr. Bartholomae, KZ 29, 1888, 566 ff.

[67] Because of this first and apparently most important *sine qua non*, pairs like Greek μέγεθος (Ion. μέγαθος) 'grandeur' :: ἀγαθός < **m̥ĝh₂-dʰh₁-ó-s* 'fort, puissant' (cf. Georges-Jean Pinault, "Grec ἀγαθός". MSS 38, 1979, 165-70) or YAv. *-drājah-* (~ Ved. **drā́ghas-*) 'length' :: *darəγa-* (~ Ved. *dīrghá-* [R̥V 33x, ŚS 20x (+)]) 'long', both of which pairs were mentioned to me at the Kyoto conference, cannot be counted, I am sorry to say, as valid examples.

[68] On the strength of this second, equally indispensable qualification, it is now the identical *udātta*-intonation of the root-syllable that makes the presumably close and fitting pair *dákṣas-* 'Geschick' :: *dákṣa-* 'geschickt' a mismatch unfit for comparison — for a comparison that would impose itself upon our critical judgement, and not only impress us with a semblance of like(li)ness.

[69] As was brought into prominence above, *dákṣa-* is predominantly used in the same abstract sense as *dákṣas-*. These two nouns, although they seem to be similarly related, do therefore not qualify as a satisfactory parallel even under condition three.

[70] Apart, that is, from *dákṣas-* n. 'Geschick' :: *dákṣa-* 'geschickt'.

[71] The meaning 'blindness' is expressed in Vedic by two other nouns. Unlike *ándhas-*, these actually are derived from *andhá-*: the (*i*)*ya*-formations **1**. **andhiya-** n., occurring twice in the Paippalāda-Saṁhitā of the Atharvaveda, at PS 2.81.2a (*andhiyam*) and PS 7.15.6c (*andhᵢyāt*), and **2**. **āndhya-** n., attested some time later, in the oldest Śrauta-Sūtras of the Black Yajurveda, at BaudhāyanaŚS 2.5:39.6 and VādhūlaŚS 15.9 (*āndhyam*) — not to mention the post-Vedic abstracts *andhatā-* f. and *andhatva-* n. in the same sense of *andhasya bhāvaḥ* (according to Pāṇini, Aṣṭādhyāyī 5.1.119 *tasya bhāvas tva-talau*).

In the absence of any decisive Vedic evidence in favour of the alleged derivational process — which, as I see it, would carry conviction only if it showed how *andhá-* could have led to *ándhas-* in a **regular** kind of way[72] — I prefer to explain *ándhas-* 'darkness' as a particularly successful portmanteau word in the production of which the poet willfully blended *andhá-* 'blind' with *támas-* 'darkness' in the artistic Carrollian manner pictorially described above.[73]

For good measure, a lucky *fifth* condition could finally be added to the list of four: Even *if* a couple of parallel formations fulfilling all the four indispensable prerequisites pedantically enumerated above w e r e eventually found, those two would still have to vie, in beauty and elegance, with a poet's ingenious portmanteau word distinguishing itself — by being both t w o - i n - o n e and o n e - i n - t w o — as singularly dual as the semi-split leaf of a *Gingko* **biloba**.

One-in-Two Afterthought(s)

"(Ich habe noch nie eine Bemerkung darüber gelesen, daß, wenn man ein Auge schließt und «nur mit einem Auge sieht», man die Finsternis (Schwärze) nicht zugleich mit dem geschlossenen sieht.)"[74]

And is it not also worth noticing that, if we decide to look at a word — in the broad d a y l i g h t of grammatical analysis — with one eye alone, we do *not* see at the same time its poetical n i g h t s i d e with the eye that is closed?[75]

That is indeed noticeable and seems to be true — so long as we keep the second eye *shut*.[76]

For a detailed discussion of *andhiya-* and *āndhya-*, see Werner Knobl, "Zwei Studien zum Wortschatz der Paippalāda-Saṃhitā". The Atharvaveda and its Paippalādaśākhā. Historical and Philological Papers on a Vedic Tradition. Edited by Arlo Griffiths and Annette Schmiedchen. Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2007, 36 ff.

[72] Even in case we seriously consider, from a PIE(-eyed) point of view, that the ancestors of the neuter noun *ándhas-* and of the multigeneric adjective *andhá-* could have made a legitimate couple in an extended, wide-ranging, well-nigh all-embracing {Caland {Schindler {Nussbaum}}} family of forms, a pairing of this peculiar sort would seem to have become highly i r r e g u l a r — and certainly un(re)p r o d u c t i v e — by the time of the Vedic language.

[73] As I have suggested in my foregoing Conclusion, it may be the poet Vasiṣṭha — that most vigilant and visionary seer of the hymn ṚV 7.88, the second stanza of which has been discussed in section **III. A. 3.** — who invented the portmanteau word *ándhas-* n. 'darkness'.

[74] Ludwig Wittgenstein, Werkausgabe [in 8 Bänden], Band 8. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, ⁶1994, 419, "Zettel" 615.

[75] A curious grammarian eager to know, 'Is this poetical *night**side real** ?' — has given the answer himself in so asking.

[76] But are we to keep it shut *for ever*? And what will happen if we open both eyes at one and the same time? Will we be able to see? Night as clearly as Day? May ***tristrom* siriusly help us to that **sidereal** clarity!

S*T*A*R*S

FOUR-IN-ONE

Werner F. Knobl, Kyoto University[*]

*per as**pera** s*[**]

Those who know me, and are familiar with the digressive propensity I have been inclined so freely to follow in some of my recent writings, will not be surprised at finding themselves exposed to an article that consists almost exclusively of excursuses. But let me prefix at least a brief *avant-propos* and *avis au lecteur*.[1]

As I have explained in the Foreword-and-Introduction above, the original paper "Portmanteau Words in the Ṛgveda" — part of which was read at an international conference on Indo-European studies held at Kyoto University in 2007, on September 11 and 12 — included a total of four excursuses. They had to be withdrawn, however, for reasons of spatial limitation, from the final version of the article as it is now published in the proceedings volume of that conference.[2]

---

[*] It is an immense pleasure for me to acknowledge, with all due gratitude, the generous help and advice I have received from Diwakar Acharya, Masato Kobayashi, Catherine Ludvik, and Brent Vine.

[**] Is the final sibilant of this *yamaka*-like line perhaps the ***s** mobile* that came to be removed from its initial position in some forms of the Sanskrit 'star'-word? Cf. **1.** the *hapax* nominative plural *tā́ras < *stā́ras* (= YAv. *stāro*), which sadly fell into oblivion after a single meteoric apparition 'in the sky' at ṚV 8.55.2b *diví **tā́ro** ná rocante*, **2.** the more fortunate derivative *tā́rakā-* f. (ŚS 4x [+]), which largely outlived, in Vedic and well beyond, its extinct ancestor *stár-/stṛ́-*, and **3.** the very curious newcomer *tṛ́bhi-* m., attested just once, at TĀ 1.11.3, for which see below, Excursus 1.

If, alternatively, the same educational motto — which I may be excused from not quoting in full, in all its trite triviality — were less drastically truncated, and only portmantelized into *perasperastra*, would the *ad*, by being dropped, make us arrive more directly *at* the stars?

[1] *Post festum*, I ask myself: Have I perhaps paid too much of an unconscious tribute to the *Zeitgeist* — or shall I say: *Zeitgeist**in*** — in contributing *mon petit apport* of a fair share, with major parts of the following four digressions and one sub-excursus at the end of the first, to the trendy *gender* studies of our times, although, to be sure, little more than *grammatical* gender seems to be belaboured in these gratuitous efforts of mine?

[2] East and West. Papers in Indo-European Studies edited by Kazuhiko Yoshida and Brent Vine. Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2009, 89–110.

If I could have kept these digressions in their proper place, i.e. after section B.3. of "The Third Case: Blind Darkness", page 100 of my "Portmanteau Words", I would have introduced them in the following way:

I hope to be excused for dangerously deviating — in no fewer than *four* consecutive digressions — from the track. I will make sure, however, not to forget, in my digressive progress, that our main topic is, after all, the portmanteau word. And so, may the following, partly lengthy aberrations, in their variously divergent ways, not stray too far afield. Or if they do, let them ultimately lead unto parcels of tillable land, despite all the scholarly *shandeism* that seems to be distracting me.

Excursus 1 : The masculine *i*-stem *tŕbhi-* 'star'

The unexpectedly productive starting-point of my first excursus — and, in its wake, of all the other digressions — was a short, seemingly innocent little sentence in the Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka (TĀ), where the controversial noun and potential portmanteau word *ándhas-* n. 'blind darkness' seemed to occur for the last time in Vedic.

As it so happens, in that same TĀ passage, we also come across an *hapax legomenon*, the apparent *i*-stem *tŕbhi-* m., which was unanimously glossed with *raśmi-* 'ray' by the TĀ scholiasts.[3]

Now, in the context of the metrically irregular 'distich' TĀ 1.11.3 *ápāgūhata savitā́ tŕbhīn / sárvān divó ándhasaḥ* — which could be regularized, as I have suggested above,[4] to the two octosyllabic verses **ápāgūhata savitā́ / tŕbhīnᵗ sárvān divó 'ndhasaḥ** — the traditional meaning 'rays' for *tŕbhīn* undeniably works, if we understand the whole sentence in the sense of 'Savitar (the Sun) hid all his *rays* from heaven's darkness'.

An unknown word can be imagined to signify all kinds of things if it occurs only once. And a single context will not suffice to fix its exact meaning, unless the unequivocal grammatical analysis of the word results in an incontrovertible etymology.

According to a rule or principle advocated by the German Iranist Friedrich Carl Andreas — which r. or p. may therefore be styled *das Andreas-Prinzip* or *die Andreas'sche Regel* — at least *three* independent text-passages are needed if we

---

[3] See the commentaries [1] of Sāyaṇācārya (Bibliotheca Indica edition by Rājendralāla Mitra, Calcutta, 1872, 87) and [2] of Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara Miśra (Bibliotheca Sanskrita edition by A. Mahādeva Śāstrī and K. Raṅgācārya, Mysore, 1900, 89): *tŕbhīn* [=] *raśmīn*.

[4] See "Portmanteau Words", 100 n. 42 for a few metrical details.

wish to determine, with a fairly good measure of accuracy, the unknown meaning of a word.[5]

It is not very likely that the original meaning of our *hapax* noun *tŕbhi-* was familiar to any of the commentators: Sāyaṇa (14th c.) probably relied on Bhāskara (10th c.?), who in turn may have depended on a predecessor, unknown to us. For all we *do* know, the gloss [*tŕbhīn* =] *raśmīn* might have been conditioned by some vague sound-association of the *nirukta*-type that suggested the meaning 'ray' to them.[6] But what homœophonic word or words could have worked this trick, I am at a loss to say with any reasonable degree of certainty.

For the time being, I can think of only one word that would be vaguely assonant to *tŕbhi-* in sound, and not too dissonant from it in sense. That word is the astrological term *tribha-* (**tri-bh-á-*) n., an apparently *complexive* compound, whose two Bedeutungen are given by Böhtlingk & Roth, PW 3, 438 s.v., as 1. "drei Zodiakalbilder, Quadrant eines Kreises, neunzig Grad" and 2. "drei Zodiakalbilder umfassend", with indirect reference to Sūryasiddhānta 7.10 and 14.16 (*tribhaṃ māsatrayaṃ syāt*) as quoted in Haughton's Bengali-Sanskrit Dictionary (*non vidi*). Cf. also Böhtlingk, pw 3, 52b.

A neuter *bha-*, meaning 'star' or 'constellation', is enumerated in a series of six non-masculine (near-)synonyms at Amarakośa 1.1.2.22cd *nakṣatram ŕkṣaṃ* **bhaṃ** *tārā tārakāpy uḍu vā striyām.*

Although this noun is ultimately based on the Vedic root *bhā* < PII **bʰaH* < PIE **bʰehₐ*₂ "glänzen, leuchten, scheinen" (²LIV 68 s.v.), short-voweled *bha-* n. is not entitled to be called a root-noun with the same right as *bhā́-* f. 'Glanz, Licht, Schein' (VS 30.12 [+]).[7]

Rather, *bha-* may have been abstracted from some compound(s) in which the original long root-vowel *-ā-* was substituted with the compositional suffix *-á-*.[8]

---

[5] In his classes and private conversations, Paul Thieme — who was pupil of Andreas (1846–1930) in the twenties — sometimes mentioned this rule or principle, which he had heard directly from his Göttingen teacher. See also Bernfried Schlerath, Indo-iranisch **var-* 'wählen'". Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik, Heft 5/6 (Festschrift Paul Thieme), 1980, [199–206] 199 = Kleine Schriften, Band II, Dettelbach: J. H. Röll, 2000, [564–574] 564: "Paul Thieme hat gelegentlich erzählt, F. C. Andreas habe die Ansicht vertreten, daß es möglich sein sollte, die Bedeutung eines unbekannten Wortes festzustellen, wenn es wenigstens dreimal in jeweils verschiedenen Kontexten belegt sei". Schlerath once mentioned to me that he had heard this also from his own teacher Herman Lommel (1885–1968), who too was Andreas's pupil.

[6] For an instructive example of this sort, see below, Excursus 4: Stars and Steers.

[7] Compare also (-)*bhā́-* in compounds such as *bhā́-tvakṣas-* "lichtstark" (Geldner) (ṚV 1x); *abhi-bhā́-* f. '[feindlicher] Anschein'; "Erscheinung, Unglückszeichen" (Böhtlingk / Roth); "böser Blick" (Geldner); "portent" (Whitney)' (ṚV 1x, ŚS 6x); *pra-bhā́-* f. 'Vorschein, helles Licht' (VS 30.12 [+]); *vi-bhā́-* f. 'weites Licht' or 'weithin leuchtend' (ṚV 1x); etc.

[8] Or, as Debrunner, AiGr II 2, 77 § 23a, describes the same process of formation: "Wurzeln auf *-ā-* erscheinen als Hinterglieder vor dem Suffix *-á-* ohne das *-ā-*, d.h. in der

That compound would have to be fairly old, because *bha-* n. occurs already several times in late-Vedic Gṛhya-Sūtras: at Āgniveśya-GS 2.5.3:21; Kauṣītaka-GS 1.17.3, 2.7.8; Baudhāyana-GS 3.7.16; Śāṅkhāyana-GS 1.25.5, 2.11.9.

When Sāyaṇa, Bhāskara — or any possible predecessor — glossed, in their respective commentaries on TĀ 1.11.3, the masculine *tṛ́bhi-*, they may have associated it with the similar-sounding neutral noun *tribha-* '[complex of] three constellations'. But in that — no more than just imaginable — case, they should have attributed to it the meaning 'star' (or 'constellation'), rather than 'ray', although for a reason entirely different from that of Burrow, whose etymology will be discussed further below.

If, on the other hand, the Indian glossators had to guess at the meaning of *tṛ́bhi-* while exclusively depending on its occurrence in this single context, then 'ray' is as good a conjecture as many another; but our well-advised adherence to Andreas's principle will not allow us to put too confident a trust in their *ad-hoc* decision.

Thus, we seem to have come to a deadlock. The stalemate will only be broken if a striking etymology is found for *tṛ́bhi-*. As I have already mentioned above, "Portmanteau Words", 101, "the unique *i*-stem *tṛ́bhi-* m. may have been abstracted from an *s*-less *stṛ́bhis* (RV 8x), the instrumental plural of *stár-/stṛ́-*". And that ingenious suggestion was made by Thomas Burrow.[9]

In his review of Manfred Mayrhofer, KEWA I, 1956, Burrow, Archivum Linguisticum 9, 1957, 136, observes that *tṛ́bhi-* "looks like a creation based on a misunderstood instrumental plural (**tṛ́bhis* = RV *stṛ́bhis*, which we can assume as a variant form since the *s-* of this word is movable)".[10]

---

antevokalischen Tiefstufe", which means, in the case of *bhā*, as *bh-* ; see the many examples given op. cit., 77 ff.

[9] Among linguists, a curt witticism, whose ultimate source seems to be unknown, is bruited about: "Etymologies are either obvious or wrong". In case this saying were meant to be true, and not just witty, most etymologies in the *etymological* sense of the word would have a difficult stand. But are we to believe that the only possible opposition to 'wrong' is 'obvious', that there are no *other* alternatives, and that the characterization of any given etymology as, for example, 'likely', 'striking', 'attractive', 'convincing', 'original', or 'ingenious', disqualifies it at the outset as 'wrong' *by definition*? If so, then every etymological 'truth', in order to be acceptable *as* 'true', would have to be a *truism*. And here we may wonder whether *all* scholars would agree to fancy an *all-truistic* kind of truth, or perhaps, rather not. I for one should prefer to disagree.

[10] In order to be *fully* convincing, it would have been necessary for Burrow to find out where exactly this alleged misunderstanding of the instrumental *stṛ́bhis* as an *i*-stem may have happened. So far as the Ṛgveda is concerned, there is not a single instance among the *eight* occurrences of *stṛ́bhis* that could have been misunderstood in any such way.

And after the ṚV, this particular case-form is no longer incontestably attested. The only word that can still be considered a likely candidate is **stṛ́bhís* at ṚVKh 1.11.6a. However, this asterisked reading will perhaps prove an all-too-easy emendation for < *stribhíś* > as written in Scheftelowitz's 1906 edition because, alternatively, the actually occurring *stribhíś* could be

For the *s*-less variant of *stár-/stṛ́-*, see the Vedic *hapax* nom. pl. *tā́ras* = *stā́ras*[11] in a Vālakhilya Dānastuti, at ṚV 8.55.2ab *śatáṁ śvetā́sa ukṣáṇo diví tā́ro ná rocante* 'A hundred white *steers* shine like *stars* in the sky'.[12]

Let us, therefore, resolutely acknowledge an odd nonce *i*-stem *tṛ́bhi-*.[13] That stem would mean 'star', according to Burrow's — not "obvious", but convincing — etymology, rather than "Strahl", as was first posited by Böhtlingk, pw 3, 1882, 41c, s.v. *tṛ́bhi*,[14] in apparent dependence on the TĀ commentators, who had glossed *tṛ́bhīn* with *raśmī́n* 'rays'. And once that new *i*-stem is accepted as having an *astral* sense, our TĀ passage acquires a fully satisfying meaning, or even *two*.

Depending on whether we take *ándhasas* as a genitive or an ablative, the translation of TĀ 1.11.3 would have to be either [1] 'Savitar (the Sun) hid (= outshone, 'overshadowed') all the stars *of* heaven's darkness' or [2] 'Savitar (the Sun) hid (= saved, protected) all the stars *from* heaven's darkness'.[15]

---

justified as a cross between *tribhíś* and *stṛ́bhiś*. If this strangely suggestive word *stribhíś* — which ought to be taken in the sense of 'with (the) three stars' — were therefore interpreted as a blend, it would *hide*, rather than reveal, the instrumental plural of the original 'star'-word.

For a more detailed discussion of the attested word's mixed understanding as a portmanteau formation, see further below, Excursus 2.

[11] The Vedic *stā́ras* had already become extinct, when their *closest relatives*, the YAv. *stārō*, were still shining in the Avestan Hymn to Sirius, at Yt. 8.8 etc.

[12] Cf. Geldner, II 377: "Hundert weiße *Stiere* glänzen wie die *Sterne* am Himmel". Being aware of the fact that *steer* may mean 'castrated young male of bovine animal', I dare take the liberty to 'de-castrate' the adolescent bull's definition of its defective part and, in consequence of the operation, to use the English *steer* in the sense of its German cognate *Stier*.

For the more specific meaning of *ukṣán-* m., newly interpreted as 'Farren, Jungstier' by Catharina Kiehnle, see her excellent Tübingen doctoral dissertation: Vedisch *ukṣ* und *ukṣ/vakṣ*. Wortgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchungen. (Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien: 21). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979, 54 and *passim*.

[13] Similarly, we have to accept an *u*-stem *apsu-*, abstracted from compounds like *apsu-kṣít-* (ṚV 1x), *apsu-jā́-* (ṚV 1x, ŚS 1x, VS 1x [+]), *apsu-jít-* (ṚV 8x), *apsu-vā́h-* (SV 1x), *apsu-ṣád-* (ṚV 1x, ŚS 2x, VS 2x), *apsú-saṁśita-* (ŚS 1x) — where it still functions as the original locative *apsú* 'in the waters' — because of the adjective *apsavyà-* ('belonging [typically] to water'). For this word is clearly derived, by means of the *svarita*-suffix *-yà-* (the tit-suffix yat in Pāṇini's grammatical system), from the secondary, obviously delocatival 'neo-stem' *apsu-*.

Attestations of the *yà*-formation *apsavyà-* are found in three different Saṁhitā passages: at MS 2.3.3:30.16–17, KS 12.6:169.2, and KS 35.15:61.4. In these text-places, *apsavyà-* qualifies **1.** Varuṇa (divinized personification of 'The Word' or 'True Speech'), **2.** his [two] retributive nooses or snares (*pā́śau*), and **3.** the giant [water-]snake *ajagará-* (literally, 'goat-swallower'), respectively.

[14] For the exact reference, see above, "Portmanteau Words", 101 n. 44.

[15] The three oldest Vedic attestations of the verbal compound *apa-gūha-*[ti/te] 'hide away [from]' that co-occur with an ablative have been quoted and translated above, in their respective contexts: ṚV 7.100.6c, ṚV 10.17.2a; ŚS 19.56.2cd (≈ PS 3.8.2cd); see "Portmanteau Words", 101 n. 45.

Against the nocturnal background of *divó ándhasaḥ* 'heaven's darkness' — which implies no fewer than two feminine nouns: both *nákt-* 'night' and *dyú-/div-* '[day]sky' — a masculine *tŕbhi-* in the sense of 'star' will twinkle with considerably *sidereal* clarity.

Sub-excursus: The femininization of the 'day-sky'

If the old word for 'day-sky' were seen exclusively from the distant viewpoint of Proto-Indo-European — where *$d_i$éu̯-* 'heaven' was called *ph_2tér-* 'father' and even deified as the *father*-god Heaven — it could be expected to remain masculine also in Sanskrit. And often *dyú-/div-* still *is* of the original gender in early Vedic; formulaic juxtapositions like the nominatives *pitā́ dyáus* (occurring, for example, at RV 1.89.4b, side by side with *mātā́ pṛthivī́*) or *dyáuṣ pitā́* (attested at 4.1.10d), and the vocatives *d̗i̯àuṣ pítar* 'O Father Heaven' (characteristically co-occurring with *pŕthivi mā́tar* 'O Mother Earth' at RV 6.51.5a) bear witness to this undeniable fact.[16]

We have to remember, however, that even as early as in the Ṛgveda, *dyú-/div-* '(day-)sky' was subjected to a transgeneric change, and that it shifted, mainly under the influence of its cosmological partner *pṛthivī́-* f. 'earth', from an old and obsolescent masculine to a new feminine that promised a brighter and less patriarchal future, thus becoming congeneric with its homologue. The newly acquired gender is highlighted by words that qualify *dyú-/div-* '(day)sky' —

---

[16] It is, therefore, quite understandable, even though not altogether justified, that Norbert Oettinger, "Bedeutung und Herkunft von altindisch *jíhīte* (Wurzel *hā*)", Historische Sprachforschung 120, 2007, [115-127] 117, takes exception to Geldner's rendering of RV 5.32.9c *imé ... devī́* "diese beiden Göttinnen (Himmel und Erde)". Oettinger considers these feminine *duals* rather to be *elliptical*, and prefers to translate *imé devī́* as "diese Göttin hier und ihr Partner" — her partner obviously being 'jener Gott dort' — for the seemingly good reason that "die beiden, nämlich der männliche *dyauḥ* und die weibliche *pṛthivī*, ... als Himmel und Erde bekanntlich ein Paar bilden".

But is it so certain that these two divine entities, Heaven and Earth, have to be heterogeneric? Would their primordial separation be jeopardized if they were not? Or could they perhaps equally well be coupled as feminines, and, in forming a *female* pair, still preserve the original distance?

Relying on the argument that follows in the main text above, we may confidently answer to these three questions with 'No', 'No', and 'Yes', respectively.

Although Night (*nákt-* f.) and Dawn (*uṣás-* f.), in the guise of yet another cosmic couple, do not stand in as clear an opposition to one another as Heaven and Earth, they too, by being two feminines, quite naturally constitute a *sisterly* pair; see, e.g., RV 7.71.1a *ápa svásur uṣáso nág jihīte* 'Night withdraws from her Sister Dawn'.

preferredly certain *vṛddhi* case-forms of it[17] — and are clearly marked as feminines: pronouns (*sā́*, *iyám*, *imā́m* [6x], *amū́m* [2x]), numerals (*tisrás* [5x]), adjectives (*mahī́* [3x], *devī́*, *bṛhatī́*, etc.), or attributive nouns (*mātā́* and *áditis* at 10.63.3ab).

These are the verses in which they occur:

1.22.13a **mahī́** *dyáuḥ pṛthivī́ ca na[ḥ*
1.35.6a **tisró** *dyā́vaḥ savitúr dvā́ upásthā*
1.35.7d **katamā́m** *dyā́m raśmír asyā́ tatāna*
1.50.11b *āróhann* **úttarām** *dívam*
1.57.5c *ánu te dyáur* **bṛhatī́** *vīr̥yàm mama*
2.3.2b **tisró** *dívaḥ práti mahnā́ s̥uvarcíḥ*
3.32.8c *dādhā́ra yáḥ pṛthivī́ṃ dyā́m ut***émā́m**
3.34.8c *sasā́na yáḥ pṛthivī́ṃ dyā́m ut***émā́m**
4.53.5c **tisró** *dívaḥ pṛthivī́s tisrá invati*
5.53.5c *vṛṣṭī́ dyā́vo* **yatī́r** *iva*
5.54.9b **pravátvatī** *dyáur bhavati pravádbhyaḥ*
5.63.6d *dyā́ṃ varṣayatam* **aruṇā́m** *arepásam*
6.17.9a *ádha dyáuś cit te ápa* **sā́** *nú vájrād*
7.87.5a **tisró** *dyā́vo níhitā antár asmin*
7.101.4b **tisró** *dyā́vas tredhā́ sasrúr ā́paḥ*
8.20.6ab *ámāya vo maruto yā́tave d̥iyáur jíhīta* **úttarā** *bṛhát*
8.40.4d **iyáṃ** *dyáuḥ pṛthivī́ mah[ī́*
8.51.8c *yadéd ástambhīt pratháyann* **amū́ṃ** *dívam*
9.96.3c *kṛṇvánn apó varṣáyan dyā́m ut***émā́m**
10.59.7b *púnar dyáur* **devī́** *púnar antárikṣam*
10.63.3a *yébhyo* **mātā́** *mádhumat pínvate páyaḥ*
10.63.3b *pīyū́ṣaṃ dyáur* **áditir** *ádribarhāḥ*[18]
10.85.1ab *satyénóttabhitā bhū́miḥ sū́ryeṇ***óttabhitā** *d̥iyáuḥ*
10.88.3c *yó bhānúnā pṛthivī́ṃ dyā́m ut***émā́m**
10.88.9c *só arcíṣā pṛthivī́ṃ dyā́m ut***émā́m**
10.111.5c **mahī́ṃ** *cid dyā́m ā́tanot sū́r̥yeṇa*

---

[17] Among the following 30 occurrences of *dyú-/div-* that happen to be generically distinguished, only four are based on the weak stem *dív-* (which carries an *udātta*, though being in the zero-grade, and, in so far as it is thus accented, proves to be secondary): twice the acc. sg. *dívam*, at 1.50.11b and 8.51.8c, and twice the acc. pl. *dívas*, at 2.3.2b and 4.53.5c.

[18] Cf. Geldner's translation (III 234) of the distich 10.63.3ab: "[Die Götter:] Denen die Mutter süße Milch quillt, die felsenfeste Himmels-Aditi ihren Rahm", and his note ad loc.: "Die Mutter ist eben Himmel-Aditi. *dyáuḥ* ist hier Fem. und deutlich mit Aditi, der Mutter der Āditya's ... identifiziert".

10.121.1c *sá dādhāra pṛthivī́ṃ dyā́m ut**émā́m***
10.121.5a *yéna dyáur **ugrā́** pṛthivī́ ca dṛḷhā́*
10.125.7d *u]t**ā́mū́ṃ** dyā́ṃ varṣmáṇópa spṛśāmi*
10.133.5d ***mahī́**va dyáur ádha tmánā*
10.173.4a ***dhruvā́** dyáur dhruvā́ pṛthivī́*

If, on the other hand, *dyú-/div-* '(day-)sky' is taken in the alternative sense 'day(-sky)' and as the diurnal counterpart of *nákt-* f. 'night', then this second opposite number may have played an important supportive role in the generic shift m. → f. The frequent co-occurrence (ṚV 21x), in one and the same verse (18x) or distich (3x), of the adverbialized instrumental *dívā* 'by day, in the daytime' and the accusative of temporal extent *náktam* 'during the night', notably in the *pāda*-initial collocation *dívā náktam* (9x), could have exerted a supplemental pressure on the day's endangered and already sensibly weakened masculinity.

Also, the formal parallelism between *dyú-/div-* 'day, sky' and *gáv-/gó-* 'cow, bull', which was established by rhyming case-forms like *dyáus* (ṚV 107x) :: *gáus* (ṚV 22x), *dyā́m* (ṚV 94x) :: *gā́m* (ṚV 42x), *dyā́vas* (ṚV 21x) :: *gā́vas* (ṚV 101x), together with the fact that *gáv-/gó-* is prominently feminine, further contributed to the change in gender.[19]

I may perhaps add that, among the three above-mentioned rhyming case-forms of *dyú-/div-*, all of which are ultimately based on the accented full-grade stem-form PIE *$d\underline{i}\acute{e}\underline{u}$-*, the accusative singular *dyā́m*, because of the sound sequence *-ā́m*, offered itself most naturally to femininization.[20]

In post-Vedic Sanskrit, the femininity of the word for 'day-sky' is a *fait accompli*.

Now, since the unique *i*-stem *tṛ́bhi-* m. 'star' is likely to have been abstracted from an instrumental plural in *-bhis*, and could therefore be styled a *deinstrumentalal* derivative, we may as well digress into a new excursus, with the intent to discuss a few other interesting cases of *decasuative* formation.

---

[19] For this particular aspect of the problem, see Wackernagel, "Nochmals das Genus von dies", Glotta 14, 1925, 67 f. (= Kleine Schriften II, 1300 f.) and AiGr III 221 § 121c*ß*.

[20] In the lengthy list of lines quoted above, *dyā́m* occurs ten times, which is exactly one third of the total number of *dyú-/div-* occurrences that are clearly characterized as feminines. In those 10 verses, *dyā́m* is referred to with the three pronouns *imā́m* [6x], *amū́m* [1x], and *katamā́m* [1x], or is qualified with the attributive adjectives *mahī́m* [1x] and *aruṇā́m* [1x].

Excursus 2: New noun-stems from case-forms

It is most frequently the accusative that serves as starting-point for a new nominal stem, and sometimes for a complete new paradigm. Among the examples that spring to mind are cases like *dánta-* m. 'tooth' (ṚV 1x [+]) abstracted from *dántam* (ṚV 1x), acc. sg. of *dánt-/dat-* m. 'tooth' (ṚV 5x [+]); or *nára-* m. 'man' (TS 1x [+]) from *náram* (ṚV 16x), reinterpreted as *nára-m* instead of *nár-am*; or the new *a*-stem *mā́sa-* m. 'moon, month' (ṚV 7x [+]), from *mā́sam* (ṚV 1x), originally acc. sg. of the consonant stem *mā́s-* m. 'moon, month' (ṚV 15x).

The secondary stem *pā́da-* m. 'foot, quarter' (ṚV 4x [+]), on the other hand, could also be based on an acc. sg. *pā́dam* (ṚV 1x). But it seems much more likely that the naturally most characteristic case-form of this noun, whenever it refers to bipeds[21] — namely, the nom. acc. dual *pā́dā* (ṚV 5x) or *pā́dau* (ṚV 2x) '*the* two feet' — accounts for the reanalysis, and for the subsequent thematicization of *pad-/pā́d-* m. 'foot, quarter' (ṚV 35x [+]).[22]

Among examples for more unorthodox kinds of 'de-casuative' derivation, the following are quotable from the Ṛgveda:

1. The ṚVic hapax adjective **stráiṇa-** in a late hymn, at 10.95.15cd *ná vái stráiṇāni sakhₐyā́ni santi sālāvṛkā́ṇāṁ hṛdayānₐy etā́* ([The Apsaras Urvaśī, letting her hair down, is taking king Purūravas into her confidence] 'There are no alliances-of-loyalty with [us] women. Hearts of Hyænas are those [of ours]') can only be based on the gen. pl. of *strī́-* 'woman' (ṚV 11x [+]).[23] Although this particular case-form happens to be unattested in the ṚV itself, *strīṇā́m* does occur in all the other Saṁhitās.[24]

---

[21] The second meaning of *pad-/pā́d-* (that is, 'quarter') presupposes — just as naturally, if also more s q u a r e l y — a reference to q u a d r u p e d s, especially of the b o v i n e family.

[22] For these and similar cases of "Stammveränderung", and especially extensions of c o n s o n a n t stems ("Stammerweiterungen") with *-a-*, see Jacob Wackernagel & Albert Debrunner, Altindische Grammatik [AiGr], Band III: Nominalflexion — Zahlwort — Pronomen. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930 [= 1975], 319 ff.

[23] *stráiṇa-* is also attested in the AV: at ŚS 4.34.2d ≈ PS 6.22.3b, ŚS 8.6.4d ≈ PS 16.79.4d, and PS 11.2.7a. For this vṛddhi derivative in *-a-* from the gen. pl. *strīṇā́m*, see Wackernagel & Debrunner, AiGr II 2, 111 § 34 f and 734 § 562 b.

[24] These occurrences are the following: ŚS (2x) 7.14.1, 8.6.13; PS (3x [+]) 2.57.5, PSK 12.7.12 = PSO 11.16.12, PS 16.80.5; VSM 23.21 = VSK 25.6.1; MS 4.5.4:67.17; KS (3x) 28.8:163.7, 44.8:164.14 & 15; KpS 43.8:309.15; TS (2x) 7.4.19.1 & 2.

In order to provide for the formation of the adjective *stráiṇa-* 'womanly, female, feminine', Pāṇini had to introduce a unique taddhita-suffix **naň** — and another one, of equal uniqueness, namely, **snaň**, for the sake of deriving its counterpart *páuṁsna-* 'manly, male, masculine' from *púmaṁs-/puṁs-* 'man' — in his grammar, at Aṣṭādhyāyī 4.1.87 *strī-puṁs-ābhyāṃ naň-snaň-au* ...

2. The neuter noun ***dróṇa-*** '[wooden] vessel' (ṚV 13x) can be explained as substantivization of an original adjective derived from the secondary nominal stem **drúṇ-*, which may have been abstracted from oblique *n*-haltige case-forms of *dā́ru-/drú-* (ṚV 12x) 'wood', such as instr. sg. *drúṇā* (ṚV 5x) and gen. sg. *drúṇas* (ṚV 1x).

The adjective ***dāruṇá-*** 'hard' < *'wooden' — which occurs just once in a Saṁhitā (PS 1.58.2c) and repeatedly in three Brāhmaṇas (ŚBM 1.2.3.8, 13.4.4.9; ŚBK 2.2.1.21, 4.4.1.14; JB 2.126: 3 & 4) — may owe its existence to a similar abstraction, but this time from secondary case-forms in *dā́ruṇ-*. See, for instance, the Atharvavedic loc. sg. *dā́ruṇi* (ŚS 6.121.2a) and instr. sg. *dāruṇā* (PS 16.51.2c).

3. The noun ***kṣoṇá-*** appears to be used only as a proper name in a single ṚV passage, at 1.117.8b; it does not seem to occur in the sense of 'herd of goats and sheep', whereas its YAv. cognate *fšaoni-* (Yt. 5.26, Yt. 9.9 [+]) means just that.[25] Based on the meaning "troupeau de menu bétail" (Benveniste) is that of the feminine ***kṣoṇī́-*** 'Geschrei' < 'Gebrüll einer [Klein]Viehherde'.[26]

Now, *kṣú-* n. 'cattle' (ṚV 2x) was substituted for **pśú-*, the zero-grade form of *paśú-* '[Klein]Vieh', according to Bloomfield's incontrovertible (?) etymology.[27] Oblique case-forms of the neuter noun *kṣú-*[28] would be **kṣuṇā*,

[25] The now generally accepted meaning "troupeau de petit bétail" was first established by Emile Benveniste, BSOS 8, 1935–37, 407, in his article "Sur quelques dvandva avestiques" (405–409).

[26] For a discussion of *kṣoṇī́-* f. as well as *kṣoṇi-* f., see Paul Thieme, "Über einige dualische Bezeichnungen von Himmel und Erde im Veda. II: *kṣoṇī́*" [Kuhns] Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung [KZ] 92, 1978, 36–49 = Paul Thieme, Kleine Schriften II, 1995, 893–906.

[27] See Maurice Bloomfield, "On some disguised forms of Sanskrit *paçu* 'cattle'". Indogermanische Forschungen 25, 1909, 185–199.

George Dunkel, FS Jasanoff, 2007, 54–55, on the other hand, thinks that Vedic *kṣú-* remains "controversial" because this nominal stem — although it was, as he is ready to admit, "impressively derived" from *paśú-* by Bloomfield — "might instead continue **Ks-sú* 'in rows' to indicate a great amount".

According to Dunkel, loc. cit., the loc. pl. **Ks-sú* is based on the well-known "Klingenschmitt root-noun" **Kás-* 'row, series, uninterrupted sequence' as it is attested in Greek, Avestan, and Sanskrit. See, for instance, the 'suffix' *-śás* in the Vedic distributive adverbs *deva-śás* 'god for god' (ṚV 1x), *pacchás* (← *pad-śás*) 'pāda for pāda' (AB, KB, ŚB, JB [+]), *śata-śás* 'by hundreds' (ŚS 1x [+]), *sahasra-śás* 'by thousands' (ṚV 1x [+]), etc.

[28] For the secondary form *kṣú-*, compare also *á-kṣu-* 'arm [an Vieh]' (ṚV 1x) and, in particular, *kṣu-mánt-* 'rich in cattle' (ṚV 13x [+]) as well as *puru-kṣú-* 'having many [head of] cattle' (ṚV 18x [+]): *kṣu-mánt-* ← **pśu-mánt-* and *puru-kṣú-* ← **puru-pśú-* clearly show how *kṣú-* has come about, that is, by dissimilation of one labial against the other.

*kṣuṇe, etc.,[29] or the gen. pl. *kṣūṇā́m ← *pśūnā́m.[30] They could have led to a spurious *n*-stem *kṣuṇ- or *kṣūṇ-,[31] and one of these may have served as derivational basis for both kṣoṇá- m. or n. and kṣoṇī́- f., which follows the *devī́*-inflection.[32]

4. Of the original consonant stem **nás**- f. 'nose' — or rather, 'nostril' — the regular nom. acc. dual was nā́sā. This form is found once in the Ṛgveda, side by side with three other dual forms of nouns that signify body parts occurring in pairs: the lips, the breasts, and the ears. That stanza, which addresses the Twin-Gods, is ṚV 2.39.6 **óṣṭhāv** iva mádh_uv āsné vádantā **stánāv** iva pipyataṃ jīváse naḥ / **nā́se**va nas tan_uvò rakṣitā́rā **kárṇāv** iva suśrútā bhūtam asmé 'Lip-like, [O Aśvins, be] uttering honey-sweet [words] to [our] mouth. Breast-like, swell [with milk] for [the nursing of] our life. Nostril-like, [be] (watchful) guardians of our body.[33] Ear-like, be attentive listeners among us!'

Now, the dual nā́sā, originally referring to 'the two nostrils', could as easily be (mis)understood in the sense of 'the nose' (that is, of *one* whole in place of *two* holes) as, for instance, *váyas*, nom. pl. of *váy-/ví-* m. 'bird' (ṚV 77x [+]) could acquire the collective meaning 'Geflügel, volaille' and lead to a new neuter *váyas*- (ṚV 1x [+]) with a secondary nom. acc. pl. *váyāṃsi* 'birds'.

Reinterpreted thus — in this productively wrong way — the original dual nā́sā would naturally lead to the creation of a new, more clearly defined

---

[29] Once, the gen. sg. kṣós is attested. In the innovative view of Dunkel, FS Jasanoff, 55 n.10, kṣós at ṚV 9.97.22b "shows a secondary hypostasis of a locative [i.e. of kṣú < **kś-sú] into a neo-genitive". (Notice the novel neologism!)

[30] Also here, the dissimilated anlaut of an original *pśu- could be explained as having been conditioned by a second labial in the same word: *kṣūṇā́m ← ***pśūnā́m**. Cf. Thieme, KZ 92, 49 = Kleine Schriften II 906.

[31] The only available '*n*-stem' of *paśú*- that occurs in the ṚV is the instr. sg. paśúnā at 10.87.16b (= ŚS 8.3.15b). The gen. pl. paśūnā́m is first attested in the AV (ŚS 25x [+]).

[32] A second stem kṣoṇī́- f. '[Klein]Viehherde' — corresponding both in form and in meaning to YAv. fšaoni- f. — has to be supposed for just one nom. pl. occurrence in a late ṚV passage, namely, at 10.22.9cd purutrā́ te ví pūrtáyo návanta **kṣoṇáyo** yathā "An vielen Orten brüllen deine [O Indra] Schenkungen (die Monsungewitter) wie Viehherden" (Thieme, KZ 92, 48 = Kleine Schriften II 905).

[33] Or else, as I fancy would be preferable: 'Nostril-like, [be] (vigilant) watch-*dogs* of our body'. The reason for my preference is this: the very mention of nā́sā suggests that the poet thought of *canine* guardians, whose keen sense of smell makes them particularly suited for watchful protection.

Compare the revealing epithet urūṇasá- < *uru-Hnas-á- 'with wide [and highly sensitive] nostrils' [and, consequently, 'with wide-ranging olfaction'], which is applied to Yama's two (twin?) messenger dogs at ṚV 10.14.12ab **urūṇasā́v** asutṛ́pā udumbaláu yamásya dūtáu carato jánāṃ ánu 'The two envoys of Yama [King of the Southern Kingdom of Death] — *fig-brown (?), wide-nosed, and feeding on [human] souls — move about among the people(s)'.

feminine *ā*-stem *nā́sā*-, the dual *nā́se* of which, referring again to the two nostrils, occurs as early as in the AV, at ŚS 5.23.3 (≈ PS 7.2.3) *yó akṣyàu parisárpati yó* ***nā́se*** *parisárpati / datā́ṃ yó mádhyaṃ gácchati táṃ krímiṃ jambhayāmasi* 'We crush that worm which creeps about the eyes, which creeps about the nostrils, which goes to the middle of the teeth'.[34]

Compare also *nā́sikā*- f. 'nostril' occurring once, in a single dual form, already in the RV, namely, at 10.163.1 (= ŚS 2.33.1 ≈ PS 4.7.1) *akṣī́bhyāṃ te* ***nā́sikābhyāṃ*** *kárṇābhyāṃ chúbukād ádhi / yákṣmaṁ śī́rṣaṇyàm mastíṣkāj jihvā́yā ví vṛhāmi te* 'Away from your eyes, nostrils, ears; from chin, brain, and tongue, I detract for your sake the wasting disease of the head'.

5. The mention of *akṣyàu* and *akṣī́bhyām* in the two Saṃhitā stanzas just quoted gives me occasion to point out that, while *akṣī́bhyām* (RV 1x, ŚS 3x [+]) depends in its form on the original nom. acc. dual *akṣī́* of the neuter consonant stem *ákṣ*- 'eye', *akṣyàu* (ŚS 8x [+]) is clearly based on a new -*ī́*-stem, which could only have come about because the nom. acc. dual *akṣī́* was reinterpreted as feminine in gender. This misunderstanding also implies the confusion of two different inflectional types: the nom. acc. dual of the *devī́*-declension ends in -*ī̀*, the same case-forms of the *vṛkī́*-declension, in -*ị̀yằ(u)*.[35]

6. There was a general tendency in Sanskrit to characterize feminine root-nouns that had a consonantal auslaut more clearly as feminines by adding the characteristic -*ā́*-. Apart from *nā́sā*- 'nostril, nose', for which see above, there is no dearth of examples that could be quoted: *íḍā̀-/íḷā̀*- (RV 53x [+]) ← *íḍ*- (RV 15x) 'nourishment', for instance, or *ūrjā́*- (RV 1x [?], ŚS 12x [+]) ← *ū́rj*- (RV 73x [+]) 'refreshment', etc.[36]

A particularly interesting case is that of *kṣapā́*- (RV 1x) ← *kṣáp*- (RV 15x). What was to become a secondary *ā́*-stem is first attested in the instr. pl. *kṣapā́bhis* at RV 4.53.7c *sá naḥ kṣapā́bhir áhabhiś ca jinvatu* 'Let him (i.e. Heavenly Savitar) enliven us by night(s) and by day(s)'. Obviously, this curious

---

[34] Cf. Arlo Griffiths, The Paippalādasaṃhitā of the Atharvaveda: Kāṇḍas 6 and 7. A New Edition with Translation and Commentary. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2009, 270: "The one that crawls around [in] the eyes, that crawls around [in] the nostrils, that goes to the middle of the teeth: this worm do we crush".

[35] In a similar way, the dual form *sakthị̀yằ* (RV 2x) or *sakthị̀yàu* (ŚS 1x) 'the two thighs', which does not fit into the regular paradigm of the heteroclitic noun *sákthi-/sakthán*- n. 'thigh' (RV 3x [+]), seems to presuppose an older **sakthī́* (cf. YAv. *haxti* [Vīdēvdāt 4x]) — presumably the nom. acc. of an original neuter consonant stem ***sakth*- (??). That dual too was then improperly treated as a *vṛkī́*-feminine.

[36] For further details, see AiGr II 2, 259–263 § 147.

form was produced by adding the plural ending *-bhis* to the instr. sg. *kṣapā́*, which is regularly formed from the consonant stem *kṣáp-* 'night'.[37]

If *kṣapā́bhis* were to be described pedantically, it could be said to have successively taken on no fewer than *two* instrumental endings: one of the singular, the other of the plural.[38]

7. With the following suggestion I may find myself out on a limb. It is, all the same, a reasonably serious proposal that I wish to make. Let us *consider* a few Vedic passages in which the instr. pl. of *stár-/stṛ́-* 'star', i. e. *stṛ́bhis* (ṚV 8x), co-occurs with *nā́ka-* m. 'sky, heaven, firmament' (ṚV 32x):

ṚV 1.68.10b *pipéśa **nā́kaṁ stṛ́bhir** dámūnāḥ* 'As master of the house, he (i.e. Agni the Heavenly Fire) has adorned the sky with stars'.

ṚV 6.49.12cd *sá pispṛśati tan_{u}ví śrutásya **stṛ́bhir** ná **nā́kaṁ** vacanásya vípaḥ* "Qu'il fasse en sorte que les paroles-inspirées de l'orateur touchent à son corps, à lui célèbre, comme (on fait toucher) le firmament par les étoiles!" (Renou, EVP V 33).[39]

ṚVKh 1.11.6a *yuváṁ ***stṛ́bhiś** citayathó 'pi **nā́kam*** 'You two [Aśvins] together with the stars are clearly visible against the sky'.

ṚVKh ***stṛ́bhiś**, which is an emendation for <stribhíś> of the edition,[40] seems to impose itself. But should we not rather refrain from emending the text and prefer to consider the attractive possibility that the instr. pl. *stribhís* as it is actually attested at ṚVKh 1.11.6a constitutes yet another portmanteau-like word-formation? With no more than a modicum of 'portmental' fantasy,[41] we could 'mayhaps' imagine **stribhís** to be an intentional cross between **stṛ́bhis** and **tribhís,** a blend that would result in the combined meaning '(together) with (the) *three stars*'.

---

[37] The hapax instr. pl. *kṣípābhis* — occurring at ṚV 9.97.57c *hinvánti dhī́rā daśábhiḥ kṣípābhiḥ* 'The thoughtful [poet-priests] speed [Soma] on, [each one] with ten fingers' — may be compared with *kṣapā́bhis*, even though of the root-noun *kṣíp-* f. 'finger' the instr. sg. **kṣípā*, which could be thought to have served as derivational basis for the instr. pl. *kṣípābhis*, does not occur, this consonant-stem being attested only in the form of the nom. acc. pl. *kṣípas* (ṚV 13x).

[38] Or else, *kṣapā́bhis* could be defined — with a pedantry even more pronounced than the one that has 'inspired' me to the description given above — as a de-instrument*alal* [sic] instrument*al*.

[39] Cf. Geldner, II 151: "Er lasse die Reden des beredten (Sängers) seinen, des Berühmten, Leib schmücken wie den Himmel mit Sternen".

[40] See Isidor Scheftelowitz, Die Apokryphen des Ṛgveda. [Indische Forschungen: Heft 1]. Breslau: Marcus, 1906 [= Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966], 66.

[41] This fancy kind of 'port-mental' fantasy would seem to mean a deliberately 'port-manteau-minded' one.

One is reminded of the three conspicuous stars referred to as "Orion's belt" or of the star "Orion's hound" referring to **Sirius** (Σείριος ἀστήρ), the dog-star. The name ʽsiriusʼ is identical in meaning (and etymology?) to YAv. *tištriia-* (Tištar Yašt [Yt. 8]), Ved. *tiṣ̣íyà-* (ṚV 5.54.13c and 10.64.8c [+]) or *tíṣya-* (KS 11.5:149.19 and 39.13:130.16 [+]) < *tri-str-iịo-* 'belonging to the three-stars (*tri-(h_2)str-óm*) [as the most conspicuous and therefore representative star of that constellation]'.[42]

The presumable change from *tri-$h_2$str-óm* to *tri-str-óm* must have occurred at an early stage of PIE, and the loss of h_2 may be accounted for by a reference to *Laryngalschwund* in composition — here, as *not* always, at the seam of a compound — or, as Brent Vine kindly reminded me, by depending on Schindler's "*Wetter*-Regel", according to which rule the complex consonant cluster *-h_1d^{h}r-* in *h_2ụeh$_1$d^{h}ro-* (from the root *h_2ụeh$_1$* 'wehen'; see [1]LIV 256 = [2]LIV 287) was reduced to *-d^{h}r-* in *h_2ụed^{h}ro-*.[43] And this ultimately resulted in the ʽwindyʼ English *weather*.[44]

---

[42] For this ingenious explanation, see Bernhard Forssman, "Apaoša, der Gegner des Tištriia." KZ 82, 1968, 37–61; especially 54 ff. Cf. also Antonio Panaino, Tištrya. Part I: The Avestan Hymn to Sirius. (Serie Orientale Roma: Vol. LXVIII, 1). Roma: Istituto Italiano per il medio ed estremo oriente, 1990.

The oxytone neuter noun *tri-str-óm* < *tri-$h_2$str-óm*, consisting of a numeral as first member and a consonant-stem extended with the compositional suffix *-ó-* as second, would belong to an independent PIE type of compound that is attested in Celtic, Latin, Greek, and Indo-Iranian. It was styled **complexive** *compound* by Ferdinand Sommer in his important monograph Zur Geschichte der griechischen Nominalkomposita. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1948, 47 ff.

Vedic examples of this autonomous compositional type, which has to be distinguished from substantivized bahuvrīhis, include *tri-**div**-ám* 'complex of three [day] skies' (ṚV 9.113.9b [+]), *tri-**pur**-ám* 'complex of three [concentric] fortification walls' (ŚB 6.3.3.25 [+]), *catuṣ-**path**-ám* 'carrefour, crossroad(s)' (TB 1.6.10.3 [+]), *ṣaḍ-**gav**-ám* 'team of six [draught]oxen' (TS 5.2.5.2 [+]), etc.

[43] This is only one of two possible versions of Schindler's rule, for which version see Michael L. Weiss, Studies in Italic nominal morphology. Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 1993, 76 n. 3.

Alternatively, the same cluster reduction rule would also work with a differently suffixed pre-form, i.e. *h_2ụeh$_1$-**tró**-* (instead of *h_2ụeh$_1$-**d^{h}ro**-*), for which alternative see Martin Peters, "Ein tiefes Problem". Compositiones Indogermanicae in memoriam Jochem Schindler. Praha: enigma corporation, 1999, [447–456] 447.

[44] Or should we perhaps prefer to imagine, with a fair measure of ʽfancifoolishʼ whimsicality, that ***tristrom** might have been intended as a prophetic homage to *Laurence Sterne* and an anticipated tribute to *Tristram Shandy* reverently paid to the exemplary digressionist ???

The guess that *stribhís* is a portmanteau word of *stṛ́bhis* and *tribhís* suggests — or rather, presupposes — that *stár-/stṛ́-* was originally masculine.[45] [For more on the gender of the 'star'-word, see below, Excursus 3].

Now, the co-occurrence of *nā́ka-* 'sky' with *stár-/stṛ́-* 'star' in the three above-quoted passages (ṚV 1.68.10b, ṚV 6.49.12cd, and ṚVKh 1.11.6a) causes me to suspect the as-yet-unsuspected fact that 'in the beginning', the cosmogonic reality *nā́ka-* did not mean 'sky' in general. Instead, it may have referred to only one *kind* or *aspect* of the sky, namely, the night-time sky. And we are perhaps allowed to call the meaning 'nocturnal sky' original, if an etymology can be found that is in mutually confirmative agreement with it.

As a regular derivation of the word for 'night' we should expect one that is based on the nominal stem *nákt-*. But I wonder if it is not possible to derive *nā́ka-* irregularly from the nominative of *nákt-*, and accordingly call it a 'de-nominatival' derivation.[46]

The nominative *nák* (< *nákts* < *nók^{u}ts* < **nóg^{u}ts* ?) occurs only once in the ṚV.[47] It is attested at 7.71.1ab *ápa svásur uṣáso **nág** jihīte riṇákti kṛṣṇī́r aruṣā́ya pánthām* 'Night withdraws from her Sister Dawn. The Swarthy One cedes the path (gives way) to the Rosy One (the new-born Sun)'. Yet, for all its uniqueness, this singular first-case noun-form could exceptionally have served as a derivational basis, and given rise to *nā́ka-* 'night sky' — in no less than two different ways.

If this case-form were allowed to behave like a root, we could consider *nā́ka-* to be the immediate result of a direct *vṛddhi*-derivation from *nák*, very

---

[45] It would seem unlikely that here we have to do with a cross between *stṛ́bhis* and (feminine) *tisṛ́bhis* (ṚV 1x [+]). If these two words were to be blended into one, the trisyllabic portmanteau ***tistṛ́bhis** should have a far better chance than any other imaginable result.

[46] Such formations are not at all unheard of. The regular nominative of *yóṣaṇ-* f. '(unmarried) young woman' is *yóṣā* (ṚV 25x). This nom. sg. could easily have been understood, in virtue of the noun's gender, as belonging to a feminine *ā*-stem *yóṣā-*. The reinterpretation would then naturally have led to new case-forms, such as the acc. sg. *yóṣām* (ṚV 7x) instead of an original *yóṣaṇam*, or the nom. acc. pl. *yóṣās* (ṚV 2x) in place of *yóṣaṇas* (ṚV 8x).

The same fate was suffered by *kaníyan- / kanī́n-* f. 'jeune fille' whose nom. sg. *kan$_i$yà̀* (ṚV 7x) led to the acc. pl. *kanyàs* (ṚV 4.58.9a) [for *kaníyanas*] and to the loc. pl. *kan$_i$yàsu* (ṚV 9.67.10c, 11c, 12c) [for *kaníyasu*]; see Hoffmann, Aufsätze II 381.

Compare also the nom. sg. *úrā* (ṚV 10.95.3d) of *úraṇ-* c. 'lamb', interpreted as feminine ('ewe Lamb') and leading to the secondary acc. sg. *úrām* (ṚV 8.34.3b), substituted for the primary *úraṇam* (ṚV 2.14.4a).

[47] This first-case existed in the language anyway; and even if we should not have found any attestation of the form in an extant text, it would still have been safe to posit Vedic *nák* (or rather, *nák**) as a regular nominative.

much, for instance, as the action noun *śā́ka-* 'Kraft, Stärke; Vermögen, Fähigkeit' [ṚV 1x][48] may have (vigorously) sprung up from the root *śak* 'to be able'.[49]

But an i n d i r e c t derivational process, as pointed out to me by Brent Vine, is a very good — and, semantically, better — alternative. That two-phased process would consist in **1**. an adjectivization: *nák → nāká-* 'belonging [characteristically] to night' and **2**. a substantivization (with accent retraction): *nāká- → nā́ka-* 'night sky'.[50]

No matter how early that newly-coined word may have arisen — whether it a r o s e at the *dawn* of Indo-Aryan, or e v e n at the *dusk* of Proto-Indo-Aryan — it must have arisen *overnight*.

Excursus 3: The gender of *stár-* 'star'

Wackernagel, AiGr III 213 § 119 b Anm., suspects: "Geschlecht von *str̥-* vermutlich weiblich (wegen *tārā-* [Epic +] *tā́rakā-* [Vedic (ŚS 4x, PS 5x, MS 1x, TS 1x) +])". Similarly, Mayrhofer, EWAia II 755, s. v. **stár-** : "(wohl f.)". To be sure, the derivative *tā́rakā-*, having the same meaning as *stár-/stŕ̥-*, and occurring already in the Śaunaka-Saṃhitā,[51] is clearly of the fair gender.[52]

In view of the gender variance that Indo-European relatives of Vedic *stár-/stŕ̥-* 'star' display, it is difficult to decide whether *$*h_2stér$-* was masculine or feminine.[53] At an earlier stage of PIE, it may just as well have been of the unspecified a n i m a t e gender, as the Hittite noun *hasterza* /hasterts/ (or /hsterts/ ?) < *$*h_2stēr$-s* would suggest.

---

[48] See ṚV 6.24.4ab *śácīvatas te puruśāka **śā́kā** gávām iva srutáyaḥ saṃcáraṇīḥ* "Deine Kräfte, des Kraftvollen, du Vielkräftiger, sind wie die gangbaren Wege der Rinder" (Geldner, II 123).

[49] In Pāṇinian terms, the *kr̥t*-suffix **gh a ñ** (see, for example, Aṣṭādhyāyī 3.3.16 ... *ghañ*, 18 *bhāve*) would be responsible for this kind of *vr̥ddhi*-derivation. Theoretically, the base could have been a root-noun *$*śák$-*, derived from the root *śak* with the zero-suffix **k v i p**. But that noun is unattested. Alternatively, the substantive **śā́ka-** 'Kraft, Hilfe' (ṚV 1x) may be based on the adjective **śāká-** 'kräftig, hilfreich' (ṚV 5x); compare the second phase of the two-phased derivational process (*nāká- → nā́ka-*) subsequently referred to in the main text above.

[50] A different etymology for *nā́ka-* m. — based on the assumption that this noun originally meant "der als Firmament sichtbare Teil des Himmels" — was hesitantly suggested ("... ? ... ?") by Thieme, ZDMG 101, 1951, 412 = Kleine Schriften I, 1971, 647 n. 4. See also Mayrhofer, EWAia II 33 s.v. *nā́ka-*, with a few further references.

[51] The four ŚS occurrences of *tā́rakā-* f. are found at 2.8.1b = 3.7.4b = 6.121.3b *vicŕ̥tau nā́ma **tā́rake*** and at 5.17.4a *yā́m āhús **tā́raka**iṣā́ vikeśíti*.

[52] The *ka*-formation *tā́ra-ka-* is obviously based on an *a*-stem *$*tā́ra$-* 'star', which must be an early abstraction from s t r o n g case-forms of the consonant-stem (*s*)*tár-/*(*s*)*tŕ̥-*.

[53] While, for instance, Greek ἀστήρ and OHG *sterno* are masculines, Gothic *staírnō*, ON *stjarna* (< *$*ster$-nā-), and Latin *stēlla* (< *$*stēr$-lā-) are feminines.

Now, if Pinault, Festschrift Jasanoff, 2007, 271–279, is justified in explaining PIE $*h_2stér- < *h_2h_1stér-$ '(celestial) fire' as based on an archaic root noun $*h_2oh_1s-/*h_2eh_1s-$[54] reflected in Hitt. $ḫāšš-$ 'ashes, soap' $< *$'burnings',[55] the original gender of our 'star'-word could perhaps be decided.[56]

The secondary (*taddhita-*) suffix *-ter-* concerned in Pinault's new derivation of PIE $*h_2h_1stér-$ "would be cognate to the well[-]known thematic suffixes $*-tro-$ and $*-tero-$, which build adjectives based originally on adverbs in $*-tr̥$ or $*-ter$". The important point Pinault makes is that *those* thematic adjectives show the same "contrastive and particularizing value" as *these* basic adverbs. And this is said to be true also of $*h_2h_1stér-$. Only the derivational process by which the latter noun has come about would be different: While the adjectives in $*-tro-$ and $*-tero-$ are derived by thematicization, $*h_2h_1stér-$ is obtained by 'internal derivation' from a local adverb $*h_2h_1stér$ based on the root noun $*h_2oh_1s-$ 'burning'. Thus, it would be a 'de-locatival' formation.[57]

---

[54] For the PIE root, see ¹LIV 229–230 = ²LIV 257–258 s. v. $*h_2eh_1s^1$ '(durch Hitze) vertrocknen' with notes.

[55] Traditionally, $*h_2stér-$ had come to be understood as a (hysterokinetic) agent noun supposed to mean 'the burning one'. It was derived either directly from the root or — with recourse to 'internal derivation' — from the endingless locative of an action noun meaning 'the burning'.

[56] Georges-Jean Pinault, "A Star Is Born: A "New" PIE $*-ter-$ Suffix". *Verba docenti*. Studies in historical and Indo-European linguistics presented to Jay H. Jasanoff by students, colleagues, and friends; edited by Alan J. Nussbaum. Ann Arbor / New York: Beech Stave Press, 2007, 271–279.

[57] This kind of 'de-locatival' derivation was illustrated by Alan J. Nussbaum, Head and Horn in Indo-European, Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986, 187–191, with several clear examples. "Clearest is the pair $dheĝh-ōm$ 'earth' ... : $dhĝh-(e)m-ōn$ ... '(found, living, etc.) on earth' > 'human being'". (Nussbaum, op. cit. 187). Pinault, FS Jasanoff, 2007, 274 n. 7, alludes to "other examples of 'de-casuative' derivation" that Nussbaum is said to have given during the IE Summer School at Freie Universität Berlin, September 2004.

Brent Vine has kindly referred me to Christian Bartholomae, "Arisches". Bezzenbergers Beiträge 15, 1889, 1–43, especially 14 ff.: "Arische lokative mit r" (14–25) and "Arische lokative mit n" (25–39). For more on $*en-$ and $*er$-locatives that served as the basis for decasuative formations, see Jeremy Rau, "The Derivational History of Proto-Germanic $*weþru-$ 'lamb'". Festschrift Jasanoff, 2007, 281–292, especially 289 ff. Rau, op. cit. 289, duly cites earlier literature, including work by Bartholomae, Johansson, and Nussbaum.

Cf. also (**1**) B. Vine, "Att. ἐρωτάω, Ion. εἰρωτάω", Glotta 78, 2002, [203–221] 215 ff., with a reference to two papers presented by Nussbaum, (**a**) in 1996 at the 15th East Coast Indo-European Conference, and (**b**) in 1998 at the 17th ECIEC respectively, (**2**) B. Vine, "Latin $-īnāre/-īnārī$", UCLA Indo-European Studies, Volume 1, 1999, [71–84] 78 ff., and, most recently, (**3**) B. Vine, "A Yearly Problem". East and West. Papers in Indo-European Studies edited by Kazuhiko Yoshida and Brent Vine. Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2009, [205–224] 214–220.

What I am driving at is this: If PIE *$h_2h_1stér$- has preserved the contrastive value that the original adverb *$h_2h_1stér$ possessed,[58] then its gender, too, may be affected by the oppositional difference. '(Celestial) Fire' explained as 'belonging [by contrast] to the burning' is set off against its counterpart, the Night. And since the Night was designated with nouns that are likely to have been feminine[59] — as also so many Vedic names for an eminently female being suggest[60] — we should be inclined to suspect that 'star' was of the opposite sex.

In confirmation, as it would seem, of this suspicion, there is one Ṛgveda passage that strongly points to the m a s c u l i n e gender of 'star'. The passage I mean is ṚV 1.164.16a (= ŚS 9.9.15a) *stríyaḥ satī́s tā́ṁ u me puṁsá āhuḥ* 'To me they speak of them (certain s t a r s)[61] as of m a l e s [by using the m a s c u l i n e gender], although [in reality] they (those stars) are f e m a l e s'.[62]

According to Thieme,[63] the stars intended in this verse are the seven feminine Pleiads (or, Pleiades),[64] called *kŕ̥ttikā*- in India,[65] and *considered* to be the consorts of the 'Seven Seers' (*saptarṣáyas*). They are first mentioned in the

---

[58] See Pinault, op. cit. 274: "The contrastive value of the original adverb is effectively kept in the derived noun: the brightness of the stars do[es] contrast with the surrounding darkness of the night".

[59] For an extremely wide-ranging survey of Indo-European names of Day and Night, see Wilhelm Schulze, "Tag und Nacht". Kleine Schriften ²1966, [Nachträge] 783–848.

[60] See, for instance, the feminine nouns *ū́rmₐyā*- (ṚV 7x), *kṣáp-/kṣapā́*- (ṚV 16x), *nákt*- (ṚV 36x), *níś-/níśā*- (ṚVKh 3x, KS 2x [10:5:129.19 & 130.1]), *níśitā*- (TS 2x [2.2.2.2 & 3]), *rā́trī-/rā́tri*- (ṚV 14x), *rāmī́*- (ṚV 1x [2.34.12c]), *rā́mₐyā-/rā́mₐyā́*- (ṚV 4x), Voc. *vibhā́vari* [*vibhā́varī*-] (ŚS 4x), *śárvarī*- (ṚV 1x [5.52.3b]), other substantivized adjectival epithets, such as *kr̥ṣṇī́*- (ṚV 1x [7.71.1b]), and all the poetical imagery featuring Night as a beautiful woman.

[61] That stars are meant in this verse is made likely by the preceding stanza, in which the 'S e v e n S e e r s' (*saptá ŕ̥ṣayas* or *saptarṣáyas*), name of the constellation U r s a M a i o r, are evoked.

[62] Cf. Thieme, Kleine Schriften II 963: "Von denen, die [in Wahrheit] Frauen sind, spricht man mir als von Männern", and II 965: "Von denen, die [in Wahrheit] Frauen / 'Sterninnen' sind, spricht man mir als von Männern ('Sternen')".

In this verse, opposition is clear and distinctly marked, not only by the present participle of the root *as/s* 'to be', for which see above, "Portmanteau Words", section III. A. 2.: ṚV 1.94.7b *dūré cit **sán** taḷíd ivā́ti rocase* 'You [O Heavenly Fire] shine across, *though being* even far away, [to appear] almost [as close as] a flash of lightning', but also by the particle *u*, for which see above, "Portmanteau Words", section III. A. 3.: ṚV 7.88.2c *sₐvàr yád áśmann adhipā́ **u** ándhaḥ* 'When Sun was in the rock *and yet* master over darkness'.

[63] See Paul Thieme, Kleine Schriften II 963 = "Das Rätsel ṚV 1.164.15–16". Hinduismus und Buddhismus. Festschrift für Ulrich Schneider. Freiburg: Hedwig Falk Verlag, 1987, [329–338] 336.

[64] The names of the seven Pleiades in Greek mythology are, according to Aratos 262 f.: A l k y o n e, E l e k t r a, K e l a i n o, M a i a, M e r o p e, S t e r o p e, and T a ÿ g e t e.

[65] Their Indian names are enumerated in four Vedic texts — at MS 2.8.13:117.3–4; KS 40.4:137.13–15; TS 4.4.5.1 & TB 3.1.4.1 — as *ambā́*-, *dulā́*- (MS *bulā́*-), *nitatnī́*- (TS *nitatní*-), *abhráyantī*-, *megháyantī*-, *varṣáyantī*- (MS *stanáyantī*-), and *cupuṇī́kā*-.

AV, at ŚS 9.7.3 and 19.7.2. See also PS 19.38.13 as recently edited and translated by A. Lubotsky, PS Kāṇḍa 5,[66] 135: *mayārakārī prathamā- ' -ūrṇavābhir atho śakā / devānāṃ patnīḥ kṛttikā ' imaṃ tantum *amūmuhan* "First the basket-maker (f.), [then] the spider,[67] and then the weaver bird (?)[68] — the Pleiades, wives of gods, have confused this thread".[69]

Excursus 4: Stars and Steers

As a curiosity — and in order to exemplify the way in which Vedic words were wont to be etymologized according to the traditional Indian *nirukta*-method[70] by showing how, for instance, the derived 'star'-word *tā́rakā-* f. was explained, in company with the (surprisingly) unrelated *nákṣatra-* n.

---

[66] Cf. Alexander Lubotsky, Atharvaveda-Paippalāda Kāṇḍa 5. Text, translation, commentary. (Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora: Vol. 4). Cambridge: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, 2002.

[67] The variously attested telling name of the spider, *ūrṇa-vā́bhi-* (PS 19.38.13b, KS 8.1:83.8, KpS 6.6:75.13; ŚB 14.5.1.23 = BĀU-M 2.1.23 = BĀU-K 2.1.20) or *ūrṇā-vā́bhi-* (MS 1.6.9:101.5) or *ū́rṇā-vábhi-* (TB 1.1.2.5; notice the strange double *udātta*-intonation of the compound!), literally means 'wool-weaver', and so it would rather neatly fit in with the name of the *kṛ́ttikās*, which may have to be derived from root *kart/kṛt* 'spin', in judicious preference to the homonymous root *kart/kṛt* 'cut'.

[68] These meaningful appellative nouns, which name three of the seven *devānāṃ patnīs* as *mayāra-kārī-*, *ūrṇa-vābhi-*, and *śakā-* respectively (*śákā-* at VS 24.32 means *śakunti-*, according to Mahīdhara, ad loc.), seem to suggest that chores like plaiting, spinning, and weaving were the routine tasks of the heavenly ladies.

[69] I suppose that *tántu-* m. cannot refer to a single "thread" here; it must mean a 'warp' in the sense of several "threads stretched lengthwise in loom to be crossed by weft" (COD). Evidently, we need a plurality of threads, if they are to be confused by the celestial web-weaving wives.

The meaning 'warp' is attested for *tántu-* m. (RV 22x, ŚS 14x [+]) — as it is for *tántra-* n. (RV 1x, ŚS 1x [+]) — from the oldest Vedic onward. I hope to show elsewhere that, somewhat surprisingly, also *sū́tra-* n. 'thread' (ŚS 5x [+]) may mean 'Aufzug = Kette = Zettel'.

[70] This method follows the (almost poetical) principle: Where we find the same sounds, we may assume the same meaning. Cf. Yāska, Nirukta 2.1 *avidyamāne* [*vṛtti*]*sāmānye 'py akṣaravarṇasāmānyān nirbrūyān na tv eva na nirbrūyāt* 'If no similarity [of regular grammatical form-and-function] can be found, one should explain [the meaning of a word] even by reason of sound-or-syllable similarity [with another word]. But one should not *not* explain'.

For the historical precursor of this method, that is, the supposedly 'magical' identifications of the Brāhmaṇa's, see Paul Thieme, "Etymologie — einst und heute". Akten der VI. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft [Wien, 1978]. Wiesbaden: 1980, 485 ff. = Kleine Schriften II, 1012 ff. The difference between the later *nirukta*-method and its Vedic forerunner may, however, not be as striking as Thieme, on account of Yāska's (possibly over-emphasized) lateness, chose to stress.

'constellation' — let me present the susceptible reader with the following somewhat amusing specimen:

TB 1.5.2.5 *salilám vā́ idám antarā́sīt / yád átaran / tát tā́rakāṇāṃ tāraka-tvám / yó vā́ ihá yájate / amúṃ sá lokáṃ nakṣate / tán nákṣatrāṇāṃ nakṣatratvám* '[In the beginning,] this [All] was [all] salty water (the primordial sea, die Urflut),[71] [and it was] in between (*antarā́*). That they (the stars) *steered* across (*átaran*) [the Great Salty or Big Brine][72] is the true nature of the *stars* (and the reason why they are called 'stars' [*tā́rakās*], or even 'steers' [*ukṣáṇas*], as I may perhaps add with appropriately punning intention[73]). He who worships / offers sacrifice here (in this world), attains (***nakṣa**te*) the world over there. That is the true nature of the *constellations* (and the reason why they are called ***nakṣa**tra-*)'.[74]

An alternative translation of the above-quoted TB sentence *salilám vā́ idám antarā́sīt* could (perhaps?) be considered, if only as a theoretical possibility: '[In the beginning,] there was a Salty Sea inside this [All]'. In this no more than just hypothetical version, *antarā́* would be understood as a ***preposition*** governing *idám*, whereas in my own rendering, *antarā́* functions not only as an ***adverb***, but also as a second (adverbial) ***predicate*** after the first (nominal) predicate *salilám*, according to the rule that regulates word order in statements of this kind, and generates the noteworthy structure **P₁ — S — P₂**.

We have come across an example illustrating this type of sentence already in section B.1. of "Portmanteau Words". And I may perhaps refer the reader back to a Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā passage containing *two distinct* predicates — one a noun, the other an adjective — which was cited there, namely, MS 4.6.7:89.17–18

---

[71] For *salilá-* 'salzig; das Salzige', see Paul Thieme, "Idg. **sal-* 'Salz' im Sanskrit?" ZDMG 111, 1961, 94–117 = Kleine Schriften I, 1971, 170–193; especially, 102–106 = 178–182.

[72] Notice the all-but-perfect anagrammatical permutation of ***antarā́*** 'inside, between' into *átaran* 'they traversed', which might strike us — if, for once, we would let ourselves be struck (or even, stricken) — as strangely suggestive of an unexpressed 'etymology' that could be explicitly formulated, in the outspoken manner of so many other characteristic *nirukta-*explanations, as **yád idám **antarā́**sīt tásmāt tā́rakā ataran** 'Because this [All] was [all sea and extended] *across*, therefore the stars travelled *across* [it (this All=Sea)]'. Or else, **... tát táraṇasya taraṇatvám** '... that is why the travelling [of the stars] *across* [the salty one] has got its telling name (a name reflecting its true nature)'.

All this may sound a little silly. But then, who are we to sit in judgement over silliness?!

[73] Compare ṚV 8.55.2ab *śatáṃ śvetā́sa **ukṣáṇo** diví **tā́ro** ná rocante* 'A hundred white *steers* shine like *stars* in the sky', for which see above, Excursus 1.

[74] This second word-play and pseudo-etymology could again be imitated in English, if I were allowed to venture yet another paronomastic quibble: 'An asterism (****) is called *constellation* because it causes *consternation*'.

ándho *vá̄ idám āsīd* ***ávyāvṛttam*** '[In the beginning,] this [All] existed as *ándhas*, [that is to say,] as indistinct [*ándhas*]'.[75]

And, in order to formulate yet another general syntactic rule, I would contend that Vedic *idám* [*víśvam / sárvam*], whenever it occurs (and this is the important *sine qua non*) in a cosmogonic context, ought to be seen — yes, always, as could be demonstrated *ad oculos* ((and spectacles)) of the sceptical student — as *subject* of the sentence, or 'agent' of the verbal 'action' expressed by the imperfect *āsīt* of the root *as/s* 'to be there, to exist [as]'. In such a *Zustandsbericht* (*bhāva-vṛtta-* n.) about the primordial state of our universe in its remotest past, *idám* must not be taken in the adverbial sense of 'here' (that is, 'in this world'), and the meaning 'now' is excluded anyway by the *past* tense.

---

[75] Although *ávyāvṛttam* means 'indistinct', it is also meant to be 'distinct' from *ándhas* — in so far as it represents a second and separate predicate of this cosmogonical proposition.

The Mid-Word Cæsura in the Ṛgveda

Degrees of Metrical Irregularity[*]

Werner F. Knobl, Kyoto University[**]

utá tvaḥ páśyan
ná dadarśa vắcam

The student of language is prone to fall out of grace with *Vāc*, the Goddess of Speech. As he stumbles along — as if intent on leaving no stone unturned — he runs the risk, *padé pade*, of turning every word into a stumbling-block. But if he stopped at every step and humbly stooped down — to lift block after block after heavy block — he would find just as many footprints of Speech underneath.[1]

Not only the words, but also the pauses in between, are vestiges of Her, and She may be traced through the silent pieces of speech with just as much accuracy as through the spoken parts. The French poet who said: *L'espace entre les arbres est l'arbre le plus beau*[2] gives me the clue to formulate, in my turn, an even more provocative paradox: ***L'espace entre les mots est le mot le plus parlant***.[3]

Assuming that there is some truth in this seemingly paradoxical formulation, and that it might at least serve the purpose of a useful *heuristic* principle, I have followed its lead in my mind-reading paper presented in 1999 at the 2nd International Vedic Workshop in Kyoto, by trying to find meaning in the metrical lacunæ of three catalectic lines in Song-Cycle Ten of the Ṛgveda: ṚV 10.10.13a, ṚV 10.95.3a, and ṚV 10.129.7b.[4]

This time I will search in a different direction. Still having empty space in mind, I am now concentrating on its absence, the lack of a minimal pause where it should be expected to occur in a trimeter verse, the not-so-infrequent phenomenon of the mid-word cæsura.

In Ṛgvedic *triṣṭubh* or *jagatī* lines, the cæsura, which by its very nature should be clear-cut, is sometimes not distinctly recognizable. In order to give a fitting name to this kind of 'incision' in the verse-line, I would choose the *oxymoron* 'unincisive cæsura', a combination of apparently contradictory terms. Alternatively, Arnold's "weak caesura", an expression of similar, albeit less pointed, intent, could be used — if it did not also cover cases in which the cæsura occurs in other places than the normal ones, that is to say, after the fourth or fifth syllable of a trimeter verse.

In his Vedic Metre, 179 f. § 205, Arnold mentions two forms of "weak caesura", **1.** "a caesura dividing the two parts of a compound" and **2.** "a caesura following the third syllable".[5] Later in the book, p. 192 § 214, long lists of instances are given for both of these forms.

Examples of the first kind, in which "the caesura follows the prior element of a compound or derivative", concern us here but marginally, as they

---

[1] *Sous les pavés*, **la plage !** — and only in the softer soil of the sandy beach below the heavily suppressive pavement could the prints of her feet become visible at all.

[2] This is the phrase I used as a motto of my 2007 Mind-Reading article; see [3] in the footnote attached to the subtitle.

[3] Probing the *silence* between the *words* — which may be styled **word**-*silence*-**word** silence — and sounding the depths of unspoken language need not lead to a *muni*-like pseudo-*mystic mutism* and comfortable *refus de penser*. The thoughtless dismissal of meaningful words, as it is tacitly expressed in the sceptical agnostic's keeping *mum*, is not a necessary consequence of our research into the cracks and crevices of speech. This will become clear, I am sure, from my deliberately wordy — yet, hopefully, not-*too*-verbose — technique of making the 'interverbal' *espace* **parlant** actually *speak* to us.

[4] The elaborate discussions of these three catalectic lines have been published in the meantime. See my reference to articles [3] and [4] in the first footnote above.

[5] E. Vernon Arnold, Vedic Metre in its Historical Development. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905. (= Delhi / Varanasi / Patna: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967).

represent lower degrees of metrical irregularity, and therefore may be considered lesser forms of poetical intentionality. But I will discuss at least one very specific example, which is more interesting than its kind would make us assume, in section I. 2. Second Degree of Mid-Word Caesura, namely, the nominal derivative *énasvantas* at 7.88.6c *mā́ ta **énas'vanto** yakṣin bhujema*.

For the immediate purpose of giving a name as neutral as possible to this freakish brain-child of the Vedic poet — but also in order to avoid the question-able idea of an earlier than early and later than late cæsura[6] — I should substitute Arnold's two forms of "weak caesura" with two types of mid-word cæsura:

I. A cæsura that falls:
0. between two elliptical ***duals***,
1. inside a ***compound***, naturally dividing it into two parts,
2. inside a ***derivative***, separating the suffix from the rest.

II. A cæsura that falls inside a simple, uncompounded word:
1. inside a ***noun***,
2. inside a ***verb***,
not cutting it clearly into two, but keeping the division *in suspense*.

Type **I** is *distinct* or *incisive* and still relatively close to the normal kind.
Type **II** constitutes the *indistinct* or *unincisive* kind of cæsura,
and it is removed from the norm to the highest degree possible.[7]

The Vedic poets, who were certainly conscious of their refined artistic techniques, must also have been acutely aware of the cæsura and its usual place. We are thus allowed to presuppose ulterior motives whenever they deviate from a well-established usage. There are several clearly distinguishable degrees of deviation. The higher the degree is, the more likely it would seem to me that the irregularity is intended and artistically motivated.[8]

The following are the main degrees that can be distinguished:

---

[6] A caesura, that is to say, which would occur as early as after the third or as late as after the sixth syllable.

[7] This high degree of metrical irregularity should be acknowledged as an exact measure of the exceptionally high *interest* type II deserves.

[8] For questions of poetic technique and scientific method, see my paper "The Nonce Formation" referred to above, in the footnote attached to the subtitle, especially 264 f. of that paper.

I. 0. The Zero Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura

In case the cæsura seems to fall inside a so-called dual dvandva, as at 1.71.9c = 3.56.7b *rā́jānā **mitrā́váruṇā** supāṇī́*, it would be possible to speak of a mid-word cæsura only if we were justified in considering *mitrā́váruṇā* and other combinations of this kind as original compounds. Since, however, such *devatā-dvandva*s, as they were also called, are better interpreted as two elliptical duals in juxtaposition, and should therefore be written separately, I shall not count them as cases of mid-word caesura at all, or rather, let me consider them as representing its zero degree.[9]

I. 1. The First Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura

A low degree of irregularity is achieved when the cæsura follows the first member of a nominal compound. Cases of this kind constitute a rather large group of more than one hundred examples, and only a few of them would appear interesting enough to deserve discussion as possibly intended irregularities. Thus, the cæsura-straddling compound *vṛtra'túram* in the second line of the distich ṚV 4.42.8cd may serve as a possibly convincing example:

Half-an-Indra

> *tá ā́yajanta trasádasyum asyā*
> *índraṃ ná **vṛtra'túram** ardhadevám*

For her (the wife of Daurgaha) they (our Fathers, the Seven Ṛṣis)
obtained by [their] worship the demigod Trasadasyu, a *vṛtra-túr-* like Indra.

---

[9] Among those cases in which the cæsura is completely neglected, Hermann Oldenberg, *Metrische und textgeschichtliche Prolegomena zu einer kritischen Rigveda-Ausgabe*. Berlin: Hertz, 1888 (= [Koelner Sarasvati Serie: Volume 3] Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1982), 45 n.1, mentions the particularly frequent occurrence of this neglect in *Göttercompositis* like *mitrā́váruṇā*, and explicitly states, as something apparently self-evident to him, that these compounds are "tathsächlich als zwei Worte aufzufassen".

Arnold seems to be in two minds about the status of these quasi-compounds. In his Vedic Metre, 1905, he opts, on the one hand, that — what he calls — a weak cæsura "separates ... the two parts of a *dvandva* dual" (180 § 205, 1a), on the other, he does not include any occurrence of this weak kind in his list of cæsuræ that follow the prior element of a compound (192 § 214, 1).

For a detailed discussion of the problem, see Stanley Insler's recent article "*mitrā́váruṇā* or *mitrā́ váruṇā*?" in: Mír Curad. Studies in Honor of Calvert Watkins. Edited by Jay Jasanoff, H. Craig Melchert and Lisi Oliver. (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft: Band 92). Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität, 1998, 285–290.

By splitting the root-compound *vr̥tra-túr-* up into two, the poet seems to suggest that Trasadasyu, even though he can be compared with the god, does not completely overcome all obstacles — as only Indra, the consummate *vr̥tra-túr-*, would be able to achieve — and that therefore his capacity does not exceed that of an **ardha-devá-**.

Excursus A: A *generic* kind of *karmadhāraya*

To be sure, *ardha-devá-* (R̥V 2x) does not mean 'half a god', but 'a half-god', and therefore the title of this section ("Half-an-Indra") is slightly, if intentionally, misleading. It would have been more appropriate for me to say 'A(n) Half-Indra', in case I had wanted strictly to abide by the rules of early Vedic grammar. For it seems that, originally, a qualifying adjective and a qualified noun were united in this kind of compound only if their union resulted in a *generic* designation.

For the oldest *karmadhāraya*s of the *ardha-devá*-type, see Wackernagel, AiGr II 1, 253–254 § 101 a–b. An example like *kr̥ṣṇa-śakuní-* 'black-bird-', which occurs at ŚS 19.57.3 and PS 3.30.4 — if it really meant *vāyasa-* 'crow', as Sāyaṇa's gloss on the ŚS passage suggests — would make the difference quite clear; because *kr̥ṣṇa-śakuní-* does not seem to signify just any *black **bird*** that happens to have the colour called *kr̥ṣṇá-*, but the *typical* — or even, **arche**typical — **black**bird.

In the PS passage, where this compound stands next to *nirr̥ti-* 'destruction', *kr̥ṣṇa-śakuni-* may refer to an ominous messenger-bird of death. Compare the two equally inauspicious envoys of Yama and Mr̥tyu — *úlūka-* m. 'owl' and *kapóta-* m. 'dove' — which are exorcised at R̥V 10.165.4 *yád **úlūko** vádati moghám etád yát **kapótaḥ** padám agnáu kr̥ṇóti / yásya dūtáḥ práhita eṣá etát tásmai yamā́ya námo astu mr̥tyáve* 'What sound the owl makes, that be in vain; and what footprint the dove makes [in the ashes] at the fireside, [that, too, be in vain]. Obeisance be to him — as whose envoy that [owl] (that [dove]), which has been sent out, [makes] that [sound] (that [footprint]) — to Yama, to Death!'[10]

---

[10] Compare the German translation: 'Was der Uhu tönt, nichtig ist das (da); welche Fußspur der Tauber [in der Asche] am Feuer macht [, nichtig ist auch die (da)]. Ehre soll sein dem Yama, dem Tode, als dessen Bote ausgesandt der da das da [tut]' and the discussion of this stanza in my paper "Die besondere **da**-*deiktische* Funktion des Demonstrativpronomens *ETAD* im Vedischen" presented at the XXX. Deutscher Orientalistentag, Freiburg im Breisgau, 24.–28. September 2007, which is now being prepared for publication.

Here are the 112 verses with a mid-word caesura of the first degree —
some of them presenting doubtful examples[11] — that can be quoted from the
Ṛgveda:[12]

1.30.16c   *sá no* **hiraṇya'rathám** *daṁsánāvān* (T)
1.35.5b   *rátham* **híraṇya'praügam** *váhantaḥ* (T)
1.52.9c   *yán* **mā́nuṣa'pradhanā** *índram ūtáyaḥ* (J)
1.58.8b   *stotŕ̥bhyo* **mitra'mahaḥ** *śárma yaccha* (T)
1.60.5c   *āśúṃ ná* **vā́jam'bharám** *marjáyantaḥ* (T)
1.61.3c   *máṁhiṣṭham* **ácch[a'ü]ktibhir** *matīnā́m* (T)
1.61.4c   *gíraś ca* **gír'vāhase** *suvṛkt[í* (T[10])
1.61.4d   *í]ndrāya* **víśvam'invám** *médhirāya* (T)
1.61.5c   *vīráṃ* **dān[á'o]kasaṃ** *vandádyai* (T[10])
1.61.5d   *purā́ṃ* **gūrtá'śravasaṃ** *darmā́ṇam* (T[10])[13]
1.61.16a   *evā́ te* **hā́ri'yojanā** *suvṛkt[í* (T)
1.61.16c   *[ā́ e]ṣu* **viśvá'peśasaṃ** *dhíyaṃ dhāḥ* (T)
1.62.1b   *āṅgūṣáṃ* **gír'vaṇase** *aṅgirasvát* (T)
1.64.3b   *vavakṣúr* **ádhri'gāvaḥ** *párvatā iva* (J)
1.116.3d   **antarikṣa'prúdbhir** *ápodakābhiḥ* (T)
1.120.9a   *duhīyán* **mitrá'dhitaye** *yuvā́ku* (T)
1.122.2a   *pátnīva* **pūrvá'hūtiṃ** *vāvṛdhádhy[ai* (T)
1.127.5b   *náktaṃ yáḥ* **su'dárśataro** *dívātarād* (J in A)
1.129.4b   *sákhāyaṃ* **viśv[á'ā]yum** *prāsáhaṃ yújam* (J in A)
1.141.12a   *utá naḥ* **su'dyót_mmā** *jīr[áa]śvo* (T)[14]
1.148.1b   *hótāraṃ* **viśvá'psuṃ** *viśvádev_iyam* (J[11])[15]

---

[11] Doubt may arise from the fact that a *jagatī* line (or, very rarely, a *triṣṭubh* line) forms
part of a stanza in mixed meter (*Bṛhatī*, *Kakubh*, etc.), and thus would allow for being scanned as
a combination of 8+4 (or 7+4) syllables, in case a word boundary happens to occur after the 8th
(or 7th) metrical unit.

[12] In the following quotations, A stands for *Atyaṣṭi*, B for *Bṛhatī*, J for *Jagatī*, K for
Kakubh, PB for *PurastādBṛhatī*, PU for *PuraUṣṇih*, SB for *SatoBṛhatī*, T for *Triṣṭubh*, U for
Uṣṇih, UB for *UpariṣṭādBṛhatī*. J[11] and T[10] indicate typically catalectic variants of J and T
respectively.

[13] If, however, we read *purā́ṃ* trisyllabically as *pur[áa]ṃ*, we would get a regular triṣṭubh
line, instead of a (typically) catalectic one. For another very likely case of metrical 'distraction'
of this particular genitive plural in the same construction with an accusative of *darmáṇ*-
'breaker', cf. ṚV 10.46.5b *mūrā́ ámūram pur[áa]ṃ darmā́ṇam* (T).

[14] As a possible, though less likely, alternative scansion of the line we could perhaps
consider to read *utá naḥ su'd_iyótmā jīr[áa]śvo*. For the more likely possibility, however, which I
have preferred to adopt in the list above, cf. also 2.4.1a *huvé vaḥ su'dyót_mmānaṃ suvṛktím*
referred to below.

[15] Agnes Korn, Metrik und metrische Techniken im Ṛgveda. Streckformen in Trimeter-
Versen. (Arbeiten aus der Abteilung "Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft" Graz). Graz: Leykam
Buchverlagsgesellschaft, 1998, 59, reads this pāda as a triṣṭubh line by scanning *hótāraṃ*

1.184.2c   *śrutám me **ácch[a'ü]ktibhir** matīnā́m* (T)

2.4.1a   *huvé vaḥ **su'dyót*ₘ*mānaṁ** suvṛktím* (T)
2.9.1a   *ní hótā **hotṛ'ṣádane** vídānas* (T)
2.9.1c   ***ádabdhavrata'pramatir** vásiṣṭhaḥ* (T)
2.19.8a   *evā́ te **gṛtsa'madā́ḥ** śūra mánm[a* (T)
2.25.4c   ***ánibhṛṣṭa'taviṣir** hant*ᵢ*y ójasā* (J)
2.34.8d   *jánāya **rātá'haviṣe** mahī́m íṣam* (J)

3.2.7d   *átyo ná **vā́ja'sātaye** cánohitaḥ* (J)
3.26.5d   *siṁhā́ ná **heṣá'kratavaḥ** sudā́navaḥ* (J)
3.53.16d   *yā́m me **palasti'jamadagnáyo** dadúḥ* (J)
3.58.7c   *nā́satyā **tiró'ahn*ᵢ*yaṁ** juṣāṇā́* (T)[16]
3.58.9a   *áśvinā **madhu'ṣúttamo** yuvā́kuḥ* (T)

4.1.8b   *hótā **híraṇya'ratho** ráṁsujihvaḥ* (T)
4.1.19b   *hótāraṁ **viśvá'bharasaṁ** yájiṣṭham* (T)
4.3.1b   *hótāraṁ **satya'yájaṁ** ródas*ᵢ*yoḥ* (T)
4.33.8b   *yé dhenúṁ **viśva'júvaṁ** viśvárūpām* (T)
4.41.3d   *sutébhiḥ **su'prayásā** mādáyaite* (T)
4.42.8d   *índraṁ ná **vṛtra'túram** ardhadevám* (T)[17]

6.2.11a   *ácchā no **mitra'maho** deva devā́n* (T)
6.11.4d   *añjánti **su'prayásam** páñca jánāḥ* (T)
6.14.6a   *ácchā no **mitra'maho** deva devā́n* (T)

---

viśvaā́psuṁ viśvádevyam. However, all six occurrences of the compound *viśvádevya-*, which is formed with the derivational suffix *-iya-*, stand in the cadence of their verses — one in a *gāyatrī* (3.62.4b), four in regular *jagatī* lines (1.110.1c, 1.162.3b; 3.2.5c; 10.92.13a), one in our typically catalectic *jagatī pāda* (1.148.1b) — and everywhere else, this compound has to be read in its metrically 'distracted' form. The only reason for making an exception in our verse, and for scanning the suffix as a monosyllable in order to produce a trochaic cadence, could be seen in the fact that this hymn of five stanzas is composed in the *triṣṭubh* meter. We find, however, one *pāda* which, although it is defective (acephalic) by two syllables, and therefore counts only ten, does have a distinctly iambic *jagatī* cadence, namely, 1.148.5a *... riṣaṇyávo*.

[16] A different scansion of this line as *nā́sat*ᵢ*yā tiróahnyaṁ juṣāṇā́* is perhaps possible. The alternative seems, however, less likely, because among the 22 pāda-initial occurrences of *nā́satyā* (20)/*nā́satyāv* (2), there are only four that require a 'distracted' reading, namely at 1.173.4d *nā́sat*ᵢ*yeva súgmiyoratheṣṭhā́ḥ*, 1.180.9d *nā́sat*ᵢ*yā rayiṣā́caḥ s*ᵢ*yāma*, 1.184.1c *nā́sat*ᵢ*yā kúha cit sántāv aryó*, and 1.184.3b *nā́sat*ᵢ*yā vahatúṁ sūr*ᵢ*yā́yāḥ*. As can be seen, they all occur within that part of the First Song-Cycle (hymns 165–191) which is ascribed to the seer Agastya.

[17] For a brief discussion of the cæsura-straddling root-compound **vṛtra'túram** in the context of the distich 4.42.8cd, see above, at the very beginning of the present section, I.1. The First Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura.

6.15.4c   *vípraṃ ná **dyukṣá'vacasaṃ** suvṛktíbhir* (J)
6.16.46c   *hótāraṃ **satya'yájaṃ** ródas₍ᵢ₎yoḥ* (T)
6.20.1c   *táṃ naḥ **sahásra'bharam** urvarāsā́ṃ* (T)
6.20.5c   *urú ṣá **sa'ráthaṃ** sā́rathaye kar* (T)
6.20.11c   *párā **náva'vāst‿vam** anudéyam* (T)
6.20.13d   *dabhī́tir **idhmá'bhṛtiḥ** pakth₍ᵢ₎y àrkáiḥ* (T)
6.24.6c   *táṃ tvābhíḥ **su'ṣṭutíbhir** vājayanta[ḥ* (T)
6.26.5d   *prā́vo **dívo'dāsaṃ** citrā́bhir ūtī́* (T)
6.29.4a   *sá sóma **ā́'miślatamaḥ** sutó bhūd* (T)
6.33.4d   *yúdhyanto **nemá'dhitā** pṛtsú śū́ra* (T)
6.34.2b   *ékaḥ **puru'praśastó** ásti yajñáiḥ* (T)
6.34.3d   *gṛṇánti **gír'vaṇasaṃ** śáṃ tád asmai* (T)
6.44.10d   *kím aṅgá **radhra'códanaṃ** t‿vāhuḥ* (T)
6.51.10a   *té hí **śr[áï]ṣṭha'varcasas** tá u nas* (T)
6.63.4c   *prá hótā **gūrtá'manā** urāṇó* (T[10])
6.68.1b   *manuṣvád **vṛktá'barhiṣo** yájadhyai* (T)
6.68.2d   *ṛténa **vṛtra'túrā** sárvasenā* (T)
6.68.6a   *yám yuváṃ **dāś‿ṷ'àdhvarāya** devā* (T)
6.68.7a   *utá naḥ **su'trāt₍ᵣ₎ró** devágopāḥ* (T)[18]

7.2.7b   *mánye vāṃ **jātá'vedasā** yájadhyai* (T)
7.4.5d   *bhū́miś ca **viśvá'dhāyasam** bibharti* (T)
7.8.6d   *dyumád **amīva'cā́tanaṃ** rakṣohā́* (T)
7.14.1c   *havírbhiḥ **śukrá'śociṣe** namasvíno* (J in B)
7.23.5b   *śuṣmíṇaṃ **tuvi'rā́dhasaṃ** jaritré* (T)
7.33.11a   *utā́si **maitrā́'varuṇó** vasiṣṭh[a* (T)
7.38.2d   *ā́ nṛ́bhyo **marta'bhójanaṃ** suvānáḥ* (T)
7.38.5d   *várūtr₍ᵢ₎y **éka'dhenubhir** ní pātu* (T)
7.58.2b   *bhī́māsas **túvi'manyav[o á]yāsaḥ** * (T)
7.60.8d   *mā́ karma **deva'héḷanaṃ** turāsaḥ* (T)
7.66.16a   *tác cákṣur **devá'hitaṃ** śukrám uccárat* (J in PU)
7.81.4c   *tásyās te **ratna'bhā́ja** īmahe vayáṃ* (J in SB)

---

[18] This is a less clear-cut case of mid-word cæsura than the other three examples from the same hymn, ṚV 6.68, because of the added complication that is created by the apparently necessary trisyllabic scansion of the compositional second member *-trātrás*. The above notation of the metrically required 'distracted' reading, viz. *-trāt₍ᵣ₎ró*, which I have chosen in preference to *-trāt₍ₐ₎ró*, is meant only to indicate the problem that is posed by the Sievers-Edgerton Law, rather than to give a solution for it. Certainly, it would be more prudent, albeit less satisfying, to leave the quality of the intermediary vowel undetermined, as Oldenberg used to do by marking it with a raised dot (thus, for instance, *-trāt·ró* in the present case). See also further above, for my tentative notation of an additional, secondary (!) vowel **m̥* before the homorganic *-m-* of the suffix *-man-* at 1.141.12a and 2.4.1a. I am confident that nobody will feel tempted to follow my example.

8.21.9b   *prá vásya **ā'nināya** tám u va stuṣe* (J in K)
8.23.19c *pāvakám **kṛṣṇá'vartaniṃ** víhāyasam* (J in U)
8.27.11c *úpa vo **víśva'vedaso** namasyúr ā́ṃ* (J in B)
8.60.17c *agníṃ **hitá'prayasaḥ** śaśvatī́ṣᵤv ā́* (J in B)
8.61.14a *tᵤváṃ hí **rā́dhas'pate** rā́dhaso maháḥ* (J in SB)
8.66.6c   *tvám íd dhí **brahma'kṛ́te** kā́mᵢ yaṃ vásu* (J in SB)
8.87.5c   *dásrā **híraṇya'vartanī** śúbhas patī* (J in SB)
8.99.1c   *sá indra **stóma'vāhasām** ihá śrudh[i* (J in B)

9.72.4a   *nṛ̥dhūto **ádri'ṣuto** barhíṣi priyáḥ* (J)
9.83.5c   *rā́jā **pavítra'ratho** vā́jam ā́ruhaḥ* (J)
9.84.1a   *pávasva **deva'mā́dano** vícarṣaṇir* (J)
9.86.40c *rā́jā **pavítra'ratho** vā́jam ā́ruhat* (J)
9.93.5b   *punānó **vāt[á'ā]pyaṃ** viśváścandram* (T)
9.94.1d   *vrajáṃ ná **paśu'várdhanāya** mánma* (T)

10.1.5a   *hótāraṃ **citrá'ratham** adhvarásya* (T)
10.17.5b *só asmā́ṃ **á'bhayatamena** neṣat* (T)
10.22.10a *tᵤváṃ tā́n **vṛtra'hátye** codayo nṝ̥n* (T in PB)
10.35.14d *té syāma **devá'vītaye** turāsaḥ* (T)
10.48.8b *íṣaṃ ná **vṛtra'túraṃ** vikṣú dhārayam* (J)
10.50.1b *á]rcā **viśvā́'narāya** viśvābhúve* (J[11])
10.61.13d *vidát **puru'prajātásya** gúhā yát* (T)
10.61.15c *manuṣvád **vṛktá'barhiṣe** rárāṇā* (T)
10.61.15d *mandū́ **hitá'prayasā** vikṣú yájyū* (T)
10.61.21c *śrudhí tváṃ **su'draviṇo** nas tᵤváṃ yāḷ* (T)[19]
10.74.6c *áceti **prā'sáhas** pátis túviṣmān* (T)
10.76.2b *á]tyo ná **hásta'yato** ádriḥ sotári* (J)
10.98.5b *devā́pir **deva'sumatím** cikitvā́n* (T)
10.99.8d *śyenó [á]yo'[a]pā́ṣṭir hanti dásyūn* (T)
10.101.2b *nā́vam **aritra'páraṇīṃ** kṛṇudhvam* (T)
10.105.4c *nadáyor **ví'vratayoḥ** śū́ra índraḥ* (T in 11.7.11 stanza)[20]

---

[19] To be sure, this triṣṭubh line could perhaps be scanned as *śrudhí tᵤváṃ sudraviṇo nas tvám yāḷ*. But such a scansion would mean that we have to accept an extremely awkward sequence of four heavy syllables in the cadence, only to avoid the mid-word cæsura of *su'draviṇo*. Shall we strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel?

[20] For a metrical description of the strangely irregular hymn ṚV 10.105, in which a tendency to mix *triṣṭubh* lines with heptasyllabic verses can be detected, see Oldenberg, Prolegomena, 158–159, and Arnold, Vedic Metre, 233 § 244 iii.

Compare also Brent Vine, "On the heptasyllabic verses of the Rig-Veda". Indo-European Studies iii. Edited by Calvert Watkins. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University,

10.105.11d   *ā́vo yád **dasyu'hátye** kutsaputrám* (T in 11.7.7.11.11 stanza)
10.105.11e   *prā́vo yád **dasyu'hátye** kutsavatsám* (T in 11.7.7.11.11 stanza)
10.120.9c   *svásāro **māta'ríbhvarīr** ariprā́[ḥ* (T) [21]
10.122.1a   *vásuṃ ná **citrá'mahasaṃ** gr̥ṇīṣe* (T)
10.126.4d   *s₁yā́ma **su'praṇītay[o á]ti** dvíṣaḥ* (J in UB)
10.132.7a   *yuvám̐ h₁y **apna'rā́jāv** ásīdataṃ* (J[11])
10.140.6c   *śrútkarṇaṃ **sa'práthastamaṃ** t₁vā girā́* (J)
10.160.1a   *tīvrásy**ābhí'vayaso** asyá pāhi* (T)
10.167.4d   *práti **viśvā'mitrajamadagnī** dáme* (J)

In the Metrical Notes to their Harvard edition of the R̥gveda,[22] van Nooten & Holland have acknowledged a "Caesura at the seam of a compound" (CSC) in only a minority of the above-quoted verses, in no more than 28 out of 112 cases, which is a poor 25% of the total number.[23] It seems clear that the two scholars prefer what they call a "rare" and — in my personal view — ghost cæsura after the third syllable to a rare but — i.m.p.v. — less spectral CSC, whenever their preference seems to be allowed for by a word boundary that happens to occur in this position.

I. 2. The Second Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura

By far less numerous and much more irregular are metrical lines in which the cæsura divides a nominal derivative in such a way as to separate the suffix from the rest. Most frequently, it is the superlative suffix *-tama* that receives a preferential treatment of this kind. Eight examples of *-tama* derivatives[24] with a

---

Department of Linguistics, 1977, 621–640 = Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 91, 1977, 246–255.

   [21] The unorthodox analysis of this R̥gvedic *hapax* compound as **māta-ríbhvarī-*, and not as ***mātarí-bhvarī-*, can be justified by adducing linguistic as well as metrical arguments in favour of it.

   [22] Rig Veda. A Metrically Restored Text with an Introduction and Notes. Edited by Barend A. van Nooten and Gary B. Holland. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volume 50). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994, 577–667.

   [23] The 28 verses with a "Caesura at the seam of a compound" acknowledged by van Nooten & Holland are the following: 1.30.16c, 1.60.5c, 1.61.3c, 1.61.5c, 1.61.5d (= 5 cases out of my 22); 2.9.1c, 2.25.4c (= 2/6); 3.53.16d (= 1/5); 4.1.8b (= 1/6); 6.20.1c, 6.20.11c, 6.34.2b, 6.51.10a (= 4/22); 7.8.6d, 7.33.11a (= 2/12); 8.60.17d (= 1/8); 9.83.5c, 9.86.40c (= 2/6); 10.35.14d, 10.50.1b, 10.61.13d, 10.61.15d, 10.99.8d, 10.101.2b, 10.122.1a, 10.126.4d, 10.160.1a, 10.167.4d (= 10/25).

   [24] The fact that these derivatives are always analysed by the author of the Pada-Pāṭha would seem to suggest that they were considered nominal compounds.

mid-word cæsura of the second degree (or a semi-incisive mid-word cæsura) can be cited from the ṚV, and half of them are found in the Fourth Book:[25]

> 1.62.6a   *tád u **práyakṣa'tamam** asya kárma* (T)
> 1.62.6b   *dasmásya **cắru'tamam** asti dáṁsaḥ* (T)[26]

> 4.1.4c   *yájiṣṭho **váhni'tamaḥ** śóśucāno* (T)
> 4.1.6b   *devásya **citrá'tamā** márt_iyeṣu* (T)
> 4.22.3a   *yó devó **devá'tamo** jắyamāno* (T)
> 4.23.6d   *s_úvàr ṇá **citrá'tamam** iṣa ắ góḥ* (T)

> 6.4.7a   *tv[aá]ṁ hí **mandrá'tamam** arkaśokáir* (T)[27]

> 10.85.37a   *tắm pūṣañ **chivá'tamām** érayasva* (T)[28]

But also suffix *-**mán**-* is attested once in a derivative that straddles the cæsura, again in Ṛṣi Vāmadeva's Maṇḍala, at 4.3.5d   *brávaḥ kád **arya'm_ṇné** kád bhágāya* (T)[29] ('What will you [O Agni] say to Aryaman, [and] what to Bhaga?'). And perhaps suffix *-tāti-*, if we read verse 9.96.4b *svastáye **sarvá'tātaye** bṛhaté* (T)[30] with a semi-incisive mid-word cæsura — and not with a

---

[25] For that reason this kind of mid-word cæsura could be called the 'Vāmadeva type'.

[26] Taken together, the two contiguous lines 1.62.6a and 6b may be rendered [and paraphrased] like this: 'But that most astounding **feat** of his, that most attractive miracle of the miraculous one (viz. of Indra) *is really there* (**asti**) [as a *real **fact*** we may safely *rely* upon]'.

[27] The metrically 'distracted' reading of *tvắm* as disyllabic *tv[aá]m* is conditioned by its historical pre-form, Proto-Indo-Iranian **tvaHám*.

[28] According to van Nooten & Holland, Metrical Notes, a "rare" cæsura after the third syllable occurs before seven of the eight above-quoted *-tama*-formations. Only in 1.62.6a *tád u **práyakṣa'tamam** asya kárma* (T) the two scholars discover a "caesura at the seam of a compound". Although I am not so sure whether, technically, *práyakṣa-tama-* should be termed a "compound", it certainly gives me satisfaction to see that a (semi-incisive) mid-word cæsura is recognized in *one* case at least. The reason for accepting it only here cannot have gone beyond the fact that there is no word boundary after the third syllable, as happens to be the case in all the other (7 out of 8) occurrences.

[29] Cf. again van Nooten & Holland, Rig Veda 609, metrical note ad loc.: "Tr. Caesura 3⌇ is rare".

[30] "[Läutere du dich] zum Wohlsein, zu hoher Vollkommenheit!" (Geldner, Der Rig-Veda III 92), "[clarifie toi] pour le bien être, l'intégralité (des biens), le haut (rang)!" (Renou, EVP IX 43). For the apparent *gender **disagreement*** between *sarvátātaye* (f.!) and *bṛhaté* (m.!), see Oldenberg, Noten II, 185 ad loc. and Noten II, 157 on 9.15.2b *bṛhaté devátātaye* "für den hohen Gottesdienst" (Geldner, Der Rig-Veda III 20). Renou, whose translation (as quoted above) avoids the problem, does make this concession to Geldner (and Oldenberg), that there may be an alternative to it, by admitting in his note on *bṛhaté*: "il n'est pas exclu que le terme soit ép[ithète] masculine du fém[inin] qui précède" (EVP IX 105). Cf. also Whitney's evasive rendering of ŚS 14.2.72d *bṛhaté vắjasātaye* "in order to what is great, to winning of strength" and his note ad loc.: "Whether one should emend in **d** to *bṛhatyāi*, or translate as is done above, may be made a

cæsura after the third syllable, as van Nooten & Holland, Rig Veda 649, metrical note ad loc., would suggest to read.[31]

Disinsinuating Sin

The nominal derivative ***énasvant-*** 'sinful', which occurs in the relative construction of 7.88.6a–c, deserves a closer, more discriminating look than other formations of its kind. These are the three *triṣṭubh* verses that are to be discussed:

> *yá āpír nítyo varuṇa priyáḥ sán*
> *tv[aá]m ā́gāṁsi kṛṇávat sákhā te*
> *mā́ ta **énas'vanto** yakṣin bhujema*

'When an intimate friend, in spite of being[32] your dear-own companion,[33] commits offences against you, O Varuṇa, then let us not suffer, as [if we were] ***sinners,*** [the (punishment for another person's) ***sin***][34] against you, O Miraculous One'.

---

question; it seems most likely to be a mixed construction, meaning virtually 'in order to the gaining of great *vāja*'" (HOS 8, 767). An emendation of *bṛhaté* to a grammatically agreeable **bṛhatyái* — although, incidentally, it would also improve the meter by achieving a regular *triṣṭubh* cadence — is, however, out of the question.

[31] An alternative scansion of this *pāda*, with the first noun metrically 'distracted' to $s_u vastáye$, even though it leads to a normal cæsura after the fourth syllable, would result not only in a hypermetrical *triṣṭubh* line, but also in an awkward sequence of syllables after the cæsura, viz. – ˘ – ˘ –, instead of one that should be expected as regular, i.e. ≍ ˘ – – –. To be sure, the cadence of this pāda is not what we would like it to be either, and therefore we should perhaps refrain from taking exception to the line in too critical a spirit.

[32] For the predominantly adversative sense of the present participle of the root *as/s* 'to be [there]', see — or rather, look forward to — my as yet unpublished paper "On the Concessive Meaning of ***sánt-*** in Vedic" (= Studies on the Present Participle: 2), presented at the 13th World Sanskrit Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, 10th—14th July, 2006.

[33] As *nítyas* 'intimate' qualitfies *āpís* 'friend', so does *priyás* 'own, dear' seem to qualify *sákhā* 'companion', although these two are separated from one another by several intervening words. Differently, Geldner (Der Rig-Veda II [= HOS 34] 260): "Wenn dein gewohnter Genosse, der dir lieb ist, Varuṇa, sich gegen dich versündigt hat, dein Freund", Renou (EVP V 72): "Si (ton) ami intime, ô Varuṇa, (bien que t') étant cher, commet des fautes contre toi, (ou encore) ton associé", and Toshifumi Gotō, "Vasiṣṭha und Varuṇa in RV VII 88". Indoarisch, Iranisch und die Indogermanistik. Arbeitstagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft vom 2. bis 5. Oktober 1997 in Erlangen. Herausgegeben von Bernhard Forssman und Robert Plath. Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2000, 155: "Wenn ein intimer Freund, o Varuṇa, obwohl er [dir] lieb ist, gegen dich Freveltaten tun wird, [obwohl] dein Gefolgsmann".

[34] For the meaning of *énas-* n., near-synonym of *ā́gas-* n., see Hans Hartog, Zur Frage des frühvedischen Sündenbegriffes. Eine sprach- und religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchung. Inaugural-Dissertation Marburg, 1939, especially 46–54, and Sten Rodhe, Deliver us from Evil. Studies on the Vedic Ideas of Salvation. (Publications by the Swedish Society for Missionary Research: 2). Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946, especially 136–142.

The mid-word cæsura of ***énas'vantas*** in this passage suggests a specific poetical purpose which would seem to call for a critical appreciation. In the ṚV, the adjective *énasvant-* 'sinful' is attested just twice. In the only other passage, it co-occurs with *énas-* 'sin' at 8.18.12 *tát ... śárma ... yán múmocati* / ***énasvantaṃ cid énasaḥ ...*** 'That protection, which will free even the *sinner* from [his] *sin*'.[35]

Here, we are not concerned with the doubly secondary character of ***bhujema*** in the ṚV: [1] though being an optative in mood, it is construed with *mā́* in all its five occurrences; [2] though being an active in voice, it governs an accusative which is not that of a person in the four passages quoted below (but implicitly also in the fifth, as we shall see later on).[36] What does concern us, however, is the fact that in all the other places where *mā́ ... bhujema* occurs, this finite verb is construed with an (impersonal) object:

> 4.3.13d   *mā́ sákhyur **dákṣaṃ** ripór bhujema*
> 5.70.4ab *mā́ kásy[a a]dbhutakratū **yakṣám** bhujema tanū́bhiḥ*
> 6.51.7a   *mā́ va **éno** anyákṛtam bhujema*
> 7.52.2c   *mā́ vo bhujem[a a]nyájātam **éno***

It is only in our verse, 7.88.6c, that the object of *bhujema* appears to be missing. The seemingly absent object is none the less there, albeit hidden behind its *double*, if we care to *mind-read énas* once again, in addition to the manifest *énas* of *énasvantas*, thus availing ourselves of an eminently useful exegetical device which was introduced by Geldner under the felicitous name of "word haplology".[37]

The secretive noun ***énas*** is all the more present since pronoun ***te*** cannot be construed without it. The adjective qualifying us as *énasvantas*, even though standing next to the enclitic, is not to be considered its immediate partner, as

---

[35] The only post-Ṛgvedic attestation of *énasvant-* seems to be at AB 5.30.11, where it also co-occurs with *énas-*. Cf. the (near-)synonymous adjective *enasvín-* attested thrice in Vedic: at ŚBM 3.2.1.40; ŚBK 2.4.2.15 & 4.2.1.27, unaccompanied, however, by *énas-*.

A third *énas*-derivative, the *-íya*-formation *enasᵢyà-* 'sinful' (ŚS 2x [+]), co-occurs again with *énas-* 'sin' at ŚS 6.115.2ab (≈ PS 16.49.5ab) *yádi jā́grad yádi svápann éna enasᵢyó 'karam* "If waking, if sleeping, I sinful have committed sin" (Whitney, II 365).

[36] For these two striking irregularities, see Karl Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda. Eine synchronische Funktionsuntersuchung. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1967, 95 f.

[37] Karl [Friedrich] Geldner, "Die Worthaplologie im Rigveda". Festgabe Adolf Kaegi. Frauenfeld 1919: 102–106. Cf. also Naoshiro Tsuji, "Über indrāvato (RV. IV.27.4a)". The Journal of the Taisho University 6–7 [Festschrift Wogihara], 1930: 131–138. But let us be warned by what Louis Renou, Études védiques et pāṇinéennes. Tome I. Paris: E. de Boccard, 1955, 39, said about this convenient device of Vedic exegesis: "La «Worthaplologie», si elle ne tombe pas à l'état d'un simple expédient, sera utile pour expliquer quelques formules". It will prove useful in our discussion of this, as well as of one or two other cases of mid-word cæsura, without degenerating into a "simple expedient", I confidently hope.

Oldenberg, Noten II, 61–62, has already pointed out.[38] Against the same scholar's express wish to take the enclitic pronoun with *bhujema*,[39] we may, however, protest that by rights *te* should belong to the absentee. This is suggested by the co-occurrence of enclitic *vas* with *énas* in two of the four above-quoted verses, [1] at 6.51.7a *mā́ va éno anyákṛtam bhujema* and [2] at 7.52.2c *mā́ vo bhujem[a a]nyájātam éno* 'Let us not be punished for *a crime against you* that was committed (brought about) by others [than us]'.[40]

In leaving out a word that should be there — because the transitive verb **bhujema** calls for an *object* to govern, and the enclitic pronoun **te** needs a *noun* to be governed by[41] — the poet seems to say that the culpability we ourselves may be thought to have incurred as an indirect consequence of sinful acts perpetrated by others — so that we should be as 'guilty' as they are, and could be called 'criminals' together with them — really is, in spite of what syntax and semantics would suggest, *not* there.

Although **énas** '*sin*' is *insinuated* by the presence of no less than three different words — *te*, *énasvantas*, and *bhujema* — the same '*sin*' is also *disinsinuated* by the very absence of the word that designates it. As a result of this clever sleight of hand, the adjective characterizing *us* as **énasvantas** 'sinful' could be *sous-entendu* in the adversative sense of '*although* (we may seem to be) guilty of the sin (and therefore punishable for it), [*we are in fact **not**]*'.

The poet Vasiṣṭha might even have intimated that the poetic justice of all this is not only his own, but also that of heavenly Varuṇa, his very personal god, and an expression of divine mercy. While we, who are at the receiving end of grace, could feel free to imagine that Varuṇa — in a spirit of *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner* — *forgives* us because he deigns to *understand*, in kindly concord with us, that our sin has graciously been made to vanish into thin air by a tricky legerdemain of the poet.

II. 1. The Third Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura

---

[38] Hermann Oldenberg, Ṛgveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten [II]. Siebentes bis zehntes Buch. (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-Historische Klasse. Neue Folge Band XIII. Nro. 3). Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1912.

[39] Oldenberg, loc. cit.: "... würde ich *te* nicht zu *énasvantaḥ* sondern zu *bhujema* stellen".

[40] Accordingly, verse 7.88.6c has been correctly understood by Geldner, who rendered it as "so möchten wir Sünder nicht (die Sünde) wider dich büßen, du Geheimnisvoller" (Der Rig-Veda II 260), and Renou, whose rendering runs thus: "puissions-nous ne pas payer, (comme si nous étions) porteurs-du-péché (fait) à ton endroit, (dieu) qui régis-le-mal!" (EVP V 72). For a different and less likely translation, see Gotō, "Vasiṣṭha und Varuṇa", 156: "sollen wir nicht als Schuldhafte dir gegenüber, o Monströser, büßen".

[41] And not just the negative particle *mā́* it happens to be leaning upon.

Among the instances of "weak caesura" in Arnold's second list, Vedic Metre, 192 § 214 ii — to which, as it happens, "examples accompanied by secondary caesura" given in a different place, VM 190 § 213 ii, are to be added[42] — there are some that have excited my curious interest more than others, and the desire to discuss them in as much detail as their exceptional nature seems to exact.[43]

In a fair number of cases, an apparently indivisible nominal form stands astride the place where the cæsura normally occurs. Examples include the following fifteen straddling nouns:

1.122.8c   *jáno yáḥ* **pajrébh$_i$yo** *vājínīvān* (T)

2.1.8d   *t$_u$váṁ* **sahásrāṇi** *śatā́ dáśa práti* (J)

2.14.4d   *tám índraṁ* **sómasya** *bhṛthé hinota* (T)

2.17.5d   *ástabhnān* **māyáyā** *d$_i$yā́m avasrásaḥ* (J)

2.31.7b   *átakṣann* **āyávo** *náv$_ī$yase sám* (T)

3.16.6c   *sáṁ rāyā́* **bhū́yasā** *sṛja mayobhúnā* (J in SB)

3.53.2d   *índra* **svā́diṣṭhayā** *girā́ śacīvaḥ* (T)

3.58.7a   *áśvinā* **vāyúnā** *yuváṁ sudakṣā* (T)

5.33.4c   *takṣé* **sū́ryāya** *cid ókasi své* (T)

6.15.12d   *sáṁ rayí* **spṛhayā́y$_i$yaḥ** *sahasrī́* (T)

7.2.7c   *ūrdhvám no* **adhvarám** *kṛtaṁ háveṣu* (T)

7.20.7d   *ā́ citra* **cítr$_i$yam** *bharā rayíṁ naḥ* (T)

7.97.3b   *suśévam* **bráhmaṇas** *pátiṁ gṛṇīṣe* (T)

7.97.9a   *iyáṁ vām* **brahmaṇas** *pate suvṛktír* (T)

10.132.2b   *suṣumn[ā́ i]ṣitatvátā yajāmasi* (? J in PP) [44, 45]

---

[42] The second list, taken together with these additions, amounts to some 70 examples of 'indistinct cæsura'. A number of doubtful cases are included in that figure. In compensation, a few cases that Arnold failed to recognize as belonging here will have to be added.

[43] Although, for the time being, no more than four from among the fifteen nouns representing the third degree of mid-word cæsura (i.e. 2.1.8d **sahásrāṇi**, 2.17.5d **māyáyā**, 3.53.2d **svā́diṣṭhayā**, and 3.58.7a **vāyúnā**), as well as seven verb-forms exemplifying its fourth degree (i.e. 2.20.1d *íyakṣantas*, 4.7.11d *vājayate*, 6.3.4d **drāvayati**, 7.20.6a *bhreṣate*, 7.88.3d *īṅkhayāvahai*, 9.72.1c *īráyati*, and 10.95.7a **jā́yamāne**), will be taken up for closer examination in the present paper, I shall have, I trust, other occasions in the future to continue, if only intermittently, this not-so-straight line of inquiry.

[44] PP stands for *PrastāraPaṅkti*, a very rare type of mixed meter. It is defined as a 40-syllable stanza consisting of four verses that count 12.12.8.8 syllables respectively. If the two dodecasyllabic lines of a PP stanza were read as 8.4 — a reading that has to be considered as possible in mixed meters, provided a word boundary falls after the 8th syllable — we would have no reason to speak of a mid-word cæsura in ṚV 10.132.2b *suṣumn[ā́ i]ṣitatvátā yajāmasi*.

[45] With the exception of 2.1.8d & 3.53.2d, where no word boundary happens to occur after the third, and therefore a cæsura is posited only after the sixth syllable, van Nooten and Holland, Rig Veda 599 & 607, thought fit to place a "rare" cæsura after the third syllable in all the other, 13 out of 15, above-quoted trimeter lines.

With the unusual position of nouns like 2.14.4d *sómasya* or 5.33.4c *sū́ryāya*, resulting in an indistinct cæsura, some emphasis appears to be intended. It is also noteworthy that these nominal forms tend to have *three* syllables of a certain prosodic character, namely, – ⏑ –, thus forming the metrical foot known as cretic or amphimacer.[46] Since this particular kind of mid-word caesura inside a trisyllabic word appears to occur most typically in the Third (3.16.6c *bhū́yasā*, 3.58.7a *vāyúnā*) and Seventh (7.2.7c *adhvarám*, 7.20.7d *cítr₍yam*, 7.97.3b *bráhmaṇas*, 7.97.9a *brahmaṇas*) Song-Cycles, it may be styled the 'Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra type'. Did the two Ṛṣis — V. & V. — who are known to have been vying with one another in poetic excellence, go to the length of competing — *à qui mieux mieux* — even with respect to the *ra-gaṇa* kind of mid-word caesura?

The Twin Gods Twinned Twice

Without arrogating to myself the right of being judge or referee in the two rivals' strife for pre-eminence, I will choose just one of Viśvāmitra's cæsuraless lines and try to do justice to it in relative isolation. My choice is 3.58.7a:

*áśvinā **vāyúnā** yuvám̐ sudakṣā*

Here,[47] the straddling position of *vāyúnā* seems stealthily to suggest a hidden meaning. If we distinctly articulate this noun, in accordance with its conspicuous placement and for the sake of emphasis, by intently syllabizing it as *vā yú nā* — without, however, going so far as to mark two distinct cæsuræ (one early, the other late), both of which could not possibly occur simultaneously in one and the same trimeter line — we will, slowly but without fail, become aware of a secret presence, and witness the emergence of another word.

From underneath, a second noun is bound to rise into view and eventually show up at the surface, one that consists of exactly the same three *syllables*, *vā yú nā*, but rearranged in a different syllabic *order*.

Do I have to pronounce that second noun by spelling out the obvious result of syllable *permutation* of the first?

---

[46] This is the so-called *ra-gaṇa*, according to Indian terminology. See, for instance, the exemplifying definition given by Piṅgalācārya, ChandaḥSūtra 1.3 *kā guhā r* (Bibliotheca Indica edition, Calcutta, 1871, 3), which may, or may not, allude to an actually occurring metrical line beginning with these syllables. Obviously, the vowelless *r* is the anlaut of a word — a trisyllabic verb or noun form would be most likely — that could have the same prosodic structure as the first three syllables of the verse: – ⏑ – . We could, if we wanted to give free rein to fancy, imagine Vedic words like *rā́dhasā*, *rāmayet*, *rejayet*, or *rocate*.

[47] For a translation of this line and part of the remaining stanza, see below.

ṚV 3.58.7 is addressed to the Aśvins. In its most important part, this stanza says: *áśvinā **vāyúnā** yuvám sudakṣā n₍ᵢ₎yúdbhiś ca sajóṣasā **yuvānā** / ... sómam pibatam ...* 'Do drink the Soma [here], O you two [eternally] young men[48] and eminently capable Aśvins, in a common enjoyment with Vāyu and [his] teams [of horses]!'

From this immediate context of line 7a, it would appear that the two Aśvins are more closely connected with Vāyu than we should have thought on first impression, when we were not yet reading beyond the most obvious surface of the text. But once we care to pry into its depth with mildly inquisitive eyes we may be able to see that they are connected not only by the explicit request asking them to enjoy the heavenly drink together with the wind, but also — in a more secret and intimate union — by the underlying identity of the Twin Gods as two young men, *yú vā nā*, with the Wind God, *vā yú nā*.

And thus, they are twinned once again.

Heaven's Magical Prop

In the Second Song-Cycle, we find a *jagatī pāda* that is, apart from its cadence, rhythmically quite similar to the *triṣṭubh* line 3.58.7a *áśvinā **vāyúnā** yuvám sudakṣā* treated above. The context of that *jagatī*, which displays yet another indistinct mid-word cæsura, is the distich 2.17.5cd:

> *ádhārayat pṛthivī́m viśvádhāyasam*
> *ástabhnān **māyáyā** d₍ᵢ₎yā́m avasrásaḥ*

> He (viz. Indra) fixed the all-nourishing earth. With magical power,
> He propped up the sky[49] [to keep it] from tumbling down.[50]

---

[48] The Twin Gods are referred to as 'young men' five times in the ṚV: four times in the enclitic vocative dual *yuvānā* (at 1.117.4b, 3.58.7b, 7.67.10a = 7.69.8a), and once in the accusative dual *yúvānā* (at 6.62.4d).

[49] Compare Geldner's translation "er stützte mit Zaubermacht den Himmel" (Der Rig-Veda, I 298). For the meaning 'magical power', see my discussion below.

[50] By a strange gaffe, Alexander Lubotsky, A Ṛgvedic Word Concordance. Part II: P—H. (American Oriental Series, Volume 83). New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1997, 1607 s.v. ***sraṃs-***, defines *avasrásas* (1x) and the homomorphous *visrásas* (2x) as *a*-aorist injunctives. The three contexts of the two words make it abundantly clear that, far from being finite verb-forms, they have to be described as ablatives of the original feminine root-nouns *ava-srás-* and *vi-srás-* respectively, functioning as infinitives. As such, they were correctly understood by Hermann Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda, Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1873 (61996), 1617 s.v.: "Verbale ***srás*** als Infin[itiv]", and other scholars. See, for instance, Bertold Delbrück, Altindische Syntax. (Syntaktische Forschungen, V). Halle an der Saale: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1888. (= Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968, 1976), 418 § 229a, who translates ṚV 2.17.5d *ástabhnān māyáyā d₍ᵢ₎yā́m avasrásaḥ* "mit Zauberkraft stützte

In this distich, the conspicuous verse- and sentence-initial position of the finite verbs gives prominence to the actions of fixing and propping respectively. Both verbs are transitive. But while *ádhārayat* is separated from its object *pṛthivī́m* by a regular cæsura after the fourth syllable, *ástabhnāt* is, on the contrary, trickily *connected* with its object *d͜yā́m* by means of a straddling noun, the cæsuraless instrumental ***māyáyā***. If this is a coincidence, it is one that happens to coincide with a meaning of unsuspected depth, a meaning that the poet may have had in mind, none the less.

Grammatically, the instrumental case plays a marginal, or peripheral, role in the sentence.[51] Metrically, however, ***māyáyā*** is central to our line and its poetic significance. And this is a conflict that has to be solved in a mutually satisfying way, by conceding a central, or pivotal, position to marginality itself.

Although the etymology of ***māyā́-*** f. is not quite certain,[52] the original meaning of the noun must lie in the area of 'miraculously creative power'. That power is ascribed to gods, or god-like beings, such as Mitra and Varuṇa, Agni, Indra, Sūrya, Soma, Pūṣan, the Aśvins, the Ṛbhus, the Maruts; but also to Indra's rival Vṛtra, to demons in general, and even to human inimical sorcerers. Thus, it may acquire the somewhat negative connotation of 'power to deceive and delude'.

Even though the action of propping up the sky is not exclusively Indra's,[53] it certainly is a characteristic activity of his.[54] Another line of the Second Song-Cycle, 2.12.2d *yó dyā́m ástabhnāt sá janāsa índraḥ* 'he who

er den Himmel vor dem Herabfallen", or Petr Sgall, Die Infinitive im Ṛgveda. Acta Universitatis Carolinae — Philologica No 2. Praha, 1958, 166 & 235, or Salvatore Scarlata, Die Wurzelkomposita im Ṛg-Veda. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1998, 673 f.

[51] For this particular role, see Calvert Watkins, How to Kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European Poetics. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 331: "The basic general grammatical meaning of the instrumental case in an Indo-European case system is to signal that the entity occupies a marginal or peripheral position in the message." Cf. also Watkins, loc. cit., for a reference to his teacher Roman Jakobson.

[52] It is, nevertheless, likely that *māyā́-* has to be analysed as *mā-yā́-*, and that it is derived from root *mā* (< PIE **meh₁*) 'to measure'. For this root and its probable derivative, see Manfred Mayrhofer, Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen. [= EWAia]. II. Band. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996, 341–343 s.v. ***MĀ***² 'messen, etc'. and 349–350 s.v. ***māyā́-*** f. 'übernatürliche Kraft, etc'..

[53] For other sky-propping gods, see e.g. ṚV 1.154.1c *yó áskabhāyad úttaraṁ sadhástham* '[He (= Viṣṇu) ...], who propped [up] the upper abode (viz. Heaven)', 3.5.10a *úd astambhīt samídhā nā́kam ṛṣv[áḥ* 'He, the lofty one (= Agni), has propped up the firmament with [his] firewood', or 8.42.1a *ástabhnād dyā́m ásuro viśvávedā[ḥ* 'He, the all-knowing Asura (= Varuṇa), propped [up] the sky'.

[54] The following are some of the ṚV passages in which Indra is characterized as having propped up the sky: 3.30.9c *ástabhnād dyā́m vṛṣabhó antárikṣam*, 6.17.7b *úpa dyā́m ṛṣvó bṛhád indra stabhāyaḥ*, 6.44.24a *ayáṃ dyā́vā pṛthivī́ ví ṣkabhāyad*, 10.113.4d *ástabhnān nā́kaṁ s͜uvapasyáyā pṛthúm*.

propped up the sky, you people, is Indra', could be taken as an appropriate qualification, and almost definition, of the god.[55]

The use, on the other hand, of **māyáyā** in our context seems uncharacteristic. We would rather expect an instrumental like *ójasā*, as it is actually found in verse 10.153.3c *úd dyā́m astabhnā ójasā* 'you [O Indra] propped up the sky with [your] strength'. Because *ójas-* n. 'physical power' is Indra's most typical quality.

Again in a hymn near by, pāda 2.15.2a speaks of Indra's miraculous deed in the following paradoxical way: **avaṁśé dyā́m astabhāyad bṛhántam** 'without a pole, he propped up the sky [sky-]high'.[56] Compare also 10.149.1b **askambhané** **savitā́ dyā́m adṛṁhat** 'without a prop, Savitar fixed the Sky'.[57] These two formulations are apt to give us a decisive clue to the adequate understanding of *māyáyā* in our verse.

For the action of propping up, a proper prop in the shape of a pole or post or pillar is needed; see, for instance, the two synonymous instrumentals *skambhéna* (at 8.41.10d) and *skámbhanena* (at 3.31.12c, 6.47.5c, 6.72.2c, and 10.111.5d), both of which case-forms are found in quite similar contexts.[58]

---

[55] For Indra's feat of dividing the one world up into two, see, e.g., ṚV 5.29.4a *ā́d ródasī vitarám ví ṣkabhāyat* 'Then he (Indra) propped the two faces (Heaven and Earth) further apart', ṚV 5.31.5c *śáktīvo yád vibhárā ródasī ubhé* 'that you, O Powerful One, separated the two faces', or ṚV 8.37.4ab *sasthā́vānā yavayasi tvám éka íc chacī́pat[e* 'All alone, O Lord of Strength, you keep at a distance [from each other] the two that were standing [closely] together'.

[56] For a comparable line in the same neighbourhood of the Second Song-Cycle, with another locative of this type, see ṚV 2.13.9c **arajjáu dásyūn sám unab dabhī́taye** 'Without a rope, you tied up the enemies on Dabhīti's behalf'. Geldner, however, renders the sentence as "da hast du für Dabhīti die Dasyu's (in den Schlaf), der keines Strickes bedarf, eingeschnürt" (Der Rig-Veda I 293), taking *arajjáu* for a bahuvrīhi.

[57] Compare Geldner's differing translations of the two passages, of 2.15.2a: "Da wo kein Balken haftet [im Luftraum], stützte er den hohen Himmel" and of 10.149.1b: "Savitṛ hat den Himmel in dem stützenlosen (Raum) befestigt" (Der Rig-Veda I 295 and III 381 respectively). As can be seen, Geldner took also the two locatives *avaṁśé* and *askambhané* for bahuvrīhis, but they should preferredly be understood, with Delbrück and many others, as adverbially used oxytone *a*-compounds or 'without'-formations representing an inherited type, which may well be of Proto-Indo-European origin.

For the most recent, comprehensive study of this 'privative' — with copious reference to scholarly literature and an abundance of examples taken from Vedic, Avestan, Greek, Latin, and Germanic — see Bernhard Forssman, "Eine besondere Gebrauchsweise der indogermanischen Privativa". Berthold Delbrück y la sintaxis indoeuropea hoy. Actas del coloquio de la Indogermanische Gesellschaft, Madrid, 21—24 septiembre de 1994, editadas por Emilio Crespo y José Luis García Ramón. Madrid: Ediciones de la UAM / Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1997, 85–111, especially 96 ff. for a list of "Absenzbildungen im Vedischen".

[58] See 3.31.12c *viṣkabhnánta skámbhanenā jánitrī* 'They (the Aṅgirases) propped the two mothers (Heaven and Earth) apart with a prop', 6.47.5cd *ayám mahā́n mahatā́ skámbhanen[a ú]d dyā́m astabhnād vṛṣabhó marútvān* 'Together with the Maruts, this mighty bull (Indra) propped up the sky by means of a mighty prop', 6.72.2c *úpa dyā́m skambháthu skámbhanen[a* 'You two [O Indra and Soma!] have propped up the Sky with a prop', 8.41.10d

If all physical means of propping up is lacking, the agent of propping has to make up for the lack by using a tricky device or artful scheme that would work like magic.[59]

māyáyā, which expresses the instrument of propping in the instrumental case of an abstract noun, is not only a makeshift and stopgap for the missing concrete prop, it also seems to fill up, albeit symbolically, the open space between heaven and earth, keeping the two partners apart as well as holding them firmly together, by means of magical trickery, so that not even the smallest measure of a metrical pause may be allowed to intervene where the cæsura is wont to fall.

There are a few very particular cases of third-degree mid-word cæsura which deserve special mention. In the three trimeter verses that are concerned, the space on both sides of the place where the cæsura may be expected to occur is occupied by words of four syllables: the numeral *sahásrāṇi*, the participle *íyakṣantas*, and the superlative *svā́diṣṭhayā*.

These metrically exceptional lines are quoted together by Arnold, Vedic Metre 191 § 214.[60] But his challenging statement, loc. cit., that we find "only *three* trimeter verses in the whole Rigveda which have certainly no caesura of any kind" — namely, 2.1.8d *t$_u$vám* **sahásrāṇi** *śatā́ dáśa práti*, 2.20.1d *sumnám* **íyakṣantas** *t$_u$vā́vato nr̥̄́n*, and 3.53.2d *índra* **svā́diṣṭhayā** *girā́ śacīvaḥ* — provokes me to ask: Why are these the only three? Is it simply because no word boundary happens to fall after the third syllable, where it would have been acceptable to Arnold? And a cæsura cutting in after only two felt like cutting in too early? Well, that must have been the only reason, I suppose, for considering these three verses as being without any cæsura.[61] Since they are so special, I feel called on to

---

yá skambhéna ví ródasī '[Varuṇa,] who [holds] the two faces (Heaven and Earth) apart with a prop', and 10.111.5cd *mahī́ṃ cid dyā́m ā́tanot sū́r₍i₎yeṇa cāskámbha cit $_s$kámbhanena skábhīyān* 'He (Indra) spanned even the great Sky with the Sun. He has even propped [it up] with a prop, [he who is] an expert prop-meister'.

[59] The instrumental of the abstract noun *s$_u$vapasyā́-* f. (R̥V 7x) 'adroitness, dexterity' in 10.113.4d *ástabhnān nā́kaṃ s$_u$vapasyáyā pr̥thúm* 'he (Indra) propped the broad firmament with skilfulness' still presupposes a concrete prop that is to be adroitly handled, whereas *māyā́-* f. (R̥V 63x) 'magical power' may be said to work also without any supporting means.

The plural of *śácī-* f. (R̥V 55x) 'capacity' is used in a similar, although less abstract, way at, for instance, 10.89.4cd *yó ákṣeṇeva cakríyā śácībhir víṣvak tastámbha pr̥thivī́m utá dyā́m* '[Indra,] who with acts of strength has propped apart heaven and earth as [one would prop apart] the chariot-wheels with an axle-tree'.

[60] Although the desiderative present participle *íyakṣantas* at R̥V 2.20.1d really belongs to the more important group of six verb-forms that display a mid-word cæsura of the fourth degree, and will, accordingly, have to be treated together with its fellows only in the following chapter (II. 2.), I had to mention it already here because of Arnold's reference.

[61] Van Nooten & Holland, on the other hand, in their metrical note on 2.1.8d, R̥V edition 599, answer to Arnold's challenge in the following characteristic way: "Arnold (VM § 214) states

take them up, all three of them, for a more detailed discussion. Let me start with Ṛ̥V 2.1.8d:

A Rousing Anticlimax

<p style="text-align:center"><i>t_uvám</i> sahásrāṇi <i>śatā́ dáśa práti</i></p>

<p style="text-align:center">You are equal to thousands, <i>hundreds</i>, <i>ten</i>.</p>

Migron, IIJ 18,[62] 182 n.18, thinks that this verse "should read *tvám sahásrāṇi / śatā́ dáśa práti* (not *tuám*; 'Bhārgava' type, Arnold p. 14), thus acquiring a perfectly normal caesura after the fifth syllable". Of the two other cæsuraless triṣṭubh lines, 2.20.1d and 3.53.2d, he says that their existence "remains a disturbing fact". I have to confess right away, even before discussing Migron's suggestion in some detail, that calling "perfectly normal" a cæsura acquired by reading *tvám sahásrāṇi ' śatā́ dáśa práti* causes me to suspect a hidden abnormity. And sure enough, in the following discussion we shall see that, while a cæsura after the fifth syllable is certainly normal in a triṣṭubh or jagatī line, an iambic foot after the cæsura is not only extremely rare in any trimeter verse, but will prove wellnigh impossible in that of the Bhārgava type.[63]

The term "Bhārgavā [sic] verse" was introduced by Arnold, Vedic Metre 14 § 52, for a few defective jagatī lines that occur in the two hymns 10.77 and 78.[64] Actually, only the first halves of these hymns are concerned, 77.1a–4d[65]

---

that this verse and two others (2.20.1d, 3.53.2d) have no caesura. It is worth noting that the only possible division in these lines is after the 6th syllable". A cæsura after the 6th is, however, "the only possible division" merely because the two scholars believe that every trimeter line *must* have a distinctly incisive cæsura *somewhere*, if not (as is frequent and regular) after the 4th or 5th syllable, then at least (rarely and irregularly) after the 3rd or 6th. And if not there at its earliest, then here at its latest.

[62] See Saul Migron, "Vedic Trimeter Verse and the Sievers-Edgerton Law". Indo-Iranian Journal 18, 1976, 179–193.

[63] According to van Nooten & Holland, Rig Veda, Introduction xviii, Table III: "The Breaks in Trimeter verse (Rig Veda 1—10)", only 84 + 46 = 130 cases of ⏑ – can be counted among a total number of 13096 verses with a cæsura after the 5th syllable, which is less than 1%. An iambic break of this kind would be even much rarer (amounting to no more than 0.35%, to be exact), if also the syllable preceding the late cæsura were taken into account, for only 46 out of 13096 trimeter verses present the metrical sequence ⏑ | ⏑ –, and Ṛ̥V 2.1.8d, in case it were read, according to Migron's suggestion, as "*tvám sahásrāṇi / śatā́ dáśa práti*", would inevitably belong to this minute group of 46.

[64] In two other places of his book, VM 212 ff. § 227 and VM 240 f. § 250, Arnold uses the expression "Bhārgavī [sic] verse" instead.

[65] If 10.77.5b were to be read as *jyótiṣmanto ná ' bhāsā́ v_iyùṣṭiṣu*, then this line, too, would represent the new type. It could prove to be a regular jagatī pāda, however, if after the caesura we were to read *bh[aa]sā́* (< *bhaHasáH*). That in fact we have to scan *bhāsā́* trisyllabically is

and 78.1a – 4d. The two hymns are ascribed by tradition to Syūmaraśmi Bhārgava; thence the name of this type of metrical line.

Now, although the same tradition ascribes 2.1, together with all the other hymns of the second book, to Gṛtsamada, who is also called Bhārgava Śaunaka, we do not find any other verse of the Bhārgava type in this hymn, apart from our controversial verse, that is. Pāda 2.1.8d would therefore be completely isolated.

More accurate, and thus more reliable, than Arnold's description of the new metrical pattern, Vedic Metre 14, 212 ff. and 240 f., is the one that was given by Oldenberg, Prolegomena 92 ff.[66] and Noten II 280 f. While Arnold speaks of a "rest" after the cæsura, which, according to him, may be either early or late, Oldenberg has the cæsura fall only after the fifth syllable, which then is always followed by a length that results, as he points out, from the contraction of the two prosodically light syllables of the original *jagatī* the new metrical type is based upon.[67]

Therefore, Migron's reading of line 8d as *tvā́ṁ sahásrāṇi śatā́ dáśa práti* corresponds only to the Bhārgava verse as it was somewhat loosely described by Arnold. It is not, however, up to Oldenberg's standard.[68] As a consequence of this scholar's more rigorous definition of the Bhārgava metre, line 8d should be excluded from the number of Bhārgava verses as they are exemplified in the first halves of hymns 10.77 and 78. Rather, it would have to be taken as a typically catalectic *jagatī pāda*, if — and only if — it were to be read as Migron suggests. But that is far from certain.

Among the 32 verses of 10.77.1–4 and 10.78.1–4 considered to be of the Bhārgava type, there are only two that seem to warrant Migron's scansion of 2.1.8d with an iambic *śatā́* in the break: the contiguous pādas 10.77.4a and 4b. Here we find **apā́m** after the cæsura of 4a, and **mahī́** in the break of 4b. If,

---

strongly suggested by the only two other occurrences of this instrumental in the break of a trimeter line, namely at ṚV 6.10.4b   *dūredŕ̥śā ' bh[aa]sā́ kṛṣṇ[áa]dhvā* and at ṚV 10.3.1c   *cikíd ví bhāti ' bh[aa]sā́ bṛhatā́*.

It is also to be noticed that all the other verses of stanza 10.77.5 can be taken as jagatī lines: 5c and 5d are quite normal, whereas 5a is either typically catalectic, or again regular, if read as *yūyáṃ dh[uu]ṛṣú ' prayújo ná raśmíbhir*. Cf. Oldenberg's detailed discussion, Noten II 280 ad loc.

[66] Cf. the recent English translation of Hermann Oldenberg's work by V. G. Paranjape & M. A. Mehendale, Prolegomena on Metre and Textual History of the Ṛgveda. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005, 89 ff.

[67] Oldenberg, Noten II ad loc.: "Mir scheint nach wie vor auszugehen von Jagatī mit späterer Cäsur, in der man die Kürzen 6 [und] 7 durch ein Länge ersetzt: so ergibt sich ⏓ – ⏑ – ⏑ | – – ⏑ – ⏑ ⏓".

[68] Notice how carefully Oldenberg, Noten II ad loc., argues against Arnold's derivation of the new metre: "Arn[old] leitet das Metrum aus Jagatī so ab, daß die Silbe nach der sei es früheren sei es späteren Cäsur durch Pause vertreten sei. So erhielte man aber für spätere Cäsur ⏓ – ⏑ – ⏑ | [⏑] ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ ⏓ ; die 6. Silbe (bei Nichtzählung der Pause) wäre Kürze, während sie in der Tat Länge ist".

however, *apā́m* were read trisyllabically — as it has to be scanned in so many other trimeter lines where it stands in the same position[69] — then 4a would become a regular *jagatī*: *yuṣmā́kam budhné ' **ap[áa]m** ná yā́mani*. And 4b, if considered a typically catalectic *jagatī*, could be read as *vithuryáti ná ' **mahī́** śratharyáti*, since the first halves of these two hymns, though being predominantly of the Bhārgava type, are variously interspersed with both regular[70] and catalectic[71] *jagatī pāda*s anyway.

Also, the very fact that in this hymn, 32 out of 42 occurrences of *tvám* at the beginning of a verse have to be scanned disyllabically speaks against a monosyllabic scansion of *tvám* in 8d. Even without including the controversial line-initial *tvám* of 8d in that number, the majority amounts to more than three quarters, or 76%, to be exact.

Therefore, only if I wanted to avoid the disturbing mid-word cæsura of this line at all costs, would I seriously consider having recourse to a suspiciously perfect metrical normalcy as the one suggested by Migron. The prosodic price that is to be paid here — a price I have tried to calculate with economic precision by means of the above arguments — is certainly not exorbitant, yet it is high enough to make me look for a different solution, one that is not just remotely possible from a merely *metrical* point of view, but one that tries to do greater justice to the eminently *poetic* character of this text.

Verse 2.1.8d, if scanned without a distinctly incisive cæsura as t_u*váṁ* ***sahásrāṇi** śatā́ dáśa práti*, is undeniably disturbing.[72] But let us be disturbed, and see what happens. The disturbance may lead to a sudden insight. And all depends on that. As Thieme once said: "Es kommt darauf an, einen Einfall zu haben, ..."[73]

---

[69] In addition to 10.77.4a, the genetive plural *apā́m* occurs 17 times in the break of a trimeter verse. In 12 of these occurrences, a trisyllabic scansion (*ap[áa]m*) is necessary. In the remaining 5, that scansion is at least possible. The 5 ambiguous lines, in which *apā́m* occurs always after a late cæsura, are 1.149.4c, 2.4.2a, 7.34.15a, 10.46.1b, 10.46.2a. They can be scanned as *triṣṭubh pāda*s, or they may be taken to represent the *dvipadā virāj* type, in which case a disyllabic reading of *apā́m* would be appropriate.

[70] See, for example, 10.77.3a   *prá yé diváḥ ' pṛthiv$_i$yā́ ná barháṇā*.

[71] See, for example, 10.78.1a   *víprāso ná ' mánmabhiḥ s$_u$uvādh$_i$yò*.

[72] Van Nooten & Holland, although they read this verse as a *jagatī* by scanning "t$_u$váṁ sahásrāṇi śatā́ dáśa práti" in their edition (Rig Veda 114), avoid the disturbingly indistinct mid-word cæsura inside *sahásrāṇi* by postulating, in the metrical notes ad loc. (Rig Veda 599), a "rare" cæsura after *sahásrāṇi*: "It is worth noting that the only possible devision ... is after the 6th syllable". Yes, it certainly *is* the only possible division if we want to have one at all costs.

[73] See Paul Thieme, Untersuchungen zur Wortkunde und Auslegung des Rigveda. (Hallische Monographien, Nr. 7). Halle / Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1949, 8: "Es kommt darauf an, einen Einfall zu haben, und der Einfall läßt sich nicht auf vorgeschriebenem Wege herbeilocken". As a matter of fact, that 'unprogrammed' *Way* is the untrodden *Path* — and also the *Method* (ἡ μέθοδος) — of Speech herself, a more-than-human latent *Trail* which evokes or elicits a patent response from us mortals.

Verse 2.1.8d *t$_u$váṁ sahásrāṇi śatā́ dáśa práti* is addressed to the same heavenly Fire as the preceding *pāda* 8c *t$_u$váṃ víśvāni s$_u$vanīka patyase* 'O Fair-Faced [Fire], you dominate all'. And it surprises us with the meaning 'you are equal to *thousands*, *hundreds*, *ten*'. This line may easily represent the extremest and most provocative example in the ṚV of an **anticlimax**, one that is 'preposterous' not only because it inverts the hierarchical order of the three cardinals 10, 100, 1000, as it should naturally be arranged according to the geometrically progressive increase of their numerical value, but also because it formally sins against Behaghel's "Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder",[74] sentence variant of Pāṇini's *alpāctara*-rule.[75]

In resorting to such an extravagant irregularity, the poet must have had ulterior motives. It lay, after all, within his skill to use the same words and express the same meaning but formulate the line in such a way as to have the cæsura fall in its usual place, by saying, for instance, *t$_u$váṃ dáśa práti śatā́ sahásrā*. To be sure, he would thus have expressed the same semantic and syntactical sense, but certainly not an equally potent *poetic* significance. And that is what counts. Shall we be able, I wonder, to take the intent and purpose, which the poet is likely to have had in mind, into due account?

We may, I think, confidently exclude the possibility that the poet neglected the cæsura out of mere inadvertency. Rather, this very neglect of the cæsura, and the supposedly intentional position of *sahásrāṇi* across the metrical

---

Often, we are able to find the manifest answer only after a long and laborious delay. And sometimes, not even then. Without the hope, however, that one day — maybe already next week, but perhaps not before another thirty or forty years have elapsed — the obvious reply will be found, we could not even make the first step in the right direction.

[74] Otto Behaghel, "Beziehungen zwischen Umfang und Reihenfolge von Satzgliedern". Indogermanische Forschungen 25 (= Festschrift für Karl Brugmann, Erster Teil), 1909, 110–142; 139: "So bildet sich unbewußt in den Sprachen ein eigenartiges rhythmisches Gefühl, die Neigung, vom kürzeren zum längeren Glied überzugehen; so entwickelt sich das, was ich, um einen ganz knappen Ausdruck zu gewinnen, als das Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder bezeichnen möchte".

[75] An elaborate and rhetorically quite effective example of a **climax** — which has the additional grace of faithfully adhering to Behaghel — can be found in the metrically irregular distich of ŚS 8.9.7cd *téna śatáṁ sahásram ayútaṃ n$_i$yàrbudaṃ jaghā́na sakró dásyūnām …* 'With that [*jā́la-* n. 'net' of his] the Mighty One (Indra) has killed a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred million enemies [of ours]'.

Here, the first line is crowded with too many cardinals. While **ayútaṃ** in the break and **n$_i$yàrbudaṃ** in the cadence are regular for a *jagatī*, the opening is hypermetrical, either by two syllables, so that we would be tempted to athetize **śatáṁ**, or by three, in which case we could wish to scan the verse without **sahásram** as a typically catalectic *jagatī pāda*.

But neither should this *wish* be complied with, nor should that *temptation* be yielded to. The metrical crowding of the line with four instead of three numerals — not to mention the dramatic exponential increase, between the third and the fourth member of the series, from 10,000 to 10,000^2 — may have been intended by the poet as an apt expression of Indra's superiority over *any* number of enemies.

spot where the cæsura should be expected to occur, makes it quite clear that he wanted to emphasize: It is **thousands**, and not only *hundreds*, or just *ten*, that you, O Agni, are equal to.

Sweet Indra?

Sweetness is certainly not one of the more obvious qualities we would naturally associate with Indra the warrior god's virile and violent character. Nor would we expect the poet ever to call that 'most manly man'[76] 'sweet'.[77] We may, therefore, find ourselves more than a little surprised when we read the *gāyatrī* stanza ṚV 8.68.11 *yásya te **svādú** sakh₍ᵢ₎yáṁ **svādvī́** pránītir adrivaḥ / yajñó vitantasā́y₍ᵢ₎yaḥ* 'Of you [O Indra], whose partnership is sweet, [whose] leadership is sweet, O Lord of the pressing-stone, the worship is to be contended for [by us and our rivals]'.

Surprised we may be, because saying of Indra that his friendship is sweet can be taken to mean that he as a friend is sweet.[78] However, to express this in a more direct way, by venturing the rather audacious expression that Indra himself is sweet, *svādús*, or very sweet, *svā́dīyān*, or extremely sweet, *svā́diṣṭhas*, could have been felt too explicit a statement by the poet. As if, out of reverence for the god, he would not dare to ascribe a quality that might be acquired eventually, after long and loyal companionship with him, to the divine companion himself.[79]

---

[76] For the frequent characterization of Indra as *narā́ṃ / nṛṇā́ṃ nṛ́tama- / vīrátama-* 'most manly / most heroic [man] among men', see e.g. ṚV 3.51.4a, 3.52.8b; 4.25.4d; 5.30.12d; 6.33.3d; 7.19.10a; 10.29.2b.

[77] From a statement, though, as it is made at ṚV 6.47.2ab *ayáṁ svādúr ihá mádiṣṭha āsa yásy[a í]ndro vṛtrahátye mamā́da* 'This sweet one (the Soma drink) here has proven most exciting, [by the effect] of which [drink] Indra has been excited at the killing of Vṛtra', it would not be such a far cry to the conclusion that, as a result of drinking sweet Soma, Indra has been sweetened by it, and therefore must be sweet himself. But this second, more audacious statement has never directly been made, it seems.

[78] As it happens, only one person is actually called 'sweet friend' in the ṚV, viz. the shamanic *múni-* who is the hero of 10.136. See the distich 6cd of that hymn: *keśī́ kétasya vidvā́n **sákhā svādúr** madíntamaḥ* 'Having knowledge of [their] intention, the long-haired one is the sweet, exquisitely-drunk companion [of Apsarases, Gandharvas, and wild beasts]'. But even here, the adjective *svādús*, although it directly qualifies *sákhā* as 'sweet', can also be taken as an implicit characterization of the *drug* our wind-riding and wind-ridden ascetic has got *high on*. For, *madíntama-* suggests *máda-* m., the noun it is ultimately based upon, not only in the sense of 'intoxication', but also in that of 'intoxicating *drink*'.

[79] To be sure, other surprising expressions of intimacy with dear Indra can be found; in one of Agastya's hymns, for instance, viz. at 1.186.7 *utá na īm matáy[o á]śvayogāḥ śíśuṃ ná gā́vas táruṇaṃ rihanti / tám īṃ gíro jánayo ná pátnīḥ surabhíṣṭamaṃ narā́ṃ nasanta* 'And our horse-yoked poetic thoughts 'lick' him, like cows [lick] their tender calf; [our] songs of praise touch him, that most fragrant [man] among men, [lovingly] like wives [caress their husband]'.

Now, in one of the *fifteen* trimeter verses quoted at the beginning of this section — II. 1. The Third Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura — we find another, by far more intriguing example for the poet's decently indirect way of suggesting that Indra himself is sweet. I am referring to ṚV 3.53.2d, which line, together with the *pāda* immediately preceding it, runs as follows:

pitúr ná putráḥ sícam ā́ rabhe ta
*índra **svā́diṣṭhayā** girā́ śacīvaḥ*

At its surface, this distich conveys the meaning: 'With sweetest speech, O Indra, do I grab hold of your [garment's] hem, O Mighty One, as a son [would grab hold] of his father's'. The mere fact that the poet compares himself to a son, and his god to a father, seems to betray a great intimacy between the human and the divine person. We may even feel invited to witness a somewhat idyllic family scene in which the little boy tries to attract the attention of his daddy by tugging at his dress, and addressing him with sweet, endearing words.[80]

Nor should we let ourselves be estranged if the poet — even before exclaiming an awesome 'O Mighty One' — would breathe, with what might be a wistful whisper, an affectionate 'O Sweetest One' in this intimately matey atmosphere of a father-son relationship. And does he not intimate just that?!

Or would it be asking too much if I discreetly proposed discretely to read **svā́diṣṭha** twice? Once, as first part of the actual instrumental phrase **svā́diṣṭhayā** *girā́* 'with sweetest speech'. And once again, independently this time, as the potential vocative **svā́diṣṭha** 'O [you my] sweetest [Indra]!' The merest *soupçon*

It seems clear that Indra, who was explicitly mentioned in the preceding distich, at 1.186.6cd, is also referred to in stanza 7, if only with the pronouns *īm* and *tám īm*. This somewhat covert reference to the god could indicate that the poet felt a certain shyness about the two comparisons. Also, it is not we ourselves who would 'lick' and fondle him, but only our songs and thoughts. And so, may Lord Indra, who would have occasion to take offence at the indelicacy, graciously consider that fact an attenuating circumstance.

Compare also ṚV 3.39.1ab   *índram matír hṛdā́ ā́ vacyámān[ā á]chā pátiṃ stómataṣṭā jigāti* '[Our] thought, shaped into a song of praise and moving sinuously out of the heart, goes towards Indra [as a wife goes to her] lord-and-husband' and ṚV 10.91.13cd *bhūyā́ ántarā hṛd₍y àsya nispṛ́śe jāyéva pátya uśatī́ suvā́sāḥ* 'May it (our poem) be able to touch [him] intimately in his heart, as a well-dressed desirous wife [is able to touch] her husband [intimately in his heart]'.

[80] Although the poet could have chosen the metrically equivalent noun *sūnú-* m. 'son' (ṚV 107x), he preferred *putrá-* m. 'son, boy, child, young of an animal' (ṚV 122x) — originating from a Proto-Indo-European *putló-, presumably of the same meaning — for the obvious reason that this noun had stronger emotional overtones, and conveyed a closer household intimacy.

Cf. also Wilhelm Schulze, Kleine Schriften. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933, 225 f.: "*putráḥ* bezeichnete, wie das fast identische lat. *pullus* verrät, nicht sowohl das Verwandtschaftsverhältnis als die Altersstufe, es kann auf Menschen wie auf Tiere bezogen werden und widerstrebt seiner ursprünglichen Funktion gemäß auch nicht der Femininbildung". The feminine *putrī́-*, however, does not seem to be attested in Vedic, as yet.

of a pause inside the undivided and indivisible word *svā́diṣṭhayā* — a minimal and scarcely more than mental pause that should not amount to anything so noticeable as a clearly 'pronounced' mid-word cæsura — would suffice surreptitiously to suggest a second orthotone vocative after *índra*.[81]

It is as if the poet, on the point of openly showing his familiarity with the god by directly addressing him in the vocative as 'sweet', checked himself and bashfully shied away from the all-too-ostentatious expression of his intimacy, letting the tentatively independent case-form of direct address smoothly glide over into an adjective qualifying only his own *speech* as 'sweet'.

The impression this subtle and sensitive handling of words by the poet, who through it expresses the delicate nature of his own noble mind, may be allowed to make on our mind-reading minds is one of human sweetness communicated to the god.

II.2. The Fourth Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura

Sometimes we also find verb-forms, both finite (5x) and participial (2x), in the same straddling position as the fifteen representative nouns previously mentioned. Typical examples of such verb-forms, which again effect a kind of metrical enjambement round and about the middle of the verse, occur in the following seven trimeter lines:

2.20.1d   *sumnám **íyakṣantas** t$_u$vā́vato nṝ́n* (T)

4.7.11d   *āśúṃ ná **vājayate** hinvé árvā* (T)

6.3.4d   *dravír ná **drāvayati** dā́ru dhákṣat* (T)

7.20.6a   *nū́ cit sá **bhreṣate** jáno ná reṣan* (T)

7.88.3d   *prá preṅkhá **īṅkhayāvahai** śubhé kám* (T)

9.72.1c   *úd vā́cam **īráyati** hinváte matī́* (J)

---

[81] Any vocative immediately following an orthotone vocative may again carry the tone on the vowel of the first syllable, unless it is used as a subordinate attribute. An eminently illustrative example, with no less than four independent and coordinate vocatives, three of which stand in apposition to a preceding vocative and are, therefore, accented again with an *ā́dy-udātta-*, can be found at ṚV 7.1.8b   *vásiṣṭha śúkra dī́divaḥ pā́vaka* '[O Agni!] O best one! O bright one! O shining one! O purifying one!'.

See William Dwight Whitney, Sanskrit Grammar. 2nd Edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1889, 109 § 314, for the above and for the following two cases: ṚV 8.46.3b *śátamūte śátakrato* "thou of a hundred aids! of a hundred arts!" (Whitney) and ṚV 8.71.3b *ū́rjo napād bhádraśoce* "son of strength, propitiously bright one!" (Whitney).

Compare also ṚV 6.75.10a   *bráhmaṇāsaḥ pítaraḥ sóm$_i$yāsaḥ* or ṚV 8.2.28c   *śíprinn ṛṣīvaḥ śácīv[aḥ*. For further details and long lists of examples, see Willabe Haskell, "On the Accentuation of the Vocative Case in the Rig[-] and Atharva-Vedas". Journal of the American Oriental Society 11, 1885, 57–66, especially 62–64.

10.95.7a   *sám asmiñ **jáyamāna** āsata gnā́ḥ* (T)[82]

Thieme has already treated 7.88.3d — together with the verse immediately preceding it, viz. 7.88.3c *ádhi yád apā́ṁ snubhíś cárāva* — as a case of "Sprachmalerei",[83] but I will take it up again for a detailed discussion, because I think its 'glotto-iconic' character allows for further elucidation. The other six above-quoted trimeter lines shall be introduced, and carefully described one by one, as new examples of intended irregularity.

The prospective treatment of all these (seven) verses will have to wait, however, until we come back from the following, somewhat lengthy digression.

Excursus B: The *Intensive* Mid-Word Cæsura

In the Ṛgveda, we find a small but representative group of five predominantly verbal intensives that straddle the cæsura of a triṣṭubh line. Their reduplication syllables seem to be highlighted by the circumstance that a semi-incisive cæsura half-separates them from the remainder of the verb-(or noun-) form.[84]

The emphasis expressed in this unconventional manner may reflect an 'intensification' of the *intensive* sense of these formations — or (perhaps) rather, a 'reiteration' of their *iterative* meaning.[85]

The following five trimeter verses occurring in the Song-Cycles Four (1), Six (2), and Ten (2) contain mid-word-cæsura intensives of the present minuscule group:

4.2.19d   *devásya **már'mṛjataś** cā́ru cákṣuḥ* (T)

---

[82] For six of these seven lines, van Nooten & Holland, Metrical Notes, suggest a "rare" cæsura after syllable three. In 2.20.1d, however, the cæsura is thought to cut in only after the 6th syllable. The reason for the special treatment of this line was, it would seem, the following: Since, in verse 2.20.1d, there is no word boundary after the 3rd syllable, and after the 2nd of *sumnám* it would have come too early, the cæsura had to wait, as it were, for the end of the tetrasyllabic *íyakṣantas* to arrive, before it could finally make its own appearance — better late than not at all — an appearance that this line could not have done without, as seems to have been the view of our two scholars.

[83] See Paul Thieme, "Sprachmalerei". [Kuhn's] Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 86, 1972, 69–72 = Kleine Schriften II. Herausgegeben von Renate Söhnen-Thieme. (Glasenapp-Stiftung, Band 5 II). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995, 999–1001.

[84] One of the five forms presently to be quoted and discussed — namely, **cárcaram** at ṚV 10.106.7a — has traditionally been considered an adjective. But see below for the alternative possibility of taking it as a substantive.

[85] For a fairly comprehensive treatment of the Ṛgvedic intensives, see Christiane Schäfer, Das Intensivum im Vedischen. (Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung, Ergänzungsheft 37). [= Dissertation, Universität Freiburg im Breisgau, 1989]. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994.

6.3.6b   *śocíṣā **rā'rapīti** mitrámahāḥ* (T)[86]

6.3.8b   *vidyún ná **davi'dyot** s$_u$vébhiḥ śúṣmaiḥ* (T)

10.106.7a *pajréva **cár'caraṃ** jā́ram marā́yu* (T)

10.106.7d *vāyúr ná **par'pharat** kṣayad rayīṇā́m* (T)[87]

Three of the five intensives just quoted are finite verb-forms: the indicative ***rārapīti*** 'he (Agni) chatters-and-prattles [through his flame]' at 6.3.6b, the injunctive ***davidyot*** 'he (again Agni) flickers-and-flashes [like some lightnings would]' at 6.3.8b, and the subjunctive ***parpharat*** 'shall swell' ('shall bag-and-bulge') at 10.106.7d.[88]

---

[86] For the apparent lack of a cæsura in this line, see Hermann Oldenberg, Kleine Schriften. Herausgegeben von Klaus L[udwig] Janert. Teil 1. (Glasenapp-Stiftung, Band 1,1). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987, 743 f.: "Den Mangel der Cäsur durch Umstellung (mit Accentänderung) *rā́rapīti śocíṣā* zu beseitigen wäre leicht, aber auch leichtherzig, um so mehr als man nicht allzu gern das Verbum an den Pādaanfang bringen wird und überdies die metrische Struktur des Pāda 8b [see below] ganz ähnlich ist".

If a change of the word order were seriously to be considered, I would prefer to suggest the reading **śocíṣā **mitrá'mahā** rārapīti**. For the mid-word cæsura at the seam of the same compound, that is, of ***mitrá-mahas-***, compare the two — no more than just slightly irregular — triṣṭubh lines 1.58.8b *stotṛ́bhyo **mitra'mahaḥ** śárma yaccha* and 6.2.11a = 6.14.6a   *ácchā no **mitra'maho** deva devā́n* quoted above, in section **I.1. The First Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura.**

[87] As was almost to be expected, Van Nooten & Holland, Metrical Notes, suggest a "rare" cæsura after the third syllable for all five of these *triṣṭubh* lines.

[88] According to Oldenberg, Noten II, 1912, 329, this intensive may have to be accented as a participle, **párpharad* ('swelling'). Alternatively, in case it is taken as an unaccent verbum finitum, Oldenberg points out that the immediately following finite verb would start a new clause; it should, consequently, carry the high-pitch tone and be pronounced as **kṣáyad*.

The present-tense 3rd singular *kṣayad* could either be defined as a subjunctive of the class II verb *kṣé-* [ti] from the *aniṭ*-root *kṣay/kṣi* 'dwell in peace', or as an injunctive of the (re)iterative / continuative *-áya*-formation *kṣ-áya-* [ti] from the *seṭ*-root *kṣā* 'govern; possess'.

It would appear necessary in this context to take *kṣayat* at least in the sense of 'possesses' or 'shall possess', because the genitive *rayīṇā́m* needs to be governed. But the verb can also be understood independently, in the sense of 'shall dwell in peace'. For all its obscurity and generally alleged or accepted untranslatability, this verse *does* have a meaning — and may have even more than one — that would seem to make satisfying sense.

The same ambiguity of the present stem *kṣaya-* has to be acknowledged for the 3rd dual *kṣayatas* at ṚV 10.65.8ab   *parikṣítā pitárā pūrvajā́varī ṛtásya yónā **kṣayataḥ** sámokasā* '[Heaven and Earth,] the first-born parents, dwelling all around, are ruling and shall [continue to] dwell in the bosom of truth, [and thus remain] in the same abode'.

Cf. Geldner's translation ("Die ringsum wohnenden, erstgeborenen Eltern, die Hausgenossen herrschen im Schoße der Wahrheit") and his note ad loc.: "*kṣayataḥ* Konj[unktiv] von *kṣi* wohnen, oder Indik[ativ] von *kṣi* 'sie herrschen'? Im letzteren Falle sind *-kṣítā — kṣayataḥ* Wortspiel" (ṚV III 239). In the latter case, these two forms constitute a *word-play* only in so far as they belong to *different* roots. In order to produce a powerful pun, it is therefore important to be acquainted with the etymology of the words involved in the paronomasia.

While **mármr̥jatas** 'polishing [the charming eye of the heavenly one (to wit, of Agni)]' at 4.2.19d is a present participle, **cárcaram** at 10.106.7a has come to be regarded as an adjectival derivative from the intensive verb-stem *cárcar^i^-*.[89]

The difficulty created by the traditional interpretation is, however, that intensive adjectives of this type are, as a rule, derived with *udātta*-suffix *-á-*, and we should, therefore, rather expect an oxytone **carcará-*, in parallel with forms like 1. *-caṅkramá-* at ŚS 11.9.16a *khaḍū́re adhicaṅkramā́m*, 2. *-tarturá-* at R̥V 1.102.2d *śraddhé kám indra carato vitarturám*, 3. *-dardirá-* at R̥V 8.100.4d *ādardiró bhúvanā dardarīmi* and R̥V 10.78.6b *ādardirā́so ádrayo ná viśváhā*, 4. *-namnamá-* at R̥V 10.136.7b *piṇáṣṭi smā kunamnamā́*. Cf. AiGr II 2, 83 f. § 35aβ.[90]

The accentuation shift from the last vowel of a regular and expectable but unattested oxytone **carcará-* to that of the first syllable in the actually occurring proparoxytone *cárcara-* of R̥V 10.106.7a *pajréva cár'caraṃ jā́ram marā́yu* could, nevertheless, plausibly be explained as reflecting a change of function. Understood in this way, the newly acquired tone would express the fact that the original adjective has secondarily been transformed into a substantive. Together with the altered function of the word, its meaning should be thought to have changed as well, shifting from an adjectival 'beweglich' to a substantival 'das Bewegliche'.

There exists a noteworthy parallel formation that happens to rhyme with *cárcara-*, and has never been considered anything other than a substantive. That parallel is *gárgara-* m., occurring once in the R̥V, at 8.69.9a, and twice in the ŚS, at 4.15.12b (PS 5.7.11a) and 9.4.4b (PS 16.24.5b).[91] In a recent article, Klaus was able to determine the meaning of this noun as being only one.[92] And he

---

[89] A finite verb-form of the intensive present-stem *cárcar^i^-* occurs in the distich R̥VKh 5.9.1"b" (ed. Isidor Scheftelowitz, Die Apokryphen des R̥gveda. Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1905 [= Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966], 155) *níṣ ṭe jihvā́ carcarīti kṣuró ná bhurī́jor iva* 'Out [of the mouth] your tongue [O Rebha] moves-and-moves, as a razor [that is being sharpened moves] between the two 'arms' [of a whetting-instrument]'. Cf. ŚS 20.127.4cd and ŚāṅkhŚS 12.15.1cd *nā́ṣṭe jihvā́ carcarīti ...*, and W. Caland's translation of the passage, Śāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra, Nagpur, 1953 (= Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 335.

[90] For the same regular and customary oxytony, see also a few intensive adjectives of a similar type, R̥V 1.140.3a **vevijá-** 'quivering-and-quaking', 'shivering-and-shaking', ŚS 8.6.6b (cf. PS 16.79.5b) **rerihá-** 'licking-and-lapping', ŚS 7.38.1b (cf. PS 20.31.7b) [*abhi-*]**rorudá-** 'yelling-and-howling [at]', ŚBM 1.4.3.16 **momughá-** 'confused-and-bewildered'. Cf. AiGr II 2, 83 f. § 35aα.

[91] The substantive **gárgara-** may be based on an adjective **gargará-* 'voraciously devouring' in perfect parallel to **cárcara-** ← **carcará-*.

[92] In his paper "Zu den Śrautasūtras". Indoarisch, Iranisch und die Indogermanistik. Arbeitstagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft vom 2. bis 5. Oktober 1997 in Erlangen. Herausgegeben von Bernhard Forssman und Robert Plath. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2000, 177–190, Konrad Klaus discusses the several, seemingly different masculine nouns **gárgara-**, traditionally thought to be mere homonyms, in their respective contexts, and posits

succeeded in unifying no less than three disparate meanings that had been posited in previous scholarship.[93]

Hoffmann, in an early publication of his, expressed the view that *gárgara-* m. — apparently in sharp contrast to the rhyming intensive noun *cárcara-* n. 'the mobile one' — is an onomatopœic formation. If it were an intensive, the argument seems to go, it would have to be a regularly reduplicated **járgara-* (< ***jargará-* ?).[94]

The following four Saṃhitā passages are variants of one and the same, somewhat bawdy, Aśvamedha *mantra* which is recited by the Adhvaryu after the sacrificial horse has been slain and the *máhiṣī-*, the king's first and principal wife, or queen-consort, has lain down at the stallion's side (as if) to have sex with him — the stallion, that is, not the king.[95]

> KSAśv 5.4.8:165.7   *āhataṃ gabhe paso ni **jalgalīti** dhānikā*
> TS 7.4.19.3m   *ā́hataṃ gabhé páso ní **jalgulīti** dhā́ṇikā*
> VS 23.22cd   *ā́hanti gabhé páso ní **galgalīti** dhā́rakā*
> MS 3.13.1:168.4   *ā́hataṃ páso ní **calcalīti***

Among these four diverse versions,[96] the MS variant is most at variance with the others. It diverges from them not only by the absence of an obvious

---

"Tierbalg" ('animal's hide', fashioned into a hose, leather bag, or into bellows) as the unitary meaning of ultimately one single word.

[93] See, as just one representative scholar of the past, Manfred Mayrhofer, Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen. [EWAia]. I. Band. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992, 471–472 s.vv. *gárgara-*[1] "rauschender Wasserstrom, Wasserstrudel", *gárgara-*[2] "ein Musikinstrument", *gárgara-*[3] "Butterfaß". Compare also Otto Böhtlingk & Rudolf Roth, Sanskrit-Wörterbuch II 696, who had already posited three different meanings (**1.** "Strudel, gurges", **2.** "ein best[immtes] musikalisches Instrument", and **3.** "Butterfass"), though under one and the same lemma *gárgara-*.

[94] Karl Hoffmann, "Wiederholende" Onomatopoetika im Altindischen. Indogermanische Forschungen 60, 1952, 254–264 = Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik, 1975, 35–45.

A reference to regularity does not sound as convincing to the sceptical ear as it would to the naively trusting one. Doubt is among the most effective motors of scientific research; even the smallest portion of it will still prove potent enough to set us in vigorous motion and make us move towards having a closer, and more *intensive*, look at some of the texts that must be taken into account.

[95] For a discussion of these verses in their context, see Stephanie W. Jamison, Sacrificed Wife / Sacrificer's Wife. Women, Ritual, and Hospitality in Ancient India. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 65 ff.: "Sexuality and Fertility: The Aśvamedha. 1. The Dead Horse and the Queens".

One might entertain the prudish hope that what follows is a purely symbolical act, but that hope must be disappointed, for this is decidedly not the case.

[96] Their diversity could be understood as the result of either misunderstanding or conscious deformation due to burlesque and tabuistic tendencies, as Hoffmann, Aufsätze II, 1976, 570, explained: "Es liegt wohl in der Natur der Sache, daß Textstellen obszönen Inhalts in der vedischen Literatur schlecht überliefert sind: sie wurden entweder scherzhaft entstellt oder aus

metrical regularity, [97] but also, and more importantly, because its intensive *calcalīti* belongs to a root other than that of the three parallel formations. In consequence of this divergency, and in agreement with the different semantics of the verb, the syntax of the sentence has also changed. [98]

The first three distichs, for their part, all seem to present variant intensive forms of the same verbal root, which in these contexts appears as *galī/gulī*. [99] The only unexceptionably regular third singular of the intensive is KS *jalgalīti*. On account of its root showing the strange ablaut-form *gulī*, TS *jalgulīti* is slightly irregular. And what shall we say of VS *galgalīti*? Will it be necessary for us to conclude that this is an onomatopœic formation, merely because its reduplication does not comply with grammatical norm?

I do not think so. If TS *jalgulīti*, in spite of its slight irregularity, is an acceptable intensive, then the nonce form VS *galgalīti* should also be recognized as such. Although the reduplication syllable **gal-** has in fact derailed from the regular **jal-**, it is only by the smallest of phonological steps. A parallel — and unimpeachably regular — intensive, such as MS *calcalīti*, could have exerted a derailing influence. Also, VS *galgalīti* itself *sounded* more 'iterative' and 'intensive' than the fully, but less completely, reduplicated TS *jalgalīti*. And indeed, onomatopœia may have played a sportively supportive role at this (apparently latest) stage of intensive word-(de)formation. [100]

---

tabuistischen Gründen verundeutlicht und dann wohl auch sehr frühzeitig nicht mehr genau von den Textüberlieferern verstanden".

[97] *A la rigeur*, the line could be read as a *dvipadā virāj*, which is a metre that counts 5+5 syllables. However, in the two pentads of this prosodical pattern, the third syllable should preferredly be light, so that the first pentad, *ā́hataṃ páso* — with its heavy **taṃ p** (jarring **on** the *tympanum*) — would not exactly agree with our sense of metrical regularity.

[98] The scabrous meaning of this phrase appears to be: 'Struck at [the slit], the penis totters-and-tumbles down into [it]'.

[99] For the *seṭ*-root *gal^i* = *gar^i* 'swallow, devour', class VI present **gir-á-^ti* (AV [+]) = **gil-á-^ti* (ŚB [+]), see Mayrhofer, EWAia I, 1992, 469–470 s.v. **GAR^{I2}** 'verschlingen'. And for the Proto-Indo-European *Urform*, see ²LIV. Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben. Die Wurzeln und ihre Primärstammbildungen. Zweite, erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage bearbeitet von Martin Kümmel und Helmut Rix. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2001, 211–212 s.v. *gᵘerh₃ (= ¹LIV, 1998, 189 s.v.).

[100] The juicy translations of TS *jalgulīti* and VS *galgalīti* by, respectively, Willem Caland, Das Śrautasūtra des Āpastamba, 16. bis 24. und 31. Buch. Amsterdam: Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1928, 250: "[die Vagina] verschluckt gurgelnd" and Paul-Emile Dumont, L'Aśvamedha. Description du sacrifice solennel du cheval dans le culte védique d'après les textes du Yajurveda blanc. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1927, 179: "[la dhārakā (vulva)] l'engloutit, en faisant un bruit de gargouillement" seem judiciously chosen. Not only because they take the original meaning of root *gal^i* "verschlucken" (Caland) or "engloutir" (Dumont) into due account, but also because they pay tribute to the shady onomatopœic side of these — yes, more (VS) or less (TS) derailed — intensive formations, by adding a word or phrase which is meant to render the 'gurgling' sound produced by voracious swallowing, and to render it almost audible, at that.

Now, if the intensive noun ṚV **cárcara-** is based on the intensive verb
*_carcarīti_ = MS **calcalī́ti**, then the noun ṚV **gárgara-** may depend on a verb-form
like *_gargarīti_ = VS **galgalī́ti**, at least from the viewpoint of morphology.

Semasiology, to be sure, is a different matter. For in order to make the
dependence of _gárgara-_ on *_gargarīti_ (= _galgalī́ti_) semantically plausible, we
would have to show that the original meaning of the noun, if it is 'leather bag',
can reasonably be connected with that of the root _gar^i_ 'swallow, devour'.[101]

The only possible connection between the two that I am able at the
moment to imagine is this: Since the leather bag is made from an animal's hide,
could it perhaps be fabricated from that of a snake for which the voracious
deglutition of its prey is characteristic? And are we not, once this possibility is
envisaged, instantly reminded of the well-attested snake-name _aja-gar-á-_, an
agent-noun which literally means 'goat-swallower', and apparently designates a
huge serpent, one that would be comparable in size and strength to a python, or
anaconda, or boa constrictor, for example?[102]

However, in order to swallow its prey, the _gárgara-_ certainly need not be
as gigantic as a python. Nor is the _gárgara-_ necessarily a snake. Some other
reptile would also do.

For the meaning 'musical instrument', see the revealing co-occurrence of
gárgara- m. together with _godhā́-_ f. at ṚV 8.69.9ab _áva svarāti_ **gárgaro godhā́**

---

[101] For _gárgara-_ in the sense of 'eddy, whirlpool, maelstrom' a detailed etymological
justification is certainly not needed.

[102] The following are all the Saṃhitā occurrences of _ajagará-_ m. "_sarpa-viśeṣa-_"
(Vishvabandhu): ṚVKh² 2.14.2a & 3a; ŚS³ 4.15.7b & 9c, 11.2.25a; PS³ 1.96.4b, 5.7.6b,
16.106.5a; VSM¹ 24.38; VSK¹ 26.8.3; MS¹ 3.14.19:176.10; KS⁴ 35.15:61.4, 40.5:139.7, KSAśv
3.4:159.8, 7.4:180.3; TS² 5.5.14.1, 7.3.14.1.

That _ajagará-_ may mean a giant '**water snake**' is suggested by the substantivized adjective
apsavyà- occurring together with our noun at KS 35.15:61.4 in the contracted form
ajagaréṇāpsavyàs. These two words stand in a lengthy sequence of phrases, each of which
presents an instr.sg. followed by a nom.sg. (rarely) or nom.pl. (frequently).

The section starts at 35.15:61.1 with _agnínā tápo 'nvábhavat_, and in every subsequent
phrase, including the one that concerns us here, the imperfect of the verbal compound _anv-ā́-bhū_
('successively come into existence') has to be supplied, either in the singular or in the plural, in
necessary grammatical agreement with the number of the respective nominative.

According to the logic and overall drift of this sequence of instrumentals and nominatives,
the former always denotes a specific representative of the general concept expressed by the latter.
Fire, for instance, represents heat (_tápas-_ n.); Sun, the sting of heat (_téjas-_ n.); Indra, the gods;
Yama, the fathers; Gāyatrī, the meters; Tiger, the forest-dwelling animals; Falcon, the birds of
prey; Ficus religiosa, the trees; or [the Snake whose name is] "Cross-Line" — _tiráści-rāji-_ m.
literally, 'the one with lines [that run] across' (ŚS 7x [+]) — symbolically stands for serpents in
general.

In that same line of thought, our gargantuan, 'goat-swallowing', ana-conda-esque kind of
snake seems to exemplify all _aquatic_ animals. These are called with the generic term _apsavyà-_,
which constitutes a decasuative formation that is derived, by means of the ('independent')
svarita-suffix _-yà-_, from the loc.pl. _apsú_ of the 'water'-word _ā́p-/ap-_ f.

pári saniṣvaṇat 'The *gárgara-* shall sound down [from above], the *godhā́-* shall sound-and-resound all around'. Lüders, 1942, follows Sāyaṇa's interpretation of the former noun as *vādya-viśeṣa-*, and he himself convincingly shows that also the latter is the name of a ([probably] stringed) musical instrument.[103]

Since *godhā́-*, as Lüders suggests, originally designated the *monitor*, a lizard of the genus *Varanus* (German *Waran*), whose hide would be used for covering the body or sound-box of a stringed instrument, we may, in our turn, consider it likely that a *gárgara*'s skin could serve a similar purpose.

But all this is neither here nor there. And it's about time for me to come back from a lengthy digression that has led us, I am fearfully aware, too far afield already — and into something of a boggy βόρβορος[104] — time to return to the high road and main topic of our journey.

A Swinging Standstill

In his 1972 article, Thieme discussed two cases of "Sprachmalerei",[105] both belonging to the second — by far more interesting — kind of mid-word cæsura: the unincisive type.

In the treatment of these cases, Thieme's wording suggests a certain terminological indecision; he speaks of an absence or neglect of the cæsura ("ein Vers ohne Zäsur" and "die Nichtbeachtung der Zäsur") on the one hand, and on the other, of its position inside a word ("ihre überraschende und ihrem Wesen widersprechende, gewissermaßen gewaltsame Verlegung in das Innere des Wortes *apām*") in the first case, and in the second, of the verb-form *īṅkhayāvahai*.

In each case, however, Thieme decides where exactly the cæsura is to be placed: inside the genitive plural ending of the trisyllabic "*apa/am*" (Thieme), i.e. *apā́m* = [*apáam*],[106] and after the first two syllables of *īṅkhayāvahai*. So that,

[103] Cf. Heinrich Lüders, "Von indischen Tieren". ZDMG 96, 1942, 23–81 = Kleine Schriften. Herausgegeben von Oskar von Hinüber. (Glasenapp-Stiftung: Band 7). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973, 490–548, esp. 40 ff. = 507 ff.

[104] Although this Greek 'mud'-word is akin in origin to Vedic *gárgara-*, and may be said to descend from the same Proto-Indo-European ancestor, an agent-noun such as *$g^{u}org^{u}orh_3o$-*, we shall bravely try not to let ourselves be bogged down into the two cognates' seductive swamp of kinship.

[105] See Paul Thieme, Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 86, 1972, 69–71 = Kleine Schriften II, 1995, 999–1001.

[106] No scholar has ever considered a device of like audacity. Instead, Arnold, VM 101 § iii and 310, with boldness of a different kind, postulated the reading "*sānúbhiḥ*" [sic!] after the cæsura, while Oldenberg, Noten II 61, hesitantly suggested, with characteristic prudence, "Vielleicht *s·núbhis*". Van Nooten & Holland, Rig Veda 325, edit "s*anúbhiś*", and Gotō, "Vasiṣṭha und Varuṇa", 152, follows suit by writing "*s_a_núbhiś*".

after all, in both these cases the cæsura falls where it quite regularly may fall in a *triṣṭubh* line: after the fifth syllable.[107] As will be seen later on in this chapter, my solution of the problem posed by the verb-form *īṅkhayāvahai* diverges to some extent from the one Paul Thieme proposed.

    The two cases treated by Thieme are found in the following two lines of the same stanza in one of Vasiṣṭha's hymns, at ṚV 7.88.3cd:

> *ádhi yád **apā́ṁ** snubhíś carāva*
> *prá preṅkhá **īṅkhayāvahai** śubhé kám*

When the two of us ((you, Varuṇa, and I, Vasiṣṭha))
will move [in our boat] upon [the ocean] over the backs of the waters,
then let us swing one another in the swing [of our boat] for beauty.[108]

    According to Thieme, loc. cit.,[109] the first line "symbolizes the movement of the ship, its climb to the top of the wave (through the opening ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑ [á dhi yá

Personally, I would prefer to decide — if a decision has to be made at all — in favour of a different pronunciation, one that Oldenberg may have had in mind when opting for his dotted spelling, *s·núbhiś*, and daringly write *sₙnúbhiś*, with a secondary (!) vocalic *ṇ*.

    To be sure, we could try to avoid the issue and read the line as a decasyllabic *dvipadā virāj*, which consists of 5+5 metrical units and regularly has a light third syllable in each of its two pentads, in the following way: *á-dhi-yá-da-pā́ṁ snu-bhíś-cá-rā-va*.

[107] Among the twenty-eight (7x4) *triṣṭubh* lines of the hymn 7.88, only four have an early cæsura after the fourth syllable: 1a *prá śundhyúvam '*, 4a *vásiṣṭhaṁ ha '*, 4d *yán nú dyā́vas '*, and, with an interesting mid-word cæsura that has been discussed above (in section I.2.) as an example of the second degree, pāda 6c *mā́ ta énas'vanto yakṣin bhujema.*

[108] This translation differs in several respects from that of Thieme, who, op. cit. 69 f. = 999 f., renders the two lines as "wenn wir mittels der Rücken der Wasser (d.h. über die hohen Wogen) uns bewegen werden" (69 = 999), "möchten wir uns dann schaukeln zur Pracht (in prachtvoller Weise) in der Schaukel [des Schiffes]" (70 = 1000).

    Dictionary tradition has it that the preposition *ádhi* can be construed with the instrumental, so that *ádhi ... snúbhis* could be taken together and rendered as 'on top of the backs [of the waters]'. It seems more likely to me, however, that *ádhi* governs an implicit locative, namely, [*samudré ... mádhye*] — for which 'binominal' phrase, compare the preceding line 7.88.3b *prá yát **samudrám** īráyāva **mádhyam** 'when the two of us will [board the ship and] make [it] rise to the middle [of the] sea' — and that *apā́ṁ snúbhiś* constitutes an independent expression, with an instrumental of the way: 'over-and-across the backs of the waters'.

[109] Cf. also Tatyana J. Elizarenkova's reference to Thieme's treatment of ṚV 7.88.3cd in her book Language and Style of the Vedic Ṛṣis. Edited with a Foreword by Wendy Doniger. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995, 116. Gotō, on the other hand, may have had his reasons for not referring to Thieme and bravely taking position against a more-than-grammatical interpretation of this distich, but if he had, he certainly succeeded in keeping them to himself in his article "Varuṇa und Vasiṣṭha", referred to above. Or is studied neglect itself a good-enough reason?

da pá]) and the sudden interruption of the ascent ([as reflected by a] cæsura inside the word [apá'am]) on its crest".[110]

In the second verse, it is, again in Thieme's original view, not only the pause of the cæsura placed once more in the middle of a word, namely, of the finite verb *īṅkha'yāvahai*, that expresses anew the abrupt suspension of a movement — which now is that of the swing the ship has turned into — but this time the whole line paints the motion of the swing in that it is rhythmically reversible and can be read, or rather heard, "wie von vorn nach hinten, von hinten nach vorn", as a symmetrical sequence of heavy and light syllables:

$$- \; - \; \smile \; - \; \smile \; - \; \smile \; - \; \smile \; - \; -$$

This ***verse*** is its own ***reverse***, it represents a metrical *palindrome*, and we may perhaps style it — with an appropriately *paradoxical* expression — a prosodic *one-line boustrophedon*.

Venturing beyond Thieme's description of the line — but not, I hope, too far beyond the poet's own intention — I dare to suggest the following Surplus of Meaning.

By metrically shaping the line in such a way as to match its ***progress*** with a measurably equal ***regress***, the poet has succeeded in symbolically keeping the swing of the ship in a relatively stable equilibrium. With the syllable *-yā-* as the central pivot of the balance in the exact middle of the line:

> *prá preṅkhá īṅkhay**ā**vahai śubhé kám*

a precarious equipoise has been achieved that seems calculated to create the alluring illusion of a *serene standstill*. The mutual *see-saw* motion of Varuṇa and Vasiṣṭha aboard their companion*ship* swinging on top of the wave-backed ocean appears even so powerfully emotive as to anticipate a prospective state in which the poet may hopefully enjoy the company of his god *for ever*.[111]

---

[110] Compare the parallel *yád*-phrases of the two preceding verses, ṚV 7.88.3ab *ā́ yád ruhā́va váruṇaś ca nā́vam prá yát samudrám īráyāva mádhyam* 'When the two of us, [I] and Varuṇa, will board the ship and make it rise to the middle [of the] sea', where *mádhyam* refers not only to the *middlemost*, but implicitly also to the **highest** part of the ocean. As a result, there is a double rising-movement expressed in this distich: our getting on top of the ship, and the ship's getting on top of the sea. Thus, we will not fail to feel **highly** elevated.

For the 'partitive' use of the adjective, in Sanskrit as well as in many other languages, see Ferdinand Sommer's impressive monograph, full of fine insights and observations, "Zum attributiven Adjektivum". Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse. Jahrgang 1928, 7. Abhandlung. München: Verlag der Akademie, 1928.

[111] In order to preserve the perfect metrical symmetry of this line, and thus to leave the *swinging standstill* of the balance entirely intact, I would, therefore, propose that it be read — not

A Case of Cut-and-Run

All the four quarters of the *triṣṭubh* stanza ṚV 6.3.4, in which we find the line without a clear-cut cæsura that concerns us in this section, run or flow as follows:

> *tigmáṃ cid éma máhi várpo asya*
> *bhásad áśvo ná yamasāná āsā́*
> *vijéhamānaḥ paraśúr ná jihvā́ṃ*
> *dravír ná **drā́vayati** dā́ru dhákṣat*

Scharf ist sein [des Feuers] Gang, groß seine angenommene Gestalt;
er schnappt (schnauft) mit dem Maul wie ein Roß, das gezügelt wird.
Die Zunge bleckend wie das (blinkende) Beil,
schmelzt er es wie ein Schmelzer, wenn er das Holz verbrennt.

This translation by Geldner, Der Rig-Veda II, 1951,[112] 95, looks marvelously accurate in the first three lines, in that it captures the ambiguities of the original by using, where it must have seemed necessary to the translator, two German expressions for a single Sanskrit word: *schnappt* and *schnauft* for the finite verb *bhásat*,[113] *bleckend* and *blinkend* for the present participle *vijéhamānaḥ*.[114]

Although we may spontaneously object that the verb-form *bhásat*, being a root-aorist subjunctive, should be rendered as 'shall snap, shall bite',[115] and that

---

with an incisive cæsura in the middle of the finite verb *īṅkha'yāvahai*, as Thieme had suggested, but — without any cæsura, or with a cæsura kept in suspense, if that's not too much to ask of a reader.

[112] Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt und mit einem laufenden Kommentar versehen. I–III. (Harvard Oriental Series: Volumes 33–35). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, l951. Reprinted in 1 volume as HOS 63: HUP, 2003.

[113] The verb-form "schnappt" is used in the translation itself, "schnauft" is offered only as an alternative at the bottom of the page, op. cit. 95 fn. 2.

[114] In his comment on *vijéhamānaḥ*, Geldner, loc. cit., suggests that it is used here in two different meanings, (1) transitively as [die Zunge] "bleckend" and (2) intransitively as [wie ein Beil] "blinkend". For a brief survey with tentative translations of all five occurrences of the present participle (*vi*)*jéhamāna-* in the Ṛgveda — viz. 1.110.5, 1.163.6; 6.3.4; 10.3.6, 10.15.9 — see Toshifumi Gotō, Die "I. Präsensklasse" im Vedischen. Untersuchung der vollstufigen thematischen Wurzelpräsentia. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987, 156 f.

[115] Geldner, loc. cit., must have regarded *bhásat* as an injunctive (of the *a*-aorist; or of a class I present *bhás-a-* coexisting with a class III present *bábhas- / báps-* ?). Also Oldenberg, ZDMG 55, 1901, 306 = Kleine Schriften I, 1967, 765 — cf. his Noten I, 1909, 376 ad RV 6.14.1

the root *bhas* does not mean 'schnaufen, schnauben', it is, nevertheless, possible to think — and Geldner apparently did think so — that verb-forms of a different root, to wit, of the homonymous root *bhas* meaning 'breathe, blow', were (still) in use at the time when, and in the place where, the poet of our hymn flourished.

Several Vedic nouns seem to be formed from this alternative root: The second member **-psu-** 'breath' as it is attested twenty times in eight different Ṛgvedic bahuvrīhi compounds: *á-psu-* (ṚV 1x), *aruṇá-psu-* (ṚV 5x), *áhruta-psu-* (ṚV 2x), *ṛta-psu-* (ṚV 1x), *pruṣitá-psu-* (ṚV 5x), *viśvá-psu-* (ṚV 3x), *viśvā́-psu-* (ṚV 1x), and *vṛ́ṣa-psu-* (ṚV 2x). This second-member noun *-psu-* was explained by Thieme as a low-grade ablaut-form of the nominal stem **bhā̆su-* "Atemhauch".[116] Similarly, the substantives **bhasád-** f. "Hintertheil" (Böhtlingk & Roth, Grassmann), which originally may have meant 'the blowing (one)',[117] and **bhástrā-** f. "Blasebalg" or 'leather bag' (used for grain, meal, sour milk, etc.),[118] as well as the adjective or substantive **bhásman-** at ṚV 5.19.5b *bhásmanā vāyúnā* "mit dem schnaubenden Winde" (Geldner, II 19) or "mit dem Blasen, dem Winde" (Thieme)[119] may be derived from the root *bhas/ps* 'to blow'.

The ambiguities of the second and third verses of our stanza seem to prepare us for the last, heavily alliterative line: *dravír ná drāvayati dā́ru dhákṣat*, which presents yet another ambiguous word. The masculine noun **draví-** referring

---

— considered the possibility of taking *bhásat* as an injunctive, but alternatively suggested to read *bhásan*, against the Padapāṭha, and to take this verb-form as a participle meaning "zermalmend".

For a more recent treatment of this form, see Ulrike Joachim, Mehrfachpräsentien im Ṛgveda. (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXI Linguistik: Band 4). Frankfurt am Main / Bern / Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1978, 115 s.v. *bhas* "zermalmen, kauen", "... *bhásat* kann als Konjunktiv des Wurzelaorists verstanden werden, formal und funktional spricht nichts dagegen". Notice that Geldner himself translated the same verb-form occurring once again in a verse near by, at 6.14.1c, as "soll ... den Mund auftun" (Der Rig-Veda II 106) and the only present subjunctive *babhasat* at ṚV 4.5.4a as "soll ... schnappen" (Der Rig-Veda I 424).

[116] Paul Thieme, "*psu*". Beiträge zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde, Walter Schubring zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von der deutschen Indologie. (Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien: 7). Hamburg: Cram / de Gruyter, 1951, 1–10 = Kleine Schriften [I]. (Glasenapp-Stiftung: Band 5 [I]). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1971, 72–81.

[117] Cf. Richard Pischel, Vedische Studien, Zweiter Band. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1897, 54 § 4. "Wurzel *bhas*": "... 'blasen' ist die Grundbedeutung von Wurzel *bhas*, die sich deutlich zeigt in *bhástrā* 'Blasebalg' und *bhasád* 'Hintern'".

[118] See Thieme, Festschrift Schubring, 1951, 8 n. 2 = Kleine Schriften, 1971, 79 n. 2: "Die abgeleitete Bedeutung 'Lederschlauch' ist zufällig früher (ŚB) belegt". However, among the 10 Brāhmaṇa occurrences of *bhástrā-* f. (ŚBM [3x], ŚBK [3x], JB [2x], PB [2x]), there are two in the same context that may already refer to 'bellows': *bhastrā-*, which is qualified with the bahuvrīhi *avācīna-bilā-* at PB 2.13.1 and 2, was translated by Willem Caland, Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa. The Brāhmaṇa of Twenty Five Chapters. (Bibliotheca Indica: Work No. 255). Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1931 (²1982) 29, as "pair of bellows", while the adjective was rendered as "with its mouth directed downward".

[119] Loc. cit. (8 = 79). There, see also about *bhásman-* n. "[Herd-]asche" (AV1x: 11.3.8 [+]), originally, according to Thieme, "der Ort, wohin man bläst [um das nachts darunter schlafende Feuer wieder anzufachen]".

to Fire was rendered as "Schmelzer" ('melter') by Geldner, who took it as an *-í-* derivation from root ***drav/dru*** 'run, flow', which is also at the basis of the causative *drāvayati* "schmelzt" ('melts').[120]

Hoffmann, however, considered that a pun may be intended,[121] and accordingly suggested the alternative meaning "Schnitter" ('reaper, harvester') for *draví-* m., connecting this noun with a different root, the *seṭ*-base *drav^i/drū* 'cut, divide', from which the hapax agent-noun *dravitár-* at ṚV 6.12.3c is obviously derived.[122]

Hoffmann's translation of verse 6.3.4d runs as follows: "wie ein Schnitter macht (Agni) laufen, das Holz verbrennend". His rendering, by the way, of the causative *drāvayati* is also ambiguous — did he intend a second *double entendre* in this line? one is tempted to ask — as it may mean 'make [the animals] run' (for fear of being cut down together with the plants) and 'cause [the wood itself] to flow; melt [it] down (like some metal)'. But I am getting carried away, unjustly treating the grammarian as if he were another poet in disguise.[123]

In the context of this highly artistic stanza — with its equivocal verb-form *bhásat* in line b, the doubly related participle *vijéhamānas* in c, the ambiguous

---

[120] It could be that *drāvayati* also belongs to the *seṭ*-root *drav^i/drū*, for which admittedly irregular possibility see below.

[121] See Karl Hoffmann, Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik, herausgegeben von Johanna Narten. Band 1 und 2. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1975–1976, 420: "wenn man ein Wortspiel anerkennt". I for one — although I may not easily pass for an exemplary representative of the "man" — am only too willing to acknowledge a *word-play*.

[122] ṚV 6.12.3c *adroghó ná dravitā́ cetati tmán* 'As a guileless (reliable) reaper, he (= Agni) appears in person'. Cf. Eva Tichy, Die Nomina agentis auf *-tar-* im Vedischen. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1995, 285: "Als ein zuverlässiger Schnitter gleichsam macht sich (Agni) von selbst bemerkbar".

[123] The causative *drāv-aya-^{ti}* occurs once more in the ṚV, at 8.4.11ab *ádhvaryo **drāváyā** t$_u$váḿ sómam índraḥ pipāsati* 'O Adhvaryu, make the Soma flow; Indra is thirsty (wishes to drink [(of) it])'.

Alternatively, *drāvayati* of ṚV 6.3.4d could perhaps be derived from the same *seṭ*-root *drav^i/drū* 'cut, divide' as *draví-* (?) and *dravitár-* (!), for which two nouns see above. Although we should, normally and by Brugmann's Law, not expect an *-ā-* in the root-syllable of the causative if the root originally ended in more than one consonant, as *drav^i* from Proto-Indo-Iranian **draṷH* actually did, there are, nevertheless, noteworthy exceptions to this Law — the causative *ádhvānayat*, for instance, which is found in a verse near by, at ṚV 6.18.10d, and which belongs to the *seṭ*-root *dhvan^i* 'be smoky' — exceptions that would allow us to reckon with the admittedly somewhat remote possibility of understanding *drāvayati* in a 'cutting' as well as 'running' and 'flowing' sense.

In our verse, the alternative meaning '[Fire] makes [the wood] cut' does not seem to work. If, however, we could take the causative to mean '[Fire] makes [the wood] *be* cut', then we may perhaps consider it likely that with this verb-form the poet intended yet another *double entendre*. At the very least, the second meaning can be *sous-entendu* as one that is underlying the first. For a similar case, see below, in the section after next ("Fire Fighting Wind"), my discussion of the ambiguous verb-form *vājayate* at ṚV 4.7.11d *āśúṃ ná **vājayate** hinvé árvā*.

substantive *dravís* together with multiple alliteration and assonance in line d —
we are well prepared for one final artifice which would deserve our applause,
were we to give the artist his deserts at all.

The causative ***drāvayati*** straddling the cæsura — as if the poet in person
stood astride the trench: with one leg on this, the other leg on that side of it — by
something like a metrical enjambement, seems to suggest that Fire's action of
cutting expressed in the noun *dravī-* "Schnitter" is superseded by yet another
activity.

Not only does Fire, in one and the same act of burning, 'make [the wood]
run' and 'cause [it] to flow'. But also, Fire has the metrical line *itself* run and
flow, in the shape of the verb expressive of that meaning, across the incision the
cæsura would mark — if it were incisive. Since it is rendered unincisive,
however, by the causative *drāvayati* running over it like a liquid in as
paradoxical a way as the flowing of water *across* a ditch would be, this mid-word
cæsura draws a picture *en miniature* of Fire's ambiguous nature, of both its
cutting edge and its gentle flow, its metallic as well as aqueous quality.

And is the poet himself, *à l'image du Feu*, not equally double-natured?[124]

Mutually Raising Voices

As a verse quite similar to the *triṣṭubh* line ṚV 6.3.4d — with another
causative that straddles the cæsura and in so straddling makes it indistinct — the
jagatī pāda ṚV 9.72.1c is to be discussed next. It runs thus:

> *úd vā́cam **īráyati** hinváte matī́*

> While he (= Soma) is raising [his / their] voice / speech,
> they (= the poets) are inciting [him / it] with their poem.

This is again a line full of ambiguities. The understanding of *úd vā́cam
īráyati* in the sense of 'Soma raises his voice' is supported, for example, by ṚV
9.12.6a *prá vā́cam índur iṣyati* 'The drop (= Soma) sends forth his voice' and by
ṚV 9.64.9a *hinvānó vā́cam iṣyasi* 'Spurred on [O Soma], you send [forth] your
voice'.[125]

Incidentally, the latter passage also supports *hinváte* as meaning 'they
incite [him]', since *hinvānás*, if indeed it can be taken as a passive, asks for an
agent of the action, and by its diathesis suggests that the poets are the ones who

---

[124] Or may even the scholar hope to achieve the almost impossible: to be *sharp **and** soft* at
the same time?

[125] For the class IV verb *iṣ-ya-ᵗⁱ/ᵗᵉ* 'send, impel', see Leonid Kulikov, The Vedic *-ya-*
presents. Proefschrift, Universiteit Leiden: preprint edition, 2001, 390 ff.

spur Soma *on* with their poems. See, however, the *double entendre* of the same present participle at RV 9.97.32d *hinvānó vā́cam matíbhiḥ kavīnā́m* '[Soma, you purify yourself,] being impelled by the poems of the poets' and, at the same time, 'sending [forth] your voice together with the poems of the poets'. Here, the two meanings are telescoped into one another in a single syntactic construction.[126]

The interpretation of *úd vā́cam īráyati* as meaning 'Soma raises the voice [of the poets]', on the other hand, is underlined, for instance, by RV 9.97.34a *tisró vā́ca īráyati prá váhniḥ* 'Three [kinds of] voices does the driver [of the sacrificial chariot][127] set in motion'. The three voices are: (1) the resonant recitation of poems by the poets, (2) the bellowing of the cows, and (3) the roaring of Soma.[128] See RV 9.33.4–5a *tisró vā́ca úd īrate gā́vo mimanti dhenávaḥ / hárir eti kánikradat // abhí bráhmīr anūṣata* 'Three [kinds of] voices are rising: the milch-cows are bellowing, the fallow [stallion] (= Soma) keeps on neighing, the voices of the poet-priests have started to shout at [Soma]'.[129]

---

[126] In Geldner's translation, only the second meaning is taken into account: "[Du läuterst dich für Indra, berauschend,] mit der Seher Dichtungen deine Stimme entsendend" (Der Rig-Veda III 99). Cf. also the renderings by Heinrich Lüders, Varuṇa II, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959, 467: "... die Stimme erhebend zusammen mit den Liedern der Weisen" and Louis Renou: "[tu te clarifies pour Indra, plein d'ivresse,] mettant en branle (ta) parole grâce aux inspirations des poètes" (EVP IX, 1961, 49).

[127] Usually, *váhni-* m. 'conveyor' (RV 66x) refers to Agni. Here, however, Soma is meant by this noun.

[128] The exact acoustic impression Soma may have made when it poured through the filter of sheep's wool we are at a loss to know from experience, since none of us has ever heard the distinctively *somatic* soma-sound, I suppose. For an approximate idea, we seem to depend entirely on the hyperbolical speech of Vedic poets.

In their exaggerated words, expressive of their Soma-induced excitement, the *svaná-* or *svará-* of the divine juice is sometimes assimilated — by simile or metaphor — to the roaring of a bull (see, for instance, RV 9.86.7d *vŕ̥ṣā pavítram át̬y eti róruvat* or RV 9.97.13a *vŕ̥ṣā śóṇo abhikánikradad gā́[ḥ]*), sometimes to the bellowing of cows (as at RV 9.13.7ab *vāśrā́ arṣant̬y índavo abhí vatsáṃ ná dhenávaḥ*), sometimes to the neighing of a racing-horse (RV 9.43.5ab *índur átyo ná vājasŕ̥t kanikranti pavítra ā́*); sometimes it is compared with the sound of the wind (RV 9.70.6b *nā́nadad eti marútām iva svanáḥ*), or of the rain (RV 9.41.3ab *śr̥ṇvé vr̥ṣṭér iva svanáḥ pávamānasya śuṣmíṇaḥ*), or of a river's wave (RV 9.50.1ab *út te śúṣmāsa īrate síndhor ūrmér iva svanáḥ*).

Arlo Griffiths (p. c.) chooses to disagree and suggests to skeptical me that, rather, we may get an adequate acoustic impression by listening to present-day 'Soma'-sacrifices!

[129] The hapax *bráhmī-* f. is likely to be (irregularly) derived from *brahmán-* m. 'poet, priest', rather than from *bráhman-* n. 'poem, prayer'. This feminine noun has been considered a kind of punning nonce formation "im Wortspiel" (e.g. PW 5, 151 s.v.) with *yahvī́-*, the almost rhyming feminine that occurs in the next verse, at RV 9.33.5b *yahvī́r r̥tásya mātáraḥ* 'the youngest daughters and mothers of Truth'.

If *bráhmī-* can be taken — as it has been taken by me — in the precise sense of *brahmáṇām vā́ṇī-* '*voice* of the poet-priests', then it is in harmonious concord with the other two voices of this context. Notice the occasional co-occurrence, in one and the same verse, of the nominative plural

The single *jagatī* line ṚV 9.72.1c embraces two complete sentences which may appear to be independent: *úd vắcam īráyati* on its left, *hinváte matī́* on its right. By the fact, however, that *īráyati*, even though not standing in *pāda*-initial position, is marked with the so-called antithetic accent[130] — while *hinváte* carries the tone anyway, because it starts a new clause — the two seemingly independent sentences become syntactically interrelated.[131]

As I have shown above, the two are also semantically close-linked by a mutual raising of voices: Soma raises his voice and that of the poets, the poets raise their voice and that of Soma.

Up to this point, all is quite regular. The dramatis personæ are introduced, and the action corresponding to their personal dramatic character is sketched out. Irregularity enters the scene only with the apparently playful appearance of *īráyati* in a straddling position. It seems utterly wanton and unwarranted that the causative should want to expose itself to danger in such an awkward way, by running the risk — or rather, *standing* a real chance — of being torn apart. Or is this actor's capricious self-exposure perhaps less arbitrary than it would seem at first blush? And less *risqué* ?

If that were in fact the case, then it would again be incumbent on us *mind-reading* scholars to try and give an answer to the puzzling question as to why the poet should go out of his way and make this finite verb-form bestride the place where a cæsura is wont to occur. If, indeed, we may suppose that the irregularity is intended, not only as an expression of sheer wantonness, but also, and much more importantly, as one of poetic significance.

The very verb-form *īráyati*, which by its intonation already guarantees the syntactic link between the two sentences, is also the one capable of completely reducing the distance that seemed to separate the two, and which would still keep them apart, in relative independence, if the verb had not *extended* well beyond its merely syntactic function. By bridging the metrical gap with its entire tetrasyllabic body *stretching* across, this causative has succeeded in creating an even stronger connection.

Syntax would ask for a pause after *īráyati*, metre for one right in the middle of it: **īrá'yati*. But the poet, by making this verb stand astride over the virtual cæsura, and thus suspending the metrical incision, gives us to understand

---

vā́ṇīs 'the voices' (ṚV 15x) with the 3rd plural middle of the *s*-aorist (*a*)*nūṣata* (ṚV 37x) 'have started to shout', viz. at 1.7.1c; 8.9.19c, 8.12.22c; 9.103.3c, 9.104.4b.

[130] Or, as I would prefer to call it with a more general term, the *suspending* accent.

[131] The close syntactic interrelation between the two clauses is quite appropriately reflected in Geldner's translation: "Während er die Rede hervortreibt, spornen sie (ihn) durch die Dichtung an" (Der Rig-Veda III 65) as well as in the rendering of the verse by Renou: "Tandis qu'il élève la voix, (les officiants l') aiguillonnent par le poème" (EVP IX 21).

Compare, on the other hand, Martin Kümmel, Stativ und Passivaorist im Indoiranischen. (Historische Sprachforschung: Ergänzungsheft 39). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996, 141: "Hervor treibt er die Rede, sie treiben ihn für sich durch die Dichtung an".

that the two actions of raising are much more deeply interdependent than even the strongest semantic or syntactical link would suggest.

The voices of Soma and the poets, rising together and raising each other, are so intimately related that they ultimately become one and the same Voice, a uniquely concordant Sound, a Speech both human and divine, one that is in perfect harmony with itself.

Fire Fighting Wind

In nice parallel with the two cæsura-straddling active causatives ***drāvayati*** at ṚV 6.3.4d and ***īráyati*** at ṚV 9.72.1c, the equally quadrisyllabic middle-voice causative ***vājayate***[132] is found in exactly the same metrical position, i.e. after three verse-initial syllables, at ṚV 4.7.11d. The immediate context of this line — that is, the distich 4.7.11cd — runs as follows:

> *vā́tasya meḷíṁ sacate nijū́rvann*
> *āśúṁ ná **vājayate** hinvé árvā*

He (= Agni), while consuming [dry food], follows the wind's rush.[133]
He incites [the wind] as (if it were) his swift [horse],
and the racer is spurred on [by him].[134]

This lively scene, in which Fire is seen as a rider and Wind as a swift racer,[135] owes much of its liveliness to the verb that *overrides* the cæsura. The inciting action exerted by the rider and suffered by the racer[136] can be allowed to override — the poet may have thought — as long as the horse itself is not

---

[132] For the alternative, albeit minor, possibility that *vājayate* could be interpreted also as a denominative, see my discussion below.

[133] This statement, that Agni follows the Wind, does not seem to agree with what was said shortly before, in verse 4.7.10b: *yád asya vā́to anuvā́ti śocíḥ* 'When the Wind blows following his (viz. Agni's) flame'. Seemingly contradictory statements like 'Fire follows Wind' : : 'Wind follows Fire' are as compatible in a poet's mind as 'Fire fights Wind' : : 'Wind fights Fire'.

[134] Cf. Geldner's translation of ṚV 4.7.11cd: "Er folgt verzehrend dem Rauschen des Windes, er spornt gleichsam seinen Renner an, das Rennpferd wird zur Eile getrieben" (Der Rig-Veda I 429) and that of Renou: "il s'associe au bruissement du vent, détruisant-par-le-feu (les aliments); il éperonne pour ainsi dire le rapide (cheval); le coursier est incité (par lui)" (EVP XIII 12).

[135] These two words — *āśú-* 'swift' and *árvan-* (or *árvant-*) 'racer' — co-occur in one and the same pāda also at 1.91.20a, 4.11.4d, 5.6.1c, 6.60.12b, 8.19.6a.

[136] For the identical passive sense of the 3rd singular *hinvé / hinve*, cf. the only other occurrence of this verb-form at ṚV 9.44.2 *matī́ juṣṭó dhiyā́ hitáḥ sómo hinve parāváti / víprasya dhā́rayā kavíḥ* 'Pleased with [the poet's] thought and spurred on by [his] insight, Soma the Seer is driven to a distance by the poet's flow [of inspired speech]'.

overridden. Obviously, our racer, for all its suffering the action of the rider, is not exhausted by the riding, because it is driven to an action of its own: the swift racing of a wind-horse. We know that this action has preceded the incitement. And it can be expected to outlast the current spurring-on.

In one and the same unaccented verbal stem-form *vājaya-*, two different meanings coincide: (**1**) that of the transitive causative *vājáya-* and (**2**) that of the intransitive denominative *vājayá-/vājáya-*.[137] Our context — with the object-accusative *āśúm* [*árvāṇam*] being governed by the verb — makes it quite clear that, primarily, the former meaning was intended, and that the translation I have chosen ('he incites [the wind-horse]') is, therefore, fully justified.

Yet, underneath the syntactic surface, the finite verb could also mean 'races, raids, fights for victory, strives after the prize'. This possible alternative meaning, even though it is only secondary in our context, will gain in likelihood, however, if we compare it with all the other occurrences of *vājayá-* (3x) and *vājáya-* (2x) in the same Song-Cycle Four. The following five passages are concerned:

4.17.16ab   *gavyánta índraṁ sakh₍yā́ya víprā aśvāyánto vŕ̥ṣaṇaṁ* **vājáyantaḥ** 'Striving for cattle, striving for horses, and striving for victory in battle, as poets [we appeal] to Indra the bull for alliance'.[138]

4.25.8d *índraṁ náro* **vājayánto** *havante* 'Striving for victory in battle, the [fighting] men call upon Indra'.[139]

4.29.3a *śrāváyéd asya kárṇā* **vājayádhyai** 'Do cause his (= Indra's) ears to listen, so that he races for the prize (= Soma)'.[140]

4.41.8ab *tā́ vāṁ dhíy[o á]vase* **vājayántīr** *ājíṁ ná jagmur yuvayū́ḥ sudā́nū* 'It is to you two [O Indra and Varuṇa], that [our] poetic thoughts, striving

---

[137] Among a total number of 49 *vājaya*-occurrences in the R̥V, we find no more than four finite verb forms: the three actives *vājáyāmaḥ* (at 1.4.9b), *vājayāmasi* (at 8.43.25c & 8.93.7a), *vājáya* (at 10.68.2d), and the only middle voice *vājayate* (at 4.7.11d).

For an attempt at explaining the unique diathesis of the latter form, see Stephanie W. Jamison, Function and Form in the *-áya*-Formations of the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda. (Ergänzungshefte zur Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung: Nr. 31). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983, 89 n. 28: "Med. *vājayate* at IV.7.11 has been attracted into the middle by the parallel med. forms in the same verse (*kr̥ṇute*, *sacate*, *hinvé*)".

This is too mechanical an explanation, for my taste. Some poets may have been blissfully unaware of what happened to them and the verb-forms in their verses, but I prefer my poets to be *more lucid*.

[138] "Kühe begehrend, Rosse begehrend, den Siegerpreis begehrend (rufen wir) Redekundigen den Bullen Indra zur Freundschaft" (Geldner, I 439).

[139] "Den Indra rufen ... die nach dem Siegerpreis strebenden Männer" (Geldner, I 453).

[140] "Mache seine Ohren hellhörig, daß er nach dem Ziel fahre" (Geldner, I 457). Cf. Jamison, *-áya*- Formations, 35 & 112: "Cause his [two] ears to hear (for him) to obtain booty".

for the prize and longing for you two, have come for help, as if [they were going] to battle, O you of good reward'.[141]

4.42.5ab *mā́ṃ náraḥ s*ᵤ*váśvā* **vājáyanto** *mā́ṃ vṛtā́ḥ samáraṇe havante* 'It is me (to wit, Indra) that the fighting men with their fine horses [invoke for help], it is me that they invoke when they are surrounded [by the enemies] in battle'.[142]

Only the present participle **vājáyantas** in the first and the last of these five passages could perhaps be construed with an accusative expressing the object that is governed by the verbal action of inciting: with [*índraṃ*] *vṛ́ṣaṇam* in 4.17.16[a]b and with *mā́m* in 4.42.5a. But this minor possibility is *sous-entendue* at best. It is completely overshadowed by the alternative interpretation of the participle in an intransitive sense as 'striving [for victory in battle]' at 4.17.16b and 'fighting' at 4.42.5a.

We are, therefore, encouraged to 'under-understand'[143] the finite verb-form **vājayate** at 4.7.11d in the sense of '[Agni] is racing' — racing, that is, in a common race with the spurred-on wind-horse, and competing with the swift racer in a mutual struggle for the prize. But also, the two (unequally) possible meanings themselves may be said to run a race within one and the same verb-form.

If *vājayate* is intended as '[Agni] incites [the wind-horse]', then that first and strongest meaning is, by force of its greater strength, clearly favoured to win. If, on the other hand, *vājayate* is sub-intended as '[Agni] races', then that secondary sense, even though it is weaker, still has a fair chance of winning the contest.

---

[141] "Diese Dichtungen sind zu euch [Indra & Varuṇa] um Beistand siegesbegierig, wie (die Siegesbegierigen) in den Kampf, gezogen, nach euch verlangend, ihr Gabenreiche" (Geldner, I 473). "Diese Gedanken sind zu euch um Hilfe als wetteifernde gleichsam zum Wettkampf gekommen, euch suchend, ihr Gut gebenden" (Kümmel, Perfekt, 155). "Ces pensées-poétiques sont allées vers vous pour (chercher votre) faveur, comme (des coursiers) dans l'arène, elles qui visent-le-prix-de-victoire, qui sont éprises de vous, (dieux) aux beaux dons" (Renou, EVP V 96).

Cf. Renou, EVP VII 76: "*tā́* duel (Old[enberg]), sinon on aurait plutôt *imā́ḥ* (comme 9)" and Oldenberg, Noten I 301, ad loc.: "*tā́* höchst wahrscheinlich nicht = *tā́ḥ* (Pp., wohl wegen v. 9a), sondern Dual. Zahlreiche Pādas fangen mit *tā́ vā́m* an, in denen *tā́* so gut wie immer (ich finde nur eine Ausnahme I, 154, 6) Dual ist. In diesem an ein Götterpaar gerichteten Lied hat dieselbe Auffassung zu gelten."

In the ṚV, 18 occurrences of verse-initial *tā́ vā́m* can be counted. And 1.154.6ab *tā́ vāṃ vástūn*ᵢ*y uśmasi gámadhyai yátra gā́vo bhū́riśṛṅgā ayā́saḥ* 'We want to go to those abodes of yours [O Indra & Viṣṇu], where the many-horned, indomitable cows are [grazing]' — here, *tā́* (= *tā́ni*) clearly belongs with *vā́stūni* — does seem to be the only exception to the rule that was formulated by Oldenberg.

[142] "Mich rufen die Männer, die gut zu Roß wettfahren, an, mich, wenn sie in der Schlacht umringt sind" (Geldner, I 474). "C'est moi que les seigneurs aux bons chevaux, chercheurs de prix-de-victoire, appellent, moi, quand ils sont encerclés dans la mêlée" (Renou, EVP V 97).

[143] The Principle of 'Under-Understanding' will have to be carefully defined and critically examined in order to make it serve the purpose of a productive working hypothesis. And I feel called upon to put it repeatedly to the test in my future research.

Agni is agent of both these actions. But while the transitive action of *inciting* is mainly to the profit of its object, the wind-horse; the intransitive action of *racing* serves only the benefit of its agent, Agni. And should Agni himself not be so self-interested as to have a natural preference for his own advantage over that of the Wind? Not necessarily.

It would seem, at least, that Agni is divided in his mind: Shall I fuel Wind with my fire so that he may win? Or shall I simply race as best I can and try to win myself? Also, we ought to remember that the verb-form *vājayate*, by virtue of its middle voice,[144] turns the incited wind-horse into one that is 'like his *own* swift racer', *āśúṃ ná *svám* [*árvāṇam*]. This suggests that Fire-the-rider and Wind-his-mount belong closely together, nay, that they are as nearly identical as two individuals can be.

We could almost expect the poet to say that Agni, in spurring the wind-horse on to victory, becomes both winner and looser: he looses as the rider, and wins as his own mount. Nor should we be surprised if the poet in fact expressed just that, albeit in a *hidden* way.

Doubt will always remain with regard to this: *jayate* 'he conquers' : : **ná vā jayate** 'or he conquers not'.[145] And as to the rare middle voice itself, *jayate* could convey two different shades of reflexive meaning: Agni either surpasses *his own* horse, the wind; or else, he defeats *himself*, the fire.

Excursus C: On the rare middle *jaya-^{te}*

In his grammar, at Aṣṭādhyāyī 1.3.19 *vi-parābhyāṃ jeḥ* [12 *ātmane-padam*], Pāṇini provides for the regular application of middle endings if root *jay/ji* enters into composition with *vi* or *parā*. But this certainly does not mean that the middle voice is excluded from other compounds or, for that matter, from the simplex. Although *jaya-^{te}* happens to be poorly attested in Vedic — the few known occurrences of it are ambiguously referred to as "abweichend" by Gotō, "I. Präsensklasse", 1987, 148 — the Ātmanepadam could readily have been used whenever the speaker had the intention to express in his speech any kind of reflexivity.

Revealing in this respect is ŚBK 2.5.4.2 = 3.2.8.2 *śrámeṇa ha sma vái tád devā́ jayante yád eṣāṃ jáyyam ā́sá ṛṣayaś ca* 'It is by painstaking effort that

---

[144] As has been pointed out above, *vājayate* is the only middle-voice form among a total number of 49 *vājaya*-occurrences in the R̥V, 45 of which are (active) present participles.

[145] In case we allow the clandestine parsing of part of this pāda as [*jayate*] **ná vā jayate** surrepticiously to rise from underground and — if not to subvert — slightly to modify the predominant order that seems to be so firmly established on the text's surface, the reading of R̥V 4.7.11d will change to *āśúṃ* **ná vā'jayate** *hinvé árvā*. And as a result, the mid-word cæsura of this trimeter line will then be *less unincisive* than it had appeared earlier, when we had not yet as closely pried into the innermost recesses of our verse as its secret meaning seemed to exact.

the gods — and the seers — used *to gain for themselves* [all] that which could be gained by them’, if we compare this passage with its parallel at ŚBM 1.6.2.3, where a more usual, and less characterized, *jayanti* is found instead of the middle.[146] The author(s) of the Kāṇva recension obviously wanted to emphasize the self-beneficial quality of the winning, as if to say: this action very much served the agents’ *own* advantage.[147]

It is also interesting to notice that the only two desiderative verb-forms of the ṚV, both uncompounded, are in the ‘aberrant’ middle diathesis: one of the two occurs at 1.163.7b   **jígīṣamāṇam** *iṣá ā́ padé góḥ* ‘[There I saw your highest form, O Horse,] trying to gain food for yourself in the track of the Cow’, the other is found at 10.4.3d   **jígīṣase** *paśúr ivā́vasṛṣṭaḥ* ‘like cattle let loose, you [too, O Agni,] try to gain [food] for yourself [by grazing]’.[148]

Not to Get Hurt

The Seventh Book, richer than most of the other family books in verbal and nominal forms that straddle the virtual incision of a trimeter line, presents us with yet another unincisive mid-word cæsura.[149] The passage I have in mind is the distich ṚV 7.20.6ab:

> *nū́ cit sá **bhreṣate** jáno ná reṣan*
> *máno yó asya ghorám āvívāsāt*

That man who will try to win his (i.e. Indra’s) savage mind,

---

[146] Cf. Julius Eggeling, SBE 12, 161: “for by (religious) toil, the gods indeed gained what they wished to gain, and (so did) the *Ṛi*shis”. If this translation were to be criticized, the least we could say is that the expression of a *wish* is certainly not one of the *known* functions of the gerundival suffix -*ya*-.

[147] For the gerundive **jayya-** as expressive of *possibility* in opposition to **jeya-** as conveying the sense of *necessity*, see Pāṇini, Aṣṭādhyāyī 6.1.81 *kṣayya-jayyau **śakyārthe***, and Masato Kobayashi, “Origin and Development of Sanskrit *yy*”. Proceedings of the Linguistics Section at the 13th World Sanskrit Conference, Edinburgh, 2006.

[148] The latter passage was translated differently by Geldner, III 125: “wie ein losgelassenes Tier willst du (den Lauf) gewinnen” — cf. his note ad loc.: “*jígīṣase*, sc. *ājím*, hier bildlich von der Flucht des Agni zu verstehen” — and even more divergently by Renou, EVP XIV 4: “tu te meus (librement) comme un animal lâché (dans le pré)” — cf. his note, EVP XIV 64, after a brief reference to Oldenberg, Noten I 156 ad ṚV 1.163.7b, who had hesitantly preferred to take *jígīṣamāṇam* as belonging to *gā* ‘go’ rather than to *jay/ji* ‘win’: “cas d’un désidératif à valeur non-désidérative, mais simplement expressive”.

[149] Apart, that is, from the ones that have been mentioned or discussed above, namely, **adhvarám** at 7.2.7c *ūrdhvám no **adhvarám** kṛtaṁ háveṣu* and **cítr¡yam** at 7.20.7d *ā́ citra **cítr¡yam** bharā rayím naḥ* (chapter II.1. The Third Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura) or **īṅkhayāvahai** at 7.88.3d *prá preṅkhá **īṅkhayāvahai** śubhé kám* (chapter II.2. The Fourth Degree of the MWC).

shall not *get hurt* at all, shall not come to harm.[150]

As has been convincingly argued by Hoffmann,[151] *bhreṣate* can be defined as the *s*-aorist subjunctive of root *bhrayⁱ/bhrī* 'hurt' < PIE *$b^h rei̯H$* 'cut'.[152] While trying to determine its accurate grammatical place in the verbal paradigm, the great grammarian has refrained from commenting on the strange metrical position of this finite verb-form — as if he had wished to leave something for us to complete. Shall we be capable of meeting the unspoken challenge of his suggestive silence?

The ten stanzas of ṚV 7.20.1–10 are entirely made up of triṣṭubh lines. In this hymn, the mid-word cæsura of 6a   *nū́ cit sá **bhreṣate** jáno ná reṣat* is, however, not the only irregularity. A second example of that kind can be found in pāda 7d   *ā́ citra **cítr̥yam** bharā rayíṃ naḥ* — for which see above, section II.1. The Third Degree.

Now, if we look around for a metrical line the wording of which could be compared with that of 7.20.6a, we will not fail to come across the regular *gāyatrī pāda* ṚV 1.41.1c   *nū́ cit sá dabhyate jánaḥ*. This octosyllabic line closely resembles the first eight syllables of our hendecasyllabic verse. Only the finite verb-form diverges.[153]

---

[150] Compare Geldner's rendering of the distich: "Niemals kommt der Mann zu Fall, noch leidet er Schaden, der seinen furchtbaren Sinn gewinnen kann" (Der Rig-Veda, II 200), and the improved translation by Hoffmann, Aufsätze I 31: "nie wird der Mensch sich versehren, noch Schaden leiden, der dessen (sc. Indras) grimmen Sinn zu gewinnen suchen wird".

For *nū́ cid* in the negative sense of "nimmermehr", see Bertold Delbrück, Altindische Syntax, 514 f. § 255. And for an etymological explanation of *nū́* by suppletion, see George E. Dunkel, Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 96, 1983, 199: "the negative *$n\acute{o}$* had a by-form *nu* in the expression for "never" or "not at all" in Vedic (*nū́ cid*) and Hittite (*nuwan*, *numan*)".

[151] Karl Hoffmann, "Die angebliche Wurzel *bhreṣ*". Beiträge zur indischen Philologie und Altertumskunde. Walter Schubring zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von der deutschen Indologie. (Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien, 7). Hamburg: Cram / de Gruyter, 1951, 19–24 = Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik. Band 1. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1975, 29–34.

For a slightly different definition of *bhreṣate* as an isolated *sa*-aorist, see Johanna Narten, Die sigmatischen Aoriste im Veda. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964, 184 s.v. *bhrī* 'verletzen'.

[152] See ²LIV, 2001, 92–93 s.v. Cf. also ¹LIV, 1998, 77 s.v.

[153] For the Vedic hapax passive *dabhyate*, see Kulikov, Proefschrift 2001, 354 s.v. **dabh** 'deceive'. And for the root *dabh* (*dabhnóti*) in the newly established sense of "überlisten, täuschen, im Stich lassen", see Johanna Narten, Die Sprache 14, 1968, 131 = Kleine Schriften. Band 1. Herausgegeben von Marcos Albino und Matthias Fritz. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1995, 93. Accordingly, ṚV 1.41.1c can be rendered thus: 'That man [whom they protect, the prudent ones: Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman] is never deceived'.

It is, however, also possible to consider *dabh* in the passive *dabhyate* as the zero grade of root *dambh* (*dambháyati*) "zerschlagen, zunichte machen", for which root, see again Narten, loc. cit. Compare also Martin Joachim Kümmel, Das Perfekt im Indoiranischen. Eine Untersuchung

The parallel in the First Song-Cycle is not likely to be older than the example from Maṇḍala Seven, and therefore may not have served as a model. But *even if* the poet Vasiṣṭha had availed himself of a ready-made phrase like the one we find at 1.41.1 — only exchanging a finite verb-form, such as *dabhyate*, substituting it with ***bhreṣate***, and extending the verse by another three syllables, to wit, *ná reṣat*, in order to get a hendecasyllabic line that would fit nicely into his *triṣṭubh* hymn — he should have used it in an intelligent way. He would not, I suppose, have unthinkingly accepted the unincisive cæsura, which had automatically resulted from the position of the verb in the new environment, as an inevitable defect of the metre. Rather, he may have been glad to greet it as a welcome irregularity, a godsend and windfall that was destined to create, in collusion with his own intent, a surplus of poetical significance.

On previous occasions,[154] I have already pointed out that Vasiṣṭha, the Seer of the Seventh Song-Cycle, has to be thought of as a highly creative poet. And if the hymn 7.20 is the work of the same Vasiṣṭha as the hymn 7.88 — which there is no reason for us to doubt — then we may as well suppose that the straddling position of ***bhreṣate*** in 7.20.6a has a purpose and significance similar to that of ***īṅkhayāvahai*** in 7.88.3d.

Now, what exactly could the poet have wished the verb-form ***bhreṣate*** to signify in addition to what it literally means? Let us imagine for a moment that the literal meaning of ***bhreṣate***, which is 'shall get hurt', would be quite aptly expressed in a symbolic way if a distinctly incisive cæsura were to 'hurt' the verb-form itself by cutting it apart, thus producing two separate pieces of a more-or-less unorganic nature, either ***bhre'ṣate*** (with an early, and less organic, cæsura) or ***bhreṣa'te*** (with a late, and more organic, cæsura).[155]

---

der Form und Funktion einer ererbten Kategorie des Verbums und ihrer Weiterentwicklung in den altindoiranischen Sprachen. (= Dissertation Freiburg [im Breisgau], 1999). Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2000, 226 f. *dabh* 'schädigen, betrügen' as well as [1]LIV 114–115 and [2]LIV 132–133 s.v. *d^heb^h* 'vermindern'.

[154] See, most especially, in this article, Section II.2. The Fourth Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura, the example under the heading: A Swinging Standstill.

[155] It would seem, by the way, somewhat difficult to decide which of the two divisions, *bhreṣa'te* or *bhre'ṣate*, is more 'unorganic' from a naïvely grammatical point of view: the first, which corresponds to an analysis of the finite verb that separates the composite stem-form ***bhre-ṣ-a-*** from the ending *-te*, or the second division, by which the pre-consonantal full-grade root-form ***bhre-*** (< *$*bhrai̯^i$- < $**bhrai̯H$-) is opposed to a complex of tense-sign ***-ṣ-*** plus mode-sign ***-a-*** plus ending *-te*.

The alternative *bhreṣa'te* strikes me as far more natural and 'organic' not only from a morphological point of view, but also with regard to the metre. If the cæsura were early, the second syllable after it would be heavy: *nū́ cit sá bhre'ṣate jáno ná reṣat*. If, however, the cæsura were late, the second syllabel after it would be light: *nū́ cit sá bhreṣa'te jáno ná reṣat*. Prosodically speaking, the latter alternative is decidedly preferable to the former.

In view of Johanna Narten's judgement expressed in Die sigmatischen Aoriste, 184 s.v. *bhrī* 'verletzen', to the effect that typologically, *bhreṣate* belongs to a group of isolated *sa-*

I should not even dream of seriously suggesting that the poet himself first went and cut the verb-form into two by means of an incisive cæsura — as if he had anticipated in his mind: 'it shall get hurt' — only to *heal* it again afterwards with an unincisive one. For us, however, who try to understand a particular poem in all its particularity, there may be no other way than *to analyse and reconstruct*, in a step-by-step procedure, *the indivisible act of poetic creation* through which the absence of a clear-cut cæsura can be conceived to have come about in verse 7.20.6a.

The *negation* of the literal meaning 'shall get hurt', as it is syntactically expressed in the sentence *nū́ cit sá **bhreṣate** jáno ná reṣat* 'That man shall not get hurt at all, shall not come to harm', would thus be poetically confirmed and enhanced by the *absence* of an incisive cæsura within the metrical space where it should have been expected to occur. Fortunately, but not fortuitously, that space was occupied by a single, undivided-indivisible, and *invulnerable* word.

Finally, the two cæsura-straddling present participles from among the seven verb-forms that were quoted at the beginning of this section (II. 2. The Fourth Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura) are to be taken up for discussion and — hopefully, adequate — appreciation, viz. the active *íyakṣantas* at 2.20.1d and, as a particularly interesting case, the middle voice *jā́yamane* at 10.95.7a.

Trial and Success

The first of the two present participles to be discussed occurs in the context of a stanza that is addressed to Indra: 2.20.1ab *vayáṃ te váya indra viddhí ṣú ṇaḥ   prá bharāmahe vājayúr ná rátham* 'We offer to you, O Indra, our fortification [drink] — be well aware of us![156] — [we offer it in the same way] as one reaching out for the racing-prize [would try to bring] his chariot [in front of the field]'.[157] The fourth and last line of this stanza, verse 2.20.1d, in concluding the sentence, describes us, the eager agents of offering, as:

---

subjunctives which were formed in analogy with old and authentic *s*-aorist subjunctives, and became productive, the two above-mentioned grammatical forms could both be simplified to **bhre-ṣa-te**. But again, this is neither here nor there.

[156] Or perhaps rather, 'Be well aware of [it (the offering) as] ours!' This would also imply the request: Do not heed the offering of others, who compete with us for divine attention by trying to win your favour with a fortifying potion of their own. Cf. Renou, EVP XVII 66: "sache (le) donc de nous, ô Indra!"

[157] The comparison is based and entirely dependent on the ambiguity of the verbal compound *pra-bhar* 'to bring forth' in the sense of both 'to bring forth as an oblation' and 'to bring forth into a leading position'. Cf. Geldner's note on his translation of the distich ("Wir führen dir, Indra, ... eine Stärkung vor wie einer, der den Siegerpreis begehrt, seinen Wagen"): "Wortspiel mit beiden Bedeutungen von *pra-bhṛ*: 1. den Wagen vorführen, an die Spitze bringen ... und 2. auftragen, darbringen ..." (Der Rig-Veda I 300).

*sumnám **íyakṣantas** tᵤvā́vato nṝ́n*

trying to obtain the favour[158] of one like you among men[159]

The desiderative present participle *íyakṣantas* formed from the verbal root *naś/aś* 'attain, obtain'[160] is best understood here in a *conative* sense.[161] A strong 'trying to obtain' seems to fit the context far better than a weakish 'wishing to obtain'. Because 'the favour of one like you' is much more than just desirable. And we should, therefore, try very hard indeed in order to win the friendly regard of Indra.

A mere wish is greatly in danger of remaining unfulfilled. While the attempt to perform an action may imply the successful execution of at least the initial stages of it, a wish might altogether fail to take the very first step towards

---

[158] The syntagma *sumnám íyakṣa-* 'try to obtain the favour [of ...]' occurs two more times in the ṚV, once at 1.153.2d [... Mitra and Varuṇa], and once at 10.50.3b [... Indra].

[159] Ludwig's rendering of the phrase *tᵤvā́vato nṝ́n* as "von einem wie du unter den helden" (Der Rigveda II 64 § 493) seems preferable to Geldner's translation of it, "eines Herren gleich dir" (Der Rig-Veda I 300). Cf. Ludwig's well-reasoned note on the same phrase: "nicht 'von männern wie du', da es solche nicht gibt, sondern 'unter allen helden nur eines solchen wie du bist' das ist: von dir [allein], da es einen dir gleichen weiter nicht gibt" (Der Rigveda V [= Commentar II] 61–62).

It is a strange but generally acknowledged fact that in the paradigm of *nár-* m. 'Mann, Herr, Held', the form of the accusative plural, *nṝ́n*, sometimes functions as genitive singular or plural. If we are willing to follow Ludwig's argument and his reasonable understanding of the phrase *tᵤvā́vato nṝ́n*, then *nṝ́n* has to be taken here in the sense of a genitive plural, and not singular.

The syntagma *tᵤvā́vato nṝ́n* occurs once again, and in the same metrical position, at ṚV 10.29.4a   *kád u dyumnám indra tᵤvā́vato nṝ́n* 'But what is the heavenly glory of one like you among men?' Here, too, Geldner's translation, "Was ist die Herrlichkeit eines unter den Herren, der dir gleicht, Indra?" (Der Rig-Veda III 174), appears to be at variance with Ludwig's reasoning and his rendering of the passage, "was ist die herlichkeit eines, wie du bist unter den helden?" (Der Rigveda II 244 § 633).

[160] The desiderative present-tense stem, being attested 19 times in the ṚV, as *íyakṣa-* (17x) or *iyakṣa-* (2x), includes the active participle *íyakṣant-* (7x) and the middle voice *íyakṣamāna-* (1x). As an obvious result of secondary *Verdeutlichung*, the stem *ínakṣa-* then came about, with a total number of six occurrences, in predominantly more recent parts of the ṚV: Book 1 (2x), Book 9 (1x), Book 10 (3x).

[161] For a recent, quite comprehensive study of the Vedic desiderative, see François Heenen, Le désidératif en védique. (Leiden Studies in Indo-European: 13). Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2006. And for the most recent publication on the topic, see Frederik Kortlandt, "The Origin of the Indo-Iranian Desiderative". Indologica: T. Ya. Elizarenkova Memorial Volume. Book 1. Compiled and edited by L. Kulikov and M. Rusanov. (Orientalia et Classica. Papers of the Institute of Oriental and Classical Studies: Issue XX). Moskow: Russian State University for the Humanities, 2008, 227–230.

performing that action. And even if the attempt should ultimately prove abortive, it promises success in a more active and effective way than a wish.[162]

The eager endeavour to win Indra's favour may be said to have found an adequate, almost pictorial representation in the position of the verb-form expressive of that endeavour. Being placed as an arching bridge across the chasm that mere metre would have left open if pure poetry had not closed it, the present participle *íyakṣantas* '[we who are] trying to obtain [your favour, O Indra]' transcends our tentative trial as it is expressed in the literal meaning of the word, and leads us head-on to success.

Parturition and Participation

The other most curiously interesting, poetically highly significant present participle which spans the cæsura of a trimeter line is the middle voice *jáyamāne* in verse 7a of ṚV 10.95, a hymn that presents, for its greater part, a spirited dialogue between the nymph Urvaśī and King Purūravas, her erstwhile lover. After *four* short **years** (**?**) of *connubial* — or rather, *concubinal* — bliss, she suddenly left him, in a flash of lightning, to rejoin the company of her celestial fellows in a more heavenly world.

Excursus D: *How* Quickly Did Urvaśī Leave?

At ṚV 10.95.16ab, Urvaśī refers back to the time of her heteromorphic existence on earth by saying: *yád vírūp[ā á]caram márt‚yeṣ‚v ávasaṁ rā́trīḥ śarádaś cátasraḥ* 'When I moved about amongst mortals in a form different [from my own], and spent the nights [with you] *for four autumns*'. Now, it seems likely to me that here *śarádas* does not mean 'years'.[163]

Rather, it may represent an *elliptical* plural. In the same way as, for instance, *saptá hótāras* — an expression that occurs at ṚV 8.60.16a and

---

[162] In his translation of this passage, Geldner, Der Rig-Veda I 300, renders *íyakṣant-* with "**um** [die Gunst eines Herren gleich dir] **zu erlangen**". This could be the rendering of non-desiderative present participles like *aśnuvánt-* or *nákṣant-*, which both occur in the ṚV (1x and 4x respectively), taken in a *final* sense. For this particular meaning, see my article "Studies on the Present Participle: 1. The Present Participle Expressive of Intentionality". Journal of Indological Studies 16 & 17, Kyoto University, Graduate School of Letters, Department of Indological Studies, 2004/2005, 65–108.

[163] This accusative of temporal extent is invariably understood in the unquestioned sense of 'years', even if it happens to be literally rendered with 'falls' or 'autumns'. For the *synecdoche* or *pars-pro-toto* meaning of *śarád*, see the dictionaries of Böhtlingk & Roth, PW 7, 93 s.v.: Bed. 2, or of Grassmann, Wörterbuch, 1382 f., s.v.: Bedd. 2 & 3; and the translations of our passage by Grassmann, II 489: "Als ich in andrer Gestalt unter den Sterblichen wanderte und bei ihnen in den Nächten weilte *vier **Jahre** hindurch*" or Geldner, III 303: "Als ich in andrer Gestalt unter den Sterblichen wandelte, *vier **Jahre** lang* (alle) Nächte (bei dir) wohnte".

9.114.3b, and has to be taken in the sense of 'the Hotar and (the) six other priests' — constitutes a clear example of ellipsis, so also *śarádas* may signify 'the four seasons of one year: autumn and the other three'.

This plural could even mean 'four seasons of more than four: autumn and the following three'. Obviously, I should prefer the latter possibility. For, if Urvaśī did depart as abruptly as a flash of lightning swiftly flying across the sky — and this is what Purūravas seems to express in the instantly illuminating simile at ṚV 10.95.10a *vidyún ná yā́ pátantī dávidyot* — it would have been most appropriate for her to be gone already before the following fall, and while the rainy season was still in full swing.[164]

Naturally, Purūravas would have experienced her precipitated departure with deeper despair, had she left him at the very *height* of the year. After all, the tropical rains are meant to be a general feast of love for man and beast, and any sudden incident that should happen to befall the two love-birds right in the middle of it would not fail to be felt with acute pain, at least by *one* of the two: the *human* one.[165]

The image of Urvaśī traveling through the air with lightning speed would display greater and more convincing *justesse poétique*, if it had been used in a comparison that referred to her actual disappearance during the rainy season,

---

[164] It all depends on whether the seasons of the year had come to be counted as *five* at the time when this hymn was composed. The occurrence in our text-corpus of the nouns **1.** *śarád-* f. 'autumn' (ṚV 30x [+]); **2.** *hímā-* f. 'winter' (ṚV 4x: 1.64.14d; 2.33.2b; 5.54.15d; 6.48.8d [+]) or *hemantá-* m. 'winter' (ṚV 1x: 10.161.4b [+]); **3.** *vasantá-* m. 'spring' (ṚV 2x: 10.90.6c, 10.161.4b [+]); **4.** *grīṣmá-* m. 'summer' (ṚV 1x: 10.90.6d [+]) or *sámā-* f. '*summer; year' (ṚV 3x: 4.57.7d; 10.85.5d, 10.124.4a [+]); **5.** *prāvṛ́ṣ-* f. '[onset of the] rainy season' (ṚV 2x: 7.103.3b & 9c [+]) proves that a *pentad* of seasons was actually known, at least to the authors of the latest Ṛgvedic hymns.

It seems less likely that the seasons were reckoned to be *six*, since the name of the sixth, *śíśira-* m. 'Vorfrühling' (ŚS 2x: 6.55.2a & 12.1.36b [+]), is not yet attested in the Ṛgveda. And even if *śíśira-* in the sense of 'cool season' had already come into common use at that time, it would have to be taken together with *hemantá-* 'winter'. In combination, these two nouns refer to a period between 'fall' (down) and 'spring' (up), during which interval, nature *lies low*, and the year, as if in sympathetic solidarity with her, follows suit in keeping an equally discreet profile — through being cold *hemanté*, or cool *śíśire*.

The frequent joining of the two seasons' names under one and the same yoke in the Yajurvedic dvandva *hemanta-śiśirá-* (VSM 10.14 = VSK 11.5.5; MS 2.7.20:105.17; KS 39.7:124.18, KSАśv 1.9:153.17–18, 11.5:187.2; TS 1.6.2.3, 4.3.3.2, 7.1.18.2, 7.2.10.2; etc.) testifies to a certain dependence of *śíśira-* on *hemantá-*.

Cf. also AB 1.1.14 **pañca ṛtavo** *hemantaśiśirayoḥ samāsena* 'The seasons are five, by throwing Winter-und-Vorfrühling together [into one]'.

For the gender of the Vedic compound, see Pāṇini, Aṣṭādhyāyī 2.4.28 *hemantaśiśirāv ahorātre ca cchandasi* [27 *pūrvaval* 26 *liṅgaṃ dvandvasya*], and Thieme's discussion of this *sūtra* in his Kleine Schriften I, 1971 (= ²1984), 532–536.

[165] This incident, which interrupts the mixed couple's joyful and sportive 'love-feast', could be qualified with a verbal governing-compound of the φερέ-οικος type as a *kill-joy*, *spoil-sport*, or *trouble-feast* event.

when they were running strongest. And the poetical truth of this image would then be in profound accord not only with Urvaśī's tempestuous temperament, but also with the depth of Purūravas's despondency.

Thus, in the by far more interesting case of *śarádas* referring to five — and not only four — seasons, the celestial nymph would have left her human lover well before the end of a full year. As she reminds him in verse ṚV 10.95.5a *tríḥ sma mā́hnaḥ śnathayo vaitaséna* 'Three times a day you used to stab me with the reedy rod [of yours]', [166] they were making love with remarkable frequency. [167] And, unless they believed in birth-control, she would naturally have become pregnant already during their first year — which, to his lasting regret, turned out to be also their last.

That their common son was born *after* she had left her paramour becomes clear not only from our distich, ṚV 10.95.16ab, but also from the prose passage at ŚB 11.5.1.11 *sā́ hovāca / saṃvatsaratamī́ṃ rā́trim ā́ gacchatāt tán me ékaṃ rā́trim ánte śayitā́se jātá u te 'yáṃ tárhi putró bhavitā́* 'She (Urvaśī) said [to him (Purūravas)]: You may come [to my place] for the last night of the year. Then, you may be lying there[168] [once again] at my side for one [last] night. But by that time, **this son of yours** will have been born'.[169]

---

[166] Why "reedy rod"? Well, because *vaitasá-* 'rod' (ṚV 2x) is derived from *vetasá-* 'reed' (ṚV 1x).

[167] To be sure, the love-making of this unequal pair must have been *demi-**divine***. But could we realistically expect that the **human** *half* of the twosome should be able to keep going at such an accelerated pace for four entire years? If we were so compulsively pedantic as to take the information that is frankly provided by outspoken Urvaśī, in the two verses 10.95.5a (***trír áhnas***) and 16b (*śarádaś **cátasras***), in a strictly literal — or rather, numerical — sense, then Purūravas would have made love to her no less than (360x3x4=) 4320 times!

A massive number amounting to this sky-high sum total, which reaches well beyond your average adult's achievement of a whole lifetime, would have been accumulated in only four years, if the plural *śarádas* really meant '[four] years' here, and meant it as clearly as *áhnas* means '[thrice] a day (including the night)'. But this is far from certain; as far, in fact, as four *years* are removed from four **seasons**.

Even if the *altitude* of the *WAVE* of their exceedingly numerous, intermittently surging intercourses was not up to the *height* of its frequency, our naturally **(**not *in***)defatigable** male would have gradually fallen off that altitude after a few honey months. And in that altogether likely case, the heavenly lady's departure — which, after all, may prove less untimely than suspected — could actually have saved her amorous partner from being made to feel more-and-more *mortal*.

[168] For a more-than-*stative* meaning of this root, see my paper "A *departicular* **deictic** verb in Sanskrit: *śay/śi* '*to be lying **there**'* as attested in the oldest Vedic texts", which was read in the Linguistics Section at the 14th World Sanskrit Conference, Kyoto, 2009, September 1–5.

[169] The adversative particle **u** 'on the other hand' — which marks this sentence as standing in clear opposition to the minimally concessive message of the previous two: **...** *ā́ gacchatāt* and **...** *ánte śayitā́se* — seems to support the comforting promise that, in sharp contrast to his lying there at her side *just one **last** time*, the son's birth will prove *a **lasting** joy* to him, and a compensatory consolation for the painful loss he was fated to suffer.

Evidently, the Apsaras is still pregnant when she says this, and she refers to the unborn baby — while pointing at her own protruding belly, I imagine — with **ayám**, the pronoun of proximal deixis, since the boy is so close at hand; not, however, without at the same time verbally distancing herself from him by suggesting that *this* son, though being inside her, is **his**, rather than *hers*.

At ṚV 10.95.13c, 'hyæna-hearted' Urvaśī goes even so far as to use neuter forms of the demonstrative pronoun *sá-/tá-* and of the relative pronoun *yá-*, in provocative preference to their more natural masculine counterparts, obviously with contemptuous intent: *prá **tát** te·hinavā **yát** te asmé* 'Offfff to you shall I send *that which* is yours [while **it** still lingers] with us' — as if their common child were a piece of unwanted luggage that Purūravas had left behind at her place.

The "rest" that Arnold, Vedic Metre 323, spotted "at the fourth place" of this catalectic *triṣṭubh* line — and which van Nooten & Holland, Metrical Notes 661, agreed to detect as well — may actually *be* there. And even, it could have been *intended* by the poet as a prosodic pause that would add some extra meaning to Urvaśī's outspoken words; in compensation, as it were, for the metrical deficiency.

No matter how brief it may be — and were it so short as a light syllable — this metrical *lacuna* is long enough for the nymph to produce a brusque gesture of the hand (possibly accompanied with a curt toss of the head) by means of which she would symbolically anticipate the prospective dispatch — *hinavā* 'I shall send' [to a distant destination that lies well beyond the care and concern of a loving mother] — a dispatch, I fear, of the coldly *neutralized* child that is still in her charge.[170]

Thus, in reply to the question asked in the title of this Excursus, "*How Quickly Did Urvaśī Leave?*", we would have to say that she left not only 'as quickly as a flash of lightning', but also 'as quickly as — after four short *seasons*, and even before the end of one year'.

In that "more heavenly world" which I have pointed at *above*, Urvaśī gave birth to the son she had conceived from Purūravas. And it is to this son that she — after spending a few months in indolent separation from the king, and finally happening to meet him again, much against her own inclination — now alludes in the two intriguing verses ṚV 10.95.7ab:

---

[170] This topic — which may provisionally be called "The Metrical 'Rest' Expressive of an Extra-Linguistic Element" — will be treated elsewhere in due detail. For the time being, see also my article "Mind-Reading the Poet". Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik 24, Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2007, [105–139] 125.

In the possibly catalectic verse ṚV 10.95.10a   *vidyún ná yā̃ · pátantī dávidyot* ('[Urvaśī] who, flying like a flash of lightning, flashed'), which was discussed there as a likely example of intended metrical irregularity, and also in some other cases of 'intentional syllable loss', the monosyllabic *rest* may sometimes prove even more **extra-linguistic** than Thieme had thought it to be; see again his "Sprachmalerei", KZ 86, 1972, 71 f. = Kleine Schriften II, 1995, 1001 f.

*sám asmiñ **jā́yamāna** āsata gnā́*
utém avardhan nad̥yàḥ svágūrtāḥ

By him, ***while he was being born***, were sitting together[171]
the divine women,[172] and the self-praised rivers raised him [later on].

Only if we wished to have a clear-cut cæsura in one of its two usual places — to wit, after the fourth or the fifth syllable — should we be tempted to make a pause right inside the participle in the middle of the first verse and, by separating the class IV present-stem *jā́ya-* from the suffix *-māna-*, read the line as *sám asmiñ **jā́ya'māna** āsata gnā́ḥ*. But do we really wish incisively to cut this single uncompounded word into two, and yield to the temptation of a deceptive metrical normalcy?[173]

Yes, why not yield to the temptation, if only just for once, and in order to get rid of it once for all?! So that we can be free for a better solution, one that is more satisfying to our poetic senses as well as reasons.

Urvaśī refers to their son without any emphasis, and almost in an undertone, using the enclitic anaphoric pronoun **asmin** — as if he, Purūravas, already knew of him who must be meant with this locative, 'by him' (in the sense of 'at his side'). Him, however, she has not yet mentioned at all in their conversation, and the news that she gave birth to a son, who cannot be but his, must have come to the king as something of a surprise.

It may have been even more than a surprise if the very effective dramatic delay of his belated reaction to the news of 7a, as it is expressed no earlier than three stanzas later, can be taken as a symptom of shock. Only just recovering

---

[171] Cf. the translations of this passage by Alfred Ludwig, Der Rigveda II, Prag: F. Tempsky, 1876, 634 § 991: "als **diser** geboren ward, saszen dabei vereint die frauen", Hermann Grassmann, Rig-Veda II, Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1877, 489: "Bei **diesem**, als er geboren ward, sassen vereint die Götterfrauen", Alfred Hillebrandt, Lieder des Ṛgveda, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913, 144: "Die Frauen umgaben (deinen) Sohn bei der Geburt", Karl Friedrich Geldner, Der Rig-Veda III, 1951, 301 (= Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv, 1967, 202): "Als **dieser** geboren wurde, saßen die Götterfrauen dabei."

The substantival *anaphoric* pronoun **asmin** should not, however, be rendered in a sense that would only befit the adjectival *deictic* pronoun **asmín**. Hillebrandt seems to have solved the problem — which this enclitic word, notwithstanding its unstressed character, emphatically poses — by not recognizing it at all.

[172] Here, the plural *gnā́s* 'divine women' does not appear to refer to 'wives of the gods', such as *indrā́ṇī-* or *varuṇā́nī-*, but to Urvaśī's playmates, the other heavenly nymphs. Therefore, Geldner's and Grassmann's "Götterfrauen" may have to be understood in the more general sense of 'göttliche Frauen' — provided the German compound should allow for this interpretation.

[173] If we agreed, on the other hand, to read the line as van Nooten & Holland, Rig Veda 661, suggest in their metrical note on 10.95.7a, namely, with a "rare" cæsura after the 3rd syllable, any satisfying poetical solution would be precluded by a questionable metrical one.

from that shock, and still half-lost in dimly-conscious reverie, he seems to be recalling a vaguely remembered fact, when he says in verse 10c, as if talking to himself: *jániṣṭo apó nár*ᵢ*yaḥ sújātaḥ* 'but (*u*)[174] a *manly* [son] has been born well[175] from the *water*'[176] — from her, the Water-Woman, that is.[177]

Urvaśī's use of the imperfects **āsata** and **avardhan**, on the other hand, makes it quite clear that she is well aware of springing on Purūravas a new piece of information that is bound to hit him like a thunderbolt, as otherwise she should have preferred the injunctive, in order just to remind him of what he might have known already.[178]

Evidently, he does not yet know. By slyly avoiding the more emphatic deictic pronoun **asmín**, which would have been in accord with his obvious ignorance, she seems intent on playing down the very fact of their common son's existence.[179]

---

[174] In compensation, as it were, for the loss he had suffered with the sudden disappearance of his son's mother. For another adversative **u** used in exactly the same function, see ŚB 11.5.1.11 *sā́ hovāca* ... and my translation of it in the preceding excursus.

[175] The etymological construction **jániṣṭa ... sújātas** — which happens to reflect two different ablauting grades of the same root *jani/jā* 'to be born' — literally means 'has been *born* a well-*born* [son]'.

[176] We may wonder whether Purūravas even remotely foresees that a conflict is likely to occur between *nár*ᵢ*ya-* m. 'manly' and *ā́p-/ap-* f. 'water'. For that not altogether unpredictable generic conflict, see further below in this chapter, where the upbringing of the king's *male* child in the custody of *female* rivers (*riveresses*) is critically considered.

[177] For *áp*ᵢ*yā*, *áp*ᵢ*yā yóṣā*, or *áp*ᵢ*yā yóṣaṇā*, all meaning 'water-woman' and designating an Apsaras as 'Water-Woman', see the three ṚV passages 10.10.4c *gandharvó aps*ᵤ́*v áp*ᵢ*yā ca yóṣā* 'the Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman', 10.11.2a *rápad gandharvī́r áp*ᵢ*yā ca yóṣaṇā* 'If she, the Gandharvī and Water-Woman, babbles', and 10.95.10b *bhárantī me áp*ᵢ*yā kā́m*ᵢ*yāni* '[Urvaśī,] the Water-Woman [flashed like a flash of lightning and left] taking away [all] things desirable to me'.

The original meaning of *apsarás-* f. seems to be undetermined as yet. For repeated, mostly vain attempts at a convincing etymology of the word, see the literature referred to by Manfred Mayrhofer, EWAia 89–90 s.v. If this is not too personal an admission, I confess to a bashful predilection for Wackernagel's 'shameless' **a-psarás-**. Cf. Jacob Wackernagel, Kleine Schriften I. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953 (= ²1969), 449 f.

However uncertain the noun's true (etymological) meaning may sound to a modern scholar's sceptical and hypersensitive sense of hearing, the native speaker's naïve ear could have *heard*, for all we know, an untroubled 'water'-connection — and could have heard it even **twice** — in the evocative sounds of **ap-saras-**.

[178] Cf. Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv 202: "Da Purūravas bei der Geburt seines Sohnes nicht anwesend war, ist der Gebrauch der "berichtenden" Augmentpräterita gerechtfertigt. *āsata* könnte allerdings der Form nach auch Injunktiv sein, doch widerspricht dem das parallele *avardhan*."

[179] This fact should have occasioned her some shame, had she been of a bashful nature, because their child, for being that of a mortal man as well as of an immortal woman, would be born '**semi-mortal**'.

But the king is not only informed of that more-than-surprising — nay, utterly shocking — fact, and thus made conscious of the dark he has been kept in until now, he suddenly also becomes aware that all the while he has been deprived of the very possibility of being present at his son's birth and attending to his upbringing. To make matters worse, the nymph tells him that it is her companions who were sitting round in a circle of female solidarity 'while he was being born', and that the rivers, *nad$_i$yàs* — again of the opposite gender — brought him up.[180]

It is further proof of her wilful wiliness that she even pretends to justify — with the provocatively causal *yád*-clause in ṚV 10.95.7cd, the second distich of our stanza — the emancipated educational practice of hers, by referring the king to his own remote past:

> *mahé yát tvā purūravo ráṇāy[a*
> *á]vardhayan dasyuhátyāya devā́ḥ*

> ***Since*** the gods ***had raised*** you,[181] O Purūravas,
> for the great battle, the killing of the Dasyus.[182]

The irony of this would-be justification lies in the fact that she cannot sincerely have expected the king to let himself be fooled by her and fall a victim to the spurious reason of her self-willed policy. Because, while he had been brought up by *male* gods and trained for the *manly* business of fighting the enemies, his son was raised by ***female*** rivers and prepared — for what exactly?

Was he meant to learn how to flow? to flow most graciously? in sinuous windings? and thus become a meandering man? a philanderer? Yes, of course,

---

[180] The wording of our verse, **sám asmiñ jā́yamāna āsata gnā́ḥ**, seems to resound with the triple echo of a passage in the eighth maṇḍala referring to Indra: 8.70.4b–d   *yásmin mahī́r urujráyaḥ / **sáṃ** dhenávo **jā́yamāne** anonavur dyā́vaḥ kṣā́mo anonavuḥ* '[Indra] **by whom** (at whose side), **when he was being born**, the wide-spreading great ones (the rivers), the milch-cows bellowed **in unison**, the heavens, the earths bellowed [as well]'.

Here, too, we find eminently feminine (and characteristically vociferous) *female* beings being present at the birth of a *male* child. And with the similarity of our verse to this stanza in Song-Cycle VIII, a possibly desirable likeness between king Purūravas — always in danger of being *held* an *unheroic* man by his woman — and Indra, that most manly of men (*nṛṇā́ṃ nṛ́tamaḥ*), could have been intended by the poet of 10.95, if only with mild irony.

[181] Cf. again Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv 202: "Der *yád*-Satz mit *ávardhayan* ist vorzeitig". And I may perhaps add that, since the 'pluperfect' of Sanskrit is not necessarily one in meaning, we are free to render some imperfects as pluperfects in the true sense of the word, if the context suggests that the action of the subordinate clause preceded the action of the main sentence, as is clearly the case in our stanza.

[182] Since these two datives — *mahé ráṇāya* on the one hand, *dasyuhátyāya* on the other — may be taken as an *hendiadys*, I should have preferred the more elegant translation 'for the great battle of killing the Dasyus'.

this is the sort of future that lay in store for him: the flirtatious career of a male nymph, a Gandharva.

Or was he perhaps intended to learn how to *praise himself*, in obsequious imitation of his foster-mothers, the '*self-praised* rivers' (7b *nad₍ᵢ₎yàḥ* **svágūrtāḥ**)?

And finally, we may ask: Is the king really supposed to be so distraught in his mind as not to see through this ostensible argument of hers, a particularly 'plausible' kind of *argumentum ad hominem*? The irony of it seems indeed lost on her man. For he is engrossed in his own thoughts and indulges in reminiscences of a regretted past, memories pleasant and painful of a transgeneric contact precariously enjoyed by him, the mortal man, but loathingly eluded by them, the immortal women, as it is related in the preceding and following stanzas.

Excursus E: The Apsaras's Animal Nature

In both of these stanzas, Purūravas refers to Urvaśī's playmates and their fastidious reluctance to have intimate dealings with him, cf. 10.95.6c and 8a–d:

> *tā́ añjáyo [a]ruṇáyo ná sasruḥ*

> They (these *rosy* [or **ruddy**] females)
> have faded like the *rouge* [of dawn].

> *sácā yád āsu jáhatīṣ₍ᵤ₎v átkam*
> *ámānuṣīṣu mā́nuṣo niṣéve*
> *ápa sma mát tarásantī ná bhujyús*
> *tā́ atrasan rathaspŕ̥śo n[á á]śvāḥ*

> Whenever I, a [mere] human, would mix with them,
> the **non**-*human* women, while [they were] undressing,
> they would shy away from me like startled gazelle[s],
> like *mares* that are [suddenly] *touched* by the chariot.

1. *ámānuṣī-* 'non-human woman' means either 'goddess' or 'female animal'. And this ambiguity fits the Apsarases perfectly because they are not only divine women, but sometimes appear in the form of, for instance, water fowl, as we are told — in a fascinating story that relates the accidental meeting of Purūravas and Urvaśī some time after their humanly painful separation — at ŚB 11.5.1.4: *tád dha tā́ apsarasá* **ātáyo** *bhūtvā́ pári pupluvire* 'There (on a pond [*sarasī́-*?] abundant in lotus-roots [*bísavatī-*] right in the middle of Kurukṣetra, where lovesick Purūravas was aimlessly roaming and rambling), the Apsarases were swimming about as *ducks*', in a flock or small party of gregarious birds

presumably belonging to a rather *colourful* variety of the anatoid family. If I were free to guess at their ornithological identity, the female of the **Ruddy Sheldrake** or *Brahminy Duck* (*Casarca* or *Tadorna* **ferruginea**) would seem a quite likely candidate to me.[183]

2. Since *bhujyú-* 'gazelle' is qualified here with the attributive present participle *tarásantī* 'sursautante, tressaillissante' — for the *portmanteau* formation of which word, see elsewhere — it has to be considered a feminine. Now, in order to have at least *gender* agreement between the two kinds of animals Urvaśī's fellow-Apsarases are compared with, while their *numbers* irremediably disagree, I would prefer to take *áśvās* as the plural of *áśvā-* f. 'mare', and not of *áśva-* m. '[male] horse'. Significantly, the chariot, with which the mares are said to come into close contact, is the masculine *rátha-*.

3. Also, the root-noun *-spŕ́ś-* in the compound *rathaspŕ́śas* need not have an active meaning. The equally possible passive (or reflexive) sense '[like mares that] *are touched* [*by* the chariot]' (or '[wie Stuten, die] *sich* [*mit* dem Wagen] *berühren*), which I prefer to the active alternative, fits the situation to a nicety. A sudden collision with the vehicle, however fugitive the contact may prove, is bound to be felt with greater surprise and resentment if it is passively suffered by the female draught-animals (or if it happens to them accidentally), rather than, if they themselves are the independent (*sva-tantra-*) agents of touching.[184]

Against this ambiguous background of conjugal affection and disaffection, both *tragic* and *comical*, we may feel invited to savour, with a discerning tongue, the subtle flavour of a cæsuraless participle — *jā́yamāne* — from either side of the generic gap. It will taste either sweet or bitter.

---

[183] For some of the field characters of this species, see the description by Sálim Ali in The Book of Indian Birds, 2nd edition, Bombay: The Bombay Natural History Society, 1943, 412: "A large orange-brown duck with paler head and neck. Wings white, black, and glistening green. Tail black. Female very similar to male ... but ... with much paler—almost whitish—head".

The *whitish* colour of the female's head, in conspicuous contrast to the general ruddiness of her body, would agree with what we seem to know about the nymph's unabashed, *brazen-*faced nature — as it is reflected, according to Wackernagel's attractive etymology, in the name *a-psarás-* 'shameless' — for if an Apsaras cares to abide by her morally free manners, she is not likely to *blush* with embarrassment at her unconventional lifestyle.

Considering the Apsarases' *Bohemian* character, we should think it less appropriate to identify the female water fowl, which were floating about over there, on that lotus-pond in Kurukṣetra, as representatives of the species called **Pink**headed *Duck* (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea* [Latham]); see Sálim Ali's description in the 11th edition of his above-mentioned work, Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras: Bombay Natural History Society / Oxford University Press, 1979, 19: "Head suffused with bright pink — the colour of new blotting paper" (which the older generation among us may still remember with wistful memories of their blotchy schoolboy days).

[184] The root-noun was understood in an active sense by Geldner, III 301, who translates *rathaspŕ́śo n[á á]śvāḥ* "wie Pferde, die an den Wagen stoßen".

Sweet to Urvaśī the mother and to her female companions, who were constantly sitting through the parturition, assisting as 'midwives', and taking part in what must have been a congenial session of sympathy.

Bitter to Purūravas the father, who was excluded from presence and participation not only then, but is also now abruptly and painfully made aware of his absence from the scene in a not-so-remote past.

The sweetness is all the more pleasant to the palate of the women as *jā́yamāne* 'while [and not just when] he was being born' emphasizes — by its extraordinary position over and across the cæsura — the prolonged process of the baby's birth.[185]

The bitterness is all the more unpalatable to the taste of the sensitive man as the same tetrasyllabic present participle — by heavily hanging over, with the measurable 'weight' of its *-māna-*, into the break of this line — stresses the length of his absence. For, as long as his son was being born — and actually well beyond that span, however extended it may have happened to be — he was, and has been ever since, bereft of all presence and participation.

And we may add, with a modicum of empathy: He has been cruelly prevented from feeling his own fatherly feelings for the boy.

In conclusion, you will wish to know whether I seriously think that *all this* was intended by the poet. And I shall sincerely say: Some of it *must*, some of it *may*, and some of it *might* have been intended by him. The point, as I seem to see it with my *own* two eyes, is this: By trying to *mind-read* the poet — by reading, that is, *his* mind with (and within) *our* mind — we are bound to read something into it, something that is not the poet's intention alone.

As it so happens, Speech the Poetess stands behind the poet. Hers is a mind that looms in the background of his. That Greater Mind is as readily readable as the poet's smaller mind. It is as immediately *there*, and as intimately accessible to us as it is to the poet, and sometimes even more so to us than to him; because Speech may choose, every now and then, to surpass her medium and messenger. And she might, at any moment, be so graciously disposed as to grant us mortals direct contact with her immortal self.[186]

---

[185] This process need not have been as excruciatingly painful for the divine woman as it is wont to be for (most) mortals. And what is called 'birth' may go well beyond parturition proper: it could include quite a number of more or less ceremonial actions, such as washing, drying, and anointing the baby, measuring and examining it, chatting and raving about the promising beauty of the new-born child, making wishes for a glorious future, discussing an auspicious name, and the like.

[186] Speaking of herself in the distich ṚV 10.125.8ab — which resounds with no less than *thirteen* labials, from among a total number of 22 consonants (or only 21, if the glide at the end of the first verse is not pronounced), in onomatopoetic imitation of the wind-like blowing forth that is produced (as if) by her two lips — Holy Speech exhales, in a sense, herself: *ahám evá vā́ta iva*

Through the poet's words and space-between-words and absence-of-space, Speech will reveal herself to us if we succeed in not falling out of grace with her. And so, may the poet's complaint, ṚV 10.71.4ab   *utá tvaḥ páśyan ná dadarśa vā́cam utá tvaḥ śṛṇván ná sṛṇot₍i₎y enā́m* 'and *many a one*, while looking [intently], has not seen Speech [successfully]; and *many a one*, while listening, does not hear her', never prove true of *any a one* of us — stumbling students of the holy language.[187]

---

prá vām₍i₎y ārábhamānā bhúvanāni víśvā 'It is I who blow forth as a [kind of] wind to take hold of all wordly beings'.

May therefore the cosmic wind of Speech inspire not only the poet, but also the scholar who tries to 'under-understand' him down to the finest fibers of his worldly — and *almost* more-than-worldly — being.

[187] If *Vāc*, the goddess of speech, does not mind my foolishly rushing investigation of her traces and footprints in places where angels would fear to tread, I will continue writing on this both dangerous and fascinating topic: dangerous, because the path of Speech is full of pitfalls; but also fascinating, because it is *her* path and may lead to insight after illuminating insight into her *unpredictable* nature.