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

By Werner Knobl, Kyoto

In memoriam Paul Thieme

priyâd 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1 This is the second instalment of a series of articles on Vedic poetry, and the sequel to my as yet unpublished paper “Mind-Reading the Poet.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 Caesura in the Rgveda: Degrees of Metrical Irregularity,” was read at the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, 14 — 19 July, 2003, Helsinki.

2 It is due to Arlo Griffiths’ 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. Klein, 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 Ludvik (Kyoto/Toronto) for her constant advice, Masato Kobayashi for his expert technical assistance, Jan Houben and Arlo Griffiths 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: “Naturally deny me not my chance, the possibility of a refined grammatical analysis of the denotations of those sentences. But also the grammar . . . the last word shall be ours, if we wish to have a conception of the meaning of such sentences as a historical unity.” (Paul Thieme, “Sprachmalerei.” Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 86, 1972, 75 n.14)

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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 under-
standing 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 Rgveda:

4 This is the case, for example, with vādāṣṭi occurring once in the RV, at 8.45.6b yās te vāṣṭi
vādāṣṭi tāt "Wer von dir [Indra] etwas will, so bestimmst du es." (Gelden) The form was
qualified as a nonce by Alexander Lubotsky, A Rgvedic Word Concordance, 1997, II
1246b s.v. vāṣṭ, but it may be an inherited formation; see Manfred Mayrhofer, Etymo-
logisches Wörterbuch des Alttindisichen II (Lieferung 17, 1995) 527 f. with literature.
1. RV 10.126.2 tād dhī vayāṃ vṛṇāmāhe vāruṇa mātr[a d]ryaman / yēnā nīr āṅhhaso yūyām pāthā nethā ca mātr[yam āti dviṣaḥ “Diese (Hilfe) ja erbit- ten wir uns, Varaṇa, Mitra, Aryaman, durch die ihr vor Not bewahret und den Sterblichen geleitet — über die Anfeindungen hinweg.” (Geldner) With respect to the curious verb-form nethā in place of a regular nāyatha, from which it diverges both by its stem and by its intonation, Berthold Dei brück, Das Altindische Verbem, 1874, 85, had said: “Offenbar ist nethā eine Geburt des Augenblicks, die in unwillkürlicher Anlehnung an das unmittelbar vorherge- hende pāthā gebildet ist ... nethā kommt also für die Erörterung des gramma- tischen Organismus des Verbems 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 nethā 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 sā no neṣan nēṣatamair āmūro agnīr vāmāḥ suvitāṁ vāyō ācha “Er führe uns mit den besten Führern, der nie irrende Agni zum Guten, zum Wohlergehen, zum Glück.” (Geldner) The superlative nēṣa-tama- ‘best leader’ — or maybe rather ‘best leading’ 5 — obviously depends on the immediately preceding aorist-stem neṣa-, and was given by Jakob Wackernagel, Altindische Grammatik I, 1st edition 1896, Einleitung XVII, as one of several examples of Augenblicksblbildung 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 Renou in his Introduction Générale to the 2nd edition of AiGr I, 1957, 6, with langue artificielle, Wackernagel 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: “nēṣatamaiḥ ... ist dichterische 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 Ludwig, RV I, 1876, 311: “er fürre uns mit bester führung, der unbetörte, Agni ... ”
3. RV 1.80.12ab ná vépasā nā tanyat[Ā] ṛndram vr̥tro vi bibhayat ‘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 tanyatā sehe ich … Augenblicksbildung eines Instrum[entalis], basierend auf Stamm tanyatā, aber abgelenkt durch das metrische Bedürfnis und das daneben stehende vépasā.” This metrical as well as morphological interpretation of tanyatā was qualified by Renou, Études 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 *tanyāt-. Wackernagel, GN 1902,6 742 (= Kleine Schriften I, 132) n.1, interpreted the form as an adverb in -āt based on the unattested verbal adjective *tany-ātā- ‘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 *tanyātā- (Wackernagel) and of a participle *tanyāt- (Renou), an ellipsis of, for example, vācā must be reckoned with. It appears that she did not take into account the interpretations of tanyatā either as an adverb, as was proposed by Wackernagel, or as a substantive, 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 to specify the kind of irregularity we are confronted with by describing it with all necessary precision, to determine the exact degree of deviation from the norm, to demonstrate that this degree is so high as to exclude a coincidental occurrence of the aberrant form, and 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 yathāsāmkhyam.

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

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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 keep it awake by making us look at the word with more-than-momentary interest. To say of an aberrant form that it came about meti causa, or by analogy, or by contamination, 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 Thieme, KZ 86, 1972, 73 ff. One is sīsratur in RV 8.59.2c yā sīsratū rājasaḥ pārē ādhvahāḥ ‘[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 sīsṛ- 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 *sisrtâs* ‘the two are running’ and a perfect *sasrâtur* ‘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’ *sîsratur*, is the ‘perfect-present’ *sasrmânâm* in RV 4.17.14b *ny ētaśaḥ rîramat sasrmânâm* ‘[Indra] made/makes’ Etâśa, being in the course of having run, stop.’ By this blend of the perfect-stem *sasr*- with the present participle suffix *-mânâ*- an action that started in the past is described as prevented from completion while it is still going on. Only the regular perfect participle *sasrânâm* would have, according to Thieme, appropriately expressed the action as being fully achieved.

Martin Kümmel, Das Perfekt im Indoiranischen, 2000, 552, apparently unaware of the sophisticated treatment *sasrmânâm* 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 RV 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 *sasrânâm*, 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 Etâśa, wenn er seinen Lauf gemacht hat,” strikes

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9 In form, *rîramat* can be an injunctive as well as a subjunctive of the reduplicated aorist, cf. Karl Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda, 1967, 239. If *rîramat* were taken as the subjunctive, the translation of the whole sentence would have to change into: ‘[Indra] will make Etâśa, 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 Etâśa, der dabei ist (*-mânâ*- losgesprungen zu sein (*sasr*), 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” *sasrmânâm* represents, according to Thieme, a logically as well as grammatically impossible “Präsensform perfektiven Aspekts.”

11 Geldner, however, renders RV 1.149.2c *prad ... sasrândh* as “hervordringend” (cf. Narten, Kleine Schriften I 351 = Kümmel, Perfekt 528: “obwohl er hervorläuft”) and RV 6.37.3a *ásasrândsah* as “hereilend.”
me as quite nonsensical. Nor does Geldner’s translation, RV I, 1923, 396 = 1951, 439, “den Etâsā, 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 sasrēmāṇā- as a “derailment” (Entgleisung) of the familiar sasrēnā-: 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 -māṇa- 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 -māṇa- 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’ piprāyasva in RV 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, 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 jujōsatiṁ RV 1× (as against a regular *jujuṣṭam; cf. the 2nd plural jujōṣṭana RV 2×) and mumōcataṁ RV 5× (: mumuktaṁ RV 2×), the 2nd plural mumōcata RV 1× (: *mumukta) of the active; and of the middle, besides piprāyasva RV 1×, there are the 2nd singulants māmahasva RV 2×, vāvṛdhāsva RV 1×, vāvṛdhāsva RV 3×, vāvṛṣasva RV 1×, and the 3rd plural māmahantām RV 20×.14 For our discussion, piprāyasva seems to me the most promising form of the list.15 Let me first quote the pāda in which it occurs, RV 8.11.10c:

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13 Cf. also A. A. Mac donel1, 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 lagem Reduplikationsvokal, 1996, who considers the imperatives with long reduplication vowel to be based on a new thematic present stem; for māmahasva and māmahanṭam, see op. cit. 72 s.v. marth; for vāvṛdhāsva and vāvṛdhāsva, 76 s.v. vardh; for vāvṛṣasva, 76 s.v. varṣa.
15 Interestingly, Lubotsky, A Rgvedic Word Concordance 951b, qualifies piprāyasva as
suvāṃ cāgne tanuvāṃ piprāyasva

Please yourself your own self, O Agni! 16

As 2nd singular of the perfect middle, *piprīṣvā would have been the regular form of the imperative, *piprāyas of the subjunctive. Obviously, the hybrid piprāyasva is based on the stem of the subjunctive, which occurs three times in the RV: once as piprayas at 2.6.8a, twice as piprāyat 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 piprāyasva was substituted for an imaginable regular *piprāyase 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 Bėndahman, Der reduplierte Aorist, 1993, 175, that it is a surrogate of *piprīṣvā, 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 *piprīṣvā fit in, had he wished to use this form? Even I could reformulate the line to your metrician’s satisfaction by saying, for example, piprīṣvā cāgne tanuvāṃ táva svām. 19

Once again viewed from the angle of form, the middle was not strictly indispensable, and the active pipriḥt — which occurs twice in the RV, at 5.33.7d and 10.2.1a — would have served the purpose, since reflexivity of the action is already expressed by tanuvāṃ, and further emphasized by suvām. The active

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


17 See, for example, dādhiṣvā (RV 7x) or vavṛṭṣvā (RV 9x).

18 Bėndahman, loc. cit.: “med. them. piprāyasva... [ist] wohl eine metrische Ersatzform für athem, *piprīṣa am Ende des 11-Silblers.”

19 For a similar formulation, see RV 6.11.2d āgne yājasva tanuvāṃ táva svām 'offer worship, O Agni, to your own self!"
pluperfect *apipres* in the parallel phrase at KS 6.8: 58.8 = KpS 4.7: 146.10 = 255.4–5 *apiprer agne svām tanvām* ‘You have pleased, O Agni, your own self’ shows clearly enough that the middle, although preferred in the RV, is not absolutely necessary with *svām tanvām* from the viewpoint of Vedic syntax.\(^20\)

However, not only in other Saṁhitās, but also in the RV, *tanvām* 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 jāyēva ṗāyte tanvām 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 nā vā u te tanvām sām paprcyām ‘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) evā mahān brhāddivo ātharvād ādvocat svām tanvām īndram evā ‘Thus the great Atharvan Brhaddiva 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’ *piprāyasva*? 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 surplus of sense. And a poet is prone to aim at that. If *piprāyase* 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 emphatic ‘shall’ in ‘you shall please.’ If it were acceptable in English to put ‘shall’ in the imperative, the adequate rendering of *piprāyasva* would be ‘shall please!’

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

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20 Cf. Delbrück, Altindische Syntax 262 f., on the post-Rgvedic reflexive usage of synonymous *ātmānam* with the governing verb not only in the middle but also in the active; see, for example, TS 1.7.5.2 *ātmānam evad priṇati* as against TS 5.1.8.3 *sā ātmānam ṗriṇata*.

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 pādās 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.

śākṣtām etād anādhṛtyām dvir vā trir vā yād ucyāte.

c. Moods of the Future

“Mode-forms of the future,” Whitney, 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 karisyās, “occurring once (or twice) in RV” according to Whitney. It certainly occurs once at RV 4.30.23:

\[\text{utā nūnāṁ yād indriyāṁ} \]
\[\text{karisyā indra pāuñṣyaṁ} \]
\[\text{adyā nākiṣ tād ā minat} \]

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 RV 1.165.9d: yāni karisyāḥ kṛṣṇuḥ pravṛddha ‘Do, [Indra] O strongly grown one, [those Indra-like deeds] which you will decidedly do!’ Already Böhlīngk & Roth, PW II 115, s.v. karisyā, suspected that the visarga of an original karisyāḥ had got lost here; cf. also Oldenberg, Noten I, 1909, 162: “Sehr wahrscheinlich karisyāḥ ..., [the immediately preceding] yāni führte zu der scheinbaren Neutralform [karisyā].”

Compared with the other ten Rțvedic future forms of this verb, including seven participles, the subjunctive karisyās seems to emphasize the voluntaive shade of meaning that is, if only implicitly, present in the indicative. Although, to be sure, karisyāsi of RV 1.1.6ab yād aṅgā dāśāče tūvām āgne bhadrāṁ karisyāsi ‘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,\(^\text{23}\) the additionally, yet not redundantly, characterized karisyās of

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\(^{23}\) Cf. Geßner’s translation “Wenn du wirklich dem Spender Gutes tun willst, Agni,” as against ‘Wenn du tun wirst.’ Renou’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 karishyás, I started from the assumption that what we call the future is, synchronically speaking, really a tense, even the only real tense. 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. 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 vavavṛūṣas. 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 element from extinction that otherwise would have been lost. By this poetic act of over-characterizing a grammatical form, the poet proves not only more sensitive 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 historical 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 dilemma: either we choose a blend of two forms that are equally expressive of the future, kāras and karasyāsi, or we prefer the future of an

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24 See Karl Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv im Veda, 1967, 276 Anm. 21: "Im synchronen Verbsystem des Veda ist der Futurstamm der einzige Tempusstamm, der als solcher eine Zeitstufe ("Zukunft") bezeichnet."

25 See again Hoffmann, 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,\textsuperscript{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 -isiyā- and an obsolescent ‘future’ in -a-. The unwelcome thrust of both of these horn}s can be avoided if the more synchronic interpretation of karisyās as a form of the future tense additionally characterized as a subjunctive mood is accepted as more likely.

\section{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 cāniṣthat in RV 8.74.11b. This highly controversial verb-form\textsuperscript{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.

Whitney, Sanskrit Grammar,\textsuperscript{2} 1889, 323 § 906 b, despaired of this word saying that it “seems hopelessly corrupt.” Similarly, Renou, Grammaire de la langue védique, 1952, 51 § 54 n. 2, called cāniṣthat a “corruption d’un subjonctif cāniṣat d’après l’adjectif cāniṣṭhā voisins.”

Oldenberg, Noten II, 1912, 137, was the first to recognize not only that a subjunctive of the īs-aorist was at the basis of this problematic form, but also that the corruption was brought about by the superlative cāniṣṭha- in verse 8b.

Wackernagel, Festgabe Jacobi, 1926,\textsuperscript{28} 4 = Kleine Schriften I, 1969,\textsuperscript{29} 420, referring to Oldenberg, op. cit., quoted our word as a candidate for “evident emendation” because a supposedly original cāniṣad at the

\textsuperscript{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?

\textsuperscript{27} Is this still a verb-form, we may ask, since a noun is involved in its making, or even a form at all, and not rather an “Unform,” as Hoffmann, see below, preferred to call it?


beginning of the second pāda of stanza 11 would not have been "corrupted to the meaningless câniṣṭhad" if the second pāda of stanza 8 did not also start with the equally anlauting correct câniṣṭhā. 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, 1957, 131 f. = Aufsätze II, 1976, 367, he gives the best translation as yet of RV 8.74.11:

\[
\begin{align*}
yāṃ tvā gopāvano girā \\
cāniṣṭhad agne āṅgiraḥ \\
sā pāvaka śrūdhi hávam \\

\text{du, den der Gopavana mit seinem Lied} \\
\text{am meisten erfreuen soll, Āṅgiras Agni,} \\
\text{hellstrahlender, höre den Ruf!}^{30}
\end{align*}
\]

Hoffmann’s excellent rendering of the composite meaning of this hybrid word-form câniṣṭhat 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 eloquence. 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 câniṣṭhat is supposed to have taken the extravagant poet by surprise, to have come upon him unawares, as it were, while he was being

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30 For other translations, cf. for example H. Grassmann, Rig-Veda I, 1876, 493: "Du, den Gopavana durch Lied, erfreut hat, Agni, Āṅgiras," or K. F. Geldner, RV II, 1951, 401: "Du, dem Gopavana mit seiner Lobrede gefallen (?) möchte, o Agni, Āṅgiraside." L. Renou, EVP XIII, 1964, 78, renders: "Toi, ô Agni, que Gopavana est apte à réjouir de son chant, ô Āṅgiras;" but in his note ad loc., op. cit. 156, he specifies, apparently under the influence of Hoffmann’s [1952/1957] interpretation, the meaning of câniṣṭhat as "qui est en mesure de réjouir (plus que tout autre)."

31 See also Johanna Narten, Die sigmatischen Aoriste im Veda, 1964, 111 s.v. can ‘sich erfreuen’: “Der zweite Verbalbeleg von can [apart, that is, from the isolated imperative caniṣṭām in RV 7.70.4a caniṣṭām deva āsādāv yapsī “erfreut euch an den Kräutern und Wassern, ihr beiden Götter” (Narten)], câniṣṭhat VIII 74, 11, ist eine deutliche Augenblicksbildung nach dem Superl[ativ] câniṣṭha- [in 8.74.8]."
carried away by the profusion and exuberance of his speech.\textsuperscript{32} On the other hand, memory is said to have led the poet astray. With \textit{cānīṣthā} of stanza 8\textsuperscript{33} still lingering in his mind, the poet was tempted to contaminate the “probably intended” subjunctive \textit{cānīṣat} ‘shall please’ with the recollected superlative \textit{cānīṣṭha}- ‘most pleasing.’\textsuperscript{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 \textit{cānīṣṭhat} ‘shall be most pleasing.’

3. RE-REDUPLICATION

While cases of de-reduplication have to be acknowledged as occurring with tolerable frequency,\textsuperscript{35} re-reduplication\textsuperscript{36} — for all our readiness to accept the exceptional — will always remain extremely rare.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{vavavrūṣas} in \textit{RV} 1.173.5d:

\[vavavrūṣas \textit{cit tāmaso vihartā}\]

[Indra is] the dispeller of even the darkness that has re-re-covered [Vṛtra / the waters].

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Hoffmann, loc. cit.: “... ist dem Überschwang des Dichters von VIII 74,11 die Uniform \textit{cānīṣṭhat} unterlaufen.”
\item \textsuperscript{33} \textit{RV} 8.74.8ab sā te aγne śāṃtamā cānīṣṭhā bhavatu priyā “O Agni, let [this newer thought for you (7a byām te nāyaṇasi māthā)] be most wholesome, most pleasing, dear to you.”
\item \textsuperscript{34} See Hoffmann, loc. cit.: “Die Erinnerung ... hat den Dichter zu der Kontamination des wohl beabsichtigten Konjunktivs \textit{cānīṣad} mit dem Superlativ \textit{cānīṣṭha}- verleitet.”
\item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{Take}, for example, \textit{skambhāthur} at \textit{RV} 6.72.2c, or \textit{skambhur} at \textit{RV} 10.65.4b.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Or ‘retriplication,’ as we may also call it.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Reduplicated forms of secondary roots, as, for example, the perfect \textit{mamand-} (\textit{RV} 4.x) of \textit{mamd-} from ‘*ma-md-’, do not concern us here.
\end{itemize}
Here another *na-* seems to be added to the already reduplicated stem of the perfect *na-vr-*. The first critical comment on this curiosity may be that of Friedrich Bollensens, ZDMG 22, 1868, 605, who considered the allegedly corrupt *vavavṛusās* a “false form” for the correct *vavṛusās* and suggested, in order to regain the missing syllable, that -*vr-* be “split” to -*var-*, and the whole participle be read as *vavavṛusās*.  

Hermann Grassmann, Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda, 1873, 1322, doubtfully defined *vavavṛusās* as “Part. Perf. des Int[ensivums]?.” The form was later mentioned by Hermann Brunnhofer, KZ 30, 1890, 512, as a case of “triplication” together with the, as he called it, “quite monstrous” YAv. *zaozīzūiī* (Gäh 1.6) and late Sanskrit *pipīrḥī* (Bhāgavata-Purāṇa [BhP] 4.19.38).

Excursus: Franz Josef Meier, “Der Archaismus in der Sprache des Bhāgavata-Purāṇa mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verbalflexion.” Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik 8, 1931, 61f., comments on *pipīrḥī* in BhP 4.19.38 *samkalpanāṃ viśvasrāṃ pipīrḥī* “erfülle den Wunsch der Weltenschöpfer” that this is a form “mit spontaner Verdoppelung der Reduplikation.” After stating that “[d]ie Erscheinung einer Triplikation (Śṛṅharavāmin) an dieser Stelle: ārṣāḥ prayogah) ist nicht ohne Parallel,” he gives as one of three Vedic examples the strangely reduplicated aorist *āpīpīpat* in BĀU-K 4.5.14 *atraiva mā bhagavān mohāntam āpīpīpat* with the comment: “Die Form ist auch von Śaṅkara bezeugt, der sie mit

38 Bollensens, loc. cit.: “... vavavṛusās, eine falsche Form für vavṛusās. Da aber so eine Silbe fehlt, so spalte man vr in var und lese vavavṛusās, worauf auch die verdorbene Lesung hinweist.”

39 On YAv. *zaozīzūiī*, Chr. Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, 1904, 1668 n. 2, had remarked: “Ist die Form ächt ..., so muss sie durch Kontamination von *zauz* ... und *zīzu* ... entstanden sein.” Jean Kellens, Le verbe avestique, 1984, 195 n. 8, objected to this explanation by pointing out that the reduplicated primary present *zīzu*- “n’est jamais attesté et que son équivalent indien a u dans la syllabe de redoublement (jukhtimasi).” Jean Kellens thinks that the middle syllable -*zī*- in the apparently triplicated *zaozīzūiī* “représente nécessairement un bêgaiement graphique,” and therefore emends the transmitted form to *zaozīiī*, 3rd singular of the intensive with the ending of the perfect used in a passive sense, setting aside the syllable -*zī*- altogether. Martin Kümmer, Stativ und Passivform, 1996, 155, follows suit, agreeing with Kellens that the form as it is transmitted in the manuscripts cannot be correct. Both these scholars, by athetzings a whole syllable, are willing to swallow the camel of drastic edenation while straining at the gnat of double reduplication. It would seem easier to accept Brunnhofer’s triplication, and account for -*zī*- by considering one of the following two possibilities: the *ī* of an originally triplicated *zaozīzūiī* was either dissimilated in pronunciation, or misrepresented as *ī* in writing.
dem *apipadat* der Mādhy[andina] Rez[ension] glossiert.”

See, however, Böhtlingk & Roth, PW I 650, s.v. *āp*, lines 19–20, who qualify *āpipat* 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 samjñāsti* ‘after death, there is no consciousness,’ and that she finds herself at a loss because she does not understand this: *na vā aham imañ (M idām) 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 ŠB-K 1.2.2.5 — has intentionally placed into Maitreyī’s puzzled mouth the stuttering verb-form *ārippat* in order to express her bewilderment? So that we may translate her stammering into English as ‘that’s where you have made me *attattain* [a state of] extreme confusion’?

*Bartholomae*, IF I, 1892, 490 n.1, after confessing to his disbelief in Brunnohero’s triplicated forms, suggested in turn (“Ich setze *va = ava*”) that the first of the two *va*- is the preposition *ava*- with aphaeresis. Against this explanation, Wackernagel, AiGr II 1, 1905, 72 § 29 b 6 n., objected that *ava*- does not occur with root *var/ṛ*, and that it does not fit the meaning of this passage.

40 The parallel passage in BĀU-M 4.3.14 = ŠB 14.7.3.14 reads: *ādraiva mā bhāga-vān mohāntām āpipadat* ‘There you have made me fall into [a state of] extreme confusion.’

41 The phrase in which *ārippat* occurs, ŠB-K 1.2.2.5 = ŠB-M 2.2.2.7, expresses the thought of a sacrificer at the time of presenting the officiants with a sacrificial fee: *ye medāh samprāpīpattā tūti* ‘[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 ŠŚ 12.1.35d *mā te hṛdayam arppām* ‘let me not make your heart be hit (hurt) [by my digging into you, O Earth].’ PS-K 17.4.4d *mā ... arpptam* in place of ŠŚ *mā ... arppipam* does not seem credible because *arpitam* cannot be construed with *mā. Arlo Griffiths* was so kind as to inform me that one of his Orissa manuscripts, V/122, reads *arpśām*, which could be interpreted as *arpipam* since “*pa* is very similar to *sa* also in Or. script.”

42 For the other two Vedic examples of triplication which Meier, op. cit. 62, adduces, i. e. *atātātā* at ĀśvŚŚ 2.4.19 and *āttātātā* at ĀpŚŚ 6.13.10,11, see Johanna Nartzen, Kleine Schriften I, 1995, 375 ff.

43 “An triplizierte Formen, von denen Brunnohero KZ. XXX 512 spricht, habe ich keinen rechten Glauben, trotz des Hinweises auf av. *avottu* G. 1. 6 und ai. *pipipṣi* 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 *vavavṛūṣas* is a contamination of the correct weak form of the participle *vavṛūṣas* with strong finite verb forms like *vavartha*.

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

The translations of Ludwig (RV II, 1876, 46: "zestreuer der umhüllenden finstre") and Geldner (RV I, 11923, 225 = 1951, 250: "der auch die verhüllende Finsternis zerstreut") do not give any clue as to how exactly these two scholars interpreted the form. 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 intensive 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.

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 iterative 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 *vihantā*, "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-

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

45 Oldenberg, loc. cit.: "vavavṛūṣah ... scheint Kontaminationsbildung aus vavṛūṣah und Formen wie vavārtha vadvrā."  
46 Hermann Grasmann, Rig-Veda II, 1877, 168, renders the line as "vertreibend auch das festumschlossene 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. Grasmann, Wörterbuch 1322, quoted above, who seemed to think that this participle may be an intensive even in form.
bly reduplicated form. Either there existed in pre-Rgvedic poetry a formula with a strong form of the participle, which would have been a trisyllabic vavrivāṅs-, and the number of syllables of a merely disyllabic *vavṛṣ- had to be “assimilated” to that form in a variation of the original formula.

Or else, vis-à-vis the indicative vavāra, the weak stem of the perfect *vavṛ- might have made the impression of being reduplicated but not clearly enough, so that another va- had to be added — for the sake of clarification.

To the first attempt, it can be objected that nowhere is there any trace of an original formula with vavrivāṅs- in the company of tāmas- and vihan-tār-. Nor would we so much as expect the strong form of the participle to be used as an attribute of the neuter tāmas-. The only position where it could be imagined to have occurred in the paradigm is the nominative/accusative plural. However, although *vavrivāṅṣi 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 -vañṣi is attested for the Vedic language; see Wackernagel, AiGr III 301 § 156e.

And the obvious objection to Kümmel’s second attempt at an explanation is this: If *vavṛ- as the weak stem of the participle was felt to be insufficiently reduplicated, why then were finite verb forms like vavvur (RV 4×) or vavvre (RV 2×) not also “clarified” by double reduplication?

It never fails to amaze 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 monster. But let’s have a look

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48 Actually there is a third attempt, which Kümmel himself, however, qualifies as “probably too audacious.” See Perfekt 456, n. 858: “Die Annahme, dass auch hier eine uralte, lautgesetzlich viersilbige Form *vavurųṣas < *Huṣa-Hur-ūṣ-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 Kümmel, Perfect 456: “Die doppelte Reduplikation könnte sich so erklären, dass der zweisilbige schwache Stamm *vavṛṣ- dem starken in der Silbenzahl angeglichen werden sollte, ursprünglich wohl in einer Formelvariation; gegenüber dem Ind. Perf. vavāra wirkte *vavṛ- vielleicht auch nicht deutlich genug redupliert und wurde zu vavvavr- 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 vavrivāṇasam, this being the only strong form of the perfect participle attested in the RV. 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 vṛtṛ-. We could thus imagine a triṣṭubh-pāda like *vavrivāṇasam vṛtrāṃ Indro vihan-tā, and argue that tāmas- ‘darkness,’ covering the light, is close enough in its mythological significance to vṛtṛ- ‘obstacle,’ blocking the waters, 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 monstrous as it is feared to be.

Let us start from the assumption 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 iterative, and therefore could be renamed in accordance with its repetitive function. It is also true of the desiderative, which conveys not only the meaning of 'wish to do' but also — and predominantly so in Vedic prose — of 'try to do,' 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 ḍvocat 'has spoken' or āpaptat 'has flown.' It is true of forms of the reduplicated present such as bibhārti / bibharti 'carries' in contrast to bhāratī 'brings.' And it is true of the oldest type of the perfect, which designates not only a past action, but rather the continued result of that action in the guise of a present state. You might be prepared to agree that when we speak of a 'state' or of 'continuation,' what we mean are forms of reiteration.

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 kavi suggests intent and cautious attention to detail, may well have been aware of the fact that the weak stem of the perfect vāvr- was reduplicated clearly enough, and stood in no need of further clarification by an additional va-. If he did, 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 was 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 Yāṣkā had in mind when he said, although with regard to a different kind of repetition, in Nirukta 10.42: abhyāse bhāyāhsam artham 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 emphasize what was already sufficiently clear in its grammatical form, by using the element va- once again, but this time with poetical 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.  

In order to push the argument a little further still, I will refer you to RV 10.113.6cd vr̥trām yād ugrō vy āvṛścad ojasā apō bīhratam tāmasā pārīvr̥tam ‘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 dhṛvyāntam tām[o ā]dha dadhvasa hat[ē] ‘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 RV 1.173.5, speaking of darkness (tāmasas) as re-re-covering (vavavrūṣas), was trying to express in a covert way, by means of a single verbal form, two concentric actions: not only does darkness cover Vṛtra, but also Vṛtra covers the waters he bears in his body. If I were to express in an overt way this double activity of re-re-covering, by the use of two participle forms, I would choose the following phrase describing darkness as apō vavivrāhsam vr̥trām vavvrivā tāmaḥ. I am well aware that, by thus disclosing 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 implicitly — not in a strictly grammatical fashion, but by poetically taking us one step beyond.

Who is still afraid of the monster?

4. DOUBLE ENDING

The hapax locative plural prtsūsa in RV 1.129.4e is quite unique, not because it happens to occur only once, but by reason of its being a nonce 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 karisyā in section 1. c. Moods of the Future.
asmākam brāhm[a ā]tāy[e
dāvā prṣūṣu kāsu cit /

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

Although, at first sight, it seems safe to say that by its formation prṣūṣu is the root-noun prt- with the locative plural ending added twice, scholars have had — for obvious reasons — some difficulty in accepting the addition of the same ending two times over as a conscious act of the poet.

Adalbert Kuhn, KZ 15, 1866, 397 ff., may have been the first to characterize prtsū- in prṣūṣu as a “new stem.” Ernst Fraenkel, KZ 42, 1909, 235, further explained that the temptation occasionally to attach once again the same suffix to the ready-made case-form was all the greater since of root-noun prt- only the locative prṣū is attested. prṣu- occurs in the compound prṣūṣu (“Kampferregung, feindlicher Angriff”) as well as in prṣūṣu (“in den Kämpfen siegreich”), and this fact, too, Fraenkel continued, could have favoured an occasional misunderstanding of the form prṣū as a new stem. In addition to that, Wackernagel, AiGr III, 1930, 73 § 29 b note, suggested that the word sequence prṣūṣu kāsu cit at the end of line 1.129.4e is a free variation of 8.31.15b prṣū kāsu cit also standing in pāda-final position — a variant that may have been conditioned by metrical convenience.


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 Kuhn, loc. cit.: “in diesem falle ist aber prṣu wohl als neues thema behandelt, wie aus den bildungen prṣudha = sākṛāma, prṣuti f. feindlicher angriff hervorzuheben scheint.”

59 Fraenkel, loc. cit.: “Da von dem Würzelnomen prt- nur der Loc. prṣē belegt ist, so war die Versuchung, an den fertigen Kasus gelegentlich noch einmal das gleiche Suffix heranzuhängen, natürlich noch um so grösser.”

60 Fraenkel, loc. cit.: “und auch dieser Umstand konnte ein gelegentliches Missverständnis der Form prṣu unterstützen.”

61 Wackernagel, loc. cit.: “Wahrscheinlich ist prṣūṣu kāsu cit ... freie durch metrische Bequemlichkeit veranlasste Variation von prṣū kāsu 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 kā-cid / kā-ca / kā-canā, although it is very often used in a distributive function, vipṣāyām, does not always convey an all-pervasive distributive meaning. Take, for example, RV 5.74.10ab dāśinā yād dha kārhi cie chuṣrūyātam imānḥ hāvam ‘O Aśvins, if you should ever have listened to this call [of ours],’ 62 or RV 8.73.5ab yād adyā kārhi kārhi cie chuṣrūyātam imānḥ hāvam ‘if you should have listened to this call at any time today,’ 63 and again RV 8.102.20ab yād agne kāṇi kāṇi cid ā te dārūṇi dadhmāsi ‘If we place any pieces of wood at your [hearth], O Agni.’ 64

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

62 Cf. Geldner, RV II 80: “O Aśvin, wenn ihr jemals auf diesen Ruf hören solltet” (not "jeweils") and Kümmel, Perfekt 531: “Aśvins, wenn ihr irgendswann hören solltet diesen Ruf hier” (not "jedesmal").


64 Cf. Geldner, RV II 434: “Wenn wir dir irgends welche Hölzer zulegen, Agni,” Wackernagel, AiGr III 574 § 259 f: “alle möglichen Holzarten” and Renou, EVP XIII 82: “Si, ô Agni, nous plaçons pour toi tels ou tels (morceaux de bois).”

65 Cf. Wackernagel, Altindische Grammatik I 1, 145 § 59 d: “Das Âmređita-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 caturakṣarāṇī-caturakṣarāṇī chandāmsi “Metren, jedes versilbig” ... Ausser bei Zusammengehörigkeit mit einem pluralischen Wort scheint ein Nomen im Âmređita nie Plural zu haben.”
prṣū kāsu cid, by being unusually extended to prṣūṣu kāsu cid, conveyed the pervasively distributive meaning 'in whatever battles.'

To conclude, let me quote an aphorism of Goethe'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 surplus of meaning 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 eccentric.

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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.

* This is the revised and extended version of the first part of a paper that I presented at the Second International Vedic Workshop held at Kyoto University, 30 October – 2 November, 1999. I am eternally grateful to Diwakar Acharya, Masato Kobayashi, Catherine Ludvik, and Thomas Oberlies for their generous help, advice, expertise, and encouragement. Nor shall I ever forget the kind appreciation I was so fortunate as to receive for my modest efforts from Tatyana J. Elizarenkova, Jared S. Klein, Leonid Kulikov, and a few other friends and colleagues, at the Kyoto Workshop.

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. Many more cases belonging to these and to other types might be considered. They must wait to be taken up in the future.

The principle at work in all the cases I treat may be called “Sprachmalerei.” 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 onomatopoeia. Because of that misuse and confusion I should prefer to speak of the ut-pictura-poesis 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 yathāsāmkhyam.

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


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:

```
no       no       no
no       no       no
no       no
```

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:

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no       no       no
no             no
no       no       no
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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 Westöstlicher 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:

\[
\text{Du beschämst wie Morgenröthe} \\
\text{Jener Gipfel ernste Wand,} \\
\text{Und noch einmal fühlet } \text{Hatem} \\
\text{Frühlingshauch und Sommerbrand.}
\]

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

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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.
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**

complete

is an incomplete

form of incomplete

**Case One: The Twin Sister’s Tantrum**

Hymn RV 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. The first two lines of that paroxysmal stanza, RV 10.10.13ab (= ŚŚ 18.1.15ab), if written continuously, run as follows:

*batō batāsi yama nāivā te máno ḥḍayamaṃ cāvidāma*

The perfect optative [ā] *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 *ō cit sākhāyaṃ sakh yā 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 *ā vīvīṣyāḥ* ‘You might have entered [my body],’ 7c *rīrīcyām* ‘I would have yielded [my body to you],’ and 9b *ūn 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 unwatched 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, II11 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, III12 136, note ad 13a: “bata als Interjektion 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, 1905, 5 § 1 d Anm.: “RV. 10, 10, 13ab batáh ‘Schwächling’ ist vielleicht substantiviert aus v[edisch] und sp[ät] bata ‘ach! weh!’ Johansson KZ. 36, 3[4]3 A[nn].”215 and accepted by Oldenberg, Noten II, 1912, 207: “batáh sehe ich mit Wack[ernagel, AiGr] 2, 5 [= II 1, 5] als

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 batāh at RV 10.10.13a is glossed with balād aitāh (!) and durbalah; cf. also the commentaries on RV 10.10.13a (Max Müller’s edition, IV [21892] 24) and on ŚS 18.11.5a (Vishva Bandhu’s edition, III [1961] 1642), both of which literally repeat Yāska’s ‘pseudo-etymo-logical’ interpretation.
15 See K. F Johansson, “Anlautendes indogermandisches b-,” Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung 36, 1900, 342–390; 343 Anm. 2: “Es (= the word bata) wäre ein un- flektiertes geschlechtlich indifferentes satzwort, das später ins paradigm eingeordnet als vokativ oder imperativ 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-breds, or portmanteau-like contaminations of verbal and nominal forms can, none the less, be found in the Rgveda. Some of these highly irregular word-(de)formations may well have been poetically intended, as in the case of the Augenblicksbildung cāniṣṭhati ‘shall-please-most-pleasingly’ at RV 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.
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 RV 10.10 consists of 14 stanzas, and it is composed in the triśṭubh metre. Out of the total number of 56 pādas, 52 are regular triśṭubh lines. Of the remaining four, one (14c) is a jagatī verse of the kind so frequently interspersed among triśṭubh 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 RV 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 evā || táva

\(^{17}\) In case the slight irregularity should have been intended, we could try to ‘justify’ the triśṭubh cadence of verse 10.10.14c tāṣya vā tvām māna ichā sā vā tāv[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 triśṭubh line (by replacing the iambic cadence with a trochaic one) had had a greater importance in his mind than accentuating the *tvattvām of ‘you.’ After all, tvām in the former part of this antithetic construction has an equally emphasizing effect — since the imperative ichā 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 sā vā tāva constitutes a fuller syntactic and rhythmical parallel to tāṣya vā tvām than *sā 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.

mánah \‖ — 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, IJ 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 hídayam ca avidáma,*” 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 triśṭubh 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-


\(^{22}\) 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 tínānā punánto.* In this triśṭubh verse, we find an exceptionally long sequence of no less than six minimal (C)V units: *-tu-mi-va-ti-ta-ū*-. 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 *ā na úpa vāsumatā 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, 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, 85 f., considered taking nāivā 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 nāivā — 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
[5] Taking up Oldenberg’s skeptical considerations, but venturing beyond them, von Schroeder, Mysterium und Minus, 1908,29 284 n. 1, had the naïve courage to complete the incomplete by introducing vīrās after nāivā 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 επιμέχη 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 nāivā te as a credible opening of 13b, and the whole pāda as a typically hypermetric triśṭubh line. He then goes on to ask: “Kann nicht davor bató batāsi 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 cadence, 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:

nāivā te máno hṛdayam cāvidāma

We have not found your heart and spirit, implying by the use of the plural a multitude of divine peers who would have approved of her more-than-sisterly love. 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.

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

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31 I trust that no scholar sensitive to syntactic tactics will mind my neglecting the Sanskrit word order, in putting ‘heart’ before ‘spirit.’ 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 h/dayam after má-nas, seems to follow the same stylistic and syntactical 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 nā te sākhā sakh/yām vaś/y etāt ‘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 usánti ghā té amṛtāsa etād ékasya cīt tyajásam máṛt 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 ‘this’ and ‘that’ ultimately point at one and the same thing, no matter how ambiguously the uniform pronoun etād may refer to it, in what could be called a ‘split’ or ‘double reference.’ The intricate ambiguities of etād 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 RV 10.10.4cd gandharāvā apṣ.y āpyā ca yōśā sā no nābhīḥ paramām jāmī tān nau ‘The Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman: they are our origin, they 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 RV 10.14.5 and 10.17.1–2, Yama-and-Yamî’s father is called vīvāsvanta and said to be mortal, while their mother, saranyū-, is considered immortal. Cf. Maurice Bloomfield, “The Marriage of Saranyū, Tvaśtar’s Daughter.” JAOS 15, 1893, 172–188.
her to squeezy-squashy or creepy-crawly things, are formulated in distich 10.10.13cd:

\[
\text{anyā kīla tvām kaksyēva yuktām} \\
pārī svajāte lībujeva vrksām
\]

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

\[
gārbhe nū nau janitā dāmpatī kar
\]

the creator has made\(^ {36}\) the two of us husband-and-wife\(^ {37}\) already in the womb\(^ {38}\)

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\(^{34}\) The co-occurrence in this sentence of particle kīla and subjunctive [pārī] svajāte 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 kīla cannot mean 'surely' if the verbal mood of svajāte does not allow for certainty, so nothing more than a certain degree of probability 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, kaksyā- 'girth' (RV 4x) and lībuja- 'creeper' (RV 2x), suit the other woman just as nicely as the masculines yuktā- 'harnessed' (RV 43x) and vrksā- 'tree' (RV 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' (pāti- m.) and 'mistress' (pātnī- f.) of the 'house[hold]' (dām-m.[?]).

\(^{38}\) In this single verse-line, Yamī nicely combines, for the sake of a would-be convincing argument, two well-known functions of dḥātār- 'creator': [1] he provides the future wife [a] with a husband and [b] with a new home, [2] he places the embryo (gārba-) into the uterus (gāṛha-). See, for instance, ŚŚ 6.60.3cd dḥāṭasyā agruvai pātim dāḍhātu pratikāṃ yāṃ 'Let Dhātar appointment to this unmarried woman a husband that is up to her desire,' ŚŚ 14.1.59c dḥāṭa vipaścit pātim asvāi viveda 'Eloquently [speaking on her behalf] has Dhātar found a husband for this [woman],’ ŚŚ 14.2.13ab śivā nār[i i]yām āstam āgann imām dḥāṭa lokāṃ asvāi dīśa 'Luckily has this woman come home. Dhātar has allotted to her this [household] world,’ or RV 10.184.1d dḥāṭa gāṛbhaṃ dāḍhātu te 'Let Dhātar place a child [into] your [womb].’
of Yama-and-Yamī’s mother, the ‘water-woman,’ áp_yā ... yōṣā, as we are, no doubt, allowed to supply from verse 4c of the previous stanza. Thus, a fluid element is suggested in which they may float even now. And in 7ab, she states as a recent event that suddenly happened upon her:

\[
yamāśya mā yam_yām kāma āgan
samānē yōna satasaśēy yāya
\]

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

Now, was it only for metrical reasons that the poet substituted dhātā with janitā, which by its prosodic character as an anapæst fits so much better into the break of this trimetrical verse than the disyllable? Or was it also the fact that jani- in janitār- evokes, if only by similarity of sound, jāni- ‘wife’ — almost as cogently as -pāti- in the neighbouring dāmpati- suggests, this time with rhyme and reason, pāti- ‘husband’?

The evocative suggestion of both jāni- ‘wife’ and pāti- ‘husband’ — standing (or, rather, lying) 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 underline 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 RV 10.10.4c gandharvō aps_yā ca yōṣā ‘the Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman.’ Cf. also áp_yā ca yōṣā in the next hymn, at RV 10.11.2a rápad gandharvīr áp_yā ca yōṣānā ‘If she, the Gandharvi and Water-Woman, babbles as well as áp_yā alone, but again in the sense of ‘water-woman,’ or ‘nymph,’ or ‘nixie,’ and referring to one particular Apsaras, namely Urvaśī, at RV 10.95.10b bhārantī me áp_yā kām_yānī, for which line see below, Type A. Case Two: The Nymph’s Evasiveness.

The plural yōṣānās ... ápyās, on the other hand, as it occurs in RV 3.56.5c rtāvarīr yōṣānās tisró ápyās ‘the three truthful water-women,’ does not seem to refer to Apsaras. If we are to believe Sāyaṇa, the three sacrificial goddesses of the Āprī hymns: Ilā, Bhrāṭi, 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- yōṣānā-, if not actually apsarās-, with greater, more natural ease than any of the two other deifications.

In the same Book Three, Viśvāmitra addresses the rivers, nad_yās, of the Punjab (principally Viśpāś and Śutudrī, but also — by implication in the plural form of nadī- f. — at least one more river of ‘Pentapotamia’) in the vocative rtāvarīs at RV 3.33.5ab ráma-dhvam me vācase somyāya rtāvarīr āpa mūhūrām ēvaih ‘Stand still for an instant, you truthful ones, with your [rushing] movements, on behalf of my soma-like word.’ Cf. also RV 4.18.6, in which stanza the waters, āpas, are compared to righteous and trustworthy women, rtāvarīs.

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 RV 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' / śī?) in the Rgveda is not only a stative ‘to be lying’ but, more specifically, a quasi-deictic ‘to be lying there’ (‘daliegen’). Does the supposedly purposeful implication of root śay⁴¹ in the making of this hapax compound saha-śéyya⁴³ again indicate, as did quadruply repeated yam of the preceding line,⁴⁴ that

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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 pitūr nāpātam ā dadhiya vedhā ādhi kṣāmi pratarām dīdh yānah ‘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 nā te sākhā sakhyām vasty etāt ‘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 amētīsa etād ēkasya cit tyajāsam máṛt yasya ‘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: yamāsyā mā yam yāṁ kāma āgan is not only rhythmically quite effective — four sequences of the same three phonemes are each time separated from one another by a single vowel (…ās…ā…ī…) — 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 insistence, she fails to convince him even with this emphatically re-re-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 sahaśép yāya instead of sahaśéy yāya, if only the RV manuscripts allowed for it. To be sure, a reference to śépa- (RV 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 yamāsyā mā yam yāṁ kāma āgan.
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 RV.\(^45\) [1] at 4.33.3ab pūnar yē cakrūḥ pitārā yuvānā sānā yūpeva jaraṇā śāyānā ‘[The Rbhus] 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 hánty āsad vá-dantam ubhāv īndrasya prāsitaʊ śayāte ‘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:\(^47\)

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\(^45\) If all the 51 RV 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 RV — and, possibly, other Sārśihitā — occurrences of this root may indeed be a worthwhile task for the future.

\(^46\) The phrase īndrasya prāsita- ‘Indra’s snare,’ by the way, seems to forebode the ominous indra-jālā- ‘Indra-net,’ first mentioned as a compound in the Atharvaveda, at ŚŚ 8.8.8 ayām lokā jālam āśic chakrasya mahatō mahān / tēnāhām indrajālēn[a a]jāmāṃs tāmasābhī dadhāmi sārvān “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): tenāhaṁ indrajālēna tamasāmūn api dadhāmi sārvān.

\(^47\) 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 yāhī tūyam ‘go driving fast!’ metaphorically refers to the chariot-like speed of sexual intercourse. See the distich RV 10.10.8cd, where he puts Yamī off with the discouraging request: anyēna mād āhano yāhī tūyam tēna vi vrha ráth yeva cakrā ‘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-
May we pull to and fro like the wheels of a chariot!

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 ... If Yama had fallen in with her, Yamī

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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 RVKā 5.22.3cd vásantikam ‘ya tējanam yābhyaṁāṇa 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 cakrā- (RV 56x) is predominantly neuter in Vedic — it is exclusively that in later Sanskrit — the form cakrā (RV 9x) could theoretically be considered a neuter plural also in verses 7d & 8d of our hymn. However, we find cakrā being used as an incontrovertible masculine dual in at least two other RV passages, namely, at 1.166.9d āḷko vaś cakrā samāyā ví vāvrte ‘Your [chariots’] axle is turning round right through the middle of your [chariots]’ two wheels [O Maruts]’ and at 8.5.29c ubhā cakrā hiranyāyā ‘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 cakrā 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 RV 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: *vavrhyāva. She could thus have produced, if only by leaving out the enclitic particle cid, the metrically fitting line-opening ví vavrhyāva, 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 (RV 1.116.25d), jagmyātam (RV 6.50.10a) or śuśrūyātam (RV 574.10b = 8.73.5b), and vavrtyāmā (RV 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, kāmamūtā, 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 rose — and faded soon after. This is how she distances herself from him at RV 10.95.2b (= ŚB 11.5.1.7):

prākramiṣam uṣāsām agriyēva

I have departed [as finally] as the foremost of dawns.~\[52\]

than four examples of it being used by her in this hymn, (1) at 1a ćīt sākhāyaṁ sakh yā vavṛtyām ‘And yet, I would have liked to make the companion revert to [acts of] companionship,’ (2) at 3ā jānyuḥ pāṭis tanvāṃ ā vīviśyāḥ ‘as husband you may have entered the body of [me as] your wife,’ (3) at 7c, the line just preceding our verse, jāyēva pāṭye tanvāṃ riricyām ‘as a wife [giving herself with abandon] to her husband would I have yielded my body [to you],’ and, finally, (4) at 9b sūryasya cāksur mūhur ūn mimiyāt ‘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- [kāma-] “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, twin 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:

\[ \text{durāpanā vāta ivāhām asmi} \]

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 \textit{pra-kram} ‘to depart.’ The implied meaning of \textit{prākrāmaśam} 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 desperately you may wish me back].’

\(^{53}\) This comparison of Urvaśī with primeval Uśas evidently alludes to a mysterious mythological event that is also referred to — with the same verbal compound \textit{pra-kram}, albeit in a different tense: imperfect \textit{prākrāmastruction} in the place of aorist \textit{prākrāmaśam} — at RV 10.138.5cd \textit{indrasya vājrād abibhed abhiśnāthah prākrāmac chundhyūr ājahād uśā ānah} ‘She was afraid of Indra’s club, of the [club’s] prodding. The pretty one escaped. Uśas 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 Uśas once was of Indra?

For a longer, though not less enigmatic, reference to this strangely suggestive Indra-striking-Uśas (or, club-hitting-cart) myth, see RV 4.30.8–11 \textit{etād ghēd utā vīr yāṃ indra cakārthā pāums yāṃ} ...


One may ask, however, why Urvaśī should not have laid some stress on \textit{ahām}. 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 \textit{ahām} proves to be in another verse of the same hymn, at RV 10.95.2a \textit{kīm etā vācā kṛṇavā tāvāhām} “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 Pros. 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 — 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:

\[
\text{vidyú́n ná́ yá́ pátantī́ dávidyod}
\]
\[
bhárantī́ me ápyā kā́mkāni
\]

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

---

55 The only other occurrence of this rare injunctive in the RV is at 6.3.8b *vidyún ná́ dāvidyot s vēbhih šúśmaih* ‘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 RV 6.3.8b, within the intensive verb-form *dávidyot*, see the pertinent section (II. 2. Fourth Degree of Mid-Word Cæsura) of my recent paper “The Mid-Word Cæsura in the Rgveda: 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 aghanábháratí kṣirám agne* ‘He who takes away the milk of the cow, O Agni,’ and RV 5.32.9b *éko dháná bhárate ápratī́tah* ‘He alone carries the prizes, unchallenged.’

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 itiṁ ny amīṁiṣad 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 RV 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: pātanti. Hard pressed, we could even consider the possibility that yā before the cæsura has swallowed the preposition ā—/ā — either to be read with the following participle as āpātanti, or to be taken as standing ‘in tmesis’ with the injunctive as ā ...

57 For āp yā in the sense of āp yā yōṣā / yōṣanā ‘water-woman’ or ‘nymph’ and referring to an Apsaras, see also RV 10.10.4c gandharvō apṣy āp yā ca yōṣā ‘the Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman’ and RV 10.11.2a rápad gandharvīr āp yā ca yōṣaṇā ‘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 RV 5.85.2 vanēṣu v y antārikṣam tatāna vājām ārvatsu pāya usriyāṣu / hṛṣā krātuṁ vārūṇo aps v agnim divī sāryam adadhāt sōmam ādrau.

Cf. also RV 10.121.7ab āpo ha yād bhātīr viśvam āyan gārbham dādhānā janāyantīr agnim ‘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 departure — an undesirable result, if you ask me.

A few stanzas earlier, Urvaśī found herself serving as target of even three precipitated similes59 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:

\[
\text{iśur ná śriyā iśudhér asanā goṣāḥ śatasā ná rámhiḥ}
\]

[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 uşás- ‘dawn’ in 2b or, as we may add, váta- ‘wind’ in 2d.

The fact, however, that the king uses the nouns iśu- ‘arrow,’ asanā- ‘missile,’ and rámihi- ‘race’ — all three of which significantly happen to be feminines,62 and thus are of the same fair gender as uşás- ‘dawn’ in 2b and

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


62 Among the eleven occurrences of iśu- [m./f.] in the Rigveda, only one is clearly masculine, namely, iśus at 8.77.7 satābrahman āḥ uṣus tāva sahasraparṇa ēkā īt / ydṁ indra cakṛṣe yūjam, where three adjectives and a pronoun agree to proclaim in unison the ex-
vidyūt- ‘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, 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, 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, 517, imagined that a finite verb form may have been lost before asanā, to wit, a rather implausible *asakta.


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 ...”


66 The 3rd person middle of the root-(and not yet s-)aorist of saj / sañj occurs only once in the RV, in a verse that contains also a form of iṣudhī- ‘quiver,’ namely, at 1.33.3a ni sārvasaṇa iṣudhīṁr asakta “Panoplied, he has hung his quivers into [position] down [his back].” In this tristubh line, the accusative plural iṣudhīn occupies exactly the same metrical position after a late cæsura as the ablative/genitive singular iṣudhēs 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 quiver 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:

\[
iṣur nā śriyā iṣudhēr [asānā]
\]

[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 (*asānā ≈ asanā) 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 other metrically fitting verbal adjectives, such as prāsūtā\(^70\) or vīśṛṣṭā.\(^71\) But Pischel's *asānā 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 triśṭubh 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 muṣṭāmuṣṭi. 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 RV, we find only one form of the aorist of root as (āsyati) ‘to throw, to shoot,’ viz. the root-aorist injunctive asan at 4.311a rtēna ājdrīm v.y āsan bhidāntah ‘With truth they (the Aṅgiras) throw the rock asunder, splitting it [into two]’ — against 24 forms of the class IV present āsyā- , and two of the perfect, i. e. parāsa at 4.18.8a and v.y āṣat 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 v.yāstāh at 1.32.7d.


\(^70\) See, for example, RV 6.75.11b patati prāsūtā ‘it (the arrow) flies sent forth.’

\(^71\) See, for instance, ŚŚ 2.3.6d ārād vīśṛṣṭā iṣavah patantu rakṣāsām “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 tri-syllabic *asānā 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, but, rather, because *asānā qualifying īṣuḥ — in parallel to goṣāḥ qualifying asanā, and to śatasāh qualifying rāmhiḥ — may have been dropped on purpose by the poet himself for the very good reason that adjective *asānā is almost identical in form with the following substantive asanā, 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.

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, īṣur *asānā, 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: unshot, 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.

Mental speed is required in order to catch up with the meaning the poet had in mind 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-

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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 literal reading, and nothing less than spirited understanding are required if we wish to catch up with that poetical surplus.

74 purástād vái prajñā purástān manojavéh (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 RV 10.71.7ab aksanvántah kārnavantah sākhāyo manojaṆeyā ásamā babhāvuh ‘[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 īṣuḥ, but also more-than-arrow-swift disappearance of evasive Urvaśī is pictorially conveyed by the absence of the adjective *asānā.

**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 triśūbha stanzas of the 10th maṇḍala, namely, at RV 10.10.11–12 and 10.121.7. The aberrant verses found in these contexts are clearly meant to be triśūbha 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 RV 10.10.11cd (= ŚS 18.1.12cd) and RV 10.10.12ab (= ŚS 18.1.14ab):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kāmamūtā & bah}_a^b \ v \ etād \ rapāmi} \\
\text{tan}_a^b \ vā \ me & \ tan}_a^b \ vām \ sām \ pipṛgdhi} \\
\text{nā \ vā \ u \ te & \ tan}_a^b \ vā \ tan}_a^b \ vām \ sām \ papṛcyām} \\
\text{pāpām \ āhur \ yāḥ \ svāsāraṇ \ nigāchāt}
\end{align*}
\]

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 triśūbha line, though of a rare type. If

\(^{77}\) Literally, bahū ... 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 bahū is used adverbially in three RV passages: (1) at 2.24.4d bahū sākāṁ sīṣeṣvar ūtsam udrīnam, (2) at 10.10.11c kāmamūtā bahya etād rapāmi, and (3) at 10.34.13bvītē ramaṣva bahū māṇyamañāḥ. 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.’ — bahū is an adjective, not an adverb, and functions as a predicate qualifying vittām, the implied object of ‘thinking.’ Similarly, bahū in the first sentence may qualify an unexpressed udatām (RV 8x) suggested by udrīn- (RV 7x) — and by ūtsa- (RV 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 bahū in an adverbial sense.

\(^{78}\) The demonstrative pronoun etād 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 etād in verse 2a nā te sākhā sakhīyam vaṣṭya etāt ‘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 body’), 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 etād at 3ab uśānti ghā té amṛṭiṣa etād ēkaṣyā cit tyajāsam márasya ‘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 caesura 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 “tanvā tanvām” against the overwhelming practice of the Rgveda itself: Out of a total number of 153 occurrences of case-forms in tanv-, all but four are to be read as tanv-. The extremely rare sound sequence tanv- is warranted by the metre only in the following exceptional cases: [1] tanvām in one gāyatrī line, at 8.76.12c indrāt pāri tanvām mame, and [2] tanvās in three triśūbha pādas: [a] at 1.162.20b mā svadhītis tanvā ā tiṣṭhipat te, [b] at 10.51.2bvyō me tanvō bahudhā paryāpaṣyat, and [c] at 10.51.4c tāsya me tanvō bahudhā nīviṣṭāḥ. 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 caesura. 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 tristubh line by simply reading: *ná vá u te tan₄vā sám paprcyām*, 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 vá 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 tanvām || tanūā.”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. -yām (optative),83 but also the tense: piprc- (present) vs. paprc- (perfect).84

be noticed that in our hymn, RV 10.10, there occur no less than four indisputably trisyllabic case-forms of tan₄v- before line 12a: three times tan₄vām at 3d, 7c, 11d, and once tan₄vā at 11d.

Arnold’s “perhaps,” which expresses possibility, seems to detract something from the necessity of emendation as it is alleged with “requires.”


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

83 The present-stem piprc- is attested once again in the plural form piprkta at RV 3.54.21b mādhwā devā ōṣadhiḥ sám piprkta (‘Do mix, you heavenly ones, the herbs with honey’), whereas another four occurrences of the perfect-stem paprc- can be counted in the RV: paprcaṃsas at 1.141.6b, paprcaṣi at 1.141.11b, paprcayat at 4.24.5c, and paprcaṃsya at 9.74.9a.

Our poet may have had very good reasons for substituting piprc- with paprc-. While any wished-for action of ‘mixing’ expressed in the present optative *piprcyām* would refer to a real possibility, the same action, if expressed in the perfect optative paprcyām, 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 paprcyām, by preluding all five phonemes of the immediately following adjective pāpāṃ, 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
—and that u is not a redundant little particle, nor solely a sentence connective, but marks opposition, here as in so many other contexts, 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 Yami’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 ō (āu) cīt sākhāyam sakḥyā vavṛtyām [Yami, 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 brhān mitrāsyā vāruṇasya dhāma kād u brava āhano vīc yā nṛṇ [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 anyām ā śu tvām yam y anyā u tvām pārī svajāte lībujeva vrksām ‘You, O Yami, [will] tightly [embrace] another [partner than me] — and, in return, another will [tightly] embrace you — as a creeper (lībujā- f.) [embraces] a tree (vrksā- m.).’

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

My argument would run quite differently: Since ná vā 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 RV 2.33.10d ná vā ñīyyo rud, ra tvād asti and at RV 10.146.5a ná vā aranyānir hanti, whereas ná vā u stands before a consonant in five out of six occurrences? (The only exception is RV 1.162.21a ná vā u etdā mriyase nā riṣyasi ‘[Although dissected] in this [sacrificial] way, you do, however, not die, nor do you come to harm [O horse].’

73
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 vá 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 willfully to reduce the poetic quality of our poem, if the anagrammatic variation of tanuvā were to be destroyed by deleting half of the sequence navāut, 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 tanuvām, the second and seemingly redundant anapest 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
tanuvām & \quad tanuvām \ sām \ pipṛgdhi \\
nāvāu & \quad tanuvām
\end{align*}
\]

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 tanuvām 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[istubh] 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?
“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 triśṭuḥ 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 Samhitās. It is the triśṭuḥ RV 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

\[
\text{ápo ha yád brhatír víśvam áyan} \\
gárbham dádhānā janáyantír agním \\
táto devánāṁ sám avartatásur ékaḥ \\
kásmai deváya haviśā vidhema
\]

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 mahatír for yád brhatír in pāda a, TS reads dáksam for gárbham in b, MS=KS=TS have nir 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 áyan — or, rather, ā-áyan, 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 coming expressed in the subordinate yád-clause logically precedes that of forming (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, then the existence of the gods formed from that as the only one. To which God could we give a sufficient share with our oblation?

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 RV (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.


The same compounded finite verb-form sám avartata occurs also in the first distich of this hymn: RV 10.121.1b hiranyagarbhá sám avartatāgre bhūtasya jātāḥ pātir 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 gārbha- ‘embryo,’ the second member — notice the compositional shift of accent to the suffix! — in the karmadhāraya hiranya-garbhā -.

Apart from the two occurrences in our hymn, sám avartata is further attested only in two other cosmogenic contexts, at RV 10.90.14b šīrño dyāuh sám avartata ‘From the head [of pūrṣa-, the giant primordial man] the sky formed’ and at RV 10.129.4a kāmas tād āgre sám avartatādhi ‘In the beginning, Desire formed upon that [viz. upon the Germ (ābhū) which had been born (ajāyata) as the only one (ékam) by the power of Heat (tāpasas ... mahinā); cf. 3cd].’

The anaphoric demonstrative tātas corresponds to the conjunction (and relative pronoun) yād, but it may also refer back to viśvaṃ / gārbḥam / agnīm. 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, dehāli-dīpa-nyāyena.

For the meaning ‘could’ of the optative in interrogative sentences, see Delbrück, Alttürkische Syntax, 1968 (= 1976), 336 f. § 190: Der Optativ in Fragesätzen; esp. 336: RV 10.121.1d “Welchem Gott könnten wir mit Opfer dienen.”

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: RV 10.121.1d “Welchem Gott sollen wir durch Opfergeüß 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: RV 10.121.1d “wer ist der Gott, den wir mit Opferguß zufriedenstellen könnten.”

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 triśṭubh 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 Samhitā that does not read ékah at the end of line c — remarks, with respect to the reading of RV, VS, TS [and KS101]: “The athetesis of the hypermetric ékah, 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 metri caussā, while it remained untouched in the other Samhitās, only shows that as early as in the Vedic age well-intentioned Verschlümm-besserungen 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].


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

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 Sanskrit’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 his 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 reason 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 RV 10.121.7c: ‘the existence of the gods then formed from that [Fire] as the only one.’ 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 devānām āsus ‘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 asmākam 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 ‘litteral’ 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 ćkas outside the line, the unique conspicuousness of this word, faithfully reflects, with mirror-like precision, its literal meaning.

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Conspicuous Absence

A New Case of Intended Metrical Irregularity: The Catalectic Line RV 10.129.7b

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

iyám vīśṭir yáta āabhůva
yádi vā dadhē yádi vā ná
yó asyādhyakṣaḥ paramē 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 Rgveda—in the metrically defective triṣṭubh lines 10.10.13a bató batāśi yama .... and 10.95.3a īṣur ná śriyá īṣudhér ...—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, Bre- men: 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 RV passages where ādhy-akṣa- m. occurs, it always refers to Agni: 1. at 8.43.24 viśāṁ rājānam ādbhutam ādhyakṣam dhārmanāṁ imāṁ ēgaṁ ēle sā 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 āgnaṁ devā
In this stanza, pāda b is as undoubtedly a triśṭubh line as almost all the other verses of this hymn, but it is defective by two syllables. Oldenberg, Prolegomena⁴ 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 triśṭubh line as metrical regularity would require, made Grassmann, Wörterbuch⁵ 1089, s.v. yādi 10, suggest the reading “yādi vā (dadhé) nā.” Oldenberg, Prolegomena 85, took exception to this reading, as it would result in a word order that is said not to occur in the RV.

More than two decades later, Oldenberg, Noten II⁶ 347, realized that he had unjustly rejected Grassmann’s suggestion to read dadhé nā for the alleged reason, because this sequence—finite verb form with the negative particle following it—does occur in the RV, namely, for example, at 4.13.5ab anāyato anibaddhah kathdyāṁ nyāṁ uttānō śva padyate nā ‘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—yādi vā nā … / yādi vā nā vēda ll—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 yādi vā nā dadhé, “against which reading the shortness of the last-but-one syllable constitutes no decisive objection”, since a similar sequence

ajanayann ajuryāṁ / ... yaksāsyāḍhyaśaṇ ṣaśām brhāntam ‘The gods created Agni [Vaiśvānara], as an unaging, powerful, and elevated overseer of [their] secret miracle,’ and 3. at 10.128.1d trāyāḍhyaśaṇa pṛṭāṇ ājayema ‘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, āḍhyaśaṇa- refers to Agni, namely, the heavenly Fire, to Fire in its celestial form: the Sun.


of words occurs as cadence in the triṣṭubh line RV 1.103.4d yād dha sūnūḥ śrāvase nāma dadhē.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 ēṣi, 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 dadhē is only apparent. We are now in a better position than Oldenberg in order to know that the historical preform of dadhē has to be posited as *dadHāi, 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.

8 Or is the Vedic poet and sūkta-kārā- perhaps to be considered a precursor of the parsimonious sūtra-kārā-, 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 \( yādi \ vā nā \) “possibly a metrical pause expressive of doubt may have been intended.”

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.

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.

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


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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.


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 (ekām) and ALL (vīṣvam) 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: RV 10.129.1a nāsad āsīn nó sād āsīt tadānīm. And this ambiguous statement about IT was interpreted by the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa as referring to none other than mānas “das Denken”. Cf. SB 10.5.3.1 āṣid āṁsāṁ vā idāṁ āgre nēvāṁtī tād dha tāṁ māṁ evāṁ ‘In the beginning, this [ALL] seemed to be real, and it seemed not to be real. That (this ALL) was then nothing but MIND.’

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].’


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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 RV 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* (‘patientive’) sense, as it has been understood by the following large group of scholars:


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16 Cf. also J. Gonda, *The Medium in the Rgveda.* (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.*”


11. Walter Harding Maurer, “A Re-examination of Ṛgveda X.129, the Näsadiya Hymn.” The Journal of Indo-European Studies, Volume 3, Number 3, 1975: 233: “whether it [this world] was made or whether 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.”


17. Joel P. Brereton, “Edifying Puzzlement: Ṛgveda 10.129 and the Uses of Enigma.” Journal of the American Oriental Society, Volume 119, 1999: 258: “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” (dadhē) [or not].”


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.”

What is mentioned as ‘subject’ in line a is iyām víśṛṣṭih, and it would seem more natural to refer the verbal action of dhā to ‘this emission’ as its object or kārman-, rather than to the supreme observer, to him yó asyāḍhyakṣah paramē vṝyōman ‘who is of this [universe] the surveyor in the highest heaven.’

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.

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

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18 Cf. also Elizarenkova, Rigveda, 1999: 526, in a note on RV 10.129.7b: “Как отмечает Рену, медийная 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 ṝṣya- refers to Agni in all the three other RV 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, sūryasya cākṣus (at RV 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 ṝṣya- 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 dadhē, but, fearing to tread, by only mentally supplying an unpronounced word, the noun expressive of the agent of the action indicated by the passive dadhē, 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 dhātrā ‘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 dadhē, since he rendered this verb-form as an active “gemacht hat.”

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

2. Maurer, JIES 3, 1973: 233 with fn. 42, in view of the fact that “no subject of dadhē is expressed” and that “dadhē may be translated ‘(it) was made’ or ‘(he) made (it)’”, carefully considered: “it may be that the object of dadhē (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 [?]”

Now, after deciding that the instrumental *dhātrā, expressing the agent of the action indicated by the middle dadhē, 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 *dhātā supposed to be the better alternative

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21 See Karl F. Geldner, Kommentar, 1909: 214: “Es fehlen zwei Silben, wohl das eigentliche Objekt zu dadhē.”

22 Because of the sandhi in asyādhyakṣab, it is impossible to decide with certainty whether the pronoun is an elliptically used deictic adjectival asyā “of this [universe]” as in pāda 6c arvāg devā asyā visārjanena, 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 dadhē, “if taken as a middle without passive sense,” is the metrically fitting nominative *dhātā. Has this word been “deliberately suppressed” by the scholar in imitation of the poet?
by Maurer, or a second dadhē 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’, ā 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 ‘creator’—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 dadhē, 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 intentionally? May he be said to have reached so high a degree of conscious naïveté as to suffer an accident, however casual, on purpose? What might have made him a good actor would have made him a poor poet.

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 ādeva- and atheist in the eyes of those who firmly believed in a personal creator god.

By leaving out the dhātār’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 Rgveda*

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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 “lithe 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 “flimsy and miserable”, yet another, taken from stanza six of the same poem2 — and representing a different, more sophisticated type — is chortle, a perfect cross of chuckle × 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.

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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 [out]. 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 ([ou] :: [ɔ]) — and yet, the result of their blending, which is smog, can be called a portmanteau in the true Carrollian 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 illusion 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 Rgveda 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
If I may briefly hark back to that discussion, I would summarize it thus: The unique nonce form cáništ that occurring at RV 8.74.11 yām tvā gopávano girá cáništad agne angiráḥ / sā pāvaka śrūdhī 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 cáni ‘shall please’ and 2. of the well-attested superlative cáništ ‘most pleasing’ (RV 7x) into one emphatically meaningful word: cáništat ‘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 cayīt at RV 6.67.8d yuvāṃ dāśūse ví cayīt āṁhaḥ ‘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 RV 4.20.9c purī dāśūse vícayīttho āṁhaḥ ‘For the worshipper, he (Indra) best removes much distress’, and it may even depend on that other verse; all the more so since ví cayīt occupies exactly the same metrical position as the superlative vícayītas. The prosodic pressure on the second syllable after the cæsura requiring it to be light is so strong that an expected *ví caiśat — with its heavy caiś — 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 cayīt ‘eine auf dem Superl[ativ] vícayītha- beruhende Kunstbildung’, and referred to Hoffmann, MSS 22,
1957, 131, 9 who had interpreted caviṣṭam as an “Unform” that adapts itself to other verb forms — regular 2nd dual s-aorist injunctives or imperatives, he meant to say, of set-roots such as avि (aviṣṭam [RV 5x], aviṣṭam [RV 4x]), kanि (kaniṣṭam [RV 1x: 7.70.4a]), kramि (kramiṣṭam [RV 1x: 1.182.3c]), vadhि (vadhhiṣṭam [RV 1x: 4.41.4b]), or śnathि (śnathiṣṭam [RV 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 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 caiṣṭam is removed from the norm by just one step. Synchronously, 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

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 uniform, or else it is an unform.
12 See the 2nd dual s-aorist imperative of aniṭ-root yav/yu ‘separate’, which occurs 6 times in 2 different verses of the RV, namely, at 8.86.1d = 2d = 3d = 4d = 5d mā no ví yaubat sauk yā mūmōcatam “Löset nicht unsere Freundschaft! Spannet aus!” (Geldner, II 411) and at 10.85.42a ihāivā stam mā 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 vá uvāca šāṅkhā sauvyā putram acniniṃ cikivāṃsam acair agnīṃ ity acaišm hiṣṭi ‘This [is what] Šāṅkha Kausya 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 RV: ajaiṣam (10.159.6a), ājais (8.40.11e), ajiṣ (9.72.5c), ājaiṣma (8.47.18a = 10.164.5a).

An injunctive of this root is attested at ŚŚ 4.38.3f mā no jaiṣur idāṃ dhānam ‘Let them (the other gamblers) not win this stake of ours’.
pronounced as [aï]),\textsuperscript{13} through a process that may be designated with the technical term \textit{diaeresis}.\textsuperscript{14}

Nor can it be denied that this single deviating step is taken in the direction of the superlative \textit{-cāyīthā-}. However, no more digressive steps are taken. The poet’s poetical \textit{démarche} stops short in the middle of the suffix \textit{-iṣṭha-}. Had he gone any further, getting even closer to the form of the superlative, and venturing an aspirated \textit{*cāyītham}, he would have run the risk of losing the celestial addressees, in spite of his pronounced aspiration to attract their attention. Mitra and Varuṇa might not have been able to guess, for all their divinatory power, that \textit{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 \textit{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 too arrogant — request expressed in the verbal compound \textit{vī cāyītham},\textsuperscript{15} Mitra and Varuṇa right away knew that it was \textit{they} who were asked to join forces in clearing away distress \textit{to the best of their divine ability}.

Narten’s qualification, by the way, of \textit{vī cāyītham} 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 \textit{brahmāṇ-}, after all, is an \textit{artist} specialized in poetic \textit{word formation}. On occasion, his activity may include conscious acts of \textit{word deformation} as well.

\textsuperscript{13} For a nice parallel to \textit{cāyītham} ← \textit{*cāiṣṭam}, see the comparable case of TS = TB \textit{ajāyit} ← \textit{ajait} referred to in the following footnote.

\textsuperscript{14} The same kind of synchronic \textit{dissociation} and \textit{resyllabification} of the diphthong \textit{-ai-} is attested in the Vājapeya formula cited at TS 1.7.8.1c (= TB 1.3.6.3) \textit{iṇḍram vājaṁ jāpayat[a ṭa [į]ndro vājam ajayit} ‘Make Indra win the prize. Indra has won the prize’. Here, trisyllabic \textit{ajayit} replaced disyllabic \textit{ajait}, which in turn was substituted for the 3rd person singular \textit{ajais} [RV 2x] from \textit{*ajaist} ‘has won’.

As regards the more regular \textit{ajait}, see RVKh 5.7.2.1a, MS 4.13.4:203.5, KS 16.21:244.7, TB 3.6.5.1 etc.: \textit{ājaid āgnir āsanad vājam} “Agni has won; he has gained the prize”.

\textsuperscript{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 RV: 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 =) \(^{18}\) 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 flüszie” (Rigveda II 20 § 458), apparently intending with this neuter noun not just any fluid or liquid, but the *soma*-juice 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 RV 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


\(^{17}\) 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.


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

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.

1. Some twenty years later, Geldner, Der Rigveda I, 1923, 73, translated the first occurrence of the word at RV 1.62.5ab grñānō áṇgirobhīr dasma vi var uṣāsā sūr, yeṇa góbhir ándha as “Von den Áṅgiras’ besungen hast du Meister das Dunkel aufgedeckt samt der Morgenröte, der Sonne, den Rindern”.

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 Áṅgiras’ gepriesen ...”), but also a new note on 5b, suggesting an alternative rendering: “Oder: ‘er deckte den Somatrank samt der Uṣas, dem Sūrya, den Kühlen auf’.”

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 Compare Alfred Ludwig, Der Rigveda II, 1876, 20 § 458: “besungen von den Áṅgiras, o wundertäter, decktest du mit der Uṣas, der Sonne[,] den rindern zugleich das flüssige 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. Sichere Belege aus Yajustexten bei Geldner, Glossar”.26

2. Left to ourselves, we would confidently render the second Rgveda passage that was thought to contain ándhas ‘darkness’, namely, RV 1.94.7a-c yó viśvátaḥ suprátikaḥ sadjñán āsī dūrē cit sán tālīd ivāti rocase / rātryās 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, [to appear] almost [as close as] a flash of lightning. You see, O Heavenly [Fire], even across the night’s darkness’.28

These are only five Rgvedic instances for the co-occurrence of the verbal compound vī-var ‘disclose, uncover’ with words for ‘light’ and (or) ‘darkness’: 1.68.1b sthātās carātham aktūn v.y ūrṇot, 1.91.22d tvāṃ jyōtiśā vī támo vavartha, 1.92.4cd jyōtir viśmasmai bhūvanāya kṛṇvātī gāvo nā vrajām v.y uṣā āvar támah, 4.52.6b v.y āvar jyōtiśā tāmah, 5.31.3d vī jyōtiśā saṃvavṛtvāt támo vah.

A few further examples could be added, for instance: 4.51.2cd v.y ū vrajāsyā támaso d, vār[ā uj]čhāntir avraṇ chūcayaḥ pāvakāḥ or, with the near-synonymous preposition āpa in place of vī: 2.11.18c āpavṛṇor jyōtir ār, yāya and 10.73.11c āpa dhvāntām ūrṇuhi pūrdhi cāksuḥ.


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 exactly how certain they are in their respective contexts.

27 For the predominantly adversative 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.


25 These are only five Rgvedic instances for the co-occurrence of the verbal compound vī-var ‘disclose, uncover’ with words for ‘light’ and (or) ‘darkness’: 1.68.1b sthātās carātham aktūn v.y ūrṇot, 1.91.22d tvāṃ jyōtiśā vī támo vavartha, 1.92.4cd jyōtir viśmasmai bhūvanāya kṛṇvātī gāvo nā vrajām v.y uṣā āvar támah, 4.52.6b v.y āvar jyōtiśā tāmah, 5.31.3d vī jyōtiśā saṃvavṛtvāt támo vah.
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 RV 1.50.10 úd vayām támasas pári jyótiṣ páśyanta úttaram / devāṁ devatrá sūr_yam ágmaná jyótiṭ urttamám ‘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 RV 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 RV 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 n, v ásya smṛiśaṃ jagnvān
agnér ánikaṃ vārṇasya māmsi
s, vār yān áśmān adhipā u ándho
ābhī mā vápur drśâyé ninīyāt

Now that I have come to see him all at once,
I consider the face of Fire to be that of Varuṇa.

29 Notice the powerful climactic gradation in this stanza: út ... úttaram ... uttamám ‘up ... upper ... uppermost’ reflecting the gradual rise of Sun’s Light from behind the horizon to its highest station in the sky and among the heavenly. In these lines, an uplifting surge can be felt which seems to carry beyond the effects of mere rhetoric. And that rising motion might even move us to exclaim: ... but also on the heights of our sunlit hearts!

30 Heinrich Lüders, Varuṇa. Aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben von Ludwig Alsdorf. I. Varuṇa und die Wasser. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951. Taken literally, the paraphrastic expression chosen by Lüders — namely, “die trübe Flut der Nacht” — happens to harmonize with the ambiguous meaning of ándhas- n. in the Saṅhitā passages MS 4.6.7:89.17-8 presently to be discussed. See below, Section B.1.
When Sun was in the rock and yet master over darkness, may he have led me to the sight of his wonderful form.

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

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) und 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, und 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 trotzdem 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, and darkness is master, may he lead me out to see (his) wondrous (appearance)”.

33 See Louis Renou, EVP V, 1959, 71, for the rendering of RV 7.88.2cd: “Le soleil qui est dans la roche et 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 Samhitās, 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 vā idām āsīd ávāyāvṛttam áhar āsīn nā rátris tād devā ṛtugrahāīr vyāvartayan yād ṛtugrahā grhyānte 'horātrāvai r̥yāvṛttyai ‘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 rātri- 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 chiaroscuro.38

36 Actually, it is also attested in a third Saṃhitā, one that has close ties with the second (KS), namely, the Kapiṣṭhalā-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 rātri-/rātri-. 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 etam setuṃ tīrtvāpi naktam āhar evābhīnispādyate (“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 … Denn neutral-es Geschlecht darf man für eine indische Benennung der Nacht getrost als Ungeheuerlichkeit bezeichnen …”.

38 Compare the aforementioned rendering of ándhas- at RV 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 νοκτὸς ἀμολύγῳ (Ilias 4x, Odyssea 1x, Hymni 1x),\(^{39}\) recently treated by L. Melazzo.\(^{40}\)

2. The second Samhitā passage, KS 7.6:67.13-4 (= KPS 5.5:64.1-2), on the other hand, reads: *ahar vai devānām āsīd rātry asurāṇām te devās tamaso ’ndhaso mṛtyo rātryā abhyāplavamānād abibhayuh* ‘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 — *mṛtyu-* m. ‘death’ and *rātrī-* f. ‘night’ — obviously are.

3. Whether *ándhas*- in the somewhat unreliable Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, namely, at TĀ 1.11.3 ápāgihata savitā ṛbhiṁ / sārvān divō *ándhasah* can mean ‘darkness’ seems very doubtful at first glance. Geldner, Vedische Studien III, 1901, 53 n. 3, does call the occurrence “unklar”.\(^{42}\)

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\(^{39}\) It would seem to me that Celan’s *der Frühe* on the one hand and Homer’s νοκτὸς on the other represent two different kinds of genitive, and that only the first is a *genetivus identitatis*.


\(^{41}\) 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 the third gender 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 *mṛtyu-* m. ‘death’ and *rātrī-* f. ‘night’ are thus effectively neutralized.

\(^{42}\) In their metrically quite regular environment, the apparently irregular verses of this distich could easily be mended to the two octosyllabic lines ápāgihata savitā / ṛbhiṁ sārvān divō *‘ndhasah*, with a *na-vipulā* sequence of syllables (ο ω ο) in the second half of the first, and an expected iambic cadence (ο ο ο) in the second páda.
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 āndhas-, which occurs in the equivocal form of āndhasas, 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 trbhi- m. may have been abstracted from an s-less stṛbhis (RV 8x), the instrumental plural of stār-/stṛ-, and that therefore it should be taken to mean ‘star’ — not ‘ray’, as the TĀ commentators thought, who glossed trbhin with raśmīn — 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 āndhas 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.

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 trbhi-, occurring at TĀ 1.11.3 and allegedly meaning ‘ray’, that it “looks like a creation based on a misunderstood instrumental plural (*tṛbhīsa = RV stṛbhīs, which we can assume as a variant form since the s- of this word is movable)”.


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. RV 7.100.6c mā vārpo asmād āpa gūha etād ‘Do not hide [any more] that form [of yours] from us’, 2. RV 10.17.2a āpāgūhann amṛṭām mārti yebhyā ‘They (the gods) hid the immortal [woman] from the mortals’, and 3. SS 19.56.2cd (= PS 3.8.2cd) tātāh svapnedām ādh i y ebhūvītha bhīṣāghbhīyo rūpām apagūhamānāh ‘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-‘Traumdeutung’ 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: nāktam tāny abhavan drśē ‘During the night,\(^{46}\) they had been visible’.\(^ {47}\)

With the neuter pronoun tāni either the night’s heavenly luminaries, jyōtiṁśi, or the constellations, nākṣatṛāṇi, may be intended. Although the gender of tāni does not agree, I should think that, nevertheless, the author means the masculine (or feminine?) stars, *stāras.\(^ {48}\)

**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 RV 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*.\(^ {49}\)

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\(^{46}\) The ‘adverb’ nāktam, 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, nāktam has to be understood in its earlier *extensive* meaning — or else, in the sense of Pāṇini’s *atyanta-samyoga* (Aṣṭādhyāyī 2.3.5) “ununterbrochene Fortdauer” (Otto Böhtlingk, Pāṇini’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 tṛbhi- 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 ṛṣi, 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.\textsuperscript{50}

There cannot be any doubt, I should think, as to the two words that went into the making of this second āndha- n., different not in form but in meaning from āndha- n. ‘Soma’. They must have been the adjective andhá- ‘blind’\textsuperscript{51} and the neuter noun tāmas- ‘darkness’.\textsuperscript{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 tāmas-, in a manner that can be formulated thus:

\textsuperscript{50} For three extreme metrical examples of Vasiṣṭha’s inventiveness, see RV 7.88.6c mā te ēnasvanto yaksīn bhujema, discussed in section I. 2. (“Second Degree of MWC”), and RV 7.20.6a nā cīt sā bhirṣate jāno nā reṣan as well as RV 7.88.3d prá preṇkhā tākhayāvahai śubhē kām, discussed in section II. 2. (“Fourth Degree of MWC”) of my paper “The Mid-Word Cæsura in the Rgveda: 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.

\textsuperscript{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’.

\textsuperscript{52} The adjective andhá- (RV 19x) as epithet of tāmas- (RV 113x) occurs in four places of the RV, at 1.100.8c andhē ... tāmasi, 4.16.4c (= ŚŚ 20.77.4c) andhā tāmāns, and 10.89.15c = 10.103.12d (= VS 17.44d) andhēna ... tāmasā, as well as in several new passages of the AV: at ŚŚ 9.2.10b (= PS 16.76.9b) andhā tāmāns, at ŚŚ 18.3.3c (= TĀ 6.12.1c) andhēna ... tāmasā, and at PS 10.12.12b = 15.19.4b andhēna tāmasā.

Cf. also VS 40.3b (= Īśopaniṣad 3b) = SB 14.7.2.14b (= BĀUM 4.2.14b = BĀUK 4.4.11b) andhēna tāmasā, VS 40.9a = 12a (= Īśopaniṣad 9a = 12a) = SB 14.7.2.13a (= BĀUM 4.2.13a = BĀUK 4.4.10a) andhāṁ tāmaḥ, and andhē tāmasi in MS 1.6.6:96.2, SB 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-ā-, 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/-ā/- after tamas-; see Aṣṭādhyāyī 5.4.79 ava-sam-andhebhyaś tamasah [75 aC 68 samāsāntāḥ].

Although not a single member of this little -tamas-ā- group-of-three thus provided for by the late-Vedic grammarian appears to be attested in any extant Vedic text, the oxytone ā-compounds *ava-tamas-ā-, *sam-tamas-ā-, and *andha-tamas-ā- 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.
\[ \text{andhá} \times \text{támas} = \text{ándhas} \]

The one meaning that resulted from the crafty combination of the two words was ‘blind=darkness’ (‘blind darkness’), 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* — ‘blarkness’.

**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 Sāyāna’s (or else, Mādhava’s) commentary on two RV passages, 1.62.5b and 1.94.7c. There, the neuter ándhas is glossed with andhakáram ‘darkness’ (literally, ‘that which makes blind’).

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.\(^5^4\) 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 RV (4x), SS (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 noises indistinguishably commingled in the voice 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 (*anudáta a* [1], *udáta 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 word formation, 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- ‘finster, blind’ ”\(^56\) 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 “finster” which has been given for andhá- in addition to ‘blind’ 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- támás- 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 “finster”-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 ‘blind’ and ‘darkness’ — 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 ‘blind’ edge or that of ‘darkness’ doesn’t really matter — and to open both eyes, would see the discrepancy.

The suggestion made by Wackernagel & Debrunner, AiGr II 2, 229 §127b, that the abstract noun \( \text{ándhas} \) ‘darkness’ is a derivation (‘\( \text{Ableitung} \)’) from the adjective \( \text{andhá} \) ‘blind’, does not exactly make it easy for us to understand \( \text{ándhas} \) as a regular formation. For we do not seem to have any convincing parallels in Sanskrit 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 \( \text{krt} \)-suffix \(-á\) - should belong to the Caland Formenverband — until I was told by Brent Vine that this is precisely what recent research has revealed with respect to the ‘Caland system’ in Indo-European.  

A close Sanskrit parallel could perhaps be seen, as Alan Nussbaum kindly pointed out to me at the conference, in \( \text{dákṣas} \) ‘Geschick’ (RV 4x) vis-à-vis \( \text{dákṣa} \) ‘geschickt’ (RV 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 \( \text{andhá} \) ‘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, \( \text{dákṣa} \) is unmistakably used as a noun in the abstract sense of ‘Tüchtigkeit’ and the like. As a matter of fact, there are not even twenty places in the Rgveda where this word seems to have an adjectival meaning, and that smallish fraction amounts to no more than a meager fifth part of the total number of \( \text{dákṣa} \)-occurrences.  

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 Shaneism. 

What may be considered an extremely extended Caland system, which would include even root-nouns and \( \text{o} \)-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. \( \text{dákṣa} 2 \). m.: meanings \( \text{a} - \text{e} \). Apart from the use of the masculine noun \( \text{dákṣa} \) 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, 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 *dakṣrā- < *deksrō-, which he thought belonged — together with dákṣi- (as in Vedic dákṣiṇa- [RV 57x]) < *deksi- (as in Greek ἀξιτερός) — to the new-born, and by then (1897) already well-known, Caland system.

Although it just might be true that in the formation of dákṣa- and dákṣiṇa-two different roots are involved — *deks (or *dek$s) ‘to be able’ on the one hand, and *deks ‘to be dexterous (?)’ on the other — 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.

‘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 *dakṣā- ‘geschickt’ (which may, or may not, reflect an original *dakṣrā-), 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 2.I, 1953, 764-823. The chapter we are interested in here (“3. ἌΡΓΙΚΕΡΑΝΟΣ und Genossen”, 8-14 = 769-75) discusses Greek bahuvṛ hi compounds, such as ἀγγ-κέραννος, 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 δεξιτερός 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. DAKŠ 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. *deks ‘taugen, tüchtig sein’ prefers to posit only one unitary root for both Vedic dákṣiṇa- (cf. Av. daśīna-, Greek δεξιός, δεξιτερός ‘rechts’) and dákṣate ‘taugt, ist tüchtig’ (keeping Av. daxṣ- [< *deks or *dek$s] separate from that root).

64 The actual employment in the Rgveda 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 Rgveda (maháh 18x, mahásya 1x, mahé 6x, etc.), as against hundreds of occurrences of the original máh- (máhi 118x, mahám 25x, mahá 6x, mahé 89x, maháh 142x, etc.) — Wackernagel, AiGr III 251 § 138, remarks: “Ausweichungen in die Flexion nach dem bequemern Stamm mahá- sind v. [= rgvedisch] ziemlich häufig: NSg. m. maháh oft (für *maháh), LSg. mahé [RV 6x] (für *mahí), GSG. mahásya nur [RV] 1, 150, 1c [für maháh], GPL. mahánám [RV 5x] (für mahám [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.

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 dáksa:- the barytone noun dáksa- and an oxytone adjective *daksā- (↔ *dakṣrā- [?]), 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 Rgveda, the noun ended up being used five times more frequently than the adjective.

Of the older paradigm, nom.sg. *mahás and loc.sg. *mahí are thought not to have survived into Vedic. *mahás, however, may be lurking under some of the 80 mahán instances that are attested in the Rgveda. They include 47 pre-vocalic occurrences of mahán (with nasalized [anánśika]ā), 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 mahánt-
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),
2. different intonation (ándhas- :: andhā-),
3. different function (abstract noun :: adjective),
4. different meaning (‘darkness’ :: ‘blind’).

By virtue of the last condition, the other aforementioned hypothetical candidate for comparison — 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 *‘blindness’ — which is exactly what it does not mean.71

67 Because of this first and apparently most important sine qua non, pairs like Greek μέγας (Ion. μέγας δόξα) ‘grandeur’ :: ἀγαθός < *μῆχρα-δέκα-ός ‘fort, puissant’ (cf. Georges-Jean Pinault, “Grec μέγας δόξα”. MSS 38, 1979, 165-70) or YAv. -drājha- (~ Ved. *drāghas-) ‘length’ :: dārajha- (~ Ved. dūrgā- [RV 33x, SS 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 udāta-intonation of the root-syllable that makes the presumably close and fitting pair dākṣas- ‘Geschick’ :: dākṣa- ‘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, dākṣa- is predominantly used in the same abstract sense as dākṣas-. 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 dākṣas- n. ‘Geschick’ :: dākṣa- ‘geschickt’.

71 The meaning ‘blindness’ is expressed in Vedic by two other nouns. Unlike ándhas-, these actually are derived from andhā-: the (i)ya-formations 1. andhiya- n., occurring twice in the Paippalāda-Sariniḥīṭa of the Atharvaveda, at PS 2.81.2a (andhiyam) and PS 7.15.6c (andhīya-t), and 2. ándhya- n., attested some time later, in the oldest Śrauta-Sūtras of the Black Yajurveda, at Baudhāyana ŚS 2.5:39.6 and Vādhwāla ŚS 15.9 (āndhyam) — not to mention the post-Vedic abstracts andhātā- 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 *andhā*- 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 *andhā*- ‘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 were 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 *two-in-one* and *one-in-two* — 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 *daylight* of grammatical analysis — with one eye alone, we do *not* see at the same time its poetical *nightside* 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*.\(^{76}\)

\(^{72}\) 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 *andhā*- 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 irregular — and certainly *un*(*re*)*productive* — 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 RV 7.88, the second stanza of which has been discussed in section **III. A. 3.** — who invented the portmanteau word *ándhas-* n. ‘darkness’.


\(^{75}\) A curious grammarian eager to know, ‘Is this poetical *nightside 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*** siriously help us to that *sidereal* clarity!
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.*

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.

* 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. *I.* the *hapax* nominative plural *tārās* < *stārās* (= YAv. *stāro*), which sadly fell into oblivion after a single meteoric apparition ‘in the sky’ at *RV* 8.55.2b *divī tāro nā rocante*, 2. the more fortunate derivative *tārkā*- f. (*ŚŚ* 4x [+]), which largely outlived, in Vedic and well beyond, its extinct ancestor *stār/-stī*-, and 3. the very curious newcomer *tṛbhi*- m., attested just once, at *ṬA* 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: *Zeitgeistin* — 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?

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 tfbhī- ‘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-Āranyakā (TĀ), where the controversial noun and potential portmanteau word āndhas- 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 tfbhī- 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 āpāgūhata savitā tfbhīn / sārvān divō āndhasaḥ — which could be regularized, as I have suggested above,4 to the two octosyllabic verses *āpāgūhata savitā / tfbhīn' sārvān divō 'ndhasaḥ* — the traditional meaning ‘rays’ for tfbhīn undeniably works, if we understand the whole sentence in the sense of ‘Savitār (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

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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 *ṭḥḥhi-* 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 [*ṭḥḥhḥi* =] *raśmnā* might have been conditioned by some vague sound-association of the *nirukta*-type that suggested the meaning ‘ray’ to them.\(^6\) But what homoeophonic 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 *ṭḥḥhi-* in sound, and not too dissonant from it in sense. That word is the astrological term *tribḥha-* (*tri-bh-ā-*) 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 (*tribḥaṁ māṣatrayaṁ 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 ṛkṣaṁ bhaṁ tārā tārakāpy udu vā striyām.\(^7\)

Although this noun is ultimately based on the Vedic root *bhā < PII *bhāH < PIE *bheH₂ “glänzen, leuchten, scheinen” (LIV 68 s.v.), short-voweled *bha-* n. is not entitled to be called a root-noun with the same right as *bhā*- 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 -ā-.\(^8\)

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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 (-)bhā- in compounds such as *bhā-tyākṣas- “lichtstark” (Geldner) (RV 1x); *abhī-bhā- f. ‘[feindlicher] Anschein’; “Erscheinung, Unglückszeichen” (Böhtlingk / Roth); “bösers Blick” (Geldner); “portent” (Whitney) (RV 1x, SS 6x); *pra-bhā- f. ‘Vorschein, helles Licht’ (VS 30.12 [+]); *vi-bhā- f. ‘weites Licht’ or ‘weithin leuchtend’ (RV 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 -ā- 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 Grhya-Sutras: at Āgniśeya-GS 2.5.3.21; Kauśitaka-GS 1.17.3, 2.7.8; Baudhāyana-GS 3.7.16; Śāṅkhāyana-GS 1.12.5, 2.11.9.

When Śāyana, Bhaṭṭācārya — or any possible predecessor — glossed, in their respective commentaries on TĀ 1.11.3, the masculine tṛbhī-, they may have associated it with the similar-sounding neutral noun tṛbha- ‘[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 tṛbhī- 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 tṛbhī-. As I have already mentioned above, “Portmanteau Words”, 101, “the unique i-stem tṛbhī- m. may have been abstracted from an s-less stṛbhīs (RV 8x), the instrumental plural of stār-istār-”. And that ingenious suggestion was made by Thomas Burrow.

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

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

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.

In order to be fully convincing, it would have been necessary for Burrow to find out where exactly this alleged misunderstanding of the instrumental stṛbhīs 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 stṛbhīs that could have been misunderstood in any such way.

And after the RV, this particular case-form is no longer incontestably attested. The only word that can still be considered a likely candidate is *stṛbhīś at RVKh 1.11.6a. However, this asterisked reading will perhaps prove an all-too-easy emendation for <stribhīs> as written in Scheftelowitz’s 1906 edition because, alternatively, the actually occurring stribhīś could be
For the s-less variant of stár-/lstʃ-, see the Vedic hapax nom. pl. tāras = *stāras\(^{11}\) in a Vālakhilya Dānastutī, at RV 8.55.2ab śatām śvetās uksāno divi tāro nā rocante ‘A hundred white steers shine like stars in the sky’.\(^{12}\)

Let us, therefore, resolutely acknowledge an odd nonce i-stem tṛbhi-.\(^{13}\) 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. tṛbhi.\(^{14}\) In apparent dependence on the TĀ commentators, who had glossed tṛbhīn with raśmīn ‘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 āndhasas 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’.\(^{15}\)

\(^{11}\) The Vedic *stāras had already become extinct, when their closest relatives, the YAv. st̪ro, 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.

\(^{13}\) Similarly, we have to accept an u-stem *apsu-, abstracted from compounds like apsu-kṣit- (RV 1x), apsu-jā- (RV 1x, ŚŚ 1x, VS 1x [+]), apsu-jit- (RV 8x), apsu-vāh- (SV 1x), apsu-śād- (RV 1x, ŚŚ 2x, VS 2x), apṣi-saṃśīta- (ŚŚ 1x) — where it still functions as the original locative apsū ‘in the waters’ — because of the adjective apsavā- (‘belonging [typically] to water’). For this word is clearly derived, by means of the svarita-suffix -yā- (the tit-suffix yat in Pāṇini’s grammatical system), from the secondary, obviously delocatival ‘neo-stem’ *apsu-.

Attestations of the yā-formation apsavā- 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, apsavā- qualifies 1. Varuṇa (divinized personification of ‘The Word’ or ‘True Speech’), 2. his [two] retributive nooses or snares (pāsau), and 3. the giant [water-]snake ajagārā- (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-gītha-līte ‘hide away [from]’ that co-occur with an ablative have been quoted and translated above, in their respective contexts: RV 7.100.6c, RV 10.17.2a; ŚŚ 19.56.2cd (= PS 3.8.2cd); see “Portmanteau Words”, 101 n. 45.
Against the nocturnal background of divó ándhasa ‘heaven’s darkness’ — which implies no fewer than two feminine nouns: both nákt- ‘night’ and dyú-ldiv- ‘[day]-sky’ — a masculine tēbhī- 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 *diéu- ‘heaven’ was called *ph2tér- ‘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 pitā dyāus (occurring, for example, at RV 1.89.4b, side by side with mātā prthīvi) or dyāus pitā (attested at 4.1.10d), and the vocatives dyāus pītar ‘O Father Heaven’ (characteristically co-occuring with prthīvi mātar ‘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 Rgveda, dyú-/div- ‘(day)-sky’ was subjected to a transgeneric change, and that it shifted, mainly under the influence of its cosmological partner prthīvi- 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 jihite (Wurzel hū)”, Historische Sprachforschung 120, 2007, [115-127] 117, takes exception to Geldner’s rendering of RV 5.32.9c imē ... devī “diese beiden Göttinnen (Himmel und Erde)”. Oettinger considers these feminine duals rather to be elliptical, and prefers to translate imē devī 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 prthīvi, ... als Himmel und Erde bekanntlich ein Paar bilden”.

But is it so certain that these two divine entities, Heaven and Earth, have to be heterogenic? 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 (uśás- 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 uśāso nāg jihite ‘Night withdraws from her Sister Dawn’.
preferredly certain \textit{vṛddhi} case-forms of it\textsuperscript{17} — and are clearly marked as feminines: pronouns (sā, iyām, imām [6x], amūm [2x]), numerals (tisrās [5x]), adjectives (mahī [3x], devī, brhatī, etc.), or attributive nouns (mātā and aditis at 10.63.3ab).

These are the verses in which they occur:

\begin{align*}
1.22.13a & \textit{mahī} \ dyāuḥ \ prthivī \ ca \ na[ḥ] \\
1.35.6a & \textit{tisrō} \ dyāvalḥ \ savitūr \ dvā \ upāsthā \\
1.35.7d & \textit{katamām} \ dyāṁ \ raśmīr \ asyā \ tatāna \\
1.50.11b & \textit{ārōhān} \ ñuttarām \ dvām \\
1.57.5c & \textit{ānu} \ te \ dyāur \ brhatī \ vṛīyām \ mama \\
2.3.2b & \textit{tisrō} \ divāḥ \ prātī \ mahnā \ sya\varṣiḥ \\
3.32.8c & \textit{dādhāra} \ yāḥ \ prthivīṁ \ dyām \ utēmām \\
3.34.8c & \textit{sasāna} \ yāḥ \ prthivīṁ \ dyām \ utēmām \\
4.53.5c & \textit{tisrō} \ divāḥ \ prthivīḥ \ tisrā \ invati \\
5.53.5c & \textit{vṛṣṭī} \ dyāvo \ yatrī \ iva \\
5.54.9b & \textit{pravātvati} \ dyāur \ bhavati \ pravādbyaḥ \\
5.63.6d & \textit{dyāṁ} \ varṣayatam \ arunām \ arepāsam \\
6.17.9a & \textit{ādha} \ dyāuś \ cit \ te \ ṣā \ nū \ vājād \\
7.87.5a & \textit{tisrō} \ dyāvo \ nīhitā \ antār \ asmin \\
7.101.4b & \textit{tisrō} \ dyāvas \ tredhā \ saśrūr \ āpāḥ \\
8.20.6ab & \textit{āmāya} \ vo \ maruto \ yātāve \ dya[u]r \ jīhīta \ ñuttarā \ bṛhāt \\
8.40.4d & \textit{iyām} \ dyāuḥ \ prthivī \ mah[ī] \\
8.51.8c & \textit{yaḍēd} \ āstambhīt prathāyann \ amūm \ dvām \\
9.96.3c & \textit{kṛṇvān} \ apō \ varṣayatam \ dyām \ utēmām \\
10.59.7b & \textit{pūnar} \ dyāur \ devī \ pūnar \ antārikṣam \\
10.63.3a & \textit{yeśhyo} \ mātā \ mādhumaṭ \ pīṅvate \ pāyāḥ \\
10.63.3b & \textit{pīyūṣam} \ dyāur \ aditīr \ adribarhāḥ\textsuperscript{18} \\
10.85.1ab & \textit{satyēnottabhītā} \ bhūmiḥ \ suryēnottabhītā \ dya[u]r \\
10.88.3c & \textit{yō} \ bhānūnā \ prthivīṁ \ dyām \ utēmām \\
10.88.9c & \textit{sō} \ arcīśā \ prthivīṁ \ dyām \ utēmām \\
10.111.5c & \textit{mahīṁ} \ cid \ dyām \ ātanot \ sūriyaṇa
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{17} Among the following 30 occurrences of \textit{dyā/-div}- that happen to be generically distinguished, only four are based on the weak stem \textit{dīv}- (which carries an \textit{udāta}, though being in the zero-grade, and, in so far as it is thus accented, proves to be secondary): twice the acc. sg. \textit{dvām}, at 1.50.11b and 8.51.8c, and twice the acc. pl. \textit{divas}, at 2.3.2b and 4.53.5c.

\textsuperscript{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. \textit{dyāuḥ} ist hier Fem. und deutlich mit Aditi, der Mutter der Āditya’s ... identifiziert”.

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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 (RV 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 *dívam 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* (RV 107x) :: *gáus* (RV 22x), *dyám* (RV 94x) :: *gám* (RV 42x), *dyávas* (RV 21x) :: *gávas* (RV 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/g484é/g487-*, the accusative singular *dyám*, because of the sound sequence -/g427m, 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 *tṛbhi*- 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.

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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 § 121cβ.

20 In the lengthy list of lines quoted above, *dyám* 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, *dyám* is referred to with the three pronouns *imám* [6x], *amám* [1x], and *katamám* [1x], or is qualified with the attributive adjectives *mahíma* [1x] and *arunám* [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’ (RV 1x [+]) abstracted from dántam (RV 1x), acc. sg. of dánt-idat- m. ‘tooth’ (RV 5x [+]); or nára- m. ‘man’ (TS 1x [+]) from náram (RV 16x), reinterpreted as nára-m instead of nár-am; or the new a-stem māsa- m. ‘moon, month’ (RV 7x [+]), from māsam (RV 1x), originally acc. sg. of the consonant stem mās- m. ‘moon, month’ (RV 15x).

The secondary stem pāda- m. ‘foot, quarter’ (RV 4x [+]), on the other hand, could also be based on an acc. sg. pādam (RV 1x). But it seems much more likely that the naturally most characteristic case-form of this noun, whenever it refers to bipeds—namely, the nom. acc. dual pādā (RV 5x) or pādau (RV 2x) ‘the two feet’ — accounts for the reanalysis, and for the subsequent thematicization of pad-/pād- m. ‘foot, quarter’ (RV 35x [+]).

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

1. The RVic hapax adjective strái/g360a- in a late hymn, at 10.95.15cd ná vái strái/g360/g232ni sakhyáini santi sálahyáman hídáyan/y etá ([The Apsaras Urvaśī, letting her hair down, is taking king Pururavas 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 strī- ‘woman’ (RV 11x [+]). Although this particular case-form happens to be unattested in the RV itself, strīnám does occur in all the other Sanskrits.

In order to provide for the formation of the adjective strái/g360a- ‘womanly, female, feminine’, Paṇini had to introduce a unique taddhita-suffix nañ — and another one, of equal uniqueness, namely, snañ, for the sake of deriving its counterpart pāumsna- ‘manly, male, masculine’ from pūmans-pums- ‘man’ — in his grammar, at Aṣṭādhīyāñī 4.1.87 strī-pums-ābhyañ mnañ-snañ-au ...

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21 The second meaning of pad-/pād- (that is, ‘quarter’) presupposes — just as naturally, if also more squarely — a reference to quadrupeds, especially of the bovine family.
22 For these and similar cases of “Stammveränderung”, and especially extensions of consonant 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 strái- is also attested in the AV: at ŚS 4.34.2d ≈ PS 6.22.3b, ŚŚ 8.6.4d ≈ PS 16.79.4d, and PS 11.2.7a. For this vṛddhī derivative in -a- from the gen. pl. strīnám, see Wackernagel & Debrunner, AiGr II 2, 111 § 34 f and 734 § 562 b.
24 These occurrences are the following: ŚŚ (2x) 7.14.1, 8.6.13; PS (3x [+]) 2.57.5, PSK 12.7.12 = PO 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.
25 These occurrences are as follows: ŚŚ (2x) 7.14.1, 8.6.13; PS (3x [+]) 2.57.5, PSK 12.7.12 = PO 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 strái- ‘womanly, female, feminine’, Paṇini had to introduce a unique taddhita-suffix nañ — and another one, of equal uniqueness, namely, snañ, for the sake of deriving its counterpart pāumsna- ‘manly, male, masculine’ from pūmans-pums- ‘man’ — in his grammar, at Aṣṭādhīyāñī 4.1.87 strī-pums-ābhyañ mnañ-snañ-au ...
2. The neuter noun *dróna*- [wooden] vessel (RV 13x) can be explained as substantivization of an original adjective derived from the secondary nominal stem *drún-, which may have been abstracted from oblique -haltige case-forms of *dáru-ldrú- (RV 12x) ‘wood’, such as instr. sg. drúnā (RV 5x) and gen. sg. drúnas (RV 1x).

The adjective *dárunā*- ‘hard’ < *‘wooden’ — which occurs just once in a Sārīhitā (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 *dáru-. See, for instance, the Atharvavedic loc. sg. *dáruṇī (ŚŚ 6.121.2a) and instr. sg. *dárunā (PS 16.51.2c).

3. The noun *kṣonā*- appears to be used only as a proper name in a single RV 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 *kṣonī- ‘Geschrei’ < ‘Gebrüll einer [Klein]Viehherde’.26

Now, *kṣū- n. ‘cattle’ (RV 2x) was substituted for *psū-, the zero-grade form of *paśū- ‘[Klein]Vieh’, according to Bloomfield’s incontrovertible (?) etymology.27 Oblique case-forms of the neuter noun *kṣū-28 would be *kṣunā,

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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).


George Dunkel, FS Jasanoff, 2007, 54–55, on the other hand, thinks that Vedic *kṣu- remains “controversial” because this nominal stem — although it was, as he is ready to admit, “impressively derived” from *paśu- by Bloomfield — “might instead continue *kś-sū ‘in rows’ to indicate a great amount”.

According to Dunkel, loc. cit., the loc. pl. *kś-sū is based on the well-known “Klingenschmitt root-noun” *kās- ‘row, series, uninterrupted sequence’ as it is attested in Greek, Avestan, and Sanskrit. See, for instance, the ‘suffix’ -sūs in the Vedic distributive adverbs deva-sūs ‘god for god’ (RV 1x), pacchās (← pad-sūs) ‘pāda for pāda’ (AB, KB, ŚB, JB [+] ), śata-sūs ‘by hundreds’ (ŚŚ 1x [+]), sahasra-sūs ‘by thousands’ (RV 1x [+]), etc.

28 For the secondary form *kṣū-, compare also *a-kṣu- ‘arm [an Vieh]’ (RV 1x) and, in particular, *kṣu-mánt- ‘rich in cattle’ (RV 13x [+]) as well as pura-kṣu- ‘having many [head of] cattle’ (RV 18x [+]): *kṣu-mánt- ← *psū-mánt- and pura-kṣu- ← *pura-psū- clearly show how *kṣu- has come about, that is, by dissimilation of one labial against the other.
*kśuṇe, etc.,

They could have led to a spurious n-stem *kśuṇ- or *kśuṇ-, and one of these may have served as derivational basis for both kṣoṇā- m. or n. and kṣoṇī- f., which follows the devī-inflection.

4. Of the original consonant stem nās- f. ‘nose’ — or rather, ‘nostril’ — the regular nom. acc. dual was nāsā. 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 RV 2.39.6 ośṭhāv iva mādhurāv āsāvā vádantā stānāv iva pīpyātam jīvāvē nāseva nas tanvīra rākṣitārā kārṇāv iva suśrātā bhūtam asmē ‘Lip-like, [O Āśvins, 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. Ear-like, be attentive listeners among us!’

Now, the dual nāsā, 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 vāy-u- m. ‘bird’ (RV 77x [+]) could acquire the collective meaning ‘Geflügel, volaille’ and lead to a new neuter váyas- (RV 1x [+]) with a secondary nom. acc. pl. váyānsi ‘birds’.

Reinterpreted thus — in this productively wrong way — the original dual nāsā 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 RV 9.97.22b “shows a secondary hypostasis of a locative [i.e. of kṣú < ***kṣ-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: *kṣuṇām ← *pśuṇām. Cf. Thieme, KZ 92, 49 = Kleine Schriften II 906.

31 The only available ‘n-stem’ of paśu- that occurs in the RV is the instr. sg. paśūnā at 10.87.16b (= SS 8.3.15b). The gen. pl. paśūnām is first attested in the AV (SS 25x [+]).

32 A second stem kṣoṇī- f. ‘[Klein]Viehherde’ — corresponding both in form and in meaning to YAv. fśaoni- f. — has to be supposed for just one nom. pl. occurrence in a late RV passage, namely, at 10.22.9cd purutrā te vī pūrtāyā nāvanta kṣoṇāyo 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 nāsā suggests that the poet thought of canine guardians, whose keen sense of smell makes them particularly suited for watchful protection.

Compare the revealing epithet uruṇasā- < *uru-Hnas-ā- ‘with wide [and highly sensitive] nostrils’ [and, consequently, ‘with wide-ranging olfaction’], which is applied to Yama’s two (twin?) messenger dogs at RV 10.14.12ab uruṇasāv asatṛpā udambalāv yamasya dūtāv carato jānām ānū ‘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 nāsā-, the dual nāsē 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 aksyau parisārpati yó nāsē parisārpati l datīm yó mādhyam gacchati tām krīmim jambhayāmasya ‘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 nāsikā- 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) aksībhyaṃ te nāsikābhyaṃ chābukād ādhi l yākṣamanā śīrṣanyām mastiśkāj jīhvāyā vī 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 aksyau and aksībhyaṃ in the two Saṁhitā stanzas just quoted gives me occasion to point out that, while aksībhyaṃ (RV 1x, ŚS 3x [+]) depends in its form on the original nom. acc. dual aksī of the neuter consonant stem āks- ‘eye’, aksyau (ŚS 8x [+]) is clearly based on a new -ī-stem, which could only have come about because the nom. acc. dual aksī was reinterpreted as feminine in gender. This misunderstanding also implies the confusion of two different inflectional types: the nom. acc. dual of the devī-declension ends in -ī, the same case-forms of the vrkī-declension, in -nīyā(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 -ā-. Apart from nāsā- ‘nostril, nose’, for which see above, there is no dearth of examples that could be quoted: ēdā–ēdā- (RV 53x [+]) ← ēd- (RV 15x) ‘nourishment’, for instance, or uṛjā- (RV 1x [?], ŚS 12x [+]) ← uṛj- (RV 73x [+]) ‘refreshment’, etc. 36

A particularly interesting case is that of kṣapā- (RV 1x) ← kṣap- (RV 15x). What was to become a secondary ā-stem is first attested in the instr. pl. kṣapābhīṣ at RV 4.53.7c sā nāh kṣapābhīṣ āhabhiṣ ca jīvatu ‘Let him (i.e. Heavenly Savitar) enliven us by night(s) and by day(s)’. Obviously, this curious


35 In a similar way, the dual form sakthya (RV 2x) or sakthynāu (ŚS 1x) ‘the two thighs’, which does not fit into the regular paradigm of the heteroclitic noun sākthi-sakthān- n. ‘thigh’ (RV 3x [+]), seems to presuppose an older *sakthī (cf. YAv. haxī [Vidēvātā 4x]) — presumably the nom. acc. of an original neuter consonant stem **sakth- (?!). That dual too was then improperly treated as a vrkī-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. kṣapā, which is regularly formed from the consonant stem kṣāp- ‘night’.37

If kṣapābhis 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 stār/-stf- ‘star’, i.e. stṛbhis (RV 8x), co-occurs with nāka- m. ‘sky, heaven, firmament’ (RV 32x):

RV 1.68.10b pipēśa nākam stṛbhīr dāmūnāḥ ‘As master of the house, he (i.e. Agni the Heavenly Fire) has adorned the sky with stars’.

RV 6.49.12cd sā pispṛṣati tanvī śrutāsya stṛbhīr nā nākam vacanāsya vīpāḥ “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

RVKh 1.11.6a yuvāṁ *stṛbhiṣ citayathó ‘pi nākam ‘You two [Aśvins] together with the stars are clearly visible against the sky’.

RVKh *stṛbhīṣ, which is an emendation for <stribhīṣ> 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. stribhīs as it is actually attested at RVKh 1.11.6a constitutes yet another portmanteau-like word-formation? With no more than a modicum of ‘portmental’ fantasy,41 we could ‘mayhaps’ imagine stribhīs to be an intentional cross between stṛbhīs and tribhīs, a blend that would result in the combined meaning ‘(together) with (the) three stars’.

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37 The hapax instr. pl. kṣīpābhis — occurring at RV 9.97.57c hīnvānti dhīrā ādaśābhīḥ kṣīpābhīḥ ‘The thoughtful [poet-priests] speed [Soma] on, [each one] with ten fingers’ — may be compared with kṣapābhis, even though of the root-noun kṣib- f. ‘finger’ the instr. sg. *kṣipā, which could be thought to have served as derivational basis for the instr. pl. kṣipābhis, does not occur, this consonant-stem being attested only in the form of the nom. acc. pl. kṣīpas (RV 13x).

38 Or else, kṣapābhis could be defined — with a pedantry even more pronounced than the one that has ‘inspired’ me to the description given above — as a de-instrumental [sic] instrumental.

39 Cf. Geldner, II 151: “Er lasse die Reden des beredten (Sängers) seinen, des Berühmten, Leib schmücken wie den Himmel mit Sternen”.


41 This fancy kind of ‘port-mental’ fantasy would seem to mean a deliberately ‘portmanteau-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 ὁ στήρις), the dog-star. The name ‘sirius’ is identical in meaning (and etymology?) to YAv. *tištria*- (Tištar Yašt [Yt. 8]), Ved. *tiṣyā-* (RV 5.54.13c and 10.64.8c [+] or *tiṣyā-*(KS 11.5:149.19 and 39.13:130.16 [+] < *tri-str-ōm* [as the most conspicuous and therefore representative star of that constellation].

The presumable change from *tri-h₂str-ōm* to *tri-str-ōm* must have occurred at an early stage of PIE, and the loss of *h₂* 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 *-h₁dhr-* in *h₂eheidhro-* (from the root *h₂eheh₁* ‘wehen’; see 1LIV 256 = 2LIV 287) was reduced to *-dhr-* in *h₂yedihr-*. And this ultimately resulted in the ‘windy’ English *weather*.

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The oxytone neuter noun *tri-str-ōm*, consisting of a numeral as first member and a consonant-stem extended with the compositional suffix *-ō* 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 bahuvṛhis, include *tri-div-ām* ‘complex of three [day] skies’ (RV 9.113.9b [+]), *tri-pur-ām* ‘complex of three [concentric] fortification walls’ (ŚB 6.3.3.25 [+]), *catus-path-ām* ‘carrefour, crossroad(s)’ (TB 1.6.10.3 [+]), *saḍ-gav-ām* ‘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. *h₂yeht₁-trō-* (instead of *h₂yeht₁-dōro-*), 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 ‘fancifoolish’ 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 *stʰbhis* and *tribhís* suggests — or rather, presupposes — that *stár-lstf*- was originally masculine.\textsuperscript{45} [For more on the gender of the ‘star’-word, see below, Excursus 3].

Now, the co-occurrence of *náka*- ‘sky’ with *stár- lstf*- ‘star’ in the three above-quoted passages (RV 1.68.10b, RV 6.49.12cd, and RVKh 1.11.6a) causes me to suspect the as-yet-unsuspected fact that ‘in the beginning’, the cosmogonic reality *náka-* 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 *náka-* irregularly from the nominative of *nákt-*, and accordingly call it a ‘de-nominatival’ derivation.\textsuperscript{46}

The nominative *nák* (< *nákt < *nókt < **nógts > ?) occurs only once in the RV.\textsuperscript{47} It is attested at 7.71.1ab ápa svásur ušásā nág jihūte rinákti kṛṣṇīr aruśāyā pānthām ‘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 *náka-* ‘night sky’ — in no less than two different ways.

If this case-form were allowed to behave like a root, we could consider *náka-* to be the immediate result of a direct *vṛddhi*-derivation from *nák*, very

\textsuperscript{45} It would seem unlikely that here we have to do with a cross between *stfbhis* and (feminine) *tisfbhis* (RV 1x +?). If these two words were to be blended into one, the trisyllabic portmanteau *tistfbhis* should have a far better chance than any other imaginable result.

\textsuperscript{46} Such formations are not at all unheard of. The regular nominative of *yóṣan- f. ‘(unmarried) young woman’ is *yóṣā* (RV 25x). This nom. sg. could easily have been understood, in virtue of the noun’s gender, as belonging to a feminine *-stem *yóṣā-. The reinterpretation would then naturally have led to new case-forms, such as the acc. sg. *yóṣām* (RV 7x) instead of an original *yóṣanam*, or the nom. acc. pl. *yóṣās* (RV 2x) in place of *yóṣanas* (RV 8x).

The same fate was suffered by *kaniyan- l kanīn- f. ‘jeune fille’ whose nom. sg. *kan,yā* (RV 7x) led to the acc. pl. *kanyās* (RV 4.58.9a) [for *kaniyānas] and to the loc. pl. *kanyāsu* (RV 9.67.10c, 11c, 12c) [for *kaniyāsu]; see Hoffmann, Aufsätze II 381. Compare also the nom. sg. *ūrā* (RV 10.95.3d) of *ūrān- e. ‘lamb’, interpreted as feminine (*‘ewe Lamb’) and leading to the secondary acc. sg. *ūrām* (RV 8.34.3b), substituted for the primary *ūrānam* (RV 2.14.4a).

\textsuperscript{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 śāka- ‘Kraft, Stärke; Vermögen, Fähigkeit’ [RV 1x] may have (vigorously) sprung up from the root śak ‘to be able’.49

But an indirect 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: nāk → nākā- ‘belonging [characteristically] to night’ and 2. a substantivization (with accent retraction): nākā- → nāka- ‘night sky’.50

No matter how early that newly-coined word may have arisen — whether it arose at the dawn of Indo-Aryan, or even 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 styr- vermutlich weiblich (wegen tārā- [Epic +] tārakā- [Vedic (ŚŚ 4x, PS 5x, MS 1x, TS 1x +)])”. Similarly, Mayrhofer, EWAia II 755, s.v. stár- : “(wohl f.)”. To be sure, the derivative tārakā-, having the same meaning as stár-/stār-, and occurring already in the Śaunaka-Samhitā,51 is clearly of the fair gender.52

In view of the gender variance that Indo-European relatives of Vedic stár-/stār- ‘star’ display, it is difficult to decide whether *h₂stér- was masculine or feminine.53 At an earlier stage of PIE, it may just as well have been of the unspecified animate gender, as the Hittite noun hasterza lhairstsal (or lhairstsal ?) < *h₂stērs would suggest.

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48 See RV 6.24.4ab śācīvatas te puruśākā śākā gōvām iva srutāyāḥ samcāraṇīḥ “Deine Kräfte, des Kraftvollen, du Vielkräftiger, sind wie die gangbaren Wege der Rinder” (Geldner, II 123).

49 In Pāṇinian terms, the kṛt-suffix ghāṇi (see, for example, Aṣṭādhyāyī 3.3.16 ... ghāṇi, 18 bhāve) would be responsible for this kind of vṛddhi-derivation. Theoretically, the base could have been a root-noun *śāk-, derived from the root śak with the zero-suffix kviṃ. But that noun is unattested. Alternatively, the substantive śāka- ‘Kraft, Hilfe’ (RV 1x) may be based on the adjective śākā- ‘kräftig, hilfreich’ (RV 5x); compare the second phase of the two-phased derivational process (nākā- → nāka-) subsequently referred to in the main text above.

50 A different etymology for nāka- 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. nāka-, with a few further references.

51 The four ŚŚ occurrences of tārakā- f. are found at 2.8.1b = 3.7.4b = 6.121.3b vṛddha nāma tārake and at 5.17.4a yām āhīs tārakaiṣād viśeṣāti.

52 The ka-formation tāra-ka- is obviously based on an a-stem *tāra- ‘star’, which must be an early abstraction from strong case-forms of the consonant-stem (s)tār-(a)śt-.

53 While, for instance, Greek ὀὐρίῳ and OHG sterno are masculines, Gothic stairnǭ, ON stjarna (< *ster-nā-), and Latin stella (< *stēr-lā-) are feminines.
Now, if Pinault, Festschrift Jasanoff, 2007, 271–279, is justified in explaining PIE *h₁stēr- < *h₂h₁stēr- ‘(celestial) fire’ as based on an archaic root noun *h₂oh₁s-/*h₂eh₁s- reflected in Hitt. ḫāss- ‘ashes, soap’ < *‘burnings’, 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 *h₂h₁stēr- “would be cognate to the well-[known] thematic suffixes *-tro- and *-tero-, which build adjectives based originally on adverbs in *-tr 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 *h₂h₁stēr-. 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, *h₂h₁stēr- is obtained by ‘internal derivation’ from a local adverb *h₂h₁stēr based on the root noun *h₂oh₁s- ‘burning’. Thus, it would be a ‘de-locatival’ formation.57

54 For the PIE root, see ¹LIV 229–230 = ²LIV 257–258 s. v. *h₂eh₁s³ ‘(durch Hitze) vertrocknen’ with notes.
55 Traditionally, *h₂stēr- 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’.
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 dhegh-ōm ‘earth’ ... : ḫēgh-(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.


What I am driving at is this: If PIE *$h₂h₁stér$- has preserved the contrastive value that the original adverb *$h₂h₁stér$ 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 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 Rgveda passage that strongly points to the masculine gender of ‘star’. The passage I mean is RV 1.164.16a (= SS 9.9.15a) *strīyaḥ satīs tāṁ u me puṁsā āduḥ ‘To me they speak of them (certain stars)$^{61}$ as of males [by using the masculine gender], although [in reality] they (those stars) are females’.$^{62}$

According to Thieme,$^{63}$ the stars intended in this verse are the seven feminine Pleiads (or, Pleiades),$^{64}$ called kātiikā- in India,$^{65}$ and considered to be the consorts of the ‘Seven Seers’ (saptārsāyas). 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”.


$^{60}$ See, for instance, the feminine nouns úrmṛyā- (RV 7x), kṣāp-ikṣapā- (RV 16x), nākti- (RV 36x), nīś-lniśā- (RVKh 3x, KS 2x [10.5:129.19 & 130.1]), nīśāt- (TS 2x [2.2.2.2 & 3]), rātri-Irātri- (RV 14x), rāmī- (RV 1x [2.34.12c]), rāmṛyā-Irāmṛyā- (RV 4x), Voc. vibhāvari [vibhāvarī] (SS 4x), śārvāri- (RV 1x [5.52.3b]), other substantivized adjectival epithets, such as kṛṣṇī- (RV 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 ‘Seven Seers’ (saptā ēṣayas or saptārsāyas), name of the constellation Ursa Maior, are evoked.


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.: RV 1.94.7b dūrē cit sān tāliḥ īvāti 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.: RV 7.88.2c sāvār yād dāsman adhipā u āndhaḥ ‘When Sun was in the rock and yet master over darkness’.


$^{64}$ The names of the seven Pleiades in Greek mythology are, according to Aratos 262 f.: Alkyone, Elektra, Kelaino, Maia, Meropе, Sterope, and Taγgete.

$^{65}$ 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 ambā-, duḷā- (MS bulā-), nitaṭī- (TS nitaṭī-), abhra[yant]-, mehghyant-[, varṣāyant]- (MS standāyant-), and cupuṇkā-. 
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: mayāra-kārī prathama- ‘-ārnavābhīr atho śakā / devānām patnīḥ kṛttikā ’ imaṁ tantum *amāmuhan “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-method70 by showing how, for instance, the derived ‘star’-word tārakā- f. was explained, in company with the (surprisingly) unrelated nākṣatra- n.


67 The variously attested telling name of the spider, ārṇa-vābhī- (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 ārṇā-vābhī- (MS 1.6.9:101.5) or ārṇā-vābhī- (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 kṛttikās, which may have to be derived from root kartīkṛt ‘spin’, in judicious preference to the homonymous root kartīkṛt ‘cut’.

68 These meaningful appellative nouns, which name three of the seven devānām patnīs as mayāra-kārī-, ārṇa-vābhī-, and śakā- respectively (śakā- at VS 24.32 means śakunti-, according to Mahādhara, ad loc.), seem to suggest that chores like plaiting, spinning, and weaving were the routine tasks of the heavenly ladies.

69 I suppose that tāntu- 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 tāntu- 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 sūtra- 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. Yāśka, Nirukta 2.1 avidyamāne [vṛtti]sāmānye ‘py aksaravārasāmānyān nirbṛyān na tv eva na nirbṛyāt ‘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 Yāśka’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 vā idám antarásīt / yād átaran / tāt tá rakānām tá rakatvām / yó vā ihá yájate / amúni sā lokām nakṣate / tān nakṣatrānām nakṣatravām

‘[In the beginning,] this [All] was [all] salty water (the primordial sea, die Urflut),71 [and it was] in between (antarā). 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’ [tā rakās], or even ‘steers’ [ukṣānas], as I may perhaps add with appropriately punning intention73). He who worships / offers sacrifice here (in this world), attains (nakṣate) the world over there. That is the true nature of the constellations (and the reason why they are called nakṣatra-).74

An alternative translation of the above-quoted TB sentence salilám vā idám antarásīt 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, antarā would be understood as a preposition governing idám, whereas in my own rendering, antarā 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 Śanīhitā passage containing two distinct predicates — one a noun, the other an adjective — which was cited there, namely, MS 4.6.7:89.17–18.


72 Notice the all-but-perfect anagrammatical permutation of antarā ‘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 *yād idám antarāsīt tásmát tá rakā ataran* ‘Because this [All] was [all sea and extended] across, therefore the stars travelled across [it (this All=Sea)].’ Or else, *... tát táraṃasya taraṃvatvām* ‘... 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 RV 8.55.2ab satām śvetāsā ukṣāno divi tāro nā 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 vá idám áśīd ávyāvrīttam ‘[In the beginning,] this [All] existed as ándhas, [that is to say,] as indistinct [ándhas]’.

And, in order to formulate yet another general syntactic rule, I would contend that Vedic idám [vīśvam / sārvam], 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-vṛttā- 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 ávyāvrīttam 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*

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utá tvah páśyan
ná dadarśa vácam

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

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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 *jagati* 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 cæsura”, 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 cæsura”, 1. “a cæsura dividing the two parts of a compound” and 2. “a cæsura 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 cæsura 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 *mutism* and comfortable *rebus 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.

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 már 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 questionable idea of an earlier than early and later than late caesura⁶ — I should substitute Arnold’s two forms of “weak caesura” with two types of mid-word caesura:

I. A caesura 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 caesura 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 caesura, 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 caesura 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:

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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 rájānā mitrāvārunā supāṇi, it would be possible to speak of a mid-word cæsura only if we were justified in considering mitrāvārunā and other combinations of this kind as original compounds. Since, however, such devatā-dvandvas, 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 cæsura 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 vytra’úram in the second line of the distich RV 4.42.8cd may serve as a possibly convincing example:

Half-an-Indra

tá áyajanta trasádayum asyā
dráman ná vytra’úram ardhadevām

For her (the wife of Daurgaha) they (our Fathers, the Seven Ṛṣis) obtained by [their] worship the demigod Trasadasyu, a vytra-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 mitrāvārunā, 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 cæsurae that follow the prior element of a compound (192 § 214, 1).

By splitting the root-compound \( vrtra-túr- \) 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 \( vrtra-túr- \), 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, \( ardha-devá- \) (RV 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 karmadhārayas of the \( ardha-devá- \)-type, see Wackernagel, AiGr II 1, 253–254 § 101 a–b. An example like \( krṣna-śakuní- \) ‘black-bird-’, which occurs at ŚŚ 19.57.3 and Ps 3.30.4 — if it really meant \( vāyasa- \) ‘crow’, as Śāyaṇa’s gloss on the ŚŚ passage suggests — would make the difference quite clear; because \( krṣna-śakuní- \) does not seem to signify just any black bird that happens to have the colour called \( krṣná- \), but the **typical** — or even, **archetype** typical — **blackbird**.

In the PS passage, where this compound stands next to \( nirṛti- \) ‘destruction’, \( krṣna-śakuní- \) may refer to an ominous messenger-bird of death. Compare the two equally inauspicious envoys of Yama and Mrtyu — \( ūlāka- \) m. ‘owl’ and \( kapóta- \) m. ‘dove’ — which are exorcised at RV 10.165.4 \( yād ūlāko vādati moghám etád yát kapótaḥ padám agnau kṛṣṇoī / yāṣya dītāḥ prāhita eṣā etá tāsmai yamāya nāmo astu mṛtyáve ‘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!’

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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 — that can be quoted from the Rgveda:

1.30.16c sá no hiraṇya’raṇhaṁ daṁsānāvāṁ (T)
1.35.5b rāthāṁ hiraṇya’praṇaṁ vāhantah (T)
1.52.9c yán mānuṣa’praṇdhānaṁ indram ītāyāṁ (J)
1.58.8b stotṛbhyaḥ mitra’maṇaḥ śårma yacca (T)
1.60.5c āśūṁ nā vājām’bharāṁ marjāyantah (T)
1.61.3c māṁhiṣṭham āch[a’u]ktibhir maṭīnāṁ (T)
1.61.4c gīraś ca gīṛ’vāhase suṣvṛktī (T10)
1.61.4d īṇḍrāya viṣvam’invāṁ médhīrāya (T)
1.61.5c vīrāṁ dān[ā’o]kāsāṁ vandāyai (T10)
1.61.5d purāṁ gūrī’ārvasāṁ dārmān (T10)13
1.61.6a evā te hārī’yojanā suṣvṛktī (T)
1.61.6c ṇā eṣu viṣvā’pēsāṁ dhīyām dhāḥ (T)
1.62.1b āṁgūsaṁ gīr’vanase āṁgiravāt (T)
1.64.3b vavaksūr ādhrī’gāvah pāvratā īva (J)
1.116.3d antarikṣa’prūdbhīr āpodaḵābhiḥ (T)
1.120.9a duḥīyān mitrā’dhitaye yuvāku (T)
1.122.2a pāṁiva pāṛvā’hūtim vāṃdhāhyai (T)
1.127.5b nāktam yāḥ su’ḍārśatāro dvātārād (J in A)
1.129.4b sākhyāyām viṣvā’âyum prāsāḥam yājam (J in A)
1.141.12a utā naḥ su’ḍyōtēmā jīr’āaṁśu (T)
1.148.1b hōtāraṁ viṣvā’pum viṣvādev, yām (J11)

11 Doubt may arise from the fact that a jagati line (or, very rarely, a tristubh line) forms part of a stanza in mixed meter (Brhatī, 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 Brhatī, J for Jagati, K for Kakubh, PB for PurastādBrhatī, PU for Purāṇiṣṭhī, SB for SatoBrhatī, T for Tristubh, U for Usṣṭhī, UB for UpariṣṭṭhdBrhaṭī. J11 and T10 indicate typically catalectic variants of J and T respectively.

13 If, however, we read purāṁ tri-syllabically as pur[a’a]ṁ, we would get a regular tristubh 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 darmān-‘breaker’, cf. RV 10.46.5b mūrā āmāram pur[a’a]ṁ dārmānam (T).

14 As a possible, though less likely, alternative scansion of the line we could perhaps consider to read utā naḥ su’d[yōmā] jīr[āa]ṁśu. For the more likely possibility, however, which I have preferred to adopt in the list above, cf. also 2.4.1a huvē vah su’dyōtēmānām suṣvṛktī referred to below.

1.184.2c śrutām me ācch[a‘u]/ktibhir matīnām (T)

2.4.1a huvē vah su‘dyōt,mānam suvrktīm (T)
2.9.1a ni hōtā hotṛ’sādane vidānas (T)
2.9.1c ādabdhratrā’pramatīr vāsiśthāḥ (T)
2.19.8a evā te gṛtsa’madāḥ šūra mānmā (T)
2.25.4c ānibṛṣṭa’taviśir hant'y ōjāsā (J)
2.34.8d jānāya rātā’haviśe mahīm īṣam (J)

3.2.7d ātyo nā vája’sātaye cañohtītaḥ (J)
3.26.5d sināhā nā heśā’kratavah sudānavah (J)
3.53.16d yām me palasti’jamadagnāyo dādūḥ (J)
3.58.7c nāsatyā tirō’ahn'yaṃ jūsānā (T)
3.58.9a áśvinā madhu’śūttamo yuvākuḥ (T)

4.1.8b hōtā hīranyā’ratho rámsujihvah (T)
4.1.19b hōtāraṃ viśā’bharasam yājīṣtham (T)
4.3.1b hōtāraṃ satya’yājan rōdas,yohī (T)
4.33.8b yē dhenūṃ viśva’jvām viśvārūpām (T)
4.41.3d sutēbhīh su’prayāsā mādāyaite (T)
4.42.8d ānīḍram nā vṛtra’ťūram ardhadēvām (T)

6.2.11a ācchā no mitra’maho deva devān (T)
6.11.4d añjānti su’prayāsam pāṅca jānāh (T)
6.14.6a ācchā no mitra’maho deva devān (T)

viśva’śupam viśvādevyam. However, all six occurrences of the compound viśvādevya-, which is formed with the derivational suffix -iya-, stand in the cadence of their verses — one in a gāyatī (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 ... riṣanāyāvo.

16 A different scansion of this line as nāsat yā tirōahnyaṃ jūsānā is perhaps possible. The alternative seems, however, less likely, because among the 22 pāda-initial occurrences of nāsatyā (20)/nāsatyāv (2), there are only four that require a ‘distracted’ reading, namely at 1.173.4d nāsat,yeva sūgmiyo ratheśtāḥ, 1.180.9d nāsat,yā rayiśāceh s,vāma, 1.184.1c nāsat,yā kūha cit sāntāv aryō, and 1.184.3b nāsat,yā vahatūm sūr,yāyāh. 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’ṭūram in the context of the distich 4.42.8cd, see above, at the very beginning of the present section, I. I. The First Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura.
6.15.4c  vípraṁ ná  dyukṣa’ vacasāṁ  suvṛktībhir (J)
6.16.46c  hōtāraṁ  satya’yājam  rōdasyoḥ (T)
6.20.1c  tāṁ  naḥ  sahāsra’bharam  urvarasāṁ (T)
6.20.5c  urū  sā  sa’ráhan  sārathaye  kar (T)
6.20.11c  pārā  nāvā’vāstuvam  anudēyam (T)
6.20.13d  dabhūtir  idhmā’bhṛtiḥ  pakthiḥ  ārkāiḥ (T)
6.24.6c  tāṁ  tvābhīṁ  su’ṣṭutībhir  vājayantaḥ (T)
6.26.5d  prāvo  dīvo’dasaṁ  citrābhir  ātiḥ (T)
6.29.4a  sā  sóma  ā’miślatamanāḥ  sutō  bhūd (T)
6.32.4d  ēkāḥ  puru’prasastō  āsti  yajñāḥ (T)
6.33.10a  hī  śṛ[ā] ṣṭha’vārucasāṁ  tā  u  nas (T)
6.34.2b  ékāḥ  puru’prastō  āsti  yajñāḥ (T)
6.34.3d  gṛṇānti  gīr’vanasaṁ  śāṁ  tād  asmāi (T)
6.44.10d  kīn  aṅgā  radhra’cōdanan tāvāhuh (T)
6.51.10a  tāṁ  nāvā’vām  dāśva’yādhvarāya  devā (T)
6.68.1b  manuvvād  vṛktā’barhiṣo  yājadhyai (T)
6.68.2d  rēna  vṛtra’tūr  sārvasenā (T)
6.68.6a  yāṁ  yuvāṁ  dāśva’yādhvarāya  devā (T)
6.68.7a  utā  naḥ  su’trāt, rō  devāgopāḥ (T)

7.2.7b  mānye  vām  jātā’vedasā  yājadhyai (T)
7.4.5d  bhāmiś ca  viśvā’dhāyasam  bibharti (T)
7.8.6d  dyumād  amīva’cātaman  rakṣohā (T)
7.14.1c  havīrbbhiṁ  śukrā’śocise  namavino (J in B)
7.23.5b  śuṣmīnāṁ  tuvi’rādhasan  jaritrē (T)
7.33.11a  utāsī  maitrā’varunō  vasiṣṭha’ (T)
7.38.2d  ā  nṛbhya  marta’bhōjanaṁ  suvānāḥ (T)
7.38.5d  vārūtrṛy  ēkā’dhenubhīr  nī  pātu  (T)
7.58.2b  bhūmāsas  tuvi’manyavo  ā’vāyuṣah (T)
7.60.8d  mā  karma  deva’hēlanāṁ  turāsah (T)
7.66.16a  tāc  cākṣur  deva’hitaṁ  śukram  uccārat (J in PU)
7.81.4c  tāśyās  te  ratna’bhāja  imahe  vayāṁ (J in SB)

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18 This is a less clear-cut case of mid-word cæsura than the other three examples from the same hymn, RV 6.68, because of the added complication that is created by the apparently necessary trisyllabic scansion of the compositional second member -trārās. The above notation of the metrically required ‘distracted’ reading, viz. -trāt, rō, which I have chosen in preference to -trāt, rō, 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, rō in the present case). See also further above, for my tentative notation of an additional, secondary (!) vowel *ṇ 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.
Mid-Word Caesura

8.21.9b prá vásyā ā'ñināya tām u va ṛustē (J in K)
8.23.19c pāvakāṁ kṛṣṇā vartanīṁ vihāyāsas (J in U)
8.27.11c ṛpa va viśva'vedasō namasyur āṁ (J in B)
8.60.17c agniṁ hitā'prayasah śaśvaiśu v ā (J in B)
8.61.14a tṛvāṁ hi rādhas'pate rādhaso mahāḥ (J in SB)
8.66.6c tvām īd dhī brahma'kṛte kāṁ, yaṁ váṣu (J in SB)
8.87.5c dáśrā hṛṇya'vartāṁ subhas paṭī (J in SB)
8.99.1c sā īndrā stóma'vāhasāṁ ihā śrūdhī (J in B)

9.72.4a nydhūto ádri'śuto barhişi priyāḥ (J)
9.83.5c rājā pavītra'ratḥo vájam āruḥaḥ (J)
9.84.1a pāvasva deva'mādano vīcāraṇaṁ (J)
9.86.40c rājā pavītra'ratro vájam āruhaḥ (J)
9.93.5b punāno vāt[ā]jpyaṁ viśvāscdrām (T)
9.94.1d vṛjāṁ nā paśu'vārdhanāya mānaṁ (T)

10.1.5a hōtāṁ citrā'ratam adhvarāṣya (T)
10.17.5b sō asmāṁ a’bhayatamena neṣat (T)
10.22.10a tvṛtra'hāye codayo nṛn (T in PB)
10.35.14d té syāma devā'vītye turāsaḥ (T)
10.48.8b iṣaṁ nā vrtra'tāraṁ viḵśū dhārayam (J)
10.50.1b ājrcā viśvā'narāya višvābhūve (J1)
10.61.13d vidāt puru’prajātāsyā gūhā yāt (T)
10.61.15c manusvād vṛktā'barhiṣe rārāṇā (T)
10.61.15d mandū hitā'prayasā viḵśū yājyū (T)
10.61.21c śrūdhī tvāṁ su’dravino nā tṛvāṁ yāḷ (T)19
10.74.6c áceti prā’sāhas pātis tūviṣmān (T)
10.76.2b ājtyo nā hásta'yato ádriḥ soṭārī (J)
10.98.5b devāpir deva'sumatiṁ cikitvān (T)
10.99.8d śyenō [á]yo'[a]pāṣṭir hanti dāṣyūn (T)
10.101.2b nāvam aritra'pāraṁ kṛṇudhvam (T)
10.105.4c nadāyor v'[vratayoh śūra īndraḥ (T in 11.7.11 stanza)20

19 To be sure, this triṣṭubh line could perhaps be scanned as śrūdhī tṛvāṁ sudravino nā tvāṁ 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’dravino. Shall we strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel?
20 For a metrical description of the strangely irregular hymn RV 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,
In the Metrical Notes to their Harvard edition of the Rgveda, 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. It seems clear that the two scholars prefer what they call a “rare” and — in my personal view — ghost caesura 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 Caesura

By far less numerous and much more irregular are metrical lines in which the caesura 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 with a


21 The unorthodox analysis of this Rgvedic hapax compound as *māta-ṛbhvarī-, and not as **mātari-bhvarī-, can be justified by adducing linguistic as well as metrical arguments in favour of it.


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-Pātha would seem to suggest that they were considered nominal compounds.
mid-word caesura of the second degree (or a semi-incisive mid-word caesura) can be cited from the ṚV, and half of them are found in the Fourth Book:25

1.62.6a tád u práyakṣa ‘tamaṁ asya kārma (T)
1.62.6b dasmāṣya cāru ‘tamaṁ asti dāṁsaḥ (T)26

4.1.4c yājiśtho vāhni ‘tamaḥ sōśucāno (T)
4.1.6b devāṣya citrā ‘tamaṁ mārt, yeṣu (T)
4.22.3a yó devó devā ‘tamo jāyamāno (T)
4.23.6d sṛ vār ṇā citrā ‘tamaṁ iṣa ā gōḥ (T)

6.4.7a tv[aā]m hi mandrā ‘tamaṁ arkaśokār (T)27
10.85.37a tām pūṣaṁ chivā ‘tamaṁ ērayasva (T)28

But also suffix -mán- is attested once in a derivative that straddles the caesura, again in Ṛṣi Vāmadeva’s Maṇḍala, at 4.3.5d brāvah kād arya ‘m, nē kād bhāgāya (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 svastāye sarvā ‘tataye bhātē (T)30 with a semi-incisive mid-word caesura — and not with a

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25 For that reason this kind of mid-word caesura 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 tvām as disyllabic tv[ā]m is conditioned by its historical pre-form, Proto-Indo-Iranian *tvāHām.
28 According to van Nooten & Holland, Metrical Notes, a “rare” caesura after the third syllable occurs before seven of the eight above-quoted -tama-formations. Only in 1.62.6a tád u práyakṣa ‘tamaṁ asya kārma (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 caesura 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 sarvā ‘tataye (f.!) and bhātē (m.!), see Oldenberg, Noten II, 185 ad loc. and Noten II, 157 on 9.15.2b bhātē devā ‘tataye “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 bhātē: “il n’est pas exclu que le terme soit épithète masculine du fém[inin] qui précède” (EVP IX 105). Cf. also Whitney’s evasive rendering of ŚŚ 14.2.72d bhātē vájasātaye “in order to what is great, to winning of strength” and his note ad loc.: “Whether one should emend in d to bhātyāīi, or translate as is done above, may be made a
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:

\[ \text{yá āpír nítyo varuṇa priyāh sán} \]
\[ \text{tv[a]m ágāṃsi kṛṇāvat sákhā te} \]
\[ \text{mā ta énas’vanto yakṣin bhujema} \]

‘When an intimate friend, in spite of being your dear-own companion commits offences against you, O Varuṇa, then let us not suffer, as [if we were] sinners, [the (punishment for another person’s) sin] against you, O Miraculous One’.

question; it seems most likely to be a mixed construction, meaning virtually ‘in order to the gaining of great vaiśa’” (HOS 8, 767). An emendation of bhṛaté to a grammatically agreeable bhṛatyái — 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 svaḥastāye, 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 sānt- in Vedic” (= Studies on the Present Participle: 2), presented at the 13th World Sanskrit Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, 10th—14th July, 2006.


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 RV, the adjective *énasvant-* ‘sinful’ is attested just twice. In the only other passage, it co-occurs with *énas-* ‘sin’ at 8.18.12 tát ... sárma ... yán mūmocati / *énasvantam cid énasah* ... ‘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 RV: [1] though being an optative in mood, it is construed with *má* 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 *má ... bhujema* occurs, this finite verb is construed with an (impersonal) object:

4.3.13d *má sákhyur dáksaṁ ripó bhujema*
5.70.4ab *má káṣya[a]dhuṭakratú yaksáṁ bhujema tanúbhiḥ*
6.51.7a *má va éno anyākṛtam bhujema*
7.52.2c *má vo bhujema[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

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35 The only post-Rgvedic 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 *enasíyà- ‘sinful’ (ŚŚ 2x [+]), co-occurs again with *énas-* ‘sin’ at ŚŚ 6.115.2ab (≈ PS 16.49.5ab) yádi jágrat yádi svápann éna enasíyó '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.

Oldenberg, Noten II, 61–62, has already pointed out. Against the same scholar’s express wish to take the enclitic pronoun with bhujema, 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 mā va éno anyākṛtam bhujema and [2] at 7.52.2c mā vo bhujem[a a]nyājātam éno ‘Let us not be punished for a crime against you that was committed (brought about) by others [than us]’. 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 — 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

39 Oldenberg, loc. cit.: ‘... würde ich te nicht zu énasvantah 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 Götō, “Vasiṣṭha und Varuṇa”, 156: “sollen wir nicht als Schuldhafe dir gegenüber, o Monströser, büßen”.
41 And not just the negative particle mā 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 — 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.

In a fair number of cases, an apparently indivisible nominal form stands astride the place where the caesura normally occurs. Examples include the following fifteen straddling nouns:

1.122.8c  jáno yāh pajaréh,yo vājínīvān (T)
2.1.8d  tāyān sahásrāṇī śatā dáśa práti (J)
2.14.4d  tám indraṁ sómasya bhṛthē hinota (T)
2.17.5d  ástabhnān māyāyā d’yām avasrāsah (J)
2.31.7b  átakṣan āyāvo nāv,yase sām (T)
3.16.6c  sām rāyā bhīyasā srja mayobhūnā (J in SB)
3.53.2d  ēndra svādiśṭhayā girā śacīvaḥ (T)
3.58.7a  āśvinā vāyūnā yuvām sudakṣā (T)
5.33.4c  tataksē sūryāya cid ṛkasi svē (T)
6.15.12d  sān rayā sprhayā,yah sahasṛé (T)
7.2.7c  ārdhvāṁ no adhvarāṁ kṛtam āhēsu (T)
7.20.7d  ā citra cītra bharā rayīṁ nāḥ (T)
7.97.3b  susēvam brāhmaṇas pātiṁ grnṣe (T)
7.97.9a  iyām vām brahmaṇas pate suvṛktī (T)
10.132.2b  suṣumnā ā jśitatvātā yajāmasi (? J in PP)

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42 The second list, taken together with these additions, amounts to some 70 examples of ‘indistinct caesura’. 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 caesura (i.e. 2.1.8d sahāsrāṇī, 2.17.5d māyāyā, 3.53.2d svādiśṭhayā, and 3.58.7a vāyūnā), as well as seven verb-forms exemplifying its fourth degree (i.e. 2.20.1d ṣalyakṣantas, 4.7.11d vājayate, 6.3.4d drāvayati, 7.20.6a bhṛṣate, 7.88.3d ṣāhkyāvalhai, 9.72.1c ṭrāyati, and 10.95.7a jāyamāne), 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 PrastāraPankti, 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 caesura in RV 10.132.2b suṣumnā ā jśitatvātā 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 caesura is posited only after the sixth syllable, van Nooten and Holland, Rig Veda 599 & 607, thought fit to place a “rare” caesura 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 *stáryāya*, 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 cletic 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 *bháyasā*, 3.58.7a *váyúnā*) and Seventh (7.2.7c *adhvarām*, 7.20.7d *citrāyam*, 7.97.3b *bráhmanās*, 7.97.9a *brahmanās*) Song-Cycles, it may be styled the ‘Vasiṣṭha-Viśvāmitra type’. Did the two Rṣis — 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 caesuralest lines and try to do justice to it in relative isolation. My choice is 3.58.7a:

\[
áśvinā váyúnā yuvām sudakṣā
\]

Here,\(^{47}\) the straddling position of *váyúnā* 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 yū 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 yū 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, ChandahSūtra 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 *rádhasā, rāmayet*, *rejayet*, or *rocate*.

\(^{47}\) For a translation of this line and part of the remaining stanza, see below.
RV 3.58.7 is addressed to the Aśvins. In its most important part, this stanza says: 

*dāśvinā vāyūnā yuvān sudakṣā nīyūdbhiḥ ca sajōśasā yuvānā / ... sōmam pibatam ...* ‘Do drink the Soma [here], O you two [eternally] young men 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, yū vā nā, with the Wind God, vā yū 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  *dāśvinā vāyūnā yuvān sudakṣā* treated above. The context of that *jagatī*, which displays yet another indistinct mid-word cæsura, is the distich 2.17.5cd:

*ādhārayat prthivīṃ viśvādhāyasam āstabhnān māyāyā dīyām avasrāsaḥ*

He (viz. Indra) fixed the all-nourishing earth. With magical power, He propped up the sky [to keep it] from tumbling down.

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48 The Twin Gods are referred to as ‘young men’ five times in the RV: 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 yūvānā (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. *srāms-, defines avasrāsas (1x) and the homomorphous visrāsas (2x) as *a*-aorist infinitives. 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-*srās- and *vi*-srās- 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 *srās* als Infinitiv”, 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 RV 2.17.5d  *āstabhnān māyāyā dīyām avasrāsaḥ* “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
prthivīṁ by a regular cæsura after the fourth syllable, ástabhṅāt is, on the
contrary, trickily connected with its object dṛyāṁ by means of a straddling noun,
the cæsuraless instrumental māyāyā. 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, māyāyā 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 māyā- 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, Śūrya, Soma, Pūṣan, the Āśvins, the Rbhus, 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 dyāṁ ástabhṅāt sá janāsā īndraḥ ‘he who

er den Himmel vor dem Herabfallen”, or Petr Sgall, Die Infinitive im Rgveda. Acta Universitatis
Carolinae — Philologica No 2. Praha, 1958, 166 & 235, or Salvatore Scarlata, Die
Wurzelkomposita im Rg-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-
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 māyā- has to be analysed as mā-ya-, 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. MĀ₁ ‘messen, etc’ and 349–350 s.v. māyā- f.
‘übernatürliche Kraft, etc’.

53 For other sky-propping gods, see e.g. RV 1.154.1c yó áskabhṛyaḥ úttaraṁ sadhāsthram
[He (= Viṣṇu) ...], who propped [up] the upper abode (viz. Heaven)’, 3.5.10a úd āstambhīt
samidhā nākam ṛṣv[āh ‘He, the lofty one (= Agni), has propped up the firmament with [his]
firewood’, or 8.42.1a āstabhṛṅd dyāṁ āsuro vīśvāvedāḥ [‘He, the all-knowing Asura (= Varuna),
propped [up] the sky’.

54 The following are some of the RV passages in which Indra is characterized as having
propped up the sky: 3.30.9c āstabhṛṅd dyāṁ vṛṣabhō antārikṣam, 6.17.7b úpa dyāṁ ṛṣvō bhṛṅd
indra stabhṛyaḥ, 6.44.24a ayāṁ dyāṁ prthivī ví śkabhṛyaḥ, 10.113.4d ástabhṅān nākaṁ
s_u vāpaṣyāyāḥ prthūṁ.
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 māyāyā in our context seems uncharacteristic. We would rather expect an instrumental like ójas, as it is actually found in verse 10.153.3c ād dyām astabhna 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: avamśe dyām astabhāyad bṛhāntam ‘without a pole, he propped up the sky [sky-high]’.56 Compare also 10.149.1b askambhanē savitā dyām adṛṣiḥat ‘without a prop, Savitar fixed the Sky’.57 These two formulations are apt to give us a decisive clue to the adequate understanding of māyāyā 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 skambhēna (at 8.41.10d) and skāmbhanena (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., RV 5.29.4a ād rōdāsī vitarām vi śkabhāyat ‘Then he (Indra) propped the two faces (Heaven and Earth) further apart’, RV 5.31.5c sāktīvo yād viḥhārā rōdāsī ubhē ‘that you, O Powerful One, separated the two faces’, or RV 8.37.4ab sasthāvānā yavayasi tvām ēka ɪ c chacipaṭe ‘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 RV 2.13.9c arajjāu dāsyūn sām unāb dabhāyate ‘Without a rope, you tied up the enemies on Dabhāti’s behalf’. Geldner, however, renders the sentence as “da hast du für Dabhāti die Dasuṇ’s (in den Schlaf), der keines Strickes bedarf, eingeschnürt” (Der Rig-Veda I 293), taking arajjāu for a bahuvrhi.

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: “Savit 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 avamśe and askambhanē for bahuvṛhis, but they should preferably 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 viśkabhānta skāmbhanenā jāntī ‘They (the Angirases) propped the two mothers (Heaven and Earth) apart with a prop’, 6.47.5cd āyām mahān mahatā skāmbhanena ūd dyām astabhṇāḥ virṣabhāḥ marūtvān ‘Together with the Maruts, this mighty bull (Indra) propped up the sky by means of a mighty prop’, 6.72.2c úpa dyām skambhāthu skāmbhanena ‘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.\textsuperscript{59}

\textit{mâyâyā}, 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 \textit{sahásráni}, the participle \textit{íyakantsas}, and the superlative \textit{svádišthayā}.

These metrically exceptional lines are quoted together by Arnold, Vedic Metre 191 § 214.\textsuperscript{60} But his challenging statement, loc. cit., that we find “only three trimeter verses in the whole Rigveda which have certainly no cæsura of any kind” — namely, 2.1.8d \textit{tu váṁ sahásráni satá dáśa práti}, 2.20.1d \textit{sumnám íyakantsas tu váṁ tavo nén}, and 3.53.2d \textit{índra svádišthayā girá sacīvah} — 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.\textsuperscript{61} Since they are so special, I feel called on to

\textit{yá skambhéna vī ródas}\textsuperscript{ī} ‘[Varuṇa,] who [holds] the two faces (Heaven and Earth) apart with a prop’, and 10.111.5cé \textit{mahí́m cid dyám átano sá́r já́ yena cákśambhá cit kákṣhañena skábhíyán} ‘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’.

\textsuperscript{59} The instrumental of the abstract noun \textit{suvapasyá-} f. (RV 7x) ‘adroitness, dexterity’ in 10.113.4d \textit{ástabhnín nákaṁ suvapasyáyá prthúm} ‘he (Indra) propped the broad firmament with skillfulness’ still presupposes a concrete prop that is to be adroitly handled, whereas \textit{mâyá-} f. (RV 63x) ‘magical power’ may be said to work also without any supporting means.

The plural of \textit{śácī-} f. (RV 55x) ‘capacity’ is used in a similar, although less abstract, way at, for instance, 10.89.4cé \textit{yó ákṣeneva cačríyá śácìbhír viśvak tástámabhá prthivím utá dyám} ‘[Indra,] who with acts of strength has propped apart heaven and earth as [one would prop apart] the chariot-wheels with an axle-tree’.

\textsuperscript{60} Although the desiderative present participle \textit{íyakantsas} at RV 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.

\textsuperscript{61} Van Nooten & Holland, on the other hand, in their metrical note on 2.1.8d, RV 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 RV 2.1.8d:

**A Rousing Anticlimax**

\[ t_u \ y\'a\'m \ s\'a\'h\'\r\'\a\'n\i \ \acute{\text{sa}}\acute{\text{\r\'a}}\acute{\text{s}} \ \acute{\text{d\'a}}\acute{\text{\a}} \ p\acute{\text{r}}\acute{\text{\a}} \ i \]

You are equal to **thousands**, **hundreds**, **ten**.

Migron, IIJ 18,\(^{62}\) 182 n.18, thinks that this verse “should read `\( t\acute{\text{v}}\acute{\text{\o}}\acute{\text{m}} \ s\acute{\text{\a}}\acute{\text{\h\'a}}\acute{\text{s}}\acute{\text{r\'a}}\acute{\text{n}}\acute{\text{\i}} \ / \ \acute{\text{s\'a}}\acute{\text{\t\'a}} \ \acute{\text{d\'a}}\acute{\text{\s\'a}} \ p\acute{\text{r}}\acute{\text{\a}} \ i \)` (not `\( t\acute{\text{v}}\acute{\text{\o}}\acute{\text{m}} \ s\acute{\text{\a}}\acute{\text{\h\'a}}\acute{\text{s}}\acute{\text{r\'a}}\acute{\text{n}}\acute{\text{\i}} \ )\`; ‘Bhārgava’ type, Arnold p. 14), thus acquiring a perfectly normal caesura after the fifth syllable”. Of the two other caesuraless triśūbh 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 caesura acquired by reading \( tv\acute{\text{\o}}\acute{\text{m}} \ s\acute{\text{\a}}\acute{\text{\h\'a}}\acute{\text{s}}\acute{\text{r\'a}}\acute{\text{n}}\acute{\text{\i}} \ / \ \acute{\text{s\'a}}\acute{\text{\t\'a}} \ \acute{\text{d\'a}}\acute{\text{\s\'a}} \ p\acute{\text{r}}\acute{\text{\a}} \ i \)` causes me to suspect a hidden abnormality. And sure enough, in the following discussion we shall see that, while a caesura after the fifth syllable is certainly normal in a triśūbh or jagaṭī line, an iambic foot after the caesura 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 jagaṭī 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 caesura after the 6th is, however, “the only possible division” merely because the two scholars believe that every trimeter line **must** have a distinctly incisive caesura **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.


\(^{63}\) 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 caesura 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 caesura were taken into account, for only 46 out of 13096 trimeter verses present the metrical sequence "- | -", and RV 2.1.8d, in case it were read, according to Migron’s suggestion, as "\( tv\acute{\text{\o}}\acute{\text{m}} \ s\acute{\text{\a}}\acute{\text{\h\'a}}\acute{\text{s}}\acute{\text{r\'a}}\acute{\text{n}}\acute{\text{\i}} \ / \ \acute{\text{s\'a}}\acute{\text{\t\'a}} \ \acute{\text{d\'a}}\acute{\text{\s\'a}} \ p\acute{\text{r}}\acute{\text{\a}} \ i \)”, 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 "\( j\acute{\text{\j\'i}}\acute{\text{\t\i}}\acute{\text{\m\a}}\acute{\text{\n\o}}\acute{\text{\t\o}} \ n\acute{\text{\a}} \ \acute{\text{b\h\'a\s\'a}} \ \acute{\text{v\j\'i}}\acute{\text{\u}}\acute{\text{\\i}}\acute{\text{\\i}}\acute{\text{\s\i}}\acute{\text{\\i}}}\), then this line, too, would represent the new type. It could prove to be a regular jagaṭī pāda, however, if after the caesura we were to read "\( \acute{\text{b\h\'a\s\'a}} | \acute{\text{\a}}\acute{\text{\a}}\acute{\text{\j\i}}\acute{\text{\j\i}}}\)" (\(< *\text{bhā\(\text{\h\'a\s\'a}\)h}\)). That in fact we have to scan \( \acute{\text{b\h\'a\s\'a}} \) trisyllabically is
and 78.1a – 4d. The two hymns are ascribed by tradition to Syûmaraśmi Bhârgava; 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 Grṣamada, who is also called Bhârgava Śaunaka, we do not find any other verse of the Bhârgava 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. 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.

Therefore, Migron’s reading of line 8d as tvām sahāsrāṇi śatā dāśa práti corresponds only to the Bhârgava verse as it was somewhat loosely described by Arnold. It is not, however, up to Oldenberg’s standard. As a consequence of this scholar’s more rigorous definition of the Bhârgava metre, line 8d should be excluded from the number of Bhârgava 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 Bhârgava type, there are only two that seem to warrant Migron’s scansion of 2.1.8d with an iambic śatā in the break: the contiguous pādas 10.77.4a and 4b. Here we find apām after the cæsura of 4a, and mahī 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 RV 6.10.4b dūredfśā ‘ bh[aa]sā ḍṛṣṇ[ḍa]dhva and at RV 10.3.1c cikīḍ vi bhātī ‘ bh[aa]sā bhṛatā.

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 vyāyāṃ dh[aa]rśā ’ prayājo nā rasāṁbhīr. Cf. Oldenberg’s detailed discussion, Noten II 280 ad loc.


67 Oldenberg, Noten II ad loc.: “Mir scheint nach wie vor auszugehen von Jagatī mit späterer Cāṣur, in der man die Kürzen 6 [und] 7 durch ein Länge ersetzt: so ergibt sich * − − − − | − − − − ; die 6. Silbe (bei Nichtzählung der Pause) wäre Kürze, während sie in der Tat Länge ist”.

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 Cāṣur durch Pause vertreten sei. So erhielte man aber für spätere Cāṣur * − − − − | [−] − − − − − ; die 6. Silbe (bei Nichtzählung der Pause) wäre Kürze, während sie in der Tat Länge ist”.

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however, apām were read trisyllabically — as it has to be scanned in so many other trimeter lines where it stands in the same position69 — then 4a would become a regular jagatī: yuṣmākam budhne’ ap[āā]m nā yāmāni. And 4b, if considered a typically catalectic jagatī, could be read as vithuryāti nā ’ mahē śratharyāti, since the first halves of these two hymns, though being predominantly of the Bārgava type, are variously interspersed with both regular70 and catalectic71 jagatī pādas anyway.

Also, the very fact that in this hymn, 32 out of 42 occurrences of tvām at the beginning of a verse have to be scanned disyllabically speaks against a monosyllabic scansion of tvām in 8d. Even without including the controversial line-initial tvām 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 tvām sahāsrāṇi satā dāśā prāti, 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 apām occurs 17 times in the break of a trimeter verse. In 12 of these occurrences, a trisyllabic scansion (ap[āā]m) is necessary. In the remaining 5, that scansion is at least possible. The 5 ambiguous lines, in which apām 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 triśubh pādas, or they may be taken to represent the dvipadā virāj type, in which case a disyllabic reading of apām would be appropriate.

70 See, for example, 10.77.3a prá yē divāh ’ pythiv,yā nā barhānā.
71 See, for example, 10.78.1a viprāso nā ’ mānmahāhī s uvādh,yō.
72 Van Nooten & Holland, although they read this verse as a jagatī by scanning “tvām sahāsrāṇi satā dāśā prāti” in their edition (Rig Veda 114), avoid the disturbingly indistinct mid-word cæsura inside sahāsrāṇi by postulating, in the metrical notes ad loc. (Rig Veda 599), a “rare” cæsura after sahāsrāṇi: “It is worth noting that the only possible division ... is at 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 (ή μεθόδοςς) — of Speech herself, a more-than-human latent Trail which evokes or elicits a patent response from us mortals.
Verse 2.1.8d \( t_u \text{vám sahásrāṇi śatā dáśa prāti } \) is addressed to the same heavenly Fire as the preceding \( pāda \) 8c \( t_u \text{vám viśvāni } s_u \text{vanika patyase } \) ‘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 RV 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, \( *t_u \text{vám dáśa prāti śatā sahāsṛā*}. \) 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 *sahāsṛāṇi* across the metrical

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\(^74\) 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 ŚŚ 8.9.7cd \( tēṇā śatāṁ sahāsram ayūtam n_yāṛbūḍaṁ jaghānā sakrō dáśyūṇāṁ ... \) ‘With that [jāla- 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 *ayūtam* in the break and *n_yāṛbūḍaṁ* in the cadence are regular for a *jagāti*, the opening is hypermetrical, either by two syllables, so that we would be tempted to athetize *śatāṁ*, or by three, in which case we could wish to scan the verse without *sahāsram* as a typically catalectic *jagāti 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 RV 8.68.11  yāśya te svādū sakhyāṁ svādvī prānītir adrivah / yajñō vīntasāyāy, 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, *svādūs*, or very sweet, *svādīyān*, or extremely sweet, *svādiṣṭhas*, 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 *nārāṁ / nṛṇāṁ nītamā- / vīrātamā- ‘most manly / most heroic [man] among men’, see e.g. RV 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 RV 6.47.2ab  ayāṁ svādār ihā mādiṣṭha āśa yāṣyaṁ īndro vṛtrahāte mamāda ‘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 RV, viz. the shamanic *muni-* who is the hero of 10.136. See the distich 6cd of that hymn: keśī kētasya vidvān sākha śvādūr madintamaḥ ‘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 *svādūs*, although it directly qualifies *sākha* 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, *madintama-* suggests *māda-*, 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  utā na īṁ maṭāyō ḛīṣvāyogāḥ śiśūṁ nā gāvas tāruṇāṁ rihanti ī tāṁ īṁ gīro jānayo nā pūtnīḥ surabhīṣṭamaṁ nārāṁ 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 RV 3.53.2d, which line, together with the pāda immediately preceding it, runs as follows:

\[
\text{pitūr nā putrāḥ śīcam ā rabhe ta ā īndra śvādiṣṭhayā ā girā śacivaḥ}
\]

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.

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 discreetly to read śvādiṣṭha twice? Once, as first part of the actual instrumental phrase śvādiṣṭhayā girā ‘with sweetest speech’. And once again, independently this time, as the potential vocative śvādiṣṭha ‘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 tām 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 RV 3.39.1ab \textit{īndram matīr hṛdā ā vacyāmānāḥ ā ḍchā pātiṁ stōmaṭāṭa jīgāṭi} ‘[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 RV 10.91.13cd \textit{bhūyā āntarā hṛdā āyā nispēṣe jāyēva pātya uṣāti suvāsāḥ} ‘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]’.

Although the poet could have chosen the metrically equivalent noun sūmū- m. ‘son’ (RV 107x), he preferred putrā- m. ‘son, boy, child, young of an animal’ (RV 122x) — originating from a Proto-Indo-European *putlō-, 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.: “putrāḥ 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 putrī-, however, does not seem to be attested in Vedic, as yet.
of a pause inside the undivided and indivisible word *svādiṣṭhayā* — 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 *īndra*.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.20.1d</td>
<td><em>sumnám ēyakšantas t_u vávato nín</em> (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.11d</td>
<td><em>āśūm ná vājayate hinvé árvá</em> (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.4d</td>
<td><em>dravir ná drāvayati dāru dhākṣat</em> (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.20.6a</td>
<td><em>ná cit sā bherṣate jáno ná reṣan</em> (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.88.3d</td>
<td><em>prā prenkhá ūkhayāvahai śabhé kām</em> (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.72.1c</td>
<td><em>ūd vācam ūdyaṭi hinváte matī</em> (J)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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 *ādy-udātta-*, can be found at RV 7.1.8b *vāṣīṣṭha śukra dīdīvah pávaka* ‘[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: RV 8.46.3b *vāṣīṣṭha śukra dīdīvah pávaka* ‘[O Agni!] O best one! O bright one! O shining one! O purifying one!’.

Compare also RV 8.71.3b *vāṣīṣṭha śukra dīdīvah pávaka* ‘[O Agni!] O best one! O bright one! O shining one! O purifying one!’.

Compare also RV 8.46.3b *vāṣīṣṭha śukra dīdīvah pávaka* ‘[O Agni!] O best one! O bright one! O shining one! O purifying one!’.

Compare also RV 6.75.10a *brāhmānaśah pītaśah sōṁ, vāśah* or RV 8.2.28c *sāprīm śivah śācīvah*.

Thieme has already treated 7.88.3d — together with the verse immediately preceding it, viz. 7.88.3c ādhi yād apāṁ snubhīś cārāva — 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 Rgveda, 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 *devāsya mār’mrjatāś cāru cāksuḥ* (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 *sumnām* it would have come too early, the cæsura had to wait, as it were, for the end of the tetrasyllabic *īyakantas* 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.


84 One of the five forms presently to be quoted and discussed — namely, *cárcaram* at RV 10.106.7a — has traditionally been considered an adjective. But see below for the alternative possibility of taking it as a substantive.

Three of the five intensives just quoted are finite verb-forms: the indicative *rärapit* ‗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

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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.: “D en Mangel der Cäsur durch Umstellung (mit Accentänderung) *rärapit* *socīṣā* 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 *socīṣā* *mitrámah* *rärapit*. 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 — *triśubh* lines 1.58.8b *stotfbhyo mitra’mahas śarma yaccha and 6.2.11a = 6.14.6a RICT no mitra’maho deva devān quoted above, in section I.I. 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 *triśubh* 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 unaccented 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 *kśayad*.

The present-tense 3rd singular *kśayad* could either be defined as a subjunctive of the class II verb *kṣē*- from the *ani-root* *kṣay/ksi* ‘dwell in peace’, or as an injunctive of the (re)iterative / continuative *-āya-formation* *kṣ-āya*- from the *se-root* *kṣā* ‘govern; possess’.

It would appear necessary in this context to take *kśayat* at least in the sense of ‘possesses’ or ‘shall possess’, because the genitive *rayīṇām* 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 RV 10.65.8ab *pariksītā pitārā pūrvajāvardi rtāsya yonā *kṣayatā sāmokasā ‘[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 Konjunktiv von *kṣi* wohnen, oder Indik[ativ] von *kṣi* ‘sie herrschen‘? Im letzteren Falle sind -kṣītā — kṣayataḥ Wortspiel” (RV 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 märmarjatas ‘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 cárcarə.\(^{89}\)

The difficulty created by the traditional interpretation is, however, that intensive adjectives of this type are, as a rule, derived with udātta-suffix -ā-, and we should, therefore, rather expect an oxytone *cárcará-, in parallel with forms like 1. -cankramá- at ŚŚ 11.9.16a khaḍḍūre adhicaṅkramām, 2. -tartará- at RV 1.102.2d śraddhé kām indra carato vitarturām, 3. -dardirá- at RV 8.100.4d ādādirā bhūvanā dardarim and RV 10.78.6b ādādirāsā adrayo nā visvāhā, 4. -namnamá- at RV 10.136.7b pīnāṣṭi smā kunamnamā. Cf. AiGr II 2, 83 f. § 35a.\(^{90}\)

The accentuation shift from the last vowel of a regular and expectable but unattested oxytone *cárcará- to that of the first syllable in the actually occurring proparoxytone cáčara- of RV 10.106.7a pājréva cácaram járam marāyū 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 cáčara-, and has never been considered anything other than a substantive. That parallel is gārgara-m., occurring once in the RV, at 8.69.9a, and twice in the ŚŚ, 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


\(^{90}\) For the same regular and customary oxytony, see also a few intensive adjectives of a similar type, RV 1.140.3a vevijā- ‘quivering-and-quaking’, ‘shivering-and-shaking’, ŚŚ 8.6.6b (cf. PS 16.79.5b) rerihā- ‘licking-and-lapping’, ŚŚ 7.38.1b (cf. PS 20.31.7b) [abhii]-rorudā- ‘yelling-and-howling [at]’, ŚBM 1.4.3.16 momughā- ‘confused-and-bewildered’. Cf. AiGr II 2, 83 f. § 35ac.

\(^{91}\) The substantive gārgara- may be based on an adjective *gargarā- ‘voraciously devouring’ in perfect parallel to cáčara- ← *cácará-.

\(^{92}\) In his paper “Zu den cácaras”. 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 was to discuss the several, seemingly different masculine nouns gārgara-, 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 cárca- n. ‘the mobile one’ — is an onomatopoeic 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 Sāṁhitā 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 māhi- , 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 āhatam gabhe paso ni jalgalīti dhānikā
TS 7.4.19.3m āhatam gabhé páso ni jalgalīti dhānikā
VS 23.22cd āhantī gabhē páso ni galgalīti dhārakā
MS 3.13.1:168.4 āhatam pāso ni 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.


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.


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 tabustic 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 scherzhafte entstellt oder aus
metric regularity, but also, and more importantly, because its intensive \textit{calcaliti} 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.

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 \textit{gali/gulit}. The only unexceptionably regular third singular of the intensive is KS \textit{jalguliti}. On account of its root showing the strange ablaut-form \textit{gulit}, TS \textit{jalguliti} is slightly irregular. And what shall we say of VS \textit{galgaliti}? Will it be necessary for us to conclude that this is an onomatopoeic formation, merely because its reduplication does not comply with grammatical norm?

I do not think so. If TS \textit{jalguliti}, in spite of its slight irregularity, is an acceptable intensive, then the nonce form VS \textit{galgaliti} should also be recognized as such. Although the reduplication syllable \textit{gal-} has in fact derailed from the regular \textit{jal-}, it is only by the smallest of phonological steps. A parallel — and unimpeachably regular — intensive, such as MS \textit{calcaliti}, could have exerted a derailing influence. Also, VS \textit{galgaliti} itself sounded more ‘iterative’ and ‘intensive’ than the fully, but less completely, reduplicated TS \textit{jalguliti}. And indeed, onomatopoeia may have played a sportively supportive role at this (apparently latest) stage of intensive word-(de)formation.

\[\text{tabuistischen Gründen verundeutlicht und dann wohl auch sehr frühzeitig nicht mehr genau von den Textüberlieferern verstanden".}\]

\[\text{97 A la rigeur, the line could be read as a } \textit{dvipadā virāj}, \text{ which is a metre that counts 5+5 syllables. However, in the two pentads of this prosodical pattern, the third syllable should preferably be light, so that the first pentad, } \textit{āhatan pāso} — \text{ with its heavy } \textit{tam p} (\textit{on the tympanum}) — \text{ would not exactly agree with our sense of metrical regularity.}\]

\[\text{98 The scabrous meaning of this phrase appears to be: ‘Struck at [the slit], the penis toters-and-tumbles down into [it]’}].

\[\text{99 For the } \textit{se/g356-} \text{ root } \textit{gali}=\textit{gari} \text{ ‘swallow, devour’, class VI present } *\textit{gir-ā-ti} \text{ (AV [+] = } *\textit{gil-ā-ti} \text{ (SB [+]}, \text{ see Mayrhofer, EWAia I, 1992, 469–470 s.v. } \textit{GAR}^{12} \text{ ‘verschlingen’. And for the Proto-Indo-European Urform, see }^{2}\text{LIV. Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben. Die Wurzeln und ihre Primärtammbildungen. Zweite, erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage bearbeitet von Martin Kümmel und Helmut Rix. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2001, 211–212 s.v. } *\textit{g/g483erh}^{7} \text{ (= }^{1}\text{LIV, 1998, 189 s.v.}).}\]

\[\text{100 The juicy translations of TS } \textit{jalguliti} \text{ and VS } \textit{galgaliti} \text{ by, respectively, Willem Caland, Das Śrautasūtra des Āpastamba, 16. bis 24. und 31. Buch. Amsterdam: Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1928, 250: [‘die Vagina] verschluckt gurgelnd” and Paul-Emile Dumont, L’Āśvamedha. Description du sacrifice solennel du cheval dans le culte védique d’aprè}s les textes du Yajurveda blanc. Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1927, 179: “[la dhārakā (vulva)] l’engloutit, en faisant un bruit de gargouillement” seem judiciously chosen. Not only because they take the original meaning of root } \textit{gol} \text{ ‘verschlucken’ (Caland) or “engloutir” (Dumont) into due account, but also because they pay tribute to the shady onomatopoeic side of these — yes, more (VS) or less (TS) derailed — intensive formations, by adding a word or phrase which is meant to render the ‘gurgling’ sound produced by voracious swallowing, and to render it almost audible, at that.}\]
Now, if the intensive noun RV *cárcara- is based on the intensive verb *carcarīti = MS calcalīti, then the noun RV gárgara- may depend on a verb-form like *gargarīti = VS galgalīti, 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 (= galgalīti) 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‘swallow, devour’.

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?

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 godhā- f. at RV 8.69.9ab áva svarāti gárgaro godhā

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101 For gárgara- in the sense of ‘eddy, whirlpool, maelstrom’ a detailed etymological justification is certainly not needed.

102 The following are all the Sanhítā occurrences of ajagará- m. “sarpa-viśeṣa-” (Vishvabandhu): RVKh 2.14.2a & 3a; ŠŚ 4.15.7b & 9c, 11.2.25a; PŚ 1.96.4b, 5.7.6b, 16.106.5a; VSM 24.38; VŚK 26.8.3; MS 3.14.19:176.10; KS 35.15:61.4, 40.5:139.7, KSAśv 3.4:159.8, 7.4:180.3; TS 5.5:14.1, 7.3:14.1.

That ajagará- may mean a giant ‘water snake’ is suggested by the substantivized adjective apsavyā- occurring together with our noun at KS 35.15:61.4 in the contracted form ajagarēnāpsavyās. 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 agnīnā tápo ‘nvāḥhavat, and in every subsequent phrase, including the one that concerns us here, the imperfect of the verbal compound anv-ā-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 (tāpas- n.); Sun, the sting of heat (tējas- 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” — tirāści-rājī- m. literally, ‘the one with lines [that run] across’ (ŚŚ 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 apsavyā-, which constitutes a decasausal formation that is derived, by means of the ‘independent’ svarita-suffix -yā-, from the loc.pl. apsū of the ‘water’-word ṅp-ḷap- f.
pári saniṣṭaṇaḥ ‘The gārga- shall sound down [from above], the godhā- shall sound-and-resound all around’. Lüders, 1942, follows Sāyāṇa’s interpretation of the former noun as vāḍya-viśeṣa-, and he himself convincingly shows that also the latter is the name of a ([probably] stringed) musical instrument.\textsuperscript{103}

Since godhā-, 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 gārgara’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\textsuperscript{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”,\textsuperscript{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 ṛṇkhayaṁvatāi.

In each case, however, Thieme decides where exactly the cæsura is to be placed: inside the genitive plural ending of the trisyllabic “*apalam” (Thieme), i.e. apām = [apām],\textsuperscript{106} and after the first two syllables of ṛṇkhayaṁvatāi. So that,


\textsuperscript{104} Although this Greek ‘mud’-word is akin in origin to Vedic gārgara-, and may be said to descend from the same Proto-Indo-European ancestor, an agent-noun such as *gʰorgʰorh₂-o-, we shall bravely try not to let ourselves be bogged down into the two cognates’ seductive swamp of kinship.


\textsuperscript{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 “sānūbhīḥ” [sic!] after the cæsura, while Oldenberg, Noten II 61, hesitantly suggested, with characteristic prudence, “Vielleicht s’nūbhīs”. Van Nooten & Holland, Rig Veda 325, edit “sānūbhīs”, and Gotō, “Vasiṣṭha und Varuṇa”, 152, follows suit by writing “s’nūbhīs”.

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after all, in both these cases the cæsura falls where it quite regularly may fall in a *triṣṭubh* line: after the fifth syllable. As will be seen later on in this chapter, my solution of the problem posed by the verb-form *ṁkhayāvahai* 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 RV 7.88.3cd:

\[
ádhi yád *apāṁ* snubhíś carāva
prá preṇkhá *ṁkhayāvahai* śubhé kám
\]

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.

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

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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 nubhīś*, and daringly write *s núbhīś*, 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-ya-da-pám snu-bhīś-ca-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 śandhyāvam ’, 4a vāsiṣṭhanha ’, 4d yán nú dyāvas ’, and, with an interesting mid-word cæsura that has been discussed above (in section I.2.) as an example of the second degree, pāḍa 6c má tu ēnas’vanto yaksīn 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 ... snubhīś* 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, [samudrē ... mádhye] — for which ‘binominal’ phrase, compare the preceding line 7.88.3b *prá yāit samudrām irāyāva mádhyam ‘when the two of us will [board the ship and] make [it] rise to the middle [of the] sea’ — and that *apāṁ snubhīś* constitutes an independent expression, with an instrumental of the way: ‘over-and-across the backs of the waters’.

109 Cf. also Tatjana J. Elizarenkova’s reference to Thieme’s treatment of RV 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 īnkha’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:

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 preńkhá īnkhayāvahai ūshhé 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 companionship 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, RV 7.88.3ab ā yád rahāva vāraṇaś ca nāvam prá yát samudrām īryāva mādhyam ‘When the two of us, [I] and Varuṇa, will board the ship and make it rise to the middle [of the] sea’, where mādhyam 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.


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 RV 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:

\[
tigmāṁ cid ēma māhi vārpo asya
bhāsad áśvo nā yamasānā āsā
vijēhamānāḥ paraśūr nā jihvāṁ
dravīr nā drāvayati dāru dhākṣat
\]

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, 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 bhāsat, bleckend and blinkend for the present participle vijēhamānāḥ.

Although we may spontaneously object that the verb-form bhāsat, being a root-aorist subjunctive, should be rendered as ‘shall snap, shall bite’, and that

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with an incisive cæsura in the middle of the finite verb ānkha’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.


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 vijēhamānāḥ, 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 (vijēhamāna- in the Ṛgveda — viz. 1.110.5, 1.163.6; 6.3.4; 10.3.6, 10.15.9 — see Toshifumi Gotō, Die “I. Präensklasse” im Vedischen. Untersuchung der vollstufigen thematischen Wurzelpräsentia. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1987, 156 f.

115 Geldner, loc. cit., must have regarded bhāsat as an injunctive (of the a-aorist; or of a class I present bhā-s-a- coexisting with a class III present bābhas- / bāps- ?). 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), aruná-psu- (ṚV 5x), áhrutá-psu- (ṚV 2x), ṛta-psu- (ṚV 1x), pruṣitá-psu- (ṚV 5x), viśvá-psu- (ṚV 3x), viśvá-psu- (ṚV 1x), and vṛṣa-psu- (ṚV 2x). This second-member noun -psu- was explained by Thieme as a low-grade ablaut-form of the nominal stem *bhāsu- “Atemhauch”. Similarly, the substantives *bhasád-* f. “Hintertheil” (Böhtlingk & Roth, Grassmann), which originally may have meant ‘the blowing (one)’, and *bhástrá-* f. “Blasebalg” or ‘leather bag’ (used for grain, meal, sour milk, etc.), as well as substantive *bhāsman-* at ṚV 5.19.5b bhāsmanayūnā “mit dem schnaubenden Winde” (Geldner, II 19) or “mit dem Blasen, dem Winde” (Thieme) 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 drGayati dRū dhákRat*, which presents yet another ambiguous word. The masculine noun *draví-*, considered the possibility of taking *bhásat* as an injunctive, but alternatively suggested to read *bhasan*, against the Padapātha, and to take this verb-form as a participle meaning “zermalmen”.

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 auf tun” (Der Rig-Veda II 106) and the only present subjunctive *bhabhasat* at ṚV 4.5.4a as “soll ... schnappen” (Der Rig-Veda I 424).

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118 See Thieme, Festschrift Schubring, 1951, 8 n. 2 = Kleine Schriften, 1971, 79 n. 2: “Die abgeleitete Bedeutung ‘Lederschlauch’ ist zufällig früher (ŠB) belegt”. However, among the 10 Brāhmaṇa occurrences of *bhástrá*- f. (ŚBM [3x], ŚBK [3x], JB [2x], PB [2x]), there are two in the same context that may already refer to ‘bellows’: *hāstrā-*, which is qualified with the bahuvrīhi *avācina-bilā- at PB 2.13.1 and 2, was translated by Willem Caland, Pañcaviśā 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 *bhasman- n.* “[Herd-]asche” (AV1x: 11.3.8 [+]), originally, according to Thieme, “der Ort, wohin man bläst [um das nachts darunter schlafende Feuer wieder anzufachen]”. 

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to Fire was rendered as “Schmelzer” (‘melter’) by Geldner, who took it as an -f- derivation from root \textit{drav/dru} ‘run, flow’, which is also at the basis of the causative \textit{dravayati} ‘schmelzt’ (‘melts’).¹²⁰

Hoffmann, however, considered that a pun may be intended,¹²¹ and accordingly suggested the alternative meaning “Schnitter” (‘reaper, harvester’) for \textit{dravi-} m., connecting this noun with a different root, the sef-base \textit{dravldrā} ‘cut, divide’, from which the hapax agent-noun \textit{dravitār-} at RV 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 \textit{dravayati} 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 \textit{bhāsat} in line b, the doubly related participle \textit{vijēhamānas} in c, the ambiguous

¹²⁰ It could be that \textit{dravayati} also belongs to the sef-root \textit{dravldrā}, 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 anerkennen”. 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.


¹²³ The causative \textit{drav-a-ya-ti} occurs once more in the RV, at 8.4.11ab \textit{ādhvaryo dravdvāyā tāvām sōmam īndraḥ pipāsati} ‘O Adhvaryu, make the Soma flow; Indra is thirsty (wishes to drink [(of) it])’.

Alternatively, \textit{dravayati} of RV 6.3.4d could perhaps be derived from the same sef-root \textit{dravldrā} ‘cut, divide’ as \textit{dravi-} (?) and \textit{dravitār-} (!), 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 \textit{drav} from Proto-Indo-Iranian *\textit{dramH} actually did, there are, nevertheless, noteworthy exceptions to this Law — the causative \textit{ādhvānayat}, for instance, which is found in a verse near by, at RV 6.18.10d, and which belongs to the sef-root \textit{dhvān} ‘be smoky’ — exceptions that would allow us to reckon with the admittedly somewhat remote possibility of understanding \textit{dravayati} 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 \textit{vājaya} at RV 4.7.11d \textit{āsān nā vājaya hinvē ārvā}. 
substantive *dravīs* 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?\(^\text{124}\)

**Mutually Raising Voices**

As a verse quite similar to the *tristubh* line RV 6.3.4d — with another causative that straddles the cæsura and in so straddling makes it indistinct — the *jagatī pāda* RV 9.72.1c is to be discussed next. It runs thus:

\[ \text{úd vācam īrāyati hinváte matī} \]

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 vācam īrāyati* in the sense of ‘Soma raises his voice’ is supported, for example, by RV 9.12.6a *prá vācam īndur iṣyati* ‘The drop (= Soma) sends forth his voice’ and by RV 9.64.9a *hinvānō vācam iṣyasi* ‘Spurred on [O Soma], you send [forth] your voice’.\(^\text{125}\)

Incidentally, the latter passage also supports *hinváte* as meaning ‘they incite [him]’, since *hinvānās*, 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?

spur Soma on with their poems. See, however, the double entendre of the same present participle at RV 9.97.32d hindvánó vácam matíbhih kavínám ‘[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 vácam śráyati as meaning ‘Soma raises the voice [of the poets]’, on the other hand, is underlined, for instance, by RV 9.97.34a tisró váca śráyati 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 váca úd śráyate gávo mimanti dhenávah ḫárir eti kánikradat ḫ abhí bráhmīr anuśāta ‘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 svanā- or svarā- of the divine juice is sometimes assimilated — by simile or metaphor — to the roaring of a bull (see, for instance, RV 9.86.7d vṛṣā pavītram āty eti rōrūvat or RV 9.97.13a vṛṣā sōno abhikānikradat gāḥ), sometimes to the bellowing of cows (as at RV 9.13.7ab vāśrā arṣānty indavo abhī vatsāṃ nā dhenāvah), sometimes to the neighing of a racing-horse (RV 9.43.5ab āndur ātyo nā vajasūk kānkāranti pavītra ā); sometimes it is compared with the sound of the wind (RV 9.70.6b nānadatu eti maritām īva svanāh), or of the rain (RV 9.41.3ab śṛṇvē vrṣēṛ īva svanāḥ pāvamānasya śūṃnāḥ), or of a river’s wave (RV 9.50.1ab īt te śūṃṃāśa śrāte śındhor īvarūmtime īva svanāḥ).

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 brāhmī- f. is likely to be (irregularly) derived from brahmā- m. ‘poet, priest’, rather than from brahmān- 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 yahvī-, the almost rhyming feminine that occurs in the next verse, at RV 9.33.5b yahvīṛ tāṣyā mātāraḥ ‘the youngest daughters and mothers of Truth’.

If brāhmī- can be taken — as it has been taken by me — in the precise sense of brahmānām vahnī- ‘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 RV 9.72.1c embraces two complete sentences which may appear to be independent: úd vácam īráyati on its left, hinváte matī 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 — while hinváte carries the tone anyway, because it starts a new clause — the two seemingly independent sentences become syntactically interrelated.

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: *ɪrá’yati. But the poet, by making this verb stand astride over the virtual cæsura, and thus suspending the metrical incision, gives us to understand

vánis ‘the voices’ (RV 15x) with the 3rd plural middle of the s-aorist (a)nāṣata (RV 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 Passivoraist 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”.

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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 RV 6.3.4d and *trāyati* at RV 9.72.1c, the equally quadrisyllabic middle-voice causative *vājayate* is found in exactly the same metrical position, i.e. after three verse-initial syllables, at RV 4.7.11d. The immediate context of this line — that is, the distich 4.7.11cd — runs as follows:

\[
vātasya melīṃ sacate njūrvann
āśūṃ nā vājayate hinvē árvā
\]

He (= Agni), while consuming [dry food], follows the wind’s rush. He incites [the wind] as (if it were) his swift [horse], and the racer is spurred on [by him].

This lively scene, in which Fire is seen as a rider and Wind as a swift racer, owes much of its liveliness to the verb that *overrides* the cæsura. The inciting action exerted by the rider and suffered by the racer can be allowed to override — the poet may have thought — as long as the horse itself is not

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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: *yād asya vāto anuvāti sōcīḥ* ‘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 RV 4.7.11cd: “Er folgt verzehrend dem Rauschen des Windes, er spornet 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 — *āśū* - ‘swift’ and *ārvan* - (or *ārvant*) - ‘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 *hinvē / hinve*, cf. the only other occurrence of this verb-form at RV 9.44.2: *matī juṣṭo dhiyāḥ hitāḥ sōmo hinve parāvāti / vīprasya dhārayā kaviḥ* ‘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 vājaya- and (2) that of the intransitive denominative vājyā-/vājāy-. Our context — with the object-accusative āśūm [ārvāṇam] 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 vājyā- (3x) and vājāy- (2x) in the same Song-Cycle Four. The following five passages are concerned:

4.17.16ab  
gavyānta īndraṁ sakhaṁ vāya víprā aśvāyánto vīśaṇaṁ vājyāntah  ‘Striving for cattle, striving for horses, and striving for victory in battle, as poets [we appeal] to Indra the bull for alliance’.  

4.25.8d  
īndraṁ náro vājyānto havante ‘Striving for victory in battle, the [fighting] men call upon Indra’.  

4.29.3a  
śrāvāyēd asya kārṇā vājyādhyai ‘Do cause his (= Indra’s) ears to listen, so that he races for the prize (= Soma)’.  

4.41.8ab  
tā vāṁ dhīy[ō ā]vase vājyānāṁr ājīṁ ná jagmur yuvayāṁ sudāṁ ‘It is to you two [O Indra and Varuṇa], that [our] poetic thoughts, striving

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137 Among a total number of 49 vājyā-occurrences in the RV, we find no more than four finite verb forms: the three actives vājyāmaḥ (at 1.4.9b), vājyāmasi (at 8.43.25c & 8.93.7a), vājāya (at 10.68.2d), and the only middle voice vājyate (at 4.7.11d).

For an attempt at explaining the unique diaphesis of the latter form, see Stephanie W. Jamison, Function and Form in the -āya-Formations of the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda. (Ergänzungshefte zur Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung: Nr. 31). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983, 89 n. 28: “Med. vājyate at IV.7.11 has been attracted into the middle by the parallel med. forms in the same verse (kṛṇute, 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, -āya- Formations, 35 & 112: “Cause his [two] ears to hear (for him) to obtain booty”.

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for the prize and longing for you two, have come for help, as if [they were going]
to battle, O you of good reward’.

4.42.5ab *mām nārah sāvā vājāyanto mām vrতāh samārne 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’.

Only the present participle *vājāyantas* 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 *[indrā] vṛṣanam* in 4.17.16[a]b and with *mām* 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’ the finite verb-form *vājyate* 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 *vājyate* 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, *vājyate* is sub-intended as ‘[Agni] races’, then that secondary sense, even though it is weaker, still has a fair chance of winning the contest.

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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 épries de vous, (dieux) aux beaux dons” (Renou, EVP V 96).

Cf. Renou, EVP VII 76: “[tā duel (Oldenberg)], sinon on aurait plutôt imāh (comme 9)” and Oldenberg, Noten I 301, ad loc.: “tā höchst wahrscheinlich nicht = tāh (Pp., wohl wegen v. 9a), sondern Dual. Zahlreiche Pādas fangen mit tā vām an, in denen tā 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 RV, 18 occurrences of verse-initial *tā vām* can be counted. And 1.154.6ab *tā vām vāstūn, y uśnasi gāmadhyai yatra gāvo bhāriśrīnā ayāsah* ‘We want to go to those abodes of yours [O Indra & Viṣṇu], where the many-horned, indomitable cows are [grazing]’ — here, *tā (= tāni)* clearly belongs with vāstūni — 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,\(^\text{144}\) turns the incited wind-horse into one that is ‘like his own swift racer’, *āśūṁ nā *svāṁ [ārvānam]. 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’ :: *nā vā jayate* ‘or he conquers not’.\(^\text{145}\) 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-parāhyāṁ jeḥ* [12 ātmanepadam], Pāṇini provides for the regular application of middle endings if root *jayljī* 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 *srāmeṇa ha sma vái tād devā jayante* yād esāṁ jāyam āsā rṣayaś 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 *vājya*-occurrences in the *RV*, 45 of which are (active) present participles.

\(^{145}\) In case we allow the clandestine parsing of part of this pāda as [jayate] *nā 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 *RV* 4.7.11d will change to *āśūṁ nā vā jayate hinve ārva*. 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 Kāncy 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 RV, both uncompounded, are in the ‘aberrant’ middle diathesis: one of the two occurs at 1.163.7b *jīgīsāmāṇam* īśā ā padē gōh ‘[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 *jīgīsāse* paśūr iṅvāvṛṣṭaḥ ‘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 RV 7.20.6ab:

\[
\text{nā cit sā bhreṣate jāno nā reṣan māno yó asya ghorām āvīvāsāt}
\]

That man who will try to win his (i.e. Indra’s) savage mind,

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146 Cf. Julius Eggeling, SBE 12, 161: ‘for by (religious) toil, the gods indeed gained what they wished to gain, and (so did) the Rīshis’. 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 *kṣaya-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.: “jīgīsāse, sc. ājīm, 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 RV 1.163.7b, who had hesitantly preferred to take *jīgīsāmāṇam* as belonging to gā ‘go’ rather than to jayjī ‘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, *adhvaram* at 7.2.7c ārdhvām no *ahdvaram* kṛtanā hāveṇu and *citram* at 7.20.7d ā *citra* *citram* bharā rayām naḥ (chapter II.1. The Third Degree of the Mid-Word Cæsura) or *ānikhayāvahai* at 7.88.3d prā prerikhā *ānikhayāvahai* subhē kām (chapter II.2. The Fourth Degree of the MWC).
shall not get hurt at all, shall not come to harm.\footnote{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 suchet”.}

As has been convincingly argued by Hoffmann,\footnote{Karl Hoffmann, “Die angebliche Wurzel bhrešate”. 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.} bhrešate can be defined as the s-aorist subjunctive of root bhrayi/bhrī ‘hurt’ < PIE *bʰreH ‘cut’\footnote{See \textsuperscript{2}LIV, 2001, 92–93 s.v. Cf. also \textsuperscript{1}LIV, 1998, 77 s.v.}. 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 RV 7.20.1–10 are entirely made up of trishtub lines. In this hymn, the mid-word cæsura of 6a nū cit sā bhrešate jānō nā rešat is, however, not the only irregularity. A second example of that kind can be found in pāda 7d ā citra citrā yam bharā rayim nāḥ — 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 RV 1.41.1c nū cit sā dabhyate jānāḥ. This octosyllabic line closely resembles the first eight syllables of our hendecasyllabic verse. Only the finite verb-form diverges.\footnote{For a slightly different definition of bhrešate as an isolated sa-aorist, see Johanna Narten, Die sigmatischen Aoriste im Veda. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964, 184 s.v. bhrī ‘verletzen’.


It is, however, also possible to consider dabh in the passive dabhyate as the zero grade of root damb (dambhñâyati) “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 dabhyaṭe, substituting it with bhreṣate, and extending the verse by another three syllables, to wit, nā 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, 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 īnhkhayāvahai 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 bhreṣate (with an early, and less organic, cæsura) or bhreṣate (with a late, and more organic, cæsura).

It would seem, by the way, somewhat difficult to decide which of the two divisions, bhreṣate or bhreṣate, 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 bhreṣ-a- from the ending -te, or the second division, by which the pre-consonantal full-grade root-form bhre- (< *bhraj-< **bhrajH-) is opposed to a complex of tense-sign -ṣ- plus mode-sign -a- plus ending -te.

The alternative bhreṣate 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: nā cit sā bhreṣate jāno nā reṣat. If, however, the cæsura were late, the second syllable after it would be light: nā cit sā bhreṣate jāno nā 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 nā cīt sā bhreṣate jáno nā 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 fyākṣantas at 2.20.1d and, as a particularly interesting case, the middle voice jāyame 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 vayám te váyá indra viddhi sū nah 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:

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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-bhar: 1. den Wagen vorführen, an die Spitze bringen ... und 2. auftragen, darbringen ...” (Der Rig-Veda I 300).
sumnám ṭyakṣantas tṛvāvato nṝn

trying to obtain the favour\textsuperscript{158} of one like you among men\textsuperscript{159}

The desiderative present participle ṭyakṣantas formed from the verbal root naśaś ‘attain, obtain’\textsuperscript{160} is best understood here in a conative sense.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{158} The syntagma sumnám ṭyakṣa- ‘try to obtain the favour [of …]’ occurs two more times in the RV, once at 1.153.2d [… Mitra and Varuṇa], and once at 10.50.3b [… Indra].

\textsuperscript{159} Ludwig’s rendering of the phrase tṛvāvato nṝn 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).

\textsuperscript{160} The desiderative present-tense stem, being attested 19 times in the RV, as ṭyakṣa- (17x) or iyakṣa- (2x), includes the active participle ṭyakṣant- (7x) and the middle voice iyakṣamāna- (1x). As an obvious result of secondary Verdeutlichung, the stem ṭyakṣa- then came about, with a total number of six occurrences, in predominantly more recent parts of the RV: Book 1 (2x), Book 9 (1x), Book 10 (3x).

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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{jāyamāne} in verse 7a of RV 10.95, a hymn that presents, for its greater part, a spirited dialogue between the nymph Urvaśī and King Purūrvās, her erstwhile lover. After \textit{four short years} (?) of \textit{connubial} — or rather, \textit{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: \textit{How Quickly Did Urvaśī Leave?}

At RV 10.95.16ab, Urvaśī refers back to the time of her heteromorphic existence on earth by saying: \textit{yād vír[pā á]caram márt,\textit{yes}, v \textit{ávasanm rātrih śarādas cátasrah} ‘When I moved about amongst mortals in a form different [from my own], and spent the nights [with you] \textit{for four autumns’}. Now, it seems likely to me that here \textit{śarādas} does not mean ‘years’.\textsuperscript{163}

Rather, it may represent an \textit{elliptical} plural. In the same way as, for instance, \textit{saptá hóttaras} — an expression that occurs at RV 8.60.16a and

\textsuperscript{162} In his translation of this passage, Geldner, Der Rig-Veda I 300, renders \textit{íyakṣant-} with “\textit{um} [die Gunst eines Herren gleich dir] \textit{zu erlangen}”. This could be the rendering of non-desiderative present participles like \textit{aśnuvānt-} or \textit{nākṣant-}, which both occur in the RV (1x and 4x respectively), taken in a \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{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 \textit{synecdoche} or \textit{pars-pro-toto} meaning of \textit{śarād}, see the dictionaries of Böhtlingk & Roth, PW 7, 93 s.v.: \textit{Bed. 2}, or of Grassmann, Wörterbuch, 1382 f., s.v.: \textit{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 \textit{vier Jahre hindurch}” or Geldner, III 303: “Als ich in andrer Gestalt unter den Sterblichen wandelte, \textit{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 śarādas 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 Urvāśī 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 RV 10.95.10a  vidyūn nā yā pātantī 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 Urvāśī 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. śarād- f. ‘autumn’ (RV 30x [+]); 2. hīmā- f. ‘winter’ (RV 4x: 1.64.14d; 2.33.2b; 5.54.15d; 6.48.8d [+]) or hemantā- m. ‘winter’ (RV 1x: 10.161.4b [+]); 3. vasantā- m. ‘spring’ (RV 2x: 10.90.6c, 10.161.4b [+]); 4. grīsmā- m. ‘summer’ (RV 1x: 10.90.6d [+]) or sāmā- f. ‘summer; year’ (RV 3x: 4.57.7d; 10.85.5d, 10.124.4a [+]); 5. prāvīṣ- f. ‘[onset of the] rainy season’ (RV 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, śīrśa- m. ‘Vorfrühling’ (ŚŚ 2x: 6.55.2a & 12.1.36b [+]), is not yet attested in the Ṛgveda. And even if śīrśa- in the sense of ‘cool season’ had already come into common use at that time, it would have to be taken together with hemantā- ‘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 hemantē, or cool śīēre.

The frequent joining of the two seasons’ names under one and the same yoke in the Yajurvedic dvandva hemantā-śīrśa- (VSM 10.14 = VSK 11.5.5; MS 2.7.20:105.17; KS 39.7:124.18, KSAśv 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 śīrśa- on hemantā-.

Cf. also AB 1.1.14 paḷca rtavo hemantāśiśirayo/g522 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 hemantāśiśirav ahorātre ca chandast [27 pūrvavāl 26 lingām dvandvasya], and Thieme’s discussion of this sūtra in his Kleine Schriften I, 1971 (= 1848), 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 śarādas 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 RV 10.95.5a tríḥ sma māhnah 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, RV 10.95.16ab, but also from the prose passage at ŚB 11.5.1.11 sā hovāca / samvatsaratamāṁ rátrim ā gacchatā tān me ēkāṁ rátrim ānte śayitāse ānte vāṁ tārihi putrō bhavītā ‘She (Urvaśī) said [to him (Purūravas)]: You may come [to my place] for the last night of the year. Then, you may be lying there168 [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 vaitasā- ‘rod’ (RV 2x) is derived from vetasā- ‘reed’ (RV 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 (trīr dānas) and 16b (śarādas cātras), 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 śarādas really meant ‘[four] years’ here, and meant it as clearly as dānas 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: śayśi ‘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: ... ā gacchatā and ... ānte śayitāse — 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 ayáam, 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 RV 10.95.13c, ‘hyaena-hearted’ Urvaśī goes even so far as to use neuter forms of the demonstrative pronoun sātattā- and of the relative pronoun yā-, in provocative preference to their more natural masculine counterparts, obviously with contemptuous intent: prā tati te hinavā yāt te asmē ‘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 tristubh 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 RV 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 RV 10.95.10a vidyūn nā yā · pātanti 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 jāyamāna āsata gnā
utēm avardhan nad jāh svāgūrtāh

By him, while he was being born, were sitting together,\textsuperscript{171}
the divine women,\textsuperscript{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 jāy- from the suffix -māna-, read the line as
sám asmiñ jāyamāna āsata gnāḥ. But do we really wish incisively to cut this
single uncompounded word into two, and yield to the temptation of a deceptive
metrical normalcy?\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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 Rigveda, 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 asmīn. Hillebrandt seems to have solved the
problem — which this enclitic word, notwithstanding its unstressed character, emphatically poses
— by not recognizing it at all.

\textsuperscript{172} Here, the plural gnās ‘divine women’ does not appear to refer to ‘wives of the gods’,
such as indrānī- or varūnānī-, 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.

\textsuperscript{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: \( jāni\ṣṭo \ apō nār, yāh sūjātah \) ‘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 \( sā hovāca \) ... and my translation of it in the preceding excursus.

\(^{175} \) The etymological construction \( jāni\ṣṭa ... sūjātas \) — which happens to reflect two different ablauting grades of the same root \( jānīlājā \) ‘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 \( nār, yā- \) [manly] and \( āp-\)lap- 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 \( āp, yā, āp, yā yōṣā, \) or \( āp, yā yōṣā \), all meaning ‘water-woman’ and designating an Apsaras as ‘Water-Woman’, see the three RV passages 10.10.4c \( gandharvō aps, y āp, yā ca yōṣā \) ‘the Gandharva in the Waters and the Water-Woman’, 10.11.2a \( rápad gandharvī āp, yā ca yōṣā \) ‘If she, the Gandharvī and Water-Woman, babbles’, and 10.95.10b \( bhārantī me āp, yā kām yānī \) ‘[Urvaśī,] the Water-Woman [flashed like a flash of lightning and left] taking away [all] things desirable to me’.

The original meaning of \( a[p]saras-\) 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’ \( a-\)psaras. Cf. Jacob Wackernagel, Kleine Schriften I. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953 (= 31969), 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, *nadēyas* — 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 *yād*-clause in RV 10.95.7cd, the second distich of our stanza — the emancipated educational practice of hers, by referring the king to his own remote past:

\[
\text{mahē yāt tvā purūravo ráṇāya\[a á\]vardhayān dasyuhātyāya devāḥ}
\]

\textit{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 \textit{male} gods and trained for the \textit{manly} business of fighting the enemies, his son was raised by \textit{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, *sām asmiṇ jāyamāna āsata gnāḥ*, seems to resound with the triple echo of a passage in the eighth maṇḍala referring to Indra: 8.70.4b–d *yāśmin mahīr urujrāyaḥ / sām dhenāvo jāyamāne anonavur dyāvah ksāmo anonavuh* ‘[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) \textit{female} beings being present at the birth of a \textit{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 \textit{unheroic} man by his woman — and Indra, that most manly of men (*nṛṇāṁ nṛtamāḥ*), could have been intended by the poet of 10.95, if only with mild irony.

\(^{181}\) Cf. again Hoffmann, Der Injunktiv 202: ‘Der *yād*-Satz mit *avardhayā* ist vorzeitig’.

And I may perhaps add that, since the ‘plerperfect’ 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 — *mahē ráṇāya* on the one hand, *dasyuhātyāya* on the other — may be taken as an \textit{hendiadys}, I should have preferred the more elegant translation ‘for the great battle of killing the Dasyus’.

\[196\]
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, yâh svâgurâh)?

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, Purûravas refers to Urvaśi’s playmates and their fastidious reluctance to have intimate dealings with him, cf. 10.95.6c and 8a–d:

\[\text{tā añjáyo [a]runáyo ná sasruḥ}\]

They (these rosy [or ruddy] females) have faded like the rouge [of dawn].

\[\text{sácā yād āsu jáhatīyāvā yātākam}\]
\[\text{ámānuśīṣu mānuśo niśēve}\]
\[\text{āpa sma mát tarāsanī nā bhujyūs}\]
\[\text{tā atrasan rathaspṛśo n[ā ā]śvāḥ}\]

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. ámānuśī- ‘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 Purûravas and Urvaśi some time after their humanly painful separation — at ŚB 11.5.1.4: tād dha tā apsarasā ātāyo bhūtvā pári pupluvire ‘There (on a pond [sarasī-?] abundant in lotus-roots [bīsavatī-] right in the middle of Kurukṣetra, where lovesick Purûravas 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 (Casarea or Tadorna ferruginea) would seem a quite likely candidate to me.\(^{183}\)

2. Since bhujyw- ‘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 Urvaśi’s fellow-Apsarases are compared with, while their numbers irretrievably disagree, I would prefer to take āśvās as the plural of āśvā- f. ‘mare’, and not of āśva- 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 -sp/g453/g257- in the compound ratha-sp/g449/g257 as 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 — j/g423yam/g232ne — 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-psarās- ‘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 Pinkheaded 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 rathaspśśo n[ā ā]śvāḥ “wie Pferde, die an den Wagen stoßen”.

Sweet to Urvaṣī 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 Pūrṇaras 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 jāyamāne ‘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 RV 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: ahāṁ evā vātā īva
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, RV 10.71.4ab \textit{utā tvah pāśyan nā dadarśa vācam utā tvah śṛṇvān nā śṛṇot, y enām} ‘and \textit{many a one}, while looking [intently], has not seen Speech [successfully]; and \textit{many a one}, while listening, does not hear her’, never prove true of \textit{any a one} of us — stumbling students of the holy language.\footnote{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.}

\textit{prā vām, y ārābhamānā bhūvanāni viśvā ‘It is I who blow forth as a [kind of] wind to take hold of all worldly 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.