Alexander Lubotsky

The Vedic root vr- ‘to cover’ and its present

Summary: The original meaning of the Vedic root vr- is ‘to cover’. The root is anīṣ and begins with a laryngeal. Of the two present stems, viz. vṛṇḍī and ārnā, the latter originated in specific phonetic environment and practically eliminated the former in late Vedic.

1. The main topic of the present paper is the relationship between two present stems of the Vedic root vr-, viz. vṛṇḍī and ārnā, but before we embark on the discussion of these presents let us first scrutinize the meaning of the root, its shape and etymology.

1.1 The meaning of the root vr-. The finite forms of the root essentially display one of the two meanings in the Rgveda (RV): 1) ‘to cover’ (with the preverbs āpa and vr ‘to open, uncover, release, remove’), or 2) ‘to stop, check’. There can be little doubt that the meaning ‘to stop’ has developed from the basic meaning ‘to cover’ (cf. for a parallel to cover a player in sport terminology). As is typical of derived meanings in general, the ‘stop’-meaning has a more restricted use. First, it is almost always found in negated or interrogative sentences, cf. 5.55.7a nā pārvatā nā nadyā varanta vo ‘neither the mountains nor the rivers will stop you (Maruts)’ or 5.32.9a kó asya śūsam tāvām varāte ‘who will stop his impetuosity, his power?’ Secondly, the ‘stop’-meaning is practically limited to the forms without preverbs (the only exceptions are the rare pra-vr- and ni-vr-) and to the middle voice (the most frequent forms with this meaning are aor. subj. middle vārate and the causative-factitive middle vārāyate).

It is further important that the Avestan root var- ‘to cover’ never shows the meaning ‘to stop’, which suggests that the latter is a specifically Vedic development. The Avestan root does have other derived meanings like ‘to impregnate’, ‘to cover eyes, ears = to blind, to deafen’.

If we now look at nominal formations which are considered derivatives of this root, we see a bewildering variety of meanings. As an illustration of the communis opinio on the matter, I here give a list of nouns which are considered by Mayrhofer (EWAia) as cognate with our root (the division into semantic classes is mine):

1. ‘to cover’: vārman- n. ‘armour’, vārṇa- m. ‘color’, vavri- m. ‘covering, vesture’, āpāvṛti- f. ‘opening’. It seems likely that vṛtra- also belongs to this semantic class. Its original meaning probably was ‘cover’, since the demon Vṛtra- "covered" the

1 Note that the second meaning is ‘to stop, check’ rather than ‘to obstruct, hinder’, which is often given in the dictionaries and handbooks.

2 The original locus of the semantic change ‘to cover > to stop’ probably was the expression ‘to cover the fire’ = ‘to stop the fire’, cf. 1.116.8a himēnātān ghrāmāvāra vārāyethām ‘you two have covered the fire, the heat, with snow’, 5.73.5cd pārti vām arṇu vāyo, ghnā vāranta ṛṭāpah ‘your red birds (= horses) will stop the glowing heat from burning’ (cf. Hoffmann 1967: 197), 8.73.8a vārethe aṅnīm ātiāpo ‘you two (the Āśvins) will cover (= stop) the fire from burning’, AVP 1.44.1cd sarṇa vīśqa ṭhāṃmāry, udvēnātān aṅvārī ‘I have extinguished all sorts of poison like fire with water’.

3 Similarly, in the nominal derivatives a(ni)vṛta- ‘unstoppable’, dur-vṛt- adj. ‘difficult to stop’.

4 The meaning ‘Versteck’, given by Grassmann and taken over by Mayrhofer, is dispensable, see Geldner’s translations.
waters, which were later "opened" (āpava-) by Indra. After the monograph by Benveniste and Renou (1934), it has become customary to operate with the original meaning 'obstacle' for this word (and for its Avestan cognate varətra-), but since we cannot reconstruct the meaning 'to obstruct' for Indo-Iranian verbal root vr-, this idea seems doubtful to me. Note further that Av. varətra- also has the meaning 'shield', which often carries the idea of covering.

2. 'to stop': varār- m. 'stopper', arno-vṛ- 'stopping the flood', vátra- n. 'dike' (AV+).

3. 'hole, imprisonment': varvā- m. 'hole, pit', valā- m. 'cave, demon of the cave', urvā- m. 'reservoir, prison'; uncertain: ulba- n. 'membrane, surrounding the embryo', bila- 'hole, pit'.

4. 'protection': varūtrār- m. 'protector', varūtrī- f. 'guardian goddess', varūthān- n. 'protection, shelter'.

5. 'leather strap': varatrāt- (RV) f. '(yoke-)strap', vārdhra- (AV+) m. 'leather strap, band', vārdhṛī- (Br.+) 'leather band'.

6. varia: vāraṇā- adj. 'tail (?)', vāra- m. '(tail) hair'.

It is clear that groups 1 and 2 are derivatives of the root vr- 'to cover'. It is conceivable that at least some members of group 3 belong there too, but the forms like ulba- and bila- make the whole group somewhat suspect of being borrowed from an indigenous language. As to the other groups, they are, in my opinion, not related to our root.

Group 4 shows a different root, viz. varā-, which goes together with a specific meaning 'to protect, guard', a meaning that is nowhere attested for the root vr-. The etymological connection of this group with Gr. ἐπουλεῖ 'to protect' can hardly be doubted, which, at the same time, excludes any relationship with Skt. vr-, since the Skt. root begins with a laryngeal, as we shall presently see.

In order to derive group 5 from our root, we would have to pay a big price, viz. to posit two unique suffixes -dhra- and -atra- and to consider a leather strap as something that covers or stops. Wackernagel-Debrunner 1954 and Mayrhofer (EWAia) are prepared to pay this price, but for me it is too high. It is further important that varatrā- is a late word in the RV, only attested in hymns of Atharvaveda-like character (3x X, 1x "Anhang"-hymn 4.57), and that the variation of the type vārdhra-/vārdhṛī-is far from regular. Words of this semantic category can easily be borrowed, and it is quite probable that here we are dealing with a loan word.

As to group 6, vāraṇā- is difficult to derive from vr- for semantic reasons. The explanation of vāra- by Thieme (1994: 324) as 'warding off (flies)' (following Yāska, Nir. 11.31) has a strong flavour of folk etymology. Moreover, the root vr- does not mean 'to ward off', which renders the idea even less probable. The old etymology connecting this word with Lith. vālas 'tail-hair' seems preferable to me.

Mayrhofer's rendering 'Abwehner' is imprecise. The word always means 'protector'. Grassmann gives the meaning 'Abwehner' only for 1.169.1b mahāś cīd asi śyājasa varūṣāḥ, which, however, can also be rendered 'you are the protector even from a great danger', cf. 7.20.1d trātā na indra ēnasō mahāś cit 'Indra is our protector even from a great mischief'.

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1.2 The shape of the root vr-.
The root is anit, cf. pres. vrñoti (for ārnóti see below), ta-ptic. vrta-, caus. vārtyate with a long vowel due to Brugmann’s Law, and nominal derivatives like *vṛt-, vṛti-, vrtrā-, etc.

It is less well-known that vr- had an initial laryngeal, as follows from consistent lengthening of preceding short vowels. The evidence consists of three groups of forms:

a. The long augment in āvar 2sg. and 3sg. aor. (14x6 in the RV, 1x in the AV). The only apparent exception is 5.31.3d vi jyāti~ii sarravṛvrat tamo 'vah, where we should probably assume injunctive var, rather than avar of the PadaPātha (Gippert 1997: 76).

b. Lengthening of the preverb in the ta-part. āpā-vrta-, āpī°, abhi°, pārī°, ā-parī°7, prā° and in impv. aor. āpā vṛdhi (5x in the RV). Further, we find lengthening in āpāvṛti- f. ‘opening’8 and in hrāduni-vṛ-, if it means ‘covered by hail’ (or ‘covering with hail’) and belongs to our root (see Geldner ad 5.54.3c). Also the long reduplication in the pluperfect āvāvarī may be old. The AV adds samḍāvṛvt-a and the gerund prāvṛtya.

c. Long scansion of vi in 1.62.5a gṛñānō áṅgirohīr dasma vi var (cf. Gippert 1997: 76) and of ā- in āvṛta- ‘unstoppable’ (in all its 7 occurrences). Also suvivṛta-(1.10.7a) must probably be scanned with long ī because otherwise there are three short syllables at the beginning of the line. It is peculiar that the preverb ni does not appear with lengthening in the Saṁhitā-text, cf. nivṛtam (1.112.5a), nivṛtāh (1.57.6c, 10.98.6b), but these forms stand after the caesura and are metrically ambiguous. On the other hand, ánvṛtā- ‘unstoppable’ must be scanned with long ī in 3.29.6c.

Taken by itself, no single form with vowel lengthening is sufficient to demonstrate the initial laryngeal, but the cumulative evidence makes it clear that we must reconstruct the root as *Hr-.

1.3 The etymology.
The etymology of vr- remains problematic, but the fact that this root contained an initial laryngeal considerably reduces the number of possible cognates. Neither Gr. ἔπειμα ‘to enfold, enwrap’, nor Gr. ἐπιμα ‘to protect’, which are often connected with Skt. vr-, can begin with a laryngeal (cf. Peters 1980: 46f.), so that we can remove them from the list. From the semantic point of view, the best candidates are Lat. aperēre ‘to open’, ope rère ‘to close’, Lith. avērī ‘to open’, (u)āvērī ‘to close’, SCR. avārīti ‘to open’, etc. The acute intonation in Balto-Slavic seems to point to a root-final laryngeal10, but the first impression is deceptive. As Professor Kortlandt points out to

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6 1.113.13b vy āvo most probably belongs to the root vaz- ‘to shine’. Lubotsky 1997: 1336 must be corrected.
7 There is only one exception in the RV, viz. 7.27.2d pārivṛtam, but it occurs in a metrically ambiguous position.
8 4.20.8a apavartār- stands in a metrically ambiguous position after the caesura. The meaning and attribution of ānapavṛt adv. (6.32.5c, 10.89.3a) are not quite certain.
9 Note, incidentally, that this form is missing from the collection of Krisch 1996.
10 I used to consider this fact prohibitive for the etymological connection with the anit vr- (Lubotsky 1988: 87).
me, the Slavic root must be anī, as follows from SCr. vręta, Russ. (dialect.) vorotá 'gate', which is identical with Lith. vaštai (2) 'gate'. The Standard Russian voróta has been generalized from prepositional phrases like *zá vorta > za voróta 'outside the gate', where the Slavic progressive accent shift (Dybo's Law) was operative. The same shift is responsible for the acute intonation in the verb, which is hardly attested without preverbs, e.g. *zavrēti > *zavrēti (Dybo) > *zavrēti with the same secondary acute as, for instance, in SCr. smrē 'death' < *smtītē. In a similar fashion, the circumflex of Lith. vaštai (2), Latv. vārti 'gate' indicates that the acute of the Baltic verb (Lith. vērti, Latv. vērī) is likely to be secondary. 11

Of old, Gr. άείπω 'to lift, raise up, remove' (< PIE *h₂yēr-) has been connected with vr-, too (cf. also Knobloch 1980: 199f.). In spite of the fact that the meaning of the Greek verb does not exactly correspond to that of Skt. vr-, the two do have much in common. Note that āpa-vr- often has the meaning 'to lift, remove (the darkness, the perils)', and it is conceivable that the meanings have diverged through the centuries. At any rate, the formal match is perfect.

2. The two presents.

2.1 The root vr- has two presents in the RV, viz. vrnōti and ārnōti, and their relationship has never been clarified. 12 When we have two competing forms in a language, it is always worthwhile to look at the actual occurrences and ask ourselves the question as to what extent these formations are complementary. The following table represents a synopsis of all forms of both present formations attested in the RV. Note that I have added the preverb only if it immediately precedes the verb (the reason for that will become clear presently).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>vrnōti (21x)</th>
<th>ārnōti (31x)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>pres. prā vrnōti</td>
<td>ārnōti, vy ārnōti, abhy ārnōti</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ārnōthāh</td>
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<tr>
<td>impf. (apa-)āvrnōh&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;, (apa-)āvrnōh&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>aūrnōh, aurnōh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>aūrnōt, aurnōt</td>
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<tr>
<td>inj.</td>
<td>vy ārnōt</td>
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<tr>
<td>impv.</td>
<td>āpurnu</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ārnūhi, ārnūhi&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;, vy ārnūhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ārnūta</td>
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</tbody>
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11 Thus also Derksen 1996: 81f., who tentatively suggests that vērti/vērt ‘to pierce, string; to open, close’ may originally have been two different verbs, viz. *yeh- ‘to pierce’ and *yēr- ‘to lift/close’.

12 Wackernagel (1896: 25) tried to dissociate the two presents by connecting ārnōti with the root r-, which is unconvincing, since vrnōti and ārnōti clearly mean the same and appear in identical formulae (cf. Oldenberg 1909: 68f.). Rasmussen’s theory (1989: 22, 78) that vr- reflects PIE *yh(e)- and, accordingly, that ārnōti is the original form does not explain (among other things) why vrnōti, which is in his view the young and productive formation, is moribund in late Vedic (see below).
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Root Formulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>*vrnvántah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>*vrnvé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>*avrnváta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>*prórnuusva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>*aprornvántah, vyůrnván, vyůrnvait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that *vrnóti has a more limited distribution: 1) it does not appear after the preverbs *vi and *abhí, and 2) it does not appear in those forms where the suffix has the anteconsonantal zero grade -nu-. If we leave the forms with *vi and *abhí out of consideration for a moment, we see that the two presents practically form one paradigm, which is especially clear in the middle: 1sg. *vrnvé, [2sg. *úrnúse,] 3sg. *úrnuté, 3pl. *vrnváte / *vrnváte, impf. *avrnváta, impv. *úrnúsva.

Since the root *vr- is anit and its Avestan cognate is *vərənaoiti, it is evidently *úrnóti that is secondary and in need of explanation. The distribution of *vrnóti and *úrnóti suggests that *úrnóti originated in the position after the preverbs *vi and *abhí and before the suffix -nu-. What we still have to do is to explain the overlapping forms and to find a phonetic explanation for the distribution.

2.2 The overlap is only found in the active: the four occurrences of the imperfect aúrñoth, aúrñot, and one occurrence of *úrnóti do not conform to the distribution. We here witness the beginning of the analogical spread of *úrnóti, which later completely ousted *vrnóti in the Atharvaveda and practically eliminated it in the other Vedic texts.

While re-examining the overlapping forms, we see that the late hapax *úrnóti occurs in the line 10.88.12d *āpo *úrnóti támó arcitśá yán 'he removes the darkness, when he comes with [his] ray' (of Súrya), which is probably remodeled after a passage like 4.45.2c apornuvántas támá d párvṣtvam 'removing the covered darkness' (of Aśvins' horses). This explains at the same time the unusual form *āpo *úrnóti with an added particle *u in order to prevent contraction: the poet evidently needed an extra syllable.

As to the imperfect aúrnóth, aúrnót, it is hardly due to an accident that in every of its four occurrences it is used with the preverb *vi, whereas the imperfect *āvrñoth, avrnót is 13 times found with the preverb *āpa and once without a preverb. From the analysis of the passages it becomes clear that the imperfect aúrnóth, aúrnót is a secondary formation, created in order to match forms like inj. vy úrnót. The dvipáda viráj line 1.68.10a *vi ráya aúrnóth dárāh purukśuḥ 'he (Agni), rich of cattle, uncovers

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13 The *vrn-forms are very rare even in the later texts. I found in the VWC only three forms: two imperatives VS(K) 40.1.15 *apa *vrnú, TA 6.7.1 *abhí *vrnú, and *apa *vrnute in the line *āpo mæhi *vrnute cákṣusá támoh (SV[K] 1.303, 2.101; [J] 1.32.1, 3.10.3; TB 3.1.3.2), which is a variant of RV 7.81.1c *āpo mæhi *vyayati cákṣasé támoh. All other forms with *vrn- belong to the root *vṛ- 'to choose, select', for which see below.
the riches, the doors’ is evidently connected with line 1b of the same hymn sthātōś ca rāham aṅkān vy ārnot ‘he uncovers the standing and the moving, [he removes] the nights’. A similar diction is reflected in 10.81.2d vi dhām aūrnōn mahīnā viśvācaksāh. The other two passages are also interrelated, cf. 6.17.6c aūnrō dāra uṣrīyābhīyo vi dhṛhā- ‘he (Indra) opened the doors, the strongholds for the cows’ and 7.79.4d vi dhṛhāṣya dāro adre ārnot aūrnōh ‘he (Indra) opened the doors of the solid rock’. The secondary character of the imperfect stem aūrnōh is further indicated by the fact that in the latter passage, aūrnōh must be scanned a-ūrnōh, in three syllables, which is the only case of a disyllabic scansion of au-. In other words, this is the injunctive ārnot, to which an augment is added.

2.3 How can we account for the proposed distribution from a phonetic point of view? Let us start with the observation that immediately after the preverbs vi and abhi we only find uñnoti. This fact implies laryngeal metathesis:

*C{i}HuC₂ > *C{i}uHC₂ (C₂ ≠ i)

A similar metathesis is responsible for the alternations like jivati : desiderative jāyūsati (SB) / jāyūsati (AitB) ‘to live’ and sivyati : sūyā- ‘to sew’, dīvya : dūyā- ‘to play dice’, mīvati : mītā- (< *mūtā-) ‘to push’, sthīvati : sthyūdā- ‘to spit’, etc. The metathesis *C{i}HuC₂ > *C{i}uHC₂ did not occur in case of C₂ = i (cf. sivyati, dīvya) because y was consonantal before i, as follows from Skt. savyā- ‘left’, nāvyā- ‘new’, etc. (which is opposite to e.g. śēva- , devā-). 14

Whereas *#Hurnauti yielded the expected vṛnoti, the laryngeal metathesis *viHurnauti > *viuHrnuti led to the attested rvṛnoti (similarly, *abhivHrnuti > *abhviuHrnuti). 15

Since rvṛnoti and abhyrvṛnoti are verbal compounds, the metathesis in these verbs must be a comparatively recent phenomenon. 16 At first sight, the non-syllabic

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14 An analogous rule must have been operative in other languages, too. For instance, the Balto-Slavic root for ‘to sew’ (Lith. siūt, Latv. šūt, Scr. šūt) points to the reconstruction *ṣūH-, cf. especially Russ. šīla and Latv. šīlū with initial accenuation due to Hirt’s Law. This means that the rule C{u}uHC > C{i}uHC must have preceded the other metathesis rule C{u}HuC > C{i}uHC, which is posterior to Hirt’s Law (cf. Russ. piša < *pišēl, with final accenuation). Also Latin movēre indirectly points to the metathesized *m{u}H-, as it contains a new full-grade to this root. Note that a metathesis in the opposite direction (C{i}uHV- > C{u}HV-), assumed by Mayrhofer (EWAia 11: 359), is phonetically implausible: the laryngeal tends to stand after the most vocalic element of the syllable, cf. CH{i}uC > C{i}uHC.

15 Forms like abhiyṛṇa- can easily have been remodeled.

16 It is tempting to assume that this metathesis rule was even operative on a synchronic level in the RV. This conclusion is suggested by 1.165.6c.10c: dham ḫy ṛgrō ‘For I (Indra) am the mighty one’ with exceptional ṛgrō- from *хи Hugra-. The reason why the lengthening is only attested in this passage must be sought in the “close contact” between ḫi and ugrā-, possibly due to the irritated intonation, with which Indra pronounces this sentence. Oldenberg’s (1909: 161) explanation of the long ḫi by kampa, i.e. a specific accent combination, seems ad hoc, because it does not account for the unique character of this passage. Cf. also SV 1.36b = 1.1.4.2b pṛhy uṭā (RV 8.60.9b pṛhy uṭā), mentioned by Debrunner 1957: 172 and Strunk 1983: 20, n. 27.

If this explanation is correct, we may account for a few instances of the lengthened particle ḫi, viz. 4.6.11b ṛ ḫy ḫ dhōh (in the cadence), 4.51.2c ṛ ḫy vṛṣṭāya (beginning of the line). In the latter case, there was no metrical need to protract the vowel. Incidentally, more than half of the occurrences of ḫi is
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-nv- in the participles výuárván, výuárvatí, abhilyárváná seems to indicate that metathesis was posterior to phonologization of the Sievers' variants,17 but since uá very often does not trigger Sievers' Law (urdhwl-, urva-, durlva-, purulva-, purlv-., tvúde-, etc.), this fact can hardly be used for establishing a chronology.18

At any rate, the non-syllabic -nv- in výuárván, etc. is the regular reflex,19 which means that -nv- in apornuávántah (1.190.6d, 4.45.2c) requires an explanation. I believe that this is a nonce formation, originated in 4.45.2c, i.e. the only passage with apornuávántas in the family books. It is important that in pada d the poet uses the scansion -u- in a totally irregular tanávanta(J:) (pada 2d is further repeated in 6b):

4.45.2cd  apornuávántas táma á párívrtam
sávárá ná sukrám tanávánta á rájáh

"[Eure Wagen (und) Pferde fahren aus,] die ganz zugedeckte Finsternis aufdeckend, wie die helle Sonne den Raum durchziehend" (Geldner)

The creative poet of this hymn20 has presumably coined apornuávántah after forms like impv. ápuru (for which see below), inspired by the rhyme formation tanávántah in the next line.21

2.4 The distribution of ùnu- vs. vṛṇo- in vṛṇv- is strongly reminiscent of the present of the root kr- 'to make' in late Vedic, where the original class V present act. króti —

found in the collocation ú śú (35x out of 61 = 83 - 22 repetitions), where the lengthening is regular (*ú h.sú). From there ú has spread to ú ná (10x). It is possible, however, that the remaining 16 instances are analogical, too, which would render metathesis unnecessary.

17 See already Seebold 1972: 201, who has proposed to restore these forms as *vivuárván, etc., assuming a fairly late chronology for the rise of the stem ùnu-. In later texts, we find pari-ùruvánta (MS) and vý ùruvánta (AV), but these forms may be secondary, built by analogy to the stems proru-, aporu-, for which see below.

18 This does not detract from the fact that ur may actually be late in many of these words (cf. Lubotsky 1997a).

19 The fact that RV 9.96.11c aporu is "das einzige alte Beispiel für Weglassung von -dhi nach langer Silbe vor -nu-" (Debrunner 1957: 16) shows that the stem of the present ùruóti was considered "short" by the speakers.

20 The creativity and skill of the poet of 4.45, belonging to the Vámadeva family, appears from the virtuosity of his play with the syllables và/va and ma, which form his "signature" as it were (for the principle of anagrams, which was discovered by de Saussure, see Toporov 1981).

21 The syllabic and non-syllabic variants of the verbal stem *ùruu(a)v- after preverbs in -a are distributed in accordance with the school tradition in late Vedic: *ùruu- is found in the Atharvaveda (AVS aporuáván, AVP proruávatu, proruávantu), in the texts of the Maitrāyaṇiya school (MS, KapKS proruávādhám, KS proruávādhám, KS and KapKS proruávīta, KS samproruávādhám), and in the texts of the Mādhavinda school (VS(M) and SB(M) proruávādhám, SB(M) samproruávanti, áporuávanti), whereas *ùrv- is used in the Kāyāya school (VS(K) and SB(K) proruávādhám, SB(K) áporuávanti) and in the Taittirīya school (TS proruávādhám, áporuávīta, TB samproruávādhám). Renou (1948: 39) writes about the distribution: "la forme n'indique par elle-même aucune tendance précise, car la non-résolution y est anormale, et l'adhésion de TS. va contre la pratique des Taittirīyas". In my opinion, the fact that the non-resolution is atypical for the Taittirīyas rather pleads for the original character of this treatment. See further section 2.6.
middle *krnu* has become *karoti — kuruté.* The forms of the new present are distributed among two stems, viz. *kar- /karav-* and *kur- /kurv-.* Admittedly, the parallel is not perfect, and the transformation of the *karoti* paradigm took place at a later stage, but it is clear that in both instances we find the same mechanism, i.e. a kind of vowel harmony. According to the convincing analysis of the *karoti* paradigm by Hoffmann (1976: 575ff.), the process started in the imperative, where the original *krnu* has become *krru* and then *kuru.* In a similar fashion, *krnav- > *krrav- > karav-,* etc.

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Hoffmann (p. 584) has pointed out that there are clear examples of vowel harmony in Vedic, cf. *srthira-* > *sithira-,* *mfhur > muhur,* to which we can now add *durhfrJii-* > *durMf}ii-* (Narten 1982: 140) and *Tvf~rar-* > *Tva~!ar-*(Lubotsky 1994: 96).

These examples presuppose the following development: *mfhur* [marhur] > [murhur] > *muhur* with dissimilation of the first r, etc. If we apply these rules to our present, we expect *Hl}!1Ju-* to have been realized as [Hl}u~u-], which led to *Hu~u-* > *u~u-.

2.5 It may be clear that the distribution of *u~u-* vs. *v!1Jo-lv!1Jv-* found in the RV was prone to restructuring. The easiest and most drastic way was followed in the Atharvaveda. In this text, *u~u- (u~omi, u~oti, u~tu,* etc.) is the only present of the root *vr-:* there is not a single occurrence of *vru* in the AV, except for Rajvedic repetitions (AVS 20.11.3, 20.69.2, AVP 6.1.8). The VWC reports two *vru* forms from the AVP, but both are corrupt. AVP(K) 9.4.9ab reads *yusmán amitrá vrnután,* *ismán apratijáná uia,* which Barret (1922: 112) reconstructs as *yusmán amitrá vrnutám,* *yusmán pratijáná uia.* The verb form *vrnutám* must no doubt be corrected to *vrnatám*': *let the enemies choose you, and also the opponents!*, cf. AVS 3.3.5ab *hvayantu tvá pratijanáh,* *práti mitrá avrśata* 'let thine opponents call thee; thy friends have chosen [thee] against [them]' (Whitney). A similar correction is necessary in AVP 19.23.13d, where the Kashmir text gives sarvá vo *vrnutám vásah* (reconstructed by Barret 1940: 37 as sarvá vo *vrvatám vísah*). Here, too, we must read *vrnatám*' *let all the people choose you*, cf. AVS 3.4.2a *ṛvám viśo vrnutám rāgāya* 'Thee let the people choose unto kingship' (Whitney).

In other Vedic texts, we witness a continuous decline of *vru* in favor of *u~u.* Already in the Brāhmaṇas we occasionally find *vru* which functions as a present to the root *v- 'to choose', cf. MS 3.9.8 (127,11) *vru* (mss. *vru*), JB 1.70, 3.88, GB 1.2.24 (4x) *vru,* KB 28.4 *pravru,* etc., and the process went on in the Sūtras and Upanishads: the present *vru,* which had become "vacant," as it were, was taken over by another root.

2.6 Another indication of decline of *vru* is the peculiar formation *prórnuai,* found twice in the Brāhmaṇas (MS 3.10.1 (129,10), SB(M) 3.8.2.16) and allowed by Pāṇ. 7.3.90 as an alternative to *prórnu.* There can be no doubt that *prórnuai* is an analogical formation based on the inflection of verbs like *naúti,* *staúti,* etc., but its relation to the "normal" *prórnu* (AVS 15.1.8, TS 6.3.11.1 (2x), SB(K) 4.2.1.12,13;

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22 This reading is now given in the Bhattacharya's edition (1997) of the Orissa version of the AVP.
23 The Orissa text of book 19 is not yet available, but Arlo Griffiths, who is currently working on this book, kindly lets me know that his manuscript reads *vrnatám* in 19.23.13d, too.
24 Not only since the Upanishads, as reported by Whitney (1885: 163).
The Vedic root vr- 'to cover' and its present

4.8.2.11, TB 3.11.9.8 prónauti) remained unclear. To my knowledge, the only explanation which has ever been given is by Debrunner (1957: 157f.), who ascribes prónauti to a tendency to avoid o...o. This suggestion does not account for the distribution with prónoti, however.25

I do not think that we have to invoke euphonic rules. The explanation becomes immediately clear once we have looked at the passages where prónauti is found:

MS 3.10.1 (129,9-10) "ghṛtēna dyāvāprthivi prōnuvām" iti. ghṛtēnaivā dyāvāprthivi prōnuauti "Let the heaven and earth be covered with ghee!" [With these words] he covers the heaven and earth with ghee.'

ŚB(M) 3.8.2.16 átha vapām út khidati. tadya vapāśṛpānyau prōnuauti. "ghṛtēna dyāvāprthivi prōnuvāthām" iti ... "Then he extracts the omentum. He covers the vapāśṛpāni (a fork for frying the omentum) with it. "O heaven and earth, be covered with ghee!" ...'

It is obvious that in both cases prōnuauti has been created as a corresponding active (transitive) present to the middle (intransitive) impv. prōnuvātham with the inflection of verbs like stauti - stuvādām as a model. Note that prōnuauti was only formed in those Vedic schools (Maitrāyănya and Mādhyandīna) which have adopted the syllabic variant prōnuv- (see fn. 21). In the texts of the Taittirīya and Kāṇva schools, where the verb had the non-syllabic form prōnu-, the proposed analogy could not arise, and the active form had the shape prōnodi.26

This account has some interesting consequences. The fact that the Vedic schools had different formations for the active present to prōnuet receives a natural explanation if we assume that there was no prōnodi available in the system. In the RV, the active present is prā vrōnodi, but in the later texts this present disappeared and had to be formed anew. Secondly, it follows that the difference between prōnuv- and prōnuv-, which is in general ascribed to the school manierisms, was a linguistic reality after all.

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25 Surprisingly, Debrunner refers to Wackernagel (1918: 403, fn. 1), who, however, does not discuss the relation between the two formations at all. Wackernagel only draws attention to the fact that in the imperfect we only find prau~ot (thus also Pāñ. 7.3.91) vs. anaut, astaut, which he explained by the apparent avoidance of au...au. In view of the analysis of prōnuauti given below, Wackernagel's explanation is unnecessary.

26 For instance, the Kāṇva version of the ŚB has the pair prōnuvāthām : prōnodi in the parallel passage (4.8.2.11).


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