Accentuation in the technique of the Vedic poets

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1. The role of accentuation in the Vedic poetics has never been investigated. Handbooks and studies on the metre and versification of the Rgveda (RV) only mention that accents have no impact on the metre. This is certainly correct, but poetics has more aspects than merely metre. Vedic Sanskrit had pitch accent, and a sequence of accents represented an accentual contour, a “melody”. By repeating or varying this melody poets could create different effects. The aim of this article is to demonstrate the relevance of accentuation for the technique of the Vedic poets. I shall first give a short account of Vedic accentuation and metre, followed by a survey of accentual poetical devices on the basis of examples taken from the second Manḍala of the RV. Finally, I shall analyze four Indra-hymns of this Manḍala, viz. 2.12 – 2.15.

2. Vedic accentuation is known from accentuated manuscripts, grammatical treatises and modern recitation. Vedic accent was a pitch accent. The main accent of a word is termed udātta ‘raised’ or ‘rising’ by Pāṇini. The pitch of the syllable immediately following the udātta is called svarita and is described by Pāṇini as a combination of udātta and anudātta ’not raised’, which is the term Pāṇini used for the other syllables. The svarita is thus a non-autonomous falling accent, marking the transition from a high to a low syllable. The svarita becomes an independent accent when the preceding udātta syllable is lost through contraction (e.g., suvār > svār). Independent svaritas in the RV are rare because contractions are generally of a later date.1 The syllable preceding the udātta or independent svarita was pronounced lower than the others and is termed by Pāṇini sannatara ’lower’.2

1 In the oldest parts of the RV the contraction of -īy V- to -yV- is only attested with the preverb abhī, e.g. 2.26.1b abhy āsat. The independent svarita further occurs in neuters of adjectives in -ya- = -iya-, e.g. asurya- adj. ’of the Asuras’, which must be pronounced in four syllables (asuriya-), but neuter asurya- in three syllables (cf. Seebold 1972: 243ff). It is unclear how to account for this phenomenon. For the phonetic realization of these cases cf. below.

2 From the description of the Vedic accentual system by Pāṇini and the Prātisākhyaśa it follows that the udātta was a rising accent and not just high, as is often suggested. This is confirmed by the accentual marks of the manuscripts, which mark the sannatara by a horizontal stroke below the line and mark the udātta or the svarita by a vertical stroke above the line. The fall of the pitch (sannatara) before the main accent (udātta or independent svarita) was essential for the correct understanding of the text, and in the sequence kākaka the middle syllable is a sannatara and not svarita. For more information on the Vedic accents and their realization in modern recitation I refer the reader to Howard 1986.
It follows that if we know the place of the main accent (udāta), the assignment of the other accents is automatic (except for a few cases of the independent svarita). Writing “A” for an accented syllable and “a” for an unaccented one, we can represent the accentual contour of a verse as a sequence of these two symbols, e.g.

2.14.6c yó varcínah satám índrah sahásram   AaAaaAAaaAa

For the independent svarita I shall use the symbol “S”.

3. Vedic metre is based on a syllabic principle, being determined by the number of syllables in a pāda (verse) and by the number of pādas in a stanza. The most common metres of the RV are triṣṭubh (4 pādas of 11 syllables), jagatī (4 pādas of 12 syllables), gāyatī (3 pādas of 8 syllables) and anuṣṭubh (4 pādas of 8 syllables). In metres containing four pādas, pādas a and b and pādas c and d form a hemistich. The structure of a pāda is based on the sequence of long and short syllables. Long are syllables containing a long vowel, a diphthong or a short vowel followed by two or more consonants. The other syllables are short. There is a tendency towards a iambic rhythm, i.e. the even syllables are mostly long, but only the rhythm of the end of a pāda is fixed. The end of a pāda with the fixed rhythm is called ‘cadence’ and comprises the last four syllables of pādas of 8 and 11 syllables and the last five syllables of pādas of 12 syllables. The quality of the final syllable of a pāda is anceps. Pādas of 11 or 12 syllables have a caesura after the fourth or the fifth syllable.

The metre of the RV shows that the original text had sometimes more and sometimes less syllables than the text we now have. Restoration of extra syllables is possible in several cases: restoration of a late contraction (e.g. *-ah a- for -o ’-), restoration of *-CRR- for -CR- (e.g. *-Ciy-, *-Cuv- for -Cy-, -Cv-), restoration of a hiatus within a long vowel or diphthong. Pādas with too many syllables are rare: the metre shows that in junctures -ā r- contraction to -ar- took place, whereas we find uncontracted -a r- in the text; moreover, some -iya- and -uva- sequences must be read -ya- and -va-.

The text below will be presented in the metrical form, i.e. divided in pādas, with the caesura indicated by a comma, with necessary omissions and restorations. Vowels to be omitted are put in square brackets (e.g. bh[i]yāsām), contractions of -ā r- to -ar- are written -a r-. Vowels to be restored are written in the superscript (e.g. sūr’yaḥ), in round brackets (e.g. īśīṣe (a)yā), or with a dash (e.g. vṛṣā-ajani for vṛṣājani).

4. The accentual contour of a pāda will thus appear as a sequence of symbols “A” and “a”. For the sake of brevity I shall use the term “melody” for any sequence of accents within a pāda. As a syllable can be either accented or unaccented, a pāda of 12 syllables can theoretically have $2^{12} = 4096$ melodies, but there are several restrictions. First, every pāda has at least one A because the vocatives and the finite verbs of principal sentences, which are normally unaccented,
are accented when they stand at the beginning of a pāda. This also means that long sequences of unaccented syllables at the beginning of a pāda are rare. For instance, in Maṇḍala II we find four consecutive unaccented syllables in this position only three times (2.9.1d sahasrambharāḥ, 2.13.11a supravācanāṁ, 2.32.5d sahasrapośām). Secondly, as a word has normally one accent, sequences of several consecutive accented syllables are rare although there is no theoretical restriction. In Maṇḍala II the longest sequence is four (occurring only three times), but in Maṇḍala X I also found sequences of five consecutive accented syllables (10.55.6c yác cikēta, satyāṁ it tan na mógham; 10.71.9a ime ye nārvān, nā paraś caranti).

5. Accentuation was used by the Rgvedic poets in several ways. In this section I would like to illustrate a number of the most common poetical devices. All examples are taken from the second Maṇḍala.

A. PĀDA LINKING.

The accentual contour of pāda, its melody, is often repeated in another pāda of the same stanza, linking these pādas, as it were. Repetition of the melody of the whole pāda is rare, but repetition of long sequences is very frequent. The question is when is repetition significant and intentional. At first it is always guesswork. For metres of eleven or twelve syllables (triṣṭubh and jagati) I have normally considered repetition of sequences of at least seven accents as significant. The sequences of seven accents or more which are repeated are underlined in all examples. However, repetition of shorter sequences can be relevant too if these sequences are unusual (for examples see below). I have left out of consideration hymns written in metres of eight syllables (gāyatrī and anuṣṭubh) because in shorter pādas repetition of shorter sequences was used and during the first analysis it is often difficult to tell whether or not repetition is due to chance.

We begin with a rather extreme example from hymn 2.27:

2.27.13a súcir apaḥ, sūyāvasā ádabda // AaaAaaAaaAa
   b úpa kṣeti, vṛddhavayāḥ suvīraḥ / AaaaAaaaAa
   c nákiṣ ūma ghnant' y, ántito ná dūrād AaaaAaaaAaA
   d ya ádityānāṁ, bhavati prańitau // AaaAaaaAaa

2.27.14a ádite mítra, várūṇotā mrśa // AaaAaaAaaaA
   b yád vo vayām, cakrām kac cid āgaḥ / AaaAaaAaAaA
   c urvāv asyām, ābhayaṁ jvotir indra aAaaAaaaAa
   d mā no dīrghā, abhi nasan tamisrāḥ // AaaAaaAaaAa
We see that the melody of pādas \(a\) and \(d\) of both stanzas is identical. Moreover, pādas \(b\) and \(c\) are linked, too: in st. 13 a sequence of eight accents is repeated\(^3\), in st. 14 a sequence of seven accents. In order to save space, I shall sometimes use formulaic notation. Linking in st. 14, for instance, can be written in a formula \(a_{1d_{11}}x_{11}, b_{1c_{27}}x_{7}\), which must be read as ‘two identical sequences of eleven accents in pādas \(a\) and \(d\), to count from the first syllable of \(a\) and the first syllable of \(d\); two identical sequences of seven accents in pādas \(b\) and \(c\), to count from the first syllable of \(b\) and the second syllable of \(c\).’

Here we see linking of pādas \(ad\) and \(bc\), but the other combinations are just as frequent.

The following example illustrates pāda linking \(ab/cd\) (a1b1x7, c1d2x10). An alternative analysis would be b4c2d3x8, i.e. a common sequence in eight syllables in three pādas.

\[
\begin{align*}
2.28.7 & \quad mā \text{ no vadhai}r, \text{ varuṇa} \text{ ye} \text{ ta} \text{ iṣṭāv} & \quad \text{AaAaaAaaA} \\
& \quad \text{enah} \text{ kṛṇvantam, asura bhṛṇānti} & \quad \text{AaaAaaaAa} \\
& \quad mā jyōtiṣaḥ, \text{ pravasathāni} \text{ ganna} & \quad \text{AAaaaaAaa} \\
& \quad \text{vī śū mṛḍhaḥ, sīratho} \text{ jīvase} \text{ naḥ} & \quad \text{AAaaaaAaa}
\end{align*}
\]

As stated above, I considered repetition of sequences of at least seven accents significant, but there are sequences of five accents which are so rare that their repetition within a stanza cannot be considered accidental. Cf. the following example:

\[
\begin{align*}
2.26.1 & \quad \text{ṛjūr īc} \text{ chaṁso, vanavad vanuṣyatō} & \quad \text{aAAAAaaaaA} \\
& \quad \text{devayānād, ādevayantam abhy} \text{ āsat} & \quad \text{aaAAAAaaSa} \\
& \quad \text{suprāvīrīd, vanavat pṛṣū} \text{ duṣṭāram} & \quad \text{aaAAAAaaAa} \\
& \quad \text{yājved} \text{ ayajyor, vi} \text{ bhajāti} \text{ bhojanam} & \quad \text{AAAAaaaAaa}
\end{align*}
\]

It is hardly open to doubt that occurrence of three sequences of three consecutive accented syllables within one stanza is intentional, the more so because pāda \(a\) of st. 3 of this short hymn of four stanzas has two more of these groups, cf.

\[
\begin{align*}
2.26.3a & \quad \text{sā īj jānena, sā viśā sā jānmanā} & \quad \text{AAAAaaAAaaa}
\end{align*}
\]

**B. INTERRUPTED SEQUENCES.**

The repeated sequences can sometimes be interrupted, i.e. one accent in the middle of a sequence does not match, cf.

\(^3\) I am aware of the fact that the last accents of these sequences do not match: in pāda \(b\) it is anudātta, whereas in pāda \(c\) it is sannatara. In the beginning I chose for a formal approach and made no difference between ‘\(a\)’s. We do not know whether the poets themselves made this difference, and the final results will not significantly be affected by this negligence anyhow because this concerns only a few cases of the first and the last accent of a sequence. Later we can always refine the analysis.
2.34.12a  te dáśagvāḥ, prathamā yajñām ūhire  AAaaaAaAaaa
   b  te no hinvantu-, -uṣāso v'yuṣṭiṣu / AaaaAaaAaaa
   c  uṣā na rāmīr, arunair āpornute  aAAaAaaAaaa
   d  mahō jyotiṣā, sucatā goārṇaṣā // aAAaaaaAaaa

We here find almost identical melody in pādas a and b, on the one hand, and in pādas c and d, on the other. In the first two pādas only the accent of the second syllable does not match, in the last two pādas only the accent of the fifth syllable is different.

Yet another example of the same linking is 2.24.1, where we find a2d1x11 and two identical sequences of five accents in pādas b and c:

2.24.1  a  semām avidōhi, prabhṛtīṁ ya śiṣe  AAaaaAaaAaa
   b  (a)yā vidhema, nāvayā mahā girā / aAAaaaAaaAaA
   c  yathā no mūdhvān, stāvate sakhā tava  AaaaAaaAaaAaA
   d  bṛhaspate, sīsadhaiḥ sōta no matīm // AaaaAaaAaaAaA

C. HEMISTICH LINKING.

This is a variant of pāda linking when the beginning of pādas a and c and the end of pādas b and d have the same melody, i.e. the beginning and the end of both hemistichs is identical, cf.:

2.2.2  a  abhi tvā nākṛir, uṣāso vavāsire  AAaaaAaaaaaa
   b  (ã)gne vatsśam na, svasareṣu dhenāvāḥ / AaaaAaaaAaaAaA
   c  divā āved, aratiṁ mānuṣā yugā-  aAAaaAaaAaaaAa
   d  -ā kṣāpo bhāsi, puruṇāra smāyataḥ // AAaaaaaaAaaaAa

In a fairly common variant of hemistich linking, the melody of the final pāda is shifted one syllable to the right, cf.:

2.35.7  a  svā ā dāme, sudūghā yaśya dhenūḥ  AAaaAaAaaaAaA
   b  svadhām pīpāya, subhūv ānnāṁ atti / aAaaaAAaaaAaaa
   c  so [a]pāṁ napād, ūrjayann apsūv antār  AAAaAaaAaaAaA
   d  vasudeyāya, vidhate vī bhāti // aaAaaaAaaAaaa

D. ACCENTUAL MOTIFS.

In several stanzas repetition of an accentual motif of five or six accents seems more essential than pāda linking. For instance, in st. 4-6 of hymn 2.36, the motif AaaAaa is repeated three or even four times in every stanza (this motif is printed bold, pāda linking is underlined, as usual):
2.36.4  a  ā vakṣi devāṃ, iha vipra vakṣi ca- AaaaAaAaaAaAa
b  -uṣān hotar, nī śadhā yonisu triṣu/ aAaaaAaaaAaaA
  prati vihi, prashtitaṃ som’yam mādhvuaAaaAaaaAa
  d  pībāgniḥrāt, tāva bhāgasya tṛṣṇuhi // AaaaAaaaAaaaAa

2.36.5  a  eṣa śya te, tan’vo nṛṃṇavārdhanaḥ aAaaAaaAaaaAa
b  saha ojaḥ, prādīvi bāh’vār hitaḥ/ AaaAaaaAaaAa
  tubhyam suto, maghavan tubhyam ābhṛtas AaaAaaaAaaAa
  d  t’vām asya, brāhmanād ā tṛpa piba // aAaaaAaaAaaAa

2.36.6  a  juṣṭēthāṃ yaṃnāṃ, bōhatam hāvasya me aAaaAaaaAaaaAa
b  sattō hotā, nividaḥ pūrv’vā anu/ aAaaAaaaAaaAa
  acchā rājaṇa, nāma et’y āvṛtam AaaAaaaAaaAa
  d  prasāstrād ā, pibatam som’yam mādhv // aaAaaAaaaAaaaAa

For further examples of accentual motifs see § 6 below.

**E. ACCUMULATION OF ACCENTED SYLLABLES.**

Sometimes we find several, mostly consecutive pādas with many accented syllables. The average number of accented syllables per pāda is approximately 3.5 in triṣṭubh and 4 in jagati, so that occurrence of five and more accents in a pāda may be considered as marked. In hymn 2.4, consisting of nine stanzas and written in triṣṭubh, pādas 5d and 6a have six accents, then follow three “normal” pādas and then a pāda with seven accents, cf.

> 2.4.5  d  jujur’vāṃ, yo muḥur ā yuvā bhūt // aaaaAaaAaaAaA
>  6  a  ā yō vaṇā, tāṭśānāṃ nā bhāti AAAAAaaAaaAaA
>  b  v’ār nā pathā, rāth’yeva svānīt / aAaaAaaaAaaaAa
>  c  kṛṣṇ’adhvā, tāpū raṇvāś ciketa aAaaAaaaAaaAa
>  d  d’yaur iva, smayamāno nābhobhiḥ // aAaaAaaaAaaAa
> 7  a  sa yō v’y āsthād, abhi dākṣad urvīm AAAaaAaaaAa

It seems to me that what is essential here is not pāda linking but the accumulation of accented syllables which creates a special effect.

**F. ACCENTUAL RHYME.**

Rhyme as a device for linking pādas is rare in the RV, and accentual rhyme is rare, too. Nevertheless, there are some interesting examples of it. Consider the beginning of hymn 2.31:

> 2.31.1  a  jajur’vā, yo muḥur ā yuvā bhūt // AaaaAaaAaaAa
>  b  saḥa ojaḥ, prādīvi bāh’vār hitaḥ/ aAaaAaaaAaaAa
>  c  acchā rājaṇa, nāma et’y āvṛtam AaaAaaaAaaAa
>  d  prasāstrād ā, pibatam som’yam mādhv // aaAaaAaaaAaaaAa
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2.31.1  a  asmākam mitrā, varuṇāvatam ratham  aAaaaaaaAa
        b  ādityāḥ rudrair, vāsubhiḥ sacāḥlūvā / aAaAaAaaAa
        c  prā yad vayo na, pāptan vāsmanas pari  AAAaAAaAaAa
        d  śravasyāvo, hṛṣīvanto vanaṣādāḥ // aAaAaaaaAa

(Note the interrupted sequence in pādas b and d and seven accented syllables in pāda c.) All pādas of this stanza end in aAaAa, but we could ascribe it to chance if stanza 5 of the same hymn did not have the same accentual rhyme:

2.31.5  a  utā tye devī, subhāge mithūḍśā- aAAaAaaAaAa
        b  -uṣāśānaktā, jāgatām āptāvā / aAaAaaAaaAa
        c  stūśe yād vām, pṛthi vānvasa vāca  aAAaaaaAaaAa
        d  sthātuś ca vāyas, trīvaya upāstire // aAaAaaaAaaAa

Moreover, this accentual rhyme is attested in pādas bd of st. 2, pādas bc of st. 3 and pādas ab of st. 4. Thus, in the first 20 pādas of this hymn the accentual rhyme aAaAa occurs 14 times.

G. STYLISTIC REPETITION.

Stylistic repetition in the Veda has been investigated in great detail by Gonda (1959). Gonda adduced many Rgvedic examples of different types of repetition, but as he omitted accent marks, he did not notice that pādas (or parts of a pāda) containing repetitions are very often accompanied by the same accentual contour. Here are some examples.

Anaphora (repetition of words at the beginning of pādas) is rather frequent in the RV. The part of the pāda before the caesura then often has an identical accentual contour, cf. the following three examples taken from hymn 2.11:

2.11.4  a  subhram nū te, sūṣmaṃ vardhāyantaḥ  aAAaaSAAAa
        b  subhram vajram, bāhupportedāhāḥ / aAaAaaAAAa

2.11.6  a  stāvā nū ta, [indra] pūrvyā mahān'y  AAAa[a]aaAaaAa
        b  uta stavāma, nūtānā kṛtāni / aAaaaaAaaAa
        c  stāvā vajram, bāh"vōr usāntam  AaaAaaAaaAa
        d  stāvā hārī, sūr'yasya ketā // AaAaaAAAa

2.11.14a  rāsi kṣāyaṃ, rāsi mitrām asme  AaAaaAAaAa
2.11.14b  rāsi sārdha, indra mārutaṃ naḥ / AaAaaAAAa

4 Oldenberg (Noten ad loc.) suggested to solve the metrical problems of pāda a by omitting the vocative indra as a late interpolation. If we do this, the accentual contours of pādas a and c become identical, which may be considered an additional argument for Oldenberg’s solution.
Epiphora (repetition of words at the end of pādas):

2.34.5d mādhor mādāya, marutāḥ samayavaḥ // AaAaaaaaaa
6a ā no brahmāṇi, marutāḥ samayavo AaAaaaaaaa

Other repetitions:

2.27.11d yusmāṇīto, ābhayam jyotir āśyām AaaAaaAaa
2.27.14c urv āśyām, abhayam jyotir indra AaaAaaAaa

Rhyme.

In the following two examples the end rhyme (in the first example) or the “vowel” rhyme (in the second example) are accompanied by an identical melody after the caesura:

2.3.6 a sādhīv āpāṃsi, saṇatā na ukṣite aAaaaAaaaA
b uśāsāṅkta, vayye raṃvite aAaaaAaaaA
2.13.9 a śataṃ vā yasya, dāsa sākām ādiya AaaAaaAaaA
b ekasya śruṣṭau, yād dha cōdām āvitha / AaaaAaaAaaA

Parallel stanza openings. In hymn 2.11, four stanzas have parallel openings with īn nu before the caesura, and in all the four cases the word preceding īn nu has the accentual contour aAa, so that the opening has the melody aAaAA:

2.11.3a ukthēsv īn nu, śūra yēṣu cākan AaaaAAaaaA
2.11.15a vyanīv īn nu, yēṣu mandasānas AaaaAAaaaA
2.11.16a bhānta īn nu, ye te tarutra- AaaaAAaaaA
2.11.17a ugreśv īn nu, śūra mandasānas AaaaAAaaaA

H. ACCENTUAL ANAGRAMS.

In several manuscripts which have been published only recently (Starobinski 1971), the great Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure advanced a theory according to which several Indo-European poetical traditions shared a common principle of composing poetry, viz. “a method of anagrams”. The poet first chose a key-word, e.g. a name of a god or his own name, and then tried to find words which contained the same sounds as the key-word. In this way, the message of the hymn could be expressed on two different levels: next to the explicit level there was a hidden second level where the key-word appeared in code, as an anagram. This theory has been elaborated by Toporov and Elizarenkova in several articles where they demonstrated the role of the anagrammatical level in the poetics of the RV (cf. Toporov 1965, Elizarenkova – Toporov 1979, its German translation Toporov 1981).
The accentual contour is a suitable device for anagrams. Below I shall discuss several hymns where the accentual contour of the refrain is repeated in other pādas. However, as names generally consist of no more than four-five syllables, it is difficult to demonstrate that a short motif is intentional and represents an anagram. Here I would like to give only one example. The first ten pādas of hymn 2.4, dedicated to Agni-, begin with aA, and it seems possible that this is a play on the name of the god. It is important that in the first two stanzas the name Agni- itself is not used in the accentual anagram. When it finally appears at the beginning of st. 3, the spell is broken and the play stops (cf. comparable observations about “sound” anagrams in Toporov 1981: 239f.).

2.4.1 a huve vah, sudyotmānam suvṛktiṃ aAaaAaaaA
b viśām agnim, atithim suprayasam aAaaAaaaAa
c mitra iva, yō didhiśāy'yo bhūd aAaaaAaaA

d devā ādeve, āne jātavedāḥ // aAAaaAaaAa

2.4.2 a imaṃ vidhanto, apam sadhaste aAAaaAaaAa
b dvitādadhur, bhṛgavo vikṣv'v āyōḥ / aAAaaaAaaAa

c eṣa viśvān'yaḥ, abhyaḥ astu bhūmā aAAaaaAaaAa

d devānām agnir, aratī jīrśvah // aAAaaAaaAa

2.4.3 a agnim devāso, mānuṣīṣu vikṣu aAAaAaaaAa
b priyāṃ dhuh, kṣeṣyanto na mitrām / aAaaaAaaAa

c sa dīdayad, usātīr īrmīyā añ AaaaaAAaaA

d dakṣāy'yo, yō dāsvate dāma ā // aAAAaaaAaA

6. We shall now look at a few complete hymns in order to get an impression how the accentual poetical devices were used in practice. For this purpose I have chosen four hymns dedicated to Indra (2.12-2.15). These hymns have in common that they all contain a refrain, i.e. several words which are repeated at the end of every stanza (in 2.14 at the beginning of every stanza). These refrains gave the poets an additional possibility to play with accents by repeating the melody of the refrain in other pādas.

Furthermore, the final stanza of the majority of hymns in the second Maṇḍala ends with the pāda bhṛhad vadamah vidāthe suvīraḥ “May we, with our valiant sons, out-talk (our rivals)” (for the translation see Kuiper 1974: 131). This final pāda is characteristic for the poets of this Maṇḍala, which belong to the Grāṃtasaṃ family, and is their “seal” as it were (cf. Renou EVP II: 31). Stanzas containing this “seal” link hymns together and actually stand outside the hymn itself. This is confirmed by the fact that these stanzas are often composed in another metre than the rest of the hymn.

The first hymn, viz. 2.12, we shall analyze in some detail, whereas the other hymns will be given with only short comments.
2.12. Triśṭubh.

This famous hymn contains the refrain sa janāsa  índraḥ ‘he, O people, is Indra!’ at the end of each stanza, except for the final stanza 15, where pāda d is a variant of the usual refrain of the second Maṇḍala. The accentual contour of the refrain and its repetitions are printed bold, pāda linking is indicated by underlining. It goes without saying that some of the repetitions may be due to chance and are not intended as such by the poets.

2.12.1  a yo jāta eva, prathamō manasvān     AaAaaaAaa 
   b devō devān, krátunā paryābhūsat /     aAaAaaaAaa 
   c yāsa śuṣmād, rōdaśī abhyāsetām     AaAaaaAaaa 
   d nṛṃṇasya mahnā, sā janāsa  índraḥ //     aAaaAaaaAa

The first stanza shows hemistich linking with the shift by one syllable to the right in pāda d (see §5C above). The same accentual device we shall come across in stanzas 10 and 14. In analyzing repetitions of all kinds I have only considered accent sequences within a pāda. If we pay no attention to pāda boundaries and look for repetitions within a hemistich, the number of repetitions would increase considerably. For instance, in this stanza we also see the melody of the refrain AaaaAa on the boundary of pādas a and b.

2.12.2  a yāḥ prthivīṁ, vyāthamānāṁ ādarṣhad    AaaAaaaAaa 
   b yāḥ pārvaṭān, prakupitāṁ āramṇāt /    AaaAaaaAaa 
   c yo antārīkṣaṁ, vimamé varīyō     AaaAaaaAaaa 
   d yo dyāṁ āstabhānāt, sā janāsa  índraḥ //     AAaaAaaaAa

Pādas a and b have the same melody after the caesura, which emphasizes the parallel structure of these two pādas. The pāda linking bd shows the same shift by one syllable to the right as in st. 1.

2.12.3  a yo hatvāhim, āriṇāt sapta śindhūn    AaAaaaAaaa 
   b yo gā udājād, apadhā valaśya /    AaAaaaAaaa 
   c yo āśmanor, antār āgṇīṁ jajāna     AaaaAaAaAa 
   d samvṛk samatsu, sā janāsa  índraḥ //     AAaaAaaaAa

A comparable shift is found here in pādas a and d (a1d2x9). Also pādas b and c have a long sequence in common (b3c2x8).

2.12.4  a yēnemā  vīśvā, cyāvānā krāṇī     AaAaAaaaAa 
   b yo dāsaṁ vārṇam, ādharam guhākāh /    AaAaAaaaAa 
   c śvāghnīva yo, jīgīvāṁ laṅkāṁ ādād     aAaaAaaAaaa 
   d aryāḥ puṣṭāni, sa janāsa  índraḥ //     AAaAaaaAaAa
Pāda linking ad/bc. The final pāda of this stanza repeats the melody of the final pāda of the previous stanza. With stanza 4 ends the opening of the hymn, dedicated to the heroic deeds of Indra in the past. In st. 3 and 4 we see a remarkable number of sequences Aa (4 in every line) and the end rhyme in -Aa. It seems probable that the accentual contour Aa represents an anagram, the poets hinting at the melody of the name Índra-. Note also the accumulation of accented syllables: beginning with pāda d of st. 2 we find 5-5-5-5-4-5-6-5-4 accented syllables in a pāda.

2.12.5 a yaṁ smā prchānti, kūha seti ghorām  AaaAaAaaaA  
b √eṁ āhur, nāśo astī'y enam  /  aAaaAaaAaa  
c so [a]ryāḥ puṣṭīr, vija ivā mināti  AaaAaaAaaA  
d śrād asmai dhatta, sā janāsa īndrah //  AaaaaAaaaAa  

In this stanza the accentual contour of the refrain is not repeated, and there are no special accentual effects. Repetition of sequences of longer than 5 accents is not attested. This state of affairs is in correspondence with the contents of the stanza: “About whom, the terrible one, they ask, ‘Where is he?’, and they say of him, ‘He is not there’, he who diminishes the riches of a stranger, as gambling (?) does – believe in him, he, O people, is Indra!” In other words, in stanza 5 Indra is in a way absent, which is emphasized by the accentual structure.

2.12.6 a yō radhrasya, coditā yāḥ krṣāsyā  AaaAaaAaaAa  
b yō brahmaṇo, nādhamānasya kīreḥ  /  AaaAaaaaAaa  
c yuktāgrāvno, yō (a)vita susipraḥ  aAaaAaaAaaA  
d sutasomasya, sā janāsa īndrah //  aaaaaAaaaAa  

In stanzas 6 and 7 we see another accentual trick: yāḥ is combined with a word of the structure aAa or yasya + Aa, which results in a sequence AaAa. There are three such groups in st. 6 and five in st. 7. This device again reproduces the accentual anagram of Indra, viz. Aa (in 7b it is repeated five times, which is the maximum!). Note that there is no significant pāda linking in st. 5-7.

2.12.8 a yāṁ krāndasī, samyaṭi vihvāyete  AaaAaaAaaAa  
b pāre (a)vara, ubhāyā amītrāḥ  /  AaAaaaAaaAa  
c samānām cid, ratham āṭasthi-vāṃśā  aaAaAaaaAa  
d nānā havete, sa janāsa īndrah //  AaaaaAaaaAa  

In stanzas 6 and 7 we see another accentual trick: yāḥ is combined with a word of the structure aAa or yasya + Aa, which results in a sequence AaAa. There are three such groups in st. 6 and five in st. 7. This device again reproduces the accentual anagram of Indra, viz. Aa (in 7b it is repeated five times, which is the maximum!). Note that there is no significant pāda linking in st. 5-7.
The similar openings of pādas a and b are linked by the same melody. The end of pāda c is reflected in the beginning of pāda d. The same device has been used in the following stanza, too.

2.12.9  a  yāsmān nā rtē, vijāyante jānāso  AaAAaAAaAAAA
        b  yām yūdhyāmānā, avase hāvante /  AAAAAAaAAA
        c  yo visvasya, pratimānām bābhūva  AAAAAAAAaA
        d  yo acyutacyut, sa jānāsa īndraḥ //  AaaaAAAAAA

Alternatively, one could analyze pāda linking as a5b5c6x6.

2.12.10  a  yāḥ śāsvato, māḥ'y ēno dādhānān  AAAAAaAaAAA
          b  aṃnyamānānī, charīvā jagḥāna /  AaaAAAaAAA
          c  yāḥ śārdhate, nānudādāti śṛdhyām  AAAAAAaAAAaA
          d  yo dāsyor hantā, sa jānāsa īndraḥ //  AaaaAAAAAA

We find here hemistich linking.

2.12.11  a  yāḥ śāmbaram, pāvateṣu kṣiyāntam  AAAAAAAAaAa
          b  cātvārīṃśyām, śarāḍ'y anvāvindat /  aaaaAaAAAaA
          c  ojāyamānam, yo ahiṃ jagḥāna  aaaaAAAaAAAaA
          d  dānum ṣāyaṇaṃ, sa jānāsa īndraḥ //  AaaaAAAAAAaA

In stanzas 8-11, the pronoun yāḥ is followed by a noun of the structure Aa(a), which creates a new pattern AAaa: once in st. 8, twice in st. 9 and 11, three times in st. 10. Note that these structures in stanzas 10 and 11 are also linked by alliteration: yāḥ śāsvato, yāḥ śārdhate, yāḥ śāmbaram.

2.12.12  a  yāḥ saptārāsmir, vrṣabhas tūviṃsān  AaaAAAaaAAAa
          b  avāṣjat, sārvate sapta śīndhūn /  aAAAaAAAaAaA
          c  yo rauhiṇām, āspurad vājrabāhum  AaaAaaaAAAaA
          d  dyām aroḥantam, sa jānāsa īndraḥ //  AaaaAAAAAAaA

2.12.13  a  dyāvā cid asmai, prthivī namete  AaaaaaaaAAAaA
          b  sūṣmāc cid asya, pārvatā bhayante /  aaaaaAaaaaAAaA
          c  yāḥ somapā, niciṭo vājrabāhum  AaaaAAAaAAAaA
          d  yo vājrabastāḥ, sa jānāsa īndraḥ //  AaaaAAAAAAaA

The similar openings of pādas a and b are linked by the same melody. The end of pāda c is reflected in the beginning of pāda d. The same device has been used in the following stanza, too.

2.12.14  a  yāḥ sunvāntam, āvati yāḥ pācantaṃ  AaAaaaAAAaAA
          b  yāḥ śaṃśantaṃ, yāḥ sāsamānām ūṭi /  AAaaAAAAAAaA
          c  yasya brāhma, vārdhanam yasya somo  AAAaAAAaAAAaA
          d  yasyedām rādhah, sa jānāsa īndraḥ //  AAAAaAAAAAa
Stanza 14 is actually the final stanza of the hymn (st. 15 is the refrain, linking together different hymns of the Maṇḍala) and has a similar melodic structure as that of st. 1. Both stanzas show hemistich linking and their first pādas have an identical melody. The circle is closed, and for the last time we come across the specific accentual devices of this hymn: repetition of the same melody at the end of pāda a and at the beginning of pāda b, yasya brāhma ... yasya sōmo yāsyedām forming the group AaA(a), culminating in pāda c in 5 times of Aa, the accentual anagram of īndra-.

2.12.15a yāḥ sunvate, pācate dudhṛā ā cid  
    b vājāṃ dārdarṣi, sā kīlāsi satyāḥ  
    c vayaṃ ta indra, visvāha priyāśaḥ  
    d suvīrāso, vidātham ā vadema //  
    a AaaAaaAaaAa

This stanza stands outside the hymn and contains a request for help and prosperity. We see two identical sequences of nine accents in the first two pādas (a1b3x9), which are constructed in such a way that after the sequence in pāda a stands ā cid (Aa), echoed in pāda b with vājāṃ (Aa), followed by the same sequence of nine accents. The final pāda is peculiar. The normal refrain of Maṇḍala II is brhād vadema, vidāthe suvīrāḥ (AaaaaAaaaAa), which occurs in 22 hymns of the total of 43 hymns of this Maṇḍala. This refrain even occurs in hymns which are composed in a different metre, for instance, in the jagatī hymns 1 and 2. What then was the reason to put a variant of this refrain in our hymn? It seems probable that through a couple of minor changes the poets could create a line with a sequence AaaaAa, i.e. the last allusion to the refrain of the hymn sa jānāsa īndraḥ.


The refrain sās' y ukth'yah 'he is to be praised' occurs for the first time in stanza 2, but its melody (AaaAa, printed in bold face) appears already three times in st. 1.

2.13.1a ṛtrū jānitrī, tās'ya apās pārī  
    b makṣū jāta, āvisad yāsu vardhate /  
    c tād āhanā, abhavat pipyūṣī pāyo  
    d (a)msoḥ piyūṣam, prathamām tād ukth'yam //  
    a AaaAaaAaaaAa

2.13.2a sadhṛim ā yanti, pāri bibhṛatiḥ pāyo  
    b visvāpsn'yāya, prā bharaṇta bhojanaṃ /  
    c samānō adhvā, pravātām anuṣyade  
    d yās tākṛṇoḥ, prathamām sās' y ukth'yah //  
    a AaaaAaaAaaaAa

2.13.3a an'v eko, vadaṭi yad dadāti tād  
    b rūpā minān, tādapā ēka īyate /  
    c visvā ekasya, vinūdas titikṣate  
    d yās tākṛṇoḥ, prathamām sās' y ukth'yah //  
    a AaaaAaaAaaaAa

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Pādas 2d = 3d and 3a have a common sequence of ten accents. Pādas b and c have an interrupted sequence of 10 accents in common.

2.13.4 a praṣṭhāṇaḥ pūṣṭīm, vibhājanta āṣate  
     b rayīm [i]va praṣṭham, prabhāvantam āyatē  
     c āśīṃvan dāṃṣṭraiḥ, pitūr atti bhojaṇam  
     d yās tākrṇoḥ, prathamaṃ sās' y ukth'yaḥ //  

Pāda linking in the first two pādas emphasizes the rhyming structures (partly consonantal and partly vocalic rhymes) and offers confirmation for the unusual Verschleifung in pāda b, viz. rayīm [i]va (cf. Oldenberg, Noten ad loc.).

2.13.5 a ādākṛṇoḥ, prthivīṃ samḍr̥se dive  
     b yō dhautūnām, ahihan[n] ārinak pathaḥ  
     c tāṃ tvā stōmebhir, udābhir na vājiṇaṃ  
     d devaṃ devā, ajanan sās'y ukth'yaḥ //  

2.13.6 a yō bhojanaṃ ca, dayase ca vārdhanam  
     b ādrād ā śūskam, mādhumad dudōhitha /  
     c sā śevadhiṃ, ni dadhiśe vivāsvati  
     d visvasyaika, īśīse sās'y ukth'yaḥ //  

The second hemistich shows two equal sequences of ten accents AaaaAaaAa.

2.13.7 a yāḥ pūṣpiniṣ ca, pras'vas ca dharmāṇaṃ-  
     b -adhi dāne, v'y avānīr ādhārayaḥ /  
     c yās cāsamā, ajano didyuto diva  
     d urū ūrvām, abhītaḥ sās'y ukth'yaḥ //  

2.13.8 a yō nāmrmaṃ, sahaṇaṃ nīnantave  
     b pṛksaṇṛ ca, dāśavesāya cāvahαḥ /  
     c ūṛjāvantya, āparīviṣṭam āś'yaṃ  
     d uṭaivādyā, purukṛt sās'y ukth'yaḥ //  

2.13.9 a śataṃ vā yasya, dāśa sākām ādīya  
     b ēkṣya śruṣṭau, yād dha codām āvitha /  
     c araṇjau dāsyūn, sam unab dabhītaye  
     d suprāv'yo, abhavaḥ sās'y ukth'yaḥ //  

The part after the caesura in pādas a and b contains almost identical vowels and the same melody.

2.13.10 a viśved ānu, rodhanā asya paumś'yaṃ  
     b dādūr asmai, dadhire kṛtnave dhanam /  
     c sāḷ astabhṇā, viṣṭiraḥ pāṇca samḍrśaḥ  
     d pārī paro, abhavaḥ sās'y ukth'yaḥ //
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2.13.11 a supravācaṇāṁ, tava vīrā vīṁyaṁ aaaaAaaaAa
   b yād ēkena, kratuṁa vīndsāse vasu / AAaaAaaaAaAa
   c jātūṣthrasya, prā vāyaḥ sahasvato aAaaAAaaaAaa
   d yā cakārthā, sendra vīśvāśy ukthi'yah // AaaAaAaaaAa

In this stanza a variant of the refrain is used. The reason for this change remains unclear to me. Note, however, that the final pāda of this and the following stanzas contains five groups Aa, an anagram of Īndra-.

2.13.12 a āramayaḥ, sāraptas tārāya kāṁ AaaaAaaaAaaA
   b turvītye ca, vayāya ca srutim / aAaaaAaaaAaa
   c nīcā sāntam, ud anayaḥ parāvṛjām aAaaAaaaaAaA
   d prāndham śroṇam, śravāyan sāśy ukthi'yah // AaaAaAaaaAa

There is no pāda linking in this stanza because in pāda a the distance between the accented syllables is three unaccented syllables, in pāda b four, in pāda c one and five unaccented syllables, whereas in pāda d with its six accents the distance is one or two unaccented syllables. It seems possible that this distribution is intentional.

2.13.13 a asmābhyām tād, vasō dānāya rādhāḥ aAaaAAAAAaaA
   b sām arthayasva, bahū te vasavyām / AaaaaAaaaAaS
   c īndra yāc citrāṁ, śravasyā anu dyūn AaaAaaAAaAaA
   d brūdham vadea, vidathe suvīrāḥ // aAaaaaAaaaAaA

The final stanza contains the refrain of the second Maṇḍala, the “seal” of the Gr̥̃tsamadā family, and it is to be expected that the melody of this refrain be repeated in the other pādas. The study of the refrains of this Maṇḍala (which I cannot present here) shows that in general this is the case. However, in this concrete stanza there seems to be no accentual play on the melody of the refrain. The only place where we find repetition of the refrain is pāda b if we assume that the independent svarita S “rhymes” with Aa in the RV. It has usually been assumed that neutrins in -ya- must be changed into *-ya- (for the material and a discussion of the older literature cf. Seebold 1972: 243ff.; see also fn. 1), but it is always better to keep to the original text. The whole problem requires further investigation, and accentual repetitions may provide additional arguments.


All stanzas of this hymn (except for the final one) begin with the vocative plural ādhvaryavah 'O Adhvaryus‘, which functions as a refrain (Aaaa, printed bold below).

The first pādas of stanzas 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 8 and 9 have an identical melody. The first pāda of st. 5 has almost the same melody as st. 3-4 (only the accent of the seventh syllable does not match), while the first pādas of st. 6 and 7 also have a similar melody (the accent of the tenth
syllable does not match). The melody of the first pādas thus divides the hymn in five parts: st. 1-2, st. 3-5, st. 6-7, st. 8-9 and st. 10-11. This division is further confirmed by other correspondences within each part. St. 1-2 have the words pītīm asya 'his drink' in common; st. 3-5 are united by the formula yāḥ + NPr. + jaghāṇa 'who slayed NPr.' at the end of pāda a; st. 6-7 have two formulas in common, viz. satam sahasram avapat 'he sowed (the earth) with hundred, thousand (enemies)' and bhāratā sōmam asmai 'bring Soma to him!' at the end of pāda d; st. 8-9 have a similar final pāda īndrāya sōmam ... juhota 'pour Soma for Indra!'; and, finally, st. 10-11 show a common formula pṛṇatā īndram somebhir 'fill Indra with streams of Soma!'.

It is further noteworthy that the great majority of pādas begins with an accented syllable, viz. 37 of the total of 44.

St. 3 shows accumulation of accented syllables (4-7-5-6 accents in a pāda).
I have indicated all identical sequences of seven accents and more by underlining, but pāda linking as a poetical device is clearly of minor importance to this hymn.

2.14.1  a  ādhvaryaavo, bhāratendrāya sōmam  AaaaAaAaaAa
   b  āmatrebhiḥ, śincatā mādyam āndhaḥ / AaaaAaaaAaaAa
   c  kāmī hi vīrāḥ, sādam asya pītīṃ  aAAaAaaAaaaA
   d  juhota vrśṇe, tād id eṣa vaṣṭi // aAAaAaaaAaaaA

2.14.2  a  ādhvaryaavo, yo āpo vavrvāṃsah  AaaaAaAaaAa
   b  vyṛtram jaghāṇa-,-asanyeva vrksam / aAaaaAaaaAa
   c  tāṃśa etam, bharata tadvaśāyam  AaaAaaaaAaaA
   d  eṣa īndro, arhati pītīṃ asya // aAaaaAaaaAaaA

2.14.3  a  ādhvaryaavo, yo ḍṛbhikaṃ jaghāṇa  AaaaAaaaAaaA
   b  yo gā udād, apa hi valaṃ vah / AaaaAaaaAaaAaA
   c  tāṃśa etam, antarikṣe na vātam  AaaAaaaAaaaAa
   d  īndramaṃ sōmaṃ, orṇuta jūr na vastraṃi // AgAaaaAaaaAaaA

2.14.4  a  ādhvaryaavo, yā ūraṇaṃ jaghāṇa  AaaaAaaaaAaA
   b  nāva cakhvāṃsam, navatiṃ ca bāhūn / AaaaAaaaAaaaAa
   c  yo ārbudam, āva nicā babādhe  AaaaAaaaAaaaAaA
   d  tam īndramaṃ, sōmasya bhrīthe hinota // AaaaAaaaAaaaAaa

2.14.5  a  ādhvaryaavo, yāḥ sīvā sānam jaghāṇa  AaaaAaaaAaaaAaA
   b  yāḥ svān, asūṣaṃ yo vyaṃsam / AaaaAaaAaaaAaA
   c  yāḥ pīrūṃ, namuciṃ yo rudhiṃrāṃ  AaaaAaaaAaaaAaA
   d  tāṃśa īndraśya-,-andhaso juhota // AaaAaaaAaaaAaaA

2.14.6  a  ādhvaryaavo, yāḥ sātam śambahasya  AaaaAaaAaaaAaaA
   b  pūro biheda-,-āsmaneva pūryāḥ / AaaaAaaAaaaAaaAa
   c  yo varcinaḥ, satam īndraḥ sahasram  AaaaAaaaAaaaAaaAa
   d  apāvapad, bhāratā sōmam asmai // aAaaaAaaaAaaaAaa

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2.14.7  
1. ádhvaryavo, yāḥ satām ā sahasram
   AaaaAaaAaAa
   b  bhúmyā upásthe, (a) vapaj jaghanván / 
      AaaAaAaaaaAa
   c  kutsasyāyor, atithgavasya vírān
      AaaaAaaAaAa
   d  n'ý ávrṇag, bharatā somam asmai // 
      AaaAaaAaaaAa

2.14.8
  a  ádhvaryavo, yán narah kāmayādhve
     AaaaAaaaAaa
  b  śruṣṭī vāhanto, nasathā tād índre / 
     aAaaaAaaaAaa
  c  gābhastipūtam, bharata śrutāya-
     AaaaaaaaAaa
  d  -iṇḍrāya somam, yajyavo juhota // 
     AaaAaaaaaaaAa

2.14.9
  a  ádhvaryavaḥ, kārtanā śruṣṭīm asmai
     AaaaAaaaAaaaAa
  b  vane nīpūtam, vana un nayadhvaṃ / 
     AaaAaaAaaaAaa
  c  juśānō hāstyam, abhī vāvasa va
     aaAaaaAaaaAaa
  d  iṇḍrāya somam, madirām juhota // 
     AaaAaaaAaaaaAa

2.14.10a  ádhvaryavaḥ, pāyasódhar yathā goḥ
          AaaaAaaAaaAa
  b  sōmebhir īm, prīṇatā bhojām iṇdrām / 
     AaaaaaaaAaaaAa
  c  vedāhām asya, nibhṛtma ma etād
     AaAaaaAaaaAaa
  d  dītsantam bhūyo, yajatas ciketa // 
     AaaAaaaAaaaAaaa

2.14.11a  ádhvaryavo, yo div'yaśya vasvo
           AaaaAaaAaaAa
  b  yāḥ párthivasya, kṣām'yaśya rājā / 
      AaaaAaaaAaaaAa
  c  tam ūrdaram nā, prīṇatā yāvena-
      AaaaAaaaAaaaAa
  d  -iṇḍrām somebhis, tād āpo vo astu // 
      AaaAaaAaaaAaaa


2.15.  Triṣṭubh.

The hymn proper contains nine stanzas. Stanza 10 is also found at the end of hymns 11 and 16-20 and is thus characteristic of Indra-hymns of the second Maṇḍala. For repetitions of the parts of theGr̄tsamada refrain in other pādas see the comments on 2.13.13 above.

The refrain of hymn 2.15, sōmasya tā, māda īndras cakāra ‘being intoxicated by Soma, Indra performed these (deeds)’, appears for the first time in the second stanza, but already in the first stanza its melody is hinted at. The refrain fills the whole pāda, and it certainly is hardly possible to frequently repeat the complete refrain. It seems that the melody of the refrain is divided into two parts, AaaA before the caesura (printed bold) and AaAaaa after the caesura (printed bold and in italics). The first part of this melody (AaaA) starts st. 3-7 and 9. The melody of the whole refrain is repeated only in st. 5, exactly in the middle of the hymn, which is a marked position (cf. Toporov 1981: 235).

Another typical feature of this hymn are long sequences of unaccented syllables, especially in pādas b and c.
2.15.1 a pra gāh n'v asya, mahatō mahānī
   b satyā satyasya, karāṇāni vocam /
   c trīkardrukes"v, apiyat sutasya-
   d -asya māde, ahim āndro jaghāna //

2.15.2 a avamśe dyām, astabhāyad brāntam
   b ā rōdāśī, aprṇad antārīksam /
   c sa dhārayat, prthīvīm paprāthac ca
   d somasya tā, māda āndraś cakāra //

2.15.3 a sa dhāmeva prāco, vi mimāya mānair
   b vajreṇa khān'y, atṛṇān naḍīnām /
   c vṛtthāṛjat, pathībhīr dīrghayāṭhaiḥ
   d somasya tā, māda āndraś cakāra //

2.15.4 a sa pravoḥn, parigātyā dabhīter
   b víśvam adhāg, āyudham iddhe aṅgau /
   c saṃ gobhir aṃsvair, aṣṇad rathebhīḥ
   d somasya tā, māda āndraś cakāra //

2.15.5 a sa āṃ mahīṃ, dhūnim ētor aramṇāt
   b so asnāṭrī, apārayat s'vasti /
   c ta utṣnāya, rayīm abhi prā taṭhuḥ
   d somasya tā, māda āndraś cakāra //

2.15.6 a sōdaṇcam śīndhum, arāṇān mahītvā
   b vajreyana, uṣasaḥ sām pīpeṣa /
   c ajavasō, javiṇībhīr vivṛṣcān
   d somasya tā, māda āndraś cakāra //

2.15.7 a sa vid'vāṃ, apagohaṃ kaṇīnām
   b āvīv bhavann, ud atiṣṭhat parāvṛk /
   c prati śrona, sthād v'y anāg acaṣṭa
   d somasya tā, māda āndraś cakāra //

2.15.8 a bhīnad valām, āṅgirohrī grṇāno
   b vī pārvatasya, drśhitān'y airat /
   c riṇāg rōdhāmsi, krtrīmān'y esāṃ
   d somasya tā māda, āndraś cakāra //

2.15.9 a svāpnaṃbhyūpyā, cūmuriṃ dhūniṃ ca
   b jaghāntha dasyam, pra dabhītim āvaḥ /
   c rambhī cid ātra, vivide āraṇyaṃ
d somasya tā, māda āndraś cakāra //
Accentuation in the technique of the Vedic poets

[2.15.10a  nūnāṇṭ sā te, prāti vāraṁ jaritṛé aAAaAaaA
b  duhīyaḥ indra, dakṣiṇā maghōṇī / aAAaAaaAa
c  sīkṣā stotṛbhya, māti dhag bhago no AaaAaAaAa
 d  bṛhad vadema, vidāthe suvīrāḥ // aAaaaaAaaAa]

7. CONCLUSIONS.

This short survey is a first attempt to analyze and classify the ways in which the poets of the Rgveda made use of the accentual contour. Even on the basis of a limited corpus (all examples are taken from the second Maṇḍala, which is the shortest Maṇḍala in the RV) it can satisfactorily be shown that the poets used the accentual contour on a large scale: as a device for linking pādas, hemistichs and stanzas, as a device for emphasizing various repetitions and the refrain, as rhyme, as an anagram, etc. We may thus conclude that this “play” on accents was an essential element of the poetical technique of the Vedic bards.

Accentual sequences can further provide important information for metrical problems. For instance, if we cannot choose between two metrical solutions, repetition of a melody can serve as an argument in favour of one of the alternatives. It is possible that sometimes the metrical requirements became subordinate to an accentual device, which may explain several instances of metrical “roughness”. We have also seen that investigation of accentual patterns may throw new light on the precise realization of accents in the Vedic times: the problem of the independent svarita in the RV may be solved in this way.

In the future it will be interesting to look at the accentual patterns in the Greek poetical tradition. If it appears that the Greek poets used the accentual contour as a poetical device (and from a few samples I took from Homer this indeed seems likely), further investigation may open up a new page in the study of Proto-Indo-European poetics.

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