

**Paippalādasamhitā 11.16: *praskadvarī-, takvarī-*
and Atharvanic *apām prāsasti-***

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INTRODUCTION: PAIPPALĀDASAMHITĀ 11.16

Paippalādasamhitā 11.16 consists of a set of 14 lengthy prose formulae that are found only in PS. They concern the various names of the waters (*āpah*), the divinity who is their *adhipati-*, and the benefits which accrue to the one who knows them. The first three sets of formulae (PS 11.16.1-3) are quoted below.²

PS 11.16.1

*ūrdhvaśrito vai nāmaitā āpo
yad ośadhayaśca vanaspatayaśca
tāsām agnir adhipatiḥ /
yo vā etā ūrdhvaśrita āpo vedāgnim adhipatim /
yathaitam etā ūrdhvā upatiṣṭhanty
evainam ūrdhvā upatiṣṭhanty
adhipatir bhavati svānāmcānyeṣāṃca ya evaṃ veda //*

These waters, that is the plants and the trees, are called 'Reaching High'; of them Agni is the overlord. He who knows these 'Reaching High' waters, (knows) Agni (as their) overlord. Just as these (waters) stand high towards this (Agni), so they stand high towards him; he becomes overlord of his own and of others, he who knows thus.

¹ I would like to express my appreciation of the hard work by the organisers of the 6th International Vedic Workshop, and to thank them for including my paper in the Proceedings. My thanks also go to all the scholars who made valuable comments following my presentation in Kerala. Individual acknowledgements are made at the points where this written version of my paper refers to their suggestions.

² A complete new edition, with translation and commentary, of the whole of PS kāṇḍa 11 is currently being prepared by me, and the full text of PS 11.16 will be presented there with a critical apparatus which shows the readings of some Oriya manuscripts (Ku₂, Pa, JM) that were not used by Bhattacharya (1997). In this paper the points in this *sūkta-* where my edition will diverge from Bhattacharya's are marked by the siglum ^x and the manuscript readings are briefly indicated below the text.

PS 11.16.2

praskadvarīr vai nāmaitā āpo
yat ^xpuṣyās
tāsām ādityo (a)dhīpatiḥ /
yo vā etā praskadvarīr āpo vedādityam adhipatim /
yathaitā etasmīn udyati praskandanty
evāsmīn āyati praskandanty
adhipatīr bhavati svānāṃcānyeṣāṃca ya evaṃ veda //

^xpuṣyās: All Oriya ms. *pṛṣyās*, Kashmiri *puruṣvās*. ⁺*pṛṣvās* Bhattacharya (1997)

These waters, that is the flowers, are called 'Leapers Forth'; of them the sun is the overlord. He who knows these 'Leaper forth' waters, (knows) the sun (as their) overlord. Just as these (waters) leap forth when this (sun) is rising, so they leap forth when he approaches; he becomes overlord of his own and of others, he who knows thus.

PS 11.16.3

takvarīr vai nāmaitā āpo
yāḥ sūdaya
tāsām pṛthivy adhipatnī /
yo vā etās takvarīr āpo veda pṛthivīm adhipatnīm /
yathaitā etasyāṃ praṇuttās takantīr yanty
evainena dviṣantaḥ praṇuttā yanty
adhipatīr bhavati svānāṃcānyeṣāṃca ya evaṃ veda //

These waters which are streaming are called 'Rushers'; of them the earth is the overlord. He who knows these 'Rusher' waters, (knows) the earth (as their) overlord. Just as these (waters) go rushing pushed forth on this (earth), so enemies go pushed forth by him; he becomes overlord of his own and of others, he who knows thus.

The same formulaic pattern repeats itself 14 times with a different name for the waters, a different god, and different related benefits. Below is a summary list of all the waters' names and their corresponding *adhipati* - :

Waters' name	<i>adhipati</i> -
1). <i>ūrdhvaśrit-</i>	Agni
2). <i>praskadvarī-</i>	Āditya
3). <i>takvarī-</i>	Pṛthivī
4). <i>vaśinī-</i>	Varuṇa
5). <i>ūrj-</i>	Tvaṣṭar
6). <i>varcas-</i>	Pūṣan
7). <i>ojas-</i>	Indra
8). <i>mahas-</i>	Parjanya
9). <i>atimanyā-</i>	Aśvins
10). <i>paricit-</i>	Yama
11). <i>ranti-</i>	Kāma
13). <i>viśvabhṛt-</i>	Mṛtyu
14). <i>tāsām..himavān ūdhaḥ</i> <i>somo vatsaḥ</i>	Parameṣṭhin

Two of the waters' names, *praskadvarī-* (11.16.2) and *takvarī-* (11.16.3), are words which do not occur elsewhere in Vedic and merit further consideration. The following section of this

paper will be devoted to a linguistic investigation and then subsequent sections will discuss the wider topic of *apām prasasti-* in the Atharvaveda and early Vedic in general.

THE LANGUAGE OF PS 11.16: *PRASKADVARĪ-*, *TAKVARĪ-*

The language of PS 11.16 shows some relatively late features (discourse particle *vai*, invariable relative *yad* in some formulae, *āpo* employed as both nom. and acc. plural, frequent use of locative absolutes, etc.), but *praskadvarī-* and *takvarī-* appear to be archaic feminine agent nouns built with suffix *-varī-*. According to the standard philological account Vedic feminines in *-varī-* correspond to masculines in *-van-*, and the alternation *-varī-*/*-van-* represents a relic of Indo-European heteroclitic inflection (Wackernagel-Debrunner 1954, §256. i). α and §719.a).). However, a survey of all the RV and AV evidence for the distribution and function of feminines in *-varī-* suggests that this picture of a class of relic forms may need to be modified somewhat.

Two subgroups of *-van-*/*-varī-* formations occur in early Vedic:

(a) Secondary derivatives from attested noun stems (where the masculine in *-van-* sometimes has a doublet in *-vant-*), e.g. *ṛtāvan-*/*ṛtāvarī-* from *ṛta-*, *svadhāvan-*, (*svadhāvānt-*)/*svadhāvārī-* from *svadhā-*, *śruṣṭivān-*/*śruṣṭivārī-* from *śruṣṭi-*.

(b) Primary derivatives based on the root³ (with *-tvan-* and *-tvarī-* following a short vowel): e.g. *yājvan-*/*yājvarī-* from *yaj-*, *vākvān-*/*vākvarī-* from *vac-*, *bhūridāvan-*/*bhūridāvārī-* from *dā-*, *sajītvān-*/*sajītvārī-* from *ji-*.

Both subgroups include inherited pairs of forms: (a) *ṛtāvan-*/*ṛtāvarī-*, Avestan *ašāuuān-*/*ašāuuārī-*, (b) *pīvan-*/*pīvarī-*, Greek *pí(w)ōn-*/*pí(w)eira* < IE **píH-ueriH*₂.

-varī- forms are not very frequent in the RV and AV Saṃhitās (28 different formations in all); only a handful of forms first appear in the YV Saṃhitās (*aprahāvarī-* MS 2.6.7, *vasatīvarī-* TS 6.4.2.1-4, MS 4.5.14, KS 3.9, 34.15, *atītvarī-*, *atiṣkadvarī-* VS 30.15, KS 34.14), and then they virtually cease to exist except in RV repetitions.⁴ Even in the early saṃhitās few formations occur more than once or twice, and they are normally limited to nom/acc/voc cases.

Parallelism with masculines in *-van-* only holds good in the RV Family Books. A high proportion of the new *-varī-* feminines in RV 10 and the AV have no corresponding masculine form in *-van-* (e.g. RV 10 *abhibhūvarī-*, *pūrvajāvarī-*, *prasūvarī-*, PS *apacitvarī-*⁵, *vighasvarī-*). When a stem in *-van-* is attested the meanings of the masculine and feminine formations sometimes diverge, e.g. RV 8, 9, 10 *kṛtvān-* 'active', ŚS 4.18.1, PS 5.24.1 *kṛtvārī-* 'sorceress'; RV 1.66.2 *tākvān-* 'bird of prey', PS 11.16 *takvarī-* 'rusher'. As far as the synchronic status of feminines in *-varī-* is concerned, the ubiquitous lexicographical practice of listing under a masculine stem in *-van-* is sometimes misleading, as a corresponding masculine stem never occurs anywhere. Hence there are indications that at a certain stage of

³ I acknowledge with gratitude T. Gotō's observation that the members of this subcategory can be based on root nouns and so represent the same process of word-formation as the first subcategory. I accept that from a diachronic point of view forms derived from root nouns may have supplied the starting point for the expansion of this subcategory; but from a synchronic point of view often no corresponding root noun is attested in Vedic (e.g. in the case of *śākvarī-*, *takvarī-*, *vighasvarī-*, *vimṅgvarī-* and inherited *pīvarī-*). Hence their synchronic status differs and my twofold classification attempts to reflect this fact.

⁴ Wackernagel & Debrunner (1954, §716 b) α .) cite as a late attested example the epic river name *Godāvarī*.

⁵ Cf. *apacit-* m., which is frequent in ŚS and PS, but **apacitvan-* never occurs.

the Vedic language the feminine agent nouns in *-varī-* had become independent formations that no longer depended on masculines in *-van-*.

This development⁶ probably took place because the *-varī-* feminines had evolved a special function of their own. They cluster in passages about the earth (e.g. ŚS 12.1: *vimīḡvarī-*, *pratiśīvarī-*, *agrētvarī-*), the plants (e.g. RV 10.97, PS 11.6 *prasūvarī-*, (*sa*)*jīvarī-*) and the waters (RV *ṛtāvarī-*, *śákvarī-*, *niṣṣídhvarī-*, *sítvarī-*, PS *uttānaśīvarī-*, KS *vasatīvarī-*). In addition they appear sporadically as a designation of human females, e.g. *atiṣkadvarī-* (VS 30.15), *niṣṭakvarī-* (ŚS 5.22.6, PS 12.1.8 *dāsī-*) are perhaps pejorative terms for certain women. The reference to females can be seen most clearly in compounds whose second element is an agent noun in *-varī-*, e.g. *bahusūvarī-* (Sinīvālī), *talpaśīvarī-* / *vahyaśīvarī-* (*nārīs*), *mātarībhvarī-* (*svāsāras*).⁷ In other words, they are used exclusively with reference to female animate beings, as in early Vedic traditions the earth, plants and waters are regularly eulogized as female divinities.

Thus the Vedic employment of *-varī-* feminines is not simply conditioned by grammatical gender. It is conditioned both by the 'natural' gender and animacy of the referent. From a morphological point of view *-varī-* forms were doubly marked as feminines (by *-var-* in addition to their feminine stem in *-ī-*), and so this two-fold morphological characterisation appears to have become specialized to supply feminine agent nouns which were only employed when the referent occupied a position that was high on the scale of animacy.⁸

Although this survey has shown that agent nouns in *-varī-* are often favoured in descriptions of the waters, it also raises the question whether *praskadvarī-*, *takvarī-* are ancient names or whether they belong to the group of new formations which, we have argued, represent a relatively recent extension of the *-varī-* class. There is not enough evidence to settle this question decisively, but it may be observed that *praskadvarī-*, *takvarī-* are by no means so isolated as most of the forms that appear to have a recent origin. Other *-varī-* and *-van-* derivatives are built from the same roots: *atiṣkadvarī-* (VS 30.15) from *skand-* / *skad-*; *niṣṭakvarī-* (ŚS 5.22.6, PS 12.1.8), *takvan-* (RV 1.66.2),⁹ *pratakvan-* (TS 1.3.3.1, MS 1.2.12, KS 2.13, VS 5.32) from *tak-*. Both roots are inherited from Indo-European: cf. *skand-*, Lat. *scandere* 'to ascend', Old Irish *sceinnid* 'jump'¹⁰; *tak-*, Avestan *tac-*, Manichaean Mid Pers *ṭz-*, Parthian *tc-*, etc. 'run, flow', Hittite *ṽatku-* 'jump', Old Church Slavonic *tešti* 'run, flow', Old Irish *tech* 'flow'¹¹.

Moreover, *praskadvarī-*, *atiṣkadvarī-* stand beside the root noun *atiṣkád-* f. (RV 8.67.19, 10.108.2) which may have supplied their derivational base, and may point to an archaic formation.¹² In early Vedic the verb *tak-* appears moribund, although it is well attested in Iranian. It occurs in the RV in the compound *sárgaprataкта-* 1.65.6 and simple pp *taktá-* 6.32.5, 9.32.4, 9.67.15, but the only finite forms are present active *takti* 9.16.1, imperfect middle *nír...atakta* (10.28.4). The present participle *takantīs* in PS 11.16.3 appears to be

⁶ An extension of this class is not found in Old Iranian. In addition to *ašāuuan-/ašāuuáirī-* the only other attested feminine in **-varī-* is the Avestan Proper Name *Vīspa.tauruuairī-* (Yašt 13.142) which stands beside (*tbaēšō*).*tauruuan-* 'overcoming (emnity), cf. RV *turváṇi-* 'overcoming'.

⁷ The remarkable form *samśīśvarī-* 'having an offspring in common', which characterises the waters at RV 8.69.11 and mother cows in a simile at 9.61.14, must be derived from **sam-śīśu-* but has been assimilated to the *-varī-* class because of its meaning and function.

⁸ I have argued (Tucker *Forthcoming*, pp. 82-83) that the use in the RV Family Books of qualifiers in *-īn*, as opposed to *-vant*, is conditioned by animacy of the referent. The whole question of the role of animacy hierarchies in determining grammatical choices in the early Vedic language merits further investigation.

⁹ Also *táku-* (RV 9.97.52), *takvá-* (RV 8.69.13), *takvavī-* (RV 1.151.5, 10.91.2).

¹⁰ Mayrhofer (1986-1996, Band II, p.749), de Vaan (2008).

¹¹ Mayrhofer (1986-1996, Band I, pp. 610-11), Cheung (2007, pp. 372-74).

¹² See footnote 3 above.

isolated as it is thematic but does not show palatalisation of the root final stop (contrast Younger Avestan *tacaiti*, *apa.tacaṭ*, *taciṭti*, etc., from a thematic present *taca-*). *takantī-* must be a neologism and may even represent a nonce form created on the basis of *takvarī-* for the sake of the formula of PS 11.16.3, since at the stage when PS 11.16 was composed the old athematic present of root *tak-* had probably fallen out of use. I am indebted to G-J.Pinault for the observation that, because *tak-* became the 'ahuric' verb 'to run' in Avestan (contrasting with 'daevic' *dru-*, cf. Vedic *dru-*, *drāvati*), it must have belonged to an elevated register of Indo-Iranian. Therefore it would be conceivable that *takvarī-* arose as an epithet for the deified waters at a prehistoric Indo-Iranian date, or at least very early in Old Indo-Aryan. On balance, it seems most likely that *praskadvarī-*, *takvarī-* are old traditional names, quite possibly inherited.

WATERS AT THE SUN AND WATERS ON EARTH

In PS 11.16.2-3 the waters which are called *praskadvarī-* have the sun as their *adhipati-*, while the earth is the *adhipati-* of those that are called *takvarī-*. The two names in *-varī-* thus stand in two sets of formulae that reflect a bipartite division into waters associated with the sun ('heavenly waters') and waters found on earth. Compare other examples of this distinction in the early saṃhitās, such as:

RV 1.23.17-18 = ŚS 1.4.2-3
amūr yā úpa sūrye
yābhir vā sūryaḥ sahā
tā no hinvantv adhvarām

Those who are at the sun,
 or together with whom is the sun -
 let them further our sacrifice.

apó devīr úpa hvaye
yātra gāvāḥ pibanti naḥ
sínḍhubhyaḥ kártvaṃ havīḥ

The divine waters I call on
 where our cows drink;
 To the rivers is to be made an oblation.

VEDIC PARALLELS FOR INVOCATION OF ĀPAS UNDER MULTIPLE NAMES

Just as each of the 14 sets of formulae that make up PS 11.16 contains a different name for the waters, so multiple types of water are distinguished and invoked in other early examples of Vedic *apām prásasti-*. In the stanza below there is again the basic twofold division into heavenly and earthly waters but the latter group is further subdivided:

RV 7.49.2
yā āpo divyā utá vā srāvanti
khanítrimā utá vā yāḥ svayaṃjāḥ
samudrārthā yāḥ sūcayo pāvakās
tā āpo devīr ihá mām avantu

The waters which come from heaven or those which flow in canals or are self-born which have the sea as their goal, clear, purifying, let those divine waters help me here.

The many subdivisions of types of earthly waters sometimes result in repetitive formulae, e.g.

ŚS 19.2.1-2 = PS 8.8.7-8 (cf. ŚS 1.6.4)

śám ta āpo haimavatīḥ
śám te santūtsyāḥ
śám te sanīsyadā āpaḥ
śám te santu varṣyāḥ

Let the waters from the Himālayas be propitious for you,
 Let those from springs be propitious for you,
 Let the continually-flowing waters be propitious for you,
 Let those from rain be propitious for you.

<i>śám ta āpo dhanvyāḥ</i>	Let the waters of the plains be propitious for you
<i>śám u te santvanūpyāḥ</i>	And let those of the marshes be propitious for you
<i>śám naḥ khanītrimā āpaḥ</i>	Let the waters in canals be propitious for us
<i>śám yāḥ kumbhébbhir ābhrtāḥ</i>	Let those which are brought by containers be propitious.

Such multiple invocations have usually been assumed to have a naturalistic basis, or at least to reflect the desire that is much in evidence among the Vedic poets, especially those of the AV, to be all-encompassing and comprehensive. In other words, at first sight it appears that invocations under many distinct names or descriptions were intended to ensure that no member of the target group, in this case the Waters, was omitted. However, in some parallel cases, for instance, the three AV poems (ŚS 2.31-32, 5.23) containing spells against worms, the practice of identifying different types and even individuals has been demonstrated to continue an inherited Indo-European poetic tradition: see the detailed treatment of this topic by Watkins (1995, pp. 521-22 and p. 540) which reaffirms the discovery originally made by A.Kuhn in 1864. It will be argued below that the division of the collective *āpas* into multiple types in stanzas such as those quoted above, and the importance accorded to knowledge of their names in PS 11.16 likewise reflects an inherited tradition of invocation, which is at least of Indo-Iranian date. The Indo-Iranian practice of praising the gods by means of divine names and epithets, and the literary characteristics of Indo-Iranian 'name catalogues',¹³ have been studied recently by Sadovski (2007). However, before questions of prehistory are taken up, the synchronic function of PS 11.16 will be considered further.

THE ROYAL ABHIṢEKA IN THE YAJURVEDA

The most significant type of Vedic parallel is without doubt the passages about the waters brought together for the royal *abhiṣeka*- which are found in all the YV saṃhitās (TS 1, 8, 11-12; KS 15, 6; MS 2, 6, 7-8; VS 10, 1-4), and other YV texts.¹⁴ The individual names of the different waters vary slightly from one YV text to another, but part of the passage from MS is quoted by way of illustrating the YV *yajus*- employed in this ritual:

MS 2,6,7

dévīr āpo apām napād rāṣṭradāḥ stha rāṣṭram datta svāhā dévīr āpo apām napād rāṣṭradāḥ stha rāṣṭram amúṣmai datta vīṣormír asi vṛsasenò (a)sy apām pátir asy āprahāvarīḥ stha parivāhīṇīḥ sthaujasvīṇīḥ stha māndāḥ stha vṛjakṣītaḥ stha sūryavarcasaḥ stha sūryatvacasaḥ stha marūtām ójo stha vāśāḥ stha śákvarīḥ stha viśvabhītaḥ stha janabhītaḥ stha (a)pām ósadhīnām rásaḥ śráviṣṭhāḥ stha rāṣṭradāḥ stha rāṣṭram amúṣmai datta

Divine waters, Apām Napāt, you are kingdom-givers, give the kingdom. Hail, divine waters, Apām Napāt, you are kingdom-givers, give the kingdom to that man. You (sg.) are the male wave, you are the male army, you are lord of the waters. You (pl.) are not departers forth, you are travellers around, you are full of strength, you are delightful, you are pen-dwellers, you have the splendour of the sun, you have the skin of the sun, you are the strength of the Maruts, you are roarers, you are powerful, you are the bearers of all, you are the bearers of people, the sap of the waters, of the plants, you are the best at flowing, you are kingdom-givers, give the kingdom to that man.

¹³ The example that is most familiar to Indologists is of course the *śatarudriya*-

¹⁴ A full list of the texts and a discussion is found in Heesterman (1957, pp. 79-90; see especially pp. 84-85 for a table of the various names by which the waters are invoked); see also Tsuchiyama (2005), Proferes (2007, pp. 78-81 and pp. 91-101).

The names by which the waters are invoked here include two feminine agent nouns in *-varī-*: *āprahāvarī-* 'not departing forth' and *śákvarī-* 'capable, powerful' (also found in TS 1,8,11, KS 15,6, VS 10,4).

I am indebted to A. Lubotsky and A. Griffiths for suggesting (verbally, following my paper at the 6th International Vedic Workshop) that PS 11.16 was probably also composed for the unction of a king. In addition, A. Griffiths has pointed out to me that the Paippalādasamhitā contains a number of compositions which exactly correspond to attested YV *yajus-*, for instance, the contents of PS 6.11-13 are mostly found also in KS (Griffiths 2009, pp. 132-168). Therefore it would not be surprising to find an independent Paippalādasamhitā composition whose purpose was similar to that of sections of the YV.

The symbolism of the amalgamation of different waters for the royal unction has been discussed by Proferes (2007, pp.78-81), who argues that its purpose is to integrate in the person of the king the appropriate attributes for leadership. Moreover, Proferes identifies two sets of such terms that are common to all the YV texts. On the one hand, *bāla-* 'strength', *ójas-* 'might', *vīryā-* 'heroic force', *indriyā-* 'Indra's power', which are aspects of the king's physical capacity to secure victory in battle and to maintain control over troops; on the other hand, *vārcas* 'splendour', *dyumnā-* 'glory', *téjas-* 'brilliance', solar qualities which link the king with the sun and fire. Many of the same abstract attributes occur either as names for the waters themselves in PS 11.16 or among the rewards for knowing the waters' names. The key terms are underlined in PS 11.16.5-8:

PS 11.16.5

ūrjo vai nāmaitā āpo
yad gāvas
tāsām tvaṣṭādhīpatiḥ /
yo vā etā ūrja āpo veda tvaṣṭāram adhipatim /
ūrjasvī tejasvī bhavati pra sāhasrān paśūn āpnoty
adhipatir bhavati svānāṃcānyeṣāṃca ya evaṃ veda //

These waters, that is cows, are called 'Powers'¹⁵; of them Tvaṣṭar is the overlord. He who knows these 'Powers' waters (knows) Tvaṣṭar (as their) overlord. He becomes full of power, full of brilliance, he obtains cattle in their thousands; he becomes overlord of his own and of others, he who knows thus.

PS 11.16.6

vārcas vai nāmaitā āpo
yad ghṛtaṃ
tāsām *pūṣādhīpatiḥ /
yo vā etā vārcas āpo veda pūṣanam adhipatim /
vārcasvī tejasvī bhavaty utāsyānabhyakta mukhaṃ rocate
adhipatir bhavati svānāṃcānyeṣāṃca ya evaṃ veda //

These waters, that is ghee, are called 'Splendour'; of them Pūṣan is the overlord. He who knows these 'Splendour' waters (knows) Pūṣan (as their) overlord. He becomes full of splendour, full of brilliance and his face shines (even) when he is unanointed; he becomes overlord of his own and of others, he who knows thus.

PS 11.16.7

ójas vai nāmaitā āpo

¹⁵ Translated 'Powers' rather than 'Nourishments' in the light of the comments of Proferes (2007, p.101). Proferes cites various passages where *ūrj-* is a quality that the waters bestow on the king via the unction rite, and in MS 2.6.8 one of the names of the waters is *ūrjasvatī-*.

*yan madhu
tāsām indro (a) dhipatiḥ /
yo vā etā oja āpo vedendram adhipatim /
ojasvī vīryāvān indriyāvī bhavati pra rājasabhāyām madhuparkam āpnoty
adhipatir bhavati svānāṃcānyeṣāṃca ya evaṃ veda //*

These waters, that is honey, are called 'Strength'; of them Indra is the overlord. He who knows these 'Strength' waters (knows) Indra (as their) overlord. He becomes full of strength, endowed with heroism, full of Indra's power, he obtains a honey and milk offering in the royal assembly.

In the light of these similarities there can be little doubt that PS 11.16 should be included in the group of Atharvaveda *sūktas* and stanzas (PS 3.18 and ŚS 3.22, PS 12.5.7-8, etc.) that were composed for the ritual of a king's consecration.

OLD AVESTAN COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE FOR NAMING THE WATERS

An invocation to the waters under different names, some esoteric, is found in the Old Avestan liturgy, the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti. Here the emphasis is on using these names in worship of the waters because the names were given by Ahura Mazda as part of his work ('skilfulness' in Y 38.4) in establishing a good existence for the followers of Truth.

Old Avestan, Yasna Haptaṅhāiti (Yasna 38.3-5)

Y 38.3

*apō aṭ yazamaidē
maēkaiiaṇtīscā hōbuuaṇtīscā
frauuazaṇhō ahurānīš ahurahiā hauuapaṇhā*

And we worship the waters
both sparkling and sap-bringing
ladies who move forth through the
skillfulness of the Lord
you (who are) easy to cross and
whose stream and bathing places are good,
a gift for the two existences.

*hupərəθβāscā vā
huuōyzaθāscā hūšnāθrāscā
ubōibiiā ahubiiā cagəmə*

Y 38.4

*ūitī yā vā vaṇ' hīš
ahurō mazdā nāmaṃ dadāt
vaṇhudā hiiat vā dadāt
tāiš vā yazamaidē
tāiš friiṇmahī
tāiš nəmaxiiāmahī
tāiš išūidiāmahī*

Thus, with those names, O good ones,
which the Wise Lord gave to you,
when he made you givers of good,
with those we worship you,
with those we please you,
with those we revere you,
with those we refresh you.

Y 38.5

*apascā vā
azišcā vā
mātərašcā vā
agəniā
drigudāiiāṇhō vīspō.paitīš
āuuacāmā
mātarō jītaiiō*

We call on you as waters
and you as milk cows
and you as mothers
prize cows
suckling the poor,
with drink for all.....
O living mothers.

Although there are no direct linguistic comparisons between the names given to the different waters in this Old Avestan passage and any of the Vedic names, there are a large number of

striking thematic parallels which may point to an ancestral Indo-Iranian tradition of invoking the waters:

(i) The Iranian and Vedic traditions use the cognates *apō* (acc pl): *ápas / apás* for the undifferentiated waters and then distinguish different groups whose names are sometimes esoteric in character. The exact interpretation of Old Avestan *maēkaiiantīšcā hēbuuantišcā* (Y 38. 3) is disputed¹⁶ and the waters' title *ahurānīš* represents a feminine secondary derivative in *-ānī-* based on *ahura-* m. 'lord'. Indo-Iranian **-ānī-* formations, like those in **-varī-*, are doubly marked as feminines.¹⁷

(ii) The waters are characterised as mothers and milk cows in both the Iranian and Indian invocations. Compare Old Avestan Y 38.5 and, for instance:

RV 10.64.9 *devīr āpo mātārah sūdayitnò ghrtāvāt páyo mádhuman no arcata* (cf. PS 6.3.5)

ŚS 1.4.1 *ambáyo yanty ádhvabhir jāmáyo*

ŚS 1.5.2 *yó vaḥ śívátamo rásas tásya bhājayatehá naḥ usatīr iva mātārah*

PS 6.3.8b *yūyaṃ somasya dhenavo madhiṣṭhāḥ*¹⁸

(iii) Both use derivatives from the root *jī-* 'live' (Sanskrit *jīv-*) to describe the living waters, and their ability to give life and to support it. Compare Avestan *jītaiiō* 'living' in Y 38.5 and the word-play on the verb 'to live' and its derivatives in ŚS 19.69, PS 19.54, which Kauśikasūtra 3.4 prescribes for ritual rinsing of the mouth with water.

ŚS 19.69

1. *jīvá stha jīvyāsaṃ sárvaṃ áyur jīvyāsaṃ*

2. *upajīvá sthópa jīvyāsaṃ sárvaṃ áyur jīvyāsaṃ*

3. *saṃjīvá stha saṃjīvyāsaṃ sárvaṃ áyur jīvyāsaṃ*

4. *jīvalā stha jīvyāsaṃ sárvaṃ áyur jīvyāsaṃ*

or with reference to support for life: PS 6.3.8d *yūyaṃ jinvata brahmakṣatram āpaḥ*

(iv) The Avestan names of the waters in Y 38.3 may represent two main groups, just as in Vedic: on the one hand the heavenly waters with obscure or esoteric names (*maēkaiiantīšcā hēbuuantišcā frauuazaghō ahurānīš*), on the other the earthly waters whose names refer to the places on earth which they inhabit (*hupərəθθāscā vā huuōyžaθāscā hūšnāθrāscā* 'you (who are) easy to cross and have good streams and good bathing places'). Such a bipartition 'rain water' versus 'water in rivers, lakes and the sea' has already been suggested on the basis of the structure of this Old Avestan passage by Hintze (2007, pp. 13-50).

(v) Old Avestan Y 38.4 explicitly attributes the origin of the waters' names and hence their praise to Ahura Mazdā. Possibly a reference to the involvement of the gods in their worship may be preserved in one Ṛgveda passage composed in an unusual metre:

RV 1.23.19b-c:

apsv àntár amítam apsú bheṣajám

apám utá práśastaye

dévā bhávata vājínaḥ

¹⁶ The translation given above follows Narten (1986, p. 43), but Humbach (1991, p. 147) translates 'tasty and juicy'.

¹⁷ This particular name is now recognized loaned into Aramaic as *'hwrnyš* in the 4th century BC trilingual inscription from the Letoon at Xanthos, Lydia. Its equivalence here to Grk *numphai* 'nymphs' is yet another indication that the waters were regarded as animate demi-gods in the Iranian tradition.

¹⁸ Other Vedic passages are collected by Narten (1971, pp. 186-89) who discusses the use of *aghnyā-* as a term for the waters.

In the waters is immortality, in the waters healing, and for the praise of the waters, O gods, be endowed with strength.

It is an isolated occurrence of this theme which appears not to have been understood by the Atharvaveda tradition as it replaces *dévās* by *ásvās*, introduced no doubt because *vājīnaḥ* was understood in its more frequent sense 'prize-winning (horses)':

PS 1.2.4b-c

apām utá práśastiṣu
ásvā bhavatha vājīnaḥ

And in the praises of the waters
you, O horses, become vigorous/
prize-winning. (*or*'you become
prize-winning horses').

The Śaunakasamhitā incorporates the modified pāda in a different context:

ŚS 19.2.4

apām áha divyānām
apām srotasyānām
apām áha prañájane
(á)svā bhavatha vājīnaḥ

'Of the waters indeed from the sky,
of the waters from the streams -
in the forth-washing indeed of the waters
you become vigorous/prize-winning horses'

(vi) The Old Avestan Yasna Haptaṅhāiti has usually been considered to be rhythmical prose. Its clearly defined strophes built out of smaller well-balanced syntactical units were emphasised by Narten (1986, p.21) who characterised the whole composition as 'liturgical recitation prose'. However, Watkins (1995, pp. 232-35) argued that so many poetic features are present in this Old Avestan liturgy that it must represent an ancient Indo-European type of poetry which is not based on syllable-counting, as the metres of the Gāthās and the RV are. In view of these characterisations of the literary genre of the whole Yasna Haptaṅhāiti, it is interesting that Vedic parallels for the invocation of the waters under multiple names are to be found in YV *yajus-* and a PS prose composition, and not predominantly in RV verse. PS 11.16 is in late AV prose and cannot be characterised as poetic, but it shares with the *yajus-* and the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti clearly defined syntactical units which balance each other and build up the larger units of the whole composition.

In general the inherited tradition which these comparisons point to is better preserved by the AV and YV, than the RV, where it was to a large extent eclipsed as a result of the role given to the waters in Indra's mythology. On the other hand, the antiquity of invocations to the waters may explain why such a hymn was placed at the very beginning of the Paippalādasamhitā (PS 1.1.1 *śam no devīr abhiṣṭaye*) and why a cluster of hymns to the waters stand near the beginning of Śaunakasamhitā (ŚS 1.4-1.6). If the Atharvanic reciters were custodians of a very ancient tradition of *apām práśasti-*, the prominence given to these hymns could perhaps be seen as an attempt to advance the claims of the Fourth Veda.

The particular importance of PS 11.16 lies in the fact that it provides a link between a prehistoric Indo-Iranian tradition of invoking the collective **ápas* under distinct names, and the invocations under different names that are contained in the YV *yajus-* for the royal *abhiṣeka-*.

THE REWORKING OF AN INHERITED TRADITION BY PS 11.16

At the same time it is clear that although PS 11.16 has preserved some names for the waters which possibly have existed since prehistoric times (*praskadvarī-*, *takvarī-*), and some traditional features of categorisation (waters at the sun vs. waters on earth), it has recast the ancient *apām práśasti-* in a form that is recognizably Vedic with a focus on knowledge of the

names and the rewards for knowing them. In this respect it represents a more 'modern' composition than the YV *saṃhitās*' invocations of the different waters for the royal *abhiṣeka*-

Firstly the etymologising implied by the formulae about the rewards that come to those who know the names may be seen in the context of some of the earliest evidence for *nirukti*- . It has often been pointed out this first appears in the AV, for instance ŚS 15.8.1 *sò (a)rajyata táto rājanyò (a)jāyata*. In one of the most extended AV passages with explicit *nirukti*- (ŚS 3.13, PS 3.4) four common words for 'water', one of them *āpas*, are derived from verbs by recounting episodes of Indra mythology.

ŚS 3.13.1 *yád adáḥ saṃprayatír*
 áhāv ánadatā haté
 tasmād á nadyò náma stha
 tá vo námāni sindhavaḥ

Because at that time going forth together you resounded (*ánadatā*) when the dragon was slain, therefore you are called *nadías*, those are your names, O Rivers.

ŚS 3.13.2 *yát préṣitā váruṇena*
 ácchībaṃ samávaḡata
 tád āpnod índro vo yatís
 tásmād āpo ánu ṣṭhana

When sent forth by Váruṇa you swiftly took pleasure together, then Indra obtained (*āpnod*) you as you were going, therefore in consequence you are *āpas*.

ŚS 3.13.3 *apakāmám syándamānā*
 ávīvarata vo hí kam |
 índro vaḥ śáktibhir devīs
 tásmād vār náma vo hitám ||

When you were flowing contrary to his wish Indra hindered you by his powers, you, O Goddesses, therefore the name *vār* was bestowed on you.

ŚS 3.13.4 *éko vo devó (a)py atiṣṭhat*
 syándamānā yathāvásam |
 udāniṣur mahír iti
 tásmād udakám ucyate

The one god stood upon (?) you as you were flowing according to your (his?) will with the words 'the great (goddesses) have breathed up (*udāniṣur*)', therefore (the word) *udaká*- is said.¹⁹

There is a parallel for formulae about benefits resulting from the knowledge of names in a section of a Śaunaka hymn about an offering consisting of a goat with five rice-offerings (9.5.31-36).²⁰ It spells out the benefits that arise from knowledge of some unusual names for

¹⁹ The last stanza is admittedly somewhat obscure (except for the fact that it explains the oblique stem of *udaká*-, i.e. *udan*- from *ud-an*-), but this whole sequence indicates early attempts to answer the question 'why are there different words for water?'

²⁰ PS 16.100.4-20 has a different version of these same formulae, e.g.

PS 16.100.4
yo vā āyantam ity ṛtúṃ véda /
āyatūmevāpriyásya bhrátṛvyasya śríyaṃ á datte

the seasons, which look very much like adhoc creations for the sake of the formulaic pattern. Apart from the name of the hot season, the names are morphologically present participles, while the resulting benefit is portrayed using a corresponding finite form from the same verb:

ŚS 9.5.31

*yó vai naídāghaṃ nāma ṛtúṃ véda /
eṣá vai naídāgho nāma ṛtúr yád ajáh páñcaudanaḥ
nir evāpriyásya bhráṭṛvyasya śríyaṃ dahati bhávaty ātmánā /
yò (a)jám páñcaudanaṃ dáksīṇājyotiṣaṃ dádāti*

Whoever knows the season called 'burning down' (*naídāgha-*). This is the season called 'burning down', namely the goat with five rice-offerings. Thus he burns down (*nir ...dahati*) the fortune of his unfriendly rival, he prospers by himself, he who gives the goat with five rice-offerings (and) the light of a sacrificial gift.

ŚS 9.5.32

*yó vai kurvántaṃ nāma ṛtúṃ véda /
eṣá vai kurván nāma ṛtúr yád ajáh páñcaudanaḥ
kúrvatīm kurvatīm evāpriyásya bhráṭṛvyasya śríyaṃ á datte /
yò (a)jám ...*

Whoever knows the season called 'making' (*kurván*). This is the season called 'making', namely the goat with five rice offerings. Thus he takes each 'making' fortune of his unfriendly rival, he who gives the goat...

ŚS 9.5.33

*yó vai saṃyántaṃ nāma ṛtúṃ véda /
eṣá vai saṃyán nāma ṛtúr yád ajáh páñcaudanaḥ
saṃyátīm saṃyátīm evāpriyásya bhráṭṛvyasya śríyaṃ á datte /
yò (a)jám ...*

Whoever knows the season called 'going together'. This is the season called 'going together', namely the goat with five rice offerings. Thus he takes each 'going together' fortune of his unfriendly rival, he who gives the goat...

ŚS 9.5.34

*yó vai pinvántaṃ nāma ṛtúṃ véda /
eṣá vai pinván nāma ṛtúr yád ajáh páñcaudanaḥ
pinvátīm pinvátīm evāpriyásya bhráṭṛvyasya śríyaṃ á datte /
yò (a)jám ...*

Whoever knows the season called 'fattening'. This is the season called 'fattening', namely the goat with five rice dishes. He takes each 'fattening' fortune of his unfriendly rival, he who gives the goat...

PS 11.16 has combined this type of 'knowing the name' formula with the more frequent AV type of formula which lists various deities as *adhīpati-* of groups of items in the cosmos,²¹ e.g:

*bhávaty ātmánā parāsyāpriyo bhráṭṛvyo bhavati /
ya evaṃ viduṣe (a)jám páñcaudanaṃ dádāti //*

Only two of the seasons' names in PS 16.100 correspond to those of ŚS 9.5 (*saṃyántaṃ, udyántaṃ*).

²¹ The most extensive *adhīpati-* list is ŚS 5.24 with one deity per element, while others refer to the points of the compass, e.g. ŚS 3.27.1-6, 12.3.55-60.

ŚS 6.10

1 *pr̥thivyaí śrótrāya vanaspátibhyo (á)gnaye (á)dhipataye sváhā*

2 *prāṇāyāntárikṣāya váyobhyo vāyáve (á)dhipataye sváhā*

3 *divé cákṣuṣe nákṣatrebhyaḥ sūryāyádhipataye sváhā*

To the earth, to hearing, to trees, to (their) overlord Agni, hail!

To breathing, to the atmosphere, to birds, to (their) overlord Vāyu, hail!

To heaven, to sight, to the constellations, to (their) overlord Sūrya, hail!

CONCLUSION

PS 11.16 was probably composed for the royal unction rite, where waters from various sources were brought together. A number of its features also suggest that it continues an inherited Indo-Iranian tradition of praise for the divine Waters which involves invocation under different names. Two of the names stand out as unparalleled items of Vedic vocabulary, whose morphology may point to an ancient origin, even though not all members of the nominal category to which they belong are necessarily relic linguistic forms. At the same time PS 11.16 is an interesting example of a late AV saṃhitā composition which embeds ancient features in a framework of formulae that are entirely Vedic in style and anticipate the compositional techniques of the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads.

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