

Is it Time to Re-Evaluate the Contribution which the Atharvaveda can make to Indo-Iranian and Indo-European Historical Linguistics?¹

ELIZABETH TUCKER

University of Oxford

1. The Use of linguistic evidence from the Atharvaveda by Indo-Europeanists

1.1 Indo-Europeanists are accustomed to cite linguistic evidence from the Atharvaveda (AV) for different purposes. Firstly, AV evidence is used to supplement gaps in the Ṛgveda (RV) evidence and is taken to represent the earliest Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) material that can be employed in IE reconstruction. The following are some random examples of morphological archaisms for which the AV provides the earliest OIA evidence cited by Gotō (2013):

Pl cases of 'dog': gen. *śúnām*, dat. *śvábhyas*

Inflection of 'liver' and 'blood': AV nom. sg *yákṛt* / RV gen. *yaknás* ; RV nom. sg *ásṛk* / AV gen. *asnás*, instr. *asná*

3 pl pres. indicative of verb 'to lie': *śére*, *śérate*, cf. Avestan *sōire*

2 pl pres. imperative of verb 'to be': *sta*

¹ I am very grateful to the organisers of the 27th Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference for their invitation to deliver a featured lecture, and for giving me encouragement to speak on the topic which I proposed, concerning the historical linguistic value of the Atharvaveda. This paper reflects the survey-like talk which I delivered at the conference, and it draws on the work of many other scholars past and present (see the long list of references) who specialise in Atharvaveda Studies. To them I am deeply indebted. This paper is aimed at Indo-Europeanists rather than Vedicists, and my hope is that it presents a fair synthesis for the linguistic questions concerning the Atharvaveda as they stand in 2015/2016.

1.2 Secondly AV evidence is employed - it seems without any feeling of contradiction - to demonstrate the first steps away from the language of the RV in the direction of later Vedic and classical Sanskrit. Examples of innovations in the AV which contrast with RV archaisms are:

Aorist from verb 'to make': only root aorist in RV *ákaram, ákar, ákar*, but in AV also thematic aorist *ákaram, ákaras, ákarat*.

S-aorist 3 sg active from verb 'to convey' (IE **ueǵh-*): RV *ávāt* < IE **éueǵh-s-t*, but AV (injunctive) *vākṣīt*

Inflection of fem. stems in *-ti-*, e.g. RV gen. sg. only *ádites*, AV *ádites* and *ádityās*.

In particular, frequency statistics about inflections based on the work of Lanman (1880) and Avery (1876) appear in our Vedic Grammars, and these are employed to show that already by the AV the dialect mixture characteristic of the RV Family Books was disintegrating and a single dialect that was the ancestor of Classical Sanskrit is taking its place, e.g.

"The [thematic] instrumental pl. ending in *-ais* is slightly commoner in the RV than *-ebhis*, but in the AV it is five times as common. It is almost always used in the Brāhmaṇas." (Macdonell 1916:78).

1.3 Thirdly, if a form is absent from the RV Family Books, but makes its first appearance in RV 10 and it is also found in the AV, this is considered good evidence for an early OIA innovation. In other words, AV evidence is employed to supplement and confirm late RV linguistic material such as: *-áya-* present from *gam*: *gāmáya-* RV 5.5.10, but *gamáya-* in RV 10 and AV

Imperatives *kṛṇu*, *kṛdhi* 'make' in all of RV, but also *kuru* in RV 10 and AV

Particle *evám* 'so' once in RV 10, frequent in AV

sapátna-, *sapatnahán-* 'rival, rival-striking' (backformed from *sapátnī-* 'co-wife')

first appears in RV 10 and very frequent in AV

'hair': *róman-* in RV 1 and 9, but *lóman-* in RV 10 and AV.

2. Lack of linguistic studies devoted exclusively to the Atharvaveda

2.1 As all the types of examples in Section 1 show, the AV's language has almost always been viewed either in relation to the language of the RV or to the rest of Vedic and Classical Sanskrit. It is hardly ever studied in its own right, even though most of us would acknowledge that it probably can offer a window on an early register or registers of OIA that differ from that of the hieratic texts, in particular from the linguistically conservative and stylistically elaborate language in which the RV Family Books are composed.

So why has the basic philological and historical linguistic principle that synchronic analysis must precede diachronic reconstruction been so neglected in the case of our second earliest Vedic text? Or is it our second earliest text? How can we know without thorough up-to-date studies?

One reason for the neglect of the AV, it may be suggested, lies in the history of Western Vedic scholarship and its early dogged attempts to work out a chronology of Vedic texts. Consider the following influential statement of Oldenberg (1888:320):

"Wie im Atharvaveda gewisse später zur Alleinherrschaft gelangte Formen, Declinations-endungen u.s.w. in viel höherem Procentsatz den alten, später verdrängten Formen gegenüberstehen als im Ṛigveda, so herrscht auch die Tendenz, in den aus dem Ṛv. stammenden Versen jene dem älteren Gebrauch angehörigen Formen zu beseitigen."

At the turn of 19th/20th century the AV's chronology was hotly debated, but on the basis of a limited number of forms and passages repeated from the RV. The 19th century view that the AV language has lost the interesting old inflectional forms and that it merely represents an impoverished version of the language of the RV was challenged by Maurice Bloomfield (1899:46):

"For reasons that are nearly always one-sided and subjective, sometimes patently erroneous, the language of the popular or Atharvavanic hymns is generally regarded as chronologically later than that of the hieratic hymns the purely linguistic data alone are a broken reed in support of the chronological fixation of a given hymn...."

Of course as Bloomfield lived before the advent of sociolinguistics, he was unable to articulate convincingly what would be considered an acceptable hypothesis nowadays, that the AV shows a different linguistic register from the highly conservative language of the RV, and in many features it appears more 'advanced' or 'modern', without this necessarily pointing to any chronological difference. His arguments were emphatically rejected by Oldenberg (1900) and Arnold (1901), but largely on metrical rather than linguistic grounds: if the AV represented a different tradition from the RV, why did it have many of the same

metrical forms? Hence any attempt to view the AV's language in anything other than a chronological light was nipped in the bud over 100 years ago.

During the 20th century, as the complexities of the whole Vedic canon were increasingly recognized, the position accorded to the AV became even less clear. Because of what Renou (1957:51) called the 'interconnexions' between Vedic texts attempts to sort out any relative chronology of the Vedic Samhitās beyond the RV were gradually abandoned. A footnote to Narten's famous 1968 article on the use of OIA verb forms for IE reconstruction gives the broad chronology of Vedic language and texts that lies behind work by members of the 'Erlangen School'. The AV's language is placed in the large category of 'mantra language' which also comprises the language of the hieratic Sāmaveda and verse portions of the Yajurveda:

"Das Vedische selbst unterteilt sich chronologisch in 1. Ṛgveda; 2. Atharvaveda und die Hauptmasse in der Rituelliteratur vorkommenden Opfersprüche (Mantras); 3. Samhitā-Prosa: TS, MS, KS, KpS [Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda Samhitās]; 4. Brāhmaṇa-Prosa: Aitareya-B, Jaiminīya-B 5. spätvedische Prosa: Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyakas, Sūtras." (Narten 1968:115, note 13).

This same Erlangen school categorization which does not accord any individuality to the language of the AV has more recently been repeated in several articles by Michael Witzel. On the subject of the AV he has also made some sweeping statements which fit his historical scenario but there are no new detailed linguistic arguments in support:

"Many of the small Atharvavedic sorcery rites may be even older than the RV. However, they have been preserved in a language that is definitely younger than that of RV 10. The AV collections also include several hymns taken over from the RV, - and, again as expected, in a linguistically younger form." (Witzel 1997 [1989]:275–6).

3. The Publication history of the Athrvaveda

The other, and probably more major reason, for the linguistic neglect of the AV lies in the publication history of the text. Conclusions about the chronological position of the AV have to a large extent been drawn from one recension, the Śaunaka (Śaunakīya) Saṃhitā (ŚS) or the 'Vulgate Text' of the AV, which was the only published version available during the 19th century. But it has been known to Vedic scholars for 140 years that another recension has survived, the Paippalāda Saṃhitā (PS). However, it has been a "Waiting for Godot" situation and the lack of a usable text for the Paippalāda recension has discouraged Atharvaveda studies, particularly studies of a linguistic nature. Finally, the situation is changing - very slowly - and the PS has turned out to be very different from the ŚS. It is much more than another version of the same AV text that we knew hitherto, as it contains a substantial amount of previously unknown Vedic material, both individual stanzas and whole new sūktas that are not paralleled anywhere else in Vedic literature. ŚS consists of 730 sūktas whereas the PS manuscripts from Orissa (see below) have a total of 923. PS Book I, for example, contains 486 stanzas. Of these 250 are common to PS and

ŚS, 62 occur in other Vedic texts, but 174 represent new material, according to Durgamohan Bhattacharyya (1964). Furthermore, even when there is parallelism between the PS and ŚS compositions, the differences in verbal details are often considerable and complete agreement is rare (cf. Griffiths 2009:xv).

In this context it is worth outlining the publication history of both surviving recensions of the Atharvaveda, even though that of the Paippalāda has often been described before (Witzel 1973; Bhattacharya 1997:ix–xiii; Zehnder 1999:11–2; Griffiths 2009:xv–xx).

4. The Śaunaka (Śaunakīya) Saṃhitā (ŚS)

4.1 Up until the last decades of the 19th century it was believed that only one version of the Atharvaveda had survived, although the names of no less than nine ancient Atharvavedic Schools are known from the Indian grammatical tradition, and Patañjali (*Mahābhāṣya* 1.1.4) cites the opening line not of the Śaunaka but of the Paippalāda Saṃhitā.

4.2 In 1856 Rudolph Roth and William Dwight Whitney published the fundamental Śaunaka text under the name *Atharva Veda Sanhitā*, using fairly recent manuscripts (the earliest ones 16/17th century CE) that were available in European libraries. In 1881 Whitney provided an *Index Verborum to the Published Text of the Atharva-Veda*, which is still the only comprehensive AV index. Whitney’s two volume English translation and commentary was published posthumously in the Harvard Oriental Series in 1905 “revised and

brought nearer to completion” by Charles Rockwell Lanman. In the meantime in 1897 Maurice Bloomfield had produced an English translation of selected AV hymns for the *Oxford Sacred Books of the East* series edited by Max Müller.

4.3 In 1894-98 Shankar Pandurang Pandit compiled a 4 volume edition (with commentary by ‘Sāyaṇa’) where the manuscript readings were checked on the basis of the living AV recitation tradition of the Śaunaka School which still existed in Gujarat and Maharashtra at the end of the 19th century. Apart from a second edition of Roth and Whitney's text with a number of small corrections by Max Lindenau in 1924, and a 1957 publication by Śrīpāda Damodara Sātavaḷekara which essentially relies on S.P. Pandit's text, the work of editing and translating the Śaunaka AV has remained in abeyance since the beginning of 20th century.

5. The Paippalāda Saṃhitā (PS)

5.1 Roth was not satisfied with the Śaunaka text he and Whitney (or largely Whitney) had published in 1856, and so via British contacts he instituted a search in India for new manuscripts. In 1873 he was able to announce the discovery in Kashmir of a birchbark written in Śāradā script and in 1875 it was transported to Tübingen University Library. The text it contained was identified as the Atharvaveda of the Paippalāda School (Roth 1875). Whitney hailed this as “one of the most important finds in Sanskrit literature of the last half-century”, and in 1901 Maurice Bloomfield arranged with the help of Richard

Garbe for the publication of a facsimile edition of the Kashmiri birchbark (reproduced in colour by chromophotography at John Hopkins University Press).

However, by the time the birchbark had been copied several times in India and then transported to Tübingen the first folios were missing. More seriously, the Paippalāda text it offered was very corrupt. Leroy Carr Barret published a Roman transcription and preliminary edition in instalments in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* and two of the Society's monographs between 1905 and 1940, but one prominent Vedic scholar after another came out with disparaging remarks about the birchbark 'find', including:

C.R. Lanman, apud Whitney 1905: lxxxiii, "The birch-bark manuscript is indeed what we may call in Hindu phrase a veritable 'mine of the jewels of false readings and blunders', an *apapāthaskhalitaratnākara*, a book in which the student may find richly-abounding and most instructive illustrations of perhaps every class of error discussed by the formal treatises on text-criticism"

and p. lxxxviii "each of these 4 words (at 12.3.36b) by itself is a good and intelligible Vedic word; but taken together, they yield far less meaning than do the famous Jabberwock verses of *Through the Looking-glass*."

M.Bloomfield, *JAOS* 29, 1911, 286 "a meaningless jumble of senseless sounds"

P. Thieme, *Pāṇini and the Veda* (Allahabad 1935), p. 66 "almost useless for philological purposes"

K.Hoffmann 1968 "It is not Barret's fault that for the most part his efforts and sagacity were doomed to failure, and that rarely convincing results were reached. Nevertheless all scholars who have so far concerned themselves with the Paippalāda version cannot but fully acknowledge and feel grateful for the enormous amount of useful work done by Barret. Yet in

spite of what was achieved...everyone who has dealt with the Paippalāda version from a philological or linguistic point of view has, again and again, been driven to despair”.

5.2 The situation changed again unexpectedly and dramatically with the announcement in 1957 that Durgamohan Bhattacharyya, a prominent Indian Vedic scholar, had discovered a living Paippalāda tradition in Orissa (now the Indian State of Odisha) and in addition several palm leaf manuscripts containing the text of the Paippalāda Saṃhitā written in the local Oriya script (Bhattacharya 1957). The palm leaf manuscripts in Oriya script are not old, and their text also contains corruptions, but in 1964 in his devanāgarī edition of the first book of PS Durgamohan Bhattacharyya was able to show over and over again that their readings made sense whereas the Kashmiri birchbark gave strings of words which looked like Sanskrit but did not make any continuous sense. For instance, at 1.84.4d the Oriya manuscripts read *upa sam dyām iha* “I fasten together here” but this appears in the Kashmiri Śāradā manuscript as *upa satyām iha*. Further examples are noted by Bhattacharyya 1964:xxi–xxxi. However, Karl Hoffmann (1968), while acknowledging the importance of Bhattacharyya's finds in Orissa, criticized his editorial methods for privileging the readings of the Oriya palm leaf manuscripts and giving too little weight to the single Kashmiri birchbark even when it could provide useful testimony.

Recordings of Paippaladin recitation were broadcast on All India Radio but subsequently these tapes were lost and Durgamohan Bhattacharyya died not many years after his spectacular discovery. His edition of Books 2-4 was published posthumously in 1970, but then there was no further publication of

the Oriya material until 1997 when Books 1-15 became available in a new devanāgarī edition by Dipak Bhattacharya, the son of Durgamohan, followed in 2008 by Book 16 and in 2011 by Books 17-18.

In the meantime several more palm leaf PS manuscripts were located in Orissa by Michael Witzel (in 1983) and Arlo Griffiths (3 field-trips 1998-2001); some have been photographed (see Griffiths 2003). The Orissa manuscripts are all fairly modern (mostly 19th century) and closely related to each other; hence they provide evidence for only a single tradition, whose history is obscure apart from some indications from epigraphical evidence that Paippalāda practitioners were living in Orissa in 10th Century AD (Griffiths 2002: 41-2; attempts to reconstruct the historical relationship between the Oriya and Kashmiri traditions of PS have been made by Witzel 1985, followed by Lopez 2010:17-21).

An international editing project which aims to use all the available Oriya material and to compare it critically with the Kashmiri birchbark (as advocated by Hoffmann 1968), has resulted so far in romanized text editions with translations and commentaries for six books of PS (Kāṇḍa 2: Thomas Zehnder 1999; Kāṇḍa 5: Alexander Lubotsky 2002; Kāṇḍas 6-7: Arlo Griffiths 2009; Kāṇḍas 13-14: Carlos Lopez 2010). In the most recently edited books of PS, and those that are in progress, all the known manuscript variants are being recorded, so that other scholars can make conjectures or reedit without rereading the manuscripts.

5.3 Thus there is the hope now that, apart from some unevenness resulting from having different editors for different books, we will end up with a better text of the PS than has ever existed for ŚS. One of several reasons why the PS is being reedited so soon after its first publication is that many textual problems have been left unresolved by Dipak Bhattacharya who often simply prints the Oriya manuscript reading with underlining when he suspects it is corrupt. Whitney, on the other hand, represented the opposite pole in editorial practice. The Roth-Whitney- Lindenau edition of ŚS is so heavy on emendations that the text is virtually recomposed in many passages. This can be seen from Whitney and Lanman's translation where often Whitney has changed his mind about the reading. Hence the ŚS needs reediting too, but this may turn out to be even more of a challenge than PS. There are indications that the Śaunaka Atharvaveda has suffered considerable contamination from other Vedic texts. Recitation of the Śaunaka recension by genuine Atharvavedins was dying out during the 19th century, and it has been observed from more recent revivalist attempts that when a Vedic practitioner whose original specialisation is in another Veda attempts to recite the AV he naturally switches back to his own Veda in parallel passages (Bahulkar Forthcoming). The Atharvaveda recitation tradition has probably been weaker than that of the other Vedas in India for a long time (as it is less useful for ritual), and so similar contamination may have occurred over hundreds of years, and predate the Śaunaka manuscripts used by Roth and Whitney. The Orissa Paippaladins on the other hand seem to have existed in isolation for some time - in such isolation that no one knew of their

existence until just over half a century ago! - and so may have preserved a 'purer' tradition; at least their manuscripts show more differences from the parallel versions of other Vedas, with the exception of a few RV hymns.

6. Is the language of the Atharvaveda homogeneous throughout?

There is thus every reason now for Indo-Europeanists to use PS in their work, and make contributions in the task of establishing a sound text. In addition to the need to complete the basic PS editing tasks, there is also the need for comprehensive studies devoted principally or exclusively to the Atharvaveda's language.

One aspect which urgently needs a full scale modern investigation is the extent to which the language varies in different parts and even different sūktas of the AV. Thanks to the Oriya manuscripts of PS the overall mechanical arrangement of the AV is now understood better. PS 1-15 the so-called 'sorcery books' are reckoned to represent the core while 16-17 are somewhat comparable to RV 10 in content (speculative or mystic compositions according to Whitney's terminology), 18 contains rites of passage and some royal rituals, while 19 and 20 are appendices (19 miscellaneous ṛcas and 20 RV material). Within PS 1-15 the arrangement is mechanical: the books each contain compositions with the same number of verses ranging from 4 in Book 1 to 18 in Book 15. There is also a redactional practice of dividing the longer compositions, and within each book the arrangement sometimes depends on verbal concatenations (Insler 1998).

Many compositions are in the AV merely because their subject matter lies outside the normal RV hieratic concerns, for instance, PS 11 has a number of poems dealing with agriculture. In addition, sūktas relating to particular rituals have ended up in the AV rather than the RV: notably, the consecration rituals for a king (Proferes 2007) and hymns to the divine waters (Tucker Forthcoming b), possibly because of their connection with the king's unction (*abhiṣeka*-). Each hymn has to be viewed critically in its own right and a view formed on its particular set of linguistic features. At the moment there is a general supposition that the larger books 16-20 contain later Vedic language (in places!), but this is yet to be demonstrated in detail (cf. Griffiths 2009:xv, note 1).

The remainder of this paper will present, by way of illustration, some examples that have already come to light via recent work on PS 1-15 which may have interest for Indo-European and/or Old Indo-Aryan historical linguistic studies. They may also have bearing on the larger linguistic questions of chronology, register and dialect, but the *caveats* mentioned above about probable internal linguistic diversity within both recensions of the AV should be borne in mind.

7. Differences in linguistic register rather than diachronic development from the earliest R̥gveda language?

The following random examples from PS involve various aspects of its language (phonology, morphology, lexicon) and arguably point to a different linguistic register or dialect rather than a younger form of the RV language.

7.1 Phonology, *l*-forms. The PS contains new early evidence for *l*-forms from roots whose previously known earliest attestations show *r*-forms; in at least two compositions there are interesting *l*-forms which are associated with 'women's language': PS 5.34 is a curse directed at a woman, and contains the imperatives *abhi cālaya, prati cālaya*. They are probably to be connected with RV and Skt root *car-* < IE **k^uel-*, *carati* 'moves', whose *-āya-* present *pari cāraya-* first occurs in the Śatapathabrāhmaṇa (Lubotsky 2002:156); the same composition (PS 5.34.6) also contains *palāyasva* 'go away', the earliest attested *l*-variant of *parāyate*.

ekalāmikā PS 7.12.1-2, in a queen's spell against rivals, has been plausibly connected with *ram-*, *rāmayati* 'makes rest' (Griffiths 2009:373 'who alone gives rest').

7.2 Morphology - stem formation. The suffixes *-ayitnú-* / *-ayiṣṇú-* form quasi-participles connected with *-āya-* presents, e.g. *poṣayitnú-* RV 3.4.9 = 7.2.9, 4.57.1 but *poṣayiṣṇúḥ* PS 2.13.3 = ŚS 3.14.6, PS 2.59.2 = ŚS 5.28.4 beside RV, AV *poṣayati* 'makes thrive' (Hoffmann 1957:419). They must be morphological variants as the evolution of one from the other would be phonologically improbable. *-ayiṣṇú-* is the normal AV suffix and the only suffix found in the Yajurveda. The PS evidence clarifies the distribution and confirms that *-ayitnú-* is characteristic only of the archaic hieratic language of RV 2-7 and 9.

Elsewhere we find *-ayīṣṇú-*, and in this case the AV is in accord with the Kāṇva's language in the RV and some other 'late' RV hymns, as well as the YV. The suffixes *-ayītnú-* and *-ayīṣṇú-* appear to represent parallel morphological innovations originating in different registers or dialects, and they may be of equal age (cf. Tucker Forthcoming c).

7.3 Morphology - Inflections. Some handbook statistics which appear to show a drift towards Classical Sanskrit now require revision in the light of PS evidence. For example, Macdonell's *Vedic Grammar for Students* (1916:125, note 2) comments on the relative frequency of the two 1st plural primary active endings in the RV and AV: "In the RV *-masi* is more than five times as common as *-mas*, but in the AV *-mas* is rather commoner than *-masi*." This may vastly exaggerate the difference. In a sample represented by PS books 2, 6-7 and 11 the distribution of the endings *-masi* versus *-mas* (and sandhi forms) is as follows:

PS 2: forms in *-masi* from 16 roots (28 tokens) vs. *-mas* from 6 roots (8 tokens).

PS 6-7: forms in *-masi* from 16 roots (34 tokens) vs. *-mas* from 4 roots (9 tokens)

PS 11: forms in *-masi* from 3 roots (3 tokens) vs. *-mas* from 1 root (1 token)

Just as in the RV *-masi* is more frequent than *-mas* in these books of PS, and similar ratios are likely to be found throughout the 'sorcery books' PS 1-15.

Lanman's pronouncement (1880:576) "the relative frequency of ancient and modern equivalent grammatical forms is a criterion of the age of different Vedic texts" was doubted already by Renou (1957:51, note 51) "vue contestable

en raison des interconnexions." Obviously, if the inflections attested in either or both recensions of the AV are simply counted, forms are included from pādas which occur in the RV and other Vedic texts. Much sifting is needed in every case to get an accurate picture of the employment of the inflections that is peculiar to the AV.

7.4 *Lexicon.* Besides IE vocabulary that first appears in the AV because of subject matter (e.g. *snāvan-* 'sinew', *takmán-* < **tap-mán-* 'fever', *kṛmi-* 'worm', verb *yabh* 'fuck'), there are inherited words with an unparalleled meaning, which is not continued in Classical Sanskrit, e.g. not only *abhicārā-* m. 'spell' (-*cārā-* < IE**-k^uoló-*) known from ŚS, but also *vāc-*, *vācas-* in the sense 'imprecation, curse' is confirmed by PS; arguably, also *pārvan-* 'bone of the joint, bone' (IE **pérur / pérū(e)n*), differentiated in meaning from *pāruṣ-* 'joint' (Griffiths and Lubotsky 2000/01:197). One can speculate that such semantic developments belong to the technical language of sorcerers, but it is very hard to believe that these sorcerers are the direct descendants of the poet who composed RV 10.71 to *Vāc*.

8. 'R̥gveda Repetitions'.

8.1 The dogma that when RV material reoccurs in the AV it is likely to show linguistic modernisation has bolstered the hypothesis that the language of the whole AV is more recent. However, the term 'modernisation' does not convey the complexity and inconsistency of the relationships that exist between

the AV and RV versions of the same sūktas or stanzas (cf. Tucker Forthcoming a, where sūktas and ṛcas which exist in three versions are studied).

8.2 Whole hymns are taken over from the RV Family Books with no variants at all, e.g. RV 7.35 to Viśve Devās, and RV 2.12 to Indra (although in the AV version the latter has some extra verses composed according to the same pattern tacked on at the end!).

In other cases only a few words and expressions differ, and many archaisms are left untouched, e.g. *mā́ ... abhí naṭ* with an old 3 sg root aorist from *naś-* 'reach' (RV 7.104.23, PS 16.11.3, ŚS 8.4.23); *imā́ bráhma* neuter pl. (RV 10.120.8, PS 6.1.8, ŚS 4.31.1b).

As far as RV 10 sūktas are concerned it is often impossible to tell whether one version is linguistically older than the other. For instance in the spell against disease repeated at RV 10.163.1-3, PS 4.7.1-3, ŚS 2.33.1-3 inherited IE words for parts of the body mingle with recent OIA ones equally in all three versions.

In the case of some RV 10 pādas where the ŚS version exactly agrees but PS differs, the variants represent compositional differences rather than linguistic forms of different age, e.g:

PS 5.18.1d *daivāḥ kṛṇutha jīvase* 'O divine ones, you make (him) to live'.

versus RV 10.137.1d, ŚS 4.13.1d *dévā jīváyathā púnah* 'O gods, you make (him) live again'.

PS 5.18.5d *yathāyam agado 'sati* 'so that this man may be well'.

versus RV 10.137.5d, ŚS 4.13.4d *yáthāyám arapá́ ásat* 'so that this (man) may be free from illness'.

Moreover, forms that have been taken as diagnostic for chronology can appear in converse distribution to that predicted by the hypothesis of 'modernisation', for instance:

RV 10.137.6 *ápaḥ sárvasya bheṣajís* 'Waters the healers of everything'.

versus PS 5.18.9, ŚS 6.91.3 *ápaḥ víśvasya bheṣajís*.

víśva- is the standard word for 'all' in the RV Family books, but here it appears in both AV versions while RV 10 has its 'late' replacement *sárva-*.

8.3 The variations, both in the compositional and linguistic domain, are similar in type to those seen across the Yajurveda Samhitās, in other words they look much more like the traditions and linguistic preferences of different groups of composers or early Vedic 'Schools', although this remains to be confirmed by further studies. Many of the old examples 'of modernisation', dating from Oldenberg, which keep being cited, can be interpreted in this way. For instance, when both PS and ŚS replace the RV absolutive *bhūtvī́* by *bhūtvā́* are they modernising or are they merely eliminating a peculiar RV form which did not exist in their own variety of OIA? Absolutes in *-tvī́* are attested most often in RV 10 and so they are unlikely to be archaic

Now that two AV recensions which sometimes diverge from each other as well as from the RV are becoming known, the evidence does not favour Renou's theory (1955:405–6) that the RV version is always basic, but rather the hypothesis that RV 10 and the two AV Samhitās drew on the same 'floating

mass' of non-hieratic mantras and recast them in their own ways. There are even some cases where the RV has arguably adapted a 'sorcery' composition and made its language more hieratic (e.g. RV 10.174 and PS 1.11, ŚS 1.29, discussed by Tucker Forthcoming a).

9. New evidence for IE archaisms from PS

Relic forms occasionally appear in PS, and some are already current in IE and OIA linguistic studies thanks to early sifting by Louis Renou (1964-5) and by Karl Hoffmann in numerous publications (however, the Oriya testimony was available to Hoffmann only for PS 1-4). This section gives some examples that have come to light via recent PS editing work, and more can be expected as the present international editing project progresses.

9.1 'Father Sky' and 'Mother Earth' appear more frequently than in the RV! e.g.

PS 2.64.3 *dyauḥ pitā pṛthivī mātā* (8 syllable line)

PS 5.21.1 *dyauś ca naḥ pitā pṛthivī ca mātā* (11 syllable line)

9.2 PS provides new early evidence for the reduplicated present from *ut pā* (cf. *pratyutpīpīte* TS 1.6.10.1) which has been compared to Hittite *pippa*- 'overturn', mid. *pippattari* 'topples' (Jasanoff 2003:131, with ref. to Oettinger and Hoffmann). In addition García Ramón 2009 compares this Vedic root *pā*³ with that of Grk *παύω*, Armenian *hanem*.

PS 2.65.2 *yas tvotpipānam pratyutpipāti* '(He) who attacks (*pratyutpipāti* 3 sg. pres. active) you as you attack' (*utpipānam* pres. middle participle).

9.3 *vi śerām* PS 2.73.3 'let them (the enemies) lie scattered' 3 pl imperative from *vi śay*⁽ⁱ⁾

PS contains a complete set of 3rd person stative forms from *śay*⁽ⁱ⁾ 'lie':

indicative 3 sg *śaye* : 3 pl *śere* (IE **kéj-oi* : *kéi-roi*)

Imperative 3 sg *śayām* : 3 pl (vi) *śerām*

9.4 *ni padām* PS 5.15.7 'let her (the earth) fall down' 3 sg imperative from the aorist stem of *pad*, cf. *apadran* RV 6.20.4, *pādi* RV 6.20.5, 1.105.3 (Kümmel 1996:70; also PS 16.81.1 *māva pādi tat*, PS 19.27.2 *mā tat sam pādi* 'let that not fall down/fall together')

9.5 *yavam* PS 19.54.4, in the sentence *mā tasmān yavam* 'prevent me from staying away from him'. 1 sg active root aorist injunctive from *yav* / *yu* 'separate' (trans.), 'stay away' (intrans.)'

Until recently only s-aorist forms were known for this root. Now we have:

pres. *yucchāmi* 'I stay away' : pres. *gacchāmi* 'I go' < **g^wṃ-ske/o-*

aor. (a)*yavam* 'I stayed away' : aor. (a)*gamam* 'I went' < *(*e*)*g^wem-*

9.6 *apakṣata* 3 pl middle s-aorist indicative 'they (the herbs) have ripened' from *pac* PS 11.14.5. An active form *pakṣat* occurs twice in the RV but its interpretation is disputed. At RV 8.69.15 it appears to mean 'he cooked' and the formal parallelism between the pair *apakṣata* / *pakṣat* and *ádhuḥṣata* / *ádhuḥṣat* speaks in favour of the analysis of *pakṣat* as a -*sa*- aorist injunctive form. This would also be possible for RV 10.27.18 *nahí pákṣat* (in opposition to the present subjunctive *pácāti* in the same pāda) since non-prohibitive injunctives in the RV can be negated by *ná* (Hoffmann 1967:99-100).

9.7 *bibhide* (PS 5.9.5) 'has split' 3 sg perfect middle of *bhed*, in a pāda about the havoc caused by farm-inhabiting demons (Sadānuvās) 'your churning sticks have now fallen to pieces (**śásrīre*), your milk-pail has burst (*bibhide te gaodohanī*)' (Lubotsky 2002:55). Hitherto only perfect active forms were known from *bhed* 'split' in Vedic (Kümmel 2000:350–1).

9.8 *vṛṣṇyā* (PS 5.28.8) hysterokinetic instr sg of *vṛṣṇi*- 'ram'. Is it an archaic form or could it be modelled on the inherited inflection *ávi*- 'sheep'? There is also some doubt whether this form exists as the reading *vṛṣṇyā* in the sentence *yan no dadur varāham.....yad⁺ vāviyūthaṃ saha⁺ vṛṣṇyā no* 'When they have given us a boar....or when (they have given) us a herd of sheep together with a ram' (ed. and trans. Lubotsky 2002:128) is not supported by all the Oriya manuscripts or the Kashmiri.

9.9 *odanapāka*- (PS 5.13.3) 'rice cooker'. Does this represent the inherited thematic agent noun *-pāka*- < IE **-pok^wó-*, cf. Myc. Grk. *a-to-po-qo* 'baker', with expected Brugmann's Law lengthening of the root vowel? PS has some other forms of this type with long *-ā-*, e.g. *madhuhāra*- 'bee' (or 'bear!'), *sphātihārī*- (f.) 'carrying (away) prosperity', whereas RV has compounds in *-bhara*- with a short vowel (discussed in Tucker 2012: 254-259). Here we have a methodological problem about whether to take AV forms which look more archaic than their RV counterparts as hard evidence for an inheritance.

10. New evidence for developments within Old Indo-Aryan

The 'new' present imperative *kuru* from *kar* 'make' is less frequent in PS than the 'old' present imperative *kṛṇu*, aorist *kṛdhi*. It occurs three times in PS 6.23, a spell 'to get rid of a rival wife', and also in PS 5.34 (see §7.1 above) where the woman is told *ululā kuru* 'make a wailing' (5.34.1) and *gaṇḡanaṃ kuru* 'make a howling' (back at dogs, 5.34.5). The contexts support Hoffmann's argument (1976:580–5) that the form originated in colloquial speech, particularly in the periphrastic use of the verb 'to make'.

11. More evidence from PS for some rare Old Indo-Aryan morphological categories

11.1 *Feminine agent nouns in -varī-* (inherited type *pīvan-*, *pīvarī-*), e.g.

patvarī- 'flier, flying' from *pat* 'fly' PS 2.87.3, *pátvan-* 'flying' RV 9.96.23

praskadvarī- 'leaper, gusher forth' (of waters) from *pra-skand* 'leap forth' PS 11.16.2

takvarī- 'runner, flower' from *tak* 'run, flow' PS 11.16.3, *tákvan* 'bird of prey' RV 1.66.2

jítvarī- 'winner, victor' from *jay* 'win' PS 11.6.3, *sajítvan-* 'victorious' (RV x 3)

Are the AV *-varī-* forms, which sometimes lack a corresponding masculine in *-van-*, archaic or are they innovations?

11.2 *Thematic adjectives with intensive type reduplication*, e.g.

carācara- 'moving to and fro' PS 7.11.2

sanīsrasa- 'constantly slipping, unstable' PS 6.11.5, 6.14.5

rerīha- 'licking repeatedly' PS 16.79.6

See Wackernagel-Debrunner *AiGr* II.2:84: *ghanāghana-* and *sarīsrpa-*, the most frequent forms of this type in PS, are also attested once apiece in RV 10.103.1, 10.162.3.

11.3 *Intensive present stem verb forms*, e.g.

nenije 'I wash and wash' PS 7.3.7

karikratu 'let them keep making' PS 5.17.2, 5.24.3 (no 3 pl intensive imperative forms were previously attested!) and f. participle *karikratīs* 'constantly making' PS 7.13.7

tutodyete 'the two keep thrusting' PS 2.87.4 (not passive acc. to Zehnder 1999:192),

⁺*tutodyatām* 'let it thrust' PS 11.14.3

jaṅgahe 'smells of, is fragrant with' PS 19.34.7, 3 sg. stative intensive from *gandh* 'smell' (Griffiths and Lubotsky 1999:480)

11.4 *Desiderative presents*, e.g.

pramimīṣati 'tries to infringe' (the law of Varuṇa) from *may* 'diminish' PS 5.32.10

saṃścikīrṣati 'wishes to accomplish' PS 7.18.3

11.5 *Reduplicated aorists*, e.g.

adidviṣas 'you made hate' PS 2.58.1-2

ayūyujan 'they have made to be yoked' PS 11.14.2

acīkṛtas 'you have made to be cut up', from *kart* 'cut' PS 13.2.5 (previously not attested before Brāhmaṇas).

According to Jamison 1983:216–19 reduplicated aorists and *-áya-* presents stand side by side in the RV and AV. Most PS examples follow this pattern, but in the case of these three newly attested reduplicated aorists the *-áya-* present from the same root does not occur until much later.

12. Lexicon

12.1 The potential of PS material for OIA and IE lexical studies was recognized by Renou who published in a periodical of the Deccan College, Poona, a list of 'remarkable' PS words on the basis of the Kashmiri manuscript (Renou 1957:74). He adopted Barret's editorial suggestions in most cases, but expressed doubts about their reliability and the completeness of his list. Many items on Renou's long list were newly attested nominal compounds composed of previously known elements, but some new individual lexemes have now been confirmed by the Oriya PS manuscripts and recent editions of individual PS books. Lubotsky (2010) supplies a list of newly attested words from PS 5 which he edited in 2002. A few examples are given below in illustration of the various types of lexical material that PS can be expected to yield.

12.2 There are one or two hitherto completely unknown Old Indo-Aryan lexemes with IE cognates, e.g. at PS 4.14.3 *puvas-* 'pus' < IE **puH-os*, cf. Lat. *pūs*, *pūris*, Grk πύον.

12.3 PS provides an earlier attestation for lexemes previously known only from Late Vedic or Classical Sanskrit, e.g.

arupyan PS 8.15.7 'they suffered pain', cf. *rupyantaḥ śere* 'they lie suffering pain' (PS 11.10.8). Previously known from TB 2.1.1.1-2. The corresponding -*āya-* pres. *ropaya-* 'hurt' is frequent in PS (1.98.1, 4.19.7, 8.15.4, etc.)

vali- 'wrinkle' f. PS 19.20.15-17 (see Griffiths 2009: 82 for a preliminary edition of this spell to remove wrinkles!). Previously known from Mahābhārata.

prapautra- m. 'great-grandson' PS 5.40.5. Known from Kathāsaritsāgara +.

mekṣaṇa- n. 'stirring spoon' PS 16.112.1, known from Brāhmaṇas and Sūtras.

12.4 PS also sometimes supplies a textual attestation for lexemes previously known only from the Indian grammatical tradition and lexica, e.g. *piba-*

'drinker' (PS 5.33.8: Pāṇ. 3.1.137), *śivatātī-* f. 'happiness' (PS 5.36: Pāṇ.

4.4.143), *jīvarī-* f. 'conquering' (PS 11.6.3: Patañjali with ref. to Pāṇ. 4.3.84).

12.5 PS textual evidence settles the meaning of disputed words, some with IE cognates, e.g.

prḍāku- 'panther, leopard', cf. Grk. πάρδαλις, NPers. *palang* (PS 2.18.1, 5.10.3: Zehnder 1999:59), but also 'spotted snake' (PS 8.7.2, 16.16.7, ŚS 10.4.17).

yātar- sg can mean 'husband's brother's wife', also pl 'brothers' wives', cf. Grk. εἰνάτερες, Lat. *ianitrices* (PS.19.19.9-11: Griffith & Lubotsky 2009)

13. Syntax

The PS contains sections with formulae in prose (e.g. 2.84-86, 2.91, 6.13, 7.16-17, 11.16, 13.9 and much more in Books 16-18). The prose of the AV has hardly been studied at all, although some of it is probably very old. The study of AV syntax, both that of verse and that of prose, could throw useful light on 'normal' early Old Indo-Aryan syntax, without the poetic elaboration and syntactic ambiguities that the RV composers indulged in.

14. Preliminary sketch of the Atharvaveda verb system based on PS 2.1-29, PS 5, PS 7, PS 11, PS 13-14

Full synchronic descriptions of different aspects of the AV's language, drawing material from both PS and ŚS, are needed as the first step in any sort of work of reappraisal. The following far from complete description based on a collection of verb forms from only a few books of PS is intended merely to give a taste of the sort of results that may be obtained from linguistic studies devoted exclusively to the AV.

14.1 *Imperatives* are the most frequent verb form. They are almost all based on present stems, but on a full range of present stem types, including intensives, desideratives, denominatives, e.g. *sacantām* 'let them follow!' (5.7.4), *pra tīrasva* 'you extend!' (11.5.12), *snāhi* 'you bathe!' (7.5.10), *jahi* 'you slay!' (7.2.2), *sam duhrām* 'let them together yield!' (5.16.1), *dadhātu* 'let him bestow!' (11.2.1), *hanyatām* 'let him be slain!' (7.2.8), *vanutām* 'let him win!' (5.7.8), *yunaktu* 'let him yoke!' (11.14.4), *mathnantu* 'let them rob!' (5.10.6), *dhāpayatām*

'let it give to suckle!' (7.11.9), *karikratu* 'let them keep making!' (5.17.2), *dipsa* 'you seek to harm!' (7.1.1), *gopāyatu* 'let him shepherd!' (7.3.7).

Exceptions: a few 2 sg aorist imperatives: *kṛdhi* 'make!', (*ā*) *gahi* 'come!', *dehi* 'give!' *dhehi* 'bestow!', and *ni padām* 'let her fall down!' (perhaps supported by the frequent present imperatives *duhām*, *śayām*?)

14.2 *Present indicatives* are only slightly less frequent, and there are many more 'expressive' present forms (intensives and desideratives) than in other Vedic texts. Presents often have a 'performative' value and there are numerous 1st person forms:

e.g. 11.2.8cd *vācā yac cakrus te guru tad ṛcā laghu kṛṇmasi* "What they have made heavy for you by a curse that we make light for you with a stanza."

In this function they are sometimes coupled with aorists

e.g. 2.12.5 *ā harāmi gavām kṣīram....āhārṣam asmākaṁ vīrān ā⁺ patnīm edam astakam*

"I am bringing the cows' milk... I have brought our men, brought my wife to this homestead."

In keeping with this pattern many *-āya-* presents and the reduplicated aorist from the same root occur repeatedly in parallel contexts, e.g. *nāśayāmi* 'I make perish' / *anīnaśam* 'I have made perish' or *jambhayāmasi* / *jambhayāmi* 'we/I crush' / *ajījabham* 'I crushed'.

14.3 The *imperfect indicative* is very rare and occurs chiefly in narration of myths, story-telling,

e.g. 2.16.3 *pāṭām indro vy āśnād dhantavā asurebhyaḥ* "Indra ate the Pāṭa plant so as to slay the Asuras".

Injunctive forms based on the present stem are confined to prohibitions (see below), and they are much less frequent than aorist injunctives.

14.4 *Non-prohibitive Injunctive.* In the sample surveyed here there are no injunctive forms outside prohibitions. In PS 7 there are some forms (*bruvat* 7.8.1, *riṣat* 7.10.2, 4) which from a formal point of view look like injunctives but are used as subjunctives with negative *na* (an exception is *mā riṣat* PS 7.7.6). The view of Hoffmann (1967:36) "...es ist offensichtlich, dass der nicht-prohibitive Injunktiv im Atharvaveda seine Lebendigkeit eingebüsst hat" appears to be confirmed.

14.5 *Aorist injunctives* in prohibitions account for around 75% of the total occurrences of aorists of all types. The morphology of aorist forms is mostly identical to that of the RV; newly attested forms that look archaic probably are archaic:

e.g. *mā .. pra cyoṣṭa* (PS 11.1.8) 'stop it from moving forth' 3 sg middle s-aorist injunctive from *pra cyav*. cf. RV 10.173.2 *māpa cyoṣṭhās* and Brāhmaṇas *acyoṣṭa* (Narten 1964:115).

mā .. vākṣīt 3 sg s-aorist active injunctive from *vah* 'convey' (PS 7.18.3, see § 2) shows the one innovation in s-aorist morphology that is at all frequent in the AV, the remodelling of old 3 sg forms, cf. e.g.

mā nir bhākṣīt from *bhaj* 'share' PS 19.46.6 (cf. the older form *bhāk* at RV 7.18.13, etc.)

mā hāsīt from *hā* 'leave' PS 2.81.1 (cf. the older form *ahās* at PS 2.39.5).

prāṇaikṣīt from *nej* 'wash' ŚS 2.7.1

ajaiṣīt from *jay* 'conquer' PS 18.14.4 = ŚS 14.2.74 (cf. older 3 sg *ájais* RV 8.40.11; a different type of remodelling *ajait* is found at PS 17.41.4 = ŚS 12.3.54).

14.6 The *perfect* is not frequent and there do not appear to be any striking innovations. The function of the perfect forms in PS Book 2 has been studied by Kümmel 2000.

14.7 The *future indicative in -sya-* is very rare (4 examples in this sample), just as in the RV, and its function appears to be to emphasise that an action really will take place in the future, e.g. PS 2.2.3 *mā bibher na mariṣyasi* "do not be afraid, you will not die."

14.8 A *periphrastic future* supplied by agent nouns in *-tar* also appears occasionally, employed to indicate an action that will happen at a determined point of time (cf. Tichy 1992), e.g.

pratyāvarttā PS 5.12.4 "He going in the opposite direction will turn back again, when the year is passed" (Lubotsky 2002:68)

aitā PS 5.31.5 "Then this man will come [there], beyond old age" (Lubotsky 2002:139)

14.9 *Subjunctive* forms occur in considerable numbers, and are formed on both present and aorist stems, e.g.

pra tirāti 'may it extend' from *tar* 'cross over, overcome' PS 2.28.5

vārayātai 'may it hinder' from *var-* 'cover, hinder' PS 5.8.8

yathā ...hanat 'so that it may slay' from *han* PS 7.1.7

karat 'may he make' root aorist subj. from *kar* PS 11.3.2, 10, 5.1.1, etc.

neṣat 'may (Dhātār) lead' s-aorist subj. from *nayⁱ* PS 7.3.7

pra tāriṣat 'may it extend (our lives)' s-aorist subj from *tarⁱ* PS 11.3.4.

Subjunctives based on athematic stems occasionally have a hyper-characterizing *-ā-*, e.g.

karātha 'may you (pl.) make' PS 5.4.6, 5.16.3 (not likely to be from the thematic aorist *akarat* as this does not occur in PS 5, whereas the root aorist indicative *akar*, *akarma*, *akran* occurs several times).

NB the frequent alternations between 3rd person subjunctives and imperatives, which are used with similar meanings in similar contexts, e.g.

PS 11.2.1d *viśaraṃ nāśayāti te* 'may he (Indra) destroy your pain'

PS 11.2.2d *viśaraṃ nāśayantu te* 'let them (the gods) destroy your pain'

14.10 The *optative* is rare, and virtually restricted to 1st person forms, e.g.

saṃ carema 'we would move together' 1 pl present optative from *car* PS 7.6.5, 9 (in both stanzas beside 3 pl imperative *bhavantu*)

syāma 'we would be' 1 pl present optative from verb 'to be' PS 5.4.5, 7.3.8, etc.

vidheyam namas 'I would pay respect' 1 sg aorist optative from *vedh/vidh* PS 5.5.1, 9

sākṣīya 'I would overpower' 1 sg mid s-aorist optative from *sah* PS 2.16.3, 7.12.8, 11.12.10.

15. Conclusion

The availability of the new PS material, in addition to parallel but sometimes differing versions of AV material which was previously known, is reason enough to justify reopening the whole question of the AV's linguistic position and the use we make of AV language in diachronic linguistic studies. However, to attempt a full reassessment would clearly still be premature, not only because just 6 of the 20 Books of PS have been edited with a commentary, translation and index, but also because it remains to be established how much internal linguistic consistency there is throughout the AV (or sections of the AV), and more detailed synchronic studies of individual aspects of its language are needed (verb system, noun inflection, use of particles, etc).

Concentration on the RV by Indo-Europeanists and the prevailing view that the AV is only useful as a supplement (in the ways outlined in § 1) means that the surface has barely been scratched. However, as the preliminary sketch of the verb system in §14 shows, the picture of the AV's language when it is considered in its own right yields some surprises. Some peculiarities are obviously attributable to the nature of the compositions (the prevalence of imperative forms, for example), but others, such as the heavy use of 'expressive' categories (intensives, desideratives, adjectives with intensive reduplication), surely support the notion of a linguistic register which was very different from that of the RV. A more difficult question is whether the 'loss' of some parts of the verb system which can be reconstructed for Proto Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian (no non-prohibitive injunctives and restricted use of the optative) is a

sign of lateness or again of a difference in register. The fact that the optative flourishes in the Brāhmaṇas and in Classical Sanskrit, whereas the subjunctive, which is robust in our PS sample, gradually dies out suggests that it cannot be correct to see a linear chronological development with the AV as the second stage after the RV, and that this 19th century view should be laid to rest. It should be replaced by a more complicated picture which recognizes different e, but much work remains to be done to identify these. Whatever conclusions are reached in the future, renewed study of the AV language can be expected to produce more material that can be employed in IE reconstruction and which greatly increases the information about early Old Indo-Aryan.

(9,031 words including references)

elizabeth.tucker@orinst.ox.ac.uk

Dr M. Elizabeth Tucker
Oriental Institute,
OXFORD OX1 2LE
United Kingdom

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