

Studies in the Atharvaveda

Welten Süd- und Zentralasiens / Worlds of South and Inner Asia / Mondes de l'Asie du Sud et de l'Asie Centrale



Im Auftrag der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft /
On behalf of the Swiss Asia Society / Au nom de la
Société Suisse-Asie

Edited by

Blain Auer

Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz

Angelika Malinar

Nicolas Martin

Ingo Strauch

Volume 15

Studies in the Atharvaveda



Proceedings of the 3rd Zurich International Conference
on Indian Literature and Philosophy

Edited by
Robert Leach, Oliver Hellwig and Thomas Zehnder

DE GRUYTER



Supported by the Swiss Academy
of Humanities and Social Sciences
www.sagw.ch

ISBN 978-3-11-124441-9
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-124443-3
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-124475-4
ISSN 1661-755X
DOI <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111244433>



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. For details go to <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

Creative Commons license terms for re-use do not apply to any content (such as graphs, figures, photos, excerpts, etc.) not original to the Open Access publication and further permission may be required from the rights holder. The obligation to research and clear permission lies solely with the party re-using the material.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024945243

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2025 the author(s), editing © 2025 Robert Leach, Oliver Hellwig and Thomas Zehnder,
published by Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston
The book is published open access at www.degruyter.com.

Cover image: Folio of Odishan Paippalāda-Sarṁhitā manuscript (Ek2), ca. 1844. Photograph by Arlo Griffiths, publicly accessible at SWISSUbase, Atharvaveda Paippalada manuscript collection
<https://doi.org/10.48656/yyzd-bf48>

Typesetting: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.

Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com

Questions about General Product Safety Regulation:
productsafety@degruyterbrill.com

Preface

The articles collected in this volume are the outcome of the 3rd Zurich International Conference on Indian Literature and Philosophy (ZICILP), *The Atharvaveda and its South Asian Contexts*, held over three days (September 26th–28th) at the University of Zurich in the autumn of 2019. We are extremely grateful to Angelika Malinar for supporting this event with funds granted to her personally by the University of Zurich for the ZICILP series of conferences. We would like to warmly thank everyone who participated in the conference and who thereby contributed to an extremely enjoyable and instructive three days. Our sincere thanks also to the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) – and to the Swiss taxpayer – for funding since 2017 the ongoing project ‘Online Edition of the Paippalāda Recension of the Atharvaveda’ (<https://www.atharvaveda-online.uzh.ch/edition>) within the framework of which we were able to host this conference. We would also like to thank the University of Zurich for providing the room and technical support. Our gratitude to Angelika Malinar and Paul Widmer, the directors of this project, cannot be adequately expressed here, but we note it nonetheless. Two integral members of the team whose names do not appear again in these pages, but whose technical support we could not do without are Magdalena Plamada and Reto Baumgartner. Finally, our thanks to Samantha Döbeli for her pivotal part in organising the conference.

It was with great sadness that we learnt, just a few days before the peer review process started, that Werner Knobl (1942–2023), one of our three invited speakers, had passed away. His contribution appears herein in the form of his final draft which was about to be sent out for review. We are immensely grateful to be able to include within this volume a late offering from such a learned and distinctive scholar. He will be missed by many in our field.

Robert Leach, Oliver Hellwig and
Thomas Zehnder, Zurich 2024

Contents

Preface — V

Robert Leach, Oliver Hellwig and Thomas Zehnder

Introduction — 1

Werner Knobl

The *ETĀD-YĀD* Construction in Vedic — 9

Paul Widmer and Oliver Hellwig

Discontinuous Linearization of Vedic Nominal Expressions — 57

Alexander Lubotsky

Remarks on the Chronology of the Paippalāda Saṃhitā — 73

Oliver Hellwig

**The Three Grand Divisions of the Śaunakasamhitā from
a Lexico-Statistic Perspective — 83**

Laura Massetti

And I Will Fix You: A ‘Chariot-simile’ in PS 4.15.6–7, ŚS 4.12.6–7 — 101

Roland A. Pooth

**The Funeral Ceremony Described in the 13th Anuvāka of the Mahatkāṇḍa (Kāṇḍa
18) of the Paippalāda-Saṃhitā vs Its Śaunaka-Saṃhitā Parallel, Interpreted
from the Perspective of Their Textual Differences — 121**

Tiziana Pontillo

**What Does the *pāñcaudana-ajá-* Represent in the *Śaunakīya-* and *Paippalāda-*
Saṃhitās? A Tentative Reading through the Lens of *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa*
II 53–54 — 157**

Robert Leach

Some Remarks on Apsarases, Dogs and Gandharvas — 193

Jarrod Whitaker

**Believing in Magic and Other Pitfalls with Interpreting
the *Atharvaveda* — 231**

Carmen Spiers

The Marginality of the Atharvaveda in Its Historical Context — 253

Angelika Malinar

Rites to Subdue: *abhicāra* and *kṛtyā* in the Mahābhārata — 277

Kyoko Amano

Influence of the Atharvaveda on Rituals in the Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā — 307

Thomas Zehnder

Quotations from the Paippalāda-Saṁhitā in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya — 331

Shrikant Bahulkar

The Śaunaka and the Paippalāda Śākhās of the Atharvaveda. A Comparative Study of Their Domestic Rituals — 349

Julieta Rotaru

The Textual Divisions and the Conventions *mantrādhikāra* and *phalādhikāra* in Classifying the Rites in the *Kauśika Sūtra*: A Case Study of the Construction Rites — 373

Shilpa Sumant

The Neonatal Rites in the Paippalāda Śākhā: The Jātakarmādyannaprāśanāntakarmāṇi Section in the Karmapañjikā — 399

Index — 431

Robert Leach, Oliver Hellwig and Thomas Zehnder

Introduction

The *Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā* (henceforth Rigveda) has attracted a fairly steady stream of philological and linguistic scholarship ever since the pioneering modern editions of Friedrich Max Müller (1849–1874) and Theodor Aufrecht (1861–1863; 1877). In recent decades, thanks to the publication of the metrically restored version of the text by van Nooten and Holland (1994), sophisticated translations by Elizarenkova (1989–1999), Witzel and Gotō (2007), Witzel, Gotō and Scarlata (2013), Jamison and Brereton (2014), and Dōyama and Gotō (2022), alongside far-reaching studies such as those by Oberlies (1998; 1999) and the online commentary by Jamison (<http://rigvedacommentary.alc.ucla.edu>), this stream has become a relative torrent. By contrast, work on the two extant Saṁhitās of the Atharvaveda, namely the *Śaunaka-Saṁhitā* (ŚS) and the *Paippalāda-Saṁhitā* (PS), long considered second in antiquity only to the Rigveda, has been decidedly more sporadic since Roth and Whitney's critical edition of the ŚS was published in 1856. Certainly this can, to some extent, be explained by the fact that until the 1950s the PS was known to outsiders only via a single, extremely corrupt birch-bark manuscript (discovered in Srinagar, in Kashmir, in 1873), published in facsimile by Bloomfield and Garbe (1901) and now available online at https://opendigi.uib.uni-tuebingen.de/opendigi/MaI421_1. However, since the partial translation of the ŚS by Bloomfield (1897), covering about one third of the text, the near-complete translation by Whitney, with revisions and additions by Lanman (Whitney and Lanman 1905), and the revision of Roth and Whitney's *editio princeps* by Lindenau (1924), little substantial work has been carried out on this Saṁhitā either until the last few years, which have seen several important studies by Shrikant Bahulkar, as well as a new critical edition by Kim (2021).

For its part, the *Paippalāda-Saṁhitā* occupies a unique place in Vedic literature in that it only became accessible to genuine scholarly research from the late 1950s, with the discovery of several palm-leaf manuscripts in rural Odisha by Durgamohan Bhattacharyya (1899–1965), Professor of Sanskrit at Scottish Church College in Kolkata. These manuscripts preserve a much better version of the PS text than does the Kashmir manuscript, and their discovery constituted a significant enlargement of the Vedic textual corpus and a major advance in scholarly research into Vedic language and culture. Since this “Announcement of a Rare Find” by Bhattacharyya (1957), a text of the complete PS has been edited by his son, Dipak Bhattacharyya (Bhattacharyya 1997, 2008, 2011, 2016). Moreover, further Odishan PS manuscripts have come to light courtesy of the Odisha State Museum in Bhubaneswar, and the pioneering fieldwork of Michael Witzel in 1983 and Arlo Griffiths between 1998–

2001 (on which, see Griffiths 2003). On this basis, the prodigious task of understanding and evaluating the PS is now being embarked upon, and pioneering editions and translations of individual books (*kāṇḍa-*) have been published (e.g. Zehnder 1999, Lubotsky 2002, the landmark work of Griffiths 2009, the online publications of our own team in Zurich <https://www.atharvaveda-online.uzh.ch/edition>; for the current status of the PS in translation, see <https://www.atharvaveda-online.uzh.ch/home/paippalada-research>). It is already five years since Selva's (2019) "state of the art" overview of scholarship on the PS to date, and since that time, five more PS Kāṇḍas have been critically edited and translated (four of these by our own project team in Zurich, the other by Spiers 2020).

This very cursory and inadequate summary of scholarship to date on the two Atharvaveda Saṁhitās is intended only to highlight the fact that the present moment represents an unusually lively and fertile period in Atharvaveda research. It is our hope that this volume can capture and reflect this. As is stated in the Preface, the articles contained herein are the outcome of a conference hosted within the framework of the ongoing project 'Online Edition of the Paippalāda Recension of the Atharvaveda' (<https://www.atharvaveda-online.uzh.ch/home/paippalada-recension>), funded in three phases by the Swiss National Science Foundation (2017–2021; 2021–2025; 2025–2028). This project was jointly conceived by its two directors, Paul Widmer, Professor of Comparative Indo-European Studies in the Department of Comparative Language Science, and Angelika Malinar, Professor of Indian Studies in the Department of Indian Studies at the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies. Its explicit aim is to bridge the disciplinary approaches of linguistics and philology in creating a digital critical edition of Books 1, 4, 10, 12 and 19 of the PS, along with English translations, a full morpho-lexical analysis, detailed linguistic and Indological comments, and documentation of parallel passages in other texts. Inevitably, by far the most parallels are found in the ŚS, and the project therefore endeavours to make new and valuable contributions to the study of this text also.

In keeping with these aims, we invited the world's leading scholars of the Atharvaveda (from Europe, India, Japan and North America) to present their research on linguistic, philological, literary and historico-cultural aspects of either recension of this text. Of course, the study of the Atharvaveda is rarely just that, for its antiquity and its cultural importance ensure close contacts with other texts and traditions, be they Vedic, post-Vedic, or more broadly Indo-European, and we especially encouraged contributions that explored these connections and interactions. The articles collected in this volume accordingly span a broad range of disciplinary approaches and subject matter. We have tried to impose some sort of thematic structure to the volume, but as always with such exercises, different arrangements could have been settled on.

The first four articles all study the language of the Atharvaveda, which is placed in its Vedic context. KNOBL offers a rich and wide-ranging study of relative

clauses in old Vedic. He focuses especially on a comparison between what he calls the *ETÁD–YÁD* construction (see his footnote 6 for an explanation of the orthography), which occurs first (albeit very rarely) in the Rigveda, and the *ETÁD–yád* construction, which is first attested in prose passages of the Atharvaveda. In the former, Knobl argues, the *YÁD* clause almost always has a non-restrictive, appositive function, with the *there*-deictic demonstrative pronoun *ETÁD* functioning more or less independently. In these cases the relative pronoun (*YÁD*) is flexible, changing its gender and number in grammatical agreement with *ETÁD*. By contrast, in the *ETÁD–yád* construction, *yád* restricts and defines *ETÁD* and has itself lost its variability, it has become fixed (thus Knobl's neologism "*yád figé*").

The article by WIDMER AND HELLWIG provides a survey of continuity in the linearization of complex nominal expressions in Vedic texts, with a special focus on the Atharvaveda. The authors extract 8,789 complex nominal expressions from a corpus of dependency-annotated Vedic texts and conduct statistical tests to understand the interactions between continuity and two properties of the modifier. In this way, the study complements previous qualitative work that focused on semantics but used a considerably smaller number of data points.

In his brief remarks on issues pertaining to the place of the Atharvaveda, and especially the PS, in the chronology of Vedic literature, LUBOTSKY argues on linguistic grounds that the bulk of the Atharvavedic hymns (*sūktá-*) most likely acquired their final shape at approximately the same time as the tenth book of the Rigveda, while the prose passages (the so-called *paryāya* sections) are contemporaneous with those of the Yajurveda. In pursuing a *terminus ante quem*, at least for the PS, Lubotsky defers to Bronkhost's (2007, 197) rather imprecise claim that it must have "existed essentially in its present form" by the time of Patañjali (2nd century BCE), who quotes its opening pāda and appears to recognise that it consists of 20 kāṇḍas.

HELLWIG undertakes a quantitative approach to the vocabulary of the ŚS. Distinguishing between words shared by old Vedic sources and those first occurring in later texts, he is able to reproduce textual stratifications of the ŚS postulated on the basis of style and content in previous research.

Working within a tradition of Indo-European studies that is concerned with poetic language (Indogermanische Dichtersprache), MASSETTI examines an Atharvavedic passage (PS 4.15.6–7 ~ ŚS 4.12.6–7) in which a simile compares a healer of a broken bone to a craftsman (*ṛbhú-*) fixing a chariot. She then traces phraseological correspondences between these two stanzas and a passage from an ode by Pindar (Pythian 3.47–53), and argues that the metaphor of the healer as a craftsman or "fashioner" (complementary to the metaphor of the body as a chariot) is but one of several "thematic matches" between the two texts. Massetti concludes that the correspondences she uncovers speak strongly in favour of a "common background".

The contribution of POOTH re-edits and translates substantial parts of the last anuvāka of kāṇḍa PS 18 (= PS 18.76–82). According to the interpretation presented here, this passage describes the burial ceremony and the construction of a burial mound for a dead king. While many of the conclusions arrived at may be viewed as being based on a preconceived hypothesis, there are nonetheless important insights here on a fascinating and difficult textual passage.

The next two contributions try to make sense not of a long passage, but of a single phrase found in both Atharvaveda Saṁhitās. PONTILLO focuses on the phrase *pāñcaudana-ajā-*, which denotes a billy goat offered with five portions of mashed rice, in the context of a sacrifice aimed at gaining access to heaven. Pontillo undertakes a lexically grounded comparison with other Vedic texts, especially the *Jaiminīya-Brahmaṇa*, and proposes that the billy goat might have originally represented the individual self with its five sense organs, and that this offering sought to achieve not merely a temporary stay in heaven, as would be the norm for such a sacrifice, but a permanent deathless state. LEACH explores the possible meanings of the word *śvānvant-*, attributed to Apsarases in the ŚS and PS but not found outside these texts. He highlights the difficulty in unravelling the meaning of this rarely-attested epithet, but suggests in his final analysis that ‘dogs’ (*śvān-*) most likely refers, metaphorically, to either death or the Gandharvas. One way of making sense of the latter metaphor, he argues, is to view the figure of the Gandharva alongside related figures from other branches of Indo-European mythology.

The following two contributions deal with the reception of the Atharvaveda and specifically the ways in which it has been categorised as a text and a set of cultural practices, in the first case by modern scholars and in the second, by other, often rival, Brahmanical traditions. WHITAKER offers a polemical critique of the scholarly application of ‘magic’ and related concepts when interpreting and classifying the Atharvaveda. He views this hermeneutic practice as a “systemic problem” that is not only inherently disapproving and exclusionary, but is theoretically shallow and unreflective, and he urges that we do away with it. In response to the sort of simplistic binaries (e.g. religion vs magic) criticised by Whitaker, some scholars have, as SPIERS shows, marched too hurriedly in the opposite direction and, eager to uproot all such schematic oppositions, they end up eliding all difference. Spiers provides an overview of the ways in which Śrauta and then Smārta Brahmans have in fact attempted to marginalise the Atharvaveda “from the beginning of its history”, and she suggests several reasons why they may have been compelled to do so.

Several of the issues raised by Whitaker and Spiers are also pertinent to MALINAR’s study of ritual practices associated with the Atharvaveda in the *Mahābhārata*. Malinar argues that while there were attempts to marginalise the Atharvaveda and its representative practices, this should not occlude the fact that the fourfold Veda

became canonical and that several of these practices came to be incorporated into the domestic ritual repertoire of the Brahmanical householder. Malinar addresses several narrative episodes in the *Mahābhārata* which can elicit a more nuanced understanding of apparently hostile practices such as *abhicāra* and *kṛtyā*, demonstrating that their acceptance (for example in situations of familial, and especially conjugal, tension) depends upon the extrinsic factors of context and motivation.

AMANO's contribution is also primarily concerned with the Atharvaveda as it is reflected in another text, in this case the *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṁhitā* (MS). Undertaking a detailed numeric evaluation of the distribution of citations from the Rigveda and the two Atharvaveda Saṁhitās in the mantra portions of the MS, Amano is able to identify changes in the status and accessibility of these earlier works for the MS's authors based on the frequency and accuracy of these citations. With respect to the Atharvaveda Saṁhitās, she proposes that in the earlier phases of the MS's composition there was closer contact with Śaunaka priests, and in the later phases with Paippalāda priests.

ZEHNDER also deals with citations of the Atharvaveda in a later work. Encouraged by sporadic cases in which Vedic quotations in Indian grammatical literature led to an improvement in the understanding of the Saṁhitās, he undertakes a systematic search for the Vedic quotations found in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* in the text of the PS. Happily, he succeeds in discovering the source of quite a number of hitherto untraced Vedic quotations in the *Mahābhāṣya*.

The final three articles in the volume concern themselves with ritual elements in later Atharvavedic tradition. Bahulkar presents a wide-ranging overview of the prescriptions for domestic rituals as found in the Śaunaka and the Paippalāda traditions up until modern times, with a particular focus on the differences in the rites enjoined in each Śākhā for the new and full moon sacrifice (Darśapūrṇamāsa). Considerable divergences between the two Śākhās are described, and the influence of local traditions is noted. ROTARU provides an in-depth investigation into two Atharvanic rites that accompany the building of a house in the *Kauśikasūtra*. She traces the (re-)interpretations these rites have encountered in the commentarial literature and in a late prayoga manual, compares them to house-building rites in other Vedic schools, and argues that only one of these is actually a proper construction rite. This study is grounded in a discussion of the textual divisions employed in the *Kauśikasūtra*, a crucial matter for the interpretation of this text. SUMANT offers a rich description of the section on neonatal rites in the *Karmapañjikā*, a domestic ritual manual belonging to the Paippalāda tradition that was composed in Odisha in the 16th century. She shares several interesting observations on the peculiar language and style of this text before presenting the edited text itself together with an English translation.

References

- Aufrecht, Theodor (1861–1863). *Die Hymnen des Rigveda*. Berlin: F. Dümmler.
- Aufrecht, Theodor (1877). *Die Hymnen des Rigveda*. 2nd Ed., 2 vols. Bonn: Adolph Marcus.
- Bhattacharya, Dipak (1997) (ed.). *The Paippalāda-Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda. Volume One, Consisting of the first fifteen Kāṇḍas*. Kolkata: Asiatic Society.
- Bhattacharya, Dipak (2008) (ed.). *The Paippalāda-Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda. Volume Two, Consisting of the sixteenth Kāṇḍa*. Kolkata: Asiatic Society.
- Bhattacharya, Dipak (2011) (ed.). *The Paippalāda-Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda. Volume Three, Consisting of the seventeenth and eighteenth Kāṇḍas*. Kolkata: Asiatic Society.
- Bhattacharya, Dipak (2016) (ed.). *The Paippalāda-Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda. Volume Four, Consisting of the nineteenth and twentieth Kāṇḍas*. Kolkata: Asiatic Society.
- Bloomfield, Maurice (1897). *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda Together with Extracts from the Ritual Books and the Commentaries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bloomfield, Maurice and Richard Garbe (1901). *The Kashmirian Atharva-Veda (School of the Pāippalādas)*. Reproduced by Chromatography from the Manuscript in the University Library at Tübingen. 3 parts. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press.
- Dōyama, Eijirō and Toshifumi Gotō (2022). *Rig-Veda. Das heilige Wissen. Sechster und Siebter Liederkreis*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Weltreligionen.
- Elizarenkova, Tatiana (1989–1999). Ригведа. 3 vols. Moskow: Nauka.
- Griffiths, Arlo (2009). *The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda, Kāṇḍas 6 and 7. A New Edition with Translation and Commentary*. Groningen: Egbert Forsten.
- Jamison, Stephanie W. and Joel P. Brereton (2014) (trans.). *The Rig Veda. The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kim, Jeong-Soo (2021). *Atharvavedasamhitā der Śaunakaśākhā. Eine neue Edition unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Parallelstellen der Paippalādasamhitā*. Published online at https://opus.bibliothek.uni-wuerzburg.de/opus4-wuerzburg/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/27703/file/Kim_AV5_Neuedition_2021.pdf
- Lindenau, Max (1924). *Atharvaveda Saṃhitā*. Berlin: F. Dümmler.
- Lubotsky, Alexander (2002) (ed. and trans.). *Atharvaveda-Paippalāda Kāṇḍa Five. Text, Translation, Commentary*. Cambridge, MA: South Asia Books.
- Müller, Friedrich Max (1849–1874). *Ṛgveda-saṃhitā, the Sacred Hymns of the Brahmins: Together with the Commentary of Sayanacharya*. 6 vols. London: W. H. Allen.
- Nooten, Barend A. van and Gary B. Holland (1994). *Rig Veda: A Metrically Restored Text with an Introduction and Notes*. Cambridge, MA: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University.
- Oberlies, Thomas (1998). *Die Religion des Ṛgveda. Erster Teil: Das Religiöse System des Ṛgveda*. Wien: De Nobili Research Library.
- Oberlies, Thomas (1999). *Die Religion des Ṛgveda. Zweiter Teil: Kompositionsanalyse der Soma-Hymnen des Ṛgveda*. Wien: De Nobili Research Library.
- Spiers, Carmen Sylvia (2020). *Magie et poésie dans l'Inde ancienne. Édition, traduction et commentaire de la Paippalādasamhitā de l'Atharvaveda, livre 3*. PhD Thesis. Paris: École Pratique des Hautes Études.

Whitney, William Dwight and Charles Rockwell Lanman (1905). *Atharva-Veda Samhitā, Translated with a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Witzel, Michael and Toshifumi Gotō (2007). *Rig-Veda. Das heilige Wissen. Erster und Zweiter Liederkreis*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Weltreligionen.

Witzel, Michael, Toshifumi Gotō and Salvatore Scarlata (2013). *Rig-Veda. Das heilige Wissen. Dritter bis Fünfter Liederkreis*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Weltreligionen.

Tiziana Pontillo

What Does the *pāñcaudana- ajá-* Represent in the *Śaunakīya-* and *Paippalāda-Saṁhitās*? A Tentative Reading through the Lens of *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa* II 53–54

Abstract: The phrase *pāñcaudana- ajá-* mentioned in ŚS IV 14 and IX 5 and PS III 38, VIII 19, XVI 97–100 denotes a billy-goat offered with five portions of mashed rice, in the context of a sacrifice aimed at gaining access to heaven. Nonetheless, several details, such as the syntagms *jyōtis tr̥tīya* in ŚS IX 5.11 and PS XVI 97.8 or *aparimita- yajña-* in ŚS IX 5.22 and PS XVI 99.8, refer to a permanent deathless state, which surpasses the impermanence of the stay in heaven commonly obtained by means of a sacrifice performed with the help of an officiant priest.

On the basis of a lexically grounded comparison with other Vedic sources, I postulate that this billy-goat might have originally represented the psychophysical self with its five sense organs, which has to merge the body entirely made of light, arisen from the sacrifices performed during one's life and stored in heaven, until the death of the sacrificer. In particular, a later, definitely less poetic but more explicit and systematic version of this eschatological theory seems to be taught in JB II 53–54 by the controversial figure of Keśin Dār̥bhya. It is the doctrine of the so-called “non-decay of what is granted by sacrifices” (*iṣṭapūrtá*), in which the individual faculties, offered during the sacrifice instead of other oblations, can reach the relevant gods (and the relevant divine worlds) and finally be “redeemed”, so that the sacrificer is able to permanently enjoy merit in heaven.

0 Premise

The present article is focused on a single phrase selected from a few dozen Atharvaveda verses, but it stems from the more general purpose of testing single passages or whole hymns of this Saṁhitā in order to ascertain whether they could be read as soteriological in intent. Scholars have often preferred to focus on the ritual side of

Note: All translations from Vedic and Sanskrit are the author's, unless explicitly stated. The present work is part of a Cagliari University Research Project REG RASSR15811 “Justifying changes and making the new acceptable from the Antiquity to the Early Modern age” (RAS 2019–2020). I am immensely grateful to Robert Leach for his valuable comments and suggestions on the present work.

most Atharvaveda hymns, e.g. emphasising how “[o]ur general experience with the Atharva Veda leads us to expect in the first instance an exorcistic purpose, a ‘blessing’ or a ‘curse,’ in any composition found in it.”¹ Even the recent reinterpretation of the late inclusion of the Atharvaveda in the Vedic Canon as a consequence of the complex and successful schedule of Brahmins “reinventing themselves” according to Bronkhorst’s hypothesis (2016) relies on the importance of the “magical formulas” collected in this work. In fact these formulas “made it possible for Brahmins to exert their powers even in hostile situations, in circumstances where the support of the ruling classes was not guaranteed or worse” (Bronkhorst 2016: 225). However, as Edgerton already noticed (1920: 118), this attitude among scholars depends on the importance the renowned *Kauśikasūtras* assumed in the later Atharvavedic tradition. Even if the Atharvaveda contains numerous texts dedicated to ritual actions aimed at achieving specific worldly goals, this should not prevent us from appreciating their relevant soteriological contents.²

For instance, it is quite possible that the *pariyāya-sūkta* ŚS VIII 10 which is explicitly devoted to praising the well-known Vedic metre consisting of four *pādas* of ten syllables each called *virāj*, actually took the social dimension of the main actors in sacrifices into account. This dimension was considered within a heroic perspective rather than being simply related to this concrete metre and more generally to the actual events on the ritual scene. In fact, *virāj* is also a noun denoting pre-eminence, and often the highest rank for a man (that is for the leader), so that the leader’s prestige, more than the homonymous metre, might have actually moved up and down within the sacrificial arena, as Candotti, Neri & Pontillo (2020: 142–143) advanced in their comment on ŚS VIII 10.4.³

This is definitely not the first time that the possible importance of soteriological contents of the Atharvaveda in their early conception has been taken into account: already at the beginning of the last century, Paul Deussen (1906: 209)⁴ remarked on the need for a monographic study specifically dedicated to Atharvaveda’s speculative viewpoints, and Edgerton (1920: 117) maintained: “It is probably true that the Atharvaveda contains more matter which can be called ‘philosophic’ than any

1 Edgerton 1920: 118.

2 With an intriguing hypothesis, only partly inspired by Gonda (1975: 292), Frank Köhler argues conversely in a forthcoming article that “these speculations should function as a theoretical foundation” for the main contents of the Atharvaveda texts, i.e. the spells. Many thanks to F. Köhler for allowing me to read a preliminary version of this article.

3 *sód akrāmat sá dakṣiṇāgnau ny ākrāmat | yajñārto dakṣiṇīyo vāsateyo bhavati yá evāṃ véda |* “She (i.e. the *virāj*) ascended; she descended into the southern fire: he who is aware of this becomes fit for worship, fit for the *dákṣiṇā*, fit for a secure position.”

4 “Um ihres absonderlichen Charakters willen verdienen sie eine monographische Behandlung.”

other Saṁhitā. Certainly it contains a great deal more of such matter than the Rig Veda.” We know in fact that, on the one hand, some presumably solemn theological hymns, e.g. “the noble hymn to Varuṇa (IV 16)”, turn out instead to be “a witchcraft charm, betraying its final purpose in the gross curse at the end – in *cauda venenum*” (Bloomfield 1899: 87).⁵ On the other hand, it is plausible that some hymns considered to be charms might also have been based on some more complex concepts of a soteriological nature which were founded on a sapiential and heroic tradition and overtly explained in other passages in the Atharvaveda Saṁhitā or elsewhere. Shende (1985: 190) also suggested that the Atharvavedic ritual performances had a double purpose, the second of which is indisputably grounded in soteriology: “Not only did the Atharvaṇic priests employ sacrifice for the sake of magic to secure worldly ends, but also they employed it for securing the heaven.”⁶ A promise of some extremely practical reward, such as wealth and success in daily life, is commonly found at the end of most Atharvaveda hymns, but let us not forget that this reward is exclusively obtained by the ‘initiate’ who possesses a given knowledge (*yo evaṁ veda*).

Now, one might wonder what the original primary purpose of the Atharvaveda was, i.e. whether the soteriological doctrines derived secondarily from some incidental reflections on concrete ritual details or if conversely this Saṁhitā tradition was only later associated with ritual performances.⁷ With regard to the Vaitānasūtras, Edgerton (1929: 157) wrote that “the application of most of Atharvaveda hymns to the Śrauta sphere was entirely a secondary matter”. Today, if we accept the very interesting perspective recently outlined by Geslani (2018), namely that the king’s legitimisation and the cyclic empowerment ceremonies of his reign are at the core of the Atharvaveda texts, we could still go a step further and assume that the expressly ritual garb in which the Atharvaveda tradition has been handed

5 ŚS IV 16.7: *śatēna pāsair abhī dhehi varuṇainaṁ mā te mocy anṛtavān nṛcaḥṣaḥ | āstāṁ jālmā udāraṁ śraṇṣayitvā kōśa ivābandhāḥ parikṛtyāmānaḥ* | “With a hundred fetters, O Varuṇa, subdue him, let not the speaker of untruth escape you, o men-watcher! Let the villain sit letting his belly fall [apart], like a hoopless vessel, being cut round about.” (tr. Whitney & Lanman 1905 vol. 1: 178, slightly modified: “subdue him” instead of “do thou bridle him”; “you” instead of “thee”).

6 This is in line with Bloomfield (1899: 87), who considers that “Every animal offered as *dakṣiṇā* represents both itself and a cosmic power of the first rank: the gift of a goat, *aja* introduces Aja Ekapād with his mystic punning attribute [. . .].”

7 Cf. Edgerton (1920: 122): “But now arises the question, what do we mean by ‘secondary’ employment? Do we mean that the ritualists have lost the thread of true Atharvan tradition, and use these hymns in a way different from that intended by their Atharvan compilers? [. . .] Even when to our minds a hymn seems to deal purely with ‘higher thought’, can we be sure that lower or more practical motives were absent from the mind of its original composer, not to speak of him who included it in the Atharvan collection?”

down to us might have been a consequence of a later reworking of the Atharvaveda literature. We could thus restore a position once expressed by Gonda (see in particular 1965: 18) for whom the time when complex Vedic sacrifices were dramatically replaced by simple *dakṣiṇās* depicted as Savayajñas (i.e. by the performance of mere symbolic offerings of the sacrifice of Soma) only came about during the Kauśikasūtra phase.⁸

Nevertheless we could reinterpret this supposed substitution and simplification of ritual actions not as something that came out of the blue, but rather as a re-emergence from the past of an even earlier tradition, namely that of the *sattra*-culture, as reconstructed by Falk (1985; 1986: 37–40). Among the distinctive features of the *sattra* I especially refer to the lack of separation between the role of officiant and patron in the sacrificial arena and to the consequent absence of a genuine “priestly gift” (*dakṣiṇā*). Indeed Falk points out that the sacrificers present themselves, i.e. their *ātman*, as *dakṣiṇā*, as explained in TS 7,4.9 and KB 15,1.23–26, and argues that a heroic self-immolation might have been part of the early *sattra*.⁹ The assumed simplification of the ritual actions as a revival of an ancient tradition probably occurred only after the Atharvaveda branch had acquired an obvious degree of centrality that would previously have been inconceivable in view of the long period it spent in the margins of orthodoxy. Sacrifices in such a simplified context were presumably basic but competitive. What mattered most was their meaning rather than the highly technical performance and hieratic ritualism of the sacrificial actions, found instead in the Yajurveda and the Kalpasūtras. And if this reconstructive hypothesis were correct, then we might also understand why the so-called *dakṣiṇā*- or *sava*-hymns appear to originally be the most “notable *medium*” for what Bloomfield (1899: 86–87) defined as the Atharvaveda’s “speculation”,¹⁰ precisely because more attention was paid to the meaning of ceremonies than to their technical details. My proposal is that the Atharvavedic ritual perfor-

⁸ “In the first place the whole procedure is simplified. They can be performed by an average man. Secondly, they are equally effective. They are thus superior to the Vedic sacrifices such as Agnistoma etc. [. . .] styled as ‘savās’ perhaps because they are symbolical of the Soma sacrifice.” (Shende 1985: 190). See Gonda (1965: 19) on Atharvavedic sources in general: “It is, if I am not mistaken, sometimes – or, at first sight – very difficult to make out whether the victims or objects regarded as ‘victims’ mentioned in these rites are primarily presented as ‘offerings’ or as ‘gifts’.”

⁹ As for a study of the Vedic phrase *ātmādakṣiṇam sattrām*, see Pontillo 2023.

¹⁰ See also the following statement (Bloomfield 1899: 86): “The presence in the Atharvaveda of a considerable number of cosmogonic-theosophic hymns, marking in a way the extreme distance from the ordinary witchcraft-formula, is not readily explained. The common village-practitioner is not likely to have had much use for them, and even the *purōhita* in his ordinary offices [. . .]. But it would be a mistake to suppose that theosophic speculation is foreign to the Atharvan, and inorganic; or that all hymns of this sort are loosely attached to the main body of its compositions.

mances which are often nothing more than simple offerings in the *Kauśikasūtras*¹¹ might have been accompanied by reflection on the attainable permanent human immortality that is the core of some Atharvaveda hymns and is found later in Sāmavedic Brahmanas and in early Upaniṣads. Bearing in mind this proposal, the present paper aims to inquire into the nature of the imagery proposed in a couple of alleged offerings that Shende (1985: 194–196) called *ajaudanasava* and *pāñcaudanasava* in ŚS IV 14 and in ŚS IX 5 respectively. Indeed the two names could be used at the same time for both hymns. In fact, on the one hand, in ŚS IV 14 the *ajá-* (mentioned 3 times in this hymn) is not generically supplemented by dishes of mashed rice (*odaná-*), but is precisely *pāñcaudana-*, i.e. supplemented by five dishes of mashed rice (or by five balls of cooked rice, according to Shende 1985: 194). On the other hand, in ŚS IX 5, where the stem *pāñcaudana-* occurs 19 times, the word *ajá-* also occurs 26 times. Thus, the same kind of performance might have been the focus of both these mentioned Śaunakīya-Saṁhitā hymns, several verses of which also match with portions of six Paippalāda-Saṁhitā hymns, namely PS III 38, VIII 19 and XVI 97–100.

The research question of the present work is: are these texts inspired by a first-hand experience of the sacred rather than being mediated by a priest? This question stems from the fact that several details of these passages involving the phrase *pāñcaudana- ajá-* refer to access to heaven and in a specific way to a permanent deathless state, which surpasses the impermanence of the stay in heaven commonly obtained by means of a sacrifice performed with the help of an officiant priest.

1 The Ritual Facets of the *pāñcaudana- ajá-* in the Two Recensions of the Atharvaveda

If we concentrate on the 53 occurrences of the compound *pāñcaudana-*, a term which to the best of my knowledge only occurs in the Atharvaveda, the correspondences between the Śaunakīya and the Paippalāda recensions of this supposedly

On the contrary, there is evidence that theosophic ideas and formulas had to some extent worked their way into the very tissue of its composition.”

¹¹ It is noteworthy that the *Kauśika-(Gṛhya-)Sūtra* might be older than both the *Vaitāna-(Śrauta-)Sūtra* and than the *Gopatha-Brahmaṇa* – see Bloomfield (1899: 102), Patyal (1969: XIV–XX) and the bibliography there quoted.

unique *sava* are represented in Table 1. Occurrences with no correspondences are shown at the end:¹²

Table 1: Occurrences of *pañcaudana-*.

ŚS 26 x	PS 27 x	Syntax
ŚS IV 14.7	PS XVI 98.10	Acc.
ŚS IX 5.8	PS XVI 97.6	Nom.
ŚS IX 5.9	PS XVI 97.10	Nom.
ŚS IX 5.10	PS XVI 98.2	Nom.
ŚS IX 5.11ab	PS XVI 97.8ab	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.12	PS XVI 98.1	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.18		Nom. + <i>ajā</i>
ŚS IX 5.21cd	PS XVI 99.8ab	Nom. + <i>ajā</i>
ŚS IX 5.22	PS XVI 99.8cd	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.24		Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.25		Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.26		Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.27	PS VIII 19.10	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.28	PS VIII 19.11	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.31 (2x)	PS XVI 100.3	Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i> (and Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>)
ŚS IX 5.32 (2x)		Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i> and Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.33 (2x)		Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i> and Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.34 (2x)		Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i> and Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.35 (2x)		Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i> and Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
ŚS IX 5.36 (2x)		Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i> and Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
	PS VIII 19.1	Nom.
	PS VIII 19.3	Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i>
	PS VIII 19.4, PS III 38.11 (2x)	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
	PS VIII 19.7	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
	PS VIII 19.8	Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i>
	PS VIII 19.9	Nom.
	PS XVI 97.8cd	Nom.
	PS XVI 97.9, 10 (2x)	Nom.
	PS XVI 99.6	Nom. + <i>ajā</i>
	PS XVI 99.8 (2x)	Nom. + <i>ajāḥ</i> and Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
	PS XVI 99.10	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
	PS XVI 100.2	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>
	PS XVI 100.10	Acc. + <i>ajāṃ</i>

¹² My thanks to Moreno Dore for helping me in preliminarily collecting and comparing these parallels.

In line with the aforementioned simplification, the main ritual action here is also very simple. It is explained in the following verse and a half, which is almost identical in both recensions, where verse ŚS IV 14.6 is a close match for PS III 38.5, and ŚS IV 14.7ab, for PS XVI 98 10ab respectively (Table 2).¹³

Table 2: The main ritual actions.

ŚS IV 14.6		PS III 38.5	
<i>ajām anajmi pāyasā ghr̥téna</i>	With milk, with ghee,	<i>odanam anajmi</i>	=
<i>divyaṃ suparnāṃ payasām brhāntam </i>	I anoint the <u>billy-goat</u> ,	<i>śavasā ghr̥tena</i>	I anoint <u>the</u>
<i>téna geṣma sukṛtāsya lokāṃ svār</i>	<u>the heavenly eagle</u> ,	<i>divyaṃ samudraṃ</i>	<u>mashed rice</u> ,
<i>āróhanto abhí nākam uttamám </i>	milky, great.	<i>payasaṃ brhantam</i>	<u>the divine</u>
	Through it, may we		<u>vessel full of</u>
	go to the world of	<i>tena geṣma</i>	<u>milk, large.</u>
	merit, <u>ascending</u> to	<i>sukṛtāsya lokam</i>	
	the shining heaven,	<i>saroruhāṇā adhi</i>	
	towards the highest	<i>nākam uttamam </i>	
	firmament!	[read: <i>svaṛ ruhāṇā</i>]	
ŚS IV 14.7 ab		PS XVI 98.10ab	
<i>pāñcaudanaṃ pañcābhir aṅgūlibhir</i>	Take up [the billy-goat]	<i>pāñcaudanaṃ</i>	=
<i>dārvyód dhara pañcadhañtām odanáṃ </i>	with its five portions of	<i>pañcābhir</i>	
	mashed rice by means	<i>aṅgūlibhir</i>	
	of the five fingers, by	<i>dārvyod dhara</i>	
	means of the ladle	<i>pañcadhañdanam</i>	
	that mashed rice <u>in</u>	<i>etam</i>	
	<u>five portions.</u>		

I have translated the accusative *pāñcaudanaṃ* in this passage as a *bahuvrīhi* conveying the sense “endowed with five portions of mashed rice” referring to the *ajā-* mentioned in the previous verse, because of the accent that complies with rule *Aṣṭādhyāyī* VI 2.1 (the first constituent retains its original accent in the *bahuvrīhi*).¹⁴

¹³ Henceforth the underlining serves to highlight the most important differences between the two recensions, compared in two parallel columns. When the PS recension is significantly different, it is also translated in the rightmost column.

¹⁴ According to *Aṣṭādhyāyī* II 1.51–52 a *dvigu* can be used when the sense conveyed is that of a *taddhita* affix, of a subsequent constituent (*uttarapada*) or of a collective noun (the so-called *samāhāra dvigu*). If it were a singular neuter *samāhāra* (i.e. a neuter singular compound, as is taught in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* II 4.1, 17), conveying the sense of “group of five portions of mashed rice”, it should have a final pitch, in accordance with the general rule for compound accentuation *Aṣṭādhyāyī* VI 1.223 (because the exceptions VI 2.29–31 do not apply to our case), while *pāñcaudanaṃ* has the initial vowel pitched (see also Whitney 1899²: 505, 512). On the other hand, the meaning of a *taddhita*, e.g.

Within a bloodless sacrificial context, this compound might also have conveyed the sense of a substitute for the billy-goat, i.e. “[a billy-goat actually] made of five portions of mashed rice”. Nonetheless, here an effective chiasmus seems to be realised by the two instrumental cases (denoting 5 items and 1 item respectively) and the two accusative cases (*vice versa* denoting 1 and 5 items respectively). On the one hand, a single agent of the verb *dhr-* “to take up” (*dárvyā* “by means of the ladle”) is linked to a fivefold object (i.e. *pañcāitām odanām* “that mashed rice which is divided into five portions”). On the other, five agents (*aṅgūlibhiḥ* “by means of the five fingers”) are presumably linked to a single object, i.e. to the billy-goat (mentioned as the *pāñcaudana-* [*ajā-*]), and not to the five *odanás* representing/replacing it.

It is clear that a billy-goat is supposed to be a real offering in this performance, and that this is supplemented in a concrete way by five portions of mashed rice. It is, however, just as clear that the purpose is quite far from the fulfilment of material desires in life, because it is instead inspired by a specific eschatological doctrine, depending on the gained merits. In fact, the sacrificer aims to reach heaven and, according to PS III 38.11, he is confident in the efficacy of this special performance, due to a successful mythic antecedent, when this special cooking of a billy-goat and of five rice-dishes was an action performed by the gods in order to master their worlds:

ajāṃ ca pacata pañca caudanān | ajāṃ pañcaudanaṃ paktvā devā lokān sam ānaśuḥ

Cook (pl.) the billy-goat and five rice-dishes. Having cooked the billy-goat of five rice-dishes, the gods have attained the worlds.¹⁵

A couple of other ritual details emerge from ŚS IV 14.7cd–9, and from the matching PS XVI 99.1–3, i.e. the specific way of positioning the several limbs of the victim and the care given to preserving its integrity, by enveloping all its parts in its skin (Table 3).¹⁶

in the sense explained by *Aṣṭādhyāyī* IV 3.120 (*tasyedam* “this is his/its”) could be assumed, because a LUK zero-replacement (i.e. the most generic substitution of an affix with zero, where the zero-replaced affix does not condition any operation on the pre-affixal base) of *taddhita*-affixes is taught for *dvigu* compounds in *Aṣṭādhyāyī* IV 1.88. But once again, a final accent should instead be expected according to *Aṣṭādhyāyī* VI 1.223. Cf. *pañcakapālā-* “prepared in five vessels” where the *taddhita* affix *-ā* taught by *Aṣṭādhyāyī* IV 2.16 in the sense of *bhakṣa- saṃskṛta- tatra* “food prepared here” is zero-replaced. Furthermore, the compound *pāñcaudana-* is used 41 times out of 53 as a qualifier, agreeing 27 times with the accusative *ajāṃ* and 14 with the nominative *ajāḥ*. This stem is used as an isolated noun in only 8 occurrences, in 7 of which it is a nominative masculine singular, which however excludes the *samāhāra dvigu*, which has to be singular neuter.

¹⁵ Translation by Lubotsky 2002: 98 n. 23.

¹⁶ This second detail also emerges from ŚS IX 5.4 and PS XVI 97.3 (see below).

Table 3: Positioning the limbs of the victim.

ŚS IV 14.7 cd-8		PS XVI 99.1-2	
<i>prācīyām dīśi śīro ajāsya dhehi dākṣiṇāyām dīśi dākṣiṇam dhehi pārśvām </i>	In the Eastern quarter set the head of the billy goat, in the Southern quarter, its right side!	<i>prācīyām dīśi śīro ajāsya dhehi dākṣiṇāyām dīśi dākṣiṇam dhehi pārśvām </i>	=
<i>dhehi pārśvām </i>	In the Western quarter set its rump,	<i>prācīyām dīśi bhasadām asya</i>	=
<i>prācīyām dīśi bhasadām asya dhehy</i>	in the Northern quarter, the left side;	<i>udācīyām dīśy uttarām dhehi pārśvām </i>	+ Stand well-grounded on
<i>ūtтарыyām dīśy uttarām dhehi pārśvām </i>	in the upward quarter set the goat's back-bone;	<i>ajāsyanūkām ūrdhvāyām dīśi dhehi dīśi dhehi pājasyam dhruvāyām </i>	the quarters by means of your legs!
<i>ūrdhvāyām dīśy ajāsyanūkām dhehi</i>	in the stable quarter, set the region of its belly;	<i>antarīkṣe madhyato madhyam asya padbhīś caturbhīh prati tiṣṭha dikṣu</i>	
<i>dīśi dhruvāyām dhehi pājasyam antarīkṣe madhyato madhyam asya </i>	in the middle part of the intermediate space, its middle part.		
ŚS IV 14.9		PS XVI 98.10cd	
<i>śrām ajām śrāyā prōrnuhi tvacā sāvair āngaiḥ sambhīrtam vīśvarūpam </i>	Envelop the boiled goat in its boiled skin, brought together with all its limbs, representing all visible appearances.	<i>prācīm dīśam dākṣiṇām pratīcīm udācīm dhruvām ūrdhvām dīśam ā kramasva</i>	Step towards the Eastern quarter, the Southern, the Western, the Northern, the stable, the upward quarter!
<i>sā út tiṣṭhetā abhi nākam uttamām padbhīś caturbhīh prati tiṣṭha dikṣu </i>	Rise from here up to the highest firmament: with your four feet stand well-grounded in the quarters!		
ŚS IV 14.9		PS XVI 99.3	
<i>śrām ajām śrāyā prōrnuhi tvacā sāvair āngaiḥ sambhīrtam vīśvarūpam </i>	Envelop the boiled goat in its boiled skin, brought together with all its limbs, representing all visible appearances.	<i>śrām ajām śrāyā prōrnuhi tvacā sāvair āngaiḥ sambhīrtam vīśvarūpam </i>	=
<i>sā út tiṣṭhetā abhi nākam uttamām padbhīś caturbhīh prati tiṣṭha dikṣu </i>	Rise from here up to the highest firmament: with your four feet stand well-grounded in the quarters!	<i>sa ut tiṣṭha prehi nākam uttamām padbhīś caturbhīh prati tiṣṭha dikṣu</i>	<from here>

It is also noteworthy that in PS XVI 98.10cd a closely similar group of lexemes conveys a different scenario.

Despite the emphasis placed on the concrete preparation of the billy-goat as a victim, and despite the mention of its four feet, a detail that is certainly more appropriate for a goat than a human being, the overall image in my opinion favours the reading of the sacrificial event described as a prefiguration of the sacrificer's post-mortem destiny. First of all, the imagery of the goat's legs firmly planted in several cardinal points aims at stressing the importance of mastering all the faculties – matching with the cardinal points – on the part of the sacrificer, who has to reach his goal safely.¹⁷ The care taken to avoid losing any part of the goat, i.e. to protect all the limbs of the goat, which is also a common issue, for instance, in the major Soma sacrifices and in the cremation rituals,¹⁸ here plausibly prefigures the sacrificer's final purpose of distributing all his faculties all around and finally redeeming them.¹⁹

2 Eschatology in the Hymns Where the *páñcaudana- ajá-* is Mentioned

Indeed, if due attention is paid to the specific lexicon employed in these hymns, the ritual framework somehow seems to be downplayed. In fact, it appears to effectively support an eschatological doctrine just as a frame supports the canvas for a painting. According to both ŚS IX 5.8 and its almost matching verse PS XVI 97.6 (Table 4), a movement in five directions is desired for the goat,²⁰ which neverthe-

¹⁷ Gonda (1965: 248–249) notices that “The sure-footed animal was in any case believed to be able to find the passage to the next world” and connects this belief to both the sacrificial horse in ṚVS I 162.2–3 and the dead body in ṚVS X 16.4–7. This role of guide is also attributed to the *śarabha* (which is also a standard for the billy-goat in ŚS IX 5.9), i.e. to the markhor (a large wild goat with very long twisted horns, also called *Capra falconeri*), in TS IV 2.10.4 and VSM XIII 51 – see Slaje 2017: 332–333.

¹⁸ See e.g. ṚVS I 162.18–21 and ṚVS X 16.1; 4 respectively. I am indebted to one of the anonymous reviewers for suggesting this comparison.

¹⁹ In PS XVI 98.10cd, the imperative form *ā kramasva* “step towards!” and indeed the imperative (*ud dhara*) found in the previous hemistich (PS XVI 98.10cd – see above) have the same addressee, presumably the sacrificer himself, who has to move within the sacrificial arena in all directions. It is tempting to interpret this behaviour as a sort of ritual mimesis of the sun, which sheds light in several directions during the day, since this *sava* is commonly interpreted as aiming at the identification of the sacrificer with the sun and at the sacrificer's securing the world of the light after death (Shende 1985: 194, 196).

²⁰ As for these cosmographical directions mentioned in the Atharvaveda passages devoted to the sacrifice of the billy-goat, see Rossi 2023: 67–72; 80.

less is going to finally reach heaven, by means of paths that once again converge towards that heaven. The final beneficiary of the action performed with the goat is the sacrificer, but such a double level of roles played by the apparent offering and the sacrificer is managed in a different way in the two recensions.

Table 4: The final goal of both god and sacrificer.

ŚS IX 5.8		PS XVI 97.6	
<i>pāñcaudanaḥ</i>	With five portions of mashed	<i>pañcaudanaḥ pañcadhā vi</i>	=
<i>pañcadhā vi</i>	rice, <u>let it</u> (i.e. the billy-goat)	<i>kramasvākramṣyamānaḥ</i>	<u>step out</u> (2nd sg. p.)
<i>kramatām</i>	step out in five directions,	<i>pañca jyotīṁṣi</i>	in five directions, <u>up</u>
<i>ākramṣyámānas</i>	about to step <u>up to the three</u>	<i>tījānānām sukṛtām prehi</i>	<u>to the five lights!</u>
<i>trīni jyótīṁṣi</i>	<u>lights</u> , go forward (2nd sg.	<i>madhyam</i>	=
<i>tījānānām sukṛtām</i>	p.) among the well-doers	<i>jyotismantam abhi lokam</i>	<u>conquer the</u>
<i>prehi mádhyam</i>	who performed sacrifices,	<i>jayāsmāi</i>	<u>celestial world for</u>
<i>ṛtīye náke ádhi vi</i>	spread out (2nd sg. p.) upon		<u>him!</u>
<i>śrayasva</i>	the third firmament!		

On the basis of the two variant readings ŚS *trīni jyótīṁṣi* vs. PS *pañca jyotīṁṣi*, it is important to establish what these lights are, seeing that they are the final goal for both goat and sacrificer. It goes without saying that *pañca jyotīṁṣi* could be a *lectio facilior* because of the close occurrence of the numeral “five” repeated twice in the same verse, and also because one might casually or mechanically expect that a movement in five directions has to reach five destinations, rather than three.²¹ By contrast, the different verbal prefixes *vi-* and *ā-* combined with the same verbal base *kram-* seem to sketch a different trajectory in that space, in my opinion a centrifugal motion and a centripetal one respectively. Consequently, the billy-goat has to finally return to a supreme light, often envisioned as a “third light”. But what is more important is that precisely the number “three” associated with bright lights (*jyótis-*) or with the vault of heaven (*nāka-*) often recurs in these hymns where the *pāñcaudana- ajá-* is mentioned.²² The relevant passages are collected in Table 5, where the parallels in the two recensions and their differences are highlighted.

²¹ Nonetheless, in VSM XVII 67, the sky is actually imagined as fivefold.

²² I would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for encouraging me to compare this image with that of the famous Rgvedic myth of the three steps of Viṣṇu, whose last step leads to the highest heaven. See RVS VII 100.3ab: *trīr devāḥ pṛthivīm eṣā etān vi cakrame śatārcasam mahitvā* “Three times the god stepped across this earth with his greatness”.

Table 5: Reaching the third firmament.

ŚS IX 5.1	PS XVI 97.1
<i>ā nayaītam ā rabhasva sukṛtām lokām api gacchatu prajānan tīrvā tāmāṃsi bahudhā mahānty ajo nākam ā kramatām trīṣyam </i>	<i>ā nayaītam ā rabhasva sukṛtām lokām api gacchatu prajānan tīrvā tāmāṃsi bahudhā vipāśyann ajo nākam ā kramatām trīṣyam </i>
Lead him here! Take hold! Let him go, foreknowing, to the well-doers' world! After crossing the darkness which extends in several directions, let the goat step up to the third firmament!	= After crossing the darkness, let the goat looking in several directions step up to the third firmament! (= ŚS IX 5.3 cd)
ŚS IX 5.3	PS XVI 97.2ab
<i>prā padō 'ya nenigdhi dūscaritam yāc cacāra śuddhahī śaphair ā kramatām prajānan tīrvā tāmāṃsi bahudhā vipāśyann ajo nākam ā kramatām trīṣyam </i>	<i>pra padō nenigdhi dūscaritam yac cacāra śuddhahī śaphair ā kramatām prajānan </i>
Wash his feet of the ill-conduct he had! With cleansed hooves ²³ let him step on, foreknowing! After crossing the darkness, let the goat looking in several directions step to the third firmament! (= PS XVI 97.1cd)	=
ŚS IX 5.4	PS XVI 97.2cd-3
<i>ānu cchya śyāmēna tvācam etām viśastar yathāparv asinā mābhī mamsthāh mābhī druhah parusāh kalpayainam trīṣye nāke ādhi vi śrayainam</i>	<i>iyotismantam sukṛtām lokam ipsan trīṣye nāke adhi vi kramasva anu cchya śyāmēna tvācam etām viśastar yathāparv asinā māti mamsthāh mābhī druhah parusāh kalpayainam sukṛtām madhye adhi vi śrayemam</i>
Cut up that skin by means of the dark sword along the joints, o slaughterer, do not be harmful, seek to not injure it, prepare him joint by joint: set him up in the third firmament!	Striving to reach the well-doers' world which is full of light, step out up to the third firmament! = in the middle of the well-doers

²³ Das (2011: 161 n. 82) underlined the fact that this detail of a billy-goat's hooves, together with the prohibition of splitting its bones or sucking its marrow in ŚS IX 5.23 and the injunction to cook it in ŚS IX 5.37, is evidence that the hymn actually refers to a billy-goat.

ŚS IX 5.6	<p>Step up from here, if you have been completely heated, from the heated pot, on to the third firmament!</p> <p>You, a fire, have come into being out of fire. Conquer the world full of light!</p>	<p>PS XVI 97.5</p> <p><i>ut krāmātaḥ pāri ced ātaptas</i> <i>taptāc caror ādhi nākam trīyaṃ </i> <i>agner agnir ādhi sām babhūvitha</i> <i>jyōtismantam abhī lokām jayaitām</i> <i>jyōtismān gaṅgcha sukrātām yatra lokah </i></p> <p>≈ PS XVI 97.9ab</p>	<p>=</p> <p>Full of light, come where the well-doers' world is!</p>
(ŚS IX 5.9cd)	<p>He who has been given to the <i>brahmān</i> together with five portions of mashed rice, he shall make the giver satisfied with satisfaction.</p>	<p><i>pāñcaudano brahmāne</i> <i>divyāmānah sā dātāram trīpyā</i> <i>tarpayāti </i> (= PS XVI 98.2cd)</p>	<p>May the billy-goat who has been given to the <i>brahmān</i> together with five portions of mashed rice, step towards the third firmament!</p>
ŚS IX 5.10	<p>The goat sets him who has given on the back of the firmament, which is made of three firmaments, three heavens and three backs. You who have been given to the <i>brahmān</i>, together with five portions of mashed rice, you are the sole milk-cow representing all the visible appearances that grants every object of desire.</p>	<p>PS XVI 98.2</p> <p><i>ajās trināke trīdivē triṣṭhe</i> <i>nākasya pṛsthē dadivāmsam</i> <i>daadhāti </i> <i>pāñcaudano brahmāne divyāmāno</i> <i>visvārūpā dhenūh kāmādūghāsy</i> <i>ékā</i></p>	<p>=</p> <p>within the well-doers' world, which is . . .</p> <p>Given to the <i>brahmān</i> together with five portions of mashed rice you shall make the giver satisfied with satisfaction.</p>
ŚS IX 5.11ab	<p>O fathers, he gives this third light of yours, a billy-goat with five portions of mashed rice to the <i>brahmān</i>.</p>	<p>PS XVI 97.8a</p> <p><i>etad vo jyōtiḥ pitaras trīyaṃ</i> <i>pāñcaudanam brahmāne jam dadāti </i></p>	<p>=</p>

This comparative survey of passages shows that

- the well-doers' world (*sukṛtām lokā-*) is equivalent to the third firmament *ṛtīya-nāka-* (ŚS IX 5.1, 6, 11, PS XVI 97.1, 5, 8–9);²⁴
- in order to attain such a world, it is mandatory to have previously overcome darkness (*tāmas-*: ŚS IX 5.1, 3, 7, 11; PS XVI 97.1, 7–9), to cleanse oneself of ill-conduct (*dúscarita-*: ŚS IX 5.3, PS XVI 97.2) and to be complete in all parts (*sárvair āṅgaiḥ*: ŚS IV 14.9, PS XVI 99.3);
- the bright light (*jyótis-*) characterises both this world and the individual who attains it, so that the billy-goat itself is called “third light” (*ṛtīya-jyótis-*: ŚS IX 5.11, PS XVI 97.8 – see also ŚS IX 5.7 below);

A well-known occurrence of this collocation *ṛtīya-jyótis-* is included in a hymn in the Ṛgveda, which Brereton (2016) has brilliantly explained as a funeral text devoted to a human being, who will enter the gods' world, as a god among gods, after his body has been transformed through fire into light.

ṚVS X 56.1:

*idām ta ékam pará ū ta ékaṃ ṛtīyena jyótiṣā sám viśasva |
saṃvésane tanvās cárur edhi priyó devánām paramé janitre ||*

Here is one (light) of yours, and far away is another. Merge together with the third light. In the merging of your body (with that light), be the one cherished, beloved of the gods in your distant birthplace (Brereton 2016: 168)

It is precisely with this third light that the body of the deceased should finally merge, after this body has first been the light coming from the funeral fire (i.e. the first light) and then the light which accomplishes the journey from the earth to heaven (i.e. the second light).²⁵ And what might this third light actually be? I assume that it is constituted by the light which arises from the sacrificial fire, called

²⁴ The reward that comes to the sacrificer is expressed in a comparable form in ŚS IX 5.10ab, ṚVS 1.125.5ab (*nákasya pṛṣṭhé ádhi tiṣṭhati śrító yáḥ pṛṇáti sá ha devésu gachati* “The one who grants, stands fixed on the back of the firmament: indeed he goes among the gods”, and in ṚVS IX 113.9abc (*yátrānukámān cāraṇān trináké tridivé divāḥ loká yátra jyótiṣmantas tátra mām amṛtaṃ kṛdhi* “Make me immortal where circulation is at will in the one made of three firmaments, three heavens, where there are worlds endowed with light!”). I owe the first and second parallels cited here respectively to the two anonymous reviewers.

²⁵ Not much information is given about this second light: here it is assumed that it corresponds to the bright path travelled from earth to heaven by the deceased. The path trodden many times in the past by all the offerings made in life by a man and taken to heaven by the god Agni should plausibly be trodden by the man himself after his death.

aja- “goat”,²⁶ when it ascends to heaven, beyond all the darkness, where the gods make it available to the sacrificers when they die. It is a fire, which has come into being out of fire (*agnér agnír ádhi sám̐bhū-*), and which attains the world of merit which is full of light (*jyótiṣmat*) or attains it as a being full of light (see above ŚS IX 5.6, PS XVI 97.5). This third light might match the so-called *iṣṭapūrtám* “something granted by a sacrifice” / *iṣṭám pūrtám* “rewarded sacrifice”, i.e., “something which gods guarantee to human beings after death as a result of the sacrifices they performed during their life,”²⁷ as it is also overtly explained in ŚS IX 5.13:

ajó hy àgnér ájaniṣṭa sókād vípro víprasya sáhaso vipascít |
iṣṭám pūrtám abhípūrtam̐ vásaṭkṛtam̐ tát devá rtusáh̐ kalpayantu ||

The goat indeed was inspired – born from the flame of the inspired, mighty, wise fire;
let the gods arrange what is sacrificed, granted, fulfilled, accompanied with *vasat-* in due order!

It is self-evident that every sacrifice was linked to the successful actions of the sacrificer, inasmuch as it depended on the booty gained during expeditions and so on.²⁸ Thus, the *iṣṭapūrtá* was accumulated by the sacrificer during his life every time he gained the privilege of patronising a sacrifice, but such a “store or treasure-house of good deeds”,²⁹ i.e. his merit, was made available to him after his death, after the last journey of his sacrificial fire towards heaven was brought about (until the so-called “third light”) and after his funeral fire had finished burning. In my opinion, the Atharvavedic *pāñcaudana- ajá-* should also be inscribed within the imagery of the *tr̥tīya- jyótiṣ-* in ṚVS X 56.1, but in a broader – not exclusively funerary – sense. This billy-goat should indeed represent the sacrificer himself, who is reborn from the fire, being a fire coming into being from another fire, in order to generate a third light in heaven. In fact, in all these Atharvavedic hymns related to the *pāñcaudana- ajá-*, the thematic role of agent attributed to the billy-goat, which is born from the fire and actively moves in several directions, deviates from its more common role of the offering in the sacrifice, i.e. from its syntactic function of object with respect to the actions performed by the officiant priest in the sacrificial

²⁶ In ŚS IX 5.7a, the billy-goat is explicitly identified with *jyótiṣ*: *ajó agnír ajám u jyótiṣ áhur* “The billy-goat is *agní*: they call it ‘light’.”

²⁷ See Pontillo 2019b: 48–50 and bibliography quoted there, in particular Windisch 1888 and Sakamoto-Goto 2000.

²⁸ As regards this, see Candotti, Neri & Pontillo 2021: 24–36; 42–60.

²⁹ I am quoting an expression used by Collins (1982: 54) to define the *iṣṭapūrtá*.

arena.³⁰ Particularly telling is the prevalence of active verbal forms in ŚS IX 5.1/PS XVI 97.1 (*gacchatu, tīrtvā, á kramatām* – see above) and the emphasised image of the birth of fire, i.e. its coming into being from the sacrificial fire and its movement starting from it, both in ŚS IX 5.6/PS XVI 97.5 (*út krāmātaḥ, sám babhūvitha* – see above), and in Table 6, referring to a mythical past:

Table 6: Attaining a god-like state.

ŚS IV 14.1	PS III 38 1
<i>ajó hy āgnér ájaniṣṭa sókāt só 'paśyaj janitāram āgre téna devā devātām āgrā āyan téna rōhān ruruhur médhyāsaḥ </i>	Indeed, the billy-goat has been born = from the heat of the fire. It saw in the beginning him who begot himself. Through it in the beginning the gods came to god-like state. Through it, those <u>fit for the sacrifice</u> <u>ascended</u> to the ascents. ³¹

As far as the human sacrificer is concerned, only at the end of his life is he supposed to be ready to share a god-like state, after accumulating merit throughout his life, especially through sacrifices, and merit is envisioned as a newly attained body entirely made of light:

ṚVS X 14.8 (= ŚS XVIII 3.58 = PS XVIII 75.1):

*sám gachasva pitṛbhiḥ sám yaméneṣṭāpūrténa paramé vyòman |
hitvāyāvadyām púnar ástam éhi sám gachasva tanvā suvárcāḥ ||*

Unite with the forefathers, unite with Yama, with what has been bestowed due to the sacrifice, in the highest distant heaven. Having left behind imperfection, come home again. Unite with your body in your full luster. (tr. Jamison, Brereton 2014: 1392 modified).

The billy-goat arising from the sacrificial fire might have been a fitting image for “the sacrificer’s new body” acquired in the highest heaven, within the framework of the idea of a body’s recovery after death, as reconstructed by Fujii (2011: 108–109, 2012: 108–113) with the help of ṚVS X 14.8 and some other Ṛgvedic passages (ṚVS X

³⁰ As noted above (§ 1 fn. 14), the stem *pāñcaudana-* is more often used as a qualifier agreeing with the accusative *ajám*. See e.g. ŚS IV 14.6: *ajám anajmi páyasā ghṛténa* “With milk, with ghee, I anoint the billy-goat”.

³¹ Gonda (1965: 248) notices that this stanza was used (with slight variation) in MS II 7.17, KS XVI 17, TS IV 2.10, VSM XIII 51, ŚBM VII 5.2.36, which mention the sacrificial action of removing the head of the billy-goat during the ceremonies connected with the so-called great fire-altar.

15.14, 16.5). Indeed, rather than purely being asked “to return to his body”³² in RVS X 14.8 the dead man seems to be invited “to wear a new body”, which I assume to be the body of light stored in heaven and recovered after one dies. This image of a garment to be changed is in fact employed in the following verse:

ŚS XVIII 2.57 (≈ PS XVIII 68.6):

etát tvā vásaḥ prathamam̐ nv āgann āpaitád ūha yád ihābibhaḥ purá |
iṣṭāpūrtám anusámkrāma vidvān yátra te dattám bahudhá vibandhuṣu ||

This is the garment (i.e. the body) which indeed first came to you; remove the one you were wearing before: reach what is granted by sacrifices (*iṣṭāpūrtá*) by knowing where it was given to you, in many ways, among people having no relations!³³

The permanent nature of such an achievement emerges from ŚS IX 5.20–22 and PS XVI 99.6–8 (Table 7), where the intriguing expression *áparimita- yajna-* seems to hint at endless merit gained by means of such a sacrifice, confirmed by the consistent phrase *aparimitam̐ lokam̐* denoting the target attained, namely a world to be enjoyed forever.

In the collection of hymns analysed here, the *tr̥t̥t̥ya- jyótis-* appears to be the kernel of a specific eschatological doctrine and this image in particular might have been the original insight, which instead seems to become slightly more fuzzy when the passages use the apparently alternative phrase *tr̥t̥t̥ya- náka-* “third firmament”. The inspiring idea could plausibly have originated from the real experience of watching what happened to the victim or to the body of the deceased man, transformed by fire into light when they were burned in the sacrificial fire or put on the funeral pyre respectively.

³² See e.g. *Sāyaṇa-Bhāṣya* on RVS X 14.8, which paraphrases *tanvā* of the phrase *sám gachasva tanvā* with *svaśarireṇa*.

³³ Whitney & Lanman 1905 translated *vibandhuṣu* “among them of various connections”, but they placed a question mark in brackets next to this noun. The translation proposed here is based on the assumed sacrificer’s fear of not being able, after his death, to recognise his individual or familiar merits, as highlighted by Sakamoto Gotō 2000. This risk might have arisen when the sacrificer started depending ‘on a number of ritual specialists to perform the sacrifice for his benefit’, because indeed he ‘realized the results of the sacrifice indirectly’ (Tull 1990: 35). In other words, there was the risk that the merits gained by the sacrifice were stored in a wrong place, belonging to people with no relation to him.

Table 7: unlimited sacrifice.

PS XVI 99.6	
<p>ŚS IX 5.20</p> <p><i>ajó vá idám agre vy ákramata</i> <i>tásyóra iyám abhavad dyauh</i> <i>prsthám </i> <i>antaríkṣam mádhyaṃ dśāh pārśvé</i> <i>samudraú kuṣṭí</i></p>	<p>The billy-goat, indeed, in the beginning³⁴, stepped out of this. This [earth] became its breast, the sky its back, the intermediate space its middle, the cardinal points its sides, the <u>two oceans</u> its belly.</p>
PS XVI 99.6	
<p><i>ajah pañcaudano vy akramata </i> <i>tasyora iyam abhavad</i> <i>udaram antarikṣam dyauh prstham</i> <i>dśāh pārśve</i></p>	<p>The billy-goat, with its five portions of mashed rice, stepped out of this. This [earth] became its breast, the intermediate space <u>its womb</u>, the sky its back, the cardinal points its sides.</p>
ŚS IX 5.21	
<p><i>satyam ca rtam ca cakṣuṣī viśvam</i> <i>satyam śraaddhā prāṇo virāt śīrah </i> <i>esā vá aparimito yañño yād ajāh</i> <i>pāñcaudanaḥ </i></p>	<p>Truth and cosmic order were its eyes, all truth and faith, its breath, the <i>virāj</i> its head; this indeed was the unlimited sacrifice, which was the billy-goat with five portions of mashed rice.</p>
≈ PS XVI 99.7	
<p><i>ditiś cāditiś ca śṛṅge</i> <i>satyam ca rtam ca cakṣuṣī </i> <i>viśvam rūpam śraaddhā prāṇo virāt</i> <i>śīrah </i></p>	<p>Diti and Aditi were its horns, truth and cosmic order were its eyes, All visible appearances and faith were its breath, the <i>Virāj</i> its head.</p>

³⁴ In other words, according to Gonda (1965: 248): “‘before or beyond phenomenal time’, in the mythical past which is the prototype (Urbild) of the reality which is known to us and in which we live”.

ŚS IX 5.22

*áparimitam evá yajñám ápnóty
áparimitam lokám áva runddhe |
yò₃ 'jám páñcaudanam
dáksināyotīṣam³⁵ dádati ||*

Indeed, he who gives the billy-goat
with its five portions of mashed rice,
whose light is the *dáksinā*, gains an
unlimited sacrifice, he takes hold of
an unlimited world.

≈ PS XVI 99.8

*eṣa vā aparimito yajño yad ajāḥ
pañcaudanaḥ |
aparimitam lokam jayaty aparimitam
lokam áva rundhe ya evam viduse
'jam pañcaudanam dadāti ||*

Indeed, since the billy-goat with five
portions of mashed rice is an unlimited
sacrifice, he conquers an unlimited world.
He who gives the billy-goat with five
portions of mashed rice to one who is aware
of this takes hold of an unlimited world.

³⁵ In all these Atharvavedic hymns related to the *pāñcaudana-ajá-*, there are 9 occurrences of this intriguing compound *dáksināyotīs-* in ŚS IX 5.22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 31, 33, 35, PS VIII 19.11. The compound has been analysed in Candotti, Neri & Pontillo 2021: 49–53, who put forward a new proposal to interpret *dáksinā-* in the earliest Vedic texts and in the Suttapīṭaka as “magnificence”. Within the framework of the present proposal to identify the *pāñcaudana-ajá-* with the sacrificer, whose merits are accumulated in heaven until the day he dies and wears a new body entirely made of light, this compound *dáksināyotīs-* seems to confirm that such a heavenly “light” is gained by the sacrificer through his actions (sacrificial actions included), thanks to his “magnificence”.

3 Solar Imagery in the *pāñcaudana- ajā-*

The imagery of the ‘dramatic’ fiery pillar of fire and flames which arise when milk is added to the heated Gharma-pot during the Pravargya-ritual was already studied in RVS I 164 by Houben (2000) as a plausible ‘laboratory’ (the term is specifically used in Houben 2000: 529) of some speculative reflections on the possibility of humans gaining an immortal state. “In fact the Gharma-milk becomes a sort of inverted lightning, unexpectedly directed at heaven, and represents the initiated man, whose identification with the sun is ritually targeted” (Pontillo 2019a: 256).³⁶ Such an image is also at the core of an Atharvavedic stanza (Table 8), which according to Selva (2019: 374) “explicitly describes the *vratins*’ path of the *gharmasya vrata* as modelled after that of the gods (*devāḥ*), as a spiritual path (“having abandoned the body”), and as aiming at the world of merit (*sukṛtāsya lokāṃ*), which is regarded as the abode or the location of immortality [. . .].”

Table 8: The abode of immortality.

ŚS IV 11.6		PS III 25.6	
<i>yéna devāḥ svàr</i>	May we go to the world of	=	=
<i>āruruhír hitvā</i>	merit, <u>desiring glory</u> , by	<i>amṛtasya dhāma</i>	<u>to the establishment</u>
<i>śáriram amṛtāsya</i>	means of the observance of	=	of immortality
<i>nābhim</i>	the <i>gharmá-</i> , <u>by means of</u>	<i>yāśasā tapasyayā</i>	<u>by means of glory</u> .
<i>téna geṣma</i>	<u>austerities</u> , by means of which		<u>by means of the</u>
<i>sukṛtāsya lokāṃ</i>	the gods, after quitting the		<u>practice of austerities</u>
<i>gharmāsya vraténa</i>	body, ascended to heaven, to		
<i>tāpasā yāśasyāvah</i>	the <u>navel</u> of immortality.		

As Lubotsky (2002: 31) pointed out, it is noteworthy that the formula *téna geṣma sukṛtāsya lokāṃ*, i.e. the prayer aimed at attaining the world of merit, present in both recensions, is also employed in the very first passage quoted above (ŚS IV 14.6, PS III 38.5 – § 1), where it is just the *pāñcaudana- ajā-* which plays the role of the *gharmá* by ensuring ascent to that highest world. Furthermore, our starting quotation already contained a possible poetic hint at the *gharmá* in ŚS IV 14.6, where the billy-goat is depicted by means of words belonging to the Vedic solar imagery, such

³⁶ In Pontillo 2019a, I assumed that RVS X 181 might have hinted at the same notion. See in particular RVS X 181.3: *tè `vīndan mánasā dīdhyānā yáju ṣkannám prathamám devayānam | dhātúr dyútānāt savitús ca víṣṇor ā sūryād abharan gharmám eté* “By focusing their minds on it, they found the first sprinkled formula which goes to the gods. They brought here the *gharmá-* from Sūrya who is the Founder, the Flashing one, the Vivifier, the All-pervasive one.”

as “the heavenly eagle, milky, great” (*ajám* [. . .] *divyám suparnám payasám bṛhántam* [. . .]).³⁷ Dore (2015a: 57–64, Dore 2015b) has clearly explained the importance of the solar imagery broadly used in Atharvavedic and Ṛgvedic texts (e.g. in ṚVS X 136, ŚS II 1, IV 11, XI 15, XIII 1, XV 1, XV 18) to depict the renowned figures of the *keśín, róhita, ekavrātyá* and *brahmacārín*, all of whom are connected to a so-called Vrātya cultural matrix and aim at an esoteric knowledge shared by men and gods, who finally enter the sun. We also discover that the final aim in the *pāñcaudana-ajā-savá-* is precisely to win the world of the sun in ŚS IX 5.18:

ajáh pakváh svargé loké dadhāti páñcaudano nírṛtiṁ bádhamānah |
téna lokánt sūryavato jayema ||

The cooked billy-goat with five portions of mashed rice, eliminating corruption, sets [us] in the heavenly world: may we conquer worlds that possess the sun!

Malinar (see e.g. 1996: 335, 2007: 38) taught us long ago that it is difficult to overestimate the importance in Vedic and Sanskrit sources of the recurring emphasis placed on the desired identification with the sun, which is also the final immortal location for the deceased man’s body, mentioned in e.g. ṚVS X 14.8 (see above, § 2), when the dead man is invited to unite with it (*sám gachasva tanvā suvárcāḥ* “Unite with your body in your full luster!”). The solar image is crucially used in the soteriological context which Malinar insightfully called the “law of heroism”, in which the greatest human achievement, man’s immortality, is depicted as a vision of solar light, as demonstrated especially in ŚvU III 8 and BhG VIII 9–10.³⁸ This solar imagery might date back to several centuries earlier than these sources (Pontillo 2016: 236–238), since ŚvU III 8 exactly matches ṚvKh 4,11.9a.³⁹

vedāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahantam ādityavarṇaṁ tamasah parastāt

I know the immense divine *puruṣa* coloured like the Sun, beyond darkness.

³⁷ See also “the heated pot” (*tápta- carú-*) in ŚS IX 5.6 (§ 2).

³⁸ ŚvU III 8: *vedāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahantam ādityavarṇaṁ tamasah parastāt* “I know the immense divine *puruṣa* coloured like the Sun, beyond darkness;” BhG VIII 9–10: *kaviṁ purānam anusāsītāram* [. . .] *anusmared yah | sarvasya dhātaram acintyarūpam ādityavarṇaṁ tamasah parastāt* [. . .] *sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣam upaiti divyam* “The sage and Preceptor primordial, [. . .] creator of all, of form unimaginable, hued like the Sun. At the back of the night – who thus thinks of him [. . .]. Attains to the Person Supreme and Divine.” (tr. Van Buitenen 1981: 103). Cf. MuṇḍUp II 2.6; 9; PS V 27.8; TS IV 2.5.2; MS II 7.12; KS XVI 12. See also the relevant comments by Ježić (2009: 243–246).

³⁹ As is well known, the Ṛgveda Khilāni – which are still quoted as a genuine part of the Ṛgveda in the *Anukramaṇī* (5th–3rd BCE) – may date back at least to the age of the Yajurveda Saṁhitā and cannot be later than the Brāhmaṇas (9th–6th BCE) – see Scheffelowitz 1906: 11–16, Sontakke-Kashikar 1933–1951, Vol. 4: 903, Bhise 1995: 8.

The lexicon used in our *pāñcaudana- ajá-* collection seems to be close to these solar passages. We have already examined three passages where the theme of the darkness (*támas*) to be crossed is emphasised (see above, *tīrtvá támāṃsi* “after crossing the darkness” in ŚS IX 5.1, 3, PS XVI 97.1). Elsewhere (Table 9), instead of the verb *tī-* “to cross”, the compound verb *apa-han-* “to smite away” is used, as follows:

Table 9: Smiting the darkness away.

ŚS IX 5.7cd = ŚS IX 5.11cd = PS XVI 97.7b		Cf. PS XVI 97.8cd–9	
<i>ajás támāṃsy ápa hanti dūrám asmíṃl loké śraddádāhānena dattāḥ</i>	The billy-goat given in this world by one who has faith smites the darkness away.	<i>ajas tamāṃsy apa hanti dūraṃ pañcaudano brahmaṇe dīyamānaḥ pañcaudano brahmaṇe dīyamāno 'jo nākam ā kramatām tṛtīyam vicakramānaḥ sukṛtasya loke sa jyotiṣā tamo apa hanti dūrām </i>	The billy-goat with its five portions of mashed rice, when it is given to the <i>brahmán</i> smites the darkness away. May the billy-goat who has been given to the <i>brahmán</i> together with five portions of mashed rice, step towards the third firmament! Stepping out in the world of merit, he smites the darkness away.

The billy-goat sacrificed in the fire with five portions of mashed rice, bursting like the *gharmá* in the Pravargya, allows the sacrificer to attain the third firmament, i.e. it is a path towards the enjoyment of immortality as an effect of ritual merits. And it is tempting to assume that some other sacrificial images like that of the white-footed sheep with its five cakes of flour (*pāñcāpūpa- śítipád- avi-* ŚS III 29.4)⁴⁰ might have been an analogous image of the achievement of a permanent stay in heaven, as the unlimited fruit of sacrifices (and indirectly of actions). This leads one to wonder what specific notion has inspired the imagery of the *pāñcaudana- ajá-*, for instance in comparison with the *gharmá* image.

⁴⁰ *pāñcāpūpaṃ śítipádam áviṃ lokéna sámmitam | pradátópa jīvati pitṛṇám loké 'kṣitam |* “The giver subsists on the white-footed sheep with its five cakes of flour, which is commensurate with his world and which does not decay in the world of the ancestors.”

4 The Self with Its Five Faculties

The aforementioned journey of a fire born from the sacrificial fire towards the place where merit is stored as light, more than representing a purely spiritual path, seems to be a journey (from the earth upward) accomplished by the body with its five faculties of perception, to attain a deathless state through the sacrificial fire. I believe that such an image sheds light on Keith's (1925: 423) reading of cremation:

The exact idea connected with the burning seems to have been that the whole self was burned, soul as well as body, in order to convey it, in a refined form but still unaltered in essence, to the regions of heaven.

Thus, from a soteriological perspective, I assume that the billy-goat represents the psychophysical self, endowed with all its faculties, which is burnt to ensure that the sacrificer gains a new permanent self among the gods. This sacrifice might have symbolically represented the ascetic and heroic self-immolation of the sacrificer, which, at least in its prototypical version, is assumed to be a part of the *sattra* (see e.g. Lévi 1898: 133; Tull 1990: 55; Malamoud 2002: 21). Such self-immolation of the sacrificer is an accepted practice in the so-called *sattra*-culture (see above § 0. Premise) and it has plausibly to be read within the framework of a society grounded in the institution of brotherhood such as the *vrātya* society (as suggested by Heestermann 1987: 98), where the *sthapati* as *primus inter pares* plays the role of an ascetic who sacrifices himself by carrying out the observances (*vrata-*) for the whole group (Dore & Pontillo 2016: 12; Pontillo 2023).

This offering of one's psychophysical self instead of any other material oblation could have been considered the best way of fulfilling human desires, among which the greatest was the permanent enjoyment of a new individual entity, exempt from any decay, in the afterlife. The pun built on the homophony between *ajá-* "goat", and *a-já-* "unborn, ever existing"⁴¹ may have suggested this interpretation of the goat's offering as a means of achieving the permanent existence of the self. This self, envisioned as the *ajá-* arisen from the fire, merges with the body gained by the sacrifice by means of merit, which is stored in heaven until the death of the sacrificer. Thus,

⁴¹ See Gonda (1965: 65): "I would [. . .] suppose the divinization of the he-goat – whose name may also be understood as the 'unborn one' i.e. 'he who exists from all eternity' – to have been facilitated by the speculations on that divine being whose name, it is true, occurs in the AV (19, 11, 3), but not in the relevant sutras", i.e. *ajá ékapad*.

it is consistent that the following two parallel stanzas (Table 10) insist on the idea of a new *rūpá-*, i.e. of a new visible appearance assumed by one who sacrifices the *pāñcaudana- ajá-* and the main action is always conveyed by the verb *sam-gam-* “to come together/to unite”. In the Paippalāda version, the word *akṣiti-* “non-decay/imperishableness” clearly confirms that the new individual entity which will be permanently enjoyed in the afterlife will be exempt from any decay.

Table 10: A new visible appearance.

ŚS IX 5.24		PS XVI 99.10	
<i>idám idam evāsya</i>	This and this become	<i>idam idam asya</i>	This and this are its
<i>rūpám bhavati ténainam</i>	its visible appearance;	<i>rūpam tenainam</i>	visible appearance;
<i>sám gamayati </i>	by means of this, one	<i>sam gamayati </i>	by means of this,
<i>īsam máha ūrjam asmai</i>	makes it unite. It yields	<i>svadhām ūrjam</i>	one makes it unite. It
<i>duhe yò₃ jám</i>	strong greatness and	<i>akṣitim maho asmai</i>	yields inherent power,
<i>pāñcaudanam</i>	strength to him who	<i>duhe ya evam viduṣe</i>	strength, non-decay,
<i>dákṣiṇājyotiṣam</i>	gives the billy-goat with	<i>jám pañcaudanam</i>	greatness to him who
<i>dadāti </i>	five portions of mashed	<i>dadāti </i>	gives the billy-goat
	rice, whose light is the		with five portions of
	<i>dákṣiṇā.</i>		mashed rice to one
			who is aware of this.

And how can this access to heaven become a permanent destiny? I shall attempt to answer by means of an intertextual comparison, relying on the lexicon involved here. The non-decay (*akṣiti-*) of what is granted by sacrifices (*iṣṭāpūrta-*) is indeed a crucial notion in a passage from the *Jaiminīya-Brahmaṇa* text (Table 11), within the esoteric teaching given by the controversial figure⁴² of the Pañcāla king Keśin Dārbhya to a deceased king of the same tribe. According to *Vādhūlasūtra* 37, the need for such a teaching depended on the fact that this deceased king (Yājñasena) was precisely afraid of the expiry of his *iṣṭāpūrta* (*iṣṭāpūrtasya kṣityai bibhayām cakāra*).⁴³

⁴² See e.g. Sarma 1968: 241, Amano 2013: 18, Kulkarni 2016.

⁴³ See also Caland 1928: 149. The same risk is recorded in KB VII 4, where the compound *iṣṭāpūrta-* is replaced by *sakṛd iṣṭa-* literally “once sacrificed” and in AB VII 21, where *kṣiti-* is replaced by *parijyāni-* literally “not falling into decay”. The idea of fear appears in KB VII 4, where the golden wild goose declares: *sakṛd ayaje tasya kṣayād bibhemi. sakṛdīṣṭasyāho tvam akṣitim vettha tām tvam mahyam iti* “Once I was a sacrificer: I am afraid of the perishableness of that. You know the imperishableness of that which once has been offered. Oh! May you [explain] this to me!” Lévi (1898: 108) interpreted *sakṛd* as “une fois pour toutes”, so that the fear that the fruit of sacrifices might be impermanent might here have been compared with and opposed to the desire that this fruit might instead become permanent.

Now, Caland (1931: XIX) considered the *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa* to be older than the other available Sāmaveda Brāhmaṇa, i.e. the *Pañcaviṁśa-Brāhmaṇa*, on the basis of a collection of generally ignored rites included in the *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa*. The Jaiminīya school is generally considered older than the Kauthuma-Rāṇāyaṇīya Śākhā, due to its accordance with the surviving Nambudiri Ṛgveda and Yajurveda traditions.⁴⁴ On the contrary, Keith decided in favour of the anteriority of the *Pañcaviṁśa-Brāhmaṇa*, especially because of linguistic evidence.⁴⁵ However, several portions of the *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa* are often quite conservative in terms of contents. This may be due to its (ritual and narrative) eclectic prolixity, which has evidently led this text to voraciously incorporate ideas borrowed from different schools and thus at least partially retain them.⁴⁶ However, more generally speaking, it might overall have been one of the most recently fixed Brāhmaṇa texts, perhaps only earlier than the *Ṣaḍviṁśa-Brāhmaṇa* and the *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* (Bodewitz 1973: 13).

Thus, I shall resort to this late source, in order to try to understand what the five *odanas* might have represented in their association with the billy-goat. In fact, JB II 53–54, where no goat is mentioned, explains how the individual faculties given

⁴⁴ See Witzel 2016: 69.

⁴⁵ See Keith 1932a: 700, 1932b: 1049. Renou (1947: 101) endorsed Keith's evaluation. The chronological problem is amplified by the assumed existence of a third Sāmaveda Brāhmaṇa, mentioned as *Śātyāyanakam brāhmaṇam* or *Śātyāyani-Brāhmaṇa* or *Śātyāyanakam* in several Kalpasūtras or by commentators (see Ghosh 1935: 98–101 fragments 55–66, Parpola 1973: 9–10, Bodewitz 1973: 11–12, Gonda 1975: 349, Witzel 1989: § 5.2).

⁴⁶ See Keith 1932b: 1048, Renou 1947: 101–102, Gonda 1975: 348, Fujii 2012: 112.

during the sacrifice match the relevant gods and divine worlds and how these can finally be “redeemed”.

Table 11: The impershableness of the *iṣṭāpūrta*-

JB II 53–54

<p><i>keśi ha dārbhṃ darbhaparṇayor</i>⁴⁷ <i>didikṣe</i> <i>atha ha sutvā yājñaseno</i>⁴⁸ <i>haṃso</i> <i>hiraṇmayo bhūtvā</i>⁴⁹ <i>yūpa upaviveśa</i> [. . .]</p> <p><i>iṣṭāpūrtasya tvam akṣitiṃ vettha</i> <i>dikṣām</i> <i>ahaṃ veda saṃprabravāvahā</i>⁵⁰ <i>iti</i> ⁵¹ [. . .]</p>	<p>Keśin Dārbhya was indeed consecrated on Darbha[-grass] and Parṇa[-leaves]. Then Yājñasena, who had performed Soma sacrifices in the past, assumed the semblance of a golden wild goose, sitting on the sacrificial post. [. . .] You know the imperishableness of what is granted by sacrifices, I know the consecration. ‘Let us explain [these two objects of knowledge] to one another!’</p> <p>[. . .]</p>
--	---

47 As noticed by Koskikallio (1991: 314 n. 43), “The correct sitting base should have been a black deerskin (*kṛṣṇājina*)” – see also Caland (1919: 138 n. 6) who refers to ŚBM I 1.4.3. In JB II 100 the story is told of how Pañcāla children mocked Darbha (Śatānika’s son), by addressing him with the words *darbha darbha*, but, in the end, he was actually honoured as a king by all the Pañcālas because he had performed the Apaciti sacrifice. In BŚS XVIII 38–39, after King Keśin Dālbhya’s Apaciti sacrifice, the Pañcālas changed the word for grass from *darbha* to *kuśa* and created a new word for hair, namely the plural noun *śīrṣanyāḥ*, which literally means “those on the head” (*śīrṣanyā iti keśān ācakṣate*) – for further links between *darbha*-grass and Vrātyas, see Dore & Pontillo 2013. According to Caland (1903: 25) and Witzel (1989: 101 n. 6), the king himself might have consequently been called *Sairṣanya Kauśa*. However, Heesterman (1962: 16) has also connected the *vrātya* epithet *keśin* with the name Śīrṣanya and with the well-known Pañcāla clan name *Śīrṣadi*, which literally means ‘whose name begins with [a reference to the] head’.

48 At the beginning of the KB (and of the *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa*) versions there is no mention of this name: *taṃ ha hiraṇmayah śakuna āpatyovāca* “To him flew up a golden bird and said” (KB 7.4). *sutvan* is here interpreted as a common noun which might qualify Yājñasena as a man who pressed the Soma, i.e. someone who had been a patron of Soma sacrifices in the past, in accordance with A III 2.103, especially because in the VādhS version (fragment 37 Caland 1928: 148) a sort of synonym, i.e. *bahuyājīn*- “who performed many sacrifices” also occurs. Nonetheless Caland (1919: 138, 1928: 148) considers *sutvan*- as a proper name and in AB VIII 28 it is actually used for another character.

49 For the hypothesis that “royal and demigodly roles” might have assured a supermundane, Gandharva-like bird state in Vedic and post-Vedic sources, see Koskikallio 1999: 314 n. 44; 352–356.

50 Ehlers (1988: 10) prefers a first dual form instead of a first person plural form on the basis of the following paragraph (JB II 54). The context itself supports this emendation. The plural form is instead given by both Caland (1919: 137) and Vira-Chandra (1954: 178) – the latter with a misprint in the vowel of the verbal base (*saṃprabruvāmahā iti*).

51 In KB VII 5 the two characters are said to “explain together” (*saṃprocate*) and in VādhS XXXVII the reciprocity is underlined by the symmetry of the following two sentences: *taṃ tvam asmabhyam brūhi, vayaṃ tubhyaṃ vakṣyāma iti bhagava iti*, “May you explain this to us (i.e. the imperishableness of what is granted by sacrifices) and we shall explain [the sacrificer’s consecration (Dikṣā)] to you.”

Table 11 (continued)

JB II 53–54

*atha hetara uvāca*⁵² | *brahmane dadad*⁵³
brūyād brahman manas te dadāni tad
anena niṣkrīṇāni brahmann idam dadānīti
*yad dāsyān syāt*⁵⁴ | *sa yan mano dadāti*
candramā vai manas candramasam
evāsmāi tad dadāti | tad yāvac candramā
na kṣiyate tāvad asya tad dattaṃ na
kṣiyate |
hotre dadad brūyāt dhotar vācaṃ te
dadāni tām anena niṣkrīṇāni hotar idam
dadānīti yad dāsyān syāt | sa yad vācaṃ
dadāty agnir vai vāg agnim evāsmāi tad
dadāti | tad yāvad agnir na kṣiyate tāvad
asya tad dattaṃ na kṣiyate |
adhvaryave [. .] prāṇaṃ [. .] vāyur vai
prāṇo [. .] |
udgātre [. .] cakṣus [. .] ādītyo vai cakṣur
[. .] |
sadasyāya [. .] ātmānaṃ [. .] ākāśo vā
ātmā [. .] |
hotrakebhyo [. .] śrotram [. .] diśo vai
śrotram [. .] |

prasarpakebhyo [. .] lomāni [. .]
*ośadhivanaspatyo vai lomāni [. .]*⁵⁵
saiṣeṣṭāpūrtasyākṣitiḥ [. .]

54. Then the other one (Keśin) replied: “When giving to the *brahmān*, one should say: ‘O *brahmān*, may I give you my faculty of thinking! Let me redeem this by means of that (i.e. a gift)! O *brahmān*, let me give you this!’ i.e. that which he is going to give him.’ Since he gives him his faculty of thinking – indeed the faculty of thinking is the moon – this gives the moon to him. As long as the moon is not consumed, that which he has given is not consumed.

When giving to the *hotr*, one should say: ‘O *hotr*, may I give you my faculty of speaking! Let me redeem this by means of that! O *hotr*, let me give you this!’ i.e. that which he is going to give to him. Since he gives him his faculty of speaking – indeed the faculty of speaking is the fire – this indeed gives him the fire. As long as the fire is not consumed, that which belongs to him and has been given is not consumed.

[. .] to the *adhvaryu*, [. .] my breath! [. .] indeed breath is the wind [. .].

[. .] to the *udgātr*, [. .] my faculty of seeing! [. .] indeed the faculty of seeing is the sun [. .].

[. .] to the *sadasya*, [. .] my *ātman*! [. .] indeed *ātman* is the ether [. .].

[. .] to the *hotrakas*, [. .] my faculty of hearing! [. .] indeed hearing is the cardinal points [. .].

[. .] to the *prasarpakas*, [. .] my hair! [. .] indeed hair is plants and trees [. .].

This is the imperishableness of what is granted by sacrifices. [. .]

52 Caland (1919: 138) translates this sentence as “Darauf der andere:” and puts the name “Sutvan” in brackets, but – in agreement with Kulkarni (2016: 76) – I consider that this passage openly focuses on the concept conveyed by the verb *kṣi-* “to perish” just as the term *akṣiti-* is used to define the special object of Keśin’s knowledge.

53 Caland (1919: 138) interprets this verb as meaning “to give a Dakṣiṇā”

54 As pointed out by Caland (1919: 138 n. 5), this passage corresponds to ĀpŚS XIII 6.4–6. See also AB VII 21.

55 The majority of individual faculties and body parts which are mentioned in this section match those found at the beginning of this work (JB I 1). Five elements, namely the sacrificer’s breath and

Only the words conveying the elements that change have been quoted from this lengthy formularised passage, which is entirely devoted to perfectly parallel explanations of how one can achieve this non-decay (*akṣiti-*) of merit by giving a specific officiant all of one's faculties in order to be compensated with the gift of some permanent elements of nature, namely fire, wind, sun, ether, cardinal points, plants and trees. To sum up, this giving of individual faculties and body parts that allows one to gain a new impermanent body brings to mind a comparison between the sacrificial way to gain access to heaven and the ascetic way, perhaps also symbolically represented by the two interlocutors who are two kings from two subsequent generations of leaders of the same tribe, one named after the sacrifice itself (*yājñasena-* and perhaps *sutvan-*) and the other for whom the *vrātya* epithet *keśin* is used. The explanation Keśin Dārbhya gives of this sort of "self-offering" pattern of sacrifice is, however, consistent with the common logic of the sacrificial arena including all the officiating priests and the patron of the sacrifice, and in particular a specific priest as a single recipient of each given faculty. Of course, the mere sacrificial mechanism is replaced by the ascetic effort to offer and then redeem oneself at the end of one's life by attaining a permanent divine state through the merits gained by means of sacrifices.

Hence, it is not unreasonable to wonder whether an ancient doctrine aimed at achieving a deathless state with a permanent body is perhaps kept alive in late Vedic passages, and indeed better explained there than in earlier sources. Thus, the *pāñcaudana- ajá-* might also have been a poetic hinting at such an early eschatological belief, aimed at envisioning the (ascetic) offering of oneself with one's own five faculties of perception which are supposed to be given back to the respective worlds and then redeemed by means of the sacrifice itself, so that all of the merit can be redeemed.

his faculties of thinking, seeing, hearing and speaking "form the object of the rite" instead of "some external gods" in the Agnihotra "viewed as an *ātmayajña*" (the bracketed words are borrowed from Bodewitz 1973: 19). The purpose is to create a new immortal body (JB I 2): [. . .] *so 'ta āhutimayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaś cakṣurmayaś | śrotramayo vāñmaya ṛimayo yajurmayas sāmamayo brahmamayo | hiraṇyamayo 'mṛtas saṃbhavati | amṛtā haivāsya prāṇā bhavanti | amṛtaśarīram idaṃ kurute* [. . .] "He (arises) from this (fire) and becomes immortal in the form of an oblation, mind, breath, sight, hearing, speech, ṛc, yajus sāman, brahman and gold. His lifebreaths become immortal. He makes for himself an immortal body here" (tr. Bodewitz 1973: 20). The same five elements are used by Keśin's interlocutor in the KB VII 4 version of the Kaiśini Dikṣā and they are all singled out as the *dikṣita*'s gods.

5 Conclusions

Bearing in mind the contents of the above-quoted *Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa* passage, the following quotation might hint at a comparable mechanism of giving and redeeming all one's own faculties, like Keśin Dārbhya's teaching. It comes just before one of the clearest stanzas explaining the billy-goat's twofold motion outwards and inwards (quoted above, ŚS IX 5.20, PS XVI 99.6).

ŚS IX 5.19 = PS XVI 99.5:

*yām brāhmaṇé nidadhé yām ca vikṣú yá viprūṣa odanánām ajásya |
sárvaṃ tād agne sukṛtásya loké jānitán naḥ saṃgámāne pathinām ||*

That which he puts before the *brahmán* and among people, the drops scattered, belong to the rice-portions, to the goat: all that of ours, O Agni, you later know in the world of merit, at the meeting of the ways.

The billy-goat comes from and comes back to the *saṃgámana*, i.e. from the meeting point of the several ways (note the recurring verbal base *sam-gam-* e.g. above ṚVS X 14.8 = ŚS XVIII 3.58 = PS XVIII 75.1; ŚS IX 5.24 = PS XVI 99.10). A sort of circularity of the way trodden by the self is depicted especially in the incipit of hymn IV 14, where it is explained that the billy-goat saw the one who begot himself.

Furthermore, the two emphasised ritual details (see above, § 1), i.e. the specific way of positioning the several limbs of the victim and the attention paid to preserving its integrity, also gain a different meaning that is not purely ritualistic in that they do not merely comply with the rules of orthopraxy peculiar to a sacrificial arena dominated by the technical competence of the officiant. In the background emerges the aim to safeguard all the limbs to be redeemed as parts of a new permanent body. As Tull has noticed (1990: 25), the “idea that the rebirth process entails the individual's integration into the constituents of the cosmos” also emerges in ṚVS X 16.3ab (*súryam cákṣur gachatu vátam átmā dyám ca gacha pṛthivím ca dhármaṇā* “Let the eye go to the sun, the breath to the wind, go to the sky and to the earth in due order!”), as the reversal of the myth of the origin of the whole cosmos from the limbs of the primeval anthropomorphic being (ṚVS X 90). The “correspondence between the vital functions and the cosmic entities” is also taken for granted in some renowned Upaniṣadic reflections on man's destiny after death that are outside the Brahmanical cultural mainstream, such as the eschatological questions Ārtabhāga asks to Yājñavalkya in BĀU III 3.13.⁵⁶ This is a concept linked to

⁵⁶ [. . .] *yátrāsya púruṣasya mṛtásyāgním vág apyéti vátam prānás cákṣur ādityám mánaś candráṃ díśaḥ śrótram [. . .] kváyám tadā púruṣo bhavatíti* “[. . .] When a man has died, and his speech disappears into fire, his breath into the wind, his sight into the sun, his mind into the moon, his hearing into the quarters [. . .] what then happens to that person?” (Olivelle 1998: 81).

that of the “deceased’s new body after death” and to the “making of the self (*ātman*) in the rituals”, dating back to the same sources and to ŚS XIX 43, along with some other later sources, as indicated by Fujii (2012: 108–110). Even the *brahmaṇaḥ parimaraḥ* in AB VIII 28 and the *daivaḥ parimaraḥ* in KU II 12–14, which explain “the dying around of the powers”, i.e. the cyclical death and rebirth of the faculties of perception (often called *devas*), might have been inspired by the same belief, as a counterpart of the cycle of cosmic powers i.e. of the deities, in accordance with Bodewitz’s interpretation (2002: 38 n. 129).

The accumulation of numerical equivalences on the basis of the number “five” especially proposed in the final part of ŚS IX 5, i.e. the mention of five plus one seasons (vv. 31–36), five golden discs (*pāñca rukmā*), five new garments (*pāñca nāvāni vāstrā*), five milch-cows (*pāñca* [. . .] *dhenávaḥ*) in vv. 25–26, contribute to making it difficult to grasp the assumed reference to the five organs of sense (plus one, i.e. *manas*), unless one makes use of a lexically grounded intertextual comparison, as I have attempted to do here.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the consistency of the quest for the permanent enjoyment of a new body made of light in all the *pāñcaudana-ajā-* passages and the opposition between the centrifugal and centripetal motion of fire/billy-goat, which steps out from heaven and then steps back into it again in the same stanzas, call for cautious analysis, before uncritically accepting that the analysed hymns are mere *savā* hymns, paving the way for an easy sacrificial offering. It is rather important to emphasise that the permanent stay in heaven described in these texts is different from that described in more brahmanically oriented texts, because the role played by officiating priests is marginal and more attention is paid to the meaning of rituals than to their technical details. The *pāñcaudana-ajā-* imagery might thus have conveyed a noteworthy step in the history of reflections on the afterlife, perhaps destined to remain forever at the periphery of Brahmanical doctrines, like the majority of the Atharvavedic and Upaniṣadic theoretical issues.

⁵⁷ The reference to the remarried woman in ŚS IX 5.27 and the list of relatives in ŚS IX 5.30 could also be puzzling at first glance, but they are indeed consistent with the reflection on what the sacrificer keeps after death and with the collective clan-based dimension of merit.

Bibliographic References

Primary Literature

- Aṣṭādhyāyī* (1987–2003). *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini* edited by R.N. Sharma. 6 Vols., New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- AB *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* (1863). *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* edited and translated by M. Haug. Bombay: Government Central Book Depot, 1863 [Reprint 2003: edited by S. Jain. 2 Vols., Delhi: New Bharatiya Book Corporation].
- BĀU *Bṛhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* (1958). *Eighteen Principal Upaniṣad* edited and translated by V.P. Limaye & R.K. Vadekar. Vol. 1, Poona: Vaidika Samshodana Mandala.
- BhG *The Bhagavadgītā* (1945). *The Bhagavadgītā* Being reprint of relevant parts of Bhīṣmaparvan from Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute's edition of the Mahābhārata, for the first time critically edited by S. K. Belvalkar. Poona: Bhandakar Oriental Research Institute.
- JB *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa* (1986²). *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda* edited by Raghu Vira & Lokesh Chandra. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass [originally published 1955].
- KB *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* (1968). *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* edited by E. R. S. Sarma. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner. <http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcc/ind/aind/rv/kb/kb.htm>. [accessed October 2018]
- KS *Kāṭhakam* (1900). *Die Saṃhitā der Kaṭha-Śākha* herausgegeben von Dr. L. von Schroeder. Leipzig: Brockhaus.
- KU *Kauṣītaki-Upaniṣad* (1958). See BĀU.
- MS *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* (1881–1886). *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* edited by L. von Schroeder. Leipzig: Brockhaus 1881–1886.
- MuṇḍU *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad* (1958). See BĀU.
- PS *Paippalāda-Saṃhitā* (1998–1999). *Atharva-Veda Saṃhitā. Paippalāda Recension* based on the edition by M. Witzel, Leiden 1989, and the edition by D. Bhattacharya, *The Paippalāda-Saṃhitā of the Atharvaveda*. Vol. 1, consisting of the first fifteen Kāṇḍas, Calcutta 1997. Electronically edited by Th. Zehnder (Kāṇḍas 1–5) and A. Griffiths (Kāṇḍas 6–15). Leiden. http://gretil.sub.unigoettingen.de/gretil/corpuitei/transformations/html/sa_paippalAdasaMhitA.htm#d1e17455 [accessed May 2020]
- ṚvKh *Ṛgveda-Khilāni* (1906). *Die Apokryphen des Ṛgveda: Khilāni* critically edited by J. Scheffelowitz, *Indische Forschungen* 1, 1–191.
- ṚVS *Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā* (1933–1951). *Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā — with a Commentary of Sāyaṇācārya* edited by N.S. Sontakke, C.G. Kashikar. Poona: Vaidika Samshodana Mandala.
- ŚBM *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa – Mādhyandina recension* (1964). *The Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa in the Mādhyandina-śākhā with Extracts from the Commentaries of Sāyaṇa, Harisvāmin and Dvivedagaṅga* edited by A. Weber. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. [originally published 1885].
- ŚvU *Śvetaśvataropaniṣad* (1958). See BĀU.
- ŚŚ *Śaunakīya Saṃhitā* (1960–1964). *Atharvaveda (Śaunaka) with the Padapāṭha and Sāyaṇācārya's commentary* edited by V. Bandhu. Hoshiarpur: Indological Vedic Research Institute.
- Sāyaṇa-Bhāṣya* (1933–1951). See ṚVS.

- TS *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* (1900–1905). *Kṛṣṇayajurvediyataittirīyasamhitā. Vedārtha-Prakāśa by Sāyana* (Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series 42). 8 vols., Poona: Anandasramamudrana Laye.
- VādhŚS *Vādhūlasūtra* (1928). See Caland 1928.
- VSM *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā – Mādhyandina* recension (1849). *Vājasaneyi Samhitā in the Mādhyandina and the Kāpvaśākhā with the commentary of Mahidhara* edited by Albrecht Weber. Berlin – London: Stenzler.

Secondary Literature

- Amano, Kyoko (2013). “Keśin Dārbyha in the Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā. Description of the Brahmaudanika Fire in MS I 6,5 (1d): 94, 4–8.” In: *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* 61, 3: 1073–1077.
- Bhise, Usha R. (1995). *The Khila-Sūktas of the Rgveda: a Study*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
- Bloomfield, Maurice (1899). *The Atharvaveda and the Gopatha Brahmana*. Strassburg: Trübner [Reprint 1975. Allahabad–Varanasi: Arsha Prakashan].
- Bodewitz, Henk W. (1973). *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa I, 1–65. Translation and Commentary with a Study. Agnihotra and Prāṇāgnihotra*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bodewitz, Henk W. (2002). *Kausītaki-Upaniṣad. Translation and Commentary with an Appendix Śāṅkhāyana Āranyaka IX–XI* (Groningen Oriental Studies. Vol. XVI). Groningen: E. Forsten.
- Brereton, Joel P. (2016). “The Funeral Hymn of Bṛhaduktha. In: Joel P. Brereton (ed.): *The Veda in Indian Culture and History. Proceedings of the Fourth International Vedic Workshop (Austin, Texas 2007)*. Florence: Societ Editrice Fiorentina.
- Bronkhorst, J. 2016. *How the Brahmins Won. From Alexander to the Guptas*, Leiden-Boston.
- Buitenen, Johannes A.B. van (1981). *The Bhagavadgītā in the Mahābhārata. A Bilingual Edition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Caland, Willem (1903). Über das rituelle Sūtra des Baudhāyana.” In: *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 12, 1, 1–65.
- Caland, Willem (1919). *Das Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl: Text, Übersetzung, Indices* (Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, 1, Nieuwe Reeks 19,4). Amsterdam: Sändig.
- Caland, Willem (1928). “Eine vierte Mitteilung über das *Vādhūlasūtra*. In: *Acta Orientalia* 6: 97–241.
- Caland, Willem (1931). *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa. The Brāhmaṇa of twenty five chapters* (Bibliotheca Indica. Vol. 255) [Reprint 1982: Calcutta: Asiatic Society].
- Candotti, Maria Piera, Chiara Neri & Tiziana Pontillo (2020). Reconsideration of a plausible relationship between gift and merit in the earliest Vedic and Pāli sources (1): A comparison between the usages of Pā. *dakṣhiṇeya* and Ved. *dakṣiṇīya*.” In: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* XCIII: 137–163.
- Candotti, Maria Piera, Chiara Neri & Tiziana Pontillo (2021). “Vedic dākṣiṇā/Pāli dakkhiṇā. Recovering an original notion behind the later institutional gift.” In: E. Poddighe & Tiziana Pontillo (eds.): *Resisting and justifying changes How to make the new acceptable in the Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern world* (Nuova Biblioteca di Studi Classici e Orientali, Supplementi alla rivista Studi Classici e Orientali 5). Pisa: Pisa University Press: 21–108.
- Collins, Steven (1982). *Selfless Persons. Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Reprint 1999].

- Das, Rahul P. (2011). "On the Study of Hinduism in the USA, and the Issue of *adhikāra*-. In: *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 106, 3: 151–168.
- Dore, Moreno & Tiziana Pontillo (2013). What do Vṛātyas have to do with long-stalked plants? Darbha, kuśa, śara and iṣikā in Vedic and Classical sources." In: Jaroslav Vacek (ed.): *150th Anniversary of the Birth of Moriz Winternitz Seminar, Pandanus* 13: 35–61.
- Dore, Moreno & Tiziana Pontillo (2016). Inquiries into Vṛātya-phenomenon: an introduction." In: Tiziana Pontillo, Moreno Dore & Hans H. Hock (eds.), *Vṛātya Culture in Vedic Source. Select Papers. A Panel of Veda and Vedic Literature. Proceedings of the 16th World Sanskrit Conference*, Bangkok – New Delhi: Sanskrit Studies Centre – Silpakorn University, D.K. Publishers, 1–34.
- Dore, Moreno (2015a). "The Pre-eminence of Men in the Vṛātya-Ideology. In: Robert Leach & Jessie Pons (eds.): *Puṣpikā: Tracing Ancient India Through Texts and Traditions* (Contributions to Current Research in Indology. Vol. 3). Oxford: Oxbow Books: 49–70.
- Dore, Moreno (2015b). "The Ekavṛātya, Indra and the Sun." In: Tiziana Pontillo, Cristina Bignami, Moreno Dore & Elena Mucciarelli (eds.): *The Volatile World of Sovereignty. The Vṛātya Problem and Kingship in South Asia and Beyond*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld: 33–64.
- Deussen, Paul (1906²). *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Religionen*. Erster Band, Erste Abteilung, Leipzig: Brockhaus.
- Edgerton, Franklin (1920). "The philosophic Materials of the Atharva Veda. In: *Studies in honor of Maurice Bloomfield* edited by a group of his pupils. New Haven: Yale University Press: 117–135.
- Ehlers, Gerhard (1988). *Emendationen zum Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa (zweites Buch)*. Bonn: Indica et Tibetica.
- Falk, Harry (1983). "Zur Ursprung des Sattra-Opfers. In: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft Supplement VI*: 275–281.
- Falk, Harry (1986). *Bruderschaft und Würfelspiel. Untersuchungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des Vedischen Opfers*. Freiburg: Hedwig Frank.
- Fujii, Masato (2011). The Recovery of the Body after Death: A Prehistory of the *Devayāna* and *Pitṛyāna*." In: Bertil Tikkanen & Albion M. Butters (eds.): *Pūrvāparaprajābhinandanam: East and West, past and present. Indological and other essays in honour of Klaus Karttunen* (Studia orientalia / Societas orientalis Fennica. Vol. 110): 103–120.
- Fujii, Masato (2012). "The Jaiminiya Sāmaveda Traditions and Manuscripts in South India." In: Saraju Rath (ed.): *Aspects of Manuscript Culture in South India* (Brill's Indological Library. Vol. 40). Leiden: Brill: 99–118.
- Geslani, Marko (2018). *Rites of the God-King: Śānti and Ritual Change in Early Hinduism* (Oxford Ritual Studies). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ghosh, Batakrihma (1935). *Collection of the Fragments of Lost Brāhmaṇas*. Calcutta: Modern Publishing Syndicate.
- Gonda, Jan (1965). *The Savayajñas: Kauśikasūtra* 60–68. Translation, Introduction, Commentary (Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel LXXI, No. 2.). Amsterdam: N. V. Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij.
- Gonda, Jan (1975). *Vedic Literature. Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas* (A History of Indian Literature. Vol. I, Fasc. 1.). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Heesterman, Jan C. (1962). "Vṛātya and Sacrifice." In: *Indo-Iranian Journal* 6: 1–37.
- Heesterman, Jan C. (1987). "Self-sacrifice in Vedic Ritual. In: Shaul Shaked, David Shulman & Guy G. Stroumsa, *Gilgul: essays on transformation, revolution and permanence in the history of religions*, dedicated to R. J. Zwi Werblowsky. Leiden – New York: Brill: 91–106.
- Houben, Jan E.M. (2000). "The Ritual Pragmatics of a Vedic Hymn: The 'Riddle Hymn' and the Pravargya ritual. In: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120: 499–536

- Ježić, Mislav (2009). "The Relationship between the *Bhagavadgītā* and the Vedic Upaniṣads: Parallels and relative chronology." In: Robert P. Goldman & Muneo Tokunaga: *Epic Undertakings*, ed. by (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference held in Helsinki, Finland, 13–18 July, 2003. Vol. 2). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass: 215–282.
- Keith, Arthur B. (1920). *Rigveda Brahmanas. The Aitareya and Kausitaki Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. [Reprint 1981². Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass].
- Keith, Arthur B. (1925). *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads I*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Keith, Arthur B. (1932a). "Review of W. Caland, *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa, Calcutta 1931*. In: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*: 697–700.
- Keith, Arthur B. (1932b). "Review of *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*. Transl. by W. Caland Dr., Emeritus Professor of Sanskrit in the University of Utrecht, pp. xxxvi + 661 (Bibliotheca Indica. Work No. 255) Calcutta, 1931. In: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 6,4: 1048–1054.
- Koskikallio, Petteri (1999). "Baka Dālbhya: a complex character in Vedic ritual texts, Epics and Purāṇas." In: *Studia Orientalia* 85: 301–387.
- Kulkarni, Nirmala R. (2016). "The Kaiśinī dīkṣā: A reappraisal." In: Tiziana Pontillo, Moreno Dore & Hans H. Hock (eds.): *Vrātya Culture in Vedic Sources. Select Papers. A Panel of Veda and Vedic Literature*. Bangkok – New Delhi: Sanskrit Studies Centre – Silpakorn University, D.K. Publishers: 73–87.
- Lévi, Sylvain (1898). *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas*. Paris: Leroux.
- Lindner, Bruno (1887). *Das Kaushītiki Brāhmaṇa. Herausgegeben und Uebersetzt*. 1. Text. Jena: Hermann Costenoble.
- Lubotsky, Alexander (2002) *Atharvaveda-Paippalāda. Kāṇḍa five. Text, translation, commentary* (Harvard Oriental Series Opera Minora. Vol. 4, ed. by Michael Witzel). Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University.
- Malamoud Charles (2002). A Body made of Words and Poetic Meters. In: *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions*: 19–28. Oxford: University Press.
- Malinar, Angelika (1996). *Rājavidyā: Das königliche Wissen um Herrschaft und Verzicht*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Malinar, Angelika (2007). *The Bhagavadgītā. Doctrines and contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Olivelle, Patrick (1998). *The Early Upaniṣads. Annotated Text and Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parpola, Asko (1973). *The Literature and Study of the Jaiminiya Samaveda in Retrospect and Prospect* (Studia Orientalia XLIII, 6). Helsinki: The Finnish Oriental Society.
- Patyal, Hukam Ch. (1969). *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*. English Translation with Notes & Introduction. Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD (Faculty of Arts). University of Poona: CASS.
- Pontillo, Tiziana (2016). "Droṇa and Bhiṣma as borderline Cases of Pupils and Masters in the Brāhmaṇical systematization: Some other Traces of the Vrātya Tradition in the *Mahābhārata*." In: Ivan Andrijačić and Sven Sellmer (eds.), Mislav Ježić (Gen Ed.) *Proceedings of the Fifth Dubrovnik International Conference 'On The Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas'* (DICSEP 5), August 11–16, 2008, Dubrovnik, Croatia. Zagreb: Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts & Ibis Grafika: 205–246.
- Pontillo, Tiziana (2019a). "Devayāna and Dyutāna in some supposed proto-indo-āryan I fragments." In: P. Vinod Bhattathiripad & Shrikant Bahulkar (eds.): *Living Tradition of Vedas*. Proceedings of the 6th International Vedic Workshop. New Delhi, India: New Bharatiya Book Corporation: 256–277. [https://www.academia.edu/43359300/Pontillo_T_2019_Devayāna_and_Dyutāna_-_Replacement]
- Pontillo, Tiziana (2019b). "When a tatpuruṣa turns into a *dvandva* in order to meet the 'Brāhmaṇical Reform'. The case-study of *iṣṭāpūrtām*." In: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, XCII, 3–4, 37–63.

- Pontillo, Tiziana (2023). “When the the *sattrins* ‘offer themselves’: the plural agency in Vedic sacrifice”. In: I. Andrijanic, P. Koskikallio, K. Krnic, S. Sellmer, P. Szczurek (eds.), *Felicitation volume in honour of Mislav Ježić on the occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, Zagreb/New Delhi: Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts/Dev Publishers & Distributors, 197–220.
- Renou, Louis (1947). *Les Ecoles Védiques et la Formation du Veda*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Rossi, Paola Maria (2023). “From conquering the sun to conquering heaven: spatio-temporal cosmographies and sovereignty in the Rgvedic and Atharvavedic collections.” In: Elisabetta Poddighe & Tiziana Pontillo (eds.), *Resisting and justifying changes II. Testifying and legitimizing innovation in Indian and Ancient Greek Culture (Nuova Biblioteca di Studi Classici e Orientali 7)*, Pisa: Pisa University Press, 37–87.
- Sakamoto-Goto, Junko (2000). “Das Jenseits und *iṣṭā-pūrtā-* ‘die Wirkung des Geopferten- und Geschenken’ in der vedischen Religion.” In: Bernhard Forssman & Robert Plath (eds.): *Indoarisch, Iranisch und die Indogermanistik*. Wiesbaden: Reichert: 475–490.
- Sarma, E.R. Sreekrishna (1968) “Keśin Dārbhya and the Legend of his Dikṣā.” In: *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 48–49 (Golden Jubilee Volume 1917–1967): 241–245.
- Scheftelowitz, Isidor (1906). See RVKh.
- Selva, Umberto (2019). *The Paippalādasamhitā of the Atharvaveda. A New Critical Edition of the Three ‘New’ Anuvākas of Kāṇḍa 17 with English Translation and Commentary*, PhD Dissertation. Leiden University / University of Turin.
- Shende, N.J. (1985). *The Religion and Philosophy of the Atharvaveda*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
- Slaje, Walter (2017). “Conundrums in Indology. II. Zum achtbeinigen Śarabha.” In: *Indo-Iranian Journal* 60: 331–364.
- Sontakke, N.S. & C.G. Kashikar (1933–1951). See RVS.
- Tull, Hermann W. (1990). *The Vedic Origins of Karma. Cosmos as Man in Ancient Indian Myth and Ritual*. Delhi, Sri Satguru [New York State University Press 1989].
- Vira, Raghu & Lokesh Chandra (1954). See JB.
- Whitney, William D. (1889²). *A Sanskrit Grammar, including both the Classical language, and the older Dialects of Veda and Brahmana*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Whitney, William D & Charles R. Lanman (1905). *Atharva-Veda Saṃhitā*, translated with a critical and exegetical commentary by William D. Whitney. Revised and brought nearer to completion and edited by Charles R. Lanman. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.
- Windisch, Ernst (1888). “*iṣṭāpūrta-*.” In: *Festgruss an Otto von Böhtlingk zum Doktorjubiläum zum Doktor Jubiläum 3 Februar 1888: von seinen Freunden*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Witzel, Michael (1989). “Tracing the Vedic dialects.” In: Colette Caillat (ed.): *Dialectes dans les littératures indo-aryennes* (Publications de l’Institut de Civilisation Indienne 55). Paris: Collège de France et Institut de Civilisation indienne : 97–265.
- Witzel, Michael (2016). “Vedic Śākhās Past, Present, Future.” In: Jan E.M. Houben, Julieta Rotaru & Michael Witzel (eds.): *Proceedings of the Fifth International Vedic Workshop Bucharest 2011*. Cambridge: Department of South Asian Studies, Harvard University/South Asia Books, Columbia, Mo., 1–94.