FÓRIZS LÁSZLÓ

Dīrghatamas[1]

The article contains all the three parts of the paper read at the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, Helsinki, Finland. The complete paper was accepted for publication by the original editors[2] of Vedic Investigations[3], but the first two parts of it were omitted later due to the limitation on the number of pages by the publisher.

Introduction

In his seminal work laying the groundwork for dealing with historical data contained in the Ṛgveda Witzel established a multidimensional grid of reference (Witzel 1995ab). However, his grid does not contain relationships of the different gods, or even more importantly of the pattern of the names of gods sometimes in the very same refrains or other relevant lists of the Ṛgveda that contain the family names he used. The omission is rather strange in the light of his heavy reliance on the "patterns of refrains which act as 'family seals'" for the correlations of grid D (tribes and clans).

In the present paper a twofold generalization of Witzel's approach is proposed. It is based on a completely different look at the affairs of gods (and their people). An important first step was the realization that the traditional, 'pantheon'-like framework (even in its improved form of Witzel 2001: 6) is inadequate for the reconstruction of early Ṛgvedic (and Pre-Ṛgvedic) history in general, and the religio-social environment necessary for our proper understanding of the sacerdotal poetry of Dīrghatamas in particular.

I looked for correlations not only in grids A–D of Witzel, but also in the direction of gods. This new grid is based on the separation of carefully chosen gods, namely *Varuṇa* (*Mitra* and *Aryaman* included), *Agni* (*Vaiśvānara* and *Apāṃ Napāt* separated), the *Aśvins,* and *Indra,* and their relationship with the previously established grids of Witzel. The main goal was to get reliable data and information by the help of which one could start the reconstruction of the historical background of the Dīrghatamas-cycle.

The paper is organized as follows:

Introduction.

Part I: Background. Generalization of Witzel's approach. The proposed new grid.

Part II: Dīrghatamas. His relationship to the grid. Summary of his reconstructed biography.

Part III: A newer and stronger hymn to Agni. Analysis of ṚV 1.143. Preliminary notes. Verse by verse analysis of the hymn. Translation.

Appendix.

This version slightly differs from the original paper. I inserted a short note on the Soma, Pravargya and Agniciti sacrificial rituals on page 153 and an Appendix, which contains the translation of the first three brāhmaṇas from the Agnicayana-part of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (6th kāṇḍa, 1st adhyāya): 1. Creation of the universe, 2. Sacrifice as a [re-]constructing act, 3. Exaltation of Agni; and a note on sacrificial rituals. I have also omitted a few paragraphs, which can be found in Fórizs 2016a.

Part I: Background

A Generalization of Michael Witzel's Approach

In order to lay down the groundwork for dealing with Ṛgvedic history Witzel introduced a carefully chosen multidimensional grids of reference, namely

A) The structure of the Ṛgveda itself, with its relative order of hymns;

B) The relationship of the various tribes and clans to the books of the Ṛgveda;

C) The authors of the hymns: deduced from self-identification of the poets, patterns of refrains ("family seals"), and the *Anukramaṇī*;

D) Geographical features, especially rivers and mountains;

E) Combination of the above information into a grid of places, poets and tribes;

F) Combination of grid E with a chronological grid established on the few available pedigrees of chiefs and poets.

In the present article a twofold generalization of the approach of Witzel is proposed. It is based on a completely different look at the affairs of gods (and their people). Correlations were looked for not only in grids A–D of Witzel, but also in the direction of gods.

This new grid is based on the separation of carefully chosen gods, namely *Varuṇa, Agni* (*Vaiśvānara* and *Apāṃ Napāt* separately), the *Aśvins,* and *Indra,* and their relationship with the previously established grids of Witzel.

Towards a new grid, the work of Hillebrandt, Parpola and Houben

This is not the right place to get involved in all the intricacies of the analysis. Let us start with a short overview of my starting point in establishing the new grid.

Hillebrandt 1927 (especially Appendix II)

First serious attacks on the problem of the relationship of *Varuṇa* the *Paṇis* and *Dāsas/Dasyu*. However, supposing too close relationship (that of a subtribe) between *Dāsa* and *Paṇis*, partly on insufficient Ṛgvedic grounds and Strabo, XI.315, but with a still sound identification of location: along the river Oxus. *Divodāsa* and *Sudās* as *Dāsa* chieftains ("Heavenly *Dāsa*" and "Good *Dāsa*"), Hillebrandt 1990 (1927): 339–353.

Parpola 1988:

Further advancement in the clarifications of the social environment. *Dāsa/Dasyu* and *Paṇi* as *Varuṇa*'s people, inherited presupposition that the relationship *Dāsa/Dasyu* and *Paṇi* is that of a subtribe. The picture is something like this: *Varuṇa* and his *Dāsa/Dasyu* and *Paṇi* are against (implicitly all) the other Vedic gods, but especially against *Indra* and *Agni* (*Vaiśvānara*). "The adoption of *Varuṇa* in the Vedic pantheon took place very early in the history of Vedic religion, during the short stay of the invading Aryans in Bactria around 1800 B.C." (Parpola 1988: 249)

At the ritual level strict correlation of *Indra* and the *Soma/Haoma*-cult is taken for granted, however no Ṛgvedic tribes are mentioned as belonging especially to *Indra*. He is supposed to belong to almost all the tribes since very early times. It is not asked whether this has always been the case or *Indra*'s strong correlation with the other tribes started only at a later time. It is an important question even in Parpola's original context, because his aim was to trace the *Haoma/Indra* people as far back in time (and space) as the Andronovo culture identifying them with the second wave (see also Parpola 1995, with the same overall picture but refinements to incorporate the new archeological evidence on *Soma/Haoma*).

Houben 2000:

The real breakthrough in this direction is Houben I–II 2000. In these articles he succesfully demonstrated that there is at least one more case (in a sense it is the first convincing evidence, if one does not count some earlier conjectures about the *Aśvins*) where a clear separation (more precisely isolation) is really possible. But, of course, the demonstration requires not only the isolation of the god(s), rite(s) and the people(s) from a conglomerate of others, but also a sound reconstruction of a unique social environment for the isolated group.

This is exactly what Houben achieved with the *Atri* clan, the *Aśvins* and their *Pravargya* ritual (Houben I 2000: 17). What makes his seminal paper(s) especially relevant here is not this or that particular findings of him, but the very framework of his enterprise. The first steps are the most difficult – and also the most important – ones.

New proposal for the grid of gods

We can see from the previous examples that a particular god can strongly correlate to a particular clan. I am convinced that we have to make this assumption visible already at the very beginning of our framework, in other words we have to enlarge Witzel's grid in this new direction by a careful generalization of the whole framework. In the following paragraphs I will introduce this new grid.

Parpola's statement – the adoption of *Varuṇa* in the Vedic "pantheon" took place during the short stay of the invading Aryans in Bactria around 1800 B.C. – (implicitly) supposes that almost all the Vedic gods except *Varuṇa* belonged to a conglomerate of non-*Dāsa* tribes lead by *Indra* (and thus came with the second wave). However, a careful analysis of the data provided by the Ṛgveda, especially the lists of god-names, and some early myths did not support this view. It shows a strong correlation (co-existence) of *Varuṇa* (*Mitra* and *Aryaman* even *Bhaga* included) and *Agni* and the *Aśvins* and some other gods.

As a consequence of this it was not *Varuṇa* who found its way later than the other gods to the Vedic "pantheon," but somebody else, namely *Indra*. The finding is based on the analysis of the correlations of lists of god names, and early myths, so there may be a considerable time shift between the real physical contacts among the people belonging to these gods and the joint occurrences of the names of their deities in the hymns of the Ṛgveda. In any case, the real newcomer was *Indra*, and basically only *Indra*.

Distribution of Gods (and their People) in Greater Iran
A few generations before Divodāsa
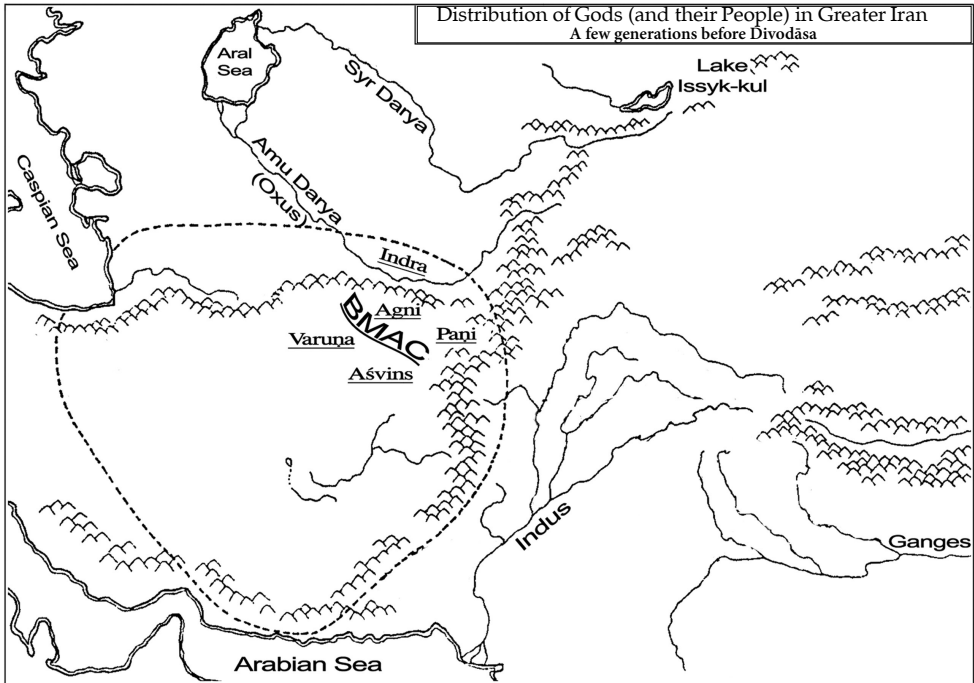
The status quo before the arrival of Indra

Gods (and their tribes) that are part of the status quo in Greater Iran or more strictly speaking of BMAC before the arrival of *Indra* (and his tribe(s)): *Varuṇa* (ancient *Ādityas*, *Mitra*, *Aryaman* included), *Apāṃ Napāt*, *Agni*, *Aśvins* + *Paṇi*'s god(s). Major participant of the status quo: *Varuṇa*. *Agni* is not a major player (yet) – lack of *Agni* in the Mitanni-agreement does not prove this, of course, but consistent with it.

Paṇi – unsubdued local BMAC tribe(s) later on forced to the mountains but still independent due to their skills, weaponry and the terrain. It is important to note that 1.151.9 contradicts Parpola's (and Hillebrandt's) assumption that the Paṇis followed Varuṇa cult: *ná devatvám paṇáyo nǎnaśur maghám* "The divinity/godhead of the Paṇi's (god(s)) cannot reach (be worth of) the riches/wealth (munificence) of yours (Mitra and Varuṇa)." (1.151.9d). Some Dāsa tribes (e.g. predecessors of Śaṃbara) also coexisted with the Paṇis.

End of the status quo after the appearance of Indra

Indra('s people) tried to find way first to some less important clans on the other side of the Oxus (Rasā, cf. ṚV 10.108, Hillebrandt 1990 (1927): 342 & 344, Parpola 1988: 215 note 161) and apparently they found such tribes among the followers of Agni.

Getting Agni first on his side Indra defeated the Paṇis. After this victory Indra became strong enough to defeat (with his allies) some of the Āyu and Dāsa tribes. As a consequence of the fightings the status quo definitely collapsed and a considerable rearrangement took place among the clans. Some of the defeated tribes made a new agreement with Indra. Among them was not only the Bharadvājas, the followers of Agni Vaiśvānara, but also some of the Dāsas, e.g. Divodāsa, the Heavenly Dāsa, and his tribes.

On the other hand some Dāsa tribes (e.g. Śaṃbara) had resisted Indra to the end, i.e. they fought against Indra, then against Indra and Agni, and finally against Indra, Agni and those Dāsa tribes who went over to the other side (i.e. joined to Indra as the people of Divodāsa), and finally, they collapsed. The result of this turmoil was that some tribes while escaping/chasing each other broke through the passes and found themselves in the subcontinent, but this part of the story has already been covered by Witzel.

Gods, tribes and sacrificial rituals at the time of Dīrghatamas (a proposal)

Book	Tribe	(Main) Ritual	(Main) God
VI	*Dāsa*	Different pattern	*Varuṇa*
	Paṇi	Foreign to all Vedic tribes	Unknown BMAC-god(s)
VI	*Bharadvāja*	*Agni* cult	*Agni* (*Vaiśvānara*)
V	*Atri*	(Proto-)*Pravargya*	*Aśvins*
II I	(Some) *Āyu* (tribes), *Dīrghatamas*	(Proto-)*Agni-citi*	*Agni* (*Apāṃ Napāt*)
III	(Ancestors of)*Viśvāmitra*	*Soma*, (Proto-)*Aśvamedha*	*Indra*

Note on the Soma, Pravargya and Agniciti sacrificial rituals

The well known Agnicayana sacrificial ritual is a result of the merging of three main rituals: the Soma-, the Pravargya- and a kind of an altar-constructing ritual, 'Agniciti', about which only a limited amount of information is available.[4]

The correct timing of the sacrificial ritual is very important. It requires adequate knowledge of how to measure time. Originally Vedic sacrificial rituals were organised around the periodic motion of the Moon.[5] The Soma-ritual was originally lunar, while the Pravargya and the Agnicayana (and presumably the Agniciti) have a solar character, and contain elements that correspond to the ritual construction of the year.[6]

Note on the people of Indra

The question arises naturally: who were the earliest people of Indra according to the evidence found in the R̥gveda. Interestingly enough there is no easy answer to this question. The only candidate is Savya, a poet with a cycle of 7 hymns praising exclusively Indra (an unparralleled custom) (R̥V 1.51–57). His cycle is located at the end – or, if we count the additions from inside, at the very beginning – of the second phase of the enlargement of the collection.

If we want some more people the only other candidates are Viśvāmitra's predecessors. The strange thing is that neither the R̥gveda nor the later sources provide a clear origin in his case, he appeared out of nowhere. Only a kind of spiritual adoption is traceable in R̥V 3.62.16–18.

Part II: Dīrghatamas (Long Darkness)

A group of 25 hymns in the present arrangement of the Śākalya-recension is attributed traditionally (by the *Anukramaṇī*) to Dīrghatamas. He is called Māmateya in four different hymns of the R̥gveda (three of which, 1.147.3, 1.152.6, 1.158.6, are probably self references) and once in a hymn of the Vāmadeva's (4.4.13). In addition to this he is also called Aucathya patronymically twice in a controversial biographical hymn describing in vivid terms the dramatic end of his long and fruitful life (1.158.1)

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4 Both the Pravargya and the Agniciti (as well as the Agnicayana) were foreign to the original Vedic sacrificial ritual scheme.
5 Not independently of the fact that the female reproductive cycle follows the same rythm.
6 The emergence of the Agnicayana as a new solemn (*śrauta*) sacrificial ritual and the new role of the Sun led to the introduction of the solar year and to an unexpected discovery. Vedic ritualists had to realize that there were clear discrepancies between the lunar and the solar year. Re-establishing divine order requires human intervention. The constructive sacrificial rituals and the cosmogonic myths behind them could serve – among other things – as a mean to recreate divine harmony (and to stabilize the new 'calendar').

10 hymns to Agni (without the Āprī-hymn, ṚV 1.142)	140. Agni; altar (*vedi*); [sacrificial] ritual and natural fire; kindling sticks as mothers of fire; Manu; Āyu; 141. Agni; installation of the ritual fires; possible reference to the old and new *Āhavanīya*; hotṛ, Varuṇa; Mitra; Aryaman; Bhaga; Mātariśvan; soma; 143. Agni/Apā́ṃ Nápāt; hotṛ; Agni begets himself in highest heaven (*sá jáyamānaḥ paramé víomani*); Mātariśvan; Bhṛgus; Varuṇa; Vasus; Maruts; Ṛta; Agni/[firmly standing] Iṣṭi (=[Fire]Altar); 144. Agni; production of the fire with two churning sticks; Bhaga; Manu; 145. Agni, wild beast in the waters (*mṛgás ápi[y]as*); 146. Agni, three headed, seven reined (*trimurdhā́nas sapta-raśmis*); 147. Agni; Āyu; blind son of Mamatā (*māmateyás andhás*, self reference of the poet); melody [harmony] of Ṛta (*ṛtásya sā́man*); 148. Mātariśvan; hotā, all the gods; sons of Manu; 149. the lord of the house (*pátir dán*); Agni, *pur*, *armiṇī* (cf. *Narmiṇī?* in Witzel II 1995: 252); *Ātman*; [the best] hotā in the seat of the waters (*hótā [yájiṣṭho] apā́ṃ sadhásthe*); 150. Agni. Note that Indra does not occur in any one of them.
3 hymns to *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*	151. Agni; Mitra; Varuṇa, Asura; Ṛta; Paṇis; the cows; soma preparation; soma-offerer (*somín*); 152. Mitra, Varuṇa and Aditi; the [dear] ordinance of Mitra and Varuṇa ([*priyám*] *mitrásya váruṇasya dhā́ma); the* son of Mamatā (*māmateyás*) (= Dīrghátamas); 153. Agni; Mitra; Varuṇa and Aditi; adhvaryu and hotṛ priests; soma; goddess Waters (*ā́pas devī́s*); the lord of the house (*pátir dán*).
3 hymns to *Viṣṇu*	154. Viṣṇu and his heroic deeds; Earth and Heaven; Viṣṇu and Indra ['you two' (*vām*) in verse 6]; 155. Viṣṇu and Indra; Kṛśānu; 156. Viṣṇu; Mitra; King Varuṇa, Aśvins, Maruts; Indra; the Ārya.
2 hymns to the *Aśvins*	157. Agni; Uṣas; Aśvins; Savitṛ; 158. Dīrghatamas as son of Ucathya; Dīrghatamas as son of Mamatā; piled-up [Agni]; [unknown] sacrificial ritual leading to the strange death of the poet (probably some kind of an Agniciti or pravargya [or both]); Vasus; Rudra; Aśvins; son of Tugra; Traitana, the Dāsa (slayer of the poet).
2 hymns to Heaven and Earth	159–160. Heaven and Earth; paradox of mutual creation or co-emergence, 159. 3[–4]: „their sons ... begot the two mothers" (*té sūnávaḥ ... jajñur mātárā*), 160. [3–]4: „[the son of the two fathers ...] who begat the two world-halves" (*putráḥ pitaróḥ... yó jajā́na ródasī*); 159. 5ab: Savitṛ (startling resemblance to the *gāyatrī-mantra*).

1 hymn to Ṛbhu	161 Ṛbhu; Soma-ritual; Agni; Sons of Sudhanvan; horse; chariot; Tvaṣṭṛ; soma-pressing; Indra; Aśvins; Bṛhaspati; Ṛbhu, Vibhvan and Vāja; third pressing; [house of] Agohya; Maruts; Varuṇa.
	Note the occurrence of Indra in the hymn (Dīrghatamas' authorship is generally accepted[5]).
1 hymn is a Praise to the Horse	162. Mitra; Varuṇa; Aryaman; Āyu; Indra, the lord of the Ṛbhus; Maruts; Pūṣan; Tvaṣṭṛ; [sons of] Manu; Horse sacrifice (a [simpler] kind of the Aśvamedha); different kinds of priests: hótṛ; adhvaryú; *ávayaḥ* (one who expiates?); agnimindhá; *grāvagrābha* (one who handles the Soma stones); *śaṃstṛ* (one who recites [=Praśāstṛ]); [Aśvins]; Aditi.
	Note that Indra occurs in the hymn (though Oldenberg was suspicious about the authorship of Dīrghatamas).
1 hymn, Immolation of a horse	163. Horse sacrifice; steed (*arvan*); falcon (*śyenā́*); antelope (*hariṇâ*); Trita; Yama; Indra; Gandharva; Vasus; the steed as Yama, as Āditya, as Trita, as appearing like Varuṇa; herdsmen of Truth (*ṛtásya … gopā́ḥ*); *ātman*; in the track of the cow (*padé góḥ*); Agni ('devourer of plants [*óṣadhi*]'); Heaven and Earth ('father and mother,' *pitṛ mātṛ ca*).
	Note that Indra occurs in the hymn (but Oldenberg was suspicious about the authorship).
1 hymn Āprī-song	142. It is inserted among the Agni-hymns and Indra occurs in it (but it is not generally accepted as the hymn of Dīrghatamas).
1 Riddle-hymn	164. Extremely rich in data, it would require a separate paper to handle all of them. Let me mention only two important themes here. Linear vs. mutual creation [re-creation]: 'who has seen the first one as he is being born?' (verse 4), 'who will proclaim this here: from whence has divine thought/mind been born?'] (verse 18); reconciliation of Varuṇa, Indra and Agni: 'though it is One, inspired poets speak of it in many ways.' (verse 46).
	Indra occurs in it, Oldenberg was suspicious about the authorship of Dīrghatamas.

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7 I am not convinced. See, for example the presence of such new grammatical formations as the absolutives in *-tvā, -tvī* (based on the archaic suffix –tu, Kuiper 1967) that occurs only in 1.161, *kṛtvī,* (3d) and *yuktvā́* (7d). (See also Tikkanen 1987).

Dīrghatamas-cycle: ṚV 1.140–164

His family

Dīrghatamas and Kakṣīvat appear together in an Aśvin-hymn that is attributed traditionally to Śaśakarṇa (or as Geldner suggested to Vatsa) (ṚV 8.9.10). Kakṣīvat is traditionally called Kakṣīvat Auśija, the son of Uśij, deriving the name from Uśij, fem., i.e. the wife of Dīrghatamas.

The clear evidence of a matronymic lineage has caused endless frustration among scholars. Part of the problem is the fact that at the time and geographical location of the *Śrautasūtras*, paternal lineage was a strict rule. It seems quite understandable that in the *Pravara* lists *auśija* is not derived from *uśij* (fem.), but from *uśija* (masc.!). It is worth noting that the Sarvānukramaṇī of Katyāyana tries to avoid this mess (if not disgrace by contamporaneous standards) by calling him simply *kakṣīvān dairghatamasa uśikprasūtaḥ*. Yet, quite remarkably, one tradition (ŚŚS) has not followed the paternal derivation.

I think that a careful analysis of the situation leads to the conclusion that instead of trying to explain away (destroy) the evidence we should take the "strange" traditional view seriously. From the point of view of pure statistics, singular occurrences are always very problematic. However, do not forget that the *śruti* "texts" have been preserved orally with unprecedented accuracy by the Vedic Schools, and so can be treated as equivalents of inscriptions. (Witzel I 1995).

The usual observation (cf. e.g. Tokunaga 1997: 209) that in the light of the above mentioned rule of paternal lineage it is, at least, very strange that an epithet of a seer is derived from the name of his mother, not to mention, of a slave-woman is, in fact strengthens the evidence. Without a real historical basis such a "disgraceful" name should have had to disappear long ago.

As one can see there is even a bonus here: an indirect, but clear, indication that in the context of our Ṛgvedic hymn(s) it is very unlikely that *dāsa* means "slave." In fact this meaning is questionable throughout the Ṛgveda as Hillebrandt observed long ago. Even in ṚV 7.86.7 the late meaning comes probably only as a connotation presented by the context or, maybe as a pun if the "slave" meaning has already stabilized its position in the language by the time of *Vasiṣṭha*: *áraṃ dāsó ná mīḷhúṣe karāṇi* "Readily to make oblation as a *Dāsa* to the generous Lord (*Varuṇa*)…"

Even more imortantly the matronymic lineage is consistent with the strong influence of the *Dāsa* heritage on the sacerdotal poetry of *Dīrghatamas* and on some of the traceable events of his life.

Summary of the reconstructed biographical data

Family of Dīrghatamas

Father	Mother	Wife	Son
Ucathya	*Mamatā*	*Uśij*	*Kakṣīvat*

Dīrghatamas

God	Clan	Ritual	Occupation
Apāṃ Napāt/ Agni	*Āyu*	*Agni-citi*	*Poet priest*

Uśij

God	Tribe	Ritual	Occupation
Varuṇa	*Dāsa*	*Different pattern*	*Wife*

Location[8]

West, close to BMAC.

Additional information concerning Dīrghatamas

Physical impairment	Age at death	Circumstances of death	Name of his killer
possibly blind	ca. 50–60 years old in the 10th yuga	Unusual death during a ritual	Traitana (Dāsa)

Comment on the age of Dīrghatamas at his death[9]

On the possible origin of the term yuga see Falk 2008. According to him *yuga* originally meant a pair of *parivatsara* and *saṃvatsara* years (378 days + 354 days = 738 days), which is nothing else than two solar years (2 x 366 days).[10] It is worth noting that from the very beginning Indian ritualists used the 360 days long *sāvana* year instead of the 366 days long solar year.

> The expansion towards the widespread and well-known 5-year yuga of the Vedāṅgajyotiṣa [VJ] tradition may have come through the wish to include the true *sāvana* year of 360 days, which is absent in the simpler scheme. In a 5-year yuga one *saṃvatsara* (354 days), one *parivatsara* (378 days), two *sāvana* years (360, 360) and again one *parivatsara* (378) add up to exactly 1830 days, the number of days in a yuga according to the VJ and related tradition. (Falk 2008: 112.)

Comment on the blindness of Dīrghatamas

In spite of the fact that it seems almost incomprehensible to us to accept the possibility that a poet with such a clear vision and deep insight could really be blind, ṚV 1.147.3 poses a serious problem. It clearly refers to him as a blind man. We have to consider the physical blindness of the great ṛṣi until someone decisively destroys the evidence of verse 3. On the other hand it is also true that later sources confused the evidence considerably by stating that he had been blind throughout all of his long life since his strange/miraculous birth

8 Early location, at the time of ṚV 1.143.
9 In the original paper I used a 10-year yuga which gave ca. 90–100 years of age for the poet.
10 Accepting this early system, one gets too young an age for the death of the poet (between 18 and 20 years of age).

Comment on 1.149.3

Witzel's suggestion *Nármiṇī* is questionable. He uses this data in his combined grid with a question mark. The problem of 1.149.3 is an old one.

> *ā́ yáḥ púraṃ ná ármiṇīm ā́dīded*
> *átyaḥ kavír nabhaníyo ná árvā |*
> *sū́ro ná rurukvā́ñ chatáātmā || 3.*

Geldner 1951: 207 translates "Burg *Nārmiṇī*." However, for the meaning of *pur* one has to consult Rau 1976 (see also Parpola 1988). Rau 1976: "The evidence …does not fit the cities of the Indus civilization. It rather suggests the existence of numerous, frequently concentric, mud or stone ramparts of round or oval ground-plan, – many times hastily erected – and re-inforced by wooden defences, enclosing thatched timber sheds to serve at best as temporary homes but more often to shelter men and their cattle in times of war, water supply and provisions being, therefore, of vital importance." (Cf. also Parpola 1988: 211–217.)

According to Mayrhoffer: "*nā́rmiṇī-*, fem, name (or attrib.) of a *pur* (ṚV 1.149.3.), interpretation is uncertain, *nā́r°* 'nicht trümmerhaft' (*na°* II.1. and *árma*)."

In my view interpreting *ná* as a negative particle is problematic – among other things – because in this case *púraṃ ná ármiṇīm* would become *púraṃ nā́rmiṇīm* in speech; but if we interpret it as a particle of comparison, the problem disappears.

> "*Ná* is used in V. (very commonly in ṚV., comparatively rarely in AV., but never in B.) as a particle of comparison, exactly like *iva* as, like. This *ná*, being in sense closely connected with the preceding word, never coalesces in pronunciation (though it does in written Sandhi) with a following vowel, whereas *ná* generally does. This *ná* always follows the word of comparison to which it belongs; or if the simile consists several words, the *ná* generally follows the first word, less commonly the second." (Macdonell 1975 (1916): 236)

Interestingly enough the "metrically reconstructed" Holland–Van Nooten text does not even mention the problem, while Oldenberg (1897: 177) does:

> "We do not know what *nā́rmiṇī* is. Possibly in this word two words, *ná ármiṇī*, are contained, so that the particle *ná* would be repeated in each of the three *Pādas*. The translation would then be: 'he who lighted up the *ármiṇī* (?) like a stronghold.'"

Witzel probably realized the problem, because in his combined grid he gave *Nármiṇī?* (instead of *Nā́rmiṇī*, or is it only a misprint?). In any case, his suggestion also violates the metric. In fact he does not really know what to do with the word.

Though Oldenberg did not give a solution for the word *ármiṇī*, and we do not agree with him in the details of his translation, the interpretation of *ná* as a particle of comparison (even if it was only a hypothetical suggestion) goes beyond all the other tentative solutions (including Witzel's).

My solution is the following:

1.) In spite of the Holland–Van Nooten text the first line is: *ā́ yáḥ púraṃ ná ármiṇīm ā́dīded.*

2.) In the comparison *pur* means a (possibly fortified) ceremonial centre (a kind of a sanctuary rather than a fort, the emphasis is on the sacred character of the place rather than on its fortified nature). (This is consistent with both the new archeological data found at the BMAC settlement in the oasis of Dashly-3 in northern Afghanistan and with the *Agnicayana* part of the Śatapatha Brāhmana, ŚB 6.3.3.24–25.)

3.) According to our reading the problem of *ármiṇī* is connected with the interpretation of *armaká* (ṚV 1.133.3) and *árma* (TS, TB+). I think the most probable meaning for *ármiṇī* (as well as *armaká*) is "the holed one," i.e. "a holed (fire) place made of mud/clay." (The new innovations for the Vedic fire places (*āhavanīya*, …) are still waiting for their invention. Cf. Mayrhoffer: "*árma*- m. (TS, TB +), dazu *armaká*- m. (ṚV [1.133.3]+; s. Hoffm, ZDMG 110 [1960] 68 Anm. 2 = HoffmA 124 Anm. 2): wohl 'Brunnen' (Bedeutungsbestimmung nach K. T. Schmidt, StIdgW 290ff.). – Wenn richtig bestimmt, dann identisch mit toch. B *ālme* 'Brunnen' (und Flußnamen Europas wie *Almus*, *Alma* usw.) < idg. *$h_2$el-mo-*; dazu vĕddhiert *$h_2{}^3$l-mo-* in toch. B *yolme* 'Teich,' Schmidt, a.a.O.)

4.) The holed one (and the sacred place) is illuminated by the hundredfold *ātman* (*sū́ro ná rurukvā́ñ chatáātmā*) (and not set aflamed /set fire by it/him).

So the translation is:

"Who illuminates the holed one like a sanctuary/fort, The sage (seer, *kaví*) runs like a neighing steed, The hundredfold *ātman* shines like the Sun."

Comment on the death of Dīrghatamas[11]

The following remarks are based on my systematic re-evaluation of the long disputed hymn, ṚV 1.158. Since I will discuss the intricacies of this important hymn in another paper, let me quote only the most relevant part of my analysis concerning ṚV 1.158.4–5. The ritual context of the whole poem is undeniable. In fact, we are in the middle of a complex ritual and then we can hear:

> úpastutir aucathiyám uruṣyen
> má mā́m imé patatríṇī ví dugdhām |
> má mā́m édho dáśatayaś citó dhāk
> prá yád vām baddhás tmáni khā́dati kṣā́m || 4.

The situation is really extraordinary. Something went wrong with the sacrifice. The tight victim was thrown into the water too early, his head had not been severed yet. The vivid description of the situation is clearly the climax of the drama.

The author shows the dramatic situation from two angles, first from the inside, from the inner perspective of the victim, 4a–c and especially 5a: *ná mā garan nadíyo mātṛ́tamā*, "Let not the most maternal streams swallow me."

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11 I have already argued in my 1997 lecture at the 35th ICANAS conference that ṚV 1.158 describes – contrary to the Brihaddevatā, and Geldner, Renou, Elizarenkova (the line can be continued) – the actual killing of Dīrghatamas during a strange sacrificial ritual. (Fórizs 1997; Fórizs 2006; Fórizs 2016b[2003].)

Then from the outside, from the perspective of the narrator (5a–c): *dāsá yád īṃ súsamub-dham avádhuḥ*, "The *Dāsas* throw the well(/strongly)-fastened (*Dīrghatamas*) in (the water)," but *Traitana*, the *Dāsa* went after him into the water (this is the real message of the long disputed *ápi gdha* at the end of 5d) and finished the job:

> *śíro yád asya traitanó vitákṣat*
> *svayáṃ dāsá úro áṃsāv ápi gdha*

"(But) to cleave his head *Traitana*, the *Dāsa*, submerged himself till (the water reached) his chest and shoulders."

Later versions of the same story (Mbh 1.104.23, BD) tell it sometimes differently (especially in some of the preserved manuscripts of BD 4.11–23), however these are not only very late sources, but also all of them depend on the (mis)interpretation of the original Ṛgvedic story. Nevertheless, they all show that the next generations loved the poet and hold him in high esteem. (Fórizs 1997, Tokunaga 1997.)

Part III: A newer and stronger hymn to Agni.

Translation and analysis of ṚV 1.143.

Since this part of the paper has been published by Motilal Banarsidass[12], I will present here only some of the main points.

Preliminary remarks

Vedic scholars have been frustrated about the hymn, and no consensus on its significance and meaning has been reached. It is a laudation of Agni, Apāṃ Napāt and Iṣṭi. I will show that the intertwining imagery of the hymn gives Agni a unique cosmological significance unparalleled in contemporary sacerdotal poetry.

Some principles concerning the translation

The following principles concerning the translation may seem trivial but are important:

1) A solution that does not violate the grammar is preferable to a solution that does. For example, a nominative is not an accusative, even if it occurs in a difficult Vedic passage. Cf. Sāyaṇa's interpretation of ṚV 1.143.3.

2) A solution that does not misuse the vocabulary (e.g., by introducing ad hoc meanings) is preferable to a solution that does. Cf. Geldner's 'Elefant' in ṚV 1.143.7.

3) A solution that does not replace a whole word by another one in order to get the 'required' meaning is preferable to a solution that does. Cf. Ludwig's replacement of *ajárāḥ* by *amárāḥ* in ṚV 1.143.3.

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12 Fórizs 2016.

4) A solution that does not modify the grammatical form of a word forcefully to get a 'more desirable' form (e.g., a word with a different ending) is preferable to a solution that does. Cf. the replacement of *aktúr* (masc. sing. nom.) by *aktū́n* (masc. pl. acc.) in ṚV 1.143.3 by Oldenberg and later on by Geldner, Mylius, etc. (Renou and Elizarenkova tried to avoid this kind of abuse in two different ways.)

5) A solution that does not violate the metre is preferable to a solution that does. Cf. ṚV 1.149.3 *ā́ yáḥ púraṃ nā́rmiṇīm ádīded* in the metrically restored (!) edition of van Nooten and Holland (1994: 91).

6) A solution that does not destroy (alter) the integrity of the original text is preferable to a solution that does. Cf. The insertion of the refrain *nábhantām anyaké same* in ṚV 8.41 by the redactors. Nevertheless, such an early intrusion can provide us useful information.

[7] A profound solution is preferable to a simplistic one.]

Analysis of the hymn

Let us start the analysis with an important observation: the hymn differs from the usual patterns of Ṛgvedic poetry with regard to its poet (his metronymic name/maternal lineage)[13], its theme (Apāṃ Napāt, iṣṭi, anointment of the cosmic/creative Agni), and its poetic form (application of pure rhymes in 1ab, 1cd, 2ab, *agnáye – bhare, priyó – ṛtvíyaḥ, víomani – mātaríśvane*). The hymn is Dīrghatamas' newer and stronger vision to Agni/Apāṃ Napāt:

> "I bring forward a stronger and newer vision (praise) to Agni, a hymn of Vāc to the son of strength; [he is] Apāṃ Napāt, the beloved hotā, who together with the Vasus has sat down on the Earth observing the appointed time." (ṚV 1.143.1.)

...

The Cosmic, Creative Role of Apāṃ Napāt

Although Findly talks about ṚV 2.35 in great detail in her paper (Findly 1979), she omits three important verses of this hymn. The first omitted verse[14] clearly states:

> "Apāṃ Napāt, the true [Lord][15], has with his Asuric power (*asuríyasya mahnā́*) created all the creatures." (2.35.2.cd)

Remarkably enough, in a late Avestan text we find a passage that strengthens this evidence:

> "… We worship the great lord … *Apąm napå* …, the strong one, … who created men …, the god who dwells in the waters, and who is the first to hear when he is worshipped." (Yašt 19.51, transl. Hillebrandt 1980.)

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13 Dīrghatamas is called Māmateya in four different hymns of the Ṛgveda. ṚV 1.147.3 and 1.152.6 are self-references. One reference, 4.4.13, is in a hymn of the Vāmadevas. In addition, in a controversial biographical hymn that vividly describes the dramatic end of his long and fruitful life, Dīrghatamas is called not only by his metronym Māmateya (1.158.6), but also twice by his patronym Aucathya (1.158.1).

14 ṚV 2.35.2 *apā́ṃ nápād asuríyasya mahnā́ víśvāni aryó bhúvanā jajāna.*

15 '*aryó*' of course, refers to the creator god and not to the creatures. (Contrary to this, e.g., O'Flaherty 1981: 105.)

Of course, such a creative activity and cosmological role is incompatible with the Avestan fire cult, even if the name, *Apạm napå̊*, is Avestan. Taking into account the fact that Yašt 19 belongs to the later part of Avestan texts (Witzel 2001: 4), the situation is remarkable. Attributing the creation of men to a subordinate Yazata, *Apạm napå̊*, is in clear conflict with the usual Zoroastrian concepts of creation.[16]

In view of the Iranian evidence the omission of the verse 2.35.2 by Findly is even more problematic. Findly should have analyzed the evidence instead of covering up the tracks. The second omitted verse ṚV 2.35.12[17] leads us to another important aspect of Apāṃ Napāt that Findly's analysis failed to touch: the concrete, earthly form of the god:

> "I rub its back, I would like to bestow it[18] with the holed ['fireplaces'] and food, and praise it with stanzas."[19]

To summarize: Findly's paper seems to be a well balanced analysis but there are at least two aspects of Apāṃ Napāt it fails to do justice to, namely, (1) its cosmic, creative role and (2) its concrete earthly form. The lack of these themes in the Indo-European heritage does not mean that these are negligible or unimportant aspects of the Apāṃ Napāt complex. It can only be interpreted as a sign that they came from another background.

A Newer and Stronger Vision to Agni

Analysis of the Available Renderings of ṚV 1.143.3

ṚV 1.143.3 has caused endless frustration among scholars since the time of Sāyaṇa. No sound interpretation has been achieved yet.

Sāyaṇa takes *tveṣāḥ* in the sense of *dīptayaḥ* ('*asya stūyamānasyāgneḥ tveṣā dīptayaḥ*') and construes *asyá tveṣå̊ ajárāḥ* as a clause by itself. According to him, *bhānávaḥ* is the subject of the next clause; *susaṃdṛ́śaḥ* and *sudyútaḥ* are nominative plurals agreeing with *bhānávaḥ* and forming the predicate of the clause; *suprátīkasya* is in construction with *asya*. In explaining the second line Sāyaṇa 'takes refuge in the absurdity' that the nominative perhaps stands here for the accusative (cf. Peterson 1888: 89–91 for this and the next three paragraphs.)

Roth takes *bhå̊tvakṣasaḥ* (which occurs only here in the Ṛgveda) as a genitive and apparently (dictionary under ati) takes it with *sindhavaḥ*. He explains that form as an anomalous genitive (*sindhavaḥ = sindhvaḥ = sindhoḥ*). He takes ati to be a preposition governing the genitive in the sense of 'over,' 'on the surface of.' Accordingly, the translation in the Siebenzig Lieder is 'Like the shimmer which floats on the surface of the stream.'

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16 Hillebrandt was among the first scholars who realized the problem.
17 ṚV 2.35.12 *asmaí bahūnā́m avamā́ya sákhye yajñaír vidhema námasā havírbhiḥ | sáṃ sā́nu mā́rjmi dídhiṣāmi bílmair dā́dhāmi ánnaiḥ pári vanda ṛgbhíḥ ||*
18 The demonstrative, of course, refers to Apāṃ Napāt, but in this case to its visible, touchable, concrete earthly form (referred to by 'it' instead of 'him').
19 The third verse omitted by Findly, ṚV 2.35.15, also refers to an important aspect of Apāṃ Napāt shared by the Ṛgveda and the Iranian myth, namely the contest theme. However, it is fair to say that Findly paid due attention to this aspect of the Apāṃ Napāt complex in her analysis.

Ludwig takes *bhā́tvakṣasaḥ* with *agneḥ* "who has light for his strength" and takes *atyaktuḥ* to mean 'all night through.' He takes *ajarā́ḥ* in both places as an adjective and avoids the apparent tautology by changing the second *ajárāḥ* to *amárāḥ*. In this way, Agni resembles the rivers as far as he, like them, is in constant motion day and night.

Grassmann follows Sāyana in taking *bhā́tvakṣasaḥ* and *síndhavaḥ* as nominative plurals. He takes ati as an adverb with rejante. For *síndhavaḥ* in the sense of "streams of light" he instances 1.52.14. *síndhave rájasaḥ* as a somewhat similar metaphor. He translates the sentence as

> "Die Flammenströme flimmern, wie das Tageslicht, die lichtgewalt'gen, nimmer schlummernd, ewig jung." "The flame-streams shine like the daylight (*áti aktúr*), full of light, never slumbering, ever young." (Grassmann 1876: 148.)

Oldenberg proposes: "Probably we should read *áti aktū́n*; comp. 6.4.5. *áti eti aktū́n*." (Oldenberg 1897: 158.)

> "His flames are fierce; never ageing are the flames of him who is beautiful to behold, whose face is beautiful, whose splendour is beautiful. The never sleeping, never ageing (rays) of Agni whose power is light, roll forward like streams across the nights(?)." (Oldenberg 1897: 157.)

It seems straightforward, but at the price of abusing the (orally transmitted) text. Soon we will see how much this 'little change' costs.

Geldner: "...zittern die Nacht über gleich dem Farbenspiel der Flüsse" (Geldner 1951: 201) (With the same abuse of the original.)

Mylius (along with the same lines as Geldner and Oldenberg):

> "Seine funkelnden, nicht alternden, seine Strahlen des schönen Anblick gewährenden, schönantlitzigen, schön leuchtenden, leuchtkräftigen Agni bewegen sich zitternd die Nacht über, wie die Flüsse nicht schlummernd, nicht alternd." (Mylius 1978: 16)

Renou:

> "*aktú* «Farbenspiel» de Gld. est tentant, mais non confirmé (Atkins JAOS. 70 p. 35 proposait («flot»); peut-être un ancien *aktū́n ná síndhavaḥ* (*aktū́n* en liaison avec *áti* comme 1.36.16, 6.4.5) a-t-il été remplacé par *aktúḥ* sous l'influence du type *sindhur ná kṣódaḥ*."[20]

Renou's effort is quite remarkable, but it is evident that he had difficulty in grasping the meaning of the verse:

> "Ses (flammes) étincelantes, à l'abri de vieillir, les rayons de ce (dieu) beau à contempler, au beau visage, au bel éclat, / vigoureux en brillance, tremblent par delà (les nuits) comme la surface-ointe (des) fleuves, (ses rayons) exempts de sommeil, exempts de vieillir."

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20 'The 'Farbenspiel' of Geldner (for *aktú*) is tempting but it is not confirmed (Atkins JAOS. 70 p. 35 proposed «flot», 'wave'); perhaps an ancient *aktū́n ná síndhavo* (*aktū́n* in connection with *áti* as 1.36.16, 6.4.5). A replacement of *aktúḥ* with *aktū́n* under the influence of the type *sindhúr ná kṣódaḥ*." (Renou 1964: 34–35)

Let us have a look at the second (and most interesting) part of his rendering:

> "les rayons... tremblent par delà (<u>les nuits</u>) tremble beyond comme la surface-ointe (<u>des</u>) fleuves – His (flames) tremble beyond (<u>the nights</u>) as the surface-ointment (<u>of</u>) the streams."

He is almost there, but the final conclusion is still much ado about (almost) nothing. Although he interprets *aktú* as 'ointment/anointing,' he could not escape from the bondage of the preconceptions of his predecessors; even <u>the nights</u> came back in the backdoor of the first <u>brackets</u>; and, what is (grammatically) worse, Roth's spirit also appeared in the coat of the second brackets.

In fact, Oldenberg was one of the first scholars who argued that *aktú* could also mean 'ointment' in the Ṛgveda. Cf. Index of Words in Oldenberg 1897 (*aktú*, night, 1.36.16, 68.1, 94.5; 2.10.3; 3.7.6; 4.10.5; *áti aktúḥ* (conj. *áti aktū́n*), 1.143.3; *aktú*, ointment: *aktúbhih ajyate*, 3.17.11. In the note to 3.17.11 he said: "I do not believe that the existence of a Vedic word *aktú*, 'ointment,' should be denied." Nevertheless, he did not think this possibility over, or what is more probable, he did try, but failed.

Elizarenkova: She is also almost there (in the first line, at least): "Его искрящиеся нестареющие (языки пламени), его лучи" — But then she falls into the same kind of trap as all of her predecessors:

> "(У этого) прекрасного видом (бога) с прекрасным обликом, с яркой вспышкой, / Сильные (своим) блеском (лучи), трепещут, словно реки / Сквозь ночь, о Агни, недремлющие, нестареющие." (Elizarenkova 1989: 182)

Even if she quotes the original in Note 3c: …трепещут, словно реки сквозь ночь (*áty aktúr ná síndhavo*)… (Elizarenkova 1989: 633) the problem is still there: The preposition (*áti*) requires an accusative! Anyway, she is honest like professor Peterson (who left this verse untranslated in his English rendering of the poem): "Сравнение остается неясным. Предлагались разные эмендации текста, но ни одна из них не очевидна."[21] It seems to me that Elizarenkova, while struggling towards the understanding of the structure and meaning of the complex imagery of the verse, relied too much on the simplistic approach of her predecessors.

The strange thing is that the language of this particular hymn is not that difficult. The same holds true for the majority of the hymns of the whole Dīrghatamas cycle. A clear exception is, for example, ṚV 1.158; but in this case the authorship of Dīrghatamas is more than questionable. As a matter of fact, almost all the obscurities concerning the grammar and the meaning of the words have already been removed by the above mentioned scholars. However, no proper understanding of the complex imagery of the poem has been achieved yet. It is the overall picture, the integrity of the vision that is lost. In order to solve the difficulties, one has to understand not only the grammar and the proper meaning of the words, but also the intertwining images and the overall context of the poem. The (probably) unconscious application of pure rhymes in ṚV 1.143.1ab, 1cd, 2ab (*agnáye – bhare, priyó – ṛtvíyaḥ, víomani – mātaríśvane*) is in agreement with the importance of the poet's vision about the emergence of a newer and stronger Agni. The poetical form of the hymn reflects the intensity of the poet's penetration into the depth of the mistery of creation.

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21 'The simile seems to be unclear. Many emendations of the text have been suggested, but no one of them is obvious/clear."

My solution of ṚV 1.143.3

The first line is a nominal sentence; the subject is put at the end of the phrase as in the case of Pāṇinean Sanskrit: *asyá tveṣā́ ajárā asyá bhānávaḥ* "His rays are his unaging (ceaseless, not decaying) stimulations / incitements." The second line can also be interpreted as a nominal sentence: *susaṃdṛ́śaḥ suprátīkasya sudyútaḥ* "The splendour(s) (or light-rays) of 'the one with a beautiful face' are pleasing ('good to look at')." Having been completely freed from the preconceptions of the predecessors, the only obstacle to the interpretation of the last two lines is *bhā́tvakṣasaḥ*. I removed that obstacle in the simplest (but not simplistic!) possible way: *bhā́tvakṣas* = *bhā́*, light + *tvakṣas*, 'maker' ('somebody who makes sg with his hands', e.g. 'a carpenter'), from √*tvakṣ* (√*takṣ*), create, produce (Avestan: *ϑβaχš-*); *bhā́tvakṣasaḥ ati*, 'beyond the light-makers' (or: carpenters of light, i.e. the stars); *aktúr ná … agnéḥ* as [if] the anointment of Agni; *ásasantaḥ*, 'not-sleeping' (i.e. awakened by the incitements of Agni); *ajárāḥ*, 'unaging' (without the incitements of Agni time [= creation] is not yet in the making). So the translation is:

> "His rays are his ceaseless incitements; The splendour of the one with a beautiful face is good to see at. Beyond the light-makers – as the anointment of Agni – the not-sleeping, un-aging streams begin to move." (3.)

Dīrghatamas' new vision of Agni

'Sun and its rays' means the culmination of the creative process. On the other hand, Agni's incitements are the beginning of the process of creation. Without the incitements of Agni time (creation) is not yet in the making. The Sun with its rays is a kind of a final cause, but it is better to say that Dīrghatamas' imagery is one of the first expressions of the Vedic idea of co-emergence, or re-creation. The Sun creates Agni and Agni [re-]creates the Sun.

Sun Agni
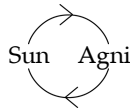
Later on the images of Vedic poets followed the path of Dīrghatamas' vision and his insight helped them to formulate their answer to the mysteries of creation.

Aditi Dakṣa	Puruṣa Virāj	Āpas Garbha	Prajāpati Agni
ṚV 10.72.4	ṚV 10.90.5	ṚV 10.121.7&9	ŚB 6.1.2.21
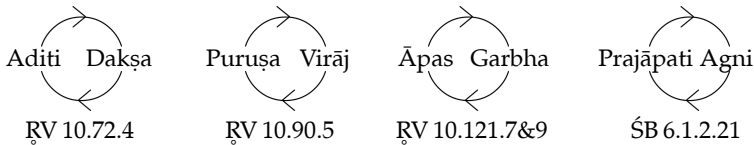
The first three brāhmaṇas in the Agnicayana section of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa are the culmination of this new insight into re-creation.[22]

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22 See also ṚV 1.159–160 (and ṚV 10.81, especially verses 2–4, cf. Forizs 2005). This imagery sheds new light also on the Gāyatrī mantra, ṚV 3.62.10, where not only the Divine sphere, but also the creature, the human being is involved in the process of re-creation. *tát savitúr váreṇyam / bhárgo devásya dhīmahi / dhíyo yó naḥ pracodáyāt //* The first pada is incomplete: *Savitṛ* and *vareṇya* ('to be wished for') yet without a denotatum evokes the child to be born (the is to be Sun). However, in the next pada *vareṇya* becomes the signifier of the effulgence of the radiant [newborn] god. The third pada emphasises the role of Savitṛ in the process. The invisible, mysterious fourth pada of the gāyatrī is gained when we realize that we are also involved in the mistery of creation: The lustre of god is ours. We not only partake in the effulgence of god, but we take part in the completion of creation by making him luminant. The divine order, harmony is in the making. We are both the raw and the boiled. (Cf. BUK 5.3.5: *āmáṁsi āmáṁ hí te mahi*; BUM 6.3.10: *āmò 'sy āmáṁ hí te máyi*.) Cf. BU 6.3.4–6[12], ChU 5.2.4–8 and BU 5.14.1–8. See also Fórizs 2016a&b.

Previous translations of ṚV 1.143.8

The first part is straightforward: "O Agni (Sun, cf. verse 1ab), attentive with your attentive, kind and powerful guardians (i.e. the stars, cf. verse 3), preserve us." The second part is a challenge but with the hope of a great victory.

Oldenberg translates:

> "Preserve us, O Agni, never failing with thy never-failing, kind and mighty guardians; protect our people all around with those undeceived, undismayed, never slumbering (guardians), O thou our wish!" (Oldenberg 1897: 158.)

Renou's solution is similar to Oldenberg's: "O (dieu qui est l'objet de notre) recherche." Both of them interprets *iṣṭe* as a vocative. The problem with their interpretation is that they could not provide the word which *iṣṭe* is the vocative of.

Elizarenkova rightly criticizes Renou (and Oldenberg whom she does not refer to) for his solution. It seems to her 'несколько натянутым.' In fact this is not only a forced solution (as Elizarenkova calls it), but also a wrong one. In her own interpretation, Elizarenkova follows a different path that closely resembles to that of Geldner:

> "Schirme uns, o Agni, unablässig mit deinen unablässigen, freundlichen, wirksamen Schirmern; mit den unbetörten, nie zerstreuten, lieben(?), die die Augen nie schließen, beschirne unsere Kinder!" (Geldner 1951: 202.)

Cf. also Geldner's note on 8c:

> "*iṣṭé* (Pp. *iṣṭe*) mit Abfall der Endung für *iṣṭébhiḥ*, ebenso in der Parallele 6, 8, 7. Man müßte sonst *iṣṭe* als Vok. von *iṣṭi* = Gegenstand des Wunsches, Liebling (wie später *kāma*) fassen."

Elizarenkova translates 8cd as follows:

> "С не допускающими обмана, нерассеянными, желанными, Не смыкающими глаз (защитниками) защити со всех сторон наше потомство!" (8.cd) (Elizarenkova 1989: 182.)

adding a note on 8c:

> "Последняя форма рассматривается как усеченная вместо *iṣṭebhiḥ* наряду с другими формами." (Elizarenkova 1989: 633.)

As we can see, they interpret *iṣṭe* as a short (i.e. cut-off) form of *iṣṭebhiḥ*. However Elizarenkova's solution also abuses grammar and, as such, is not convincing, either. Again, all these scholars are almost there, but there is something still missed, and none of them provide a decisive solution.

My solution of ṚV 1.143.8

The crucial point is the analysis of *iṣṭe*. We have to find a solution that does not abuse either the grammar or the vocabulary. From its form, *iṣṭe* is the sing. V. of an i-stem. Our job is to find a stem that fits our case the best. To derive it via a past passive participle from either the root √*yaj*, "sacrifice" or √*iṣ*, "desire" is not only a forced but also a false solution. The problem is that no Ṛgvedic word fits easily to our case without abusing the grammar or the vocabulary (or both). When a word notoriously resists all attacks of researchers (as has been the case with *iṣṭe* since the beginning of Vedic scholarship) one has to try a different approach. First of all, one has to enlarge the horizon and look at the problem from a different perspective. This is what I have essentially done in my completely independent and new solution. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the problem of *iṣṭe* has not been taken too seriously by the majority of scholars; definitely not as seriously as the problem should have deserved. The core of the problem is the fact that this difficult form occurs only twice in the Ṛgveda.[23] Consequently, our success will finally depend on our understanding of the context and the complex imagery of the hymn as well as the self-consistency of our analysis. In fact, the situation is not that bad, what is more, it is promising because the word in question occurs in the hymn of a great poet with clear vision and poetical insight and unity of thought. Let us analyse the structure of the poem.

The beginning (verses 1–2):

Agni, son of strength	Begotten in the highest Heaven	radiance/flame glittered on Heaven (Sun)
Apāṃ Napāt, the beloved hotā	He has sat down on the Earth	radiance/flame glittered on Earth (altar)

The middle:

a) Cosmic level (especially verse 3): Streams (unsleeping, unageing) begin to move by the incitement of Agni (Sun). On the other hand the Sun corresponds to the completion of the process of creation.

b) The level of the ritual (especially verse 4): Carry that fire with thy prayers to (your) own house. (1) That fire is the possessor/knower of all, the (only) One who rules (over everything); (2) whom the Bhṛgus (have) obtained; (3) it is on the navel of the earth and of the world (*nábhā pṛthivyā́ bhúvanasya*), a likely reference to some form of an altar. (I am going to discuss this issue later.)

c) Microcosmic (personal/inside the heart) level: Would Agni be fond of our hymn? Would He – the Vasu together with the Vasus – fulfil our desire? Will He, the inciter/inspirer, stir our visions that they may be successful? I praise Him whose face is bright, with this vision/prayer (of mine).[24]

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23 Here and in an Agni Vaiśvānara hymn of Bharadvāja Bhārhaspatya, ṚV 6.8.7 (449.7).
24 One can see from this short summary that the hymn intertwines the three main levels of Ṛgvedic sacerdotal poetry. The great Riddle hymn (ṚV 1.164), that summarizes the poetry of Dīrghatamas, uses the same technique. See Brown 1967, Fórizs 1995 and Houben 2000.

The end:

First of all, notice that there is a clear parallelism between the first and the last verse: 1ab is related to 8ab and 1cd to 8cd. Now let us start our rendering with the neighbouring words of *iṣṭi*. *á-dabdhebhir*: the usual rendering of *á-dabdha-* is 'undeceived,' but I prefer 'unimpaired, intact, unbroken, unharmed' from the root √*dabh*, 'to harm'; *ádṛpita*, usual solution: 'uninfatuated' from the root √*dṛp*, 'rave', but 'uninflamed' (from the root √*dṛp*, 'to light, kindle, inflame,' *Dhātupāṭha* 39.14) is at least as acceptable as the previous meaning; *ánimiṣadbhiḥ*, from *á-nimiṣá*, mfn. 'unwinking', *ni+*√*miṣ*, 'to shut the eyelids, wink, falls asleep'; *nimiṣá*, mfn. 'winking' is applied also for the stars, therefore *á-nimiṣá* qualify something that corresponds not to the stars, not to the heavenly guardians (and the Sun), but to their earthly counterpart, something connected to the (sacrificial) fire/altar (and/or the altar/fire itself).

1ab: I bring forward a stronger and newer vision (praise) to Agni, a hymn of Vâc to the son of strength;

1.cd: Apāṃ Napāt, the beloved hotā, who together with the Vasus has sat down on the Earth observing the appointed time.

8ab: O Agni (cf. verse 1ab), attentive with your attentive, kind and powerful guardians (i. e. the stars), preserve us;

8cd: O Iṣṭi (?, but cf. 1cd), with your unimpaired, not inflamed, not winking [something, not known yet] (however, cf. 8ab), protect our children!

Let us summarize our findings:

8ab

Agni:	attentive, kind and powerful guardians	Heaven
	belonging to or parts of Heaven (the stars)	Sun

8cd

Iṣṭi	unimpaired, not inflamed, not winking guardians	(the navel of the) *Earth*
Can be identified with Agni and Apāṃ Napāt	belonging to or parts of *Iṣṭi* (requires further analysis of the etymology and meaning of *Iṣṭi*)	Can be identified with *Iṣṭi*

We have arrived at the following situation: *Iṣṭi* can be identified with (a form of) Agni/Apāṃ Napāt (that sat down on the Earth). It is also clear from the context that the usage of the vocative of this still 'unknown' word is legitimate. The use of the vocative together with the connotations of the neighboring words is consistent with the assumption that the primary meaning of *iṣṭi* is not an abstract notion but a real togetherness of some real things. It is a new word on its own right.

On the other hand, the earlier expression *nábhā pṛthivyā́ bhúvanasya* together with a clear reference to the sacrifice and a form of an altar in 164.34ab and 35ab (in the same Dīrghatamas cycle of hymns) – *pṛchámi tvā páram ántam pṛthivyā́ḥ pṛchámi yátra bhúvanasya nábhiḥ* (34ab)

iyáṃ védiḥ páro ántaḥ pṛthivyā́ ayáṃ yajñó bhúvanasya nā́bhiḥ (35ab) – makes it probable (or even reasonable) that this new word (that represents the visible earthly form of Agni/Apā́ṃ Napāt refers to a special form of an altar (or, at least, can be identified with it).

...

Now we are in a position to give a preliminary translation of verse 8:

"O Agni (cf. verse 1ab), attentive with your attentive, kind and powerful guardians (i. e. the stars), preserve us; O Iṣṭi [brick altar], with your unimpaired, not inflamed, not winking (guardians) [bricks], protect our children!" (8.)

We have come to the conclusion that it cannot be excluded that before the innovation of Ved. *íṣṭakā, iṣṭikā* an earlier form, *iṣṭi* also found its way to the Ṛgveda, or – more precisely – to a singular hymn of a great Western poet. The hymn praises an equally singular form of fire, the Brick Altar (Iṣṭi), that can be identified with Apā́ṃ Napāt, the Child of the Waters, as well as with the widely known Agni. The intertwining imagery of the hymn gave Agni (and Apā́ṃ Napāt and Iṣṭi) such a unique cosmogonic significance that was unparalleled in the contemporary sacerdotal poetry.

I hope that my analysis of ṚV 1.143 will reopen an old debate and some scholars may even reconsider the possibility of tracing the construction of a brick altar in the Ṛgveda. As for me, I am confident that I have found strong indirect evidence for the presence of brick in the Ṛgveda. Remarkably enough, it turned out that the most important obstacle that confused the evidence was the brick-altar itself. In other words, we have not seen the bricks for the altar.

Translation of ṚV 1.143[25]

prá távyasīṃ návyasīṃ dhītím agnáye vācó matíṃ sáhasaḥ sūnáve bhare |
apā́ṃ nápād yó vásubhiḥ sahá priyó hótā pṛthivyā́ṃ ní ásīdad ṛtvíyaḥ || 1

1. I bring forward a stronger and newer vision (praise) to Agni, a hymn of Vāc to the son of strength; [he is] Apāṃ Napāt, the beloved hotā, who together with the Vasus has sat down on the Earth observing the appointed time.

sá jā́yamānaḥ paramé víomani āvír agnír abhavan mātaríśvane |
asyá krátvā samidhānásya majmánā prá dyā́vā śocíḥ pṛthivī́ arocayat || 2

2. [He who is] being begotten in the highest heaven, Agni revealed himself to Mātariśvan. By the inspiration, by the majesty of the [one who] kindled [himself], radiance/flame glittered on Heaven and Earth.

asyá tveṣā́ ajárā asyá bhānávaḥ susaṃdṛ́śaḥ suprátīkasya sudyútaḥ |
bhā́tvakṣaso áti aktúr ná síndhavo agné rejante ásasanto ajárāḥ || 3

3. His rays are his ceaseless incitements; The splendour of the one with a beautiful face is good to look at. Beyond the light-makers – as the anointment of Agni – the unsleeping, un-ageing streams begin to move.

yám eriré bhṛ́gavo viśvávedasaṃ nā́bhā pṛthivyā́ bhúvanasya majmánā |
agníṃ táṃ gīrbhír hinuhi svá ā́ dáme yá éko vásvo váruṇo ná rā́jati || 4

4. Whom the Bhṛgus (have) aroused, the possessor/knower of all, [who is] on the navel of the earth and of the world in [all his] majesty; urge that fire with thy songs/prayers in his own house, [that Agni] who – like Varuṇa [the lord] of the Vasus – is the [only] One who rules.

ná yó várāya marútām iva svanáḥ séneva sṛṣṭā́ diviyā́ yáthāśániḥ |
agnír jámbhais tigitaír atti bhárvati yodhó ná śátrūn sá vánā ní ṛñjate || 5

5. He who is unstoppable like the roar of the Maruts, like an arrow that is sent forward, like the thunderbolt of heaven, Agni eats with his sharp jaws, he chews, he throws down the forests as a warrior throws down his foes.

kuvín no agnír ucáthasya vī́r ásad vásuṣ kuvíd vásubhiḥ kā́mam āvárat |
codáḥ kuvít tutujyā́t sātáye dhíyaḥ śúcipratīkaṃ tám ayā́ dhiyā́ gṛṇe || 6

6. Would Agni be fond of our hymn? Would He – the Vasu together with the Vasus – fulfil our desire? Will He, the inciter/inspirer, stir our visions that they may be successful? I praise Him whose face is bright, with this vision/prayer [of mine].

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25 The translation is slightly different from that of Forizs 2016a. (Cf. verses 4&7.)

ghr̥tápratīkaṃ va r̥tásya dhūrṣádam agním mitráṃ ná samidhāná r̥ñjate |
índhāno akró vidátheṣu dī́diyac chukrávarṇām úd u no yaṃsate dhíyam || 7

7. Being kindled it reaches your Agni, whose face shines with ghee, as a [good] friend under the chariot-pole of R̥ta; the anointed in the [sacrificial] assemblies, the kindling one (Agni) stretches out/sustains our bright-colored vision.

áprayuchann áprayuchadbhir agne śivébhir naḥ pāyúbhiḥ pāhi śagmaíḥ |
ádabdhebhir ádr̥pitebhir iṣṭe ánimiṣadbhiḥ pári pāhi no jáḥ || 8

8. O Agni (Sun), attentive with your attentive, kind and powerful guardians (i. e. the stars), preserve us; O Iṣṭi (Agni/Altar/Apā́ṃ Napāt), with your unimpaired, not inflamed, not winking [guardians], protect our children!

....

Appendix

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Sixth Kāṇḍa. First Adhyāya. First Three Brāhmaṇa[26]

1. Creation of the universe[27]

[1]Verily, in the beginning (*agrế*) this [universe] (*idam*) was [the] non-existent (*asat*) alone.[28] As to this they say, 'What was that non-existent?' The r̥ṣis … were the non-existent. As to this they say, 'Who were those r̥ṣis?' The seven r̥ṣis … were the vital airs (*prāṇā*). ...

[2]This same vital air in the midst doubtless is Indra. He, by his power (*indriya*), kindled those (other) vital airs from the midst; and inasmuch as he kindled (*indh*), he is the kindler (*indha*): the kindler indeed, — him they call 'Indra' enigmatically for the gods love the enigmatic. They (the vital airs), being kindled, created seven separate persons (puruṣa).

[3]They said, 'Surely, being thus, we shall not be able to generate: let us make these seven persons one Person!' They made those seven persons one Person: they compressed two of them (into) what is above the navel, and two of them (into) what is below the navel; (one) person was (one) wing (or side), (one) person was (the other) wing, and one person was the base (i.e. the feet).

[4]And what excellence, what life-sap (*rasa*) there was in those seven persons, that they concentrated above, that became his head. And because (in it) they concentrated the excellence (*śrī́*), therefore it is (called) the head (*śíras*). It was thereto that the breaths resorted (*√śri*): therefore also it is the head. … And because they resorted to the whole (system) therefore (this is called) body (*śárira*).

[5]That same Person became Prajāpati. And that Person which became Prajāpati is this very Agni (fire-altar), who is to be built. ...

[8]Now this Person Prajāpati desired, 'May I be more (than one), may I be reproduced!' He toiled, he practised austerity. Being worn out with toil and austerity, he created first of all the Brahman (neut.), the triple knowledge (*vidyā*). It became to him a foundation: hence they say, 'the Brahman is the foundation of everything here.' … Resting on that foundation, he (again) practised austerity.

[9]He created the waters out of Vāc; for speech belonged to it (Brahman): that was created (set free). It pervaded everything here; and because it pervaded (*√āp*) whatsoever there was here, therefore (it is called) water (*āpaḥ*); and because it covered (*var*, *√vr̥*), therefore also it (is called) water (*vā́r*).

[10]He desired, 'May I be reproduced from these waters! 'He entered the waters with that triple knowledge. Thence an egg arose. He touched it. 'Let it exist! Let it exist and multiply!' so he said.

[11]Now the embryo which was inside was created as the foremost (*agri*): inasmuch as it was created foremost (*agram*) of this All, therefore (it is called) Agri:

26 Eggeling's translation with some changes. See also Forizs 1994: 61–69.
27 ŚB 6.1.1.11–28. Eggeling 1894: 143–148.
28 *ásadvā́ idamágra āsīt.*

Agri, indeed, is he whom they enigmatically call Agni; for the gods love the enigmatic. And the tear (*áśru*, n.) which had formed itself become the '*áśru*' (m.): '*áśru*' indeed is what they enigmatically call '*áśva*' (horse), for the gods love the enigmatic. And that which, as it were, cried (√*ras*), became the ass (*ráśabha*). And the juice which was adhering to the shell (of the egg) became the he-goat (*ajá*). And that which was the shell became the earth.

[12]He desired, 'May I generate this (earth) from these waters!' He compressed it [the shell of the egg] and threw it into the water. The juice which flowed from it became a tortoise; and that which was spirted upwards (became) what is produced above here over the waters. This whole (earth) dissolved itself all over the water: all this (universe) appeared as one form only)', namely, water.

[13]He desired, 'May it become more than one, may it reproduce itself!' He toiled and practised austerity; and worn out with toil and austerity, he created foam. He was aware that ' this indeed looks different, it is becoming more (than one): I must toil, indeed!' Worn out with toil and austerity, he created clay, mud, saline soil and sand, gravel (pebble), rock, ore, gold, plants and trees: therewith he clothed this earth.

[14]This (earth), then, was created as (consisting of) these same nine creations. Hence they say, 'Threefold (three times three) is Agni;' for Agni is this (earth), since thereof the whole Agni (fire-altar) is constructed.

[15]This (earth) has indeed become (√*bhū*) a foundation! '(he thought): hence it became the earth (*bhū́mi*). He spread it out (√*prath*), and it became the broad one (=earth, *pṛthivī́*). And she (the earth), thinking herself quite perfect, sang; and inasmuch as she sang (√*gā*), therefore she is Gāyatrī. But they also say, It was Agni, indeed, on her (the earth's) back, who thinking himself quite perfect, sang; and inasmuch as he sang (√*gā*), therefore Agni is Gāyatra.' And hence whosoever thinks himself quite perfect, either sings or delights in song.

2. Sacrifice as a [re-]constructing act[29]

[11]...[I]ndeed it was Prajāpati who created everything here, whatsoever exists. [12]Having created creatures he – having run the whole race – fell asunder[30]. ...From him being thus fallen asunder, the vital air went out from within. When it had gone out of him the gods left him. [13]He said to Agni, 'Restore[31] me!' ... — 'So be it!' so (saying) Agni restored him: therefore, while being Prajāpati, they call him Agni.

[16]This, then, was his (Prajāpati's) '*citya*' (Agni to be set up on an altar-pile); for he had to be built up (*ci*) by him, and therefore was his '*citya*'. And so indeed he now is the sacrificer's '*citya*'; for he is to be built up by him, and therefore is his '*citya*'. [17]Now it was those five bodily parts (*tanu*) of his (Prajāpati's) that fell

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29 ŚB 6.1.2.11–28. Eggeling 1894: 150–154.
30 Vedic: *vi-√sraṃs*, 'fall asunder or to piece'. Eggeling translates 'became relaxed', but with the following note: Literally, he fell asunder, or to pieces, became disjointed. Hence, when the gods 'restored' Prajāpati (the lord of generation, identified with the sacrifice, and with Agni, the fire), the verb used is *saṃskṛ*, 'to put together'; and this putting together, or restoration, of Prajapati is symbolically identified with the building up of the fire-altar.
31 Ved. *saṃ-√dhā*.

asunder[32], – hair, skin, flesh, bone, and marrow, – they are these five layers (of the fire-altar); and when he builds up the five layers, thereby he builds him up by those bodily parts; and inasmuch as he builds up (*ci*), therefore they are layers (*citi*). [18]And that Prajāpati who fell asunder is the year; and those five bodily parts of his which fell asunder are the seasons; for there are five seasons, and five are those layers: when he builds up the five layers, he thereby builds him up with the seasons; and inasmuch as he builds up (lays down), therefore they are layers. ... [20]And the Fire that is laid down on the built (altar), that is yonder Sun; — that same Agni is indeed (raised) on the altar, and that just because Agni had restored him (Prajāpati).

[21]But they say, — Prajāpati, when fell asunder, said to the gods, 'Restore me!' The gods said to Agni, 'In thee we will heal this our father Prajāpati.' 'Then I will enter into him, when whole,' he said. 'So be it!' they said. Hence, while being Prajāpati, they yet call him Agni. [22]In the fire the gods healed him by means of oblations; and whatever oblation they offered that became a baked brick and passed into him. And because they were produced from what was offered (*iṣṭa*), therefore they are bricks (*iṣṭaka*). And hence they bake the bricks by means of the fire, for it is oblations they thus make. ...

[26]Now that father (Prajāpati) is (also) the son: inasmuch as he created Agni, thereby he is Agni's father; and inasmuch as Agni restored him, thereby Agni is his (Prajāpati's) father; and inasmuch as he created the gods, thereby he is the father of the gods; and inasmuch as the gods restored him, thereby the gods are his fathers. [27]Twofold verily is this, — father and son, Prajāpati and Agni, Agni and Prajāpati, Prajāpati and the gods, the gods and Prajāpati.

3. Exaltation of Agni[33]

[1]Verily, in the beginning (*agré*) this (*idam*) was Prajāpati alone.[34] He desired, 'May I exist, may I reproduce myself!' He toiled, he practised austerity[35]. From him, worn out and heated, the waters were created: from that heated Person the waters are born. [2]The waters said, 'What is to become of us?' 'Ye shall be heated,' he said. They were heated; they created the foam. ... [3]The foam (m.) said, ' What is to become of me?' — 'Thou shalt be heated!' he said. It was heated, and produced clay. ... [4]The clay said, 'What is to become of me ?' 'Thou shalt be heated!' he said. It was heated, and produced sand. ... [5]From the sand he created the pebble, ... from the pebble the stone, ... from the stone metal ore; ... from ore gold. ... [6]Now that which was created was flowing; and inasmuch as it was flowing (*ákṣarat*), a syllable (*ákṣara*) resulted therefrom; and inasmuch as it flowed eight times, that octosyllabic Gayatrī was produced. [7]'This has indeed become a foundation,' so he thought: whence it became the earth. He spread it out (*prath*): it became the broad (earth, *pṛthivī*).

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32 Eggeling translates 'became relaxed' (here and in all the following occurences).
33 ŚB 6.1.2.11–28. Eggeling 1894: 157–161.
34 *prajā́patirvā́ idamágra āsīt*.
35 Or became heated.

On this earth, as on a foundation, the beings, and the lord of beings, consecrated themselves for a year: the lord of beings was the master of the house, and Uṣas (the Dawn) was the mistress. [8]Now, those beings are the seasons; and that lord of beings is the year; and that Uṣas, the mistress, is the Dawn. And these same creatures, as well as the lord of beings, the year, laid seed into Uṣas'.

There a boy (*kumārá*[36]) was born in a year: he cried. [9]Prajāpati said to him, 'My son, why criest thou, when thou art born out of labour and trouble?' He said, 'I am not guarded against[37] evil; I have no name given to me: give me a name! ' ... [10]He said to him, 'Thou art Crier (Rudra). And because he gave him that name, Agni became that (form), for Agni is Rudra: because he cried (*rud*), therefore he is Rudra. He said, 'Surely, I am mightier than that: give me yet a name! [11]He said to him, 'Thou art Everything (*sárva*).' And because he gave him that name, the waters became that, for Everything is the waters, inasmuch as from the water everything here is produced. He said, 'Surely, I am mightier than that: give me yet a name! [12]He said to him, 'Thou art Prajāpati.' And because he gave him that name, the plants became that, for Prajāpati is the plants. ... He said, 'Surely, I am mightier than that: give me yet a name! [13]He said to him, 'Thou art the Strong (*ugrá*).' And because he gave him that name, Vāyu (the wind) became that, for Vāyu is strong: hence when it blows strongly, they say 'Ugra is blowing.' He said, 'Surely, I am mightier than that: give me yet a name! [14]He said to him, 'Thou art the Lightning (*aśáni*).' And because he gave him that name, the lightning became that, for Aśani is the lightning. ... He said, 'Surely, I am mightier than that: give me yet a name! [15]He said to him, 'Thou art the Birth of Life (*bháva*).' And because he gave him that name, the Rain-cloud (*parjánya*) became that; for the Rain-cloud is the Birth of Life, since everything here comes (*bhávati*) from the rain-cloud. He said, 'Surely, I am mightier than that: give me yet a name! [16]He said to him, 'Thou art the Great God (*mahā́n deváḥ*).' And because he gave him that name, the Moon became that, for the Moon is Prajāpati, and Prajāpati is the Great God. He said, 'Surely, I am mightier than that: give me yet a name! [17]He said to him, 'Thou art the Ruler (Íśāna).' And because he gave him that name, the Sun became that, for Íśāna is the Sun, since the Sun rules over this All. He said, 'So great indeed I am: give me no other name after that![38]

[18]These then are the eight forms of Agni. Kumārá (the Son) is the ninth: that is Agni's threefold state. [19]... The Son entered into the forms one after another; for one never sees him as a mere boy (*kumārá*), but one sees those forms of his, for he assumed those forms one after another. [20]One ought to build him (Agni, the fire-altar) up in (the space of) a year, and recite for a year. ... To him (Agni) when built up (*cita*) he gives a name: whereby he keeps away evil from him. He calls him by a bright (*citra*) name, saying, 'Thou art bright;' for Agni is all bright things.

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36 The Son.
37 Or freed from.
38 "[7]But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: [8]and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. [9]Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Philippians 2, 7–9 (King James Bible).

Note on sacrificial rituals

According to Frits Staal (Vedic) ritual is pure activity, like dance[39], which is for its own sake, and – in this sense – ritual is meaningless.[40] It is governed by explicit rules. The only thing that matters is the syntax of the ritual. Jan Heesterman duly criticizes this view.[41] He argues that what really matters is the meaningful (lost) world of the sacrifice, and the reconstruction of the original ([pre]-Vedic) sacrifice is a must, and this is the main goal of Heesterman 1993. According to his reconstruction sacrifice is nothing else than (i) contest, like play or game. But this contest is life-and-death.[42] Later on he also adds the following three elements to the definition: (ii) killing, (iii) destruction, and (iv) feast.

But there is a problem with these approaches. Both of them miss the point that Vedic ritual and sacrifice are, in fact, inseparable; so these diagonally opposite theories should be interpreted as complementary descriptions of one and the same complex process, the sacrificial ritual.[43] As an immediate result of this synthesis one has to add a very important „zeroth" element to Heesterman's list: (0) [making] the ritual law as it is witnessed already in the Ṛgveda:[44] „With the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice: these were the first ordinances (*dhárma*)."[45]

However, in my opinion, sacrifice contains not only the necessary element of destruction, but it is also a [re]constructive act.[46] This [re]construction is even more important than real killing and destruction.[47] What has to be real is much more subtle. For what is really at stake during the sacrificial process is the transformation of the sacrificer, his rebirth, and the real success of the sacrificial ritual is this inner change.[48] In the case of constructive sacrificial

39 "To performing ritualists, rituals are to a large extent like dance, of which Isadora Duncan said: 'If I could tell you what it meant there would be no point in dancing it.' … The important thing is what you do, not what you think, believe or say." Staal 1979: 5.
40 „To say that ritual is for its own sake is to say that it is meaningless, without function, aim or goal, or also that it constitutes its own aim or goal. It does not follow that it has no value: but whatever value it has is intrinsic value." Staal 1979: 9. (See also Staal 1990.)
41 Nevertheless, he really appreciates Staal's work: „No doubt this line of inquiry is valid and rewarding, even more so for being not far removed from the interests and intentions of the Vedic ritualists. They can be shown to have been deeply concerned with turning sacrifice into a closed and unalterable system of rules governing acts (karma) and utterances (mantra). Their probing reflections, known as mīmāṃsā, led them to the basic syntactic structures of ritual. …It is this that makes Vedic ritual a privileged field for the purely syntactic analysis proposed by Staal. Naturally such an analysis will not tell us much if anything about the institution of sacrifice. Yet it was sacrifice that was the overriding concern of the ancient ritualists." Heesterman 1993: 1–2.
42 "In the simplest terms, sacrifice deals with the riddle of life and death, which are intimately linked and at the same time each other's absolute denial. The riddle cannot be resolved, it can only be reenacted by the participants in the 'play' of sacrifice, whose stakes are the 'goods of life' as against death. …In other words … [sacrifice] is a life-and-death contest." Heesterman 1993: 2. (On the oral contest in the Ṛgveda see, e.g., Kuiper 1960, Johnson 1979 and Fórizs 1995 & 2005.)
43 Interestingly enough already Heesterman uses this term: "If sacrifice is catastrophic, ritual is the opposite. It is called upon to control the passion and fury of the sacrificial contest and to keep such forces within bounds. Sacrificial ritual represents 'the rules of the game.' However, there is no guarantee that the rules will hold. The stakes are high — in fact the highest imaginable." Heesterman 1993: 3. (The emphasis is mine.)
44 In the famous Riddle-hymn of the Dīrghatamas-cycle, ṚV 1.164.50 (= ṚV 10.090.16 [Puruṣasūkta]).
45 Brown 1965: 32; Heesterman 1993: 13. Brereton and Jamison translates dhárma here as 'foundation': "With the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice: these were the first foundations." (Brereton – Jamison 2014 [Vol I], 359.) It is interesting that in the Puruṣasūkta they translated the verse differently: "With the sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice for themselves: these were the first foundations." (Ibid [Vol III], 1540.) The original Vedic form is identical in both cases: *yajñéna yajñám ayajanta devā́s tā́ni dhármāṇi prathamā́ny āsan.*
46 The real place of self-sacrifice is not the sacrificial enclosure, but the battlefield or the hunting ground or the scene of a disaster threatening our family, our tribe, our people, our friends. Hopefully, it will never happen in our life, but we have to be well prepared if the time comes. And the sacrificial ritual helps us to prepare for that.
47 In fact, real killing during the sacrificial ritual can be interpreted as a kind of a pornography.
48 'That the ancient Indian ritualists still called their revolutionary system of ritual yajña is not just 'conservatism' – a stopgap notion – but fully justified. …Prefiguring both Upaniṣadic thought and the Mīmāṃsā theory, which called the main act of sacrifice puruṣārtha, 'having man as its purpose,' the ritual manual of Baudhāyana asks: 'Where then is sacrifice?' The answer is, 'In man.'" Heesterman 1993: 5.

rituals, such as the piling up of the fire-altar (Agnicayana), this [re]construction is, of course, more than just the inner rebirth of the sacrificer.[49]

In the light of the above, the basic elements of sacrificial rituals are: (i) [making] the ritual law, (ii) contest, (iii) killing, (iv) destruction, (v) [re]construction and (vi) feast.[50]

It is worth noting that Heesterman's reconstruction of the world of sacrifice was heavily criticized by Stephanie Jamison.

> „Heesterman essentially never uses the evidence of the ṚV, not even as a way-station on the route from his reconstructed prehistory to the classical śrauta texts. Instead he creates this prehistory entirely from hints found in the śrauta texts. His avoidance of the ṚVic evidence is not surprising to those who know that text, for it provides little or no support for Heesterman's reconstructions."[51]

The Dīrghatamas-cycle, and the reconstructed life and death of the great poet priest is enough to prove that this criticism is false.[52]

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49 It is worth noting that this type of constructing rituals were originally foreign to the Vedic sacrificial ritual system.

50 Our Hungarian language preserved the most important elements: áldoz (sacrifice), alkot (creative/constructive act), áldomást iszik (feast). For the details, and the reconstructed old Hungarian root, *al[t]<*ol[t]*, see Mészöly 1943, and also Rédei 1986–1988.).

51 Jamison 1996a: 105.

52 I have already argued in 1997 that contrary to the Brihaddevatā (and Geldner, Renou, Elizarenkova, the line can be continued), ṚV 1.158 describes the actual killing of Dīrghatamas during a sacrificial ritual. (Fórizs 1997; Fórizs 2006; Fórizs 2016b [2003].)

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