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ABOUT TRACES OF A PRAKRIT DIALECTAL BASIS
IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE ṚGVEDA

The Ṛgveda (RV), as it is well known, is the first written record of the Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) language, which makes its situation unique. It represents a kind of link, connecting the OIA language with its Indo-European (IE) sources. It is just this position of the RV that has conditioned for a long time the retrospective character of linguistic studies of it in the West. The RV was usually searched for the sake of " reflexions " : for archaic linguistic facts, contradictory to the system, for ancient poetical formulas, for the echo of myths, vague on Indian soil, but having connections with other ancient IE traditions. The Ṛgvedic data were used on a large scale for IE reconstructions. This is a comparative approach. It was very effective for the aims of the comparative historical grammar of the IE languages. As for the RV itself, it can be used for an "outer" approach.

An "inner" approach to the linguistic investigation of the RV presupposes that attention should be concentrated on the regularities of the system as a whole (not on its fragments, no matter how archaic they may be). Besides, as the linguistic system of a written record is under investigation, one should take into consideration its genre, and the way it functioned, what kind of social demands it was fulfilling, in which social environment it served as a means of communication, etc. In other words, a purely linguistic research approach should be supplemented by a social stratification of the language.

These are the ideal requirements for an investigation of this kind. In reality, the difficulty lies in the fact that all the extralinguistic information must be elicited from the text of the RV itself, which results in a vicious circle, because the hymns, which have been transmitted orally during several millennia, are the only more or less reliable document that remains from that ancient epoch.

It is generally acknowledged nowadays that the RV-Saṃhitā was formed as a collection on Indian soil (the modern N.-W. India, N.

Pakistan and the adjacent districts of Afghanistan). A very probable supposition has been made that the mixture of the language of the Aryan tribes with that of the natives was an active process already in the times of the RV [1]. In spite of the fact that many details of this process still remain vague, there is thanks to the works of scholars such as T. Burrow, F. B. J. Kuiper, etc., no doubt now that there exists in the RV a number of lexical borrowings from the Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages [2].

It is important in principle that a certain amount of substratum borrowings should be recognised in the language of the RV, for thereby a decisive blow is struck at the idea of a pure and impenetrable character of the language of these elevated hieratic hymns. But the discovery of individual words in the RV, which were marked by Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA) phonetic traits, the so-called Prakritisms, was even more important for the stratification of the language. It was just this approach to the investigation of the Ṛgvedic lexica, which was connected first of all with the works of P. Tedesco, T. Burrow, M. Mayrhofer in the fifties, that made it possible to raise the question about the existence of some colloquial language of a Prakrit (Pr.) type at that period, when the language of religion was that of the Vedic mantras. It does not matter that at first there was a certain over-estimation in the field of Pr. etymologies of Ṛgvedic words. Many of them, as far as one can judge now, were nothing more than rather fantastic reconstructions. Besides, there is a group of words, for which some scholars suggested substratum etymologies, and others Pr. ones (e.g., for āṇi- "linchpin" a Pr. and a Dravidian one were suggested, for gaṇa- "crowd" a Pr., a Munda, and a Dravidian one, etc. [3]). Of vital importance is the fact that there exists a group of words recognised as Prakritisms by most scholars. And although lexical borrowings, especially when they are few, do not affect the system of the language, nevertheless, the very fact of the existence of a number of Prakritisms in the language of the Vedic (Ved.) religious poetry makes one put the question, from which source these words were borrowed.

To answer this question one has to turn to the functional aspect of the language, and try to shed some light upon the mutual relation between the language of religious poetry and that of the everyday life of the Aryans at the end of the 2nd — beginning of the 1st millennium B.C. Did those languages coincide or not, and if they did, to what degree? It should be said at once that we do not know anything for sure, and can only make suppositions.

L. Renou, one of the most profound connoisseurs of the language of the RV, although being very cautious in this respect, nevertheless did not manage to avoid some contradictions. There are different statements about it in his "Introduction générale" to the Wackernagel-Debrunner Grammar [4]. They are as following. The RV was compiled in a language which had been used by the Aryans before the 10th century B.C. (p. 1). It was an artificial language, different from the colloquial speech of the Ṛṣis (p. 2). Phonetically the latter coincided completely with the language of the hymns, but at the same time there existed outside the priestly environment a popular language characterized by the main traits of an early MIA type (of the Pali [Pa.] kind), which was shown by a number of formations that had penetrated into the RV (p. 7). No Pr. had taken full shape in the time of the RV. One can speak only about separate MIA traits (pp. 54-55, n. 80).

One can well understand such caution, when the problem of the character of the colloquial speech of the Aryans in the period of the RV is being discussed [5]. Attention should be drawn here to a question of terminology. The terms "MIA" or "Pr." are used to denote the type of the language, rather than a chronological layer, and there are good grounds for it. It is known that OIA and MIA coexisted side by side for no less than one and a half millennia. The lower limit of the MIA period creates no difficulties — it is c. the 10th century A.D. The upper one is usually timed to the 5th century B.C. (the language of the Buddhist preachers). There are no other historically reliable dates previous to it, and one treads here upon purely hypothetical grounds.

It may not be out of place here to remember a peculiarity of the coexistence of the OIA and MIA types of languages. More than once during the history of the development of the IA languages in Ancient India one can trace a tendency to a partial or complete sanskritization of various MIA languages, which began in a certain period to function as the language of religion or literature. The first written documents in an IA language in Ancient India are the rock inscriptions of the Buddhist king Asoka (the 3d century B.C.) in early

1. See : *Aryan and non-Aryan in India*, Ed. by M. M. DESHPANDE and P. E. HOOK (= Michigan Papers on South and South-East Asia, 14), Ann Arbor, 1979.

2. In the Soviet Union this trend of investigations is represented by the works of N. V. GUROV (The Leningrad State University, Oriental Department).

3. See correspondingly : M. MAYRHOFER, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, Bd. 1-4, Heidelberg, 1956-1980.

4. J. WACKERNAGEL. L. RENOU, *Altindische Grammatik, Introduction générale*, Göttingen, 1957.

5. Cp., e.g., the doubts expressed by M. MAYRHOFER in *KEWA* in connection with the possible interpretation of *maṇḍūka* "frog" as a Pr. borrowing : "Ist ein so weitgehender Prakritismus im RV glaubhaft?".

Pr., reflecting various dialects of that time[6]. Sanskrit (Skr.) inscriptions appeared only in the first centuries A.D. Buddhism started its preachings in MIA languages, and the text of the Buddhist Canon was fixed in an early MIA *koinè* — Pa., but in the course of time the Buddhists turned to Skr., and the history of the gradual sanskritization of the original MIA language of the Buddhist texts is shown by a sequence of written records in Buddhist Hybrid Skr. At the time when Pa. and early Pr. were functioning as the literary languages of the Buddhists, the first versions of the great Epic poems Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa were compiled in another environment. As to the language of these texts in Epic Skr., suggestions were made by various scholars at the end of the 19th century that they were originally compiled in a Pr., and only afterwards transmitted into Skr. — a viewpoint which was violently criticized by H. Jacobi and others[7]. This hypothesis should be qualified as going too far at least, but it is the linguistic situation in Ancient India that provoked its possibility.

This particular type of coexistence of MIA and OIA in a comparatively late period gives the idea of a possible projection of similar relations into a prehistoric period, from which only the orally transmitted text of the RV-Saṃhitā has remained. In any case, such a possibility should be taken into consideration, though it should be kept in mind that the grammatically normalized Skr. had a greater authority when compared to the MIA languages. It was taken as a model of any kind of literary activity, and this fact conditioned the character of the mutual relation of languages. Since the Ved. language was not grammatically normalized (cp. Pāṇini's formula : *chandasi bahulam*), it was more dynamic and fluctuating, which can be explained by the immanent qualities of poetic speech in general, as well as in other ways.

In the light of these general considerations, it seems reasonable to investigate the language of the RV on several levels, looking for some systematic characteristics that might unite it with Pr. and differentiate it at the same time from Skr.

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6. Thus they are described by J. BLOCH, who denied a real geographical basis for the later Dramatic Pr. — See : J. BLOCH, *Indo-Aryan from the Vedas to modern times*, English edition, Transl. by A. MASTER. Paris, 1965, p. 139.

7. Cp. about the problem : П.А. Гринцер. Древнеиндийский эпос. Москва, 1974, p. 173. Nevertheless, it deserves mentioning that Sukumar Sen treats the syntax of the Mahābhārata on the same scale as that of Pa. and Pr. — cp. : *Historical syntax of Middle Indo-Aryan*, Calcutta, 1953.

PHONETICS — PHONOLOGY

The language of the RV does not in practice differ in its phoneme set from Skr. (the only difference is that *jh* in the RV cannot be taken as a phoneme, because it is met only once, as a geminate in an onomatopoeia *jajhjhatīs* V, 52, 6). Nevertheless, there are two different phonological systems here, because the rules of the distribution of phonemes do not coincide in many respects, and these differences are carried out on the level of phonemic variants. Only those facts that belong to one synchronic layer and have a systematic character will be dealt with here, and not solitary instances or reconstructions based on the inconsistencies of the system.

Vowels.

1) Combinations of glides with vowels are treated differently in the language of the RV and in Skr. There is an automatic rule of the complementary distribution of glides in combinations of Skr. : it has a consonantal quality before a vowel, and a vocalic one before a consonant, e.g. : *vy-akti-, vy-ūha-*, but *vi-pakṣa-, vi-vāda-; sv-asti-, sv-ojas-*, but *su-bhaga-, su-labha-*. There exists no such automatism in the distribution of variants of glides in the RV. The complementary character of the distribution is violated by the spreading of vocalic variants to positions characteristic in Skr. only of consonantal ones. Within a word, it is met first of all at morpheme-junctions, e.g. between a prefix and a root : *ní-ak-, ni-áyana-, ni-okas-, ví-uṣṭi-, vi-enas-, ví-oman-*; a root and a suffix : *yúj-ia-, ahan-ia-*, as well as between a stem-forming vowel and an inflexion, cp., e.g., the paradigm of declension of the *tanū́*-type : sg. Acc. *tanú-am*, I. *tanú-ā*, D. *tanú-e*, Abl.-G. *tanú-as*, L. *tanú-i*; du. N.-Acc.-V. *tanú-ā*; pl. N.-Acc. *tanú-as* (the same being relevant for the *vṛkī́*-type). The vocalic treatment of a glide before a vowel is also possible within a morpheme, e.g. : *siá-/syá-* "that", *tuám/tvám* "you", etc.[8]. It is quite usual at the junction of two members of a compound, e.g. : *drú-anna-, paśu-iṣ-*.

2) Long vowels in certain grammatical forms and lexical items can be scanned as two syllables : the inflexion of the G.pl. *-ām*, Abl. sg. *-āt*, N.-Acc.-V.pl. *-ās, -āsas*, the *-ā-* of the subjunctive mood, the

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8. The problem of the limits of application of the Sievers law in the RV is discussed elsewhere — cp. Т.Я. Елизаренкова. Исследования по диахронической фонологии индоарийских языков, Москва, 1974, p. 23 ff.

inflexion of the Acc.pl. -*īs*. The radical vowel of some short words can also be scanned, e.g., that of the root injunctives, like *dās* or *bhūt* (2 syllables), as well as long vowels representing **ṝ* in root nouns, like *gīrbhís, dhūrṣú* (3 syllables). Such an extension of long vowels can take place only in certain positions of the metrical scheme — in the end of a pada or a stanza, i.e. always before a caesura. But since it is met with only in a limited number of grammatical forms, and never occurs in other forms in the same phonetic environment, Renou does not recognize this phenomenon as a purely metrical one[9]. No matter of what nature it is, it should be noted that the pronunciation of long vowels as two syllables is in principle possible in the language of the RV, and that under certain conditions all the simple vowels can be treated like that.

If the so-called " diphthongal " long vowels are scanned, it results in a sequence of vowels of different quality. As a matter of fact, it is the question of -*e*-, occurring in Sandhi in the superlatives in -*iṣṭha*- from the roots in -*ā*, having an optional variant in -*aï*-, e.g. : *jyéṣṭha-/jyáïṣṭha-* (*jyā-*), *déṣṭha-/dáïṣṭha-* (*dā-*), *dhéṣṭha-/dháïṣṭha-* (*dhā-*). However, the existence of an epenthetic consonant -*y*- cannot be excluded in this group of forms.

Skr. does not know of such scanning of long vowels in metrical texts. This testifies to the statement that the limits of " poetic licence " in a language are conditioned by its system.

3) The rules of external Sandhi of vowels are non-obligatory in the language of the RV, which is not always graphically fixed. The absence of the contraction of vowels of the same or of different quality, is widely admissible here, e.g. : *uktha-arká-* " recitation and hymn ", *su-uktá-* " hymn " (lit. " well said "), *gó-opaśa-* " furnished with a twist of leather straps ", *gó-r̥jīka-* " prepared with milk " (in the last two instances, however, the first member may be pronounced as *gav-*), *iddhó ájman* (I, 112, 17), *śr̥ṇve ádha* (IV, 17, 10), *tvé indra* (II, 11, 12), *jáhāti ápracetasaḥ* (IX, 64, 20). In Skr. the Sandhi of vowels is applied in the same automatic way as that of consonants, and hiatus functions as a Grenzsignal (resulting from certain rules of Sandhi), and it is much less frequent than in the RV.

Due to the above-mentioned peculiarities, various types of vowel combinations are admissible in the RV : those of phonemes and their variants. It is known that different kinds of vowel combinations are characteristic first of all of the MIA. It is but natural that there this phenomenon is found in a fully developed state. In the Dramatic Prakrits, for instance, numerous different vowel combinations are

9. L. RENOU, *Grammaire de la langue védique*, Lyon-Paris, 1952, p. 31.

admitted (up to those of 4 members), the types of consonant combinations being very restricted[10]. However, it is the same distributive tendency at work, which is absolutely alien to Skr.

4) There are individual cases in the RV of variants of words with *e/aya, ayi, o/ava*, e.g. : *deṣṇá-/dayiṣṇá-* " gift ", " offering ", *préṣṭha-/práyiṣṭha-* " dearest " (*prī-*), *śréṣṭha-/śráyiṣṭha-* " best " (*śrī-*), *ogaṇá-* " despised " — cp. Skr. *avagaṇa-* id.[11], *śroṇá-* " lame " — cp. Skr. *śrávaṇa-* id. The transition *aya, ayi > e, ava > o* is characteristic of MIA.

5) There are separate cases of a vocalic treatment of *r̥* in the RV, e.g. :

víkaṭa- " horrible "	— *víkr̥ta-* " deformed "
kitavá- " gambler "	— cp. *kr̥tá-* " the lucky or winning die "
gehía- " domestic wealth "	— cp. *gr̥há-* " house "
śithirá- " loose "	— cp. *áśr̥thita-* " not loosened " (*śrath-*).

It should be remembered that not a single MIA language possesses a syllabic sonant, those of OIA being represented by a vocalic reflex.

Consonants.

1) Consonant clusters are less stable in the language of the RV than in Skr. Belonging to the same OIA type, both the languages are characterized by consonant clusters. But in Skr. these clusters are richer and more diverse in their structure both in the middle and in the beginning of the word. Besides, the syntagmatic treatment of these clusters is different in the two languages. Renou mentioned that the main peculiarity of the Skr. consonant clusters consists in their faculty to remain. Their simplification is anomalous[12]. There was an opposite tendency in the language of the RV — to break up certain types of consonant clusters by all possible means. It is explained in the *Prātiśākhya*s (including the *R̥k-prātiśākhya*), how according to their structure consonantal clusters should be broken up by means of different vowels. Those with *r* should be broken up by a *svarabhakti-*

10. For details see : В.В. Вертоградова. Структурная типология среднеиндийских фонологиуеских систем, Москва, 1967.

11. Inscribing the word *ogaṇá* in the list of (pre-) Prakritisms, Renou at the same time stresses its ambiguity — cp. *Grammaire de la langue védique*, pp. 13-14; otherwise H. OLDENBERG, who compares it with *úgaṇā* of the Sāmaveda and Yajurveda, and with the Pr. *oyaṇa* — cp. *R̥gveda, Textkritische und exegetische Noten, Siebentes bis zehntes Buch*, Berlin, 1912, p. 297.

12. L. RENOU, *Grammaire sanscrite*, I, Paris, 1930, p. 5.

vowel, those with a nasal by a *sphoṭana*-vowel, those with a glide by means of vocalization of the glide.

Metrical evaluation of some words with consonantal clusters has shown that those clusters could be equal to a syllable — cp. such cases of pronunciation as *ind°ra-* beside *indra-*, *yaj°ná-* beside *yajñá-*, etc. Sometimes the anaptyctic vowel is fixed by writing, as in *jyók/jiyók*, *smát/sumát*, its quality being conditioned by the following consonant.

There exists a similar type of treatment of consonantal clusters in MIA — cp., e.g., forms with an anaptyctic vowel, as Pa. *ariya-* (Skr. *arya-*), *paduma-* (Skr. *padma-*); Māh. *raaṇa-*, Šaur. *radaṇa-*, Mg. *ladaṇa-* (Skr. *ratna-*).

2) Individual words with complete or partial assimilation within consonantal clusters can be found in the language of the RV. There are instances of palatal assimilation, as in *jyótis* with *dyut-*, *jyók/jiók* with *dyúbhiḥ*, *dyūn*; *vṛścáti* with *yūpa-vraská-*; and of assimilation in voice, as in *śagmá-* with *śákman-*.

This tendency has been consecutively carried out during all the stages of development of MIA. As a result of it, the number of permissible intervocalic consonantal clusters in late MIA *Apabhraṃśa* was reduced to a minimum.

3) There can be found in the RV individual cases of voicing of single intervocalic stops, e.g. :

1. *arbhaká-* "small", "young" (6 times) — *árbhaga-* "young" (I, 116, 1)
2. *pārá-* "the further bank" — *jihmá-bāra-* "having an aperture on one side"
   nīcína-bāra- "having its opening below"
3. *nāthitá-* "one who needs help" — *nādhitá-* id.
   anāthá- "helpless" — *nādhamāna-* "seeking help"
4. *átha/áthā* "then", "and", "therefore" — *ádha/ádhā* id. (the main, more frequent variant)[13].

There are also other examples, not so obvious as the above ones.

In all the Pr. (except Paiśācī) single intervocalic stops became weak, which resulted phonetically in their gradual sonorization, further spirantization, and often in their complete loss.

13. The same form of these words, viz. *áthā* and *ádhā*, is recognized by many authors, cf. one of the recent works : A. ETTER, *Die Fragesätze im Rigveda*, Berlin, New York, 1985 (p. 40). A different viewpoint is expressed by J. S. KLEIN, « *Áthā, ádha* and a typology of Rigvedic conjunction », IIJ 20.3 (1980), pp. 195-219.

4) Some words in the RV have optional variants with a voiced aspirated stop and *h* (mainly within the root), e.g. :

1. *kakuhá-* "lofty", "high" — *kakúbh-* "summit"
2. *duh-* "to milk" p. med. *dúhāna-* — *dúghāna-* id., *dúghā* "milch cow"
3. *ruh-* "to grow" 3 sg. pr. *róhati* — *ródhati* id., 3 sg. inj. *ródhat* (rare) (frequent)
   upārúh- "sprout", "shoot" — cp. *vīrúdh-* "plant"
4. *sahá* "with" — *sadhá* id.
   sahá-vīra- "with heroes" — *sadha-vīra-* id.
5. *dhā* "to put", "to place"
   pp. *hitá-* "placed" — cp *sú-dhita-* "well placed"
   devá-hiti- "arrangement of gods" — cp. *vásu-dhiti-* "a treasury"
6. *harṣ-* "to rejoice"
   hṛṣívant- "mirthful" — cp. *ghṛṣu-* id., *ghṛṣvi-* id.
7. *han-* "to kill"
   3 sg. pr. *hánti* — 3 pl. *ghnánti*

— the verb retains this variation both in the same and in different paradigms (cp. 3 sg. pr. *jíghnate*, pf. *jaghāna*, int. *jánghanat*, des. *jíghāṃsati*).

On the synchronic level one might mention here also *arh-*, *arhati* "to deserve" — cp. *sahasra-arghá-* "equivalent to a thousand" in spite of their different correspondences in Avestan.

The loss of obstruent articulation by the aspirated stops (first of all in an intervocalic position) is characteristic of the MIA distribution model of consonants, and this is testified already in the Ashokan Pr.[14]. But even in those early Pr., initial consonants (at first inside a rythmical unit) were sometimes also involved in this process, as, for instance, in *bhoti/hoti* (Skr. *bhavati*). Voiced aspirates were affected in the first place. Therefore, one can say in general that, no matter what the details are, the change between a voiced aspirate and *h* in phonetic variants of a word is a MIA trait.

5) In a number of words in the RV one can find the cerebral nasal *ṇ* in positions where it is neither conditioned by the rules of cerebralization, nor can it be explained by a reconstructed archetype or as a borrowing from a substratum language, viz. *niṇyá-* "concealed", *maṇi-* "a jewel", *sthūṇā-* "the pillar of a house", etc. Mayrhofer calls these cases spontaneous cerebralization, treating them as elements of a future system, with which the phonetic material of the RV is interspersed[15]. It is well known that in Pr. cerebralization was carried

14. See, e.g. : J. BLOCH, *Les inscriptions d'Asoka*, Paris, 1950 (pp. 52-53).
15. M. MAYRHOFER, "Über spontanen Zerebralnasal im frühen Indo-Arischen", *Mélanges d'indianisme*, Paris, 1968, pp. 509-517; also T. BURROW, BSOAS 33, 1971, pp. 46-54.

to great lengths. In such late Pr. as Māhārāṣṭrī, Śaurasenī and Māgadhī, the cerebral *ṇ* is a phoneme, the dental *n* being its variant in combination with a homorganic occlusive [16].

6) There is a form *prắüga-* "the forepart of the shafts of a chariot" in X, 130, 3 (i.e. in the later part of the RV) with the MIA hiatus in place of the lost intervocalic glide *-y-*. Another case is *titaü-* "sieve" in X, 71, 2; this is morphologically less transparent and can be treated in the same way only if its etymological connection with the root *taṃs-/tas-* "to shake" is correct [17].

It should be said, in conclusion, that in the field of phonetics — phonology of the RV both general systematic tendencies of a MIA character and MIA traits in individual words are visible on the syntagmatic axis through the OIA model.

MORPHOLOGY

The paradigm of nominal declension in the RV differs from that in Skr. in some peculiar inflexions, and partly also in the combinability of types of stems and inflexions, the possibilities of morpheme combinations in Ved. being wider in general than those in Skr. [18].

Emphasis was usually laid on paradigmatic isoglottic lines which connect Ved. with different MIA languages outside Skr. It is the question of MIA reflexes of some Ved. inflexions, i.e. : Ved. N. pl. *-āsas* — Pa., Ash. Pr. [19] *-āse* (some vagueness remaining in the explanation of the final vowel); Ved. N.-Acc. du. n. *-ā, -ī, -ū* — Ash. Pr. N.-Acc. pl. n. *-ā,* Pa. *-ī, -ū* [20].

In the language of the RV the inflexion of I. pl. *-ebhis* can be added to the *a-* stems (the corresponding inflexion in Skr. being *-ais*), which has its parallel in the MIA *-ehi,* the only inflexion of this most productive type of nominal stem.

Similar common systematic characteristics, along the syntagmatic axis of the language of the RV and the MIA, seem to be of no less

16. Cp. В.В. Вертоградова, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

17. Cp. M. MAYRHOFER, *KEWA*.

18. For details see : Т.Я. Елизаренкова, Ведийский и санскрит : вариации лингвистического типа. — Вопросы языкознания, 3, Москва, 1980, p. 24 ff.

19. Cp. M. A. MEHENDALE, *Aśokan inscriptions in India*, Bombay, 1948, p. 28. [But see J. BLOCH, *Les inscriptions d'Asoka*, Paris, 1950, p. 59. According to L. ALSDORF, *se* = Skr. *tad* (particle), *S. K. De,* Felicitation Volume, Poona, 1960, pp. 258-9 = K. S., pp. 437-8].

20. However, J. BLOCH notes that one cannot be sure whether the Pa. neutral form *akkhī* should be derived from the Ved. dual or from *akkhīni*, like *mūlā(ni)*. — Cp. *Indo-Aryan*, p. 134.

importance than the paradigmatic identity of separate inflexions. Greater variation is typical of both the Ved. and the MIA types of nominal paradigms. In contradistinction to Skr., one and the same combination of grammemes can be expressed by various forms. Thus, N. pl. m. has the inflexions *-ās* and *-āsas,* N.-Acc. pl. n. *-ā* and *-āni,* I. pl. of the *-a-* stems *-ais* and *-ebhis,* etc. Ved. paradigms in general are characterized by a less strict and obligatory character of junction of stems and inflexions of certain types. Cp., e.g., the existence of a consonantal type of inflexion in a paradigmatic class of stems in a long vowel : *vṛkī́* — Acc. sg. *vṛkíam, tanū́* — *tanúam,* along with the vocalic one in another paradigmatic class of stems of similar structure : *devī́* — Acc. sg. *devī́m.* Cp. also separate forms with consonantal inflexion added to the stems in a short vowel : *ari-* — Acc. sg. *aryám* (beside *arím*), *páśu-/paśú-* — D. sg. *páśve* (beside *paśáve*), Abl.-G. sg. *paśvás* (beside *paśós*), etc. As to the MIA nominal paradigms, their most typical feature is the existence of variants built by analogy to the corresponding forms of the productive vocalic types of stems, e.g., Pa. *rājan-,* I. sg. *raññā, rājinā, rājena*; D.-G. sg. *rañño, rājino, rājassa, raññassa.* One can see that the trend of variability in the two systems is of a different nature. The system of nominal inflexion in Ved. is spreading out widely, while in MIA inflexion in general, and the nominal one in particular, are in the process of gradual reduction. All the same, common syntagmatic characteristics are rather substantial in both the systems, and the situation cannot be explained only by the non-normalized character of Ved. and MIA, as compared to Skr. [21].

The same tendency towards variation can be found in the declension of pronouns, both personal and demonstrative in the language of the RV and in MIA. It is significant that some variants of pronouns met in the RV can be found in this or that MIA language, though they are absent in Skr. E.g., the form *asmé* in the RV can function in the paradigm of the declension of the 1st pl. personal pronoun as D.-G.-L. In later Pr. this form functions as N.-Acc. pl., while in Skr. it does not exist at all.

Among individual pronominal isoglosses, connecting the language of the RV with MIA, one should note the disyllabic N. sg. of the 2nd sg. personal pronoun : RV *tuvám* — Pa., Pr. *tuvaṃ*; pronominal adjectives : RV *tyá-/tiá-* "that", *tva-/tua-,* "some" (rare) — Pa. L. sg. *tyamhi* and N. sg. *tumo* [22]. Finally, the noun *tanū́-* "body" is used

21. See : SUKUMAR SEN, *Comparative grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan*, Calcutta, 1951, pp. 76-77.

22. See : W. GEIGER, *Pāli, Literatur und Sprache*, Strassburg, 1916, p. 97. True, Geiger assumes that the Pa. *tumo* may be connected with the Ved. *tman.*

in the RV as a reflexive pronoun "oneself", while in Skr. it is the noun *ātman* "spirit" which is used. Corresponding forms derived from the Ṛgvedic usage are testified in the N.-W. Ash. Pr. and in Niya (which is genetically connected with the N.-W. of the IA area) [23].

The verb in the RV differs from that in Skr. in some paradigmatic and syntagmatic parameters. The difference in the set of moods is rather significant on the paradigmatic axis. The injunctive (inj.) does not make an independent mood in Skr. (only separate forms with the prohibitive particle *mā* being used), and there exists no subjunctive (subj.) mood (its meanings in Ved. being divided in Skr. between the future tense and the optative).

It is the general opinion that the inj. in the RV is an archaism, contrary to the system of differentiated tenses and moods as a whole. According to Renou, the inj. is used in the RV with a stylistic purpose in mythological passages [24]. The invariant meaning of this grammeme was established by K. Hoffmann as "memorative" (the mentioning of an action, and not its description) [25]. This mood is also ambiguous in its form in the RV, having augmentless stems of the imperfect or of the aorist. Their meaning is interpreted according to the context either as temporal (present — past — future), or as modal [26]. After the RV the inj. as a mood decreased rapidly.

There is a peculiarity, concerning MIA, which deserves special attention. All the MIA languages which retain an inflexional paradigm in the past tense (that is, early MIA : Ash. Pr., and Pa., as well as Ardha-Māgadhī) possess an augmentless preterit with the stem of an imperfect or an aorist and secondary personal endings. The forms of the augmentless preterit in Pa. are regularly connected, on the one hand, with a certain structure of the stem (that in -*e*-) and a certain inflexional type (the sigmatic one), e.g. : *cintesi* "he thought"; on the other, they can function as optional variants in the personal paradigms of the past tense of a different structure, e.g. : *agami* and *gami* "he went" [27]. The use of the augment in Ash. Pr. is optional —

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23. Sukumar Sen, *Comparative grammar*, p. 87.
24. Cp. L. Renou, "Les formes dites d'injonctif dans le Ṛgveda". — *Étrennes de linguistique E. Benveniste*, Paris, 1928, pp. 63-80.
25. K. Hoffmann, *Der Injunktiv im Veda : eine synchronische Funktionsuntersuchung*, Heidelberg, 1967.
26. For details see : Т.Я. Елизаренкова. Грамматика ведийского языка, Москва 1982, pp. 281-283.
27. About the mutual relations between the type of inflexion and that of stem in the Pa. preterit see : T. Y. Elizarenkova, V. N. Toporov, *The Pāli language*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 96-97.

cp. variants of the same inscription from various places : G. *ahuṃsu*, K. *husu*, Sh. *abhuvasu*, M. *husu* (VIII, 26-30) [28].

Ardha-Māgadhī is the only MIA language which has only an augmentless paradigm in the past tense (beside participles functioning as predicates). It is a paradox that forms of this paradigm have an inflexion which derives from the personal inflexion of the past tense, but in the verbal system of Ardha-Māgadhī it does not express the category of person, but only that of number. E.g., the verb *hasa-* "to laugh "has the 1, 2, 3 sg. pret. *hasittha* — the 1, 2, 3 pl. pret. *hasiṃsu* [29].

The use of the inj. in the function of an augmentless preterit is a remarkable isogloss, connecting the language of the RV with early MIA. This peculiarity is of a systematic nature in early MIA. As long as the language possessed a personal inflexional paradigm in the past tense, augmentless forms were used side by side with the augmented ones. From this viewpoint, the use of separate inj. forms with the prohibitive particle *mā* in MIA is not diagnostic, because it is familiar not only in the RV, but in Skr. as well.

Another mood well represented in the RV, but absent in Skr., is the subj. In spite of the fact that in MIA in general the subj. was rapidly ousted by the optative, there are separate forms in Ash. Pr. with primary endings and the -*ā*- of the subj., such as the 3 sg, *huvāti*, the 2 pl. *bhavātha*, the 3 sg. *vitarāti*, etc. [30].

Finally, there are some paradigmatic isoglosses, connecting the non-finite forms of the verb of the RV and MIA. Though it is particular phenomena that are dealt with here, these forms should not be neglected. The most frequent affix of the gerund formed from a root without a prefix is -*tvī*, -*tvā* being rare. In Skr. the affix -*tvī* is not known, and the only affix, possessing the same function, is -*tvā*. The affix -*tu* prevails in the N.-W, Ash. Pr., but side by side with it there are separate forms with -*ti*, e.g. : Sh. *tiṭhiti, vijiniti, aloceti*. J. Bloch finds it difficult to interpret them, and does not express his opinion about the etymology : Pr. -*ti* < Ved. -*tvī* [31], which is supported by other authorities.

The most frequent of the RV types of the infinitives have different kinds of the Dative inflexion. The infinitives in -*tum* are the rarest

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28. J. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 111, 26-30.
29. See : A. M. Ghatage, *Introduction to Ardha-Māgadhī*, Kolhapur, 1951, p. 112.
30. See : Sukumar Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 113, M. A. Mehendale, *op. cit.*, p. 45. [But also see J. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 77; R. L. Turner, *Collected Papers*, London, 1975, p. 328; H. Smith, "Les deux prosodies du vers bouddhique", *Bull. Soc. Royale des Lettres de Lund*, 1949-50, p. 34 and n. 3, etc.].
31. J. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

among all the varieties, and it is just this affix which is used as the sole means of forming gerunds in Skr. The D. infinitive in -*tave* was the main type in the Ash. Pr., e.g. : G. *chamitave*; D. J., etc., *ālādhayitave*,while the infinitive in -*tu* (< -*tum*) is met only once : G. *ārādhetu*. Besides, in Ardha-Māgadhī, this literary Pr., which is regarded by the native tradition as a language of independent origin, that is not as conditioned by Skr. as the other MIA languages [32], D. infinitives in -*ittae*/-*ettae* function together with the Acc. ones in -*um*/-*ium*. Acc. infinitives in -*tum*/-*itum* prevail in Pa., though D. infinitives of different structure in -*tave*, -*tāye*, -*tuye*, -*āya* are also used, e.g. : *kātum*, *pucchitum*, *netave*, *dakkhitāye*, *marituye*, *dassanāya*.

Thus, all these non-finite forms of the verb in the RV and in MIA are characterized by the variation of affixes, expressing the same grammatical meaning, which distinguishes them from those of Skr.

SYNTAX

Some syntactic peculiarities of the language of the RV, which are usually explained either as archaisms, or as " poetical licence" of the Ṛṣis, are paralleled in MIA.

There is a well known syntactic peculiarity of the language of the RV, which consists in the use of clipped case forms beside the characterized ones. The fact of the matter is that the case form is not clipped mechanically, but in such a way that the remaining part of the word is equal to a meaningful form, the stem coinciding usually with the N. sg., L. sg. or with some other case form. E.g. : *samít-samit sumánā bodhy asmé*/*śucā-śucā sumatim rāsi vásvaḥ* (III, 4, 1). "With each piece of firewood be kind to us, with each flach of fire give us favour of the god!". Inflexional and clipped forms occupy symmetric positions in the pada, the marked initial one. The same can be found in the final position of the pada, e.g. : *ádabdhebhis táva gopábhir iṣṭe* (VI, 8, 7) "With your protectors devoid of fraud, desired...", where the last word *iṣṭe* does not have the ending -*bhis* (the same in I, 143, 8).

Renou treats syncopated inflexions in his " Grammaire de la langue védique" either as a result of haplology or as that of analogy of alternative forms, like -*ā*/-*āni*, -*ās*/-*āsas* [33]. He remarks elsewhere that the syncope of endings in the RV is a stylistic phenomenon, mentioning by the way that similar forms are also met in Pa. verses,

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32. See : B.B. Вертоградова, Пракриты, Москва, 1978, p. 17.
33. L. RENOU, *Grammaire de la langue védique*, pp. 83-84.

Jain prose, Pr. and Ap., where it is regarded as the beginning of the decay of the case system [34].

In this connection one can put the question about the possibility of interpreting the syncope of endings in the RV as a MIA characteristic, and the above given examples as cases of group inflexion, which is well attested by Pr. — cp., e.g., Niya : *Khema Khotamnade* 272 "from Khema and Khotan" [35]. It sometimes happens that, in a number of Pr., among nouns having the same case meaning, only the last one is inflected, the rest being represented by a pure stem equal in form to the N.-Acc. sg.

In the language of the RV structurally and semantically vague case forms are used sporadically, which contradicts the whole elaborate system of declensional paradigms, differing in their stem formation. Sometimes these are *i*- stems with the lengthening of the final vowel, having the meaning of several cases. They have usually the meaning of I. sg., e.g. : *yáḥ sunvántam ávati yáḥ pácantam*|*yáḥ śaṃsantaṃ yáḥ śaśamānám ūtí* (II, 12, 14) "Who supports with his aid the soma pressing (man), who the cooking (man), who the reciting (man), who the (man) toiling (at the rite)..." (*ūtí* being equivalent to *ūtiā* here). It may have the meaning of I. pl., e.g. : *prāvo divodāsaṃ citrābhir ūtí* (VI, 26, 5). "You supported Divodāsa with your wonderful (I. pl.) aids" (with *ūtí* equivalent to *ūtibhis*). Now and then it has the meaning of D. sg., close to that of a D. infinitive, e.g. *marútvān no bhavatv índra ūtí* (I, 100, 1-15) "Let Indra together with Maruts be for our help! (with *ūtí* equivalent to *ūtáye*). Cp. a similar construction with *bhū*- in the imperative, and the D. inf. : *asmākam íd vṛdhé bhava* (I, 79, 11) "Be only for our reinforcement!" or : *svādman bhavantu pītáye mádhūni* (X, 29, 6) "Let the sweet (streams of Soma) be tasty for drinking" [36]. As can be seen in the afore-cited examples, the short ambiguous form *ūtí* occupies always the final position in a pada. In the same way, the stem *suvṛktí* " praise" is sometimes used in the same position with the meaning of the I. sg. (I, 61, 2, etc.).

Should these and similar cases in the RV be interpreted only as "poetic licence"? It should be remembered that the limits admissible for "poetic licence" in a given language depend on its system. For instance there is no place for such "licence" in Skr. poetry. One should not exclude the possibility that pure nominal stems, having the

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34. L. RENOU, Introduction générale, p. 54, n. 75.
35. This peculiarity is noted by T. BURROW — see : *The language of the Kharoṣṭhi documents from Chinese Turkestan*, Cambridge, 1937, p. 25.
36. RENOU, however, understands *ūtí*, in I, 100, 1-15 in a different way, translating this refrain as : "... que, accompagné des Marut, il vienne à nous avec sa protection!" — *Études védiques et pāninéennes*, t. XVII, Paris, 1969, p. 33.

meaning of different cases, and being used by the poets in the end of a pada, when there remained a fixed number of syllables required by the metrical scheme, were comprehensible to the Ved. audience, just because in their everyday language these pure stems could be used in the broad sense, their meaning depending on the context. This use is characteristic of MIA syntax [37].

Finally, it is known that occasional instances of broken agreement in number and gender are found in the RV. First of all, cases of incomplete expression of the plural grammeme by neutral nouns (which had been noticed already by Renou [38]) should be mentioned here. This is expressed by alternative constructions, e.g. : *vásu... divyắni* (IX, 36, 5), *divyắni... vásūni* (IX, 14, 8) "celestial riches" — cp. in this connection the weakening of the grammeme of the neutral gender in MIA until its complete annihilation in Niya.

Separate cases of broken agreement in number should also be mentioned here, e.g. : *ubhắ... mātárā* (I, 140, 3) "both (m.) the mothers", which can also be regarded as the result of MIA influence [39].

One should say, in conclusion, that the state of things in the RV makes one admit in its language the existence not only of separate lexical borrowings, possessing a MIA phonetic aspect, but that of Pr. tendencies, which can be traced on all linguistic levels : phonetic/phonological, morphological and syntactic. That gives grounds for supposing that there might be two kinds of language in the period when the hymns of the RV were composed : a hieratic language of the religion of an OIA linguistic type, which is known as Ved. proper, and another one, a colloquial speech, used by the Ṛṣis in their everyday life and belonging to the MIA type (or being strongly marked by MIA tendencies). Both kinds of language seem to have the same dialectal basis. There is hope that a further investigation of the language of the RV from the viewpoint of this hypothesis may make clearer some peculiarities of the linguistic situation of the Aryans in that far away period.

37. Cp., e.g., the general ambiguity of the inflexions -*ī*, -*ū* in Pr. — see : В.В. Вертоградова, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69, or the functioning of the pure nominal stem in Niya.
38. See : RENOU, *Grammaire... védique*, p. 336.
39. See : SUKUMAR SEN, *Historical syntax*, p. 1.

RÉSUMÉ

A PROPOS DES TRACES D'UNE BASE DIALECTALE PRAKRITE DANS LA LANGUE DU ṚGVEDA

La langue du RV sera examinée d'un point de vue « interne », l'attention se concentrera sur le système (non sur des faits de détail isolés, quel que soit leur archaïsme ou leur intérêt). On verra que, par différents traits, ce système a des affinités avec le « prakrit » (le terme est à prendre dans sa valeur linguistique, sans implication chronologique), et se sépare du sanskrit classique. Le fait se vérifie à plusieurs niveaux : phonétique et phonologique, morphologique, syntaxique.

Une partie des formes optionnelles du RV relève d'un système phonologique dont plusieurs traits se retrouvent en m. i. (voyelles en hiatus, résolution de voyelles longues en deux brèves dans certaines formes grammaticales, échanges *aya* ~ *e, ava* ~ *o*, remplacement de *ṛ* par une voyelle brève d'autre timbre, diérèse, assimilation de groupes consonantiques, sonorisation de sourdes intervocaliques, désocclusion d'occlusives sonores aspirées, cérébralisation spontanée...). Certains morphèmes et formes du RV (optionnels ou non), n'ont pas de parallèle en sk. mais se retrouvent dans divers m. i. (déclinaison (pro)nominale, formes secondaires sans augment (injonctif, prétérit), absolutif en -*tvī*, infinitifs). En syntaxe, l'existence de formes « syncopées » et des confusions de genre et de nombre fournissent des parallèles significatifs.

On peut ainsi déceler, dans la langue du RV, des tendances comparables à celles qui se trouvent réalisées en m. i. : on peut donc supposer que les hymnes du RV ont été composés à une époque où deux langues coexistaient : une langue hiératique de type vieil indo-aryen (le védique, à proprement parler), et une langue parlée usuelle, que les ṛṣi employaient dans la vie courante, et qui appartenait au type m. i.). Ces deux langues paraissent avoir eu la même base dialectale. On peut espérer, à partir de cette hypothèse, élucider quelques particularités de la situation linguistique des Aryens à cette époque reculée.