

Apām Napāt, Dīrghatamas and the Construction of the Brick Altar
Analysis of RV 1.143

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Introduction

The paper presents the translation and interpretation of RV 1.143, the newer and stronger vision of *Dīrghatamas*. RV 1.143 belongs to the *Dīrghatamas* cycle, a group of 25 hymns in the present arrangement of the *Śākalya*-recension that is attributed traditionally to *Dīrghatamas*. The hymn has caused endless frustration among Vedic scholars and no consensus on its significance and meaning has been achieved yet. It is a laudation to both *Agni* and *Apām Napāt*. I will show that the intertwining imagery of the hymn gives *Agni* a unique cosmological significance unparalleled in contemporary sacerdotal poetry.

Preliminary notes on translation

Here comes a list that contains seemingly more or less trivial but important statements about translation.

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. Sāyana's interpretation of RV 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 RV 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. the replacement of *ajarāḥ* by *amarāḥ* in RV 1.143.3 by Ludwig.

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 *aktún* (masc. Pl. Acc.) in RV 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 metric is preferable to a solution that does. Cf. *á yáḥ púram nármiṇīm ádīded*, RV 1.149.3 in the metrically restored (!) edition of Holland and van Nooten; or the same verse in Witzel (*á yáḥ púram · nármiṇīm ádīded*).

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 RV 8.41 by the redactors. Nevertheless, such an early intrusion can provide us a lot of useful information.

(7. A profound solution is preferable to a simplistic one.)

Translation of RV 1.143.

A newer and stronger vision to Agni

Let us start the analysis with an important observation: neither the poet (matronymic name/maternal lineage)¹, nor the theme (*Apām Nápāt*, *Iṣṭi*, anointment of the cosmic/creative *Agni*), nor the form of the poem (application of pure rhymes in 1ab, 1cd, 2ab, *agnáye – bhare, priyó – rtvíyah, víomani – mātariśvane*) fits the usual pattern of Ṛgvedic poetry. The hymn is *Dīrghatamas*' newer and stronger vision to *Agni*/*Apām Nápāt*:

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

The problem of Apām Nápāt

The most important and most difficult part of the vision is verse 3 so I will discuss it in greater detail. However, without taking into account the complex roles *Apām Nápāt* (and *Agni*) could play a proper understanding of the subtle imagery of the verse is not possible.

Apām Nápāt occurs only in a few hymns of the Ṛgveda: in 1.22.6a, 1.143.1c, 2.31.6d, 2.35.1c, 2.35.2c, 2.35.3d, 2.35.9a, 2.35.10b, 3.9.1c, 6.50.13b, 6.52.14b, 7.34.15a, 7.47.2b, 10.30.3b, 10.30.14d, 10.92.13b. There is an entire hymn of the *Gṛtsamāda* clan (2.35) that laudates *Apām Nápāt* exclusively. Another possible form is *apām gárbho* that occurs in 1.70.3a, 1.164.52b, 3.1.12d, 3.1.13a, 3.5.3b, 7.9.3d, 9.97.41b. This form does not occur in the 2nd Maṇḍala. Neither *Apām Nápāt* nor *apām gárbho* occurs in the 4th, 5th and 8th Maṇḍala. In Book 9 only *apām gárbho* occurs.

We can see that in the 1st, 3rd and 7th Maṇḍala both forms occur, in the *Dīrghatamas*-cycle *Apām Nápāt* occurs only in 1.143 while *apām gárbho* occurs at the end of the Riddle hymn (1.164.52b).

The problematic nature of *Apām Nápāt* is evident from the discrepancies of his numerous scholarly interpretations: sun, lightning, old name for Moon, water spirit, *Soma*, *Varuṇa*, god of waters, the horse-shaped sun-fire in the waters (Findly 1979, Parpola 2005). In the quest for a sound interpretation Dumézil turned to Indo-European mythology to find some clues. Findly summarizes the results of his comparative analysis in the following way: "We can see ... that the myths from the Old Irish, Roman, and Iranian sources have four major themes: 1) a burning or glowing element 2) hidden in the midst of the waters 3) attainable only by those who are qualified and forbidden to those who are not, 4) but whose illegitimate attempts to claim the element result in the overflowing of the waters." (Findly 1979, p.176)

What Findly tries to show is that all the four major themes can also be found in the Ṛgveda but with a gradual shift of emphasis from the "natural" water forms (streams, rivers, lakes, seas, rains, and snows) to the "ritual" ones (the water used in the preparation of oblations and other kinds of liquid offerings, i. e., milk, ghee, *Soma*, and honey) culminating in the ritual mixing of the *Vasatīvarī* and *Ekadhanā* waters in the course of the *Aponaptrīya* ceremony of the *Soma*-ritual.

Some remarks on the Aponaptrīya ceremony

The following questions arise naturally: What ritual activities precede its performance and what activities follow it? What (if any) special ritual constructions are present in the scene in the course of the *Aponaptrīya* ceremony?

At the time of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* there are two ritual enclosures present. Besides the *vedi* there is also an *uttaravedi* (U) in the scene. The old *Āhavanīya* (OA) has already become the new *Gārhapatya* (NG). (See Fig. 1.) However, the new domestic altar is square shaped and constructed

¹ *Dīrghatamas* is called *Māmateya* in four different hymns of the Ṛgveda (two of which, 1.147.3 and 1.152.6 are probably self references) and once in a hymn of the *Vāmadeva*'s (4.4.13). In addition, he is called not only *Māmateya* (1.158.6), but also *Aucathya* patronymically twice (1.158.1) in a controversial biographical hymn that vividly describes the dramatic end of his long and fruitful life. I will discuss the intricacies of this important hymn and the life and work of *Dīrghatamas* in another paper.

from bricks (*Gārhapatyaciti*) in the place of the old offering altar, which was made of clay.²

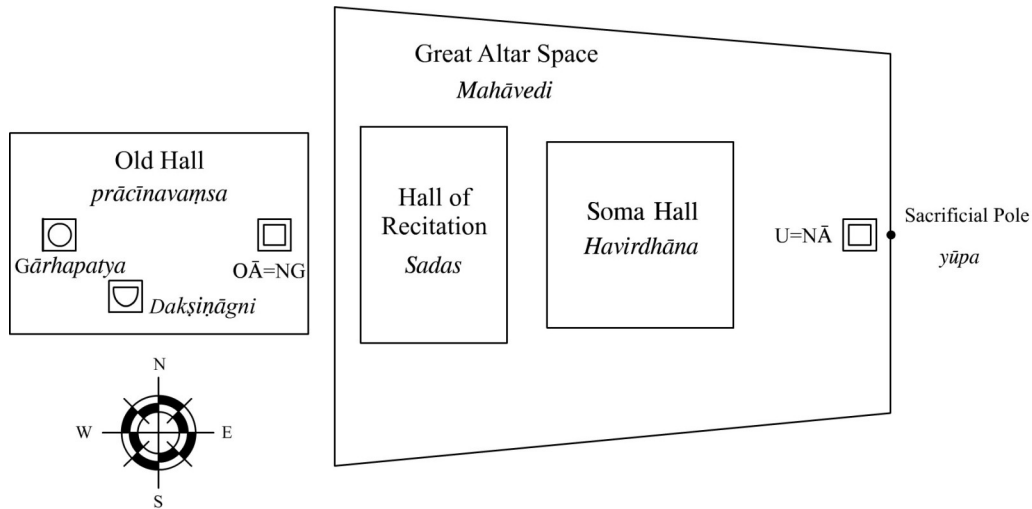


Fig. 1 Ritual Enclosures for the Soma Rituals

Whether any of the fire places or altars was made of bricks at the time of the hymn remains an open problem, but we knew that in later times not only the new domestic altar, but also the new bird shaped eastern fire-altar was made of bricks (Agnicayana). Since what time have brick constructions been present in Vedic rituals? The answer to this question is not known.

Of course, I am well aware of the fact that there is an apparent consensus among Vedic scholars of modern time on the lack of bricks in the Ṛgveda. It is enough to quote from the epoch making work of Frits Staal: “The Ṛg-Vedic references to houses indicate that they were made of perishable wood and thatch. Bricks were thus not part of the Ṛg-Vedic technical or ritual accomplishments.” (Staal 2001 (1983))

However, some of the greatest Vedic scholars of the past did not find it impossible to trace the piling up of brick altars back to the Ṛgveda. Oldenberg, for example, did not rule out that an early form of the *Agnicayana* was also present in the time of the Ṛgveda: “Perhaps we may conjecture ... that the *Agnicayana* rite in its simplest form was known already in the Ṛgveda period.” (Oldenberg, 1897, p. 286). For Eggeling, this was also possible in the context of the Puruṣa sukta (RV 10.90). Interestingly enough, Geldner saw a possible reference to it even in our present hymn (RV 1.143).³

We can see from the above comments that the *Aponaptrīya* ceremony is, at least indirectly, also connected with the construction of a brick altar during the Soma ritual complex. Since what time has the construction of a brick altar been part of the Soma ritual? Where does it come from?

Vedic fire places and the uttaravedi (Evidence of 1.149.3, RV 2.35.5 and RV 1.140.1)

Instead of relying too much on the situation at the period of the Śatapatha Brāhmana we have to find evidence for any of these constructions in the Ṛgveda (at the time of *Dīrghatamas*).

Uttaravedi – Comment on RV 1.140.1

In RV 1.140.1 (i. e. in a hymn of the *Dīrghatamas* cycle) *Agni* is called *vediśād*. This means that *Agni* sits on the *vedi*, but *Agni* can sit only on the *uttaravedi* as Hillebrandt already noticed long ago: “Because *Agni* is called *vediśād* in RV. 1.140.1, thus corresponding to the *uttaravedi* of the ritual.” (Hillebrandt, Alfred 1990 (1927, 1929), p. 379).

² One of the main theme of the *Aponaptrīya* rite is the mixing of the old and the new: “Water hath united with water, plants with plants! the sap of the sacrifice which was fetched yesterday and that fetched today, both kinds he thereby mixes together.” (ŚB 3.9.3.29) There is another possible connotation here: mixing of the old ritual and the new one. I think the two ritual enclosures and the “strange” (square shaped) form of the new domestic altar are clear signs of the conrescence of rituals. I am going to discuss this problem complex in another paper.

³ Cf. His note on RV i.143.4: In den Nabel der Erde=den Feueraltar (Geldner 1951, Vol. 33, p. 201)

Comment on RV 2.35.5⁴

The most problematic word of verse 5 is *kṛtā*. It occurs only here in the Ṛgveda.

For Geldner, the reading (*kṛtā iva*) is only one of the probable options, and he did not try to translate it. (Cf. Note 1 in Geldner 1951: 321.)

Neither did Renou: “le mot reste mysterieux” (Renou 1965: 103). Mayrhofer did not give a clear derivation, either. For him, the word was still “nicht voll geklärt.” As an excuse, he made a reference to the failure of Geldner and Renou.

Bailey’s tentative suggestion is “girl.” He identified the word with Vd 19,30 (*srīra*) *kārata*, and translated it as “(beautiful) girls/maidens,” but according to Mayrhofer this was “ohne erkennbare philologische Begründung.” On the other hand, Mayrhofer got very close to the solution when he tried to think over Bailey’s rather ad hoc conjecture: “A.a.O. auch zum Etymon von iir. **kṛtā*-‘Mädchen’; wenn es existiert hat, dann ist es eher erotischer Slang aus ‘*Spalte’.”

The most probable meaning of *kṛtā* is “holed” or “sg/sy with a hole,” e. g. the holed fireplaces. (The new innovations for the Vedic fire places (*Āhavanīya*,...) are still waiting for their invention.) So the translation is:

“Three women, goddesses, desire to bestow (*didhiṣanti*, desid. √*dhā*, ‘give’) food upon the immovable (/unshakeable, *avyathyá*, fut. part. pass. (gdv.) √*vyath*, ‘waver’) god. (It seems) as if he stretches forth (*úpa prasarsré*, pr. intens. S/3, (*úpa*) *pra*-√*sṛ*, ‘extend, stretch forth to’) to the holed ones (the holed fireplaces) in the waters while he sucks the milk of those who have brought forth (life) for the first time.”

Comment on 1.149.3⁵

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

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 reinforced 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 Mayrhofer: “*nārmiṇī*-, fem, name (or attrib.) of a *pur* (RV 1.149.3.), interpretation is uncertain, *nār*° ‘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 nārmiṇīm* in speech; but if we interpret it as a particle of comparison, the problem disappears.

“*Ná* is used in V. (very commonly in RV., 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 does. Let us see now his note on the problem: “We do not know what *nārmiṇī* 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 *Nārmiṇī*? (instead of *Nārmiṇī*, 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

4 *asmai tisró avyathiyāya nārīr devāya devīr didhiṣanti ánnam | kṛtā ivópa hí prasarsré apsú sá pīyūṣaṃ dhayati pūvasūnām ||*

5 *á yáḥ púraṃ ná ármiṇīm ádíded átyaḥ kavīr nabhanīyo ná árvā | súro ná rurukvāñ chataātmā ||*

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:

(i) In spite of the Holland–Van Nooten text the first line is: *á yáḥ púraṃ ná ármiṇīm ádided.* (ii) 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 Brāhmaṇa*, *ŚB* 6.3.3.24–25.) (iii) According to my reading the problem of *ármiṇī* is connected with the interpretation of *armaká* (RV 1.133.3) and *árma* (TS, TB+). I think the most probable meaning for *ármiṇī* (as well as *armaká*) is “firewell,” 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. Mayrhofer: “*árma*- m. (TS, TB +), dazu *armaká*- m. (RV [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. **h₂el-mo-*; dazu vřddhiert **h₂ēl-mo-* in toch. B *yolme* ‘Teich,’ Schmidt, a.a.O.) (iv) The firewell (and the sacred place) is illuminated by the hundredfold *ātman* (*súro ná rurukvāñ chatáātmā*) (and not set aflamed /set fire by it/him).

So the translation is: “Who illuminates the firewell like a sanctuary/fort, the sage (seer, *kavi*) runs like a neighing steed, the hundredfold *ātman* shines like the Sun.”

The cosmic, creative role of Apām Nápāt

Although Findly talks about RV 2.35 in great detail in his paper (Findly 1979), he omits three important verses of the hymn. The first omitted verse⁶ clearly states: “*Apām Nápāt*, the true [Lord]⁷, has created with his Asuric power (*asuríasya mahná*) all the creatures.” (2.35.2.cd)

Remarkably enough in a late Avestan text we find a passage that corroborates strengthens the evidence. “...We worship the great lord ... *Apam napā* ..., the strong one, ... who created men ..., the god who dwells in the waters, and who is the first to hear when he is worshipped.” (Yt 19.51, Hillebrandt's translation.) Of course, such a creative activity and cosmological role is incompatible with the Avestan fire cult, either, even if the name, *Apam napā*, is Avestan. Taking into account the fact that Yt 19 belongs to the later part of the Avestan texts (Witzel 2001:4), the situation is remarkable. Attributing the creation of men to a subordinate Yazata, *Apam napā*, is in clear conflict with the usual Zoroastrian concepts of creation.⁸

In the light of the Iranian evidence the omission of this verse is even more problematic. Findly should have analyzed the evidence instead of covering up the tracks.

The second omitted verse⁹ leads us to another important aspect of *Apām Napāt* that Findly's analysis failed to touch: the concrete, earthly form of the god. (“I rub its back, I would like to bestow it¹⁰ with the holed ['fireplaces'] and food, and praise it with stanzas.”)¹¹

To summarize: Findly's paper seems to be a well balanced analysis but there are at least two aspects of *Apām Napāt* it fails to do justice to, namely, (i) its cosmic, creative role and (ii) its concrete earthly form.

The lack of these themes in the Indo-European heritage does not mean that these are

6 *apām napād asuríasya mahná vísvāni aryó bhúvanā jajāna*

7 'aryó,' of course, refers to the creator god and not to the creatures. (Contrary, e. g., to Doniger 1981, p. 105.)

8 Hillebrandt was among the firsts scholars who realized the problem. In spite of his obsession with lunar interpretations, he was well aware of the problems this aspect of *Apām Nápāt* presented.

9 *asmai bahūnām avamāya sākhye yajñair vidhema námasā havírbhiḥ | sám sānu mārjmi dídhīšāmi bílmair dādhami ánnaiḥ pári vanda rḡbhiḥ*

10 The demonstrative, of course, refers to *Apām Napāt*, but in this case to its visible, touchable, concrete earthly form (referred to by 'it' instead of 'him').

11 The last omitted verse (2.35.15) also refers to an important aspect of *Apām 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 *Apām Napāt* complex in his analysis.

negligible or not important aspects of the *Apām Nápāt* complex. It can only be interpreted as a sign that they came from another background.

Analysis of the available renderings of RV 1.143.3

RV 1.143.3 has caused endless frustration among scholars since the time of *Sāyana*. No sound interpretation has been achieved yet.

Sāyana takes *tveṣaḥ* in the sense of *dīptayaḥ*: (“*asya stūyamānasyāgneḥ tveṣā dīptayaḥ*”), and construes *asyā tveṣā ajārāḥ* as a clause by itself. According to him, *bhānavaḥ* is the subject of the next clause; *susamḍṣāḥ* and *sudyūtaḥ* are nominative plurals agreeing with *bhānavaḥ*, and forming the predicate of the clause; *suprātīkasya* is in construction with *asya*. In explaining the second line *Sāyana* “takes refuge in the absurdity” (I borrowed the words from professor Peterson) that the nominative perhaps stands here for the accusative. (This and the next three paragraphs are based on Peter Peterson 1888: 89–91.)

Roth takes *bhātvakṣasaḥ* (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* = *sindhoh*). 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.”

Ludwig takes *bhātvakṣasaḥ* with *agneḥ* “who has light for his strength” and takes *atyaktuḥ* to mean “all night through.” He takes *ajarāḥ* in both places as an adjective and avoids the apparent tautology by changing the second *ajarāḥ* to *amarāḥ*. 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 *bhātvakṣasaḥ* and *sindhavaḥ* as nominative plurals. He takes *ati* as an adverb with *rejante*. For *sindhavaḥ* in the sense of “streams of light” he instances 1.52.14. *sindhavaḥ rajasaḥ* 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 (*āti aktūr*), full of light, never slumbering, ever young.” (Grassmann 1876: 148)

Oldenberg: “Probably we should read *āti aktūn*; comp. 6.4.5. *āti eti aktūn*.” (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: “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) — Along with the same lines as Geldner and Oldenberg.

Renou: “*aktú* «Farbenspiel» de Gld. est tentant, mais non confirmé (Atkins JAOS. 70 p. 35 proposait («flot»); peut-être un ancien *aktūn ná sindhavaḥ* (*aktūn* en liaison avec *āti* comme 1.36.16, 6.4.5) a-t-il été remplacé par *aktúḥ* sous l'influence du type *sindhur ná ksódaḥ*.” The «*Farbenspiel*» of Geldner (for *aktú*) is tempting but it is not confirmed (Atkins JAOS. 70 p. 35 proposed «flot», “wave”); perhaps an ancient *aktūn ná sindhavo* (*aktūn* in connection with *āti* as 1.36.16, 6.4.5). A replacement of *aktúḥ* with *aktūn* under the influence of the type *sindhúr ná kṣódaḥ*. (Renou 1964: 34–35)

His 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-oïnte (des) fleuves, (ses rayons) exempts de sommeil, exempts de vieillir.”

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

tremblent par delà (les nuits) tremble beyond comme la surface-ointe (des) fleuves — His (flames) tremble beyond (the nights) as the surface-ointment (of) 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 the nights came back in the backdoor of the first brackets; 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 aktúh* (conj. *áti aktún*), 1.143.3; *aktú*, ointment: *aktú-bhīh 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 3с: ...трепещут, словно реки *сквозь ночь* (*áti aktúr na sindhavo*)... (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.” “The simile seems to be unclear. Many emendations of the text have been suggested, but no one of them is obvious /clear.”

It seems to me that professor 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, RV 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 RV 1.143.1ab, 1cd, 2ab (*agnáye – bhare, priyó – ṛtvīyaḥ, víomani – mātariśvane*) 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 mystery of creation.

My solution of RV 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 Pāṇinian Sanskrit). *Asyá tveṣá ajārā asyá bhānávaḥ* “His rays are his unaging (ceaseless, not decaying) stimulations/ incitements.” The second line can also be interpreted as a nominal sentence. *Susamḍśaḥ suprátikasya sudyútaḥ* “The splendour(s) (/lightrays) of ‘the one with a beautiful face’ are pleasing (‘good to see at’).”

Having been completely freed from the preconceptions of the predecessors, the only obstacle to the interpretation of the last two lines is *bhátvakṣasaḥ*. I removed that obstacle in the simplest (but not simplistic!) possible way:

bhátvakṣas = *bhá*, light + *tvakṣas*, maker (“sy who makes sg with his hands,” e. g. “a carpenter”), from *√tvakṣ* (*√taks*), create, produce (Zend: *thwaksh*)

bhátvakṣasaḥ ati, beyond the light-makers (/carpenters of light) (i. e. the stars)

aktúr ná ... agnéh as [if] the anointment of *Agni*

ásasantah, not-sleeping, i.e. awakened by the incitements of *Agni*

ajárāh, 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 re-creation. *Agni* creates the Sun and the Sun re-creates *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. (Cf. RV 10.72.4: *Dakṣa*→*Aditi* and *Aditi*→*Dakṣa*, RV 10.90.5: *Puruṣa*→*Virāj* and *Virāj*→*Puruṣa*, RV X. 121. 7 & 9: *āpas*→*garbha* and *garbha*→*āpas*.) The first three *brāhmanas* in the *Agnicayana* section of the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* are the culmination of this new insight into mutual-creation (ŚB 6.1.1–3: *Prajāpati*→*Agni* and *Agni*→*Prajāpati*). The analysis of this development will be discussed in another paper. (See also Forizs 2005.)

Translation of RV 1.143.7

The solution is, of course, based on my understanding of *ak-ra*, adj. anointed, m. someone who is anointed (cf. *vip-ra*, inspired; *gṛdh-ra*, greedy) and the understanding of the hymn as a whole. In fact, my translation of verse 7 corroborates that of verse 3.

“Having been kindled, it (i. e. our heart) reaches (*ṛñjate*) your *Agni*, whose face shines with ghee (/your ghee-faced *Agni*), as a (good) friend in (/under) the yoke of *Ṛta*; the anointed (*akrō*) in the (sacrificial) assemblies (*vidátheṣu*), the kindling one (= *Agni*) stretches out/ sustains /maintains (*yaṃsate*) our bright-colored vision.” (7.)

To see the divergences and serious problems with other renderings it is enough to quote Geldner and Elizarenkova: “Eurem *Agni*, dem Schmalzgesicht, der auf der Deichsel des rechten Werkes' sitzt, läßt der Anzündende den Vortritt wie einem verbündeten Freund. Entflammt bei den Opfern leuchtend möge er (wie) ein Elefant*(?) unser lichtfarbened Gedicht emporheben. *Oder nach Ludwig: (Wie) eine Säule entflammt bei den Opfern leuchtend, möge er emportragen.” (Geldner 1951: 201–202)

“К вашему Агни с ликом, (обмазанным) жиром, сидящему на дышле закона, (Жрец,) зажигающий (его,) направляется как к другу. Зажженный, сверкающий на местах жертвенных раздач, (этот) боевой конь (?) Пусть понесет вверх нашу светлоокрашенную поэтическую мысль!” (Elizarenkova 1989: 182)

Translation of RV 1.143.2

“He (who is) being begotten in the highest heaven, *Agni* revealed himself to *Mātariśvan*.

By the inspiration (*krátvā*), by the greatness/majesty (*majmánā*) of the (one who) kindled (himself), (his) radiance/flame (*śocíh*) glittered on Heaven and Earth.” (2.)

Translation of RV 1.143.4

yám eriré bhṛgavo: The possessor/knower of all (/The all-possessor /all-knower) whom the *Bhṛgus* (have) obtained. *ā-√ir* can mean not only *set in motion, set to work* (Oldenberg) /spornen (Geldner), *strengthen* (Elizarenkova) but also *procure, obtain*. All the three choice are acceptable with more or less equal probability.

nābhā pṛthivyā bhūvanasya majmánā: “(who is) on the navel of the earth, and of the world, with/in (all his) majesty/might/greatness (*majmánā*, inst.)” Grammatically not only the instrumental, but also *majmánā*, ind., is acceptable, cf. Geldner’s solution: “in den Nabel der Erde¹², der Welt insgesamt eingesetzt haben,” but taking into account the occurrence of *majmánā* in verse 1 (and also note 7 on translation) the first choice is preferable.

agnīm tām: It is important to note that it is a concrete thing that is referred to here: the fire that can be grasped with one’s hands and then can be carried. On the other hand, if this is the case, then a vessel is also required (fire is to be carried!). It is also important to note that this carrying of fire is accompanied with the utterance of praises (*gīrbhīr*).

ā-√hi can mean *stir up* (Oldenberg) or *sporne* (Geldner), but it is more likely that here it means *convey, bring, carry* or *подгонять* (Elizarenkova, “Этого Агни подгони к своему дому хвалебными песнями.”)

yá éko vásvo váruṇo ná rájati: That (sacrificial) fire (*agni*) is, on the other hand, (mysteriously) identical with *Agni* (*Apām Nápāt* and even the *Iṣṭi* (altar), see later on). (that *Agni*) who – like *Varuṇa* (the lord) of the *Vasus* – is the (only) One who rules.

A possible connotation here is “the One (lord) who – like *Varuṇa* (the lord) of the *Vasus* – rules (over everything).” So this *Agni* is not only the Fire of the *Vasus*, but also the Fire of all of us (like *Agni Vaiśvānara*). However, *Vaiśvānara* never occurs in the *Dīrghatamas* cycle. The word occurs only in two hymns of the first *Maṇḍala*: in a *triṣṭubh* hymn of *Nodhas* (*Gotama* family), 1.59 (4x) (cf. Jaim. Br. 1.147 tells about a *Nodhas*, the son of *Kakṣivat*) and in another *triṣṭubh* hymn of *Kutsa* (*Aṅgiras* family) 1.98 (4x).

It is also important to note that *Agni Vaiśvānara* does not occur in the hymns of the *Gṛtsamāda* clan (Book 2) at all. In fact, this is the only book of the *Ṛgveda* where *Agni Vaiśvānara* does not occur. This requires an explanation all the more because he already occurred in the oldest strata of the *Ṛgveda* (Book 6). Three entire hymns (two *triṣṭubhs* and a *jaḡatī*) laudate Him. (6.7 (7x), 6.8 (6x), 6.9 (2x). Notice also that the status of *Agni Vaiśvānara* is unique in these hymns. No individual god is named except him, and when all the gods are named (in 6.9.7) we hear: *vísve devā anamasyan bhīyānās tuvām agne tāmasi tasthivāmsam | vaiśvānaré avatu útāye no ámartiyo avatu útāye naḥ.*

Agni Vaiśvānara occurs in the *Maṇḍala* of the *Atri* clan, in 5.27 (2x), 5.51, 5.60. (I am going to discuss *Agni Vaiśvānara* and the *Bharadvāja* clan at another time.)

Taking into account all the above considerations, my translation is as follows:

“Whom the *Bhṛgus* (have) obtained, the possessor/knower of all (who is) on the navel of the earth and of the world with all his majesty/might, carry that fire with thy prayers to (your) own house, (that *Agni*) who – like *Varuṇa* (the lord) of the *Vasus* – is the (only) One who rules.” (4.)

Previous translations of RV 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: “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!”

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, beschirme unsere Kinder!”

12 Cf. Geldner’s note: Fire altar.

See also his note 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.” (Geldner 1951: 202)

Elizarenkova 1989: 182: “С не допускающими обмана, нерассеянными, желанными, Не смыкающими глаз (защитниками) защиты со всех сторон наше потомство!” (8.cd) and note to 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 RV 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 \sqrt{yaj} , “sacrifice” or $\sqrt{iṣ}$, “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).

In those cases 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 1.143.8c seems to be the only occurrence of this difficult word in the Ṛgveda. 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

<i>Agni</i> , son of strength	Begotten in the highest Heaven	radiance/flare glittered on Heaven (Sun)
<i>Apām Nápāt</i> , the beloved hotā	He has sat down on the Earth	radiance/flare glittered on Earth (altar)

The middle:

a) Cosmic level (especially verse 3)

Streams (not-sleeping, un-ageing) 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. (i) That fire is the possessor/knower of all, the (only) One who rules (over everything); (ii) whom the *Bhrgus* (have) obtained; (iii) it is on the navel of the earth and of the world (*nābhā pṛthivyā 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)¹³

¹³ One can see from this short summary that the hymn intertwines the three main levels of Ṛgvedic sacerdotal poetry. A later masterpiece of the same poet which uses this technique is the great Riddle hymn (1.164). See Fórizs 1995, and especially Houben II 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-dabdhebhīr*, *á-dabdha*, usual rendering: “not deceived,” but I prefer “unimpaired, intact, unbroken, unharmed” from \sqrt{dabh} , harm; *ádyṣṭī*, usual solution: “not infatuated” from $\sqrt{dyṣ}$, “rave,” but “not inflamed” (from $\sqrt{dyṣ}$, “to light, kindle, inflame,” *Dhātup.* xxxix.14) is at least as acceptable as the previous meaning; *ánimiṣadbhiḥ*, from *á-nimiṣá*, mfn. not winking, *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 *Vāc* to the son of strength;

1.cd: *Apām Nápāt*, 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	<i>Agni</i> :	attentive, kind and powerful guardians belonging to or parts of Heaven (the stars)	Heaven Sun
8cd	<i>Iṣṭi</i> Can be identified with <i>Apām Nápāt</i>	unimpaired, not inflamed, not winking guardians belonging to or parts of <i>Iṣṭi</i> (requires further analysis of the etymology and meaning of <i>Iṣṭi</i>)	(the navel of the) <i>Earth</i> Can be identified with <i>Iṣṭi</i>

We have arrived at the following situation: *Iṣṭi* can be identified with (a form of) *Apām Nápāt* (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 usage 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 *nābhā pṛthivyā bhúvanasya* together with a clear reference to the sacrifice and a form of an altar in 164.34ab and 35ab (in the same cycle of hymns) – *pṛchāmi tvā páram ántam pṛthivyāḥ pṛchāmi yátra bhúvanasya nābhiḥ* (34ab) *iyám védiḥ páro ántaḥ pṛthivyā ayám yajñó bhúvanasya nābhiḥ* (35ab) – makes it probable (or even reasonable) that this new word (that represents the visible earthly form of *Apām Nápāt*, the Child of the Waters) refers to a special form of an altar (or, at least, can be identified with it.) We could arrive at these conclusions without preliminary assumptions about the semantic field of the word *Iṣṭi* or the knowledge of its etymology.

We reached a point where the etymological analysis of a word is necessary. I would like to emphasize that there is no known Ṛgvedic word that fits in well with our previous analysis. There exists a possibly related word in Vedic, but it occurs only in the early Yajurveda: *íṣṭakā*, “brick.” It denotes almost exclusively the sacred bricks of the *Agnicayana* ritual.

Etymology of the word Iṣṭi

Let us start with the origin of *íṣṭakā*, the early Yajurveda word for “brick.” Converse 1974: 83–85 suggested two possible Tamil candidates: *cengal* (*cennu* + *kal/gal*) and *cuṭakal/suṭakal* (*cuṭ/suṭa* + *kal*). As a consequence of Emeneau’s critique of Converse’s proposal Staal 1983 turned to other possibilities and offered the Avestan *iṣṭiiā* and Old Persian *iṣṭiṣ* as a starting point. Witzel II 1995 not only accepted this but also enlarged the horizon significantly by arguing that – on the basis of the

slightly different Vedic and Iranian (Avestan and Old Persian) forms – “the origin as a loan word from some unknown pre-Aryan culture should be considered.” He also made a proposal for this pre-Aryan language: the Bactrian-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) or the “Oxus culture” of Bronze Age (ca. 2500–1500 BCE).

Since that time a considerable amount of work has been done (Witzel 1999, Lubotsky 2001). An important innovation was the use of Common Tocharian as a “control language.” Archaeological evidence shows not only contacts between Xinjiang and BMAC, but also the direction of transfer of both material and non-material culture: Proto-Tocharians borrowed among other things the usage of mud bricks, and the widespread use of ephedra, especially in burial ceremonies. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that Common Tocharian and Indo-Iranian borrowed independently from BMAC language. On these grounds Witzel successfully reconstructed the BMAC word **išt(i)* (Witzel 1999). Pinault 2002 could even show that BMAC **išt(i)*- had been integrated into the inflection of *i*-stem in Common Tocharian.

išt(i)*- “clay, mud brick” Toch. B *išcem* “clay,” *išcake (*iščake* in St. Petersburg bilingual manuscript) “a kind of clay,” from a paradigm Toch. B **išce*, acc. sg. **iśc*, Toch. A **išác*, borrowed into Old Turkic (Uighur) *išič*, *äšič* “cooking pot.” Indo-Iranian: Old Pers. *išti-*, MPers. *xišt* “brick,” LateAv. *ištiia-* “brick,” *zəmōištiuuu-* “brick of clay,” Ved. *ištakā-* fem. “brick,” *ištikā-* etc. (Pinault 2003)

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 *Išti* [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. *ištakā*, *ištikā* an earlier form, *išti* also found its way to the Ṛgveda, or – more precisely – to a singular hymn of a great Western poet who praised an equally singular form of fire, *Apām Nápāt*, the Child of the Waters (identified with *Išti*) as well as a widely known one, *Agni*, at the same hymn. The intertwining imagery of the hymn gave *Agni* (and *Apām Nápāt* and *Išti*) such a unique cosmological significance that was unparalleled in the contemporary sacerdotal poetry.

I hope that my analysis of 1.143 – along with the corroborating evidence of the *Apām Nápāt* sukta of the *Gṛtsamada* clan (2.35) – 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 RV 1.143.

*prá távyasīm návyasīm dhītīm agnáye vācō matīm sāhasaḥ sūnáve bhare |
apām nápād yó vásubhiḥ sahá priyó hótā pṛthivyām 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) *Apām Nápāt*, the beloved *hotā*, who together with the *Vasus* has sat down on the Earth observing the appointed time.

*sá jāyamānaḥ paramé víomani āvír agnír abhavan mātariśvane |
asyá krátvā samidhānāsya majmánā prá dyāvā śocíḥ pṛthiví 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 tveṣá ajārā asyá bhānávaḥ susamḍśaḥ suprátikasya sudyútaḥ |
bhátvakṣaso áti aktúr ná síndhavo agné rejante ásasanto ajārāḥ || 3*

3. 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-ageing streams begin to move.

*yám eriré bhṛgavo viśvávedasaṃ nábhā pṛthivyá bhúvanasya majmánā |
agnīm tám gīrbhír hinuhi svá á dáme yá éko vásvo váruṇo ná rájati || 4*

4. Whom the *Bhṛgus* (have) obtained, the possessor/knower of all, (who is) on the navel of the earth and of the world in (all his) majesty; carry that fire with thy prayers to (your) 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 sṛṣṭá diviyá yáthāsániḥ |
agnír jámbhais tigitaír atti bhárvati yodhó ná sátrūn 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 vír ásad vásuṣ kuvíd vásubhiḥ kāmam āvárat |
codáh kuvít tutujyát sātāye dhíyaḥ súcipratikaṃ tám ayá dhíyá 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).

*ghṛtápratīkaṃ va ṛtāsya dhūrśadam agním mitráṃ ná samidhāná ṛñjate |
índhāno akró vidátheṣu dīdiyac 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 yoke of *Ṛta*; the anointed in the (sacrificial) assemblies, the kindling one (*Agni*) stretches out/sustains our bright-colored vision.

*áprayuchann áprayuchadbhir agne śivébhír naḥ pāyúbhiḥ pāhi śagmaíḥ |
ádabdhebhír áḍṛpítebhír iṣṭe ániṃṣadbhiḥ 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* (Altar/*Apām Nápāt*), with your unimpaired, not inflamed, not winking (guardians), protect our children!

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