Root aorists with primary endings in Vedic: A *tēzzi* principle?

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1   Introduction

1.1 The aorist in early Vedic is occasionally found with primary endings in place of the expected secondary ones (e.g., 2du. *kṛtháḥ* 'you two make' rather than *kṛtám* 'you two make, make!').

1.2 Hoffmann (1967:111) has suggested that such forms are in fact functional injunctives, used to avoid confusion with the imperative, which coincides formally with the injunctive in parts of its paradigm.

1.3 I follow his analysis and expand it to include other root-aorist forms with primary endings in Vedic, namely those ending in *-ā-* (type *dhấti* 'puts, will put').

1.4 Such forms have gone relatively unscrutinized, since they correspond formally to the subjunctive. Yet upon examination these seem to align with those observed by Hoffmann (1967:111).

1.5 Formations like *dhấti*, if not from subjunctive /dhá-a-ti/ but /dhá-ti/, call to mind the "*tēzzi* principle" of the Anatolian languages, whereby a new present was built to an inherited root-aorist stem by adding primary endings to it rather than secondary ones.

1.6 I propose that, like Anatolian, Vedic had no ban *per se* on using primary endings with (non-modal) aorist stems, but that, unlike in Anatolian, such formations were of highly restricted occurrence, being produced just in case the corresponding injunctive was (for formal or semantic reasons) unavailable.

2   Vedic data

2.1   Non-*ā*-final root aorists

2.1.1 In Vedic, the aorist indicative and injunctive typically only take secondary endings (*-m, -s, -t,* etc.), not primary ones (*-mi, -si, -ti,* etc.).

2.1.2 So, we expect to find forms like *gata* but not *gathá* 'you go' (2pl. aor. act. inj.).

2.1.3 In fact, *gata* always has a directive (imperative) value in the Ṛgveda (12x), while *gathá*, occurring only once, has a presential meaning.

   (1)   *yásya vā yūyám práti vājíno nara ấ havyấ vītáye* **gathá**
         abhí ṣá dyumnaír utá vấjasātibhiḥ sumnấ vo dhūtayo naśat (*RV* VIII.20.16).

         'Or the prize-seeker whose oblations you **come here** to pursue, o men,
         he will attain to your favors, you shakers, along with brilliant things and the winning of prizes' (tr. Jamison and Brereton 2014:1070, slightly modified).

2.1.4 Verse 10cd of this hymn contains a sequence nearly identical to that in 16b but with the imperative *ā́...havyā́ no vītáye gata* 'come here to pursue our oblations' (cf. Jamison 2015–: ad loc.).

2.1.5 Forms of the *gathá* type occur a handful of times in the *Ṛgveda*, as follows:

- *kṛthā́ḥ, kṛtha* (e.g., *RV* X.97.9d)

- *gathá* (*RV* VIII.20.16b)

- *bhūthā́ḥ, bhūtaḥ* (e.g., *RV* VI.67.5c)

2.1.6 These forms always have a presential (habitual) meaning, rather than a past (like the aorist indicative) or directive one (like the imperative), while their corresponding injunctive forms have consistently directive functions.

- There is also at least one thematic aorist with a primary ending: *takṣatha* (*RV* IV.36.3d, X.53.10b) (on which see Narten 1964:124–5). Here again, as per Hoffmann (1967:111), the 2pl. aor. inj. *takṣata* is always directive in meaning.

2.1.7 Given this complementary distribution, Hoffmann (1967:111) argues that the primary endings of such aorists are motivated whenever the speaker wants to express a meaning characteristic of the injunctive (viz. habitual or "timeless" present) but cannot unambiguously do so by using the actual injunctive, since it is exclusively associated with directive meaning.

2.1.8 As a kind of last resort, to avoid confusion with the imperatival forms, the primary endings are added to the aorist stem to form a kind of pseudo-injunctive with present habitual meaning.

2.2 Root aorists to roots in final *ā*

2.2.1 In addition, there are several *ā*-final root-aorist stems that are attested with primary endings (not treated in Hoffmann 1967):

- *sthāti* (*RV* II.31.3c), *sthā́thaḥ* (*RV* IV.46.4c = VIII.5.28c)

- *pānti* (*RV* II.11.14d), *pāsi* (*RV* I.134.5f/g);[1] *pāthā́ḥ* (*AVŚ* VII.29.1b, though *AVP* XX.8.1b has *pātam*, with secondary or imperative ending)[2]

- *dā́ti* (*RV* IV.8.3c, V.48.5d, VI.24.2d, VII.15.12c, VII.42.4d)[3]

- *dhā́ti* (*RV* II.38.1c, IV.55.1d, VII.90.3b)[4]

2.2.2 These are typically understood to be subjunctives (e.g., *dhā́ti* ← /dhā́-a-ti/), but several of them occur in highly presential contexts, which lend themselves to non-subjunctive interpretations.

- These verbs are metrically assured to be disyllabic, rather than trisyllabic, in all occurrences, and so never *have* to be read as subjunctives on purely morphological grounds (with a sequence -*ā́-a*-).

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1. Distinct from root-present *pā́nti, pā́si* 'protect' at *RV* VIII.25.13c, etc.

2. *MS* agrees with *AVŚ*; *ŚŚS* with *AVP*; *TS* has the root-present injunctive/imperative *vītám* 'pursue' (Whitney and Lanman 1905:I.408).

3. Distinct from root-present *dā́ti* 'mows, cuts' at *RV* I.65.8b, V.7.7b.

4. 2du. *dhéthe* (*RV* I.158.2b) and *dhāithe* (*RV* VI.67.7a) are as subjunctive as they appear (i.e., future referring), as (evidently) are the occurrences of *dhā́mahe* 'we will acquire' (*RV* I.92.13c, V.16.5d, IX.74.5d) (here the imperative and injunctive would have distinctive forms). However, the last of these (*RV* IX.74.5d) could plausibly be interpreted as presential-habitual/"timeless."

2.2.3 So, for example, *ánu nú sthāti* in (2) may be read as 'now stands beside', though a futurate interpretation 'will now stand beside' is also possible.

(2) **ánu** <u>nú</u> **sthāty** *avr̥kā́bhir ūtíbhī rátham mahé sanáye vā́jasātaye* (*RV* II.31.3cd).

'(Indra) <u>now</u> **stands/will stand** beside our chariot with help that keeps the wolf away, for great gain, to win spoils' (tr. adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014:446).

2.2.4 More problematic as a subjunctive is *pā́nti* in (3).

(3) *sajóṣaso yé ca* <u>mandasānā́ḥ</u>[PRES.PART.] **prá** *vāyávaḥ* **pā́nti** *ágraṇītim* (*RV* II.11.14cd).

'And they who jointly <u>are finding exhilaration</u>[PRES.PART.]—(those) Winds **are drinking** the first offering' (tr. adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014:415).

- Jamison (2015–: ad loc.) calls the primary ending on *pā́nti* "disturbing," since "the context requires a connection with $\sqrt{pā}$ 'drink'," rather than with the morphologically more straightforward $\sqrt{pā}$ 'protect', which regularly forms a root present.

- Jamison (2015–: ad loc.) notes further that pāda c contains a predicated present participle *mandasānā́ḥ* 'are finding exhilaration'.

- The principal function of predicated present participles seems most typically to be marking action ongoing at the reference time (= the present time in the context of this hymn), as seen, for example, in (4).

(4) PREDICATED PRESENT PARTICIPLE AS PROGRESSIVE
ví yó **bháribhrad**[PRES.PART.] *óṣadhīṣu jihvám átyo ná ráthyo* <u>dodhavīti</u>[PRES.IND.] *vā́rān* (*RV* II.4.4cd).

'He who **is flicking**[PRES.PART.] his tongue hither and yon among the plants, like a steed at a chariot he <u>keeps twitching</u>[PRES.IND.] his tail.'

- The predicated present participle in (3) therefore supports a presential reading of *pā́nti* 'they drink, are drinking'.

2.2.5 A similar case can be made for *pā́si* 'you drink' in (5), where again "context favors a connection with $\sqrt{pā}$ 'drink'" (Jamison 2015–: ad loc.).

(5) *tváṃ víśvasmād bhúvanāt* **pā́si** *dhármaṇāsuryàt* **pā́si** *dhármaṇā* (*RV* I.134.5fg).

'You **drink** before every creature by statute—you **drink** because of your lordship by statute' (tr. Jamison and Brereton 2014:305).

- As Jamison (2015–) notes, (5) describes the same situation as that in (3) above: "Vāyu's first drink of soma."

- She adds that a subjunctive interpretation 'will drink' or even "a nonce *-si* imperative" 'drink!' are also possible.

- Yet the present habitual interpretation of *pāsi* seems strongly supported by the fact that it is preceded in this verse by two injunctives and a present indicative, all serving to state general truths about Vāyu, with a succession of forms of the second person pronoun (*tubhyam… tvām… tvám*), suggesting structural and semantic parallels between the clauses. I give the complete verse in (6).

(6)   *tubhyaṃ śukrāsaḥ śucayas turaṇyavo madeṣūgrā* **iṣaṇanta**[INJ.] *bhurvaṇy apām* **iṣanta**[INJ.] *bhurvaṇi*
      tvāṃ tsārī dasamāno bhagam **īṭṭe**[PRES.IND.] *takvavīye*
      tvám víśvasmād bhúvanāt **pāsi** *dhármaṇāsuryàt* **pāsi** *dhármaṇā* (*RV* I.134.5).

      'For you **do** the glittering, gleaming, rapid, strong ones [=soma drinks / horses] **set themselves**[INJ.] aquiver at the revels—(like waves) of the waters they **set themselves**[INJ.] aquiver. You **does** the stealthy (hunter), as he wearies, **reverently invoke**[PRES.IND.] for good fortune in his swooping pursuit.
      You **drink** before every creature by statute—you **drink** because of your lordship by statute' (tr. Jamison and Brereton 2014:305).

2.2.6 The forms *dáti* 'gives, will give' and *dhā́ti* 'puts, will put' are generally taken to be subjunctives. However, Whitney (1889:301, §836a) says that these two forms are "almost indicative in value." Grassmann (1873:s.v.) agrees with this, stating that *dhā́ti* occurs "mit unverkennbar indikativischer Bedeutung" ('with an unmistakably indicative meaning').

2.2.7 An illustrative example is (7), in which *dhā́ti* seems to describe an event in progress, similar to *pānti* 'they are drinking' in (3) above.

(7)   *úd u ṣyá deváḥ savitā́ savā́ya* <u>*śaśvattamáṃ*</u> *tádapā váhnir* <u>*asthāt*</u>[AOR.IND.]
      <u>*nūnáṃ*</u> *devébhyo* **ví** *hí* **dhā́ti** *rátnam áth<u>ā́bhajad</u>*[PRES.INJ.?] *vītíhotraṃ svastaú* (*RV* II.38.1).

      'So this god Savitar <u>has stood up</u>[AOR.IND.] to impel <u>the latest of each and everything</u>—the draft-horse whose work this is:
      Seeing as (Savitar) **is** <u>currently</u> **distributing** treasure to the gods [= the Milky Way], accordingly he <u>is liable to give a share</u>[PRES.INJ.?] in well-being to the one of pursuit-worthy oblations' (tr. mine (cf. Jamison and Brereton 2014:456–7)).

- Here I read "*áth<u>ā́bhajad</u>*" as *átha ā́ bhajat*, taking *bhajat* to be injunctive, against the Padapāṭha, though my interpretation of *dhā́ti* as presential 'is giving' does not depend on this assumption (for discussion and alternative interpretations see Jamison 2015–: ad loc.).

- In any case, the adverb *nūnám* 'now' makes a presential, event-in-progress reading of *ví dhā́ti* likely: 'is currently distributing'. In addition, the fact that this is the first verse of the hymn, and that the hymn is identified as an evening hymn, "in which Savitar quiets the world for the night" (Jamison and Brereton 2014:456) suggests that the action of *ví dhā́ti* is is currently underway as the stars come out, rather than located in the future.

2.2.8 In (8), the present *kr̥ṇoti* in verse 2 is paralleled by the aorist *dhāti* in verse 3, both of which govern a dependent clause containing an aorist (vs. 2) or perfect (vs. 3) indicative. *dhāti* is in turn followed by the present injunctive *saścata* 'they accompany' in 3c.

(8)   *īśānā́ya práhutiṃ yás ta <u>ánat</u>*[AOR.IND.] *chúciṃ sómaṃ śucipās túbhyaṃ vāyo*
      kr̥ṇóṣi[PRES.IND.] *tám mártyeṣu praśastáṃ jātó-jāto jāyate vājy àsya*

      rāyé nú yáṃ <u>jajñátū</u>[PF.IND.] *ródasīmé rāyé deví dhiṣáṇā* **dhāti** *devám*
      ádha vāyúṃ niyútaḥ <u>saścata</u>[PRES.INJ.] *svā́ utá śvetáṃ vásudhitiṃ nireké* (*RV* VII.90.2–3)

      'Whoever <u>has reached out</u>[AOR.IND.] the fore-offering to you who have dominion (over it),
      the clear soma for you, Vāyu, drinker of the clear,
      you **make**[PRES.IND.] him acclaimed among mortals: each one born to him is a prizewinner.

      The one whom these two world-halves <u>begat</u>[PF.IND.] for wealth, that god **does** the goddess,
      the Holy Place, **position** for wealth.
      Then his own teams <u>accompany</u>[PRES.INJ.] Vāyu and the gleaming white treasure-chamber
      [=Dawn] exclusively.' (tr. adapted from Jamison and Brereton 2014:997).

- The two verses together would thus show a sequence of present indicative, aorist injunctive, present injunctive, all in essentially the same sort of function: present habitual or "timeless."

- The rest of the hymn contains mainly perfect and present indicatives. There are no other subjunctives, and no future time reference at all, aside from the commands and exhortations made in the first and final verses (in the imperative and optative).

3   The case for treating primary *ā*-final root aorists as pseudo-injunctives

3.1 While I do not wish to suggest that none of the occurrences of these words have a futurate/subjunctive value (some occur alongside marked subjunctives), it does seem likely that at least some have a presential value, whether habitual or progressive, as identified above.

3.2 As Hoffmann (1967:256, 261–2) observes, the injunctives *dā́ḥ* and *dhā́ḥ* almost always have a directive force, respectively 'give!' and 'put!' This is because these root aorists lack imperative forms, so the injunctive "fills in" in this role of the paradigm.[5]

3.3 Use of the injunctives *d(h)āḥ* with present habitual meaning occur only occasionally in the R̥gveda (e.g., *RV* VI.4.4c; see Hoffmann 1967:262).

3.4 In the third person, the injunctive forms "stehen...an Stelle von nicht oder nur schlecht bezeugten aoristimperativen" ('stand in place of aorist imperatives that are not or only poorly attested'), namely *dā(n)tu* and *dhā(n)tu*, which have only a handful of (relatively late) attestations in the R̥gveda, whereas the directive injunctives *d(h)āt* and *d(h)uḥ* occur frequently and in all layers of the text (Hoffmann 1967:264).

3.5 Given that the aorists with primary endings discussed by Hoffmann (1967:111) amount to functional injunctives, and that these are motivated, ultimately, by the lack of an imperative form in the relevant slot of the paradigm (type *gata* 'come!' vs. *gathá* 'you come'), I propose that in forms like *dā́ti* and *dhā́ti* we have the same situation.

3.6 These would then not be subjunctives (at least not in all of their occurrences) but *injunctives* that use primary endings as a means of distinction from the ordinary injunctives, *dā́t* and *dhā́t*, which are functionally imperative (directive).

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5. Cf. the cognate forms in Greek, synchronically treated as imperatives: δός 'give!' and θές 'put!'

3.7 So, whenever a presential interpretation of the injunctive to these verbs were desired, a speaker would stand the best chance of being understood by using the "pseudo-injunctive" forms *dā́ti* and *dhā́ti* in place of the real injunctives (*dā́t* and *dhā́t*).

3.8 The motivation for the use of non-subjunctive *dā́ti* and *dhā́ti* thus matches that of the *kr̥tha(ḥ)*/*gathá* type observed by Hoffmann (1967:111). And so we may generalize as follows:

   (9)   An injunctive that is regularly associated with directive meaning is typically avoided in non-directive use, and the forms with primary endings may be used instead, as a means of disambiguation.

3.9 The case of *sthāti* 'stands' in (2) is less clear but can probably be similarly explained. There is in fact no aorist imperative to $\sqrt{sthā}$ 'stand' in the R̥gveda (or the *Atharvaveda*) aside from the 2pl. *prá sthāta* 'set out' at *RV* VII.34.5a.

3.10 The injunctive in the second person singular is used where an imperative would be expected at *RV* VI.24.9c (*sthā́ḥ…ūrdhváḥ* 'stand erect'), where it is coordinated with the aorist imperative *prá…yandhi* 'hold forth' in pāda b.

3.11 In the third person singular, the injunctive to $\sqrt{sthā}$ is most commonly prohibitive (with *mā́*) but is also has indicatival uses which can be past (*RV* VII.87.6a, II.15.7c 'stood') or present referring (*RV* II.3.10a, I.68.1a 'stands, is standing').

3.12 The case for *sthāti* being used to mean 'stands' in order to avoid a typically directive injunctive is thus essentially comparable to the case of *d(h)āti*, despite the occasional uses of *sthāt* in the same (presential) meaning. Recall that even 2sg. *d(h)āḥ*—robustly attested in directive use—attests some presential readings in the R̥gveda (see §3.3 above).

3.13 Lastly, the comparable forms built to $\sqrt{pā}$ 'drink' might be thought to resist such an explanation, since there are perfectly good imperative forms in the second and third persons.

3.14 2sg. imperative *pāhi* 'drink!' is indeed very frequent in the R̥gveda, occurring some 25 times. However, though the 2sg. injunctive occurs only once (*RV* IV.20.4c), it also seems to have a directive value (so Jamison and Brereton 2014:589, despite Hoffmann 1967:263).

3.15 The 2sg. *pāsi* at *RV* I.134.5f/g, then, is strictly justified in contrast to the possible alternatives that might have been used instead, since, though meagerly attested, its corresponding injunctive has a directive value.

3.16 The 2du. *pātháḥ* in *AVŚ* (also *MS*) is likewise explicable by the fact that the corresponding injunctive form, *pātam*, is attested 14 times in the R̥gveda, always with directive force (i.e., as an imperative).

3.17 Finally, the form *pānti* at *RV* II.11.14d cannot be said to stand in direct contrast with any attested injunctive form, nor any imperative. The only third-person imperative to this root attested in the R̥gveda is the present *pibantu* (4x). There is no attested 3pl. aorist injunctive **puḥ* (though the indicative *apuḥ* 'they have drunk' occurs at *RV* I.164.7d).

3.18 In addition, the interpretation of *pānti* as a subjunctive is made at least somewhat problematic by its ending, which ought, strictly speaking, to be *-an* rather than *-anti*.

3.19 I conclude, then, that it is possible to interpret all of these verb forms, both formally and functionally, not as subjunctives but as pseudo-injunctives with primary endings, in at least some of their

attestations (some occurrences may, of course, remain rightly considered subjunctives).

4   A *tēzzi* principle

4.1 In the Anatolian languages are found forms like Lyc. *tadi* 'places', Hitt. *tēzzi* 'says', from Proto-Anatolian *dḗ-di, as it were from PIE ˣ*dʰéh₁-ti*.

- Similarly Lyc. *adi* 'makes', Hitt. *iez(z)i* 'makes, does' << **Hi̯éh₁t* (see Jasanoff 2003:136).

4.2 Such forms are generally considered an innovation of the Anatolian languages, since the root **dʰeh₁-* 'put' is thought to have only built a root *aorist* in the proto language, and so would not have had a root present at all.

4.3 This type of back-formation, whereby primary endings were added to a formerly root-aorist stem, is known as the "*tēzzi* principle" (coined by Malzahn (2010:267–8)).

4.4 If what I have claimed above is correct, however, then Vedic would show a parallel to the *tēzzi* principle in (non-subjunctive) *dhā́ti*, which has precisely the same morphological shape as *tadi* and *tēzzi*.

- Malzahn (2016) has already suggested that a process similar to the *tēzzi* principle is responsible for the *tudáti*-presents in Indo-Iranian, which are formally the same as thematic aorists with primary endings.

4.5 While I do not suggest that this correspondence shows the form ˣ*dʰéh₁ti* to be reconstructible for PIE, it does indicate that there was nothing wrong *in principle* with the combination of root-aorist stems with the primary endings in the Indo-European languages.

4.6 The verb system of Anatolian languages is of course very different from that of Vedic, having only one verb stem for past and present, and so the two languages show markedly different application of their respective "*tēzzi* principles."

- Anatolian uses the root formations as *the* presents for this lemma, there being no synchronic aorist/present contrast in these languages.

4.7 In Vedic, on the other hand, the "*tēzzi*-like" formations necessarily occupy only a small corner of the grammar, there being a robust network of competing forms, including the ordinary reduplicated present *dádhāti* and the aorist injunctive *dhā́t* (present injunctives to this root do not occur in the Ṛgveda).

- Forms like *dhā́ti* are motivated in Vedic only when the speaker desires an aorist that is *functionally* injunctive but for which the actual injunctive form is unavailable, whether for formal or semantic reasons.

4.8 In this way, two apparently similar phenomena across Indo-European languages turn out to have very different motivations and distributions.

4.9 Nonetheless, the existence of such forms in Vedic make the Anatolian forms seem less anomalous.

4.10 Even if the *tēzzi* principle operated independently (as I think) in both languages, the very fact that this could happen suggests that the apparent ban on putting primary endings on aorist stems was not so much an IE grammatical *rule* as it was a grammatical *fact*, arising from interactions with the various other forms in the verb system.

Abbreviations of texts

AVP *Atharvaveda Pāippalāda Saṃhitā*

AVŚ *Atharvaveda Śāunaka Saṃhitā*

MS *Māitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*

RV *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā*

TS *Tāittirīya Saṃhitā*

ŚŚS *Śāṅkkhāyana Śrāuta Sūtra*

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Appendix: A progressive aorist?

- The meaning of the primary endings seems to be [NON-PAST], as these are the regular endings of the present and future tenses and (partially) the subjunctive mood in Sanskrit. So there is nothing necessarily incompatible about the primary endings and the (non-subjunctive) aorist stem, as these would simply require the aorist to have present reference. Present-referring aorists are abundant in the perfect readings of its indicative forms (type *prá…avocam* 'I have proclaimed' (*RV* I.116.25a)) and the performative readings of its injunctive forms (type *prá vocam* 'I (hereby) proclaim' (e.g., *RV* I.32.1a)).

- What is somewhat more surprising is the apparent event-in-progress interpretation of the aorists in (3) and (7), seeing as the progressive reading would seem incompatible with perfective aspect.

- However, we find a similarly presential use of the aorist used in Ancient Greek (though not, to my knowledge, in Homer), as shown in (10), where the action of the aor. ind. ἐργάσαο appears to be ongoing at the time of speech, thus 'you are doing', as it is specified by the pres. ind. δαχρύεις 'you are weeping'.

  (10) PRESENTIAL AORIST IN CLASSICAL GREEK
        ὦ βασιλεῦ, ὡς πολλὸν ἀλλήλων κεχωρισμένα **ἐργάσαο**[AOR.IND.] νῦν τε καὶ ὀλίγῳ πρότε-
        ρον· μακαρίσας γὰρ σεωυτὸν <u>δαχρύεις</u>[PRES.IND.] (Hdt. 7.46.1).

        'O king, what a distance there is between what you **are doing**[AOR.IND.] now and
        [what you did/were doing] a little while ago! For having declared yourself blessed
        <u>you are weeping</u>[PRES.IND.]'.

- Ordinarily, this interpretation of the aorist is surely blocked by the present indicative, which is more highly specialized for the progressive use. Yet under certain circumstances, it seems, this logically possible reading of the aorist can be realized, as in (10), where the verb ἐργάσαο must look both backwards and forwards to what is happening 'now' and what has happened 'a little while ago'.

- A similar account can be adopted to explain the Ṛgvedic data in (3) and (7).