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Postscript on Vedic jaṅgahe

In an earlier volume of this journal, one of the present authors (Lubotsky 1997, 562f.) argued that Vedic jaṅgahe is an intensive of the root gandh- ‘to smell, be fragrant’. This form is attested only three times: at RV 1.126.6, AVŚ 5.19.4 (= AVP 9.19.1), and, finally, AVP 19.34.7. Although the meaning could be conjectured on the basis of the first two passages, the presently available Orissa manuscripts of the Paippalāda recension of the Atharva Veda provide the definitive proof.

Arlo Griffiths is currently preparing an edition of the nineteenth book of this text, and we have decided to present the relevant passage to the scholarly community, as it clearly shows that jaṅgahe indeed means ‘smells’.

The hymns of book 19 of the AVP mostly consist of so-called tṛcas, i.e., originally separate groupings of three stanzas which at some point were placed together by redactors of the text. The word jaṅgahe occurs in the tṛca AVP 19.34.7–9, the preliminary edition of which is given below.¹

AVP 19.34.7–9 (TO A FRAGRANT PLANT)

7. Only AVP

tvam uttamaṃ surabhiṣāṃ ‘mādhyanam vahator asi I
(8-8)
tvayā ‘vadhūr vi jaṅgahe ‘tāṃ tvā varcasa ā dade II
(8-8)

You are the most supreme of the fragrant ones. You are the center of the bridal procession. The bride smells of you. I take you for splendor.

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8. Only AVP

mūrdhnaṃ te mūrdhnye bhya yo ‘agrvaḥ ‘pativyatāḥ / (8-7)
aukṣaṁ śirṣata ā dade //
(8)

From your top for the top-parts of the unmarried woman who has [now found] a husband; I take the uktṣa fragrance from [your] head.

- It is remarkable that the stanza consists of three pādas (gāyatri) instead of the expected four. The possibility that a pāda e has been lost during the transmission of the text cannot be excluded.

mūrdhnaṃ. mūrdhnaṃ Pa, {yaś caṃsa} mūrdhnaṃ Guç, mūrdhnyas K • The superfluous akṣaras which the scribe of Guç correctly chose to cross out have been taken over from stanza 9.

mūrdhnyēbhya, mūrdhnyēbhya Pa Guç, pārdhno- bhya K • For mūrdhnya- cf. MS 3.2.6 (24:11) = 3.2.9 (29:12) = 3.3.2 (33:9) mūrdhnya ‘sāni ‘I shall be at the top’, KS 20.11 (32:3–4) = KapKS 31.13 (162:3) tan mūrdhnyānām mūrdhnyātavam. The entry under AVP 19.9.12 in Vishva Bandhu’s Vedic Word-Concordance is a ghost-word introduced by Barret in his edition.
agruvaḥ. K – grivaḥ Pa, śrivāḥ Gu. • The reading of the Orissa ms (with Gu a graphical error corresponding to Pa grivaḥ) may be understood as a ‘learned correction’ based on an inferred connection with the body-part mentioned in pāda a. We hesitatingly adopt the metrically deficient reading offered by K.

‘pativyāḥ. pativyāḥ Pa Gu, pativyā K • Barret reads, probably mistakenly: patividyā. His emendation pativyāḥ, based on this reading, is improbable as we need a genitive here.

auksaḥ. auksam Pa Gu, oh kṣaṁ K • The name of a fragrance auksa- is further attested at AVP 2.21.6 = AVŚ 2.36.7 (idām hiranyam gūḍulgulv ayām auksa atho bhagah / ete pātībyas tvām adah pratiṃḍāya vēt- tave “This gold, this bdellium, this auksa and Bhaga as well: they have prepared you for husbands, that you may obtain one that is agreeable” [tr. after Bloomfield 1897]), in the Apsaras’ name auksāgandhi- ‘smelling of auksa’ (AVP 12.7.3 [AVPK 13.4.3] = AVŚ 4.37.3) and at BĀU(K) 6.4.18 = BĀU(M) 6.4.17. These places have been discussed by C. Kiehnle (1979), 188ff. It seems futile to look for an etymology of this term and to combine it with the word for ‘ox’.

sīrṣata ā. Pa Gu – sīrṣatā K.

9. Only AVP

yaś ca ‘svādmā te aṅgesu ’yaḥ premā hṛdaye ca te / (8-8)
tam tvad ā veśayāmahe ’mayi bhṛjāti ’didyata // (8-8)

The sweetness which is in your limbs, and the affection which is in your heart, we transfer it to us from you. The resplendent one will shine on me.

‘svādmā. smādmā Pa [?] Gu, spāmā K • If the Orissa reading is correct (Pa is barely legible here), it is probably a rather recent corruption due to the similarity of the Oriya ligatures -sv- and -sm-. As for K, the corruption can be explained as a combination of graphical (-sv- ~ -sp-) and auditory errors (cons. + nas. → nas. : cf. Witzel [1994], 35f.).

aṅgesu. Pa Gu – aṅge*(→ ŚRA) K • Barret almost certainly misreads the marginal ‘correction’, interpreting it as su.

yaḥ. K – ya(*h) Pa, yaḥ Gu. tam tvad. Pa Gu – tantur K. veśayāmahe. Pa Gu – veśayāme K. bhṛjāti ’didyayat. bhṛjāti didyayata Pa, bhṛjāti diDYata Gu, trāgadudidyat. K • Barret misreads or misprints trāgā-. All corruptions in K can be explained as graphical or as auditory mistakes (cf. Witzel 1994): the corruption j > g, which occurs with some frequency throughout the manuscript, is of especial interest, as it may go back to a Nāgari predecessor of K (cf. Singh, plates 91ff.). On this Nāgari predecessor (*D), cf. Witzel (1985), 256–71.

REFERENCES


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