

## Shamanism in the Ṛgveda and Its Central Asian Antecedents George Thompson

-- For Michael Witzel

I. There have been several attempts over the past decade to identify traces of shamanism in the Ṛgveda, but for the most part they have been impressionistic and not entirely convincing. I myself have recently suggested that there are shamanistic elements in some of the Soma hymns, though notably not among the Soma-hymns of the ninth book of the RV. Whatever their reasons for it may be, Vedicists for the most part seem to have been reluctant to accept such claims. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that shamanism is a far more important presence in the RV than is generally conceded, and therefore it is with pleasure that I notice that, in a recent paper delivered at the Third International Vedic Workshop in 2002, Michael Witzel has repeatedly pointed to shamanic motifs and themes in the Ṛgveda, citing their likely antecedents in Central Asia and the Hindu Kush. This paper is offered to him in recognition of the many ways in which he has deepened our understanding of the Vedic tradition, not the least of which has been his discussion of Vedic shamanism.

II. One obvious limitation of the previous discussions of shamanism in the RV is that they have tended to revolve around the discussion of only a few hymns, leaving the impression that traces of shamanism in the RV are therefore at best marginal or vestigial. Another problem is that the basic methodology of these discussions has been to simply draw parallels between this or that Vedic theme or motif and similar themes and motifs from ethnographic accounts of Central Asian or Siberian shamanism. At best, drawing such parallels can only be suggestive. It does not give proof of relatedness. While I think that it is necessary to provide more parallels of this sort between the Ṛgveda and Central Asian and Siberian sources with regard to shamanism, it is also necessary to establish clear and demonstrable links between these cultures. I think that this can be done.

III. The best way to do this, as far as I can see, is to examine the different lexical strata that have recently come to light. Vedicists have recently shown increasing interest in identifying with much greater specificity the substrate layers that stand between the RV as a product of the Punjab at, say, 1000 BCE, and the roots of Vedic in remote Indo-European antiquity. It emerges that several strata can be identified, ranging from evidence of quite early contact between Indo-Iranian speakers and Finno-Ugrian speakers; between Indo-Iranians and at least two sets of speakers of unknown Central Asian languages; as well as several other sets of speakers of languages present in the Indian sub-continent at the time of the arrival of the early Indo-Aryan speaking peoples whose religious and ritual traditions are preserved in the RV. Witzel's contribution to this Round Table lays this out quite clearly [cf. also Witzel 2000; Parpola 2001].

IV. These Central Asian substrate languages, which appear to have been a significant source of new words into Indo-Iranian, can be characterized with some degree of confidence. One of these seems to have been the source of a number of terms for Central Asian flora and fauna, as well as terms of technology reflecting a well-established urbanism that was otherwise alien to the early Indo-Iranians. One is reminded of the much-discussed BMAC culture. Let us note in passing that a cylinder seal found at one of its major sites appears to depict a ritual setting in which shamanic drums play a prominent role [see the photograph posted to the HRT website].

The other Central Asian substratum seems to have contributed a quite different set of new terms, which essentially revolved around religion and ritual, and in particular around the cult of Soma/Haoma. This substrate language seems to have been the source of names for various ritual functionaries, as well as the original Soma plant itself, and many terms for magic and healing, as well as the name of the quintessential Vedic god Indra. This language may well be associated with one of the steppe cultures of Central Asia, for example the Andronovo culture, although all of this is rather speculative.

V. It seems to me that a comparison of ethnographic accounts of Central Asian and Siberian horse sacrifice with the extremely elaborate accounts of the Vedic horse sacrifice is potentially much more productive than the comparisons that have been made between the Vedic horse sacrifice and accounts of horse sacrifice in other IE traditions. The problems in the reconstruction of an IE ritual horse sacrifice [along with accompanying myths] are well-known. It seems that some of the gaps in our knowledge may well be filled by recourse to Central Asian and Siberian accounts. For example, it is clear in these accounts of horse sacrifice that a shaman was a central participant. I would call your attention to one crucial function of the shaman in these proceedings: his impersonation of many of the major players in the performance. It turns out that the same may well be true of the early Vedic horse sacrifice as well, in the figure of Indra.

VI. In Radlov's classic account of Altaic horse sacrifice, we encounter a shaman who imitates and in fact impersonates numerous spirits, including the spirit of the horse to be sacrificed. The ritual mimicry here is quite striking and suggests that impersonation is itself a central element of the Altaic shaman's repertoire. Radlov's ethnography offers us a vivid description of a shaman who imitates both the physical and the audible gestures of a horse, its high-stepped prancing and its aristocratic neighing, as well as a sequence of self-assertions ["I am here, kam!" etc.] which show that the shaman who makes these assertions speaks not for or as himself, but for and as these others, and in particular the horse, and the gods whom he represents. Other accounts of such impersonations are readily available.

VII. The archaeology of prehistoric Central Asia should also play an important role in any discussion of shamanism in the RV, since it gives us crucial evidence of ancient parallels with RV ritual and mythology that would otherwise be inaccessible to us. The Ṛgvedic myth of the prophetic horse's head, i.e., the head of Dadhyañc, who lost his head only to have it replaced by that of a horse, is very likely reflected also in the Dereivka burial site [dated to c. 4500-3500 BCE] made famous by D. Anthony's claim that it offers us the oldest evidence of horseback riding, because of the evidence of bitwear on the horse's teeth. At this site of the Sredny Stog culture north of the Black Sea, a horse's skull, and the forelegs of another horse, are interred along with the remains of a dog. Anthony has seen significant parallels between this archaeological evidence and the Ṛgvedic myth of Dadhyañc, as well as those dog-eating Vrātyas whom Anthony likes to talk about.

VIII. Certainly some elements of the Vedic horse sacrifice have roots that go back to IE antiquity. Other roots don't go that far back, however. Evidence for the sacrifice of massive numbers of horses at the death of a ruler is attested in Iranian [via the reports of Herodotus]. Similar evidence of the sacrifice of massive numbers of horses is attested in Central Asian

archaeological sites from the Ukraine to the Altai mountain region. [Mallory IE Ency: s.v. horse sacrifice]. In fact, there is no good reason whatsoever to assume that horse sacrifice is a 'footprint' of IE culture, since horse sacrifice is well attested in many non-IE cultures of Eurasia. Whereas it is impossible to reconstruct the sacrifice of a large number of horses at the inauguration of an IE king, it may well be possible to reconstruct such an epic sacrifice of horses and other sacrificial victims in common Indo-Iranian, very possibly under the influence of Central Asian sources rather than older IE sources.

IX. One area of the Vedic horse sacrifice where Central Asian substrate words play a prominent role is the obscene banter between the priests and the chief queens, well-known of course for obvious and titillating reasons. It is interesting to observe the range of terms that are used in the various *aśvamedha* texts for the horse's rather prominent genitalia. There are the expected euphemisms, of course, like *garbhadhá* ['impregnator'], *retodhá* ['seed-placer'], and *prajanana* ['genitalia'], as well as a few good old crude IE words like *pása* ['penis' with which in fact it is cognate]. But in general one finds a preference for terms that are probably Central Asian in origin. Thus in TS we encounter the otherwise rare term *grḍá*, 'penis', as well as the obviously cognate but otherwise obscure *sárdigrḍi*, 'vulva, clitoris.' *grḍá* has a clear cognate in the late Avestan compound *garedō.kereta*, also rare [castrating, cutting off the genitals], but is clearly non-IE. Another Central Asian substrate word that we encounter here is *śépa* [also anomalous *śépha*], 'penis.' Yet another word, which is problematic, and not necessarily Central Asian, is *śíśná*, 'penis,' well known in later Sanskrit, but probably not IE either. On the other hand, when the chief queen [*máhiṣī*] taunts the dead horse, she resorts to a mantra opening with the words "ámbe ámbāly ámbike" [see Jamison for variants]. Possibly onomatopoeic, these related terms meaning 'mother, little mother' may well be of Dravidian origin [thus Kuiper 1991 p.63]

X. The point here is that at a crucial moment in the ritual of the horse sacrifice there is a clear tendency in the earliest texts toward using foreign words. The reason for this is not clear. Perhaps the very foreignness of these words increased their semantic [i.e., obscene] charge. But perhaps the reverse is true, however, since you probably can't get more obscene than the inherited IE root *yabh-*, 'to fuck,' which is used in the horse sacrifice as well. In any case, the presence of these substrate words establishes a link, a linguistic point of contact, between this most central of Vedic rituals and Central Asia.

XI. As for the association of dogs with horse sacrifice in Vedic and in Central Asian sources, both archaeological and ethnographic, again this association can be reinforced by noting the presence of Central Asian substrate words. The famous *Śunaḥśepa* story recounted in AB and ŚSS, but already known in some rather brief form in the RV, is an enormously interesting story which cannot be summarized here. But two features of it are worth mentioning. First, consider the names of the three brothers, sons of that atrocious Brahmin *Ajīgarta* who, his own son says, behaves more like a *Śūdra* than a true Brahmin. Unlike Abraham, his Biblical counterpart, *Ajīgarta* has no qualms at all about selling his son to be sacrificed, nor even about performing the sacrifice himself when no one else is willing to do so. That *Ajīgarta* lives "in the wild" [*araṇye*] is reinforced by the names of his three sons:

*Śunaḥpucca* ['dog-tail']      *Śunaḥśepa* ['dog-tail']      *Śunolāngūla* ['dog-tail']

In each case, the second member of the compound lacks a convincing etymology; they exhibit phonological irregularities; their semantics are clear in a broad sense, "rear-end [of the dog]", but it is possible that each and every one could mean "tail, penis, ass, etc." *lāṅgūla* is well-attested in MIA and NIA, and in Hindi, in the form of *langūr*, it refers to "the long-tailed black-faced monkey, baboon," or English 'langur.' Kuiper suggests that the Vedic word is a borrowing into IA from Austro-Asiatic, but it otherwise has no clear non-Indic cognates. The other two do have cognates in Iranian, but beyond these no others are known. For these reasons Lubotsky has rightly classified them as loanwords from a Central Asian substratum [Lubotsky 2001 and 2000]. Once again, the link between the archaeological evidence, the ethnographic evidence and the Vedic evidence is established on linguistic grounds. But another element of this story of crude sacrificial substitution is relevant: Indra makes an appearance "in the wild." At several key moments he takes human form in order to give advice. This is of course a very common theme in Indra mythology, both Vedic and post-Vedic. As we will see, Indra is a shape-shifter. In fact, he is a shaman.

XII. Before turning to Indra, let us return to the prior claims for evidence of shamanism in the RV. When it comes to finding shamanism in the RV, one of the most frequently cited hymns is 10.136, the hymn of the long-haired Muni. The bibliography on this hymn is extensive, going back to Oldenberg, Hauer, Gonda, Oguibénine, Closs, et al., culminating in recent papers by Deeg [1993] and Filipi [1999]. In the paper cited above Witzel repeatedly refers to this hymn as well. Much of interest has been pointed out about the hymn, and much more could be added. But here one new point will be made: this Muni is of course a "long-haired" sage, a *keśín*. That this term is a signature of the Muni is made dramatically clear in the opening stanza of the hymn where it occurs 5 times! In fact the term occurs 7x in this brief hymn, whereas *mūni* occurs only 3x [along with the derivative *maúneya* 1x]. Beyond this hymn, the term *keśín* is used almost exclusively to refer to the "long-haired" horses of Indra, in fact his pair of chariot-horses, the *Haris*. Among the few exceptions to this are a few obscure mystical references to "long-haired" virgins [i.e., flames] embracing Agni, or a riddling reference to "long-haired" females chanting to the *Rta* of *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, etc. The riddling poet *Dīrghatamas* is responsible for most of these metaphorical uses of the term in the RV [he is also the author of the only two full *ásvastutis* in the RV]. To make a long story short: the word *keśa* itself doesn't even occur in the RV, and its derivative *keśín* is almost exclusively used to refer to the long-haired manes of Indra's *Haris*. The attestations of the Avestan cognates are few, but likewise they are suggestive: once *gaēdu* refers to the hair of a camel; 3 times *gaēsu* refers to the hair of a man, the great Avestan, and rather Indra-like, hero, *Kərəsāspa*. Notice his equine name, which ends with *-aspa*, "-horse." Once again, these Indo-Iranian terms, *kéśa* / *gaēsu* (*gaēdu*) are foreign words borrowed from a Central Asian substrate language. The link between the ecstatic long-haired Muni and Central Asia is, I think, incontrovertible. It is legitimate to call him a shaman without being anachronistic or impressionistic. In RV 10.136.6 this *Keśín* is said to go on the path of *Apsarases* and *Gandharvas*. Not to beat a dead horse any more than one has to, but the Central Asian origins of these spirits or demigods are confirmed by the survival of their cult in in the Hindu Kush and Himalayas [cf. Witzel, above, p. 19 et passim], and in fact the term *gandharvá* is also an Indo-Iranian substrate word whose original meaning remains utterly obscure to us, but it clearly refers to a mythical being whose role in the Soma-myth is clearly prominent.

XIII. Now we can turn our attention to Indra, who, as we have already seen, has many features that are rooted in Central Asia. This is not simply a matter of identifying his name as belonging to a Central Asian substrate, although it does appear to: the name can be reconstructed only for common Indo-Iranian [on the various etymologies, besides EWA, see Witzel and Lubotsky]. We can be fairly sure that the attestation of Indra in Late Avestan as the name of a Daēva is not a borrowing from Indic, since the name is also attested in Nuristani languages, as *Indr*. We also have the corroborating evidence of the Iranian proper name *\*zariyaspa* [attested in Greek as *Zariaspes* = Vedic *háryasva*], which Swennen 2001 has shown to have been at an early date a divine epithet exclusive to Indra, "having golden horses," and thereafter surviving as an Iranian name.

XIV. In spite of the fact that Indra is of course a massive presence in the RV, his cult rather quickly faded after the Vedic period. Nevertheless, he remained an active figure in popular mythology, but in fact often a figure of scorn, or abuse, or mockery. Since Indra is mentioned in the Mitanni texts, it cannot be said that he is a new god in the RV, as is sometimes suggested, but he does nevertheless give the impression of being an outsider, rather *nouveau* compared to other Vedic gods. In spite of his obvious centrality in R̥gvedic mythology, as an awesome, powerful warrior, a passionate consumer of Soma, and by far the most frequently invoked god in the RV, he is explicitly a second-generation god with Oedipal issues against his father that may go back in some way to Indo-European antiquity, even if Indra himself does not go that far back. Indra of course tended to attract old IE cosmogonic motifs to himself like a magnet. But essentially, in my view, he was a Central Asian god with roots deep in Central Asian shamanism.

XV. It is not often noted that Indra, as the Vedic warrior par excellence, is most frequently by far the Vedic god who is the first to encounter foreign cultures. In the appendix to this abstract you will find the text and translation of a pair of hymns, what are called *ātmastutis*, "hymns of self-praise" [RV 10.48-49]. In order to illustrate Indra's encounter with foreign cultures, I have marked foreign terms in these hymns in bold italics. This will illustrate and explain an important point: it is a remarkable fact that Indra is the only Vedic god of whom it is explicitly said that there are clans out there who are hostile to him, and to him in particular. We know that there are *adeva*-clans, clans who are hostile to the Vedic gods in general. But Indra is unique insofar as the Vedic tradition acknowledges that there were clans hostile particularly to Indra: *anindra*-clans. As a result, we find that a great many of the foreign words in the RV occur in hymns invoking Indra to lead the charge against this or that enemy, or to defend this or that devotee against some foreign threat or other.

XVI. Another distinguishing feature of Indra's divinity is the fact that within Vedic culture there are persistent doubts even among the Vedic clans themselves about Indra's very existence, or at least about his presence at Vedic ritual activities. This is so well-known that it is unnecessary to dwell on it here. But the fact that Indra's very existence is a much contested issue even among his own devotees calls for an explanation.

XVII. As is well known, Vedic culture is highly agonistic. Aggressive interrogations and challenges directed at one's rivals are common-place [cf. Thompson JAOS 1997a]. Of course, these aggressions often arouse very heated responses. We have evidence of this in the often very bombastic self-assertions of the Vedic poets [cf. Thompson 1997b and 1997c on the *satyakriyā*].

Ṛgveda 10.48-49 may look like bombastic self-assertion, but actually they are quite a different thing.

XVIII. Like any other Vedic personage, Indra is present in Vedic discourse in three ways:

- (1) as a third person topic, e.g., in those hymns where the Vedic Ṛṣi [a term which is by the way yet another Central Asian substrate loan!] recounts for all the heroic deeds of Indra.
- (2) as a second person addressee, e.g., where Indra is invoked for aid, etc. [e.g., RV 8.14: "if I were you, Indra, I'd be generous to one like me...", etc.]
- (3) as a first person speaker, i.e., such as we have in RV 10.48-49. The sequence of first person pronoun forms dominates such hymns, of course.

The difference between what I call an *ahaṃkāra*, i.e., the self-assertion of a man or woman against a rival, and what I call an *ātmastuti*, i.e., a "hymn of self-praise," which is really an impersonation of a god by a human, is, well, crucial. In these *ātmastutis*, as also in the dialogue hymns of the RV, we have performances – sometimes very theatrical performances – in which the Ṛṣi impersonates, takes on the role of, a god. Vedicists have tended to look at these hymns as the first examples of Indic drama. I prefer to view them as the last vestiges of shamanic seances in Vedic.

XIX. It is not an accident that Indra is the god who is most frequently impersonated both in *ātmastutis* and in dialogue hymns. It is also not at all an accident that RV 10.48-49 are framed by other Indra hymns. The preceding one, RV 10.47, is a typical direct address to Indra, invoking him for wealth [*rayí*, the hymn's theme-word]. The following one, RV 10.50, contains a *brahmodya*-sequence that implicitly questions Indra's presence and purpose, but resolves those questions by addressing him with the epithet *sátpati* ["true lord"] and as the "best mantra." The famous pair RV 4.26-27, in which Indra is impersonated, is likewise framed by related hymns, indicating that the redactor of the RV was sensitive to the connections between these themes. The implication of this [which is only tentatively offered here; to be argued more fully later] is that these *ātmastutis*, shamanic seances, are intended and understood as a response to the explicit challenges to Indra's presence, purpose, and even his existence, which are frequently encountered in the RV. Gods of nature with clear palpable ties to natural phenomena do not need to be made manifest in *ātmastutis*, for their presence is manifest already. Likewise gods of the moral and social order [the *Ādityas*] are only infrequently impersonated [the exceptions are *Agni* and *Varuṇa*]. It is Indra, the Vedic person par excellence, as R. Söhnen nicely put it, who most inspires these performances.

XX. We have to put ourselves in the context of situation, to use Malinowski's famous phrase: What does it mean for a Ṛgvedic Ṛṣi to say "I am Indra"? There is a famous RV crux in 4.42.3: *ahám índro váruṇaḥ*. The mythic, or intended, speaker here is supposed to be one or the other of the two gods, no doubt, but the *actual* speaker is a human being. What does the Ṛṣi mean by saying *ahám índro váruṇaḥ*? I would suggest that he means exactly the same thing as the Siberian shaman, quoted in Radlov's ethnography, means when he says "I am here, kam!" "Here I am, Indra, Varuṇa [both]!" And I think that he means it quite literally.

XXI. I will conclude this rather long abstract with some quick observations on the two hymns RV 10.48-49, which appear in the Appendix. The Ṛṣi is doing the voice of Indra here. Let us notice some of the things that, as Indra, he says.

10.48.2 Notice the reference to Dadhyañc, whose soothsaying horse's head has been mentioned earlier with regard to Anthony's discussion of the excavation from Dereivka.

10.48.3 The gods "aryanize" Indra through the performance. This interpretation of the verb áryanti may be controversial, but I think that it is defensible. Cf. áryaṃ náma at 49.3, and KEWA under áryati [á + aryati denominative from árya].

10.48.6. Note "indraṃ yé vájraṃ yudháye 'kṛṇvata" = "they who have made Indra into a cudgel for battle." Shades of the shape-shifting shaman!

10.48.7 Explicit reference here to those anindra-clans who are hostile to and revile Indra. They are like sheaves on the threshing-floor.

10.48.8 & 9 Clear reference here, as so often elsewhere, to Indra's encounters with foreign clans, some of whom he is good to [e.g., the Guṅgus]; to others not so good [i.e., Parṇaya and Karañja; cf. yát parṇayaghná utá vā karañjahé, where these clan-names are compounded with forms of the verb han-, 'kill, smash'].

10.48.10 Not clear, but Geldner thinks that asthá may be inst. sg. of ásthan, and may refer to a horse's skull.

10.48.11 Speaking through the Ṛṣi [i.e., a shaman], Indra says that [in spite of appearances] he does not go beyond what the gods ordain, for he has been fashioned by them. Interesting mea culpa.

10.49.1 "I performed a bráhmaṇ as a strengthening for myself": this certainly suggests that Indra and the Ṛṣi are basically indistinguishable, at least during the performance of this hymn!

10.49.2 The Ṛṣi seems clearly to say of himself "I am Indra by name," established as such by all the clans of the three worlds. The impersonation seems quite evident here.

10.49.3 The Ṛṣi i.e., Indra, withholds the Aryan name from the Dasyus. Note here Indra's special relationship with Kutsa, the only mortal who appears in a dvandva compound with a god! Interpretation of the first line is problematic.

10.49.4 & 05 Notice the foreign names in these two stanzas, all of them the names of people subdued by Indra!

10.49.8 The strange assertion "I am more Nahuṣ than Nahuṣ himself" suggests perhaps that the Ṛṣi is a shaman who can take on many different personae, and often foreign ones as in this case.

10.49.11 Notice the coda where the poet appears to return to himself. Or perhaps rather the redactor has attached an addendum suggesting as much.

In the RV hymns to the sacrificial horse [RV 1.162-163, part of the Dīrghatamas cycle], Indra is twice said to have been the first one to mount the sacrificial horse. Along with the anonymous horde of the Maruts, Indra is the only individual explicitly said to have ridden a horse in the RV. At RV 1.32.12 Indra is said, rather famously though obscurely, to have become a horse's tail. Indra is sometimes called an ardhadevā, a demi-god – the only RV god to be so called – , whereas one of his rivals, Śambara, is scornfully called a devāka, i.e., a little god, or a false idol. All of these facts need to be examined in light of Indra's shamanizing and shape-shifting.

XXII. Sometimes divine in form, sometimes very human., sometimes a mantra, sometimes a vajra. A horse's tail here, a mother hyena there, Indra, we have seen, takes on many different forms. Recall once again the story of Śunaḥśepa in XI above. Indra takes human form [puruṣarūpe], the form of a Brahmin, to give good self-preserving advice to Rohita. He is called "friend of the wanderer" [carataḥ sakhā], etc. That shape-shifting is evident in the pair RV 10.48-49 is, I think, quite strong.. Of course, Indra is also more deeply involved in the Soma-cult than any other god. In short he was a shape-shifter and he was a Soma-drinking shaman, very much of the Central Asian type, to which he now can be linked through these Central Asian substrata that are evident in the RV. Vedicists need to confront this new view of Indra. A full version of this paper will give in more detail the reasons for suggesting so.

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 Appendix: The following text and translation of RV 10.48-49 is intended to illustrate the claims made in this paper. Note that forms of the first person pronoun have been highlighted in **bold** characters, as well as a few first person verbal forms that seem to have a marked function. Note also that a few other forms of particular interest are also highlighted in **bold** characters. Finally, proper names of foreign [non-IE] origin, and other probably foreign lexica, have been highlighted in *bold italics*.

10.048.01

**ahám bhuvam** vásunaḥ pūrvyās pátir / **ahám** dhánāni sám **jayāmi** śásvataḥ /  
**mám** havante pitāraṃ ná jantávo / **hám** dāsúṣe ví bhajāmi bhójanam //

**I myself am [and have always been]** the first lord of wealth! **I myself** completely conquer all forms of treasure! The clans invoke **me** as their father! **I am the one who** distributes the offering-portion to the priest who pays **me** homage!

10.048.02

**ahám Āndro** ródho vákṣo *AtharvaŪas* / tritáya gá ajanayam áher ádhi /  
**ahám dĀsyubhya**Ōpári ṇmṇám á dade / gotrá śíkṣan dadhīcé mātariśvane //

**I am Indra**, the *Atharvan's* wall, (and) breast! For Trita's sake I forced the birth of the cows from the serpent. **It was I who** took manhood away from the *Dasyus*, steering the cow-herds toward Dadhyañc, toward Mātariśvan.

10.048.03

**máhyam** tváṣṭā vājram atakṣad āyasám / **máyi** deváso 'vṛjann ápi krátum /  
**mámánikaṃ** sūryasyeva duṣṭáram / **mám áryanti** kṛténa kártvena ca //

It was **for me** that Tvaṣṭar fashioned the metal cudgel! It was **upon me** that the gods turned their attention (for) **my** face is hard to endure, like the sun's! They **make me an Aryan** with a work [poem? performance?] that is performed and one that is to be performed.

10.048.04

**ahám** etám gavyáyam ásvyam paśúm / puriśiṇam sáyakenā hiraṇyáyam /  
 purú sahásrā **ní śísāmi** dāsúṣe / yán **mā** sómāsa ukthíno ámandiṣuḥ //



**It is I who** [wins] the sacrificial beast, whether it is made of cows, of horses, or of dung, or of gold [won] with my missile! Many thousands **do I strike down** for the priest who serves me, when the soma-juices and the songs have intoxicated **me!**

10.048.05

**ahám Āndro** ná párā jigya íd dhánaṃ / ná mṛtyávé 'va **tasthe** kádā caná /  
sómam ín **mā** sunvánto yācatā vásu / ná **me p̄rava**Ōsakhyé riṣāthana //

**I, Indra, I** have never gambled away my winnings, nor **have I ever fallen** in the face of death. Press the soma and ask **me** for wealth! **Pūrus**, you will not suffer in **my** friendship!

10.048.06

**ahám** etāñ chāsvasato dvā-dvé- / 'ndraŃ yé **vájraṃ** yudháye 'kṛṇvata /  
āhváyamānāñ áva hánmanāhanam / dṛḷhá vādann **ánamasyur** namasvínaḥ //

**I** have [struck] them, those panting snorting ones, two by two, who have made **Indra** into a **cudgel** for battle! **I have struck** down with my striker those who challenge **I the unbending one** speaking strong words to those who themselves [will] bend!

10.048.07

abhídám **ékam éko asmi** niṣṣál / abhí dvá kím u tráyaḥ karanti /  
khále ná **parŪān** práti **hanmi** bhūri / kím **mā nindanti** śátravo 'nindrāḥ //

So **here I am, one** victor against **one**, and against two! What can three do [against me]? Like **sheaves** on the threshing-floor, many [are they that] **I strike down**. Why do these enemies **hostile to Indra slander me?**

10.048.08

**ahám guŪgĀbhyo** atithigvám **iṣkaram** / iṣaṃ ná vṛtratúraṃ vikṣú **dhārayam** /  
yát **parŪayaghnÁ** utá vā **karaŪjahE**/ **prāham** mahé vṛtrahátye ásuśravi //

**I have made** Atithigva a nourishing food for the **Guṅgus!** Like a Vṛtra-defeating food **have I established** him among the clans, when at the killing of **ParŪaya** as well as the killing of **Karañja, I** won fame for **myself** for the great deed of killing Vṛtra.

10.048.09

prá **me nĀmī sēpyÁ** iṣé bhujé bhūd / gāvām éṣe sakhyá kṛṇuta dvitā /  
didyūṃ yád asya samithéṣu **maṃháyam** / ád íd enaṃ sámśyam ukthyāṃ **karam** //

**NamŚSāpya** went forth for me to be the enjoyment of nourishing food. In pursuit of cows, he made friendship with me, repeatedly! When **I made great** his arrow in confrontations, at once **I made him** praise-worthy, hymn-worthy!

10.048.10

prá **nĒmasmin** dadṛṣe sómo antár / gopá **nĒmam** āvír asthá kṛṇoti /  
sá tigmásṛṅgaṃ vṛṣabhāṃ yúyutsan / druhás tasthau bahulé baddhó antáh //

Soma has become visible within **the one**. The guardian makes manifest **the other** by means of the bone [skull?]. Eager to fight the sharp-horned bull [i.e., Indra], he has stood bound within the thick [fetter] of the Lie.

10.048.11

ādityānāṃ vāsūnāṃ rudrīyāṇāṃ / **devó devānāṃ ná mināmi dhāma** /  
té **mā** bhadrāya śávase **tatakṣur** / áparājitam ástrtam áṣāḷham //

Whether among the Adityas, among the Vasus, among the Rudras, **a god among the gods I do not transgress their functions!** For the sake of auspicious power **have they fashioned me**, me unconquered, unbroken, unsubdued!

10.049.01

**ahám dām** gr̥ṇaté pūrvyam vāsv / **ahám** bráhma kṛṇavam **máhyam** vārdhanam /  
**ahám bhuvam** yájamānasya coditā- / 'yajvanaḥ **sākṣi** víśvasmin bhāre

**I am the one who gave** the singer the first of all wealth! **I performed a hymn** as a strenghennng **for myself!** **I became** the sacrificer's prod! Those who refuse to sacrifice [to me] – **I have crushed** them in every battle!

10.049.02

**mām** dhur **índram náma** devatā divás / ca gmás cāpām ca jantávaḥ /  
**ahám** hārī víṣanā vívratā raghú / **ahám** vájram śávase dhṛṣṇv á dade //

The clans of the heaven and of the earth and of the waters – they have established **me** as a divinity, **Indra by name!** **It was I** who took the swift unruly golden-pair, the stallion-pair, **I** boldly took the cudgel for battle-strength!

10.049.03

**ahám Átkañ** kaváye **Úhathañ** háthair / **ahám kÁtsam** āvam ābhír ūtíbhīḥ /  
**ahám** śuṣṇasya **ÚhAthitē** vādhar yamaṃ / ná yó rará **áryam náma dÁsyave** //

**I** [gave **Kutsa my**] cloak. For the Kavi [i.e., **Kutsa**] **I destroyed** with many blows. I helped **Kutsa** with these sorts of help. I, the **destroyer** of Śuṣṇa, I controlled the weapon! I, who did not give **the Aryan name** to the **Dasyu!**

10.049.04

**ahám** pitéva **vetasèi** r abhiṣṭaye / **tÁgrañ kÁtsĒya smÁdibhañ** ca randhayam /  
**ahám** bhuvam yájamānasya rājāni /prá yád **bhāre** tūjaye ná priyádhṛṣe //

Like a father **I** [aided] the **Vetasus** to superiority! For Kutsa **I** overthrew **Tugra** and **Smadibha** both! **I found myself** under the leadership of the sacrificer! When **I bring myself** to the front for Tuji, there is no being aggressive against [my] two precious [horses]!

10.049.05

**ahám** randhayam *mégayaŃ* śrutárvaṇe / yán **májihīta** vayúnā canānuṣák /  
**ahám** veśám namrám āyáve 'karam / **ahám** sávyāya pádgr̥bhim arandhayam

I overthrew *Mīgayam* for Śrutarvan, when he approached **me** in due course regardless of custom. **I** made the settlement humble for Āyu! I overthrew Padgr̥bhi for Savya!

10.049.06

**ahám** sá yó návavāstvam bṛhadratham / sám vṛtréva *dāsaŃ* vṛtrahárujam /  
yád vardháyantam pratháyantam ānuṣág / dūrē pāré rájaso rocanákaram //

**It was I who** [smashed? protected?] Navav~stva, Bṛhadratha! **I, the destroyer of obstacles, I completely smashed** the *Dāsa*, like so many obstacles, when in due course I made the lights in the distance to the farthest end of the dark sky, [and] the waxing one and the outspreading one.

10.049.07

**ahám** sūryasya **pári yāmy** āśúbhiḥ / praitasébhīr váhamāna ójasā /  
yán **mā** sāvó mánuṣa áha nirníja / řdhak **kṛṣe** *dāsaŃ* kṛtvyaṃ háthaiḥ //

With Sūrya's swift horses **I circle around**, carried forth by the Etaśa-horses with strength. When the teaching of Manu speaks to **me** of the adorned robe, with many blows **I drag** the confident *Dāsa* aside!

10.049.08

**ahám** saptahá *nÁhuŮb nÁhuŮāraŮ* / práśrāvayaṃ śávasā *turvÁŮāŃ yÁdum* /  
**ahám** ny ānyāṃ sáhasā sáhas karam / náva vrádhato navatím ca **vakṣayam** //

The destroyer of seven, **I am more Nahuṣ than Nahuṣ himself!** Because of my power, **I have made Turvaśa and Yadu famous!** **I myself brought** one down, with my strength against his, and ninety nine others, strong as they are, **I increased** their strength!

10.049.09

**ahám** saptá sraváto **dhārayaṃ vṛṣā** / dravitnvāḥ pṛthivyāṃ *śrā* ádhi /  
**ahám** árñāṃsi ví tirāmi sukrátur / yudhá **vidam** mánave gātúm iṣṭáye //

**A bull, I contained** the seven rivers, and the little *streams* flowing upon the earth! Of good insight, **I cross over** the floods! Through battle, **I have found** a path for Manu to pursue!

10.049.10

**ahám** tád āsu **dhārayaṃ** yád āsu ná / devás caná tváṣṭádhārayad rúsat /  
spārhám gāvām údhasu vakṣāṇāsv á / mádhor mádhu śvātryaṃ sómam āśíram //

**I myself have contained** that thing which is in them, which no god at all, not even Tvaṣṭar, has contained -- that radiant, the much-desired thing in the udders and the bellies of cows, the honey of honey, the nourishing Soma mixed with milk!

10.049.11

evá deváñ **Āndro** vivye n̄ñ / prá cyautnéna maghāvā satyārādhāḥ /  
víśvét tá te harivaḥ śacīvo / 'bhí turāsaḥ svayaśo gṛṇanti //

In this way **Indra** has addressed himself, with his action [performance?] to gods and men, Indra rich in gifts, whose gifts are true! All these things, O leader of the Haris, [Indra] full of power, possessed of your own glory, do strong men sing in agreement!