

The Sanskrit *-yet*-Optative A Formation Not Yet Recorded in Sanskrit Grammars*

*To my first guru of Sanskrit,
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1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

“Kann *kṣipyet* überhaupt eine richtige Form sein?”
(Böhtlingk 1897: 92)

In the individual verbal systems of a few Sanskrit verbs which can build only middle *-ya*-presents, or no *-ya*-presents at all, we find isolated forms in *-yet*, which at first glance cannot be anything but 3sg. active optatives of *-ya*-presents (class IV): *kṣipyet*, *-śiṣyet*, *sicyet*, etc. Such forms are extremely rare and first appear in late Vedic and post-Vedic texts, and therefore are generally regarded as instances of late and erroneous diathesis replacement (middle → active). Accordingly, editions usually conjecture middle (passive) optatives instead (**-śiṣyeta*, **sicyeta*, etc.). One should note, however, that in most such cases there are no other (non-optative) active forms based on a *-ya*-stem (***kṣipyati*, ***śiṣyati*, etc.); in other words, forms like *kṣipyet* and *-śiṣyet* prove to be isolated and their explanation as resulting from diathesis confusion seems unconvincing. This account is even less probable if the root in question has no

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-*ya*-presents (active or middle) or -*ya*-passives at all, as is the case with *kṣip*. All these facts require us to reconsider the paradigmatic status of such forms. To begin with, I will discuss a few such forms attested in Vedic prose.

2. -*YET*-OPTATIVE: A PRELIMINARY HYPOTHESIS

2.1. The form -*śiṣyet* occurs in the late GB (1.2.14: 47.11-12): *na devayajana-mātram purastāt paryavaśiṣyet*. The same sentence also appears (with minor modifications) in the ŚB (2.10.12): *tasya na purastād devayajana-mātram atiśiṣyāt*. Bollée (1956: 63f.) translates:

East of it (the place of sacrifice) no space, wide enough for laying out another place of sacrifice, must be left.¹

The form -*śiṣyāt*² is likely to be a root aorist optative,³ often also called “precative”.⁴ The root *śiṣ* has no root aorist indicative forms beside the optative -*śiṣyāt*, but, as Narten (1982: 128f. [= 1995: 255]) rightly points out, many roots build precatives, but lack indicatives and other non-optative forms of the root aorist.

The parallelism of the two passages above, GB 1.2.14: 47.11-12 and ŚB 2.10.12, clearly indicates that -*śiṣyet* has the same value as the root aorist optative -*śiṣyāt*. In turn, the latter is probably functionally equivalent to the optatives based on the present stem with the nasal infix (also attested in late Vedic), which belong together with the transitive nasal present *śināṣti*, *śimṣati* Br. +, and thus can only be employed transitively,⁵ as in ŚB 7.4.2.18:

sá yád amūm evòpadadhyāt, nēmām apaśimṣyāt, kṣipré hāsmāl lokād yāja-mānaḥ préyāt “Now were he only to lay down that (golden man), and not to let this dviyagus (brick) remain,⁶ the Sacrificer surely would quickly pass away from this world” (Eggeling III/382).

Intuitively, -*śiṣyet*, -*śiṣyāt* and -*śimṣyāt* all belong together, but their exact relationship is unclear. Let us put -*śiṣyet* aside for a while and pass on

¹ On this prescription, see Caland – Henry 1906: 7 with n. (9.3).

² Mentioned by Eelsingh in the introduction to his edition of the ŚB (p. xxxiv) among “merkwaardige verbaalvormen”.

³ Unless it is a scribal error for the present optative -*śimṣyāt* (Ch.H. Werba, p.c.).

⁴ For this formation, see, for instance, Whitney 1884: 286ff. (= 1971: 294ff.); Bloch 1927; Burrow 1954; Hoffmann 1967; Narten 1982.

⁵ Cf. also Sāyaṇa’s gloss -*śeṣayet*.

⁶ This part of the passage should probably be understood as “Würde er dann/aber nur den (Ziegel) dort anlegen, ohne den hier übrigzulassen ...” (Ch.H. Werba, letter of 26.06.2006).

to another form in -yet, attested in the ŚĀ (8.2): *yad vā rte prāṇād retah sicyet, tat pūyen, na sambhavet*. Keith (1908: 51) translates: “If without breath seed were effused, it would decay, it would not be productive.”

Both ed. ĀnSS and ed. Keith read *sicyet*, but the active -ya-present **sicyati* does not exist in Vedic; we only find the -yá-passive *sicyāte*. Correspondingly, in his translation, Keith (1908: 51, n. 4) notices the irregularity of the form;⁷ ed. Bhim Dev and *VWC-Br.* II/1590a (with n. a) conjecture **sicyeta*, apparently following the passive interpretation suggested by Keith.

As in the case of the parallel forms -*śiṣyet* and -*śiṣyāt*, *sicyet* can hardly mean anything different from the root aorist optative (precative) *sicyāt*, which occurs, for instance, in JUB 1.1.3.8 [ed. Oertel 1.3.8]: ... *yathā kṣīre kṣīram āsicyāt* ...⁸ “... as one would pour milk into milk ...” (Oertel).

The syntax of the context poses no difficulties. The form *āsicyāt*, derived from the fundamentally transitive verb *sic* “pour”, is undoubtedly transitive, and *sicyet* must be such as well. Likewise, one may suppose that both the unclear -*śiṣyet* and its precativē pendant -*śiṣyāt* are employed transitively. This immediately raises a number of questions: are Bollée’s and Keith’s passive translations of -*śiṣyāt* (in ŚB 2.10.12) and *sicyet* (in ŚĀ 8.2) correct? Do we actually have sufficient reasons for taking the passages in question as (unambiguously) intransitive? If not, why have Keith and Bollée interpreted these constructions intransitively (passively)?

In fact, the aforequoted sentences in which the forms -*śiṣyet*, -*śiṣyāt* and *sicyet* occur are syntactically ambiguous – by virtue of the morphological ambiguity of the nouns *retah* and *devayajanamātram* (nominative/accusative); i.e. all three can be interpreted either intransitively (“no space ... should *be left*”, etc.) or transitively (“he should *leave* no space”, etc.). Apparently, both Keith and Bollée have associated -y- in -*śiṣyāt* and *sicyet* with the present (passive) suffix -ya-. Since y in the optative has nothing to do with the passive suffix -ya-, this analysis is certainly im-

⁷ “*Sicyeta* seems most probable, as *sicyet* is very irregular. *Sicyāt*, a precativē form, is just possible, but not likely.”

⁸ Narten (1964: 267, n. 845) conjectures an optative of the athematic nasal present (“wahrscheinlich Schreibfehler für sonstiges *śiṇcyāt*”); for this and other athematic forms of this nasal present, see Werba 1997: 254); for the athematic present optatives see also § 6.2 below. Oertel (p. 227, n. a.l.) hesitantly conjectures **āsiñcet*. Böhtlingk (*apud* Oertel 1895: ccxliii [= 1994: I/27]), Caland (*apud* ed. Limaye – Vadekar, p. 380, n. i) and Sharma (see also p. 227, n. a.l.) suggest **°sicyeta*. In my view, neither of these conjectures is in fact required.

possible for the root aorist optative *-śiṣyāt* and should be likewise rejected for *-śiṣyet* and *sicyet*: as it seems, *-y-* in *-yet* is of the same nature as in *-yāt*.

On the other hand, there are no good reasons to suppose that precatives (and “precativ-like” forms) could not be employed transitively. Generally, root aorist optatives show the same syntactic pattern as other (primary) derivatives of the verb. In particular:

(i) root aorist optatives of fundamentally transitive verbs are employed transitively, cf. *ā-bhriyāt* (ŚB 1.5.1.20) “he should bring” (not *‘‘he should be brought’’), *vadhyaāt* (Yajurveda) “he should slay”, and other examples given by Narten (1964);

(ii) root aorist optatives of intransitive verbs are employed intransitively, cf. *puṣyāsam* “may I prosper”, *gamyāś* RV “he should come”, etc.

Thus, since transitive interpretations are syntactically possible and even preferable for *-śiṣyet*, *-śiṣyāt* and *sicyet*, the corresponding passages should be translated transitively, contra Keith (1908: 51) and Bollée (1956: 63f.), i.e.: “East of it ... he *should leave* no space ...” (for GB and SB), and “If he *were to pour* seed without breath, it would decay ...” (for ŚĀ).

2.2. While the aforementioned passages containing *sicyet* and *-śiṣyet* are syntactically unclear, by virtue of the morphological ambiguity of the nouns involved (nominative/accusative), in the case of *-dihyet*, attested in the BhārŚS, the syntactic context leaves no choice. *-dihyet* can only be interpreted transitively (BhārŚS 11.17.10):

yadi bhidyeta, vidhuṃ dadrāṇam iti saṃdhāya, yāni dṛdhārthe saṃśleṣaṇāni, tair enam abhidihyed, yad anyan māṣebhyo māṃsāc ca, yad ṛte cid abhiśriṣa iti “If [the Mahāvīra-vessel] would break, he should unite [its parts] with [the verse]: ‘[The grey-haired one has swallowed] the deadly hit [moon] which was walking [in the fight of many ones ...]’⁹ (RV 10.55.5 = TĀ^m 4.20.1, etc.) and besmear it with [things] which make [other things] cling together to [remain] (firmly) fixed (for some time), except beans and meat, with [the verse]: ‘When [the one who unites] without ligature ...’ [TĀ^m ib.]”.

The parallel passage in ĀpŚS 15.17.8 clearly shows that *abhi-dihyet* in the BhārŚS replaces the optative *abhi-dihyāt*:

yadi bhidyeta, vidhuṃ dadrāṇam iti saṃdadhyāt, tato yāni dṛdhārthe saṃśleṣaṇāni syus, tair enam abhidihyāt ...

⁹ For this mantra, see Caland 1924: 76, n. 3 ad ĀpŚS 9.4.1; see also Tichy 1993: 15f. for the meaning of the hapax *vidhú-* (“tödlich getroffen”).

The form *-dihyāt* may belong to the system of the root present (*degdhi*, etc.); however, in formal terms, this form can also be taken as an instance of the root aorist optative (precative), a formation which has become functionally (almost) equivalent to present optatives by the late Vedic period (see Narten 1982: 129 [= 1995: 256]).

Thus, the preliminary conclusions on the function and status of the forms *-dihyet*, *-śīṣyet* and *śicyet* (hereafter labelled *-yet*-optatives) can be recapitulated as follows:

- (i) *-dihyet*, etc. do not belong with *-ya*-presents, nor with *-yá*-passives;
- (ii) these forms are employed in the same usage as root aorist optatives (precatives) in *-yāt* (*śicyāt*, etc.);
- (iii) like the corresponding root aorist optatives, they can be employed transitively if the base verb is transitive.

3. ATTESTED FORMS

In what follows I will discuss forms in *-yet* which cannot be explained as optatives of active *-ya*-presents and thus may represent *-yet*-optatives.

kṣip “throw”: *kṣipyet*

ChU 8.6.5 [*kṣipyet*, ed. Böhtlingk ⁺*kṣīyeta*, Böhtlingk (1876: 640) ⁺*kṣīyet*, *VWC-Up.* I/261b ⁺*kṣipet*]

The form *kṣipyet*, attested in an unclear ChU passage (8.6.5), has drawn the attention of Böhtlingk (see p. 27 above) and other interpreters. The passage runs:

atha yatraitad asmāc charīrād utkrāmaty, athaitair eva rāsmibhir ūrdhvam ākramate. sa om iti ⁺vāho ⁺dvāram ⁺vyate.¹⁰ sa yāvat kṣipyen manas, tāvad ādityaṃ gacchati.

Since neither (active) *-ya*-presents, nor *-ya*-passives can be derived in Vedic from *kṣip*,¹¹ the form *kṣipyet* appears even more irregular than

¹⁰ Conjectures by K.F. Geldner; see Morgenroth 1981: 289ff. and Olivelle 1998: 569 (with bibliographical references) for a discussion of the initial part of the passage.

¹¹ The passive of *kṣip* appears in post-Vedic texts. In particular, we find *kṣipyanti* (with the abnormal active inflexion, see Bharadwaj 1982: 113; *VWC-Sū.* II/953, n. 1 conjectures the metrically impossible middle form ⁺*kṣipyante*) in *ViṣSmṛ.* 43.42cd: *kvacit kṣipyanti bāṇaughair ' utkrtyante tathā kvacit* || “In some place they are shot (lit. thrown) with many arrows; in some place they are cut in pieces” (from a description of hell). Cf. also Epic Skt. part. act. *ākṣipyant-* “being pulled, thrown” (*Mbh.* 1.16.15b); see Kulkar- ni 1943: 239 and Oberlies 2003: 265, 411.

sicyet and *-śisyet* discussed above. Böhlingk (1889) conjectures ⁺*kṣīyeta*, but the meaning “disappear” makes little sense in the context (in Böhlingk’s translation: “Während das Denkorgan verschwindet, gelangt man zur Sonne”);¹² cf. ed. Senart 1930: 113, n. 3.¹³ In his edition Morgenroth (p. 506) accepts no emendation and interprets the form in question intransitively (“Der – wie schnell ein Gedanke ausschießt, so schnell gelangt er zur Sonne” [p. 368]), which is hardly possible for the fundamentally transitive verb *kṣip*.

In my view, the normal (transitive) interpretation of *kṣip* (“throw”) better suits the sense of the passage (*VWC-Up.* I/261b reads ⁺*kṣipet*), which can be tentatively rendered as follows:

Now, when one exits from this body, then with those same rays one rises upwards. With the word “Om” this charioteer (?) drives to the gate. So long as he can direct [lit.: throw, send]¹⁴ his mind [thither], he comes to the sun.

Most likely, the form *kṣipyet* cannot be grouped with *-ya*-presents,¹⁵ nor with *-ya*-passives. The interpretation of this form as an instance of *-yet*-optative renders conjectures suggested by Böhlingk (⁺*kṣīyet*, ⁺*kṣīyeta*) and *VWC-Up.* I/261b (⁺*kṣipet*) unnecessary.

grh “seize, grasp”: *grhyet*

Kauś^m 82.21 [*grhyet*, v.ll. *grhet*, *grhyot*, *duhyed*]

The form *grhyet* occurs in an unidentified mantra quoted in the Kauś 82.21:

yad-yat kravyād grhyed yadi ' kravyādā nānte 'paredyuh /
divo nabhaḥ śukraṃ payo ' duhānā iṣam ūrjaṃ pinvamānāḥ //

Pādas cd are found (with some modifications) in Atharvaveda-Paippalā-dasamhitā 19.52.1-3 (see Griffiths 2004: 77);¹⁶ the source of Pādas ab is

¹² The conjecture ⁺*kṣīyet*, earlier suggested by Böhlingk (1876 [= *Mélanges asiatiques*, p. 640]), retains the active ending, but the present *kṣīya*-¹⁶ occurs with active inflexion only exceptionally (twice in TĀ 1.14.2).

¹³ “Je n’ose pas décider quelle est la lecture exacte : *kṣipyet* n’est guère satisfaisant, et je crois moins encore à *kṣīyeta* qu’à conjecturé BÖHLINGK. Je traduis donc un peu au hasard, d’après le sens que le contexte paraît suggérer avec beaucoup de vraisemblance.”

¹⁴ Thus already Deussen (1897: 194): “... rasch wie man den Geist darauf richtet” – the interpretation which Böhlingk (1897: 92) rejected. Cf. also Olivelle’s (1998: 279) translation: “No sooner does he think of it than he reaches the sun.”

¹⁵ Although the influence of the synonymous *-ya*-present *asyati* “throws” cannot be ruled out (W. Knobl, p.c.).

¹⁶ Cf. also RV 9.74.4a: *ātmanvān nābho duhyate ghṛtām páyaḥ* “The animated cloud is milked [for] ghee [and] milk.”

unknown. Pāda b is obscure and may require emendations, but the sense of Pāda a seems clear in the context of the funeral ritual to which this part of KauśS is devoted: “Whatever the flesh-eater (i.e. funeral fire) would grasp”

dih “(be)smear”: -*dihyet*

BhārŚS 11.17.10 [*abhi-dihyet*] (≈ ĀpŚS 15.17.8 [*abhi-dihyāt*])

The form -*dihyet* “he should besmear” has been discussed above (p. 30f.).

dhyā “think of, reflect, meditate”: *dhyāyét*

RVKh. 3.10².16 [*dhyāyét*, *VWC-Sa.* III/1744a ⁺*dhyāyét*] (≈ BD 6.145)

The form *dhyāyét* (transmitted with a final accentuation, which is impossible for the class IV present *dhyāya-ti* attested for this root) occurs in RVKh. 3.10².16; the verse is also quoted (with minor modifications) in BD 6.145:

pāvamānīm pitṛñ +dévān ' dhyāyéd +yás ca +sārasvatīm |
+pitṛñs +tāsyópa tiṣṭheta ' kṣīrām sarpír mádhūdakām ||

“And who meditates on the Pāvamānī (stanza), on the fathers, on the gods, and on Sarasvatī, his fathers (only) milk, ghee, honey, (and) water may approach.”

The verse is based on the ṛgvedic stanza 9.67.32, which has undergone essential changes, however:

pāvamānīr yó adhyét,y ' ṛṣibhiḥ sámbhṛtaṃ rásam |
tāsmāi sārāsvatī duhe ' kṣīrām sarpír mádhūdakām ||

“Who knows by heart the Pāvamānī [verses], the sap brought together by the Ṛṣis, Sarasvatī gives him milk, ghee, honey, water.”

dhyāyéd yás seems to originate in ṛgvedic *yó adhyéti*, and the awkward form *dhyāyét* undoubtedly results from misunderstanding ṛgvedic *adhyéti*, to which it may owe its unusual accentuation. Although the passage contains a few words with clearly corrupt accentuation (*yás ca*, *sārasvatīm*, *dévān*, *pitṛñs*), and the final accent in *dhyāyét* might be treated likewise, it cannot be ruled out that introducing this accent placement could have been supported by the morphological model of the -yet-optative, which might inherit its final accentuation from precatives in -*yāt*. Under this analysis, the accent emendation (⁺*dhyāyét*)¹⁷ becomes unnecessary.

¹⁷ *VWC-Sa.* III/1744a and n. g (with question mark).

This analysis is indirectly confirmed by the parallel of the root aorist optative in *-yāt* (*dhyaṃyāt* “he should think”), attested in Vedic prose – for instance, at KB 8.7.6 and 9.5.19.

pad “fall”: *+padyet*

ĀrṣU 7.14 [*vi ... +padyet* (corr. Tsuji 1957: 21f.); ed. Belvalkar, ed. Shastri *°padyat*; *VWC-Up.* II/773a *+°padyan*]

A *-yet*-optative may underlie the unclear form *-padyat* attested in the post-Vedic Ārṣeya-Upaniṣad (ed. Belvalkar, p. 7, 13-14): ... *vīva padyad ārtim ṛcchet* “... he would perish, he would run into misfortune.”

Instead of the morphologically impossible *-padyat*,¹⁸ *VWC-Up.* II/773a hesitantly conjectures act. part. *+padyan*. An optative form is more appropriate in the context, however (cf. the adjacent *ṛcchet*), and, correspondingly, Tsuji’s (1957: 21f.) emendation *+padyet* seems more likely.

bhañj “break”: *-bhajyet*

MānGS 2.15.6 [*prabhajyet*, ed. Sastri *°bhajet*, Falk (1994: 323) **°bhujet*]

The *-ya*-present *bhajya*-^{1e} (the intransitive counterpart of the nasal transitive present *bhanākti*) first appears in post-ṛgvedic mantras (AV, RVKh.). By virtue of its semantic, syntactic and paradigmatic features, it seems to belong with the non-passive middle *-ya*-presents with fluctuating accentuation (cf. esp. *bhidyá*-^{1e} and *chidyá*-^{1e}; see Kulikov 1998 and 2001: 361, 533, 543). The earliest active occurrence is the post-Vedic optative *-bhajyet* attested in the MānGS (2.15.6):

yady arcā dahyed vā naśyed vā prapated vā prabhajyed vā prahased vā pracaled vā ... “If the image of a god burns, or disappears, or falls down, or breaks,¹⁹ or laughs or trembles ...” (a list of omens).

Instead of *-bhajyet* (as in ed. Knauer), Sastri reads *°bhajet* (thus reckoning this form to the root *bhaj* “share, distribute”), but the meaning of *pra-bhaj* (“execute, accomplish”) makes no sense in the context. Falk (1994: 323, with n. 31) rejects both readings and hesitantly conjectures **°bhujet* (“[falls ein Verehrungsobjekt ...] sich beugt ...”), but his emendation seems too drastic; note also that the rare compound *pra-bhu**j* occurs in the Sūtras only in the absolutive (*prabhujya*). In my view, the

¹⁸ Taken as an augmentless imperfect by Renou (1957: 129); see Tsuji’s (1957: 21) objections.

¹⁹ Rather than “is crushed” (passive) in Dresden’s (1941: 165) translation.

meaning of *prá-bhañj* (well-attested from the RV onwards) perfectly suits the context and the reading adopted in ed. Knauer is most likely.

Although the active inflexion of the form *prabhajyet* can readily be explained as emerging under the influence of the adjacent active optatives (cf. the similar case of *manyet* discussed below), it cannot be ruled out that *-bhajyed* represents a -yet-optative; note especially the lack of other (non-optative) active forms built on the stem *-bhajya-* in the Sūtras.

bhr̥j(j) “roast”: *bhr̥j(j)yéyur*

MS^p 1.10.11: 151.6 [*bhr̥jyáyur*] ~ KS^p 36.6: 73.1 [*bhr̥jjáyur*] (*PW* V/398, Hoffmann 1985: 173, Werba 1997: 213 ⁺*bhr̥jjáyur*)

The plural optative form *bhr̥j(j)yéyur* is attested in two Saṃhitās of the Black Yajurveda (MS 1.10.11: 151.6 ~ KS 36.6: 73.1-2):

yád bhr̥jyáyur [KS *bhr̥jjáyur*], *ánaveṣṭam ámhah syāt* “If they would roast [the grain], *ámhas* (narrowness) would not be removed by sacrificing.”

The form in question cannot be the optative of an active -ya-present²⁰ (otherwise unattested) because of the suffix accentuation. Already Roth (*PW* V/398) had conjectured the class VI present optative ⁺*bhr̥jjáyur* (for the Kāthaka occurrence). Renou (1940: 7) noticed the secondary character of -y- in this form; Hoffmann (1985: 173 [= 1992: 814]) explained ⁺*bhr̥jyáti* as a hypersanskritized substitute for the class VI present *bhr̥jjáti* (see also Werba 1997: 213).

Although the class VI analysis of this form is possible, it cannot be ruled out that *bhr̥j(j)yéyur* is the plural pendant of the -yet-optative ⁺*bhr̥j(j)yét* – which renders the emendation ⁺*bhr̥jjáyur* unnecessary.

mṛ “die”: *mriyet*

AmṛtU 38 [*mriyet* (Weber 1865: 37f., ed. Āpte, ed. Mahadeva Sastri = ed. Acarya 39)]

The form *mriyet* occurs in the concluding verse of the late Amṛtanāda-Upaniṣad:

yatra-yatra mriyed vāpi ¹ *na sa bhūyo bhijāyate* // (AmṛtU 38cd = [ed. Acarya] 39cd) “Wherever [this adept] would die, he is not born again” (see Varenne 1971: 121f. and 156, n. 32).

²⁰ Thus Bartholomae 1925: 34 (followed by *KEWA* II/520 and *EWAia* II/278), according to whom *bhr̥jj* can be traced to *bhr̥j-y-* (cf. Av. *-bərəjīia-*).

The irregular character of the form was noticed by Weber (1865: 38).²¹

mṛj “wipe off, destroy”: *-mṛjyet*

GB 1.4.13: 104.13 [*nir-mṛjyet*, ed. Gaastra ⁺*nir-mṛityet*] (≈ ŚBM 12.1.3.23 [*vi-mṛityét*])

The form *nir-mṛjyet* occurs in the GB, probably replacing the original *-yet*-optative of *mṛit*, *vi-mṛityét* (attested in the parallel passage of the ŚB). For a detailed discussion of the relevant passage, see below, s.v. *mṛit* (p. ##, n. 27).

mṛit (/mlit, mṛt)²² “decay, rot; dissolve”: *-mṛi/ṛityét*, *-mṛityeyur*²³

ŚBM 3.2.1.31 [⁺*āpa ... mṛityet*] ≈ ŚBK 4.2.1.22 [*āpa-mṛtyet* (v.l. *āpaṃmṛitye*^o, *āyaṃmṛitye*^o, *āpamṛitye*^o); ŚBM 12.1.3.23 [*vi-mṛityét*, *vi-mṛityeyur*] (≈ GB 1.4.13: 104.13f. *nir-mṛjyet*, *nir-mṛjyeran*, ed. Gaastra ⁺*nir-mṛtyet*, ⁺*nir-mṛtyeran*); ŚBM 9.5.2.14 [*vi ... mṛityet*] ≈ ŚBK [*vi ... mṛityé*^o (v.l. ^o*mṛitye*^o)]²⁴

The isolated optative forms *mṛityét* and *-mṛityeyur*, which do not occur outside ŚB,²⁵ are treated in *PW* V/932 as forms of the intransitive active *-ya*-present **mṛitya-* (“zerfallen, sich auflösen”). After Böhtlingk and Roth’s dictionary (*PW*), this analysis has been followed by all grammars and dictionaries²⁶ and adopted in Indo-Iranian and Indo-European scholarship; cf. Mayrhofer, *KEWA* II/695f.; *EWAla* II/387 (“zerfallen, sich auflösen”). In Avestan studies this intransitive *-ya*-present is taken as the counterpart of Avestan *frīθīieiti*; cf. Geldner 1896: 52; Kellens 1984: 120f. (“se décomposer”); Werba 1997: 220 (“verfaulen/rotten, sich auflösen”).

The semantics and syntax of *mṛityét* and *mṛityeyur* pose no difficulties in the following two passages:

²¹ “*mṛityet* ist eine ungewöhnliche Form, Passivum mit der Endung des Activs.”

²² For the relationship between the root variants *mṛit* and *mṛt*, see, in particular, Oertel 1926: 240ff.; 1927: 106 [= 1994: I/565].

²³ I have greatly benefited from discussing the interpretation of the relevant passages with W. Knobl and Ch.H. Werba. Of course all responsibility for possible mistakes and misinterpretations is mine.

²⁴ See ed. Caland II/470; for the numeration, see ed. Caland I/117 (ŚBM 9.5.2 ≈ ŚBK 11.7.2).

²⁵ For occurrences in GB 1.4.13 (which is likely to be based on ŚB 12.1.3.23; see GB, ed. Gaastra, Einleitung, p. 21), see below, n. 27.

²⁶ Thus Whitney 1885: 127 (though with a question mark); Delbrück 1888: 340; 1897: 33 (with the tentative accent emendation ⁺*mṛityati*); Uhlenbeck 1899: 233; Monier-Williams 837 (“decay, be dissolved”); Werba 1997: 220.

átha yá u hainam ápy etárhi táthopeyúr, yáthāmapātrām udaká āsikte vimrityéd, evān haivá té vimrityeyuh (ŚB 12.1.3.23 [= GB 1.4.13: 104.12-14] *ya enam adya tathopeyur, yathāmapātram udaka āsikte nirmrjyed, evaṃ yajamānā nirmrjyeran*)²⁷ “[B]ut if nowadays any (sattrins) were to perform it [sc. the rite] on this wise, they assuredly would crumble away²⁸ even as a jar of unbaked clay would crumble away if water were poured into it.” (Eggeling V/144).²⁹

ná táthā kuryād, yáthā śúṣkaṃ sthānūm udakénābhīṣīncét tādīk tát, páyéd vā vái sá ví vā mrityet (ŚB 9.5.2.14). “He should not act that way, [for] it would be as if one were to besprinkle with water a withered trunk; it would rot or fall to pieces (dissolve?).”

More problematic is the third occurrence of this formation, at ŚB 3.2.1.31:

yó vái gárbhasya kāṣṭhēna vā nakhēna vā kaṇḍūyéd āpāsyān mrityet “and were any one to scratch an embryo either with a chip of wood or his nail, thereby expelling it, it would die” (Eggeling II/33).

This translation suggests quite an odd syntax in the complex sentence (“who scratches ..., [it = the embryo (?)] dies”). The postposition of *āsyān*, interpreted by Eggeling as participle of *as* “throw” in spite of the lack of accent on the verbal form,³⁰ is also unusual.

²⁷ Ed. Gastra conjectures in both cases ⁺*omrity*^o (⁺*nirmrityet*, ⁺*nirmrityeran*) for the reading *omrjy*^o (*nirmrjyet*, *nirmrjyeran*) attested in mss. and adopted in ed. Mitra. The reading attested in the GB must be secondary, based on the replacement of the forms of the rare root ⁺*omrit*^o with those of the much more common *mrj* (see Oertel 1926: 241 and 1927: 106 [= 1994: I/565]; Patyal 1973: 255), which is most frequent with the preverb *nir-*, meaning “wipe off, destroy” (Ch.H. Werba’s p.c., letter of 16.07.2006). Such replacement could trigger the concomitant adjustment in the morphology and syntax of the passage. Specifically, while *nirmrjyet* may represent a -yet-optative of *nir-mrj* (“one would destroy (it)”), *nirmrjyeran* cannot be anything but the 3pl. pass. opt. form of the same compound, replacing the original 3pl. form of the -yet-optative of *vimrityeyur*. The fundamentally transitive syntax of (*nir-*)*mrj* may be responsible for the passive syntax of the resulting construction, replacing the original non-passive intransitive sentence. Accordingly, the variant of the ŚB passage attested in the GB can be tentatively translated as follows (Ch.H. Werba, *ibid.*): “Wenn man heute an ihn so heranginge, würden, wie [wenn man] ein rohes (Ton-)Gefäß mit Wasser begösse und es so vertilgte, so die Opferherrn vertilgt werden” (emphasis is mine – LK).

²⁸ The compound with the preverb *vi-* should rather be translated as “crumble asunder, fall to pieces”.

²⁹ Likewise, Delbrück (1888: 340): “diejenigen aber, welche auch jetzt noch so zu ihm kommen sollten, würden zerfallen, als ob ein rohes Gefäß zerfiel, nachdem Wasser hineingegossen ist”; Oertel 1926: 240; Minard (1956: 178 [441]): “ceux qui, aujourd’hui encore, accompliraient ainsi ce (rite), comme un vase (d’argile) crue se déliterait si l’on (y) versait de l’eau, tout ainsi se déliteraient-ils.”

³⁰ In order to explain away this abnormal accentuation, Eggeling II/33, n. 2 suggests a plausible conjecture, 3sg. opt. ⁺*āpāsyet* “he would force it out”.

A different syntactic analysis of *mrityet* has been suggested for ŚB 3.2.1.31 by Caland (as well as by Lindner, in his unpublished translation of the ŚB, also quoted by Caland) in his “Kritisch-exegetische Bemerkungen zu den Brāhmaṇas” (1912: 116 [= 1990: 204]). Caland’s interpretation is based on the Kāṇva recension (4.2.1.22): ... *kaṇḍūyéd āpa mṛtyed*³¹ *asya* ... (cf. ŚBK, ed. W. Caland, Introduction, p. 42 [§9c]).

Caland conjectured **āpāsyamrityet* for *āpāsyamrityet* in the Mādhyandina recension and translates both versions as “so würde er ihm schaden (?)” or “die Haut desselben abschaben (?)”.

A more attractive interpretation of this passage has been suggested to me by W. Knobl (p.c., letters of 27.08.2001 and 20.01.2005), who adopts Caland’s conjecture **āpāsyamrityet* for both recensions of the ŚB and translates the whole passage as follows: “Wer etwa das Kind im Mutterleib mit einem Stück Holz oder mit dem Nagel kratzen würde, dem (!) würde es abgehen (d.h. als Frühgeburt missraten).” Thus, the compound *āpa-mrit* is taken as synonymous with *srīv* or *āpa-pad* “be aborted”. Still, the syntactic structure of the passage remains not quite clear.

Finally, Ch.H. Werba (p.c., letter of 16.07.2006) suggested a plausible correction to the interpretation of the compound *āpa-mrit*, rendering it in the sense of German *ab-faulen*, i.e. “solange verfaulen/verrotten, bis der Embryo dann auch abgeht”. Accepting the above-mentioned conjecture **āpāsyamrityet*, he offers the following interpretation of the passage in question (which, incidentally, accounts for the genitive *gārbbhasya* in the subordinate clause): “Würde man an der Eihaut des Embryo schaben oder kratzen und diese damit beschädigen, so würde sich einem diese Eihaut und damit der Embryo selbst auflösen und schließlich als Totgeburt abgehen”

Another formation which belongs to this verb (made from the *l*-variant of the root, *mlit*) is the absolutive derived from the causative stem *mle-taya-*, *a-saṃmle-tya* “without chewing [it]”, attested in the Śrautasūtras (ĀpŚS 3.19.7 = VaikhŚS 7.1: 69.6, etc.).

The final accentuation of *vimrityét* in ŚB can be accounted for under the assumption that *mrityét* does not belong with the *-ya*-presents, but represents a separate morphological formation, parallel with and functionally equivalent to the root aorist optative (precative) in *-yāt* and adop-

³¹ V.ll. *āpamṛityet*, *āyamṛityet*, *āpamṛityet*. Note that the ŚBK has preserved the root variant *mṛt*.

ting its final accent. The form *-mrityeyur* can be identified as the plural counterpart of *mrityét*.

ram “stop”: *-ramyet*

BaudhŚS 24.7: 190.15 [*vi-ramyet* (ed. Caland, ed. Kashikar), v.ll. °*ramyeta*, °*rasyeta*]

The optative *vi-ramyet* occurs in BaudhŚS 24.7: 190.14-15: *na karmaṇo hetor mantro viramyet* “The mantra should not stop for the sake of the rite.”³²

Caland (1903: 42) noticed this form as “merkwürdig”, mentioning that Veṅkaṭeśvara’s commentary glosses it as *na viramet*. Since active *-ya-*presents are not derived from this root,³³ the form in question is likely to represent a *-yet*-optative.

vid “know”: *vidyet*

JābU 4: 66.6 [*vidyet*, v.ll. *vidyāt*, *vindet*, *veda*, ed. Schrader *vindet*]

The form *vidyet* appears among variant readings in the late Jābala-Upaniṣad:

yady agniṃ na vinded apsu juhuyāt. āpo vai sarvā devatāḥ. sarvābhyo devatābhyo juhomi svāheti hutvoddhṛtya prāśnīyāt sājyaṃ havir anāmayam. mokṣamantras trayī. evaṃ vidyet (JābU 4: 66.3-6). “If he cannot obtain fire, he should offer [the oblation] in the waters. All the deities verily are the waters. He should offer the oblation with the words ‘I offer to all the deities, hail!’, take [some from it] and eat that salubrious oblation mixed with clarified butter. The triple [Veda] is the mantra of liberation. Thus one should know” (cf. Olivelle 1992: 144).

Schrader adopts the reading *vindet* (attested in a number of mss.), but in Vedic the nasal present can only be derived from the homonymous root ¹*vid* “find, obtain” (*vindāti*, etc.), not from ²*vid* “know”. Although in post-Vedic texts (in particular, in Epic Skt.), when both roots become confused, the nasal present of ²*vid* “know” does occur, in our passage the form *vindet* seems to have been triggered by the present optative *vinde[t]* “he can(not) obtain” at the beginning of the passage. Among the attested readings only *vidyāt* (precative) can belong to ²*vid* “know” as a correct form, and *vidyet* may have arisen as its secondary variant

³² For this prescription, see Gonda 1977: 510.

³³ Middle *-ya-*presents are rare, late and secondary, attested in the imperative *abhi-ramyatām* (KauṣGS 3.14.16 ~ ŚGS 4.2.6 ~ GautPS 2.6.13, for which see Caland 1895: 108, 112 [= 1990: 18, 22]; but Hultzsich’s ms. reads °*ramate*; see Appendix to Caland’s ed. of the GautPS, p. 132); the parallel passage ViṣSmr. 73.26 reads *abhi-ramantu*.

(on the relationship between precatives and optatives in *-yet-*, see below §5-6).

śams “recite”: *-śasyet*

ŚŚS 17.9.6 [*saṁ-śasyet*]

The transitive *-yet*-optative *-śasyet* is attested in ŚŚS 17.9.6: *ubhe sūkte pacchah saṁśasyet* “He should recite together both hymns by verse-quarters.”

śiṣ “leave, remain”: *śiṣyet*

GB 1.2.14: 47.12 [(tr.) *paryava-śiṣyet*] (= VaitS 11.5); VaikhŚS 21.4: 325.2 [(intr.) *śiṣyet*]; BhārŚS 7.3.9 [(intr.) *uc-chiṣyet*, *VWC-Sū*. I/628b ⁺*yeta*]

In contrast to the transitive *-yet*-optative *paryava-śiṣyet* “he should [not] leave” (GB 1.2.14: 47.12), discussed above (p. 28ff.), both occurrences of *śiṣyet* in the Śrautasūtras are intransitive:

yat prokṣaṇīnām ucchiṣyet ... (BhārŚS 7.3.9) “What of the sprinkling-waters remains ...”; *yadi ... alpasomah śiṣyet* ... (VaikhŚS 21.4: 325.1-2) “If ... a little Soma remains”

For BhārŚS 7.3.9 *ucchiṣyet*, *VWC-Sū*. I/628b (with n. h) conjectures ⁺*yeta* (with a question mark); likewise, in VaikhŚS, ed. Caland (Preface, p. xviii), *śiṣyet* is considered a secondary replacement of the regular middle optative *śiṣyeta*. Under the assumption that *śiṣyet* is a *-yet*-optative, both conjectures, albeit quite plausible *per se*, are unnecessary. The syntactic variability (transitive/intransitive) can be explained by the fact that both transitive and intransitive usages are equally basic for this verb (cf. *śimṣāti*, *śināṣti* “leaves” and *śiṣyate/śiṣyāte* “is left, remains”³⁴), which makes both transitive and intransitive usages of *-yet*-optatives possible.

sañj (/sajj) “hang, attach”: ⁽⁺⁾*-sajjet*

MānŚS 1.1.3.6 [⁽⁺⁾*ava-sajjet* (← **o*sajj^o [?]), v.l., ed. van Gelder *ava-sr̥jet*]

A *-yet*-optative may underlie the form *-sajjet* attested as a v.l. in MānŚS 1.1.3.6, which van Gelder reads as follows: *darbhamayaṁ pavitraṁ tri-guṇarajju śākhāyām anulomam avasr̥jed, granthim akurvan*. The meaning of *sr̥j* (“release, set free”) does not suit the context, however, and, in fact, van Gelder has translated the passage differently: “On (the top of) the

³⁴ On the accent fluctuation in this present, see Kulikov 1998.

branch he shall fix three Darbha blades as a strainer, their tips on the top of the branch; he shall not make a knot.”

The original reading (on which van Gelder’s interpretation is apparently based) could have been preserved in one of the ms. sources used by Knauer, abbreviated in the critical apparatus as Kc (fragments from the Mānava-, Kāṭhaka- and other Sūtras collected by A. Weber from the commentary on the KātyŚS). Kc reads the form in question as *avasajjet*, which can only be derived from the root *sañj* (/sajj). This reading is hesitantly adopted by Caland (1902: 124 [= 1990: 604])³⁵ and mentioned by van Gelder (in crit. app.), who surmises a sporadic gemination (“perhaps °*vasaje*° is right”). In my view, the gemination can be readily explained as the Prakrit-like reflex of the cluster -*jy*-, attested, in particular, in pres. *sajjate* (← pass. *sajjāte*),³⁶ which occurs, for instance, in ŚB 14.6.9.28 (v.l.),³⁷ NidānaS 9.8: 163.12, 18, 25, in some late Upaniṣads, Epic and Class. Skt. Although *sajja-* does occur with the active inflexion (from the Śrautasūtras onwards), and we cannot rule out that the form in question is the optative of the secondary present *sajjati*, an analysis in terms of -yet-optatives seems very likely; note that a non-optative form of this present occurs in the Śrautasūtras only once (VaikhŚS 18.6: 256.16 *ā-sajjati*).

sic “pour”: *sicyet*

ŚĀ 8.2 [*sicyet*, ed. Bhim Dev, *VWC-Br. II/1590a* +*sicyeta*]

The form *sicyet* “[if] one were to pour” has been discussed above, p. 29f.

sū “beget”: *sūyet*

AVPar. 71.7.1 [*sūyet*]

The form *sūyet* occurs in the Paṛiśiṣṭas of the Atharvaveda:

yonivyatikaram yatra 'kuryur evaṃvidham striyaḥ | gaur vā sūyet tathānyā-ni' tatra rājyaṃ vinaśyati || (AVPar. 71.7.1) “Where females produce such [freaks] as a result of confusion of wombs, or a cow gives birth to other [kinds of offspring], there the kingdom perishes.”³⁸

³⁵ “... ist vielleicht die Lesart von Kc richtig, da dem *avasajjet* oder *avasajet* bei Baudh. *praveṣṭayati* entspricht.”

³⁶ Cf. Gotō 1980: 27 and 35, n. 47; 1987: 322, n. 779; Kümmel 1996: 119 with n. 232; Werba 1997: 250; Kulikov 2001: 208-210.

³⁷ Mss. read *sājyate* and *sājigate*; see ed. Weber, crit. app.

³⁸ I am grateful to Ch.H. Werba for valuable clarifications on the meaning of this passage.

The transitive *-ya*-present *sūya*^{te} “beget” (competing with the old root present *sūte* RV +) first appears in the post-Vedic period, in particular, in ViṣSmr. and AVPar.;³⁹ cf. *pra-sūyante* at AVPar. 71.7.4, i.e. just a few verses after the aforementioned passage, *sūyate* at AVPar. 71.11.1, and, especially, the middle optative *prasūyeta* employed in a similar context (*gaur aśvam ... prasūyeta*) at AVPar. 71.5.2. However, forms with active inflexion do not occur until Epic Skt.; Gotō (1991: 698) mentions only one attestation in Mbh. Although active forms frequently substitute for the regular middles in AVPar. (*dīpyati* for *dīpyate*, *vāśyati* for *vāśyate*), the lack of non-optative forms (***sūyati*, etc.) makes the analysis of *sūyet* as a *-yet*-optative very likely. It is worth mentioning that the AVPar. quite often employs optative forms in indicative usages, in particular, in indefinite relative clauses (see Modak 1993: 467); the above-quoted passage (mentioned by Modak, *ibid.*) is a typical example of such a usage.

snā “bathe, swim”: *snāyet*, *-snāyeyur*

GB 1.5.2: 114.4, 6, 9, 12, 15 [*pra-snāyeyur*] (≈ ŚB 12.2.1.1ff. [*pra-snānti*]⁴⁰); Mānavānugrāhikasūtra 23 [*snāyet*]

The plural optative form *-snāyeyur* occurs a few times (in the same syntactic context) in a GB passage:

gādhām pratiṣṭhā caturviṃśam ahar yathopakakṣadaghnām vā kaṇṭhadaghnām vā yato viśramya prasnāyeyus, tādrk tat (GB 1.5.2: 114.3f. = 5f. = 8f. = 11f. = 14f. [≈ ŚB 12.2.1.2=4 *yāthopapakṣadaghnām vā kaṇṭhadaghnām vā yāto viśramya prasnānti*]) “The Caturviṃśa-day is a ford, a foothold. As if having rested [where the water] reaches (only) to the arm-pits or to the neck, one would swim forth from there, so it is.”

Werba (1997: 329) records this form as the optative of the secondary *-ya*-present. Note, however, that, apart from one isolated middle form in a late mantra (MānŚS^m 8.20.8 *snāyasva*; see Kulikov 2001: 593), the *-ya*-present *snāya*^{te} only occurs in post-Vedic texts (see Werba, *ibid.*, and, for attestations in Epic Sanskrit, Oberlies 2003: 194, 538). Rather, the form *-snāyeyur* instantiates a *-yet*-optative (pl.), parallel to the root present optative *snāyāt* (which might equally be a precative), attested, in particular, in GB 1.2.2: 34.3 and TĀ 1.26.7.

³⁹ See Gotō 1991: 698.

⁴⁰ The form *pra-snāyūr* attested in ŚB 12.2.1.1 corresponds to the optative *pra-tareyur* at GB 1.5.2: 114.2.

The corresponding singular form occurs in Mānavānugrāhikasūtra 23 (quoted from Caland 1896: 83, n. 304), probably emerging under the influence of the adjacent active optatives:

śucivāsā notsaveṣu gachen, nākāle snāyen, na hr̥ṣyet “[His wife], clothed in pure garments, should not go to festivals, should not bathe at the wrong time, should not rejoice.”

4. THE MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF -YET-OPTATIVES A RECAPITULATION

4.1. Morphology

The -yet-optative can now be safely posited as a separate morphological type, albeit late, marginal and rare. Correspondingly, the forms in -yet / -yeyur discussed above need not be emended.

The rules of derivation are essentially the same as for the regular root aorist optatives (“precatives”), apart from *é* instead of *ā*; i.e. -yét is attached to the zero grade root. The plural form in -yéyur is probably made by analogy with class IV present optatives. Thus, unaccented -yet-optatives are formally indistinguishable from 3rd person active optatives derived from -ya-present stems; in other words, a form in -yet can be identified for certain as a -yet-optative only in the cases where there are no active -ya-presents derived from the root in question.

Unlike root aorist optatives in -yāt, etc., the -yet-optative seems never to have developed a full paradigm, thus being similar to other isolated formations with defective paradigms, such as passive -i-aorist. I was unable to find forms beside 3sg. and 3pl. (for instance, a hypothetical 2sg. form might be *kṣipyés).

4.2. Syntax and Transitivity

-yet-optatives follow the syntactic pattern which is typical of the base verb. It should be emphasized once again that *y* in -yet-optatives has nothing to do with *y* in (intransitive) -ya-presents and/or -yá-passives, so that transitive verbs do not become intransitive in -yet-optatives. That is, if a verb is (fundamentally) transitive, its -yet-optative is employed transitively: *kṣipyet* “he should throw”, *bhr̥j(j)yéyur* “they should roast”, -śasyet “one should recite”, *sicyet* “one should pour”, etc. On the contrary, if a verb is intransitive, its -yet-optatives are employed intransitively; cf. *mriyet* “he should die”, and -ramyet “he should stop”. The

-yet-optative *śiṣyet* can be employed both transitively (“one should leave”) and intransitively (“it would remain”), since both syntactic patterns are well attested for the verb *śiṣ*.

In addition, one should note that the majority (approximately two-thirds) of *-yet*-optatives are transitive. This ratio does not necessarily represent a syntactic feature of *-yet*-optatives,⁴¹ but it may have influenced the choice of syntactic pattern in those cases where both transitive and intransitive usages were possible; see below, p. 52, § 7.1 on the post-Vedic optative *trudheyur*. Incidentally, an unusual syntax (particularly, higher transitivity) may be the only criterion distinguishing unaccented *-yet*-optatives from the regular present optatives in the cases where active *-ya*-presents can be derived from a given root.⁴²

4.3. Semantics

Evidence is too scant to assume any specific meaning for *-yet*-optatives, in contrast with the corresponding (far more common) regular present optatives. It seems that this formation is employed in the same usage as precatives in *-yāt* – which, in turn, have become functionally (almost) equivalent to present optatives by the late Vedic period (Narten 1982: 129 [= 1995: 256]) and, eventually, almost disappear by that time (Hoffmann 1970: 66f. [= 1976: 517f.], n. 2).⁴³

5. PARADIGMATIC FEATURES AND THE ORIGIN OF THE *-YET*-OPTATIVE

In order to trace back possible sources of the *-yet*-optative, I give a synopsis of all forms in *-yet* / *-yeyur*, together with the corresponding

⁴¹ This disproportion can be partly accounted for by the fact that a good many fundamentally intransitive verbs build active *-ya*-presents, the optatives of which are indistinguishable from *-yet*-optatives in unaccentuated texts.

⁴² Such may be the case with the optative form *krudhyet*, constructed with the accusative in VaikhŚS 12.11: 141.4 (*anyam na krudhyet*; see VaikhŚS, ed. Caland, Preface, p. xix), in contrast to the forms of the *-ya*-present *krūdhyā*^{-ti}, typically constructed with the dative.

⁴³ Hoffmann’s claim that the precative totally disappears in late Vedic seems too categorical. However, some rare forms (such as the aforementioned *-śiṣyāt* ŚB 2.10.12 and *-sicṣyāt* JUB 1.1.3.8 [ed. Oertel 1.3.8]) still occur in late texts; see also the list in Renou 1940: 13f., n. 1 and cf. the examples from Epic Sanskrit in §7.1.

present formations attested for the same root, and, for comparison, a selection of root aorist optatives (precatives):

-yet-optatives		present formations	
		thematic	athematic
<i>kṣip</i>	<i>kṣipyet</i>	<i>kṣipāti</i>	
<i>gr(b)h</i>	<i>grhyet</i>	(<i>grhñate</i> , etc.) ⁴⁴	<i>gr(b)hñāti</i>
<i>dih</i>	<i>-dihyet</i>	—	<i>degdhi</i>
<i>dhyā</i>	<i>dhyāyét</i>	<i>dhyāyati</i>	
<i>pad</i>	⁺ <i>-padyet</i>	<i>pádyate</i>	
<i>bhañj</i>	<i>-bhañyet</i>	<i>bhañyate</i>	
<i>bhrj(j)</i>		<i>bhrjjāti</i>	
<i>mṛ</i>	<i>mriyet</i>	<i>mriyáte</i>	
<i>mṛj</i>	<i>mṛjyēt</i>	—	
<i>mrít</i>	<i>-mrityét</i>	<i>-mrityeyur</i>	
<i>ram</i>	<i>-ramyet</i>	<i>rámate</i> , <i>-ti</i>	
<i>vid</i>	<i>vidyēt</i>	<i>vidāti</i>	
<i>śams</i>	<i>-śasyet</i>	<i>śámṣati</i>	
<i>śiṣ</i>	<i>-śiṣyēt</i>	<i>śimṣāti</i>	<i>śínáṣti</i>
<i>sañj</i>	⁽⁺⁾ <i>-sajjēt</i>	<i>sájati</i>	
<i>sic</i>	<i>sicyet</i>	<i>siñcāti</i>	
<i>sūyet</i>	<i>sūyet</i>	<i>sūyate</i>	<i>sūte</i>
<i>snā</i>	<i>snāyet</i>	<i>-snāyeyur</i>	<i>snāti</i>

precatives (a selection)

<i>ad</i>	<i>adyāt</i> , <i>adyāsam</i>	—	<i>āti</i>
<i>aś</i>	<i>aśyās</i>	—	<i>aśnóti</i>
<i>āp</i>	<i>āpyās</i>	—	<i>āpnóti</i>
<i>ṛdh</i>	<i>ṛdhyās</i>	<i>ṛdhyate</i> / <i>ṛdhyáte</i>	<i>ṛdhnóti</i> , <i>ṛñáddhi</i>
<i>kṛ</i>	<i>kriyāt</i>	—	<i>kṛnóti</i> , <i>karóti</i>
<i>gam</i>	<i>gamyās</i>	<i>gácchati</i>	
<i>bhū</i>	<i>bhūyās</i>	<i>bhávati</i>	
<i>bhr</i>	<i>-bhriyāt</i>	<i>bhárati</i>	<i>bíbharti</i>
<i>yuj</i>	<i>yujyātām</i> , <i>yujyāt</i> , etc.	—	<i>yunákti</i>
<i>śak</i>	<i>śakyām</i>	—	<i>śaknóti</i>

⁴⁴ Thematic present formations are secondary and late (*grhñate* MuṇḍU, *-grhasva* ĀgnivGS, *-grahet* ĀgnivGS, late Up.; see Gotō 1987: 85f. with n. 53f.).

The main difference between the two lists is evident. All roots for which *-yet*-optatives are attested have thematic (classes I, VI, IV) presents (except *dih* and *snā*), whereas many roots of the second group do not. This correlation suggests the following simple explanation: *-yet*-optatives result from a contamination of precatives (root aorist optatives) (*śiṣyāt*, *sicyāt*, etc.) and thematic present optatives (*śimṣet*, *siñcet*, *kṣipēt*, etc.), thus being, in a sense, ‘thematic precatives’. To put it differently, the rebuilding of the original root aorist optatives *śiṣyāt*, *sicyāt*, etc. has been triggered by the thematic present formations of the same root.

The identification of *-yāt* and *-yet* could be further supported by the parallelism of precatives and class IV present optatives derived from *ā* roots, noticed by Hoffmann (1967: 26ff. [= 1976: 466ff.]); cf. such pairs as *-vāyāt* (KS, KauśS) : *-vāyet* (Taittirīya-Saṃhitā, Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa) (*√vā* “become extinguished, vanish”) and *dhīyāyāt* : *dhīāyet*.

6. -YET-OPTATIVES AND PARALLEL FORMATIONS

There are two optative formations which are, in some ways, parallel to the *-yet*-optative and important for understanding its paradigmatic status.

6.1. *-yet*-Optatives and the Type *gamema*

The rare aorist type *gamema* has been discussed and explained by Insler (1975: 6ff.); see also Renou 1940: 6ff. and Hoffmann 1955: 91 (= 1976: 386). As is well known, alongside athematic root aorist optatives like *gamyās*, we find *gaméma* (RV) and *games* (Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā), alongside *ṛdhyās*, *ṛdhyāma* (RV) – *ṛdhema* (AV), *ṛdhet* (ŚB), etc. As Insler shows, these formations result from thematicization of the root aorist optatives.

In my view, *-yet*-optatives have arisen due to the same tendency, i.e. due to thematicization. Like the type *gamema*, *-yet*-optatives have adopted the accentuation of the underlying root aorist optatives (cf. Hoffmann 1955: 91 [= 1976: 386]; Insler 1975: 11f.). Both of these morphological types have been created on the basis of forms in *-yāt*, *-yāma*, etc. The difference between the type *gamema* and *-yet*-optatives is, in particular, of a chronological nature. While the type *gamema* arises already in the Mantra period, *-yet*-optatives appear in Vedic prose and post-Vedic texts (late Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads, Sūtras).

Once these morphological types were rooted in the verbal system as separate formations, they could probably be derived without the inter-

mediary stage of the root aorist optative. Thus, for instance, we do not find the root aorist optative ***kṣipyāt* alongside *kṣipyet*, etc.

It should be noted that 3sg. forms like *labhét* and *ṛdhet* may both represent formations of Insler's type *gamema* and – under the assumption that *-yet*-optatives could lose the suffixal *y* (see §7.2) – betray unattested *-yet*-optatives (**labhyét*, **ṛdhyet*).

6.2. *-yet*-Optatives and Athematic Infixes Nasal (Class VII) Present Optatives

There is yet another late Vedic formation closely related to the precatives in *-yāt*, represented by such forms as *nindyāt*, *vindyāt*, *siñcyāt*. This type has been briefly discussed by Hoffmann (1970: 66f. [= 1976: 517f.], n. 2).⁴⁵ From the formal point of view, such forms can only be treated as optatives derived from athematic presents with the nasal infix (class VII). The main problem about such an analysis is the absence of non-optative forms based on athematic stems (***vinātti*, ***sinākti*, etc.). We only find thematic forms (*vindāti*, *siñcāti*), and the corresponding 3sg. optative must be *vindét* and *siñcét*, while *vindyāt* and *siñcyāt* prove isolated. Hoffmann was absolutely right in pointing out that *vindyāt*, etc. cannot belong with the unattested athematic nasal present (***vinātti*, etc.), but his characterisation of such forms as “analogische Neubildung” does not clarify their origin. In my view, forms like *nindyāt*, *vindyāt* and *siñcyāt* exemplify yet another replacement of the regular root aorist optatives (precatives) with hybrid forms based on the infixed present stems. Obviously, the root aorist optatives had become unfamiliar by the late Vedic period and tended to be replaced by formations based on more common stems. Although the easiest option – thematic present optatives (*vindet*, *siñcet*, etc.) – was of course available, the authors/redactors of the texts may have been looking for forms more similar to root aorist optatives, thus creating athematic “pseudo-present” optatives of the type *siñcyāt* and *-yet*-optatives of the type *sicyet* (both incorporating *y* after the root) – in imitation of the authentic root aorist optatives in *-yāt*.

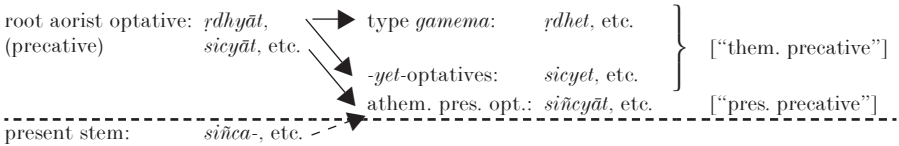
Thus, strictly speaking, forms like *siñcyāt* should also be regarded as a separate formation, built on the same model as root aorist optatives (and functionally equivalent to these), but based on present stems – “present precatives”. This analysis is also supported by their defective paradigms: like *-yet*-optatives, they lack other forms besides 3rd person singular – we

⁴⁵ See also Oberlies 2003: 210 with n. 1.

do not find ***siñcyām*, etc. Neither formation can belong to the present system, for neither athematic nasal presents (of the type ***sinákti*), nor active *-ya*-presents (of the type ***sicyati*) are derived from the roots in question. In a sense, *-yet*-optatives are even less regular than athematic nasal present optatives like *siñcyāt*: the latter form is based on the nasal present stem, which is attested for this root – at least in its thematic variant; whereas (active) *-ya*-presents are not derived from the roots *kṣip*, *śams*, *sic*, etc. at all. Moreover, the final accentuation of *mrityét* and *bhr̥jyéyur* shows that *-yet*-optatives cannot be grouped with *-ya*-presents even from the purely formal point of view.

6.3. The Paradigmatic Domain of Aorist Optatives in Late Vedic

The paradigmatic domain of aorist optatives in late Vedic and its origins can now be schematized as follows:



7. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND POSSIBLE TRACES OF *-YET*-OPTATIVES

7.1. Evidence from Epic and Classical Sanskrit

A number of forms in *-yet* can be found in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa:⁴⁶

vanāc ca vāyuh śurabhiḥ pravāyet [v.l. *°vāyāt*]⁴⁷ (Mbh. 1.65.42a) “And let a fragrant wind blow forth from the wood ...”

⁴⁶ Most of the relevant Mbh. forms I owe to Thomas Oberlies (see also Oberlies 2003: 143, 230f. *et passim*); a few forms (among which Mbh. 1.147.8 *vyucchidyet*) are mentioned by Holtzmann (1884: 25, §774); most of the Rām. forms are taken from Sen 1949: 102.

⁴⁷ In formal terms, the form *-vāyet* might also be taken as a regular class IV present optative. In early Vedic the root ¹*vā* “blow” has only a class II present (*vāti*, etc.), being paradigmatically opposed to the root ²*vā* “become deficient, extinguished, vanish”, which forms the class IV present *vāya-ti*. However, from the late Vedic period onwards, *vāya-*⁴⁸ is also attested in the sense “blow” (in particular, in the ŚB, AĀ, JUB; see Kulikov 2001: 460), and Mbh. 1.65.42 *-vāyet* could belong with this secondary class IV present (see Sil 1961: 43; Oberlies 2003: 194, 510). The most important argument against this analysis is the precative form *-vāyāt*, attested as a variant reading in a number of mss. (see crit. app. *ad loc.*), which indirectly supports the interpretation of *-vāyet* as a *-yet*-optative (= precative).

tāte 'pi hi gate svargaṃ 'vinaṣṭe ca mamānuje / piṇḍaḥ pitṛnām vyucchidyat
'tat teṣāṃ apriyaṃ bhavet || (Mbh. 1.147.8)

“Since, when [my] father has gone to heaven and my younger brother has perished, the offering to the fathers will be interrupted, [and] that will be unpleasant for them.”⁴⁸

kathaṃ jāyān (v.l. *jāyen*) *mamodare* || (Mbh. 3.13.62d) “How (else) could he (sc. my husband) be born (again) from my belly!”⁴⁹

na cānuśiṣyed (v.l. *°śiṣyād*) *rājānam* ' *apṛcchantam kadā cana* / (Mbh. 4.4.12ab) “One should never instruct a king who does not ask (for it).”

yo hy ādriyēd (v.l. *°driyād*) *bhakṣyam iti śvamāṃsaṃ* ' *manyē na tasyāsti vivarjanīyam* || (Mbh. 12.139.83cd) “Since for the one who would accept dog’s meat as edible there will be nothing, I think, which should be avoided.”⁵⁰

api cet ... sarvān vedān ... / ... adhīyet (v.l. *adhīyāt*) ... (Mbh. 13.36.15) “Even if he will learn all the Vedas...”⁵¹

nāvamanyed abhigataṃ ' *na praṇudyāt* (v.l. *°ṇudyet*) *kathaṃ cana* / (Mbh. 13.62.13ab) “One should never despise or drive away a visitor.”⁵²

nākīrtayitvā gāḥ supyāt (v.l. *supye°*) (Mbh. 13.77.15a) “One should not go to bed without having recited [the names of the] kine.”

yas trāyet tridaśān api || (Rām. 3.57.11d) “(the one) who could protect all thirty (gods)”⁵³

*setur atra yathā badhyed*⁵⁴ ' *yathā paśyema tāṃ purīm / tasya rākṣasarājasya* (Rām. 6.2.9abc) “that a bridge is bound up here, so that we could visit the city of the Rākṣasa king.”

rāghavasya yaśo hīyet (v.l. *hīyāt*) (Rām. 5.35.57c) “Rāghava’s glory would be diminished.”

⁴⁸ This form is taken by Oberlies (2003: 240 and 430) as a passive with the active inflexion.

⁴⁹ See Oberlies 2003: 430.

⁵⁰ Oberlies (2003: 449) prefers a precative analysis of this form, and, accordingly, the reading *°driyāt*. For another post-Vedic attestation of the form *ādriyet*, in Varāhamihira’s *Yogayātrā*, see below, p. 51.

⁵¹ See Oberlies 2003: 208f., 392.

⁵² See Oberlies 2003: 143, 460. – For another post-Vedic attestation of the form (-) *manyet* in *Dharmasūtras* (*Smṛtis*), see below, p. 50f.

⁵³ See van Daalen 1980: 95; Oberlies 2003: 442.

⁵⁴ V.l. *badhyetātha yathā setur; setur badhyeta hi yathā*. For this form see Sen 1964: 201 (where it is explained as “due to MIA [= Middle Indo-Aryan] influence”) and Oberlies 2003: 241, 469.

Strictly speaking, the argumentative validity of the Epic forms in *-yet* is somewhat weaker than for the evidence from Vedic. While in Vedic and (early) post-Vedic texts middle *-ya*-presents (passives) with the irregular active inflexion are exceptional, in Epic Sanskrit they become more common (albeit still fairly rare), and some forms quoted above can be explained as replacements of regular middle present (passive) optatives (i.e. ⁺*trāyeta*, ⁺*badhyeta*, etc. – which are indeed attested in some cases as variant readings) – sometimes for metrical reasons. Yet, this explanation does not work for all such forms. The strongest evidence for Epic *-yet*-optatives is furnished by occurrences for which mss. attest the regular precativ form in *-yāt* alongside a form in *-yet*, as is the case with *adhīyet* || *adhīyāt*, *jāyet* || *jāyāt*, *ādriyet* || *°driyāt*, *praṇudyāt* || *°nudyet*, *pravāyet* || *°vāyāt*, *°śisyet* || *°śisyāt*, *supyāt* || *supyet*, *hīyet* || *hīyāt*; cf. also Mbh. 4.47.9 *khyāyet*, v.l. *khyāyāt*.

Next to these supposed Epic *-yet*-optatives, there are a few forms in *-yet* attested in the Smṛti literature, which thus belong to approximately the same chronological level and can equally be explained as replacements of regular middle forms for metrical reasons:

saṃviśet tūryaghoṣeṇa ¹ *pratibudhyet tathaiva ca* / (YājñSmṛ. 1.330ab [ed. Pāṇḍey 1.331ab]) “He should go to bed to the music of instruments, and so should he wake up.”

The middle *-ya*-present *būdhyā-te* “wake” is well attested from the RV onwards. Apart from the unclear atharvavedic form ⁺*būdhyema* (Roth – Whitney’s conjecture for AV 19.67.3, mss. *bú(d)dhema*, *būdhyrema*), which may have emerged under the influence of the adjacent active optatives *pāśyema*, *bhāvema*, etc.,⁵⁵ active forms of the *-ya*-present *būdhyā-te* do not occur in the Vedic period. In the Sūtras we only find the active participle *pra-budhyant-* in MānŚS 2.1.3.11.

Another Smṛti form in *-yet* which is relevant for our discussion is *man-yet*:

taṃ vai manyet pitaraṃ mātaraṃ ca ¹ *tasmai na druhyet kṛtam asya jānan* || (ViṣSmṛ. 30.47cd ~ VāsDhS 2.10 = HirDhS 1.1.18)⁵⁶ “[The student], indeed, should consider him (sc. his teacher) as (his true) father and mother; he should not grieve him, acknowledging what he (sc. his teacher) has done [for him].”

⁵⁵ See Insler 1975: 7, n. 13; Gotō 1987: 220.

⁵⁶ The parallel verses in the VāsDhS and HirDhS use the corresponding middle form instead (*taṃ manyeta* ...; see, for instance, Olivelle 2000: 356 and 637), and this reading is adopted by Krishnamacharya.

The -ya-present *mānya*^{-le} “think” is well attested from the RV onwards, but does not occur with the active inflexion until the Upaniṣad and Sūtra period (see Gotō 1997: 1016).⁵⁷

Although both -*budhyet* and *manyet* could be explained as built under the influence of the adjacent active optatives (-*viśet* and *druhyet*, respectively), we cannot rule out that they are -yet-optatives.

One more form, which may represent a -yet-optative, and is also attested in a post-Vedic metrical text, Varāhamihira’s *Yogayātrā* (ed. H. Kern), is -*driyet*:

daivajñamantrisuhrdāptavacāmsi rājā'yo nādriyet svamaticeṣṭitaduṣṭabud-dhiḥ / (Yogayātrā 2.9ab; see Kern 1868: 168 [= 1913: 104]) “Ein König, der die Worte seiner Astrologen, Minister, Freunde und Vertrauten nicht beachtet, indem er eigensinnig verfäht und unrichtig urtheilt ...” (Kern 1868: 183 [= 1913: 126]).

Kern (1868: 201 [= 1913: 156]) noticed the irregularity of the active ending in *ā-driyet*. Although one of the mss. has the middle optative instead (*°yeta mati°*), the editor has adopted the reading *°driyet*, since the absence of *sva°* in the following word renders the whole compound meaningless.

On the Epic attestation of *ādriyet* (Mbh. 12.139.83), see above.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ The two active forms attested in the Upaniṣads and Sūtras are *abhimanyanti* MuṇḍU 1.2.9 “they think, imagine” (see Salomon 1981: 97; Olivelle 1998: 441) and part. *ava-manyant-* BaudhŚS 29.8: 380.13. The form *ava-manyet*, quoted in *VWC-Sū.* 1/394b as attested in VaikhDhS 3.3.6 and mentioned by Bharadwaj (1982: 108), may be based on a misunderstanding. Ed. Caland (3.3: 134.12) has the regular middle optative (*devān vedān rājagurumātāpīṭṇ vidvadbrāhmaṇān nāvamanyeta na nindet* “He should not despise, nor blame the gods, the Vedas, the king, his teacher, his mother and father, learned Brahmanas”), with no variant readings (note that in Bharadwaj’s [1982] bibliography only Caland’s ed. is mentioned). The two Indian editions used by Caland, as well as the Madras edition, to which *VWC-Sū.* refers, were unavailable to me. Active forms of *mānya*^{-le/iti} become more common in Epic Sanskrit (see Gotō 1997: 1016; Oberlies 2003: 163); cf., in particular, Mbh. 13.62.13 *avamanyet* quoted above, p. 49.

⁵⁸ Yet another form attested in a metrical text, which may be worthy of discussion, is 3pl. opt. -*līyeyur* met with in the relatively late Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa: *tasmāc chyenādayo yasya °nīlīyeyuḥ śirasya atha* (MärKP 51.69cd) “therefore he, on whose head a hawk and other [birds] would alight”. Although active forms of the -ya-presents ¹*līya*^{-le/iti} “adhere, cling” and ²*līya*^{-le/iti} “dissolve, disappear” (see Werba 1997: 315) do occur from the post-Vedic period onwards (on one attestation in the “principal” Upaniṣads, MuṇḍU 3.2.2 *pra-vi-līyanti*, see Salomon 1981: 98; a few forms occur in later texts, e.g. Rām. 6.102.33a *ava-līyanti* “hiding oneself”, and MärKP 61.19b *vi-līyatā* “with melting [snow]”), they remain very rare. Furthermore, -*līyeyur* cannot be explained as a replacement *metri causa* of the middle optative -*līyeran* (which has the same metrical scheme). Note, incidentally, that both active forms of the -ya-present of the compound *nī-lī* quoted in *PW* VI/551 are 3rd person optatives: *nī-līyeyur*, *nī-līyet*.

Besides a few forms from metrical texts listed above, worthy of mention is 3pl. opt. *vi-trudyeyur*, with which an indigenous commentator glosses the transitive *virujeyur* at KātyŚS 22.3.22 *dakṣiṇākāle kaṇṭakair enā virujeyuh* “[the priests] should prick them (sc. the cows) with thorns at the time of *dakṣiṇā*[-distribution]”. The active *-ya*-present of the late (Class. Skt.) root *truṭ* is employed intransitively (“break, come into pieces”).⁵⁹ The transitive syntax of *-trudyeyur* (derived from the root variant *truḍ*) can be explained under the assumption that this form belongs with the *-yet*-optatives, not with the *-ya*-presents; see §4.2.⁶⁰

7.2. Possible Indirect Reflexes of *-yet*-Optatives

Both in late Vedic and post-Vedic periods, *-yet*-optatives remain extremely rare. Most likely, this formation was considered too awkward to become a productive morphological type. Being morphologically indistinguishable (in unaccentuated texts) from *-ya*-present optatives and lacking any specific function different from that of present optatives, it had little chance to survive. What could become of these forms? On the one hand, some *-yet*-optatives may have been replaced with much more familiar and productive *-ya*-passives, with the concomitant restructuring of the syntax of the corresponding sentence; cf. the discussion of the passive optative form *nir-mṛjyeran* in GB 1.4.13: 104.13f., where the passive construction *yajamānā nirmṛjyeran* “the sacrificers would be wiped off” is based on ŚB 12.1.3.23 *té vimrityeyuh* “they would fall to pieces” (see above, s.v. *mrit* [p. 37, n. 27]). On the other hand, in some *-yet*-optatives, the segment *y* could have been assessed as a secondary insertion, especially if the root in question also formed class VI presents (as in the case of *bhrj(j)yéyur* || *bhrjjāti*; see s.v. *bhrj* above, p. 35). The co-existence of *-yet*-optatives ($\sqrt{-yét}$, $\sqrt{-yéyur}$) with forms without *y* (i.e. class VI present optatives: $\sqrt{-ét}$, $\sqrt{-éyur}$) could favour the secondary association of *-yet*-optatives with class VI presents. The $\sqrt{-yét}$ || $\sqrt{-ét}$ model could probably trigger the loss of *y* also in the individual verbal systems where, originally, class VI presents were lacking. In particular, traces of *-yet*-optatives can possibly be found among active optatives

⁵⁹ For this present, see *PW* III/451f.; Tedesco 1953: 80f.; Balbir 1982: 66.

⁶⁰ The very rare irregular forms in *-yet* in Classical Sanskrit, mostly attested as variant readings (for instance, Pañc. 2.118: 154.18 *na parityajyet*, for the correct *-tyajet* “[he] should not quit ...”, see Hertel 1912: 143 and Sternbach 1956: 124; KujT 23.134 *prapūjyet* [ms. D], for the correct *prapūjyeta*, see ed. Goudriaan – Schoterman, p. 81), are likely to result from scribal errors.

built on thematic root present stems (classes I and VI) which are unattested or exceptional with the active inflexion; cf. the list of such forms in Gotō 1987: 396f. This may be the case for *graset* SVB 2.3.11 (~ middle pres. *grásate*), *saheyur* ŚĀ^m 12.7 (32) (~ middle pres. *sáhate*), which may betray unattested *-yet*-optatives (**grasyet*, **sahyeyur*).⁶¹

In some cases the loss of *y* in hypothetical *-yet*-optatives may have given rise to secondary thematic root presents (class VI).⁶² Such may be the origin of the class VI present *-uṣa-*^{ti} “burn”, which appears in late Vedic (GB) and in the Sūtras alongside the old class I present *óṣa-*^{ti}. Gotō (1987: 109f.) accounts for this formation as resulting from the reanalysis of imperfect forms in compounds with *upa* (**upoṣat* << *upa-auṣat*). This assumption is plausible but does not explain why the majority of the attested forms are 3sg. and pl. optatives in *-et* and *-eyur*. Assuming that *-uṣet*, *-uṣeyur* go back to hypothetical *-yet*-optatives (**-uṣyet*, **-uṣyeyur*), we are able to account for this imbalance of moods.

7.3. Evidence from Middle Indo-Aryan

Although *-yet*-optatives have not become a productive formation, it makes sense to look for their traces in later texts and in Middle Indo-Aryan. In particular, here probably belongs the much debated form *haṃñeyasu/haṃñeyu*, attested in the famous Aśokan Rock Edict XIII (N). Most interpreters noticed the morphological irregularity of this form and translated the end of the sentence (in the Shāhbāzgarhī version: ... *na ca [ha]ññeyasu*)⁶³ as a passive construction: “in order that

⁶¹ Some of the 3sg. forms in *-ét*, such as RVKh. 3.17².2 *labhét* (which cannot be a correct optative form of the middle class I present *lābhate*; note especially the abnormal final accentuation, see Gotō 1987: 262), can be accounted for otherwise – as belonging to Insler’s type *gamema* (see above, §6.1). In general, this analysis is more probable for forms attested in the mantras, where the type *gamema* first appears; on the contrary, for late Vedic and post-Vedic forms an explanation in terms of *-yet*-optatives seems preferable.

⁶² The loss of *y* before *e* is also attested (from the Sūtras onwards) in 3sg./pl. optatives of *syati* (√*sā* “bind”) and *asyati* (√*as* “throw”); cf. *-set* (in *adhyava-set* BaudhŚS 21.11: 88.18-19, KauśS 137.1, Mbh.), *-aset* (e.g., in *ny-aset* MānŚS 10.3.5.22, 11.7.1.6^{2x}, ManuSmṛ. 6.46, YājñSmṛ. 2.103, 3.35, BhāgP 7.12.24; *abhy-aset* ĀpDhS 1.27.8 [= HirDhS 1.7.33 *abhy-asyet*, cf. Renou 1947: 193]; etc.); see also Böhtlingk 1896: 249f.; Leumann 1968: 58; Biswas 1968: 74, 171. The loss of *y* in compounds has probably been supported by dissimilation processes after preverbs in *-i/-y*; see Leumann 1968: 58, Gotō 1987: 85, Oberlies 2003: 197 with n. 3, and Kulikov 2005: 307f. for details. In Epic Sanskrit we also find non-optative forms for both of these newly-built class I presents; see Whitney 1885: 5, 185 and Oberlies 2003: 197, 202, 390, 531.

⁶³ For a synopsis of versions, see Schneider 1978: 75 and 116.

they may not be killed” (Hultzsch 1925: 69)⁶⁴ – which makes little sense in the context, however. Caillat (1991: 11; 1992) has convincingly demonstrated that Bloch’s (1950: 129) transitive translation “qu’ils cessent de tuer” is more attractive, and that *haṃñeyasu/haṃñeyu* is a “mixed” optative form. Thus, the gemination betrays *y* of the optative suffix (cf. Skt. *hanyāt*), not of the *-yá*-passive, while *e* must be yet another mark of the optative (whence Caillat’s term “double optative suffix”). In my view, Sanskrit *-yet*-optatives can further clarify the morphological status of the Aśokan form in question, which can readily be explained as a trace of (or a formation parallel to) the plural *-yet*-optative of *han*, i.e. Skt. **hanyeyur*. The most direct reflex of the supposed Old Indo-Aryan form would be *haṃñeyu* (*haṃñeyu*), which seems to have been preserved in two versions (Erraguḍi and Kālsī) and is adopted by Schneider (1978: 75 and 116) for the prototext. To the same morphological type must belong Pāli optative *haññe* (< Skt. **hanyet*) “one should kill”, which thus supports the transitive analysis of Aśokan *haṃñeyu/haṃñeyasu*. The Pāli 3sg. optatives *pakampiye* “he will bend”, *maddiye* “he shall crush” and *haññe* “he should kill” have been correctly evaluated already in *CPD* I/517, s.v. *asnāti* as “mixed pot.[ential]s”; see also Smith 1951: 4 (“formes contaminées du type *-kampiye* (< *-kampet* × *-kampyāt*)”) and Oberlies 2000: 227f. In my view, these forms point to the Pāli formation, corresponding to the Skt. *-yet*-optative.⁶⁵

8. SYNOPSIS OF FORMS AND CONCLUSIONS

For the sake of convenience I list all forms discussed above as well as hypothetical *-yet*-optatives:

⁶⁴ Likewise Edgerton (1952: 117), contra Bloch (1950: 129) and Schneider (1978: 117): “damit sie ... nicht getötet werden”; cf. also Schneider’s comments on p. 150.

⁶⁵ I would like to thank Thomas Oberlies for having drawn my attention to these Pāli and Aśokan forms.

I. Attested Forms

1. <i>i</i> “go”	-īyet Mbh.	
2. <i>kṣip</i> “throw”	<i>kṣipyet</i> ChU	
3. <i>chid</i> “break, hurt”	<i>chidyet</i> Mbh.	
4. <i>grh</i> “seize”	<i>grhyet</i> Kauś ^m	
5. <i>trā</i> “rescue”	<i>trāyet</i> Rām.	
6. <i>truṭ</i> (<i>truḍ</i>) “break”		- <i>trudyeyur</i> KātyŚSBh.
7. <i>dih</i> “besmear”	- <i>dihyet</i> BhārŚS	
8. <i>dr</i> “heed”	- <i>driyet</i> Mbh., Yogayātrā	
9. <i>dhyā</i> “think”	<i>dhyāyét</i> RVKh.	
10. <i>nud</i> “push”	- <i>nudyet</i> Mbh.	
11. <i>pad</i> “fall”	+ <i>-padyet</i> ĀrṣU	
12. <i>bandh</i> “bind”	<i>badhyet</i> Rām.	
13. <i>budh</i> “wake”	- <i>budhyet</i> YājñSmṛ.	
14. <i>bhañj</i> “break”	- <i>bhajyet</i> MānGS	
15. <i>bhrj</i> (<i>j</i>) “roast”		<i>bhrj(j)yéyur</i> M/KS
16. <i>man</i> “think”	<i>manyet</i> ViṣSmṛ., Mbh.	
17. <i>mṛ</i> “die”	<i>mriyet</i> AmṛtU	
18. <i>mṛj</i> “wipe off, destroy”	- <i>mṛjyet</i> GB	
19. <i>mrít</i> “decay”	- <i>mrityét</i> ŚB (≈ GB)	- <i>mrityeyur</i> ŚB
20. <i>ram</i> “stop”	- <i>ramyet</i> BaudhŚS	
21. <i>lī</i> “adhere”		- <i>līyeyur</i> MārKP
22. <i>vā</i> “blow”	<i>vāyet</i> Mbh.	
23. <i>vid</i> “know”	<i>vidyet</i> JābU	
24. <i>śams</i> “recite”	- <i>śasyet</i> ŚŚS	
25. <i>śās</i> “teach”	- <i>śisyet</i> Mbh.	
26. <i>śiṣ</i> “leave”	<i>śisyet</i> GB (= VaitS), Vaikh/ BhārŚS	
27. <i>sañj</i> “attach”	(+)- <i>sajjet</i> MānŚS	
28. <i>sic</i> “pour”	<i>sicyet</i> ŚĀ	
29. <i>sū</i> “beget”	<i>sūyet</i> AVPar.	
30. <i>snā</i> “bathe”	<i>snāyet</i> Mānavānugrahika sūtra	- <i>snāyeyur</i> GB
31. <i>svap</i> “sleep”	<i>supyet</i> Mbh.	
32. <i>hā</i> “abandon”	<i>hīyet</i> Rām.	

II. Hypothetical Forms

33. <i>uṣ</i> “burn”	* <i>uṣyet</i> (→ <i>uṣet</i> , class VI pres. <i>uṣati</i> GB, Sū.)	
34. <i>kamp</i> “tremble”	* <i>kampyet</i> (> Pāli <i>pakampiye</i>)	
35. <i>gras</i> “devour”	* <i>grasyet</i> (→ <i>graset</i> SVB)	
36. <i>mṛd</i> / <i>mard</i> “crush”	* <i>mṛdyet</i> (> Pāli <i>maddiye</i>)	
37. <i>sah</i> “prevail”		* <i>sahyeyur</i> (→ <i>saheyur</i> ŚĀ)
38. <i>han</i> “kill”	* <i>hanyet</i> (> Pāli <i>haññe</i>)	* <i>hanyeyur</i> (> Aśoka <i>haṃneyu</i> , etc.)

Let us recapitulate the main arguments *pro* and *contra* *-yet*-optatives as a separate morphological formation. Of course, from the formal point of view, forms in *-yet*- could be regarded simply as active optatives based on class IV presents; but in most of the cases discussed above this analysis is impossible.

The strongest evidence for positing *-yet*-optatives as a separate formation is furnished by the verbs which have no non-passive (class IV) *-ya*-presents at all: forms like *-śasyet* or *kṣipyet* can by no means be grouped with *-yá*-passives and therefore prove to be isolated within the corresponding verbal systems.

Evidence for *-yet*-optatives of those verbs from which class IV (non-passive) presents do derive – albeit with the middle inflexion – is somewhat weaker. Forms like *-driyet*, *manyet*, *mriyet* and *sūyet* can of course be (and usually are) explained as instances of diathesis confusion (middle/active) in late Vedic and post-Vedic texts – i.e. as replacements of the original middle optatives ⁺*manyeta*, ⁺*mriyeta*, ⁺*sūyeta*, etc. Such an explanation is possible, particularly, in the cases where non-optative forms are attested already from the late Vedic or early post-Vedic periods onwards.⁶⁶ However, this analysis does not account for the total absence of other active forms (***mriyati*, ***sūyati*; part. ***mriyant*-, ***sūyant*-, etc.) from the paradigm or the unusual imbalance of moods.

Finally, positing *-yet*-optatives as a separate formation renders a number of emendations unnecessary:

- ⁺*kṣīyeta* or ⁺*kṣīyet* (Böhtlingk) and ⁺*kṣipet* (*VWC-Up.* I/261b) for ChU 8.6.5
- ⁺*dhyāyet* (*VWC-Sa.* III/1744a) for RVKh. 3.10².16
- ⁺*padyan* (?) (*VWC-Up.* II/773a) for ĀrṣU
- ⁺*bhajet* (ed. Sastri) or ⁺*bhujet* (Falk) for MānGS 2.15.6
- ⁺*bhrījéjur* (*PW*) for MS^p 1.10.11: 151.6 ~ KS^p 36.6: 73.1
- ⁺*-mrityo* (Delbrück) for ŚB *-mrityét*
- ⁺*śīsyeta* (Caland) for VaikhŚS 21.4: 325.2
- ⁺*-śīsyeta* (*VWC-Sū.* I/628b) for BhārŚS 7.3.9

⁶⁶ Thus I do not include into my corpus the form *dahyet* (MānGS 2.15.6, late Up.), which belongs with the middle present *dahya*^{-le}, since the active non-optative forms are attested from the late Brāhmaṇas onwards (*dahyanti* ŚB 5.9.2) and become quite common in Epic Skt.; see Holtzmann 1884: 25f.; Kulkarni 1943: 239. Likewise, *vāśyet* (mss. *vāsyō*) in APrāyaśc. 2.4 (cf. also Caland's conjecture ⁺*vāśye*[t] for JGS 2.7: 32.7 [ms.] ^o*vāśapeco*), which corresponds to the middle optative *vāśyeta* (*vāśya*^{-le} “low, bellow”) in the parallel Brāhmaṇa passages ŚB 12.4.1.12 ~ AB 5.27.6 = 7.3.3, occurs adjacent to the indicative form *vāśyati*, being therefore of lesser value for our purpose.

- ⁺-*sajet* (ed. van Gelder) for MānŚS 1.1.3.6
- ⁺*sicyeta* (Keith, ed. Bhim Dev, *VWC-Br.* II/1590a) for ŚĀ 8.2.

To sum up, evidence for -yet-optatives appears rather scant: thus far I have found about 30 forms. It should be noted, however, that the unusual morphological character of -yet-optatives may have caused editors and interpreters of texts to emend most such forms, treating them either as class IV optatives with the irregular active ending, or as class VI optatives (with a secondary *y*). Thus, some -yet-forms may merely have been emended, leaving no traces in editions with minimal critical apparatus. A thorough search into the ms. sources and into variant readings adduced in critical apparatuses will probably furnish further evidence for -yet-optatives.

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