R E V I E W S

Leonid Kulikov. 2012. *The Vedic* -ya-*presents. Passives and Intransitivity in Old Indo-Aryan*. Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, gr.-8, pp. xxix + 994. (Leiden Studies in Indo-European, 19.)

This monumental and highly impressive work is an extended and rewritten version of the author's 2001 Leiden dissertation. It has the rare quality of having become a somewhat obscure, legendary classic within its field before having been made publicly available in print. This status is not only evident from the fact that it has long figured in various scholarly references but especially from the peculiar fact that an anonymous referee once reproached me for not having taken this work into consideration, even though there was still some time before it was actually published. So I think it is fair to say that the publication of this book has been awaited with great expectations within the research community and it was therefore with great pleasure and excitement that I accepted the invitation to review it. In my opinion, the book lives fully up to these expectations, representing a careful and diligent in-depth study which manages to clarify a hitherto rather obscure area of Vedic verbal morphosyntax.

In this study, Kulikov (K.) primarily focuses on a number of Vedic present formations which have in common that they are derived by a suffix *-ya-* from some form of the verbal root, characteristically but not exclusively the zero or reduced grade. One may preliminarily distinguish three basic types, so-called passive forms of the type *kriyáte* 'is made' from *kar-* 'make', so-called class IV middle forms of the type *mányate* 'thinks' from *man-* 'think' and so-called class IV active forms of the type *múhyati* 'becomes confused, errs' from *moh-* 'become confused, err'. The most central claim of this book is that there is a strict correlation between suffix accentuation and passive meaning on one hand and between root accentuation and non-passive meanings such as anticausative or reflexive on the other. The book is divided into three main parts. The Introduction (Part A) contains a preliminary discussion of the most important aspects of the Vedic stem formations in *-ya-* (Chapter I pp. 3–16), a section determining the theoretical and terminological framework (Chapter II pp. 17–29), a brief outline of the corpus of texts and the evaluation of evidence (Chapter III pp. 30–33) and a short survey of the classification of different types of *-ya-* presents on which the rest of the book is based as well as of the structure of the lemmata (Chapter IV pp. 34–36). Part B is the main empirical part of the book, presenting a systematic survey of Vedic *-ya-* presents. It is divided into six individual chapters: Chapter I (pp. 39–312) discusses middle *-ya-* presents with accent on the suffix (e.g. *kriyáte*), Chapter II (pp. 313–361) examines middle *-ya-* presents with accent on the root (e.g. *mányate*), the topic of Chapter III (pp. 362–451) is middle *-ya-* presents with fluctuating accent (e.g. *chidyáte* vs. *chídyate* from *ched-* 'break, cut off'), Chapter IV (pp. 452–516) explores middle *-ya-* presents which are attested with no accent[1], Chapter V (pp. 517–660)

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[1]   This may be due to various factors. First, finite verbs in main clauses are generally unaccented in Vedic. Second, past tense forms are characterized by a prefix *a-*, the so-called augment, which attracts the accent when

contains an overview of active *-ya-* presents (e.g. *múhyati*) and Chapter VI (pp. 661–680) gives a survey of the present stem of the *cyáti* type which has traditionally been regarded as a subtype of the active *-ya-* presents. Part C presents a systematic analysis and classification of *-ya*-presents and consists of seven chapters: In Chapter I (pp. 683–690) K. presents an overview of 'Morphophonological classes of *-ya*-presents', Chapter II (pp. 691–725) discusses the semantics of *-ya*-presents, Chapter III (pp. 726-731) explores 'Transitivity alternations and paradigmatic oppositions within the system of *-ya*-presents', Chapter IV (pp. 732–737) contains a number of 'Remarks on paradigmatic properties of *-ya*-presents', Chapter V (pp. 738–745) discusses the relationship between *-ya*-passives and other passive formations, Chapter VI (pp. 746–750) explores diathesis fluctuation in *-ya*-presents and Chapter VII (pp. 751–764) discusses 'Vedic *-ya*-presents in a diachronic perspective'. Furthermore, the book contains three appendices, one discussing a selection of Post-Vedic *-ya*-presents (pp. 767–783), one surveying 'Vedic quasi-denominatives and their passives' (pp. 784–796) and one giving a synopsis of *-ya*-passives and other formations attested in the passive usage (pp. 797–799), a rich bibliography (pp. 801–922), a list of abbreviations (pp. 923–927), and three indices, an index verborum (pp. 929–950), an index locorum (pp. 951–989) and an index rerum (pp. 990–994). As it is virtually impossible to discuss all of the many intriguing aspects of this massively sized work, I have chosen to focus on a limited number of issues it raises, partly regarding its significance for Vedic linguistics and partly regarding its more general theoretical impact.

An important preliminary distinction on which the philological analysis is based concerns the difference between passive and anticausative. The theoretical framework couched in the Leningrad/St. Petersburg typological tradition and outlined on pp. 17–29 takes both of these notions to represent derived voice alternation patterns prototypically operating on the basic argument structure implied in the binary transitive pattern, promoting the initial object and demoting the initial subject. However, while a passive is taken at the very least to imply an agent argument which may or may not be expressed, an anticausative does not come with this implication and may be taken to have an intransitivizing or valency-reducing effect on the argument structure of two-place verbs. By way of illustration, on a semantic level a passive form like *kriyáte* 'is made' clearly appears to involve reference to some expressed or unexpressed agent corresponding to the subject of the active verb *kṛṇóti* 'makes'. This is not the case with an anticausative form like *jā́yate* 'is born' which only involves reference to the promoted initial object of the corresponding active form *jánati* 'beget, generate'. Through an extremely diligent examination of all attested relevant Vedic forms in Part B, Chapters I and II, K. demonstrates beyond any reasonable doubt that there is a significant correlation between passive semantics and suffix accentuation, on one hand, and anticausative semantics and root accentuation on the other and makes a strong case for the claim that sporadic exceptions to this general rule, such as the often cited *mriyáte* 'dies' from the verb *mar-* 'die' are due to secondary accent shifts and do not represent significant counterevidence to the general rule. Thus, I am strongly inclined to accept K.'s main claim that Vedic had a grammaticalized opposition between passive and anticausative which was expressed by means of different accent patterns. Amongst other things, this assumption would lead one to expect that

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the verb is accented, cf. e.g. Imperfect *ábhavat* 'he became, was' vs. Present *bhávati* 'he becomes, is'. A similar point regards the privative suffix *á-* which is often added to participle forms. Third, some Vedic texts are only found in manuscripts which do not mark accents.

there be a non-negligible number of minimal pairs where passive and anticausative forms were used contrastively. However, this expectation is not borne out in the data, according to the author. In fact, K. only identifies one clear-cut case where one and the same verb shows suffix-accented and root-accented forms with a passive and an anticausative meaning, respectively, namely the pair *pacyáte* 'is cooked' and *pácyate* 'ripens' from the verb *pac-* 'cook', cf. his discussion of these forms on pp. 400–409. The other middle -*ya*- presents with fluctuating accent discussed in Part B, Chapter III are mostly classified either as passive or as anticausative, although K. identifies a number of potential borderline cases which on closer examination may turn out to be even more interesting than the clear-cut ones. Importantly, however, K. notes a tendency for certain texts to show suffix accentuation in such cases whilst other texts tend to show root accentuation (cf. e.g. p. 394) and, given that many of the verbs belonging to this group do seem to have a lexical semantics which may easily assume an anticausative meaning, K. plausibly concludes that verbs showing this alternation pattern originally belonged to the middle class IV presents and were secondarily interpreted as passives. While this explanation is perfectly convincing in the case of verbs like *ched-* 'break', *dah-* 'burn', *darⁱ-* 'crack, split, break, burst' or *bhed-* 'split', I am inclined to entertain some doubts as to whether it may be invoked to explain cases like *mayⁱ-* 'damage, diminish, violate' or *hā-* 'leave (behind), omit, exclude' which appear to have a much stronger inherent emphasis on the agentive argument so that a development from passive to anticausative seems more likely. However, in any case it is clear that the verbs showing fluctuating accentuation patterns represent an important point of convergence between the passive and anticausative constructions in Vedic. Although K. is not explicit on this point, I believe his findings are in principle compatible with an analysis of the relationship between these two construction types in terms of a continuum where a (prototypical) passive like *kriyáte* 'is made' is located on one end and a (prototypical) anticausative like *jā́yate* 'is born' on the other, while less clear-cut cases are located at some point in between. An approach along these lines would, in my opinion, provide a simpler account of a couple of other phenomena discussed in this book, for instance regarding how so-called 'agentless passives' relate to anticausatives. K. himself rightly points out (pp. 22–23) that it is often difficult to distinguish agentless passives from anticausatives in Vedic, that this distinction 'sometimes seems to be (almost) irrelevant for the author' and that, on the other hand, the interpretation of certain passages, e.g. the well-known cosmogonic hymn Rigveda (RV) X 129, 'depends on how the author of the hymn visualizes the way the world was created – to understand this demands insight into the very heart of the Ancient Indian cosmogonic thought' (p. 23). While K. outlines in a clear manner some of the challenges one faces when undertaking a study of the present kind, I missed a somewhat more elaborate methodological discussion of how difficulties of this kind can be dealt with or overcome. In practice, however, unclear or borderline cases are resolved on a case-by-case basis through a thorough philological examination of the relevant text passages and a generally compelling conclusion drawn upon it. An intriguing case in point concerns the discussion of the (unaccented) hapax form *udyate* from the verb *od-* 'moisten, wet' found in RV I 164.47[2] which, however, is replaced by the active perfect indicative form *ūduḥ* 'they moisten, be-

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[2]   Cf. the entire verse:
   kr̥ṣṇáṃ niyā́naṃ̇ hárayaḥ suparṇā́ apó vásānā dívam út patanti /
   tá ā́vavr̥tran sádanād r̥tásyād íd ghr̥téna pr̥thivī́ vy ùdyate // (RV I 164.47)
   'Along the black route the fallow birds, clothing themselves in the waters, fly up to the sky. They

sprinkle' in parallel verses in other Vedic texts[3], something which provides a powerful piece of indirect evidence that the form *udyate* in the presumably original verse found in RV had a passive meaning 'is besprinkled' and that the unexpressed agent of this passive form was co-referent with the expressed agentive subject of the immediately preceding active verb forms *út patanti* 'fly up' and *ā́vavr̥tran* 'returned' in the immediately preceding context. Incidentally, it should be observed that this particular passage provides a well-defined syntactic-pragmatic context where the agent argument of passive constructions can be omitted in Vedic which from a more general methodological perspective provides a principled way of discerning potential passive constructions from anticausative ones. Another, slightly more controversial set of questions concerns whether the *-yá*-passive is subject to any principled lexical semantic constraints. K. points out (pp. 24–26) that transitivity and objecthood are key notions in this connection. Specifically, although a majority of direct objects of two- and three-place verbs appear in the accusative case in Vedic, the correlation is by no means perfect, both because many verbs allow non-canonical and/or alternating object realization patterns and because in many cases verbs are accompanied by an accusative-marked sentence constituent which cannot, strictly speaking, be regarded as an argument. An important claim K. makes is that the *-yá*-passive mainly represents a way of promoting genuine accusative object arguments to subjects and that other types of accusative constituents never appear as the subject of passive derivations (pp. 25–26).[4] The convenient survey of passive *-yá*-presents given on pp. 691–695 clearly shows that the majority of *-yá*-passives are formed from primary transitive verbs, that is, more or less highly agentive two-place verbs or transitive verbs derived from intransitives through verbal composition as well as from secondary causative and non-causative *-áya*-presents. Moreover, K.'s data clearly show that virtually any semantic type of two-place predicate is attested with a *-yá*-passive. These considerations suggest that the Vedic *-yá*-passive may be taken to represent a rather inclusive type of passive construction which minimally presupposes that the original predicate has more than one syntactic argument. This assumption also underlies the claim that 'intransitive verbs (…) generally do not passivize' (p. 69) a claim which is supported by the fact that K. only identifies two examples of passive forms derived from intransitive verbs, namely *kramyánte* from the verb *kram^i-* 'stride' (Taittirīyā Saṃhitā (TS) I 7.6.2) and *nr̥tyate* from the verb *nart-* 'dance' (Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa (JB) II 69), both of which are classified as passives 'derived from intransitives with content accusatives' (p. 693). In this context, 'content accusative' is understood as a subtype of the

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returned from the r̥ta's residence; thus the earth is moistened/becomes wet with ghee' (KULIKOV 2012: 462).

[3]   Cf. e.g. Atharvavedaśaunakīyā (AVŚ) VI 22.1:

kr̥ṣṇáṃ niyā́naṃ hárayaḥ suparṇā́ apó vásānā dívam út patanti /
tá ā́vavr̥trant sádanād r̥tásyā́d íd ghr̥téna pr̥thivī́ṃ vy ūduḥ //

'Along the black route the fallow birds, clothing themselves in the waters, fly up to the sky. They returned from the r̥ta's residence and then have sprinkled the earth with ghee' (after KULIKOV 2012: 463).

[4]   In this connection, it may be worth mentioning that while original accusative-marked direct objects appear in the nominative case when they are promoted to subject by a passive operator, non-canonically case-marked direct objects may in some cases retain their original case marking in Vedic. This may, for instance, be seen in a few cases where passive forms of ingestion verbs occur with a genitive-marked subject argument, cf. e.g. the following example from the RV:

ápāyi *asya ándhaso* mádāya

'(Some of) this soma-juice has been drunk for inebriation (i.e. in order to get inebriated)' (RV II 19.1).

more general *figura etymologica* where a basically intransitive verb is supplied with an accusative-marked noun derived from the same root. For example, in TS I 7.6.1-2[5] we find a middle form of the verb *kram^i*- 'stride', *krámate* 'strides' governing the accusative form *viṣṇukramā́n* 'steps of Viṣṇu', yielding a derived transitive meaning 'strides the steps of Viṣṇu' which in turn forms the basis of a passive derivation *viṣṇukramā́ḥ kramyánte* 'the strides of Viṣṇu are stridden'. This particular example, although almost entirely isolated, provides unambiguous evidence that content accusatives could be passivized in Vedic and hence had argument status. The other example K. analyzes in terms of content accusative, *nṛtyate* from the verb *nart*- 'dance' in JB is slightly less compelling than the one just discussed, especially because the form is not preceded by a corresponding active construction. Significantly, however, it is accompanied by the accusative-marked relative pronoun *yat* 'what'.[6] Although this construction type is rather marginally attested in Vedic, these two examples suffice to show that the *-yá*-passive was compatible with unaccusative intransitive verbs in cases where these verbs occurred in a derived transitive construction with a content accusative. However, K. fails to note that the Vedic *-yá*-passive does not seem to appear in impersonal passive constructions of the type German *es wird getanzt* 'it is being danced' or Latin *curritur* 'it is run', a point which is of relevance as it contributes to delimiting the typological character of the Vedic *-yá*-passive.

While the passive *-yá*-present seemingly is compatible with any type of genuinely two-place predicate and, moreover, appears to become more productive over time, the two other main types of Vedic *-ya*-presents, notably the class IV middle anticausative of the type *jā́yate* 'is born' and the class IV active of the type *múhyati* 'becomes confused, errs', have somewhat more restricted distributional properties. K. distinguishes (p. 706) three main semantic classes of verbs that select the class IV middle anticausative, (1) verbs denoting a spontaneous, non-controllable change of state, (2) verbs of motion and body posture and (3) verbs of mental activities. The last group differs from the former two in that it contains verbs that may be constructed with an accusative-marked direct object. As regards class IV active presents, they occur with non-controllable states and processes, intransitive activities and some transitives (pp. 723–725). Apart from some markedly agentive verbs such as *as*- 'throw, shoot', *nah*- 'tie', *sīv*- 'sew', *dīv*- 'play', *yodh*- 'fight' or *stā*- 'steal', most of the verbs forming a class IV middle or active stem in Vedic share the entailment that the subject argument does not strictly speaking control the situation denoted by the predicate. K. identifies (p. 724–725) the notion of entropy increase, that is, decay, spontaneous destruction or destructuring more generally, as one central semantic feature common to the

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[5] Cf. the entire passage:
   prá vā́ eṣò 'smā́l lokā́c cyavate *yáḥ* //1// *viṣṇukramā́n krámate* suvargā́ya hí lokā́ya *viṣṇukramā́ḥ kramyánte* (TS I 7.6.1-2).
   'Verily, the one who strides the steps of Viṣṇu, falls out of this world, since to the heavenly world the strides of Viṣṇu are stridden' (Kulikov 2012: 69).

[6] Cf. the entire passage:
   tad yad yajñe stūyate yac chasyate yat pracaryate sā prajāpates senāsa / atha yad vīṇāyāṃ gīyate yan nṛtyate yad vṛthācaryate sā mṛtyos senāsa (JB II 69).
   'What in the sacrifice is sung as stotra, what is recited as śastra, what is performed as ritual activity, this has been Prajāpati's sacrificial weapon; and what is sung with a vīnā, what is danced, what is performed uselessly (= without a sacrificial goal), this has been weapon of the Death' (Kulikov 2012: 579–580).

different class IV verbs. Significantly, a comparison with data from Avestan indicates that a considerable number of Vedic class IV middles and actives are of Indo-Iranian age; on the other hand, the *-yá*-passive had not yet developed into a fully grammaticalized category in Indo-Iranian, as Avestan forms belonging to this category alternately select middle or active endings (p. 751). As regards the relationship between the passive and anticausative class IV middle, K. notes (p. 760) that the difference in accentuation between these two categories is secondary and suggests that the passive *-yá*-stem has retained the original accent pattern, while the non-passive stem type for some reason has developed a root accent. This latter process may, in K.'s opinion, have originated in non-passive forms where there was no para-digmatic distinction between zero and full grade, e.g. *mányate* 'think', and then have spread to other forms with a similar non-passive meaning. K. further assumes that the Vedic binary opposition between passive and anticausative/non-passive developed from a unitary mor-phological category in Indo-Iranian formed by means of the suffix *-i̯á-* which was used as an 'additional characterization of some middle presents' (p. 764), above all verbs typically belonging to the group of *media tantum* in various Indo-European languages. A scenario along the proposed lines would seem to presuppose that the class IV middles underwent an accent shift only after the passive had been grammaticalized at some point in the post-Indo-Iranian prehistory of Proto-Indo-Aryan. However, in this context one might wonder whether K. is correct in regarding non-passive forms with accented suffix such as *mriyáte* 'dies' as the result of a secondary accent shift in Vedic (pp. 179–181, 707/–709), as such forms could easily reflect archaisms from a time when the passive-anticausative distinction had not yet fully developed.

In this review I have discussed a selection of the many interesting specific problems K. discusses in this important contribution to Vedic linguistics. I hope to have shown that some of the issues are also relevant for a more general readership, in particular regarding the diachronic relationship between various types of valence-altering grammatical categories, especially passives and anticausatives. Although this book clearly represents a landmark in Vedic and Indo-Iranian linguistics which will undoubtedly remain a standard work in the foreseeable future, it suffers from the slight disadvantage that it may be somewhat difficult to access for readers unfamiliar with Vedic Sanskrit. This is regrettable insofar as this work has an obvious relevance for general linguistic theory, in particular linguistic typology but this shortcoming is to a large extent remedied by the fact that most of the findings presented in this book have been amply discussed by K. elsewhere. To conclude, K.'s book represents a close to ideal in-depth study of a rather complicated problem in Vedic linguistics and is an impressive achievement which will determine the course of future studies within its field.

Allatum die 23 mensis Julii anno 2013

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