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## A note on Vedic *cīti-*

**Abstract:** Vedic *cīti-*, attested in the Atharvaveda, is argued to be related to Av. *šāiti-*, OP *šiyāti-* ‘happiness’ built to PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>iēh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘to (come to) rest’.

**Keywords:** Vedic, Atharvaveda, disease, healing, etymology

### 1 Ved. *cīti-* and Gk. *τίω*

The meaning and etymology of the *dis legomenon* Ved. *cīti-* (AVŚ 2.9.4; AVP 2.10.3) are unclear (cf. EWAia: 1, 544). Weiss (2017) has proposed to connect it with *āpa-citi-* ‘respect’, *āpa-cāyati* ‘respects, honors’ (JB, ŚB, TB), *āpa-cita-* ‘respected’ (Kāth.+), etc., following Hoffmann’s interpretation (Hoffmann 1982) of RV 4.28.4d *āvinde-thām āpacitiṃ vādhatraiḥ* ‘You have made yourselves to be respected with your weapons’. The difference in length of the root vowel would be the result of laryngeal loss in the compound *apa-citi-*. Together with *inter alia* Greek *τίω* ‘I honor’ and *τιμή* ‘honor’ *cīti-* would speak for a root PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>eiH-*, not *\*k<sup>w</sup>ej-* as assumed in LIV<sup>2</sup>: 377. As this interpretation hinges on the semantic plausibility of *cīti-* meaning ‘respect’, a different proposal may be in order.

### 2 Ved. *cīti-* and Iran. *\*čjāti-*

AVŚ 2.9.4/AVP 2.10.3 are part of a healing spell against “possession by demons: with an amulet” (Whitney 1905: 50) meant to ward off the imminent death of the sick person. In the Śaunaka version, the first verse asks for release from the demon (*raḥsas-*) and the “seizure”, *grāhi-*, being both the disease and its demonic personification, that has taken hold (*gra[b]h-*) of the sick person.<sup>1</sup> The following three verses describe the patient’s return to health as a *fait accompli* in past tense forms. Verse four may be understood as a summary indicating the agents responsible for the healing:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Zehnder 1999: 28 on AVP 2.3.4.

- (1) *devās te cītim avidan brahmāṇa utā vīrūdhah*  
*cītim te vīśve devā ávidan bhūmyām ádhi /*  
 ‘The gods have found your *cīti-*, the priests and the plants; all the gods have found your *cīti-* upon the earth.’ (after Whitney, who interprets *cītim* as ‘gathering’) AVŚ 2.9.4
- (2) *cītim te deva avidan brahmāṇa uta vīrudhah*  
*cītim te adyottamām avidan bhūmyām adhi*  
 ‘The gods found ‘respect’ for you and the priest the plants. The gods found the highest<sup>2</sup> ‘respect’ for you today on earth.’ AVP 2.10.3, (Weiss 2017)

If one takes not the amulet, but the sick person as the addressee in AVŚ 2.9.4/AVP 2.10.3 as in AVP 2.10.2 *sa eva tubhyaṃ bheṣajaṃ cakāra* ‘He has made the drug for you,’<sup>3</sup> *cīti-* might refer to something instrumental in the act of healing, e.g. the amulet itself, or to the resulting state of health restored by the joint effort of gods, priests and plants.<sup>4</sup>

In the latter case, *cīti-* might be connected with YAv. *šāiti-*, OP *šiyāti-* ‘(earthly) bliss, happiness’, Lat. *quiēs*, beside the adjective OAv. *šiiāta-*, OP *šiyāta-* ‘happy’, Lat. *quiētus* ‘calm, quiet’, from PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>iēh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘to rest’ (LIV<sup>2</sup>: 393). Zero-grade forms are also found in Arm. *hangč’im* ‘to rest’, *hangist* ‘rest’ (n.) < *\*-k<sup>w</sup>i-*, Gmc. *\*h<sup>w</sup>īla-* ‘while’ (Goth. *hweila* ‘period, while’, ON *hvīla* f. ‘bed’, etc.) and OCS *po-čiti* ‘to rest’. The full grade in Lat. *quiētus* and Iranian *\*čjāta-* is likely to be secondary, and *\*k<sup>w</sup>iēh<sub>1</sub>ti-* / *\*k<sup>w</sup>iēh<sub>1</sub>ti-* (> Ir. *\*čjāiti-*, Ved. *cīti-*) could be remnants of a regular proterokinetic noun *\*k<sup>w</sup>iēh<sub>1</sub>ti-* : *\*k<sup>w</sup>iēh<sub>1</sub>-tēj-*. The generalization of different ablaut grades (CReC/CṚC) is matched by a case like Av. *fra-zaiṇti-* < *\*oḡen<sub>h</sub>ti-* and Ved. *jāti-* ‘birth’ < *\*ḡ<sub>h</sub>ti-* (CeRC/CṚC).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For *uttama-* (locally) ‘highest’ and (metaphorically) ‘best, excellent’, cf. e.g. RV 6.60.3 *rādhobhir ... uttamebhiḥ* ‘with highest bounties’.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Leumann & Leumann 1907: 100: “*cīti* f. ‘Ehrfurcht’ AV. II 9,4 (wie die nachfolgende Strophe an den Kranken gerichtet)”; Zehnder 1999: 45.

<sup>4</sup> Metonymically the same noun may of course refer to the abstract state and its concrete physical representation, cf. Lat. *fascinum* meaning both ‘witchcraft, sorcery’ and ‘amulet, phallus’.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Liebert 1949: 107; Vine 2004: esp. 372 fn. 44; Kümmel 2014. However, one cannot exclude influence of the corresponding full grade of the aorist, cf. YAv. *šiiāmā* (1pl inj. or subj.) ‘let us rejoice/find peace’, Lat. *quiēui* ‘I rested’ (LIV<sup>2</sup>: 393), cf. also fn. 6.

### 3 Et in terra pax

The meaning ‘rest, repose’ may still be present in a bridging context such as the following in which the meaning ‘well-being, happiness’ could develop:

- (3) *xvafnəm. mazdaδātəm. yazamaide. / šāitīm. pasuuā. vīraiiā.*  
 ‘We worship sleep created by Mazdā, \*repose → happiness for beast and man.’  
 Vr. 7.3

In the context of disease, \**k̄̌ih<sub>1</sub>ti*- might have meant ‘rest from suffering → well-being, happiness’ (e.g. Cic. *Cat. 4.4.7 laborum ac miseriarum quietem*), i.e. ‘The gods have found *rest* (from the demoniac possession)/*well-being/happiness* for you, the priests and the plants; all the gods have found *rest/well-being/happiness* for you on earth.’ *Vid*- ‘find, acquire’ occurs in charms such as RV 10.161 meaning getting the sick or dead person back to health or life, i.e. a person who was on the way to the departed:

- (4) *yādi kṣitāyur yādi vā páreto*  
*yādi mṛtyór antikām nīta evā*  
*tām ā harāmi nīṛtyer upāsthād*  
*āspārṣam enam śatāsārādāya*  
 ‘If his lifetime is exhausted, or he is (already) departed, or if he has just gone down to the face of death, I bring him here from the lap of Dissolution. I have redeemed him for a hundred autumns.’  
 RV 10.161.2, JB

- (5) *āhārṣam tvāvidam tvā*  
*pūnar āgāḥ punarnava*  
*sārvāṅga sārvaṁ te cākṣuḥ*  
*sārvam āyus ca te ‘vidam*  
 ‘I have brought you here; *I have found you*. You have come here again, o you who are new again. O you with hale limbs, *I have found* your eye hale and your lifetime whole.’<sup>6</sup>  
 RV 10.161.5, JB

The use of *cīti*- in a context of restoring health in this life (*bhūmyām ādhi* ‘on earth’) may have a parallel in OP *šiyāti*- ‘happiness, being in the state of *šiyāta*-’ which describes the state of the worshipper of Ahuramazdā during lifetime as opposed to *ṛtāvan*- ‘bliss’, the state after death, cf. XPh §6. 53–56 (cf. Schmitt 2009: 168):

- (6) *martiya, haya avanā dātā pariyaṭi*  
*utā A.uramazdām yadataṭi*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. also Av. *vaēda*- ‘acquiring, providing; acquisition’, Y. 29.10 *paouruim vaēdam* ‘the first provider’ (Humbach & Ichaporia 1994: 29), sup. Y. 46.19 *vaēdištō* ‘the best provider’ (1994: 81).

*ṛtācā brazmaniya,  
 haṃ utā jīva śiyāta bavati  
 utā mṛta ṛtāvā bavati.*

‘The man who obeys the law passed by Ahuramazda, and worships Ahuramazda in due time and with due ceremony; he will be *happy in life* and *blissful after death*.’<sup>7</sup>

If *brazmaniya*-, ‘the (correct) formulation/ritual’ necessary for acquiring the state of *śiyāti*-, can be equated with Ved. *brahmanyā*-,<sup>8</sup> it parallels the presence of the *brahmāṇaḥ*, the experts of the effective formula, who along with the gods and plants procure *cīti*- for the sick person.

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Schmitt 2014: 248. The Avestan use differs from this apparently neat opposition: for being *śāta*- after death cf. *Pursišnīhā* 24.44 *šātəm daθāiti uruuanəm ašaonō iririθanahē* ‘Il rend *heureuse* l’âme du juste mort’, *Hadoxt Nask* 2.6 (the soul of the righteous dead worshipper) ‘ressent autant de plaisir [*auuauuat šātōiš*] qu’en ressentit son état vivant’ (Kellens 1995: 94), for being *ašauuan*- during life, cf. V. 5.61 *juuasciṭ nōiṭ buuaṭ ašauua māsasciṭ nōiṭ baxšaiti vahištahe aṅhāuš* ‘Vivant, il n’est pas *juste*, mort, il ne partage pas la meilleure existence’ (Kellens 1969: 211–212), but cf. also *š(ii)ā*- expressing happiness acquired during sacrifice in Y. 58.3 *nəmahī šiiāmā ahurā mazdā* ‘Nous trouvons la paix à te rendre hommage, ô Ahura Mazdā’ (Kellens 1995: 35). According to Kellens (1995), the contrast in XPh may be interpreted as highlighting two aspects of the same state of the pious worshipper, i.e. reassured during lifetime and blessed after death.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Henning 1944; Schmitt 2014: 154. Different proposals for this much-disputed form are e.g. Mawet 1978: adj. derived from \**brazman* ‘loftiness’, cf. RV 1.75.5 *ṛtām bṛhāt* ‘lofty truth’, cf. also Klein 1988: 405; Skjærvø 1999: 42, or a connection with YAv. *barəsmān*- ‘bundle of twigs (used in the ritual)’, cf. Kellens 1995: 36 fn. 40.

## Abbreviations

- EWAia      Manfred Mayrhofer (1986–2001). *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. 3 vols. Heidelberg: Winter.
- JB            Stephanie W. Jamison & Joel P. Brereton (2014). *The Rigveda. The Earliest Religious Poetry of India*. 3 vols. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
- LIV<sup>2</sup>        Helmut Rix & Martin Kümmel (2001). *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

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