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## **Ṛgveda 1.28 and the Alleged Domestic Soma-Pressing**

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## **Editor's Note**

The first EJVS issue of this year contains an important article by my revered teacher, Hanns-Peter Schmidt, prof. emer., UCLA. He was my first teacher of Sanskrit at Tübingen University, back in 1965; the following year we began with Vedic Sanskrit under his guidance, often being his only Vedic student then. We continued until he left for Los Angeles in 1967.

I owe him a great deal and express my profound gratitude for his acumen and patience, with which he guided my first steps into all things Indian.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome him to EJVS now and I express my hope for many returns.

Michael Witzel  
8/2/09

HANNS-PETER SCHMIDT

## R̥gveda 1.28 and the Alleged Domestic Soma-Pressing

The hymn R̥gveda 1.28 has attracted much attention because of its obvious use of sexual metaphors and the use of mortar and pestle for pressing Soma. The sexual allusions have been judged as humoristic and lascivious by Geldner and J.J. Meyer, a view vehemently rejected by Lommel. Oliphant considered the hymn as particularly old because of the use of pestle and mortar which has a close parallel in the Zoroastrian Haoma ritual. Witzel closely follows Geldner. The most recent treatment is that of Schlerath who interprets the hymn as a description of the sexual act as a Soma sacrifice.

*1 yátra grāvā prthúbudhna  
ūrdhvó bhávati sótave,  
ulūkhalasutānām  
ávéd v indra jalgulaḥ*

1 When the pressing- stone with a broad bottom is raised upward for pressing, you, o Indra, shall gulp down again and again (the Soma) pressed in the mortar.

The iterative or repetitive meaning of *jalgulaḥ* is discussed by Schaefer (p.37,85,115). Schlerath argues (p.91f.) that the mortar is never mentioned as a tool for Soma pressing in Vedic literature and that, if it existed and was not a fiction of the poet, the Soma pressed in it could not directly be drunk by Indra without first being strained, as it regularly done. His conclusion is that the poet does not talk about a Soma sacrifice at all. He also argues that in the Veda there is no evidence that Soma was drunk in sips repetitively. He suggests that the pressing stone stands for the penis, the mortar for the vulva and the repetitive gulping refers to the rhythm of the ejaculation. He says that the idea of Indra gulping down the semen seems to be "adventurous", but argues that Soma is identified with semen in this case though there is no evidence for Soma = *rétas* elsewhere in R̥gveda. As indirect evidence he adduces Kāthaka 5, 4,8 (p.165.7) *āhatam gabhe paso ni jalgalīti dhānikā* "the vulva gulps down again and again the penis struck into the slit", assuming that *pasas* "obviously" stands for *retaḥ pasasaḥ*. I consider this as a sleight of hand. Actually Soma is *rétas* in 10.94.5 (quoted by Lommel (1959:143=1978:411) and is called *divó rétas* (9.74.1; 86.28, cf. Lüders 703). Schlerath also ignored that Soma is not strained at the Upāṁsugraha (ĀpŚS 12.10.7; according to TS 6.4.5.3 in this case speech is the strainer), though this does not

apply to our hymn which mentions the strainer in 9. Schlerath has not considered the possibility that the hymn does not give a step by step description of the ritual but telescopes it: the act of pressing is mentioned together with its ultimate purpose, i.e. to offer the Soma to Indra. This is surprising since he himself (101) states that chronological sequences are mostly only coincidental, but never planned in the hymns. The interpretation of *jalgulas* is possibly too narrow. The repeated gulping may rather refer to the forceful, greedy swallowing. The text as it stands makes sense as description of the sex-act without recourse to "adventurous" suggestions.

2 *yátra dvā́v iva jaghánā*  
*[a]dhiṣavanyā̀ kṛtā́,*  
*ulūkhalasutānām*  
*ávéd v indra jalgulaḥ*

2 Where, as it were, the two buttocks (thighs) are made for pressing Soma, you, o Indra, shall gulp down again and again (the Soma) pressed in the mortar.

*adhiṣavanyā̀* refers to the *adhiṣavaṇaphalake*, the boards on which the cowhide is spread, which serves as a cushion for the lower pounding stone on which the Soma is pressed (cf. Oldenberg 1908, 460 = 1967,269). Hillebrandt (1927: 416) suggested that the two thighs were two thighlike parts or handles of the mortar so that it could be compared to the female sex organ. Lommel (1959: 135,143 = 1978:403,411) accepted this interpretation. Oberlies (1999: 140+fn.76) suggests that these boards serve to fix the lower pressing stone (*úpara*) on the ground, and conjectures that it may have been similar to a stone implement from Central Asia, a flat stone board with an indentation in the middle. I think it is unlikely that the boards can have served this purpose since they would have been too far apart from each other, not only two fingers' breadth as in ĀpŚS 11.13.6; I do not know any instance where they are farther apart. Oberlies rejects Hillebrandt's and Lommel's interpretation. He assumes that a regular Soma-sacrifice with one lower and one upper stone is meant. The *úpara* is mentioned in RV 10.94.5 ~ AV 6.49.3. While the RV verse refers to a Soma sacrifice, the AV verse may refer to a substitute domestic ritual; the reference to the Soma stalks in 2 then is likely to be to a different plant as we find it in other AV contexts to be mentioned later. Hillebrandt (1927: 408 fn.3, 431) has not realized this; he takes *úpara* in RV to refer to the lower pressing stone while Geldner has the lower [region] and Lüders (1951: 121) the lower [ocean]. 10.175.3 mentions *úpara* in the plural, for which I do not know any parallel. In 1.28 we have wooden implements, which are comparable only to those used in domestic sacrifices, mortar and pestle. The mortar lends itself more easily than a flat board to the sexual imagery. Schlerath (98f.) follows Lommel's sexual interpretation. It is, however, unlikely that the semi-cycle parts of a wheel (*pradhī*) which form the upper parts of the *adhiṣavaṇaphalake* were positioned as on the drawing on p.99, since this is not in agreement with the descriptions in the Śrautasūtras.

3 *yátra nā́ry apacyavám*  
*upacyavám ca śíkṣate,*  
*ulūkhalasutānām*  
*ávéd v indra jalgulaḥ*

3 "Where the woman is practicing moving to and fro, you, o Indra, shall gulp down again and again (the Soma) pressed in the mortar."

The action of the woman possibly refers to her moving the churning stick, and the sexual allusion is on her "on top" position. The participation of the wife in the sacrifice is attested in 8.31.5, where *pāti* and *pātnī* press, rinse and mix Soma with milk. In the Agniṣṭoma the wife plays a prominent role in the third pressing (cf. Jamison 1992: 131f.). The ṚV reference is singular, and Jamison now believes that originally the wife had no active part in the Ṛgvedic Soma sacrifice.

4 *yātra mānthāṃ vibadhnāte*  
*raśmīn yāmitavā iva,*  
*ulūkhalasutānām*  
*āvéd v indra jalgulaḥ*

"Where they tie the churning stick like reins in order to control, you, o Indra, shall gulp down again and again (the Soma) pressed in the mortar."

Schlerath (200) stresses that *mānthā* is the churning stick and metaphorically the penis. He thinks that the fingers are the subject of *vibadhnāte*, to which he assigns the sense "fest umfassen" (clasp firmly). We can compare the churning of the fire described in sexual terms in 3.29.1 where the *adhīmanthana* is the *prajānana*, here obviously referring to the penis. The movement in intercourse will be the churning practiced by one of the partners. Sāyaṇa assumed the churning stick is used for the mixing of Soma with *āśīr*, curdled milk. Hillebrandt (413) and Oliphant (238) take the *mānthā* for the pestle which crushes or bruises the Soma, and the former suggests a kind of hand-mill. Hillebrandt, Oliphant and Lommel (1959: 138 = 1978:406) suggest that a string, both ends of which were pulled, was wound round the stick. In favour of this interpretation parallels can be quoted which clarify it. In AV 5.20.2 the drum (*duṇḍubhi*) is *vibaddha* "stretched", i.e. the drum-skin is stretched tight by strings. ĀpŚS 20.3.16 *āharantya aiśīkam udūhaṃ varatrayā vibaddham* "They fetch a broom made of reeds which is bound by a string that can be held at both ends" (as it is according to 19-20 by 200 men at the south and 200 at the north to pull the dead horse out of the water to the bank of the river). The comparison with the reins is quite appropriate since these are pulled tight like the string to turn the churning stick. The churning stick is not usable for pressing Soma, but in the context of the hymn it has the same function as the pressing stone in the first verse. According to Schlerath the situation ante coitum is referred to: Indra is called to the place where the pestle is guided into the mortar. This presupposes that his interpretation of *vibadhnate* is adopted. The other interpretation requires a different phase of the sex-act, the churning movement guided by the fingers as reins. If, however, we are following Sāyaṇa's suggestion that the churning stick for curdling the milk is meant, we are led to the task of the wife in the third pressing of Soma in the Agniṣṭoma, already referred to at verse 3, where the Soma stalks left from the first and second pressings are pressed again and the meager left-over Soma is mixed with the curdled milk prepared by the wife. In ĀpŚS 13.10.8 the wife has curdled (*mathivā*) the milk, and this could be the model for our verse, if the hymn is referring to an actual Soma sacrifice. *manthīn* is used of Soma mixed with barley meal and milk (3.32.2; 9.46.4). Hillebrandt (414) refers to the use of the churning stick in the *agnimanthana* and in producing butter (TS 2.2.10.2), quoting the description given by Wilson on 1.28.4 and that of butter churning given by Grierson (1926: 27).

5 *yác cid dhī tvām grhé-grha*  
*ulūkhalaka yujyāse,*  
*ihá dyumáttamaṃ vada*

*jáyatām iva dundubhīḥ*

"Though, you little mortar, you are as it were yoked in every house, sound here very high like the drum of the victors."

Schlerath does not comment on this verse. The double entendre of mortar and vulva seems to be quite clear: The mortar hit by the pestle cries out like the woman at the moment of orgasm.

6 *utá sma te vanaspate  
vāto ví vāty ágram ít,  
átho índrāya pātave  
sunú sómam ulūkhala*

"Round your top the wind is blowing, o tree. Now press the Soma for Indra to drink, o mortar."

The tree is the pestle and metaphorically the penis, as Schlerath (102) correctly points out, comparing RV 10.101.11 and AV 20.136.6. He implicitly explains the blowing of the wind by the vehement movement of the pestle. Lommel (1959:141=1978:409) suggests that the wind is introduced here because Soma is the friend of the wind (*vātāpi* 1.121.8; 187.9) and that there are other references to their relationship. According to Schlerath *pādas cd* seem to contradict his remarks on *jalgulas* in 1, and he suggests that the poet does not speak himself but quotes a standard formula (e.g. RV 9.1.1; 108.15 etc.), a conclusion supported by the fact that otherwise the hymn does not have parallels to other hymns.

7 *āyajī vājasātāmā  
tā hy ūccā vijarbhrtāḥ,  
hārī ivāndhāmsi bāpsatā*

"Attracting by sacrifice, winning many prizes, these two (mortar and pestle) separate upwards again and again (going to and fro), chewing the Soma stalks like the fallow steeds (of Indra)."

Schaefer (163f.) interprets *bāpsatā* by the horizontal movements of the horses' lower jaw. Schlerath (102f.) suggests that the horizontal movement of the jaw fits the coitus better than the movements of the pestle since he apparently assumes that the pestle is only pounding up and down, not sideways. This is, however, not conclusive since the pestle can make also churning movements.

8 *tā no adyá vanaspatī  
ṛṣvāv ṛṣvébhiḥ sotṛbhiḥ,  
índrāya mádhumat sutam*

"You two trees, excelling ones, with the excelling pressers, press the sweet drink for Indra."

Schlerath (105) points out that *sotṛ* is not a technical term, but rather used for all concerned with the Soma sacrifice. According to him the purpose of the verse is to clarify that those who perform the sexual act are excelling because their action is identical with that of the excelling Soma sacrificers.

9 *úc chiṣṭám camvòr bhara*  
*sómam pavíttra á sṛja,*  
*ní dhehi gór údhi tvací*

"Take the residue out from the cups, pour the Soma on the strainer, deposit (the residue) on the cowhide."

Schlerath (107) suggests that the action *post coitum* is alluded to, which must have been familiar to the Vedic Indian. He guesses that residue which is not Soma is taken out of the cups and deposited on the cow's hide. Geldner had interpreted the *camũ* as mortar and pestle (III p.8, cf. also Hillebrandt 1927, 417 n.2), but Schlerath rightly follows the view of Oldenberg (1908, 459-70 = 1967, 268-279), according to whom they are two cups or vessels in which Soma is kept, but who does not specify which vessels might be meant. The residue may be identified with the Soma stalks left over from the pressing. In Schlerath's interpretation a bunch of grass may have been involved which was associated with the pressed-out Soma stalks. He does not say what the purpose of this bunch might have been in the action *post coitum*. He assumes that pāda *b* (= 9.16.3; 9.51.10) is a banal sentence placed in the middle of a hardly comprehensible context. If the Soma stalks are involved, the insertion of the pāda might have been triggered by the association with the Soma stalks drenched by water. But it is more probable that the composer had a real ritual situation in mind: The Soma has been pressed and is now poured on the strainer. Schlerath argues that the verb *ní dhā* refers to a final depositing and bases this on passages which have nothing to do with Soma and are accordingly hardly decisive (several of them even do not refer to discarding something). His conclusion, that the pressed-out stalks are meant which are to be disposed of and not to be used again, is therefore not cogent. His reference to the stalks drenched by water, however, lead to a context in the ritual of the Agniṣṭoma. In ĀpŚS 12.8.4 three Soma stalks are selected from a bundle and in 4 we read: *ādhavanān aṃsūn prajñātān nidhāya ... anusavanam ekaikaṃ mahābhiṣavaneṣv apisṛjati* "after having deposited the drenched stalks ... he releases them according to the respective pressing one by one in the great pressings." The individual pressings are referred to in 12.11.11; 12.12.1; 13.10.5. (According to Kāṭhaka 30.7 = p. 189.10 the stalks are not pressed; Caland's "ausgepresst" is an error.) This shows that *ní dhā* can refer to preserving an object for further use. I do not suggest that our hymn alludes to this ritual, but it cannot be excluded that unpressed though watered stalks were reserved for another phase. Schlerath's identification of the residue with the stalks is probably correct since there is nothing else which could be deposited. Their purpose in the context remains enigmatic. The assumption that the stanza refers to an action *post coitum* cannot be taken for granted. It is rather the question whether it refers to a sexual situation at all.

If Schlerath's claim that the hymn is a description of the sex-act in terms of the Soma sacrifice were correct, his interpretation comes close to that of Meyer (1937: III 187) who thought that the sex-act is pleasing to Indra as fertility demon, a view scorned by Lommel (1959: 140 = 1978: 408), still more than Geldner's characterization of the hymn as humoristic and lascivious. Actually we do not know how the Vedic Indian felt about the matter. What seems to be much more important is to ask why the Soma pressing is here described in terms which are at variance with much we hear about the pressing process in the rest of the Saṃhitā.

As Schlerath has rightly stated mortar and pestle are only in this hymn used for pressing Soma, in addition we should mention that they are made of wood. This is typical for the

domestic sacrifice. Accordingly we should consider to connect the hymn with a substitute sacrifice. Oliphant (1920: 230) lists a number of places where *ulūkhalā* and *mūsala* are called *grāvan*. In AV 9.6.14 this identification is preceded by that of the soma stalks (*aṃśú*) with the grains of rice and barley which are scattered out (*yé vrīhāyo yāvā nirupyānte 'mśāva evā té*). In 16 the sieve is the Soma strainer, the chaff the residue of the pressed out Soma stalks, the water that used in the pressing (*śúrpaṃ pavitraṃ tūṣā rjīṣābhiśāvaṇīr āpah*). The hymn accompanies the ceremony of the reception of a guest, which is a domestic sacrifice thus assimilated to a Soma sacrifice. Similarly the two pressing-stones are to split the Soma stalks identified with the rice used for the *brahmaudana* in AV 11.1.9-10 (cf. Gonda 1965: 27;143). All the other instances come from the Gṛhyasūtras or places in the Saṃhitās not referring to Soma-pressings.

The entire hymn ṚV 1.28 is quoted in AiB 7.17 (=ŚŚS 15.23) in the Śunaḥśepa legend as accompanying the *añjaḥsava* "immediate, abbreviated pressing" Śunaḥśepa has devised. (ŚB 12.3.3.6-10 gives examples for abbreviated pressings.) The order of the stanzas differs from that of the ṚV and is, as Oldenberg observed, more in consonance with the sequence of the ritual action: 5-8 accompany the pressing of the Soma, 9 taking the Soma to the *dronakalaśa*, the vessel called *camū* in the hymn, 1-4 invitation of Indra to drink. Lommel (1959: 153f. = 1978: 471f.) follows Oldenberg. The connection of the Śunaḥśepa legend with the Rājasūya is controversial, but it was incorporated in the performance of this sacrifice (cf. Heesterman 1957: 158ff.). It is not very likely that the abbreviated pressing in this case was a shortened form of the royal consecration, but rather was a substitute ceremony. Hillebrandt (1927: 412 with fn.1) quotes ĀpŚS 14.25.5 where a stick of Palāśa-wood is substituted for lost pressing-stone, as proof for the pressing with mortar and pestle was the most natural form and that 1.28 was accompanying an *añjaḥsava* "quick pressing" as performed by Śunaḥśepa in extraordinary and urgent circumstances.

That the hymn was originally meant for this occasion is however rather doubtful. If it were connected with a real Soma sacrifice it would be the only case in the entire Vedic literature. In all the places where stanzas or pādas of the hymn are quoted they are employed for pounding other substances. In ĀpŚS 16.26.1 and 3 stanzas 5 and 6 refer to the pestle and mortar used for pounding all kinds of plants in a phase of the Agnicayana; MŚS 6.1.7.23 quotes only stanza 5 in this context and has rice being pounded.

From the quotations of the hymn or parts of it in other Vedic texts it can be inferred that it was not an abbreviated, quick Soma-sacrifice, but rather a substitute domestic ceremony.

Oliphant (230) calls the hymn demotic rather than hieratic, and later ancient and demotic. This characterization is apparently based on the assumption that the sacrifice is performed in every house and that the closest parallel to the pressing of Soma by pestle and mortar is found in Zoroastrianism and is accordingly a survival from pre-Vedic times. From the description of 1.28 Oliphant (231) deduces that it "presents a primitive mode of pressing Soma, identical with or similar to the Iranian mode". The pestle is supposed to be turned by a cord like a churning-stick. This method is neither attested in the Veda nor in Iran for pressing Soma – it is pure speculation. Oberlies (1999:137) assumes that Oliphant does not recognize a pressing in a mortar as other scholars did, but this is contradicted by O.'s own words. O. states later (248): "in the Vedas we have two types of press, and only two, one the mortar and pestle, and possibly derivative forms of the same, the other a press of then type by Āpastamba, with possible variations also". He does not specify how the variations looked in his opinion.



Oliphant (231ff.) finds another early press in RV 9.102.2:

*úpa tritásya pāsyòr ábhakta yád gúhā padám,  
yajñásya saptá dhāmabhir ádha priyám.*

"Between the two stones (?) of Trita (Soma) has assumed his secret stage, with the seven forms of the sacrifice now his dear (or own) stage."

This stanza is far from clear. Oliphant assumed that *pāś%* means "stone", but this is not certain since the etymological relationship with *pāśāna* is doubtful (cf. Mayrhofer s.v.). The meaning of *dhāman* is not clear either (cf. Gonda 1967: 51f.). O. has chosen this stanza because in his view it is ancient and represents the transition from the wooden implements of 1.28 to the later stone implements. The mention of Trita, that "mysterious ancient deity", leads him to a detailed comparison with the Avestan parallels, which however do not contribute anything to the problem at hand.

In the Kuntāpa hymn AV 20.136.6 (=ŚSS 12.24.2.7) we find another example for the sexual interpretation of the wooden mortar:

*mahānagny ūlūkhalam atikrāmanty abravīt,  
yáthā táva vanaspate nighnánti táthāivéti.*

"The harlot, stepping over the mortar, said: 'Just as on thee, O tree (O wooden mortar), they strike with (with the pestle) so they strike on me.' " (trsl. Caland)

Sexual imagery is also involved in RV 10.101.10-12. Hillebrandt (1927: 415f.), Oliphant (235) and O'Flaherty (1981: 68) suggested that mortar and pestle are involved. They assume that *vānaspāti* and *vāna* in stanza 11 stand for pestle and mortar respectively. This was rejected by Oldenberg (Noten II 317) who takes the words as referring to Soma as lord of the plants and the wooden vessel. The hymn is on the whole very difficult, and the interpretation remains doubtful.

10 *ā tū śiñca hárim im drór upásthe vāsībhis takṣatāśmanmáyībhiḥ,  
pári śvajadhvaṃ dáśa kakṣyābhir ubhé dhúrau práti váhniṃ yunakta.*

"Pour the golden-yellow (Soma) into the womb of the wood (vessel), carve (it) with knives of stone. Embrace (it) with the girths, yoke the draught animal to the two shafts."

I suggest that *pādas a-b* give the actions in reverse order: the carving of the wooden vessel precedes the pouring of the Soma. O'Flaherty interprets the knives of stone as the pressing stones, which I think is unlikely. In *cd* the girths are the fingers (Grassmann etc.), the shafts are according to Oldenberg and Geldner the hands, more probably however the arms. The draught animal is hardly Soma, but rather the pressing stone as Hillebrandt has it.

11 *ubhé dhúrau váhnir āpībdamāno 'ntár yóneva carati dvijāniḥ,  
vānaspátim vāna āsthāpayadhvaṃ ní śū dadhidhvam ákhananta útsam.*

"The draught animal moves between the two shafts (stepping from one side to the other) like a man with two women in bed. Place the tree in the wood. Sink a well without digging."

On pādas *ab* cf. Strunk (1977: 977): The draught animal steps with one foot to one shaft, then with the other to the other like a man turns from one woman to the other. Geldner takes it as the Soma pressed between the two hands. O'Flaherty assumes a triple entendre: "the tree in the wood (forest) is the Soma plant in the wooden bowl and the penis in the womb, the latter simile extended in the last quarter of the verse, that further echoes the imagery of verses 3 [seed in the womb], 5 and 6 [water from a well] and the final verse."

12 *kāprn naraḥ kaprthám úd dadhātana codáyata khudáta vājasātaye,*  
*niṣṭigryàḥ putráṃ á cyāvayotáya índraṃ sabādha ihá sómapītaye.*

"The penis, men, raise the penis, push it in to win the prize. Bring the son of Niṣṭigrī here for help, eagerly here to drink Soma."

O'Flaherty takes *ab* as a sexual metaphor for Soma pressed in the mortar by the pestle. This would be an attractive interpretation, similar to that of tree and wood in st.11. If it were correct, this would be beside RV 1.28 another example of the use of wooden pestle and mortar for pressing Soma. The verse is quoted in the Kuntāpa-hymn or *āhanya*-verses (AV 20.136; ŚŚS 12.24.2) where in the above quoted verse 6 the mortar is wooden; I wonder whether this can be taken to support Hillebrandt's and O'Flaherty's interpretation.

The question whether the sexual descriptions or allusions are to be considered obscene or not is a matter of interpretation and judgement. The case of the Kuntāpa-hymn is rather clear: it is intentionally obscene just as many, if not all, sexual references in the Ásvamedha are indecent and have to be atoned for (cf. Jamison 1996: 71f.). RV 9.112.4 *śépo rómaṇvantau bhedaú ... icchati* "the penis seeks the hairy slit" stands among quite innocuous references to the wishes of professions and animals, in its isolation makes the impression of a "tongue in cheek" remark. In the Dānastuti 1.126.6 a slave girl, who is among the gifts received, seduces her new master by telling him that she does not have only few hairs (on her pudenda), but it is all hairy like a lamb, thus indicating that she is not a child, but ready for intercourse. In the context can hardly be considered as indecent, but rather as coarse or vulgar. In the Vṛṣākapi-hymn 10.86 the indecent verses 16-17 are spoken by the monkey as well as 6 and 7 are to be attributed to the monkeys Vṛṣākapeyī and Vṛṣākapi, not to Indra and Indrāṇī, according to Thieme (1985: 240ff.=1995: 925ff.), who as animals do not know any shame.

The references to wooden *grāvāṇas* in AV 3.10.5 and in several other Vedic texts never imply Soma offerings, but *havis* offerings.

Oliphant has made RV 1.28 the cornerstone of the division of the Soma-pressing into one with one upper and one lower stone, the other with four upper stones and one lower stone as in ĀpŚS 12.2.15-16.: *tasmimś (carmaṇi) catura grāvṇaḥ prādeśamātrān ūrdhvasānūn āhanaprakārān aśmanaḥ saṃsādayati, uparaṃ pratiṣṭhaṃ madhye pañcamam. 15. tam abhisammukhā bhavanti. 16.* "On this (skin) he (the Adhvaryu) places together four pressing stones, each a span in measure, high backed ones, fit for striking, in the middle the broadest, the lower one. 15. (The four stones) are facing it (the fifth)." He calls the first *ulūkhala* type, the second Āpastamba type. He considers the former as predominant in the RV, the latter as rare.

The Āpastamba type is mentioned in 10.94.5:

*suparṇā vācam akratópa dyávy ākharé kṛṣṇā iṣirā anartīṣuḥ,*  
*nyāñ ní yanty úparasya niṣkṛtām purū réto dadhire sūryaśvítah.*

"The eagles have raised their voice towards heaven, the eager black antelopes have danced on the pasture; they go down to the rendez-vous with the lower (stone), they produce the semen of the sun-bright (Soma)."

The eagles and antelopes are obviously metaphors for the pressing stones, the pasture is the lower stone. The entire hymn speaks of plural pressing stones.

Oliphant (237) quotes 10.92.15 and 3.54.12 as further examples of this type of press. In 10.175.3 several lower stones are mentioned, for which I cannot find any parallel. It is more than doubtful to connect 8.26.24 with this press since *grāvān* is used in the singular.

Oliphant (237) assumes that in 8.34.3 *átra ví nemír eṣām úrām ná dhūnute vṛkah* "there their fellow shakes here and there like the wolf the lamb" *eṣām* refers to the pressing stones (following Sāyaṇa). It is the only mention of a *nemí* for the pressing stones. "Such would seem necessary for a press of the Āpastamba type. The upper stones must have been fastened together in some way, probably by a frame-work attached to their 'high backs', around the whole, and the spout or nozzle on one side, such as Āpastamba in 12.1.9; 13.9 describes in the case of the *grāvāṇam upāṃśusavanam* with a *mukha* towards the south. On the other hand the *nemí* of our passage may be only the rim of the mortar about which the soma sprays are shaken by the rotating, pounding pestle."

Oliphant's first alternative is most unlikely since such a contraption is without parallel and would be hardly operable, in spite of O.'s assertion (247) that "a press of the Āpastamba type could easily be geared up to produce the speed of a revolving mill-stone." Āpastamba 12.1.9 does not describe anything like it or leaves room for such manipulation: *bṛhann asīty* (TS 1.2.3q) [*bṛhann asi bṛhadgrāvā, bṛhatīm indrāya vācam vada*] *te antareṇa grāvāṇam upāṃśusavanam dakṣiṇāmukhaṃ saṃsprṣtam pātrābhyām*. (With the formula) "[You are high, having a high pressing stone, address Indra with a high voice] (he places) the pressing stone used for the silent pressing whose mouth (face) is turned to the south between the two vessels (*antaryāmapātra* and *upāṃśupātra*), touching both of them." The *mukha* is not a snout or nozzle, but rather the face of the upper pressing stone, probably its base. In ĀpŚS 12.9.2 the Adhvaryu takes the same pressing stone with the formula TS 1.4.1.1a *grāvāsy adhvarakṛd devébhyo gambhīrām imām adhvarām kṛdhy uttaména pavínéndrāya sómam sūṣutam mádhumantam páyasvantam vṛṣṭivānim* "You are the pressing stone performing the ceremony for the gods, make this ceremony deep for Indra by the outer rim: the well pressed, sweet, juicy, rain bringing Soma." The rim is rather that of the bottom of the upper pressing stone than that of the lower stone.

Oliphant is mistaken in his suggestion that the *grāvopāṃśusavana* is a special derivative form of the *ulūkhale* type (238) since this pressing stone is one of the four upper stones. It becomes clear from ĀpŚS 12.12.3, according to which each of the priests takes the pressing stone in front of him and strikes the soma stalks, that each stone is handled individually. It is not clear to me whether the priests strike simultaneously or take turns; the former is more likely since the *upara* is probably not very large.

The fellow in 8.34.3 can be compared to the rim in TS 1.4.1a since both terms refer to parts of the wheel. As Oldenberg has pointed out, in the preceding stanza *grāvā* is singular, and it is

more likely that the plural *eṣām* refers to the Kaṇvas who have driven to heaven in their chariot.

In the first edition of his *Vedische Mythologie* (1891: I,152ff.) Hillebrandt pointed out distinctions in the use of certain verbs with *grāvan* and *ádri*, the two main terms for the pressing-stones, and Oliphant independently dealt with the same topic, devoting the remaining pages of his paper (238-250) to detailed statistics of the use of specific words with the *ulūkhala* and the *Āpastamba* types and with *ádri*. Hillebrandt (1927: 407) acknowledged his contribution. O.'s conclusion that the term *grāvan* is general and demotic, while *ádri* is specific and hieratic (242), should be taken *cum grano salis* because it is unlikely that there ever was a demotic form, particularly if it is conceded that Ṛgveda 1.28 does not refer to an actual Soma-sacrifice performed in every house, but to a substitute domestic ceremony, for which we have examples in the Atharvaveda. The prevalent opinion that the hymn refers to an actual domestic Soma-pressing is without support in the Vedas though it would have a parallel in the Avesta: Visperad 12.5 states that the Haoma-presses should be set in motion in house, village, province, and country. This should however not be used as an argument for the interpretation of the Vedic hymn.

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