

ON VEDIC VERBAL MORPHOSYNTAX

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The interpretation of the Vedic Perfect as expressing the condition or state reached by the subject as the result of the preceding action perfectly applies to telic verbs, e.g. *jujóṣa* 'enjoys', 'prefers, chooses' (: *joṣ* 'enjoy' *'taste', aor. *joṣ-*) or *cākana* 'enjoys, is pleased' (: *kañ* / *cañ* *'get pleased', aor. *cañ-*). This actually reflects the original aspectual function of the perfect stem as /POSTTERMINAL/, which is realized as [resultative] with telic transformative lexems, whence its development to temporal ADTERMINALITY (past action continued into the [and with consequences in] the present), and to preterite with the current readings “continuative”, “comprehensive”, “narrative” and others

This does not apply however for non telic verbs (stative, or durative), which as a rule do not have an aspectual perfect (e.g. ²*har* 'be pleased', 'enjoy', also 'hope, look for': pres. *hár-ya-te*, no perfect, no aorist). When a perfect is attested, it shows no aspectual difference as against the present: they are simply synonymous as shown, for instance, by Perf.ptc. *rārahāná-* 'hastening' ('→ swift') : pres. *rámhamāna-* 'id.' (ramphoh 'hasten') or by perf. *dadāśa* 'worships' : pres. *dāś-* 'id.' (*dāś-*, with aor. *vidh-*), e.g. RV VIII 19.5 *yáḥ samídhā yá áhuti yó védena dadāśa mártō agnáye* 'the mortal who whorships Agni with fire wood, with an oblation, with his knowledge,...' and X 91.11 *yás túbhyam agne amítāya mártyaḥ samídhā dāśad utá vā haviṣkṛti* 'who, being a mortal, worships you, Agni, with firewood or with oblation ...'. In such cases it is by no means clear that the perfect expresses a past action continued onto the present: since there is no relevant end limit (telos), POSTTERMINALITY simply refers to the initial limit, and is simply coincident with the action. The perfect reduplication may stress iconically an expressive reading.

The fact that stative, non-telic ²*har* is only attested in the present stem, whereas *joṣ* is attested only in aorist and perfect (just 4x denominative *joṣáya-te*), like *kañ* / *cañ*, suggests the existence of a pattern of suppletion which must be specified.