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and non-Germanic Languages

EDITED BY

John Charles Smith

Delia Bentley

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VOLUME 1: GENERAL ISSUES AND
NON-GERMANIC LANGUAGES

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Vedic Causative Nasal Presents and their Thematicization A Functional Approach

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1. The problem

The main opposition within the Old Indic verbal present system is that between athematic and thematic stems.¹ Any form belonging to the present tense system can be unambiguously characterized as either athematic or thematic, except for some forms discussed below. Any thematic form has the thematic vowel *-a-* incorporated before the personal ending, cf. *bháva-ti* 'is, becomes', *áśya-ti* 'throws', whereas in athematic forms endings are added immediately to the (athematic) stem, cf. *é-ti* 'goes', *dádā-ti* 'gives'. Besides verbs with purely athematic or purely thematic paradigms, there are verbal roots for which both athematic and thematic forms are attested or at least can be reconstructed. For some verbs, only thematic forms exist, whereas athematic forms are not attested and can only be reconstructed at the Proto-Indo-European or Proto-Indo-Iranian stage, e.g., *sthā-* 'stand': **tíṣṭhāti* (only thematicized *tíṣṭhati* is attested). Sometimes athematic forms are attested in more archaic texts, whereas their thematic counterparts appear in later ones, cf. *rudh-* 'obstruct': *ruṇáddhi* (class VII, appears from the *Rigveda* — henceforth RV — onwards) / *rundhati* (thematicization, from the Brāhmaṇas period onwards). Finally, the most interesting case is the coexistence of athematic forms and their thematic counterparts in the same text, i.e., at the same synchronic stage, cf. *i-* 'go; send': *inóti* / *ínvati*.

¹ I am much indebted to R. S. P. Beekes, T. Ja. Elizarenkova, F. H. H. Kortlandt, A. Lubotsky, N. Nicholas, H.-P. Schmidt, P. J. Sidwell, and Ja. G. Testelests, who provided me with helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

Diachronically, the general tendency is obvious enough: thematic forms gradually oust their athematic counterparts (Elizarenkova 1982:297, etc.). However, the synchronic aspect of the problem has up to now generally remained neglected: it is not known whether the athematic/thematic (thematicized) distinction had any **functional** value.

According to popular consensus, the thematicization does not imply any modifications in the meaning and the use of forms, i.e., there exists no functional distinction associated with the athematic/thematic distinction (see, for instance, Joachim 1978:27). This claim is probably correct as to the lexical meaning of the verbs or their aspectual meaning and Aktionsarten; it seems to be false, however, with regard to the syntax of the forms. Below I shall examine the R̥gvedic present forms with nasal affixes. It will be argued that the athematic forms and their thematic counterparts differ in their syntactic properties.

2. Preliminary remarks

It is natural to assume that the problem of the functional value of the athematic/thematic distinction may be solved on the basis of a thorough analysis of those verbs for which both athematic and thematic forms are attested in the same text, i.e., at the same synchronic stage of the language; henceforth I will label such verbs as AT-verbs. More specifically, I will discuss AT-verbs with nasal affixes, viz. with the suffixes *-nó-/nu-* (class V), *-nā-/nī-* (class IX) and with the infix *-ná-/n-* (class VII).

It is clear that the sets of AT-verbs are different for different texts. For instance, *i-* 'go, send' is an AT-verb in RV (where both athematic *inóti* and thematic *ínvati* are attested) but not in the Atharvaveda (where only thematic forms occur).

Before I proceed to the study of the problem it is necessary to give strict definitions of some basic concepts and terms.

2.1. Athematic vs. thematic (thematicized)

As mentioned above, most of the nasal present forms can be unambiguously identified as either athematic or thematic. In athematic forms endings are added immediately after the nasal affix (classes V and IX, cf. *inó-ti* 'sends', *pr̥ṇā-ti* 'fills') or to the root into which the nasal affix is incorporated (class

VII, cf. *yunák-ti* 'joins'). In thematic (thematicized) forms the thematic vowel -*a*- is incorporated before the ending (in class IX forms -*a*- replaces the vowel of the suffix *nā-/nī-*), cf. *invá-ti* 'sends', *yuñja-ti* 'joins', *prṇā-ti* 'fills'.

There are, however, four groups of forms which are ambiguous and hence have to be treated separately.

(i) Third person plural active forms (cf. *hinvanti*, *hinvan*, *ahinvan*, *hinvantu*) and active participles (*hinvánt-*), unless the form in question bears the accent on the root.² These forms can be considered both athematic (with the morphological segmentation *hinv-* + *-anti* etc.) and thematic (thematic stem *hinva-* + ending *-ntī*). Among active participles, only feminine participles in *-ántī-* are not ambiguous, since they can belong only to the thematic paradigm (cf. *prṇántī-* 'filling'), in contrast to feminine participles in *-atī-*, which are ambiguous (Wackernagel & Debrunner 1954:161, 418-419).

(ii) First person singular present middle forms like *ṛñje* (also unless root-accented) can also be treated both as athematic (stem *ṛñj-*) and thematic (stem *ṛñja-* with regular ending *-e*).

(iii) Third person singular and third person plural middle forms with perfect endings *-e* and *-ire* (like *hinvē* 'is impelled', *hinvire* 'are impelled') are excluded from the corpus. First, these forms are ambiguous (like 1 sg.pr.mid. *ṛñje* discussed above); therefore they can neither support nor refute the hypothesis. Second, there are good reasons for treating such forms as representing a separate category, 'stative' (see Kümmel 1996, with bibliography).

(iv) Finally, all forms built from the class IX present stems terminating in *-nā-* that can, at least in formal terms, be treated as subjunctives (*prṇās(i)*, *prṇāt(i)*, *mināma*, etc.) are also ambiguous, cf. *prṇāti* = *pr-ṇā-ti* (athematic indicative), or *pr-ṇā-a-ti* (athematic subjunctive), or *pr-ṇa-a-ti* (thematic subjunctive).

No strict criterion for identifying these forms as athematic or thematic exists; therefore I shall proceed from a triple distinction: "athematic vs. thematic vs. ambiguous", rather than from the traditional dichotomy "athematic vs. thematic". It should be emphasized that, due to the ambiguity of forms belonging to groups (i-iv), their syntactic properties cannot support or

² If the form is root-accented, this proves its thematic character unambiguously.

disprove any hypothesis related to the functional value of the athematic/thematic distinction.

Before analysing the data I have to mention one more group of forms which require special treatment.

2.2. Middle participles in *-āna-*

Middle participles in *-āna-* differ considerably in their syntactic properties from the corresponding finite forms. These participles are well-attested in both intransitive and transitive constructions. A typical example would be the participle *hinvāná-*, which appears 18 times as intransitive-passive, as in (1):

- (1) *īndur hinvānó arṣati tiró vārāṇy avyáyā* (RV 9.67.4)
 'The sap, being impelled, flows through the woollen strainer.'

and 10 times as transitive, as in (2):

- (2) *dhīyo hinvāná uśtjaḥ* (RV 2.21.5)
 'Uśijas inciting the religious thoughts...'

Thus, participles in *-āna-* are to be treated separately from finite forms.

2.3. Intransitive vs. transitive (causative)

The problems related to the definition of transitivity are rather complicated, and their examination would make me stray from the point at hand. I shall simply define a transitive verb as a verb which takes an obligatory direct object in the accusative (which can be omitted in elliptical constructions), and an intransitive verb as a verb which does not (for details, see Jamison 1983: 25-33).

Almost all the Rigvedic AT-verbs which I shall analyse below are attested in both intransitive and transitive constructions. Most often, transitive occurrences are causative counterparts of intransitive occurrences (cf. *i-*: *éti* 'goes' ~ *inóti*, *ínvati* 'sends'). The subject of intransitive verbal forms (V_{ITR}) shows up as the direct object of the corresponding transitive forms, whereby either V_{TR} means 'cause V_{ITR} ' ('send' = 'cause to go', etc.), thus being a causative, or V_{ITR} is passive (cf. *hi-*: 'impel' ~ 'be impelled') or reflexive (cf. *śubh-*: 'adorn' ~

'adorn oneself'). The first type of relation clearly predominates, so that the terms 'transitive' and 'causative' can be used interchangeably in most cases.³

3. A preliminary hypothesis: transitivity and thematicization

It is well known that verbal formations with nasal affixes (class V, VII, and IX present stems in the traditional notation, as well as their thematicizations, henceforth labelled **N-forms**) are attested mainly in transitive constructions. Most of them are causatives, as opposed to other present forms belonging to the same individual verbal system (see Jamison 1983:10); cf. *kṣi-*: *kṣīyate* 'disappears' (ITR) ~ *kṣiṇāti* 'destroys'; *i-*: *éti* 'goes' ~ *inóti*, *ínvati* 'sends', etc. (see, for instance, Kuiper 1937: 214-218). This rule can, however, be violated (albeit rarely), cf.:

- (3) *tveṣás te dhūmā ṛṇvati* (RV 6.2.6)
'Your vehement smoke rises.'

(Geldner: "Heftig steigt dein Rauch auf.") The N-form *ṛṇvati* is intransitive in this passage. No regularity has been found in anomalies like this. I will argue below that there are some regularities which can be formulated in terms of the athematic/thematic distinction.

Let us look at the verb *ṛ-* (*ar-*) 'go, move'. Athematic forms (class V stem *ṛṇó-/ṛṇu-*) appear only in transitive-causative constructions (12x), cf.:

- (4) *indra ... ṛṇór apáh* (RV 1.174.2)
'O Indra, [you] set the waters in motion.'

The only intransitive occurrence (with a goal accusative) is attested in the late book I of RV:

- (5) *savitā ... véti sūryam abhí kṛṣṇéna rájasā dyām ṛṇoti* (RV 1.35.9)
'Savitar approaches the sun, reaches the sky through the black region'

³ It is necessary to distinguish between transitive-causative forms proper and intransitive forms with preverbs constructed with an accusative, cf.:

sárvaye ... gáchāmītrān prá padyasva (RV 6.75.16)
'O arrow, ... go forward, attain the enemies.'

In such constructions the accusative is due to the preverb rather than to the verb proper and is not a direct object properly speaking.

As for thematic forms (stem *ṛṇva-*), they occur not only in transitive-causative constructions but also in intransitive ones; cf. (3) as well as

- (6) *dhānōr ādhi pravāta ā sā ṛṇvati* (RV 1.144.5)
 'He (Agni) moves from his refuge to the mountain slopes.'
 (cf. Renou, EVP 12: 36),

and perhaps

- (7) *agnīr dhiyā sām ṛṇvati* (RV 3.11.2)
 'Agni moves due to a prayer.'

For (7) a transitive interpretation, as proposed by Geldner and supported by Renou and Elizarenkova, is generally adopted ('Agni carries out [the rite] by means of a prayer'); however, an intransitive reading, as suggested by Grassmann — 'Agni moves due to a prayer' ("Gefügt wird Agni durch Gebet") — is also possible.

The intransitive occurrences make up the smaller part of the thematic attestations; nevertheless, they are not exceptional.

Thus the regularity in question for Early Vedic can be tentatively formulated as follows:

- (I) athematic forms are always transitive-causative, whereas their thematic counterparts can also be intransitive (although rarely).

4. Rigvedic evidence

4.1. Preliminary remarks

The main hypothesis proposed in the present paper is based on evidence from the Rigveda (RV), which is the most ancient Vedic text, and therefore the most valuable source of information about the original verbal system of Vedic. Some additional evidence will be taken from another Vedic text, the Atharvaveda (AV), which is almost as ancient as RV.

Below I shall verify rule (I) by analysing 13 verbs for which both athematic and thematic nasal presents are attested in RV, i.e., RVic AT-verbs. For each verb the number of intransitive (ITR) and transitive-causative (TR) occurrences of athematic (ATH), thematic (TH), and ambiguous (AMB) forms will be given. Among athematic forms, I give numbers for middle participles in *-āna-* (MP), if attested, separately from those for finite forms (FIN). All the

counts are based on the dictionaries of Grassmann (1873), Lubotsky (1997), and Whitney (1881). I mostly follow Geldner's, Renou's, Whitney's, and Elizarenkova's translations; in some cases Grassmann's translation is also used. For reasons of space, I am forced to reduce (or even to omit) the philological analysis of some problematic passages. It is important to note that for some occurrences both intransitive and transitive readings are possible (cf. *ṛṇvati* in (7)). For such verbs, two numbers are given, separated by a hyphen. The first indicates the minimum number of intransitive (or, respectively, transitive) attestations; the second, the maximum number, i.e., including all problematic passages for which an intransitive or transitive reading, respectively, is at least possible. A more detailed study of these examples may perhaps imply reinterpretation of some forms (in terms of the opposition 'intransitive vs. transitive') and correction of several numbers. Nevertheless, the main tendency in the syntactic properties of athematic and thematic forms seems to be clear enough even after an approximate calculation.

4.2. Rigvedic AT-verbs

In accordance with the class of the athematic present stem, AT-verbs can be divided into 3 groups.

A. Verbs forming class V presents

1. *i-* 'go, move, send'

	ITR	TR
ATH	–	9
TH	0-1	31-32
AMB	–	–

N-forms are attested mostly in transitive constructions, cf.:

- (8) *invāsi śátrum* (RV 1.176.1)
'You drive [away] the enemy.'

An intransitive construction is attested once for the thematic form *ínvasi*:

- (9) *vṛṣā yajñó yám ínvasi* (RV 8.13.32)
'Like a bull is the sacrifice to which you go.'

(Geldner: "bullengleich ist das Opfer, zu dem du kommst"; Geldner does not rule out a transitive reading though: "[das Opfer], das du förderst"). The scarcity of intransitive thematic attestations does not refute the hypothesis in question: the thematicization renders intransitive usage possible but not obligatory; furthermore, unlike the roots *ṛ-*, *ji-*, and *pi-*, which I shall discuss later, the verbal system of *i-* includes the well-attested root present (*ḥti*, etc.) that serves as an intransitive counterpart to the causatives *inóti* and *ínvati*, so that an additional intransitive present type is not needed (unlike *ṛ-*, *ji-*, and *pi-*).

2. *ṛ-* 'go, move, rise; set in motion, raise'

	ITR	TR
ATH	1	12
TH	2-3	7-8
AMB	–	6

A detailed analysis of some passages was presented above. It is worth repeating that the only exception to rule (I) is attested in the late book I.

3. *ji-* 'urge on, impel, incite'

	ITR	TR
ATH	–	1
TH	1-2	45-46
AMB	–	1

This verb perfectly meets rule (I). The hapax athematic form *jinóṣi* '[you] refresh [the soil]' (RV 5.84.1) is transitive. There is at least one indisputably intransitive occurrence of a thematic formation:

- (10) *sá jinvate jaṭhāreṣu prajajñivān*
vṛṣā citréṣu nānadan ná simhāḥ (RV 3.2.11)
 'He, born in various wombs, becomes lively, the bull roaring like a lion'

For *jinvátha* (RV 10.9.3) an intransitive reading (as suggested by Grassmann) is more questionable.

4. *pi-* 'swell, fatten, fill'

		ITR	TR
ATH	FIN	–	–
	MP	1	–
TH		25	42
AMB		–	1

Most of the thematic attestations are transitive; however, middle forms are generally intransitive, compare:

- (11) *ágne ... ūrjā pinvasva* (RV 3.3.7)
 'O Agni, swell with force.'

5. *hi-* 'set in motion, impel'

		ITR	TR
ATH	FIN	-	31
	MP	18	10
TH		-	2
AMB		-	43

As has already been mentioned, the middle participle *hinvāná-* is well-attested in both transitive and intransitive (passive) constructions (cf. (1-2)). Other forms are transitive, compare:

- (12) *hinvānty áśvam āraṇaṃ ná nītyam* (RV 3.53.24)
 'They impel their own horse like one of another.'

B. Verbs forming class VII presents6. *ṛj-* 'stretch, make favourable, single out'

Normally, N-forms are causatives to intransitive *-ya-* presents (*ṛjyate* etc.). Athematic forms are attested five times in transitive constructions, compare:

- (13) *kīm iṣṭāśva iṣṭāraśmir etá*
īśānāśas tāruṣa ṛñjate nṛ̃n (RV 1.122.13)

'Do these Iṣṭāśva, Iṣṭāraśmi, triumphant rulers, single out the heroes?'⁴

There is one clear exception to rule (I):

- (14) *sám asminn ṛñjate gírah* (RV 1.6.9)
 '[All] praises rush together to him (sc. Indra).'

Note, however, that this occurrence is found in the late book I.

Thematic and ambiguous forms are often intransitive, cf.:

- (15) *sá jihváyā cāturanīka ṛñjate* (RV 5.48.5)
 'This four-faced (Agni?) stretches with his tongue.'

One more unclear form which should be mentioned is attested in an intransitive construction:

- (16) *rejayad vṛṣā ... evayāmarut*
yénā sāhanta ṛñjáta (RV 5.87.5)
 'Accompanied by the quick Maruts, the Bull, with whom [they], triumphant, stand out, makes everything tremble.'

(Geldner: "... mit dem sie siegend sich auszeichnen"). This translation implies interpreting *ṛñjáta* as 3pl.inj.mid., i.e. as an athematic form violating rule (I). However, this form may be alternatively interpreted as 2pl.impv. based on the thematic stem *ṛñja* (so Grassmann 1873:281; Macdonell 1910:330): '... the Bull, with whom, [o Maruts], do stand out!'

Despite the abundance of problems related to *ṛj-*, the general validity of (I) seems to hold for this verb as well. It is interesting to note that two translators of the RV, Geldner (see his comments on RV 1.95.7) and Renou (EVP 4: 29) pointed out the irregular syntactic properties of *ṛj-*, whose active forms are mainly attested in intransitive constructions, whereas middle forms are often transitive. This anomaly may be explained if we take into account rule (I): it is the active participle in *-ant-* (which may be treated as a **thematic** form), that appears in intransitive constructions, whereas middle forms attested in transitive sentences are **athematic**.

⁴ I follow Geldner's interpretation. For this passage, as well as for RV 1.141.6, 1.143.7, and 2.2.5, Renou and Elizarenkova suggest an intransitive reading ('go, rush'), cf. for RV 1.122.13: 'do ... these rulers ... rush [to reward] the heroes?'. This translation seems less attractive, however.

	ITR	TR
ATH	1-2	5
TH	1-3	4-5
AMB	4-5	4-5

7. *tuj-* ‘move, grow; push’

		ITR	TR
ATH	FIN	–	2
	MP	–	2
TH		1	–
AMB		–	2

The only intransitive occurrence is the middle thematic participle *túnjamāna-* ‘growing’ (RV 3.1.16).

8. *śubh-* ‘glance, adorn (onself), purify’

		ITR	TR
ATH	FIN	–	0-1
	MP	–	1
TH		12	9-10
AMB		–	8

Thematic forms are well-attested both in intransitive and transitive constructions. An unambiguously athematic form (middle participle *śumbhāna-* ‘purifying (his own body)’) is attested once (RV 8.44.12) and is transitive.

For the form *śumbhata* (RV 10.95.9) both athematic (so Oldenberg, Kuiper, Hoffmann, Joachim, and Gotō) and thematic (so Geldner, Grassmann, and Macdonell) interpretations are possible (for a bibliography, see Joachim 1978:161); in both cases a transitive reading is suggested.

9. *sic-* 'pour'

Strictly speaking, this verb does not belong to the AT-class, since all attested forms are either thematic (*siñcāti* etc.) or ambiguous (*siñcānti* etc.). If we look at the participles, however, we come across a remarkable opposition which could be a good reason for labelling *sic-* as a 'quasi-AT-verb'. Next to masculine forms, all of which are transitive, we find two feminine participles, *siñcatīḥ* and *-siñcāntīḥ*. The former is ambiguous, whereas the latter is unambiguously thematic (see §2.1 (i)). Thus, this pair exemplifies the opposition 'ambiguous vs. thematic'. This means that, although *siñcatīḥ* can belong to both athematic and thematic paradigms (Wackernagel & Debrunner 1954:418-419), it is, in a sense, 'less thematic' or even 'more athematic' than *-siñcāntīḥ*. This was probably one of the reasons for that this form, despite its formal features, has been treated by Joachim (1978: 167) and Gotō (1987: 61, 327, fn.795) as (unambiguously) athematic.

Most importantly, this form is transitive:

- (17) *tvé dharmāṇa āsate juhūbhiḥ siñcatīr iva* (RV 10.21.3)

'They sit at your [place], obeying the law, like the [women] **pouring** [oblation] with ladles.'

By contrast, *-siñcāntīḥ* is intransitive:

- (18) *imām ū nū kavītamasya māyām mahīm devāsya nākir ā dadharṣa
ékam yād udnā ná prṇānty énir āsiñcāntīr avānayaḥ samudrām*
(RV 5.85.6)

'Nobody dares [to surpass] this great wonder of the wisest god, that these shining streams, when **flowing**, do not fill one sea with [their] water.'

The following explanation can be suggested for this difference in the syntactic behaviour of *siñcatīḥ* and *-siñcāntīḥ*. Although unambiguously athematic forms cannot be derived from this root, so that the opposition of 'thematic vs. athematic' cannot be used as an (additional) marker of transitivity, this opposition may have been replaced, from the functional point of view, by that of 'thematic vs. ambiguous', or, in other words, 'thematic vs. less thematic'. Thus the correlation with transitivity, as formulated in rule (I), may have been secondarily associated within the verbal system of *sic-*, at least within the sub-system of (feminine) active participles, with this latter distinction. This may have al-

lowed an unambiguously thematic participle (as opposed to ambiguous ones, which are transitive) to be used intransitively.

C. Verbs forming class IX presents

10. *gṛ̥*- 'sing, praise'

This verb is an apparent exception to rule (I): neither thematic, nor ambiguous forms are attested in intransitive constructions, whereas athematic forms may be intransitive (passive).

However, it is worth noting that the only indisputably thematic attestation is 3pl.inj.mid.:

- (19) *abhí tvā pūrvāpītaya indra stómebhir āyávaḥ*
samīcīnāsa ṛbhávaḥ sám asvaran rudrā gṛ̥anta pūrvyam
 (RV 8.3.7)

'O Indra, the Ayus [call] you with praises for the precedence in drinking, the Ṛbhus praise [you] in chorus, together, the Rudras praise [you] as the first.'

The formations in *-anta* have been discussed in detail by Jamison (1979), who demonstrated that they cannot prove by themselves the existence of a middle paradigm, often being substitutes for the active forms in *-an*. Adopting and developing Jamison's idea, I would suggest that this form, similarly, cannot prove by itself the existence of a **thematic** paradigm, since forms in *-an* are ambiguous. In the passage quoted above, *gṛ̥anta* is preceded by an active form, *asvaran*, so that the suggestion that *gṛ̥anta* is a substitute for ambiguous **gṛ̥nan*, seems to me quite appropriate. Thus, *gṛ̥*- is most probably not an AT-verb.

11. *pṛ̥*- 'fill'

	ITR	TR
ATH	–	11
TH	2	28
AMB	–	40

This verb perfectly meets rule (I). Thematic forms are attested twice in intransitive constructions, cf.:

- (20) *óruvyácāḥ pṛṇatām ebhír ánnaiḥ* (RV 3.50.1)
 'May he, [Indra], extending far, be filled with this food.'

12. *mī-* 'diminish, change, violate'

		ITR	TR
ATH	FIN	-	8
	MP	-	4
TH		1	3
AMB		1-3	about 50

There is one thematic intransitive occurrence:

- (21) *ā te suparṇā aminantaṃ* évaiḥ* (RV 1.79.2)
 'Your eagles changed according to [their] customs.'

Active participles can also be intransitive (cf. RV 5.2.1).

13. *mṛ-* 'crush, destroy'

	ITR	TR
ATH	-	1
TR	-	9
AMB	-	4

Unlike all the verbs discussed earlier, the nasal present derived from the root *mṛ-* is nowhere attested as intransitive and lacks an intransitive counterpart. Some grammarians, however, treat it as a causative to *mṛ-* 'die' (*mriyáte* 'dies' ~ *mṛṇāti* 'crushes'), by analogy with pairs like *kṣīyate* 'disappears' ~ *kṣiṇāti* 'destroys'.

4.3. The general rule describing the syntactic properties of N-formations in RV may be summarized in the following table:

		intransitive	transitive (causative)
athematic forms	finite forms	–	+
	middle participles in <i>-āna-</i>	+	+
thematic forms		(+)	+

5. Evidence from a later text: Atharvaveda

The development of rule (I) in the period after RV deserves a separate study. It seems to be violated in some later texts, and even in the late book I of RV two exceptions occur.

For some texts, rule (I) is difficult to verify, owing to scarcity of AT-verbs, so that only very cautious suggestions can be formulated. This is true of AV.

In AV we find some new (as compared with RV) thematicizations (cf. *pṛc-* below); but at the same time some athematic forms do not occur (*inóti*, etc.), so that AT-verbs are fewer than in RV.

1. *pṛ-* 'fill'

	ITR	TR
ATH	–	3
TH	1	4
AMB	–	11

Exactly as in RV, this verb perfectly meets rule (I) in AV. All athematic occurrences are transitive, compare:

(22) *távéd viṣṇo bahudhā vīryāṇi*

tvám naḥ pṛṇīhi paśúbhir viśvárūpaiḥ (AV 17.1.6)

'O Viṣṇu, your heroic deeds are manifold; do fill us with cattle of all forms.'

There is one thematic intransitive (reflexive) occurrence:

- (23) *syonám ā sīda purú pr̥nasva* (AV 19.61.1)
 'Sit on what is pleasant; fill yourself full.'

2. *pr̥c-* 'fill, mix'

	ITR	TR
ATH	–	1
TH	1	–
AMB	0-1	4-5

The situation with *pr̥c-* is similar. Most of the occurrences are transitive, cf. the only athematic form:

- (24) *ardhám ardhéna páyasā pr̥nakṣi* (AV 5.1.9)
 'Half with half milk you mix.'

The only thematic occurrence is intransitive:

- (25) *úpehópaparcanāsmín goṣṭhá úpa pr̥ñca naḥ* (AV 9.4.23)
 'Here in this stall, o impregnation, be impregnated for us.'

3. *m̐-* 'crush, smite' & 4. *ś̐-* 'crush'

Two more Atharvavedic AT-verbs, *m̐-* and *ś̐-*, both phonetically and semantically very close to each other, are attested only in transitive constructions, thus also not violating rule (I).

Thus, although only 4 verbs belong to the AT-class in AV, their syntactic properties perfectly meet rule (I).

6. A tentative explanation and conclusions

I cannot offer an exhaustive explanation of the suggested rule; however, the following explanation seems quite probable. Transitivity (causative meaning) of Vedic N-formations is associated with nasal affixes (*-nó/-nu-*, *-ná/-n-*, *-nā/-nī-*). Being thematicized, the N-affix disappears and a new root (quasi-root) arises: *pinv-*, *ṛñj-*, *pr̥ñ-*, etc. The present forms derived from this root still retain their predominant transitivity in most occurrences; however, the rule originally associated with athematic N-affixes becomes less strict.

In conclusion, one more interesting observation should be mentioned. For most RVic AT-verbs, intransitive and transitive occurrences are opposed as non-causative vs. causative, except for *hi*- (intransitive occurrences are passive) and *mṝ*- (sometimes treated as a causative to *mṛ*- 'die' though). At the same time, from such RVic verbs with well-attested N-presents as *kṛ*- 'make', *rudh*- 'obstruct', *gr̥(b)h*- 'seize', and many others, thematic forms were not derived. Thus, I would suggest that in Early Vedic (Rigvedic) the tendency towards thematicization can be observed only in those N-presents that can, in view of their semantics, form a causative pair ('go' ~ 'send' = 'cause to go', 'fill (ITR), become full' ~ 'fill (TR), cause to become full', etc.). Verbs whose meaning does not incorporate the component 'cause', like *kṛ*- ('?' ~ 'make'), *rudh*- ('?' ~ 'obstruct'), *gr̥(b)h*- ('?' ~ 'seize') have not been affected by this trend, so that the N-forms derived from these roots do not undergo thematicization.⁵

Thus, surprisingly enough, the athematic/thematic distinction or, to be more exact, the capability of a nasal present stem to be thematicized, turns out to correlate with the semantic and syntactic properties of the verb, such as (in)transitivity and causativity.

⁵ This is not to say, of course, that all N-presents which are members of a causative/non-causative opposition can be thematicized. This is obviously false, cf. *kṣiṇāti* 'destroys' (as opposed to intransitive *kṣīyate* 'disappears') and some other nasal presents which have no thematic counterparts.

Abbreviations

act.	active	mid.	middle
AMB	ambiguous	MP	middle participles
AT-verbs	verbs for which both athematic and thematic forms are attested	pl.	plural
ATH	athematic	pr.	present
AV	Atharvaveda	prtc.	participle
EVP	<i>Études védiques et pāṇinéennes</i>	RV	Rigveda
FIN	finite forms	sg.	singular
impv.	imperative	TH	thematic (thematicized)
inj.	injunctive	TR	transitive
ITR	intransitive		

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