In the RV there are approximately 375 verb forms with the med. 3rd pl. sec. ending -anta, belonging to about 160 separate stems. The med. voice of the great majority of these forms can be easily accounted for. Most either belong to completely med. paradigms (type ājāyanta to jāyate ‘is born, arises’; ājusanta to jušate ‘enjoys’) or to paradigms with a well-established semantic contrast between act. and med. forms (type intrans. avardhanta to med. vārdhate ‘increases’ vs. act. trans. vārdhati ‘makes increase’; intrans. sādhanta to med. sādhati ‘succeeds’ vs. act. trans. sādhati ‘makes succeed’). Others are found in paradigms where both act. and med. forms are common, with no strong functional differentiation between them at this period (type āyajanta to yājati, -te ‘worships’). A semantic or functional explanation can often account even for -anta forms isolated in fundamentally act. paradigms. Such forms generally appear in idiomatic usage with a particular preverb, especially sdm (cf. Delbrück, Altind. Syn., 233) (type samāgachanta ‘became united’ beside act. gāchati ‘goes’; sām . . . hānanta ‘clash together’ beside act. hānti ‘smashes’).1

However, when all -anta explicable in the above ways have been identified, a substantial residue of -anta forms remains unaccounted for. These are forms found in entirely or predominantly act. paradigms and semantically indistinguishable from act. forms belonging to the same stem, as in parallel passages such as the following:

X.88.9a yām devāsā jānayanta āgnim
‘Which Agni the gods begat . . .’

X.88.13b āgnim devā ajānayam ajuryām
“The gods begat unaging Agni’.

VII.3.5b āgnim ātyam nā marjaya nārāh
“The men wipe Agni like a steed.’

IX.87.1c ātyam nā tvā vājīnam marjāyantaḥ
‘Wiping thee like a booty-winning horse . . .’

II.34.2a dyāvo nā stibhiṣṭhitā citayanta khādinah
‘Ornamented, they (= Maruts) appeared like heaven with (its) stars.’

II.2.5d dyāvān nā stibhiṣṭhitā citayad rōdāsi ānu
‘Like heaven with (its) stars does he (= Agni) appear through the two worlds.’

As will be seen below, these -anta forms often virtually replace the expected act. 3rd pl. sec. -an ending in these otherwise act. paradigms, and, in anticipation of my conclusion, I will henceforth refer to these forms as -anta substitutes or replacements.

There are 89 such forms in the RV, belonging to 36 separate stems.2,3,4 26 of them, belonging to 17 stems, have no other med. forms in their inflections:

(abhya) ámanta (1x) : ámīti ‘vexes’

iṣáyanta (2x) : iṣāyati ‘sends’
iṣáyanta (1x) : iṣāyati ‘flourishes’

ṛtayanta (1x) : ṛtāyati ‘acts according to the truth’

jījananta (1x) : jījanat ‘begat’
tatánanta (1x) : tatānat ‘spread’
nadáyanta (1x) : nadāyati ‘resounds’
nomuvanta (1x) : nōmuvā- (subj.) to nōnavīti ‘sounds’

patáyanta (1x) : patāyati ‘flourishes’
panáyanta (3x) : panāyati ‘admirers’
bhananta (2x) : bhānati ‘speaks’
raṇanta (1x) : raṇati ‘enjoys’
raṇāyanta (5x) : raṇāyati ‘enjoys’
vivvacyanta (1x) : vivvākti* (see n. 15) ‘embraces’
susvāyanta (1x) : susvāyati ‘is fertile’
jānghamanta (2x) : jāṅghana- (subj.) to jāṅghanti ‘smashes’

harṣayanta (1x) : harṣāyati ‘excites’

The remaining 63, distributed among 19 stems, belong to paradigms with a few other med. forms alongside an otherwise act. inflection:

(vi) caranta (1x) : cārati ‘wanders’
citayanta (3x) : citāyati ‘appears, perceives; makes perceive(d)’
jananta (5x)6 : jānati ‘begs’
(ā)janayanta (20x, 3x aug.)7 : ḍaṇyati ‘begs’

taruṣanta (1x) : tāruṣati ‘crosses over’
tarpayanta (1x) : tarpāyati ‘makes enjoy’
(ā)dhārayanta (7x, 2x aug.) : ṛdārayati ‘supports’
(ā)nayanta (6x, 4x aug.) : nāyati ‘leads’

mahayanta (1x) : mahāyati ‘exalts’
amṛksanta (1x) : amṛksat ‘has wiped’
marjayanta (5x) : mṛjayati ‘wipes’

marmṛjanta (1x) : māmrja- (subj.) to māmrasti* ‘wipes’

>vīvardhanta (1x) : vīvṛdhāti ‘makes increase’

subhāyanta (1x) : subhāyati ‘is/becomes beautiful’
asādlayanta (3x, all aug.) : sādāyati ‘makes sit’

(a)sṛjanta (2x, 1x aug.) : sṛjāti ‘discharges’
sthāpayanta (2x)6 : sthāpayati ‘makes stand’

johuvanta (1x) : jōhuva- (subj.) to jōhavīti ‘calls’