A NOTE ON \textit{Pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}}\textbar{(?)}

The Sanskrit term \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}}- ‘father’s brother’ may be found, in the literature of scholarship, accented in at least four different ways:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}}: cf. J. A. C. Greppin, \textit{Annual of Armenian Linguistics} 4 [1983], p. 67.
  \item \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}}: cf. Wackernagel, \textit{Andreas Festschrift}, pp. 5–6; Frisk, \textit{GEW} v. 2, p. 482; Mayrhofer, \textit{KEW} v. 2, p. 278.
  \item \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}}: cf. Böhtlingk und Roth, \textit{PW} v. 4, p. 720; Ernout-Meillet, \textit{DELL} 3ème éd., p. 488.
  \item \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}} (sans accent): cf. Monier-Williams, \textit{SED} p. 627; Macdonell, \textit{SED}, p. 162; Wackernagel, \textit{AG} II:2, p. 919.
\end{itemize}

This variety is interesting in itself, especially in view of the fact that the word occurs in no canonically accented texts. The discussion offered here may serve as a caveat to those who are inclined to take at fact value accents of Sanskrit words as cited in secondary sources.

The first occurrences of \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}} are found in Āśvalāyana \textit{Gṛhyasūtra} 1.24, Baudhāyana \textit{Śrāutasūtra} 24.32, Sāmavēdhāna \textit{Brāhmaṇa} 1.5.8, and Jaininiya \textit{Brāhmaṇa} 3.221 [= Caland §201], all unaccented Vedic texts. The term does not occur in any mantra citations, so no accent may legitimately be posited. Thus Monier-Williams, against earlier and weightier authority, is correct.

The later of the two Wackernagel citations \cite{AG} is also correct, and perhaps provides a clue to understanding \textit{PW’s pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}}, by adducing, as an example of the same suffix, \textit{AV bhṛ\textit{r}tv\textbar{}}. The ādyudātta may result from an overextended analogy based on a supposed parallelism of the two terms.

\textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}} is more complex. The accentuation is doubtless based on Pāṇinean authority. Indeed, Pāṇini enjoins \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}} [4.2.36] as a \textit{nīpātā} – a term whose derivation is unnecessary, dubious or exceptional, and which is presented in effect without derivation. This is significant, for it shows that Pāṇini did not accept the obvious derivation of \textit{pitr\textit{r}vy\textbar{}}, namely from a base \textit{pitr-} ‘father’ plus a suffix \textit{-vy\textbar{r}a(t)}. Later Pāṇinīyas, beginning with Kātyāyana, did however propose this analysis. For them, the suffix \textit{vya(t)} is enjoined to the base \textit{pitr-}, the \textit{(t) anubandha} functioning to occasion svarita of the suffix; hence: \textit{pitr\textbar{r}vy\textbar{}}.\footnote{1985 by D. Reidel Publishing Company.}

The earlier Wackernagel and Mayrhofer are thus following this later śāstraic accentuation, founded on no text, but rather on the correct application of Pāṇini’s rules, as understood [though curiously, in this case, \textit{against} Pāṇini!] . Wackernagel
indeed attributes the svarita of *pitṛvyā* to the vārttika cited, but considers this *indubitable* proof that the word was so accented! The fact that Mayrhofer [without checking the later Wackernagel?] follows him shows just how slight are sometimes the grounds on which the citation of our forms rests.

I suspect that many forms have gotten their accents in just such a roundabout way, via Pāṇini or an intermediate Pāṇinīya argumentation. This is not to suggest that Pāṇini or [even modern] Pāṇinīyas are unreliable; rather that they in such cases are but a filter between the [accented] forms and ourselves, for it is clear that accent, by the time of Pāṇini, was near the end of its evolution in Indic.

The last accent, *pitṛvyā*, which might be alleged to derive from the general rule P.3.1.3, *ādyudāttaś ca*, is probably a misprint or an error.9

---

**NOTES**

1 Another early occurrence is Baudhāyana *Pītṛmedhasītra* 3.1.5. My thanks to M. Witzel for pointing out several of these citations.

2 Presumably meaning ‘father’s brother’s son,’ though this gloss would technically not be correct: see notes 3 and 7, below.

3 Cf. P. 4.1.144 *bhrātur vyac ca*, which enjoins this suffix to the base *bhrātr*- to derive the term *bhrātryā*, in the sense ‘father’s brother’s son’ [note accent]; cf. the [incorrect] listing of this word, occurring in AV 5.22.12 (*bhrātryā*) in *Vei Vedic Word Concordance*, Vol. 1, p. 2381.

4 Vārttika ad 4.2.36: *pitṛmātrbhyaṁ bhṛtari vyadātacau*.

5 By P. 6.1.185, *itt svartam*. Similarly of course *bhṛtryā*.

6 “...nach dem unzweideutigen Zeugnis..” Andreas Festschrift, p. 5.

7 Cf. *PW tarkft*, v. 3, p. 275 and Wackernagel AG II:2, p. 473. The word is commented on in Nirukta 2.1.

7 Note, perhaps not surprisingly, that even the Pāṇinīyas seem finally not to have agreed on an accent for our word. In commenting on Kātyāyana’s vārttika, Nāgēśa says: ..*vyān [sic] iti nit niranyānbandhakahād tīd vētī bahudarśibhir vicāryam*. Apparently, the ambiguity of the anubandha in the vārttika, which Kāśikā resolves straightforwardly as *vyat ducā ca*, was resolved in other ways, including *vyā(n)* and *vyā [sans anubandha]*, which differ of course only in the accent resulting. I surmise that a problem developed in interpreting the word because its evident parallel *bhrātryā* [P. 4.1.144: not found so accented] also occurs in the meaning ‘rival’ or ‘enemy,’ and such is *difficultly* accented [P. 4.1.145: *vyān sapatne*]. The (n) anubandha of *vyā(n)* provokes *udātta* of the initial syllable by P. 6.1.197: *nityād dir nityam* – hence: *bhrātryā* [so attested, AV etc.]. With the putative suffix *vyā(n)*, one could of course derive a similarly accented *pitṛvyā*. But with what meaning? Was it *this* problem that obliged Pāṇini in the first place to give *pitṛvyā* as a *nipāta*? If so, we might just as reasonably argue that the original “Pāṇinean” accent was *pitṛvyā*, distinguished from *bhrātryā* by its semantics [for it would seem essentially parallel in meaning to the relational term *bhrātryā*, and not in that case to require a *nipāta*].

9 The general rule would of course be superseded by the specific rules already cited. Perhaps also contributing to this misreading is the adj. *abhrātryā* [ŚB. 5.3.3.12, etc. but RV *abhrātryā*;