

ALLA RICERCA DI VARIANTI DIAFASICHE IN UNA LINGUA LETTERARIA

ABSTRACT

In the 14 RgVeda dialogues, that have been collected and translated by S. Schnaus, the number of the injunctives (formally, imperfects or aorists without augment), compared with the corresponding augmented forms, is significantly lower in relation to the other sessions of the sylloge. Analogous data are provided by the Homeric poems, in which the augmented forms are much more frequent in the dialogic than the narrative parts. This confirms the thesis by which the augment originated in a diastratically lower level, close to the spoken language. An exception, though, is represented by the dialogue between Urvaśī (a nymph) and Purūravas (a mortal): in this text, the non augmented forms (the injunctives) are frequent, but occur only in Purūravas' speech. These data are consistent with what has been observed by S. Jamison, with a different purpose: only men can access the sacral language of ministers; women are excluded from the ministry and, therefore the language of female characters shows diastratically lower variants relative to the language of the male characters.