Almut Hintze,  On the compositional structure of the Avestan Gāhs.

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by Almut Hintze

0. Introduction

In Zoroastrianism, the twenty-four hour day is divided into five watches, called asniia- ratu- ‘the times of the day’ in Avestan and gāh in Middle and New Persian. In each of these watches, an Avestan text, called a Gāh, is to be recited in praise not only of that particular time but also of divine and human beings as well as notions, all of which are associated with it and considered as its co-workers. These texts have been transmitted as part of the Khorde or Smaller Avesta and are recited by both priests and lay members of the community.

Of the literature of the Avesta, the Gāhs belong to those texts that have received least scholarly attention. Like some other Younger Avestan writings, such as the Visperad, they have rarely been studied, the last occasion being about a century ago by the French scholar James Darmesteter. One of the reasons for this may be that the Gāhs appear to be less attractive literary compositions than other parts of the corpus, both linguistically and from the point of view of their content. For example, the Gāhs contain little original text: about a third are simply repetitions of the Yasna. Moreover, the introductory and concluding portions are nearly the same in all of them, the only variation being that of different names, which are substituted at certain points. The most original sections are the central parts. But even they offer little new material because they consist of yazamaide-formulae which just mention the names of various entities worshipped, without much about them.

1. The noun ratu-, which is probably derived from the root ar ‘to fit’ (Mayrhofer, EWAia I 257), is very common in the Avesta. Bartholomae, AirWb. 1498-1502 posits three homonymous nouns ratu-. The first denotes a period of time, the second a ‘judge’ and the third ‘judgment’. However, as rightly argued by Benveniste, Noms-d’agent et noms d’action en indo-européen, Paris 1948, 89, they all belong to one single noun ratu- denoting ‘the appropriate time’, for instance for a religious ceremony, and also both the ‘regulation’ and the person who presides over it.
In the present article I shall challenge dismissive assumptions about the literary quality of the Gāhs, and suggest that a close structural analysis reveals interesting ‘horizontal’ features about the intertextual relationships between them. The five Gahs have parallel structures and form an interconnected set of texts. Moreover, it will emerge that the way they are interrelated provides an insight into the underlying religious system of which these texts are an expression.

1. The compositional structure of the Gāhs

All five Gāhs share a common pattern consisting of nine units (see figure 1). Three of the latter comprise the beginning, three the middle and three the end. The pattern according to which these nine units are arranged is that the three central ones (fig.1, nos. 4-6) are separated from two introductory (nos. 1-2) and two concluding ones (nos. 8-9) by a buffer unit on either side (nos. 3 and 7).

Some of these units are identical in all the Gāhs, while others differ to varying degrees. The three sections consisting of repetitions from the Yasna are indistinguishable. Two of them frame the central portion, setting it apart from the introductory and concluding sections. Thus, Y 71.3-4, which constitute stanzas 3-4 of all five Gahs, is recited between the introductory and central parts, and Y 71.23-24 between the central and concluding ones. Lastly Y 68.11 and 72.9-10 form the finale of all Gāhs.

Moreover, the introductory and concluding formulae are nearly identical. They vary only in respect of the names of the individual Gāh and its co-workers in whose honour the prayer is recited. Let us take the Ušahin Gāh, Gāh 5, as an example. All Gāhs begin with the words xšnaodra ahurahe mazdā ‘by gratification of the Wise Lord’, followed by three A?m Vohu-prayers and the first two clauses of the Confession of Faith (Y 12.1):

(1) frauwarāne mazdaiiasnō zarathuštriš
vidaēnāō ahura.ťkaēšō
I have made my choice as a Mazdā-worshipper, a Zarathustrian,
who rejects the daevas, who follows the teachings of the lord.

After the introductory lines just quoted, the formula of Gāh 5.1 runs as follows:
(2) G 5.1 ušahināi ašaone ašahe raθbe
yasnaïca vahmāïca xšnaθrāï frasastaiæeca
bârțiṇāï nmâniæïca ašaone ašahe raθbe
yasnaïca vahmāïca xšnaθrāï frasastaiæeca
For the truthful dawn-time of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.
For the truthful honour- and house-time of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

This opening is the same in all Gāhs except for the different names (underlined) in whose honour the text is recited. For instance, the first stanza of the Háwan Gāh, G 1.1, runs as follows:

(3) G 1.1 hāuuanþe ašaone ašahe raθbe
yasnaïca vahmāïca xšnaθrāï frasastaiæeca
sâuvaθphþe visiïæïca ašaone ašahe raθbe
yasnaïca vahmāïca xšnaθrāï frasastaiæeca
For the truthful pressing-time\(^3\) of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.
For the truthful morning- and clan-time of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

The introductory section is followed by a formula that gives the names of the so-called co-workers, i.e. deities associated with a particular Gāh (fig.1, no.2). The names and their attributes always appear in the genitive governed by xšnaθrāïca ‘by gratification of’. The formula concludes with the words ‘for worship, praise, gratification and glory’ (yasnaïca vahmāïca xšnaθrāï frasastaiæeca):

(4) G 5.2 sraoθhe ašiiehe ašiuuatô vœrœθrâjanô frâdat.gaœθahe
rašnaœx razištahe
arštâsca frâdat.gaœθaiiâ varœdat.gaœθaiiâ xšnaθra
yasnaïca vahmāïca xšnaθrâï frasastaiæeca
By gratification of Sraoṭa accompanied by reward, provided with reward, the victorious one, who promotes the living beings, (and by gratification) of straightest Rašnu

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3. The name hāuuanþi: ‘pressing-’ refers to the ritual action of pressing the Haoma in the Yasna ritual, which starts in this morning Gāh. On the names of the five Gāhs, see Hintze 2003.
and of Arštāt who promotes the living beings, who makes the living beings grow, for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

As in the initial section, formulae invoking various deities are replaced in different Gāhs, while the syntactic frame, consisting of the expressions ‘by gratification’ and ‘for worship, praise, gratification and glory’, is identical. G 1.2, for instance, runs as follows:

(5) G 1.2 miḏrahe vouru.gaoiiatōiš
ahaŋrō.gaošahe baēuwar.cašmaŋō
aomtō.nāmanō yazatahe
rāmanō xʾāstrahe xšnaōrö
yasnāica vāhmāica xšnaōrāica frasastaiiaēca

By gratification of Mithra, who has wide cattle-pastures, who has a thousand ears, ten thousand eyes, the venerable one, whose name is uttered, (and by gratification) of Peace provided with good pasture, for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

The opening section concludes with a set of lines identical in every Gāh and extremely common in all liturgical Avestan texts:

(6) yahā ahū vairiīō
zaotā frā mē mṛūtē
aṭhā rātuś ašātciḥ haca
frā ašauwa viḍuwa mraotū
“As he is to be chosen by the Lord”
the chief priest proclaims to me
“Thus is the regulation on the basis of truth”
the knowledgeable truthful one shall proclaim!

The introductory invocation is followed by two verses from Y 71(fig.1, no.3) praising Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra, the choice (frauwaši-) of the latter and the Amāša Špōṇtas:

(7) G 5.3 (= Y 71.3) ahurwēm mazdqw ašauwaṁ ašahe ratūṁ yazamaide
zarathuštrwēm ašauwaṁ ašahe ratūṁ yazamaide

4. On frauwaši- see Hintze [2006] ad Y 37.3 no 2 frauwašīš ‘choices’. 
zaraduštrahe ašaonō frauuašūm yazamaide
aməxš spəntā ašaonqam yazamaide

We venerate the Wise Lord, the truthful one, the ratu- of truth.
We venerate Zarathushtra, the truthful one, the ratu- of truth.
We venerate the choice of truthful Zarathushtra.
We venerate the truthful Bounteous Immortals.

Furthermore, they also venerate the choices (frauuašū-) of the truthful people, the ratu- ‘who is best at obtaining’ (apanōtōma-) and the gratification of the ratu-s (ratufriti-):

(8) G 5.4 (= Y 71.4) ašaunqam vaj’hīš sūrā spəntâ frauuašaiiō yazamaide
astuuatō manahiiāca
apanōtōmag ratβam yazamaide
yəetuştəməm yazatanqam
hanhauštəməm ašahe raθβam
aibinasqastəməm
yaʃmiištəməm ašaonō ašahe raθβō
ratufritim yazamaide

We venerate the truthful, good, strong, bounteous choices of the truthful ones.
Of the material and spiritual (life),
we venerate that one of the ratu-s who is best at obtaining,
the most active of the venerable ones,
the most successful of the ratu-s of truth,
the one who succeeds most.
We venerate the ratu-pleasing of the truthful ratu- of truth,
(the ratu-pleasing) that is best at arriving.

The middle part, which in all Gāhs begins in stanza 5, is characterized by the verb yazamaide ‘we venerate’ and may be divided into three sections (fig. 1, nos. 4-6) each of which takes up and expands on the theme set out in the two initial verses. The first of these central units (no.4) elaborates on the name of the Gāh, which is, in the case of Gāh 5, ušāhina- ratu-. The second central unit (no.5), which in some Gāhs is the longest section, venerates the two ratus associated with a particular Gāh, i.e. here bərəjia- and nmāniia-. The third part (no.6) is dedicated to the co-workers of the Gāh, in Gāh 5 Sraoša, Rašnu and Arštāt.

The central section is separated from the concluding verses by another quotation from the Yasna, Y 71.23-24, which again is identical in all Gâhs (fig.1, no.7). It praises the ritual fire, which is the son of Ahura Mazdâ, along with other ritual items, namely the libation, the date palm leaf, and the sacrificial straw. Furthermore, it also praises Apâm Napât, Nairya Sañha, Upama dâmôîš, the souls of those who have died and the fravashis of the truthful ones:

(9) G 5.8 (= Y 71.23) զծամ այրմ ահուրահե մազդա պուդրում
ասաւասում ասահե ռատում յազամայիդէ
հադա.զաոտրում հադա.աիբիիայհանում
imat բարսմա ասայա բրաստառում
ասաւասում ասահէ ռատում յազամայիդէ
apամ նապատրում յազամայիդէ
nairîm սայհէմ յազամայիդէ
taxռում դամոիշ յպամանում յազատում յազամայիդէ
taxmէm դամոիș յպամանում յազատում յազամայէ
taxmէm դամոիș յպամանում յազատում յազամայէ
taxmէm դամոիș յպամանում յազատում յազամայէ
taxmէm դամոիș յպամանում յազատում յազամայէ
taxmէm դամоіиш յпаманоւм յаузтоум յацамаідэ
iristamq uruaqnoon yazamaide
yä aśaonam frauaśaiio
We venerate you, the fire, the son of Ahura Mazdâ, the truthful ratu- of truth,
(we venerate you) together with the libation, together with the date-palm leaf.
We venerate this sacrificial straw, laid out correctly, the truthful ratu- of truth.
We venerate Apâm Napât.
We venerate Nairya Sañha.
We venerate Upama Dâmôïš, the swift venerable one.
We venerate the souls of the dead, the choices of the truthful ones.

Y 71.24 praises the lofty ratu-, namely Ahura Mazdâ, the Zarathushtrian teachings and all good actions that have and will be done. The recitation concludes with the Yeņhê Hâtâm prayer:

(10) G 5.9 (= Y 71.24) ռատում բեռզանիտում յազամայիդէ
yim ahurōm mazdam
yô ašahe apanotōmō
yô ašahe jaγմûštəmô
vîspa srauâd zarathûstrî yazamaide
vîspaca huuarštâ šiiaðna yazamaide
varštaca varoṣiïamnaca
We venerate the lofty ra-tu-Ahura Mazdā, who is the acme of truth, the most advanced in truth. We venerate all Zarathushtrian teachings. We venerate all well-done actions, those which have and those which will be done. In the veneration of which (male) one of those who exist the Wise Lord knows, on the basis of truth, what is very good, and (in the worship) of which (female) ones: we worship these (male) and these (female) ones.

The final section (fig.1, no.8) begins with two Ahuna Vairya–prayers which are followed by the praise of the co-workers and concluded by the Ašəm Vohu–prayer.

(11) G 5.10 yaθā ahū vairīō ... (2)
yasnōmca vahmōmca aοjaσca zauarōca āfrīnāmi
sraośahe ašīiehe ašiuvatō vərəθrājanō frādat, gaēθahe raśnaoš razištahe
arštätasca frādat, gaēθaiiâ varədat, gaēθaii? ašəm vohū vahištəm astī ... 
As he is to be chosen by the Lord ... (twice)
I bless the worship, the praise, the strength and swiftness Sraoša accompanied by reward, provided with reward, the victorious one, who furthers the world, of straightest Raṇu and of Arštät who furthers the world, who makes the world grow. Truth is the highest good ...

All five Gāhs end with more quotations from the Yasna, namely Y 68.11 and Y 72.9–10 (fig.1, no.9). They are followed by the Pāzand text Kerba mazd and again close with the Ašəm Vohu–prayer.
2. The sequence of the Gāhs

In the manuscripts of the Khorde Avesta, the Hāwan Gāh usually stands at the beginning. Such is the case, for instance, in the manuscript E1, where the Gāhs start on folio 422v. In his edition of the Avesta, Karl Friedrich Geldner (1889–1896, vol. II 51) followed the manuscripts, and since then, the Hāwan Gāh is usually referred to as “Gāh one”.

However, in both Avestan and Pahlavi texts, itemizing of the Gāhs sometimes begin with Hāwan (Geldner’s Gāh 1) but sometimes with Uşahin (Geldner’s Gāh 5). For instance, in Nerangestān 46–51, which describes the time span covered by each Gāh, the first ratu- is uşahina-.

By contrast, in the Yasna, the list of the ‘daily times’, asnīta- ratu-, starts with hāuwan- (Y 1.3–7 and Y 17.2). The same situation is found in the Pahlavi texts. In the Dēnkard, uşahin stands at the beginning of the Gāhs, but in the Bundahišn it is hāwan. This indicates that there was uncertainty as to which Gāh was the first.

This variation in the Avestan and Pahlavi texts seems to reflect liturgical practice. Before the beginning of any ritual, the appropriate Gāh is supposed to be recited. There is one ceremony, the Vendidad, which starts during the watch of the Uşahin Gāh, at midnight, and goes on for about nine hours. At the beginning of this longest and most solemn of all Zoroastrian liturgies, the Uşahin Gāh is to be recited. However, not only the Yasna, but most religious ceremonies begin and are performed in the watch of the Hāwan Gāh, when the sun rises. As Kotwal and Boyd put it, the Hāwan Gāh is considered to be “the ideal time, [when] the fire temple is filled with activity, people coming in with offerings”.

This may have been the reason why the Hāwan Gāh acquired the status of the first watch of the 24-hour day.

However, while Uşahin and Hāwan could not both take the position of the first Gāh, the internal structure of the Gāh texts suggests that they were composed with a view to Uşahin being the first Gāh, as was rightly observed by Darmesteter.

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ontal analysis that only when the Ušahin Gāh is considered as the first one, does the structure of the texts exhibit a regular pattern according to which there is a development from smaller to larger units and from the abstract to the concrete. Such a progressive structure would not be observed if the list started with Hāwan.

3. The horizontal analysis

3.1. The introductory part

Horizontal analysis entails a comparison of equivalent parts of the various Gāhs, and reveals which terms and names are substituted in the corresponding sections. In the invocation of the ratu-s in section 1, the five watches are correlated with the territorial and social structure of the Iranian lands. It starts in Ušahin Gāh (Gāh 5) with the smallest unit, the house, nmāna-, moves on to the clan, vis- in Gāh 1, the tribe, zanṭu-, in Gāh 2, the land, daxīiu-, in Gāh 3 and culminates in zaraṭuštrotoma- in Gāh 4.12

The names associated with the territorial divisions are also interconnected. The ratu-s of Gāhs 2, 3 and 4 progress in so far as there is a movement from animal to human being and eventually to all good life. Thus, the time of midday of Gāh 2, rapiḍṭin, is associated with frādat,fsu- ‘who promotes cattle’, and that of the afternoon, uzērin, with frādat,vīra- ‘who promotes men’. Finally, the evening Gāh, ēbsrūś-rīm,13 is associated, in the most general way, with the time ‘which promotes all good life’.

The ratu-s of Gāh 5 and 1, in contrast, are different. In Gāh 5, bōrjiiia-, the ratu- associated with the house, nmāna-, refers to the welcome, honour and esteem offered to a truthful being. The noun bōrjiiia- lexicalizes the idea of the respectful and welcoming spiritual attitude that characterizes the relationship between Ahura Mazdā and those of his creatures that have chosen to side with the Wise Lord. This intimate and personal allegiance is associated with the smallest territorial and social unit, the house, nmāna-, and results from each individual’s choice, frauuaši-. The ratu- sāuvañghi-, connected with the clan (vīśiia-) and praised in Gāh 1, characterizes the sunlight rising from the east and

is appropriately associated with the morning watch. The rising sun epitomizes the natural, cosmic event which brings light and life every morning and thus exemplifies the good functioning of the physical creations.

On the basis of this interpretation, we may establish the following interconnected links between this set of ratu-s of the five Gâhs: bôrâjîia-characterizes the good spiritual attitude of respect and esteem between an individual person and Ahura Mazda, while sâuuângî represents the benefit for physical life derived from the sunlight. The two terms thus refer, respectively, to the spiritual and physical worlds, whose proper functioning brings prosperity to animals and human beings in particular and to all good life in general. In other words, the prosperity of the animal, human and entire living world depends on the effective operation of the spiritual and the physical worlds.

3.2. The central part
3.2.1. The first section of the central part

The central section of the Gâhs is characterized by the verb yazamaide. The first unit (fig.1, no.4) praises the constituent parts of the Zoroastrian ritual. It begins, in Gâh 5, with the divine beings Ahura Mazda and his spiritual creations, the Amaša Spântas. G 5.5 venerates Ahura Mazda and four Amaša Spântas: Good Mind, Best Truth, Desirable Rule and Bounteous Right-mindedness. The Háwan Gâh praises the two remaining Amaša Spântas, Wholeness and Immortality, and begins with the praise of texts: the Ahurian question, the Ahurian teachings and the Yasna Haptaŋhâiti. The Rapiðâbin Gâh continues by praising the five Gathas, which are listed individually, while the Uzâr Gâh extols the eight classes of priests, each mentioned by name. Finally, Gâh 4 praises the implements used in ritual, namely the fire, various utensils and the ritual water and plants.

The movement across the fourth section of the Gâhs is from the spiritual world to the physical one. The spiritual creations, i.e. the Amaša Spântas, are linked to the physical ones, represented by the priests and ritual implements, by means of the sacred texts, referred to in G 1.5 and 2.5. Correspondences between the physical (G 3.5, 4.5) and spiritual (G 5.5, 1.5) realms may be established in so far as the priests correspond to

14. The noun sâuuângî is a vrddhi-derivative from *sauuah- ‘morning, east’ attested in the name of the eastern clime sauuahi’, see Bartholomae, AirWb.1572, 1562; Witzel 2000, 299f.
Ahura Mazda, the ritual fire to Truth (aša-), pestle and mortar to Best Rule (xšaṭra- vairiia-), libation (zaorṭra-) to Good Mind (vohu- man-ah-), water to Wholeness (hauruuatÇt-), and plants as well as sacrificial straw to Immortality (amʔrǝtät-).

3.2.2. The second section of the central part

The second section of the central part elaborates on the two ratu-s associated with the individual Gāhs (fig.1, no.5). Gāh 5.6 praises the ratu-s ‘belonging to honour’ and ‘to the house’, bǝrəjiia- and nmâniaa-, and gives more information about what bǝrəjiia- means. It is worshipped through a respectful attitude towards truth and the Mazdayasnian faith:

(12) G 5.6 (= Y 35.1) bǝrəja vanhôus ašahe
bǝrəja daëniiâ vanhuiiâ māzdaiiasnöiś
with esteem for good Truth,
with esteem for the good Mazdayasnian vision.

These words are taken from Y 35.1, the YAv. passage inserted between the last stanza of the Ahunavaitī Gatha, Y 34.15 and the first of the Yasna Haptanāhtiī, Y 35.2. In the corresponding passage of Gāh 1, the Airyaman Iṣya-prayer is commended as the prayer which overcomes all hostilities (G 1.6). G 2.6 elaborates on the ratu- that promotes the animals by praising the cattle breeder’s manthra (fšūša- maṭra-), which comprises Y 58. Furthermore it also praises rightly spoken words, three of Ahura Mazda’s physical creations (water, earth and plants), the spiritual Yazatas and the Amāša Spōntas. After venerating both the ratu- that promotes men, frādat.vīra-, and the ratu- of the country, G 3.6-7 praise the physical creations. They include the stars, sun and moon, the ageless lights, good life, the realization of what is right, the ‘later teaching’, and again the ratu- of the country, zañtuma.

G 4.6-9 is the longest of all the central portions. After the ratu- ‘that promotes all well-being’, frādat.vīspqm.hujiiaiīti-, it praises Zarathushtra, the beneficent formula (maṭra- spōnta-), the soul of the cow, Zarathushtrōtoma and again Zarathushtra (G 4.6), the three social classes, namely priest (aďrauan-), warrior (raďaēštar-) and herdsman (vāstria-fšuimant-), and finally the lords (paiti-) of the four territorial divisions: house, clan, tribe and land (G 4.7). G 4.8 venerates the truthful youth of good thoughts, words, deeds and vision (daēnâ-), as well as a number of praiseworthy activities such as marriage within one’s family (x’aētuua-daďa-), travelling both inside one’s own country and abroad. The praise of
a range of female beings begins with the lady of the house (nmānahe nmāno,patnī-) and continues in G 4.9 with truthful women, Bounteous Right-mindedness and the noble ladies of Ahura Mazdā. The latter passage is a Younger Avestan quotation from the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, Y 38.1 yāscā tōi gōnā ahurā mazdā. As convincingly argued by Narten, the ‘ladies’ refer to the personifications of ‘fat-offering’ (ižā-), ‘vitalization’ (yaošti-), ‘perfection’ (fārašti-) and ‘right-mindedness’ (ārmaiti-). Finally, Zarathushtrōtoma is again venerated, along with the truthful man.

It appears that the second central part is dedicated to the spiritual and practical life of all Mazda-worshippers, both priests and laypeople. Gāhs 2-4 are especially linked in so far as each of them again praises the ratu- of the territorial and social division at the end of the section. This suggests that the longish central portions elaborate on the ratu-s frādat,šatu-, frādat,vīra- and frādat.vispaṃ.hujiāiti-, after which the other ratu- (zaŋtuma-, daixiuma-, zaraθuštrō.toma-) associated, respectively, with each of Gāh 2–4 is mentioned a second time.

3.2.3 The third section of the central part
The third central section (fig.1, no.6) is dedicated to the co-workers of each Gāh and thus takes up the theme of the second stanzas, with which this section is virtually identical, apart from the grammatical case. Being governed by the verb yazamaide ‘we venerate’, the names of the co-workers occur here in the accusative, while they are in the genitive in stanza 2.

3.3. The concluding part
After the repetition of verses from the Yasna, Y 71.23–24 (fig.1, no.7), the formula of stanzas 2, praising the co-workers, is repeated in the concluding section of the Gāhs (fig.1, no.8). This is followed by further quotations from the Yasna (fig.1, no.9).

4. Conclusion

It emerges from this analysis that the praise of the time sections, ratu-, alternates with that of the co-workers. There are two sections dedicated to ratu-s (fig.1, nos. 1 and 4–5). The first is followed by one unit prais-
ing the co-workers (no.2), the second by two (nos. 6 and 8). Each praise of ratu-s and co-workers is followed by quotations from the Yasna (nos. 3, 7 and 9), thus forming three large blocks of text. While neither the praises of co-workers nor the quotations from the Yasna are original compositions, those of the ratu are. The structure of the Gâhs is a ring-composition in so far as the most original parts are at the centre.

The association of a time-section with a territorial and social division follows a regular pattern. We have seen that, from Gâh 5 through to Gâh 4, there is a progression from the smallest unit, the house, to the largest one, the country, finally culminating in the priest, zarañuštrôtêma-. This structure points to the idea of the all-pervading presence of the Mazdayasian religion in both time and space. The Gâhs presuppose that the Zoroastrian religion was widespread and that the priests were at the head of the social and spiritual hierarchy. Furthermore, I have argued that the second group of ratu associated with a time division also follows a pattern. The latter consists in the good functioning of the spiritual (denoted by bôrjiiâ-) and physical (sauwâñhî-) worlds and guarantees the prosperity of cattle (frâdat.fõsu-), men (frâdat.vîrâ-) and all well-being (frâdat.vispâm.hujiâiti-). The main central parts invoke religious life on two levels: priestly ritual in the first section, and the religious life of laypeople in the second. This arrangement expresses the idea that the five-fold division of the day pervaded the lives of both priests and laypeople.16

This analysis suggests that the five Gâhs form an interconnected unit of text. The constituent parts of each Gâh are composed with regard to the equivalent passages in the other Gâhs. Such a thoughtful arrangement indicates that the priests who created these texts had a good command of the Avestan language. The compositional structure of the Gâhs is both an expression of and pointer to an underlying and coherent religious system, which must have been fully developed at the time of their composition.

16. Both priestly and lay ritual are represented, respectively, by the names of the morning (hâwûani-) and evening (aîspâram.aibigaia-) Gâhs, while the names of the other day sections derive from either natural phenomena (ušahîna-, uzaiieirâ-) or human custom (rapídînâ-), see Hintze 2003, 143, 154.
References:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1: Compositional Structure of the Gāhs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Usāhina ratu</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>midnight to sunrise</td>
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<td>Gāh 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Ratu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yasnāca vahmāica etc.</td>
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<td>+ dat.</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Co-workers</strong></td>
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<td>xšnaōdrā yasnāca vahmāica etc.</td>
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<td>+ gen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Quotation from Yasna</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Ratu, Priestly High ritual</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>yasnāide + acc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Ratu, Spiritual and Practical life of all Mazdayasians</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>yasnāide + acc.</td>
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<td>6. <strong>Co-workers</strong></td>
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<td>yasnoma vahmoma etc.</td>
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<td>+ gen.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Quotation from Yasna</strong></td>
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<td>8. <strong>Co-workers</strong></td>
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<td>yasnoma vahmoma etc.</td>
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