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ON THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE YASNA HAPTANHĀTI

Almut Hintze

"Le Yasna se compose de soixante-douze chapitres ou Hās (hāiti) qui se suivent dans un ordre dont le principe n'est pas apparent."

J Darmesteter, Le Zend-Avesta vol. 1, p. LXXI.

INTRODUCTION

Ritual has always played a significant part in religious practice. This is particularly true of the Zoroastrian tradition, in which it proved to be crucial for the survival of the faith. For it was because of ritual that the ancient sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrians—the Avesta, composed in Old Iranian, and its Middle Persian translations and commentaries, the so-called Zand—have survived the vicissitudes of the history of Iran.

The scriptures of the extant Avesta fall into two groups, both defined by their ritual application. The first comprise texts recited in priestly rituals. These are the Yasna (abbreviated: Y) 'worship', Visperad (Vr) 'all masters' and Videvdad (Vd) 'law of those who reject the demons'. The second group consists of devotional hymns called the Yašt and prayers which can be recited by any member of the community. They constitute the extant 'Small' or Khorde Avesta. All these texts have survived as a result of the religious requirement to recite them in the original Avestan, language at certain times of the day. Those texts which had no ritual function were generally lost or, at best, have been transmitted very badly.

The Yasna ceremony is undoubtedly the most important of all Zoroastrian rituals. It is celebrated daily, at the request of a member of the community, and starts at sunrise in the morning watch of the Hāwan Gāh. Nowadays it is performed by two cultic officials, a chief priest (zōšt) and an assistant priest (rāspī) in the inner parts of the fire temple. They carry out the ceremony on behalf of the member of the community who has requested and paid for it. Laypersons may be present during the ritual, but do not have to be.
Not only the ritual, but also the Avestan text recited during it bears the name yasna-, which constitutes the highest liturgy of Zoroastrian ritual. It consists of 72 chapters, each denoted in the Avestan language by hāīti. This noun is a tī-abstract derived from the root hā (= Vedic sā) 'to bind' and literally means 'binding'. Presumably it lexicalizes the idea that a hāīti is a self-contained literary 'bundle' or composition. In religious practice, the 72 hāīti- of the Yasna are represented symbolically by the 72 strands from which the sacred girdle of the Zoroastrians, the kutīt, is woven. The Yasna has always been held in particularly high esteem by Zoroastrians because it includes at its centre all of the surviving Old Avestan texts. Of the latter, the hymns called the Gathas are traditionally attributed to the prophet and founder of the religion, Zarathushtra. The Gathas again also contain an important text at their centre, the Yasna Haptaŋhāti (abbreviated: YH), the "Worship in Seven Chapters". As the name indicates, this text consists of seven hāīti.

Thus, at the centre of the 72-chapter Yasna, there is another, shorter, 7-chapter Yasna. However, while the name of this shorter Yasna is found throughout the Avesta, that of the 72-chapter text is probably not. It appears that neither the Avesta itself nor its manuscripts refer to this text as yasna. This is confirmed by the fluid state of Middle Persian terminology, where yasti, yazist, or yasyn denote the Avestan high liturgy. Similarly, as Antonio Panaino has shown, the Yaśts are frequently referred to as yasna. Jean Kellens concluded that the use of yasna as the name of the 72-chapter text was a product of early nineteenth century scholarship, having been reinstated by Burnouf.

In this article, I propose to examine the role of the YH within Zoroastrian liturgy in order to determine the extent to which the Younger Avestan parts of the Yasna liturgy are informed by, or indeed dependent on, that central Yasna. I shall discuss the position the Yasna Haptaŋhāti takes, first, within the 72-chapter Yasna and, second, in the two other Zoroastrian high liturgies, which are based on the Yasna, namely the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies. We shall see that the YH is positioned at the centre of each of the three Zoroastrian high liturgies, and I shall argue that such a position indicates that the YH is the focal text of Zoroastrian high ritual. This view will derive further support from an examination of the usage of the word yasna- in the Avesta, as a result of which it will emerge that, throughout the time Avestan texts were composed, the Yasna Haptaŋhāti was perceived as the Worship, or yasna-, par excellence and provided the model for the Younger Avestan eulogistic invocations characterized by the verb yazamāide 'we worship'.

THE YASNA HAPTAŅHĀTI AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE YASNA

It has already been stated above that the text recited during the Yasna ritual is divided into 72 chapters or hāīti. This number, however, is achieved artificially by means of repetition of certain individual chapters. For example, Y 5 consists of the wholesale repetition of Y 37, which is the third chapter of the YH, and the entire Gothic hymn Y 47 is repeated twice, in Y 18 and in Y 68. There are numerous other instances in the Younger Avestan parts of the Yasna, where verses from the Older Avesta are included. Yet the division of the Yasna into hāīti- seems to be old.

The Yasna falls into three larger units, two Younger Avestan sections enclosing an Old Avestan middle. The central part of the Old Avestan texts, the Gathas, is flanked on either side by sacred prayers and has the Yasna Haptaŋhāti at its heart. The Yasna thus exhibits a concentric compositional structure. The outer circles consist of liturgical praises to Ahura Mazda and all his good spiritual and physical creations. The first half of the Yasna, Y 1–27, is characterized by three sections of invocations, comprising Y 1–8, 14–18 and 22–26. They address, in order, Ahura Mazda, the Amaša Spānta, the various divisions of time, called


3 Kellens, "Considérations sur l'histoire de l'Avesta", pp. 480 f.

ratue, and other entities. These sections alternate with texts and praises devoted to special subjects, such as the praise of Haoma (Y 9–11), the Mazdayanian Creed (Y 12) and the commentaries to the three holy prayers (Y 19–21). The part following the Old Avestan kernel, Y 55–72, contains few of such invocations and mainly texts with a certain theme. These include the hymn to Sraoša (Y 56–57), the manthra of the cattle breeder (Y 58), the Benediction of the house of the Mazdaysians (Y 60), the praise of fire (Y 62) and the Ritual of the Waters (Y 63–70).

The exact centre of the 72 chapters of the entire Yasna consists of Y 36 and 37, the second and third chapters of the YH. Y 36 is about Ahura Mazda’s heavenly fire, which is invoked and invited to come down and merge with the ritual fire. During the ritual, this process must take place between stanzas 2 and 3, because in stanza 3 the ritual fire is identified with both Ahura Mazda’s heavenly fire and with his most bounteous spirit.5

(1) Y 36.3
atarš voi mazdā ahurahiia ahi
mainiinš voi ahiia spoinšito ahi
hiaš vā tōi namanam vazištam
atarš mazdā ahurahiia
ā tōi paurijasaimidē

‘You are indeed the Fire of the Wise Lord.
You are indeed his most bounteous spirit.
We approach you,
O Fire of the Wise Lord,
With what is the most powerful of your names.’

At the end of this chapter, in stanza 6, the ritual fire is addressed as Ahura Mazda’s most beautiful shape:

(2) Y 36.6
srāššīm at tōi kohrām kohrām
hauvādāiānāi mazdā ahurā
imā raacā
barazīnām barazīnānām hauvā
yāt ‘huuara ahuāct

‘We proclaim, O Wise Lord,
That these lights
Are your most beautiful shape of shapes
Since that highest of heights
Was called the sun.’

It must therefore be assumed that from that moment of the ritual onwards, the worshippers believe themselves to be in the presence of Ahura Mazda, who has become visible to them in the form of the ritual fire before which they stand.

The worship enters its central part in chapters 37–39. The latter are characterized by the frequent use of the verbal form ‘we worship’, in Avestan yazamaident, which occurs seventeen times altogether in this short text. Indeed, in Old Avestan, this particular form is confined to these three chapters, which contain the worship formulae proper.6

First Ahura Mazda is praised and identified as the creator of the cow and truth, of the waters and plants, of the lights and the earth and all that is good:

(3) Y 37.1
iša at yazamaident ahurēn mazdām
yāgāmcā aŋmacā dāt
apacā dāt uruwardscā varghis
raoacscā dāt bámtmaca
vīspacsc vohē

Y 37.2
ahiiia xia dracā mazāncā hauvāpatrhāiscā
ītom at yaznamap pauuuwātā yazamaide
yōi gōs haca šienvīt

‘Thus we now worship the Wise Lord, who has created the cow and truth.
He has created the waters and the good plants.
He has created light and the earth
and all that is good

Y 37.2
by his rule and greatness and creativity.
We worship him with the primeness of worship,
(we) who dwell on the side of the cow.’


6 See Narten, Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, pp. 167 f.
This stanza takes up the theme of the Gothic hymn Y 44.3–5 and is also linked to Y 33.14 by the expression yasanaŋm pauuuuatāt ‘with the primeness of worship’. In the following verse, Ahura Mazdā is worshipped in his Ahurian names and for guiding the choices (frauuasī-) of the truthful men and women (Y 37.3). His Ahurian names are listed individually in the two stanzas concluding this chapter. They are: ‘Best truth’ (Y 37.4), ‘Good Mind’ (Vohu Manah), ‘Good Rule’ (vōhu xāsā ṣr̥a-, ‘Good Vision’ (vātřhi- daenā-, ‘Good Joy’ (vātřhi- fšorātī-),7 and ‘Good Right-mindedness’ (vātřhi- ārmaitī-), Y 37.5. The worship continues in chapter 38 with praise of the earth and of the ladies (goṇā-) who belong to Ahura Mazdā (Y 38.1). These are identified as powers such as fat-offering (ię-,) purification (yaosī-), perfection (faraṇī-), and right-mindedness (ārmaitī-) active during the ritual. Moreover, good reward (ašī-), invocation (iś-,) libation (dzuīti-,) praise (frasasti-) and blessing (parpaṇī-) are worshipped in the central chapter of the YH, Y 38, the worship culminates in the praise of the waters (Y 38.3–5).

The third and last chapter of the yazamaide-section, Y 39, praises the soul of the cow, the maker of the cow, furthermore the worshippers’ own souls as well as those of domestic and non-obnoxious wild animals (Y 39.2), and of the truthful ones (Y 39.2) and, finally, the male and female Amaša Spāṇas. In the last stanza, all power is conferred on Ahura Mazdā (Y 39.4).

For a long time, the religious and literary importance of the Yasna Haptaŋhātī has been underestimated precisely because of this yazamaide-section. It was felt that the YH was similar to the lengthy and repetitive yazamaide-formulae characteristic of some parts of the Younger Avesta. However, following the study of Johanna Narten (1986), it is now recognized that the YH belongs, together with the Gathas and holy prayers, to the same homogeneous body of Old Avestan literature. This re-evaluation of the YH also changes the way the Younger Avestan texts may be viewed. For it is not the case that the YH is similar to the YAv invocation formulae. Rather, the reverse is true, since the latter result from an attempt to compose more texts which are similar to the central portion of the YH. The most obvious indication of this is the consistent use of the Old Avestan form yazamaide, ‘we worship’, in the Younger Avesta.8

As in the YH, the Younger Avestan eulogies and invocations start with the praise of Ahura Mazdā:

(4) Y 1.1
niuuaešaiemi hänkāraiemī
daušō ahurahē mazdā
raeuuattō x’arānan’vanahā
taštēheca vahūštaheca
xraoźštēheca xraβšštēheca hukuṟoṟaṃheca
‘I invite, I perform
(the worship) of the creator Ahura Mazdā,
who has wealth and glory,
the greatest, best, most beautiful one,
the firmest, wisest, most shapely one.’

The superlative expression mazištēheca vahūštēheca sraštēheca characterizes Ahura Mazdā at the beginning of the Yasna (Y 1.1) and recalls the first yazamaide-section of Y 37.1–2, where Ahura Mazdā is said to have created all that is good ‘by his greatness’ (mašnā Y 37.2). The latter is echoed in the YAv. formula masanacca vahānacca srašiṣṭacca ‘through greatness, goodness and beauty’, which also occurs in the genitive masanascā vahansacca sraštanacca in the pseudo-OAv. Y 58.4.9 Furthermore, as suggested by Jean Kellens10, Ahura Mazdā’s attribute hukuṟoṟaṃa ‘most shapely’ in Y 1.1 could be interpreted on the basis of Y 36.6, where the ritual fire is addressed as his most beautiful body. The worship of Ahura Mazdā is followed, in Y 1.2, by that of the Amaša Spāṇas, who are listed individually:

(5) Y 1.2
niuuaešaiemi haŋkāraiemī
vahāuwē manaŋhe
ašū i vahūšā
xśā ṣrāi varītāi
spraṇtāiē ārmaitē

---


8 On this form, see Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhātī*, pp. 167 f.


Fire (ātar-), of both Ahura Mazda’s son and all fires, and of the waters and plants:

(6) Y 1.12
niuaēbaīemi haŋkāraīemi
taua āhrūhe mazdā pu əra
maŋ vispaēbiō āhrābiō
niuaēbaīemi haŋkāraīemi
aiōbiō vaŋhībiō
vispaŋmaca apaŋ mazdābātanm
vispaŋmaca uruuaraŋm mazdābātanm

‘I invite, I perform (the worship) of you, the Fire, O son of Ahura Mazda together with all fires.
I invite, I perform (the worship) of the Good Waters, and of all waters created by Mazda, and of all plants created by Mazda.’

Y 1.12 recalls Y 37.1, where Ahura Mazda is praised as the creator of the waters and good plants. These observations suggest that the first hāiti- of the Yasna is inspired by the praises of the YH. The same applies to the other chapters of praise, i.e. Y 2–4 and 6–8 as well as Y 14–18 and 22–26 (which contain repetitions from Y 3 and 4), because their structure is parallel to that of Y 1. The Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, being the worship-text par excellence, offered the model for many of the yazamaide-formulae in the YAv. parts of the Yasna.

The link between the initial chapters of the Yasna and the YH is reinforced by the repetition of Y 37, which is the same as Y 5 and divides the eight initial hāiti of the Yasna into half. Y 5 is followed, in Y 6, by yazamaide-formulae praising a series of divinities identical to those of Y 2, Y 17 and 59, while Y 7 is identical to Y 3, differing only in the verb. Y 7 concludes in sections 24–25 with verses again taken from the YH (Y 41.5–6).

Each of the chapters of the YH finishes with the yejhe hāqm-prayer. The YH shares this feature both with the yazamaide-portions of the YAv. part of the Yasna and with the Yasts, where it concludes each Karde. This feature of Avestan eulogistic literature may be explained...
by the content of the yeiθhē hātam-prayer, which justifies and enjoins the worship of a wide range of male and female entities besides Ahura Mazda. Such worship is the theme of both the Yasna Haptaŋhāti and the Younger Avestan eulogistic parts of the Yasna, as well as of the Yaṣṭs.13

THE POSITION OF THE YH IN THE VISPERAD AND VENDIDAD CEREMONIES

The text of the Yasna is organized in such a way that it includes at its centre all of the surviving Old Avestan texts, which probably constituted the oldest liturgical kernel of Zoroastrian ritual. In post-Old Avestan times, this central core was further expanded not only by the addition of more texts of different origin placed both before and after the original Older Avestan kernel, but also by the insertion of YaAv sections into the Old Avestan core. These insertions invariably occur at key points. Most interestingly, two of these, Y 35.1 and Y 42, are found in the direct vicinity of the YH, one before and one after it. The third insertion is Y 52 after the fourth Gatha, thus separating it from the fifth Gatha constituting Y 53.

Moreover, the Yasna was enlarged by more chapters and thus became the Visperad ceremony. The latter was in turn further extended to constitute the longest of all Zoroastrian rituals, the Vendidad ceremony. The content of the Vṛ sections, or Kardes, is dependent on the chapters of the Yasna before or after which they are recited. For instance, Vṛ 16, which is recited after the YH, praises that text. In contrast, the content of the twenty-two chapters (fargard) of the Videvdad does not relate either to the Yasna or the Visperad passages into which they are inserted. Obviously their consistently pairwise arrangement is a purely mechanical one. However, it is noteworthy that the pairs of Videvdad chapters are only inserted in and around the Older Avesta.14


The pattern of this arrangement is as follows: A Gatha, for instance the Spəntamainyu Gatha, Y 47–50, is both preceded and followed by a Karde of the Visperad, Vṛ 18 and Vṛ 19 respectively. Vṛ 18 is in praise of the preceding Üštavaita Gatha, while Vṛ 19 praises the Spəntamainyu Gatha, after which it is recited. Thus, the Gathas alternate with the Kardes of the Visperad. In the Vendidad ceremony, the Videvdad chapters 13–14 are recited after the Visperad Karde 19, which praises the preceding Spəntamainyu Gatha, and before the Vohušastra Gatha, which comprises Y 51 (see next page, fig. 1).

By contrast, this basic pattern changes when it comes to the Yasna Haptaŋhāti. After the last hātī of the Ahunavaita Gatha, Y 34, Vṛ 14 is recited in praise of that Gatha. In the Vendidad ceremony, this is followed by fargard 7–8 of the Videvdad. However, the recitation does not then move directly on to the Yasna, as in the case of the Gathas, but an additional Visperad chapter is inserted—as if serving to mark, in a special way, the beginning of a new section. Moreover, the Yasna Haptaŋhāti is followed by a chapter in Younger Avestan. This has become part of the extant Yasna as chapter 42, a text which resembles the Visperad portions in praise of preceding Gathas. Y 42 praises the Amasa Spentas, the YH, and Ahura Mazda’s physical creations, in particular the waters, mountains and lakes. Y 42 is followed by two (not one) Kardes of the Visperad, Vṛ 16–17, both of which praise the Yasna Haptaŋhāti. In the Vendidad ceremony, they are followed by two fargards of the Videvdad, Vḍ 9–10. This arrangement suggests that both the Yasna and the Visperad give particular prominence to the YH by their insertion of additional chapters both before and after the latter. The entire Visperad seems to be geared towards the recitation of the Older Avestan texts, which are invoked, in Vṛ 1.3–8, at the very beginning of the Visperad.
The Yasna extended by the Visperad and Videvdad

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There is, however, more to it than that. Vr 21, recited between Vr 20 and 22, praises 'the second Yasna Haptāḥātī'. While Bartholomae thought that the expression aparā-yasnā-haptāḥātī meant the Younger Av. chapter Y 52,13 there are two problems with his interpretation. First, the kardes of the Visperad usually follow, rather than precede, the hātti of the Yasna which they praise. Secondly, although Y 52 contains praises of Ahura Mazda and his creations, it is a text quite different from the YH, both linguistically and contentwise. It is by no means self-evident why Y 52 should be called a 'second' or 'later' Yasna Haptāḥātī.

Much more likely, therefore, is the interpretation proposed by Darmesteter but rejected by Bartholomae. According to Darmesteter, the above expression referred to the second recitation of the YH at the beginning of Vr 21.16 As indicated by Geldner in his edition of the Avesta, not only is the whole of the YH, Y 35–41, recited a second time at the beginning of Vr 21, but so also is the Younger Avestan appendix consisting of Y 42. It thus makes perfect sense to assume that the expression aparā-yasnā-haptāḥātī refers to the second recitation of the Yasna Haptāḥātī, one which takes place in the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies at the commencement of Vr 21.

In a personal communication, Dastur Kotwal has pointed out that, in the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies, the second recitation of the Yasna Haptāḥātī marked a particularly beautiful phase of the ritual. Since the second YH was recited not by the chief priest, the zōt, but by his assistant, the rāspī, the former was allowed to enjoy some rest at this stage. This second recitation of the Yasna Haptāḥātī sounded particularly sweet and beautiful, because the rāspī tended to recite it slowly and with additional emphasis, thus setting it apart from the preceding lengthy Vendidad and Visperad portions. The beauty of that moment was further enhanced by the fact that, during the Vendidad ceremony, it was dawn by the time Vr 21 was reached, and people would be beginning to visit the firetemple.

The point is that in the Vendidad ceremony, Vr 21 is treated just like the first recitation of the YH in Y 35–42. Vr 21–22 constitute the only instance in which two Videvdad chapters are recited both before and after Visperad sections, whithout an intervening hātti from the Yasna. The

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13 Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strasburg, 1904), cols. 1272 f.
only explanation available is that this is so because the whole of the YH, namely the *apara- yasna- haptanāhāti-*, is recited in between the Videvdad pairs. In this way, the second recitation of the YH is given special prominence. Moreover, in the Visperad ceremony, this repetition of the YH and its praise in Vr 21–22 as the ‘second Yasna Haptanāhāti’, the *apara- yasna- haptanāhāti-*, is followed by Y 52, a Younger Avestan chapter inserted into the Old Avestan material.

After the second recitation of the YH, that text is worshipped in Vr 21: the waters are praised, the plants, the guiding choices (frauvaši-) of the truthful ones (Vr 21.1) and finally, in verse 4, the *apara- yasna-* itself:

(7) Vr 21.4

*aparam yasnam yazamaide*
*aparahe yasnahe yasnam yazamaide*
*aparahe yasnahe yazamaide*
*hātišca afmanāc vacasc vacastašītme*

‘We worship the Second Worship,
we worship the worship of the Second Worship,
we worship the chapters, syllables,
words and stanzas of the Second Worship.’

The larger context of this verse suggests that *apara- yasna-* is short for *apara- yasna- haptanāhāti-*. The treatment of the YH in both the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies points to the elevated status of this particular text. The liturgical arrangement of all three texts of the Zoroastrian high ritual centres around the YH. The latter constitutes the focus not only of the Yasna, but also of the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies. While the Yasna ceremony has a single climax in Y 35–41, the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies reach, in addition, another one in Vr 21 with the second recitation of the Yasna Haptanāhāti.

No ritual action takes place while the Yasna Haptanāhāti and succeeding Gathas Y 43–54 are recited. This is remarkable as ritual action accompanies the recitation of the other parts of the high ritual. Be that as it may, rather than assuming that the rituals have been lost, it is likely that their lack may be an ancient feature, because it agrees with the content of the Yasna Haptanāhāti, whose purpose is the praise of Ahura Mazda and his physical and spiritual creations.

**THE YH AND THE RITUAL OF THE WATERS**

It has been argued in section 1 above that the invocation- and yazamaide-formulae of the Younger Avestan parts of the Yasna are inspired by the Yasna Haptanāhāti. A further instance, where a Younger Avestan ritual could have been influenced by the Yasna Haptanāhāti is the Ritual of the Waters, the āh zōhr, which constitutes a part of the Yasna liturgy (Y 62.11–Y 70).

This ritual opens in Y 62.11 with the formula:

(8) Y 62.11

*aži.gorōmdahī apqm vaŋ’hinam*
*frātīmca paśītīmca aibjaratīmca*

‘Of the good waters, we welcome the coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming.’

It concludes in Y 70.6 with a variation of the same formula:

(9) Y 70.6

*apqm vaŋ’hinam yazamaide*
*frātīmca paśītīmca aibjaratīmca*

‘Of the good waters, we worship the coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming.’

The two formulae differ only by virtue of the verb, because aži.gorōmdahī ‘we welcome’ in Y 62.11 is replaced by yazamaide ‘we worship’ in Y 70.6. Y 62.11 and Y 70.6 respectively introduce and conclude the Ritual of the Waters. Their position at the beginning and end indicates that the almost identical formula of the two stanzas probably refers to that ritual.

While there is no Old Avestan attestation of the first two words frātī- and paśītī-, the sound shape of the third term of this formula, aibjaratī- ‘welcoming’, suggests that it is, like yazamaide, an Old Avestan loan

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17 Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 112–115. This observation was confirmed by personal communications from both Dastur Dr F.M. Kotwal and Ervad Dr Ramiya Kananja.

18 According to Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 119 f. n. 138, the āh zōhr begins with Y 62.11 and ends at Y 70.8. It must be noted, however, that Y 70.7, the final stanza of Y 70, is a repetition of Y 57.4, and Geldner, *Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 232 does not have Y 70.8. The rite of the āh zōhr is discussed by M. Boyce, “Ašz-zōhr and Āb zōhr”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1966, pp. 110 ff.
word, displaying the preverb with intervocalic -b- instead of the Younger Avestan bilabial spirant -β-. The verbal abstract aibijaratī-, which as in other YaAv. passages occurs only in its OAv. form, belongs to a group of derivatives from the compound aibi-jar ‘to greet, to welcome’. Semantically these words refer to the greetings and welcome accorded the divine beings when they accept the invitation and come to the place of ritual worship. The persistent retention of the Old Avestan form in the Younger Avestan passages indicates that this group of words continued to be perceived as being firmly established in the Old Avestan texts and borrowed from there for use in the Younger Avestan eulogies.

The only Old Avestan passage where a form of aibi-jar occurs, is in the Yasna Haptaŋhāti. In its first stanza, Y 35.2, the worshippers declare:

(10) Y 35.2
humatanm hāxtanm huvarstanm
iaiācā aniaiācā
varziiatūnmcā vānuarziiatūnmcā
maht aibjajaratō
naēnēstārō *ya ḏaṇā vohunam maht
‘We are welcomers
of good thoughts, good words, good deeds,
which are done and have been done here and elsewhere.
We are not blasurers of (what is) good.’

The initial expression in this introductory stanza of the YH, ‘we are welcomers’, may have provided the model for the opening (Y 62.11) and concluding (Y 70.6) formulae of the Ritual of the Waters. While in Y 62.11 and Y 70.6 the actions of ‘coming forwards, going back and welcoming’, frāitiṃca paîtittīṃca aibijaratīṃca, are characterized as being those of the good waters, the expression occurs without a genitive in Y 71.6:

(11) Y 71.6
vīspaeca pānce gā ḍā ḍaoniṃ yazamaide
vīspaeca yasnam
frāitiṃca paítitīṃca
aibijaratīṃca yazamaide
‘And we worship all five truthful Gathas;
and we worship the entire Worship
and the coming forwards and going back,
and the welcoming.’

It is reasonable to assume that the expression ‘coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming’ refers here, as it does in Y 62.11 and 70.6, to the ‘good waters’. Since in Y 71.6 these actions are worshipped together with texts, namely ‘five Gathas’ and the ‘Worship’, it is probable that the formula also refers to a text. The latter could be the Ritual of the Waters, the āh zōhr, which, in the arrangement of the extant Yasna, consists of Y 62.11–Y 70.

Bartholomae assumed that the first two terms of the expression frāitiṃca paîtittīṃca aibijaratīṃca meant ‘coming forwards’ and ‘going back’, and referred to ritual action involving water.19 Narten, in contrast, and on the basis of Vedic evidence, reversed their meanings, so that frāiti- became ‘going away’ and paîtiti- ‘coming forwards’ (‘Weggehen und Herangehen’).20 Some clarification as to the more precise meaning of the expression frāiti- and paîtiti- of the ‘good waters’ could come from the Nerangestan, where the fourth and last attestation of the word frāiti- ‘coming forwards’ is found:

(12) N 48
kahmāt haca apām ‘va ḍaṁ’ frāitiḥ frajasauītī
haca ha ‘vāxṣāt’ ā ‘ha ḍaṁ dātōjītī’ paíri sacaitē
taṭ hama taṭ ‘aibī gāme
yō ṭepa zao ḍram frabaraitī
pasca hā ‘frāśmō dātītī para hā vāxṣāt
nōj vaṭ ho aṁ ḍaītī ‘šīao ḍom vairāetiī
va ḍa yaṭ him aţōiī ‘visāpaehe ‘gastram’ paîtīēpta karšōjīt
‘Whence does the “Coming Forwards” of the good waters proceed? –
It evolves from sunrise to sunset.
This (is so) in summer and this (is also so) in winter.
The one who brings a libation to the water
after sunset (and) before sunrise,
does not do a better deed than
as if he poured it into the mouth21 of a poisonous serpent.’

This passage forms part of the description of the five watches given in N 46–51. N 48 comprises an additional section appended to N 47, which characterizes the morning watch, called hāuani-. In his edition of the Nerangestan, Waag seems to have considered the passage N 48 as being

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19 Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, cols. 1010 and 829.
20 Narten, Der Yasna Haptaŋhāti, p. 90 with n. 15.
21 On ‘gastram instead of transmitted vastram, see A. Waag, Nirangistan. Der Awestaraktat über die rituellen Vorschriften (Leipzig, 1940), p. 139.
out of order, because he moved it to follow chapter 109. However, the position of N 48 adjacent to the chapter discussing the morning watch (hāwunāri), during which the Yasna ceremony is celebrated, makes sense if the ‘coming forwards of the good waters’ is interpreted as referring to a ritual action, perhaps one that may both form part of the Yasna ritual but could also be performed on its own. Such an action must be that of the ‘Ritual of the Waters’, the āb zôhr, which, as stated by Kotwal and Boyd, should only be recited during daylight.\(^{22}\)

In contrast to another passage praising the ‘streaming forwards of the waters’ (apam fâsta-xâṣastra-) in

(13) Y 42.6
apamcâ fôrrasâstra-yazamâide
vaiaqmacâ fôrafrôk yazamâide
‘We worship the streaming forwards of the waters,
we worship the flying forwards of the birds’,

which seems to describe purely natural phenomena, apam frâiti-, the ‘coming forwards of the waters’ in Y 62.11, 70.6, 71.6 and N 48 is probably a technical expression of Zoroastrian ritual. All contexts in which frâiti- ‘coming forwards’ and paititi- ‘going back’ occur have a ritual connotation. In particular, the pair seems to characterize a certain process taking place during the ceremony, because the flowing forwards and back of the waters is precisely what happens during the āb zôhr ritual. This is enacted in such a way that the chief priest (the zôr) pours a ritually prepared and consecrated libation, the zôhr, from a cup in his left hand into a cup in his right hand, then from the cup in his right hand back into that in his left and so on. Thus, the mixture is repeatedly poured backwards and forwards.\(^{23}\)

Accordingly, the collocation frâitiqma paititiqma may be the Avestan expression describing these movements of the waters taking place during the āb zôhr ritual. If that is the case, it would constitute an instance of agreement between the content of the text recited during the Yasna ceremony and its accompanying ritual action. Such agreement would suggest that the Avestan text of the āb zôhr contains sections composed with a view to the ritual action. If this is so, the Ritual of the Waters, the āb zôhr, goes back at least to the Younger Avestan period.

\(^{22}\) Kotwal/Boyd, A Persian Offering, p. 121 n. 140, point out that this injunction is also observed in the Vendidad ceremony, which begins at midnight, because the daylight watch of the Hâwan Gâh has begun by the time the ritual reaches Yasna 65.


The Younger Avestan passages referring to the Ritual of the Waters bear traces of dependence on an Old Avestan model. This is indicated by the noun aibîjarittî ‘welcome’, which is a loanword from the Older Avesta. It forms part of the formula ‘the coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming of the good waters’, introducing and concluding the āb zôhr in Y 62.11 and Y 70.6. The connection of aibîjar with the Yasna Haptâhâiti also emerges from attestations of the verb aibî/ auij-jar ‘to welcome’, which exhibit the Younger Avestan form of the preverb instead of OAv. aibi. This verb occurs in verses introducing a new section not only in Y 62.11 aibî.gorâdmahi ‘we welcome’, but also in the other two of its three attestations. The second occurrence of the verb aibî/auui-jar refers explicitly to the YH:

(14) Vr 17.1
aibî.gorâdmahi
yasnahe haptâhâitiis
humataca hûxtaca huiarštaca
aibî.gorâdmahi aâm vohâ
‘We welcome
the good thoughts, good words, good deeds
of the Worship in Seven Chapters.
We welcome good truth.’

This passage is from the Visperad-Karde recited after the YH and praising that text. The words humataca hûxtaca huiarštaca are probably a quotation from the opening words of the YH in Y 35.2 (no. 10), where a form of aibî-jar also occurs. The third attestation of this verb is found in Vr 21 in its first two verses, which are recited after the ‘second Yasna Haptâhâiti’ and similarly praise that text:

(15) Vr 21.1
auui apamça vat’hinâm
urwâramça x’âbrîranâm
ašaonâmça frauawâ’înam
yasnam gorâdmahi vahmâmca
auui dêhâmci yâ vat’yhînê
yâ apô yásca urwârâ
yâsca ašaonâmça frauawâsîi
yasnam gorâdmahi vahmâmca
‘We welcome the worship and praise
of the good waters,
of the fruit-bearing plants,'
of the guiding choices of the truthful ones.
We welcome the worship and praise
of those who are good:
namely the waters, the plants,
and the guiding choices of the truthful ones.'

Vr 21.2
aun aišai aiši gaiiehe
aun mā ērahe spāntahe
așa onō garezialtja hehe
yaśnu mā ērahe vahmāca
aun tawa ahura mazda
yaśnu mā ērahe vahmāca
aun tawa zara ēšttra
yaśnu mā ērahe vahmāca
aun tawa ratuō bārga
yaśnu mā ērahe vahmāca
aun amāfārām spāntaŋm
yaśnu mā ērahe vahmāca

'We welcome the worship and praise
of the cow, of Gaia,
of the bounteous formula,
the truthful one, whose life-force is energetic.
We welcome the worship and praise
of you, O Wise Lord.
We welcome the worship and praise
of you, O Zarathushtra.
We welcome the worship and praise
of you, O high Ratu.
We welcome the worship and praise
of the Bounteous Immortals.'

Moreover, another trace of the language of the YH in Vr 21.1–2 is the expression yaśnu ... vahmāca, a collocation which is first attested in the YH (Y 35.7). Thus, although the verb aibi/auui jar appears in its Younger Avestan form, it always occurs in contexts which are dependent on the YH. Indeed, all attestations of this family of words recall the YH in one way or the other.

The link between the Ritual of the Waters and the YH consists in the fact that the worship of the Waters constitutes the central part and focus of both texts. The OA. form aibi, sahrat, in the formula introducing and concluding the āb zōhr belongs to Old Avestan ritual terminology. The connection between the two texts is further reinforced by the quotation of a line from the YH, apō aś yazamaide ‘we worship the waters’ (Y 38.3a) in Y 63.3, with OA. aś but no lengthening of the final -e, and, moreover, by the repetition of entire sections of the Yasna Haptāhnāti: the praise of the waters, comprising stanzas 2–5 of Y 38, is twice repeated in the Ritual of the Waters (Y 67.6–8 and Y 68.20–21).

THE WORD YASNA- IN THE AVESTA

We have already seen from Vr 21.1 (no.7), that the Yasna Haptāhnāti could be referred to just by yasna-, without its epithet haptāhnāti. The question, however, is whether there is any Avestan evidence for the use of yasna- alone as the name of the 72-chapter text. Accordingly, in the following discussion of its usage in the Avesta, passages where it could refer to a text will be of particular interest.

The Avestan word yasna-, which means ‘worship’, corresponds exactly to the closely related Vedic yajñā-, which is the ordinary noun for ‘sacrifice’ or ‘worship’. In most of its Avestan attestations the word yasna- refers to the ‘worship’ of Ahura Mazdā and his creations. Particularly frequent is the collocation

(16) yasnaica vahmīca xšnao ērāaica frasastaiæca
‘for worship, praise, gratification and glory’, in invocation formulae of the Younger Avesta. The object of the worship is usually either Ahura Mazdā himself or one of his truthful spiritual or physical creations, though occasionally the expression is also used of Daevas, e.g. in

(17) Vd 16.11

daēnuanam yasnaica vahmīca
‘for the worship and praise of the Daevas’.

Moreover, yasna- refers to a certain text bearing that name. In most instances, this text is unequivocally identified by the epithet haptāhnāti-as ‘the Worship in Seven Chapters’, e.g. in the formula

(18) Y 41.8 (Y 71.12, Vr 16.0 and 2.7)
yasnu sīrōm haptāhnāti
ašaunam ašahe ratum yazamaide

24 E.g. in Gāh 1.1 and numerous other passages, see Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, col. 557.
‘we worship the strong Worship in Seven Chapters, the truthful one, the Ratu of Truth’.

In addition, however, there are six passages, where yasna- alone appears to denote a certain text. We have already discussed Vr 21.4 (no.7), where aparmon yasnam refers to the second Yasna Haptaňhâiti recited at the beginning of Vr 21. Y 71.6 (no.11) praises the texts that have just been recited, i.e. the Gathas, the Yasna, and, probably, the āb zōhr. One could argue here that vispaŋ yasnam ‘the entire Yasna’ meant the 72-chapter text, at the end of which this stanza is recited. However, the Gathas, too, are referred to as vispaēca ... gā ḍē ‘and all Gathas’, and we know for sure that they constitute only a part of the 72-chapter Yasna liturgy. Therefore, since the Gathas and āb zōhr are clearly defined parts of the Yasna liturgy, Bartholomae was probably right in his interpretation that vispaŋ yasnam meant the YH.25

The remaining four passages, where yasna- alone refers to a text, are found in the Nerangestan (N 20,26 22, 24 and 40). In N 22, the recitation of the Gathas is contrasted with that of the yasna-:

(19) N 22
’srapo ṭhā ‘nā gāđanaṁ `ratufriś paitī astica yasnahe aḍa ṭsaśō māṭhahe ahe ṭi nā ‘śravaṇyḥo ‘āframentsī ṭīstrīветe yā ḍkī gāđanacīt gā ḍkī sṛauaṇātī yasnam yasnaṁ paitištātī- vispaŋ gāđanaṁ `ratufriś yasnam yasnaṁ gāđanacīt gā ḍkī sṛauaṇātanām paitišt-h yasnahe aṭauahe `ratufriś aratufriś gā ḍanaṁ‘A man pleases the Ratus by the recitation of the Gathas and by standing by at the Worship, and equally at the Formula of the Cattle Breeder.
For a man commits an offence by not recalling this word just as (in the case) of the Gathas.

25 Bartholomae, Aliranisches Wörterbuch, col. 1272.
26 On N 20, see below n. 29.

The one who, while reciting the Gathas, stands by the one celebrating the Worship, that one pleases the Ratus of all the Gathas.
If one celebrates the Worship while standing by during the recitation of the Gathas, that one pleases the Ratu with regard to the Worship alone, (but) does not please the Ratus with regard to the Gathas.’

The passage is about the recitation of texts from the Older Avesta, in which the YH is embedded. One indication that yasna- refers to the YH,27 is not only that it is contrasted with the Gathas, but also that another text of the Yasna liturgy is mentioned, the ‘Mantra of the Cattle Breeder’, ṭsaśō māṭha, comprising Y 58. This would not make sense if yasna- referred to the entire 72 chapter text. Furthermore, if yasna- does refer here to the YH, this passage provides evidence for the view that the Yasna Haptaňhâiti was considered as part of the Gathas.

The discussion of the declamation of the sacred texts continues, in the Nerangestan, with the question of simultaneous recitation by two priests and the objectionable behaviour of one who, while celebrating the Worship (yasna-), listens to the recitation of the other priest instead of concentrating on his own.28 Such behaviour does not ‘please the Ratus’:

(20) N 24
ya yasnam `yasnaṁ `afsmainiuva vacastātiuvaṁ vā uau `ratufriś hām sruṭ vāciadha `yasnaṁ `uau aratufriś kaṭ hām sruṭ vācimca yaḥ hakat ṭāmrūṭo afsmainiuvaṁca vacastātiuvaṁca auui `ainiio surumauvi nōi aiśni oṣō ratufriś yō nōig `aiśli surumauvi

27 As suggested by Bartholomae, Aliranisches Wörterbuch, col. 1272.
28 F.M. Kotwal/Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, The Herbedestan and Nerangestan, vol. 2: Nerangestan, Fragard 1 (Paris, 1993), p. 51 n. 95 comment that priests in Naosari are still trained to concentrate entirely on their own recitation and ignore that of other priests next to them in the ritual precinct. Philological details of N 24 are discussed in A. Hintze, “When the stars rise; the Avestan expression ažištāt.brāma- ažišt.a”, Religious themes and texts of pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia: studies in honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli on the occasion of his 65th birthday on 6 December 2002, eds. M. Maggi et al. (Wiesbaden, 2002), pp. 138–140.
‘If they celebrate the Worship in verse lines or stanzas, both of them satisfy the Ratus.
If they celebrate while listening to one another’s words, neither of them satisfies the Ratus.
And what is ‘listening to one another’s words?’ — When both pronounce simultaneously in verse lines and stanzas (and) one listens, but the other does not, the one who does not listen pleases the Ratus.’

Although the figura etymologica yasnam yaz could be translated with Kotwal and Kreyenbroek as ‘to perform the act of worship’, the larger context of N 22–24 supports the interpretation that the passage is about the recitation of the Yasna Haptañhāti, as is clearly the case in N 22 (no. 19) and some Pahlavi passages.

An opposition between hātti-, referring to the Gathas, and yasna-, referring to the Yasna Haptañhāti, is found in N 40:

(21) N 40

‘kahiiti ci tā dahmanām zəo ṣrāďa ratufrīš
‘nārikli cviṣci apafnaćiukahceti
yezi vaθa hāθanām βηlarāsca frataurunāsca
antara hāttiv yasnam ‘frāiazoīž
‘One pleases the Ratus with the priest-office of either anyone (male) of the community,
or of a woman or of a minor child,
if the one knows the beginnings and ends of the chapters,
(and) recites the Worship in between the chapters.

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29 Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, The Hērbedestān and Nārangestān, vol. 2, p. 49. The figura etymologica yasnam yaz occurs also in Yt 1.24, where yasna- means ‘worship’ but does not appear to refer to a specific text bearing that name. In N 81, yasna-haptañhāti- is mentioned after ahuna-vairia-. In N 20, where yasna- is governed by a middle form of yaz (yasnam yazmamæhe), it is, unlike in N 81, not characterized as haptañhāti-. However, it may refer to that text, because it occurs, as in N 81, after ahuna-vairia-. On yasnam yaz cf. also the comments by Kellens, “Considérations sur l’histoire de l’Avesta”, p. 481.


31 Transmitted frāīši is was corrected to ‘frāiazoīž by Waag Nirangistan, p. 58 and to ‘frāiazoīž by H. Humbach, “Textkritische und sprachliche Bemerkungen zum Nirangistan”, Kuhns Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung 77, 1961, p. 108.


33 On hātti- as referring specifically to the Gathas, see Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, col. 1801.

34 Cf. Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, col. 1589.

35 See Hintze, “On the literary structure of the Older Avesta”, p. 32 n. 3 (with references).
RITUAL AND RITUALS IN THE NERANGESTĀN

Philip G. Kreyenbroek

Oral transmission plays an important role in the history of the sacred and religious texts of Zoroastrianism. While many scholars hold that Zarathustra, to whom the Zoroastrian tradition attributes its origin, lived in pre-history—perhaps around 1200 or 1000 BCE—no alphabet that was suitable for representing the sound system of the Old Iranian language of its sacred texts appears to have been known in Iran until such a script was developed in the course of the Sassanian period (226–651 CE). Until that time the corpus of Old Iranian sacred texts, the Avesta, must have been handed down orally. In the course of time, the centre of Zoroastrian culture shifted from Eastern Iran to the west of the country, the heartland of the Achaemenian Empire (ca. 550–330 BCE), where ‘Avestan’ was a foreign language. It has been argued that the relative unfamiliarity of the sacred language led the West Iranian priesthood to memorise all religious texts verbatim, which in turn led to the fixation of the many texts that may until then have been transmitted more freely. Possibly at the same time or perhaps a little later, when the ‘Old Iranian’ period gave way to the ‘Middle Iranian’ stage in the development of the languages of the Zoroastrian communities, the ‘Avestan’ language came to seem increasingly obscure, and a simple word-for-word translation into contemporary Iranian languages came into being. This enabled the priesthood to understand the meaning of the Avesta to some extent, while the simplicity of the translation technique enabled scholar-priests (herbed) to memorise and study a surprisingly large number of Avestan texts with their translation (which was known as Zand), apparently without relying on written sources. The translations of the Zand were not always illuminating, however, and in the course of time scholar-priests’ comments were memorised along with the actual translations. The extant Zand texts are all in Middle Persian or Pahlavi, although similar texts must have existed in other Iranian languages.