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## Gathic Composition and Lexicology\*

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It is now possible to illuminate the Gathas through two novel approaches, representing recently described phenomena of the structure of this poetry, and systematic transtextual generation of new poems, noted below. These approaches, brought to bear on what will be shown to be two cognate words, will lead from a consideration of an eschatological passage to a focus on Zarathushtra's concerns in connection with his own mortality.

The meaning of *yāb-* was earlier treated,<sup>1</sup> now summarized and expanded. Ring composition was applied to show that Y30.2, against various other opinions, means '(chariot)-race'. Apart from ring composition, evidence adduced for this meaning included the collocation of *yābī-*, *yāb-* with

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1. Martin Schwartz, "Encryptions in the Gathas: Zarathushtra's variations on the theme of bliss," in Carlo G. Cereti, Mauro Maggi and Elio Provasi,

eds., *Studies in Honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday on 6th December* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003), 376-378.

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names in *-aspa-* ‘horse’, respectively Y46.14 *Vīštāspa* and Y49.9 *Dājāmāspa*, further collocated with the motif of fame in the first instance, and in the second instance the motifs of yoking/being yoked. In addition, a semantic shift of *yāh-* from ‘chariot-race’ to ‘agon’ (< Greek *ágōn* = OInd. *ājī-* ‘chariot-race’ from ‘drive forth’) contextually suits translation of Yt 11.13 *vərəθrastəmō yāhī* ‘most victorious in the contest’, and ‘agon’ > ‘agony’ fits Yt13.14 *yāñhəm ... qzayñhəm* ‘of agonies ... of anxieties’ (for YH36.2 *mazištāi yāñhəm*, see Schwartz 2006a, 484).

The ring composition supports *yāh-* as ‘chariot race’.<sup>2</sup> Y30.10, the stanza concentrically corresponding to Y30.2, in addition to its formal correlation of *srauuah* ‘fame’ (\*‘hearing about’) to Y30.2 *sraotā* ‘hear you’, has a correlation with the chariot-race motif of Y30.2. Y30.10 has ‘but they remain yoked ..., those who win in good fame’ (cf. above on Y49.9 and Y46.14 for *yāh-* in the contexts of being yoked for a prize and achieving fame) contrasts there with ‘breakage will befall the *spaiiaθra-* of Wrongness’. For *spaiiaθra-*, translation ‘attachment of the chariot’s shaft (pole) to the yoke’ is corroborated by the cognate root stem *-spā-t-* in YAv. *upairi.spāt-* ‘chariot pole’ and, with preverbs *\*ā-*, *\*vi-*, and *\*ava-*, Sanglechi, Yidgha, and Wakhi words for the functionally equivalent ‘plowshaft’. Thus in Y30 ring composition confirms that Y30.2 *yāh-* means ‘chariot-race’. Finally, as to etymology, *yāh-* *\*/ya’ah/* matches Vedic *yā-ti* ‘races, courses forth’, which would be the meaning of their Indo-Iranian verb etymon  $\sqrt{yā}$  ( $\sqrt{yaH}$ ).

## II

The Indo-Iranian root of Av. *yāh-*, *yā* ‘to race, to course’, provides the substance for our second section. Insler (1975, translations, ad loc.) has a diversely triple treatment of *yāh-*, Y30.2 *yāñhō* as gen. of a *yāh-* ‘retribution’, Y46.10 *yāhī* as *\*yā \*ahī* ‘with whom thou art (allied)’, and Y49.9 *yāhī* as ‘yes’

2. Matrin Schwartz, “How Zarathushtra Generated the Gathic Corpus,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 16 (2006), 53–64, see 53–54 as to the principle.

(?!). What is important for us now is that Insler (p. 90) emends Y48.2 *yā mēng* to *\*yāmēng*, gen. of *\*yāman-* = Vedic *yāman-* ‘course’ (which derives from the aforementioned root *yā*), and takes the hapax *pərəθā* in the same line, otherwise interpreted as ‘compensation’ or the like, as ‘far end’.

Insler comments on Y48.2b: “The peculiar *yā mēng* is for orig. *yāmēng*, gen. of *yāman-* ‘course’ = Ved. *yāman-*, and the hapax *pərəθā* (otherwise taken as ‘compensation’ vel sim.) corresponds to Ved. *pārā-* ‘far shore, end’. Thus the expression *\*yāmēng pərəθā* means ‘the end of the course’, and is a euphemism for death. Cf. comparable Ved. formation *ádvanah pāram* RV. V. 54.10d, etc. Separation to *yā mēng* has taken place under the influence of *yā* in the first [i.e., preceding] line.”<sup>3</sup>

For *pərəθā* as ‘far side, far end’, cf. also Av. *pərətu-* ‘a crossing over, ford, bridge’ <  $\sqrt{par}$  ‘to cross over’, collocated at Y46.10e *frō ... frā pərətūm* ‘I shall cross over the ... Bridge’. More importantly, *\*mēng* could occur only as part of a phrase *\*mēng ... dā-* (*\*mēng* < *manh* < *\*mans*), with *mēng ... dā* = *mązdā-*.<sup>4</sup>

With adoption of Insler’s understanding of Y48.2b, the entire stanza may now be given with a new translation, whose details will be justified below:

Y48.2

a *vaocā mōi yā tuuēm vīduuā ahura*  
 b *parā hīiaṭ mā yā mēng pərəθā jīmaitī*  
 c *kaṭ ašauuā mazdā vēngḥaṭ drəguuantam*  
 d *hā zī aṅhəuš varḥi vīstā ākəratiš*

Y48.2

‘Tell me, O Thou knower, Ahura,  
 before the end of my course [= my death] shall come:

3. Stanley Insler, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra* (Teheran-Liege: E. J. Brill, Leiden and Biblio-

theque Pahlavi, 1975), 206.  
 4. Insler, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra*, 14-15.

Shall the righteous one overthrow the wrongsome one,  
 O Mazdā? For that *gestaltung* of existence is the good one to be obtained.

The question exemplifies Y48.1a, *yezī adāiš ašā drujim vōnghaitī* ‘if, upon these (*scil.* Y48.1’ salvific benefits) one shall overthrow the wrongsome one via Rightness’. For *vistā* ‘(to be) obtained’, note resumption at Y48.3a’ *vaēdamnā* ‘to the one who obtains’. Etymologically *ākərətīš* is from *ā* +  $\sqrt{kar}$  ‘to make or bring about to a certain end, patterning, design’, cf. RV X 85.5 *sāmānām māsa ākrīh* ‘the moon is the *gestaltung* of the years’.

This interpretation is confirmed within Y48 by stanza 9:

Y48.9

a *kadā vaēdā yezī cahiiā xšaiiaθā*  
 b *mazdā ašā yehiiā mā āiθiš duuaēθā*  
 c *ərəš mōi {ərəž}ūcəm vaṅhəuš vafuš manəṅhō*  
 d *vīdiiāt saošiiqs yaθā hōi ašiš aṅhat*

Y48.9 ‘When shall I know whether Thou hast power, O Mazdā with Rightness, over whoever is a danger and threat to me? May the design of Good Mind be told me aright, for the weal-bringer should know how his reward will be.’

Here, matching Y48.2 *ākərətīš* ‘*gestaltung*, patterning, design’ is *vafuš* ‘(cosmic) design’ < ‘weaving pattern, weft’ (cf. the Vedic cognate *vapus-* ‘form’, influenced by *vap-* ‘to shear, trim’, representing the pervasive Indo-European metaphor of the weaving of fate). At Y29.6 *mazdā vīduuā vafuš* ‘Mazdā, knowing the designs’ refers to the primordial divine prognostication of Zarathushtra’s messengership. For *vafuš-*, contexts, and etymology.<sup>5</sup>

Y48.9 not only provides a variant of the question of Y48.2 (with Zarathushtra and his adversary representing respectively the righteous one

5. Martin Schwartz, “Gathic Compositional History, Y29, and Bovine Symbolism,” in Siamak Adhami ed., *Paitimāna: Essays in Iranian,*

*Indo-European and Indian Studies in Honor of Hanns-Peter Schmidt* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 210.

and the wicked one), but as parallel to the latter, Y48.9 indirectly confirms that Y48.2 refers to Zarathushtra's desire for divine assurance before his death. Y48.9 is closely based on Y32.16:

Y32.16 a

*hamēm taṭ vahištācīṭ yē ušuruiiē siiascīṭ dahmahiiā*  
*b xšaiiṣ mazdā ahurā yəhiiā mā aiθišcīṭ duuaēθā*  
*c hiiataēnāñhē drəguuatō ēānū išiiəng aṅhāiiā*

Y32.16 'This is equal to the best thing for me: when I am reposing in the happiness of the Skillful One (i.e., Thee), O Mazdā Ahura, (Thou) having power over him who is for me a danger and threat, so that I would put in check the wrongsome ones as to their harm to the future messengers.'<sup>6</sup>

It must yet be shown that at Y48.2 the posited phrase 'end of the course' (= 'death') is indeed based on a *yāman-* 'course', the latter supported, as we have suggested, by *yāb-* 'race' as cognate. Proof is the cross-textual consecutive recasting of lexical material from Y30 as part of the lexical skeleton of Y48, whereby, in this instance, each stanza of Y30 contributes at least one word to each stanza of Y48<sup>7</sup> with Y30 is Y48.2b *parā ... yāməng* and Y30.2c *parā ... yāñhō*, whereby *yāman-* matches *yāb-*:

6. For the translation of the final word at Y32.16 as 'put in check, tie up' see Insler, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra*, 210; Schwartz, "How Zarathushtra Generated the Gathic Corpus," 54 & 58; Martin Schwartz, "The Gathas and Other Old Avestan Poetry," in Georges-Jean Pinault and Daniel Petit, eds., *La langue poétique indo-européenne, Actes du Colloque de travail de la Société des Études Indo-Européennes (Indogermanische Gesellschaft/Society for Indo-European Studies)*, Paris, 22–24 octobre 2003 (Leuven-Paris: Peeters, 2003), 460–461 & 464–465.

7. for the principle, see Schwartz, "How Zarathushtra Generated the Gathic Corpus," 55–57 & 59–64; further Martin Schwartz

"Pouruchista's Gathic Wedding and the Teleological Composition of the Gathas." in Werner Sundermann, Almut Hintze, and Francois de Blois, eds., *Exegisti Monumenta: Festschrift in Honour of Nicholas Sims-Williams*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 429–448 and, with consequences for lexicography and etymology, Martin Schwartz "Lexical Cruces of Yasna 29 and the Serial Cross-Composition of the Gathas," in Maria Macuch, Dieter Weber, and Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, eds., *Ancient and Middle Iranian Studies: Proceedings of the 6th European Conference of Iranian Studies, held in Vienna, 18–22 September 2007* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 219–224.

- Y30.1a' *vaxšiiā*; Y48.1b" *fraoxtā*: √*vak* 'to speak'
- Y30.2b' *parā ... yāṅhō*; 48.2b' *parā ... \*yāmēṅ*: 'before' + noun < root √*yā* 'to course'
- Y30.3c' *hudāṅhō*; Y48.3b' *hudā* 'benefactor'
- Y30.4b" *aṅhaṭ apēməm*; Y48.4d" *apēməm ... aṅhaṭ* 'will be last'
- Y30.5c" *šiiəoθanāiš*; Y48.5b" *šiiəoθanāiš* 'with actions'
- Y30.6c" *marətānō*; Y48.5c" *mašiiā*: \**mart*— 'mortals'
- Y30.7c" *paoruiiō*; Y48.6d" *paouruiiehiiā* 'first'
- Y30.8b" *vohū manāṅhā*; Y48.7 *vanhəuš manāṅhō* 'Good Mind'
- Y30.8c" *ašāt*; Y48.8c' *ašā* 'Rightness'
- Y30.9c" *aṅhaṭ*; Y48.9d" *aṅhaṭ* 'will be'
- Y30.10a' *adā*; Y48.10a,10b' *kadā* 'then'/'when?'
- Y30.11c' *sauuā*; Y48.12a" *saošiiantō*: √*sū* 'to bring (salvific) benefit or weal'
- What may now be suggested is that not only does the entire phrase 48.2b *parā ... yāmēṅ* correspond to Y30.2b' *parā ... yāṅhō*, but the theme of Y48.2 'the end of the course' (*yāmēṅ parəθā*) was suggested by the allusion to the end of the race at Y30.2 and thereby Y30.10.

The cross-stanzaic correspondence between Y48 and Y30 beyond the level of words shows other correlations. Y30.1–2 is one of a number of Gathic passages in which the overt key word *vahištā* 'best things' is the target of a nearby encryption (or serial encryption) in which the sounds of *vahištā* are to be perceived as scrambled in a kind of oral anagram (which I call "mixophonism") within a phrase of other words.<sup>8</sup> This technique is found at Y30.1a 'Lo! I shall speak to the seekers (/at TĀ WaxšyĀ IšānTAH/) things to be understood indeed by *the knower* (*vīdušē*)', with a further

8. Schwartz, "Encryptions in the Gathas: 378-385; chwartz, "How Zarathushtra Generated the Gathic Corpus," 204-206.

mixophonism of /VAHIŠTĀ/ at the end of the stanza. The decryptive clue is given at Y30.2a: ‘Hear with your ears *the best things* (*vahištā*). Y48.2d also mixophonizes /VAHIŠTĀ/: /HĀ zI AHauŠ VIŠTĀ ĀkrTIŠ/. The decryption comes at Y48.3: For the one who obtains/possesses/gets it/them, (is/are) *the best* (things) (*vahištā*) of the teachings which the beneficent Ahura teaches with Rightness, being holy, *knowing* (*viduuā*) indeed the hidden utterances, like Thee, O Mazdā, with the intellect of Good Mind. “The hidden utterances” refer to the encrypted sounds, whereby the ‘good *gestaltung*’ of 48.10d is seen as tantamount to ‘the best things’.

In addition, the defeat of Wrong by Right, designated at Y48.1a by *sauua-*pl. ‘beneficial weal’, is found in the last line of Y30, again with *sauua-*pl., generalizing the successful results of the metaphoric chariot race. Furthermore, the cognate term for the bringer(s) of this evil-expelling weal, *saošiant-*, is found in the last line of Y48, and is also used self-referentially in Zarathushtra’s question at Y48.9 as to the outcome for him.

It is seen that attention to the compositional aspects of Y30 and Y48 and their comparison yields substantial insights into the lexicology and thematics of both poems.