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 IN CONTEXT

EDITED BY

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Introduction of Theory and in Zoroastrianism 77

Theoretical Parameters for the Analysis and Comparison
 of Recent Approaches to the Study of the Yasna 99

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

The An of Khas in a Comparative Context 137
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Heil und Kontinuität in Texten und Rituellen
 der zoroastrischen und indischen Traditionen 153
 W. LUDDECKENS

Zoroastrian and Taoist Ritual: Cosmology and Sacred
 Cosmology 173
 G. WINDFURR

Aspects of the 'Interpretation' of the Sacrifice in the
 Zoroastrian Tradition 223

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Unifying Urtexts: The Yasna and the Avesta 253
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CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgments	IX
Contextualizing the Contexts. On the Study of Zoroastrian Rituals	1
M. STAUSBERG	
MODELLING THEORY—THEORETICAL APPROACHES	
Sequenzierung von Riten und die Ordnung der Rituale	57
B. GLADIGOW	
'Initiations' in Theory and in Zoroastrianism	77
J. SNOEK	
Meta-Theoretical Parameters for the Analysis and Comparison of Two Recent Approaches to the Study of the Yasna	99
J. KREINATH	
COMPARATIVE STUDIES	
The Art of Ritual in a Comparative Context	137
J.W. BOYD / R.G. WILLIAMS	
Bruch und Kontinuität in Todesritualen. Beobachtungen zu westeuropäischen und zoroastrischen Bestattungen	153
D. LÜDDECKENS	
Zoroastrian and Taoist Ritual: Cosmology and Sacred Numerology	173
G. WINDFUHR	
Aspects of the 'Interiorization' of the Sacrifice in the Zoroastrian Tradition	233
A. PANAINO	
RITUAL TEXTS—RITUALS IN TEXTS	
Smashing Urine: On Yasna 48.10	253
P.O. SKJÆRVØ	

- Les précautions rituelles et la triade du comportement 283
J. KELLENS
- On the Ritual Significance of the Yasna Haptanhāiti 291
A. HINTZE
- Ritual and Rituals in the Nērangestān 317
PH. KREYENBROEK
- The Yasna Ritual in Pahlavi Literature 333
SH. SHAKED

RITUAL PERFORMANCES AND PRACTICES

- Sub specie maiestatis: Reflections on Sasanian Court Rituals 345
A. DE JONG
- Ritual Community Meals in Ancient Iranian Religion 367
A. HULTGÅRD
- To Praise the Souls of the Deceased and the Immortal Spirits
of the Righteous Ones: The Staomi or Stūm Ritual's History
and Functions 389
F. KOTWAL / J.K. CHOKSY
- The Bāj-dharnā (Drōn Yašt) and its Place in
Zoroastrian Rituals 403
R.P. KARANJIA
- Fires and the Establishment of *ātaš bahrāms* in the
Zoroastrian Tradition 425
M. VITALONE
- The *Ātaš nu gīr*: A Reconstitutive Ritual of Recital 443
S. STEWART
- Prejudice vs. Reality. Zoroastrians and their Rituals
as Seen by two 19th Century Italian Travellers 461
C.G. CERETI
- Manekji on the Religious/Ritual Practices of the Iranian
Zoroastrians: An English Translation of a Passage from his
Travel Report in Gujarati (1865) 481
M. GIARA / R.P. KARANJIA / M. STAUSBERG

THE INTERACTION OF RITUAL TRADITIONS

- Zarathustra der Priester und Prophet in der Lehre der
Manichäer 517
W. SUNDERMANN
- Supernatural Intercession to Earthly Problems: *Sofreh* Rituals
Among Shiite Muslims and Zoroastrians in Iran 531
S. KALINOCK
- „O Herr, erhöere unser Monāğāt“: Zarathustrische
Traditionslinien einer persischen Gebetsgattung zwischen
Indien und Iran 547
B. SCHMERMBECK
- From Private Shrine to Pilgrim-Center: The Spectrum of
Zoroastrian Shrines in Iran 563
R. LANGER

RITUAL CHANGE—CHANGING RITUALS

- Archaeological Evidence of Zoroastrian Funerary Practices 593
D. HUFF
- Kontinuität und Wandel in den Ritualen der iranischen
Zarathustrier 631
K. MAZDAPOUR
- Monday-Nights at the Banaji, Fridays at the Aslaji:
Ritual Efficacy and Transformation in Bombay City 653
M. STAUSBERG
- Abstracts 719
- List of Illustrations 735
- Colour Plates 739

ON THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE YASNA HAPTAŅHĀITI

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. LXXXI.

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 Yašts 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 (*zōt*) 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 *hāiti*. This noun is a *ti*-abstract derived from the root *hā* (= Vedic *sā*) 'to bind' and literally means 'binding'. Presumably it lexicalizes the idea that a *hāiti* is a self-contained literary 'bundle' or composition. In religious practice, the 72 *hāiti*- of the Yasna are represented symbolically by the 72 strands from which the sacred girdle of the Zoroastrians, the *kusti*, 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 Haptañhāiti (abbreviated: YH), the "Worship in Seven Chapters". As the name indicates, this text consists of seven *hāiti*.

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.¹ 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 *yašt*, *yazišn* or *yasn* denote the Avestan high liturgy. Similarly, as Antonio Panaino has shown, the Yašts are frequently referred to as *yasn*.² 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.³

¹ The earliest attestation of this use of *yasna* is probably found in Mas'ūdī, who died in 956 C.E., if what he calls *isnād* in Arabic is a corrupted rendering of *ysn* = *yasna*, see Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d'or*. Texte et traduction by C. Barbier de Meynard/Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1863), vol. 2, p. 125; J. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*. Traduction nouvelle avec commentaire historique et philologique. 3 vols. (Paris, 1892–93, repr. 1960), vol. 1, p. LXXXVIII, cf. J. Kellens, "Considérations sur l'histoire de l'Avesta", *Journal Asiatique* 286, 1998, p. 479; A. Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī and his World. A Muslim Humanist and his Interest in non-Muslims* (London, 1979), p. 288. The New Persian term *jašn*, which is the regular continuation of a reconstructed Old Persian **jašna-*, denotes, however, an outer liturgical ceremony.

² A. Panaino, "Philologia Avestica IV: Av. *yaštay-/yešti-*; *yašta-*; phl. *yašt*. Quelques réflexions sur les titres des hymnes de l'Avesta", *Studia Iranica* 23, 1994, p. 176 f.; F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Paris, 1991), p. 90, n. 82.

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

In this article, I propose to examine the role of the YH within Zoroastrian high 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 Haptañhāiti 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 Haptañhāiti was perceived as *the* Worship, or *yasna-*, par excellence and provided the model for the Younger Avestan eulogistic invocations characterized by the verb *yazamaide* 'we worship'.

THE YASNA HAPTAÑHĀITI 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 *hāiti*. 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 Gathic 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 *hāiti*- 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 Haptañhāiti at its heart. The Yasna thus exhibits a concentric compositional structure.⁴ The outer circles consist of liturgical praises to Ahura Mazdā 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 Mazdā, the Aməša Spəntas, the various divisions of time, called

⁴ See A. Hintze, "On the literary structure of the Older Avesta", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65, 2002, pp. 31–51.

ratu-, and other entities. These sections alternate with texts and praises devoted to special subjects, such as the praise of Haoma (Y 9–11), the Mazdayasnian 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 Mazdayasnians (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

*ātarš vōi mazdā ahurahiiā ahī
mainiiuš vōi ahiiā spāništō ahī
hiiat vā tōi nōmanqm vāzištəm
ātarə mazdā ahurahiiā
tā ʒβā pairjasāmaidē*

'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

*sraēštəm aṭ tōi kəhrpəm kəhrpqm
āuuāēdaiiamahī mazdā ahurā
imā raocā
barəzištəm barəzimanqm auuaṭ
yāt + huuarə auuācī*

⁵ All English versions of the passages from the YH quoted in this article are adaptations of the German translation by J. Narten, *Der Yasna Haptanhāiti* (Wiesbaden, 1986), pp. 38–48. The interpretation of Y 36 presented here is based on Narten, *ibid.*, p. 26, cf. Hintze, "On the literary structure of the Older Avesta", pp. 46–50.

'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 *yazamaidē*, 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 of all that is good:

(3) Y 37.1

*i ʒā aṭ yazamaidē ahurəm mazdaqm
yō gəmcā ašəmcā dāt
apascā dāt uruuarāscā vaṇ^vhīs
raocāscā dāt būmīmcā
vīspācā vohū*

Y 37.2

*ahiiā xša ʒrācā mazēnācā hauuapaṇhāišcā
tēm aṭ yasanqm pauuruatātā yazamaidē
yōi gəuš hacā šīieiṇtī*

'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 Haptanhāiti*, pp. 167 f.

This stanza takes up the theme of the Gathic hymn Y 44.3–5 and is also linked to Y 33.14 by the expression *yasnanam pauruuatātā* ‘with the primeness of worship’. In the following verse, Ahura Mazda is worshipped in his Ahurian names and for guiding the choices (*frauuaṣi-*) 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’ (*vohu xšaθra-*), ‘Good Vision’ (*vaṅ^hhī- daēnā-*), ‘Good Joy’ (*vaṅ^hhī- fsəratū-*),⁷ and ‘Good Right-mindedness’ (*vaṅ^hhī- ārmaiti-*, Y 37.5). The worship continues in chapter 38 with praise of the earth and of the ladies (*gənā-*) who belong to Ahura Mazda (Y 38.1). These are identified as powers such as fat-offering (*ižā-*), purification (*yaoṣti-*), perfection (*fərašti-*), and right-mindedness (*ārmaiti-*) active during the ritual. Moreover, good reward (*aṣi-*), invigoration (*iš-*), libation (*āzūiti-*), praise (*frasasti-*) and blessing (*parəṇdi-*) 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 Aməša Spəntas. In the last stanza, all power is conferred on Ahura Mazda (Y 39.4).

For a long time, the religious and literary importance of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti 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

⁷ On *fsəratū-* see Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaṅhāiti*, pp. 186–188. The meaning ‘joy’ is based on the etymological connection with Ved. *psāras-* ‘enjoyment, delight’, see H. Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra and the Other Old Avestan Texts* (Heidelberg, 1991), vol. 2, p. 124; M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*, 3 vols. (Heidelberg, 1986 ff.), vol. 2, p. 198.

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 Mazda:

(4) Y 1.1

niuuaēdaiemi haṅkārāiemi
da θušō ahurahe mazdā
raēuuatō x^harənaṅ^hatō
mazištaheca vahištaheca sraēštaheca
xraoždīštaheca xra θβištaheca hukərəptəmaheca

‘I invite, I perform
 (the worship) of the creator Ahura Mazda,
 who has wealth and glory,
 the greatest, best, most beautiful one,
 the firmest, wisest, most shapely one.’

The superlative expression *mazištaheca vahištaheca sraēštaheca* characterizes Ahura Mazda at the beginning of the Yasna (Y 1.1) and recalls the first *yazamaide*-section of Y 37.1–2, where Ahura Mazda is said to have created all that is good ‘by his greatness’ (*mazēnā* Y 37.2). The latter is echoed in the YAV formula *masanaca vaṅhanaca sraiiianaca* ‘through greatness, goodness and beauty’, which also occurs in the genitive *masānascā vaṅhānascā sraiiianascā* in the pseudo-OAV. Y 58.4.⁹ Furthermore, as suggested by Jean Kellens¹⁰, Ahura Mazda’s attribute *hukərəptəma-* ‘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 Mazda is followed, in Y 1.2, by that of the Aməša Spəntas, who are listed individually:

(5) Y 1.2

niuuaēdaiemi haṅkārāiemi
vaṅhauue manəṅhe
aṣāi vahištāi
xšaθrāi vairiīāi
spəntaiiāi ārmatē

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

⁹ See Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaṅhāiti*, p. 173 n. 18 (text passages). Y 58 has been studied in detail by E.V. Pirart, “Les fragments vieil-avestiques du Y 58”, *Annali del Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 52, 1992, pp. 225–247.

¹⁰ J. Kellens, “Considérations sur les premiers chapitres du Yasna”, *Journal Asiatique* 284, 1996, pp. 37–108, p. 44.

hauruuaṭbiia aməṛətaṭbiia
gəuš tašne gəuš urune
*āṅre ahurahe mazdā*¹¹
yaētuštəmāi aməṣanəm spəntanəm

'I invite, I perform (the worship)
 for Good Mind,
 for Best Truth,
 for Desirable Rule,
 for Bounteous Right-mindedness,
 for the two, Wholeness and Immortality,
 for the Maker of the Cow, for the Soul of the Cow,
 for the Fire of Ahura Mazdā,
 who of the Bounteous Immortals has taken his position most.'

This list largely agrees with that of the YH, Y 37.3–4 and Y 39.1, although not all the entities praised in the YH are mentioned in Y 1.2. This may be because in the YH the Aməša Spəntas are not a fixed group of seven, as they usually are in the Younger Avesta. Interestingly, however, Y 1.2 also praises the Maker of the Cow and the Soul of the Cow, just like Y 39.1. Moreover, the Fire (*ātar-*) is explicitly called an Aməša Spənta. Theologically, Y 1.2 therefore agrees more with the ideas of the YH than with those of the standard YAv. system. A further allusion to the YH could be the fire's epithet *yaētuštəma-* 'who has taken his position most' because it could refer to Y 36.¹¹

This initial invocation is followed in Y 1 by those of the various divisions of time: of the day (Y 1.3–7), of the month (Y 1.8), of the year (Y 1.9) and of all the time divisions (*vīspe ratauuō* Y 1.10). The list continues with an invocation of 'the two, Ahura and Mithra' (Y 1.11), of the

¹¹ Kellens, "Considérations sur les premiers chapitres du Yasna", pp. 45–46. In the discussions which took place during the conference, Professor Jamsheed Choksy suggested that a theological extension from Y 1.2 *āṅre ahurahe mazdā yaētuštəmāi aməṣanəm spəntanəm* may explain the depiction of figures emerging from the flames on the reverse of Sasanian coins from Hormizd II on, cf. R. Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics*. With 16 minting Tables and 16 Plates (Manuals of Middle Asian Numismatics, vol. 1; Braunschweig, 1971), p. 19 and plates 5.80, 81, 83, 85, 86; 6.102; 8.136; 9.157. While the uncrowned figure has been commonly believed to be Ahura Mazdā, Göbl draws attention to a coin of Varhrān V. where the bust wears the crown of the corresponding king (plate 9.157). He interprets the image not as that of Ahura Mazdā but of the king himself emerging from his own regnal fire. In that case, the king would be represented as Ahura Mazdā's imperial representative on earth emerging from the fire.

Fire (*ātar-*), of both Ahura Mazdā's son and all fires, and of the waters and plants:

(6) Y 1.12
niuuaēḍaiiemi haṅkārāiemi
tauuā āṅrō ahurahe mazdā puṅra
maṭ vīspaēibiiō ātəṛəbiiō
niuuaēḍaiiemi haṅkārāiemi
aiḅiiō vaṅhibiiō
vīspanəmca apəm mazdaḍātanəm
vīspanəmca uruuaranəm mazdaḍātanəm

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

Y 1.12 recalls Y 37.1, where Ahura Mazdā 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 HaptaŅhāiti, 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 hātəm*-prayer. The YH shares this feature both with the *yazamaide*-portions of the YAv. part of the Yasna and with the Yašts, where it concludes each Karde.¹² This feature of Avestan eulogistic literature may be explained

¹² On the *yejhe hātəm*-prayer, see C.G. Cereti, *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn*. A Zoroastrian Apocalypse (Serie Orientale Roma 75; Roma 1995), p. 197 with references. A

by the content of the *yeŋhē hātām*-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 Haptañhāiti and the Younger Avestan eulogistic parts of the Yasna, as well as of the Yašts.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 YAv. 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 Vr sections, or Kardes, is dependent on the chapters of the Yasna before or after which they are recited. For instance, Vr 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

detailed analysis of this prayer and its YAv commentary in Y 21 is given by J. Narten, *Die Aməša Spəntas im Avesta* (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 80–97.

¹³ As aptly stated by Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. 2, p. 332, a Yašt is a *yasna*-, a 'worship' dedicated to one particular divinity, cf. Panaino, "Philologia Avestica IV: Av. *yaštay-lyešti-; yašta-; phl. yašt*", p. 171.

¹⁴ See K.F. Geldner, "Awestalitteratur", *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, ed. W. Geiger/E. Kuhn (Stuttgart, 1896–1904), pp. 10–12; Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. 1, p. LXVII.

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, Vr 18 and Vr 19 respectively. Vr 18 is in praise of the preceding Uštavaiti Gatha, while Vr 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 Vohuxšaθra Gatha, which comprises Y 51 (see next page, fig. 1).

By contrast, this basic pattern changes when it comes to the Yasna Haptañhāiti. After the last *hāiti* of the Ahunavaiti Gatha, Y 34, Vr 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 Haptañhāiti 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 Aməša Spəntas, 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, Vr 16–17, both of which praise the Yasna Haptañhāiti. In the Vendidad ceremony, they are followed by two fargards of the Videvdad, Vd 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 Vr 1.3–8, at the very beginning of the Visperad.

The Yasna extended by the Visperad and Videvdad

Yasna	Visperad	Videvdad
1.1–8	1	
1.9–2.8	2	
2.9–11.8	3.1–5	
11.9–11.15	3.6–4.2	
11.17–14	5	
15	6	
16–17	7–8	
18–21	9	
22	10–11	
Ahuna Vairya Aṣəm Vohu Yeḡhē Hātaṃ	12	1–4
Ahunavaiti Gatha I	13	5–6
Ahunavaiti Gatha II	14	7–8
Yasna Haptaṅhāiti	15	
Uštavaiti Gatha	16–17	9–10
Spəntamainyu Gatha	18	11–12
Vohuxšaṡra Gatha	19	13–14
Second Yasna Haptaṅhāiti (Vr 21)	20	15–16
Vahištōišti Gatha	21–22	17–18
Aryaman Iṣya Prayer	23	19–20
	24	21–22
55–72		

There is, however, more to it than that. Vr 21, recited between Vr 20 and 22, praises ‘the second Yasna Haptaṅhāiti’. While Bartholomae thought that the expression *apara-yasna-haptaṅhāiti* meant the Younger Av. chapter Y 52,¹⁵ there are two problems with his interpretation. First, the kardes of the Visperad usually follow, rather than precede, the *hāiti* of the Yasna which they praise. Secondly, although Y 52 contains praises of Ahura Mazdā 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 Haptaṅhāiti.

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 *apara-yasna-haptaṅhāiti* refers to the second recitation of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti, 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 Haptaṅhāiti 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 Haptaṅhāiti 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, without an intervening *hāiti* from the Yasna. The

¹⁵ Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Straßburg, 1904), cols. 1272 f.

¹⁶ Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 487 f. with n. 4; cf. K.F. Geldner, *Avesta. The sacred books of the Parsis*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1889–1896), vol. 2, p. 28 ad Vr 21.0 n. 3.

only explanation available is that this is so because the whole of the YH, namely the *apara- yasna- haptanḥāiti-*, 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 Haptanḥāiti’, the *apara- yasna- haptanḥāiti-*, 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 (*frauuāṣi-*) of the truthful ones (Vr 21.1) and finally, in verse 4, the *apara- yasna-* itself:

(7) Vr 21.4

aparəm yasnəm yazamaide
aparahe yasnahe yasnəm yazamaide
aparahe yasnahe yazamaide
hāitišca afsmanāca vacasca vacastaštīmca

‘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- haptanḥāiti-*.

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 Haptanḥāiti.

No ritual action takes place while the Yasna Haptanḥāiti and succeeding Gathas Y 43–54 are recited.¹⁷ 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 con-

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 Ramiyar Karanjia.

their lack may be an ancient feature, because it agrees with the content of the Yasna Haptanḥāiti, whose purpose is the praise of Ahura Mazdā 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 Haptanḥāiti. A further instance, where a Younger Avestan ritual could have been influenced by the Yasna Haptanḥāiti is the Ritual of the Waters, the *āb zōhr*, which constitutes a part of the Yasna liturgy (Y 62.11–Y 70).¹⁸ This ritual opens in Y 62.11 with the formula:

(8) Y 62.11

aiβi.gərəδmahi apəm vaṇ^vhīnəm
frāitīmca paititīmca aibijarətimca

‘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

apəm vaṇ^vhīnəm yazamaide
frāitīmca paititīmca aibijarətimca

‘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 *aiβi.gərəδmahi* ‘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 *frāiti-* and *paititi-*, the sound shape of the third term of this formula, *aibijarəti-* ‘welcoming’, suggests that it is, like *yazamaide*, an Old Avestan loan

¹⁸ According to Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 119 f. n. 138, the *āb 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 *āb zōhr* is discussed by M. Boyce, “*Ātaš-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 *aibijarəti-*, which as in other YAv. 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 Haptanḥāiti. In its first stanza, Y 35.2, the worshippers declare:

(10) Y 35.2

humatanəm hūxtanəm huuarštanəm
iiaḍacā aniiḍacā
vərəziiamnanəm vāuuərəzananəm
mahī aibi.jarətārō
*naēnaēstārō *ya θnā vohunəm mahī*

‘We are welcomers
of good thoughts, good words, good deeds,
which are done and have been done
here and elsewhere.
We are not blamers 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’, *frāitīmca paititīmca aibijarətīmca*, are characterized as being those ‘of the good waters’, the expression occurs without a genitive in Y 71.6:

(11) Y 71.6

vīspaēca pañca gā θā aša onīš yazamaide
vīspəmca yasnəm
frāitīmca paititīmca
aibijarətīmca 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 *āb 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 *frāitīmca paititīmca aibijarətīmca* 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 *paititi-* ‘coming forwards’ (‘Weggehen und Herangehen’).²⁰ Some clarification as to the more precise meaning of the expression *frāiti-* and *paititi-* 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 apəm +vañ hīnəm +frāitiš frajasaiti
haca hū +vaxšāt +ā +hū +frāšmō.dātōišt +pairi.sacaite
tašt hama tašt +aiβi.gāme
yō āpe zao θraṃ frabaraiti
pasca hū +frāšmō.dātīm para hū vaxšāt
nōišt vañ hō ahmāt +šiao θnəm vərəziieiti
ya θa yašt hīm azōiš +višāpahe +gastrəm +paitiīapta karšōišt

‘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 *hāuuani-*. In his edition of the Nerangestan, Waag seems to have considered the passage N 48 as being

¹⁹ Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, cols. 1010 and 829.

²⁰ Narten, *Der Yasna Haptanḥāiti*, p. 90 with n. 15.

²¹ On **gastrəm* instead of transmitted *vastrəm*, see A. Waag, *Nirangistan. Der Awestatraktat 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 (*hāuuani-*), 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 zōhr*, 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’ (*apqm fəra-xšaostra-*) in

(13) Y 42.6

apqmcā fəraxšaostrəm yazamaidē
vaiiqmcā fərafrao ʒrəm yazamaidē

‘We worship the streaming forwards of the waters,
we worship the flying forwards of the birds’,

which seems to describe purely natural phenomena, *apqm frāiti-*, 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 *frāiti-* ‘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 zōhr* ritual. This is enacted in such a way that the chief priest (the *zōt*) pours a ritually prepared and consecrated libation, the *zōhr*, 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 *frāitīmca paititīmca* may be the Avestan expression describing these movements of the waters taking place during the *āb zōhr* 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 zōhr* contains sections composed with a view to the ritual action. If this is so, the Ritual of the Waters, the *āb zōhr*, 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 Hāwan Gāh has begun by the time the ritual reaches Yasna 65.

²³ Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 121, cf. p. 124.

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 *aibijarəiti-* ‘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 zōhr* in Y 62.11 and Y 70.6. The connection of *aibi-jar* with the Yasna HaptaŅhāiti also emerges from attestations of the verb *aīβi/auui-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 *aīβi.gərəδmahi* ‘we welcome’, but also in the other two of its three attestations. The second occurrence of the verb *aīβi/auui-jar* refers explicitly to the YH:

(14) Vr 17.1

aīβi.gərəδmahi
yasnahe haptaŅhātōiš
humataca hūxtaca huuarštaca
aīβi.gərəδmahi ašəm vohū

‘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 hūxtaca huuarštaca* are probably a quotation from the opening words of the YH in Y 35.2 (no. 10), where a form of *aibi-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 HaptaŅhāiti’ and similarly praise that text:

(15) Vr 21.1

auui apqmcā vaŅ^vhīnq̄m
uruuaranq̄mca x^vaβrīranq̄m
ašəonq̄mca frauuašīnq̄m
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca
auui aŅhəmcī^t yā^v vaŅ^vhīš
yā^ā āpō yā^{sca} uruuarā
yā^{sca} ašəonq̄m frauuašaiiō
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca

‘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

auui gəuš auui gaiiehe
auui maθrahe spəntahe
ašaonō vərəziiaŋ’hahe
yasnəm gərədmahi vahməmca
auui tauua ahura mazda
yasnəm gərədmahi vahməmca
auui tauua zara θuštra
yasnəm gərədmahi vahməmca
auui tauua ratuuō bərəza
yasnəm gərədmahi vahməmca
auui aməšanaqm spəntanqm
yasnəm gərədmahi vahməmca

‘We welcome the worship and praise
 of the cow, of *Gaiia*,
 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 *yasnəm ... vahməmca*, 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 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 OAv. form *aibi.jarəiti-* 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 aŋ yazamaide* ‘we worship the waters’ (Y 38.3a) in Y 63.3, with OAv. *aŋ* but no lengthening of the final *-e*, and, moreover, by the repetition of entire sections of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti: 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 21.4 (no.7), that the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti could be referred to just by *yasna-*, without its epithet *haptaŋhāiti*. 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 *yajñá-*, 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) *yasnāica vahmāica xšnao θrāica frasastaiiaēca*

‘for worship, praise, gratification and glory’,

in invocation formulae of the Younger Avesta.²⁴ 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

daēuuanqm yasnāica vahmāica

‘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 *haptaŋhāiti-* as ‘the Worship in Seven Chapters’, e.g. in the formula

(18) Y 41.8 (Y 71.12, Vr 16.0 and 2.7)

yasnəm sūrəm haptaŋhāitīm
ašauuanəm ašahe ratūm 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 *aparəm yasnəm* refers to the second Yasna Haptañhāiti 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 *vīspəm yasnəm* '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 *vīspaēca ... gā 9ā* '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 *vīspəm yasnəm* 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

**srao 9ra + nā gā 9anqm + ratufriš*
paiti.astica yasnahe
aḍa fšūšō mq 9rahe

ahe zī nā + srauuahō
**aframəṛəiti āstriieite*

ya 9a gā 9anqmcij

gā 9ā srāuuaiiō

yasnəm yazəntəm paitištāiti-

vīspanqm gā 9anqm ratufriš

yasnəm yazāiti

gā 9anqm + srāuuaiiamnanqm paitišt-

yasnahe aēuuahē ratufriš

aratufriš gā 9anqm

'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, *Altiranisches 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', *fšūšō mq 9ra*, 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 Haptañhāiti 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

yā yasnəm + yazənti
**afsmainiiuuq vā vacastaštiuuq vā*

uua + ratufriia

hqm.sruq. + vāciiāḍa + yazənti

**uua aratufriia*

kaq hqm.sruq.vācimca

yaq hakaq + āmrūtō

afsmainiiuuqca + vacastaštiuuqca

auui + ainiiō + surunuuaity nōiq ainiiō

aēšō ratufriš yō nōiq + aiβi.surunuuaiti

²⁷ As suggested by Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1272.

²⁸ F.M. Kotwal/Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2: *Nērangestān*, Fragard I (Paris, 1995), 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 *aiβisrū 9rima- aibigaiia-*", *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 *yasnəm yaz* could be translated with Kotwal and Kreyenbroek as 'to perform the act of worship',²⁹ the larger context of N 22–24 supports the interpretation that the passage is about the recitation of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti, as is clearly the case in N 22 (no. 19) and some Pahlavi passages³⁰.

An opposition between *hāiti-*, referring to the Gathas, and *yasna-*, referring to the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti, is found in N 40:

(21) N 40

⁺*kahiiāciṭ nā dahmanəm zao θrāḍa ratufriš*
⁺*nāirikaiiāsciṭ apərənāiiūkaheciṭ*
yezi vaē θa hā θanəm θbarəsēšca frataurunāšca
aṅtarə hāitišu yasnəm ⁺frāiiāzōiṭ

'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) recites³¹ the Worship in between the chapters.'

²⁹ Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2, p. 49. The figura etymologica *yasnəm 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-* *haptaṅhāiti-* is mentioned after *ahuna-* *vairiia-*. In N 20, where *yasna-* is governed by a middle form of *yaz* (*yasnəm yazəmnahe*), it is, unlike in N 81, not characterized as *haptaṅhāiti-*. However, it may refer to that text, because it occurs, as in N 81, after *ahuna-* *vairiia-*. On *yasnəm yaz* cf. also the comments by Kellens, "Considérations sur l'histoire de l'Avesta", p. 481.

³⁰ Cf. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1272 with n. 2.

³¹ Transmitted *frāiziš* was corrected to ⁺*frāiiāzōiṭ* by Waag *Nirangistan*, p. 58 and to ⁺*frāiiāzōiṭ* by H. Humbach, "Textkritische und sprachliche Bemerkungen zum Nirangestān", *Kuhns Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung* 77, 1961, p. 108.

In the most recent edition of this text, Kotwal and Kreyenbroek replace *yasnəm* with *yeṅhē hātaṃ*.³² However, there is no need for such a substitution if *yasnəm* is interpreted as referring to the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti, which is recited in between the *hāiti* of the Gathas.³³

It emerges from this survey that, where *yasna-* denotes a text in Av. passages it is referring to the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti. One may wonder whether the expression *staota-* *yesniia-*, which in the Younger Avesta denotes the central part of the Yasna,³⁴ may be translated as 'praises belonging to the worship', in the sense of 'praises arranged around the *yasna-*', the latter referring to the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti. In the oldest form of this liturgy, the *staota-*, 'praises', would have been the Gathas.

CONCLUSION

Although the language of the YH is also the Old Avestan idiom, it differs from the Gathas in a number of ways. From a formal point of view, the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti—unlike the Gathas—is not composed in a syllable counting metre, but in rhythmic speech.³⁵ Furthermore, while the ritual function of the Gathas does not emerge clearly, that of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti is obvious. The predominant use of the first person plural 'we' in the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti, in contrast to the singular 'I' of the Gathas, indicates that this text was meant to be recited by or on behalf of the community of worshipping Mazdayasnians. As we have seen, there are also unequivocal references to the ritual fire, in front of which the worshippers stand. Moreover, while the Gathas abound with references to the rejection of evil, the latter is not even mentioned in the YH.

It appears, therefore, that the YH is *the* text of worship par excellence, being entirely dedicated to the worship and praise, *yasnəm cā vahməm cā* in the language of the YH, of Ahura Mazdā and his spiritual and physical creations. Furthermore, in this text the worshippers express their commitment to dedicating their thoughts, words and deeds to

³² Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2, p. 123 with n. 437.

³³ On *hāiti-* 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).

strengthen and support what is good. Being a text of ritual worship, the YH, much more than the Gathas, lent itself to being imitated in later periods. The practice of deriving inspiration and borrowing expressions from the YH when composing eulogies in YAv., as well as its central and pivotal position in the arrangement of the Yasna, Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies, indicate that the priests of the Younger Avestan period were aware of both the ritual and doctrinal importance of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti.

RITUAL AND RITUALS IN THE NĒRANGESTĀN

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 Sasanian 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 argued¹ 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 (*hērbed*) 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.

¹ See Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, “The Zoroastrian Tradition from an Oralists’ Point of View”, *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, Second International Congress Proceedings*, ed. H.J.M. Desai/H.N. Modi (Bombay, 1996), pp. 221–237.