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The Heritage of Zarathushtra

A NEW TRANSLATION OF HIS GĀTHĀS

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Technical Remarks

The Avestan text is transliterated according to the now standard system introduced by Karl Hoffmann. The spelling of proper names and religious terms has been simplified, however, in the Introduction as well as in the English translation. The text is that of K. F. Geldner's edition: *Avesta, The Sacred Books of the Parsis* I-III, Tübingen 1886. Departures from this norm are indicated by a postponed small circle (°) in the case of orthographic variants and given explicitly in the foot-notes when involving morphological differences.

Abbreviations etc.

OAv. = Old Avestan

(i.e. the language of the Yatha Ahu Vairiyo, the Ashem Vohu, the Gathas, the Yasna Haptanghaiti, and the Ā Airyema Ishiyo)

YAv. = Young Avestan (i.e. the language of the Younger Avesta)

lit. = literally

ms. = manuscript

mss. = manuscripts

var. = variant reading found in one or more manuscripts

varr. = variant readings found in the manuscripts

In the Avestan text:

[] square brackets denote later additions to the text

<> pointed brackets denote loss of text or elements of text

In the English translation:

() round brackets are used to denote additions inserted for better intelligibility.

Preface

When Gāthā scholarship began in the second half of the 19th century knowledge of the grammar of the language was still rudimentary and the translations by necessity less than adequate. At best they reflected the Sasanians' understanding of the text as seen in the Pahlavi rendering, of uncertain date. Nevertheless, theories that were based on these early, mostly incorrect, translations remained the basis for subsequent translations of the Gāthās, thus producing a vicious circle which was broken only in the late 1950's. But even after this time Gāthā translations have tended to cater to a public expecting traditional renderings and an easily readable text, although such translations can only be achieved by smoothing over numerous difficulties in the text or plainly disregarding the grammar.

The first to study the Gāthās applying the rigorous methods of modern philology was Helmut Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* I-II, Heidelberg 1959, an updated English version of which is his *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra* I-II, Heidelberg 1991.

While these two earlier translations to a great extent mirror the Avestan text in all its complexities, the present version is intended to be user-friendly and to be consulted by those who prefer an easier access to the Gāthās as poetry and religious document. We have tried to accomplish this without departing too much from the original text, but also without encumbering the translation with stylistic features common in Avestan but alien to English.

In this way we hope we have avoided creating misunderstandings at the same time as making the text readily available to those who wish to study it for its vocabulary and phraseology or for its message.

For scholars this new translation does not replace the two earlier editions, which should be consulted for philological details as well as for Helmut Humbach's personal opinions regarding Zarathushtra and his Religion.

Helmut Humbach wishes to thank his old friend and colleague, Prods Oktor Skjærvø (Harvard University) for taking time to read this translation, as well, and to discuss with him numerous details of it.

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Introduction

1. Zarathushtra

1. According to Xanthos, a Greek historian of Lydian descent who wrote in the mid-5th century B.C., Spitama Zarathushtra (Zarathuštra), the prophet of Ancient Iran, lived 600 years before Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont ($480 + 600 = 1080$ B.C.). This is in approximate agreement with the linguistic evidence. The native Iranian tradition, transmitted by sources of the early Islamic period (i.e., more than one millennium later) puts him 300 years before Alexander's campaign ($330 + 300 = 630$ B.C.).¹

1.1. By Xanthos or, rather, one of his unknown sources, the name of the prophet was distorted into Zōroastrēs (whence Latin Zoroaster), thus wrongly linking him with the Chaldaean astrologers.

1.2. Zarathushtra mentions his own name fifteen times in his Gāthās (Gāṭās), once in the first person (46,19 'for me, Zarathushtra'), once he addresses himself rhetorically (46,14 'O Zarathushtra'). He quotes the following persons among his adherents and relations, or addresses them: Kavi Vishtāspa, his princely promoter, Frashaoshtra Hvōguva and Jāmāspa Hvōguva, two noble brothers at Vishtāspa's court, Maidyoimāngha Spitama, Zarathushtra's cousin who was later said to have been his first convert, the clan of the Haēchataspa Spitamas, relatives of the prophet, Zarathushtri Spitāma, a son of the prophet whose individual name is left unmentioned, and the prophet's youngest daughter Pouruchistā Haēchataspānā Spitāmī. Honorable mention is also made of the relations and descendants of Tūra son of Friya, perhaps a member of a Turanian family.

1.3. By granting Zarathushtra shelter at his court, which was an essential prerequisite for the spreading of the Religion, Kavi Vishtāspa 'Prince Vishtāspa' stood out among the many rulers who opposed the prophet, called by him 'the (other) Kavis'. In the same context as these, the Karapans, the Usijs, and the Grehma gang are mentioned, groups of religious or political character that are otherwise not defined. Two opponents of the prophet are blamed by him individually for not having accepted him, namely Vaēpiya the Kaviyan (51,12) and Bendva (49,1) whom he ironically calls a 'great chief'.

1.4. The society described by Zarathushtra was organized in house, village, county (or: district), and land (or: country). The members of a household are a family, the inhabitants of a village are a community (or: clan), those of a county are a tribe (or: people of the county). No term for the inhabitants of a land is found. In this society the power and renown of individuals as well as of social groups could be measured in the number of sheep, oxen, horses, and camels, owned by them, as well as in the pasture area they commanded and its fertility. The food of average people was mostly barley,

¹ By a lapsus in *The Gāthas* I, 1991, p. 26, the Greek number of years as written in the Istanbul manuscript is given as hexēkonta '600' instead of hexakosia '600'.

milk, and milk products, occasionally meat. Yet many people experienced difficulties living from day to day in infertile mountains and steppes and grazing their cattle in poor soil under hard climatic conditions.

1.5. In the time of Zarathushtra the tribes were constantly engaged in warfare. The Kavis other than Kavi Vishtāspa flourished and prospered by raiding and plundering the pastoral and agricultural settlements. Their priests worshipped a pantheon of divinities called Daēvas, the ancient gods, interpreted by Zarathushtra as false gods, devils or demons. Through cruel bloody sacrifices and ritual partaking of intoxicants, preferably strong forms of the Haoma (Haoma Dūraosha), they would seek the help of the Daēvas for the success of the raids perpetrated by their worldly leaders. Against their religious views, called by him a religion of deceit (Druj), Zarathushtra set the Mazdayasnian Religion, the worship of Ahura Mazdā, who represents the principle of truth (Asha/Aša), the foremost in a long series of other Ahurian principles or moral concepts (see 2.2). He rejected and condemned the Daēvas and all their adherents, who ruined existence, and he wished the aggressive chieftains of the deceitful tribes of the neighborhood to be replaced by peaceful good rulers such as truthful Kavi Vishtāspa.

2. The Mazdayasnian Religion

2.1. Zarathushtra's Religion is considered by scholars as the dualistic religion par excellence, i.e., a religion in which the evil in the world is not attributed to God's inscrutable ways, as is necessary in monotheism, but in which God's antagonists are blamed for it. As a matter of fact, the life of the world from the loss of paradise caused by Yima¹ to its renovation is painted in the Zarathushtrian tradition as a continuous conflict between Ahura Mazdā and the Daēvas and their respective ideals, between the principle of truth (Asha/Aša) and that of deceit (Druj), between good and evil, between the truthful and the deceitful. Yet, for the following reason the dualistic interpretation must be somewhat modified: In the Gāthās Ahura Mazdā is described as being at the head of a group of divine beings called Ahuras. These Ahuras evidently are the antagonists of the Daēvas, but among the latter there is no individual antagonist of Ahura Mazdā, such as the Evil Spirit in the Younger Avesta (Angra Mainyu) and the Middle and New Persian literature (Ahreman). This is a very monotheistic aspect of Zarathushtra's spiritual world. The picture of the end of this material world drawn by the prophet is even purely monotheistic. By the renovation and transfiguration of the world called its 'brilliant-making', Ahura Mazdā and the truthful guided by the prophet will finally succeed in eliminating evil, restoring paradise on earth, and securing Ahura Mazdā's rule for ever.

2.2. The Ahuras, a group of spiritual entities, are described best as personifications of the Ahurian principles and concepts. These principles and concepts are designated by what we call Ahurian terms. Apart from truth (Asha for which see 1.5), they include holy spirit (Spenta Mainyu), good spirit (Vohu Mainyu), good thought (Vohu Manah), good power (Vohu Khshathra), power worthy of being chosen (Khshathra Vairiya), right-mindedness (Āmaiti), obedience/attention (Sraosha), integrity (Haurvatāt) and

¹ Yima, YAv. also Yima Xšaēta, New Persian Jamshid.

immortality (Ameretatāt, Ameretāt), but also fire (Ātar) and good reward (Vanghvi Ashi). The Ahurian principles and concepts represent cosmic powers pervading both the spiritual and the material world and manifesting themselves in both the divine and human sphere. Thus Asha does not only denote the Ahurian principle and concept 'truth' but also its realization as a moral quality of Ahura Mazda as well as of his truthful worshippers. It also not only denotes its personification as a divine entity but also its materialization in the good things of the world, then called 'material truth' (Astvat Ashem).

2.2.1. To the Ahurian principles and concepts, the dualistic picture of the world opposes the corresponding Daëvic concepts such as deceit (Druj), harmful spirit (Angra Mainyu), evil spirit (Aka Mainyu), evil thought (Aka Manah), scorn (Tarōmaiti), disobedience (Asrushti), and others, such as wrath (Aēšma).

2.2.2. The number of both the Ahurian terms and their Daëvic counterparts is undefined in the Gāthās. That of the Ahurian terms has been noticeably enlarged in the Yasna Haptanghāiti (3.2.2). Six of them are represented as Holy Immortals (Amesha Spentas) in the Younger Avesta, where they are the patron saints of the six working days of the first week of each month: namely, good thought (Vohu Manah), best truth (Asha Vahishta), power worthy of being chosen (Khshathra Vairiya), holy right-mindedness (Spentā Armaiti), integrity (Haurvatāt), and immortality (Ameretatāt). The term 'Holy Immortals' (Amesha Spenta) is not attested in the Gāthās, but the Yasna Haptanghāiti twice speaks of Spenta Ameshas with an inversion of the two elements, with which we can perhaps compare the inverted word order Mazda Ahura found beside Ahura Mazda in both the Gāthās and the Yasna Haptanghāiti.

3. The Gathas and the other Old Avestan texts

3.1. Zarathushtra's Gāthās (Gā9ās) are preserved in the Yasna, the liturgy of the Zarathushtrians. Small groups of these survive in Iran, but their best-known branch is the Pārsis ("Persians") in India, particularly in Bombay, and in Pakistan. These are descendants of Iranian emigrants of the medieval period. In the past decades numerous groups of Zarathushtrians, Iranian as well as Indian and Pakistani, have established themselves in America and Europe.

3.2. The Gāthā collection forms the core of the Yasna liturgy which is about two fifths of what has come down to us of the Avesta, the Holy Scriptures of the Zarathushtrians. The Gāthās consist of seventeen religious hymns each of them covering one chapter (Hāiti) of the Yasna (Yasna 28-34, 43-51, 53).

3.2.1. Avestan, the language of the Avesta, is an Old Iranian language closely related to Old Persian known from the Achaemenid inscriptions. Avestan is attested in two dialects differing from each other both chronologically and dialectologically. Whereas most of the Avesta is in Young Avestan dialect the Gāthās are composed in the archaic dialect we call Old Avestan.

3.2.2. Old Avestan is also used in the Yasna Haptanġhāiti (Haptanġhāiti), the ‘Yasna of Seven Chapters’, a prose text inserted in the Gāthās (Yasna 35-41) and attributed by most scholars to early successors of the prophet.

3.2.3. Old Avestan features are also found in what the Zarathushtrians call their four Most Holy Prayers, namely the triad which precedes the Gāthās: the Yathā Ahū Vairiyo (Ya9ā Ahū Vairiō, Yasna 27,13), the Ashem Vohū (Ašəm Vohū, Yasna 27,14), and the Yenghē Hātām (Yeġhē Hātām, Yasna 27,15), and the Ā Airyemā Ishiyō (Ā Airiōmā Išiiō, Yasna 54,1), which concludes them. Among these the Ā Airyemā Ishiyō is the only prayer in the strict sense of the word; the other three are better characterized as manthras (Middle Persian nīrang, cf. Sanskrit mantra), that is, powerful meditational texts and truth-spells.

3.2.4. Among these four prayers or manthras, the Yathā Ahū Vairiyo, the Ashem Vohū, and the Ā Airyemā Ishiyō are in pure Old Avestan dialect. Thus there is no reason for questioning Zarathushtra's authorship of them. As a matter of fact it is hardly thinkable that the founder of a religion left his adherents without any manthras or prayers. Only the authorship of the Yenghē Hātām is somewhat doubtful. The only Old Avestan characteristic found here is the lengthening of the final vowels of the single words whereas the words themselves appear in a typically Young Avestan form. Thus yenghē (yeġhē), the first word of the Yenghē Hātām (Yeġhē Hātām), is most instructive. It equals Young Avestan yeġhe, but contrasts with its correct Old Avestan equivalent yehiiā. From this it is evident that our Yenghē Hātām, in spite of the Old Avestan appearance of its word endings, must have had a Young Avestan original. On the other hand, the name of God is given there not in its Young Avestan form Ahura Mazdā but with the Gāthic word order Mazdā Ahura. Thus one is entitled to conclude that the dialectal inconsistencies of the language of the Yenghē Hātām do not necessarily prove a post-Gāthic origin of the stanza. Instead they may be due to a complicated textual history.

3.3. The term Gāthā is often used to designate each of the seventeen hymns which form the seventeen Hāitis or chapters of the Gāthā collection, and this use has even found its way into numerous scholarly publications. However, in scholarly usage the term Gāthā should be used exclusively to denote one of the five groups in which the seventeen hymns are arranged according to their respective meters:

(1) Ahunavaiti Gāthā (Ahunauvaiti Gā9ā), seven hymns (Yasna 28-34). Stanzas of three lines of regularly 7+9 or 7+8 syllables each.

(2) Ushtavaiti Gāthā (Uštavauaiti Gā9ā), four hymns (Yasna 43-46). Stanzas of five lines of regularly 4+7 syllables each.

(3) Spentāmainyu Gāthā (Spəntāmainiiu Gā9ā), four hymns (Yasna 47-50). Stanzas of four lines of regularly 4+7 syllables each.

(4) Vohukhshathrā Gāthā (Vohuxša9rā Gā9ā), one hymn only (Yasna 51). Stanzas of three lines of regularly 7+7 syllables each.

(5) Vahishtoisti Gāthā (Vahištōišti Gā9ā), one hymn only (Yasna 53). Stanzas of four lines (but 53,6 five lines) of undefined number each.

4. The authenticity of the transmitted text

4.1. The text of the Avesta is transmitted in an alphabetical script including vowels which was created in Sasanian times with the purpose of exactly rendering and preserving the phonetic peculiarities of the pronunciation of the oral tradition as codified by the Sasanian redaction of the Avesta. Yet, linguistic considerations suggest that, particularly with regard to the vowels, the Sasanian way of recitation did no longer agree in all details with Zarathushtra's pronunciation. Numerous dissyllabic vowels or diphthongs had been reduced to monosyllabic value, and numerous redundant vowels had been developed. Thus *dayanā/daiianā* 'religious view, religion' had been reduced to *daēnā*, and *shyaothna/šiiioθna* 'action, act, deed' had been extended to *shyaothana/šiiioθana* (a development which has continued to modern times where, e.g., the ritual pronunciation of the noun *khshathra/xšaθra* 'power', though preserved correctly in its written form, has developed into *khshathra*). Such phonetic change took place unconsciously, adapting itself to the phonetic peculiarities of the respective contemporary language. It did not, however, affect the substance of the text, although it must be taken into account for a correct evaluation of the number of syllables in a Gāthic line.

4.2. According to a syntactic rule largely observed in the archaic language of the Gāthās, verbal prefixes can stand separated from their verb, e.g., in Y 50,9 *paitī ... aiiēnī* 'I shall approach again' (instead of connected *paitī.aiiēnī* or *paitīaiiēnī*). In a number of cases the separated prefix has been repeated immediately before the verb so that the text has the separated as well as the connected preverb, e.g., in Y 48,7 *paitī ... paitī.siiōdūm* 'strike (your axe)'. In such cases the repeated prefix is metrically redundant, a fact which proves that the repetition does not belong to the original text but must have been inserted by the Sasanian, or perhaps by an earlier redaction, in order to make the text easier to understand. To restore Zarathushtra's original the repeated preverb evidently must be suppressed. In this edition it is placed in square brackets, writing *paitī ... [paitī.]siiōdūm*. This insertion, as well, did not affect the substance of the text.

4.3. The metrical regularity of by far most of the Gāthic lines has led the majority of Gāthic scholars to "correct" the transmitted text of all, many, or parts of Gāthic lines that are metrically irregular, having one syllable too much or too less. The most common example of this procedure is Y 28,6c *yā daibišuuatō duuaēšā tauruuaiiāma* 'whereby we may overcome the hostilities of the enemy'. The number of syllables of the line exceeds the norm, having 10 instead of regularly 8/9 syllables. There is therefore among scholars a strong presumption that the text is corrupt. To "correct" it some delete *duuaēšā*, obtaining 8 syllables, others obtain 9 syllables by replacing *tauruuuiiāma* with *tauruuāmā* otherwise not attested in Avestan. Neither of the two solutions is acceptable. It is much more likely that the text is correctly transmitted and that Zarathushtra used, without regard for the number of syllables, a set phrase which exceeded the bounds of the meter.

5. Notes on the poetry of the Gāthās

5.1. From the translations presented here it will be seen — and it may come as a surprise to some — that some of the concepts attributed to Zarathushtra by modern scholarship such as the “myth of the two spirits” actually are not found in the Gāthās. The two passages in question (30,3-4, 45,2) in fact describe the choices that have to be made by any person at any time. Of special interest is the exact interpretation in which integrity (Haurvatāt/Hauruuatāt) and immortality (Ameretatāt/Aməretatāt) are depicted as sacrificial offerings (33,8.12, 34,1.11, 44,19, 45,10, 47,1). On the one hand this usage goes back to the Indo-European and Indo-Iranian times (cf. Greek Ambrosia and Sanskrit Amrita, both of which have the double meaning ‘immortality’ and ‘elixir of life as enjoyed by the gods for food’). On the other hand it continues in the Younger Avesta where the two words denote the liquid and vegetable parts of the oblation. As for the Gāthic use we just must leave open the question which kind of offerings are referred to by Zarathushtra.

5.2. It should also be stressed that the Gāthās are not a religious handbook with carefully co-ordinated paragraphs. Thus in 30,6 the Daēvas are said to be used to choosing the worst thought and wrath of the deceitful, whereas in 32,1 they are depicted as being out to take possession of the pious gifts offered to Ahura Mazdā by the truthful. There is also an apparent contradiction between the translation of 31,1 given here where Zarathushtra proclaims unheard words to the deceitful, and 31,18 where he expresses the wish that no adherent of the deceitful one should be allowed to listen to Ahura Mazdā's mantras and teachings. Yet in this case at least we can see that the apparent contradiction is not necessarily an actual one. The prophet doubtlessly distinguishes between adherents of the alien faith who can and cannot be taught the new faith. The problem lies with the poetic style, which allows him to vaguely allude to or even completely omit the details we would regard as the most relevant.

5.3. Although the Gāthās are poetical texts of visionary character they are composed according to rules of a poetical technique which were in vogue at the prophet's time. Modern readers are unaccustomed to this technique, and they must train themselves to understand it. In a number of passages, Zarathushtra's intoning a song of praise is compared with somebody yoking a team of horses (28,10, 30,10, 50,6-7). Other similes derive from the world of ideas of the cattle-breeders. Thus the ‘bulls of the days’ mentioned in 46,3 stand metaphorically for the first rays of the rosy dawn, announcing the rosy dawn itself which is implicitly compared with a herd of cows. On the other hand the bulls of the days announcing the morning are parallel with the ‘intellects of the strengtheners’ or ‘intellects of the Saoshyants’, i.e., with the wise decisions of the promoters and sponsors of the Religion, who are expected to play a decisive part in the ‘brilliant-making’, that is, the renovation and transfiguration of the world.

The Gāthās of Zarathushtra

The Holy Prayers of the Zarathushtrians

and

The Yasna Haptanghāiti

Text and Translation

Yasna 27,13-15. Introductory Prayers

27,13. Yaθā Ahū Vairiō

Yaθā ahū vairiō aθā ratuš ašātciṭ hacā
 vaṅhōuš dazdā manajhō šiiəθənanəm¹ aṅhōuš mazdāi
 xšaθrəmcā ahurāi.ā yim drigubiiō dadaṭ vāstərəm

¹ Geldner šiiəθənanəm as usual in the manuscript transmission of the Gāthas.

Yasna 27,13-15. Introductory Prayers

27,13. *Yathā Ahū Vairiyō*

Since He is (the One) to be chosen by the world
 therefore the judgment emanating from truth itself
 (to be passed) on the deeds of good thought of the world,
 as well as the power, is committed to Mazda Ahura whom (people) assign
 as a shepherd to the poor.¹

¹ More literally: 'Since/as He is to be chosen by the world therefore/so the judgment emanating from truth itself (to be passed) on the deeds of good thought of the world is committed to Mazda (Ahura), and the power (is committed) to (Mazda) Ahura...'. Note the repetitions 'world ... world' and 'commit ... assign' (lit. 'give ... give'). With its artistic syntax the *Yathā Ahū Vairiyō* offers a summary of the Zarathushtrian Religion in three lines. The traditional translation of its first line by 'as He is the Lord so He is the judge' is attested as early as in the Younger Avesta (cf. particularly Y 19.12). Yet it is untenable for both grammatical and syntactical reasons. A more reliable picture results from comparison with Yasht 19,12.90. There the phrase *aṣa ratuš* 'such/so (is) the judgment' refers to eschatological events which suggests that the *Yathā Ahū Vairiyō* has an eschatological reference as well.

27,14. Aṣəm Vohū

Aṣəm vohū vahištəm astī
 uštā astī uštā ahmāi
 hiiat ašāi vahištāi aṣəm

27,15. Yərjhe Hātəm

Yərjhe hātəm āat yesnē paiti vaŋhō¹
 mazdā ahurō vaēḡa² ašat hacā yārḡamcā
 taścā tāścā yazamaidē

¹ The Vulgata reading vaŋho (instead of expected vaŋho) is also found in Vispered 16,3 yaešam nō ahurō mazdā ašauua yesne paiti vaŋho vaēḡa. The Vispered passage is modelled after the Yenghe Hātəm, but the Young Avestan dialect form vaēḡa is replaced there by the standard form vaēḡa as well as the archaic word order mazdā ahurō is replaced by the Young Avestan standard ahurō mazdā.

27,14. Ashem Vohū

Truth is best (of all that is) good.
 As desired, what is being desired
 is truth for Him/him who (represents) best truth.

or:

Truth is best (of all that is) good.
 As desired, as desired, truth
 is for Him/him who (represents) best truth.¹

Yasna 27,15. Yenghē Hātām

In accordance with truth Mazda Ahura knows the man among the existing,
 as well as the women, whose better (attitude is seen) at worship.²
 Those men and women³ we worship.

¹ The Ashem Vohū consists of three lines of four words each. Note the repetitions 'truth ... truth ... truth', 'good ... best ... best', 'desired ... desired'. The first of the two *Ushta*'s doubtlessly means 'as desired', but the second is ambiguous as it can mean 'as desired' as well as 'what is being desired' (cf. 43,1). Thus at least two different renderings of the Ashem Vohū are possible. Zarathushtra may even have intended the ambiguities to provide a basis for the pious to meditate on the message of the stanza.

² lit.: 'In accordance with truth Mazda Ahura knows the better (attitude) of which male one among the existing, and of which female ones, (has been seen) at worship.'

³ 'those men and women', lit. 'those male ones and those female ones'. The text recalls 51,22, but it is not clear whether its third line refers to the Ahuras (Amesha Spentas), or to human beings, or to both.

Yasna 28-34. Ahunauaiti Gā9a

[Yānim manō yānim vacō yānim šiiə9nəm ašaonō zara9uštrahe]¹
[Fərá aməša spəntā gā9á gōuruuāin]

[Nəmə və gā9á ašaoniš]²

Yasna 28. Ahiiāsā Hāiti

28,1. Ahiiā yāsā nəmanhā ustānazastō rafəδrahiia
mainiiəuš° mazdā pouruuīm spəntahiiā aša vīspəng šiiə9anā
vanhəuš xratūm mananhō yā xšnəuuīšā gəušcā uruuānəm

28,2. yə vā mazdā ahurā pain̄.jasāi vohū mananhā
maibiiōi dāuuōi ahuuā astuuatascā hiiatcā mananhō
āiiaptā ašaṭ hacā yāiš rapəntō° daidit̄ x'ā9rē

28,3. yə vā aša ufiāni manascā vohū apaouruuīm
mazdāmcā ahurəm yaēibiiō xša9rəmcā aγžō.nuuamnəm°
varədaiti ārmaitiš ā mōi rafəδrāi zauuəng jasatā

28,4. yə uruuānəm mən̄g<9>³ gairē vohū dadē ha9rā mananhā
ašišcā šiiə9ananəm viduš mazdā ahurahiiā
yauuat̄ isāi tauuācā auuat̄ xsāi aēšē ašahiiā

28,5. aša kaṭ 9βā darəsāni manascā vohū vaədəmnō
gātūmcā ahurāi səuuīštāi° səraošəm mazdāi
anā mą9rā mazištəm vāurōimaidi xrafstrā hizuuā

28,6. vohū gaidi mananhā daidī aša dā darəgāiū
əṛəšuuāiš tū uxđāiš mazdā zara9uštrāi aojōghuuat̄° rafəno
ahmaibiiācā ahurā yā daibišuuatō duuaēšā taunuuiiāmā

28,7. daidī aša ṭam ašim vanhəuš āiiaptā mananhō
daidī tū ārmaitē vīštāspāi ištəm maibiiācā
dāstū mazdā xšaiiācā yā və mą9rā srəuuimā° rādā⁴

¹ The first of these three lines has been inserted in the Young Avestan period.

² The second and third lines are in Old Avestan dialect but they are of post-Zarathushtrian origin.

³ mən̄g gairē instead of məng gaire, owing to erroneous segmentation of spoken text.

⁴ srəuuimā rādā, Geldner srəuuim aradā.

Yasna 28-34. Ahunavaiti Gāthā

[Of truthful Zarathushtra the thoughts, words, and actions are entreating.]

[May the Holy Immortals accept the Gāthās.]

[Reverence to you, O truthful Gāthās.]

Yasna 28. Ahiyasa Haiti

28,1. In reverence for him, with hands out-stretched at first I entreat (you) all, O Mazdā, for the actions of support of the spirit holy through truth, through whom you may gratify the intellect of good thought¹ and the soul of the cow.

28,2. I approach you with good thought, O Mazdā Ahura, so that you may grant me (the blessings) of the two existences, the material and that of thought, the blessings emanating from truth, with which one can put (your) supporters in comfort

28,3. I extol you as never before, O truth, and good thought and Mazdā Ahura, for (all of) whom right-mindedness increases also unfading power. May you come to my calls for support.

28,4. Inspired by good thought and being a witness for Mazdā Ahura, I have in mind (one's) soul for (his commendation by my) song, as well as the rewards for (his) actions. For as long as I can and am able I shall look out in (my) search for truth.

28,5. O truth, shall I see you, I who possess good thought as well as obedience to be a throne for Him, the very strong Mazdā Ahura? O you beasts,² through this manthra, (spoken) by (my) tongue, we would win (Him), the Greatest one.

28,6. Come with good thought. With truth grant (us) a long-lasting gift through your exalted utterances, O Mazdā Ahura. (Grant it) as strong support to Zarathushtra and to us all so that thereby we may overcome the hostilities of (your) enemy.

28,7. Grant us that reward, O truth, the blessings of good thought. Grant, O right-mindedness, vigor to Vishtāspa and me. Grant (these things), O Mazdā, and rule with a manthra through which we can learn of your bounties.

¹ 'intellect of good thought' instead of 'men (and women) possessing the intellect of good thought'.

² The beasts (or: noxious animals) include the Daēvas and the (evil) mortals, cf. 34,5. They are addressed here in order to discourage and chase them away from the ritual so as not to spoil it.

28,8. vahištəm θβā vahištā yəm ašā vahištā hazaošəm
 ahurəm yāsā vāunuš narōi fərašoštāi maibiiācā
 yaēibiiascā iṭ rāṅhaṅhōi vīspāi yauuē vaṅhōuš manəṅhō

28,9. anāiš vā nōiṭ ahurā mazdā ašəmcā yānāiš zaranaēmā
 manascā hiiāṭ vahištəm yōi vō yōiθəmə dasəmə stūtəm
 yūžəm zəuištiiāṅhō išo xšaθrəmcā sauuaṅḥəm

28,10. aṭ yəṅg ašāaṭcā vōistā vaṅhōušcā dāθəṅg manəṅhō
 əθəθβəṅg mazdā ahurā aēibiiō pəṛənā āpanāiš kāməm
 aṭ vō xšmaibiiā asūnā vaēdā xʻaraiθiiā vaiṅtiiā srauūā

28,11. yō aiš ašəm nipāṅḥē° manascā vohū yauuaētāitē
 tuuəm mazdā ahurā frō mā sīšā θβahmāt vaocaṅḥē°
 mainiiōuš° hacā θβā əəāṅhā yāiš ā aṅhuš pouruiō bauuaṭ¹

End of Yasna 28

¹ bauuaṭ perhaps slightly incorrect for buuaṭ.

28,8. I lovingly ask you, O Best one, the Ahura who is in harmony with best truth, for that which is best for gentle Frashaoshtra, and for me, and for all those on whom you will bestow it with good thought for all time.

28,9. With these entreaties, O Mazdā Ahura, may we not anger you, nor truth or best thought, we who are standing at the offering of praises to you. You are the swiftest (bringers of) invigorations, and (you hold) the power over the benefits.

28,10. Fulfill with gains the desire of those whom you know to be just and meticulous through truth and good thought, O Mazdā Ahura. For (all of) you, O Rich ones, I know loving eulogies conducted by a good charioteer.¹

28,11. Through these you store for yourself truth and good thought for eternity, O Mazdā Ahura. So teach me with your mouth, in accordance with your spirit, how to pronounce these (eulogies) by which the first existence comes into being.²

End of Yasna 28

¹ 'conducted by a good charioteer': The eulogies are compared with a team competing at a horse-race (cf. 30,10, 50,6-7; Introd. 5,3). Thus 'good charioteer' is the well-trained tongue of the singer.

² 'the first existence comes into being', or: 'came into being', or: 'will come into being'? Instead of 'first existence' perhaps better 'foremost existence'. At any rate, in the Gāthas 'first' when used in connection with 'existence' has a wide spectrum of meanings.

Yasna 29. Xšmauuōiia.gəuš.uruuā Hāiti

29,1. Xšmaibiiā gəuš uruuā gərəždā kahmāi mā 9barōždūm kə mā tašaṭ
 ā mā aešəmō hazascā rəmō [ā]hišaiiā dərəšcā təuuiscā
 nōiṭ mōi vāstā xšmaṭ aniiō a9ā mōi saštā vohū vāstriiā

29,2. adā tašā gəuš pərəsaṭ ašəm ka9ā tōi gauuōi ratuš
 hiiat hīm dātā xšaiiantō hadā vāstrā gaodāiio 9βaxšō
 kəm hōi uštā ahurəm yə drəguuō.dəbiš° aešəməm vādāiioiṭ

29,3. ahmāi ašā nōiṭ sarəjā aduuaešō gauuōi paiṭi.mrauuat
 auuaešəm nōiṭ viduiiē yā šauuaitē¹ ādrəng ərəšuuāṅhō
 hātəm huuō aojištō yahmāi zauuəṅg jimā kərəduša

29,4. mazdā sax'ārē mairištō yā zī vāuuərəzōi pairi ci9iṭ
 dəəuuāišcā mašjiāišcā yācā varəšaitē aipī ci9iṭ
 huuō vīcīrō ahurō a9ā nā aṅhaṭ ya9ā huuō vasaṭ

29,5. aṭ vā ustānāiš ahuuā zastāiš frinəmnā ahurāi.ā
 mō uruuā gəušcā aziiā hiiat mazdəm duuaidi fərəsābiiō²
 nōiṭ ərəžjiiōi frajiiāitiš nōiṭ fsuiientē drəguuasū pairi

29,6. aṭ <h>ə vaocaṭ ahurō mazdā viduuā vafūš viianaiiā
 nōiṭ aəuuā ahū vistō naēdā ratuš ašāṭciṭ hacā
 aṭ zī 9βa fšuiiantaēcā vāstriiāicā 9βərəštā tataša

29,7. tēm āzūtōiš ahurō mṭ9rəm tašaṭ ašā hazaošō
 mazdā gauuōi xšuuīdəmcā huuō urušaēibiiō spəṅtō sāsnaiiā
 kastē vohū manəṅhā yə i dāiiaṭ əəuuā marətaēibiiō

29,8. aēm mōi idā vistō yə nā aəuuō sāsna gūšatā
 zara9uštōrō spitāmō huuō nā mazdā vašti ašāicā
 carəkərə9rā srāuuaiieṅhē hiiat hōi hudəməm diiāi vaxədrahiiā

29,9. aṭcā gəuš uruuā raostā yə anaēšəm xšəmənē rādəm
 vācəm nərəš asūrahiiā yəm ā vasəmi išā.xša9rim
 kadā yauuā huuō aṅhaṭ yə hōi dadaṭ zastauuat auuō

¹ šauuaitē, mss. šauuaitē and šauuaitē.

² fərəsābiiō, Geldner fərəsabiio.

Yasna 29. Khshməvōiia-gēush-urvā Hāiti

29,1. The soul of the cow¹ complains to you: ‘For whom did you shape me? Who fashioned me? Wrath and oppression, fury, spite, and violence hold me fettered. I have no shepherd other than you. Thus reveal yourselves to me with good pastoral work.’

29,2. Thereupon the fashioner of the cow asks truth: ‘Of what kind is your judgment for the cow? As you, O Ruling ones, have ordered zealous cattle-breeding together with forage, whom do you wish to be her master who may crush the wrath of the deceitful?’

29,3. But no deliverer will answer (the fashioner) through truth in a way helpful to the cow. No one knows how to set the weak free. He is the strongest among the existing, (the Ahura), whom I wish to reach with (the plaintiff) who has called (for help).²

29,4. May Mazdā who precisely remembers acts of brutality take note here and now those which have been perpetrated by Daēvas and (evil) mortals, and may he hereafter take note of those which will be perpetrated by them in future. He is the Ahura with judicial authority. As He desires, so it shall be for us.

29,5. Therefore we two, my soul and that of the fertile cow,³ are devoting ourselves mindfully and with hands out-stretched to Mazdā Ahura, choosing Him to give (us) orders. There is no hope for the cattle-breeder living correctly among the deceitful.

29,6. Mazdā Ahura, knowing the pronouncements through His vitality, says (to the cow): ‘No judgment emanating from truth itself has been found by the world. For the shaper has fashioned you for the cattle-breeding herdsman.’

29,7. In harmony with truth, Mazdā Ahura, by His teaching beneficial to the emaciated, fashioned for the cow both the manthra of nourishment and the milk. Who may be able through good thought to send these things down to the mortals?

29,8. Here, I have found Zarathushtra Spitama, the only one who listens to our teachings: He wishes to sing hymns of praise for us, O Mazdā, and for truth, to let me enjoy the beauty of his speech.

29,9. But the soul of the cow laments: ‘Must I be content with a vigorless caretaker, with the voice of a weak man while I wish him to be in possession of vigorous power? When will that person ever come who can offer him help with (his own) hand?’

¹ ‘soul of the cow’ is a mystical concept. It encompasses the soul of the primeval animal as well as that of the whole species and that of any living member of that species. In the present context it particularly refers to the soul of the animal that the deceitful have taken hold of in order to kill it cruelly for sacrificial purposes.

² ‘whom I wish to reach ...’ is uncertain. It seems that it is the soul of the cow which calls for help.

³ ‘my soul and that of the ... cow’ is virtually the same as ‘I, Zarathushtra, and the ... cow’, cf. 50,1.

29,10. yūžəm aēibiio ahurā aogō datā ašā xšaθrəmčā
 auuaṭ vohū mananḡhā yā hušəitīš rāmančā dāt
 azəmcit̄ ahiiā mazdā θβəm mōḡhī paouruuim vaēdəm

29,11. kudā ašəm vohucā manō xšaθrəmčā aṭ mā mašā
 yūžəm mazdā frāxšnənē mazōi magāi.ā paiti.zānatā
 ahurā nū nā auuarō əhmā rātoiš yūšmauuatəm

End of Yasna 29

29,10. Grant to those (present), O Mazdā Ahura, strength through truth and through good thought that power by which one may establish good dwellings and peace. Indeed I realize, that you are the first provider of these things.

29,11. Where are truth, good thought and power? Recognize me, (the cow), through (the mediation of) mortal (Zarathushtra), with foresight for the great offering. O Mazdā Ahura, come down to us now, on account of our gift to those such as you.

End of Yasna 29

Yasna 30. At tā vaxšiiā Hāiti

- 30,1. At tā vaxšiiā iṣəntō yā mazdā9a hiiatciṭ viduše
staotācā ahurāi yesniiāca vaṇhəuṣ manəṅhō
huməzdrā aša.yeca¹ yā raocəbiṣ darəsata uruuāzā
- 30,2. sraotā gəuṣ.āiṣ° vahištā auuaənata sūcā manəṅhā
auuarənā vici9ahiiā narəm narəm x'axiiāi tanuiiē
parā mazə yāṅhō ahmāi nā sazdiiai baodəntō° paiti
- 30,3. at tā mainiiū pouruiiē yā yōmā x'afənā asruuatəm
manahicā vacahicā šiiə9anōi hī vahiiō akəmcā
āscā hudāṅhō ərəṣ višiiātā noiṭ duzdāṅhō
- 30,4. atcā hiiat tā hēm mainiiū jasaētəm paouruuim dazdə
gaēmcā ajiiaiṭimcā hiiatcā aṅhaṭ apəməm aṅhuṣ
acištō drəguuatəm at ašəunē vahištəm manō
- 30,5. aiiā mainiiuuā° varatā yō drəguuā acištā vərəziō
ašəm mainiiuṣ spəništō yə xraozdištəṅ asənō vastē
yaēcā xšnaoṣən ahurəm hai9iiāiṣ šiiə9anāiṣ fraorəṭ mazdəm
- 30,6. aiiā noiṭ ərəṣ višiiātā daəuuācinā hiiat iṣ ā dəbaomā
pərəs(ə)mnəṅ² upā.jasaṭ hiiat vərənātā acištəm manō
at aēšəməm həṇduuārəṅtā yā 9anaiiən ahūm marətānō
- 30,7. ahmāicā xša9rā jasaṭ manəṅhā vohū ašācā
at kəhpəm utaiiuitiṣ° dadat ārmaitiṣ 9nmā
aēšəm tōi ā aṅhaṭ ya9a aiiəṅhā ādānāiṣ pouruiiō
- 30,8. atcā yadā aēšəm kaēnā jamaiti aēnəṅhəm
at mazdā taibiiō xša9rəm vohū manəṅhā voi.vidāiti³
aēibiiō sastē ahurā yōi ašāi dadən zastaiiō drujəm
- 30,9. atcā tōi vaēm xiiāmā yōi im fərašəm kərənaon⁴ ahūm
mazdāscā ahurāṅhō ā.mōiiāstrā baranā ašācā
hiiat ha9rā manā bauuat⁵ ya9rā cistiṣ aṅhaṭ maē9a

¹ aša.yeca for ašaiia-ca from ašaiia-ca, or blunder for aša yaeca?

² pərəs(ə)mnəṅ, Geldner pərəsmanəṅ.

³ voi.vidāiti, Geldner voiuuidāiti; var. voi.vidaite, voi.vidāiti, voi.vidaite.

⁴ kərənaon, Geldner kərənāun.

⁵ bauuat, var. buuat.

Yasna 30. At-tā-vakhshyā Hāiti

30,1. O approaching ones, I shall now proclaim praises for the Ahura and worships of good thought, worthy of being noted even by Him who (already) knows them, O attentive ones, and for truth (I shall proclaim) the joy which is visible through the lights.

30,2. Hear the best with your ears. Through the radiance (of the fire) contemplate with your thought the preferences of decisions,¹ contemplate each man individually,² before the great sharing, in anticipation of having it proclaimed to us.

30,3. These are the two spirits (existing) in the beginning, twins who have been heard of as the two dreams, the two thoughts, the two words, and the two actions, the better and the evil. Between these two, the munificent discriminate rightly but not those who give bad gifts.

30,4. When these two spirits confront each other (to fight for a person,³ then that person) determines (his) first (existence), (with) vitality or lack of vitality, and how his existence will be in the end. (The existence) of the deceitful will be very bad, but best thought will be (in store) for the truthful one.

30,5. Of these two spirits the deceitful one chooses to do the worst things, but the most holy spirit, clothed in the hardest stones, (chooses) truth, (as do those) who, with true actions, devotedly gratify Mazdā Ahura.

30,6. The Daēvas do not at all rightly discriminate between these two spirits, for as they take counsel with each other delusion comes over them, so that they choose the worst thought. In that way they all run to meet wrath, by which the mortals sicken existence.

30,7. And to this one He comes with power, good thought, and truth. Thus stability (grants) bodily form, and right-mindedness grants breath, and so by fettering the (Daēvas) in iron, (existence) will be your first one, O Ahura.

30,8. And so, when the (day of) payment for the crimes of these comes, (then) the power will be committed to you with good thought, O Mazdā Ahura, to command those who will deliver deceit into the hands of truth.

30,9. Thus may we be those who make existence brilliant, O Mazdā and you (other) Ahuras, with the bringing of changes, and with truth, while (our) thoughts are concentrated on the place where insight wavers.⁴

¹ 'preferences of decisions', or perhaps: 'invitations resulting from discernment' (cf. 45,1.8).

² Everybody who wants to participate in the worship of Ahura Mazdā has to undergo a test to determine whether he/she can be accepted.

³ The two spirits fight with each other for each single person in order to win him or her over to their respective sides.

⁴ 'where insight wavers': uncertain.