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“How to kill a cow in Avestan”
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How to kill a cow in Avestan

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In one of his most elucidative articles, Calvert WATKINS dealt with a rather martial aspect of Proto-Indo-European social life, tracing its residues throughout the literary products of various daughter languages. He argued convincingly that poetic formulae such as Rigvedic áhann áhím “(he, Indra) slew the serpent“ witness to a central motive of PIE folklore which reflects, to put it shortly, some kind of ritualization of the killing of mighty enemies by heroes. The essential linguistic feature of the formulae involved is the usage of the verbal root *gwh-en- as represented in Ved. áhann (3.sg.impf.act., < *é-gwh en-t), Hittite kuenta (3.sg.pret.act., < *gwh en-t), or Greek ἐξεσφέν (3.sg.plup.act., cf. perf. *gwh-e- gwhon-e). The verb in question was thus demonstrated to have had special connotations, preventing it from being used in everyday speech.

The usage of *gwh-en- was not restricted to the killing of enemies such as dragons, serpents, ”anti-heroes“, or ”anti-guests“, though. Both in Greek and in Indo-Iranian, the same root could be used when people talked about the killing of cows. This can hardly be accidental, given that in all those languages the combination of *gwo˘u- and *gwhen- yielded compounds such as Ved. m. gohán- ”cow killing“ (referring to a ”weapon“, vadhá, of the Maruts: nom.sg. gohā RV 7,56,17c beside nrhā ”man killing“; derived nom.sg.ntr. goghánám in RV 1,114,10a beside pūrusaghnám), Avestan gaojan- (gen.sg. gaojanō, referring to the winter: Vd. 7,27, cf. below), or the Greek verb βουφονέω (3.pl.impf.act. βουφόνεον H 466; cp. the voc. βουφόνε in the first Hermes hymn, 430). The Homeric tradition and its background were discussed in great detail by J. BECHERT (1964). In the following pages, I shall examine the Avestan material in question concentrating upon Zarathustra’s teachings.

The most intriguing Avestan passage that deals with the killing of the cow explicitly is Y. 32,14c. The verse belongs to a context where Zarathustra complains about the practices of the karapans and kavis appearing as a grōhma-2 to him:


Although the context is far from being clear in all details, the interpretation of the forms in question was never debated about: gauś is the nom.sg. meaning ”cow“, and jaidiāi, an infinitive with the suffix *-dhíāi built from jan- < *gwh-en- ”to kill“. The greatest divergences in the different interpretations of the present verse concern the form mraoi and the syntactical analysis depending on it. As this is basic for the understanding of the whole passage in question as well as for gaining an insight into the situative background involved, it is worth while recollecting the proposals made so far.

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1 WATKINS 1987, 270-299.
2 Following HUMBACH (1991: II, 86) I take this word as a collective noun designating a group of persons.
In a 1985 article, I adopted the view expressed by Chr. Bartholomae in his Wörterbuch (1904, 1193) who considered mraóī as a finite 3.sg. passive injunctive form of the root mrū- "to speak". Comparing the syntactic constellation thus established with other occurrences of *mrū- plus infinitives in Vedic and Avestan, I arrived at the conclusion that the sentence in question could be interpreted as denoting the speech act leading to the killing of cows: "und wenn die Kuh als zu töten(de) genannt wird", i.e., "and when the cow is ordered to be killed" (1985, 43). The clause would thus represent a passivized equivalent of Vedic sentences like áśvam áñetavai brūyāt "(he, the Adhvaryu) should order a horse to be brought about" (ŚBM 2,1,4,16).

Bartholomae’s own interpretation differed only partially from this in that he regarded gāuš jaidiīāi as a clause of direct speech: ".. und daß es heiße: das Rind ist zu töten .." (1905, 31). A similar analysis of the infinitival clause was proposed by S. Insler in his Gatha edition (1975, 208 sq.). This author, however, regarded mraóī as an infinitive formation of its own, depending on vīṣṇīā in the preceding verse and thus being arranged parallel with auuō "help(ing)". The syntagm consisting of gāuš and jaidiīāi is taken as a formula of direct speech then, together with the closing half verse: ".. since they (the Kavis) have begun to aid the deceitful person and to say: ‘The cow is to be killed (for him) who has been kindling the Haoma ...'“ (1975, 49).

This interpretation is doubtful in several respects. First, Insler had to suggest that the attested form, mraóī, "somehow reposes on an orig. reading inf. *mrūvōī (= *mrūvāi)" (o.c., 209). Given that a form mruiīē (this is what we should expect from *mrūvaī) is well attested several times in Old Avestan as well as Young Avestan contexts (as a 1st sg. pres.ind.med.: Y. 49,3d; Y. 9,17; 12,4; 19,10), this conjecture is hard to believe, all the more since none of the variants listed in Geldner’s edition is nearer to mruiīē than to mraóī: mraóī itself is the reading of nearly all manuscripts pertaining to the Iranian Pahlavi Yasna (Pt4, Mf1; Mf4 may be added), the Sanskrit Yasna (J3; S1 is "defective" in the present context), the (Indian) Yasna Sāde (C1, K11; H1, J6, J7), and the Iranian Vendidad Sāde (Mf2, Jp1); from the latter branch, only K4 has mrōī. mraóī is further attested in the Khordā Avesta ms. Pd. The mss. assigned to the Indian Vendidad Sāde mostly read mraouī (L2, K10, L1) or, with a neglectable difference, mraouī (P1). B2 and L3 from this branch have mraóī again. Another ms. belonging here, O2, agrees with the reading of the Indian Pahlavi Yasna, which has mraomī (J2, K5); the same holds true for the Iranian Khorda Avesta ms. K37 and the Yasna Sade ms. L13 (where the m was secondarily added). Geldner was certainly right in rejecting this as the lectio difficilior, all the more since a 1st sg. "I speak" could hardly be motivated in the given context.

Another point that has to be objected against S. Insler’s interpretation is that the two forms he assumes to depend from vīṣṇīa as infinitives are basically distinct: mraóī, if it had replaced *mruiīē, would represent a dative root infinitive, thus being

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3 This ms. was not used by Geldner because it "did not reach (him) until after the entire Yasna was completed" (Prolegomena: 1896, xxiv); nevertheless Geldner had to acknowledge its importance as a sister ms. of Pt4. Mf4 is nowadays easily accessible via the facsimile edition prepared by Jamasp Asa / Nawabi (1976e) where it is named "D90".

4 This reading is not mentioned in Geldner’s apparatus but can be taken from the facsimile edition prepared by Burnouf (1829-1843).
equivalent to a certain extent with framrūītē depending on *vīsaitē in Y. 8,4 which INSLER quotes as a parallel. auuō, on the other hand, is the accusative of an s-stem noun, *āuas. Although such a syntactic disjuncture cannot be ruled out with certainty, it would nevertheless be hard even if we could regard vīsāntā as a verb of motion ("to enter").

Although all interpretations connecting mraoū with the root mrū "to speak" are supported by the Pahlavi translation which uses guft "spoken"5, several quite divergent proposals were published as to the form in question. In a 1957 article, H. HUMBACH argued that mraoū cannot represent a 3rd sg. form of the passive aorist of "mrū/mrav 'sprechen'" because this root is supplied by vāc in the aorist throughout, the 3sg. aor.pass. being vācī. Instead he proposed to connect mraoū with the YA. adjective "mrūra- 'gewalttätig (?)'" which is used in Vd. 2,22 as an epithet of the "winter", just as the compound gaojan- "cow killing" is used in Vd. 7,27. Accordingly, he proposed the tentative translation "die Kuh wird, um getötet zu werden, gewalttätig behandelt"6. Note that here, the infinitival syntagm is regarded equivalent with a passive final clause, "for being killed". In HUMBACH’s first Gatha edition (1959: I, 99), his translation was a bit more concise: ".. während die Kuh zu Tode gequält wird .."

This view according to which mraoū is a 3.sg. aor.pass. of a root 2mrū "to torment" was adopted by J. KELLENS in his study on the Avestan root nouns (1974, 325) as well as — hesitatingly — by K. HOFFMANN and B. FORSSMAN in their "Avestische Laut- und Flexionslehre" (1996, 228). It was KELLENS who extended the basis for the alleged 2mrū by relating to it both *amrū-, the name of a saint occurring in Yt. 13,109, interpreted by him as "qui ne maltraite pas“, and mrauuaiāsca appearing as a variant reading in Yt. 1,15. Taking the latter as a gen.sg. of a fem. ā-stem mrauuā- "la violence", KELLENS explicitly tried to improve BARTHOLOMAE’S Wörterbuch entry "mrū- f. etwa ‘Hader, Zwist’" based on GELDNER’s reading mruaiāsca (1904, 1197). One further derivation of the root in question had been claimed before by G. KLINGENSCHMITT in his 1968 dissertation on the Farhang-ī-ōm according to whom mruta appearing in F.11 (491) is the "einziger Beleg des PPP. der Wz. mrū“ [!], its meaning being ‘‘vernichtet, geschädigt’ (o.ä.)”5. The interpretation of mraoū as a passive form of 2mrū "maltraiter“ has been upheld by KELLENS ever since: It is repeated both in "Les textes vieil-avestiques“, edited together with E. PIRART (KELLENS-PIRART 1991, 289) and in a recent article dealing about the Avestan infinitives (KELLENS 1994 [1995], 57); the translation agrees with the one proposed by HUMBACH in 1957: ".. lorsque la Vache est maltraitée pour être tuée“ (KELLENS-PIRART 1988, 121).

HUMBACH himself, however, has meanwhile changed his mind again. In his second Gatha-edition published in collaboration with J. ELFENBEIN and P.O. SKJÆRVØ (1991),

5 As usual, this is an interlinear rendering of the Avestan words rather than a translation: W AMTˇc w’ TWRA znšn gwpt‘ i.e. ud ka-z ŏ gāw zanišn guft ”and also-when to the cow killing (is) spoken".
7 KLINGENSCHMITT 1968a, 149; the "Teildruck“ (1968b) does not contain any commentary on the form in question.
he now regards mraoī not as a finite passive form of mruī but as an “instr.sg. of an ī-stem noun mraoī- ‘destructive action, destruction, enfeeblement’, derived from the same root (1991: II,89). Taking gauš jaidiāi as a direct speech clause, he arrives at the following translation for the verse in question: “.. when, with the destructive action (called) ‘let the ox be killed’ ..” (I: 135). HUMBACH felt it necessary once again to explicitly state that “mraoī cannot be for *mrāuuī [sic; see n. 42 below], 3rd sg.aor pass of mrau/mrū ‘to speak, recite’, since the aor. of this root is supplemented by the root vac ‘to speak, say’” (II: 89).

Considering this amount of divergent opinions, it seems worth while reinvestigating the arguments put forth in detail. If we start with contrasting the two roots in question, 1mrū and 2mrū, we are struck by the fact that the former only is well attested in Avestan and elsewhere: With its Vedic counterpart, brū-, it shares both its meaning and its formal peculiarities, i.e. the existence of an athematic root present, the non-existence of an aorist stem, and its suppletion by *yač-. And it can be traced to a Proto-Indo-European *mluH- by identification with Slavonic *mlūv- “to speak”.

The case for 2mrū, on the other hand, is rather weak, at least if it is postulated to be a verbal root. In this case, the form mraoī would remain the only finite form attested — provided the analysis as underlined by KELLENS and HOFFMANN / FORSSMAN can be maintained at all. But the nominal derivatives invoked as witnesses are not beyond doubt either.

The most serious problem is posed by the alleged attestation of a noun *mrūuī- or *mrāuuā- meaning “Hader, Zwist” or “la violence” in Yt. 11,15. In the context in question, it is just the verse containing this word which shows the greatest variation in manuscript tradition. This was studied in great detail by J. KELLENS (1968, 43) in connection with a second hapax legomenon appearing alongside with *mrāuuā- here, viz. paras-. For the present investigation, the complex situation may be summarized as follows.

Taking GELDNER’s edition as a basis, the text of Yt. 11,15-16 can be rearranged into syntactical units in the following way:

(11,15) sraoštām. ašīm. [huraodēm. vṛ̣r̥drāśjanēm. frādaṭ. gaēḏēm. ašauanēm. ašahe. ratūm.j yazamaide:
 yim. daḍaṭ. ahuru. mazdā. ašauāua. aēšmahe. xruuū. draoš. hamaēstārēm:
 āxšīm. hqm.vainīm. yazamaide.
 parētāsca. mruuāliṣca. hamaēstāra.
(11,16) haxaita. sraošahe. aśiiehe.
 haxaita. rašnaoš. razīštāhe. ...

8 I shall not discuss the name amru-, appearing in Yt. 13,109 in the genitive form, amraoš, rhyming with the following name, camaraoš, nor the Old Persian proper name Gaubruva (g-u-b-ru-v) interpreted by HUMBACH (1991: II, 89) as “bull-killer”. They have no argumentative value.
9 Cf. MAYRHOFER 1986-, II, 235 sq. for O.Ind. brū- (BRAV6) and VASMER 1955, II, 148 sq. s.v. Russ. molvā. The Slavonic -i-present (Czech mluviti, Pol. mówić etc.; a “ˇcech. mluvati” as quoted by MAYRHOFER seems never to have existed) can immediately reflect the athematic root present if it was remodelled after the 3.pl.pres.ind.act. *mlūvečti < *mluḥ,enti = Ved. bruvánti.
10 The text in brackets is suppled from Yt. 11,1.
The contents are clear for the first sentence which concerns Sraoša ("obedience"), the yazata Yt. 11 is dedicated to in general:

"We worship Sraoša, the one (receiving) allotments, [of beautiful build, victorious, supporting the (living) world, a righteous Ratu ('ruler') of truth], whom Ahura Mazda created, the righteous one, as a destroyer of Aēšma ('blood-thirstiness'), the one having a cruel wood(en weapon.)."

The following sentence is less clear as it stands. According to normal Avestan usage, we should expect *hgm.vaintīm to be an epithet ("winning, overwhelming") of āxštīm "peace": "We worship overwhelming peace". But hamaēštāra as well as haxaiía which introduces every line in 11,16 have to be interpreted as dual forms, thus forcing us to take āxštīm and hgm.vaintīm as two independent nouns, arranged in an asyndetic way: "peace (and) victory, the two destroyers .., the two friends ..". The dual forms cannot be assumed to cover sraoša- plus āxštī- ("obedience and peace") because of the first line in 11,16 talking about "the two friends of Sraoša, the one receiving allotments": Sraoša could hardly have been called his own friend.

The situation becomes more complex if we consider the manuscript tradition concerning the two elements depending on hamaēštāra.

GELDNER’s text agrees with the one present in K20, a codex mostly containing plain Pahlavi texts. The most similar readings can be found in younger collective manuscripts of this type (partially at least descending from K20), viz. M4, P7, P14 and M12, as well as some Khorda Avesta mss., viz. J10, J15, K18, K36, W1, L12. To this group we may add the Khorda Avesta mss. published under the names of R 411, "J1", MU 27, and TD23 by JAMASP ASA / NAWABI (1976f/b/g/a).

Quite a different tradition reveals itself in a third group of manuscripts mostly containing the text of the Yasht sequence proper (i.e., not as part of a Khorda Avesta collection) or single Yashts. The leading one of these mss. is F1 which reads astar etacæ amuiiamana.; it shows no trace of *hamaēštāra but continues immediately with 11,16 (haxia). The same text is present in E1 but also in the Khorda Avesta mss. Pt1, Mb1, J16, an equivalent tradition is further met with in the mss. L18, P13, Jm4, Jm5.
A special case is M35, a collective ms. which contains two versions of the text of Y. 11, starting from 11,15; here, we find both wordings side by side. And a peculiar position is maintained by K22 which contains patarståscas alongside with amauiia, thus standing somewhat in between the two traditions. For easy convenience, the ms. readings are listed here according to the two groupings (the mss. not collated by GELDNER are marked by parentheses):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K20-group</th>
<th>F1-group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K20</td>
<td>F1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca hamaĕstāra.</td>
<td>astrarståsca. amuuiia.mana. + haxiia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>E1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. maruuiăśca ??</td>
<td>astrarståsca. amuuiia.mana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Pt1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. ?? ??</td>
<td>astrarståsca. amuuiia.mana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. ?? ??</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca.mruuaiiăśca hamaĕstārəm.[!]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R411</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca hamaĕstāra.)</td>
<td>(R115 astrarståsca. amuuiiamana.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(“J1”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca. ahamēstāra.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MU27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca. ahamēstāra.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(TD23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca. ahamēstāra.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>J10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca hamaĕstāra.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>J15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca hamaĕstāra.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>K18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca hamaĕstāra.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca hamaĕstāra.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. ?? ??</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. mruuaiăśca. hamaĕstāra.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M35A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parståsca. maruuiăśca.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M35B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>astrarståsca. amuuiia.mana.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patarståsca amauiia.</td>
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</table>

J. KELLENS was right then in pointing out that the wording of the second ms. group is equivalent to a passage in Vispered (Vr. 7,1). According to GELDNER, this runs as follows:

(Vr. 7,1)   vaca. aršuxđa. yazamaide:   ašši-ti. hqm.vanti-ti. yazamaide:
            sraoša. aštī. yazamaide:   astrarståsca. amuuiiamna. yazamaide:
            aštī. vahāuhim. yazamaide:   aššuŋamca. frauašaiiō. yazamaide: ...

Here, we find both Sraoša and ašši-ti- hqm.vanti-ti- again, followed by a sequence astrarståsca. amuuiiamna. which looks nearly identical with what the F1-group has in Yt. 11,15. From this fact KELLENS concluded that the latter was secondarily adopted (“interprétation secondaire”) to the wording of Vr. 7,1, maintaining that the tradition of the K20 group represents the lectio difficilior.

There can be no doubt that both passages are connected in a way. But given that the verses in question contain hapax legomena in both versions, we may ask whether these might not represent one original wording lastly, the divergences having developed only secondarily.

19 From GELDNER’s edition, it is not clear whether hamaēstāra appears in M35.
From the Vispered manuscript tradition, no further information as to this question is deducible at first glance: Besides **astwrótaca** as represented by K7a, K7b, M4, M6, J15, Kh1, J8, Pt3, Jm5, L1, L2, Os, Br1, B2, Dh1 and in the repetition of Vr 7 in Mf2, Jp1 and Kh1\(^\text{20}\), **GELDNER** notes **astwrótaca** for Jp1, K4, Fl1, and Fl1\(_2\), H1, and H1\(_2\), P14, and S2; **astwrótaca** in Mf2; and **asttówaca** in L27. For **amuiiamna** as appearing in K7b, K4, Mf2, Jp1, Fl1, Pt3, L1 and L2, a variant **amuiiamnôm** is noted for K7a, M6, J15, and P14\(^\text{21}\). It is worth while considering the following observations, though.

First, **amuiiamna**-, best interpreted as a negated participle pertaining to the passive present stem \(\sqrt{\text{mû-}}\text{já-}\), from a root \(\sqrt{\text{mû}}/\text{mû} “\text{to move, to seduce}”\), is well supported by three other occurrences in the Yašt: In Yt. 13,35 and Yt. 17,17, it is combined with **razîštanam**, gen.pl. of **razištâa** = Ved. **rajîsthâa**- “the straightest”, normally used as an attribute of **pantâ** = Ved. **pânthâh** “way”. If we admit that the gen. is used instead of an abl. here, **amuiiamna**- means “not to be lead astray (from the straightest paths)”, talking about the Fravâšîs of the righteous and Aši, respectively. The third occurrence is in Yt. 13,133 where a gen.sg.fem. **amuiiamnâiâ** appears as an attribute of **saghû-** (gen. **saqhuhas-ça**) “command”\(^\text{23}\), alongside with **hu-sastaiâ** “well proclaimed”\(^\text{24}\) and **auuanemnâiâ**, med.pres.part. from **van “to conquer”**. This reminds of the parallelism between **amuiiamna**- and **hamvaintîm** in Vr. 7,1.

Second, **asthörâtâ**-, although being a hapax in Avestan, is well supported by its Vedic counterpart, **áststra-**, which appears several times in the RV with the meaning “insuperable”. The non-negated stem of the participle, **sthörâta-** “slain down”, is attested two times in YAv. texts, viz. in Vd. 19,2 (**druxš**) and Yt. 19,34 (**yimô**). The interpretation of the sequence consisting of **asthörâta-** and **amuiiamna**- as “insuperable and unmoveable” is based on solid ground like this. We have to consider then that the forms as attested in Vr. 7,1 represent objects to **yazamaide** so that we expect them to be accusatives. We can leave the variant **amruïiamnôm** (K7a, M6, J15, and P14) as a lectio faciliorm aside, all the more since it is not confirmed by any one of the mss. of the F1-group in Yt. 11,15. Accordingly, we have to choose between a neutre (nom.-)acc.pl. and a masc. or neutre (nom.-)acc.dual.

Third, we have to take into account that for **ãxštîm** in Yt. 11,15, a variant reading **ãxšti** is well attested in several mss. of the K20 group (K20, K18, J15, L12; “J1”, TD23). This was noted by J. **KELLENS** (1974, 46) as an indication of an underlying dual syntagm joining **ãxšti-** and **hamvaintî-** in a similar way as in Vr. 11,16 where we read **ãxštibiiãca hgm.vaintibiã**; in this case, the latter word would have to be interpreted as a fem. verbal abstract in -tî-, not a participle in -ntî-. This analysis would fit

\(^{20}\) Cf. **GELDNER**’s edition, preliminary note to Vr. 7, according to whom Vr. 7 is repeated within the text of Y. 25 in the V(en)d(idad-)s(âde) mss.

\(^{21}\) From the mss. edited in the “Pahlavi Codices and Iranian Researches” series (ed. **JAMASP ASA / NAWABI**), the following readings may be added: **asthörâtaca. amuiiamna.** TD4a (vol. 52, 1978, 632); **asthörâtaca. amuiiamnôm.** MU 35 (vol. 38, 1976h, 75); **asthörâtaca. amuiiamnôm.** “J2” (vol. 16, 1976d, 220).

\(^{22}\) Cf. **BARTHOLOMAE** 1904, 147 who refers to Ved. **kâmamûta-** (RV 10,10,11c).

\(^{23}\) Thus according to **BARTHOLOMAE** 1904, 1558: “Gebot, Befehl”; the word occurs only here.

\(^{24}\) This reading is preferred to **hu-staiã** because it implies a figura etymologica with **saghû**.
well with the fact that in Yt. 11,16 the dual form haxaiia follows which can be understood as resuming āxšīti plus ḫṃvainti as a dual dvandva.\(^{25}\)

Lastly we have to consider that in the tradition of Yt. 11,15 as represented by the F1 group, there is no trace of either yazamaide (as present in Vr. 7,1) nor of hamae-stāra. As it stands, the text rather suggests that astorsta- plus amuiamma- are appositions to āxšīti- plus ḫṃvainti- — or attributes joint to the following haxaiia. The latter possibility is preferable because it explains the change of gender: haxay- = Ved. sākhi- “friend” is a masc. throughout.\(^{26}\)

On this basis, we may seriously wonder whether the text of Yt. 11,15 as conserved in the F1 tradition might not be reliable as it is. Furthermore, it becomes conceivable that the wording of the K20-branch of tradition might be due to a corruption of ast rotorca amuiamma as the prototype reading. The similarities of the written forms are indeed striking, and the testimony of K22 reading patarasca amuiai. might indicate an intermediate step. In this case, m(a)r(a)uu(a)ii˚¯asca would have to be regarded as a ghost word. But as long as the manuscript tradition for such texts as the Srōs Yašt Hađōxt has not been established with certainty, this remains conjectural of course.

Unfortunately, the Pahlavi translations of the passages in question do not give any further hints. In Vr. 7,1, it reads (ṣṭltyh w ḡmtkṛḥ mynwg Y ḡśdlyḥ ycwvn)\(^{27}\), thus adopting the Avestan words in question as abstract nouns in Middle Persian disguise: astardagīh renders astorsta-, and amūdagīh, amuiamma-, just as āṣṭih renders āxšīti-, and amāvandīḥ, ḫṃvainīḥ- amūdagīḥ alone is glossed by mēnōg-ī ōśyārīḥ, i.e. “spirit of consciousness”.\(^{28}\) The Pahlavi translation of Yt. 11,15, styled as “undeutlich” by Bartholomae (1904, 891 s.v. pēr et-) and 1197 s.v. mrv-ı) runs quite different from that. Humbach (1991, 89) notes the reading āṣṭih amāvandīḥ, wīn’ḥ ud nkeł’ī, leaving the interpretation of the two words in question open. These may well represent MPers. wad-xwāḥ (to be transliterated as (wxw’h)\(^{29}\)) and nakkīrā, both met with as juridical terms in the Mādīgān-i Hazār Dādestān with the meanings “malevolent” and “denying”\(^{30}\); the latter also appears in religious Pahlavī and Pāzend texts as the denotation of a sin.\(^{31}\) But within the given passage (the

\(^{25}\) Cp. Y. 16,8 where the dual dvandva consisting of xšuuīḥa and āxšīti, “milk and fat”, is resumed by the dual hamōṣtri “the two destroyers”.

\(^{26}\) Note that in RV 1,15,5c, āstrītam is used as an epithet of sakhyām “friendship”. In RV 1,4,4 and 1,41,6-7 āstrīta- and sakhi- occur side by side, but with no narrow relationship between them.

\(^{27}\) Cf. Dhabhar 1949, 304 sq.; the same reading appears in K7a, cf. the facsimile edition by Barr (1944), fol. 125r.

\(^{28}\) In “J2” and MU35, we read (xwyšk’lyḥ) xweškārīḥ “sense of duty” instead of ōšyārīḥ; TD4a has (ṣṭltyh ‘m’wkṛḥ) (aṣṭrenīḥ *amāvandīḥ?) instead of astardaghīḥ amūdagīḥ.

\(^{29}\) This reading seems first to have been suggested by Dhabhar 1963, 204 n. 15 (non vidi); it was accepted by Kreypenbroek 1985, 66 and 103 n. 15.\(^{4}\).

\(^{30}\) Cf. MHD 83,11 in the new edition by Macuch (1993, 539) where both words occur side by side: MN psym’t pt ZK n ykr’y ḡwt’h’ ḡṣčy’r ñwth’h, i.e. az pasēmāl-i pad ūn-i nakkīrā bóxt pēšēmāl wadhwāḥ “as against a defendant who has been cleared of what he had denied, the plaintiff (is declared) malevolent”. Cf. Macuch, o.c. 63 sq. for a detailed analysis of nakkīrā.

\(^{31}\) Cf., e.g., Mēnōg-i xrad, Pahl.-Vs., 36,13 (ed. Sanjana 1895, 53): dahom kē tis ī š pad nigāḥdārīḥ padirīf bē xarēd ud *nakkīrā bawēd “the tenth (sin), if (he) consumes a thing he has taken charge of and (if he) denies (this)”.
How to kill a cow in Avestan

The complete wording is 〈štyh w hmwndyhcwmx wtkw’k ymyst’l〉, i.e. aštih ud amāwandih yazom *wad-xwāh *ud *nakkirā hamēstār in K20, “J1”, TD23), wadxwāh and nakkirā do not necessarily witness to the meaning of the Avestan words they represent; as often, they may have been inserted by the translator as mere stand-ins, suggested to him by the context. In the present case, we cannot but suspect that either aštih or amāwandih (or even hamēstār) was used in comparable juridic environments. It must be underlined, however, that by now, the Pahlavi translation can only be quoted from mss. belonging to the K20-group; F1 contains a sāde text (as well as R115), and for the other mss., it is not clear from GELDNER’S description whether they have Pahlavi versions or not. It seems that the F1-tradition is restricted to sāde mss. at all.

In connection with the other alleged cognates of the Avestan root 2mrū “to violate”, the Pahlavi tradition gains more weight. mūrō, epithet of the winter in Vd. 2,22, is translated by mūdag which in its turn is glossed by 〈AYK MNDOM tp’h ŐBYDWNyt〉, i.e kū tis tabāh kunēd “which makes thing(s) spoil”.32 The same word, mūdag, is used as the equivalent of mūtua in the Farhang-i ūmīm (F. XI: 491). As G. KLINKENSCHMITT (1968a, 149) points out, we find two further attestations of both mūdag and its gloss in the Pahlavi version of the Hōm Yašt, viz. in Y. 9,32 and 11,6, where the text has the compound 〈mwtk-krt〉, i.e. mūdag-kardār “spoilt-maker”. The former testimony is worthless because here, the compound obviously mirrors Av. maoðanō.kairiï, a bahuvrīhi meaning “whose action is lust” (attribute of a whore, jahikā-); mūdag may have been chosen in this case because of its phonetic similarity, the Av. hapax maoðana- reminding of MPers. mūd-. In Yt. 11,6, however, mūdag-kardār translates Av. mūrakā (nom.pl.), one in a series of three names of (Daevic) creatures (beside dahākā and varṣānā) to be born in the house of somebody who deprives Haoma of his legitimate share. The exact meaning of the Av. word remains unclear, although it might be a derivational form of mūra- as appearing in Yt. 5,93, a Pahlavi mostly translated as “wicked” in agreement with Ved. mūrā-. Unfortunately, a Pahlavi version of Yt. 5 is not available so that we cannot prove that the Pahlavi translator had this word in mind when rendering mūraka- by mūdag kardār. There is a hidden indication, however, of the interdependency of mūra- and mūdag to be found in the Farhang-i ūmīm. The entry following the hapax mūtua is unusual in the sense that the Av. word in question, mərəzānāi, seems to be glossed by two Pahlavi lemmas, one of them written in Avestan script. According to KLINKENSCHMITT (1968a, 1650), the entry reads mərəzānāi: *mwl’n cygwn "KLSH, i.e. “‘mulān soviele wie Bauch” (KLSH is the aramaeogram for askam(b) “belly”). While Mpers. mulān “belly” and Av. mərəzāna-, a hapax again, can easily be identified etymologically (presupposing OPers. *mərdāna-), there is no reason why the former should have been written in Avestan script, all the more since the writing is defective: what we read is mūrā in both substantial manuscripts containing the Farhang33. We may therefore suggest that two items of the prototype manuscript were confused here, viz. (MPers.) mulān and

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32 Cf. the edition SANJANA 1895, 19; JAMASP / GANDEVIA 1907, 36 have kunēd “they make”.
33 Cf. KLINKENSCHMITT 1968a, I and 1968b, I. Besides K20 and M51, the Farhang is included in TD28 (ed. JAMASP ASA / NAWABI 1976i); here the text is as defective for the entry in question (159) as the one contained in M51, reading only (mərəzānāi mūrā plus) 〈SE〉 instead of 〈cygwn KLSE〉.
Returning to mrūrō in Vd. 2,22, we may wonder then whether this might have secondarily replaced an original *mūrō meaning “noxious”. In this case, we should have to explain the first r in mrūrō as an intrusion. A possible source for this can be traced in Vd. 7,27 where, in another lamentation about bad winter, this is called xrūta- “cruel” (and, n.b., gaojan- “cow killing”). The parallelism of xrūra- / xrūta- and mrūra- / mruta- is indeed striking. After all, the adaptation of *mūra- to mrūra- need not necessarily have been restricted to manuscript tradition. It may well have become a feature of the spoken (Young-)Avestan language. But even if it did, this does not mean that we should expect the resulting “root” √mrūa to have been able to form a passive root aorist, /mrau̯i/, or a feminine ī-stem noun mraoī- in Gathic times — just as *kreuh2-, the “root” underlying Av. xrūra-, did not develop a primary verbal paradigm in any I.-E. language.

What, then, is mraoī in Y. 32,14? The main argument put forward by HUMBACH and KELLENS when rejecting the traditional analysis of mraoī as a 3.sg. passive form of √mrū “to speak” was that this root formed a present stem only, its aorist being supplied by √vāc, and that the expected 3rd sg. passive forms, vāci (inf.) and auūāci (ind.) are well attested (Y. 43,13 / Y. 36,6: HUMBACH 1991, 89). It is indeed true that the passive formation with the ending -i is confined to the aorist in Vedic. This can easily be shown by looking at the attestations of the immediate cognate of Av. auūāci, viz. Ved. avāci: In five of its six occurrences in the RV, it appears in the last stanza of a hymn, its function consisting in stating that the aim of proclaiming the hymn has just been achieved by reaching its end; cp., e.g., RV 6,34,5b: īndrāya stotrám matíbhir avāci “(with these words,) a praise song has now been proclaimed to Indra, with (pious) thoughts”.

Thus, avāci is in perfect agreement with the corresponding 1st

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34 Note that in K20, the Mpers. equivalent of mruta is written (mwlkt) (cf. CHRISTENSEN 1931, fol. 82v). This suggests a (secondary?) identification of mruta with morztə- “dead” = Npers. mūrda < Mpers. *murdag; cp. also n. 36 below.

35 xrūrahe instead of xrūtahe is the variant reading of Jp1, Mf2, K10, L2 in Vd. 7,27; other variants are xratahe (K1) and xrūvahe (! L1, O2). GELDNER’s xrūtahe appears in Pt2, Mi4, P10, L4a, L3, and P2 (sec. manu).

36 One further attestation of mrūra- may be seen in one of the fragments edited by WESTERGAARD (FrW. 8,2: 1852-54, 334). The text as contained herein is much more parallel to the Pahlavi version of Vd. 2,22 passage than this is itself; note the following equivalences: Vd. 2,22 haca. staxrō. mrūrō. zīā: / FrW. 8,2 haecī. . staxrāhe. morzō. zaiia: / Vd. 2,22 PT with gloss: stahmagī (i-ʃ {ZY-S}; read ziyā(-i)?) / FrW. 8,2 auuaθa. staxrō. yaθ. hā. druxš. aēiti.: Vd. 2,22 PT with gloss: mūdag (kū tis tabāh kunēnd) / FrW. 8,2 mōirōs. yaθ. mahrkūšō. auua.mīrīiäte. > Vd. 2,22 PT with gloss: zamīstān rasēd (*markūšān gōwēnd) (> Npers. gloss in K1 [ed. BARR / IBSCHER 1941, 34] ism-i zamīstān gōyand). Although the much distorted text of FrW. 8 deserves of further investigation (according to WESTERGAARD, it is found in two mss., viz. K15 and K38 [= M3 WESTERGAARD]), it seems clear that the equivalent of mrūrō is concealed both in morzōtə. (< mruta-? cp. n. 34 above) and mōirōs here. Should (mōir-) reflect (mūr-) directly? — mruuāca in N.62 has no context and cannot be taken into consideration (cf. HUMBACH 1991, 89).

37 Similarly RV 1,51,15b; 5,3,12b; 8,40,12b; 10,54,6d; 7,58,6c may be added where traditional sā vāci conceals sā avāci. Cf. HOFFMANN 1967, 219 sqq. for this restitution and for the function of the
person active forms, *avocam* (1.sg.) and *avocāma* (1.pl.) that are normally used as in RV 1,114,11a-d: *ávocāma nāmo asmā avasyāvah* “(with these words), we have proclaimed the (hymn of) veneration, longing for help”\(^{38}\). The same principle can be seen in the use of the Old Av. counterpart of *avocāma* attested in the finishing stanza of Y. 38 in the form *āuuocāma*\(^{39}\) which may conceal ā plus *auuaocāma*: “(with these words), we have called you hither (the waters ...)”\(^{40}\).

Thus, the assumption that the 3rd sg. passive forms in -i pertain to the aorist system in Indo-Iranian seems well founded. This does not mean, however, that they formed a part of the aorist paradigm proper: There is a clear difference between *(a)vāci on the one hand and *(a)vocam, *(a)vocāma etc. on the other hand in that the latter only are built from the reduplicated thematic stem (*e-˘ue-˘uk˘e/o-*) which by comparison with Greek εῖπον can be regarded as inherited from the I.-E. protolanguage. *(a)vāci, however, must be considered as an athematic formation, consisting of an ending -i directly attached to the o-graded root\(^{41}\). Taking this into account for the case of *mraoï* meaning “it is spoken”, I have argued (1985, 55 n. 65) that this could easily have been built by analogy with the passive aorist forms, because \(\sqrt{mrū} \) had an athematic root present. The analogy would thus have consisted in transferring the ending only, yielding /mrauï/ with short -a- in accordance with the BRUGMANN condition of a closed syllable produced by the root final laryngeal (*\(mrou.H-i\))*\(^{42}\).

But such an assumption is not even necessary to justify *mraoï*, given that within Avestan, at least one passive form is attested that is regarded by the communis opinio\(^{43}\) to be built from a marked present stem. This is *srnāuui* which occurs several times in the so-called Hōm Yašt (Y. 9) in the formula kā. ahmāi. ašiš. srnāuui. “what an allotment was allotted to him?” (Y. 9.3.6.9.12; the following verses each contain the answering formula hā. ahmāi. ašiš. srnāuui. “this allotment was allotted to him”). Note that *srnāuui* and aši- (< *ārti-, \(\sqrt{ar}\)) are joint in a figura etymologica which reoccurs, with plain medial forms functioning as passives, in Y. 56,3-4 and 65,17: .. vaphuīiāscā. ašiš. yasnāi. yā. nō. āraēcā. srnauuataēcā. aṣāŋhāxā “.. for worship(ping) of the good allotment which was allotted to us (formerly: pf. āraē) and will be allotted to us (in future times: cj. *srnauuataē*), accompanying (or accompanied by) truth”.

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\(^{38}\) Similarly: *ávocam*: 1,116,25a; 1,185,10a; 4,45,7a; *avocāma*: 1,78,5a; 189,8a; 4,2,20b; 5,1,12a; 5,73,10d; 10,80,7b; exceptional: 8,59,5a.

\(^{39}\) This variant, present in Pt4, K5, J2, S1; Mf2, Jp1, K4, is preferable as against GELDNER’s *auuaocāma* taken from Dh1, Lb2, H1, L13, J7, P6 or *auuocāma* as represented in Mf4, Mf1, J3, L2, L1, O2, B2, L3, Bb1, C1; cf. NARTEN 1986, 235 n. 145.

\(^{40}\) For *auuaçī*, the last word of Y. 36, a similar analysis is hardly possible; cf. below.

\(^{41}\) A recent attempt to find an I.-E. perspective for this formation was published in JASANOFF 1992, 129 sqq.; now cf. also KÜMMEL 1996.

\(^{42}\) Cp., e.g., Ved. (á)jāni < *ę(ę)ön̂h-ı* from set *janı* “to beget” vs. átāpi < *ętop-ı* from anit *tap “to heat”; HUMBACH’s *mrāuui* (1991: II, 89) has no basis.

\(^{43}\) Cf., e.g., BARTHOLOMAE 1904, 184 f. s.v. *2ar*; KELLENS 1984, 231; HOFFMANN/FORSSMAN 1996, 228.
A second Avestan form that has to be dealt with in this connection is *jaini* which occurs three times in Yt. 19,92-93. This can only be analysed as a passive form belonging to √*jan* "to kill": It appears just in the ritualized context of killing enemies Calvert Watkins discussed in the article we started from. Cf. his interpretation of Yt. 19,92:

\[ 'va\ddot{\text{a}}\text{d}m \text{ va\ddot{\text{e}}j\ddot{\text{o}} } yim \text{ v\ddot{\text{a}}r\ddot{\text{e}}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{r}}\ddot{\text{a}}\ddot{\text{n}}\ddot{\text{m}} } \]
\[ yim \text{ bar\acute{\text{a}} } t\acute{\text{a}}\acute{\text{m}} \text{ \ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{r}}\ddot{\text{a}}\ddot{\text{t}}\ddot{\text{a}}\ddot{\text{n}}\ddot{\text{o}} } \]
\[ y\acute{\text{a}}t \text{ a\ddot{\text{i}}\ddot{\text{s}}h \text{ dah\acute{\text{a}}k\acute{\text{o}} } \text{ jaini} \]

‘swinging the weapon which smashes resistance which brave Thraetaona carried, when Aži Dahāka was slain.’

With the object of slaying, aži- dahāka-, put in the nominative, this verse represents a clear passivization of the active clause present in Y. 9,8 ... draētāōnō .. yō janaţ ažīm dahākōm ‘... Thraetaona ... who slew the dragon Aži Dahāka’\(^{45}\). Of course we have to note that for the verbal root in question, √*jan* < √*gʷhēn*-, we should expect not *jaini* but *jāiṇi* as the 3rd sg. passive form containing the o-graded root, *(e)gʷhon-i* — just as we should expect not *janaţ* but *jan* or *jən* (< *gʷhōn-t = Ved. hān, Hitt. kuṇeta\(^{46}\)) for the 3rd sg. act.inj. form. But nevertheless, there can be no doubt that *jaini* was built directly from a verbal root which shared two important features with √*mrū* “to speak”: Both were typical “Präsenswurzeln” in the sense that they formed an athematic root present and never developed an aorist stem of their own.

It is interesting, then, to see that in Vedic too, we find i-passives from roots that form present stems primarily or exclusively. One such case is bhārī (RV 9,97,23d). Although there are but few traces in Vedic showing that √*bhar* “to bear” once formed an athematic root present (3rd sg. pres.ind.act. bhārti in RV 1,173,6d, bharti in 6,13,3b; what we normally have is a thematic full-grade root present, bháratī, or a reduplicated athematic one, bibhárti), and although an s-aorist of this root is attested, it is quite probable on comparative grounds that √*bhar* was inherited as a “Präsenswurzel” into Indo-Iranian\(^{47}\). One more such case is √*stu* “to praise” whose i-passive, ā/lāstāvī, is attested six times in the RV (1,141,13a; 6,23,10b; 8,52,9a; 10,45,12a; 63,17d; 64,17d). Besides being notorious for representing the special “Narten” type of athematic root present, this root too has an s-aorist in Vedic; but as with √*bhar*, it seems likely that this is only secondary\(^{48}\), all the more since it has no counterpart in Avestan.

\(^{44}\) Cf. Watkins 1987, 275 (where “Yt. 19.32” is a misprint). Although a variant va\ddot{\text{a}}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}} seems not to be attested in the present place, the emendation of va\ddot{\text{e}}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}} (v.l. vai\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}, va\ddot{\text{e}}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}, vaid\ddot{\text{m}: HINTZE 1994, 370}) as preferable to SCHINDLER apud WATKINS I.c. is preferable to BARTHOLOMAE’S view now supported by HINTZE (o.c., 373 sq.) according to whom this might be a derivative of the root present in Old. vīdhyati “to shoot, to hit”. Cp. va\ddot{\text{a}}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}} attested in Vd. 14,7 (L4) with variants vaid\ddot{\text{m}} (Jp1), va\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}} (L1, M2, O2), but also va\ddot{\text{e}}\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}} (K1, K10, L2, Dh1), vī\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}} (Mf2), vai\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{m}} (B2), or the cognate vadarē beside vōiž\ddot{\text{d}}\ddot{\text{a}}t in Y. 32,10c.

\(^{45}\) Watkins, o.c., 274.

\(^{46}\) Cp. Old Av. a\ddot{j}ēn in Y. 48,10 if this represents *ā\ddot{j}ēn < *ā-\ddot{j}ant as suggested by KELLENS 1984, 94, HUMBACH 1991, II: 203 or HOFFMANN / FORSSMAN 1996, 201 (BARTHOLOMAE 1904, 492 takes this as a 2.sg., quasi *ā-\ddot{j}ans).

\(^{47}\) For the Vedic aorist forms cf. NARTEN 1964, 183 according to whom these “machen .. den Eindruck .. einer Neubildung”; for further literature, cf. MAYRHOFER 1986-, II: 248 sq.

\(^{48}\) Cf. NARTEN 1964, 276 sqq.
There is a difference, however, between Ved. *astāvi* and Zarathustra’s *mraoī*. For the former, it can easily be shown that it forms part of the aorist system in the same way as *avācī* does: It always appears in the final (or last but one: 8,52,9a) stanza of a hymn, stating that the praise of the deity the hymn is dedicated to has been accomplished. For Av. *mraoī*, such a function cannot be assumed — which is no surprise, given that it is not augmented, thus lacking the characteristic element of the Vedic aorist indicative forms compared. But even if it has to be considered as an injunctive form from the morphological point of view, we are entitled to ask whether it can be assigned to the aorist rather than the present paradigm. The answer is certainly no: There is good reason to believe that *mraoī* did not pertain to the aorist but to the present system. The evidence can be taken from the context it appears in in Y. 32: Starting from Y. 32,9, Zarathustra complains about the evil deeds (aēnaŋh- = Ved. énas- “outrage, crime”) his opponents commit. Nearly all of the incriminated actions are named by verbal forms that must be classified as present injunctives: between Y. 32,9 and 13, we find *mōrødāt* / *mōrødān*, *aogādā*, *dadāt*, *vūuāpāt*, *vōiždaṭ*, *rārēšiiq*, *rāpḥatiiq*, *hīšasat* (desiderative), *jīgūr ezat* The same holds true especially for the immediate context *mraoī* appears in: In Y. 32,14, we read [nī.]*dadāt* in the main clause, *vīśētiq* and *mraoī* in two adjunct subordinate clauses introduced by *hiiat* / *hīaṭīq*, and *saocaiiṭ* in the final relative clause 49. It is well conceivable that in all these cases, the present injunctives were used to express actions that were regularly and usually, if not repeatedly, undertaken by the persons accused (karapans, kavis etc.)50. In the present context, this is underlined by the use of *fraidiuuiā* “day by day”. Starting from this assumption, we arrive at the following interpretation of the stanza containing *mraoī*:

“As a grēhma-, even the kavis (continue to) concentrate their (mental) powers in the fettering of this one (*dēhiiāt maqtrāno*, ’thy prophet’: 32,13c), and in (achieving) glamour51, day by day, whenever they get near the deceitful one to assist (him), and whenever the cow is ordered to be killed, to assist (him) who inflames the one who is hard to burn”.

We can contrast this with the use of *vācī* in Y. 43,13e which appears in perfect agreement with the aorist injunctive *dārēšt* of the preceding verse, both forming the predicate of a relative clause:

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ärēṭā. vōizdiāī. kāmahiīā. tēm. mōi. dētā.
darēgahiiā. yāuū. yēm. vā. naečīś. dārēšt. itē.
vaiiiūā. stōiś. yā. dēhāmiī. xṣaṭröiī. vācī.
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51 I agree with INSLER 1975, 208 in taking *ā.hōiđōi.* and varēcā.hīcā. as parallel locatives, the latter distorted from *varēcahi-cā.*
“.. to take notice of the aims of (my) wish — grant this to me — for a long lifetime, (a wish) which nobody keeps you from acceding to, (and my wish) for the preferable existence which is said (to be) in your reign.”

As against mraoī in 32,14, vācī and dārašī do not describe usual or repeated actions but denote general statements, thus perfectly matching with what K. HOFFMANN worked out as the main function of the aorist injunctive in non-prohibitive sentences in Vedic (“stating of the result of a past action which has a lasting effect”: 1967, 218). In German, the difference between mraoī and vācī can easily be accounted for by translating them with either one of the two different passives, using the “Vorgangs-passiv” for mraoī (“wenn die Kuh als zu töten[de] benannt wird”) and the “Zustands-passiv” for vācī (“die als in eurem Herrschafts-bereich benannt ist”).

The two passive forms quoted from Young Avestan, 邑ənəuuui and jaini, can as well be shown not to have left the present system. Both are used in contexts that are characterized by other forms pertaining to the present stem, viz. hunuīta in Y. 9,3 sqq. and barat in Y. 19,92 sq. In contrast with mraoī, however, we have a different function of the injunctives here in that the passages in question refer to (mythic) events in the past; cp. Y. 9,3 (Zarathustra asks Haoma):

kasə. ə̄nə̄a. paoiriņo. haoma. mašiō. ə̄nə̄uuui.  "Who pressed you (Haoma) as the first mortal (being) for the corporeal world? What allotment was allotted to him?"

astuuainīiā. hunuīta. gaēbīiīiā. kā. ahmāi. aśiś. ə̄nə̄uuui.

Given that a thorough study of the Avestan past tense categories is still wanting, we cannot decide with certainty whether this is a function of the present injunctive proper or whether we have to analyse the forms in question as augmentless imperfects. Nevertheless they prove that there was a tendency in Avestan to extend the use of the passive ending -i to the present system, perhaps brought about by contexts that required passive forms of the present injunctive (I imperfect) such as the ones discussed here. And there is no reason to believe that this tendency could not have emerged in Old Avestan times, mraoī being the first example attested.

52 Parenthetical əm (..) dā- is an inherited Indo-Iranian formula uttered when speaking about a wish; cp. RV 7,97,4cd kāmo rāyāh savīryasya tām dāt pārṣan no ṛtā saścātā ārstān ”the wish (concerning) wealth of good men — this he will grant (us); he will lead us past (all) pursuers without being damaged“ where the parenthetical character of tām dāt is underlined by kāmuh being a pendent nominative.

53 As against INSLER 1975, 238, dārašī cannot represent a 3rd sg. root aor. of drī ‘dare’ because of its vocalism (but dārašī in 49,2c can). If it is an s-aorist from ə̄d̄ar ”to hold“ (thus KELLENS/PIRART 1988-1991: II, 254), we should expect an ”ablative infinitive“ depending from it, to give it the sense of ”keep sbd. from doing sth.“; KELLENS / PIRART (l.c.) prefer to translate ”contraindre acc. à dat./inf.“. Note that itē seems no longer to be regarded as an infinitive by J. KELLENS: As against KELLENS / PIRART (o.c., 222 and 254), it is not mentioned in his more recent article (1994 [1995], 52 and 59).


55 Cf. HUMBACH 1991: II, 75, according to whom “what in Old Avestan is an inj.pres. has become a preterite in Young Avestan”.

56 Parenthetical əm (..) dā- is an inherited Indo-Iranian formula uttered when speaking about a wish; cp. RV 7,97,4cd kāmo rāyāh savīryasya tām dāt pārṣan no ṛtā saścātā ārstān ”the wish (concerning) wealth of good men — this he will grant (us); he will lead us past (all) pursuers without being damaged“ where the parenthetical character of tām dāt is underlined by kāmuh being a pendent nominative.

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There is one final observation that supports the view of mraoē as expressed here. Interpreting this as a passive form from ṣmrū “to speak, to order”, we have to assume that a speech act was intrinsically involved in the cruel act of cow-killing Zarathustra complains about. And indeed, this speech act is referred to another time in the immediate context. In Y. 32,12b, Zarathustra speaks a first time about the cow-killers who are reproached for their evil deed by Ahura Mazda: aēbiēō. mazdā. akā. mraoē. yōi. gōuš. mōrōndōn. uruuāxs.uxtī. jiōtīm. “The Mazda declares (these) as evil (reputations, srauuā) to those who spoil the cow’s life by speaking uruuāxs”. On the basis of a comparison with Ved. nāmaiktī- “speaking with veneration”, HUMBACH (1991: II, 86) was certainly right in identifying the second member of the compound uruuāxs.uxtī with the -ti-stem abstract of ṣvac, the root supplying ṣmrū; cp. the instr.pl. nāmaiktitibhi in RV 8,4,6d, with āvocāma nāmāh “(with these words,) we have pronounced veneration” in 1,114,11a and nāmāh ... bravāma “we shall pronounce veneration” in 2,28,8ab. Although the actual meaning and status of uruuāxs remains unclear, it becomes conceivable that for Zarathustra, the killing of cows as committed by his enemies was essentially accompanied by ritualized utterances.

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