

3. Initials for initiates Phonic mystagogy, “audiovisuality” and the eschatology of the *Gathas*

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Abstract

This chapter analyzes the construction of a stanza in Zarathushtra’s preliterate *Gathas*, Yasna 45.3, in the light of the rest of the Gathic corpus, and attempts to show that the details of composition aim to replicate a vision that Zarathushtra claims to have had. The stanza’s composition offers an equivalence of the spatiotemporality of the vision’s protology and eschatology, and, via symbolic initial sounds of the stanza’s phrases, represents the role of the divine entity ‘Good Mind’ in the scheme of eschatological requitals. The architectonics of the stanza thus establish a framework for “audiovisuality”, a phenomenon that is further evidenced by the relationship of Yasna 33.7 to Yasna 29.11.

I open with a quotation from “5. Concluding remarks” of Peter Jackson Rova’s chapter in the present volume, “Dwellings Undwinding: Towards an Indo-European poetics of perlocutionary sites”:

A poet’s reminder to the effect of his long-lasting song as an audiovisual edifice, attracting attention by both the sounding of words and the seeming of things of which they speak, was apparently a good way to start imagining a world in which to endure unbound by the contingencies of the ordinary world.

Also prefatorily relevant for my present chapter is Jackson Rova’s (loc. cit.) idea of the archaic Greek, Vedic and Gathic poems having otherworldly loci conceived of as constituted by the words of the poems themselves. I shall also take further Jackson Rova’s perceptive remarks on the Gathic *garō dāmāna-* ‘House of Song’ (for the meaning and origin of the term, see Schwartz 2023) as Mazdā Ahura’s home, in

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which the poet's patrons (*magauuan-*) are said to be destined to become guests. Jackson Rova's citation there of Vedic evidence for Proto-Indo-European **k̑lewos tetk̑-* 'to fashion praise/glory' also entails my prefatory mention of Laura Massetti's examples with PIE **tetk̑-* 'to fashion' (originally 'to craft as a carpenter', M.S.) in her contribution "Orpheus and the Ȓbhus: Fashioning drinks for the afterlife" in this volume. Under "fashioning words/sacred formulations", she compares Vedic *takṣ-* ... *bráhman-*, Pindar's *epéōn téktones* and its cognates Vedic *takṣ-* ... *vácas* and Avestan *vacastašti-*. Since I shall be focusing on the construction of a Gathic stanza that is also a mantra, I note now as parallel to Vedic *takṣ-* with *bráhman-*, Vedic *takṣ-* with *mantra-* as having a Gathic cognate phrase (Yasna 29.7 *m̑θȓm taš-*) and I stress that Av. *vacastašti-* means specifically 'a Gathic stanza' (as consisting of words tectonically crafted).

Accordingly, my focus shall be Yasna 45.3 as a mantra that I shall show has an ARCHITECTONIC, i.e. architectural structure, to which I speculatively apply the characterization "audiovisual", taking the adjective more literally than Peter Jackson Rova may have meant it, since I posit for it both an acoustic (phonic) aspect and a quasi-visual aspect. The passage and its Gathic parallels are chosen because they accord with the theme of the present volume, Indo-European accounts of the afterlife. I detail linguistic strategies as part of the poem's mystagogy – phonic encryptions and, specifically, coded use of initial sounds – an amazingly complex example of which I treated in Schwartz 2015: 53–55, and cf. 55–56 for the present focal example; for a Gathic acrostic, see Schwartz 2018, important for my methodology of Gathic interrelationships; and see also Schwartz 2003a, where Pindaric material also figures.

The following conventions will be employed: Y (plus two-digit number = numeration of the seventeen individual Gathic poems in the later liturgical Yasna sequence; the numeration has nothing to do with the compositional order of the poems; see Schwartz 2024); after the Y-number and period (.) a further number refers to the stanza cited, and the letters a–e refer to the line involved. Thus Y 45.3e = Yasna 45, third stanza, last line. Forms in slashes (/.../) represent reconstructed phonemic renderings, as per Beekes (1988); here /v/ indicates a sound like English *w*.

Here is Y 45.3:

aṭ frauuaxšiiā | aṅhəuš ahiīā paouruuīm
yaṃ mōi vīduuā | mazdā vaocaṭ ahurō

yōi īm vā nōiṭ | iθā maθrəm varəšəntī
 yaθā īm | mənāicā vaocacā
 aēibiiō aṅhəuš | auuōi aṅhaṭ apāmam

Lo! I shall proclaim this existence's primal [mantra],
 which the Knower, Mazdā Ahura, told me:
 whoever of you will not effect this mantra
 exactly as I think it and will tell it,
 “woe!” will be their existence's final [thing].

The stanza may be reconstructed phonemically thus (the bold letters will be explained below):

/at fra vaxšyā | ahauš ahya parviyam
 yam **mai** vidvāh | **mazdā** vaucāt ahurah
 yai im **vah** nait | iθā **man**θram varšanti
 yaθā *imam | **manāi**-ca vauca'ā-ca
 aibyah ahauš | avai ahat apamam/

The stanza is a ring composition *in parvo*. The first line and the last line both have /ahauš [...] ah-/; the echoism of the last line occurs amid onomatopoeic /a-/ alliteration, and the word ‘first’ end the first line, and the word ‘last’ (= ‘final’) ends the last line. All three middle lines begin with relative /ya-/. Moreover, the verb stem *vaoca-* = /vauca-/ ‘tell’ occurs in both the second and the fourth lines.

Phonically, the three inner lines have a total of four phrases consisting of a word with initial /m-/, followed immediately by a word with initial /v-/. In addition, in the central line, the third words of each hemistich yield the syllables **vah** and **man**. Thereby, in addition to the four phrases beginning with **m-** **v-** and symbolizing /manah- vahu-/ ‘Good Mind’, the syllables **vah** and **man** symbolize the more common order /vahu- manah-/, again ‘Good Mind’.

Good Mind is the most important aspect of Mazdā Ahura (‘the Wise Lord’), which also presents the optimal rational quality of human thinking; thus in Y 45.3 there is symbolization of the role of Good Mind in the divine scheme of individual eschatology. The poem complements the dire report of Y 45.3 by stressing Good Mind in Y 45.9 and 10 as bringing about a happy afterlife for Mazdā Ahura’s worshippers.

After Y 45.3, Y 45.4 (with proclamation as “the best thing of existence”) decrypts the phonic encoding of Y 45.3: “I know [Mazdā,] the Father of efficacious Good Mind”. Here “I know”, vis-à-vis Y 45.3b “Mazdā the Knower told” and Y45.3 “[I] will tell”, constitutes a

transformation of the phrase type indicating SPEECH TO THE KNOWER. I see the latter phrase type as an inherited Indo-European formula-type that signifies the presence of language that requires decoding.

Such a formula is attested in the Orphic tradition, whence it seems to have passed into the Pindaric text to be discussed here (cf. Schwartz 2003a with West 1983: 110, 83–84 [in which, note the allusion to eschatology that precedes O. 2.83 seq., entailing a paradise for the righteous and punishments for the wicked]; further examples of Pindaric encoding in Schwartz 2003a: 383–384). The immediately relevant Pindaric passages are to be seen in Pindar, O. 2.83–2.91, which I translate as follows (numbering lines to be explicated in detail):

I have many swift missiles under my arm
 within my quiver
 (85) which have sound for those who understand, but which want
 people who can bring them into numinous manifestation.
 He who knows a great deal is skillful by nature, but the mere learners
 are rash,
 (87) chattering with all manner of verbiage, like ravens, to no effect,
 versus the divine bird of Zeus.
 Come now, direct the bow at the target, my spirit: [at] whom/what
 are we shooting
 arrows of good fame going forth from a gentle mind?
 (91) At Akragas [am I] aiming

L. 85 has the formula indicating SPEECH TO THE KNOWER, as well as the key term *hermēneús* (here gen. pl.); my ‘bring[ing] into numinous manifestation’, along with my basic construal of the line, are based on Glenn W. Most’s “Pindar, O. 2.83–90” where it is shown that *hermēneús* in archaic Greek referred to someone who brings speech from a state of inchoate potentiality into overtness, where the message is associated with the realm of the divinity, and prophecy; cf. in Most’s own translation for L. 85, ‘oracular announcers’. Following Most’s parallels (pp. 312–313), one can say that, in coming out of (latent) hiddenness within the quiver, the arrows of speech to be shot by Pindar will bring forth their state of (patent) manifestation. Whereas Most denies that Pindar, in our passage, has any obscurantism addressed to a special audience (p. 305), I see the passage as having such an intent as its dénouement. The description of the disorderly speech of the prolix tyros, in the long L. 85, contains the same sounds, albeit scrambled, as the two-word L. 91, which expresses Pindar’s target, that is, his patron Theron in his city:

(85) pANglōSSIAI korAKeS hōS AKRANTA GARUETōN
 (91) AKRAGANTI TANUSAIS.

The contrast illustrates the difference between the unordered realm of potential language vs. Pindar's literally focused formulation, which (unlike the speech of his rivals) brings about the desired effect.

In fact, we shall see below at Yasna 30.1–2 a Gathic instance in which a targeted word is foregroundedly scrambled within other words (via the technique pointed out for Pindar), here, moreover, within the formula that indicates SPEECH TO THE KNOWER. For now, however, further examples of the symbolic encryption of the initials of /vahu manah/ 'Good Mind' will be given.

We start with Y 51.8:

*aṭ zī tōi vaxšiiā mazdā | vīdušē zī nā mruiiāt
 hiiāt akōiiā drəguuāitē | uštā yā ašəm dādrē
 huuō zī maθrā šūiātō | yā vīdušē mrauuiāitē*

So therefore, I say to Thee, O Mazda, for a man should speak to the Knower, what consists in evil for the wrongsome one, success for him who upholds Rightness. For this mantrist is content, who will speak to the Knower.

For decryption of the symbolism of the three phrases with *v- m-*, the opening 'So therefore' points back to the last hemistich of the preceding stanza, Y 51.7c, end, *manahā vohū sējēhē* 'at/for the proclamation of Good Mind', which in its stanza's context completes a request to Mazda for 'integrity and immortality, endurance and perpetuity', that is, for the maintenance of the body in the afterlife.

The overt term 'Good Mind' is found in Y 31.5 as part of a series of words with initials *v- v- m- m-*, introduced by *m- v- v- (... v-)*:

*taṭ mōi vīcidiīāi vaocā | hiiāt mōi ašā dātā vahiiō
 vīduiīē vohū manahā | mēncā daidiiāi yehiiā mā ərəšiš
 tācīt mazdā ahurā | yā nōiṭ vā aṇhaṭ aṇhaiti vā*

Tell me that better thing which has been created/given for me by Rightness, that I may [discriminatively] discern it, in order to know via Good Mind and put thought into that of which I am a poet-seer, indeed for those things, O Mazda Ahura, which will not be or will be.

A final example of alliterative patterning plus the formula SPEECH TO THE KNOWER is the stanza standing ring-compositionally counter to Y 31.6, Y 31.17:

*katārēm ašauuā vā | drəguuā vā vərənuuaitē maziō
viduuā vīdušē mraotū | mā auuīduuā aipī dābāuuaiiat
zdī nē mazdā ahurā | vaṅhəuš fradaxštā manahō*

Whom – is it the righteous or the wrongsome one – is one to believe more?
Let knower speak to knower; let not the non-knower prattle.
Be for us, O Mazdā Ahura, the *sign-shower* of Good Mind.

Here I use the original sense of *fradaxštar-* (on which see below on Y 51.9) for the agent noun of the verb *fra daxš-*, which comes to mean ‘teacher, explicator, guide’ within Avestan. In our present passage, ‘sign-shower’/‘explicator of Good Mind’ could, inter alia, refer to making the symbolism of the *v- m-* patterning for /vahu- manah-/ explicit. A more general sense of *fradaxštar-*, still with reference to pointing to linguistic decryption, and (as also at Y 51.17) with ‘Good Mind’ representing the power of ratiocination, is to be found for Y 51.3:

*ā vē gəuš.ā hēmiiantū | yōi vē šiiəθanāiš sārəntē
ahurō ašā hizuuā | uxđāiš vaṅhəuš manahō
yaēšəm tū pouruiō | mazdā fradaxštā ahī*

Let your ears be focused, you who are already united via your deeds.
Thou art the Lord [Ahura] with Rightness, via the tongue [= speech],
through utterances of Good Mind,
of which Thou, O Mazdā [Wise One], art the first guide.

The “guidance” is to the syntax of the next stanza, in which 51.4b–c should have the following construal: ‘Where is Rightness honored, where Holy Harmonious Thought, where Best Mind? Where? Via Thy Dominion, O Mazdā.’ The usual translation of the last hemistich of the stanza as ‘Where via Thy Dominion/power?’ (or the like) leaves matters unanswered and lacks motivation. The instrumental *xšaθrā* (instead of locative **xšaθrōi*) addresses the mode whereby the previous list of divine entities is honoured. Compare Y 34.11 and 15, 48.11 and 30.6. The reference of *fradaxštar-* in Y 51.3 to as guide for cryptic language may be a generalization from Y 51.17, with regard to decryption of the symbolic *v- m-* alliteration.

Now, it should be observed that non-symbolic alliteration is comparatively sparse in the *Gathas* (as compared, e.g., to the *Rig Veda*). Parallel to *v- m-* patterning, which is alliteratively symbolic of /vahu- manah-/ ‘Good Mind’, on which phrase it is obviously based, we also have at Y 33.3 repeated *a- v-* alliteration, which is symbolic of the divine entity *aša- vahišta-* ‘Best Rightness’; compare further Schwartz 2015: 55–56.

A different alliterative symbolism is that of *a-d-*, based on the pervasive Gathic dualism /arta(van-)/ ‘right(eous)’ vs. /drug(vant-)/ ‘wrong(some)’. We have already encountered it above at Y 51.8b *hiiaṭ akōiia drəguuāitē | uštā yā aṣəm dādrē*. It is also featured in the next stanza, Y 51.9:

*yqm xšnūtəm rānōibiiā dā | θβā āθrā suxrā mazdā
aiiaṅhā xšustā aibi | ahuuābhū daxštəm dāuuōi
rāšaiieṅhē drəguuaṅtəm | sauuāiio ašauuanəm*

That reciprocity which Thou hast established for both sides via Thy bright/red fire, O Mazdā,
by means of the molten metal, is a sign to be given in consciousnesses
for the destruction of the wrongsome one, and for the strengthening of the
righteous one.

The phrase ‘sign [*daxšta-*] to be given within consciousnesses’ parallels the history of Italian *insegnare* and French *enseigner* ‘to teach, guide’, and illuminates the semantics of *fradaxštar-*.

Finally, the symbolic initials are especially clear at Y 31.20, on whose text compare Insler 1975: 43 with 191:

*yā āiiaṭ ašauuanəm | diuuamnəm hōi aparəm xšaiiō
darəgəm āiuiū təmaṅhō | duš.x^varəθāəm auuaētās vacō
təm vā ahūm drəguuaṅtō | šiiəoθanāiš x^vāiš daēnā naēšaṭ*

Whoever comes to the side of the righteous one, heavenly brightness will be his future possession;
a long lifetime of hellish darkness, foul food, and the word “woe” –
to that existence, O wrongsome ones, will your envisionment lead you via
your own actions.

This last passage returns us to Y 45.3, for which I shall now try to justify its having an “audiovisual” quality. It should be kept in mind that our Gathic text was nothing written that could be seen by its audience, since the *Gathas*, like the *Rig Veda*, was a purely oral, preliterate text, written down many centuries after its composition. What I suggest may have been “quasi-visual” as to Y 45.3 consists in its architectonic structure, with its firstness and lastness positionally framing the stanza, and the symbolical ‘Good Mind’ represented within.

I propose preliminarily that Y 45.3, among other Gathic passages, is based on a vision that Zarathushtra had (cf. Schwartz 2000 [2003], in which the various elements of these visions, including the divine female hypostasis *Ārmaiti* ‘Harmonious Thought’, occur), and that Y 45.3 attempts a verbal replication of an aspect of that vision.

The most relevant passage is Y 43.4, of which the final line marks the advent of Good Mind to Zarathushtra:

*aṭ θβā mānḡhāi | taxməmcā spəntəm mazdā
 hiiat̄ tā zastā | yā tū hafšī auuā
 yā dā ašš | drəguuaitē ašāunaēcā
 θβahiiā garəmə | āθrō ašā.aojaḡhō
 hiiat̄ mōi vaḡhəuš | hazē jimat̄ manəḡhō*

And I shall think Thee mightily valiant and holy, O Mazdā,
 when with that hand with which Thou upholdest aids/those
 requitals which Thou givest to the wrongsome and righteous
 via the heat of Thy fire, which is strong though Rightness,
 when (from that hand) Good Mind's forcefulness comes upon me.

Then comes Zarathushtra's report of the vision, Y 43.5:

*spəntəm aṭ θβā | mazdā mānḡhī ahurā
 hiiat̄ θβā aḡhəuš | zəθōi darəsəm paouruuim
 hiiat̄ dā šīiaoθanā | mīždauuəḡn yācā uxδā
 akəm akāi | vaḡ^vhīm ašim vaḡhaouuē
 θβā hunarā | dāmōiš uruuāēsē aḡəmē*

So, holy did I think Thee, O Mazdā Ahura,
 when I saw Thee at the birth of existence as primal,
 when Thou didst bring about actions and utterances to have payments,
 bad for the bad one, good reward for the good one,
 via Thy skill, at the final turning point of creation.

The parallels to Y 45.3 in phraseology and meaning are obvious. Y 43.6 continues with Mazdā's advent with His Dominion, via His Holy Spirit, with Good Mind, the stanza concludes in correlations with Y 45.4: the presence of Harmonious Thought, and the undeceivability (*nōit̄* + *√dab*) of Mazdā Ahura. In the next stanza, Y 43.7a–b, and like every second stanza from there (Y 43.9a–b, Y 43.11a–b, Y 43.13a–b and Y 43.15a–b), the first line of Y 43.5 is followed by *hiiat̄ mā vohū | pairī.jasat̄ manəḡhā*, giving: 'So holy did I think Thee, O Mazdā Ahura || when He [The Holy Spirit] attended me with Good Mind.' This striking overt systematic mention of Good Mind is parallel to the emphasis on Good Mind via encryption in Y 45.3.

With a variant of Y.43.5a etc. as incipit, we have another report of a vision, featuring Mazdā as 'Father of Good Mind' (= Y 45.4c) at Y 31.8:

*aṭ θβā māyhī paouruuīm | mazdā yazūm stōi manāhā
vaḥhēuš ptarēm manāhō | hīiaṭ θβā hēm cašmainī [hōh]grabəm
haiθīm ašahiīā dqmīm | aḥhēuš ahurəm šīiaoθanaēšū*

And I thought Thee, O Mazdā, as primal, and to be youthful via [Thy] mind,
[and] the Father of Good Mind, when I grasped Thee in [my] eye,
[Thee,] the true Creator of Rightness, [and] Lord of existence among actions.

‘Eye’ = ‘vision’ is found again in Y 45 itself, at 8b–c, where /vahu-manyu-/ ‘Good Spirit’ seems to be a variant of /vahu-manah-/ ‘Good Mind’:

*nū zīt | cašmainī viiādarsəm
vaḥhēuš mainiiēuš | šīiaoθanahiīā uxḍaxīiācā*

For now I have gazed upon [Him, Mazdā Ahura] in a vision [lit. ‘eye’] of Good Spirit, action and utterance.

Evidence that Zarathushtra’s audience were enjoined to “see” the revelation represented by Y 45.3 will now be presented. Now, Y. 45.2 and Y 30.3 are the two Gathic passages in which there is an account, in visionary trappings, of the two primal spirits, one benign and one malign. Of these, Y 30 has the more explicit request for seeing (as well as hearing) and so provides evidence for “audiovisuality”. Here are the first line and last hemistich of the three-line Y 30.1:

*aṭ tā vaxšīiā išəntō | yā mazdāθā hīiaṭcīt vīdušē...
yā raocēbīš darəsatā uruuāzā*

I shall tell, O ye who seek, indeed to the knower, the things to be comprehended [...]
that are to be seen amidst the lights via bliss.

This opening is amplified in the next stanza, Y 30.2a–b:

*sraotā gēuš.āiš vahištā | auuaēnatā sūcā manāhā
āuuarəṇā vīciθahiīā [...]*

Hear with your ears the Best Things: look with a bright mind at the two options of choice [...]

The formula SPEECH TO THE KNOWER signals encryption: the sounds of *vahištā* ‘the [eschatological Best Things] to be heard’ at Y 30.1a /at

TĀ VAXŠyĀ IŠanTAH/, *vahištā* being similarly encrypted in many other passages (cf. e.g. Y 31.1a and c). The results of the choice which are to be glimpsed are then set forth at Y 30.4, in which the phraseology of primality and finality with regard to existence, *paouruuīm ... yaθā ... apāmam aṅhuš*, corresponds to Y 45.3, and ‘Best Mind’ = ‘Good Mind’:

aṭcā hūiaṭ tā hēm mainiū | jasaētəm paouruuīm dazdē
gaēmca ajiūāitīmca | yaθācā aṅhaṭ apāmam aṅhuš
acištō drəguuatəm | aṭ ašāunē vahištəm manō

And when those two Spirits came together at the first [existence] they brought about

life and lifelessness, so that the existence of the wrongsome will be the worst at the end, but Best Mind [will be] for the Righteous.

Y 45.1a–c, which parallels what we have noted for Y 30, anticipates the mantra (Y 45.1c *īm* masc. as in the metrical respension at Y 45.3c) in terms of its brightness:

aṭ frauuaxšiiā | nū gūšō.dūm nū sraotā
yaēcā asnāt | yaēcā dūrāt išaθā
nū īm vīspā | ciθrē zī mazdāyḥō.dūm

I shall tell forth, now listen and hear
 – O you who seek from near and far –
 this [mantra]; comprehend, for it is bright[ly clear].

It is moot whether the fact of Zarathushtra’s name at the precise centre of Y 28 and Y 50, whereby all the systematically concentric stanzas may be said to radiate, can be claimed to be evidence of a phenomenon perceptually akin to visuality. However, the phenomenon of Gathic systematic concentricism does seem to provide a kind of evidence of parallel to visuality. This possibility is inherent in the relationship between Y 33.7 and Y 29.11.

In Y 33, the precise centre of the ring composition is between Y 33.7 and Y 33.8, that is, just after Y 33.7c ‘bright gifts’ (and before Y 33.8a, the request for the divine entities to heed). Y. 33.8 is immediately preceded by Y 33.6c *tā tōi iziūā ahurā | mazdā darštōišcā hēm. parštōišcā* ‘Thus am I eager for Thy sight and consultation [i.e. ‘hearing and consultation with Thee’]’. This amounts to a request for seeing and hearing, on the basis of which my emendation to **darəsaṭ* ‘and visually’ in the next line (where a putative *darəsaṭcā* ‘and boldly’ makes less sense; the š is due to the preceding *darəštōišcā*). I take Y 33.7a *xⁿaiθiiā*

not from *x^vatō* ‘(*by) oneself’ but from an underlying *-ti-* abstract of $\sqrt{x^van}$ ‘to sound’. Here then is Y 33.7:

*ā mā [ā]idūm vahištā | ā x^vaiθiiācā mazdā darəsaṭcā
ašā vohū manaḥhā | yā sruiiē parē magaonō
āuuīš nā aṅtarə hēntū | nəmax^vaitiš ciθrā rātaiiō*

Come here to me, O Best Ones, here with sight and sound, O Mazda with Rightness and with Good Mind, whereby I am [to be] heard/famed among the patrons [munificent ones].

May bright gifts of reverence be patent among us.’

Compare the finale stanza, Y 29.11:

*kudā ašəm vohucā | manō xšaθrəmcā aṭ mā mašā
yūžəm mazdā frāxšnənē | mazōi magāi ā paiti.zānatā
ahurā nū nā auuarē | əhmā.rātōiš yūšmāuuatəm*

Where are Rightness, Good mind, and Dominion? Now take account [*mašā* < /márta/] of me,

You [all] – O Mazdā [too] – with foresight give recognition for the great patronage/munificence.

O Ahura, now [come] down to us because of our gift to those such as You [all].

Y 33.7 and Y 29.11 share the enumeration of the divine entities, *maga-/magauiuan-* ‘munificence/munificent’, and dénouement *rāti-* ‘gift’ (which is emphasized as obligatory ring composition correspondence of the final and middle stanzas by Y 33.14a *rātā-*, referring to Zarathushtra giving himself as ‘gift’). Most importantly, Y 33.7c, at the poem’s MID-most location, refers to the gift as appearing *nā aṅtarə* ‘AMIDst us’, and Y 29.11c, in the last, as it were, “bottom” line, *nā auuarə* ‘DOWN to us’.

Y 33.7, moreover, is self-referentially “audiovisual” in its phrasing, with visibility emphasized alongside audibility. It is significant that its counterpart, Y 29.11, was composed as a new finale to Y 29, replacing the old final stanza, which became a separate text (Y 27.13), the most sacred “Ahuna Vairiia prayer” (see Schwartz 2003b: 215–216, and for Y 29.11 and Y 33.7, cf. 246–247). The creation of the present Y 29.11 seems to have had, among other factors, a desire for a match with Y 33.7. As we have seen, in Y 33.7 and Y 29.11 there is positional focus on *rāti-* ‘gift(s)’, and in Y 33.7, in the context of sight and sound, *rāti-* is literally highlighted by *ciθra-* ‘bright’, in its greater self-referential context, reification of a traditional characterization of gifts as (metaphorically) splendid; compare Vedic *citrarāti-*.

Thus, we see that it is true to an amazing degree for Zarathushtra – and here we may ring-compositionally return to Jackson Rova’s “5. Concluding remarks” – what the latter proposed for Zarathushtra’s ancient forebears:

[T]he poets of Indo-European prehistory were apparently inclined to penetrate deeper into the mysteries of language and ceremonial gift-exchange so as to create a new sense of otherworldliness.

I close by adding to the observation made at the outset that Y 45.3 is a one-stanza ring composition in itself; this as such is unique in the *Gathas*, and is further evidence that it was crafted (like Y 33.7 etc.) as a remarkable preliterate attempt, apparently experimental, at rendering spatiotemporality and audiovisuality, applied in Y 45.3 to a mystagogic eschatology.

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