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

The meaning of *yāh-* was earlier treated, now summarized and expanded. Ring composition was applied to show that Y30.2, against various other opinions, means ‘(chariot)-race’. Apart from ring composition, evidence adduced for this meaning included the collocation of *yābī-, yāh-* with...
names in -aspa- ‘horse’, respectively Y46.14 Vištāspa and Y49.9 Dējamāspa, further collocated with the motif of fame in the first instance, and in the second instance the motifs of yoking/being yoked. In addition, a semantic shift of yāh- from ‘chariot-race’ to ‘agon’ (< Greek ἄγων = OInd. ājī- ‘chariot-race’ from ‘drive forth’) contextually suits translation of Yt 11.13 vorəbrastamō yāhī ‘most victorious in the contest’, and ‘agon’ > ‘agon’ fits Yt13.14 yəŋhəm ... qəzəŋhəm ‘of agonies ... of anxieties’ (for YH36.2 mazīštāi yəŋhəm, see Schwartz 2006a, 484).

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

II

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

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

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

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

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

Y48.2

a vaocā mōi yā tuuṃ víduuā ahura
b pərā hiiat mā yā mōng pərəϑā jimaiti
c kət așauuā māzdā vəŋghat drəguuəntəm
d hā zi aŋhōuš vəŋhī vistā əkərətiš

Y48.2

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

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

The question exemplifies Y48.1a, yezi adāšə ašā drujim vōnghaiti ‘if, upon these (scil. Y48.1’) salvific benefits) one shall overthrow the wrongsome one via Rightness. For vistā ‘(to be) obtained’, note resumption at Y48.3a’ vađomnā ‘to the one who obtains’. Etymologically ākərətiš is from ā + √kar ‘to make or bring about to a certain end, patterning, design’, cf. RV X 85.5 sāmānām māsa ākətiš ‘the moon is the gestaltung of the years’.

This interpretation is confirmed within Y48 by stanza 9:

Y48.9

a kadā vađā yezī cahiia xšaiiabā
b mazdā ašə yehiia mā āšiš duuaēbā
c arəš mōi {ərəž}ūcām vaŋhoubə vafuš manayhō
d vidiiaṭ saošiias yaθə hōi ašiš aŋhət

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

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

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

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

Y32.16 a

\[\text{Y32.16 a} \]

\[\text{ham} \vá̄m \text{tat} \text{vahistâcît} \quad \text{yə ušuruiiê} \text{siuascît} \text{dahmahiiā} \]

\[\text{b} \text{xsaiq}s \text{mazdā} \text{aburā} \quad \text{yahiā mā aiviisît} \text{dzwaeā} \]

\[\text{c} \text{biiaqænaihē} \text{draguuaotō} \quad \text{əξänū işiisōng anhâiā} \]

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

It must yet be shown that at Y48.2 the posited phrase ‘end of the course’ (= ‘death’) is indeed based on a \(yāman\)- ‘course’, the latter supported, as we have suggested, by \(yāb\)- ‘race’ as cognate. Proof is the cross-textual consecutive recasting of lexical material from Y30 as part of the lexical skeleton of Y48, whereby, in this instance, each stanza of Y30 contributes at least one word to each stanza of Y48\(^7\) with Y30 is Y48.2b \(\text{par ā} \ldots \text{yāmōng}\) and Y30.2c \(\text{par ā} \ldots \text{yāŋhō}\), whereby \(yāman\)- matches \(yāb\):

---


Y30.1a’ vaxšīā; Y48.1b” fraoxtā: √vak ‘to speak’
Y30.2b’ parā ... yāḥhō; 48.2b’ parā ... yāmōṅ: ‘before’ + noun < root √yā ‘to course’
Y30.3c’ hudāḥhō; Y48.3b’ hudā ‘benefactor’
Y30.4b” añhat apēməm; Y48.4d” apēməm ... añhat ‘will be last’
Y30.5c” šiiaobanāiš; Y48.5b” šiiaobanāiš ‘with actions’
Y30.6c” marātānō; Y48.5c” maʃiiā: *mart— ‘mortals’
Y30.7c” paouriiio; Y48.6d” paouruiiehiiā ‘first’
Y30.8b” vôhū manaŋhō; Y48.7 vaŋhōuš manaŋhō ‘Good Mind’
Y30.8c” aʃā; Y48.8c’ aʃā ‘Rightness’
Y30.9c” añhat; Y48.9d” añhat ‘will be’
Y30.10a’ adā; Y48.10a,10b’ kada ‘then’/‘when’?
Y30.11c’ sauua; Y48.12a” saoʃiiaptō: √sū ‘to bring (salvific) benefit or weal’

What may now be suggested is that not only does the entire phrase 48.2b parā ... yāmōṅ correspond to Y30.2b’ parā ... yāḥhō, but the theme of Y48.2 ‘the end of the course’ (yāmōṅ parəϑā) was suggested by the allusion to the end of the race at Y30.2 and thereby Y30.10.

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

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

“The hidden utterances” refer to the encrypted sounds, whereby the ‘good gestaltung’ of 48.10d is seen as tantamount to ‘the best things’.

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

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