
Ritual and ritual text in the Zoroastrian tradition:

The extent of Yasna 41



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Abstract

This article examines the extent of the concluding section (Y 41) of the Yasna Haptaṅhāiti in light of the manuscript evidence and the section's divergent reception in a Middle Persian text known as the "Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest nē Šāyest" (Suppl. ŠnŠ). This investigation will entertain the possibility of an alternative ritual being described in the Suppl. ŠnŠ. Moreover, it argues that the manuscripts transmit the ritual text along with certain variations and repetitions while the descriptions of the extent of each section preserve the necessary boundaries of the text as a textual composition or unit.

Keywords: Zoroastrianism; Yasna; Avestan; Middle Persian; Rituals

The five *Gāθās* and the *Yasna Haptaṅhāiti* ("Yasna in seven sections") constitute the core of the Old Avestan (OAv.) sections of the *Yasna* (Y), a Zoroastrian ritual text commonly divided into 72 *hāiti* ("section, chapter") and at the centre of many Zoroastrian rituals.¹ As Cantera recounts, Scholars have long debated the structure of the Old Avestan texts, examining the age of the divisions of the *Gāθās* into *hāiti*.² In that same article, Cantera questions whether the *Yasna Haptaṅhāiti* (YH) originally consisted of seven *hāiti*, arguing that despite its name the *Yasna Haptaṅhāiti* "was not originally divided into seven chapters".³

¹The *yaθā ahū vairiō* (Y 27.13) and *airiāman išia* (Y 54.1) are also composed in Old Avestan. In my view, these constitute together with the *yējhē hātəm* and the *ašəm volū* moveable sections of the Zoroastrian ritual texts. Out of convenience, I refer to these sections as prayers. On chronology, dialects and geography of OIr. languages, see P. O. Skjærø, 'The Avesta as source for the early history of the Iranians', in *The Indo-Aryans of ancient South Asia: Language, material culture and ethnicity* (Indian Philology and South Asian Studies 1), (ed.) G. Erdosy (Berlin, 1995), Chapter 6, pp. 155–176. For the Zoroastrian hermeneutic treatment of the prayers, see Y. S-D. Vevaina, 'Resurrecting the resurrection: Eschatology and exegesis in late antique Zoroastrianism', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19 (2005 [2009]), pp. 215–223.

²A. Cantera, 'How many chapters does the "Yasna of the Seven Chapters" have?', *Iranian Studies* 45(2) (2012), pp. 217–227.

³*Ibid.*, p. 217.

Cantera's perceptive observations are based on the use of the YH in the ritual as reflected in one manuscript, but are not easily reconciled with the manuscript tradition that preserves a structure suggestive of a division into seven *hāiti*. Here, I will examine the extent of the concluding *hāiti* (Y 41) of the *Yasna Haptaḥhāiti* in light of the manuscript evidence and the *hāiti*'s reception in Middle Persian (MP) texts, irrespective of the age and authenticity of the structural divisions. I am delighted to offer this paper to François de Blois in honour of his life's work.

In his edition of the Avestan texts, Geldner divides *Yasna* 41 into eight stanzas, while noting that the manuscript "Pt4 reckons 6 Strophes".⁴ Elsewhere, he assumes that the YH ends with Y 41.6.⁵ Narten⁶ and Humbach⁷ posit six stanzas, Kellens and Pirart⁸ five, while Hintze⁹ follows Geldner positing eight stanzas. By contrast, the exegetical manuscripts of the Pahlavi *Yasna* (PY) unambiguously assign six stanzas to Y 41, ruling out any additional strophe at the end of Y 41: *šaš wīčast sē gāh*.¹⁰ Y 41.6 and the concluding instructions of the *hāiti* appear as follows in manuscript 0400 (Pt4):

Y 41.6¹¹ (a) *ahiiā huuō nō dāidi ahmāicā ahuiiē manaxiiācā :: ān ī *ōy¹² ān ō amā dahē pad-iz ēn axwān pad-iz mēnōyān (b) taṭ ahiiā yā taṭ upājamiitāmā :: kū ēdōn pad ān ēdōn abar rasēm (c) tauuacā sarəm ašaxiiācā vīspāi yaoē :: ō ēd ī tō sālānīh ud ahlāyīh-iz hamē tā ō wīsp*

yejḥē hātəm yazišnīgīh ēwāmṛūdiḡ gōwišn humatanəm bišāmṛūdiḡ gōwišn yaθā ahū vairiō časrušāmṛūdiḡ gōwišn ašəm vōhū srišāmṛūdiḡ gōwišn yasnəm sūrəm haptaḥhāitīm ašauuanəm ašahe ratūm yazamaide pad yasn ī abzār ī haft hād ī ahlaw ī ahlāyīh rad yəzom

yejḥē hātəm yazišnīgīhā ēwāmṛūdiḡ gōwišn :: šaš wīčast sē gāh

yejḥē hātəm is to be recited once in the manner of worship. *humatanəm* is to be recited two times. *yaθā ahū vairiō* is to be recited four times. *ašəm vōhū* is to be recited three times. We sacrifice to the strong *Yasna* in Seven Sections, the orderly *ratu* of *aša*. We worship through the powerful Worship of Seven Sections, which is righteous (and) the authority of righteousness.

yejḥē hātəm is to be recited once in the manner of worship. Six stanzas, three verse lines.

⁴K. F. Geldner, *Avesta. The sacred books of the Parsis* (Stuttgart, 1886–96) Vol. I–III, Vol. I, p. 138, fn. 8.2.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 31. For an overview of the various attempts to define the boundaries of the YH, see J. Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaḥhāiti* (Wiesbaden, 1986), p. 17 with references.

⁶Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaḥhāiti*, p. 17.

⁷H. Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra and the other old Avestan texts* (Heidelberg, 1991) Vol. I–II. In collaboration with J. Elfenbein and P. O. Skjærvø, Vol. I, p. 150. In the introduction, Humbach, *ibid.*, p. 7, considers the YH to encompass Y 35.3–41.7, viewing Y 41.8 as *Yav*.

⁸J. Kellens and É. Pirart (eds.) *Les textes vieil-avestiques. Introduction, texte et traduction* (Wiesbaden, 1988), Vol. I, p. 140. For a discussion of their position, see A. Hintze, *A Zoroastrian liturgy. The worship in seven chapters* (Iranica 12) (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 321ff.

⁹Hintze, *A Zoroastrian liturgy*, p. 325.

¹⁰Counting the stanzas of a *hāiti*, or extent descriptions, is a feature found in the manuscripts of the so-called Iranian family of the Pahlavi *Yasna*. I refer to these manuscripts as the exegetical manuscripts of the *Yasna* and discuss them in a forthcoming paper on editing the Pahlavi *Yasna*.

¹¹I quote this passage verbatim from 0400, but leave the stanza untranslated as it is not discussed in this article.

¹²0400 reads 𐬨. I have emended it to 'LH based on the other manuscripts' reading.

stanzas of a *hāiti* and are not counted in the extent descriptions. Thus, the question emerges as to how we can explain the contradiction within the same text and exegetical tradition.

Four more paragraphs follow the description of Y 41 (Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.22), before Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 moves on to Y 43, the next OAv. *hāiti* within the *Yasna*:

Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.22 *stūtō garō šaš wačast humatanam dō fār huxšatrōtemāi sē fār būdan ī puserān ī zarduxšt rāy* (23) *ašahiīā āaṭ sairī dō fār stāyišn ī ahlāyīh ud zanišn ī druz rāy*

(24) *yēfhe hātām dō fār stāyišn ī ohrmazd ud amahraspandān ud zanišn ī gannāg mēnōy wišūdagān rāy*
(25) *θboi statarascā stāyišn ī yazišn ud mizd*¹⁹ *rāy* (26) *ātrəmca dō bār stāyišn ī ādur ī farrōbāy ātaxš ī wāzišt rāy*

(22) *stūtō garō* has six stanzas, *humatanam* (is to be recited) two times (and) *huxšatrōtemāi* three times on account of the existence of *Zarduxšt*'s sons. (23) *ašahiīā āaṭ sairī* two times for the praise of righteousness and the smiting of the demon. (24) *yēfhe hātām* two times for the praise of *Ohrmazd* and the *Amahraspandān* and the smiting of the Evil Spirit (and) the daevis creatures. (25) *θboi statarascā* for the praise of the worship and the reward. (26) *ātrəmca* two times for the praise of the *Farrōbāy* fire (and) the fire *Wāzišt*.

Kotwal makes a number of observations on Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.22–26. Firstly, that the numerical interpretation of Y 41 is missing in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.22 and that the paragraphs 13.22–26 are descriptions of those YH stanzas that are repeated more than once.²⁰ Secondly, that 13.25, a reference to Y 41.5, has possibly been dislocated, as it occurs after the paragraph on Y 41.6's *yēfhe hātām* in 13.24;²¹ finally, that *mizd* refers to the *dōn* ceremony.²² However, the expectation of a numerical reading of Y 41 in 13.22 is not compelling as the first *hāiti* of the YH (Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.16) also lacks a numerical speculation. The assumption that the text is describing stanzas of the YH with multiple repetitions is contradicted by the fact that two stanzas with two repetitions, namely Y 39.4 & 41.3, are not mentioned in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13. Therefore, the text does not merely list stanzas of the YH with multiple repetitions, unless we presume that the latter were mistakenly omitted. Furthermore, the manuscripts do not support Kotwal's assumed disturbances in the text. His critical apparatus, for instance, does not indicate an omission in 13.22, and no text appears to be missing in F35 either. In my view, the question is whether Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 describes the OAv. corpus as a text or whether the exegesis follows the course of a ritual?

In the manuscript F35, Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 starts with the slightly indented words *čim ī gāhān ēn* "The meaning of the *Gāθās* is this", with the rest of the text following immediately.²³ Accordingly, this chapter is concerned with the interpretation of the *Gāθās*, at times describing individual stanzas, which, contrary to the subject matter, are not exclusively OAv. The description of the individual stanzas resembles the repetition instructions found in the manuscripts of the PY with the addition of a numerical interpretation. That Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 describes a ritual emerges from the frequent references made to passages from the *Wisperad* (Wr). In fact, Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.15 explicitly mentions the *Wisperad* ritual and interprets the ritual

¹⁹F35 reads *𐬨𐬀𐬎𐬀*.

²⁰Kotwal, *The supplementary texts to the Šāyest Nē-Šāyest*, p. 104, fn. 36.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 104, fn. 40.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 104, fn. 41.

²³Kotwal, *ibid.*, p. 41, renders *čim ī gāhān* as the title, taking *ēn* as the first word of 13.1.

Table 1: Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 & Wr ritual

	Suppl.ŠnŠ 13	<i>Wisperad</i>
Y 28–30	Wr 13	Wr 13
Y 34	∅	Wr 14–15
YH/Y 42	Wr 16	Wr 16–17
Y 46	Wr 18	Wr 18
Y 50	Wr 19	Wr 19
Y 51	Wr 20	Wr 20
2 nd YH	Wr 21	Wr 21–22
Y 53	Wr 23	Wr 23

action connected with the *Ahunauaitī Gāθā*.²⁴ Likewise, Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.9 refers to ritual actions. The fact that the text does not mention passages from the *Wīdēwdād*, suggests that Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 describes the *Wisperad* rather than the *Wīdēwdād* ritual.²⁵ As Table 1 shows, with the exception of Wr 14, the intercalation of the *Wisperad* passages described in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 is identical to the scheme laid out by Geldner.²⁶

Thus, Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.26²⁷ largely agrees with the intercalation of the *Wisperad* ritual, where Wr 16 is inserted between Y 42 and Y 43. The text ignores Y 42 because it is not part of the OAv. corpus and links Wr 16 (*ātrəmca*) to the YH by associating it with the fire *Wāzišt*. With Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.27 the text moves on to Y 43 and consequently mentions Wr 18–21 & 23, which are inserted at the end of each of the succeeding *Gāθās* that the Suppl.ŠnŠ analyses. It appears, therefore, that the content of Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 is not confined to a textual discussion of the OAv. corpus, but follows the course of the *Wisperad* ritual. If this is indeed the case, then Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.25 is not dislocated, as Kotwal suggests, but refers to Y 41.5 as one of the stanzas recited at the end of the YH. Moreover, rather than representing the *drōn* ceremony, *mizd* in that same paragraph refers to Y 41.5c where the reward (Av. *mīzdam*) is explicitly mentioned: *ē mizd ō manīgān frāz dahē* “May you give my people the reward”. The paragraph only seems dislocated in comparison with the corpus, where Y 41.5 precedes the *yējhē hātām*.

It is noteworthy that certain strophes positioned after Y 41.6 in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.22–26 are not mentioned in the manuscripts in the repetition instructions at the end of the chapter. As Hintze points out, the sequence and repetition mentioned in the final section of the YH agree with those in *Nērangestān* 47.41: *humatanam* (Y 35.1) to be recited two times,

²⁴In his notes, Kotwal, *ibid.*, p. 4, frequently refers to the *Wisperad* ritual, but does not seem to interpret the text as a description of the same ritual or a variant thereof.

²⁵On the intercalations and the rituals, see K. F. Geldner, ‘Awestalitteratur’, in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, (eds.) W. Geiger and E. W. A. Kuhn (Strassburg, 1896–1904), Vol. II, pp. 11–12, and A. Hintze, ‘Avestan literature’, in *The Literature of pre-Islamic Iran* (A History of Persian Literature 17), (eds.) R. E. Emmerick and M. Macuch (London, 2009), pp. 36–39. For a table comparing the various intercalation schemes, see A. Cantera, ‘The sacrifice (Yasna) to Mazdā. Its antiquity and variety’, in *The Zoroastrian flame. Exploring religion, history and tradition*, (eds.) A. Williams, S. Stewart and A. Hintze (London, 2016), p. 68.

²⁶Geldner, *Avesta*, Vol. II. Geldner’s numbering of the Wr, used by Kotwal in the Suppl.ŠnŠ, is currently under review by *Corpus Avesticum Berolinense* (<https://cab.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/>). In Table 1, I use Geldner’s numbering scheme to maintain consistency with Kotwal’s edition.

²⁷Kotwal, *The supplementary texts to the Šāyest Nē-Šāyest*, p. 105, fn. 42.

Table 2: Extent descriptions in Suppl.ŠnŠ & Y

	Suppl.ŠnŠ 13	Repetition instructions after Y 41.6
	Ø	<i>yejhē hātām</i> (2x)
22	Y 35.1 (2x)	Y 35.1 (2x)
22	Y 35.4 (3x)	<i>yaθā ahū vairiō</i> (4x)
23	Y 35.7 (2x)	<i>ašəm vōhū</i> (3x)
24	<i>yejhē hātām</i> (2x)	<i>yejhē hātām</i> (1x)
25	Y 41.5 (1x)	Ø
26	Wr 16 (2x)	–

yaθā ahū vairiō four times and the *ašəm vōhū* three times.²⁸ This sequence, however, conflicts with Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.22–26, which in addition mention Y 35.4 (“*huxšatrōtemāi*”), Y 35.7 (“*ašahiia āat sairī*”) and Y 41.5 (“*θβoi statarascā*”). A comparison between Y 41.6’s repetition instructions found in the various manuscripts of the PY and the information provided in the Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 leaves us with two different schemes (see Table 2).²⁹

As Cantera has observed, concluding instructions with a similar pattern occur at the end of each *hāiti* of the *Gāθās*: the first strophe of the respective *Gāθā* (2x); *yaθā ahū vairiō* (4x); *ašəm vohū* (3x); title of the *hāiti* + *hāitīm yazamaide* and the concluding *yejhē hātām* (1x).³⁰ Although Cantera states that a similar pattern can be observed at the end of the YH, in the manuscripts we find the concluding block untypically preceded by two repetitions of *yejhē hātām*, while Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 offers a completely different view (see Table 2 for both).³¹ As the manuscripts largely agree on these instructions at the end of the YH, we can perhaps propose that the pattern for the concluding block of prayers differs between the *Gāθās* and the YH.

Be that as it may, it is difficult to establish whether Y 35.4, 7 & 41.5 in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 are intended to replace the respective concluding prayers or if they are to be recited after them.

²⁸Hintze, *A Zoroastrian liturgy*, p. 325.

²⁹I have examined the following manuscripts: IrYS 0020 (ML15284); InYS 0100 (B3) 0230 (L17) 0231 (Bh5) 0234 (G26); IrPY 0400 (Pt4) 0410 (Mf4) 0415 (F2) 0418 (R413) 0420 (T6) 0450 (E7); InPY 0500 (J2) 0510 (K5) 0530 (M1); InSktY 0680 (T7); IrWrS 2010 (G18b); InWrS 2230 (K8); IrWdS Ave977/978; InWdS 4210 (B2) 4240 (T46) 4400 (G106) 4410 (B4) 4420 (G112) 4510 (ML630). The *Wištāsp Yašt* manuscripts 5020 (K4) and 5102 (DY1) omit the extent descriptions but agree in the repetition scheme with the other manuscripts: *yejhē hātām* (2x), *humatanām* (2x), *yaθā ahū vairiō* (4x), *ašəm vohū* (3x) and *yejhē hātām* (1x). Some of the manuscripts offer a slight variation from the commonly recurring pattern given in Table 2: InYS 0231 (Bh5); IrPY 0400 (Pt4) and InWdS 4400 (G106) 4410 (B4) 4510 (ML630) record one initial *yejhē hātām* instead of two, although a marginal note by a second hand corrects this in 0400 to two repetitions. InPY 0500 (J2) and InWdS 4420 (G112) omit Y 35.1. InPY 0415 (F2) has *yejhē hātām* (1x), *humatanām* (1x), *yaθā ahū vairiō* (4x), *ašəm vohū* (3x) and *yejhē hātām* (1x).

³⁰Cantera, ‘How many chapters does the “Yasna of the Seven Chapters” have?’, pp. 218–219. While Cantera initially maintained that the *yaθā ahū vairiō* was repeated four times only in the *Ahunauuaitī Gāθā*, he corrected his position in A. Cantera, ‘Repetitions of the Ahuna Vairia and animal sacrifice in the Zoroastrian long liturgy’, *Estudios Iranios y Turanios* 1 (2014), p. 25. Cantera, ‘How many chapters does the “Yasna of the Seven Chapters” have?’, p. 219, also suggests that certain chapters of the YH are closed by one or two *yejhē hātām*, which I cannot confirm. I believe the instructions at the end of those *hāiti*, which are usually in the form *yazisūngihā ēvāmṛūḍig/bišāmṛūḍig gōwišn*, signify the number of repetitions for the *hāiti*. For further relevant observations, see also A. Cantera, ‘The Old Avestan texts in the Vīdēvdād and the Visparad ceremonies’, in *Le sort des Gāthās et autres études Iraniennes in memoriam Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin* (Acta Iranica 54), (ed.) É. Pirart (Leuven, 2013), pp. 25–48.

³¹Cantera, ‘How many chapters does the “Yasna of the Seven Chapters” have?’, p. 219.

Table 3: The *gāhān* in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13

Suppl.ŠnŠ 13	<i>Gāθās</i>
13.1–2	Introduction
13.3–4	Y 28–30
13.5	Wr 13
13.6	Y 31
13.7	Y 32
13.8	Y 33
13.9	Ritual action in Y 33.11
13.10	Y 34
13.11	Y 34.15 (4x)
13.12	Concluding Y 28.1 (2x)
13.13	<i>yaθā ahū vairiō</i> (4x)
13.14	Interpretation of Y 28
13.15	Interpretation of the <i>frāgām</i> for all <i>Gāθās</i>
13.16–25	YH
13.26	Wr 16
13.27	Y 43
13.28	Y 44
13.29	Y 45
13.30	Y 46
13.31	Y 43–46 & 46.15
13.32	Concluding Y 43.1 (2x)
13.32	Wr 18
13.33	Y 47–50
13.34	Interpretation of <i>Spəntāmahiīn</i> <i>Gāθā</i>
13.35	Concluding Y 47.1 (2x)
13.36	Wr 19
13.37	Y 51
13.38	Concluding Y 51.1 (2x)
13.39	Wr 20
13.40	Wr 21
13.41	Y 53
13.42	Interpretation of Y 53
13.43	Interpretation of line numbers for Y 53
13.44	Interpretation of line numbers for Y 53.6
13.45	Concluding Y 53.1 (2x)
13.46	Wr 23
13.47	Y 54 (<i>airiāman išīia</i>) (4x)
13.48	<i>airiāman išīia</i>
13.49	Y 58
13.50–51	Extent descriptions of the <i>Gāθās</i>

If we take Y 35.1 and the second *yejhē hātām* as a frame of agreement between the two sources, then it is likely that the stanzas mentioned in Suppl.ŠnŠ were substitutions for the prayers mentioned in the repetition instructions of the canonical manuscripts, thus representing a variant of the instructions perhaps for a variant ritual.

Recent scholarship has brought into focus the complex structure of Zoroastrian rituals.³² Karanjia, for instance, has shown the complexity of the *Bāj-Dharmā* ritual, otherwise also known as the *Drōn Yašt*.³³ Recently, Cantera has advanced the idea that the transmitted Avestan texts do not represent a rigid ritual structure.³⁴ To the contrary, he argues, the intended ritual could trigger certain variations and combinations of the texts which are not always transmitted in the extant manuscripts, so for instance the lists of the textual *ratu* which could differ according to the type of ceremony.³⁵ The manuscripts, however, do not record these variations. Elsewhere, Cantera notes the *Wisperad Gāhānbār* of Y 60.12 as one example, where the *yaθrā ahū vairiīō* is repeated ten times rather than the prescribed four.³⁶ More importantly, Cantera regards the *Wisperad* ritual as “the basis for the celebration of other variants of the [long] liturgy”.³⁷ Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 claims to explain the meaning of the *Gāθās*. It does this by including the YH as part of the *Gāθās* and intercalating them with material from the *Wisperad*. In doing so, the text sets the OAv. corpus within the context of a ritual in which it is then interpreted. In this light, the disagreements between the repetition instructions and N 47.41 on the one hand and the Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 on the other, do not constitute inconsistencies, but rather Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 could refer to a different ritual with an alternative sequence of prayers at the end of the YH. That the YH might have played a significant role in this hitherto unknown ritual emerges from the fact that the major differences noted here relate to the sequence and repetitions of this text’s stanzas at the end of Y 41. The exact nature and textual structure of this ritual, however, remain elusive and the question arises as to whether the omission of Wr 14 after Y 34 is an error or a deliberate part of this alternative ritual. We may also ask as to why Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 does not mention Y 27 and Wr 12?

Admittedly, the exegesis of the *Gāθās* in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 is enigmatic. While the text approaches a ritual text from an exegetical and numerological vantage, its reading of the text does not appear systematic at first. As a result, Kotwal makes frequent references to misplaced passages within Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.³⁸ Although dislocation and loss of content must remain a distinct possibility, I would like to propose that Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 follows the course of a hitherto unknown ritual or a manuscript with a set of variations in its repetition instructions. At this point, it might be instructive to visualise the manner by which Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 approaches the *gāhān* and their *hāiti* (see Table 3).

³²For an example, see M. Stausberg (ed.), *Zoroastrian rituals in context* (Numen Book Series 102) (Leiden, 2004).

³³See R. P. Karanjia, ‘The Bāj-dharmā (Drōn Yašt) and its place in Zoroastrian rituals’, in *Zoroastrian rituals in context* (Studies in the History of Religions 102), (ed.) Michael Stausberg (Leiden, 2004), pp. 403–423, and R. P. Karanjia, *The Bāj-dharmā (Drōn Yašt). A Zoroastrian ritual for consecration and commemoration* (Mumbai, 2010).

³⁴See A. Cantera, ‘Die Staota Yesniia der textuellen *ratu* des Visparad’, in *Zarathushtra entre l’Inde et l’Iran. Études indo-iraniennes et indo-européennes of-fertes à Jean Kellens à l’occasion de son 6^e anniversaire* (Beiträge zur Iranistik 30), (eds.) É. Pirart and X. Tremblay (Wiesbaden, 2009), pp. 17–26, and A. Cantera, ‘Rituales, manuscritos y ediciones del Avesta: Hacia una nueva edición de los textos avésticos de la liturgia larga’, *Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Iranología* 1 (2010), pp. 28–42.

³⁵Cantera, ‘Die Staota Yesniia der textuellen *ratu* des Visparad’, p. 18.

³⁶Cantera, ‘Rituales, manuscritos y ediciones del Avesta’, p. 38. For the number four in the *Yasna* of *Wisperad* with the *xšnuman* of *Gāhānbār*, see B. N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazdar Framarz and others* (Bombay, 1932), p. 13.

³⁷A. Cantera, ‘Talking with god: The Zoroastrian *ham.parsti* or intercalation ceremonies’, *Journal Asiatique* 301(1) (2013), p. 85. Text in the brackets is my addition.

³⁸Kotwal, *The supplementary texts to the Šāyest Nē-Šāyest*.

The text shows a thorough understanding of the structure of the *gāhān*, their ritual as well as numerological significance. The discussion of the *gāhān* is not strictly limited to the *Gāθās*, but includes the YH, *airiāman išīia* and Y 58. The final two paragraphs (50 & 51) of the text offer statistics on total numbers of stanzas, lines, words and syllables in the *Gāθās*. They also define the first and final stanzas of the *Gāθās*. The extent of the individual *Gāθās* are clearly defined, each by a reference to the concluding twofold repetition of its first stanza. The *Ahuna-uaii* *Gāθā* (Y 28–34) is the only exception, as two more paragraphs (13.13 & 14) interpret its content and one (13.15) discusses ritual actions for all the *Gāθās* after the concluding Y 28.1. Unexpectedly, Wr 14 does not follow Y 34 in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13. Likewise, despite mentioning Wr 20–23, Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 is silent on the second YH, which is typically recited after Wr 20. As already pointed out, the numerological interpretation of some passages is missing in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13. For instance, the manuscripts mention the repetition of Y 33.14 but not Suppl.ŠnŠ 13. If we eliminate the possibility of unsystematic exegesis and missing or misplaced passages, then these perceived inconsistencies appear as features of an unknown variant of a *Wisperad* ritual. Although it is very unlikely, these could also have been characteristics of a manuscript that must have formed the basis for the exegesis in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13, a chapter that is preceded (Suppl.ŠnŠ 12) and followed (Suppl.ŠnŠ 14) by discussions of ritual matters. Perhaps the references to the *nōzūd*³⁹ and *nāwar* ceremonies in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.2 are not the results of a misplacement, as Kotwal suggests,⁴⁰ but somehow the context of the ritual described and interpreted in Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.⁴¹

If we thus accept that Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 describes an alternative ritual, possibly an alternative intercalation of the *Yasna* with the *Wisperad*, then we can also reevaluate Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.16: *yasn bun kardag nō wācāst u-š bun humatanām u-š sar humatanām*. I subscribe to Kotwal's interpretation of the passage, that *humatanām* refers to the beginning and end of the YH.⁴² However, in view of the fact that Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.22 differs from the repetition instructions found in the extant PY manuscripts, I would like to leave open even the possibility that Suppl.ŠnŠ 13.16 represents a ritual tradition that repeated Y 35.1 at the end of the text's first chapter.

Moreover, the discrepancies between the manuscripts of the *Yasna* and Suppl.ŠnŠ 13 reveal how the exegetes approached the OAv. corpus. As we have seen, the extant *Yasna* preserves a ritual text that was subject to a certain degree of variation, even if the extant manuscripts do not attest these clearly and widely. In the ritual, it was possible to add prayers in various positions, and stanzas or parts thereof reoccur in other passages. Indeed, the *Yasna* is the proverbial example of this practice. Y 58.8, for instance, quotes Y 36.6 verbatim, while Y 68.23 only quotes Y 36.6b. Similarly, Y 5 anticipates Y 37, causing its abbreviation in many of the manuscripts at its original place between Y 36 and 38. In addition, the prayers occur throughout the *Yasna*. In a tradition that permitted such modifications for ritual purposes, it was essential to keep track of the “original” text. This is not surprising as already in

³⁹The manuscripts have *nwyt z'tyh*.

⁴⁰Kotwal, *The supplementary texts to the Šāyest Nē-Šāyest*, p. 101, n. 5.

⁴¹I have consulted F. M. Kotwal, ‘Initiation into Zoroastrian priesthood: Present Parsi practice and an old Pahlavi text’, in *A green leaf. Papers in honour of Professor Jes P. Asmussen* (Acta Iranica 28), (eds.) J. Duchesne-Guillemin, W. Sundermann and F. Vahman (Leiden, 1988), pp. 299–307, and J. J. Modi, *The religious ceremonies and customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1937) on the *nāwar* ceremony without further leads.

⁴²Kotwal, *The supplementary texts to the Šāyest Nē-Šāyest*, p. 103, n. 25.

the YAv. *Yasna* and in the *Wisperad*, the OAv. corpus and particularly the YH were viewed as sacrosanct texts. Defining the extent of the OAv. corpus, allowed the priests to rearrange the text for the ritual without risking disturbances in the transmission of the texts. Therefore, descriptions such as *šaš wīčast sē gāh*, were crucial in maintaining the boundaries of the text. In this way, the exegetes could accommodate their desire to conclude the YH with its initial stanza (Y 35.1), an attempt at constructing a compositional cycle, while the borders and extent of what was regarded by the priestly tradition as the original composition were still maintained by counting the stanzas. The manuscripts thus transmit the ritual text along with variations and repetitions while such descriptions of the extent of the text preserve the necessary boundaries. In this way, the Zoroastrian tradition maintained a distinction between ritual performance and ritual text.

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