

Benedikt Peschl

# Avestan-Middle Persian tense mismatches in the Zand and the Middle Persian “performative preterite”

**Abstract:** This article addresses the issue of Avestan (Av.)/Middle Persian (MP) tense mismatches that are occasionally found in the Zand, the MP translation with commentary of the Avesta. While most of these mismatches turn out to be aspectually insignificant or illusory once examined more closely, some of them appear to illustrate the use of the MP preterite as a temporally unspecified perfective category, contrasting with its usual perception as a simple past. In accordance with a pattern found also in non-translational MP literature, the perfective usage of the preterite is argued to be present in the translation of a series of Av. performative utterances in Visperad 3 (the “installation of the Av. priestly college”). Moreover, its use can be observed when the Zand depicts two punctual events as temporally coinciding within a timeless (gnomic) statement. Proceeding from these observations, I discuss the expression of performativity in MP on a more general level. The observations shared in this article support the view that, if considered diligently, the older Zand texts have the potential to contribute valuable data to the linguistic description of MP. Conversely, the article shows how paying close attention to the MP translators’ use of verbal forms may inform our interpretation of the Zand.

**Keywords:** Middle Persian, aspect, performative, Zand, Avestan

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background: Aspectual features in the Middle Persian verbal system

The verbal system of Middle Persian (MP), especially that of its Zoroastrian and Manichaean literary variants, is often envisaged as being arranged around two basic tenses: present (*kunēd*, *kun(a)d* ‘s(h)e does, is doing’, henceforth *prs.*) and

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**Benedikt Peschl**, Institute of Iranian Studies, Freie Universität Berlin; benedikt.peschl@fu-berlin.de

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preterite (=š *kird* ‘s(h)e did, has done’, henceforth pret.).<sup>1</sup> This is roughly the picture one finds in some of the well-known handbooks.<sup>2</sup> As has by now been well-established, however, the use of these verb forms in the actual texts occasionally deviates from the expected distribution, especially in Inscriptional Middle Persian (IMP). In particular, it seems that the Old Iranian imperfect (henceforth ipf.) in fact survived into MP as a formal category at least until the period of the early Sasanian inscriptions. Most of the relevant forms of the ipf. have become graphically indistinguishable from the prs. ind. at this point. Yet the few outwardly distinct forms of the ipf. that remain,<sup>3</sup> combined with the common past time reference both of the formally distinct ipf. forms and those indistinguishable from the prs., indicate that the ipf. was indeed still a productive category in early Sasanian MP (Henning 1958: 101f.; Skjærvø 1992; 1997; Jügel 2015: 510–514). It thus seems that the MP language of the early Sasanian era as documented through the inscriptions possessed a two-fold set of categories with past time reference. In the words of Skjærvø (1997: 162),

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1 Notes on conventions. In accordance with the practice adopted in the project “Zoroastrian Middle Persian: Corpus and Dictionary” (MPCD, Bochum/Berlin/Cologne), the Aramaic letters Hē and Hēt when used in aramaeograms (MacKenzie’s ⟨E⟩ and ⟨Ḥ⟩) are transliterated with ⟨Ḥ⟩ and ⟨H⟩, respectively (sic—cf. Rezaia 2020:165f.). The word *bē* (BR<sup>1</sup>) is transcribed as *bē* when it is thought to represent a preposition or preverb and as *be* when it seems to function as a verbal particle denoting the completion of an action. The past stem and infinitive of the verb ‘to do, make’ are transcribed as *kird*, *kirdan*. Passages from the Avestan Yasna liturgy and its Middle Persian version are referred to by the section numbering established for the project Corpus Avesticum Berolinense (CAB). Where this system diverges from the older system canonised by Geldner, Geldner’s numbering is added with the prefix “GY”. Passages from the Visperad and Vidēvdād are referred to by their traditional Geldner numbering. Abbreviations of texts and languages: FiŌ: Frahang ī Ōim; IMP: Inscriptional Middle Persian; MMP: Manichaean Middle Persian; MP: Middle Persian; N: Nērangestān; OAv.: Old Avestan; PV: Pahlavi Vidēvdād; PVr: Pahlavi Visperad; PY: Pahlavi Yasna; ŠGW: Škand Gumānīg Wizār; V: Vidēvdād; Vr: Visperad; Y: Yasna; YAv.: Young Avestan; Yt: Yašt; ZMP: Zoroastrian Middle Persian (Pahlavi); ZWY: Zand ī Wahman Yasn. Manuscripts consulted: Mss. 400, 500, 510, 4000, 4010, 4600, 4610, 4680, 4700, 4710, 4713, 4610, 4615, 4670, 4711, 4712 and 4715 were consulted through their online facsimile editions published in the Avestan Digital Archive (<https://ada.geschkult.fu-berlin.de>). Ms. K7 and TD4 were consulted through their facsimile editions prepared by Barr (1944) and JamaspAsa, Nawabi & Tavousi (1978) respectively.

2 Cf., e.g., Salemann 1895 (“Präsens”, “Präteritum” expressing “Vergangenheit”); Skjærvø 2009: 218 (“present, preterite”); Durkin-Meisterernst 2014 (“Präsens”, “Präteritum/Perfekt” as “Vergangenheit”), and others.

3 I.e., the 3sg. passive in *-iy* and the 1sg. ind. in *-ēn*. The authenticity of the latter ending, which is exclusively attested in the Barm-e Delak (or Abnōn) inscription, has recently been affirmed from a palaeographical perspective by Durkin-Meisterernst 2017: 111–113.

the imperfect and/or narrative present is used in main and subordinate clauses (especially temporal clauses) to describe a sequence of events that took place in the past, while the ‘simple preterite’ is used in main and subordinate clauses to express anteriority, that is, an action viewed as completed with respect to the present or with respect to a past or future event.

Regarding the language of the Manichaean MP (MMP) texts, it seems that it has essentially retained only the remodelled 3<sup>rd</sup> person ipf. forms of the copula: 3sg. *ānād*, 3pl. *ānānd* (Skjærvø 1997: 164; 2009: 216; Jügel 2015: 132–134). Beyond that, Henning (1958: 104 fn. 1) has pointed out the intriguing case of a hymn preserved both in a MMP and a Parthian version. Within the MP version of this hymn, there is a clear instance of the MP present corresponding to a pret. in the Parthian version. The hymn in question forms part of the collection recently edited as “Mani’s Psalms” by Durkin-Meisterernst & Morano (2010: §332). These are considered likely to be in some way derived from Mani’s original writings in Aramaic (Durkin-Meisterernst & Morano 2010: ix; van Oort 2015: 336) and thus may be attributed to the earliest stratum of Iranian Manichaean literature. Whether the MP and Parthian versions were both independently translated from the Aramaic original or whether the Parthian version was translated from the MP one is difficult to evaluate. Henning (1958) seems to assume the latter, and Durkin-Meisterernst & Morano (2010) consider the MP version particularly old (which, however, does not exclude either of the two options mentioned above). Although an isolated example, Henning’s (1958) observation seems significant, as the translators’ choice of words and forms in the two versions of this particular hymn has otherwise been shown to be highly deliberate (cf. Henning 1958: 102f.; Morano 2014: 87f.). Judging from this example, a thorough investigation of the MMP data may yet yield further indications that certain functions of the ipf. have survived also in this variety of MP.

With regard to the language of the bulk of the Zoroastrian MP (ZMP) corpus, most of which was fixed no earlier than the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, Jügel (2015: 87–90) points out two types of contexts where an unexpected shift between pret. and prs. may actually represent a juxtaposition of the pret. as a perfective past with the ipf. (formally identical with the prs.) as an imperfective past. This includes (a) cases where the pret., denoting the completion of an event, is followed by the prs. (as ipf.) denoting a temporally extended event; and (b) cases where the prs. (as ipf.) denotes an ongoing event that forms the background for a punctual event denoted by the preterite. Moreover, Jügel (2015: 83–85) adduces a number of ZMP examples which indicate that the MP pret. was sometimes used to denote the perfective aspect in performative contexts (see §4.2 below). This latter observation in particular points to the continued relevance of the aspectual features of the pret. also beyond the IMP language of the early Sasanian era.

The aspectual use of the MP pret., on which the present article will focus, may be put in relation with certain non-preterital uses of the pret. also in modern Western Iranian.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, a continuation of the Old Iranian ipf. in the MP prs. would agree with what must be assumed also for other, undocumented varieties of Western Middle Iranian on the basis of their modern descendants. For example, this would explain why modern Hawrāmi (a dialect of Gōrāni) still displays a verbal system arranged around the contrast between a prs. and an ipf. paradigm, both of which are derived from the Old Iranian prs. stem (MacKenzie 1966: 33, 58; Jügel 2020: 298).

## 1.2 Outline of the article

In what follows, I will first introduce the particular body of texts that stand at the centre of this article: the Zand, that is, the MP translation with commentary of the Avesta. In doing so, I will address some features that distinguish the language of the Zand in the context of the overall MP corpus, highlighting what those features imply for the study of the Zand from a linguistic perspective (§2). Next, I will give a brief overview of the kinds of (apparent) tense-mismatches that can be observed when comparing the Zand texts with the Av. originals on which they are based; I maintain that, despite the relatively common nature of such mismatches, few of them have the potential to contribute anything to our understanding of aspectual features in the MP verbal system (§3). In §4, I will first survey the evidence for the use of the MP pret. in performative utterances as previously documented for non-translational MP literature. I will then consider the contexts in which such “performative preterites” may in theory also be expected to occur in the Zand, before providing a detailed analysis of a passage where this seems to be repeatedly the case (the so-called “installation of the priestly college” in Pahlavi Visperad 3). Further Zand passages (analysed in §5) are argued to bear witness to another aspectually motivated, non-preterital use of the MP pret.: the marking of a temporal coincidence between two timeless punctual events. Finally, §§6–7 are dedicated to the question why, despite the availability of the pret. as a marker of performativity in MP, the Zand still clearly favours the use of the prs. for that purpose.

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<sup>4</sup> P.c. Thomas Jügel. See, for example, Jahani 2017: 267–273 for some aspectually motivated uses of the pret. in New Persian. Jahani explains these as based on the function of the pret. as a “relative past with perfective aspect” (p. 67). However, it seems more straightforward to derive them directly from an underlying aspectual core function of the preterite comparable to the one posited for MP here. See also Jügel, Çelebi & Nahid 2017: 172 for similar uses of the pret. in Kurdish.

## 2 The Zand as a source for the linguistic examination of Middle Persian

### 2.1 Position of the Zand within the MP corpus

The chronologically incoherent nature of the MP corpus prevents us from conflating all our observations on the MP grammar and lexicon into one homogeneous linguistic system. Rather, linguistic phenomena that are documented for texts representing one particular stage of the language do not necessarily apply to other stages of the language as well. Furthermore, there is a certain temporal gap between (a) the MP of the Sasanian inscriptions and the bulk of the MMP texts on the one hand, and (b) the stage of the language encountered in the majority of the ZMP texts on the other, most of which received their final redaction only in post-Sasanian times (9<sup>th</sup> century CE and later, “late ZMP”). As is to be expected, late ZMP shows some clear innovations compared to the language of our earliest sources. However, we know relatively little about how the language developed in the time intervening.<sup>5</sup> It is against this backdrop that the Zand, despite all its problems and peculiarities, deserves to be taken into proper consideration by linguists.

Studies by Josephson (1997) and Cantera (1999; 2004) have shown that the older Zand texts in our possession—broadly speaking, the MP versions of the *Vidēvdād*, *Hērbedestān*, *Nērangestān*, as well as the slightly more recent Pahlavi *Yasna* and *Visperad*—represent a distinct historical stratum within the overall ZMP corpus. Certain linguistic features of these older Zand texts, particularly of their translation layer, indicate that their language may, to some degree, be understood as bridging the gap between the archaic language of the inscriptions and the roughly contemporaneous language of the earlier MMP texts on the one hand, and the main body of the Zoroastrian literary corpus on the other hand. This fact alone makes the Zand a potentially helpful source for increasing our understanding of the development of MP from its Sasanian stage (when it was fully alive as a spoken

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<sup>5</sup> Due to the stratified nature of many of our sources, a comprehensive survey of the internal history of MP covering its entire period of attestation constitutes a task fraught with problems. Unsurprisingly, it is yet to be tackled. For discussions of some of the linguistic features that are relevant to the internal stratification of MP, see Cantera 1999; Josephson 2006; Josephson 2013; Jügel 2015: 465–469. The linguistic evaluation of many ZMP texts is further hampered by the fact that the time of composition, time of final redaction and time of first attestation of a given text usually do not coincide, which yields diachronic discrepancies within the texts as well as various issues of dating.

language) to its use as a traditional literary language in the 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>6</sup> See the somewhat simplified scheme in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Historical layers of the MP corpus

texts	time periods
Sasanian inscriptions	3 <sup>rd</sup> century CE
MMP texts composed in Mani's lifetime (216–276/7 CE) and by his early followers <sup>7</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> –4 <sup>th</sup> centuries CE
older Zand texts	basic canonisation (at least of the translation) around the 6 <sup>th</sup> century CE <sup>8</sup>
older ZMP literary texts <sup>9</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> –8 <sup>th</sup> centuries CE
younger ZMP literary texts and late MMP texts; their language shows the interference of contemporary Early New Persian varieties (see fn. 6 and 7)	9 <sup>th</sup> –11 <sup>th</sup> centuries CE
late Zand texts (secondary supplements to perceived gaps in the Zand corpus)	11 <sup>th</sup> century and beyond

**6** It is assumed that the New Persian dialects spoken in the southern Iranian sphere during the time period in question (documented by several Early Judaeo-Persian texts and the famous *Qor'ān-e Qods*) were still less removed from Middle Persian than the contemporary northern variety that came to be cultivated as a new standard language by Muslim speakers of Persian (Lazard 2003). Still, even in the context of such a scenario, the language employed by the Zoroastrian scholar-priests who composed and redacted some major ZMP works in the 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries must have represented a literary and, to some degree, archaic register. As common with literary registers, we expect the development of ZMP to have lagged to some extent behind that of the spoken language, an effect that was certainly increased by the link of ZMP to the archaising Pahlavi script. Cf. Lazard (2003: 100), according to whom “parler perse du sud et moyen-perse littéraire n'étaient que deux registres de la même langue”.

**7** On the group of MMP texts that are likely to belong to this era, see Maggi 2009: 259–261. Later MMP texts (on which see Durkin-Meisterernst 2003) generally show an admixture of Parthian and, in the final period (9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries), New Persian elements. They were neither composed by native speakers of Middle Persian nor in an environment in which Middle Persian was still actively used.

**8** See Cantera 2015 (last consulted on 27.01.2022), with further references.

**9** Aside from certain parts of the Zand, the number of Zoroastrian Middle Persian text whose extant shape can be assigned to a pre-9<sup>th</sup>-century date is comparatively small (*Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān*, the core of the *Kārnāmag, Wizārišn ī Čatrang*, and several minor texts). To be left aside in the first instance when studying the internal diachrony of MP are works of a strongly compilatory nature such as the *Dēnkard* and the *Bundahišn*. Rather, a future improved understanding of this diachrony might enable us to discern more clearly the redactional history of these texts.

For improving our understanding of the intermediary stages in the long attestation of MP, the language of the Zand therefore does have a certain role to play. This also applies to some issues surrounding the development of the verbal system, as exemplified, e.g., by the continuation of the full paradigm of the *prs. subj.* in the language of the older Zand texts (Cantera 1999), a feature they share with early Sasanian MP as against late ZMP. As an observation of potential relevance for the preservation of functions of the Old Iranian *ipf.* in the MP *prs.*, Cantera (2004: 28) notes that the seemingly erroneous rendering of various Av. *inj.* (i.e., simple past) forms with MP *prs. ind.* forms may be an effect of the formal merger of the early Sasanian MP *ipf.* with the *prs. indicative*. Complementing this, one is inclined to consider whether mismatches of the reverse kind, that is, those between Av. *prs. ind.* forms and MP preterites, may at least in some instances reflect a non-preterital, purely aspectual use of the MP preterite. This latter kind of mismatch would complement the situation that has been posited for both early Sasanian MP and late ZMP, confirming that the latent aspectual (perfective) character of the *pret.* represents an element of continuity in the centuries-long history of MP. Before engaging with this possibility, however, I will first address the legitimate question as to whether the translational nature of the Zand material does in fact allow any genuine insights into natural MP grammar at all.<sup>10</sup>

## 2.2 Mechanical translation patterns concerning Av. tense-aspect forms

It is obvious that the approach of the MP translators of the Avesta was often informed by the existence of more or less mechanical translation patterns which they generally followed. Due to the current lack of an exhaustive Av.-MP glossary of the Zand or a respective digital database, a comprehensive quantitative evaluation of such patterns has yet to be undertaken. However, important steps towards their description, albeit using a limited database, have been made by Josephson (1997: 138–152) (who analyses the MP translators' techniques as exemplified by PY 9–11, with a focus on the rendering of the Av. moods) and, on a larger scale, by Cantera (2004: 284–302). Cantera's conclusions rely on an evaluation of the

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. the caveat voiced by Jügel (2015: 492), which led him to exclude the Zand corpus from his investigations. Naturally, this concern only applies to the translation proper whereas the added explanatory comments and excursuses of the Zand (the Pahlavi "commentary" as opposed to the translation) can be assumed to follow the ordinary rules of MP grammar. In many cases, the comments are obviously meant to paraphrase the content of the translation, when the commentators did not consider the wording of the latter to be sufficiently clear.

first eight chapters of the Pahlavi Vidēvdād, supplemented by the remaining Zand attestations of the words that occur in these chapters (Cantera 2004: 269 fn. 52). Among the translation patterns identified by Cantera, the following are relevant to the matters discussed in this article:

- (a) The Av. prs. ind. is, by default, rendered with the MP prs. ind. (“numerous” instances, Cantera 2004: 286). Besides that, Cantera records a small number of cases in which an Av. prs. ind. is rendered with a MP pret. (6×).
- (b) The Av. prs. inj., which commonly functions as a simple past especially in YAv., is most frequently rendered with the MP pret. (24× in Cantera’s data, see Cantera 2004: 287). However, there is also a considerable number of prs. inj. forms that are rendered with the MP prs. ind. instead (11×, see Cantera 2004: 287f.). An extended list of apparent mismatches of this type is given by Ferrer-Losilla (2013: 329).
- (c) The specific features of the remaining, rarer Av. past tense categories (aor., pf., ipf.) were, it seems, not clearly understood by the translators, or else they did not make efforts to provide them with a distinct expression in MP.<sup>11</sup> Instead of taking recourse also to MP periphrastic formations (e.g., the *stay*-perfect) or adverbs such as *hamē* ‘always’, they usually handled these categories in the same way as the YAv. prs. inj. (simple past).

### 2.3 Non-mechanical elements in the MP translators’ approach

The existence of mechanical translation patterns such as those mentioned above has contributed to the common view that the language of the MP translations of Av. texts is, from the perspective of MP grammar, highly artificial. Yet a close reading of any extended section of the Zand shows that such patterns were not always followed slavishly. Depending on the passage at hand, the translation process often seems to have involved both the application of mechanical translation rules and the incorporation of preconceived, traditional views of what a given passage was thought to be about. A third factor that seems to have contributed to the overall translation process was the translators’ occasional willingness to

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<sup>11</sup> If this lack of differentiation is indeed due to a limited understanding of the Av. past tense categories on the side of the MP translators, this would find a succinct explanation in the significant time gap that lies between the composition of the original texts (ca. late 2<sup>nd</sup> to mid-1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE) and the production of the translation (mid-1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE). One might further want to point to the considerable typological differences between the verbal systems of the two languages, with Av. possessing a plethora of inflected verbal categories and MP essentially only one (the prs.).



also develop innovative interpretations of some of the more difficult Av. passages. Presumably, this third factor was likely to come into play when two conditions were met: (a) a mechanical rendering did not seem to yield acceptable sense; and (b) a traditional interpretation was, for one reason or another, unavailable or at odds with the translator's own interpretive agenda. As a result of the interplay between the three factors mentioned, traditional as well as innovative interpretations sometimes came to override the results that a purely mechanical word-by-word translation would have yielded. Consequently, even the older Zand texts furnish examples where the rendering of an Av. passage into MP blatantly contradicts the translators' basic knowledge of Av. grammar as documented elsewhere.<sup>12</sup>

Undeniably, the translational nature of the textual core of the Zand puts certain limitations on the reliability of this corpus as a basis for the linguistic analysis of the MP language. But this should not prevent us from taking into account the Zand for this purpose altogether. Instead, when aiming to "mine" the Zand for linguistically relevant data, it seems advisable to focus on those instances where the translator appears to deliberately deviate from the available mechanical translation patterns. Since such deviations presuppose a conscious choice on the part of the translator, they must reflect the translator's perception as to the contexts in which the specificities of MP grammar suggested or even demanded a non-mechanical rendering. Hence, if we aim to examine the aspectual features of MP verb forms in the language of the Zand, we should focus on those cases where the appearance of a given MP verb form is unexpected from a purely tense-based perspective. This, however, requires us to limit our investigation to those instances where the tense mismatch at hand is indeed likely to be due to a deliberate choice of the translator. By contrast, all those mismatches which can be accounted for on other grounds need to be left out of consideration.

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<sup>12</sup> See Peschl 2022: chapter 19, on the MP exegetes' occasional "top-down" approach when translating, which is to be observed especially in the MP translation of the OAv. Gāšās. Rather than construing the meaning of a given passage through an analysis of the individual Avestan words, the translation sometimes seems to result from an attempt to secondarily link pre-existing ideas about the content of the text to its actual wording. Cf. also Zeini 2020: 190–193. As remarked by an anonymous reviewer, a similarly mixed translational approach as that seen in the Zand may be found, for instance, in the Armenian Bible translation; cf. Meyer 2018: 48, 50f. (with fn. 34), 55, 60.

### 3 Defining linguistically significant tense mismatches in the Zand

Combined with the mismatches that had been previously gathered by Cantera and Ferrer-Losilla (see §2.2), the data examined during my work for the project “Aspect in Middle Persian”<sup>13</sup> at first seemed to yield a considerable number of potentially significant tense mismatches, including

- (a) those between Av. verb forms and their MP rendering, including both unexpected MP prs. ind. forms that seemingly correspond to Av. preterital forms and, more importantly for the sake of the present article, MP pret. forms that seemingly correspond to Av. non-preterital forms;
- (b) those between a MP verb form and its obvious intended time reference within the MP text.

By definition, type (a) only occurs in the translation layer of the Zand, whereas examples of type (b) may occur both in the translation and in the commentary layer. Naturally, mismatches of type (b) can only be identified in passages whose overall content makes it reasonably clear which time reference is implied by the MP text. For example, a piece of text mentioning an event in the life of a legendary figure can be safely expected to have past time reference.<sup>14</sup> Conversely, a statement about an event coinciding with or encompassing speech time is unlikely to carry past time reference.

In theory, mismatches of this kind in the Zand may provide a valuable diagnostic tool for detecting signs of the same non-temporal, purely aspectual uses of the MP prs. and pret. that have been postulated for IMP, MMP and even late ZMP. Upon closer inspection, however, it appears that few of the mismatches encountered in the data provide any solid basis for conclusions regarding the aspectual features of the MP forms involved. Rather than reflecting non-temporal uses of the MP prs. and pret., they can usually be accounted for by a variety of other factors. Their examination is therefore often less relevant for the linguistic, but all the more relevant for the philological analysis of the Zand, as exemplified in

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<sup>13</sup> See the “Note on data” at the end of this article (§9).

<sup>14</sup> Exceptions would be found in cases where the use of a verb form with salient present time reference serves to foreground a particular past event within a larger narrative. Extended sequences of such “historical presents” are certainly lacking in the Zand, whereas for an individual verb form to be categorised as a historical present, one would like to identify a palpable pragmatic reason for its appearance in the context at hand.

Appendix 1 (§10). Particular factors that can be identified include what I refer to as content-driven emendations (§10.1), content-driven re-interpretations (§10.2) and pseudo-etymological considerations (§10.3) on the part of the translators, as well as the translators' recognition of non-preterital uses of the Av. prs. injunctive (§10.4). Finally, some illusory mismatches probably result from text-critical problems affecting the transmission of the MP text (§10.5).

It thus turns out that, despite the considerable number of Av.-MP tense mismatches that emerge from a superficial screening of the data, the number of examples that invite an aspectual interpretation of the respective MP verb form is, in the end, very low. I have not encountered any genuinely significant instance of the MP prs. rendering an Av. past tense form in the texts examined (see §9). This assessment becomes even more definitive if one also applies the criterion that such instances should occur in contexts where an imperfective past (“ipf.”) reading is logically justifiable.<sup>15</sup> What remains are a handful of promising examples for the non-preterital, purely aspectual use of the MP pret.-as-perfective, signalled by their correspondence to Av. non-preterital forms. This limited but, I would suggest, significant evidence for the non-temporal use of the MP pret. in the Zand will be dealt with in sections §§4–5.

## 4 The MP preterite-as-perfective in performative utterances

### 4.1 Non-preterital uses of perfective categories

The MP pret. most commonly appears in contexts which, upon first sight, suggest a simple past function. However, this fact is not mutually exclusive with a (synchronically) underlying or even (historically) primary perfective character of the pret., as perfective categories tend to be used in past tense contexts by nature of their referring to completed events. According to Dahl (1985: 79), “for all languages it holds that ‘past time reference’ characterises prototypical uses of PFV”, and “languages will differ, however, in the extent to which they allow uses of PFV with non-past time reference.” In other words, a category that predominantly carries

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<sup>15</sup> A remaining candidate for a potentially significant prs. form with past time reference (i.e., an ipf.?) is N 71.1 *frāz wistarēd* ‘he used to spread out’, which renders the Av. preterital opt. *frastarənaēta*. However, as I will argue in a separate article with the working title “The Old Iranian optative in Middle Persian: a survey”, the ending *-ēd* in this context, if genuine at all, is more plausibly explained as continuing the Old Iranian 3sg. opt. middle ending *\*-aīta*.

past time reference may in fact represent, or have developed from, a temporally neutral perfective category whose widespread past tense reading is but its most common implicature. Languages can be arranged along a scale according to which the use of their perfectives is subject to more and less narrow restrictions applying to their possible time reference beyond the past.

Against this background, the non-preterital use of the MP pret. (as previously mentioned in §1.1), peripheral though it may be, suggests that the MP pret. should strictly speaking be categorised as a perfective, one close to, but not coinciding with, the “past tense” end of Dahl’s “perfective to past tense” scale. To confirm the validity of this assessment, one needs to examine how MP expresses those kinds of propositions that correspond to typical non-past uses of temporally underspecified perfective forms. These may, in theory, include the following:

1. **GNOMIC ASSERTIONS.** Jügel (2015: 90) cites at least one plausible example for the gnomic use of the MP preterite. The instances of the pret. discussed in §5 of this article could likewise be considered gnomic, although I will argue that their context is somewhat more specific, referring to the temporal coincidence between two timeless punctual events, all wrapped in a gnomic statement.
2. **FUTURE TIME REFERENCE.** I am not aware of any example attesting such a use of the pret. in MP, which may be due to the fact that the relevant kinds of contexts are rare in our corpus, as Thomas Jügel rightly points out to me. Note, however, the use of the New Persian pret. to refer to events in the imminent future, see Jahani 2017 and fn. 4 above.
3. **PERFORMATIVE UTTERANCES (henceforth also “performatives”).** Although relatively rare from a typological perspective (see Fortuin 2019: 42 and §7 below), the compatibility of perfective forms with performative utterances has been highlighted with regard to several Semitic languages (Hebrew, Classical Arabic etc.), as well as languages and language groups as diverse as Georgian, Totonac, Northern Iroquoian, Mian and others (Fortuin 2019: 20–24).<sup>16</sup> Examples for “performative preterites” arguably provide the clearest indications of the continued perfective value of the pret. in later MP (see §§4.2–4.4 below).

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. also the Ancient Greek ‘tragic aorist’ (Bary 2012). Of particular relevance in the context of this article is the existence of the same phenomenon in Modern Persian: *āmad* ‘here it is’ (pret. of *āmadan* ‘to come’, Perry 2007: 999). Scholars have also tried to offer non-aspectual explanations for the apparent “performative perfectives” of some of the individual languages that appear to exhibit them, e.g., by suggesting a derivation of the performative reading from a resultative one (see Fortuin 2019: 2f. for a survey of opinions on this matter). However, although the combination of perfective aspect with present time reference may at first seem contradictory, its exceptional application to denote “total events at the moment of speech” (Dahl 1985: 81) seems perfectly plausible and, unlike such alternative accounts, rather straightforward.

Possible Zand evidence for this particular use of the MP pret., together with some more general considerations on the expression of performativity in the Zand, will be the central subject of the remainder of this article.

## 4.2 Signal contexts for performativity in non-Zand MP literature

Based on his collection of data from non-Zand MP texts, Jügel (2015: 85–90) points out the following types of signal contexts in which performative preterites occur:

- (A) Performative statements that constitute legal acts. These are repeatedly found in the Sasanian law book *Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān* (MHD[A]), for instance in (1).

- (1) *ka gōwēd kū-m tā rēdag purnā bawēd ayāb gōwēd kū-m tā rēdag aburnā ēn tis ō tō dād* (pret.) *har ē ēwēnag*  
 ‘If one says: “(for the time) until the boy comes of age” or if one says “(for the time) as long as the boy is not of age, **I herewith give** you this thing”—each (of those ways of saying it) is equivalent.’

MHDA 22.17–23.1

See Jügel 2015: 83 for an in-depth discussion of this and other relevant passages from the MHD(A). To those may be added the following example (2).

- (2) *ka gōwēd kū-m ēn dastgird ō tō dād* (pret.) *ān dastgird ud harw čē pad ān dastgird dāšt ēstēd dād bawēd*  
 ‘If (someone) says “**I herewith give** you this property”, then that property and everything that is contained in that property will count as given.’

MHD 18.6f.

When looked at in isolation, *-m ... ō tō dād*, lit. ‘I have given you’, could also refer to an act of giving that has already been executed previous to the statement, meaning that *-m ... dād* would represent a pret. in resultative function. However, considering that the passage does not discuss a physical act of giving but a legal transfer of property, it is more likely that the utterance of the statement itself constitutes that very transfer, and that *-m ... dād* represents a “performative pret.,” exemplifying the underlying perfective character of the preterite.

- (B) Opening and concluding formulas of various texts as they are presented in the manuscripts. Whereas Manichaean manuscripts attest both opening and

concluding formulas of the relevant types (3), Zoroastrian manuscripts seem to attest only the relevant concluding formulas (4).<sup>17</sup>

- (3) *[ni]wist* (pret.) *mahr ī dōšambatīg*  
 ‘**Herewith is introduced** a Monday-hymn.’ FH 651
- (4) *frazaft* (pret.) *pad drōd ud šādīh ud rāmišn*  
 ‘(The text) **herewith ends** in peace, happiness and ease.’  
 ZWY 9 (colophon)

Opening formulas as exemplified by (3) seem particularly significant here: since they appear in the manuscripts before the actual text in question sets in, they are irreconcilable with any kind of past time reference (either recent past or resultative).

- (C) Incantations, spells, benedictions, maledictions (curses).<sup>18</sup> An example ad-  
 duced by Jügel (2015: 371), here given in extended form, is (5).

- (5) *bast-ham* (bind.PRET-1SG)<sup>19</sup> *zahr ud wiš ud zafar ī hamāg xrafstarān*  
 ‘**I herewith bind** the poison and the sting and the mouth of all noxious  
 beasts.’ NZB 0.1

Based on these and other convincing examples gathered by Jügel, the existence of the MP “performative pret.” will be accepted as a given for the sake of the following discussion. Proceeding from late ZMP examples such as the ones cited above, the aim of the following sections is to examine whether the performative pret. was also employed in the Zand. This discussion will show that, although examples are certainly few, an awareness of this phenomenon, and of the aspectual usage of the pret. more generally, may help us elucidate certain otherwise enigmatic passages in this particular sub-section of the MP corpus.

To begin with, however, it seems appropriate to contemplate which kinds of Av. sentences are likely to have been regarded as performative utterances by the MP translators. In Appendix 2 (§11), I discuss an uncertain Zand example for a malediction, which, if genuine, may be regarded as a representative of context (C) above. However, as I will argue in the next section, the main context in which we may expect to find performative expressions in the Zand is in the translation of Av. 1<sup>st</sup> person liturgical formulas. Such formulas may be added as a distinct signal

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Jügel 2015: 84f., 371, with further examples.

<sup>18</sup> For the performative character of benedictions and maledictions, and more generally of spells, see Sadovski 2012.

<sup>19</sup> The construction of the pret. here follows the New Persian type, with agent agreement of the copula.

context (D) to the three contexts outlined above. But arguably they could also be subsumed under context (A), considering the pragmatic affinities between ritualist and legalist discourses in the Av. and MP corpora.

### 4.3 Liturgical utterances as expected instances of performativity

The majority of the Av. texts in our possession, including most of those for which a MP version is preserved, are liturgical in nature. Composed as recitatives, they serve as integral constituents of a variety of religious ceremonies, which receive their validity only through the correct synchronisation of the ritual actions with the recitation text. As expected in the light of their liturgical nature, the Av. texts repeatedly feature 1<sup>st</sup> person utterances that must be considered strong candidates for qualifying as performative utterances. This includes semantic classes such as announcements ('I announce'), praises ('I praise'), requests ('I request'), commissives ('I accept'), and welcomings ('I welcome').<sup>20</sup>

Let us consider whether such liturgical statements do indeed meet the criteria that have been established to distinguish performatives from other kinds of speech acts. Austin (1962: 14f.), for example, posits six rules all of which must be fulfilled to yield a "felicitous" (or perhaps better: prototypical) performative expression. It will be helpful to quote Austin's criteria in extenso:

- (A.1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect; that procedure [has] to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
- (A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure involved.
- (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
- (B. 2) completely.
- (C. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designated for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of [a] certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further
- (C. 2) [they] must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

Let us consider how Austin's criteria relate to the circumstances under which Av. 1<sup>st</sup> person liturgical utterances are meant to be recited in Zoroastrian rituals, and,

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<sup>20</sup> For a typological overview of those types of performative utterances that tend to be employed in liturgical texts, see de Jong 2007.

we may assume, were already meant to be so in the Sasanian period, when the Zand texts were composed.

- (A. 1) For an Av. liturgical utterance to be valid in the context of a religious ceremony, the text recited must agree with the canonical, rigidly fixed (or, in Austin's terms, conventionalised) recitation text. In accordance with Austin's defining criteria for performative expressions, an Av. utterance must be pronounced at the right volume and in the right fashion,<sup>21</sup> in the right place and at the right moment in time, which often means in synchrony with a prescribed ritual action or gesture.<sup>22</sup> The conventional recitation text is agreed on by all those present and receives its validity from what was rightly perceived to be its considerable antiquity already from the viewpoint of the MP exegetes. Central sections of the Av. liturgies (including, for instance, the Ahuna Vairiia formula or the Gāθās) are depicted in the Avesta itself and in the MP literature as originating from the mythical past and from the divine sphere (cf., e.g., Y 9.1, Y 19, Y 57.11 = GY 57.8). This strongly underlines the sacred, and thereby entirely conventionalised, character of the recitation text. The same applies to the so-called *hamparšti*-liturgies, i.e., liturgies that feature extended dialogues between one of the foundational figures of the tradition (most typically Zaraθuštra) and the deity Ahura Mazdā.
- (A. 2) The recitation text must be uttered by a person carrying certain attributes, namely an ordained male priest in the prescribed state of ritual purity.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The importance of reciting the Avestan texts at the appropriate volume (sometimes depending on the passage at hand) repeatedly emerges from the Nērangestān, an Av.-MP meta-ritual treatise that received its final redaction in the late Sasanian period. Cf., for example, N 8f., 15 and 84. Further pertinent evidence is provided by the MP ritual directions contained in many manuscripts of the Avesta. For instance, a MP ritual direction found in ms. 400\_Pt4, fol. 93r l. 1, indicates that the fourfold recitation of the Ahuna Vairiia formula at the end of Y 18 must be performed *pad buland wāng* 'in a (particularly) loud voice'. Although the ritual directions have, in the course of their manuscript transmission, been adapted to post-Sasanian innovations in the ritual practice, their basic stock displays the same meta-ritual jargon as the Nērangestān and clearly goes back to the Sasanian era (cf. Cantera 2014: 196–210). Apart from reciting the Avestan texts at the right volume, an appropriate recitation style and an accurate articulation were also deemed essential. For example, N 24 discusses the issue of a priest who is unable to recite Avestan properly due to being intoxicated with alcohol.

<sup>22</sup> The Nērangestān bears ample witness to all of these points. Further evidence again comes from the MP ritual directions (see fn. 21).

<sup>23</sup> The Nērangestān repeatedly discusses the conditions under which a priest does not fulfil those requirements, and the effects this has on the validity of the ritual.



(B. 1–2) To have full effect, a liturgical utterance must form part of a globally successful ritual, that is, all of the ritual’s constituent elements must be carried out correctly at least to the extent that the global validity of the ritual is not impaired.<sup>24</sup> If something inappropriate happens during the later stages of the ritual, a liturgical utterance may retroactively become “infelicitous”, no matter whether the priest pronouncing it is himself responsible for the mishap or whether it is a colleague.<sup>25</sup>

(C. 1–2) As mentioned above, Av. 1<sup>st</sup> person liturgical utterances typically consist of announcements, praises, requests, commissives or welcomings, which implies that they “inaugurate a certain consequential conduct” (Austin) that must be genuinely intended by the speaker. Their recitation must be performed deliberately, with each priest focussing on the text of his own recitation.<sup>26</sup>

There must be a genuine and permanent intention to complete the performance of the entire ritual appropriately, although this is presumably a matter of course, with the result that it is nowhere stated explicitly, to my knowledge. Conversely, the correct and complete performance of each liturgical utterance also constitutes a necessary prerequisite for the further progress of the ritual.<sup>27</sup>

As it turns out, Austin’s criteria suit the nature of the Av. recitatives remarkably well, meaning that many of the common 1<sup>st</sup> person utterances in the Av. liturgies probably qualify as performatives. Given the MP exegetes’ obvious awareness of the liturgical nature of the texts—after all, their main function continued to be their ritual usage—, we may assume that the MP translators were well aware of the performative character of the sentences in question, unless there is clear evidence indicating otherwise (for the possible existence of occasional exceptions, see §6.1). As a consequence of this, the MP translations are likely to feature verbal categories that were considered fit for expressing performativity.

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<sup>24</sup> This is likewise discussed in detail in the Nērangestān.

<sup>25</sup> Mishaps that cause an ongoing ritual to become *gumānīg* ‘doubtful’ (i.e., its validity and effectiveness are to be considered questionable) and those which should be amended by repeating (parts of) the ritual, are discussed in N 2 (see Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 2003: 18–20).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. N 3, 6 and 18.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the “installation of the priestly college” in Vr 3 (discussed in §4.4 below).

#### 4.4 Performative preterites in the Zand of the “installation of the priestly college” (Vr 3.1, 3.7)

A striking sequence of examples for performatives within the Av. liturgies is found in the so-called “installation of the priestly college” in Visperad 3, a YAv. section included only in the solemn variants of the Av. “long liturgy”.<sup>28</sup> Nowadays, the long liturgy, both in its solemn (Visperad, Vidēvdād) and non-solemn variants (Yasna, Yasna ī Rapiθβin), is celebrated by no more than two priests: the main priest (Av. *zaōtar*- ‘the pourer [of libations]’, MP *zōd*) and one assistant priest (MP *rāspīg*). However, Vr 3 bears witness to the fact that formerly the celebration of the solemn variants of the liturgy could involve a set of no less than seven assistant priests. As apparent from their names (e.g., *hāuuanān*- ‘the one in control of the pestle and mortar’, *ātrauuaxša*- ‘the fire-kindler’), each of these seven assistant priests was originally entrusted with a distinct role in the ritual procedure.<sup>29</sup> As an effect of the pre-modern reduction of the number of assistant priests to a single one, most functions of the former seven assistant priests have become attached to the Zōd, which contributes to his present-day dominant role in terms of the amount of text and ritual actions assigned to him.<sup>30</sup> The remaining tasks have been taken over by the Rāspīg, including that of symbolically accepting the roles of each of the former assistant priests during the recitation of Vr 3. For this purpose, the Rāspīg successively takes several different positions in the ritual precinct, supposedly those which were formerly assigned to the seven assistant priests.<sup>31</sup>

In what follows, I only give the Av. text of the beginning of Vr 3.1, which may suffice as a representative sample of the extended exchange of parallel formulas that ensues from it. Added in parentheses to the English translation are the practical instructions for the performing priests as provided in Anklesaria’s (1888)

**28** The term “long liturgy” serves as a cover term for the Yasna, Yasna ī Rapiθβin, Visperad and Vidēvdād liturgies (all of which are still performed today) as well as a variety of related liturgies (including the Vištāsp Yašt liturgy) whose performance has been suspended at different points in time over the past centuries.

**29** On the earlier variety in the number of priests involved in the celebration of the Av. long liturgy, see now Cantera 2021, especially pp. 2–4.

**30** Cf. Cantera 2021: 3f. More precisely, the possibility of performing even the solemn variants of the long liturgy with less than the ideal number of eight priests is already documented for the Av. period, through the Av. fragments contained in the Nērangestān. The eventual canonisation of the reduced number of two priests is thus the result of a narrowing down of a former multiplicity of options (from two up to eight priests) to a single, basic one (two priests only).

**31** For particulars regarding the spatial positions that are linked to the different priestly functions, see Rezanian 2017: 27f. and now Cantera 2021: 19f.

manual of the Yasna and Visperad ceremonies.<sup>32</sup> For reasons of space, only the first exchange of formulas is given a morphological glossing.

(6) (zōd:) *hāuuanānəm āstāiia*<sup>33</sup>

Hāuuanān.ACC install.SUBJ.1SG.PRS

(rāspīg:) *azəm vīsāi*

1SG.NOM accept.SUBJ.1SG.PRS.MID

‘(The Zōd recites alone:) “I shall (herewith) install the Hāuuanān.” (Standing on the right-hand side of the Zōd, the Rāspīg recites:) “I shall (herewith) make myself available.”’<sup>34</sup>

(zōd:) *ātrauuaxšəm āstāiia* (rāspīg:) *azəm vīsāi*

‘(The Zōd recites alone:) “I shall (herewith) install the Ātrauuaxša.” (Standing on the right-hand side of the Zōd facing the fire, the Rāspīg recites:) “I shall (herewith) make myself available.”’

(zōd:) *frabərətārəm āstāiia* (rāspīg:) *azəm vīsāi*

‘(The Zōd recites alone:) “I shall (herewith) install the Frabərətār.” (Standing on the left-hand side of the Zōd, the Rāspīg recites:) “I shall (herewith) make myself available.” [The text continues with the installation of the remaining assistant priests.]

Vr 3.1

<sup>32</sup> The original instructions are written in Gujarati. The English translation is based on that of Redard & Daruwalla 2021: 18f.

<sup>33</sup> The form *āstāiia* may either be 1sg. ind. or 1sg. subjunctive. On a purely morphological level, a 2sg. imp. value as assumed by the Pahlavi translator (see below) is possible as well, but difficult to reconcile with the context. With regard to the pragmatically parallel nature of the Rāspīg’s reply, where the verb form used is unambiguously subj., I assume that *āstāiia* is a subj. form, too.

<sup>34</sup> The historically basic meaning of the well-attested Av. verb *vis-* is ‘to take one’s place, to enter’, as apparent from a comparison with the Vedic cognate verb *VEŚ-* (EWAia: 2, 384). A closely related derived meaning ‘to present oneself’, ‘to be prepared’ or ‘to make oneself available for/as’ (cf. Bartholomae 1904: 1326 ‘sich bereitstellen’; Kellens 1984: 21 ‘servir de’) is manifest in examples such as the passages from Vr 3 in (6), (8) and Y 14.1 in (16). Consider also Y 10.9 *frā tē vīsāi uruuəθō staōta* ‘I will serve as your ally, your praiser’ and Y 10.8 *frā ābiio tanubiiō haōmō vīsāite baēšazāi* ‘Haōma will serve for the healing of their bodies.’ That *vis-* has further developed a more abstract meaning ‘to accept, to agree’ is illustrated by N 1.3, which discusses the situation when someone has previously agreed (*vis-*) to wake a priest for the fulfilment of his ritual duties, but has then failed to wake him: *vīsāiti dim fra.yrāraiio nōiit + fra.yrāraiiēiti* ‘(if) he agrees to wake him (or: accepts the task of waking him) and does not wake him’; cf. Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 1992: 26f.; Kellens 1984: 337. The negated version ‘to decline’ is attested in Y 8.5 = GY 8.4 *yasca ... imq vacō nōiit vīsāite framrūite* ‘he who declines to pronounce these words’. It is this latter, abstract usage of *vis-* in the sense of ‘to accept’ on which the default MP rendering with *padiriftan* ‘to receive, accept’ is based. Following the model of instances such as N 1.3, the translators then also applied *padiriftan* in

With regard to the Av. recitation text, the context strongly suggests that both the Zōd’s and the Rāspīg’s statements represent performatives. This interpretation presupposes that performativity generally was, or at least could be, expressed by the (voluntative) subj. in Avestan. The use of future or modal forms encoding intention is, cross-linguistically speaking, one of several ways in which performativity may be expressed, often as a marked alternative to the use of a simple present.<sup>35</sup> It is clear from the larger context of the passage that the Av. subj. *visāi* indeed implies the actual acceptance of the priestly roles in question, although it could potentially also denote only a declaration of intent: following the decisive step in the ritual procedure that is Vr 3.1, the ritual continues based on the assumption that the installation of the priests has indeed been carried out.<sup>36</sup>

We may now turn to the MP rendering of the Av. performatives in the Zand of the passage above. See example (7).

- (7) *zōd gōwēd zand ēn kū: +hāwanānih<sup>37</sup> ēstēn*  
Hāwanān-ship establish.IMP.2SG  
*rāspīg gōwēd zand ēn kū: ā-m padīrift*  
CONN=1SG.OBL accept.PP

‘The Zōd speaks (the formula whose) Zand is this: “establish the role of the Hāwanān (literally: the Hāwanān-ship)!” The Rāspīg speaks (the formula whose) Zand is this: “*ā-m padīrift*.”’

*zōd gōwēd zand ēn kū: ātarwaxših ēstēn; rāspīg: ā-m padīrift*

‘The Zōd speaks (the formula whose) Zand is this: “establish the role of the Ātarwaxš!” Rāspīg: “*ā-m padīrift*.”’

*zōd gōwēd zand ēn kū: frabardānih ēstēn; rāspīg: ā-m padīrift*

‘The Zōd speaks (the formula whose) Zand is this: “establish the role of the Frabardār!” Rāspīg: “*ā-m padīrift*.” [etc.] PVr 3.1

contexts where it matches the semantics of Av. *vis-* only imperfectly. It is therefore unnecessary to assume with Josephson (1997: 90 fn. 28) that *padīriftan* as a rendering of *vis-* has replaced *padrāstan* ‘to make, prepare’ during the transmission of the texts.

**35** Fortuin (2019: 37) notes the optional use of future or modal categories in performative expressions to induce a pragmatic implication of politeness, sometimes contrasting with the use of the simple present, which lacks this implication. Somewhat differently, the pragmatic implication of the subj. in Avestan performative expressions such as the ones above may be that, by making the statement, the speaker also acknowledges an obligation to act accordingly (p.c. Thomas Jügel).

**36** For the significance of Visperad 3 within the overall structure of the long liturgy, see recently Panaino (2018; 2021).

**37** The mss. give *hāwānih*, with haplography. The terms for the other priestly functions are all derived by attaching the abstract suffix *-ih* to the term for the respective priest. We would hence expect

In the MP translation of the Zōd's statements, the Av. 1sg. subj. (or, theoretically, ind.; see fn. 33) *āstāīia* 'I shall (herewith) install' is rendered with the 2sg. imp. *ēstēn* 'install, establish!'. The reasons for this misrendering are evident: the 1sg. prs. subj. (or ind.) value of the ending *-a* in *āstāīia* is an OAv. feature that occurs only as an archaism in YAv. (Kellens 1984: 199, 250; Tremblay 2006: 265). It was therefore probably unknown to the translator, whose knowledge of Av. pertained mainly to Young Avestan.<sup>38</sup> Since *-a* is also the ending of the 2sg. imp., one could even acknowledge that the MP rendering is correct on the formal level, as long as one considers the Av. verb form in isolation. As a way of accommodating for the misrendering of the Av. 1sg. form, the Av. terms for the priests (*hāuuanān-*, *ātrauuašā-*, etc.) are rendered in the MP version with terms referring not to the priests themselves, but to their respective functions (\**hāwanānih* 'Hāwanān-ship, role of the Hāwanān', etc.).

With regard to the interplay between the different translational approaches that can be observed in the Zand (see §2.2f.), one could say that, in the present case, the schematic approach has won out over the logical-interpretive one. Based on the latter, the translator should have been aware that it is obviously the Zōd himself who undertakes the formal installation of the other priests. But one could also say that, proceeding from the mechanical and, strictly speaking, erroneous rendering of *āstāīia* with a MP imp., the translator has then construed a meaning that seems nevertheless acceptable in the overall context, even though it implies a different perspective on the scene compared to the Av. version.

More relevant to the topic of this article is the MP rendering of the Rāspīg's replies. In the context of (7), the MP verb *padiriftan* denotes a priest's formal acceptance of a role assigned to him in the ritual. It seems to carry connotations similar to those seen in the legal usage of the same verb, for which Macuch 2017: 360 posits the meaning 'to accept, agree (with binding force)' (referring to a legal transaction). On the semantic level, the MP verb thus represents an appropriate rendering of Av.

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the role of the *hāwanān*-priest to be referred to as \**hāwanānih* 'Hāwanān-ship'. The emendation of *hāwānih* to \**hāwanānih* was already suggested by Dhabhar (1949) (see p. 5 of his glossary).

**38** The translators' knowledge of Avestan grammar primarily pertains to the language of the Younger Avesta, which agrees with the fact that those texts whose MP translation is thought to reflect a more or less continuous exegetical tradition (Vidēvdād, Hērbedestān, Nērangestān) are all Young Avestan. Grammatical categories exclusive to OAv., such as the aorist, were clearly less well understood by the translators (Cantera 2004: 289). According to Cantera (2004: 274), however, Av. 1sg. forms were, as a rule, correctly identified by the translators, independent of their tense, mood, and voice. It is worth noting that one of the exceptions adduced by Cantera also contains the ending *-ā*: Y 51.2 *dōišā* (OAv. 1sg. aor. subj.) → *dahād* (MP 3sg. prs. subj.).

*vis-*, as it reflects the ritually binding force of the utterances made by the Rāspīg.<sup>39</sup> Less straightforward are the grammatical features of the particular rendering chosen for the 1<sup>st</sup> person subj. form in Vr 3.1 (*vīsāi* → *-m padīrift*). Av. 3<sup>rd</sup> person subj. forms are commonly rendered with the MP 3<sup>rd</sup> person subjunctive. In the 1<sup>st</sup> person, the Av. subj. was probably often rendered with the MP subj. as well, but the loss of the non-3<sup>rd</sup> person subj. in post-Sasanian MP has, in the received versions of our MP texts, usually led to a replacement of 1<sup>st</sup> person (and 2<sup>nd</sup> person) subj. forms by the corresponding ind. forms or by the 3pl. subj. (Cantera 1999; 2004: 294–296; Peschl 2022: chapter 20, §5). Contrary to the archaic 1sg. subj. active *āstāiia* in the Zōd’s statements (vs. more recent *\*āstāiāni*), the person-number ending of 1sg. subj. middle forms such as *vīsāi* was generally understood correctly and rendered with the MP subj. by the translators (Cantera 2004: 274). The translator did indeed recognise the person (1sg.) of *vīsāi* also in Vr 3.1. However, instead of rendering *vīsāi* with a MP 1sg. subj. *\*padīrān*<sup>40</sup> ‘I shall accept’, as a purely mechanical approach to the translation would have suggested, he consistently chose to render *vīsāi* with the MP pret. *-m padīrift*, lit. ‘I (have) accepted (it)’, throughout the series of parallel formulas in Vr 3.1. It therefore seems that he deliberately deviated from the default translation pattern that would suggest itself on the formal level, and instead opted for the pret.(-as-perfective) as a more adequate MP expression of the performative speech acts performed by the assistant priest(s).

The pattern is confirmed by its multiple recurrence within Vr 3.1 as well as by Vr 3.7, where, following the installation of the assistant priests, the Zōd, at the instigation of the Rāspīg, finally declares his own acceptance of his role as Zōd. Here, too, Av. *vīsāi* is rendered with the pret. *padīrift*, although this instance shows an ungrammatical marking of the agent with the direct case of the 1sg. pronoun (*an*) rather than with its oblique case (*man* or *-m*), see examples (8) and (9).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> In the wider realm of Pahlavi literature, the verb *padīriftan* is also used to refer to a person’s acceptance of the Zoroastrian religion (*dēn*); cf. Cereti 1995: 322.

<sup>40</sup> Later copyist would have been likely to replace the moribund 1sg. subj. in *-ān* by a 1sg. ind. in *-am* or 3pl. subj. in *-ānd* (Cantera 1999: 183f.; 2004: 296).

<sup>41</sup> Cantera 1999: 199 fn. 66 cites this passage as a rare case in which the direct 1sg. pronoun *an* (𐬀𐬎𐬌) and its oblique variant *man* (𐬀𐬎) are not correctly distinguished in the older Zand texts, which generally do distinguish the two forms. As an explanation for the unexpected appearance of *an* in PVr 3.7, Cantera suggests an erroneous mechanical rendering of Av. *azəm* → *an* following the model of passages such as Vr 11.19 *yaθa diš azəm yō zaōta āuuāēdāiēmi* → *čiyōn-iš an kē zōd ham niwēyēnam*, where *an* is syntactically appropriate. Once the direct form *an* had been ousted by the oblique form *man* in later MP, some copyist may have regarded *an* as an archaic, but functionally equivalent by-form of *man*.

- (8) *tūm nō āθraōm zaōta-stē ...<sup>42</sup> azəm aēta zaōta vīsāi*  
 ‘(Rāspīg:<sup>43</sup>) “You, O priest, are here for being our Zaōtar.” ... (Zōd:) “**I shall (herewith) make myself available** as the Zaōtar here.”’ Vr 3.7
- (9) *rāspīg gōwēd zand ēn kū: tō az amāh āsrō pad zōdih ēst ... zōd gōwēd: an<sup>44</sup> ē(d)<sup>45</sup> zōdih padirift ...*  
 ‘The Rāspīg speaks (the formula whose) Zand is this: “you among us, O priest, take your place for the Zōd-ship!” The Zōd says: “**I herewith accept** this Zōd-ship.”’ PVr 3.7

The striking and recurrent mismatch between the Av. and MP verb forms in Vr 3.1 and Vr 3.7 implies that the two versions of the text employ different strategies for expressing performativity. In YAv., a viable means to express performativity was the voluntative subj., which in fact represents the most salient function of the subj. when used in the 1<sup>st</sup> person.<sup>46</sup> In the MP translation, the expression of performativity is achieved by presenting the priest’s acceptance of his role as already completed at the moment of its utterance. In this context, we can observe the surfacing of the underlying aspectual, perfective nature of the MP pret., while its conventional past time reference is suppressed.

**42** The Rāspīg’s address to the Zōd and the Zōd’s statement of acceptance are interrupted by a *wāž*, a recurring exchange of formulas marking, among other things, a change of speaker within the recitative (Cantera 2016: 53–56).

**43** Originally, this sentence was spoken by the Ātrauaxša-priest; cf. Cantera 2016: 54.

**44** Ms. K7 (‘NH ‘y); TD4 (‘NH yb) or (ZNH yb) (facsimile unclear). The remaining known MSS. of the Pahlavi Visperad all depend on K7. In theory, one could also read the whole sequence as a verbal form (HWH-yb) *hē*, meaning ‘you are’ (2sg. prs. ind.), ‘you may be’ (2sg. prs. opt.), ‘(s)he may be’ (3sg. prs. ind.) or perhaps even ‘I may be’ (1sg. prs. opt.). But none of these verbal readings makes any sense in the context, not to speak of the then-implied blatant deviation from the Av. original.

**45** Cf. fn. 44.

**46** Cf. Kellens 1984: 261; also Hoffmann 1967: 249. There is notably not a single OAv. form among the considerable number of examples classified as voluntative 1sg. subjunctives by Kellens. Although an argument *ex silentio*, this does suggest that, in OAv., it was presumably another form that covered this functional domain.

## 5 The MP preterite marking the temporal coincidence between two timeless punctual events

Before turning once more to the topic of performativity, I would like to address another non-preterital use of the MP pret., one that is likewise attested in the Zand and is distinct from its use in performative contexts. As we have seen, the performative pret. denotes the coincidence of an utterance with a punctual event that the utterance is meant to represent. In the cases to be discussed in this section, by contrast, the pret. is used to denote the coincidence between two external punctual events. Either these are depicted as being fully equivalent to one another (here referred to as “case of equivalence”), or it is implied that, at the moment when one of the two events happens, this simultaneously also entails the happening of the other event (“case of correspondence”). An example for the “case of equivalence” is found in the MP commentary layer of (10)–(11). Incidentally, the Av. text in (10) contains two further 1<sup>st</sup> person liturgical statements that may be considered performatives, although they are in this case rendered with the MP prs. (*stāyam*, *nigōhēm*; on MP performative presents see §5 below). What interests us here, however, is the use of the pret. *-m stāyīd* in the comment added to the MP translation.

- (10) *staōmī ašəm ašəm vohū vahištəm astī ... nāismī daēuuō*  
 ‘I praise order: *ašəm vohū vahištəm astī ...*<sup>47</sup> I scorn the demons.’  
 Y 12.4–6 = GY 11.19–12.1
- (11) *stāyam ahlāyīh ... nigōhēm dēw [hād abāg-iz ēd kū ka-m ahlāyīh stāyīd*  
*ā-m dēw nigōhīd bawēnd ā-šān pas-iz pad judāgīh be nigōhēm]*  
 ‘I praise righteousness<sup>48</sup> ... I scorn the demons. [With this the following is implied: **at the moment when I praise righteousness**, the demons

<sup>47</sup> The two components of the contrastive double formula “I praise order – I scorn the demons” are interrupted by the ubiquitous Ašəm Vohū formula (representing, in a way, a “praise of order (*aša-*)”).

<sup>48</sup> MP *ahlāyīh* regularly renders Av. *aša-* ‘(cosmic) order, (true) order’ and refers to a central concept not dissimilar from the one denoted by the Av. term. Despite this, the rendering of *ahlāyīh* with a distinct English word is meant to convey that the connotations of the Av. and MP terms only partially overlap, especially due to the increased moral and eschatological dimensions of *ahlāyīh* (see König 2010: 8f.). A distinct English rendering of MP *ahlāyīh* can also be argued for on the basis of its derivational history. Since it is formally an abstract noun derived from the adjective *ahlaw*, which itself is a loan from Av. *ašauuan-* ‘associated with (cosmic) order’, *ahlāyīh* may (originally) have meant ‘the fact or state of being associated with *aša-*’ rather than corresponding to *aša-* directly.



(thereby) count as having (already) been scorned by me. And afterwards I also scorn them separately.]’ PY 12.4–6

The point made by the commentator seems to be the following: praising the cosmic principle of ‘order/righteousness’ (Av. *aša-*, MP *ahlāyih*) in itself already amounts to a scorning of the demons in their role as opposers of order. Nevertheless, the demons are subsequently also scorned separately and explicitly. In other words: the act of praising order/righteousness is regarded as equivalent to the act of scorning the demons, and the moment when this twofold punctual event takes place is one and the same. This may reflect the idea that the Aṣəm Vohū formula, which, besides many other occurrences in the liturgy, is recited after the phrase *staōmī aṣəm* ‘I praise order’ in Y 12.4, possesses apotropaic powers against the demons (compare Y 61).

The strictly punctual temporal correspondence between the event mentioned in the main clause *ā-m dēw nigōhīd bawēnd* and that mentioned in the *ka*-clause is expressed by the pret. *-m stāyīd* in the *ka*-clause. The main clause displays a periphrastic construction consisting of a past participle (*nigōhīd*), an oblique personal pronoun and the prs. ind. of the verb *baw-* in its legal-technical sense of ‘to count as, to be valid as, to go to one’s account as’.<sup>49</sup>

The related use of the pret. in the “case of correspondence” can be observed in (12) and (13), which describe a man’s entry into a new stage of sinfulness<sup>50</sup> at the precise moment when he takes a certain measure to injure or kill another man.

(12) *yō narš snadəm usəhištaiti aētaṭ hē āgərəptəm yaṭ frāšusaiti aētaṭ hē auuaōirištəm*

‘A man who stands up to strike a man—this is his *āgərəpta*-sin. When **he moves forward**—this is his *auuaōirišta*-sin.’ V 4.17

(13) *kē pad ān \*ī mard sneh ul ēstēd [pad zanišn ī mard-ē] ēdōn ōy kē-š āgrift [andar ōy bun bawēd] ka frāz raft* (pret.) [*kū be rawēnēd*] *ēdōn ōy ōyrišt*

‘He who stands up for striking a man [for smiting a man]—thus (it is) this which is his *āgrift* sin [(the sin) counts as being on his account]. At the

<sup>49</sup> The syntactic structure of this latter construction, which is, for example, frequently attested in the Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān (see Macuch 1993, *passim*) and the Pahlavi Nērangestān, requires further investigation. For some preliminary considerations, see Jügel 2015: 14f. A more comprehensive discussion of the construction is under preparation as a further product of the project “Aspect in Middle Persian” (working title: “The Middle Persian construction of PP + *baw-* with an oblique personal pronoun: competing syntactic interpretations”).

<sup>50</sup> For the technical terminology surrounding the different grades of sin in Zoroastrianism, see STŠnŠ 11 (Kotwal 1969: 22–25, 96).

moment when **he goes forth** [he advances it (i.e., the weapon)]—thus this (is his) *ōyrišt sin.*’ PV 4.17

Once we acknowledge the possible use of the pret. in the “case of equivalence” and “case of correspondence”, this may throw new light on some other, more complex Zand passages as well. Consider (14) and (15), the latter of which may contain further possible examples of the “case of correspondence”, although the text is riddled with philological problems. The passage describes the damage afflicted on the demons each time that humans attend to the virtuous task of baking bread.

- (14) *yaṭ yauuō dāiiāt āaṭ daēuua x<sup>v</sup>isən; yaṭ suduš dāiiāt āaṭ daēuua tusən; yaṭ pištrō dāiiāt āaṭ daēuua uruθən; yaṭ guṇdō dāiiāt āaṭ daēuua pərəðən* ‘As soon as the barley **is being laid out**, the demons **begin to sweat**. As soon as the sieve/millstone<sup>51</sup> **is being put to use**, the demons **become vain**. As soon as the flour **is being put to use**, the demons **mourn**. As soon as the dough ball **is being prepared**, the demons **fart**.’ V 3.32

- (15) *ka jōrdā dād ēg dēw xwist hēnd [kū ō pāy būd hēnd [ay ēn hamāg ān ī pad bundahišn]]; ka suftag dād ēg dēw tuhiḡ būd hēnd [anōmēd; ast kē ēdōn gōwēd ay ēd gyān andar aškamb be nē mānd]; ka pēšaḡ dād [grih] ēg dēw griyist hēnd [kū-šān šēwan und mōyag kird]; ka gund dād [kulāčag] ēg dēw pulid hēnd [kū-šān tarakag andar ōbast]*

‘At the moment when the corn **is put in place**, the demons **begin to sweat** [i.e., they get on their feet [all this (refers to) what (happened) at the time of creation]]. At the moment when the sieve/millstone (?) **is put in place**, the demons **begin to become empty** [(they become) without hope; there is (a commentator) who says that no life-force has remained in their stomach]. At the moment when the dough ball [a “knot” (*grih*)] **is put in place**, the demons **begin to lament** [i.e., they start making complaints and lamentations]. At the moment when the dumpling [a *kulāčag*] **is put in place**, the demons **begin to fart** [i.e., a noise escapes them].<sup>52</sup> PV 3.32

The basic structure of the four Av. clauses in (14) compared to that of their MP versions may be schematised as follows:

<sup>51</sup> For some considerations on the unclear meanings of Av. *sudu(š)*-, MP *suftag* (literally ‘what is perforated’), see Cantera 2004: 55 fn. 43.

<sup>52</sup> The text and translation of the MP text mostly follow Cantera 1998, with minor modifications applied to the translation. For the interpretation of the first comment, see Moazami 2014: 87 and the remark in the main text below.

Av. *yaṭ* ‘as soon as’<sup>53</sup> + (present) subj. — *āaṭ* ‘then’ + prs. inj.

MP *ka* ‘when’ + pret. — *ēg* ‘then’ + pret.

In the subclauses, the rendering of the Av. 3sg. prs. subj. passive *daiiāṭ* (for \**dāiāt*, see Kellens 1984: 128) with a MP pret. represents a deliberate mismatch, because the Av. 3sg. subj. in *-āṭ* is generally recognised as such by the translators and rendered with the MP subjunctive.<sup>54</sup> We are thus dealing with another set of examples for the use of the pret. as a perfective, here denoting a complete temporal coincidence between the timeless punctual events in the main clauses with the timeless punctual events in the corresponding subclauses. In (13), the event related by the main clause that is presented as coinciding with the event related by the *ka*-clause was expressed by means of a noun clause (without overt copula). In (15), by contrast, not only are the events in the *ka*-clauses denoted by the pret., but also the coinciding events mentioned in the main clauses. This may even be the default constellation to be expected in the “case of correspondence” unless the event in the main clause is denoted by a noun clause as in (13).

In the main clauses of (14), the Av. text shows the rare use of the prs. inj. in gnomic (timeless) function, which, I would argue, remains marginally attested in YAv. besides the ordinary use of the prs. inj. as a simple past.<sup>55</sup> Because of the usual past tense value of the Av. prs. inj., one might think that its rendering with MP

<sup>53</sup> On the construction of *āaṭ yaṭ* (or *yaṭ ... āaṭ*) with the subj. in the meaning ‘as soon as’, see Kellens 1984: 288, who describes the principle governing the choice of the subj. in this context as follows: “Le subjonctif est requis dans les subordinées de temps introduites par une conjonction indiquant que l’action conjonctive et l’action principale, nécessairement inaccomplie, se trouvent dans un rapport logique où l’une constitue le préalable de l’autre (potentiel du présent).” Although Kellens does not quote V 3.32 among his examples for this morphosyntactic configuration (presumably because he considers the passage too obscure overall, see fn. 55 below), the passage neatly matches his definition.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Cantera 2004: 294. When the MP prs. ind. appears instead of the subj., this can often be explained by the common replacement of MP non-3<sup>rd</sup> person subj. forms with the corresponding ind. forms by the hands of later copyists (see fn. 40 above). In some cases, it may also be due to an incomplete agreement between the rules governing the use of the Av. and MP subj., respectively.

<sup>55</sup> Kellens (1984: 241) regards the function of the inj. in this passage as “indeterminable”. In my view, however, nothing speaks against the assumption that the inj. is here, as in a few other passages, used in its historically primary (although, in YAv., synchronically marginalised) function as a category underspecified for tense and mood. It is as such predestined to be employed in gnomic statements and descriptions of timeless states and activities. Some further non-preterital YAv. injunctions gathered by Kellens (1984: 239–244)—all of which Kellens tries to explain otherwise—likewise find a solid account through this assumption. This particularly applies to examples occurring in descriptions of the characteristic features and activities of deities. Regarding V 3.32, Kellens’ assessment of the overall sense of the passage seems overly agnostic: even though, as he rightly notes, the exact sense of the nouns *suḍu(š)*-, *pištra*- and *gunḍa*- is difficult to establish,

pret. forms in (15) may simply reflect a mechanical translation pattern. However, as addressed in Appendix 1, §10.3, there are a few examples suggesting that the translators rather refrained from rendering the YAv. inj. with the pret. when they recognised that the particular Av. inj. form at hand evidently lacked past time reference. In (15), too, it seems doubtful that the translator would have considered the use of the MP pret. forms acceptable if the pret. had exclusive past tense value (on the seemingly contradictory MP commentary note regarding the “time of creation”, see below). As is evident from its wider context within V 3, the Av. text of (14) clearly does not refer to past events, but to timeless facts. Rather than being concerned with a particular mythic event, it describes the anti-demonic effects of bread-baking as a matter of general validity. Whereas the previous paragraph (V 3.31) emphasises the beneficial effects that the sowing of grain generally has on Ahura Mazda’s creation, V 3.32 as given in (14) then specifies those effects by describing the way in which the baking of bread, a consequence of the cultivation of grain, harms the demons: each time the actions mentioned in the subclauses are performed, this coincides with the demons’ entry into an increased state of discomfort. It is hard to imagine that the MP translators of the Vidēvdād would not have caught the “gnomic” outlook of V 3.31f., even though a commentary note added to the first *ka*-clause (‘all this (refers to) what (happened) at the time of creation’) seems to suggest otherwise. This commentary note, appended to another commentary note, goes completely against the logic of the passage as a whole and may have become incorporated into the received text at any time during the initial centuries of its transmission.<sup>56</sup>

In making this argument, I am fully aware of the methodological difficulties involved when I sometimes regard the interpretations of the commentators as contradicting the intention of the translator, while elsewhere I rely on them as a tool for elucidating the translation (see also fn. 60). In (17) and (19), for example, I will consider the possibility that the interpretation emerging from the commentary may already underlie the translation. However, there is an important difference between (17) and (19) on the one hand and (15) on the other. In (17) and (19), nothing in the MP translation suggests that the interpretation of the commentator may not also underlie the translation. In (15), by contrast, the comparison of the MP translation with the Av. text suggests that the former replicates the basic outlook of the latter, whereas it is the view of the secondary commentator that deviates from both the Av. text and its MP translation. As we have seen, the translator of (14)

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it is still clear that the passage as a whole makes general, timeless assertions on the process of bread-making and its detrimental effects on the demons.

<sup>56</sup> Apparently based on a similar assessment, Moazami (2014: 87), too, renders the preterites in the MP translation with English presents and those in the comments with English simple pasts.

deliberately chose the pret. for rendering the Av. prs. subj. *daiiāt* in the subclauses, although we firmly expect him to have recognised the Av. form as non-preterital.<sup>57</sup> This in turn entails that, according to the translator's intention, the MP pret. forms in the main clauses do not carry past time reference either, even though they render Av. inj. forms.

To conclude the discussion of (14)–(15), it is interesting to note that the use of the pret.-as-perfective apparently superimposes an inchoative reading on the MP activity and state verbs involved in this passage: *xwīstan* 'to sweat' (state?) → *xwīst hēnd* 'they begin to sweat'; *griyistan* 'to lament' (activity) → *griyist hēnd* 'they begin to lament'; and so on.<sup>58</sup>

To sum up §5, the use of the MP pret. as a marker of the temporal coincidence between two timeless punctual events supports the argument previously made with regard to the "performative preterite" (§4). Both uses may be regarded as reflecting the same underlying aspectual nature of the pret., which, under specific contextual conditions, allows for a complete suppression of its usual past tense implicature.

## 6 The MP present in performative utterances

### 6.1 Occasional non-performative reinterpretations of Av. performatives?

Assuming that the pret. is indeed an apt means of denoting performativity in MP, one wonders why this usage of the pret. remains very rare in the Zand despite the wealth of 1<sup>st</sup> person liturgical statements in this corpus. One reason contributing to the scarcity of examples could be that many such 1<sup>st</sup> person statements in the Av. liturgies do not actually represent performatives or were at least not interpreted as such by the MP exegetes. Consider (16), a liturgical statement by which the Zōd at first sight seems to proclaim his acceptance of certain further priestly roles assigned to him in the context of the Av. long liturgy. Contrary to the pattern seen in (6)–(9), however, Av. *vīsāi* is here rendered not with the pret. (-*m*) *padīrift* but with the prs. ind. *padīram* 'I accept'.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> On the occasional non-preterital value of the YAv. subj., see fn. 55 above and §10.3 in Appendix 1.

<sup>58</sup> For the potential of perfective forms to induce an inchoative ("ingressive") reading of atelic verbs, particularly of state verbs, cf. Comrie 1976: 19f. (with parallels).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. also the linguistically modernised variant of Y 14.1 in Vr 5.1: *vīse* (1sg. prs. ind. [!] mid.) *vō aməša spənta staōta zaōta zbāta yašta framarəta aibijarəta* → *padīram ān ašmāh amahrspandān*

- (16) *vīsāi vā aməša spəntā staōtā zaōtā zbātā yaštā framarətā aibijarətā*  
 ‘I will make myself available, O Aməša Spəntas, to serve as your praiser, pourer (of libations), invoker, sacrificer, reciter (and) welcomer.’ Y 14.1
- (17) *padīram az ašmāh amahrspandān stāyišn zōdīh xwānišn yaštārīh franāmišn abar-gīrišnīh ... [ōh kunam]*  
 ‘I accept from you, O Amahrspands, the task of praising, the task of libating, the task of calling, the task of sacrificing, the task of venerating, the task of sacrificing, the task of professing (the *dēn*), the task of appropriating (you for us) ... [thus I will do it].’ PY 14.1

In contrast to the priests’ formal acceptance of their priestly roles in Vr 3—see (6)–(9), the MP exegetes possibly did not regard the utterance in (16) as a performative in the strict sense, that is, one that in itself constitutes a ritual action integral to the further progress of the ceremony. As we have seen, the 1<sup>st</sup> person statements in Vr 3 effect the priests’ investiture implying certain priestly roles to be held throughout the subsequent stages of the ceremony. Y 14.1, rather than representing a performative, may be understood as a general statement of the Zōd’s commitment to some of the concrete tasks that he is expected to fulfil at specific later stages of the ceremony. The comment *ōh kunam* ‘thus I will do it’ at the end of (12) indicates that this is precisely how the MP exegetes interpreted the passage.<sup>60</sup> Tasks mentioned in Y 14.1 that can be linked to specific upcoming sections of the ceremony include the task of acting as a *staōtar*- ‘singer of praise songs’ (MP *stōdīh*), which points to the recitation of the Old Avesta in Y 28–54.1; the task of acting as a *zaōtar*- ‘pourer’ (MP *zōdīh*),<sup>61</sup> which anticipates the libations performed during the Āb-Zōhr section of the liturgy (Y 63–68); and the task of acting as a *yaštār*- ‘sacrificer’ (MP *yaštārīh*), which points to the animal sacrifice that was formerly performed during Y 34–58. The term *framərətār*- ‘the one who recites’ (see Bartholomae 1904:

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*stāyišn ud zōdīh ud xwānišn ud yazišn frāz-ōšmurišnīh ud abar-rasišnīh*. A similar sequence occurs in Yt 3.1 (König 2016: 248–251), but for this Yašt only a late, secondary MP version is preserved.

**60** Here and elsewhere in this article, I assume that the MP translation was made based on roughly the same interpretation of the Av. text as that which emerges from the added comments. This is admittedly an oversimplification and there are certainly also instances where this is not the case, especially since the commentary layer of the Zand texts sometimes explicitly adduces alternative interpretive views; cf. also the discussion of (15) above. By and large, however, it seems fair to assume that the translation originates from the same interpretive tradition as the added comments. The commentary layer also tends to show more recent linguistic features than the translation (e.g., an increased use of *be* as a verbal particle marking the completion of an action), but this merely points to a more recent canonisation of the commentary rather than to a generally more recent age of its content.

**61** As against *zōdīh* ‘Zōd-ship, role of the Zōd’ in (9).

114f. on the verb *fra-mar-*) perhaps specifically refers to the ‘reciter of litanies’ (thus cautiously Tremblay 2016a: 23). At the stage of Y 14, several litanies are still left to be recited in the remainder of the ceremony, so that the appearance of the Av. term *framarətar-* in the list could likewise be considered structurally meaningful. Whereas the etymologising rendering with MP *frāz-ōšmurišnih* in the parallel passage Vr 5.1 approaches the same notion as the Av. term, that with *franāmišn* ‘act of professing’ in Y 14.1 seems rather to refer to the recitation of the Frauuarānē, a recurring set of formulas arranged around the anchor Av. *frauuarānē* ‘I shall make my choice’ from the verb *fra-var-*, which is regularly translated with the MP verb *franām-* ‘to profess’.<sup>62</sup> Even this unexpected rendering can be seen as structurally meaningful in the context of the list, however, given that several instances of the Frauuarānē formula are still left to be recited at the stage of Y 14. The appearance of the two remaining terms, Av. *zbātar-* ‘invoker, the one inviting’ (MP *xwānišn* ‘calling’) and *aibijarətar-* ‘welcomer’ (MP *abar-girišnih* ‘appropriation’)<sup>63</sup> in the list of Y 14.1 is more difficult to explain. Unless *zbātar-* points to the upcoming task of inviting the Aməša Spəntas to the ritual (*aməšə spəntā ... ā-zbāiia*) shortly after in Y 15.1, *zbātar-* and *aibijarətar-* are probably best explained as traditional priestly epithets that came to be included in the list of Y 14.1 without pointing forward to any specific upcoming task in the ritual.<sup>64</sup>

Another set of two Av. performatives that do not seem to have been interpreted as such by the MP exegetes is given in (18), followed by their MP translation in (19).

- (18) *aibi.gairiia daiθē vīspā humatācā hūxtācā huuarštācā paiti.riciia daiθē vīspā dušmatācā dužuxtācā dužuuarštācā*  
**‘I (herewith) declare** all my<sup>65</sup> good thoughts and good words and good actions as such that are to be welcomed (by the deities). **I (herewith)**

<sup>62</sup> The translator of Y 14.1 apparently identified or confused the Av. verb *fra-mar-* (contained in the agent noun *fra-mərə-tar-*) with *fra-var-*.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Zeini 2020: 18f. on the meaning of *abar-griftār* ‘appropriator’, which renders Av. *aibi-jarətar-* ‘welcomer’ in the Pahlavi Yasna Haptanḥāiti (Y 35.1). The Yasna Haptanḥāiti has probably provided the model for Y 14.1, both on the level of the Av. text and on that of its MP translation.

<sup>64</sup> Note in this context the formulaic triplet *staōmi zbāiemi ufiemi* ‘I praise, I invoke, I sing to’ (Y 17.19 = GY 17.18 etc.), the second member of which could justify a designation of an officiating priest as *zbātar-*. Note also that *aibijarətar-* anchors Y 14.1 in the tradition of the Yasna Haptanḥāiti (see fn. 63), whereas *staōtar-* and *zbātar-* establish a link between Y 14.1 and a stanza from the Gāθās (Y 49.12). Hence, the inclusion of these terms in the list of priestly tasks in Y 14.1 (and Vr 5.1) may be an effect of the aim observable in the post-OAv. sections of the long liturgy to harmonise the originally distinct traditions of the Yasna Haptanḥāiti on the one hand and the Gāθās on the other hand; on this aim, see most recently Kellens & Redard 2021: 16f.

<sup>65</sup> The agent’s possessor status with regard to the direct objects in the sentence is implied by the middle inflection of *daiθē*; cf. Kellens 2004: 287.

**declare** all my bad thoughts and bad words and bad actions as such that are to be ignored (by the deities).’ Y 0.6 = GY 0.4

- (19) *bē-gīrišnih daham harwisp humat ud hūxt ud huwaršt [kū kirbag kunam] bē-hilišnih daham harwisp dušmat ud dušhūxt ud dušhuwaršt [kū wināh nē kunam]*

‘**I (generally) assign** to the status of having to be welcomed good thoughts and good words and good actions [i.e., I do good works]. **I (generally) assign** to the status of having to be abandoned bad thoughts and bad words and bad actions [i.e., I do not commit sins].’ PY 0.6

In the context of the Av. liturgies, this passage forms part of a recurring section of text in which the priests formally declare their choices regarding the features of the ritual, or part of the ritual, that is about to be performed (the above-mentioned Frauuarānē section).<sup>66</sup> By uttering the formulas of (18), they preemptively declare only their well-performed ritual activities (‘good thoughts, words, actions’) as such that are to be heeded by the deities, whereas all errors that might occur in the process (‘bad thoughts, words, actions’) are declared as such to be ignored.<sup>67</sup> In their function as integral steps of the overall ritual procedure, these declarations constitute performative utterances no less than those in (6) and (8). A rendering of Av. *daiθē* (1sg. prs. ind. middle) ‘I (herewith) declare’ with a MP pret. (virtual *\*-m dād*) instead of the attested prs. *daham* would therefore seem conceivable if not expected. However, the added explanatory comments indicate that the Av. liturgical performatives in (18), rather than being understood as momentary steps in the tightly regulated ritual procedure, were reinterpreted by the MP tradition as statements about a general attitude of the speaker, with certain moral or ethical connotations. Presuming that the interpretation emerging from the comments also underlies the work of the translator, this would mean that the MP renderings of the Av. sentences in (18) should not to be taken as examples of MP performative utterances at all.

<sup>66</sup> As shown by the related Vedic ritual tradition, the “declaration of ritual choices” (concerning various parameters such as the overall aim of the ritual, the deity at whom it is directed, the time of its performance, or the selection of the participating priests and the sacrificial victim) already constituted an obligatory stage in the ritual *cursus* of the Proto-Indo-Iranian precursor of the Av. long liturgy; cf. Tremblay 2016b: 34.

<sup>67</sup> For this interpretation of the Avestan passage, see Kellens 2004: 286–288.



## 6.2 Likely examples of the performative present in the Zand

Despite examples such as (18)–(19), not all renderings of Av. performatives with MP presents can be explained away with reference to their possible non-performative interpretation on the part of the MP exegetes. This is illustrated by example (20),<sup>68</sup> taken from the beginning of a litany at the outset of the Av. long liturgy. Here, we may assume that at least the first of the two Av. verbs *niuuāēdaiemi* ‘I announce’ and *haṅkārāiemi* ‘I (begin to?) celebrate’<sup>69</sup> was interpreted by the MP exegetes as a performative. This is suggested by the explanatory comment added to the translation, which links the verb *niuuāēdaiemi* to the non-physical, punctual (telic) act of beginning the ritual (*bun*<sup>70</sup> *kunam* ‘I begin’). Nevertheless, *niuuāēdaiemi* is not rendered with a pret. (virtual *\*-m niwēyēnīd*) but with the prs. *niwēyēnam*.

- (20) *niuuāēdaiemi haṅkārāiemi daṅušō ahurahe mazdā ...*  
**‘I (herewith) announce and (begin to?) celebrate** (the sacrifice) belonging to the creator Ahura Mazdā ...’ Y 1.1
- (21) *niwēyēnam hangirdēnam [ō ēn yazišn; be niwēyēnam kū bun kunam; hangirdēnam kū-š sar be kunam] dādār ī Ohrmazd ...*  
**‘I (herewith) announce and I will (later on) complete** (the sacrifice) [I announce (Ohrmazd) to this sacrifice: i.e., I begin (it); I will complete (it): i.e., I will finish it] (to) the creator Ohrmazd ...’ PY 1.1

The second verb in the Av. text of (20)–(21), *haṅkārāiemi*, probably should be left out of consideration in the context of the present discussion, because the MP exegetes do not seem to have grasped its likely original meaning ‘I celebrate’ (see fn. 69) correctly. Instead, they made an understandable connection between the

**68** The passage launches an extended litany of parallel formulas that successively introduce a long series of divine beings, beginning with Ahura Mazdā. On the structure and function of this litany, see Kellens 1996, 2006 and 2015.

**69** This interpretation of the form *haṅkārāiemi* is based on its assignation to the root <sup>2</sup>*kar-* ‘to celebrate’ (Kellens 1995: 15; Tremblay 2007: 758). Since Av. <sup>2</sup>*kar-* is indeed known to have formed a present *kārāia-*, this derivation seems to find better support from within Avestan than the explanation as a denominative derived from an unattested noun *\*hamkāra-* corresponding to Skt. *saṃskāra-* ‘arrangement’ (Kellens 2006: 11). The latter derivation would yield a translation with ‘I organise’ or similar.

**70** In the context of the ZMP meta-ritual literature, the term *bun*, literally ‘foundation’, commonly occurs in the meaning ‘beginning’. For a random example, cf. the ritual direction at the beginning of the first *fragard* (section) of the Vidēvdād in ms. 4010 (Cantera 2016: 56): *zōd fragard bun kirdan* ‘the Zōd should begin (reciting) the *fragard*’. Also, the beginnings of individual sections of the liturgies are commonly marked in the manuscripts with indications such as *srōš drōn bun* ‘the beginning of the Srōš Drōn (i.e., Yasna 3–8)’ (cf. Redard 2021a: 84).

Av. verb and the structurally similar MP verb *hangirdēnīdan* ‘to make complete’, not unlike some modern interpreters.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, *haṅkāraīemi/hangirdēnam* is explained by the commentator as an anticipatory reference to the eventual completion of the ritual (-š *sar*<sup>72</sup> *be kunam* ‘I will finish it’) rather than as a performative utterance. More specifically, the MP exegetes may have understood *haṅkāraīemi/hangirdēnam* as expressing the priest’s commitment to indeed complete the ceremony that has been initiated.

The correlation between an Av. performative in the prs. ind. and its rendering with a MP prs. ind. is also found in several other litanies of the long liturgy. An example is the litany built around the formulaic anchor *āaṭ diš āuuāēḍaiiamahi* ‘we (herewith) dedicate (*ā-vid-*) them’ (Y 4), which effects the dedication of a series of previously mentioned ritual items (Y 4.1) to the divine beings. Here, too, the MP translator regarded the MP prs. ind. as an adequate rendering of what he must have perceived to be a performative statement in the Av. text, see examples (22) and (23).

(22) *āaṭ diš āuuāēḍaiiamahi ahurāica mazdāi sraōšāica ašiiāi amāṣaēibiiasca spəntaēibiiō ...*

‘And **we (herewith) dedicate** these (previously mentioned items) to Ahura Mazda, to Sraōša who is accompanied by Ašī, to the Amāṣa Spəntas ...’ Y 4.2

(23) *awēšān niwēyēnam [ī-m guft] Ohrmazd ud Srōš-ahlīy ud Amahrspandān ...*

‘**We (herewith) announce**<sup>73</sup> them [(the items) which I have spoken of] to Ohrmazd and Srōš-ahlīy and the Amahrspands ...’ PY 4.2

The litany of Y 4 is recited without any simultaneous ritual actions being performed (Kotwal & Boyd 1991: 95; Redard & Daruwalla 2021: 77). Like (20), (22) therefore

<sup>71</sup> I assume that MP *hangirdēnīdan* is a causative verb meaning ‘to make complete’ (MacKenzie 1971: 42) and derived from the past participle *\*hangird* of *kar-*, *kirdan* ‘to make’ + preverb *ham*. A genuine etymological connection between *hangirdēnīdan* and Av. *haṅkāraīa*- seems unlikely, since the alleged evidence for MP reflexes of the Old Iranian root *\*kar-* ‘to celebrate’ (thus Nyberg 1974: 114; implicitly also Kellens 1996: 40, with reference to MMP *hangār-* ‘to reckon, acknowledge’) remains dubious. The meaning ‘to reckon, acknowledge’ of MMP *hangār-* as well as meanings such as ‘to establish’ and ‘to count’, which have been posited for certain instances of MP *kirdan*, can be plausibly derived from the basic meaning of *\*kar-* ‘to make’.

<sup>72</sup> In principle, MP *sar* (literally ‘head’) may appear in the sense of either ‘end’ or ‘beginning’ (MacKenzie 1971: 74). However, it is, to my knowledge, consistently used in the meaning ‘end’ in ZMP meta-ritual jargon, where the noun specifically refers to the end of a segment of text. Cf., for example, Kotwal & Kreyenbroek (1995: 142), who also list some occurrences of the phrase *sar kirdan* ‘to finish’ in the Nērangestān.

<sup>73</sup> As an aside, it is worth noting that the Av. verbs *ni-vid-* as in (20) and *ā-vid-* as in (22) are not distinguished in the MP translation, both being rendered with MP *niwēyēnīdan*.

does not merely describe an ongoing ritual action in the sense of a constative. It is rather the utterance itself that effects the dedication of the ritual items to the deities, meaning that the utterance represents a performative. Other litanies that, grammatically speaking, show the same translation pattern as (20)–(21) and (22)–(23) include those centred around the phrases *āiiese yešti* ‘I bring here in a ritual fashion’ (Y 2–3, Y 22) and *ašaiia daδqmi* ‘I offer in an orderly fashion’ (Y 7, Y 66). With these, however, the performative character of the 1<sup>st</sup> person statements in question is less clear, as one could also interpret them as constatives, merely describing simultaneous ritual actions rather than representing ritual acts in themselves. The *āiiese yešti* litany of Y 2–3 initially (in Y 2.1) involves some ritual activity that could be interpreted as symbolising the “bringing here” of the items mentioned in the litany (Kotwal & Boyd 1991: 93f.; Redard & Daruwalla 2021: 74). The parallel *āiiese yešti* litany in Y 22 is likewise accompanied by a repeated ritual action that may be explained in similar terms (Peschl 2022: chapter 17). As regards the *ašaiia daδqmi* litany of Y 7, there is no accompanying ritual activity in modern practice. But the actions in the parallel Y 66 could again be interpreted as symbolising the “offering” spoken of in the text.

## 7 A functional difference between performative preterites and performative presents?

Examples such as the ones adduced in §4 and §6 suggest that both the pret. and the prs. could serve as acceptable expressions of performativity in MP. Typologically speaking, performative utterances can be expressed by a variety of tense/aspect-forms, including “simple” or “general” (that is, aspectually unmarked) present tense forms, imperfectives, progressives, perfectives, resultative perfects, futures, as well as modal and evidential forms.<sup>74</sup> Each of these types of categories possesses potential implicatures that theoretically allow for the category to be employed in performative contexts. Since these implicatures are bound to overlap to a certain degree, a single language may also employ two or more modes of expressing performativity side-by-side.<sup>75</sup> Due to the distinct prototypical functions of the forms involved, however, we do not expect such competing expressions of performativity

<sup>74</sup> For a comprehensive survey, including examples and references for each of these types, see Fortuin 2019.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, Dahl’s (2008) exemplary analysis of the multiple expressions of performativity found in Vedic Sanskrit.

to be completely synonymous.<sup>76</sup> We must therefore suspect that the choice between the pret. and prs. as markers of performative utterances in MP implied some kind of semantic or pragmatic difference.

Fortuin's (2019: 42) cross-linguistic survey of possible expressions of performativity suggests that the use of perfective categories for that purpose is typologically rare, but not without parallels (see §4.1 above). It has its logical basis in the link between performativity and the completion of an action: to qualify as a performative in the strict sense, the change of state induced by the utterance must already be completed with the completion of the utterance.<sup>77</sup> With this in mind, we may hypothesise that the MP pret. represents a pragmatically more emphatic expression of performativity than the prs., implying a strong focus on the strictly punctual nature of the event which the utterance denotes.

The performative pret. *-m padīrift* in (7) could then be paraphrased as 'I herewith perform and, at the same time, complete the act of accepting (the priestly role)'. The use of the pret.-as-perfective makes it unmistakably clear that the imagined event time does not extend beyond the time of the utterance, or in other words, that the change of state induced by the utterance already comes into full effect at the very moment of the utterance itself. Performatives like this, which denote the complete coincidence between an utterance and the punctual event it represents, may here be referred to as "strictly punctual". The use of the pret. as a marker of performativity thus draws on the same basic perfective function of this form as its use in the "case of correspondence/equivalence" in (10)–(15), and both uses could be subsumed under the label "case of coincidence" (between two events).<sup>78</sup>

Analogous interpretations also suit the performative preterites from non-Zand texts in (1)–(5) and possibly also the doubtful example (30)–(31) in Appendix 2 (§11). Examples (1) and (2) represent legal utterances with immediately binding force. As far as we know, they are strictly punctual in the sense that they do not entail any further actions or utterances to be performed in order to make them effective. Particularly telling in this respect is the statement *-m ... ō tō dād* 'I herewith give

<sup>76</sup> I thank Thomas Jügel for a helpful exchange of ideas on this matter.

<sup>77</sup> Thus, accounting for the performative use of the Vedic aor. ind., Dahl (2008: 21) states that "speech time constitutes the endpoint of a reference time interval which only comprises a minimal interval", with the result that speech time and reference time effectively coincide.

<sup>78</sup> Note that this usage of the term "case of coincidence" differs from the one found in older German-language scholarship, where "Koinzidenzfall" is used in ways that are more or less synonymous with English "performative utterance". With "case of coincidence" as such being a helpful term, I propose to apply it to a mere subset of performative utterances, namely those with strictly punctual time reference, while simultaneously extending its scope also to situations when two external punctual events are depicted as coinciding.

you' in (1). Equalling a legal act, the statement becomes legally binding from the moment of its utterance. Beyond this, however, it does not have any further connection to, or direct impact on, the immediate present at speech time, because its consequences will only unfold following the death of the donor (Macuch 1981: 140, 180f.).

The performative preterites in (3) and (4) are intended to mark the very beginning and the very end of a hymn, respectively, which by definition makes them represent strictly punctual events. In the case of the performative pret. in a healing spell in (5), and especially in the possible example of a malediction in (31), strict punctuality cannot be completely ascertained, as one could think of some associated actions or gestures whose performance is required to make the spell fully effective and whose duration extends beyond speech time. However, it still seems plausible that, like legal utterances, such spells were thought to come into effect at the very moment of their utterance.

Contrasting with the performative pret., the use of the MP prs. in the examples discussed in §6.2 perhaps leaves open the possibility that the performative in question carries what Mumm (1995: 180) describes as “extended present” time reference. According to Mumm, this type of time reference is in fact more commonly found with performatives than strict punctuality (my translation from Mumm’s German):

In most cases, however, the present action denoted by the performative utterance comprises more than the mere uttering of the sentence. For example, a benediction may consist of the mere utterance ‘I hereby bless you’. But often we expect it to be accompanied by some gesture or by some additional sentences. From a purely quantitative perspective, the present time denoted by the utterance hence extends beyond the amount of time required for performing the utterance.

And further (p. 181):

These additional sentences, which are co-denoted by the self-referential [i.e., performative] sentence, are [...] temporally prior or posterior with regard to the latter. Nevertheless, they are denoted by the same verb by which the self-referential sentence refers to itself. Hence, the priority or posteriority of the co-denoted sentences cannot be expressed in the context of the performative sentence but is merged into its extended present.

MP performative presents such as the ones seen in (21) and (23) would thus signify events that are conceived of as at least potentially extending somewhat beyond the duration of the utterance, or else they are simply neutral regarding the distinction between strict punctuality and extended present time reference.<sup>79</sup> The use of the

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<sup>79</sup> The potential extended present time reference of the MP performative prs. may in some way be linked to the possible future tense reading of the present.

pret., by contrast, would emphatically exclude any kind of extension of the event time beyond the completion of the utterance.

In both (20)–(21) and (22)–(23), an extended present time reference of the performatives in question seems indeed plausible. Ex. (20) forms part of an elaborate litany, whose component segments are introduced by the formulaic anchor *niuuāēdaiiemi haṅkārāiemi* ‘I (herewith) introduce and (begin to?) celebrate’. In effect, this litany successively introduces a long series of divine beings, referring to them as those at which the present ceremony is directed. The reason why the verb *niuuāēdaiiemi* in (20) and in all the subsequent parallel segments of the litany carries extended present time reference may be the fact that all of the segments speak of one and the same ceremony. In a sense, the entire litany constitutes one single extended performative statement that introduces the ceremony and does so with regard to all the divine beings concerned. Within the litany, each instantiation of the Av. formulaic anchor *niuuāēdaiiemi haṅkārāiemi* (and, we may assume, also of its MP translation) carries extended present time reference insofar as it co-refers also to the remaining segments of the litany. The same rationale can be applied to the *āuuāēdaiimahī*-litany exemplified by (22), which follows the same kind of overarching structure.

Another performative prs. with likely extended present time reference is the phrase *staōmi aṣəm* ‘I (herewith) praise order’ → MP *stāyam ahlāyih* ‘I (herewith) praise righteousness’ in (10). The phrase may itself be understood as a performative, that is, its utterance represents a ‘praising of order/righteousness’ in itself. Within the context of the liturgy, however, the phrase is followed by the Aṣəm Vohū formula, as noted in the discussion of (10) above. This formula can itself be understood as a ‘praise of order’ and hence participates in the extended present time reference of *staōmi aṣəm*.

The schematic depiction in Figure 1 summarises the hypothesis developed in the present section.

## 8 Summary

I conclude with a short summary of the major points made in this article, whose main objective was to examine a possible correlation between the phenomenon of Av.-MP tense mismatches in the Zand with the optional non-temporal, perfective reading of the MP pret. that has previously been noticed in some non-Zand texts. Following some initial considerations on the value of the Zand for the linguistic analysis of the MP language (§2), I first pointed out that most tense mismatches between the Av. base text and its MP translation should in fact be accounted for on

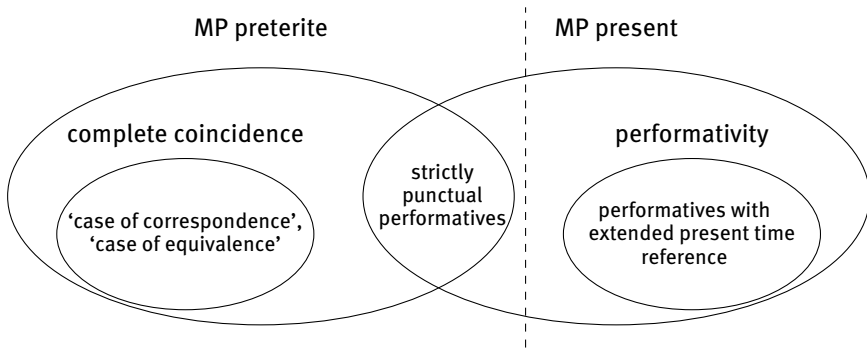


Fig. 1: Coincidence and performativity and their MP modes of expression

the level of textual interpretation if not even discarded on text-critical grounds (§3). However, some rare instances remain that do indeed invite an aspectual interpretation of their seemingly unexpected use of the pret. without past time reference (§§4–5). In particular, I analysed a set of MP preterites in the “installation of the priestly college” (Vr 3) that seem to be deliberately used for rendering Av. performative utterances, thus matching the performative use of the pret. as previously noticed in non-Zand material (§4). A second context in which a non-preterital use of the MP pret.-as-perfective can be observed in the Zand is in the description of situations that involve a precise coincidence between two timeless punctual events (“case of equivalence/correspondence”, §5). Examples from the Zand such as the ones discussed in §4–5 of this article are in accord with certain aspectual features of the pret. that have previously been posited both for early Sasanian MP (IMP, early MMP) and for late (Z)MP. This seems to confirm that the latent aspectual (perfective) character of the pret. represents an element of continuity in the centuries-long history of MP. The rarity of convincing examples that I have so far encountered in the Zand is, to some extent, counterbalanced by the weight these examples gain from the fact that they reflect conscious deviations from mechanical translation patterns on the part of the translators.

Despite the availability of the “performative pret.” as described in §4, the majority of liturgical performatives in the Avesta are, however, rendered with the MP prs. ind. (§6). To account for the co-occurrence of performative preterites and performative presents in MP, I proposed to introduce a distinction between strictly punctual performatives on the one hand, and those which imply an extended present time reference on the other hand (§7). According to this hypothesis, the use of the pret., which emphasises the immediate completion of the performative event, is reserved for performatives of the former type. By contrast, performative

utterances that imply an extended present time reference, or at least do not exclude it, are commonly denoted by the MP prs. indicative.

In the course of the article, the discussion has repeatedly touched on the issue of how to deal with the Zand as a source for the linguistic study of MP, and, conversely, how to apply our knowledge of natural MP grammar to the interpretation of the Zand. Generally speaking, the collective observations shared in this article support the view that, if evaluated carefully, the older Zand texts, despite their obvious limitations, have a certain potential to contribute valuable data to the linguistic analysis of MP. In particular, data from the Zand may and should be used to substantiate conclusions that also find independent support in non-Zand texts. Conversely, the passages discussed in this article show that taking seriously the MP translators' precise choice of verb forms may sometimes enhance our understanding of the Zand.

## 9 A note on data

The data presented in this article was gained from scanning through a number of Zand texts with the aim of identifying any notable aspectually motivated uses of MP tense-aspect forms in the Zand. Taken into account were major portions of the Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad (through a file containing my own interlinear arrangement of the texts), the Hērbedestān and Nērangestān (through Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 1992; 1995; 2003; 2009), as well as Vidēvdād 1–8 (using Cantera's unpublished glossary as a key), 10–15 (through Andrés-Toledo 2016), and 19 (through Redard 2010). Further observations made on the basis of this data will be published in an article with the working title "The development of the Middle Persian *stay*-perfect" in the near future.

I would like to add an explicit note on the reasons why, at this stage, I have not attempted to offer a statistical corroboration of the points made in this article (e.g., by offering a quantitative juxtaposition of aspectually motivated vs. aspectually neutral uses of pret. forms in the Zand corpus): (1) given the formulaic and often repetitive nature of the Av. corpus, and thereby of its MP translation, the value of statistical assertions regarding the relative number of occurrences of one translation pattern over another is bound to be very limited; (2) a morphologically tagged digital corpus of Zand texts, as would be required for conducting such statistical evaluations with a reasonable amount of effort, does not yet exist. It is, however, currently being built in the context of the DFG-funded project "Zoroastrian Middle Persian: Corpus and Dictionary" (Bochum/Berlin/Cologne), so that a more system-



atic re-evaluation of the questions raised in this article may become viable at some point in the future.

## 10 Appendix 1. Accounting for Av.-MP tense mismatches in the Zand

As pointed out in §3 of this article, a large majority of apparent tense mismatches between Av. verb forms and their MP translations need to be accounted for in ways other than by assuming a non-temporal, purely aspectual use of the respective MP forms. This appendix is meant to illustrate some different kinds of accounts that alternately apply in such cases.

### 10.1 Content-driven emendations

In the case of some mismatches, the translator apparently tried to smooth out an otherwise confusing segment of MP text by deliberately deviating from the expected translation pattern. In example (24)–(25), Zaraθuštra is asked by an unnamed interlocutor where it is that he, Zaraθuštra, takes the “stones” (i.e., the Ahuna Vairiia formula, see Yt 17.20) that he received from Ahura Mazdā as a weapon for battling the Evil Spirit.<sup>80</sup>

- (24) *frašūsataḡ zaraθuštrō ... asānō zasta dražimnō katō.masanḡhō hənḡti ašauua zaraθuštrō viṇdəmnnō daθušō ahurāi mazdāi; kuua hē dražaha aṅhā zəmō yaḡ paḡanaiiā skarənaiiā dūraēpāraiīā; darəjiia paīti zbarahi nmānahe pourušāspahe*

‘Zaraθuštra approached ..., grasping with his hand stones of the size of a house, righteous Zaraθuštra, obtaining them from the creator Ahura Mazdā. “Where on this broad, round earth with far-reaching boundaries **do you take** (them) for his sake (i.e., for Ahura Mazdā)?” “To the (river) Darəji, at the river bend next to the house of Pourušāspa.” V 19.4

- (25) *frāz raft zardušt ... u-š sang pad dast dāšt ī kadaḡ-masāy būd ahlaw zardušt [sag ī sagēn; ast kē mēnōy \*ī yatāhūwairyō ḡōwēd] kē-š windīd az dādar*

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<sup>80</sup> Having been revealed to Zaraθuštra by Ahura Mazdā in primordial times, the Ahuna Vairiia is considered to be the most powerful of all the Av. sacred formulas (*maqθra*-). It is repeated numerous times throughout the Av. liturgies.

*Ohrmazd kū ōy dāšt pad ēn zamīg<sup>81</sup> \*ī pahn ī gird ī dūrwidarg pad darjīg zibāl andar mān ī Pōrušāsp*

‘Zardušt approached ... and righteous Zardušt held in his hand a stone the size of a house [a stony stone; there is (a commentator) who says: “(it is) the spirit of the Yaθā-Ahū-Vairiīō (or Ahuna Vairiia) formula”],<sup>82</sup> (a stone) which he had obtained from the creator Ohrmazd so that he (i.e., Zardušt) **held/would hold** it (MP *ōy*, i.e. the stone) on this broad, round earth with far-reaching boundaries, at the swift (river) Darəjīg,<sup>83</sup> in the house of Pōrušāsp.’

PV 19.4

Examples like this tell us more about the MP exegetes’ multi-faceted translation technique than about the linguistic features of the MP verbal system. The Av. text of the passage is riddled with problems of interpretation and grammar, which had to be tacitly dealt with for the sake of providing the English translation above (for particulars, see Redard 2021b: 3). Among them is the sudden shift from a past tense narrative featuring Zaraθuštra in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person to a direct address of Zaraθuštra in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person. Against this background, the rendering of the Av. 2sg. prs. ind. *dražahe* ‘you take’ with the MP 3sg. pret. *dāšt* ‘(he) held’ is not at all surprising. The MP translator, who must have similarly wrestled with this Av. passage as we modern interpreters do, has deliberately smoothed out the text by aligning the 2<sup>nd</sup> person address to Zaraθuštra with the surrounding 3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative. The use of a pret. form in a *kū*-clause, which I here interpret as a purpose or result clause, is admittedly unusual. In the older MP texts, we normally expect verbs in purpose and result clauses to appear in the prs. subj., whereas late MP instead shows the prs. ind. in this context (Josephson 2013: 60f., 69). However, it is conceivable that, in the specific case when both the main clause and the *kū*-clause

**81** The expected *zamīg* (for Av. *zəmə* ‘earth’) is omitted in MSS. 4600 and 4610 but preserved in the interlinear Pahlavi version contained in the liturgical Vidēvdād MS. 4000.

**82** In the Zoroastrian cosmology of the Pahlavi works, “every material object, as well as every intellectual concept, seems to be represented by a *mēnōg* [i.e., *mēnōy*] prototype or to have a *mēnōg* counterpart” (Shaked 1971: 76). As illustrated by Shaked (p. 76, fn. 56), this “spiritual counterpart” is sometimes denoted by expressions of the type “*mēnōy* of X”, yielding expressions such as “spirit of the wind”, “spirit of the Gāθās” or “spirit of creation”. The “spirit of the Yaθā-Ahū-Vairiīā formula” mentioned in V 19.4 seems to represent the same kind of concept: the “stones” spoken of in the text are explained by the commentator as referring to the “spiritual” counterpart of the Ahuna Vairiia formula. This implies that, according to the commentator, the seemingly physical events described in V 19.4 are in fact a figurative representation of mythical events that are thought to have taken place in the *mēnōy* plane of existence. The concept of a “spirit of the Yaθā-Ahū-Vairiīā formula” recurs in Bd 1.50.

**83** Cf. Grenet 2002: 201.

have past time reference, the use of the pret. in the *kū*-clause is in fact grammatical. Further research on this question is needed.

## 10.2 Content-driven re-interpretations

Other tense mismatches in the Zand seem to be due not so much to “content-driven emendations” as described in §10.1, but to minor, and exegetically plausible, temporal-aspectual re-interpretations of the Av. verb forms in question. For example, consider the renderings of the Av. verb forms *dərətā* and *yaōgəṭ* in (26)–(27).

- (26) *taṭ 9βā pərəsā ərəš mōi vaōcā ahurā | kasnā dərətā zəmcā adē nabāsc | auuapastōiš kē apō uruuarāscā | kē vātāi duuq̄nmaibiāscā yaōgəṭ āsū*

‘This I ask you, tell me correctly, Lord: who **fixed** both the earth below and the sky from falling down? Who (fixed) the waters and plants? Who **yoked** the two swift (horses) to the wind and to the clouds?’ Y 44.4

- (27) *ān ī az tō pūrsēm rāst man gōwē Ohrmazd | kē dārēd zamīg pad adārišnih [kū-š dāštār-ēw ī gētīy nēst] | abē-ōbadišn<sup>84</sup> [ay ēn dānēm kū bē nē ōbadēd] kē āb ud urwar [dād] | az kē ka wād abr āyōzēd tēz [ō xwēškārih]*

‘This I ask you, tell me correctly, O Ohrmazd: who **holds** the earth in the state of not-being-held [i.e., it does not have a holder belonging to the material (*gētīy*) world] (and) without falling-down [that is to say, I/we know this: it does not fall down]. Who [created] water and plants? By whom (is it achieved) when the wind **yokes** the clouds (making them go) swift [to (their) duty]?’ PY 44.4

Descriptively, the MP rendering of the stanza displays two noteworthy tense mismatches. The aor. *dərətā* ‘has fixed’ (Old Iranian \**dar-* ‘to fix’) most certainly carries past tense value in the Av. text of Y 44, which is, broadly speaking, concerned with Ahura Mazda’s primordial cosmogonic activities. In the MP version, by contrast, it is rendered with the prs. ind. *dārēd* ‘holds’, which derives from the Old Iranian imperfective stem of the same root (\**dāraja-*). Despite this slight shift in perspective, however, the translation makes good sense on its own and may even be considered valid in relation to its Av. source: whereas the Av. text places the focus on the past action, the MP version refers to a following result state that continues into the present. Similarly, the Av. aor. inj. *yaōgəṭ* ‘yoked, has yoked’ is rendered with the MP prs. ind. *āyōzēd* ‘yokes’. In its Av. cosmogonical context,

<sup>84</sup> Cf. ms. 510 (‘-BR’\_’wptšn’), with (BR’) seemingly deleted. Mss. 400, 410 and 500 have (yb\_BR’\_’wptšn’), with (‘wptšn’) written over an illegible deleted word in ms. 500.

the statement in Y 44.4 depicts the yoking of horses to the clouds as part of Ahura Mazda's primordial creative activity. If one was to argue that the translator aimed to express the exact same idea, one might be tempted to conclude that *āyōzēd* in the translation does not function as a prs., but as an ipf. similar to the narrative ipf. of IMP.<sup>85</sup> After all, however, it is probably a more straightforward assumption that the translator simply interpreted the stanza outside of its original cosmogonic context. In this case, he may have taken the reference to the yoking of the clouds as a gnomic statement denoting a recurring, timeless event, or as one that has been regularly repeated from its first performance in primordial times up until the present day. Be that as it may, with such convenient alternative explanations of *dārēd* and *āyōzēd* available, the apparent Av.-MP tense mismatches in (26)–(27) should be left out of consideration when considering a possible past tense (“ipf.”) use of the MP present.

### 10.3 Recognition of non-preterital uses of the Av. prs. injunctive

Further mismatches of the type “Av. inj. → MP prs.” find an explanation if one assumes (i) that the YAv. prs. inj., whose synchronic core function is that of marking a simple past, peripherally also maintained its older function as a verbal category underspecified for tense and used for making gnomic statements (see fn. 55 above); and (ii) that the translators were either immediately aware of this peripheral function, or they recognised that, for some reason, certain instances of the Av. inj. excluded a preterital reading.

This applies to several items on the list of mismatches given by Ferrer-Losilla (2013: 329). For example, the 3sg. inj. prs. *fraiiat* in V 3.1 evidently does not carry past time reference, but serves to make a timeless, “gnomic” assertion. It is therefore only logical that the translator chose to render it with a MP prs. (*franāmēd*), which covers the same semantics. Similar explanations apply to V 1.14 *jasən* → *rasēnd* and, possibly, to V 3.24 *saēta* → *nibayēd*. For N 85.15 *fraiiat* → <sup>†</sup>*franāmēd*, read *franāmād* (cf. Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 2009: 90). Here, too, the value of the Av. prs. inj. *fraiiat* is best explained as timeless. With regard to OAv., where the frequent timeless value of the prs. (and aor.) inj. is widely accepted, it can likewise be observed that timeless inj. forms were sometimes rendered with MP prs. forms. This accounts for the examples Y 32.14 *vīsəntā* → *padīrēnd* and Y 46.13 *frādaṭ* →

<sup>85</sup> As Thomas Jügel reminds me, (‘ywcyt), if read as *āyōzēd*, could in theory even represent an augmented ipf. of the kind attested in IMP. However, given that non-preverbated \**yōxtan* does not seem to be attested in MP, it is more likely that the initial (‘) here spells the preverb *ā-* as in other MP verbs.

*frāy dahēd*. The 1sg. inj. prs. *bərəjaēm* in V 7.52 seems to carry subj. value ('I will welcome'), as is implied by the preceding 3pl. subj. *bərəjiiānte* 'they will welcome' and by the context as a whole, which "describes the good fate of the soul of a deceased person who has earned merit by digging away earth from the ground (*daxma-*) where human corpses have been deposited" (Hintze 2007: 52). Whatever the grammatical justification for the use of the prs. inj. in this Av. passage may be, the rendering with the MP 1sg. prs. ind. *burzam* (MS. 4610 ⟨blcm⟩, MS. 4000 ⟨bwlcm⟩), perhaps replacing an earlier 1sg. prs. subj. *\*burzān* (\*bwlc'n), seems to reflect the translator's recognition of the non-preterital value of *bərəjaēm*.

## 10.4 Pseudo-etymology

Yet another type of mismatch may be exemplified by the rendering of the Av. present forms *uskənti* 'they dig up' (V 3.12) and *vikaṅti* 'they tear down' (V 3.13; V 3.22) by the MP preterites *ul kand* ⟨L'L' HPLWNt⟩ and *bē kand* ⟨BR' HPLWNt⟩, respectively. These mismatches are probably due to the fact that the MP pret. *kand* is intriguingly similar to Av. *-kaṅti* with regard to its phonetic shape, which seems to have led the translator to choose the MP pret. rather than a prs. form.<sup>86</sup> Occasionally, this kind of blindly imitative translational approach has won out over the more common approach that combines mechanic translation patterns of Av. verb forms with deliberate content-induced deviations from those patterns (see §2.3 above).

## 10.5 Text-critical problems

For this case, consider examples (28)–(29) from the Vidēvdād. According to one way of reading the MP text (Cantera 1998: 59), the Av. 1sg. inj. (i.e., simple past) *frabarəm* 'I brought' is rendered with a MP 1sg. prs. ind. *frāz baram* 'I bring'. In light of this mismatch, one is tempted to consider the possibility that the prs. here functions as an ipf. of the type known from IMP.

<sup>86</sup> As Thomas Jügel reminds me, it is also conceivable that *kand* is a by-form of the 3sg. prs. *kanēd*, of the type seen in forms such as *kund* and *bard* besides *kunēd*, *barēd* (see Klingenschmitt 2000: 210f.). I am not aware of any unambiguous attestations of this type of 3sg. prs. for the verb *kan-*, which, however, does not exclude its former existence.

Table 2: Transmission of V 2.6 *bar...* (YBLWN-...)

4600 group		4610 group	
MS. 4600 (1323 CE)	-t (supplied)	MS. 4610 (1324 CE)	section non-extant
MS. 4680 (ca. 1830 CE)	-tn' (or -t')	MS. 4615 (1588 CE)	-x <sub>2</sub>
MS. 4700 (1839/1841 CE)	-tn' (or -t')	MS. 4670 (1815 CE)	-ym
MS. 4710 (no date)	-t' (added sec.m.)	MS. 4711 (no date)	-x <sub>2</sub>
MS. 4713 (no date)	-x <sub>2</sub>	MS. 4712 (no date)	-t'
		MS. 4715 (no date)	-x <sub>2</sub>

(28) *āaṭ hē zaiia frabaram azəm yō ahurō mazdā suβraṃ zaranaēnīm aštraṃca zarañiiō.paēsīm*

‘Then I, O Ahura Mazda, **brought** forth to him two tools: a golden horn<sup>87</sup> and a gold-coloured whip.’ V 2.6

(29) *ēg ō ōy zay frāz baram (?) man kē Ohrmazd ham sūrāgōmand zarrēn ud aštar-iz zarrēn-pēsīd*

‘Then, O Ohrmazd, I **bring/brought (?) forth** to him as tools a golden (musical instrument) with holes and a whip adorned with gold [...].’ PV 2.6

More precisely, one might consider the option that the prs.-as-ipf. here indicates that the past event described by the passage was one of extended duration, implying a successive rather than simultaneous bringing of the two tools mentioned. Upon closer inspection, however, the transmission of the MP form in question is quite inconclusive, as shown by the conspectus of MS. readings in Table 2.

In one of the main witnesses of the Pahlavi Vidēvdād, MS. 4610 (1324 CE), V 2 is missing altogether. In the second main witness, MS. 4600 (1323 CE), the relevant section has been supplied by a later hand. All the remaining manuscripts depend on one of these two main witnesses, and either group provides internally conflicting evidence that overall points to either ⟨-t⟩ (*frāz burd*) or ⟨-x<sub>2</sub>⟩ as the original reading. The primary value of the sign ⟨-x<sub>2</sub>⟩ is a matter of debate. Jamasp (1907) in his edition of the Pahlavi Vidēvdād further refers to certain “other” manuscripts that give ⟨-x<sub>1</sub>⟩, another sign of ambiguous value.<sup>88</sup> Cantera (1998: 464 fn. 9) rejects the reading *frāz burd* (pl’c YBLWNt) (as favoured by the previous editors Sanjana 1895

<sup>87</sup> On the disputed meanings of Av. *suβrā*-, see Sims-Williams 2000. Cantera (1998: 60f.) argues for “trompa” being the meaning not only of the MP, but also of the Avestan word.

<sup>88</sup> It is clear that, at the late stages of the transmission that are represented by our manuscripts, ⟨-x<sub>1</sub>⟩ and ⟨-x<sub>2</sub>⟩ served as cover symbols that were used to reflect a variety of present endings, including the 2sg. (ind. and imp.-opt. in -ē), the 3sg. (-ēd) and the 3pl. (-ēnd), but also the past stem in -t/d and the infinitive in -tan. More disputable is the original distribution of the two signs and the ligatures they ultimately represent. Evidence from the MP papyri suggests that a ligature

and Jamasp 1907 and taken up again by Moazami 2014), pointing to the lack of an enclitic pronoun *-m* after *ēg*. However, the following phrase *man kē Ohrmazd ham* is likely to have sufficed as an expression of the agent in the eyes of the translator. Indeed, as Thomas Jügel points out to me, the rightward dislocation of the independent personal pronoun even represents the expected means of focussing a logical subject. As a further theoretical alternative for explaining the transmission pattern of our form, Jügel points out to me the possibility that the appearance of ⟨-t⟩ in a 1sg. context is the result of a trivial misreading of ⟨-yn⟩ as ⟨-t⟩. If so, the original ⟨-yn⟩ would have represented a rare, if not unique, reflex in ZMP of the 1sg. ipf. ending *-ēn* that is otherwise attested only in the Barm-e Delak (Abnōn) inscription (Skjærvø 1997: 162; Durkin-Meisterernst 2017: 111–113). At any rate, the correct reading of the form is uncertain to a degree that no conclusions about possible non-prototypical functions of the MP prs. should be drawn from it.

A text-critical re-evaluation of the Av. and MP verb forms involved also helps to discard some of the examples in Ferrer-Losilla's (2013: 329) extended list of mismatches. In N 83.1 [N 101], read *frakāraiiēiti* instead of *frakāraiiat* (see Kotwal & Kreyenbroek 2009: 72). In PV 22.20, MP *frāz kārēd* ⟨pr'c ZLYTWNyt⟩, which renders *frakāraiiat*, should probably be read as *frāz kārīd*, assuming a neo-pret. *kārīd* besides older *kišt* (cf. NP *kārīdan* beside common *kāštan*; Steingass 1892: 1004; Dehkhoda 1998: s.v. کاردین). A pronominal agent *-š* of *frāz kārīd* is still implied following the appearance of *-š* in the previous clause.<sup>89</sup> The mismatch in FiÖ 15 (561) *jaiđiiaṭ* → ⟨zyt⟩, if the MP spelling indeed represents *zayēd*, is hard to assess due to its lack of context.

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that may be considered a precursor of ⟨-x<sub>2</sub>⟩ is to be read as ⟨-tny⟩ and was hence originally proper to the infinitive in *-tan* (Weber 1992: 21f.). In the Zoroastrian manuscript tradition, this ⟨-tny⟩ (with silent ⟨-y⟩) may also have become used for the past stem, with ⟨-tn⟩ being graphically identical to ⟨-t'⟩. Differently, Ferrer-Losilla (2013: 45 incl. fn. 137) considers the possibility that ⟨-x<sub>2</sub>⟩ may, from a palaeographical perspective, reflect the endings ⟨-ym⟩ (1sg., 1pl.) or ⟨-ynd⟩ (3pl.), so that a 1sg. reading (*-ēm*, *-om*, *-am*) would be among the readings to be originally expected for ⟨-x<sub>2</sub>⟩. Incidentally, however, the one example adduced by Ferrer-Losilla to substantiate this hypothesis is our very example from V 2.6. According to Nyberg (1964: 136), the signs ⟨-x<sub>1</sub>⟩ and ⟨-x<sub>2</sub>⟩ are “never [...] substituted for the endings of the first pers. sing. and pl.”

**89** On the common phenomenon of topic-drop in MP, see Jügel 2015: 404ff.

## 11 Appendix 2. A performative preterite in a malediction?

In addition to the examples of the performative pret. in the “installation of the priestly college”, and hence in liturgical utterances (§4.4), I here include some thoughts on a passage from the Pahlavi Vidēvdād that possibly exemplifies the use of the performative pret. in a malediction (curse). Due to the uncertainties involved in its interpretation, I have preferred to put my suggested reading of the passage up for debate by placing it in an appendix, rather than incorporating it into the main body of the article. The passage discusses a situation in which a man has first impregnated a young woman and has subsequently urged her to ask an “old woman” for the plants required to perform an abortion. See examples (30) and (31).<sup>90</sup>

- (30) *aētaḍa aēša yā kaine hanqm aētaēšqm jijišāiti pərəsāiti; aēša hana +frabarāiti*<sup>91</sup> *banḥam vā šaētəm vā ynānəm vā fraspātəm vā kəmciṭ vā vitācinanqm uruuaranqm: aētahmāt puθrāt mimarəxšāy<sup>92</sup>ha; aētaḍa aēša yā kaine aētahmāt puθrāt mimarəxšāite; hauuanta aētahe šīiaōθnahe vərəziiqn nāca kainica hanāca*

‘Then this girl aims to procure them and asks an old woman. This old woman offers her *banḥa-*, *šaēta-*, *ynāna-*, *fraspāta-* or any other of the abortive plants (saying): “**By means of this**<sup>92</sup>, **try to destroy the child!**” Then, by means of this, this girl tries to destroy the child. They equally take part in this action—the man, the girl and the old woman.’ V 15.14

- (31) *ēdōn ān kē kanīg ō hqn*<sup>93</sup> *awēšān +zīwišn- +zīnēnidārān*<sup>94</sup> *hampursēd; ān kē hqn frāz barad mang ayāb šēd [ēk ān ī wištāspān ēk ān ī zarduštān] zanēd*

<sup>90</sup> Both versions of the text essentially follow Andrés-Toledo 2016: 325, with some minor modifications.

<sup>91</sup> Mss. *frabarāiti*. Since the sequence of events in V 15.14 is otherwise described in the subj. (*jijišāiti*, *pərəsāiti*, *mimarəxšāite*, *vərəziiqn*), it seems appropriate to restore a subj. form here as well. The use of the subj. throughout the Av. passage, which is not replicated in the English translation above, may be due to the hypothetical nature of the scene described.

<sup>92</sup> For occasional uses of the ablative that resemble those of the instrumental, see Bichlmeier 2011: 95.

<sup>93</sup> A Pāzand form of a MP word that is ultimately a mere transcription of the Av. word *hanā-* ‘old woman’. In the light of MP *ān kē hqn*, one may consider restoring the Av. text as *\*aēša yā hana* (cf. *aēša yā kaine* → *ān kē kanīg* in the previous sentence).

<sup>94</sup> Andrés-Toledo edits (*+zywšn<sup>1</sup> zynyt<sup>1</sup> l<sup>1</sup> n*) *+zīwišn-zīnēnidārān*, which he translates with ‘damaging life’. The nonsensical form *+zīnēnidārān* may have arisen by haplography from *zīnēnidārān*, with



[*kū andar aškomb be +ōzanēd*] *ayāb frāz-abganišnih* [*kū bē āyēd ud pas be mīrēd*] *ayāb kadār-iz-ē ān ī bē-tāzišnōmand urwar* [*dārūg-ē ud čiš-ē*] *kū pad ēd pus be (mlncynyt)*<sup>95</sup>; *ēdōn ān kē kanīg pad ān pus be murnjēnēd*; *hāwand pad awēšān kunišn-warz bawēnd mard ud kanīg ud haṇ*

‘Thus, the girl asks an old woman for those (means) damaging life. The old woman offers her *mang*, *šēd* [one (is) that of the Wištāspān, the other (is) that of the Zarduštān], “It-kills” (*zanēd*) [i.e., it kills (the child) in the womb], “Premature-emission” (*frāz-abganišnih*) [i.e., (the child) comes out and then it dies] or any other of the abortive plants [a drug or something (similar)] (saying): “**By means of this, pus be (mlncynyt).**” Thus, the girl destroys the child by that. They become equally actionable by those (actions)—the man, the girl and the old woman.’ PV 15.14

Within this passage, the segment relevant to the topic of this article is the piece of direct speech uttered by the old woman. In the Av. text, the old woman addresses the young one in the 2sg. imp. prs. middle *mimarəxšaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* of the desiderative stem *mimarəxša-* ‘to try to destroy, intend to destroy’. The expected MP rendering of an Av. 2sg. imp. (both active and middle) would be an endingless 2sg. imp. (\**murnjēn* ‘destroy!’) or a functionally equivalent 2sg. opt.-imp. in *-ē* (-yb) (\**murnjēnē*). The MP form (mlncynyt<sup>v</sup>), however one prefers to interpret the spelling of its ending (-yt), thus indicates that the translator has construed the passage somewhat differently. The evidence as to whether the translators of the older Zand texts generally recognised Av. forms in *-ṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* as imperatives is ambiguous: most instances suggest so (e.g., V 2.4 *vīsaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* → *padīr*, see Cantera 2004: 275; V 17.4 *upa.θβərəsaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* → *abar brīnē*; Y 9.2 *hunuaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* → *hun*; Y 10.5 *varədaīiaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* → *wālēnē*), but some also attest to a certain flexibility or confusion on the part of the translators regarding the correct interpretation of this ending (e.g., V 15.13 *jijišaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* → agent noun *zīwišn-zīnēnīdārān*; Vr 8.1 *maḍaiiaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* → abstract noun *mayīh* and *səṇḍaiiaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* → abstract noun *hunsandīh*). V 18.19 *snaiiaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* ‘wash (your hands)!’ → pret. *šust* (thus mss. 4600, 4610; untranslated in ms. 4000) attests the same translation pattern as here assumed for V 15.14, although in V 18.19 a performative interpretation seems impossible for contextual reasons. Against this overall background, it is conceivable that the translator of V 15.14 did not feel compelled to follow a rigid translation pattern that would have forced him to interpret *mimarəxšaṇ<sup>v</sup>ha* as a 2sg. imperative.

*zīnēnīdār* being the expected agent noun of the verb *zīnēn-*, *zīnēnīdan* ‘to damage’. I thank Thomas Jügel for directing my attention to this issue.

<sup>95</sup> Thus mss. 4600, 4000; ms. 4610 is defective.

As mentioned in §4.2, blessings and maledictions (curses) represent prototypical contexts in which performatives are expected to occur. Accordingly, if we imagine the old woman's statement to be a malediction spoken at the moment when she makes the pregnant woman eat the herbs, ⟨mlncyny't⟩ = *murnjēnīd* (3sg. pret.) could be understood as another performative illustrating the non-preterital use of the MP pret.: 'by means of this, the child shall herewith be destroyed'.<sup>96</sup>

The alternative reading of ⟨mlncyny't⟩ as *murnjēnēd* (2pl. imp.) cannot be excluded, but is certainly problematic.<sup>97</sup> It would imply that the old woman addresses both the pregnant woman and the man, although the man does not seem to physically take part in the abortion process. Indeed, one of the points made by the text is the very fact that the man's shared responsibility in the abortion does not derive from his participation in the abortion scene itself, but from his role as the original instigator of the process described. A plural address both to the pregnant woman and the man is therefore unexpected in the context. There is also no indication that the pregnant woman returns to the man to perform the abortion in his rather than in the old woman's presence. Instead, the text seems to imply that the pregnant woman consumes the abortive plant right after receiving it from the old woman.

Finally, Thomas Jügel draws my attention to a third and radically different way of reading the passage. According to this third option, *kū* would here not function as a quotative particle but as a subjunction introducing a purpose or result clause: '... so that she (i.e., the pregnant woman) would thereby destroy the child.' Upon first sight, this indeed seems to constitute a rather straightforward way of construing the MP clause, especially if one considers it in complete isolation from its Av. base text. However, this reading would imply that the translator not only reinterpreted the Av. 2sg. imp. middle form *mimarəxšəŋ'ha* (as I, too, assume), but that he also entirely disregarded the direct-speech character of the sentence in question. Although certainly not beyond the realm of possibility, one is cautious to attribute such a blatant misinterpretation of the overall structure of the passage to the rather competent translators of the Vidēvdād. Evidently, the problems affecting this passage remain complex. But the performative interpretation offered here may perhaps stimulate further discussion about it.

<sup>96</sup> Andrés-Toledo's English rendering 'thereby the child is destroyed' likewise seems to be based on a reading of ⟨mlncyny't⟩ as *murnjēnīd*, despite his transcription with *murnjēnēd*.

<sup>97</sup> By contrast, a 2pl. imp. reading of ⟨mlncyny't⟩ seems likely in the curiously similar case of V 19.1, where *murnjēnēd* renders Av. *mərəŋcaŋ'ha* 'destroy!'. Here, the Av. text addresses the demon Drūj, conceived of as a sg. entity, whereas the MP version implies an interpretation of the *drūz* as a plural collective; cf. Redard 2010: 65.

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## Abbreviations

CAB	<i>Corpus Aesticum Berolinense</i> . <a href="https://cab.geschkult.fu-berlin.de">https://cab.geschkult.fu-berlin.de</a> .
EWAia	Manfred Mayrhofer (1986–2001). <i>Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen</i> . 3 vols. Heidelberg: Winter.
MHD	<i>Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān</i> . Ed. Modi 1901; Macuch 1993.
MHDA	<i>Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān</i> . Ed. Anklesaria 1913; Macuch 1981.
NZB	Jamaspji M. JamaspAsana (1897–1913). “Nērang ī Zahr Bastan”. In: <i>The Pahlavi Texts. Contained in the Codex MK Copied in 1322 A.C. by the Scribe Mehr-Āwān Kaī-khōsrō</i> . 2 vols. Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 84.

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