



xšnaoθrahe ahurahe mazdā

Detail from above the entrance of Tehran's fire temple, 1286š/1917-18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad

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The Aramaeogram of the Copula in Zoroastrian Middle Persian and a Note on the 2sg. Optative

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The copula in MPZ is normally written with the Aramaeogram ⟨HWE⟩. However, verbal Aramaeograms usually end in ⟨WN⟩. Even those which are differently written in MPI, like ⟨YDOYTN⟩ /dān-/ ‘to know’ or ⟨YCBE⟩ /kām-/ ‘to wish’, usually get another stroke in MPZ. The resulting ⟨YDOYTN’⟩ can also be read ⟨YDOYTWN⟩, and ⟨YCBE’⟩ could be read ⟨YCBMWN⟩, because ⟨E⟩ has the same shape as ⟨MW⟩. There are cases where an additional stroke also appears between the Aramaeogram ⟨HWE⟩ and the PE. Hence, we could interpret such forms as ⟨HWEN-⟩, or ⟨HWMWN-⟩.¹ In other words, the writing of the copula would have been assimilated to the general graphical marking of Aramaeograms. This analysis is supported by forms such as the 2pl. ind. ⟨HWE’yṭ⟩ /hēd/, where the stroke cannot be read as a part of the PE. However, in the 1sg. and 3pl. this stroke could well represent a part of the PE: ⟨HWE’m⟩ or ⟨HWEwm⟩ /hom/, ⟨HWE’d⟩ or ⟨HWEnd⟩ /hand/ or /hēnd/. In MPI, where several letters are still distinguished, the 3pl. is in fact written ⟨HWEnd⟩. Thus the question is whether the additional stroke in MPZ should be considered: a) a part of the Aramaeogram, b) a part of the phonographic PE, c) neither of both (e.g. marking the morphological boundary, idiosyncratic style of the scribe, etc.).

In order to answer this question, I have checked the writing of the copula in a number of texts, which was part of a project on verbal endings in MP.² The following table lists all writings of PEs with the Aramaeograms ⟨HWE⟩. The PE of the 3sg. is missing, because it is written with a different Aramaeogram, viz. ⟨AYT(’)⟩ /ašt/. Orthographic variations of PEs are not indicated (e.g. 1sg. ⟨-m⟩, ⟨-m’⟩; 1pl. ⟨-ym⟩, ⟨-yym⟩, 2sg. ind. ⟨-y⟩, ⟨-yh⟩, ⟨-yyh⟩, etc.). Furthermore, those modal forms which are identical with the

1- This was suggested by SKJÆRVØ (1997: 167).

2- “Western Iranian Dialectology and Early Judeo-Persian” (2009-2010). Several preliminary results were published in Ferrer 2013. The overall figure of verbal forms exceeded 7.000 instances.

indicative in writing are included in the figures (i.e. 2sg. ind. = 2sg. opt.³, 2pl. ind. = 2pl. imv.). Another simplification concerns the writing of the 3pl. In MPI and in the Psalter, the marker of the end of word is graphically distinguished from the letter ⟨n⟩. Thus, the 3pl. is unambiguously written ⟨-nd⟩ and not ⟨-ʿd⟩. For the sake of simplicity, the 3pl. ind. ⟨-nd⟩ of MPI and the Psalter is included among the instances of ⟨-ʿd⟩ in this table.

Table :PE of the indicative and similar forms (± the additional stroke) after HWE														
		1sg.			2sg.		1pl.				2pl.		3pl ⁴ .	
		-m	'-m	'-ym	-y	'-y	-m	-ym	'-m	'-ym	-yt	'-yt	-d	'-d
MPI	Abn.													2
	KI	16												9
	NPi				2x -∅	2					1x -d ⁵ (?)			
	ŠPs1-													1
	ŠPs2-	1												
Psalter		4			3x -w	6								26
MPZ	AW	52			13		2					60	2	
	AZ	6			5					1				
	DA	13			2									
	Dk7	1	19	5	1	15			2	9		8	33	
	GA						1					5		
	HÖD												10	
	KN	13			4						1		3	
	MHD	4	14		10	6		2		11		2	1	43
	MJF	5			5								10	
	ŠNŠ	5			1			2			1			8
	WČN	1									4		1	
	WZ	9			11		2	3			4		27	
	Yasna	16			31	1							9	1
ZWY	3	1		1								13	3	

3- For 2sg. opt. ⟨-yš⟩ see below.

4- Due to the high regularity of writing the 3pl. in MPZ, this form was only selectively collected. Thus figures are actually higher in texts of MPZ.

5- Skjærvø (1983: 69) proposes to interpret [... HWE]d in NPi §88 as 2pl. ind. This would be the only instance of such a writing, *though*.

Remaining forms of ⟨HWE⟩

The forms of ⟨HWE⟩ not included in the table are the following:

1sg., 3sg., and 3pl. subj.: The subjunctive is never written with a stroke between the Aramaeogram and the PE in MPZ: 1sg. ⟨HWEn⟩ /hān/ (all in KI); 3sg. ⟨HWEt(′)⟩ or ⟨HWEʔt(′)⟩ /hād/ (all in MPZ); 3pl. ⟨HWEnd⟩ /hānd/ (Psalter 5 V.7; 6 V.13).

3sg. opt.: The 3sg. opt. and the 2sg. ind. are identically written in the editions. In MPI both have a zero ending while they show the same sets of PEs containing ⟨y⟩ in MPZ and MPM. The only two MPZ texts which show instances of a stroke before the ⟨y⟩ are Dk7: 1x ⟨-y⟩, 8x ⟨-ʔy⟩; and MHD: 7x ⟨-y⟩, 7x ⟨-ʔy⟩.

Evaluation

In MPI and the Psalter, the 3pl. is constantly written ⟨-nd⟩, which would have developed graphically to ⟨-ʔd⟩ in MPZ. However, this did not happen. Only two texts show high frequency of ⟨-ʔd⟩, viz. Dk7 and MHD, and these texts also show high frequency of PE with an extra stroke where the stroke can not be interpreted to have a phonological reading (like 2sg. ⟨-ʔy⟩ for /-ē/).

The other persons display a similar distribution. Only Dk7 and MHD exhibit high frequency of an additional stroke between Aramaeogram and PE, irrespective of its possible phonological reading (as with the 1sg. as /w/).

This means that the Aramaeogram of the copula was not assimilated to the writing of the other Aramaeograms with the exception of the texts Dk7 and MHD. Contrarily, the PE of the 3pl. ind. of the copula ⟨-nd⟩ was substituted by the common marker of the 3pl. ind. ⟨-d⟩.

Hence, the hypothesis of SKJÆRVØ (1997: 167) that ⟨HWEnd⟩ could be interpreted as ⟨HWENd⟩ is only true for a few specific authors and their texts. Whether this is also a chronological difference, remains to be investigated.⁶

The 2sg. optative in -š

SKJÆRVØ (2009: 217, 236) notes a 2sg. opt. in /-ēš/, but adds that “[i]t needs to be investigated whether it is only used in imitation of Avestan.” CANTERA (1999: 179f.) assumes that in MPZ the respective writings reflect an optative or imperative in ⟨yyh⟩ /-ē/. The Old Iranian optative active of causative stems *-ayaiš* would probably have resulted in simple *-ē*. The middle *-ayaiša*, however, could have given *-ēš*. New Iranian languages suggest a continuation of this form exhibiting 2sg. endings in *š* for categories that could be linked to the optative (e.g. Abyānei future imperative 2sg. *-iš-a*, 2pl. *-iš-īya*; Judeo-Tat and Tāleši 2sg. present optative *-oš*, which is probably a conflation of the subjunctive vowel *-ā-* and the optative consonant *š* of the 2sg.; Iron dialect of Ossetic 2sg. present subjunctive *-is* < **-iš*; besides Lāri where *-eš* is the common ending of the 2sg.).

In my MP sample, the writing of the 2sg. indicative, optative, and subjunctive are not arbitrary. The indicative is mostly marked by ⟨yb⟩ 156× followed by ⟨yh/š⟩ 26×, ⟨yyh/yš⟩ 25× and ⟨yyy/ʔy⟩ 21× with a few other variants: ⟨yy/ʔ⟩, ⟨yy/s⟩, ⟨yyh/yš⟩, and ⟨y⟩. The subjunctive is always indicated by writings that

6- FERRER (2009: 77) takes ⟨HWEN⟩ as the correct reading, not only because of the 3pl., which is indicated by ⟨-d⟩ with other verbs than the copula, but also because he reads the 2sg. of the Psalter ⟨HWEN⟩ and not ⟨HWEw⟩. However, the letters ⟨n⟩ and ⟨w⟩ are clearly distinguished in the Psalter. He adopted the reading ⟨HWEw⟩ in 2013 (p.84f.).

allow for a reading /ā/: ⟨ʔy⟩ 8×, ⟨ʔ⟩ 3×, ⟨ʔh⟩ 3×. The optative is represented by two variants that appear in the same manuscripts: endings that allow for a reading with š 11×, and those that do not: 13×.

The New Iranian evidence suggests to recheck our interpretation of 2sg. optatives. Writings that suggest the reading š may be established as optative endings - at least for some texts. Other writings that have so far been interpreted as optative endings may in fact be indicative or subjunctive endings.

Abbreviations

PE: personal ending, MPI: Middle Persian of the inscriptions, MPM: Manichaean MP, MPZ: Zoroastrian MP.

Abbreviations of texts

Abn: Skjærvø, Prods Oktor (1992): “L’inscription d’Abnūn et l’imparfait en moyen-perse”, pp. 153-160 in: *Studia Iranica* 21/2.

AW: Gignoux, Philippe (1984): *Le Livre d’Ardā Vīrāz – translitération, transcription et traduction du texte pehlevi*, Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations Cahier 14.

AZ: ‘Oryān, Sa‘īd (1371 h.š.): *Motun-e Pahlavi (tarjome, āvānevešt)*, with a reprint of the pahlavi texts edited by Jāmāspji Daštūr Manučehrji Jāmāsp-Āsānā, Tehrān: Ketābxāne-ye melli-ye Jomhuri-ye Eslāmi-ye Irān, [English cover: Orian, Said (1992): *Pahlavi Texts – (Transcription, Translation)*, edited by Jamasp ji Daštūr Minocher ji Jamasp-Asana, Tehran: National Library of Iran].

DA: ‘Oryān, Sa‘īd (1371 h.š.) see AZ.

Dk7: Molé, Marijan (1967): *La legende de Zoroāstre selon les textes pehlevis*, Paris: Klincksieck.

GA: Chacha, Homi F. (1936): *Gajaštak Abālish*, Bombay: published by the Trustees of the Parsi Panchayet Funds and Properties.

HÖD: Dhabhar, Ervad Bamanji Nasarvanji (1930): *Andarj-i Aōshnar-i Dānāk*, Pahlavi Text Series No. 4, Bombay: Trustees of the Parsee Panchayet Funds and Properties.

KI: Jügel, Thomas (2010): *Konkordanz der Kirdīr-Inschriften*, online publication: <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/personal/tjuegel/kirdir.pdf>.

KN: Čunakova, Oljga Mikhajlovna (1987): *Kniga dejanij Ardašira syna Papaka*, Moscow: NAUK. [The Book of the Deeds of Ardašir, Son of Papak]

MHD: Macuch, Maria (1993): *Rechtskasuistik und Gerichtspraxis zu Beginn des siebenten Jahrhunderts in Iran – Die Rechtssammlung des Farrohmard i Wahrāmān*, Iranica Bd 1, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. [see also the TITUS database <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/iran/miran/mpers/mhd/mhd.htm>]

MJF: Ja‘fari, Maḥmud (1365 h.š.): *Mātikān-e Yušt Friyān – matn-e pahlavi, āvānevešt, tarjome, vāže-nāme, pišgoftār-o peyvašt*, Tehrān: Sāzmān-e Forūhar [English cover: Jafari, Mahmood (1987): *Matikan i Yošt i Fryan*, Tehran: Sāzmān-e-Faravahar].

NPi: Humbach, Helmut and Prods Oktor Skjærvø (1983): *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli*, Part 1: Humbach: *Supplement to Herzfeld’s Paikuli*, Part 2: Humbach/Skjærvø: *Synoptic Tables*, Part 3.1: Skjærvø: *Restored text and translation*, Part 3.2: Skjærvø: *Commentary*, Wiesbaden: Reichert.

Psalter: Andreas, Friedrich Carl and Kaj Barr (1933): *Bruchstücke einer Pehlevi-Übersetzung der Psalmen*, aus dem Nachlass von F. C. Andreas, herausgegeben von Kaj Barr, Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften.

ŠNŠ: Tavadia, Jehangir Cowasji (1930): *Šāyašt-nē-šāyašt – A Pahlavi Text on Religious Customs*, Hamburg:

de Gruyter. & Durkin-Meisterernst, Desmond (2002): *Šāyist nē šāyist*, in the TITUS database, <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/iran/miran/mpers/snštrl/snštr.htm>.

ŠPs-1 & ŠPs-2: Back, Michael (1978): *Die Sassanidischen Staatsinschriften – Studien zur Orthographie und Phonologie des Mittelpersischen der Inschriften zusammen mit einem etymologischen Index des mittelpersischen Wortgutes und einem Textcorpus der behandelten Inschriften*, Acta Iranica 18.

WČN: Panaino, Antonio (1999): *La Novella degli Scacchi e della Tavola Reale – Tešte Pahlavi, Traduzione e Commento al Wizārīšn [!] ī čātrang ud nīhišn ī nēw-ardaxšīr*, Mailand: Mimesis.

WZ: Gignoux, Philippe and Ahmad Tafazzoli (1993): *Anthologie de Zādspram – Edition critique du texte pehlevi*, Studia Iranica Cahier 13.

Yasna: Dhabhar, Ervad Bamanji Nasarvanji (1949): *Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad*, Pahlavi Text Series No. 8, Bombay: Trustees of the Parsee Panchayet Funds and Properties.

ZWY: Cereti, Carlo Giovanni (1995): *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn – A Zoroastrian Apocalypse*, Serie Orientale Roma Vol. 75, Rom: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

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- (1997): “On the Middle Persian Imperfect”, pp. 161-188, in Eric Pirart (ed.): *Syntaxe des langues indo-iraniennes anciennes – Colloque international, Sitges Barcelona, 4-5. Mai 1993*, Aula Orientalis Supplementa 6, Barcelona: Editorial AUSA.