The Daēva Cult in the Gāthās

An ideological archaeology of
Zoroastrianism

Amir Ahmadi

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Addressing the question of the origins of the Zoroastrian religion, this book argues that the intransient opposition to the cult of the *daēvas*, the ancient Indo-Iranian gods, is the root of the development of the two central doctrines of Zoroastrianism: cosmic dualism and eschatology (fate of the soul after death and its passage to the other world).

The *daēva* cult as it appears in the Gāthās, the oldest part of the Zoroastrian sacred text, the Avesta, had eschatological pretensions. The poet of the Gāthās condemns these as deception. The book critically examines various theories put forward since the nineteenth century to account for the condemnation of the *daēvas*. It then turns to the relevant Gāthic passages and analyses them in detail in order to give a picture of the cult and the reasons for its repudiation. Finally, it examines materials from other sources, especially the Greek accounts of Iranian ritual lore (mainly) in the context of the mystery cults. Classical Greek writers consistently associate the nocturnal ceremony of the magi with the mysteries as belonging to same religious-cultural category. This shows that Iranian religious lore included a nocturnal rite that aimed at ensuring the soul's journey to the beyond and a desirable afterlife.

Challenging the prevalent scholarship of the Greek interpretation of Iranian religious lore and proposing a new analysis of the formation of the Hellenistic concept of 'magic', this book is an important resource for students and scholars of History, Religion and Iranian Studies.

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AW   Bartholomae, Ch 1979, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin

EWA   Mayrhofer, M 1992–2001, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. 3 vols. Carl Winter, Heidelberg

N   'Nērangestan', in Kotwal, FM and Kreyenbroek, PhG 2003, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān, volume 3: Nērangestān, Fragard 2*, Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, Paris

OAv.   Old Avestan

RV   Ṛgveda

V   Vīdēvdād, in Geldner, KF 1886–1896, *Avesta, die heiligen Bücher der Parsen*, 3 vols., Kohlhammer, Stuttgart

Y   'Yasna', in Geldner, KF 1886–1896, *Avesta, die heiligen Bücher der Parsen*, 3 vols., Kohlhammer, Stuttgart

YAv.   Young Avestan

Yt   'Yašt', in Geldner, KF 1886–1896, *Avesta, die heiligen Bücher der Parsen*, 3 vols., Kohlhammer, Stuttgart

Introduction

The central role of the *daēva* cult in the formation of the religious thought of the Gāthās and Zoroastrianism more generally has not been appreciated. The two features of Zoroastrianism that gave it its distinctive characteristic for classical and Hellenistic Greek observers, namely its comprehensive dualism and eschatological doctrine, may be traced, as far as our evidence permits, to the uncompromising opposition of the poet of the Gāthās to the *daēva* cult. In effect, as a religious-historical question, the emergence of these two features would otherwise remain without a satisfactory answer.

The *daēvas* are deities that preside over the fate of the soul and its passage to the beyond. Since mental life continues across the threshold of death and is determined in its quality by earthly existence, the *daēvas* are thought to exercise power over the latter too. Their cult as it is described in the Gāthās seems to have had a specifically eschatological significance. In any case, it is primarily on this ground that the poet attacks them. The repudiated deities pretend to control access to the blissful abode of the gods. On the other hand, their followers complain that Zarathuštra's 'messenger' prevents them from 'seeing *aṣa-*', i.e. reaching the divine sphere, probably meaning both after death and in ritual ecstasy.[1] We have evidence that initiation to the mysteries of Eleusis or the status of the *dīkṣita* in the Vedas, for instance, was understood to be a consecration to death and, conversely, the initiate's death was imagined to be like mystic celebrations. The assimilation of death to ritual initiation is ancient.[2] The rite devoted to the *daēvas* apparently made use of ritual elements that are regularly associated with initiatory patterns of the mysteries and of the more ancient male clubs whose roots probably go back to Indo-European times. From a Gāthic verse (Y 30.6cc′) we learn that the mortals who take part in the *daēva* cult 'damage existence' with their rite that involves the *aēšəma-* 'rave or rage'. Every time the word *maṣiia-* 'mortal' is used in the Gāthās in association with the *daēvas*, it has a pejorative sense. We may safely go further, I believe, and be more specific about the reference of the word. The context of the usage suggests that what is meant by 'mortal' is the initiate of the *daēva* cult.

It is indeed curious that the inherited root (***d[e]iu̯-*) that in a number of Indo-European languages yields words related to diurnal sky, including divine

names, should give in Iranian the word for malicious spirits. In the Avesta the word *daēva-* is used to refer to noxious supernatural beings, somewhat akin to the bad variety of Hellenistic *daimōn*. Its exact Vedic counterpart *devá-* becomes the common noun for god, and when used as an adjective, it means celestial or divine. The Indo-European root also gives the divine names (nom. sg.) Vedic *dyáuṣ pitā*, Gr. *zeús páter* and Lat. *iup[p]iter*. How can we understand the development whereby the apparently traditional gods are 'demonized' so massively, so peremptorily, that the divine appellation itself becomes the word for demon? But perhaps the question is badly posed; or to put it in another way, the puzzlement at the 'demonization of the divine' may be due to conceptual confusion. Our concept of god, which Christian theology adopted and passed on, derives largely from Plato. Archaic Greece had no idea of 'god', not even Hesiod's Zeus is a 'god' in the post-Platonic sense; nor should we assume that ancient Iran did. Even if we could know nothing else about the *daēvas*, it would be much more reasonable, comparatively speaking, to assume that these gods were functionally defined as a group and associated with a specific activity. In other words, *daēva-* would not be a generic divine appellation. In the Young Avestan texts, the word *yazata-* 'worthy of worship' is a title, seemingly emerging from a definite genre of ritual discourse; but it is not an inclusive term.[3]

The attempts made since the nineteenth century to come to terms with the problem of the 'demonization' of the *daēvas* have not produced satisfactory results. The Gāthās are difficult to understand. Even where there is no grammatical or syntactic problem, still the significance and references of the text remain elusive. This is in part due to the historical isolation and poetic nature of the compositions. We do not quite know how to read the Gāthās. The systematic comparison with the language of the Vedas and Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary more generally was instrumental in setting the study of the text on a sound linguistic basis.[4] Why should we not extend the comparison to the ideological sphere as well? This assimilation has in fact been the frame of a number of recent interpretations. 'Je crois,' declared Jean Kellens in his inaugural paper at the Collège de France in 1994, 'le temps venu d'un retour à la méthode védisante pure et dure pour éclairer le texte de l'Avesta et le texte dans son ensemble, c'est-à-dire non seulement sa langue, mais aussi les conceptions religieuses qui s'y expriment'. Kellens hopes to be able to show on this basis that 'aucune intervention prophétique n'a modifié le cours de la religion iranienne'.[5] It is hard to suppress the suspicion that the research in its extension of the 'Vedicizing method' to 'religious conceptions' may not be beholden to a preconception. A common 'language' per se, even if this includes shared items of phraseology, does in no way permit one to infer a common religious thought inherited from the Indo-Iranian past. Kellens' view of the matter is in part a reaction to the 'traditional' conception of the religion of the Gāthās, which made of them the founding document of a monotheistic religion issuing from the campaign of a sermonizing prophet. One needs no argument or elaborate work of interpretation to discover the

model that is behind this view. Scholars who have championed such a thesis have time and again compared Zarathuštra with the (stereotyped) Hebrew prophet. The extraordinary extent to which the monotheistic enthusiasts are willing to go to support their thesis may be seen in Gershevitch's meditations.[6] The question remains, however, whether the justified rejection of the Biblical assimilation requires the placement of Gāthic religious thought within the Vedic horizon.

The problem of the repudiation of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās can hardly be separated from the question of their pre- or non-Zoroastrian status and function. *This* has to be the frame of research on the topic. Is the *daēva* cult condemned because polytheistic gods, by definition, have no place in a monotheistic religion, according to one thesis? Or, are the *daēvas* 'demonized' because they are the accursed part of the pantheon, a structural requirement of the 'dualistic logic', according to another thesis? In either perspective, what the Gāthās have to tell us about the nature, pretensions and activities of the *daēvas* necessarily becomes a matter of indifference.

In the first part of the book I argue that the approaches taken by scholars since the mid nineteenth century to account for the 'demonization' of the *daēvas*, far from taking the Gāthās as their point of reference and orientation, ignore the relevant passages or make them yield the expected meaning. If I am right that the question of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās has never been posed outside these frames, should we not want to know what in the treatment of the question comes from these, e.g. what is a red herring? It is not always the whole thesis that one adopts but this or that component of it. The perspective of theodicy has no place in the Gāthās: it is not only historically stranded but also incapable of executing the function for which it is enlisted. The supposed Gāthic idea of 'free will' as a solution to the problem of evil *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* is a theological contribution of the Western scholar steeped in Christian theology, just as much as attributing the idea of 'ingesting the god' to Dionysiac omophagia is, practically assimilating the cult of the god to Christian sacramentalism.[7] The spectre of the comparison with the middle Vedic opposition of *deva* and *asura*, supposed to have been dispatched in the 1970s, haunts Kellens' latest explanation of the 'demonization' of the *daēvas* in *La quatrième naissance de Zarathushtra* (2006).

In the second part I discuss in detail the passages from the Gāthās that bear on the topic. I put forward new interpretations of a number of key Gāthic terms such as √*xšā* 'have disposition' or *xratu-* 'resourcefulness'. It will be seen that the opposition to the *daēva* cult was current at the time of the composition of the Gāthās. The *daēva* cult is described in the Gāthās as having eschatological pretensions and involving ritual features that indicate, as I mentioned, a background in initiation-based male associations. The connection with masculine esoteric rites must remain a hypothesis, but a plausible one nonetheless, in view of the convergence of comparative material. The cultic status and function of the Gāthic deities stand out clearly against the proposed thesis concerning the *daēva* cult. In effect, they replace the *daēvas*.

The generally admitted or readily acceptable characteristics of the two sets of deities mutually illuminate one another once they are placed in the perspective proposed in this book: the *daēvas* are repudiated essentially as the deities that (pretend to) provide access to the divine sphere, and are replaced by another cult, which consciously constituted itself in opposition to what it aimed to supplant. I critically discuss previous translations and interpretations in respect of grammar, syntax and sense. The interpretation proposed here is based on linguistic and syntactic analyses *and* aims at understanding the sense and significance of the texts. My aim is to read them as a *discourse*. The interpretation makes use of comparative ideological data wherever possible.

In the last part, materials from other sources, especially the Greek representations of the magi's lore, are examined, mainly in the context of a discussion of the mystery cults. Admittedly, these provide only partial and indirect evidence, but their convergence is significant. Classical Greek writers consistently associate the magi's nocturnal rite with the mysteries, and the magus with figures such as the 'mendicant priest' and 'initiator' belonging to the mystic cultural field. The 'magician' undoubtedly receives his professional name from this association, which indicates the solidity of the connection. The Greeks had a more or less definite image of the mysteries.[8] This can be seen, for example, in the appropriation of the chthonic cult of Osiris and Isis extracted from its native royal-ideological frame. The comparison of the magi's rite with the mysteries is explicit in a Pre-Socratic exegesis of an Orphic theogony, whose text is partially preserved in a charred papyrus found in Derveni in northern Greece. Likewise, we regularly find the Greek 'Zoroaster' in the company of or otherwise associated with the 'divine man' such as Pythagoras or Empedocles, who, like Orpheus, travels to the underworld at will in quest of 'true' knowledge or departed souls. Now, the existence of this whole constellation is a fact of literary evidence. The question is how to account for it and assess its significance for our topic. Can it be a case of the Greek misunderstanding of an 'alien wisdom'? I consider this view, which is prevalent among scholars who have considered the matter in one respect or another, and argue that it is untenable. If the suggested analysis of the relevant passages of the Derveni text is plausible, we have to admit that (its author thought that) the magi's sacrifice, just like initiation to the mysteries, had an eschatological significance, and that the Derveni '*magoi*' were Iranian ritual experts.[9] The capacity to make the world immortal at the end of times is attested for their rite in Greek philosophical sources. One would have to conclude, taking into account the Iranian evidence, that the magi's lore included a nocturnal rite, probably both funerary and initiatory, which aimed at ensuring the soul's journey to the beyond and a desirable afterlife.

Of course, there were differences between the reported magi's doctrines and the mystic ideology, the most important of which is the idea of redemption from an 'ancient guilt' that seems to have been central in the mysteries but not present in our evidence about the magi's ritual lore. But the absence may simply be due to the loss of pre-Zoroastrian traditions, since we find a

comparable idea in the Vedic myth of Yama and the Brāhmaṇic doctrine of sacrifice.[10] Yama the immortal accepts to die (a sacrificial death) in order to open the path to the realm of immortality for his mortal descendants: this apparently establishes a debt on the part of the latter. I will emphasize the masculine esoteric background of the mysteries in Greek literature (e.g. the apprenticeship of Orpheus with the Daktyloi), that is to say, the initiatory form of the mystery cults. The Greeks unquestionably had an authentic and relatively detailed knowledge of Zoroastrian eschatology. This is the frame in which the assimilation of the *magos* to the 'divine man' must be considered.

   The comparison of cultural items can be treacherous. One must know what the purpose of the comparison is and in respect of what it is being made.

> A comparison is a disciplined exaggeration in the service of knowledge. It lifts out and strongly marks certain features within difference as being of possible intellectual significance, expressed in the rhetoric of their being 'like' in some stipulated fashion. Comparison provides the means by which *we* 're-vision' phenomena as *our* data in order to solve *our* theoretical problems.
>
> (Smith 1990, p. 52)

There is irrefutable evidence that the *daēvas* were worshipped down to the Achaemenid time and beyond among some Iranian populations. The Avestan text of the *Nērangestān* mentions and seems to permit the nocturnal 'sacrifice of a wolf in the manner of *daēva*-worshippers'. Evidently, Zoroastrian magi in some areas did perform chthonic rites dedicated to the *daēvas*; or, in any event, this practice was current at the time. Is it plausible to think that the Achaemenid *daēvas* or the *daēvas* of the *Nērangestān* had nothing to do with the Gāthic *daēvas*? My purpose in considering the Greek evidence is simple: the Greeks knew a type of Iranian ritual that took place at night, had an eschatological significance and, apparently, an initiatory pattern. I will argue against contemporary scholarship[11] that the reports and descriptions of the rite cannot be dismissed. The significance of the Greek evidence has not been properly appreciated. This evidence indicates that eschatological concerns handled in special rites were a prominent feature of Iranian religious thought, and parallels the Avestan picture of the *daēva* cult.

Rivalry between gods and men

The idea of rivalry between mortals and gods has received scant attention in the study of ancient religions.[12] This is surprising, since in many ancient cultures exchange in the widest sense was the basis of the relation with gods. In any system of exchange, disagreement and accusation of fraud are always real possibilities. It is certainly embarrassing to point to such phenomena in religion. If the essential dimension of religious life is the elevated sense of the sacred, bickering with the gods does indeed look unseemly. The

appropriate religious feelings, according to one phenomenologist of religion, are reverence and helpless awe (*mysterium tremendum*).[13] These feelings are supposed to have a cognitive function: they disclose the sacred and give access to the beyond. Self-interested manipulation of the divine is the *bête noire* of religion. The great German scholar Oldenberg finds the Ṛgveda thoroughly vitiated with magic and the acquisitive spirit.[14] The Vedic hymn, he notes with an obvious irritation, 'lacks the eloquence of suffering', hardly bespeaks the 'warmth and the depth, the soft trembling of a pious heart', and 'knows little of the abysses of misery and guilt' (Oldenberg 2004, p. 3). Presumably, these define in the scholar's mind a 'religious' disposition. Thus, *e contrario*, Oldenberg underwrites Nietzsche's view of Christianity.[15] It was only in the last few decades of the twentieth century that students of ancient religions conceded as a matter of principle the absence of any clear boundary between 'religion' and 'magic', each being, for not a few, first and foremost a definition.[16]

The feeling of dependence on invisible beings that are more powerful than humans is thought to be the psychological basis of religious experience.[17] Communication with these powers is possible, if not for everyone then at least for the qualified few, which role determines their status and function in the society to which they belong. Every religion assumes that gods involve themselves in human affairs. It is not clear, however, why some of these gods are solicitous while others are malicious. Religious knowledge allows humans to place themselves under the aegis of the former against the mischief of the latter. This is held to be the value of the peculiar knowledge. In return for the protection they extend, the beneficent gods demand obedience and impose rules of conduct, ritual and ethical, and sometimes amuse themselves with the foibles of their protégés.

The hypertrophy of the sense of dependence on the divine seems to have overwhelmed in late antiquity the exchange basis of pagan religions.[18] Feelings of dependence and inadequacy have no inherent limits. Everything can be read as a sign of divine care, testing though it may be; misfortune only proves one's own guilt. Thomas Mann's Jacob, having received the news of his favourite son's death, perches on a rubbish heap in his courtyard, and laments and hurls abuse at Yahweh for days on end.[19] At long last he calms down and, exhausted, reflects on the fact that despite his offensive behaviour, the god has not reacted. This unresponsiveness he attributes to the almighty's magnanimous tolerance; and the inaccessibility of the deity is interpreted as the mark of his majestic stature. In Jacob's mind, it infinitely elevates Yahweh in all his positive attributes.[20] A disenchanted mind would have viewed the indifference as an indication of callousness or even of non-existence. Jacob's god, on the other hand, is one with complete disposition over the world, which nothing other than his own discretion can discipline. Where the sense of dependence is absolute, it is hard to distinguish (resentful) helpless submission from reverence. In the ancient world this religious situation was anomalous. The religion and god of total submission would come later.

And why should a mortal not be able to stand up to the gods? In the *Iliad* 22.23, Apollo and Achilles do not spare each other's feelings: 'Nothing for you to fear, no punishment to come. Oh I'd pay you back if I only had the power at my command!'

But mutual mistrust and hostility between gods and mortals are in no way limited to the Greek world. There is no existence more fateful than that of Adam, and there is no god as unforgiving as the god of Genesis. 'The Tree of Knowledge stood in the garden of God not in order to dispense information on good and evil, but as an emblem of judgment over the questioner'.[21] The taunting question that the Lord God addresses to Adam after his transgression, 'where are thou?' (Gen 3:10) is of course not a question at all; it reduces not just him but all his descendants to guilt-ridden silence. It is not meant to be answered by Adam in paradise, but reverberate forever in human existence. The word of God, as the shadow of the 'creative word', enters the fallen world of man as the judgement suspended over him. The human condition – earthly sufferings and death – is born in the Lord God's curse. But this is not all. The justification of the punishment visited on man is not to be sought only in Adam's defiance of the divine command. God's malice is *natural*. It is a matter of protecting what makes him superior: 'And the Lord God said, "Now that the human has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he may reach out and take as well from the tree of life and live forever"' (Gen 3:22). So, God drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. The meaning of the original temptation is plainly stated by the serpent: 'you will become as gods' (Gen 3:6). It is, for the god, a matter of eliminating potential rivals.[22] It is not just mortals who appear petty in their rivalry with the gods; the latter are also compromised to no lesser a degree.

Zeus contemplates destroying men time and again. We know from both Homer and Hesiod that the 'god of justice' never really liked humans. He views them with suspicion. They are belligerent and associated with the Titans, hence tainted. In the *Iliad*, every god finds at least one occasion to vent his or her hostility toward a hero, often mortally, and is in turn defied and sometimes belittled by his or her human adversary. But the most characteristic testimony on the rivalry between men and gods is due to the very institution that brings them together. Such is the ironic pathos of the Greeks that sacrifice, the locus of mortals' relation with the gods should be the reminder of their mutual suspicion and hostility.[23] Before the fateful event at Mekone, gods and men ate from the same table, the expression par excellence of reciprocal trust and community (*Theogony* 530ff.).[24] Men 'lived like gods' then (*Works* 110ff.).[25] The ostensible antagonist of the supreme god at Mekone is Prometheus. He deceives the god 'whose designs do not fail'. For Zeus 'he laid out meat and entrails rich with fat in the hide, covering it in the ox's stomach, while for men he laid out the ox's white bones, which he arranged carefully for a cunning trick by covering them in glistening fat' (*Theogony* 530ff.). Zeus demands what is offered to men (*anthrōpoi*), and thereby seals the god's share

of the sacrificial victim from then on. Is it because of the repulsiveness of the stomach (*gastēr*) that Zeus rejects the part originally presented to the gods? But Hesiod says that Zeus' intelligence did not fail him, for 'he recognized the trick and did not mistake it, and he boded evil in his heart for mortal men, which was to come to pass'. From then on, man (*anēr*) has to work hard for his food hidden in the belly of the earth, which only postpones the inevitable evil of death, and requires the woman, the 'pretty bane', to procreate. For men 'desirable things are hidden within evils while evils are sometimes hidden within desirable things and sometimes concealed by their invisibility'. Thus 'human existence is governed, through the gods' "hiding" operations, by a mixture of goods and evils, by ambiguity and duplicity' (Vernant 1990, p. 197). Zeus' vengeful plan for the *anthrōpoi* is to suffer the human condition.

The god, then, must have welcomed Prometheus' cunning trick and seen through the deception (*apatē*); but this did not lessen his rage: 'wrath reached him to the spirit, when he saw the white ox-bones set for a cunning trick' (*Theogony* 550ff.).[26] Is he angry just because Prometheus has attempted to deceive him (*Theogony* 537–41) or, more fundamentally, because the Titan's fraud (*dolos*) is meant to benefit men against the wishes of the god? Did Prometheus, the embodiment of foresight, count on the god's wanting the humans' share *because* it was offered to *them*? This alone can explain Zeus' anger: he is not angry because he has been tricked, something that the text explicitly rules out, but because Prometheus has sided with men against the gods. Prometheus counts on the supreme god's hostility to men. In any case, it is more fitting, for both protagonists, to imagine that the Titan aimed to deceive the god 'whose designs do not fail' with this calculation in mind rather than with 'deceptive' appearances. Zeus' real antagonist is not the Titan but humans, for quite clearly at stake in the myth is the aetiology of not just man's relationship with the gods but also his way of being.[27] Man is man to the extent that he has to work to prolong his transient life, which he owes to the 'pretty bane', and that his sole contact with the divine is through sacrifice, the occasion that primordially gave rise to his misery as the myth recalls. In the aetiological myth, the contestation between men and gods is the fundamental ground of the human condition.[28]

In the *Mahābhārata*, Kāvya Uśanas is the sorcerer who knows the 'secret of resurrection'. He acts as the *purohita* 'chaplain' for the *asuras* (demons), to whose fight against the *devas* (gods) he contributes by raising their slain in the war. This is how the *Mahābhārata* describes it:

> All the demons who were killed by the gods in the battle, Kāvya raised again by the power of his knowledge. They rose and recommenced the combat against the gods. On the contrary, the gods that the demons killed on the battlefield, Bṛhaspati, despite his wisdom, did not restore to life for he did not know the knowledge that Kāvya knew, the science of resurrection, and because of it the gods suffered a great distress.[29]

In their desperation, the gods turn to Kaca, the son of Bṛhaspati, and ask him to present himself as an apprentice to the sorcerer and learn the science from him.[30] Now, the sorcerer is in no way beholden to the *asuras*.[31] Kāvya is really a magician, characteristically independent, rather than a chaplain. It is not clear why he has sided with the *asuras*, but it is certainly significant that what mediates his fraught relationship with the gods is his 'science of resurrection'. What allows the magician to stand apart from the gods is this science, which he evidently possesses in his own right. This situation is reminiscent of the position of the *ṛṣis* in the Brāhmaṇas, where gods and men equally owe their (possible) immortality to sacrifice. The only difference is that, for men, death is the condition of access.[32] Only in spirit can mortals reach the divine sphere. The gods, having learned the way of sacrifice and thereby the access to paradise, try to keep it from men. It is only thanks to Yama, the discoverer of the path to the beyond, and the *ṛṣis*, the inspired poets, that humans have a chance of becoming immortal.

The Iranian magician-king Kavi Usan (or Usadan), the Pahlavi Kay Us, is also a rebel against the gods. Christensen compared his legend with his predecessor, the first man and king Yima (Yim).[33] In Zoroastrian lore, both were born immortal but because of their rivalry with the gods were 'changed'[34] into mortal men. Both are builders of enclosures where men never age, and both while king rule over the seven *kešvars* and are masters of 'men and demons' alike. Dumézil, like Lommel, compares the Iranian figure with the Vedic Kāvya Uśanas, and argues for an Indo-Iranian prototype *Kavi *Uśan, a powerful magician who was especially known for his science of rejuvenation and (immortal) life.[35] The basic likeness of the Iranian and Vedic figures cannot be denied. Whether one must infer from it the existence of a common mythical character or, as Christensen maintains, see the Vedic figure as based on the Iranian Kavi Usan, who must have been originally a king in eastern Iran,[36] is not important for what is at issue here. The legendary magician-king Kay Us, just like the 'first man and king' Yim, is an ambiguous hero who is fundamentally defined by his wanting to be god-like. It is certainly no coincidence that at stake in his difficulties with the gods is his own immortality. In the Pahlavi accounts he owes it to Mazdā, but this may well be a later adjustment. The fact that the magician-king is able to build a fortress (*Dēnkard* 9, 22.4) where people do not age and the aged upon entry turn young clearly indicates that originally he had the power of life in his own right. The god did not grant him immortality but took it away, apparently because Kavi Usan aspired to extend his rule to the divine domain. Iranian Yima is ever only human; nonetheless he rivals Mazdā not only in cosmogonic activities but also in the work of immortality. Jean Kellens argues that Yima's refusal in the Vīdēvdād 2 to accept the *daēnā* ('religion') is in effect the refusal to die, to pass in spirit to the beyond.[37] On his own initiative, he established an immortal world through the exercise of his 'magic' power – 'as long as he exercised his power' (Y 9.5). Does the eventual failure of his project indicate the impossibility of corporeal immortality? In Zoroastrian

lore Yima is accused of an unpardonable wrong, which, one way or another, comes down to his rivalry with the god.[38]

One may wish to interpret such rivalry myths as cautionary tales, thereby quickly reabsorbing into 'religion' the troublesome episodes. This is the way they are normally understood in the studies of ancient religions. The attitude to the phenomenon is in fact rooted in our 'monotheistic' mental habit. Hostility to the one almighty, benevolent god can only mean perversion or insanity. It had to be different within the polytheistic frame of ancient religions.[39] The gods were playful and adventurous and could be counted on one against the other. The aetiological connections that the 'rivalry myths' have with the human condition[40] incline one to think that these myths also express something essential about the divine. I do not propose to explain what this might be, but it is certainly significant that in many instances the point of contention is human mortality. It seems that a contentious relationship with the gods, on whose good will human happiness depended, was not a strange phenomenon in ancient myths and stories.

The afterlife

The images of existence after death in ancient religions are basically of two kinds. The type that is perhaps older depicts the afterlife as an unpalatable existence in a dreary underworld. This is the fate that awaits all humans regardless of their achievements, moral or heroic, in their earthly lives, as Athena explains to Telemachus in *Odyssey* 3. 236ff. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (the Old Babylonian version), annihilation seems to be the horrid outcome that is in store for Gilgamesh: '[spoken by the alewife:] Gilgamesh, where do you roam? / You will not find the eternal life you seek. / When the gods created mankind / They appointed death for mankind, Kept eternal life in their own hands'.[41] It may be that 'death' refers to 'ghostlike' existence in the underworld.[42] In the Hebrew Bible, *Sheol*, the abode of the dead, is just like the Mesopotamian underworld, an abyssal pit, the 'land of darkness', permanently removed from the light of God (Job 10:21–22). The Homeric Hades belongs to this type (Gantz 1993, pp. 123–35). Even the heroes are destined to go there: 'the Achaeans… hurling down to the house of Hades, strong souls of heroes' (*Iliad* 1.3ff.). Book 11 of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus relates his encounters in Hades gives us the canonical picture of the Homeric underworld (cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, pp. 17ff.). Achilles' ghost reacts to Odysseus' praise of him as one honoured like a god in life and the ruler of the dead in Hades in these words: 'Nay, seek not to speak to me soothingly of death, glorious Odysseus. By god, I should rather slave on earth for another man – some dirt-poor tenant farmer who scrapes to keep alive – than rule down here over all the breathless dead' (*Odyssey* 11.547ff.).

The images of the afterlife belonging to the second type portray a desirable condition. But it is only vouchsafed to a privileged group.[43] The slain warriors of the Old Norse saga go to Valhalla where, just as they did in

life, they fight and carouse. The race of heroes in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, too, enjoys a privileged afterlife: 'These dwell with carefree heart in the Isles of the Blessed Ones, beside deep-swirling Oceanus: fortunate Heroes, for whom the grain-giving soil bears its honey-sweet fruits thrice a year' (*Works* 170ff.). In *Odyssey* 4.332–592 Menelaus is exceptionally saved from death and transferred to Elysium, representing the 'belief in an immortality for a select few in the epics', according to Sourvinou-Inwood (1995, p. 54), 'an eschatological strand that was to develop significantly in post-Homeric times and provide models of hope for the afterlife to ordinary mortals'. In Pindar's *Olympian* 2 (*c*.70), the same location is preserved for those who manage to keep themselves 'pure' in three incarnations. They thus join the race of heroes. There are more or less clear indications that the initiates of the mystery cults imagined an afterlife of celebrations and festivals similar to those of the Eleusinian mysteries – but only for themselves. A privileged postmortem fate after a distinguished earthly career must have made sense, whether the latter was that of a hero, of an initiate, or of a morally upright person as we find in Plato. The image of paradise in a Ṛgvedic hymn to Soma, the sacrificial drink and deity, is virtually identical with what we find in the Avesta: one is 'made immortal' in a 'deathless undecaying world, wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre shines… where are those waters young and fresh… where they move even as they list, in the third sphere of inmost heaven… where spirit's food and refreshment are found… in that realm where joys and delights… and longings of desire are fulfilled' (RV 9 113.7ff.). Free movement, fulfilment of every desire, inexhaustible refreshment, an ever-young, joyous existence – these 'boons' are requested from the god of a (probably) stimulating sacrificial drink. The (simulated) ecstatic experience of the drinker may be assumed to have given a foretaste of the heavenly bliss he expected from the god. In what it reveals about the particular type of rite that gave rise to the mentioned image of the afterlife, however, the significance of the sacrificial drink cannot be reduced to the exalted state it induced.

The earliest accounts of a desirable afterlife tell us that only the duly qualified were entitled to look forward to it. The ritual settings such as we find in the Ṛgvedic hymn to Soma, in the mysteries, or in the Gāthic picture of the cult of the *daēvas*, indicate an initiatory background, probably in the tradition of the masculine esoteric association. Some of the legends told of figures like Orpheus, Empedocles or Pythagoras, who were intimately associated with the mysteries, are of the shamanistic type.[44] The most telling feature that distinguishes the type is the visit to the underworld.[45] Our evidence comprises two sets of data that are more or less well established: images of the desirable afterlife restricted to a qualified few, on the one hand, and, on the other, accounts of related rites with features such as secrecy, nocturnal celebration, eccentric behaviour and the 'ecstatic' state, sometimes induced by the consumption of drugs. They point to the aristocratic milieu of warriors' associations – specifically their esoteric rites, initiatory and funerary – as the

likely provenance of individualistic eschatological concerns, documented, for instance, in the *hieroi logoi* of the mysteries or in the Gāthās. It seems that the most ancient Greek conception of the qualification for a 'blessed' afterlife restricts the privilege to the heroic warrior.[46] Later, others too may look forward to the happy outcome, provided they are properly 'purified'. The scheme of ritual initiation is pivotal in both and connects the two, to judge from the Greek and Gāthic material. The presumed eschatological quest of the aristocratic warrior is consonant with his desire, reflected in the epic, of having his exploits preserved. The warrior and the poet had a symbiotic relationship. It was the poet that ensured the 'imperishable fame' (*aphthiton kleos*) of the warrior and thus gave him a claim to immortality. In the *Symposium* (208c) fame is one way of attaining immortality. Watkins and Nagy have shown the Indo-European lineage of the phrase and the sentiment it expresses.[47] The *locus classicus* of the theme is the famous speech of Achilles to Odysseus in the *Iliad* (9.410ff.):

> For my mother the goddess, silver-footed Thetis tells me that twofold fates are bearing me toward the doom of death: if I abide here and play my part in the siege of Troy, then lost is my home-return, but my renown shall be imperishable; but if I return home to my dear native land, lost is then my glorious renown, yet shall my life long endure, neither shall the doom of death come upon me quickly.

The fifth-century doxographer Stobaeus (*Ecl.* 1.41.60) has preserved an excerpt of Porphyry's allegorical interpretation of the *Odyssey* as a description of the career of the soul. The fate of the *psychē* after death only comes into focus with the Pre-Socratics and the mysteries, but already in Hesiod, as I mentioned, the hero is given the privilege of a blessed afterlife. The theme of conquering death, of 'return to light and life', constitutes an important dimension of the hero's career in Homeric Greece, as has been shown by Douglas Frame (1978) in his admirable book *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic*. It does not make much sense to try to distinguish shamanistic and warrior initiation types in Greek myths. In my opinion, the story of Orpheus' Korybantic discipleship and certain features of mystic initiation make it very likely that the mysteries inherited their form from the masculine esoteric association, where the heroic concern with the fate of one's soul must have been paramount.[48] Coalescence with specifically shamanistic motifs, or adoption of shamanistic techniques, could have taken place in the context of funerary rites.[49] The dead hero or the dying god gave the perfect occasion to imagine the realm of the dead and seek the knowledge of the *goēs*, that is to say, the adept of passage to the beyond. In the classical Greek mind, the *magos* belonged with the mantic initiator of the mysteries, not only in respect of certain traits of their rites, but also insofar as the concern with the fate of the soul was a prominent feature of their respective ideological landscapes.

Notes

1 Compare Pirart 1996, pp. 6–7; Kellens and Swennen 2005; Cantera 2012.
2 See Heesterman 1962, pp. 8–11 for the *dīkṣita* and Bremmer 1983, pp. 92–93 for the Homeric material.
3 See Kellens 2012b, pp. 471–72. Compare Kellens 2010a, pp. 7–13; 1996, p. 101 and p. 103: 'Ces dieux forment bien un corps… subordonné à Ahura Mazdā et aux Aməšas Spəṇtas… le titre *yazata*-, d'une part affirme littéralement leur dignité sacrificielle personele, d'autre part se réfère à un cercle restreint de divinité dominé par la figure de Miθra'.
4 See Kellens 2006.
5 See Kellens 1994, p. 10. Kellens has of course modified his views somewhat, but the Gāthās are still for him liturgical compositions addressed to deities, etc. within the religious horizon of the Vedic hymns. Unlike the Vedic hymns, however, each Gāthā is a 'compact text corresponding to a specific ritual' (Kellens 2009, p. 268). See in particular Kellens 2007, pp. 434–36.
6 Panaino (2004, pp. 103–105) rightly insists on the religious dimension of the Gāthās and on the intention expressed therein to impact societal norms (whatever the scope of the impact may be). But does every 'religious reform' led by a charismatic person necessarily have a monotheistic agenda?
7 See Henrichs 1981. On the specifically Christian comparative bias in interpretations of the mystery cults, see Smith 1990, pp. 54–143.
8 See Seaford 1986 and Sfameni Gasparro 1985, pp. 6–25.
9 The idea of making the *magoi* of the late archaic and early classical periods anything other than Iranian priests, raised both in relation to Heraclitus' fragment (e.g. Dickie 2001) and the Derveni papyrus (e.g. Most 1997, Betegh 2004), is unacceptable. I discuss the issue in the last part.
10 Compare Kellens 2000, pp. 251–54.
11 Exceptions are Burkert 2007, Vasunia 2007, Horky 2009.
12 Compare Van der Leeuw 1938; De Vries 1977; Pettazzoni 1954; Eliade 1979, 2007; Bianchi 1975. Although Jonathan Z. Smith never discusses this topic, his non-hierophantic conception of ritual and religion is in my mind commensurable with the perspective adopted here. See in particular the essays in Smith 1988. In his contribution to Hamerton-Kelly 1987, Smith describes his views in somewhat provocative terms: 'ritual is the realm of the "little", the "petty", the "trivial"… ritual is "no big deal". The object of action that receives ritual attention is, more often than not, commonplace. The choice of this or that object for ritual attention often appears arbitrary. But what is of prime importance is its infinite and infinitesimal elaboration' (Smith 1987, pp. 194–95).
13 See Otto 1958.
14 See Oldenberg 2004, pp. 2–4.
15 Nietzsche's god would '*only* do wrong', thereby freeing life from guilt: 'it is not divine to take the punishment upon oneself – it is divine to take on the *guilt*' (Nietzsche 2005, p. 80).
16 See Versnel 1991. Compare Bianchi 1975 and Assmann 2006, pp. 139–54, for the place of magic in Egyptian religious lore. 'Magic, it is generally agreed today, refers to no objective reality; magic differs from religion as weeds differ from flowers, merely by negative social evaluation' (Parker 2005, p. 122).
17 See, for example, Bianchi 1975, p. 33.
18 See Brown's illuminating works on late antiquity and the emergence of the Christian church, e.g. Brown 1978. The rise of the mortal 'agents of the supernatural' characterizes the period (Brown 1978, pp. 11–26). The articulate clarity of the claims and demands made by these agents on behalf of the divine offered to men the possibility of putting an end to the uncertainty of the terms and expectations

of the exchange relation. Once and for all, security was purchased at the price of slavery (cf. Versnel 1990, pp. 194–205). 'Agents of the supernatural existed and could be seen to exist. Seldom has an age mobilized such skill in representing the faces of those men thought to be in contact with the divine [14]… The men we call "agents of the supernatural" were those who had brought down into the dubious and tension-ridden world beneath the moon a clarity and a stability associated with the unchanging heavens' (Brown 1978, pp. 16–17). See also Assmann 2008, pp. 76–126. The Yahwist covenant has a peculiar status, since Judaism moves in the direction set out by the model of god as an autocratic master.

19 See Sloterdijk 2009; compare Genesis 37: 34–35.

20 See Assmann 2001, p. 168.

21 See Benjamin 1997, p. 72.

22 'Why do we harp on about Original Sin? It wasn't on its account that we were expelled from Paradise, but because of the Tree of Life, lest we eat of its fruit' (Kafka 2006, p. 82).

23 See Vernant's admirable essay on Hesiod's Prometheus in Vernant 1990, pp. 183–201.

24 Compare Sourvinou-Inwood 1986. I cannot agree with her interpretation of the commensality of men and gods as basically a negative motif, i.e. a fraught situation of transgressing the boundaries of the human condition that only leads to bestiality. See note 28 below.

25 Vernant (1989) convincingly identifies the men of 'gold race' from *Works and Days* with those who share the gods' table before the dispute at Mekone in the *Theogony*.

26 See Gantz 1993, pp. 152–66. Compare Vernant 1990, p. 186: 'He [Prometheus] "offers" to Zeus the portion of beef that seems appetizing but is, in reality, inedible. Zeus accepts this share that appears to be the best one and so is tricked (although this trickery is in effect an integral part of the *metis* Zeus has premeditated in order to undo mankind). Zeus is angry'. In fact, Zeus asks for the part that is ostensibly offered to men. The success of the cunning design should rule out anger on the part of the designer. How to understand Zeus' anger?

27 Compare Rudhardt's comment: 'la crise de Méconè a déjà commencé, il y a déjà contestation entre les hommes et les dieux, lorsque Prométhée intervient. L'objet de cette contestation doit être ce dont l'action prométhéenne va définir les modalités, soit, précisément, le sacrifice' (Rudhardt and Reverdin 1981, p. 28). The story 'defines the status of man, midway between that of the beasts and that of the gods: It is characterized by sacrifice, fire for culinary and technical operations, the woman seen both as a wife and as a bestial stomach, and cereal foods and agricultural labor' (Vernant 1990, p. 192).

28 Despite what has been claimed (e.g. Sourvinou-Inwood 1986, p. 54) Sisyphus is not a trickster figure, for he is not a (foolish) rascal. Regarding the Plains Indians' 'Old Man-Coyote', an archetypal trickster figure, see Harrod 1987, pp. 54–65. Sisyphus' crime in the *Odyssey* 11 is his attempt to escape death. This defiance is the core of the myth, as Sourvinou-Inwood (1986, pp. 50–51) acknowledges. For Sourvinou-Inwood (1986, pp. 52ff.) the Sisyphus myth belongs to the type of story that limits human aspirations by articulating the boundaries of the human condition and setting out the dire consequences of wanting to transgress these. The punishment imposed on Sisyphus recalls his attempt to escape to the upper world and the futility of the adventure. 'Myths of transgression help define the normative' (Sourvinou-Inwood 1986, p. 57). This reading, in my view, overstates the similarities of the Sisyphus myth with those of Tityus and Tantalus. It assigns to it the intention of representing the place of humans in the cosmic order. 'Thus the three "sinners" in *Odyssey* 11 illustrate the offenses of forbidden sex, forbidden food, forbidden life; as – among other things – paradigms of these

transgressions they help articulate the existence of, and the need to respect, the cultural rules governing men's relationship with the gods, life and death and each other' (Sourvinou-Inwood 1986, p. 55). This interpretation is an application of the general structuralist thesis (cf. Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, pp. 20–21) of the so-called Paris School, which she shares: 'It is in myth that the limits of the human condition and of proper behaviour and the exploration of its transgression are explored' (Sourvinou-Inwood 1986, p. 54). One must admit, for instance, that it is strange to include among 'cultural rules governing men's relationship with the gods' a rule which forbids sex with a deity, presumably when it is initiated by a mortal, since gods regularly ravish mortals in myths. But Tityus is not a man at all. Nor is the 'prohibition' in any way meaningful. The myth of Tityus does *not* belong to the group of myths (of banishment) that may be understood as defining the human condition in reference to an ideal state, e.g. a very long life without toil, commensality with gods and hence eating the same type of food, and generation without sex. The opposite of current human diet (e.g. meat consumed at sacrifice and cultivated cereals) is the food shared with the gods *in illo tempore*; the opposite of procreation through sex is autochthonous generation that men (*anthrōpoi*) enjoyed before their falling out with the gods – and *not* sex with the gods. Compare Vernant 1990, pp. 151–52, 173–75. How one should assess the significance of the myths of a 'past' ideal state is not my concern here. In my mind, one detail of the Sisyphus myth, probably belonging to its earliest layer, points in a different direction. Sisyphus was apparently a universal king with unrestrained ambitions. The myth must have contained a circumstance that explained Sisyphus' premature departure for Hades. When Ares captures the fugitive Sisyphus and hands him over to Thanatos, the cunning king asks to be allowed to speak to his wife. He then secretly orders her 'to send no more sacrifices down to the king and queen of the realm of the dead' (Kerényi 1974, p. 76). When the netherworld rulers receive no libations and offerings for a long time they agree to let him go to the upper world in order to remedy the problem. Kerényi (1974, p. 76) points out that it 'seems from this tale that Sisyphos was not only a primaeval man but also a primaeval king and lord of almost the whole earth'. If Kerényi's inference is accepted, Sisyphus' status and his ambitions (notably to escape death) make him, like the Iranian figures I presently introduce, a rival of the gods.

29 See Dumézil 1971, p. 161.
30 See Dumézil 1971, pp. 160–76.
31 See Dumézil 1971, p. 175: 'il se sent plus proche de Bṛhaspati, le chapelain des dieux, que des démons qu'il sert: maglré la guerre, il accueil le fils de Bṛhaspati comme disciple et le protège contre les démons que scandalise et inquiète à juste titre cette présence ennemie, et finalement il lui livre le secret qui jusqu'alors, à travers lui seul, faisait la supériorité des démons'.
32 See my discussion in the final chapter.
33 See Christensen 1931, pp. 79–80.
34 See Christensen 1931, p. 75. According to the Pahlavi text Mēnōg ī Xrat, Yim, Frēdōn and Kay Us were immortal but were deceived by Ahriman and 'changed' into mortals. The nature of the deception was related in the case of Kay Us in the now lost Sūdgar Nask, whose outlines is given in the Pahlavi *Dēnkard* 9, 22.5–6. The demon Xēšm corrupts the king's soul and as a result he is no longer content with his sovereignty on earth but wants to rule over the heavens too. Hence he offends against the gods.
35 See Dumézil 1971, pp. 153–57, 173–205; Kellens 2000, pp. 248–49.
36 See Christensen 1931, p. 28 n. 2. It is hard to see how the Vedic and Iranian legendary figures developed their similar magical characters if, according to Christensen, both are based on a real Iranian king. Starting from the premise of a real king, it would be difficult to explain the development of two independent traditions

that nevertheless made the magical work of immortality the central feature of the respective figures. Compare Kellens 1976, pp. 37–40.

37 See Kellens 2000, pp. 246–48.

38 See Kellens 2001, pp. 728–34. Kellens' pages on Yima are very interesting. What is said about the nature of Yima's sin in the Gāthās may be more substantial than the rather obscure Y 32.8. 'Il est possible que la triple faute de Yima (Yt 19. 34–38) soit en rapport avec la triple extension de la terre… et elle a peut-être consisté, dans la confrontation avec la difficulté, à soupçonner Ahura Mazdā de mensonge… Et si Yima a commis une seule faute fatale, il est possible qu'elle ait été inscrite dans un projet qui lui était personnel, conduisait à l'impasse et avait pour conséquence inéluctable, comme nous allons voir, l'intrusion du démoniaque dans le monde matériel' (Kellens 2001, p. 731). See also Kellens 2010b, pp. 755–56. Even within the Zoroastrian frame represented in Vīdēvdād 2, the figure remains problematic: his divine commission does not include the immortalization of earthly creatures, which he undertakes on his own initiative. 'L'homme Yima a successivement rejeté un plan divin et modifié un autre' (Kellens 2012a, p. 13).

39 Yahwism was not monotheistic by the standards of the later Judaism. See De Moor 1997 and Bottéro 2000. It was primarily characterized by an exclusive allegiance to one god. There was also a strong tendency toward exclusive worship among the Mesopotamian cities of the second millennium BC, since the worship was basically the daily maintenance of the gods in their cult images. See Bottéro 2001. Compare Assmann 2006, pp. 65–70, 2008, pp. 90–126 on the role of 'revealed' texts in recasting the question of the plurality of religious traditions in Abrahamic religions in terms of the opposition between 'true' and 'false' religions.

40 To add another tale about the difficult relationship between gods and men to our list, I recall the Mesopotamian myth of Atrahasis. See Dalley 1989, pp. 1–38. The myth presumably 'explained' why the denizens of the Mesopotamian temple cities of the third millennium BC lived the way they did. The primary task of the citizenry, 'officially', was the service of the gods. But why present this as a settlement on the back of conflicts? In the myth, men remind themselves they are only human and not gods. This is, however, only one side of the issue. The settlement with the gods also gives humans a breathing space, to speak with Kafka. The 'whole world of the gods', he writes about the Greeks, 'was only a way to keep that which was decisive at a distance from the earthly body, to provide air for human breath' (Kafka 2006, p. 127).

41 See Dalley 1989, p. 150.

42 See Dalley 1989, pp. 120–25. The snake that steals the plant of 'rejuvenation' in the Sumerian version (Dalley 1989, p. 119) and thus thwarts Gilgamesh's enterprise is not so much an infernal creature as a symbol of fate.

43 See Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, pp. 49–56.

44 'The shaman is pre-eminently an ecstatic. Now on the plane of primitive religions ecstasy signifies the soul's flight to Heaven, or its wanderings about the earth, or, finally its descent to the subterranean world, among the dead. The shaman undertakes these ecstatic journeys for four reasons: first, to meet the God of Heaven face to face and bring him an offering from the community; second, to seek the soul of a sick man, which has supposedly wandered away from his body or been carried off by demons; third, to guide the soul of a dead man to its new abode; fourth, to add to his knowledge by frequenting higher beings' (Eliade 1958, p. 95). I emphasize that at issue, e.g. in the mysteries, is not specific shamanic techniques such as climbing trees or 'magic flight', etc. but a character type, such as the 'divine man', that shares some of the abilities of the shaman. What genetic connection there might have been between the shaman of the north and central Asia and the *yogi* or the *mantis* can only be a matter of speculation. Compare Eliade 1964, pp. 407ff. I

cannot accept Eliade's speculative reduction (1958, pp. 81–102) of the *Männerbund* initiation rite to the shamanic type. Assimilation of certain elements of the shamanistic ideology by warrior clubs is possible, but not genetic development of the *Männerbund* rites from the shamanic initiation per se. See my discussion in the final part of the book.

45 The Odysseus myth as we find in the *Odyssey* may be understood as a visit to the underworld and return to life. See Frame 1978. Versnel (1993) asserts the shamanistic background of the myth against casting it as a simple initiatory scheme. 'In the context of "eccentric" experiences there is quite a difference between the statement that Odysseus represents a youth during his initiation and the well-known theory that both fairy-tales and (a specific type of) myths, including the one of Odysseus, go back to shaman tales – the records of their ecstatic experiences in the "other world"' (Versnel 1993, p. 72 n.147). Compare Meuli 1935, pp. 153ff.

46 See Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, pp. 49–70.

47 See Nagy 1999, pp. 26–41; and Watkins 1995, pp. 68–93, pp. 173–78.

48 Compare Vernant 1991, pp. 220–43.

49 See Vernant 2006, pp. 321–32. Seasonal and fertility rites are a different matter. See Smith 1990, pp. 91–104. Versnel and others see in the Babylonian New Year *akitu* a 'reversal festival', where the king is ritually humiliated, etc.; and more generally he understands the myth related in the *Epic of Creation* (*Enuma Elish*) as comprising the 'scenario' of the New Year 'ritual drama', whereby the restoration of the king and his sacred marriage ensures the renewal of the world. See Versnel 1993, pp. 32–37. Smith (1978, pp. 71–74) rejects this interpretation – rightly in my mind. The humiliated king, according to him, is not a 'pious Babylonian king' but an impious invader brought to submission, then restored by the god of the city, having declared his allegiance. 'The Hellenistic Babylonian New Year festival is either a repetition of an earlier ritual typologically understood to describe the current situation of foreign domination, to have contemporary political as well as religious implications; or the text is a new, Hellenistic composition' (72). Smith suggests to view apocalypticism as 'wisdom lacking a royal patron', where the disappearance of the 'native' royalty, which presided over the renewal of rightful rule and law in the land, leads either to 'prophecy against foreigners rather than in favor of a specific king', or the 'cosmicization' of the king, 'a thorough-going apocalypse' (81).

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Part I

Preamble

The status of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās is one of the major issues of Avesta scholarship. In the Young Avestan texts the word *daēva* has the sense of demon, and the *daēvas* have more or less the same nature as other mischievous supernatural beings. In the Gāthās, on the other hand, the word seems to designate divine beings, however much disapproved. The present consensus of scholars about the 'original' divinity of the *daēvas* has a troubled history behind it, not just scientific debates but also ideological polemics.[1] This makes the agreement all the more significant. What does it mean, though, and what exactly is at stake in it? What has been settled and what is still outstanding?

In the conclusion to his book on the history of Avesta scholarship, *La quatrième naissance de Zarathushtra*, Kellens gives an idea of where things stand today with regard to our topic:

> La situation, on en conviendra, n'est pas banale: qu'a-t-il bien pu se passer pour qu'un peuple renverse le titre de dieu en celui de démon? Notre itinéraire s'est achevé au cœur de cette question qui n'a jamais reçu de réponse adéquate. La démonisation des daivas ne peut être une particularité globalement iranienne… car il fut un temps où les Iraniens ont appelé leur dieux *daivas*, et certaines tribus sur la longue durée, comme en témoignent l'inscription de Xerxès au Ve siècle avant l'ère commune et l'onomastique sogdienne au IXe siècle après.
>
> (Kellens 2006, p. 149)

Kellens' statement that the question of the Iranian treatment of the *daēvas* has not been given an adequate answer to date requires utmost attention. Twelve years earlier he had dismissed the same 'témoins' (Kellens 1994, pp. 15–16) and asserted that the demonic status of the *daēvas* is a 'constitutive and fundamental fact of the language and religious mentality of the Iranians' (Kellens 1994, p. 26). According to Kellens in *Le panthéon*, the separation of Vedic Indians and Iranians is the formative event not just of their linguistic but also of their religious histories. The *daēvas* were never Iranian gods. This position itself is at odds with his view of the matter a few years earlier in the Introduction to *Les textes vieil-avestiques*, where we read that the *daēvas*, the

'traditional gods of the Indo-Iranian pantheon', were indeed the gods of the 'Gāthic circle' some time in its past, and that it is precisely their condemnation that constitutes the circle's 'religious innovation' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 30). These significant changes in Kellens' view of the matter show its elusive nature. In this part I will analyse the terms and frames in which the question of the character of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās has been posed in Avesta scholarship.

The repudiation of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās and the significance of this condemnation have been broached in Western scholarship in four perspectives: the (1) monotheistic, (2) *ahura*-cult, (3) ethno-historical and (4) ritualistic frames. I will examine them one by one in the following four chapters. We will see that all four are problematic, some more seriously than others, and fail to account for the Gāthic treatment of the *daēvas*. The aim of the discussion is to be conceptually comprehensive with respect to the issues and claims raised in the four perspectives regarding the status of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās.

Notes

1 How else should one interpret Duchesne-Guillemin's mention of his colleagues' religious persuasions in his compte-rendu of their views of Zarathuštra (Duchesne-Guillemin 1995, pp. 39–48)? He believes that their religious convictions are relevant for a proper evaluation of their debates.

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1   Monotheistic thesis

As long as Zarathuštra is viewed as a monotheistic prophet and the Gāthās are understood more or less as quasi-Biblical sermons, one hardly feels the need to ask why the ancient Iranian gods were repudiated. It is the prophet's business to denounce false gods and advocate the one true god, in analogy with the stereotype Biblical prophet.[1] If those who support this thesis have gone beyond this simple affirmation and discussed the status of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās, it has been for the purpose of proving their view against their opponents.

For Bartholomae (1924) in *Zarathuštras Leben und Lehre*, the basic innovation of Zarathuštra is his replacement of polytheism with monotheism (Bartholomae 1924, p. 12). But it is not just a matter of denouncing the inherited gods or renaming them (e.g. Agni becomes Ātar). More is needed if all associations with the inherited deities are to be dissolved. The very appellation 'god' is tainted. 'Gods' (*daēvas*) become 'false gods'. The word *daēva* ('god') then gives way to *ahura*, also meaning 'god', recalled from obscurity by the prophet for the purpose of serving as divine appellation in his new religion. It is only later that the dualism of god and 'false god' (or idol: 'Götze') coarsens into that of god and devil ('Teufel'). The introduction of monotheism centred on Mazdā is the first stage of the 'development' of Zarathuštra's doctrine. But the second stage, that of dualism, already compromises the inchoate monotheism. 'Das Grübeln über die Herkunft des dem Menschen Schädlichen, des Bösen und Falschen in der Welt brachte den Propheten in Widerspruch zu der von ihm selber gelehrten monotheistischen Weltanschauung mit dem einen guten Gott' (Bartholomae 1924, p. 13). Bartholomae understands Zoroastrian dualism as a solution to the problem of evil posed by Zarathuštra's monotheism, which is itself simply assumed or rather conjured up through the assimilation of the 'Iranian prophet' to the figure of Biblical prophet: Zoroastrianism is 'entitled' to the description 'monotheism' just as much as Semitic religions and in particular Christianity (Bartholomae 1924, p. 13). Apparently, for Bartholomae, the problem of the existence of evil in the world is irresolvable within the monotheistic framework (see below). After all, even in the first stage, the supposed monotheism is no sooner pronounced than withdrawn. The uneasy

relation between monotheism and dualism is in part due to the divergent motivations that inform them. Dualism is supposed to be the prophet's answer to the question of the existence of evil. Having set up his one true god, Zarathuštra realized that the existence of evil in the world remained unexplained; or if this is intellectualizing the issue, he did not want the slur of evil to taint the character of his benevolent god. Hence there had to be powerful dark forces and evil men that were responsible for the misery and cruelty one observed in the world. The exculpation of the one true god in the face of evil becomes an overriding concern as soon as it is noticed that a contradiction exists between his goodness and his uniqueness as an all-powerful god. In the perspective taken by Bartholomae and others who follow him, the thesis of monotheism gives rise to the dualistic justification of the benevolent god, which nonetheless undermines the monotheism it was invoked to armour.

As in the Augustinian theodicy, the postulate of the 'free will' is used in this perspective for exculpating the monotheistic god. The principle of free will is important for Augustine because it allows him to divert the responsibility for evil away from his God.[2] Free will is nothing if it is determined by external causes. The extent to which this principle is a theodicy motif can be seen in Augustine's argument in *De libero arbitrio* that humans are not able to have a good volition in the absence of grace (*De lib. arb*. 3.18.51). Humans do not have to be evil. If they are, it is their choice and responsibility, not God's; but at the same time, they cannot be good on their own and require God's grace to be so. They are responsible for their sins to the extent that they use the 'good' (e.g. free will) created by God for perverse ends. The original accusation raised against God is thus reduced to the seemingly manageable question: why does God create a creature with free will? The answer is: 'because it is good'. It is true that this is a tautological answer, since everything God creates is good. Still, it diverts the original accusation, albeit at the expense of the perspicuity of the explanation: one exchanges a culpable God for a mysterious God, which expresses nothing more than the limits of human intellect. But Augustine feels the weight of the question: why *would* a free creature turn away from its creator, and whence the perversion?

> But perhaps you are going to ask: since the will is moved when it turns away from an immutable good to a mutable good, from whence does this movement arise? It [the movement] is actually evil, even though a free will is to be counted among the good things, since without it no one can live rightly. For if that movement, that is, the will's turning away from the Lord God, is without doubt a sin, how can we say that God is the author of the sin? Thus the movement will not be from God. From whence then will it come? If I respond thus to your querying – that I do not know – perhaps you will be disappointed – but nevertheless I would respond truly. For that which is nothing cannot be known.
>
> (*De lib. arb*. 2.20.54)

Augustine's casuistry aside, his disowning of the final question has its logic: the unmotivated turn away from God has to be either completely arbitrary or grounded in human nature. Augustine chooses the first, since the second would again point the finger of accusation at God.

Augustine's doctrine of free will as a theodicy must be placed in the context of his battle against Manichaean dualism.[3] It is meant to justify the one creator god. The concerns and motives of such a theodicy, whether purely dualistic or 'ethical', or indeed a mixture of the two, are in no way native to the Gāthās. They are pressing only for a mind that is steeped in Judeo-Christian monotheism and is exercised by its theological problems. The scholar imports into the Gāthās the theodicy motif along with the assumption of Gāthic monotheism: an accused God must be as intolerable for the Iranian 'thinker' as it is for the Christian theologian. Then, the scholar will have to deal with the problem of reconciling monotheism with dualism, introduced in order to exculpate the one true God in the face of evil. From the beginning this problem, which obsesses the mind of the proponent of Gāthic monotheism, supplants the question of the repudiation of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās, perceived as natural for a monotheistic religion. The trajectory of Plato's theology from the *Republic* to the *Laws* shows the dualistic consequences of the concern with the problem of evil once the highest being is defined in moral terms. Under the pressure of the identification of the 'Good' with the divine *nous* (cf. *Philebus* 22c), the monotheistic tendency of his philosophical outlook leads not to monotheism but to cosmological dualism. In the *Republic* 617e evil in the world is accounted to human freedom, but in the *Laws* 896e and 906a Plato seems to place the blame at the door of a cosmic evil, the rival of the good demiurge. Plato's overriding moral-philosophical motive in forming his conception of the divine is well known. In the *Timaeus* 37a, for instance, he defines the good demiurge as 'the best of everything which can be comprehended by thought and which is eternal'. This little statement is the birthplace, or perhaps the baptism,[4] of the concept of god, e.g. in Christian theology. The concern with the moral goodness of a god that has disposition over the world inevitably leads to the limitation of his powers.[5]

Scholars working within Bartholomae's frame emphasize the 'ethical' motivation that he sees underlying the dualistic 'second stage' and quickly pass over Zarathuštra's supposed monotheism, whose nature becomes ever more elusive. The affirmation of Gāthic monotheism, if not simply assumed, is asserted on supposed typological grounds, as we will see in detail in the works of Pettazzoni and Gnoli. One can see how this obligatory double reference creates formidable difficulties in understanding the process of the 'demonization' of the 'old gods'. The postulation of monotheism obliges the prophet to view the *daēvas* as false gods, that is, non-existent; dualism, on the other hand, requires the existence of the 'powers of darkness' strong enough to stand their ground against the benevolent god. The interpreter thus feels pressed to dissolve the first moment, i.e. monotheism, quickly whether by making it a 'cultural background' or assigning it to a different dimension,

'theological', which is for all intents and purposes an empty tag. Then, the so-called 'ethical dualism' becomes the basic principle of understanding the 'demonization'.

Henning (1951) sees in 'ethical dualism' the *differentia specifica* of Zoroastrian religion.

> It seems to me [he says] that a dualism of this kind can have been built only on a pre-existing monotheism, on the belief that one God, a good God, was responsible for the world. For this reason I would claim that the religion in which Zoroaster grew up was purely monotheistic. Zoroaster's religion (as are most dualistic movements) is best understood as a *protest against monotheism*. Wherever a monotheistic religion establishes itself, this protest is voiced – if there is a man with a brain in his head. Any claim that the world was created by a good and benevolent god must provoke the question why the world, in the outcome, is so very far from good. Zoroaster's answer, that the world had been created by a good god *and* an evil spirit, of equal power, who set out to spoil the good work, is a complete answer: it is a logical answer.
>
> (Henning 1951, p. 46)

Zarathuštra was 'a man with a brain in his head' (the 'thinker') who understood that two sides are needed, because it would be illogical to reckon the evil in the world to a benevolent creator. Or, to put it in another way: two sides are needed, of 'equal powers', if the good side is to be kept free of evil.

Generally speaking, the idea that monotheism thought-through gives rise to a dualistic protest is a take-it-or-leave-it assertion. Obviously, one cannot say that monotheism as such leads to dualism. The primacy of the moral qualification of the one god and the philosophical demand for the consistency of the proposed theodicy are the necessary conditions for the dualistic development. From the other side, not every dualism has developed from monotheism, as a protest against it. Manichaean and Marcionite dualisms, despite their differences, are based on the antagonism of creation and salvation: material life itself is evil. It is not the creator god that has to be defended against the charge of allowing evil to take place in the world. There is, on the one hand, the evil creator of the material world and, on the other, the saving god of 'spirits' imprisoned in matter – there are not two creators, one benevolent and one malevolent.[6] The view that the one creator god stands in need of justification (under Gnostic pressure) in the face of evil in the world and that this justification consists in finding another agent (i.e. possessed of 'free will') to take on the responsibility for evil – this theodicy goes back to Augustine and his polemics against Gnosticism, and is foreign to the Avesta.

Aside from this, Henning's argument, strikingly formulated as it may be, runs into serious problems as soon as one tries to work out what this 'protest' implies. The perception of evil in the world under the conditions stated above

leads to the postulation of an evil or mischievous cosmic creator (whether beside the good one or uniquely). That Augustine thought he could solve his theodicy problem by invoking man's free will – making man responsible – should not be taken as a contrary proof.[7] In any case, the Augustinian postulate of free will is not oriented to the 'moral dignity' of man. The idea that the specific 'moral' achievement of Zarathuštra is his 'noble vision of Man as the arbiter between Good and Evil' (Henning 1951, p. 45) is a philosophically and historically stranded conception. In Henning's account of the religion of the Gāthās, we in fact have two postulates, one of monotheism, and one of the protest against it. Henning takes over the first, which he rightly finds at odds with the dualistic belief 'in two highest beings, the Good God, and the Evil antitheos' (Henning 1944, p. 291), but instead of letting it go he turns it into the background of the 'prophet's mission'. How should we understand the repudiation of the *daēvas* in this scheme? If in fact there was a theodicy need for an accursed 'antitheos', why not let the *daēvas* play that role, since there are clear expressions of their condemnation in the Gāthās? The reason seems to be that for Henning the 'background monotheism' of the prophet's mission was a 'recently' developed condition: an emerging monotheism that is finally accomplished by the prophet, who at the same time 'reacts' to this monotheism by developing a radical dualism.[8]

Henning sees in the 'entities' associated with Mazdā the trace of an earlier polytheistic condition. Emphasizing that the move from polytheism to monotheism cannot be viewed as an evolutionary process but requires a 'negation or a revolution', Gnoli (2009, p. 99) believes that something like Henning's thesis would be a 'plausible response to the problem of the relation between monotheism and dualism in Zoroaster': 'de voir dans le dualism une réaction contre un monothéisme *in fieri* et dans la condamnation des daivas l'aboutissement d'un monothéisme réalisé par négation de l'ancien polythéisme, grâce à l'œuvre d'un réformateur religieux'. The condemnation of the *daēvas* that one finds in the Gāthās would, then, have to be interpreted as a *coup de grâce* on polytheism delivered by the 'prophet'. If so, one would expect to see in the Gāthās two simultaneous and only seemingly contradictory impulses: accomplishing the monotheistic tendency and, at the same time, exculpating the recently elevated god in the face of evil. There should be, on one side, a negation of the polytheistic gods, the *daēvas*, and on the other, an affirmation of the existence of an evil 'antitheos' who can be blamed for worldly misfortunes. If these two really constituted the raison d'être of the prophet's mission, one would have to deem that he did not articulate that mission in the Gāthās. The condemnation of the *daēvas* that one finds throughout the Gāthās is for specific acts (e.g. Y 32.3), which presupposes their existence in some sense. As the 'bad intuition' (*aka- mainiiu-*), Henning's evil antitheos has deceived the *daēvas*, we are told in Y 32.5; the *daēvas* in turn cheat the mortal out of 'good life and immortality'.[9] Why place the *daēvas* as mediators between mortals and the 'deceitful intuition' (*drəguuaṇt- mainiiu-*)? How does one account for this, that the equally powerful antitheos whose existence one

wants to affirm is placed for his worldly activity in a relationship of dependence with 'false gods' whose existence one wants to deny?

Gershevitch feels more strongly than Henning that Zarathuštra's monotheism has to be maintained alongside his 'ethical dualism' as an equally important 'tenet'. In 1959, in the 'Introduction' to his edition of the Mihr Yašt, he thought he could resolve the tension between the two 'tenets' by shunting them off to different dimensions: 'these two tenets pertain to an ethical dualism tempered by a monotheism which is centered in Ahura Mazdā' (Gershevitch 1959, p. 9). The idea of a dualism 'tempered' by monotheism is so obscure that he abandons it a few pages later where he elaborates further the constituents of each dimension. Here Gershevitch moves closer to Henning's position, except that unlike the latter, who had 'understood' monotheism as a system overcome in ethical dualism, Gershevitch happily juxtaposes them: 'a dualism on two planes, involving opposition respectively between "Truth" and "Falsehood" on the one hand, and Spənta and Aŋra Mainyu on the other; a monotheism centered in Ahura Mazdāh, who has created, or emanated, seven supernatural aspects of himself, the Entities' (Gershevitch 1959, p. 12). The other *ahuras* are assimilated to Mazdā as his 'emanations'. Gershevitch thus constructs a self-styled monotheism.[10] The juxtaposition of the two seemingly heterogeneous religious views is made explicit in his article of 1964: 'Two religions, therefore, appear to have been syncretized by the prophet: a monotheism centered in a god of whom Truth is an emanation, and a dualism in which Truth is primordial' (Gershevitch 1964, p. 12).[11] The embarrassing 'evil spirit' who is 'opposed' to 'god's creative organ' as a 'destructive organ or agent' is the prophet's solution to the problem of 'adapting' his monotheism to the dualism of truth and falsehood. 'Naturally not even Zarathuštra could amalgamate a dualism with monotheism without incurring inconsistencies. But the system he achieved displays cohesion and structural balance, and complies with the most exacting rational, ethical, and spiritual aspirations' (Gershevitch 1959, p. 47). One wonders what the 'inconsistencies' might be, given the comprehensive reassurance that follows their admission.

For Gershevitch, Zarathuštra's monotheism means the rejection of the *daēvas* as 'false gods'. Their 'reality' is that of their worshippers' belief in them. Here is how he sees this idea expressed in the Gāthās:

> [The prophet] granted them existence… only as thoughts, conceived by erroneously thinking men ("worst men"[12]) who had taken for guideline original Evil Thought. Even erroneous thinking, by definition, amounts to choosing, to a rejection of what is correct. The gods, therefore, existing as thoughts, had it in them to *think*, i.e. choose. This is why in *Ys* 30.6 Zoroaster can say that the gods themselves chose wrongly. Being thoughts, however wrongly conceived, they *could* have bethought themselves within their human thinkers' minds, and opted for extinction by rejecting their wrong conception.
>
> (Gershevitch 1975, p. 80)

Having declared that the reality of the *daēvas* is that of their conception in the minds of their worshippers, Gershevitch wants them nevertheless to be able to 'think' themselves into some form of existence (apparently capable of reflection) in order to 'opt for extinction' (their own) because of their human hosts' 'wrong conception' of them – whatever this sequence might mean. The *daēvas* have to be, on the one hand, mere 'thoughts', so that one can sensibly speak of monotheism, and, on the other, agents of sorts capable of being blamed, etc., since otherwise Gershevitch's theorizations completely lose touch with the text. Hence the incomprehensible 'thoughts' that 'bethink' themselves in and out of existence.[13]

Despite small variations in his opinion throughout the years, Gershevitch has always viewed the 'elaboration' of a dualism based on the opposition of truth and falsehood and its 'adaptation' to monotheism as Zarathuštra's specific contributions. The prophet 'found' the Mazdaean monotheism and 'elaborated' the fundamental dualism of truth and falsehood (Gershevitch 1959, p. 47). Henning thought that Zoroaster conceived his dualism as a pro-test against monotheism. For Gershevitch it is a question of 'adapting' it to the monotheistic system that the prophet 'found'. In his final publication on the matter he put it somewhat differently:

> That Zoroaster built his doctrine on a pre-existing monotheism, has been self-evident from the moment Henning (1951), p. 46, explained why any other origin is out of the question.[14] But whereas Henning called Zoroaster's religion a 'protest' against monotheism, I should prefer to call it a stunning solution of the impasse *inherent* in monotheism.
>
> (Gershevitch 1995, p. 5)

The 'inherent impasse' of monotheism is the existence of evil in the world;[15] and the 'stunning solution' consists in the introduction of the notion of free will and the opposition of a destructive agent to the benevolent god. Since the point is not to explain the origin of evil in the world or enhance man's ethical stature,[16] but to exculpate the benevolent god, Gershevitch's 'stunning solution' should imply the limitation of the power of the god by an equally powerful 'evil spirit'. Zarathuštra discovered the dualistic solution 'en route of his heading, confirmed monotheist as he was, for the highest of goals, that of safeguarding the *perfection* of God one and only from being maligned on account of the existence of evil and wrong' (Gershevitch 1995, p. 6). Freedom of choice in this scheme is not the ground of the 'dignity of man' but may at most be understood as the condition of the potency of the malevolent spirit, for it has to be explained why, despite his being the creator of man, the benevolent god cannot secure his creature's making the 'right choice', i.e. to side with his creator. Gershevitch, however, wants to resist the inevitable consequence of the exculpation: the restriction of the good god's power.

In *The Avestan Hymn to Miθra*, Gershevitch (1959, p. 46) maintains that although the 'Fiendish Spirit' is begotten, like his good twin, by Mazdā, his

becoming evil is subsequent to his 'emanation' and only due to 'insubordin-
ation', which implies free will. In this way, he believes, both monotheism and
moral perfection of the one god are preserved. But he must have felt he had
not satisfactorily discharged the issue, since in 1964 he has his imagination
contribute further to the picture.

> The conclusion the Fiendish Spirit, too, was an emanation of Ahura
> Mazdāh's is unavoidable. But we need not go so far as to assume that
> Zarathuštra imagined the Devil as having directly issued from God.
> Rather, since free will, too, is a basic tenet of Zarathuštrianism, we may
> think of the 'childbirth' implied in the idea of twinship as having con-
> sisted in the emanation by God of undifferentiated 'spirit', *which only
> at the emergence of free will* split into two 'twin' Spirits of opposite alle-
> giance … the fact that the Fiendish Spirit had chosen Falsehood would
> all but obliterate his original connection with God.
>
> (Gershevitch 1964, p. 13)

I take it that the 'emergence of free will' takes place in the 'undifferen-
tiated spirit', although the formulation is unclear. Free will exculpates the
god through inserting an ontological nullity between him and his 'emanation'
turned evil. But the idea operates under difficult conditions: it is not just the
moral integrity of the god that has to be protected but also his being the
unique source of all there is, his absoluteness. Thus, somehow 'free will' has
to split itself and give rise to two free wills, which go on to constitute the
twin spirits. Aside from the obvious problem that none of this is found in the
Gāthās, it is just bad philosophizing. The will is, according to its concept, uni-
tary.[17] In any case, Gershevitch abandons this idea, too, and finds yet another
role for his 'free will'.

> Thought, *mainyu* in Gathic, is twinship, a single fertilized egg dividing,
> seeing that good or right for example are un*think*able, except against the
> foil of evil and wrong … He [Zarathuštra] can have no doubt that noth-
> ing would have been easier for God than to see to evil and wrong never
> come into existence. But had God seen to this, his name would not have
> been *Mazdā* and Man would have been unthinking as are hens, turnips
> or stones. Hence only *dualism*, so the perceptive discoverer of it informs
> us in Yasna 30.3, can avail to render monotheism truly impregnable to
> maligners: there *can* be no Spənta Mainyu, except against the foil of Aŋra
> Mainyu.
>
> (Gershevitch 1995, p. 6)

It is dualism as such that is needful in the mind of Gershevitch's Zarathuštra
and not the free will per se: without oppositional concepts man would be
like hen or turnip, whereas God wanted him to be a thinking creature.[18] It is
unclear why Gershevitch believes without binary moral concepts man would

be reduced to a turnip, or, less dramatically, why these concepts define man's thinking as such. In any case, the 'stunning solution' would work only if one could show that the existence of what is bad is necessary for moral-conceptual clarity, e.g. that the concept of evil necessitates the existence of evil, which is, of course, not possible. Moral exculpation of the one god inevitably leads to the restriction of his power and, if effected dualistically, to the negation of his uniqueness. The existence of evil can become an accusation against a creator god only in the frame of a moralistic monotheism. Historically, this happened in the context of Gnosticism. Now, we find no trace of this situation in the Gāthās; there is no inkling here that the supreme god *might be* suspected of complicity with evil. Not every form of opposition (e.g. 'dualism') is oriented to restoring the moral integrity of the one god.

Gnoli continues to put the relation of dualism and monotheism in the perspective of a monotheistic system in need of theodicy. In his 1980 book *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland*, he sees in the Gāthās a

> conception of dualism that is closely connected with the monotheistic faith, not in the sense, as it has been said, that this dualism is a protest against monotheism but in the sense that it is a natural consequence of it, owing to the necessity of explaining the evil that is in the world. In every monotheism there is the germ of a dualism that it is hard to confine within merely moral bounds.
>
> (Gnoli 1980, p. 182)

The existence of evil in the world can be reconciled with monotheism only by way of dualism. It is not clear what Gnoli means here by 'moral bounds': that 'ethical dualism' ineluctably ends up in 'theological dualism'? In any case, Gnoli understands Gāthic 'dualism' to be grounded in the justification of the monotheistic god in the face of worldly evil. Thirty years later, he restates the 'moral' motivation of justifying the unique god:

> Le refus net et conscient de toutes les divinités du polythéisme par une personnalité qui enseignait un dualisme éthique radical présupposait vraisemblablement la négation de toutes les divinités, en tant que fausses divinités, et était dirigé contre une religion qui était véritablement et pure-ment polythéiste et peut être aussi à l'encontre d'autres monolâtries de type différent, soit que c'était implicite à la religion nouvelle, qui, cara-ctérisée par un monothéisme total, voulait ainsi donner une réponse au problème de l'origine du mal.
>
> (Gnoli 2009, p. 100)

Does the monotheism that starts with a total negation of polytheism save its basic character once it is forced to accommodate an anti-god? One has to agree with Kellens (2006, p. 110) when he describes Henning's 'dualism' as 'une religion à part entière'. The dualistic solution to the problem of evil

generally leads to the dissolution of the monotheism it was supposed to immunize. No sooner is the one true god proclaimed against 'the polytheism of the traditional religion' (Pettazzoni 1954, p. 7) than he (Pettazzoni: 'Principle of Good') finds himself in mortal strife with an equally powerful anti-god ('Principle of Evil'). If the rejection of the 'traditional gods' as *false* in favour of the one *true* god is the mark of monotheism,[19] admitting a fundamentally independent adversary, whatever one cares to call it, is its abrogation, unless one is happy to manipulate definitions to make them fit one's purposes. In his 2009 article, Gnoli more or less takes the same position on dualism as he earlier had in *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland* (1980, pp. 183–85) in his discussion of Pettazzoni's view. 'En effet, le dualisme ne serait ainsi pas la négation du monothéisme, mais le monothéisme lui-même, sous ses deux aspects opposés et contraires. Il ne serait pas non plus antérieur au monothéisme, mais en serait plutôt le reflet'. It is not dualism in general that is at issue here but a dualism that is meant as a solution to the problem of evil in the world. This is the raison d'être of 'ethical dualism' according to Henning, Gershevitch and Gnoli himself. 'The answer which Zoroaster gave to this eternal problem… resides in the clearly dualistic conception of his monotheism' (Gnoli 1980, p. 184). But the dualistically exculpated god is no longer monotheistic because he loses his exclusive disposition over the world. Goethe's 'extraordinary saying' applies here too: 'nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse'.[20] In Gnoli's opinion, the distinction between, on the one hand, the (supposed) Gāthic 'opposition of the two principles of Aša and Drug, between which the two Mainyus who come from Ahura Mazdā make their choice',[21] and, on the other, 'the simple opposition between Ahura Mazdā and Angra Mainyu' (Gnoli 1980, p. 210) forestalls the charge of incompatibility of monotheism and dualism. I will presently argue that the distinction between an 'ethical' dualism and a 'metaphysical' one is meaningless in the frame of the problem of evil where dualism is supposed to do its service. The epithet 'ethical' in Gnoli's scheme is in reality meant to protect the imperilled 'total monotheism'.[22]

Gnoli places the prophet's activities in a post-polytheistic condition where religious life is mainly defined by 'monolatry centered on the figure of Ahura Mazdā'. Zoroaster would introduce an 'authentic monotheism' characterized by a 'radical ethical dualism', and to this phase also belongs 'the condemnation of the *daēvas* as gods and that, too, of the ancient polytheism' (Gnoli 2009, p. 102).[23] The notion of 'ethical dualism', for Gnoli as well as Gershevitch, is supposed to convey the idea of a dualism based on a 'free choice' between good and evil or truth and falsehood, first exercised by the two primordial spirits, as opposed to the 'metaphysical or ontological dualism', where good and evil spirits pre-exist their choice.[24] The problems with this construction are as follows.

First, the proponents of this distinction are yet to give us an acceptable account of its existence in the Gāthās. Here is Gnoli's version:

> I am convinced, as Gershevitch (1964, 13) amongst others maintains, that
> the basis of the reality of the two Spirits is their 'choice', and this is a
> widely accepted interpretation… If it is true that the two Spirits exist in
> consequence of their choice, which, as Gershevitch (*loc. cit.*) rightly says,
> 'is the prototype of the choice which faces each man as he decides between
> following the path of Truth or that of Falsehood', it is just as true that their
> natures derive from the choice that they have made and not vice versa.
>
> (Gnoli 1980, p. 213)

The task of argument is discharged by the appeal to an authority and to the
wide acceptance of the idea. But these do not make the idea of a 'choice'
being the '*basis of the reality*' of the agent, the idea of the agent's '*existing
in consequence*' of its 'choice', any less incomprehensible. The words 'reality'
and 'existence' have to be given completely new meanings for these statements
to have any sense. If, further, the 'nature' of each 'Spirit' is formed as a result
of its choice, what possible motive can one think for each to make its self-
constitutive choice? But even this way of putting the matter is artificial.
The right choice (of Truth) and the wrong choice (of Falsehood) are not
symmetrical, since the latter is always an imputation, and hence subject to
dispute and justification. Why did 'the prototype' of the evil man choose 'Evil'
or the 'path of Falsehood'?[25] If not completely arbitrary and not externally
compelled, this choice must be grounded either in the will to evil, i.e. in an
evil nature, or, alternatively, in the failure to make the good the principle of
one's choice, i.e. in a defective nature. In either case, the idea that the choice
grounds the 'nature' is simply wrong. An aboriginal choice that produces a
good or bad nature is unintelligible.[26]

Second, the advocates of 'ethical dualism' have an unexamined view of
terms like 'ethical', 'truth', 'falsehood', and so on. Humans are beings with
free will who have to make a choice between truth and falsehood, or good and
evil.[27] The simplicity of this picture is specious: one never chooses between
good and evil. As I have already mentioned, the non-diabolical ego always
chooses 'good' and never 'evil'. It is the *content* of the choice that allows
a meaningful determination of its goodness or wickedness by an observer.
Ethical qualification pertains only to a *concrete* maxim. Aside from this prob-
lem, there is the difficulty that seems to be general in the field: the adjective
'ethical' (e.g. Gnoli 1980, p. 204) is used simply as a positively marked term,
vaguely evoking modern humanistic sensibilities.

Third, in the Gāthās the reason for the imputation of the wrong choice to
the *daēvas* is clear: they lead men away from the good life and immortality (Y
32.5), having been confused or deceived themselves (Y 30.6). The perspective
is that of the mortals; the interest expressed therein is that of the mortals. The
'benevolent' gods commit themselves to the 'better (thought, word, action)',
the 'malevolent' deities decide for the 'bad (ones)' (Y 30.3).[28] Presumably, the
former promote a pleasant earthly life and afterlife for mortals, while the latter

cause 'ruination' (Y 30.4). How is this picture related to the philosophically questionable conception of a free choice between good and evil grounding the reality of the two spirits?[29]

Since 'the condemnation of the *daēva* is the work of Zoroaster' (Gnoli 1985, p. 56), Iranian religion(s) that preceded him had to be polytheistic (Gnoli 1985, p. 57), 'comparable' to Vedism. And we have the testimony of the Young Avestan texts for the post-Zarathuštra polytheism. Against this background, the impression that the Gāthās give is indeed one of mythological austerity. For the mind thus impressed it is but an easy step from the focus on the supreme god in the Gāthās to the idea that these poems represent a 'monotheistic' religion 'comparable' to that of Hebrew prophets.[30] The *daēvas* have to be repudiated as 'false gods', since, after all, Zoroaster is a monotheistic prophet. Contrary facts can always be accommodated one way or another; and the formidable difficulties that the Gāthās present to the work of comprehension are an alibi for tendentious interpretations.[31] The so-called dialectical scheme ('communément admise'[32]) has, among other defects, this one in particular, that one does not know what exactly the elusive 'Gāthic' moment is supposed to represent other than the ill-considered monotheism that the scholar provides himself. Interpretive and conceptual problems that the thesis produces are sidestepped in favour of pseudo-historical questions: 'how is polytheism in general overcome?' One appeals to Pettazzoni's thesis that only a historical prophet through a religious revolution can bring polytheism to end. And how did the supposed Gāthic monotheism (the 'unsuccessful monotheism') give way so pathetically to a resurgent polytheism despite its being armoured by 'ethical dualism'? All manners of paradox can enliven the 'historical' account: les dieux survécurent à la révolution monothéiste de Zarathoustra et cela, paradoxalement, de deux manières différentes et contrastées: ou bien devenant des démons, comme Indra… et donc en s'ajoutant au pandémonium mazdéen, ou bien en devenant des Yazata, c'est-à-dire des êtres inférieurs à Ahura Mazdā, mais toujours dignes de culte' (Gnoli 1980, p. 205). 'Paradoxically' means: whether or not one can explain why some gods were demonized and others were not, such is the testimony of history; after all the *yazatas* are honoured in Zoroastrianism while the *daēvas* are reviled.[33] The brief moment of monotheism – in which the 'ancient gods of polytheism' are 'denied' as such, that is to say, rejected as 'illusions ou chimères qui étaient seulement le fruit de l'ignorance et des mauvais choix de l'homme' (Gnoli 1985, p. 58) – can withdraw behind the stage where the historical drama unfolds into the inscrutability of a definition. Monotheism is monotheism, and already contains all the 'natural consequences' of its definition. 'La condamnation des *daēva* est la conséquence naturelle de l'affirmation d'une idée monothéiste, parce que les *daēva* ne sont autres que les "dieux", c'est-à-dire les divinités d'un panthéon d'une ou plusieurs religions polythéistes' (Gnoli 1985, pp. 56–57). The Gāthās cannot tell us anything about the repudiation of the polytheist gods that we do not already know from 'monotheism', which by definition makes them 'Hirngespinste'.[34]

Gnoli's picture of the Gāthic treatment of the ancient gods comes in its essential features from Herman Lommel's work *Die Religion Zarathustras* (1930). Lommel sees in the Gāthās a monotheistic religion advocated by a historical prophet who turned against ancient Iranian gods. 'Daß Ahura Mazda Gott ist, und zwar *der* Gott und nicht einer von vielen, ist der Kernpunkt' (Lommel 1930, p. 11). But the essence of this monotheism, here too, remains elusive. That Ahura Mazdā is a creator 'most clearly stands out' in the Gāthās, but he 'has not created everything'. 'Auch ist Ahura Mazda des Richter beim Weltgericht am Ende der Zeiten. Aber nicht er allein, und wie beim Gericht, so wirken auch bei der Schöpfung seine hohen Geister mit' (Lommel 1930, p. 12). The significance of Zarathuštra's 'rejection' of the *daēvas* is no less difficult to determine. The word is etymologically related to the Vedic *deva-* 'god', Latin *deus*, etc., but in the Young Avestan texts it clearly means 'Teufel' (Lommel 1930, p. 90). The word undergoes a reversal of value in Iran, according to Lommel. There must have been an in-between stage where the word no longer meant 'god' but had not yet assumed its eventual meaning 'demon'. At this transitional stage it must have meant 'Götze'. 'Und so ist es in der Tat' (Lommel 1930, p. 90). Lommel believes that this usage is attested in the Gāthās (e.g. Y 32.3). 'Die Verehrung der Daivas aber ist der alte Götterkult, der dem Zarathustra als Götzenverehrung und Teufeldienst sich darstellte' (Lommel 1930, p. 91). But more frequently the word is used to denote demonic, anti-divine beings: 'Es its verwendet wie ein feststehender, anerkannter und eingebürgerter Ausdruck für das Schlimme, Verabscheuungswürdige, und der Prophet gebraucht das Wort, das seinem Volk bisher das höchste Heilige ausdrückte, so, als ob die von ihm daran vorgenommene völlige Umwertung schon allgemein vollzogen und in aller Herz und Sinne eingeprägt wäre' (Lommel 1930, p. 91). Zarathuštra is thus responsible for the revaluation of the word from 'god' to 'demon'. It is not easy to understand, however, how the gods denied, that is, turned into Götzen, can subsequently develop into Teufel. Moreover, each of these two notions as the equivalent concept of the Gāthic *daēva* presents its own problems. The circumspection that Lommel shows in articulating the nature of the treatment of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās displays his difficulty to come to grips with the issue. 'Die Existenz der alten Götter hat Zarathustra nicht geleugnet, aber er hat sie für schlecht erklärt, und zwar offenbar besonders weil ihr Kult ihm als Verirrung und Greuel erschien' (Lommel 1930, p. 93). Here, it seems, Lommel thinks that Zarathuštra does not deny the existence of these supernatural beings after all, that he does not reduce them to mere Götzen, but declares them noxious, etc.; and if this involves a denial of their divinity, it is because these supernatural beings are 'bad'. The fact that Lommel is willing to use the term 'Teufel' for such beings has more to do with the natural disposition of the proponents of the monotheistic thesis to assimilate the Iranian 'prophet' to the Hebrew stereotype than with what can be learned from the Gāthās. Just as the denial of polytheistic gods is a 'natural' consequence of monotheism, so too is the assimilation of the abhorred supernatural beings to the Devil. Received conceptions

underlying automatic understanding leave no room for genuine engagement with the text as a discourse. Casting the *daēvas* as 'Teufel' already tells one why they are condemned, which is the reason why Lommel feels no need to analyse the two crucial passages (e.g. Y 30.6 and 32.5) in this respect.

I have argued that in keeping with the intention of the monotheistic interpretation of the Gāthās the only significance one can give to 'ethical dualism' is that it is motivated by the concern to vindicate the goodness of the one true god in the face of worldly evil, as 'une réponse au problème de l'origine du mal' (Gnoli 2009, p. 100). As for what this goodness consists in – this question should be put to Gershevitch and others who generally share his views. The 'condemnation of the *daēvas* qua divinities' belongs, according to Gnoli, with this 'authentic monotheism characterized by a radical ethical dualism'. Whether one can in fact describe the treatment of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās as a denunciation of Hirngespinste is of no real consequence for the adherents of the monotheistic thesis, for the denunciation is deducible from the definition of monotheism. One way or another, they conjure away the embarrassing problem of a monotheistic religion attributing serious power of mischief to 'false gods'. I think it is also clear that, from before Bartholomae to Duchesne-Guillemin[35] and Gnoli, the thesis of Gāthic monotheism constantly invokes the analogy of the Biblical prophetic tradition. This thesis is present in the works of its champions either as an assumption ('admitted by all') or as a polemical cause that the advocate feels he should defend against the detractors. It is never examined in reference to Gāthic texts without prejudice.

Generally speaking, Narten's description is apt: 'Bemerkenswert ist, daß die Gathas einerseits deutlich die Einzigartkeit Ahura Mazdās erkennen lassen, worin man eine monotheistische Tendenz sehen könnte, daß andererseits aber eben doch auch weitere göttliche Wesen neben Ahura Mazdā genannt werden, also der Polytheismus nicht grundsätzlich abgelehnt wird' (Narten 1996, p. 72). Beyond this sound scepticism one can also question what knowledge is gained by insisting that the Gāthās are 'monotheistic' when one does not even know in what exact sense this term is being used. Should one start with inquiring into the unquestionable existence of 'other divine beings' beside the supreme god, or with the question whether the 'unique' status of the supreme god could be understood as that of the exclusive recipient of sacrifice? Narten (1996, p. 72) suggests that perhaps the 'other divine beings' owe their existence to the pressure of the Indo-Iranian polytheist sacrificial tradition. This 'ritual' ('auf ritueller Ebene') explanation still leaves the question of the sense of the 'uniqueness' ('Einzigartigkeit') of the supreme god open.[36] By contrast, in *Le panthéon*, Kellens (1994, pp. 118–22) thinks that the uniqueness of Ahura Mazdā asserted in the Gāthās is specifically sacrificial: these 'liturgical compositions' extend to the ritual sphere the inherited cosmogonic and eschatological pre-eminence of the god. I will discuss these issues in due course: whatever criticism one may have of Kellens' views, they are articulate and hence amenable to analysis, in contrast with the monotheistic interpretation

of the Gāthās. The monotheistic thesis undermines all serious study of the status of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās, since everyone knows what monotheism is: there is only one true god; all other pretenders are false. If the scholar feels he or she has to say something or other on the issue for whatever reason, it is just to assert *ex cathedra* that the 'polytheistic gods' are mere Hirngespinste, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

Notes

1 The Semitic analogy gradually replaced in the Western reception of Zoroaster the hostile contrast drawn by the Christian writers of the early modern period. According to Herrenschmidt (1987), the decisive date in the history of the reception is the publication of *De Religione Persarum* in 1700: 'Once and for all Europeans had the same vision of Zoroaster as they did of the prophets of Israel… Zoroaster the Prophet is Zoroaster the writer. The view still remains with us' (Herrenschmidt 1987, p. 214). By 'writer' she means 'thinker'. One way or another, the Semitic shadow has been a constant of the monotheistic view of Zarathuštra and Zoroastrianism. The idea of 'Zoroaster's imposture' was the eighteenth century's way of reconciling the monotheistic interpretation of Zoroastrianism and the belief in the exclusive authenticity of Judeo-Christian monotheism (Herrenschmidt 1987, pp. 217–19).
2 Compare Nietzsche 2005, p. 181: 'The notion of will was essentially designed with punishment in mind, which is to say the desire to *assign guilt*'.
3 See Blumenberg 1983, pp. 125–36.
4 Plato's statement may be traced in some respects to the moralistic criticisms of Homer's gods by a number of Pre-Socratics, e.g. Xenophanes of Colophon. 'For the first time, speaking about the divine is dominated by postulates of what is fitting' (Burkert 1987, p. 308).
5 In the extreme it will lead to the elimination of God, better dead than tainted, 'atheism *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*'. See Marquard 1989, pp. 38–63.
6 See, for example, Jonas 1958: for a summary, pp. 42–47; for Marcionite version, pp. 130–46; for Manichaeism, pp. 206–37.
7 Dualism is philosophically more robust. The free will argument only constantly shifts the problem and creates a tangled mess. Compare Blumenberg 1983, pp. 127–36. 'Marcion wanted a god who did not need to contradict himself by creating man in such a way that he would have to deliver him from his lost state… by producing a world that, in spite of his omnipotence, in the end allows the announced design of salvation to accrue only to a few men. Marcion wanted to place his foreign God, free of the burden of responsibility for the world, entirely and without restriction on the side of man's salvation' (Blumenberg 1983, p. 130). Augustine's solution is meant to be an 'overcoming' of the Gnostic charge against the monotheistic God of *creatio ex nihilo*, which means it *also* has to answer the question of 'the origin of what is bad in the world' (Blumenberg 1983, p. 132). The background of Augustine's solution is Gnosticism, without which it would not be understood. One may put it like this: dualism addresses the existence of evil; the Augustinian doctrine of free will addresses the dualistic (Gnostic) solution on behalf of the creator God. 'With a gesture just as stirring as it was fateful, (Augustine) took for man and upon man the responsibility for the burden oppressing the world. Now, in the aftermath of Gnosticism, the problem of the justification of God has become overwhelming, and that justification of God has become overwhelming, and that justification is accomplished at the expense of man, to whom a new concept of freedom is ascribed expressly in order to let the whole of an enormous responsibility and guilt be imputed to it' (Blumenberg 1983, p. 133). To some extent, Augustine takes

over the language of ancient philosophy, which makes no distinction between moral wickedness and natural misfortune. Nothing better than the idea of an inherited original sin shows that in Augustine the doctrine of free will is not meant to assert man's 'moral dignity' but to affirm God's inculpability for worldly evil.

8 Henning 1944, p. 292: 'The Ethical Dualism of Zoroaster is most easily understood as the reaction against a monotheism which, it seems, had sprung up in his country on the basis of the original Iranian polytheism. Primitive Polytheisms commonly tend to develop into monotheisms, by stressing a single personality of the pantheon while the other deities fall into insignificance and become subordinated to the One God as his angels or archangels. It seems likely that such a stage in the religious development had already been reached before Zoroaster'. This 'process' of elevation of one god of the pantheon to the status of the sole god is problematic. No commonly acknowledged monotheistic religion can be understood to have emerged through this process. Nor is a pantheon a Masonic Lodge where every member stands on the same level. The supremacy of one god in a pantheon may well be a structural feature, not a sign of a 'development' to monotheism. It is true that in ancient Greece local cults always attached themselves to one particular deity, but this phenomenon can in no way be viewed as a tendency toward monotheism. See Versnel 2011, pp. 23–149. In Vedic India, the rise of Indra did not produce any monotheistic pressures. Yahwism was a monolatry with a political intent, like other monolatries of the Levant in the first millennium BCE, and the emergence of Hebrew 'monotheism' (e.g. in so-called Deutero-Isaiah) should probably be understood against the background of the political situation of the Exile. Compare Assmann 1997, pp. 23–54, 2006, pp. 77–80. The political element, i.e. the formation of the Islamic state in Medina, played a fundamental role in Islamic theology.

9 I cannot accept Panaino's presentation of the issue in Panaino 2004. The condemnation of the *daēvas* 'est le corollaire logique à une idée typiquement zaraθuštrienne' (Panaino 2004, p. 114). These 'ancient gods of Indo-Iranian polytheism' (115) are defined by 'absolute negativity' (Panaino 2004, p. 136). Their 'non-existence' in the 'vital dimension', however, does not mean they are not present in the 'mental domain'. 'Certes, les Daēuua ne sont pas éliminés, mais leur présence se cantonne au niveau mental… Les liens entre Aŋra Mainiiu et les Daēuua avec le concept de negation de la vie… confèrent aux forces du mal une dimension extra-mondaine, sorte d'hallucination de la pensée' (Panaino 2004, p. 117). Does not the 'negation of life' imply the power of its agents to influence the world, their worldly existence, then, be it 'parasitical', be it by way of 'pseudo-création' or 'créations inférieures' (136)? Does the 'Mainiiu Bénéfique' address a 'hallucination' in Y 45.2 (see his own translation in Panaino 2004, pp. 129–30)? Are the *daēvas* of Y 30.6 (his translation in Panaino 2004, p. 120) 'chimères'? If the *daēvas* exist only in the 'mental domain' (is it any different for Mazdā and other gods in the Gāthās?) – does this make them less 'real', Gershevitch's *Hirngespinste*?

10 The reduction of the Gāthic 'entities' to 'aspects' of the one true god, or the hypostases of his activities, is Gershevitch's way of dealing with these divine beings. This view of the 'entities' is not just found in Gershevitch. Maria Wilkins Smith, Duchesne-Guillemin and Martin Schwartz (the latter two with some variations) share the view. Schwartz maintains that Ahura Mazdā forms a 'divine triad' with Aša and Vohu Manah, and sometimes calls the triad 'the three aspects of the Divinity' (Schwartz 1998, p. 167). Kellens (2000, p. 52) justifiably comments: 'This interpretation is an example… of the incurable tendency of Western scholarship to make its own Mazdean theology'. Parpola (2002, pp. 89–91) uses this idea to relate the Gāthās to the 'ecstatic cult' of the Mesopotamian Aššur, 'a monotheistic God' whose cult was 'associated with mysticism'. Zarathuštra becomes one of 'the Median princes who were brought up by the Assyrians to train them

for state service as high officials and to brainwash them to loyalty to Assyria'. An important plank of the programme would have been the inculcation of 'the esoteric monotheistic religion of the Assyrians', which the brainwashed prince-cum-prophet duly conveyed in his Gāthās. See also Parpola 2004–2005, p. 18. I cannot discuss these idiosyncratic views in detail, such as the notion that Aššur was a monotheistic god. See, for instance, Van Seters 1997 and Assmann 2006, pp. 65–80. Mysticism depends on canon (i.e. sacred writing) and interpretation, both absent from Mesopotamian religious thought. One should note, in any event, the strange places to which the meditations of an enthusiast of Gāthic monotheism may lead.

11 Gershevitch's definition of monotheism as 'worshipping only one god' (Gershevitch 1964, p. 12), to which he himself does not adhere, is unusual; or one should say it is unusual if it means just what it says rather than the belief in the uniqueness of the godhead. But when he writes 'Zoroaster's sole god, Mazdā', for example, he does not mean the one god Zoroaster worships but the one god there is to worship: 'when Zoroaster inveighs against the gods… he inveighs not against demons but against *polytheism*' (Gershevitch 1975, p. 80).

12 This supposed Gāthic expression owes its existence to Gershevitch's interpretation of Y 32.4a–b. See my discussion of the passage in the second part.

13 In view of the reception of Gershevitch's conception of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās, one should think that these sentences would have attracted some critical scrutiny from scholars, in particular from the adherents of the monotheistic thesis. Gershevitch is convinced in the manner of a dogmatic believer that Gāthic religion is monotheistic, hence the *daēvas* have to be false gods. But then what to do with the passages that seem to grant them agency? Gershevitch's translations of Gāthic texts are tendentious (Gershevitch 1986, pp. 88–92), sometimes beyond plausibility. Since the religion of Mazdā is monotheistic, Y 31.4a2′ *mazdåscā ahuråŋhō* has to be understood as 'hendiadyadic Mazdāh-and-Thy-Lords' (Gershevitch 1986, p. 91). Since Zarathuštra is a 'prophet', and a 'prophet' spreads the gospel of the one true god and, apart from his livelihood, is only after spiritual fulfilment, Y 46.19c–d′ *ahmāi mīždəm hanantē… manə̄.vistāiš maṯ vispāiš gāuuā azī* must say 'who-am(meanwhile, by spreading Thy gospel,)-wage-earning two pregnant cows, in addition to every-conceivable spiritual-acquisition' (Gershevitch 1986, p. 89).

14 I have quoted the text of Henning Gershevitch refers to here in my discussion of Henning. Obviously, the reference to Henning's supposedly authoritative explanation ('why any other origins is out of question', etc.) is Gershevitch's way of unburdening himself of the task that no one seems to want to take up: demonstrating the reality of Gāthic monotheism, background or foreground.

15 Compare Panaino 2004, p. 114: 'le problème principal [de le monothéisme] se trouve dans la nécessité d'expliquer l'origine du mal'.

16 Contra Gnoli 1980, p. 182: 'He (i.e., Zarathuštra) gives the utmost significance to man's moral choice and hence to his dignity and freedom'.

17 '"Willing, if it is not to be a sort of wishing, must be the action itself. It cannot be allowed to stop anywhere short of the action." If it is the action, then it is so in the ordinary sense of the word; so it is speaking, writing, walking, lifting a thing, imagining something' (Wittgenstein 2001, §615).

18 Thus Gershevitch reads Zarathuštra's mind reading Mazdā's mind, since none of this is found anywhere in the texts. It is unclear what Gershevitch means by 'good', 'evil', etc., or even whether he means the *concept* of good, etc. That 'good is unthinkable without the foil of evil' seems to suggest that he has, at least here, their concepts in mind. Whatever one thinks of this statement, that the concept of good implies the concept of evil hardly justifies God in the face of the *existence* of misfortune and wickedness, which was at issue. Gershevitch also seems to think that the statement that closes our citation is the equivalent of the one we just

considered. That 'there *can* be no Spəṇta Mainyu, except against the foil of Aŋra Mainyu' is simply wrong. Just because a concept may imply its opposite does not mean that the thing that is known through the first necessitates the existence of the thing that is known through the second. Descartes (1985, pp. 93–120) thought that the concept of the 'supremely perfect being', i.e. 'God', implies its necessary existence, as one of the attributes that belongs to the perfect being (the version in Axiom 10, Second Replies). Kant showed that existence is not a predicate, e.g. which may be implied in the concept of a thing (Kant 1996, pp. 582–86).

19 Compare Assmann 2003.

20 See Blumenberg 1983, pp. 523–56.

21 See also Eliade 1978, p. 310: 'Ahura Mazdā is the father of… Spenta Mainyu. But this implies that he also engendered the other twin Angra Mainyu'. Aside from other problems with this inference, it is not even clear that the 'most vitalizing spirit' (*mainiiu- spə̄ništa-*) of Y 30.3–5 is not Mazdā.

22 The 'ethical loftiness' (Gnoli 1980, p. 191) of the idea of free choice, whatever one may think of this historically stranded idea, has nothing to do with the problem of evil that a 'total monotheism' has to face, save the function, theoretically possible, of giving foothold to the anti-god in the good god's creation, as mentioned in the discussion of Henning. But one has to be careful. The whole language of 'free choice' as intended by interpreters like Gershevitch and Gnoli is misleading. The belief that there is a lofty ethical motivation (i.e. of affirming man's moral dignity) behind the Gāthic 'choice' is a construction of the scholar with no basis in the Gāthās (see my discussion of Y 30.3 in the second part).

23 See also Gnoli 1980, esp. pp. 130–36, 1985, pp. 48–50, 1996, pp. 576–81. Gnoli's position is the best proof that the monotheistic thesis is a Biblical conception: a prophet advocating morality in the face of empty ritual, centred on the rejection of false gods in favour of the one true god – with all the attendant drama. I do not think that this picture of the Hebrew religion, or of Abrahamic religions more generally, is that of the experts of the field, but it seems to be the stereotype that Gnoli has in mind: 'Je suis convaincu que, si nous ne comprenons pas la force et la nouveauté de ce personnage historique, noun nous coupons de la possibilité de pénétrer dans l'esprit du mazdéisme… Et cela est en harmonie avec le fait que le message de Zoroastre est essentiellement caractérisé par son monothéisme et son dualisme – l'un intimement en rapport avec l'autre – car j'estime que l'on doit partager la thèse de R. Pettazzoni, selon laquelle le monothéisme dérive toujours d'une révolution religieuse dans un sens antipolythéiste… révolution qui n'est pas concevable sans l'action de puissants personnages historiques' (Gnoli 1985, pp. 48–49). Everything fits together as in a jigsaw puzzle. Can there be any question that a monotheistic prophet could have any view of the gods other than as false idols? Whatever the data of the reference text, the answer is given in advance.

24 See Gnoli 1996, pp. 576–77 and Gershevitch 1964, pp. 13–16.

25 See below for a discussion of the spurious idea of the choice of an immortal entity as the prototype of human choice.

26 Where does one find, whether in philosophy, mythology, or common sense, such a strange notion? For Eliade, both 'Good and Evil, the holy one and the destroying demon, proceed from Ahura Mazdā', a typical theology based in the 'mythico-ritual systems of bipartitions and polarities', 'systems that accounted for the cosmic rhythms and the negative aspects of reality and, first and foremost, for the existence of evil' (Eliade 1978, pp. 310–11). That evil too has proceeded from God does not create any moral responsibility for Him, according to Eliade, 'since Angra Mainyu freely chose his mode of being and his maleficent vocation'. But Eliade immediately dismantles the nexus he has created to accommodate what he takes to be the data of Gāthic theology: 'On the other hand, Ahura Mazdā, in his omniscience, knew from the beginning what choice the Destroying Spirit would make and

nevertheless did not prevent it; this may mean either that God transcends all kinds of contradictions or that the existence of evil constitutes the preliminary condition for human freedom' (Eliade 1978, p. 310). The existence of evil is either a matter of indifference to the god, who is beyond good and evil, or necessary for human freedom, so deemed presumably by the god. What, then, is the purpose of the story of a primordial being 'choosing evil'? What is the point of positing a dubious idea, or at least – one must admit this much – an idea that is so obscure?

27 Schmidt (1975, p. 5), too, thinks that the 'doctrine of free will' is 'one of Zarathustra's most revolutionary ideas'.

28 Detailed treatment of these texts is found in the second part.

29 The misconception is a constant in Gnoli's work. '[L]a nature de ce dualisme, qui oppose à l'Esprit Bienfaisant (Spǝnta Mainyu) l'Esprit Mauvais (Angra Mainyu), est essentiellement morale, en ce qu'elle se fonde sur la conception du choix. Le dualisme gâthique est le fruit d'une pensée philosophique et éthique; le sens de la révolution religieuse de Zoroastre se trouve en cela: c'est une révolt contre une religion formaliste et ritualiste en faveur d'une religiosité intérieure et du droit de l'individu à se soustraire aux règles de la tradition et à son impératif' (Gnoli 1985, p. 50). These words are surprising from the pen of a historian. The 'sense' of the Zoroastrian 'revolution' is the rejection of traditional ritualism and legalism in favour of an individualistic ethics of choice and spirituality. It is hard to determine whether this term-for-term opposition of the new religion to what Gnoli takes to be the nature of 'traditional' religiosity is an analytic expansion of the notion of 'revolution' as such, or whether he thinks that the ideas of 'interior religiosity and right of the individual to opt out of traditional norms' are aspects of the supposed Gāthic doctrine of free choice. As a general proposition, the latter is of course a chimera, since the consequences of the dualistic choice totally overwhelm the ethical freedom supposed in the individual, who, in heeding the new conception of individual freedom, would also pay close attention to the admonitions regarding the dire outcome of making the wrong choice. The historian feels he has to give some recognizable feature (i.e. anti-ritualist, etc.) to his 'ethical' religion even if it flies in the face of historical sense.

30 See, for example, Gnoli 1985, pp. 50–51. The advocates of the monotheistic thesis never tire of comparing their Zoroaster with the Biblical prophet.

31 See Henning 1951, p. 14: 'Inevitably, there is a large number of words in the Avesta whose meanings are unknown, and a further large number whose meanings are imperfectly known; and such unknown or imperfectly known words are particularly numerous in the Gâthâs. Then there are the words whose meaning is not in doubt; but even they, as all words, have a certain range of meaning, and from that range one can select an eccentric meaning. Now if one attributes an entirely arbitrary set of meanings to the unknown words, in such a way that this set of meanings is consistent within itself and conforms to a preconceived notion of the contents of the Gâthâs, and if one proceeds to select suitable extreme meanings for the known words, one can translate the Gâthâs (or for that matter any ancient text that carries a sufficient number of unknown words) in any way one likes'. There is no point in reading 'an ancient text' if one has no intention of finding one's way to its sense, understanding it as a *discourse*, that is to say, an expression of a conscious engagement with the world that defined its mental horizon. Students of ancient religions and myths cannot do without this horizon, their rhetorical statements to the contrary notwithstanding. On the other hand, one should certainly be alarmed once one's image of a different Weltanschauung curiously resembles a stereotype of one's own tradition. See Versnel 1990, pp. 1–35.

32 Gnoli (1985, p. 55) sketches the scheme in the following terms: 'polythéisme du type védique; condamnation de ce polythéisme par Zoroastre; restauration partielle de ce polythéisme en des synthèses sacredotales successives, d'abord par les

prêtres avestiques et ensuite par les Mages mèdes'. Why was the moment of purity so short lived? Answer: the elevated message was utterly incomprehensible to the contemporaries (so Gershevitch), who forthwith proceeded to rid themselves of its core principles of monotheism and ethical dualism. Why keep the name then?

33 In *Zoroaster in History* Gnoli prefers Burrow's account of the divergent fates of the *daēvas* and the gods of the Young Avestan pantheon: the former had a foreign origin, etc. See my discussion of Burrow in Chapter 3.

34 Gnoli approvingly paraphrases Gershevitch: 'Zoroaster condemned the *daēvas* as such, as "Hirngespinste", because he was a monotheist' (1980, p. 79 n.124).

35 See Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, p. 13: 'Sa prédication passionnée, exclamatoire, est tout animée par la présence qu'il sollicite et adjure sans cesse, et qui se révèle. Elle nous rappelle le ton des prophètes d'Israël. Zarathustra sait que Dieu parle par sa bouche'. See also Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, pp. 71–84.

36 The status of Mazdā, the nature of the Gāthās, and the question of the supposed Gāthic ritual are bound together. In my view, the most promising perspective on these issues is the following statement: 'Toutes les actions réalisées par les "divinités" inférieures du panthéon mazdéen sont liées au projet eschatologique d'Ahura Mazdā' (Panaino 2004, p. 117). On the other hand, as I have mentioned, Panaino's desire to save 'le monothéisme vieil-avestique' is questionable.

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2 Ahura-cult thesis

A number of scholars have tried to account for the repudiation of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās within the frame of a postulated *ahura* cult. This so-called '*ahura* theory' was explicitly formulated in Martin Haug's *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis* first published in 1862. Haug (1884, pp. 267–76) notes the parallel but inverted fate in ancient India and Iran of the *devas/daēvas* and the *asuras/ahuras*. Whereas Vedic India continues to use the term *deva* in its presumed Indo-European sense ('god'), in Iran the term comes to designate, first, a 'bad god' and eventually a 'demon'. Conversely, while in India the term *asura* ends up by the late Vedic period as a categorial name for anti-gods, in Iran *ahura* develops an exclusively positive meaning, being used especially of the Iranian supreme god Mazdā. It is true that these two semantic developments do not unfold within the same chronological frame; nonetheless, in view of the parallel inversions, Haug found it hard to view them as independent from each other. He proposed placing these seemingly parallel developments in a historical setting of socio-ethnic conflicts between Vedic Indians and inchoate Iranians, where ethno-cultural differences become a vehicle for a socio-economic antagonism between the warlike nomadic Indians and the pacific sedentary Iranians. The reaction of the Iranian victims of the Indian cattle-raids is the demonization of the latter's gods, the *devas*. Thus develops the Iranian religion of the *ahuras*. Although Haug views Zoroaster as a monotheistic prophet who grafted onto his 'theological monotheism' a 'philosophical dualism' (Haug 1884, pp. 301–305) as a work of theodicy, the condemnation of the *daēvas* is not his prophetic achievement. In this way Haug effectively decouples the question of Zoroaster's monotheism from the Gāthic repudiation of the *daēvas*. Although in Haug, too, the assimilation of Zoroaster to the figure of Biblical prophet frames the interpretation of the Gāthās (Haug 1884, pp. 294–308), the removal of the *daēvas* from the ambit of the topic of monotheism opens a theoretical perspective different from the one considered in the previous chapter.

A number of French and Swedish linguists and students of ancient religions adopted this thesis to various degrees starting from the 1920s. Antoine Meillet (1925, pp. 64–73) relocated the fault line of the socio-theological

conflict inside Iranian society itself. The Gāthās are an expression of the views and aspirations of pastoral and agricultural folks in the face of aristocratic masters. Mazdā and the associated 'active forces that preside over each activity' in particular express the interests of the 'working men' who require 'an orderly, peaceful society' in order to 'benefit from their activities'. 'On est bien plutôt en face de vieille opposition des riches et des pauvres, des aristocrates et des cultivateurs. C'est cette opposition qui, seule, rend compte de l'importance dominante attribuée par le zoroastrisme ancien à la doctrine de la rétribution après la mort' (Meillet 1925, p. 71). If I understand this last point correctly, the notion of an eschatological retribution is a religious weapon in the class struggle, a sort of spiritual compensation for relative socio-political and martial impotence. Kellens (2006, pp. 80–81) rightly points out that the pastoralist vocabulary does not in itself make the Gāthās 'le programme du parti paysan'. Meillet's social explanation of Zoroastrian eschatology is perhaps somewhat crude, but one cannot dismiss the question of the social aspect of the condemnation of the *daēvas*. Kellens (2006, pp. 80–81) maintains that Meillet's 'antagonism between the poor and the rich' is an arbitrary hypothesis, and that there is no clear expression in the Gāthās of an opposition to warlike activities as such. Although the terms Meillet uses to articulate the question of the social dimension of the condemnation of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās are not ideal, one cannot accept Kellens' wholesale rejection of the issue. If it turns out that the Gāthic term *aēšəma-* 'fury' is specifically associated with a certain type of masculine society, perhaps of Indo-European origins, as has been claimed by Wikander (1938, pp. 30–41, pp. 57–66) and Widengren (1969, pp. 39–43, pp. 82–85), the social settings of the cult of the *daēvas* may well be significant in the condemnation of these gods.[1] Did the cult of the *daēvas* have an initiatory pattern? In any case, the cult must be understood as an institution. Although in his *La quatrième naissance* (2006) Kellens gives up his earlier (Kellens 1994, pp. 82–84) idea that the *daēvas* were never considered gods by Iranians and only ever played even in the Gāthās the role of 'the accursed part of the pantheon', he still seems reluctant to acknowledge the historical reality of an Iranian *daēva* cult (see my discussion in Chapter 4). The view that the Gāthās are liturgies whose themes and terms must reflect ritual phenomena is a hypothesis that unnecessarily narrows our view.

Benveniste (1929) says virtually nothing about the *daēvas* in the lectures he delivered at the Sorbonne in 1926. His main interest there was the accounts given by classical authors of three 'Iranian religions': the nature-worship of the ancient Persians found in Herodotus, the Cappadocian Mazdā-worship in Strabo and Zurvanism in Plutarch. None of these is 'Zoroastrian' according to him, which means that they are different from the Gāthic religious view characterized by monotheism, 'cosmic dualism', the rejection of blood sacrifice and the affirmation of moral purity (Benveniste 1929, pp. 25–26). Zarathuštra's 'religious reform', Benveniste says, replaces the worship of natural phenomena with that of 'moral abstractions'. Cosmic dualism

presumably means a dualism that embraces every aspect of life, although the two manifestations Benveniste mentions, the exposure of the corpse and destruction of 'demonic' creatures are not found in the Gāthās. It is not clear in what sense Benveniste considers Gāthic Mazdaism to be monotheistic. Zurvanism, according to him, is not only the source of Miθraism and Manichaeism but also of Mazdaism: 'It may be said without exaggeration that Mazdeism is dualistic in so far as it is Zervanite' (Benveniste 1929, p. 116). The indirect remark he makes about the *daēvas* seems to suggest that their repudiation should be understood in the context of a split and hostility between the adherents of the *ahura* cult and those of the *daēva* cult: the 'name "the Lord Wisdom" indicates a being of the family of the Asuras, who were known through the Vedic texts in which they become evil spirits, as in Iran the ancient name of "god" (daiva) became that of the demon' (Benveniste 1929, p. 40). This view of the origins of the 'demonization' of the *daēvas* is prima facie at odds with the thesis of the Zurvanite lineage of Mazdaism. For if the 'cosmic dualism' of the latter is a sign that it evolved from Zurvanism, which is supposed to have separated Iranian religions from their Indo-Iranian origins in pre-history, why do the Gāthās repudiate the *daēvas*, the ancient Indo-Iranian gods? Should they not rather condemn the 'evil spirit' (alone), the harmful progeny of the 'Endless Time'? The account given in the Gāthās of the 'hostile' or 'deceitful intuition' (Y 30.3–5) seems to place this being in the primordial times interacting with the *daēvas*; another passage (Y 32.5) explicitly says that it is the latter that bring the deceitful intuition's primordial determination to bear on the destiny of man. It is thus the *daēvas* that seem to be active in the human world. Why would a monotheistic religion resuscitate false gods and integrate them into its cosmic dualism to play the role of the intermediary, where the 'evil spirit' is presumably quite capable of playing the antagonistic role? It is hard to reconcile the two theses: on one side, the Zurvanite genealogy of Mazdaean dualism and, on the other, the *ahura*-cult background of Mazdaean monotheism.[2]

In his short article 'Hommes et dieux dans l'Avesta' (1967) Benveniste emphasizes the Indo-European origins of the Avestan expression 'daivas + martyas', and argues that the fact that it is still found as a formulaic phrase in the Young Avestan texts shows that in the Gāthās it still has its original sense of 'gods and mortals'. If so, the Gāthic repudiation of the *daēvas* cannot be interpreted as a condemnation of demons. Are these ancient Indo-Iranian deities the gods of a rival Iranian religion? The 'fragmentising view' of Benveniste (De Jong 1997, pp. 44–49, pp. 63–66) might incline one to this interpretation. Whatever 'repudiation' may mean – condemnation or negation?[3] – Benveniste's position in 1967 is clearly at odds with his 1926 thesis of the Zurvanite origins of Iranian religions. The Iranian *daēva* cult, one may speculate, must have bypassed the Zurvanite break. But the problem with this interpretation is that the Gāthic passages (e.g. Y 33.2–4, 46.1, 46.5–6) where one expects that the alien nature of the *daēva* cult should be signalled rather affirm the native status of its devotees (the 'deceitful'[4]); they belong to the

same community or social group as Zarathuštra does. More importantly, it seems to me, again, that the *daēvas* have an endemic position in the picture given of them in the Gāthās and are not repudiated as gods of outsiders. The integral status of the *daēvas* is a problem for any approach that views them as 'alien' gods, whether this adjective is understood in an ethnic, cultic or historical sense, or a combination of the latter two, as in the schemes of Benveniste, Nyberg and Duchesne-Guillemin.

In a 1934 publication Benveniste explicitly gives his support to the *ahura*-cult thesis in a discussion of a number of Avestan words (e.g. *ahura.ṯkaēša*- or *ahura.δāta*-) in which *ahura* seems to be used as a divine appellation (Benveniste and Renou 1934, pp. 42–49). These 'traces' of an ancient *ahura* cult, however, are specious: far from proving the existence of an *ahura* cult, their interpretation as 'traces' relies on the thesis (so Narten 1996, p. 78). The first occurs in a context (the Zoroastrian profession of faith, the *frauuarānē*) that leaves virtually no doubt that the term *ahura* in fact refers to Mazdā.[5] There is no question that the name Ahura Mazdā throughout the Avesta is understood as a composite name made of two words.[6] This means that only one of its components can participate in the composition of compounds that refer to the god.[7] Thus there are good linguistic grounds to view *ahura.δāta*- as a double of *mazdaδata*-. Kellens (1994, p. 31) maintains that the choice between the two words is 'uniquement dicté par la métrique'. Benveniste implicitly arranges this *ahura* religion chronologically in relation to the 'Zoroastrian Mazdaism' but does not explore the implications of this arrangement for his earlier thesis of a Zurvanite break. One way or another, Benveniste and other adherents of the *ahura*-cult thesis believe that 'Iranian religions', despite their fragmentary nature, have a common origin, which marks them as specifically Iranian. To say that they are all non-Indic is more than just a statement of an ethnic fact; it describes a fundamental religious break. The question is how to interpret this constitutive threshold.

Henrik S. Nyberg, the scholar of Semitic languages at the University of Uppsala, was active around the same time as Benveniste. We owe to his monumental work *Die Religionen des alten Iran* (1938: German edition) the sharpest formulation of the *ahura*-cult thesis. Despite the fact that there is not just one Iranian religion (he counts four), as the title of Nyberg's work makes clear, the *ahura*-cult thesis seems to make it possible to ground them all in a constitutive opposition.

> Das arische Altertum kannte Asura (= iranisch Ahura) als eine Klasse von Gottwesen, die einer andern Klasse mit dem Namen Daiva (indisch Deva, iranisch Daēva) nebengeordnet war. In der religiösen Geschichte der Arier haben diese beiden Göttergruppen um die Herrschaft gekämpft. Die Entwicklung ist so verlaufen, daß in Indien die Devas siegten und die Asuras zuerst zurückdrängten, später verdrängten und auf die Stufe der Dämonen herabdrückten, während dagegen in Iran die Ahuras den Sieg davontrugen und die Daēvas zu Dämonen herabdrückten. Nach aller

> Wahrscheinlichkeit haben alle Götter der Lichtwelt in Iran von Anfang
> an den Namen Ahura geführt.
>
> <div align="right">(Nyberg 1938, p. 96)</div>

The origins of the religious break between Iranians and Indians should not be sought in the history of ethnic conflicts but in the history of religions. In the Indo-Iranian religious world there were two 'classes' of divinities, the *daivas* and the *asuras*, and these two groups fought for supremacy. While in India the former prevailed, in Iran they succumbed to the latter. At one stroke, Nyberg accounts for the intriguing parallel, but inverse, semantic developments of the two divine designations *and* the specifically Iranian identity of his four religions (Achaemenid, Magian, Miθraist and Gāthic). In this religious-historical perspective, the rejection of the *daēvas* and the elevation of the *ahuras* are coeval with Iranian religious culture (Nyberg 1938, pp. 96–97). The attraction of this schema has been strong for those who reject the revolutionary nature of Gāthic religious thought. In the 1990s Kellens thought that the 'demonization of the *daiva-* founds the Iranian cultural entity and goes back to the time of the breakup of the Aryans into two distinct branches' (Kellens 1994, p. 30), despite the fact that he generally rejected the thesis of an Iranian *ahura* cult.

Behind its symmetrical simplicity, however, Nyberg's position contains intractable difficulties. The supposed struggle of the Indo-Iranian period between the two divine groups is really an empty postulate because, on the Indian side, the demonization of the *asuras* is a late Vedic development and thus could not have occurred in the time frame in which Nyberg places it.[8] Also, on the Iranian side, the 'demonization' of the *daēvas* does not seem to have been a pan-Iranian phenomenon. Among a number of pieces of evidence, we have Xerxes' so-called Daiva Inscription where he boasts of having banned the 'daiva cult' during an expedition. There is no point in interpreting the 'daiva' of this text to mean anything other than what it denotes so that it would suit one's purposes. Nyberg himself acknowledges (1938, p. 339) the existence of an Iranian *daēva* cult reflected in the *daēvic* triad Indra, Saurva and Nāŋhaiθia of the Vīdēvdād.[9]

It seems that in Nyberg's work, the Ur-religious-historical dualism of the *ahuras* and the *daēvas* is a manifestation of a theoretical perspective that makes dualism the horizon of 'Iranian religions'. 'Die Vorstellungen von den Zwillingen bilden also den Bestandteil einer traditionellen Theologie, die es vor Zarathustra in der Gathagemeinde gab' (Nyberg 1938, p. 104). This generalized dualism has for him a constant point of reference: Zurvanism. 'Der Himmelsgott Ahura Mazdāh ist in dieser von Zarathustra übernommenen Theologie eine dem Zurvān des Westens *parallele* Erscheinung, er vertritt den Urvater in dem Zwillingsmythos des Ostens, während Zurvān ihn in dem des Westens vertritt' (Nyberg 1938, p. 105). In the theology of the Gathagemeinde, Ahura Mazdā is a 'deus otiosus', just as Zurvan is in the Magian religion of Western Iran. The 'real creator of the good world' is the

'effective Mainyu'. Zarathuštra more or less perpetuates this situation; his Ahura Mazdā is the creator of 'all things' through the 'effective Mainyu'. The real antagonism in the Gāthās is that of the 'effective Mainyu' and the 'hostile Mainyu'. The dualistic frame is inherited, but its transposition in terms of an 'ethic of good and bad' is the specifically Gāthic achievement, which defines the eschatological perspective of Zoroastrianism (Nyberg 1938, pp. 226–32). Nyberg emphasizes the 'ethical nature' of the dualism by contrasting it with both 'physical' and 'metaphysical' ones.

> Die Aufteilung in Gut und Böse, die für unsere Welt charakteristisch ist, ist nicht dadurch zustande gekommen, daß die einen gut und die andern böse geschaffen wurden, sondern sie beruht auf einer urzeitlichen Wahl. Sie ist ethischer Nature. Es hat einst im freien Ermessen der Wesen gestanden, zwischen Leben und Nicht-Leben zu wählen.
>
> (Nyberg 1938, p. 105)

The contrast with 'metaphysical dualism' is problematic, though, since, if the primordial 'determination (*dad-*)' by the two 'Mainyus' of 'life and ruination' (Y 30.4) does not count as 'metaphysical', nothing would.[10] If the choice between 'good and evil' for mortals in fact amounts to the choice between 'living and ruination', as Nyberg has it, then the symmetry with the mythical model breaks down. For in contrast to the immortal beings, mortals by definition choose living, just as ruination by definition is always the choice of one's adversary. Among the mortals, the will to self-ruination or general destruction would only be imputed and never acknowledged. On the other hand, the idea of a will to evil as such, of choosing an evil maxim, and not simply a *malum defectus* (a failure of the will to make the good the ground of its choice) – if *this* idea is implied in the primordial choice of an immortal being, as it appears in Nyberg's view of it, such a wilful choice of evil would be incomprehensible without positing an evil nature behind it, for an immortal being in contrast to mortals has no incentive in choosing 'life' or its opposite.[11] The choice of evil for such a being would be either completely arbitrary or in accordance with its nature. In either case, it would have nothing 'ethical' about it. In short, the primordial 'choice' of the two 'spirits' cannot be understood as the 'model' of an ethical choice for mortals. As far as mortals are concerned, the dualistic admonition addressed to them to choose life (and not destruction of life) is really asking them to side with the author of the address. We know that the Gāthic choice of 'life' in no way implies naturist pacifism, so that, e.g. understood as abstention from killing, 'life' could become a concrete value for the will. In the absence of this concrete sense, 'life' cannot be an object of the will but the name one may give to the side one has taken.

Nyberg shows no real interest or curiosity in the question of the treatment of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās. The general dualist frame of analysis together with the idea of an ethical transposition of dualism decides their fate in Nyberg's work. In the generalized dualism that Nyberg posits, the cause of

the antagonism is incidental, and hence no thought is given to it. The *ahuras* are at war with the *daēvas* – for supremacy. It seems natural enough for the two classes of gods to vie for the upper hand. And since in Iran the *ahuras* became ascendant, the *daēvas* had to be demonized. What requires attention, in Nyberg's mind, is that Gāthic dualism is not a confrontation of two 'natures', one good and one bad, but grounded in the 'ethical' choices of the two 'spirits', one supposedly choosing living and the other ruination. This 'ethical dualism' makes one side not just bad but also morally culpable, since 'in freedom' it has chosen to destroy life. It is this choice, in Nyberg's account, with which each mortal in turn is confronted and for which he is accountable at the end of his life. But we have seen that the 'choice' between living and ruination can constitute an 'ethical' perspective neither for mortals nor for immortals.

According to Duchesne-Guillemin (1953, pp. 22–29) there were two basic Iranian religious systems: an *ahura* cult and a *daēva* cult. Zoroastrianism is a development of the former, which is characterized by monotheism centred on the figure of Ahura Mazdā (Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, p. 28). The elevation of Mazdā may be considered a result of the activity of Zarathuštra, whose teachings are found in the Gāthās (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 145). But since we cannot be sure whether the Achaemenid religion was influenced by Zarathuštra's views, we are not in a position to judge which of the Gāthic teachings are specifically his. Nonetheless, it seems possible to recognize in the prophet's teachings a 'mélange original de dualisme et de monothéisme' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, p. 55). The condemnation of the *daēvas* is a traditional position of *ahura* religion, and merely taken up by Zarathuštra, who 'accentuates this movement… by absolutely interdicting any cult that had non-*ahuras* as objects' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, pp. 190–91). This presumably means that there were still *daēva*-worshippers active in Zarathuštra's time and land.[12] The post-Gāthic rehabilitation of the pre-Zoroastrian *ahuras*, according to Duchesne-Guillemin, takes place in accordance with the social-functional differentiation of the Indo-Iranian pantheon.[13] *Ahuras*, the gods of the first social function, the sovereign-priest, are admitted back into the cult, albeit strictly subordinated to Mazdā, but the *daēvas*, the gods of the warrior class, are kept out, as are those of the third function. But if in fact this selection criterion lies at the basis of the post-Gāthic pantheon it must also be the one that had originally separated the followers of the two original cults: 'La condemnation des anciens dieux, réduits en Iran à se confondre avec ces démons, paraît être œuvre cléricale, puisqu'elle porte exclusivement… sur les dieux des deux fonctions non sacredotales' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 190). In other words, the post-Gāthic pantheon restores the gods of the pre-Zarathuštra *ahura* cult. By in part drawing on the Vedic characteristics of the *asuras*, Duchesne-Guillemin points in particular to two specific features of the *ahura*: the *ahuras* are the guardians of *arta*, the true order, and possess the magic creative power *māyā*. Zarathuštra is an inheritor of the *ahura* cult and as such could not but condemn the *daēvas*. 'The word *daēva* seems

to signify three things': (1) in the ancient formula 'daivas + martyas', it does not seem to have a pejorative sense and simply means 'god'; (2) it could also mean 'demon' and be used of supernatural beings whether of Indo-Iranian (e.g. Gandvrwa) or Avestan (e.g. Apaoša) origins; (3) but in the majority of the cases, '*daēva* est synonyme de non-*ahura*. C'est dans cette acception que d'anciens dieux sont désignés (dans l'Avesta récent) comme *daēvas*… Il est remarquable – et certainement essentiel – que tous sont d'anciens dieux des 2ᵉ et 3ᵉ fonctions' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 190). The *daēvas* are the ancient (i.e. Indo-Iranian) gods of the second and third social functions, which explains, in Duchesne-Guillemin's mind, why their repudiation may be thought to have been the work of the exponents of the sacerdotal class.

In Duchesne-Guillemin's view, the Gāthic 'monotheism' is the exclusive worship of Mazdā 'avec son escorte', the 'entities' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 145), called Aməša Spənta in the Young Avestan texts. Where do these entities come from, and is there a principle that presides over their list? According to him, 'ce principe apparaît, dès qu'on s'avise, avec Dumézil, que cette liste est parallèle à celle des fonctions sociales et des dieux qui les représentent' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 200). The same tripartite ideology 'permet d'élucider complètement la série des objets matériels patronnés par les entités' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 202). The Dumézilian scheme fully accounts for the existence, function and order of the entities. Moreover, comparative data allows us to name the 'suppressed' (or, in Dumézil's words, 'substituted') Indo-Iranian gods (or, in any case, their Indo-Aryan epigones) behind the entities: Vohu Manah is Mitra; Aša is Varuṇa; Xšaθra is Iṇdra; Haurvatāt/Amvrvtāt are the two Nāsatyas; and the trivalent Ārmaiti is the goddess of fecundity. The list 'énumère, dans leur ordre, les trois fonctions sociales: souveraineté (en ses deux aspects), guerre, fécondité' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 201). The suppression of the 'gods' in favour of the 'entities' is declared to be the work of Zarathuštra. 'Disposant d'un double système traditionnel de dieux et d'entités… Zarathuštra a supprimé tous les dieux, sauf un, en ignorant Miθra et en condamnant tous les autres, qui n'étaient que des *daēvas*; mais il a laissé subsister toutes les éntités, en les annexant ou les subordonnant à Ahura Mazdā' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, pp. 202–203).[14]

The contradiction between the two schemes Duchesne-Guillemin uses to explain Zarathuštra's 'theology' is not hard to see. It is, at least in part, due to the desire to harmonize the perceived dualism and monotheism in the Gāthās, which in 1953 he 'credits' to Zarathuštra in the form of a 'mélange original de dualisme et de monothéisme'. The system constituted by the one true god and the 'entities' as his 'aspects' defines a comprehensive monotheism, a monarchical monotheism as it were. Just as the Indo-Iranian king is supposed to have united in his person all the three functions,[15] so through his 'aspects' Mazdā is a universal god, and thereby the one god. On the other hand, one cannot account for the radical Gāthic dualism within this system, hence the role of the thesis of a pre-Zarathuštra anti-*daēvic ahura* cult. We then have a confusing situation: the *daēvas*, the non-*ahura* gods of the second and third

classes, are at one and the same time rejected – precisely because they are not the gods of the first class, the *ahuras* – and functionally accommodated in the system of Aməša Spəṇta entities. Although 'ignored', Miθra and Aryaman, two Indo-Iranian *ahuras* according to Duchesne-Guillemin, 'are never called *daēvas*' because they belong to the first function (Duchesne-Guillemin 1962, p. 190). Does this mean that the ancient *ahuras* are in some sense less repudiated than the *daēvas* in the Gāthās?[16] He further adds to the confusion by declaring that the *ahuras* in the Gāthic expression 'Mazdā + *ahuras*' are probably the entities 'qui n'avaient pas encore reçu leur désignation collective d'immortels salutaires' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1995, p. 46).[17] As an exponent of the *ahura* cult, Zarathuštra 'accentuates' that tradition by 'absolutely interdicting' the cult of the *daēvas*, the non-*ahura* gods of the non-sacerdotal classes, but at the same time he is contemptuous of the *ahuras* since he is the prophet of the one true god; despite all this, in yet another twist, he functionally admits the non-sacerdotal gods into the Mazdaean pantheon in the form of 'entities', who appear as the *ahuras* in the Gāthās: the two 'traditional' *ahuras* (the counterparts of Varuṇa and Mitra) plus the rehabilitated gods of the non-sacerdotal classes in their functionally equivalent 'entity' forms. One major contributor to this conceptual confusion is the double application of Dumézil's scheme: once in order to account for the list of the entities, as Dumézil (1986, pp. 43–51) does himself, and once in order to place the Gāthic condemnation of the *daēvas* in the frame of the thesis of a pre-Zarathuštra *ahura* cult.

Dumézil, too, tries to explain the Avestan pantheon along the same lines as Duchesne-Guillemin's *ahura*-cult thesis. The difference is that Dumézil sees the clerical ejection of the non-sacerdotal gods as a post-Gāthic development.

> Ainsi les théologiens qui, quelques générations sans doute après Zoroastre, ont réintroduit les dieux fonctionnels dans la religion réformée, n'ont retenu comme dieux que ceux de la première fonction… ils ne pouvaient concevoir la purification de la religion, la "réforme", que comme l'extension à tous les niveaux de l'idéologie et de la morale propres au leur. Les dieux des deux autres niveaux, qui garantissaient des conduites, des idéaux différents, divergents, menaçants donc pour la réforme… ont été rejetés, condamnés… ils sont devenus les exemples typiques de ces *daēva*.
>
> (Dumézil 1986, pp. 42–43)

This of course leaves open the question of why the *daēvas* are condemned in the Gāthās and, if the 'typical examples' are post-Gāthic additions, the question of the identity of the Gāthic *daēvas*. Dumézil's post-Gāthic clerical intervention, just like Duchesne-Guillemin's pre-Gāthic one, remains *ad hoc*. His psychological explanation is unconvincing. The supposed 'threat' from the non-sacerdotal gods – does it pertain to their character and activities or their identity? In the latter case, it is never considered a 'threat' elsewhere in

the Indo-European areas, and, if the 'tri-functional ideology' has any meaning, this has to be the legitimation of a hierarchical tripartite society and pantheon. The elimination of two tiers of the pantheon is incomprehensible within this frame. In the former case, not only does this 'revolution from above' (Dumézil 1986, p. 120) spawn new non-sacerdotal gods, e.g. Drvāspā and Gōušurvan (Dumézil 1986, p. 118), it also reassigns warrior functions, left in search of an agent by the ejection of Indra, to a god of the first function, Miθra, assisted by a second-function god Vərəθraγna (Dumézil 1986, pp. 118–21). This shows that the 'threat' can no more be accounted to the type of activities of the non-sacerdotal gods. Moreover, as can be seen from the list Pirart (2008, p. 39) gives of the Avestan deities that preserve their Indo-Iranian status, not all the supposed Indo-Iranian gods of the non-sacerdotal classes are demonized in the Young Avestan texts, e.g. Vāta, Vayu, Haoma.[18]

If Dumézil never wants to know about the motivations behind the Gāthic condemnation of the *daēvas*, which must be one of the important aspects of 'la réforme zoroastrienne', it is because for him, too, the 'pure Zoroastrianism' is monotheistic. In the Gāthās 'où le monothéisme règne absolument, où, sous Ahura Mazdā, aucune des personnes divines dont les noms sont aussi védiques n'a été retenue, ni comme dieu ni comme démon' (Dumézil 1986, p. 41), there is no reason to ask why certain gods are repudiated, since 'monotheism' acknowledges only one god.[19] Dumézil's appeal to the psychology of the 'prophet' is tautological. 'Zoroastre, en bannissant tous les anciens dieux fonctionnels au profit du Dieu unique, n'a pas voulu perdre une philosophie dont il continuait d'apprécier la valeur, celle qu'exprimait leur multiplicité et leur rapports' (Dumézil 1986, p. 147).[20]

In contrast to Dumézil, the *ahura*-cult thesis makes the repudiation of the *daēvas* a fact of the cultural milieu where Zarathuštra steps onto the historical stage, a repudiation that, effected by the clerical proponents of the *ahura* cult, becomes a constituent of the intellectual tradition that the 'reformer' inherits. Duchesne-Guillemin believes that the 'reason' for the rejection must be sought in the 'fact' that the *daēvas* belong to the non-sacerdotal classes.[21] In the frame of Dumézil's theory of tripartite ideology, this would be a very odd development. As I mentioned, this ideology legitimates the tripartite structure of the pantheon no less than the tripartite division of society; or rather it explains the former as a reflection of the latter. Duchesne-Guillemin acknowledges this when he takes up Dumézil's account of the tripartite ideology. The Dumézilian explanation of the Gāthic repudiation of the *daēvas* leads to an impasse.

Mary Boyce is as committed to the *ahura*-cult thesis as the scholars we just considered: 'Before Zoroaster preached, such antagonism existing between the adherents of *ahuras* and *daēvas* had probably not prevented the prudent man from offering sacrifices to both' (Boyce 1975, p. 251). It is true that even before Zoroaster these 'gods' were rejected by the adherents of the *ahuras*, she suggests, but this condemnation had not yet found its way to cult practice. The 'most difficult point of Zoroaster's new doctrines for the people at large

to accept was his utter rejection of the *daēvas*. He himself acknowledged the power and ubiquity of their wicked company, the *daēvadāt*; and he showed therefore the greatest courage, as well as the utmost faith in Ahura Mazdā, in defying them and denying them all worship' (Boyce 1975, p. 251). His 'offering hope of salvation to every morally good person', no matter how humble, offended the aristocratic establishment. The emphasis on the 'moral quality' of the faithful and making this the condition of salvation decided the fate of the 'materialistic' *daēvas*. What gave the *coup de grâce* to these 'warlike' gods must have been this new, specifically Zoroastrian, doctrine of salvation. Although Boyce never makes the dependence of salvation on moral goodness the frame of her account of the Gāthic rejection of the *daēvas*, she does explicitly link 'morality' and salvation. This allows her to maintain both the thesis of a pre-Zarathuštra, anti-*daēvic ahura* cult and the 'revolutionary' character of Zoroastrianism.

Some 'opposition between the ethical Asuras and Indra was felt already in the Indo-Iranian period, and the times of the great migrations probably intensified awareness of this' (Boyce 1975, p. 252). For Boyce, Zarathuštra is an inheritor of the *ahura* religion and *ahuric* rejection of the *daēva* cult because of its encouragement of 'unethical' practices. It is stated 'in Pahlavi literature' that the adherents of the cult 'did not believe in moral rewards and punishments, which suggests that the Daēva-worshippers had the simple materialistic outlook of the Vedic devotee of Indra, seeking happiness here and hereafter through divine favours accorded him in direct return for his offerings' (Boyce 1975, p. 252). One could fairly say that in her account the basis of the repudiation of the *daēvas* is their warlike nature and their worshippers' amoral conception of the desirable life and salvation, which is reduced to a kind of barter. Morality is thus the ground of condemnation of the *daēvas*. Instead of propitiating them, as continued to be the practice of even *ahura* worshippers, one must fight them and their followers. Indeed, Boyce could have referred to a number of passages in the Gāthās that show in just how thoroughgoing a fashion the combat against the 'powers of darkness'[22] was conceived. Y 46.4 praises the one who deprives the 'adherent of deceit' of his power and livelihood; 46.6 says association with the 'deceitful' will deliver one to the bonds of *druj*; and 46.8 wishes misery for the deceitful. Y 53.9 looks forward to an *ašauuan- ahura-* depriving those who have made the 'wrong choice' (*dužuuarəna-*) of their 'livelihood and liberty'.

However, the idea that the qualification for salvation involves more than just being ritually adequate (as in the Vedic doctrine) remains, in my mind, a supposition in Boyce's work.[23] Neither opposition to war and bloodshed as such nor Gāthic 'anti-ritualism' (which she certainly does not espouse, as opposed to Gnoli, for example) can be regarded as the substance of what she means by 'ethical'. This leaves only the 'values' of the 'peaceful pastoralist tribes in search of settlement' – more or less the same values that Bartholomae (1924, pp. 16–17) saw reflected in the 'third stage' of the development of Zarathuštra's doctrine – opposed by the 'ruthless, predatory'

warriors 'delighting in combat for its own sake and for the booty it could bring'.[24] These warlike bands 'would naturally have worshipped the unscrupulous Indra, warlike and bountiful, whereas settled peoples were much more likely to have offered their heartfelt prayers to the Ahuras, guardians of order and peace' (Boyce 1975, p. 252). The *ahuras* are the 'guardians of order and peace' hence they are 'ethical'. An elective affinity between a way of life and a certain type of deity has some plausibility as a general proposition. But the problem is that Boyce uses it to conjure up germane gods for the two types of existence that she imagines must have defined by and large the Iranian populations of the end of the second millennium BC. The peaceful people must have had 'ethical' gods, and the warlike people 'unethical' ones. But Zarathuštra repudiates *daēvas* and not Indra alone. The Vedic Nāsatyas are not primarily warriors but saviours, especially eschatological.[25] Boyce wants to infer from the 'unethical' nature of Indra[26] not only that the defining characteristic of the *daēvas* was their warlike nature but also that this was the reason why they were rejected by the 'ethical' *ahura* worshippers. In fact, Boyce's extension of the 'unethical' quality of Indra (and Šarva)[27] to the *daēvas* must be based on her thesis of an Iranian cult of the 'ethical Ahuras' (i.e. the guardians of peace and order, the 'beneficent' gods of peaceful tribes), which requires in the *daēvas*, rejected in the Gāthās, the opposite quality. In her later work she somewhat revises her interpretation of the pre-Zoroastrian *daēva*. It no longer refers to a warlike divinity but seems to be a general term for 'god' that subsequently acquired its pejorative meaning through its being used as divine appellation by warlike worshippers.

> It seems likely that already before Zoroaster's own day there was a strong consciousness among the law-abiding 'Avestan' people of being above all *ahura-tkaeša*, 'adhering to the teaching of the Ahuras', while they may have looked on their more warlike fellows as indiscriminate 'worshippers of the gods', *daevayasna*; and that it was through this contrast that the meaning of the word *daeva* 'god' came to stand particularly for those divinities whom warriors most venerated.
>
> (Boyce 1992, p. 72)

Boyce carries the later usage of the title *ahura* to the Gāthās (Boyce 1975, pp. 40–52).[28] According to her, behind the Gāthic phrase 'and (other) *ahuras*' in Y 30.9 and 31.4 'can only be Miθra and *Vouruna Apąm Napāt' (Boyce 1975, p. 195, cf. p. 23), who together with Ahura Mazdā constitute the *ahura* class of gods. As far as I can see, she bases this assertion on four disparate findings. First, aside from Mazdā, the title *ahura* is used of Miθra and Apąm Napāt in the Young Avestan texts.[29] Second, in the R̥gveda, Mitra and Varuṇa are the guardians of *R̥ta*, Avestan *aša*, the 'moral order' (Boyce 1975, p. 32). In the Avesta, however, neither Miθra's nor Apąm Napāt's link with *aša* is significant in their character. Third, 'the ancient Indo-Iranian *asuras* all personify abstract concepts' (Boyce 1975, p. 23): *mitra-* means 'covenant,

loyalty' (Boyce 1975, p. 25), *varuṇa-* 'binding utterance, oath' (1975, 34), *medhā́-* (which she maintains is the Vedic counterpart of *mazdā-*) 'insight, wisdom' (Boyce 1975, p. 39). The second and the third translations (so also Thieme 1970, p. 411 'Wahrheitswort', and p. 409 'Weisheit', respectively) are controversial.[30] Fourth, one of the cosmic activities of Varuṇa is said in the R̥gveda to be the production of rain (Boyce 1975, p. 33), so this Vedic god has to be the Avestan Apạm Napāt. Whatever the value of each, they are not probative for her thesis in the face of the lack of Gāthic evidence: why is no mention made of them in the Gāthās?[31] Y 43.3 mentions an *ahura* that is clearly not Mazdā.[32] According to Boyce's thesis, this must be either Apạm Napāt or Miθra: but why the reticence in naming the god? Moreover, why use the plural instead of the dual in Y 30.9 *mazdåscā ahurår̊hō* 'Mazdā and (other) *ahuras*', if there are in fact only two 'other *ahuras*' – a perfect occasion for using the dual?[33]

I have not questioned so far the validity of the thesis of an *ahura* class of gods. From the beginning, this thesis was no more than an assumption.[34] The Vedic scholars who were attentive to the semantics of the usage of *asura* in the R̥gveda, like Oldenberg, noticed that in the earlier hymns (the so-called Family Books) the term does not have a negative meaning and that it is especially used of the gods that possess the *māyā*.[35] Accordingly, Oldenberg thought that the semantic developments of *asura/ahura* and *deva/daēva* in ancient India and Iran were independent. He also rejected the idea that *asuras* formed a specific class of beings in the oldest part of the Vedas (Oldenberg 2004, pp. 45–51, pp. 85–88, pp. 141–50). The certainty that the term *asura* is not a categorical designation came in 1986. After a thorough examination of the Vedic and Brāhmaṇic material Hale concluded that in the earliest parts of the R̥gveda, *asura* means 'lord' or 'leader' and does not designate a particular kind of being, and that it is used only in the singular (or dual) and never in the plural (Hale 1986, pp. 52–53). The change of connotation from the positive to the negative seems to be underway in the *Sāmaveda*, where it is close in meaning to the word *dásyu–*, but the four occurrences of *asura* in the singular are still positive (Hale 1986, p. 130). '*Ásura-* had the basic meaning "lord" in the Indo-Iranian period and continued to have this meaning in the RV. But by the time of the composition of the Brāhmaṇas it had taken the meaning of "demon" or "anti-god". It is probable that some already extant concept of demon served as a model for at least part of this developing meaning' (Hale 1986, p. 135). Hale plausibly suggests that this 'model' was the *dásyu-* and *dāsa-*, referring to peoples who seem to have been the enemies of the Vedic Indo-Aryans.[36] His conclusions make the *ahura*-cult thesis untenable as they remove its mainstay, that is to say, the presence of an *asura* type of gods in the oldest layer of the Vedic tradition. Hale in effect shows that (1) the term develops its negative meaning in the attested Vedic period,[37] and that this development is not in the context of a religious-historical interaction with the *devas*; and (2) it comes to denote a category of supernatural beings in the later Vedic period in a kind of semantic coupling with the terms *dasyu-* and

dāsa- that designated the human enemies of the Aryans, so that correspondingly *asuras* become the enemies of the *devas*.[38] He thus offers a convincing, comprehensive account of the formation of the demonic class of *asuras* in the later Vedic period. Since from the beginning the *ahura*-cult thesis had relied on the supposed Vedic evidence, with the disappearance of the latter, the thesis collapses; or, so it should.

The scholars who deny the reform aspect of Zoroastrianism, however, have found it difficult to let go of the idea of an interaction between the semantic developments of the Indian and Iranian couples. While acknowledging the conclusions of Hale's study and its implications for the interpretation of the Gāthic repudiation of the *daēvas*, Kellens (2006, p. 147) is reluctant to accept the independence of the two 'demonizations', which he finds 'intellectually difficult to accept'. The reluctance is understandable, because if there are no grounds to think that the Gāthās continue a pre-Zoroastrian tradition that in doctrine and cult repudiated the supposed Indo-Iranian **daivas*, one would have to come to terms with the historical reality of an Iranian *daēva* cult, and consider the condemnation of these deities in the Gāthās against that historical background. Narten (1996, p. 65) succinctly formulates the ineluctable consequence: 'Für Zarathustra, den überzeugten Verehrer Ahura Mazdās und seiner göttlichen Helfer, waren die Daēvas, die anderen Götter, zweifellos ebenso existent'.[39] And in fact there is historical evidence that the *daēvas* were worshipped among Iranian-speaking peoples. Whatever the origins and the process of the 'demonization' of these ancient gods, its sheer extension, in view of the vastness of the territory and the imaginable difficulties inherent in any form of religious 'conversion', require explanation. It may seem that in the process the divine appellation itself (or one of the Iranian words for god) is discredited. In any case, it has been the perspective of many scholars that the word *daēva* is a general term meaning god. The question whether the process 'originated' in the Gāthās does not belong to the order of historical knowledge. Nothing in history has a simple origin. The idea that a new intuition of the divine formed in the mind of a noble prophet is at the origin of Zoroastrianism, or of any other religion for that matter, should be left to hagiographic tracts. This is not to deny the role of the charismatic individual, which is plausible enough as an important factor in the formation of the movement whose effects are more or less known historical facts. But the whole picture of a noble prophet heeding the word of the one true god and admonishing his fellows and inviting them to the new faith, etc. – this Biblical costume drama does not belong to the Gāthās. Zarathuštra's god is not distinguished from the *daēvas* by his being morally 'good', as Narten maintains:

> Zarathustras Ablehnung des Daēvas und des Daēva-Kultes ist – zumindest so, wie es die Gathas darstellen – im wesentlichen ethisch bedingt. Für Zarathustra ist der Gott, den er verkündet, die Verköperung des Guten. Entsprechend sind auch die Menschen, die Ahura Mazdā verehren, gut.
>
> (Narten 1996, p. 82)

This 'explanation' of the Gāthic rejection of the *daēvas* amounts to no more than a nomenclature, since no account is given of what is understood by 'good' or 'bad'.[40] Just as in Boyce and Gnoli, one suspects modern humanistic sentiments behind the adjective 'ethical' and hence the explanation that relies on it.

The question of the ethical character of Zoroastrianism, and in particular its supposed ethically inspired rejection of the Indo-Iranian *daēvas*, is a pseudo-problem so long as one does not say what one means by 'ethical'. Saying that the *daēvas* are repudiated because they are 'evil' or 'unethical', supposedly showing the ethical nature of the religion, does not elucidate anything. The picture given by Narten and others relies on the transparency of the notion of 'good', to which the 'ethical' rejection of the *daēvas* refers. Again, *in what sense* is Zarathuštra's god the embodiment of 'Good'? Far from illuminating the Gāthic ideological horizon, terms like 'ethical', 'free choice', 'good' help create a substitute universe where everything is simultaneously transparent and inscrutable, since everyone knows what the good is, that choice creates responsibility, etc., which automatically 'explains' – e.g. the *daēvas* are repudiated because they are 'evil' – what one wants to explain.

We have seen how this whole procedure, as soon as it commits itself even in the most passing way to the givens of the text, to the words of the Gāthās, runs into irresolvable difficulties. Once one equates the 'good' with 'living', as Nyberg does, it becomes impossible to describe as 'ethical' the primordial 'choice' of the two spirits; and once we restore the mythical dimension of the 'choice' and set out its implications, the supposed distinction between the ethical and the metaphysical becomes meaningless. As for the mortals' choice of 'life', we saw that this choice can in no way be described as ethical, since there cannot be an ethical action without a concrete maxim that directs it, and 'life' does not constitute a concrete value in the opposition of 'life and ruination'. The term 'life' in the Gāthās does not belong to a moral discourse but to a religious confrontation that seems to be primarily over eschatological issues. For Boyce, the *ahuras* are 'ethical' because they promote 'peace and order', that is to say, the values of the peaceful pastoralists as opposed to the warlike gods of the nomadic warrior bands, the *daēvas*. The term 'ethical' is then redundant, so much so that its usage only arouses the suspicion that it means *something* more elevated than merely the maintenance of peace and order, since, after all, this can also be achieved by Machiavellian means. One is then free to understand this 'something' as one pleases, in keeping with one's modern humanistic sentiments, and feels no need to render any account of it. There is no point trying to imagine what the author could mean by the extra 'something' that the term 'ethical' should signal. One can only analyse and criticize what is articulated.

Notes

1 See my discussion of the *Männerbund* in the final part of this book. The Odinic warrior bands, the *berserkir* 'bare skinned' or *ūlfheðnar* 'wolf skinned', who are

portrayed both before and after death as moved by the god's *furor* seem an especially interesting comparison. See Puhvel 1987, pp. 196–97 and Wikander 1938, pp. 67–95. The *daēvic mairiia-* 'young man' is described as 'two-legged wolf' in a Young Avestan text (Y 9.18; cf. V 7.52). See Boyce 1992, pp. 38–39: 'In the Rigveda, by contrast, the word *marya* survives only used in laudatory fashion of chariot-riding gods, notably of the band of youthful Maruts'. It is reasonable to think that the term was originally used by the Indo-Iranians as the designation for members of warrior bands. See also Heesterman 1962 and Parpola 1997, pp. 195–96.

2 See Benveniste 1929, pp. 39–40: '[W]e have strong reasons for thinking that this very ancient god was merely utilised and brought into prominence by the Zoroastrian reform… His abstract name, Mazdâh, is prior to the reform, to which he does not even owe the essential rôle which has developed upon [sic] him'.

3 Benveniste (1967, p. 146) writes: 'Pour Zarathuštra, les *daivas* sont encore les "dieux" de la vieille religion, dieux honnis certes, mais dieux réels et qui avaient leurs fidèles'. The *daēvas* are 'real gods' in so far as they have 'their faithful'. The question is whether they are considered in the Gāthās to be 'bad' gods or only 'false' gods, who are worshipped by (adverse) other groups, and 'real' in this sense. The thesis of Gāthic monotheism requires the latter interpretation.

4 Cf. Y 49.4 *yōi duš.xraθβā… tōi daēuuāŋg dạn yā drəguuatō daēnā* 'the ineffectual imbeciles make of the vision-soul of the follower of *druj* (the way to) the *daēvas*'. I take this to imply that the follower of *druj* practices the *daēva* cult, so Narten 1996, p. 83: 'Die Verehrer der Daēvas hingegen (i.e. die *ašauuan-*), der nach Zarathustras Auffassung ausnahmlos "schlechten" Götter, sind ihrerseits ebenfalls schlecht, es sind Menschen, die drəguuaṇt- "trughaft, Anhänger des Trugs" genannt werden'.

5 The Zoroastrian profession of faith uses both components: *frauuarānē mazdaiiasnō zaraθuštriš vīdaēuuō ahura.ţkaēšō* 'I declare my choice of being a Mazdā worshipper in the manner of Zarathuštra, a denouncer of the *daēvas*, an adherent of the doctrine of the *ahura*'. Is the presence of two words that refer to the god just a matter of having both components of the divine name in the all-important Zoroastrian 'confession'? In other words, do *mazdaiiasna-* and *ahura.ţkaēša-* mean the same thing? Or, are they complementary? What, then, does each signify? Compare Narten 1996, p. 79; Pirart 2012, pp. 181–96.

6 See Kellens 1984, pp. 133–36.

7 See Narten 1996, pp. 78–81. She pertinently observes: 'Nun werden beide Wörter von den Gathas an bis ins jüngere Avesta hinein auch einzeln zur Bezeichnung Ahura Mazdās verwendet' (Narten 1996, p. 78). As for the dvandva *miθra.ahura bərəzaṇta* 'Miθra and Ahura, the majestic two', I find Narten's remarks convincing. That *ahura* in the expression refers to Mazdā may be inferred from its occurrence in a typical formula of reverence *yazamaide* 'we worship' at the end of the Mihr Yašt, the hymn to Miθra, where it was felt that the name of the supreme god had to be included in the final statement of worship. This inference becomes a virtual certainty once one observes that the order of the components is reversed in the passages from the Yasna: 'das Götter-namenkompositum wurde dort sozusagen mazdayasnisch korrigiert, indem man den Namen Ahura Mazdās an den Anfang stellte'. The reversal of the order (*ahura.miθra*) in the face of the dvandva 'rule' (the word with fewer syllables precedes) indicates that the term *ahura* indeed refers to the supreme god.

8 I will come back to the question of the existence of an Indo-Iranian divine class of *asuras*.

9 The mention of the three *daēvas* in the Vīdēvdād shows, according to Nyberg's thesis of a West-Iranian Magian religion, that the ancient Medes '*ursprünglich dasselbe altarische Pantheon gehabt haben, wie die Arier von Mittani. Dieses Pantheon zeigt die Mischung von Ahura- und Daēva-Göttern, die einst alle arische Religion*

auszeichnete (S. 96); vor dem streng *Ahura*-verehrenden Zoroastrismus mußten die alten medischen *Daēva*-Götter fallen' (Nyberg 1938, p. 339). Nyberg refers here to the passage quoted above in the text. It is not clear, though, how these *daēvas* managed to survive among the 'ancient Medes' even after the Indo-Iranian split.

10 Y 30.4 in Panaino's translation: 'Alors, le fait que ces deux Mainiiu se confrontent, détermine, en principe, la vie (*gaiia-*) et la non-vie (*ajiiāti-*), de manière qu'à la fin, la pire existence soit celle des partisans de la Tromperie (*druj-*), mais que la très Bonne Pensée (appartienne) au partisan d'Aša' (Panaino 2004, p. 119).

11 Life and non-life cannot form the evaluative horizon of an immortal being, by definition. The perspective adopted in the Gāthās on the 'primordial choice' of the two 'spirits' is that of the mortals. Nothing is said about the motivation (or intention) of the two immortal beings. In the absence of this knowledge, all talk of an 'ethical model' in the sense implied by Nyberg and others is impertinent. What is contained in the primordial 'Good' and 'Evil'?

12 What Kellens (1994, p. 29) says about Duchesne-Guillemin's, Boyce's and Molé's handling of the *daēva* question in the Gāthās is apt: for them 'la condamnation des *daiuas* est à la fois l'oeuvre de Zaraθuštra et antérieur à lui'. 'Absolutely interdicting' could well be a move in this game of maintaining the 'prophet' in his traditionally recognized status (with all its insignia: 'monotheism' and 'dualism'), which has, however, become honorary.

13 In his 1953 book, the readmission of the *ahuras*, as opposed to the *daēvas*, to the pantheon was understood by Duchesne-Guillemin more in terms of the force of a tradition: 'S'ils [i.e., Indra, Sarva, Nāhaθya] ne sont jamais rentrés en grâce, c'est que leur déchéance datait d'avant celle de Miθra, d'avant le temps du prophète' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, p. 28).

14 See Dumézil 1986, p. 49: 'la liste des Entités appelées à devenir les Amvša Spvnta a été substituée par la théologie réformée à une liste de dieux des trois fonctions toute voisine de celle qui avait cours chez les futurs Indiens'.

15 See Gonda 1959, pp. 172–80.

16 One might also ask whether 'being ignored' here means something different from 'being attacked' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1948, p. 145) or 'an intentional, passionate, hostile silence' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, p. 15).

17 Somewhat different is the reference of '*ahuras*' in 1962: 'Ahura Mazdā résume en soi toute la souveraineté, toute l'ahurité. Cependant, on dit encore (Y 30.9) "les *ahuras*" pour désigner, avec lui, Aši, Sraoša, Rašnu, les Aməša Spəntas, toutes les entités' (204). What is the significance of 'cependant' in the last sentence?

18 See also Kellens 2000, pp. 49–51.

19 See Versnel 1990, p. 22.

20 Dumézil's monotheistic apology (1986, p. 147) is prompted by Gershevitch's remark (1959, p. 48) on 'Dumézil's theory' of the substitution by Zarathuštra of the old gods with the 'entities' in his *Naissance d'Archange*: 'The prophet was, of course, much too honest to bring in Miθra by the back door, e.g., by substituting him for one of the Aməša Spəntas, or adding him to their number. Such "substitutions" or "adjustments"… as part of the working method of a prophet of Zarathuštra's stature and integrity… are unthinkable'. How can Gershevitch be so certain of Zarathuštra's psychology? The reason is simple: the 'prophet' is *his* Zarathuštra.

21 His view was different in *Ormazd et Ahriman*, where it seems that the disfavour the *daēvas* suffer does not have much to do with the rejection by the *ahura*-cult doctors of the non-sacerdotal gods. Here, the 'rejection' of the *daēvas* results in no more than, for example, 'le remplacement d'Indra par Vṛθraγna, lequel est un Indra déguisé sous l'une de ses épithètes constante' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, p. 24).

22 See Boyce (1975, p. 85): 'the gradual debasing in Zoroastrian usage of the word *daēva* from "god" to "false god" and thence to "demon" led to this becoming *the* term in Zoroastrianism for the powers of darkness'. A 'false god' cannot mean

here an imaginary god. Rather, a *daēva* is a powerful supernatural being whom one should not consider a 'god' because he is unethical.

23 See, for example, Boyce 1975, p. 279: 'Here [i.e. legends of Zoroaster's childhood] as elsewhere the prophet's hostility to *dēv* worship is represented as founded solely on what he regarded as the wickedness of the beings who were venerated, and not on the manner of their cult'.

24 'And if the men who carried out the raids were wicked, how could the gods whom they worshipped, and who seemingly granted them these cruel successes, be good? And, if not good, how could they have their being from Mazda, himself wholly good? By some such steps, it seems reasonable to suppose, Zoroaster was led to active denunciation of the "Daevas", with at their head, as the Young Avesta shows, the probably by then great Indra' (Boyce 1992, p. 72). Active opposition to cruelty and warlike activity (cattle-raiding?) is the basis of the prophet's 'active' rejection of the 'gods'. The qualification 'active' marks for Boyce the prophet's specific contribution to the 'ahuric doctrine'. Compare Duchesne-Guillemin's view of Zoroaster's opposition to cruelty and promotion of sedentary life: 'En somme, l'action bonne se résume à soigner le bœuf et à le défendre; il s'y ajoute le devoir positif d'étendre, aux dépens du nomade, le domaine des prés fertilisés' (Duchesne-Guillemin 1953, p. 12).

25 See Frame 1978, pp. 125ff.; Parpola 2004–2005, pp. 20ff.; Gotō 2006. The background of the two Aśvins is perhaps in the institution of chariotry, i.e. 'the deified chariot team', as Parpola (2004–2005, pp. 6ff.) maintains.

26 Compare Söhnen 1997. The reduction of Indra to a war god is based in 'misunderstanding' and 'prejudice', according to Söhnen: 'Indra is nowhere in the Ṛgveda in opposition to the ethical ideals as personified in the shape of the Ādityas' (1997, p. 236).

27 Boyce herself admits that this is not the only quality of the Vedic Indra. See Boyce 1975, p. 83. In fact, it is not even the defining quality of this Vedic god. Nor is Indra opposed to the 'moral order'. 'The essential affinity of *Indra* and *Varuṇa*, which leads to the formation of the dvandva *Indrā-Varuṇā*, consists in the fact that both of them punish those who sin against truth and in particular break their contractual word' (Thieme 1960, p. 311). See also Gonda 1975, pp. 114–22 and Oldenberg 2004, p. 90, pp. 141–50. Oldenberg's pages on the term '*asura*' are insightful: 'This word *Asura*, which denotes in the later Vedic language almost exclusively a being hostile to gods, appears moreover in the older texts, in fact, predominantly, as an epithet of gods… it is not used for all gods with the same preference; it may be far from the opposite of the word *deva*, yet by no means synonymous with the word *deva*… where it is used for gods, [it] does not simply have the meaning of "god" or "lord"; rather it must have meant for the consciousness of the Vedic poets something like the "owner of a secret power"' (Oldenberg 2004, pp. 85–87).

28 Compare Duchesne-Guillemin 1995, p. 46.

29 On Apąm Napāt see Oettinger 2009 and Kellens 2012, pp. 476–81.

30 One should note the circularity of this argument: one must already know who the *ahuras* are, and that the *ahuras* are personified abstract concepts, so that the abstractness of a divine name may be used as, at least partial, proof of its bearer's *ahura* status. See Kuiper 1976 and compare Hintze 2012, pp. 67–69.

31 See Narten 1996, pp. 74–75.

32 This *ahura* is, in my view, Sraoša.

33 See also Narten 1982, p. 62.

34 Witzel (2001, pp. 8–9) still believes that the opposition between the *asuras* and the *devas* was the main feature of the 'early IIr. religion'.

35 See Macdonell 1897, p. 156, and Eliade 1978, p. 200: 'In the Vedas the title *asura* is used as an epithet for any god, even for Dyaus and Indra (the latter is named "Sovereign of the Asuras" in AV 6. 83. 3). In other words, the term *asura* refers

to the specific sacred powers belonging to a primordial situation, especially that which existed before the organization of the world. The young gods, the Devas, did not fail to take over these sacred powers; this is why they enjoy the epithet *asura*'.

36 See Hale 1986, pp. 169–71: 'The distribution of the words *dāsa-*, *dásyu-*, and *ásura-* in the "demonic" sense is also quite remarkable. The texts in which the last of these three appears are almost devoid of the first two. It looks very much as if ásura- in its new meaning replaced the other two terms… It should be noted how similar the conflict of gods and *asuras* is to the conflict of the Aryans and the dasyus. In both cases the conflict seems to arise because the *asuras* or dasyus have something which the gods or Aryans want'. See Bailey 1959, pp. 107ff. Compare Parpola 1997. Parpola maintains the Dāsas were the ancestors of the Sakas, and associates them with the Bronze Age archaeological cultures of Bactria and Margiana such as Gonur-Tepe.

37 See Narten 1996, p. 68.

38 Compare Heesterman's analysis (1993, pp. 126–37) of the sacrificial dynamics of the *śrauta* fires and the emergence of the *śrauta* ritual. 'The divide between the two types of sacrifice, then, is not the one between vegetal and blood sacrifice but that between the (at least in principle) fixed *śālā*, the hall where the lordly *asuras* stayed, and the mobile laager of the soma *dīkṣita* moving about, like the *devas*, "on wheels" with his carts and cattle' (Heesterman 1993, p. 132). The magnate of the hall 'should be "well-to-do (*puṣṭa*) like an *asura*". Incidentally, this may also throw light on the brāhmaṇas' statement that he who removes the fire… scatters sacrifice and cattle or is even guilty of manslaughter. Rather than terminate a sacrificial fire – what is regularly done at the end of a sacrifice – it suggests the forcible removal of the wealthy magnate's fire and cattle. Being "like an *asura*", the latter is not likely to give in without a fight that may well end in manslaughter. Here we have come full circle and are back again with the *asura*-like magnate "sitting in his *śālā*" and challenged on his place of sacrifice by the "gods [*devas*] driving about on wheels" who are after his fire and cattle' (Heesterman 1993, p. 137).

39 And further: 'Die Daēvas waren in Kern zweifellos Götter des indoiranischen Pantheons, die in Iran weiterhin verehrt wurden' (Narten 1996, p. 82). Narten herself was a proponent of the *ahura*-cult thesis (cf. Narten 1982, p. 62). The existence of an *ahura* cult in ancient Iran was a reasonable assumption consistent with the idea, inferred from the supposed existence of a Vedic *asura* class, that there must have been such a class of gods in Indo-Iranian times, which was then thought to stand in the background of 'Zarathuštra's reform' (cf. Narten 1996, p. 67).

40 No 'moral' impulse understood in the modern deontological sense (e.g. subjecting the maxim of an action to the test of universalizability, as in Kantian ethics), underlies any ancient religious thought.

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3   Ethno-historical thesis

In an important article, Burrow (1973) gave an ethno-historical account of the repudiation of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās.[1] His point of departure, too, is the observation that the 'demonization' of the *asuras* in the later Vedic period is unrelated to the condemnation of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās. The word *asura* never designates a class of deities in the Veda; and no god given the title *asura* ('lord') ever becomes a demon (Burrow 1973, pp. 127–29). Nonetheless, Burrow maintains that the repudiation of the *daēvas*, as a fact of the 'religious history of Iran',[2] must be placed in the context of a hostile confrontation with the Indo-Aryan worshippers of the *devas*. Thus the religious dimension of the ethnic conflict between Iranians and Indians should not be imagined in the common Indo-Iranian period, where the religious-historical animosity of the two 'classes' of gods is supposed to have given rise to antagonistic grouping of the human proponents of each, forming eventually the Iranian and Indian branches, but in the period, following the settlement of the Indo-Aryans across the northern Iranian plateau from the north-west of the Indian subcontinent to the north-west of Iran, when immigrating Iranian tribes were driving south in stages from Central Asia along the plains east of the Caspian and taking control of the hitherto Indo-Aryan territories. The basics of the account are simple. Although becoming politically ascendant in the territory that would eventually take its name from their self-designation, the recently settled Iranians here and there accepted the gods of the culturally more advanced Indo-Aryans into their pantheon. The key idea is that the *daēvas* were never Iranian gods, but borrowed, especially by some eastern Iranian princes, for some period before the appearance of Zarathuštra, 'uncompromisingly condemned' by the latter and finally turned into demons by his epigones.

The thesis of the non-Iranian origins of the *daēvas* allows one, according to Burrow, to account for the post-Gāthic membership of the Zoroastrian pantheon, whose list, as given in the Yašts and other places, Burrow (1973, p. 130) assumes to be complete. Since there is no *daēva* among the gods of the Iranian pantheon, there would be no contradiction between Zarathuštra's uncompromising repudiation of the *daēvas* and the restoration of the old Iranian gods to the pantheon: these were never condemned by Zarathuštra.

Burrow thus explains the nature of the Zoroastrian rejection of the *daēvas*: they are alien gods of a hostile people, hence nefarious. The rare evidence of a *daēva* cult among Iranians (e.g. the Sogdian theophoric names containing the word *daēva*[3]) can be understood as the remnants of a borrowed alien cult (Burrow 1973, p. 134). On the other hand, the 'Iranian word for "god" was not *daiva*- but *baga*-. This can safely be assumed on the strength of the distribution of the word in the various Iranian languages: OPers. *baga*-, Av. *baγa*-, Sogd. *BG*-, etc.' (Burrow 1973, p. 130). The antiquity of the term as a divine appellation is shown by its presence in the Slavonic (OSl. *bogŭ* 'god'), which is not 'considered a loanword from Iranian', proving its thoroughgoing integration. If this word was replaced in the later Avestan literature by the word *yazata*, it was in order to signal the subordinate status of the old gods vis-à-vis Ahura Mazdā.

Kellens' dismissal of Burrow's 'hypothesis' as 'une pure intrigue historique' (Kellens 2006, p. 146) is unfair. The objections that Kellens raises against Burrow's account are either irrelevant or relative to one's interpretive frame. The question, which Kellens rightly puts to all interpretations of the Gāthās that combine the *ahura*-cult thesis with monotheism – 'why would Zarathuštra, in order to affirm monotheism, revile the *daēvas*, long since demonized, instead of the *ahuras* of the national polytheism?' (Kellens 2006, p. 107) – would miss its mark here since Burrow does not claim that Gāthic theology is monotheistic. In fact, he explicitly says that Zarathuštra never condemned the gods of the Iranian pantheon. Whether this is an acceptable interpretation of the Gāthās is not at issue here. The names of the *daēvas* mentioned in the Vīdēvdād (Indra, Saurva and Nāŋhaiθya), Kellens says, 'sont ceux de démons iraniens correspondant à des dieux indiens' (Kellens 2006, p. 107). Burrow does not deny that these names show genuine Iranian phonetic features, but he thinks that the conclusion Kellens wants to draw from this linguistic evidence – that they cannot be Indo-Aryan gods – does not necessarily follow. According to Burrow, these were among the principal gods that Indo-Aryans worshiped in eastern Iran when Iranians took political control of this area (Burrow 1973, p. 128), and the typically Iranian development of the sibilants is due to the change in the language of the Indo-Aryans living in this area, 'similar to that in Iranian' (Burrow 1973, p. 132). The relatively late evidence of *daēva* worship (i.e. Xerxes' inscription or the Sogdian theophoric names) is not troublesome for Burrow's account. Whether *daēva* worship indicates an Indo-Aryan tradition continued by the descendant Indo-Aryan societies (Burrow 1973, p. 136) or is an Iranian cult adopted from Indo-Aryan populations settled in the whole northern Iranian plateau and areas to the north-east even beyond the Oxus – either way, Burrow's account can accommodate the *daēva*-cult evidence. The remaining objection from Kellens' list is too impressionistic to be compelling: 'L'ensemble du domaine linguistique iranien semble avoir éprouvé des difficultés à dire "dieu", même si *baga* est largement répandu. Tout se passe comme si la déchéance du mot *daiva* avait créé une case vide dans la titulature divine' (Kellens 2006, p. 107). Kellens himself

thought in 1994 that the word *baga* was indeed the Iranian word for god, and he even believed he found it in the Gāthās as one of the exponents, along with Mazdā, the 'entities' and the *daēvas*, of the *haṇt*, 'being', supposedly the word for divinity (Kellens 1994, p. 117). The geographic and chronological extension of the attestation of *baga* makes it *difficult not to* think that this word was in some way the Iranian term for god. The Avestan exceptionalism would then have to be explained as a doctrinal intervention, although *baga* is perhaps attested once with the meaning god in the Gāthās, in the enigmatic passage (Y 32.8), which describes the 'wrongs' that presumably precipitated Yima's downfall. In any case, the idea that in general Iranians had difficulties with how to say 'god' does not seem reasonable to me. Even more problematic is to want to ground this supposed difficulty in the malaise created by the 'déchéance' (decline) of the word *daēva*, the erstwhile term for god. The view that the repudiation of this or that god or even a whole pantheon should lead to the denigration of the divine appellation itself is, at best, a hypothesis in need of proof. I cannot think of a single historical instance that would make it credible.

If Kellens' objections by and large miss their target, is Burrow's thesis acceptable? In other words, are the key claims, namely that the *daēvas* were never Iranian gods and that the word *daēva* never designated divinity in any Iranian language, valid? These claims certainly find a comfortable place in Burrow's account of 'historical interactions' between the Indo-Aryan and Iranian populations from around the middle of the second millennium BC to the Achaemenid times, but this account cannot establish their validity. As far as I can see, Burrow gives two reasons for his claim that the *daēvas* were not Iranian but only ever Indo-Aryan gods. One is that their attested respective pantheons have hardly any god in common and certainly do not share any 'important' god (Burrow 1973, p. 131). The qualification 'important', I suppose, is a matter of interpretation, but one can legitimately question whether deities like Haoma and Vayu, beside minor ones, are not 'important'. Were these deities, who kept their status in both pantheons, Indo-Iranian gods? If so, the old problem of the selection criteria for the membership of the Avestan pantheon returns, not to mention the added question of the reason for the survival of some but not all the ancient gods as common deities. The whole issue is thereby shifted back in time, i.e. prior to Zarathuštra. The problem is especially acute with respect to Mitra/Miθra. Burrow himself acknowledges it, but the way he sets about resolving it is not really satisfactory: 'this god is so much more important in the Iranian scheme of things than in the Vedic (and presumably Proto-Indoaryan), that the correspondence could be ignored' (Burrow 1973, p. 131). That Miθra was 'so much more' important for the Iranians than Mitra was for the Indo-Aryans, even if true, does not mean that Mitra was not important for the latter, which is obviously incorrect, especially in view of his close association with Varuṇa. Mitra is, after all, one of the deities mentioned in the Mitanni treaty, however one cares to interpret the list. In Burrow's account, if the Indo-Aryan word for 'god' was

adopted by the Iranians as the term for harmful deities and then demons, it was because 'it could easily appear to the Iranians and to Zoroaster that the *daēvas*, taken as a whole, were a different set of gods from their own' (Burrow 1973, p. 131). But vilifying the *daēvas* (the Indo-Aryan gods) meant reviling the 'Iranian gods' that happened to hold the membership of both pantheons. This could not have been lost on religious experts. Could one imagine such a casual attitude ('taken as a whole') in a priest with respect to so grave an issue as blasphemy? History also testifies against the plausibility of the thesis that the Iranians vilified the gods of their enemy,[4] which is, generally speaking, out of place in the ancient world in any case, save in the Abrahamic religions.[5]

Burrow maintains that the word *daēva* is a loanword from Indo-Aryan that was adopted by the 'less developed' Iranians once they took over the territory already settled by the Indo-Aryans: 'the Iranian princes in this area respected the old religion and its representatives, and to a large extent adopted those cults' (Burrow 1973, p. 131). The plausible reconstructed picture does not prove that *daēva* is a loanword but only accommodates this claim. How to prove that the word *daēva* is a loanword? Burrow uses the argument that Gray (1927) had made in his article on lexical dualism in the Avesta: for a good number of things Avestan has two (or more) terms, one with a positive value ('Ahurian') and the other with a negative value ('Daevian'). A 'significant pattern emerges' when the two vocabularies are examined from an etymological perspective: 'the "ahurian" words as a general rule are the ones that have the widest representation throughout the Iranian languages, while the "daevian" words have in many cases either no other cognates in Iranian, or are represented only in a few marginal dialects' (Burrow 1973, p. 132). Such is the conclusion of Gray's study according to Burrow, who extends it in the direction of his own thesis: 'it is possible' that a certain number of Indo-Aryan words 'formed a starting point' for the 'daēvian vocabulary' (Burrow 1973, p. 133). He mentions the 'daēvian' words *karəna-*, *aš(i)-*, *hunu-*, *gah-* and *gərəða-*, which have Vedic cognates. These indicate (Burrow: 'there is no doubt') that the 'nucleus' (Burrow 1973, p. 133) of the daēvian vocabulary consists of Indo-Aryan loanwords, to which *daēva* itself may be added, all of which have a negative value, as might be expected in view of their provenance in a hostile culture.

Burrow's rendition of Gray's conclusions is misleading, however. The 'significant pattern' that emerges from Gray's study is not that of the Avestan terms which are solidly Iranian vs. those which are isolated or marginal in Iranian languages and have Vedic cognates, but rather that of the Avestan words which have Modern Iranian cognates vs. those that are archaic, i.e. have only Indo-European cognates. A 'survey of the geographical distribution of the words under consideration seems to justify the conclusion that in the majority of cases the Ahurian terms find cognates in several Modern Iranian dialects, and often outside Iran as well; the Daēvian words, on the other hand… find cognates only outside the Modern Iranian area, except for a few in the Pamir dialects' (Gray 1927, p. 434). In other words, the 'Ahurian'

Avestan terms generally have an Iranian future while the 'Daēvian' ones show at best a marginal Iranian existence and are linguistically archaic. One must also note that many 'Ahurian' terms do have Vedic cognates: verbal roots like *ai, gam, čar, tak, θβarəs, zan, mru*; and nouns like *āh-, manaoθrī-, zasta-*, etc.[6] One could very well appeal to the wide distribution of the word *daēva* in the sense of demon in Iranian languages and claim that the reason for the obsolescence of the 'Daēvian' terms is precisely their compromised status. One can even accept all the premises of Burrow's picture but turn the terms of the argument around: 'archaic' terms (i.e. understandable but more or less defunct among eastern Iranians) were initially harvested by the Zoroastrian priests from Indo-Aryan to represent 'Daēvian' phenomena for the purpose of clearly marking off these phenomena in (the sacred) language, etc. This account fits as well as Burrow's own with his thesis of the Indo-Aryan nucleus of the Daēvian vocabulary.

In my mind, what finally makes Burrow's thesis of the purely Indo-Aryan origins of the *daēvas* and the word *daēva* unacceptable is the lack of all textual evidence of hostile confrontations between the arriving Iranians and the settled Indo-Aryans *and* the association of these supposed confrontations with the condemnation of the *daēvas*. I do not deny that this scenario is plausible, but were it the reason behind the Zoroastrian condemnation of the *daēvas*, would it not *somehow* be reflected in the Gāthās? Burrow tries to forestall this objection by claiming that the ethnic conflict was exhaustively expressed in religious terms, and since both Iranians and Indo-Aryans called themselves 'Aryan', the Avesta had no distinctive term to refer to the Indo-Aryans.[7] The Avesta (Yt 13.143–44) uses ethnic terms to refer to various apparently Iranian peoples that converted to Zoroastrianism: Aryan, Tūrian, Dāhian, Sānian (probably eastern Saka peoples) and Sarmian (probably Sarmatians). Are we to assume that there was no dialectal or tribal differentiation among the Indo-Aryans, and they all referred to themselves as 'Aryan' *tout court*?[8] Further, Vedic poets had no trouble referring to 'enemy Aryans' beside the Dāsas and Dasyus: why suppose it for the Avestan composers? Finally, the idea that one should be at a loss to refer to a hostile people because the latter refers to itself with the same ethnic term as one's own people – this idea simply beggars the imagination. The whole religious edifice is supposed to be built on the basis of this ethnic hostility; nonetheless, one cannot point to this basis, express it in one's sacred language, because of the identity of the ethnic terms of self-reference. As for the idea of an exclusively religious expression of the enmity: it is just an ad hoc postulation unless one can put forward the reason behind it, which is not to be found in Burrow's account. The hypothesis of the suppression of the ethnic roots of Zoroastrian dualism or, at any rate, of the Gāthic condemnation of the *daēvas*, is all the more unacceptable as the Avesta does not seem to have any problem expressing an ethnic ('Aryan') self-affirmation. Whatever might have been the dynamics of the interaction between Indo-Aryan ethnicity and the cult of the *daēvas* among Iranians, the reduction of the latter to the former (as to its 'origins'), that is to say, the 'explanation' of the latter in terms of the former, is a *petitio principii*.

Notes

1 Compare Parpola 2002, p. 73, pp. 85–91. Burrow's thesis has been attractive especially for the historians of the Bronze Age cultures of Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau.
2 'Darmesteter opposed Haug's theory and asserted that there had been no changes in the nature of the Indian or Iranian gods but merely an alternation in the usage of words. As far as the history of the word *asura-* in Sanskrit is concerned, what he said is perfectly true, but he was wrong about the *daēvas* since those principal *daēvas* mentioned above (i.e., Indra and Nāsatya from the Mitanni treaty) are undoubtedly ancient gods who have been turned into demons' (Burrow 1973, pp. 128–29).
3 See Henning 1965, pp. 253–54, and further in the next chapter.
4 See Briant 2002 *passim*.
5 See, e.g. Assmann 2006, pp. 55–62 and Sloterdijk 2009.
6 From 28 Ahurian terms in Gray's survey, 18 are 'common in Iranian' and only 3 'archaic', while only 4 out of 23 Daēvian terms are 'common in Iranian' and 16 'archaic' (Gray 1929, p. 440).
7 'The Avesta has no ethnic term to denote the Proto-Indoaryans, which is not surprising since both they and the Iranians called themselves Aryans and spoke closely related languages. The opposition between the two sides is always spoken of in religious terms between the Mazdayasnas… and the Daēvayasnas' (Burrow 1973, 133–34).
8 Compare Witzel 1997 and Parpola 2002.

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4 Ritualistic thesis

Jean Kellens has developed a ritualist perspective on the Gāthic condemnation of the *daēvas*. Although, as we presently see, he has significantly changed his view of the matter twice, his general approach has remained more or less the same. This approach is in turn based in Kellens' theory of Mazdaism (or Zoroastrianism), which has two distinct features. First, he rejects the historicity of Zarathuštra and the 'revolutionary' nature of Zoroastrianism (which he equates with 'prophetic' apparently understood in the Biblical sense). Kellens' position is the direct opposite to that of Nyberg, who reads the Gāthās as a kind biographical record of Zarathuštra's activities.

> Je ne vois dans les textes avestiques anciens ou récents aucune innovation doctrinale assez considérable pour imposer l'idée qu'une intervention prophétique a fait dévier l'évolution naturelle et régulière du système religieux depuis les temps indo-iraniens… Accepter ou dénier l'existence historique de Zarathushtra conduit inexorablement à construire deux modèles explicatifs du zoroastrisme radicalement différents.
>
> (Kellens 2001, pp. 171–72)

The denial of the historicity of Zarathuštra, on the one hand, and the essential affinity of Mazdaean and Vedic religious systems, on the other, are logically interdependent, according to Kellens. Either one categorizes Zoroastrianism as a prophetic religion, in which case it needs a 'prophet'; or one interprets it as a 'natural and regular evolution' of the Indo-Iranian system and, accordingly, Zarathuštra becomes a 'mythic' figure.[1]

Second, Kellens views the Gāthās as a purely liturgical text, that is, a text composed for the purpose of ritual recitation and addressed to divinities. In an article he wrote with Pirart, they put it in the following way.

> D'une manière générale, nous sommes surpris de la résistance que rencontre la définition des Gâthâs comme texte liturgique… L'un d'entre nous (i.e. Kellens) a parlé de rituel spéculatif… En dissertant sur le rituel, les Gâthâs en dévoilent le fondement spéculatif et disent beaucoup de choses qui ne sont pas d'ordre strictement rituel. Ce qui, pour nous, n'est

pas négociable, c'est que les Gâthâs sont des textes composées pour servir de récitatif à une cérémonie liturgique et non des textes doctrinaux qui ont fini servir de récitatif liturgique.

(Kellens and Pirart 1997, pp. 64–65 n. 62)[2]

Kellens does not merely think that the Gāthās had a ceremonial function. As far as we can tell, all archaic Indo-European poetry consisted of oral compositions that were performed in different types of festivals.[3] But 'ceremony' is not the sense in which Kellens understands the postulated Gāthic ritual. The Gāthās must be understood in the horizon of the Vedic type of sacrificial hymns, oral compositions offered to specific deities, celebrating their powers and achievements, and through recalling these, empowering the gods, contributing to the cosmic order, and procuring rewards for the sacrificer.[4] Nonetheless, according to Kellens, the Gāthās are more than just eulogies to divinities. They contain 'a reflection on the ritual and on the human conduct in the frame of the ritual' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 17). The poet 'speculates' about the structure and powers of ritual and about the proper ritual conduct that ensures the proper functioning of the ritual. All seemingly ordinary words such as 'existence' or 'power' should be understood as terms referring to the ritual sphere. The ritual function of the Gāthās strictly determines not just their themes but also their concepts and metaphors.[5]

Ritual is the universal reference of the motifs present in the Gāthās.[6] In the Introduction to his and Pirart's edition of the Old Avestan texts (Kellens and Pirart 1988), Kellens maintains that the only time (in Y 43.5–15, according to them) Zarathuštra appears in the first person in the Gāthās he has the role of 'l'inspirateur du rituel gâthique. Il fait, en représantant de sa communauté, le choix de l'état d'esprit qui est le fondement du bon rituel… il enseigne le principe de ce bon rituel' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 21). In the same way, the fault with which the 'Gāthic circle' reproaches the *daēvas* has to do with the wrongfulness (*aēnah-*) of the ritual that these ancient gods carelessly 'accept' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 31; cf. Humbach 1957). The 'wrongfulness' of the ritual, according to Kellens, should be understood as its technical incorrectness. The *daēvas* are not foreign gods for Gāthic society but deities it worshipped in its past.[7] In fact, at the time the Gāthic circle introduces its 'religious innovation' there are Mazdaean groups who still make offerings to these 'traditional gods of the Indo-Iranian pantheon' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 30). 'To some extent, they are more of a victim than a villain' since, confused by the 'illusion that comes over them', they 'do not properly distinguish between the good and the bad state of mind that determine in the faithful the choice of sacrificial conduct' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 31). The historical reality of the *daēvas* is affirmed; they are rebuked because they indiscriminately accept all and any sacrifice offered to them.

Voilà qui nous contraint de décrire avec beaucoup de nuances le jugement porté sure les daēuua: ils ne sont ni démonisés, ni niés, ni même

franchement condamnés, mais seulement coupables de laisser leurs partisans commettre l'*aēnah* dans le culte qui leur est rendu. Les daēuua ont encore une place dans l'univers divin.

(Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 31)

The *daēvas* are still gods, if already on their way to being replaced by the specifically Gāthic gods 'issus de l'allégorie' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 31). In their commentary to the Gāthic texts, Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 78) find further extenuating circumstances for the failure of the *daēvas*. These 'traditional gods' are 'victimes d'une illusion qui provient du fait que les deux états d'esprit sont indistincts au niveau de la pensée et de la parole'. The reference to the 'indistinctness' of the 'two states of mind' at the level of thought and speech comes from Kellens and Pirart's interpretation of Y 30.3, the so-called Twins stanza. According to them, this stanza has nothing to do with myth but is an analysis of the 'psychology' of ritual conduct.[8] Apparently, it is as important for the gods as it is for mortals to make a distinction between the two states of mind in which the sacrificial offering is made to them. The rebuke given to the *daēvas* in the Gāthās has to do with their carelessness or lack of insight. I should like to quote in full the passage where Kellens and Pirart discuss this whole affair, a discussion that closes with a significant admission of incomprehension.

Ce qui s'y trouve en germe, ce n'est pas le dualisme (sinon d'une manière très lointaine), mais une psychologie, qui, ne concevant encore 'l'existence de la pensée' que comme manifestation de l'activité rituelle, s'interroge sur le processus caché par lequel l'homme fait le choix d'une conduite, qui ne devient perceptible et ne révèle son[9] caractère positif ou négatif qu'au moment où elle se traduit en acte. Elle affirme que le moteur initial de ce processus est le *mainiiu*. Faculté critique pour les hommes, qu'il partage en deux camps, il l'est aussi pour les dieux. Leur puissance est mise à l'épreuve d'un redoutable exercice de clairvoyance. Les daēuua échouent: le *mainiiu* est donc à l'origine de ce clivage entre les dieux qui constitue la grande question des Gāθā.[10] Pouquoi fallait-il, dans le système gâthique, mettre aux côtés des hommes qui font le choix d'un mauvais rituel, des dieux qui l'aaceptent? Il est d'autant plus difficile de répondre à cette question que l'explication donnée à la défaillance divine, l'illusion, paraît étrangement courte.

(Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 44)

The fault of the *daēvas* must have to do with ritual – as a matter of principle – so Kellens and Pirart postulate a woefully incorrect ritual practice as the grounds of the rebuke levelled at the 'traditional' gods by the 'Gāthic circle'. One would expect that once the 'postulate' has led to an impasse it should be abandoned. Instead, Kellens and Pirart put the puzzling question their postulate has created to the text, which seems to them 'strangely' inadequate

in providing an answer: why blame the gods for the mortals' choice of inappropriate ritual? It seems that not only mortals but also gods have to be adepts of ritual practice, and in particular, they, too, have to be able to see into the 'hidden process' of ritual, into its 'psychological' grounds, and distinguish therein the right 'state of mind' from the wrong one. It is not clear why the gods have to do this and, more importantly, what constitutes the 'wrong state of mind'. What does characterize the rightness of the right state of mind, and what the wrongness of the wrong state of mind? Kellens and Pirart can give only a tautological answer to this question. In the event, the 'traditional' gods fail to distinguish between the right and wrong states of mind, whatever these may be, as they fall victim to an 'illusion'. As already mentioned, for Kellens and Pirart, the 'illusion' has to do with the 'fact that the two (ritual) states of mind are indistinct at the levels of thought and speech' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 78). This conception of the nature of the 'fault' committed by the *daēvas* corresponds to a theoretical exigency that determines Kellens' position: the rejection of the 'moralistic' approach to the Gāthās and to the repudiation of the *daēvas* in particular. Generally speaking, one can only agree with Kellens' rejection of this approach, taken by most scholars of the field, which is ultimately an automatic assimilation of the Gāthic ideas to stereotyped Biblical images and modern humanistic sentiments. But Kellens' reduction of all Gāthic ideas (e.g. fault of the *daēvas*) to matters of ritual leads to unacceptable conclusions.

Kellens and Pirart understand the failure in question as the discredited gods' lack of insight, the inability of the *daēvas* to perceive the psychological grounds of ritual practice. It is not a moral issue and has nothing to do with a choice between good and evil. It is not that these 'gods' make the 'wrong' choice, but being unable to have an insight into the 'hidden processes' of ritual conduct, they cannot tell the difference between the correct and incorrect ritual. Since, according to the two scholars, the 'positive or negative character' of the ritual choice is only 'revealed' at the level of 'gesture' ('acte'), would one have to conclude that the ritual offered to them does not involve gesture? Can there be a ritual with no 'gesture'? If not, in what sense should one understand the *daēvas*' failure to distinguish between correct and incorrect ritual, since the 'gestures' should allow them to inform themselves about its 'positive or negative character'?[11] Or, if one places the emphasis on the fact that some gods are apparently capable of making the distinction while the *daēvas* are not, one may conclude that the latter fail to see through the gesture to the thought or intention that animates it, to interpret correctly the gesture and perceive the intention motivating it. It is the ritual intention (again, whatever this may mean) that finally makes one type of ritual acceptable and the other abhorrent. It is a matter of hermeneutic failure on the part of the *daēvas*.

I have already pointed to Kellens and Pirart's own admission of the apparent absurdity: why indeed should the worshipper's fault be visited on the gods with such unforgiving hostility? This is the first difficulty. The second, perhaps more important, problem in their account is that we simply have no

idea what makes a ritual choice either correct or incorrect. These two difficulties in effect make their theory amount to postulating an unknowable factor in order to explain the explanandum in an incomprehensible way. Finally, the whole hermeneutic construction is specious. The difference of 'choice' is, according to their account, registered on the level of ritual practice,[12] which allows an evaluation of the positive or negative character of the choice. But the idea that ritual gesture is in some sense more positive (more real) than ritual thought or ritual speech is illusory. As their paraphrase of Y 30.3, given above, shows, they treat ritual as if it were a pragmatic (or mundane) action whose evaluation depends on the ascertainment of the intention behind it. At the deepest and most hidden level ('stade') lies the intention or thought, least amenable to perception, hence least positive. There is, then, the level of speech, where the intention is embodied in words, e.g. given the materiality of public statement and the security of public scrutiny, but still liable to manipulation, disavowal of consequences, disclaimer of being misunderstood, etc. At the most manifest level is the positive act, where the intention is finally revealed and becomes a 'reality', as real and solid as the world. It is only at this level that one can 'really' know what to make of the thought that motivated the new constituent, however tiny, of the world. Now, whether or not this scheme is generally realistic or valuable, it is inappropriate for the ritual situation. Ritual speech is no less manifest or real than ritual gesture. Ritual thought is as perceivable (for its divine interlocutors) as ritual speech and gesture. Ritual 'choice' is not something hidden, a psychic intention that always holds itself back in some supposed interiority from where it organizes the 'ritual conduct'. In short, there is no such thing as the 'psychology of ritual activity' in the sense that Kellens and Pirart intend it. Perhaps in part because of these difficulties, Kellens abandoned this scheme a few years later.

In *Le panthéon de l'Avesta ancien* and other publications of the 1990s, Kellens makes his ritualist understanding of the Gāthās more thoroughgoing. The ritual function semantically stamps virtually all Gāthic concepts. If the Gāthās are liturgical compositions, all the concepts there must be technical terms of ritual.[13] In *Le panthéon* Kellens rejects the historical reality of the *daēvas*: they are not 'traditional gods' but merely the 'accursed part' in the ritual rhetoric of the Gāthās: 'il ne fait aucun doute que le corps des daēuuas constitue la part maudite du panthéon' (1994b, p. 82). On the one hand, he discounts the few extant historical facts that may point to an ancient Iranian *daēva* cult (1994b, pp. 15–17, p. 125). Two of these in particular are significant and their dismissal is in my mind unacceptable. In his article 'A Sogdian God' (1965) Henning had drawn attention to two Sogdian personal names that bear the word δyw (i.e. *daēva*), which in all probability proves that 'the Daēvas maintained themselves as divinities, at least in a part of Sogdiane' (Henning 1965, p. 253). One, a king's name, is found in the Mugh documents: *Δēwāštīč* meaning something like 'divine'. The second is the name of a prince of a territory known in the ninth century as Usrūšana, immediately north of the mountainous regions along the upper course of Zarafshan river, who served

as a general in the Khalif's army: Abu'l-Saǰ Dīwdād b. Dīwdast. His grandson too bore the name Dīwdād. The word means '(having) god (as) creator' (Henning 1965, p. 254). Kellens rejects them as evidence of *daēva* worship by an Iranian people because of their paucity, lateness and marginal provenance: 'la disproportion est évidente entre l'importance du fait et l'inconsistance des données qui en témoignent', and concludes: 'Il n'y a aucune attestation sûre, dans les langues iraniennes, d'un mot original **daiu̯a*- signifiant "dieu"' (Kellens 1994b, p. 17). But this last statement is incorrect; and the existence of a solid attestation of a *daēva* cult among at least some Iranian peoples places the Sogdian names in a different light. In one of his inscriptions, the Achaemenid king Xerxes denounces the worship of the 'daiva' and recounts one of his campaigns against their cult. None of the objections that Kellens raises against the Sogdian onomastic evidence can be raised against Xerxes' inscription, XPh 35–41:

> a^ntar aitā dahyāva āha^i yadātiya paruvam daivā ayadiya^n pasāva vašnā A^{h}uramazdahā adam avam daivadānam viyakanam utā patiyazbayam daivā mā yadiyaiša^n yadāyā paruvam daivā ayadiya^n avadā adam A^{h}uramazdām ayadaiy artācā brazmaniy[14]

> in these countries there was (a place) where previously the *daēvas* were worshipped. Subsequently, in accordance with the will of Ahura Mazdā, I destroyed that *daēva*-sanctuary and made the (religious?) declaration: 'the *daēvas* may not be worshipped!' Where previously the *daēvas* were worshipped, there I worshipped Ahura Mazdā (with holy twigs?).

Those who maintain that Xerxes' *daivā* are not the *daēvas*, the ancient Iranian gods, must bear the burden of proof.[15] In *Le panthéon* Kellens argues that in the inscription Xerxes is either aiming at a foreign cult, or 'more probably' the king 'pratique l'amalgame dans le cadre d'une polémique mineure interne au mazdéisme et qui concerne le rituel,[16] étant donné que c'est l'acte défini par *yad* qui est en cause' (Kellens 1994b, p. 125). Both of these scenarios are improbable. If the king were aiming at a 'culte étranger' he would have called their gods by their proper names. As for the second one, it is just the extension of Kellens' view of the status of the Gāthic *daēvas* to the Old Persian *daivas*. Whether or not this view is justified in the case of the Gāthic *daēvas* (I will come back to this below), it cannot be automatically applied to a royal pronouncement. Why, indeed, does a 'polémique mineure interne au mazdéisme' deserve the 'honor' of a royal pronouncement while the elimination of a 'culte "païen" résiduel n'aurait probablement pas mérité les honneurs de l'épigraphie officielle et l'envoi de multiples duplicata' (Kellens 1994b, p. 125)?[17] We have to accept the testimony of the data as they appear until sound arguments to the contrary are at hand.

Kellens also makes a couple of analytical points in *Le panthéon* against the historical reality of the Gāthic *daēvas*. They both have to do with the Avestan

pantheon. The first one questions the fate of the 'divine title', i.e. *daēva*, in the light of the supposed Young Avestan rehabilitation of the pre-Gāthic pantheon, or rather some of its members. I give the argument in full:

> Si les daēuuas ont été les dieux traditionnels de l'Iran prézoroastrien, le mouvement de réaction polythéiste que l'on veut bien reconnaître dans l'Avesta récent paraît étrangement fondé sur un double processus: réhabilitation des divinités répudiées par Zaraθuštra d'une part, conservation, voire durcissement, de l'idéologie anti-daēuua d'autre part. Il est bien difficile de se représenter comment a pu se produire une telle fracture entre les individus divins et le titre qui les a définis.
>
> (Kellens 1994b, p. 15)

How could the Iranian divine appellation *daēva* become an accursed designation while some of the condemned gods are admitted back into the (new) pantheon? One must concede that prima facie this is a cogent argument if Gāthic *daēva* means god in general. It is in particular devastating for the monotheistic interpretation of Gāthic religious thought. Zarathuštra repudiates as Götzen or Teufel the ancient Iranian 'gods' but, soon after, some of these gods who are not alien to the spirit of the Zoroastrian reform are rehabilitated while the divine appellation itself is demonized; and, taxing our imagination further, for one reason or another this new polytheistic religion thinks of itself as following the teachings of the founding prophet although it gives up his central message: monotheism.[18] If, however, Gāthic *daēva* does not mean god *tout court* but perhaps a special kind of divinity, Kellens' objection loses its force. The Gāthās, in other words, denounce not the 'gods' in general but the *daēvas* for a specific reason, namely that these gods have failed to perform their (traditional) function.[19] I leave the matter for the next chapters.

The second argument Kellens gives against the reality of the *daēvas* is the seemingly chaotic nature of the ensuing 'rehabilitation' process.

> Ceux qui considèrent la démonisation de tous les dieux traditionnels comme l'acte fondateur du monothéisme zoroastrien se trouvent par là-même confrontés à une rude tâche. Comment expliquer la structure du panthéon avestique récent? Comment définir le principe qui a présidé au repêchage de quelques personnalités divines et au rejet définitif de quelques autres? … démonisation totale du panthéon d'abord, puis réhabilitation de quelques chanceux.
>
> (Kellens 1994b, pp. 19–20)

Again, while his objection hits home against the monotheistic interpretation of the Gāthās, it becomes questionable, to say the least, in the frame mentioned above.[20] It is true that the Gāthās are silent about the gods of the Young Avestan pantheon – but what does this silence mean? That they are rejected? Not necessarily: most Vedic hymns are addressed to specific

gods – could we conclude that other Vedic gods are thereby denounced? We do not as yet have a clear idea of what the central concerns of the Gāthās are; and we do not know whether in the light of these the silence would be understandable in ways other than rejection. It is thus pointless to speculate about the meaning of the silence, whether it is hostile or not. Kellens points out two relevant facts. The divine appellation most extensively attested in the Iranian languages from the sixth century onwards is *baga- 'provider'. But this is not the case in the extant Avestan texts, where its few occurrences do not seem to have the general sense of deity (see Kellens 1994b, p. 24). Its absence in the general sense is, according to Kellens, difficult to understand, which could mean either that the Avesta 'is unaware of it' or, 'more probably', 'refuses to use it' (Kellens 1994b, p. 25). He asserts that this refusal could be due either to its 'too general and therefore imprecise' a sense, which makes it 'without theological interest',[21] or its being made 'an object of taboo' (Kellens 1994b, p. 25). Does, however, the virtual absence of *baga- in the Gāthās (the only possible occurrence is in Y 32.8), which is the most widespread Iranian word for god, mean that the Gāthās have difficulty saying 'god'? Not so, according to *Le panthéon*. Even if the word *daēva* is discounted as a divine appellation in the Gāthās, as it is in *Le panthéon*, this does not mean that no word for god was available to the poet. As far as the *daēvas* (*daiua-) are concerned, their 'demonization' is coeval with the formation of the 'Iranian cultural entity' (Kellens 1994b, p. 30), and thus the negative sense of the word in the Gāthās has to be explained in some way other than the supposed monotheistic reform of the traditional religion.[22] As for the *bagas*, they are not really absent in the Gāthās but disguised, as it were, under the term *haṇt-*, the present participle of the verb √*ah* 'be'. 'Ils constituent une catégorie divine inclue, avec Mazdā, les entités et les daēuuas, dans celle des *haṇt*, qui englobe la totalité des composantes de l'univers divin. C'est à ces *bagas* sans noms et sans titre explicites que le chantre s'adresse lorsqu'il procède à une invocation à la 2ème du pluriel avec 3ème personne du nom d'Ahura Mazdā' (Kellens 1994b, p. 117). I have argued elsewhere that Kellens' view of the present participle is problematic.[23] We have no reason to think that the anonymous second person plural invocation of deities in the Gāthās has a reference other than the so-called 'entities', whether the name of Mazdā is mentioned in the second (Kellens 1994b, p. 105) or third (cf. Kellens 1994b, p. 107[24]) person, which is probably also true of the term *ahura-* 'lord' in the plural.[25] Still, we must note that Kellens puts the *daēvas* in the category of gods without further ado, albeit as the accursed part of the divine world. In order to eliminate the 'Zoroastrian reform', i.e. to level as much as possible the pre- and post-Zoroastrian religious thoughts, he makes the 'demonization' of the *daēvas* a pan-Iranian phenomenon.[26] In identifying the question of the (historical reality of the) 'Zoroastrian reform' with that of 'Zoroastrian monotheism' (Kellens 1994b, p. 34), Kellens makes the task of negating the former easy for himself. The rejection of the reform character of Zoroastrianism and the affirmation of the mythic status of Zarathuštra, two related, constant preoccupations of Kellens (cf. 2001, p. 178) are presented

by him as inevitable consequences of the untenability of the monotheistic interpretation of the Gāthās. He never questions whether the repudiation in the Gāthās of the *daēvas* as Iranian gods may not be understood, religiously and not just ritualistically, in ways other than a monotheistic rejection. This is indeed a paradox since he takes over the logic of e.g. Pettazzoni and Gnoli: monotheism, a fruit of anti-polytheist revolution, is not conceivable without the action of a 'strong historical personality'. Gnoli affirms Gāthic monotheism and hence the reality of the religious revolution that introduces it; Kellens denies Gāthic monotheism and believes that the question of the 'Zoroastrian reform' and hence the reality of an Iranian *daēva* cult is thereby settled in the negative. One can see that without this 'logic' there is no reason to think that the denial of monotheism must lead to the dismissal of the claim that the Gāthās contain new religious thoughts or, perhaps more prudently, that they express in a particularly intense fashion certain religious concerns that underlie the turn against the *daēvas*. The condemnation of the *daēvas* may express something essential about the Gāthās.

In *Le panthéon* Kellens proposes to understand the treatment of the *daēvas* in the frame of the 'rhetoric' of a 'ritual triage'. I quote his text in full:

> Que les daēuuas soient bien les dieux *duždāh* ne peut guère être mis en doute vu le passage de 30.3… Les voici donc doublement victimes de l'avis religieux des hommes (*mainiiu-*): non seulement ceux qui ont le bon avis ne pensent pas qu'ils sont *speṇta*, qualité réservée à Mazdā, mais eux-mêmes se trouvent incapables de faire la différence entre le bon et le mauvais avis et acceptent en conséquence le mauvais rituel. Les daēuuas ont pour rôle d'être victimes du tri rituel. Ils sont cette part du panthéon qui est indigne du sacrifice et dont l'exclusion va de pair avec l'hommage rendu aux bonnes divinités. Ils apparaissent pour être chassés, ce qui est le lot des démons. Les Gāθā ne requièrent nullement qu'ils soient en voie de démonisation, mais les présentent comme les dieux mauvais dont le rejet est nécessaire pour que le sacrifice ne soit pas, du fait de leur présence, frappé de souillure et d'impiété. Le texte de la liturgie gâthique fonctionne parfaitement si nous reconnaissons que les daēuuas y sont les démons qu'ils ont toujours été dans le monde iranien.
>
> (Kellens 1994b, p. 84)

Aside from the questionable suppositions Kellens makes in his interpretation of the relevant texts (e.g. Y 30.1–6 or Y 45.1–3), which I will discuss in due course, the very idea of the *daēvas* as the necessary object of a ritual triage presents a number of serious difficulties. The apparent cause of their repudiation, namely, according to Kellens, their failure to distinguish between correct and incorrect rituals, etc., is, as we have already seen, dubious. The whole hermeneutic construction of the ritual situation is seen to be untenable once analysed. Further, the coupling of this apparent cause with the 'structural' cause of triage makes the former arbitrary. If indeed the rejection of the

daēvas is 'necessary' for the ritual ('whose exclusion goes together with the homage rendered to the good deities. They appear only to be chased away… whose rejection is necessary', etc.), any apparent cause will do – why imagine their lack of insight into the grounds of correct ritual, so cumbersome as we have seen? Is their 'coming to the sacrifice' a fact (i.e. that is what they do) or a requirement, i.e. an element of the theatre of ritual triage? Is it only their rejection that is necessary or both their coming *and* rejection? The suspicion that the latter (the 'structural' role) is meant seems justified[27] in view of what Kellens says about the necessity of the fiction of an adversary in dualism: the human worshippers of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās are a dualistic 'invention':

> Pour le dualisme, l'ennemi est une nécessité doctrinale. Si la realité n'en procure pas, il faut s'en forger et la fiction peut y pourvoir. Il est possible que l'adversaire et son inévitable défaite ait été figurée d'une manière ou d'une autre dans la liturgie gâthique, comme dans le mime que nous a paru supposer la dernière Gāθā, et que les contrastes et les exécrtions du texte s'adressent à des représentations conceptuellement nécessaires, mais purement symboliques, du mauvais parti. Il faut cependant reconnaître que les Gāθā recèlent des détails qui s'expliquent mal autrement que par la réalité concrète… Ceci invite plutôt à voir dans les adorateurs des daēuuas de bons mazdéens victimes de l'amalgame qui consiste à assimiler la plus légère déviance au mal absolu.
>
> (Kellens 1994b, p. 86)

If the 'faithful of the demons' are only slightly different Mazdaeans (whose ritual is 'slightly deviant'?) and in fact the victims of a tendentious 'amalgam-ation', and if their casting as the evil adversary is 'une méthode polémique inhérente à la doctrine dualiste' (Kellens 1994b, p. 86), what prevents the same dualistic logic from also spawning divine players? Just as 'good Mazdaeans' are cast, by the necessity of the dualistic logic, as *drugvaṇt* on the grounds of 'la plus légère déviance', so too, by the same logic, there *have to* be 'accursed gods', whatever the apparent cause of their 'demonization'. For Kellens the real cause of their repudiation lies in the logic of dualism, which casts them as the necessary victim of ritual triage and the imputed 'gods' of the dualisti-cally appointed enemy. 'Dans la théologie des Gāθā, les daēuuas jouent un double rôle: ils sont les victimes du tri rituel qui cristallise le conflit dualiste de la vie religieuse et, lieu géometrique des répulsions, ils sont l'argument ultime de la condamnation polémique' (Kellens 1994b, p. 87). If the logic of dualism as such explains the 'demonization' (or indeed the existence) of the *daēvas* and the condemnation of their faithful, why then pay any attention to the content of Gāthic texts on these subjects? In *Le panthéon* Kellens ends up constructing a parallel account which, instead of illuminating Gāthic texts, follows its own course. How else could we understand the fact that he says nothing in *Le panthéon* about the stanza (Y 32.5) where a specific wrong is ascribed to the *daēvas*?

Kellens eventually abandons his denial of the historical reality of an Iranian cult of the *daēvas*, or so it seems. Before turning to his most recent publications, I would like to stress and retain Kellens' valid criticisms of the monotheistic interpretation of the repudiation of the *daēvas*. In the frame of this interpretation, the principle presiding over the formation of the Avestan pantheon is not clear; neither is the reason why, following the 'rehabilitation' of some of the gods, the supposed appellation by which these gods were previously called remains an accursed word. In the monotheistic perspective, as Kellens rightly observes (Kellens 1994b, p. 33), not even Burrow's thesis of the *daēvas* as alien gods seems coherent: why attack (only) these gods (handicapped to some extent, one supposes, by their being the enemy's gods) and not the indigenous Iranian gods, e.g. the *bagas*? Kellens, of course, never questions the presumed link between monotheism and the reality of an Iranian cult of the *daēvas*: monotheism is always a religious revolution led by a strong historical personality, a prophet, against polytheism. In the Gāthās the false gods of the polytheistic pantheon are collectively called the *daēvas*, the ancient Indo-European word for god. His overriding theoretical interest in eliminating the 'reform moment', levelling out the history of Mazdaean religious thought, and affirming the mythic status of Zarathuštra, makes him take over this link, raising it to the level of logic. If the monotheistic thesis proves untenable, the rest of the 'historical' prejudice will fall with it: Zarathuštra is only a mythic figure and the *daēvas* are only personae of the ritual, etc. Can there be no reason for repudiating the *daēvas* other than monotheistic zeal? Could the *daēvas* not have been a part of the Iranian pantheon, defined by a specific function? After all, functional specialization ('mode of action', 'sphere of activity'[28]) of the members of pantheons is a normal phenomenon in myths and religions. In any case, Kellens articulates a new view of the matter in his *La quatrième naissance de Zarathushtra*.

As a result, in part, of his revision of the value of the evidence of the cult of the *daēvas* (Kellens 2006, p. 146), Kellens gives up the 'link' between monotheism and the 'demonization' of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās: 'Le lien entre la démonisation des daivas et la fondation du monothéisme centré sur Ahura Mazdâ n'a aucun caractère de nécessité et ne paraît logique que parce que le deuxième est présupposé réel' (Kellens 2006, p. 147). He then faces a peculiar difficulty. On the one hand, he wants to maintain his mythic model against the historical model of Zarathuštra and hence against the idea of Gāthic religious innovation, and, on the other hand, seemingly acknowledging the historical reality of an Iranian *daēva* cult, he has to develop a scheme to explain how the 'demonization' of the ancient gods occurred. The point of convergence of these two perspectives is, according to Kellens, the question of whether the turning of 'a people' against its gods is thinkable in the absence of any religious innovation. But his formulation indicates that Kellens (2006, p. 149) does not want to take the measure of the problem fully: 'qu'a-t-il bien pu se passer pour qu'un peuple renverse le titre de dieu en celui de démon?' Although he acknowledges the reality of an Iranian *daēva* cult, he makes the

word daēva and not the gods it designates the object of 'demonization'. He does not ask: how to explain the Iranians' rejection of their gods in a way other than through a historical event (e.g. religious revolution)?, but: how to conceive a complete reversal of the sense and value of the word god into the word demon in the absence of all conscious innovation? In order to do this, Kellens revives an opinion formulated by Haug (Kellens 2006, pp. 27–28) about the 'lexical inversion' whereby the god of the Indians (*deva*) becomes the Iranian demon (*daēva*) and the god of the Iranians (*ahura*) becomes the Indian demon (*asura*). 'Il reste que l'indépendance des démonisations indiennes et iraniennes est intellectuellement difficile à admettre, quoiqu'il s'agisse d'une possibilité théorique d'autant plus acceptable qu'on n'a jamais pu les corréler d'une manière qui ne parût pas arbitraire' (Kellens 2006, p. 147).[29] It is not merely based on a kind of intellectual hunch – which it seems to be at first sight – that Kellens is reluctant to give up the supposed correlation between the two processes of 'demonization'.

I argued above that Hale's work has discredited any such link. But even before him, astute scholars of the Vedas such as Oldenberg had questioned it. And the reason is not hard to understand. The two processes are not symmetrical, neither chronologically, nor, more importantly, in respect of the objects they operate on. No Vedic god ever becomes a demon. The later Vedic 'demonization' is really that of the word *asura*, which is subsequently used of the enemies of the gods. This is not the case with the *daēvas*. It is not that the term *daēva* in Iran, just like the term *asura* in India, changes its value from positive to negative, and is subsequently used as a term of abuse to designate the gods of any other peoples whatsoever. Kellens (2006, p. 149) seems to acknowledge this when he writes: 'il fut un temps où les Iraniens ont appelé leur dieux *daivas*, et certaines tribus sur la longue durée, comme en témoignent l'inscription de Xerxès au Vᵉ siècle avant l'ère commune et l'onomastique sogdienne au IXᵉ siècle après'. Nonetheless, this acknowledgement in no way informs his scheme, which answers a quite different question, namely, how is it possible that a term meaning god becomes a term meaning demon? It seems that for Kellens, despite his statement, the 'daiva' of Xerxes' inscription does not and cannot designate (certain) Iranian gods but is in fact a term of abuse used to refer to unapproved deities.[30] He dissolves the historical reality of a religious alienation into the semantic process of (certain?) words developing one or the other of their opposite (potential) meanings through (stereotype) usage. It is not clear whether this process can happen to any word, given that it occurs in 'formulae', i.e. formulaic contexts, or to a certain category of words marked by definite characteristics: whether the 'semantic amphipolarity' in question 'est inhérente ou déterminée par le contexte, voire l'insertion formulaire' (Kellens 2006, p. 151). In my mind, the issue of the 'bipolarity' of words as such is an artificial topic and without any explanatory value. Neither words nor their usage are bound by Kellens' implied binary logic. Whether *dásyu-/*dahyu-* develops a negative or a positive value on the Indian or Iranian side, for example, has nothing to do with the 'semantic amphipolarity' of the word

but, for instance, with the pragmatics of conflictual situations, in reference to which they *may* become marked and perhaps eventually develop into absolute evaluative markers, e.g. independently of the actual context, as happened to *dasyu*. Certainly, Iranian *dahyu- has neither positive nor negative value in itself.[31] Kellens' description of the usage of the word *martiya*- 'mortal' or 'man' in the Old Persian texts in no way supports his thesis. 'En vieux-perse, le sens est neutre quand *martya* désigne l'homme en tant que mortel, amphipolaire quand c'est l'homme en tant qu'individu, négatif s'il s'agit des usurpateurs, positif s'il s'agit des sept conjurés ou des artisans du palais de Suse' (Kellens 2006, p. 151). Describing *martiya*- as 'amphipolaire' because it has a negative connotation when it appears in an admonition or imprecation and a positive one when in a praise – what is it supposed to show?

'Tant les mots indiens que les mots iraniens conservent la marque plus ou moins accusée d'un caractère originellement amphipolaire. Il en résulte que les deux domaines ne se différencient pas par les inversions de polarité… mais par la perte progressive et parfois inverse de l'amphipolarité' (Kellens 2006, p. 152). The amphipolarity is an original characteristic of (certain) words. It is not that there is 'a reverse process of polarisation' (so Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 23) pushing the word to one extreme or the other, but it is a question of the word losing its original amphipolarity and retaining only one of its polar meanings, and this may happen to the word in opposite semantic directions in different contexts. Even granting the (rather artificial) notion of an original amphipolarity of (certain) words,[32] should we not want to know what these contexts were that determined the opposite semantic developments? It is these contexts that should explain the actual meaning/value that a supposed 'amphipolar' word retains. And if so, are we not referred back to historical practices and institutions? Kellens (2006, p. 152) continues: 'L'amphipolarité sémantique, que les Indiens et les Iraniens pratiquaient pareillement à l'aube de leur histoire, est un phénomène global affectant entre autres le vocabulaire qui touche au cœur de la conscience religieuse et ethnique'. This frame of mind only leads to a *petitio principii*: the opposite values of *deva/daēva* and *asura/ahura* 'prove' the semantic amphipolarity, which is postulated to 'explain' the phenomenon. 'Il n'est donc pas de bonne méthode d'expliquer au coup par coup les exemples qui en témoignent… On voit bien que, dans ces conditions, l'accident historique ou théologique échoue à en (i.e. opposite semantic developments) rendre compte' (Kellens 2006, p. 152). What does the phrase 'under these conditions' refer to: the 'semantic amphipolarity' that the Iranians and Indians are supposed to have 'practised at the dawn of their history'? The primordial 'practice of amphipolarity' is the pseudo-historical transposition of the 'original semantic amphipolarity'; and both are the marker of the potency of theory to 'explain' evaluative development of words, where empirical, concrete explanations necessarily fail. Compared to the explanatory power of such amphipolar semantics and pragmatics, taking place in the quasi-transcendental stage of a language or a history, historical or theological circumstances are at best insignificant accidents. Kellens' reference

to the work of Renou (1939, pp. 161–235) is malapropos. By 'contre-partie' Renou simply means the juxtaposition of statements containing favourable and unfavourable terms: 'Le type le plus clair est par example la combinaison de deux prières, l'une demandant qu'un bien soit octroyé à l'homme, l'autre qu'un mal lui soit épargné' (Renou 1939, p. 162).[33]

No sooner has Kellens admitted the reality of an Iranian cult of the *daēvas* than he turns it into a question of the semantic amphipolarity of the word *daēva*.[34] But even so, he cannot completely dispense with historical determinations. In yet another formulation, the amphipolar quality of (certain) Indo-Iranian words is no longer 'original', whatever this may mean, but a product of the 'rhetorical' practice of 'contre-partie': 'On peut admettre que tous les mots envisagés étaient à l'origine neutre ou unipolaire, que leur amphipolarité s'est constituée à l'époque indo-iranienne commune comme effet de la rhétorique de "contre-partie" et s'est résorbée de manière indépendante en Inde et en Iran' (Kellens 2006, pp. 152–53). Is this 'rhetoric of contrareity' a specifically Indo-Iranian patrimony? One can see why Kellens feels that he has to adopt such a contorted position: admitting anything resembling a religious innovation would mean to him giving up his in-principle rejection of the historical reality of Zarathuštra and of the 'Zoroastrian reform'.[35] He cherishes the opportunity to display his irreverence: 'L'accident de langage est la meillure explication que l'on ait donnée de la démonisation des daivas, à condition de bien identifier les facteurs qui l'ont provoqué' (Kellens 2006, p. 153). 'Accident' (even linguistic) by definition belongs to the empirical sphere; it should be a matter of presentation and not of postulation. As I have already mentioned, the postulate of a formative amphipolarity of (Indo-Iranian) words is artificial, and the best proof of this is that Kellens cannot make up his mind where to lodge it. As for the 'factors' that provoked the 'demonization' of the *daēvas*, one may justifiably think that they are for the most part 'rhetorical' or 'poetic' practices, based on Kellens' own statements. And what are these *about*? It is possible to defer the reference to and the analysis of the content of the poetic practice, but not indefinitely. It is not clear to me why Kellens thinks that an affirmation of Gāthic innovation would automatically mean a denial of the mythic status of Zarathuštra, to which he is attached. Does the legendary nature of Orpheus prevent 'Orphic life' from being a distinctive religious movement, with its peculiar concerns and ideology?[36] According to Kellens' scheme, the word *daēva* does not designate any specific god or a group of gods; it is a demonizing term one uses to refer to deities one abhors, having lost its 'original amphipolarity'. But even if one grants this view, it only takes us back through a tortuous path to the still unanswered question: why do the Gāthās abhor the deities they call the *daēvas*? Kellens' solution of the question of the 'demonization' of the *daēvas* is really a suppression of the problem. The usage of the term *daēva* becomes simply a matter of theological abuse. This is one way of understanding his position. On the other hand, if Kellens in fact believes that behind the *daēvas* are disapproved *Iranian* gods, that is, if he does not want to conjure away

the process of 'demonization', he is perforce ascribing to the word *daēva* the power to demonize deities, to produce religious realities. Would the 'demonization' be an empirical or a 'transcendental' event? If the former, when, under what circumstances, did it take place? We should turn to the Gāthās.

Notes

1 Panaino's position on the issue in Panaino 2004, pp. 103–105 seems reasonable to me, especially: 'il faut conclure que si Zaraθuštra est le produit d'un mythe (et non le fruit d'une mythisation d'une réalité), ce mythe a été inventé par quelqu'un qui à son tour, en composant les Gāθā, aurait eu comme nom de plume celui de Zaraθuštra' (Panaino 2004, p. 104). I would not give the question of the historical reality of Zarathuštra as much importance as Panaino does, however.

2 I should like to note in passing Kellens' presentation of the issue in terms of binary oppositions: the Gāthās must be either doctrinal or liturgical; since they are obviously not the former, they have to be the latter, hence the 'surprise'. As long as we do not have an explicit account of what this ritual was like or meant, the affirmation only serves the end of reducing the content of the compositions to matters pertaining to ritual, which is understood, be it implicitly, on the Vedic model. 'Our limited comprehension of the Gāthās' gives rise to 'illusions' (Kellens 2001, p. 178) – that is, 'prophetic' illusions. Compare Kellens 2011, pp. 73–79 and pp. 109–113. According to this text (Kellens 2011, p. 78), 'les théologiens de l'Avesta récent s'en (i.e., Sraoša le briseur d'obstacle) sont forgé une conception radicalement neuve, justifiée à tort ou à raison par l'exégèse des Gâthâs et intégrée à une formidable innovation: la doctrine des âges du monde, dont, selon eux, les Gâthâs font le récit'. See also Kellens 2012, pp. 483–85. Most recently (in his 2011/2012 Collège de France lectures) Kellens suggests that each of the Gāthās was recited during one of the five *ratus* of the day. The recitation of the second Gāthā took place at night, for instance, while that of the first came just before the sunrise (February 3, 2012). 'Les Gâthâs présentent un cursus rituel complexe et savant. Le but de ce rite tel qu'il est décrit à la fin du Y 34 est (métaphoriquement ou pas) le fait de suivre un chemin, une course, pour gagner le prix de l'immortalité. Ainsi, eschatologie, en apparence introuvable dans le texte, est indissociable du rituel car elle est la finalité de celui-ci' (December 16, 2011). How does this daily service relate to the 'eschatological finality' of the Gāthic ritual? Kellens characterizes the Avestan doctrine of the ages as a 'formidable innovation', which presumably took place in the context of Gāthic eschatology. The question that naturally arises is how to account for the central place of eschatology in the Gāthās.

3 See Nagy 1990, pp. 18–82; Graf 1993, pp. 142–75.

4 See Kellens 1994a, 2000, pp. 101–102, 2007, pp. 434–36, 2009, p. 268. Compare Gonda 1975, pp. 83–91, pp. 105–13. That Gāthic ritual was thought to contribute to cosmic order is a theoretical supposition and based on, e.g. Eliade's general theory of sacrifice. So far not a single line from the Gāthās has been adduced to support this view. Assmann (2006, pp. 139–54) shows that in Egypt ritual could serve such a cosmic-regenerative function. Falk (1997, esp. p. 80) argues that the 'R̥gvedic ritual' (i.e. 'the standard Indra/Agni complex') took place at the beginning of spring asking the gods for the swelling of rivers with waters, and not at the winter solstice for the return of longer days or as a New Year ritual.

5 In a sense, concepts and metaphors are condensed discourses. It does not go without saying that the words occurring in a stereotyped discourse are semantically determined by the function that the discourse serves. Compare Nietzsche's remarks on the 'concept' of punishment, in Nietzsche 1994, p. 57. See also Blumenberg 1997, pp. 81–102.

 6 Compare Panaino 2004, pp. 36–47. He questions Kellens' tendency to reduce the
   religious thought of the Gāthās to matters of ritual, and gives central place to
   eschatology in the Gāthās. Panaino (2004, p. 43) also suggests an initiatory-drama
   pattern for the supposed Gāthic ritual. See my discussion of the pattern in the
   last part. Panaino concludes: 'critiquer et exclure le rituel daēuuique a été l'effet
   d'une réflexion sur la réalité et le sens du sacrifice' (Panaino 2004, p. 46). But does
   this reflection only lead to the affirmation of a stereotyped definition of sacrifice?
   'Le sacrifice, instrument garant de l'ordre cosmique et sa reproduction, conçu sur
   le modèle de l'acte créateur d'Ahura Mazdā; ainsi, la fonction du sacrifice est de
   soutenir et de reproduire l'ordre de l'univers ainsi que de garantir au sacrifiant et à
   sa communauté une récompense (*mižda*), leur bien-être présent et futur' (Panaino
   2004, p. 43).
 7 This must mean that these gods formed a definite group, i.e. the word *daēva* is not
   a generic term for god.
 8 See my detailed discussion of the stanza in the following part.
 9 Their text has 'sont', which is obviously a typographic mistake.
10 Here the text refers to a footnote (no. 44) from their Introduction (Kellens and
   Pirart 1988, p. 32) where they acknowledge that the 'difference of nature' between
   the Gāthic ritual and that of its adversaries is 'postulated' by the two scholars in
   order to 'explain' the disfavour in which the *daēvas* find themselves. 'Nous nous
   rendons bien compte que, si nous ne postulons pas une différence de nature entre
   le système gâthique et celui de ses adversaires, nous laissons inexpliqué le discrédit
   qui frappe les daēuua, car il ne va pas de soi que la condamnation des pratiques
   entraîne la mise en question de ceux à qui elles s'adressent (la querelle aurait pu
   se traduire par une controverse sur la volonté des dieux)'. Their reasoning for the
   postulation of a wrongful ritual practice, which is supposed to make comprehen-
   sible the Gāthic rebuke of the traditional gods, escapes me. Does not the statement
   that is introduced by 'for' undermine the postulate? Is the 'nature' of ritual some-
   thing different from ritual 'practices'? In any event, this 'explication' places them
   before another riddle: 'Nous faisons la constatation que les Gāθā ne disent pas
   comment l'existence du mauvais rituel met en cause la responsabilité des daēuua'.
   But why postulate the 'wrong ritual', and suppose it to be the ground of the con-
   demnation, if it cannot make comprehensible what it is meant to explain? What
   then motivates the postulation?
11 Their 'paraphrase' of Y 30.3 is: 'Les deux états d'esprit, initiaux parce qu'ils sont
   le fondement des trois niveaux de la conduite rituelle (pensée, parole, acte), sont
   réputés être des songes jumeaux au stade de la pensée… ils sont jumeaux parce
   qu'il est difficile de les distinguer l'un de l'autre. Pourtant, si insaisissables et indis-
   tincts qu'ils soient, au moment de l'acte rituel, l'un inspire le bon acte, l'autre le
   mauvais, et certaines divinités sont capables de les distinguer, d'autres non' (Kellens
   and Pirart 1991, p. 43).
12 I refer to their hermeneutic construction of the ritual situation, according to which
   the ritual intention 'ne devient perceptible et ne révèle son caractère positif ou
   négatif qu'au moment où elle se traduit en acte' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 44).
   One can reconstruct one and only one meaning for identical actions in identical
   contexts at any one time. If the intention is to be manifested in action, as their
   statement avers, one would have to conclude that different intentions must lead to
   different actions. On this set of assumptions, the *daēvas* are bad hermeneuticians.
   See Honneth and Joas 1988, pp. 59–69.
13 The effect and outcome of this method can be seen in Kellens' understanding of
   the Gāthic *xšaθra*- 'power' as 'emprise rituelle (sur)', 'hold over' the divinity to
   which the ritual is addressed (Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 232). The formidable dif-
   ficulties of translation that their 'methodological' choice creates do not discourage
   them. They translate (Y 37.2) *ahiiā xšaθrācā mazānācā hauuapaŋhāišcā* as 'grâce

à l'emprise sur lui, à sa grandeur et à ses savoir-faire'. The genitive pronoun referring to an agent in two instances yields a subjective sense and in one ('power') an objective sense, in a statement that is clearly about the god's virtues. In the face of the syntax and sense, Kellens maintains his 'methodological position' that *xšaθra*- is everywhere a technical ritual term. In the 'domaine exclusif d'une liturgie étroite et homogène' (Kellens 1990, p. 99), terms can only have ritual meanings. 'Bien entendu, ceci est une position méthodologique qui demande à être corrigée à tout moment à l'épreuve des faits… Prenons l'exemple de *xšaθra*-… Ce n'est pas que nous pension que *xšaθra*- ne puisse avoir des significations analogues à celles, par exemple, de son équivalent vieux-perse, mais nous doutons qu'elles apparaissent dans les textes. Effectivement, le sens "emprise magique du sacrifiant sur la divinité" et lui seul semble en mesure de rendre compte sans difficulté de toutes les attestations de *xšaθra*-. Reste une exception à la fois incertaine et remarquable' (Kellens 1990, p. 99). The 'uncertain' exception is the occurrence in Y 37.2 mentioned above. Kellens abandons this 'methodological position' – silently for the most part. The only place that I am aware of where he addresses his revision is the following. 'Mon sentiment personnel est que *kṣatrá*- / *xšaθra*- est l'un des mots indo-iraniens que nous comprenons le moins bien. Pirart et moi (TVA II 1990, 232), sur une suggestion de Humbach (1959, II 86), en avons fait l'emprise rituelle, entre autre parce que ce sens est compatible avec la réversibilité… Le sacrifiant exerce l'emprise sur la divinité et la divinité concède au sacrifiant que l'emprise soit exercée sur elle' (Kellens 2002, pp. 439–40). The 'reversibility' of an instrument or a course of action with respect to two agents (see Wackernagel and Debrunner 1954, pp. 701–706 for the suffix *-tra*) can hardly mean one party wields it and the other allows itself to undergo it. Kellens continues: 'Mais j'ai toujours douté, contrairement à Pirart, que le champ sémantique du mot s'arrêtait là (voir TVA III 1991, 140). J'ai néanmoins adhéré à la traduction systématique de *xšaθra*- par "emprise-rituelle" parce que notre principe commun était de refuser les polysémies de commodité et qu'un reste de dumézilianisme m'inclinait à penser que le *xšaθra*- était trifonctionnel et que celui de première fonction devait correspondre à cela' (Kellens 2002, p. 444). The ritualist distortion of the Gāthic term goes unnoticed.

14 See Herrenschmidt 1993, pp. 48–49, who proposes reading **artā hacā* for *artācā*; and Schlerath and Skjærvø 1987 on *brazmaniy(a)*. The OP text is cited from Kent 1953, p. 151.

15 See Boyce 2001, p. 56: 'Old Persian "daiva" corresponds to Avestan "daeva", and these lines show the religious struggle initiated by the prophet in eastern Iran being carried on centuries later by his followers in the west'. See also Zaehner 1961, p. 159: 'The *daivas* mentioned in the inscription can scarcely be other than the *daēvas* whom Zoroaster so vigorously attacks in the *Gāthās*'. Gnoli's translation (1980, p. 78) of the first statement ('and amongst these countries there was (one) in which previously the *daivas* were worshipped') cannot be right, since the anaphoric *avam* ('that') in the following statement qualifies *daivadānam* ('daiva-temple').

16 How to know the controversy concerns the ritual?

17 The idea that the inscription may be viewed as a 'restoration of royal cult' lacks all basis. It should not be a question of coming up with an idea that has some general plausibility (i.e. common difficulties attending royal succession) that allows one to make the facts (i.e. the 'daiva') suit one's purposes.

18 As Kellens (1994b, pp. 12ff.) points out, the difficulty of this account is especially acute in the frame of the traditional dating of Zoroaster. The 'account' that, e.g. Gershevitch (1964, pp. 26–32) gives of the supposed process of the perversion of the monotheistic message of the prophet by his 'epigone' and later by the Magian priesthood of western Iran is a historical romance. In no other field of historical studies would such an account be taken seriously – why should it be here, just because relevant historical evidence is scarce?

19 I emphasize again that the notion of 'god' as we generally understand it comes from Platonic philosophy. It is a concept that does not exist in ancient religions.

20 In his 2010/2011 lectures at Collège de France, Kellens, taking his departure from the observation that most of the deities of the Avesta do not have Vedic counterparts, offers a different perspective on the pantheon: 'le système religieux de l'Avesta dans son ensemble permet la théogenèse. C'est la vigueur, l'inventivité et la permanence du processus de théogenèse qui rend compte des divergences entre le panthéon védique et panthéon mazdéen, mais aussi entre le panthéon de l'Avesta ancien et celui de l'Avesta récent. Ce qui caractérise celui-ci par rapport à celui-là, c'est la multiplication des dieux. La plupart des dieux étant nouveaux, la multiplication n'est pas la marque du retour au passé polythéiste, mais le produit continu de la théogenèse' (Kellens 2012, p. 484).

21 This is his position in Kellens 2012, p. 471.

22 The thesis of the constitutive demonization of the *daēvas* allows Kellens (1994b, p. 33) to confront the monotheistic camp with yet another 'damning paradox': 'pour affirmer le monothéisme, Zaraθuštra s'en prend non aux *ahuras* ou aux *bagas*, mais aux *daivas*, qui sont ou d'antiques démons, ou les dieux de l'ennemi' (according to Burrow).

23 See Ahmadi, forthcoming.

24 'Le premier type associe à Mazdā les entités exclusivement, le second n'est attestés avec abondance et clarté qu'au moment du tri des dieux *išaṇt* (de 29.1 à 31.2, 45.1, 53.4–7), ce qui signifie qu'il s'adresse à un ensemble divin plus vaste que celui constitué par Mazdā et les entités et qui inclut, en tout cas, les démons. Il est clair à présent que les *bagas* ne peuvent être tacitement présents dans l'Avesta ancien que s'ils sont compris eux aussi dans l'extension maximale du monde divin que définissent *išaṇt* et *haṇt*' (Kellens 1994b, p. 107). I will comment on the passages Kellens mentions in the next chapters, but even if it turns out that *išaṇt* is an inclusive divine category in the Gāthās (*haṇt* is illusory in my mind), it is not possible *ipso facto* to conclude that it coincides with (Kellens 1994b, p. 117), or includes (Kellens 1994b, p. 107), the *baga*. We have no evidence whatsoever that the Iranian *baga* elsewhere includes the *daēvas*. The 'ritual triage' argument is considered in the text. As for the *baga* being included in the *išaṇt*, this is a supposition with no clear textual evidence.

25 See Narten 1996, p. 64.

26 But even in this frame it is not easy to level out the two sides: how to explain the degeneration of a part of the pantheon (with a seemingly important ritual function) into the grotesque fiends of the later Zoroastrian literature, e.g. Vīdēvdād? For whatever number of centuries the *daēvas* maintain their divine status as a part of the pantheon, albeit accursed (such is their Gāthic role, according to *Le panthéon*), then in the course of a few centuries in the context of Zoroastrianism they degenerate into supernatural ruffians and perverts (e.g. V 8.31–2). Whence such a metamorphosis?

27 Kellens first postulates the 'wrong ritual' as the grounds of the repudiation of the *daēvas*; then, not being able to say in what the wrongness consists, he conjures away the whole problem. The emptiness of the adjective signifies that it is a structural feature of the Gāthic ritual dualism.

28 See, for example, Detienne and Vernant 1978, pp. 177–213.

29 The reasoning escapes me: since thus far no substantial proof has been produced for the correlation of the two processes, the theory that nonetheless postulates the correlation – because it is intellectually difficult to admit it as a coincidence – has to sound all the more plausible. But theory should explain real events or in any case phenomena admitted as real, and not conjure scenarios *against* evidence and pretend it is explaining independent data.
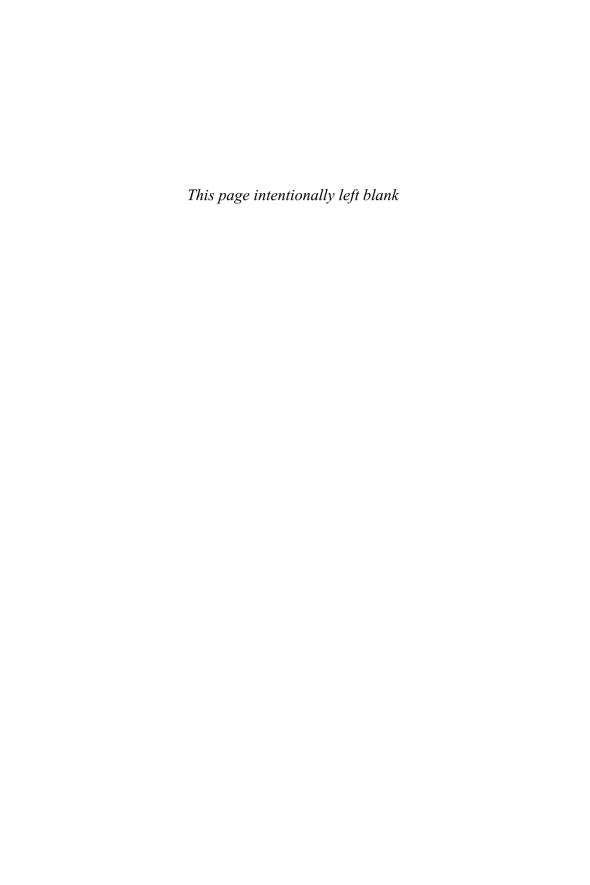
30 The alternative is: the word *daēva* is demonized and *thereby* its references become demons. But this is singularly monstrous.

31 Compare Watkins 1995, pp. 311–12.

32 In my mind, when all is said and done, this 'amphipolarity' of words is constructed to serve a theoretical programme (i.e. denying at all cost the historical reality of the 'Zoroastrian reform', in any sense of the term). And when Kellens (see further in the text) talks about 'the semantic amphipolarity that the Indians and Iranians practised at the dawn of their history' – the whole thing sounds like mythification. Besides, one wonders what 'practising semantic amphipolarity' means and how it squares with describing words as being semantically amphipolar.

33 What Renou says about the unstable arrangement of the Vedic pantheon or the role of sacrifice therein (e.g. the reversibility of ritual procedures as means of power), etc., is not, at least *prima facie*, relevant for the Gāthic material.

34 See Kellens 2006, p. 153: 'Les inversions indo-iraniennes de polarité ne sont la conséquence ni d'une dissension ethnique ni d'un coup d'État théologique. Elles découlent pareillement, mais indépendamment, d'un vieux trait de langue et de poésie en définitive assez superficiel'. Here, in the second variant, Kellens thinks that the polarity of a *daēva* is both a matter of language and poetic practice. Kellens' diction 'theological coup d'état' for referring to religious innovation shows what he thinks of the idea, and one can imagine his pleasure in writing 'en définitive assez superficiel'!

35 Compare Swennen 2009, p. 311.

36 See my discussion in Part III, with references.

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Part II

Preamble

Recent scholarship has emphasized the central place of ritual in the Gāthās.[1] This emphasis is well justified. That we know what the purpose of the supposed Gāthic rite (why only one?) was, what its significance might have been; that the Gāthās themselves were liturgical texts (like the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti (YH) or the text of a ritual drama); or that sacrifice generally aims at a kind of restoration of the pristine world or time – these assertions and others like them are yet to be demonstrated. Even if the 'result of the *yasna* ritual', as Skjærvø (2007b, p. 119) maintains, is 'the re-ordering and rebirth of the cosmos' – an opinion which is as much based on Eliade's theory of sacrifice as on a possible interpretation of a number of Pahlavi texts – still this says next to nothing about the supposed 'Gāthic sacrifice'.[2] Just because we find in the Gāthās the idea that Mazdā 'fashioned' the world 'by means of thought' (e.g. Y 31.11) we cannot conclude without further ado that 'Gāthic sacrifice' must somehow imitate this act of creation – unless one assumes that this is the function of sacrifice in general.[3] Herrenschmidt, too, subscribes to the view in question. 'In Mazdean Iran, ritual functions as the repetition of the god's cosmogonic activity and reproduces the exact order of divine creation. It is characterized by exact order in its language, gestures, and speech' (Herrenschmidt 2003, p. 16).[4] The problem with this view is that taken in a vague sense it seems to have a general plausibility; after all, every ritual must have a sense and purpose, and if there was in fact a 'Gāthic rite', it must have had the significance that one can find in later Zoroastrian tradition, which is, further, supported by the theory of sacrifice – so the reasoning goes.[5] Thus the *question* of ritual in the Gāthās is never genuinely raised. Why, indeed, assume there was only one type of Gāthic ritual?

The picture of the *daēva* cult we find in the Gāthās marks out an authentic (that is to say, scrutable) way to the question of ritual in the Gāthās. The cult is repudiated both in its form and in its pretensions, but precisely, it seems, in the name of what it holds out as its purpose. The Gāthic deities are declared to be superior to the *daēvas* and their mortal followers (Y 34.5 and 45.11) – but in respect of what? The character of the *daēvas* that emerges from the Gāthās is more or less clear. Our knowledge of the Gāthic conception of these gods comes almost entirely from two passages: Y 30.1–6 and Y 32.1–5. In both of

these passages the poet frames his mythological discourse about primordial things with notices of his own privileged status and role. In neither of these texts do Gāthic deities appear in the second person (i.e. in the vocative): the (implied) interlocutor seems to be human. But it is not merely on grammatical grounds that we must envisage human addressees for the poet's discourse. More importantly, what is said can be of interest only to them. Something needful, vital, something 'to be heeded' (*mazdāθā*), is presented to the 'mindful ones' (*humązdrā*). It is in this context that the reason for the condemnation of the ancient gods is expressed. Based on the repudiation one may conclude that the *daēvas* had, already before Zarathuštra, assumed a definite function, in whose discharge they have failed in the poet's eyes. Two stanzas, Y 44.20 and 48.11, seem to recall the traditional view of these gods, against which the poet takes a stance. Stanzas Y 34.5 and 45.11 declare the superiority of Gāthic deities to the *daēvas*, which logically precedes Y 27.13, the acknowledgement of Mazdā as the guiding and protective god of life and salvation. I discuss the texts from Y 30 in Chapter 5 and leave those of Y 32 for Chapter 6.

Notes

1 See in particular the contributions in Stausberg 2004. Skjærvø strongly believes in the pivotal role of ritual in the Gāthās. See Skjærvø 2003, 2007a, 2007b. See also Herrenschmidt 2003; Kellens 2011; Cantera 2012.
2 Skjærvø (2003, pp. 189–90) follows Molé (1963) in maintaining that the Gāthās describe the scenario of a ritual drama (Skjærvø: 'ritual procedure') whose purpose is the re-creation of the pristine order world, e.g. by combating the forces of evil. There is a 'second level of meaning' in sacrifice beyond 'a gift exchange with the gods', according to Lincoln (1981, p. 69): 'it also acts for the benefit of the whole world as a reenactment and recreation of the first sacrifice, the memory of which is preserved in myth. This primordial sacrifice served to create the world, and it is the prototype not only of all sacrifice but also of all creative action. Each sacrifice makes that first offering real again and reestablishes the entire creation'.
3 Compare Skjærvø 2007a, pp. 61–64.
4 The phrase 'exact order' seems to have two different senses in the two statements where it appears: substantive order and sequential orderliness of a procedure, respectively. If I am correct about the first, I wonder what the statement, 'ritual reproduces the exact order of divine creation', could possibly mean, and to what it actually refers.
5 This conception of Gāthic ritual is an 'application' of a theory that rouses minimum amount of questioning, since the theory does most of the work: ritual by definition follows a strict order; it is naturally performed for a purpose; its purpose is to refresh the order. The vagueness of the theory is not a flaw but a virtue.

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5   The choice

In Yasna 30 the poet presents his interlocutors with a 'choice' between 'life and ruination'. It is the choice that determines one's existence not only in this world, but also beyond death in the 'mental state'. The concluding stanza, Y 30.11, scarcely leaves any doubt as to the eschatological perspective of the discourse. The obscure Y 30.9 seems to point to a project of the renovation of the world, to a universal eschatology, then, but it contains much that is incomprehensible. If in fact such a view is justified, two questions naturally arise: what does this renewal mean, and what are its mechanisms? In this context belongs the question of the cosmic role of sacrifice in the Gāthās. One must give due consideration to the antagonistic dualism of this context. In the terms that J. Z. Smith uses, the frame of the question must probably be the 'utopian' worldview, and not the 'locative'; the latter is cast in the language of 'confidence' while the former in that of 'salvation'.[1] In any case, it is in the concern with the fate of the soul that eschatology is present in Y 30.

In the poet's thoroughgoing opposition to the *daēva* cult we may find the fulcrum of a historical explanation of Zoroastrian cosmic dualism and eschatology. The role that the 'beneficent spirit' (*spənta- mainiiu-*) plays in the economy of the spiritual powers in the Gāthās, namely the source of Zarathuštra's 'true' knowledge (of primordial things), on the one hand, and, on the other, the parallel role ascribed to the 'deceptive spirit' (*drəguuaṇt- mainiiu-*) in the *daēva* cult, suggest that the concrete reality behind the 'deceptive' or 'hostile spirit' (*aŋgra- mainiiu-*) is the *daēva* cult. The two spirits (but not the idea of a supernatural source of knowledge) must be a Gāthic innovation. The poet undermines the 'actions' of the *daēva* cult at its source: they are not grounded in 'true' but 'deceptive' knowledge, and only lead to 'ruination'.

> Y 30.1   *aṭ tā vaxšiiā išəṇtō, yā mazdāθā hiiaṭcīṭ vīdušē*
> *staotācā ahurāi, yesniiācā vaŋhōuš manaŋhō*
> *humązdrā aša. yecā, yā raocōbīš darəsatā uruuāzā*

O you who wish to come! I am going to pronounce these noteworthy (ultimate things), which (are) precisely for the one who understands, and (offer) praises and worshipful (words) inspired by good thinking for the

Lord, O you attentive ones, and for *aṣa*, beautiful (because) bathed in the heavenly lights, in which I rejoice.

The syntax of this stanza presents only two problems. As far as I know, all the scholars translate the emphatic particle °*cīṯ* as 'even', and accordingly understand the relative phrase as something like: I am going to declare these (things) that should be heeded even by those who already know (them). Insler (1975, p. 33) has: 'I shall speak of those things which are to be borne in mind – even by one who already knows', etc. Is the poet reminding his listeners of something they already know? The content and tone of the discourse makes this very unlikely. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 123) gives: 'I shall proclaim (now)… such (things) which You shall report to (Him) who already knows (them)', etc. Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 110) have: 'Je vais dire… les louanges que même le savant doit prendre en compte', etc. Panaino (2004b, 119) has: 'les connaissances qui (appartiennent) à celui qui (déjà les) connaît'. The emphatic particle draws attention to the word to which it is attached. This is its primary significance, and only occasionally has the concessive meaning of 'even'. Here there is no reason to understand it in the latter sense, especially because the resulting statement becomes rather awkward: telling certain things to someone (divine or human) who already knows them. The awkwardness is even more pronounced in Humbach, and Kellens and Pirart, since they take the interlocutors to be divine beings. Is the poet excusing himself for being repetitive? The perfect participle *vīduuah-* 'the knowledgeable one' does not refer to someone who knows a particular thing, so that in our stanza it would mean the one who already knows the things the poet is about to announce. The term designates a specific type of being, divine or human. The *vīduuah* has access to a special kind of knowledge. The type is also found in the Vedas and Homeric and Hesiodic poems. In Y 31.17 we find: 'which of the two, the *aṣauuan* or the *drugvaṇt*, convinces (?) more, let a knowledgeable one tell (another) knowledgeable one (*vīduuå vīdušē mraotū*)', etc. Y 31.6 is specific about the type of 'knowledge' that is at issue: *ahmāi aŋhaṯ vahištəm yə̄ mōi vīduuå vaocāṯ haiθīm mą̇θrəm yim hauruuatātō aṣahiiā amərətātascā mazdāi auuaṯ xšaθrəm hiiaṯ hōi vohū vaxšaṯ manaŋhā* 'may the best thing be for *him*, the knowledgeable one, who would tell me the true formula, (namely) that of integrity, *aṣa* and immortality, (that is,) for Mazdā (the best thing which is) the (divine) power that (one) will have made grown for him by good thinking'. The *vīduuah* knows the 'true' formula. Thus in Y 30.1, the phrase *hiiaṯcīṯ vīdušē* characterizes and signals the kind of discourse that the poet is about to deliver, and indirectly recalls the privileged status of the poet himself. It is the knowledge of ultimate things that the poet is going to impart to his listeners: of the beginnings and the end, and of what one should do in the meantime, the side one has to take, in order to have a good life and a blissful afterlife.

Humbach and Kellens and Pirart maintain that the vocatives *išəṇtō* and *humązdrā* refer to divine beings.[2] If this were true this stanza would be completely isolated from the rest of Y 30, which (1) hardly has any interest for

immortal beings, and (2) cannot be described as 'liturgical praises of the *yasna-* (and *vahma-*) type'. The interlocutors of Y 30.2 are human beings, as we will see; it continues the previous stanza, with the finite verbs in the second person plural. Humbach and Kellens give no *specific* reasons for taking the interlocutors as divine beings; their only reason is that since, according to them, the Gāthās are liturgical compositions of the Vedic type, the interlocutors must be divine. This affirmation is not adequate, as it does not take up *in situ* the task of demonstrating the suitability of the assignment. Humbach's translation in particular hardly makes sense: nondescript divine beings (or the 'Ahuras', according to his commentary in Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 45), are addressed and asked to report the hymns of praise and prayers on offer to Mazdā who already knows them. Why is the supreme god himself not present? Is *aṣa* absent, too, since its name is mentioned in the third person? The image of some gods being asked to convey to Mazdā the hymns meant for the god is particularly out of place in the Gāthās, where Mazdā is the ever present, if not exclusive, divine interlocutor of the poet.

As for my second point: which of the stanzas of Y 30 may be reasonably described as 'praises and worshipful words' (Humbach) or 'praises of vahma- and yasna-type' (Kellens and Pirart)? Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 45) make *mazdāθā* somehow dependent on *staotācā* 'praises' as a kind of attributive, and account for the coordinating particle by assuming that *staotācā… yesniiācā* is elliptical for **staotā yesniiācā vahmiiācā*. But it is not necessary to do this. The °*cā* attached to 'praises' coordinates *staotā*°… *yesniiācā vaŋhə̄uš manaŋhō* with *mazdāθā*, thus giving due weight to the fact that *mazdāθā* is further specified by the attributive relative and thus distanced from the other two accusative complements of the verb, which, moreover, occur in a different verse line. The poet says: I am going to give you the knowledge of ultimate things, a knowledge that should be committed to mind, the kind that a *vīduuah* has access to; and also offer praises and worshipful words to Mazdā and *aṣa*. Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 301) suggest that *vahma* may designate a ritual phase complementary to *yasna*: '*d'après la structure du YH* (my italics), il semble que le vahma consiste à réciter des formules de demande et d'éloge'. In the commentary to their translation of the Older Avestan texts, they further write: 'si 35.7 *ahurahiiā… mazdå yasnəmcā vahməmcā* définit la cérémonie d'hommage haptahâtique, étant donné que l'ensemble 37–39 *est intrinsèquement défini* (my italics) comme le *yasna*, 40–41 constitue implicitement, mais nécessairement, la phase du *vahma*. La prière, à l'optatif ou à l'impératif, qui compose 40, a pour objet la récompense eschatologique… 41, avec son mélange de prières… et de déclarations de bonne volonté rituelle… semble avoir une fonction essentiellement rhétorique' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 129). The text of Y 37–39 is a composition of *yasna*-type because its units are framed by the liturgical *yazamaidē* 'we worship', which occurs seventeen times in this text, and is confined, in the Old Avestan texts, to these three YH chapters (Hintze 2004b, p. 295).[3] This is why Kellens and Pirart say it 'is intrinsically defined as *yasna*'. The Yasna Haptaŋhāiti not only was

placed at the centre of the Yasna collection of texts (72 sections) but, 'being the worship text par excellence, offered the model for many of the *yazamaide*-formulae in the YAv. parts of the Yasna' (Hintze 2004b, p. 299). In fact, after a careful analysis (Hintze 2004b, pp. 311–16) of the uses of the word *yasna* in the Young Avestan texts from the Yasna and Visperad collections, Hintze concludes that 'where *yasna*- denotes a text in Av. passages it is referring to the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti… while the ritual function of the Gathas does not emerge clearly, that of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti is obvious… the YH is *the* text of worship par excellence, being entirely dedicated to the worship and praise, *yasnəmcā vahməmcā* in the language of the YH, of Ahura Mazdā and his spiritual and physical creations' (Hintze 2004b, p. 315).[4] The later Avestan tradition knows the *yasna*-type liturgy from the three YH sections (Y 37–39), which are *transparently* a text of liturgical worship. And, according to Hintze, and Kellens and Pirart, the only text we may with some confidence identify as *vahma*-type is Y 40–41. On the other hand, generally speaking, we have virtually no idea of the supposed 'ritual function' of the Gāthās. Hintze's statement that 'the ritual function of the Gathas does not emerge clearly' is, to my mind, an understatement. Cantera (2012, p. 227) asserts that the *arrangement* of the Gāthās 'depends on the ritual exactly like the arrangement of the *YH*'. Perhaps. Given that Y 30 neither self-evidently (in the actual content) nor in comparison with the only composition of the *yasna*-type (i.e. Y 37–39 marked by the 'we worship' formula) about which we have any knowledge can be described as 'praises of *yasna*-type', by what measure can we consider the stanzas of Y 30 to be so? Kellens and Pirart's interpretation of the syntax (*tā… yā… staotā°*) is one possibility, but not the only one. The phrase *tā… yā mazdāθā hiiaṯcīṯ vīdušē* emphasizes 'things to be committed to mind' both syntactically and by characterizing the kind of things in question, namely the kind that a *vīduuah* has access to. Along with his discourse about the ultimate things, the poet also offers praises and worshipful words 'inspired by good thinking' to Mazdā and *aṣa*. If we assume that with *staota*- and *yesniia*- the poet is referring to traditional types of ritual discourse,[5] one may speculate that perhaps in mentioning them (what is the significance of the restriction 'inspired by good thinking'?) he is discharging an office by declaring it fulfilled or perhaps recalling his social function and underlining his privileged status. Note the restriction 'inspired by good thinking' placed by the poet on the traditional genres, e.g. *stut*-type. He differentiates himself from traditional priests.

The relative phrase Y 30.1c′ can be understood in two ways: the relative pronoun either refers to *darəsatā*, '(things) to behold' or perhaps 'beautiful (things)', itself the object of the principal verb *vaxšiia*–, or it refers to *aṣa*- immediately preceding it.[6] The difficulty with the first alternative is that one would not know what to do with *raocəbīš*. Insler, who seems to interpret *darəsatā* as a gerundive, translates the instrumental plural *raocəbīš* 'throughout your days': 'which things are to be seen in joy throughout your days' (Insler 1975, p. 33). But then this would be the only instance in the Gāthās that *raocah*- has

a quotidian sense. In all its other occurrences it refers to celestial regions. The interpretation (by Humbach and Insler) of *darəsatā* as a gerundive is also problematic. I prefer Kellens and Pirart's analysis (1991, p. 45), which makes of *yā* a relative pronoun (inst. neuter) referring to *aša* and governed by the first person present *uruuāzā* 'I rejoice'. The phrase *darəsatā raocəbīš* describes *aša*–, introduced in the relative phrase, and in the instrumental by case attraction (cf. Oettinger 1986). As Kellens and Pirart write (1991, p. 45), it is hard to get a firm grip on the sense of the inst. pl. *raocəbīš*. It is probably a complement of *aša*- describing the circumstances under which it is imagined. The adjective *darəsata*- means something like 'pleasing to see' or simply 'beautiful'. The relative phrase would then mean something like: the beautiful (*aša*) bathed in the heavenly lights in which I rejoice. Again, in the phrase, the poet says something about himself, too, and tacitly offers his capacity and experiences as a basis for the veracity and authority of his discourse.

> Y 30.2   *sraotā gə̄uš.āiš vahištā, auuaēnatā sūcā manaŋhā*
> *⁺āuuarənā vīciθahiiā, narəm.narəm xᵛax̌ⁱiiāi tanuiiē*
> *parā mazə̄ yåŋhō, ahmāi (nə̄) sazdiiāi baodaṇtō paitī*

Listen with your ears to the best things! Behold with an enlightened mind the two choices before your discernment, so that, before the great reckoning, each man may announce it (i.e., his choice) in the expectation of (the reckoning).

Y 30.2c′ has an excessive syllable. Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 46) suggest that *nə̄* is a contamination from Y 51.6 *aθā nə̄ sazdiiāi* (so too Insler 1975, p. 164). As it will become clear below, syntactic and semantic considerations also oblige us to remove it. The better attested *āuuarənå* chosen by Geldner (e.g. *āuuarənah- in the plural) is troublesome. It is formed from *ā* + √*var* 'choose, select', attested also in Sanskrit (see *AW*, col. 1360; cf. *EWA*, vol. 2, p. 511). Insler (1975, p. 163) interprets the word as the dual accusative of a presumably masculine *na*-stem noun ('the two choices') without, however, commenting on the attested endings, following Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 333) and Reichelt (1911, p. 222: 'confession of faith') among others. The form should then be *āuuarənā*, which is given only in Mf2 and C1 among the good manuscripts (see Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 46). For *āuuarənå*, both feminine *nā*-stem and neuter *nah*-stem are possible. Kellens and Pirart dismiss Kuiper's explanation (1978, pp. 25–28) of the replacement of –*ā* by –*å*, since, according to them, the confusion between the two attested endings at the end of a word occurs only in the case of *hizuuå*/*hizuuā* (Y 45.1, 51.3), i.e. at the internal boundary of a compound. However, Kellens himself (1994a, pp. 60–61: 'par la faute graphique') considers such an explanation for *hizuuå.āuuərətō*, replacing either **hizū–vāuuərətō* or the instrumental *hizuuā followed by the adjective *vərətō. The 'graphic' explanation ('une scriptio continua abusive') seems to me, even for the latter, not as plausible as the phonetic one. Liturgical

recitation provides the phonetic environment for the confusion in question: an open vowel followed by a rounded (semi-) vowel ('v' or 'u').

The genitive *vīciθahiiā* is considered as subjective by scholars: 'the two choices of decision' (Insler 1975, p. 33), 'the two parties (?) between which one must discern' (Kuiper 1978, p. 26), 'les préférences qui résultent du discernement' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, 110), 'the invitations resulting from the discrimination of each single man' (Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 123), 'die beiden Wahlmöglichkeiten, die zur Entscheidung stehen' (Lommel 1930, p. 221). The word *vīciθa*- 'discernment' may be understood either as a faculty or an activity. Lommel, Kuiper, Insler and Gnoli (1980, p. 182) rightly understand the genitive in the possessive sense, i.e. the two choices belonging to, falling to, or before (the power of) discernment. In this rendition, *vīciθa*- has the sense of 'faculty'. In Humbach's, and Kellens and Pirart's version, it is understood more as an activity or possibly an accomplishment (Kellens 1994a, p. 65: 'l'acte de discrimination'). The problem is: where does one place such an accomplishment? Who carries out this discernment between the two choices? Is it the individual whosoever that distinguishes between the two choices? This cannot be right, since it precisely requires the extraordinary knowledge that is only available to the poet. Is it, then, that the interlocutors are asked to note the result of the activity of discernment accomplished by the poet? This is in fact what Kellens and Pirart (1991, pp. 203–204) are committed to, since for them the verb *vī* + √*ci* does not mean 'picking out, selecting' but 'distinguishing between'. In *Le panthéon* Kellens (1994a, p. 65) gives a particular sense to *āuuarənå*, which he assimilates to *varana–*, without analysing its form, however. It is, according to him, a constituent of the ritual triage of the gods: 'déclaration de préférence-rituelle'. In this, *varana*- seems to be an already positively marked 'choix'.[7] If so, there cannot be a 'bad choice'. On the other hand, the semantics of *vīciθa*- ('distinguish between') posited by Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 46) prevent *āuuarənā* (or *āuuarənå*) from being the object of a positive act of choosing. Finally, even if *āuuarənā* is understood as a dual with a neutral meaning – thus, 'observe well the two ritual choices that are put to you and declare your hands' – what the poet urges his audience to do, namely, to take note of and distinguish between the two choices, seems to be at odds with the general condemnation, according to Kellens' theory, of the 'bad ritual' in the Gāthās. In effect, 'ritual preference' is not a matter of choice.[8] The 'ritual triage' (the phrase Kellens uses in *Le panthéon*) presumably eliminates the uninvited 'divine guests' (*išaṇt*- according to Kellens' interpretation of this term) rather than giving them a chance to choose the 'good ritual', be it theatrical (see Chapter 4). I will argue further down that the semantics of *vī* + √*ci* proposed by Kellens is untenable.

The idea that the attention of the interlocutors is drawn not to the 'best things' which the poet announces and encourages them to make their own, but to the two (ritual) choices, one correct and one incorrect, has to confront a formidable challenge. Kellens and Pirart see in 30.2aa′ *vahištā… manaŋhā* the name of *vohu- manah*- 'good thinking', but since the two main verbs already

have their instrumental of means, they translate it as describing the grounds of the actions expressed in the verbs: 'Grâce à la très divine Pensée, écoutez de vos oreilles et regardez de votre vue' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 110). So does Panaino (2004b, p. 119): 'Écoutez de (vos) oreilles et regardez de (votre) vue grâce à la Pensée la Meilleure (Vahišta Manah) les (deux) préférences', etc. Although formally possible, this analysis is unlikely in view of Y 45.5. I do not discount the possibility that the suggestive presence of the constituents of the name of the god *vohu- manah-* is intended. But, in my view, the meaning of the verse is something like: 'listen with your ears to the best things! Observe with a clear mind', etc. (so Insler, Kuiper, Lommel, and Humbach, see above). Y 45.5 expresses the images and ideas found in Y 30.2 in a more explicit way. The poet's conception of his own position and activity, and the stakes involved in the 'choice' are made explicit.

> Y 45.5   *aṯ frauuaxšiiā, hiiaṯ mōi mraoṯ spəṇtō.təmō*
> *vacā srūidiiāi, hiiaṯ marətaēibiiō vahištəm*
> *yōi mōi ahmāi, səraošəm dąn caiiascā*
> *upā.jimən, hauruuātā amərətātā*
> *vaŋhə̄uš mainiiə̄uš, šiiaoθanāiš mazdå ahurō*

Now, I am going to pronounce the word that the most vitalizing Mazdā Ahura tells me, so that it is heard, (the word) that is the best for my men. Those who give him obedience and respect will accede to integrity and immortality through actions informed by the good intuition.

The two aorist verbs *dąn* and *upā.jimən* are in the subjunctive; the relative clause expresses the condition of the action described in the main clause: 'those who do… will have achieved…' The aorist focuses attention on the action as such (rather than the circumstances of its unfolding). Thus the two actions describe a general relation, a conditional situation; and the audience is told that the attainment of the state they presumably desire is consecutive to the action urged by the poet. The eschatological context is unmistakable. It is the interest of the mortals that is being addressed. The poet sees himself as the conduit of the divine word and invokes the authority of the god for his discourse. The 'good intuition' belongs to the poet (see below). The two nouns *səraoša-* 'obedience' and *caiiah-* 'respect' (or 'attentive regard') are derived from verbs of perception √*sru* 'listen' and √*ci* 'perceive'.[9] Obedience and respect for the god is in effect obedience and respect for the poet and his word (hence the implied authority of the poet in Y 30.2a–b: listen to the best words that I am going to tell you! Perceive with a clear mind the two choices before your discernment!). The 'word that is the best for mortals' is the knowledge of the way to immortality and integrity. We will see that the eschatological horizon of the poet's activity is also present in Y 30.

The phrase *narə̄m.narəm x^va xíiāi tanuiiē* has been interpreted in two ways. It is obviously an adverbial phrase – but which action does it modify? Gnoli

(1980, p. 182), Insler (1975, p. 33) and Kuiper (1978, p. 26) relate it to *ā* + *vaēna-* 'see'. Lommel (1930, p. 221) relates it to the participle *baodaṇt-* from √*bud* 'be alert, awake', as do Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 110). The adverbial, in either case, individualizes the members of the audience addressed collectively. I prefer the second reading. The emphatic, individualizing significance that the phrase has seems malapropos in 'perceive with an enlightened mind the two choices', where *ā* + *vaēna-* has, in any case, its perfectly appropriate complement in *sucā manaŋhā*. On the other hand, the individualizing emphasis is understandable if the stake is the destiny of each person. The existential condition of the audience is portrayed by the phrase *parā mazə̄ yåŋhō… baodaṇtō paitī* 'before the great reckoning… in the expectation of (it)'. *baodaṇtō paitī* literally means 'expecting', 'being ready for' or 'being alert to'.[10]

The literature on the noun *yāh-* is substantial. Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 1291) translates it with 'Krise, Entscheidung, Wendepunkt', but does not give its etymology. Lommel (1930, p. 221) accepts the meaning 'Krisis' with some reservation. Kuiper (1960, pp. 250–52), while assuming it has an eschatological meaning in the Gāthās, interprets it in the context of two Yašt passages (Yt 11.3 and Yt 13.108) as having the sense of a 'verbal contest'. He considers this usage to be older than the supposed eschatological one. If so, one could relate it to the root √*yā* 'request, demand'. With some hesitation, Kuiper (1978, p. 26) translates the word in Y 30.2 as 'test'.[11] Kellens and Pirart believe that the meaning of a verbal challenge is appropriate for its occurrence in Y 46.14, but generally stay with the meaning close to its supposed etymology: 'demande, interpellation' (Kellens and Pirart 1990, 293).[12] The Gāthic usage, however, points to a narrower sense: 'Il semble bien que le *yāh* gâthique soit en tout cas une sorte d'épreuve pour les fidèles' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 138). Schmidt (1968, pp. 177–80) derives *yāh-* from √*yā* 'travel, race', a term of chariot racing meaning 'Gang' and 'entscheidender Gang' and eventually 'Entscheidung'. Insler (1975, p. 163–64) derives it from √*yā* 'request' and maintains that it is a word of 'legalistic origins': 'I understand *yāh-* to mean "retribution", and the word pointedly refers to the time when the truthful and the deceitful shall have their fair share, a repeated major theme of the Gāthās'. These scholars interpret Gāthic *yāh-* as having an eschatological significance, or, at least in the case of Kellens and Pirart, the sense of a challenge to prove one's faith.

There is also a ritual interpretation of the word. Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 121) maintains that the word is synonymous with *yāta-* 'share', but could also mean 'distribution of shares'. Accordingly, he understands *parā mazə̄ yåŋhō* as '"before the great share" (local), or: "before the great sharing (of good things)" (temporal)'. Following Narten (1986, pp. 149–55), Hintze (2007, pp. 130–31) translates the word as 'appeal'. Narten (1986, p. 152) argues that Y 36.2 *mazištāi yåŋhąm* 'for the greatest of the appeals' refers either to the appeal made by the participants to the heavenly fire to join the ritual fire, or to the whole Haptaŋhāitic ceremony. Hintze suggests that the Gāthic usage of the term may very well refer to this ceremony or, in any case,

to an 'appeal-ceremony'. Thus in Y 30.2 'the expression "before the great appeal"… which used to be interpreted in an eschatological sense, could anticipate *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* if the traditional arrangement of the YH (Y 35–41) after the *Ahunavaitī Gatha* (Y 28–34) is original' (Hintze 2007, p. 130). She accepts Humbach's (1952, p. 18) semantic convergence of the word with *maga–*, understood as ritual gift-exchange: '*maga-* and *yāh-* belong to the same semantic field, in which *maga–*, denoting the ritually enacted gift-exchange, is the more general term while *yāh-* refers more precisely to the human entreaties directed to the deity' (Hintze 2007, p. 131). The basis of the ritual interpretation is the assimilation of the Gāthās to the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, both in concept and, it seems, in function. In my mind, the appropriateness of the assimilation is yet to be demonstrated. We do not know the 'original' relation (and not simply the post facto arrangement[13]) of these two compositions. The latter is patently a liturgical text. This is not true of the former. That they are two different types of discourse is undeniable: the absence of the *daēvas* in the YH is of *fundamental* importance.[14] The Gāthic references to the known types of ritual composition (*vahma*, *yasna*, *stut*) place the Gāthās in the same cultic-mythic horizon as the YH, but do not prove that the former were composed for liturgical usage of a similar type. A (possible) non-liturgical type of discourse would have necessarily used 'traditional' images and concepts, for example, those of the priestly office, for (possibly) different, in part ideologically determined, ends.[15] Would we not misperceive the apparently different type of ceremonial discourse if we insisted on assimilating it to the 'traditional' types on the grounds that we find identical cultic references, without worrying about what these actually are in each discursive context? Rejection of the ritual interpretation of *yāh-* does not mean, of course, that the eschatological one should be admitted just because it is generally accepted.

What everyone accepts in the word is that it designates an event of vital importance. The question of the origins of the word – its etymology and the type of activity where it 'originally' belonged – is secondary to that of its usage when it comes to its significance. The right question to ask is: how to understand the sense of urgency that is clearly present in the stanza? Let us first quickly look at the (possible) answers the proponents of ritual interpretation may give to this question and then see what the text and the context can tell us. Kellens realized in *Le panthéon* that their earlier interpretation of *yāh-* (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 138, quoted above) is at odds with his 'liturgical' understanding of the Gāthās, whose interlocutors must be divine beings. This means that in Y 30.2, the gods are asked to make their 'ritual choice', one by one, before the great *yāh-* 'interpellation', which can only be a ritual event. According to Humbach, this event should be understood as the equivalent of *maga-* 'ritual gift-exchange', or perhaps the final stage of the *maga-* ceremony when the actual exchange of gifts takes place. This ceremony and its finale are presumably a regular event, so the word *maz-* 'great' does not mark a special occurrence but signifies a ritual-internal climax, a kind of hyperbole. Thus the gods are asked to make their ritual choice and make it known before

the climax of the ritual, which consists, according to Humbach, in mutual offering of gifts between the gods and their mortal worshippers. Either, the sense of urgency is theatrical bombast; or, the 'gifts' in question have a singular importance; after all, we know that, generally speaking, rituals can have cosmological or eschatological functions.[16] This functional link to the extra-ritual dimension is made explicit by Hintze for *yāh-* in Y 30.2 via, however, the YH. As we saw, she has the word refer either to the YH fire-consecration, or to the YH ceremony as a whole. Hintze points out the link made between the word and *vahišta- mižda-* 'best reward' in Y 49.9, where it is said (in her translation) 'in the appeal(-ceremony) those who are yoked together with truth have yoked their beliefs (in the race) for the best prize' (Hintze 2007, p. 131). This passage, it is true, could as easily be interpreted eschatologically. But the important point for her is the link with the 'best prize'. She then moves to the YH, more explicitly to Y 40.1–2 and 41.5–6. 'The nature of the "best prize" is stated explicitly and in detail at the end of the YH. It (*mižda-*) is meant to benefit both the spiritual and the material life and consists of everlasting communion with both the Wise lord and Truth (Y 40.2, 41.6). Furthermore, the "prize" includes fellowship with truthful and truth-desiring men as well as with non-violent herdsmen… The *mižda-* is given by Ahura Mazdā to the worshippers in exchange for the "offerings" (*ādā-* Y 40.1) presented by them in the ceremony of the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*' (Hintze 2007, p. 131). That the traditional (i.e. Indo-Iranian) ritual ended with a 'demand', made by the poet-priest on behalf of his client, for such things as fertility, long life, and prosperity is not at issue.[17] The word *mižda-* is the Iranian word for 'reward' both spiritual and material; its meaning seems to be context-independent, which means that its occurrence does not indicate one particular context (e.g. ritual) as opposed to another (eschatological).[18] The question is whether *yāh-* in the Gāthās in fact refers to the YH ceremony, where the sense of urgency it has in the Gāthās receives its justification in the vital importance of the goods exchanged. Hintze's interpretation of the co-occurrence of *yāh-* and *mižda-* in Y 49.9 is dependent on her assumption that the former refers to the YH, and does not prove it.

The eschatological interpretation of *yāh-* has, in my mind, a basis in the text. The infinitive of purpose with its complement *ahmāi sazdiiāi* can be analysed in only one way. The verb √*sah* 'announce, declare' (OP √*θah*) is a transitive verb. The phrase can hardly mean, as Insler (1975, p. 33) has it, 'to declare yourselves to Him', meaning the god, or as Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 110) have it, 'pour qu'il se définisse'.[19] Insler's claim that the two infinitives *sazdiiāi* and *sastē* derived from the verb √*sah* are 'consistently employed medio-passively in the sense "declare oneself, to announce oneself", with the dat. of the person addressed' (Insler 1975, p. 164) is not borne out by the usage.[20] The appearance of the accusative complement of an infinitive of purpose in dative form is attested also in Y 44.17 (*sarōi būždiiāi*), 46.12 (*rafəδrāi… sastē*) and twice in 49.3 (*ahmāi varənāi… sūidiiāi, ṱkaēšāi rāšaiieŋhē*).[21] Thus Y 30.2cc′ has to mean something like 'in order to announce it (masculine *ahmāi* referring to

the 'choice') in the expectation of the great *yāh*. *sə̄ŋgha-* 'declaration' is from the same root as *sazdiiāi* and seems to be regularly used in the Gāthās with a clear eschatological valence. The 'declaration' (of the wrong choice) can lead to the house of *druj*: Y51.14cc′ *yā īš sə̄ŋghō apə̄məm drūjō dəmānē ādāt̰* 'the declaration that in the end will have placed them (the Karapans) in the house of *druj*'. In Y 32.6, after evoking the 'wrongs' of Yima, the poet exclaims his wish that his 'declaration' is heard in the divine sphere: 6cc′ *θβahmī vā mazdā xšaθrōi ˣaṣ̌ā.yecā sə̄ŋghō vīdam* 'let (my) declaration (of the right choice) be manifest for you in your kingdom, O Mazdā, (for you) and for *aṣ̌a*'.[22] Now, it is precisely the choice for one or the other side that is at stake in the mythological account given in Y 30.3–6. The 'choice' determines, as we will see, whether one will be an *aṣ̌avan* or a *drugvaṇt* and, accordingly, what kind of existence one will have upon death. The unmistakable sense of urgency that the time 'before the great *yāh*' has, where, in expectation of it, each person must make the fateful 'choice', leading either to bliss or ruination – *this* sense of urgency, in my mind, makes sense only if the 'great *yāh*' is the kind of reckoning that bears on a whole life.

Y 30.3   *at̰ tā mainiiū pauruiiē, yā yə̄mā xᵛafənā asruuātəm*
manahicā vacahicā, śiiaoθanōi hī vahiiō akəmcā
åscā hudåŋhō, ərəš vīṣ̌iiātā noīt̰ duždåŋhō

(Behold,) then, the primordial intuitions, the twins, which are revealed by (divination through) sleep; in (realm of) thought and in (realm of) word, (as well as) in (realm of) action, the two (thoughts, etc. are) one good and one bad: the benevolent ones choose rightly from these two (thoughts, speeches, actions), (but) not the malevolent ones.

The first two verse lines of this stanza have ever been a topic of controversy. Every word in these two verse lines gives itself to more than one grammatical assignment; and, as far as I know, five basic syntactic arrangements have been proposed by scholars, some more plausible than others.

Before Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 110) proposed to read *tā mainiiū* in the accusative, it was generally understood as nominative. Insler (1975, p. 33) translates 3aa′: 'Yes, there are two fundamental spirits, twins which are renowned to be in conflict'. Gnoli (1980, p. 207) translates: 'In the beginning the two Spirits who are twins were perceived in a dream'. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 123) gives for 3a-b′: 'These (are) the two spirits (present) in the primal (stage of one's existence), twins who have become famed (manifesting themselves as) the two (kinds of) dreams, the two (kinds of) thoughts and words, (and) the two (kinds of) actions, the better and the evil'. Insler's and Humbach's translations are problematic. The (demonstrative) pronoun *tā* can correlate with *yā* (as in Gnoli's) or refer to an antecedent, but it cannot mean 'there are' as in Insler's translation. In Humbach's text, one is not certain whether the pronoun ('These') refers, as a demonstrative pronoun,

to the two spirits – presenting them to the audience, which would be rather awkward given the nature of the object of the presentation[23] – or to an antecedent, which, given the context, can only be the 'two choices' from the previous stanza. This latter possibility cannot be dismissed. Gnoli's translation is quite plausible if we make three adjustments. The adverb of time 'in the beginning' does not relate to *asruuātəm* (i.e. it is not the dream that is inaugural!) but places the two spirits in primordial times;[24] the aorist verb does not signify past tense but presents the action it denotes from the outside, reduced to a fact; and *xᵛafənā* cannot be read 'in a dream' as if a particular event is meant, but 'by dream', i.e. dream as a means of gaining (a special kind of) knowledge. Thus, in Gnoli's scheme, the first verse line should be understood as something like: 'the two Spirits of the primordial times who are twins are perceived by dream'. It is hard to see, however, what role *aṯ* may be given in Gnoli's text, since the sentence has nothing exclamatory about it. *aṯ* could also signify continuation or resumption of a thought across stanzas (e.g. Y 34.2, 3, 43.10), but the inaugural nature of the translated sentence rules this out. And it cannot have, in Gnoli's scheme, either an emphatic value or a disjunctive value: when the article has any of these roles, the theme persists across the stanzas and the particle is used to signal, in the first case, a significant development, a conclusion (e.g. Y 31.10, 34.14), and, in the second, a noteworthy change (e.g. of protagonist: Y 43.8).

Kellens and Pirart revisited the stanza in their article 'La strophe des jumeaux' (1997) and inventoried various points of controversy, whether syntactic or semantic, and, with two caveats, reaffirmed their translation in *Les textes vieil–avestiques* (1988, p. 110): '(Je vais dire aussi) les deux états d'esprit fondamentaux qui sont connus pour être des songes jumeaux lors de la pensée et de la parole. Lors de l'acte (rituel), ce sont le meilleur (acte) et le mauvais (acte). Entre ces deux (états d'esprit), les généreux distinguent bien, non les avares.' According to their compte-rendu in 'La strophe' (Kellens and Pirart 1997, pp. 37–38), there are three morphological ambiguities bearing on the forms of *paouruiiē* (nom. acc. dual or loc. dual?), *manahī° vacahī° šiiaoθanōi* (nom. acc. dual or loc. sing.?), and *xᵛafənā* (nom. acc. dual or inst. sing.?). There is, further, the question of how to understand 3a–b′ syntactically. Is 3a′ a subordinated relative clause? What is *hī* in form and value (Kellens and Pirart 1997, pp. 43–50)? In 'La strophe', they prefer to read *vaxšiiā* 'I am going to say or speak' (the verb of the main clause, according to them, by persistence from 30.1a) as directly governing the relative clause, too (Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 50): 'il est possible et peut-être necessaire d'accorder à la relative la fonction d'un second accusatif: "je vais dire des deux *mainiiū* premiers qu'ils ont été entendus…"'. Also, *hī* is an enclitic pronoun (nom. dual) and as such it should take the second position in the sentence. What does it refer to? Finally, there are semantic ambiguities with regard to five terms (Kellens and Pirart 1997, pp. 60–61): *mainiiu-* (is it a mythic entity or a human/divine faculty?), *paouruuia-* (understood in a temporal or a hierarchical sense?), *yəma-* (understood in a literal or a metaphorical sense?), *xᵛafəna-* (characterization

of the two intuitions, extension of the ritual triad of thought, speech, gesture, or the means of knowledge governed by *asruuātəm*?), *asruuātəm* (understood in past or present tense?).

The pronoun *hī* has always been a thorn in the side of translators. As far as I can see, Humbach, taking 'dream' as an extension of thought, speech and action (all in the nom. dual), translates 3a-b′ as if *hī* did not exist (Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 123). So too does Lommel (1971, 41): 'Und diese beiden ersten Geister, welche als Zwillinge durch einen Traum vernommen wurden, sind ja im Denken, Reden und Handeln das Bessere und das Schlechte'. Perhaps they think the pronoun has an emphasizing role. Gnoli (1980, 207), following Gershevitch (1964, p. 32), interprets the pronoun as a gen. dual referring to *mainiiū*, 'their ways of thinking, speaking and acting are two: the good and the bad'. Gershevitch later comes to think that *hī* is an acc. masc. dual pronoun 'resumptive' of the 'two spirits' and speculates that the 'resumption… would to native listeners have been very welcome because the *hī*, prevented the Old Iranian enclitic syntax from referring to the noun to which it is attached if the latter stands in the same case, number and gender, would force them to recognise in it an accusative which was masculine and not neuter, and thereby to direct their minds back to the two spirits' (Gershevitch 1995, p. 17).

Insler (1975, p. 33), too, makes the pronoun masculine, but a nominative one, referring to the two spirits: 'In thought and in word, in action, they are two: the good and the bad'. Since the pronoun, according to its form (cf. Beekes 1988, p. 139), is a neuter (or feminine), it cannot have *mainiiu-* as antecedent (contra Panaino 2004b, p. 119). Y 30.3b′ *akəm°* must thus be a neuter adjective, and not – the other formal possibility – masculine in the accusative. The pronoun *hī* refers to a neuter antecedent.

Kellens and Pirart (1997, pp. 50–51) suggest for the antecedent of the pronoun three possibilities: *varana-*, *srauuah-*, and the joined *manah-* and *vacah-*. The second one can be set aside since it requires the implausible development of the 'account of the two intuitions' (*srauuah-* 'account') into the 'two accounts'. The first and the third options seem possible within their syntactic scheme. Although the immediate context perhaps favours the third one, the syntax seems to speak for the first. In their earlier translation, Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 110) in effect render 3b′: 'in the moment of ritual gesture, the two ritual gestures are the good one and the bad one'. The locative of time, which describes the circumstance (of the event), seems redundant, since in their view *śiiaoθana-* 'enactment' is per se 'ritual gesture'. The restriction by way of the locative is thus awkward. Now, if one goes with the third possibility they propose in 'La strophe des jumeaux' (1997), the sense of 3b′ would be something like 'in action, however, thought and speech reveal themselves to be the good one and the bad one'. The two qualifying neuter terms *vahiia-* 'better' and *aka-* 'bad' are in the singular, whereas one would expect them to be in the dual if each were modifying the subject, 'thought *and* speech'. If we took *varana-* 'choice' as the antecedent of the pronoun we would have: 'in action, the two choices reveal themselves to be the good one and the bad

one'. Note that it cannot be said that it is (only) in action that the choice can be bad or good, but that it reveals itself to be good or bad in action. The choice is obviously first and foremost a mental event. It is also a phenomenon of speech. One can choose to speak truthfully or deceitfully. But 'deception' is, if not a mere imputation, something that is only revealed 'in action'. In the latter case, one may act in such a way that belies one's claim to truthfulness. Hence, whether 'choice' or 'thought and speech', the context has to be understood in such a way that it would make sense to say that as opposed to the realms of thought and speech the realm of action 'reveals' one's intentions (or claims), where they may then be qualified as bad or good. One has to admit that this opposition between indeterminable thought and word on the one hand and revelatory action on the other hand is out of place in ritual. Kellens and Pirart's hermeneutic scheme cannot be placed in the ritual sphere, to which they are nonetheless committed.

So, which one, 'choice' or 'thought and speech', is better suited for their syntactic scheme? It seems to me that beside the syntax of 3b′ the sense of the two statements contained in 3a–b′ favours 'choice'. If we take 3b′ as an independent phrase then 3a–b consists of an accusative phrase qualified by a relative clause. Kellens and Pirart (1988, 110) take *paouruiiē* as an acc. dual of the adjective *paouruiia*- 'former, first' (cf. Sanskrit *pūrvyá*- 'ancient, former'), whose expected form is **paouruiiā*.[25] According to Hintze (2007, pp. 112–13) this is improbable since the ending *–iiā* is regularly present in the Older Avesta, and so she finds the assumption of a 'graphic aberration' *–iiē* unconvincing. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 123) reads it as a locative, and understands it in the attributive sense (Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 48). If *paouruiiē* is a locative, it can hardly be taken in the attributive sense, since *paouruiia*- is never a substantive in the Gāthās. It would have to represent an elliptical phrase, e.g. primordial creation. Hintze (2007, pp. 112–13), following Narten (1986, p. 139), reads Y 36.1 *paouruiiē* as a loc. sing., and maintains that it is used adverbially in the YH text. If this were the case, in Y 30.3 one would have to take *tā mainiiū* in the nominative, so that the adverbial *paouruiiē* 'in the beginnings' would bear on the elliptical verb 'be' rather than on √*sru* 'hear': 'these twin intuitions (exist) in the beginnings, which are revealed', etc. For reasons that become apparent below, this is not a plausible syntactic analysis of Y 30.3aa′. The simplest solution is to read *paouruiiē* as an acc. dual adjective (with de Vaan 2003, p. 423, and Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 61). The ending *–iiā* (along with *–iia*) is regularly rendered *–iie* in the Young Avestan texts (see Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 85). The assumption of a Young Avestan influence on the morphology of a supposed **paouruiiā* is dismissed by Narten and Hintze as ad hoc, since this would be the only case of such an influence for a *–iiā* ending in the Gāthās (Narten 1986, p. 139; Hintze 2007, p. 112). Be that as it may, it is impossible to read Y 44.19 +*paouruiiē* in any role other than nom. sing. f., that is, for **paouruiiā*. If so, we have to accept *paouruiiē* as the Gāthic graphic form of **paouruiiā*, e.g. of nom. acc. dual **paouruiiā*.

Thus, in accordance with Kellens and Pirart's scheme, one could translate Y 30.3a–b in this way: 'I am going to speak about the two primordial intuitions that are famed as twin dreams in thought and speech'.[26] The *a* that is attached to the verb (*asruuātəm*) should probably be understood as the postpositive emphatic particle *ā* (so Insler 1975, p. 165), since the augment is very rarely attested in the Gāthās. The adjective 'twin' (*yə̄mā*) is supposed to imply a state of indistinction. If we take 3b′ as having a contrastive value, one may perhaps speculate that the use of the word 'dream' (*x^vafənā*) for describing the two primordial intuitions has to do with the fact that dreams are inscrutable: one cannot perceptually inspect a dream image, unlike objects in the perceptual field. Whether the phrase *yə̄mā x^vafənā* is taken as an instrumental governed by *asruuātəm* or as an attributive in the nominative, it describes the two intuitions as these are known in 'legend' (*yā yə̄mā x^vafənā asruuātəm* 'that are famed as the twin dreams' or 'famed for being the twin dreams'). Thus, in Kellens and Pirart's scheme, one would get something like: 'the two intuitions that are famed for being the twin dreams in thought and in speech'. Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 41) prefer to take the locative terms *manahi(cā) vacahicā* in the sense of 'in the moment of thinking and speaking' ('locatif libre de temps'), because they think that Gāthic 'thought', 'word' and 'action' are always ritual. As I said, their hermeneutic scheme is hardly compatible with this assumption. The whole idea of a progression of the 'state of the mind' in stages from dream through thought and speech to the manifest reality of action, if these terms are understood in the context of ritual, must be illusory. Surely, speech is as manifest as gesture in sacrifice, and if the latter could be good or bad (i.e. correct or incorrect), so can the former. Why could not the correct and the incorrect ritual speeches be distinguished from one another? The same goes for 'ritual' thought: it is, after all, the 'undeceivable god' (Y 45.4 *nōiṯ diβžaidiiāi* 'not to be deceived') for whom the priest stages the sacrifice.

If one accepts the basic syntactic scheme of the two scholars, the locative terms may be plausibly interpreted as the poet's gloss on the legendary characterization of the primordial intuitions. Thus Y 30.3a–b can be translated as follows: '(I will also speak about) the two primordial intuitions that are famed as twin dreams, that is, in respect of thought and speech'. The gloss presents the primordial situation in terms relevant to practical contexts. The two intuitions are indistinguishable in the thought and speech they inspire because these are inscrutable as to their real value. Truthful thought and truthful speech are for the moment mere claims. In the previous stanza (Y 30.2) the poet had already called on his audience's power of distinction (*vīciθa-*) and vigilance in making their choice (*āuuarəna-*), really, in taking sides. Now, with his gloss, he would be putting things again in that perspective; in it, one might conjecture, the poet counsels vigilance: 'beware, in thought and speech one is liable to confusion between the two intuitions'. For his audience the primordial intuitions are present as the fundamental decision or 'choice' (*varana-*) each makes for one side or the other. Where the most vital question is answered, namely

that of good life and immortality, the actions inspired by the two intuitions decide everything (cf. Y 32.5 and 42.5). The choice of the good intuition is the good choice and the choice of the bad one the bad. In action, in taking sides, the basic choice (*varana-*) reveals itself as good or bad. One may, then, translate Y 30.3a–b′ as follows: '(I will also speak about) the two primordial intuitions that are famed as twin dreams, (that is), in respect of thought and speech. In action, (however) the two (choices show themselves to be) the good one and the bad one.' One has to set aside the ritualistic framework of interpretation.

This translation, which, I think, is the best one can do with the basic parameters proposed by Kellens and Pirart, is not, however, satisfactory. There are three problems with it. The supposed antecedent of *hī* is not present in the text, unless one assumes the neuter **āuuarənah-* as the base of *āuuarənå* in Y 30.2b, which is ruled out even by Kellens and Pirart themselves in favour of the masculine *āuuarəna-*. But there is a more serious difficulty. The stanza begins by emphatically drawing attention to the two intuitions. Should the pronoun refer to an antecedent beyond its immediate context (i.e. to the two choices rather than the two intuitions), one would expect a formal indication of the change of focus. There is no sign that the thematic boundaries set by the first and the last verse lines are breached in the middle verse. Hence, given this factor and the fact that, as to its form, *hī* can only refer to a dual feminine or neuter antecedent, we are left with only the three neuter nouns present in the verse itself. This also means that the three nouns cannot be in the nominative since this would make the pronoun redundant.

That the two intuitions should be characterized as 'dream' or 'sleep' is strange, whether the phrase is rendered 'twin spirits famed as two dreams' or 'two spirits famed for being twin dreams' or 'twin spirits famed for their sleep'. I do not find Insler's (1975, p. 165) attempt to produce an alternative meaning for *xᵛafəna-* convincing. He translates the word as 'rivalry' from a supposed IIr. **svapni-* 'rivalry' and unrelated to Vedic *svápna-* 'sleep'. The two passages from the Ṛgveda he cites to support his proposed word, however, are not probative. It is not clear to me why Insler thinks the meaning 'ill rivalry' for *duṣvápnya-* fits RV VIII 47.14ab better than 'nightmare', which is the usual translation (e.g. Geldner: 'böser Traum'): *yác ca góṣu duṣvápnyaṃ yác cāsmé* 'what nightmare exists among our cattle and among ourselves'. In fact, the context (14–17) makes the meaning 'nightmare' quite acceptable, more fitting, in any case, than 'ill rivalry', since in the subsequent lines (15–17) the speakers 'consign whatever nightmare' (*duṣvápnyaṃ sarvam… pari dadmasy* [15] or *saṃ nayāmasy* [17]) to Trita Aptya; and more significantly in 16 the goddess Dawn, with Trita and Dvita, is asked to 'carry away the nightmare' (*uṣo duṣvápnyaṃ vaha*).[27] Insler's IIr. **svapni-* 'rivalry' simply has no secure basis.

Gershevitch's (1995, pp. 17–18) solution of replacing 'sleep' with 'endowed-with-own-motivation' or 'moving (in the sense of behaving) on his own, independently of the other', amounting to 'free will', is tendentious. He analyses *xᵛafəna-* as *xᵛa–pn–a* (a possessive compound?) with *xᵛa* meaning self or own

and built on the zero grade of the root *p(h)an* found in Vedic. But this root is not attested in Avestan. Besides, even if the basic meaning of 'self-moving' is granted, we are still far from the 'free will' desired by Gershevitch. The 'two self-moving primordial spirits' can mean no more than the 'two independent primordial spirits', and this says no more than the 'two primordial spirits', the primordial two. Bartholomae's 'durch ein Traumgesicht' (in Kellens and Pirart 1997, pp. 38–39) and Gnoli's 'in a dream' (1980, p. 207) are basically right. As I said above, *x^vafənā* is best interpreted as an instrumental of means governed by *asruuātəm*.

The idea that sleep and dreams can be a gateway to the beyond or to the beginnings, a kind of second sight, is widespread in the ancient world. In *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.3.7–9, the 'self' is described as 'remaining ever the same… having fallen asleep, he transcends this world'. Sleep is a 'third twilight state' of consciousness. 'Standing in this twilight state, he sees the [other] two, that of this world and that of the other world. Now, however, when he approaches the state [of consciousness] of the other world, he fares forth [toward it] and descries both evil and joyful things' (Zaehner 1992, p. 82). In archaic Greece, both 'mythically and historically, the divinatory procedure of incubation, "the most ancient form of divination", seems to have been especially highly valued' (Detienne 1999, p. 63, the cited phrase is from Plutarch). Divination through sleep, as Detienne shows, is firmly embedded in the pre-classical Greek culture where mantic cognition was the privileged form of knowledge, since it alone gave access to the 'true' source of worldly events. In its poetico-religious role, *Alētheia* 'truth', just as much as 'memory', was both the means of acquiring mantic knowledge and the basis of the poetic speech that directly embodied the power of the beyond. By 'reciting the myth of emergence' in his *Theogony*, Hesiod collaborates 'in setting the world in order' (Detienne 1999, p. 45).[28] This knowledge was the reserve of certain social types: the inspired poet, the diviner and the king of justice. The mantic knowledge of these figures was 'a form of divinatory omniscience. The formula defining their powers was the same; it was knowledge of "all things that were, things to come and things past". For the poet, remembrance came through a personal vision that ensured direct access to the events his memory evoked. His privilege was to enter into contact with the other world, and his memory granted him the power to "decipher the invisible"… It [i.e. memory] was… a religious power that gave poetic pronouncements their status of magicoreligious speech' (Detienne 1999, pp. 42–43). Just like his twin brother *Thanatos* 'Death', *Hypnos* 'Sleep' is an entering into the world beyond. The procedure for incubatory consultation with Trophonius the Nurturer at Lebadaea perfectly expresses the link between memory, sleep and death in respect of mantic knowledge. 'Before entering the oracle's cave, the person who has come to consult it drinks from the springs of *Lēthē* and *Mnēmosynē*. When he drinks the water of *Lēthē*, he becomes like a dead person, but through the water of *Mnēmosynē*, which works as an antidote to *Lēthē*, he retains the privilege of remembering everything and thus acquires the ability to see and hear in a

world where ordinary mortals can no longer do so' (Detienne 1999, p. 84).[29] In ancient India, too, the inspired poets had a privileged access, in the form of visions and words, to things divine and the realm beyond time; and there, too, their efficacious speech carried the power of truth, especially valued for its ability to restore life beyond death.[30] In the Gāthās, *mainiiu-* seems to be the means of access to the divine sphere. It is the faculty of intuition of the 'true' sources of earthly life and, as such, embodies the power of these sources. Thus the idea that sleep or dream can be a means of revelation of divine things and primordial conditions is completely at home in the ancient world and in the Indo-European context. If *xᵛafənā* is read in the instrumental, *yə̄mā* 'twin' will have to be the epithet of *mainiiū*. We may translate Y 30.3 aa': '(Behold) then the primordial intuitions, the twins, which are revealed by (divination through) sleep'. The epithet perhaps signifies that the two intuitions are equally 'primordial', hence independent from each other, and not necessarily that they are of common origins – although, obviously, this cannot be ruled out. In any case, despite the wishes of the enthusiasts of Gāthic monotheism, the question whether Mazdā is the progenitor of the twins finds no answer in this stanza. Whether the main verb of the first verse is *vaxšiiā* 'I am going to talk about' from the first stanza or *auuaēnatā* 'behold' from the second is hard to determine. I prefer the latter because I see no reason to bypass it for the former. Besides, the dual object of 'behold' in Y 30.2, namely 'the two choices', seems to be extended in some sense in the theme of 'the two intuitions', and thus the particle *aṯ* may be understood as signalling the persistence of the verb *auuaēnatā*. 'Behold the two choices… (behold) then the two intuitions (that first made those two choices)!'

Y 30.3bb' must be an independent sentence. The priestly exegetical tradition, as it appears in Pahlavi and Sanskrit translations of the verse line,[31] and a number of Western scholars understand it as a parenthetical statement. Bartholomae integrates it with the first verse line: 'Die beiden Geister zu Anfang… (sind) das Bessere und das Böse in Gedanken, Wort und Tat' (in Kellens and Pirart 1997, pp. 38–39), and reads the triad thought, speech and action in the locative. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 123), too, reads the two verses 3a-b' as a unit, and the triad in the nominative. Insler (1975, p. 33) translates: 'In thought and in word, in action, they are two: the good and the bad', with *hī* in the nominative masculine, referring to the two intuitions. I have already given my reasons why I think Y 30.3bb' should be understood as an independent sentence. The first pāda has one extra syllable; so, Monna (1978, p. 17) and Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 110) remove the first *cā*. As we have seen, Kellens and Pirart read 30.3b with 30.3aa'. Their reason for breaking up the verse is that 'le pronom enclitique du vieil-avestique gâthique est un indicateur d'initialité. Il suit nécessairement et sans aucune exception le premier mot d'une proposition… Dès lors, *śiiaoθanōi* est nécessairement le premier mot d'une indépendante' (Kellens and Pirart 1997, pp. 47–48). In fact, however, the authors go on in a footnote (no. 26) to qualify this statement with a list of 'deviations' variously accounted for (see below). Kellens and

Pirart maintain that what gives philology (and, in the event, the translation of the Avesta) scientific status are the more or less general rules. These rules block out ideological interferences and the temptation to subject the ancient text to the requirements of 'good sense', which is necessarily our sense. In their translation of the Old Avestan texts, they consistently use another 'rule' they think they discover in the work of Klein. This rule, too, has to do with syntax.

> Les relevès de Klein pour la R̥S et ceux de Pirart pour le vieil-avestique montrent sans ambiguité que, dans une coordination à trois éléments, il n'y a que quatre dispositions possible de la particule °*cā*: avec chaque élément (AcāBcāCcā), avec les deux derniers (ABcāCcā), avec le dernier seul (ABCcā) et avec le premier seul (AcāBC). La configuration AcāBCcā doit être considérée comme exclue (Klein, DGR I, 207).
>
> <div align="right">(Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 9)</div>

By the same token, ABcāC and AcāBcāC should be ruled out. It would seem, then, that the reading of bb′ as an independent sentence contravenes not only the 'rule' about the position of the enclitic but also that of coordination by means of the coordinating particle *cā*.

Kellens and Pirart's representation of Klein's findings is not quite correct, however. These are the relevant observations of Klein (1985, vol. 1):

> There are *six* passages in which <u>ca</u> follows each term of a conjoined set consisting of three members. Three of these are from the Tenth Maṇḍala and represent the beginnings of the tendency seen in later Sanskrit to construct elaborate seriations involving <u>ca</u> [p. 162, my italics].
>
> [...]
>
> Semantically, the X <u>ca</u> Y <u>ca</u> Z <u>ca</u> passages fall into the same general categories which we have already seen elsewhere [p. 163, the categories are antonymous, complementary, synonymous terms, units of time, proper names: cf. Klein 1985. vol. 1, pp. 141–52].
>
> [...]
>
> The residual group in which <u>ca</u> appears most frequently consists of *eight* passages of the type (W) X Y <u>ca</u> Z <u>ca</u> [p. 195, my italics]. Next in frequency among the residual <u>ca</u> syntagms is the type $X_1 \ldots X_{n-1}$ <u>ca</u> X_n in which the particle occurs a single time between the penultimate and final member of a series consisting of at least three terms. *Six* of these show the configuration (W) X Y <u>ca</u> / Z with an X Y <u>ca</u> construction in one pāda and additional term in a subsequent pāda… the sequence X / Y <u>ca</u> Z is seen only *twice*.
>
> [...]
>
> *Four* additional passages show an entire three-term sequence within a single pāda and in *two* the sequences is spread over three pādas with one term in each [p. 198, my italics]. A third residual syntagm attested in *five*

passages is W <u>ca</u> X <u>ca</u> Y (Z)… all three metrical possibilities for three-term sequence are encountered: X <u>ca</u> Y <u>ca</u> Z, X <u>ca</u> Y <u>ca</u> / Z, and X <u>ca</u> / Y <u>ca</u> Z; predictably, the second type is the most frequent…

[…]

In virtually every instance a semantic or formulaic basis can be found for analyzing the sequence into smaller components, yet in each case the terms seem to represent an integral series of conjoined subjects or objects [p. 205, my italics].

[…]

In *three* passages X <u>ca</u> Y Z <u>ca</u> appears [p. 207, my italics]. The only possible position of <u>ca</u> within three-term structures not so far observed is X <u>ca</u> Y Z. There is *one* passage which can be categorized in this way [p. 208, my italics].

And there are *eighteen* passages containing X Y Z <u>ca</u> pattern (Klein 1985. vol. 1, pp. 86ff.). Proportionally, the number of occurrences of the patterns allowed by Kellens and Pirart's rule is only slightly larger than that of those disallowed by their rule. The pattern ABcāC excluded by their 'rule' has the highest number of occurrences after ABCcā. Moreover, as can be expected with any syntactic rule, the integrating function of the coordinating particle interacts/combines with other factors of (sub-clausal) cohesion, in particular metrical and semantic (cf. Klein 1985, vol. 1, pp. 151–53). Lexical (and phrasal) integration by means of the coordinating particle is especially sensitive to pāda and verse boundaries and to semantically significant combinations, e.g. complementary terms, etc. Another way of putting it is to say that the poetic and formulaic structures are determining factors in the actual usages made of the coordinating particle. There are no such things as exceptionless syntactic rules that are automatically applied. As for the 'rule' of the obligatory second positioning of the enclitic in the sentence, it, too, interacts with poetic and formulaic factors. Kellens and Pirart themselves mention a few of these:

Les mots coordonnés ou en asyndète peuvent être accompagnés, comme en védique, de la répétition d'un pronom enclitique (Y 36.4, 38.5, 48.6). Il est aussi possible que le pronom enclitique ne soit présent que la second fois (36.2,5). Un fais formulaire (répétition d'une formule figée ou toute faite) peut déroger à la règle.

(Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 48 no. 26)

Now, our verse line (Y 30.3bb′) can readily be classified under either of these last two 'exceptions'. The triad of thought, speech and action may certainly be understood as a (doctrinal) formulaic unit in the Gāthās. This could have encouraged the elliptical construction we see in the verse where the syntagm *hī vahiiō akəmcā* applies to each of the triad members. In other words, the syntagm is suppressed in the case of the first two members but clearly

implied by dint of their formulaic bond (and identical doctrinal status) with the last. Thus, in full propositional form, Y 30.3bb′ should read: **manahī hī vahiiō akəmcā vacahī hī vahiiō akəmcā šiiaoθanōi hī vahiiō akəmcā* 'in area of thought, two (kinds), the good one and the bad one; in area of speech, two (kinds), the good one and the bad one; in area of action, two (kinds), the good one and the bad one'.[32] This formula puts the matter in the perspective of the present, which does not mean that the terms have no mythological status. 'Bad thought', 'bad speech' and '(bad) action' take part in the 'deception' of the *daēvas* in Y 32.5. In the Gāthās, it is always in respect of one of these (thought, speech, action) that the 'choice' is pressed on the mortal, and that the 'choice' of the *daēvas* is condemned and that of the 'benevolent' gods or mortals is commended; *mainiiu-* is the object of 'choice' only for the inspired poet (Y 43.16).

The last verse of the stanza should be straightforward since its syntax is clear. Nonetheless, most of the translators are, I think, incorrect in their understanding of the semantics of the verb *vīšiiātā*. Lommel (1971, p. 41) translates: 'zwischen diesen beiden haben die Rechthandelnden richtig entschieden, nicht die Schlechthandelnden'. Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 441) gives two equivalent translations of the verb *vī + √ci + ərəš* in the middle voice: 'sich richtige entscheiden, die richtige Wahl treffen zwischen'. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 123) translates the verse: 'And between these two, the munificent discriminate rightly, (but) not the miserly'. Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 110) give: 'Entre ces deux (états d'esprit), les généreux distinguent bien, non les avares'. Insler (1975, 33) has: 'And between these two, the beneficent have correctly chosen, not the maleficent'. Insler's and Bartholomae's are closer to what I consider to be the right meaning: the verb *vī + √ci* 'set apart' plus the adverb *ərəš* 'rightly' does not mean 'correctly distinguish (between)' but 'rightly pick (from)'. In a number of passages the verb *vī + √ci* means 'discern', with an internal/implied object or two accusatives. But, contrary to Kellens and Pirart's assertion (1991, p. 204), its government does not require two accusatives. It so happens that for the (ideological) purpose of expressing a comprehensive and antagonistic set, dualistic complement is privileged. The dualistic complement presents the authoritative distinction: the two that matter. The one who does *vī + √ci* + two accusatives A and B does not 'distinguish between A and B' but 'sets apart, singles out, A and B', i.e. discerns A as well as B.

In Y 31.5aa′ *taṱ mōi vīcidiiāi vaocā, hiiaṱ mōi aṣā dātā vahiiō* 'tell me the better (rule) that you have established for me for the reason of *aṣa* so that I may discern (it)', the infinitive 'to discern' has one direct object: from a set of rules, tell me the one that is best for attaining *aṣa* so that I can discern it, pick it.[33]

> Y 49.6   *frō vå fraēšiiā, mazdā aṣəmcā mrūitē*
>   *yā və xratəuš, xšmākahiiā ā.manaŋhā*
>   *ərəš vīcidiiāi, yaθā ī srāuuaiiaēmā*
>   *tąm daēnąm, yā xšmāuuatō ahurā*

> I urge you, O Mazdā and *aṣa*, to express your intentions (or insights),
> which (are those) of your resourcefulness, so that we could make them
> heard for the purpose of correctly discerning the *daēnā* that belongs
> among your kind, O Ahura.

The infinitive of purpose takes one direct object: the *daēnā*. When the verb
takes two direct objects it is for the purpose of articulating the authoritative
dual set. Y 46.5c′d *yə̄ aṣauuā drəguuaṇtəm vīcirō hąs* 'as long as he remains
discerning of the *aṣavan* (as well as) of the follower of *druj*', meaning having
an eye for each of the two that matter.[34] Still, the semantics of the verb does
not require two accusatives. One can also set apart, discern, one item from a
group. In fact, this is the basic meaning of the verb. One goes wrong when one
reads the implied dualistic set into the semantics of the verb as such: because
the ideologically constructed set contains two elements, recognizing both one
and the other is the same as distinguishing between them. But this latter sense
is superficial, owing to the particularly significant pairs, i.e. an antonymous
pair. There may be other types in the set too (cf. Y 33.1), but what is of vital
importance is the recognition of the *aṣavan* and the *drugvaṇt* (cf. Y 46.5–
6). Compare Y 46.15a–b′ *haēcat̰ aspā, vaxšiiā vā spitamåŋhō | hiiat̰ dāθə̄ŋg,
vīcaiiaθā adāθąscā* 'O Haēcat.aspas, I am going to tell you, Spitāmas, that
you should discern the righteous ones and the unrighteous ones'. In Y 30.3cc′
åscā hudåŋhō, ərəš vīš́iiātā nōit̰ duždåŋhō 'and from these two the benevolent
ones correctly pick (but) not the malevolent ones', *åsᵒ* is *necessarily* a (neuter)
partitive genitive, referring to the preceding dual sets. If Kellens and Pirart
were right about the government of the verb, the dual pronoun should have
been in the accusative. In effect, the verse line says: among the two terms from
each set the benevolent picks the right one; the necessarily single object of
picking is internal to the verb. Here too we find that the set is significantly
dualistic. The failure of the malevolent is not 'incorrectly distinguishing
between' the two terms but 'not picking the right one', which is tantamount
to choosing the bad one. Such is the logic of the dualism. The verb *vīš́iiātā* is
an injunctive aorist. The process denoted by the verb is viewed externally as
a fact. It expresses something about the two subjects, namely their relation to
the verbal idea. The circumstances of the action are a matter of indifference.

 Traditionally and in Western scholarship, the emphatic dual pronoun *åscā*
is understood to refer to the two intuitions (cf. Panaino 2004b, pp. 107–109).
As to its form, the genitive pronoun can be masculine, feminine or neuter.
However, as far as the syntax is concerned, there is no basis to think that its
antecedent is not 'the two' thoughts, etc. of the preceding verse line. Every
time the object of the 'choice' of the mortals or immortals is explicitly stated,
even for the primordial intuitions themselves (Y 30.5), it is always one of the
triad and never 'intuition'. The traditional interpretation of the genitive dual
pronoun *aiiå* in 30.6 as referring to the two intuitions relies on the like inter-
pretation of this stanza. But there is no formal, syntactic, textual or concep-
tual basis for the interpretation.

The poet invites his audience to take note of the primordial intuitions, along with the two choices evoked in the previous stanza. Then, he articulates the dimensions where the choice is operative, namely in thought, word and action. Finally, he says the benevolent chooses the good alternative of the respective sets (good thinking, good speech, good action), and the malevolent the bad alternative. In Y 30.6 the *daēvas* choose the worst thought. In the Gāthās, the gods or mortals always choose between good and bad thoughts, etc. – never between the two primordial intuitions – and are accordingly praised or repudiated. The epithets *hudāh-* and *duždāh-* in Y 30.3cc′ do not necessarily refer to divine beings, contra Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 47). The context (Y 30.2) in fact inclines one to think that they include both categories. The possessive adjective *hudāh-* < *hu* + *daʾah-* cannot mean generous, i.e. 'who has many gifts', but 'who gives good things' and is thus benevolent or beneficent (so de Vaan 2003, p. 430). This shows, again, that the condemnation of the 'malevolent' is not aimed at the failure to distinguish between correct and incorrect ritual doctrines, but at picking the bad alternative of the dual sets (thought, word, action) and thus becoming malevolent.

> Y 30.4 *aṯcā hiiaṯ tā hə̄m mainiiū, jasaētəm paouruuīm dazdē*
> *gaēmcā ajiiātīmcā, yaθācā aŋhaṯ apə̄məm aŋhuš*
> *acistō drəguuatąm, aṯ aṣ̌āunē vahištəm manō*

And so, when, in the beginning, the two confront each other, one constitutes life and (the other) non-life in such a way that in the end the worst existence will be (that) of the *drugvaṇts*, while the best mind (will be) for the *aṣavan*. (And so, that the two intuitions come together (this) originally constitutes life and ruination in such a way that in the end the worst existence will be (that) of the *drugvaṇts*, but the best mind (will be) for the *aṣavan*.)

There are two ways of translating Y 30.4a–b. One can make *hiiaṯ* a relative pronoun introducing an independent statement, which, by way of an elliptical anaphoric pronoun, is the subject of *dazdē gaēmcā ajiiātīmcā* 'constitutes life and ruination'. The accusative adjective *paouruuīm* 'primordial' functions as an adverb 'primordially'. It probably modifies *dazdē* 'constitutes' rather than *hə̄m… jasaētəm* 'come together'. So one can translate: 'And so, (the fact) that the two intuitions confront each other originally constitutes life and ruination'. The fact that these two intuitions exist and are active in the same domain is responsible for the worldly condition where there is both life and ruination. The fact of their coming together produces the present condition of existence.

One can also read *hiiaṯ* as the relative adverb 'when' heading a subordinate clause. The subject of the third sing. ind. pres. *dazdē* would then have to be each of the individual intuitions, understood to be in turn responsible for one of the conditions produced: 'And so, when, in the beginning, the two

confront each other, one constitutes life and (the other) ruination'. In this scheme it makes better sense, I think, to have the adverb *paouruuīm* 'originally' modify *hə̄m… jasaētəm* 'confront each other'. The event of their confrontation is primordial and prompts each to produce its kindred condition (as a weapon?). Insler's (1975, pp. 166–67) analysis of the two verbs is mistaken: '*dazdē* must be 3du. imperf. (or perf.) of *dā*, fully parallel to the preceding *jasaētəm*' (Insler 1975, p. 166). The former is a sing. ind. present and the latter a dual inj. present (see Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 45 and Humbach 1991, vol. 2, pp. 49–50).

The °*cā* attached to *yaθā* in 4b′ should probably be removed in view of the excessive syllable. Y 30.4b′–c′ would then be a completive clause: 'in such a way that in the end the worst existence will be (that) of the *drugvaṇts*, but (that of) the best mind (will be) for the *ašavan*'. Otherwise 4 b′–c′ would be a subordinate clause, introduced by a relative adverb (*yaθācā*) and coordinated with the two conditions stated in Y 30.4b: 'and how in the end existence will be: the worst one (will be that) of the *drugvaṇts*, but (that of) the best mind for the *ašavan*'. Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 48) have remarked that the two expressions of the final conditions of the *drugvaṇt* and of the *ašavan* may be brachylogic: '*il faut comprendre *aŋhuš acištahiiā manaŋhō… aŋhuš vahištahiiā manaŋhō*' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 48). If so, one must understand the 'best mind' and the 'worst mind', contra Kellens and Pirart, not as two dimensions of 'ritual existence' but as two modes of (mental) existence after death. Y 43.3, among others, specifically sets 'this existence possessed of bone' apart from the existence 'of the mind' in a transparently eschatological context.[35] It is a question of two postmortem modes of existence, the best and the worst.

The question of the events and conditions described in the stanza is not easy to answer. Is it an aetiological myth that the stanza relates, so one should understand the confrontation as unfolding in primordial times, or an existential psychology, taking place in every human life, or even a kind of fundamental analysis of the ritual psyche engaged in the course of the ritual underway? Earlier translations use the past tense, presumably to indicate mythical times. Lommel (1971, p. 41) has: 'Und als diese beiden Geister zurest zusammenkamen, schufen sie Leben und Nichtleben'. Insler (1975, p. 33) translates: 'Furthermore, when these two spirits first came together, they created life and death'. Both verbs in question are of course in the present. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 124) has: 'and when these two spirits confront each other (to vie for a person), then (that person) decides (of what nature will be) the primal (stage of his existence): vitality and lack of vitality, and (on the other hand) of what nature (his) existence will be in the end'. The present tense, it seems, supports the existential reading of the event: the confrontation takes place in the psyche of each individual and, depending on which way the person decides, determines his life condition and his destiny in the afterlife. I am not sure what the 'primal stage of existence' means. The only way it makes any sense in the translated text is something like: the 'basic conditions of existence'. We

should also note that as the translated text stands, one expects to see that the basic conditions would be dissociated ('vitality or lack of vitality' depending on the decision of the individual) and not associated with one another.

Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 48) note the fact that the verbs are in the present, too, and conclude from this 'que les faits évoqués ne se sont pas déroulés dans le passé – il n'y a pas de "mythe des deux esprits", etc.' Their translation (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 111) reflects their view that it is the psychology of ritual that is at issue in the stanza: 'Or, le fait fondamental que ces deux états d'esprit se confrontent soumet la vie et l'impossibilité de vie à ce que, finalement, l'existence (de la) pire (Pensée) soit celle des partisans de la Tromperie, et à ce que (l'existence de) la très divine Pensée appartienne au partisan de l'Harmonie'. It is not clear to me what Avestan word they have in mind for 'fact'. I suppose we at least know it is a neuter, since the adjective *paouruuīm* has to be understood in the nominative. Their translation of the sequence, *dazdē* + accusative + *yaθā* 'subject the accusative to the fact that' requires reading the relative adverb as a kind of dative marker, turning the whole relative clause into a dative phrase, which is ad hoc.[36] And what about the two accusatives 'la vie et l'impossibilité de vie' – what do they mean? What does it mean to 'subject these to the fact that finally the existence of the worst thought will be that of the partisans of deception, etc.'?

> Les deux états d'esprit sont fondamentaux parce que leur confrontation a pour résultat que le stade initial de la conduite rituelle, la pensée, qu'elle se manifeste ou non de façon perceptible (*gaēmcā ajiiātīmcā*), se traduit, soit par une mauvais existence rituelle, soit par une bonne.
>
> (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 43)

Somehow *gaēmcā ajiiātīmcā* (literally: 'life and non-living') means 'whether in a perceptible or an imperceptible manner'. It is even more mysterious how the 'initial stage of ritual conduct, thought,' has become the protagonist of the stanza.

The question remains: do the verbs in the present make it necessary to discard the mythological view of the stanza, as Humbach and Kellens and Pirart maintain? Firstly, the Gāthic present, when used in relating an event, does not necessarily imply that the event is taking place in the present. Past events may be narrated in the present in order to enhance their dramatic 'presence'. Secondly, if the Gāthic verbal system is characterized primarily by the distinction of aspect (the present vs. the aorist), then the verbal idea expressed in the 'present' does not simply refer to the present regardless of the context. As a general rule, the aorist expresses the process denoted by the verb *externally*: the process is reduced to a fact, or a moment in the process is highlighted as the significant fact. The present represents the process *internally* as ongoing, i.e. qua duration, whether continuative or as repeated events. The verb in the present draws attention to the circumstances, the development, and features of the process. This so-called 'durative aspect' of the present obviously has an

elective affinity with the present tense, or rather, can take on the additional role of expressing the present tense. But the consideration of this role, especially in the case of the third person, must be subject to the discursive context.[37] Finally, the question of whether the verbs in the present describe an actual process or a mythical (or historical) phenomenon has to be decided *in situ*. Let us then examine our text in view of this question.

The nom. acc. neuter adjective *paouruuīm* is best interpreted adverbially. I pointed out above that the adjective **paouruiia-* means 'first, primitive, former'. In none of its Gāthic occurrences does the adjective (or the adverb formed from it) have the sense of the hierarchically bottommost. Used as an adverb *paouruuīm* means 'primordially, originally, first, in the beginning'. I think the point is important and bears emphasis. It rules out both Humbach's 'primal stage of one's existence' and Kellens and Pirart's 'le fait fondamental'. Rather, the adverb tells us that the action it modifies takes place in the beginning of a process or a career. What kind of process could this be? The confrontation of the two intuitions takes place 'in the beginning', and the result is the constitution of 'life' on the one hand and 'non-living' on the other. One could take the completive clause in the subjunctive as expressing the envisaged ends of the opposing constitutions: e.g. one establishes life and the other non-living in such a way that the worst existence would be that of the *drugvaṇt* while the best existence would fall to the *ašavan*. The opposition in the original constitution is somehow related to the fact that each individual faces a choice between two possible destinies. There is a connection between the opposing constitutions and the two eventualities. *gaēmcā ajiiātīmcā* are antonymous abstract nouns. The first one means 'living', not the capacity to live, but actual living; the abstract noun in *–ti* opposed to it, with the privative *a–*, means 'non-living', that is, existing in a way that does not qualify as 'living'. They describe existence as such viewed from a dualistic perspective. If so, one must ask: what interest is in view in the perspective that describes existence in terms of living and non-living? Every mortal, presumably, values living both here and beyond death, be it, in the latter case, in a mental state. The poet claims for his own worldview the support of man's most fundamental desire: a flourishing life and a blissful afterlife. The followers of the traditional religion and its gods will have the worst (mental) existence, the continuation of their earthly 'non-living'.[38] Non-living does not mean nothingness but an abhorrent existence. A certain way of life is simply equated with 'living', leading to the best mental existence 'in the end'. The tendentious appeal to 'life' against tradition or, in this case, a religious tradition, is understandable. It does not mean, however, that the poet is insincere where he describes the ways of his opponent as 'non-living' or ruination. But one cannot ignore the rhetorical or ideological dimension of the imputation. The placement of his own view under the sign of 'life' is, in my mind, a sure indication of the poet's revolutionary self-conception. Such is the mental setting that he wants to establish, and within whose frame he urges his listeners to make the 'right choice'. The subjunctive mood of the verb √*ah* 'be' in the subordinated clause

portrays envisaged conditions, two eventualities, which must be placed in the frame of the poet's conception about his own activity. The poet's presumed audience is urged to make the right 'choice'. It is this choice that connects the dualistic description of existence to the two eventualities, and operationalizes, as it were, the poet's religious view. The opposing conditions of existence and the implied choice *together* lead to the two eventualities. I think this is the correct way of understanding the sense of the subordinate clause in the subjunctive. The 'choice' that the mortal faces here and now is thus placed against the poet's extraordinary knowledge of the invisible, the primordial and final conditions of existence. The anomalous °*cā* attached to *yaθā*, which is thought to be, for the reason of meter, a later insertion, shows in a way that the later tradition perceived the discontinuity between the opposing conditions of existence and the eventualities, but instead of understanding it in terms of the intervening 'choice', took the eventualities as a final constitution on a par with the two primordial ones.

As far as I can see, there is no plausible way to interpret the confrontation of the two primordial intuitions solely as a psychological conflict in the career of an individual life (Humbach). The poet reveals the truth about existence, in the light of which he invites his audience to make the right choice. This truth is necessarily primordial. The authority of the poet is based on his ability to see the origins of existence, how things are constituted in the beginnings. It can hardly be otherwise.[39] As for the possibility of a ritual 'career' (Kellens and Pirart), it is based on questionable assumptions. The ritual interpretation of 'existence' should be set aside. The whole construction of the 'stages of ritual conduct' is spurious, as I have argued. What, indeed, is 'ritual existence' – the episode in the participant's life framed by the beginning and end of a rite, or the course of the rite itself? How to imagine the 'ritual existence' ending in a condition characterized by the 'best mind' or the 'worst mind'? If the 'worst existence' was only 'une mauvaise existence rituelle', could not things turn out differently (for one) in the next sacrifice? How, then, to understand the evidently incomparable gravity of the 'final' conditions? How does one recognize the good or bad ritual existence 'in the end': perfectly executed on the one hand and marred with mistakes on the other? Do these produce, respectively, the best mind and the worst? Is not 'thought' or 'mind', whether good or bad, supposed to be the basis of ritual conduct, and not its outcome? As one can see, the problems associated with this interpretation are not limited to the rather implausible rendition of 'living and non-living' as whether 'elle [la pensée] se manifeste ou non de façon perceptible'. At every turn, the words and phrases are stamped with presumed meanings. In the end, the stanza says what it is meant to say: the correct ritual is based in one mental state and the incorrect ritual in the opposite – and ends up, too, with one or the other.

The conditions described in Y 30.4cc′ are those of the afterlife. The word *apəma*- 'the last' is *consistently* used in the Gāthās to describe the end of (embodied) existence or creation. It seems to have an exclusively eschatological significance. The *drugvaṇts* 'in the end' reside in the 'house of *druj*',

whose postmortem status is evident, for example, from Y 49.11, Y 46.11 (for eternity), and Y 31.20 (final lot: a lasting period of darkness, etc.).[40] The stake of the 'choice' between the two ways of being is explicitly articulated in this stanza. The concern with the fate of the soul beyond death frames the treatment that the *daēvas* receive in the Gāthās (see below). It is scarcely possible to overstate the importance of this eschatological perspective.

Here too, like in the previous stanza, the poet skilfully handles two perspectives: that of the mythical beginnings and that of the demand that the primordial constitution makes on each individual. He does this by projecting the two opposing ways of existence into the eschatological future. The dualistic beginning of the conditions of existence is connected with the two possible outcomes by way of the choice (*āuuarəna-*) that each man makes. The unstated 'choice' is the link between the unique beginning and the multiple ends, in the context of the concern that each individual has (*narām.narəm x^{v}axíiāi tanuiiē*) with the fate of his or her soul after death. The gravity of the tone that the reader finds in Y 30.4 is not out of place. Behind the world as 'life and non-living' stands an eschatological concern. One may want to use 'ethical' to describe each person's choice in the light of which her or his postmortem fate is determined, insofar as the regulation of conduct according to a precept may be termed 'ethical'. But there is no independent reflection here on the part of the individual about what in the situation constitutes a meritorious and what a culpable act. The 'choice' is in reality siding with one party against another, framed by the poet's representations, and motivated by the desire for a pleasant existence (here and) beyond. As I have emphasized, orientation to an abstract, universal 'good' is a notion of modern moral philosophy. Such a perspective is out of place in the ancient world.

> Y. 30.5   *aiiå mainiuuå varatā, yə̄ drəguuå acištā vərəziiō*
> *ašəm mainiiuš spāništō, yə̄ xraoždištə̄ŋg asə̄nō vastē*
> *yaēcā xšnaošən ahurəm, haiθiiāiš šíiaoθanāiš fraorəṭ mazdąm*

From these two intuitions, the *drugvaṇt* one chooses to do the worst (acts), (while) the most vitalizing spirit, who is clothed in the hardest stones, (desires) *aṣa*, and (so do those) who resolutely please Ahura Mazdā by (their) true acts.

One of the protagonists chooses *aṣa*; the opposing one chooses to do the worst (acts). Doing the worst acts and pursuing *aṣa* seem to be set against each other as the contents of the choices that the two antagonists make. How should we understand this? Pursuing *aṣa* implies 'satisfying' Ahura Mazdā, *haiθiiāiš šíiaoθanāiš* 'with true acts'. Doing the 'worst acts', on the other hand, involves turning away from *aṣa*. In another stanza (Y 51.13) this is expressly stated about the *drugvaṇt*: *x^{v}āiš šíiaoθanāiš hizuuascā, aṣahiiā nąsuuå paθō* 'has disappeared from the path of *aṣa* thanks to his actions and (the words) of his tongue'.[41] The turn away from *aṣa* lies at the basis of the 'worst acts'

committed by the *drugvaṇt* intuition and all those beings that are 'deceived' by him (cf. Y 32.5). The primordial choices of the two intuitions mark out the choices available to mortals. I do not think there can be any question that in these two primordial intuitions we must see two 'mythological' characters. In the YH, Y 36.3, *mainiiu- spәništa-* 'the most vitalizing intuition' is used as an epithet of the heavenly fire, 'Ahura Mazdā's fire' (see Hintze 2007, pp. 132–33). In the Gāthās, however, the term can refer to a specific capacity of Mazdā, and, in one case, in the stanza before us, is used as a synecdoche to refer to the god himself. One should note that the poet does not turn to Mazdā as an interlocutor until Y 30.7. In the meantime, he gives a 'knowledgeable' account of the beginnings and the possible ends, sharpened into a dichotomy, the conditions that define earthly existence. What is this specific capacity of the god that is significantly used here as a synecdoche? Choosing *aša* has a particular meaning for mortals. The perspective adopted in this stanza on the activity of the two intuitions is framed by the 'decisive choice' (*āuuarәna-*) between life and ruination put forward in the previous stanzas. This is signalled by the syntactic construction: inj. aor. of √*var* 'choose' + infinitive of √*varz* 'do, carry out'. The difficulties of this stanza are all conceptual. The syntax is clear.

Insler (1975, p. 33) reads the finite verb *varatā* in the past tense. But the aorist is used to represent the verbal idea as an accomplished act; the time of the action is a matter of indifference. Humbach in effect substantivizes the adjective 'worst': 'Of these two spirits, the deceitful one chooses to do the worst (things)' (Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 124). Kellens and Pirart read 'action' for the noun in ellipsis: 'Celui d'entre ces deux états d'esprit qui est partisan de la Tromperie choisit d'accomplir les plus mauvais (actes rituels)' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 111). The worst act means the worst ritual act, just as*, haiθiiāiš šiiaoθanāiš* means 'par des actes cultuels' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 111). In view of the parallel opposition in Y 51.13, one can be more or less certain that the elliptical noun is indeed *šiiaoθana-* 'action' or 'enactment'. Thus we have three sets of opposed terms: *aša* versus *druj*, the most vitalizing intuition versus the *drugvaṇt* intuition, and the 'true actions' versus the 'worst actions'. Once again, one should not lose sight of the discursive frame established in the previous stanza: the choice between living and ruination. Now, Kellens and Pirart's interpretation of *haiθiia-* as cultic is based on a questionable analysis of the function of the present participle *haṇt-* 'being'. I have argued elsewhere that the term *haiθiia-* 'true' is connected with eschatological motifs in the Gāthās.[42] The 'true act' is an act that is based in the primordial arrangement of the world and hence eschatologically efficacious, just as the 'true formula' (Y 31.6) is a formula that secures immortality, integrity and *aša*.[43]

We should now discuss the terms *spәṇta- mainiiu-* and *spәništa- mainiiu-*. *mainiiu-* designates not just a certain disposition or 'force' (see *EWA*, vol. 2, p. 313 for Vedic *manyú-* 'erregter Sinn, Eifer, Leidenschaft, Affekt, Wut') but also a form of knowledge, namely an insight into the beginnings, that is to say,

into the divinely constituted world. It is the power of 'second sight', insight into the invisible. In Y 44.7 *spəṇta- mainiiu-* seems to have the strict meaning of 'seeing' the divine world: *azəm tāiš θβā fraxšnī auuāmī mazdā spəṇtā mainiiū vīspanąm dātārəm* 'for the sake of these (questions?) I assist you, O Mazdā, recognizing, through vitalizing intuition, (that you are) the creator of all things' (for *fraxšnin-* cf. *EWA*, vol. 1, p. 600: *pra–jñā́-* 'Unterscheidung, Urteilskraft'). In Y 43.2 the man who teaches the 'straight paths of vitalization' (Y 43.3bb′ *ərəzūš sauuaŋhō paθō*) to the mortals is said to be able to 'perceive' (*ciciθβan-*), through 'your most vitalizing intuition' (*θβā… spāništā mainiiū*), the supernatural powers (*māiiå*) of 'good thinking', which the supreme god makes available because of *aša*. But this insight into the primordial constitution makes available an extraordinary power, needful for vitalizing 'existence' and acceding to the divine sphere.

> Y 33.6   *yə̄ zaotā ašā ərəzūš, huuō mainiiə̄uš ā vahištāṱ kaiiā*
>   *ahmāṱ auuā manaŋhā, yā vərəziieidiiāi maṇtā vāstriiā*
>   *tā tōi iziiā ahurā, mazdā darštōišcā hə̄m.parštōišcā*

> (To me), the priest, who because of *aša* perceive the straight (paths of vitalization), on the basis of the best intuition, with that state of mind with which he (i.e., the Ahura) has conceived the way the work of pastoral care should be carried out; with this (state of mind) I endeavor to see you and consult with you, O Ahura Mazdā.

I propose to read *kaiiā* as the first person singular of the thematic present stem *kaiia-* 'to perceive' from √*kaị/ci* < PIE *√*kʷo/ei*. Although this root is otherwise unattested in verbal form in the Gāthās, it does have a Vedic equivalent (*EWA*, vol. 1, p. 531), which seems to be in competition with √*cit* 'to perceive, observe' (*EWA*, vol. 1, p. 547). The root is represented in the Gāthās by *caiiah-* 'attention'. If we take *kaiiā* as a first person verb it has to satisfy a few syntactic and semantic criteria. The subject of the verb is the priest who accomplishes the action denoted by the verb with a mental activity or state (*manaŋhā*); the action is mentioned in the context of similar achievements that display the priest's credentials. The adjective *ərəzūš* is in the accusative (plural) and qualifies the implied *paθō* 'paths' mentioned in the previous stanza. 'Straight paths', perhaps in part of Indo-European lineage,[44] represent either the means or the object of Zarathuštra's intellectual activity in the Gāthās, and seem to connote the efficiency of his knowledge. In the context it almost certainly means straight paths of vitalization. From Y 43.2 we may gather that the attainment of the cognitive power that lies at the basis of the supreme god's creative activity (*maniiu-*) is the fundamental mark of Zarathuštra's privileged status. The ablative form in general signifies the origin of a movement or, when used more abstractly, the basis of a view or mental activity. The postposition *ā* emphasizes the basal nature of the intuition, which the next verse signals again with *ahmāṱ.*[45]

In 'Un avis sur vieil-avestique *mainiiu-*', Kellens (1990) examines in some detail the usages made of the term *mainiiu-* in the Older Avestan texts. There are two passages that, according to him (Kellens 1990, p. 101), provide decisive evidence for the meaning of the term: Y 31.7 and 43.16.

> Ce peut difficilement être un hasard si, à deux reprises, le mot *mainiiu-* se trouve dans la proposition qui annonce ou signale a posteriori un discours direct caractérisé ayant pour pivot le verbe même dont il dérive, *man*, employé à la 1ère sing. inj. aor. dans l'expression de la coïncidence. Comment ne pas en conclure que *mainiiu-* désigne l'acte même qui consiste à faire une déclaration de coïncidence en *māŋhī*?
>
> (Kellens 1990, p. 102)

The phrase *tā… mainiiū* in Y 31.7c refers to the *following* 'consecutive declaration' (starting with Y 31.8a 'I think, O Mazdā, that you are the first') of the stanzas 8 to 10, all of whose second pādas are short by one syllable (Kellens 1990, pp. 101–102). Kellens translates Y 31.7cc′ *tā mazdā mainiiū uxšiiō yə̄ ā nūrə̄mcīṯ ahurā hāmō*: 'ô Ahura Mazdā, continue à t'accroître par ce *mainiiu*, toi qui es pourtant jusqu'à présent le même' (Kellens 1990, p. 101). In my opinion, this analysis is mistaken. In 31.7cc′ and 31.8aa′ we have two formulations of the idea that Mazdā is immortal, the first in reference to the god's *primordial* creation by mental power, the second in reference to the poet's access to things *primordial*, things divine. Y 31.7cc′ should perhaps be translated: 'by means of that creative intuition (or conception), O Mazdā Ahura, you thrive, (you) who are the same to the very present'. The god is unaffected by the passage of time; he exists beyond time. Y 31.8aa′ *aṯ θβā mə̄ṅhī paouruuīm mazdā yazūm stōi manaŋhā* means: 'thus I intuit you in my mind, young that you are, to (have) be(en) the first'. Hence, the word *mainiiu-* in 31.7c does not refer to any 'direct discourse' but to the mental power of the god (Y 31.7aa′) *yastā maṇtā pouruiiō raocə̄bīš rōiθβən xᵛāθrā* 'the first who conceived that the free expanses be filled with heavenly lights'. The word *mainiiu-* seems to designate a mental power ('conception' or 'intuition') that has a creative force, especially when used of the god. In Y 43.16 *mainiiu-* does not refer to the preceding formulations of the 'view' that 'Mazdā est *spəṇta*', but names the mental force that 'visits' the poet and allows him to obtain insight into the invisible, set out in Y 43.3–15. Insler (1975, p. 63) sees 'the virtuous spirit of the lord' in the unspecified third person sing. '(…) visits' in the refrain Y 43.5 (7, 9, 11, 13, 15) bb′ *hiiaṯ mā vohū, pairī.jasaṯ manaŋhā*. I cannot go into an analysis of this passage. One should remark, however, that in Y 43.2 the poet implicitly refers to himself as the 'one who perceives' by means of the god's 'most vitalizing intuition' (*θβā spə̄ništā mainiiū*); and in 43.16 he concludes by stating that Zarathuštra 'chooses' the god's *mainiiu-* 'that is the most vitalizing thing there is' (*yastē cišcā spə̄ništō*). For the poet, 'the vitalizing intuition' of the god is not just a power of observation into the invisible but also a power of vitalization, just as it is for the god in Y 31.7cc′.

The symmetry of the primordial creation and the end of existence, whether it is a question of the fate of the soul or the earthly conditions of life, is implied in the notion of the 'intuition that is vitalizing'. The knowledge of the beginnings is necessarily knowledge of the end, since it is an insight into the true source of time and existence. Just like the archaic Greek 'memory', i.e. the knowledge of the past, the present and the future, the Gāthic 'vitalizing intuition' gives access, beyond time, to the divine source of things. The poet's insight into the primordial and final times is a divine power, which can, just because it is in contact with truth, produce 'good' (e.g. 'vitalizing') thought, speech and action. In the same way, the *mainiiu-* of *druj* has the power to harm and destroy existence.[46] One cannot emphasize this strongly enough. The supreme god is intuited to be 'vitalizing' not just because of his original creative act but also – and, one should say, more importantly, as far as the interest of mortals is concerned – because he has made eschatological arrangements.

> Y 43.5   *spəṇtəm aṱ θβā, mazdā ⁺mə̄ṇ́hī ahurā*
> *hiiaṱ θβā aŋhə̄uš, ząθōi darəsəm paouruuīm*
> *hiiaṱ då šiiaoθanā, mīždauuąn yācā uxδā*
> *akə̄m akāi, vaŋᵛhīm aṣ̌īm ˣvaŋhauuē*
> *θβā hunarā, dāmōiš uruuaēsē apə̄mē*

So I intuited you (to be) *vitalizing* as I saw you (to be) the primordial one in the engenderment of existence, when you, by your consummate skill, set retribution for actions and words, a bad (reward) for the bad one, a good reward for the good one, (taking place) at the final turn of creation.[47]

Thanks to the mantic poet, these arrangements can be known and turned to good account in pursuit of the desired existence. In another stanza this symmetry is again emphasized. It is as a creator that Mazdā is asked to grant immortality, etc.

> Y 51.7   *dāidī mōi yə̄ gąm tašō, apascā uruuaråscā*
> *amərətātā hauruuātā, spə̄ništā mainiiā mazdā*
> *təuuīšī utaiiūtī, manaŋhā vohū sə̄ŋ́hē*

(O you) who fashioned the cow, and the waters and the plants, through (your) most vitalizing intuition, O Mazdā, give me immortality and completeness, (and) robust strength and youthful tonicity, because of (my) good thinking at (the time of) the declaration.

The 'most vitalizing intuition' in this stanza seems to refer to the divine power of securing the desired eschatological outcome. Mazdā's vitalizing intuition is thus bivalent: if it embodies the god's creative force, it is, in the poet, also the

divine capacity of 'seeing' the primordial events and final things, the faculty that underlies 'true' actions which pursue the (eschatological) vitalization of (one's) existence. The meaning of resolutely embracing Mazdā, the 'most vitalizing intuition', by 'true acts' should be placed against this conceptual nexus. Desiring *aṣa* for the mortals involves satisfying the god who carries their eschatological hopes. 'Woe!' would be the 'last word of existence' for those who do not apply the formula (i.e. efficacious formula) as Mazdā conceives and articulates it (Y 45.3). And the poet mediates between the divine and mortals. The expression *darəsa- aṣahiiā* used in Y 32.13 can hardly have any other meaning than attaining the divine sphere, which means that, at least in one respect, *aṣa* is understood to be associated with a condition that is the object of eschatological longings.[48] It stands out clearly, against this background, that the 'worst acts' are those that, among others, frustrate eschatological expectations.[49] With their powers the *karapans* and the Kavis 'yoke the mortal with bad actions (*akāiš šiiaoθanāiš*) in order to destroy (his) existence, whom their own *daēnā* and their own *uruuan* enrage when they come to the Collector's Bridge: forever (*yauuōi vīspāi*) guests at the House of *druj*' (Y 46.11). I have already alluded in this connection to Y 51.13, where it is said that the *drugvaṇt* 'thanks to his own actions and (the words) of his tongue has disappeared from the path of *aṣa*'. The eschatological imagery used in this stanza shows in what sense one should understand the phrase 'path of *aṣa*'. 'Bad action' is not an instance of 'Evil', whatever this means. It is bad because, in particular, it undermines the mortal's desire to accede to the divine sphere beyond death.[50]

Y 30.6 *aiiå nōiṯ ərəš vīš́iiātā, daēuuacinā hiiaṯ īš ā.dəbaomā*
×pərəsəmnōṇg upā.jasaṯ, hiiaṯ vərənātā acištəm manō
aṯ aēšəməm hōṇduuārəṇtā, yā bạnaiiən ahūm marətānō[51]

Even the *daēvas* do not pick correctly from those two since the deceiver comes over to them while they are deliberating. As they choose the worst thinking they rush headlong to *aēšəma*, with which mortals sicken existence.

This stanza, along with Y 32.5 and the difficult 44.20, is crucial for understanding the Gāthic view of the *daēvas*.

The use of the enclitic emphatic particle °*cinā*, employed in negative statements, is significant. We should try to get the nuance right. As far as I am aware, there are two views among scholars about the sense of the term; and, within the second group, two shades of meaning can be distinguished. Insler (1975, p. 33) and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 124) have the negative emphasis bear on the act of discrimination, so Humbach: 'The *daēvas* do not at all discriminate rightly between these two (spirits)'. For the second view, the particle emphatically foregrounds the *daēvas* in their failure, and not the failure itself. Thus Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 441) has 'auch'; Lommel (1971, p. 42):

'Zwischen diesen beiden haben sogar die Götter nicht richtig unterschieden'; and Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 111): 'Entre ces deux (états d'esprit), les (mauvais) dieux surtout ne distinguent pas bien'; and Humbach (1957b, p. 308): 'zwischen diesen beiden scheiden auch die *Daēvas* nicht richtig'. It seems that the emphasis on the 'gods' may be understood with two different nuances: 'not even the gods rightly discerned', etc., or 'the gods in particular did not discern rightly', etc.[52] The question is whether we should read the emphatic particle °*cinā* as foregrounding the culprit in their failure or as singling out a particular group in relation to a failure. In the first case, the poet is emotionally involved, the outrage palpable and possibly fresh. By contrast, in the second case, the sentence rather assumes the tenor of a report or something akin to it. Although the act of singling out the *daēvas* for a special mention obviously points to the importance that their failure has for the poet, it also conveys a sense of distance between the poet and their wrong, whether one would like to see the distance in a temporal or psychological sense. The aorist aspect of the verb *vīśiiātā* 'set apart, discern' expresses the failure as a fact while *upā.jasaṱ* 'come over' in the injunctive present draws attention to the process, the circumstances of the failure.

The genitive pronoun *aiiå* is necessarily partitive, so the verb *vī* + √*ci* has to be understood with an implied direct object, which agrees with its usage elsewhere in the Gāthās. The verbal phrase *aiiå nōiṱ ərəš vīśiiātā* thus means 'do not pick rightly from these two'. I have already discussed this point. It is very important to have it firmly in view. Humbach's (1957b, p. 308) translation of the phrase, 'zwischen diesen beiden scheiden… nicht richtig', is problematic; so, too, the others given above. Thus the point being made is that the gods do not pick the right one from the dual set, and *not* that they do not discriminate correctly between the two. It is not a question of the power of discrimination, of a failure due to feeblemindedness, but the wrong choice, which, viewed from the mortals' perspective, is ruinous. Yet, most scholars have translated and understood the phrase in the former sense (see above). Insler (1975, p. 33) is an exception in this regard: 'The gods did not at all choose correctly between these two'.

Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 217) analyse *ā.dəbaoman-* as '(*ā* +)*dbu*(/¹*dab*)' and translate 'illusion, égarement'. Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 52) points out that this would be 'an unusual formation', and suggests to read *ā*° as a postpositive particle of emphasis. The particle would, then, keep the focus on the *daēvas* in a presumably changed discursive frame. Kuiper (1973, pp. 201–202) argues that *ā*° should be read as a verbal prefix with *upā.jasaṱ*, with which Insler (1975, p. 167) agrees, following Geldner in interpreting *dəbaoman-* as an agent noun 'deceiver', a reference to the *drugvaṇt mainiiu*. Geldner's and Insler's view is attractive. It is true that the great majority of the Indo-Iranian stems in *man* are neuter action nouns, but masculine agent nouns in *man*, accented on the suffix, are also regularly attested in Vedic (Wackernagel and Debrunner 1954, pp. 760–62); according to Whitney, 'in several instances, a neuter and a masculine, of the one and the other value and accent, stand side

by side' (Whitney 2005, p. 437). It is possible that certain neuter nouns are turned masculine to serve as agents of the actions denoted by the original neuter. In any case, the subject of the verb *upa* + √*gam* 'come to' in the Avesta is a person or a personalized abstraction (see *AW*, col. 497). Of course, we still have to ask what the nature of the deception is. What Y 32.5 and 44.20 tell us about this topic partly overlaps with the material in Y 30.6 and partly supplements it. The picture that emerges from these stanzas is that of a systematic ideology, which, as we will see, will explain the Gāthic repudiation of the *daēvas*.

The shift from the aorist (*vīśiiātā*) to the injunctive present (*upā.jasaṯ*) is not insignificant, despite Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 52), and Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 75). Having admitted the aspectual opposition between the aorist and the present, one cannot deny all significance to their juxtaposition. Here (and, e.g. in Y 31.9–10) one finds the present in a subordinated clause and the aorist in the main. We must first of all reject the idea that one can tell the (relative) time (i.e. tense) of the reported event from this verbal distribution.[53] Whether one should place the *daēvas*' failure in past or present time cannot be determined by the use of the present in the subordinate clause. The present verb of the subordinate does not prevent the placement of the *daēvas*' failure, and with it their deliberation, in the 'past' *if* the event should be understood as a mythological phenomenon – 'past', of course, meaning the time of myth. The aorist in the main clause recounts an event as a momentous fact; the present of the subordinate clause draws attention to the circumstances that attend the reported fact, i.e. as it unfolds. The middle present participle *pərəsəmnāṇg* '(while) consulting' describes the gods *in situ*. In the subordinate clause one is given a view into the circumstance whereby the outcome reported in the main comes about. In any case, the mythic 'past' is also present precisely as a momentous fact. Also, I do not think we can understand this circumstance in any other way than as a mythological episode. From the comparison of this stanza with Y 32.3–5 and Y 44.20, one is inclined to consider the episode as belonging to a well-defined story.

Humbach (1957b) interprets the 'decision' of the *daēvas*, 'put before them by men', as one bearing on the kind of ritual offered to them. The passage, according to him, speaks of 'einer Entscheidung, vor die die Daēvas *immer wieder* von den Menschen gestellt werden: Sollen sie sich dem Opfer der Truhaften oder dem der Wahrhaften zuwenden?' (Humbach 1957b, p. 303) The emphasis on 'again and again' is meant to drive home the ritual nature of the decision to be made by the gods time and again. This picture, however, is questionable. The aorist cannot be that of the so-called habitual action, in part because it is juxtaposed with the verbs in the present, but more importantly because of the evidently momentous nature of the decision. The present form of the verb and the participle of the relative clause does not indicate the 'real present' but the circumstances of the action expressed in the main clause. An opposition of aspects is at issue here. Moreover, if by 'choice' the poet merely meant the choice between two kinds of rite – if *this* were the meaning

of the 'choice' – he would have no doubt so expressed himself. The decisive choice at stake in these stanzas is before the mortals and not the gods. To put it in another way: the wrong (ritual) choice of the *daēvas*, made in primordial times, matters because it affects the vital interests of the mortals across the threshold of death and in the beyond.[54]

The word *marətānō* has been analysed in three ways. Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 1148) reads it as the gen. sing. of *marətan-* 'sterblich; Mensch'. Kuiper (1957, p. 94 n.27) maintains that the word is in the genitive, which is, moreover, required by the context. Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 49), too, make it a genitive, but from a different stem: '*marətān-* du type *maθrān-*', which they (1990, p. 282) translate 'chef des hommes'. Lommel (1971, p. 42), Humbach (1957b and 1991, vol. 2, p. 52), de Vaan (2003, p. 590) and Hoffmann and Forssman (2004, p. 144) read it as a nominative plural of *marətan-* 'mortal'. Insler (1975, p. 168) makes it an accusative plural. Thus Kuiper, Insler, and Kellens and Pirart have to make the *daēvas* the subject of *bąnaiiən* 'sicken, afflict'. Insler (1975, p. 33) translates Y 30.6cc′: 'they then rushed into fury, with which they have afflicted the world and mankind'; and Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 111): 'ils courent ensemble vers la Rage, dont ils infectent l'existence (rituelle) du maître d'hommes'. Y 44.20 and Y 49.4, where, significantly, we find both words *daēuua-* and *aēšəma–*, seem to use the latter as a specific type of ritual. I will consider these two stanzas later; suffice it to point out here that in both Y 44.20 and Y 49.4 it is not the *daēvas* but the mortals that foster and organize the *aēšəma*. Thus it seems to make better sense to read *marətānō* in the nominative: 'they (the *daēvas*) rush headlong to the *aēšəma* (rite), with which men sicken existence'.

The word *ahu-* (Vedic *ásu-*) means 'existence' or 'Leben', but not 'the world', as Insler (1975, p. 33) and Schwartz (2003, p. 216) translate it.[55] In all its Older Avestan occurrences it seems to have the sense of a state and not that of an entity. Two idiomatic usages are made of it in the Gāthās. In the YH we find a third one, *uba- ahu-* 'both states', referring to the corporeal existence and mental existence. Lommel (1930, pp. 101–105, pp. 120–29, p. 144), Narten (1986, pp. 290–95) and Hintze (2007, p. 73) understand the expression as referring to the physical and spiritual dimensions of earthly life, based in a (quasi-Cartesian) doctrine of body and mind. On the other hand, Narten (1986, p. 291) acknowledges that in a number of YAv. passages, the opposition between 'this existence' or 'corporeal state' and the 'mental state' is that of the earthly life and the afterlife. It is indeed difficult to interpret, e.g. Yt 10.93 or, especially, HN2 16.34 in any other way: Yt 10.93 *vaēibiia nō ahubiia nipaiiå āi miθra vouru.gaoiiaoite aheca aŋhə̄uš yō astuuatō yasca asti manahiiō* 'O Mithra of wide pastures, protect us in both existences: this existence which (is) possessed of bone and (the one) that is of the mind'; HN2 16.34 *astuuataṯ haca aŋhaoṯ manahīm auui ahūm* 'from the corporeal existence to the mental existence', which describes the status of the soul just arrived at Mazdā's abode. However, Narten rejects this 'eschatological' interpretation for the Old Avestan texts.

The Gāthic locution 'corporeal and mental states' seems to correspond to the YH 'two states': Y 28.2 *ahuuå astuuatascā hiiat̰cā manaŋhō* 'of two states, the one possessed of bone and the one of the mind'; and Y 43.3 *ahiiā aŋhōuš astuuatō manaŋhascā* 'of this state possessed of bone and (that) of the mind'. In this last phrase 'this possessed-of-bone state' is differentiated from the existence 'of the mind'. Thus we should understand the expression not in the sense of Cartesian dualism but as referring to the life that is embodied, here, and the life that is (only) mental, hereafter. In one YH passage, 'this existence' is distinguished from the 'existence of the mind': Y 40.2 *ahmāicā ahuiiē manax̌iiāicā* 'for this life and the mental one'. The Gāthās, too, use the term 'this existence' by itself (e.g. Y 30.9, 34.6, 45.3), where it signifies the earthly existence as opposed to the state beyond death. Y 45.3 seems to confirm this meaning of the term.

> Y 45.3   *at̰ frauuaxšiiā, aŋhōuš ahiiā paouruuīm*
> *yąm mōi vīduuå, mazdå vaocat̰ ahurō*
> *yōi īm vā nōit̰, iθā mąθrəm varəšəṇtī*
> *yaθā īm mānāicā vaocacā*
> *aēibiiō aŋhōuš, auuōi aŋhat̰ apə̄məm*

The poet declares that 'woe!' would be the 'last (word) of existence' for those who do not apply the 'primordial formula of this life' as Mazdā conceives and articulates it. 'This existence' is an existence that has an end, which evidently rouses serious concern, even anxiety. It is artificial to dissociate 'this existence' of the first verse from the 'existence' of the last verse, as Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 155) do, having the first refer to the 'ritual state' and the second to the 'profane state'. The resulting scenario would become hard to imagine. The Gāthic adjective *astuuaṇt–*, usually translated as physical or corporeal, literally means 'possessed of bone', i.e. the state of existence possessed of bone. It does not mean the physical dimension of life, next to which we would have a mental dimension (cf. Panaino 2004b, pp. 121ff.). The 'existence possessed of bone' refers to the earthly life and the 'existence of the mind' refers to the state of existence beyond 'this state'.

In the second specific usage, *ahu-* is qualified by the adjective *paouruuiia-* 'prior or previous'. Now, as I argued, this adjective does not mean 'fundamental' in the architectonic sense, but expresses priority in a sequence, which may be absolute. It has, then, the sense of the 'previous', and absolutely, 'primordial', 'first', 'best'. Insler (1975, p. 132) understands *ahu- paouruuiia-* as 'the foremost existence', and maintains that it refers to 'the time when the rule of truth and good thinking… shall be brought to realization on earth (cf. Y 30.7–8), when deceit shall be destroyed forever (cf. 48.1–2)'. He further thinks that *ahu- paouruuiia-* is equivalent to 'the good form of existence' (Y 48.2d *aŋhōuš vaŋ'hī… ākərəitiš*), 'the best existence' (Y 44.2b *aŋhōuš vahištahiiā*), and the 'splendid existence' (Y 34.15c *fərašə̄m ahūm*); and that they are all to be placed in the future. The adjective can certainly be understood in Insler's

sense, but the placement of *ahu- paouruuiia-* in the future would have to be taken in the sense of some kind of restoration of a 'primordial state of existence'. From Y 28.11c ′ *yāiš ā aŋhuš pouruiiō ˟buuaṯ* 'by means of which the primordial state of existence will have taken place',[56] we know that the 'primordial existence' has a normative value, since it was 'created' (e.g. Y 44.3–5) by the supreme god. The verb *buuaṯ* is in the subjunctive aorist expressing an envisaged phenomenon. Thus Humbach's hesitation (1991, vol. 2, p. 29) as to whether to translate 'prime existence' or 'primal existence' depending on whether to place the event in the future or the past may be resolved.

The occurrence of *ahu-* in Y 30.6c′ does not seem to belong to any of these two usages. But I think the context (Y 30.7–9) makes it likely that it should be understood as referring to earthly existence, which is perhaps the damaged continuation of the 'primordial state' (cf. Y 45.1). The nominative *marətānō* marks a break with the previous topic. The men who sicken existence with the *aēšəma* will be seized and punished, and 'this existence' (Y 30.9 *īm… ahūm*) made 'splendid' (*fərašəm*), by those 'who will deliver the *druj* into the hands of *aṣa*' (Y 30.8c′). The genitive pronoun *aēšąm* in the verse line Y 30.7cc′ *aēšąm tōi ā āŋhaṯ, yaθā aiiaŋhā ādānāiš pouruiiō* can hardly refer to the *daēvas*, contra Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 124): 'so that through their (the *daēvas*) being fettered in iron, (existence) will be Thy prime one'. Insler (1975, p. 35) maintains that it refers to the 'faithful', whom he sees behind *utaiiūitiš ārmaitiš*, and reads *pōi* 'to protect' for *tōi*: 'He shall be here for the protection of these (faithful), just as He shall be the first (to do so) during the requitals with the (molten) iron'. His reason for making this change, however, is not sound (see Insler 1975, p. 170). Mazdā's being the subject of the verb (*jasaṯ*) in the first verse does not require his being so of another verb in the last. Lommel (1971, p. 45) makes the 'powers' (Mächten) mentioned in the first two verses the antecedent of the pronoun, and *ārmaiti-* the noun underlying the adjective *pouruiiō*, which would have to be then read in the feminine: 'so daß sie bei deinen Vergeltungen durch das (geschmolzene) Erz die erste von diesen (vorgenannten Mächten) sein wird' (1971, p. 42). The added gloss[57] *aiiaŋhā* makes it likely – the discrepancy in the number notwithstanding – that *ādāna-* was understood to be the cognate of either *ādāna-* 'enchainment' or *ādhāna-* 'bridle' (see Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 53). The genitive pronoun *aēšąm* refers to the 'mortals' of Y 30.6c ′, and the underlying noun of the adjective *pouruiiō* is *ahu–*, 'for the sake of it' (*ahmāiˢ*) the god 'comes' (*jasaṯ*) in the first verse, and it (*ahu-*) is the beneficiary of *dadāṯ* 'gives' in the second verse line. The direct object of √*gam* 'come' is either in the accusative or locative, not in the dative (e.g. Y 43.1). When the verb has no complement, it has the sense of 'arise' or 'arrive' (e.g. Y 30.8, 31.14, 48.11), and its possible dative complement expresses the reason for 'arising'.[58] Y 51.10cc′ *maibiiō zbaiiā aṣəm vaŋhuiiā aṣī gaṯ tē* means 'I invoke *aṣa* with good *aṣi* to come for me', i.e. for my sake, and not 'de venir à moi' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 183), 'to come to me' (Humbach 1991, vol.1, p. 188), etc. Hence, Y 30.7cc′ should be translated: 'with the enchainment of these (men), (existence) will be yours as the first one

(was)', or: 'with the enchainment of these (men), (existence) will be like your primordial one (was)'.[59]

Y 30.6 explicitly associates the *daēvas* with a certain type of ritual characterized by *aēšəma-* 'fury', since the accusative object of a verb of movement almost always denotes a concrete phenomenon.[60] If I am correct about the nuance of the emphatic particle °*cinā* 'not even' in the stanza, the poet is repudiating the *daēvas* in opposition to the traditional view of these 'gods', or at least in opposition to a certain tradition still thriving at the time. Y 29.4 confirms that the *daēva* cult was very much active and widespread when the Gāthās were composed. In fact, it seems like the poet expects that it will continue to exist in the future.

> Y 29.4   *mazdå sax^vārə̄ mairištō, yā zī vāuuərəzōi pairī.ciθī̆ṭ*
> *daēuuāišcā mašiiāišcā, yācā varəšaitē aipā.ciθī̆ṭ*
> *huuō vīcirō ahurō, aθā nə̄ aŋhaṭ yaθā huuō vasaṭ*

Mazdā best remembers performances, (those) indeed that have been done by the *daēvas* and men hitherto, and (those) that may be done (by them) henceforth. He, the lord, discerns (whatever has been done before and whatever may be done henceforth in respect of *aša* and *druj*). As he may wish, so shall it be for us.

The neuter noun *sax^vārə̄* (acc. pl.) has been related to both √*sāh* 'instruct' (Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 314) and √*sac* 'be able' (Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 153; Hintze 2007, p. 178). I tend to agree with Hintze's view that the semantics of the verb √*varz* 'do, exercise' must be taken into account, although in Y 45.3 the same verb has the sense of verbal performance whose object is a 'formula' (*mąθra-*). It is best to understand the word in the broadest sense of 'performance', including things thought. Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 36) suggest that the two obscure terms *pairī.ciθī̆ṭ* and *aipī.ciθī̆ṭ* are adverbs consisting of two adverbs of time *pairī* and *aipī* 'portant l'agrégat particulier *cīṭ* + *ī̆ṭ*. The particle *ī̆ṭ* must be distributive here, as in, for example, Y 39.3. They explain the fricative -*θ*- by the 'sandhi d'époque orthoépique' (Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 126). The fricativization of the intervocalic dental is regular in Young Avestan. There is one certain case (*AW*, col. 860: 'zuvor') where *pairī* is used as an adverb of time meaning 'hitherto'. Given the coordinated construction and the modes (perfect *vāuuərəzōi*, subjunctive *varəšaitē*) in which the verb √*varz* is used, one has no choice but to admit that *aipī* is an adverb of time meaning something like 'henceforth'.

Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 108) and Hintze (2007, p. 178) integrate the adverbials into the two relative phrases: *yā… vāuuərəzōi pairī.ciθī̆ṭ… yācā varəšaitē aipī.ciθī̆ṭ*. But what to make of °*cīθ°* < *cīṭ*?[61] It cannot be the singular neuter indefinite pronoun (Ved. *cid*), since its only possible antecedent *sax^vārə̄* 'performances' is in the plural. As far as I can see, the only possibility is the one suggested by Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 242), namely to read *cīṭ* as the

emphatic particle. In Y 46.5 the adjective *vīcira-* has verbal force and governs two direct objects.[62] It is possible that here, too, it has a direct object, *sax^vārā*, which it shares with *mairišta-*. Still, if *īṯ* is indeed a distributive particle, the coordinating °*cā* in 4b′ remains problematic.

Y 30.8 uses the term *aēnah-* 'wrong' to characterize the action of men who take part in the *aēšəma* rite, dedicated to the *daēvas* (Y 30.6c). In other passages, too, where the *daēvas*, along with their mortal followers, are described as participating in a wrong 'action' (cf. Y 32.3), this term almost certainly refers to the condemned ritual. Y 29.4 asserts the disposition of Mazdā over how 'it will be for us'. This expression, in my mind, has a specific reference. Although the adverbial *apǝ̄mǝm* 'finally' is not used here, the disposition that Mazdā is said to have must refer to the fate of the soul, as in Y 48.4 (see Chapter 6), which will depend on how one shapes one's *daēnā*. The 'discernment' (from *vī* + √*ci* 'set apart') that Ahura exercises brings to bear the authoritative opposition of *aṣa* and *druj* on the *daēnā* (e.g. Y 30.11 and 46.5). In Y 30.11 Mazdā's 'rules' determine both the 'access and ban on access' to the divine sphere (*x^vītica ǝ̄nǝitī*) and 'that long withering is for the *drugvaṇts* but vital energies for the *aṣavans*' (*hiiaṯcā drǝguuō.dǝbiiō rašō sauuacā aṣauuabiiō*). It is '(by abiding) with these (rules)' that 'things will be according to (your) wish' (*aṯ aipī tāiš aŋhaitī uštā*). The poet addresses the 'mortals' (*maṣiiå̄ŋhō*) in this stanza; and, clearly, their 'wish', which will be satisfied once they learn the god's rules, has to do with the afterlife.

In Y 30 the poet-seer pronounces his dualistic image of human existence, which he claims he has acquired through his insight into the primordial arrangement of things. The doctrine connects the beginnings with the end of things. The urgency of the 'decisive choice'[63] pressed on each person has to do with the fact that he or she in 'choosing' one or the other of the pairs in each dual set (thought, word, action) decides his or her fate in the afterlife. The primordial 'choice' made by Mazdā and the *drugvaṇt mainiiu*, respectively, of 'good' (thought, word, action) and 'bad' (thought, word, action) is not the prototype of the mortals' choice. Rather it establishes the conditions of mortal existence and hence the dualistic 'choice' that each person faces. Now, this eschatological doctrine explicitly refers to the *daēvas* and their cult against which it asserts itself. The poet incorporates these gods into his doctrine and evaluative scheme, where they are subordinated to the *drugvaṇt mainiiu* and *ipso facto* condemned. The agonistic reduction makes it likely that the idea of a primordial 'bad' *mainiiu* is an original contribution of the poet. The concrete reality behind the new dualistic doctrine is the *daēva* cult and the poet's total opposition to it. What is the basis of this opposition? One would have to know what the purpose of the *daēva* cult is. We turn to this question in the following chapter.

Notes

1 See Smith 1990, p. 130. 'The [locative] is concerned primarily with the cosmic and social issues of keeping one's place and reinforcing boundaries. The vision is one

of stability and confidence with respect to an essentially fragile cosmos, one that has been reorganized, with effort, out of previous modes of order and one whose "appropriate order" must be maintained through acts of conscious labour' (Smith 1990, 121). See also Smith 1978, pp. 67–87, pp. 190–207.

2 See Kellens 1994a, pp. 59–61, pp. 80–87, pp. 117–19.

3 Cantera (2012, p. 219) divides the YH into three sections: the introductory Y 35; the ritual core Y 36–39; and the concluding Y 40–41: Y 36 'seems to mark the beginning of the ritual action accompanied by *YH*, the offering of meat to the fire, with the consecration of the fire on which the victim is going to be placed'.

4 See also Cantera 2012, pp. 226–27: 'The *YH* is a ritual text with direct references to the ritual action it served. Since this ritual action disappeared as a consequence of abandoning animal sacrifice, such references are no longer easy to understand completely, but sometimes they can still be recognized'. The thesis is interesting; if true it would explain why no ritual action takes place between Y 36 and 59. See Panaino 2004b, pp. 51–75 for an alternative account of the absence of ritual acts ('l'intériorisation du rituel') during the recitation of the mentioned texts. See Kotwal and Boyd 1992, pp. 112ff. The problem with Cantera's thesis is that if indeed the *yasna* ritual originally included the sacrifice of an animal (for which one must rely on interpretation of allusive references in the text, e.g. Y 37.3, according to Cantera), one has to explain why it was 'abandoned', i.e. the historical circumstances of its removal from the ritual, otherwise it becomes an *ad hoc* assumption. Compare Hintze 2012, pp. 49–50.

5 Compare Y 34.12 *kaṯ tōi rāzarə̄ kaṯ vašī kaṯ vā stūtō kaṯ vā yasnahiiā sruidiiāi mazdā* 'O Mazdā! Which address (?) is for you? Which do you wish to hear, that of praise or that of consecration?' Here again, toward the end of the first Gāthā, the poet refers to two types of discourse that may be addressed to the god: *stut*-type and *yasna*-type. In my mind, this shows that Kellens and Pirart's syntactic analysis of *staotācā… yesniiācā* as elliptical for **staotā yesniiācā vahmiiācā* is gratuitous. See also Y 50.9. Insler (1975, p. 33) interprets the two words as instrumental, and produces a disjointed statement: 'I shall speak of those things which are to be borne in mind – even by one who already knows – through both praise and worship for the very Wise Master of good thinking and for truth', etc.

6 Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 47) seems to posit *uruuāza*- 'delightful', which, substantivized, would give the neuter plural 'delightful things, the introduced antecedent of the relative pronoun: '(I shall proclaim) what delight (is) to be seen through the lights' (1991, vol. 1, p. 123).

7 About 45.1dd′ *akā varanā drəguuå hizuuå.āuuərətō* Kellens (1994a, p. 65) writes: 'Il semble que les vers dd'… constituent une formule séparée et que c'est la force déprécative de celle-ci qui va magiquement opérer le tri: "Puisse celui qui donne de fausses définitions ne pas affaiblir le second état!" Il reste au chantre à constater l'effet de sa formule: "En fonction de ce choix (de nous) mauvais (pour lui), voici le Trompeur écarté-du-sacrifice par la langue"'.

8 But who exactly is the addressee of the exhortation? According to Kellens' 'liturgical' interpretation of the Gāthās, it has to be the gods. One must admit that the notion that it is the gods that are being *required* to 'declare' their ritual choice is rather strange.

9 Incidentally, compare Thomas Mann's comment in '*Joseph and His Brothers*: A Lecture': 'If I were to state what I personally understand by religiosity I would say that it is *attentiveness* and *obedience*' (in Assmann 2006, p. 215 n. 62).

10 Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 48) gives interesting parallel Vedic phrases with *práti* + *budh*, with the same meaning. His assumption of verbal government of *narə̄m.narə̄m xᵛax̌iiāi tanuiiē* by *vīciθa*- is, however, artificial and without much sense: 'invitations resulting from the discrimination of [acc.] each single man' (Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 47).

11 It is unclear here whether 'test' is derived from 'travel', as it is in a 1973 article (Kuiper 1973, p. 183–86), or from 'request'.

12 In his 2011/2012 lectures at the Collège de France Kellens interprets it as the mandatory ritual section of 'énumération des noms propres' (January 6, 2012).

13 Compare Kellens 2011, pp. 63ff. and Cantera 2012.

14 Compare Hintze 2012, p. 49: 'The ritual thus anticipates the state of perfection, described in Avestan as *frašō.kərəti* and pertaining to the end of time, when all Evil will be completely removed from the material world. From that point of view, it makes sense that Evil is not mentioned in the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti because it does no longer exist in that special ritual moment. This interpretation derives support from the Gathas, in which the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti is embedded, for the theme of "perfection," *frašō.kərəti*, recurs at the end of each of the first three'. But if so, can the 'ritual moment' mirroring the final restoration of the material world precede any of the Gāthās, where combat against evil is underway?

15 See Panaino 2004b, pp. 66–75, pp. 95–105. Compare Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 51. I do not think the presence of the *daēvas* may be understood as merely a genre requirement ('praise and blame'), neither does Panaino (2004b, pp. 81–82).

16 See, for instance, Eliade 1985, pp. 17–34, pp. 51–92.

17 See Hintze 2004a.

18 But compare Kellens 2011, pp. 119–20, pp. 128–29.

19 But then compare Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 315), where they seem to classify the infinitive as requiring an accusative complement.

20 See Kellens 1994b, p. 49. Insler's translation of *sastē* in Y 30.8 is in particular artificial: 'the rule shall take place in order to announce itself to those', etc. What does this mean? Compare Kellens 1994b, p. 55.

21 Compare Kellens 1994b, p. 53, who classifies Y 44.17 and 49.3 as 'infinitive governed adjectivally'.

22 See also Y 51.7: 'O Mazdā give me… immortality and integrity… and strength and youthful robustness when the declaration takes place (*sə̄ŋhē*)'.

23 Since, generally speaking, for Humbach the gods are the interlocutor of the poet, are the 'twins' presented to them?

24 Gershevitch (1964, pp. 32–33) maintains that the 'locative' *paouruiiē* from the adjective *paouruuia-* cannot mean 'in the beginning' but, used adverbially, has to be 'at first, firstly'. Accordingly, he translated the first verse: 'Firstly the twin Spirits [*lit.* the two Spirits who (are) twins] were revealed (to me), each-endowed-with-own-wish (= free will)'. The adverb has to bear on 'revelation': the Spirits were at first revealed. What could this mean? The same form (*paouruiiē*) of the adjective occurs in Y 45.2, again attached to the dual *mainiiū*: 45.2aaʹ *aṭ frauuaxšiiā aŋhōuš mainiiū paouruiiē*. However one interprets the form (whether a locative or a nom. acc. dual), it cannot be separated from the 'two intuitions'. Gershevitch makes it an adverb: 'I shall mention firstly of the world the two Spirits'. This is problematic. *ahu-* does not seem to have a concrete sense (the 'world') in the Gāthās, but always an abstract meaning: 'existence' or 'state'. The object of the 'proclamations' (*aṭ frauuaxšiiā*) of the first six stanzas is each time marked as ultimate, elevated: 45.1 *īm (ratūm)… ciθrā*; 45.2 *aŋhōuš mainiiū paouruiiē*; 45.3 *aŋhōuš ahiiā paouruuīm… mąθrəm*; 45.4 *aŋhōuš ahiiā vahištəm*; 45.5 *vacā… vahištəm*; 45.6 *vīspanąm mazištəm*. There can hardly be any doubt that *paouruiiē* belongs with *mainiiū*. Later he corrects himself, reading *mainiiū paouruiiē* as nom. acc. dual: 'the two primordial thoughts' (1995, p. 17).

25 See de Vaan 2003, pp. 422–24, for the edition to *paouruiiē* (PY) as opposed to Humbach's and Kellens' *pauruiiē* (SY). The adjective **paouruiia-* regularly means 'first, primitive, former'. Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 874) gives: '"der erste, primus," nach Zeit und Ordnung', that is to say, what comes before or first in a sequence. For its Vedic counterpart *pūrvyá-* Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 2, p. 157) has: 'vormalig, früher

dagewesen, frühest, vorzüglichst,' and for the adverb *pūrvyám* he has: 'zuerst, früher, zuvor'. Thus the Vedic adjective means 'what precedes', comparatively or absolutely, in a sequence, and from the latter sense it naturally develops the meaning 'excellent, prime'. The Gāthic adjective *apaouruiia-* is 'without precedent'. In none of its Gāthic occurrences does the adjective (or the adverb) have the sense of the hierarchical fundament. Used as an adverb *paouruuīm* means 'primordially, originally, first, in the beginning'. I think the point is important and has to be stressed. Thus the adjective, contra Humbach, Kellens and Pirart, cannot mean 'fundamental'.

26 The translation given in the text agrees with one of the two 'variants' they consider 'les seuls choix raisonnables' (Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 63). In the alternative variant the sense of *xᵛafǝnā* is completely artificial: 'les *mainiiu* (jumeaux) originels/ fondamentaux qui sont connus / ont été connus pour leur sommeil (jumeau) au moment de penser et de dire' (Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 63). What information are we given by 'the two spirits that are known for their sleep during thought and speech' or even 'in respect of thought and speech'? That at the level ('stade') of thought or of speech in the ritual the two spirits are 'sleep' or 'dreaming', but then become active at the level of gesture? None of this makes much sense.

27 As for RV X 36.4ab *grāvā vadann ápa rákṣāṃsi sedhatu duṣvápnyaṃ nírṛtiṃ víśvam atríṇam*, neither the associated negative terms nor the remedy against them (the 'ringing pressing-stone') to which the poet appeals makes Insler's 'ill rivalry' more attractive than 'nightmare'. See also Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 58.

28 'Like *Mnēmosynē*, *Alētheia* is the gift of second sight: an omniscience, like memory, encompassing the past, present, and future. The nocturnal visions of dream, called *Alēthosynē*, cover "the past, the present, and all that must be for many mortals, during their dark slumber". And the *Alētheia* of the Old Man of the Sea is knowledge "of all divine things, the present and the future". As a power of prophecy, *Alētheia* sometimes replaces *Mnēmosynē* in certain experiences of incubatory prophecy, as in the story of Epimenides. Thus magus spoke with *Alētheia*, accompanied by *Dikē*, during his years of retreat, in the cave of Zeus Diktaios' (Detienne 1999, p. 65). The cited passages are from Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Tauris* and *Helena*, respectively. See further Detienne 1999, p. 45: 'In Hesiod's poem we find the most ancient representation of a poetic and religious *Alētheia*. What is the Muses' function according to the theology of speech deployed in the *Theogony*? The Muses proudly claim the privilege of "speaking the truth" (*alētheia gērusasthai*). The meaning of this Alētheia is revealed by its relation to the Muses and to memory, for the Muses are those who "tell of what is, and what is to be, and what was before now"; they are the words of memory. The very context of the *Theogony* thus already indicates a close connection between *Alētheia* and memory and even suggests that one should understand these two religious powers as a single representation'. See Vernant 2006, pp. 139–53 for the myths around the link between memory and death in ancient Greece. See also Gernet 1981, pp. 220–26 on the notion of decisive proof. Under certain conditions, visions and words could immediately reveal the 'real' (e.g. beyond time) origins of existence, and this revelation was always vouchsafed to specially privileged figures such as inspired poets. The belief in the mantic power of dreams, and in the equivalence of sleep and death with respect to occult knowledge, is also found among the ancient Celts and ancient Germans. See Eliade 1964, pp. 382–84.

29 Detienne (1999, p. 123) cites the following tradition about Epimenides, the 'magus': 'During the day Epimenides lay down in the cave of Zeus Diktaios and he slumbered in a deep sleep for many years; he conversed in his dreams with the gods and spoke with *Alētheia* and *Dikē*'.

30 See Malamoud 1996, pp. 195–206. Thompson 1998 on the notion of *satyakriyā* 'truth-act' and its relation to the figure of the inspired poet is very important. The utterance of efficacious speech is immediately its realization. Compare Detienne

1999, p. 73: 'The speech of the diviner and of oracular powers, like a poetic pro-nouncement, defines a particular level of reality: when Apollo prophecies, he "real-izes" (*krainei*). Oracular speech does not reflect an event that has already occurred; it is part of its realization… while the visions of dreams in which words were not realized (*akraanta*) were opposed to dreams that did "accomplish the truth" or "realize reality" (*etuma krainousin*)'.

31 Both Pahlavi and Sanskrit translations of the verse treat it as an independent state-ment. The Pahlavi translation with the gloss (Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 34) reads: '*menišn ud gōwišn ud kunišn ān ī har dō az weh ud az–iz wattar (ēk ān ī weh menīd ud guft ud kard ud ēk ān [ī] wattar)*': 'thinking and speaking and doing, they that were two, one [picked?] from the good and one from the bad (one was the one who thought and spoke and did what is good, and one was the one who [thought and spoke and did] what is bad)'. Incidentally, the 'good' and the 'bad' in the Pahlavi translation seem to describe the members of the triad and not the spirits (*mēnōg*) – according to the gloss in any case. Neryosang's Sanskrit translation (Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 35) reads: '*manasi ca vacasi ca karmaṇi ca tad dvitayam uttamaṁ ca nikṛṣṭaṁ ca*': 'in thinking and speaking and doing, those two [spirits] are the best and the corrupted'.

32 Compare Kellens and Pirart 1997, p. 49: 'Dans une construction sujet + attribut, le locatif ne peut être que strictement circonstanciel. Il faut comprendre que *hī* est bon ou mauvais au moment de penser, au moment de dire, au moment de faire'. I have already pointed out the difficulties this 'rule' gives rise to for their interpret-ation of Y 30.3a–b′.

33 Kellens' translation of the three infinitives in Y 31.5 undermines his proposed semantics of the verb, requiring for it a different object, for which the syntax does not provide: '*taṭ mōi vīcidiiāi vaocā… vīduiiē… mə̄ncā daidiiāi* "dis-moi la (stipula-tion-d'alliance), afin que je fasse (correctement) la différence entre elle (et celles de la Tromperie), que je la connaisse et que je la médite"' (Kellens 1994b, p. 55).

34 See Ahmadi 2012a.

35 See Ahmadi 2013.

36 Their supporting material (Y 34.5a′) does not seem cogent to me: *yaθā* in this stanza (*yaθā vā hahmī* 'or as I sleep') does not 'supplée un datif nominal' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 48). I discuss this phrase in due course below.

37 See Gonda 1962 for Homeric and Vedic examples and analysis.

38 Although Y 53.6 is badly damaged (see Kellens and Pirart 1991, pp. 270–72), it perhaps describes the departure of the soul of the *drugvaṇt* for the 'house of druj' (*drūjō hacā rāθəmō*) where it will lead a ruined 'mental existence' (*ā manahīm ahūm mərəngəduiiē*). The phrase Y 53.6 *tanuuō parā vāiiū bərədubiiō duš.xᵛarəθə̄m nąsaṭ xᵛāθrəm drəguuō.dəbiiō də̄jīṭ.arətaēibiiō* seems to be evoked in *ZS* 31.2 *sē rōz pas az marg ka ruwān andar bīm handāzag sē rōz ī pēš zāyišn ka wād andar tan kōxšīdār* (Gignoux and Tafazzoli 1993, p. 112).

39 See, for instance, the texts from Detienne 1999 cited above and in Part III of this book.

40 See Ahmadi, forthcoming.

41 One should perhaps have in mind that the expression 'path of *aša*' does not neces-sarily mean the path that leads to *aša* but may mean the 'domain of *aša*'. See Gonda (1962, pp. 197–98) for a discussion of the Vedic cognate, where he cites Benveniste's opinion that the term *pánthā*- does not simply designate a track or way but 'un franchissement', that is, a perilous passage. 'The actions of the tongue' evoked here must be related to the context of Y 48.1. See my discussion of this stanza below.

42 See Ahmadi 2013.

43 Y 44.17 clearly expresses the poet's eschatological concern. See Ahmadi 2012b. Zarathuštra wishes that his voice be able to 'effect a union with integrity and

immortality' by means of the formula that is *rāθəmō ašāṭ hacā*. In the essay I proposed to translate the adnominal phrase *ašāṭ hacā* as '*aṣ̌a*-bound', i.e. oriented to *aṣ̌a*. It could be that *rāθəma*- is derived from √*rād* 'succeed in, attain' (cf. *EWA*, vol. 2, p. 228: *rādh* 'Gelingen haben, Erfolg haben, den Zweck erreichen') 'in *ma*, meaning something like 'attainment'. The devoicing and fricativization of the Indo-Iranian *d(h)* before *m* is also attested for the derivatives of √*rud(h)* 'grow'. See *AW*, col. 1531. If OP *artācā* from Xerxes' so-called Daiva Inscription is indeed for *artā hacā*, as Herrenschmidt (1993) maintains, it will be a further proof of the antiquity and formulaic nature of the phrase. As Skjærvø (Schlerath and Skjærvø 1987) has observed, the phrase is not translated in the Elamite (*ir–ta–ha–ci*) and Akkadian (*arta–šá´-*) versions of the OP text. 'The normal word-order in Old Persian', Skjærvø writes, 'is for *hacā* to precede its noun' (Schlerath and Skjærvø 1987).

44 See Detienne 1999, pp. 130–31 for a short discussion of the 'path of truth' in Parmenides, who has a privileged access to *Alētheia* and, like the diviner and magus, is the 'one who knows'. Detienne gives further bibliographic information on the topic. The connection between the poet's 'insight' and salvation ('return to life') is brought out for archaic Greek material by Frame 1978, pp. 1–33. See my discussion of the topic in Part III of this book.

45 The ablative + *ā* construction is generally used in Indo-Iranian to indicate the interval covered by a movement. The word in the ablative can be either the point of departure or that of arrival. Thus the construction could mean 'all the way from X' or 'all the way to X'. The reversal in the sense of direction the ablative normally has (from 'from out of' to 'up to') in the latter case must have been consequent to the regular use of the construction for indicating the interval covered by a movement, emphasizing the thoroughness of the coverage. Hence, the construction signals the point of orientation, whether it implies movement ('all the way up to a location') or not ('at a location'). In our passage, the priest's attentive grasp of the straight paths is said to originate in the best intuition. It not only informs us about the special nature of the perception but, indirectly, also about the privileged position of the seer.

46 One can see that the account of the two primordial intuitions given in Y 30.3–5 has to be mythological, and not just psychological, as some scholars have it. Without its divine source related ('realized') in the myth, the poet's speech is powerless.

47 The italic is due to the foregrounding of *spəṇtəm* 'vitalizing' and thus belongs to the Gāthic text. On *spəṇta*–, compare Bailey 1934, pp. 288–94 and Gonda 1949.

48 See my discussion of Y 32.1. Compare Y 28.5.

49 See my discussion of Y 32.4 and Y 32.5.

50 See my discussion of Y 32.2.

51 See Kellens 1984, pp. 323–24, for the emendation.

52 See Klein 1985, vol. 1, pp. 285–92 for a discussion of *caná*, the Vedic equivalent of the Avestan enclitic negative particle.

53 Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 75: 'Il faut nécessairement admettre que, d'une manière générale, l'injonctif aoriste exprime lui aussi le réel du présent'. In my mind, behind this apparently philological finding stands a definite theory of the Gāthās.

54 See my discussion of √*xšā* 'have disposition over' in the following chapter.

55 Compare Schlerath 1968.

56 The emendation is from Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 28. Compare Lommel (1971, p. 20): 'damit ich sagen kann, wie erste Dasein geworden ist'.

57 See Insler 1975, p. 170.

58 The sense of the accusative and dative complements of √*gam* is clear in Y 36.2 *uruuāzištō huuō nå yātāiiā paitī.jamiiā ātarə mazdå ahurahiiā* 'You there, the most joyful one, may you come close to us for the sake of the request, O fire of the Wise Lord!' (Hintze 2007, p. 119). See her analysis of the dative *yātāiiā* in Hintze

2007, pp. 124–27. Compare Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 35. Y 28.3c′ *ā mōi rafəδrāi zauuə̄ṇg jasatā* means 'come to my appeals for help' where the direct object ('my appeals') is in the accusative and the reason for coming ('helping') is in the dative. In Y 29.3c′ *yahmāi zauuə̄ṇg jimā kərədušā* the dative relative pronoun does not refer to Y 29.3c *hātąm huuō aojištō* but to Y 29.3a *ahmāi* (the 'Soul of the Cow'): for the sake of the Soul of the Cow I come to (his) appeals, humble (that I am). The expression *zauuə̄ṇg ā √gam* may be idiomatic. Compare Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 108.

59 Y 30.7aa′ *ahmāicā xšaθrā jasaṯ, manaŋhā vohū aṣācā* must be translated 'and for the sake of it (existence) comes (Mazdā) by means of the power (acquired) through good thinking, along with *aṣa*' in view of Y 30.8bb′ *aṯ mazdā taibiiō xšaθrəm vohū manaŋhā +vōiuuīdāitē* 'then, O Mazdā, power will be presented to you through good thinking'. Compare Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 111, Humbach 1991 vol. 1, p. 125, Lommel 1971, p. 42, and Insler 1975, p. 35.

60 Apparent exception is the direct object of *upa + √gam* 'reach' or 'accede', which may be abstract as in Y 40.2 and 45.5. In Y 43.1cc′ *utaiiūtī, təuuīšīm gaṯ.tōi vasəmī* 'I wish to accede to youthfulness and robust strength', these may well be divinites or used metaphorically to denote the divine sphere.

61 I agree with Kellens (1984, p. 353; p. 354 n. 7), contra, e.g. Humbach (1991, vol. 2, pp. 35–36), that *ciθīṯ* can hardly be the third sing. optative of *cit* 'note'. Aside from the formal problem that Kellens and Insler (1975, p. 150) point out, the sense of Humbach's text (1991, vol. 1, p. 121) does not fit the context. The stanza is an exposé of the power of Mazdā, and not a supplication to him, which clearly starts in the next stanza signalled by the article *aṯ*.

62 See Ahmadi 2012a.

63 See Narten 1985.

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6   The *daēva* cult

Yasna 32 is a discourse on the *daēvas* and their cult.[1] Unfortunately, it contains a number of crucial obscurities, lexical and otherwise. Thematically, it comprises two sections. The first part (32.1–8) is on (1) the character of the *daēvas* (32.1–5), and (2) Yima's involvement in their cult (32.6–8). The remaining part (32.9–15) is about the actual *daēva* cult, i.e. its features and priests, and, seemingly, the contemporary situation, especially if the mysterious *grəhma*- turns out to be the name of a person. The last stanza Y 32.16 is hopelessly difficult to decipher.

If by 'character' of the *daēvas* one means the purpose and features of their cult, Y 32 is an exposition of their character. It appears from the first stanza that these gods were traditionally viewed as controlling access to the divine sphere. Their cult is primarily dedicated to the 'pursuit of immortality', if one may rely on Y 48.1. Apparently, Yima, the Iranian counterpart of the Vedic psychopomp Yama, also took part in the *daēva* cult. We can only wish we could more exactly know what is conveyed about him in Y 32.8bb′. A few decades ago, Kellens (1984b) put forward the interesting idea that Yima, too, was the collector and guide of human souls to the realm of the dead and argued that he is behind the phrase *cinuuatō pərətu*- 'Bridge of the Collector', the bridge that leads to the beyond. This means that the image of the bridge to the beyond must be pre-Zoroastrian. Hence Yima's connection with the *daēva* cult associates the *daēvas* with eschatological functions. I mentioned at the end of the last chapter that the *daēva* cult is the concrete reality behind the *dugvaṇt mainiiu*. If so, Zoroastrian dualism is grounded in the opposition to the *daēva* cult. Just as the 'good' *mainiiu* is the divine source of Zarathuštra's extraordinary knowledge, the 'bad' *mainiiu* is thought to be the 'deceiver' of the participants of the *daēva* cult; or, more exactly, it is in this way that the proponent of the new doctrine presents the ancient cult. The fact that the 'bad' *mainiiu* has not yet assumed in the Gāthās its later more or less fixed epithet *aŋra*- (or later 'aŋra-') 'hostile' probably indicates that it is conceptually inchoate. Zarathuštra (the poet of the Gāthās, in any case) seems to be responsible for this conceptual development and the doctrine that is based on it. Invoking the oppositional nexus and the eschatological role of the *daēvas*, one may put forward the hypothesis that Mazdā and other Gāthic deities,

especially Ārmaiti, took over the eschatological function of the *daēvas*. I have argued in an article that this is how the *Ahuna Vairiia* may be understood, namely the appointment of the supreme god as, among others, the dispenser of the 'soteriological measure' (*ašāṯ hacā ratu-*).[2] In a Young Avestan exegesis of the stanza, Mazdā is described as the 'guide' (*fradaxštar-*) for the mind, which is already to be found in the Gāthās (cf. Y 51.3). In the Vīdēvdād 19.29 the god is the creator of the 'bridge' that leads to paradise (*cinuuaṯ.pərətu-mazdaδāta-*), and the *daēnā* is the psychopomp (V 19.30). In the late Vištāsp Yašt (32–33), Mazdā and the Aməša Spəntas guide the soul to Mazdā's 'house of welcome' for a 'long blissful existence in the mental state' (*manahiieheca aŋhōuš darəγāi hauuaŋ́hāi*).[3] In these passages we clearly see how Mazdā and other Gāthic gods have assumed the function that one may think to have belonged to the *daēvas* and their cult. In the Gāthās we discover significant fragments of the process of replacement of the *daēvas* by Gāthic deities *in fieri*.

Y 32.1   *ax́iiācā xᵛaētuš yasaṯ, ahiiā vərəzǝ̄nəm maṯ airiiamnā*
            ahiiā daēuuā mahmī manōi, ahurahiiā uruuāzəmā mazdå
            θβōi dūtåŋhō ˣaŋhāmā, tǝ̄ṇg dāraiiō yōi vå daibišəṇtī

The family and the clan along with the association (of clans) ask for the bliss that Ahura Mazdā grants, (and so do) the *daēvas*, in my mental vision, (saying): 'let us be your messengers, so that we could hold back those who are hostile to you!'

This stanza has been syntactically analysed in two different ways, depending on what grammatical role is given to *daēuuā*. Humbach makes it a vocative: 'The family entreats, the community along with the tribe (do so) in my recital, O you *Daēvas*, (entreating) for His, the Wise Ahura's favour' (Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 132). So does Insler (1975, p. 45): 'At my insistence, ye gods, the family, the community together with the clan, entreated for the grace of Him, the Wise Lord'. Insler refuses to read *daēuuā* in the nominative because these gods 'never sought to serve AhM., only the evil spirit, and this was their great offense and the first ruin of the world' (Insler 1975, p. 196). The repetition of the genitive pronoun *ahiiā*, however, makes this analysis improbable. It is not clear from their translated texts, nor from their comments (Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 77; Insler 1975, p. 196), what role they give to Y 32.1b *ahiiā*. Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 81) and Schwartz (2006, p. 469) read *daēuuā* in the nominative. According to them, the repetition of the pronoun anticipating the name of the god is used to coordinate the subjects. Kellens and Pirart further maintain that the *maṯ* + instrumental construction in Y 32.1a′ 'délimite, dans le groupe des sujets, le sous-groupe positif, de telle sorte que la circonstance exprimée par le locatif libre *mahmī manōi* ne vaut que pour *daēuuā*' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 81). They seem to think that the evaluative differentiation between the *daēvas* and the human groups must somehow be reflected in the

syntax, and make it the role of *maṯ* + instrumental, which is merely a sociative construction (Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 3). The purpose of the differentiation is to signal that the adverse phrase *mahmī manōi* 'à ma grande irritation' only applies to the 'gods'. According to them and Schwartz, the direct discourse of Y 32.1cc′ is uttered by all the named subjects, but the syntax and sense of the utterance is differently interpreted by these scholars.

Schwartz (2006, p. 469) translates 32.1cc′: 'We will be Thy messengers, holding back those who are inimical to You', reading *dāraiiō* as an infinitive 'to hold' (so Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 242, and Lommel 1971, p. 60).

> However, such an oath would be paradoxical for the *daēuuas* (demongods, and adjectivally, their worshippers)… the *daēuua*-camp, in pretending to promote the Mazdean mission, can declare their true nature and agenda, i.e. obfuscation. And, using √*dar* for 'uphold, hold as intimate' (thus Y46.3, Y46.5, and Y49.2), rather than (e.g. Y46.7) 'hold back', the pretenders voice their true intention to embrace Mazdā's enemies. Thus Y32.1 contains a sincere oath by righteous members of society, as well as the duplicitous (*daibitāna*- 'double-meaning') counterfeit by the society which represents the *daēuuas*.
>
> (Schwartz 2006, p. 469)

There are two problems with this interpretation. In the first place, there is no indication here or elsewhere in the Gāthās that the name of the 'gods' is also used as a descriptive adjective to refer to their worshippers. It seems to me, rather, that Schwartz is forced to see behind *daēuuā* human subjects because he places all the supplicants in one group and thus homogenizes them at some level. The Y 32.1cc′ utterance is accordingly placed in the mouths of all these subjects. On the other hand, there must be a way of marking the requisite difference between the utterance of the true worshippers of the supreme god and that of the duplicitous pretenders. Schwartz makes the semantically ambivalent √*dar* 'hold' perform the role of differentiating between the 'righteous members of society' and the '*daēuua*-camp'. The latter, he argues, intends to be understood as saying 'we want to be your messengers, too, holding back your enemies!', but, in using the treacherous verb, it betrays itself: 'we embrace your enemies!' Analysing the word in the nominative, Schwartz sees in the stanza, not a 'recalling of the wrong choice' that the gods made (so Insler), but an unintended staging of the deception intended by the worshippers of the *daēvas*. According to him, the righteous group is approvingly answered in Y 32.2 while the duplicitous one is rebuked in Y 32.3 and Y 32.12.[4] The groups are, in fact, differentiated and addressed accordingly by the supreme god. In 32.2 Mazdā addresses the human supplicants: 'to them (*aēibiiō*)… Mazdā Ahura replies', etc. The *daēvas* are addressed separately in Y 32.3, whether by Mazdā or by the poet on behalf of the god. This opposition may reflect the speech situation of the original address in 32.1: the human supplicants are only allowed an indirect speech, mediated by the

poet himself, while the 'gods' are given a direct speech, the content of which, moreover, shows that it cannot have ordinary mortals as the subject. As we saw, the genitive pronoun coordinates all the supplicants in respect of the request for heavenly bliss made to Mazdā. It is not plausible, even if Kellens and Pirart's rendition of *mahmī manōi* is accepted, that the differentiation of the human groups and the *daēvas* solely serves the purpose of expressing the poet's selective disapproval (*mahmī manōi*).[5] The phrase must rather signal the differentiation of the subjects in respect of the direct speech. Our analysis of the content of the direct speech will make it clear that it is only the *daēvas* that speak in Y 32.1cc′.

Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 118) read *dāraiiō* as an injunctive present, and translate the direct speech in 32.1cc′: 'Nous voulons être tes messagers; continue à retenir ceux qui vous sont hostiles'. This interpretation is unlikely. A volitive expression on one's own behalf is liable to be construed by a superior interlocutor as a presumption, unless accompanied by a mitigating statement. The infinitive *dāraiiō* would provide such a statement, tactfully pointing to the god's interest being served. If the word is understood in the injunctive, the suspicion of possible presumption is in fact confirmed. Moreover, the injunctive statement 'continue to hold back your enemies!' is a nonsensical (*unsinnig*) utterance. Kellens and Pirart's attempt at producing a sense for it by imagining a fitting context, according to their own admission, ends in failure.

> Le demande faite à Mazdā (1cc′), en opposant ceux qui sont mis en route et ceux qui sont retenus immobiles par le grand dieu, implique la soumission à un jugement. Or, curieusement, ce jugement, Mazdā ne le rend pas dans sa réponse. Il ne faut y voir rien d'autre qu'un effet de style offrant à l'auditeur un petit suspense convenu.
>
> (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 77)

It is hard to see what convention they have in mind. The word *dūta-*, usually translated as 'messenger',[6] has a specific sense in the Gāthās. Although it occurs only twice, the contexts are significant. The 'messenger' controls the access to the divine sphere. In Y 32.13 the 'messenger' of the supreme god's *manθrān* (the bearer of divine formulae) is said to be able to hold back unnamed but obviously hostile aspirants from 'seeing *aṣa*': Y 32.13cc′: θβahiiā *mąθrānō dūtəm, yə̄ īš pāṯ darəsāṯ aṣahiiā*.[7] The expression 'seeing *aṣa*' must mean acceding to the abode of the gods. The place where the soul enjoys the supreme god's bliss, and the domain of *aṣa* in Y 32.13 must be semantically equivalent to Mazdā's blissful domain in Y 32.1. In both, access to the divine sphere is at issue. The agents of the direct speech in Y 32.1cc′ ask Mazdā to let them be his 'messengers' so that they may hold back those who are hostile from the god's domain. Perception of the invisible, or knowledge of things divine, is the restricted privilege of particular social types in ancient societies. The restriction must be all the more stringent when it is a question of the control of access to the divine sphere. It is thus impossible to imagine that

human groups at large have such a pretension, expressed approvingly by the poet whose position would then be undermined. In fact, Mazdā's reply in Y 32.2 to the human supplicants hardly leaves any doubt that no such claim is understood to have been made by the latter. On the other hand, as we will see, the charges laid against the *daēvas* in 32.3–5 have to be understood in reference to their claim in 32.1cc′.

These observations also shed light on the troublesome *mahmī manōi*. If the *daēvas* are the exclusive subject of the direct speech in Y 32.1cc′, one may rightly expect that this is indicated in *mahmī manōi*. Kellens and Pirart give *manōi* a negative connotation ('irritation') expressing the poet's attitude toward the *daēvas*' impertinent request. But the knowledge conveyed in Y 32.1cc′ requires a special mode of cognition, i.e. the poet's privileged power of insight into the invisible. Derivatives of the roots meaning 'perceive' or 'conceive' (e.g. *mainiiu-* or *cisti-*) are used to express this cognitive privilege in the Gāthās. It is the regular practice of the poet to declare the means by which he has come to the possession of his supernatural knowledge (leaving aside the many instances of direct communication by the god): e.g. Y 30.3a′ *xᵛafə́nā*; 31.8a *mə̄ŋ́hī*; 32.1b *manōi*; 43.2c′ *spə̄ništā mainiiū*; 44.2e *mainiiū*; 47.2d *cistī*; 51.21 *cistī*; etc. Given the convergent data, it makes more sense in my mind to understand *mahmī manōi* in the sense of 'in my vision', or, in any case, as referring to an availing attunement of the mind. The locative case, instead of the expected instrumental, may be explained by the fact that *mahmī manōi* plays the role of a gerundive, i.e. articulating the circumstances.[8]

> Y 32.2   *aēibiiō mazdå ahurō, sārəmnō vohū manaŋhā*
> *xšaθrāt̰ hacā paitī.mraot̰, aṣ̌ā huš.haxā xᵛə̄nuuātā*
> *spəṇtąm və̄ ārmaitīm, vaŋᵛhīm varəmaidī hā nə̄ aŋhat̰*

To them, Mazdā Ahura, the loyal friend, joined with the sun-drenched *aṣ̌a* through (or: along with) good thinking, replies from (his) realm: 'we choose your vitalizing, good attunement (Ārmaiti). Let her be with us!'

Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132) translates the middle participle *sārəmnō* 'sheltered by' and in his comments he equates this meaning with 'associated with'. So Y 32.2a′ becomes: 'sheltered by [associated with] good thought' or 'sheltering Himself with good thought' (Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 78). But these two translations are not the same thing. Humbach thinks that the Avestan √*sar* is a cognate of the Vedic √*śar*, which gives *śárman-*, referring generally to a protective cover. Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 2, p. 620) gives the following meanings for it: 'Schirm, Schutzdach, Decke, Obhut, Zuflucht'. In the Avesta, however, √*sar* means 'join, unite'. Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 1563) gives 'vereinigen' for the verb, and 'Vereinigung, Verbindung' (*AW*, col. 1564) for the root noun *sar-*. Lommel (1971, p. 60), Insler (1975, pp. 196–97), Narten (1986), Kellens (1974, pp. 390–92), Hoffmann and Forssman (2004, p. 138), and Hintze (2007a, p. 353) translate the noun as 'union'. Humbach's derivation of one

sense from the other is artificial: 'The mid. of the pres. *sara-* has the reciprocal meaning of "to be in mutual shelter with" > "to be associated with", etc.' (Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 78). The noun regularly appears in constructions with dependents either in the genitive or instrumental, e.g. Y 35.8 *ašahiiā… sairī* 'union with *aša*', Y 44.17 *sarōi… hauruuātā amərətātā* 'union with integrity and immortality'. Thus the participial phrase *sārəmnō vohū manaŋhā… ašā… xvānuuātā* means 'united with sun-drenched *aša* through good thinking' or 'joined with good thinking and the sun-drenched *aša*'. The instrumental *ašā* 'with *aša*' is almost certainly comitative, and the epithet 'sun-drenched' evokes a place, the divine sphere.

The adverbial *xšaθrāt̰ hacā* is, in my mind, misunderstood in the literature. Lommel (1971, p. 60) translates it 'aus seiner Herrschermacht heraus'; Insler (1975, p. 45) 'as befits His rulership'; Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132) 'in accordance with (His) power'; Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 118) 'à cause de l'emprise (rituelle)'. The construction abl. + *hacā*, however, seems to have a specific sense in the Old Avestan texts. The preposition is derived from √*hac* 'associate with, follow' and has a cognate in the Vedic adverb *sácā* 'zusammen, mit, zugleich, dabei, bei' (*EWA*, vol. 2, p. 688). When used with verbs implying movement in the Young Avestan texts, the construction concrete abl. + *hacā* means 'from X', where 'X' is a noun with a concrete sense. In the Old Avestan texts, however, the construction does not have this sense; here, except in two instances, one *could* translate the construction as 'in accordance with X', where 'X' is (understood to be) an abstract noun. This is in fact the usual translation of the phrase. The two exceptions are crucial. One is found in the YH: Y 37.2 *yōi gāuš hacā šiieiṇtī*, which Hintze (2007a, p. 168) translates 'who are on the side of the cow'.[9] Following Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 1706), Hintze (2007a, p. 169) maintains that the 'verb *ši* "to dwell" is used metaphorically… The combination of *ši* with the postposition *ā* or *hacā* and the ablative case is a figure for being "on someone's side" and literally means "to dwell from someone's point of view"'. This explanation is unlikely. The 'literal' meaning, if it were to develop into the 'metaphorical' one, has to be understood in the sense of 'dwelling next door'. The YH verbal phrase does not mean something like 'to have the cow's viewpoint' but, according to Hintze, 'to be on the side of the cow', i.e. to be 'committed to care for the cow' (Hintze 2007a, p. 169). Thus, it is not the verb that is used metaphorically but the whole verbal phrase √*ši* + the abl. + *hacā*. If so, the abl. + *hacā* must mean something like 'next to the abl.' or 'near the abl.' or 'at the abl.' 'Dwelling next to something', when used metaphorically, becomes 'standing by something'. This sense of the abl. + *hacā* as 'next to the noun in the ablative' seems to be confirmed by the second exception: Y 44.17b–c *kaθā mazdā zarəm carānī hacā xšmāt̰ āskəitīm xšmāką̇m* 'O Mazdā, how could I make my aspiration to be with you into (being in) your company?' Hoffmann and Forssman (2004, p. 53) analyse *āskəiti-* < **āskə̄ti-* < **ā-skti-*, and translate 'Gefolgschaft'. The masculine noun *zara-* means 'aspiration, striving'. Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 1670) gives 'Streben, Ziel' and links it with the Vedic *háryati* 'er strebt nach'.

For Vedic √*har* Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 2, p. 804) has 'sich freuen, Gefallen finden, gern haben', and for *haryatá* 'begehrenswert, erwünscht'. Here the abl. + *hacā* must have the meaning 'auprès de vous' or 'with you'. The conventional translation of the construction as 'in accordance with' may be understood to have developed from the sense of 'being oriented toward', and this latter from 'being at' a location. Thus Y 32.2 *xšaθrāt̰ hacā* would mean being present at his kingdom: the god replies from his kingdom. Now, we are in the fortunate position of being able to verify this meaning. In Y 32.2 we find the supreme god joint with *aṣa* in his kingdom addressing the mortals' desire to accede to the god's abode – mortals who are asked for their attunement to the divine, presumably as the condition of succeeding in their quest. The situation is identical in Y 49.5

> Y 49.5   *at̰ huuō mazdā īžācā āzūitišcā*
> *yə̄ daēnąm vohū sārəštā manaŋhā*
> *ārmatōiš kascīt̰ aṣā huzə̄ṇtuš*
> *tāišcā vispāiš θβahmī xšaθrōi ahurā*

> But the noble man of divine attunement, whoever he might be, O Mazdā Ahura, who joins his vision-soul to *aṣa* by means of good thinking, (is like) refreshment and libation (that reach you), with all these he (will be) in your kingdom.[10]

The point of assimilation to 'refreshment and libation' is not necessarily that the noble man (i.e. his soul[11]) becomes a sacrificial offering, but that just as the traditional sacrificial offerings reach the gods, so too the soul of the properly attuned person, although the 'sacrificial' sense may be a plausible inference. The locative *θβahmī xšaθrōi* here all but guarantees that Y 32.2b *xšaθrāt̰ hacā* has a locative sense, i.e. the god replies from his kingdom, where the attuned soul is received.

Generally speaking, *ārmaiti-* seems to designate the proper disposition of the faithful toward the supreme god, or perhaps divinity as such, in the Gāthās. It has been translated as 'Denken, wie es sich gehört, rechtes, dem göttlichen Gebot und Willen sich fügendes Denken, Frommergebenheit' (*AW*, col. 335); 'pensée qui prend justement en considération, qui honore comme il convient, déférence' (Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 219); 'Rechtgesinntheit' (Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 289); 'right-mindedness' (Hintze 2007a, p. 334); 'piety' (Insler 1975, p. 45); 'Fügsamkeit' (Lommel 1971, p. 60). For its Vedic equivalent *arámati-* Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 1, p. 110) has 'rechter, bereiter Sinn; Gottheit des rechten Sinnes'. Skjærvø (2002, pp. 403–408) maintains that the word designates the mythic 'genius of the earth'. 'Ārmaiti is both Ahura Mazdā's daughter and the Earth both in the Old Avetsan texts and in the later Avestan texts, as well as in several Old Iranian mythologies (Persian, Sogdian, Khotanese). She is therefore the counterpart of heaven ~ Good Thought' (Skjærvø 2002, p. 404). The close association of *āramiti*

with the earth, even their mythological identity, in the Middle Iranian and Armenian literatures is indisputable.[12] It is also true that the goddess is said to be Mazdā's daughter in the Gāthās, a clear sign of the personification of the abstract noun. There might even be some form of association between *ārmaiti* and the earth, but the nature of this association is far from clear and, more importantly, it does not seem to be conceptually significant in the Gāthās. Female deities are generally associated with the earth, waters, fertility and the domestic sphere; and the Gāthic goddess does seem to have an affinity with the promotion of *gaēθā-* 'living creature' (Y 43.6, 46.12, possibly 44.10), but this is not exclusive (cf. Y 46.13). The mythological stereotype, however, is hardly an adequate basis for seeing the 'genius of the earth' behind Gāthic *ārmaiti* as its primary meaning. What could Y 32.2cc′ possibly mean if we read the 'genius of the earth' for *ārmaiti-*? In fact, this verse proves that the word must be understood in the sense of a certain mental disposition of mortals toward the gods. The plural genitive pronoun *və̄* in the verse certainly has a possessive sense. Even if divinized, here and elsewhere in the Gāthās, *ārmaiti-* preserves its abstract meaning in the activities the goddess performs or patronizes. It has been remarked time and again that it is difficult to decide for each particular occurrence whether a divinized abstraction is personified or designates a sacred capacity. In either case, one cannot presume that the term refers to just one type of activity. In two passages (Y 33.13, 43.1), Ārmaiti seems to have a psychopompic role, embodying the attunement of the mortals to the divine sphere; and in two (Y 32.2, 43.16), the wish is expressed that she be present in the heavenly realm. It is also by virtue of the proper mental disposition of the worshippers (*ārmaiti-*) that Mazdā receives (ideal) youthful strength (*təuuīši-*): Y 33.12a-b′ *us mōi uzārəšuuā ahurā, ārmaitī təuuīšīm dasuuā / spəništā mainiiū mazdā, vaŋhuiiā zauuō ādā* 'Appear to me, O Ahura Mazdā, through the most vitalizing intuition! Take youthful strength through (my) attunement (and) vivacity through the sacred offering!' It seems, then, that *ārmaiti-* is the proper disposition of mortals toward the gods that both ensures their own access to the divine sphere and invigorates the gods.

In Y 33.13 Ārmaiti is asked to 'conduct home' the 'vision-souls' because of the vitalizing *aša*.

Y 33.13   *rafəδrāi vourucašānē, dōišī mōi yā və̄ abifrā*
         tā xšaθrahiiā ahurā, yā vaŋhə̄uš ašiš manaŋhō
         frō spəṇtā ārmaitē, ašā daēnå fradaxšaiiā

For aiding (me), O Ahura of wide vision, show me your crossing apttitudes (?)[13], those of power, by which the advent of good thinking (happens).[14] Conduct our vision-souls, O vitalizing Ārmaiti, by reason of *aša*!

The instrumental *ašā* probably has the value of a cause. The psychopompic role of *daēnā-* 'vision-soul' (the 'peregrinating soul') in the Young Avestan texts is certain.[15] In the Gāthās it seems to have the sense of a (supernatural)

guiding faculty.[16] Every human has a *daēnā*. Y 51.13, for example, states that the *drugvant*, too, has a 'vision-soul', which in his case 'neglects' (*marədaitī*) the true (*haiθiia-*) action that constitutes the direct 'path of boon', and thus causes trepidation in his departed soul. In Y 51.17 the poet wishes that Mazdā make vigorous Frašaoštra's 'vision-soul' so he may attain the *gərəždi-* (a state of intense desire?) for *aša*. One shapes one's *daēnā* while alive and *thereby* one's destiny after death. That one forms one's *daēnā* in life is clearly stated in Y 48.4a-c′ *yə̄ dāt̰ manō, vahiiō mazdā ašiiascā / huuō daēnąm, šiiaoθanācā vacaŋhācā / ahiiā zaošəṇg, ˟uštīš varənə̄ṇg hacaitē* 'he who makes his thinking better or worse, (makes so) his *daēnā*, (also) through his action and word. (His *daēnā*) follows his inclinations, wishes and choices'.[17] The *daēnā* leads one either to the abode of the gods or to the *daēvas* and the 'house of *druj*'. In Y 49.4, *duš.xraθβā* 'the imbeciles', who 'increase *aēšma* and bondage', are said to make the *dāevas* the aim of the *daēnā* of the *drugvaṇt* (49.4dd′ *tōi daēuuāṇg dąn yā drəguuatō daēnā*).[18] On the other hand, one's *daēnā* can be the most divine of all things (49.10bb′ *tąm daēnąm yā hātąm vahištā*) or, even more directly, 'the *daēnā* that belongs among your kind, O Lord' (49.6dd′ *tąm daēnąm yā xšmāuuatō ahurā*). To repeat: mundane and ritual observances shape one's *daēnā*, which in turn seals one's destiny after death.

It seems, then, that the 'vision-soul' is the faculty of a special kind of perception, namely, that of the insight that guides one to the divine sphere.[19] Y 43.1 is best analysed in the following way.

> Y 43.1   *uštā ahmāi, yahmāi uštā kahmāicīt̰*
> *vasə̄ xšaiiąs, mazdā dāiiāt̰ ahurō*
> *utaiiūitī, təuuīšīm gat̰.tōi vasəmī*
> *ašəm dərəidiiāi, tat̰ m̐ōi då ārmaitē*
> *rāiiō ašīš, vaŋhə̄uš gaēm manaŋhō*

Happy is he, whosoever, for whom Mazdā Ahura, having absolute disposition (over it), fulfills (his) wish! I wish that I reach (literally: come to) youthfulness and robust strength (and) that I embrace *aša*! O Ārmaiti, give that to me (and) the rewards of (divine) opulence (and) the life of good thinking.

The neuter pronoun *tat̰* is an anaphoric pronoun, referring to *dərəidiiāi* and *gat̰.tōi*.[20] The infinitive does not mean here 'to uphold' (contra Insler 1975, p. 61: 'in order to uphold the truth') but 'to hold'.[21] The wish to 'embrace *aša*' and 'reach youthfulness and robust strength' is eschatological; it must be a figure of the desired afterlife.

The adjective used of *aša* in Y 32.2, *xᵛə̄nuuaṇt-*, means 'possessed of the sun' or simply 'sunny', strongly suggesting spatial contiguity or proximity; in any case, it is a topographic qualification. It indicates the divine space, the abode of the gods, just as much as *raocōŋhuuaṇt-* 'possessed of heavenly lights', used in Y 37.4 of *aša*, does.[22] In Y 43.16d–e′ the poet expresses his

wish that Ārmaiti be present in the 'sun-drenched kingdom': *xᵛə̄ŋg.darəsōi, xšaθrōi xiiāt̰ ārmaitiš / aṣ̌īm šiiaoθanāiš, vohū daidīt̰ manaŋhā* 'Let Ārmaiti be present in the sun-drenched kingdom! May she make happen, through good thinking, (my) advent (to the divine sphere) thanks to (my) actions!'[23] The best manuscripts from the Pahlavi Yasna tradition, the Persian Pt4 and the Indian K5, have the genitive *xᵛə̄ŋg.darəsō* instead of *xᵛə̄ŋg.darəsōi*, both from the noun-compound *xᵛə̄ŋg.darəsa-*, which is used as a possessive adjective. Kellens maintains that the genitive determination is objective: 'qui voit le soleil = exposé au soleil' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 169). Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 156) does not admit the compound and translates the phrase *xᵛə̄ŋg. darəsōi* 'in the view of the sun', reading it with the previous verse line. Lommel (1971, p. 100: 'sonneblickenden') and Insler (1975, p. 65: 'who has the appearance of the sun') understand the genitive in the subjective sense, Kuiper (1964, p. 120) in the objective sense.[24] From its usage in Y 32.13, one can gather that *darəsa-* has the sense of '(act of) seeing' rather than 'look' or 'appearance'. Thus the genitive in *xᵛə̄ŋg.darəsa-* should probably be understood in the objective sense. Whether the possessive adjective is used of the 'kingdom' or of the god (in ellipsis) makes no difference to the point made here. In either case the epithet indicates the divine sphere. The poet wishes that Ārmaiti be present in the divine kingdom and give his reward, e.g. ascension to the divine sphere. This is reminiscent of Y 32.2. In Y 43.1, as we just saw, the poet asks her, among others, for god-like existence (*aṣ̌əm dərəidiiāi*). In Y 32.1 the mortals ask Mazdā for the bliss or joy that the god grants.[25] Mazdā's reply to this request in 32.2cc′ shows that the god understands this request to be that of access to the divine sphere, and that he cherishes the prospect of the presence of the goddess that stands for the supplicants' divine attunement. It seems, then, that *ārmaiti-* is the proper disposition of men toward the gods that both ensures their own access to the divine sphere and invigorates the gods.

> Y 32.3   *at̰ yūš daēuuā vīspåŋhō, akāt̰ manaŋhō stā ciθrəm*
> *yascā vå maš yazaitē, drujascā pairimatōišcā*
> *šiiaomąm aipī daibitāna, yāiš asrūdūm būmiiå haptaiθē*

But you all, the *daēvas* and the great one who offers you sacrifice, are clearly from bad thinking, (and) together (take part) in actions inspired by *druj* and negligence, for which you are notorious (even) in the seventh clime. (Or: But you all, the *daēvas* and the leader who offers you sacrifice, are clearly from bad thinking, (and) together (take part) in the action inspired by *druj* and negligence, (the wrongs) for which you are notorious (even) in the seventh clime.)

Gershevitch believes that this stanza proves his monotheistic interpretation of the Gāthās – followed by other adherents of the thesis.[26] There is a general consensus among scholars about the syntax of Y 32.3a–b′, if not about its sense; and the testimony of the Young Avestan texts seems to support the

common view. Gershevitch's translation is more or less representative of this view: 'But you gods all are a manifestation of evil thinking, and he who so-much worships you (is a manifestation) of falsehood and dissent' (Gershevitch 1975, p. 79). Insler (1975, p. 45) has: 'But ye gods – as well as the one who worships you – all of you are the offspring stemming from evil thinking, deceit and disrespect'. And Lommel (1971, p. 60) translates: 'Aber ihr Götter alle seid Same (Abkömmlinge) aus schlechtem Denken, und wer euch hoch verehrt aus Lüge und Hochmut'. Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 119) give: 'Vous, tous les (mauvais) dieux, et le chef qui vous fait consécration, vous êtes la mani-festation même de la mauvaise Pensée, de la Tromperie et de la Négligence'. The usage 'noun in the ablative + *ciθra-* + be', where *ciθra-* is a noun meaning either 'manifestation' or 'essence', seems to be attested in the Young Avestan texts, FrW 10.40: *spəntāṯ haca mainiiaoṯ zaraθuštra aēšąm ciθrəm vahištāaṯca manaŋhaṯ* 'their (i.e. the souls of the righteous) seed or apparition (is) from the vitalizing intuition, O Zarathuštra, from the best thinking', and, albeit with another verb, in Yt. 13.87: *yahmaṯ haca frāθβərəsaṯ nāfō airiianąm dax́iiunąm ciθrəm airiianąm dax́iiunąm* 'from whom (i.e. Gaya Martan) (Mazdā) fash-ioned the families of the Aryan nations, the essence or apparition of the Aryan nations'.[27] The ablative case can certainly convey the sense of origination. This sense is clearly present, for example, in these two passages: the apparition or essence of the Aryan nations originates in, comes from, Gaya Martan, etc. The singularity of 'apparition' together with the plurality of 'Aryan nations' that determines it probably indicates that the phrase expresses a speculation about the 'true' origin of the worldly phenomenon in question (cf. Yt 13.87). Is the supposed idiomatic usage adopted from the Gāthic Y 32.3 or does it underlie the latter? Or, a third possibility, are the two independent from each other? If the second scenario is right, the idiom must have already developed into a fixed formula in the Gāthās, since it escapes the rule of the agreement of the subject and the attribute in case, number and gender. As far as I know, only Kellens and Pirart have acknowledged the grammatical anomaly of the syntax of Y 32.3aa′, without, however, analysing it any further. 'L'emploi de l'adj. *ciθra-*, comme substantif neutre attribut du sujet et régissant l'ablatif, est inédit et il nous paraît sage de considérer qu'il n'existe aucune interprétation sûre: notre traduction n'est rien d'autre qu'une approximation incertaine' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 82). If, by contrast, the first interpretation is correct, it would mean that the use of the idiom 'the abl. noun + *ciθra-* (determined genitivally by a plural subject)' to express a relation of primordial origination is due to the fact that Y 32.3aa′ was understood by the Mazdaean tradition as a state-ment about the origins of the *daēvas*. This understanding of the context is, of course, completely warranted. Now, in this context, one can analyse the verbal phrase *yūš daēuuā vīspåŋhō akāṯ manaŋhō stā ciθrəm* in two ways: either one makes the ablative noun the complement of the verb and *ciθrəm* an adverb, or one makes *ciθrəm* the attribute of the gods (and the 'great one'), governing the ablative noun. Read in the latter way, the construction would then become an authorized idiom for expressing genealogical relations.

It seems to me that the second picture is implausible. First, the adjective *ciθra-*, in its other occurrences in the Gāthās, shows no tendency toward acquiring the meaning and the grammatical role it is supposed to have in Y 32.3aaʹ. In all the other passages (Y 31.22, 33.7, 44.16, 45.1) where it occurs, the word is an adjective and means something like remarkable (abstract) or luminous, splendid (concrete). Moreover, the Indo-Iranian stems in *ra* (e.g. *cit-ra*) are either adjectives or concrete nouns, many of these substantivized adjectives.[28] What reason is there to assume that *ciθra-* is a noun with an abstract meaning like 'appearance' or 'manifestation' in Y 32.3? Second, even if the supposed idiomatic use of the word as an abstract noun (i.e. for expressing a 'true' relation of origination) is allowed, one still cannot see why it should contravene one of the most basic rules of the grammar, the agreement of the subject and the attribute. The two Young Avestan instances are grammatically impeccable, and in each of them *ciθram* seems to have a concrete sense, whether apparition or seed. Finally, if we look past the anomaly one way or another, we would still have to resolve a formidable problem of sense, as *ciθram* applies not only to the gods but also to *maš* the 'great one'. One has to come up with a sense of origination that can reasonably apply to both the gods and a mortal.[29] The sense of a spiritual genealogy would not satisfy the proponents of the monotheistic thesis, as Y 32.3a–bʹ is supposed to be, in their opinion, *the* Gāthic statement regarding the ontological nullity of the gods of polytheism, which are nothing but '*thoughts*, conceived by erroneously thinking men' (so Gershevitch 1975, p. 80). Hence, *maš* 'the great one' must also be merely a 'thought conceived by erroneously thinking men'. Note also that in the two Young Avestan passages cited above, *ciθrəm* is used to express a real relation of origination: both the 'souls of the righteous dead' and the 'Aryan nations' are real entities in the sense that an adherent of the monotheistic thesis would not accept for the *daēvas*. In any case, it is hard to see what sense would be appropriate for the supposed shared attribute other than that of a metaphorical 'manifestation', in the verbal sense of this term.[30] Again, *ciθrəm* in Y 32.3aʹ cannot have a concrete sense, which is the only sense attested for it as a noun in the Young Avestan texts – if for no other reason than the fact that it is supposed to be shared by the gods and their mortal worshipper. At the same time, one cannot see how *ciθrəm* 'appearance' can have a verbal sense, i.e. in the statement 'you all, the gods and the leader who worships you, are a manifestation of bad thought'.[31] Nothing better than Gershevitch's and Kellens and Pirart's translations prove this abortive sense: they translate the ablative as if it were a genitive. The problems involved in this analysis of the syntax of Y 32.3a–bʹ are too formidable, and the reading should therefore be abandoned. The usage of *ciθra-* as a noun in some of the Young Avestan passages may perhaps be traced to the Gāthic Y 32.3. If so, it seems to be due to a misunderstanding: while the sense of the stanza and the context was rightly understood, the syntax of Y 32.3aaʹ was incorrectly analysed. If, on the other hand, the Young Avestan sense of the noun *ciθra-* is independent from the Gāthic verse, this latter was wrongly assimilated to a familiar usage.

The first syntactic scheme mentioned above, i.e. √*ah* 'be' with an ablative complement in the sense of 'being from or grounded in the noun in the ablative', creates no grammatical problem. The verbal phrase '*us* + √*stā* + ablative complement' is attested only in Yt 8.32 (*us aδāt̰ hištāt̰ satauuaēsō… zraiiaṇhat̰ haca vourukaṣ̌āt̰*), but it is considered unproblematic because the sense of 'a star rising from a sea' is natural enough. The semantics of the verbal phrase seems to require the ablative complement, although the verb does not really mean 'rise' but 'stand up'. The composer could have used the more straightforward *us* + √*ar* 'rise up' (*AW*, col. 183) to convey the supposed meaning, but the peculiar nature of the locution 'standing up from the sea' does not undermine the phrase.[32] Thus the fact that a particular usage is attested only once in a small corpus does not by itself make it questionable, even where, as in this example, a verb that is more 'naturally' suited to a complement in the ablative is available. In any case, as far as the grammar is concerned, the two YAv. passages (FrW 10.40 and Yt 13.87) cited above prove that a concrete subject can in fact have a purely ablative predicate.[33] There can thus be no formal objection to the reading (concrete subject + √*ah* 'be' + the ablative complement) proposed here.

The ablative case is commonly used to express provenance from a source, physical or mental. Y 32.3a–b is an aetiology of the downfall of the *daēvas*, well understood by the Mazdaean tradition, just as Y 32.3b′–c′ is a statement about where they end up. In the ancient thought, Greek no less than Iranian or Indian, an account of the origin ('myth' or, in the post-archaic Greece, 'physics') of a phenomenon explains its manner of existence.[34] The phrase 'the *daēvas* are from bad thought' means that their way of existence is occasioned or caused by bad thought. If this is the meaning the poet wants to convey; if, in other words, the poet is making known the 'truth' about the *daēvas*, the ground of their manner of being, his expression is quite understandable. The *daēvas*' very being is grounded in bad thought. Now, we have a positive evidence for this determination of the *daēvas* by bad thought: Y 30.6b′ *vərənātā acištəm manō* '(the *daēvas*) choose the worst thinking' and Y 32.5bb′ *hiiat̰ vå akā manaŋhā yə̄ṇg daēuuāṇg akascā mainiiuš* 'as bad intuition (has made) you into the *daēvas* that (you are), thanks to (or: by means of) bad thought'. Thus the meaning of Y 32.3a–b is something like: 'but you all, the *daēvas* and the great one who worships you, are clearly grounded in bad thinking'.

One can read Y 32.3b′ *drujascā pairimatōišcā* either in the ablative with *akāt̰ manaŋhō* or in the genitive determining *šiiaomąm* 'actions'. The former has nothing in its favour. Insler (1975, p. 45) and Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 119) read it in this way without any justification.[35] The 'actions of negligence' (*pairimatōiš*° *šiiaomąm*), on the other hand, may be contrasted with Y 51.21aa′ *ārmatōiš… šiiaoθanā* 'by means of action inspired by (divine) attunement', which characterizes the 'vitalizing man' (*nar- spəṇta-*).[36] According to Y 43.2–3, the action of the vitalizing man consists in 'teaching' the mortals about the straight paths of 'vitalization of both this corporeal life and the spiritual one'. I have argued elsewhere that the 'vitalization of existence'

is an eschatological phenomenon. The image given of the 'living creatures possessed of vitality' in Yt 19.11–12 is, in my mind, a Gāthic one: Yt 19.12 *bun gaēθå amaršaṇtīš yå ašahe ˇsauuaŋᵛhaitīš niš.taṯ paiti druxš nāšaite yaδaṯ aiβiciṯ jaɣmaṯ ašauuanəm mahrkaθāi aom ciθrəmca stīmca…* 'The living creatures of *aša* will become immortal, possessed of vitality. *Druj* will be banished to the very place whence he had come with the purpose of making mortal the *ašavan*, him, (his) apparition and (his) being'. *Druj* personifies the forces of death, disorder and deceit, and brings, in the Gāthās, destruction to the living creatures of *aša*: Y 31.1bb′ *yōi uruuātāiš drujō ašahiiā gaēθå vīmərəṇcaitē* '(those) who by means of the stipulations of *druj* destroy the living creatures of *aša*'. Both genitives must be subjective. The followers of *druj*, end up as 'guests in the House of *druj*' (Y 49.11), that is to say, condemned to 'lasting darkness and foul food' (Y 31.20). The turn away from *aša* and toward *druj* (Y 32.12) leads 'in the end' to the House of *druj* (Y 51.13–14). Opposed to the 'actions of *druj*' are the 'true actions' (Y 30.5) with which the *ašavans* (those 'who choose *aša*') ensure for themselves the best mental state (Y 30.4–5), i.e. a blissful afterlife. Whatever other dimensions the opposition of *aša* and *druj* may have in the Gāthās, and more generally in Iranian religious thought, the eschatological one is an important one, and, in the Gāthās, it seems to be the basic preoccupation. Kellens (1995, pp. 32–38) has written important pages about the eschatological valence of 'being an *ašavan*' in the Avesta, which he terms 'l'artavanité'. Just as following *druj* in this life condemns the soul to a tormenting existence in the 'House of *druj*' beyond death, so, in diametrical opposition to it, 'artavanity' (perhaps one may call it the 'state of sanctity') gives the soul access to the 'sun-drenched (abode of) *aša*'.[37] It is in this context that we must understand *drujascā pairimatōišcā śiiaomąm* 'actions inspired by *druj* and negligence'. These are the actions that, among others, lead 'in the end' to the House of *druj* and make one estranged from the divine and from the blissful destiny that *ārmaiti*- 'attunement' makes possible for the soul.

Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 761), Lommel (1971, p. 60) and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132) read *śiiaomąm* in the nominative and *aipī* as an adverb 'likewise': respectively, 'desgleichen auch die (eure) Taten, durch die ihr schon lang bekannt seid auf dem siebenten Kreis der Erde'; 'auch eure Taten, durch die ihr bekannt wurdet in dem Siebentel der Erde, sind gegensätzlich (gegen eure Worte der Ergebenheit)'; and 'as well as the activities of deceit and contempt, for which you again and again have become notorious in (this) seventh (of the seven climes) of the world'. They all depend on a problematic interpretation of *aipī* (*AW*, 82–83). The only meaning that is certain for this term in the Avesta, whether as a preposition or verbal prefix, is 'onto' or 'at', always implying a relation of contiguity with the object of the verb, which can be in either the accusative or locative. The adverbial uses Bartholomae lists are highly controversial, to say the least. It is probably used as an adverb of time ('henceforth') in Y 29.4.[38] Its two occurrences following *pərəθu* in Yt 8.40 and Y 10.44 (*pərəθu aipi*) are hard to interpret. Pirart (2006a, 92, p. 120) seems to read *pərəθu* once in the locative (Yt 8.40: 'se distribuent en de larges

rivières') and once in the instrumental (Yt 10.44: 'arrosée d'une large rivière'). Gershevitch (1959, pp. 197–99) believes the usage is similar to OP *dūraiy api* 'afar' and translates *pərəθu aipi* 'abroad'. But OP *dūraiy* is in the locative, which shows the attraction of the preposition for this case in Iranian.[39] In any event, there is no clear evidence for an adverbial use of *aipī* meaning something like 'auch' or 'desgleichen auch', as opposed to Vedic, where it is prevalent (cf. *EWA*, vol. 1, p. 86). Kellens and Pirart (1991, 83) interpret *śiiaomąm* as a locative: 'la seule façon de rendre compte sans difficulté de *aipī* consiste à en faire la préverbe de *ah*, dont la forme personnelle, sousentendue, persiste depuis a… Dès lors, *śiiaomąm* doit être considéré comme le loc. sing. régi, selon un usage courant, par *aipī+ah* "collaborer à loc."'. The two occurrences of *aipī* in Y 30.11 and 32.8 with a locative are important but cannot prejudge the case in 32.3.[40] In any event, in Y 30.11 c' *at̰ aipī tāiš aŋhaitī uštā* 'then, (by abiding) with these (rules), things will be according to (your) wish', and probably in Y 32.8cc' *aēšąmcīt̰ ā ahmī θβahmī mazdā vīciθōi aipī* 'O Mazdā, I follow your decision regarding these (wrongs)', *aipī* is a *preposition* and not a verbal prefix. If, in fact, in Y 32.3 it is a verbal prefix (*aipī* + √*ah*) the kind of contiguity with the complement that the verb should convey must have the sense of 'ending up at' since a virtual career is being described: the manner of being that originates in bad thought ends up in actions of *druj* and negligence, hence the accusative signifying the endpoint of a displacement.[41] Moreover, *śiiaomąm* has the regular Gāthic nom. acc. pl. form of *man* stems.[42] The only certain word with -*mąm* ending in the locative is Y 46.16 *varədəmąm*. Finally, reading *śiiaomąm* as a locative leaves the following relative pronoun *yāiš* without an explicit antecedent. The *daēvas* and the 'great one' who worships them, having taken their bearings from bad thought, end up being involved in actions of *druj* and negligence, for which they become notorious.

Nevertheless, Kellens and Pirart's proposal to read *śiiaomąm* as a locative is also quite plausible, should *aipī* be a preposition. In this case, the antecedent of the relative pronoun *yāiš* would have to be *aēnah-* (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 83), which anticipates the persistent mention of the word in the section Y 32.6–8. The theme of these four stanzas (Y 32.3 and 32.6–8) is the repudiation of the 'wrongs' (*aēnah-*) for which the perpetrator has become known (√*sru*) the world over. If one accepts, as seems reasonable, the lexical and thematic nexus that connects the four stanzas as a basis for reading *aēnah-* into Y 32.3cc' as the antecedent of the relative pronoun, then with all the more reason one should admit that the 'wrongs' committed by Yima, according to Y 32.8, have to do with taking part in the *daēva* cult, for which, like the 'great one' (*maz-*) of Y 32.3, he has become notorious (√*sru*). The 'one with many wrongful acts' (×*pouruuaēnå*[43]) of Y 32.6 may refer to Yima, who wants to make himself famous with wrongful acts: Y 32.6aa' ×*pouruuaēnå ənāxštā yāiš srāuuahiieitī yezī tāiš aθā* '(wrongs) by which the one with many wrongful acts becomes famous, if thus (acquired it is deserved)', etc. Y 32.8bb' seems to state something specific about the 'wrongs' with which Yima is charged. Unfortunately, it is difficult to decipher its sense: *yə maṣ̌iiāŋg cixšnušō, ahmākāŋg gāuš bagā*

x^{v}ārəmnō. The last three words are semantically ambiguous. *gāuš* must be a finite verb, and not, e.g. the genitive of *gao-* 'cow', or else a finite verb has to be provided for the relative clause. Humbach's translation is not only abstruse as to its sense, but also syntactically questionable, for he reads *cixšnuša-* as the finite verb of the clause without further ado: 'the ox, who tried to satisfy the mortals, our (people), in swearing by God' (1991, vol. 1, p. 133). But Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 82) also suggests that the word may be from an s-aorist stem of *gu/gau* meaning 'fail' or 'commit a sin' (cf. Hintze 1994, p. 88 n. 56: 'sündigen, fehlen'). *x^{v}ārəmna-* may be from √*x^{v}ar* 'eat' (*AW*, col. 1865; perhaps more generally 'take', see Bailey 1971, pp. xxvi–xxvii) or from √*x^{v}ar* 'be fitting' (attested in Persian among others, see Bailey 1971, p. xxviii),[44] depending on which *baga-* could be either '(sacrificial) share' or 'god'. If the latter is the correct interpretation, what could the participial phrase *bagā x^{v}ārəmnō* mean? Is it a question of self-apotheosis: '(Yima) who wishing to satisfy the mortals (i.e. worshippers of the *daēvas*), having placed himself in the position of a god, failed our (people)'? In the various legends of Yima we find direct and indirect support for such a view of his fateful sin.[45]

The Gāthic *daibitānā* is a troublesome term that occurs only twice in similar contexts. In both of its occurrences it seems to be an adverb. Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 78) analyses it into the adverb *daibitā* (Ved. *dvitā*) plus the particle *-nā*, and believes it means 'again and again'. Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 1, p. 767) translates *dvitā́* 'nach wie vor, jetzt wie früher, jetzt wie immer, ein witeres Mal'. Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 263) rightly point out that this meaning does not seem appropriate for *daibitā* in Y 49.2, where 'the context', according to them, suggests 'à double titre'. The Gāthic adjective *daibitiia-* certainly means 'the second' just as YAv. *bitya-*, OP *duvitīya-* and Vedic *dvītya-*.[46]

Like its Old Persian counterpart,[47] the Gāthic adverb *daibitā* should be translated 'in two (ways)' or 'twofold': Y 49.2 *t̰kaēšō drəguuå daibitā ašāt̰ rārəšō* 'the *drugvaṇt* teacher abandons *aša* in two ways'. Humbach's translation of the adverb as 'again and again' is arbitrary and ill suits the context. The two ways that the *drugvaṇt* teacher abandons *aša* are stated in the aorist, i.e. presented as 'facts': Y 49.2c–d′ *nōit̰ spəṇtąm dōrəšt ahmāi stōi ārmaitīm / naēdā vohū mazdā fraštā manaŋhā* 'He neither embraces the vitalizing Ārmaiti to be his, nor consults with Good Thinking, O Mazdā'.[48] If so, *daibitānā* cannot be an adverb of time, 'vor langem' (*AW*, col. 761), and does not mean 'again and again' (Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 132); nor does it imply duplicity as in 'gegensätzlich' (Lommel 1971, p. 60) or facing two fronts as in 'à double porté' (Kellens 1994a, p. 83).[49]

As to its form, *daibitānā* can be analysed in two ways. The suffix *na* can make adjectives from adverbs in Indo-Iranian, as in the Sanskrit *purāṇá* 'ancient' or *samāná* 'like'. The adjective **daibitāna-* must then mean 'the two': nom. acc. voc. dual **daibitānā* 'the two'. In this form, it could have then developed an adverbial nuance, perhaps when used by itself (i.e. elliptically) referring to significantly coupled entities, eventually becoming an adverb, in the same form, meaning something like 'together'. Alternatively, *daibitānā* could be analysed

as the adverb *daibitā* plus the enclitic particle of emphasis *-nā*. In both of its occurrences (Y 32.3 and 48.1) it couples the *daēvas* and the mortal proponents of their cult.

Y 48.1   *yezī adāiš, aṣā drujəm vōŋghaitī*
hiiaṱ ą̄sašutā, yā daibitānā fraoxtā
amərətāitī, daēuuāišcā maṣiiāišcā
aṱ tōi sauuāiš, vahməm vaxšaṱ ahurā

When despite these (words), which are harm-mobilizing, (Ārmaiti) will have prevailed over *druj* because of *aṣa*, (words) that are uttered by the *daēvas* and mortals together in quest for immortality, then, O Ahura, she will increase your veneration for the sake of the vital energies.

Aṣa is clearly the motivation here (and elsewhere) for prevailing over *druj*. Kellens and Pirart's reason (1991, p. 221: 'l'accumulation des instrumentaux nous paraissait suspecte') for reading *aṣā. drujəm* 'le trompeur de l'Harmonie' is not cogent. The subject of both subjunctive verbs is Ārmaiti. Insler's impersonal 'one' (1975, p. 91) is not the best option in view of the textual evidence. I just cited Y 49.2, where it is said that one of the two reasons the follower of *druj* falls away from the path of *aṣa* is his failure to turn to Ārmaiti. But we have plain evidence in Y 49.4 and Y 51.21 for the interpretation proposed here. In the former, *duš.xraθβā* 'the imbeciles', who 'increase *aēšma* and bondage', are said to 'make of the vision-soul of the *drugvaṇt* (the way) to the *daēvas*' (49.4dd′ *tōi daēuuāŋg dąn yā drəguuatō daēnā*).[50] In Y 51.13, the 'negligent' *daēnā* is instrumental in making the follower of *druj* 'disappear' from the 'path of *aṣa*'. On the other hand, Y 51.21a–b *ārmatōiš nā spəṇtō huuō cistī uxδāiš šiiaoθanā daēnā aṣəm spənuuaṱ* 'the vitalizing man is so by the Ārmaiti-inspired utterances, action and the insight: "*daēnā* (is set to) the vitalizing *aṣa*"'.[51] Ārmaiti, as the attunement of men to the divine sphere, guides the *daēnā* toward *aṣa*: Y 33.13 cc′ *frō spəṇtā ārmaitē, aṣā daēnå fradaxšaiiā* 'O Āramiti, conduct (our) *daēnās* because of *aṣa*', where the instrumental case expresses the reason for the requested action. It is also by means of the 'attunement' to the divine sphere that worshippers convey vitality and strength to the gods: 33.12a–b′ *us mōi uzārəšuuā ahurā, ārmaitī təuuīšīm dasuuā / spōništā mainiiū mazdā, vaŋhuiiā zauuō ādā* 'Appear to me, O Ahura Mazdā, through the most vitalizing intuition! Take youthful strength through (my) attunement (and) vivacity through the sacred offering!' Now, in Y 48.1 both of these activities are present. In fact, this stanza must be considered a conceptual exposé of *ārmaiti-* 'attunement'. In my mind, the two concluding stanzas of Y 48 leave no doubt as to the identity of the subject of 48.1: 48.11a–b′ *kadā mazdā aṣā maṱ ārmaitiš jimaṱ xšaθrā hušəitiš vāstrauuaitī* 'when will Āramiti come along with *aṣa*, thanks to (your?) power, O Mazdā, (Ārmaiti) who provides a choice place of residence and pasturage?'

The relative phrase Y 48.1b is admittedly difficult to decipher because the form and meaning of *ąsašutā* are unclear. In view of the excessive syllable of the pāda the *a* between the two sibilants may be taken as a glide and metrically null.[52] This would give us **ąsšutā*, which can be analysed into *ąs* + *šutā*, the first as the root of *aŋra-* 'hostile, noxious' (*AW*, col. 104), also attested in the Gāthās in *ąsta-* 'misfortune, harm', and the second as the action noun **šuiti-* from √*š(ii)u* 'set in motion' (*AW*, col. 1714: 'sich in Bewegung setzen') in the locative (see Insler 1975, p. 285), or as the n. pl. of the past participle **šuta-*. Schwartz (2006, p. 481) chooses the latter option and substantivizes **šutā* as 'things enacted' and translates the compound **ąsšutā* as 'the enactments of malice'.[53] Lommel (1971, p. 153) reads instead **ąsšutā* as the third sing. medio-passive of √*nas* 'attain', which he seems to think is from an iš-aorist stem. He translates Y 48.1b–c′: so daß was zweifach für die Unsterblichkeit vorausges-agt ist, von Göttern und Menschen erlangt wurde', subordinated to Y 48.1aa′ by *hiiat̰*. The problem is that he takes *adāiš* ('mittels der Vergeltungen') as the inst. pl. of *adā-*. Narten (1986, pp. 104ff.) has shown that *adāiš* should be read *ad-āiš*, where the first is the sandhi form of *at̰*. The syntactic structure of the stanza is as follows. Y 48.1a–c′ (*yezī …*) and 48.1dd′ (*at̰ …*) are related to each other as protasis and apodosis, both in the subjunctive aorist: 'when X will have occurred, then Y will happen'. Y 48.1a–c′ itself consists of a main clause, Y 48.1aa′ and two subordinated relatives, Y 48.1 b and Y 48.1b′–c′. *hiiat̰*, a causal adverb, subordinates Y 48.1b as the explanation of the treat-ment of the 'utterances (of the gods and mortals)' in Y 48.1aa′, signalled by *ad*°. The meaning of **ąsšutā* tells us in what sense we should understand the instrumental °*āiš*, whether positively, 'by these', or negatively, 'despite these'. Y 48.1b′–c′ is subordinated by means of the attributive relative *yā* referring to °*āiš*: 'these (words) that are uttered in pursuit of immortality', etc. As I men-tioned, **ąsšutā* can be either a nominative or a locative, telling us the sense in which the instrumental °*āiš* should be understood. If the word is a locative, Y 48.1b would mean something like: 'since (those words are uttered with the intention of) mobilizing harm', the locative being that of the mindset.[54] If **ąsšutā* is a nominative, it must be a descriptive adjective, and the sense of the pāda is: 'since (those words are) harm-mobilizing, i.e. potent in their harm'. In either case, it is clear that the 'words' are understood as an obstacle. They are potent forces for *druj*. I prefer the nominative reading because it is more straightforward.

The instrumental *sauuāiš* can be understood in three ways: extension of time (Insler 1975, 48), motivation for action (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 168), and the instrumental of means (Lommel 1971, p. 149; and Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 176). There are two neuter nouns in the Gāthās from √*sū* 'vitalize': *sauua-* and *sauuah-*. Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 313) suspect they constitute a heteroclitic paradigm. This does not seem right to me. Scholars have generally translated these two words as if they were synonymous.[55] Their usage, how-ever, indicates otherwise. *sauuah-* seems to be consistently used in an abstract, even close to a verbal, sense.[56] Thus, for example, in Y 34.3 *hudåŋhō sauuō*

'vitalization of the benevolent', the genitive is objective; and in 43.3 *yə̄ nå*
ərəzūš sauuaŋhō paθō sīšōit̰ ahiiā aŋhə̄uš astuuatō manaŋhascā 'who may teach
us the straight paths of vitalization of this corporeal existence and (the one)
of the mind', *sauuah-* has a verbal force.[57] By contrast, *sauua-* has a concrete
sense, something like 'vital energy', which the gods make available to mortals.
In Y 30.11 the eschatological horizon of *sauua-* is unmistakable.

> Y 30.11   *hiiat̰ tā uruuātā sašaθā, yā mazdå dadāt̰ mašiiåŋhō*
> *xᵛīticā ə̄nəitī, hiiat̰cā darəgə̄m drəguuō.dəbiiō rašō*
> *sauuacā ašauuabiiō, at̰ aipī tāiš aŋhaitī uštā*

> When, O mortals, you learn the stipulations in reference to which Mazdā
> establishes both easy access and ban on access (to the divine sphere), and
> (learn) that there will be a long withering for the followers of *druj* and
> vital energies for the *ašavans*, then, (by abiding) with these (rules), things
> will be according to (your) wish.[58]

According to Y 45.7, the 'soul of the *ašavan*', for which the gods 'mobilize
the vital energies needful for attaining (the divine sphere)' (*yehiiā sauuā
išåṇtī rādaŋhō*), is 'capable of reaching immortality and youthful robustness'
(*amərətāitī ašāunō aēšō utaiiūtā*). As I mentioned, *sauua-* seems to be the
energies the gods make available to the mortals, e.g. for eschatological or
perhaps ecstatic purposes. Thus in Y 44.12 the *drugvaṇt* (perhaps *the drugvaṇt*,
i.e. *aṇgra- mainiiu-*?) is said to want 'to interpose himself between me and
the vital energies that you provide' (*yə̄ mā drəguuå θßā sauuā paitī.ərətē*),
which makes him 'noxious' or 'hostile' (*aṇgrō*).[59] The instrumental *sauuāiš*
in Y 51.15 expresses the motivation for the allocation (of praise?) made to
the gods: *tā və̄ vohū manaŋhā ašāicā sauuāiš ciuuīšī* 'these are allocated to
you through good thinking, and to *aša*, for the sake of the vital energies', i.e.
so that you make available to us the vital energies. Thus there can hardly be
any doubt in which sense the instrumental *sauuāiš* should be understood in
Y 48.1dd′: 'then, O Ahura, she will increase your veneration for the sake of
the vital energies'.

A coherent picture emerges of what it is to be 'hostile' (*aṇgra-*) if we com-
pare Y 48.1 *ạsašutā* '(words that are) harm-mobilizing' with Y 44.12 *huuō…
aṇgrō yə̄ mā drəguuå θßā sauuā paitī.ərətē* 'he is hostile, the follower of *druj*
who (is so minded) to interpose himself between me and the vital energies you
provide' on the one hand, and on the other, with Y 32.3 *drujasᵒ… šiiaomąm*
'the actions of *druj*' perpetrated by the *daēvas* and the 'great one'. Apparently,
the mortals require the 'vital energies' if their souls are to reach the divine
sphere (Y 45.7). Now, the hostile follower of *druj* prevents these vital energies
from reaching the desirous. Āramiti is to eliminate this threat, overcome *druj*
for the sake of *aša*, in the face of the harm-mobilizing words of the *daēvas*
and (their) men. She will then make the veneration of the supreme god thrive
so that the vital energies make their way to the mortals. We know from Y 32.1

that the *daēvas* put themselves forward as the 'messengers' of Mazdā, supposedly in order to hold back those who mean harm to Mazdā from reaching the divine sphere. Mazdā's rejection of this overture and his choice *instead* of (the mortals' attunement) Āramiti now appear to be of vital importance for the eschatological aspirations of the mortals.

> Y 32.4   *yāt̰ yūštā framīmaθā, yā mašiiā acištā dan̰tō*
> *vaxšən̰tē daēuuō.zuštā, van̰ŋhə̄uš sīždiiamnā manaŋhō*
> *mazdå ahurahiia, xratə̄uš nasiian̰tō aṣ̌āat̰cā*

> To the extent that you authorize these worst (actions), having established (them), (actions) which the mortals, befriended by (you) the *daēvas*, will have grown (on their own account), while moving away from good thinking, (and) removing themselves from Mazdā Ahura's resourceful power (to realize the desired end) and from (the path of) *aṣ̌a*;

The subjunctive *framīmaθā* is from √*mā* 'measure, measure out' (*EWA*, vol. 2, pp. 341–42: 'messen, abmessen, zumessem, zuteilen'). One of the meanings Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 1165–66) gives for the present stem *mīm-* with the verbal prefix *frā* is 'als Norm aufstellen'. This seems to be the exact sense that the subjunctive verb has in this stanza. Neither Gershevitch's 'you have ordered' (1975, p. 79) nor Kellens and Pirart's 'vous permettez' (1988, p. 119) seems quite right. The *daēvas* 'establish the measure' for actions that aim at a certain purpose. One has to keep this in mind. The specific sense in which the words are to be understood cannot be separated from the context, not just that of the stanza but also that of the issue. The 'purpose' for which the *daēvas* pretend to give the measure, as we have already seen and will see again, stated explicitly in the next stanza, is 'good life and immortality'.

We must be wary of making the censured 'actions' into an empty vessel that the scholar may fill with his or her own moral sentiments. The adjective *acištā* 'worst' has been interpreted as describing the 'men' (so Gershevitch 1975, p. 79; and Insler 1975, p. 45) or substantivized as the direct object of *dan̰tō* (so Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 119: 'de très mauvais dons'). Lommel (1971, p. 60) and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132) rightly read it as qualifying the (elliptical) 'actions' from the previous stanza, referred to in this stanza with °*tā*. Despite the common view, however, *dan̰tō* cannot refer to the actions of the men; rather, it describes the establishment by the *daēvas* of the models for the men's actions. Lommel (1971, p. 60) translates Y 30.4aa′: 'Indem ihr das befehlt, was ganz schlecht ist, so daß die Menschen, die es tun'; Gershevitch (1975, p. 79): 'Through-the-fact-that you have ordered these (deeds, by) doing which the worst men'; Insler (1975, p. 45): 'Insofar as ye authorize these actions, which the worst mortals (then) serve'; Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132): 'insofar as you order those worst (things), (by) offering which the mortals'; Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 119): 'Aussi longtemps que vous permettez les (torts) que les (mauvais) hommes… après avoir fait

de très mauvais dons'. The participle *daṇt-* is from √*dā* 'set or give'. The verb does not have the sense of committing an action, contra Lommel and Gershevitch. Also it does not mean, despite Insler, 'attend to' or 'serve', which is rather √*vīd* (*AW*, vol. 1320 'dienend ehren'; see Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, pp. 220–22) with the object in the dative (see Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 305). The participle is formed from an aorist stem (cf. Beekes 1988, p. 193; Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 226) expressing an accomplished action, a 'fact'; here it represents the background of the actions in the present. Thus 'doing', 'offering', 'then serve' are untenable. Kellens and Pirart (1990, pp. 75–77) maintain that the aorist conveys a relation of anteriority in such a structure. In their scheme the sense of the verse would become something like: the *daēvas*, having received 'the worst (ritual) gift' from their worshippers, who have thus endeared themselves to them, allow these men to commit wrongful things. In my mind, this view is not right, although it is true that the 'actions' in question here refer to rites. Their interpretation is based on their theory of the fault of the *daēvas*, i.e. the indiscriminate acceptance of ritual offerings.[60] The verb √*mā* does not mean 'permit' or 'allow' but to 'measure, measure out, establish measure', and at a pinch, 'order'. Once one restores the right meaning of the verb, the participial '(after) having made very bad gifts' becomes senseless: one would be at a loss to explain its relevance. The sense of the stanza, once again, is not that the *daēvas* are coaxed into permitting their worshippers to do wrongful things. It is not the mortals who cajole the gods, but, according to Y 32.5, the other way around. As I mentioned above, the adjective *acištā* belongs with the elliptical 'actions' (cf. Y 30.5), and not with the imagined 'gifts'. Thus *daṇtō* must be vocative rather than nominative.

The subjunctive aorist *vaxšəṇtē* is difficult to interpret. The subjunctive mode of *framīmaθā* is dictated by the conjunctive structure *yāṯ yūštā framīmaθā…* (Y 32.5) *tā dəbənaotā…* 'As long as you authorize these… (Y 32.5) You deceive…'. This structure seems to have attracted the finite verb in the relative clause. If so, the mode of *vaxšəṇtē* has no significance. Also, the fact that for √*vaxš* 'grow' the aorist vs. present opposition coincides with the transitive vs. intransitive opposition makes it hard to decide, if no other indicator is forthcoming, whether the use of the aorist is not simply a by-product of the requirement for a transitive verb. Lommel (1971, p. 60), Gershevitch (1975, p. 79), Insler (1975, p. 45) and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132) read *vaxšəṇtē* as an intransitive verb, presumably based on its voice. Except for Insler, these scholars translate Y 32.4b as something like: the mortals increasingly endear themselves to the *daēvas*.[61] Insler understands the pāda to mean that the number of the followers of the *daēvas* increases, perhaps because the actions that the latter authorize are popular. Accepting the sense of 'growing endearment to the *daēvas*' for the verbal phrase *vaxšəṇtē daēuuō.zuštā*, one may translate Y 32.4a–b: 'insofar as, having established (them), you authorize these worst (actions), with which the mortals may grow (in being) *daēva*-endeared'. However, aside from the fact that the aorist seems to be used exclusively as a

transitive verb, there are two serious problems with this interpretation. First, one expects the complement *daēuuō. zušta-* to be in the accusative (i.e. the subject grows in relation to or in respect of the complement), as seems to be the case in Y 33.10, and not in the nominative, which would be merely an adjective of the subject. Second, in the face of the existence of a present stem, one cannot see why an aorist (whether perfective, punctual, momentaneous, gnomic, etc.) is used to express an inherently durative process, even if this is not, strictly speaking, a question of aspect but the objective nature of the action denoted by the verb.[62] Insler separates this stanza from the following one and subordinates Y 32.4aa′ to 4b: 'Insofar as ye authorize these actions, which the worst mortals (then) serve, those agreeable to (you) the gods shall increase'. The present participle cannot function as a finite verb; it describes, like a relative clause, the subject's condition, which accompanies or is a background to the action expressed in the finite verb. Thus *yā mašiiā acištā daṇtō* cannot mean 'which the worst mortals (then) serve'. Aside from this, the translated text has no determinable sense. Ostensibly it means something like: the gods' authorization of the 'actions' occasions the increase in the number of their followers (why the future tense?). But if so, the 'actions' cannot be all that bad, neither for the mortals, who obviously find some form of satisfaction in them, nor for the gods, whose devotees and hence offerings swell. The 'actions' are described in the previous stanza (in Insler's translation) as 'hateful', for which the gods are known the world over. Everything said about the gods and the actions they authorize is negative in Y 32.3–5. Against this background, what is the sense of the *utterance*: 'insofar as ye authorize these actions… those agreeable to (you) the gods shall increase'? Are the gods meant to understand this as a rebuke?

Kellens and Pirart translate the middle-voice *vaxšəṇtē* as a transitive verb (1988, p. 119: 'les (torts) que les (mauvais) hommes… accroissent à leur bénéfice'). The middle voice indicates the reflexive nature of the action, which they represent as 'for their own benefit'. But this is ambiguous. Given the negative portrayal of the character of the *daēvas* and the actions they institute, the meaning of the finite verb *vaxšəṇtē* can be either that the men befriended by the *daēvas* reap the benefits of the condemned actions, whatever they might be, *against* the interest of (righteous) others, and hence, this being understood, the discourse preserves its negative tenor; or that the 'rewards' themselves are negative even for the recipient. The former interpretation has Gāthic evidence: Y 34.8, 46.1–2, 47.4, 49.1. Nonetheless, I think the latter understanding is the right one. This means that *vaxšəṇtē* has a negative significance, or more accurately, a neutral value: the nature of the reward is determined by the nature of the action. A neutral sense for the verb is attested in Y 44.3dd′ *kə̄ yā må uxšiieitī nərəfsaitī θβāṯ* 'who is the one by which the moon now waxes (now) wanes?' In Y 32.5aa′, that is to say, in the main clause to which Y 32.4 is subordinated, the 'gods' are accused of cheating the mortals out of 'good life and immortality'. Firstly, there is no basis to think that the 'mortal' in Y 32.5 constitutes a different category from the 'mortals' in Y 32.4, who are

'befriended by the gods'. Y 32.5aa′ states the outcome of their engaging in the 'worst actions' instituted by the *daēvas*: loss of good life and immortality. *This* is the 'benefit' they reap. Secondly, the conjunctive structure makes the direct sequencing of Y 32.4a–b and Y 32.5aa′ ineluctable, for the conjunctive particle **tād* opening Y 32.5 *has to* refer to the situation described in Y 32.4a–b, and not to 32.4b′–c′, which elaborates further that situation.[63] In other words, Y 32.5aa′ is the direct outcome of the situation described in Y 32.4a–b, *ironically* expressed in *vaxšəṇtē* 'will have grown on their own account'. The aorist verb should then be understood in a terminative sense: what the gods establish and measure out, their mortal followers bring to fruition to their own detriment. The outcome also reveals what is meant by the 'worst actions': actions that undermine the desirable existence, earthly and beyond.

The sense of the participial phrase *mazdå ahurahiiā xratə̄uš nasiiaṇtō* is obscure. Gershevitch's translation of *xratu-* as 'commandment' is *ad hoc*.[64] Other scholars have translated the word with 'intelligence' (Kellens and Pirart), 'intellect' (Humbach), 'will' (Lommel and Insler), 'Geisteskraft' (Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 294). Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 535) gives two series of meanings: 'Wille, Absicht, Plan, Ratschluss' and 'Gesiteskraft, Einsicht, Verstand, Gedächtniskraft, Weisheit'; and places the Y 32.4 occurrence under the former category. Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 1, p. 407) gives 'Geisteskraft, Willenskraft'. Its verbal root is unclear (see Wackernagel and Debrunner 1954, p. 474). In the Middle Persian *xrad* means reason or wisdom. It is significant that, although it is an important concept in the Gāthās, *xratu-* is absent from the YH. In the Gāthās it is positively marked. In Y 48.10, *karapans* and the 'malevolent power holders in the nations', using an intoxicating liquor, sicken men with malice and 'efficaciously' (inst. *xratū*). But here it is used ironically.[65] The genitive in Y 48.3 *vaŋhə̄uš xraθβā manaŋhō* 'by the resourcefulness of good thinking' is subjective. Y 34.14 *xšmākəm hucistīm… xratə̄uš* probably means 'the availing insight of your resourcefulness', i.e. the genitive is subjective, and not objective as Insler (1975, p. 59) has: 'the good understanding of your will'. The occurrence of *xratu-* in Y 48.4 is instructive.

Y 48.4   *yə̄ dāt̰ manō, vahiiō mazdō aśiiascā*
huuō daēnąm, šiiaoθanācā vacaŋhācā
ahiiā zaošəṇg, ˟uštīš varənə̄ṇg hacaitē
θβahmī ˟xratāu, apə̄məm nanā aŋhat̰

Hintze (2007a, p. 59) has analysed the syntax of 4a–c′: 'He who makes his thinking better or worse, (makes so) his *daēnā*, (also) through his action and word. (His *daēnā*) follows his inclinations, wishes and choices'.[66] The 'vision-soul' or *daēnā* being the way to the divine sphere, it should matter to the mortal how it is shaped, whether it is 'good' or 'bad'. And the poet clearly wishes to impress on his audience that this (i.e. whether it is good or bad) depends on the quality of one's thought, word and action, the doctrinal triad. Insler's translation (1975, p. 91) of Y 48.4dd′ more or less captures the sense

of the Avestan text, although his understanding of *xratu-* is not correct, in my mind: '(But) when Thy will shall be done, the end shall be different (for each)'.[67] Humbach's translation does not make much sense (1991, vol. 1, p. 177): 'Finally, he will be (recorded) in Thy intellect here and there'; neither does Kellens and Pirart's (1988, p. 169): 'Du point de vue de ton intelligence, la fin sera diverse!' Y 48.4d′ means something like 'in the end (things) will be in different ways', being understood that it is one's fate that is at issue, and that the outcome will be individually determined according to how one has shaped one's *daēnā*. Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 2, p. 34) gives for the Vedic cognate (*nānā*) of *nanā* 'auf verschiedene Weise, von verschiedenen Seiten, da und dort, jeder für sich'. Thus the meaning of *apəməm nanā aŋhat* is: the outcome will be different for each depending on the shape of one's *daēnā*. The soul either ends up in the 'house of welcome' or the loathsome 'house of *druj*' (cf. Y 51.14). The admonitions and promises made by the poet (on behalf of Mazdā) regarding the afterlife, e.g. how one's fate depends on the way one shapes one's *daēnā*, are not made in vain. Mazdā has the power to make good those promises and admonitions, bring them to conclusion. The locative phrase *θβahmī ˣxratāu* must thus mean: '(the outcomes lying) within your power to bring to pass your designs'. One's fate being within Mazdā's power of bringing affairs to their appointed ends, e.g. making good the poet's promises and admonitions, the end will be different for each depending on how one has shaped one's *daēnā*. The locative phrase states the condition of the verbal phrase in the subjunctive. Conversely, *duš.xraθβā* 'imbeciles' in Y 49.4 are those who are incapable of realizing their desired end, or perhaps, as Y 32.4 tells us, are those who deprive themselves of Mazdā's efficacious power of accomplishing their desire for immortality.[68] Instead, *tōi daēuuāŋg dan yā drəguuatō daēnā* 'they make of the *drugvaṇt*'s *daēnā* the way to the *daēvas*' (Y 49.4dd′), instead of the way to Mazdā's blissful abode. In Y 32.4, the desired end for which one should want Mazdā's resourcefulness is explicitly stated: *aṣa*. Depriving oneself of Mazdā's power is tantamount to *nasiiaṇtō aṣāat̰cā* 'disappearing from (the path of) *aṣa*'. I have already pointed out that the figure of 'path of *aṣa*' may be understood as a metonymic designation of the divine sphere. *Aṣa* in Y 43.12aa′ *hiiat̰cā mōi mraoš aṣəm jasō frāxšnənē* must refer to something concrete, as the locative or accusative complement of √*gam* 'come', whether simplex or with the verbal prefix *ā* or *aibī*, has a concrete sense in the Gāthās when the subject is a person. A translation, therefore, such as that of Lommel (1971, p. 99): 'Zum Wahrsein gehe'; of Insler (1975, p. 65): 'Thou hast come to the truth in thy discernment'; or of Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 155): 'With foresight thou reachest truth', aside from the problem of sense, would be anomalous as far as the semantics of the particular usage of the verb is concerned.

Y 32.5   *tā dəbənaotā maṣīm, hujiiātōiš amərətātascā*
hiiat̰ vå akā manaŋhā, yāŋg daēuuāŋg akascā mainiiuš
akā šiiaoθanəm vacaŋhā, yā fracinas drəguuaṇtəm xšaiiō

(to that extent) you deceive the mortal away from good life and immortality, as bad intuition and (bad) action (have made) you into the *daēvas*, which (you are), by means of bad thought (and) bad word, with which (that action or the bad intuition) appoints a follower of *druj* to exercise power.

Y 32.5 is the core of the Gāthic doctrine, not just of the *daēvas* but, *e contrario*, also of the divine. The relative phrase Y 32.5c′ is difficult to decipher. Scholars generally read *xšaiiō* as a nom. sing. of *xšaiia-* 'ruler' (according to Insler 1975, p. 45; Kellens 1984a, p. 65; and Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 80) or 'expert' (so Gershevitch 1975, p. 79), but do not give any analysis of its form. As Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 80) remarks, it seems to be attested in Yt 13.18 *hō aŋhāiti zazuštəmō xšaiiō* 'he will become the most victorious ruler', where one would expect, were it the present participle, *xšaiią* instead (cf. de Vaan 2003, p. 390–91). The regular Gāthic form of the latter is *xšaiiąs*. One may justify the existence of *xšaiia-* 'ruler' next to the regular Gāthic *xšaiiaṇt-* by the fact that the present participle cannot be the subject of a finite verb (or the antecedent of a relative pronoun) on its own. So, in effect, *xšaiiaṇt-* could not mean the 'ruler'. Nonetheless, the nominative reading of the form is problematic. The usual translation of Y 32.5c′ is 'by reason of which a ruler (or the Ruler) recognizes (or marks or identifies) a deceitful person', where the relative pronoun *yā* 'by which' refers to *aka- vacah-* 'bad word'. The verb √*cit* means 'to recognize' e.g. the complement in the accusative. Its Vedic cognate √*cet* 'recognize, note' has both cognitive ('observe') and intersubjective ('acknowledge') senses (see *EWA*, vol. 1, pp. 547–48). In the Gāthās, however, √*cit* has the former sense only in Y 51.5, where it is qualified by the adverb *ərəš* 'rightly': *yə̄ dāθaēibiiō ərəš ratūm xšaiiąs ašiuuå cistā* '(resourceful pastor), the holder of reward, who, having disposition over (life), correctly recognizes the measure for those who abide by the law'. In all other occurrences in the Gāthās the verb means 'to acknowledge'. In the middle voice and without a direct object, it has a reflexive sense, i.e. 'get oneself acknowledged as the nom. or for the dat.': Y 51.11cc′ *kə̄ vā vaŋhə̄uš manaŋhō acistā magāi ərəšuuō* 'which upright one has got himself recognized for the gift due to good thinking?' and 32.11a′b *yōi drəguuaṇtō mazbīš cikōitərəš aŋ^vhīšcā aŋhauuascā* 'the masters and mistresses who have got themselves recognized as followers of *druj* by their great (wrongs)', i.e. are known for being the followers of *druj*, etc. When the verb has an accusative complement, it means 'acknowledge the acc. (e.g. for a purpose)': Y 46.9 *kə̄ huuō yə̄ mā arədrō cōiθaṯ pouruiiō* 'who is the one who would acknowledge me as the first attainer (of the divine sphere)?'; and 33.2b′ *vaŋhāu vā cōiθaitē astīm* 'or (who) would acknowledge his guest at (the time of?) the good (distribution of rewards)'. Thus, if *xšaiiō* is a nominative term, Y 32.5c′ should mean something like '(the bad speech) by means of which the ruler acknowledges the follower of *druj* (as the facilitator of immortality?)' or 'by means of which the ruler acknowledges (= appoints)

the follower of *druj*'. In any case, the usual translation of the relative phrase, which takes *fra* + √*cit* to mean 'identify', should be ruled out.

One can analyse Y 32.5c′ differently. *xšaiiō* may be taken as an infinitive of the present stem *xšaiia-* 'have disposition over' in *ah. vərəziiō* from Y 30.5 and *dāraiiō* from 32.1 are certainly infinitives; *sauuaiiō* from Y 51.9 and *auuō* from 32.14 may also be (cf. Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 242). If *xšaiiō* is an infinitive governed by *fra* + *cinat-*, the subject of the verb would have to be either *aka- mainiiu-* or, more likely, *šiiaoθana-*, and the relative pronoun probably refers to *aka- vacah-*: '(the bad speech) with which the action of *druj* (or the bad intuition) appoints a follower of *druj* to exercise power'. Now, it is true that the next three stanzas (Y 32.6–8) are about Yima; and given that he is the archetypal magico-religious 'ruler' in Iranian mythology,[69] one would be tempted to make this pāda into a short (tendentious) notice about the source of Yima's 'power', who is described as *ˣpouruuaēnå* 'possessed of many wrongs' in the following stanza.[70] The relative phrase does not relate a mythical episode but states a general fact about the 'bad word', the power of the 'bad word': it is used by the 'bad action' (i.e. bad rite) to appoint a follower of *druj* to 'rule'. An implied object is inherent in the semantics of √*xšā* 'rule, have disposition over'. This raises the question of the object of *xšaiiō* in Y 32.5. What is it in this passage over which the follower of *druj* has disposition or perhaps pretends to have disposition? From two other passages, which I will discuss in detail presently, we know that the *daēvas* are known to have 'exercised the power'. It is not a general form of power that is meant here but a special kind of power, namely the power of 'life'. In Y 44.20 the poet asks Mazdā: *ciθənā mazdā huxšaθrā daēuuā åŋharē* 'O Mazdā, have the *daēvas* ever exercised a salutary power?' We should recall what is said of the 'utterances' of the *daēvas* and their followers in pursuit of immortality in Y 48.1: they mobilize harm and misfortune. Despite these, it is asserted that Ārmaiti will prevail over *druj* and the 'veneration' (*vahma-*) of Mazdā will grow for the sake of the 'vital energies' (*sauua-*), which, as I argued, have an eschatological function. In Y 48.4, we saw that the supreme god's power to bring things to their appointed ends (*θβahmī ˣxratāu*) stands as the guarantee of the effectiveness of the words of the poet regarding the shape of one's *daēnā*.[71] The good *daēnā* will lead to '*aṣa* possessed of vitality' (51.21 *daēnā aṣəm spānuuaṯ*), while the 'bad *daēnā*', that is to say, the 'negligent *daēnā* of the follower of *druj*', is bound to 'make his soul rage in the face of the Collector's Bridge' (Y 51.13 *yehiiā uruuā xraodaitī cinuuatō ˣpərətāu ākå*). The hope the follower of *druj* places in the *daēvas* (Y 49.4) in pursuit of immortality must be illusory. This dualistic doctrine of the role and fate of the *daēnā* is in the background of Y 48.4. Any doubt as to the eschatological horizon of the issue raised in this stanza would be artificial. Now, in the following stanza, Y 48.5, the poet turns to Ārmaiti (recall Y 48.1): Y 48.5a-b′ *huxšaθrā xšə̄ṇtạm mā nə̄ duš.xšaθrā xšə̄ṇtā vaŋhuiiå cistōiš šiiaoθanāiš ārmaitē* 'O Āramiti, let those with salutary power exercise the power with actions inspired by good insight, do not let those with nefarious

power exercise the power for us!' The object of √*xšā*, over which the sub-
ject has disposition, if explicitly present, appears in the genitive (Y 31.19,
32.15, 44.15, 48.9, 50.9). These occurrences have two features in common.
The verb is in the present, and the object is a specific matter, never a per-
son. The verbal or participial phrase states that the subject has disposition
over the matter in the genitive. Only in the OP inscriptions (e.g. DNa.19:
adamšām patiyaxšaiyaiy 'I ruled over them') do we find the present stem in
the middle voice and the verbal prefix *pati* with the person in the genitive
as the object of the exercise of power. It is clear that here political rule is
meant: the king has power over a population and a territory. It has the same
form and meaning in Yt 19.26, 28, 31: *yat̰ xšaiiata paiti būmīm haptaiθiiąm
daēuuanąm mašiiānąmca* 'so that he ruled over the *daēvas* and men in the
(whole of) seven-sectioned land'. In Yt 19.66, too, the implied object of the
political power is territory: *yō auuaδāt̰ fraxšaiieitē* 'who expanded his power
from there'. In contrast to other Gāthic passages, the verb in Y 48.5 is in the
aorist stem and its indirect object is a person. The context does not allow the
interpretation of the verb √*xšā* in the political sense. Moreover, the fact that
the verbs are in the aorist cannot be insignificant. The action denoted by the
aorist verb is viewed from the outside, 'reduced to a fact'; the statement in
the aorist expresses a wish with regard to a momentous fact rather than any
specific, unfolding circumstance. This would hardly be an adequate way of
stating one's wishes about an ongoing condition, i.e. political rule. On the
other hand, the discursive context leaves scarcely any doubt that the nature
of the power at issue is, generally speaking, 'existential' in the absolute sense:
disposition over existence as such,[72] which perhaps in the present context may
be legitimately interpreted as eschatological. The *dušə.xšaθrā* are the *daēvas*
and the 'hostile' (*aŋgra*-) mortal followers of *druj* whose speech mobilizes
harm and blocks the vital energies that Mazdā makes available for the right-
eous (*dāθa*-) mortals (Y 44.12, 48.1, 51.5), the speech with which the *daēvas*
and their devotees conspire to prevent the latter from attaining to the divine
sphere (Y 32.1). The 'power' of their followers only leads to the 'house of the
worst thought' (Y 32.13). By contrast, the *huxšaθrā* exercise a salutary power
of life, and in particular across the threshold of death.

> Y 44.20 *ciθənā mazdā, huxšaθrā daēuuā åŋharə̄*
> *at̰ īt̰ pərəsā, yōi pišiieiṇtī aēibiiō kąm*
> *yāiš gąm karapā, uxsiščā aēšmāi dātā*
> *yācā kauuā, ąnmēnē urūdōiiatā*
> *nāit̰ hīm ⁺mizə̄n, ašā vāstrəm frādaŋ́hē*

O Mazdā, have the *daēvas* ever exercised a salutary power? I ask (you)
this: what (cow) for those who 'face (the sun)', with whom, the Karapan
and Uxsij submit the cow to *aēšma*, with which the Kavi makes obstacle
to the vital breath (of Ārmaiti)? They do not foster her (so that she would
be able) to make the pasture thrive, along with (or for the sake of) *aša*.

The object of *pišiieiṇtī* must be the sun.[73] *pišiia-* has been explained by Gershevitch (1959, p. 255) from √*piš/paēš* 'face'. If it is indeed from this root, it can hardly mean 'block' as Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 161) has it. De Vaan (2000, p. 83) derives the verb from IIr. *√*pik* 'drücken, kneifen', giving Avestan present stem **picia-* 'falsch opfern' or 'schlecht behandeln'. Its negative semantics are based in Gāthic rhetoric against the *daēva* cult, where the term is used to describe a (characteristic) ritual gesture with a polemical intent. Thus in Y 44.20 the verb means: 'eine falsche Opferhandlung verrichten', and in Y 50.2 the participial: 'die die Sonne kneifen', where 'kneifen' 'really' means 'abkneifen, durch falsches Kneifen mißhandeln' (de Vaan 2000, p. 84). Thus, according to de Vaan's hypothesis, the verb stigmatizes the *daēva* cult by synecdoche. This means that its usage must naturally be limited to two occasions: the original one, where the verb describes in a tendentious way a specific ritual gesture; or the generalized one, in which the term refers to the deprecated cult or sacrifice *in toto*, as in de Vaan's 'eine falsche Opferhandlung verrichten'. Now, the usage 'die Sonne kneifen' is semantically stranded in this scheme. It obviously makes no literal sense. What could the phrase 'abuse the sun by a false pinch' mean? It is not even completely clear to me whether in de Vaan's estimation, in the postulated literal sense, the verb describes a (deprecated) gesture or is used polemically to deprecate a gesture. De Vaan (2000, p. 84) argues that the same term is also found in Yt 14.19 *pišatō upara. naēmāṯ* against Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 907), followed by Pirart (2006a, p. 166), who derives it from IIr. √*piš* 'crush' (Ved. √*piṣ*).[74] Since the phrase describes the flight of a bird of prey, if the participle should be read as **pišiiaṇt-*, it makes better sense in my mind to translate the phrase as 'fronting from above', i.e. a bold gesture, rather than 'pinching from above'.[75] Thus the expression *huuarə̄ pišiiaṇt-* must mean something like 'facing the sun'. If the phrase refers to an actual gesture, it could describe a symbolic action of the *daēva* cult that is in some sense characteristic or otherwise significant, i.e. refers to a doctrine.

In my opinion, the expression is a self-description of the *daēva* cult and has an ecstatic and/or eschatological meaning: to reach the heavenly sphere. That 'facing the sun' refers to an adversely viewed cult seems to be confirmed by Y 32.10, where the officiating priest is accused of enfeebling the poet's hymns: Y 32.10a-b *huuō mā nā srauuå mōrəṇdaṯ, yə̄ acištəm vaēnaṇh̆ē aogədā / gąm ašibiiā huuarəcā* 'he enfeebles my utterances, the man who utters the worst things in order to see with his eyes the sun and the cow'.[76] The full (agonistic) context of the usage of the phrase is apparent in Y 50.2a–c′ *kaθā mazdā, rāniiō.skərəitīm gąm išasōiṯ / yə̄ hīm ahmāi, vāstrauuaitīm stōi usiiāṯ / ərəžəjiš ašā, pourušū huuarə̄ pišiiasū* 'how may the man living rightly because of *aša* among the many who face the sun ask for the joy-giving cow, (the man) who would want her, possessed of pasturage, to be for him?' The expression *ahmāi… stōi* 'to be for him' means 'to make available to him what he wants', e.g. 'joy'. It is almost certain, again, that this 'joy-giving cow' is the sacrificial animal, which would have been 'mistreated' by the *kavi* along with those 'who greet the sun' (cf. Y 32.14).

The same question is asked in Y 51.5, but here the 'cow' is described differently: Y 51.5 a–b′ *vīspā tā pərəsas yaθā, aṣāṯ hacā gąm vīdaṯ / vāstriiō šiiaoθanāiš ərəšuuō, hąs huxratuš nəmaŋhā* 'asking all these (and also:) how the pastoralist, being elevated in his actions and efficacious in his worship, acquires the *aṣa*-bound cow'. The phrase *aṣāṯ hacā* describes the cow. Lommel reads it as an adverb: 'wie dem Wahrsein gemäß der Kuh teilhaftig wird der Viehzüchter' (1971, p. 173). Is the poet indirectly preaching about the proper way of acquiring cattle (e.g. not stealing)? The striking parallelism between Y 51.5 and 50.2 obliges us to understand *aṣāṯ hacā* as an adnominal. Besides, as we have seen in the Gāthic passages just discussed, the concern expressed with regard to the cow is consistently with her ritual treatment and not about how she is acquired. The question, 'how does a pastoralist in accordance with truth find a cow?' is rather artificial on different levels.[77] The phrase has to be an adnominal. Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 182) translate *aṣāṯ hacā gąm* 'la Vache harmonieuse'. The basic question about *aṣāṯ hacā* is whether *aṣa*- is to be understood in a concrete sense, for instance, as a metonym for the divine sphere, or in an abstract sense, e.g. order or truth. The probable equivalence of *aṣāṯ hacā gąm* and *rāniiō.skərəitīm gąm* speak for the former. As I argued, the adnominal *aṣāṯ hacā* means something like 'being oriented to (the domain of) *aṣa*' just as Y 53.6 *drūjō hacā* seems to mean 'being oriented to (the house of) *druj*'. The cow that gives joy is the cow that facilitates access to the divine sphere.

Ārmaiti is metonymically the indirect object of *urūdōiiatā*, to whom the pronoun *hīm* also refers. *urūdōiia*- is from √*rud* 'block, hinder' (so Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 311), and not from √*rud* 'lament, moan' (so *AW*, col. 1492; Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 292). The neuter noun *ąnman*- 'breath' occurs three times in the Gāthās. In Y 30.7, Ārmaiti is said to give 'breath' to 'existence' (*dadāṯ ārmaitiš ąnmā*), while youthfulness (*utaiiūiti*-) gives it form. She provides the 'breath' to Mazdā: Y 45.10a–c′ *tə̄m nə̄ yasnāiš, ārmatōiš mimaɣšō / yə̄ ąnmə̄nī, mazdå srāuuī ahurō / hiiaṯ hōi aṣā, vohucā cōišt manaŋhā* 'by means of consecrations inspired by Ārmaiti we seek to please him, Mazdā Ahura, who is known for the breath that she allocates to him because of *aṣa* and through good thinking.' It is not completely clear in what exact sense the instrumentals must be understood in this sentence, but the relative pronoun *hiiaṯ* cannot refer to anything else than *ąnman*- 'breath', and *cōišt* 'allocates' can hardly have any other subject than Ārmaiti. *ąnmə̄nī* is not a locative form (contra *AW*, col. 359; and Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 143) but an instrumental (so Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 220; and Tremblay 1996, p. 119). Humbach's translation of Y 45.10bb′ hardly makes any sense: 'the Ahura who in the wind is heard (as being) the Wise One' (1991, vol. 1, p. 166); Insler's is no better: 'the Lord who is famed to be Wise in His soul' (1975, p. 77). The reason why the supreme god is famous for the breath that he receives from Ārmaiti is perhaps given in Y 30.7: when Mazdā 'comes for the sake of' existence 'Ārmaiti gives it breath'; a phrase that is to be understood, I think, in an eschatological sense: 30.7cc′ *aēṣą̄m tōi ā ąŋhaṯ, yaθā aiiaŋhā ādānāiš pouruiiō*

'with the enchainment of these (mortals), (existence) will be yours as the first one (was)' or 'with the enchainment of these (mortals), (existence) will be like your primordial one (was)'. Perhaps, more generally, the 'breath' that Ārmaiti allocates to the divine sphere is that of the sacrificial 'cow'. Thus the connection between 'breath' and Ārmaiti is intimate. In Y 44.20, 'breath' must be a synecdoche for Ārmaiti.

The subject of the infinitive *frādaŋhē* 'to promote' in Y 44.20ee′ seems to be Āramiti. In Y 44.10 it is Ārmaiti that, accompanied by *aṣa*, promotes 'my living creatures'. Thus, here too, the instrumental *aṣā* should probably be understood in the comitative sense. The poet says that the *kavi* uses *aēšəma* to block the passage of Ārmaiti. Again, it seems that at stake is a certain form of ritual. According to Y 32.14, the 'Kavis put their resourcefulness in his (i.e. the follower of *druj*) bondage… when they place themselves in the service of a *drugvaṇt* and when the sacrificial cow is ill-treated (*gāuš jaidiiāi mraoī*) in order to assist the one who inflames the fire-proof (*haoma* twigs)'.[78] Whether one interprets *mraoī* as derived from √*mrū* 'ill-treat', attested in *mrūra-* 'gruelling' (*AW*, col. 1197), with Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 289), or from √*mrū* 'say', the ritual context is unmistakable. In Y 29 the mysterious 'Soul of the Cow' complains of *aēšəma*, cruelty and bondage, etc. that have held her in 'captivity', and asks for 'good pastoral work' from the gods (Y 29.1), and then turns to *aṣa* for the 'measure' (*ratu-*) of its existence (Y 29.2). Although no 'measure' is provided for the cow – for she is created for the breeder and the pastoralist (Y 29.6) – *tām āzūtōiš ahurō mąθrəm tašaṱ aṣā hazaošō mazdå gauuōi xšuuīdəmcā* 'in harmony with *aṣa*, Mazdā Ahura has constructed for the cow the formula of libation and the milk' (Y 29.7). Apparently, this provision satisfies the 'Soul of the Cow' since the further complaint it makes is not about the lack of *ratu-* but about the 'ineffective word' of a 'powerless man' who is charged with bringing it to the mortals (Y 29.7–9). The dative *gauuōi* marks the beneficiary of the formula, not in the sense that the ritual is conducted for the cow – this, at any rate, is how I understand Y 29.6bb′[79] – but insofar as it finds relief from *aēšəma*, etc., that is to say, from a certain kind of ritual, for releasing the cow (its soul?) to the 'pasture' of *aṣa* and good thinking. The 'formula of libation and the milk' is to be given to the 'mortals' (*marətaēibiiō*). Does the ritual that makes use of the 'formula' replace another form of ritual, whose elements constitute the substance of the complaint by the 'soul of the cow'? Does the milk replace the blood of the cow? In any case, the cow that is denied to 'those who greet the sun' and their priests is not the cow in the field but the 'cow' in a ritual role. The passage of Ārmaiti (to the divine sphere, cf. Y 32.2) and the 'joy-giving cow' are elements of a drama, in which the *daēvas* are the antagonist. The *aēšəmatic* sacrifice of the 'cow', and the neglect and ritual blocking of the 'vitalizing' Ārmaiti by the 'many who greet the sun' and the traditional priests who officiate at their rituals – these 'worst acts' are constituted by the *daēvas* and taken up by their mortal followers on their own account (Y 32.3–4), which makes them *duš.xraθßā* 'imbeciles' (Y 49.4), that is to say,

who are incapable of realizing their desired end. We can appreciate, then, the full significance of the poet's (perhaps) rhetorical question in Y 44.20: 'O Mazdā, have the *daēvas* ever exercised a salutary power?' Have they ever promoted and protected 'life', whether in its corporeal state, across the threshold of death, or in its mental form? The 'power' that the poet has in mind in the wish he expresses to Ārmaiti in Y 48.5a–b′ is the power of life, of ensuring 'life' (in the face of ruination), in particular, given the context, the power of achieving the desired eschatological outcome: blissful existence in the divine sphere (Y 32.1).

Let us go back to Y 32.5. Although the infinitive *xšaiiō* 'to exercise power' is from the present stem, it must have the sense of 'disposition over life', which we discovered in Y 48.5aa′. Thus, if I am right, Y 32.5c′ is not about a particular follower of *druj*, e.g. Yima, but is a kind of definition of *aka-vacah-* 'bad word': it is used to appoint a follower of *druj* to the position of power over life in general, in earthly life and beyond, and across. The *daēvas* aspire to this power. They intend a double deception. On the one hand, they approach Mazdā with the offer of holding off from the divine sphere those who are 'hostile'. On the other hand, they pretend that the actions they authorize and are involved in 'together with (their) men' (Y 32.3–4), and the words they utter 'together with (their) men in pursuit of immorality' (Y 48.1), can secure access to the divine sphere (cf. Y 44.20). Thus they deceive the mortal away from 'good life and immortality': Y 32.5aa′ *tā dəbənaotā maṣīm, hujiiātōiš amərətātascā*. Benveniste (1975, pp. 87–95) has shown that the Indo-Iranian abstract nouns in *-ti* denote actual actions, while those in *-tu* have the sense of intention or capacity for action, or are sometimes concretized as means or aims of action. The charge made against the *daēvas* tells us three things: that 'good life and immortality' constitute an object of longing for mortals; that together they define a comprehensive set; and that the distinction made between them must be significant. *amərətatāt-* has to be positively marked, since we know that even the followers of *druj* continue to exist after death: a 'lasting period of darkness' (Y 31.20) in the 'house of *druj*' (Y 51.14). Thus 'immortality' neither means simply existence after death nor long earthly life. This latter interpretation has no textual or conceptual basis. 'Immortality' is a divine condition: 34.1a–b′ *yā šiiaoθanā yā vacaŋhā, yā yasnā amərətatātəm | aṣəmcā taibiiō dåŋhā, mazdā xšaθrəmcā hauruuatātō* 'the action, the word, the worship by which you, O Mazdā, establish for yourself immortality, *aṣa* and the power over completeness'. The integrity of the corporeal form (the 'togetherness' of its constituents) is intimately associated with 'immortality'. In Y 32.1 the *daēvas* ask Mazdā for the divine 'bliss', and in Y 48.1, together with their mortal followers, they seek 'immortality'. The 'immortality' of which the *daēvas* deprive their followers is evidently the blissful existence in paradise, where significantly *aṣa* is found.[80] The exact meaning of *hujiiāti-* is difficult to determine. Nonetheless, the appreciative prefix and the presence of the coordinated 'immortality' indicate that it probably signifies a good earthly life. Together,

they seem to constitute the totality of conditions desired by the mortals. We saw that in Y 44.20 the poet asks whether the *daēvas* ever exercised a salutary power, which in the light of our analysis of √*xšā* may also be put in another manner: have the *daēvas* ever been able to secure the desirable existence? For the *daēvas* to 'exercise deception' (*dəbənaotā*) there must be a dissemblance, a pretence, on their part. The pretence is: they give access to the divine sphere and perhaps secure good life on earth. The poet's knowledge of the constitution of human existence and its possible final states, which is the basis of his discourse on the proper conduct, comes from the 'vitalizing intuition' and is thus 'true' and 'efficacious'. By contrast, the pretension of the *daēva* cult is grounded in untruth, in deception; its ultimate source is the 'deceiver', the 'harmful intuition'. The rejection by the poet of the Gāthās of the ritual that is offered to the *daēvas* is rooted in this comprehensive opposition, and not merely in the incorrectness of the ritual, whatever this might mean. The *daēvas* deceive those who place in them their hope for the desired existence. It is Mazdā and the Gāthic gods, in particular Ārmaiti, who possess the 'measure' (*ratu-*) of the desired conditions of existence. In two articles I have argued that this is the meaning of the *Ahuna Vairiia* (Y 27.13) and that it is in this sense that it is understood in the YAv. exegesis of the prayer (Y 19).[81] In Y 43.6 Ārmaiti gives the 'measure' to the righteous, behind which stands the ultimate guarantee of its effectiveness: Mazdā's *xratu-* 'resourcefulness': Y 43.6d–e′ *aēibiiō ratūš, sə̄nghaitī ārmaitiš / θβahiiā xratōuš, yə̄m naēciš dābaiieitī* 'Ārmaiti announces for these (righteous ones) the measures of your resourceful intelligence, which nothing frustrates'.[82] Mazdā is not just the creator god but also the vitalizing god: 51.16c *spəṇtō mazdå ahurō* 'Mazdā Ahura (is) the vitalizing one'.

The causal conjunctive *hiiaṱ* 'as' perhaps also signals a temporal arrangement in the situation that has made the *daēvas* into what they are. Hence, what is described in the subordinate clause Y 32.5bb′ explains the action of the *daēvas* in respect of the 'mortal' both as a fact (see below) and as having been taking place since primordial times. This interpretation seems probable to me because of what we are told in Y 30.6, and more generally Y 30.3–7. The deception of the *daēvas* originally occurs in the mythical past and is the reason why they act the way they do toward the 'mortal'. The poet's explanation of the wrongful conduct of the *daēvas* indicates a revaluation of these gods: he sets against the traditional view of these gods his 'true' knowledge of the primordial events.

Y 32.5b–c (i.e. the explanation of the conduct of the *daēvas*) is in fact without a verb. What is the elliptical verb?[83] Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 133) translates the clause: 'because the evil spirit along with evil thought (had lured) you, the *daēvas*, (away from them), (the evil spirit) as well as the action (inspired) by the evil word'. Given the use of the noun °*dəbaoman-* in Y 30.5 in respect of the same event, one might consider √*dab* 'deceive' as an obvious candidate. Insler (1975, p. 45) and Humbach carry the two ablatives along with the verb.[84] The problem would then be how to understand the idea of 'evil spirit

and action' depriving the *daēvas* from 'good life and immortality'. If we take the couple 'good life and immortality' as defining a comprehensive set, 'good life' has to signify earthly life, the good life of this world, as opposed to the immortal (i.e. divine) state, to which one aspires beyond death. In Y 32.1, as we saw, the *daēvas* are portrayed as seeking Mazdā's 'bliss', and in Y 48.1 they are explicitly portrayed as 'in pursuit of immortality', a divine condition and not just perpetual existence. It seems, then, that there is good ground to read 'immortality' as the ablative complement of the supplemented verb 'deceive' in the subordinated clause Y 32.5b–c. However, since the term is embedded in a complementary set in Y 32.5a′, if carried, it has to be accompanied by 'good life'. Humbach's translated text, then, implies that the *daēvas* had at some stage an earthly existence. It is true that we have a tradition (e.g. Y 9.15) according to which the *daēvas* are supposed to have been driven 'under the earth' (*zəmarə.gūz*-) by Zarathuštra's recitation of the *Ahuna Vairiia*. But this does not necessarily imply – even if the term *zəmarə.gūz*- must be understood literally rather than, say, in the sense of 'damned'[85] – that the *daēvas* were earthlings. There is also another tradition according to which the *daēvas* once mingled with men: in Y 9.15 it is said that prior to their being driven underground they went about the earth in human form (*vīrō.raoδa*-). This is in all probability from a time that they had already become demons or some such thing. In the Zamyād Yašt (Yt 19), the primordial universal kings are said to have ruled over *daēuuanąm mašiiānąmca yāθβąm pairikanąmca sāθrąm kaoiiąm karafnąmca* 'the *daēvas* and men, sorcerers and sorceresses, tyrants, Kavis and Karapans' (Y 19.26, 28, 31). But one can hardly draw any conclusion from this list regarding the earthly status of the *daēvas*. The point is rather that these kings brought the whole hostile world under their control. To the age-old comprehensive set of 'gods and men', which now means 'demons and men', are added other religiously significant hostile groups. But none of this implies that the *daēvas* are conceived as earthlings in the Gāthās. The very notion of *daēuuaiiasna*- '*daēva*-worshipper' (*AW*, col. 670) implies the otherworldly status of the *daēvas*: one 'worships' them the same way as one does the 'gods': by offering praise and sacrifice. In Yt 5.94–95 they are portrayed as helping themselves (*paiti.vīsəṇte*) to the sacrifice offered by the '*daēva*-worshippers' to the goddess Ardvī Surā Anāhitā after sunset. The *daēvas* are otherworldly in the Gāthās. 'Good life and immortality' together constitute human aspirations.

All this leaves the question of the missing verb unanswered.[86] The choice of √*dab* 'deceive' for the clause relies not just on the immediate context but also on Y 30.6. Nonetheless, I believe that Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 119) are right to argue for √*dā* 'set'. As they explain, the verb regularly takes two accusatives with the meaning of 'making X into Y'.[87] The addition of the verb (e.g. *dąn*) also rectifies the defective meter of Y 32.5b′, if in fact it is defective. But, more importantly, the sense of the phrase with √*dā* would perfectly fit with what we learn from Y 32.3, where the *daēvas* are said to be what they are because they are grounded in 'bad thought', which also explains their

involvement in the action(s) inspired by *druj*. The action in question seems
to be related to *aēšəma* ritual. As we saw in Y 44.20, the *aēšəma* rite of those
'who greet the sun' conducted by the *kavi* and other cult officials is the frame
of the question the poet puts to Mazdā: have the *daēvas* ever exercised a salu-
tary power (*huxšaθrā*)? In Y 30.6 we are told that 'as the *daēvas* choose the
worst thinking they rush to *aēšəma*', and in the course of the ritual, together
with their mortal devotees, utter 'harm-mobilizing' (*aṣašutā*) words 'in pur-
suit of immortality' (Y 48.1). The *daēvas* assert their claim to have disposition
over access to the divine sphere in Y 32.1. We can see that Y 32.5c′ represents
the nature of the illusion to which the *daēvas* succumb, namely the pretension
to the position of power over (desirable) life. The 'bad thinking' from which
they proceed (Y 32.3aa′) is in fact the ground of ruination, and the 'bad intu-
ition', their 'Deceiver' in Y 30.6, 'in the end' delivers the followers of *druj* to
the 'worst existence' (Y 30.4). On the other hand, the *dāθa*- 'righteous' receives
the *ratu*- 'measure', which gives access to the divine sphere (*aṣāṯ hacā*). Now,
just as there is the *pretence*, staged in the *aēšəma* ritual, that the *daēvas* do
have disposition over life in all its dimensions, i.e. worldly, otherworldly and
in transition, so, too, one pretends that the followers of *druj* are in the pos-
ition of receiving the 'measure': Y 32.10a–b′ *huuō mā nā srauuå mōrəṇdaṯ,*
yə acištəm vaēnaŋ́hē aogədā | gąm ašibiiā huuarəcā, yascā dāθōṇg drəguuatō
dadāṯ 'he enfeebles my poems: the man who utters the worst (words) in order
to see with his eyes the cow and the sun, and the one who places the followers
of *druj* in the position of the righteous'. Wrongly impressed by the references
in the following verse line to devastation of pasture and hostility displayed
against the *aṣavan*, Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 134) and Insler (1975, p. 47)
think Y 32.10b′ describes a quasi-political situation: respectively, 'and who
makes the just (into subjects) of the deceitful one', and 'the one who has set
the deceitful against the just'. The word *dāθa*- seems to have a specific sense
in the Gāthās: the one who is entitled to receive the 'measure'. It is set, in
a dualistic comprehensive set, against *adāθa*-: Y 46.15bb′ *dāθōṇg vīcaiiaθā*
adāθąscā 'discern the righteous ones and the unrighteous ones'. In Y 51.5, the
'resourceful pastoralist' identifies for the *dāθa*- the 'measure' (*ratu*-). And in Y
28.10, the *dāθa*- is described as *ərəθβa*- 'who is in accordance with the meas-
ure'. I have tried to show elsewhere the eschatological valence of 'measure'.[88]
Thus the meaning of Y 32.10b′ is the condemnation of the one who pretends
that the followers of *druj* are in a position to entertain the hope of attaining
'good life and immortality'.

The word *šiiaoθanəm* in Y 32.5c is in the nominative, and should probably
be understood to refer to the deprecated ritual. The relative phrase in the
accusative *yōṇg daēuuåṇg* '(those) who (are) the *daēvas*' emphatically recalls
the identity of the addressee. It is assimilated to the enclitic *vå* 'you' in the
accusative. The poet regularly emphasizes the *daēvas* in their failure: Y 30.6
daēuuācinā; Y 32.3 *daēuuā vīspåŋhō… ciθrəm*; Y 32.5 *vå… yōṇg daēuuåṇg*;
Y 44.20 *ciθənā… daēuuā*. The emphasis clearly indicates that it is a lively
issue.[89]

Y 34.5   *kaṯ vā xšaθrəm kā īštiš, š́iiaoθanāi mazdā yaθā vā hahmī*
            aṣ̌ā vohū manaŋhā, θrāiiōidiiāi drigūm yušmākəm
            parə̄ vå vīspāiš parə̄.vaoxəmā, daēuuāiščā xrafstrāiš maṣ̌iiāiščā

Which power do you bring to bear, O Mazdā, what control (do I exercise)
thanks to good thinking and because of *aṣa*, for (the time of) action or as
I sleep, for safeguarding (me), your needy one? We declare you superior
to all the *xrafstar daēvas* and the mortals.

Formally, the action noun *īšti-* can be from four different roots. Kellens
and Pirart (1990, p. 224) consistently derive it from √*yaz* 'offer (sacrifice)',
cognate of Vedic *iṣṭí-*, and translate it 'manière sacrificielle, rite'. It can also
be derived from √*is* 'be capable'. Lommel (1971, p. 87: 'Macht'), Insler (1975,
p. 55: 'mastery') and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 140: 'command') generally
derive *īšti-* from √*is*. The other two formal possibilities are √*iš* 'seek, desire'
(cf. *EWA*, vol. 1, p. 270) and √*iš* 'set in motion' (cf. *EWA*, vol. 1, p. 271).
The noun occurs eleven times in the Gāthās but not a single time in the YH.
The reason for the consistency of the translations despite the number of
formal possibilities is not hard to determine: the word occurs three times
with both *vohu- manah-* and *xšaθra-*, four times with the former and twice
with the latter. The least one can say is that it has an elective affinity with
these concepts. In its four collocations with *vohu- manah-*, *īšti-* is determined
by it in the genitive (Y 46.2), 'allocated' (√*ciš*) by it (Y 46.18), 'esteemed' by
it (Y 32.9), and made available through it (Y 49.12). It is thus an activity or
a phenomenon that is available thanks to 'good thinking'. In this respect it
is like *xšaθra-*,[90] with which it is intimately associated: once, in the genitive,
it determines *xšaθra-* (Y 51.2) and once is determined by the latter in the
genitive (Y 48.8). In Y 48.8aa′ *kā tōi vaŋhə̄uš, mazdā xšaθrahiiā īštiš* 'O
Mazdā, which *īšti-* does your good power make available?', both 'command'
(Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 178: 'the command of Thy good power') and
'power' (Insler 1975, p. 93: 'the power of Thy good rule') sound somewhat
pleonastic. In Y 51.2 *dōišā mōi ištōiš xšaθrəm* 'I will show you the power
of my *īšti-*', Humbach's 'the power of my command' (1991, vol. 1, p. 186)
makes sense if understood as 'the power that I command'. Kellens and
Pirart's 'je vais montrer l'emprise de mon rite' (1988, p. 181) is plausible, but
then 'rite' hardly makes sense in Y 48.8: 'what is the ritual that your good
power makes available?' Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 170) read *xšaθrahiiā*
īštiš as an objective genitive: 'Quel est, ô Mazdā, le rite qui donne la divine
emprise sur toi?' This reading is based on their interpretation of *xšaθra-* as
the 'hold' on the divinity to which sacrifice is offered, which I have already
discussed. Twice *īšti-* is in the locative. Y 49.12 *kaṯ tōi vohū manaŋhā… auuaṯ*
yāsᵃs hiiaṯ və̄ īštā vahištəm 'which (help) do you make available (to me)
through good thinking… asking for that (help), which is the best you offer
in *īšti-*' is decisive. Kellens and Pirart, who translate the locative 'au moment

du rite' (1988, p. 174), comment: '*və̄ īštā vahištəm*, qui joue visiblement sur une répétition de sonorités (lo. **u̯ah ištā u̯ahištam**), montre que *īšti*- a une première voyelle étymologiquement brève et ne dérive donc pas de *is*' (1991, p. 237).[91] But the next stanza (Y 50.1) seems to take up the same question: 50.1aa' *kaṯ mōi uruuā, isē cahiiā auuaŋhō* 'Does my soul dispose of any help whatsoever?'[92] This seems to indicate that the locative *īštā* in Y 49.12 should be understood in the sense 'to be under my command'. Hence Y 49.12dd' in translation is: 'asking for that (help), which is the best you offer, (to be) in (my) command'. Y 48.8aa' *kā tōi vaŋhōuš, mazdā xšaθrahiiā īštiš* means 'O Mazdā, what control does your good power make available (to me)?' Therefore Y 34.5a–b means: 'Which power do you possess, O Mazdā, what mastery (do I exercise), thanks to good thinking and because of *aša*, for (my) enactment or as I sleep?'[93]

The meaning of *š́iiaoθanāi… yaθā vā hahmī* 'for (my) enactment or as I sleep' is not easy to decipher. The two terms must form a significant pair, but the phrase could hardly mean 'day and night'. This would be a strange circumlocution marred with an incomprehensible disparateness of components. We have two clues to unravel its mystery: *īšti*- and *drigu*-. Let us go back to the former. There are three occurrences of the word that are particularly instructive. In Y 32.9 the poet complains about the 'announcements' of the 'one with bad doctrine': 32.9a–b' *duš.sastiš srauuå mōrəṇdaṯ, huuō jiiātōuš sōṇghanāiš xratūm / apō mā īštim apaiiaṇtā, bərəxδąm hāitīm vaŋhōuš manaŋhō* 'the one with bad doctrine enfeebles my words: with his announcements concerning life, he binds my resourcefulness and control, which is nonetheless esteemed by good thinking'. The announcements of the bad doctrinaire just as, e.g. the 'words' of Y 48.1, have the power to enfeeble. Here, though, the nature of the enfeeblement is specified. It is clearly a magico-religious harm. The poet complains of his discourse (*srauuå*) being 'enfeebled'. The verb √*mard* 'enfeeble' more exactly means something like 'render without force' (cf. Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 282: 'rendre sans force, corrompre'). Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 2, p. 386) translates its Vedic cognate *mrad* 'sanft machen, weich machen'. The poet's complaint is that his discourse is rendered ineffective to achieve its goal. The expansion, Y 32.9a'–b', of the opening clause, Y 32.9a, further articulates the point in a general statement. We saw that *xratu*- designates in general the power to achieve a goal, and that *īšti*- is the control that the poet exercises in particular over *xšaθra*-, which is made available to him through 'good thinking'. These two faculties are held back from their goal by the bad doctrinaire's utterances. The verb *apa* + √*yam* literally means 'hold away' the accusative (cf. *EWA*, vol. 2, p. 399; Hoffmann and Forssman 2004, p. 316), obviously from a goal. Humbach's translation of *apaiiaṇtā* with 'robs' (1991, vol. 1, p. 134) is misleading, Lommel's 'verhindert' (1971, p. 61) perfect. It is the *xšaθra*- acquired through *vohu- manah*- that the poet has in mind when he talks about his 'control'. The connection between these three may be gathered in more detail from Y 51.18–19.

Y 51.18   *taṃ cistīm də̄jāmāspō, huuō.guuō ištōiš xᵛarənā*
           ašā vərəṇtē tat̰ xšaθrəm, manaŋhō vaŋhə̄uš vīdō
           tat̰ mōi dāidī ahurā, hiiat̰ mazdā rapə̄n tauuā

Jāmāspa Hauguva chooses… (and) this conception of control because of
aṣa: 'Acquire the power of good thinking!' O Ahura Mazdā, give me this
supportive (power) which is yours (to grant)![94]

Y 51.19   *huuō tat̰ maidiiōi.mə̊ŋhā, spitamā ahmāi dazdē*
           daēnaiiā vaēdəmnō, yə̄ ahūm išasas aibī
           mazdå dātā mraot̰, gaiiehiiā šiiaoθanāiš vahiiō

O Madyōmāha Spitāma, the man, who pronounces the laws of Mazdā,
asking for (best) existence and finding (it) through his *daēnā*, acquires for
himself that (power which is) better through actions of life.

The two participial phrases describe the subject of *dazdē* 'acquires'. The
instrumental *gaiiehiiā šiiaoθanāiš* can be governed either by the verb just
mentioned or by an attributive. But, given the positioning of the phrase
and the conceptual implications, the latter is in all probability the correct
interpretation. The genitive in the phrase must be objective. The power in
question is better because the actions it underlies promote life. The significance
of 'existence' (*ahu*-) is prima facie ambiguous in the stanza. But we know
that *daēnā* has a psychopompic role (cf. esp. Y 31.20, 33.13, 46.11, 51.13,
51.21, 53.2, 53.5). It is therefore almost certain that at issue is existence in
the divine sphere. The conception of 'control' that Jāmāspa adheres to out
of his interest for *aṣa* is the one that requires him to make his own the power
of good thinking. Mazdā grants this 'supportive' power (cf. Y 50.1). 'Life'
(*gaiia*) must be understood in the same unrestricted and positive sense as in Y
30.3.[95] As a concept, *īšti*- means 'control' of the power of good thinking for
the purpose of promoting life. The eschatological orientation of 'control' is
emphasized in Y 53.1a-c″ *vahištā īštiš srāuuī, zaraθuštrahē / spitāmahiiā yezī
hōi, dāt̰ āiiaptā / ašāt̰ hacā ahurō, mazdå yauuōi vīspāi.ā, huuaŋhə̄uuīm* 'It will
be known that Zaraθuštra Spitāma's is the best control, should Ahura Mazdā
give him soteriological award and eternal blissful existence (or: since Ahura
Mazdā will make eternal blissful existence the *ašāt̰ hacā* award'. *huuaŋhə̄uuiia*-
is a particular state of being, namely blissful existence in paradise.[96]

   Narten (1986, pp. 238–41) underwrites the common understanding of
drigu- 'needy'.[97] 'Auch an den Beiden Gatha-Stellen läßt sich die Annahme, daß
mit drigu- ein macht- und besitzloser Mensch gemeint ist, vertreten' (Narten
1986, p. 239). The socio-economic valence of the word perhaps finds support
in the passages, e.g. Y 34.5 and Y 50.1, where the poet seems to describe his
social condition. It does not seem, however, that the depressed social condi-
tion as such is considered to produce entitlement. Rather, it must be the basis
for approaching the gods for 'protection'; but exactly in what sense 'neediness'

is understood is not easy to determine. It does not seem to be in the sense of 'in need of socio-political protection', or at least only in this connection. Of course, the specifically magico-religious 'power' could have been mobilized for worldly ends. The turn to personalized invisible powers on the part of the helpless in the face of oppressive conditions is, according to a philosopher, the core impulse behind myth.[98] The inspired poet would bring these forces to bear on behalf of the 'needy'. But the Gāthās do not allow us to restrict the 'protection' that the gods are asked to provide to the mundane. In fact, the worldly intervention of the protective gods is there, but for the most part as a background. Ancient conceptions of deities and of their relation to men are generally religious transpositions of socio-political relations.[99] Eschatology, too, makes use of the vocabulary of societal conditions, its familiarity, and its emotional resonance. The importance of pastoral terms in particular, like *vāstar-*, is a general phenomenon of ancient religious thought. The controversy over the 'metaphorical' use of, e.g. *vāstar-* only proves the inappropriateness of our perspective. Is it in the 'metaphorical' sense where used of a protective god? The question seems to be badly formulated.

The history of religions, anthropology and comparative sociology of religious behaviour allow us to reconstruct in some measure the conceptual universe to which we must assume the term belonged – at our risk, of course, but we have no other choice. What, indeed, does the 'pastoralist' have to do with the protection asked for one's soul once it is separated from the body, whether in ritual, while asleep, or at death? Is it because the soul is on its own that it is in need of protection – in all these cases a situation of helplessness being at hand? Is it because the lowly, let us say, has not been able to ensure through fitting, lavish sacrifice the good will of the gods either for his earthly existence or for the final journey of his soul? The juxtaposition remains puzzling:

> Y 50.1   *kaṱ mōi uruuā, isē cahiiā auuaŋhō*
> *kə̄ mōi pasə̄uš, kə̄ mə̄.nā θrātā vistō*
> *aniiō ašāṱ, θβāṱcā mazdā ahurā*
> *azdā zūtā, vahištāaṱcā manaŋhō*

> Does my soul dispose of any help whatever? Which protector other than *aša* and you, O Mazdā Ahura, and Good Thinking is assuredly there for me and for my (sacrificial?) animal at the time of invocation (for help)?

The adverb *azdā* 'assuredly, obviously', despite its position, naturally modifies the verbal adjective *vistō* 'found'. The reference of the action noun *zūti-* 'invocation', from √*zū* 'call, invoke', is obscure. The Vedic cognate √*hav* means 'call on', e.g. the gods, so ritual invocation of the gods, but it can also be used in non-ritual contexts, according to Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 2, pp. 809–10).[100] In the Gāthās, however, the verb is consistently used to call on deities, especially for 'help', whether this is explicitly stated (Y 49.12) or not (Y 51.10). Thus, as Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 241) have remarked, the action noun

zūti- governs the implied *auuah-* 'help'. This shows that the two juxtaposed questions, Y 50.1aa′ and 1b–d′, cannot be separated. One might think that the reason for coupling the two questions is to underline the twofold character of the function of the protective gods, worldly and eschatological, but the notion of *auuah-* does not seem to be used in a non-cultic context in the Gāthās. Nonetheless, the temporal locative *zūtā* 'at the time of invocation (for help)' need not, and in fact should not, be taken in the restrictive sense of 'during invocation' – not: 'who is there to protect me during ritual invocation?', but: 'who is there for sure at the time of invocation, so I can ask for help?' The 'help' is probably sought for the soul especially when in need of protection, i.e. separated from the body.

Y 46.2 presents a similar situation: the neediness of the poet is presented in socio-economic terms, and on this basis, the boon-granting god is approached for 'help', which is nearly viewed as compensation. Although the exact nature of this 'help' is not specified, it is related to the *īšti-* 'control' that good thinking allows the poet to exercise.

> Y 46.2   *vaēdā tat yā, ahmī mazdā anaēšō*
> *mā kamnafšuuā, hiiatcā kamnānā ahmī*
> *gərəzōi tōi, ā īt auuaēnā ahurā*
> *rafəδrə̄m caguuå, hiiat friiō friiāi daidīt*
> *āxsō vaŋhə̄uš, ašā īštīm manaŋhō*

I know why I am ineffective, O Mazdā: it is because of the paucity of my flock, and because I have few men. I address my laments to you. Consider (giving) it (to me), O Ahura, the help that a friend possessed of gifts would give to (his) friend. Behold (then) (my) control, (in adherence) with *aša*, available through good thinking!

Whether *caguuå* is from *caguuah-* or *caguuaṇt-* (Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 240), it is in the nominative, and so cannot be related to the vocative *ahurā*. This means that the enclitic neuter pronoun *īt* does not refer to the complaint but to giving *rafəδrə̄m* 'help' (contra Lommel 1971, p. 132; Insler 1975, p. 81; Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 168; Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 158). The adjective *caguuå* modifies *friiō* 'friend', both in the nominative. The genitive *vaŋhə̄uš…* *īštīm manaŋhō* is subjective: the poet's 'control' is available to him through good thinking. From other passages considered above, in particular Y 51.2b′ *dōišā mōi ištōiš xšaθrəm*, we know that the object of control is *xšaθra-* 'power'. The help the poet seeks is in fact magico-religious power, thus turning his mundane powerlessness to good account.[101] The instrumental *ašā* is not the complement of *āxsō* but of *īštīm*, an action noun with verbal force. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 168) makes *ašā* an attributive: 'Look upon the vigour of good thought, (inspired) by truth'. For Insler (1975, p. 81), it is a comitative instrumental: 'Let me see the power of good thinking allied with truth!' His analysis, however, is unacceptable, based on a vague (unexamined) sense of

īšti- 'control'. The instrumental has the sense of an authorising reference: it expresses the ground of 'controlling' the power that the protective god grants (cf. Y 51.18–19).

Three times, as we said, *drigu-* 'needy' occurs in the Gāthās, and each time we find it in close connection with the power (*xšaθra-*) of the protective god. In Y 27.13 the power that the protective god, Mazdā Ahura, receives through good thinking makes him a pastor of the needy ones (*vaŋhōuš dazdā manaŋhō… xšaθrəmcā ahurāi.ā yim drigubiiō dadaṯ vāstārəm*).[102] The *Ahuna Vairiia* was understood by the Young Avestan tradition as the acknowledge-ment of Mazdā as the guiding and protective god, with an eschatological sig-nificance. In Y 27.13, *ratu- ašāṯ hacā* places the appointment in the perspective of eschatology. In Y 53.9 the subjunctive aorist verb *dāhī* expresses an envis-aged action, taking place presumably in the future once and for all: Y 53.9d-d″ *taṯ mazdā tauuā xšaθrəm, yā ərəžəjiiōi dāhī, ⁺drigauuē vahiiō* 'that power is yours, O Mazdā, with which you will have made it better (i.e., best) for the needy who lives rightly'. The protective god's 'power' is placed here in direct relationship with eschatology. The subjunctive *dāhī* is not from √*dā* 'give' but from √*dā* 'set, place'. Yet, as far as I know, all the scholars understand it in the former sense. Bartholomae (*AW*, col. 778) translates: 'du dem rechtlebenden Armen das bessere Los verschaffen wirst'; Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 194): 'Thou mayest grant the better (part)'; Insler (1975, p. 113): 'Thou shalt grant what is very good'; Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 191): 'tu veux bien faire le meilleur don'. We find the same particular usage of the comparative *vahiiō* as the direct object of √*dā* 'set, place', with a dative of person as the beneficiary and the divine *xšaθra-* 'power' as the instrumental of means, in Y 51.6, where the eschatological frame is unmistakable.

> 51.6   *yə̄ vahiiō vaŋhōuš dazdē, yascā hōi vārāi rādaṯ*
>   *ahurō xšaθrā mazdā, aṯ ahmāi akāṯ aśiiō*
>   *yə̄ hōi nōiṯ vīdāitī, apə̄mē aŋhōuš uruuaēsē*

> Who makes it better than good by his power for the one who accedes to his will, but worse than bad for the one who would not venerate him, at the last turn of existence, (is) Ahura Mazdā'.[103]

The expression 'set in place what is better than good for the one, and for the other worse than bad' recalls Y 48.4 'things being within your power of achieving your intended ends (*xratu-*), the outcome will be different for each depending on the shape of their *daēnā*'. In Y 53.9, the divine power clearly serves eschatological ends. One can see that *drigu-* 'needy' is not merely a socio-economic category but has taken on a definite eschatological sense: the needy is the one who is in need of the protective god's power (*xšaθra-*) of making it 'better than good' for him, who lives rightly and adheres to the god's teachings.

Let us go back to Y 34.5. *kaṯ və̄ xšaθrəm kā īštiš… ašā vohū manaŋhā θrāiiōidiiāi drigūm yūšmākəm* means: 'for safeguarding me, who is in need of

your protective power – because of *aṧa* – what power do you bring to bear, what control do I exercise thanks to good thinking?' Insler (1975, p. 55) and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 140) indiscriminately translate the two instrumentals as the means governed by the infinitive 'to protect': 'to protect your needy dependent – as I indeed am – with truth and with good thinking' (Insler). This is clearly wrongheaded, both as a general proposition and as a Gāthic statement in particular, in view of the doctrine of 'power' and its relation with 'good thinking'. Good thinking is what makes possible the poet's control of the divine power, and it is through good thinking that this power is exchanged between the supreme god and his worshippers. *Aṧa*, on the other hand, is the ground on which the protective god's intervention is requested, the reason for the god's exercise of power on behalf of the 'needy' and for the poet's exercising control over that power.[104] This is the frame in which we have to place the puzzling phrase *ṧiiaoθanāi… yaθā vā hahmī* 'for (my) enactment and as I sleep'. Insler (1975, p. 222) edits the verb to *ahmī*, represented only by poor Indian manuscripts (e.g. J3, L13, O2), and interprets *yaθā vā ahmī* as a parenthetical emphasis of the poet's status: 'as I indeed am' (Insler 1975, p. 55). This forces him to have *θrāiiōidiiāi* governed by a noun, i.e. *ṧiiaoθana-*, which is otherwise unattested except perhaps in the case of nouns in *ti*.[105] Our phrase cannot mean 'during wakefulness or as I sleep'. It is not any action whatsoever that is commended to the divine protection. The repudiation of the *daēvas* tells us what action the poet has in mind in Y 34.5. It is the action that is diametrically opposed to the one we encounter in Y 32.4–5, the 'worst action' that deprives man of the resourcefulness (*xratu-*) of Mazdā and leads him astray from the path of *aṧa*. In this way, man is cheated out of 'good life and immortality'. In Y 30.5, the poet's action is specified as *haiθiia- ṧiiaoθana-* 'true action', which pleases Mazdā, and for whose 'measure' one should look to the protective god (Y 27.13). In Y 51.19 it is described as the action that promotes life (*gaiiehiiā ṧiiaoθana-*), where 'life' connotes the valued (mental) existence. More immediately, the 'action' of Y 34.5 is already introduced and described in 34.2bb′ *spəntax́iiācā nərəš ṧiiaoθanā, yehiiā uruuā aṧā hacaitē* 'the action of the vitalizing man whose soul is associated with *aṧa*'. Whether the 'vitalization of existence' (Y 43.2–3) is oriented to the 'best (mental) existence' in the divine sphere or to a 'true state of being', apparently on earth, made 'splendid' by the power of the protective god (Y 34.15), it is a programme that involves the vitalizing man in situations of strife with the forces of *druj*, both supernatural and mundane. The all-embracing nature, indeed the cosmological dimension, of this combat between the 'vitalizers' of existence (*saošiiaṇt-*) and the 'partisan of *druj*' is sketched in Y 46.3–4:

*kadā mazdā, yōi uxšānō asnąm | aŋhōuš darəθrāi, frō aṧahiiā frārəṇtē | vərəzdāiš
sōŋghāiš, saošiiaṇtąm xratauuō |… aṭ tō̄ṇg drəguuå, yō̄ṇg aṧahiiā važdrō̄ṇg pāṭ
| gå frōrətōiš,… dužazōbå hąs, x́āiš ṧiiaoθanāiš ahō̄mustō | yastōm xšaθrāṭ,
mazdā mōiθaṭ jiiātōuš vā | huuō tō̄ṇg frō.gå, paθmō̄ṇg hucistōiš caraṭ*

When will the bulls of days, the efficacious powers of the vitalizers, rise in support of the existence of *aṣa* with thriving (?) declarations? The partisan of druj, being a foul invoker and repulsive because of his actions, prevents the oxen, the conveyors of aṣa, from surging forward. He who deprives him (the drugvaṇt) of power and the capacity to live will make these (oxen) the vanguards of the flight of good insight'.[106]

For his perilous 'action' against the forces of druj, the vitalizing man needs the protective power of the supreme god (cf. Y 51.21 *ārmatōiš nā spəṇtō huuō… šiiaoθanā… vohū xšaθrəm manaŋhā mazdå dadāt̰ ahurō*).

Sleep puts the poet in touch with the invisible origins of existence; it is, as we saw, a privileged medium of true knowledge. But the possession of 'second insight', that is, the vision of the invisible, is also a source of danger. Just as the soul needs guidance and protection upon entering the realm of the dead in archaic Greek literature and in the mystery religions, and in Vedic literature, so, too, does the Gāthic poet, because of the very nature of his activity. The invisible is both the source of true knowledge and a perilous realm. Thus *yaθā vā hahmī* 'or as I sleep' does not refer to death or actual sleep (or ecstatic seizure), but to any of these as a state of being in contact with the invisible.[107] The dual determination of the role of the poet, namely as the man of divine intuition and vitalizing action, is also reflected in Y 34.2, which confirms the sense proposed here for 'as I sleep': 34.2a–b *atcā ī tōi manaŋhā, mainiiə̄ušcā vaŋhə̄uš vīspā dātā / spəṇtax́iiācā nərəš šiiaoθanā* 'all the (primordial) determinations (are) yours, both (those) of the good intuition (apprehended) by thought and (those) of the vitalizing man (accomplished) by action'. As Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 114) explain, *ī* is the sandhi deformation of *īt̰* before the following dental. The enclitic *tōi* must be genitive, not dative, contra Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 125. The expression *tōi… vīspā dātā* 'all determinations or laws (are) yours' can hardly be separated from Y 33.1 *iθā varəšaitē yā dātā aŋhə̄uš paouruiiehiiā ratūš šiiaoθanā razištā* 'thus will be accomplished the straightest actions that have been established as the measures of the primordial existence', and Y 46.15 *tāiš yūš šiiaoθanāiš aṣəm xšmaibiiā daduiiē yāiš dātāiš paoiriiāiš ahurahiiā* 'you make *aṣa* for yourselves with these actions that (are) the primordial determinations of Ahura (Mazdā)'. The second passage indicates the raison d'être of the 'actions' primordially established by the god; it also shows that the enclitic *tōi* in Y 34.2 is a genitive. Y 34.5 *šiiaoθanāi… yaθā vā hahmī* can be paraphrased: 'for the action of the vitalizing man, which aims at accomplishing the measures of primordial existence, and while "seeing" the invisible, which reveals, e.g. through dreams, the (true) constitution of existence set in place by the creator god'.

Mortals have always looked to the gods for attaining their ultimate desires. Life is not just an absolute value for man, against which everything is measured, but also a constant source of anxiety, something that can be easily taken away from him. It is understandable, then, that in safeguarding his life, man should turn to superhuman powers which alone are capable of combating on

his behalf the dark forces he feels are at work imperilling his existence. In some
sense, the failure of the appointed gods is inevitable. And when it is noticed
and announced, other gods must replace the failed deities. Y 34.5cc′ *parə̄ vå*
vīspāiš parə̄.vaoxəmā, daēuuāišcā xrafstrāiš mašiiāišcā does not say that the
gods (*ahuras*) are stronger than the *daēvas* and their mortal followers, but that
'we declare you superior' to the latter. The Gāthic gods are considered super-
ior to the traditional gods. A common measure is implied in the comparison.
Obviously it is not a question of one group of deities being merely imaginary,
or even being less 'godlike', whatever this might mean. Unfortunately, the
adjective *xrafstra-* used here and elsewhere of the *daēvas* has resisted ana-
lysis, so one cannot be certain of its exact meaning and reference, but it is a
term that in the Gāthās has a special affinity with the *daēvas*.[108] In any case,
the common measure is more or less clear. The Gāthic gods are superior to
the *daēvas* and their mortal devotees in providing the knowledge and action
(the measure and power) necessary for the desirable life. The turn away from
the *daēvas* is underway at the time of the composition of the Gāthās. Both the
antagonism between the followers of the Gāthic doctrine and the adherents
of the *daēva* cult, *and* the formation of a new community based on the new
thought are signalled in Y 45.11.

Y 45.11 *yastā daēuuə̄ṇg, aparō mašiiąscā*
   tarə̄.mąstā, yōi īm tarə̄.mainiiaṇtā
   aniiə̄ṇg ahmāt̰, yə̄ hōi arə̄m.mainiiātā
   saošiiaṇtō də̄ṇg, patōiš spəṇtā daēnā
   uruuaθō brātā, ptā vā mazdā ahurā

Who henceforth, because of it, spurns the *daēvas* and the men who scorn
him, (those) other than the one who shows him deference – (he is) a loyal
ally, (like) a brother or a father, O Mazdā Ahura, the vitalizing *daēnā* of
the salvific master of the house.

The instrumental pronoun *tā* from Y 45.11a probably refers to *ahmāi stōi* from
the previous stanza. The nominative *aparō* must be among the introduced
antecedents of the opening relative pronoun. Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 201)
understand it in a temporal sense: 'qui vient en second place, ultérieur'. So
do Bartholomae: 'posterior' (*AW*, vol. 76) and Mayrhofer: 'hinterer, späterer'
(*EWA*, vol. 1, pp. 83–84). The Old Persian adverb *aparam* certainly means
'subsequently or later on' (cf. *EWA*, vol. 1, p. 83). Humbach (1991, vol. 1,
p. 167) translates the adjective 'the other one' and maintains that it refers to
Zarathuštra. This implied reference is quite possible. His supposed activity
entails a change in current religious practices and beliefs, which may be what
is meant in his being described as *aparō* 'the one coming after'. But he is also
said to be the *daēnā* of the master of the house, who thus plays a salvific
role. Whatever else *daēnā* may signify, its eschatological (i.e. psychopompic)
significance is essential; and here, given the adjectives derived from √*sū* 'vitalize'

and the context of the previous stanza to which *tā* refers, it is probably a (pointed) synecdoche for Zarathuštra (*pars pro toto*), or perhaps better said, a description of the function of Zarathuštra or, in any case, the promoter of the Gāthic doctrine.[109]

The traditional priests *karapans* and Kavis, intimately associated with the *daēva* cult, were not just ritual technicians but also guardians of customs and social norms, as were the magi.[110] When the poet says that the *daēvas* cheat 'man' from the 'good life and immortality', he implicitly refers to the role of his priestly adversaries in society at large. A confrontation with the cult of the *daēvas* could not have been confined to matters of rite in the narrow sense. Their relation with the *daēvas*, clearly reflected in the Gāthās, had to be the ground of the authority the *karapans* claimed for themselves. These ancient Iranian priests presided, perhaps indirectly, over the norms of communal life. But these norms, like any set of social norms, had to be biased in the interest of a section of the community,[111] whose scope had now perhaps expanded to embrace settled confederations of tribes (*dax́iiu-*). Elective worship of a part of the pantheon by particular sections of society, however defined,[112] was a regular phenomenon of the ancient world. The 'good life' thus had its social markers, as it always does. The mortals associated with the *daēvas* and their cult, and apparently repudiated because of it, could not mean the whole (male population of) society. The specific features of the *daēva* cult, such as the (imputed) 'cruel' treatment of the sacrificial victim or the consumption of 'intoxicants', and generally its characterization as 'fury' (*aēšəma-*) and its stated purpose (or pretension) of attaining immortality (cf. Y 48.1, but also the description in Y 32.10a′b[113]) make it very likely that we are dealing with a specific type of rite.[114] In fact, as we will see later, the *daēva* cult was a nocturnal sacrifice. This type of rite was anomalous among Indo-European festivals and rites; or more precisely, it was dedicated to the realm of the dead and the passage to the beyond.

The Zoroastrian 'profession of faith' (Y 12, Yt 13.89) preserves the fundamental importance of the turn against the *daēva* cult for the new doctrine.[115] In Yt 13.89 Zarathuštra's *frauuarānē* is prefaced with *yō paoiriiō stōiš astuuaiθiiå staoṯ ašəm nāist daēuuō* 'who among beings possessed of bone first praised *aša* and reviled the *daēvas*'. The double gesture defines the threshold of the religion. Praising *aša* requires reviling the *daēvas*. The faithful in *frauuarānē* (Y 12.1) repeats Zarathuštra's founding gesture: to practise the cult and doctrine of Ahura Mazdā in the manner of Zarathuštra is to be *vīdaēuuō* 'rejecting the *daēvas*'. As Benveniste (1970, pp. 41–42) points out, the adjective is shorthand for the formula (Y 12.6) *daēuuāiš sarəm vīmruiiē* 'I renounce the company of the *daēvas*' or 'I renounce all association with the *daēvas*'. The expression points to the *daēva* cult and its basic conception as the company of the *daēvas* and their worshippers. In effect, the formula says: I do not take part in the cult of the *daēvas*. This must have been its original meaning. 'Il faut remonter à la prédication des Gāthās (e.g., Y 49.3 – A. A.) pour retrouver la valeur authentique de *vī-daēva-*, qui résume l'essence du zoroastrisme; c'est

pourquoi *vī-daēva-* et *zaraθuštri-* vont souvent ensemble' (Benveniste 1970, p. 42). At the core of the Gāthic turn against the ancient gods was an uncompromising opposition to a definite rite, in which the *daēvas* and mortals came 'together in quest of immortality' (Y 48.1), and the ideology it represented.

Notes

1 Compare Kellens and Pirart 1991, pp. 77–81 and Insler 1975, pp. 195–96.
2 See Ahmadi 2012.
3 Compare Kellens 1995, pp. 30–34.
4 Schwartz (2006, p. 469) has Y 32.3 (instead of Y 32.2) and Y 32.4 (instead of Y 32.3): 'the first group is answered with divine approval at Y 32.3', etc. This is obviously an unintended mistake.
5 *manōi* must be a derivative of √*man* 'conceive, think' and scanned /*mnōi*/. Lommel's interpretation of *mahmī manōi* is unlikely: 'Es ist, wie ich glaube, ein Ausdruck dafür, daß die prophetische Schau dieser ersten Strophen ein Phantasiestück ist' (1971, p. 63). It is not clear to me from his translation whether he thinks that the *daēvas* are the sole subject of the direct speech: 'Nach seinen, des Weisen Herrn, Freuden begehrte der Sippengenosse und auch seinen (Freuden) die Dorfgemeinschaft nebst dem Gastfreund, nach seinen (Freuden begehrte) die Götter, so denke ich mir (und sprachen): Deine Boten wollen wir sein, um die abzuhalten, welche euch befeinden' (1971, p. 60). The erroneous past tense rendition of yāsat, giving the stanza the stamp of a report, underlies its being imagined a 'Phantasiestück', supposedly signalled by *mahmī manōi* 'in meinem Sinn'.
6 In the *Rgveda* the word has the sense of 'courier' (e.g. RV 2.39.1) and is especially used of Agni, e.g. RV 4.2.2, 4.8.1, 5.3.8.
7 Compare Schwartz 2006, p. 468.
8 Compare my discussion of Y 48.4 *θβahmī xratāu* further on.
9 Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 136) do not translate the phrase: 'Le sens de abl. + *hacā* ne nous paraît pas accessible' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 140). Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 146) forces the conventional translation on the text: 'who dwell in accordance with (the needs of) the cow'.
10 Hintze (2007a, p. 214) translates: 'That person (is) invigoration and libation, O Wise one, who unites his belief with good thought, whosoever, by virtue of right-mindedness, (is) well acquainted with truth and with all those in your kingdom, O Lord'.
11 Compare Y 49.10a–c′ *tatcā mazdā θβahmī ā ḍąm nipåŋ́hē manō vohū urunascā ašāunąm nəmascā yā ārmaïtiš ížācā* 'and this, O Mazdā, you shelter in your abode: good thinking and the souls of the *ašavans*, and (ritual) reverence with which (are) Ārmaiti and refreshment'.
12 Compare Molé 1963, p. 19.
13 See Kellens 2013, p. 68. Compare Humbach 1991, vol. 2, p. 102. Tremblay (2009, p. 337 n.36) accepts Humbach's analysis and relates the word to √*frā* 'emplir'. See also Tremblay's discussion of the form and meaning of √*daxš* in Tremblay 2009, pp. 336–39. According to him, with the pre-verb *frā*, √*daxš* 'marquer, pointer' takes the sense of 'orienter, marquer le but'.
14 The genitive must be subjective. On 'advent' for *aši-* see Kellens 2011, 99–100 and Pirart 2006b, pp. 27–33.
15 See Kellens 1990, pp. 165–71, and especially Kellens 1995, pp. 49–51: 'la dayanâ est non seulement définie par son nom comme une capacité de voyance, mais entretient un rapport intime et multilatéral, à la fois actif, passif et causatif, avec l'acte de voir. La dayanâ voit, est vue, fait voir. Elle est la première et unique chose que

le ruvan qui a quitté le corps voit du monde qui l'entoure. Elle distingue le chemin et le montre au ruvan qu'elle guide. Par sa beauté remarquable, elle fait apparaître aux dieux, de manière immédiate, le mérite de celui qui arrive chez eux' (Kellens 1995, p. 51).

16 Compare the discussion of *psychē* in the third part of this book.

17 Although I follow Hintze's analysis (2007a, p. 59) of the syntax in the main, my translation is somewhat different.

18 See Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 233.

19 See Detienne 1999 and Gonda 1963, pp. 68–77, pp. 202–208, pp. 259–65.

20 Compare Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 143; Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 151; Insler 1975, p. 61; Lommel 1971, p. 97. Kellens and Pirart's assignment of the neuter pronoun is artificial: 'Je souhaite atteindre la jouvence et le tonicité, détenir l'Harmonie, Fais-moi ce cadeau: que la vie de la divine Pensée soit pour moi un octroi de richesses!' In their comments (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 159), they admit that it is 'un pur artifice'. On the other hand, they must be right in reading *utaiiūitī təuuīšīm* as **utaiiūitī təuuīšī*, a 'regular dvandva' (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 159).

21 See Beekes 1988, pp. 196–97; cf. Kellens 1994b, p. 52. Lommel (1971, p. 97) translates *ašəm dərəidiiāi* 'am Wahrsein festzuhalten'.

22 See Kuiper 1964, p. 121.

23 Compare Pirart 2006b, pp. 27–33.

24 The general connection that Kuiper (1964, pp. 106–18) sees between *aša*, or more generally the abode of the gods (e.g. of Varuṇa), and the sun in the Indo-Iranian understanding of the heavenly sphere can hardly be disputed. Varuṇa 'resides in and watches over the Cosmic Order (*R̥tá*), which is said to be "fixed and hidden where they unharness the horses of the sun"' (Kuiper 1964, p. 107). It is, however, another thing to limit the bliss promised to the *ašavan* to a mystical vision of the 'sun in the rock'. 'Just as Mitra and Varuṇa, as lords of the cosmic mystery, knew the secret of "the sun in the rock" and were, therefore, "sun-seers", so, with the transfer of the epithet from the lord to his domain, Ahura Mazdā's *xšaθra-* is called "sun-seeing" in the Gathas' (Kuiper 1964, p. 120). But this supposed transfer is hardly meaningful: a 'domain' cannot have a mystical vision of 'the sun in the rock'.

25 Compare Y 49.8: 'Make the most joyful union with *aša* happen for Frašaoštra and me in your divine kingdom for ever – this I ask you, O Mazdā Ahura! Let us be dispatched (to you)!'

26 Compare Gnoli 2000, pp. 31–33: 'An article by Gershevitch has been and still is an enlightening point of reference for me: since it was published, in 1975, I have gone back to it on several occasions… As far as Zoroaster was concerned, the meaning of *daēva-* remained the same: he condemned *all* of them… for the very reason they were the *gods* of polytheism… As Gershevitch rightly points out, they existed as "thoughts, conceived by erroneously thinking men"… Therefore the semantic development of Iranian *daivas* from "gods" to "demons" still holds good. It gets its origin from Zoroaster's condemnation of all the gods, manifestation of evil thinking (*Y.* 32, 3) or "Hirngespinste", as Gershevitch writes'. See my discussion of Gershevitch's text to which Gnoli refers in Chapter 1.

27 See Soudavar 2006, pp. 164–70. Soudavar argues against attributing the sense of 'seed' or 'offspring' to *ciθra-* in any of its occurrences in the Avesta. Translating *ciθra-* as 'apparition' rather than 'appearance', which Soudavar continues to use, perhaps fits in better with his view of the matter.

28 See Wackernagel and Debrunner 1954, pp. 849–58; and Renou 1958, p. 17.

29 Narten (1982, p. 39) translates Y 32.3aa′: 'aber ihr Götter alle seid Samen aus dem schlechten Denken'. She seems to have a metaphorical 'Samen' in mind. Aside from the problems I point out above, there is also the difficulty of the use of the ablative instead of the genitive. Lommel (1971, p. 60) and Gershevitch (1975, p. 79)

split Y 32.3 a–b′ into two parallel statements coordinated by the enclitic particle *ca* in Y 32.3b. This is very unlikely, since *ca* regularly coordinates sub-clausal terms in the Gāthās and extremely rarely, if at all, clauses (see Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 143, p. 158, pp. 160–61). Here it coordinates two subjects.

30 Gershevitch's translation of Y 32.3bb′ bears this out: 'and he who so-much worships you (is a manifestation) of falsehood and dissent' (Gershevitch 1975, p. 79). It is not clear whether he thinks *drujascā pairimatōiščā* are in the ablative or genitive. If the parallelism with Y 32.3aa′ holds they have to be in the former, but he translates as if they were in the (subjective) genitive. Compare Kellens 1994a, p. 81 n.27.

31 Compare Panaino 2004, p. 116: 'Alors vous, Daēuua, êtes tous la manifestation (*ciθrəm*) (qui vient) de la Mauvaise Pensée (*akāt manaŋhō*) et le chef (mauvais) aussi qui vous donne le sacrifice est (une manifestation) de la "Tromperie et de la Négligence". Vous êtres odieux dans l'action (mauvaise), (à cause des actes) par lesquels vous êtes renommés sur la septième partie de la terre'.

32 In Yt 8.32 we also find *us paiti aδāt hištaiti… tištriiō… zraiiaŋhat haca vourukašāt* 'Then, Tištrya (Sirius) rises up again from the Sea Vourukaša'. Here *paiti* is used as an adverb 'again', not a verbal prefix. It is used regularly as a verbal prefix with √*stā* and a complement in the accusative or locative (*AW*, col. 1603). This latter combination emphatically locates the subject in the complement.

33 Compare Vr 11.12 *aδāt māta aδāt būta haca vaŋhaot manaŋhat* 'being both formed and risen from good thought' (Hintze 2013, p. 60).

34 See, for example, Vernant 1991, pp. 164–85.

35 Insler's appeal to Y 51.10b *huuō dāmōiš drujō hunuš* is not cogent. That 'offspring' and *druj* are found together does not automatically make the passage relevant.

36 Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132) has 'the activities of deceit and contempt'.

37 Kellens (1994a, p. 35) cites Y 16.7 *xᵛanuuaitīš ašahe ⁺vərəzō yazamaide yāhu iristanąm uruuąnō šāiieṇti yå ašaonąm frauuašaiiō* 'we venerate the sun-drenched domains of *aša* where the souls of the dead, which are the Fravartis of the *ašavans*, exist in blissful tranquility'. The locative relative pronoun *yāhu* indicates that at issue must be a concrete place. There cannot be any question that Old Persian *artāvan-* is the one who achieves eschatological salvation and the Middle Persian *ardāyīh* designates the postmortem state of 'being saved'. See also Gignoux 1979.

38 See my discussion in Chapter 5.

39 Compare Whitney 2005, pp. 414–15: use of *ápi* with the locative is rare in Vedic.

40 Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 201) believe *aipī* is used in all three passages as a verbal prefix, i.e. *aipī* + √*ah*, requiring a complement in the locative. But it is not the verbal prefix alone that decides the case of the complement; one must also consider the actual semantics of the verb.

41 See Renou 1968, p. 290.

42 See De Vaan 2003, p. 396.

43 See Kellens and Pirart 1991, pp. 84–85.

44 Bailey seems to derive the sense of taking an oath from the more basic meaning of 'be fitting'. Mayrhofer (*EWA*, vol. 2, pp. 792–3) gives for Vedic *svar* 'tönen, schnauben, erschallen', etc. Compare Rix 2001, p. 613.

45 See Christensen 1934 and Kellens 1984b.

46 See Wackernagel and Debrunner 1954, pp. 644–45.

47 See Ahmadi 2014b.

48 One finds it difficult to understand Insler's reasoning (1975, p. 297) for translating the adverb as 'by oneself'.

49 Kellens maintains that in Y 48.1 *daibitānā* qualifies *fraoxtā* and the phrase means 'la parole à double portée', 'qui consistera à rejeter les *dušə.xšaθrā* et à faire allégiance aux *huxšaθrā*' (1994a, p. 83). This translation of the term is based in his theory of ritual triage. What sense could his translation have in Y 32.3?

50 See Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 233. *daēuuāŋg* must be an accusative of relation.

51 Lommel (1971, p. 176), Insler (1975, p. 109) and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 191) read Y 51.21b *daēnā* in the instrumental. This would make the pāda metrically excessive. Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 185) read *ašəm spə̄nuuaṱ* in the nominative and translate Y 51.21b 'la conscience est l'Harmonie bénéfique'. This statement of the identity of *daēnā* and *aša* is (at least conceptually) meaningless. If the attainment of *aša* is meant, as it must be (cf. 43.12 *mōi mraoš ašəm jasō frāxšnənē… uzirəidiiāi parā ahmāṱ* 'so that I may rise before… you tell me: "come to *aša* in knowledgeable (help)"'), it makes sense to turn to 49.4dd', quoted above in the text, for the syntax and sense of the 'insight'.

52 See Beekes 1979, pp. 5–7.

53 It is not clear to me how Schwartz analyses the section (Y 48.1b–c') that he translates: 'as (also) the enactments of malice, the duplicitous things proclaimed by the daēuuas and mortals for / as to immortality' (Schwartz 2006, p. 481). How is 'as (also) the enactments of malice' related to the rest of the sentence? Does it describe the effect of 'the duplicitous things'? What is the syntactic function of *hiiaṱ*?

54 Insler (1975, p. 91), Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 168) and Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 176) read *hiiaṱ* as an adverb of time ('when'); hence, in their view, 48.1b describes a period or an event, accompanying or providing the context of the action that unfolds in 48.1aa'. Kellens and Pirart do not translate *ąsašutā*. Humbach (1991, vol. 2, p. 196) interprets it as the loc. sing. of a hapax *ąsa-šuiti-* 'setting in motion [apportionment] of the (due) share', admitting the excessive syllable. However, the convergence of two considerations, namely, the regular insertion of a glide between sibilants and the metric excess of the pāda, makes Humbach's interpretation of the form unlikely. Insler thinks that *hiiaṱ* 'can only refer back to **āṱ* in the sense of "after this present time which…"' (Insler 1975, p. 285). Thus he translates *adāiš… hiiaṱ *ąsšutā* 'during the times after this (present) one which is under the workings of evil', taking the instrumental °*āiš* as indicating an extension of time. Insler seems to make *hiiaṱ* perform two functions at the same time: time adverb and relative pronoun.

55 Kellens and Pirart (1990, p. 313) translate 'opulence'; Lommel (1971, p. 97, p. 149) translates 'Heil' and, occasionally, 'Vorteil' or 'Nutzen', but without making an distinction between the two Gāthic words; Humbach (1991, vol. 1, e.g. p. 176), 'benefit'; Insler (1975, e.g. p. 35), 'salvation'.

56 See Wackernagel and Debrunner (1954, pp. 219–35). The verbal sense that the Avestan stems in *ah*, Sanskrit *as*, can have is especially clear in the case of their use in the bahuvrīhi compounds such as *hu-manah* 'well-minded' or *duš-manah* 'ill-minded', etc.

57 The appearance of *sauuah-* in the plural in Y 28.9 *xšaθrəmcā sauuaŋhąm* 'and power over vitalizations' does not create any problem for the interpretation proposed here. See Ahmadi 2014c and the discussion of *xšaθra-* below.

58 Compare Narten 1982, p. 57 and Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 112.

59 I follow Tremblay's analysis and translation of the stanza. See Tremblay 2006, pp. 305–18.

60 See my discussion in the previous chapter.

61 Gershevitch (1975, p. 79) translates Y 32.4a'b: 'doing which the worst men wax darlings of the gods'; Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 132): 'offering which the mortals may grow (as) minions of (you) Daēvas'; Lommel (1971, p. 60): 'so daß die Menschen, die es tun, den Göttern immer mehr wohlgefällig werden'.

62 See Gonda 1962, pp. 3–111. In the aorist the culminating point or relevant moment of the process is brought out; or the process is presented as accomplished, i.e. 'reduced to a fact', hence the so-called gnomic (i.e. generalizing) use of the aorist. Compare Hintze 2007a, pp. 240–41.

63 For the recovery of the final dental in the conjunctive particle see Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 83.

64 Gershevitch's translation (1975, p. 79) of the stanza is problematic: 'Through-the-fact-that you have ordered these (deeds, by) doing which the worst men wax darlings of the gods (despite their) shunning Good Mind, (despite their) recoiling from the Lord Mazdā's commandment and from Truth'. Why 'despite', since the gods themselves 'order' the actions? Is conformity with 'Good Mind', etc., a value for the *daēvas*, in which case alone the 'despite' utterance would have any sense? One must admit, given Gershevitch's enthusiastic 'defense' of the monotheism of the Gāthās, that these stanzas stage a burlesque play: the 'prophet' apostrophizes the 'gods' that do not exist and accuses them of 'ordering' actions that lead to men's loss of life, for which the gods are held responsible.

65 See Ahmadi 2014a.

66 Although I follow Hintze's analysis of the syntax in the main, the translated text is mine.

67 Insler's translation of the 4a–c′ is, however, both syntactically and conceptually confused. Also, it is not clear why he prefaces 4dd′ with the adversative conjunctive 'but'. Nothing in the Avestan text warrants this provision.

68 *saošiiaṇtąm xratauuō* in Y 46.3 is 'the vitalizer's mental capacity to achieve the desired or appointed end' (in the plural). It can hardly mean 'the intellects of the saviors' (Schmidt 1975, p. 8) or 'les intelligences des promis à l'opulence' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 159), both of which mar the sense of the stanza. See Ahmadi 2014a.

69 See, for example, Kellens 1984b. Despite forcing itself into an uncomfortable Dumézilian mould, this is an interesting article on the nature of the power (*xšaθra-*) that Yima wields. Kellens aptly characterizes Yima as 'le magicien de l'immortalité' (Kellens 1984b, p. 280). 'Il est le dernier et le plus prestigieux des héros primordiaux qui ont pour fonction de parachever l'œuvre divine. Par la construction du vara, il est même quelque chose de plus… Avec l'aide d'Ahura Mazdā, le magicien Yima a su donner forme à un véritable microcosme de la création divine… L'homme Yima détient une parcelle de ce que l'Iran considère comme le plus grandiose attribut des dieux, le pouvoir démiurgique' (Kellens 1984b, p. 273). Yima's 'power' is divine not just because it is demiurgic but also by virtue of its capacity to make the living immortal, to make the living coincide with its concept, as it were. See Christensen 1934 for various versions of the legend of Yima.

70 See Kellens and Pirart 1991, pp. 84–85 for emendation.

71 Compare Y 43.6ee′ *θβahiiā xratə̄uš yə̄m naēciš dābaiieitī* 'your mental capacity to achieve your ends (*xratu-*), which no one can frustrate'.

72 Compare the Haptaŋhāitic Y 41.2 (translation modified from Hintze 2007a, p. 310): 'May we obtain, O Wise one, your good power for all time! May a good ruler, a man or a woman, exercise the power for us in both existences, O most beneficent of those who exist!'

73 See de Vaan 2000, p. 72.

74 See *EWA*, vol. 2, p. 169.

75 The point stands, I think, whether or not one accepts de Vaan's edition (2000, p. 84) of *uruuatō* to ˣ*auruuatō* in the phrase *uruuatō aδara.naēmāt*, that is to say, whether it means 'roaring from below' or 'swift from below'. See Kellens 1984a, p. 90 and *EWA*, vol. 2, p. 439.

76 Insler's (1975, pp. 205–206) interpretation of the phrase 'to see the cow and the sun' as 'to remain alive' by drawing on the supposedly relevant Vedic idiom *svàr dṛśé* is not convincing. 'Seeing the cow and the sun' seems to be an inherited characterization of the rite of the *daēva* cult. See Part III.

77 It seems that in the Gāthās, *vāstriia-* 'pastoralist' has a specifically religious meaning, in charge of the spiritual care of the community.

78 See Gippert 2002, pp. 184–87.

79 See Ahmadi 2012.

80 See my discussion of Y 32.13 above.

81 The eschatological significance of the (recitation of the) *Ahuna Vairiia* is clearly set out in Y 19.6–10. See Ahmadi 2013.

82 The masculine plural pronoun *aēibiiō* 'for them' is without antecedent. Insler (1975, p. 63) seems to think it refers to *gaēθå* 'living creatures' from the previous verse. But this word is feminine. Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 153) makes it a demonstrative pronoun referring to 'those present'. This is possible. In Y 51.5, *vāstriiō… haṣ huxratuš* 'resourceful pastoralist' marks out correctly *dāθaēibiiō… ratūm… ašiuuå* 'the measure of the two rewards for those who abide by the law'. The parallel is striking and conceptually understandable. Compare also Y 31.1 *tā vå uruuātā marəntō… aēibiiō vahištā yōi zarazdå aŋhən mazdāi* 'your stipulations, O divine reckoners, are the best for those who will place their confidence in Mazdā'. Unfortunately, Y 31.2aaʹ is obscure, and the sense of 31.2b–cʹ is not quite accessible because of the hapax *aṣa-* 'section, part': 31.2b–cʹ *aṭ vå vīspə̄ŋg āiiōi, yaθā ratūm ahurō vaēdā / mazdā aiiå aṣaiiå, yā ašāṭ hacā juuām̃ahī* 'then I turn to you all (wanting to know) how Mazdā Ahura knows the *aṣa*-bound (i.e. soteriological) measure of these two parts by which we live'. Is it too much to suggest that the two parts are the earthly life and the beyond?

83 The pāda bʹ is one syllable short. It seems unlikely, however, that behind the enclitic °*cā* a mutilated finite verb might be hiding, e.g. *cinas, as has been suggested by Bartholomae in the sense of 'lehren'. See Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 84.

84 Insler separates 32.c from the subordinated clause, and translates 32.bbʹ: 'much as ye have deceived yourselves, the gods, (of it) by such evil thinking, and the evil spirit himself' (1975, p. 45). To make a case for auto-deception, however, is a tall order, which Insler certainly does not make. In his translated text, the ultimate culprit is 'evil thinking'. *aka-* or *aŋgra- mainiiu-* seems to be coeval with Mazdā (Y 30.3–5). The *daēvas* are deceived by *aŋgra- mainiiu-* (Insler 1975, p. 33). The suggestion that at issue is a 'moral' failure ('evil thinking') is specious. See my discussion in the first part of this book.

85 See Kellens 1974, pp. 31–33 where he cites FrW 4.3 'zəmargūzō bauuāṭ aŋrō mainiiuš zəmargūzō bauuåṇti daēuua "Aŋra Mainiiu sera se cachant en terre, les daēuuas seront se cachant en terre"' (Kellens 1974, p. 32). According to Yt 19.12, in the revitalized world, *druj* is ejected to where it had come from, i.e. under the earth, according to the later tradition recorded in Bundahišn.

86 Lommel (1971, p. 61) makes *fracinas* the verb of the subordinated clause 32.5b–c and derives it, following Bartholomae (AW 429ff.), from the supposed √*ciš* 'teach'. But OAv. √*ciš* 'allocate' does not take the accusative of person.

87 See Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 119: 'parce que le mauvais état d'esprit et le (mauvais) acts (rituel), à cause de la mauvaise Pensée et de la mauvaise parole, (ont fait) de vous les (mauvais) dieux'. They refer to Y 49.4 *tōi daēuuəŋg dąn yā drəguuatō daēnā*, where also the verb is articulated with two accusatives (Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 84). I do not think this phrase means: 'font des (mauvais) dieux la conscience du partisan de la Tromperie' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 172), but: 'set the *daēnā* of the *drugvaṇt* to the *daēvas*'. In any case, Y 32.10bʹ *yascā dāθə̄ŋg drəguuatō dadāṭ* means 'and the one who places the followers of *druj* in the position of the righteous ones', i.e. who pretends the former are righteous. It does not mean 'and the one who makes (i.e. forms), etc.' (cf. Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 120).

88 See Ahmadi 2012.

89 See also my discussion of Y 45.11 below.

90 See Ahmadi 2012.

91 The short initial vowel should not constitute a problem in any event, since it is present in the words derived from √*is* 'to master', e.g. *isuuan-* 'master', that is to say, without reduplication, as opposed to its Vedic cognate.

92 Cf. Cantera 2013, p. 111: 'Of which kind of help does my soul dispose, and when?'

93 Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 126) translate 5aa′: 'Quelle emprise (rituelle) s'exerce sur vous? Quel rite pour (quand je suis en) acte ou quand je dors'? It is hard to know what the second question could mean. In his lectures at the Collège de France 2011/2012, Kellens translates the stanza: 'Quel est votre pouvoir? Quelle recherche (de celui-ci) est loisible à mon activitié ou à mon sommeil, ô Mazdā, pour qu'il protège par l'Agencement et la bonne pensée celui qui a besoin de vous? Nous avons toujours déclarés supérieurs à tous les dieux infects et à leurs hommes' (February 3, 2012). I am not sure what the question 'which pursuit of your power is available to my activity and my sleep?' could mean. The sense of the two nouns in the instrumental is also completely obscure.

94 For *vīdō* as second sing. inj. aor. see Kellens 1974, pp. 72–75. Lubotsky (2002, pp. 191–95) argues that *xᵛarvnah*- is the Avestan form of a postulated Scythian **farnah*- meaning something like 'dominion', the cognate of Vedic *párīṇas*-, from the IIr. root *par* 'fill'. The initial fricative would mean that the term spread from Scythian to other Iranian languages. Did it not already exist in these languages? Despite historico-linguistic difficulties (see Hintze 2007b, 179–80), the phraseo-logical similarities in the Vedic and Avestan passages where the word occurs is overwhelming. 'The formula *rāyā parīṇasā* is no doubt identical with the Avestan formula (*ahe/manalåŋhąm*) *raiia xᵛarənaŋhaca* and goes back to Indo-Iranian times' (Lubotsky 2002, p. 193). If Lubotsky's hypothesis is accepted, 51.18aa′ would become: 'Jāmāspa Hauguva chooses dominions (and) this conception of control'. See also Kellens 2012, pp. 480–81, in which he suggests that the word may represent 'la transfiguration divine de l'aliment sacrificiel'.

95 The term *gaiia*- 'life' seems to be used in the OAv. texts to designate (primal) mental existence, which is subsequently embodied, *astuuaṇt*- 'possessed of bone', and upon death returns to the mental state. In Y 41.3 it is set in a complementary position to *astəṇtāt*- 'boney state'. In Y 30.4 it is opposed to *ajiiāti*- 'non-life', both coming into existence 'in the beginnings' as the result of the confrontation of the two creative 'intuitions'. It is thus positively marked as such, and, if one is permitted to see the opposed terms in the light of the cosmogony attested in the later sources, 'life' and 'non-life' refer to the underlying 'mental' existence, i.e. life in all its three phases. In other words, *gaiia*- is the (mental) life that was originally constituted by Mazdā and to which one may return upon death by way of good thinking. By contrast, *ajiiāti*- is the vitiated mental state. The sense of (desirable) mental existence seems appropriate in Y 51.19.

96 See Kellens 1995, pp. 30ff.

97 Compare Lommel 1968, pp. 127–29.

98 See Blumenberg 1983. What humans accomplish through their work of/on myth is the 'reduction of the absolutism of reality' (Blumenberg 1983, p. 7). 'Precisely to transform the original emotional tension of a "savage terror" into distance, to elaborate it as something concretely perceptible, is part of the function of rites and of myth' (Blumenberg 1983, p. 62). 'Significance is generated not only by intensification but also by power depletion. By intensification, as a supplement to positive facts, to naked data… by power depletion as the moderation of some-thing intolerable… Significance also arises as a result of the representation of the relationship between the resistance that reality opposes to life and the summoning up of energy that enables one to measure up to it' (Blumenberg 1983, p. 75). Myth makes reality approachable for humans. See further my discussion of the function of myth in the final part of this book. Compare Lincoln 1981, pp. 134–54.

99 See Bottéro 2001 and Van Seters 1997.

100 Insler (1975, p. 99) interprets the phrase *azdā zūtā* as 'when my summoning really occurs', i.e. the divine summoning of the poet at death. If so, this would be the

only instance in which the verbal idea √*zū* 'call' has this, as it were, reversed usage.

101 Compare Lincoln 1981, pp. 140–54.

102 See Ahmadi 2012.

103 Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 256) maintain that *dazdē* 'doit bien avoir le sens de "attribuer, donner". Dès lors, le moyen peut s'expliquer par un rapport de possession entre le sujet et l'objet (littéralement: "Ahura Mazdā donne son mieux que le bien")'. The reason behind translating *dazdē* 'establishes, sets in place' as if it were *dastē* 'gives' is hard to understand.

104 Kellens and Pirart (1988, p. 126) translate: 'afin de protéger, en raison de l'Harmonie et de la divine Pensée, le nécessiteux qui vous (rend un culte)'. Lommel (1971, p. 87) has: 'euren Hilfsbedürftigen um (seines) Wahrseins und Guten Denkens willen zu beschützen'. They see that *aṣā vohū manaŋhā* cannot be taken as the instrumental of means where 'power' and 'control' are invoked precisely as the means of protection. The automatic translation of the two 'entities' in the instrumental as the means is grounded in the lack of conceptual clarity.

105 See Kellens 1994a, p. 53.

106 See Ahmadi 2014a.

107 Compare Detienne 1963, p. 43–46, pp. 73–85 and Bremmer 1983, pp. 70–82.

108 See *AW*, col. 538 and *EWA*, vol. 1, p. 409. It could have originally been a descriptive term, e.g. for a characteristic ritual gesture or function. Mayrhofer is sceptical of relating *xrafstra-* to Vedic *krap* 'jammern, flehen, traurig sein, sich sehnen' (*EWA*, vol. 1, p. 409), meaning something like 'jämmerlich', since the Young Avestan usage does not bear out this meaning. But this is not an adequate ground for dismissing the relation. It could have developed its hateful sense precisely as a result of its formulaic association with the word *daēva*. Moreover, Vedic *krap* does not just mean 'wail, lament' but also 'supplicate, yearn'. We know that the '*daēvas* and the men' yearn for the bliss of Mazdā, for the divine sphere. In Y 28.5, *xrafstrā* could either be an instrumental qualifying *hizū-* 'tongue' (cf. Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 106) or a vocative plural (so Humbach 1991, vol. 1, p. 118) probably referring to the *daēvas*. In neither case, however, does it necessarily have the meaning 'fierce' (Humbach) or 'affreuse' (Kellens and Pirart). Y 28.5 *aṣā kat θβā darəsānī, manascā vohū vaēdəmnō* / *gātūmcā ahurāi, səuuištāi səraošəm mazdāi* / *anā maθrā mazištəm, vāurōimaidī xrafstrā hizuuā* has been analysed in different ways. *vāura-* has been derived from √*var* 'enclose, cover' (*AW*, col. 1360: ¹*var*; Vedic √*var* 'umschließen, zurückhalten' *EWA*, vol. 2, p. 512) by Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 118: 'receive') and Kellens (1994a, p. 61: 'détourner du sacrifice' as in the ritual use of its Vedic cognate). Hoffmann and Forssman (2004, p. 184) maintain that it is rather a reduplicated present from √*var* 'choose'. De Vaan (2003, p. 378) points out that the 'long reduplication can only be explained from a laryngeal-initial root', thus from √*var* 'enclose' < *H*u̯ar*. He further makes the point that, since there is already a nasal present from the root in Avestan, it is more likely that *vāura-* is a perfect stem. In this case, however, the secondary middle ending would be anomalous. It is perhaps best to interpret it as a reduplicated present from √¹*var*. The specifically ritual usage and sense in which Kellens understands the verb is based on his theory of ritual triage. In view of Y 33.5, one should probably read *səraošəm… mazištəm* together, the direct object of *vāurōimaidī*. *anā maθrā* may refer to the following stanza, Y 28.6. *vaēdəmnō* governs the coordinated *manascā vohū* and *gātūmcā ahurāi*. *səuuištāi… mazdāi* is the dative complement of *vāurōimaidī*, the beneficiary of the action. Y 28.5 can thus be translated: 'when will I see you, O *aṣa*, having found good thinking and the way to Ahura? With this formula (spoken) with the tongue (i.e. audibly), which is *xrafstra-*, we embrace the greatest hearing in honor of Mazdā, the most vitalizing one'. If the syntactic analysis is correct and *vāura-* in fact means something like 'embrace',

then *xrafstra-* can hardly have the sense 'fierce'. Bailey (1970, pp. 25–30) maintains that the adjective means something like 'biting' or 'stinging', later defining a category of animals, e.g. in the *Dēnkard*. But neither the formal analysis (Bailey 1970, p. 27) nor making the later (Pahlavi) usage the basis of the earlier (Gāthic) meaning is convincing. I find Insler's translation of Y 28.5b′–c′ incoherent: 'With a fierce tongue we would turn the greatest obedience to the most powerful Lord through the following prayer' (Insler 1975, p. 25). What is the 'fierce tongue' doing in a prayer to the supreme god? Humbach (1991, vol. 1, p. 118) has: 'Through this formula we would receive the Greatest One, O you evil beasts, with (our) tongue'. The address would make sense (in view of 28.6 *darəgāiiū… aojōŋhuuat̰ rafənō… yā daibišuuatō duuaēšå tauruuaiiāma*) if made to the *daēvas*. In any case, the meaning of *xrafstra-* remains obscure. Nonetheless, if one allows a connection with Vedic √*krap* 'jammern', formal difficulties aside, the imaginable ritual function of facilitating the passage to the beyond *and* its being related to the funerary gesture of wailing are reminiscent of the semantics of the archaic Greek *goēs*. See my discussion of the latter in Part III.

109 Humbach takes the word to be in the instrumental. As Kellens and Pirart (1991, p. 195) point out this would make 11d′ pāda hypermetric. Compare Y 46.10 where the poet describes himself as one who wishes to rally people to the *vahma-* of the gods.

110 See, for example, Boyce 1982 on the role of the (diaspora) magi.

111 See Clastres 1989, pp. 189–218.

112 Compare, for example, Parpola 2002, p. 61: 'Among the singer families of the R̥gveda, it is especially the Kāṇvas and the Atris – and the Vasiṣṭhas of the 7th book, whose special deity is Varuṇa, also mentioned in the Mitanni treaty – that worship the Aśvins'. In ancient Mesopotamia, jurisdictions and cultic rights of the gods were defined in reference to the city boundaries, but also on certain occasions had to do with their functions. See Bottéro 2001. In Egypt, after the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt, social function was the important basis of elective relationship with the tutelary god, but cult was still very much localized. See Assmann 2003, pp. 121ff, pp. 204ff. In archaic and classical Greece, gender was an important factor of differentiation in the cult, but special rites with appropriate deities existed for important activities or events, e.g. war, childbirth or tribal initiation. See Burkert 1987.

113 See my discussion in the final part.

114 Cantera (2012, pp. 226–27) sees in the arrangement of the Gāthās and the YH in the *yasna* ritual indications of the eschatologico-ecstatic structure of the 'original' rite that involved animal sacrifice: 'The ritual represents a journey. It starts with the slaughtering of the cow, after the *Ahunauuaitī Gāθā* and before the *YH*, and with the identification of the victim's offered meat with the body of the sacrificer (*Y.* 37.3), and it ends with the union of the sacrificer's soul with his vision-soul in the nuptial hymn of *Y.* 53' (Cantera 2012, p. 227). Kellens and Swennen (2005) have a similar opinion; otherwise, Panaino 2004, pp. 51–75.

115 See Benveniste 1970, pp. 37–42.

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Part III

Preamble

The Gāthic passages devoted to the *daēvas* give us limited but fairly clear information about the character of these ancient Iranian gods. Uncertainty may remain, however, about the significance of their cult that our analysis of the Gāthās has suggested. Comparative material can help reduce this uncertainty to some extent. Inevitably, the available sources decide the type of questions we can ask. Aside from Iranian evidence, there are, of course, classical and Hellenistic Greek sources. As it happens, the most directly useful are concerned with ritual. This is not a bad thing. A foreign observer is more prone to error and misconception in understanding abstract ideas than those associated with stereotyped actions, especially actions tied to familiar or typical situations, the intended purposes of which can be stated more or less simply. It seems reasonable to assume that the Greeks acquired their knowledge of Iranian religious doctrines in good part from questioning the meaning of the magi's ritual lore. The Greek representation of Iranian religious thought, however, often distorts its subject matter and is fragmentary, especially before the classical period. In treating it as a source, we thus have to be willing to resort to argumentation and imagination in a more basic way than, for example, the exposition of a doctrine would require. Nonetheless one can reasonably rely on the cumulative weight of the converging evidence in Greek literature about the magi's lore, which sets limits to the field where an acceptable interpretation of the magi's doctrines may be sought. Along the way, we analyse and eliminate competing interpretations of the relevant data.

The person who takes part in a rite has a motive for doing so, which, however idiosyncratic it may be in some respects, draws on and hence expresses a certain tradition. An invented myth is oxymoronic; just as, on the other hand, the notion of a pristine myth is artificial.[1] Ritual and myth interact, and carry a meaning for the actor, whether or not this meaning is deemed illusory by the external observer. Kirk rightly points out 'that *no* ritual, for all practical purposes, is performed without some kind of underlying motive and belief… Either the ritual is related to current needs and interests, or it is interpreted as explaining something about the traditional past itself' (Kirk 1981, p. 55). Ritual recalls an immemorial past, be it implicitly, and relies on a tradition

or traditions, for which it claims the authority of the founding beginnings. Nonetheless, traditions are not static, and foreign traditions are adopted and adapted, and become native.[2] The more marginal or innovative a ritual tradition, the more its adherents must be conscious of its supposed raison d'être.[3] They adhere to it because it carries a 'meaning' for them, which immediately resonates with their way of acting and thinking[4] and is partly reflected in the transformations they effect in related myths.[5] Myth 'stamps' a whole range of situations with a definite and communicable significance. The gods are not so much objects of inward faith as participants in a comprehensive programme of life.[6] The calendar of festivals is the most significant manifestation of this programme.[7] In this perspective, a ritual–myth complex articulates a way of relating to the world – in certain respects.[8]

Both in composition and intention a ritual is manifold, but synchronically one may presume it embodies a sense, brought to light by the analysis of its features in, e.g. a comparative context. The mystery cults comprise a 'family' that carried in the Greek eyes definite features and meaning, in particular securing a happier afterlife through initiation.[9] If late archaic and classical Greeks consistently assimilated the magi's rite to the mystic initiation, one can at least suppose that they perceived significant similarities between the two. The extant Greek testimonies about the magi's lore – fragmentary and at times elusive but nonetheless informative – give support to our supposition. Scepticism regarding the Greek reflection of other cultures (of 'alien wisdom'[10]) is to some extent justified, but perhaps one looks for the wrong thing in the wrong place.[11] We should expect that, just as the highest Iranian sky god in Herodotus is 'Zeus',[12] so too will Iranian ritual lore have been assimilated to a Greek type. In both cases, the operation is bound to produce misunderstanding, and obviously, the more complex the 'alien' idea the more distortion there will be in its *interpretatio graeca*. Nevertheless, the distorted picture is not arbitrary. The question is how to understand and benefit from this non-arbitrariness. Admittedly, what will follow is an essay, an attempt to shed the light of an available suggestive source on the magi's traditions and, ultimately, on the character of the *daēvas*. The connection made in Greek sources dating from the end of the sixth century onwards between the magi's practice and the *mystēria* has been ignored for the most part by students of Zoroastrianism. I will argue against the current view of the relation between the *mageia* and 'magic' in Hellenistic wisdom. The borrowed name does not merely reflect cultural hostility availing itself of a ready abusive term based in national enmity, or the magician's desire to give his craft the semblance of an exotic wisdom.[13] The adoption of the name must be viewed against the background of the assimilation of the *magos* to the 'divine man' and other terms from this semantic field. In an important sense, the Greek Zoroaster is an Orpheus. The philosophical disparagement of the *mageia* applied to the whole ideology of mystic initiation as a doctrine of salvation, with which philosophy apparently competed (Plato, *Phaedo* 66d–70c).

Notes

1 Compare Vernant 1990, pp. 211–15. See Vernant 1990, 226–60 and Graf 1993, pp. 35–56 for short accounts of the approaches to myth and ritual in the twentieth century. According to the so-called myth-and-ritual theory, particular myths account for the origins of the rites associated with them, or else are the specific stories behind the rites. See Versnel 1993, pp. 20–48. According to Versnel, there are rituals without a myth and myths without a ritual. But if myth is generally understood as a mode of intelligibility, a way of organizing human experience in its most vital moments and basic architecture (see Vernant 1990, pp. 224–26), there can hardly be an important ritual without a myth, that is to say, a traditional tale with a significance generalized across a culture. Compare Burkert 1979, pp. 1–58. Burkert programmatically reduces associated pairs of myth and ritual to common origins. '"Myth" means telling a tale with suspended reference, structured by some basically human action pattern; ritual is stereotyped action redirected for demonstration. Thus both are dependent on action programs, both are detached from pragmatic reality, both serve communication' (Burkert 1979, p. 57). For the meaning of 'displacement from the pragmatic context' see Burkert 1987, pp. 154–55. The 'question "Where from?" remains a legitimate or even necessary complement to functional and structural interpretations' (Burkert 1987, p. 160). But genetic explanations of myth and ritual are always controversial. Vernant (1990, pp. 183–202) rejects the idea that behind the symbolic action of Prometheus at Mekone in Hesiod are Palaeolithic hunting customs. Smith (1987, p. 196ff.) questions, more generally, the idea that hunting lies at the origins of sacrifice on the grounds that every attested sacrifice is that of a domesticated animal and belongs to a pastoralist or agrarian society. In *Creation of the Sacred*, Burkert (1996) places sacrifice and more generally religion squarely in an evolutionary perspective. Sacrifice is the demonstrative transposition of the survival strategy of ransoming a valuable possession or part in the face of a predator. The same fundamental anxiety (of survival) is addressed in both situations.

2 Compare Parker 2005, pp. 375–76 on Attic festivals: 'The festival cycle was rooted in a belief in that special time [of myths]. Almost all festivals were held to have their origin then or to commemorate occurrences during it. The details of that origin or of the occurrence commemorated mattered less than the belief that the festival did indeed derive its power and legitimacy from the special time'. On the other hand, 'a whole succession of Attic festivals acquired new myths of origin during the fifth or fourth centuries… poets and other men of words were free to suggest improvements and new connections. What they could not do was to cut the umbilical cord linking the festival to the "generation of heroes"'. See also Assmann 2006, pp. 122–38.

3 See Turcan's remarks on the cult of Mithras in Turcan 1981.

4 See Wittgenstein 1969, §204: 'Die Begründung aber, die Rechtfertigung der Evidenz kommt zu eindem Ende; – das Ende aber ist nicht daß uns gewisse Sätze unmittelbar als wahr einleuchten, also eine Art *Sehen* unsrerseits, sondern unser *Handeln*, welches am Grunde des Sprachspiels liegt. (Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; – but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i.e., it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game.)' Compare Wittgenstein 2001, §217, §325: 'Was die Menschen als Rechtfertigung gelten lassen – zeigt, wie sie denken und leben. (What people accept as a justification – shews how they think and live)'; and §326: 'Wir erwarten *dies* und werden von *dem* überrascht; aber die Kette der Gründe hat ein Ende. (We expect *this*, and are surprised at *that*. But the chain of reasons has an end.)'

5 See Blumenberg 1983, pp. 59–112, pp. 215–62. One aspect of the 'work on myth' is the transformation of myth, such as the one we must assume for the Orphic Dionysus. See Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 66–93.

6 This, of course, does not mean that the Greeks did not 'believe in' their gods. Inward faith, a rather modern (Protestant) phenomenon (if we are to accept Hegel's picture), is rarefied and even alienated from the world. Compare Versnel 2011, pp. 539–59; Parker 2005, pp. 378–79.

7 See Burkert 1985, pp. 225–27. The local particularism of both the calendars and the cults shows the communal embeddedness of the Greek gods. Compare Vernant 1990, p. 224.

8 See Versnel 1993, pp. 48–88.

9 Compare Seaford 1986, p. 12; Sfameni Gasparro 1985, pp. 1–19.

10 See Momigliano 1975.

11 See Vasunia 2007, pp. 251–52.

12 See De Jong 1997, 96–98. I wonder if this Zeus is not Miθra rather than Ahura Mazdā. On the Greeks' appropriation of foreign religious lore (e.g. the cult of the Phrygian Kybele), compare Sfemani Gasparro 1985, pp. 9–25.

13 To judge from the Greek Magical Papyri, 'magic' as a term of self-description is not the most popular; nor is it uniformly used by the various genres contained in the collection. Rather, it is used at the most reflective level (Betz 1982, p. 163: 'the most ambitious level of magical *literature* in the strictest sense of the terms') where philosophical speculation about the nature and purpose of magic is rife. 'It is at this higher cultural level in the PGM that we find the terms *mageia* ("magic"), *magikos* ("magical"), and *magos* ("magician") as designations of magic as a whole. But in other sections other terms are used' (Betz 1982, p. 164).

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7   Chthonic features of the *daēva* cult

The nocturnal nature of the *daēva* cult may give us meaningful direction regarding the character of the *daēvas*. Unfortunately, the Gāthās are not forthcoming in this respect. The passages that might be interpreted as pointing to a nocturnal nature for the *daēva* cult can as well be understood otherwise. Y 32.10 *yə̄ acištəm vaēnaŋhē aogədā gąm ašibiiā huuarəcā* 'who utters the worst things in order to see with his two eyes the sun and the cow' does not necessarily indicate that the deprecated rite takes place at night. The phrase 'to see the sun and the cow' could be an eschatological trope.[1] Beyond this, as I discussed earlier, there are the somewhat cryptic Y 44.20 *yōi pišiieiṇtī* and 50.2 *pourušū huuarə̄ pišiiasū*, probably meaning something like 'who face the sun', etc. Here too, the implication of a nocturnal rite is far from certain. In Y 44.20 the 'sun-greeters' are denied the 'cow', which they, along with the cult officials, subject to the *aēšəma*. 'Facing the sun' seems to describe a significant idea or a gesture, perhaps expressing an essential element of the doctrine of the cult. It is of course possible, generally speaking, that the description (understood as 'greeting the sun') merely points to the nocturnal nature of the rite. Nonetheless, I do not think that 'facing the sun' is a temporal trope. The 'sun-greeters' appear in both contexts with the 'cow', which almost certainly carries eschatological expectations. Those who face the sun also seek the cow (see my discussion of Y 44.20). In other words, 'facing the sun (and wanting the cow)' seems to belong with 'seeing the sun and the cow with his eyes', perhaps the poet's manipulation of this latter phrase.[2] The original phrase, then, must be a self-description of the worshippers of the *daēvas*, signifying their eschatological hopes. The later negative connotation of *aši-* 'eye' may well be a result of the poet's insertion and revaluation of the original phrase in his own discourse. It is therefore safe to say that we do not find any direct reference to the nocturnal nature of the *daēva* cult in the Gāthās.

There is, however, one passage from the Gāthās that seems to associate the *daēvas* with the night. It is Y 34.9, where certain unnamed undesirable elements are described with two adjectives *xrafstra-* and *auruna-*. The context makes it clear that the underlying noun is *daēuua-*.[3] Swennen (2003) has shown that the second adjective is the cognate of Vedic *aruṇá-* meaning 'red'. On the other hand, whatever the term literally means in Gāthic, the meaning of the

epithet goes beyond its etymological chromatic sense. In Vedic the feminine form of the adjective *aruṇī-* is exclusively used of the goddess Dawn (*uṣás-*). Based on this usage, designating the red colour of the dawn, the adjective 'en vient à désigner Uṣas elle-même, puis toute la période de temps que celle-ci représente' (Swennen 2003, p. 87), that is to say, the crepuscular periods. The secondary significance of the adjective to refer to crepuscular phenomena is clear in its usage in relation to the nocturnal wolf (Swennen 2003, p. 88) and the sacred drink *soma* (Swennen 2003, pp. 89–90), even if in this case the twigs of the plant, its flower, or its juice may be reddish. The Gāthic dichotomization of the Indo-Iranian cosmology into the absolute opposition between the realms of light and darkness inevitably relegated the crepuscular phenomena, which presumably had a *sui generis* significance, to the nocturnal sphere. The epithet *auruna-* used of the *daēvas*, which must be traditional, places their cult in the dark of night close to or bordered by the twilight period(s).[4]

The famous passage from the Ābān Yašt (Yt 5.94) prima facie justifies thinking that the *daēvas* received their worship at night: *arəduui sūre anāhite kəm iδa tē zaoθrå bauuaiṇti yasə tauua frabarəṇte druuaṇtō daēuuaiiasnåŋhō pasca hū frāšmō.dāitīm* 'Ardvī Sūrā Anāhitā, what becomes of the libations that *drugvaṇt* worshippers of the *daēvas* offer you after sunset?' If we take this text at face value, it shows not only that the *daēva* cult takes place in the dark of night but also that the worshippers of the *daēvas* offer libations to a Zoroastrian deity. The goddess does not count herself among the *daēvas*, though, since in 5.95 she replies that it is the *daēvas* and not her that receive the libations offered after sunset. The conclusion Kellens (1994, p. 86) draws from this constellation is strange: 'Ce texte intéressant atteste qu'à l'époque où il fut rédigé, les daēuuas étaient la référence obligée de toute réprobation religieuse, fût-elle inspirée par le plus mince particularisme'. The worshippers in question, too, are Mazdaean, according to Kellens, and their cult of the *daēvas* is only a maliciously intolerant accusation. But this interpretation covers over the text. The term of reprobation is *drugvaṇt*, 'the follower of *druj*'; *daēuuaiiasna-* 'worshipper of *daēva*' must be primarily descriptive, however pejoratively understood in the context.[5] Further, there is no question that in the YAv. texts, and even in Pahlavi texts,[6] the two *daēuuaiiasna-* and *mazdaiiasna-* are understood to be mutually exclusive (cf. V 7.36) precisely insofar as they describe two different types of *daēnā* (*daēnā-*).[7] It is this reciprocal exclusion that ultimately explains the vilification *daēuuaiiasna-* incurs. That *daēva*-worshippers make offering to a goddess who does not count herself among them shows that the term *daēva* has a restrictive sense for those who practise the cult, and that, in all likelihood, the nomenclature signifies a particular group of divine beings. I do not see any reason why one should discount this evidence of the nocturnal nature of the *daēva* cult. Of course, the text does *not* imply that the ritual is an occurrence that takes place every night, but only that the *daēva* cult is nocturnal, that this is a characteristic of the cult, and that it significantly distinguishes the cult from other type(s) of sacrifice.

The *videvdad sade* rite takes place at night. The ceremony receives its name from the text called Vīdēvdād, the 'law of the abjuration of the *daēvas*',[8] whose chapters are inserted into the texts of the *visperad* service. No ritual gesture accompanies the nocturnal recitation. The service stands out in these respects among the Zoroastrian priestly rituals.[9] The fact that the rite is celebrated at night must be related, as the title of the recited text makes clear, to the nocturnal nature of the *daēvas*.[10] The *Nērangestān* also associates the *daēvas* with the night and darkness. In a chapter on the Ebsrusrim Gāh (the period from the appearance of stars to midnight), the Pahlavi commentator says that the ritual worship, performed by a single man, may continue into the night but only in the company of fire, otherwise it would be an act of the *daēva* cult. *Ka yazišn ēw-tāg kunēd pēš-rōz ud šab bawēd ātaxš pad nigērišn sar frāz kunēd dēw-ēzagīh ī tanāpuhlagān* 'if one performs a rite of worship by himself (having started) the previous day and (in the meantime) it will have become night, (and) he deliberately lets the fire go out, (then the rite would be) an act of the *daēva* cult of the damned' (N 33.5).[11] The blazing fire is obviously the condition of the concession made to the solitary worshipper.[12] In N 50.5 a quoted Avestan text states that the *daēvas* 'lick' (**raēzaite*) the libation that is spilled 'in the dark of dusk' (**upa.naxturušu *tạθraēšu*). Another Avestan text, although corrupt, clearly teaches that the libation poured in the dark will not reach the (unspecified) god: *mē zaōθrå *yeiṇte (*aṇtarə) raōcahe nōiṯ aṇtarə təmahe* 'the libations (poured) in the light of day come to me, not (those poured) in the dark' (N 50.3).[13] The *daēvas* are fundamentally nocturnal and associated with darkness.

In *De Iside et Oriside*, Plutarch gives a short description of apotropaic gloomy offerings (*apotrópaia kaì skythrōpá*) made to Ahriman, which, he says, are prescribed by Zoroaster. The proceedings take place in the dark. 'He taught that votive- and thank-offerings should be made to Horomazes, but gloomy offerings to Areimanius, and those intended to avert evil. For they pound a certain herb called omōmi in a mortar, invoking Hades and darkness, and then after mixing with it the blood of a slain wolf, they take it out to a sunless spot and throw it away' (Plutarch, *De Iside et Oriside* 46).[14] Zaehner (1972, pp. 13–16) sees in this text a real description of the ritual of 'devil-worshippers', similar to a 'black Mass'. He characteristically finds for the lugubrious sacrifice a 'suggestive' parallel in Christian lore, which should, in his estimation, make the procedure intelligible. 'These devil-worshippers are identical with the "sorcerers" of the *Dēnkart* who did not believe in rewards and punishments and worshipped the demons' (Zaehner 1972, p. 14). The 'religion' (*dēn*) of 'demon-worshippers' (*dēvāsn*) is identical, according to Zaehner, with the 'religion of sorcerers' (Zaehner 1972, p. 15). The idea of a sorcerers' religion is taxing enough, but that mortal antagonism to a 'proscribed sect' of sorcerers should become one of the founding aspects (if not *the* founding moment) of a bona fide religion, i.e. *mazdēsn*, is simply reckless.[15] Nor, indeed, does one find any basis for the alleged identification in the *Dēnkard*, which typically sees sorcery behind the supposed *attraction* of the

dēvāsn (see the quoted Pahlavi texts in Zaehner 1972, pp. 30–31). The unright-eous rite of the sorcerer that serves the *daēvas* is obviously quite different from a 'religion' of sorcerers.

In any event, at issue in Plutarch's account is not a separate religion but a specific rite, apparently performed by the Zoroastrian magi. Puzzlingly, the reported text also states that it is Zoroaster himself who has prescribed the 'gloomy offerings'. This could simply mean, of course, that making such offerings is a practice of the magi, who consider themselves follow-ers of Zoroaster. De Jong (1997, p. 179) maintains that Plutarch's source for his description of the 'daēvic ritual' must have been 'Zoroastrian polem-ics against a nonexistent group of devil-worshippers'. Are *these* the source, too, for his making Zoroaster the author of the apotropaic prescription? Impossible.[16] Boyce and Grenet (1991, pp. 168–71) suggest relating Plutarch's 'gloomy offerings' to the ritual burial of pots mouth downward discovered in the areas of the Late Bronze Age Andronovo culture in the steppes, e.g. Sintašta, and in the precincts of a temple in the Greek Bactria. These burials seem to indicate chthonic rituals. Dark or sunless spots where, according to Plutarch, the libation is poured, are typically associated with the *daēvas*, e.g. in the form of the 'cave'. In V 3.7 the dwelling of the *daēvas* is described as the 'cave of *druj*' (*drujō gərəδa-*). Still, the apotropaic procedure in *De Iside et Oriside* 46 may look somewhat artificial and rouse the suspicion that it is put together to correspond to the perceived dualism of Zoroastrianism. If the good god's evil rival is independently powerful (cf. Plutarch, *De Iside et Oriside* 45), then 'wisdom' bids one come to terms with the dark power by appropriate means.[17] For Plutarch, the measures taken *had to* include the strange chthonic mixture, whether or not there was any evidence for it, just as (for Hermodorus) the magi's procedure *had to* come from Zoroaster since he was their authority.

Nonetheless, Plutarch could have merely interpreted the ritual as apotro-paic in accordance with his own dualistic cosmology, and the description of the chthonic rite may well be authentic. The lugubrious libation contain-ing the blood of a slain wolf may not be so strange after all.[18] An Avestan text in the *Nērangestān* seems to attest to wolf sacrifice: *ratufriš vəhrkaiiā kəhrpaca paiiaŋhaca haδō vīspanąmca daēuuaiiasnąm tanu.pərəθanąmca haθra baoδaŋha *frauruuaēsaiiå* 'One satisfies the *ratu* with both the milk and the body of a wolf, like (those) of the *daēva*-worshippers and of the damned, with (or at the instant of) the perception of the forward-turn (?)' (N 41.3).[19] The Pahlavi commentator apparently misunderstood the obscure description that closes the Avestan statement. *Radīhā gurg kirb ud pēm* [*pad tarsāgāhīh*] *abāg harwispīn dēwēsnān ud tanāpuhlagān ka-šān hān ī abāg *bun frōd wašt estēd* [*kū-š sar ī dumb *brīd estēd; pad kardag hān gyāg gyāg dārēnd.*] 'The body and milk of a wolf [(offered) with caution] are in accordance with the ritual law, (as it is done) by all the *daēva*-worshippers and the damned *ka-šān hān ī abāg *bun frōd wašt estēd* [that is to say, the tip of its tail is cut off; they do this in several places.]'[20] I have not translated the Pahlavi text that corresponds to

haθra baoδaŋha *frauruuaēsaiiå. Kotwal and Kreyenbroek suggest that it has to do with the offering of a 'bad' creature, 'whose "defeat" is symbolized by cutting off part of its tail' and once this is done 'it is acceptable to the Yazads' (Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 181 n. 712). This explanation is unlikely. If the creature is bad, it remains bad no matter what, and hence unfit as an offering to the 'gods'. The third person pronoun of the gloss (*kū-š*, etc.) is in the singular, whereas the pronoun in the phrase it is supposed to elucidate[21] is in the plural (*ka-šān*, etc.). Do they have the same antecedent, namely the wolf? If they do, the only explanation would be that the phrase *ka-šān*, etc. is reporting what the *dēwēsnān* do with their wolves; the gloss then reverts to the singular *gurg* of the opening. But I do not think this is the right reading of *ka-šān*, etc.

The adverbial *pad tarsāgāhīh* generally means 'respectfully' or 'obediently', but here (and in N 41.1, the only other passage in the text where it appears) it signifies cautious approach as before an uncanny power. In fact, chapter 41 seems to be about sacrifice of the female wolf. N 41.1 does not specify the victim but only gives its sex: *nāirikā-*, Pahlavi *nārīg*, 'female'. N 41.2 rejects the sacrifice of *span-* 'dog' presumably as a substitute for the wolf: *Sag nē kirb nē pēm* [*radīhā. Abarag guft hād *bun andar nē hilišn*. Here, as in N 41.3, Kotwal and Kreyenbroek read *bun* for bwny of the manuscripts. They translate N 41.3 *ka-šān hān ī abāg *bun frōd wašt estēd*: 'when their extremity has come down' (Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 181), where 'their extremity' is for the literal 'the lowest part that is with them' (Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 181 n. 711). Neither the literal translation nor the whole phrase in translation makes much sense. The verb *frōd + waštan* 'turn downward' implies an upside down position or, in any case, a lowering of something from its normal position, which their translated text hardly conveys. Serious problems also dog their rendition of N 41.2 *hād *bun andar nē hilišn*: 'One should not leave its extremities (on the body)' (Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 179). Rather, they should have translated: 'one should not leave its bottom', because when used of the body, Pahlavi and Persian *bun*, generally meaning 'base or basis' (cf. Avesta *buna-* and Vedic *budhná-* 'bottom, ground'), means 'bottom' and not 'extremities' or 'extremity'. But what does the translated phrase mean then? Comparing N 41.2 and 41.3, it seems like what is being said in N 41.2 is that the ritual treatment of the wolf is not permitted apropos the dog. The sense of the Pahlavi phrase in N 41.2 depends on that of N 41.3, which itself stems from a misunderstanding of the corresponding Avestan text.

The Pahlavi word *bun* does not just mean 'base' but also 'tree trunk'. The manuscript's bwny can well be 'bun-ē': 'a tree trunk'. Hence the phrase from N 41.3 would become: *ka-šān hān* [*ī*] *abāg bun-ē frōd wašt estēd*. The connective particle ī is extraneous and due to an automatic assumption of the idiomatic construction '*ān ī* + qualifier + noun'. The phrase can then be translated: 'when they (i.e. the *dēwēsnān*) have it (i.e. the wolf) turned upside down by means of a tree trunk', i.e. stake the animal upside down.[22] N 41.2 *hād bun-ē*

andar nē hilišn must then mean something like 'one should not leave (a dog) with a stake inside' or 'one should not set a stake inside (a dog)'. It is not clear to me how the gloss (*kū-š*, etc.) in N 41.3 is related to what precedes it. Perhaps it only makes explicit a detail of the treatment and is not meant as its elucidation *in toto*. The Pahlavi translator seems to have read *baoδa-* 'scent', instead of *baoδah-* 'perception', Pahlavi *bōy* (*bwd*) 'scent', which he must have understood to indicate 'incense', as *bōy* sometimes means. Then, another commentator, perhaps Abarag (from N 41.2), sought to rectify what he took to be an orthographic lapse, understood *bōy* to be *bun*, and added a vertical stoke to get bwny (*bun-ē*) 'a stake', encouraged by the Pahlavi *frōd wašt estēd* which supposedly translates *frauruuaēsaiiå. He then relied on the ghost treatment of the female wolf to reason why the bitch cannot be sacrificed, in the absence of any Avestan indication, as if the issue were the manner of sacrifice.[23] One can see that the Pahlavi description of the ritual treatment of the animal is worthless. On the other hand, what seems indisputable is that sacrifice of a wolf is considered a normal feature of the *daēva* cult, and was apparently still practised when the Avestan texts of the *Nērangēstān* were composed.[24] Further, the Avestan authority obviously thinks the chthonic rite is an acceptable practice in Zoroastrian perspective, and the Pahlavi commentators do not find it shocking, even with the explicit mention of the *daēva* cult as its provenance. The sacrifice, as I said, could hardly have been meant for the 'Yazads'. It is indeed astonishing that the rite made its way past the orthodox guardians of Zoroastrian dualism, apparently a survivor from the time when 'Zoroastrian' magi still sacrificed to the *daēvas*. One must note that in ethnographic literature, the ritual killing of wild animals is particularly associated with initiations into secret societies.[25]

Notes

1   See Frame 1978, pp. 46–47, pp. 89–95. Frame shows the intimate relation of the 'sun symbolism' with the theme of 'return to light and life' in archaic Greece. The same theme is found in Vedic rescue stories of the Nāsatyas. In RV 1.112.5 they lift up Vandana (from the grave) 'so that he may see the sun' (*svàr dṛśé*). See Parpola 2004–2005, p. 30. The Homeric motif of return to light and life uses terms (e.g. *noos*) derived from PIE *nes, which also underlies Ved *nasatí- 'return home safe' and *nāsatya*-. The eschatological significance of these terms seems to be related to their idiomatic usage in chariotry, e.g. to refer to the charioteer who 'brings home' his team partner, the chariot warrior. See Parpola 2004–2005, p. 12. Importantly, the association of 'cattle' with the sun in Greek myths regularly occurs in contexts of the hero's visit to and return from the underworld. Indirect arguments that I will present in due course may make this interpretation more attractive. Compare Gotō 2006, pp. 205–11. Gershevitch (1975) arrives at a similar reading of the phrase but on a different basis: 'one may confidently say that "seeing the cow and the sun" was an idiom, perhaps even an idiom invented *ad hoc* by Zoroaster, for "going to Paradise"' (Gershevitch 1975, p. 79). His suggestion that the Gāthic phrase is a manipulation of a traditional idiom 'may he go to Hell' reflected in Y 9.29 *mā ząm vaēnōiṯ ašibiia mā gąm vaēnōiṯ ašibiia* 'may he not see the earth with his evil eyes, may he not see the cow with his evil eyes' is unconvincing. If this curse says

'may he go to hell' and not simply 'may he die', then 'seeing the earth and the cow' must mean going to paradise, and not simply continue living – but how? How can 'seeing the earth and the cow' mean 'going to paradise'? *This* is the question that Gershevitch has to answer. His reasoning is confused, since when it comes to explaining why sun must replace earth in the paradise formula, he asserts that 'seeing the earth and the cow' does not mean 'seeing the paradise'. But then what does it mean, whose negation should mean 'going to hell'? 'A poet intent on extracting from it an antonymous idiom for "going to Paradise" could not have contented himself with omitting the word *not*. For there would still have remained the word earth to exclude the Paradise. The word earth had to be replaced with a word denoting something higher up than the earth' (Gershevitch 1975, p. 79). Gershevitch seems to say, after all, that Y 9.29 idiom means 'may he die' and, as a curse, *only implies* 'may he go to hell'. But this will require that 'seeing the earth and the cow' simply mean 'continue living'. If so, why should the poet carry 'the cow' into his paradise formula, since it would have no connection with paradise, and, idiomatically used with the earth, it would recall earthly existence and thus spoil the paradise formula?

2 If so, perhaps the poet is punning with the phrase 'facing the sun' > 'fronting the sun' > (Humbach's) 'blocking the sun'.

3 See Kellens and Pirart 1991, p. 118.

4 Swennen (2003, p. 92) sees expressed in Y 34.9cc′ *aēibiiō maš aṣ̌ā siiazdaṯ, yauuaṯ ahmaṯ aurunā xrafstrā* the idea that just as the bad chief draws away his people from 'les harmonies', so our good chief draws away the demons from us. He explains the strange 'harmonies' poetically: 'l'art du poète consiste à établir sa comparaison avec une habileté telle qu'il lui suffit d'énoncer la complément direct du deuxième membre de la comparaison pour faire tenir toute la phrase. Le stratagème ne peut fonctionner que si la comparaison repose sur un total parallélisme syntaxique' (Swennen 2003, p. 92). The 'total parallelism' demands an accusative 'demons' matching the accusative 'harmonies'. But the plural *aṣ̌a* may rather be due to (the poet's desire to emphasize) the individuated relation between the individual and the presumed goal, i.e. attaining the *aṣ̌a*: the chief takes from the men of bad action their *aṣ̌a* that they *each* so desire. In any case, the translation of *aṣ̌a* as harmony makes not much sense. A vexing problem with Y 34.9cc′ is the subjunctive mode of the verb. Swennen says nothing on the issue, but it is obviously troublesome. In what way should the subjunctive siiazdaṯ be interpreted? See Ahmadi 2014.

5 See Benveniste 1970a, p. 9.

6 See Zaehner 1972, p. 16.

7 Compare Y 49.4 and Y 51.13.

8 See Benveniste 1970b, pp. 37–42.

9 See Boyce 2001, pp. 156–57 and Skjærvø 2007 for a synoptic view of the text, its manuscript traditions and Western scholarship, and its content and ritual.

10 Compare Skjærvø 2007, pp. 120–22; Cantera 2013, pp. 89–92.

11 See Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 148, my translation.

12 N 33.4 has: *pad šab ka yazišn ēw-tāg kard u-š rōz pad-iš abāz bawēd* 'if a man, being single-handed, happened to perform ritual worship at night, for him his day would still be', i.e. the 'day' would continue for him. This shows how out of place Zoroastrian ritual is after dark.

13 See Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 228, p. 230. In the Vīdēvdād 7.79 libations made after sunset and those that are *nasumaitīm* are said to be *druj* practices. It seems like these two qualifications belong to the same context. Now, the expression *nasumaitīm*, usually translated 'defiled by a corpse', should not be understood as if it describes an accidental circumstance, i.e. it does not urge caution. The suffix *-mant-* signifies association or possession. Thus the phrase describes a type of

chthonic libation, perhaps tendentiously, such as water mixed with the blood of an immolated animal.

14 See De Jong 1997, p. 164. Compare Boyce and Grenet 1991, pp. 456–60, who take Plutarch's description of the 'chthonic' offerings at face value. Horky (2009, pp. 79ff.) argues that the text that contains the description of the rite ('For they pound', etc.) comes from the Platonist Hermodorus of Syracuse, but the narrative is due either to Plutarch or to a contemporary Persian (Horky 2009, p. 79 n. 119).

15 Compare Benveniste 1970b, p. 42: 'Les *daivas* que le fidèle abjure en se déclarant *vī-daēva*- sont évidemment les *daivas*- dieux que Zaraθuštra a combattus, les "dieux" de l'ancien culte, et nullement les *daivas*- démons des âges plus récents. C'est à l'acte décisif de Zaraθuštra, sa rapture avec les *daivas*- dieux, que se réfère la profession de foi zoroastrienne, car c'est cette rupture qui instaure la croyance nouvelle'.

16 How does the attribution of the apotropaic rite to Zoroaster serve the supposed polemical intent of the Zoroastrian source? How does one conclude from this attribution that the rite is imaginary? More importantly, how does one reconcile the imaginary nature of the rite with the supposed hortatory aim of the text? One conjures up a non-existent rite in order to admonish the listeners not to follow it?

17 'For if nothing comes into being without a cause, and if good could not provide the cause of evil, then nature must contain in itself the creation and origin of evil as well as good' (Plutarch, *De Iside* 45, in De Jong 1997, p. 162). 'This is the view of the majority and of the wisest; for some believe that there are two gods who are rivals, as it were, in art, the one being the creator of good, the other of evil' (Plutarch, *De Iside* 46, in De Jong 1997, p. 163).

18 Compare Parpola 1997, p. 195: 'A golden head of a wolf from Altyn Tepe, four wolves on a golden drinking bowl from Quetta, and seals from Margiana suggest that this feared predator might have been an important totemic animal for the aristocratic elite of the Bronze Age cultures in the northern and eastern parts of the Iranian Plateau'.

19 See Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 178, my translation. The manuscript (G 42) has *frauruuaēiio*. Kotwal and Kreyenbroek's emendation must be (in part) based on the Pahlavi translation of the term (*frōd waštan*). They thus postulate a feminine noun: *frauruuaēsā-. Obviously, the rite is *not understood to be* imaginary, and in fact it is thought to be appropriate in some ritual context (*ratufri*-), if not as offerings to the *yazata*-. The phrase 'like (those) of all the *daēva*-worshippers, etc.' is descriptive, and is not meant to condemn the practice (here). In any case, it is hard to see how from this text one could conclude that the rite is *understood to be* imaginary.

20 See Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 180. The translated text in square brackets is theirs.

21 Compare Kotwal and Kreyenbroek 2003, p. 181 fn. 714: 'Possibly the comment is added because the explanation was expected to seem strange to most people'.

22 It is interesting to note that the pistachio tree is also called *wan* (= *bun*) *ī gurgānīg* in Pahlavi.

23 What is described in the Pahlavi text seems like a chthonic sacrifice, even if it is not found in the Avestan original. The animal is staked upside down probably in a pit. A Kizzuwatnean wise woman describes her sacrificial technique for ridding one from sin in exactly the same terms: 'When the night falls, the petitioner digs a hole in the ground and kills a piglet, "'sicking' it downward" so that its blood flows into the pit' (Collins 2006, p. 175).

24 Compare Turcan 1981, pp. 346–48.

25 See Smith 1987, p. 204.

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8   The nocturnal rite

As far as comparative evidence allows us to judge, nocturnal sacrifice is limited to one significant context. The rule among the Vedic Indians, Romans, Greeks and Iranians is that sacred rites are generally diurnal events, even if they continue into the night, as in a number of Greek festivals.[1] Daybreak is the standard time for the commencement of festivals and sacrifices, whether simple daily offerings or more elaborate ceremonies.

In Vedic India, the night seems to be ritually significant in two connections. One is in relation to Rudra. The bull-Rudra is sacrificed in the woods outside the village at midnight. No part of the victim may be brought back. In this way, the Rudra of the cattle is removed from the settlement and made to join the Rudra of the wilderness, where it belongs (*Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sutra* 4.8.31, 33). Rudra is a fierce god; the wilderness belongs to him, and perhaps the night. He has a strong affinity with the serpent. The red colour of his skin is the colour of the clothes of the person condemned to death. The bull sacrifice must have a propitiatory function, but it also dispels the danger of dissolution from within society: the active principle of destruction that is said in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.2 to 'dwell within all creatures'.[2] But Rudra is also as brilliant as the sun, the 'best physician of physicians', and the divine protector and 'lord of the cattle'. Generally speaking, this double nature is not surprising for a god. Apollo is both the bringer of plague and the healer; Dionysus both induces madness and cures it. But it seems that, to a great extent, the protecting and healing Rudra in the Ṛgveda (e.g. RV 1.114, 2.33) is merely the dangerous Rudra propitiated and thus prevented from causing disease among the cattle and injury to men.[3] The epithet 'healing' is a proleptic device or contains a euphemistic request. In any event, in the Brāhmaṇic doctrine of sacrifice the Rudras do not seem to be important, perhaps no more than other gods,[4] and are generally isolated.[5] In short, the midnight bull sacrifice reflects the nature of the god and is meant to eliminate his destructive power.

All regular and occasional Vedic sacrifices (e.g. great *soma* ceremonies) are diurnal events. But the day ceremony stretches into the evening in the Atirātra with scheduled nightly recitations. The nocturnal Atirātra continues the Jyotiṣṭoma day. It is possible that the cycle represents the lifetime, since at the dawn of the following day the *āśvinaśastra* is recited for the Nāsatyas,

the (eschatological) saviours, suggesting funerary connections and, in particular, the safe ascension of the dead to heaven 'like the Suparṇa' (*Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa* 18.4).[6] While many gods are invoked during the day, the night is totally dedicated to Indra, who is not afraid of the night and death, and fights the *asuras* or kills Vṛtra to bring the light and space. Only the *chandas* 'meters' and *soma*, the sacred drink, help the god. 'The verses accompanying the offerings should contain the keywords *andhas*, *mad*, and *pīta* (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 4.6.3; *Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa* 17.7.11), a clear reference to the Soma which Indra is thought to consume. The priests have to stay awake because "wakefulness means light" (*Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa* 17.7,13f.)'.[7] The texts recited in the Atirātra ceremony were 'discovered' and 'recited' in primordial times by Prajāpati, according to *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa* (1.4), in order to 'accomplish' *ahorātra*, the sequence of day and night, that is, the basic temporal reference for Vedic ritual. '[C]'est par la force inhérente aux paroles du récit que le Veda fait de cet événement qu'il réalise cette partie de la genèse' (Malamoud 2002, p. 60). The cosmogonic myth (of Indra or Prajāpati) associated with the rite is transparently an ex-post rationalization of the nocturnal *soma* ritual that must have involved composition of inspired poetry.[8]

According to Oldenberg (2004, pp. 251–55), in the Ṛgvedic period a sacrifice priest also performed rites of a 'magical' kind. Liturgical hymns recited at sacrifices no less than magical formulae handle invisible powers and, out-bidding magic in scale, are supposed to contribute to the orderly functioning of the visible world.[9] The basis of this homogeneity is the enigmatic *brahman* embodied in the ancient formulae, which in the *Brāhmaṇas* and later literature is the 'power' underlying the system of correspondences.[10] There is no conceptual difference between a rite dedicated to the gods and a ritual enacted in the interest of manipulating invisible powers in general. In fact, if one adopts the perspective of the later Vedic developments, the divine belongs with these powers.[11] It is not just the structured universe (e.g. the strife between the forces of *ṛta* and *nirṛta*) that limits the power of the gods. From the beginning (cf. Oldenberg 2004, p. 186), the virtual identity of liturgy and magic prepares the eventual disappearance of deities in the *Upaniṣads*.[12] The Atharvaveda, a collection of hymns intended mostly for everyday usage and for the performance of magical incantations and charms of various types,[13] already dispenses with the idea of divine agency. In some of the more speculative *sūktas*, one even finds hymns accompanying rites for escaping death or for transforming the sacrificial substance into the highest being so as 'to achieve the fulfillment of the sacrificer's aspirations, i.e., survival in heaven, divine existence' (Gonda 1975, p. 291).[14]

The fundamental idea of the efficacy of sacrifice leads to speculation on the mechanisms of ritual and the supposed powers on which it bears.[15] This is the direction of the Vedic thought, which relentlessly presses the idea to its logical conclusion. It must have been sacrifice that allowed the gods to win immortality and their place in heaven. They subsequently tried to keep the secret of sacrifice from humans. Having found their way to that secret, thanks to the

r̥ṣis, men become the partner of the gods. Both pursue the same ends through sacrifice: 'immortality and residence in the celestial world'.[16] But death will have its share: unlike the gods, men have to surrender their bodies.[17] 'It is, thus, a deferred immortality that is enjoyed by humans' (Malamoud 1996, p. 204).[18] Why should man seek the help of the gods and not avail himself of the efficacious power on which they themselves rely? It is interesting that the efficacy of sacrifice is fundamentally seen within the horizon of achieving immortality. This does not mean, of course, that earthly goods do not appear among things sought by the sacrificer. They constitute the bulk of desired objects in the R̥gveda (Oldenberg 2004, pp. 181–86; Gonda 1975, pp. 108–13). But, naturally, the efficacy of sacrifice needs not limit itself to such things and could and should press toward the ultimate desired object, the attainment of divine status.[19] The victorious sacrificer of the *vājapeya* climbs up the sacrificial post along with his wife toward the wheel-shaped cake placed on top, which is understood to represent the sun and the heavenly sphere where the gods reside. The meaning of the symbolic act is clear.[20]

All Roman cults, whether *sacra publica* or *sacra privata*, were a communal affair with the head of the community, the magistrates or paterfamilias, making the offerings in festive gatherings on behalf of the participants from the city or the household.[21] Sacrifices typically began at daybreak and, depending on their nature, could last the entire day and sometimes even into the evening. In civic sacrifices the offering speech always contained the phrase 'for the Roman people'. In general, the prayer stated who made the offering, who its recipient was, and who the intended beneficiary (Scheid 2007, p. 266). The culmination of the official banquets in honour of the named deities was the sacrificial meal, shared by the participants both human and divine, albeit with a courteous lag on the part of the former. The exception with regard to the sharing of food were the sacrifices made to the gods of the underworld, which were completely burnt.[22] This same practice of holocaust is also found in the case of magic sacrifices, 'since they were generally aimed at Underworld gods' (Scheid 2007, p. 267).

Magic sacrifices for the purposes of divination or *defixiones* (binding magic) are also exceptional in another respect: they were enacted at night and in secret (Scheid 2007, p. 262). The nocturnal nature of these seemingly latecomers into the world of Roman sacrifice cannot be, however, due only to the fact that the divine partner, called *párhedros* in Greek, was chosen from among the gods that were associated with the underworld.[23] The partners were regularly picked from the mystery gods (Osiris, Dionysus, Demeter, Persephone, etc.) or associated with them (e.g. Hermes, Adonis). The timing of the rite is obviously related to the underworld connection of the gods. Some of the magical ceremonies were felt to be nocturnal by nature, such as those of binding magic with voodoo dolls or requests for oneiric revelation (*oneiraitḗton*), and were thus duly held at night. But even erotic spells (*philtrokatadesmos*) were enacted at night. In the first part of Theocritus' second Idyll, one finds a depiction of a rite of erotic magic. 'In the middle of the night, under shining

moon, two women are practicing magic, Simaitha and her slave Thestylis. The goal of the rite is to win back the love of a young man, Delphis, who was for a time the lover of Simaitha, but has henceforth turned to other lovers' (Graf 1997, p. 176).

The magician did not limit himself to traditional Greek or Roman deities. In a sense, the important point was ensuring the cooperation of a powerful god. One magician, recorded in the Greek Magical Papyri, invokes the Israelite god: 'I am your prophet Moses, to whom you conveyed your mysteries celebrated by the Israelite' (Betz 1992, p. 103). The reference to the mysteries even in invoking a Semitic god is significant. The literate magician tends to view his nocturnal rite as a kind of mystery cult.[24] It is this mystic pedigree that explains the nocturnal and secret character of magical rite and, more importantly, its method: initiation to the 'mysteries' of a god. Thus the nocturnal character here is programmatic and basic. To be sure, not every magical rite took place at night; there were various types (Graf 1997, pp. 118–233). But there cannot be any question that magic, e.g. in the Greco-Roman world throughout Hellenistic and Imperial periods, fundamentally conceived of itself in reference to the *mageia* and the mysteries.[25] The association of the mystery cults with nocturnal celebration was a commonplace, as we will see, so magic, too, was archetypically viewed as nocturnal, even though the actual rites were not necessarily so. All in all, night was the favourite time of the magician – at least this is how the matter is represented in literary sources.

There is another important difference between traditional Roman sacrifice and the rites of the magician, who seems to have led a marginal and insecure existence in Hellenistic and Imperial Rome.[26] Public sacrifice 'was a banquet, which offered men the opportunity to become familiar with their divine counterparts, to define their respective qualities and status, and, together, to address the matters in hand' (Scheid 2007, p. 270). The social function of public sacrifice is fundamental, if not as important as the religious dimension.[27] Magical rite, in contrast, is oriented to specific aims of private individuals and serves no social function. In this, it is true, magic has certain affinities with votive prayers,[28] but the votive aspect is also present in the mystery cults and should be understood within this context. On the one hand, where magic is not directed to more or less utilitarian goals, the practitioner seeks in his rite the 'extraordinary experience' of divine epiphany or revelation, the type of experience reported for the mystery cults. On the other hand, what definitively sets magical rite apart from the ordinary votive prayer – and again shows the telestic affinity of the former – is that, whereas the latter is fundamentally supplicatory in character,[29] a sense of entitlement to the object sought accompanies the former (cf. Dickie 2001, pp. 27ff.). The expectation must be grounded in the conception of initiation and the perception of its efficacy. Referring to the 'assistant *daimōn*', the magician Pnouthis writes in his epistle: 'He will serve you suitably for whatever you have in mind, O blessed initiate of the sacred magic, and will accomplish it for you' (in Betz 1982, pp. 168–69). The idea that magic involves the coercion of deities, which is generally true, is perhaps

misleading in the case of magical practices of the ancient Mediterranean world. The basic ideology of these practices is adopted from the mysteries, not just in what concerns behaviour and doctrine but also in attitude.[30] The transgression of the boundaries between men and gods in 'magic' – completely anomalous in the perspective of the traditional piety, *eusebeia*, which is basically the keeping of a respectful distance from the gods[31] – suffuses the intellectual milieu of the mystery-type initiation, where the possession of a special knowledge serves to underwrite the magician's pretension to a god-like status.[32] The seers and founders of the mysteries, from Orpheus to Melampus and Dardanos, are the true ancestors of the magician.[33]

Notes

1 I do not deal with the *pannychis* in this book. A number of important Greek festivals, such as the *Panathenaea*, continued into the night, although it is wrong to say that they 'culminated' at night. See, for example, Parker 2005, pp. 166–71. The only significant thing that can be said about the *pannychis* in general is that it was women-oriented – in a number of them (e.g. the *Brauronia* or *Tauropolia*) virgins had the lead role – and was therefore characterized by the loosening of societal norms. The Eleusinian mysteries, on the other hand, are nocturnal in conception, despite diurnal events such as the escort of Iacchus on Boedromion 20 from Athens to Eleusis. See Clinton 1993.

2 See Daniélou 1991, pp. 192–94. The Rudras are also said to be the 'forms of the life energy' whose departure from the body causes lamentation, hence their name: 'causes of tears', according to *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9.1.

3 See Oldenberg 2004, pp. 111–12.

4 See Lévi 1898.

5 *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (V.8.4.5) 'distinguishes besides gods, fathers (manes) and men, a fourth special class, "the Rudras"' (Oldenberg 2004, 111).

6 See Parpola 2004–2005, pp. 33–34.

7 See Falk 1989, p. 81. In the Ṛgveda (RV 9.8.9) the priests drink the *soma* in their daily rite that they imagine had been offered to Indra the previous night. Falk (1989, p. 82) concludes 'that in the old ritual Indra was offered Soma at night, when he needed it most, during his fight against Vṛtra, killing the demon and thereby creating the unfolded world with its space, light, and water. Indra is the original drinker of Soma and no other god but Indra is praised in the night during the Atirātra. Therefore the Atirātra form of the *śrauta* Soma sacrifice seems to reflect much more of the Ṛgvedic customs concerning Soma than does the usual Agniṣṭoma, which does not associate Soma with the night'.

8 'There are several stanzas proving that the poet, feeling wide awake, associates his ability to formulate with the influence of Soma. RV 9.96,18 calls Soma a maker of seers, *ṛṣikṛt*; in RV 8.44,29 Agni is said to be awake like an inspired poet… In RV 9.97,37 Soma is called *jāgṛvi* and *vípra* side by side' (Falk 1989, p. 80).

9 'Seen in this light, the Veda is a vast magical synthesis expressed in symbolic terms. The images of the Veda have a ritual significance in themselves; they bring about the ordered functioning of a universe which is itself conceived as the scene of a vast sacrifice, the prototype of man-made sacrifices' (Renou 1968, pp. 17–18).

10 See Renou 1968, p. 10; Heesterman 1993, p. 54.

11 Compare Hubert and Mauss 1964, pp. 81–94.

12 Normal cult follows a rigid pattern, but not so the practice of magic, which has to be responsive to the case at hand. See Renou 1968, p. 40.

13 See Gonda 1975, pp. 142–48, pp. 277–87: charms for curing disease and exorcising demons; for getting divinities to provide remedies and prolong life-time; imprecations and charms directed against human adversary; 'rites for special wishes' (*kāmyeṣṭi*); for increasing wealth and prosperity; love-charms; for victory in battles; even for the special needs of the brahmins such as success in the study of the Veda, prestige, purification, etc.

14 See Gonda 1975, pp. 291–97.

15 'In fact, the gods only exist as a function of the sacrifice, within the sacrificial context. The divinity is, in relation to the sacrifice, a subordinate factor, a kind of means to an end: in order that the sacrifice might be complete, there must also be a divinity, one who receives the oblation. But it is not the divinity who produces the results of the sacrifice; rather it is a force that emanates from the sacrifice itself' (Malamoud 1996, p. 224).

16 See Malamoud 1996, p. 203.

17 See Lévi 1898, pp. 102–107.

18 Compare Hubert and Mauss 1964, p. 91.

19 See Bodewitz 1999, pp. 221–22; compare Kellens and Swennen 2005.

20 See Parpola 2004–2005, pp. 50–51; Eliade 1958, pp. 77–80.

21 See Dumézil 1966, pp. 529–92. The same is true of Greek sacrifice, as Rudhardt says: 'Ce n'est pas un individu qui sacrifie, mais une communauté – serait-ce par l'intermédiaire d'un seul représentant. Cette communeauté peut être un groupe familiale ou politique; elle peut être une armée; elle peut être un groupement privé' (in Rudhardt and Reverdin 1981, pp. 132–33).

22 Similarly, in the Greek sacrifices whose recipients were the underworld gods, such as *sphagia* (a pre-battle blood-sacrifice), no part of the victim was eaten. The seer who conducted the sacrifice used it especially for obtaining omens, which included divination from the intensity of fire when gallbladder and urinary bladder of the victim were burnt, and possibly divination from the partially burnt *sphagia*. See Henrichs 1981, pp. 213–16.

23 See Nock 1972, pp. 190–94. Helios, Selene and Hecate are regularly invoked in the Greek Magic Papyri. See Betz 1992. But Apollo, too, is present, naturally as the god of divination. Sometimes the invoked powers are left anonymous: 'the inhabitants of Chaos and Erebos… masters of things not to be seen, guardians of secrets' etc. Still, these powers obviously belong to the underworld: 'leaders of those beneath the earth' (Betz 1992, p. 127). But the typical deities were Hermes and Osiris. See Betz 1982, pp. 165–66. See Parker 2005, pp. 126ff. for the Greek magical practices such as curses (including political!) mostly from the end of the fourth century BC.

24 See Graf 1997, pp. 89–117. One hardly finds a 'magic' text before the late Hellenistic period, that is, around the time of the 'disappearance of the charismatic specialists' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 142). Did the magician replace the itinerant purifier? Compare Betz 1982, p. 164: 'There is a clear tendency in some texts to interpret magic in terms of the mystery cults. The whole of magic as well as its parts can be called *mystērion*… the magician is the "mystagogue" (*mystagōgos*). Furthermore, handing over the magical tradition to a student becomes the purpose of a mystery-cult initiation'.

25 Compare Dickie 2001, pp. 33–43, pp. 124–41.

26 See Dickie 2001, pp. 142–201.

27 Plato's comments in *Laws* 738d, 771d–772a, 828bc on these two aspects seem to have general validity.

28 See Hickson Hahn 2007, pp. 235–48 for a survey of various types of prayer in Rome.

29 'Although sacrifice was certainly the heart of Roman ritual, sacrifice without prayer, as Pliny the Elder commented, was useless. Without words of prayer to identify

the purpose of rituals, neither the divine recipients nor the human audience could understand what was happening. As in those mute paintings and relief sculptures, there would be no clue whether the intent was petition, oath, or thanksgiving. The term "supplication" (*supplicatio*) illustrates this problem well. The Romans used the same word to identify public days or prayer and offering for propitiation, expiation, and thanksgiving… The only distinguishing factor was the content of the prayers of magistrates and people' (Hickson Hahn 2007, p. 247).

30 See Burkert 1987, pp. 68–69.

31 See Burkert 1985, pp. 272–75; Vernant 1989, pp. 43–51; Parker 1983, pp. 286–300. In his *Apology* (26.6), Apuleius defines the 'magus' as 'someone who, through the community of speech with the immoral gods, possesses an incredible power of spells for everything he wishes to do' (in Graf 2002, p. 93).

32 See Vernant 1990, pp. 116–19. The general attraction of Heracles is rooted in the hero's victory over death. 'Heracles has broken the terrors of death; as early as the fifth century it was said that his initiation at Eleusis protected him from the dangers of the underworld' (Burkert 1985, p. 211). 'The Dioskouroi are above all saviours, *soteres*', who rescue those who appealed to them from mortal dangers (Burkert 1985, p. 213). Divine agents with specific characteristics and life stories are called on for the purpose of averting death or attaining divine status. This constellation has well-defined particular features. It involves, among other things, mystery initiation. 'The Dioskouroi, like Heracles, were also said to have been initiated at Eleusis and were seen as guiding lights for those hoping to break out of the mortal sphere into the realm of the gods' (Burkert 1985, p. 213).

33 See Burkert 1972, pp. 147–65; Parker 1983, pp. 207–14; Betz 1982, p. 166.

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9 The Greek mysteries

The mysteries, with the exception of Mithraism,[1] are a Greek phenomenon, even if they adopted certain elements from the Near East.[2] Nocturnal celebration is a basic dimension of the mystery cults, and because this was so characteristic, the nightly rite became almost synonymous with initiation into the mysteries in classical literature.[3] The prominent atheist of the fifth century, Diagoras of Melos, 'revealed the Eleusinian mysteries to everyone "and thus made them ordinary". In the light of day the nocturnal ceremonies are nothing' (in Burkert 1985, p. 316, the quoted text is from Krateros). All the important mysteries of the Greek world, namely Eleusinian, Dionysiac and those of Isis and Kybele, were celebrated at night (Burkert 1985, p. 91, pp. 96–97; Sfameni Gasparro 1985, p. 11 n. 21, p. 17, p. 20). The *teletai* that Dionysus brings in the *Bacchae* 485–6 are nocturnal. The dark of night is plainly associated with the secrecy of these rites in the testimonies. 'Eleusinian iconography depicts, one might almost say, torches, torches, and nothing but torches. At this point the veil of secrecy descends' (Parker 2005, p. 350). The timing, however, had a wider significance than the requirement of secrecy, ensuring and reflecting the initiate's privileged status. The night-time belongs to the gods of the underworld, who were assumed to determine the fate of the soul.[4] Herodotus writes that the 'Egyptians say that Demeter and Dionysus are the rulers of the underworld' (Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.123). The mystery gods (Isis and Osiris) are simply introduced as rulers of the underworld.[5] The nocturnal character of the mysteries, as we will see, is related to the eschatological function of the cult deities.[6]

Two details about what took place during the 'sacred nights' at Eleusis were exposed in a Gnostic treatise, which the Christian theologian Hippolytus reports in his *Refutation* 5.8.39ff. One passage reads: 'the hierophant, at night in Eleusis, celebrating the great and unmentionable mysteries beneath a great fire, cries aloud, saying: the reverend goddess has born a child, Brimo Brimos, the strong one has born a strong child', probably meaning that Dionysus is born from Persephone.[7] The claim made by various writers on behalf of the celebrations at Eleusis was that the mysteries take from death its terror and guarantee a happy afterlife.[8] The *mystēs* stands to gain not just an 'extraordinary experience', namely the joyful vision of the divine Kore, but also a

privileged status in the afterlife.[9] 'Thrice blessed are those mortals who have seen these rites and thus enter into Hades: for them alone there is life, for the others all is misery' (Sophocles frg. 837 from the lost tragedy 'Triptolemos', in Burkert 1985, p. 289). How did the *mystēria* achieve this? Apparently the 'great, admirable, most perfect epoptic secret' that was revealed 'in silence' at Eleusis, according to the other detail from the Gnostic treatise, was the showing by the hierophant of a 'reaped ear of corn' (Burkert 1987, p. 91).[10] Sourvinou-Inwood argues that this 'revelation' brings the search for the goddess to its climactic end and is tantamount to the epiphany of the queen of the underworld.[11] Whatever the supposed meaning of the scene may have been, it must have carried a particular message, and not just a feeling of 'exhilaration', for the participants (cf. Parker 2005, p. 352). The texts that talk about the experience of the *mystai* and *epoptai* ('watchers' who were already initiated) assert that mystic blessedness consists, not in emotional exultations that may have accompanied the event, but according to Aristotle, 'in the act of "seeing" what is divine' (in Burkert 1987, p. 93). The 'seeing' must be the experiential seal of the crucial knowledge. The moment of revelation had a symbolic reality, the myth realized in an emphatic experience, adding the weight of experience to the doctrine concerning the divine care and promise of salvation.[12] The presence of the 'gods of deliverance' (Plato, *Republic* 366a: *lysioi theoi*) confirms their intimacy with the initiate, signals their willingness to 'release' or otherwise help the initiate, and thus warrants the initiate's hope for a privileged afterlife.[13] The elements of the ritual, including the ear of corn, could have been, and indeed probably were, inherited from various sources and chronological layers, and given new meanings within the new system.[14] Perhaps the ear of corn became the symbol of new life emerging in the dark bowels of earth. One can compare with this the unveiling of the large phallus in a winnowing basket, *liknon*, to the initiate in Dionysian *orgia*. The presentation per se could not have been a revelation of some awesome secret,[15] although it is evidently a hierophantic scene, to judge from the fresco of the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii. 'The *liknon* with phallus appears much earlier in Bacchic contexts, but without any special "mystic" connotations… phallus processions had always been present in the worship of Dionysus' (Burkert 1987, 96). Even beyond the horizon of its employment in the Dionysian festivals, one can imagine that the 'sacred object' was used, rather transparently, in some puberty ritual as the symbol of virility, finding its way eventually into the Bacchic ceremonies.[16] But this sort of archaeology is illuminating as long as one can bring together the findings and reconstruct the actual traditions behind the mysteries; otherwise it only leads to confusion. The revelation must be understood symbolically.

Both the Bacchic *teletē* and the initiation to Isis took place at night.[17] The candidate was confronted with horrifying phenomena, then reassured and blessed, and in the following day was received by the admiring crowd, the 'blessed chorus' (*thiasos*). Demosthenes, in his invective against Aeschines, describes a Bacchic nocturnal ceremony, conducted by the latter's mother, at

the climax of which the initiates were 'raised up' to their feet and exclaimed 'I escaped from evil, I found the better' (Demosthenes, *Discourses* 18.259). The sins or impurities thus purged could have been any number of things.[18] As for the mystery of Isis, we have the famous passage from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* describing in all probability his own experience at a nocturnal initiation: 'I approached the frontier of death, I set foot on the threshold of Persephone, I journeyed through all the elements and came back, I saw at midnight the sun, sparkling in white light, I came close to the gods of the upper and the nether world and adored them from near at hand' (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.23.6–8). 'Experiencing' deathlike conditions in the passage belongs not to rhetoric but to the fundamental ideology of the mysteries. The search for Kore at Eleusis was also a descent to Hades (see Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, p. 34). Seeing the sun at midnight is enigmatic; one feels more is said in the phrase than merely expressing some kind of intellectual illumination. Is it an image of the descent into the underworld, where the sun spends the night?[19] The dimension of death is pervasive in the mysteries.[20] 'The mysteries of Isis are to be accepted, the priest says, "in the form of a voluntary death and salvation by grace"… the day following the night of initiation is reckoned as a new birthday; Isis has the power to change fate and to grant a new life' (Burkert 1987, p. 99).[21]

The Greek assimilation of Egyptian Osiris and Isis to the mystery cults is significant. Burkert suggests that in the background of this reception lurked a cross-cultural misunderstanding. Generally, in Greek eyes, Egypt was the place of divine wisdom vouchsafed to priests adept in special rituals.[22] But what made the ritual of Osiris particularly mystery-like for classical Greeks, says Burkert, were its nocturnal character and the lamentations[23] that accompanied it. Eumolpus, the mythical ancestor of the hierophants is etymologically "fair singer", and an epitaph speaks of a hierophant "pouring forth a lovely voice: it is generally and plausibly supposed that within the *telesterion* there was some intoning of "sacred cries" but little if any discourse in prose' (Parker 2005, p. 352). The adoption of the cult of Isis in the form of *mystēria* was so self-assured that 'authentic Egyptian mysteries' were suspected behind the mysteries of Eleusis and even those of Dionysus. The sanctuaries of Isis began offering initiation to 'those who had the desire and the means' for a more intimate, personal relation with the goddess (Burkert 1987, pp. 40–41). Intimate and reassuring contact with underworld deities is the hallmark of all the mysteries. One should appreciate the singularly strong bias that the nocturnal 'lamentation' of the cult of Osiris must have exercised on the Greek mind that saw in it a mystery cult. Archaic and classical Greeks tended to view a ritual contact with underworld gods celebrated at night and involving initiation-type proceedings as a mystery cult.

But what was the basis of the perception of 'initiation' in the worship of Isis? Here, too, there must have occurred a 'cross-cultural misunderstanding'. Initiation in general enacts a change of status. In some sense, the initiate dies and is reborn as a new being.[24] In the myth of Osiris, the dying god gives rise to

a new (form of) life; and this myth is basic to the cult. The lamentations in the Egyptian ceremony may be for the sufferings of the god, but more likely are meant to facilitate the passage to the realm of death. The theme of death and subsequent triumph would have made the worship of Osiris seem like a mystery initiation. Herodotus (*Histories* 2.171) says that Egyptians call the drama of the suffering and dying god represented in nocturnal rituals of mourning the '*mystēria*'.[25] This content qualified the cult of Isis and Osiris as a form of mystery rite for the famous Greek historian of the fifth century BC. He then famously declines to say more; but in designating the cult of the Egyptian gods *mystēria*, Herodotus has been less discreet than he believed. The passage to the realm of the dead appears to have been the fundamental dimension of initiation to the mysteries, probably evoked or perhaps enacted in a schematic way in the nocturnal celebrations (cf. Parker 2005, p. 354). 'These are the mysteries,' writes the Christian apologist Clement of Alexandria (second–third centuries AD), 'to put it briefly, murder and burial' (*Protrepticus* 2.19). The Latin Christian apologist of the fourth century AD, Firmicus Maternus, has described a mystery scene which appears to be from the cult of Isis (or perhaps of Dionysus).[26] The fate of the initiate seems to be likened to that of the 'saved' god. After days of lamenting before an idol, the priest anoints the throat of the participants and whispers: 'Be confident, *mystai*, since the god has been saved, you too will be saved from your toils' (Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum* 22).[27] It is not clear prima facie from what the god is rescued. Neither Osiris nor Attis[28] 'returns' to earthly life; and the Orphic Dionysus does not end up on the throne of Zeus, for which he was destined before his murder at the hands of the Titans. Kore is not saved from death either: in Greek literature being raped by Hades 'means simply to die'.[29] Burkert points out that the theme of the 'dying god' per se was obviously not enough to make a cult fit for mystic initiation. The cult of Heracles never developed into the mysteries.[30] Nor can the salvation promised to the initiate be some type of resurrection. None of the mysteries makes such a claim. The key factor seems to be the underworld status of the deity.[31] Osiris does not return from the realm of the dead, but becomes the 'god of the dead'. If the cult Firmicus Maternus had in mind was that of Isis and Osiris, the 'saved god' had to be the god 'justified'.

The deceased Egyptian before the divine panel that decides his fate hopes to receive 'justification' and thereby a pleasant postmortem existence.[32] No hope of return to life is implied. 'Osiris is not a resurrected god, but one who in death achieves a new form of existence in the beyond through the triumph and piety of his son, thus becoming the archetype of all deceased persons' (Assmann 2001, p. 145). Initiation to the mysteries of Isis promised a blessed afterlife, not resurrection.[33] This tallies with what Cicero says about the gains of the initiate of Demeter: 'how to live in joy, and how to die with better hopes' (in Burkert 1987, p. 21). The idea of receiving 'justification' through initiation is also at home in the mystery cult of Dionysus, if it is the mysteries of this god that Firmicus described. The Orphico-Dionysiac myth of Dionysus, son

of Persephone, murdered by the Titans, lies behind the instructions the dead receive in the form of inscriptions on gold leaves for their afterlife journey. As 'a god of eschatological mysteries, he becomes powerful to aid the individual to a better lot in the afterlife' (Parker 2005, p. 315). The dead from whose graves these leaves, mostly from the fourth century, have been recovered were initiates of the mysteries of Dionysus.[34] Pindar (frg. 133) speaks of Persephone accepting 'compensation for ancient grief' from the dead;[35] 'this grief of the goddess for which men bear the guilt can only be the death of her child Dionysos' (Burkert 1985, p. 298). The Orphico-Dionysiac doctrine of the 'ancient guilt' that every human inherits from his or her Titanic origins (humans are made, according to the myth, from the soot remnant of the Titans struck by Zeus' lightning) and the need of redemption from that guilt through initiation goes back in some form to at least the seventh century BC.[36] The initiate is not 'saved' by being likened to the god Dionysus (who is 'restored' in some versions of the myth[37]), even though one could plausibly maintain that the 'divine model' is in some sense resurrected.[38] Rather, the initiation has the value of removing 'pollution' (or guilt) through justification, understood in a broad sense.[39]

> The only bacchic 'initiations' that are clearly attested in Attica are a specialized form, the 'orphic-bacchic' rites administered, to both sexes, by 'orpheus-initiators'. The formal purpose of these was to secure well-being in the afterlife, but they included bacchic 'play', and some may have undergone them chiefly with a view to more immediate enjoyment.
>
> (Parker 2005, p. 325)

The initiate is reminded on the gold lamellae from Pelinna (modern Palaiogardiki) in the late fourth century BC: 'tell Persephone that the Bacchic One himself released you'. Similarly, the leaves recovered from a tumulus at Thurii speak on behalf of the deceased: 'I come pure from the pure, Queen of the Chthonian Ones… I also claim to be of your happy race. I have paid the penalty for unrighteous deeds… Now I come as a suppliant (feminine) to Persephone'.[40] As for the mysteries of Eleusis, Burkert reminds us that the 'catchword is not "rescue" or "salvation" but "blessedness", and it is taken to refer to the afterlife more than anything else: the "other gift" of Demeter, besides the bringing of grain, is the promise of a privileged life beyond the grave for those who have "seen" the mysteries' (Burkert 1987, p. 21). Certainly, the experience the initiates had during the 'sacred nights' must have formed in their mind an integral part of the overall assurance that the mysteries offered. But that unique experience in itself, even if repeated on a number of occasions, cannot be the basis of the peace of mind that the mysteries are supposed to have provided.[41] Plutarch (*Non posse* 27) pokes fun at the hopes of the initiates, who 'believe that certain rites of initiation and purification will relieve them: once purified, they believe, they will go on playing and dancing in Hades in places full of brightness, pure air and light'. Plutarch apparently

thought that initiation was tantamount to 'purification', but a special kind: it makes the initiate entitled to expect a blissful afterlife. 'Blessed is he who has seen these things before he goes beneath the hollow earth, for he understands the end of mortal life and the beginning of a god-given life' (Pindar, frg. 137).[42] The mystery gods made it possible for the initiate to 'justify him- or herself, 'release' him- or herself from a certain guilt,[43] and thus become fit for a blessed state. 'Like the Eleusinian mysteries, although on a much larger scale, Dionysus promised his followers a happy afterlife' (Henrichs 1981, p. 160).[44]

Purifications were also offered for the ills of this life, such as madness.[45] Ritual incantation is used for both summoning the dead and curing ills in the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus.[46] Plato (*Republic* 364e–365a) mentions that the itinerant initiators offered 'special rites for the dead' beside the purifications for remission of sins for the living. The distinction between the rites for the dead and those for the living is worthy of attention. If Plato's reference to the 'hubbub of books of Musaeus and Orpheus' that the mystery priests produced as the basis of their ritual purification describes a general phenomenon, there must have been an explicit doctrine or mythic account behind their procedures, and hence some form of homogeneity. Nonetheless, the peregrinating purifier's was a private craft and naturally subject to improvisations and myriad variations.[47]

In his book on the influence of the Near Eastern myths and rituals in the Greek world from the eighth to the sixth century BC, *The Orientalizing Revolution*, Burkert connects the Hellenic figure of the purifier to the Near Eastern type of the itinerant healer. Homer (*Odyssey* 17.384ff.) classifies the seers and doctors as migrant 'craftsmen', the Greek counterpart to the Eastern figure of 'seer' who appeared in the Greek world during the 'orientalizing period' and was active there in various sectors from construction to medicine. Hepatoscopy (divination by way of inspecting the liver of an immolated animal), *the* Mesopotamian divination, becomes in the course of the seventh and sixth centuries the dominant form of divination in Greece.[48] There is evidence that a number of Greek ritual healings, seemingly both in conception and practice, have almost exact Mesopotamian precedents (Burkert 1992, pp. 55–87). Epimenides purified Athens from pollution around 600 BC. Diotima could delay through appropriate rituals the onset of plague (*Symposium* 201de). The Near Eastern connection is significant, for if the idea of ritual therapy is the sole basis of the claim that the mystery cults provide 'better hopes' for the afterlife, the mysteries move into the domain of the 'orientalizing revolution'. Crime is the cause not just of individual illness and communal affliction but also of postmortem sufferings. Plato's description of the claims and practices of the 'mendicant priests and diviners' in the *Republic* 364b–e shows that ritual purification was used as therapy for physical illnesses by the same figures that are associated with the mysteries: 'For their part, beggar priests and diviners (*agyrtai de kai manteis*) come to the doors of rich men and persuade them that they have obtained from the gods,

by sacrifices and incantations (*epōdais*), the power to heal them by means of games and festivals[49] of some injustice committed by themselves or by their ancestors… for, to hear them, they persuade the gods to place themselves at their service'. They heal by ritual purification. But one must be careful in assigning provenance and borrowing.

The idea of therapy by way of purificatory atonement was widespread in the ancient world, where any disturbance of the unique, 'multi-stranded' order was thought to produce nefarious effects in various dimensions.[50] If specific therapeutic procedures were adopted from the Mesopotamia into the Greek world, this 'transfer' must have taken place on the basis of the Greeks' perception of their efficacy; and such a perception could arise only within a shared horizon of sensibilities with regard to the practices in question. What recommended the adopted procedures were not so much their empirical results as their ideological foundations. The transfer of objects, techniques and ideas from the Near East to archaic Greece following the 'dark ages' should not be viewed simply as adoption of the items of a superior culture. There were many Mesopotamian items available, contemporaneous with the 'adopted' ones, which were shunned and remained 'barbaric'. One must take the full measure of the fact that the Mesopotamian precedents of ritual purifications evoked by Burkert (1992, pp. 41–79) are therapeutic in the narrow sense, i.e. directed to the ills of this world. Pacifying disgruntled ghosts so that they leave the living in peace is not the same thing as providing a blessed existence for the departed soul. Gilgamesh remains a mortal; only a dreary existence is in store for him upon dying, but not so for the hopeful Pythagorean, nor for the initiate of the mysteries. There is no evidence that the Semitic East shaped the basic ideological pattern of the mysteries. When Herodotus credits Egypt with the mysteries and metempsychosis (*Histories* 2.123), it is clear that what he is describing in this instance is in fact Greek: Egypt never developed a doctrine of metempsychosis. As I said above, the assimilation of the cult of Isis and Osiris to the mysteries has to be understood on the basis of the fundamental elements of the mysteries (nocturnal celebration apparently involving lamentation, the underworld status of the gods invoked, 'justification' as the way to postmortem bliss, etc.). The Egyptian cult is not the origin of the mysteries. Having become a Greek mystery cult and the 'origin' of Pythagoreanism, the 'Egyptian' cult *had to* be also the origin of the doctrine of metempsychosis.

Notes

1 Mithraism shared the main features of the mysteries. I do not discuss it here not because it made an exception in this regard but because of its relative lateness. In his so-called *Caesares*, the Emperor Julian, an initiate of Mithras, has Hermes address him in the following words: 'I have granted you to know Mithras the Father. Keep his commandments, thus securing for yourself an anchor-cable and safe mooring all through your life, and, when you must leave the world, having every confidence that the god who guides you will be kindly disposed' (in Clauss 2001, p. 144).

The similarities of Mithraism and Christianity in respect of salvation claims and even doctrinal points of ritual were known to the early Christian polemicists. The common characteristics were a constant incitement of vengeful impulses in these preachers of the religion of love as long as Mithraism existed. See Clauss 2001, pp. 108–109 on the ritual meal, and generally pp. 168–72. Mithras was, more than any other mystery god, a psychopompic god. 'Initiation into a mystery cult such as that of Mithras enabled one to acquire knowledge of all the secret lore, prayers and rituals which guaranteed that initiate's soul would one day find its way to the sphere of the fixed stars' (Clauss 2001, p. 141). Mithras is undoubtedly a composite figure. See Kellens 2000, pp. 693–95, for a discussion of the eschatological role of Mithra in the Avesta. Beck (1998) argues for a Commagenian formation of the mysteries from learned astrological traditions and Iranian elements. The *ascent* of the soul to heaven *guided* by the god reveals the Iranian background of Mithras, notwithstanding the prevalent view that makes the god more or less purely Roman (Clauss, Gordon and others). Mithraism is first and foremost a mystery cult, understood in the sense it is presented in this chapter. See Turcan 1981, pp. 358–63; Beck 1998, pp. 116–17. The slaying of the bull, Clauss (2001, pp. 78–90) maintains, seems to have cosmogonic as well as eschatological significance. 'The bull is sacrificed so that new life may be produced' (Clauss 2001, p. 81). One can hardly dispute this general proposition, but the particular content that Clauss wants to give it is another matter. 'The geste of Sol Invictus Mithras is one that brings about creation and deliverance. This is the core of all sun- and vegetation-myths, the very pith of this as well as other ancient mystery-cults' (Clauss 2001, p. 82).

2 See Burkert 1987, 1992; Sfameni Gasparro 1985, pp. 64–83.

3 On the *Adonia* see Versnel 1990, pp. 103–105.

4 See Graf 1974, pp. 79–93.

5 The idea of Dionysus as the ruler of the dead is attested only for Dionysus Zagreus. See Gantz 1993, pp. 118–19; Parker 2005, p. 315.

6 One cannot overemphasize the importance of the underworld connections of the mystery gods for understanding the meaning of the mystery cults. Those who deny the eschatological function of these cults are hard pressed to explain this central feature. This, of course, does not mean that the function is necessarily the 'origin' of the mysteries, which, in any case, responded to worldly concerns too. See Sfemani Gasparro 1985, pp. 84–106. I am sceptical about Clinton's assertion that the mysteries 'represent a transformation of the much older Thesmophoria and similar cults open only to women. Several elements and themes of the older cult remain in the new creation – sorrow, fasting, a sacred well, ritual mockery, deposition of piglets in *megara*, agrarian prosperity' (Clinton 1993, p. 120). Clinton maintains that the 'divine drama' of Kore and Demeter, in which the initiate takes part in the sacred night, contains a message of hope for the afterlife. 'The initiates suffer as the Goddesses suffer and finally share in the Goddesses' extraordinary joy. And so they enter into a special relationship with each of them and naturally with Kore's other self, the Thea in the underworld, who will look after them in the life to come' (Clinton 1993, p. 120). What is essential is the form of initiation. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess institutes the mysteries so that she may be appeased once she has failed in her immortalization of the nursling Demophon. See Parker 1991, pp. 8ff. A cause for grievance is obviously at issue. Further, initiation to the mysteries in general was understood in classical literature as 'purification'. These points make Clinton's conception of the process of imparting the 'hope for a better afterlife' questionable.

7 Clinton (1992, pp. 91–95) and Graf (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 151), among others, maintain that Brimo is Demeter and Brimos, Plutus, Wealth; 'this is the commonest view' (Parker 2005, p. 358 n. 138). Neither Demeter nor Plutus, however, can be legitimately characterized as 'strong'. Parker considers the Dionysus option, referring to some texts in which it is said that 'Dionysus son of Persephone'

is honoured at Eleusis, but finally decides for Plutus. 'A representation at Eleusis of the birth of the Orphic Dionysus would be, so to speak, eschatological dynamite; it would change the whole base on which the cult's promises about the afterlife were grounded. But for that very reason it is rather hard to believe in' (Parker 2005, pp. 358–59). Parker himself acknowledges that the 'goal of the *Mysteries* is eschatological; the cult's promise of a blessed afterlife is repeated with remarkable consistency over many centuries' (Parker 2005, p. 354). Even if the Orphic Dionysus was not originally a persona in the Eleusinian drama of salvation, one can see its attraction for the Kore-centred ritual. The epiphany of the queen of the dead will have been reassuring to the initiate, whose initiation meant 'purification'. The initiation presumably had an eschatological significance. How does one account for this without the 'Orphic Dionysus' – purification from what, reconciliation for what? A 'chorus in Sophocles invoke [sic.] Dionysus as one who rules "in the vales, open to all, of Eleusinian Deo"… the only source which tells us anything specific about the content of the *Lesser Mysteries* at Agrai (usually described in the vaguest terms, but associated with Demeter and Kore) describes them as "an imitation of the story of Dionysus"' (Parker 2005, p. 341). According to Plato, *Gorgias* 497c, the 'lesser mysteries' were the condition of access to the 'great mysteries'. The importance of Dionysus in the Eleusinian mysteries is thus beyond doubt. A fragmentary tomb inscription from the island of Tenos says 'a maenad of wild Brimos' takes part in 'the rites of the girl from the race of Agenor' (Henrichs 1978, p. 138). Brimos here is unquestionably Dionysus. See also *Bacchae* 725–6: '(the maenads) calling in unison on Bromios as Iakchos'. Compare Clinton 1992, 64–71. The god also appears with the name Bromios in Pratinas, Pindar and Aeschylus. See Gantz 1993, p. 118 for references.

8 See Burkert 1985, pp. 285–90.

9 I will discuss in more detail the relation between 'mystic experience' and the certainty of a blissful afterlife below.

10 The chain of adjectives in the monk's description of the proceedings is obviously ironic if not malicious.

11 'What evidence there is on searches and on modalities of divine presence in Greek rituals suggests that the finding of a deity had taken one of two forms: the finding of the statue, or the finding of something else closely connected with the deity… I suggest that the "finding" of Kore in the Mysteries consisted of the miraculous appearance of something connected with her… the advent of Kore was ritually enacted through the miraculous finding of an unseasonable ear of corn' (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, p. 35).

12 Graf (1974, pp. 139–50) convincingly shows that the Eleusinian 'promise' was publicly known by the end of the fifth century BC, thanks to the 'Orphic' poems. 'The dominant language in early texts is of "showing" or even just "doing" the *Mysteries*' (Parker 2005, p. 353). Without some kind of knowledge of the myth and doctrine of the mysteries, all the 'showing' and 'doing' would have been meaningless to the participant.

13 According to a fragment (*Fr.* 15), Aristotle thought that the aim of the initiates (*teloumenoi*) should be to 'experience' (*pathein*), and not to 'learn' (*mathein*), the mysteries. See Burkert 1987, p. 69, p. 89. Graf interprets this as meaning that the object of the mysteries was some kind of 'emotional experience', and that it was *this* that had to be kept secret: 'the rites were kept secret, and the central, emotional experience could not be communicated at all, as Aristotle already knew' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 141). If the prohibition to communicate applied to the 'central, emotional experience' that the initiates are supposed to have had, it was a redundant ban, since, like emotional experience in general, it could not have been really communicable anyway. The 'experience' had to do with the closeness of the 'absolving gods'. The secrecy in part guaranteed for the 'experience' the

status of a positional good. The experience had to be *symbolic*, in the sense that for the initiate it embodied a *lógos*, even if it, as it is *supposed* by modern scholars, ecstatically claimed the initiate. All aspects of sacrifice, whether mystic or otherwise, are symbolic, understood in this sense: e.g. the 'meal' that the participants of Greek sacrifice eat no less than the 'portion' that the gods receive in the form of smoke. See Vernant's comments in Rudhardt and Reverdin 1981, pp. 24–25, pp. 89–90. Making 'ecstatic experience' as such the central achievement of the mysteries, aside from the methodological problems it introduces, goes against the evidence. In a similar vein, Henrichs criticizes the thesis of ecstatic identification with Dionysus in Dionysiac rituals. See Henrichs 1981, pp. 157–60.

14 See Kirk 1981, pp. 70–72. Ritual elements do not necessarily give us the key to the meaning of the ritual where they are found. Atavistic episodes are reinterpreted in the light of an acquired meaning. The 'fact that the mysteric ritual's ultimate goal was the achievement of a happy afterlife in Hades makes it more likely than not that the search for Persephone was given an eschatological reinterpretation when the festival became the Mysteries' (Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, p. 34).

15 'Would the secret of Eleusis, could we know it, come as a surprise?… nothing suggests that the answer would, on a large scale, have been "yes"; this was a cult of showing, not of teaching, and the ideas that it deployed were almost necessarily those that the initiates brought with them to the *telesterion*' (Parker 2005, p. 360).

16 But see Diodorus, *Library of History* 1.22.6 where he refers to the use of the 'hidden phallus' of Osiris in Egyptian rites and sacrifices. In all Dionysiac rituals, the 'phallus is basic' (Parker 2005, p. 318). In the procession, the 'phallus probably struck an informal, uninhibited note… it was also, above all, a symbol and a celebration… of male lust… The satyrs… express, in comically transferred form, a recognition and even a complaisant acceptance of the power of desire' (Parker 2005, pp. 319–21).

17 So did the mysteries of Kybele: 'by torch light', according to Pindar (Sfemani Gasparro 1985, p. 11).

18 'The formula is vague, perhaps deliberately so, and need not imply eschatological hopes; but the books that Aeschines read out were probably Orphic (what else could they have been?), and are likely to have contained promises of this kind. Here, therefore, we have, unusually, clear evidence for a rite of deliverance that can reasonably be seen as Orphic, and that took the form of physical purification' (Parker 1983, p. 303).

19 See my discussion of the topic in the Conclusion. Compare Frame 1978, pp. 6–33. Frame shows that the underworld topography was a topic of the Indo-European poetic tradition. Helios is present in the Nysian plain 'at the ends of the earth', the site of Persephone's original descent into Hades. See Parker 1991, p. 7. According to Graf, a comparable conception of initiation is behind the gold leaves: the initiation rehearses what the doctrine teaches about death and the journey of the departed soul. The emotional centre of the initiation 'is not physical death but rather the descent to the Underworld, the confrontation with the powers down there, and, finally, the successful arrival among the other blessed initiates' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 158).

20 See Burkert 1983, p. 295.

21 See Versnel 1990, pp. 39–52, for an illuminating discussion of the aretologies of the goddess.

22 Diodorus (*Library of History* 1.92.3) wrote that Orpheus had presented Egyptian rites as his own descent into the world below, and introduced these rites in the form of mystery cults into Greece. The question of what degree of sensitivity is to be expected from the Greek observers is apparently not settled. 'The very ancient could always count on a respectful curiosity on the part of the Greek public, but as this was increasingly accompanied by a receptivity toward the spiritual contents

themselves, the antiquarians were encouraged imperceptibly to turn into teachers and preachers' (Jonas 1958, pp. 19–20). But much more ambivalent are the views of Nock 1972, pp. 308ff. and Beck 1991, pp. 491ff. I will discuss these two in some detail further below. The idea that anything the Greeks have to say about other cultures is by and large of their own making, because no accurate reflection of these is found in Greek writings, is methodologically problematic. Yet, one feels it is operative in many an otherwise illuminating analysis. Compare Momigliano 1975, pp. 144–48. According to this approach, the Greeks were generally uninterested in and incapable of 'learning' from other cultures. I wonder how a proponent of this view explains, e.g. what Plutarch's fourth-century BC sources have to say about Zoroastrian eschatology in Plutarch, *De Iside* 46–47. See Chapter 7.

23 The *goēteia* 'wizardry' is derived from the ancient word of funerary lament *goos*. See Dickie 2001, pp. 13–14. I discuss this topic further in the text.

24 As the gold leaves from Pelinna remind the deceased initiate of Dionysus: 'Now you have died and now you have come into being' (in Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 36–37). Conversely, death may be understood on the model of a rite of passage. 'Death is treated as a change of state, an entry into a world other than that of the living, an access to an elsewhere' (Vernant 1991, p. 77).

25 One can gather from the 'longer version' of Herodotus, *Histories* 2.81 that 'Orphic' and 'Bacchic' ritual teachings had common elements and that Herodotus thought they were 'in reality Egyptian and Pythagorean'. See Burkert 1972, pp. 127–28 for the controversy about the two versions of the text. Burkert (1972, p. 128) writes: 'Herodotus states that there is a connection between Orphism and Pythagoreanism in the realm of ritual. In addition, the longer text contributes not only an indication that Orphism is connected with Dionysus, but a theory about its origin, namely that it comes from Pythagoras, who got his teachings from Egypt'.

26 See Burkert 1987, p. 75. It does not make any difference for our purpose to which mystery cult the description belongs.

27 In my mind, this reference to the 'saved god' makes Parker's interpretation that it is physical purification as such that 'delivers' the initiate improbable. See Parker 1983, pp. 298–303.

28 See Sfemani Gasparro 1985, p. 42: 'if we cannot talk of the youth's return to life or "resurrection", the mythical tradition attested by the two authors [i.e. Pausanias and Arnobius] has an outcome which, even if it is characterised by *pathos* and by mourning, guarantees a positive prospect for Attis, since he is saved from complete annihilation. In this manner [i.e. undecaying body] the youth obtains a subsistence beyond death, or rather what we would be entitled to call a subsistence "in death"'. Compare Kerényi 1951, pp. 88–90. The same is true, incidentally, of Adonis. 'Concerning a "resurrection" of the god nothing is known. Both myth and ritual focus on the mournful aspects of his decease' (Versnel 1990, p. 104).

29 See Burkert 1983, pp. 261–62, who refers to a number of instances.

30 See Burkert 1987, pp. 75–76. Pythagoreans were represented throughout antiquity as 'imitating Heracles'. The mythical symbolism of the hero was especially important in the legend that grew around Empedocles, whose purification of Selinus from plague, involving the changing of the course of two streams, and his subsequent leap into Etna (i.e. death and apotheosis by fire) are clearly Heraclean. See Kingsley 1995, pp. 250–88. But the cult of the hero never became one of the mysteries, despite the fact that he was a human, a hero, it is true, who rose to the status of a god. The cult of Heracles would have made the most perfect mystery if initiation meant the identification of the initiate with the cult figure. Those who propose an interpretation of the mysteries along these lines ignore this fact. The sense of the expected 'salvation' is not: 'I am like X, so I will not die', where X is whatever god or hero that dies and lives again; but: 'I will have a blessed afterlife

because X saves me', where X is an underworld god. I will discuss the meaning of 'X is for me' further below.

31 The word 'underworld' does not have any sinister resonance in this context. The mystery cults certainly are not about propitiating hostile deities.

32 See Assmann 1989, pp. 147–52, 2001, pp. 123–47.

33 The gold leaves, found in the graves of Dionysiac initiates in Greece, Crete and southern Italy, 'preserve traces of a ritual scenario that was part of the bearers' initiation and that prepared them for the role they had to play once their souls had left their bodies and entered "the dark realms of Hades"' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 164).

34 See Graf and Johnston 2007 for the texts, commentary, history of scholarship and bibliography.

35 See Parker 1983, p. 300.

36 See Burkert 1982, pp. 8–9 and Robertson 2003, pp. 218–24.

37 See Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 66–93.

38 Kingsley (1995, pp. 264–69) argues (against Zuntz) that the portrayal of the initiate, found in a number of gold tablets, as a 'kid' or 'bull' or 'ram' 'jumping into milk' or 'making for the breast of the underworld queen' is an image of 'immortalization' through identifying with the victim-god Dionysus. I am not convinced, at least not in this straightforward version. The change of status is different in each case, the divine model and the initiate. If one can say anything general about the situation of the divine figures of the mysteries it is this: the god becomes an underworld god. The mortal of the gold plates, on the other hand, becomes immortalized thanks to her or his initiation to the Bacchic One. An Apulian volute crater from around 380 BC shows Chthonic Dionysus in a handshake with the enthroned Hades in an underworld scene. The initiate is a 'follower' of the god, who is expected to *guide* her or him to 'Persephone's sacred meadows and groves', as a plate from Thurii describes the postmortem blessedness. This point is important.

39 See Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 121–31; and Burkert 1985, pp. 293–95: 'by the fifth century at the latest there are Bacchic mysteries which promise blessedness in the afterlife. Implied is the concept of *baccheia* that designates ecstasy in the Dionysiac *orgia*, in which reality, including the fact of death, seems to dissolve' (Burkert 1985, p. 294). Be that as it may, the dissolution of the fear of death in ecstatic experience could hardly constitute the eschatological attraction of the mysteries, the reassurance they provided regarding the afterlife. The scholar naturally feels he has to accommodate all the known aspects of the mysteries in a coherent theory, but this might not be possible. Ritual elements are bound to be from different historical layers, and atavistic survivals are certain, possibly absorbed by the emergent doctrine. But not all the surviving components are reassigned to new functions. The 'original' functions of rituals may be lost while the rites themselves do not disappear but are understood in the light of a new ideology. See Versnel 1981, pp. 184–85. The account one can plausibly reconstruct for the mysteries along the lines that they promise or even make possible a blessed afterlife may not be able to explain the hierophantic scene of Eleusis, i.e. the silent showing of the ear of corn, which can be and has been interpreted in a number of ways, none of which really appears connected with the general doctrine of blessed afterlife through initiation. 'Attention has been drawn to the saying from St. John's Gospel that a grain of wheat must die if it is to bring forth fruit. For "from the dead comes nourishment and growth and seeds". The ear of corn cut and shown by the hierophant can be understood in this way' (Burkert 1985, pp. 289–90). If prompting to such a conciliated view of life were the sense of the revelation of the ear of corn in silence, then that 'revelation' would be an alien element in the doctrine assumed for the mysteries. Indeed, it would form a competing doctrine.

40 The tablets, writes Johnston, 'share the expectations that there is a special place in the Underworld for Bacchic initiates (shared with the heroes and perhaps the initiates of other mysteries as well) and that reaching it requires the use and display of knowledge obtained during initiation rituals performed before death' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 131). It is possible that the 'penalty' refers to the deceased's life as such which was lived in accordance with the Orphic precepts, e.g. of vegetarianism, and thus purified of the stains of human existence. Thus the initiate can say: 'I come pure', etc.

41 Compare Parker 1983, p. 286: 'All the sources insist that the salvation of the initiate depended not on purity, a mere preliminary, but on what he saw and heard on the night of Boedromion 20 in the great hall of initiation'.

42 See Parker 2005, pp. 360–63; and Burkert 1983, pp. 293–97.

43 See Graf 1974, pp. 151ff. In the Orphic context, the guilt of involvement in the murder of Dionysus attached to human beings by virtue of their Titanic origins.

44 For the initiate, the acquisition of 'Dionysiac identity', beyond the role-playing of the festivals, is possible only in the afterlife. 'The satyrs and maenads together incorporate the whole gamut of Dionysiac "madness": the satyrs are subject to drunkenness and sexual frenzy, the maenads undergo an ecstatic encounter with wild nature… [The god's] followers surrender their individuality in the collective excitement. But they do not achieve union with the source of that excitement, however close they may seem to approach' (Parker 2005, p. 326).

45 See Parker 1983, pp. 212–21: 'the purifiers of the fifth and fourth centuries… are called purifiers because they remove disease by a kind of washing' (Parker 1983, p. 212). Bathing and lustration are the most basic methods. 'Purification assimilates disease to dirt that can be washed off' (Parker 1983, p. 216). Ecstatic dancing could also be an independent method of purification, especially of madness. This is how the god cured the maenads. 'It remains for us to wonder what really constituted the intrinsic unity of these two dimensions of mysteries – realistic cures and immunizations, on the one hand, and imaginary guarantees of bliss after death, on the other' (Burkert 1987, p. 23). But if the ills of this world are due to crimes committed by oneself or one's ancestors and are remediable by way of purification or *askēsis*, why not those that are visited on the soul in the afterlife? Besides the preparatory purification such as the taking of a bath, writes Graf, 'the overall initiation rite could have a cathartic function as well; this is especially true for ecstatic rituals. Ecstasy was understood as being purificatory by itself, cleansing the soul from the disturbances and constraints of daily life. Originally this cleansing was connected with eschatological concerns; then it was transferred to the soul's cleansing from the guilt accumulated by unjust deeds' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 144). Parker (1983, pp. 281–307) argues that the development of eschatological concerns within Bacchic circles was due to the influence of Empedocles and Pythagoreans. If Graf is right about the priority of eschatologico-mystic over utilitarian-magical purification, once again, 'magic' finds its historical roots in the mysteries.

46 See Dickie 2001, p. 25.

47 Compare Burkert 1992, pp. 9–12: 'In Greece even the "normal" craftsmen were working each at his own risk and profit, without institutions such as the late medieval guilds. All the more did religious practitioners aspire for singularity… the decisive criterion for being a *kathartēs* or *telestēs* must have been success… Thus we should not expect consistency of beliefs or even dogmas; each individual would select, adopt and discard according to the exigencies of his career' (Burkert 1992, pp. 9–10). See also Dickie 2001, pp. 60–78.

48 See Burkert 1992, 48–49.

49 Compare Plato *Euthydemus* 277de.

50 The term 'multi-stranded' comes from Ernest Gellner (1988, pp. 58–62), which he defines as the subordination of the referential logic of cognition to the exigencies of the social. Compare Parker 1983, pp. 1–17.

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10 The magi in Heraclitus and the Derveni author

In a famous fragment (DK 14), Heraclitus says: 'the initiation into the mysteries (as) practised among men is unholy (*anierōsti*)'. Clement of Alexandria, who is the source (*Protrepticus* 22), also reports another fragment, which is thought by some scholars to be Clement's own gloss: 'Against whom are Heraclitus the Ephesian's prophecies addressed? "The wanderers of the night: the magi, the bacchantes, the maenads, the initiates" – he threatens all these men with tortures after death, he threatens them with fire, for "what men believe to be mystery initiations are impious rites"'.[1] The fragment, if genuine, is the earliest attestation of the *mystēria* and the *magoi* in Greek. In the disputed part, the magus (*magos*) is mentioned on a par with the initiate (*mystēs*), etc., and described as a night-wanderer. The magus is a practitioner of a nocturnal rite, presumably similar to the mysteries of Eleusis and Dionysus. Graf rightly points out that 'a meaning of *magos* which is widely different from that of the era of Clement guarantees Heraclitus' authorship' of the disputed fragment (DK 14a): νυκτιπόλοις μάγοις, Βάκχοις, Λήναις, μύσταις 'the wanderers of the night: the magi, the bacchantes, the maenads, the initiates'. Heraclitus, who lived under the Persian Empire toward the end of the sixth century BC[2] and must have had first-hand experience of the Persian priests, directly associates the nocturnal rite of the magi with the mysteries and says that these rights (as) practised by men are unholy (see Janko 2001, p. 4).[3] In a later work, Graf seems to suggest that the 'likening' of the initiates and initiators of the mysteries to the magi in Heraclitus had merely a polemical basis, namely the hateful reputation of the alien priests in 'Persian-occupied Ephesus' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 146). If this is indeed Graf's meaning, it cannot be right. The polemic intent in associating apparently popular and, at least in the case of some of the cults, officially sanctioned practices (see Plato *Republic* 364e) with those of the 'feared, hated, or despised' Persian priests could be effective only if the similarities between the Greek and Persian cults were perceptible and significant. The exercise could not have been a mere *ad hominem*. This is strong evidence for the fact that the magi's nocturnal rite and the mysteries had typical features in common. Gordon (1987, p. 78) maintains that the association under *nuktipoloi* with the Bacchants 'strongly suggest[s] a negative connotation already' for the *magoi*. But, strangely, he does not ask what the

basis of the comparison could have been.[4] Dickie (2001, pp. 28–30), on the other hand, maintains that the *magoi* 'offered initiation into private mystery-cults' just like 'figures from the cult of Dionysus', but raises doubts (followed by Horky 2009, pp. 54–55) as to whether Heraclitus' *magoi* are really 'Iranian fire-priests' and not 'wandering religious charlatans' passing themselves off under that title. A few pages later, he removes the doubt. 'By the time – and this is at a very early date [i.e. in Heraclitus] – we encounter in a Greek setting persons who are referred to as *magoi* there is no trace left of Zoroastrianism. What we find instead are men who offer initiation into the quite unPersian institution of the mystery-cult'.[5] Dickie thus acknowledges the similarities in Heraclitus' eyes between the magi's rite and the mysteries. That the shared features included the form of initiation must remain a speculation in this context. Based on it, however, Dickie denies the Persian identity of Heraclitus' *magoi*, since, according to him, initiation into the mysteries is 'unPersian'. It is, of course – by definition. But what does this have to do with the fact that the magi, *too*, performed their rite at night and that their rite may have had other significant similarities with the mysteries? That in the last quarter of the sixth century BC in Ionia some wandering religious charlatans for unknown reasons took on the title *magos*, and that this name quickly and definitively became theirs, so much so that by *magoi* Heraclitus had to mean *them* rather than the Persian priests who presumably had moved into the Greek cities of Asia Minor two or three decades earlier – these assertions are untenable. It is not even clear, Dickie notwithstanding,[6] that Heraclitus' condemnation of the mysteries aims at their 'private' nature and not their very conception.[7] All in all, there is no reason to think that by *magoi* Heraclitus did not mean Iranian priests.

Since its discovery in 1962 near a grave at the cemetery of Derveni in Thrace, the carbonized fourth-century papyrus scroll has been the object of keen scholarly interest. It is the 'oldest literary papyrus that has ever been found' (Most 1997, p. 117). The text, which must be older than the scroll itself,[8] consists in the main of an allegorical interpretation in Pre-Socratic terms of an Orphic theogony, but it also contains some observations about mystery-type rites.[9] The extant papyrus comprises 26 columns, some, especially the first columns, badly damaged, and a number of fragments. The authorized publication of the whole text appeared only a few years ago.[10] The first five columns seem to be about the afterlife and column 6 is about the rites that can facilitate (seemingly) the passage of the soul to the beyond. This column refers to a rite of the magi, which the Derveni author compares with the sacrifice that the *mystai* make. The magi's rite involves 'incantation' claimed to be capable of driving away the 'hindering *daimones*'. Do we have in this text an authentic description of an Iranian rite?

Column 6 (Kouremenos 2006, p. 73) reads:

(1) [c.8 εὐ]χαὶ καὶ θυσ[ί]αι μ[ειλ]ίσσουσι τὰ[ς ψυχάς,]
(2) ἐπ[ωιδὴ δ]ὲ μάγων δύν[α]ται δαίμονας ἐμ[ποδὼν]
(3) γι[νομένο]υς μεθιστάναι· δαίμονες ἐμπο[δὼν δ᾽ εἰσὶ]

(4) ψ[υχαῖς ἐχθ]ροί. τὴν θυσ[ία]ν τούτον ἕνεκε[ν] π[οιοῦσ]ι[ν]

(5) οἱ μά[γο]ι, ὡσπερεὶ ποινὴν ἀποδιδόντες. τοῖ(ς) δὲ

(6) ἱεροῖ[ς] ἐπισπένδουσιν ὕ[δω]ρ καὶ γάλα, ἐξ ὧνπερ καὶ τὰς

(7) χοὰς ποιοῦσι. ἀνάριθμα [κα]ὶ πολυόμφαλα τὰ πόπανα

(8) θύουσιν, ὅτι καὶ αἱ ψυχα[ὶ ἀν]άριθμπί εἰσι. μύσται

(9) Εὐμενίσι προθύουσι κ[ατὰ τὰ] αὐτὰ μάγοις· Εὐμενίδες γὰρ

(10) ψυχαί εἰσιν. ὧν ἕνεκ[εν τὸν μέλλοντ]α θεοῖς θύειν

(11) ὀ[ρ]νίθ[ε]ιον πρότερον [c. 11].ιςποτε[..]ται

(12) […]ω[.]τε καὶ τὸ κα[]ου…[..].ι.

(13) εἰσὶ δὲ […].ι…[]τουτο.[

(14) ὅσαι δὲ []ων ἀλλ[

(15) φορου[]…[

'… prayers and sacrifices appease the souls, while the [incantation][11] of the magi is able to drive away the daimons who are hindering; hindering daimons are vengeful souls (or: hostile to souls). This is why the magi perform the sacrifice, just as if they are paying a retribution. And on the offerings they pour water and milk, from which (plural) they also make the libations (…)[12] Innumerable and many-knobbed are the cakes they sacrifice, because the souls too are innumerable. Initiates make a preliminary sacrifice to the Eumenides in the same way the magi do; for the Eumenides are souls. On account of these,[13] anyone who is going to sacrifice to the gods must first… [sacrifice?] a bird… and the… they are… as many (fem. 'souls'?) as…'[14]

Although the last line is badly damaged, it is crucial, I think, for understanding what precedes it. The conjunctive ὧν ἕνεκ[εν must refer to the preceding 'souls': 'because of the souls', i.e. because of the way the souls are or what the souls do, 'anyone who is going to sacrifice to the gods must first…' Thus the Derveni author must think that the 'souls' are in a position that enables them to prevent the sacrifice from reaching the gods. These are the 'vengeful souls', which is the author's explanatory term for the 'hindering *daimones*' of the *magoi*. Burkert (2007, pp. 119–20) maintains that the aim of the ritual actions 'must be to get into contact with the god or gods. This is the function of sacrifice and prayer. But this can be achieved only through the well-known dealings with the intermediary powers, as known by the magi'. All this tells us that we should place the 'souls' in space between the earth and heavens.

Scholars have raised doubts whether the author's *magoi* are really Iranian priests.[15] Most (1997, p. 120) assumes without further ado that the *magoi* 'figure here as representatives not of Persian but of Greek religion'. Betegh (2004, pp. 78–83) expresses the same view but goes even farther and argues that the Derveni author thinks of himself as a *magos*, which for him means simply a 'religious expert'. Kouremenos (2006, pp. 167–68) believes that the *magoi* the author has in mind are 'charlatans'.[16] Burkert (2007, p. 108) dates the use of the term *magoi* in the sense of 'itinerant magicians and sorcerers' to the end

of the fifth century BC, and refers to the passages from the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* 2 and, even earlier, from Sophocles, Euripides and Gorgias, where the use is evident. Thus, in principle, we have three candidates for the Derveni *magoi*. They could be Iranian priests. They could also be itinerant 'charlatans'; in other words, *magoi* may be a term of abuse, as it is in the passages to which Burkert refers. Finally, they may be Greek ritual experts who went by the professional name *magos*. Since no derogatory tone is detectible in the use of the term in the passage, the second possibility can be ruled out. As for the third, there is no evidence whatsoever that in the fifth century BC there was a group of Greek priests who took on the professional name for some unknown reasons. The supposed evidence invoked by scholars is, in fact, dependent on the tendentious interpretation, as we have encountered, for instance, in Dicki's view of Heraclitus' *magoi*. That Heraclitus met with the *magoi* and observed their rites is a near certainty.[17] That a fifth-century BC Pre-Socratic philosopher, very likely from Ionia, Ionian colonies on the Black Sea or further afield in Thrace, met with *magoi* is quite probable.[18] All in all, the assertion that the *magoi* of column 6 are anything other than what the term designates, namely Iranian priests, is yet to be substantiated. As Horky (2009, pp. 63–65) has pointed out, the use of incantation (*epaōidē*) in ritual is associated in classical Greek literature with Persian religious lore (cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.132). The Derveni author compares the magi's sacrifice with that of the *mystai*, but not the use of incantation, which apparently differentiates the two for the author.[19] The 'initiates' (perhaps of Dionysus[20]) are described as making a 'preliminary sacrifice' to the Eumenides 'in the same manner as the magi'. 'The *magoi* perform this sacrifice as if they make a retribution (*poinē*)' or 'penalty' for a crime committed.[21]

The opening line of the column seems to be a general statement about the efficacy of rites: they can propitiate the 'souls'.[22] If the conjunctive 'for' (*gàr*) in line 9 ('For the Eumenides are souls') is to have its causal force, one should think that the magi sacrifice to the 'souls' with the purpose or in the manner that the 'initiates' do to the Eumenides. The Derveni author equates the initiates' 'preliminary sacrifice' to the Eumenides with the magi's sacrifice to the *daimones* by way of explaining both recipients as 'souls'. This shows the correctness of Burkert's restoration (2007, pp. 118–19) of *tàs psychás* in the first line against Kouremenos' *tàs Erinys* (Kouremenos 2006, p. 167). West (1983, p. 98) suggests that the Eumenides are the children of Persephone (and Apollo). The term *psychás* 'souls' is obviously the author's own term for the magi's *daimones* and the initiates' Eumenides. His 'explanation' of the two 'mythic' conceptions in terms of a Pre-Socratic notion is completely characteristic. This is his procedure.[23] Thus we expect that his understanding of 'soul' should be in keeping with *his* ideological outlook. Already in 1968, Burkert (1968) argued that the author's physics depends on Anaxagoras and his followers. In an important article, Janko (1997) extensively shows that the author's physical theory is very similar to that of Diogenes of Apollonia, in particular his materialistic pantheism: Air, which Zeus is for Diogenes, pervades everything,

etc. Later, Janko (2001) suggests that the author is no other than the notorious atheist Diagoras of Melos.[24] In any case, there is unanimous agreement among students of the Derveni papyrus that its author's cosmological outlook is thoroughly Pre-Socratic.[25]

Janko's restoration of the beginning of line 4 ('that are vengeful souls') may seem preferable to Burkert's ('being enemies of the souls') – but see further below. In column 2, too, the author may be equating the Erinyes with 'souls' (Kouremenos 2006, pp. 143–45; West 1983, p. 81; Betegh 2004, p. 86: only souls of the righteous; Johnston 1999, p. 276 rejects the identification; I tend to agree with Johnston). Thus, if one may trust the ostensible meaning (and obviously the restorations) of the text, the Derveni author identifies three terms: (1) the traditional Eumenides, (2) the magi's *daimones*, and (3) his own term 'souls', which explains the first two in 'physical' terms. If the last one is the author's explanatory term for the entities in question, one could plausibly think that the term *daimones* belongs to the religious language of the magi or is at least the Greek rendition of the original.[26] According to Burkert (2007, pp. 120ff.), the magi's rite in the Derveni text fits Iranian religious lore better than Greek chthonic sacrifices.

The idea that it is only to the magi that the gods listen, that the magi alone can mediate between the gods and men, seems to be a commonplace in Greek literature on 'Persian religion'. Herodotus (*Histories* 1.132) writes: 'and when he [who offers the sacrifice] has arranged it [i.e., laid out the pieces of the victim on a bed of grass], a magus who stands close by sings (*epaeidei*) a theogony – such do they say the incantation (*epaoidēn*) is; for without a magus it is not their custom to sacrifice'.[27] We find an almost identical description seven centuries later in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.6: 'the magi deal with the veneration of gods, with sacrifices and prayers, because, they say, they alone are heard' by the gods. But in the Derveni text the rites of the magi are described as having a specific function ('for this reason they perform the sacrifice' etc.), namely, to neutralize the *daimones* and make it possible for the offerings or the souls to reach their celestial destination. The Derveni author further explains that the magi's sacrifice is 'like making atonement'. Is this how the magi themselves viewed their sacrifice or is it the author's assimilation of their rite to the Orphic-Dionysiac mysteries?[28]

We find the term *daimōn* in another context in the Derveni papyrus. In column 3, the *daimones* seem to be associated with the underworld and called the 'servants' of gods, although the text is full of lacunae and hence unreliable.[29] Most (1997, pp. 131ff.) compares the magi's *daimones* with the underworld guards from the gold leaves from, e.g. Hipponion, who interrogate the dead, etc. This is implausible. First, the author's Pre-Socratic physics obliges us to place the 'souls' in space rather than make them the 'guardians' of the underworld, not to mention the import of the conjunctive 'on their account' in line 10, as I mentioned above. Just as the author 'interprets' the Orphic myth in terms of Pre-Socratic physics, he must have done the same with regard to the traditional images of the afterlife, (perhaps) found in column 3. Although the

column is too damaged to yield a reliable text, one gets from it the impression that Hades is understood here (in accordance with the traditional account) to be a place of punishment, possibly also in column 5. In this latter column, however one reconstructs and reads the text (cf. Janko 2001, p. 20; Betegh 2004, pp. 12–13; Kouremenos 2006, p. 71, p. 130; Ferarri 2011, p.74), i.e. whether the author intends to dispel or proclaim the 'terrors of Hades' (probably the former, contra Kouremenos), the underworld is associated with eschatological retribution, in keeping with its traditional image. Why assume that the magi's *daimones* are the same as the (Greek) *daimones* from column 3 who reside in the underworld? The identification by the author of the *magoi*'s *daimones* and the (Pre-Socratic) 'souls' in column 6 tells us at least that here the former too must be imagined *in space* and not in Hades,[30] where the 'souls' hinder the passage of the sacrificial offering to heavens. In other words, the obstruction the *magoi*'s *daimones* cause would have to be understood as one between mortals and heaven.[31]

In Plato, *Symposium* 202e–203a, the *daimōn* is an intermediate being between god and mortal and plays the role of the 'interpreter and ferryman' between the two, conveying, among other things, the 'craft of the priest' concerning 'rites' (*teletas*) and 'incantations' (*epōdas*), and 'divinations' (*manteian*) and 'wizardry' (*goēteian*). All these are placed on the same level: the 'whole science of divination', which is the affair of the *daimones*. Aristotle, too, places dreams in the sphere of activity of the *daimōn*: just as for Plato (*Symposium* 203e) there cannot be any direct contact between man and god, and the extraordinary knowledge of the *mantis* (the basis of his 'sacred craft') is 'daemonic', so, too, for Aristotle (*Div. per somnum* 463 B 12–15), dream as a mode of contact with the invisible is not divine but daemonic.[32] From a fragment of Xenocrates, the second scholarch of the Academy after Plato's nephew Speusippus, one learns that the *daimones* may be mischievous agents just as they are in the supposed Pythagorean text reported by Alexander Polyhistor.[33] The archaic idea of the *daimōn* having irruptive 'miraculous contact with mortal beings'[34] is perhaps the background of the 'mediating *daimōn*'. In any case, since the author's outlook is Pre-Socratic, the in-between place of the magi's *daimones* cannot depend on Plato,[35] although it evokes for us Diotima's *daimones* in the *Symposium*. It is, on the other hand, probable that Plato's conception of the soul and the connection he makes between moral virtue and spiritual fulfilment have an Orphic-Pythagorean background.[36] Plato's idea of the *daimōn* as the intermediary between men and gods is already present in the Pythagorean cultic hierarchy of the *kreittones*. The *constellation* of an apotropaic rite directed at the *daimones* understood as vengeful souls of the dead is quite peculiar and probably limited to Pythagorean lore.[37] Admittedly this is very close to what is said about the *magoi*'s *daimones* in column 6, but there is no reason to make the author a proponent of Pythagoreanism. For him, the *magoi*'s *daimōn* cannot already mean 'soul', for if it did, why his glossing it as 'soul'? His gloss may well draw on the popular Greek notion that the *daimones* are souls of the dead, which

was favourably received by some Pre-Socratics, among others.[38] Again, the Derveni author systematically recasts received religious ideas, whether Orphic or 'magian', in terms of Pre-Socratic (e.g. Anaxogorean[39]) 'physics'. On the other hand, as I have already mentioned, the word *daimōn* was regularly used in the sense of a strange or *foreign god*. This sense seems to be current especially in the language that we can plausibly connect with the mystery cults and Orphic circles.[40] In the magi's view, the *daimones* are (foreign) divine beings that intervene in a specific human sphere; the magi are able to propitiate them by way of sacrifice. In the Derveni author's view, the magi's *daimones* are the '(vengeful) souls' of the dead.

Contrary to Tsantsanoglou (in Kouremenos 2006, p. 167), the magi's *daimones* that the author compares with the Eumenides cannot be the Iranian *fravašis*. There is no evidence in Iranian sources that the 'external souls' of faithful Zoroastrians place themselves in space and 'obstruct' the path to the divine sphere. The connection with the underworld (the magi are said to pour the *choai*, which is the Greek libation to the underworld powers, as opposed to the *spondai* made to the Olympian gods) does not necessarily make the magi's *daimones* souls of the dead, which in any case the *fravašis* are not.[41] In the Avesta, ritual incantation has the power to mark out the path to the beyond[42] and remove the obstruction that the *daēvas* pose to the soul on its way to the divine sphere ('the path of *aša*').[43] In Y 55, the Gāthās and the Staota Yesniia (the central part of the Yasna collection containing the Gāthās and the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti[44]) are described as the 'guardians and protectors' of the soul, with 'the power to smash obstructions', but also as 'the givers of good reward, the givers of abundant reward, the givers of the reward of *aša*, for the beyond, after the parting of consciousness and the body'. In the Gāthās (Y 32.1), the *daēvas* approach Mazdā with the request to be his 'messengers' (*dūta-*), that is to say, the supreme god's gatekeepers. They have pretension to the control of access to the god's abode. In Y 44.16 Zarathuštra asks Mazdā: *kə varəθrəm.jā θβā pōi sə̄nghā yōi həṇtī* 'which divine smasher of obstacle is there to protect (me) in accordance with your declaration?' The poet, in the process of acquiring his true knowledge, e.g. by way of incubatory divination (Y 30.3, 34.5), needs divine protection just as much as the soul does, since both are separated from the body and directly exposed to supernatural powers.[45] The departing soul, too, on its way to the 'sun-drenched domain of *aša*' (Y 16.7 *xᵛanuuaitīš aṣahe ⁺varəzō*) requires the protection of the (ritual) recitation of holy texts in the face of the 'obstacle' that the *daēvas* constitute.

The judgement whether one should be satisfied with a Greek genealogy of the magi's *daimōn* as it appears in the Derveni text depends to some extent on how one interprets the rather particular role ascribed to it. The equation of the magi's *daimones* with the traditional Erinyes from column 3 is problematic, and in my view, unacceptable (contra Betegh 2004, p. 88). In columns 3 and 4 (although hopelessly lacunose) the Erinyes seem to carry out some kind of 'Heraclitean' cosmological function and perhaps also an eschatological role, i.e. punishing the souls of the unjust men (col. 3): 'Dike punishes pernicious

men through each of the Erinyes' (Kouremenos 2006, p. 129).[46] One way or another (see Kouremenos 2006, p, 147), the Erinyes are divine functionaries or perhaps even Zeus' agents, just as they are the servants of Dike in Heraclitus (col. 4). The punitive function of the Erinyes in column 3 (?) and column 4 seems to be in the service of the cosmic ruler, and again reminds one of their traditional role, also found in Pythagoreanism.[47] As opposed to the *daimones* of column 3,[48] the *magoi*'s *daimones* are active in space on their own account. There is no reason to deny the obviously Zoroastrian sense of the 'hindering *daimones*' where the Derveni author explicitly attributes the lore to the *magoi* and where no Greek evidence exists for the idea that the *daimones*, taking up space between the earth and heaven, can obstruct the path between men and gods. One will recall the role of gatekeeper that the *daēvas* want to take on themselves in the Gāthās (Y 32.1); and if the protection the faithful seeks for his soul (in its ascent to heaven) in Y 55 should be understood against this Gāthic background, the 'obstacle breaking' Staota Yesniia (Y 55.3), that is, the priest's incantation of the sacred text, removes no obstruction other than that of the *daēvas*.[49]

But there remains the Derveni author's puzzling gloss, 'paying a penalty': 'the magi perform the sacrifice, just as if they are paying a retribution' (Kouremenos 2006, p. 130). The notion of atonement in this context immediately recalls the Orphic myth of Dionysus and the mysteries more generally. But if so, one is at once faced with a few questions. First of all, is the object of the *magoi*'s concern the soul of the dead, rather than simply sacrificial offerings to the gods? The *magoi* perform the sacrifice in order to remove the *daimones*, who are, according to one restoration, 'hostile to souls'[50] – remove them from the path of the ascending souls. However one reads the missing words ('avenging souls' or 'hostile to souls'), it seems almost certain that the object of the *magoi*'s rite is the soul of the dead. How else can one interpret the crucial 'as if they are paying a penalty', where the author explicitly equates in function the *magoi*'s rite with the initiates' 'preliminary sacrifice'? The background here must be the Orphic myth of the murder of Dionysus by the Titans and the resulting penalty falling due to each mortal.[51] In the mysteries, the soul of the dead does not ascend to the heavens, however, but descends to the underworld. One could invoke the Pre-Socratic frame of the author and argue that he has changed the destination of the soul in accordance with his interpretive frame: *psychē* is made of the same substance as the heavenly *aither* and, after its separation from the body, ascends to join the divine element.[52] The chthonic libations (*choas*) are not necessarily made to the dead. Generally speaking, the absence of wine and perhaps an altar where the libation can be poured are characteristics of the libations poured for the dead.[53] But the same type of libation is offered to the powers of the underworld in Greek sacrifice. It is much more reasonable to compare the *daimones*, who are entitled to receive a compensation, with the mystery gods rather than with souls of the dead. Finally, one cannot be sure that the preliminary sacrifice to the Eumenides in the manner of the magi further describes the sacrifice

that is understood by the author as paying a penalty. It looks like the author is comparing the magi's rituals with the mysteries in respect of one of the constituents of the magi's sacrifice that may be understood as compensation. Certainly, the Derveni author is not giving a systematic account of the magi's rite or the mystery cults but expounding his own views, here, in reference to one or another aspect of the two rituals that he compares. But if one grants a continuity of thought in the author's description, the basis of comparison of the respective sacrifices must be their perceived common purpose. The magi's sacrifice to the obstructive *daimones* compares with or evokes for the author the initiates' rite ('preliminary sacrifice'), which has an expiatory or propitiatory intent. Given the general comparison with the mysteries and in particular the gloss that the magi perform the sacrifice as if they are paying a penalty, the object of their concern must be the *psychē* rather than offerings to the gods. The context of the first columns, too, seems to point to death and the afterlife.[54]

The idea of paying a penalty to supernatural powers in order to ensure a better afterlife comes from the Orphic-Dionysiac mysteries.[55] Now, the Derveni author says that the magi perform their sacrifice 'like' or 'as if' (*hōsperei*) they are paying a penalty. It is certain that it is the author who is likening the magi's sacrifice to 'paying a penalty'. And he does it presumably on the basis of the perceived similarity of the eschatological aims of the two rituals, namely the magi's rite and the mysteries. According to this picture, then, in the Derveni author's view, the magi perform their sacrifice in order to remove the 'hindering' *daimones* from the path of the ascending souls. The magi, apparently, not only used 'incantation' (*epōidē*) but also made 'offerings', e.g. 'many-knobbed cakes', and 'libations' of 'milk and water' both on the ground and on the offerings. If this is a genuine description of the magi's rite, one would have to conclude that the *daimones* are not treated by them simply as hostile powers that must be eliminated (a situation reminiscent of Y 55.2–3) but as powers that have disposition over the fate of the soul, or at any rate over its passage to the beyond, and thus must be somehow accommodated. The magi propitiate and remove the hindering *daimones* with a sacrifice that includes 'incantation'. This picture generally squares with the Gāthic data on the *daēvas*, although, of course, the Gāthic poet is not into the business of propitiating the hindering *daēvas*. Nonetheless, as we saw, there is in the Gāthās a clear indication of the power that the *daēvas* were believed to have exercised over the soul in its passage to the beyond.

The Derveni author identifies the function of the *magoi*'s ritual with that of the mysteries: both are eschatological.[56] The identification of the 'hindering *daimones*' with 'hostile souls' must reflect the author's Pre-Socratic perspective, in which the departing *psychē* is viewed as immortal and ascending, alien to Homeric religion. Therefore, space may become an object of eschatological concern and target of ritual intervention. 'Mysteries had taught comparable ideas as a secret: the divine origin of man and his goal of unity with the divine. This now becomes explicit through natural philosophy, with a claim to

objective truth' (Burkert 1985, p. 320).[57] The idea of an ascent to heaven by the soul facilitated by some form of sacrifice in the face of 'hindering' super-natural beings comes from Iranian religious thought.[58] It is quite possible that the author actually met with the *magoi*, in Asia Minor or Thrace. One way or another, the Derveni author's description of the *magoi*'s rite must be authen-tic. His interpretation of the rite, e.g. 'as if paying a penalty', is a different matter, as we saw. I have pointed to a number of texts from the Avesta where it is plainly stated that the *daēvas* seize nocturnal sacrificial offerings. It is true that no explicit mention is made of the nocturnal nature of the *magoi*'s rite in the Derveni papyrus, but the comparison with the mysteries may very well imply it. Not only the Eleusinian mysteries but also those of Dionysus and Isis were held at night.[59] Ritual incantation is a characteristic feature of Persian sacrifice in classical Greek literature. In the Avesta, the recitation of certain texts (Staota Yesniia) 'breaks the obstacle' that the *daēvas* pose to the soul on its way to heaven.[60] There is no reason to see in the *magoi* of the papyrus any-thing other than what the name denotes: Iranian ritual experts. Scholars who deny the Iranian identity are yet to produce a convincing account of their claims. On the other hand, the particular features of the rite underwrite what the name *magos* avers.

Notes

1 See Marcovich 1967, pp. 465–67; Graf 1997, p. 21, with references in note 8; and Horky 2009, pp. 51–55. Marcovich's argument (1967, p. 466) for deletion of the magi from the list is similar to the one I consider below.

2 See West 1971, pp. 111–202, who argues for certain similarities between a number of ideas in Heraclitus' fragments and those of Indo-Iranian religious lore. If one is reluctant to talk about 'influence', the similarities at least demonstrate a shared ideological horizon. There is then all the less reason to assume that Heraclitus mis-understood the magi's rite in question, as Nock (1972, p. 311, p. 318) does. See also Kirk 1954, pp. 37–46 on the notion of *logos* in Heraclitus as the common formula of things and behaviour. It takes Heraclitus to articulate this basic formula, what 'the rest of men fail to notice' (DK 1). 'The explanation of all things… involves the con-sideration and definition of separate instances… and this suggests that the *physis* of a thing, that which governs its behaviour, will testify to the universal application of the Logos; but by the time the examination of individual structure takes place the intuition of the Logos has already occurred' (Kirk 1954, p. 43). Heraclitus is a 'prophet'. On *physis* see Kirk 1954, pp. 228–29. See also Morgan 2000, pp. 53ff.

3 It is not entirely clear from the Greek text whether Heraclitus condemns the mystic initiation as such or objects to a certain manner of performing it. Guthrie (1962, p. 476) and Kirk *et al.* (1984, p. 209) understand it in the latter sense.

4 See my discussion of his thesis regarding the 'Persian origin' of magic below.

5 See Dickie 2001, p. 41. He continues after a few lines: 'it is not to be doubted that persons either calling themselves *magoi* or who were thought to be *magoi* must have appeared in the Greek world. Their connections with anything Persian may have been slight to the point of vanishing. What they certainly fastened on and exploited were the possibilities presented by offering initiation into the mysteries. In other words, they exploited what was, however they may have presented it, an essentially Greek institution' (Dickie 2001, p. 41).

6 'We may surmise that the impiety Heraclitus saw in these ceremonies of initiation lay in part in their being performed privately and apart from the cults that the city sanctioned' (Dickie 2001, p. 29).

7 See Marcovich 1967, pp. 465–67 and my discussion of DK 15 further in the text. Compare Morgan 2000, pp. 57–60.

8 West (1983, p. 82) dates it to around the end of the fifth century: 'He seems to stand in the same tradition as that other Anaxagorean allegorist, Metrodorus of Lampsacus: not necessarily as early, but scarcely generations later'. Burkert dates it to 420–400 BC and thinks it is from the pen of one of the intellectuals of the time. Janko believes this intellectual is the famous atheist Diagoras of Melos (Janko 2001).

9 See West 1983 for a detailed analysis of the Orphic poems. According to West 1983, pp. 80–82, the 'preposterous commentator' of the Derveni text uses the Orphic theogony as a pretext to expound his own views. A more balanced approach is found in Most 1997: 'the focus of previous scholarship upon problems of detail, upon the commentator's physics, and upon the Orphic theogony has led to a relative neglect of another, no less fundamental aspect of the papyrus: namely the continuity and integrity of the Derveni text itself. What is the argument of the Derveni papyrus? How do its parts cohere? How are we to understand the over-all structure and ultimate purpose of its allegorical exegesis?' (Most 1997, p. 119).

10 See Kouremenos *et al.* 2006 and Betegh 2004.

11 The Greek text has: ἐπ[ωιδὴ δ]ὲ (Kouremenos *et al.* 2006, p. 73). The same restoration is found in Betegh 2004, p. 14; Janko 2001, p. 20; Burkert 2007, pp. 117–18 n. 78.

12 Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou (in Kouremenous *et al.* 2006, p. 130) have 'libations to the dead' for χοάς, i.e. chthonic libations.

13 Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou (in Kouremenous *et al.* 2006, p. 130) have 'On their account'.

14 Tsantsanoglou's and Parássoglou's translation (in Kouremenous *et al.* 2006, p. 130) is slightly altered. Bernabé (2010, p. 82) translates the last line: 'Hence a person who intends to sacrifice to the gods, first must liberate a bird, with whom they fly, with the result that the evil (?)…' Betegh (2004, p. 15) has: 'On account of these, he who is going to sacrifice to the gods, first birdlike… and the… (they) are… as many as…'

15 See Bernabé 2010, p. 78 n.4.

16 Kouremenos *et al.* (2006, p. 167) writes: 'there is no compelling reason to see in the magi and their cultic practices a reference to Persian priests and their cultic practices'. This is an odd statement. What are the compelling reasons *not* to see Iranian priests in the magi against the ostensible evidence of the name?

17 See Papatheophanes 1985, pp. 154–58.

18 Compare Burkert 2007, p. 117: 'That Empedocles met with magi is intrinsically plausible, even if no fragment of his can be found to prove it'. See also Kingsley 1995, pp. 185ff.

19 Compare Burkert 2007, pp. 117–21.

20 But see Henrichs (1984, p. 267), who thinks it more likely that the 'initiates' are those of Eleusis. Zuntz (1971, pp. 407–11) dismisses the reality of chthonic Dionysus. 'Dionysos was, to many of his devotees, a giver of life after death; they expected to follow him in an eternal kosmos; perhaps on earth or perhaps in some other, mystic realm – but not in Hades… No "chthonic Dionysos", then, can be assumed to have met the bearers of the Gold Leaves in the realm of Persephone' (Zuntz 1971, p. 411). It is well known that Greek gods developed (multiple) cultic characteristics. Trophonius, who gave incubatory oracles at Lebadea, was *Zeùs Chthónios*, and Epimenides met this Zeus 'in the bowels of the earth' (Burkert 1972, p. 154). See

also Detienne 1999, pp. 63–64: 'The consultation took the form of a descent into Hades' (Detienne 1999, p. 63). 'More than any other Greek god, Dionysus lacks a consistent identity. Duality, contrast and reversal are his hallmark' (Henrichs 1981, p. 158). Where did the Orphic (chthonic) Dionysus 'reside'? We do not know; but this is hardly the point. The god is characteristically a-topian, always in transit and crossing boundaries, the god of advent. See Parker 2005, pp. 302–303; Zeitlin 2002, pp. 209–14. The relation with Persephone and the fact that it was Dionysus who released the initiate from the burden of the 'ancient guilt' and thus made possible a blissful existence in the underworld mark the god of the Orphic-Dionysiac mysteries as 'chthonic'. The incubatory nature of divination at Lebadea makes the god 'chthonic' through the identity of Sleep and Death (cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.7.21), e.g. both provide access to the 'true' knowledge of the invisible. In the same way, the direct involvement of the god Dionysus, through genealogy and fate of his followers after death, makes him 'chthonic', for there cannot be any doubt that the afterlife unfolded in the underworld – no matter where the god himself was imagined to reside (Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 94–136). According to the *Rhapsodies*, human souls 'spend three hundred years in the other world and then are reborn (231). But their aim is to achieve release from the round of misery. Zeus has ordered purification ceremonies to go forth from Crete (156), and Dionysus has been appointed with Kore to assist mankind to find their release through regular sacrifices and rites (229, 230, 232)' (West 1983, p. 75; the numbers in brackets refer to the fragments). Betegh (2004, pp. 82–83) maintains that 'there is no reason to restrict the application of the term to the Eleusinian initiates in the Derveni papyrus' (Betegh 2004, p. 83).

21 See Kouremenos *et al.* 2006, pp. 72–73, pp. 166–71.

22 See West 1983, pp. 78–79 and Janko 2001, pp. 2–6.

23 See Most 1997 and Betegh 2004, pp. 224–77.

24 See Betegh's criticisms of Janko's hypothesis in Betegh 2004, pp. 373–80. Betegh in turn tries to show that 'the Derveni author is closer to Archelaus than he is either to Anaxagoras or to Diogenes' (Betegh 2004, p. 321).

25 On the Pre-Socratics, see Guthrie 1962, pp. 62–71, pp. 83–106, pp. 132–39; Guthrie 1965, pp. 294–317, pp. 362–81, 1994; Betegh 2004, pp. 278–324. See also Laks 1997, pp. 126ff., who emphasizes the role of Heraclitus, whose importance for the author, according to Laks, was his relating Pre-Socratic physics to eschatology.

26 Prior to the fifth century BC, the word *daimōn* does not specify a class of divine beings but uncanny powers that directly affect and sometimes overwhelm mortals. Dreams and illnesses were thought to be *daimones*; later the latter were distinguished from the phenomena they had signified and became the agents responsible for them (Detienne 1963, pp. 43–48). Oedipus (Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 788) curses Thebes: his 'polluting *daimōn*' will haunt the city 'for ever'. The word seems to mean vengeful spirit. The fact that it will be, like the person it survives, 'polluting' shows it is personalized. Another conception of the *daimōn* is represented in Hesiod, *Works and Days* 122: the dead of the golden generation of men who 'lived like gods' while alive become beneficent *daimones* after death by Zeus' design. In Hesiod, *Theogony c.*990, Phaeton is represented after his death as a *daimōn* that receives cult. The term obviously implies the immortality of the soul of the hero and those of the first human generation. See Nagy 1999, p. 191. In Pythagoreanism the *daimōn* is more or less equated with immortal *psychē* or perhaps the divine part of the soul. It is the task of the Pythagorean *askēsis* to purify the demonic soul. See Detienne 1963, pp. 60ff., esp. pp. 78–85. Finally, the word is regularly used of foreign or new gods. 'The word *daimôn* retains, throughout Greek tradition from the Homeric poems to the very end, its meaning as a synonym of *theos*, but it also has its own specific nuances' (Sfameni Gasparro 1997, p. 71).

In Eudexus of Cnidus, Ohrmazd and Ahriman are *daimones*, which he identifies with Zeus, the god of light, and Hades, the god of infernal darkness. See Bidez and Cumont 1973, pp. 11–12. It is also in the sense of a 'new', and hence fake, god that the term is frequently used in the *Bacchae*, e.g. 256, 481. We also find a related but somewhat different usage in the play, implying direct contact with mortals. This may be the basis of Plutarch's opinion about the origin of the doctrine of the intermediary status of the *daimones* between gods and men, expressed in passing in *On the Disappearance of Oracles* 415a5–7: 'Perhaps the doctrine derives from the magi, followers of Zoroaster, or perhaps it is Thracian, and derives from Orpheus – or it may be Egyptian – or Phrygian'. In the *Bacchae* 22 Dionysus says he intended to be an *emphanēs daimōn* 'god manifest' to men. The god's epiphany is fundamental to his character in the play and underlies his function in the mysteries. Compare Versnel 1990, pp. 158–59 n. 246: 'it appears that *daimōn* is particularly used in cases of a specific and unique action by a god with special reference to the speaker… later developments of the term always imply the notion: "miraculous contact with mortal beings". This is, of course, very characteristic of Dionysos in the *Bacchae*. Thus the term acquires a truly ambiguous meaning, combining the negative elements of contemporary fake gods, who are as a rule referred to as *daimones*, and the awe-inspiring aspects of its authentic meaning in Homer and elsewhere'. This last sense of *daimōn* seems to be a development of the first, i.e. supernatural intervention. Janko (1997, p. 92) maintains that the 'Derveni papyrus professes a belief in *daimones* which uncannily resembles Socrates' *daimonion*'. The basis of this assertion escapes me. See also Gordon 1999, pp. 224–29.

27 Translation comes from De Jong 1997, pp. 117–18, slightly altered; see his comments in De Jong 1997, pp. 117–18. Compare Cantera 2012, p. 226.

28 On the designation 'Orphic-Dionysiac' see Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 142–43.

29 Tsantsanoglou and Parássoglou give the following text: '… below… each (masc.) acquires a daimon as healer… For Dike punishes pernicious men through each of the Erinyes. And the daimons who are in the underworld never observe [sleep? rest?] and, being servants of gods, they… all (masc.), … are [mindful?] so that unjust men…, and are responsible for… such as (masc. pl.)…' (Kouremenos *et al.* 2006, p. 129). According to Betegh (2004, p. 87), the category of the Erinyes in column 3 is either coextensive with or included in the wider category of *daimones*. In tragedy, the *daimōn* often represents the spirit of vengeance and is thus the equivalent of the Erinys, which is itself either 'malediction under mythic form' or the 'executor of malediction' (Detienne 1963, pp. 87–88). One should not forget that the 'categories' (e.g. in column 3), whatever their supposed relation, are *not* those of the Derveni author. One cannot infer the meaning and reference of the magi's *daimones* in column 6 from the occurrence of the term *daimones* in column 3, which, given the author's outlook and procedure, must be placed in scare quotes in his text. See my remarks on Most 1997 in the text.

30 Betegh (2004, p. 346) implicitly admits this: 'in all those systems where there is a cosmic intelligence posited, the individual soul (or the most valuable, rational, divine part of it) shares in the basic nature of the cosmic intelligence. This pattern is certainly present in the respective systems of those philosophers who had the most impact on the Derveni author: Anaxagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia and Heraclitus. Moreover, the most evident form of this scheme is where the cosmic intelligence manifests itself in one of the physical elements; in this case the soul (or the most elevated form or part of it) is characterised by the same element… If so, the author's souls must have at least a component of air in them… the Eumenides are expressly identified as souls (the souls of the righteous?) in col. 6… it follows that, for the Derveni author, the Erinyes are airy souls'.

31 Pythagoreans believed that 'the whole air is full of souls: the motes in the air which one sees dancing in a ray of sunlight are indeed souls; Pythagoreans

marvel at a man who believes he has never encountered a *daimon*' (Burkert 1985, p. 303). See also Burkert 1972, pp. 185–87 and Guthrie 1962, pp. 282–318. The Pythagorean cultic hierarchy of the *kreittones* 'powerful supernatural beings', the gods, *daimones* and heroes, also assigns them corresponding regions of the cosmos, respectively, heaven, space and earth. The *daimones* never had a role in the official religious life of the *polis*. There are indications, however, that their cultic status in Pythagorean thought reflects archaic religious conceptions about them. They are equated in this context with the souls of the dead, and apparently their cult could take the form either of *apotropē* or of *therapeia*. The text cited by Alexander Polyhistor seems to confirm the conception of *daimones* as troublesome souls that have to be propitiated. 'The whole air is full of souls which are called *daimones* or heroes. It is they who send men dreams, signs and illnesses, and not just to men but also to sheep and other small domestic herd animals. It is to these *daimones* that one addresses purifications and apotropaic rites, and those of divination and the like' (Diogenes Laertius *Lives* 8.32, translation altered). This conception seems similar to the Derveni author's picture of the magi's rite, but there are also important differences between the two. The archaic concern with the life of the community in this passage is to be contrasted with the eschatological concern with the fate of the soul in column 6 of the Derveni papyrus. See Detienne 1963, pp. 32–42. Incidentally, the 'Pythagorean' passage is incongruous with both the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis and that of the 'demonic soul'.

32 See Detienne 1963, pp. 45–46.

33 The fragment is found in Plutarch *De Iside* 25.361b: Xenocrates thought that 'unlucky days and such festivals as involve scourgings or lamentations or fastings or blasphemies or foul language belong to the honouring neither of gods nor of good *daimones*, but that there are great and strong beings in the atmosphere, malevolent and morose, who rejoice in such things'. The terms in which the 'festivals' are described point to initiation ceremonies.

34 See Versnel 1990, pp. 158–63.

35 See Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 149.

36 In the *Phaedo* 67 Plato recommends practice of moral virtues as the only way to escape the trammel of bodily existence and achieve the spiritual contemplation of 'ideal' reality. Even death does not dissolve the pollution of bodily desires for the person who was not virtuous while alive. Postmortem bliss depends on moral purification in life. Plato transposes the ideology of the mysteries from the ritual sphere to the moral one, but the mystery background is transparent. Perhaps somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Plato (*Phaedo* 69c) writes: 'And I fancy that those men who established the mysteries were not unenlightened, but in reality had a hidden meaning when they said long ago that whoever goes uninitiated and unsanctified to the other world will lie in the mire, but he who arrives there initiated and purified will dwell with the gods'. Note the 'promise' of the mysteries in the last phrase. Compare Kingsley 1995, pp. 79–148: 'while the physical foundation for the *Phaedo* myth is chiefly Sicilian, its mythical foundation now appears to be Orphic. In short, the myth arose out of the soil of Sicily and Italy and took the form of an Orphic poem written, used, interpreted, and eventually transmitted to Plato by western Pythagoreans. The significance of this sequence can hardly be overestimated. For one thing, the interrelation between the categories of "Orphic" and "Pythagorean" is graphically demonstrated. For another thing, habits die hard, and in spite of the evidence of the Derveni papyrus it is still normal to find the allegorizing of Orphic poetry and mythology as a primarily Neoplatonic phenomenon. Here, however, we have the allegorizing interpretation of Orphic literature not only attested before Plato's time, but actually feeding into and creating the Platonic myths themselves' (Kingsley 1995, p. 126). See Betegh 2004, p. 339 on

Plato's story of Er of Pamphylia in the final book of the *Republic*: 'Plato incorporated many Orphico-Pythagorean elements in the story of Er'.

37 See Detienne 1963, pp. 93ff.

38 See, for instance, Sfameni Gasparro 1997.

39 See Janko 1997, p. 70.

40 Compare Versnel 1990, pp. 158–89.

41 It is very likely that the Derveni author thought that the magi's *daimones* were really souls of the dead, and that the point of the sacrifice and libations, or the preliminary sacrifice, was to 'appease' them, as he states in the opening statement of the column. But the magi's view, recoverable in my mind from the author's description and interpretive procedure, does not coincide with his. Thus, I do not agree with Graf's resolution of the magi's perspective: 'The *magoi* offered cakes and libations of water and milk as part of a sacrifice that they perform "as if they were paying a penalty"; the aim of their rite was to placate dead souls that might otherwise "be in the way". The rite of the *magoi*, then, is purificatory and heals damage done by vengeful ghosts' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 149). But the *daimones* are where and 'in the way' of what?

42 The same idea is found in the Vedic thought. See Malamoud 2002, p. 24: 'Entre Yama qui a vu et fait le chemin et les poètes qui ont vu, élaboré et énoncé les poèmes du Veda, il n'y a pas seulement une analogie: le chemin vers l'au-delà est aussi œuvre de langage; il est fait des paroles que les survivants doivent prononcer pour que le défunt accomplisse sa transformation en Père et parvienne à sa destination'.

43 See most recently Kellens 2011, pp. 74–79, pp. 99–103, pp. 119–20. For Kellens the 'combat antidémoniaque' is directed in the *yasna* service at the protection of the material world. The combat is the principal role of Sraoša in the rite. But the martial aspect 'échappe au réseau des sources gâthiques, probablement parce que les Gâthâs sont moins obsédées par les démons' (Kellens 2011, p. 76). If 'obsession' means 'importance', one has to disagree with his assessment of the status of the *daēvas* in the Gāthās.

44 See Kellens 1996; Cantera 2009.

45 The intimate connection between sleep and death must be an Indo-European phenomenon. I have already referred to some evidence from Greek and Indic material. Bodewitz (1999, p. 115) concludes his important article on the underworld in the Atharvaveda by 'draw[ing] attention to the association of sleep or dream and death. Yama is sleep's lord and Varuṇa's wife bore sleep (AV. 6,46,1). The bad dream should be given to the enemy, but the good dream is the agent of Yama (19, 57, 3). However, in AV. 16,5 *svapna* (sleep) is associated with all kinds of evil… and is still called the agent of Yama. It is not only Yama who is equated with sleep and dreams. ŚB. 12, 9, 2, 2 directly identifies the Pitṛs with sleep (and men with being awake)'.

46 Compare, however, Janko's and Betegh's translations: '… Erinyes… But (a) daimon comes into existence for each one… persons who are wiped out… But those below (are called?) daimons…, and do not have (?)… of (the?) gods, but are called servants… they are, like wicked men who are punished with death, and they are responsible… such (persons) as… initiate' (Janko 2001, p. 18); '… daimon becomes to each… destroyed utterly… the daimones beneath… receive… and are called assistants of the gods… (they) are, like unjust men… and they are responsible… such as… initiate' (Betegh 2004, p. 9). The comparison shows how unsound it is to want to say anything meaningful about the relation between the Erinyes and the *daimones* in column 3.

47 Deprived of access to the highest regions of heaven, impure souls are bound in irrefragable chains by the Erinyes (in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8.31). See Detienne 1963, p. 49.

48 See Most 1997, p. 126; Betegh 2004, pp. 87–88; Kouremenos *et al.* 2006, p. 129. The idea of *daimōn* as 'divine agent intervening in human affairs' is recurrent throughout ancient Greek history from Homer onwards: in lyric poetry, tragedy, the historians and orators. See Sfameni Gasparro 1997, p. 71 for references.

49 Compare Cantera 2012, pp. 226–27.

50 See Most 1997, p. 131.

51 See Betegh 2004, pp. 349ff.

52 See Burkert 1985, pp. 319–320. 'The association of soul and heaven, which had probably received impulse from Iranian eschatology, could easily be combined with this [i.e., the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis]: soul is heavenly matter' (Burkert 1985, pp. 319–20). Plato's famous description of the ascent of the soul in *Phaedrus* 246a–249b seems to have an Iranian background in a particular sense: not just in the notion of the immortal soul aspiring to reach the divine sphere beyond the sky, but also in the image of the soul's chariot being pulled by two horses, one good and one wicked, one pulling upward, the other downward, etc., that is to say, in the idea of an ethical dualism that bears on the fate of the soul. 'Many and blessed are the sights and the movements in the sky where the race of blessed gods moves, each performing his own function; there follows whoever will and can; for jealousy stands outside the chorus of the gods… That place above the sky as yet none of the earthly poets has sung, and never will one sing it worthily… The uncoloured, unshaped, untouched being that truly "is", which is only to be beheld by *nous*, the guider of the soul, the being with which the kind of true knowledge has to do, this is what occupies this place' (translation from Burkert 1985, p. 324). One can only be amazed at the similarity of Plato's 'mind' (*nous*), the 'guider of the soul' (*psychēs kybernētēs*), and the Gāthic Y 31.17 *mazdā-*, the 'guider of good thinking' (*vaŋhōuš fradaxštā manaŋhō*), both in a dualistic setting and with an apparent eschatological function (cf. Y 51.3).

53 Henrichs' suggestion (1984, pp. 264ff.) to connect the magi's libations with the Eleusinian *plēmochóai* faces the problem that the latter are made in the last day of the celebrations.

54 See Most 1997, pp. 127ff. Burkert's general interpretation of the passage completely removes the magi's sacrifice from the frame of comparison with the mysteries. 'The ultimate aim in all these actions must be to get into contact with the god or gods. This is the function of sacrifice and prayer. But this can be achieved only through the well-informed dealings with the intermediate powers, as known by the magi' (Burkert 2007, p. 119). This last idea, despite the fact that *in abstracto* it makes sense, finds no support in Iranian religious lore; as far as I know, it is also alien to the Greek views of sacrifice. It is hard to tell what telestic ritual, known from elsewhere, is behind the author's 'preliminary sacrifice'. Betegh (2004, p. 87) considers it possible that what the *daimones* are supposed to receive, according to Janko's restoration, in column 3 is 'the soul of the recently deceased'. Russell (2001) argues that the magi's rite described in the Derveni text is the Zoroastrian *Satūm* service in honour of the dead.

55 See Graf and Johnston 2007. The myth of chthonic Dionysus, born from Persephone and killed by the Titans, the ancestors of humans 'is explicitly connected with the mysteries by several authors, and it seems that Herodotus considered it a secret although he has several allusions to it. Later texts treat it as just part of normal mythology' (Burkert 1987, p. 73). Burkert (1987, p. 73 n. 38) mentions a number of ancient authors. I do not find Seaford's suggestion (1986, p. 8) that the 'penalty' Persephone accepts in Pindar fr. 133 *consists in* the 'ancient grief', namely the fate suffered by the Titans after their defeat, convincing. Then, he needs to argue that somehow men are Titans. Just because in the Pythagorean or 'mystic doctrine' men are imagined to possess an immortal part, the *daimōn* or *psychē*, which if properly cared for in this life can have a god-like existence after

death, does not mean one can throw the Titans in the mix: 'a mystic adaptation of Hesiodic tradition, in which men (or some men) are imagined as immortals (generally Titans)…' (Seaford 1986, p. 9). Seaford does not give any evidence for this hypothesis.

56 According to Betegh (2004, pp. 88–89), there are two possibilities for the ritual context of the text. 'One is that the author is speaking about rites that should secure the safe passage of the soul of the dead to the underworld, and to the most blissful part of it… The other possibility is that the author is speaking about the initiation… But, of course, these two ritual contexts, initiation and funerary ritual, are closely connected. The initiation prepares the blissful post mortem existence of the soul, whereas at death the individual so to speak cashes in the advantages gained by initiation, and the funerary rite is supposed to guarantee this privileged status by reminding the powers of the underworld that the person is an initiate'. According to the early Christian apologist Arnobius (*Adv. gentes* 2.13) in vain does the initiate place his hope of 'salvation' in the 'mystic rites in which you beseech some powers to be favorable to you, and not put any hindrance in your way to impede you when returning to your native seats [i.e., heavens]'. The conception of the 'mystic rite' here is remarkably similar to the Derveni author's portrayal of the magi's rite.

57 Compare Parker 1983, pp. 299–301.

58 Compare Burkert 2007, p. 110: 'Three general statements may safely be made. (1) The idea of going to heaven after death does not belong to the world picture that is common in Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Greece in, say, the beginning of the first millennium. Instead, the opposite idea usually prevails, that of a "land of no return" or a "house of Hades", which is a dreadful subterranean abode, a place of swamps and clay, without light, far away from the gods. "Let us sit down to weep" is the final message of the *Gilgamesh* epic; the quest for immortality has failed. No hope is left. (2) The idea that the pious will ascend to god and rest with him forever is basic to the religion of Zarathustra since the earliest documents, the *Gathas*. (3) The idea of *psyche* or *pneuma* rising to heaven after death is found in Greece in scattered references beginning about the middle of the fifth century B.C., together with concepts of "spirit", *pneuma*'.

59 See Burkert 1987 *passim*.

60 See Kellens 2011, pp. 76–79.

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11   The divine man, the *goēs* and the magician

Heraclitus' invective (DK 14) against the 'wanderers of the night' aims at a type, which significantly includes the magi, along with the initiates or initiators of the mysteries. The inclusion of the *magoi* is not only based on their performing their rite at night, but also, as the Derveni papyrus shows, because the rite is dedicated to ends that are perceived to be similar to those of the mysteries. Heraclitus complains that these *mystēria* that are practised among men are unholy (*anierōsti*). The mysteries are not able to deliver what they promise because, despite their claim, they cannot purify the soul and make it equal to its divine nature. It is this thought that seems to be expressed in the famous fragment (DK 15) on the identity of Hades and Dionysus, which ends with: 'Hades and Dionysus are the same, no matter how much they go mad and rave celebrating bacchic rites in honour of the latter' (Marcovich 1967, p. 252). Zuntz (1971, pp. 310–12) maintains that it is naive to take the identification of Hades and Dionysus at face value. According to him, the idea of chthonic Dionysus is untenable (Zuntz 1971, pp. 407ff.), since the god of the vine can only be the god of life. I have already argued against this line of reasoning. The cultic reality of chthonic Dionysus in the mysteries is beyond doubt.[1] In any case, the point made in the fragment does not seem to be a general thesis regarding the unity of life and death. The first part of the fragment shows that at issue are the expectations placed on the Bacchic rite: 'if they [i.e. the many] omitted (failed) to make the procession to Dionysus and to sing the hymn to the shameful parts, they would be proceeding most irreverently (impiously); but Hades and Dionysus are the same, etc.' (Marcovich 1967, p. 252).[2] Heraclitus says that the hopes of the bacchantes are misplaced. This interpretation goes well with his condemnation of the mysteries and 'mantic' knowledge in general. Heraclitus' identification of Hades and Dionysus has, among other things, an eschatological message.

In another fragment (DK 129) Heraclitus calls Pythagoras a charlatan.[3] 'Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, practiced scientific inquiry beyond all other men, and having made a selection of these (or such) writings, contrived a wisdom of his own, which was but erudition and deceitful craft' (Marcovich 1967, p. 68, translation slightly modified). The final word *kakotechnia* means something like 'spurious craft'. Burkert points out that it is a 'technical term

for the subornation of perjury, and in general designates disingenuous ruses by which anyone attains an end' (Burkert 1972, p. 161). Pythagoras is the 'chief of charlatans', according to another fragment (DK 81). Heraclitus does not question Pythagoras' 'learning'. He is a charlatan because his craft or practice for which he has become famous is deceitful, unable to deliver the demonic soul.[4] Sophocles (*Electra* 59ff.) refers to this 'deceitful craft' and probably to Pythagoras, or in any case to his type,[5] where he has Orestes cynically say: 'How does it hurt me, when by feigned death I find true life and win renown? No word is ill-omened, I trust, if it yields gain. For often before now I have seen clever men die in false report; then, when they return home, they are held in greater honor'. It is likely that Heraclitus' charge of *kakotechnia* was particularly aimed at Pythagoras' ritual *katabasis*. But the scope of his criticism of Pythagoras is much wider.

One must also keep in mind, when interpreting Heraclitus' attack on the mysteries, Plato's account of the position of philosophy vis-à-vis the mystic doctrine.[6] The essence of his view is expressed in Plato, *Phaedo* 66d–70d, which is nothing less than the programme of philosophy: the separation ('purification') of the soul from the body is the necessary condition of wisdom. As Detienne (1963, p. 70ff.) argues, this conception is in line with the Pythagorean doctrine of the reciprocal relation between purification of the soul and attainment of true knowledge.[7] The fundamental affinity of philosophy, the 'practice of dying' (Plato, *Phaedo* 67e), as the true form of purification with the mysteries is clearly expressed: the few (true) initiates 'are those who have been true philosophers' (Plato, *Phaedo* 69d).[8] Philosophy (cultivation of virtues) and initiation to the mysteries make the same claim. The difference in method therefore has to be set out all the more sharply. In the same text (Plato, *Phaedo* 70a–d), Plato also points out the *basis of both* philosophy and the mystic ideology: the immortality of the soul and its desire to return to its divine nature. For this, he recommends separation of the soul from the body through Pythagorean *askēsis*, which he interprets as the practice of dying (*Phaedo* 81b–c, 83a). Death is the paradigm, as it were. Was initiation to the mysteries (i.e. mystic purification), too, understood as the 'release' of the soul from the body? As we will see, the initiatory scenario probably enacted the passage of the soul to the beyond. Plato's text also points in the same direction. Finally, Heraclitus' attack on the mysteries (Dionysus is Hades) and on Pythagoras all but confirms our surmise.[9] The nexus between the mysteries and philosophy clearly set out in Plato shows the centrality of eschatology in the mystic ideology. Now if we go back to the magi's rite, we may reasonably assert that the comparison with the mysteries indicates the eschatological significance of the magi's rite. That it was performed at night connects it with the *daēva* cult.

Voluntary separation from the body is the hallmark of the 'divine man'. He releases his soul at will so that it can acquire 'true' knowledge, something that happens involuntarily in sleep and catalepsy.[10] Abaris, Epimenides, Pythagoras and Empedocles have the prophetic power, the 'second sight',

to 'see' the invisible.[11] The ability to separate the soul from the body indicates a 'shamanistic' background or at least an ideological horizon commensurate with ecstatic practices.[12] To the Greeks, Zalmoxis was an imitator of Pythagoras, but for the Getae, the figure was apparently a *daimōn*. The Getae, writes Herodotus (*Histories* 4.94–95), 'believe that they do not die, but that when someone succumbs he goes to the *daimōn* Zalmoxis. Once every five years they choose one of their people by lot and send him as a messenger to Zalmoxis [i.e. sacrifice him]… But as I learn from the Greeks who live on the Hellespont and the Black Sea, this Zalmoxis was a human being, a slave, in Samos, of Pythagoras the son of Mnesarchus'. The Getaean Zalmoxis was a god who received the soul of the dead. According to the historian, the Greeks thought that Zalmoxis learned from Pythagoras the 'craft' of disappearing and descending to Hades, which in fact was only an 'underground chamber', and reappearing after four years, thus becoming famed for returning from the realm of the dead.[13] Hermippus (Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8.41) relates a very similar story about the master, Pythagoras, who had 'his mother' keep him informed about the events while disappeared in the subterranean chamber. On his return from Hades, people 'were sure that he was some kind of divinity'. Burkert rightly maintains that it 'is highly unlikely that Pythagoras brought his mother with him to Croton, and such an idea is never mentioned in the tradition. What we have, then, is a rationalizing version of something quite different. Pythagoras brings with him from Hades *tes mētròs paraggélmata* (commands of "the mother"), a message from the divine *mētēr* – Demeter. Thus the "little dwelling" becomes a sanctuary of Demeter, as Timaeus says Pythagoras' house was… Hermippus' report has independent value as evidence alongside that of Herodotus. It shows Pythagoras in the role of a hierophant in the cult of Demeter' (Burkert 1972, p. 159).

The figure of Pythagoras thus connects the mysteries to ecstatic practices, and in particular to the *katabasis* and the quest for 'godlike' afterlife. The significance of the story is more or less clear: what he must have claimed to be able to achieve for others was that of enabling them to take control of their destiny after death, for which the episode had to serve as proof. The claim had to be grounded in experience, in a publicly known event. Whatever the differences between various eschatological views (e.g. involving metempsychosis or not), the essential thing was the transmission of the knowledge of what awaits one after death and the certainty with regard to one's position in achieving the best outcome. One will recall the topographic instructions that the gold leaves give their bearers so that they can avoid the pitfalls of the underworld. Familiarity with the geography of Hades was obviously vital. Pythagoras' *katabasis* stood as the guarantee of his extraordinary knowledge. One can perhaps decode the double personality, divine and human, of Zalmoxis in reference to the theme of immortality: the original myth was probably related to an initiation rite that ensured, among other things, a blessed afterlife.[14] As we will see, Yama, too, has this double personality. Herodotus' refusal in *Histories* 4.96 to pronounce on the veracity of the story of Zalmoxis and

his underground chamber is, as Eliade (1970, p. 34) writes, characteristic of him in matters related to the mysteries.[15] In Plato, *Charmides* 156d–157b, Zalmoxis is a Thracian king, 'who is also a god' and the teacher of a practice that remedies bodily ills through working on the soul by means of 'charms'. The physicians of his court, presumably having learned it from him, know how to make one immortal.

Herodotus related Pythagoras to Egypt, significantly, as the provenance of Orphic and Bacchic mysteries. Isocrates (*Busiris* 28), too, claimed that Pythagoras brought philosophy to Greece from Egypt. But there was also a Greek tradition that introduced Pythagoras as a disciple of Zoroaster. The Christian polemicist Hippolytus (*Refutation* 1.2.12) apparently knew two accounts that contained the story of a meeting between Pythagoras and 'Zaratas the Chaldaean': one by Aristoxenus, a Pythagorean and pupil of Aristotle, and one by an otherwise unknown Diodorus of Eretria. Gnoli believes that Aristoxenus' 'testimony' proves that Zoroaster was a contemporary of Pythagoras.[16] 'The only thing we can be sure of is that Aristoxenus thought it natural that Pythagoras should have learnt from Zoroaster because evidently, in talking about their meeting, he was not aware of any chronological obstacle to it' (Gnoli 2000, p. 108). The historian refers to an article by Kingsley (1990), which argues that the 'traditional' sixth-century dating of Zoroaster has a Greek origin in Aristoxenus. Following Gershevitch (1995, pp. 14–15), Gnoli (2000, p. 106, p. 108) maintains that Kingsley's point is dependent on (his being misled by) Boyce's view that Zoroaster lived 'a great deal earlier than the sixth century B.C. – probably some time in the second millennium' (Kingsley 1990, p. 245). I do not want to enter the debate over the dating of Zoroaster in any detail.[17] Whether or not Zoroaster lived in the sixth century BC, the Greek 'evidence' that Gnoli (2000) musters to prove it is illusory. He asserts that 'various Greek traditions' about Zoroaster 'assume that a sixth-century dating for Zoroaster was current amongst the Magi or the Persians of the Achaemenian period, and we have no reason to believe that it was not of Iranian origin' (Gnoli 2000, p. 108). The assertion that there are 'various Greek traditions' that 'assume the sixth-century dating' depends on a tendentious interpretation of the tradition, due to Xanthus, that placed Zoroaster 6,000 years before Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont.[18] Gnoli's 'various Greek traditions' do not exist. The sheer scantiness of classical Greek accounts of Zoroaster – supposedly a 'prophet' whose religion conquered the whole of the Persian Empire and a contemporary of the Empire's founder[19] – and the way, in each case, the Iranian *sophos* perfectly fits the Greek context incline one to suspect that they are indeed Greek in origin.[20] The company that Zoroaster keeps in these accounts tells us about what the Greeks thought of him as a *magos* and nothing about his date. The Zoroaster of the scholiast of the *First Alcibiades* is thoroughly Pythagorean, not just in matters of knowledge and existence, but also insofar as he is said to be either a Greek or a descendent of men who are from the lands beyond the 'great sea'.[21] Colotes, an Epicurean philosopher of the mid third century BC, thought that Plato's

myth of Er is based on Zoroaster's *katabasis*. Beck (1991, p. 529) points out that Colotes must have known an account of Zoroaster's descent to and return from the underworld, and 'mistook the derivative ("Zoroaster's") for the original (Plato's) – willfully perhaps in sectarian zeal'. The Zoroaster story is almost a replicate of Hermippus' account of Pythagoras' *katabasis*. Colotes' 'mistake' is no mistake at all. Sectarian motivation may well be a factor, but the attribution itself had to be ideologically sound. In Colotes' mind, Zoroaster *must* have done what was also related of Pythagoras, which meant that he *had to* be Plato's model. Plato's associates made the step an easy one in any case.[22] This is the Zoroaster that the Hellenistic age inherited from classical Greece. The possibly Hellenistic stories that Pliny (*Natural History* 30.3–11)[23] knew about Zoroaster included accounts (30.9–11) of Greek 'philosophers' (Pythagoras, Empedocles, Democritus) travelling east to learn from the original teacher of 'magic'. Orpheus, Empedocles and Pythagoras are called the 'magi' in Apuleius' *Apology* (in Graf 2002, p. 94).

The second-century author of *Stromata*, Clement of Alexandria, gives a list of pagan figures and events which are, according to him, contemporary with various Biblical characters from Moses onwards (Clement, *Stromata* 1.21). 'Zoroaster the Mede' is mentioned in a group that comprises figures such as Abaris, Epimenides, Empedocles and Pythagoras. These names belong to the type of 'divine man'.[24] Clement also adds the name of Socrates. This may seem odd but the statement that he reports from Socrates makes clear the Socrates he has in mind. It also demonstrates what for him characterizes the group: 'I am attended by a supernatural intimation', Socrates says. Contact with the supernatural world was the privilege that singled out these figures. Socrates 'said that "something divine", *daimonion*, had happened to him; it was probably too mysterious even for himself for him to be able to call it divine' (Burkert 1985, p. 317). The traditions concerning Greek charismatics not only intimately connect them with shamanistic experiences but also point to the ideological basis of their mantic and therapeutic claims: the doctrine of the divinity of the soul.[25] And this basis, as a number of Hellenists have argued, draws them into the sphere of Iranian religious thought.[26] Kingsley (1995a, pp. 88–132) has shown the Orphic background of the *Phaedo* myth of the underworld. In particular, the doctrine underlies the Orphic-type claims that bear on the afterlife. The soul can attain its divine nature in the afterlife if purified in this life (Plato, *Phaedo* 69c–d). For this a special knowledge is needful, available through men who have access to the invisible source of the world.[27] Zoroaster is such a man, a *sophos*, in the classical Greek eyes. This is what determines his place and character in Greek traditions about him.[28] If he is placed in the company of men like Pythagoras, it is because the Greeks intimately connected the magi with Orphic-type views and activities. It is this perception that has a historical reality and not 'Zaratas the Chaldean', the teacher of Pythagoras.[29] Plato lists in *Symposium* 202e–203a (see above) the functions of the 'purifier' that claims knowledge of the beyond. These define a particular semantic field where *mageia* too belongs.

In *Oedipus Tyrannus* (387ff.) Oedipus accuses Creon of enlisting the services of Teiresias for his plot against the king, calling the seer a *magos* and *agyrtēs*. The latter term refers to the mendicant purifier,[30] and *magos* apparently has a negative connotation, a mantic 'who has sight only when it comes to profit'. For Sophocles, the word *magos* is clearly related with the 'seer', and more specifically with the 'second sight', however grudgingly conceded. It seems that *agyrtēs* is foremost a socio-economic designation. One of the groups that the Spartan lawgiver Lycurgus bars from entering the city is the *mantis agyrtikos* 'mendicant seer', according to Plutarch (Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 9.5), a category probably reflecting the classical or Hellenistic society.[31] It is impossible to say whether the practice by the *agyrtēs* of *katharmoi* 'ritual purification' was simply rooted in opportunism or had some original religious ground.

Plato also uses another term to describe the ritual purifier, *goēs*, which evidently belongs to the same semantic field. In the *Symposium* 202e–203a he says that the race of *daimones* is the intermediary between men and the gods, this is why the sacred craft concerning, among others, '*goēteia*' belongs to it. In a fragment (DK 82) from Gorgias' *Apology for Helen*, we find an explicit combination of the *mageia* and the *goēteia*.[32] 'For the ecstatic enchantments by words bring joy, chase away sadness; for, when the power of the enchantment unites with our soul by means of belief, it charms and persuades and transforms by the art of the wizard (*goēs*). Wizardry and magic are two techniques that both are the error of the soul and the illusion of opinion'. The 'error of the soul' probably has the same significance as Heraclitus' charge of deception against the mysteries. The Greeks noted the ritual incantation of the *magos*. The association with the *goēteia* indicates its power in connection with the realm of the dead. Burkert (1972, p. 164) suspects shamanistic origins for the *goēs*, 'a word that combines the magic of self-transformation with the mourning of the dead', and even wonders whether it did not 'originally mean something like "shaman"'. Graf gives a similar picture of the *goēs*: it 'derives from *goos*, the ritual lament; the *goēs* is connected with funerary rites, ecstasy, divination, and healing; if the *goēs* bears traces of shamanism, this belongs at best to prehistory' (Graf 1997, p. 28). Herodotus' remarks about the *Neuroi* in the *Histories* 4.105 seem to connect the *goēteia* with a shamanic culture in Scythia. 'It may be that they are wizards (*goētes*). For (*gar*) the Scythians, and the Greeks settled in Scythia, say that once a year every one of the Neuri is turned into a wolf, and after remaining so for a few days returns again to his former shape. For my part (*eme men nun*), I do not believe this tale; but all the same they tell it, and even swear to its truth'. That the *Neuroi* are said to turn themselves into wolves explains why one might call them *goētes*. The sense of *goētes* is elucidated by the allegation of shamanic werewolfism made on behalf of the *Neuroi*.[33] The role of the *goēs* in funerary rites was probably shamanistic, or something similar,[34] since in Aeschylus' *Persae* (performed in 472 BC) the *goēs* is 'the specialist who brings back the dead from their graves'.[35] Necromancy is performed through incantation and chthonic libations. There is 'in the speech with which the ghost

of Darius addresses the Council of Elders when he first rises up above his tomb something that suggests *goeteia* has been performed: Darius speaks of the Elders standing near his tomb uttering a lament (*threnein*) and calling to him in piteous fashion, raising their voice in spirit-drawing cries of woe (*psychagogoi gooi*)'.[36] Whatever the veracity of ascribing necromancy to the Persians, one must admit that in the tragedy the *goēteia* is used to refer to the practice, which is in the Greek mind associated with the Persians. Thus the coupling in Gorgias' text of the *magos* and *goēs* cannot be unmotivated.[37] For the sophist, the *mageia* and *goēteia* obviously belonged to the same set of practices. The bond is more significant than just the indication of a cultural horizon, since the *goēs* had a special affinity with the realm of the dead. For the mysteries like those of Dionysus, which had a special interest in the after-life, being in contact with the realm of the dead had a particular importance: the *goēs* 'was primarily concerned with the passage between the two worlds' (Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 170). The *goēteia*, appearing in the *Symposium* 202e–203a among the functions or rites that make contact with the invisible world possible ('the science of divination'), must have had to do specifically with facilitating the passage of the soul to the beyond. Perhaps in ancient times ritual lament in funeral ceremonies was associated with the passage. In short, the *goēs* made the passage over the threshold of death possible – both ways. This seems to have been his 'wizardry'. In Euripides, *Bacchae* 230ff., Pentheus calls the disguised Dionysus, the god who releases, a *goēs* and an *epōdos* 'enchanter'. The intended abuse betrays an archaic signification, which is in keeping both with the contradictory personality of the god (expressed in the play by the opposition *theos* vs. *daimōn*) and, more specifically, with the 'tragic paradox' of the play.[38] The irony expressed in the word *goēs* depends on its double meaning. The ultimate *goēs* who 'releases' and makes possible a happy life and afterlife becomes the *goēs* who dispatches Pentheus without recourse.

The mobile life of the charismatic *mantis* is a basic dimension of his exist-ence. It expresses something essential in his status, namely that he belong nowhere and everywhere, and is thus able to travel at will across the threshold of death.[39] Empedocles 'goes among' men as 'an immortal god' (DK 112),[40] which also means to him that he is not at home among mortals (DK 113 and 114). Ubiquity also characterizes the existence of the *mantis* in time. This is how Empedocles describes a mantic *sophos* (apparently Pythagoras) in a frag-ment (DK 129): 'And there was among them a man of rare knowledge, most skilled in all manner of wise works, a man who had won the utmost wealth of thoughts (*prapides*); for whenever he tensed all his *prapides*, he contemplated everything comprised in ten, yea, and twenty lifetimes of men'. Detienne (1963, pp. 79–83) has shown the connection of *prapides* with the ecstatic tech-nique of 'concentrating' the soul in order to separate it from the body and thereby gain access to the invisible source of existence, to truth (cf. Plato, *Republic* 571d–e). Empedocles (DK 111) promises Pausanias: 'you shall bring back from Hades the life of a dead man' if the disciple 'as an initiate' relies

on the *prapides* properly disposed and contemplates the revelations of the master (DK 110). Pausanias will be able to descend into Hades and fetch the dead man's soul back to the world of the living. 'The idea of trying to bring someone back from the dead was, in the framework of normal Greek morality, almost unthinkable… in terms of not only formal and structural analogies but also of historical contacts, there can be no separating the Thracian Orpheus from central-Asiatic shamanic tradition' (Kingsley 1995a, p. 226).[41] In Lucian, *Menippus* 6 (the second century AD), Menippus, tongue-in-cheek, reports meeting a Mithrobarazanes 'one of the magi, disciples and successors of Zoroaster, who I heard are able – through certain spells and rites – to open gates of Hades and take down safely whomever they want and then bring him up again'. The ritual descent begins at night; at dawn they ride a boat along the Euphrates to the marshes where the magus sacrifices a sheep and addresses the underworld gods, including the Erinyes and Persephone. Necromancy belongs to the sphere of activities of the *magos* in Hellenistic literature.[42] But a more potent 'magic' is alleged here of the magus than just conjuring the dead. Just like Odysseus in the Homeric *nekyia* and Orpheus, he is able to go to the realm of the dead and return to life. Mithrobarazanes bids Menippus to adopt their name, or that of Heracles, while in the underworld.[43] The goētic characteristics and abilities of the type to which the *magos* belongs, whatever their historical origins, are undeniable.[44]

Magic is derived from the name of the Persian priest, the magus. The word *magos* had from the earliest attestations two uses in Greek: either a Persian priest or a 'magician'. How to account for the derived sense? Why did the magician call himself by that name? In his study of Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha of the Hellenistic period, Beck (1991, p. 520) writes: 'Generally, the Greek image of the magi, when not distorted by the equation of magus and magician… is a favourable one'. If so, it becomes even more of an enigma how the magus ended up giving the magician his contemptible professional name, for the magician always had, under whatever name, a despised status, whether thought to be a dangerous conjurer or merely a charlatan, e.g. in Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 385ff. Nock believes that the derived meaning developed from 'the impression made on unfriendly Ionian spectators by Persian priests, with their queer garments and tiaras and mouth masks – as we see them on the relief from Dascylium – performing uncomprehended rites, uttering unintelligible prayers, and indispensable at sacrifice' (Nock 1972, p. 318). But how does incomprehension of a sacrificial rite lead to imputation of 'magic' where, in fact, as we know from Herodotus, *Histories* 1.131–32 for instance, the Greeks *knew* that the magi's sacrificial rites were precisely sacrifices? In Herodotus, the *magos* is a diviner (dream-interpreter) and a professional of sacrifice. It has been supposed that the magi's sacrifice and casting of 'spells' (*goēsi*) in the *Histories* 7.191 had the value of magic. But even here, the magi are described as making a sacrifice, and if the 'spells' they cast are supposed (by them) to possess efficacy, the connection of magic with Persian sacrifice would have been in the Greek mind neither necessary

nor exclusive. Although Zeus releases (*lyseien*) from many fetters, says Apollo of his father in Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 644ff., he has made (*epoiēsen*) no magic spells (*epōdas*) for resurrecting the dead.

Incantation with a 'magical' value could apparently stand on its own, here and also in Herodotus' text; and if it has for the Greeks an elective affinity with the magi's rite, it is in an eschatological key, as is apparent, for example, in the *Eumenides* passage and the Derveni papyrus. Bremmer (2008) follows Nock, his initial statement notwithstanding (Bremmer 2008, p. 235). He believes that the 'two reasons' why sorcery was suspected in the magi's 'activity' by the Greeks were the 'incomprehensibility' of their incantation and the 'whispering' voice with which they delivered it (Bremmer 2008, p. 244). Did the Greeks expect to be able to understand, e.g. Old Persian? The 'incomprehensibility' of the magi's ritual incantation as the basis for seeing sorcery in their rite is a completely artificial explanation.[45] The confusion is not in the mind of the Greek observer. Surprisingly, Beck, too, uses the same specious argument. 'Why', Beck (1991, p. 513) asks, 'were the magi chosen by the Greeks for this role as the standard-bearers of magic? Undoubtedly, at the origin was a misunderstanding – perhaps a willful misunderstanding – of the function of actual magi in religious ritual as the Ionian Greeks first observed it in their early contacts with the Persians'. Nothing shows the nullity of this argument better than the fact that, only a page later, Beck feels he has to produce a completely different argument. For the Greeks, the magi represented an 'alien' and 'dangerous' cult which was 'inimical' and 'inferior' to their own; and so was also 'the other system located on the margins of established religion – magic'. By calling this system 'magic' the 'Greeks at a stroke marginalized and delegitimized it. Magic becomes by definition irredeemably foreign'. 'Its power, too, is precisely fixed: sinister and menacing, like the art of the actual magi, yet subordinate to the religion of the traditional cults, just as the cult and gods of the magi lost to the cults and gods of Greece' (Beck 1991, p. 514). The compulsion that the suggested four similarities (alien, dangerous, inimical and inferior) between the magi's lore and 'sorcery' (the two 'systems'[46]) are supposed to have exercised on the 'Greeks' to assimilate the two is plausible neither as a general proposition nor with regard to the particular instance it seeks to pretention explain. The pretension to manipulate physical phenomena by ritual means was no less native in Greece than elsewhere.[47] Are we to suppose that the 'Greeks' suddenly decided to stigmatize a number of traditional religious activities by putting a threatening alien name on them? More generally, one just cannot see how the two 'systems' are so amalgamated that the practitioner of one gives its name to that of the other simply because the two systems are perceived as 'alien', etc. And who were the 'Greeks'? The same 'reasonably well informed Greeks' (Beck 1991, p. 520) who produced the favourable 'group portrait' reflected in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.6–9? Then one would have to think that the 'Greeks' who 'generally' had a 'favorable image' of the magi deliberately 'distorted' their own view by equating the magus with the sorcerer.

In fact, working from the same suppositions, Gordon (1987, p. 78) wonders about this quandary. 'But how did this theory of Persian origin arise in the first place? Since it is wholly fanciful, how could the Greeks persuade themselves of its truth?' Like Beck and Nock, Gordon believes that the construction of the hateful image of the Persian priests was motivated by political hostility making use of the strangeness of the magi's lore. The Greek victory in beating off Xerxes' invasion not only proved the political and military supremacy of the Greeks but also demonstrated their religious superiority: 'the elaborate rituals of the *magi* were mere form, with no ability to produce effects claimed' (Gordon 1987, p. 79). Thus, through a 'process of catachresis' the name of the representative of a hated and 'failed religion' becomes the basis of a pseudo-historical account of the origins of 'magic', equally despised and viewed as fraudulent. The Greeks did not really 'persuade' themselves of the Persian origin of magic; they fabricated it – but why? Gordon's two-tiered reply to this question is not convincing: it is contradictory at one level and amounts to a *petitio principii* at another. The Greek political and cultural elite constructs the Persian lineage of 'magic' in order to draw firm boundaries between the civic religion of the *polis* and the practices of marginal magico-religious craftsmen, thereby consolidating the former. 'The otherness of the religion of the Greeks' arch-enemy' was thus a 'suitable metaphor' in this enterprise. But then how to draw the boundaries between the 'most widespread forms of popular religion' and the religion of the *polis*? Does the former comprise only 'magico-medical healing, charms and amulets against illness, informal kinds of divination', etc., or does it also include public festivals and ceremonies and 'a vague assortment of poetic representations in Homer and Hesiod'? One can see that the distinction is artificial. The 'popular forms of religion', which, according to Gordon, the elite wanted to undermine with their 'suitable metaphor', had to include Homeric and Hesiodic myths and public festivals such as the city and country Dionysia, etc., all the manifestations of the 'civic religion'. Gordon himself admits as much: the 'redefinition of true religion – moralized gods and scepticism towards traditional representations of divinity – could be legitimated by redefining impiety to include the bulk of popular religion' (Gordon 1987, p. 79). What do 'traditional representations of divinity' refer to in classical Greece if not the gods of Homer and Hesiod? In effect, then, the 'Greek elite' sought to consolidate the 'civic religion' against the despised 'marginal' magico-religious forms, but, not knowing where to draw the boundaries, ended up destroying the whole edifice as mere 'superstition'. Is this 'the value to the emergent intellectual class, and so to the elite as a whole, of "Persian" magic' (Gordon 1987, p. 79)?

On a more basic level, the 'Persian history of magic' merely continues and 'simplifies' the native 'theme of the outsider magician', exemplified in the figure of Medea (Gordon 1987, p. 80). Thus the *magos* dislodges Medea as the political-religious hostility against the 'enemy of the state' replaces the traditional suspicion and animosity of men toward women (Gordon 1987, pp. 83–84).[48] But as Gordon (1987, pp. 64–65) acknowledges, a clear distinction was made

between male and female traditions of magic. What is the basis of the comparison of the Persian *magos* and Medea, aside from the vague assertion that the two are the most important 'outsider magicians in Graeco-Roman literature'?[49] 'Prior to the elaboration of the image of the Persian *magos* therefore, and parallel to it (especially in the form of the Thessalian women), the figure of Medea served to represent the simultaneously alien and domestic quality of magical activity' (Gordon 1987, p. 83). The 'dangerous' quality that the elite perceived in magic, e.g. that it was 'simultaneously alien and domestic', can hardly be an adequate basis for the historical connection it is expected support. Nor is Medea merely a negative, foreign figure: she is *both* alien and domestic, *both* salutary and sinister. One can see that, if Medea was in fact cast as the tutelary figure of the sorceress, myth had already prepared her for the role. But, according to the premises of Gordon's story, the Persian magus could not be an ambiguous figure in the relevant sense: he was *only* alien, *only* sinister.

Dickie (2001) follows Graf's conception that 'magic' is not a universal religious phenomenon but a particular 'category of thought' that has a specific birthplace, namely classical Greece. According to Graf (1996, pp. 31ff.), the set to which the word 'magic' refers was formed through a process of exclusion and stigmatization of a number of traditional religious activities. Philosophy undertook a moral purification of the idea of divinity and, as a result, certain ways of relating to the gods became reprehensible. At the same time, medicine ruled out ritual manipulation as an appropriate and effective form of intervention in natural processes. Thus the philosophers and doctors condemned a whole range of activities as inimical to 'religion' and 'natural science', which were then baptized as 'magic'. This picture, although formally elegant, is implausibly intellectualist, as Dickie (2001, p. 21) points out. Nonetheless, Dickie (2001, 27–46) preserves Graf's thesis concerning the basis of the formation of the concept of 'magic', merely getting rid of the operators of the process: the concept is a 'product of a special set of circumstances' (Dickie 2001, p. 20). The marginalized activities were 'akin to conventional forms of religious behaviour' but in their 'impiety', 'immorality' and 'secrecy' were 'at odds with it'; and their claim to upsetting 'the course of nature' was either fraudulent or dangerous (Dickie 2001, p. 46). The reason 'the disparate practices, lacking any common thread to tie them together, that were later held to constitute magic', were jumbled together was that all of them were 'exposed to the same moral condemnation' and 'were already viewed as being at odds with accepted religious practice and were already thought to be able to upset the normal course of nature' (Dickie 2001, p. 27). 'Moral condemnation' is the basis of the formation of the concept of magic, which is already discernible in tragedy and comedy, i.e. before the Hippocratic *On the Sacred Disease* and Plato. Whatever the merits of this thesis regarding the formation of a 'category of thought', the question remains why it was called after the Persian priest. The connection is fortuitous, according to Dickie (2001, p. 41), since the *magoi* who gave their professional name to 'magic' had 'no trace left of

Zoroastrianism' or even 'anything Persian'. 'What we find instead are men who offer initiation into the quite unPersian institution of the mystery-cult' (Dickie 2001, p. 41). Dickie recognizes the intimate relation of 'magic' with the mysteries, but the way he conceives of this relation poses more problems than it solves: 'magic, because of its early associations with mystery-cult, took on some of the colouring of the mysteries' and 'some of its ceremonial became inextricably confused with mystery-rites… It is still a puzzle… how the purveyors of initiation into the mysteries came to double as magicians' (Dickie 2001, p. 43). This 'puzzle' must be added to another, namely 'how it came about that persons calling themselves *magoi* presented themselves as experts in magic and at the same time offered initiations into the mysteries' (Dickie 2001, p. 43). It is not clear why Dickie thinks that a nocturnal sacrifice with an eschatological intent, if this is a fair description of the rite of the *magoi*, which may be assumed in Heraclitus, is 'unPersian'. As I have already mentioned, the idea that in two or three decades the Persian *magoi* completely metamorphosed or that a group of *agyrtai* using their professional name completely overwhelmed them is historically quite implausible. In Dickie's account, the Persian *magoi* simply vanished in the last quarter of the sixth century BC.

In the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* 2 from the late fifth century BC, the *magoi* are charlatans, for they claim catalepsy to be a divine condition. They claim 'great piety and superior knowledge'. 'Those who first attributed a sacred character to this malady were like magicians, purifiers, begging holy men and charlatans of our own day, men who claim great piety and superior knowledge. Being at a loss and having no treatment that would help, they sheltered themselves behind the divine and called this illness sacred, in order to conceal their utter ignorance'. Catalepsy is akin to death and sleep, in that the soul can gain access to the invisible (cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 8.7.21). Induced cataleptic condition convinced Aristotle, according to his pupil Clearchus, 'that the soul is separable from the body'.[50] The *magoi* ('magicians') are in a familiar setting. The disparagement that the *magos* suffers, becoming a 'charlatan', applies to the whole company: Heraclitus' *nuktipoloi*. The real question is, as I have argued, why the *mageia* is associated with the mysteries, which undoubtedly constitute the background of magic. The individual magic rite was often called *mystērion* or even *theoin mystērion*; and more often it was simply called *teletē*, which in classical Greece was used for any rite, including that of initiation to the mysteries.[51] A Greek Magical Papyrus has preserved fragments of a *katabasis* ritual where the interlocutor is taught spells and formulas for protecting himself once in the underworld (or underground chamber) against the punitive *daimones*. Just as in Lucian's satirical portrayal, the candidate is told to introduce himself as Hekate (or the Babylonian Ereshkigal), etc. Then, the famous 'Orphic formula' is given: 'I have been initiated, and I descended into the (underground) chamber of the Dactyls, and I saw the other things down below, virgin, bitch, and all the rest'.[52] Clement calls it a *synthēma* 'password'. Betz (1980, p. 293) points

out that such combinations of mystery initiation and descent into the underworld are commonplace in the Hellenistic period. The ability to pass to the underworld was a defining characteristic in both the magician and the figure of the 'divine man' (such as Orpheus or Pythagoras) associated with the mysteries. Simulation of descent into Hades seems to have constituted the mystic initiatory scenario. The language of the formula is without a doubt that of the mysteries. The attribution by Clement (*Stromata* 1.15) of the 'Orphic formula' to the Idaean Daktyloi, as we will see, must itself be a mystery tradition. Betz (1980, p. 292) rightly compares the underground chamber of the Daktyloi with the Eleusinian Ploutonion as the 'entrance to the underworld'. The fact is that the literate magician's lore is derived from the mysteries.[53] The magician took his professional name from the *magos*: the cultural and semantic links between the two are the mysteries.

Notes

1 See Detienne 1979, p. 90: 'Dionysos is more complex and polymorphous than any other divinity in the pantheon – by his rare prestige as a magician as much as his affinity for displaying or manifesting in the *beyond*. His *beyond* with respect to the human condition between gods and beasts does not only take the form of the state of cruel bestiality omophagy imposes. For the very same Dionysiac indistinctness between men and beasts likewise leads to the disappearance of any distance between men and gods'. Dionysus Zagreus, is, according to a few sources, the son of Persephone and Hades who may well be the alter ego of Zeus *katachthonios*. See Gantz 1993, pp. 118–19 for references. See also Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 123 and Kerényi 1976, pp. 262–90.

2 See his discussion of the various readings of the fragment: Marcovich 1967, pp. 250–55. The cultural context of Heraclitus' dictum may be the seemingly widespread belief that the god can bring ruin for the mortals who 'enjoy' his epiphany, such as Ariadne, Lycurgus, Pentheus and Icarius. Obviously, the circumstances must be taken into account in determining the significance of the god's character in this respect.

3 Incidentally, just as in DK 15, Heraclitus first states the common belief then imposes his own contrary view. Here, too, he allows the received opinion of the topic but quickly undermines it as superficial, i.e. having an eye only for the appearance of wisdom. See Seaford 1986, pp. 14–20. His conclusion is: 'Herakleitos seems to have believed that the mysteries as celebrated provide an inadequate conception of post-mortem experience. The truth about that experience is contained, of course, in his *logos*, which resembles a mystic doctrine in both form and content, differing from it in respects which we cannot recover' (Seaford 1986, p. 20).

4 Compare Seaford 1986, p. 18: 'For Herakleitos it seems that post-mortem existence (or persistence?) as a *daimōn* requires a fiery (or daemonic?) soul in life, and this in turn depends on character and behavior: *ēthos anthrōpōi daimōn* (B 119)'. The sectarian (and hence political) nature of Pythagoreanism cannot have been unimportant in Heraclitus' judgement. See Redfield 1991, pp. 108–17.

5 See Burkert 1972, pp. 160–61.

6 I agree with Seaford's assessment regarding the ideological homogeneity of the various mysteries: 'Our knowledge of the mysteries in general reveals broad similarities even between mysteries belonging to different deities' (Seaford 1986, p. 12). See also his conclusion in Seaford 1986, pp. 25–26, which I cannot follow in every detail, especially his hypothesis regarding the place of the Titans in the mystic doctrine.

7 Compare Detienne 1963, p. 92: 'si la séparation de l'âme et du corps permet la connaissance totale, réciproquement la connaissance de l'astronomie, de la géométrie, de l'arithmétique et de la musique doivent réaliser la purification de l'âme qui est séparation d'avec le corps… tout homme qui a une âme, appelée démon, doit réaliser son démon, c'est-à-dire qu'il y a, croyon-nous, passage d'*avoir* à *être*'.

8 Compare Redfield 1991, p. 108: 'The ancients traced *philosophia* – in the sense of a way of life – back to Pythagoras (D.L., *Proem.*, 12)… Ion of Chios (fr., 2) says that Pythagoras wrote poems under the name of Orpheus; Pythagoras therefore was absolutely an Orphic'. Redfield draws a sharp distinction between Pythagoras' and Empedocles' conceptions of the philosophical life. I think the difference is exaggerated and, generally, Redfield overlooks their shared intellectual horizon. See Detienne 1963, pp. 79–85. Pythagoras is the link between Orphism, and the ideology of the mysteries, and philosophy, more generally.

9 Heraclitus' method of criticism is to make a received idea yield a meaning opposed to the one traditionally ascribed to it. See Heidegger and Fink 1993, pp. 49ff. Plato's attack on the 'seers and mendicant priests' in the *Republic* must be interpreted in the context set out above otherwise it is misunderstood.

10 See Detienne 1963, pp. 73ff. Compare Aristotle's fragment 12 A from the early text *On Philosophy*: 'Lorsque l'âme devient elle-même dans le sommeil, alors elle retrouve sa nature propre et peut voir l'avenir' (Detienne 1963, p. 75). Detienne draws attention to Aristotle's and others' view of catalepsy as 'une véritable expérience métaphysique' (Detienne 1963, p. 84). It proves, according to Aristotle, the immortality of the soul. The separation of the soul from the body is for Aristotle the necessary condition of knowledge, 'qui est vision d'une *psychē* rendue à elle-même' (Detienne 1963, p. 84).

11 See Detienne 1963, pp. 86–87: 'nous connaissons les affinités d'un Épiménide de Crète avec le type de sage auquel appartiennent Empédocle et Pythagore. Or le devin n'a pas seulement le pouvoir de prédire l'avenir, mais aussi celui de connaître le passé: c'est précisément le cas d'Épiménide qui, selon Aristote (*Rhet.* 3.17.10), faisait des révélations "non sur les choses futures mais sur les choses passées, sur les choses invisibles". Et s'il était tourné vers le passé, c'était surtout pour découvrir les fautes commises dans une vie antérieure ou dans l'histoire de quelque *genos*'. This last statement points to an intimate connection between the divine man and the ideology of the mysteries.

12 Bremmer (1983, pp. 25–53, esp. pp. 47–48) rejects 'shamanistic influence' on the legends of Orpheus, Aristeas, Hermotimos, etc. The way he poses the issue is unacceptable to me. In any event, there are undeniable continuities between ecstatic experiences reported for Siberian shamans and the abilities of the Greek legends, however one wishes to refer to these abilities ('ecstatic' or 'shamanistic'). Historical contacts between supposed shamanic cultures of the north and Greece prior to the classical period can strictly be neither proven nor disproven. It is true that ecstasy and the journey of the soul are not limited to the two cultures; and, in any event, the belief among the Greeks related to such abilities may well be older than possible contact during the archaic period. The expression 'shamanistic' describes a type (of ability, experience, etc.), not a cultural genealogy. Further, *katabasis* and necromancy must be added to the list of the abilities shared by the shaman and the Greek 'divine man'. Compare Ustinova 2002, p. 287.

13 According to Strabo (*Geography* 8.3.5), upon his return to Getae, Zalmoxis impressed the king with his mantic skills and took up residence in a 'cavernous place', where the king met and consulted with him. The role of king's divine councillor later on fell to a Dekaineos, described as *goēs anēr*.

14 Compare Ustinova 2002, p. 280: 'The *interpretatio Graeca* of Thracian ideas on immortality demonstrates that the cult of Zalmoxis involved a belief in the blissful

postexistence, and certain initiatory rites: in fact Hellancios calls the rites introduces (sic.) by Zalmoxis initiations (*teletē*)'.

15 Eliade 1970, p. 33: 'L'important est le fait que les Grecs ont été frappés par la similarité entre Pythagore et Zalmoxis. Or, ceci suffit pour nous renseigner sur le type de doctrine et de pratique religieuses spécifiques du culte de Zalmoxis… Le fait qu'on ait désigné Pythagore comme source de l'enseignement religieux de Zalmoxis, indique que le culte du dieu gète comportait la croyance à l'immortalité de l'âme et certains rites de type initiatique. A travers le rationalisme et l'évhémérisme d'Hérodote, ou de ses informateurs, on devine le caractère mystérique du culte'.

16 See Gnoli 2000, pp. 102–11.

17 Kellens' rebuttal (2001) of Gnoli's reasoning is for the most part valid.

18 See Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 1, pp. 4–23; De Jong 1997, pp. 317–23; and Kingsley 1995b for an analysis of, e.g. the tradition that placed Zoroaster 6,000 years before Plato. I do not agree with all of Kingsley's conclusions, especially the ones stated in Kingsley 1995b, pp. 193–94.

19 See Kingsley 1995b, p. 182: 'the earliest Greek evidence has as a matter of fact always been a major obstacle to accepting that Zoroaster could have lived in the sixth century B.C. Herodotus's total silence about him is extremely difficult to understand or explain on the assumption that he was such a recent, as well as powerful, figure'.

20 Vasunia (2007, pp. 245ff., esp. p. 251) argues that Aristoxenus' associating Pythagoras with Zoroaster had sectarian motivations. The arbitrary nature of Gershevitch's and Gnoli's reasoning shows itself when one compares the relation they assume for the Greek observer and his supposed Zoroastrian informers. They are happy to have Aristoxenus 'gleefully learn from Greeks who had met Zoroastrians in Babylon' (Gershevitch 1995, p. 15) that Zoroaster lived in the sixth century. But the Greek writers who placed Zoroaster, e.g. '6000 years before Ostanes', did so because of a 'misunderstanding' (Gnoli 2000, p. 73, p. 78: 'were involuntarily misled') about the magi's doctrine of the *fravaši*, i.e. the 'pre-existent soul'. Even Xanthus of Lydia (cf. Kingsley 1995b, pp. 176–85) must have 'misunderstood' the magi when he was told that Zoroaster's 'soul had been created six thousand years ago before his birth' (Gnoli 2000, p. 74). From this 'doctrine', Xanthus could have at least gathered that Zoroaster lived some time in the sixth century, since, according to the supposed compte-rendu by the magi, his 'soul' was created *six thousand years before his birth*. To have Xanthus 'mistakenly' conclude from such a statement that 'Zoroaster lived six thousand years before the 6th century' is tantamount to having him 'gleefully' place Zoroaster's birth six thousand years before his birth! Gnoli's reference (2000, pp. 67–75) to the millennial scheme of the Zoroastrians does not help his case, for this scheme precisely has Zoroaster live at the beginning of the last 3,000-year cycle. Compare Kingsley 1995b, p. 191: 'the dating of Zoroaster to six thousand years before Xerxes's attempted invasion cannot possibly be reconciled with the dating of Zoroaster in any of the other schemes – where he always occurs towards the end of the world-cycle'. The doctrine that Aristoxenus ascribes to 'Zaratas', as Boyce and Grenet (1991, pp. 368–70) argue, seems thoroughly Pythagorean.

21 See Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 1, pp. 103–106, vol. 2, pp. 23–24. On the dialogue, see Horky 2009, p. 70 n. 89.

22 See Vasunia 2007, pp. 248ff. and Horky 2009, pp. 74–77, pp. 93–98. '[T]he priority that is given to the place of the *magoi* in Aristotle's archeology of metaphysics (i.e. *Metaphysics* 1091[b] 6–12) suggests that, for Aristotle at least, the *magoi* played a significant role not only in the development of Ionian wisdom traditions, but also in the establishment of the conceptual apparatus by which the Pythagoreans and, ultimately, Plato would derive their ontological hypotheses' (Horky 2009, p. 76).

23　See Gordon 1987, pp. 74–75.

24　See Burkert 1972, pp. 147–92 and Detienne 1999, pp. 35–67. Momigliano's characterization of the passage from classical to Hellenistic thought is unrealistic: 'the subordination of Greek thought to Oriental wisdom, that is, the change from the conquest of truth through reason to the acquisition of truth through revelation' (Momigliano 1975, p. 147). His image of pre-Hellenistic Greek thought is one-sided, to say the least.

25　See Detienne 1963, pp. 93ff.

26　See Burkert 2007, 110; West 1971, pp. 213–35; Kingsley 1995a, pp. 217–316. Compare Bremmer 1983, pp. 70–124.

27　Compare Smith 1978, pp. 197–204.

28　See Beck 1991 for Zoroaster's place in Hellenistic wisdom.

29　For Bidez and Cumont, 'Zaratas the Chaldean' is a 'légende', an 'être fictif'. See Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 1, pp. 27–29; on the assimilation of the magi and Chaldean priests, Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 1, pp. 32–36; on the name Zaratas, Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 1, pp. 37–38. For a critical discussion of Cumont's thesis regarding the prevalence of Chaldean ideas in Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha, see Beck 1991.

30　See Versnel 1990, pp. 105–11 and Dickie 2001, pp. 60–74. '*Agyrtai* by their nature are basically persons who are destitute, although some of them may eventually become sufficiently successful to settle down and establish themselves in a community. The real question is where can persons with a knowledge of ritual practice of whom a fair number must have been literate have come from… Although destitute and essentially beggars, *agyrtai* were not necessarily obscure and nameless individuals… Philippos the Orpheotelestes, a man who was utterly destitute… told people that those who had been initiated under his supervision became prosperous and happy, once they had died' (Dickie 2001, p. 67).

31　See Dickie 2001, p. 66; Graf 2002, pp. 100–101.

32　See Graf 1997, p. 26. For Hesychius the Alexandrian grammarian of the fifth century, *magos* is a synonym of *goēs* 'wizard'. Bidez and Cumont (1973, vol. 1, pp. 144–45) observe that the *magos* had throughout Greco-Roman antiquity the double usage of the Persian priest and the magician, the second becoming more frequent with time. 'Les plus anciens textes où *magos* apparaisse avec la signification de "sorcier", "thaumaturge", "enchanteur", remontent jusqu'au cinquième siècle avant notre ère, et dans la suite ce mot est fréquemment employé comme un synoyme de *goēs*' (Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 1, pp. 144–45). In Euripides, *Orestes* 1490ff., *mageia* is used to describe Helen's sudden disappearance, which clearly expresses a supernatural intervention. It does not seem to have any negative connotation. The exact sense of the term must be analysed in relation to the characterization of the two would-be assassins as 'Bacchantes'. Compare Horky 2006, pp. 389–94.

33　Dickie (2001, p. 76) misinterprets the passage: it is not 'because the Neuroi are shamans that Herodotus supposes they are *goetes*, but because they are not what they purport to be… In other words, a *goes* is for Herodotus a person who is able to create in the mind of others an illusion of what is not'. The *goēs* is a deceiver. The causal conjunctive adverb *gar* 'for' makes it plain that the allegation regarding Neuri's werewolfism explains why one may want to call them *goētes*. The epithet has nothing to do with Herodotus' expression of disbelief, which is, in any case (i.e. without the conjunctive *gar*), clearly set off by *eme men nun* 'as for my part' from the related account. This passage is, as far as I know, the one place that the *goēs* is associated with a so-called shamanic practice and culture.

34　Graf and Johnston (2007, p. 170 n.33) reject the shamanistic connection.

35　See Graf 1997, p. 28. Compare Eliade 1964, pp. 200–36; 182: 'the shaman is indispensable in any ceremony that concerns the experiences of the human soul as such,

that is, as a precarious psychic unit, inclined to forsake the body and an easy prey for demons and sorcerers. This is why, all through Asia and North America, and elsewhere as well (e.g., Indonesia), the shaman performs the function of doctor and healer… It is always the shaman who conducts the dead person's soul to the underworld, for he is the psychopomp par excellence… the shaman is these because he commands the techniques of ecstasy – that is, because his soul can safely abandon his body and roam at vast distances, can penetrate the underworld and rise to the sky… The danger of losing his way in these forbidden regions is still great; but sanctified by his initiation and furnished with his guardian spirits, the shaman is the only human being able to challenge the danger and venture into a mystical geography'.

36 See Dickie 2001, p. 30. Dickie continues: '*Psychagogoi* is a term used for drawing up the spirits of the dead from the Underworld. As for *gooi*, the term Darius twice employs to refer to the cries with which he is summoned from the grave, it is a word generally used of a funeral lament and belongs to the same root as the word for a sorcerer, *goes*' (Dickie 2001, p. 30).

37 According to Gordon (1987, p. 78), the word *magos* entered Greek in the late sixth or early fifth century and partly replaced the word *goēs*. The *goētes* 'conjurers' apparently specialized in evoking the *daimones*. The connection continues in the Greco-Roman literate magic tradition. See Gordon 1987, p. 65. Dickie's point in the following passage is lost on me: 'It does not follow from *magos* or *goes* being a term of abuse that the activities which defined a man as a *magos* or *goes* were in themselves suspect, only that some of the activities pursued by such men were thought questionable' (Dickie 2001, p. 36).

38 See Versnel 1990, pp. 158–75.

39 See Bremmer 1983, pp. 38–53. The status of the soul in trance is similar to that of the dead.

40 Compare Zuntz 1971, pp. 189–92. Rightly understood, Pythagoras is neither a man nor a god, according to one of his aretologies. 'Rather he is the mysterious "included middle"' (Smith 1978, p. 200).

41 Kingsley (1995a, pp. 226–27) continues: 'it is certainly no accident that the closest parallel from the ancient literature to Empedocles' image of a person capable of descending to and returning from the underworld at will is the account by Lucian (*Menippus* 6) of the practices of a Zoroastrian magus at Babylon. Not only were these Persians Magi the people who provided the Greeks with their word *magos* or "magus" in the first place: we also know that their own religious and magical traditions are inextricably linked with the traditions of north-Asiatic shamanism, and a major problem in understanding the influence of shamanic traditions on Greeks has been due to the failure to appreciate the role played by Iranians as intermediaries in the process of transmission. From the closeness of the parallel in Lucian to Empedocles' own words in fragment 111 we can understand why later writers felt it natural to make Empedocles a pupil of the Magi. But even more significant is the fact that this tradition of linking him with the East almost certainly goes back to his own lifetime, because the very first reference to him in the surviving body of Greek literature – by his contemporary, Xanthus of Lydia – appears to have presented him in the context of a discussion of the Persian Magi'. Compare Eliade 1958, p. 64: 'he who has been successful in such an exploit [i.e. descent to the underworld] no longer fears death; he has conquered a kind of bodily immortality, the goal of all heroic initiations from the time of Gilgamesh… The beyond is also the place of knowledge and of wisdom'. Eliade's 'a kind of bodily immortality' is misleading, at least as a general description.

42 See Beck 1991, pp. 516–21.

43 See Frame 1978, pp. 34–80.

44 Compare Bremmer 1983, pp. 47–48.

45 'In addition to being "the other", there are then also two very concrete reasons as to why (all?) Greeks will have looked at the Persian Magi as sorcerers' (Bremmer 2008, p. 244). It is to be expected that 'the other' has alien customs, e.g. murmuring incantation at sacrifice. Thus, in Bremmer's account, the imputation of sorcery may well be reckoned to the (threatening) foreignness of things Persian. The appeal to 'the other' seems to make the 'two concrete reasons' redundant.

46 Calling them both 'system' does not make them comparable.

47 See Dickie 2001, pp. 47–95.

48 'Medea is an exaggerated version of this representation [e.g. Hesiodic Pandora] of women, dominated by nature, false, scheming and dangerous: and magic is part of the armoury which gives this sex its power' (Gordon 1987, p. 83).

49 See Gordon 1987, p. 73. As far as the word *magos* is concerned, it regularly means magician and nothing beside in, e.g. Hellenistic wisdom, unless otherwise stated. It is the *connection* that is made between the magician and Zoroaster that is important and in need of explanation. As for 'the Persian magus of whom the type is Zoroaster' (Gordon 1987, p. 73), in Hellenistic literature, he is *not* a magician, or at least, not simply a magician. See Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 1. On the other hand, in the most extensive collection of magical texts we have, e.g. the *Greek Magical Papyri*, that is to say, in the document of literate magic tradition, the 'great Zoroaster is mentioned only once' (Betz 1982, p. 166).

50 See Bremmer 1983, p. 50. That this account is a 'pure fiction' is hardly the point. Compare Detienne 1963, pp. 84–87.

51 See Graf 1997, p. 97: 'the magician's colleagues are called "fellow initiates"', the *synmystai*, and a 'magician of superb knowledge becomes "he who introduces to the mysteries"', the *mystagōgos*. Graf (1997, pp. 99–108) shows that the rite of magic not only uses the languages of the mysteries but also takes on their initiation structure.

52 See Betz 1980, p. 292.

53 Compare Betz 1980, pp. 294–95: 'The redactor (of the text of the *katabasis* rite) has combined (the spells) because they were related to the underworld goddess Hecate and can serve as means to avert "fear". Luckily, because of this interest he has included what seem to be liturgical remnants from the mysteries of the Idaean Dactyloi, remnants in which scholarship is interested for doubtless quite different reasons. How much more such material from mystery-cult rituals may be buried in the Greek magical papyri?'

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12   Initiation-based youth bands and initiatory sacrifice

The undeniable connection of the mysteries with figures that display shamanistic features does not make the mystery cults shamanistic séances; nor, of course, does it mean that the mysteries had their origins in shamanic cultures of the steppes.[1] Mystic initiation rites had neither a simple origin nor, as we know, a unitary manifestation.[2] Certain themes and patterns were shared with official public cults. Manic, carnivalesque behaviour, ecstasy, or perhaps play at ecstasy, equally belonged to the official *pomp* of Dionysus, the Anthesteria and the country and city Dionysia;[3] and if the 'ecstatic state' attained during initiation was deemed to have a cathartic effect (as was also the case in the cult of the Great Mother[4]), especially for curing madness, and thus became an important constituent of the mysteries of Dionysus, it is hard to see how it could have been different in kind from the 'liberating' effects of the public festivals held in honour of the god and the exulted state of the participants.[5] The initiation to the Dionysiac mysteries seems to have employed the same implements as one finds in the public procession: the *tympanon* and the phallus-in-*liknon*, the snake and winnowing basket, the *krater*, and the (ithyphallic and masked) satyr – all seen in the initiation scene of the famous fresco of the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii. Some of these implements were almost certainly taken up from non-Greek cults, e.g. the *tympanon* from the cult of the Phrygian Kybele, and possibly, by way of the latter, from the Mesopotamian ritual tradition.[6] But they were absorbed into a particular ideology: an entitlement to a privileged afterlife thanks to membership of an exclusive association acquired through initiation to divinities deemed to have disposition over the fate of the soul.[7] Although 'Dionysiac initiation is fulfilled in raving, *baccheia*' (Burkert 1985, p. 292), the rave per se, shared by the public worshippers of the god, could not have been the point of the mysteries of Dionysus.[8] The role that a component is supposed to have according to the synchronic conception of the whole where it is found does not necessarily reveal its genealogy. The significance of the mirror in Orphic-Dionysiac myth, where it is used to lure the child Dionysus away from the guarding Kouretes to his horrible slaughter, does not *ipso facto* account for its being part of the ritual in historical (genetic) terms. The doctrine could have found the mirror in its ritual inheritance and mytho-poetically absorbed

it, thereby covering earlier layers of its significance. Historical phenomena do not have single 'origins' but are formed from various currents and disparate elements for a more or less limited duration of time. Possession by the god (*enthousiasmos*) could not have reassured the initiates about their postmortem fate, although this experience defined the 'nature of the god' (Versnel 1990a, p. 137) and made his epiphany a central feature of the cult (Versnel 1990a, p. 157), whether official, maenadic, symposiac or mystic (see Henrichs 1981). Rather it demonstrated a real 'intimacy' (Boyancé in Versnel 1990a, p. 154; Sfemani Gasparro 1985, p. 15) with the saving god, a basic element in the ideology of the mysteries. Dionysus was a perfect mystic god.[9]

There are indications that the initiation-based association, that is to say, the mysteries in their formal aspect, developed from the seemingly pan-Indo-European initiation-based masculine bands. Dedication to a special type of god for a specific purpose could have emerged within the frame of initiation as a 'second birth'.[10] The formal structure of initiation explains a number of features reported about the mysteries. The suffering that the initiate undergoes may be understood as the formation of a new identity and of a new social bond, which can override the normal social relations of the initiate. What in normal society is prohibited is all the more valued in the esoteric association because of its differentiating charge. Orgies and intoxication serve this purpose, possibly among others. But they also precipitate ecstasy (at least this is what has been supposed), the 'extraordinary experience', which for commentators, ancient and modern, forms the psychological centre of the mysteries.[11] An exhilarated state of consciousness was a real feature of the mysteries of Dionysus and Kybele and, perhaps in a more mitigated form, of Demeter and Kore.[12] The positive evaluation of extreme forms of ritual rage and abandon should perhaps be traced to initiation rites of the late Neolithic masculine youth bands.[13] 'The mother and the maiden, Kore, stand side by side, meeting in the course of the secret rituals of the *Männerbund*' (Burkert 1983, p. 82). The connection is not merely hypothetical. The presence of Kouretes ('warlike lads') in the aetiological myths related to the mysteries links these to the initiation of young men in esoteric rituals.[14] There are also stories that connect heroes with initiation rites of manhood and of warrior status. Nakedness is associated with the warlike state and virility: the warrior and athlete alike take to the battlefield naked. Achilles disguised as a girl on Skyros, upon hearing the sound of trumpet or seeing weapons, strips off his clothes in order to reveal his manly physique. The festival of *Ekdysia*, 'stripping', in honour of Leto at Phaistos recalls the story of the girl who stripped off and changed into a powerful *ephebos*. Stripping to reveal one's manly body must have been a routine feature of tribal and puberty initiation and, stylized and enhanced with warlike behaviour such as the war dance (e.g. the Kouretes clashing their weapons around the child-god's cradle), it became part of warrior initiation.[15] If a recent analysis of the Nordic *berserkir* is correct, the word means 'bare-skinned' and thus *berserksgangr* 'going berserk', stripping for the battlefield or ritual or contest, refers to the manic state of the warrior who disdains

protective armour.[16] The masculine-band background, in other words, is not limited to the mysteries and can be found in the heroic-quest myths that have the structure of initiation, such as the story of Theseus.[17] In this respect, the mysteries are not exceptional. They developed an ancient form of association for their own purposes, or perhaps one should say that one of the ways in which the initiation-based masculine association evolved was the mystery cult.[18]

Kouretes or Korybantes are found in a number of stories related to the mysteries.[19] According to one tradition (Diodorus, *Library of History* 5.65), they were thought to have been the inventors, among other items of civilization, of the sword and the helmet, and the war dance, 'by means of which they raised a great alarm and deceived Kronos'. Myth places the Kouretes on Crete, especially in the sacred caves of Ida and Dikte, each said to be the birthplace of Zeus. 'This reflects a cult association of young warriors meeting at the grotto of Mount Ida, and brandishing their shields in war dances to which the bronze *tympana* and votive shields of Orientalizing style give early testimony' (Burkert 1985, p. 262). The ivory pyxis with Dionysiac scenes (at the Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna) from sixth century AD depicts the Kouretes dancing around an enthroned child Dionysus, whose gaze seems fixed on the sinister female figure (possibly Hera) holding up a mirror. Here we have in pictorial representation a transparent coincidence of ritual and myth, that is, a ritual drama. It is true that the Korybantic implements in the mysteries of Dionysus have been related to the cult of the Phrygian Mother, which saw enthroned initiation candidates surrounded by frenzied dancers with *tympana*, etc.[20] Sabazios, the Phrygian double of Dionysus, was inseparable from the Korybantes, ecstatic dancing and ritual consumption of alcohol. Be that as it may, festivals of admission of male initiates as a full member of the tribe, with attendant tribulations and triumphant celebrations, seem to have been a common phenomenon,[21] the basis perhaps for the adoption of foreign items which were deemed particularly impressive, e.g. 'shields of Orientalizing style'. The annual gathering of the Aetolians at one of the earliest temples of Apollo in Thermos was the occasion where new members who had come of age were admitted into the society of men.[22] The 'orientalizing' elements perhaps indicate confluent currents rather than a genetic origin. Multiple developments of a basic pattern with lateral reciprocal influences is a much more realistic picture than a unilateral importation of a finished product.

What sets the masculine band apart from puberty initiation in general is its voluntary and esoteric nature, and perhaps its dedication to warlike activity, although this latter has also been posited for tribal initiations.[23] Because it is voluntary, the association must be assumed to use all means to enhance its identity and inculcate the required characteristics in its members. One thus expects to see warrior-styled behaviours and patterns in initiation rituals of the esoteric masculine bands. Such patterns are present in the Orphic anthropogony. An Orpheus tradition explicitly connected the figure with the Daktyloi

(see below). The sequence of the dismemberment of an enthroned 'child' in a cave surrounded by a band of masked warriors and his subsequent 're-birth' reflects initiation rite and a martial background.[24] The raging gypsum-faced men, the Titans of the myth,[25] dismember the sacrificial victim, boil and roast it, and feast on it. In a typical initiation pattern, the 'double' of the initiate is put to death, a 'double' that is also the releasing god.[26] It is quite possible that an aspect of the initiation was the ostentatious commitment of the candidate to the esoteric deity in the course of the god's epiphany.[27] Behind the ritual drama of crime, ensuing feeling of guilt and conciliatory closure,[28] one may want to see social-functional reasons. In a controlled form and isolated from society, mad frenzy is allowed to take hold for a limited time and thereby dissipate, as Aristotle (*Poetics* 1449b) thought the tragic stage does with terror. But the social-functional explanation would then have to appeal to 'natural' impulses (which need purging) or accept, at least as a hypothesis, institutional formations that can account, e.g. for the eccentric behaviour. It would be wrong, again, to derive all the elements of mystery initiation from a single origin or attribute them to a single function. Any rite is composed of a number of historical layers, and its synchronic coherence is ever only an assumption, not only on the part of the observer but also for the actor. In part, the myth 'explains' for the participant the rite to which it is attached, which does not preclude mutual interaction. As far as I can see, the initiation structure of the mysteries and the warlike themes in the myths associated with them point to a background in initiation-based youth bands. The story that Plato (*Republic* 565d) tells of the sanctuary of Lykaian Zeus in Arcadia must be based in an esoteric-initiatory tradition: 'he who tastes of one bit of human entrails minced up with those of other victims is inevitably transformed into a wolf'. According to Pausanias, *Periegesis* 8.38.2–7, the sacrifice at the altar of Zeus the Wolf on Mount Lykaion took place 'in secret'. The cruel dismemberment sacrifices (*sparagmos*) reported by Pausanias (*Periegesis* 8.37.8) for the sanctuary of the enigmatic *Despoina* in Arcadia, where 'each man chops off a limb of the victim, just that which happens to come to hand', are hardly understandable in terms of 'the paradoxical logic of sacrifice' whereby one has to take life in order to promote life.[29] Even if 'sacrifice is ritual killing' (Burkert 1966, p. 106), why the ostentatious cruelty where one would expect, according to the logic of committing an unwanted but necessary act, a guilty attempt at concealment?[30]

Prometheus' presentation of the bones of the sacrificed animal covered with fat to Zeus as if it were the whole animal may be rooted in magic practices of the primordial hunters appeasing the Master of Animals.[31] This may reflect the hunter's natural concern about the continuity of life: he is anxious to preserve his source of food (Burkert 1966, p. 109).[32] If so, in its pretence of innocence it may be thought to tally with the 'paradoxical logic' that one's life can be sustained only by killing (but see further below);[33] ritual acts of extravagant cruelty, however, are not really comprehensible according to this logic. Also, I am less confident than Burkert that the purpose of the 'unspeakable

sacrifice' reported for the mysteries of Demeter was to enact symbolically and therefore sublimate socially disruptive instincts, 'gruesomeness and sexual outbursts finally overcome in the establishment of a divine order' (Burkert 1983, p. 284).[34] Generally speaking, the social-functional explanation[35] of ritual rage and cruelty need not be incompatible with seeing in such phenomena warlike ritual practices. Aggression operative in hunt and war fulfils itself in killing. However, the aggression-level stress cannot go unchecked.[36] Its manifestations are followed by reconciliation, which ensures the continuation of life and society. Perhaps reconciliation is motivated or accompanied by the feeling of guilt, at least in some cases. One may well think that the 'warlike' or 'savage' ritual preserves and controls impulses of aggression in its valorization and celebration of warlike behaviour. But social institutions cannot be reduced to psychological or instinctual drives, as if a 'natural' impulse could explain the form and function of the institution.

Diodorus (*Library of History* 5.64.4) relates a tradition that he apparently found in the fourth-century historian Ephorus: 'the Idaean Daktyls were born in the region of Mount Ida in Phrygia; they migrated with Mygdon to Europe. Being *goētes*, they spent their time with spells (*epōidai*), initiations and mystery cults. When they were living about the island of Samothrace, they quite frightened the indigenous inhabitants with all these things. At this time also, Orpheus became their student, although his different nature had first driven him to poetry and music; and it was he who first brought initiations and mystery cults to the Greeks'.[37] The Daktyloi Idaioi or Kabeiroi were also called Korybantes (cf. Clement, *Protrepticus* 2.19), the sons of the Mother Goddess, who settled them on Samothrace; but the identity of their father was only revealed to the initiates of their cult. On Lemnos the Kabeiroi were smiths and hence known as Hephaistoi.[38] The connection of metallurgy with magic is very old. There was an ancient Kabirion on the island: 'the continuity of cult from pre-Greek to the Greek era is astounding. A community of initiates would gather there for secret celebrations in which wine played a major role. As worshippers of the mythical smithies, they were probably a *Männerbund* which modeled itself on a smithy guild' (Burkert 1983, pp. 194–95). The Telchines (Daktyloi) were known to be *goētes* and 'could even do what the magi of Persia could' do (Diodorus, *Library of History* 5.55.3). The Kouretes and the divine smiths Daktyloi reflect the initiation-based society of men dedicated to the cult of the Mother Goddess. Their identification in various myths shows their fundamental affinity. As we saw, the *goēs* was able to make contact with the world of the dead. The Daktyloi are said to be *goētes*, and *being so* they perform initiations and mystery cults. The magical spells (*epōidai*) are in the service of activities one can suppose for the *goētes*. The tradition preserved by Ephorus made the Daktyloi the source of the mysteries in Greece via Orpheus, who became an adept of their craft, 'though in nature being different'. Obviously the 'manly' business of the Daktyloi did not go with music and poetry. Orpheus was regularly represented as the founder of the mysteries. In the myth, secret societies of men are thus the matrix of the

initiation-based organization of the mystery cults. Strabo (*Geography* 7.330, frg. 18) calls Orpheus 'a *goēs* who first peddled music along with divination and mystery rituals, but later thought more highly of himself and attracted crowds and power' (in Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 171).[39] For Pausanias (*Periegesis* 9.30.4), Orpheus was a poet who, initiated into the society of Daktyloi, was known to have discovered the mysteries and purification from sins by initiation.

There is another myth that connects Orpheus with esoteric masculine societies. In the story told by Conon, Orpheus performs initiations for a warrior group in Leibethra, located in the Pieria region near Mount Olympus, originally settled by Thracians. The town had a sanctuary to Orpheus. Women were forbidden to enter the sacred precincts. In the story, Orpheus is represented as the king of Thrace and Macedonia. 'On certain days, Orpheus assembled the warriors of Macedonia and Thrace in a building well equipped for initiation (*teletai*); when celebrating these rituals, they had to leave their weapons outside. The women resented being excluded' (Graf 1987, p. 87). One day they helped themselves to the weapons and, finding the men drunk, tore Orpheus to pieces and threw the parts into the sea. Pausanias (*Periegesis* 9.30.5) cites this as the reason why the Thracian warriors intoxicate themselves before taking to the battlefield, probably reversing the real relation between the *andrēōn* and the battlefield. The connection of the myth with the masculine society can hardly be clearer. Orpheus is an initiator for a society of warriors. The link between the poet and diviner on the one hand and the founder of the mysteries on the other is Orpheus' involvement with the initiation-based masculine society. It is, then, a reasonable hypothesis that it is from this type of association that the mystery cults take their esoteric-initiatory structure and a number of their elements such as raving and dancing.[40]

Orpheus and charismatic figures such as Epimenides, Empedocles and Pythagoras are composite characters. Their capacity to acquire 'true' knowledge, which Hesiod (*Theogony* lines 10–45) ascribes to the inspired singer, and the Vedas to the *kavi*, unquestionably has Indo-European roots.[41] The seer's extraordinary knowledge of 'reality' is acquired through his ability to separate his *psychē* from his body and thus 'contemplate' the invisible. Based on his access to the supernatural realm are his healing and saving abilities. Burkert makes a convincing case for the enrichment of the Indo-European healer through Near Eastern influences, especially during the 'orientalizing' period (the eighth to the sixth century BC). However, we must not forget that healing by way of spells is attested in the Atharvaveda;[42] and behind the seemingly eschatological Gāthic 'healer of existence' (*ahūm.biš-*) perhaps stands an ancient (i.e. Indo-European) tradition of therapeutic use of ritual: *ratu-*.[43] The historical emergence of the eschatological 'releaser' is perhaps more complex. Strabo says, as mentioned above, that Orpheus was not content with being a diviner and musician but 'attracted crowds and power'. In other words, he pretended to found a life programme, including, it seems,[44] not just dietetic medicine and general purity norms of conduct bearing on different aspects of

life, but also rules related to the afterlife (cf. Plato *Phaedrus* 244d–e). There is a natural tendency in an ideology such as the one attributed to Orpheus toward establishing religious communities.[45] At least in the case of Pythagoreans this is an undisputed historical fact. The divine man's *akousmata* 'things heard', i.e. exoteric precepts, were observed among the southern Italian Pythagorean communities. Here we have a case where a 'son of god'[46] and, perhaps, hierophant of Mater Magna with shamanistic claims[47] founds communities based in observance of authoritative precepts, on which, among other things, one's possibility of salvation depends.[48]

But not all who received initiation converted to Orphism. For them, certainly the majority, the initiation rite itself ensured the 'blessed' afterlife they were anxious to secure for themselves. Plato's remarkable description, albeit with an incredulous tone and sarcasm, of the 'begging priests and seers' in the *Republic* 364b–366b is perhaps the most comprehensive testimony we have of their claims and practices. Parker (2005, p. 121) says of Plato's seers: 'perhaps we should recognize late survivors of the kind of charismatic all-purpose man of god best illustrated for us by Empedocles'. The departed soul goes to 'the world below', according to the Orphic doctrine, and there receives a judgement. The *orpheotelestai* believe they have 'accumulated a treasure of power from the gods', which allows them to perform efficacious *teletai* that 'deliver us from misfortunes (*kakōn*) in that other world, while terrible things await those who have neglected to sacrifice'. Orphic rites, derived from the books of Orpheus and Musaeus ('poets and messengers' and 'sons of the gods'), 'expiate and cure'. The gods who preside over the initiation rites are called the 'absolving gods' (*lysioi theoi*). In one of the Pelinna gold leaves, the departed initiate is reminded to 'tell Persephone that the Bacchic One himself released (*elyse*) you' (Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 36–37). Behind the 'pleasurable games' of the *Republic* 364b, with which the mendicant holy men expiate and cure, may well stand the 'sportive gambols' of the 'Korybantic rites' of initiation we find in the image given of the mysteries in Plato, *Euthydemus* 277de. The tradition from Conon about Orpheus that makes him an initiator for a warrior society and the one reported by Ephorus that makes him a pupil of the Daktyloi, although 'being of a different nature', are, to my mind, sure indications that the ritual practices of esoteric youth societies continued in some way in the mysteries. There is a similar story, related by Porphyry (*Vita Pythagoras* 17), about Pythagoras: on Crete he was initiated to the cult of Zeus (and the Daktyloi?) in the Idaean cave by one of the Daktyloi. He was wrapped in 'black wool', probably imitating Zeus himself,[49] for the purposes of purification. The Idaean Zeus, the father, is probably no other than Dionysus, the son, as their identical epithets (Chthonios, Zagreus) seem to suggest. The *Megistos Kouros* of the Cretan Palaikastro inscription from third century BC has been identified as the *Zeus kouros*. The connection with the Kouretes and the apparent death of the young god points to the existence of similar stories about the Cretan Zeus and Dionysus (their birth, nursery and enthronement in the cave) and ultimately to a tradition of initiation into an esoteric male

cult.[50] The strange episode of Pythagoras' inscription of an epigram on Zeus' tomb on Mount Ida, too, suggests that the god that presides over the initiation dies. It would be hard to deny that the initiation of Pythagoras and the apprenticeship of Orpheus with the Daktyloi, among others, reflect historical connections between mystic initiation and the society of men. Burkert (1985, pp. 278–81) draws attention to the 'clan and family mysteries', which seem to have developed from tribal or puberty initiation festivals. But, even here, Korybantic elements, e.g. cruel sacrifices and warlike behaviour, are attested. On balance, it seems to me, the initiation form of the mysteries must be related to a type of ceremony that was characteristic of initiation-based men's associations. It is difficult to say whether dedication to a specific type of deity was a feature of these associations, although, generally speaking, dying gods or deities of the underworld seem to have been favoured for the role.[51] In any case, in the mysteries, initiation is always to the gods that are traditionally connected with the world of the dead.

The initiatory sacrifice had a special significance. In the mysteries of Eleusis there was a preliminary sacrifice of a piglet to Demeter. The pig sacrifice was, of course, a common feature of the cult of the goddess. But the preliminary sacrifice of the young pig by the *mystēs* had the peculiarity of being individualized. Each candidate had to bring his or her own animal. But this is not all. 'The Greeks mentioned explicitly that the initiate surrendered the animal to death "in his stead" and that a life was exchanged for a life' (Burkert 1983, p. 258).[52] Parker (1983, p. 283) points out that the key phrase means 'on behalf of himself' rather than 'instead of himself'. The word *choiros* 'piglet' was apparently the slang for female genitals. Piglets were deposited into a pit (*megaron*) on the first day of the Thesmophoria celebrated in honour of Demeter and Kore.[53] The myth of Hades' abduction of Persephone associated her disappearance into the underworld with the sinking of Eubuleus' grazing pigs into the earth, according to the *aition* for the Thesmophoria. The swineherd shared a priest at Eleusis with the 'god' and 'goddess' (probably Pluton and Persephone, but see Clinton 1992, pp. 62–63). A figure on a number of vases with Eleusinian themes has been identified as Eubuleus guiding Kore from the underworld to Eleusis (Clinton 1992, 71–73). If so, the same figure is connected with the chthonic scene and the epiphany of the queen of the underworld at the Eleusinian mysteries. Clinton (1992, pp. 58–60) argues that this Eubuleus may well represent in a transposed 'hero' form the approachable underworld ruler Zeus Eubuleus, worshipped in a divine triad with Demeter and Kore throughout the Greek world, at Eleusis where Pluton serves the cultic function. In one of the versions of Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigeneia, he is required by Artemis to surrender his daughter in expiation for his killing a stag in the goddess's sacred grove; before the actual slaughter, however, a doe is substituted for the girl.[54] But what does this three-way relationship mean: the initiate kills the piglet 'on behalf of himself', which also signifies the maiden being sacrificed? If the maiden is the equivalent of the sacrificial animal, the candidate dispatches the maiden into the underworld

on his own behalf, that is, in order to achieve something for the dispatcher. Burkert (1983, p. 162) interprets the rape of Kore as a 'maiden-sacrifice', and understands the latter to have the character of a renunciation (pig = maiden = Kore) in the expectation of something more valuable (grain, the gift of nourishment, from Demeter). For 'the receptive initiate, the routine sacrifice of the "mystery pig" could always assume a deeper dimension: standing there at the edge of death, he destroys a life in his stead; the act of killing is irrevocable and yet must provoke an answer. The scales of life's equilibrium have been tipped and, if an equilibrium exists at all at the center of being, the scales must swing back again. It is the hope of the initiate that the path into death will lead to life' (Burkert 1983, p. 264). It is not clear in what sense the last statement should be understood: that the gods are obliged to let the donor of the sacrificial victim live? That a 'receptive initiate' would have reflected on the slaughter of the animal and seen in it Burkert's 'paradoxical logic' of sacrifice, life for life, seems implausible to me. In any event, renunciation in anticipation of a greater gain (by forcing the hand of the god) hardly suits the tragic consciousness, which sees in sacrifice a reminder of the paradox that continuation of life depends on killing. The mystery maiden-pig as the initiate's sacrificial advocate must have had another meaning.

The *mystēs* expects to have a blissful existence once he has crossed to the world of the dead thanks to his or her initiation into the mysteries. Initiation anticipates the process of dying and the subsequent journey of the soul.[55] It entitles the initiate to a capable guide and imparts the necessary knowledge. This is implied in Plato, *Phaedo* 108a: 'the path [to the lower world] is neither simple nor single, for if it were, there would be no need of guides, since no one could miss the way to any place if there were only one road. But really there seem to be many forks of the road and many windings; this I infer from the rites and ceremonies practiced here on earth'. A text from Plutarch (frg. 178 in Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 158) says that the soul 'undergoes the same experiences as those who are initiated into the great mystery rituals; this is why the word *teletē* "initiation rites" echoes the word *teleutē* "end, death" and the reality of initiation echoes the reality of death'. One rehearses the journey to the world beyond in initiation, made concrete in the victim: the 'double'.[56] If dying is the condition of attaining a god-like existence, then, as the epitaph of a hierophant has it, 'death is not only not an evil, but good' (cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 67d–e). In a grave gold leaf found in Hipponion (Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 4–5), the initiate is reassured: 'you, too, having drunk [i.e. from the Lake of Memory], will go along the sacred road on which other glorious initiates and *bacchoi* travel'. We also have Aristophanes' barbed remark in the *Frogs* that the *mystai* of Demeter will go on celebrating their festivals in the underworld.[57] Conversely, the initiate believes he has the same experiences as the departing soul. The text from Plutarch (frg. 178) continues, ostensibly describing the experiences of the soul of the initiate as it enters the underworld: 'Wanderings astray in the beginning, tiresome walkings in circles, some frightening paths in darkness

that lead nowhere; then immediately before the end of all the terrible things, panic and shivering and sweat, and amazement. And then some wonderful light comes to meet you, pure regions and meadows are there to greet you, with sounds and dances and solemn, sacred words and holy views; and there the initiate, perfect by now, set free and loose from all bondage, walks about, crowned with a wreath, celebrating the festival together with the other sacred and pure people, and he looks down on the uninitiated, unpurified crowd in this world in mud and fog beneath his feet' (in Burkert 1987, pp. 91–92). It is almost certain that what Plutarch is describing are actually the events of the Telesterion at Eleusis.[58] The uncanny epiphany of Kore must have had, among other things, the significance of the anticipated confrontation with the goddess in the underworld, the point where dread comes to an end, and the release (both psychological and juridical) is followed by joyous celebrations. The knowledge that the initiate received contained, according to the testimony of the gold leaves (see Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 4–49), information about the geography and conditions of the underworld; and, in a sense, he did enact the passage to the world beyond in his initiation: from dying, i.e. consecration,[59] through walking the sacred road to Eleusis and reaching the grotto of the lord of the underworld, beyond which no uninitiated may venture on pain of death, and finally to the nocturnal celebrations at the Telesterion.[60] If the experience of initiation had a reassuring effect regarding death, as Demosthenes (*Discourses* 19.199, 249, 281) and Aristotle (*Politics* 8.1342a) report, it was because in the mind of the *mystēs*, the mysteries staged the passage to the 'pure regions and meadows' of the underworld; they made the uncanny event somewhat familiar and inculcated the belief that success in the former guaranteed success in the latter.[61]

The sacrifice that each candidate of initiation made thus had to have a special significance. One's death is the condition of access to the 'pure' regions and precincts.[62] This condition was perhaps fulfilled for the initiate by the double, the piglet-maiden. So, in some sense, the victim is the substitute of the sacrificer. In his article on the 'psychological category of the double', Vernant (2006, p. 331) shows that the *kolossos* had the function of mediating between the worlds of the living and the dead. 'It is one of the forms that the *psuchē* – as a power from beyond – can adopt when it makes itself visible to human beings' (Vernant 2006, p. 325). The grief-stricken Laodameia makes an *eidōlon* of her dead husband Protesilaus and embraces this double each night. When her father finds out, he has the wax effigy cast in the fire. 'Laodameia throws herself in after it, in order to follow Protesilaus into the beyond… whether it is used to brings the shades of the dead back to the light of day or to send the living down among the shades, the *kolossos*, as a double, always establishes a link between the living and the underworld' (Vernant 2006, p. 327). The double symbolically embodies the *psychē* in its ambiguous status: a form of visibility that belongs to the invisible realm, and a means of communication of the power of the beyond in the world of the living. Thus, it is not merely a sign but an effective power, 'activated' by means of ritual (Vernant 2006,

p. 331). The passage between the realms of life and death that characterizes the various forms of the double (dream images, apparitions, etc.) in Vernant's account seems to determine the nature of the 'preliminary sacrifice' in the Eleusinian mysteries. Being consecrated to the realm of death, the *mystēs* has to play a double game;[63] and this is exactly what he does, since initiation is to undergo death while still living. The victim is thus 'symbolically' the double (substitute) of the initiate's *psychē*, and its death 'ritually' counts as the death of the initiate. But the animal victim as the initiate's substitute is the 'double' in another connection, which gives its fundamental sense to the scenario of initiation as a crossing to the realm of death. The 'double' re-enacts the primordial passage of the god to the realm of the dead.

The notion of sacrificial double has a clear Vedic reflection in the myth of Yama, the aboriginal psychopomp, and in the Brāhmaṇic doctrine of the sacrificial death.[64] Like his father, the sun (Vivasvant), Yama is immortal, but chooses to die in order to mark out the path to the abode of the Pitṛs. In dying and making his way to the beyond, Yama is the prototype of humanity. 'Yama was the first to find the way for us, this pasture that shall not be taken away' (RV 10.14.2ab).[65] The kind of immortality mortals can have consists in existence in the kingdom of Yama by way of death.[66] In his illuminating study of the Vedic figure, Malamoud (2002, p. 16) remarks that the connection between the three constitutive aspects of humanity as conceived in Vedic thought, namely being mortal, being related to the sun[67] and having a double, 'est à la fois confirmée et rendue plus intelligible par la figure de Yama'. Yama is not just the prototype but also the progenitor of mortals.[68] Procreation and immortality are incompatible; the engendered creature must die. Death is the negation of the conditions of earthly life: generation and the passing of generations. Death thus annihilates time. Every dead person can become an 'ancestor', that is, without any relation to time. Still, it is not death as such that allows access to the timeless realm of Yama. The members of successive generations reach the kingdom of the ancestors only through sacrificial death.[69] Yama as the 'poet of the Pitṛs' has opened the path of 'ritual speech', followed by the *ṛsis* 'seers'. Finally, Yama is also the lord of the dead, which to the living means the god of death, the 'collector of men', as a hymn from the Ṛgveda (10.14.7–8) puts it: '[to the dead man] Go forth, go forth on those ancient paths on which our ancient fathers passed beyond… Unite with the fathers, with Yama, with the rewards of your sacrifices and good deeds, in the highest heaven' (translation from Doniger O'Flaherty 1981, p. 44). 'C'est en tant que dieu qu'il est la mort, et en tant que "premier des mortels" qu'il guide les défunts vers le lieu où ils pourront "vivre" comme ancêtres' (Malamoud 2002, p. 22).

Yama 'twin' is sometimes the brother of Manu, who is born from the double of Yama's mother Saraṇyū.[70] Being wearied of the burning contact of her husband Vivasvant, Saraṇyū flees and hides, but takes the precaution of making a replica of herself, Savarṇā. Now, Manu is known not only as the 'first man' in the Vedas but also as the first sacrificer (*yajamāna*).[71] In the

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (I.1.4.14–17) Manu sacrifices his wife Manāvī, whose voice captured in the sacrificial vessels is asura-killing. Manāvī is probably also Manu's sister, and behind her, as Lincoln (1975, p. 134) maintains, stands Yama.[72] Yama's 'choosing to die' is simultaneously understood as his sacrifice.[73] Every sacrificial victim is supposed to give its 'consent' before immolation. Yama makes his way to the underworld as a sacrificial victim.[74] He also seems to be the figure behind the 'cosmic man', Puruṣa, of the famous Ṛgvedic hymn 10.90, from whose sacrifice and dismemberment the cosmos is created.[75] Here again we find the notion that the victim is the 'twin' of the sacrificer: 'dans les sacrifices comportant immolation d'animaux, la victime, avant d'être mise à mort, doit être attachée à un poteau (*yūpa*) qui a pour hauteur la taille du sacrifiant' (Malamoud 2002, p. 32).

Sacrifice is the path of immortality for the mortal because the sacrificial victim is the double of the consecrated sacrificer. In a sense, in the victim, the *dīkṣita* is put to death – and reborn to a god-like existence.[76] Consecration of the candidate and sacrifice of the animal are identical (not parallel) in the Vedic logic of correspondences.[77] In the ceremony of consecration of the king (*rājasūya*), he is vowed to death in his divine double King Soma, who suffers a sacrificial death, by which the consecrated king becomes the hidden *brahman*, the supernatural power embodied in sacrifice.[78] Consecration *dīkṣā* is thus a 'deathlike condition' (Heesterman 1993, p. 171). In another soma sacrifice, connected with chariot racing and intended to win the vital force *vāja*,[79] a wheel-shaped cake symbolizing the sun is attached to the top of the sacrificial post *yūpa*. The sacrificer climbs a ladder placed next to the post and calls to his wife: 'come, wife, let us climb to the sun'; then he ascends the ladder, holds the wheel, and says: 'we have reached the sun, O you gods!'[80] There cannot be any question that reaching the sun means attaining the divine sphere. The post-Ṛgvedic ritual association of the *yūpa* and the god Viṣṇu is based on the idea that both span the three spheres, earth, atmosphere and the heavens, and both are thought to prop up the sky. Viṣṇu holds up *uttaraṃ sadhastham*, the 'highest assembly place' (RV 1.154.1bc), 'which is the abode of the gods and the pious, and is equivalent to heaven' (Proferes 2003, pp. 336–37). Hence we have a series of correspondences that make the sacrificial death of the sacrificer the condition of his achieving supernatural power and, ultimately, immortality.[81] In respect of the latter, as I mentioned above, sacrifice alone permits the deceased to enter the realm of Yama. But in an important sense, the living too is subject to Yama by way of the ordained sacrifice that maintains the dead ancestors in Yama's kingdom. According to Malamoud (2002, p. 29), there is a deeper sense in which the living is indebted to Yama, who is the 'ultimate creditor' of man. Surrendering one's life in sacrifice (consecration) is making good the debt which one incurs as soon as one is born.[82] Being generated, man is mortal, whose immortality can only have the nature of a sacrificial achievement. Yama 'renounced' his immortality in order to discover/make the way to the underworld. He is thus both the model and the creditor of the mortal. In sacrificial death the

sacrificer both pays his debt and follows the primordial model.[83] The particular identification of the sacrificer and sacrificial victim in the Brāhmaṇic doctrine has a mediating term, the model and creditor Yama, which makes the procedure understandable.

The speculative literature on *puruṣamedha* 'human sacrifice' has the wife of the victim listen to the same exhortation addressed to the principal wife of the deceased on the funerary pyre.[84] Human sacrifice, according to the Brāhmaṇic works on the matter, is the model of the *aśvamedha*, the most elaborate royal sacrifice, where the wife of the sacrificer lies with the immolated horse in an apparent simulation of sexual union. Via its model, the human sacrifice, the episode in the horse sacrifice points to the doctrinal basis of both, namely the identity of the sacrificer and sacrificial animal.[85] 'Si l'épouse du sacrifiant est considérée, en la circonstance, comme la veuve du *puruṣa* immolé, n'est-ce pas aussi que le sacrifiant, le mari bien vivant de cette femme, se reconnaît en quelque sorte dans la victime morte?'[86] The Brāhmaṇas view the immolation of the animal as the recovery or redemption of the sacrificer's own person, who in *dīkṣā*, the preliminary consecration, has surrendered himself to the gods. 'In truth he enters into the mouth of Agni and Soma, the one who goes through *dīkṣā*. When he immolates a victim to Agni and Soma, it is for him a recovery of his own person (*ātmaniṣkrayaṇa*). Having, by the victim, redeemed his own person, become free of debt, he performs a sacrifice (*yajate*). This is the reason why one should not eat from this victim; for it is a human as image (*puruṣo hi sa pratimayā*)' (*Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* 10.3). It is only in surrendering his mortal life in consecration that man can enter the realm of the Pitṛs. But in substituting the animal, the sacrificer can perform the sacrifice that allows him to escape annihilation. This, at any rate, seems to be the paradoxical logic of the sacrificial double in the doctrine. One has to subject oneself to death in order to go beyond it. 'Man, once born, is born in person as a debt to death; when he sacrifices, he redeems himself from death' (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 3.6.2.16).

In every sacrificial drama, the *yajamāna* personally takes part not only as the one who performs his duties toward the gods but also as the follower of Yama. Yama, the god who chooses to die in order to show the way to the place of immortality to his descendants, is not just the creditor of the mortal but also the prototypical victim. He is the creditor because he is the primordial 'double'. Every sacrifice rehearses the passage of the divine 'twin'; every victim is a 'double' after the god who made the way to the realm of death. This symbolic re-enactment of the drama of a god who becomes mortal in order to find the way to immortality defines the potency of Brāhmaṇic sacrifice. Paradoxically, the sacrificer makes good his debt to Yama by incurring further debt, since the victim is the double both of the sacrificer and of the god. It is possible that the god Yama emerged from the figure of the consecrated animal or human victim.[87] The myth of Yama, especially in its Brāhmaṇic treatment, shows that the idea of sacrifice with an eschatological intent is very ancient, going back to the Indo-European times.[88]

Notes

1 Compare Eliade 1964, pp. 375–427.

2 See Burkert 1987. Robertson (2003, pp. 219–22) maintains that myths and rites of mystic initiation developed from those that were associated with the public cults of Greek cities, especially those of Demeter and Dionysus, and ultimately from the ritual of the pastoral goddess Rhea. She also appears as the 'Mother of the Gods' whose cult stands behind Greek theogonies, 'the gods being all the lesser powers of nature' (Robertson 2003, p. 221). Compare Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, pp. 17ff. According to Robertson (2003, p. 220), the 'original Greek initiates or *mystai* did not join a separate social group, a tribe or sect… Only when the community effort began to lose its hold did *mystai* form private associations, like the Orphics'. Joining a separate group was a marginal phenomenon throughout Greek antiquity. The only certain case is the Pythagorean community of southern Italy. See Burkert 1982. In any case, Robertson's criticism of 'initiation rites as a topic of comparative religion' is a case of straw man fallacy. The *mystēria* as a 'type', according to Sfemani Gasparro (1985, p. 6), comprises two aspects 'peculiar' to it: 'the ritual esoteric-initiatory component and the specific content, the latter viewed in the light of both the character of the divine being object of the cult and of the particular relationship which develops between deity and worshipper'.

3 See Henrichs 1981; Versnel 1990a, pp. 146–50; Burkert 1985, pp. 237–42; Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988, pp. 381–412; Parker 2005, pp. 312–26.

4 'The Dionysiac cult, in the early form of the thiasoi described by Euripides, and the cult of Cybele do not imply the re-evocation of a divine vicissitude, but rather the participation of the adept in a rite which puts him, through sacred possession to which he yields submissively, in immediate relationship with the deity… The capacity to infuse sacred mania is in fact one of the specific prerogatives of the great Phrygian goddess… this theme, in its double significance (μανία beneficial if produced ritually and destructive "madness" which afflicts the guilty) defines the entire mythical vicissitude experienced by Attis, in its "Phrygian version", and the ritual complex of the Galli' (Sfemani Gasparro 1985, pp. 14–16).

5 See Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1988, pp. 381–412 and Versnel 1990a, pp. 137–39.

6 See Sfemani Gasparro 1985, pp. 10–11, pp. 20–23; Burkert 1983, p. 264: 'in Babylon, the kalu-priests were entrusted with the knowledge of how to make the tympanon in secret sacrificial ceremonies'.

7 See Bernabé 2007, pp. 100–101. Only the initiate is entitled to know the secret knowledge, which, as it bears on the afterlife, guarantees a 'blessed' postmortem existence. Compare Burkert 1987, pp. 3–11. The two definitions Burkert gives of the general character of the mystery cult are different. 'Mysteries are a form of personal religion, depending on a private decision and aiming at some form of salvation through closeness to the divine' (Burkert 1987, p. 12). But he also gives another one, which seems too cerebral to me: 'Mysteries were initiation of a voluntary, personal, and secret character that aimed at a change of mind through experience of the sacred' (Burkert 1987, p. 11). Compare Sfemani Gasparro 1985, pp. 24–25.

8 Not all the mysteries were primarily directed to ensuring a better afterlife. The initiates of the Great Gods of Samothrace sought safety at sea. See Bianchi 1976, pp. 1–15 and Burkert 1985, pp. 281–85. The famous Orphic phrase from Plato, *Phaedo* 69c ('many are the thyrsus-bearers, but few are the *bacchoi*') distinguishes between genuine and superficial dedication to the god. But this genuineness does not mean, and is not proven by, having an ecstatic experience per se. Rather, as the context shows, it is fulfilled in initiation to the mysteries of the god and authenticated after death.

9 'Presence of and immediate contact with the god are precisely the most specific features of the Bacchic *orgia*… On these two points both *orgia* and [Eleusinian] mysteries were equally different from normal cultic practice' (Versnel 1990a, p. 154).

10 According to Eliade (1958, p. 74), the three 'innovations' of the secret men's society were 'the primary role of secrecy, the cruelty of the initiatory ordeals' and the replacement of the 'Supreme Being' by 'a demiurgic God, or by the mythical Ancestor, or by a civilizing Hero'.

11 See Sfemani Gasparro 1985, p. 13 n. 30.

12 See Versnel 1990a, pp. 105–18 and Burkert 1983, pp. 274–93. '"Madness" is a distinctive feature of *bakcheia* in its full sense, and those devoted to the Phrygian Mother become *entheoi* or *theophoretoi*, "carried by the divinity", especially under the effect of certain kinds of music' (Burkert 1987, p. 112). Burkert cites a passage from Proclus, head of the Academy in the fifth century AD. 'Eleusis had been destroyed some fifty years before he was born… still, he knew the daughter of Nestorius, the Eleusinian hierophant, and admired her as a guardian of the most sacred tradition. Thus what he writes about mysteries should be taken seriously as containing authentic tradition. Proclus writes the following about the *teletai*: "They cause sympathy of the souls with the ritual [*drōmena*] in a way that is unintelligible to us, and divine, so that some of the initiands are stricken with panic, being filled with divine awe; others assimilate themselves to the holy symbols, leave their own identity, become at home with the gods, and experience divine possession"' (Burkert 1987, pp. 113–14). The (symbolic) presence of the god to whom one entrusts one's life and afterlife must have been *reassuring*, even if initially overwhelming, a concrete proof that the god cares about one's fate, etc. Nonetheless, Proclus' philosophical interpretation of the 'extraordinary experience', like many a retrospective wistful account, must be to some extent an idealized picture. Compare Henrichs 1981, pp. 144–45: 'Greek ritual in general was traditionally action-oriented (*drōmena*), repetitive and stereotyped, externalized and unreflecting, or in other words, a studious re-enactment of an inherited response rather than a personal expression of inner feelings or religious sentiment. These characteristics of Greek ritual explain why the physiological and psychological condition of maenads in ritual action remains unknown. The true nature of their "telestic madness" is therefore a matter of speculation'.

13 See Versnel 1980, pp. 112–21 and Bremmer 1982.

14 See Bremmer 1983, pp. 137–46.

15 Eliade (1958, pp. 73–77), too, sees a 'perfect continuity between puberty rites and rites for initiation into men's secret societies' (Eliade 1958, p. 73). But he relates this continuity to their supposed common origin: the experience of the sacred. 'What, in my view, is original and fundamental in the phenomenon of secret societies is the need for a fuller participation in the sacred, the desire to live as intensely as possible the sacrality peculiar to each of the two sexes' (Eliade 1958, p. 74). This is an unacceptable supposition. Since for Eliade the sacred is a universal explanatory reference, invoking it becomes a tautological explanation. Its psychologizing direction ('the desire to live, etc.') makes it even more inscrutable. This is not to deny the connection of the *Männerbund*-type initiation rite with supernatural powers or even with an 'extraordinary experience' of these powers. But to make this experience the universal ground for, e.g. the existence of particularly cruel practices is not a demonstrable or arguable position.

16 See West 2007, pp. 448–51. West also points to the Indo-European member of the predatory or marginal warrior bands, who often 'consciously adopted a wolfish identity, clothing themselves in wolfskins and uttering terrifying howls. The Norse berserks are sometimes called *úlfeðnar*, "wolf-skinned"… In Homeric epic, while there are no professional *berserkir*, a few of the greatest heroes are from time to time visited on the battlefield by a mad raging fury that makes them

invincible. This fury is called *lyssa*, which is a derivative of *lykos* "wolf"' (West 2007, p. 450). Compare Burkert 1983, pp. 84–93. 'The wolf metamorphosis, as described by Euanthes, can easily be seen as an initiation ritual, for stripping off one's clothes and swimming across a lake are clearly rites of passage… Arcadian warriors carried the skins of wolves and bears instead of shields' (Burkert 1983, pp. 90–91).

17 See Graf 1993, pp. 113–18. Compare Versnel 1990b, 48–49, pp. 53–58.

18 The controversy regarding the *Männerbund* is to some extent artificial. De Jong (1995, p. 7 n.9) writes: 'The theories connected with the *Männerbund* are almost completely disregarded among Iranianists, for the obvious reason that the textual basis for its existence… is slender, and that in many cases the reconstruction is based on ethnographic parallels in institutions from totally unrelated (contemporary pre-industrialized) cultures, which are then "discovered" in the Avesta'. The 'slenderness' of the 'textual basis' (in the Avesta?) is a matter of interpretation: what counts as 'evidence' or even what may be allowed to count as 'evidence', e.g. in the light of reasonable assumptions, comparative material, nature and quantity of the texts, and one's theoretical interest, among others. See Smith 1990, pp. 36–53. The second part of De Jong's assertion, however, is not correct. The 'basis' of the 'discovery' of the idea in the Avesta is in fact comparative Indo-European material (e.g. Dumézil 1971; Puhvel 1987). Whether there are problems with these comparative 'reconstructions' is another issue. Further, I know of only one instance where the comparison is made with 'institutions from totally unrelated cultures', and that is Lincoln 1981. But even here, Lincoln's thesis, right or wrong, is in no way dependent on the comparison with the 'East African Cycles'. After referring to a number of studies, De Jong goes further and complains that 'instead of being a rejected theorem, the concept is still widely applied'. It is hard to know what to make of this confident assertion since it cannot be due to the literature he adduces. I cannot see how Versnel 1990b, 'esp. 45–59' (De Jong 1995, p. 7 n.9) is a 'critical evaluation of the concept in the context of Graeco-Roman antiquity'. These pages are concerned with the relation of myth and ritual in the light of the concept of initiation. Versnel 1980 and especially Bremmer 1982 provide *supporting* evidence and arguments for the idea of an Indo-European tradition of initiatory-esoteric youth groups engaged in warlike activities. Boyce's thesis that the Proto-Indo-Iranians formed a 'classless society' is based on limited archaeological finds. Compare Mallory 1989, pp. 182–85 and Kuz'mina 2007, pp. 349–450. Besides, such a fundamental conclusion from archaeological data is, in general, methodologically unsound. In any case, the substance of the characterization, namely the absence of 'a warrior or knightly class', does not rule out the existence of initiation-based youth bands intermittently involved in, e.g. cattle-raiding. In fact, Boyce's remarks (1987, pp. 512–13) on the IIr. *marya* may be interpreted in support of an IIr. tradition of youth bands, since one would naturally like to know who the IIr. *marya* was. We have enough Indic and Iranian material to ask the question sensibly. Not enough attention has been paid to the 'unnatural' idea that in the Avesta the adolescent male (fifteen years old) represents the ideal human form. What may be the background to such an idea? That the *marya* used the club and the slingshot as weapons, and not the spear, or that he did (or could) not belong to the (non-existing) warrior 'class', does not preclude the idea of an initiatory tradition of youth bands. The association of the Maruts with a certain type of weapon in the literary record does not necessarily restrict the tradition behind the myth to Bronze Age, contra Boyce (1987, pp. 513–14). See Heesterman 1962. Myth is dynamic and adapts itself to social conditions and material culture. Shining metal eventually outshone the dull stone. Boyce's appeal to the tightness of familial or tribal structure in order to exclude 'separate initiation for "warrior" youths' (Boyce 1987, pp. 514–15) in the face of Indo-European (literary) traditions

(see Bremmer 1982, pp. 137–44) is not cogent. Whether the formation of cohort bands of adolescent males for a limited period (marked by a marginal and 'savage' existence) was 'originally' a part of tribal initiation is difficult to answer. 'That *sodalitates* could be formed within a *gens* has been shown, just as *sodalitates* could also be selected from a local community, but it is highly improbable that gentiles who observed a cult as a gens, for that reason called their fellow-*gentiles sodales*' (Versnel 1980, p. 112). Whatever the 'origins' of the masculine associations, 'comradery' and kinship are different principles of grouping. Initiation is the armature of the voluntary group. Finally, 'wolfish' existence was apparently part of the ethos or initiation process of the Indo-European youth band. The *mairiia-* is described in the Avesta as a 'two-legged wolf'. This must describe his ethos. See Boyce 1987, p. 515. 'The members of the *fían*, the *fénnid*, were regularly connected with wolfs and wild dogs, and this fits in well with the fact that among the Indo-Europeans strangers and boys who had to live away from civilised society were often called dog or wolf, or even dressed as such; this custom is found among the Irish, Germans, Greeks, Lithuanians, Hittites and Indo-Iranians' (Bremmer 1982, p. 141). Compare Gershenson 1991, pp. 98–126.

19 See Kerényi 1951, pp. 83–85.
20 See Sfemani Gasparro 1985, p. 15 n. 37 and Burkert 1987, p. 98.
21 See, for example, Eliade 1964.
22 See Burkert 1985, pp. 144–45 and Parker 2005, pp. 50–78.
23 Among Indo-European peoples 'many tribal and personal names are composed with the element "wolf" (Lycii, Lycurgus etc.), and it is hard to attribute this only to the bearers' having been criminals; it rather points to the time when they lived away from society during their initiation, or when they were performing heroic feats to prove their manhood' (Bremmer 1982, p. 141). See also West 2007, p. 451.
24 See Burkert 1985, p. 280.
25 See Vernant 1989, p. 46: 'their name evokes calcinated earth, the white ash or quicklime that Greeks call *titanos* without always clearly distinguishing it from gypsum, *gupsos*'.
26 See below for an analysis of this topic. The implied likening of the sacrificial victim to the murdered god, according to Parker (1983, p. 299), served the Orphic requirement of vegetarianism within the frame of the belief in metempsychosis. Animal sacrifice would then simply be murder and cannibalism. If so, the function of initiation is to introduce a particular way of life (*bios*) that carries the initiate's eschatological hopes. Initiation is thus subordinated to a comprehensive existential regime as in Pythagoreanism. Compare Burkert 1972, pp. 166ff.
27 Dionysiac enthusiasm is in one respect an extreme form of dedication whereby the follower loses his or her ordinary identity, through violent dance or intoxication with wine (see Bremmer 1984), and is supposed to become one with the raging god. See Detienne 1979, pp. 42–56 on Strabo's 'Namnetai women' who are, isolated on their own island, 'possessed by Dionysus and devoted to appeasing the god by rites'. Compare Henrichs 1981, pp. 157–60 and Kerényi 1951, p. 263. Maenadism could well have had ritual reality, even if this had the nature of an act getting out of hand. 'Dionysiac ritual by its very nature threatens – or is at least expected – to go off the rails now and then' (Versnel 1990a, p. 143). 'In the case of maenadism, myth and ritual are even more than usually inseparable: maenadic myth mirrors maenadic ritual, while ritual practice mollifies the mythical model. Unfortunately maenadic myth is infinitely better known than actual maenadic ritual' (Henrichs 1981, p. 143). In the doctrine, madness becomes an object of therapy, presided over by the god who suffered from madness himself and was cured by the ecstatic cult of the Phrygian Meter. See Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 146–47 and Burkert 1985, pp. 164–65. The god can be the ultimate guide to health thanks to his having experienced both the illness and recovery.

28 Clement (*Protrepticus* 2.15.2) reports a tradition according to which Zeus, having raped Demeter, tears off a ram's testicles and throws them to her, wanting to assuage her, 'as if he had castrated himself'.

29 Burkert (1985, p. 266) defines the logic of sacrifice in reference to the 'paradoxical fact that life continues through killing. This is where the rhythm of sacrifice comes from'. See also Burkert 1983, pp. 296–97.

30 'In the situation of killing, man feels guilty, and he has to overcome this reluctance by means of a complicated ritual pattern, which Meuli pertinently calls "comedy of innocence" ("Unschuldskomödie"), though we must not forget that this "comedy" has a very serious basis. At the center of the sacrifice stands neither the gift to the gods nor fellowship with them, but the killing of the animal, and man as its killer' (Burkert 1966, p. 106).

31 But see Leroi-Gourhan 1983, esp. pp. 25–36, pp. 66–78.

32 Vernant (1981, pp. 24–25) rejects the argument apropos Bouphonia: 'Si on remet sur pied le bœuf des Bouphonies, ce n'est pas pour assurer la permanence et la reproduction de l'espèce, mais pour effacer symboliquement sa mise à mort et pour fixer l'animal dans le nouveau statut qui est désormais le sien: non plus mangeur de céréales, à la façon des hommes, mais tirant l'araire pour faire germer le froment'.

33 Compare Kirk 1981, pp. 70–72.

34 Heesterman's distinction of ritual and sacrifice is illuminating for the Brāhmaṇic doctrine of sacrifice and convincing as the analytic frame for an evolutionary history of Vedic rituals. I am sceptical, however, about the possibilities of generalizing, e.g. the notion of sacrifice he proposes, that rather than resolving the tensions of man's social existence 'sacrifice raises tension to an abnormally high pitch' (Heesterman 1993, p. 26). And the ultimate horizon of man's mortal condition is the conflict of life and death. 'Sacrifice is not a safe outlet for pent-up aggression and competition that is redirected at a scapegoat victim… By offering an arena apart from normal life sacrifice calls forth and intensifies competition and conflict. It must do so in order to disentangle and play out the riddle of life and death in ever-recurring rounds of an ambiguous *qui perd, gagne*. And it can do so, because it is a game subject to its own rules, at one remove from everyday life' (Heesterman 1993, p. 44). That Heesterman means his 'sacrifice as contest' to be accepted as a general concept is clear from the fact that he applies it to the renewal type sacrifices: 'Even when sacrifice is seen to celebrate and renew the primordial cosmogonic event, this event is always the violent breakup of a previous monolithic and static order' (Heesterman 1993, p. 28). This rendition of, say, the Babylonian New Year *akītu* is wrong-headed. The point was not to express the philosophical idea that all order is transitory, etc. but rather to celebrate (and consolidate) the current 'legitimate' social and cosmic order. See Bottéro 2001, pp. 158–64; Smith 1978, pp. 72–74; Eliade 1985, pp. 51–92.

35 Compare Burkert 1966, p. 110: 'Instead of asking which incident could bring forth some special form of religion, we should ask why it succeeded and was preserved. The answer can be seen in its function in human society'.

36 See Mühlmann 1996.

37 Translation is from Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 170. See also Dickie 2001, p. 73.

38 See Kerényi 1951, pp. 86–88.

39 Kingsley (1994, p. 189) maintains that the 'relevance of the phenomenon of shamanism to the figure of Orpheus is beyond any reasonable doubt'.

40 Graf (1987, p. 101) writes: 'since Conon's account preserves genuine-looking ritual information, since the details in Pausanias fit in, at least in a general way, with what Conon says, since Bacchic societies are nowhere in Greece all-male groups but rather female associations, and since, finally, according to some scholars the poets of archaic Greece show features which make them come close to initiators, it

seems plausible to credit Orpheus with a genuine ritual background in such secret societies'.

41 See in particular Detienne 1999. For the *kavi*, see Gonda 1963 and Jamison 2007. Compare Bremmer 1983, pp. 29ff.

42 See Gonda 1975, pp. 277ff.

43 Compare Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 645ff. where Apollo says that Zeus has not made any 'incantations' (*epōdas*) for raising the dead.

44 See Burkert 1985, pp. 301–304 and compare Detienne 2002, pp. 152–64.

45 See Burkert 1982.

46 See Smith 1978, pp. 197–207.

47 See Burkert 1972, p. 165, pp. 166–92.

48 'As metempsychosis changed from ritual and myth to a doctrine with a claim to truth, so here, ritual bound to certain conditions changed into unconditional, permanent rules of life. In both cases Orphism, or the *Orphikòs bíos*, bears an embarrassing resemblance to Pythagoreanism. In Orphism, however, according to the testimony of Plato, the older practice of individual, magic rites did not die out; he makes the complaint against the Orphic *agýrtai kaì mánteis* that they promised individuals and whole cities expiation for their sins, at the cost of a little sacrifice and a pleasant dinner. One can make use of the *Orphiká* without being an Orphic, but he who follows Pythagoras becomes a *Pythagóreios*' (Burkert 1972, p. 191). Graf (in Graf and Johnston 2007, 163–64) leaves the question of the reality of 'Orphic communities' open.

49 Compare Burkert 1985, p. 65.

50 'In his *Krete* Euripides offers a chorus of Kretan *mystai* ("initiates") who have become *mystai* of Idaian Zeus and herdsmen of "night-wandering Zagreus, celebrating the feasts of raw flesh," so that, holding up torches for the mountain mother, they acquire the title of Bakchos… this and the rest of the context may suggest some fusion with Dionysos' (Gantz 1993, p. 118). Compare Vernant 1990, p. 102: 'the Greek Zeus is not only an Indo-European god; he has come into contact with other male deities, in particular a Cretan cave god with whom he merged. This Cretan god differs in many respects from the Indo-European Zeus: he is a child god, *Zeus kouros*; he is also a god who dies and is reborn. His tomb used to be pointed out in Crete'. See my discussion of the 'sacrificial double' below.

51 See Eliade 1964, pp. 110–45 and Hubert and Mauss 1964, pp. 50–52.

52 Compare Hubert and Mauss 1964, pp. 98–99: 'If he [i.e. the sacrificer] involved himself in the rite to the very end, he would find death, not life. The victim takes his place. It alone penetrates into the perilous domain of sacrifice, it dies there, and indeed it is there in order to die. The sacrifer [i.e. sacrificer] remains protected: the gods take the victim instead of him… There is no sacrifice into which some idea of redemption does not enter'.

53 See Parker 2005, pp. 275–83.

54 See Clinton 2005. Iphigeneia, writes Henrichs (1981, pp. 207–208), 'herself a virgin like Artemis and occasionally Artemis' duplicate in cult, plays an equally ambiguous role: a would-be victim of human sacrifice, she slaughters human victims among the Taurians in another… Artemis personifies the natural supply of young life and the dangers which threaten its survival. The myth of Iphigeneia, and the ritual mechanism reflected in it, articulate this ambiguity, and create the impression of catastrophe survived. Animal substitution was the chief ritual means by which the Greeks created this cultic illusion of death without actual loss of human life, an illusion which reinforced man's most vital instinct, that of survival'. The 'ritual mechanism' settles 'a divine claim to a human life' 'without actual loss of human life' (Henrichs 1981, p. 205). But why are the gods owed in *human* life, not in the context of a mortal crisis to the survival of community as such? The Arcadian or the Attic version of the Iphigeneia myth is transparently initiatory.

See Henrichs 1981, pp. 198–204. Moreover, in this perspective, a crucial feature of the myth remains obscure. 'I must admit,' says Henrichs (1981, p. 238), 'that I fail to understand the Greek mind when it comes to her [Iphigeneia's] paradoxical role as both sacrificial victim and sacrificer'. See also Parker 2005, p. 239: 'the goddess sought or seemed to seek the life of a virgin in exchange for that of the animal; but… a further animal was substituted for the girl. The little bears [i.e. the girls consecrated to Artemis for a period and who served at her temples in Brauron and Mounichia] thus "imitate" the original or, in "Iphigeneia", the substituted animal; but they also surely, in a different sense, imitate the original girl whose life was owed to the goddess'.

55 Versnel (1993, pp. 79–88) suggests that what lies at the background of the two myth-and-ritual complexes of reversal festivals (i.e. New Year rites) and initiation is the traumatic experience of critical transitions: 'the most elementary and primordial scheme of (originally bio-sociological) functions has been conserved and transformed, in ritualized and mythicized form, at precisely those points where human society experiences primal crisis most intensely. Apart from incidental calamities like epidemics, wars, earthquakes and floods, these are precisely the critical and painful moments of transition that are experienced nowhere more keenly than during initiatory periods and at the turning points of the agricultural or social year' (Versnel 1993, pp. 83–84). Death has to be added to the list of critical transitions.

56 'There is a curious ambivalence in *thyesthai* which is already Indo-European: the same expression means "to sacrifice on one's own behalf" and "to be sacrificed". Sacrificer and victim are so correlated as to be nearly identified' (Burkert 1966, p. 112). Compare Vernant 2006, pp. 321–32. See also Versnel 1981. For Versnel, the general principle of sacrifice is 'compensation': the 'compulsory feeling' (Versnel 1981, p. 185) that something must be given up as ransom for the life one has and wants continued or for the life one wants to have and feels can purchase it (Versnel 1981, pp. 163ff.). When the sheer survival of the community is under threat, it feels it has to pay the highest price, namely in human life, according to the logic of *unus pro omnibus*. Be it '*debt* or *guilt*, man always *pays*' (Versnel 1981, p. 177). But the dear purchase may be avoided by animal substitution: he 'may give up an animal or something valuable in order to buy salvation' (Versnel 1981, p. 167). In myth, normally the human victim does not die, but is saved by a substitution, or does not die as a human, having taken animal form (e.g. Kallisto). However, death in initiation myths and rituals does not have the sense of destruction but that of a passage. The initiate of the mysteries expected to die a hero's death, i.e. to a blessed afterlife. The animal victim here is not only the substitute for the donor.

57 See Burkert 1987, pp. 21–22.

58 See Burkert 1985, pp. 287–88; Sourvinou-Inwood 2003; Parker 2005, pp. 352ff.

59 In Roman religious lore the *consecratio* of a human (the *sacer*) is always to the gods of the underworld, whatever the means of death, e.g. enemy troops. The same is true of self-sacrifice in an act of *devotio*, such as throwing oneself from the rocks into the sea, which warranted 'heroization'. See Versnel 1981, pp. 148–58.

60 According to Sourvinou-Inwood (2003, p. 33), 'the Telesterion is the mysteric correlative of the holy meadows', where the *psychē* aspires to go in the afterlife.

61 In Homer and other early Greek sources the funeral ceremony is understood as the rite of passage for the dead into an afterlife. See Bremmer 1983, p. 73, p. 88.

62 '*Hagnon* are rites and festivals, temple, *temenos* and sacred grove, but also fire, light, and especially the inviolate state required when dealing with the gods, the absence of sexuality, blood, and death; this is called *hagneia*'. The '*hagnai theai* as such are Demeter and Persephone', although in myth and ritual they are in characteristic contact with death and sexuality (Burkert 1985, p. 271). The *hagnai theai* cannot be sullied.

63 Compare Versnel 1981, pp. 156–63, on the Roman notion of *sacer*.

64 See Lévi 1898, pp. 90–100.
65 The three 'funeral hymns' (RV 10.14–16) are among the Ṛgvedic texts that are
    closer than the 'older' books of the Ṛgveda in language and religious ideas to
    the Atharvaveda, the Brāhmaṇas. Atharvavedic, just as the later Classical and
    Epic Sanskrit, could have derived, according to Parpola (2002, pp. 60–66), from
    the 'archaic Old Indo-Aryan dialect encountered by the immigrating Pūru and
    Bharata tribes in the Panjab' from whose midst comes the bulk of the 'older' texts
    of the Ṛgveda. 'Linguistically the 10th book provides the clearest evidence of the
    dialect mixing that took place after the Pūru-Bharata tribes had settled in the
    Panjab and had been subjected to the substratum influence of the language of
    its previous inhabitants' (Parpola 2002, p. 61), i.e. apparently the earliest Indo-
    Aryan immigrants, who settled in the Panjab even before the first wave of Ṛgvedic
    Indo-Aryans, the Yadu-Turvaśa tribes. Parpola (2002, pp. 54–61) connects the
    Kāṇva hymns, mostly from book 8, with the latter. The description of the heavenly
    abode of the dead as 'pasture' (*gavyūti-*) is to be compared with Y 33.3 *yə̄ aṣ̌āunē
    vahištō… huuō aṣ̌ahiiā aŋhaȋ vaŋhə̄uščā vāstrē manaŋhō* 'Who is very good to the
    aṣ̌avan… he will be in the pasture of *aṣ̌a* and *vohu manah*'.
66 See Lévi 1898, pp. 102–103: 'Si le pact des dieux avec la mort interdit au corps
    humain l'accès du monde céleste, les promesses du sacrifice risquent de demeurer
    illusoires… Mais la dîkṣâ intervient. La dîkṣâ est un ensemble de cérémonies
    préliminaires qui sert à déifier la créature humaine', etc. Compare Versnel 1981,
    pp. 178–79.
67 See Hoffmann 1976; Kellens 2007, pp. 23–38; Malamoud 2002, pp. 113–14.
68 See Lincoln 1981, pp. 227ff. for comparative material from Celtic, Germanic and
    possibly Greek myths and legends. The PIE figure *Yemo must have been, accord-
    ing to Lincoln (1981, pp. 239ff.), *both* the first mortal and the king of the dead,
    whose death was sacrificial. Compare Malamoud 2002, p. 61.
69 See Lincoln 1981, p. 225; Malamoud 2002, pp. 20–33; Kellens and Swennen 2005.
70 Saraṇyū is also the mother of the Aśvins, the deities of death and salvation, which
    'save people by helping them make the dangerous, liminal passage' (Parpola 2004–
    2005, p. 36) to the beyond.
71 See Oldenberg 2004, p. 138.
72 Puhvel (1975) is of the same opinion.
73 The victim is the 'vehicle' of the votive formula to the gods. See Hubert and Mauss
    1964, p. 66 n.385. The Getae (Herodotus, *Histories* 4.94) dispatched a 'messenger'
    to Zalmoxis once every five years to bear their demands to the god.
74 Kuiper (1964, pp. 107ff.) argues that the underworld enclosure of Yama and
    Varuṇa, e.g. *harmyá-*, revolves to become the celestial regions at night, where also
    the sun retires (RV 7.88) and the dead dwell. In RV 10.14.1 Yama's way to the realm
    of the dead takes him to the 'great lofty streams' (*pravato mahīr*); presumably the
    gate to the underworld is located on a mountain top. Iranian Yima offers sacrifice
    to the goddess Anāhitā on the high peak of Mount Harā, Hukairiia (Yt 5.25),
    whence heavenly waters stream into the ocean that circles the earth (Yt 5.3).
75 See Parpola 2002, pp. 61–62; compare Caillat 1997 and Witzel 1997.
76 See Lévi 1898, pp. 102–107 for references from the Brāhmaṇas. Compare Eliade
    1958, pp. 53–57. Consecration of the sacrificer is also understood (the Atharvaveda
    XI 5.6) as a return to the fetal status. The completion of the procedure is like a
    'new birth'. According to the *Maitrayani Saṃhita* III 6.1, the initiate leaves the
    world and 'is born into the world of the Gods'.
77 See Renou 1968.
78 See Heesterman 1993, pp. 171–72.
79 See Gonda 1975, pp. 328–29.
80 See Oldenberg 2004, p. 44.
81 See Malamoud 2002, pp. 32–33.

82 Compare Vernant's observation on the 'sentiment of debt' in Greek and Vedic religions: 'Notre vie est "dépendante". Elle finira. Nous n'en sommes pas maîtres. Si nous la possédons, avec tous les biens qu'elle suppose, c'est qu'elle nous a été donnée, ou mieux, concédée. En ce sens, naître, c'est déjà contracter une dette' (in Rudhardt and Reverdin 1981, p. 192).

83 The victim imparts its consecration to the sacrificer. This is why the latter touches, be it with a utensil, the former. See Hubert and Mauss 1964, pp. 52–66.

84 See Malamoud 2002, pp. 114–25.

85 'Human sacrifice', writes Burkert (1966, p. 111), 'is a possibility which, as a horrible threat, stands behind every sacrifice'.

86 See Malamoud 2002, pp. 118–19. The human victim, *puruṣa*, before becoming, in the later Vedism, identified with Prajāpati, the god who creates the cosmos from his own substance, is the double of the sacrificer, who follows Yama, etc. Compare Malamoud 2002, p. 118.

87 According to the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sutra* III.3.1, the head of the victim must be turned towards the west, the direction that the sun takes, that the dead follow, and by which the gods ascended to heaven. Compare Burkert 1985, p. 152: 'Behind maiden initiation, maiden sacrifice appears as a still deeper level. And just as Apollo is mirrored in Achilles, so Artemis is mirrored in Iphigeneia; Iphigeneia herself becomes a goddess, a second Artemis. In this way the very figure of the Virgin grows out of the sacrifice'. See also Burkert 1985, p. 64.

88 Compare Kellens and Swennen 2005.

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13 Eschatology

The magi's lore is likened to mystic initiation in Greek literature from the end of the sixth century onwards. We know that Xanthus had written on the magi, referred to as *Magica* in Clement of Alexandria, which was perhaps a part of his history of Lydia, *Lydiaca*.[1] Xanthus apparently knew of the magi's millenarian scheme of history. The interest the Lydian Xanthus showed in the magi is understandable. More generally, one may assume a similar interest among the Greeks in Asia Minor from the second half of the sixth century BC onward. Under Persian domination, the opportunity to observe the magi and a vital interest in doing so formed the basis of the Ionians' curiosity about the magi's practices. It is true that, as has often been asserted, genuine ethnographic curiosity was limited among the Greeks and, generally speaking, cannot be assumed to underlie their 'description' of other cultures. But wrong conclusions have been drawn from this truism. It is simply inconsistent to allow for the Persian origins of Greek biographical writing in the fifth century BC, as Momigliano does,[2] admit the Greek knowledge of Iranian religious ideas such as cosmological dualism and eschatology (see below),[3] and acknowledge Iranian dualistic ideas behind Plato's images of the fate of the soul and his notion of eternal cosmological struggle in the *Laws* 896a, 906a, etc., but dismiss the classical Greek assimilation of the magi's ritual lore to the mysteries as based in hostility and incomprehension.

The similarities between the mysteries and the magi's rite, as much as we may gather from Greek testimonies, went beyond their common nocturnal nature.[4] I have tried to show that the mysteries had definite characteristics for the Greeks. Already Heraclitus tells us that, despite their claim, the mysteries of Dionysus are deceitful in the eschatological promise they make: Dionysus, the supposed god who 'releases' is no other than Hades, the god of death. Characteristically, Heraclitus allows and in fact presses the relation between initiation to the mysteries and death, but reverses the received sense. The association of the mysteries with a blessed afterlife is a constant theme of the *hieroi logoi*.[5] In the *Republic*, we saw, Plato says that among the purification rites offered by the seers and mendicant holy men, the *orpheotelestai*, there were those that ensured the blissful existence of the initiate in the underworld. This 'practical' aspect of the *teletai* is implied in the obligation of secrecy

attached to the initiation, not just in respect of the actual initiation process but also to some extent with regard to the *logoi*, i.e. myths and doctrines, which included, at least in some cases, instructions about the underworld.[6] What is considered useless hardly incites possessiveness. One way or another, the gods of the mysteries had a special affinity with the dead and determined the fate of the *psychē* in the underworld. They could 'release' the soul, or intercede on its behalf with the ruler of the dead. The climax of the mysteries of Demeter was the 'appearance' of Kore for the initiate and, in the myth, the Mother Goddess (*Hymn to Demeter* 380ff.), who had to 'be consoled'. Eleusinian Demeter was a chthonic goddess. 'The Athenians called the dead *Demetreioi* and sowed corn on graves' (Burkert 1985, p. 161). If the identification of the initiate's sacrificial double with Kore is right, the Mother Goddess had to be appeased, on which the fate of the soul depended just as much as the condition of life on earth. Demeter is not just the bringer of grain but also the mysteries with their promise of a blissful existence beyond death: 'Blessed is he of men on earth who has beheld them, whereas he that is uninitiated in the rites, or he that has had no part in them, never enjoys a similar lot down in the musty dark when he is dead' (*Hymn to Demeter* 480ff.). Perhaps even in the mysteries of Demeter, initiation had an expiatory dimension. Sacrificial death was not just the condition for the *psychē* attaining a blissful state, but also, insofar as it was inflicted on the maiden, a crime that required justification.[7] Here again, the god who dies is also the god who pronounces judgement on the dead.

The *synthema* expressing the preparations for initiation to the mysteries of Eleusis contained the declaration: 'I fasted, I drank the *kykeon*', a barley soup. The cleansing of the body from impurities is the condition of access to the sacred. In effect, the initiate declares that he is 'consecrated' in the exact sense that a sacrificial victim is.[8] But the sacrificial death is also understood to be a divinization. The myth says that while searching for her daughter, Demeter went to the court of Celeus, the Eleusinian king, disguised as a nurse, and took charge of the king's sons. Every night she placed Demophon, one of the sons, in the hearth's fire in order to make him immortal. One night, the mother discovered the child in the hearth and screamed in horror. The goddess had to abandon the project. Instead, she taught Triptolemus the art of agriculture and the mysteries.[9] 'Unlike the vitality of the gods, which is pure of all negative elements, theirs is precarious, unstable, fleeting, and doomed to death from the outset. The very term *bios*, which Hesiod employs to indicate the ear of grain men use as their particular food, underscores a relationship between grains and the vitality peculiar to men, a relationship so intimate that we must speak of consubstantiality. The fabric of human life is cut from the same material that forms the food that sustains it. It is "because they do not eat bread" that the gods are not mortals. Not knowing wheat, fed on ambrosia, they have no blood' (Vernant 1989, pp. 36–37). If the connection between the 'gifts' of the grain and the mysteries is not fortuitous but is meant to define the essence of human life, the concern with the postmortem condition

in the mysteries must be basic. The human 'victim' is supposed to be made immortal by fire, just as Heracles 'purified' himself on the pyre of Mount Oeta and turned into a god, and Empedocles sought apotheosis by throwing himself into Etna.[10] Death by fire is the ultimate purification, making possible a god-like existence.[11] Both the rite and the myth point to the same thing: initiation to the mysteries is sacrificial death and thereby 'purification'.[12]

This general, perhaps composite, picture must be close to what Greek observers had in mind when they wrote on the mysteries. We have, on the other hand, the consistent association of the magi, or religious views safely attributable to them, with the so-called 'charismatic seers and initiators' such as Orpheus, Empedocles, Pythagoras and others, some of whose ranks were certainly involved in the production of Orphic literature. The Platonic image of the postmortem *ascent* of the soul to heaven shows the influence of the Iranian view of the matter, probably by way of Pythagorean ideas. The ground for this influence must have been laid in the parallel eschatological ideologies behind the mystery cults and the magi's nocturnal rite. We have accurate sketches of the magi's eschatological doctrine in the extant Greek literature. It is unlikely that the magi established themselves in Mesopotamia and Anatolia prior to the mid sixth century BC.[13] Heraclitus' magi could not have been yet influenced by Mesopotamian astral religion.[14] Since the magi did not have any dogma or doctrinal orthodoxy,[15] their ritual traditions would have presumably endured through the changes in their theological or cosmological views. Cult forms and elements are resilient and assume new meanings if need be, unless destroyed by zealots familiar from the history of Christianity and Islam. Nor could there have been a question of a systematic confusion on the part of Greek observers between the Chaldean and the magi – not even much later (cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.6). Vehement post-Hellenistic protests against traditions that connected Greek institutions with non-Greek cultures show the liveliness of the topic.[16] I have tried to show that the best way to account for the association of the magi's nocturnal rite with the mysteries is to view them within their common eschatological horizon. The literate magician who insisted on the connection of his profession with the mysteries called himself after the *magos*. It is certainly noteworthy that in archaic and republican Rome one finds no figure comparable to 'the itinerant specialist who practices divination, initiation, healing, and magic' (Graf 1997, p. 49). This points to the mystic roots of the magician and, along with other converging evidence, makes the etymology of 'magic' significant. For classical Greeks, the *mageia* claims knowledge of the invisible and involves initiation, both bearing on the fate of the soul. Secrecy, direct contact with the divine and ritual initiation – these are the three features that Graf believes are common to the mysteries and 'magic'.[17]

Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* 1.8) conveys two observations that are important. The first remark, made by Aristotle in a book called *Magicus* and by Dinon in his *History*, is that the magi were 'wholly unacquainted' with 'the art of magic (*tēn goētikēn mageian*)'. The work attributed to Aristotle is in fact a dialogue

by an unknown Hellenistic writer.[18] The clarification shows that competent observers knew that, despite outward similarities between the practices of the magus and the 'magician', which were important enough to warrant derivation of the latter's name from the former, the magus' rites pursued different aims or at least were not limited to those of the magician. In the *First Alcibiades* 122a, the '*mageia* of Zoroaster' is defined as *theon therapeia* 'the worship of the gods'.[19] Both are significant: the possibility of confusion in the mind of the superficial observer between the magi's and the magician's rites *and* the distinction drawn between them.[20] The similarities, as I have argued above, must have been those that were also shared by the mysteries: initiation, claims of personal contact (and, especially, a covenant) with a powerful god, nocturnal celebration, immolation of a victim. But on what grounds could the distinction be made? The magi were priests: they worshipped the gods.[21] Their religious status was in part based on the claim, already found in Herodotus, that the gods listened only to their words. They mediated between men and the gods, making the former's requests heard by the latter. The belief in the exclusive efficacy of their incantation is also found in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.6. The similarities mentioned above must have been framed by the magi's claim of the efficacy of their 'secret rites'.[22] One can imagine that the *mageia* were thought to be effective in more than one domain. But a specific theme defined the horizon of the magi's rite and differentiated it from magic. The second observation found in Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* 1.9) that is of interest to us is from the pen of the fourth-century BC historian Theopompus, who was apparently well informed about the religious views of the magi,[23] and that of the philosopher of the same century, Eudemus of Rhodes, a student of Aristotle: 'according to the magi men will live in a future life and be immortal, and that the world will endure through their invocations'. Life in that future world will be permanent thanks to the incantation of the magi. The idea of a general resurrection in body of the dead at the end of times and an eternal life thereafter is an authentic Avestan conception (cf. Yt. 19.19, 23, 89–90).

The testimony is remarkable since the idea is completely alien to the classical Greek mind. A more detailed picture of the eschatological doctrine is found in the Hellenistic *Oracle of Hystaspes*.[24] The 'world' of the second part of the observation from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.9, although difficult to interpret,[25] cannot mean the current world, both because this would reframe the focus without any indication, breaking the apparent continuity of the thought, and because the permanence of the current world is not a Zoroastrian idea. On the other hand, however, we do not find any Iranian evidence for the idea that the resurrected world (in Pahlavi, *tan ī pasēn*) will endure 'without decay, living forever', etc. thanks to the magi's incantations. But in Yašt 19.94 there is the following enigmatic statement about the power of Saošyant's gaze: 'he will behold with the eyes of efficacy (*xratōuš*)… he will look at the whole corporeal existence with the eyes of invigoration (*ižaiiå*), and will make indestructible the entire corporeal world with (his) look'.[26] The two words in the genitive are ritual terms, or at least have a regular ritual usage.[27] The idea that at the end

of time Saošyant will render the resurrected creatures immortal (and sometimes even resurrect them) by means of a rite is commonplace in the Pahlavi literature.[28] In the Iranian *Bundahišn* 34.23 it is said[29]: *yazišn ī pad rist-wirāyīh Sōšyans abāg ayārān kunēd. ud gāw ī Hadayōš pad ān yazišn kušend ud pih ī ān gāw ud hōm ī spēd anōš wirāyēnd ud ō harwisp mardōm dahēnd ud harwisp mardōm a-hōš bawēnd tā hamē(w)-ud-hamē(w)-rawišnīh* 'Saošyant, along with his colleagues, performs a rite in order to resurrect the dead. They sacrifice the cow Hadayōš for the rite, and from the fat of the cow and the white Hōm they prepare Anōš (a drink) and give to all the people, and everyone will become immortal for ever and ever'. The Pahlavi evidence encourages an interpretation of the Yašt 19.94 passage along the same lines, already suggested by the occurrence of the two terms with ritual usage. If so, the second part of Theopompus' and Eudemus' observations reported in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.9 must mean: 'and the world will become permanent by means of their incantations'. Thus we have two pre-Hellenistic Greek reports of the magi's claim that their rite has a specifically eschatological efficacy: at the end of time, their incantation will make the resurrected and purified world immortal. Based on these and the assimilation of the magi's ritual lore to the mysteries beginning from the end of the sixth century BC, it is possible to conclude that the classical Greek observer knew of a secret rite performed by the magi that had an eschatological function similar to that of the mysteries.[30] It had the form of initiation, involving sacrifice, efficacious formulae and probably some form of ritual abandon, taking place at night and addressed to deities thought to have disposition over the passage of the soul to the beyond. They claimed that it was based on a sacred knowledge that they acquired directly from the gods. Just like the 'divine man', the magus had access to the world beyond.

This is the picture that emerges from the ancient testimonies, in part based on the reasonable assumption, as I have tried to show, that the Greek assimilation of the magi's nocturnal rite to the mysteries was motivated by significant similarities. Whoever knows Heraclitus' way of dealing with received ideas will agree that his fragments on the mysteries are evidence for the approach taken here. One cannot ignore the collocation of the *magoi* with the adepts of the mysteries in Heraclitus or the eschatological frame ('Dionysus is Hades') of his condemnation of them all as 'unholy practices'. I argued that it is not possible to dismiss the assimilation on the grounds that Heraclitus' *magoi* do not have any connection with Zoroastrianism and the Persian priesthood. Egypt became (e.g. in Herodotus *Histories* 2.123 and 171) the provenance of the mysteries because the Greeks saw in the nocturnal worship of Osiris and Isis, in the lamentations that accompanied it, and most of all, in the myth thought to be behind the rite, a mystery cult. In Herodotus' *interpretatio Graeca* Osiris and Isis are Dionysus and Demeter. The appropriation thus had an authentic basis.[31] Herodotus' Greek informants (Herodotus, *Histories* 4.94–95) associated the figure of Zalmoxis with Pythagoras in the context of Orphic and mystic themes.[32] The confusion over the double personality of Zalmoxis, both the shamanistic traveller to the underworld,[33] a *goēs*, and the god who presides

over the fate of the soul after death, is understandable in the light of the figure of Yama. The reported rite of dispatching a 'messenger' to the god Zalmoxis shows that, for the Getae, the soul continues to exist beyond death. There may have been a special rite of initiation dedicated to Zalmoxis that ensured the soul's successful passage to the underworld. The idea of immortality of the soul and the belief in a Yama-type god that decides its fate after death seem to have been the basis of associating Zalmoxis with Pythagoras. Neither in the cult of Osiris nor in the figure of Zalmoxis is the comparison with a Greek phenomenon arbitrary. Why should one assume that the likening of the magi's nocturnal rite to the mysteries had no basis in reality? Direct and indirect evidence shows that the Greeks were familiar with genuine Iranian eschatological lore.

Notes

1 See Kingsley 1995b, pp. 183–85.
2 See Kingsley 1995b, pp. 186ff. Xanthus wrote on Empedocles.
3 Compare Vasunia 2007, p. 242.
4 Of course, I am not suggesting that there was only one type of ritual offered by the magi or that the magi formed a church with doctrinal uniformity. The rites they performed at night struck the Greeks, who perceived behind them an ideology similar to that of the mysteries. As I argued, nocturnal rites were anomalous among Indo-European peoples.
5 See Henrichs 2003; Graf and Johnston 2007, pp. 75–84.
6 See Graf and Johnston 2007, p. 182: 'eschatologically-oriented *hieroi logoi* (including those called *Katabasis* and *The Lyre*), probably included specific instructions about where to go and what to do in the Underworld – some of which we now find embedded in some of our [gold] tablets'.
7 Compare Burkert 1983, pp. 136–43 on the first-fruit festival of Bouphonia.
8 Each of the participants at a typical Greek sacrifice took a handful of barley groats from the sacrificial basket and, following the sacrificer's invocations, threw them onto the altar and the animal as part of the consecration. According to Pausanias (*Periegesis* 1.38.6), the same procedure of 'anointing' with barley was followed for the sacrifice at Eleusis. Compare Burkert 1966, pp. 107–108: 'all participants throw the *oulai* [barley groats] "forward" at the victim and the altar. Throwing together at a common object is the primeval gesture of aggression'.
9 See Kerényi 1951, pp. 241–45. Was the goddess making the child immortal in life, i.e. removing death as the condition of immortality? She is forced to give up the ambition, and *instead* gives mortals the grain and the mysteries. These gifts fundamentally define the human condition: a creature beset by suffering and death in search of a blissful immortal existence.
10 See Kingsley 1995a, pp. 278–88.
11 Sacrificial fire, one of the manifestations of Agni, mediates between the gods and mortals in the R̥gveda (e.g. 1.26.9), and with Soma in the source of inspiration for the poet. See Oldenberg 2004, pp. 61–74. In Greek sacrifice, fire purifies the portion offered to the gods and thus makes it fit, and connects earth to heaven. The funerary pyre (*Iliad* 23.71, 75–76) makes the perishable body disappear and thus allows the *psychē* of the dead to make the passage to the invisible world. See Detienne 1963, pp. 98ff.
12 Iconography attests to the idea of initiation as rebirth to a new state. One of the scenes from the initiation frieze shows the veiled initiand sitting on a stool covered with a fleece. See Burkert 1987. The fetal posture and darkness signify gestation.

Also, as we say, the initiate is 'raised from the purification' by the purifier and asked to say 'I have escaped the bad, I have found the better' (Demosthenes, *Discourses* 18.259–60).

13 See West 1971, pp. 240–42.

14 For the later period, Beck (1991, pp. 524–25) is convincing in his argument that the astrological lore found in the Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha is a common phenomenon of Hellenistic wisdom and cannot be used to link the corpora to the Hellenized magi (so-called Magusaeans) as Bidez and Cumont maintain.

15 See Bidez and Cumont 1973, pp. 73–78.

16 Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* 1.2–5) attacks authors who make the magi, Egyptian priests and Gymnosophists the source of the (presumably Greek) 'achievements', among which he mentions 'philosophy'. But the figures he mentions to prove that philosophy originated in Greece are Orphic poet-heroes Musaeus and Linus. The former is said to be the ancestor of the Eleusinian hierophants, the Eumolpidae, or related to them in any case, by way of his eponymous father Eumolpus, and to have composed a theogony. Diogenes' dismissal of Orpheus as a possible source for Greek philosophy, about 'whose antiquity there can be no doubt' and who thus may be suspected, shows what kind of 'philosophy' he has in mind. Incidentally, Plutarch (*De exilio* 607b) and Pausanias (*Periegesis* 1.38.3) thought that Eumolpus was from Thrace.

17 See Graf 1997, pp. 99–117.

18 See Graf 1997, p. 29.

19 The other element of the *mageia* is 'the royal things' (*ta basilika*). Compare Papatheophanes 1985.

20 Writing in the first century BC, Cicero had to clarify that the magi were the official priests of Persia, a body of 'wise men and scholars among the Persians' (Cicero, *De Divinatione* I 46.91), and had nothing to do with 'magic', which he seems to equate more or less with the binding spell. They interpreted dreams and initiated the kings into their art. See Graf 1997, pp. 58–59. This picture of the Persian priest goes back to Herodotus, and is found in Plato too, who also mentions in *Republic* 572e the magi's role in the succession story of Darius.

21 See Dio Chrysostom (*Oratio* 36.41): the Persians call 'magi (*magous*)' those 'who know how to cultivate the divine power, not like the Greeks, who in their ignorance use the term to denote wizards (*goētas*)'.

22 Dio Chrysostom (*Discourses* 36.39–60), the orator and philosopher of the first century, recounts the content of two hymns that he says were recited by the magi in their 'secret rites' (39: *en aporrētois teletais*, 56: *en arrētois teletais*). I do not think that these two hymns necessarily belong to the mysteries of Mithras, as Bidez and Cumont (1973, vol. 1, p. 98) maintain. They are certainly syncretistic, perhaps fundamentally Stoic. The Zoroaster of the first hymn (*Discourses* 36.40–41) fully conforms to the Greek type of the charismatic *thaumaturge*. See Beck 1991, pp. 539–48.

23 See De Jong 1997, pp. 222–25; Horky 2009, pp. 79–93; and my discussion of Plutarch, *De Iside* 46–7 in Chapter 7.

24 See Boyce and Grenet 1991, pp. 376–81. The description of the last events and the final judgement is undoubtedly authentic and ancient, allowances made for the expected differences in presentation of the theme due to the context. The Sibylline doctrine of the wickedness of the final age, however, as Boyce and Grenet (1991, pp. 380–87) argue, is Hellenistic. Prophecies of coming doom were 'the hallmark of the Sibylline oracles themselves' (Boyce and Grenet 1991, p. 381), whether Persian, Hebrew or Babylonian.

25 See De Jong 1997, p. 225.

26 Compare Humbach and Ichaporia 1998, p. 168.

27 For *ižā-* see Narten 1986, p. 290 n.12; Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 224; Hintze 2007, pp. 211–14.

28 See Molé 1963, pp. 86–100 for some references.

29 See Pakzad 2005, p. 384.

30 The interesting text of the third-century philosopher Porphyry's *De antro nympharum* 5–6 (in Bidez and Cumont 1973, vol. 2, p. 29) makes Zoroaster the founder of the mysteries of Mithra. Porphyry gives a Neoplatonic interpretation of the mysteries: the initiation, which takes place in a cave, signifies the descent of the soul to the sublunary regions, and its return. This text has been the object of much controversy in Mithraic studies. Turcan (1975) and Merkelbach (1984, pp. 301ff.) argue that the picture given by Porphyry is thoroughly Neoplatonist and hence unreliable as a description of the doctrine behind Mithras mysteries. Still, there is no reason to suppose simple fabrication on Porphyry's part. The process of initiation is intimately related to the career of the soul. I argued above that the postmortem condition of the *psychē* was the main concern of mystic initiation, which duly enacts the fate of the *psychē*. Porphyry interprets *this* in Neoplatonic terms. Whether the mysteries of Mithras actually conformed to the supposed doctrine is perhaps impossible to say. Compare Burkert 1987, p. 27. Nonetheless, seen in the perspective suggested here, Porphyry's text need not be taken as baseless. The mysteries apparently had a certain general sense for Porphyry, and the cult of Mithras, insofar as it was a mystery cult, had to conform to that sense. The mysteries of Mithras in any event had an eschatological dimension. See Turcan 1981. For Porphyry, Zoroaster is significantly a founder of the mysteries.

31 Beck's remark (1991, p. 508) that the 'most powerful factor that militated against the transmission of authentic data… was the reluctance of the Greeks themselves to listen to the original voices of those alien cultures' is too general a statement to have a chance of reflecting the realities of individual cases. If one were to judge the case of the Greek comparison of the magi's ritual lore with the mysteries, one would do well to ask why Zoroaster was seen behind Plato's Er, whose visit to the underworld was recounted by 'Zoroaster' himself in the Hellenistic *On Nature*. This tradition goes back to the third century BC. See Beck 1991, pp. 528–39. Even Porphyry, 'one of antiquity's few literary sceptics' (Beck 1991, p. 529), a pupil of Plotinus, the 'one honorable exception' in the universal credulity of the Imperial period vis-à-vis Zoroastrian pseudepigrapha (Beck 1991, p. 511), has Pythagoras '"listen to the discourse (sc. of Zaratos = Zoroaster) about nature (*ton peri physeōs logon*)", a good indication that he both knew *On Nature* and… accepted it as genuinely Zoroaster's' (Beck 1991, p. 529). Beck finds this acceptance surprising. But there is nothing surprising in it. In *On the Cave of the Nymphs* 6, Porphyry makes Zoroaster the founder of the mysteries of Mithras, in which the 'Persian mystagogues initiate their candidate by explaining to him the downward journey of souls and their subsequent return, and they call the place where this occurs a "cave"' (translation from Lamberton 1983, p. 25). Plato's cave metaphor in the *Republic*, according to Porphyry (*De antro Nympharum* 7–8), comes from the mysteries.

32 See Burkert 1972, pp. 155–65. Pythagoras, according to Burkert (1972, p. 165), 'is the hierophant of Great Mother mysteries with an Anatolian stamp, and has a new doctrine, probably influenced by Indo-Iranian sources, of immortality and of the triumph over death through successive rebirths'.

33 Compare Versnel 1993, p. 72 n.147.

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Conclusion

The convergence between the Greek testimonies about the magi's lore and what can be learned from the Gāthās about the cult of the *daēvas* shows that eschatology was a characteristic feature of Iranian religious thought. The concern with the fate of the soul among the Greeks during the classical period and even before is beyond doubt. New institutions and notions evolved or were adopted and adapted to address this concern; these new social forms of experience in turn shaped eschatological expectations and images of the afterlife. The 'individualism of the *Mysteries*', writes Parker (2005, pp. 342–43), 'reflects their character as a preparation for another individual experience, death'. Even philosophy has been placed in the perspective of the concern with one's postmortem fate.[1] A number of Hellenists, as we saw, have drawn attention to the Orphic background of Plato's accounts of the afterlife, especially the *Phaedo* myth (107c–115a) and the myth of Er (*Republic* 614a–621d). Plato (*Phaedrus* 246a–249d) probably adopted the image of the winged soul ascending to the 'pure' regions beyond the heavens from Iranian thought, perhaps by way of Pythagorean traditions.[2] In the background of this reception stood the mysteries: the *orpheotelestai* were (or pretended to be) fundamentally concerned with the state of the *psychē* after death. Initiation to the mysteries was meant, among other things, to ensure a blissful afterlife. But why should the institution that was especially charged with handling the individualistic concern with one's afterlife have an esoteric-initiatory structure? The initiatory form of the mysteries may be related to initiation-based men's associations dating back to Indo-European times. In my mind, the presence of cruel and eccentric conduct in some reports about mystic rituals and in a number of myths pertaining to the mysteries can best be understood in this perspective, rather than, say, as 'reversal' episodes that had the purpose of affirming social norms.[3] If initiation was used to ensure the exclusivity of membership, its character could not have been a matter of indifference but must have reflected the ethos of the members in exaggerated forms. Whether particularly eccentric acts were only fabled (mythic) or were (also) performed in some Greek rituals in earlier times is not important for the point made here.[4] Indo-European warrior bands devoted themselves in esoteric rituals to deities (e.g. Vayu[5] or Oðinn[6]) that had strong connections

with the world of the dead. It is quite possible that the mysteries reframed the role that the *Männerbund* gods had played in secret warrior clubs and in some hero cults.[7] The warrior set himself apart from ordinary folks, both while alive and in the afterlife; a 'heroic' life and death, he hoped, ensured not only fame among the living but also a privileged state in the world beyond death, whereas the ordinary person should expect nothing but obscurity and shadowlike existence in the underworld.[8]

The existence of the features that have been supposed for initiation-based masculine rites in the *daēva* cult as it appears in the Gāthās inclines one to imagine the cult in commensurate settings. The Gāthās accuse the traditional priests, the *karapans* and *kavis* ('seers'), of cruel treatment of the victim and of the use of intoxicants or stimulants in their rituals (Y 32.14 and 48.10).[9] If the prototype of the 'great one' (*maz-*) of Y 32.3 is indeed Yima, the latter's 'wrongs' too must have been related to taking part in the *daēva* cult, which unquestionably had eschatological pretensions. We know from Young Avestan and Pahlavi accounts that the theme of immortality is basic in the Yima legends.[10] The sacrificial victim, the 'cow', in the Gāthās has an eschatological dimension,[11] perhaps similar to that of the victim in mystic initiation rites. In Y 44.20 the 'cow' is denied to the participants of the *daēva* cult, who are accused of submitting it to (perceived) ritual cruelty, the *aēšəma*. In two parallel texts, Y 50.2 and 51.5, the 'cow' carries two qualifying phrases, *rāniiō. skərəiti-* and *ašāṯ hacā*, respectively. The first one means 'making more joyful' (**rāniias-kr̥ti-*) and the second '*aša*-bound', as one would say of a path.[12] Both adjectives have eschatological significance.[13] The presence of the divine entity 'Soul of the Cow' (*gə̄uš uruuan-*) in the abode of the gods in Y 29 is consonant with the Brāhmaṇic doctrine of the sacrificial double, although it is not clear what the exact relationship is between the victim's soul and the divine entity.[14] In the Young Avestan fragment Pursišnīhā 33 the soul and perception of the sacrificial victim seem to be an emissary substitute for the sacrificer's: *gaospəṇta gaohudå baoδasca uruuānəmca fraēšiiāmahi nazdišta upa θβaršta raocå narš cašmanå sūkəm* 'vitalizing cow, benevolent cow, we dispatch your perception and soul to the nearest fashioned lights, the light of vision of the man's eyes'.[15] The victim must have had a comparable significance in the *daēva* cult. We know that the cult survived, and possibly thrived in some regions, in the face of the expanding Zoroastrianism, into the Achaemenid period and probably later. There may have been accommodations on both sides. It is thus almost certain that there were reflexes of the cult in historical evidence. It is in this perspective that one should consider the Greek evidence for the two 'chthonic' features of the magi's rite: nocturnal celebration and wolf sacrifice.[16] One may reasonably speculate that the esoteric cult dedicated to the *daēvas* persisted to some extent in form and purpose while, under the impact of Zoroastrianism, the 'gods' themselves assumed a hostile status. In the Gāthās, their pretension to 'have disposition' (√*xšā*) over the access to paradise is deceitful. I recall my argument in Part III of this book that behind the magi's *daimones* in the Derveni papyrus lurk the *daēvas* which exercise control

over (i.e. obstruct) the passage of the soul to the beyond. The *magoi* there are neither charlatans nor Greek beggar-priests but Iranian ritual experts. Scholars who deny the Iranian identity of the rite reported in the papyrus are yet to substantiate their claims in the face of the ostensible evidence.

The assimilation of the magi's rite to the mysteries cannot be divorced from Iranian eschatological ideology, which Greeks knew well in its general features. In the allegoristic account of the Derveni author we have a testimony where the homogeneous purposes of the magi's rite and the mysteries are explicitly stated. In my mind, this has a momentous significance. The ritual context of the relevant text is the passage of the soul. The magi's incantation dislodges the 'hindering *daimones*' from the path of the departing soul. The account found in the two fourth-century BC Greek observers Theopompus and Eudemus (in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 1.9) of the magi's belief in an immortal future world and in the eschatological efficacy of their rite (in bringing it about) is undoubtedly authentic. In the light of the Greek evidence we can describe the magi's nocturnal rite in general terms: it had an initiatory pattern involving sacrifice; its purpose was to gain access to the beyond; to this end, it had to neutralize certain seemingly hostile supernatural beings (the *daimones*) by means of special incantations, possibly accompanied by chthonic libations (*choai*), as in Plutarch and the Derveni author. Aeschylus (*Persians* 620) has Atossa make libations (*choaisi*), followed by the chanting of 'hymns', when she wants to summon the *daimōn* of Darius from the underworld.[17] There are Avestan parallels for these features reported in or inferred from Greek descriptions. The *daēva* cult takes place at night and involves making 'chthonic' libations (V 7.79). The *daēvas* seize the nocturnal offerings made by their worshippers even when intended for the Zoroastrian goddess Ardvī Surā Anāhitā (Yt 5.94–95). Is it because they occupy the space between the earth and where the gods reside, as the magi's *daimones* do in the Derveni papyrus? According to Y 55, ritual recitation of the Gāthās and Staota Yesniia has the power to smash obstacles and protect the soul separated from the body. The *Nērangestān* attributes wolf sacrifice to the *daēva* cult.

There is one conceptual nexus in particular that makes apparent the eschatological valence of the *daēvas* in the pre-Gāthic period. The nucleus of this nexus is the concept of *daēnā*. In the post-Gāthic traditions, the *daēnā*, where it does not simply mean religion, is either the allegorized divine entity representing Zoroastrianism or the psychopompic vision-soul, having the shape of a female leading the soul (*urvan*) of the departed to paradise or hell.[18] Now, it is in the sense of psychopompic vision-soul that the word *daēnā-* is regularly used in the Gāthās. The association to which one belongs, *ašavan* or *drugvant*, directly impacts by way of the *daēnā* on one's postmortem fate.[19] The *drugvant*, too, has a 'vision-soul', which in his case 'neglects' (*marədaitī*) the 'true' (*haiθiia-*) action that constitutes the direct 'path of boon', and thus causes trepidation in his departed soul in the face of his fate in the other world (Y 51.13). One determines the destiny of one's soul through the shape that one gives to the *daēnā*: 'He who makes his thinking better or worse, (makes

so) his *daēnā*, (also) through his action and word. (His *daēnā*) follows his inclinations, wishes and choices' (Y 48.4a–c′). The *daēnā* leads the soul either to the abode of the gods or to the *daēvas*, that is to say, to the 'house of *druj*'. The teaching of the 'seers' (*karapan-*) of the *daēva* cult will 'eventually' (*apōmǝm*) place them in the *drūjō dǝmāna-* 'house of *druj*' (Y 51.14). Opposed to the latter is the *garō dǝmāna-* 'house of welcome', where the followers of Zarathuštra receive their 'recompense' (*mīždā-*) from Mazdā (Y 51.15).[20] Every time the *daēvas* are denounced, directly or indirectly, the primary stake is the destiny of the soul. If the term *daēnā* came to mean religion *tout court*, this can only indicate the singular importance of eschatology in the religious thought whose earliest testimony is the Gāthās.[21] Eschatology is the terrain on which the poet opposes the cult of the *daēvas*.

On the other hand, nowhere do we find the *daēvas* associated with any cosmological activity. They have no pretension in this regard. This silence cannot have anything to do with the poet's suppression of their cosmological claims, for, as we have seen, he has no difficulty expressing their traditional eschatological role (e.g. Y 44.20). In the pre-Gāthic pantheon, the *daēvas* must have been subordinate to Mazdā, as Y 32.1 suggests.[22] Thus the Gāthic opposition to them did not mean that a new religion (Mazdaism) was set against the old religion of the *daēvas*. Apparently, Mazdā was the supreme deity even for the practitioners of the *daēva* cult. The poet naturally impugns the *daēvas* and their cult in connection with their reputed function, in other words, in relation to what was perceived to be their sphere of activity. He tells his audience that these 'gods' cannot deliver the eschatological hopes that their mortal devotees place in them. This is the substance of their repudiation. I have suggested that their provenance must be sought in the initiatory and funerary rites of the Indo-Iranian warrior societies.[23] As far as the Indic side is concerned, I have referred to Heesterman's interesting analysis of the episode of the *śrauta* fires (Heesterman 1993, pp. 126–37). It has been suggested that the Vedic *deva* par excellence, Indra, took over from the Indo-Iranian god of victory *Vṛtraghna, the breaker of obstacles.[24] Although being 'mobile' in the sense Heesterman develops does not necessarily connect the *devas* especially with warrior bands, it can form a meaningful constituent of such a thesis.[25]

But the question remains: whence the poet speaks? Archimedes is supposed to have said: 'give me a place to stand on and I will move the world'. On which firm ground does the composer of the Gāthās stand in his claim that the *daēvas* will have failed their devotees? This question can be analysed into two. First, what is the source of his knowledge? This question is not inviting psychological speculations, but is meant to direct us to examine the historical evidence already rehearsed in a particular light. And – the second question – what were the social circumstances of the poet's denunciation?

The social background one may assume for the poet's repudiation of the *daēvas* must remain to some extent a conjecture. Nonetheless, I think it is reasonable to imagine that the cult of the *daēvas* had an elective affinity with the *Männerbund*-type circles, or even that it developed in such a milieu.[26] If

the connection with the esoteric initiation rite is accepted (see below), one can think that those on whose behalf the poet condemns 'the *daēvas* and the mortals' did not benefit from the supposed power (*xšaθra*-) manipulated in the rite. The exclusive nature of the rite must have been an important factor in the condemnation of the cult; or, more cautiously, the poet rejected the inherited division between 'the mortals' and others as decisive for eschatological outcomes. This rejection is reflected in the poet's denunciation of Yima's 'wrongs', who, 'wanting to please the mortals', 'failed our (people)' (Y 32.8). I argued that, given the lexical and thematic nexus with the previous stanzas (notably Y 32.3), there can hardly be any doubt that 'the mortals' are no other than those who take part in the cult of the *daēvas*. It is these men who benefited (or thought they benefited) from the 'wrongs' they committed in their rites devoted to the *daēvas*. We must ask the question of *who* the mortals are that appear in the formula 'the *daēvas* and the mortals'. It is a significant parameter for the question of the identity of the *daēvas*; and we have adequate textual evidence to answer it. The term 'mortals' used in the formula 'the *daēvas* and the mortals' is certainly derogatory, but it cannot have a general reference.[27] The poet replaces the repudiated division with his own *ašavan* vs. *drugvaṇt*, the second of which he uses with respect to the worshippers of the *daēvas*, whose actions, according to him, are inspired by *druj* (Y 32.3) and who will end up in the house of *druj* (Y 46.11). It is clear that the term *drugvaṇt* can only be an imputation. The social reality behind the epithet is 'the *daēvas* and the mortals', or more concretely, 'the mortals' who, seeking 'immortality' (Y 48.1), take part in the cult of the *daēvas*, and are thereby involved in 'ritual rage' and 'intoxication' (Y 32.14 and 48.10). The hypothesis of an initiation-based masculine-society background for the cult plausibly accounts for the facts of our text. But there is more.

There is an intimate connection, perhaps going back to the Indo-European past, between the realm of the dead and the gods that are associated with it, on the one hand, and the seer's extraordinary knowledge, on the other. Simply put: the first is the source of the second, probably in the frame of an initiatory-esoteric rite. We saw that Yama is not just the 'god of the dead' but also the 'poet of the ancestors'. The *r̥ṣis* 'seers' are the first to have followed the path opened by Yama, in whose accomplishment he manifested his 'poetic force'.[28] Recall, too, the theme of *katabasis* in the Greek traditions about mantic figures such as Orpheus, Empedocles, Pythagoras, etc. The chthonic Zeus Trophonius at Labadaea was a source of incubatory divination that took the form of initiation. 'On emergence from his incubatory consultation, the initiate was endowed with memory, the same gift of second sight as that of the poets and diviners… Like Tiresias and Amphiarus, he became one of the living among the dead'.[29] Oðin is both the ruler of the dead and, as his name makes plain, the giver of prophecy and poetry. The seer has a supernatural source that is associated with the realm of the dead. Zarathuštra's 'choice' of the 'most vitalizing intuition' as his source (Y 43.16) must be set against this background.[30] Scholars have observed the agonistic character of

the verb √*var* 'choose' in the Gāthās.[31] In Y 43 the poet sings about, among other things, the primordial and final events that he has 'seen' through the 'vitalizing intuition'. Whereas the 'insightful' (*ciciθβan-*) man 'teaches' the paths of the vitalization of both this life and the next (Y 43.2–3), the 'seers' of the *daēvas*, the *karapans* and *kavis*, use their power to 'yoke man with bad actions in order to ruin (his) existence'. They end up as 'guests in the house of *druj* for eternity' (Y 46.11, cf. Y 32.12). Thus the poet clearly sets himself against the traditional seers who officiated for the *daēva* cult (cf. Y 45.11). Just as the 'vitalizing intuition' is the supernatural source of Zarathuštra's knowledge of the ultimate things, the *daēvas* could have been the source for the *kavis*. In the partly obscure Y 32.14, where we find ritual features elsewhere associated with the cult of the *daēvas*, at issue is apparently the professional activity of the *kavis* and *karapans*, since in the following stanza the poet execrates the *kəuuītāt-* and *karapō.tāt-*. Y 34.5 is singularly significant in this connection. As we saw, in this stanza the poet declares on behalf of his followers that the Gāthic gods are superior to all the '*xrafstar daēvas* and the men'. The context of the declaration is the poet's concern for his soul while in contact with the supernatural, which being without the body is in need of divine protection, just as the soul of the dead is in its final journey to the beyond. The seer accordingly commends his soul to the Gāthic gods 'for the time of the rite or while asleep'.[32] 'Did the *daēvas* ever dispose of a salutary power?' – the poet asks in Y 44.20, rejecting the eschatological efficacy of the *daēva* cult.

If indeed the two situations (pursuit of divine knowledge and the passage to the beyond) are homogeneous insofar as the soul stands in need of the protective supernatural power (*xšaθra-*), one may reasonably think that the poet's 'seeing' the invisible was paradigmatically imagined after the ecstatic state or, more concretely, that it actually took place in ecstatic ritual. It is perhaps in reference to this paradigm that one should understand the condemnation in Y 32.14 and 48.10 of the *daēva* cult, the '*duš-xšaθra* of the lands' (*dušə.xšaθrā daxíiunąm*), and in particular the use of the apparently stimulant *hoama*.[33] Martin Schwartz (2006) argues that Zarathuštra rejected in particular the cult of *haoma* and its pretensions, 'the most objectionable example of the deceptions of his rivals' (Schwartz 2006, p. 476). Pirart (1996), Kellens (1994), and Kellens and Swennen (2005) have connected Indo-Iranian *soma/haoma* rite with the attainment of divine condition. 'Comme l'homme, le dieu plante qui pousse sur la terre (Y 10.4) est terrestre et matériel, mais aussi mortel, puisque le pressurer, c'est le tuer (Y 10.2: *jan*) et n'accède à l'éternité que par la reproduction (Y 10.11) et la permanence de sa pensée transcendente' (Kellens and Swennen 2005, p. 75). In the ritual consumption of *haoma*, the zaotar is 'no longer a man made of matter and spirit; he is a cadaver whose mind, liberated from the body, has acquired the power of the god's mind' (Kellens and Swennen 2005, p. 75). In the 'mixed' world, transcendence of mortal condition requires two ritual operations: 'la pressurage de Haoma, auquel est consacré le vaste *Hōm Stōm* (Y 9–11.10), et la constitution d'une *daēnā*, acquise

au Y 12.9' (Kellens and Swennen 2005, p. 75). The thesis of the *haomic* origin of human being in the Hōm Stōm is set out in greater detail in Kellens (2007). This is certainly an interesting thesis. The text probably preserves in some way a myth that accompanied ecstatic *haoma* ritual. The god *haoma* protects the departing soul (Y 9.32). The fact that the Hōm Stōm stresses the mixing of the extract of the plant with milk (*haoma- gaomaṇt-*) perhaps points to a specific tradition. The text (Y 10.8) is at pains to distinguish the ecstasy of the (presumably) mixed *haoma* drink from (other) forms of 'drunkenness': whereas these are accompanied by the *aēšəma*, the former leads to 'blissful ascension' (*aši- uruuāsman-*).[34] The poets of the Vedic Kāṇva family criticize 'the habit of other priestly families who make offerings of plain Soma (to Vāyu and Iṇdra) without mixing it with milk or curds, with honey or with barley… The recipients of the Soma mixed with milk or curds are Mitra and Varuṇa' (Parpola 2002, p. 59). According to Parpola, a number of linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the 8th book of the Ṛgveda suggest for the Kāṇva family tradition a location in Central Asia in the neighbourhood of Iranian speakers. The mixing of the *haoma* extract with milk does not seem to be a specifically Zoroastrian adaptation of the rite. Whether or not Falk (1989) is right in his view that the sacred plant was (as it is now) Ephedra, the motive behind the rejection of the *haoma* drink could hardly have been its psyche-delic effects per se. Further, the use of the stimulant drug cannot account for the manic conduct (*aēšəma*), abhorred in the Gāthās, of the participants in the *daēva* cult. The *aēšəma* is an institution or, more concretely, a ritual behaviour which must reflect the stylized ethos of the warrior.[35] Behind the rejection of the *haoma* stands the repudiation of the *daēva* cult. The former is not the cause but the effect of the rejection of the latter. The fundamental association of the *soma* with the night and martial valour (of Iṇdra) in the Vedic literature seems to have ancient roots.

The *haoma* rite, continued after a fashion in the Yasna ritual,[36] is at odds with the doctrine of the *daēnā*. The *daēnā* is the way to the divine sphere in the Gāthās (Y 48.4) and in some later Avestan traditions (in Yt 17.16 *aši* and *daēnā māzdayasni* are sisters, daughters of Mazdā and Ārmaiti, both Gāthic eschatological facilitators; in the fragment from Hadoxt Nask 2, the *daēnā* is the psychopomp[37]). The attainment of the divine condition by way of the *daēnā* as this is conceived in the Gāthās undermines the *haoma* rite and its eschatological pretensions. Pirart (1996) points to the 'parallelism' of three ritual pairs: the *ašavan* and the sacrificial animal; the *haoma* juice and milk; the soul (*urvan*) and the *daēnā* as a young woman in the HN2 fragment. In fact, the last pair duplicates the second. Pirart's speculative resolution of the duplication, among others, disregards the conceptual problem mentioned above: 'L'âme de la vache ou le lait de la vache, ce qui semble revenir au même, et, d'autre part, le suc de Hauma sont eux aussi des préfigurations. Envoyés aux dieux moyennant le pressurage et l'immolation, ils occupent dans l'au-delà les places que, lors de cet ultime sacrifice qu'est la mort, viendront occu-per l'âme du sacrifiant et sa conscience religieuse' (Pirart 1996, p. 7). In effect,

the doctrine of the *daēnā* replaces the *haoma* ritual (and myth[38]) as the frame of eschatology in the Gāthās. I tried to show that *xratu-* 'resourcefulness' in the Gāthās possesses the specific sense of eschatological efficacy. In Y 34.10, the *huxratu-* is the 'one who knows' (*vīduuah-*) the goddess Ārmaiti, closely associated with the *daēnā*. In Y 51.5 being *huxratu-* is the condition of acquiring the '*aša*-oriented cow' (*ašāṯ hacā gao-*). In YAv. texts the epithet is used only in the Hōm Stōm (see *AW*, col. 1819), once of the beseecher of the god *haoma* (Y 9.23) and once apparently of the god himself (Y 10.2).[39] The usage may well go back to the pre-Zoroastrian *haoma* rite and indicate a context comparable to that of the Gāthic usage. Clear reflections of this conception of the sacred drink are found in Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature where *hōm ī spēd* is *darmān ī amargīh*, the panacea that brings about immortality. At the end of time, the *frašgird*, according to the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram* (35.15), the consumption of *hōm ī spēd* during the celebration of the final *yasna* resurrects the dead and immortalizes the living (*kē-š murdagān pad-iš zīndag ud zīndagān pad-iš a-marg bawēnd*).[40] As far as the Gāthās were concerned, the fate of the *haoma* rite was tied with the cult of the *daēvas*. The observations made by Pirart (1996) and Kellens and Swennen (2005) about the Indo-Iranian *soma/haoma* rite underwrite its eschatological significance, and if the rite was part and parcel of the *daēva* cult, a virtual certainty,[41] the latter too has to be placed in the same field. Here is, then, another indication of the eschatological valence of the *daēvas*.

I have already noted the significant place of eschatology in the classical Greek picture of Iranian religious lore. The magi claimed for their rite, according to Greek accounts, the power of making the world immortal. In the Derveni author's commentary, the magi perform a rite that facilitates the passage of the soul to the beyond. What stood out for the Greeks in Iranian religious traditions were the idea of cosmic dualism and a doctrine of the end of things based on the notion of immortal soul. Zoroastrian eschatology must have been particularly striking for the Greeks. One must give due attention to this fact. It is in the context of this perception that the magi's nocturnal rite is assimilated to the mysteries. The Pythagorean idea of the 'demonic soul', which Detienne (1963, pp. 93–117) traces back to the *demōn* and the *hērōs* in Hesiod's *Works*, is in its basic conception more comparable with the Iranian idea of the soul, even if the tutelary role and the imagery of a privileged afterlife associated with the Hesiodic notions (*Works* 123–25) are prominent in the usage Plato makes of the Pythagorean idea in his political myth of the philosopher-guardian.[42] Just as much as the mysteries (Plato, *Phaedo* 66–70), philosophy is a discipline of 'purification' aimed at a blessed afterlife, probably in the ethereal heavens; philosopher is the true *mystēs*. The purpose *and* the method, however conceived (whether it is purely ritual, or a matter of the lifestyle, or is synonymous with intellectual and moral cultivation) – this constellation is at odds with Greek civic religion.[43] The presence of such a cultural and intellectual constellation provided the context for the reception of comparable Iranian religious ideas.

The concern with the fate of the soul is paramount in the Gāthās, as we have seen. In this perspective, one may perhaps describe the process of the repudiation of the *daēva* cult as the 'reoccupation' of a position that continued to exert itself by requiring the new ideology answer an old question, namely that of the way to a blissful afterlife.[44] It is a matter of the persistence of the function and not necessarily of the content. Whatever else Gāthic religious thought may have been, it prominently contained a doctrine of the attainment of the divine sphere through an authoritative schedule of observances (*ratu*-), and a doctrine of the end of things. The opposition to the *daēva* cult had a constitutive role in the formation of the former. Traces of a ritual with eschatological aims have been observed in the Yasna rite.[45] How to account for the doctrine of a final and definitive renewal of the world, and the cosmic optimism reflected in the doctrine?

There are fugitive indications in the Avesta and Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts that connect the *daēva* cult with the underworld. I pointed out that in V 3.7 the dwelling of the *daēvas* is described as the 'cave of *druj*' whence they 'rush' (*haṇduuarəṇti*) onto the steep heights of Mount Arzūr (*arəzūrahe grīuuaiia*). The Bundahišn chapter on the mountains (9) locates *dar ī dušox* 'gate of hell' on the same peak and repeats V 3.7: *Arzūr grīwag pad dar ī dušox kē-š ham-dwārišnīh ī dēwān padiš bawēd* 'on the heights of Mount Arzūr (is) the gate of hell through which the rushing-together of the Dēvs (into the world) takes place'.[46] The aim of the *ham-dwārišnīh* is the ritual ground (cf. Y 30.6), which evidently has to be placed on mountainous heights, i.e. Mount Arzūr. Recall the testimony of Herodotus, *Histories* 1.131: 'it is their [the Persians] custom to go up to the highest summits of the mountains and sacrifice to Zeus, calling the entire vault of heaven Zeus'. Yama's gate to the underworld is also on lofty mountains with watercourses, according to RV 10.14, as we have seen. Ābān Yašt (5.3, 5.25) places Yima's sacrifice to the goddess of waters on the peak Hukairiia whence celestial waters stream into the sea *vouru.kaṣa* (cf. Y 65.3).[47] The tradition about this peak and the celestial waters is also found in Pahlavi texts. The Bundahišn describes *Hugar ī buland* as *ān kē-š āb ī Ardwīsūr aziš frōd jahēd* 'the one from which the waters of Anāhitā streams down'.[48] The connection between mountainous heights and the passage to the beyond thus goes back to the common Indo-Iranian period. In V 19.30 the two guard dogs that watch over the *činwad puhl* 'bridge of the collector', on Mount Dāitī, accompany the welcoming *daēnā* of the righteous *urvan*, but it is likely that these dogs were originally those of the Indo-Iranian *Yama (cf. RV 10.14.10–12), who is referred to as the 'gatherer of men' (*saṃgamana-janānām*) in the hymn dedicated to him in the Ṛgveda. If Kellens (1988) is right that Avestan *cinuuatō pərətu*- should be derived from √*ci* 'collect or heap' and thus, according to its form, cannot mean the 'bridge of separator' (despite the judicial function of the bridge in Zoroastrian lore) but 'le pont de l'empileur' (332), and that the 'builder of the bridge' to the beyond is indeed Yama's Iranian counterpart Yima, the builder of the *vara*, we can reasonably conceive of Yima as the original facilitator of the passage to the realm of the

dead.[49] He carries in V 2 a goad and a horn (*suβrā-*), presumably for collecting men and animals, and builds an enclosure (*vara-*) made of clay (V 2.31) where men live, if not an immortal, at least a very long and happy life. Originally he would have collected the souls of the dead and led them to the underworld.[50] Against this background, Yima's sacrifice to the goddess Anāhitā on Hukairiia, the point of contact with celestial waters, reveals its significance. The celestial waters (the Milky Way, according to Witzel 1984) are associated in the Veda with the night sky, Varuṇa and Yama. The 'underworld' kingdom of Yama, the abode of the dead, is also the stone house (*hamryá-*) of Varuṇa, the night sky where the celestial waters are found (Kuiper 1964, pp. 114ff.) and into which the sun withdraws after dusk: RV 7.88.2 *svàr yád áśman* 'sun in the rock' (Kuiper 1964, pp. 108ff.).[51] The Gāthās use neither *diiau-* nor *asman-* to refer to the sky or heavens.[52] It is hard to explain why the epithet *anāhita-* is used of the persons and the implements of the sacrifice offered to Mithra by the god Haoma on Hukairiia (Yt 10.88) except through the compelling association of the summit with the goddess of celestial waters.[53] This peak connects Yima, the original collector of souls, with the night sky and *haoma*, and hence with the nocturnal sacrifice. The goddess herself, one will recall, is not a stranger to nocturnal sacrifice, as we saw. Kellens (2002–2003, p. 321) points out the 'real solitude' of Anāhitā: 'Elle n'est pas mentionée dans les Yašts des autres dieux et aucun de ceux-ci ne l'est dans le sien'. But it does not seem to be the goddess that is the recipient of the non-Zoroastrian Yima's sacrifice, although her 'solitude' in the pantheon, her association with the *daēvas* and nocturnal sacrifice (repudiated by the goddess in Ābān Yašt) and her domain in the night sky – all these compromise her greatly. We have seen that behind Y 32.6 *pouruuaēnah-* 'who has committed much wrong' is probably Yima, named in Y 32.8, who is thus implicated in the *daēva* cult. The *daēvas* were, then, intimately connected with the passage of the soul to the underworld.[54] Their sacrificial cult was celebrated at night in the mountains, near a cave, attended by the initiates, perhaps rehearsing, as in the mysteries, the final journey of the soul (guided by Yima) to the underworld, to the 'house' of the *daēvas*, the place of the nocturnal sojourn of the sun. The strange story related of Yam (Yima) and the Dēvs in the third book of the *Dēnkard*, according to which he apparently wins immortality for the 'creatures' from the Dēvs in a verbal contest,[55] perhaps evokes, albeit through a Zoroastrian prism, an ancient myth about Yima and the *daēvas*, whose verbal interaction presided over the passage of the soul to its lasting abode.

Notes

1 Compare Vernant's remarks: 'l'attitude spirituelle qui est propre aux orphiques et qui les place aux marges extrêmes de la religion civique comme du corps social, trouve dans la philosophie le moyen de se transposer et de s'intégrer à la cité. Pour un Platon comme pour un Aristote, l'exercice de la philosophie n'a pas d'autre fin que de se rendre soi-même divin, autant que possible. Le programme des orphiques n'est pas plus ambitieux' (in Rudhardt and Reverdin 1981, p. 37). See also Vernant

1990, p. 176; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995; Detienne 1999, pp. 119–37. 'The mythical geography of the two plains [of *Alētheia* and *Lēthē*], along with the eschatological representation of the sources of *Mnēmosynē* and *Lēthē*, figures in imagery peculiar to the circles intermediate between philosophy and religion, that is, philosophicoreligious circles… They are intelligible only in the context of thought obsessed by individual salvation and the problem of the soul in relation to time' (Detienne 1999, p. 122).

2 See Detienne 1963, pp. 112–15.

3 Compare Vernant 1990, pp. 176–78. 'The Dionysiac religion, in the savage form of possession, and Pythagoreanism, in the intellectual and ascetic form of spiritual purification, both – in opposite ways – bypass sacrifice in order to draw nearer to the gods. The aim they share explains how it is that, despite their mutual opposition, omophagy and vegetarianism are (as there is evidence to show) in certain instances practiced within a single sect' (Vernant 1990, p. 178). The 'eccentricity' of these practices is dependent on the 'normality' of sacrifice as conducted in the official religion of the *polis*. But this can hardly mean that the function of the practices was to affirm the 'normal' instance. Why then put, e.g. the Adonia, in such a perspective, as Vernant (1990, pp. 143ff.) generally does – unsuccessfully in my mind, as may be seen especially in Vernant 1990, pp. 163–67? 'Far from embodying the spirit of wheat, Adonis' position is sometimes above and at other times below the cereals; never does he belong to the same sphere as they. His destiny leads him directly from myrrh to the lettuce and this is, in a sense, an indication that he bypasses the cereals which lie quite outside his path. It thus illustrates the temptations and dangers of a way of life that would seek to elude normality' (Vernant 1990, p. 147). According to Vernant (1990, pp. 164ff.), the Adonia is a specific usage made of the 'code' of the 'Greek religious system', which is opposed to the usage made by the official religion. Nonetheless, Vernant himself admits that 'within the Greek religious system' and against the normality of marriage, seduction is always negative and dangerous. Thus, following Detienne, on whose book *The Garden of Adonis* he is commenting, Vernant formulates 'the hypothesis that religious thought was all the more insistent in consecrating the unique significance of marriage by opposing it to erotic seduction, since, in default of an unequivocal legal definition, the distinction between concubine and legitimate spouse remained in the fifth and fourth centuries somewhat hazy and uncertain' (Vernant 1990, p. 182). Then, how to understand the 'glorification of Adonis and erotic seduction'?

4 Compare Henrichs 1981.

5 It has been suggested that Indra took over from the Indo-Iranian god of victory *Vṛtraghna, the breaker of obstacles. See Thieme 1960, pp. 311–14 and Söhnen 1997. In an Avestan fragment (Aog 77) the passage to the other world is described as the 'path of the implacable Vayu'. In two Pahlavi texts (*Dēnkard* and *Dātastān ī dēnīg*) Vāy of the Long Dominion is charged with 'smiting the breath-soul of men' (Zaehner 1972, p. 87). Vayu is the god of the 'breath of life', who takes away the dead (Lommel 1927, pp. 148ff.) and plays a role in the resurrection at the end of time (*Dēnkard* 9, 23.1–5). In Yašt 15 (53–56), the good Vayu is the teacher of spells against the *daēvas*. The second of the three cakes consecrated at the departure of the soul (the dawn after the third night of a death) is in the god's honour. See Gray 1929, p. 169. In *Mahābhārata*, Bhīma, the unruly and savage warrior who is as swift as the wind, is the son of the god Vāyu 'wind'. In the Vedic India, Vāyu was associated with Indra, who may have taken over some of the warlike characteristics and activities of the wind god. See Dumézil 1968.

6 See Puhvel 1987, pp. 189–204.

7 See Nagy 1990, pp. 10–15 and Burkert 1983, p. 82.

8 See Nagy 1999, 151–210; West 2007, pp. 447–503; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995, pp. 44–45. 'One improves his position in the next world', writes Redfield (1991,

p. 105), 'by the same means by which he has improved it in this. Nor is the picture essentially changed by the existence of mystery rites which promise a better after-life to the initiate'.

9 Compare Lincoln 1981, pp. 140–62.

10 See Christensen 1934.

11 Compare Pirart 1996, pp. 6–7. The cow is intimately connected with the vision-soul *daēnā* which in the Gāthās has a psychopompic function. See Piras 2003.

12 Kellens' interpretation of *ašāt̰ hacā* as a substitute for *ašauuan-* is acceptable, as far as its semantics is concerned, if one keeps the eschatological significance of the latter in the foreground. See Kellens 1995, pp. 29–38. In the Gāthās, the word *aša-* is regularly used metonymically for the divine realm, e.g. Y 32.13 *darəsāt̰ ašahiiā* '(hold back) from seeing *aša*'. The construction abl. + *hacā* seems to have an idiomatic sense in the OAv. texts. See my discussion in Chapter 6.

13 Compare Kellens 1994, pp. 52–53.

14 Admittedly, the relation between the *urvan* and the 'mental state' in which form life continues after death is unclear, although in some sense the *urvan* of the cow must survive death. Compare Pirart 1996, 2012, pp. 65–66. Kellens (1995, 355) translates Y 29.6bb′ *nōit̰ aēuuā ahū vistō, naēdā ratuš ašāt̰cīt̰ hacā*: 'Jamais celui qui n'a q'un seul état n'a trouvé ni (un Maître) ni un plan adopté à l'Agencement'. I find his analysis of the verse line problematic. First, the implication of Kellens' translation is that, except for human beings, worldly creatures have no *ahura*. It is hard to reconcile this conception with how the word is otherwise used in the Gāthās. Second, in what sense should the 'plan' and the 'plan adapté à l'Agencement' be understood, since elsewhere Kellens (Kellens and Pirart 1990, p. 308) translates *ratu-* as 'modèle, prototype'? Has the role or place of the cow in the cosmic order not been envisaged? This cannot be right. Third, Kellens in effect treats *aēuuā ahū* as a possessive adjective, something like **aēuuā.ahu-* 'one who has one existence', whereas if such a compound existed, the sandhi would have made it something like **aēuuāhu-* and the verse line would have been one syllable short.

15 Compare Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 34: 'L'*uruuan* de la vache est, lors de chaque cérémonie, l'ambassadeur de l'*uruuan* humain et fait le chemin que ce dernier fera un jour vers l'au-delà, accédant au but que l'homme a choisi par ses pratiques rituelles: les lumières du jour, la maison d'Ahura Mazdā ou le ciel nocturne, la maison de la Druj. Le sacrifice gâthique a donc acquis une portée eschatologique'. The acquisition is apparently in relation to the 'traditional' cosmological function of sacrifice, a development that is accompanied by its being moved to day-time, whether the former prompts the latter or the other way around, which seems to be favoured by Kellens and Pirart: 'pour l'homme gâthique, le sacrifice rendu aux dieux n'a plus pour but, comme l'*agnihotra* védique, de garantir le retour de l'aurore' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 33). The twice-daily milk offering into the fire *agnihotra* coincides with the sunrise and the sunset, as Swennen (2003, p. 93) points out. See also Heesterman 1993, pp. 210–14.

16 In the Vīdēvdād 7.79 libations made after sunset and those made with *nasumaitīm āpəm* are said to be *druj* practices. It seems like these two qualifications belong to the same context. Now, the expression *nasumaitīm āpəm*, usually translated 'water defiled by a corpse', should not be understood as describing an accidental circumstance, i.e. it does not urge caution. The suffix *-mant-* signifies association or possession. Thus the phrase describes a type of chthonic libation, perhaps tendentiously, such as water mixed with the blood of an immolated animal.

17 On the *choai* see Rudhardt 1992, pp. 246–48.

18 See Kellens 1990, 165–71; Piras 2003.

19 See Ahmadi 2012. Kellens (1995, pp. 49–51) connects the *daēnā* of the Hadoxt Nask II fragment, the female psychopompic 'vision-soul', with 'dawn' (Vedic *uṣás-*, Avestan *ušah-*): 'L'aurore et la dayanâ sont toutes deux des montreuses de chemin'

(Kellens 1995, p. 49). '(L)a dayanâ est non seulement définie par son nom comme une capacité de voyance, mais entretient un rapport intime et multilatéral, à la fois actif, passif et causetif, avec l'acte de voir. La dayanâ voit, est vue, fait voir… Elle distingue le chemin et le montre au ruvan qu'elle guide' (Kellens 1995, p. 51). See also Kellens (1990, pp. 165–71), and Schmidt (1975) for a different interpretation.

20 See Kellens and Pirart 1988, pp. 32–36 and Hintze 2004.

21 Compare Benveniste 1970, pp. 8–9. Some aspects of Cantera's view of the ritual role of the *daēnā* (2012, pp. 47–48) are questionable: 'l'auteur italien [Panaino] voit dans le refus de Yima le rejet du mariage avec sa propre *daēnā* après sa mort… si Panaino a mis l'accent sur l'union avec la *daēnā* après la mort, je le mets sur l'union de la *daēnā* avec l'*uruuan* du sacrifiant pendant la liturgie longue. J'estime que le sacrifice est la clé interprétive du mythe de Yima dans le V2: le refus d'une fonction dans le rituel, en rapport avec la *daēnā*, est à la base de l'échec de l'essai de l'immortalité de Yima. L'union rituelle avec la *daēnā* permet d'apporter aux hommes la vision de l'au-delà et leur assurer l'arrivée au monde des dieux après la mort avec l'assistance de leur propre *daēnā*. Le refus (par incapacité) d'être porteur de la *daēnā* a pour conséquence que l'immortalité obtenue par l'activité rituelle de Yima ne soit pas définitive, mais reste utopique, déplacée, hors du monde des dieux'. Generally speaking, this theory tries to explain too much. I especially find the idea of sexual union between the sacrificer's *urvan* and *daēnā* during the ritual as the 'guarantee' of the 'eschatological success' for him and the community incomprehensible. See Cantera 2012, p. 55, p. 62. 'Cette union donne au sacrifiant la capacité de faire un entretien avec la divinité, de se rappeler de la "vision", de la mémoriser sous forme de mots (*mar*-) et de l'apporter (*bar*-) aux hommes. Mémoriser la *daēnā* par des mots et l'apporter aux hommes est le but du sacrifice; c'est la technique sacrificielle qui garantee le succès eschatologique à la communauté sacrificielle' (Cantera 2012, p. 63). Pirart's speculation that the union of the dead's *urvan* and *daēnā* has the purpose of procreating eschatological combatants, the *saošyant*, whatever one may think of it as an interpretation of Zoroastrian data, is in itself comprehensible: (spiritual) sexual copulation leads to (spiritual) procreation. However, one cannot see how such a union engenders the capacity to converse with the god, acquire the eschatological vision, etc. Where the *daēnā* is said to be a sexual partner, what could 'memorizing the *daēnā* in verbal form' mean?

22 Compare Kellens and Pirart 1988, pp. 30–32.

23 See Heesterman 1962.

24 Compare Thieme 1960, pp. 311–14; Söhnen 1997.

25 But compare Heesterman 1993, p. 212: 'the brahmin was not a priest and in fact never fully became one. His lineal ancestor was the consecrated warrior, the *vrātya*, who spawned the consecrated soma sacrificer-to-be, the *dīkṣita*'. According to Parpola (2002, pp. 63–64), the *śrauta* royal rites were adopted from the indigenous population. 'These rituals which had been performed in South Asia before the arrival of the Aryans associated with the family books of the Ṛgveda and the Soma cult were however presented as "variants" of the Soma sacrifice, which was now made an essential part of them, and all ritual acts were given a Ṛgvedic mantra to be pronounced at their performance' (Parpola 2002, p. 64). The ecstatic *soma* cult was one of the rituals that Indo-Aryans brought with them to their new territories.

26 See Ahmadi 2014.

27 See Schlerath 1968, p. 150. I will not speculate about the relation of the Gāthic formula with the Vedic *déva- mártya-*. In RV 6.48.19ab (*paro hi martyair asi samo devair uta śriyā*), for example, the second term may have the general sense of the 'mortal' opposed to the 'god'. But immediately in 20cd *devasya vā maruto martyasya vejānasya prayajyavaḥ*, where the two terms are not opposed, the 'mortal' is described as the one who sacrifices to the Marut, the heavenly warriors.

28 See Malamoud 2002, p. 24.

29 See Detienne 1999, p. 64, and Ustinova 2002, pp. 269–74 for a complete dossier of the ancient reports.

30 Compare Kreyenbroek 1993.

31 Compare Narten 1985.

32 I have emphasized in a number of places in this book that the dream was an important mode of divination in the ancient world. For finding out the source of and dealing with the plague, Achilles says 'let us ask some seer or priest, or even a dealer in dreams, for the dream too is from Zeus' (*Iliad* 1.62–63).

33 Falk (1989) argues that the *soma/haoma* plant was Ephedra, whose extracts produce the stimulating Ephedrine. Taken in excess, it causes heart palpitations, sweating, vertigo, and nausea and vomiting (Falk 1989, p. 87), symptoms which may be reasonably assumed to underlie *urūpaiia*- 'make feel pain' in Y 48.11.

34 See Kellens 1999 for the interpretation of *aṣi*- as 'départ, mise en route (pour l'audelà)' (Kellens 1999, p. 464). It is also said in the same text (Y 10.13) that the sacred drink enhances the mind's learning and reflecting capacity (*spainiiah- cistiuuastara-*). See Falk 1989, pp. 80–82 for Vedic texts that express the same idea. See also Kellens 2011, pp. 99–103.

35 See Y 9.27 and compare Falk 1989, p. 87: 'ephedrine was a reliable stimulant for warriors and a mighty aphrodisiac. These profane uses most likely stood at the beginning of its career'. See also Lincoln 1981, pp. 103–32.

36 'En brisant l'union du corps et de la pensée, il [i.e., le pressurage de Haoma] permet à l'officiant de revenir à l'état de *frauuaṣi* et de projeter sa *daēnā* sur les chemins du futur. Ainsi, le sacrifice met en contact direct le début et la fin en niant l'état d'aujourd'hui. Telle est la chimère centrale du mazdéisme' (Kellens and Swennen 2005, p. 76).

37 See Kellens 1995, pp. 46ff.

38 The 'tendency of Soma/Haoma to look for a suitable place in already existing mythologies proves to my mind that the mythological qualities of Soma/Haoma did not stand at the beginning of its career' (Falk 1989, p. 78). Compare Boyce 1970.

39 See Pirart 2004.

40 See Gignoux and Tafazzoli 1993, p. 130. Boyce (1970, p. 65 n.31) quotes from the *Dādistān ī dēnīg* (*Purs*. 47.16) describing the *hōm ī spēd*: *kē-š amargīh ī frašgird aziš paydāg* 'the immortality which is realized in the *frašgird* is due to it'.

41 Aside from the connection made in the Gāthās between the cult and the *haoma* rite (stressed by Schwartz 2006), there is also comparative and historical evidence. The close association of Iṇdra and Soma in Vedism cannot be insignificant. Compare Parpola 2002, p. 87: 'The R̥gvedic hymns repeatedly emphasise that their enemies, the Dāsas, did not press Soma or worship Iṇdra'.

42 See Detienne 1963, pp. 102–106, pp. 112–17. 'C'est Platon aussi qui reprenait un schème pythagoricien, lorsqu'il affirmait que les dirigeants, dont la nature est philosophique, appartiennent à la race d'or. Devenir philosophe, c'est devenir *daimōn*, c'est-à-dire avior réalisé son *daimōn*' (Detienne 1963, p. 116). Compare Plato, *Timaeus* 90b–c.

43 See Vernant 1990, pp. 117–19, p. 176.

44 I borrow the idea, *mutatis mutandis*, from Hans Blumenberg's critique of the 'secularization' thesis of the modern age. See Blumenberg 1983, pp. 63–75. 'What mainly occurred in the process that is interpreted as secularization, at least (so far) in all but a few recognizable and specific instances, should be described not as the *transposition* of authentically theological contents into secularized alienation from their origin but rather as the *reoccupation* of answer positions that had become vacant and whose corresponding questions could not be eliminated' (Blumenberg 1983, p. 65).

45 See Kellens 1994; Kellens and Swennen 2005, pp. 75–76; Cantera 2012, pp. 225–27. Kellens (2004) rejects what he calls the 'ethical' understanding of the Gāthic

triad (good thinking, good speech, good action) based on his demonstration that the triad has a strictly ritual significance in YAv. texts. 'Le fait est que nous ne comprenons pas bien les Gâthâs et les passages où intervient la triade pas mieux que les autres. Y reconnaître l'expression d'une éthique abstraite étrangère au passé indo-iranien comme au futur de l'Avesta récent relève seulement de la stratégie du désir ou de la crispation sur l'habitude' (Kellens 2004, pp. 288–89). I am not sure what is intended by 'abstract ethics', but if it is something like Kantian morality, Kellens' denial of it to the Gāthās is incontrovertible – but also obvious. If, however, by ethics Kellens means the regulation of conduct outside the strictly ritual sphere, I do not see how our very limited comprehension of the Gāthās may be used to deny an ethical conception of the triad in these compositions, any more than to affirm it. To the proponents of the latter, Kellens wants to say more than simply: 'you have not shown a basis for ascribing it to the Gāthās', which would have been fair enough. Indeed one should add to it: '*what is it* that you want to ascribe to the Gāthās?', since, as I argued in the first part, it is never clear what is meant by 'ethics', e.g. in Gershevitch or Gnoli. Rather, Kellens says: 'you have no basis to ascribe an ethical conception of the triad to the Gāthās, and since we do not find it (presumably) before or after (in the liturgical texts), there cannot be such a conception in the Gāthās'. Thus, at best, the case for the denial is circumstantial. But Kellens' denial is not restricted to the triad, as we saw in the first part of this book.

46 Pakzad 2005, p. 130.

47 See Kellens 2002–2003, p. 321, p. 324.

48 Pakzad 2005, p. 129.

49 Compare Cantera 2012, p. 51.

50 The Pahlavi gloss to V 2.41(cited in Lincoln 1981, p. 235) reads: *kū 150 sāl ziwēnd; hast kē ēdōn gōwēd kū nēktar pad gyān ziwēnd; kū harguz bē nē mīrēnd* '(in Yima's enclosure) people live for 150 years; some say that they live happy in their soul, that they never die'.

51 Compare Witzel 1984, p. 243 n.103: 'Avec l'ascension de Varuṇa au zénith du ciel nocturne, Yama at son paradis se meuvent aussi'.

52 'Il faut vraisemblablement mettre en rapport le rejet du rituel nocturne, quoiqu'on ne voit pas exactement selon quelle articulation, avec le tabou du nom du ciel qui se manifeste dans l'ensemble des textes vieil-avestiques' (Kellens and Pirart 1988, p. 33). Compare Cantera 2012, pp. 57–58.

53 Cantera (2012, p. 60) maintains that the shared descriptive features of Yima's *vara* and Haoma's 'house' on Harā (Y 57.21) indicate that the two are identical. Both are internally illuminated, and in both not only the stars but also the infinite lights of heaven are visible. Kellens (2002–2003, pp. 321–25) proposes a new analysis of the epithet *arəduuī- sūra- anāhita-* of the goddess *āp-* '(celestial) Water' (324). He derives *arəduuī-* from √*rād* 'succeed in, attain': *arədu-* a 'dialectal variant of *arədra-*', and hence translates *arəduuī-* as 'celle qui réussit' (Kellens 2002–2003, p. 322). I pointed out that the adjective *arədra-* probably has the sense of 'who succeeds in attaining the divine sphere'. See esp. Y 43.2 and Y 50.4. The term *sūra-* 'vigorous' is from the same root (√*sū*) as *sauuah-* 'vitalization'. 'Du point de vue des études religieuses, il importerait cependant de savoir pourquoi c'est la puissance *sauuah* qui est attribuée à la déesse plutôt qu'une des nombreuses autres' (Kellens 2002–2003, p. 322). As I tried to show on various occasions in this book, the word *sauuah-* has a strong eschatological valence in the Gāthās. Finally, Kellens derives *anāhita-* from *ā* + √*hā/hi* 'tie'. The semantic range of the adjective 'untied' is unclear. But the domain of the goddess is the celestial space.

54 According to Cantera (2012, pp. 48–49), at the basis of Yima's failure in acquiring a lasting immortality for the world lies in his refusal to carry out 'a ritual function', namely to have sexual union with his *daēnā* during sacrifice. In V2 Mazdā asks him

to be the 'memorizer and carrier for the *daēnā*', but Yima refuses, so the god offers him another mission. The reason why Yima refuses to 'carry' the *daēnā* is that he himself is the builder of the enclosure where the *daēnā*, understood as 'l'aurore intériorisée', is imprisoned in Yima's *vara* (Cantera 2012, pp. 61–62). But then why does the *god* ask him to 'be the carrier of the *daēnā*'? Or, in another perspective, why does the god ask *him*? The 'porter' of the *daēnā* becomes (Cantera 2012, p. 62) her 'libérateur'. How does 'being the sexual partner' in the scenario envisaged by Cantera mean the same thing as 'being the liberator'? The interpretive move from 'being the memorizer and carrier for the *daēnā*' (*mᵊrᵊta bᵊrᵊtaca daēnaiiāi*) to 'being the sexual partner and memorizer of the *daēnā*' is unexplained. The latter phrase reverses the order of the original; more importantly, it requires at one and the same time two different senses for the word *daēnā*.

55 Cited in Lincoln 1981, p. 235.

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