

NOTES ON APĀM NAPĀT

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The topic of the present paper concerns the nature and the features of the deity Apām Napāt as observed both in Avestan and in Vedic traditions.

All of the research, that has been offered in order to outline the religious and mythological role of Apām Napāt and that has given place to a lot of discussion among scholars, lacks a monographic study up to now. Nevertheless, the complexity of the debate, the variety and the discordance among the solutions proposed by scholars seems to require it.¹

I devoted myself to the study of the enigmatic role of Apām Napāt in the religious worlds of the Ṛgveda and of the Young Avestan texts in occasion of my graduation thesis. It is obvious that this study is far from being the exhaustive answer we are still waiting for. It is an attempt to focus the main problems concerning the nature of Apām Napāt and it intends to make the basic tools available for further research. All the passages where Apām Napāt is mentioned have been gathered and analyzed from a linguistic and philological point of view. They have been then discussed in order to outline some possible interpretations about the role and the importance of Apām Napāt in the mythology of the Avesta and of the Ṛgveda.

In the present paper, I shall attract your attention only to some of the main subjects which, as far as I can see, are strictly related to Apām Napāt, with a special regard to the Avestan evidence and just a mention when necessary, about the Vedic field.

The identity of name, which means "Child of the Waters,"² and the general likeness of traits of the god in both traditions, which can be suddenly noticed at a first glance, no doubt testify that Apām

¹ The main scholarly contributions with regard to Apam Napat can be listed as follows: O. Bohtlingk / R. Roth, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, St. Petersburg 1855, p. 275; F. Windischmann, *Zoroastrische Studien*, Berlin 1863, pp. 180-185; F. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop* II, London 1868, p.82; Id., *Natural Religion*, London 1889, p. 500; A. Bergaigne, *La religion védique, d'après les hymnes du Rig-Veda*, Paris 1878-1883, I, pp. 160-167, II, 17-19; A. Ludwig, *Der Rigveda III*, Prag 1878, p. 324; J. Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta*, Oxford 1880, 1883, I, p. 63, II, p. 6; Id., *Le Zend-Avesta* II, Paris 1892, p. 630; F. Spiegel, *Die Arische Periode und ihre Zustände*, Leipzig 1887, pp. 192-194; L. von Schroeder, *Apollon-Agni*, in *KZ* 29, 1888, pp. 193-229.; Id., *Arische Religion II*, Leipzig 1916, pp. 482, 490-1; A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, Breslau 1891, 1899, I, pp. 365-380, II, p. 59, 126-134; E. Hardy, *Die Vedische-brahmanische Periode der Religion des alten Indiens*, Münster i.W. 1893, pp. 38-39; E.W. Fay, *The Aryan God of Lightning*, in *AJPh* 17.1, 1896, pp. 1-29; A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Straßburg 1897, pp. 70, 92; Id., *A Vedic Reader for Students*, Oxford 1917, pp. 67-68; H.W. Magoun, *Apām Napāt in the Rig-Veda*, in *JAOS* 19.2, 1898, pp. 137-144; Id., *Apām Napāt again*, in *AJPh* 21, 1900, pp. 274ff.; L.H. Gray, *The Indo-Iranian Deity Apam Napāt*, in *AatR3*, 1900, pp. 18-51; Id., *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, Bombay 1929 p. 135; C. Bartholomae, *AIW*, 1904, col. 1039; B. Geiger, *Die Ameša Spentas*; Vienna 1916, p. 222; H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, Stuttgart-Berlin 1923, pp. 118-121; K.F. Geldner, *Der Rigveda I*, Göttingen-Leipzig 1923, pp. 289-9 1; A.B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads I*, p. 135-6; J. Hertel, *Die Sonne und Mithra im Avesta*, p. 246; G. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran*, Uppsala 1938, p. 238; Id., *Die Religionen Irans*, Stuttgart 1965, pp. 34-35; M.N. Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism*, New York-London 1938, pp. 229-30; E. Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and his World*, 1947, p. 569; J. Gonda, *Some Observations on the Relations between "Gods" and "Powers" in the Vedas*, Gravenhage 1957, p. 56; Id., *Die Religionen Indiens I*, Stuttgart 1960, p. 69; R.N. Dandekar, *Some aspects of the Agni Mythology in the Vedas*, in *JOIB* 11.4, 1962, pp. 363-368; G. Dumézil, *Le Puits de Nechtan*, in *Celtica* 6, 1963, pp. 50-61; Id., *Mythe et épopée III*, Paris 1973, pp. 21-89; J. Puhvel, *Aquam Extinguere*, in *JIES* 1.3, 1973; C. Scott Littleton, *Poseidon as a reflex of Indo-European 'Source of Waters' God*, in *JIES* 1.4, 1973, p. 423-440; M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism I*, Leiden 1975, pp. 41-53; Id., s.v. *Apam Napāt*, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica II*, pp. 148-150; E. Banks Findly, *The "Child of Waters:" A Revaluation of Vedic Apam Napāt*, in *Numen* 26.2, 1979, pp. 165-184; A. Panaino, *The Origin of the Pahlavi Burz "Apam Napāt." A Semasiological Study*, in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 48, 1995, pp. 117-126.

² The name of Apām Napāt does not constitute a problem at all under the linguistic point of view: the god's name shows a genitive plural of the Indo-Iranian stem *ap- "water" (going back to Indo-European *āp-, see J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern-München 1959, 1969, p. 51) and the substantives *nāpāt-* and *napāt-*, coming from the Indo-Iranian form with alternating stem **napāt-* / *naptr-* sometimes translated as "grandson" but more likely meaning properly "child," descendants, "offspring" (see C. Bartholomae, *AWI*, col. 1939). The restored Indo-European stem is **nepōt-* / *nept-* (Latin *nepōs* Greek νέποδες, ἀνεψίος = Av. *naptiia-* < IE **nept-iyō-*; Ancient English *nefa*, see J. Pokorny, *IEW*, p. 764; M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefaßtes Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, Heidelberg 1956-1980, II, p. 132 ff.). From this latter, viz. *nept-*, comes *naptūnus*, through **nept-o-no-*, and Old Irish *nechtan*.

Napāt belongs to the common religious heritage of the archaic cultures of Iran and India. A mainly comparative perspective of study is therefore fully legitimate and decidedly advisable, even though some difficulties present themselves at the very beginning. Before reaching the core of the subject, I would like to make a few preliminary and necessary remarks.

The study of Apām Napāt, if considered under a comparative point of view, is involved, in fact, in the general problems concerning the possibilities and the limits of the comparative analysis itself, at least in the field of Indo-Iranian studies. If the idea of a cultural Indo-Iranian unity is generally assumed and firmly established, on the other hand, it is often followed by attempts to reconstruct in detail the common ancient pantheon, or parts of it. These attempts encounter many obstacles. The most difficult one concerns the lack of proof of the results of a pre-historical comparative inquiry. Whenever we want to restore the original features of a deity or the original religious concepts belonging to the unitarian archaic Indo-Iranian people, we can only propose hypotheses which are in no way verifiable, because no written evidence is available up to this time.

Entering deeply into the field of pre-history is undeniably a very delicate undertaking. It seems to be even more problematic if we carefully consider that this undertaking often appears as a solution for facing the difficulties encountered in the attempt to interpret the religious systems strictly as they present themselves in the texts. The deities, as they appear in the Avesta and in the R̥gveda, are complex and articulate entities that give many dilemmas to those who try, after such a long period of time, to explain their features and importance in the lives of the men of ancient Iran and India. Their roles and the relationships between them, as well as the meaning they express for the ancient way of thinking, are so intricate in the original texts, as to give rise to a natural need for simplification by the researchers who interpret them. I am referring to a trait that often distinguishes the attempts to specify the original physiognomy of the gods, both in the field of comparative studies and in that of one and the same culture.³ This trait consists of depriving the divinities under discussion of some features thought to be secondary, in order to declare the pre-eminence of others thought to display the real and genuine nature of the gods. The complex data furnished by the texts do not allow such a simplification, which can hardly be seen as a living form: the supposed essential features of the divinities are never directly recognizable in their pure form in the stage of religious thought referred to by the sources, but are rather inextricably mingled with the supposed secondary traits.⁴ These facts usually compel us to assign the genuine nature of the gods to the period of the origins and therefore to talk about a primitive nature.

The historical perspective, as far as religious Indo-Iranian prehistory is concerned, appears to be decidedly unstable because of two types of problems: the first one is related to the lack of direct, viz. written, evidence. This kind of hindrance reveals how risky is any attempt in using reconstructions in order to understand the attested religious stages; the second concerns the need for clearness, by the interpreter, which often leads to curtail the profile of the gods of various features in order to introduce the concept of original, genuine nature. In my opinion, this practice can not become a proper and useful method of research, because it would be of little help in understanding the role of the gods as it can be actually found in the reference material.

For facing the inquiry on Apām Napāt, I suggest not to neglect the previous remarks which concern the problem of how the notion of cultural unity is to be considered and the possible usefulness of comparisons. I will avoid going back to prehistory in order not to risk recreating a

I cannot deal in this occasion with the possible historical connections between Apām Napāt, Neptunus and Ποσειδών. As far as these are concerned I refer to the articles of G. Dumézil, J. Puhvel and C. Scott Littleton quoted above. I just would like to draw briefly your attention on the etymology of Ποσειδών proposed by C. Scott Littleton. The scholar suggests that Poseidon should be considered as coming from an IE compound **potis-dā-*, with the meaning "Lord of the Waters" or "Husband of the Waters" and with the IE root **dā-* "flowing water," see Vedic *dānu-*, Av. *dānu-*, "river, stream" (see J. Pokorny, *IEW*, p. 175; C. Bartholomae, *AIW*, col. 733-34; A. Carnoy, *Les noms des dieux et des héros d'Homère*, in *Les études classiques* 23, 1954, p. 342). The traditional etymology of Poseidon considers, as it is well known, Δα as a pre-Greek form of, γη "earth", and interprets the name of the god as "Husband of the Earth," from a vocative *Πότει Δαζ (see H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch II*, Heidelberg 1970, p. 583-584).

³ As far as Apām Napāt is concerned, see for instance Hermann Oldenberg's and Mary Boyce's interpretations (*op. cit.*).

⁴ In an article appeared in the *Indo-Iranian Journal*, no. 5, 1961-62, titled *Remarks on the Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, p. 42, F.B.J. Kuiper attentively wrote: "The question naturally arises, why there should be any need of such theories on the part of the modern historian of religion to explain *how* a god *became* a water-god, whereas the evidence does not suggest that he at any time was *not*."

primitive *Apām Napāt. The latter would necessarily be a conjecture devoid of benefit for the understanding of the real and actual value of two different gods, viz. Zoroastrian *Apām Napāt* and Vedic *Apām Napāt*, in two, by now, different cultures. The method of comparative approach is here rather meant to be a tool for inquiring whether traces of the same spheres of meaning and clues of a similar mentality can be found, in ancient Iran and ancient India, regarding the spheres of experience which involve Apām Napāt. Such a definition of the question no doubt comes from the idea, especially established thanks to the linguistic inquiry, of a common past. The results, if they are positive (and they actually are), would confirm, once again, this well known notion. Nevertheless, the Indo-Iranian prehistory, especially in the fields of religion and mythology, is a general reference we can hardly determine in detail lay means of statements concerning specific subjects. On the contrary, it is rather possible, in my opinion, to illustrate in detail the affinities and resemblances that link two historical cultures, finding traces of a past unity, but chiefly indicating the affinities still existing at the time of the sources.

Apām Napāt appears some thirty times in the Avesta, exclusively in the sections written in Younger Avestan.⁵ The characteristic attributes which accompany him in an almost fixed formula are *bərəzañt-*, *kšaθriia-*, *kšāēta-*, *auruuat.aspa-*. Apām Napāt shares the attribute *auruuat.aspa-* only with the Sun (*huuarə*), whereas the great title of *ahura-* so often possessed by him is shared only by Miθra and Ahura Mazdā.

In this short paper I would like to focus my attention on Yašt 19.51, which I believe is the most important passage regarding Apām Napāt, at least as a starting point for understanding the role of this god in the Zoroastrian pantheon. In this case, in fact, a feature of Apām Napāt is highlighted explicitly, which is, as far as I can see, extremely important and fundamental in the nature of this god, viz. the guardianship over *xʷarənah-*. The passage reads as follows: Yašt 19.51:

*āētaṭ xʷarənō frapinuuta
 āuui zraiiō vouru.kašəm
 a.dīm haθra haṅgəuruuuiiaṭ
 apəm napā auruuat.aspō
 taṭca iziiāiti
 apəm napā auruuat.aspō
 aētaṭ xʷarənō haṅgrəfšāne
 yaṭ axʷarətəm
 bunəm zraiiəṅhō gufrahe
 bune jafranəm vairiianəm*

A possible translation is: "This *xʷarənah-* went to swell into Sea Vourukaš. There, Apām Napāt endowed with swift horses noticed⁶ it suddenly and Apām Napāt endowed with swift horses longs for it: This *xʷarənah-* that is hidden (occulted) I want to grasp (and take) to the bottom of the deep sea, on the bottom of the deep recesses."⁷

Thanks to this passage we immediately learn how essential it is, for our purposes regarding Apām Napāt, the meaning and the religious importance of *xʷarənah-*. The nature of the concept of *xʷarə*

⁵ The passages are: Yašt 2.4; Yašt 5.72; Yašt 8.4, 34; Yašt 13.95; Yašt 19.51-52; Yasna 1.5, 2.5, 3.7, 4.10, 6.4, 7.7, 65.12, 70.6, 71.23; Vīspərəd 7.5; Gāh 1.9, 2.10, 3.2, 3.8, 3.9-10, 3.11, 4.11, 5.8; Sīh Rozag 1.7, 1.30, 2.7, 2.30.

⁶ Against the idea that *haṅgəuruuuiiaṭ* could mean "he grasped / he seized" (see, for instance, A. Hintze, *Der Zamyād Yašt*, p. 269: "ergriff") see H. Humbach / P.R. Ichaporia, *Zamyād Yasht*, Wiesbaden 1998, pp. 44, 131, where *haṅgəuruuuiiaṭ* is translated as "(*Apām Napāt*...) reached for (it)". The verb *grab-* also means "to seize with one's mind, to comprehend, to perceives," as Prof. Humbach kindly reminded me (see J. Kellens I E. Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques I*, Wiesbaden 1988, p. 239, with regard to the Old Avestan use of *grab-*, with double accusative, with the meaning of "saisir, percevoir que acc. est acc.").

⁷ Since the ending of *bunəm* could be influenced by the preceding *axʷarətəm*, Almut Hintze, *op. cit.* p. 270, emended it with *xʷune* (see also H. Humbach / P.R. Ichaporia, *op.cit.*, pp. 44, 131; the same correction already in C.Bartholomae, *Arische Forschungen I*, Halle 1882, p. 124, and K.F. Geldner, *Drei Yasht aus dem Zendavesta*, Stuttgart 1884, p. 39). This solution restores the possible anaphora in lines 9 and 10 and makes the passage no doubt more intelligible and clear. Nevertheless, the manuscript tradition, which shows exclusively *bunəm*, recommends prudence and suggests the possibility of seeing actually a *variatio* in the text (C. Bartholomae and K.F. Geldner themselves renounced the emendation in *AIW* col. 968, and in the edition of the Avesta). Adopting the unanimous textual transmission, it is a matter of explaining the function possessed by the accusative *bunəm*. According to my opinion, an idea of motion connoting *haṅgrəfšāne* to be possible: the translation given above follows this suggestion, but could be also replaced by another translation such as "I want to grasp this *xʷarənah-* ... , (going) to the bottom of the deep see."

nah- is one of the most problematic subjects in Zoroastrian studies, from a linguistic point of view as well as in the field of the history of religions. It is well known how intricate the inquiry of the etymology of *x^varənah-* is, a problem which still involves the contribution of scholars (recently a new hypothesis has been put forward by A. Lubotsky).⁸ It is not possible in this short paper to deal exhaustively with this complex and large subject. In spite of the plurality: and the discordance of opinions, it is generally accepted that the concept of *x^varənah-*, one of the main issues in the vision of the world contained in the Younger Avesta, is closely related to the ideas of glory and splendor. I will confine myself to mentioning only some of its features, because of their considerable importance for our subject.

The *x^varənah-* is explicitly equated to a fire in Yašt 10.127. This evidence, as it is often underlined, is in favor of the igneous nature of the *x^varənah-*. The passage reads as follows: *nixša*

⁸ *Avestan x^varənah- the etymology and concept*, in *Spache und Kultur der Indogermanen. Akten der X. Fachtagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, Innsbruck 22-28. September 1996*, herausgegeben von W. Meid, Innsbruck 1998, pp. 479-488. A. Lubotsky's hypothesis starts from the phonological problem that arises whenever we compare the Avestan word *x^varənah* with its cognates belonging to other old and middle Iranian languages. I will dwell briefly upon this point: initial *hu-* is shown only by the Avestan word and by the Pahlavi *xwarrah*, which is generally considered as a loan-word from Avestan (see G. Gnoli, *Über das iranische *hwarnah-: lautliche, morphologische und etymologische Probleme. Zum Stand der Forschung*, in *Altorientalische Forschungen* 23, 1996, p. 175; H. Humbach / P.R. Ichaporia, *op. Cit.*, p. 14). All the other forms show initial *f-*: Old Pers. *°farnah-*, Manichean Middle Pers. and Parthian *prh, frh / farrah, farroh /*, Buddhist Sogdian *prn*, Manichean Sogdian *frn*, Christian Sogdian *fn*, khotanese *phārra*, Bactrian *φαρ(ρ)ο*, Ossetic *farn*, Tocarain *parām, parn, perne*. In facing these data, the traditional view considers the development *hu > f* as a specific trait of the language of the Medes, since this development does not suit the phonetic features of Old Persian: *farnah-* would be originally a Median form, adopted in Old Persian as a loanword and subsequently spread by the Achemedians throughout their kingdom (see A. Meillet / É. Benveniste, *Grammaire du vieux-perse*, Paris 1931, pp. 7-9, 63; K. Hoffmann, *Altiranisch in Handbuch der Orientalistik I.4.1*, herausgegeben von B. Spuler, Leiden-Köln 1958, p.4). Two observations oppose this view: on one hand, we can not hold for certain that the phonological development *hu > f* is a Median feature and therefore exclude that it could belong as well to any other Iranian language unknown to us (see P. Lecoq, *La langue des inscriptions achéménides*, in *Acta Iranica* 2, Leiden 1974, p. 57; P.O. Skjærvø, *Farnah: mot mède en vieux-perse?* in *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique* 78.1, Paris 1983, pp. 246-251); on the other hand, there are many doubts about the assumption that the word *farnah-* was so important in the royal ideology of the Achemedians as to be spread thanks to their conquests, since it is completely absent in the inscriptions of this dynasty (see J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La Royauté iranienne et le x^varənah-*, in *Iranica*, a cura di G. Gnoli e A.V. Rossi, Napoli 1979, p. 383; G. Gnoli, *Politique religieuse et conception de la royauté sous les Achéménides*, in *Acta Iranica* 2, Leiden 1974, pp. 170 ff.). These undeniable difficulties induced P.O. Skjærvø to propose another solution, according to which the development **hwarnah-> farnah-* would be the result of the dissimilation of *hw...h* into *f...h*. The Avestan only, apart from the other Iranian languages, would have changed initial *hw-* into *x^v-*, thus distinguishing it from final *h*, early enough as not to need the dissimilation (see P.O. Skjærvø, *art. cit.*, pp. 255-257; G. Gnoli *On Old Persian farnah-*, in *Acta Iranica* 30, Leiden-Brill 1990, p. 86; Id., *art. cit.*, in *AoF* 23, pp. 174-175). The only perplexity aroused by this hypothesis concerns the idea that the mentioned dissimilation could have occurred identically in such a great number of languages. By stressing the importance of this uncertain point in Skjærvø's theory, A. Lubotsky puts forward his new solution that directly involves the etymology of *x^varənah-*. The scholar maintains that the original Iranian form should not be looked for in Avestan *x^varənah-< *hwarnah-*, but rather in *farnah-*, which he regards as deriving from proto-Iranian **parnah-*. He finds two main arguments in favor of this etymology: (1) observing that, even if in the Avestan language the compounds with second member beginning with *x^v-* usually present themselves in the form *-š(.).x^v-* after *r, u, i*, because of the Ruki rule, *x^v-* remains unchanged only in compounds with *x^varənah-* (and in three compounded verbs which are not to be neglected, see Lubotsky, *art. cit.*, p. 481); *x^v-* in *x^varənah-* therefore can hardly represent proto-Iranian **hw<* Indo-European **sw-*; (2) finding out a possible Vedic parallel in *pāriṇas*, full property, omnipossession, sovereignty, abundance", that goes back to IE root **pelH_i*, "to fill." The development maintained by A. Lubotsky would be therefore: IE *pelH_i-nos->* Indo-Iranian **parhnas-*.

Since the Ossetic is the only Iranian language that shows the regular shift from **p* to *f* this latter phonological development ought to be regarded as belonging to some old Scythian dialect from which **farnah-*, for pan-Iranian **parnah-*, would have been adopted by all other Iranian languages. *X^varənah-* would be the result of the adaptation to the Avestan phonological system which does not allow initial *f-* before a vowel. The Vedic passages, adduced by A. Lubotsky as comparisons, are of great interest, especially those concerning the expression Myra *,r~nasa* which is directly comparable to the Avestan formula read *~Vm3n~7hara* Nevertheless, the occurrence of the Avestan attribute *p~r3na~haanf-* "abundant" (Yast 5.130; see A. Lubotsky, *art. If*, p. 487), which testify the existence of a substantive **pw3na~*, perfect parallel of Vedic *pandas'* seems to me to be still problematic. If otherwise it is possible to think that the genuine Avestan word was substituted by the Scythian loan-word or, at least' overshadowed and confined by it into a marginal role, nevertheless some general questions of historical nature remain still unresolved: why the term **faro~* would have been borrowed from a Scythian language? On the basis of which data are we allowed to think that the concept of *\$ farms-* was primarily drawn up in the bosom of the culture of the Scythians? What can make us believe that the concept of **f~n~* has spread among all Iranian populations under a so decisive influence of the Scythian culture as to induce those populations to take directly from that culture the word that expresses it?

ta ahmāt vazata ātaxš yō upa.suktō uyrām yō kauuaēm xʷarənō "In front of him (viz. Miθra) flies the Fire that is blazing, that is the strong *xʷarənah-* of the Kavis."⁹

Another passage which is of fundamental importance for us points to the creative power of the *xʷarənah-* and to its function in the cosmogony brought about by Ahura Mazda: (*uyrām yō kauuaēm xʷarənō*) *yašt asti ahure mazdā / yaθ dāmān daθašt ahurō mazdā / pouruca vohuca pouruca srīra ca / pouruca abdaca pouruca frašaca / pouruca bāmiiāca*. The translation is as follows: "(The mighty *xʷarənah-* of the Kavis) which belongs to Ahura Mazda in as much as Ahura Mazda has created the creatures (or so that A.M. can create), the good ones in great number, the beautiful ones in great number, the marvelous ones in great number, the bright ones in great number, the luminous ones in great number."

In Yašt 19.51 Apām Napāt takes possession of the *xʷarənah-* that seeks shelter in the waters of sea Vourukaša, after having flown away from Yima and after Âtarš and Aži Dahāka have contended for it in vain. This episode concerns, most probably, the mythological theme and symbol of the fire in the waters, which is also well attested in Vedic sources, as we shall see later on.

The *xʷarənah-* hidden in the waters is said to be *axʷarəta-*. The meaning of this attribute is obscure and embodies another well known dilemma in the field of Avestan studies. I will briefly dwell upon it in order to put forward some remarks and suggestions. The Pahlavi translation of *axʷarəta-* is *agrift* which has been rendered as "unattainable, unseizable" (even though it is more likely to mean "unattained, not seized") as often as this meaning has been transposed to the Avestan word, in this way neglecting its morphological nature. In fact, even if the etymology proposed some fifty-six years ago by H.W. Bailey¹⁰ from **xvar* to "take" were accepted, *axʷarəta-* should actually be translated as "not seized" or "unappropriated,"¹¹ being undoubtedly a past participle. *Axʷarəta-* presents itself only in agreement with *xʷarənah-* and only in the central section of the Zamyād Yašt (Yašt 19), where the *xʷarənah-* actually escapes all those who try to grasp it, except Apām Napāt.

Another possibility, however, for understanding the meaning of *axʷarəta-* is to apply to the Indo-Iranian root **svar-* "to illuminate, to shine" and to translate *axʷarəta-* "not illuminated, occulted, subtracted from the light of the sun."¹²

⁹ See I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge 1967, pp. 136-137; G. Gnoli, *Un particolare aspetto del simbolismo della luce Mazdeismo e nel Manicheismo*, in *AION* 12, Napoli 1962, p. 99; Id., Note sullo «*Xʷarənah-*» in *Acta Iranica* 23, Leiden 1984, p. 211; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Le xʷarənah-*, in *AION-L* 5, Napoli 1963, p. 22. The idea that *ātaxš* and *xʷarənah-* can be two separate subjects of *vazata* (F. Wolff, *Avesta*, Straßburg 1910, p. 218; A. Hintze, *op. cit.*, p. 26) is clearly unlikely: *vazata* is a singular third person and *yō* is masculine and should therefore agree only with *ātaxš* since *xʷarənah-* is neuter (see G. Gnoli, *art. cit.*, in *AoF* 23, pp. 172-173).

¹⁰ Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books, Oxford 1943, pp. 1-77.

¹¹ H. Humbach / P.R. Ichaporia, *op. cit.*, 16; see also B. Jacobs, *Das Chvarnah – Zam Stand der Forschung in Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 119, 1987, p. 226: "unergriffen."

¹² The inquiry on the etymology of *axʷarəta-* is closely related to that of *xʷarənah-* since the expression *axʷarəta-* *xʷarənah-* usually regarded as *figura etimologica*. Notwithstanding the large debate among scholars a final solution to the matter has not been reached yet. On the one hand, stands the above mentioned etymology first proposed by H.W. Bailey and nowadays widely shared (see N. Sims-Williams' *Inaugural Lecture*, London 1997, p. 24; H. Humbach / P.R. Ichaporia, *op. cit.*, p. 16; J. Kellens, *De la naissance des montagnes à la fin du temps: le Yašt 19*, in *Annuaire du Collège de France 1997-1998*, p. 742); on the other, an etymology that derives *xʷarənah-* and *axʷarəta-* from the IE root **swel-* "to burn without flame" is held in very high esteem as well (see A. Hintze, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32, 237-240, under the suggestion of K. Hoffmann; G. Gnoli, *art. cit.*, in *AoF* 23, pp. 171, 178; A. Panaino, review of *Hintze, Der Zamyād-Yašt*, in *Kratylos* 41 Wiesbaden 1997, pp. 66-67). This latter etymology links the concept of *xʷarənah-* and the meaning of *axʷarəta-* with the idea of light and fire as does also the traditional interpretation that, otherwise joins etymologically *xʷarənah-* / *axʷarəta-* with *huuar-* "sun" (H. Lommel, *Aw. axʷarəta-*: *Awestische Einzelstudien II*, in *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik* 2, 1923, pp. 225-233; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *art. cit.*, in *AION-L* 5, p.25; J. Pokorny, *IEW*, p. 881). The derivation from IE **swel* starts from the exigence to differ from the traditional view: the latter infact has been rejected (J. Kellens / E. Pirart, *Les textes vieli-avestiques*, Wiesbaden 1990, 1991, II p. 236, III p. 262; A. Hintze, *op. cit.*, p.28) adducing arguments which, in my opinion, it is still worth while to dwell upon. Since Avestan *huuar-* and Vedic *svār-* are disyllabic and go back to IE **seH₂wel* / **suH²(e)l* (Gr. *ἀελίος*, *ἥλιος*, Hom. *ἥελίος* from a previous **sāwel-io-s* > *âFελίος*; Got. *Sauil*, *sunno*, Lat. *sōl* < **suH₂ol-*) with the heteroclitite suffix *-wel-* / *-wen-* (Old Av. gen. sin. *xʷəng*) and since the Gathic hapax *xʷarənā* (Yasna 51.18) is very likely to be monosyllabic (see also M.C. Monna *The Gathas of Zarathushtra: A Reconstruction of the Text*, Amsterdam 1978, p. 84), *xʷarənah* has been thought not to belong to the same root as *huuar-*. As far as the syllabic quantity is concerned, passages like Yasna 50.2 and 53.4 are worth while considering. In these instances, in fact, the root of *huuarə* and *xʷənuuat* is no doubt monosyllabic even if we

G. Gnoli thought the *ax^varətam x^varənō* to be the "splendor without light,"¹³ namely the one that takes refuge in the aquatic darkness of sea |Vourokaša. He gave the convincing demonstration of how the Pahlavi *agrift* could have been coherent to the Avestan intention. *Agrift* is in fact used in Pahlavi literature for characterizing the *mēnōg* state of existence, in regards to its specific feature of intangibility, ideal and germinal state.¹⁴ In the same way, *ax^varəta-* defines the *x^varənah-* dwelling in the waters as a virtual, potential force wrapped in the seminal symbolism of the waters. The *x^varənah-* nevertheless is *ax^varəta-* even before sinking into the abyss. The expression *ax^varətam x^varənō* cannot therefore simply indicate the *x^varənah-* in the waters, but rather, it can be suggested, the *x^varənah-* which is no longer manifest.

Be it "unappropriated", "occulted" or "without light", the *ax^varətam x^varənō* could be considered, in my opinion, as the image of the burning creative energy which has entered into a state of concealing (hiding). It is a potential, virtual condition of the *x^varənah-* whose beginning is in the very moment when no one succeeds in holding it and whose culminating event and symbolic representation is embodied by the sinking into the waters, receptacle of all germs. On the basis of the textual evidence, especially the structure of Yašt 19, we can say, almost certainly, that *kauuaē m x^varənō* and *ax^varətam x^varənō* are two distinct states of the same igneous phenomenon. In Yašt 19 the sections concerning the two conditions of the *x^varənah-* are openly divided: *kauuaiia-* and *ax^varəta* are never used at the same time as attributes of *x^varənah-* so does Sīh Rōzāg 1.28

would expect it to be disyllabic (see J. Kellens I E. Pirart, *op.cit.*, II pp. 92, 175, 184, 189; III pp. 242, 269; G. Gnoli art.cit., in *AoF* 23, pp. 176-177. It is possible therefore to suppose that *x^varənā* in Yasna 51.18 can easily be one of those instances where the root *huuar* / *x^var* is considered as monosyllabic. Even in the Rgveda we find an instance where *svār-*, which otherwise is always disyllabic, must be read as monosyllabic. I am referring to RV 2.35.6a (*ásvasya átra jánimāsyá ca svar*, A. Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader for Students*, cit., p. 72).

How can we provide a fit explanation for these syllabic variations? The Indian alternation *svār-* / *súr-* is not equal to the syllabic variation of *huuar-* in the quoted Avestan passages: the former is an apophonic alternation between weak and heavy stems and has a morphological value that cannot be attributed to the latter. Otherwise, the cases of *huuarē* and *x^vənuuaṭ* on the one hand and that of *svār-* in RV 2.35.6a on the other seem to be decidedly comparable. In both cases the monosyllabic root seems to be due to metrical exigences. The question suddenly arises whether the same metrical exigences account for the syllabic quantity of *x^varənā* in Yasna 51.18 or not. For being positive the answer would require instances where *x^varənah-* is surely endowed with a disyllabic root. Passages like Yašt 19.34f: *auuaēnō x^varənō fraēštō*, Yašt 19. 45a: *uyrəm ax^varətam x^varənō*, Yašt 19. 56i-k: *taṭ x^varənō apatacaṭ* / *taṭ x^varənō apa.hiḍaṭ* are generally considered constituted by seven syllables. If the attempt at restoring the line of eight syllables is a legitimate operation in respect of the prosody of the Yašts, we can suppose that in these instances *x^varənah-* actually presents three syllables, viz. a disyllabic root.

But, as statements about the Younger Avestan prosody are so often surrounded by uncertainty, another possibility is worth to be considered in order not to separate *x^varənah-* and *huuar-* under the etymological point of view. I am referring to the suggestion, already put forward by G. Ito ~ Gathica XIII: Av. *ax^varəta- x^varənah-*, in Orient 11, 1975, p. 39), that *x^varənah-* could be formed on the monosyllabic weak form of the root, corresponding to the Vedic stem *súr-*. In this case the closest comparison with *x^varənah-* would be Indian *súrya-* (the exact parallel would be **súr-nas-*), instead of *svārənara-*.

If these considerations were actually fit for overcoming the separation of *x^varənah-* and *huuar-* because of syllabic quantity, further difficulties for their etymological unity would still be represented by the fact that *x^varənah-* shows the IE suffix *-nes-* / *-nos-*, which needs a verbal root (A. Meillet, *Sur le suffixe indo-européen *-nes-*, in *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique* 15, Paris 1908-9, pp. 254-264). This verbal root has often been denied with regard to *huuar-* / *svār-* see Bailey H.W., *op. cit.*, 2nd edition, Oxford 1971, p. XXIV; A. Hintze, *op. cit.*, p. 28). Nevertheless, apart from Old Indian *svar-* "to shine, to illuminate" (found in *svarati*, Kaus. Up.; *svaráyantam arcis ā* Atharvaveda 13.2.2; *pratisvara-*, Nirukta 7.23), which could perfectly well be traced back to IE **seH₂wel-* (M. Mayrhofer, *op. cit.*, Knapp. 563-567) rather than to **swel-* "to burn," the most convincing confirmation of a verbal root for *huuar-* / *svār-* is, according to my opinion, still represented by Vedic *súrta-* and *asúrta-* (RV 10.82.4: *asúrte súrte rájasi* AV 10.3.9: *asúrtam rájo*, see H. Lommel, *art. cit.*, G. Ito, *art. cit.*, p. 38-39). These two words should be regarded as past participles, coming from IE **(n)-syH₂I-to-* and formed in a similar way as *súrya-* sun (< **suH₂I-yo-*). The best Avestan parallel to Vedic *asúrta-*, according to this perspective, would be *ax^varəta-*, as it has often been underlined. Apart from the three mentioned etymological interpretations, that derive *x^varənah-* and *ax^varəta-* respectively from **x^var-* "to take," **x^var-* "to burn without flames" and **x^var-* "to illuminate", stands A. Lubotsky's etymological inquiry (see note 8), which involves of course *ax^varəta-*, thought to be a loan from Scythian **afarta-* < Proto-Iranian **-parta-*, meaning "ungiven, undistributed" (see A. Lubotsky, *art. cit.*, p. 480, note 3).

¹³ «*Ax^varətam x^varənō*» in *AION* 13, 1963, pp. 295-298; recently G. Gnoli (*art. cit.*, in *AoF* 23, p. 179) accepted A. Hintze's etymology from IE **swel-* and proposed the meaning "unerschöpflich" developed from a previous "nicht verbrannt."

¹⁴ See G. Gnoli, *art. cit.* in *AION* 12.

that clearly distinguishes *kauuaēm* and *ax^varətəm x^varənō*.¹⁵ I would cautiously suggest the possibility of considering this to be a differentiation between a seminal-ideal state of the *x^varənah-* (*mēnōg*) and a manifest, actual, concrete one (*gēṭīg*). This point should be undeniably examined more carefully and remains in this occasion only a suggestion.

At the moment it is suffice to say that the *ax^varətəm x^varənō* in Yašt 19.51 seems to correspond in all respects to the idea of a creative and powerful fire hidden in the waters.

We are often concerned with a similar fire also in the Rgveda One of the main and well known features of Agni is that it is the germ of the waters, *apām gārbho*. He is born in the waters: *tvām adbhyás ... jāyase* "you (Agni) are born from the waters" (RV 2.1.1). This concept seems to be closely related to the idea of the sun hidden in the waters: *samudrá ā gūlhām ā sūryam* RV 10.72.7).¹⁶ Otherwise, the sun appears in the aquatic dwelling in the shape of a bird, which reminds us of the *x^varənah-* flying away from Yima's head in the same shape: *mərəgahə kəhrpa vā rəynahe* (Yašt 19.35). The waters themselves are said to be *svārvatīh* "endowed with the sun."

The symbol of a hidden and germinal fire has clear creative and cosmogonical implications. RV 10.121.7 hints quite explicitly at this idea: *āpo ha yád brhaṭīr vísvam āyan gārbham dádhāna janá yanṭīr agnīm / táto devānam sám avartatāsur ékaḥ* "When the Waters came bringing the world as a germ, generating Agni, from there then sprang the life of the gods."¹⁷ Agni / Sūrya can therefore be called *pratna- retas-*, "primordial seed" (RV 8.6.30).

If in the concept of Agni's birth possessed by the Vedic seers, Agni could take the shape of an embryo (*gārbha-*) nothing is natural but the fact that he could also appear as a child and therefore be equal to Apām Napāt, "the Child of the Waters". A passage of the Vājasaneyīsaṃhitā (8.24) explicitly states this identification: *agnéh ānīkam apā āviveśa apām nāpāt* "Apām Napāt has entered the waters, the face of Agni". The features of Apām Napāt provided by the hymn 2.35, which is addressed to him, correspond in the most complete way to the idea of the fire generated and nourished by the waters: Apām Napāt is that fire itself. The waters surround the god who is shining¹⁸ and feed him.¹⁹ Apām Napāt therefore increases in vigor.²⁰

As far as the Vedic evidence is concerned we can reliably state the coincidence between Agni's embryonic aspect and Apām Napāt. In my opinion, we cannot think of Apām Napāt as simple epithet of Agni. These two gods do not seem to lose their own individuality. The great god Agni, who lives in every igneous manifestation, embodies at his birth, viz., in a particular feature of his nature, the fiery germ of life hidden in the waters, which is also identical to Apām Napāt. The two deities seem therefore to be expressions of the same reality, in a symbolic and conceptual fluidity that also involves the god Soma. Since we can't discuss this latter deity now, it is suffice to say, as it is known, that he is said to be *apām gārbha-* too.

The first pāda of the sixth stanza in an hymn addressed to Apām Napāt reads as follows: *ásvasyāt ra jānimāsyá ca svār*, which can be translated, in spite of the morphological difficulties of the passage, as "in this place (viz., in the waters) is the birth of the horse and of this sun" (*svār*

¹⁵ Both G. Ito and A. Hintze, by means of different arguments, refuse the negative function of *a-* in *ax^varəta-* and translate respectively with "shining" and "glänzend," in this way depriving the expression *ax^varətəm x^varənō* of the stylistic and symbolic power of the oxymoron (see A Panaino, art. cit., in *Kratylos* 41, p. 67). Especially, these two solutions cancel the particular nature of the *ax^varətəm x^varənō* and its distinction from the *kauuaēm x^varənō* which, on the contrary, is clear in the sources (see H. Humbach / P.R. Ichaporia, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16).

¹⁶ See Luders, *Varuṇa I*, dem Nachlaß herausgegeben von L. Alsdorf, Göttingen 1951, p. 331, who wrote: "Die Sonne ist nur eine Erscheinungsform des Agni."

¹⁷ See F.B.J. Kuiper, *Cosmogony and Conception: a Query*, in *History of Religions* 10.2, Chicago 1970, p. 237.

¹⁸ See for instance the 4th stanza: *tām ... pári yanty āpaḥ / sá šukrēbhīḥ śīkvabhī revád asmé / dīdāyānidhmó ghṛtá nimig apsú* "The waters surround him; he prodigally shines among us without fuel and wrapped in butter, endowed with luminous and nimble (flames)."

¹⁹ RV 2.35.5: *asmai tisró avyathyāya nārīr / devāya devīr didhīsanty ánnam / kītā ivópa hí prasarsré apsú / sá pīyū sam dhayati pūrvāsūnām* // the three women, the goddesses, wish to provide him with food, so that he does not waver. He stretched out (strongly) in the waters as towards the abysses (and) sucks the milk of the primordial mothers."

²⁰ RV 2.35.7 *svadhām pīpāya subhv ánnam atti / só apām nāpād ūrjáyann apsv antár vasudéyāya vudhaté ví bhāti*, "He ... swells his own vital force, he eats excellent food; Apām Napāt, increasing his strength in the waters, glitters in order to grant goods to the pious."

probably refers here to Apāṃ Napāt himself). This evidence significantly points at the special link between Vedic Apāṃ Napāt and the horse, which is firmly sustained even by the usual epithet *āsu héman-* "of swift impulse" and by a passage like R̥V 1.186.5: *nápātam apám junāma / manojúvo vísaṇo yám váhanti* "we shall incite Apāṃ Napāt whom stallions swift as thoughts lead."

As far as this point is concerned, it is worth noticing that *auruuat.aspa-* "of swift-horses" is a specific attribute of Avestan *Apqm Napāt*, which he shares only with the Sun: see for instance Yašt 6.1: *huuarə.xšaētəm aməšəm raēm / auruuat.aspəm yazamaide*. This datum is very eloquent in confirming the remarkable bond that joins *Apqm Napāt* with the igneous element, first of all with the *x^varənah-* "parcelle de soleil", as J. Duchesne-Guillemin called it.²¹

This fundamental link however is devoid of any implication of identity. Whereas Vedic Apāṃ Napāt is at any probability the fire in the waters itself, in the Avestan world he appears essentially as the great custodian of it.²²

A fundamental mythological and religious motive testify how the Vedic and the Avestan symbolic complexes concerning the fire in the waters draw from similar and very close ideas, which are treated nevertheless in very different ways. In both cases however cosmogonical and spermatological implications are still clearly recognizable. They involve directly indeed even Apāṃ Napāt. R̥V 2.35.2: *apām nápād asuryásya mahná / vísvāny aryó bhúvanā jajāna* // "Apāṃ Napāt the lord, has created all beings thanks to the greatness of his power of Asura."

The obligatory comparison is the one with the remarkable passage of Yašt 19.52:

*bərəzaṇtəm ahurəm xsaθrīm
xsaētəm apqm napātəm
āuruuat.aspəm yazamaide
āršānəm zauuanō.sum
yō nərəuš tataša
šrut.gaošōtəmō asti yəzimnō*

"The high lord, mighty, brilliant *Apqm Napāt* endowed with swift horses we worship, the male who causes to prosper the one who invokes (him), (he) who created the men, (he) who shaped the men,²³ (he) who, the god dwelling under the water, listens at his best when invoked."

I think that the surprising faculty of being able to create men attributed to *Apqm Napāt* is due primarily to his possession of the *x^varənah-* and to his full participation to the realm of the germinative waters. How can we conciliate it with the supremacy of Ahura Mazda and is it really in contrast with this supremacy? In my opinion, we are rather dealing with a mere and specific reference to the creative power of the *x^varənah-* and to the aquatic world which can be thought as equal to the *mēnōg bun ī gētīg*, viz., the *mēnōg* state of existence which is the foundation of the *gētīg* existence.²⁴

The idea that *Apqm Napāt* was once a mere attribute of the pre-historical great god *Vouruna (parallel to Vedic Varuṇa) was proposed, as it is well known, by Mary Boyce.²⁵ The power to create possessed by *Apqm Napāt* would be, according to her, a relic of the ancient pre-eminent role of *Vouruna in the pre-Zoroastrian religion. Many arguments, however, are against this hypothesis. Apart from general considerations about pre-historical reconstructions mentioned above, the main obstacles this interpretation must meet with can be summarized as follows: (1) the Vedic evidence is not in favor of the identification between Apāṃ Napāt and Varuṇa. There

²¹ Art. cit., in AION-L 5, p.25.

²² This role is confirmed by the report of Great Bundahišn 26.91, where Burz (which is the Pahlavi name of *Apqm Napāt* derived from the attribute *bərəzaṇt-* see A. Panaino, *art.cit.*, in *AOASH* 48, pp. 118, 124-125) guards over *x warrah*.

²³ See H. Humbach / P.R. Ichaporia, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 132, where *nərəuš* is translated as "heroes", but see also A. Hintze, *op. cit.* p. 271: "Männer", A. Panaino, *art. cit.*, in *AOASH* 48, p. 118-119.

²⁴ See Denkard 398-399, ed D.M. Madan, *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Denkard*, Bombay 1911; cf. G. Gnoli, *Osservazioni sulla dottrina mazdaica della creazione*, in AION 13 pp. 185 ff.

²⁵ *Op. cit.*

are fifteen passages and two entire hymns concerning Apām Napāt in the R̥gveda²⁶ and only in one of those passages (viz. R̥V 10.8.5) Varuna and Apām Napāt could perhaps be identified; (2) the Avestan invocation *miθra-ahura bərəzañta* (Yt. 10.113 /145; Ny. 1.7) which, according to Mary Boyce, would indicate *Miθra* and **Vouruna Apqm Napāt* and which would correspond to the Vedic compound *mitrā-varuṇā*, can not be translated as "Miθra and the High Lord", as M. Boyce does. *Bərəzañta-* is in fact a dual case and compels us to translate with Gershevitch "o exalted Miθra and Ahura!"²⁷ There is no reference in this passage therefore to a god who is alone called *ahura bərəzañt-* and who would probably be *Apqm Napāt*.²⁸

The possession of the *xʷarənah-* appears to be the main feature of *Apqm Napāt* in conformity with the Indo-Iranian symbol of the fire in the waters. I think it to be responsible even for the relationship between *Apqm Napāt* and *Miθra*. Yašt 13.95:

*ida apqm miθrō yō vouru.gaoiiaoitš
fradāt vīspā fratəmatātō daxiiunqm
yaozaiñtīšca rāmaiiaiti
ida apqm napā sūrō
fradāt vīspā fratəmatātō daxiiunqm
yaozaiñtīšca niāsāite ...*

"Henceforth, *Miθra* of wide pastures will strengthen all the authorities of the lands and will pacify (the lands) in turmoil, henceforth, the mighty *Apqm Napāt* will strengthen all the authorities of the lands and will quell (the lands) in turmoil ..."

Miθra is said to possess the *xʷarənah-* to an exceptional and unequalled extent: Yašt 19.35: *miθrə m vispanqm daxiiunqm dañhupaitīm yazamaide yim fradaθat ahurō mazdā xʷarənañhastəməm maniiuuuunqm yazatanqm*, "We worship *Miθra* lord of all the lands, that *Ahura Mazda* has made the most endowed with *xʷarənah-* among the spiritual *yazatas*." The political perspective regarding the safeguard of power and authority in Yašt 13.95 is likely to be connected with the role of *xʷarənah-* in the idea of the sacred sovereignty. The *xʷarənah-*, which is strictly related to the legitimate supreme authority and with the charismatic power, makes his guardian, viz., *Apqm Napāt*, participate to *Miθra*'s activity while securing social ties and political supremacy.

The same determine element is to be found with regards to the link between *Apqm Napāt* and *Ard uuī Surā Anāhitā*. Yašt 5.72:

tqm yazənta ašauuazdā puθrō pourudāxštōiš ašauuazdasca θritasca sāiiuzdrōiš puθra u pa bərəzañtəm ahurəm xšaθrīm xšaētəm apqm napātəm auruuat.aspəm satəm aspanqm a ršnqm hazanrəm gauuqm baēuuarə anumaiianqm.

"*Ašauuazdah*, son of *Pouruđixšti*, *Ašauuazdah* and *θrita*, sons of *Sāiiuzdri*, sacrificed for her (*Arduuī Sūrā Anāhitā*) a hundred male horses, a thousand bulls, ten thousand rams, at the place of the high lord, the powerful, shining *Apqm Napāt* who is endowed with swift horses."

²⁶ Passages concerning Apām Napāt in the R̥gveda are as follows: R̥V 1.22.6; 1.122.4; 1.143.1; 1.186.5; 2.31.6; 3.9.1-2; 5.41.10; 6.13.3; 6.50.13; 7.34.15; 7.35.13; 7.47.2; 10.8.5, 10.92.13; 10.149.2. Hymns 2.35; 10.30.

²⁷ See J. Narten. *Die Aməša Spəntas im Avesta*, Wiesbaden 1982, p. 60, n. 44; A. Panaino, *art. cit.*, in *AOASH* 48, p. 123, n. 12.

²⁸ In fact *ahura- bərəzañt-* could refer either to *Ahura Mazda* or to *Apqm Napāt*. M. Boyce argues in favor of the latter, observing that *Ahura Mazda* is never invoked by the mere title of *ahura-* and maintaining that, on the contrary, *Apqm Napāt* is. This statement is contradicted by the fact that neither *Apqm Napāt* is called *ahura-* without his name being clearly expressed: the formulas are in fact all of the kind of *Yasna* 2.5: *bərəzañtəm ahurəm ... apqm napātəm*. The hypothesis that *apqm napāt* was originally an epithet does not allow this same consideration with reference to the texts at our disposal, where *Apqm Napāt* appears no doubt as a proper name. There is, moreover, no epithet that can be used in antonomasia at the place of *Apqm Napāt* (cf. A. Panaino, *art. cit.*, p. 123). This also accounts for *bərəzañt-*, which, even if it is often used referring to *Apqm Napāt* and it is important for the development of his name in the Pahlavi tradition, is also assigned to *Miθra* (Yašt 10.7, 10.25), *Ahura Mazda* (*Yasna* 57.4) and other divinities (cf. Bartholomae, *AIW*, col. 959-960). In the *Avesta*, *miθra ahura bərəzañta* is more likely to refer to *Miθra* and *Ahura Mazda*, first of all on the basis of the testimony of Ny. 1.7 (called "a condensed hymn to *Mithra*" by I. Gershevitch), which mentions explicitly *Ahura Mazda* before the appearance of the compound (cf. Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-264).

The goddess is thought of as a river containing a great amount of *xʷarənah-*, Yašt 5.96: *arəduuī ... masō xsaiieite xʷarənaŋhō yaθa vīspā imā āpō yā zəmə paiti fratacinti yā amauuaiti fratacaiti* "Areduuī, that flows impetuously, possesses as much *xʷarənah-* as all these waters that flow on the earth."