

Some Remarks about *Druuāspā* and *Yašt 9*

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The goddess

The ninth hymn of the Avestan Corpus is consecrated to *Druuāspā*, a female deity of the Zoroastrian pantheon.¹ Her name² is mentioned in very few cases, both in the Avestan literature (only in *Yt. 9* and *Sīr. I-II.14*) and in the larger Pahlavi one. In *Sīh Rōzag I-11.14*, *Druuāspā* is mentioned as the third entity (*yazata*-), after *Gēuš Tašan* and *Gēuš Uruuan*, who presides over the 14th day of the month, named "day of *Goš*."³

In the Pahlavi texts she is quoted only in the translation of the two *Sīh Rōzag*, in the *Stāyīšn Sīh Rōzag* and then in the Supplementary Texts to the *šayest nē-šāyest*.⁴ Among the Indo-Iranian sources, we can also mention the existence of a Vedic domestic ritual named *Dhruvāśvakalpa* which aims at the obtainance and/or maintenance of strong horses.⁵

Apart from the above mentioned quotations inferred from the strictly religious tradition, we must consider three Bactrian coins, two datable to Kaniska's and one to Huviška's era. These coins bear the image of a standing bearded man, of a trotting horse and the inscription ΛΠΟΟΑÇΠΙΟ on the obverse. It seems quite probable that Bactrian ΛΠΟΟΑÇΠΙΟ corresponds to Avestan *Druuās*

¹ For the most important editions of the text: Westergaard (1852-54: 186-191) and Geldner (1886-96: 119-125).

The Avestan text in Devanagari script was published by Kanga (1962: 450-462). For the translation of *Yašt 9* see in particular: Darmesteter (1882: 110-118; 1892-93: 431-440), Wolff (1910: 195-198), Lommel (1927: 58-61).

For the critical edition of the *Avestan Hymn to Druuāspā*, Circassia (forthcoming).

² Av. *Druuāspā*, Pahl. *Druwāsp* literally "(she who is) with solid or sound horses", or, interpreting the *Bahuvrīhi* compound of adj. *druua-* and subst. *aspa-*, not only with a possessive but rather with a causative meaning, "(she) who keeps solid or sound the horses" (Darmesteter 1892-93: 431 "celle qui tient le chevaux en santé"). The question about who was the subject of the adjective *druuāspā-* is still irresolute. Mary Boyce (1975: 82) thought that it could originally have been an epithet of the goddess *Ašr* from which it eventually developed into the name of an independent divinity, but what is certain, is that the word *Druuāspā-* is attested only as the proper name of the goddess. Nevertheless, the use of an adjective as a proper name is not an unusual phenomenon at all; it is enough to remember the case of *Anāhitā*, the great goddess to whom *Yt. 5* is consecrated, whose entire name is composed by three epithets: *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā* "the Moist Strong Untained". Even the existence of the Armenian noun *Drūasp*, (from Av. *Dr(u)wāspa*), the appellative/name of a favorite of Tigranes I, is worth recording. (Justi) 1895: 86).

³ Hartman (1957: 46). It is important to emphasize the clear comparison between the day *Goš* of the Zoroastrian Calendar and the emeronym *Go* taken from the lists of the *Maga Brāhmaṇas*. These lists (where the days are called *the Lords of the degree of the signs*) are attested in two Indian sources, the *Pañcasiddhāntikā* I.23-25 and the *Vāteśvarasiddhānta* (chap. I, section 5, 117-120); these two lists "clearly presuppose an original Zoroastrian model, more or less orthodox, but in any case stemming from a Zoroastrian, *latu sensu* milieu" (Panaino 1996: 584).

⁴ *Sīh rōzag xwurdag* and *Sīh rōzag wuzurg* (Dhabhar 1927 175-181 and 223-259), for the translation see the same author (1963: 325 and 441-442). For the *Stāyīšn Sīh Rōzag* Mahamedi (1971: 84, 125 and 171); for the Supplementary Texts to the *šayest nē-šāyest*, where (I 1.4) it is stated that the left shoulder of the sacrificial victim is *Druwāsp*'s portion, see Kotwal (1969: 23).

⁵ Monier-Williams (1899: 521), Dresden (1941: 128-131).

pā, but the problems concerning this Zoroastrian deity in the Kuṣān pantheon are still far from being totally solved.⁶

About the faculties of *Druuāspā*, we are informed only by the first and second stanzas of *Yašt* 9, which contain a cataloger of her epithets. The rest of the hymn does not add anything else to the figure of the goddess as, in the same way, all the other sources do not come in handy at all in marking her distinctive features.

At the beginning of her *Yašt* after the usual introductory formulas, we read that *Druuāspā* is *sūrā*- "strong" (Bth. 1904: 15S4, Benveniste 1969: 183-184), *mazdadātā*-, "created by Mazda" (Panaino 1992b), *ašāonī*- "pious" (Bth. 1904: 246), *druuō.staorā*- "who keeps small cattle in health" (Bth. 1904: 783, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 161), *druuō.staorā*- "who keeps large cattle in health" (Bth. 1904: 784, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 161), *druuō.uruuāθā*- "who keeps friends in health" (Bth. 1904: 783, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 161, Schmidt 1958: 122), *druuō.apərənāiiukā*- "who keeps children in health" (Bth. 1904: 783, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 161), *yuxta.aspā*- "with yoked horses" (Bth. 1904: 1301, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 172), *varətō.raθā*- "with a running chariot" (Bth. 1904: 1368, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 175) *xʷanaṭ.caxrā*- "with resounding wheels" (Bth. 1904: 1864, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 174), *fšāoni.marəzā*-, a difficult compound perhaps meaning "with a blooming boundary",⁷ *amauuaiī*- "powerful" (Bth. 1904: 141), *huraodā*- "good-looking" (Bth. 1904: 1836, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 189), *xʷāsaokā*- "granting goods"

⁶ For the iconography (Göbl (1984: 7, 20, 41 and 165). The fact that in ΔΡΟΟΑÇΠΟ the name of the Avestan goddess is to be read, seems to be out of discussion. Linguistically, in eastern Middle-Iranian languages, an initial *-I-* may represent an original *-d-* (Sims-Williams 1989: 168). Moreover, this interpretation is strengthened by the very image, where a trotting (hence strong, vigorous, healthy) horse is pictured behind the bearded man, as it would be obvious to expect in every *Druuāspā*'s iconography or, better, in every kind of iconography referring to the health of horses. On the other hand, the reason why the masculine form of the deity's name appears on the coins is still unexplained. See Stein (1887: 158) and Rosenfield (1967: 78-79). A sketchy attempt to the solution of the problem (i.e. the passage from feminine to masculine gender) was advanced by Christensen (1928: 39): ΔΡΟ ΟΑÇΠΟ est done, selon toute probabilité. un Dr^vāspa masculin, représenté avec l'animal qui lui est propre, le cheval. Si cette divinité est identique avec *Gəuš urvan*, le sexe masculin est, du reste, son sexe naturel, car le mot *urvan*- est masculin."

⁷ This translation of the adj. *fšāoni.marəzā*- (hapax) follows the one given by Geldner (1882: 103 "fruchtbare Gebiete habend") and then by Lommel (1927: 5B "ihr Landgebiet ist strotzend") who saw the subst. m. *marəza*- "limit, boundary" at the second part of the compound. But Geldner (1889-96: 119) edited two distinct feminine accusative adjectives, *fšāonim* and *marəzqm*, following the most quoted reading by the Mss. tradition. Even this last interpretation shows a lot of uncertainties because on the one hand the adj. *fšāoni*- "fat, blooming, plump" is usually referred to groups of animals, particularly to the flock (*vqθba*-) on the other hand the adj. *marəza*- would seem linked to the verbal root *marz*- "to touch, to rub, to scrub" (Kellens 1995: 44 "frotter"), from which the doubtful translation "pure, bright" proposed by Spiegel (1864-69: 543 "rein") and Darmesteter (1892-93: 433 "luisante"). But we can think, and it is not a rare phenomenon at all that the Mss. reading is due to a copying error, consisting in the transcription of two *-m-* (at the end of *fšāoni*- and at the beginning of *marəza*-) instead of only one of them (that of the second stem). In this case, we have the compound *fšāoni.marəza*-, as also Bartholomae (imitated by Wolff 1910: 195) and Duchesne-Guillemin thought. Nevertheless, both these scholars did not give a satisfactory explanation to the problem: Bartholomae offered the unlikely translation "Streifen von Fett (habend, d.i. beim Fahren) hinterlassend" (1904: 1027) and Duchesne-Guillemin (1936: 77) did not propose any translation at all, considering the compound extremely corrupted and hence "inutilisable". To sum up, Lommel's solution seems to be the most suitable for the passage in which the adjective is inserted, because *fšāoni.marəza*- refers to the wealth and prosperity of those lands where the healthy action of *Druuāspā* is reflected.

(Bth: 1904: 1878, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 273, *baēšaziīā*- "healthy" (Bth. 1904: 916), *druuō.st āiī-* and *druuō.varətā-* "who keeps in health and who makes returning to health" (or, generally, "who recovers") (Bth. 1904: 784, Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 161).

That is all we are able to know about *Druuāspā*, who may really be regarded as a vanishing goddess, or "a strangely discreet goddess" using an expression coined by Prof. Kellens (1996: 565).

Among the Avestan scholars, the common opinion is that *Druuāspā*, as a divine entity, has been first associated, then totally absorbed in the double figure of *Gəuš Tašan* and *Gəuš Uruuan*, who are mentioned together with her in the two *Sīh rōzag*, because they share similar prerogatives in the protection and patronage of the animal world.⁸ Even if a survey of *Druuāspā*'s epithets seems to show that she was originally a deity related not only to animals but also to human beings,⁹ the association that the religious community felt between *Druuāspā* and cattle is very difficult to be contradicted because of the general scantiness of the sources. Moreover, their connection is confirmed by the fact that some manuscripts bear the title of *Goš Yašt* instead of *Druwāsp Yašt*.¹⁰

The Text

Even if topics such as length, language (compositional refinement, grammatical correctness) or internal structure do not constitute always sound judgement's criteria in order to fix the major or

⁸ The association of these deities has been firmly maintained since the time of Darmesteter, for whom "Drvāspa n'est sans doute qu'une abstraction de Gāush: c'est Gāush veillant sur le cheval ..." (1892-93: 431). See also Henry (1905 51 "Drvaspa ... semble n'être qu'un dédoublement de Gāush"); Jackson (1928: 58 "Drāvaspā ... is apparently identical with (Gēush Urvan)". Christensen (1928: 38) tried to explain the lack of sources about the goddess as a consequence of her peculiar connexion with *Gēuš Uruuan*: "Si Drvāspā est en réalité un autre nom de *Gəuš Urvan*, le silence de l'Avesta, en dehors du Yt. 9. en ce qui concerne notre déesse, s'explique: à une certaine époque on a désigné *Gəuš Urvan* sous le nom de Drvāspā, mais ce nom n'a été en vogue, évidemment, que peu de temps: n'ayant pu supplanter l'ancien nom, il a disparu, et le terme original, *Gəuš Urvan*, *Gōš*, a subsisté. Mais la période où le nom de Drvāspā était à la mode a laissé des traces hors de l'Avesta" (this last sentence refers to the Bactrian coins).

At the present time, *Druuāspā* and *Gōš* are invoked in the prefatory rites (Paragnā) to the proper Yasna, precisely during the rite of taking goat's milk (Modi 1937: 278 and Kotwal-Boyd 1991: 70).

⁹ See for example the sequence composed by the four "complementary" epithets *druuō.pasu-* and *druuō.staora-*, *druuō.uruuāθa-* and *druuō.apərənāiīuka-* (all hapax). These adjectives are inseparable by the conceptual point of view. In fact they show the whole spectrum of the deity's healthy action through the enumeration of its four "poles", two concerning the cattle world (*pasu-* and *staora-*) and two the human one (*uruuāθa-* and *apərənāiīuka-*). One may also note the chiasmus among *pasu-* and *apərənāiīuka-* on the one hand, and *staora-* and *uruuāθa-* on the other, which are respectively the "little" and the "great" of both the natural species. The final epithets *druuō.st āiī-* and *druuō.varətā-* refer to the same matter, but without any reference to specific subjects; they declare the global action of the deity consisting in the maintenance of the health (expressed by the root *stā-*) and in the restoration of it to those who had lost it (by the root *varət-*).

¹⁰ (Geldner 1886-96: 119 and Panaino 1994: 168). F1.Pt1.E1. M12 have *Druwāsp Yašt*. The equation with *Gōš* is transmitted by those Mss. that do not directly derive from the transmission line of F1 (L18.P13.J10), and by those descending from the *Xorda Avesta* line (K37.38.Jm4.03). The value of the *Xorda Avesta* line in the transmission of the *Druwāsp* or *Gōš Yašt* is to be pointed out; this aspect could be taken into account as a sign of the "popular favor" of *Druuāspā* (absorbed by *Gōš*) cult, since, as Geldner wrote (1904: 113 the *Xorda Avesta* was "so to speak, a short extract of the entire Avesta, intended for the use of the laity".

minor rank and the antiquity of a text, according to the traditional criteria for the classification of the Avestan hymns, *Yašt* 9 could be included in that category of texts which present some compositional problems, such as extreme shortness (e.g., *Yt.* 6 and 7, the *Xwaršēd* and *Māh Yašt*), some imperfections of form or content and the use of tedious and stereotyped formulas (*Yt.* 14 for *Vərəθraγna*, *Yt.* 15 for *Vayu*, *Yt.* 16 for *Daēnā*).¹¹ These components do not allow us to put the *Druwāsp Yašt* at a remote age, but, at the same time, they don't entitle us to consider it simply as a late composition.¹²

The *Druwāsp Yašt* is made up of 32 paragraphs or stanzas, subdivided in 7 chapters or *kardes*. The *kardes*, varying from a minimum of four stanzas to a maximum of six, follow a very simple and regular compositional order:¹³ every *karde* is introduced by an invocation to Druuāspā (e.g., st. 1-2 *druuāspām sūrām mazdadatām ašaonīm yazamaide ...° °... auuaṅge narām ašaonām* "we worship Druuāspā strong, created by Mazda, pious ... for the help of the pious men"), followed by a legendary section made up of two or three paragraphs;¹⁴ the chapter ends with a new praise to Druuāspā [e.g., st. 5 *daṭaṭ ahmāi ... ° °... dāθriš āiiaptəm* "Druuāspā granted him this favour ... she who grants her help (to the applicant)] and with the usual invocation taken from *Niyāyišn* I.16 (*ahə raiia xʷarənaḡhaca ...° °... "On account of his splendor and xʷarənah ...* ").¹⁵

Substantially, the narration develops through the description of the sacrifice offered up to Druuāspā by a renowned character of Iranian mythology or pseudo-history¹⁶ and through the inventory of the purposes that he wants to obtain thanks to the help and protection of the goddess.¹⁷

¹¹ Exhaustive surveys of the history of studies of the Avestan hymnic literature, with many bibliographical references, have been written by Panaino (1991 and 1992a). Particularly, for the so-called "minor" *Yašts* and the problems relating to their "evaluation" in comparison with the "higher" and more "noble" texts, see Panaino (1991: 116-120). The literary aspect of the Avestan hymns has been analyzed in detail by Skjærvø (1994).

¹² Christensen (1928: 45) dated *Yašt* 9 to the Arsacid Era, about to the first century AD.

¹³ See Skjærvø (1994: 210-212).

¹⁴ These sections always begin with *tām yazata* ("to her offered up a sacrifice") followed by the name and titlature of the offerer and by the place where the "rite" happens. Then the text goes on with the formula *dazdi mē vaṅʰi sə uiušte druuāspe taṭ āiiaptəm* ("grant me this favor, good, powerful Druuāspā") followed by some king/hero's request. More than twenty years ago, Prof. Kellens (1975) showed that the *Yašts* for *Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā*, *Druuāspā*, *Vayu* and *Aši* share lexical and phraseological distinctive features that make them different from the *Yašts* dedicated to *Miθra*, *Tištrya*, *Vərəθraγna* and the *Fravašis*. In the first group of hymns the worship to the deity is expressed by *yazata* (inj.third sing.), while in the second by *yazamaide* (pres. first pl.). Kellens interpreted the differences among that texts as the logical consequence of the nature of the involved divinities. *Miθra* and the others are always felt as actual by any religious conscience because their faculties are strictly related to human morality, and there is the present; on the other hand, *Anahita* and the other gods are thought as placed in an "indefinite", but real, past, and the injunctive signifies such reality in the past. Thus, "Les hymnes en *yazata* se distinguent de ceux en *yazamaide* non seulement par l'imprégnation mythologique, mais aussi par la distance envers les affaires humaines" (1975: 264).

¹⁵ For the Compositional techniques in the *Yašts* of the Younger Avesta see Hintze (1995).

¹⁶ *Haošiiāḡha*, *Yima*, *θraētaona*, *Haoma*, *Haosrauuah*, *Zarəduštra*, *Kavi Vīštāspa*. As it has been suggested by Skjærvø (1994: 233), this kind of hymnic structure reflects a particular form of composition, the epic composition, "that is, incorporating epic material to exalt the importance of the deity through examples of heroes whom the worship of the deity in question benefited".

¹⁷ Some examples of request: defeating the *dāēvas* and their worshippers (*Haošiiāḡha*), bringing in the world a sort of "Golden Age" (*Yima*), fighting against the three-headed demon *Aži Dahāka* (*θraētaona*), taking vengeance for some undergone wrong (*Haosrauuah*) etc.

Because of its contents, the *Druwāsp Yašt* has to be included by right in that class of hymns which contain a list of worshippers.¹⁸ Moreover, *Yašt* 9, together with some sections of *Yt.* 5, 15, 17 (their lists of worshippers), 13 (interrogation of the *Fravašis*) and 19 (list of *xʷarənah*'s holders), are very important sources for the study of the most ancient stages of Iranian epic and mythology.¹⁹

The Avestan hymns with which *Yašt* 9 agrees almost entirely are those dedicated to *Anāhitā*, *Vayu* and *Aši*. The list of worshipper of *Yt.* 9 is in some way "included" in the text of both *Yt.* 5 and 15 while it is equal to the list of *Yt.* 17 (i.e., *Aši* and *Druuāspā* have the same illustrious worshippers).²⁰ However, while in *Yt.* 5, 15 and 17 the appeals made by the heroes to the deity are only a part of the text, containing also other sections,²¹ in the case of the *Druwāsp Yašt* the invocations of the heroes and their legendary history form the full substance of the hymn, with the exception of the first two stanzas. Probably, the (undeniable) precise and very numerous textual correspondences between the *Druwāsp Yašt* and these hymns is one of the reasons why *Yašt* 9 has never been the object of a circumstantial analysis. Anyway, some peculiarities are briefly worth recording.

The female proper name *Vāriḍkanā* (Mayrhofer 1977: 93) is attested only in *Yašt* 9 while *Yt.* 9 and *Yt.* 17 contain the only evidence of the Avestan name *Ašta.auruuant-* (Mayrhofer 1977: 25) and of the one of his father *Vispa.θāuurō.ašti* (Mayrhofer 1977: 96). In *Yt.* 9.10 and *Yt.* 17.30, at the end of the two stanzas containing Yima's requests, we find the words *hazaṅrəm aibi.gāmanam* "for thousand winters". This expression is to be compared with the *Widēwdad* Fragment about the Millennium of Yima preserved by some manuscripts of the *Vendidad Sade* between II.19 and II.20. This phrase reminds, though only at a beginning phase, of the chiliadic doctrine of the Mazdean Cosmic Year, which will be completely developed in Pahlavi texts.²²

One may even note some inter-textual differences related to the formulary. At the beginning of the paragraphs listing the hero's requests to the deity, *Yašt* 5, 15 and 17²³ relate the phrase *āaṭ hīm jaiḍiaṭ auuaṭ āiiaptəm* "then he addresses her for (having) the favor" before the imperative *dazdi.mē*, which, on the contrary, constitutes the *incipit* of the corresponding stanzas of *Yt.* 9. The sentence *āaṭ hīm jaiḍiaṭ auuaṭ āiiaptəm* appears in the *Druwāsp Yašt* only in two precise passages (*Yt.* 9.17 and 9.25), instead of the usual sacrificial formula with the verb *yaz-* which expresses the material act of the animal sacrifice. It is not a case that both st. 17 and st. 25 tell about the worship to *Druuāspā* made respectively by *Haoma* and *Zaraθuštra*, that is a deity and the prophet, "authorities" who, as it seems, did not need to offer big quantities of animals (hundred

¹⁸ Kellens (1998: 747) uses the expression "catalogue de sacrificiants" after Tichi and Hintze's "Adorantenkatalog".

¹⁹ See Christensen (1928: 25-35), (1931: 17-35) and Kellens (1979).

²⁰ The "epic sections" of these hymns comprehend some other people who do not appear in *Yt.* 9 like *Ahura Mazda*, *Aži Dahāka*, *Kərəsāspa* (all in both *Yt.* 5 and *Yt.* 15), *Fraṅrasiian*, *Kauui Usan* or *Zairi-vairi* (in *Yt.* 5), and *Auruua sāra* or *Hutaosāa* (in *Yt.* 15). See Schlerat (1968: 56-58) and Kellens' final schedule (1979: 52-53).

²¹ In these *Yašts* the epic section occupies a part among others: *Yt.* 5.104-118, *Yt.* 15.6-38, *Yt.* 17.23-52. For a survey of the structures and contents of the "legendary" *Yašts*, see Skjærvø (1994: 212-220).

²² See Panaino (forthcoming).

²³ E.g., *Yt.* 5.34, 15.24, 17.25.

horses, thousand cattle and ten thousand sheep) as a sacrifice to the goddess or libations (*zaoθr a-*) in order to carry out their plan like all the other heroes do.

What I have called "sacrificial formula in *yaz-*" can be compared in different ways to some passages of *Yt.* 5, 15 and 17 aiming at signifying the same content (i.e., some offering to the deity). The expression of *Yt.* 9 which I refer to is ⁺*satē aspaŋm* ⁺*hazaŋrē gauuqm baēuuarə an umaiianqm uta zaoθraqm frabarō* "(to her sacrificed ...) in the quantity of (or, more crudely "on the head of") one hundred horses, a thousand cattle, ten thousand sheeps and offered libations too."²⁴ This formula finds large correspondence with that of *Yt.* 5.21 (⁺*satē aspaŋm aršŋm* ⁺*hazaŋrē gauuqm baēuuarə anumaiianqm*) where the horses are said "male" (*aršan-*) and where the final sentence about offering libations does not appear, while the only difference to be found between *Yt.* 9 and *Yt.* 17 relates just to the use (or absence) of this formula (they are otherwise totally equal), which does never appear in the hymn to *Aši*.²⁵

²⁴ Geldner edited the first words of the formula as *satəm aspŋnam hazaŋrəm gauuqm*. About the construction of the verb, *yaz-* in this peculiar passage, see Narten (1985: 299-300) and Circassia (forthcoming).

²⁵ One may see the progressive reduction of the expressed violence degree in these passages. In Anāhitā's hymn only the bloody sacrifice of many animal victims is reported. then in the *Druwāsp Yašt* the sentence *utazaoθraqm fr abarō* was added in order to mention the bloodless and non-violent assumption of liquid substances. and *Yašt* 17 testifies, with the absence of any reference, the end of any kind of offering practice. In *Yt.* 15.7 another kind of expression is introduced, ending with the words *pərənēbiō paiti γžāraiiatbiō* "with the hands overflowing of libations".

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