

Education

(to learn and teach, to write and read)

The education of the ancients (Av. *aēθra-* ‘teaching’) was intended to form the student (*aēθrya*¹), typically an *Aθravan*² or Magian³, in a particular function or office: First, that of *aēθrapaiti* ‘teaching priest’⁴; then, that of *zaotar* ‘officiating priest’⁵; and, finally, that of a perfect scholar by whom the Truthful Wisdom is rescued from collective oblivion, and the Religion from doubt.

The scholars of old were called *paoiryā tkaēša*⁶; later on, a perfect scholar –priest or layman– received the title of “the wise one”⁷.

To learn and teach

To learn (Av. *aiβi-ah, fras*) and teach (Av. *caš*):

The elementary (*fratama*) level of instruction consisted of technical knowledge of language and texts from the lips of the teachers to the student. The instruction is a two-fold operation:

One, hearing (*sru*), memorizing (*mar/ darnj*), reciting/
chanting (*srāvaya-/ gā*);

The other, deliberating over the meaning of the words heard (*fras*). This second step, described as the knowledge of the religion (Av. *zaiṇti*, Pers. *zand*), consists of the word-for-word rendering of the text (into a local Perso-Aryan language) in

¹ Rendered by Pers. *hāvišt* < Av. *hāvišta-* ‘disciple’.

² Av. *āθravan-/ aθaorun-* m., Skt. *átharvan-*, Pers. *āsrōn/ āsrōg*.

³ Av. *moγu*^o, OPers. *magu-*, *maguš*, Sogd. *mwy /moγ/*, *mwy.ny /moγānē/*, Pers. *muv/ mog*, Skt. *maga-/ magu-* ‘priest of the Sun’.

⁴ **a□θra-pati-*, Pers. *ēhrbed/hērbed*, Aram. (Hatra) *ḥdrpt*, Guj. (Parsi) *ervad* ‘ordinary priest’.

⁵ Av. *zaotar-* m. ‘head-priest at an actual sacrifice, chief officiating priest’, Pers. *zōt*, Skt. *hótar-*.

⁶ Or *paoiryō. □kaēša-*, Pers. *pōryōdkēš*.

⁷ Pers. *dānāg* (it renders Av. *daṅra-/ G daṅgra-* adj. ‘of marvellous power or skill’ > Pers. *dastvar*). Cf. X^rR II.17 *dānāgān ud hērbedān ud dastvarān*. Pers. *zīr(ag)*, Parth. *žīr* (Av. *jira-*, cf. AZ 2 *pouru.jirō yaθa aošnarō*), cf. HAM 50 *zīrag ud dānāg*. Pers. *frazānag* < **fra-zāna-ka-*, cf. Dk iv M 429 *frazānagān ī ērānšār*; Mardānfarrox called Ādaurfarrōbay *agrī-frazānag* ‘the excellent wise’, cf. ŠGV 5.92, 9.3.

small parts by adding the gloss, so that the meaning-purpose of the text is grasped.

Vd 18.6 *təm dim mruyā āθravanəm uiti mraoṭ ahurō mazdā āi ašāum zaraθuštra yō haurvqm tarasca xšapanəm xratūm pərəsāṭ ašavanəm qzō.būjim ravazdqm cinuuat.pərətūm havaṅ^vhō.dqm ahu.nāsəm aša.nāsəm vahišta.nāsəm vahištahe. aṅhəuš* ‘Him you shall call an Āθravan –thus said Ahura Mazdā – O truthful Zaraθuštra, who throughout the night shall study the truthful wisdom, which delivers one from anxiety, gives freedom at the Cinvaṭ Bridge, which gives one a good existence, which makes one reach the Existence, which makes one reach Truth, which makes one reach the Best, that of the Best Existence (Paradise).’ Zand: *ōy rāy gōbē āsrōg, ēd-šōn (ēdōn?) guft ohrmazd kū, ē ahlav zardušt kē hamā tarist šab xrad pursed ahlav [kū hērbdestān kuned. kū tis ī frārōn pursed ud hamōzed] ī az tangīh-bōxtārīh [hān xrad] frāxīh-dādār ped cihvidarg huvoxīh-dādār [nēvdilīh ped cihvidarg] ox-arzānīg [gyāg] ahlāyīh-arzānīg [kār kirbag] pahlum-arzānīg [mizd pādāšn] andar hān ī pahlum oxān.* ‘You shall call him a priest, thus said Ahura Mazdā, O truthful Zaraθuštra, who the whole night through, will enquire of the truthful wisdom [that is: he pursues religious studies, he enquires and learns righteous subjects] ...’

N 84 *yā^xnaire ašaone^x daste aiβica.^xhāite^x cašānāica paitica^x pərəsmanāi xratūm ašavanəm* ‘... which is offered to the truthful man who studies and teaches, and reads the truthful wisdom.’ Zand: *kē ō mard ī ahlav ē⁺ dahed ī ušmurdār ast ud cāšīdār [ast kē gōbed ē: kē varm bē kuned ud abāz cāšed], ud abāz-pursīdār ī xrad ī ahlavān [kū nīrang dāned]*

H 12.1-2 *cvaṭ nā aēθra.paitīm upōisāṭ yārə.drājō*

θrizarəmaēm xratūm ašavanəm aiβyāṅhaṭ

‘For how long shall a man stay with a teacher?

For the length of a year.

For (the length of) three summers (that is, three years) he shall study the Truthful Wisdom.’

Zand: *mard cand peymān hērbdestān abar-x^vāhed? sāl drahnāy [andar hān peymānag ī se-šabag sīh frasang]. se zarmēm xrad ī ahlavān abar bē gīred (^xvāhed).*

Av. *aiβi.ah* ‘to study, learn’ ≈ Pers. (*abar-*)*x^vah-/ x^vāh-*: *x^vast*. Cf. ŠnŠ 15.1 *u-š vāz hamē x^vast* ‘He was learning the (sacred) words.’ Y 19.6 *x^vāhed* gl. of *ušmured*. Dk vi, M 514 *x^vastan ud vizustan ī andar dēn* ‘the study and research in the Scripture’, M 537 *kē abestāg x^vāhed* ‘He who studies the Avesta’. See also ASS 15 *nask ... x^vast ud varm kird*; PK 10 *pursīd ud x^vast ud vizust*; VZ 30.38 *u-š nē x^vast ud nē pursīd*; H 18.1 *pairi aiβyaṇhaṭ* : *abar ē ušmured* [*ē ēd-iš ušmured vāzagīh u-š x^vāhād (ē x^vāhed)*].

To learn the recital of the texts

The Āθravan class studied, transmitted and preserved in an unaltered form the “truthful wisdom”. There were different expressions (or, “stages”) used to describe the process of learning the recital of the texts, viz., *mar*, *draṇj*, *sru/ srāvaya*, *gā* (and *yaz*). In the *Bayā* of the holiest formula, the different stages of its recital till the performance of ritualistic works are enumerated in the following order:

Y 19.6 *yasca mē aētahmi aṇhvō yaṭ astvaiṅti spitama zaraθuštra bayam ahunahe vairyehe marāt frā vā marō draṇjayāt frā vā draṇjayō srāvayāt frā vā srāvayō yazāite θrišciṭ tarō pərətūmciṭ hē urvānəm vahištəm ahūm frapārayeni azəm yō ahurō amzdā ā vahištāt aṇhaoṭ ā vahištāt ašāt ā vahištaēibyō raocābyō* ‘And whoever in this existence which is osseous (material), O Spitama Zaraθuštra, shall memorize my *Bayā* of the Ahuna Vairya, or (after) memorizing it shall recite it from memory, or (after) reciting it from memory shall make it heard (/ shall chant it), or (after) making it heard shall worship it (as part of the liturgy), I, Ahura Mazdā, shall get his soul through the Cinvaṭ Bridge (and pass over it) to the Best Existence in three steps: to the Best Existence, to the Best Truth, to the Best Lights.’

Zand: *kē andar hān ī man ox ī astumand, spitāmān zardušt, baxtārīh ī ahunvar ušmured* [*kū ōh xvāhed*], *frāz hān ī ušmurd drenzēned* [*kū varm bē kuned*], *ud frāz hān ī drenzēnīd srāyed* [*kū nīrang bē dāned*], *ud frāz hān ī srūd yazed* [*kū yašt bē kuned*], *se-bār tarist cihvidarg hān ī ōy ruvān ō hān ī pahlum oxān frāz vidāram, an kē ohrmazd* [*ē: andar hān rōz ka yašt nāvar kuned ā-š se-bār ruvān bē ō ānōh nayam, u-š nekīh pediš kunam*], *ō hān ī pahlum oxān ud hān ī pahlum ahlāyīh ud hān ī pahlum rōšnīh*.

Y 19.21 *bayqm ahunahe vairyehē yazamaide*
ahunahe vairyehē yazamaide frasraoθrəmca framarəθrəmca
fragāθrəmca frāyaštīmca ‘We worship the section of the Ahuna
Vairya (as part of the liturgy). We worship the conversancy with
the Ahuna Vairya, and its memorized recital, and its regular
chanting, and its use in the Yasna service.’

Zand: *baxtārīh az ahunvar yazem* [*nēkīh az ēn fragard*].
ahunvar yazem ped frāz-srāyišnīh [*kē abestāg ped srāyišn*
mehmān], *ā-š andar frāz-ušmurišnīh* [*hād. bē cē nāmcīštīg*
gōbed dā] *andar ēn frāz-vāngīh* [*abestāg ped gāh*] *frāz-yazišnīh*.

See also Vr 3.7 *staotanqm yesnyanqm frasraoθrəmca*
framaraθrəmca fragāθrəmca frāyaštīmca. Vr 13.3 *tišranqm*
haurva.paoiryānqm ... frasraoθrəmca framaraθrəmca
frāyaštīmca.

Three steps of the recital

mar

The Avesta base *mar* is cognate with Sanskrit *smar* ‘to
remember, think of, recollect’ and is known in Pers. *ušmur-/*
ešmār-, Sogd. (šm̄r, Khot. *šumār-* ‘to count’. The meaning ‘to
memorize/ recite, learn by heart’ is found in the Gāthā:

Y 43.14 *maṭ tāiš vīspāiš yōi tōi maθrā marəntī*
‘together with all those who are memorizing formulas for
you.’⁸

The meaning ‘to count’ which arises from the manner of
memorizing the texts seems to be found in the Avesta.⁹ The
method of committing formulas (*maθra-*) to memory is the
division of the text into blocks, which are learnt seriatim:

1) Repetition: the teacher will normally recite aloud¹⁰ each
part, the student repeating it after him¹¹;

⁸ The one who has memorized the Avesta formulas is called in Pers.
ušmurd-mahr. Cf. DD 0.8 *anī-z hērbedān ud muvmardān ī ušmurd-mahr ī*
drenzēnīd-zand ī uskārd-dādestān ‘also other teachers and priests who have
memorized formulas, recited (their) Zand, and studied laws.’

⁹ Av. *ratus mərət-* ‘who counts *ratus* (norms, moments)’, Pers. *rad-*
ušmurd.

¹⁰ Av. *fra-mar* ‘to memorize; recite’, Pers. *frāz-ušmār-*.

¹¹ Av. *paiti-šmar* ‘to look for, expect; repeat from memory’, Khot.
patāmar- ‘to report’, Sogd. *p^htšmār-* ‘to count’.

2) The antiphonal response: the teacher recites the first piece of the text portion under the study; the student recites in unison the second piece, then the teacher, then the student, and so on.

The memorization (Av. *marəθra-*, Pers. *ušmurišn*) of the formulas, as well as the two other occupations of a memorizing priest¹², that is instruction (listening to formulas and teaching) and performance¹³, are clear in such an Avesta passage as Yasna 55.6:

*staota yesnya yazamaide yā dātā aṅhəuš paouruyehyā
marəmnā vərəzimna sixšəmnā sācayamna dadrāna paitišāna
paitiš.marəmnā framarəmnā frāyazəmnā ...*

‘We worship (the texts of) the Staota Yesnya, the created (texts) of the first existence, as they are memorized, performed (in the ceremonial), learnt, taught, kept (in mind), examined, meditated, recited, and worshipped (as part of the liturgy), ...’

Zand: *stōd yasn yazem kē dād ax^vān fradum, ušmurem ud varzem ud hamuxtem ud hamōzem ud dārem [bē nē jōyem] ud abar x^vāhem nōg nōg abar ušmurem frāz ušmurem [kū: ōh gōbem] ud frāz yazem fraškird ped kāmag andar ax^vān dahem.*

draṅj

The Avesta words *mar*, *draṅj/draṅjaya-* and *srāvaya-* in the Yasna 19.6 are explained by the glossator by these remarks:

ōh x^vāhed ‘he should study’¹⁴;
varm bē kuned ‘he commits to memory’¹⁵;
nīrang bē dāned ‘he knows the ritual formulas/ incantations’.

Although memorization by word of mouth is fundamental to Avesta study, *mar*, *draṅjaya* and *srāvaya* exhaust the three steps of the recital and conversation. Av. *draṅj* and its Pers. cognate *drenz(ēn)-* mean ‘to recite from memory’. This meaning seems to be found in the Vd 4.45:

¹² Av. *āθravan-* *marəmnā-*, cf. Yt 5.86 *āθravanō marəmnō āθravanō θrāyaonō*.

¹³ Av. *sāsnā-* ‘teaching; commandment’, cf. Y 31.18 *maqraṣca ... sāsnāscā*, Yt 13.86 *manasca ... sāsnāscā*. It is rendered by Pers. *hamuxtišn/ hamōzišn*. Av. *varəz(y)a-* ‘performance, application’, cf. Y 45.3 *maqərəm varəšəntī*, Y 22.3 *marəθrəmcā varəzīmca daēnayā vaṅhuyā māzdayasnōiš*. Dk ix M 874 *hamuxtišn ud ušmurišn ud varzišn* ‘instruction and (memorized) recital and performance’.

¹⁴ Cf. Dk viii M 704 *abar dōšārm ī ō jādūgīh burden ud x^vāstan*.

¹⁵ Cf. also H 13.1.

*vīspəm ā ahmāt yaṭ tā sravā drəñjayən yā paourva
aēθrapatayō drəñjayən*

‘... until they could recite from memory all these discourses
which the teachers had before recited from memory.’¹⁶

*Zand: hamāg az hān ī ka avēšān srav drenzēnend ī pēš
hērbedān drenzēnend [cōn ādurbād ī mahrspendān].*

srāvaya-

The Avesta actually attests *srāvaya-* ‘to make heard, chant’¹⁷,
and *gā* ‘to sing, recite in a singing manner’¹⁸. The verses¹⁹ were
recited with a loud voice and with observing musical accents.
Sometimes they were accompanied with musical (stringed)
instruments:

*Bd 130 vin vāng hān ast kē ahlavān srāyend abestāg abar
gōbend.*

‘The sound of the Vina²⁰ is the sound played by the righteous
ones when they recite the Avesta.’

The Magians, learned in the Daēnā, usually performed their
ritualistic works by uttering Avesta formulas.

The oldest “songs” (*gāθā-*) are the *Gāθā* of *Zaraθuštra*. The
officiating priest prepared (“purified”) the fire; then he chanted
the *Gāθā*²¹, performing the liturgy text about the good waters
(i.e. the *Yasna* ending with *Āb-zōhr*)²². This ceremony was
called the *Yašt ī āb ud srūd ī gāhān* ‘the consecration of the
waters and the chanting of the *Gāθā*’²³.

¹⁶ Cf. also Dk viii M 734 *drenzēnēd srav*.

¹⁷ caus. pres. from *sru* ‘to hear’. Pers. *srāy-*: *srūd*.

¹⁸ Parth. *ng’y-/ nigāy-/* ‘to pray, sing’, Pers. *niyāy-* from **ni-gā*. Skt. *ni-gā*, *nigāyati* ‘to accompany with song, chant’, Pers. *niyāyišn* ‘praise’.

¹⁹ Av. *gāθā* - f. ‘hymn of a certain strophic form; song’, Skt. *gāthā-*, *gāthā-*, Pers. *gāh* ‘verse; verse-line’.

²⁰ Pers. *vin/vīn*, Sogd. *wyn/ vinā/* ‘lute’, Khot. *bīna-* ‘musical instrument; lute’, Skt. *vīṇā-*, Armen. *vin* ‘lute’. Cf. Bd 130 *barbut, tambūr, cang <ud> harv rōdīhā <ī> srāyend vin x’ānend*. Pers. *vin-srāy* ‘vina-player’ (≈ Skt. *vināvādā-*), cf. HKR 62.63; *vin srāy-* ‘to play Vina’ ≈ Sogd. *vinā žen-*.

²¹ Cf. Y 9.1 *gāθāasca srāvayaṇtəm* ‘chanting the *Gāθā*’. It is different from *gāθanaym sraoθrəm* ‘the conversancy with the *Gāθā*’ (Y 3.4). Av. *a-srāvayaṭ.gāθa-* adj. ‘who does not (know to) chant the *Gāθā*’ rendered by Pers. *a-srūd-gāhān*.

²² Cf. Hn 2.13 *gāθāasca srāvayō apasca vaṇ’hīs yazəmnō*.

²³ Cf. ZVY 5.4 ... *ped x’adāyīh ī vištāsp šāh yašt <ī> āb srūd <ī> gāhān būd hē*; RP 21a *ē māh drahnāy yašt ī āb srūd ī gāhān*; MJF *epilogue si sāl yašt <ī> āb srūd <ī> gāhān yazed*, Sīh Purs. (R 410) 18-19. Av. *srutā gāθā* (lit. ‘the heard, the *Gāθā*’) ‘the *Gāθā* when recited’, cf. N 25.

The transmission and preservation of the Avesta

The task of the religious authority was the transmission of the text of the Daēnā²⁴, while that of the royal authority was its preservation. The transmission²⁵ of the Daēnā was primarily a matter of hearing and memorizing and reciting by heart²⁶, while the preservation²⁷ was at the very beginning a matter of writing down. The oral²⁸ religious transmission and the written²⁹ royal preservation formed a “couple” –just like the “couple” of Ahura Mazdā and Daēnā Māzdayasni. According to the Magians, the oral tradition preserves the (original) text in its state of purity, whereas the literary tradition based on the copying of the text contributes to its deterioration. For this reason, if the text was written down on the order of a king, this did not imply that its oral transmission thenceforth ceased in other parts of the Mazdayasnian clergy.

A Christian disputant whose name was Bōxt-mārā (lit. ‘saved by Lord’) asked thirty questions of various kinds from a Mazdayasnian priest. In the fifth book of the Dēnkird we then have from among them the following:

*yazd ēn dēn cē rāy ped ēvāz-ē ī anāšnāg ī nihuftag ī abestāg nām guft? ud cē rāy ped nibištāg nē bavandag hangārd, bē ped gōbišn varm kirdan framūd?*³⁰

²⁴ One of the ten injunctions with which all the injunctions of the religion are linked: *cahārum, nām-pēdāgīh ī az ahlavān nē appurdan rāy cē hamuxt az x^vēš hamōzgār rādīhā abāz ō arzānīgān abespārdan*. ‘Fourth, to retransmit liberally to the deserving ones whatever one has learnt from his own teacher in order not to steal fame and publicity from the righteous.’ (PXA 10)

²⁵ Pers. *abespārišn*.

²⁶ Sāyaṇa quotes the saying that “the text of the Veda is to be learnt by the method of learning it from the lips of the teacher and not from a manuscript.” R. K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian Education*, London, 1947, 27. Cf. also Bērōnī:

البراهمه ... يتعلمونه كذلك فيما بينهم يأخذ بعضهم من بعض. (تحقيق ماللهند، ١٢)

‘The Brāhmaṇa ... in the same way learn it by heart, the one receiving it from the other.’

According to the Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa I, 31 “all the Vedas are learnt orally (*mukhatās*- ‘by means of the mouth’).” However, the manuscripts of the Vedas existed. See, for example, MBh 13, 24.70:

vedavikrayiṇaś caiva vedānām caiva dūṣakaḥ.

vedānām lekhakā caiva te vai nirayagāmināḥ

‘Teachers of the Veda for money, corrupters of the Vedas,

And those who write the Vedas, these surely go to Niraya (/ hell).’

²⁷ Pers. *dārišn*.

²⁸ Pers. *uzvānīg* ‘lingual, oral’.

²⁹ Pers. *nibištāg*.

³⁰ Dk v, M 455.

Question: “Why did God say this religion in an unfamiliar and concealed language, called Avesta? And why did He not consider it complete in a written (form), but ordered to memorize by oral tradition?”

The answer of the Mazdayasnian is given later³¹:

ēn dēn mānsr [abestāg] ud hamāg ī uzvānīg nibištān ōn framūd ō bunīh nibištāg. nūn-z. frāyist pez nibēgīhā pād ēsted, cōn andar āgāhān pēdāg.

bē varm kirdan sūd vas: aziš, hudagīh ped īzišn stāyišn āgāhēnišn ī ō ramān ēk vēš dānist ī tisān, aziš, ōh-iz. hān ī ōn zufrīhā soxan ud ēvēn rāstīhā ud ^xavašt-rangīhā abespārdan šāyistan. dādestān ī ^xvāz gōbišnīg frāy az hān ī nibēsišnīg vasīhā. ud pez abārīg vas cim zīndag ud gōbišnīg soxan az hān ī ped nibišt māyagvardar hangārdan cimīg.

Answer: “The (sacred) formulas of the Scripture (Daēnā), as well as all the oral (texts) were so ordered to be written, (and) it was written at the very beginning. It is true that, nowadays, it has mostly been preserved in books, as is known among the knowing ones. However, the benefit of committing (it) to memory is immense:

1. One advantage is the giving of knowledge to the people, through the ritual (*Yasna*) and praise (*Stuiti*), [so that] they can know more things³²;
2. In such a way it is possible to transmit the so profound words³³ and customs (or Laws)³⁴, directly and without changing sounds³⁵. This decision [is this that:] the Word (Av. *vac/ vāc*) in the oral form is far beyond its written form. And for many other reasons also it is reasonable to consider the Word in the living and oral form closer to the original text³⁶ than that in the written form.”

To write

The Perso-Aryan word for designating the literary tradition is derived from **pis* ‘to carve, adorn; picture, paint’ with or without the verbal prefix *ni*. In the Avesta, the word

³¹ M 459-60

³² Cf. CHP 1 *ēn and tis bē abāyed dānistan kū*.

³³ *sax’an/r-*, λόγος.

³⁴ *ēvēn*, νόμος.

³⁵ Pers. *rang* ≈ Skt. *várna*.

³⁶ Pers. *māyagvar* ‘original (text, document)’, *ham-peccēn* ‘copy’.

vīspō.paēsah/ °*paēs-ī-* ‘containing all adornment, having all sorts of ornament’ was used to describe the belt of the ecliptic³⁷, the chariot of Miθra³⁸, and the sword of Vərəθraγna³⁹. The “ornaments” of the celestial sphere are clearly the “fixed” stars. However, the word meaning ‘all-adorned’ was used also for *masti-* (rendered by Pers. *frazānagīh* ‘knowledge, wisdom’) which designates the sacred texts⁴⁰. In the Yasna 57.20, Sraoša was described as “being master of all-adorned knowledge”⁴¹. The Magians interpreted these “adornments” of the religious knowledge the religion in its written form. For example:

vištāsp šāh ... nibēgīhā ī az vispdānāgīh pēsīd mazdesn dēn frēstīd.

‘King Vištāspa ... sent ... books belonging to the Mazdayasnian religion which was written (lit. ‘adorned’) about all knowledge.’⁴²

This meaning seems to point to the use of pictographs in early times for writing. Then the word **paēsah-*, properly ‘adornment’, meant also in Avesta the “pictographic” writing.

**pis*: Av. *pis*, *paēsa-* pres., °*pixšta-/* °*paxšta-* ppp., Skt. *piś* ‘to adorn; form, mould’, OPers. *piθ* ‘to adorn; paint’, *paiθa-* or *pi_nθa-* pres., *pišta-* ppp., Khot. *pīsa-* ‘work of art; carving’, Osset. *fysyn*: *fyst/ finsun*: *fīnst* ‘to write’, Ormuri *pis-*: *pištak* ‘id.’, Oroshori *pis* ‘id.’, OChurch Slavonic *pъsti* ‘id.’.

**ni-pis*: OPers. *ni-piθ* ‘to write down’⁴³, *ni-pišta-* ppp., Sogd. *npys-* : *np.xšt /nīpēs-* : *nīpaxšta/* ‘id.’, *npγyšt /nīpīxšt/*, Bactr. *νιπισ-*: *νιπιγτο*, *ναβιγτο* ‘id.’, *ναβισιδο* ‘it is written’ < **ni-pisjat(a)i*, Parth.-Pers. *nibēs-*: *nibišt* ‘to write’, Paz. *niβṣṣ*: *naβašt*.

To read

³⁷ Cf. Y 9.26 *aiβyānhanəm stəhrpaēsahəm maīyu.tāštəm vaj^vhīm daēnəm māzdayasnīm*; Bd 193 *farrah ī dēn ī mazdesnān kustīg humānāg ī star-pēsīdag mēnōgān-tāšīd* <ped> *hān ī spīhr*.

³⁸ Cf. Yt 10.124 *vāšəm srīrəm ... vīspō.paēsəm zaranaēnəm*.

³⁹ Cf. Yt 14.27 *karətəm zaranyō.saorəm frapixštəm vīspō.paēsahəm: kārd [kū tēz-šafšēr-x^vadāy] ud zarrēn-abzār[-x^vadāy. ud hān abzār] rōšndar [ud guzurgdar] ud harvisp-pēsīd [ēdōn pāsebānēned]*.

⁴⁰ Cf. Y 9.17 *mastīm vīspō.paēsahəm*.

⁴¹ *paiθimnō vīspō.paēsīm mastīm: pādixšāy ped frazānagīh ī harvisp-pēsīd*.

⁴² Dk iv, M 411.

⁴³ Cf. DB IV.70.

The Perso-Aryan word for ‘to read’, related to **(ni) pis*, is **(pati) fras*. If the first sense of *fras* was ‘to take counsel (with someone, or, with each other) for knowing’, after the writing down of the texts, it was also used in the sense of ‘to take counsel with a written text’, i.e. ‘to read’.

Av. *fras*, *pərəsa-/°frasa-* inch. pres. ‘to ask, consult’, mid. ‘to study; deliberate together’, *paiti-fras* ‘to question; read’, *fərasā-* f. ‘consultation; study’ (rendered by Pers. *frāz-hampursagīh*), *naskō.frasa-* adj. ‘who studies the Naska (of the Avesta)’, *paiti.fraxštār-* m. ‘reader’, *paiti.frāsa-* m. ‘id.’, *paiti.paršti-* f. ‘reading; perusal’, *maṭ.pərəsu-* adj. ‘with study’, *maṭ.paiti.pərəsu-/frasa-* adj. ‘with reading’, *parštō.vacah-* adj. ‘who studies words’, *paiti.parštō.sraṇah-* adj. ‘who reads discourses’. Skt. *praś* ‘to ask, question’, *prati-praś* ‘to ask, enquire of’, OPers. *fraθ*, *prsa-* ‘to ask; punish’, *pati-fraθ* ‘to read, peruse’, Khot. *pūs-* ‘to read’, *pūsṭa-* ppp., Sogd. ptβs-, ptfs- /*petfas-* ‘to read’, Parth. pdfwrs-, pδbwrs- /*padfurs-* ‘to read’, Pers. *pehipurs-*, *pehiburs-* ‘id.’.

The Scripture (Daēnā) was recited and also read by priests:

Yt 10.33 *paiti.parštīmca maθrahe spəntahe*.

‘And the Reading of the sacred formulas (i.e., the corpus of Mazdayasnian texts).’

Yt 13.91 *paiti.fraxštaca daēnayāi yaṭ haitinqm vahištayāi*.

‘(Zaraθuštra) was the reader of the Daēnā which (is) the best of those that are.’

Yt 5.91 *āθravanō parštō.vacāṇhō paiti.parštō.sraṇahō maṭdrō haḍa.hunarō tanu.maθrō*.

‘[Zaraθuštra] who has the role of a priest who studies Words, who reads discourses, wise, learned, who personifies the divine formula.’

Vd 18.51 *vīduš.gāθəm paiti.parštō.sraṇahəm maṭdrəm haḍa.hunarəm tanu.maθrəm*.

‘(A man) knowing the Gāθā, knowing the Yasna, who reads discourses, wise, learned, who is the Formula incarnate.’

Dk vi M 537 *kē abestāg x^vāhed ud huxēmdar nē baved, ud zand pehipursed ud dānāgdar nē baved, ud māndag garzed ud avināhdar nē baved, hān did ped kār nē uz māyīšn*.

‘One who studies the Avesta and does not become of better personality, and one who reads the Zand and does not become wiser, and one who confesses a sin (of omission) and does not become less sinful –that one needs not again to be tested.’

Raham Asha