

LESSON 3

PHONOLOGY

Consonants

We may posit the following (original) consonant phonemes for Young Avestan. The principal allophones are in parenthesis.

	Stops		Fricatives		Continuant		Nasals	Sibilants	
	- voice	+ voice	- voice	+ voice	- voice	+ voice		- voice	+ voice
Bilabials:	p	b		(β)		ɥ <uu>	m (m, m̥)		
Labio-dentals:			f	v (?)					
Dentals:			θ	(δ)				s	z
Alveo-dentals:	t	d					n (n̥)		
Alveolar:					(hr ?)	r (?)		ʃ (?)	
Alveo-palatals:	č	ǰ						ʃ	ž
Palatals:				y		ɰ <ii>	(ń)	š	(ž)
Velars:	k	g	x	(ɣ)			ŋ		
Palato-velars:			(x̣)				(ŋ̣)		
Labio-velars:			xʷ				ŋʷ		
Pharyngeal:					h				

β δ γ: Post-vocalic and, in some instances, post-consonantic /b d g/ were realized as *β δ γ* (e.g., *baya-* “lord, god,” *duyda* “daughter”), except *d* in the vicinity of *r*, which was regularly realized as *d* (*huraoda-* “well-shaped” but *vadar-* “(striking) weapon”).

ǰ: This letter is rarely used in Young Avestan, which has *ǰh* where Old Avestan has *ǰ*. It is always followed by *ii*, e.g., *daǰiiunqm* “of the lands,” *nəmaǰiiāmahi* “we revere.”

xʷ: This letter is used in initial position and corresponds to *ŋʷh* between vowels (except when it is from **-ku-*).

r, hr: /r/ had an unvoiced allophone before *p* and *k* written *hr*, apparently limited to syllables which bore the stress. The original **hri* became *š* (see next). As the stress shifted, or if the consonant changed, the original *r* reappears: *kəhrpəm* ~ *hukərapta-*, *aša-* ~ *Astuuat.ərata-*, *mahrka-* ~ *amərapxti-*.

m̥: /m/ has a special variant—written *m̥*—after *h*, which was perhaps a preaspirated rather than voiceless *m* (cf. Eng. *hum*) In the manuscripts we sometimes find only *ṃ* <m̥> for this sound, sometimes *ṃ̣* <hm̥>. In many manuscripts the letter *ṃ* <m̥> is not used, however, and *hm* is simply written *ḥm* <hm>.

ŋ: /n/ was realized as *ŋ*, a nasal of uncertain nature, before consonants except *ɰ* and *ɥ*.

ń: Before *ɰ* and possibly also *i*, *n* was palatalized to *ń*, but the letters *ɲ* and *ɲ̣* <ń> are not consistently used in the manuscripts. When followed by *ii* some scribes write *ńii* or *nii*, others *inii*, e.g., *mańiiuš*, *maniiuš*, or *mainiiuš*. When followed by *i* (internally) we find spellings such as *ańim*, *anim*, or—commonly—*ainim*. <ń> is never (?) used alone to express palatal *ń* when not followed by *i* or *ii*. Examples: *ańiiō* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎, *aniiō* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎, or *ainiiō* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎 other, *mańiiuš* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬀𐬎, *maniiuš* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬀𐬎 or *mainiiuš* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬀𐬎 “spirit”; *ńitəmō* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬀𐬎 or *ńitəmō* 𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬀𐬎 “lowest.” In this manual the forms *aniia-*, *maniiu-*, *ńitəma-*, etc., will be used, but *ainim* (see Lesson 4).

ŋ: The velar nasal /ŋ/ has two origins:






1. It is for *ŋg* (*nk*) in *paŋtaŋ*^ha- “a fifth” < **paŋgta-*. In some manuscripts it is used instead of *ng* between vowels in words such as *aŋušta-* = *aŋgušta-* “finger.”


2. In most instances *ŋh* is the realization of /h/ between vowels, e.g., *manaŋhō*, gen. sing. of *manah-*. This change did not usually take place when the *h* was followed by *i* or—less regularly—*u*: e.g., *ahi* “you are,” *vohu* “good” neut. sing./plur., but *vaŋhuš* masc. sing.

When followed by *r*, the standard editions write only *ŋ*, e.g., *aŋra-*, *hazaŋra-* “a thousand,” *Fraŋrasii-*, name of a villain, *caŋraŋhāk-* “grazing, following the pastures,” etc. In some manuscripts, however, the spellings *aŋhra-*, *hazaŋhra-* are also common.

ŋ̄ is only used between vowels and is always followed by *h* (*ŋ̄h*). The actual spelling alternates between *ŋ̄h*, *iŋ̄h*, and *iŋh*, e.g., *aŋ̄he*, *aiŋ̄he* or *aiŋhe*, or even *aŋhe*. In this introduction only the spelling *ŋ̄h* is used.

ŋ is only used between vowels and always followed by *h* (*ŋ^h*). It corresponds to *x* in initial position. Instead of *ŋ^h* the scribes frequently wrote *ŋuh* or just *ŋh*, e.g., *aŋ^hhe*, *aŋu^hhe*, or *aŋhe* (thus *aŋhe* can be for *aŋ̄he* or *aŋ^hhe*!).

š̄, *š̌*, *ṧ*: The three sibilants /š̄/ , /š̌/ , /ṧ/  had merged into one sound [š̄] by the time of our earliest manuscripts, but must originally have been separate phonemes. /š̄/ must have been the regular alveolar sibilant, e.g. *gaoša-*  “ear” (cf. OInd. *ghoṣa-* “sound”) and /š̌/ a palatal(ized) sibilant (< *č̌i, e.g., *š̌auua-*  “to go,” cf. OInd. *cyava-*).

The distinctive features of /š̌/ (< *-rt with stress on the preceding vowel) are uncertain. In the table above it is suggested that it may have been an alveolar sibilant, but it must have had some additional feature, perhaps rhotacization (a sound found in some modern Iranian dialects), but it may have been a retroflex affricate or lateral and later a retroflex sibilant, e.g., *maš̌iia-*  “man, mortal” (cf. OInd. *martiya-*). It may be noted that in the Sasanian (learned) pronunciation there was no distinction between this sound and the sound resulting from Avestan *rt* and *rθ*: they were both written *hl* and presumably pronounced *hl*, as well, e.g., *mahlī*, name of the first human, “Adam” < *maš̌iia-* and *ahlaw* “Orderly” < *aš̌auua* versus *puhl* “bridge, punishment” < *pərəθu-*.

In the extant manuscripts there is a tendency to write *š̌* everywhere before *ii*, e.g., *maš̌iia-*, and the distribution of *š̄* and *š̌* varies from scribe to scribe: some commonly use *š̄* as the normal (default) spelling, others *š̌*. When Geldner made his edition of the Avesta, he based himself primarily upon manuscripts where the default spelling was *š̌*, not *š̄*, which means that also in his critical apparatus, when a spelling is quoted from several manuscripts, *š̌* means *š̌* or *š̄*!

t̄: The letter *t̄* probably represented an unreleased (sometimes called “implosive”) dental stop and was an allophone of / t / found in final and pre-consonantal position, examples: *jana^{t̄}* “he killed,” *tkaēša-* “guidance,” *tbaēšah-* “harm.” Between vowel and consonant it alternates with *δ*: *a^{t̄}ka-* ~ *aδka-* “coat.”

MORPHOLOGY

General remarks

The following survey of morphological categories is not meant to be mastered completely right away, but be used as reference.

The Avestan systems of declensions and conjugations are still of the Indo-Iranian type, involving a variety of stems, genders, numbers, cases, etc. Because of the limited material the forms are not as well known as for Vedic, and the student should keep in mind that some declensions and conjugations are known from only a few forms, sometimes only a single form. In unfavorable instances the manuscript tradition may also be so poor that the correct forms cannot be determined.

Morphological (inflectional) categories

Groups of words that take the same kind of forms and endings are grouped into separate “inflectional categories.” There are two main subgroups: those words which have forms and endings indicating “time” (past, present, future) and those that do not. “Time-words” are called “verbs.”

The verbs are classified according to the way they function in a sentence. “Transitive” verbs are those that can take a direct object (he kills the dragon, I see you, etc.), while “intransitive” verbs are the others. Intransitive verbs include verbs of state (I live), verbs of motion (I walk), mental processes (I think), and others. Intransitive verbs can usually only take “inner” objects (I live a life, I walk a walk, I think a thought). When transitive verbs are used like intransitive ones they are called “passive” (I am killed, he is seen).

The second subgroup is in turn divided into several subgroups. One of these subgroups contains words that distinguish between different “cases,” that is, forms indicating the function of the word in the sentence (subject, direct object, indirect object, possessor, and other), and those that do not. Words that distinguish cases are nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and numerals. Nouns can be defined as not being adjectives, pronouns, or numerals.

Adjectives are distinguished from nouns by taking different forms depending on the gender of the noun they qualify.

Pronouns are distinguished by “deixis,” that is, references to place or time relative to the position of the speaker (I, you, he/she/it/that; here, there, yonder).

Numerals are a special kind of nouns, adjectives, or adverbs used for counting objects (cardinals); indicating position in a series (ordinals); denoting fractions (one-third), number of occurrences (once, twice); etc.

The last subgroup contain various types of words that do not change forms or take different endings depending on their function in the sentence. This subgroup contains “adverbs,” “prepositions” and “postpositions,” “conjunctions,” and various “particles.”

These categories will be described in greater detail later on. Following is a brief survey for reference. Students without a background in Classical languages, Sanskrit, or linguistics would probably benefit from reading a traditional textbook on theoretical linguistics. Modern linguistic theory and models of description are not very useful for *learning* Avestan, however.

NOUNS

General remarks

Nouns (substantives) can be “proper nouns,” e.g., *Zarathuštra-*, *Vištāspa-*, or “common nouns” (“appellatives”), e.g., *mašīia-* “man, human being,” *puθra-* “son,” *gairi-* “mountain,” *manīiu-* “spirit.”

The part of the noun (or adjective) that remains when the ending is removed is referred to as the “stem” and is marked by a hyphen, as in the examples just cited.

Declensions

Nouns and adjectives are classified as consonantic and vocalic stems, which constitute the vocalic and consonant “declensions,” or groups of nouns and adjectives characterized by the same or similar endings.

Consonant-declension nouns have a consonant before the ending, most commonly *n*, *r*, *h*, but also *p*, *t*, *nt*, *d*, etc.

Vowel-declension nouns have a vowel before the ending: *a*, *ā*, *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū*. Depending on the vowel before the ending these nouns are classified as *a*-stems, *ā*-stems, *i*-stems, etc. This vowel is also referred to as the “stem vowel.”

Some stems behave partly as vowel-stems, partly as consonant-stems, e.g., the “diphthong” stems in *aē-*, *ao-* and the *uu-*stems.

The stem vowel *a* of the *a*-declension is often referred to as the “thematic vowel” and the *a*-declension as the “thematic declension,” as opposed to “athematic” declensions.

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The same terminology is used for verbs.

Gender

Nouns, adjectives, and pronouns can be of three genders: masculine (masc., m.), feminine (fem., f.), or neuter (neut., n.).

The *a*-declension contains masculine and neuter nouns and adjectives.

The *ā*-declensions contains mostly feminine nouns and the feminine forms of *a*-declension adjectives.

There are a few masculine *ā*-stems, among them the very common noun *mazdā*-. Others are *raθaēštā*- “charioteer” and *pañtā*- “road, way.”

The *i*-declension contains masculine, feminine, and neuter nouns and adjectives. Nouns in *ti*- are usually feminine.

The *aē*-declension contains only masculine nouns, notably *kauuaē*- “kauui” and *haxaē*- “companion.”

The *u*- (and *uu*-)declension contains masculine and neuter nouns and adjectives.

The *ao*-declension contains a few masculine nouns (*bāzao*- “arm”) and adjectives (e.g., *uγra.bāzao*- “having a strong arm”) and a few feminine nouns, notably the common *dañhao*- “land” and *nasao*- “carrion, the demoness of carrion.”

The *ī*-declension has only feminine nouns and adjectives in Young Avestan and the *ū*-declension only feminine nouns. Exceptions are a few adjectival compounds with so-called root nouns as second member.

Number and case

There are three numbers: singular, dual, plural, and eight cases: nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive, dative, ablative, instrumental, locative.

The vocative is different from the nominative only in the singular and only in some declensions.

Feminine and neuter nouns have the same form for the nominative and accusative plural.

Neuter nouns always have the same form for the nominative, vocative, and accusative in the singular, dual, and plural.

In the plural, dative = ablative; in the dual, dative = ablative = instrumental.

Articles

There is no definite or indefinite article.

Nominative and vocative

We start by giving some nominative and vocative forms of nouns and adjectives. Endings:

	<i>a</i> -decl.		<i>ā</i> -decl.	
	m.	n.	m.	f.
Sing.				
nom.	-ō, -as ^o	-əm	-ā, -ās ^o	-a
voc.	-a		-a	-e
Plur.				
nom.-voc.	-a	-a	-ā, -ās ^o	-ā, -ās ^o

Notes:

The vocative singular of *a*-stems is the bare stem form.

The expression *Aməšā- Spəñta*- “Life-giving Immortal” often has the nom.-voc. plur. *Aməšā Spəñta* in the manuscripts.

Paradigms of *haoma*- m. “haoma,” *hanjamana*- n. “assembly,” *mazdā*- m. (in *Ahura- Mazdā*-, which has no plural forms), *pañtā*- m. “road,” and *daēnā*- f. (see Vocabulary). Neuter nouns and inanimate nouns in general do not have vocative forms.

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	<i>a</i> -decl.		<i>ā</i> -decl.	
	m.	n.	m.	f.
Sing.				
nom.	<i>haomō, haomas^o</i>	<i>hanjamanəm</i>	<i>mazdā, mazdās^o</i>	<i>daēna</i>
voc.	<i>haoma</i>		<i>mazda</i>	<i>daēne</i>
Plur.				
nom.-voc.	<i>haoma</i>	<i>hanjamana</i>	<i>paṇtā</i>	<i>daēnā, daēnās^o</i>

The forms marked with a final ^o are found before *-ca* “and” and *-ciṭ* “even”: *haomasca* “and the haoma,” *daēnāsciṭ* “even the *daēnās*.”

Nominative plurals in *-ānhō*

Sometimes masc. *a*-stems take the ending *-ānhō* (*-āṇhas^o*) in the nom. plural. This ending corresponds to OPers. *-āha* and Skt. *-āsah*. There is no difference in meaning from the regular form.

VERBS

General remarks

The Young Avestan verb, is—like other old Indo-European verbal systems—a multidimensional system containing the categories “tense,” “mood,” and “voice,” in addition to “number,” “person,” and “gender.”

The part of the verb that remains when the personal endings are removed, is referred to as the “stem” and is marked by a hyphen, e.g., *šauua-* “go,” *hišta-* “stand,” *bandaiia-* “bind.” The part of the stem that remains when the prefixes and suffixes that form the stem are removed, is called the “root,” e.g., $\sqrt{\text{šau-}}$, $\sqrt{\text{stā-}}$, $\sqrt{\text{band-}}$ (see Lesson 11).

Conjugations

Like nouns, verb stems are classified as vocalic or consonantic, also referred to as “thematic” and “athematic” conjugations. Thematic verbs are verbs with stems ending in *-a*, while athematic verbs have stems ending in (original) consonants or semi-vowels (*i*, *u*). In practice, stems in long *ā* and diphthongs are athematic. Thematic verbs can also be described as “regular” or “weak,” while athematic ones are “irregular” or “strong.”

The endings are basically the same in the two classes, but in the athematic conjugation frequent changes take place as a result of the various historical developments of the consonant groups resulting from the combinations of final consonant of the stem plus the initial consonant of the ending.

Some forms of the verb function as adjectives (“participles”) or nouns (“infinitives”).

Tenses

The tenses are present: “he does, he is doing”—imperfect: “he did, he was doing”—aorist: “he did, he has done”—perfect: “he has (always) seen.”

In Young Avestan the imperfect tense is mostly expressed by the inherited present injunctive forms, more seldom the imperfect forms (= injunctive + augment). In this manual this form will be called the “imperfect-injunctive.”

The use of the aorist indicative (see below) is limited in Young Avestan, but some modal forms are relatively common.

The perfect is used in old Young Avestan in its old functions. Its modal forms also have important uses.

A “periphrastic” perfect formed by the perfect participle in *-ta* plus the verb “to be” (similar to German *Ich bin gewesen* and French *je suis allé*) is seen occasionally.

Moods

There are five moods: indicative: “he does, he is doing”—subjunctive: “(that) he (should) do”—imperative: “do!”—optative: “may he do, he should do, (I wish) he would do”—and (present, aorist) injunctive: “(do not) do!”

Voices, passive

There are two “voices”: active and middle: act. “he does (for others)”—mid. “he does for himself.”

The passive (“it is done, he is killed”) can be expressed by middle forms or by a special present stem in *-iia-*.

On terminology

Students without a background in Latin, Greek, or Sanskrit are likely to be confused by the many meanings of terms such as “injunctive,” “active,” and “middle.” It should be carefully observed that these terms sometimes refer to *forms*, sometimes to *functions* or *meanings*. Thus verbs with “middle” *endings* can have “active,” “passive,” or “middle” *meaning*. The normal *function* of the “injunctive” of the present stem is “imperfect,” while “imperfect” (augmented) *forms* are very rare in Avestan.

The imperative

As with the nouns, we shall start with the simplest forms of the verbs: those of the 2nd person singular and plural imperative active.

The following table shows the endings of the thematic verbs with the imperative active forms of *jasa-* “to come,” *bandaiia-* “to bind,” and *dāiia-* “to give, grant.”

	Endings:	Examples:		
Sing. 2nd pers.	-a	<i>jasa</i> “come!”	<i>bandaiia</i> “bind!”	<i>dāiia</i> “give, grant!”
Plur. 2nd pers.	-ata	<i>jasata</i>	<i>bandaiiata</i>	<i>dāiata</i>

Note that the imp. sing. of thematic stems ends in *-a*, which is, like the voc. sing. of *a*-stem nouns, the bare stem.

“To be”

The common verb “to be” has the following forms in the present indicative:

	Present indicative	Examples:
Sing.		
1	<i>ahmi</i>	<i>azəm ahmi</i> “I am”
2	<i>ahi</i>	<i>tum ahi</i> “you are”
3	<i>asti</i>	<i>asti</i> “(he/she/i)t is”
Plur.		
1	<i>mahi</i>	<i>vaēm mahi</i> “we are”
2	<i>stā</i>	<i>yužəm stā</i> “you (all) are”
3	<i>hənti</i>	<i>hənti</i> “(they) are”

Notes:

The 2 plur. *stā* is not found in Young Avestan, only Old Avestan.

The verb “be” is used with the dative to express possession: *nōiṭ mē asti* “I have no ...”

SYNTAX

Uses of the nominative

The main functions of the nominative are the following:

1. Subject

It is the case of the subject of a verb: intransitive (e.g., "I am, she goes"), transitive (e.g., "the men kill enemies"), or passive (e.g., "the women are abducted").

azəm mazdaiiasnō ahmi "I am a Mazdaianian"

· azəm mazdaiiasnō ahmi

Ahurō Mazdaḡ bayō asti "Ahura Mazda is a god".

· Ahurō Mazdaḡ bayō asti

Arəduuī Sura Anāhita srira asti

· Arəduuī Sura Anāhita srira asti

"Arduuī Sura Anāhita is beautiful"

2. Predicate noun or adjective

It is the case of the predicate noun or adjective of the verb "to be" and some other verbs (e.g., "to seem"):

Examples with "to be":

azəm mazdaiiasnō ahmi "I am a Mazdaianian"

· azəm mazdaiiasnō ahmi

Ahurō Mazdaḡ bayō asti "Ahura Mazda is a god".

· Ahurō Mazdaḡ bayō asti

azəm ahmi Zaraθuštrō tum Jāmāspō ahi

· azəm ahmi Zaraθuštrō tum Jāmāspō ahi

"I am Zarathustra, you are Djamasp."

vaēm mazdaiiasna mahi "we are Mazdaianians."

· vaēm mazdaiiasna mahi

yužəm daēuua stā dušxšaθra

· yužəm daēuua stā dušxšaθra

"you are demons, with bad command"

· yužəm daēuua stā dušxšaθra

ime hənti paoiriō.dāta paoiriō.fraθbaršta

"these are those first brought forth, first fashioned forth."

yōi hənti haoma sura spənta

· yōi hənti haoma sura spənta

"... which are the life-giving haomas, rich in life-giving strength."

The verb "to be" is sometimes omitted. Clauses with a subject and predicate noun or adjective but without a verb are called "nominal clauses" or "noun clauses." In Avestan, relative clauses that characterize nouns are frequently noun clauses:

azəm yō Ahurō Mazdaḡ tum yō Zaraθuštrō

· azəm yō Ahurō Mazdaḡ tum yō Zaraθuštrō

"I who (am) Ahura Mazda, you who (are) Zarathustra."

Note also the following construction, which is quite common in Avestan (see Lesson 11):

yā āpō baēšaziia "the healing waters" (lit. which (are) the healing waters)

· yā āpō baēšaziia

3. Appositions to a noun in the nominative

Appositions to a noun in the nominative are themselves in the nominative:

azəm ahmi Ahurō Mazda māniiuš spāništō 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌
 “I am Ahura Mazda, the most Life-giving Spirit.”

Use of the vocative

The vocative is used only when addressing someone and is often used together with an imperative.

azəm ahmi Zərəθuštra Haomō duraošō 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌
 “I am, O Zarathustra, Haoma the death-avorter.” (Y.9.2)

tum ahi Ahura Mazda yazatō mazištō 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌
 “You are, O Ahura Mazda, the greatest god.”

vasō.xšaθrō ahi Haoma 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌
 “you are in total command, O Haoma.” (Y.9.25)

Use of the imperative

The imperative is used to express a command or an exhortation, as in English, “come!,” “stop!.” The person the command or exhortation is addressed to is frequently in the vocative.

Examples:

srīre Anāhīte mošu jasa “O beautiful Anāhitā, come quickly!” 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌

taṭ nō dāīiata yazata mazištaca vahištaca 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌
 “Give (grant) that to us, O gods, both greatest and best!” [Note: *taṭ* here is acc. as direct object = nom.]

Number

When a subject consists of several nouns (not a person) the verb usually agrees with the nearest noun.

Examples:

āetaṭ astī yasnasca vahmasca “this is the sacrifice and hymn.” 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌

Repetition of verbs

Instead of repeating a verb in the sentence, like in English, Avestan prefers repeating nouns, pronouns, and preverbs, example:

imaṭ baṣa dāīiata imaṭ vispe yazata 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌 𐬀𐬰𐬎𐬌𐬎𐬎𐬌𐬰𐬊𐬰𐬌
 “Give this, O gods, (give) this, O all beings worthy of sacrifice!” [Note: *imaṭ* is acc. direct object = nom.]

EXERCISES 3

1. Write in transcription and Avestan script the nom. and voc. sing. (only “living” things) and plur. forms (not proper names!) of the following nouns and adjectives:

baṣa- mazišta-, yazata- vahišta-, maṣīia- acišta-, daēnā- spəntā-, xšaθra- vərəθrajaqstəma-, aka- yāna-; Pāuruua- nauuāza vīfrō.təma-, Anāhitā- vahmiīā-.

2. Write in transcription and Avestan script the sing. and plur. imperative forms of the following verbs:

x^vara-, yāsa-, taca-, hišta-, baṇdaiia-, x^vafsa-.

VOCABULARY 3

Note: nouns ending in *-a-* are masculine unless marked n. (neuter), and nouns ending in *-ā-* are feminine, with the few known exceptions.

acišta-, superlative of aka-: most evil	kaṭ, nom. sing. n. of ka- how, what
aḍaoiia-: who cannot be deceived	kauuaē- m.: kauui; mythical poet-priests, some of them were Zarathustra's competitors
ahuraḍāta-: established (put in its proper place) by Ahura Mazdā	kərəp-/kəhrp- f.: form, shape
aiβi.draoxḍa-: who may be deceived, cheated	kō, nom. sing. m. of ka-: who? what? how?
aka-: bad, evil	mahrka-: destruction
amərəxti- f.: absence of destruction	maniiəuuī-, fem. of maniiəuuā-
aniia-: other	mazišta-, superlative of mazānt-: great
aṅušta-, aṅušta-: finger	nitāma-: lowest
apa.duuara-: to run away	nō: to/for/of us
apa.nasiia-: to get lost	nōiṭ: not
Astuuat.ərəta-: he through whom Order will have bones (= be permanent), name of the last Revitalizer (<i>saošiant-</i>), son of Zarathustra	paitiiāra-: adversary
ašaiia-: in Orderly fashion, according to the ritual Order	paṅtaṅʰa- n.: a fifth
aṭka- = aḍka-: coat	paoiriō.dāta-: first established
āpō: waters; nom. plur. of āp- f.	pərətu- m.: ford, bridge
ātarə: O fire; voc. of ātar-	puθra-: son
baēšaza- n.(?): healing, medicine	šāuua-: to go
baēšaziia-: healing, medicinal	uṅra.bāzao-: strong-armed
baēšaziiō.tāma-: most healing; superlative of baēšaziia-	uruuārā-: plant
baya-: lord, god	usəhišta- < √stā: to get up, rise
bandaiia- < √band: to bind, tie	uzdāta-: past participle of uzdā-: set up
bāzao- m.: arm	vadar- n.: (striking) weapon
-ca: and	vahma-: hymn
-ca ... -ca: both ... and	vahmiia-: worthy of hymns
darəyəm: for a long (time)	vasō.xšaθra-: having/with command at will, in complete command
dāiia-: to give, grant	vərəθrajastāma-: most obstruction-smashing, most victorious
duyḍar- f.: daughter	vispe nom. plur. of vispa-: every, all
dušxšaθra-: having/with bad, evil command	Vištāspa-: proper name, last of the great kauuis who fought the powers of evil
gairi- m.: mountain	vō: to/for/of you (all)
gaoša-: ear	xʰafsa- < √xʰap: to go to sleep
haxaē- m.: companion, friend	yaska-: illness
hazaṅra- n.: a thousand	yasna- n.: sacrifice, ritual
hišta- < √stā act: to stand (up), take up position; mid.: to stand	yesniia-: worthy of sacrifice
hukərəpta-: well-shaped	yōi, plur. nom. masc. of ya-: who
huraōḍa-: well-shaped	zaraθuštriš, nom. sing. of zaraθuštri-: son of Zarathustra, (who is) in the tradition of Zarathustra
huraθa-: having/with good chariots	
huuāspa-: having/with good horses	
huxšaθra-: having/with good power	
imaṭ: neut. nom.-acc. sing. < ima-	
ime: masc. nom.-acc. plur. < ima-	