

## LESSON 5

### THE SCRIPT AND THE TEXT

#### Punctuation

In the manuscripts every word is separated by a point (period). The point is also regularly used to separate members of compounds (see Lesson 6), as well as to mark off preverbs and prefixes (not consistently), enclitic pronouns, sometimes even endings. The enclitic particles *-ca* and *-ciŋ*, however, are not separated from the words they are attached to.

It has become tradition to transcribe this point by a period whenever it does not simply mark the end of a word. It is also sometimes used with enclitic pronouns (*yā.mē*, etc.). This is wrong, however, as the long *ē* of the enclitic pronouns shows they were considered by the scribes as separate words. If they were genuinely enclitic, they would—by the rules (see below)—have final *-e*, not *-ē*, etc.

### PHONOLOGY

#### Sound system. The ə

The phonemic status of Avestan *ə* is problematic. It is found mainly in the following phonetic contexts:

1. as the regular allophone of *a* before nasals and before *uu* followed by *i* or *ī*. Examples: *hənti* “they are” (but *zauuainti* “they curse”); *maniəuuī-*, feminine of *manīiauuā-* “belonging to the world of thought,” *səuuīšta-* “most rich in life-giving strength” (< *sauu-*), *rəuuī-* f. “fast,” see below;
2. as the common anaptyctic vowel, see below.

#### Final syllables

Not all vowels, diphthongs, or consonants are found in final position.

Final vowels in monosyllables are always written long (except short *-e* in some late manuscripts), no matter their origins, e.g., *mē* “(to, for) me,” *zī* “for, namely,” *nō* “(to, for) us.”

The only diphthong found in final position is *ōi*, and even this is rare, e.g., *yōi* “who (plur.).”

In polysyllabic words *ā*, *ī*, *ū*, *ē* and diphthongs are not used at the end of words in genuine Young Avestan, only in imitation of Old Avestan.

#### Conspectus:

Finals:	Monosyllables:	Polysyllables:
Short		<i>a, i, u, e, ə</i>
Long	<i>ā, ī, ū, ō, ā, q, ē, ōi, āi, āu</i>	<i>ā, ō, q, ē</i>

Among the exceptions are: *Arəduuī Sura* (possibly influenced by Pahl. *Ardwīsūr*).

The diphthongs *aē* and *ao* become *-(ii)e* and *-uuō* in final position. The diphthongs themselves reappear before *-ca* “and” and *-ciŋ* “even”: *-aēca* and *-aoca*, e.g., *tē* “they,” *taēciŋ* “even they.”

Note that vocative forms never take the enclitics *-ca* and *-ciŋ*, and so the original diphthongs do not (usually) reappear in vocative forms.<sup>3</sup>

Few consonants are found as finals: the two nasals *m* and *n*, the dental *t* and the sibilants *s* (rare), *š* (common), e.g., *barəm* “I carried,” *barən* “they carried,” *baraŋ* “he carried,” *hauruuatās* “wholeness,” *manīuš* “spirit(s),” *gairiš* “mountain(s).”

The consonant *r* always takes *ə* as supporting vowel when final, e.g., *dātarə* “O creator!,” *ātarə* “O fire!”

<sup>3</sup> On *gao-* see Lesson 8.

The consonant *s* takes *ə* as supporting vowel when final in *sandhi* (see Lesson 4), e.g., *kasə tē* “who for you?.”

Vowels in monosyllables ending in consonants basically follow the same rules (or lack of rules) as vowels in other final syllables. In this introduction, short *i* will be used in words such as *im* “this (f.)” (not *īm*), *dim*, *diš*.

### Modifications of vowels: *a* + nasal

Among all the vowels, the vowel *a* is the most prone to change. Its main variants are *ə* before *uu*/*uuī* and nasals (*n* and *m*) and *e* when palatalized.

The variant *ə* is in turn very sensitive to its surroundings and regularly becomes *i* when preceded by palatal consonants (*ii*, *c*, and *j*) and *u* when preceded by *uu*.

The combinations *-(i)ii*m, *-(u)uum* and *-(i)ii*n, *-(u)uun* are then finally simplified to *-im*, *-um* and *-in*, *-un*. These finals in turn combine with a preceding *-a-* to form diphthongs: *-aēm*, *-aom*, etc.

Note: Sometimes the intermediate stage persists beside the final one, e.g., *-aiiən* ~ *-aēn*.

The sound changes listed in the table below can all be derived from these rules.

Mastery of these rules and sound changes is crucial to the students’ ability to analyze Avestan, as they pervade the entire language.

Following are some common examples of sound changes needed to understand the paradigms in this lesson. The student should learn them by heart. A complete table is given in lesson 7.

*-am	>	-əm		*-an	>	-ən
*-iiam	>	-iiəm	>	-im		
*-aiiam	>	*-aiiəm	>	-aēm		
*-auuam	>	*-auuəm	>	-aom		
				*-ian	>	-iən
				*-aiian	>	-aiiən
				*-auuan	>	-auuən
					>	-in
					>	-aēn
					>	-aon

### The voiced fricatives: *β*, *δ*, *γ*

The voiced fricatives are all subject to contextual, possibly also dialectal, changes and variations.

Intervocalic *δ* alternates with *θ* in forms of *vaēδ-* “to know” and the present stem *dadā-* of the verb *dā-* “to give, place, create,” e.g., *viθuš* “knowing,” *dadaṭ* “gave.”

Intervocalic *β* further tends to become *uu*, which in turn is subject to change, cf. *aiβi* “to” > *auui* > *aoi*, *viāuuaiti-* “shining far and wide” < *\*vi-ā-bā-* < *√bā* “to shine.” The combination *\*bi* became *βi*, written *βii*, which further became *ui*, which combined with preceding *a* > *aoii*, cf. *\*adaβiia-* “undeceivable”: nom. *adaoiiō*, but acc. *adauuiim*; *\*daiβi-* f. “deceptive” > *\*daiuuī-* (written *daēuuī-*, *daēiuuī-*).

The velar fricative *γ* is lost in some positions: *druuaṅt-*, cf. OAv. *drəguuaṅt-*; fem. *rəuuī-* “fast” < *raγu-* (cf. Skt. *laghvī-*); *Mourum* < *\*Maryum*.<sup>4</sup>

## NOUNS

### *u-* and *ū-*stems

The endings of the nom. and voc. sing. and plur. forms of the *u-* and *ū-*declensions and the irregular noun *pasu-* “small cattle (sheep and goats)” are:

	<i>u-</i> decl. m.	n.	<i>pasu-</i> m.	<i>ū-</i> decl. f.
Sing.				
nom.	-uš	-u	-uš	-uš
voc.	-uuō		-	-

<sup>4</sup> See Skjærø, “Avestica II,” 1997.

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Plur.

nom.-voc.    *-auuō, -auuas°*    *-u*    *-uuō, -uuas°*    *-uuō, -uuas°*

Paradigms (*ratu-* m. “(divine) model,” *pouru-* “much, many,” *tanū-* f. “body,” *pasu-* m. “sheep”; note how the labialization rules work!):

	<i>u</i> -decl.			<i>pasu-</i>	<i>ū</i> -declension
	m.		n.	m.	f.
Sing.					
nom.	<i>ratuš</i>	<i>pouruš</i>	<i>pouru</i>	<i>pasuš</i>	<i>tanuš</i>
voc.	<i>ratuuō</i>	-		-	-
Plur.					
nom.-voc.	<i>ratauuō,</i> <i>ratauuas°</i>	<i>parauuō,</i> <i>parauuas°</i>	<i>pouru</i>	<i>pasuuō</i> <i>pasuuas°</i>	<i>tanuuō</i> <i>tanuuas°</i>

Notes:

In the manuscripts we often find *pasuuō* “normalized” to *pasauuō*.

*ratu-* is properly a *u*<sup>2</sup>-stem (see Lesson 11).

For the feminine *u*-stems, see *ao*-stems in Lesson 8.

The vocative endings of the *i*-stems (and *aē*-stems): *-e* (< \**-ie*), and *u*-stems: *-uuō*, are for \**-aē* and \**-ao* in final position.

After *ii* the vocative ending is only *-ō*: *maniiō* < *maniiu-* “spirit,” *Vaiiō* < *Vaiiu-*.

### About the endings

The *a-*, *i-*, and *u*-declensions originally (= in Indo-European) had the same ending in the nominative singular, namely *-s*, as in Greek θεός *theós* “god,” πίστις *pístis* “faith” and ἰχθύς *ikhthús* “fish,” Latin *dominus*, *civis*, *sinus*, but in the Indo-Iranian mother language *s* became *h* after *a* and *ā* but *š* after *i* or *u* according to the “*ruki*” rule, which states that *s* became *š* after *r*, *u*, *k* [Iran. *x*], *i*). The Indo-Iranian forms were therefore \**-ah*, \**-iš*, \**-uš*.

In addition, in Avestan final \**-h* was lost causing rounding of the preceding vowels: \**-ah* > *-ō*, \**-āh* > *-ā*.

## ADJECTIVES

### Feminine and neuter forms

Feminine forms of adjectives of the *a*-declension are usually declined according to the *ā*-declension, occasionally according to the *ī*-declension, e.g., *sura-* “rich in life-giving strength,” f. *surā-*; *spənta-* “life-giving,” f. *spəntā-*, but *zarənaēna-* “made of gold,” f. *zarənaēni-*, *maniiuuua-*, f. *maniiuuuī-*.

Note the fem. nom. sing. *naire* < \**nairiia* of *nairiīā-* “manly, heroic.”

Feminine forms of other adjectives are declined according to the *ī*-declension, e.g.: *vaŋhu-* “good,” *vaŋhī-* f.; *pouru-* “plentiful, many,” *paoirī-* f.; *driyu-* “poor,” *driuuī-* f. (note the phonetic changes).

Neuter adjectives are declined like neuter nouns, e.g., nom.-acc. sing. *surəm*, *āhuiri* “belonging to/related to Ahura (Mazdā),” *vohu*.

### Adjectival compounds in *-ī* and *-ū*

There are a few adjectival compounds ending in root nouns in *-ī* and *-ū*, e.g., *yauuaēji-* “living forever” and *yauuaēsū-* “vitalized forever” (see Lesson 12: laryngeal stems). These stems are declined like *ū*-stems, but few forms are actually attested:

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Sing.			
nom.		*yauuaējiš	*yauuaēsuš
Plur.			
nom.-acc.		*yauuaējiiō	*yauuaēsuuō

### PRONOUNS

#### Personal pronouns in the nominative

The personal pronouns have the following forms in the nominative.

	1st	2nd	3rd		
Sing.					
nom.	azəm “I”	tum “you, thou”	hō, has <sup>o</sup> ; huuō “he”	hā “she”	taṭ “it”
Plur.					
nom.	vaēm “we”	yužəm “you, ye”	tē “they”	tā “they”	tā “they”

Note: *hasciṭ*, but *hō + ca > hāca* in *hāca iḍa astu* “and he (Sraoša) shall be here” (Y.27.6, Vr.12.1).

### VERBS

#### Imperfect-injunctive active 1

Depending on their shape, the Avestan verbs are divided into groups of verbs with similar characteristics. There are two main groups: “thematic” verbs, in which the stem ends in *a*, and “athematic” verbs, in which the stem does not end in *a*. These two groups are further divided into subgroups called “present classes.” We have already seen examples of imperative forms of athematic verbs ending in consonants or vowels and thematic verbs with stems ending in *-a-*, *-ii-*, and *-aia-*. These will be discussed in greater detail later.

To express past tense (past action, state, etc.) Young Avestan employs a form of the verb which here will be referred to as the “imperfect-injunctive.”

The endings of the imperfect-injunctive are called “secondary” (i.e., as opposed to the “primary” endings of the present indicative, see Lesson 8). As the secondary endings are less exposed to phonetic changes than the primary ones—although there are several—we shall discuss them first.

**Note:** Because many forms are not (well) attested in the *Avesta*, it is impossible to give complete paradigms. To make it easier on the students I have as far as possible used the same verb throughout the paradigms, although these particular forms may not be attested, and I have sometimes included forms that are strictly speaking only attested in Old Avestan.

In the athematic verbs, the endings vary according to the final of the stem.

Paradigm (athem.: *mrao-/mru-* “to say,” *stao-/stu-* “to praise,” *daḍā-/daḍ-* (*daθ-*) “to give, place”; them.: *vaēna-* “to see,” *tauruuāia-* “to overcome”):

	Athematic		Thematic		
Sing.					
1	-m, -əm	daḍqm	mraom	-əm	vaēnəm
2	*-h, -š	daḍā	mraoš	-ō	vaēnō
3	-t	daḍāṭ	mraoṭ	-aṭ	vaēnaṭ
Plur					
1	-ma			*-āma, -ama	*vaēnāma
2	-ta	dasta	staota	-ata	*vaēnata
3	-ən	daḍən		-ən	vaēnən
					tauruuāiama
					tauruuāiata



*ā.jasaḥ Vərəθraγnō ahuraδātō* .𐬵𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬨𐬌 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀  
 “Vərəθraγna, established by Ahura Mazdā, came (flying).”  
*ā nō jasa auuaḥhē* “Come to our assistance!” . 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀  
*paiti dim pərəsaḥ Zərəθuštrō* “Zarathustra asked him in turn.” . 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀

A verb can have several preverbs:

*āiḥi paiti.auua.jasa Arəduuī Sure Anāhite* . 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀  
 “Come! Come down to (us), O Arəduuī Sura Anāhita!”

When a verb with a preverb is repeated in a sentence, instead of repeating the whole verb, the preverb may be repeated without the verb (cf. Lesson 3), e.g.:

*pairi tē Haoma daḍam pairi vō āpō pairi tē ātarə* . 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀  
 “I presented to you, O Haoma, (I presented) to you, O waters, (I presented) to you, O fire ...”

EXERCISES 5

1. Write in transcription and Avestan script the nom. sing. and plur. (where appropriate) forms of the following nouns and adjectives:

*aša- vahišta-, aši- vaḥhī-, baya- mazišta-, bayā- paoiri-, driγu- mašiiia-, frasparəγa- srira-, kaniia- hudaēnā-, vohu- vastra-, buiri- xʷarəθa-, aka- yātu-, vaḥhu- gairi-; Vaiiu- uparō.kairiia-*

2. Write in transcription and Avestan script the imperfect-injunctive forms of the following verbs:

*āi-, ā.kasa-, isa-, kərənao-, gauruuaiia-, θβərəsa-, bərəjaiia-, zauua-, zbaiia-*

3. Transcribe and translate into English:

. 𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀 . 𐬀𐬵𐬀𐬯𐬀𐬯𐬀

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pasu-: (small domestic) animal, especially sheep and goats	upāi-/upaē- < √aē/i: to go over (to), approach
pata- > vī.pata-	Ušahina-: Ušahina, genius of dawn
pāiu-: guardian	uxšīia- < √vaxš/uxš: to grow, wax
pərəsa- < √pars/fras: to ask	Uzaiieirina-: Uzaiieirina, genius of the evening
pouru.mahrka-: full of destruction	vaēna-: to see
Rapiθβina-: Rapiθβina, genius of noon-time	vastra- n.: garment
razišta-: straightest; standing epithet of Rashnu	vərəθrajaštəma-, superlative of vərəθrajan-: the most obstruction-smashing, most victorious
Sāuuuḡhaē-, voc. Sauuḡḡhe: Sāuuuḡḡhi, genius of the late morning	viš = vī-
staora-: (large domestic) animal, cattle and horses	vī.pata-: to run away (used of evil creatures)
šē encl. pron. gen.-dat.: to/for him/her	x <sup>v</sup> isa- < √x <sup>v</sup> aēd: to begin to sweat
tafsa- < √tap: to become hot	yaθa: as, like, when
taršta-: frightened	yauuaējī- adj.: living forever
tauruuaīia- < √tar: to overcome	yauuaēsū- adj.: life-giving/vitalized forever
tē: 1. of/to/for you, your; 2. they	yātu-: sorcerer
θβərəsa- √θβars: to fashion (like a carpenter)	zairi.gaona-: green
uiti: thus	zaṅtu-: tribe
upa.duudara-: to come running (daēuuas, etc.)	zaoša-: pleasure
uparō.kairīia-: whose work is above; epithet of Vaiiu	zauua- < √zu: to curse
	zbaiia- < √zbā: to invoke
	zī: for, because