BRIEF COMMUNICATION

AVESTAN VAARE YAONA

Like most Avestan texts, Yagā 5, the Arōdvī Sūrā Anāhitā Yašt, is full of puzzling verses, which have challenged numerous Iranologists. Verse 87 has recently been investigated at length by R. Hauschild in MIO, xi. 3, (1966), 463-512. Hauschild begins by citing some thirteen of the earlier translations of this verse. His own eventual interpretation depends upon a rather drastic change of the text. He reads vaḍairyu, yaoṇa instead of Geldner's vaḍre yaona. Yet it seems to me that the text can be satisfactorily interpreted as it stands.

Geldner's text reads in transcription:

$$\text{Owqm kaininō vaḍre yaona}$$
$$\text{xšadra hvāpā jaiyānte}$$
$$\text{təxməmča mnəñō.paii̯m}$$
$$\text{Owqm čarāitiš zizanāitiš}$$
$$\text{jaiyānte huzāmīn}$$
$$\text{tūm tā aēibyo xšayamna}$$
$$\text{nisirinavāhi ardvī sūre anāhite}$$

It would seem clear that Owqm kaininō...jaiyānte is parallel with Owqm čarāitiš...jaiyānte, and that we would therefore expect vaḍre yaona to be parallel with zizanāitiš. The objects of jaiyānte should also be parallel: xšadra hvāpā...təxməmča mnəñō.paii̯m and huzāmīn. Most scholars have in fact attempted to preserve the parallelism, but difficulties have immediately arisen.

Thus, Bartholomae, very plausibly, reasoning from the context, took vaḍre as an adjective meaning 'marriageable'. He explained it as standing for *vaṭrāya NPM, agreeing with kaininō, which he took to be sometimes
masculine plural like Old Indian dārāḥ masc.pl. ‘wife’. He was incapable of explaining yaona.

Reading vaḍrī with MSS. E 1 and F 1, several scholars (Darmesteter, Wackernagel, Lommel, Weller) connected the word with Old Indian vāḍhri- ‘barren’. This led to the assumption that yaona meant ‘womb’, one of the meanings developed by Old Indian yōṁi-. Thus, H. Weller read vaḍrī. yaonā (NPf), which he rendered ‘unfruchtbaren Schosses’. Hauschild has raised serious objections to this interpretation on semantic grounds.

Gershevitch disregarded the parallelism and took vaḍre yaona as object of jaiḍyānte. He explained vaḍre as APn, for *vaḍrya, a derivative of *vaḍra- ‘wedding’. yaona he claimed as “plural of a neuter derivative of vyu ‘to join’”. He then commented, presumably as a joke: “the *vaḍryam yaonam being literally the ‘wed-lock’”. The English wed has, of course, no connection with Avestan vaḍ- ‘lead’ nor has 9lock the idea of ‘join’.

Finally, Hauschild read:

\[\thetaωμαν \ χαίνινον \ υαδαιρυύ, ιοαονά
\] 
\[\xiσάρα \ χβόπα \ jaiḍyānte
\] 
\[\tauαχμοιντα \ ιηνινον \ ιαιτιμ\]

and translated: “Dich sollen die Neuvermählten, deren Schoss nach der Begattung schmachtet, um ‘fruchtbare Domān’ anflehen, und um einen wackeren Haussherrn.”

If we keep the text offered by Geldner, we can, however, obtain a satisfactory interpretation. vaḍre must clearly be connected with vaḍairyu- as Bartholomae had already seen. vaḍairyu- evidently implies an old r/n-stem *vaḍar- ‘wedding’ < vaḍ- ‘to lead; marry’. But *vaḍra- would not also be ‘wedding’ as Gershevitch wanted. Just as we have ugra- ‘strong’ beside aogar- ‘strength’, so we would expect *vaḍra- to be an adjective ‘marriageable’ beside the noun *vaḍar- ‘wedding’.

vaḍre can be explained as LSm < vaḍra- ‘marriageable’. vaḍre stands for *vaḍraya rather than for *vaḍrya. Thus, hama- ‘same’ has as LSm both hame and hamaya: hiṣṭoṇa...hamaya gātvō ‘they stood in the same place’ (Yt 13. 53, 55) beside hame gātvō...hiṣṭoṇa (Yt 13. 57).

1 H. Weller, Anahita (Stuttgart-Berlin, 1938), pp. 95, 119, 143.
4 See Hauschild, loc. cit., pp. 479 f.