

BENEDIKT PESCHL

Avestan

Morphology – Part 2: Nominal stem formation and inflection



MUYA —
The Multimedia Yasna Project

Roadmap

- Nominal stem formation
- Nominal inflection
- Inner-paradigmatic ablaut and heteroclisis
- Alternation between stem classes
- Number

Nominal stem formation: primary derivatives

- Derivation from roots. Examples:

gaē- /gai/ ~ jiiā- ~ jī- 'to live'

-a- *gaii-a-* 'life'

-θā- *gaē-θā-* 'living being, world of living beings'

-ti- *jī-ti-* 'living' (noun/adjective)

-tu- *jiiā-tu-* 'life subsistency'

hak- 'to accompany' -man- *hax-man-* 'fellowship'

pā- 'to protect' -tar- *pā-tar-* 'protector'

Nominal stem formation: root stems

- Nominal roots:

āp- 'water'

kəhrp- 'body'

- Root nouns corresponding to verbal roots:

gar- '(song of) welcome' cf. *gar-* 'to welcome'

vac- 'word' cf. *vac-* 'to say'

Nominal stem formation: secondary derivatives

- Derivation from derived stems. Examples:

-a-	<i>aiiar-</i> ‘day’	<i>aiiar-a-</i> ‘of the day’
-iia-	<i>gaēθ-ā-</i> ‘world of living beings’	<i>gaēθ-iia-</i> ‘belonging to G’
-uuan-	<i>aša-</i> (principle of order and truth)	<i>ašauuan-</i> ‘partaker in A.’
-uuaṇt-	<i>ama-</i> ‘force’	<i>amauuaṇt-</i> ‘forceful’
*-Han-	<i>mąθra-</i> ‘formula’	<i>mąθrān-</i> / <i>manθra(H)an-</i> / ‘possessing formulas’

Thematic vs. athematic inflection

- Principal distinction in both noun and verb inflection
- Depending on the presence or absence of a stem-final vowel *-a-*, partly distinct sets of endings are used
- Tendency towards use of “thematized” forms in YAv. texts

Nominal inflection: OAv. sample paradigm

- Inflection of thematic stems. *ahura-* ‘lord’ (m.), *uxδa-* ‘utterance’ (ntr.)

case	singular		plural		dual	
nom.	<i>ahurō</i>	<i>uxδǎm</i>	<i>ahurā, ahurǎṅhō</i>		<i>ahurā</i>	<i>uxδōi</i>
acc.	<i>ahurǎm</i>		<i>ahurǎṅ</i>			
voc.	<i>ahurā</i>		<i>ahurā, ahurǎṅhō</i>			
dat.	<i>ahurāi(iā)</i>		<i>ahurōibiiō, ahuraēbiiō</i>		<i>ahurōibiiā</i>	
abl.	<i>ahurāt</i>					
instr.	<i>ahurā</i>					
gen.	<i>ahurahiiā</i>		<i>ahuranqm</i>		<i>ahuraiiā</i>	
loc.	<i>ahurōi(ā), ahurē</i>		<i>ahuraēšū</i>		<i>ahuraiiō</i>	

OAv. case inventory (animate stems)

sg.	pl.	du.
nom.	nom. = voc.	nom. = voc. = acc.
voc.		
acc.		
dat.	dat. = abl.	dat. = abl. = ins.
abl. (athem. = gen.)		
ins.	ins.	
gen. (athem. = abl.)	gen.	gen.
loc.	loc.	loc.

Case system: changes from OAv. to YAv.

- Syncretism of abl. and instr. pl.: abl. ending $-(aēi)biiō$ takes over the function of the ins. endings $-āiš$ (thematic) and $-bīš$ (athematic)
- Abl. of athematic inflection re-characterized by $-ṭ$ (as in thematic inflection)
 - Increasing differentiation in the sg. contrasts with syncretistic tendencies in the plural

Pronominal inflection

- While in principle thematic, the inflection of pronouns (demonstrative, interrogative, relative) shows some systematic differences from that of thematic nouns and adjectives:

example *ta-* ‘that’

nom.pl.m	OAv. <i>tōi</i> , YAv. <i>te</i> / <i>taj</i> /	thematic nouns <i>-ā</i> , <i>-āṅhō</i>
nom.-acc.sg.n	<i>taṭ</i> / <i>ta-t</i> /	thematic nouns / <i>-m</i> /

- Shared features with thematic noun inflection against athematic inflection:

abl.sg.	<i>-āṭ</i>	athematic <i>-(a)h</i> = gen.
ins.pl.	<i>-āiš</i>	athematic <i>-biš</i>

Noun declension: inner-paradigmatic ablaut

- Suffix ablaut: regular with certain athematic stem classes:

dā-tar- ‘creator’ → acc. *dā-tar-am*, gen. *dā-θr-ō*

see also examples in video 3.1 (Morphology, part 1)

- Root ablaut: archaism preserved by very few nouns:

nom. *āiiū* (*Hāi-u), gen. *yaō-š* (*Hi-au-š) ‘life time’

nom. *paṇtā* (*pant-aH-s), abl. *paθō* (*pṇt-H-as) ‘path’

Heterocclisis: *r/n*-stems

- Neuter stems with alternation between *r* and *n* in the suffix (productive)

- Suffix *-ar-* ~ *-an-*:

YAv. nom.-acc.sg. *aiiar^a* /aṯ-ar/, gen. *aiiqn* */aṯ-an-s/ 'day'

- Suffix *-uar-* ~ *-uan-*:

YAv. nom.-acc.sg. *karšuar^a* /karš-ṽar/, nom.-acc. pl. *karšuuqn* /karš-ṽān/
'continent'

YAv. alternations between stem classes

- Significant amount of (apparent) examples
- Neuter *a*-stems with *ā*-stem plural forms (Hock 2014)

x^varəθa- ‘food’ regular plural *x^varəθa*

but also *x^varəθ-ā̇* ‘(kinds) of food’ (as if from *x^varəθā-*)

- May (at least in part) also represent the pl. of a distinct collective stem in *-ā-*, itself derived from the neuter *a*-stem

YAv. alternations between stem classes (cont.)

- Feminine *ā*-stems with neuter *ah*-stem plural forms (de Vaan 2003)

haēnā- f. 'army', but Y 57.25:

druuaṭbiiō

deceitful.ABL.PL.N

haēnābiiō

army.ABL.PL.N (as if from **haēnah*-)

"from the deceitful armies"

- But confusing manuscript transmission makes reading as corruption for *druuaṭibiiō haēniābiiō* (from stem *haēniā*-, perhaps 'gang') possible as well (see Kellens 2011)

YAv. alternations between stem classes (cont.)

- Thematization of nouns: occasional thematic forms of otherwise athematic stems

root compound *daēnō.dis-* ‘showing the vision/religion’:

nom.sg *daēnō.disō* (as if from stem *daēnō.disa-*)

Number: Counting of nouns

- The quantity: dual/plural, in the case form required by the context:

ahmīia *vāše* *vazānte* *caθβārō* *auruuantō*
this.LOC chariot.LOC pull.PRS.3PL 4.NOM.PL.M racehorse.NOM.PL.M
“Four racehorses pull this chariot” (YAv., Yt 10.125)

- NB: the numerals from 1-4 inflect according to gender and case.
- From 100 onwards: gen.

hazanrəm *baēšazanqm* *baēuuarē* *baēšazanqm*
1000 remedy.GEN.PL 10 000 remedy.GEN.PL
“1000 remedies, 10 000 remedies” (YAv., passim)

Use of the dual

- Prominently used with body parts or items which come in natural pairs:
OAv. *ašibiiā* “with the (two) eyes” (*aši-* ‘eye’)
- Frequent occurrence with other nouns illustrates that the dual is fully alive as a grammatical category:
OAv. *mainiū* “the two (kinds of) mental attitude / spirits” (*mainiu-*)
- Elliptical dual for logical pairs:
təuuīšī “the two strengths” → equivalent to the dvandva compound *təuuīšī utaiiūtī* “strength and stability” (OAv., Y 33.8)
hāuuanaiiās=ca “and of the mortar (and pestle)” (YAv., Y 27.7)

“Numerative”?

- It has been argued that the language of one specific YAv. text, the Vīdēvdād, contains evidence for use of a special category “numerative” (Tremblay 1997)
- Descriptively: use of the thematic nom-acc. pl. ending *-a* for athematic nouns when used with numbers:
xšuuāš xšafn-a “6 nights” (*xšapan-* f. ‘night’, with acc.pl. *xšapan-ō*)
- May reflect former “collective” value of the ending *-a*