

ALMUT HINTZE

Avestan

Phonology – Part 2: Phonetics, dialectal features



MUYA —
The Multimedia Yasna Project

Roadmap

- The phonetic shape of the texts
- Dialectal features

Local influences on the pronunciation of Avestan

- Texts composed in different periods and in different areas
- Text recited by speakers of different Iranian languages
- Avesta written down in southwestern Iran, but the language is not Persian
- Influence of the oral traditions of different regions on the pronunciation of the Avesta

Regional dialectal features in the language of the Avesta

Gen.sg. of the neuter heteroclitic stem *huuar-*, *huuan-* ‘sun’: expected is

PrAv. **huuáñh* > OAv. *huuāñg*

YAv. **huuā* > *hū*

OAvt. *xvāñg* (disyllabic) instead of expected OAv. *huuāñg*

Y 44.3 *kasnā xvāñg* *strāmcā dāt aduuānəm* 4 + 7 syllables
/kas-nā xuúanh straam-ca dāt aduúanam/
‘who established the path of the sun?’

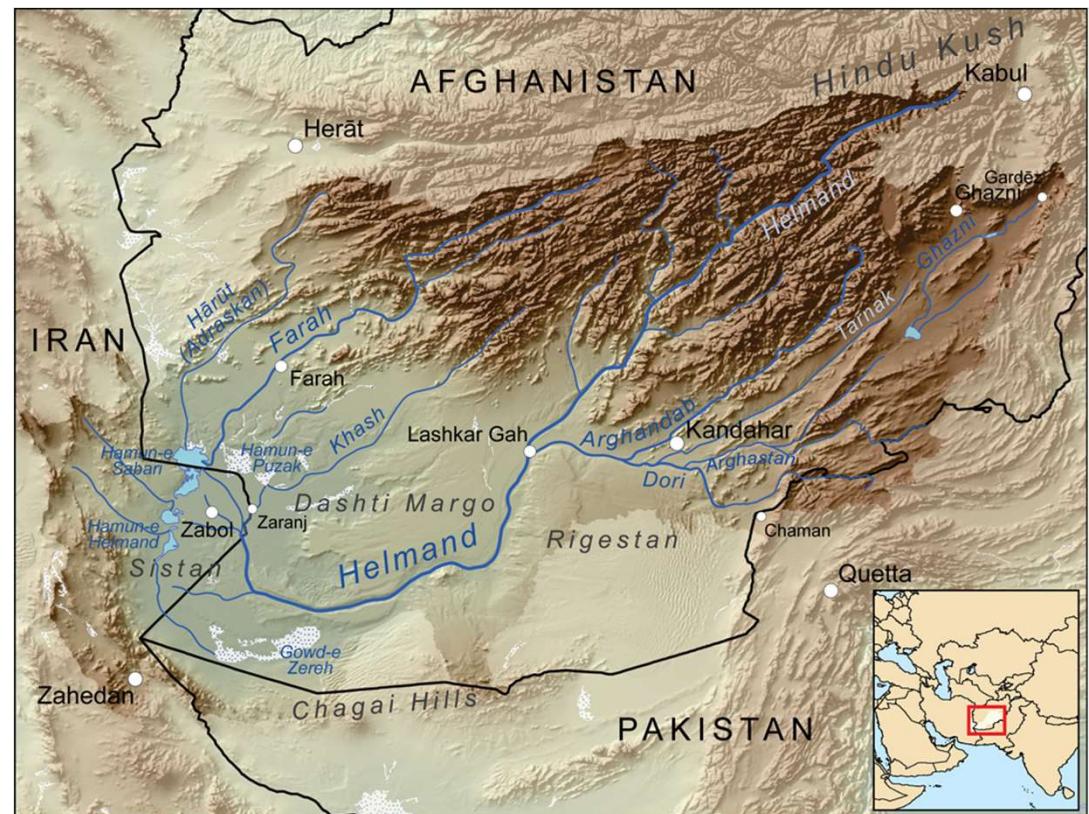
Other examples for unetymological x^v

Instead of huū-:

- OAv. *x^vāϑra-* ‘well-being’ < **huū-āϑra-* (opposite of *duž-āϑra-*)
- YAv. *x^vāstra-* < **hu-ūāstra-* ‘having good pastures’ Y 68.15
- YAv. *x^vāstrā-* in Yt 19.67 name of a river which flows into Lake Hāmūn in Sīstān, possibly today’s river Xāšrūd

Instead of -hū- > YAv. -ŋ^vh-:

- *harax^vaitī-* Vd 1.12 instead of expected **haran^vhaitī-*, Av. name of Arachosia; Ved. *sárasvatī-*



Regional dialectal features in the language of the Avesta

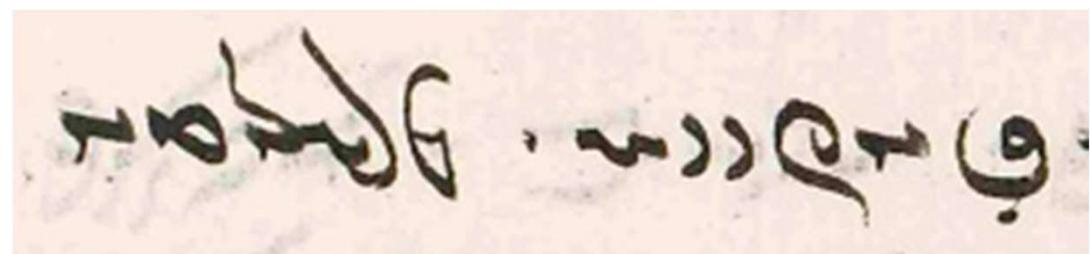
OP influence: PrIr. *-j-*, *-y-* after a consonant or between vowels > *-jj-*, *-yy-*,
written *-ii-*, *-uu-* in the Av. script

- Av. *ańia-*, OP *aniya-* /anja-/ , Ved. *anyá-*
- Av. *hauruua-*, OP *haruva-* /harua-/ , Ved. /sárva-/

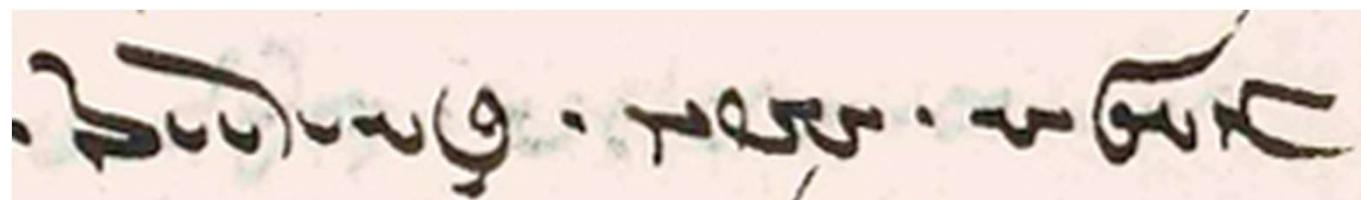
Local dialect influence in Av. mss.

ī instead of ū in mss. copied in Kerman and Yazd from 1700 CE:

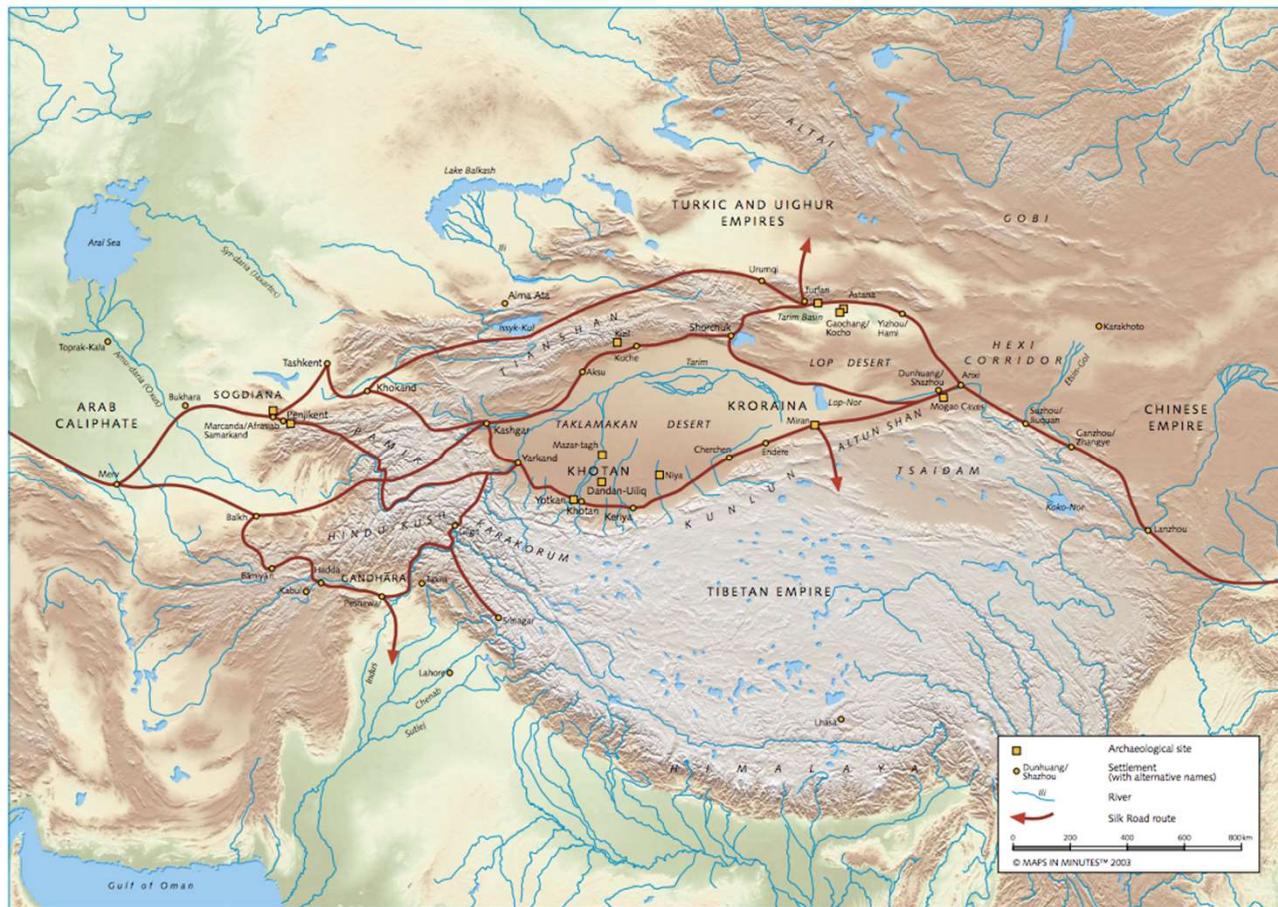
Ms. K4, copied in Kerman
in 1723 CE
fol. 93r6: *vīδuuā mraōtī*



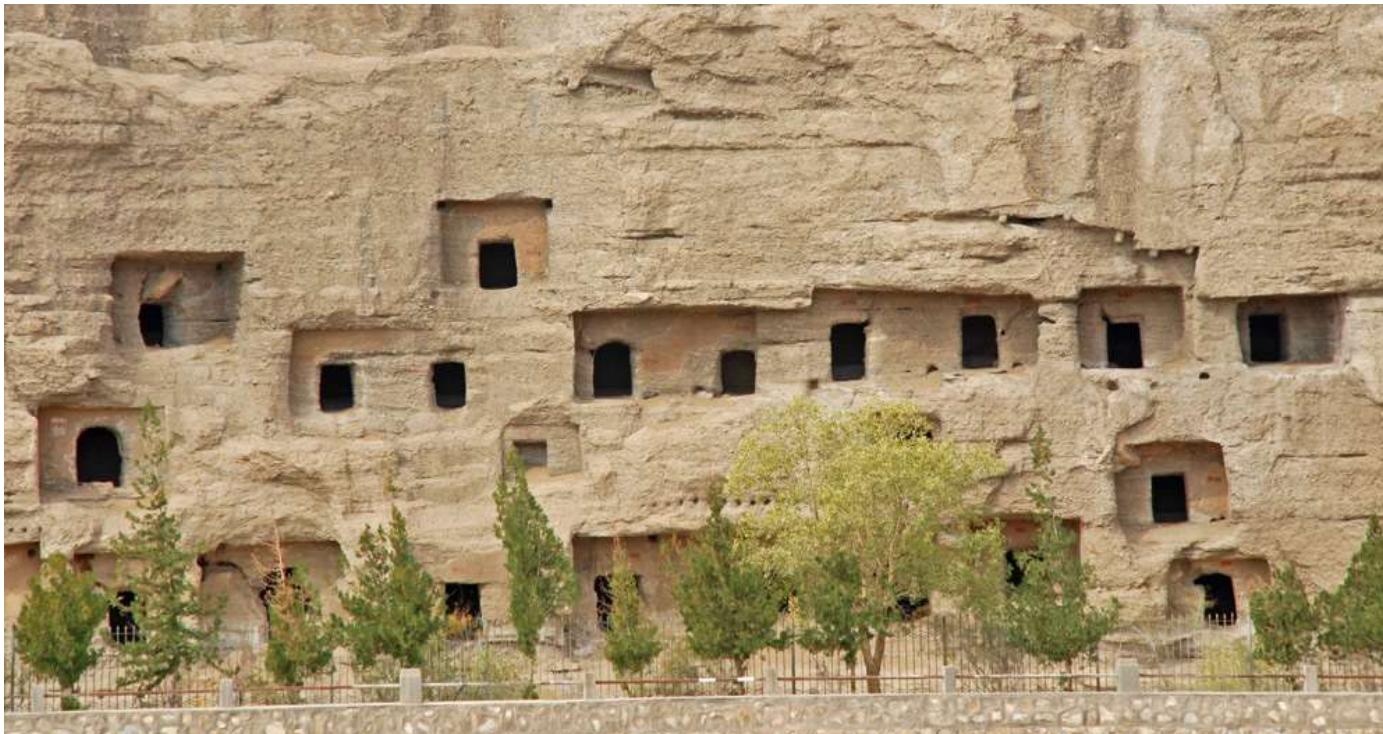
Ms. K4 fol. 90r10:
yaθā ahī vairiiō



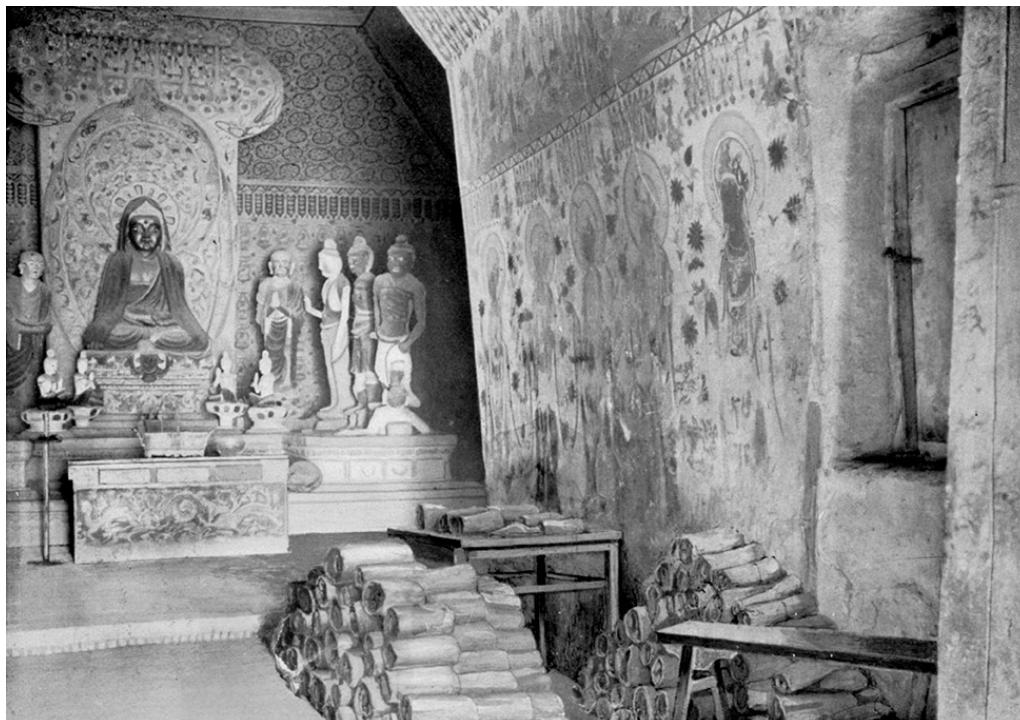
Location of Dunhuang on the Silk Road



MOGAO CAVES, DUNHUANG



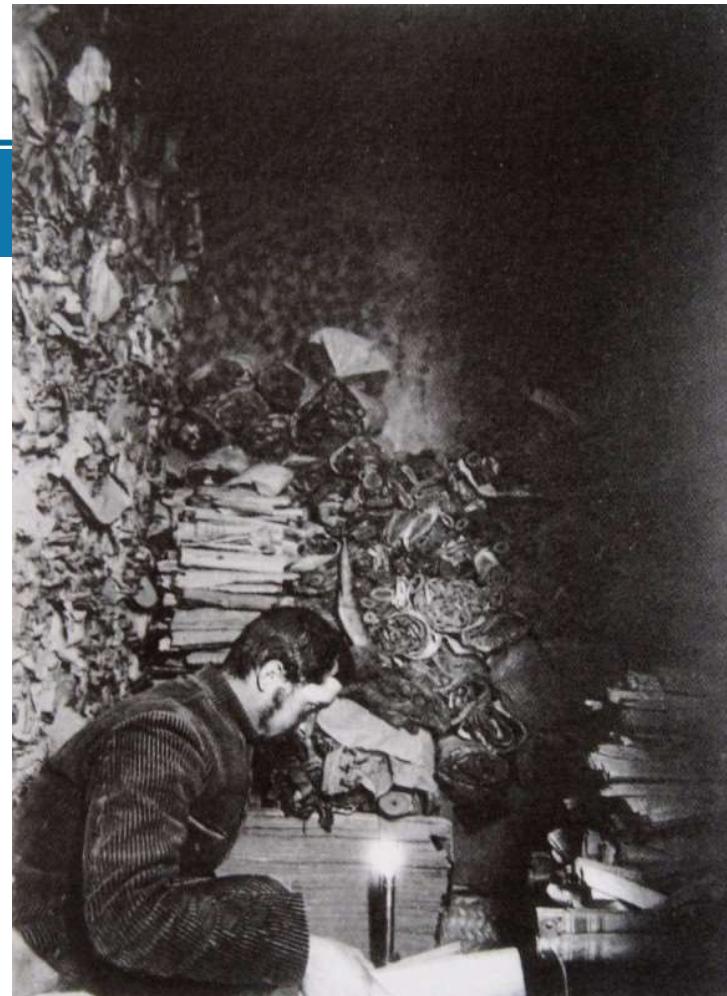
DUNHUANG CAVE 16, 1907



With entrance door
to Cave 17 on the right

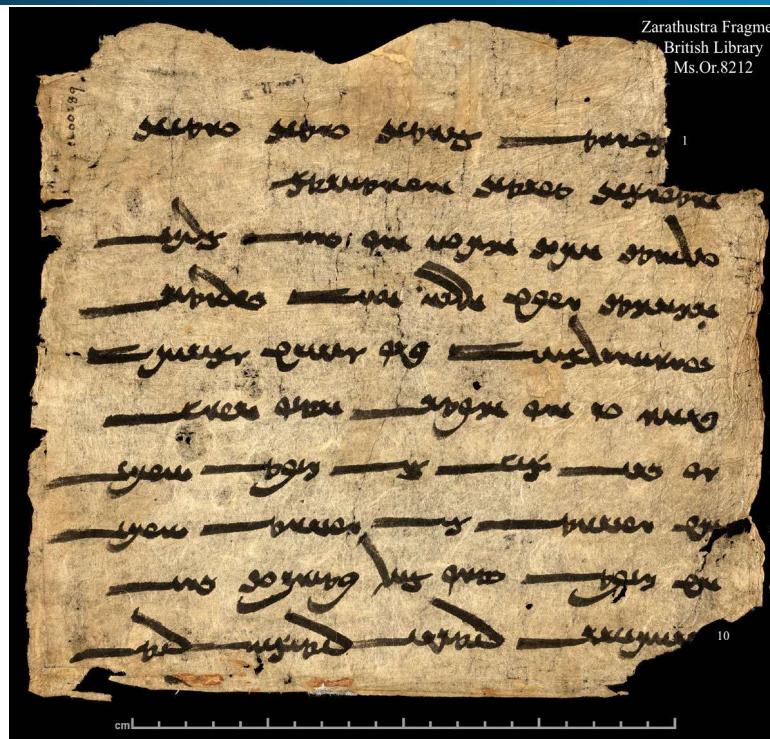
DUNHUANG CAVE 17, 1908

Paul Pelliot in the library
cave (Cave 17), 1908



THE ZARATHUSTRA FRAGMENT, BRITISH LIBRARY

Ms. Or. 8212



Avestan – Phonology, Part 2

Line 1 of the Zarathustra Fragment



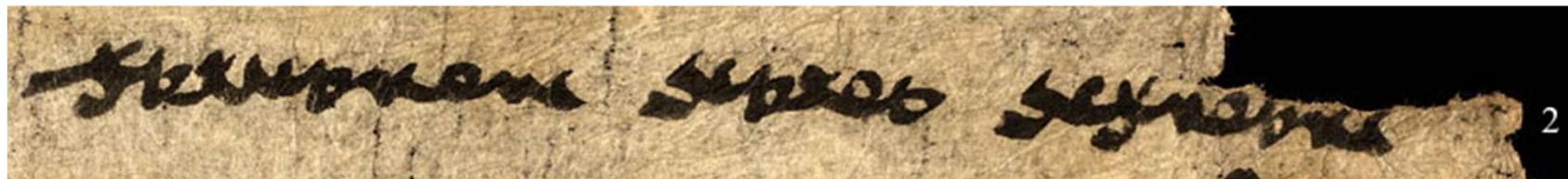
['rt]mwxšt myšt'y wšt'y wšt''y
[ərt]əmwaxšt meštī uštāy uštāy]

Resegmented:

[’rt]**m** w xštm yšt'y wšt' ywšt''y
[ərtəm wa(xu) (wa)xəštəm ištī uštā yuštāy]

Avestan: **ašəm** vohū vahištəm astī uštā astī
Good Truth is best. It is according to wish,

Line 2 of the Zarathustra Fragment



'štuxm' y twrt' y 'xwšt' y rtm
[əštuxmāy turtāy əxuštāyərtəm]

Resegmented:

'st wxm' yt wrt' y 'xwšt' y rtm
[əšta uxmāy yat urtāy əxuštāy ərtəm]

Dialectal phonetic feature;

Sogd. wrt' y [urtāy]
vs. Av. ašāi

Avestan: uštā ahmāi hīāt ašāi vahištāi ašəm
according to wish for the one here, (for)
truth (is) for best truth.