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### Citation

Vaan, M. A. C. de. (1997). Avestan \*pouru.zaothra-. *Die Sprache. Zeitschrift Für Sprachwissenschaft*, 39(1), 128-135. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14921>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)  
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**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Avestan \*pouru.zaōdra<sup>-1</sup>

1. The text of Yašt 10.113 offers the form *gouru.zaōdranəm*, genitive plural of a stem *gouru.zaōdra-* which occurs nowhere else in Avestan. This compound specifies *hunauuō*, nom.pl. of *hunu-*, the daevic word for 'son'. For this reason, *gouru.zaōdranəm* is likely to have a pejorative meaning, and this is confirmed by the larger context:

Yt 10.113<sup>2</sup>

*tada nō jamiānt auuaŋhe  
miθra ahura bərəzanta  
yaŋt bərəzəm barānt aštra  
vācim aspanəmca sriša  
xšufsən aštrā<sup>3</sup> xkafsən jiiā  
xniuuiddiian tiyrāŋhō xarštaiiō  
tada hunauuō gouru.zaōdranəm  
jata paidiānte frā.vərəsa*

'May he then come to our help,  
O exalted Mithra and Ahura!  
When the whip raises a high  
voice and the neighing of the  
horses, (when) the whips start  
to swish, the bow-strings are  
bent, the sharp spears are  
flung, then the sons of the  
*gouru.zaōdra*'s, having been  
struck, will go down writhing.'

Embroidering on suggestions of Windischmann 1857: 48 and Darmesteter 1883 II: 164 fn. 1, Bartholomae 1895: 358 has connected *gouru*<sup>o</sup> with Skt. *gurū-* 'heavy', which implies a phonetic development of Indo-Iranian \**gr̥Hú-* 'heavy' > Proto-Iranian \**garu-* > Av. *gouru-*. He translates *gouru.zaōdra-* as a possessive compound 'whose libations are heavy(-flowing)', arguing that the word refers to sacrifices involving blood, which would have been termed 'heavy-flowing' because

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Alexander Lubotsky (Leiden), Stefan Schaffner (Regensburg) and Chlodwig H. Werba (Vienna) for useful comments on a preliminary version of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> The translation is based on Gershevitch 1959: 130, but I have adopted Kellens' emendation (1986: 346) of attested *kahuuan* to \**kafsən* and of *aštaiiō* to \**arštaiiō*. As for the form edited *nauuiddiian* by Geldner (relevant v.ll. **F1** *nauuiddiian*, **J10** *nauuaidiian*), Kellens (1977: 200, again 1986: 346) proposed to read \**niuuiddiian* 'they pierce' and to connect this with Skt. *nī-vidhya-* 'to shoot down'. An original meaning 'to shoot, to throw' is also attested for the East-Iranian descendants of a PIR. root \**yid-*, e.g. Yaγnōbī *wīd-* 'to throw', Šuynī *wēd-* 'to throw', Paštō *wul-* 'to shoot'. Note that a translation 'they pierce' for \**niuuiddiian* would not make sense since the form appears without object, in a description of events in which it is preceded by two other intransitive verbs; this is why I have chosen a translation as a passive.

blood flows slower than milk or haoma<sup>3</sup>. In support, he adduces Yt 14.54 *mašiiāka daēuuaiiāzō vohunīm vā tācaieinti frašaekəm vā frašincanti* 'the daēva-worshipping people let the blood flow or pour it forth by pouring', in order to show that daevic sacrifices indeed involved blood.

Bartholomae's interpretation<sup>4</sup> has been accepted by most scholars (e.g. Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 159, Gershevitch 1959: 66, 131) and the Avestan adj. *gouru-* appears in many etymological dictionaries as a cognate of Skt. *gurū-*, from Horn 1893: 200 up to Mayrhofer 1986–96 I: 491.

2. A few important difficulties remain unsolved if this etymology is accepted. Firstly, the *u*-mutation which is necessary to explain the development of \**garu* to *gouru* would be irregular in view of the fact that it normally occurs only after an initial labial consonant, cf. Bartholomae 1894–5: 173 or Hoffmann-Forssman 1996: 65. It is attested in *pouru*<sup>o</sup> 'much, many' and derivatives, in *moγu.tbiše* 'who is hostile towards the magicians' (Old Persian *magu-*), *mošu* 'soon' (Skt. *maksū-*), the acc.sg. *mourum* < \**maryum*, *vouru*<sup>o</sup> 'broad', *vohu* 'good' and in *vohunī-* 'blood' and derivatives<sup>5</sup>. Morgenstierne (1942: 45) sought to solve this problem by assuming that "the velar character of the *g-* appears to have been effective in combination with the following *u*", but we have no other indications that *g* in Avestan would have such an effect.

<sup>3</sup> On the liquids generally used for the offerings, compare e.g. *imā-zaōdrā-haomauuaiti- gaomauuaiti-* 'this haoma-containing, milk-containing libation' on various occasions in YAv.

<sup>4</sup> Bartholomae 1895 loc.cit. posits a determinative compound \**gouru.zaōdrā-* 'heavy libation' as the basis of the supposed possessive compound *gouru.zaōdra-* 'with heavy libations'. In view of paucity of determinative compounds of this kind (formed with an adjective plus a substantive) not only in IIR. (cf. Wackernagel 1905: 241, 288), but still in Avestan (Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 138ff. clearly shows that the few forms which do occur are recent formations), it seems more likely that *gouru.zaōdra-* would have been formed directly from *gouru-* and *zaōdrā-*.

<sup>5</sup> The cause for the absence of *u*-mutation in other forms lies in the consonant between \**a* and \**u* (cf. Morgenstierne 1942: 45 «several consonants have the power of obstructing the rounding of *a*»). The mutation is absent in front of dental consonants, viz. in *pasu-* 'cattle', *maðu-* 'mead', *manuš-* 'man', *maniiu-* 'spirit', *vaðu-* 'wife', in front of *ii* (*vaiiu-* 'air', *vaiiū-* 'woe'), in front of *f* (*vafu-* 'regulation') and *ŋh*. Especially the strict split in the paradigm of \**vahu-* 'good' between *vohū*, *vohūm*, *vohunəm* on the one hand and *vahhu*, *vahhuš*, *vahhūš*, *vahhuiiā* etc. on the other suggests the decisive role of *h* and *ŋh* respectively. For the consonants *γ*, *r*, *s* and *h*, in front of which *u*-mutation takes place, we can assume that they allow rounding on them (so that the rounding moves regressively from *u* via the consonant to \**a*), while the others block rounding.

3. A second objection concerns the hitherto unchallenged assumption that *gouru.zaōdra-* itself must convey a negative, so-called daevic semantic load. This seems to be self-evident from the use as a name of people who are slain with the help of Mithra and Ahura, and from the use of the word *hunu-* in this context. It is the daevic word for ‘son’ (as opposed to ahuric *puōdra-*), attested only in connection with the genitive of a name of an opponent of the true believers. Apart from Y 51.10 *drūjō hunuš* ‘son of the Deceiver’, we find Yt 5.54,57 *hunauuō vaēsakaiia* ‘the sons of Vaēsaka’ and Yt 19.41 *hunauuō yaṭ pavānaiia nauua, hunauuasca niuuikahe, hunauuasca dāštaiiā-nōiš* ‘the nine sons of Pavāna, the sons of Niuuika, the sons of Dāštaiiāni’.

Yet many Avestan names which are used in a daevic context represent original heroes or deities of the Indo-Iranian pantheon, the names of whom came to be used in a negative sense only in the Avesta. The best known example is probably the triadic expression in V 10.9 *paiti.pərəne iṅdrəm, paiti.pərəne saurum, paiti.pərəne nāṅ haiṭīm daēum* ‘I oppose Indra, I oppose Sauruua, I oppose the daeva Nāṅhaiṭiia’, the names of which can be directly compared with Skt. *indra-*, *śarvá-* and *nāsatya-*. Of the names connected with *hunu-*, only *dāštaiiāni-* has a somewhat accepted etymology, viz. as ‘with an obtained favour’ to Av. *dāšta-* ‘obtained’ and *yāna-* ‘favour’ (Mayrhofer 1977: I/35f.). This would imply the same shift from an original, logically positive epithet *\*dāšta-iāna-* ‘with obtained favour’ to its use as a demonic name, as the shift displayed by e.g. *\*indra-*. It can therefore not be excluded that *gouru.zaōdra-* too contains an older name which originally had a positive connotation; there may be no direct link between the etymology of *gouru* and the daevic use of the name *gouru.zaōdra-* in the Avesta.

4. A third, semantic problem is the fact that the use of the terminology (‘light’ and) ‘heavy’ in connection with offerings would be completely isolated in IIR<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, the supposed metaphoric use of ‘heavy’ to indicate that the daevic offerings involve blood which flows more slowly than other liquids, and that therefore the offerings are ‘heavy’, would be out of place in the usually vivid and concrete narrative style of the Yašts, and could only be imagined in the allusive poetry of the Gāthās.

<sup>6</sup> This point was already raised by Lommel 1925: 167, but his alternative connection of *gouru* with Skt. *ghorá-* ‘horrible’ is impossible, since IIR. *\*g<sup>h</sup>aurá-* would have yielded Avestan *\*gaōra-*.

We can go further, and question Bartholomae’s basic assumption that blood flows more slowly than other liquids. Of course, once it cools down it will coagulate, but this is not the most significant part of an animal sacrifice. The prime moment of most animal sacrifices is reached when the killer takes a sharp knife and cuts the carotid artery of the victim, and anyone who has witnessed the slaughter of a sheep or a pig knows that the heart keeps beating for some seconds and the blood comes pouring out in streams. The first dashes of blood which emerge are of special significance not only in ritual slaughter, and great care is usually taken in not spilling the blood.

In the Vedic ritual literature concerning animal sacrifices (*paśu-bandha*), the first dashes of blood that come out are used for the ritual purpose of dipping a straw into them. In a passage in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa which describes the actual moment when the first streams of blood come out, the verb *ut-pat-* ‘to fly up, to jump up’ confirms the image of the strong, thrusting movement of the blood: ŚB 3.8.2.14 *sá yátrāchyáti yáta etál lóhitam utpátati tád ubhayáto ‘nakti rákṣasām bhāgo ‘síti rákṣasām hy èṣá bhāgo yád ásrk* ‘And where he skins (the victim), and whence the blood spirts out, there he smears it (the bottom part with blood) on both ends with ‘Thou art the Rakshas’ share!’ for that blood is indeed the Rakshas’ share<sup>7</sup>.

5. A final point to note is that *gouru* would be the only Iranian form to preserve the IIR. adjective *\*gr<sup>h</sup>Hú-* ‘heavy’ (from PIE *\*g<sup>wr</sup>h<sub>2</sub>ú-*, cf. Skt. *gurú-*, Gr. *βαρύς*, Got. *kaurus*) in unchanged form<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, we can assume with Gershevitch 1971: 274 (= 1985: 244) that the expected Plr. outcome *\*garu-* ‘heavy’ has served as the basis for an adjective *\*garuka-* ‘heavy’, which is reflected by Khot. *ggarkha-*, Yidya *γary/γorg/γarx* and Khwar. *γrk*<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Translation by Eggeling 1885: 193.

<sup>8</sup> The adjective has also survived in Av. *ayrū-* f. ‘unmarried, maid’, cognate with Skt. *agrū-* f., which can be derived from IIR. *\*a-gr(H)u-H-* ‘not pregnant’, but this was lexicalized with the meaning ‘unmarried’ in IIR. (cf. Mayrhofer 1986–96 I: 46).

<sup>9</sup> In order to connect the adj. *\*g(a)rāna-* ‘heavy’, which is attested in MP *gr<sup>n</sup>*, Paz. *g(ə)raṇ*, NP *girān*, Sogd. *γr<sup>n</sup>* ‘heavy’, also ‘serious’ and ‘pregnant’, Gershevitch l.c. reconstructs *\*grāuna-* < *\*graHu-na-*. This would imply that Plr. had preserved of the adjective two ablaut variants *\*grHu-* and *\*graHu-* and used both of them to form secondary adjectival derivatives; this seems unlikely. Moreover, a Plr. preform *\*graHuna-* would normally yield *\*grauna-*, not *\*grāuna-*. To explain *\*g(a)rāna-*, we may suggest that Plr. *\*garuka-* was metanalysed as *\*garuka-* in part of the Iranian languages, analogous to the frequent occurrence of *\*-uka-* as a suffix in Iranian, and that this suffix was then replaced by the adj. suffix *\*-āna-*. But since the languages concerned do continue other adjectives in *\*-uka-*, the motivation for such a replacement remains unclear.

6. The objections brought forward disappear if we assume that Yt 10.113 *gouru.zaodranqm* is the result of a simple scribal mistake of \**p-* to \**g-*, the original form having been \**pouru.zaodranqm*. The letters *p* and *g* do not differ much in their form (*p* is **U**, *g* is **U**), and an erroneous spelling *gouru*° for \**pouru*° may have occurred in the Stammhandschrift of the Yašts (cf. Humbach 1973: 113ff.), so that it is reflected in all Yašt mss. we have.

I know of no parallel case in which the Avestan mss. have mistaken *p* for *g*, but the occurrence of scribal errors in the Yašt Stammhandschrift has been proposed for other aberrant forms before, especially for the greater Yasht chapters 5, 8, 10, 17 and 19, for which on the whole we dispose of only two independent mss., viz. **F1** and **J10**. It has been recognised long ago (cf. Geldner 1881: 480, who refers to Geiger) that Yt 8.33 *frašāupaieiti* is incorrect for original \**frašāuuaiieiti*, which points to a scribal error of *p* (**U**) for *uu* (**U**)<sup>10</sup>. Hoffmann 1975: 258ff. has shown that the verbal form *jauua* which the mss. display in Yt 5.63 must represent \**jasa*, indicating a scribal error of *uu* (**U**) for original *s* (**U**). Humbach 1973: 115 has added Yt 8.42 *viiarāt* for \**uziiarāt*, which implies a misspelling of *v* (**U**) for *uz* (**U**), and Yt 19.6 *spašitaēdaca* for \**upašitaēdaca*, with *s-* (**U**) for *u-* (**U**)<sup>11</sup>. Kellens' correction (1984: 257, 259) of Yt 19.46 *parəx'āide* to \**parətāide*, with *x'* (**U**) for *t* (**U**), has been accepted by the subsequent studies of Hintze (1994: 242ff.) and Humbach-Ichaporria (1998: 126).

7. The most important advantage of assuming \**pouru.zaodranqm* in Yt 10.113 is the fact that we get rid of an awkward exception to the rule for *u*-mutation of \**a*. Av. *pouru* 'many, much' is attested many times as the first member of a possessive compound, also in personal names: *pouru.cištā-* f. 'with a lot of intelligence, very intelligent'.

<sup>10</sup> Via \**frašāupaieiti*, as especially the variant *frašāpaieiti* of **J10** in the parallel Yt 8.9 shows. In Yt 8.33, the vowel *ā* was then further misspelled to *āu*, as in many other instances. Other spelling errors involving *p*, but occurring in a later stage of the transmission, can be found e.g. in Yt 19.46, where the ms. **J18** spells *harə.xāide* for *parəx'āide*, with *h* (**U**) for *p* (**U**). In Yt 19.56, the correct reading *apa.spaiiat* is preserved in **J10**, while **F1** is defect at this point. The ms. **E1** has *apažaiiat*, which is confirmed by **Pt1** *apazaiiat*: they imply a spelling error of *ž* (**U**) for *sp* (**U**) in an older manuscript which influenced both **E1** and **Pt1**, but which did not belong to the line of **J10**, since this preserves the original reading. The manuscript stemma in Hintze 1994: 58 should be modified accordingly.

<sup>11</sup> This solution is mentioned but not adopted by Hintze 1994: 87 fn. 45, then defended again by Humbach-Ichaporria 1998: 79.

8. An original possessive compound \**prHū-j'autra-* 'with many libations', formed on the basis of the Ilr. noun \**j'autrā-* 'libation', would fit smoothly into the category of Indo-Iranian names which are used in a daevic sense in Avestan (compare the remarks in § 3). The meaning 'with many libations', when applied to humans, can probably be understood in the sense of 'offering many libations', which must have represented a favourable denomination. The reciprocal character of Indo-Iranian offerings, in which the suppliant asks a favour in exchange for the offering he brings, implies that he who brings more libations can ask more favours of the gods.

The use of Avestan *zaodrā-* and Rigvedic *hótrā-* confirms the assumption that multiple libations existed and were regarded as auspicious. Whenever these nouns occur in the plural, they refer to an undetermined number of libations to one or more of the principal deities. Compare e.g. in Avestan Y 57.3 *təm yazāi surunuata yasna sraošəm ašīm zaodrābiio* 'him I will worship with audible prayer, the truthful Sraoša, with libations', or RV 1.122.9 *jāno yó mitravaruṇāv abhidhrúg, apó ná vām sunóty aksṇayādhruk | svayám śá yáqṣmañ hrdaye ní dhatte, āpa yád im̄ hótrābhīr ṛtāv ||* 'the dishonest man, o Mitra-Varuna, who deceitfully presses the Soma for you like water, inflicts the consumption on himself, whereas the righteous one succeeds with his libations.'

9. The supposed metaphoric use of 'heavy' in connection with offerings, to which we objected in § 4, and the alleged description of blood as flowing slowly, are non-existent.

10. A perfect formal match of Avestan \**pouru.zaodra-* might be seen in the Skt. personal name *Puruhotra-* (once in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa 9.24.6), but its attestation does not suffice to prove an Ilr. origin of both names. Firstly, the complicated history and compilation of the BhāgP. does not guarantee a high age, say of the Vedic period, for all the names found in it (cf. e.g. Rocher 1986: 138ff.). Secondly, even if *Puruhotra-* would date back to the Vedic era, the productivity of the possessive compound type with *puru*° as a first member allows for the possibility of an inner-Vedic origin of *Puruhotra-*.

11. The only disadvantage about our explanation for the attested *gouru.zaodranqm* is the fact that *pouru* is a very frequent word in the Avestan texts, and must be regarded as the lectio facilior vis-à-vis *gouru*. Since this objection does not outweigh the advantages of the view proposed here, it seems best to accept a scribal lapsus at a point where the transmission depended on a single manuscript<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Rather than to blame the error on earlier manuscript damage, for chances

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are much higher than a damaged form [.]*jouru* would have been restored to *pouru* than to *gouru*. I would thus modify Kellens' conclusion (1986: 346<sup>16</sup>) about Yt 10.113, that "certains mots n'étaient plus très lisibles dans l'ancêtre commun aux deux traditions qui nous ont transmis le Mihr Yašt". The mistake of *huu* for \**fs* in \**kafsaṇ* is of the type we described in § 6 above (𐬨𐬀 for \*𐬨𐬀), the form *aštaiiō/aštriiō* for \**arštaiiō* was probably influenced by the preceding *aštrā*, and *auu* for *iuu* in \**niuu(a)iθiiṇ* could have happened to any scribe.

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