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THE OLD PERSIAN MONTH NAME *VIYAX(A)NA*-, AVESTAN *VIIĀX(A)NA*- 'ELOQUENT, BRAGGING' AND OSSETIC FESTIVALS

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1. The twelfth and last month of the Old Persian (OP) calendar, corresponding to Akkadian *Addāru* (February – March), appears in the Behistun inscription as *v*^{i}*-i-y-x-n-*. Its Elamite equivalent is spelled in the same inscription *Mi-ya-kán-na-iš* (DB II 72, III 29) and *Mi-kán-na-iš* (DB I 28). On the Persepolis tablets we find sixteen different spellings of this Elamite word, the most frequent ones being *Mi-ya-kán-na-iš/-aš*, *Mi-ya-kán-na-*, *Mi-kán-na-iš*, *Mi-kán-na-* (Schmitt 2003: 24). The Elamite spellings indicate that OP *v*^{i}*-i-y-x-n-* must be read as *viyax(a)na-*, while the shorter form *Mi-kán*˚ points to the later (already in the time of Xerxes) OP contraction *-iya-* > *-ī-*, for which cf. Kent 1953: 13.

In the above-mentioned publication, Schmitt (p. 43) goes even further and argues that "die weit überwiegenden Schreibungen mit *-kán-* ... und die Schreibungen mit *-qa-na-* lassen zwingend darauf schließen, daß die Sequenz altpers. *-x-n-* als /-xan-/ zu verstehen ist". It seems to me, however, that these spellings can only indicate that the Elamites heard [*viyaxana*] or [*viyaxəna*], which does not necessarily mean that the OP word had a phonemic vowel between *x* and *n*. We shall return to this point below.

Schmitt (p. 44) further discusses the etymologies that have been proposed for OP *Viyax(a)na-* and discards them all. On the whole, his criticism is justified, but, in my opinion, the etymological suggestion by Oettinger deserves more credit. In a footnote, Oettinger (1983: 258, fn. 38) remarked that "*viyaxana-* wahrscheinlich '(Monat der) Versammlung' heißt und zu av. *viiāxana-* (vermutlich: 'Versammlung') gehört", but Schmitt considers this unlikely for formal (long *ā* in Avestan) and semantic reasons: "Avest. *viiāxana-* selbst kommt nur als Personenbezeichnung vor, etwa "beredt"; andererseits aber ist für die Adjektivform, wie sie für den Monatsnamen benötigt wird,

avest. *viiāxa-*[1] nicht der richtige Ausgangspunkt, und schließlich führt der Vergleich dieser Wortfamilie auch im Semasiologischen nicht weiter." In the following I shall try to show that Oettinger's connection of OP *Viyax(a)na-* with Av. *viiāxana-* is both formally and semantically cogent.

2. The discrepancy in the vocalism between OP *Viyax(a)na-* and Av. *viiāxana-* can easily be accounted for by the well-known Avestan lengthening of short *a* in the position after *i̯*, cf. *aiβiiāma-* 'offensive', *aiβiiāuuah-* 'assistance', *viiāxti-* 'make-up', *viiārəθa-* 'misused', etc. (Hoffmann – Forssman 1996: 57). As is shown by de Vaan (2003: 31ff.), this lengthening only occurs when the preceding *Ci̯* goes back to **Ci̯i̯*. In other words, the rule is **Ci̯i̯a* > *Ci̯ā*. This means that *viiāxana-* can go back to **u̯ii̯axana-*[2].

Another point is the original form of the Avestan word, which is attested in two spellings, *viiāxna-* and *viiāxana-*. Kuiper (1960: 243ff.) meticulously studied the manuscript tradition and concluded that the reading *viiāxana-* must be the original manuscript reading. Also the metrical passages of the Yashts seem to point in this direction. There are three passages (Yt 10.25, 10.61, 13.85) where the word must be scanned in four syllables and five passages (Yt 5.73, 10.61, 13.16, 52, Ny 3.10) where the word must be scanned in three syllables. The most straightforward way to account for these facts is that the poets used either [*vyāxana-*] or [*viyāxana-*], according to the metrical needs (thus already Geldner 1887: 31, 39; Kuiper 1960: 244).

Nevertheless, Kuiper was reluctant to assume an original Avestan form *viiāxana-*, because such a form can only be explained as a derivative of an Iranian root **(i̯)ā̆k^h-*, and the prospective of reconstructing a root with a voiceless aspirate is not very inviting, indeed. Therefore, he preferred to explain *viiāxana-* in terms of an anaptyctic vowel, similar to *šiiaoθ(a)na-* n. 'action', which is written *šiiaoθna-* in the Yashts and the Vendidad, wheras the Yasna text always has *šiiaoθana-*. The latter form is not only written, but also scanned a few times in three syllables. This analysis of *viiāx(a)na-* has the advantage of providing us with an option to explain Iranian *-xn-* from an earlier **-kn-*.

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1 As a matter of fact, Av. *viiāxa-* does not exist, Gāh 2.8 *viiāxəmca* being a corruption of *viiāxmaca*, as was demonstrated by Kuiper 1960: 245.

2 The same lengthening is attested in the cognate Avestan words *viiāxman-* 'ceremonial meeting', *viiāxmaniieiti* 'speaks in a contest', for which see below.

3. Whatever the explanation for the *-a-* in Avestan *viiāx(a)na-*, it is clear that the connection with OP *viyax(a)na-* is formally impeccable. Before we discuss the etymology of this word, let us first turn to the meaning of Avestan *viiāxana-*. Kuiper (1960: 247ff.) has demonstrated (developing the ideas of Benveniste in Benveniste – Renou 1934: 44, fn. 3) that *viiāx(a)na-* is an adjective qualifying a warrior as 'eloquent, victorious in the verbal contests'. As a typical example of the contexts where it is used I here give the beginning of Yt 13.16 with Kuiper's translation:

ā̊ŋhąm raiia x^{v}arənaŋhaca
us.nā zaiieiti viiāxanō
viiāxmōhu gūšaiia.t̰.uxδō
yō bauuaiti xratu.kātō
yō nāidii ā̊ŋhō gaotəmahe
parō.yā̊ parštōi.t̰ auuāiti

'Through their brightness and glory a man is born who is victorious in debates, whose authoritative words are listened to in the verbal contests, who is esteemed for his quick wit, who comes off from the dispute triumphing over the weaker Gautama' (Kuiper 1960: 247f.).

The epithet *viiāx(a)na-* usually qualifies heroes and gods, but it can also be applied to the enemies, cf. Yt 5.73 *ya.t̰ bauuāma aiβi.vaniiā̊ dānauuō tūra viiāxana* 'so that we would become victorious over the *viiāxana* Turian Dānus'. It seems to me that *viiāxana-* here has the connotation of 'bragging, boasting', which is a necessary corollary of the military verbal contests.

4. Assuming with Kuiper that the original form of this adjective is *viiāxna-*, we can analyze it, together with its cognates *viiāxman-* n. 'ceremonial meeting' and *viiāxmaniieiti* 'to speak in a contest, to boast',[3] as the preverb *u̯i* plus an Indo-Iranian root **(i̯)ā̆k-*. Kuiper (1960: 257ff.) assumed the long *ā* in the Avestan word family to be old and connected the root with the Sanskrit verb *yāc-* 'to implore' and further with PIE **i̯ek-* 'to speak solemnly' (Pokorny 503f.), attested in OHG *jehan, gehan*, OS *gehan* 'to declare',

[3] For the meaning of this verb see Kuiper 1960: 255f.

Umbr. *iuku, iuka* ‘preces’, Lat. *iocus* ‘joke’, MW *ieith*, MoW *iaith* ‘language’, MoB *yezh* f. ‘id.’, MIr. *icht* ‘people, tribe’.[4]

This etymology is open to several objections. The long vowel in Skt. *yāc-* ‘to implore’[5], its construction with double accusative and its meaning suggest that this verb does not belong with PIE **i̯ek-*, but is rather an extension of Skt. *yā-* ‘to implore’ (thus Gotō 1987: 255, Mayrhofer EWAia s.v.). Since the Indo-European etymology of Lith. *juõkas* ‘laughter, joke’, Latv. *juõks* ‘joke’ is uncertain,[6] the root **i̯ek-* turns out to be restricted to the Western European languages. Although it cannot theoretically be excluded that Avestan has preserved the only vestiges of this root outside Europe, it is at any rate clear that the verbal root is unattested in Indo-Iranian, and it is hardly credible that Avestan would have made a derivative from this root with a preverb *vi-*.

I would propose a different explanation for the Avestan forms. As we have seen above, *viiāxna-* and *viiāxman-* are ambiguous, as far as the length of *a* is concerned, so that they can reflect Iranian **u̯ii̯axna-*, **u̯ii̯axman-*, the forms which are also suggested by OP *Viyax(a)na-*. If we consider that the Sanskrit verb for ‘to dispute with one another’ is *vi-vac-*, the term for ‘verbal contest’ is *vívāc-*,[7] and ‘eloquent’ is *vivakvánt-*, it seems attractive to assume that Iranian **u̯ii̯axna-*, **u̯ii̯axman-* are due to dissimilation from **u̯iu̯axna-*, **u̯iu̯axman-*, cf. also Skt. *vákman-* n. ‘utterance, speech’ (RV 1.132.2). The fact that the combination of **u̯ac-* with the preverb **u̯i-* does not occur in Avestan and Old Persian[8] has certainly contributed to the preservation of the dissimilated forms – there was simply no model for restoration.

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4 For the Celtic words see now Schrijver 1995: 106f.

5 A lengthened grade in the thematic present *yā́cati, -te* is hard to account for.

6 The vocalism makes borrowing from German (dialect of Western Prussia) *jōk* ’Spaß’ very likely, cf. Fraenkel s.v.

7 H. Martirosyan has drawn my attention to Arm. *vēč* ‘verbal fight, quarrel’ (Bible+). It has always been considered a loan-word from Iranian, although the source remained uncertain. Martirosyan plausibly suggests deriving Arm. *vēč* from Iran. **viyā́č-* (cf. Arm. *vēr* ‘wound’, borrowed from Iran. **v(i)yā́ð-* ~ Skt. *vyadh-*), which would indirectly prove that Iranian at some time possessed the word **viyā́č-* ‘verbal contest, strife’, corresponding to Skt. *vívāc-*.

8 The only possible forms of **u̯i-u̯ac* in Iranian are OKhot. *byūj-* ‘to abuse’, OKhot. *byūṃgga-* ‘abuse’ (thus reconstructed by Emmerick 1968: 105 and 87), although the reconstructions **abi-vac-* or **abi-vanc-* are equally possible.

The formation of **viy̯ax(a)na-* remains unclear, because the suffix *-na-* usually does not have active meaning in Indo-Iranian. Reconstructing a suffix *-ana-* is not an option, because this suffix palatalizes the preceding consonant, and it is unlikely that in the system **viy̯axman-* : **viy̯acana-*, the *x* would have been generalized. The only alternative is to assume that **viy̯axna-* goes back to **viy̯axmna-* adj. 'pertaining to the ceremonial meeting, verbal contest', being a derivative of **viy̯axman-*. In Sanskrit, these formations have full grade of the suffix, cf. *sāmaná-* 'rich' : *sā́man-* 'property', *pāmaná-* 'itchy' : *pāmán-* 'itch', etc. (Wackernagel – Debrunner 1954: 136), but the original zero-grade is still attested in Av. *zaiiana-* adj. 'pertaining to the winter', n. 'winter time' < **ź^{h}ay̯m̥n-a-* and its vṛddhi-formation Skt. *hāyaná-* m.n. 'year', adj. 'pertaining to a year'. Phonetically, the loss of *-m-* is understandable, cf. YAv. gen.sg. *ašnō* 'stone, sling-stone, heaven' < **aćmnah* (from *asman-*) and a similar loss in Skt. gen.sg. *áśnas*, instr. sg. *áśnā* < **áśmnas, *áśmnā* 'stone', instr.sg. *preṇā́* < **premṇā́* 'affection', etc. (Wackernagel – Debrunner 1930: 268f., 1954: 766), especially when there was a labial in the root, cf. further instr.sg. *prathinā́, bhūnā́, mahinā́, variṇā́*.

5. What can be the semantic link between the OP month-name *Viyax(a)na-* and Av. *viiāx(a)na-* 'eloquent, bragging'? One of the most important results of Kuiper's 1960 epoch-making article is his demonstration of an ancient Indo-Iranian New Year festival, at which the creation of the world was celebrated and which was marked by verbal contests. In the Iranian world, the New Year festival has moved to the period around the vernal equinox and was thus celebrated during the month *Viyax(a)na-* (February – March).

It is well-known that at least some of the Old Persian months are named after the festivals which were held during them (cf. Marquart 1905: 126ff., Justi 1897: 247, Eilers 1953, Wackernagel – Debrunner 1954: 303, Lubotsky 2002: 198ff.). Thus, *Bāgayādi-* (September – October) is named after **bagayāda-* '(festival of) the offering to Baga (= Miθra)', *Āçiyādiya-* (November – December) after **āçiyāda-* '(festival of) the fire-offering', *Θāigraci-* (May – June) after **θigra-ci(t)-* 'garlic festival', and *Ādukani-* (March – April) after the festival **ăd̆ukana/i-*, which is further unknown. Therefore it does not seem too far-fetched to assume that the month when the New Year festival was celebrated was called the "bragging" month, the month of the verbal contests.

6. The "bragging" month has a perfect parallel in Ossetic. The common Ossetic name for January – February is *ærtqiræny mæj / ænqeræni mæjæ*, literally 'the month of threatening'. Usually, the name is interpreted in the sense that the cold still threatens a return of winter (Abaev 1970: 2 with references), but it seems more probable to me that the threatening rather refers to the verbal contests which took place during the New Year festival.

We can glean more information about the New Year festival from the Ossetic traditions. There are several indications that in Ossetia, the Iranian New Year festival at some point merged with the Carnival, the beginning of Lent. One of the most important spring festivals of the Ossetians is Tutyr (or Styr Tutyr 'the great Tutyr'), probably called after the Greek Saint Theodoros. Tutyr is celebrated during the first week of Lent, its first three days being the most important.

Several features of Tutyr make it probable that this originally was the New Year festival.[9] First of all, Ossetians believe that everything which is being said during these days has great magic power and always comes true. The three days are considered holy, and even the blood feud is interrupted for this period. Secondly, all inhabitants of the village come together at the *nyxas*, the central square of the village, on the first day of Tutyr (Monday). Here they are being entertained by the bards and singers.[10] Thirdly, Tutyr is characterized by various games. Although the games can be organized during other festivals as well, the Tutyr games are believed to have especial magic power. Most popular during the Tutyr were horse races and competitions in archery. Finally, as indicated by Čibirov (p. 102), various customs practiced during the Tutyr in the Digor gorge are exactly the same as the New Year customs elsewhere. This would mean that the Tutyr originally marked the beginning of the year.

7. We can learn a lot from the Ossetic tradition about the other Iranian festivals as well. As argued by Abaev in various publications (e.g. 1970, 1972), the Ossetic religious and agrarian festivals are very archaic, being only superficially covered by a Christian varnish. In the following I would like to point out some remarkable parallels between Ossetic festivals and the

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9 The following description of the Tutyr is taken from Čibirov 1976: 95ff.

10 It is very important that during the Tutyr many, if not all, bards of the village came together at the *nyxas*, which is a clear indication of an original competition (cf. also Cybyrty 1999: 81). I am grateful to the late V. Gusalov for this reference.

pre-Zoroastrian calendar of Old Persian. It should be borne in mind, however, that the Ossetic traditional calendar has been largely synchronized with the Christian one, so that some discrepancies in the time of celebration are inevitable.

7.1. OP *Bāgayādi-* (September – October) ~ Oss. *ʒiorguba / gewærgoba*

The month name *Bāgayādi-* is called after **bagayāda-* '(festival of) the offering to Baga', which was dedicated to Mithra (= Baga), as was recently proven by Sims-Williams (1991). This festival was of great importance in the Iranian world, since it is reflected in the name of the seventh month not only in Old Persian, but also in Sogdian (*bɣk'nc*), Middle Persian (*Mihr*), Armenian (*Mehekani*) and Georgian (*Mihrak'nisay*). In my opinion, this festival corresponds to Ossetic *ʒiorguba / gewærgoba*, the festivities in honour of Wastyrʒi or Saint George. The name is borrowed from Georgian *Giorgoba*, but the festival itself is of high antiquity. The essentials of its celebration can be gleaned from Čibirov 1976: 210f, of which I here give a paraphrase. The days celebrating Wastyrʒi were most popular in the annual cycle of calendar festivals as far as their importance and the scale of the feast are concerned. The Wastyrʒi festival has always been held in November, starting on Sunday and lasting one or two weeks. The night from Monday to Tuesday of the first week (*Wastyrʒi 'xsæv*) was the most essential part of the festival, when a goat was sacrificed to the saint. During this night every family went to a Wastyrʒi sanctuary with sacrificial gifts. Every Ossetic family, wherever it may live and however poor it may be, always celebrates this festival with an animal sacrifice because Wastyrʒi is the most revered Ossetic saint, the main deity of the pantheon.

It seems evident to me that Wastyrʒi corresponds to Old Iranian Miθra, although I was unable to find this point clearly mentioned in the literature (Cornillot 2002: 66ff. points to several correspondences between Wastyrʒi and Sraoša, whom he considers a copy of Miθra). Wastyrʒi has all functions of Avestan Miθra, for which see Gershevitch 1959: 26ff. First of all, Wastyrʒi is a god of contract. He is called *cæxærcæst* 'with sharp eye-sight', he punishes the sinners, he is the guardian of the marital contract (marriages are preferably arranged during the Wastyrʒi days because the marital bonds will then be the most solid), by his name people swear. Secondly, Wastyrʒi is the patron of warriors and travelers (because he wards off thieves and robbers), and he even has some solar features (he is called *syɣzærin*

'golden', *syɣzærin bazyrǯin* 'with golden wings'). Finally, it is worth of mention that Wastyrǯi is specifically a god of men. Women are not allowed to use his name and call him *lægty ʒuar* 'the god of men' or *galty ʒuar* 'the god of bulls'.

7.2. OP *Āçiyādiya-* (November – December) ~ Oss. *ærtxuron* / *ærtxoron*

For the celebration of the New Year, Ossetic women bake an enormous round cake in the form of the sun, which is called *ærtxuron* / *ærtxoron*, lit. 'sun, son of fire' (*art* 'fire', *xur* 'sun'). The same name is given to a deity of fire. Abaev (1970: 7; 1972: 328) plausibly suggested that this name originally referred to the festival, too (cf. *basiltæ* 'New Year = Saint Basil' and the name of the bread specially baked for that occasion). Accordingly, there was an Ossetic festival held in December, dedicated to the worship of fire and the sun, which may correspond to OP **āçiyāda-*. Further traces of this festival may be found in the traditional Christmas bonfires. Young boys leap over the fire and throw fat into it (Čibirov 1976: 51).[11]

7.3. OP *Θāigraci-* (May – June) ~ Oss. *cyrɣisæn / cirɣesæn*

In a recent article (Lubotsky 2002), I argued that the OP month *Θāigraci-* corresponds to the Ossetic festival *cyrɣisæn / cirɣesæn*, in Iron also called *Atynæg* (after the Greek saint 'Αθηνογένης, cf. Abaev 1958 s.v.). This festival marks the beginning of the mowing season. We find the following description in Čibirov 1976 (p. 193; translation mine): "Nobody of the Ossetians is allowed to start mowing at his will, until in July all inhabitants of a village and district come together for a celebration, called Atynæg. During this festival, the old men after long deliberations decide whether it is time to start mowing. When the day is set, it is announced that whoever takes a scythe in his hands before this date, will be responsible for bad weather." The festival is always held on Sunday, whereas the actual mowing starts on Monday or Tuesday depending on the local tradition. Similar festivals also take place elsewhere in the Caucasus, in Georgia, Abkhazia, Ingushetia, etc. In Georgia, for instance, June or July is called *tibisay* 'month of mowing, a grass-month' (cf. Gippert 1986: §3.3).

OP *Θāigraci-* is usually explained as a month of the garlic festival, OP **θigra-* corresponding to Modern Persian *sīr* 'garlic'. In the above-

[11] About similar festivals in Iran see Schmitt 2003: 33.

mentioned article, I suggested to consider Ossetic *cyrɣisæn / cirɣesæn* also as an etymological match of the OP month name. The name of the Ossetic festival is traditionally interpreted as a compound literally meaning '[time for] taking up the sharp [things]' (cf. Abaev 1958 s.v. *cyrɣ*: 'vremja, kogda berutsja za ostroe (t.e. za kosy, načalo senokosa)' 'time when people take up the sharp things, i.e. the scythes; the beginning of mowing'). The first part of the compound is *cyrɣ* / *cirɣ* 'sharp, sharp thing',[12] which is a regular reflex of PIr. **tigra-*. The second part is *isæn* / *esæn* (from PIr. **āi̯as-* + *-ana-*), a verbal noun to *isyn* / *esun* 'to take'.[13] This transparent analysis has a strong flavor of folk etymology, however. It remains a distinct possibility that the original meaning of the festival was 'collecting garlic'. When the Ossetians took over a different word for 'garlic' (Iron *nury* from Georgian *niori*; Digoron *bodæn* < PIr. **baudana-* 'smelly'),[14] they did not understand the name of the ancient festival any longer. Due to the new interpretation, *cyrɣisæn* / *cirɣesæn* has become one of the names of the mowing festival.

One of the *Benennungsmotive* for 'garlic' is the arrow-like shape of its shafts. For instance, English *garlic*, OE *gārlēac* is actually 'spear-leek' (OE *gār* 'spear, lance'). It is therefore attractive to assume that MoP *sīr* and, possibly, OP **θigra-* are related to Ir. **tigra-* 'sharp', **tigri-* 'arrow', which would mean that these are borrowed from an Iranian language, presumably Scythian, with the regular development of **ti-* into **tˢi-*. An additional argument in favor of the Scythian origin of this word is the fact that garlic is native to Central Asia. It is possible that Skt. *śigru-* 'Moringa pterygosperma' also belongs here as an Iranian loan word. Its connection with the Ṛgvedic people's name *Śígru-* and Av. *siɣūire˚* (in compound *siɣūire.ciθra-* 'of S. origin') < **sigrui̯a-* remains hypothetical, although not inconceivable.

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12 In Modern Ossetic, the word for sharp things in general is *cyrɣag / cirɣag*.

13 Abaev 1958 s.v. follows Miller's derivation of the verb from PIr. **ais-* 'to rule', which is implausible because this root does not appear in full grade in Indo-Iranian. Abaev further suggests contamination with PIr. **yas-*, but this is an unnecessary complication: PIr. **āi̯asa-* (an inchoative to **ā-i̯am-*) can regularly yield Oss. *isyn* through the stages **āi̯asa-* > **ai̯asa-* (East Iranian shortening before *i̯*) > **ai̯sV-* (Oss. syncope, for which see Cheung 2002: 69ff.) > Oss. *isyn / esun*.

14 As Sergey Starostin pointed out to me a few years ago, the Darginian and Lezgian words for 'garlic', Darg. *s:urge*, Lezg. *serg*, are likely to be borrowed from Alano-Sarmatian **cirgV* (and not related to Proto-East-Caucasian **swVɬV*, as hesitantly suggested in Nikolayev – Starostin 1994: 972), which indirectly proves that Oss. *cyrɣ* originally had the meaning 'garlic'.

R. Schmitt (2003: 39) is critical about my idea of borrowing from Scythian. First of all, he prefers to see Skt. *śigru-* as an inherited word. His second and weightiest argument is: "Völlig unbeachtet läßt Lubotsky bei seinen Ausführungen aber die elamischen Schreibungen mit *šá*-Anlaut, um die es mir hier vorrangig gegangen ist und die nach aller Analogie als nicht-persische Dialektvarianten anzusehen sind, so wie auch neupers. *sīr* einem 'Nordwest-dialekt' entstammt. An ihnen scheitert die These von dem angeblichen skythischen Lehnwort, die allein für das Alt-persische paßt, aber die nicht-persische Variante unerklärt läßt, in jedem Fall." The name of the month is written in Elamite almost exclusively with *sa-*, and Schmitt does not make clear how the few spellings with *šá-* must be evaluated (e.g., the month name *Θūravāhara-* is spelled with *tu-/du-* or with *šu-* in Elamite). I would think that in view of the bewildering amount of variant spellings – Schmitt gives 26 of the most important spellings of *θāigraci-* on p. 20 – we can equate *šá-* with *sa-*. It is further unclear whether we must conclude from the *sa*-spellings that the Elamites used the North-Western variant *sāigraci-*, but even if we do, it has no bearing whatsoever on my thesis of a Scythian borrowing. As I wrote in my article, "the *θ* of Old Persian may be due to substitution (cf. the Greek rendering of the Old Persian name *Aspacanah-* by ʼΑσπαθίνης), but if the borrowing is sufficiently old – the contacts of the Persians with the Scythians can date back to the VIIIth c. B.C. – Scythian *t^s could be taken over with **ć* or **s* (the reflex of PIE **ḱ*), which only later merged with *θ* in Old Persian. A similar scenario must at any rate be assumed for the name of Egypt, which had emphatic *ṣ* in Semitic languages (Akk. *mi-ṣir-a-a*, Hebrew *miṣrayim*) and was borrowed by Old Persian in a form like **mu(d)zrāya- > mudrāya*" (p. 196).

7.4. OP **vṛkazana-* (October – November) ~ Oss. *fœzzæǯy tutyr*

The name of the 8th month is not attested in the Behistun inscription and can only be reconstructed on the basis of Elamite. We find the Elamite spellings *Mar-qa-za-na-iš*, *Mar-qa-šá-na*, *Mi-ir-qa-šá-na*, which can render OP **M/Vṛg/k/xǎzǎna-* (Schmitt 2003: 45). There are of course many possible solutions, but the most reasonable assumption still remains **vṛkazana-* 'Wolf-men (month)', as already suggested by Cameron (1948: 45, fn. 1), or rather **vṛkāzana-* 'chasing the wolves' (Iranian *-azana-*, cf. Schmitt 2003: 47). It is therefore remarkable that around this time the Ossetians celebrate

the so-called *fæzzæǯy tutyr* 'the Autumn Tutyr', which is characterized by various rituals against wolves and is intended to protect the cattle.

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