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The Fire Wāzišt and the Demon*

ALMUT HINTZE, London

In the Middle Persian Zoroastrian texts the fire Wāzišt is the fire of lightning. Residing in the clouds, it belongs, together with the star Tištar, to a group of beneficent beings producing rain. As Tištar is opposed by Apaoš, the demon of drought, so the fire Wāzišt, too, has an opponent. This demon, the story goes, utters a fearful cry called ‘thunder’ when smitten on the head by the fire Wāzišt. As a result the waters flow and rain is produced. This myth is related or alluded to in a number of Pahlavi texts. The demon’s name is Spenjruš (*spnclwš*) or Aspenjruš (*’spnclwš*) in several passages of the *Bundahišn*,¹ in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat of the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 18.d2 and in the Pahlavi translation and gloss to Y 17.11. Its name appears as Sponjagr (*spwncgl*) in *Zādspram* 3.17, besides other variants, and as Spenjagr (*spncgl*) in *Skand Gumānīg Wizār* 4.52.

A demon Spenjagr (*spncgl*) slain by the fire Wāzišt also seems to be mentioned in the Pahlavi translation of Vd 19.40, where *spncgl* renders the Avestan hapax legomenon *spənjayrīm*. The latter is usually considered by scholars to be the proper name of a demon slain by the fire *vāzišta-* (BARTHOLOMAE 1904, col. 1619). The form Spenjruš (*spnclwš*) or Aspenjruš (*’spnclwš*), in contrast, is the equivalent of Av. *spinjauruška-*, mentioned in Yt 9.31 as the name of a *daēva*-worshipping enemy of Zarathustra’s patron, Kavi Vištāspa (BARTHOLOMAE 1904, col. 1625).

Editors and translators of those Pahlavi texts where the story is mentioned usually assume that the demon’s correct name is the Middle Persian equivalent of Av. *spənjayrīm* and therefore regard the transmitted forms Spenjruš or Aspenjruš as mistaken for Spēnjargāk,² Spanjagr³ or Sponjagr⁴. However, the discrepancy between the spelling of the name in the Pahlavi texts, on the one

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1 In the manuscript TD2 the readings and attestations are as follows: *spnclwš* 50.11, *spnclws* 123.6, 138.2, *’spnclwš* 187.8, *’spnclwš* 70.7, 135.7, 138.1.4, *’spnclwš* 64.3.5.

2 WEST 1880, p. 62 with n. 1, p. 28 with n. 1 (*Aspenjargāk*).

3 WILLIAMS 1990, I, p. 97, II, pp. 36, 158. MACKENZIE 1964, p. 513, n. 15, comments that the form *spnclwš* for Av. *spinjauruška-* transmitted by the mss. is written instead of the expected *spncgl* (Spenjagr), Av. *spənjayriia-* attested in Vd 19.40.

4 PANAINO 1990–1995, II, pp. 87, 95.

hand, and its transcription in the scholarly tradition, on the other, justifies doubts about its common interpretation as the Middle Persian equivalent of Av. *spənjayrīm*. Moreover, the meaning of Av. *spənjayrīm*, which is believed to underly the demon's name, is not clear. In spite of HUMBACH's convincing morphological analysis as *spən-jayri-* (see below n. 29), it is puzzling that a noun meaning 'spattering prosperity' should function as the name of a demon. In an attempt to explain it, HUMBACH refers to the oral tradition of the Mazdayasnians, who interpret it as 'destroying prosperity by spattering water.' Apart from that source being unidentified, this explanation is hardly convincing, not least because the demon is one of *drought*.

In what follows I propose to investigate the attestations of the demon's name in the Pahlavi texts with a view to establishing its correct form in Middle Persian. I shall argue that the demon's name is not Spenjagr but Spenjrūš or Aspenjrūš in those passages where it is written *spnclwš* or *'spnclwš*. Moreover, the etymology of Av. *spinjauruška-* and the question of the meaning of Av. *spənjayri-* will be discussed, and I shall argue that *spənjayri-* is not the name of a demon but an epithet of the fire *vāzišta-*. This interpretation will be supported with reference to a passage from the *Yasna Haptayhāiti*. I shall conclude that, while the myth of the fire *vāzišta-* slaying a demon goes back to the Avesta, there is no Avestan evidence for the demon's name. It was during the course of the development of the myth and its meteorological connections, triggered by an association of *spənjayri-* with forms of **sp(r)enj-* 'to burst forth; be bright; sprout', in the Middle Iranian period that the name of the *daēva*-worshipper *spinjauruška-* (*spenjrūš*) provided that of the demon, possibly because of its assonance with *spənjayrīm* (*spenjagr*), the meaning of which was no longer understood. From this there also originated the reinterpretation of *spənjayrīm* as a demon's name and the confusion in some of the Pahlavi texts of two names for the demon slain by the fire Wāzišt.

1. The name of the demon slain by the fire Wāzišt

Perhaps the most detailed account of the battle between the fire Wāzišt and the demon is found in the *Iranian Bundahišn*. According to this myth, the demon Spenjrūš or Aspenjrūš resides in the clouds and is, along with the demon Apaoš, in conflict with the rainmakers. Apaoš is opposed to Tištar, and Aspenjrūš to the fire Wāzišt (TD2 50.11, 135.7, 187.8), who is said to have been created in the clouds in defiance of the demon Aspenjrūš.⁵ The latter is smitten on the head in the clouds by the fire Wāzišt with a club (*gad*), and as a result the waters flow and rain is produced. The club is like the blazing of fire and is also called 'light-

5 Since the forms Spenjrūš and Aspenjrūš vary indiscriminately in the passages relating to the two sets of opposed pairs, the optional initial vowel of Aspenjrūš could be either analogical on the name of the demon Apaoš or, more likely, as suggested by N. SIMS-WILLIAMS (e-mail of 10 October 2004), merely prothetic.

ning' (*rōzāg*). When struck on the head, Aspenjruš utters a fearful cry (*wāng*) which likewise is referred to as 'thunder' (*γarrānāg*). Finally, the fire Wāzišt is said to be the body of the fire of Spenāg Mēnōg with water in the clouds. In the manuscript TD2 the text runs as follows (137.15–138.7):

- 137.15 'MT pt⁶ ZK 'dwyнк' YHWWN-yd 'thš y w'zyšt' cygwn BYN
 138.1 'pl BR' YHBWN-t' YK'YMWN-yt' hmyst'lyh 'špncłwš šDY'
 138.2 ZK MY' t'cynyt' W gt' 'L L'šH y špncłwš šDY' ptkpyt'
 138.3 ZK gt dcšn' 'thš t'cšn' [t'cšn']⁷ y 'thš MY' l'y
 138.4 lwšnyh BYN 'pl YHWWN-yt' MNW lwc'k' KRYTWN-d W 'špncłwš
 138.5 'MT' ZK gt QDM ptkwpyt' k'l' shmkn' 'BYDWN-yt' MNW gl'n'k
 138.6 KRYTWN-d 'thš-c w'zšt' tn' hm 'thš y spyn'k mynwk
 138.7 LWT_H MY' BYN 'pl
- 137.15 *ka pad ān ēwēnag bawēd ātaxš ī wāzišt ciyōn andar*
 138.1 *abr be dād ēstēd hamēstārīh aspenjruš dēw*
 138.2 *ān āb tāzēnēd ud gad ō sar ī spenjruš dēw pahikōbēd.*
 138.3 *ān gad dazišn ātaxš. tāzišn ī ātaxš āb rāy*
 138.4 *rōšnīh andar abr bawēd kē rōzāg xwānēnd. ud aspenjruš*
 138.5 *ka ān gad abar pahikōbēd wāng sabmgen kunēd kē γarrānāg*
 138.6 *xwānēnd. ātaxš-iz wāzišt tan ham ātaxš ī spenāg mēnōg*
 138.7 *abāg āb andar abr*

When it happens that way, the most invigorating⁸ fire, as it has been created in the clouds in opposition to the demon Aspenjruš, makes that water flow and strikes his club upon the head of the demon Spenjruš. That club (causes) the burning of fire. Because of the flow of fire into the water there is brightness in the clouds which they call lightning. And when he [i.e. the fire] strikes that club upon (him), Aspenjruš utters a fearful cry which they call thunder.

The most invigorating fire (is) even also the body of the fire of the Bounteous Spirit with water in the cloud.

6 The transliteration pt' for Pahl. *pad* follows O. HANSEN: *Die mittelpersischen Papyri der Papyrussammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin*. Berlin 1938, pp. 8, 17. Further support for this reading is given by D. WEBER: "Kalligraphie und Kursive: Probleme der Pahlavi-Schrift in den Papyri und Ostraca", in: W. SKALMOWSKI and A. VAN TONGERLOO (eds.): *Medioiranica. Proceedings of the International Colloquium organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 21st to the 23rd of May 1990*, Leuven 1993 (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 48), pp. 183–192, and "Remarks on the development of the Pahlavi script in Sasanian times", in: *The Proceedings of the Copenhagen Symposium Religious Texts in Iranian Languages*, edited by F. VAHMAN and C.V. PEDERSEN, Copenhagen [2007] (in press). Arguments in favour of PWN are put forward by PH. HUYSE: "Ein erneuter Datierungsversuch für den Übergang vom Schluß-γ der mittelpersischen Inschriften zum Endstrich im Buchpahlavi (6.–7. Jh.)", in: D. WEBER (ed.): *Languages of Iran: Past and Present. A Volume of Iranian Studies in memoriam David Neil MacKenzie*, Wiesbaden 2004, pp. 51–68.

7 This word is erroneously written twice.

8 On form and meaning of Av. *vāzišta*- see HINTZE 2007, on Y 36.3.

In both the Avestan and the Pahlavi texts, the fire *vāzišta-* is one out of several fires. The *locus classicus* for this distinction in the Avesta is Y 17.11, where the heavenly fire is worshipped as the son of Ahura Mazda together with five different fires:

Y 17.11 θβq̄m ātrəm ahurabe mazdā^o puθrəm yazamaide
 ātrəm bərəzisauuayhəm yazamaide
 ātrəm vobu.friiānəm yazamaide
 ātrəm uruuāzištəm yazamaide
 ātrəm vāzištəm yazamaide
 ātrəm spāništəm yazamaide
 *xšaθrō.nafəθrəm nairiū.sayhəm yazatəm yazamaide
 ātrəm vīspanəm nmānanəm nmānō.paitim yazamaide
 ahurabe mazdā^o puθrəm
 ašauuanəm ašabe ratum yazamaide
 maṭ vīspaēibiū ātərabiiō

We worship you, the fire, the son of Ahura Mazda.
 We worship the fire of high strength.
 We worship the fire who loves what is good.
 We worship the most joyful fire.
 We worship the most invigorating fire.
 We worship the most bounteous fire.
 We worship Nairyōsaḥa,⁹ the grandson of rule,¹⁰ worthy of worship.
 We worship the fire, the master of all houses.
 We worship the son of Ahura Mazda,
 the truthful one, the model of truth,
 together with all fires.

Three of those names, namely *atar- vāzišta-* ‘most invigorating fire’, *atar-uruuāzišta-* ‘most joyful fire’ and *atar- spāništa-* ‘most bounteous fire’ are also found in the YH (Y 36.2–3) from where they probably derive.¹¹ The Pahlavi translation of Y 17.11 explains that the fire *Wāzišt* slays the demon *Spenjruš*:

Y 17.11 'thš w'zyšt YDBHWN-m [zK šDY' spncłwš¹² MHWTWN-yt']
 ātaxš wāzišt yazēm [ān dēw spenjruš zanēd]

We worship the fire *wāzišt* [that one slays the demon *spenjruš*]

- 9 In Y 17.11 *Nairiū.sayha-*, the messenger (*ašta-*) of Ahura Mazda (Vd 19.34), is, like its Ved. cognate *nārāśāmsa-*, a name for the ritual fire.
 10 This epithet of *nairiū.sayha-* is attested twice and occurs in two spellings. One is that of a compound, *xšaθrō.nafəθrō* (gen.sg., Ny 5.6). The other is that of the acc.sg. *xšaθrəm nafəθrəm* (Y 17.11), edited without variants by GELDNER 1886–1896, I, p. 71, where both members of the compound are inflected, see BARTHOLOMAE 1904, cols. 547, 1055, n. 1.
 11 NARTEN 1986, p. 157, n. 84.
 12 DHABBAR 1949, p. 94, edits *spncłwš*, while *Persian Rivayats* p. 59, n. 8 (no. 4), has *spncłwšk*.

In the Pahlavi texts, the distinction of five fires is found, for instance, in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat* of the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, which in A. V. WILLIAMS' translation reads as follows:

PRDd 18.d1: (In) one place (it is) revealed that the fire (is) so valuable, Ohrmazd created the body and soul of Fire from his own mind and thought, and he created its radiance and glory from the light of the Endless Light.

PRDd 18.d2: And he made five (fires). One (is) that which burns before himself in Garōdmān, and with this he makes true the essence of men; and one (is) that which he created in the body of men; one (is) that by which he smites the demon *Spanjagr; and one (is) that which he created in water and plants; one (is) that which he desired to create in the material world.¹³

The phrase in PRDd 18.d2, rendered by WILLIAMS as 'that by which he smites the demon *Spanjagr', refers to the fire *vāzišta-*. The reading **spncgl* on which his transcription *Spanjagr is based, is not found in the manuscripts but results from an emendation in his *Pahlavi Rivāyat* I 96 from a transmitted word which he transliterates as *spncldw'k'* (*ibid.*, p. 244). The ambiguous character of the Pahlavi script, however, also allows the same word to be read as *spncldwšk' /spenjrušk'*. The latter is probably the correct form, because, apart from the suffix *-ka-*, it agrees with the demon's name in the *Iranian Bundahišn*.

A transcription Sponjagr is justified in *Zādspram* 3.17, where the name is transmitted as *spwncgl* (or rather: *sprncgl*, see below p. 131) by the manuscripts K 35 (fol.239r l.15) and BK.¹⁴ By contrast, the manuscript TD offers a reading *spncd'sn'*.¹⁵ The latter form could be transcribed as *spenjarašn* and interpreted as corrupted from *spenjruš*. In any case, in spite of the different forms of the name in Zs 3.17, this demon, which is presented as the opponent of the fire *wāzišt*, forms part of the two sets of opposed pairs, the other being Apaoš contra Tištar. In Zs 3.17 the demon Sponjagr has the same function as Spenjruš/Aspenjruš in the *Bundahišn* and Spenjrušk in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat* of the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg*.

The demon's name also occurs as Spenjagr in *Škand Gumānīg Wizār* 4.52, where it is spelt *spənzagar* in Pazand, and *spncgl* in a surviving fragment of the Pahlavi version¹⁶:

ŠGV 4.52 MN hcdl y 'LH-šān 'ltyk y tyštl W spncgl šDY'
4.53 W 'thš y w'čst W 'p'wš šDY'

13 WILLIAMS 1990, II, p. 36 (translation), I, p. 96f. (Pahlavi text). Further references to the five fires are given by him in part II, p. 157f.

14 *Codices Avestici et Pahlavici bibliothecae Universitatis Hafniensis*, vol. IV: *The Pahlavi Codex K35, Second part, containing the Epistles of Manušchbihr and the Selections of Zādspram*. Copenhagen 1936, p. 67. GIGNOUX/TAFAZZOLI 1993, pp. 148, 199, 425, transcribe the name as Sponjagr, while ANKLESARIA 1964, p. 23, interprets it as Spen-jagr.

15 Anklesaria 1964, p. 23; GIGNOUX/TAFAZZOLI 1993, p. 325.

16 JĀMĀSP-ĀSĀNĀ/WEST 1887, pp. 23, 199, 267; DE MENASCE 1945, pp. 54, 55, 60.

4.54 'p'ryk šPYL mynwg'n y LWTH twmyk'n
pŕ' w'l'n krt'lyh W swt bht'lyh y 'L d'm'n

4.52 *az azēr ī awēšān ardiġ ī tištar ud spenjagr dēw*

4.53 *ud ātaxš ī wāzišt ud apaoš dēw*

4.54 *abārīg wēh mēnōgān ī abāg tomīgān*
pad wārān kardārīh ud sūd baxtārīh ī ō dāmān

Below them (is) the battle between Tištar and the demon Spenjagr
and the most invigorating fire and the demon Apaoš
(and) the other good spiritual (beings) with the darkness
about the production of rain and the distribution of benefits to the creatures.

This passage exhibits a curious confusion between the two sets of opposed pairs in so far as Spenjagr is presented not as opposed to the Fire Wāzišt but to Tištar, whose enemy otherwise is always Apaoš.

It emerges from this survey that the name of the demon opposed to the fire Wāzišt is usually Spenjruš/Aspenjruš (*Bundahišn*, Pahl. version of Y 17.11) or Spenjrušk (PRDd 18.d2), the Middle Persian equivalent of Av. *spinjauruška-*. It could be Sponjagr in *Zādspram* 3.17 (*spwncgl* K 35 BK, with the variant *spncl'sn'* in TD, possibly representing *spenjarāšn*) and it is Spenjagr in ŠGV 4.52 (Paz. *spənzagar*, Pahl. *spncgl*, with a mix-up of the agents in the opposed pairs) and apparently also in the Pahlavi translation of Vd 19.40, where it is a transcription of the Avestan word *spənjagrīm*.

2. Av. *spinjauruška-*

The name *Spenjruš* or *Spenjrušk* is the Middle Persian equivalent of Av. *spinjauruška-* referred to in Yt 9.31 as the name of a *daēva*-worshipping enemy of Kavi Vištāspa. Zarathustra's patron prays to the deity Druvāspā and requests the following favour:

Yt 9.31 *uta azəm nijanāni*
təθriiāuuantəm duždaēnəm
uta azəm nijanāni
**spinjauruškəm daēuuaiiasnəm*

And that I may slay
Təθriiāuuant of bad belief.
And that I may slay
the *daēva*-worshipping Spinjauruška¹⁷.

17 GELDNER 1886–1896, II, p. 124, edits a form which could be read either as *spinjaurušəm* or, assuming that the sign š may also represent the ligature šk, *spinjauruškəm*. That the latter is the correct reading emerges unequivocally from the facsimiles of F1 (JAMASP-ASA 1991, p. 118) and E1 (fol. 238r l.1–2, KOTWAL/HINTZE, forthcoming).

There is no extant Pahlavi translation of this passage. However, it is to be expected that the name of the *daēva*-worshipper Spinjauruška would be written *spnclwšk*, just like that of the demon smitten by the Fire Wāzišt in the Pahlavi texts. This implies that either the same name was used for both a man and a demon or that the *daēva*-worshipper of the Avesta had himself become a *dēw* in the Pahlavi texts.

The formation and meaning of *spinjauruška*- are uncertain.¹⁸ BARTHOLOMAE'S (1904, col. 1625) connection of *uruška*- with the Latin adjective *luscus* 'blind, obscure, unintelligible' is untenable because *luscus* probably derives from an earlier **nuscus* attested in the noun *nuscitiō* 'night-blindness', from *nuscitiō*, an earlier form of *luscitiō*.¹⁹ BARTHOLOMAE relates the first part of the name *spinjauruška*- to an otherwise unattested noun *spinja*- which he considers to be the name of a tribe.²⁰ However, it is more likely that the first member is the same as that in *spənjaγri*-, i.e. *spən*- 'prosperity'. This requires the assumption that *spin*- goes back to earlier *spən*-, possibly under the influence of the following palatal stop *-j*-, i.e. *spanj*^o > *spənj*^o > *spinj*^o.²¹ A form with *spən*- is attested in the otherwise corrupted variant reading of the manuscript J10 *spənzurōšakəm*.

The second part of the compound is then *jaruška*-. This could be a diminutive form with the suffix *-ka* attached to an *-uš*- stem from a root *jar/gar*. In Indo-Iranian, stems in *-uš*- are, like those in *-as*-, neuter *nomina agentis* expressing the carrying out of the action denoted by the verbal root.²² While there are no other examples in Avestan for the further suffixation of Indo-Iranian action nouns in *-as*-, *-uš*-, *-iš*- with *-ka*-, Vedic parallels include *a-cchandás-ka*- 'without metre', Epic *dhānušká*- 'archer', literally 'provided with a bow' (*dhānuš*-, *AiGr.* II:2, p. 523), TS *an-āśír-ka*- 'without blessing' (*āśís*- 'wish', *AiGr.* II:2, p. 537, § 367 bε). The suffix *-ka*- does not change the meaning when attached to a nominal stem which forms part of a compound.²³ The meaning of the suffixed formation is therefore that of a Bahuvrīhi and could be either 'provided with ...' or 'occupied with ...' (*AiGr.* II:2, p. 522ff.). In addition, the suffix *-ka*- may also add a pejorative semantic component, since Av. *spinjauruška*- is the name of a deceitful person.

18 MAYRHOFER 1979, p. 77, comments that the etymology is "völlig unklar".

19 WALDE/HOFMANN, I, p. 838f.; CLARE 1982, pp. 1052, 1207. ERNOUT/MEILLET 1959, p. 371, point out that the noun occurs with initial *n*- already in Plautus, *Festus* 176, where it could be due to the influence of *nox* 'night'. They consider *luscus*, *luscitosus* as "mot populaire, d'origine inconnue".

20 BARTHOLOMAE (1904, col. 1619) connects *spinja*- with *spəngha*-, the proper name of a truthful person. For an uncertain OP equivalent **spanga*- see HINZ 1975, p. 225 with references, MAYRHOFER 1979, p. 76.

21 On the sound change *span*- > *spən*- see DE VAAN 2003, p. 482. The sound change *-ə*- > *-i*-, however, occurs normally after, not before a palatal *ĵ*, *c*, *j*, *ž*, see HOFFMANN/FORSSMAN, p. 63, § 30.dd.α.

22 *AiGr.* II:2, pp. 229, 489f.; BRUGMANN 1906, p. 534.

23 *AiGr.* II:1, p. 102f., § 45c, 1930, III, p. 518, § 361d; F. EDGERTON: *The k-suffixes of Indo-Iranian*, Leipzig 1911, pp. 8, 18, 29ff.

The morphological segmentation of the name is thus *spin-jar-uš-ka-*. The noun *spən-ja-yr-i-*, in contrast, is formed from a reduplicated root. HUMBACH 1991, II, p. 172, regards the name of the *daēva*-worshipper as a diminutive of *spənjayri-*. However, in order to avoid the semantic difficulties of his explanation, it is preferable to assume that the underlying root *gar/jar* in *spin-jauruška-* is different from but homonymous with that in *spən-jayri-*. Of the various roots *gar/jar* in Indo-Iranian, *gar* ‘to welcome, honour’ (IE **g^werH*) and *gar* ‘to wake’ (IE **h₁ger*) are excluded for semantic reasons. Possible candidates among those remaining include Ved. *garⁱ* ‘to raise (a weapon)’ (IE **g^welh₁*, according to MAYRHOFER 1986–2001, I, p. 470) and Av. *gar*, Ved. *garⁱ* ‘to swallow’ (IE **g^werh₃*, MAYRHOFER 1986–2001, I, p. 469f.).

The only Avestan evidence for a root *garⁱ* ‘to raise (a weapon)’ has been thought to be the isolated form *ni-yrāire*, which occurs twice only in Yt 10.40 (BARTHOLOMAE 1904, col. 512). However, this form is probably to be emended to **niynāire* with INSLER 1967, who assumes a scribal error.²⁴ So far, however, the emendation has been a pure conjecture because GELDNER 1886–1896, II, p. 134, does not record any variant readings. It now receives additional and decisive support from the manuscript J18, not used by GELDNER, of the K. M. JAMASPASA’S collection,²⁵ where a form with *-n-* is attested at the first occurrence (*niynāiri*, fol. 138v l. 4) while the reading is *niyrāira* the second time (fol. 138v l. 9).²⁶

There remains then only the root *gar* ‘to swallow’. It occurs in the compounds *aspō.gar-*, *nərə.gar-* ‘swallowing horses’, ‘swallowing men’, both of which function as epithets of the ‘horned serpent’ slain by the hero Kərəsāspa (KELLENS 1974, p. 30f.). In the morphological analysis presented above, it would be the only possible root underlying the name *spinjauruška-*. While it is hard to justify *-jauruška-* as a *nomen agentis* governing *spin-* (**‘swallowing prosperity’*), the *-ka-* suffix could be used to turn a basic Bahuvrīhi into a name, or to mark it as pejorative. The compound could thus mean ‘occupied with the swallowing of prosperity’, ‘characterized by the swallowing of prosperity’. The name would describe a deceitful person who swallows prosperity as his food, gobbles up prosperity.

There are other stories in the *Yāsts* (and later Epic) which suggest that daevic creatures ‘swallow’ the good things of life. In addition to the ‘horned serpent’ that swallowed men and horses (Yt 19.40), there is also the monster Gandarəβa who rushed about with his mouth wide open ‘to destroy the bodily living beings of truth’ (Yt 19.41). Furthermore, Yima is said to have brought prosperity back on earth after it had been taken away by the demons (Yt 19.32). Such parallels confirm that this sort of name is appropriate for a *daeva*-worshipper, even if it

24 Cf. KELLENS 1974, p. 152, n. 3, 1984, p. 164, who considers the emendation favourably.

25 The manuscript is described by HINTZE 1994, p. 56, and 1989, p. 45.

26 On Vedic *garⁱ* ‘to raise (a weapon)’ see A. HINTZE: “Indo-Iranian **gar* ‘to raise aloft.’” In: G. SCHWEIGER (ed.): *Indogermanica. Festschrift Gert Klingenschmitt*. Tübingen 2005, pp. 247–260.

may be figurative like Homeric δημόβορος ‘devourer of the common stock’. The meaning is also nasty enough to make the transference to a demon plausible.²⁷

3. Av. *spənjayrīm*

The Avestan noun *spənjayrīm* is attested only in Vd 19.40, where the *ātar-vāzišta-* is said to slay a demon:

Vd 19.40: *ātrəm vāzištəm frāiiazaēša*
+ *daēum.janəm spənjayrīm*

You shall worship the fire *vāzista-*
which slays the demon, the *spənjayrīm*

That one particular demon is slain by the fire emerges from the accusative singular case of the first member of the compound +*daēum.jan-*.²⁸ The form *spənjayrīm* is analysed by BARTHOLOMAE 1904, col. 1619, as the acc.sg. of a masculine stem *spənjayriia-*. Syntactically he considers the acc. to be governed by the root noun °*janəm*. Interpreting *spənjayrīm* as the name of the demon slain by the fire *vāzista-*, he translates the phrase as ‘you may worship the *vāzišta-* fire, the one that slays the demon, the *Spənjayrya*’.²⁹ The Pahlavi translation of this verse, however, is ambiguous as to the interpretation of *spənjayrīm*, which is not translated but transcribed as *spncgl*:

Vd 19.40 ṭhš y w’zyšt pr’c YDBHWN-šn’
MNW šDY’ MHYTWN-yt spncgl

ātaxš i wāzišt frāz yazišn
kē dēw zanēd spenjagr

One shall worship the most invigorating fire,
which slays the demon, the *spenjagr*.

BARTHOLOMAE describes *spənjayrīm* as a compound of the elements *spənja-* and *ayriia-* ‘first’ (BARTHOLOMAE 1904, col. 50), but without further analysis. More convincing is HUMBACH’s explanation that it consists of *spən-* and *jayri-*.³⁰ The

27 This section on the name *spinjauruška-* has greatly benefited from discussions with ELIZABETH TUCKER, who also drew my attention to the Greek parallel.

28 GELDNER 1886–1896, III, p. 130, edits two words *daēum.janəm*. On compounds with *jan*, cf. DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN 1936, p. 72f.; KELLENS 1974, pp. 145–163, esp. p. 154.

29 That BARTHOLOMAE interprets *spənjayrīm* as the demon’s name emerges unequivocally only from the German translation thanks to the grammatical distinction of gender in that language: “Das Vāzista-Feuer, (das) den Daēva schlägt, den Spənjayrya, sollst du verehren!” (WOLFF 1910, p. 432). Also in KELLENS’ translation (1974, p. 154) *spənjayrīm* is unambiguously taken as the name of the demon: “Offrez le sacrifice au feu vāzista, qui tue le démon Spənjayri”.

30 HUMBACH 1959, II, p. 64, 1991, II, p. 172; cf. also KELLENS 1974, p. 154 with n. 1.

latter equals Vedic *jághri-* ‘spattering’ attested only once in RV 1.162.15, where, with regard to the sacrificial horse, one is advised:

RV 1.162.15 *má tvāgnír dhvanayīd dhūmagandhir*
mókhā bhrájanty abhí vikta jághriḥ |

Do not let the smoky-smelling fire envelope you with smoke³¹;
do not let the shiny pot boil over spattering.

From a morphological point of view, *jághri-* is an adjective from the reduplicated root *ghar* ‘to drip, sprinkle’. Such forms with an accented reduplicative syllable, zero-grade root and a primary *i-* suffix are agent nouns usually referring to the repetition of the action denoted by the verbal root.³² Literally, *jághri-* thus means ‘(repeatedly) sprinkling, spattering, spurting’. The stem of the Av. compound has been credibly posited by HUMBACH as *spənjayri-* and translated as ‘spattering prosperity’. Like his predecessors, HUMBACH interprets it as the name of a demon. However, in spite of his convincing morphological analysis, it is difficult to accept that a noun with such a meaning would serve as a demon’s name.

Some insight into the meaning and function of this compound may be gained from a comparison of the *Vidēvdād* passage with a stanza from the *Yasna Haptaḥāiti*. J. NARTEN has shown that in Y 36.2 the heavenly fire of Ahura Mazda is addressed and invited to come down and merge with the ritual fire. After this process has taken place, the ritual fire is identified not only with Ahura Mazda’s heavenly fire but also with the deity’s most bounteous spirit.³³ In Y 36.3, the worshippers approach (*pairijasāmaidē*) the transformed ritual fire, addressing it by the ‘most invigorating of names’ (*nāmanəm vāzištəm*) of Ahura Mazda’s fire:

Y 36.3 *ātarš vōi mazdā aburahiiā abī*
mainiiuš vōi abiiā spəništō abī
hiiat vā tōi nāmanəm vāzištəm
ātarə mazdā aburahiiā
tā θβā pairijasāmaidē

You are truly the Fire of the Wise Lord.
You are truly his most bounteous spirit.
We approach you,
O Fire of the Wise Lord,
(addressing you) by what is indeed the most invigorating of your names.

NARTEN 1986, pp. 157–159, argues convincingly that this *vāzišta-* of names is the one mentioned in the preceding sentence, i.e. Ahura Mazda’s most bounteous-

31 The nonce form *dhvanayīd*, a secondary *iṣ-* aorist injunctive in the *má* prohibitive (preventive) clause, is formed from the causative stem *dhvānaya-*, see NARTEN 1964, p. 155f., JAMISON 1983, p. 115 with n. 17, HOFFMANN 1967, p. 63.

32 *AiGr.* II:2, p. 291f.; TICHY 2000, p. 50.

33 NARTEN 1986, p. 155f., cf. HINTZE 2007 on Y 36.3 n. 1.

ous spirit (*mainiiuš spōništō*). The identification of the ritual fire with Ahura Mazda's heavenly fire, which is invoked in Y 36.2, is made in the first *abī*-clause. The second such clause equates the ritual fire, now identical with Ahura Mazda's heavenly one, with the deity's most bounteous spirit. The latter was mentioned in Y 36.1 in its function of retributing evil. According to NARTEN, it is because of this judicial role that in Y 36.3 *spənta-mainiiu-* is called the most invigorating (*vāzišta-*) of all the names for the divine fire.³⁴

The Pahlavi translation of Y 36.3 confirms NARTEN's interpretation of *vāzišta-* as the name of the ritual fire in which *spənta-mainiiu-* is present in so far as the Av. clause *abiiā spōništō abī hūiaṭ vā tōi nāmanəm vāzištəm*³⁵ is translated in the sense that the fire's characteristic or personality (*xwēš*) is called *abzōnīg*, which translates Av. *spōništa-*, when its name is *wāzišt*³⁶:

Y 36.3 'thš pṭ' zK y 'whrmzd 'k's 'YT [pṭ' dyn' y 'whrmzd] W pṭ' mynwḵyh 'k's 'YT' [+ZY -š¹ 'YT'² 'MT -š pṭ' wḥl'nyh BR³ YTYBWN-d] ||[Ⓞ]
 'pṛzwnyk 'YT +NPŠH³ 'D 'MT '+'w⁴ LK⁵ šM cygwn w'zyšt' ||[Ⓞ]
 'n⁶ 'thš y 'whrmzd y LK pṭ' zK y KR' 2 BR' +YHMTWN-ym⁷ [Yḵ-š hyhl⁸ y mynwḵ W gytyḵ hc-š L' WHL YHSNN-m⁹] ||[Ⓞ]

1	ZK-š DHABHAR ZY-š K5 J2	4	'LH y DHABHAR 'w' K5 J2	8	hyhl DHABHAR 'k'1 J2
2	'YT' y DHABHAR 'YT' J2	5	LK DHABHAR LK' J2	9	YHSNN-m DHABHAR YHMT deleted before
3	BNPŠH DHABHAR NPŠH J2	6	'n' DHABHAR, J2		YHSNN-m J2
		7	YHMTWN-m DHABHAR YHMTWN-ym J2		

ātaxš pad ān ī ohrmazd āgāh ast [pad dēn ī ohrmazd] ud pad mēnōgih āgāh ast [+i-š ast ka-š pad wabrāmih be nišinēnd] ||[Ⓞ]

*abzōnīg ast *xwēš tā ka +ō tō nām ciyōn wāzišt* ||[Ⓞ]

*ān ātaxš ī ohrmazd ī tō pad ān ī harw dō be *rasēm [kū-š hixr ī mēnōg ud gētīg az-š abāz dāram]* ||[Ⓞ]

The fire has knowledge of that belonging to Ohrmazd [of the religion of Ohrmazd] and it has knowledge of the *mēnōg* [it has it when it is established as a *Wabrām* fire]. ||[Ⓞ]

Bountiful is its own when it corresponds to your name of *wāzišt*. ||[Ⓞ]

We approach that fire of you, O Ohrmazd, provided with both [that is, I hold back from it the filth of the spiritual and physical (world)]. ||[Ⓞ]

34 KELLENS/PIRART 1988–1991, III, p. 138, consider *vāzista-* itself as that name. On the meaning of *vāzišta-* see above n. 8.

35 By splitting the Av. sentence in the middle after *vōi* and before *abiiā*, the Pahlavi translation separates *mainiiuš* from *spōništō*.

36 The Pahlavi text is given according to the edition of DHABHAR 1949, p. 169. A reading different from the form edited by DHABHAR but attested in one of the manuscripts is marked by a plus sign (+). The symbol || indicates the end of a section in the manuscript J2, where the text switches from Avestan to Pahlavi. Different sections are marked by an index number in order to facilitate finding corresponding clauses of the transliterated and transcribed Pahlavi text and the translation.

The tradition that the fire *vāzišta-* is identical with Ahura Mazda's most bounteous spirit was also known in the Middle Iranian period. This is confirmed by the passage from the *Bundahišn*, quoted above on p. 121, where the fire *wāzišt* is said to be the body of the fire of the bounteous spirit (TD2 138.6). The text also suggests that the fire Wāzišt has an affinity to water thanks to its identity with the fire of Spenāg Mēnōg.

In the course of the Yasna ritual, it is from Y 36.3 onwards that this divine fire, which is also Ahura Mazda's most bounteous spirit, is believed to inhabit the ritual fire. If the fire *vāzista-* is the one in which Ahura Mazda's most bounteous spirit (*mainiiuš spāništō*) is present, then the compound *spənjayri-*, rather than being a semantically unsuitable name for a demon, could be an epithet of that fire. It is because of the presence of *mainiiuš spāništō* or *spənta- mainiiu-*, that the fire *vāzista-* is said to 'spurt *spən*': *spən-jayri-*. Accordingly, Vd 19.40 should be translated as follows:

Vd 19.40: *ātrəm vāzištəm frāiiazaēša*
+daēum.janəm spənjayrīm

You shall worship the most invigorating fire
 the one that slays the demon, the one that spurts prosperity.

Tradition elaborated on the myth that this 'most invigorating' fire slays a demon. That the myth goes back to the Avesta is evidenced by the fire's epithet *+daēum.janəm* in Vd 19.40. While the demon is not named in the Avesta, the *daēva*-worshipper's name *spīnjauruška-* was reinterpreted to become the demon's name *spenjruš* in Middle Persian. This emerges from the Pahlavi translation of Y 17.11 quoted above on p. 122 and from other texts. One reason why a *daēva*-worshipper of the Avesta became the demon opposed to the fire Wāzišt in such texts can be seen in the phonetic similarity of his name to the fire's epithet *spənjayrīm*. The whole myth could have been secondarily derived from Vd 19.40, where *spənjayrīm* was re-interpreted as agreeing with *daēum*. Subsequently, *spənjayrīm* was confused not only with the name of the *daēva*-worshipper *spīnjauruška-* but also, as N. SIMS-WILLIAMS suggested to me, with a Middle Iranian word **sp(r)enjan* vel sim. meaning 'lightning'. The meaning 'thunder' of this word is attested, for instance, in Buddh.Sogd. *'spr'yncn* P9.36 'thunder-bolt'. E. BENVENISTE, *Textes sogdiens*, Paris 1940, p. 220, writes *'spr'ynch* (with final *-h*, thus also BAILEY 1979, p. 473b), but N. SIMS-WILLIAMS kindly informs me that this was corrected by GERSHEVITCH in an unpublished annotation to his copy of W. B. HENNING's *Sogdica*, London 1940, p. 31. SIMS-WILLIAMS further comments that "[t]he annotation is in connection with the entry *"sprync nsnng"* in a Manichaean Sogdian glossary fragment, which GERSHEVITCH proposed to read *spryncn snng* (with different word-division) and to interpret as "thunderbolt". For *snng* (lit. "stone") = *vajra* = "thunderbolt" he refers to Gr.Bd. 139sq. The MP or Parthian equivalent in the glossary fragment is missing, but should have begun with the letters *ʿ + s* (or, theoretically, *ʿ + š*),

so it may well have been a close cognate of the Sogdian form, with prothetic ‘ before the group *sp(r)-*.”³⁷

Iranian **sparg* ‘to burst forth; to be light; to sprout’ belongs to an IE root **sp^hṛh₂g* or **sb^hṛh₂g* ‘to issue, burst forth’ (of sound, light, fire, water, plants)³⁸ widely attested in IE languages such as, for instance, in Ved. *spḥūrjāti* ‘to thunder, resound, roar’; Av. (*fra-*)*sparəya-* ‘sprout’, Gr. ἀσπάραγος, ἀσπάρραγος ‘asparagus’; Old English *spearca*, Engl. *spark*; Latin *spargō* ‘to scatter, emit’; Gr. σπαράγέομαι ‘to burst with a noise, crackle, sputter; to be full to bursting (of udders)’. Other Middle Iranian cognates include Khot. *sparggä* ‘noise, twang’ (of bows) (BAILEY 1979, p. 415b) and Man.Sogd. *sprymy* ‘flower’. Since in Middle Persian a word cannot begin with three consonants, *spr-* has been simplified to *sp-*, cf. Pahl. Psalter present stem *spz-* ‘to sprout, to blossom’, indicating /(*ə*)*spīz* / or /(*ə*)*spēz* / < **sp^hṛjya-*;³⁹ Pahl. *spyc-* /*spīz-* / ‘to shine; sprout’, Man.MP *‘spyxtn*, *‘spyz-*;⁴⁰ Pahl. *spycšn* /*spīzišn* / ‘sprouting’ (e.g. Zs 30.35), ‘brilliance’ (e.g. Zs 34.25), Man.MP *‘spyzyšn* ‘brightness’ M 781.50, “a stylistic variation of *rwn*” (HENNING 1947, pp. 40, 46).

The meteorological connections, which the myth of the fire Wāzišt slaying a demon developed, could have been triggered by an association of the first part of the fire’s epithet, resegmented as *spənj-ayri-*, with a similar sounding word derived from **sparg* ‘to burst forth; to be light; to sprout’, of which a form with nasal infix is attested in Khwarezm. *isprenjik* ‘to blossom’ < **sprenja(ya)-*.⁴¹ The meaning of this root is also close to that underlying the epithet’s second part *jayri-* ‘spurting’. Thus a demon’s name could have been formed meaning either ‘(flash of) lightning’ or ‘thunder’, ‘thunderbolt’. An older form of the demon’s name could be preserved in Zs 3.17 if the reading of K35 and BK is interpreted as representing *sprncgl* /*sprenzgar* / or *spernzagar* / rather than *spwncgl* /*spenjagr* /.⁴² In the Pahlavi script, the spelling *sprncgl* differs from *spncgl* /*spenjagr* /, transcribing Av. *spənjayrīm*, only by one additional vertical stroke. The form *sprenzgar*, possibly an Avestan loanword, could have produced an optional variant *spenzgar* adapted to Pahlavi phonology. The identity of the latter with *spenjagr* / could have motivated the use of a different, but similar sounding proper name, *spinjruš*, of an evidently evil person, to substitute the name with **sparg* ‘to burst

37 N. SIMS-WILLIAMS, e-mail of 10 October 2004.

38 MAYRHOFER 1986–2001, II, p. 778, and 1956–1980, III, p. 545f.; BAILEY 1979, p. 473b; POKORNY 1959–1969, pp. 996–998; RIX et al. 2001, p. 586.

39 HENNING 1947, p. 47 [= Henning 1977, II, p. 281].

40 MACKENZIE 1971, p. 76.

41 HENNING 1947, p. 47, n. 5; MORGENSTIERNE: “Iranian Elements in Khowar”, in: BSOS 8 (1935–1937), p. 662; M. SAMADI: *Das chwaresmische Verbum*, Wiesbaden 1986, p. 199.

42 That the name of the demon could be a corruption of a word meaning ‘(flash of) lightning’ and that the variant *spwncgl* in Zs 3.17 could perhaps be read **sprncgl* and thus preserve a trace of an older form was suggested to me by N. SIMS-WILLIAMS in an e-mail of 10 October 2004.

forth; be light; sprout' at a time when the myth had already developed its meteorological connections. That the root **sparg* was involved in the development of the tempestuous aspects of the myth is suggested by the detail of the demon's fearful cry also called 'thunder' when hit on the head by the fire.

The entire myth appears to be an aetiological account of the origins of lightning and thunder. The fact that, apart from two instances (*Zādspram* 3.17; ŠGV 4.52), *spənjayrīm* was not used to provide the demon's name, indirectly indicates that even at that time this noun was not understood as the name of a demon. Rather, some memory of the 'spurting' (*°jayri-*) nature of the fire *vāzišta-* has been preserved in the detail of the story that the club, which the fire uses to hit the demon's head, is like the blazing of fire also called 'lightning'.

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