ENCRYPTIONS IN THE GATHAS: ZARATHUSHTRA’S VARIATIONS ON THE THEME OF BLISS

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I am very pleased to contribute to this celebration of Professor Gherardo Gnoli with a paper related to some themes in his own illuminations of the world of Zarathushtra and early Zoroastrianism.

The present study will investigate the Gothic passages attesting derivatives of the root *wrđz ‘be joyous, be happy, feel bliss’, which expresses a major eschatological value-concept. This investigation will also treat the most interesting varieties of the encryptive exploitation of linguistic forms, which constitutes an important aspect of Zarathushtra’s poetic preaching.

The root in question is spelled ursudc in our Gothic Vulgate text.¹ The monosyllabic scanio shows that the u- is a later addition, representing the usual Young Avestan (YAv.) prothesis before ru- (*xrw-), itself the YAv. outcome of *wr- with metathesis of a balan type encountered later on e.g. within Pashto, wrēza > rwēza ‘female member of a wedding procession’ < *wrdzyt ‘rejoicing’, from our root (Morgenstierne 1927, 88).² Etiologically √wrđz is obviously related to the closely synonymous √wrđd (ursud-) ‘be happy’, etc.; the roots can be reconciled by a Proto-Indo-Iranian *wrđdh-s(a-) > wrđz(a-). The Indo-Iranian etymology involves the Vedic root vrđh. Its meaning is (approximately) ‘be great, feel oneself great’, which is supported by the formulaically related collocations of the verb with ‘great(ness)’; RV 5.6.7 māhī vrđhantah (3rd pers. pl.), and of the pres. participle, RV 1.135.9 māhī vrđhantah (nom. pl.). Further connection is with Vedic urdhvā- ‘high’ < Proto-Indo-European (PIE) *wrīdh-<, √wrēdh.³ Accordingly, Indo-Iranian *√wrđh may be defined as ‘to swell, to expand’. The Irania development to ‘be happy, be blissful’ would parallel Arab. ñb-s-s ‘to expand’: inbusata ‘became expanded or expansive, became joyful’; ḫas ‘expansion; feeling happy’ (in Sufi mysticism, a state of elation contrasting with ḫabd ‘contractiveness’).

The semantic development ‘bliss’ < ‘expansiveness’ proposed for Ir. √wrđz is paralleled by OAv. hrdatra (YAv. spelling tīṭhra-) ‘comfort, ease’ < ‘spaciousness’.⁴ √wrđz and hrdatra are collocated in 50.5 (to be examined below), and a Young Avestan passage which exemplifies the eschatological value of both tīṭhra- and ursud-man- ‘bliss’

¹ For Old Avestan (OAv.) I use a reconstructive transcription essentially in accord with Boekes 1988. In the few cases where vulgar Gothic spellings are quoted, they are explicitly indicated as such (Vulg. = vulgar spelling).

² Cf. further Yaghmaci rōwān < Sogdian w matière ‘lamb’.

³ Perhaps formed with ‘stative’ suffix -s- from root *wetH – *werH, whence Vedic ur-, Avestan vōuru- ‘broad, wide’ < *wṝḥ- etc.

⁴ < *good (hu-) breathing (-tīṭhra-). Note especially Y 8.8 ruṣanacca xīṭhrmcca ‘roominess and *good-tīṭh-‘ vs. qaṣṣa duḥš-m ‘constriction and *bad-tīṭh-. To Bartholomae’s connection with Vedic dni ‘breathes’ I add *dīṭh- < PIE *H₂dr̥yō-, compound form of *H₂dr̥y-, whence Welsh anudd, Old Irish anu ‘breath’.


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b haštī anīṭī yat-ca dargam durgvadnyah rāśah

c savī-ī ca arātīwahah at apī tīśū dhati utītā

30.10 ‘For then will occur the breakage of Wrong’s (chariot)-shaft(ing), but the swiftwits will (still) be yoked at the fine dwelling of Good Mind and of Wisdom and Righteousness, and they will win in good renown.

30.11 When you have learned the new associations which Wisdom has delivered, O mortals—good passage and impass, whence for the wrongsome long destruction but promotions for the righteous, thereby then will all be as wished’.

The underlying conception is the Indo-European ‘chariot of Righteousness’ (Vedic rśya rātha = Gr. ἵρμα δίκης, “and Old Irish thematic congener” are mentioned by Watkins 1995, 16 with lit.; for the chariot race and dualistic eschatological rewards, note especially Y 43.5c-e, with wraĉso- ‘turning point of race course’). The chariot of Righteousness is reflected by the opposite conception at 30.10a’, cf. 49.9c ‘to/with Rightness in the race’, to be discussed presently. My translation of 30.10a’ spāyātra- (Vulg. spatiabara-) as ‘(chariot-)shaft(ing)’ fits the context, since it was the shaft (pole) whose strain and breakage during turns in races most frequently caused chariot crashes. I analyze the word as a secondary derivative in - ṭrā, suffix of agency (of devices, etc.). The root, spā-, gives root-stem spā-, which, with preverbs a, wi, and awa, yields Sanglechi, Yidgha, and Wakhī words for the plowshare (i.e. the pole which connects plow and yoke), and with upari yields Yav. upari-spā- Yt 10.125 ‘chariot shaft’. The form spāyātra- may refer to the shaft with its attachments. I take OAv. yuṇah- (as at 30.2c) as ‘race’; cf. the Vedic verb yuṇ- ‘races, courses’, YAV. yuṇ- ‘agon’. For OAv. yuṇah- ‘race’ three other passages should be cited, two of which also attest vrūța::

49.8 a frāṣa-adntrī vrūțṣātām arātāh dāh
b sarām tat thāw mazād yāstī ahūra
c mabya-ca yam wāhū thwārmi ā dāhtrāi
d yarwai wēstāi frāṭtāhah ahāma

49.9 b nait rīwcāh sarām dadans drugwātā
c yat dayanāh wāhitāh yuṇan mīdāi
d ārā yuṇatā yuṇah dāmaaswāsena

49.8 ‘For Prasashostra establish Thou Righteousness’ most blissful connection—this do I entreat Thee, O Lord Wisdom—and for me, too, (the connection) which is in Thy good Dominion. For all eternity will we be (Thy) envoy’.

49.9b-d ‘The rightly-speaking one does not establish connection with the wrongsome one, for they yoke their envisionment to the best prize who are yoked with Rightness in the race, O Jamaspā!’


7 Cf. YAV. Yt 11.3 yuṇhi varēṣajātamente ‘most victorious in the contest’; Yt 13.14 yurīṣaḥ... yuṇah... of *agonies... of anxieties*. For yuṇah (yuṇh-) as racing term, cf. Schmidt 1968, 178, and for ‘(verbal) content’ Kuiper 1960, 250-251; possible eschatological term Kuiper 1973, 186. Differently Narten 1986, 149-155, defending ‘Bite’. [See also the detailed survey on yuṇh- in Kellens 1987, 249-250, with tentative conclusion ‘hailing, challenging’]

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5 Kuiper’s thesis proceeds from his view of Vedic cosmogony, and involves pīśis’ mystical visualization of the sun in the breached primordial rock, the otherworldly source of ṛitī.
The word play on ąyləhı́ ‘in the race’ and the name djāma-aswa̲- (aswa̲- ‘horse’) has its precedent in 46.14c, whose larger context parallels 30.10 where with renown as reward:

46.13 a yah spitānam sarathīram raḍahā
b maraśṭāna ṣnānūh ān nā fra sudraśī rōnāh
46.14 a sarathīra kṣ-tai artūnāh wraṭaḥ
b maṭau maṇgh kah-wī fra sudraśī wāṭī
æ at āu kawā viśvaśaswaḥ ąyləhī
db ‘Whoever among mortals solicitously treated
Sptānīd Zarathushtra with hospitality, he is fit to be famed’.
46.14a-c ‘Zarathushtra, who is thy righteous ally
for great patronage? Or who wishes to be famed?
Now that’s Kavi Vistasp in the race’.

Collocation of ̱wṛːzā and ąyləh occurs again in YH 36.2:
wrśīṣṭaḥ āu nāh
yā[yā]yaḥ pāti jamyāh
āṭar mazḍa[h]ah ahuraḥya
wrśīṣṭāh yāwśīyā
nā[m]īṣṭāḥya nāmāḥ nāh
mā[z]īṣṭaḥ ąyləh[ə]h[ə]m pāti jamyāh
‘Mayst Thou, the most blissful, come over to us for (Thy) share, O Fire, of the Lord Wisdom, with the bliss of the Most Blissful One, with the reverence tendered by the tenderest one; mayst Thou come over to us for the greatest of contests’.

The passage conflates: (1) 30.1-2, in which maz- ąyləh ‘the great race/context’ is collocated with the sun-like luminosity of bliss (wrśīṣṭa-: loc. wrśīṣṭa, instr. wrśīṣṭya); and (2) 49.8 wrśīṣṭa-... 49.9 ąylə-. Note that the sequence of the phonically similar 49.7d wrśaṇā, 49.8a wrśīṣṭām is duplicated by YH 36.1 wrśaṇā, YH 36.2 wrśīṣṭaḥ, and that YH 36.1 ayaḥ... wrśaṇā echoes 32.1 ayaḥ wrśaṇaṃ.²

Before considering the other examples of Gothic forms from ̱wṛːzā, a second look at Y 30 will bring us to Zarathushtra’s cryptic devices of language. Interpretation of 30.2a srauta gauśīṣṭaḥ wāhiṣṭhaḥ as ‘hear with your ears (the word wāhiṣṭha =) the best things’ goes with the fact that the sounds of WĀHĪṢṬHA are found with compact scambling in the words of the opening hemistic, 30.1a at Tā Wāxśyā Kaniṭṭhaḥ, and in its closure, 30.1c’ yā raucaṭhīḥḥ darsaṭā Tāraḥā, as well as in the last two stanzas, (e.g.) 30.10b-c āṣīṭṭaḥ... A huśīṣṭaḥ Wāhaita... Wāhaita srawhīḥ and in the finale, 30.11 sāwā-cā artawabhīṭh at Apī Tāis Ahaṭ uṣṭaḥ. I shall henceforth employ a term mixophonism for the technique, exemplified by Gothic passages discussed hitherto, in which a targeted word/name of textual importance is encrypted through the compact repetition of its sounds, in any order, as part(s) of the other words favored for purposes of this device. This technique was rightly suspected by Saussure (Starobinski 1971) in his now influential “anagrammatic” speculations, as a characteristic of early literatures in Indo-European languages.

² Possibly there is a phonie (but not semantic) association in YH 36.2 between yā[y]āyaḥ pāti jamyāh and ąylə[h]aḥam pāti jamyāḥ; cf. 36.2 wrśīṣṭaḥ nā[m]īṣṭāḥya... 36.3 nā[m]manuḥaḥ wāṭīṣṭaḥ.

The same technique is found for 31.1-2, which take up motifs of the first and last stanzas of Y 30: speech (Whilst) asseverations (wraṭaḥ); hearing (vīśū); visibility (vīśī); choice (wāṭi vraṭaḥ, PIE *wīsīḥ); knowing (wīśīd); and a focus on the overt word wāhiṣṭha itself.

31.1 a Tā WAH Wrāṭa ṁarantaḥ āgaṭṭaḥ Wāhāḥ sannāhaḥ
b aṭbāh yaḥ wraṭaḥ ṣtṛjāḥ artaḥya guṇāḥ wī mergatā
æ a[c]-i c[i] aṭbāyḥ wāhiṣṭhaḥ
æ a[c]-i c[i] aṭbāyḥ wāhiṣṭhaḥ aṣṭ[a]ḥ ahaḥ maṇḍ[a]h[e]ah
2.1 a ya[i] ṣi dū nati wraṇaṭa[n] āgā ṣvāḥ ABHĪṢṬHA WĀHĪṢṬhaḥ
b a[v] āu wāṭaḥ vīśīn[a]ḥ a yā[i] yā ṣvāḥ ahaḥ wāhīṣṭhaḥ

31.1 ‘Remembering those asseverations of Yours, we pronounce words unheard by those who destroy, through avowals of Wrong, Rightness’ life-realms, but (words) which are indeed the best things for those who are faithful to Wisdom.

31.2a-b If through these things the better road for choosing is not in sight, then let me come to you all, in accord with the arbitration/arbitrator which/whom the Lord knows’.

The mixophonism of WĀHĪṢṬHA also appears at the end of Y 31. Closing the thought of 31.21 that the Lord Wisdom gives the ‘fatness/solidity’ (32.21c wazdw[ar]) of His Dominion’s connection (sahā) as reward to whoever is His ally (31.21c’ wraṭaḥ) in spirit and actions, the poem’s last hemistic, 32.22c’-, has: WAHĪṢṬHA AHĪṬ Aṣṭā ‘he will be Thy most nourished/strengthened guest’.

Mixophonism is again found in 49.8, which, as we have seen, also deals with a connection for the righteous in the Lord’s Dominion (49.8b-c’saram zāt[a]rā): fraśāuṣṭra vṛkṣaṭṣṭaḥ artāha ṣaṭhā WĀHĪṢṬHa ṣaṭhā A ḍAŚṬHaḥ. Like 49.8, the final stanza of Y 49 features Zarathushtra entrancing (yāṣa-.) Wisdom. Its finale virtually decrypts the scrambled representation of WĀHĪṢṬA:

49.12 a kat tāi artā aṣvyanat aṇṇuḥaḥ
b sarathīraḥ kat ca ṣaṇī WAHĪṢṬHah
æ yah WAH ŚauṭṣṭH mazḍaḥ frīnāḥ ahura
æ a[vat] yā[k]aḥn[æ]s yah WAH ISHTA ṣvāḥṭaḥ

49.12 ‘What help hast Thou, O Lord Wisdom, with Rightness, what with Good Mind, for me, Zarathushtra, who, invoking You, mean to gain Your friendship through praises, entreating for that which is best in Your mightysending?’

The latter stanza is, in effect, continued by 50.1, which again opens with kat... awakah ‘what help?’, and again concerns invoking (vīśī) the divine triad:

50.1 a kat mai rūlā iṣa[c] iṣah awakah
b kah mai pasu'[h] kaḥ mana ṛāṭaḥ vīśītah
æ a[n]yaḥ artāḥ ṣwā-ca mazdaḥ ahura
æ azā zūnā Ṣaṭhūṭaḥ-cā maṇḍah

50.1 ‘What help of anyone can my soul have?
Who has been found as my cattle’s, and my, protector, other than Rightness, and Thee, O Lord Wisdom,... when my invocation is made – and Best Mind?’
The technique of WAIH ISTA wahiṣṭa, in which the targeted word is paronomastically broken up into its successive syllables, has a parallel of sorts in 46.14a-c, where (after KAT-tai aratkā wāhakāwāh ‘who is thy righteous ally?’) we have KAH-WAH anticipating the targeted title kawāw. It is a similar word-play that supplies Y 50 with the concatenation required between the first and central stanzas. 50b’ MAMA PRATI ‘my protector’ links up to 50.6a mantrarā ‘mantramaker, sacred poet’, Zarathushtra’s title for himself (thus also 50.5b mantrarāni). Otherwise the middle part of Y 50 is linked to the beginning only by the line-end word awak-‘help’ in the stanzas 50.5 and 50.7, which flank the central 50.6. The word play mantrarā : mana PRATI encapsulates the reciprocal relationship between poet-priest and divinity, which is expressed in the poem’s overall structure.10

We now come to yet another Gathic example in which Vwārā (again with chariot-race imagery) figures in phonic encryption. At 50.5b’ wawrāzāba ‘you are delighted’, phrasally

9 KAH-WAH for a śrutarā WAIH also contains the name (kawāw) wawrāzāba in scrambled form; cf. 46.14a-‘I invoke, with utterances of Good Mind, these whom Thou mindest (mānā < vām = Vedic vām) in Thy residence’ as referring both to hospitality (cf. Gr. meignum) for the patron in the divine house, and to the scrambled sounds of his name. In 51.11-12a, the negative counterpart to 46.14, the questions KAH-WAIH . . . KAH-WAH is answered by nait . . . wawrāzāba in anath ‘not that kawāw bugger’. Cf. Schwartz 1986, 335-336 and 1991, 131.

I have just (July 1, 2002) received from Prof. Stephanie W. Jamison a typescript of a paper “An anagram in the Gathas: Yasna 51.4-5,” to appear in an honorary volume for Prof. Stanley J. Insler published by the American Oriental Society. Here Jamison suggests that Vulg. 51.5a vākāt ūc contains an incomplete “anagram” of the name Vāshīṣṭa. She notes that such an “anagram” would provide motivation for the marked syntax, against usual vākāt ūc. She builds her case textually by comparing the wording of 51.16 with 51.11, 51.11, and 46.13, which contrast with 51.12. I would recast Jamison’s putative “anagram” by seeing it as part of a complete microp rozwiązaniem WAIH ISTA: 51.5a vawrāzāba vawrāzāba ‘the pasturer lofty through actions’ (jivanadhśa ‘through actions’ as at 51.3a’).

One may also note that 51.3b’ with utterances (udvidh) of Good Mind’ probably indicates cryptic language, as does the same phrase at 46.14a’. 51.5 also indicates that cryptic language is involved, since the Allison to the pasturer “finding the cow” is a variant of the Vedic motif of “finding the hidden tracks of the cow”, which (as discussed by Watkins 197, 72-73 and 107-108) refers to linguistic crypticism or encryption. (In the Gathas the Cow, as at 51.7a, symbolizes the good environment [sāgara], which figures at 51.16-19 and contrasting with 51.13. See Schwartz 2003, 220-244 on Y 29 and confirmation of H.-P. Schmidt’s views on Gathic bovine symbolism.)

10 This structure is duplicated in the completion of Y 28: in both Y 50 and Y 28 the name zarathāvahā is at the precise center (at caesura or line-end) of the poem, collocated with double mention of mantrarā, and further collocated with the word ‘help’ or ‘support’ at line-end, concatenating with such a word at the end of the first line. The last stanza requests divine assistance for Zarathushtra’s goal as poet-priest to restore the original perfection of the world. Y 28 originally consisted of 28.1-8, a complete composition, as shown by the systematic lexical concentric concatenations, and connection of central stanza-pair to outer stanzas: 28.1 and 28.8, yāh; 28.2 and 28.7, vākāt (dāwān,dās < dās) + dyāqāt; 28.3 and 28.6, ērap (rātpīr/rātvān), vāgam (jauvān/jauvā); 28.4c-28.5a, continuous declaration of quest for vision of Rightness: 28.4, beginning, and 28.1, end, rātvām; 28.5e and 28.8a, 3 syll. + ēw. By contrast, the final version of Y 28 (28.1-11) shows lexical concatenation only precisely for the outer stanzas and the inner trio, with details including the corresponding stanzas of Y 50. During the period between the two stages of Y 28, there was completion of the series Y 46, Y 32, Y 48, Y 49, and Y 50. Cf. Schwartz 1998, 138 seq., 188-193. 28.6 was a model for the central stanza 43.8, zarathāvahā . . . dwālāhā . . . rātvām . . . ajāŋhāvāt.

50.5 ‘So may there be a rewarding through You, (who are) Wisdom, O Lord, with Rightness, — if You are delighted as to Your mantramaker — with visible, patent help of potent hands, which will put us at ease.

50.6 This mantramaker who gives voice is an ally with/via Rightness, reverently: Zarathushtra. May the Creator of intellect, via Good Mind, instruct my tongue’s chariot-course to be that of my direction.

50.7 And I shall yeke for You the swiftest chargers, who are expansive with victories of eulogies for You, and who are strong, O Wisdom( ), with Rightness and Good Mind, and through these (chargers) will You drive forth. Be You for my help’. 50.6c-d serves as a model for the use in 34.6 of awak-, -āsta-, and (--)āra in rendering the scrambled syllables of WAIH ISTA.

34.6 a at-tai ām māna aŋhāWāntam arta usmāh
b Ašīṣṭāna amaWāntam stai rapanāti cīwāWāntām
 c at mādā hūNtānti zarhāISTĀ drēśRainaham

34.6 ‘And we wish Thy Fire, O Lord, which is mighty with Rightness, and is swiftest and strong, to be of clear help for Thy supporter, but, O Wisdom, for Thy enemy, violence one sees has seized’. 11

Note that the correlation in use of āsīṣṭā ‘swiftest’ with 30.10b, of ārthā with 31.2a’ as well as 50.5c abidhrā, and the 1st pl. ending of usmāhi, like that of 31.1 a sanctamah, indicates the phonetic motivation in the choice of these words.

11 Word-play on drēśa- ‘seen’ (‘drēśa) or ‘seized’ (‘drēśa). The passage shows influence of 46.7b mā . . . didarākāta inahāi ‘wishes to hold (‘da) on seize (‘drēśa) me for violence’ and 46.7c ‘hārmhrāt dīras-c’ . . . and Thy Fire’; cf. also 46.7d’ and 34.3b ‘tāstu’ ‘fostered’. However, the overwhelming influence of Y 50 on Y 34 is shown e.g. by 50.9a > 34.6c; 50.13b > 34.5b and 34.7c; 50.6c > 34.12a’ and b’~c’; and, as finale, 50.11d > 34.15c.
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The two-theme mixophonological riddles parallel in their technique Y 50.5-7 (WAHISTA and ZARAOUSTRA) and Y 46.14 (KÃ¥MÅ and WÔSTÅAWSÅ).

I now turn to mixophonisms in archaic Greek. In view, inter alia, of the riddle or riddle-like context, it will prove relevant to ground the exposition in some independent observations concerning the enigmatic aspect in the archaic Greek lyricist Pindar. G. Nagy has focused on Pindar's epinician poetry as illustrative of the medium or genre termed ainos, which, with its verbal derivatives ainôs and ainomaiainmisonoi in archaic Greek refers to a special kind of utterance, ranging from praise to oracular response as well as to riddles. Nagy 1990, 148-149 describes the Pindaric ainos as a "code" which "presupposes a restricted audience who . . .

1. understand the message of the code that is the poetry.
2. have been raised on the proper ethical standards that are the message that the code of the poetry teaches.
3. are socially connected to the poet and to each other, so that the message of the code may be transmitted to them and through them . . .".

Nagy cites two Pindaric verses to illustrate the programmatic declaration about the ainos which the poetry itself makes:

1. . . .phôndaetai sunetoi . . .
   ' . . . having a sound for these who can understand . . .' (Olympian 2.85);
2. . . epaineonta sunetoi
   '"those who can understand give praise' (Pythian 5.107).

He goes on to comment, "Only 'those who can understand' (the sunetoi) can deliver or hear the message of praise", and that apart from hearers who can understand, the ainos of Pindar, "difficult in its form and enigmatic in its content", is "apt to be misunderstood, garbled" (Nagy 1990, 239-240).

Upon reading Nagy's analysis of the Pindaric ainos, I was struck by the parallels to the Gathic situation, and particularly to the passages in Y 30, Y 31, and Y 46, discussed above. As for Nagy's second category, the special audience with the proper ethical standards, in "the agahoi, those who are intrinsically 'noble'", we have the equivalent of the Gathic artiâwaens, the 'righteous'; and Nagy's third category, characterized by social connections, fits Zarathushtra's allies (wâdha-), who give him patronly hospitality (vâsnu). Most important is the first category, "those that can understand'. Here Pindar's O. 2.85 parallels Zarathushtra's announcement in 30.1 'I shall speak . . . the things to be understood, indeed, by the knower'. For the wrong audience, the words/sounds are 'unheard' (31.1a) 'aguhid'. In fact, 31.1-2 (seq.) matches the situation of O. 2.85 (seq.), for in both the audience is a rivalry between poets. In O. 2.85-88, Pindar states that what is necessary is a hermanas (in archaic Greek 'one who can make latent language manifest'; in this passage the words are latent in that they are [O. 2.83-84] 'swift missiles/arrow in the quiver' beneath Pindar's arm). Pindar then contrasts 'the wise one (sophos) knowing (eidos) many things naturally', with poets who are disorderly (laboroi) in their ineptitude (cf. O. 2.95-97: 'those who prattle rude the ainos').

Another kind of encryption of the name zarathusra, through an elaborately extended allusion to its etymology, occurs in 44.17-8 (zaram . . . ulram); see Schwartz 1986, 376-379.
After I saw the parallelism between the Pindaric and Zarathushtrian texts, I wondered whether what was characterized for Pindar as "a code" by Nagy (employing the term in the very broad usage of Prague School linguistics) could indeed be encryptive. What I found for O. 2 was a mixopoimic relationship between the description of the disorderly and prolix poets, O. 2.87 paŋgōsai korakes has AKrANTA GARUTON 'in all manner of tongue, like a pair of ravens, they speak things which do not come into effect', and the concise expressed target of Pindar's (O. 2.90) 'arrows of good praise', O. 2.91 AkrAGANTI TANUSAI 'stretching the bow toward Akragas'; i.e. aiming toward Agrigento, home of Pindar's patron Therons.

The same poem O. 2 also encrypts the name of the patron, Therons, but as part of an overlapping three-theme mixopoiimic. We have the rhetorical question at O. 2.2:

\[\text{tina theon, tin hērōa, tina d'andra kelaðeisomen}\]

'Which god, which hero, which man shall we celebrate?'

the text (O. 2.2-8) then furnishes the three answers: Pisa belongs to Zeus; Heracles established the Olympiad, and Therons is to be proclaimed for his four-horse victory (etc.). The question itself gives, in reverse order of these answers, the three names as direct objects of 'celebrate':

\[\text{Theon tin' hērōa = THERΩNA}\]
\[\text{HERΩA . . . KelaΔeisomen = HERAKLEA (or the like)}\]
\[\text{(tina . . . ) tina D'Andra = DIA}\]

The introductory rhetorical question in O. 2.2 and Pindar's further praise (O. 2.6-8) of Therons as a righteous guest-friend (díkaios xénon), of noble family, who distinguishes himself for civic accomplishments, parallel, in the praises describing his patron, Y 46.13-14 and Y 49.7-9, discussed above for their mixopoiimic and allusion to races.

As for P. 5.107, I found that here Pindar was introducing mixopoiimic for his patron's name, Arkestillas (P. 5.103):

\[\text{P. 5.109 KRESSONAI men hēλIKIAS}\]

'superior for his age'

\[\text{P. 5.113-114 agōnīsai d', hērkos hoion sthenos}\]
\[\text{en te moisaiš poišos apo mētros phthlais}\]

'in the contest, like a bulwark, strong; flying up to the Muses straight from his mother'

Note that in the mixopoiimic describing Arkestillas, hērōs 'bulwark' (which recalls Ajax's Homeric epithet hērkos Akhilaion 'bulwark of the Achaeans') is of a piece with the meaning of Arkesti-lai(os) 'he who protects the people'.

In both passages the repeated initials w- m- encrypt wauh manah 'Good Mind'. Such encryption of targeted phrases through the foregrounding of their initials, put as the first sounds of other phrases, I call acrophonism.

13 Watkins (1995, 189 and 280) cites O. 2.2 as containing (only) THERΩNA, and on the next page (and on p. 86) mentions O. 2.87 AKRANTA GARUTON: O. 2.91 AKRAGANTI. The latter encryption, as also that in Pindar P. 5.113-115, were discussed in great detail in my lecture "Pindaric puzzles, Russian riddles, and Zeccoster" at Harvard University, April 4, 1990. Prof. Watkins, who attended my lecture, has recently privately explained to me his lack of mention of my lecture as an accidental oversight (his book otherwise has several citations of my publications). In general, Watkins' book serves as a valuable introduction to Indo-European poetic-cripstractism.
The principle is shown again in 45.3. The introductory 45.1 begins much like 30.1:

45.1 a at fra waxyā nā guśadswam nā xrasta
b yai-ca asndt yai-ca dūrāt śaṭha
c nī in wisvā cīrath-zī mazāṭahdwaṃ
d yai ca asndt yai ca dūrāt zāvah

45.2 ‘Now I shall speak out—now listen and hear, you who seek from near and far, for it all is clear (m.); understand it’. The ‘it’ which is ‘clear’ (masculine gender) is the manātra- (m.) in 45.3:

45.3 a at fra waxyā ahau ahau parviyam
b yai mai wudwān mazāṭa waucat ahura
c yai in Wahi nātī bāh MANTRAH waṝṣantī
d yahā ahau manāṭa-ca waucat-cī-ca
e aiḥya ahau anvai anvai apamān

45.3 ‘And I shall speak forth (about) this existence’s first thing, which the Lord Wisdom, the Knower, told me: Those who will not put this manātra into effect just as I think it and will speak it, for them will the word “woe” be their existence’s last thing’.

Enclosed iconically between the line which ends with ‘first thing’ and its thematically echoic and alliterative closure, which ends with ‘last thing’, we have four phrases with initials m- w-, and, in the central line 45.3c, WAIH . . . MANTRAM, making clearer the symbolism m- w- (= w- m-) = manah wahu = wahu manah. The symbolism is further decrypted in the next stanza:

45.4b’* mazāṭa waṣa yak im dāi
... c iṣaram waḥauḥ waṣrayantāḥ ṣanahah

45.4b’*c ‘(it is) Wisdom, I know, who created this, (He), the Father of efficacious Good Mind’.

Here another m- w- phrase, 45.4b mazāṭa waṣa ‘Wisdom, I know’, is the reciprocal counterpart of 45.3b wudwān mazāṭa ‘Wisdom the Knower’, and the overt 45.4c wahuḥ . . . ṣanahah corresponds to the encrypted 45.3c WAIH . . . MAN-. The manātra mentioned in 45.3 is characterized in 45.5b’ as martaḥyāh waḥiṣtam (m- w-) ‘the best for mortals’ and at 45.6a’ as wisiwaṇam mazāṭhīm (w- m-) ‘the greatest of all things’. The manātra itself is given in 45.7, which follows the acrophonisms for ‘Good Mind’ with mixophonism for ‘the best things’:\footnote{15}

45.6 d yahya waṭ̄mai̊ wāṭ̄i ṣaṭ̄iḥ manahah
e aiḥya xatū fra mi śiṣṭu waḥiṣṭah

\footnote{15 The contents of 45.3-7 are concentrated in 31.6-8 in terms of visionary revelation and luminous comforts (haṭha). As at 45.4, at 31.8 the Lord Wisdom is seen as ‘Father of Good Mind’ and creator. 31.6 decrypts 45.3 with similar phraseology, ‘The best thing will be for him who, knowing, will tell me the . . . manāṭra . . . ’ (yahai mai wudwān waucat . . . MANTRAM) and then the denouement, ‘For Wisdom dominion is such that one will increase it for Him with Good Mind (waḥah manahah).’}

45.7 a yahya saṃāḥ sāramī rād̄at̄ah
b yai zi jvāḥ āḥar-ca beṃantī-ca
c amṛti- ahra taunah rāv̄ ahā
d utaiśtā yā nhī sadra dwgatāh
e xai̊-ca xviṣṭḥ mazāṭa dāmī ahurah

45.6d-e ‘May He, in the eulogy for Whom I have consulted with Good Mind, reveal for me, with His intellect, the best things.

45.7 They will seek the benefactions of his solicitude, for those who are living, we were and will be— in immortality will the soul of the righteous be strong; in perpetuity will grief befall wrongsome men—

and through this (act of) dominion is Wisdom, the creator, the Lord’.

We may now return to ṣr̄at̄ah and the connection of ‘bliss’ with encryption. Acrophonism is brought to its fullest complexity in Y 32:

32.1 a ahūya ca hwaṭ̄tāḥ jvāḥ ahūya waṣranam maṭ arayamāḥ
b ahūya dawād mahmi mnaī ahūhāya ṣr̄at̄ah mazāṭah
... c ṣr̄at̄at̄ āṭåhāh abamā tamå dhaw̄yāh yai waḥ̄ dūṣantī
d aiyāh mazāṭa ahurah sāramāḥ waḥ̄i mahaanah
b xviṣṭḥ cāci paiti mrau arā ṣiḥfāxā sānpūr̄amā
c swaṛtām waḥ aratimāt waḥwāma ṣaḥ naḥ aṭat

32.1 ‘And of Him did family entreat, of Him did community with clan, as did also the gods, at my prompting, (entreat), for His, the Lord Wisdom’s, bliss: “May we be Thy messengers, to hold those inimical to You”.

32.2 To those did the Lord Wisdom, Who is connected with Good Mind

and is the Boon Associate of sunny Righteousness, respond from (His) Dominion: “We have chosen your holy proper-mindedness; it shall be Ours!”’

The word waṣran- used here was the most common derivative of ṣr̄at̄ah; cf. YAv. uruṣaṭēman- and Middle Persian (MPers.) urwām. As discussed in detail in Schwartz 1991, 166-168 and passim, the initials of the last few words in 32.1a, and their echoic correspondents, the last four words of 32.1b, encrypt the theological relationship stated for the divine triad in 32.2, with the overlapping (interconnection) of initials in 32.1a a w m a (i.e. a w w m) and again in 32.1b m a w m (i.e. a w a w w m), both series corresponding to the interconnectedness of the divine triad Mazōd Ahura, Wahu Abanah, and Arta Wahiṣṭa, described in overt (and decryptive) terms in 32.2. The dawāvās (‘godlings’) and their followers are duplicitous (32.3c) dūṣāt̄a, representing themselves as those who would hold back the Lord Wisdom’s enemies, but their real intention is to hold on to, embrace, uphold (√ar, cf. 46.3, 5, 7, and 49.2) such enemies, their own ilk. 32.2a b aiyah mazāṭa . . . paiti mrau to these [honest ones] Wisdom answered contrasts with two responses to the duplicitous dawāvās: 32.3, and 32.12b aiyah mazāṭa aki paiti mrau yai gaů
Conclusion: The Gothic theological doctrines – the interconnectedness and homogeneity of the divine triad (Mazdā Ahura with Arta Wahišta and Wahu Manah) – and his eschatology – the righteous soul’s blissful connection or state of unity with the divine triad – were endowed by Zarathushtra with a mystical depth and resonance, through the cryptic, i.e. enigmatic, techniques of his poetic revelations, which were particularly aimed at his patrons and initiates. These techniques were especially applied to two important value-concepts of his doctrines: (1) wahišta, ‘the best things’ = ‘paradise’ (> MPers. wahīšt, Persian behesht, cf. Avestan vahišta-ahu), also = ‘the Best Ones’, the Mazdaic divine triad, poetically equated with wahišta ‘the best things’ (28.3-a-b, c.f. 32.2-a-b, c.f. 33.7-a-b); (2) wražmna (etc.) ‘bliss’. The first term was encrypted through a traditional Indo-European technique, the quasi-anagrammatic mixophonism. The second term was, on the one hand, used (32.1) as part of an oral cabalism culminating a symbolism of initial sounds and, on the other hand, was the focus of an oral acrostic (33.2c). The last two techniques demonstrate the astounding cognitive complexity of Zarathushtra’s poetics, and the intellectual sophistication of the patronly milieu who were converted by his poetry.

ADDENDUM

I have recently found that Zarathushtra’s focus on wražman-, wraž- in Y.32 originates in his adversarial transformations of the lost Old Avestan Vorlage of the hymn to Ḥoma on which are based the present YAv. Y.9 and Y.10. Y.32.10-14 (and a substantial portion of Y.48) contain phraseological variations of the prototype of Y.9.28.10-21. Within these variations, 32.12 wraž-–textually goes back to *wražmna (Y.10.8 wražmna), as does then also 32.1 wražma. The latter (in tandem with wraž-, stem wraž-) in turn suggested 30.1 wražâh, the first of a series of sequential lexical/phraseological influences of 32.1-8 on 31.3. The priority of 32.1-8 over 30.1-8 follows from the consideration that, inter alia, in addition to these sequential influences, 32.8 yama (Yama, orig. ‘[the male] Twin’), itself reflects the prototype of Y.9.4-5 yimaš, so that 32.8 suggested the adjective 30.3 yamâ ‘the two twinned [Spirits]’; note that the predicate verb of each of these Gothic instances of yama- is a passive past tense form of the root sraw-–izrâ ‘to hear’.

The acrostic in 32.3, based on overt wražma in 32.1, was a chief impetus for Y.33, since 33.2-10 constitutes a complete set of concentric lexical concatenations, and the compositional core of Y.33.

REFERENCES


