THE AVESTAN COMPOUNDS IN °*NIUUĀ̊* AND °*NIUUĄ̇N*

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1. The four YAv. compounds *rāmaniuuā̊*, *bāmaniuuā̊*, *afsmaniuuą̇n* and *afsmaniuuā̊* have been discussed by various scholars of Avestan, one of whom was Jochem SCHINDLER (1982: 189, 199f.). It is my contention that none of the hitherto proposed solutions is satisfactory. In this paper, I will discuss the attestations of the compounds, discuss former etymologies, and present my own solution. In recent publications, CHEUNG (2007) and ZIEGLER (2004) have independently reconstructed a Proto-Iranian verbal root **(H)uan(H)-* 'to throw out, spread'. Its main representatives are Old Persian *avaniya* 'it was spread out', several Middle and Modern Iranian verbs, and, in Ziegler's account, two Avestan verb forms of the stem *ni-vana-* 'to cover, hide'. In my view, the elements °*niuuā̊* and °*niuuą̇n* receive a better explanation if we assume that they also contain *ni-van-*. The meaning 'to throw out, spread' is simply a semantic derivative of PIr. **uanH-* 'to win, overcome', and does not require the reconstruction of a different PIr. verbal root.

2. The form *rāmaniuuā̊* occurs in Yašt 8.9 in the nom.sg.m.; it indicates a quality of the star Satauuaēsa (translation based on PANAINO 1990: 35):

āaṱ tå āpō fraṧauuaiieiti	'Then Satavaēsa impels those waters
satauuaēsō auui haptō.karšuuairīš	towards the seven Karšvars,
viiāhuua yaṱ jasaiti;	when he approaches the reservoirs;
srīrō hištaiti rāmaniuuā̊	beautiful he stands, a dispenser of peace
huiiāiriiå auui ˣdaṅhūš	to the countries which gain good harvest.'

The meaning of *rāmaniuuā̊* closely resembles that of the compound *rāmō.dāiti-* 'bestowing peace' in V 1.1 and of OAv. *rāmā då* 'you created peace' in Y 47.3. The ending *-uuā̊* would seem to point to a suffix **-uan-* or **-uant-*, cf. *miiazdauuā̊* to *miiazda-uuan-* or *astuuå* to *ast-uuant-*; it is also possible to posit a root noun in *-n* or *-m*, cf. nom.sg. *vərəθrajå* to *vərəθra-jan-* and *zå* to *zam-*.

3. The form *bāmaniuuå* in Yt 17.14 refers to beautiful clothes:

aēšąm ərəzatəm zaranīm	'Ihnen bringt Silber (und) Gold
+*nibərəθe ābərəta baraiti*	im Gepäck der Kaufmann
aiβitarābiiō haca daṅhubiiō	aus fernen Ländern,
vastrå̄sca kəṣå̄ bāmaniuuå	und Kleider, fertige, glänzend aussehende.'

This translation is taken from HINTZE 2000: 309. Although some details of the passage are unclear[1], the general meaning seems certain. If we interpret *bāmaniuuå* as 'dispensing radiance', its meaning is parallel to that of *rāmaniuuå* 'dispensing peace'. The ending *-uuå* agrees with the acc.pl. ending of *vastrå̄sca*[2], which suggests a thematic adjective in *-*ua*-. Alternatively, *bāmaniuuå* might be interpreted as a nom.sg. referring to *ābərəta* 'merchant', although the position in the sentence would be unusual: 'the merchant brings ready clothes from far-off lands, (he) who dispenses radiance.'

The three words *vastrå̄sca kaṣå̄ bāmaniuuå* are also quoted in the word-list Frahang ī Ōīm (F 279); here, the Pahlavī version translates them as *wstlg ZY krt ZY b'myk-tl'c /wastarag ī kard ī bāmīg-tarāz/* 'produced clothing of shining silk'.

4. The form *afsmaniuuąn* is found in the Srōš Yašt (Y 57) and in the priests' manual Nērangestān. It is used as a technical term for the way in which verses should be recited in the liturgy, and it always occurs as the first member of the expression *afsmaniuuąn vacastaštiuuaṯ(ca)* 'in verse-lines (and) in verses':

Y 57.8 (translation according to KREYENBROEK 1985):

yō paoiriiō gāθå̄ frasrāuuaiiaṯ	'who was the first to recite the Gāthās,
yå̄ paṇca spitāmahe ašaonō zaraθuštrahe	the five of righteous Spitāma Zarathuštra,
afsmaniuuąn vacastaštiuuaṯ	in verse-lines, in verses,
maṯ.āzaiṇtīš maṯ.paiti.fraså̄	with explanations, with answers.'

N 23 (text and translation according to KOTWAL–KREYENBROEK 1995: 46f., with some modifications[3]):

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[1]   For instance, the use of the gen.pl. *aēšąm* as a dative; it may be a perseveration of the *aēšąm* with which the verses 17.8 to 17.13 begin.

[2]   A neuter noun; cf. PIRART 2000: 378ff. for the use of the ending *-å̄* for the neuter pl.

[3]   In the second line of N 23, I do not adopt KOTWAL–KREYENBROEK's emendation of *srāuuaiiamnō* to ˣ*srāuuaiiatō*, since the Phl. version does not translate the form as a dual (which it does in the first line). Assuming that the ending originally was *-å̄*, it may refer

yā gāθå ^x*afsmainiuuąn* ^x*srāuuaiiatō* ^x*uua ratufriš*
vacastaštiuuaṯ ^x*srāuuaiiamnå* ^x*aētauuatō* ^x*katarasciṯ ratufriš yauuaṯ fra.marəṇti*
'If both recite the Gāthās in verse-lines, both satisfy the Ratus;
if they are being recited in verses, either one of them satisfies the Ratus to the extent that
he recites quietly.'

N 24:
yā yasnəm ^x*yazatō afsmainiuuąn vā vacastaštiuuaṯ vā uua ratufriia* '(If) both perform the act
of worship in verse-lines or in verses, both satisfy the Ratus.'

N 24:
kaṯ hąm.sruṯ.vācimca? yaṯ hakaṯ ^x*āmrūtō afsmainiuuąnca* ^x*vacastaštiuuaṯca* 'What is
'recitation while listening to each other'? (It is) when both speak in unison, both in verse-
lines and in verses.'[4]

There is a difference in the syntax of *afsmaniuuąn* and *vacastaštiuuaṯ*
between Yasna 57 and N 24. In Y 57, both elements are juxtaposed without any
conjunction. The translation given above treats them as asyndetically
coordinated 'in verse-lines, [and] in verses'. In N 24, both forms are explicitly
coordinated by means of the conjunctions *vā* and *-ca*. It is possible that the
conjunction was simply omitted in Y 57.8, but this is not certain. Note that the
forms *maṯ.āzaiṇtīš* and *maṯ.paiti.fraså*, which must indeed be coordinated
asyndetically, refer to the acc.pl.f. *gāθå*, whereas this cannot be the case with
afsmaniuuąn vacastaštiuuaṯ. It is therefore conceivable that these two are not
equivalent adverbs in asyndetic coordination; instead, *vacastastiuuaṯ* can be an
adverb, determining *afsmaniuuąn*. This interpretation was chosen by SCHMIDT
(1885: 393): *yō paoiriiō gāθå frasrāuuaiiaṯ … afsmaniuuąn vacastaštiuuaṯ*
'welcher zuerst die gāthās vortrug … metrisch recitierend nach dem texte'.

Nevertheless, at some stage of Avestan composition, the two words were in-
terpreted as an asyndetic coordination. Hence the Pahlavī translation in Y 57.8
abāg *gāθr[5] *ud abāg wacast* 'with song and with strophe', and the use of *vā*

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to *gāθå*. The correction *aēuuatō* to ^x*aētauuatō* seems compelling in view of the correlative
yauuaṯ which follows it. For *fra-mar-*, I regard KOTWAL–KREYENBROEK's original translation
as 'to recite quietly' (1992: 67) as better than 'to concentrate on the recitation' which they
adopt in 1995: 39.

4   This is the literal translation. KOTWAL–KREYENBROEK 1995 interpret this as '(It is) when
both speak in unison, either in verse-lines or verses.'

5   Most mss. have *gaiθr*, for *gāθr, in Avestan script; cf. KREYENBROEK 1985: 40. Mf4 has
gāθ, J2 *gaⁱθr*, K5 *gaiθr*. The same term probably occurs in the Phl. form *hm-g'sθ* /*ham-
gāh*/ 'even reciting together' in the Phl. commentary on N 23, cf. KOTWAL–KREYENBROEK

and -*ca* in N 24. Compare also the coordination of *afsman*- and *vacastašti*- in the Vīspered: *yasnəm haptaŋhāitīm … maṯ.afsmanəm maṯ.vacastaštīm* (Vr 16.0) 'the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, which contains afsman(s), which contains vacas-tašti(s)', *ahunauuaitīm gāθąm ... maṯ.afsmanąm maṯ.vacastaštīm* (Vr 14.1).

For *afsman*-, a general meaning 'part, section' can be inferred from its use in Y 19.16:

aētaṯca vacō mazdaoxtəm	'And that Mazdā-spoken word,
θri.afsm(an)əm[6] *caθru.pištrəm*	with three *afsman*s, with four classes,
paṇca.ratu; kāiš hē afsmąn	with five Ratus; which are its *afsman*s?
humatəm hūxtəm huuarštəm	the well-thought, the well-said, the well-done.'

However, the precise meanings of *afsman*- 'section' and *vacas-tašti*- 'word-creation' are uncertain, as was stressed by BOYCE 1966: 108. We might rely on the Pahlavī tradition, as KREYENBROEK does (1985: 80), but this is no guarantee for a correct interpretation. Avestan possesses five words which refer to the divisions of the Gāthic texts: *vacah*-, *vacastašti*-, *afsman*-, *hāiti*- and *gāθā*-. The meaning of three of them is clear: *vacah*- is 'word'; *hāiti*- refers to a single Gathic chapter, e.g. *yasna- haptaŋhāiti*- 'the Yasna which contains seven *hāiti*s', viz. Y 35 to 41; and *gāθā*- 'song' indicates a fixed collection of Gathic chapters, e.g. *ahunauuaitī- gāθā*- (Y 28 to Y 34), *uštauuaitī- gāθā*- (Y 43 to 46). This leaves at least three entities smaller than 'chapter' to which *vacastašti*- and *afsman*- may theoretically refer, viz. 'syllable' (smaller than 'word'), 'verse-line' (the smallest metrical unit) and 'strophe' or 'stanza' (a group of verse-lines). BARTHOLOMAE 1904 translates *vacastašti*- as 'strophe' and *afsman*- as 'verse-line'; as we have seen above, this interpretation still holds sway. Although I have found no unequivocal evidence for its correctness, I will adopt it here.

5. In V 18.70, we find a form *afsmaniuuå*. GELDNER edits it as *asmaniuuå* (see also BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 221), but, in reality, the spellings of the Pahlavī Vīdēvdād manuscripts L4 *asmaniuuå* and K1 *asmane.vå* are probably corruptions of the forms in the two other mss. branches of the Vīdēvdād, viz.

1995: 49, fn. 86.

[6]   All mss. have °*məm* except S1 *θriafsmanəm*. Since S1 represents a separate branch of the Pahlavī-Sanskrit-Yasna, it may preserve the original form, an acc.sg.m.n. of *θri-afsmana*-.

IrVS *afsmanuuå* and InVS *afsmaniuuå*. The context would perfectly allow for the meaning 'in verse-lines':

> *hazaŋrəm anumaiianąm frāuuinuiiāṯ, vīspanąmca aētaēšąm pasuuąm* +*afsmaniuuå zaoθra āθre aṣ̌aiia vaŋhuiia frabarōiṯ, bāzauua aiβiiō vaŋuhibiiō frabarōiṯ*
> 'A thousand sheep he must kill, and of all those sheep he must in verse-lines offer libations to the fire according to the good rite, the front legs he must offer to the good waters.'

I interpret +*afsmaniuuå* as a nom.sg. which refers to the subject of *frabarōiṯ*; for the syntax, compare Yt 8.9 *srīrō hištaiti rāmaniuuå*. This same interpretation was proposed by SCHMIDT 1885: 393, who translates *afsmaniuuå* as 'metrisch recitierend'. The acc.pl. *zaoθra* is irregular for a f. *ā*-stem, but we find the same form as an acc.pl. in Y 2.1ff. *zaoθra āiiese yešti*. It may thus be due to the spread of the nom.acc.pl. ending -*a* in the more recent text parts of YAv.

A different analysis of +*afsmaniuuå* was suggested by GERSHEVITCH apud BOYCE 1966: 108, viz. as an adjective to *zaoθra*. BOYCE assumes that *zaoθra* refers to a sacrifice of different body parts of animals, which was practised by Persian Zoroastrians until recently. She accordingly translates *afsmaniuuå* as 'having parts, sections', and its basis *afsman-* as 'that which is joined (to another), a part, section'. This interpretation seems less attractive, since *zaoθrā-* usually refers to libations, not to offerings of any solid substance.

6. Unfortunately, the etymology of *afsman-* is not clear enough to specify its meaning. The consonant cluster -*fsm*- is unique in Avestan. Words with a very similar structure are OAv. *afšman-* and *an-afšman-* (both in Y 46.17), the meaning of which is disputed. HUMBACH (1991 II: 187) uses the occurrence of two compounds in °*afšman-* in V 13 to break this deadlock. The compounds occur in a long description of the characteristics of dogs. To BARTHOLOMAE, the two compounds were too unclear to translate; HUMBACH translates the relevant passages as follows: *zairimiiafsma θriiafsma yaθa vaēsō* 'bound to the house with three bonds like a male slave' (V 13.46) and *zairimiiafsma θriiafsma yaθa jahika* 'bound to the house like a prostitute' (13.48). He thus posits a meaning 'bond' for *afsman-*, which is not very far from 'part, section'. *Afsman-* is probably also present in personal name ˣ*pərəθuuafsman-* (Yt 13.126); cf. Schindler 1982: 199 for the restoration of the *man*-stem.

Phonetically, OAv. *afšman-* and YAv. *afsman-* 'part, section' can go back to IIr. **Hapsman-*, under the assumption that **s* would have been restored in YAv. Semantically, a connection with Av. °*apah-*, Skt. *apas-* 'work', Latin *opus*

seems attractive, but a derivation *Hap-s-man- is difficult to account for. We face the same difficulty when deriving *afsman-* from the PIE root *h_2ep- 'to fit, join' (LIV-2: 269), which has yielded Old Hittite *happaru*, NHitt. *hapzi*. The meaning of *afsman-* also renders possible a connection with Skt. *ápsas-* 'breast, forehead, front', the appurtenance of which to the root *h_2ep- is uncertain (cf. EWAia I: 90). In that case, we would have an IIr. root *(H)aps- with only two nominal derivatives.

7. The morphological analysis of the four forms in question may be summarized as follows. The nominal stems *rāman-*, *bāma-* and *afsman-* suggest that we are dealing with compounds *rāma-niuuå̊*, *bāma-niuuå̊* and *afsma-niuuą̊n/-niuuå̊*. The form *bāmaniuuå̊* seems to be thematic. The nom.sg.m. -*uuå̊* in *rāmaniuuå̊* and *afsmaniuuå̊* belongs to a stem in *-uan-* or in *-uant-*. The ending -*ą̊n* in *afsmaniuuą̊n* can reflect IIr. *-ān (as in the nom.acc.pl.n. of *(ua)n-*stems, e.g. *karšuuą̊n*, *baēuuą̊n*) or maybe *-ānt*[7]. In theory, it is also possible to posit IIr. *-āns and *-ānts (> *-āns), although no such forms have yet been reconstructed for Avestan.

Several theories about the origin of these compounds have been proposed. BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 103) posits *afsmanivant- 'like the verse-lines (of the Gāthās)' and *rāmanivant-* 'bringing peace'. He compares the Skt. adverbs in -*vat* meaning 'after the manner of, like', e.g. *manuṣvat* 'as Manu did'. He does not explain the origin of -*i*-, but if the suffix is *-uant-*, this yields the unlikely assumption that it was added to the inflected nom.acc.pl.n. *afsmani* and *rāmani* rather than to the bare nominal stem. Also, the ending *-ani is only attested in OAv. *n*-stems; in YAv., we once find *-āni (Y 12 *cinmāni*) but usually *-ān. In order to compare *bāmaniuuå̊* with the other two stems, BARTHOLOMAE postulates an *n*-stem *bāman-*, which is unattested.

A different explanation for *bāmaniuuå̊* has been put forward by GERSHE-VITCH 1959: 282. He assumes that *bāmaniuuå̊* means 'lichtähnlich' and corresponds to a hypothetic combination of Skt. *bhā́ma-* (RV+) 'light' and *nibha-* (epic Skt.) 'resembling'. In GERSHEVITCH' view, this etymology is supported by the Pahlavī translation of *bāmaniuuå̊* as *bāmīg-tarāz* in F 279, and by a possible connection of Ossetic *niv* 'form, manner' with Skt. *nibha-*. Neither of these

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[7] It is generally assumed that OAv. nom.pl.acc.n. *mīždauuą̊n* belongs to a stem *mīžda-uuant-*. However, HINTZE (2000: 255) rightly remarks that there is no guarantee that this is really the case. Compare YAv. gen.pl. *miiazdauuanąm* (N 63) and nom.sg. *miiazdauuå̊* (A 3.7; 8-12): the latter is usually attributed to a *uuant-*stem, but it could also represent *miiazda-uuan-*.

two arguments carries much weight. The word *tarāz* in MoP means 'raw silk', *ṭarāz* 'a royal robe, or rich dress ornamented with embroidery'; therefore, Pahl. *bāmīg-tarāz* means 'shining silk' or, more generally, 'beautiful clothes'. This is understandable, since *bāmaniuuå* occurs in the context of *vastråsca* 'clothes'. The etymology of Ossetic *nyv/nivæ* 'luck; form' from **ni-bʰā-* 'shining down' is adopted by ABAEV 1973: 211f., but it seems a moot possibility to me, since the combination *ni* + **bʰā-* is not attested in Old Iranian or in Vedic.[8]

HOFFMANN (1958: 10) etymologizes *afsmaniuuən* as *afsma niyuvą 'binding the verse', which he connects with Skt. *ní yuvati* 'ties down'. According to KELLENS (1974: 228), HOFFMANN applied the same analysis to *rāmaniuuå*: **rāma-ni-iu-uan(t)-* 'who offers peace'. This solution is explained at somewhat greater depth in a footnote in HOFFMANN–NARTEN 1989: 48. They argue that Yt 8.9 *rāmaniuuå* may be dissected into *rāma-ni-iuuå*[9] 'granting peace', built from the same verb as Skt. *ní yu-* 'to grant'. They hesitate between an analysis as an adj. in **-uan-* or a pres.part.act. in *-uant-*. The latter analysis is impaired by the fact that a participial nom.sg.m. ending *-å* does not exist in Avestan, see SCHINDLER 1982: 200.

In the same footnote, HOFFMANN–NARTEN also return to *afsmaniuuən*. They posit an original sequence of three words *afsma **niiuuą vacastaštiuuaṯ* meaning 'das Dichtwerk (*afsman-*) in metrischer Form (*vacas-taštiuuaṯ*) anspannend (*ni-iuuą*)', with °*ni-iuuą* as the nom.sg.m. of the pres.part.act. **ni-iuuant-* 'tying down'. Semantically, their explanation is based on a conception of *afsman-* as the poetic text in its entirety, rather than as 'strophe' or 'verse-line'. They do not address the formal problem that a nom.sg.m. in *-ą* (< **-ans*) is usually spelled as *-ą* rather than *-ąn*[10]; see SCHINDLER 1982: 189, who stresses this point. A decisive objection to their thesis is the fact that the ending **-anh* of the nom.sg.m. of *ant*-stems yields either *-ą* or *-ə̄* in YAv., depending

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[8] It is atttractive to connect *nyv/nivæ* with OP *nᵃ-i-bᵃ-* 'beautiful', as proposed already by MILLER 1881-1887 II: 83. If OIr. *noíb* 'holy' is indeed cognate (IEW 760), this would point to PIE **noibʰo-*.

[9] By giving the spelling of the ms. P13 *rāmaniiuuå* between brackets, they suggest that this ms. has preserved the older variant. But the evidence of P13 can not be used, since it is a copy of Pt1, which has *rāmaniuuå*.

[10] The only exception being the gen.sg. *aiiąn* (in Y 57.31, Yt 1.18, 8.54, 11.5), which may be due to graphic influence of the loc.sg. and nom.acc.pl. *aiiąn*. In view of the paradigm split which was obviously under way in YAv. (nom.acc.sg. *aiiarə*, thematicised as *aiiara-*, loc.sg. and nom.acc.pl. *aiiąn*), it is also conceivable that loc.sg. *aiiąn* was petrified as an oblique form of 'day', and replaced the gen.sg. *aiią in expressions of time.

on the preceding consonant. The reflex *-ą* is regular after nasals, *h* and *ii*, whereas *-ə̄* is found after all other consonants, including *u*[11]: acc.pl. +*daēuuə̄* (cf. HOFFMANN), +*auuə̄*, after *-uu-*, it has yielded *-ū*, as in *framrū*. Thus, it is impossible to posit original **ni-yuuants*.

SCHINDLER's own solution (1982: 189) is based on HOFFMANN's analysis **afsma-ni-yuvant-*. In view of the problems involved in assuming a nom.sg.m. in *-ąn*, SCHINDLER posits a neuter sg. **afsma-ni-yuvant*, used as an adverb. Since the expected reflex of **niiuuant* would be †*-niiūn*, he ascribes attested *-uuąn* to dialectal variation within Avestan, which is hardly an explanation. One might suggest that the syllable *-ua-* was restored at some stage of YAv. so that the complete assimilation to *-uu-* did not take place. The result would be †*niiuuən*, but never *niuuąn*.

A serious problem which all etymologies with °*ni-iuua-* must face, is the fact that Skt. *yuváti* has no correspondence in Avestan, nor do other forms of the Skt. root *yu-*, such as *ni-yút-*. Together with the formal problems of the ending, which diminish the probability of the proposed comparison, it seems best to drop it altogether.

In order to save an interpretation as **ni* + a verb, one might reconstruct **ni-iuga-* 'yoking down', which would yield †*niiuua-* by regular development **ni-iuγa- > *ni-iuua-* (cf. SKJÆRVØ 1997: 116); but no present formation **yuga-* is attested in Skt. or Avestan, and the root *yuj-* never occurs in combination with the preverb **ni* in the Ṛgveda. Wherever we find it (AV, ŚBr.), it occurs with the loc. of goal: *ni yunakti* + loc. 'to bind on something'.

8. In my view, the element °*niuuå̄* / °*niuuą* is explained in a more satisfactory way as a reflex of the Iranian root *van-* 'to win, overcome' (see KELLENS 1984: 116 and 1995: 49-50), which is also attested with the meaning 'to spread out'.

From BARTHOLOMAE 1904 to ZIEGLER 2004, scholars have discussed the number of Iranian roots *van-*, and their meaning(s). BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 1353 divides the occurrences of Avestan *van-* 'to win', and especially of the YAv. present *ni-uuana-*, among three different entries: [1]*van-* 'superare', [2]*van-* 'gewinnen' and [4]*van-* 'von oben her bergen'. As KELLENS (1974: 76–80) has clearly shown, all attestations can be derived from a single root *van-* 'to win, overcome'; and just like Vedic, Avestan *van-* 'to win' is homonymous with

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[11]   See DE VAAN 2003: 492-498.

van- 'to wish, love'[12]. In the Old Persian texts ordered by Darius at Susa (D Sf 25, 28, first published in 1929), a 3sg. impf. pass. *avaniya* occurs twice, with *θikā* 'gravel' as its subject. BENVENISTE (1951) interpreted *θikā avaniya* as 'gravel was spread out', and connected the verb form with some Middle and Modern Iranian verbs of similar meaning, such as Khot. *uysvāñ-* 'to throw up'. According to BENVENISTE, this would point to a separate Iranian root *van-* 'to spread out'. ZIEGLER (2004: 3–4), apparently unaware of the discussion in KELLENS 1974 and 1984, proposes to add to BENVENISTE's dossier the two YAv. verb forms which BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 1353 adduces under [4]*van-*, viz. Yt 14.41 *niuuānəṇti* and Yt 10.75 *niuuānāṯ*. She might be right as far as Yt 14.41 is concerned, since *niuuānəṇti* does seem to show similar semantics as OP *avaniya* and some of the MIr. forms meaning 'to spread out'. I am less convinced that this is also true for Yt 10.75. See KELLENS 1974 for more details on the YAv. forms.

KELLENS' structural argument still seems convincing to me: in view of the fact that only one finite YAv. verb form can be translated with 'to spread out', it is unattractive to distinguish two different YAv. verbs *ni-uuana-*. However, the positions of KELLENS and ZIEGLER are not mutually exclusive, since 'to spread out' may be a derived meaning of 'to win, gain'. I therefore propose the following solution: beside *van-* 'to love', Iranian had a second root *van-* 'to win, gain', which in Avestan is found especially often in combination with the preverb *ni*[13]. The literal meaning of this combination was 'to win down, to fully overcome', with the image of the opponent being struck down by blows. Through metaphorical extension, 'to strike down' acquired the meaning 'to spread out'. This does not necessarily imply, of course, that the meaning 'to win' was ousted: both meanings may have existed side by side for a long time.

Apart from *niuuānəṇti* in Yt 14.41, there is another piece of evidence which seems to confirm that *ni-uuana-* already had the meaning 'to spread out' in YAv., viz. the noun *niuuāiti-*. It probably contains the zero grade of *ni-van-*, as we find it in the abstract *haθrā-ni-uuāiti-* 'victory in one blow'. After the example of the latter word, Y 10.16 *niuuāitiš* is usually translated as 'victory', but this is problematic. The Pahlavi text translates it as *wc'lšnyh* /*wizārišnīh*/ 'decision', an abstract derived from *wizārdan* 'to separate':

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[12] The root **uanH-* 'to love' is well-attested in Vedic; in Avestan, we find only nominal derivatives, no verb forms.

[13] We also find **ni* with other verbs of conquering, viz. *nī ... tauruuaiia-* 'to overcome' in Y 9.18 and *ni-jan-* (YAv. passim) 'to strike down, destroy'.

ašaonō ahmi, druuatō nōiṯ ahmi, aṯciṯ ahmāṯ yaθa apəməm maniiuuå aŋhaṯ niuuāitiš
'I am [a partisan] of the truthful one, I am no [partisan] of the deceitful one, from now until the end [when] the *niuuāitiš* of the two spirits will take place'. The last three words are rendered in Pahlavi by *mēnōgān ast be wizārišnīh* 'there will be the decision of the spirits' (JOSEPHSON 1997: 101).

The text clearly refers to the battle between the good and the evil spirit, the *spəṇta- mainiiu-* and the *aŋra- mainiiu-*. A translation 'victory of the two spirits' would therefore be senseless, since they cannot both win. Since the Pahlavi word also cannot be ascribed to etymological speculation on the part of the translator, it may simply preserve the original meaning of *niuuāitiš*. The meaning 'decision' would fit the context very well, and original 'separation' (with the literal meaning of Phl. *wizārdan*) would fit even better. Since 'separation' may easily derive from 'spreading out', *niuuāitiš* provides independent evidence for a YAv. verb *ni-uuana-* 'to spread out'.

The same noun is found in N 84: ⁺*dāθre*[14] *zī paiti niuuāitiš vīspahe aŋhə̄uš astuuatō hūmataēšuca hūxtaēšuca huuarəštaēšuca* 'For through the gift [arises] the separation of the material world in good thoughts, good words and good actions.' Again, the Pahlavi version translates *niuuāitiš* with *wizārišnīh*; and again, 'separation' yields a better understanding of the text than 'victory'.

Now that we have concluded that YAv. *ni-uuana-* had already acquired the meaning 'to spread out' beside 'to overcome', we can return to the compounds in °*niuuå* / °*niuuąn*. The assumption that they contain a root noun *ni-uanH- 'spreading out' accounts for the actual meanings of the words in a better way than all preceding solutions. Interpreting 'spreading out' as 'dispensing', the accepted meaning of *rāmaniuuå* as 'dispensing peace' follows naturally. Similarly, we can easily interpret *bāmaniuuå* as 'dispensing radiance'. Finally, a translation of *afsmaniuuąn* as 'dispensing verse-lines' makes good sense: the Gāthās must be recited *afsmaniuuąn*, i.e. delivering all verse-lines in the right order, and the libations (in V 18) must be offered with all verse-lines in the right order.

9. So far for the semantics. As for the morphology, the root-final laryngeal in Proto-Iranian is suggested by the long vowel in *(haθrā)niuuāiti-* < *ni-unH-ti-*. This, in turn, implies that original *uan- 'to win' had been replaced by *uanH-,

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[14] Both mss. have *-i.* I interpret *dāθre* as a locative depending on *paiti*, as BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 733 does.

probably on the example of the IIr. root **sanH-* 'to gain'. Since some Vedic forms of *van* 'to win' (*avātá-* 'unattacked', *vánitar-* 'owner') also show a long vowel or preconsonantal *i*, it is possible that the analogical replacement of **uan-* by **uanH-* had already started in Proto-Indo-Iranian; cf. DE VAAN 2003: 111.

By sound law, a nom.sg. **-uānHs* should have yielded **-uāniš* in Avestan, compare *tǝuuiš* 'power' < **tauHs* and the evidence collected by BEEKES 1981: 277. However, in other case forms than the nom.sg., the laryngeal would not have been vocalized, such as the gen.sg. **-uanH-as*, nom.pl. **-uanH-as*. It is conceivable that the nom.sg. was eventually adapted to the other forms of the root, yielding pre-Avestan **-uāns*. Since *afsmaniuuąn* can be plausibly explained as a subject complement in the nom.sg.m. (*yō … frasrāuuaiiaṯ … afsmaniuuąn*), we return to the explanation of *afsmaniuuąn* as a nom.sg., put forward by SCHMIDT 1885: 393. In contradistinction to SCHMIDT, we now know that it was not an asigmatic form, but a sigmatic one. Hitherto, no Avestan forms had been found for which a sigmatic nom.sg. of an *n*(*t*)-stem with lengthened vowel had to be assumed. The only possible form of this type was the nom.sg. OAv. *θβāuuąs* from *θβā-uuaṇt-*, but the ending *-ąs* may reflect **-ants* or **-ānts*, and furthermore it must have secondarily restored **-s* after the Iranian change of (**-nts* >) **-ns* to **-nh*; compare the nom.sg. *-ą* of other *nt*-stems, and the discussion in DE VAAN 2003: 390ff.

The ending *-uuå* in *afsmaniuuå*, *rāmaniuuå* and (maybe) *bāmaniuuå* can be explained with SCHMIDT 1885: 393 as the result of a more recent analogical introduction of IIr. **-uās* which is also found in possessive *-uant-* and *-mant-* stems (e.g. OAv. *drǝguuå*, YAv. *astuuå, xratumå*), and which HOFFMANN 1976: 555f. has argued to be reflected in the Skt. endings *-vān, -mān* too (e.g. *ámavān, gómān*).

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