

From the bellowing cow to the cow's soul

Remarks on the Old Indo-Āryan and Old Iranian animal sacrifice

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This paper aims to draw parallels between the ancient Iranian or Avestan culture and the ancient Indo-Āryan or Vedic Sanskrit culture as regards animal sacrifices. As is well known, these two cultures share an ancient common cultural basin, that is the so-called Indo-Iranian culture located at least within the Andronovo cultural complex, during the Bronze Age, and within the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) in the first half of the second millennium BCE. However, the Iranian culture which we know from the Avestan textual *corpus* developed especially on the Iranian plateau, at least from the ninth century BCE onwards, whereas the Old Indo-Āryan culture we know from the Vedic textual *corpus* developed in the North-Western area of the Indian subcontinent, that is between Afghanistan and Pakistan earlier (1500-1300 BCE), and later in the area corresponding to today's eastern Panjab, and Uttar Pradesh (1300-900 BCE). Therefore, despite a common cultural background, for centuries the Avestan and Vedic cultures developed independently of each other, each with its own characteristics. As regards the so-called 'sacrifice,' known as *yasna* in Old Iranian and *yajña* in Old Indo-Āryan, and in light of the afore-mentioned historical premise, there are nevertheless peculiar parallels that are anything but mere cultural coincidences, nor the mere remnants of an ancient Indo-Iranian cultural unit, but the result of the development of a common cultural heritage under similar historical conditions, despite the peculiarities of each culture. This article aims to highlight such developments, especially in relation to the performance of the animal sacrifice.

Keywords: animal sacrifice, Long Liturgy, Avestan *uruuan-*, *śrauta* reform, bellowing Soma-bull.

1. The Avestan *yasna*: animal sacrifice, cow's soul (*gəuš uruuan-*) and man's soul (*narō uruuan-*)¹

The Avestan term *yasna* denotes both a ceremony and a textual genre to be recited during the ceremony itself; in particular, the ceremony consists of nine liturgical sequences, combined with the recitation

¹ This research was made possible thanks to the financial support of Next Generation EU – Line M4.C2.1.1 – PRIN 2022, project “For a Multivocal History of the Attitudes Towards Non-Human Animals in South Asia. Ethics, Practices, Symbolism. Investigating New and Unsolved Issues” CUP G53D23004630006.

of all 72 Avestan *yasnas* (Kellens 2015). However, according to the scholars of the first half of the last century, the *yasna* liturgy would have consisted of prayers and the oblation of butter, milk, water and vegetables to the sacred flame (De Jong 2002: 129-130), a ceremony still performed in the Parsi community today. Any animal sacrifice and even *haoma* pressing would have been abolished by the so-called Zoroastrian reform.² Therefore, even though *yasna* is etymologically cognate with OIĀ *yajñā*, as both are derivatives of the PIE root < **√H₁eg_{h₂}ǵ* ‘to honour with offerings,’ corresponding respectively to Av *vyaz-* and OIĀ *vyaj-* ‘to sacrifice, to worship’, it seems that the Avestan term *yasna* does not convey the same conception of sacrifice as it does in the Old Indo-Āryan culture. In fact, the *yasna* would have been a mere worshipping ceremony, focusing on the fire, without any blood sacrifice, and Zoroastrianism would have mainly been a purely spiritual and ethical religion. In actual fact, the whole Avestan textual corpus, as definitively canonized during the Sasanian period (224-651 CE), clearly shows that the aim of a *yasna* ceremony consists in upholding the Ahura Mazdā cosmic order and preparing the heavenly path that the soul of the sacrificer has to follow to reach the supreme cosmic entity (Skjærvø 2007). It is a sort of journey of the soul, called *uruuan-*, towards Ahura Mazdā: the act expressed by the root *yaz-* allows the *uruuan-* as ‘breath-soul’ of the sacrificer himself to be elevated into the sphere of the divine world, beyond darkness, like an ‘itinerant soul.’ There, it joins with the so-called vision-soul *daēnā-*, that is its visual counterpart and thus the sacrificer achieves the otherworld. (Panaino 2004; Cantera 2016: 70-71). Therefore, the term *yasna* would not mean a sacrificial act which involves the ritual killing of living beings, but a bloodless act of worship.

However, in the last decades of the twentieth century and more recently, the question of Zoroastrian sacrifice and the correlated notion of the so-called Zoroastrian ‘reform’ has been reconsidered in the light of an in-depth analysis of the textual stratification of the Avestan corpus, attesting a complex process of canonization (cf. Panaino 2012). It has been debated whether the so-called Zoroastrian reform was a real watershed between earlier Indo-Iranian and later Iranian theological beliefs and ritual practices, due to a single historical figure called Zarathustra, or whether it was a long process of cultural development, characterized by several step changes leading to, among

Furthermore, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Prof. Antonio Panaino and Prof. Velizar Zadovski, who generously offered me significative suggestions and provided me with crucial bibliography for my argumentations. I accept full responsibility for the final version. As far as the passages of Vedic and Avestan texts are concerned, unless otherwise stated, the translation is mine.

² As regards the historicity and dating of Zarathustra, and the so-called Zoroastrian reform, cf. i.a. Kellens (2002). In particular, as to the dating of Zarathustra, let us briefly say that, on the one hand, the traditional date of 258 years before Alexander the Great places him around 600 BCE while, on the other, he may have reasonably lived around 1000 BCE.

others, the Parsi customs. But above all, close connections between text and ritual have been pointed out, so that the sacrificial Long Liturgy appears to be the key interpretation of the Avestan itself (Kellens 2015; Tremblay 2016; Cantera 2020); it must be a modular liturgical system, that is a synthesis of manifold Avestan traditions (Panaino 2017), whose arrangement is likely resulting from a long revision process also correlated to the textual canonization: it is ascribable even to the pre-Sasanian era, but is definitively fixed in the Sasanian Period. And Cantera (2016: 62) goes as far as to claim that: «The Zoroastrian long liturgy continues an Indo-Iranian tradition: a sacrifice to the gods that is characterized by an initial pressing and drinking of a stimulating drink, the **sauma*- [Av *haoma*, OIĀ *soma*-], followed by an animal sacrifice offered to the fire and completed with an office for the fire and the waters».

In actual fact, the Avestan textual layers allow us to assume that the Long Liturgy not only entailed a double *haoma* pressing and drinking, but also oblations of animal meat to the fire (Cantera 2022: 40-41); this would mean that somehow an animal was slain so that its meat could be offered ritually.

Thus, the question of the animal sacrifice in ancient Zoroastrianism has become a much debated issue. In fact, references to the killing of animals for ritual purposes are presented in the later exegetical literature, and hints at oblations of animal flesh are even found in a few Old Avestan texts-*yasnas*. Moreover, it is assumable that the ancient ritual traditions that entailed animal sacrifice as a heritage of the Indo-Iranian culture must have progressively declined, finally being abolished around the end or even after the fall of the Sasanian Empire, that is around 600-700 CE (De Jong 2002: 130; Panaino 2020: 160-163). This would mean that a form of ‘animal sacrifice’ was accepted at a certain time in the Avestan culture, at least inasmuch as it was combined with an extremely solemn ritual act that was symbolically and spiritually connotated.³ In this perspective, the killed animal was conceived of as the substitute for the sacrificer himself, and in this way the breath-soul (*uruuan*-) of the animal, as a counterpart of the sacrificer’s breath-soul (*uruuan*-), could ascend to Ahura Mazdā (Boyce 1996: 149; De Jong 2002: 146-147; Panaino 2004; 2020): for example, in Y 26.4 the breath-soul of the cow (*qāuš uruuan*-) is worshipped like the breath-soul of those who have upheld the Order of the Truth (*aša*-); it recites as follows:

[...]

iḍa.ašaonəm. ašaoninəmca.

ahūmca. daēnəmca. baodasca.uruuānəmca. frauuašīmca. yazamaide.

³ Moreover, the verbal forms of the Avestan root *vyaz*- mostly denote a symbolic value, i.e., a bloodless act of worship, rather than a sacrifice *stricto sensu* (Hintze 2007: 156ff.).

*yōi.ašāi. vaonarə.
gəuš. huδāñhō. uruuanəm. yazamaide. (4)*

Here we worship - of the male and female upholders of Order – the living essence (*ahu*),⁴ the vision-soul (*daēna-*), the consciousness, the breath-soul (*uruuan-*), and the divine soul (*frauuaši*), [of those] who have ever won for Order. We worship the breath-soul of the cow that gives good gifts (Skjærvø 2007:77, slightly modified).

Similarly, in the Young Avestan *Yāsts* there are a few references to two different kinds of sacrificial rite. In particular, in the 14th *Yāst*-hymn, devoted to the mythical warrior figure called *Vərəθrajan*, one who slays the obstacle/the demon *Vərəθra*, the rite performed by the *daēuua*-sacrificers (*daēuuaiiāza-*) is mentioned (st. 54). It is worth recalling that the Av term *daēuua-* corresponds to OIĀ *deva-*: in the parallel Vedic cultural context *devas* are gods, but in the Avestan one *daēuuas* are demonized as rivals. The sacrifice to the *daēuuas* is a blood sacrifice, as is emphasized in st. 54:

*54: aδāṭ. uiti. frauuašata vərəθraynō. ahuraδātō.
nōiṭ. narō. yesniiō. vahmiiō. gəušca. uruua. dāmi.dātō.
yaṭ. nūrəm. viiāmbura. daēuua. māšiiāka. daēuuaiiāzō.
vohunīm. vā. tācaiiēnti. frašaēkəm. vā. frašicaṇti*

Then, *Vərəθrayna*, created by Ahura, proclaimed as follows:

‘The man’s soul (*narō. uruuan-*) is not to be worshipped nor praised, and neither the cow’s soul (*gəuš. uruuan-*), created by the holder of the heavenly reins (*dāmi.dāta-*), now that the *Vyāmbura daēuuas*, [and] the men *daēuua*-sacrificers (*daēuuaiiāza-*) shed blood and pour out such liquids.’

Therefore, blood sacrifices are a matter for the *daēuua*-followers, who do not uphold *aša-* the ‘Order of the Truth;’ on the contrary, the worshippers of Ahura must care for cattle, as is specified in st. 61 of the same *yāst*:

*61: vərəθraynəm. ahuraδātəm. yazamaide
[...]
gauue. aməm. gauue. nəməm.
gauue. uxδəm. gauue. vərəθrəm.
gauue. xvarəθəm. gauue. vastrəm.
gauue. vərəziiātəm. təm. nā. xvarəθāi. fšuiiō.*

⁴ As to the value of the Avestan *ahu-* cf. Kellens (2020).

We worship Vərəθraγna, created by Ahura:

[...]

To the cow strength. To the cow reverence.

To the cow speech. To the cow [winning] assault.

To the cow nourishment. To the cow pasture (?).

Let it be performed in honour of the cow: keep cattle for our nourishment.

Here the cow is worshipped and honoured without bloodshed, thus suggesting a symbolic form of sacrifice, correlated to the cow's soul and the man's soul mentioned above, in st. 54. This scenario would appear to be congruent with the above-mentioned *communis opinio*: the so-called Zoroastrian reform would have implied the abolition of the animal sacrifice, in opposition to the bloody *daēuua*-traditions, and textual references to such a practice are to be interpreted symbolically.

However, in the later exegetical Pahlavi text entitled *Nērangestān* (N 47; 54), attributed at least to the late Sasanian period, it is clearly reported that a flesh oblation to the fire can only be offered (*yašt pad zōhr*) in conjunction with the recitation of one of the oldest Avestan sections, that is the *Yasna Haptanhāiti* ('yasna of the seven chapters'), within the Long Liturgy. Domesticated animals, such as sheep and cattle, are suitable for this oblation, whereas wild animals had to be caught and domesticated before being ritually killed. The same exegetical text gives a detailed description of the slaughter of an animal as a sacrificial victim: the animal is led by the priest *pasuuāzah*- 'one who leads the sacrificial animal' (N 47. 19-24), that is the officiant in charge of killing the animal. Firstly, it is made to stand facing the fire with its legs bound together, and then its neck is broken with a log of wood, or, alternatively, it is stunned, and only then is it killed by cutting its throat with a knife.⁵ Therefore, even though the killing of an animal is not compulsory, the text presents it as an act that is actually performed and not just a symbolic practice (Cantera 2022: 74). Moreover, according to Cantera's studies (2022: 75-77), two different types of *yašt pad zōhr* are pictured in the *Nērangestān*: one type foresees the slaughter of an animal and the consequent cutting out of a part of its duodenum (*gōnwad*) for the oblation, and then the *gōnwad* itself is offered to the fire. In this case Cantera (2022: 84) assumes that the animal is slaughtered outside but very close to the ritual space, and in conjunction with the ritual performance. The second kind of *yašt pad zōhr* envisages just an offering, with no slaughter: in this case

⁵ As to this interpretation of *Nērangestān* passages and the correlated reconstruction of the sacrificial practices I am referring to De Jong (2002: 135-140), Panaino (2016), Cantera (2022: 73ff.). Panaino (2020: 125-126) focuses on the figure of the priest *pasuuāzah*- 'one who leads the sacrificial animal.'

the offering is the fat and flesh of an animal, which had been previously slaughtered during another ritual performance and cooked before the Long Liturgy itself (Cantera 2022: 88).

In any case, flesh oblations to the fire—with or without the actual slaughtering of the animal during the ceremony—were offered during the central phase of the Long Liturgy, in correspondence with the beginning of the recitation of the *Yasna Haptaṅhāiti* or ‘yasna of the seven chapters’ (Y 35-41), an old Avestan section in a sort of rhythmic prose: in particular, between the recitation of Y 34 that closes the first Avestan *gāthā*, and the opening of Y 35, the first of the seven chapters. Thus, in the case of the *gōnwad* offering, the ritual killing of the animal victim is expected to be performed before the recitation of Y 35. For example, according to Kellens (2013: 59), the term *miiazda-* ‘solid ritual food’ in the third stanza of Y 34 presents an explicit reference to the fresh oblation:

34.3 aṭ. tōi. miiazdām. ahurā. nəmaṇhā. ašāicā. dāmā.
gaēθā. vīspā. ā. xšaθrōi. yā. vohū. θraoštā. manahā.
ārōi.zī. hudāṇhō. vīspāiš. mazdā. xšmāuuasū. sauuō.

As sacrificial food (*miiazda-*) for Thee, O Ahura, and for Truth (*aša-*), we place in reverence all [our] herds in (Thy) power, (the herds) which one has nourished with good thought. Indeed, the benefit of a munificent one has been allotted by all among Those such as You, O Wise One (Humbach 1991: I. 140).

Here the accusative of the term *miiazda-* is correlated to the accusative *gaēθa-* ‘herd, living being,’ and associated with Ahurā Mazdā and the dative of Truth-*aša*; a similar terminological combination is mentioned in a Young Avestan text, the *Āfrīnagān ī Gāhānbār* 3.6, where the recitation of the fifth stanza of Y 35 ends with the reference to the ritual food-*miiazda-*:

[...]
huxšaθrōtāmāi. bāaṭ. xšaθrēm. ahmaṭ. hiiṭ. aibī.
dadəmahicā.cīšmahicā. huuqnmahicā.
hiiṭ. mazdāi. ahurāi. ašāicā. vahištāi”
dātō. hē. miiazdō. ratufrīš.

As far as we are concerned, we offer, assign and impart the rule to the one whose rule is indeed the very best, namely the Wise Lord, and to the best Truth (*Aša Vahišta*) (Hintze 2007: 77ff.). For him the sacrificial food (*miiazda-*) is established, that satisfies the correct arrangement of the ritual (*ratus-*).

Likewise, the following formulaic expression occurs in the Young Avestan (e.g., Y 7.1 and 7.20, Y 3.1 and 3.20; Y 8.1):

aṣaiia. daδqmi. xvarəθəm. miiāzdəm.
hauruuata. amərətāta.
gāuš. hudā

In compliance with Truth, I offer the solid oblation as the food:
 wholeness and immortality, the cow giving good gifts.

Here the solid oblation is correlated to the cow which is *hudās*, that is ‘giving good gifts;’ moreover, in Y 8.2 men are urged to eat the solid ritual food (*xvarata. narō. aētəm. miiāzdəm.*: ‘O men, eat this solid oblation’). Finally, in Y 37.1 Truth-*aša*, the core term of Zoroastrianism, is directly associated with the cow-*gau*-:

Y. 37.1 *iθā. āt. yazamaidē. ahurəm. mazdqm.*
yō. gāmcā. ašāmcā. dāt.
apascā. dāt. uruuarāscā. vaṇuhiš.
raocāscā. dāt. būmīmā.
vīspācā. vohū.

In this way we now worship the Wise Lord,
 who has created the cow and Truth,
 (who) has created the waters and the good plants,
 (who) has created light and the earth
 and all that is good (Hintze 2007: 155).

It is remarkable that in such a cosmogonic list we find a cow and Truth associated in a sort of hendiadys (*gāmcā. ašāmcā.* ‘and cow and Truth’). Moreover, as Sadovski highlights (2023a), we can assume the existence of a common Indo-Iranian formulaic phraseology, since similar lexicon combinations are also found in the Rigvedic collection: for example in RV 10.70.2cd the term *miyédha*- ‘ritual meal, sacrificial food,’ a cognate of the Avestan *miiāzda*-, is mentioned in correlation to the term *ṛtá*-‘Truth,’ which etymologically corresponds exactly to the Avestan *aša*-:

ṛtāsya pathā námasā miyédho devébhyo devátamaḥ suśūdat

along the path of Truth, with reverence the foremost of the gods will

sweeten the ritual meal (*miyédha*-)⁶ for the gods (Jamison-Brereton 2014: 1495).

Furthermore, these verses are extracted from one of the so-called Āprī hymns, which are recited at Indo-Āryan animal sacrifices (van den Bosch 1985a; namely 101-102). Therefore, a ritual meal based on the flesh of bovine and ovine victims in particular was probably quite usual in Indo-Iranian cultural phases. Later on, with the development of the Avestan culture, this would be integrated into the Long Liturgy, where it came to be performed without bloodshed in the sacred space and during the recitation; the meal with blood shed was definitively attributed to the *daēuua*-followers. And the textual references to solid oblations, consisting of meat and correlated especially to bovine animals may be remnants of earlier bloodshedding rituals.

In actual fact, in *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, namely in Y 39, we find the same expressions *narō uruuan* and *gəuš uruuan*, that is the so-called ‘man’s breath soul’ and ‘cow’s breath soul’:

Y 39.1: *iθā. āt.1 yazamaidē. gəuš. uruuānəmcā. tašānəmcā.
ahmākəŋg. āat. urunō. pasukanəmcā. yōi. nā. jīiṣənti. [...]*

In this way we now worship (*yazamaidē*) the cow’s soul and [her] maker (Ahura);
[we worship] our own souls as well as those of the domestic animals, which desire to gain our support. [...].

Y 39.2: *daitikanəmcā. aidiiūnəm. hiiat. urunō. yazamaidē.
ašāunəmcā. āat. urunō. yazamaidē. kudō.zātanəmcit. narəmcā. nāirinəmcā. [...]*

We worship the souls of the wild animals, insofar they are harmless.

Now we worship the souls of the truthful ones, men and women, whenever they may have been born. [...] (Hintze 2007: 39-40).

These passages attest the close correlation between the *gəuš uruuan*-‘cow’s breath-soul’ or *pasukanəmcā uruuan*- ‘breath-soul of the domestic animals (*pasuka*-)’ and the sacrificer’s breath-soul, or better, the breath-soul of those who are *ašāuuan*-‘truthful,’ that is endowed with *aša*-‘Truth,’ the Zoroastrian

⁶ OIĀ *miyédha*- ‘meal, food’ is quoted 7x in the Rigvedic collection, mostly in ritual contexts, thus meaning ‘sacrificial meal/food.’ As regards its etymology, it is assumable that both the Avestan and the Vedic forms are derivatives of the IIr. compound **mi(H)as-d^hHa-*, where the first constituent may be correlated to IIr. **máiHas-* ‘lust, (physical) enjoyment,’ so that **mi(H)as-d^hHa-* would mean ‘one who/which disposes/sets/makes enjoyment.’ As to further interpretations cf. Sadovski (2023a:15-17). As for the expression *ṛtásya pathā* ‘along the path of Truth,’ echoing the common formulaic expression *devānām páthas-* ‘path of the gods,’ cf. Schmidt (1973: 33ff.).

founding principle. According to some scholars (Hintze 2007: 258-259) the reference to *gāuš uruuan-* ‘cow’s breath-soul’ must be connected to the famous ‘Lament of the Cow’ of Y 29, where the very *gāuš uruuan-* ‘cow’s breath-soul’ complains that, as a cow, it is a victim of violence and therefore asks the Ahura Mazdā for protection. In particular, the first stanza of Y 29 seems to allude to the very immolation of the cow, according to Tremblay 2016: 79-80):

Y 29.1: *xšmaibiiā. gāuš. uruuā. gərəždā. kahmāi. mā. θbarōždūm. kō.mā. tašat:*
ā.mā. aēšəmō. hazascā. rəmō. āhišāiiā. dərāščā. təuuīščā.
 [...].

The soul of the cow complains to You: For whom did You shape me? Who fashioned me?
 Wrath and oppression, fury, spite and violence, hold me fettered [...]
 (Humbach 1991: I.120).⁷

This would confirm that, on the one hand, sacrificial violence on domestic animals was well known, particularly in relation to *daēuua*-followers: the controversial expression *gāuš jaidiīāi* ‘let the ox be killed’ (Y 32.14) refers to the bloody *daēuua*-ritual, and in general to those are considered as opponents of Zoroastrianism.⁸ On the other hand, the followers of Zoroastrianism are told to care for their cattle and pasture lands: cowherds are the ideal Zoroastrian worshippers, as declared in other Avestan *gāθās*, such as in Y 31.15, where *pasu-* ‘domestic animal’ and *vīra-* ‘man’ constitute a pair of living beings under the protection of the not-deceiving (*a-drujiiaṇt-*) cowherd, that is *ašāuuuān-* ‘truthful’:⁹

Y 31.15: *pərəsā. auuāt. yā. mainiš. yō. drəguuāitē. xšaθrəm. hunāitī.*
duš.šiiāoθanāi. ahurā. yō. nōiṭ. jiiōtūm. hanarə. vīnastī.
vāstriehiiā. aēnaṇhō. pasəuš. vīrāatcā. adrujiiaṇtō.

That I ask [you] what the chastisement (*maini-*) [is for him] who delegates power to the deceitful one, to the evil-doer, o Ahura, (the one) who does not find a livelihood without injury to cattle and men of the not- deceiving cowherd (*vāstriia-*) (Humbach 1991: I. 130, slightly modified).

⁷ In this sense, the key word is *rəma-*, literally meaning ‘bloodlust, fury,’ etymologically, it can be correlated to OIā *srāma-* ‘lameness, sickness,’ according to Humbach (1991: II. 208); Tremblay (2016: 80) suggests the meaning ‘étouffement,’ so referring to the death of the cow by suffocation, typical of the Vedic ritual.

⁸ Humbach (1991: II. 89) explains it as “a ritual formula, or the beginning of a ritual text, which is recited by the deceitful priest at the opening of the ceremony of slaughtering the animal, performed in a way which was considered as cruel by Zarathustra.” Gippert (1998) proposes a different linguistic analysis, but the interpretative context is the same.

⁹ As regards the peculiar value attributed by Zoroastrianism to pastoral milieu, see Schmidt (1975).

It is therefore assumable that two different trends emerged in the ancient Iranian culture: on the one hand, sacrificial violence as such was stigmatized, and animal oblations were accepted only if the flesh used for the oblation came from outside the sacrifice itself. This is what may correspond to the so-called Zoroastrian reform, that is a long process of cultural change, which culminated in the later abolition of the animal oblation as such, which came about at the end of the Sasanian Empire. In this way, animals and human worshippers were mutually equated before Ahura Mazdā, inasmuch as they were both followers of the Truth. In fact, the animal's breath-soul is interpreted as a substitute for the human worshipper's breath-soul on the journey to the divine world (Panaino 2004). On the other hand, rites including the bloody slaughter of animals were still performed: these came to be defined as non-Zoroastrian rites, or belonging to the so-called *daēuua*-followers. However, the bloody *daēuua*-practices can refer both to rituals belonging to other cultures with which the Iranian one came into contact in the course of their history, and even to remnants of the common Indo-Iranian ancient background, preserved by the most conservative fringes of the Iranian clans. This latter hypothesis may be argued by taking into account of the parallel Indo-Āryan scenario.

2. The Brahmanical *yajña*: animal sacrifice, *śrauta* reform and *ahiṃsā*- 'non-violence'

If we consider the Avestan scenario in relation to the Indo-Āryan culture some analogous and noteworthy dynamics immediately emerge: first of all, the Vedic *corpus* results from a textual revision process, beginning with the canonization of the Rigvedic collection by the sacerdotal class, and promoted in association with the so-called *śrauta* reform, which culminated in Brahmanical ritualism during the first millennium BCE. This means that one can distinguish between pre- and post-reform rituals in the Indo-Āryan culture and, similarly we can note that the Avestan collection results from a process of liturgical revision and canonization, culminating in the so-called Long-Liturgy, which, later on, led to the stigmatization of the shedding of blood.

Also, whereas the Indo-Āryan pre-*śrauta* ritual was probably closely correlated to the ancient Indo-Iranian traditions, the *śrauta* ritual implied a Brahmanical reinterpretation of the ancient ritual heritage that emphasized the formal correctness and complexity of the liturgy: ritual orthopraxis came to be established and transmitted through *Brāhmaṇa* exegetical texts and ancillary literature. According to M. Witzel's studies (1997), such a transformation in the Indo-Āryan culture was originally set in motion by the Kuru hegemony. Taking into account the fact that this dates back to around 1300/1200-900 BCE, Skjærvø (2003-2004: 37) claims that «the transition period between Old and Young Avestan periods would coincide with the time of the crystallization and, probably, the canonization of the *Rigveda*». Therefore, around the beginning of the first millennium BCE, when the Vedic textual

revision began to be applied and a new ritual model began to develop, the Avestan *repertoire* and the ancient Iranian traditions in the Old Iranian sphere were also undergoing significant changes, which later culminated in the definition of the Long Liturgy. Moreover, it is remarkable to note that in the ritual textual tradition of both the cultures—*Brāhmaṇa* texts and sequence of the *yasnas*—ritual systematization coincides with the cosmicization of ritual itself: as Sadovski emphasises in his studies (e.g., 2024), the ritual taxonomy corresponds to the cosmic taxonomy; such a ‘cosmos-rite’ unfolded in conjunction with the unravelling and modular expansion of the basic somic/homic ritual, operated by the priestly category, in both the culture.

Nonetheless, in the Indo-Āryan context the term *yajña* never assumed the value of a textual category, but only meant the ritually performed action, both with animal and non-animal oblations.¹⁰ Finally, the Brahmanical *yajña* characterized by bloodless oblations is generally correlated to the spread of the ideal of non-injury or *ahiṃsā* ‘non-violence,’ which, as is well known, belonged to the *śramaṇa* background and is proclaimed in the Aśokan inscriptions, even though its acceptance within the Brahmanical milieu is rather ambiguous. In fact, on the one hand, bloodshed as such is considered ritually impure and hence dangerous, while, on the other, animal oblations are not completely excluded from the *śrauta* liturgy: a sort of compromise, analogous to the Avestan one, is adopted in the late Vedic period.¹¹ In fact, a mechanism of sacrificial substitution was also contemplated in the *śrauta* ritual: for example, the sacrificer, Prajāpati deity, animal and vegetal oblations are inter-changeable on the basis of chains of equivalences (Smith 1989: 176ff.); in this way even animal sacrifices could be replaced by vegetable sacrifices, and a bloodless ritual form came to be established. However, in the very MDŚ 5.39d it is declared that ‘within the sacrifice slaughter is not slaughter’ (*yajñe vadho ‘vadhah*), and moreover, in 5.40 and 42, the following is claimed:

oṣadhyah paśavo vṛkṣās tiryāṇcaḥ pakṣiṇas tathā |
yajñārthaṃ nidhanaṃ prāptāḥ prāpnuvanty utsṛtiḥ punaḥ || 40 ||

eṣv artheṣu paśūn hiṃsan vedatattvārthavid dvijaḥ |
ātmānaṃ ca paśūṃś caiva gamayaty uttamaṃ gatim || 42 ||

When plants, domestic animals, trees, beasts, and birds die for the sake of a sacrifice, they will in turn earn superior births. [...] When a twice-born man who knows the true meaning of the Veda

¹⁰ As regards the development of the concept of *yajna* in the Indian culture, see Colas (2006).

¹¹ The origin and development of *ahiṃsā*- ‘non-violence’ in relation to the Brahmanical culture is widely debated: cf. Tull (1996) and Houben (1999), with related bibliography.

kills animals for these purposes, he leads himself and those animals to the highest state (Olivelle 2005: 140).

The death of sacrificial victims, especially animals, is justified or even denied in these dharmic passages, inasmuch as the sacrificed beings do not die definitively, but reach a superior state. In particular, in the second dharmic *śloka* the equivalence between victim and sacrificer is stated, or better the Self of the sacrificer is equated to the victims, who can both attain the supreme goal by means of the sacrificial action. Here the Avestan relationship between man's soul (*narō uruuan-*) and a cow's soul (*gāuš uruuan-*) appears to be echoed, even though there is no precise linguistic correspondence: *ātman-* 'Self' is not etymologically correlated to *uruuan-* 'breath-soul,' but semantically they both refer to a similar idea of vital principle.¹²

Further enhanced ambiguity regarding animal sacrifice occurs in the more ancient Vedic texts, where traces of pre-*śrauta* ritual often appear. A few references are found in the Rigvedic family books (II-VII); for example, RV 6.16.47c contains generic phrases such as 'let the oxen, bulls, and mated cows be yours, [o Agni]' (*té te bhavantūkṣāṇaḥ | ṛṣabhāśo vaśā utā*). Nonetheless phrases such as 'Let your cow-smiting, man-smiting weapon stay at a distance' (*āré gohā nṛhā vadhó vo astu*) in RV 7.56.17c lexically recall the expression *gāuš jaidiāi* in Y 32.14, and semantically refer to the close relationship between men and cattle, expressed in Y 31.15. In fact, men and livestock enjoyed a close relationship in the Indo-Āryan culture, since the survival of the Indo-Āryan community depended mostly on cattle breeding: in the proto-Vedic clan-based society the chieftain had to be a good cowherd, and is often portrayed as bull.¹³ On the other hand, in the later Rigvedic layers, horse sacrifice is referred to in detail: for example, in RV 1.162 it is clearly a bloody and truculent sacrifice.

Lastly, references to animal sacrifice are found in the so-called Āprī hymns which are ten Rigvedic hymns spread throughout different textual layers of the Rigvedic collection (1.13; 1.142; 1.188; 2.3; 3.4; 5.5; 7.2; 9.5; 10.70; 10.110). However, they all have a common structure and phraseology, and their stanzas are also mentioned in the Brahmanical text (e.g., *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* 2.4) as the accompaniment to the preliminary offerings (*prayāja*) of the animal sacrifice as a systematized *śrauta* ritual. In fact, the *śrauta* ritual implies the animal sacrifice called *paśubandha* 'domestic animal bond' within the performance of the classical somic liturgy (*agniṣṭoma*). In this case too, the victim's limbs were cut off

¹² Panaino (2004: 249ff.) proposes that a parallel with the symbolic offering of the *uruuan-* 'breath-soul' of the Avestan sacrifice can be seen in the *ātmayajña-* 'self-sacrifice' of the Vedic sacrifice.

¹³ The bovine image is relevant in Vedic poetry: Vedic deities such as Indra, Agni, and Soma are recurrently equated to king-bulls.

and blood was shed only after the animal had been choked to death, an act that was carried out by a specific priest called *śamitṛ*: thus, there was no real bloody slaughter. The main flesh oblation was the omentum, and the sacrifice entailed cooking it raw on the *śamitra*-fire. Moreover, just as happens in the Avestan liturgy, the killing and dismembering of the victim took place outside the sacrificial place, just on the northern corner, near the *cātvāla*.¹⁴

However, the ritual function of the Rigvedic Āprī hymns was much debated by scholars in the last century (van den Bosch 1985a: 95-97), and more recently the issue has become even more cogent especially in the light of the definitive recognition of the ritual development from the pre- to the *śrauta* reform, that is from mere oblation into the fire up to complex liturgical system. But this does not simply indicate that these hymns are remnants of a form of pre-*śrauta* animal sacrifice and, hence, preserve traces of Indo-Iranian ritual traditions, or *śrauta* reform textual interpolations, due to the process of the Brahmanical revision. Neither does it imply that they could have been associated with the animal sacrifice *śrauta* only secondarily, given that no animal sacrifice is explicitly mentioned in their verses. In fact, Vanaspati, the cosmic tree or ‘the lord of the forest’ is recurrently mentioned in these stanzas, which would have led the late Vedic ritual specialists to introduce these stanzas into the section of the Brahmanical repertoire dealing with the animal sacrifice, inasmuch as the animal to be sacrificed was firstly bound to the sacrificial pole (*yūpa*), equated to the Vanaspati-cosmic tree.

In actual fact, according to Proferes (2003a and 2003b), proto-Rigvedic liturgy belonging to manifold clans was re-arranged during the Kuru hegemony in order to create an ‘ecumenical’ and supra-clan liturgy. This must have affected the sonic liturgy and animal sacrifice, and later on sacerdotal ritualism would revive both rites as definitive *śrauta* rites. Such an ‘ecumenical’ liturgical revision was also combined with a similar process applied to clan textual material so that, on the one hand, clan rites involving the killing of the victim (Schmidt 1973: 35) were re-organized in the name of Kuru ecumenism while, on the other, poetic repertoires of different lineages, related to this kind of sacrifice, were distinctively integrated into the Rigvedic collection as family books. Nonetheless, a direct expression of Kuru hegemony saw the poetic re-arrangement of textual material, merged especially in the first and tenth Rigvedic books, Atharvavedic hymns and Yajurvedic mantra. The Rigvedic Āprī hymns would represent an intermediate phase that resulted from the Kuru revision applied to the ritual and textual clan traditions. They can thus mirror the ecumenical effort, while at the same time retaining traces of the earlier ritual version and preluding the later development into the *śrauta* version. For example, in these hymns the figures of the cosmic tree Vanaspati and ritual fire

¹⁴ Cf., e.g., BŚS 4.6. As to the rite, cf. also Dumont (1962), and Schwab (1886).

Agni are frequently combined with the peculiar term: *śamitṛ-*, which, as the *nomen agentis* of the root *√sam-* 'to become tired, to exert oneself,' literally means 'one who becomes tired, who fatigues himself' around the sacrificial victim, performing rites (Thieme 1953), and is the technical appellative for one who kills the animal, the 'butcher' (e.g., RV 3.4.10ab; 7.2.10ab; 10.110.10c). The same term is mentioned in the Rigvedic hymn devoted to the horse sacrifice, one of the Kuru expressions of ecumenical rituals: *śamitṛ-* in RV 1.162.9c and 10c refers to the role of butcher-priest, who was responsible for cutting off the horse's limbs and offering them as oblations. Finally, it is the core term of the *paśubandha* as portrayed in the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, but it also conveys a fundamental semantic shift: *śamitṛ-* is one who is committed to making the victim come to peace with the sacrificial action, that is 'in agreement' with it. In this case the term *śamitṛ-* euphemistically means 'one who calms, one who quiets', interpreted as *nomina agentis* of the causative meaning 'to make peaceful, to appease,' from the same root *√sam-*.¹⁵ For example, the later *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (3.8.1.15) prescribes that the victim is suffocated by keeping close its mouth or by hanging with a noose, so that no blood was shed. In a certain way, the animal is not really dead and, furthermore, its consent is required: the Brahmanical text uses the causative form of the root *saṃ-vjñā-* 'to agree; to be in concord with:'

ŚBM 3.8.1.15:

tad apigrhya vaiva mukhaṃ tamayanti veśkaṃ vā kurvanti tan nāha jahi mārayeti mānuṣaṃ hi tat saṃjñapayānvagann iti tad dhi devatrā sa yadāhānvagann ity etarhi hy eṣa devān anugacchati tasmād āhānvagann iti |

Then they suffocate [it], having just closed its mouth, or they make a noose; then (the sacrificer) does not say 'Slay it! Make it dead!:' in effect, it [would be suitable for] the human being. Saying as follows 'Make it concord [with us]: it has followed [the gods' path], this [manner], in actual fact, is pertaining to the gods. When he says 'It has followed,' then, actually, that (sacrificer) has followed the gods, therefore, he says 'it has followed.'

Therefore, the animal is not led to its death, but to the gods and it substitutes the sacrificer, in a manner similar to that outlined in the Avestan liturgy (Panaino 2016: 144-147). Furthermore, choking the animal is equated to obtaining the animal's consent: here the role of the *śamitṛ-* becomes 'calming the victim,' given that the animal emits no sound or bellow since it is being choked and its breath is not expelled from its body. In this way, a form of interiorization of the sacrifice occurs, so that both victim and sacrificer obtain heaven and immortality (cf. Thite 1970).

¹⁵ Cf. Tichy (1995: 38, fn. 39) *contra* Thieme (1953). As to the ritual role of the *śamitṛ-* in Yajurvedic, Brahmanical and ancillary literature, cf. Voegeli (2005).

Lastly, in *śrauta* ritualism the animal sacrifice is combined with the *agniṣṭoma*, the somic rite based on pressing and drinking *sóma* juice. This point has been especially compared with the sequence of the Avestan Long Liturgy: Tremblay (2016: 37-38; 66-68) considers the recitation of the *Yasna Haptaṇhāiti* section equivalent to a form of *prayāja*, that is the liturgical preliminary to animal sacrifice, as the *Āprī* hymns are recited at the beginning of the Vedic *paśubandha*.¹⁶ However, also the *śrauta* version of the *agniṣṭoma* develops in much the same way as we have seen for the animal sacrifice, emerging from an elaborated revision of a primordial somic rite, also frequently mentioned by the ancient textual layers of the Rigvedic collection. Nonetheless, the somic liturgy as attested in the Rigvedic family books is even further simplified in comparison to the description in the ninth Rigvedic book, which is entirely devoted to the somic *pavamāna*, the ‘filtering’ of the *sóma* juice. According to Proferes (2003b), this latter collection of hymns devoted to Soma, both as a deity and sacrificial juice, seems to attest an ecumenic version of the somic ritual, in compliance with the new cultural model of Kuru hegemony. This would mean that these Rigvedic somic hymns, like the *Āprī* ones, represent an intermediate stage in what later will be definitively assumed as the model for the *śrauta* rite. It is noteworthy that at this stage the somic plant is equated to a bovine being: for example, in RV 9.70.7ab the soma juice is a terrible bellowing bull:

ruvāti bhīmó vṛṣabhás taviṣyáyā | śṛṅge śísāno háriṇī vicakṣaṇāḥ |

The fearsome bull bellows forcefully, sharpening his golden horns, wide-gazing (Jamison-Brereton 2014: 1303).

Likewise, in RV 9.71.9 and 9.74.5 the bellowing Soma-bull is denoted by the derivatives of the root *√rav*ⁱ / *rū*- ‘to roar, to bellow’ (Gotō 1987: 265-267). Interestingly, in RV 10.94, which is devoted to the pressing stones used to extract the somic juice, the third stanza recites as follows:

eté vadanty ávidann aná mádhu | ny ùṅkhayante ádhi pakvá ámiṣi |
vṛkṣásya śákhām aruṇásya bápsatas | té súbharvā vṛṣabhāḥ prém arāviṣuḥ || 3 ||

They speak; in this way they found the honey. They growl over the cooked flesh. Gnawing at the branch of the reddish tree, the gluttonous bulls have bellowed out to it (Jamison-Brereton 2014: 1546).

¹⁶ Similarly Sadovski (2023b: 166-168).

Here the soma plant is conceived of as ‘cooked’ (*pakvá-*) *āmiṣ-* ‘raw flesh,’ thus referring to the very *miyédha-* ‘ritual meal,’ a cognate of the Avestan *miiazda-*, mentioned in the Āprī hymn 10.72.2. Moreover, the streams of somic juice are equated to bulls which were literally bellowing-*arāviṣuḥ*: as an aorist of the Vedic-Sanskrit root *√ravⁱ- / rū-* ‘to roar, to bellow’ (Gotō 1987: 265-267), it is employed to denote animal sounds, and especially, bovine sounds. This Vedic-Sanskrit root is a cognate of Gr *ὠρύομαι* ‘to howl, cry,’ Lat *rūmor* ‘noise,’ and as a derivative of the PIE root **h₃reuh* ‘to roar, to bellow’ it is also attested in YA verbal forms such as the YA present participle *uruuatō* (Yt 14.19). Interestingly, the Avestan term *uruuan-*, conventionally translated as breath-soul, is the outcome of the same IIR phonetic sequence **(H)RuHV-* from which *uruuaṇt-* derives (Cantera 2001: 34-35), which leads one to wonder whether this is not a mere phonetic coincidence, but a token of a deeper etymological link. In that case the Avestan cow’s breath-soul would literally be a cow bellowing, the same bellow that, during the Brahmanical animal sacrifice as standardized in the *śrauta* ritual, must be retained within the victim; for example, in the ancillary literature the following is prescribed:

ŚŚS 4.17.11: *taṃ samjñāpayanti prākśīrasam udakpādaṃ pratyakśīrasaṃ vodakpādam aravamāṇam ||*

They make [the animal] consent: it is not bellowing (*a-ravamāṇa-*), with its head towards the east and its feet towards the north, or with its head towards the west and its feet towards the north.¹⁷

3. Etymological note

As regards the etymology of the Avestan term *uruuan-*, it has been suggested that it could be derived from PIIR **luHan-* correlated to the Gr *λύω* ‘to untie, to loosen:’¹⁸ the ‘soul’ is what is untied from the corpse or laces of death. However, Kellens, in his essay concerning ancient Iranian eschatology (1995), suggests that *uruuan-* may be an *-an* stem from the same PIIR root **HrauH / HruH-* from which the OIĀ root *√ravⁱ- / rū-* also derives; *uruuan-* < PIr **ruṇan-* may be the outcome of the root PIIR **HruH-* + *-en-*, so meaning ‘roarer.’ Such a reconstruction may be congruent with the Vedic *hapax ruvaṇyú-* ‘roarer,’ mentioned in ṚV 1.122.5a:

*ā vo ruvaṇyúm auśijó huvádhyai | ghóṣeva śáṃsam árjunasya námśe |
prá vah pūṣṇé dāvána ām̐ | áchā voceya vasútātim agnéḥ || 5 ||*

It is for (Kakṣivānt), son of Uśij [/the fire-priest], to call the “screecher,” the laud, for you as if with a shout, at the attainment of the silvery one [=soma?]. (Put him [=Pūṣan]?) forward for yourselves,

¹⁷ Similarly, in BŚS 4.6.17.

¹⁸ This hypothesis is by Karl Hoffmann as mentioned by Narten (1986: 248).

for Pūṣan to give. I would call here Agni's assemblage of good ones [=gods] (Jamison-Brereton 2014: 284).

In this complex Rigvedic stanza the term *ruvanyú-* 'screecher, roarer, bellower,' as *-yú-* stem from the denominative formation *ruvanya-* meaning 'to be like **ruvan*-roarer, bellower' (cf. Wackernagel-Debrunner 1954: 845), is correlated to a terminology (*śáṃsa-* 'chanted praise,' *ghóṣā-* 'shout,' *voceya* 'I would call' [aorist optative < *√vac-* 'to call, to say']) that refers to sounding and chanting praise in honour of the gods, especially Agni, during a somic ritual. In such a context, the bovine sound, expressed through the derivatives of the root *√ravⁱ- / rū-*, is recurrently associated with somic juice and fire and, in this particular case, it is also an attribute of the chanting priest (*hótr-*). Similarly, in RV 8.96.12 the injunctive of the denominative formation *ruvanya-* refers to the singer (*jaritṛ-*):

tád viviḍḍhi yát ta índro jújoṣat | stuhí suṣṭutīm námasā vivāsa |
úpa bhūṣa jaritar má ruvanyaḥ | śrāváyā vācam kuvíd aṅgá védat || 12 ||

Labor at what Indra will enjoy from you. Give as praise a good praise hymn. Seek to entice him here with reverence. Be attentive, singer. Don't screech, but make your speech heard. Surely he will take cognizance (of it)? (Jamison-Brereton 1201).

This stanza invites the singer to do more than just roar/bellow the song of praise in honour of Indra, asking him to make the sound clearly morphologically discernible as a *vāc-* 'word.' The OIĀ root *√ravⁱ- / rū-* 'to roar, to bellow' refers both to bovine sounds and the singer's voice, inasmuch as they are both noticeably loud and audible.¹⁹ Finally, if it is assumable that **ruvan-* is the nominal stem on which the denominative formation *ruvanya-* is constructed, it must be the OIĀ outcome of the PIr **HruH-* + *-*en-*, that is equivalent to the Avestan *uruuan-* from PIr **ruuān-*. This would mean that the common PIr **HruH-*, denoting emission of sound breath for both men and cattle, in the Vedic culture developed a meaning mostly correlated to sonority, whereas in Old Iranian the semantic spectrum related to breath became prevalent, implying the value of a bodily vital principle, that is the soul.²⁰

4. Conclusions

This brief survey clearly shows that both the Avestan and the Vedic cultures follow similar parallel paths. Firstly, they are both characterized by a close connection between men and cattle, which may be inherited from an Indo-Iranian common background, since in the semi-nomadic and pastoral Indo-

¹⁹ The derivatives of another root, *√navⁱ- / nū-* (< PIE **neu(H)-*) 'to roar, to bellow'—which share not only the meaning but also the morphological structure of certain verb forms with *√ravⁱ- / rū-* (Gotō 1987: 198-199)—are also used to denote the 'bellowing' of the men, especially to refer to the shouting of inspired poets (e.g., RV 6.38.3).

²⁰ In this sense, the meaning of 'soul' is derived from a more literal meaning of 'breath,' just like the case of the Greek *ψυχή*; cf. Humbach (1956: 76-77).

Iranian clan-based society, herds were the most valuable possession. The Indo-Iranian chieftain himself is a sort of 'pastoral hero,' as documented by the PIE formulaic phrase **uih_xro-peku-* + **Vpah₂-* 'protector of men and livestock:' it is echoed in the Avestan expression *pasəuš. vīrāatcā* 'cattle and men' of the not-deceiving cowherd in Y 31.15; similarly, the term OIĀ *virapśín-* 'one who has men and livestock,' a derivative of *virapśá-* from **vīra-p(a)śu-* 'men and livestock,' is an epithet for Indra,²¹ the chieftain warrior-cowherd. OIĀ **ruvan-* and OAv *uruuan-*, as derivatives of the PIIr root **HruH-* denoting 'to breathe soundly,' appear to be another linguistic trace of this close relationship between men and bovines: they indicate 'breath,' both cow-breath and man-breath, especially as exhalation is the loudest phase of breathing.²²

In such an Indo-Iranian scenario, animal sacrifice, particularly of bovines, with the shedding of blood, must be part of a clan ritual of cooking and sharing food, as an auspicious practice for prosperity. Later on, around the end of the second millennium and the beginning of the first millennium BCE, the proto-Indo-Āryan and proto-Iranian cultural branches underwent ritual changes triggered almost in parallel by the Kuru hegemony on the one hand, and by the settlement of Iranian clans in the Iranian plateau, on the other. This was a response to a similar need which was to unify clans in the name of shared ethical values and ecumenical rituals. In fact, the cognates Old-Indo-Āryan *ṛtá-* and Avestan *aša-* 'Truth,' are the ideological expression of a form of ecumenism: in the former case, a multi-clan society was developed in the name of a cosmic supra-tribal sovereignty promoted by the Kuru lordship, while in the latter, the unity of a community was sought under the guidance of the supreme cosmic being Ahura Mazdā.

Moreover, during the Kuru period, bloody animal sacrifices were performed, such as the horse sacrifice, in continuity with the Indo-Iranian heritage; similarly, it is likely that the Iranian communities performed animal sacrifices, even though the later Zoroastrianism stigmatized bloodshed as a ritual peculiarity of the opponents to Ahura Mazdā's followers, that is the *daēuua*-followers.

Nonetheless, on the one hand, the development of a Vedic priestly class independent of the rulers, at the behest of the Kuru sovereignty itself, also determines the unfolding of the ritual reform in which animal sacrifice was preserved, but standardized as illustrated above. On the other hand, the Avestan liturgy did not exclude the meat oblation, albeit with the limitations described previously, meaning that the ritual meal of animal flesh is present in both the Old-Indo-Āryan and Old Iranian ritual performances: manipulation, oblation, consuming and sharing of animal flesh are in different ways

²¹ E.g., RV 3.36.4a; 4.17.20a; 4.20.2c; 6.22.6d; 6.32.1c; 6.40.2b; etc. Cf. Watkins (1979).

²² As regards the ritual zoomorphic relationship man-cow, cf. Spanò (2024: 179-218).

components of the Avestan Long Liturgy and the *śrauta* performance of the *paśubandha*.²³ In both cases the slaughter of the animal takes place outside the ritual space, after the animal has been stunned or choked, that is without bloodshed, as if to reduce the miasmic effects of violent death; moreover, in the Brahmanical version the victim's consent is also requested.

Furthermore, in both the Zoroastrian and the Brahmanical traditions the death of the animal is justified as a ritual substitution and associated with a process of ritual interiorization. In fact, the sacrificer comes to be equated to the sacrificed victim, inasmuch as the sacrificer's breath-voice and the animal's breath-bellowing correspond; in this way the death of the animal coincides with the death of the sacrificer, at least symbolically, and the sacrificial violence is turned into an eschatological journey for the victim-sacrificer. Such an identity is emphasized by the way in which the victim loses its life: the sounds of its breath are blocked either because the stunned animal no longer emits any sound or because the suffocated animal no longer emits breath; in both cases, the animal's sonorous breath is integrated into the sacrificer's breath and the sound of his liturgical recitation.

Lastly, it is difficult to establish the extent to which the *śramaṇa* movement influenced and increased the non-violent tendencies more or less inherent in Brahmanical ritualism, and also to evaluate the impact of such cultural tendencies on the development of the Zoroastrianism and vice versa. However, speculations on sound and breath were fundamental in the *śramaṇa* milieu.

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²³ As to this issue, cf. McClymond (2008: 53ff.).

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