



AHURĀNĪ

AHURĀNĪ, feminine deity of the waters. A complete *yašt*, hidden in the *Yasna* as chapter 68, is dedicated to her. (Similar cases are: *Y.* 9-11, the *Hōm Yašt* and *Yašt* 57, the *Srōš Yašt*.) Ahurānī is not one of the “official” *yazatas* and has no day in the calendar—possibly because Arədvī Surā Anāhitā, another deity of the waters, holds the water-related function in the pantheon of the Younger Avesta. The *zaotar* officiant in the Zoroastrian *yasna* rite offers Ahurānī milk and butter (*Y.* 68.2). She represents the water in all appearances: lakes, sources, rivers, snow, and rain (*Y.* 68.6). She is invoked beside the cosmic ocean Vourukaša. She brings fertility, offspring, immortality, and peace. She enlightens thought, speech, and acts (*Y.* 68.4). Another important passage relating to Ahurānī is *Y.* 38.3-5, where the waters are invoked as “milking cows” (*agənyā-*). Ahurānī is created by Ahura Mazdā (*Y.* 38.4).

The name Ahurānī is derived from Ahura with a feminine suffix *-ānī*, which denotes “wife, mate, companion” of the bearer of the base word (cf. *tištryaēinī-* “stars near the star Tištrya” or OI. *Varuṇānī* “wife of Varuṇa”). If Ahurānī is an old pre-Zoroastrian deity, the word does not necessarily refer to Ahura Mazdā. In this case Ahurānī “wife or wives of the Ahura(s)” may give an important hint at the original nature of the Ahuras (Indo-Ir. **asura-*) as opposed to Indo-Ir. **daiva-* “god” (lit. “heavenly one”). Generally modern research sees in Indo-Ir. **Vouruna* the **Asura* whose functions are transferred to Ahura Mazdā. So the waters as “Ahura’s wives” (*ahurānī*) are the historical parallel to the *varuṇānī* “Varuṇa’s wives” in the *Rig veda*.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

J. Narten, *Acta Orientalia Neerlandica, Proceedings of the Congress of the Dutch Oriental Society*, Leiden, 1971, pp. 120ff.

For the suffix *-ānī*, see W. Meid in *IF* 62, 1956, p. 278.

Cf. M. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism I*, p. 51.