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WORD AND SPIRIT IN OSSETIC¹

The Ossetic pantheon includes two gods or spirits, *Uacilla* and *Uastyrdži* (Digor *Uaskergi*, *Uasgergi*, *Uaşgergi*²), whose names contain Ossetic forms of the names Ilya and George respectively. The Ossetes no longer know the meaning of the prefix *Uac-* (of which *Uas-* is held to be a secondary development before *t* and *k*), which at first sight appears to fulfil the function of the appellative 'Saint'. 'St. Ilya and St. George', wrote V. Miller in *Осетинские Этюды* I, 119, 'were introduced into Ossetia from Georgia by Christian missionaries, but subsequently became popular gods'.

There is nothing very saintly about these spirits: *Uacilla* is connected with thunder and lightning; *Uaskergi*'s function, according to Ossetic popular belief, is to protect honest people against bandits, but this is not so in the Nart Saga, where the god plays a somewhat disreputable part in the procreation of the heroine Satana. It is therefore understandable that subsequently Miller expressed the opinion (op. cit. II, 240, 257) that the two gods go back to the period of Ossetic heathendom, and were renamed after Christian saints under the impact of Christian propaganda.

The appellative *Uac* is also applied to St. Nicolas (*Uac Nikkola*), and to *Tutyr* (Digor *Uas Totur*), the patron spirit of wolves (*Tutyr* corresponding perhaps to Theodor, v. Hübschmann, *ZDMG* 41, 537, n. 1). My Digor friend in translating from Russian a tale of *Æfsati*, the patron of hunters, referred to this god as *Uac Æfsati*.

The current Ossetic word for 'saint' is *syhdæg*, in which, as in MPers. *ywzδhr* and Sogd. *zprt*, the meaning 'holy' derives from 'pure'. The question

¹ The gist of this article was presented as a paper to the Twenty-third International Congress of Orientalists at Cambridge, in August 1954.

² Cf. the month-name *Biy-Aşkergi* among the Mountain Tatars who live to the West of Digoria, between the River Urux and the Elbrus, MILLER, *Ос. Эм.* III, 9.

therefore arises whether *Uac*, rather than rendering the meaning 'saint', may not be a pre-Christian appellative of the spirits whose functions the Christian Illa and Kergi have inherited.

Beside the appellative *Uac* the Ossetic language has a substantive *uac* meaning 'news'. Miller and Freiman's Ossetic Dictionary contains the tentative suggestion that the two *uac* are connected. V.I. Abaev has wholeheartedly adopted this view in his book *Осетинский язык и фольклор* vol. I. I quote the relevant passages: –

(Pp. 185 f.): Av. *vāk-*, *vačah-*, survive in Oss. *uac* 'word; news'. In Ossetic the word had a religious connotation, as *λόγος* in Hellenistic cults; it serves as epithet of Christian saints in *Uacilla* and *Uaskergi*; cf. also *Aciroxs* (<*Uaciroxs*), name of a Nart heroine, lit. 'light of *Uac*', and *Aciamongæ* (<*Uaciamongæ*), name of the magic cup of the Nart, lit. '*Uac*-indicator'³. (Pp. 206 f.): Intervocalic voicing of *c* is found in the oblique case *uadzæn* (*uadzæn aftæ akænīnc* 'as the proverb goes'), in *uadzimis* 'poet', and in *Uadzæftauæ*, name of a woman in the Nart tales. (...Since the most important Christian saints bear the epithet *uac*) this word must have been one of the main religious terms in pre-Christian Ossetia. Such a term had every chance of entering the formation of proper names... The examples show that *uac* was not merely the 'word', but some higher 'divine' force, comparable to *farnah-* and *arta-*, whose role in Iranian names is well-known. In the Nart tale *The Song of Acæmæz* it is said that *uacæ roxs* 'the light of *Uac*' radiates from good Nikkola and Uaskergi. Clearly it is not enough to attribute to *Uac* the meaning 'word'. ...*Uac* was no ordinary *logos*, but 'the Logos', with capital L.

Professor Abaev's remarks appear to me substantially correct, with two reservations. One is phonological: the Avestan accusative *vāčim* can account for *uadz-*, but not for *uac(-)*, cf. Miller, *Ossetisch*, 28. The occasional replacement of initial *c-* by *dz-* provides no parallel, since the forms with *dz-* are likely to have arisen in compound sandhi. On the other hand the assumption that in *uac dz* may have been unvoiced because it stood in final position, while still not accounting for *uacæ*, *Uacilla*, etc., goes against normal Ossetic practice: 'voiced consonants in final position

³ This cup rises of its own account to the lips of the Nart hero who relates his exploits truthfully, but remains on the table if lies are told, cf. *Narty Kaddžytæ* 229 = V. Dynnik, *Нартские сказания* 298, v. also Dumézil, *Légendes sur les Nartes*, 136 f. Also Miller, *Ос. Эм.* I, 161, n. 20, connected the first element of *Uacilla* with that of *Uasiamongæ* [as he spells this name, which only occurs in Digor; the pronunciation is wafja°, secondary development of wafjia°].

are rarely, if at all, unvoiced' (ABAEV, *apud* A.M. KASAEV, *Осетинско-русский словарь*, p. 447). I can find only *nymæc* : *nymædz*, against consistent *ssædz*, *afædz*, *zæppadz*, *xūlydz*. The second difficulty lies in the vagueness of the definition of 'Logos' as applicable to Oss. *uac*: what is the meaning of 'light of *Uac*' or '*Uac*-indicator'? how did an abstract religious conception, such as Logos, come to be used as an appellative of individual gods in a way neither *farnah*- nor *ɾta*- ever did?

The solution to these difficulties becomes apparent as soon as the Middle Persian and Parthian descendants of OIr. *wāk*-, *wāč*- are taken into consideration. MPers. *w'xš*, from the OIr. Nom. Sg. *wāxš*, is clearly attested in the meaning of 'a spirit', cf. H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems* 66, 118, 228. A similar meaning (v. below, p. 488 (B) (b)) can now be attributed to Parth. *w'c*, from the OIr. Acc. Sg. *wāčam*, since W. B. Henning has established that Man. Parth. *w'c'fryd* corresponds to MPers. *mynwg* 'spiritual' (v. Mary Boyce, *The Manichaean Hymn-Cycles in Parthian*, 103, n. 1). If then the Oss. appellative *Uac* belongs to OIr. *wāk*-, we must take the clue to its form and meaning from MPers. *w'xš*.

The assumption that Oss. *c* sporadically represents OIr. *xš* is favoured by Digor *docun* 'to milk'. Hübschmann, *Pers. Studien* 64, derived NPers. *dōš*- from **dauxša*-; Morgenstierne proposed **dauxšya*- as starting form of Pš. *lwašəl*, Pers. *dōšīdan*, Sangl. *dēš*-, and Orm. *düš*-, cf. *IIFL* I, 393, II, 225; it is unlikely that Oss. *docun* goes back to any other present stem.

H. W. Bailey has brought together *docun*, *ficun* 'to cook', and *xuæcun* 'to seize, wrestle, fight', suggesting that all three contain *c* < *xs* (TPS 1936, 101). This suggestion may have to be amplified in the sense that it is early Ossetic *xs*, whether from OIr. *xs* or *xš*, which under special conditions became *c*. If *ficun* is derived from OIr. **paxsa*- the intransitive meaning of this verb is accounted for, cf. Yaṇ. *puxs*- '*pazīdan*', Junker, *Yaghnōbī-Studien* 12, and Yāzg. *past*, Tedesco, *BSL* 25, 63. But *ficun* is also transitive: *fid⁴ ficuy* means

⁴ Beside *fyd* 'meat' and *fyd* 'father', Miller-Freiman's Dictionary has the entry *fyd* 'millstone'. This interesting word may be from **piti*- 'crushing, crushing instrument', and compare with Pš. and Orm. (Waz.) *pal* 'millstone' (cf. Morgenstierne, *NTS* v, 25, who assumes Indian origin) < **paiti*- (hochstufe as in Ved. *hetī*, cf. Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Ai. Gr.* II², p. 631 c notes; cf. Pš. *wala* < *vaēti*-, and, for the ending, *NTS* XII, 93). This *pi*- may be the unextended base of Av. *pišant*-, Skt. *pināśfi*, etc., which can also be recognized in *Vend.* 13, 40: *jaθwa vəhrka sčəθwa vəhrka pōiθwa vəhrka snaēžana* 'the slavering wolves are to be killed, smashed, crushed'; this explanation of *pōiθwa*- is to be preferred to Bartholomae's (*Air. Wb.* 1893 on 899) or Geldner's (*Studien* 53).

On the other hand, under the entry *fark* two homonyms have been thrown together in

both 'the meat is cooking' and 'he is cooking the meat', cf. Munkácsi, *Blüten* I, 22, n. 1. In its transitive meaning *ficun* may represent OIr. **paxš(a)-*, cf. Sogd. *pwjš'*, *GMS* § 551.

The case of *xuæcun* is more complicated, as *c* has to be reconciled with the *s* of the past stem *xuæst-*.⁵ If *c* here represented OIr. *-ti-* there would be no difficulty. However, Miller's connexion (*Ossetisch* 26) of *xuæcun* with Skt. *svaj-*, *svañj-* 'to embrace, clasp', cf. Av. *pairiš.x'axta-*, is not lightly to be abandoned. For a verbal noun derived from OIr. **hwanj'*-, which with various preverbs displays meanings that suit the usage of Oss. *xuæcun*, can be recognized in Sogd. 'nxwnc, 'xwnc 'struggle', and 'wxwnc. These words were discussed by Heiming in *BBB*, p. 63; 'wxwnc had been connected by Lentz with the 3 Sg. Pres. 'wxt, with which it occurs in a difficult sentence: *c'nw dw' xwdbtyq 'wxwnc qwnntq'n yy xw xwny myn'bry wnm' 'wxtq'm cn nyz'wry ms mydc'nw sfsqnt qy 'wxt cn sfnyq*, *ST* II, 5,15 ff. In his treatment of this passage, *J As.* 1951, 116 ff., Benveniste has made it likely that 'wxt means 'becomes separated'⁶; a connexion with 'wxwnc is thus excluded. On the other hand, Benveniste translates the first five words by 'quand les deux royaumes prendront part à une guerre', leaving *xwdbtyq* unexplained, while Lentz's translation 'wenn die beiden einander eine Schlacht liefern werden' disagrees with the situation as elucidated by Benveniste. Comparison with *Daniel* II, 43, shows that there is no question of a 'battle', but on the contrary of the two kingdoms 'cleaving' (Aram. *dbq*) to one another. We must therefore translate: 'as⁷ the two will clasp each other, that plenipotentiary⁸ will retreat from the weak one, as clay retreats from iron'. Thus Sogd. 'wxwnc (< **awa-hwanj'a-*) 'clasping' preserves the original meaning of the base, which in Oss. *xuæcun* coexists with the secondary meaning of Sogd. 'nxwnc, 'xwno 'struggle'. For the Ossetic verb we may postulate an OIr. present stem **hwaxš(a)-* or

the Dictionary. *Fark* meaning 'piece, splinter, small plank' (cf. also *færki-færgkai*, *Памятники* II, 8¹⁰, 'in smithereens') is connected with NPers. *pāra*, while *fark* 'blade of a mill-wheel, paddle' belongs to NPers. *pārū*.

⁵ Thus also in the etymologically obscure Digor verb *xincun* 'to treat hospitably, entertain', whose past stem is *xinst-*, while its Iron equivalent *xyncyn*, which in addition means 'to count', has as past stem *xyxt-*, *xyhd-*.

⁶ Considerable doubt, however, attaches to Benveniste's identification of Chr. 'wxt with B. 'wyr. Loss of final *r* of a present stem before the ending *-t* of the 3 Sg. occurs in Chr. *-d't* after a long vowel, but is not attested after short vowels. Also the difference in the construction, which Benveniste has noted, goes against the identification.

⁷ cf. *JRAS* 1946, 181, on 115.

⁸ v. Henning, *BSOAS* XII, 309 n.

**hwaxsa-* (note that *xuæcun* is intransitive). The past stem *xuæst-* will then go back to early Oss. **xuæxst-*, with dissimilatory loss of the second *x*. The importation of *s* or *š* from the present to the past stem is attested in the Oss. inchoatives *xussun*: *xust-* 'to sleep', *cæfsun*: *cæfst-* 'to burn' (cf. Bailey, *BSOS* VI, 67), *dunsun*: *dunst-* 'to swell', *tæfsun* 'to warm up': *tafst* 'warmth', in Khot. *hušt-* 'to sleep', *kašt-* 'to fall', *dīšt-* 'to ripen' (v. Bailey, *Asica* 30, *Asia Major* (N.S.) II, 31), in Sogd. *δβxšt-* 'to collect, gain' (*GMS* § 551), and in Av. *axšnušta-* 'unreconciled', *fradaxšta-* 'taught; branded'.

The conditions in which early Oss. *xs* from *xs*, *xš*, may have become *c* are not clear. Normally this consonant group has remained unchanged. Thus *xs* < OIr. *xš* is found in *æxsinun* 'to gnaw' (connected by Miller with Skt. *kṣi-nā-ti*), cf. Sogd. *γšy-* 'to gnaw' *SCE* 83, in *ixsun* 'to be worn out' < **xšu-*⁹, cf. Skt. *kṣurá*, Gr. *ζύω*, in *æxsīn* 'lady, housewife',¹⁰ perhaps in Iron *uæxsk* (beside the unexplained Digor *usqæ*) 'shoulder' (which Miller, *Oc. Em.* III, 169, and again Abaev, op. cit. I, 18, equated with Skt. *vakṣas* 'chest'), etc., cf. also Miller, *Ossetisch* 26 (§ 24, 2). For Oss. *xs* < OIr. *xs* cf. *buxsun* 'to endure, have patience',¹¹ and *xixsæntæ* 'slops, swill', plural of **xixsæn* with suffix *-æn*, < **hixsa-* 'to be poured out', to Av. *haēk-*.

⁹ Not from **xšī-*, as shown by Digor *fexsuyun*, *fexsud*, which preclude Miller's (*IF* 21, 328) and Morgenstierne's (*IIFL* II, 209, s.v. *fšīi*) connexion of *ixsun* with Skt. *tṣīyāte*.

¹⁰ In common with other Eastern Iranian languages Ossetic has lost OIr. *θ* before *n*. Miller did not mention this development in his grammar, but neither Hübschmann (*Arm. Gr.* 20) nor Bartholomae (*Mitteliranische Mundarten* III, 29) hesitated to derive *æxsīn*, of which *æfsīn* is apparently a side-form, from OIr. **xšaiθnī-*. In addition, Ossetic provides representatives of the usual two test words, OIr. **araθnī-* 'cubit', and *hapaθnī-* 'co-wife'. The former has been recognized by H. W. Bailey (personal communication) in Digor *cæng-ærīnæ*, Iron *ælm-ærin*, *ærm-ærin* 'cubit'. The latter survives, in my opinion, in *bīnontæ* 'family, members of a household, relatives, wife', which lends itself to the analysis *bīn* (< *hapaθnī-*) + suffix *-ān* (*a-*) (cf. *binoinag*, usually 'member of a household', but in Iron *Adæmon Sfældystad*, Ordžonikidze, 1941, 8²⁷, 'wife') + plural suffix *-tæ*. The original meaning will have been 'co-wives and their children', cf. E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, 84, on the position of women among the Scyths. In Sogd. *pn'nc* 'co-wife' (v. W. B. Henning, *Sogdica* 17 f.) the same suffix *-ān(a)-* has been adapted to the Sogdian personal feminine suffix *-ānč*; this view is preferable to the one taken in *GMS* §1046. The Ossetic palatalization of *a* in *-a(θ)nī-* compares with the treatment of *-anya-* in (*suh*)*zærīnæ* 'gold' from *zaranya-* (Miller, *Oc. Em.* III, 138).

¹¹ From my Digor friend I have *ristæn næ buxsun* (or *buxsagæ dæn*) 'I cannot endure pain', *næ ibæl buxsun* 'I miss him, long for him' (lit. 'am impatient for him'). Oss. *buxs-* probably continues an OIr. inchoative **buxsa-*, the past participle of which survives in Sogd. *βωγτ'rmk* 'patient', cf. *GMS* §§ 469, 1105.

Apart from *docun*, *ficun*, *xuæcun*, one may suspect that *c* represents *xš* in the name of the Sturdigor feast *facbadæn* (variant *fazbadæn*) which Miller, *Oc. Əm.* II, 282 ff., described in detail. Gatuyev thought the name meant 'sitting in the glade', but this guess has no relation to the practice of the feast, during which the inhabitants of Sturdigor allow no one to enter or leave their village. *Facbadæn* may therefore mean 'sitting aside', if *fac* is a dialect form of *faxs* 'side' ~ Skt. *pakṣa* (v. Miller, *Oc. Əm.* III, 142), cf. *ævvaxs* 'near'; the variant *faz-* before *b* reminds one of *uas-* before *t* and *k*. Furthermore, a comparison of the two synonyms *lacamarz* and *læxamæca* 'sloven(liness)', in which the verbal elements belong respectively to *mærzyn* 'to sweep' and *mæcyn* 'to wallow', invites the conjecture that *lac* is related to *læx* 'dung' through an old form **laxša-*.

If the assumption of an Ossetic dialect variant *c* of *xs* is granted, then Abayev's derivation of *Uac* from OIr. *wāk-* only needs to be revised in the light of the meaning of MPers. *w'xš*, to acquire a high degree of probability. The meaning 'spirit' not only meets the fact that *Uacilla* and *Uaskergi* are spirits, but also helps to explain the curious use of both these names in the plural. The *uacillatæ* and *uastyrdžitæ* are nondescript spirits, said to be God's 'angels' (*zædtæ*, cf. the text quoted by Miller, *Oc. Əm.* I, 24 ff.¹²); they are a favourite target of the Nart heroes *Batradz* and *Xæmyc*, who without any apparent provocation kill a number of them at each encounter. These spirits, who always make their appearance collectively, seem to have nothing but the name in common with the individual spirits *Uacilla* and *Uastyrdži*. To us, who have reasons to think that *Uac* means 'spirit', Ossetic story-tellers may not seem to be very accurate when they use the plural of *zæd* to describe the *uacillatæ* and *uastyrdžitæ*: they should by rights have employed the plural of *uac*¹³. This plural, we may surmise, ceased to be used once the function of *uac* was reduced to that of a prefix of proper names. It would then be understandable if the ancestors of the Ossetes, when they wished to refer to the *uac* class of spirits, as distinct from the *zæd* or the *dauæg* class, resorted to the

¹² There three *uacilla*-angels are referred to as *ærtæ Tbauacillajy*, viz. *uacillas* from the mountain *Tbau*; cf. the *Song of Acæmæz*, line 166 (in Abaev's edition. *Из осетинского эпоса*, pp. 54 ff.), where *White Yelia* (= the individual spirit *Uacilla*) is said to reside on mount *Tbau*.

¹³ An early form of the plural of *uac* 'spirit' (*uac* 'news' has the plur. *uactæ*) survives perhaps in the asseveration *uastæn* (and *uasdæn*? v. Dict.), which, as it seems to be used like Engl. 'by Jove', may be a Dat. plur. meaning 'by the Spirits'. The Dictionary suggests that *uastæn* contains the postposition *stæn*; this is unlikely, for the noun which precedes *stæn* is always in the Genitive, as the examples collected by G. Morrison, *Ricerche Linguistiche* II, 79 n., clearly show. Cf. *uasæn* and *uadzæn* below, p. 488, n. 2.

plural of *Uacilla* and *Uastirdži*, the most popular representatives of this class.

Apparently the *uacillatæ* are closer to the *zædtæ* than to the *daudžytæ*. For not only are they described by the Ossetes as *zædtæ*, but they even replace the *zædtæ* in the Nart tale printed by Miller, *Ос. Эм. I*, 149, where Batradz says: 'I killed five *daudžytæ* and six *uacillatæ*'; elsewhere Batradz's conflict is said to be with the *zædtæ* and the *daudžytæ*.¹⁴

Generally speaking, the Ossetes are only dimly conscious of a difference between *zædtæ* and *daudžytæ*.¹⁵ Both are simply protective genii in Ossetic folklore. However, according to D. G. Bekoev, who translated and annotated the Ossetic texts published in *Памятники III*, the *zæd* is an 'angel', the *dauæg*¹⁶ a person who becomes a member of the heavenly host surrounding God, 'what in Church language is called an intercessor' (pp. 136, n. 22 ; 138, n. 72). This definition is in agreement with the less ecclesiastical use of *daudžytæ* in a Nart tale, where Kurdalægon, the smith whom Ossetic story-tellers sometimes describe as living in Heaven, sometimes in the realm of the dead, is considered to be a *dauæg*.¹⁷ In the absence of any other definition, it is as well to take seriously this one, which makes of the *dauæg* a 'blessed dead in Heaven'.

¹⁴ v. Dynnik, *Нартские Сказания* 348 ff. = *Narty Kaddžytæ* 261 ff.

¹⁵ *Dauæg* is usually translated as 'seraph, protective genius'. In *Iron Adæmon Sfældystad* 275, n. 75, Digor *idaugutæ* is explained by '*izædtæ*'. Miller remarked, *Ос. Эм. II*, 240, that to his knowledge neither the individual *Uastyrdži*, nor any of the other gods were ever called *zæd* or *dauæg*; however, in the *Song of Acæmæz* *Uašgergi* is referred to as an *izæd* (line 128), and a group of gods consisting of *Uašgergi*, White Yelia, Good Nikkola, *Æfsati*, *Fælværa*, and others, is more than once collectively described as *izædtæ* and *idaugutæ*. – Beside the collectively appearing *daudžytæ* there exists an individual genius by the name of *Dauæg*, who was believed to avert the plague. To him a sanctuary was dedicated near Sturdigor (Miller, *Ос. Эм. II*, 261, 283 f.); cf. *Barduag* in the next note.

¹⁶ Beside *dauæg* (Dig. *idaugæg*) we find *duag* in an Iron text, *Памятники III*, 7¹², cf. *ryny Barduag* 'god of (= averting?) illness' (Dictionary). The development is as in Dig. *bauær*: Iron *buar* 'body', etc., cf. Miller; *Ossetisch* 17.

¹⁷ *Fervysta Satana Kūrdalægonmæ. Nart æmxærd, æmnuæzt ūdysty daudžytimæ, – ærcydis Kūrdalægon Satanaŋj xūndmæ* 'Satana sent for Kurdalægon. The Nart were on convivial terms with the *dauægs*, and K. came at Satana's invitation', *Narty Kaddžytæ* 64. The name of this smith (Oss. *kūrd*) contains *læg* 'man' according to Miller, *Ос. Эм. I*, 118; on the other hand Abayev, *Ос. яз. и фолькл.* I, 71, starts from the Digor variant *Kurd-Ala-Ūærgon* (Dictionary, 703 f.), which he analyses as 'the Alanic smith *Wærgon*', *Wærgon* corresponding in his opinion to *Vulcanus*. Kurdalægon is described by Miller, loc. cit., as living in Heaven or in the realm of the dead, where he forges horseshoes, etc., for the horses of deceased persona.

Since it has long been recognized that *zæd*, Dig. *izæd*, derives from Old Iranian *yazata*-, one naturally looks to the range of Old Iranian ideas to which *yazata*- belongs for an explanation of *dauæg*. The notion of a 'blessed dead in Heaven' is most nearly rendered in Xerxes' definition of Old Persian *artāvan*:- 'The man who behaves according to the law which Ahuramazdāh established, and worships Ahuramazdāh in proper style in accord with *Arta*, becomes happy while living, and *artāvan*- when dead', *Daiva Inscr.* 51 ff., cf. also 48. H. W. Bailey has pointed out the use of *ahrav* with the same meaning in Pahlavi texts (*Zoroastrian Problems* 87, n. 4). It should be noted that the key to this doctrine is to be found in an Avestan passage, *Yasna* 16, 7: 'We worship the radiant quarters of *Aša* in which dwell the souls of the dead, the Fravašis of the *ašavans*; the best existence (= Paradise) of the *ašavans* we worship, (which is) light and affording all comforts'.¹⁸

I therefore suspect that Iron *dauæg*, Digor *idauæg*¹⁹ represent popular mutilations of Middle Ossetic **ærdauæg*,²⁰ misinterpreted as containing the preverb *ær*- on the analogy of cases like *ærgom* : *gom*, *ærhudi* : *hudi*, and many more. A parallel can perhaps be found in the participial adjectives Iron *uændag*, Digor *iūændæg* 'brave, daring, agile, fast' (cf. Dictionary and Abaev, *Ос. яз. и фолькл.* I, 483), and the denominative (as shown by the past stem) *uændyn* : *uændyd* 'to brave, dare', which Miller, *Ossetisch* 63,²¹ unconvincingly derived from **uantar*- 'victor'. From the semantic point of

¹⁸ The problem of OPers. *artāvan*- was last discussed by J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zorwrtre*, 130 f., who did not consider the Avestan evidence.

¹⁹ I used to consider, but have abandoned as semantically unsatisfactory, a connexion of *idauæg* with Sogd. *wyt'w-* 'to endure, persevere'. This verbal stem was somewhat misleadingly quoted in *GMS* § 216. The passage there referred to, *M* 133, 83, is the one from which Henning, *Sogdica*, p. 3, had quoted *wyt'wp'zny'h*. It is only in this compound that *wyt'w-* occurs in Man. Sogd.; in Buddh. Sogd. we have *wyt'wn'k* 'persevering' in *P2*, 1130, with which Benveniste rightly compared *pr'w-* 'to endure'; cf. Chr. *pt'wp'zny* 'Duldensinn' in *ST II*, which approximates the meaning of Man. *wyt'wp'zny'h*. – I take this opportunity to point out that Benveniste was the first to notice, in *J As.* 1939, 275 f., that B. *zn'kh* in *VJ* means 'body' (cf. *TPS* 1945, 138, n.4).

²⁰ OIr. *pta-* gives Oss. *ard* 'oath' (cf. Bailey *apud* E. B. Ceadel, *Literatures of the East* 101), which becomes *ærd-* when unstressed, cf. *ærdxórd* 'confederat'. For the *-(a)k(a)-* suffix added to an *-āuan-* stem Sogd. *cn'wq* 'thirsty' can perhaps be compared.

²¹ The form *æuūændyn* there quoted by Miller is not to be found in the Dictionary and seems to be due to confusion with *æuūændyn* 'to trust'.

view Av. *aurvant-* 'brave, fast' (Middle Oss. **ærǔænd-*) would provide the ideal etymon. Admittedly the initial *i-* of the Digor form, which Miller's etymology left unexplained, still remains obscure (cf. *Ossetisch* 17 f.).²²

In the case of (*i*)*dauæg* a special consideration can be adduced to account for the assumed development. In common with other preverbs, *ær-* when prefixed to nouns or adjectives that are followed by the copula in the present, turns them into virtual past participles *fiendi*. The function of the copula is thereby reduced to that of a personal ending, the whole complex acting as an intransitive preterit; cf. e.g. Digor *hæla æy* 'he is an idiot', *æs-hæla* (*fæ-hæla*, *ni-hæla*) *æy* 'he became an idiot'; *hæzdug dæn* 'I am rich', *is-hæzdug dæn* 'I became rich'; *darh-æy* 'it is long', *ær-darh-æy* 'it became long'.²³ Now, while a man who *is-hæzdug-æy* 'became rich' may subsequently fall into poverty, one who at death 'became blessed' necessarily remains so for all times. There

²² Trace of a replacement of the pseudo preverb *ær-* by the preverb (*w*)*i-* in the denominative verb **ærǔænd*? (Nowadays, according to the Dictionary, *ǔændyn* takes the preverbs *a-*, *ba-*, *s-*, and *fæ-*). Such an explanation cannot, of course, account for the *i-* of *idauæg*, since no denominative of this word is attested. At a stretch one may invoke a possible analogical (alliterative) influence of *i-zædtæ*, with whom the *i-daugutæ* are constantly associated in the formula *izædtæ æma idaugutæ*, which for practical purposes is a *dvandva* of the *mad-æmæ-fyd* type (cf. Miller, *Ossetisch* 96).

²³ The preverb originally may have belonged to the verb *kænun* 'facere', with which the corresponding transitive expressions are formed: *ni-hæla-kodta* 'he turned (somebody) into an idiot', *is-hæzdug-kodta* 'he made (someone) rich, he enriched', *ær-darh-kodta* 'he made (something) long, he lengthened'. The pseudo intransitive past participles abstracted from such periphrases were treated like real ones: the 1st Sing. Pret. *is-hæzdug-dæn* 'I became rich' was formed on *inhæzdug* 'become rich', as *ærcud-tæn* (< **ærcud-dæn*) 'I came', lit. 'vontus sum' on the past participle *ærcud-* (OIr. **ōcyuta-*), or MPers. 'md hym, Sogd. 'γtym on the past participles 'md, 'γt- (OIr. *āg(m)ata-*) respectively. In the 3rd Sing. of the Preterit the copula is usually implied (Sogd. 'γt, MPers., NPers. *āmad*, etc.), but in Ossetic beside Iron *ærcyd* 'he came', we more commonly find *ærcyd-i(s)*, in Digor always *ærcud-æy* 'ventus est'; correspondingly in Iron both *s-qæzdyg* and *s-qæzdyg-i(s)* are possible, in Digor only *is-hæzdug-æy*. These interesting Ossetic periphrastic denominatives, as one may call them, have not yet received the systematic treatment they deserve, which would take into account their complete inflection, and the shades of meaning or aspect conferred by various preverbs; cf. provisionally v. Stackelberg, *Beiträge zur Syntax des Ossetischen* 71 f., Miller, *Ossetisch* § 87, 2, Abaev *apud* Kasaev, *Осетинско-русский словарь* 492.

follows that an Ossete saying some centuries ago of his ancestors that they **ærdauæg æncæ* 'are blessed', would do full justice to his meaning even if he wrongly analysed the etymologically obscure word as **ær-dauæg*, and understood the statement as meaning 'they became (and therefore are) *dauæg*'. By mistaking 'blessed' (**ærdauæg*) for 'become blessed' (**ær-dauæg*) he would create a new word for 'blessed' (*dauæg*).

To illustrate the possible background against which we might set the world of spirits of Ossetic folklore, which as interpreted by us is somewhat reminiscent of late Zoroastrianism, we may pause for a moment to consider the mythical dreamland *Kūrys* of the Ossetes. As described by B. Gatiev in *Сборник сведений о кавказских горцах*, vol. IX (1876), part 3; pp. 26 f., *Kūrys* is a meadow belonging to the dead, which contains wonderful seeds of various cereals, as well as of good luck and misfortune. In every village there are a number of people who are able to visit *Kūrys* in their sleep. Their souls leave the sleeping bodies, mount on other people's horses, dogs, or children, and drive them to *Kūrys*. There the souls alight, pick a handful of the wonderful seeds, and return home, sometimes pursued by the dead who aim arrows at them. Inexperienced souls instead of collecting seeds bring back colds, coughs, and fever. Miller was told by his informant Tukkaev that among the Digors the region which the souls visited was called *Burku*; neighbours of 'Burku-travellers' found it advisable to tie little chains to themselves and their horses, to prevent the noctambulant souls from using them as mounts on their journeys (*Ос. Эм.* II, 270). According to another tradition picked up by Shanaev and quoted by Miller, p. 272, the destination of the souls was the mountain *Tatar-Tup*. As to *Kūrys* (on which cf. also the Dictionary p.v.) Miller verified with one of his informants that the pronunciation was with *y*, and the word was distinct from the noun *Kūrīs*, Digor *kures* 'sheaf'.

Kūrys recalls the name of the mountain or mountain-range *kaoirisa* in *Yašt* 19, 6. In the chapter on mountains of the Bundahisn *kaoiris* (spelt *kwy(y)l's*, *Gt. Bd.*, 79¹¹, *Ind. Bd.*, 12, 25) is the only mountain to be located in Ērān Vēž. Here, then, we may hope to find in Ossetic folklore a direct reference to Aryana Vaējah. According to Bartholomae the Avestan form of the name represents **karuisa*-. If this were the case, there would be no exact parallel to show what result should be expected in Ossetic.²⁴ But *kaoirisa*- is

²⁴ Discounting *mældzyg*, Dig. *muldzug*, 'ant' < **marui-ča-ka*- (cf. Sogd. *zm'wrc*, *GMS* § 247, v. also Bailey, *BSOAS* XIII, 664), where apparently *u* was transferred to the suffix by metathesis. The first *u* of the Digor form will then be secondary, cf. Miller, *Ossetisch* § 7, 3, note.

just as likely to be a *vṛddhi* derivative of the name of, say, a region **kuirisa-*, which may be the one remembered by the Ossetes.

That the ancestors of the Ossetes, the Alani, should have brought to the Caucasus the memory of a region of Aryana Vaējah, the homeland of the speakers of Avestan (cf. Henning, *Zoroaster*, 42 f.), is a supposition which squares well with current views on the subject. The Alani = Āryānas²⁵ were brought from the area of Lake Aral to the Caucasus by a migratory movement which can be dated between A.D. 25 and 35 (cf. Täubler, *Zur Geschichte der Alanen*, *Klio* 9 (1909). 23 ff.). In their seats around Lake Aral (cf. Junge, *Saka-Studien*, *Klio*, Beiheft XLI, N.F., Heft 28 (1939), p. 77), the Alani were in contact with Chorasmia, i.e. with at least the northern fringe of the country which once was Aryana Vaējah. It would even seem possible that the tribal name Alani = Āryāna reflects a connexion of the tribe with inhabitants, or former inhabitants, of Aryana Vaējah²⁶. Against such a background it would

²⁵ Abaev, in an article published in 1927 and reprinted in *Ос. яз. и фолькл.* I, 246, ingeniously finds the tribal name *āryāna-* in the *allon* smell by which the man-eater of an Ossetic fable recognizes the presence in his house of the hidden 'Alanic' hero. On the other hand, Abaev dismisses the long-cherished view that the Ossetic name of the Ossetes, *Ir*, *Iron*, Digor *Iræ*, represents OIr. *arya-*. It is true, as he says, that *-ry-* should have resulted in *-l(l)-*, to judge by *næl* < *narya-*, *dællag* < **adaryāka-*, etc. But the initial *i-* in both *Iron* and *Digor* is best explained as a palatalized *a-*, cf. *innæ* 'other' (< *anya-*) in both dialects. It is possible that the ancient ethnicon *arya-* survived beside the phonologically correctly developed *ala-*, and became *ira-* at a time when *r* was no longer affected by a following *y*. Note that among the Sarmato-Alanic names we find not only Ἀλέξαρθος < **arya-xšaθra-*, but also *Ἡρακας (chief interpreter of the Alans, beginning of 3rd cent. A.D.) < **aryaka-*, beside the archaic Ἀριαράμνης, etc.

²⁶ Such was the opinion of Andreas as summarized by E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 4th ed., I, 2, p. 898, § 572 n.: 'Aryanəm vaējo identifiziert Andreas wohl richtig mit Chvaresm, dem Heimatland der Alanen oder Osseten, an dem der Ariernamen speziell haftete'. One cannot, of course, identify the Alani with the Aryana-Vaējahians if one accepts the view, as we do, that the latter were the speakers of Avestan. But the gist of Andreas' theory can be maintained by assuming, for instance, that the tribes (of the Aorsoi confederacy? cf. Ptolemy's Alanorsoi, and v. Junge, op. cit., 78 f.) that were due to become known as Alani, had fallen under the sway of an Aryana-Vaējahian class of rulers, whose ethnical name they adopted at the beginning of our era. If the Alani are actually Aorsoi renamed, then *Ās*, the medieval name of the Ossetes, which goes back to older **Ars-* (v. Bailey, *BSOAS* XIII, 135 f.), is most likely a later form of *Aors(oi)* (as seen by O. Maenchen. Helfen, *JAOS* 1945, 78 f., who, however, proceeded with too broad a sweep), despite the obvious phonological difficulties. We may

not be surprising if the Alani had absorbed a few Zoroastrian notions, of which certain popular superstitions of the Ossetes preserve a faint echo.

To revert to our spirits, if the explanation proposed for the *daudžytæ* can be trusted, it is likely that the *Uacillatæ*, replacing an earlier plural of *uac uāxš* 'spirit, genius', occupied in the divine hierarchy of the early Ossetes an intermediate position between gods (*yazatas*) on the one side, and men raised to heavenly bliss (*ašavans*) on the other. The tendency we noticed earlier (p. 482 f.), to identify the *Uacillatæ* with gods rather than with blessed men (as we take the *daudžytæ* to be), is counterbalanced by the Ossetic replacement of the Christian epithet 'Saint' by *uac* in *Uacilla* and *Uaskergi*; such a replacement implies a somewhat closer affinity of the *uac* with the *dauæg* as interpreted by us, than with the *zæd*. It is only natural that Ossetic opinion should have hesitated over the precise definition of the nature of a spirit, or genius.

If our conclusion on the meaning and origin of *uac* is correct, the relation of Word and Spirit in Iranian thought will be seen in a new perspective. It has been assumed that MPers. *w'xš* came to mean 'spirit' under the influence of the Gnostic or Christian Logos (cf. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 119). We have seen that a similar assumption has been made for Oss. *uac*. But firstly the Gnostic or Christian Logos does not seem to have meant 'spirit' in the sense of a genius that goes about and talks or acts. Secondly there is no evidence that the ancestors of the Ossetes indulged in Gnostic speculation. Lastly, the Ossetic use of *uac* cannot very well be attributed to the Christian use of Logos, since no Christian would ever use the word *logos* to denote a saint. If then the meaning of Oss. *uac* is independent of the Gnostic or Christian Logos, one may well doubt that even the Middle Persian and Parthian use of *w'xš* and *w'c-* respectively, was due to Gnostic or Christian influence. Should we not regard as genuinely Iranian, rather than due to foreign Logos speculation, a development whose result becomes apparent to us both in Western Middle Iranian and in Ossetic? It would seem reasonable to conclude that the semantic transition from *Word*, or *Voice*, to *Spirit*, was a development inherent in the meaning of the *Old Iranian* word *wāxš*, *wāčam*.

To end, we may attempt to sort out as follows the Ossetic words and names which may be connected with OIr. *uāk-*, noting that the formal

remember that a replacement of *-aor-* by *-ar-*, which is puzzling despite Marquart, *Eranšahr*, 155, and Schaeder, *Iranica* 50, also took place in the name of the almost certainly identical Saoromatai : Sarmatai, the predecessors of the Aorsoi-Alani, and remote ancestors of the Ossetes.

difference between the ancient Nom. and Ace. was apparently made to serve the semantic distinction between the two main connotations of the word 'spirit':

(A) Old Iranian *wāxš*, Nom. Sing.

(a) 'Word': *uac* 'news' (the meaning 'word' given by Abaev (v. above, p. 478) is not found in the Dictionary), plur. *uactæ*; *uacqud* 'news' (lit. 'news-thought'); with *s* generalized from the position before voiceless stops (cf. (b)), *uas* 'sermon'.

(b) 'Spirit: supernatural personality': *Uac* in *Uacilla* and *Uac Nikkola*; *Uac*, n. pr. (cf. *Dauæg* as n.pr. of a genius, p. 483, n. 2) ; with secondary *s* *Uaskergi*, *Uas Totur*, possibly also the asseverations *uastæn* (p. 482, n. 2) and *uasæn* (p. 488, n. 2); *Uacamongæ*, *Acamongæ* (the form (U)ac/siamongæ is probably analogical to *Uaciroxs* below), name of a magical cup (above, p. 479, n. 1) also called simply *Amongæ* 'the Exposer', lit. 'the Spirit Exposer', cf. *Uacilla* = 'the Spirit Illa'; Digor *uacæ roxs* (which I take to be a compound with the compound vowel -æ-, cf. *ændær-æ-bon*, *fyd-æ-bon*), quoted in the Dictionary, s.v. *uac*, from the *Song of Acæmæz*, line 126; 'light of a supernatural being = supernatural light'; *Uacyruxs*, *Acyruxs*, Dig. *Uaciroxs*, n.pr., 'having the light of a supernatural being'; Digor *uacaxæssæn* (not in Dict.: *æ duuæ uacaxæssæn congebæl* 'on his two powerful arms', *Памятнику II*, 49³⁸) 'having the grasp of a supernatural being = of supernatural grasp'.

(B) Old Iranian *wāčam*, Ace. Sing.

(a) 'Word': *uadzæn* (Dative) 'proverb' in the expression quoted above, p. 479, from Abaev; *uadzymys* 'sharp-witted; poetry', lit. 'inventor, invention, of words', cf. *BSOAS XIV*, 485; *uadzæftauæ* 'conjunction, curse' may be interpreted as 'imposition' either 'of the word' or 'of the spirit', with a pejorative connotation which presumably is absent in the n.pr. *Uadzæftauæ*.

(b) Spirit: the animating principle, as opposed to body or matter (no more than this meaning need be attributed to Parth. *w'c* ('fryd') referred to above, p.

479): *uadzyg*, Digor *æuadzug*, 'fainted, in a swoon', lit. 'without spirit'²⁷; *uadzavard*, *uadzæværd* 'stupefied', lit. 'whose spirit is laid low'; possibly *uadzæftauæ*, see (a), conceivably also the asseveration *uadzæn*²⁸.

²⁷ The loss of the privative particle is known to my Digor friend also in *donug* (Dictionary only *ædonug*, *idonug*, beside Iron *doini*) 'thirsty' (lit. 'without water'), and *xormag* (Dictionary only *æxxormag*) 'hungry' (lit. 'without food'). Initial *æ* is also lost in *cægæy* 'in truth', *Памятники*, II, 92³⁵ < *æcægæy*.

²⁸ On p. 1250 the Dictionary has the following enigmatic entry: *uadzæn* (= *uasæn*; *uasxæn*, *somïæn*) adv. 'not for nothing, if only (< I swear?)'. Unfortunately no examples are given. *Uasxæn* and *somïæn* ought to mean 'for (= upon?) oath'. Hence *uasæn* and *uadzæn* are conceivably asseverations in the singular, both inaccurately abstracted from the plural *uastæn* 'by the Spirits' (on which v. above, p. 482, n. 2): *uasæn* with analogical *s* instead of expected *c* (cf. *uas*, 'sermon' (A) (*a*) above), *uadzæn* 'by the (=my) spirit' with a shift to the other connotation of the word 'spirit'.

Two further words have been tentatively connected with *uac*, no doubt wrongly. In *Ос. Эм.* I, 119, 161, Miller compared the name *Uasxo*, and his Dictionary has a reference to *uadz*, *uas*, under the entry *uaz*. *Uasxo* was the name of a sanctuary at Kani. The name of the god to whom the sanctuary was dedicated appears in the formula *Uasxo dæ uazæg* 'U. is (or may U. be) your guest'. Miller analysed the name as *Uas-xo*, but who, or what, is *xo*? In the Kabard epos oaths are sworn by *Uasxo-kan*, and in one of the Kabard Nart tales (*Нарты, Кабардинский эпос*, Moscow, 1951, p. 334) the god *Uašxo* is himself the curser. One might therefore suppose that the name is connected with the Oss. noun *uasxæ* 'oath'. However, M. E. Talpa, *Кабардинский фольклор*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1936, p. 638, offered a Kabard etymology of *Uasxo*: *uafa* 'sky' + *šxo* 'blue'. As to *uaz*, apart from the difficulty of explaining the *z*, the meaning 'prayer, admonition' which the Dictionary assigns to it, scarcely suits the one context in which it is quoted. *Памятники* II, 116²⁹; there, a being who first appears as a bear, later turns out to be a religious man: *ye ba læg uæxæn adtæy æma medavaræy ændæmæ uaz lævardta* 'he was such a man that he gave *uaz* from inside the room towards the outside'. At a guess one might say that *uaz dædtun* here means 'to radiate light'.