I. The Structure of Discourse

1. Syntax is the grammatical regimen that informs meaningful discourse. It is concerned with the relationship between the forms and functions of words in context (morphosyntax) and with the principles that shape their arrangement in sequence (word order).

Extended discourse is divisible into a sequence of grammatically autonomous units, which for want of a clearer term will here be called s e n t e n c e s . They are those units which can be marked off in writing by full stops, corresponding to breaks in syntactical continuity between successive units.

2. A sentence may consist of a single word or of many. Each word has a grammatically definable form appropriate to its function in the utterance. The sentence as a whole is an organic structure, in principle internally coherent, though in practice the coherence may break down if the speaker or writer switches from one construction to another, having forgotten how the first one started out, or having found it inconvenient to continue with it; such a switch is termed anacolouthon.

Being a grammatical and not a logical unit, the sentence does not necessarily give explicit expression to a self-sufficient piece of meaning. The sense intended may be apparent only when two or more sentences are taken together, or when the words are mentally supplemented from the context or from an understanding, shared between author and recipient, of the conceptual framework, factual background, or immediate situation to which the utterance has reference.

3. In nearly all sentences a grammatical s u b j e c t a n d p r e d i c a t e can be identified, whether or not they are explicitly expressed.[1] In an inflected language both are often expressed in a single word, as in Latin *dixi* 'I have spoken'.

The grammatical 'subject' is not necessarily the main topic or referent upon which attention is being directed (cf. §315). Its status is purely syntactical: in a verbal sentence it determines the choice of the verb (and in inflected

---

1 Often one or the other is understood from the context. Sentences not so analysable would include: (1) imperatives such as 'come here', 'shut up'; (2) vocatives and other exclamations, e.g. 'Veronica!' or 'Hell!'; (3) utterances such as 'yes' and 'no', which are tokens standing for the subject–predicate sentences 'it is so', 'it is not so', 'I refuse', etc.; (4) subjectless verbs such as Latin *pluit* 'it is raining'. On these last see Delbrück iii. 23–37; Brugmann (1925), 17–41.

languages its marking for person, number, and voice); in a nominal sentence (§8) it is the prior element in the equation.

'Predicate' refers to the use made of the subject. The term suggests a statement about it, but it may equally be a surmise, a question, or a wish concerning it.

4. The subject–predicate synthesis, whether explicit or implicit, is the essential nucleus of most sentences. When explicit, its expression may require several words, depending on how unitary the subject and predicate are and on the linguistic resources available for their formulation. The subject may be non-unitary, for example, because it consists of two or three named persons, 'A and B and C'. The predicate may be non-unitary because it makes a connection among several distinct entities, as in '(Diomedes) sent the horses of Aeneas to the Achaean camp by means of his servant'.

5. The subject–predicate nucleus can be built upon in various ways, for example by adding further information about the subject, or about one or more of the persons or things present in the predicate, or about the manner in which an action is performed. These amplifications may be achieved with single words, with longer phrases, or with whole extra clauses that contain their own subject–predicate syntheses. When these are attached to the original nuclear clause in certain grammatically defined ways, we deny them the status of independent sentences and classify them as subordinate clauses.

A sentence is complete, not when a self-sufficient grammatical structure has been formed or a self-sufficient piece of sense expressed, but only when the author of the discourse stops adding to the structure he has built on the nucleus and starts a new construction on a different one.

Sentence and Clause in Old Avestan

6. Sentences in Old Avestan, especially in the *Gāthās*, show great variation in their extension, from nuclear brevity to protracted utterances of considerable syntactic density. The shortest sentences are mostly answers to questions, where the question sets up the syntactic frame into which the answer fits: 43. 7–8 "*ciš ahī?*" … "*Zaraϑuštrō*", 'who art thou?—Zarathushtra'; 43. 9 "*kahmāi vīuuīduiiē vašī?*" … "*ϑβahmāi āϑrē*", 'whom dost thou wish to serve?—Thy fire'; 51. 22 *yehiiā mōi … vahištəm yesnē paitī, vaēdā: Mazdå Ahurō*, 'I know in whose worship my best (interest lies): (it is) Mazdā the Lord'.

7. Occasionally one sentence is inserted parenthetically into another (§378). A main clause is often preceded or followed by one or more subordinate clauses; a subordinate clause may also be embedded inside a main clause, or further material may be appended to the main clause after a subordinate clause. A sub-

ordinate clause may sprout a further dependent clause of its own, and that one a third, so that there is a syntactic hierarchy, as in 43. 4,

at̰ ϑβ̄ā mə̄ŋghāi taxməmcā spəṇtəm, Mazdā,
hiiat̰ tā zastā, yā tū hafšī auuå
yå då aṣ̌īš drəguuāitē aṣ̌āunaēcā …
hiiat̰ mōi vaŋhə̄uš hazō jimat̰ manaŋhō.

I will think thee bold and bounteous, Mazdā,
<u>when</u> by that hand, <u>in which</u> thou holdest those
rewards <u>which</u> thou hast set for the wrongful one and the righteous …
the force of good thought comes to me.

By far the greatest number of subordinate clauses are relative clauses. Others can be classified as temporal, causal, comparative, final, conditional, and object clauses, though the classification is often open to interpretation, especially as the same subordinating conjunction *hiiat̰* is used in more than one function. No example of a concessive clause occurs.

Old Avestan also has other means of attaching secondary subject–predicate syntheses to the main clause, by using verb-derived forms (infinitive, participle, *nomen agentis*, *nomen actionis*) capable of fitting in to the construction as nouns while at the same time exercising verbal rection. In this way the sentence may develop an outgrowth analogous in function to a regular subordinate clause. The creation of nominal compounds containing verbal elements can achieve the same effect on a small scale.

Verbal and Nominal Predication[2]

8. The finite forms of the verb serve to make (or contribute to) the predicate in a main or subordinate clause. But frequently the predicate is verbless, giving what is called a n o m i n a l   s e n t e n c e. The predicate in this case may be a noun or noun phrase, a pronoun, an adjective, or an adverb (cf. §133). Nominal syntax occurs both in main and in subordinate clauses. It is the normal way of saying 'A is B'; the verb *ah-*, which may serve as a copula 'be', does not in fact occur in this function in the *Gāthās* in the 3rd sg. or pl. of the present indicative, and it can be omitted even in 1st- and 2nd-person statements.[3]

Examples of n o m i n a l   m a i n   c l a u s e s: 28. 9 *yūžə̄m zəuuištiiåŋhō; īšō xšaϑrəmcā sauuaŋhąm*, 'ye (are) the promptest ones; (your) powers and domain

---

2   Reichelt §715.

3   The primary meaning of *ah-* was not 'be (the same as)' but something like 'be there, be available, be palpably present'; cf. Delbrück iii. 12–14. It retains this sense in passages such as 29. 5 *ā huuā*, 9 *aŋhat̰*; 31. 16 *aŋhat̰*; 43. 16 *x̌iiat̰*; 50. 7 *x̌iiātā*. In *YH* 35. 6 *aϑā … yaϑā īt̰ astī* means 'so, just as it (actually) is' (as opposed to how it might be misrepresented); it is more than a simple copula. In 27. 14, *aṣ̌əm vohū vahištəm astī, uštā astī*, it should perhaps be given a more emphatic translation than simply 'is'.

(are) of strengths'; 29. 8 *aēm mōi idā vistō*, 'this man here I have found'; 31. 6 *Mazdāi auuaṯ xšaϑrəm, hiiaṯ …*, 'that (is) dominion for Mazdā, what …'; 31. 7 *huuō xraϑβā dąmiš Ašəm*, 'he by his sapience (is) the creator of Right'; 31. 20 *diuuamnəm hōi aparəm xšaiiō*, 'radiance (is) his hereafter to possess'; 31. 22 *ciϑrā ī hudåŋhē*, 'these things (are) clear for the well-doer'; 32. 16 *hamēm taṯ vahištā-cīṯ*, 'that (is) equal to the very best'; 48. 7 *aṯ hōi dāmąm ϑβahmī ā dąm, Ahurā*, 'his lodgings (are) in thy house, Lord'; 51. 10 *huuō dāmōiš drūjō hunuš; tā duždå, yōi həṇtī*, 'he (is) a son of the creator of Wrong, and thus (is) a malefactor (of all) who exist'; 51. 16 *spəṇtō Mazdå Ahurō*, 'bounteous (is) Mazdā the Lord'.

Examples of n o m i n a l r e l a t i v e c l a u s e s :[4] 28. 2 *ahuuå, astuuatascā hiiaṯcā manaŋhō*, 'both existences, the material one and (the one) that (is) of thought'; 31. 5 *vohū manaŋhā …, yehiiā mā ərəšiš*, 'with Good Thought, the one whose prophet (I am)'; 31. 7 *tā … mainiiū uxšiiō, yō ā nūrēmcīṯ … hāmō*, 'through that will … thou dost increase, which even now (is) the same', or perhaps 'who (art) the same'; 31. 12 *yaϑrā maēϑā*, 'where (there is) uncertainty'; 31. 13 *yā frasā āuuīšiiā* 'the question that (is) overt'; 31. 21 *yə̄ hōi mainiiū šiiaoϑnāišcā uruuaϑō*, '(to him) who (is) his ally in will and deeds'; 32. 16 *xšaiiąs … yehiiā mā aiϑīščīṯ duuaēϑā*, 'in control of (that) whose danger (is) a threat'; 33. 3 *yō ašāunē vahištō*, 'he who (is) best to the righteous one'; 33. 6 *yō zaotā ašā ərəzuš, huuō … kaiiā*, 'I who (am) a straight minister in accord with Right, desire'; 33. 11 *yə̄ səuuištō Ahurō*, 'thou who (art) the strongest Lord'; 34. 13 *mīždəm, Mazdā, yehiiā tū daϑrəm*, 'the reward, Mazdā, of which thou (art) the gift'; 44. 5 *kə̄ yā ušå arēm.piϑβā xšapācā*, 'who (is it) through whom (there are) morning, noon, eve?'

N o m i n a l c o n d i t i o n a l c l a u s e s occur in three places: 31. 2 *yezī āiš nōiṯ uruuānē aduuā aibī.dərəštā vax́iiā*, 'if through these (words) the better way (is) not in plain view to the soul'; 32. 6 *pourū aēnå ə̄nāxštā yāiš srauuahiieitī, yezī tāiš aϑā*, 'the many offences against peace by which he seeks renown, if by them (he is doing) so'; 44. 6 *yā frauuaxšiiā yezī tā aϑā haiϑiiā*, 'if the things I am about to say (are) true thus'.

Interrogative sentences[5]

9. Most interrogative sentences are introduced by an interrogative pronoun or adverb such as *kə̄* or *ciš* 'who?', *kaṯ* 'what?', 'est-ce que …?', *kadā* 'when?', *kaϑā* 'how?', *kudā* or *kuϑrā* or *kū* 'where?', 'whither?', *katārəm* 'which of the two?' These always stand in initial position. See further §§136–9.

Interrogative sentences are not necessarily signalled in this way. In oral delivery they were no doubt distinguished by a particular intonation, but in the

---

4   Cf. Caland 17–28; Benveniste 215–21.
5   Reichelt §§722–4.

texts, in the absence of one of the above question-markers, we cannot identify them by any formal feature such as word order. In two passages they are indicated by accompanying references to questioning: 29. 5 *hiiaṯ Mazdąm duuaidī frasābiiō: 'nōiṯ ərəžəjiiōi frajiiāitiš, nōiṯ fšuiieṇtē drəguuasū pairī?'* 'as we set Mazdā to our questions: "Is there no prospect for the righteous–living one, none for the stock–raiser, among the wrongful?"'; 44. 10 *taṯ ϑβā pərəsā, ərəš mōi vaocā, Ahurā: tąm daēnąm, … ārmatōiš uxδāiš š́iiaoϑnā ərəš daidiiaṯ?* 'This I ask thee, tell me straight, Lord: that religion, … do they with pious words and deed have a true conception of it?'

In other cases the interpretation of sentences as interrogative depends on the sense of the passage.

Examples of i n t e r r o g a t i v e n o m i n a l s e n t e n c e s: 29. 2 *kaϑā tōi gauuōi ratuš, hiiaṯ hīm dātā xšaiiaṇtō?* 'how (was) thy ruling for the cow, when ye powers put her here?'; 29. 5, see above; 29. 7 *kas.tē, vohū manaŋhā yō …?* 'whom hast thou, who by good thought …?'; 29. 11 *kudā aṣ̌əm vohucā manō xšaϑrəmcā?* 'where (are) Right and Good Thought and Dominion?'; 34. 5 *kaṯ vō xšaϑrəm, kā īštiš?* 'what (is) your power, what your ability?', cf. 48. 8, 49. 12; 44. 3 *kas.nā ząϑā ptā Aṣ̌ahiiā paouruiiō? … kō yā mǡ uxšiieitī nərəfsaitī ϑβaṯ?* 'who (was) the father–begetter of Right in the beginning? … Who (is it), through whom the moon waxes or wanes?'

Negation

10. The regular particle of negation in the *Gāthās* is *nōiṯ*. In *YH* we find only *naē* (once): 35. 2 *naē naēstārō yaϑənā vohunąm mahī*, 'we are not revilers of what is good'.[6] In the *Gāthās* this appears only in *naē.ciš, naē.cīṯ*, 'no one', 'nothing'.

In prohibitions the negative is *mā* (§192). In wishes and advice expressed in the optative, however, it is *nōiṯ* (§§188–9).

11. Adjectives and nouns may be negatived with the prefix *a-/an-*. These negative forms are often juxtaposed with the corresponding positive ones for rhetorical effect; see §§381–4. In at least some such cases the negative form appears to be newly coined *ad hoc*. Thus in 31. 10 the *a-* prefix is used to create a nonce antithesis between herdsman (*vāstriiō*) and non–herdsman (*auuāstriiō*); it corresponds to *vāstriiāṯ vā … yō vā nōiṯ aŋhaṯ vāstriiō* in the preceding stanza, 'the herdsman or he who is not a herdsman'.

The same form of negation is used with participles, as 28. 3 *aγžaon-uuamnəm* 'unimpaired'; 31. 12 and 17 *əuuīduuǡ* 'unknowing'; 31. 15 *adrujiiaṇtō* 'innocent'; *YH* 35. 4 *asrunuuatascā … axšaiiaṇtascā* 'not hearing, not having

---

6 See Narten 91 f.

authority'.[7] And with *nomina actionis* in -*ti*-: 30. 11 *ə̄nəitī* 'through failure'; 34. 9 *əuuistī* 'through non–acquisition'.

12. *nōiṯ* may negate a whole sentence or clause, or a single word within it. When it negates a single word, that word generally contains a verbal element, as in 29. 3 *ahmāi Aṣ̌ā, nōit sarəjā, … paitī.mrauuaṯ,* 'to him Right, not a union-breacher, will answer'; 49. 4 *yaēṣ̌ąm nōiṯ huuarṣ̌tāiš vą̇s dužuuarštā,* 'through whose not doing-good-deeds the ill deeds prevail'; apparently 46. 6 *yas.tə̄m nōit nā isəmnō ā (i)yāṯ,* 'the man who comes to him unwanted', though if this is the correct analysis it is an exception to the principle that participles are nega-tived by *a-*.

In a nominal sentence *nōiṯ* may be equivalent to 'there is not': 29. 1 *nōiṯ mōi vāstā xšmaṯ aniiō,* 'I have no pastor other than you'; 29. 3 *auuaēṣ̌ąm nōiṯ vīduiiē,* 'of those things (there is) no knowing'; 29. 6 *nōiṯ aēuuā ahū vistō naēdā ratuš aṣ̌āṯcīṯ hacā,* 'indeed no patron has been found, nor a ruling in line with Right'. Similarly in a question: 29. 5, quoted in §9.

nōiṯ is several times used in contrastive expressions of the type 'A, not B'; see §383. 'Not A … nor B' is *nōiṯ … naēdā …,* as in 29. 6 just quoted; 46. 1, where A and B are again nouns; 49. 2, where they are verbal clauses.

13. If it is a whole main clause that is negated, the negative particle regularly stands in initial position, unless preceded by a demonstrative adjective or pro-noun (with any subjoined enclitic), as in 28. 9 *anāiš vå nōiṯ … yānāiš zaranaē-mā,* 'with these prayers may we not anger you'; 29. 3 *auuaēṣ̌ąm nōiṯ vīduiiē,* 'of those things there is no knowing'; 30. 6 *aiiå nōiṯ ərəš viš́iiātā daēuuācinā,* 'be-tween those two even the Daevas do not rightly discriminate'. In 32. 7 the demonstrative is accompanied by its noun: *aēṣ̌ąm aēnaŋhąm naēcīṯ vīduuå aojōi,* 'of those offences I declare that I know nothing'.

The same rule applies to subordinate clauses, where the negative normally follows the relative pronoun or other connective: 31.15 *yə̄ nōiṯ jiiōtūm hanarə vīnastī vāstriiehiiā aēnaŋhō,* 'who cannot find a livelihood without wronging the herdsman'; 31. 5; 34. 8; after relative + enclitic, 51. 6 *yə̄ hōi nōiṯ vīdāitī,* 'who will not serve him'. In 44. 13 the relative pronoun has an adjectival phrase appended to it before the negative: *yōi asruštōiš pərənåŋhō nōiṯ Aṣ̌ahiiā ādīuuiieiṇtī hacə̄nā,* 'who, being full of non-compliance, do not strive for the companionship of Right'. Demonstrative intervening before the negative: 31. 2, quoted in §8; demonstrative + enclitic, 45. 3 *yōi īm vå nōiṯ iϑā mąϑrəm varəṣ̌əṇtī,* 'those of you who do not so act on this prescript'.

In one passage the *nōiṯ* is further delayed: 44. 19 *yas.taṯ mīždəm hanəṇtē nōiṯ dāitī,* 'he who does not give that reward to one earning it'. Here the demonstr-ative *taṯ* brings its noun with it (as in 32. 7 above), but then *hanəṇtē nōiṯ dāitī* is preferred to *nōiṯ hanəṇtē dāitī* to avoid the suggestion of 'gives to one not earn-ing it'. It should not be supposed that the negative is attracted to the verb; in a

---

7   Cf. Delbrück ii. 529–31.

number of places we find initial *nōiṯ* combined with a verb in penultimate or final position. Penultimate: 43. 15; 49. 2, 9. Final: 31. 10; 45. 1 (end of verse), 2; 46. 8; similarly with *naē* in *YH* 35. 2.