

Arm. *awrhas*.

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This etymological note is offered to the memory of Archbishop Norayr Bogharian, a great Armenian scholar of the age and a true and faithful servant of Almighty God.

It has long been recognized that Arm. *patuhas*, "punishment", is derived from a Mlr. form related to Phl. *p'tpl's* /*pādīfrāh*/, "punishment, retribution"; Av. *paitifrasa*.¹ Hübschmann doubted the phonetics of his etymology, but Meillet explained it in the stages: **pati-fras* > **patiwhras* > **patiwhas* > *patuhas*, with the reduction of the cluster *-hr-* to *-h-*, a well-attested change in Arm.² The second part of the compound meaning "punishment", *frasa*, OP. *frath-*, means to question, more forcefully to interrogate, and most severely to punish (in Sgd., *frās* means "punishment" all by itself, though *pātfrās* is attested as well, with the same meaning); and it is cognate with Arm. *harc'-anem* "ask", both deriving from PIE. **prkʰ-*. In the OP. of Darius I, with ppart., *ufrasta-/ufrasta-* means "well punished", with prefix (*h*)*v-* "good".³ Mlr. *fr-*, a cluster often encountered because of the productivity of the preverb *frā-*, regularly becomes *hr-* in Arm. loans: cf. Mlr. *framān*, NP. *fermān*, Arm. *braman*, "command"; Av. *frasa-*, Arm. *hras'-k'* "wonder, miracle". The OIr. preverb **abi-*, Av. *aiwi-*, "towards, against" is rendered regularly in loans in Arm. as *aw-*: *awtar* "alien", cf. Av. *aiwītara*.⁴ We may now consider Arm. *ōrhas* (i.e., *awrhas*), adj. *awrhas-akan*, "fatum, fatalis", variant *ōrahas*.⁵ The Venice dictionary offers a *Volksetymologie*, "*ōr vaxčani i veray baseal*", "the day of death having arrived" which seems not to have been challenged hitherto, perhaps because all the other compounds in Arm. with *-has* do in fact contain the aorist stem of *has-anem* "reach".⁶ The earliest attestations are Scriptural: in II Macc. 13.7, III Macc. 5.4,7,13,16, and Is. 57.10- and in these cases the word means essentially a harsh sentence of death pronounced against one. Only by later semantic extension will it have developed the meaning of fate and fateful. The word is probably to be derived, therefore, from an unattested Mlr. form, with metathesis of the cluster *-hr-*, ultimately from OIr. **abi-frasa* > Mlr. **aw-fras* > Arsacid Arm. **aw-hras* > Clas. Arm. *awrhas*. Death is still punishment and query, sentence for our Fall and gateway into the great mystery. When the great American poet Gertrude Stein was dying, she asked Alicia B. Toklas, "What is the answer?" When Alice was silent, unable to answer, Stein said, "In that case, what is the question?" Those were her last words.⁷

¹H. Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1897, p. 226, no. 525; D.N. MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971, p. 62.

²M. Leroy, "Emprunts iraniens dans la composition nominale en arménien classique," *REArm* 17, 1983, p. 64, para. 19, with n. 64.

³R.G. Kent, *Old Persian*, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1953, p. 176.

⁴R. Schmitt, "Iranisches Lehngut in Armenischen," *REArm* 17, 1983, p. 102.

⁵NBHL, p. 1056.

⁶S. Malxaseanc', *Hayerēn bac'atrankan ba'aran*, vol. 4, p. 619, repeats it: *Mahvan ōr, or vray ē hasel*, "the day of death, which has arrived".

⁷Donald Hall, ed., *The Oxford Book of American Literary Anecdotes*, New York, 1981, p. 169.