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AVESTA I. SURVEY OF THE HISTORY AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK
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AVESTA

i. Survey of the history and contents of the book

the holy book of the Zoroastrians. Avesta is the name the Mazdean (Mazdayasnian) religious tradition gives to the collection of its sacred texts. The etymology and the exact meaning of the name (Pahlavi *ʾp(y)stʾk/abestāg*) can not be considered established, although, despite a recent study by W. Belardi ("Il nome dell'"Avesta""), Bartholomae's hypothesis (*Die Gatha's*, p. 108) still seems to be very convincing: we should read *abestāg* and derive this from Old Iranian **upa-stāvaka-* "praise." Properly speaking *Avesta* is the collection of texts in Avestan, and *Zand* their translation and commentary in Book Pahlavi. The interest of the book of Avesta is twofold; on the one hand, it transmits to us the first Mazdean speculations and, on the other hand, it contains the only evidence for Avestan, an Old Iranian language which together with Old Persian constitutes the Iranian sub-division of the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European. The Avesta is a compilation of ancient texts, which we owe to the collaboration of the Mazdean priesthood and the Sasanian political power, but of which, unfortunately, only a fraction has been transmitted to us by the Parsi communities of India and Iran, which still

remain true to the old religion. The corpus which Western scholarship has reconstituted is found in manuscripts that all date from this millennium; the most ancient (K 7a) dates from A.D. 1288 (TABLE 1).

The indigenous history of the sacred books is told in several Pahlavi texts. In essence it is as follows: The twenty-one *nask*s "books" of the Avesta, which were created by Ahura Mazdā, were brought by Zaraθuštra to king Vištāspa. The latter or, according to another tradition, Dārā Dārāyān, had two copies of them written down, one of which was deposited in the **Šasabīgān* (thus Bailey, *ZoroastrianProblems*, pp. 230-31; Markwart, *ProvincialCapitals*, p. 108, gives *Šapīkān* or *Šīčīkān*; Nyberg, *Manual* II, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 186, prefers *Šēčīkān*) treasury, the other in the "house of the archives" (*Diz ī nibišt*). At the time of Alexander's conquest, the Avesta was destroyed or dispersed by the Greeks, who translated into their own language the scientific passages of which they could make use. The first attempt at restoring the Avesta was made under the Arsacids, when a king Valaxš had the fragments collected, both those which had been written down as well as those which had been transmitted only orally. This undertaking was carried on in four phases under the Sasanians: Ardašēr (226-41) ordered the high priest Tansar (or Tōsar) to complete the work of collecting the fragments that had begun under the Arsacids and gave official protection for this undertaking; Šāpūr I (241-72) initiated a search for the scientific documents that had been dispersed by the Greeks and the Indians and had them reintroduced into the Avesta; under Šāpūr II (309-79) Ādurbād ī Mahraspandān made the general revision of the canon and ensured its orthodox character against sectarian divergences by submitting himself successfully to the ordeal by fire at the time of a general controversy; finally, a revision of the Pahlavi translation took place under Ḵosrow I (531-79).

The testimony of the Mazdean religious tradition is often incoherent and can not be taken literally; it must necessarily be confronted with the results of modern scholarship, which leads to the following picture of the different stages of the formation and transmission of the Avestan texts.

The origin of the Avestan texts. It is on this point that the testimony of the *Dēnkard* and the *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* is obviously the most based on legends and so the least trustworthy; there never was an Avesta set down under the Achaemenids and destroyed or dispersed by the Greek invaders. The Avestan texts can not be dated accurately, nor can their language be located geographically. Its phonetic characteristics prove with absolute certainty only

that this is not the dialect of Pārs/Fārs. One can locate it almost anywhere else without having to face serious counterarguments. Thus scholars have located it in the northwest (Tedesco, "Dialektologie"), the northeast (Morgenstierne, *Report*), Chorasmia (Henning, *Zoroaster*), Margiana-Bactria (Humbach, "Al-Biruni"), or Sīstān (Gnoli, *Ricerche*).

The texts which form the canon were not all written at the same period. We must at least make a chronological distinction between the Old Avestan texts (the *Gāthā*s—*Y*. 28-34, 43-51, 53; the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*—*Y*. 35-41; and the four great prayers of *Y*. 27) and the remaining, Young Avestan, texts. The Old Avestan texts are probably several centuries older than the others, although a precise date can not yet be justified. In the last ten years a general consensus has gradually emerged in favor of placing the *Gāthā*s around 1000 BCE and assuming that the composition of the best texts of the recent Avesta is more or less contemporary with the Old Persian monuments. The *Vidēvdād* seems to be more recent than the *Yašt*s or the *Yasna* and it has also been suggested that it belongs to a particular liturgical school; however, no linguistic or textual argument allows us to attain any degree of certainty in these matters. The earliest transmission of the Avesta must have been oral only, since no Iranian people seem to have used writing in early times. Only with the invention of the cuneiform Old Persian script (probably under Darius) would it have been possible to codify the religious texts. However, there is no evidence that the Achaemenids actually did this. Until the advent of the Sasanians, and even under their regime, Iran was a country in which written documents were conspicuously rare, so as far as the religious tradition is concerned, it faithfully carries on the old Indo-Iranian tradition which established the preeminence of a precise and careful oral textual transmission and made learning by heart of the sacred texts an essential element of an adequate cult. Thus, until the beginning of our era, at least, the liturgical texts of Mazdaism could only have formed the subject of an oral tradition preserved by theological schools such as that of Eṣṭaḵr, of which the tradition was not entirely forgotten. It is clear that the writers of the Pahlavi books shared our ignorance of the prehistory of the Avesta. However, we can concede that it does preserve the memory (though in legendary form) of a real break in the religious tradition, or of its splitting into sects, as a result of the absence of a unifying political power after the Greek conquest.

The "Arsacid Avesta." The existence of a written Arsacid canon was at the center of one of the most important disputes in the history of Iranian studies.

In 1902 Friedrich-Carl Andreas enunciated the hypothesis that the Avestan Vulgate was full of mistakes resulting from a clumsy transcription in a differentiated phonetic alphabet of a text originally written in a script of the Pahlavi type, i.e., the vowels were not usually marked and the same letter was used for different consonants. Thus the analysis of a modern scholar agreed with the teachings of the *Dēnkard* in postulating the existence of an Arsacid archetype. As a matter of fact, early testimonies are at variance in the question of Mazdean books in the first centuries of our era. Saint Basil states that the magi had no books and the *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* relates that Ardašēr collected the Avestan texts as they had been memorized by priests who had been summoned for this purpose; however, according to a passage from the Coptic *Kephalaia*, Mani reported that Zaraθuštra's disciples wrote his words down "in the books they are reading today." By a curious coincidence, three outstanding Iranian scholars, more or less simultaneously, published strong criticism of the theory, denying either the existence or at least the relevance of the "Arsacid Avesta": H. W. Bailey (*JRAS*, 1939, p. 112) stated that "the hypothetical Arsacid text will probably prove to be unreal, and the alleged transcribers not to have existed." G. Morgenstierne ("Orthography and Sound-system," pp. 30-31) and W. B. Henning ("Disintegration," pp. 47-48) did not deny the existence of an Arsacid text, but its practical importance. Whatever may be the truth about the Arsacid Avesta, the linguistic evidence shows that even if it did exist, it can not have had any practical influence, since no linguistic form in the Vulgate can be explained with certainty as resulting from wrong transcription and the number of doubtful cases is minimal; in fact it is being steadily reduced. Though the existence of an Arsacid archetype is not impossible, it has proved to contribute nothing to Avestan philology.

The Sasanian Avesta. It has now been established beyond any doubt that the known Avestan Vulgate originates from a canon which was arranged and written down under the Sasanians in an alphabet typologically similar to the Greek alphabet, invented ad hoc in order to render with extreme precision the slightest nuances of the liturgical recitation. The comparison of the Avestan letters with those of Pahlavi allowed K. Hoffmann (*Henning Memorial Volume*, p. 275) to date the fixing of the canon and its writing down to the fourth century, i.e., approximately under Šāpūr II. This enterprise, which is indicative of a Mazdean revival and of the establishment of a strict orthodoxy closely connected with the political power, was probably caused by the desire to compete more effectively with Buddhists, Christians, and Manicheans, whose faith was based on a revealed book. The earliest reference to the Avesta in

Sasanian times is perhaps to be found in the inscriptions of Kirdēr (Kartēr), see P. O. Skjærvø, *AMI* 16, 1983 [1985], pp. 269-306.

Of the history of the Avestan texts from the collapse of the Sasanian empire and the oldest manuscripts in our possession little is known. We know that the Muslim conquest and the dispersal of the Mazdean communities caused a weakening of the religious tradition and a decline of the liturgical elocution, which caused damage to the written transmission of the Avesta. Also, examination of the manuscripts reveals mistakes which prove that all of them derive from a single common ancestor, which K. Hoffmann (*Aufsätze* II, p. 515) calls the "base manuscript" and places in the ninth to tenth century A.D. This was proved definitively by K. Hoffmann for the transmission of the *Yasna*, and by H. Humbach ("Beobachtungen") for that of the *Yašt*s and the *Vidēvdād*, but already Nyberg (*Die Religionen des alten Iran*, p. 13) had assumed that all extant Avesta manuscripts derive from a single Sasanian archetype, and Morgenstierne ("Orthography and Sound-system," p. 32 n. 6) had adduced material from the *Yasna*, *Yašt*s, and *Vidēvdād* in support of Nyberg's hypothesis.

Contents of the Avesta. The Sasanian collection of the Avesta and its commentary (*zand*) is described in chap. 8 of the *Dēnkard*; it was probably composed of three books of seven chapters as shown in Table 1: the left column gives the names as recorded in the *Dēnkard*; the middle column shows which texts are still extant; the third column indicates the contents of the texts. The *Dēnkard* probably does not give us a reliable and credible image of the Sasanian archetype, since it is deficient on several points. Most importantly, the analysis in the *Dēnkard* is based on the Pahlavi translation of the Avestan texts and so may have left out texts without Pahlavi versions on the one hand and included post-Avestan texts on the other. Thus it takes into account Avestan texts that we know to be late compilations; e.g., the *Vištāsp Yašt*, which is considered by this tradition to be Zaraθuštra's teaching to Vištāspa, is just a poorly fabricated medley of quotations from the *Vidēvdād*. It is certain that only a part of the Avestan texts collected in the Sasanian archetype is now extant. Duchesne-Guillemin (*La religion de l'Iran ancien*, p. 31) suggested that we only know one quarter of it, since only about one-fourth of the Avestan quotations in the Pahlavi commentary are found in the extant Avesta. However, fragments such as the *Pursišnīhā* and the *Vaēθā Nask* indicate that an indeterminable quantity of juridical literature similar to that of the *Vidēvdād* has been lost. On the other hand, it is not improbable that the oldest

texts, i.e., the Old Avestan texts and the old *Yašt*s, that were known to the Sasanian priesthood, have come down to us in their entirety. Not only are no quotations from lost *Yašt*s to be found, it is also clear that the Parsis would have paid particular attention to the transmission of the most venerable parts of the sacred canon.

The extant Avesta comprises the following texts:

I. The *Yasna* (*Y.*) "sacrifice," which is composed of 72 *hād*s "chapters" (from Av. *hāiti* "cut"), is a heterogeneous collection of liturgical texts recited during the ceremony of the preparation and offering of *haoma*.

Y. 1-8 are written in the form of an enumeration: the deities are invited to the sacrifice (1), the libation and the *barəsman* are presented to them (2), then the other offerings (3-8: *Srōš darūn*).

Y. 9-11 form the *Hōm Yašt* "hymn to Haoma." *Y.* 9 begins with a dialogue between Zaraθuštra and the *haoma* personified. In it Indo-Iranian myths are reflected: the first four to pour the *haoma* were in chronological order Vīuuaŋhan, Yima's father, Āθβiia, Θraētaona's father, Θrita, father of Uruuaxšaiia and Kərəsāspa, and lastly, Pourušāspa, Zaraθuštra's father. The core of the *Hōm Yašt* is a series of prayers and eulogies. *Y.* 11 reports the curses of the cow, the horse, and the *haoma* on those who do not treat them as prescribed and mentions the parts which are attributed to Haoma during the bloody sacrifice (the cheeks, the tongue, and the left eye).

Y. 12-13 constitute the Mazdean profession of faith, which opens with the *frauuarāne* declaration "I wish solemnly to declare myself (a Mazdean, etc.)." The passage is in pseudo-Gathic, i.e., it imperfectly imitates the characteristics of the language of the *Gāthā*s.

Y. 14-18, a series of invocations comparable to *Y.* 1-8 which serve as introduction to a section called *StaotaYesniia*, which extends to *Y.* 59.

Y. 19-21 or *Bagān Yašt* provide a commentary on the three prayers *Yaθā ahū vairiiō* (called *Ahuna vairiia*), *Ašəm vohū*, and *Yeńhe hātąm*. These three very special chapters, the only ones in the Avesta which represent the kind of commentary typified by the commentaries of Sāyaṇa in India, have not yet been fully interpreted.

Y. 22-26 contain another series of invocations.

Y. 27 gives the text of the three prayers which are commented upon in *Y*. 19-21.

Y. 28-53 constitute a collection of texts written in a more ancient dialect than that of the rest of the book. This dialect is called Gathic or Old Avestan. The different chapters are arranged in unities characterized by a similar meter. The *Gāthā*s are the only Avestan texts which are clearly composed in verse, using meters based on the number of syllables. In detail:

Y. 28-34 *Gāthā Ahunauuaitī* (named after the Ahuna Vairiia in *Y*. 27): stanzas of 3 verses of 7 + 9 syllables.

Y. 35-41 *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* in prose.

Y. 43-46 *Gāthā Uštauuaitī* (from the beginning of *Y*. 43, *uštā ahmāi*): stanzas of 5 verses of 4 + 7 syllables.

Y. 47-50 *GāthāSpəṇtamainiiū* (from the beginning of *Y*. 47, *spəntā mainiiū*): stanzas of 4 verses of 4 + 7 syllables.

Y. 51 *Gāthā Vohuxšaθrā* (from the beginning of *Y*. 51, *vohū xšaθrəm*): stanzas of 3 verses of 7 + 7 syllables.

Y. 53 *Gāthā Vahištōištī* (from the beginning of *Y*. 53, *vahištā ištiš*): stanzas of 4 verses, 2 of 7 + 5 syllables followed by 2 of 7 + 7 + 5 syllables.

We see that the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* or “Yasna of the seven chapters” is inserted in the *Gāthā*s properly speaking. It is written in Gathic, but in prose. On the other hand, *Y*. 42, an invocation of the elements, and *Y*. 52, a praise of Aši, are texts in the later language that have been secondarily inserted among the *Gāthā*s.

Y. 54 gives the text of the prayer *ā airiiəmā išiio* already mentioned in *Y*. 27.

Y. 55 praises the *Gāthā*s and the *Staota Yesniia*.

Y. 56 appeals to the deities for attention.

Y. 57 constitutes the *Srōš Yašt*, a hymn to Sraoša, the genius of religious discipline. Its formulas are closely related to and partly borrowed from *Yašt* 10 to Miθra. (See K. Dehghan, *Der Awesta-Text Srōš Yašt*.)

Y. 58 praises the “prayer” (*nəmah*).

Y. 59 repeats some of the invocations of *Y*. 17 and 26.

Y. 60 contains a series of blessings of the abode of the just.

Y. 61 extols the anti-demoniacal power of the *Ahuna Vairiia*, *Aŝəm vohū*, *Yeŋ́he hātąm*, and *Āfrīnagān dahmān*.

Y. 62 is a praise of the fire (*Ātaxš Niyāyišn*).

Y. 63-69 constitute the prayers which accompany the ritual of the waters (*Āb Zōhr*): praise in 65, offering in 66-67, invocation in 68-69 (they are invoked under the name, among others, of *ahurānī*s "Ahura's wives").

Y. 70-72 again contain a series of invocations.

II. The *Visprad* (*Vr*.) "(prayer to) all the patrons" (from Av. *vīspe ratauuō*), composed of twenty-four sections (*kardag*), supplements the *Yasna* with invocations and appeals to the patrons (*ratu-*).

III. The *Ḵorda Avesta* "little Avesta" contains the prayers which are recited by the faithful on everyday occasions as opposed to those which are recited by the priest. The name of this book is not mentioned in the Pahlavi literature and therefore it is difficult to estimate its age. It comprises:

1. Five introductory chapters (Intr.), quotations from different passages of the *Yasna*.

2. Five *Niyāyišn*s (*Ny*.) "praises," addressed to the sun, Miθra, the moon, the waters, and the fire, composed of excerpts from the corresponding *Yašt*s, the last from *Y*. 62. (See Z. Taraf, *Der Awesta-Text Niyāyiš*.)

3. Five *Gāh*s (*G*.) "moments of the day," addressed to the genii presiding over the great divisions of the day: *hāuuana–* "the morning," *rapiθβiina–* "midday," *uzaiieirina–* "the afternoon," *aiβisrūθrima–* "the night, from midnight up to the dawn."

4. Four *Āfrinagān*s (*A*.) "blessings" which are recited respectively in honor of the dead, at the five epagomenal days which end the year, at the six feasts of seasons, at the beginning or the end of summer.

IV. The *Sīrōza* "thirty days" enumerates the deities who patronize the thirty days of the month. It exists in two forms, the "little" *Sīrōza* and the "great"

Sīrōza. The former consists of incomplete formulas containing only the name of the deity and his epithets in the genitive (e.g., *ahurahe mazdā raēuuatō xᵛarənaŋhuṇtō*), whereas the latter contains independent sentences in which *yazamaide* "we sacrifice to" governs the same formulas in the accusative (*ahurəm mazdąm raēuuaṇtəm xᵛarənaŋhuṇtəm yazamaide*).

V. The *Yašt*s (*Yt*.) are hymns addressed to the principal deities. There are twenty-one *Yašt*s, unequal in size and interest; among them we find those texts which in addition to the *Gāthā*s provide the most information about the origins of Mazdaism and its doctrine at the time of its early development. All of them are written in what appears to be prose, but which, for a large part, may originally have been a (basically) eight-syllable verse, oscillating between four and thirteen syllables, and most often between seven and nine (Gropp, *Wiederholungsformen*, p. 137; G. Lazard, "La métrique de l'Avesta récent," in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin Emerito Oblata*, Acta Iranica 23, Leiden, 1984, pp. 284-300).

Yt. 1-4 are mediocre, meaningless texts, composed in incoherent language; they probably result from a very late expansion of the *Yašt* collection. *Yt*. 1 (33 verses) to Ahura Mazdā; *Yt*. 2 (15 verses) to the *Aməša Spəṇta*s; *Yt*. 3 (19 verses) to Aša; *Yt*. 4 (11 verses) to Hauruuatāt.

Yt. 5 (132 verses) is an important hymn addressed to *Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā*, goddess of the waters. It falls into five principal sections: verses 1-5, praise of the goddess; 16-83, enumeration of the mythical sacrificers with allusions to their feats; 84-96, Anāhitā informs Zaraθuštra of her sacrificial requirements; 97-118, enumeration of the sacrificers of the circle of the prophet: Zaraθuštra, Vištāspa, Zairiuuairi; 119-32, description of the goddess as a beautiful noble maiden.

Yt. 6 (7 verses) to the sun.

Yt. 7 (7 verses) to the moon.

Yt. 8 (62 verses) to Tištriia, the star which controls the mechanism of rain, relates the myth of his fight against Apaoša, demon of drought.

Yt. 9 (33 verses) where Druuāspā, the goddess who ensures the health of horses, is extolled with formulas borrowed from *Yt*. 5, enumerating the prestigious sacrificers of the past.

Yt. 10 (145 verses) to Miθra, who is described as the strict guardian of the contract, patron of warriors, master of the entirety of the Iranian countries, inciter of the dawn, and god of the diurnal heaven, which he travels through in a chariot surrounded by an escort of attendants. (See I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*.)

Yt. 11 (23 verses) and *Yt*. 12 (47 verses) are dedicated to Sraoša and Rašnu, attendants of Miθra.

Yt. 13 (158 verses) to the *frauuašis* falls into two parts. Verses 1-84 praise the *frauuašis* by presenting them as agents of the creation who witnessed its early moments and saw then to its permanence (these passages constitute the only known elements of ancient Mazdean cosmogony), as protectors in battle and distributors of water to their fatherland. The second part enumerates in seven groups the *frauuašis* of the heroes of Mazdaism from Gaiiō Marətan to Saošiianṭ: verses 85-95, *frauuašis* of the deities, the first man Gaiiō Marətan, the prophet Zaraθuštra, and his first disciple Maiδiiōi.māŋha; 96-100, *frauuašis* of the early Zoroastrians (circle of Vištāspa); 111-117, *frauuašis* of the heroes of Pouruδāxšti's circle; 118-128, *frauuašis* of the heroes of the non-Iranian countries; 129, *frauuašis* of Saošiianṭ Astuuaṭ.ərəta; 130-138, *frauuašis* of the mythical heroes; 139-142, *frauuašis* of the holy women of Mazdaism. (See J. Kellens, *Fravardīn Yašt*.)

Yt. 14 (64 verses) to Vərəθraγna relates the ten incarnations in which the deity appeared to Zaraθuštra (1-28); enumerates the powers that he bestows on Zaraθuštra in return for his cult (31-33); describes the magic of a particular feather which makes invulnerable in fighting (34-46); and ends with a praise (47-64).

Yt. 15 (58 verses), in spite of its title *Rām Yašt* (hymn to Rāma Xᵛāstra, attendant of Miθra), is dedicated to Vāiiu, god of the stormy wind, who belongs partly to good, partly to evil. The hymn falls into two clearly distinct parts: 1-41 draw upon the formulas of *Yt*. 5 which enumerate the famous sacrificers; 42-58 list the names of the deity, most of which are very obscure.

Yt. 16 (20 verses), *Dēn Yašt*, praises Čistā, the wisdom which impregnates the Mazdean religion.

Yt. 17 (62 verses) to Aši Vaŋᵛhī "good fortune:" 1-22 describe the benefits the goddess lavishes on pious houses; 23-52 enumerate her sacrificers in the

manner of *Yt*. 5; 53-62 describe those who are to be excluded from her cult.

Yt. 18 (9 verses), *Aštād Yašt*, praises the *Airiiana xᵛarənah* “Aryan Glory.”

Yt. 19 (97 verses) justifies its title *Zamyād Yašt* “hymn to the earth” with the first eight verses, which relate the creation of the mountains. The rest is a hymn to the *xᵛarənah*: it enumerates its holders, tells how Yima lost it, describes the fight of the two spirits for its possession, and announces the use the final savior will make of it.

Yt. 20 (3 verses) to Haoma is a short excerpt from *Y*. 9-11.

Yt. 21 (2 verses) is a brief praise of the star Vanaṇt.

Some scholars have tried to discern distinct strata in the material of the *Yašt*s. S. Wikander endeavored to define material proper to the clan of the Friiāna characterized by dialectal peculiarities and the preeminence of the cults of Vāiiu and Anāhitā. His conclusions were adopted by S. Hartmann, who reinforced them by adding his views concerning a tradition impregnated with Zurvanism, and by J. Kellens (*Études mithriaques*), who thinks a distinction can be established between the *Yašt*s of the type of *Yt*. 10, which are essentially moral and written in the first person present tense (invocation containing *yazamaide*), and those of the type of *Yt*. 5, which are epico-historical and written in the third person preterite (invocation containing *yazata*). This distinction, if correct, reveals a duality of tradition in primitive Mazdaism based on deep divergences of formulary.

VI. The *Vidēvdād* (*V*.) “law of breaking off with the demons” (see Benveniste, “Que signifie *Vidēvdāt*?” pp. 71f.) comprises twenty-two chapters, the first two explaining the origin of the book, the rest containing diverse rules and regulations, with the exception of chap. 19 which contains the temptation of Zaraθuštra.

Chap. 1 is a prelude explaining the successive creation by Ahura Mazdā of the different provinces of Iran, each of which Aŋra Mainiiu, in response, afflicts with a specific counter-creation or adversary.

Chap. 2 relates how Yima refused to accept the Mazdean law and to transmit it to men, confining himself to ensuring their immortality and their prosperity. He completes his mission by building an artificial cave (*vara*) as a refuge from the great winter that was to ravage the world.

Chap. 3 contains rules concerning the earth, its working, and injunctions not to defile it.

Chap. 4 contains rules concerning contracts and attacks on people.

Chap. 5-12 deal with the impurity due to contact with a corpse and the purifications which are prescribed in this case.

Chap. 13 praises the dog.

Chap. 14 concerns the crime of killing an otter.

Chap. 15 deals with the five sins which deserve death (to make apostate, to give a dog noxious food, to cause the death of a pregnant bitch, to have sexual intercourse with a menstruating or a pregnant woman); a man's obligations to a natural child and its mother; the cares owed to a pregnant bitch; and the breeding of dogs.

Chap. 16 concerns the impurity of women during menstruation.

Chap. 17 describes what one should do with cut hair and nails.

Chap. 18 deals with the unworthy priest, the saintliness of the cock, the four sins which make the Druǰ "deceit" pregnant with a progeny of demons (to refuse to give alms to one of the faithful, to urinate standing, to have a nocturnal emission, not to wear the sacred belt and shirt after the age of fifteen); the evil caused by the prostitute; and the atonement for the sin of having sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman.

Chap. 19 relates the temptation of Zaraθuštra, who, urged by Aŋra Mainiiu to forswear the good religion, turns towards Ahura Mazdā and solicits him for his teaching.

Chaps. 20-22 expound a tri-functional conception of medicine: treatment by means of incantation, with a knife, or with plants.

The Avestan texts described above have reached us in a version that is, if not complete, at least continuous. They were edited by Geldner in his monumental edition of the Avesta. The entire Avesta, including all the fragments known to him, was translated into French by James Darmesteter. Fritz Wolff, basing himself on the dictionary by Bartholomae, translated into German Geldner's corpus, with the exception of the *Gāthā*s, which had been translated by

Bartholomae himself. As a rule, Wolff is more reliable than Darmesteter, whose translation follows the Pahlavi version. Darmesteter is sometimes superior in his understanding of the Vidēvdād.

VII. The fragments. In addition to the complete texts, more than twenty groups of fragments are known (cf. *AirWb*., pp. viii-x).

1. *Nīrangistān* (*N*.) "precepts concerning the organization of the cult." The first eighteen fragments comprise the Ēhrbadistān "precepts concerning the priest's activity." (Ed. see bibliography.)

2. *Pursišnīhā* (*P*.) "questions" (Darmesteter's "Fragments Tahmuras") is a small Mazdean catechism. (Ed. Humbach and JamaspAsa.)

3. *Aogəmadāēčā* (*Aog*.) lit. "we accept," is a treatise on death. (Ed. Geiger; JamaspAsa.)

4. *Hādōxt Nask* (*H*.) "book of the scriptures" is made up of two lengthy fragments, the first celebrating the prayer *Aŝəm vohū*, the second relating the soul's destiny after death. (Ed. Haug and West.)

5. *Frahang ī ōīm* (*FiO*.), Avestan-Pahlavi lexicon. (Ed. Reichelt; Klingenschmitt.)

6. *Āfrīn ī Zardušt* (*Az*.), a blessing which was pronounced, according to the legend, by Zaraθuštra upon King Vištāspa. (Ed. Westergaard, *Zendavesta*, pp. 300-01, *Yt*. 23.)

7. *Vištāsp Yašt* (*Vyt*.), a medley of quotations from the *Vidēvdād*. (Ed. Westergaard, pp. 302-17, *Yt*. 24).

8. *Nīrang ī Ātaxš* (*Any*.) "precepts concerning the fire cult." (Ed. Westergaard, p. 317.)

9. *Vaēθa Nask* (*Vn*.) concerns some points of law and religious ethics. (Ed. K. M. JamaspAsa and H. Humbach, Wiesbaden, 1969.)

10. Westergaard's fragments (*FrW*.). (*Zendavesta*, pp. 331-34.)

11. Darmesteter's fragments (*FrD*.). (*Zend-Avesta* III, pp. 149-53; frag. no. 3 restored by Hoffmann, *Aufsätze* I, pp. 221-27.)

12. Geldner's fragments (*FrG*.). ("Yasna 36," pp. 587-88 n. 6; *AirWb*., cols. 329

s.v. *āparō*, 1071 s.v. *nəmrōnāi*, 1697 s.v. *zimata*.)

13. Barthélémy's fragments (*FrB*.). (*Gujastak Abalish*, Paris, 1887, pp. 55-56; *AirWb*., col. 1168 s.v. *mānō*.)

14. West's fragments (*SlZ*.). (J. C. Tavadia, *Šāyast-nē-šāyast*, Hamburg, 1930, chap. 8.22; F. M. P. Kotwal, *The Supplementary Texts in the Šāyest nē-šāyest*, Copenhagen, 1969, pp. 116-18; SBE V, pp. 307, 338, 366; cf. *AirWb*., col. 579 s.v. *čaθruš*.)

15. Sanjana's fragments (*DkB*.). (*Dēnkard* III, p. 131; ed. Madan, pp. 113-14; ed. Dresden, p. 749; see *AirWb*., col. 1125 s.v. ^{2}*man*-, end of article.)

16. Fragment from the *Aogəmadaēčā* (*Aog*. 81 D; cf. *AirWb*., cols. 221-22 s.v. *a-srāuayaṯ.gāθā*-.)

17. Fragments Gš. (P. B. Sanjana, *Ganjesháyagán*, Bombay, 1885, pp. 19f.)

18. Fragments from the *Bundahišn* (pp. 224-25; tr. 34.15, pp. 288-89; *AirWb*., col. 549 s.v. *xšapan*, end of article).

19. Fragments from the *VidēvdādSādā* (*Vs*.). (H. Brockhaus, *Vendidad Sade*, Leipzig, 1850.)

20. Fragments which are contained in the Pahlavi or Sanskrit translations of Avestan texts. (Cf. Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* III, pp. 29-52.)

21. Fragments in the *Vizīrkard ī Dēnīg* (*Vd*.) (Ed. Bartholomae, *IndogermanischeForschungen* 12, 1901, pp. 93-101.)

22. Anklesaria's fragments (*FrA*.). (Ed. G. Klingenschmitt, *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 29, 1971, pp. 111-74.)

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Careful analysis and sifting of the Pahlavi books would no doubt reveal much more material quoted from the Sasanian *Avesta* and *Zand*. These books contain a large number of explicit quotations from various *nask*s, but the summary in the *Dēnkard* allows us to approximately identify much other material as well. Thus, much of the *Spand* was probably incorporated into

book seven of the *Dēnkard* (the legend of Zaraθuštra, see, e.g., M. Molé's edition, pp. 5-6, and J. de Menasce, *Le Dēnkart*, p. 64) and in the description of hell in the *Ardā Wirāz-nāmag* (see Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* III, pp. xiif.). The *Bundahišn* probably contains material from the *Čihrdād* and *Dāmdād* (see Darmesteter, ibid., pp. xivf.).

The manuscripts of the Avesta. The entirety of the known handwritten tradition was the subject of a definitive analysis by Geldner in the *Prolegomena* to his critical edition, where the names of the manuscript families indicate the text (*Yasna*, *Visprad*, etc.), their origin (Indian or Iranian), and whether they contain a Pahlavi or Sanskrit translation. The manuscripts that contain only the Avestan text are called *sāda* "pure." The *Vidēvdād sāda* family contains the entirety of the texts recited during the liturgy of the *visprad*, i.e., the *Yasna* enlarged by the formulas of the *Visprad* and followed by the *Vidēvdād*.

(a) The *Yasna* is the book for which we have at our disposal the largest number of independent testimonies. We distinguish six manuscript families:

1. The Sanskrit *Yasna*: S1 and J3, old undated manuscripts; P11 and K6 derive from J3.

2. The Indian Pahlavi *Yasna*: J2 and K5, both dated 1323; B3, M1, and L17 derive from K5.

3. The Iranian Pahlavi *Yasna*: Mf1 (1741), Pt4 (1780), and Mf4, which Geldner does not quote (facsimile published K. M. JamaspAsa, 1976). F11 and Br2 derive from Mf1.

4. The Iranian *Vidēvdād sāda*: Mf2 (1618), Jp1 (1638), and K4 (1723).

5-6. The Indian *Vidēvdād sāda* (K10, L1, etc.) and the *Yasna sāda* (C1, H1, etc.) contain few important readings.

(b) The *Visprad* rests on two manuscript families:

1. All the manuscripts of the Pahlavi *Visprad* (M6, J15, M4, Pt4) derive from K7a (1278).

2. Those of the *Visprad sāda* (H1, J8, Jm4, K11, L27, Pt3, Pl2) derive from a common ancestor.

(c) The *Ḵorda Avesta* is transmitted in two manuscript families:

1. The ancestor of the Indian *Ḵorda Avesta* is Jm4 (1352). J9 and H2 contain a Sanskrit translation.

2. The Iranian *Ḵorda Avesta*, which is more recent, is divided into three families: (i) F2, Mf3, K36, K38; (ii) K18a, K37, W1, W3, Pd, Kh2, L25, Lb5, Lb6; (iii) K13, H5, and M12 (modern codex written in Arabic alphabet).

(d) Most of the *Yašt*s are transmitted in a small number of manuscripts.

1. The most important manuscript is F1 (Nausari 1591). Pt1 and E1 are copies of F1; P13, K19, L18 derive from Pt1, and K15, K16, H3 from E1.

2. The Pt1 family gives a version that is independent of F1 in *Yt*. 4, 9, and 14, but agrees with E1 in *Yt*. 1, 2, 3, and 16.

3. J10, a bad modern manuscript, contains the only independent testimony for the entire *Yašt* collection. In this manuscript a source anterior to F1 shows through. D represents this tradition for *Yt*. 19.

4. The *Ḵorda Avesta* transmits independently the text of some *Yašt*s; both branches contain *Yt*. 1, 2, 3, 9, 14 (J9 gives the Sanskrit translation of *Yt*. 1, 11); the Indian branch also contains *Yt*. 4, 6, 7, 12, 16, 18; the Iranian branch also *Yt*. 13.

5. The modern manuscript H4 (1820), which probably influenced K40, gives an independent version of *Yt*. 10 and appears to agree with the now unknown manuscript Jm2 that Darmesteter used.

(e) The *Vidēvdād* is transmitted in three manuscript families:

1. The (Indian) Pahlavi *Vidēvdād* is represented by two incomplete ancient manuscripts: L4 (1323), of which Pt2 is a copy, and K1 (1324), from which M13 (1594), B1, K3a, K3b, P2, and M3 derive.

2. The Iranian *Vidēvdād sāda* (see the *Yasna*).

3. The Indian *Vidēvdād sāda* is divided into two branches, that of Br1, L2, and K10, a collection of manuscripts from the eighteenth century, and that of L1, M2, O2, B2, and P1, which are all of poorer quality.

History of Avestan studies. A specimen of the *Vidēvdād sāda*, which was given to a merchant by the Parsis of Surat, reached the Bodleian Library in Oxford in 1723: the West thus learned that Zoroaster's book was not lost. It had only to be collected and interpreted, which could be done only with the cooperation of the Parsi priesthood. This was the work of Anquetil-Duperron. He went to India in 1755, succeeded in overcoming the reticence of the Parsis, and on 15 May 1762, deposited the 180 Avestan, Pahlavi, Persian, and Sanskrit manuscripts in the King's library. He then began to analyze the documents he had gathered and prepared a translation of the Avesta, which was published in 1771. The following years saw no progress in Avestan studies, mainly on account of the long polemics concerning the authenticity of the text brought back by Anquetil, though already in 1776-1777 there appeared a German translation of Anquetil's works. Also, the notion was entertained for a long time by William Jones, Paulin de Saint-Barthélémy, and others, that the Avesta was written in a Sanskrit or Prakrit dialect. The works of Emmanuel Rask and Eugène Burnouf not only established an adequate method for a philological approach to the text, but also proved conclusively that though Avestan was a language with an Iranian phonetic system, it was not the direct ancestor of Modern Persian. The deciphering of the Old Persian inscriptions finally proved, by revealing an Iranian language closely akin to Avestan and dating from the Achaemenid period, that the language of the Avesta was an antique representative of an independent Indo-European language, which was however more closely related to Indian than to any other branch of the family. The publication of a complete edition of the Avesta, by Nicolas Westergaard, a follower of Rask, concluded this first stage of the research.

Avestan studies were particularly active during the second half of the nineteenth century and became involved in a fierce polemic between the "traditional" school represented by scholars such as Spiegel and Darmesteter, who considered that the Avesta could only become clear with the help of the native Pahlavi commentary, and the "Vedic" school, of which Karl-Friedrich Geldner was the most famous representative. The latter school, skeptical about the commentary, which in its view was no more reliable a guide to the Avesta than was Sāyaṇa's commentary to the Rigveda was convinced that the best approach to the true meaning of the Avesta was the etymological one, for which Vedic provided abundant material. During the last years of the century the discord was, if not dissipated, at least mollified: The representatives of both schools became aware that their respective methods were legitimate and dangerous at the same time, and, above all, they had learned to rate the

Pahlavi commentary at its true value. This estimate of the Pahlavi commentary has not changed since that time (Klingenschmitt, "Die Pahlavi-Version"); it is essential for the understanding of the *Vidēvdād* and some fragments such as the *Nīrangistān*, but absolutely devoid of any value as to the *Yasna* and texts such as the *Vištāsp Yašt*. The scholars of that generation gave Avestan philology its great monuments, which still have not been superseded. We must mention Darmesteter's translation (1892-1893), Geldner's monumental critical edition (1889-1896), which was based upon the analysis of more than 120 manuscripts, the grammatical description of Avestan in the *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie* (1896), and the *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (1904) by Christian Bartholomae.

The year 1902 opened a new period in the history of Avestan philology. That year, at the congress in Hamburg, Friedrich-Carl Andreas stated the hypothesis that the Avesta, as it is transmitted to us, was a clumsy transcription in a differentiated phonetic alphabet of a text—the Arsacid archetype—that had been recorded in a script that omitted vowels and confused some consonants (see Andreas iii). From this he logically concluded that the only adequate philological approach to rediscover the authentic aspect of a form consisted in imagining the manner in which it was written in the Arsacid archetype. For more than forty years this principle of graphic restoration was universally applied. It was not until counterarguments were brought to light during World War II by Henning ("Disintegration"), Bailey (*ZoroastrianProblems*), and Morgenstierne ("Orthography and Sound-system") that confidence in Andreas' principle was lost. But harm had been done. Avestan philology had gone off on a wrong track precisely during the important fifty years in which the Vedic, Greek, or Latin philologies accomplished progress of prime importance and produced reference books of paramount value. Only two important works were published during that period: *Les infinitifs avestiques* by Emile Benveniste (Paris, 1935) and *Les composés de l'Avesta* by Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin (Paris and Liege, 1936), works which achieved results of value because their authors, while claiming to apply Andreas' methods, only rarely did so.

Progress in Avestan studies from 1902 until about 1965 was confined largely to the elucidation of particular facts, almost always from the etymological point of view. Two approaches were available: etymology "from above," from Vedic and Indo-European, and etymology "from below," from Middle Iranian dialects that became known in the course of this century. The two approaches

did not give scope for a confrontation, as had happened in the nineteenth century, because their fields of research were not the same. Comparison with Vedic and Indo-European allows us to explain morphological facts and is more fruitful in the analysis of the most ancient parts of the Avesta, while the Middle Iranian languages help clarify the phonetic and semantic aspects. Two outstanding works, both published in 1959, illustrate this point in a striking way. In his new translation of the *Gāthā*s, H. Humbach exploited to the full the "Vedic" approach (it was used later by S. Insler in his translation of the *Gāthā*s). On the other hand, I. Gershevitch, in his edition of *Yt*. 10, shed much light on the text by comparing the Middle Iranian languages.

Over the last twenty years K. Hoffmann has been in the center of the renewal of an adequate philological approach to the Avesta. His critical investigations have resulted in his delineating convincingly the history of the formation of the canon and in his establishing an important point of methodology, namely that the extant Avesta is not that of the authors but that of the Sasanian diascevasts. Thus the primary task of the philologist is to determine exactly what was written in the canon that the Sasanian priesthood collected in the course of the fourth century. The only sound way to answer this question is to combine the traditional methods of philological analysis with the handling of a linguistic postulate. The different readings must be evaluated on the basis of criticism of the manuscripts, and the reading which must be considered as genuine in the sense that it belonged to the Sasanian archetype must be confronted with the linguistic postulate, i.e., with the form which comparison with Vedic leads one to expect. If both agree, we can consider it as a proof.

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