



HĀDŌXT NASK

HĀDŌXT NASK (Book of scriptures), the sixth of the seven Gaθic *nasks* (*Gāsānīg*) of the Sasanian Avesta, according to the *Dēnkard* (8.45.1). The summary of it given in the *Dēnkard* is, however, too brief, and also too vague and too abstract to provide a clear idea of its original content. It is said to have consisted of 3 divisions containing 133 sections, the first one containing 13 sections, the second 102, the third 19 (which actually makes 134 sections), and to have started with commentaries on the recitation of the prayer *Ahura vairiia* (see AHUNVAR). Edward William West (pp. 166 ff. n. 6) expressed doubts about the possibility of identifying some of the fragments of this nask in the Avesta edition.

According to James Darmesteter (III, p. XII), six extracts of this *nask* have been preserved: the *Fšūšō maθra* (Y. 58), the *Srōšyašt hādōxt* (Yt. 11), the two *Hādōxt nask* fragments (*Hādōxt nask* 1 and 2; see below), the *Afrīnagān ī Gāhānbār* (A 3) and a brief quotation of the *Saddar*, which has become known as Fragment Darmesteter 4 (FrD 4). [Karl Friedrich Geldner](#) (1896) seems to have excluded the *Fšūšō maθra* from this list.

The reasons for attributing these texts to the *Hādōxt nask* are diverse and of variable authority. In the case of the *Afrīnagān ī Gāhānbār* (see [GĀHĀNBĀR](#)) and the Fragment Darmesteter 4, there is merely a hypothesis based on their content. The former deals with the preparation of festivals and the latter with the respect toward masters, two subjects that *Dēnkard* (8.45.1) actually seems to attribute to the *Hādōxt nask*.



The two texts edited by Niels Ludwig Westergaard (1852) as “Yasht-fragment 21” and “Yasht-fragment 22” are commonly known by the title *Hādōxt nask* 1 and 2 since their re-edition by Martin Haug and E. W. West in 1872. This title has not been called into question, but it probably reproduces an ancient Parsi tradition. The problems relating to this text have been thoroughly re-examined by Andrea Piras.

The text of the *Hādōxt nask* fragments has come down to us in two manuscripts based on a common origin, and is remarkably old for the Avestan manuscript tradition. The colophon of H6 (Haug collection) is dated 20 November 1397 by the copyist Kamden. K20 (Rask collection) is a set of manuscripts from the end of the 14th century recopied by the copyist Mehrābān, whose activity is attested from 1320. The colophon of the *Hādōxt nask* fragments, reproduced in extenso, is dated 1350. The two fragments greatly differ from one another in their content. While the first one exalts the power of the *Ašəm vohū* formula, the second makes particularly important contributions to our knowledge of Mazdean conceptions regarding the survival of the soul. It says that the *uruuan*, the intra-corporal soul that produces the feeling of the I, when liberated by death, stays for three nights at the head of the deceased, incapable of perceiving, of being perceived or of moving. At the dawn of the third day, the *daēnā*, (see *DĒN*), which is the mobile and seeing soul, the soul of the path, appears to it and guides it towards the beyond. Ahura Mazdā welcomes the newcomer and immediately addresses him by the vocative case of *ašauuan* “adherent of *Aša*” (see also *AŠAVAN*) or *druuant* “adherent of *Druj*”. This succinct judgement describes the attitude he had, when alive, towards the order of the world, and now that he is dead, identifies him officially and definitively with the host of paradise or of hell. The process of acceding to paradise can be set in motion because the acquired piety has, at the crucial moment, suggested that he recite the adequate text, the first *hāiti* (chapter) of the second *Gāthā* (Y. 43) and especially its first strophe. From that moment, the soul enjoys the same *šāiti* “tranquility” which piety had provided to the living man. This feeling has three aspects: the peace of sleep during the three nights of death, the absolute trust in what was to happen, and also the pleasures of love. The *daēnā* is a young girl who has just reached the age of nubility (*kainīn*) and the *uruuan* a man whom death has just returned there (*yuuan*). The transition of the “young girl” to becoming a “young woman” (*carāiti*) to mark the *daēnā* discreetly and surely reveals the matrimonial character of the meeting. The Mazdean death thus appears like a marriage with oneself (see Kellens, 1995).



The F1 manuscript and its copies thus explicitly call the *Yašt* 11 *Srōš yašt hādōxt*, thus distinguishing it from *Srōš yašt se šabag* “*Srōš yašt* of the three nights” (Y. 57), with which it indeed has many passages in common. It is no doubt significant that its original part, the phrases 1 to 7, do not belong to the *Yašt* genre (formulae in *yazāi* and *yazamaide*), but magnify the power of prayer (about this text, see Kreyenbroek).

The *Fšūšo mąθra* or “formula of the livestock conqueror” (Y. 58) is qualified with *haδaoxta-* in *Yasna* 59.23. This adjective thus confirms its belonging to the corpus of Avestic texts called *haδaoxta-* mentioned in *Visperad* 1.8 and 2.10, which were prestigious enough to be called “high standard” (*ratu bərəz*). Nevertheless the *Yasna* 58 is a text of a poorly elucidated structure which might have consisted, at least partially, of Old-Avestic phrases (Pirart).

The Avestan adjective *haδaoxta-* (lit: recited with) must have implied a text complementing another. It is tempting to conclude from the indications we have that each text belonging to the *Stot yašt*, which is the basic *nask gāsānig*, had been provided with a “complement” explaining what its particular power consisted of. This quite closely corresponds with the “remedy whose utterance aloud by the faithful is a chief resource for the creatures of the sacred beings” (West, p. 168). The *Dēnkard* résumé mentions a lost “complement” of the *Ahuna vairiia*. We probably possess, wholly or partly, those of the *Ašəm vohū* (*Hādōxt nask* 1), of the *Yasna* 43.1 (*Hādōxt nask* 2), and of the *Yasna* 57 (Yt. 11). The *Yasna* 58 appears to be the complement of a lost Old-Avestan text, of which it provides several quotations that are unfortunately difficult to define.

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