



VAEΘĀ

VAEΘĀ, a short Avestan text with Pahlavi translation; each Avestan sentence is followed by its Pahlavi translation and sometimes with additional explanatory glosses. *Vaeθā* took its name from the first words of the text: *vaeθā daēniīā māzdaiiasnōiš ahurahē mazda mraōt* “the knowledge of the Mazdayasnian religion, Ahura Mazdā said.” The text represents a fragment of the Nikātom Nask (one of the *dādīg* “law-related” nasks; for a list of the nasks, see [AVESTA](#), Table 1), according to a note in Persian, in manuscript B, used by [James Darmesteter](#) (1886, p. 183) and also in ms. F8bis (Humbach and Jamaspasa, pp. 12, 58).

The text has the following sections: questions on religious conduct and disposal of the dead; parallels to some quotations found in *Frahang ī ōīm*; questions regarding intercourse between a Zoroastrian man and a non-Zoroastrian woman, children born from that relation, and the question of their inheritance; supplementary note on atonement and repentance; a collection of incomplete Avestan quotations from the *Pahlavi Vidēvdād*; supplementary quotations taken from the Avestan *Vidēvdād*; rituals pertaining to the fourth day; conversion to Zoroastrian religion from other faiths; the five watches (*gāh*) of the day; the formula/prayers recited before and after passing urine.

Vaeθā is preserved in two principal manuscripts from the nineteenth century, one of which has an interlinear Persian translation. (See list of all manuscripts in Humbach and Jamaspasa, eds., 1969, pp. 11-16.) These were found at Navsari by [Martin Haug](#), who undertook a tour in [Gujarat](#) between 1863 and



1864 and examined several of the Parsi libraries; one manuscript is in Avestan, and the other is in Avestan with Pahlavi translation (Haug, 1878, p. 46). When Darmesteter was in India, Dastur [Peshotan Sanjana](#) brought to his attention the existence of *Vaeθā* (Kotwal, 1966, Preface, p. i), and he published a portion of it (Darmesteter, 1886).

Another portion of the text is preserved in a nineteenth-century manuscript in the Munich State Library—one of those collected by Haug (M35 in Geldner, 1896a, p. x). The *Vaeθā* fragment that it contains was identified by [Karl Geldner](#) as related to, but not identical with, Darmesteter's text; Geldner made note of the text in his other 1896 review of manuscripts (1896b, p. 9, with n. 8).

[Edgard Blochet](#) made a copy of the whole text for Darmesteter from a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (ms. Supplément Persan 1216; Blochet, 1900b, pp. 68 ff.; see Kotwal, 1966, Preface, p. ii; Humbach and Jamaspasa, 1969, p. 12). He studied and translated into French, but did not edit, the entire text of *Vaeθā* (Blochet, 1900). [Christian Bartholomae](#) in a 1901 article transcribed the Munich fragment and its heading (which contains the attribution “*nask*” applied to the text), noted correspondence with part of Blochet's translation, and briefly discussed points of script and word formation. He subsequently cited the fragment in his 1904 *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* as Fragment Bartholomae (FrB; *AirWb.*, p. xxvi).

At that time the text was treated as an authentic fragment. All eight manuscripts of the text (E20, F3, F8, F54, F55, T34, T38, T64) held at the Meherji-Rana Library at Navsari were attributed to the nineteenth century based on a dated colophon or on general evidence.

Later, [B. N. Dhabhar](#) described the text as “a modern production written in very incorrect Avesta and with equally incorrect Pahlavi” (1923, p. 147). F. M. Kotwal, after the examination of the Navsari manuscripts, came to the conclusion that the work as a whole was a nineteenth-century forgery; and he sent a handwritten copy of it to [W. B. Henning](#), who concurred with his opinion (Kotwal, 1966, Preface, p. iii, n. 10). Kotwal then edited the text of *Vaeθā* from the eight Navsari manuscripts and published it (Bombay, 1966).

However, in the view of Helmut Humbach and Kaikhusroo M. Jamaspasa (1969, p. 16), who published a new edition of the text, the origins of *Vaeθā* might reach back beyond the eighteenth century. Humbach and Jamaspasa

collated many more manuscripts, which were not available to Kotwal, and based their edition on the two undated manuscripts T38 and F54. In their edition, the Avestan and Pahlavi versions appear in transcription, with a facsimile of manuscript T38 at the back of the book.

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