



VENDĪDĀD I. SURVEY OF THE HISTORY AND CONTENTS OF THE TEXT

VENDĪDĀD

i. Survey of the History and Contents of the Text

Of the three major divisions of the 21 Nasks of the Sasanian *Avesta*, the Vendīdād—Avestan *widaēwa-dāta-*, Pahl. *jud-dēw-dād* “The Law repudiating the Demons” (Benveniste, 1970)—was the last of those called *dādīg* “dealing with law,” and 19th overall. The summary of its contents given in the 9th-century Dēnkard (Bk. 8.44; West, 1892, pp. 6-8, 152-66; ed. Madan, pp. 777-84) accords closely with the extent of the received text. In both the latter and the former chapter 12 is omitted, though in the Mss the numbering after 11 jumps to 13. K2 and the Mss descended from it contain a chapter 12, but this is an 18th century composition (West, 1892, pp. 160-61). Thus, the received text of both the Avestan and Pahlavi versions (see below) is as it was in the 9th century, and we can only assume that at some point after the fall of the Sasanian empire the twelfth chapter became lost. Since this chapter is also absent from the Vendīdād Sāde Mss. (on which, see below), we can conclude that the composite texts were constructed after the 7th century, that is, after the loss of Chap. 12, and that the Widēwdād-ceremony (Modi, 1922, pp. 350-51) is an innovation of the Islamic period.



Why did the Vendīdād survive almost intact, while so much else of the Sasanian Avesta was lost or has been preserved only in the countless citations of the 9th century books? The answer lies, most probably, in its ritual use for the nocturnal Widēwdād-ceremony intended to protect from the demonic menace, as well as in its general applicability to crucial matters of purity and pollution. As a work of literature and theology, the Vendīdād has generally been the object of much abuse by scholars (see Bishop, 1974, pp. 12-14), in that, like Leviticus, it has little appeal to modern tastes. Nevertheless, it is nearly unique among Avestan texts in the view it gives of certain aspects of the life of the Zoroastrian community.

The manuscripts, text-criticism, and translations. Owing to the special employment of the Avestan text in the Widēwdād-ceremony, there developed two parallel, though not wholly independent, manuscript traditions. The one may be called the Pahlavi Vendīdād (PV), in that the Avestan text is accompanied by the Pahlavi “translation.” The other is the Avestan text interpolated, along with the Vispered, into the Yasna (for details see Modi, 1922, pp. 351-54), with the entire compilation bearing the name Vendīdād Sāde (VS). Further, there are two VS Ms traditions: an Iranian one, which is quite faithful to the Avestan text of the PV, and an Indian one, which diverges from the Iranian VS and the PV. The Mss of the VS became the Vulgate texts of their respective communities, and, while they abound in number, they (especially those of the Indian branch) are of limited text-critical value.

Of the PV tradition there exist two old Mss to which all later Mss can be traced. L4 was completed on 28 August 1323 by the scribe Mihrābān Kay Kusrow at Nawsari. K1 was completed by the same scribe on 17 May 1324 at Cambay. Both are now incomplete and damaged, though folios 2-32, then in the possession of Ervad Mānekjī Rūstamjī Unvālā, were used by D. Hoshang Jāmāsp in his 1907 edition. Nevertheless, M13 completed on 13 May 1594 by Ardašir Zīwā at Broach is preserved as the sole complete and direct transcript of K1. From M13 are immediately descended B1 and K3b, both undated. From a lost copy of B1 are immediately descended K3a, M3, both undated, and P2, completed in 1728 by Dastur Dārāb at Surat. Finally, in the K1 line are K2, also by Dastur Dārāb and much influenced by the Vulgate, and P10, a 19th-century copy based on both K1 and L4 lines. The only authoritative Ms in the L4 line is Pṭ. Undated, this Ms appears to be a copy of a lost copy of L4. It is both influenced by the Vulgate and has been corrected by a second hand in conformity to P2. Through colophons the prehistory of the L4-K1 lines can be



plotted. Mihrābān used a Ms which his father Rustam Mihrābān Marzbān had made shortly after his arrival in India in 1269, who in turn had copied a Ms made by Ardašir Wahman in Iran ca. 1205. Finally, that copy was of a Ms made by Hōmāst (date?). (See [Table 1.](#))

Both Iranian and Indian classes of the VS derive from a Ms tradition older than Rustam's PV manuscript. The authoritative Mss of the Iranian line are Mf2 (29 May 1618) and Jp1 (13 July 1638), both in the Yazd tradition. In K. F. Geldner's opinion these represent the Iranian Vulgate and are the descendants of a revised, critical version which would have been composed "in strict adherence to a Pahlavi Avestā codex now lost" (*Avesta* I, p. xxiii). The Indian VS appears to derive from the Seistan tradition. As mentioned, its Mss are of limited text-critical value.

The Pahlavi commentary was first edited and published by Spiegel (1853), where the Avestan and Pahlavi texts, both in their respective scripts, are given separately. P. Sanjana (1895) published the Pahlavi text only, as "the text prescribed for the B.A. and M.A. examinations of the University of Bombay." Again, H. Jamasp (1907) published the Pahlavi version beside his edition of the Avestan text. These latter two are useful editions in Pahlavi script, but must be used with caution, as the authors had recourse to a small numbers of Mss either in their possession or available in contemporary Bombay, as well as to the Spiegel edition. In any case, the Pahlavi version of the text is surprisingly faithful to the original. Although it is often referred to as a translation, as, for example, in the *AirWb.* citations of the "Pū" (= Pahlavi Übersetzung), it is not so much a translation as a running word-for-word gloss. That is, without changing the word order to reflect Middle Persian syntax, the commentator has, in the same manner as the Yasna commentary, glossed in order every Avestan word, often, though not always, adding an *ežāfa* or a preposition to indicate syntactic relationships. The biggest problem for understanding the glosses is in respect to verb endings, as there is a constant vacillation in the 3rd person between singular and plural endings, often in disregard of the obvious Avestan form. Is this due to a very faulty scribal tradition, or was it part of the original gloss?

There are only two worthwhile complete translations. The more philologically reliable is the German translation of Fr. Wolff, itself based on Chr. Bartholomae's dictionary. In many ways far more useful, provided one reads with great care, are the translations of J. Darmesteter. His *Zend-Avesta* was first brought out in English translation in the *Sacred Books of the East* (1880)



and again in French (1892) with greatly expanded notes. A second English edition, revised by the author and completed after his untimely death by West, appeared in the *SBE* (1895). The French translation is a monument of Avestan scholarship, its greatest value residing in the copious notes, which attempt to deal seriously with the Pahlavi version and more generally with the authority of the Pahlavi books.

Dating of the Avestan text. Since the nature of the received text itself is composite and heterogeneous, it is impossible to assign a date to the text without specifying what the date refers to. Thus, final redaction will have a much younger date than those which one might assign to the various parts. Henning (1942, pp. 235-39) argued that, in matters of linear measurement, Avestan texts exhibit two systems. The one, consisting of the *hāra* and *carātu* or *carātā*, was used for long distances and was derived from the measurements of race courses. This system is found especially in older texts, such as the *Yašts*, and is Iranian in origin. The other, used for short distances, “so closely resembles the common Greco-Roman system, as a whole and in all details, that its foreign origin can be taken for granted. It was presumably introduced into Persia by the Macedonian conquerors.” Accordingly, at least those sections of the text which use the system of measurements for short distances could be assigned a post-Achaemenid date of composition (cf. Gershevitch, 1968, p. 27; Boyce and Grenet, 1991, p. 68). However, there is substantial evidence, derived from Achaemenid architecture, that measures corresponding to the Greek were already in use (Bivar, 1985, pp. 625-30). Further, the Avestan terms may simply reflect an indigenous system analogous to the Greco-Roman system, as the latter cannot claim priority in the assignment of fingers, hands, spans, cubits, fathoms, feet, and paces for units of measure. The Avestan terms are all good Iranian words (except for *baši* and *ṭbišiš*, whose meaning is unknown, unless one assumes *a priori* the exact correspondence to Gr. *kóndulos* “knuckle”), and many correspond to terms in Old Indian: Av. *dišti* ‘short span’: OInd. *diṣṭi*, Av. *wītasti* “normal span”: OInd. *vitastī*, Av. *paḍa* “foot”: OInd. *pada*; Av. *frārāθni* “cubit”: OPers *arašni*, OInd *aratnī*; Av. *ərəzu* “finger(breadth)” is glossed by Pahl. *angust* (cf. Av. *angušta*): OInd. *aṅgúṣṭa* = *aṅgula*. That is, the measurement vocabulary found in the Vendīdād cannot reliably serve as a guide to dating the text.

There is general agreement among scholars that the Avestan of the Vendīdād bears witness to a late and degenerate state of the language. One encounters such infelicities as lack of agreement in case and number, as well as gender, in



unexpected verbal forms, and in tortured syntax. A huge editorial conundrum is to decide where the received text preserves the reading that the author intended and where the Ms tradition is the cause of error. Quite apart from text-critical problems of Ms readings, however, stands the problem of understanding how the text was constructed. A review of the contents of the Vendīdād (see below) reveals that this is a quite heterogeneous work. Rather than the creation of a single author composing in his native language, the Vendīdād is the conscious product of a redactor (or redactors) who has assembled diverse materials from sources now mostly lost. Seen in this light, many of the grammatical and syntactical problems are more accurately traced to the incongruity of sources which frequently make up the patchwork of the text. For example, Chap. 3.14 is composed out of at least three different sources. The opening prohibition, “Let no one carry a dead (man) alone” (*mā.ciš̥ *barōt̥> aēwō yaṭ̥ iristəm*), appears to be coordinated with the protasis of the immediately following statement: “But if *for him* he should carry a dead (man) alone” (*āaṭ̥ yezi.šē barāt̥ ...*). But the enclitic *–šē*, having no referent, betrays the independent source. The apodosis, “the Nasu will surely contaminate (him)” (*upa wā nasuš̥ raēθβāt̥*), is in order; however, *raēθ-* should take the instrumental case rather than the ablative in the following series of body-parts, which, accordingly, will have been taken from another context (cf. *Vd.* 9.16 ff.). Also in this series the term *paitiš̥.x^w arənāḍa* “from the jaw” is a gloss on “having a tongue” (*hizuma(n)t*), i.e., mouth.” Then, there is an abrupt switch to the plural: “This Nasu Druj flies upon their nails. They become incapable of being purified for ever and ever” (*aēšq̥m paiti srūye aēša druxš̥ yā nasuš̥ upa.dwqsaiti. ayaoždya bawainti yawaēca yawaētātāeca*). In this example we see that the passage is not the rude essay of someone attempting to compose in Avestan; rather, it is the piecing together of separately good Avestan phrases by someone who could not compose Avestan, yet who could produce, nonetheless, an intelligible statement. These considerations lead to the conclusion that the text of the Vendīdād was redacted after Avestan ceased to be a live medium of communication, yet was still understood in its general contours. If, as is generally held, the Zoroastrianized verses of the Yašts were composed in decent Avestan approximately in the 5th century B.C.E., then the Vendīdād will have been composed in the Arsacid period, if not even under the early (?) Sasanians.

As imprecise as the dating of the redaction may be, the dating of the materials so redacted seems a nearly hopeless task. One can observe, though, that the repetitious style of many sections, which has brought the charge of literary



vacuity, is probably traceable to oral compositions, for which one can find ample analogies, for example, in the originally oral Theravāda Buddhist scriptures.

Dating of the Pahlavi text. Despite the differences of opinion among scholars over the dating of the great compilation of the Sasanian Avesta and the invention (probably for this enterprise) of the Avestan script (see [AVESTA](#)), the Iranian traditions of the cultural blossoming under Xusrow I (531-79 C.E.) certainly included writings on law. The one remaining collection of legal judgments from the Sasanian era, the *Mādayān ī Hazār Dādistān*, can be dated to ca. 615 C.E. in the reign of Xusrow II (591-628) (Perikhanian, 1997, p. 12). As already noticed, the Sasanian Avesta contained the Vendīdād as one of its *dādīg* Nasks. Now, the Pahlavi commentary to Vend. 4.49 makes reference to Mazdak son of Bāmdād (*mazdak ī bāmdādān*), who was active in the reign of Kawād (488-531) and put to death under the then crown prince Xusrow ca. 528. While Mazdak's name became synonymous with rebellion thereafter into Islamic times (Frye, 1984, p. 324), this date does mark a terminus post quem. However, the usefulness of the notes like this one in the commentaries is compromised by the fact that they were written after the completion of the word-by-word gloss. The commentaries also mention the names of various authorities who themselves composed commentaries called *cāštag* “teaching” and who are quoted in other Pahlavi works. The *Šāyast-nē-šāyast* even refers to the “Vendīdād of Mēdyōmāh,” apparently a full commentary now lost. It seems impossible to place any of these men in a more specific context than late Sasanian times (for details on the names and citations, see West, 1880, pp. 242-45).

We may, then, identify at least two main phases of the development of the Pahlavi text of the Vendīdād. The first will be the word-by-word gloss which was composed uniformly as the *zend* (or *zand*) of the 19th Nask. The date one assigns this is dependent upon the general dating of the Sasanian Avesta. The second phase will be the commentary, that is, the longer explanations and comments inserted throughout the text. Here we have little to go on except to recognize that these are marginalia gleaned from late Sasanian *cāštags*. Whether they are the work of a single hand, like the “Vendīdād of Mēdyōmāh,” or collected notes added over generations, is impossible to tell, though their randomness suggests the latter and does not rule them out as the product of 9th-century scholasticism.

Authorship and place of composition. From the fact that the overriding concern



of the Vendīdād, often in the most minute detail, is pollution, scholars have generally agreed that the authors of the text were the Magi. This is due to the observation of Classical authors concerning the fastidiousness of these Median priests. The same Classical sources, as well as the Achaemenid inscriptions, document the prominent role of the Magi both in Media and in Persis, and Middle Persian terminology (*moymard*, *mowbed*) shows the continuity of this priesthood through history. However, the extant texts of the Avesta mention this name only once (Y. 65.7 *moyu.tbiš* “hostile to the mayu”; see Molé, 1963, p. 80), using instead other terms (*aθrawan-*, *zaotar-*, *mqθran-*), the Vendīdād being no exception. Matters are further complicated by the geographical details offered in the first chapter of the text. The chapter opens with Ahura Mazdā (AhM) telling Zaraθuštra: “I established a place of habitation that affords peace, not one devoid of joy. For if I had not established a place ... devoid of joy, the entire material world would have gone to Airyana Waējah.” In order to avert overpopulation (also a problem addressed in Chap. 2), AhM established other localities as alternate abodes for Iranians, thereby defining the bounds of suitable habitation. The location of Airyana Waējah “The Expanse of the Aryans” (see [ĒRĀN-WĒZ](#)), the homeland of the Avestan people, has been the subject of much discussion. Although in the Vendīdād list it may be a substitute for X^wārazmī (Chorasmia), one senses that the term is more ideological than specifically geographical, like the later concept of Ērān-šahr or the Indian concept of Aryavarta. In any case, the area bounded by the entities included in the list is defined by Rayā farthest west, Sogdiana farthest north, the region of the southern Hēlmand farthest south, and the Panjāb farthest east. Prominently absent in comparison with the satrapy lists of the Achaemenid inscriptions are Māda and Pārsa, among others. The Vendīdād list also differs from the inscriptions in the use of place names; thus, Gawa glossed with *suyδō.šayana*– ‘abode of Sogdiana’ = OPers. Suguda; Waikṛta “Kābul” = Gandāra; Xnanta glossed with *wəhrkānō.šayana* ‘abode of Wṛkāna’ = Warkāna. In other words, the list appears to be thoroughly eastern Iranian and uninfluenced by the well publicized satrapy lists. (See [AVESTAN GEOGRAPHY](#).)

The conundrum is: if the Vendīdād were composed by the Magi either during or after the Achaemenid period, why do they avoid all allusion to the historical centers of political power in western Iran? Christensen (1943, pp. 81-82) offered the weak argument that because burial of the dead, an abomination in the Vendīdād, was practiced in Persis, it was deliberately omitted from the list, even though all Classical sources attest to the power and prominence of the



Magi in all matters pertaining to the Persian religion. Other explanations involve elaborate theories about how the Magi came to appropriate eastern texts without mentioning themselves or western Iran. Leaving aside the question of the redaction which created the received text (see above), the evidence is that the substance of Chap. 1 is thoroughly eastern Iranian, like the rest of the Avesta. Further clouding the issue of Magian authorship is the assumption that they would have been the only priests in ancient Iran preoccupied with purity and pollution.

The Vendīdād as law-book. Although one can find analogies with other ancient works dealing with law, the Vendīdād is a unique form of composition. Since, from the Zoroastrian theological point of view, all revelation came to Zaratuštra directly from Ahura Mazdā, the entire work is framed as a dialogue between God and prophet, though at times the author is unable to sustain the literary fiction, e.g., Vend. 19.1-6, a fragment of the Zaratuštra legend. As in the Pentateuch, where pericopes are introduced with the formulaic voice of authority, “And the Lord said to Moses ...,” pronouncements have the authority of AhM’s voice and are not the creation of a king or the prophet. Also, similar to the literary framing of the laws of the Pentateuch in a broad narrative, the author of the Vendīdād carefully placed his “laws” within an opening narrative context of geography and creation of the world and a closing (Chaps.19-21) of loosely arranged themes foreshadowing the eventual defeat of [Angra Mainyu](#). If there is a common strand binding all the disparate material, it is maintenance of righteous living in pursuit of happiness in a world constantly threatened by pollution and chaos from the demonic powers.

In using the word “law” to translate Av./OPers. *dāta-* (a word borrowed into Akkadian, Aramaic, and Hebrew), one should not think of legislative statutes. Rather, it has been long recognized (Landsberger, 1939) that ancient Near Eastern law codes are literary collections of judgements. Such was the case of Sasanian law as well. In ancient India, by contrast, the *dharmaśāstras* are largely collections of aphorisms on legal principles. Stripped of the literary framework of question-answer many of the laws in the Vendīdād follow the formulaic model of the ancient Near East, approximately: “If a man does X, then Y should happen.” Aphoristic verses do occur, for example, the praises of agriculture (3.24-33). Still, a large portion of the text is devoted to questions that demand either prescriptive or descriptive responses. Thus, in Chap. 9 to a query about cleansing after contact with a corpse, AhM gives a long



descriptive account on how one should perform the *baršnūm* (see [BARAŠNOM](#)) purification ritual; in Chap. 5 Zaraθuštra formulates a series of occasions when one might incur pollution through indirect contact with a corpse, and asks what expiation should be made.

The “laws” contained in the Vendīdād are of various sorts. Some appear to have a basis in civil jurisprudence, for example, those dealing with assault, contracts, oaths; many others dealing with pollution fall under what one might call religious law. However, the distinction between civil and religious law is not a concept to be found in the tradition. For a community which believed the world to be overrun with demonic forces whose most powerful weapons were pollution and disease, infringement of rules of conduct designed to combat and negate these evils, would have been tantamount to exposing the righteous believers to grave danger. Nevertheless, a survey of the punishments prescribed reveals that those for civil offenses have the ring of practical authenticity, while those for religious transgressions often far exceed what could have been actual practice. For example, the punishments for the types of assault and battery escalate according to the gravity of the crime and repeated offense. For assault 10 lashes (see below) are prescribed for the first offense, 15 for the second, to 90 for the sixth and 200 for the incorrigible. In contrast, the punishment for placing a full piece of clothing, whether of fabric or leather, on a corpse is 1,000 lashes, a flogging that could not be endured.

The impression of artificiality one gets from these and other examples, is strengthened by the literary structure of many of the formulations. Especially prominent is the penchant for either ascending or descending enumeration of entities and punishments according to prestige, value, or severity. In Chap. 7, for example, to Zaraθuštra’s simple question about the possibility of purifying a cup which has been polluted by contact with the *nasu* “corpse” of a dog or dead man, AhM responds with a long series of repetitions reflecting the descending hierarchy of metals: “If they are of gold (silver, bronze, steel, stone), then they should wash them once (twice, thrice, four times, six times) with bull’s urine, fill them up once (twice, thrice, four times, six times) with earth, wash them once (twice, thrice, four times, six times) with water; then they will purify them.” In the case of violated contracts (4.5-16) the legal principle is advanced that the family of the contract-breaker also becomes responsible, with the responsibility extending ever wider according to the value of the pledge which concluded the contract. A word obligates 300 male members of the family, a handshake, 600; a sheep, 700; a cow, 800; a man, 900;



and a tract of land, 1,000. In parallel, the punishment for the contract-breaker extends from 300 to 1,000 lashes.

Although legal procedure is never spelled out, we can identify some of the main terminology. The judge was called *ratu*, a member of the priestly estate. Punishment is encountered throughout the text, usually when, after having posed a situation of transgression, Zaraθuštra asks with the formula *kā hē asti ciθā* “What is his *ciθā*?” In most cases this term can be translated as “punishment,” yet there are contexts where the basic meaning “expiation, atonement” (PahlGl *tōzišn*) is a better rendering. That is, the expiation entailed either a corporeal or monetary consequence, and was regarded not only as punishment, but also as a form of purification. Flogging is the standard form of corporeal punishment. Its specifications occur in the formula: *X upāzananqm upāzōiṭ aspahe aštraya X sraošō.caranaya* “One should inflict X lashes of the horsewhip, X of the scourge.” It is not certain exactly what the *aspa aštrā*, lit. “(instrument for) the driving of a horse,” was, and altogether uncertain what the *sraošō.caranā* “instrument of obedience” was. Further, it is unclear whether the text is specifying double flogging with two instruments, or whether the terms form a literary hendiadys. The priest (cf. Vend. 5.58) who carried out the flogging was called the *sraošāwarəz* “who works obedience.” Most severe of the levels of crime, both civil and religious, are those whereby the perpetrator becomes *tanū.pərəθa* or *pəšō.tanū* (see Gershevitch, 1959, pp. 245-48) “whose body is forfeit, owed,” a term whose PahlGl is *tanāpuhl, marg-arzān* “worthy of death.”

SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT

Chap. 1. See above under *Authorship and place of composition*.

Chap. 2. The chapter presents two general mythic motifs, both, in some sense having to do with the ordering of the Earth after the initial creation. After an initial question of Zaraθuštra concerning whom AhM first taught the “ahuric, Zoroastrian Religion” and AhM’s reply that it was Yama, secs. 3-19 recount how Yama rejected AhM’s request that he be the first priest, then accepted the second request that he expand, prosper, and rule the Earth, that is, be the first ruler; how at the end of segments of 300 years he had to drive the Earth so that she could expand to accommodate the overcrowding of creatures. During these periods life remained in a paradisiacal state without hot or cold winds,



and without sickness or death. In spite of the ideal conditions, evil had entered the world. Secs. 20-43 recount a “Noah’s ark” type of myth. At an assembly of gods and men AhM warns Yama of a terrible winter to come and instructs him in how to build the *wara*, some sort of elaborate barn in which to store food and shelter, male and female of the various species, so that creation might survive the destructive cold. Although detailed instructions are given, it is not always clear exactly what the *wara* was to look like, owing mostly to the corrupt state of the text. This last section of the chapter appears to be an extensive redaction of older sources which preserve an ancient pastoralist myth about the first winter cattle station.

Chap. 3. Secs. 1-6 (5 is an amplification of 4) employ the question and answer formula: “Where is it, first (second, etc., to fifth), most happy on this Earth?” ... “Where most of all” The happiest places are ones where proper religious practices are maintained and where house and agricultural economy flourish. The formula repeats, with substitution of “most unhappy” for “most happy,” in sec. 7-11 and specifies five places of demonic activity involving demonic presence in the home or demonic settlement, improper treatment of the dead and the enslavement of wife and child. Sec. 12 initiates a new formulaic series that is interrupted by several long interpolated digressions. Thus, the formula “First (second, etc., to fifth), who propitiates this Earth with the greatest propitiation?” ... “Where mostly” forms secs. 12, 13, (interpolation), 22, 23, (interpolation) and 34-35 with 36-39 as a further interpolation expanding on AhM’s response in 35. In order, the Earth is best propitiated when one digs up a place where a corpse is buried, razes a *daxma* “cinerarium or ossuary(?),” digs away the Ahrimanic abode (of *xrafstras*, the evil creations), cultivates food-producing plants, and either irrigates or drains soil, and where the laborer is justly compensated. The first interpolation, secs. 14-21, deals with the inexpiable transgression of carrying a corpse alone and the capital punishment involving scalping, to which the sinner is ultimately subjected. The second interpolation, secs. 24-33, is a sustained praise of agriculture and the cultivation of the earth. Secs. 40-42 form an appendage in which the, sometimes harsh, punishments prescribed in the chapter are mitigated by the power of the Good Religion to absolve the penitent man of his sins.

Chap. 4. One who does not repay a debt is a thief (sec. 1); secs. 2-16: the six kinds of contracts (*miθra*), ordered according to the value of the pledges made; family obligations in honoring a contract and the punishment of the contract breaker (*miθrō.druj*). Secs. 17-43: the three types of violent crime—threat



(*āgərəpta*), attack (*awaoirišta*), and premeditated wounding (*arəduš*)—and punishments for levels of severity of the crime, including manslaughter. Secs. 44-45: obligations to give money, a wife, or instruction to a coreligionist who petitions. Secs. 46, 50-55: a section on oaths and punishments for perjury, in the midst of which was inserted a digression on the virtue of worldliness as opposed to asceticism.

Chap. 5. This and Chap. 6 deal almost exclusively with *nasu* (corpses and carrion generally) the primary cause of defilement and contagion. In secs. 1-7 Zaratustra raises hypothetical situations of unintentional defilement, as when a bird, having eaten carrion, defecates in a tree which is later cut for fuel, or when a dog, fox, or wolf drowns in an irrigation ditch. In these cases a man is not sinful through pollution of fire, water, and earth. Secs. 8-9: neither fire nor water kills a man; rather, the demon Astō.wiḍātu does. Secs. 10-14: how to treat a corpse in winter by constructing a special chamber where the body can be kept until a thaw, when the body can be exposed. Secs. 15-20: how pure water becomes increasingly polluted as it passes from rain to streams to eventually become purified in the Pūitika (The Filter) Sea. Secs. 21-25: praise of the Mazdean Religion and the Zoroastrian anti-demonic Law (*dātəm yim wīdōyūm zaratuštri*). Sec. 26 is obscure. The precise sense of secs. 27-32 is not altogether clear. When members of a household, including dogs, sit touching each other and one dies, the extent of the pollution extends according to the rank of the individual in the social hierarchy, with the *urupi*-dog (sec. 33-34) in a separate category. Secs. 35-38: extent of evil influence of the “biped scoundrel” on the world. Secs. 39-44: rules for removal and return of fire and ritual utensils from the house where someone has died. Miscarriage is the subject of secs. 45-58 with special attention to the restoration of the woman and the household to states of purity. Secs. 59-62: an appendage of miscellaneous matters.

Chap. 6. Secs. 1-25 prescribes a one year ban on cultivating earth where men or dogs have died. Before sowing any field all bones and other remains must be removed. The dropping of a human or dog bone that still has flesh on it, is punishable with increasing severity according to the size or quantity of the bone(s). Secs. 26-41: the pollution of moving water, the obligation to remove a corpse from it. Secs. 42-43: polluted *haoma*. Secs. 44-51: prescriptions for disposal of the dead, including the making of an erection (*uzdāna*) to shelter the corpse.

Chap. 7. The ghastly Nasu Druj, as a filthy fly, invades the body immediately



upon death or in the next watch in exceptional cases (secs. 1-4). Secs. 5-8 = 5.27-30. Secs. 9-15: rules for washing polluted clothing. Secs. 17-22 = 5.57-62. Secs. 23-27: ghoulish men and those who bring carrion to fire or water cannot be purified. Further, they aid the hostile forces of nature: xrafstras, drought, and winter. Secs. 28-35: rules for purification of kindling wood, grain, and grass. Secs. 35-44: the practice of medicine and fees allowed. Secs. 45-52: concerning different types of burial, namely, deposit on the earth, interment, placement in a *daxma*; and the proper time for exhumation or exposure. Secs. 53-59: the *daēwas* congregate mostly at *daxmas*. Secs. 60-72: this segment returns to the subject of miscarriages, but adds three more stanzas, of which sec. 71 is obscure. Secs. 73-75: rules for purifying drinking vessels of different metals. Secs. 76-79: milk and other products of a cow who has consumed *nasu* are forbidden for a year.

Chap. 8. Secs. 1-22 describe funeral rites for men and dogs: the isolation of the corpse for 2-3 days (or until weather permits) until proper disposal for exposure by the two corpse-bearers (*nasukaša*); their purification with urine of livestock or next-of-kin. The path traversed by the corpse must be cleared of the Nasu Druj by leading a four-eyed white dog with yellow ears along it. The text is not entirely in order, but this is the first reference to the all-important Zoroastrian ritual of the *sagdīd* (see [DOG ii](#)). Secs. 23-25: punishments for putting different sized pieces of cloth or leather on a corpse. Secs. 26-32: no expiation for the crime of pederasty, whether the individual be an active or passive sodomite. Secs. 33-72 form a long, exceptionally repetitious section, in which first the *baršnūm* purification ritual with urine and water is described, then a body-part by body-part enumeration of the exit path from head to toe of the Nasu Druj. Secs. 73-96: rewards for the rescue of fires used for cremation or burning of bodily excretions; the rescue of fires used in baking clay and smelting of metals. Secs. 97-107: the problem of accidental contamination in a deserted place.

Chap. 9. Secs. 1-36: detailed description of the *baršnūm gāh* and the entire ceremony. Secs. 37-44: the honoraria for the priest who administers purification. Secs. 45-46: Gāthic verses to recite in order to repel the Nasu Druj. Secs. 47-50: capital punishment for the unqualified priest who attempts to administer the *baršnūm*. He should be scalped and left to be eaten by vultures. Secs. 51-57: the heterodox teacher (*ašəmaoya*) takes away all prosperity and health, which can only be restored when he has been slain or converted.

Chap. 10. In order to repel the flight of the Nasu Druj from the corpse to a



living person, AhM prescribes the recitation of the Gāthic verses called *bišāmrūta*, *trišāmrūta*, and *caθrušāmrūta* “recited 2 [3, 4] times.”

Chap. 11. Secs. 1-8: more Gāthic verses to be recited in order to purify house, fire, water, the earth, cattle, and plants. Secs. 9-13 appear to be interpolated verse formulae: “I oppose Wrath (Nasu and other daēwas)” and “–?– (*paršta*) Wrath, etc.” Secs. 14, (15-16 = 9-10) 17: more Gāthic verses to be recited.

Chap. 12. This is a later addition (see above), a formulaic series of instructions on how long to mourn various kin.

Chaps. 13-14. This segment describes the sanctity, roles, proper treatment, and punishment for mistreatment of dogs and other animals (hedgehog [?], otter). Especially important to the community are the dogs who guard herd and settlement (*pasušhaurwa* and *wišhaurwa*), and the hunting dog (*wohunazga*). Also mentioned is the *wanhāpara*, glossed in the Av. text with *dužaka*, in the Pahl. *zūzag* “hedgehog,” but described as having a pointed head and perhaps, rather, a mongoose. Punishments, especially, for injuring or slaying an otter, are strikingly severe.

Chap. 15. Secs. 1-8 lists the 5 deeds which render a person *pəšō.tanū*: causing apostasy of a believer, giving unground (?) bones to a dog so that it choke or food so hot that the dog burn its mouth and tongue, harming or frightening a bitch with a litter, having intercourse with a menstruating woman, having untimely intercourse with a woman who has given birth. Secs. 9-19: other cases of illicit sex not *pəšō.tanū* and the obligations of the man. Secs. 20-51: rules about caring for bitches and puppies in various situations.

Chap. 16. Secs. 1-7: the necessity of isolating a menstruating woman. Secs. 8-12: if a woman finds traces of blood after 9 nights, she must undergo a purification ceremony. Secs. 13-18: again prohibitions against intercourse with a menstruating woman.

Chap. 17. Secs. 1-6: how to dispose of hair properly to avoid infestations of daēwas and xrafstras. Secs. 7-11: how to dispose of nail clippings to avoid their becoming weapons for the Māzanian daēwas.

Chap. 18. Secs. 1-6: a man who does not perform ritual actions or recite properly is not to be called a priest (*āθrawan*). Secs. 7-10: the demon Maršawan is the source of the danger from the *ašəmaoya*. Secs. 11-12: various obscene gestures one should make when encountering an *ašəmaoya*. Secs.



13-29: the rooster (*parō.dārās*), called by the vulgar (*kahrkatāt*), identified as the constable (*sraošāwarəz*) of Sraoša. By waking people up it combats the demon Būšyastā (Procrastination), and by its exhorting of people to prayer demons are driven away. Those who heed it, care for it, or give a pair of chickens reap great rewards, including Heaven. Secs. 30-59: a dialogue between Sraoša and the demoness Lie (Druj), in which Sraoša poses a series of questions. How does she reproduce? She is impregnated by four men: one who has no charity, one who urinates on the tip of his foot, rather than squat and urinate back between the feet, one who has a nocturnal emission, one who goes uninitiated, without girdle and shirt, after age 15. The antidote for 1, 2 and 4 are performance of required action; for 3 he must immediately recite a number of *mąθras*. Secs. 60-65: most vexing to AhM is the whore who contaminates the semen of all men and, through a mere glance, despoils creation. Secs. 66-76: in contrast with 15.8, where he is *pəšō.tanū*, here a man who knowingly has intercourse with a menstruating women can gain expiation through a series of elaborate presentations of sheep, kindling, *barəsmān* (see [BARSOM](#)) sticks, libations, and bridge timbers, through the killing of thousands of snakes, frogs, and ants, and through 1,000 lashes.

Chap. 19. Secs. 1-10: a fragment of the “temptation” episode in the Zaraθuštra legend, where Anra Mainyu attempts to seduce Zaraθuštra, but is repulsed by the *hāwanā* mortar, the cup, and *haoma* and by the recitation of the *ahunwar* and other *mąθras*. Secs. 11-16: AhM instructs Zaraθuštra to invoke the Aməša Spəntas and other deities to banish the Lie from the community. Secs. 17-19: use of the *barəsmān* to worship the plant-creation. Secs. 20-25: again, purification of a well-meaning man who is polluted through contact with *nasu*. Secs. 26-34: preparation for and passage over the Cinwat bridge (see [ČINWAD PUHL](#)), where the souls meet the beautiful maiden who conducts the righteous across, but plunges the wicked into darkness. Secs. 35-42: a long list of invocations, not all grammatical, with the formula *nizbayemi* “I invoke (call down)...” Secs. 43-47 return to the initial theme of the chapter, namely, Zaraθuštra’s power over the demons; the daēwas retreat into darkness at the birth of Zaraθuštra.

Chap. 20. Secs. 1-3: Thrīta, the first physician, received cures from Xšaθra wairya. Secs. 4-6: AhM provides thousands of medicinal plants to combat various diseases, and the latter (secs. 7-14), as demons, are assaulted with curses and *mąθras*, especially powerful being the *ā.airyāmā.išyō* (see [AIRAMAN IŠYA](#)) prayer.



Chap. 21. Secs. 1-16: invocations of the Cow, Waters, Sun, Moon, and Stars. Secs. 17: curse against the demoness Kaxuži. Secs. 18-23 = 20.9-14.

Chap. 22. This is a rather ungrammatical collection of stanzas dealing with A°ra Mainyu's creation of diseases against AhM and the acquisition of antidotes eventually from [Airyaman](#). Secs. 21-26 = 20.9-14.

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