possibly gōšudā rather than gōšudāg (p. 104). A few typesetting mistakes have occurred as is inevitable in such complex texts, examples are bud for bād (p. 44), mardān for mardān (p. 65), and §98 where abēdāhūg is quite out of place (p. 63).


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This publication is an impressive achievement of the Avestan philology and related fields (palaeography, linguistics, literature, history of religion), and languages of the Zoroastrian transmission (Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Pazand, New Persian, Gujarati) of such a text. Various scholarly points of view, most of them up-to-date, have here been collected, with a look at the history of the discipline (Westergaard, Geldner, Bailey, Henning, Morgenstierne, Hoffmann, Humbach, Narten) and at actual problems and future perspectives. The book includes the proceedings of the midterm Salamanca Conference of the Societas Iranologica Europaea (September 2009) and other workshops done in the context of the Corpus Avesticum Project, as well as preliminary issues addressed. The focal point of the Preface puts emphasis on the rediscovering of the importance of the Avestan manuscripts, joined to the relevance of the oral character (in the footsteps of Milman Parry’s methodology) pertaining to the transmission of the Avestan texts, as a ritual corpus with a ritual structure. So the very fitting label of “performative philology” (p. XI) posits a new and fresh approach to the study of Avesta: the oral texts exist only through their performance and it is only through it that they can be understood, given the central role of rituality and cultic performance of the Avestan texts and manuscripts. That implies the consideration of the oral composition, ranging from standard conservatism to innovation, from traditional clichés to poetical creativity, within an heritage of expressions of Indo-Iranian and Indo-European origin (according to the well-known studies of Schmitt, Schlerath, Nagy, Watkins, and recently Sadovski). The volume is divided into four sections.

1. The first part of the volume (“From the Oral Composition to the Writing down of the Avestan Texts”) starts with an article of P. O. Skjærvø dedicated to the Zoroastrian oral tradition as reflected in the texts (pp. 3-48), where he criticizes the inherited terminology of Classical philology (“author”, “original”, “composition”) and

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the concept of “edition” as a distorted image of a text and of its ritual usage, improper to understand the structure of an Avestan text accompanying a certain ritual. According to a new methodology, we do not read today what was recited centuries ago and the need is not to analyse the texts to determine the original and added pieces: on the contrary, we do look at how the short or long ready-made building blocks of text were assembled and how new text was added as a “mortar” to hold them together. J. Kellens (pp. 49-58) revises his seminal article of 1998 (Journal Asiatique 286, 2), with an emendation of three points (chronology of three phases of canonization; the alleged doctrinal debates because of historical events, e.g. the king vs. the magi; the Yasna as a designation of the liturgy of 72 chapters). K. also put forward a new topic of discussion: a few Yašt (Y. 57. 2-8; Y. 57. 19-26; Yt. 10. 88-94) reveal a cultic recitation of the Old Avestan texts with some key-words denoting a strong likeness with the Yasna of the so-called “Avesta Ausgabe”. This fact suggests a good reception of the Yasna and its conceptual framework during the Yašt composition and within a long process of elaboration, with variants, troubles and resetting of textual materials. The Yasna with its variants must have been existing long time before the idea of the Avesta collected in the virtual and alleged “Sasanian Avesta”. U. Remmer (pp. 56-69) approaches the language and composition of the Avestan prayer formulas in Nyāyaš 1, transmitted in the Khorda Avesta for the daily office of lay-people. It remains unclear whether the text was established during the oral phase of the tradition or after the invention of the Avestan script, even if the mixture of phraseologies of different styles and linguistic chronological layers is evident from other late Avestan texts. The Ny. 1.1 must then have been created by a cleric who used the Older Avesta as it existed in his day, by arranging the Y. 42.1 or Y. 34.5 by mixing in late Avestan phraseology (Y. 72.10). A. Panaino (pp. 70-97) deals with the age of the Avestan canon and the origin of the ritual written texts. He proposes that when the ancestral codices (Stammhandschriften) of our sources were prepared, the Zoroastrian priests probably still had at their disposal texts of different nature: part of the Naṣki with Avestan and Pahlavi translations, from which many Avestan minor texts of limited or without any ritual importance were copied; the ritual texts of the long and short liturgies unabridged and without their Pahlavi translations; as in the case of the Widēvdād, some ritual versions accompanied by the Zand should have existed. Probably the high priests’ families committed the preparation of these practical sources (considered a prestigious possession) during the Sasanian period and increasingly after the collapse of the Sasanian empire, and in the 9th century a group of ancestral manuscripts belonging to one prominent Zoroastrian priestly school, have been the starting point for the Stammhandschriften: copied not only to save the texts but also to teach the priests in other regions, to help believers to uphold a correct ritual after the end of the empire. X. Tremblay (pp. 98-135) provides a masterpiece of Avesta criticism and history of research, with an in-depth analysis of the tradition (Pahlavi texts) and by quoting other texts concerning the oral and written transmission of the Avesta (Manichean and Syriac Christian texts); with a balanced treatment of the philological discipline mixed with other epistemological tools, such as the genetics of populations, in order to draw a cautious conclusion against the illusion of an erroneous reconstruction: is the Avesta a text? Does it depend on literary criticism? No. The Avesta is a constellation of compilations of texts, used for
liturgical purposes and without stylistic coherence: with the primary aim to perform the
sacrifice to obtain immortality and the final victory against Evil; and also to
provide the minor prayers to attack Evil by means of a sacralization of time (hours,
days, seasons). E. Pirart (pp. 136-162) analyses the metrical structure and the his-
tory of the Avesta, to stress that the Pahlavi traditions do mention the verses and
strophes of the Gādās but without giving evidence of the syllabic computation or of
any prosodic criteria to arrange the verses, with the exception of Viṣṇud 14.1 quot-
ing the “feet”. A survey of manuscripts (F1) points to a use of diacritical signs to
mark the octosyllabism in the Yaṣa and claims for a desideratum in future editions:
to notice such devices of prosodic division in the manuscript investigation and to
report it as a further point of textual criticism.

2. The second part (“The Manuscripts and their Analysis”) collects ten articles
going into detail of manuscript collections and textual investigation. K. Mazdapour
(pp. 165-172) presents twelve newly found Avestan manuscripts (mainly of Widēwād, Khorda Avesta and Yasna) in Iran, the oldest of which belong to the Sa-
favid period. He makes an appeal for a better preservation, given the danger of de-
struction (termites and smugglers) and unfitting conditions of storage. U. Sims-Will-
iams (pp. 173-194) submits a history of the three most important collections of
Zoroastrian manuscripts in the British Library of London, namely of Thomas Hyde
(mid-17th century), Samuel Guise (late-18th century) and Burjorji Sorabji Ashburner
(second half of the 19th century). F. Jahanpour (pp. 195-196) presents a Widēwād
manuscript of the Astan-Qods Library, written on old yellow-coloured paper of Sa-
favid invention. F. Kotwal, with D. Sheffield (pp. 197-206), outline the history of the
First Dastoor Meherjirana Library in Navsari, from the time of this dastur living
under the rule of Mughal emperor Akbar until the present day, describing the com-
plex building of the library and its collection, as a very important institution for
Zoroastrian studies. M. A. Andrés-Toledo and A. Cantera (pp. 207-243) list a com-
plete inventory of the Widēwād manuscripts, grouped according to known locations
and unknown locations. A. Hintze (pp. 244-278) surveys 178 manuscripts of the
Yasna and Yasna i Rapithwīn. A. Cantera (pp. 279-346) approaches the genealogical
relations between the manuscripts of Widēwād, also pointing to important features
of extralinguistic topics (p. 289), such as geometrical, animal and vegetal decora-
tions, or sketches of human figures inside the manuscripts, trying to detect the inter-
action between ritual and copying activities. He also provides a criticism of Lach-
mannian principles of philology. He puts forward a different methodology based on
a Coherence-Based-Genealogical Methodology (CBGM), considering the number of total
agreements in preservation and variation/and the time factor (relative chronology)
of a genealogical coherence (based on mistakes and analysis of errors). J. Martínez
Porro (pp. 347-354) analyses the manuscripts of the family of L4 by using the CBGM
method, to reconstruct the textual flow for the copies of L4. G. König (pp. 355-394)
traces the textual history of the Bayān Nāsk and its ritual usage. J. José Ferrer (pp.
395-415) examines the Avestan quotations of the Pahlavi translation in the Widēwād Sāde
tradition and their use to highlight the transmission history of this
text, showing a mutual influence with different degrees between the oral and the
written traditions (especially of the Pahlavi exegesis). The inclusion of Avestan quo-
3. The third part ("The Edition of the Avesta") is inaugurated by A. Hintze (pp. 419-432) and her criticism of Geldner’s work (mistaken in collations, perpetuation of errors, inaccuracies and even confusion of manuscript siglas, e.g. P2 and P10). Hintze proposes as new criteria: a fresh collation of manuscripts; to take into account new manuscripts, especially those from Iran which were underrepresented in Geldner’s edition; to trace their history (scribal traditions, scribal schools, scribal errors, palaeographical typologies, psychological factors of conscious/unconscious changes). The need target is: to establish the earliest possible form of the text, on the basis of all available evidence, according to the most probable historical conditions of the Avesta, as it was written down for the first time in the script in which it has survived to the present day. M. A. Andrés-Toledo (pp. 433-438) presents a revision of Geldner based on: criticism of collatio, survey of contradictions between Prolegomena and Edition (Geldner did not mention all the important mss. of each text in the critical notes). As a consequence, we cannot discern the agreements in mss. belonging to the same class with the edited word; we do not have enough information in the critical notes to revise the stemmata codicum. Emendations and words above the line or in the margin by the same hands are usually not recorded; second and even third hand emendations are not distinguished; differences in the dots of the words are not marked; many variants of his critical notes are not actually found as such in the manuscripts. A. Cantera (pp. 439-475) approaches the need of a new edition of Zoroastrian long liturgy, stressing the interrelations between copying, ritual practice and ritual teaching. He emphasizes the role of the recent discovery of Avestan mss. in Iran as the most important touchstone to check the readings of the Indian mss. The insufficient analysis of the mss. and the deficiencies in the text constitution are the main argument for a new edition trying to solve all the principal weaknesses of available editions.

4. In the final part ("The Transmission and Edition of Other Zoroastrian Texts"): K. Rezania (pp. 479-494) investigates the reasons of canonization and the shifting between the concepts of “orthodoxy” and “heresy” related to Mazdakism and his doctrine opposite to the institutional religion, although not an heresy but one of the several lines of interpretation which provoked a reaction and a reset of the Avestan canonisation, with internal debates between different opinions and different exegesis of the Zand. G. König (pp. 497-518) examines the Pahlavi translation of Yašt 14, pointing out to incompatibilities between the Avestan language and the translator’s world of thought: the translators of the Pahlavi version might have used materials stemming from other translations (a Middle Persian source, common to the Pahlavi and New Persian translations), with a tendency towards archaisms, and sometimes with folk etymologies (e.g. a cross-fade between värəy-nahe and vorōtəy-nahe). M. Macuch (pp. 519-537) deals with the editing of Pahlavi legal texts, to understand the transmission and adaptation of the Zoroastrian juridical terminologies in the Sasanian periods. Moving from the Hērbedestān 9.8 and the Avestan term adādātīti-“abandonment” → Pahlavi advadād, with the meaning of “lacking”, she reconstructs a semantic development from the abandonment to the lacking of sustenance (to be legally given to individuals, sheepdogs and sacred fires) and to withdrawing of spir-
ritual nourishment, not teaching to a disciple willing to learn or giving a false teaching (mišūsūst), committing the sin of lacking offence (i.e. adwaddād) with juridical consequences. J. Josephson (pp. 541-552), approaches the problems of an edition and translation of the third book of Dēnkard, with a working hypothesis that this book was a manual for teaching composed in Hellenized priestly circles, being a presentation of Zoroastrian opinions on topics debated among the different religious communities between the mid-6th to mid-10th centuries. Dk 3 differs from the other Dk books with regard to its evolution and early transmission: its employing Aristotelian logic reveals the nature of a learned work, addressing questions of religious doctrines referred to Jews, Christians, Manichaean and finally Islam, and at each stage of its elaboration the text was expanded and modified with material from various sources.

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In der Einleitung diskutiert die Verfasserin den Stand der Forschung, begründet ihren Untersuchungszeitraum, stellt ihre Quellen vor und erläutert ihre Fragestellung. Etelā’ūt dient ihr als Fallbeispiel für die Entwicklung der Presse im Iran jener Zeit, wobei die Verfasserin diese Zeitung als Druckerzeugnis und Wirtschaftsunter-