

tahrir, for which Persian singers are renowned. Tables are utilised to good effect once again, this time to demonstrate how master vocalists differ in their application to modes of song texts and *gushes*. In the presentation which follows of the background to the structure of Persian and Arabic poetry, a rare debt to Arab prosody is acknowledged, but the inevitable case is made for Persian antecedents of what is mystifyingly referred to as the “post-Islamic” quantitative metric system. Useful appendices include texts and translations with metric analyses, notations and transcriptions.

Additions to the relatively small number of substantial works on Persian music in European languages are welcome, and this book is valuable in that it represents an earnest effort to convey a noble music tradition as perceived by its practitioners. In doing so it raises interesting and far-reaching questions relating to the state of traditional music in contemporary society, the interface of politics and culture and the stability of musical traditions. Ultimately, however, the infelicitous juxtaposition of the speculative and the descriptive seriously compromises its contribution.

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ZAMYĀD YASHT. YASHT 19 OF THE YOUNGER AVESTA. TEXT, TRANSLATION, COMMENTARY. By HELMUT HUMBACH and PALLAN R. ICHAPORIA. pp. 194. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998.

In the last decade, the Zamyād Yasht has received a remarkably large amount of scholarly attention. Following Pirart 1992 and Hintze 1994, the book under review is the third edition of this text to be published in ten years. These earlier editions have, in turn, stimulated a number of further studies in the form of reviews (e.g. Tremblay 1996, Panaino 1997, Skjærvø 1997) and articles (e.g. Kellens 1997–8, 1999). As a result, the Zamyād Yasht is now one of the most studied texts of the entire Avesta, in this respect being second only to the Gathas.

The present volume is the product “of more than three years of close co-operation” (p. 7) between Helmut Humbach, Professor Emeritus of Indo-European Studies at Mainz University, and Pallan Ichaporia, with whom Humbach had already collaborated on a translation of the Old Avestan texts (Humbach/Ichaporia 1994). The book consists of an introduction (pp. 11–20), text and translation (23–61), commentary (63–165), bibliographical references (171–172), a list of sigla and abbreviations (173) and a glossary (175–194). There is no index.

Humbach and Ichaporia assume that Yt 19 consists of “two heterogenous pieces of text”, that is the list of mountains (“Geographical Fragment”, Yt 19.1–8), and the hymn to the *x^varənahi-* (“Kayān Yasn”, Yt 19.9–97). A link between the two parts is seen in the eschatological role of the mountain Ušaḏā Ušidarəna located in the region of the lake Kašaoya from where the eschatological saviour is expected to come (p. 11). Moreover, the day Zamyād, which, in the Zoroastrian calendar, is the 28th day of the month, is dedicated not only to the “Munificent Earth” (*zəmə hudaǰhō*), but, among others, also the mountains, the glory (*x^varənahi-*) of the Kavis and the “unseized glory” (Siroza 1.28, 2.28; for the rendering of *ax^varəta-* see Sims-Williams 1997, 24). Although the connections between the mountains and the Glory would appear to be “relatively old”, “the two pieces give the impression of having been joined together at a relatively recent time”, as indicated by the “confused numbering of the kardes” (p. 12). As the “Geographical Fragment” lends the name to the entire hymn, the authors infer that it must have “originally formed part of another much larger text which dealt with all the geographical aspects of the (Iranian) world”, and which is lost today. They call this hypothetical text the “Proto-Zamyād Yasht”, indirect evidence for which survives in the geographical chapters of the Middle Persian Bundahishn, whose list of mountains partly agrees with that in the Zamyād Yasht. The list of lands found in the first Fargard of the Videvdad is regarded as a further fragment of the lost “Proto-Zamyād Yasht”.

While the agreements between the chapter on the mountains in the Bundahishn and the first eight stanzas of the Zamyād Yasht are obvious, it must be noted that there is no positive evidence that these passages ever constituted a Yasht, the more so as the first eight stanzas of Yt 19 do not exhibit the formal characteristics of the hymnic literary genre (division into sections [Kardes], introductory and concluding formulae of praise). The same lack is also true for some other Yashts, for example Yt 18. Such texts rather bear traces of the “Frashna style” according to which the teachings are cast into the form of a dialogue between Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra (Yt 19.1 and 7; Yt 18.1). This stylistic device, while also employed in Yashts structured by introductory and concluding formulae of Kardes (e.g. Yt 5), especially characterizes the didactic genre of the Videvdad. Apparently there existed traditional lists and commentaries describing the various aspects of the lands inhabited by the Aryans and encoding their geographical knowledge. Use of such inventory could have produced what Skjærvø 1994, 219 refers to as “catalogue poetry”, such as the list of lands in Yt 10.14–15.

The name Zamyād is explained here (equally Humbach 1995, 195) as an “Early Middle Persian adaption” of the Avestan expression *zəmō huδāghō* “of the beneficent earth”, the first two words at the beginning of the formula of the 28th day of the month as preserved in the Siroza (S 1.28). It is, however, not acknowledged that this had already been suggested by I. Gershevitch (*Cambridge History of Iran* II, 1985, 775 n. 1) who, in contrast to Humbach and Ichaporia, addresses the major problem with this otherwise attractive interpretation, that is, how to derive *-yād* from *huδāghō*.

In the commentary, the authors’ style of presentation is somewhat peculiar. They state their views, occasionally rather bluntly, usually without giving any reasons or pointing out problems, and with little or no discussion of alternative possibilities or interpretations put forward by other scholars. This is surprising, and sometimes irritating, in view of the extent to which this text has been studied in recent years. While dispensing with scholarly discussion, Humbach and Ichaporia present their views somewhat *ex cathedra*, displaying a reckless self-assurance, hardly corroborated either by further evidence or the scholarly debate. With regard to the latter, a reader consulting them alone runs the risk of getting “a distorted impression” or, in Humbach’s own words: “ein verzerrtes Bild” (Humbach 1995, 196 about Pirart 1992).

For example, the claim that “[t]he customary derivation of *vasna* from root *vas* “to wish” . . . must be abandoned for phonetical reasons” is far too apodictic (11:5). Although their equation with Vedic *vasná-* “price” is possible on phonetic grounds and cannot be excluded since derivatives of *vas* “to sell” are not otherwise found in Avestan, it is semantically unsatisfactory. The supposed meaning is to be deduced from Vedic and Middle Iranian continuations, all of which, however, refer to buying and selling (e.g. MP *wāzār*, NP *bāzār* “market, bazaar”). But what could “selling price” mean in the context of Yt 19.11? “In value”, as it is translated here, masks the problem, not addressed by the authors, of what the metaphor of “selling price” could stand for. In contrast, the meaning “at will” perfectly suits the context: it denotes Ahura Mazda’s intention according to which he created the world in order to overcome evil. Moreover, their rejection of the derivation of *vasna* from the root *vas* “to wish” fails to take into account the parallel and generally accepted derivation of *yasna* (instead of **yasna*) from *yaz* “to worship”, with **-zn-* > *-sn-* (Hoffmann/Forsman 1996, 102).

Another instance where their views are debatable is the proposal that *dāman* (19.10) includes not only “Ahura Mazda’s living creatures but also the material things or objects created by him in order to make human lives comfortable and pleasant”, an interpretation which is “borne out” by an Old Persian passage (DNb1–2). Humbach and Ichaporia maintain that the expression *yaṭ kərənauuqn frašəm ahūm* “originally referred to material life”. The rest of stanzas 11 and 12, dealing with the perfection of life and eradication of evil, were “appended” by “one of the earlier transmitters of Yašt 19”. However, as was shown by Narten 1986, 201, DNb1–2 simply attributes the source of all that is excellent (*fraša-*) to Ahura Mazda (a usage attested in the Avesta as well, Hintze 1994, 107 with n. 81).

Yt 19.10–12, in contrast, state that Ahura Mazda created his excellent (*fraša-*) creatures (*dāmṇh*) in order that they might render life excellent (*fraša-*), i.e. free from evil (stanzas 11–12). Thus, at the outset of this hymn, the purpose of creation is stated. There is no need to detach the eschatological part. Moreover, as was rightly pointed out by Kellens 1997–1998, 744, Yt 19.19 and 23 *taēcēt yōi vasna frašəm ahum daθən* “it is they who will render this life excellent” take up 19.11 *yaṭ kərənauuṇ frašəm ahūm* “so that they will make life excellent”, and thus identify the agents of *kərənauuṇ* as the Amesha Spentas (19.14–20) and the Yazatas supported by human helpers (19.21–24). The stanzas which here are considered to be later interpolations, in fact state, in a formulaic way, the purpose of Ahura Mazda’s creation, namely to overcome evil, and thus form an integral part of the composition.

In spite of these shortcomings, however, the work does offer a number of interesting new readings and interpretations. Examples of these include:

12:3 Instead of the transmitted *saṅ^vhaiiṣ*, Humbach and Ichaporia propose an emendation **sauuag^vhaiiṣ* which would make the verse line metrically octosyllabic. While such a reading is not supported by any manuscript, and the extant *saṅ^vhaiiṣ* can be plausibly analyzed, this is an interesting suggestion because *sū* “to be strong” and its derivatives do form part of the eschatological vocabulary.

12:4–6 The difficult passage transmitted by F1 as *āθadca mərənāšātaēca* is restored by H/I as *āθadca *mərəncaiiaca *niš nāšātaēca*, interpreting *āθadca *mərəncaiiaca* as two locatives “in terror and destruction”.

32:3 While their emendation of the transmitted *x^vairiiaṇtu* into **x^vairiie*, a nom.du. of the adjective *x^vairiia-* ‘to be consumed’ is unconvincing, their proposal to correct **āstəm* (3 du.ipf.) from *astu* has already proved fruitful. After reviewing the results of various recent studies, Kellens 1999 reads **x^vairiienṇti*, a dual present passive participle “while being consumed” and, taking up Humbach and Ichaporia’s suggestion, interprets *astəm* (not necessarily *āstəm* as proposed by H/I), as a 3 dual ipf. The passage could, therefore, be rendered as: “Because of his rule both (kinds of) refreshment, while being consumed, were undiminishing”.

33:1 Humbach and Ichaporia propose an interesting and attractive solution for the old crux *para anādruxtōiṭ*. Assuming that *para* is a mistake for *parō* under the influence of the following *para*, they translate “owing to not-lying”, “since there was no deceit”.

34:2 Their derivation of *brāsaṭ* as an inchoative from **bar* “to storm, surge” is possible, but their translation “Yima got excited” appears strange.

49:1 The restoration **fraduuarat* instead of *hqm.duuarat* (E1 N107) is convincing as it is supported by 19.47f–g *āaṭ hē paskāt fraduuarat ažiš θrižafā duždaēnō* (not adduced here).

92:4 Humbach and Ichaporia’s conjectural change of the transmitted *vaēḍəm vaējō* into **vazrəm vaējō* “brandishing the mace” is satisfactorily supported by referring to *vazra- huniuixta-* “the mace (which is) well brandished”. While this reading is consistent with the heroic context, it presupposes a grave corruption of the text. Less drastic but semantically just as fitting is Schindler’s emendation **vadəm vaējō* (apud C. Watkins, *How to kill a dragon*, 1995, 319 and earlier, cf. Hintze 1994a, 373 n. 29), which the authors do not mention, *vada-* equalling Vedic *vadhá-* “weapon”, another word for Indra’s cudgel. In any case, a word such as “mace” or “club”, denoting Astvat.ərətā’s weapon with which he removes evil from Ahura Mazda’s creation, supports the present writer’s theory about the origins of the Zoroastrian saviour. As suggested in Hintze 1995, 1999, the concept of a single world saviour, Astvat.ərətā, the “victorious Saoshyant”, derives from the re-interpretation of the ancient Indo-Iranian (and Indo-European) myth of the hero who kills the dragon.

In view of the earlier editions so recently published, Humbach and Ichaporia justify their work as focusing not so much on the linguistic aspect of this hymn, but on “its intrinsic value as a document of the mythical and legendary early history of the Iranians, and its place in the Mazdayasnian

tradition" (p. 7). This claim is borne out by short but frequent quotations from Pahlavi and New Persian texts, the latter almost exclusively from the Shahname. However, there is no interpretation of these later sources and little, if any, discussion of how they relate to the Avestan passages, such as, for example, the Middle and New Persian parallels to the "lie" of Yima in Yt 19.33 (p. 109f.).

Therefore, the scholarly merit of the book lies not so much in what its authors claim that it does, but in the philological analysis of some of the passages. For that reason, this work makes a valuable contribution, though one wonders whether it was necessary to produce another edition of the text of the entire hymn, together with a translation and commentary, rather than a more detailed and elaborate discussion of their own views. For this procedure has required Humbach and Ichaporia to comment on forms where they have nothing new to contribute. For instance, their commentary on 51.4 **bune* reads like an English summary of Hintze 1994, 270, except for the lack of either references or acknowledgement. Another example is the discussion of Yt 19.82 *auui.viiṇi vñāpəm*, again without references, differing from earlier works only in Humbach and Ichaporia's final suggestion that *vñāpəm* be interpreted as an (otherwise unknown) name of Aṇam Napāt.

Although the Zamyād Yasht still offers scope for further research, there are Yashts (e.g. Yt 9, 14, 15 and 17) and nearly all the other texts of the Younger Avesta which are in desperate need of being critically edited, translated and expounded. It is to be hoped that they will receive a comparable amount of attention.

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The Persians of the mediaeval period had a name for this sort of thing: they called it a *jung*, or scrap-