

1 INTRODUCTION

The Rašn Yašt is the Pahlavi title given to the Zoroastrian hymn (Phl. *yašt*¹) that stands in praise of Rašnu (Phl. *rašn*), the deity 'Justice'. It belongs to the body of religious texts known as the Avesta - a collection of works composed in the ancient Iranian language of Avestan. Although the Rašn Yašt, like all of the Avesta, is generally assumed to have been committed to writing either during, or shortly after the Sasanian era (224-651 CE.), its verses were probably composed during the early first millennium BCE, being transmitted in the first instance orally.

When discussing the Avesta, it is customary to distinguish the so-called 'Older Avesta' from the 'Younger Avesta'. The former comprises the Gāthās (a series of 17 hymns), the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti (the 'worship in seven chapters'), as well as the *ahuna vairiia* and *airiia man išiia* prayers. These are composed in what is widely assumed to be a more archaic form of the Avestan language, referred to as 'Old(er) Avestan'. The remainder of the Avestan text corpus is composed in so-called 'Young(er) Avestan'².

Among the Younger Avestan texts is an important assemblage of 21 hymns known as the Yašts³. Each Yašt is devoted to a different member or group of the Zoroastrian pantheon, beginning with the supreme god Ahura Mazdā (Yt.1) and ending with the star Vanant (Yt.21). Within this series, the Rašn Yašt is the twelfth.

The Yašts vary significantly in content and length. Early classifications essentially divided the hymns into the 'great' Yašts and the 'minor' Yašts, which latter group includes Yt.12⁴. According to Lommel, the 'great' Yašts are the more ancient, often containing cosmological, naturalistic or heroic mythology. By contrast, the 'minor' Yašts were broadly characterised as little more than 'a collection of prayer-formulae and remnants of a mindless, trivial, jibber-jabber cult'⁵.

It is clear that this categorisation was based upon a modern, Western literary aesthetic that, broadly speaking, lays significant emphasis on originality. For this reason, the Rašn Yašt, whose own style is somewhat repetitive, was widely dismissed by many early scholars, being variously branded as 'a late and insignificant work'⁶ and 'a linguistically inferior,

¹ The form *yašt*, meaning 'prayer, worship' (MacKenzie, *CPD*, 97) arguably comes from Av. *yašta*- lit. 'worshipped' (so Nyberg, *Religionen*, 38. Panaino, 1994). It is connected with the root √ *yaz* 'to sacrifice, worship'.

² For a summary of research on the periodisation of Avestan, including Tremblay's claims of evidence for 'Middle Avestan' (being an intermediate stage between Old(er) and Young(er) Avestan), see Hintze, 2014b:16-19.

³ On the Yašts in general, see Panaino, 1992. Skjærvø, 1994. Hintze, 2009a:46-62.

⁴ See, e.g. Geldner, 1896-1904:7. Lommel, *Y'sAv*, 1.

⁵ Lommel, *Y'sAv*, 1 '...eine Zusammenstellung von Gebetsformeln und Niederschlag eines geistlos veräußerlichten Plapperkultus'.

⁶ Bartholomae, *AirWb*, 1517, s.v. *rašnav*- 'Dem das späte und nichtssagende Stück Yt.12 gewidmet ist'.

lousy job⁷. This approach to the Yašts however, is profoundly misguided and fails to take sufficient stock of the fact that these compositions were born of an oral tradition. Until they were accorded the status of ‘sacral’ poetry and achieved petrification, works such as the Yašts were presumably composed afresh in each performance – the poet drawing upon banks of well-known formulae for their improvisation⁸. Repetition both within the Yašts and between the Yašts is a common feature of this literary genre.

Subsequent attempts at grouping the Yašts have, for example, contrasted so-called ‘legendary’ works, being hymns that are constituted in the main by descriptive accounts of worshipful acts performed by individuals in respect to a given deity (characterised by the frequent use of the verb *yazata* ‘he/she worshipped’) with ‘hymnic’ works, including Yt.12, that are primarily concerned with lauding a particular deity’s qualities and praising his or her deeds (characterised by their first-person addresses, e.g. *yazamaide* ‘we worship’). A third, ‘apotropaic’ group has also been proposed, covering such Yašts as hymn the titular deity’s protective powers⁹. The boundaries between these suggested groups of Yašts however, are quite fluid and many contain elements from more than one category.

Despite such differences, the Yašts are united in containing essentially the same opening and closing formula, allowing for substitutions depending on the deity being addressed¹⁰. Further, as Hintze¹¹ observed, they are almost without exception repositories of information not found elsewhere in the Avesta. In the case of the present Yašt, it has long been recognised to uniquely preserve information regarding an ordeal ritual (the *varah-*) that was designed to supernaturally detect perjury. It also contains a comprehensive cosmographical scheme that affords important insights into an ancient Iranian worldview.

1.1 RITUAL PURPOSE OF THE RAŠN YAŠT

According to the Dēnkard’s testimony, the Great Avesta of the Sasanian era was composed of 21 Nasks ‘divisions’, among them the Bagān Yašt Nask. The latter is said to have included descriptions of Ahura Mazdā and the other gods, both visible and invisible¹².

⁷ Lommel, *Y’sAv*, 95 ‘...ein sprachlich minderwertiges Machwerk’.

⁸ The inadequacy of the traditional criteria for classifying the Yašts was addressed by Skjærvø, 1994: 234-236, who also drew attention to such features of the hymns as reflecting their oral composition and transmission.

⁹ On the division of the Yašts into ‘legendary’, ‘hymnic’ and ‘apotropaic’ types, see Hintze, 2014a. The division of the ‘great’ Yašts into two categories, characterised by the pervasive use of the verbs *yazata* and *yazamaide* was proposed by Kellens, 1978, though subsequently modified somewhat, see Kellens, 1996a:101 fn.46 (cf. also Kellens, 1998:498 fn.73).

¹⁰ See commentary to Yt.12,0 no.1 (p.90f).

¹¹ Hintze, 2009a:54.

¹² DkD.105 1.3-5. See Skjærvø, 1989.

There is good reason to believe this Nask contained many compositions that are counted among the Yašts today, including the Rašn Yašt¹³.

As highlighted by Kreyenbroek¹⁴, the Nērangestān makes repeated reference to a high ritual - the Bagān Yasn, in which the contents of this Bagān Yašt Nask were intercalated with the Yasna and Vīspērad as part of a liturgy. The precise details of this ceremony have not been preserved, though it would no doubt have been lengthy and highly involved¹⁵.

The Nērangestān however, also suggests the one time existence of a much simpler, and less costly ritual that involved the recitation of the Yašts. This essentially consisted of the dedication of a *drōn* service to the day's presiding deity, accompanied by the intoning of the appropriate Yašt¹⁶. In the Zoroastrian calendar, the 30 days of the month (and 12 months of the year), are each named after a particular *yazata*- 'venerable one': the first of the month, for example, derives its name from Ahura Mazdā, the 18th day from Rašnu.

In contemporary praxis, the Yašts continue to occupy a place in the lives of many lay Zoroastrians, taking on the character of common prayers. To recite the Rašn Yašt on the day of Rašnu is considered auspicious, though it may also be intoned on the 7th (Amurdād), 26th (Aštād) and 28th (Zamyād) days of the month¹⁷. There is no restriction on the time period (*gāh*) in which it may be uttered.

1.2 CONTENTS OF THE RAŠN YAŠT

Following the introductory formula, the Yašt to Rašnu commences with a brief question and answer exchange between Ahura Mazdā and the 'truthful one' (*aš auuan-*), identified in verse 2 as Zaruštra, about the nature of the 'Bounteous Mantra' (*maqθra- spənta-*). This dialogic or catechismal style is, in respect to Zoroastrian literature, termed *frašna* (lit. 'question'), and usually involves the parties of Zaruštra and Ahura Mazdā¹⁸.

¹³ The principal evidence consists of the Dēnkard's description of the Bagān Yašt Nask's contents (see Skjærvø, 1989. König, 2012). West, *PT*, IV, xlv drew attention to a New Persian Rivāyat in the 17th cent. ms. B29 (fol.164), according to which the Bagān Yašt Nask contained 16 Yašts (Yts.1, 5-19). In this connection, it is noteworthy that in the mss. F1 and E1, Yašts 14-19 are indicated as corresponding to *fragards* 11-16 (see Kotwal/Hintze, *E1*, 1-2). The Rivāyat tradition however, also attests to 17 divisions of the Bagān Yašt Nask, see West, *PT*, IV, 426, 431, 436, 444.

¹⁴ Kreyenbroek, 2004:327-331. Kreyenbroek, 2008.

¹⁵ Cf. Cantera, 2013:103-5, who reconstructed a hypothetical, Bagān Yašt intercalation ceremony. Cantera, *loc.cit.* and 2009:21-24, building on the work of Kellens, 1996a, has also argued that the Vīspērad ceremony originally involved the intercalation of four Yašts, namely Yts.5,10,14,19 between the Old Avestan parts of the Yasna.

¹⁶ See Kreyenbroek, 2004:330-331. Kreyenbroek, 2008.

¹⁷ See Darmesteter, *ZA*, II, 168. Choksy/Kotwal, 2005:236-7.

¹⁸ Alternative pairings of interlocutors include: Y.71,1 Frašaoštra and Zaruštra; Yt.5,90 Zaruštra and Arəduuī Sūrā Anāhitā. On the rather complicated set of conversations presented in the Vištāsp Yašt, see Cantera, 2013:125-127.

Much of the material from the other Yašts (not to mention the Vīdēvdād) is also cast in the *frašna* mould¹⁹. In part, the presumed purpose of this was to portray the composition as having been divinely revealed, thereby giving authoritative weight to its doctrinal assertions²⁰. One might suppose this was especially desirable when elucidating, for example, the physical arrangement of the universe – a subject of which most humans could not claim personal knowledge. It would also have affirmed that the instructions for performing the *varah-* ‘ordeal’ ritual contained in Yt.12 were consistent with the Mazdā-worshipping religion and not party to the kinds of sorcery practised by so-called Daēuua-worshippers²¹.

The remainder of the Rašn Yašt (vv.3-37) unfolds in three distinct, yet related, movements: The first movement, comprising stanzas 3-6, begins rather abruptly with the words *āaṭ mraōṭ ahurō mazdā* ‘thus spoke Ahura Mazda’, followed by a direct quotation in the first-person voice, outlining how the *varah-* ritual is to be performed. This includes the invocatory formula to be uttered, e.g. ‘We call, we propitiate Rašnu who is strong ... to this prepared ordeal’ as well as certain ritual actions to be performed, such as the direction to ‘strew forth one-third of the *barəsmān-* along the path of the sun’. The invitation to attend the ordeal is extended first to Ahura Mazda (vv.3-4), then to Rašnu (vv.5-6), and both are said to come accompanied by a host of other deities, including the victorious Winds, Dāmōiš Upamana, the Kauui-dynasty Glory and the Mazdā-made Radiance.

The second movement, comprising stanzas 7-8, is devoted in the main to praising Rašnu, and consists of a series of 13 vocative forms, lauding the deity as, for example, *tāiium nijaṇišta-* ‘the best at striking down the thief’.

Finally, the third movement, which extends from stanza 9 through 37, artfully continues the invocation of Rašnu whilst building up a detailed cosmographical map. This it achieves by commencing each verse with the phrase *yaṭciṭ ahi rašnuuō ašāum ...* ‘Be you, O truthful Rašnu at ...’, followed by the name of a particular place and a repetition of stanzas 5-8. In total, Rašnu is called forth from 29 distinct locations, both terrestrial and superterrestrial. The hymn concludes with the standard closing formula found in the Yašts.

Whilst stanzas 3-37 appear to be of a piece, it is somewhat difficult to see the direct relevance of stanzas 1-2. Conceivably, the hymn to Rašnu was largely adapted from a pre-existing composition whose original purpose related directly to the ordeal ritual. In order to lend this a suitably Yašt-like feel, it was prefixed with a *frašna* fragment whose lines contain echoes of other Yašts (Yts.1, 8 and 19²²). As Pirart²³ plausibly speculated, the motivation for the inclusion of this particular text portion might also have been that it

¹⁹ On the *frašna* genre, see Hintze, 2009a:39-40, 59. Cantera, 2013.

²⁰ Cf. Skjærvø, 1994:212. Cantera, 2013:134-5.

²¹ This distinction is made in DkD.693 1.2-3. See p.84.

²² See commentary to Yt.12,1 nos. 4,5 (p.99).

²³ Pirart, 2009:222.

contains the word *rašniia*²⁴ (v.1). This could be interpreted as a kind of ‘sound-hint’, subtly invoking Rašnu, without explicitly pronouncing the deity’s name.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE RAŠN YAŠT

Most Yašts, but not all, are structured internally by *kardes* ‘sections’²⁵ whose length within a hymn, and number between the hymns differs significantly but which represent a self-contained unit. Typically, Yašt *kardes* conclude with the same formula that includes the *yejrhē hātqm* prayer. The opening lines of a Yašt *karde* meanwhile, differ across hymns, but are internally consistent.

Concerning the division into *kardes*, the Rašn Yašt is unusual: F1, the oldest known manuscript containing the text, does not evidence such a division nor does J18 which appears to derive from a line of transmission somewhat independent of F1²⁶. Originally, the manuscript E1 did not divide the text in this way either, though a second hand has added the *karde* numbers 1-31. This is consistent with the manuscripts P3 P13 W2 J10 J19 M12 that break the hymn into 31 numbered *kardes*. O3 does not segment the text into *kardes*. However, together with L18 W2 and J19, O3 does indicate that the standard formula with which *kardes* are concluded is to be recited before the Yašt’s conclusion²⁷.

In those manuscripts that do break the Rašn Yašt into numbered *kardes*, the first section comprises stanzas 1-8 (inclusive). Each successive stanza corresponds to a new *karde*, such that the text following verse 37 has in some instances been numbered *karde* 31. With the exception of the final *karde* (31), these divisions are not followed by the standard formula that marks the end of each *karde* in most other Yašts. Instead, each of the stanzas 9-37 is followed by a repetition of stanzas 5-8. The only other Yašt whose *kardes* are not concluded in the standard fashion is the Frawardīn Yašt (Yt.13) that is also sectioned into 31 *kardes*. It is important to note that the further subdivision of *kardes* into stanzas is not a feature of the manuscripts, but a scholarly convention dating to the mid 19th century²⁸ and adopted for ease of reference.

For readability’s sake, an additional editorial choice has been taken to divide the stanzas into verse lines. Although the Yašts evidently contain metrical material, the nature of the

²⁴ On *rašniia*, see commentary to Yt.12,1 no.2 (p.95).

²⁵ The *karde* division is also characteristic of the Visperad, and contrasts with the *hāiti* ‘chapter’ division of the Yasna.

²⁶ On the various lines down which Yt.12 has been transmitted in written form, see below section 1.7.2 (see p.12ff).

²⁷ See Yt.12 [Karde 31] p.205f. Given this discrepancy between the mss., it is unsurprising that the various editors and translators of Yt.12 have differed in their presentation of the text. Among those who included *karde* numbers are: Anquetil-Duperron, *Zend-Avesta* II, 238-246; Westergaard, *Zendavesta*, 217-221; de Harlez, *Avesta*, 473-479 (de Harlez however, included stanza 9 in *karde* 1, and hence recognised only 30 *kardes*); Darmesteter, *ZA*, II, 168-178; Sethna, *Yashts*, 182-197. By contrast, Geldner, *Avesta*, II, 163-167; Wolff, *Avesta*, 226-229; Lommel, *Y’sAv*, 98-101 did not mark *kardes*. The *karde* divisions found in the text of Pirart, 2009:229-247 do not correspond to any known manuscript (cf. Pirart’s remarks on p.223).

²⁸ The divisions of the Yašts into verses first appears in the edition of Westergaard, *Zendavesta*, 25.

metre has been much debated²⁹. It has long been recognised however, that octosyllabic verse lines dominate and preference has here been given to divisions that reflect this. Yet, as in the other Yašts, we are compelled to admit many lines of more or fewer syllables. The reason for this variability remains uncertain³⁰.

As to the segmenting of the text found in the actual manuscripts, F1 and E1 make use of punctuation marks consisting of three dots arranged in a triangular pattern (∴), and a short horizontal line with a dot above and below resembling an obelus (÷), respectively. The placement of these markings in the two manuscripts is largely in agreement. The table below contrasts the division of Yt.12,2 into verse lines in the present edition with the text as it is found in F1

Division of Yt.12,2 in the present edition and in the ms. F1.

Yt.12,2 Division (and text) in Present Edition	Yt.12,2 Division (and text) in F1
(a) <i>ātaṣ mraōṭi ahurō mazdā</i>	<i>ātaṣ mraōṭi ahurō mazdā ∴ azəm bā tē taṣ</i>
(b) <i>azəm bā tē taṣ framrauūāni</i>	<i>framrauūāni ∴ ərazuuō ašāum spitama ∴</i>
(c) <i>ərazuuō ašāum spitama</i>	<i>məθrō spəntō ∴ yō aš.x^varəṇā ∴ taṣ asti</i>
(d) <i>məθrō spəntō yō aš.x^varəṇā</i>	<i>məθrahe spəntahe ∴ arš.dātəm ∴ taṣ</i>
(e) <i>taṣ asti məθrahe spəntahe arš.dātəm</i>	<i>fraždātəm ∴ taṣ vīciθrəm ∴ taṣ</i>
(f) <i>taṣ fraždātəm taṣ vīciθrəm</i>	<i>θamnaṣhūntəm ∴ taṣ varəcaṣhūntəm ∴</i>
(g) <i>taṣ θamnaṣhūntəm taṣ varəcaṣhūntəm</i>	<i>taṣ yaōxštiuuantəm ∴ taradātəm aniiāiš</i>
(h) <i>taṣ yaōxštiuuantəm</i>	<i>ndāmaṣn ∴</i> ³¹
(i) <i>taradātəm aniiāiš dāmaṣn</i>	

Pirart³² has suggested the use of the punctuation mark ∴ in F1 is evidence of a memory of octosyllables. As may be observed above, the text in F1 is divided also into units of 3 (*arš.dātəm*), 4 (*taṣ fraždātəm*), 5 (*taṣ θamnaṣhūntəm*) and 9 (*azəm bā tē taṣ framrauūāni*) syllables. Indeed, in two instances a potential octosyllabic line, namely *məθrō spəntō yō aš.x^varəṇā* and *taṣ fraždātəm taṣ vīciθrəm* is broken up into two, quadrisyllabic units. Though it is clear that the ∴ sign is indicative of some kind of internal textual division, its precise nature is so far poorly understood.

²⁹ For a broad survey of the literature associated with the question, see Hintze, 2014a. Hintze, 2014b:14-16.

³⁰ Indeed, even the correct method of counting syllables in Younger Avestan is not absolutely certain. Pirart, 2009, included possible syllabic values of verse lines in his edition of the Rašn Yašt, though in places, the scholar inserted or deleted text to achieve an octosyllabic line.

³¹ In Yt.12,2, the placement of the sign ÷ in E1 agrees with the placement of ∴ in F1 with the exception that, in E1, *ərazuuō* is followed by ÷.

³² Pirart, 2009:229.

1.4 LANGUAGE OF THE RAŠN YAŠT

Contrary to Lommel's³³ characterisation of the Rašn Yašt as being, at least in part, a linguistically inferior composition, the hymn's language appears comparable with that evidenced in the other Yašts. The material of which these texts are constituted was presumably composed at varying times and possibly varying places³⁴.

The Rašn Yašt reveals evidence of the gradual collapsing in Avestan of the nominal paradigms, e.g. the use of the dative case for the genitive (cf. *hazaŋrāi*, Yt.12,24³⁵). Examples of this kind however, are plentiful and widespread in the Younger Avesta, and ought not to be regarded as properly 'ungrammatical'.

That said, we do find in Yt.12 a number of genuinely irregular constructions involving the preposition *upa* governing substantives in the nominative case (Yt.12,28-32)³⁶. This no doubt reflects the uncritical combination of set formulae and again, is not without broad parallels in other parts of the Avesta.

The Rašn Yašt though, also includes fifteen forms that are not otherwise attested and it is thus an important witness to the Younger Avestan language. These forms are:

Words attested only in the Rašn Yašt.

Passage	Form	Meaning
12,1	<i>adaōiīō.xratu-</i>	having an undeceivable intellect
12,7	<i>arəθəmaŋt-</i>	judiciary (?)
12,7	<i>bairišta-</i>	best supporter
12,17	<i>ərəðβō.biš-</i>	which heals the upright
12,1	<i>fraždāta-</i>	perfected
12,8	<i>hāidišta-</i>	best at guiding to the goal
12,17	<i>hubiš-</i>	which heals well
12,7	<i>nijaŋmišta-</i>	best at striking down
12,7	<i>parakauuistəma-</i>	best at piercing from afar
12,3	<i>raoŋniā-</i>	butter
12,1	<i>rašnā-</i>	rectitude (?)
12,3	<i>uruuavθā-</i>	Allegiance (?)
12,3	<i>varah-</i>	ordeal (as adj.)
12,7	<i>vidcōišta-</i>	most discerning
12,17	<i>vīspō.biš-</i>	which heals all

³³ Lommel, *Y'sAv*, 95.

³⁴ It has been suggested by Hoffmann/Narten, *Archetypus*, 77ff and Hoffmann/Forssman, *ALF*, 35, that certain phonetic phenomena displayed in the mss. reflect dialectal variations of Avestan associated with the ancient region of Arachosia. These include: the change of *-β- > *-y-, e.g.: *adaōiīa-* for expected **a-ḍaβ-iīa-* < **a-dab-ū* - (Yt.12,1), *auui* < **aβi* (Yt.12,3); the development of unaccented **huu-* in Anlaut to *x^v-*, e.g.: *x^vāθra-* < **huu-āθra-* (Yt.12,36).

³⁵ See Reichelt, *AwEl*, 245.

³⁶ See Yt.12,9 commentary on *upa*.

1.5 TRANSLATIONS OF THE RAŠN YAŠT

Neither a Pahlavi nor Sanskrit translation of the Rašn Yašt is known to exist and, as von Spiegel³⁷ lamented in relation to this ‘short but important work’, we are thus limited to our own powers of understanding.

The first European translation of the Rašn Yašt, as indeed the Avesta, was published in 1771 by Anquetil-Duperron³⁸. His three-volume edition was entitled ‘Zend-Avesta. Ouvrage de Zoroastre’. A German translation of Anquetil-Duperron’s work was subsequently published between 1776-1777, by the theologian and philologist Kleuker³⁹.

The next major advance in Avestan scholarship came with von Spiegel’s⁴⁰ monumental German translation of the Avesta, published between 1852-63. At the request of the Parsi Mr. Muncherjee Hormusjee Cama, von Spiegel’s translation was rendered into English by Bleeck⁴¹ in 1864, for the express benefit of the Zoroastrian community living in India.

In turn, this work was succeeded by another complete translation of the Avesta into French, prepared by de Harlez⁴², the second edition of which was published in 1881. Shortly thereafter (1883), a second English translation of the Rašn Yašt appeared as part of Darmesteter’s⁴³ contribution to the *Sacred Books of the East* series, edited by Müller. Between 1892-3, Darmesteter⁴⁴ also produced a French translation of the Avesta under the title *Le Zend Avesta*. Unlike von Spiegel, de Harlez and Darmesteter would have had the benefit of Justi’s *Handbuch der Zendsprache*, which was published in 1864 and was the first dictionary of its kind.

Justi’s pioneering work was superseded in 1904 with the appearance of Bartholomae’s *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* – an immense contribution to the study and understanding of Avestan and Old Persian. Based entirely upon Bartholomae’s readings and definitions, Wolff⁴⁵ then published a German translation of the Avestan texts edited by Geldner (see below section 1.6) in 1910 entitled: ‘Avesta. Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen’.

In 1927, Lommel⁴⁶ brought out his important monograph ‘Die Yäšt’s des Awesta’, being a translation of all 21 Yašts into German, along with an introduction to each hymn. Lommel is to be credited with many innovative suggestions and improved upon Wolff’s translation both in terms of style and accuracy. His translation of the Rašn Yašt effectively stood as the

³⁷ Von Spiegel, *Commentar*, II, 588, writing of the Rašn Yašt: ‘Es wäre höchst wünschenswerth, wenn wir über dieses kleine aber wichtige Stück einheimische Mittheilungen besäßen. Dies ist aber nicht der Fall, wir sind lediglich auf unsere eigenen Kräfte beschränkt...’.

³⁸ See Anquetil-Duperron, *Zend-Avesta*, II, 238-246 for the Rašn Yašt.

³⁹ See Kleuker, *Zend-Avesta*, II, 243-246 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁴⁰ See von Spiegel, *Avesta*, III, 106-111 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁴¹ See Bleeck, *Avesta*, III, 76-80 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁴² See de Harlez, *Avesta*, 473-479 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁴³ See Darmesteter, *ZA*, II, 168-178 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁴⁴ See Darmesteter, *LZA*, II, 490-499 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁴⁵ See Wolff, *Avesta*, 226-229 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁴⁶ See Lommel, *Y’sAv*, 98-101 for the Rašn Yašt.

last serious, scientific attempt for nearly a century⁴⁷, during which time significant advances were made in the fields of Zoroastrian studies and Indo-Iranian (and Indo-European) philology.

Then, in 2009, Pirart⁴⁸ published as an article a French translation of Yt.12, which includes also the text (without an *apparatus criticus*), an introduction and a brief set of commentarial notes. The following year, a slightly modified version of this translation (without text) was published in book form as part of the scholar's collection of Yašt translations⁴⁹.

1.6 EDITIONS (WITHOUT TRANSLATION) OF THE RAŠN YAŠT

The earliest text-critical version of the Rašn Yašt was published in 1854 by Westergaard⁵⁰ as part of his seminal work entitled *Zendavesta*. This book presented for the first time a text of the Avesta (in Avestan script), together with an *apparatus criticus*. In the case of Yt.12, this included readings from five manuscripts⁵¹, namely: Or (= O3 in present edition), P13 L18 K12 W2 as well as an edition of the text produced in Bombay (written in Gujarati script) in 1842 and given the siglum Kh1. As the first, Westergaard's edition was to prove invaluable to scholars of the day.

Between 1889-1896, Geldner⁵² brought forth his three-volume critical-edition of the Avesta, and his work – drawing on some 150 mss., quickly superseded Westergaard's as the standard text. For the Rašn Yašt, Geldner collated altogether 10 codices, including the oldest, F1. His text (also presented in the Avestan script) was based upon the following manuscripts: F1 E1 Pt1 P13 O3 L18 K12 J10 W2 M12. Until the present, Geldner's critical-edition of the Yt.12 text has remained without revision.

1.7 PROLEGOMENA

1.7.1 MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING THE RAŠN YAŠT

The Rašn Yašt is known from at least fifteen manuscripts. Geldner⁵³ divided the Yašt containing manuscripts into three principal types:

⁴⁷ Here, reference may be made to the translations of the Yašts published by T. R. Sethna in 1976 which though, is an admitted work of an amateur. See Sethna, *Yashts*, ii and for the Rašn Yašt, pp.182-197.

⁴⁸ Pirart, 2009.

⁴⁹ See Pirart, *Adorables*, 173-188 for the Rašn Yašt.

⁵⁰ Westergaard, *Zendavesta*.

⁵¹ Note that the Yašt-containing manuscripts are, in the present work, principally referred to by the sigla employed by Geldner in his edition of the Avesta. By contrast, manuscripts of the Yasna/Vīspərəd/Vīdēvdād/VīštāspYašt are principally referred to by the numerical identifiers established by Cantera, and employed on the Avestan Digital Archive website (<http://ada.usal.es>). See Cantera, *LL*, 403ff (Annexe 5) for a full list. All manuscripts quoted herein are cited in the Bibliography and the bibliographic references include any alternative identifiers.

⁵² Geldner, *Avesta*.

⁵³ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xl. Kellens, 1998:456-7. Cf. König, 2012.

- 1) Indian Yašt Sāde codices, containing the complete set of 21 Yašts and Nyāyišns, as exemplified by F1.
- 2) Khorde Avesta with some Yašts codices, containing only a selection of the Yašts, as exemplified by O3.
- 3) Khorde Avesta with all Yašts codices, as exemplified by E1.

In addition, the Yašts have been transmitted in smaller Yašt Sāde type manuscripts such as W2 that contain only a limited selection of Yašts but not Khorde Avesta texts.

Readings from the following manuscripts have been included in the present edition:

F1. Yašt Sāde codex⁵⁴. 277 foll., 19 x 12 cms. Written in Navsari by Āsadīn Kākā of the family of Hormazyār Rāmyār. Completed 1591 CE. This is the earliest Yašt codex. The manuscript belongs to the private collection of the JamaspAsa family. A facsimile edition was published by JamaspAsa⁵⁵. Yt.12, foll. 170r – 175v.

E1. Khorde Avesta with all Yašts codex⁵⁶. 542 foll. in 2 vols., 24 x 14.5 cms. Written in Navsari in 1601 CE. by Ervad Šāpuhr, son of Hōšang, son of Āsā. Presently in the Meherji Rana Library of Navsari. Catalogue ref.: F4. A facsimile edition was published by Kotwal/Hintze⁵⁷. Yt.12, foll. 296r – 302v.

Pt1. Khorde Avesta with all Yašts codex⁵⁸. 543 foll., 21 x 13 cms. Written in Surat by Herbab Dārāb, descendent of Hormazdyār Rāmyār, in 1625 CE⁵⁹. The present whereabouts of this manuscript are not known⁶⁰.

O3. Khorde Avesta with some Yašts codex⁶¹. 294 foll., 21.5 x 13.5 cms. Bound. Written in 1646 CE. Located at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Catalogue ref.: Fraser, 258. Designated ‘Or’ in Westergaard’s edition. Yt.12, foll. 231r-239v.

P3. Sanskrit Yasna and Khorde Avesta with some Yašts codex⁶². 2 parts. 310 foll., 44 x 24 cms. Bound. Written by Mōbad Šāpūr bin Mānak in 1760 CE. Housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Catalogue ref.: Supp. Pers. 29. Yt.12, Part 2, foll. 281v-284r.

P13. Khorde Avesta with some Yašts codex⁶³. 427 foll., 20 x 13 cms. Bound. Scribe and date unknown though, according to Blochet (writing in 1898), it belongs to the (then) last century. Housed at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Catalogue ref.: no.4, new supplement 31. Yt.12, foll. 351r - 357r.

⁵⁴ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, iii. Hintze, 1989:32.

⁵⁵ See JamaspAsa, *FI*.

⁵⁶ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, ii. Hintze, 1989:40.

⁵⁷ Kotwal/Hintze, *E1*.

⁵⁸ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xii.

⁵⁹ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xii.

⁶⁰ See Hintze, *ZY*, 55.

⁶¹ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xii.

⁶² Anquetil-Duperron, *Zend-Avesta*, II, v-vi. Blochet, *Catalogue*, 15-23.

⁶³ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xii. Blochet, *Catalogue*, 44-52.

L18. Khorde Avesta with some Yašts codex⁶⁴. 490 foll. 25 x 17 cms. Bound. The manuscript has no colophon, but the Sanskrit and Pāzand Āširvāds (foll. 111v and 118v) indicate the date 1672 CE. Housed at the British Library. Catalogue ref: Oriental mss. Avestan 20. Yt.12, foll. 372r - 380r.

K12. Khorde Avesta with all Yašts codex. 378 foll. Written in 1801 CE. Manuscript located at the Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen⁶⁵.

J18. Yašt Sāde codex⁶⁶. 341 foll., 13.5 x 21 cms. Bound. Written by Herbed Shapur Dastur Sohrabji Dasturān, Dastur of the Mahyar family for Mobed M.R.Vaccha, in 1827 CE. The manuscript belongs to the private collection of Dastur JamaspAsa. Yt.12, foll. 189r – 196v.

J10. Khorde Avesta with all Yašts codex⁶⁷. 540 foll. 20 x 14cms. Undated but ‘modern’. This manuscript belongs to the private collection of the JamaspAsa family, Bombay, though its present whereabouts are unknown.

W2. Smaller Yašt codex⁶⁸. 394 foll. 18 x 11 cms. Bound. Unknown date (first half of 19th cent.), made for Rev. Dr. John Wilson, by same copyist as K40⁶⁹. Housed at the John Rylands Library, Manchester (UK). Catalogue ref: Rylands Parsi ms. No.13 (old no.4 ‘collection of favourite Yashts’). Yt.12, foll. 150v – 249v.

J19. Khorde Avesta with all Yašt codex. 439 foll. 14 x 20.5 cms. Unknown date. This manuscript belongs to the private collection of Dastur JamaspAsa. Yt.12, pp. 494 – 518.

In his edition, Geldner provided occasional readings from **M12**, a modern manuscript⁷⁰ written in Persian script compiled from Indian and Iranian sources. A very few readings have been carried over to the critical apparatus of the present work.

There exist at least two additional manuscripts containing the Rašn Yašt which were not utilised by Geldner nor for the present edition:

EMU₂. Khorde Avesta with some Yašts codex⁷¹. 158 foll. (foll. 1-10 missing, incomplete at end also). 20.5 x 17.5 cms. Unknown date. Formerly belonging to Ervad Maneckji R. Unwala. Yt.12, foll. 146-151. Present whereabouts unknown.

B27. Khorde Avesta with some Yašt codex⁷². 2 bound vols.: Vol.1 foll.1-318. Vol. 2 foll.320-558. 24.5 x 14 cms. Written by Ervad Tehmur Ervad Kaus Sanjana in 1796 CE. Housed in Dastur Kayoji Mirza Institute, Udvada.

⁶⁴ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, ix.

⁶⁵ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, vii.

⁶⁶ Hintze, 1989. Also, Hintze, *ZY*, 56.

⁶⁷ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, v.

⁶⁸ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xiii.

⁶⁹ K40, also a ‘Smaller Yašt codex’ was copied for Rev. Dr. John Wilson in 1842. See Geldner, *Prolegomena*, viii.

⁷⁰ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xi.

⁷¹ Bharucha, *Sanskrit Writings*, I, x.

⁷² See Hintze, 1989:42-44. Hintze, *ZY*, 56, 58.

In the current apparatus, Geldner's text is denoted by the siglum **G**.

Of those manuscripts employed by Geldner for his edition (see p.9), F1 E1 O3 P13 L18 and W2 have here been freshly collated yielding many additions and a few corrections⁷³. Three additional manuscripts, P3 J18 J19, which are unknown to Geldner's edition of the Yašts, have also been collated for the present edition. For Pt1 K12 J10 and M12, I have had to rely entirely upon Geldner's apparatus.

1.7.2 FILIATIONS

All the manuscripts collated for the present edition derive from India, the Rašn Yašt being unattested in any of the known, Iranian Khorde Avesta codices. For those Yašts, including Yt.12, attested in the Indian Khorde Avesta tradition proper⁷⁴, Geldner⁷⁵ supposed there to be two branches of transmission: 1) The Indian Yašt Sāde manuscripts, represented principally by the manuscript F1, but including a side-line represented by J10; 2) The Indian Vulgate.

Within a single manuscript however, it was not uncommon for the Yašts to have been copied from a variety of sources and to evidence a highly complex series of horizontal relations. Illustrative here are Geldner's remarks on the Khorde Avesta with all Yašt codex Pt1, the scribe of which he supposed '...at first took as the basis of his copy one or more Khorda Avestâ Mss., but completed the Yashts by drawing also upon F1'⁷⁶. In particular, Geldner believed F1 served as the source for Yašts 5-8; 10-13; 15; 17-19⁷⁷.

The task of determining genealogical relations between the manuscripts thus becomes extremely complicated⁷⁸ and it is fair to say that the written transmission of the Yašts as a whole is only very imperfectly understood. For this reason, I have refrained from attempting to draw a *stemma codicum*⁷⁹ as well as speculating on the pre-recorded history of the Yašts' transmission. Instead, I have grouped together under the appropriate representatives of F1 and J10, such manuscripts as appear most closely related. These observations are drawn from, and are limited in scope to, the twelfth Yašt⁸⁰.

⁷³ For example, in his apparatus to Yt.12.6, Geldner erroneously stated that lines a-g (inclusive) were missing in J10 M12 and W2, where in fact they stand in W2. Further, he claimed that at the conclusion of Yt.12.6, stanzas 5-6 are repeated in O3 J10 K12 W2 M12, where such text is not repeated in W2.

⁷⁴ Typically exclusive of the 'greater' Yašts 5,8,10,15,17,19.

⁷⁵ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xlv.

⁷⁶ Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xlii.

⁷⁷ Cf. Tremblay, 1996:111 fn.22, who further argued for the influence of the Indian vulgate tradition on Pt1, coming either directly, or (in his opinion) more probably via a second-hand correction to F1.

⁷⁸ See Tremblay, 1996:108-112.

⁷⁹ For stemmata relating to the Yašts, cf. those drawn by Hintze, *ZY*, 58, Panaino, *Tištuya*, I, 9 (which largely agrees with Hintze), and the revisions proposed by Tremblay, 1996:112.

⁸⁰ Omitted from detailed discussion are the mss. Pt1 K12 M12 which have not been freshly collated for the present edition. On these, cf. Geldner, *Prolegomena*, xl ff.