Avesta

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The Avesta (, Book Pahlavi: ?p(y)st?k' (abest?g), Persian: ????? (avestâ)) is the text corpus of religious literature of Zoroastrianism. All its texts are composed in the Avestan language and written in the Avestan alphabet. Modern editions of the Avesta are based on the various manuscript traditions that have survived in India and Iran.

The individual texts of the Avesta were originally oral compositions. They were composed over a long period of several centuries during the Old Iranian period (possibly ranging from 15th century BCE – 4th century BCE). The written transmission began during the Sassanian period, with the creation of the Avestan alphabet. The resulting texts were then compiled into a comprehensive edition of the Avesta in 21 volumes. This edition was lost sometime after the 10th century CE and only a small part survived through a series of different manuscript traditions. The oldest surviving fragment of such a manuscript dates to 1323 CE.

Unlike the Sasanian Avesta, which was organized thematically, the surviving Avestan manuscripts correspond to the different ceremonies in which they are used. It is assumed that it was their regular use which ensured their survival to this day. The principal text is the Yasna, which takes its name from the corresponding ceremony, in which it is recited. Extensions to the Yasna ceremony include the texts of the Vendidad and the Visperad. Unlike the Yasna, Visperad and Vendidad, the Yashts and the other texts of the Khordeh Avesta or "Little Avesta" are no longer used liturgically in high rituals. Aside from the Yashts, these other lesser texts include the Nyayesh texts, the Gah texts, the Siroza and various other fragments.

Zoroastrianism

Mazdaiiasna) or Behdin (????? behd?n), is an Iranian religion centred on the Avesta and the teachings of Zarathushtra Spitama, who is more commonly referred

Zoroastrianism (Persian: ??? ?????? D?n-e Zartosht?), also called Mazdayasna (Avestan: ??????????? Mazdaiiasna) or Behdin (????? behd?n), is an Iranian religion centred on the Avesta and the teachings of Zarathushtra Spitama, who is more commonly referred to by the Greek translation, Zoroaster (Greek: ????????? Z?roastris). Among the world's oldest organized faiths, its adherents exalt an uncreated, benevolent, and all-wise deity known as Ahura Mazda (??????????), who is hailed as the supreme being of the universe. Opposed to Ahura Mazda is Angra Mainyu (??????????), who is personified as a destructive spirit and the adversary of all things that are good. As such, the Zoroastrian religion combines a dualistic cosmology of good and evil with an eschatological outlook predicting the ultimate triumph of Ahura Mazda over evil. Opinions vary among scholars as to whether Zoroastrianism is monotheistic, polytheistic, henotheistic, or a combination of all three. Zoroastrianism shaped Iranian culture and history, while scholars differ on whether it significantly influenced ancient Western philosophy and the Abrahamic religions, or gradually reconciled with other religions and traditions, such as Christianity and Islam.

Originating from Zoroaster's reforms of the ancient Iranian religion, Zoroastrianism began during the Avestan period (possibly as early as the 2nd millennium BCE), but was first recorded in the mid-6th century BCE. For the following millennium, it was the official religion of successive Iranian polities, beginning with the Achaemenid Empire, which formalized and institutionalized many of its tenets and rituals, and ending with the Sasanian Empire, which revitalized the faith and standardized its teachings. In the 7th century CE, the rise of Islam and the ensuing Muslim conquest of Iran marked the beginning of the decline of

Zoroastrianism. The persecution of Zoroastrians by the early Muslims in the nascent Rashidun Caliphate prompted much of the community to migrate to the Indian subcontinent, where they were granted asylum and became the progenitors of today's Parsis. Once numbering in the millions, the world's total Zoroastrian population is estimated to comprise between 110,000 and 120,000 people, with most of them residing either in India (50,000–60,000), in Iran (15,000–25,000), or in North America (22,000). The religion is declining due to restrictions on conversion, strict endogamy, and low birth rates.

The central beliefs and practices of Zoroastrianism are contained in the Avesta, a compendium of sacred texts assembled over several centuries. Its oldest and most central component are the Gathas, purported to be the direct teachings of Zoroaster and his account of conversations with Ahura Mazda. These writings are part of a major section of the Avesta called the Yasna, which forms the core of Zoroastrian liturgy. Zoroaster's religious philosophy divided the early Iranian gods of Proto-Indo-Iranian paganism into emanations of the natural world—the ahura and the daeva; the former class consisting of divinities to be revered and the latter class consisting of divinities to be rejected and condemned. Zoroaster proclaimed that Ahura Mazda was the supreme creator and sustaining force of the universe, working in g?t?g (the visible material realm) and m?n?g (the invisible spiritual and mental realm) through the Amesha Spenta, a class of seven divine entities that represent various aspects of the universe and the highest moral good. Emanating from Ahura Mazda is Spenta Mainyu (the Holy or Bountiful Spirit), the source of life and goodness, which is opposed by Angra Mainyu (the Destructive or Opposing Spirit), who is born from Aka Manah (evil thought). Angra Mainyu was further developed by Middle Persian literature into Ahriman (???????), Ahura Mazda's direct adversary.

Zoroastrian doctrine holds that, within this cosmic dichotomy, human beings have the choice between Asha (truth, cosmic order), the principle of righteousness or "rightness" that is promoted and embodied by Ahura Mazda, and Druj (falsehood, deceit), the essential nature of Angra Mainyu that expresses itself as greed, wrath, and envy. Thus, the central moral precepts of the religion are good thoughts (hwnata), good words (hakhta), and good deeds (hvarshta), which are recited in many prayers and ceremonies. Many of the practices and beliefs of ancient Iranian religion can still be seen in Zoroastrianism, such as reverence for nature and its elements, such as water (aban). Fire (atar) is held by Zoroastrians to be particularly sacred as a symbol of Ahura Mazda himself, serving as a focal point of many ceremonies and rituals, and serving as the basis for Zoroastrian places of worship, which are known as fire temples.

Avesta (disambiguation)

The Avesta is the primary collection of sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. Avesta may also refer to: Avesta Municipality (Avesta kommun), one of 290 municipalities

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Avesta Municipality

Avesta Municipality (Swedish: Avesta kommun) is one of 290 municipalities of Sweden. It is in Dalarna County, in the central part of the country, and its

Avesta Municipality (Swedish: Avesta kommun) is one of 290 municipalities of Sweden. It is in Dalarna County, in the central part of the country, and its seat is in the town of Avesta.

The municipality in its present size was created in 1967 when the four surrounding municipalities were joined with the City of Avesta. In 1971 it became a municipality of unitary type.

Avesta (locality)

Avesta (Swedish pronunciation: [????v?sta]) is a locality and the seat of Avesta Municipality in Dalarna County, Sweden, with 11,949 inhabitants in 2015

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The name of Avesta is first found in 1303 as "Aghastadhum". The Swedish Aghe is of similar origin as the word å, meaning stream, in this case the Avestafors, a tributary of the river Dalälven. The Swedish Stadhum was the dative plural of a word of similar origin as the English word stead, or farm. The present name of the town is identical with that of the ancient Persian language and scriptures, but there is no apparent linguistic connection between them.

Zend

the texts, hence the misnomer " Zend-Avesta" for the Avesta. In priestly use, however, " Zand-i-Avesta" or " Avesta-o-Zand" merely identified manuscripts

Zend or Zand (Middle Persian: ???) is a Zoroastrian term for Middle Persian or Pahlavi versions and commentaries of Avestan texts. These translations were produced in the late Sasanian period.

Zand glosses and commentaries exist in several languages, including in the Avestan language itself. These Avestan language exegeses sometimes accompany the original text being commented upon, but are more often elsewhere in the canon. An example of exegesis in the Avestan language itself includes Yasna 19–21, which is a set of three Younger Avestan commentaries on the three Gathic Avestan 'high prayers' of Yasna 27. Zand also appears to have once existed in a variety of Middle Iranian languages, but of these Middle Iranian commentaries, the Middle Persian zand is the only one to survive fully, and is for this reason regarded as 'the' zand.

With the notable exception of the Yashts, almost all surviving Avestan texts have their Middle Persian zand, which in some manuscripts appear alongside (or interleaved with) the text being glossed. The practice of including non-Avestan commentaries alongside the Avestan texts led to two different misinterpretations in western scholarship of the term zand; these misunderstandings are described below. These glosses and commentaries were not intended for use as theological texts by themselves but for religious instruction of the (by then) non-Avestan-speaking public. In contrast, the Avestan language texts remained sacrosanct and continued to be recited in the Avestan language, which was considered a sacred language. The Middle Persian zand can be subdivided into two subgroups, those of the surviving Avestan texts, and those of the lost Avestan texts.

A consistent exegetical procedure is evident in manuscripts in which the original Avestan and its zand coexist. The priestly scholars first translated the Avestan as literally as possible. In a second step, the priests then translated the Avestan idiomatically. In the final step, the idiomatic translation was complemented with explanations and commentaries, often of significant length, and occasionally with different authorities being cited.

Several important works in Middle Persian contain selections from the zand of Avestan texts, also of Avestan texts which have since been lost. Through comparison of selections from lost texts and from surviving texts, it has been possible to distinguish between the translations of Avestan works and the commentaries on them, and thus to some degree reconstruct the content of some of the lost texts. Among those texts is the Bundahishn, which has Zand-Agahih ("Knowledge from the Zand") as its subtitle and is crucial to the understanding of Zoroastrian cosmogony and eschatology. Another text, the Wizidagiha, "Selections (from the Zand)", by the 9th century priest Zadspram, is a key text for understanding Sassanid-era Zoroastrian orthodoxy. The Denkard, a 9th or 10th century text, includes extensive summaries and quotations of zand texts.

Turya (Avesta)

(Avestan ??????, t?riia) is the ethnonym of a group mentioned in the Avesta, i.e., the collection of sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. In those texts

Turya or Turanian (Avestan ???????, t?riia) is the ethnonym of a group mentioned in the Avesta, i.e., the collection of sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. In those texts, the Turyas closely interact with the Aryas, i.e. the early Iranians. Their identity is unknown but they are assumed to have been Iranic horse nomads from the Eurasian steppe.

Like the ethnonym Iranian, which is derived from Iran, the modern term Turanian is a back formation from the toponym Turan. Both Turan and Iran are in turn back formations from the Old Iranian ethnonyms Turya and Arya, respectively. Turya, or variants thereof, does not appear in any historically attested sources. However, the Turanians appear in later Iranian legends, in particular in the Shahnameh as the enemies of the Iranians. During medieval times, Turkic tribes began to settle in Turan and the name was increasingly applied to them. The modern pan-nationalist movement Turanism also ultimately derives its name from the term.

Sasanian Avesta

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The Sasanian Avesta or Great Avesta refers to the anthology of Zoroastrian literature produced during the Sasanian period. Most of this work is now lost, but its content and structure can be reconstructed from references found in a number of texts from the 9th century onward.

Compared to the extant Avesta, the Sasanian Avesta was much larger and organized into 21 distinct volumes called nasks (Avestan: naska; Middle Persian: nask, 'bundle'). Of those, only one is preserved in its entirety, while others are either lost or only preserved in fragments.

Mithra

2001, p. 243, n.18. "AVESTA: YASNA (English): Chapters 0-8". avesta.org. "AVESTA: KHORDA AVESTA: Niyayeshes (Litanies)". avesta.org. Sundermann, W. (1988-12-15)

Mithra (Avestan: ????? Mi?ra; Old Persian: ??? Mi?ra??) is an ancient Iranian deity (yazata) of covenants, light, oaths, justice, the Sun, contracts, and friendship. In addition to being the divinity of contracts, Mithra is also a judicial figure, an all-seeing protector of Truth (Asha), and the guardian of cattle, the harvest, and the Waters.

The Romans attributed their Mithraic mysteries to Zoroastrian Persian sources relating to Mithra. Since the early 1970s, the dominant scholarship has noted dissimilarities between the Persian and Roman traditions, making it, at most, the result of Roman perceptions of Zoroastrian ideas.

Avestan

which it is used and simply means language of the Avesta. The name Avesta comes from Persian ?????? (avestâ) itself derived from Middle Persian abest?g. It

Avestan (?-VESS-t?n) is the liturgical language of Zoroastrianism. It belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family and was originally spoken during the Old Iranian period (c. 1500 – 400 BCE) by the Iranians living in the eastern portion of Greater Iran.

After Avestan became extinct, its religious texts were first transmitted orally until being collected and put into writing during the Sasanian period (c. 400 – 500 CE). The extant material falls into two groups: Old Avestan (c. 1500 – 900 BCE) and Younger Avestan (c. 900 – 400 BCE). The immediate ancestor of Old Avestan was the Proto-Iranian language, a sister language to the Proto-Indo-Aryan language, with both having developed from the earlier Proto-Indo-Iranian language. As such, Old Avestan is quite close in both grammar and lexicon to Vedic Sanskrit, the oldest preserved Indo-Aryan language.

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