

correctly employed and *ṅuh* or *ṅh* was written instead of *ṅ'h*. The manuscripts themselves constantly betray a marked deterioration in the pronunciation of the vulgate.

*Bibliography:* C. F. Andreas, "Die Entstehung des Awesta-Alphabetes und sein ursprünglicher Lautwert," *Verhandlungen des XIII. internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses, Hamburg, September 1902*, Leiden, 1904, pp. 99-106. W. B. Henning "The Disintegration of the Avestic Studies," *TPS*, 1942, pp. 40-56 (*Selected Papers II*, Acta Iranica 15, pp. 151-67). Idem, "Mitteliranisch," p. 52. K. Hoffmann, "Zum Zeicheninventar der Avesta-Schrift," in *Festgabe deutscher Iranisten zur 2500 Jahrfeier Irans*, Stuttgart, 1971, pp. 64-73 (*Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik I*, Wiesbaden, 1975, pp. 316-25). A. V. W. Jackson, *The Avestan Alphabet and its Transcription*, Stuttgart, 1890. K. M. JamaspAsa, *Manuscript D90: Yasnā with its Pahlavi Translation I-II*, Shiraz, 1976 (facsimile of Geldner's ms. Mf4). G. Morgenstierne, "Orthography and Sound-system of the Avesta," *NTS* 12, 1942, pp. 30-82 (*Irano-Dardica*, Wiesbaden, 1973, pp. 31-79). C. Salemann, "Ueber eine Parsenhandschrift der Kaiserlichen Oeffentlichen Bibliothek zu St. Petersburg," *Travaux de la troisième session du Congrès international des Orientalistes 1876 II*, St. Petersburg and Leiden, 1879, pp. 508-19. G. Windfuhr, "Diacritic and Distinctive Features in Avestan," *JAOS* 91, 1971, pp. 104-24 (somewhat speculative). See also J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Kratylos* 7, 1962, pp. 4-9.

(K. HOFFMANN)

## ii. THE PHONOLOGY OF AVESTAN

*Attested forms and stages of development.* Avestan is attested in two forms, known respectively as Old Avestan (OAv.) or Gathic Avestan and Young Avestan (YAv.). They differ from each other not only chronologically but also dialectally. Avestan, which is associated with northeastern Iran, and Old Persian, which belongs to the southwest, together constitute what is called Old Iranian. It is possible to some extent to reconstruct Proto-Iranian by comparing Avestan with Old Persian. This Proto-Iranian is closely related to the Vedic language of ancient India. Both Proto-Iranian and Vedic go back to Proto-Indo-Iranian or Proto-Aryan, which in turn descends from Proto-Indo-European.

By comparison with Vedic, whose phonemes are consistently recorded, Avestan in the form in which it has been handed down in manuscripts from 1288 A.D. onwards is attested in a very irregular notation. Apart from errors introduced in the post-Sasanian period, the essential features of the manuscript tradition of the Avesta must have been present already in the Sasanian archetype. When the Avestan texts were first recorded, perhaps as early as the fourth century A.D., each sound of the current Avestan pronunciation was designated by a special letter. The fact that a phonetic notation was used rather than a phonemic one means that it is

possible to assess the linguistic significance of the individual spellings with regard to both the synchronic description of the language and its historical development.

Every Avestan text, whether composed originally in Old Avestan or in Young Avestan, went through several stages of transmission before it was recorded in the extant manuscripts. During the course of transmission many changes took place.

For Old Avestan the following stages may be assumed: 1. The original language of the Zarathustrian *Gāthās*, the *Yasna Haptaṅhāiti*, and the four sacred prayers; 2. Changes involved by the practice of slow chanting; 3. Changes due to transmission by YAv. priests, who introduced many YAv. sound forms into the OAv. texts; 4. Deliberate alteration of the text in the course of an orthoepic revision ("School text"); 5. Continued transmission of the OAv. texts along with the YAv. texts.

Young Avestan went through the following stages: 1. The original language of the composers of grammatically correct YAv. texts; perhaps in Marv or Herat; 2. Dialect influences as a result of the transfer of the Av. texts to Southeast Iran (Arachosia?); 3. Transfer of the Avesta to Persis in Southwest Iran, possibly earlier than 500 B.C.; 4. Transmission of the Avesta in a Southwest Iranian theological school, probably in Eṣṭāḱr: Old Pers. and Mid. Pers. influences, the insistence on fantastic pronunciations by semi-learned schoolmasters (Av. *aēθrapaiti-*), the composition of ungrammatical late Av. texts, the adaptation of portions of texts taken from other regions where they were recited; 5. The end of the oral transmission: phonetic notation of the Avestan texts in the Sasanian archetype, probably in the fourth century A.D.; 6. Post-Sasanian deterioration of the written transmission due to incorrect pronunciation (Vulgate); 7. In the ninth and tenth centuries A.D. the manuscript copies of individual texts were made on which the extant manuscripts are based; 8. Earlier manuscripts were copied in manuscripts dating from A.D. 1288 till the nineteenth century by scribes who introduced errors and corruptions. These are the manuscripts extant today.

Many phonetic features can not be ascribed with certainty to a particular stage since there may be more than one possibility. Every phonetic form that can be ascribed to the Sasanian archetype on the basis of critical assessment of the manuscript evidence must have gone through the stages mentioned above so that "Old Avestan" and "Young Avestan" really mean no more than "Old Avestan and Young Avestan of the Sasanian period."

*The vowels.* The Proto-Indo-Ir. vowels *a*, *ā*, *i*, *ī*, *u*, *ū* and the diphthongs *ai*, *āi*, *au*, *āu* (= Vedic *e*, *ai*, *o*, *au*) remained unchanged in Proto-Iranian. Proto-Indo-Ir. *i* that arose from Proto-IE. *ə* (the vocalization of a consonantal laryngal *H*) is attested by such forms as Av. *pitār-* "father," OAv. *sīšā* "teach," cf. Vedic *śiṣat*, from Proto-IE. \**k̑ase-*; OAv. *-maidī*, cf. Vedic *-mahi*, 1 plur. verb ending, from Proto-IE. \**-medʰə*. But Proto-IE. *H*