THE HYMNS OF ZOROASTER. A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE MOST ANCIENT SCARED TEXTS OF IRAN. Translated by M.L. WEST. pp. xi, 162. London, I B Tauris, 2010.
doi:10.1017/S1356186311000289

This book by a specialist in Greek and Indo-European comes as something of a surprise, since scholars of the difficult texts in Old Avestan, the oldest known texts in Old Iranian, do not usually emerge out of the blue. Quite aware of this, M.L. West presents his entrance with a preface and an introduction designed to show that he can bring a fresh wind to the subject. Does it work?

After a short preface, a note on the pronunciation of Avestan words and names "γ as 'gh' in 'aargh' ("on being strangled", which surely must be a joke', and an introduction, the texts of the Old Avestan corpus are presented with a translation on the right-hand and a running commentary on the left-hand pages. This useful device was taken, as the author says, from J. Duchesne-Guillemin's translation which appeared in French in 1948 and was translated into English by Mrs. M. Henning, the wife of W.B. Henning, and published in 1952. On pp. 38–170 West gives in this manner the translation of Yasnas 28–34 and 43–54.1 with a commentary. Yasna 52 is left out. On pp. 172–177 Yasna 35–41 are translated but without a running commentary. This also means that Yasna 42 is omitted. Two pages of notes and two pages of bibliography follow. Curiously, in the bibliography no mention is made of M. Monna's 1978 edition which attempted to reconstruct a standard Avestan text freed of later orthographical conventions. No dictionary is mentioned, nor any specific comment made on the complex state of Avestan lexicography. Work such as that of Martin Schwartz, to name just one scholar, on the compositional techniques of the Avesta would also have deserved a mention for its demonstration of the very close-knit system of repetitions in the small corpus. This shows beyond doubt that West's assumption on p. 31 that Zoroaster might not have wanted his texts to be memorised and perpetuated cannot be true. H.-P. Schmidt 1985, for example is quite clear on this (p. 4): "The extremely high degree of abstraction exhibited in Zarathustra's poetry is also proof of its sophistication" and "the prophet's princely patrons ... will have possessed ... a measure of education sufficient to appreciate the verbal and intellectual skills of the poet".

The introduction is informed by a positive presentation of 'facts' that unfortunately are no way as certain as West suggests. Even the statement on pp. 1–2 referring to Zoroastrianism: "For more than a thousand years it was the official religion of a great empire." is cryptic, as no known empire on Iranian soil ever lasted that long. There are a number of mistakes, e.g. the sample of text in original script on p. 33 does not correspond with the transliteration placed below it in a number of places, and shows great inconsistency in sometimes having, but mostly missing, the dot that marks the end of the word in the manuscripts and in modern editions. Rather than giving such a sample, why not give part of a facsimile page from a manuscript and a table of the script?

West starts with a clear idea of Zarathustra as a person, a helpful position given the recent tendency to de-construct him. However, he then follows the traditional view that puts Zarathustra into opposition with the Younger Avesta, and even to a certain extent with the Old Avestan prose text Yasna Haptanhāiti, without paying any regard to the fact that the very abstract nature of the Old Avestan texts allows no direct comparison with the inherited Indo-Iranian mythologies in the Young Avesta and even the deities in the Yasna Hapatanhāiti. On the basis of this fundamental difference in textual content we are not really enabled to make the traditional claim that Zarathustra, as a reformer, rejected what went before him. He may have stood outside it, but that does not necessarily mean a rejection; therefore the 'reincorporation' of the Indo-Iranian heritage does not have to mean a dilution or travesty of Zarathustra's teachings.

Since West claims on p. viii that previous translations have been "unmoderated by a ... concern for an intelligible and coherent train of thought" the most convenient place to start will be the English translations of Duchesne-Guillemin's 1952 and Humbach/Ichaporia 1994. The first difference when compared to Duchesne-Guillemin is immediately obvious, West presents the texts in the tradition order whereas Duchesne-Guillemin experimented with his own sequence (not at all without reason, of course). West however, also departs from the traditional order in taking Yasna 35–41 out and placing this text separately at the back of the book. He has some justification for doing this, because Yasna 35–41 form a text of their own, the Yasna Haptanhāiti. West calls this 'The Liturgy in Seven Chapters', clearly following A. Hintze's 2007 edition with the title *A Zoroastrian Liturgy. The Worship in Seven Chapters*. Hintze chose these designations carefully; by conflating them into one West has gone further than her. He clearly regards the Haptanhāiti as distinct not only in form but also in date from the other Yasnas. A difference in date is by no means proven and therefore the conclusion that the Yasna Haptanhāiti is a development of Zoroastrianism after Zoroaster's death and, in consequence, in some way in opposition to Zoroaster's thinking (see: p. 3 "created within the earliest Zoroastrian community not long after the prophet's lifetime" and on p. 22 "It is a marvellously sunny text: there is no reference to any difficulties faced by the community, ..."; "... the acceptance of some elements of traditional popular religion into Zoroastrian cult" etc.) is very tentative and therefore something that would have deserved more comment but, in particular, should be clearly marked as tentative. West seems unhappy with this text in any case, because the translation here is without the running commentary of the other texts. Many things remain unexplained. He leaves out the linguistically somewhat younger first strophe of Yasna 35, without commenting on this in any way. The lack of a commentary means that the reader has to make up his own mind about who the 'we' speaking in this text are and whether the speakers are always the same. However, on p. 21 he suggests that the text was "spoken by a priest before a congregation of worshippers".

West decides to give the central term *aṣ̌a-* one consistent translation only, as 'Right'. He rightly points out on p. 12 that the word "is etymologically identical with the Vedic *Ṛta-*, a divine principle that governs the natural world, for example the course of the sun, as well as representing truth or rightness in the human sphere" but in fact that is more a justification for translations such as 'truth' or 'rightness' rather than 'right' because the latter does not necessarily suggest 'the correct order' to which humans are also bound. This is a problem all translators of the Avesta have been faced with. It might have been worth considering leaving such a prominent term untranslated. Its opposite is not 'wrong', rather it is deceit, the denial of adherence to the correct order. The translation given on p. 15 for *saošiiant-* as "(would-be) strengthener" is also unfortunate because the Avestan word conveys a future rather than a pretence or conjecture: "(future) strengthener".

In the translation of the enigmatic hymn 33 West translates "for the wrongful one and as regards the righteous" and "for him whose false and straight deeds" in 33.1 whereas Humbach/Ichaporia render it as "for the deceitful one and the truthful one" and "for the one whose wrong and right (deeds)". Quite apart from the difficulty in deciding what 'straight deeds' might mean I see no improvement in West's translation and, as mentioned above, more accuracy in the opposition of 'deceitful' and 'truthful'. West is close to Duchesne-Guillemin's "the wicked man and the righteous one". Similarly, West offers 'disregard' and 'arrogance' in 33.4 whereas Humach/Ichapria have 'disobedience' and 'scorn', more focussed terms. Without a comment on 33.2 the passage translated by West as "or instructs his comrade in goodness" is, despite its elegance, no more persuasive than Humach/Ichaporia's 'or [the one who] wins him over to be his guest at the good [reward]" and ultimately deceptive. Duchesne-Guillemin has "Or he who converts his clansman to the good" which may have inspired West's rendering. H.-P. Schmdt 1985 suggests: "or will recognize the guest (as being) on the good (side)". Clearly, the final word has not been spoken on the interpretation and translation of these texts and it serves little purpose to claim otherwise.

In short, the book is an interesting experiment which, if it makes these difficult texts, which are among the oldest surviving religious texts in the world, more accessible to a readership beyond the scholarly world, will have been worth it. If this should result in turn in the need for a second edition it is to be hoped that that edition will try to do more justice to the complex texts presented here and the issues they raise.

Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst
Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities

The Portuguese in the East: A Cultural History of A Maritime Trading Empire. By Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya. pp. xv, 212. London and New York, Tauris Academic Studies, 2008.
doi:10.1017/S1356186311000307

The Portuguese in the East is not, as the subtitle declares, a comprehensive cultural history of the Portuguese empire in Asia or even of the Estado da Índia, nor perhaps is it intended to be. Instead, it is a somewhat eclectic account of how certain elements of Portuguese language, music and dance interacted, both together and separately, with the indigenous languages, music and dance of some of the Asian peoples among whom the Portuguese settled as colonists, traders or Catholic missionaries. No doubt because the author is of Sri Lankan origin, the majority of the examples she uses to illustrate this process of cultural interaction are taken from Sri Lanka, and to a lesser extent Melaka. She begins by describing how Portuguese became a *lingua franca* in Asia, not only in those places where the Portuguese settled in significant numbers and on a more or less permanent basis, such as Melaka, Macau, Flores and Timor, but even in those places where they established themselves only briefly or hardly at all. She goes on to show how in many parts of Asia the use of Portuguese as a means of communication with indigenous Asian peoples outlasted the Portuguese presence by hundreds of years and was used by other Europeans who followed in their footsteps as merchants, missionaries, soldiers of fortune or colonists. However, she does not prove convincingly that the phenomenon of the adoption of Portuguese as a *lingua franca* has anywhere been in itself a vehicle to any significant degree for the transmission of *cultural* influence in the strict sense of that term rather than simply a practical solution to the problems of communication in a multilingual environment, any more than have other *lingue franche*, such as Swahili on the east coast of Africa, Malay in the Indonesian archipelago, Franco among galley slaves in Constantinople under Ottoman rule or even, most recently, English worldwide. Portuguese used only as a *lingua franca* has certainly not exercised a cultural influence comparable to that of standard Portuguese and its variants in those countries where it has been adopted as the national or one of several official languages, or even of creoles such as Sri Lanka Indo-Portuguese or Melaka Portuguese Creole, to a detailed examination of which Dr de Silva Jayasuriya devotes a large part of the rest of her book.

De Silva Jayasuriya asserts that both these creoles, as with other creoles and with pidgin, so far from being inferior or bastardised forms of Portuguese, are languages in their own right and that their emergence demonstrates how cultural interaction can bring about the creation of new art forms. Little of what she has to say about these linguistic phenomena and their cultural implications in Portuguese Asia is new, though few scholars have described them in such meticulous detail, and it is in the chapters which deal with the combined influences of Portuguese secular and religious literature, music and dance on the indigenous folk literature, music and dance of some Asian peoples, particularly the Sri Lankans, that she really comes into her own and is at her most innovative. Her analysis and translations into standard Portuguese and English of two Sri Lankan Indo-Portuguese ballads, one from the collection