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ON

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LATE PROFESSOR OF SANSKRIT AND COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY AT THE  
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TO  
THE PARSIS OF WESTERN INDIA  
THIS REVISION OF THE  
FIRST ATTEMPT, IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,  
TO GIVE A CORRECT ACCOUNT OF THEIR  
ANCIENT ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION AND LITERATURE,

**Is Inscribed**

IN MEMORY OF THE OLD TIMES  
OF FRIENDLY INTERCOURSE ENJOYED  
BOTH BY THE AUTHOR AND BY  
THE EDITOR.

## P R E F A C E.



THE author of these Essays intended, after his return from India, to expand them into a comprehensive work on the Zoroastrian Religion ; but this design, postponed from time to time, was finally frustrated by his untimely death. That he was not spared to publish all his varied knowledge on this subject, must remain for ever a matter of regret to the student of Iranian antiquities. In other hands, the changes that could be introduced into this second edition were obviously limited to such additions and alterations as the lapse of time and the progress of Zoroastrian studies have rendered necessary.

In the first Essay, the history of the European researches has been extended to the present time ; but, for the sake of brevity, several writings have been passed over unnoticed, among the more valuable of which those of Professor Hübschmann may be specially mentioned. Some account has also been given of the progress of Zoroastrian studies among the Parsis themselves.

In the second Essay additional information has been

given about the Pahlavi language and literature; but the technical portion of the Avesta Grammar has been reserved for separate publication, being better adapted for students than for the general reader,

Some additions have been made to the third Essay, with the view of bringing together, from other sources, all the author's translations from the Avesta, except those portions of the Gâthas which he did not include in the first edition, and which it would be hazardous for an editor to revise. Further details have also been given regarding the contents of the Nasks.

Several additional translations, having been found among the author's papers too late for insertion in the third Essay, have been added in an Appendix after careful revision, together with his notes descriptive of the mode of performing a few of the Zoroastrian ceremonies.

Some apology is due to Sanskrit scholars for the liberties taken with their usual systems of representing Sanskrit and Avesta sounds. These deviations from present systems have been made for the sake of the general reader, whether English or Indian, who can hardly be expected to pronounce words correctly unless they are spelt in accordance with the usual sounds of the letters in English. Probably no European language can represent Indian consonants so easily as English; but as every English vowel has more than one characteristic sound, it is necessary to look to some other European

language for the best representation of Indian vowels. The system now generally adopted by Englishmen in India, and followed in these Essays, is to use the consonants to represent their usual English sounds, the vowels to represent their usual Italian sounds, and to avoid diacritical marks as much as possible, because they are always liable to omission. In applying such a system to the Aryan languages of India, Englishmen require very few arbitrary rules. They have merely to observe that *g* is always hard and *ch* always soft, that *th* and *ph* are merely aspirates of *t* and *p* (not the English and Greek *th* and *ph*), and that *a* represents the short vowel sound in the English words *utter*, *mother*, *come*, and *blood*. As this use of *a* is often repugnant to Englishmen, it may be remarked that all the other vowels have to be appropriated for other sounds, and that it is also strictly in accordance with the Sanskrit rule that when one *a* coalesces with another the resulting sound is *ā*, which could not be the case unless there were a close relationship between the two sounds.

Some unfortunate representations of Indian sounds have become too inveterate to be lightly tampered with; so it is still necessary to warn the general reader that every *w* in the Avesta ought to be pronounced like an English *v*, and that every *v* in Sanskrit or the Avesta closely resembles an English *w*, unless it be followed by *i*, *ī*, *e*, *ri*, or a consonant, in which case it has a sound



somewhere between *v* and *h*. Again, Sanskrit has two sets of letters represented by *t*, *th*, *d*, *dh*, *n*, *sh*; one set is extremely dental (pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the extremities of the teeth, or as close to them as possible in the case of *sh*), the other set is lingual (pronounced with the tip of the tongue far back upon or near the palate). The English *t*, *d*, *n*, *sh* are pronounced between these two extremes, but all natives of India consider the sounds of these English letters as decidedly lingual, so that they always represent them by Indian linguals when transliterating English words. Unfortunately, European scholars have been of the opposite opinion, and have represented the dental *t*, *th*, *d*, *dh*, *n* as unmodified, and the linguals as modified, either by a diacritical dot (as in this work) or by using italics. For the sake of uniformity, this practice has been here extended to *sh*; but there can be no doubt that the dentals ought to be modified and the linguals unmodified, though neither group can be exactly represented by European sounds. Further, the letters *ri* do not adequately represent that peculiar Sanskrit vowel as pronounced in *Mahārāshṭra*, where the Brahmans have been least disturbed by foreign influences. They say there that the correct sound is *ru*, and the tendency in colloquial Marāṭhī is to corrupt it into *u*. The nearest European approach to this sound appears to be the English *re* in *pretty*, which word is never pronounced *pretty* when the

*r* is indistinctly sounded, but has a tendency to become *pooty*.

In Avesta words *th* has the same lisping sound as in English and Greek, *η* and *ι* have the sound of *ng*, *q* ought to be sounded like *khw*, *zh* bears the same relation to *sh* as *z* to *s* (that is, it has the sound of *s* in *pleasure*), and *shk* is pronounced *sh* by the Parsis. They also pronounce the other sibilants *s* and *sh* as written in this work, and there seems no sufficient reason for departing from their traditional pronunciation, which is corroborated, to a great extent, by Pahlavi and Persian words derived from the Avesta, such as *Zaratusht*, *âdash*, &c.

The author's principal object in publishing these Essays originally was to present, in a readable form, all the materials for judging impartially of the scriptures and religion of the Parsis. The same object has been kept in view while preparing this second edition, giving a larger quantity of such materials collected from a variety of sources, which I may now leave to the reader's impartial judgment.

E. W. WEST.

MÜNCHEN, February 1878.

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