David Buyaner. *Penitential Sections of the Xorde Avesta (patits). Critical Edition with Commentary and Glossary*

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REFERENCES

David Buyaner. *Penitential Sections of the Xorde Avesta (patits). Critical Edition with Commentary and Glossary*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016, x + 519p. (Iranica 22).

- 1 David Buyaner's volume, elaborated within the framework of the Institute for Iranian Studies at Freie Universität Berlin, uses, in addition to previously well-known sources, the rich and under-researched collections of the K.R. Cama Institute in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and the Meherjirana Library in Navsari, Gujarat.
- 2 The book is dedicated to the recitals of penance (Middle Persian *patīt*, Parsi Gujarati *patēt*) of the *Xorde Avesta*. The latter serves as the main basic religious prayer book for lay Parsis (*behdīn* in Parsi Gujarati), who constitute the majority of the world's Zoroastrians and colloquially refer to it as the "Avesta"; this popular significance increases the importance of Buyaner's study.
- 3 B. critically reconsiders the approach to the *patīt* texts by earlier scholars, such as D.N. Dhabhar. This leads him to a number of essential research outcomes. For instance, B. challenges the perception universally accepted in almost all preceding works by West, Dhabhar, Asmussen and Cantera that Pahlavi texts of the *Patīt ī pašimānīh I*, the *Patīt ī murdagān* and the *Xwad patit* are later copies of their Pāzand versions; he underlines the need to further examine the Pāzand constituent of the *Patīt ī pašimānīh II*. For the former works, B. convincingly "rehabilitates" the original character of the Pahlavi *patīts* and disproves the "retranscribed Pahlavi" hypothesis that veils the three-fold structure of the *Patīt ī pašimānī I* (*zand* core, "retranscribed" part and commentary in

Neo-Pahlavi). Such findings, according to B., “take research a new level, such as the actual significance and function of Pāzand in Zoroastrian booklore” (p. 3).

- 4 The volume contains an extensive commentary and a glossary. Another strength is the incorporation of multiple sources and secondary literature from various schools of Zoroastrian studies encompassing anglo-, germano-, russo-, and francophone literature, even if this sometimes leads to direct quoting from, for instance, a German language work by Cantera on the influence of New Persian of late Pahlavi unaccompanied by English translation, which however might be due to an editing convention of the series.
- 5 Although the volume belongs to a renewed *Iranica* series and is predominantly dedicated to academic use, it would be advisable for the author to orient its readers on some of the terms used, such as, for instance Pahlavi and Middle Persian, which Buyaner uses interchangeably when discussing texts “retranscribed” from Pāzand (p. 5).
- 6 These small possible upgrades do not diminish the fact that Buyaner’s work, as justly noted by the author himself, represents an important step towards a fundamental task – the critical edition of *Xorde Avesta*.

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