

THE AVESTAN ALPHABET AND ITS TRANSCRIPTION

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The Avestan alphabet and its transcription by A. V. Williams Jackson

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A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON

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THE
AVESTAN ALPHABET

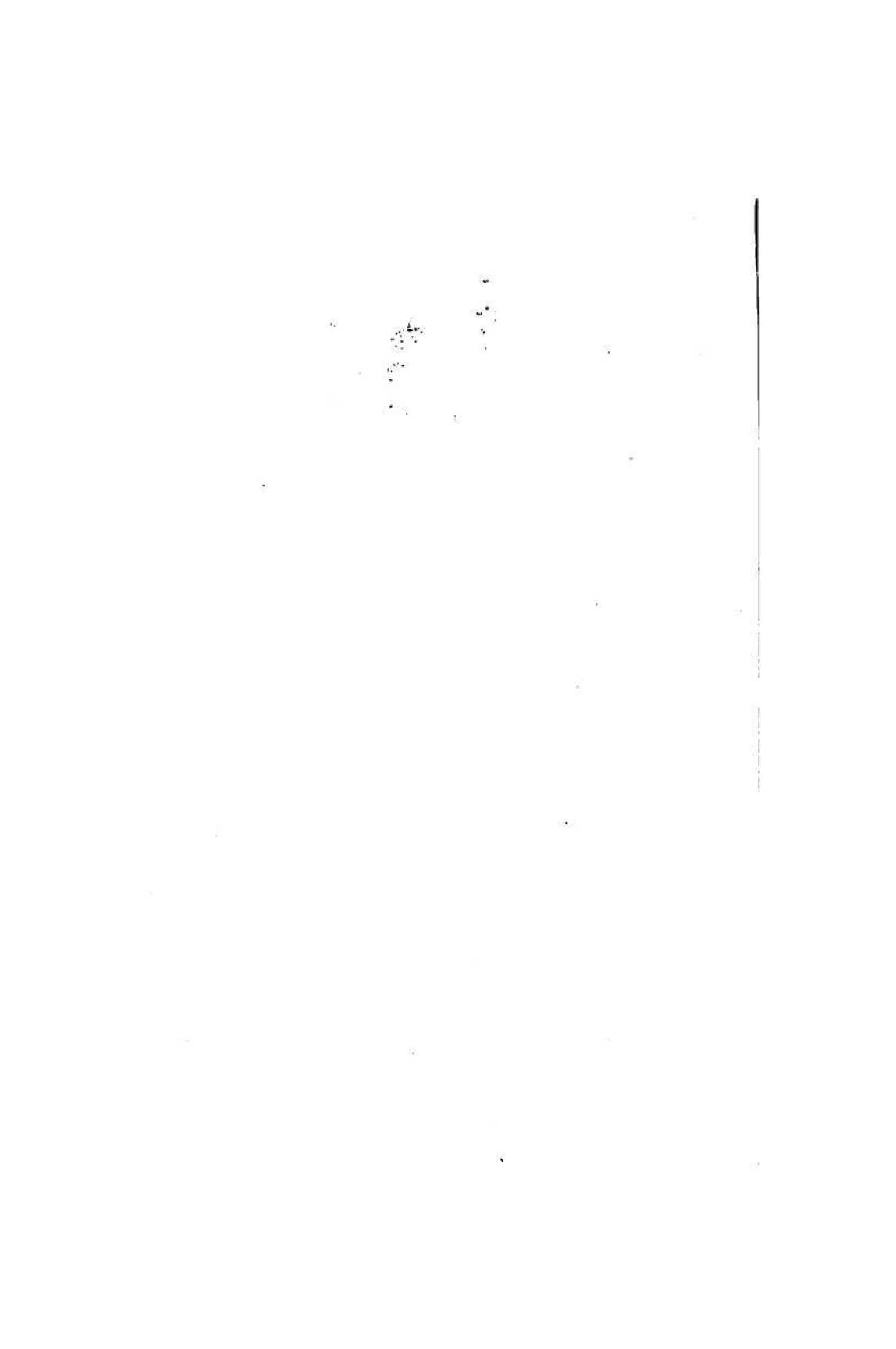
AND ITS
TRANSCRIPTION

BY
A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON

OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE, NEW YORK CITY

WITH APPENDICES

STUTTGART
W. KOHLHAMMER
1890



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Avesta
J12a

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent and reliable data collection processes to support informed decision-making.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in data management and analysis. It discusses how modern software solutions can streamline data collection, storage, and reporting, thereby improving efficiency and accuracy.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges associated with data management, such as data quality, security, and privacy. It provides strategies to mitigate these risks and ensure that data is used responsibly and ethically.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes by summarizing the key findings and recommendations. It stresses the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that data management practices remain effective and aligned with the organization's goals.

The Avestan Alphabet and its **Transcription.**

What the original alphabet was in which the Avesta was written we do not know. The alphabet in which our texts are now preserved bears the stamp of a much later age than the language it presents. The question of the origin of this alphabet in which our MSS. are written has difficulties; but there is little doubt that it is derived from the Pahlavi alphabet of the Sassanian times; it is closely related to the book-Pahlavi. This point must be constantly borne in mind in discussing the letters. The question, moreover, of the transcription of this Avestan alphabet as we now possess it has long been and is still a very vexed one. This is the question, in particular, that forms the chief subject of inquiry in the present paper; but all investigations into the matter of transcription imply a more or less extended study of the alphabet from the standpoint of palaeography, phonetics and philology.

The lack of uniformity in the system of transliterating the Avestan characters is confusing to those pursuing philological studies; it has doubtless also in some degree retarded the advancement of the Avestan cause. From the standpoint of philology, the present necessity of some accordance in the method of transcribing this language is apparent. The time is not far distant, it seems, when scholars should and will tend toward adopting some uni-

form system. Geldner's new edition of the Avestan texts has practically fixed the number of characters to be transcribed, and should Iranian students now agree—and it is hoped that those in America may perhaps set the example—in adopting some uniform method of transliteration, that shall be practical as well as scientific, an additional impetus would be given to these studies. Such adoption would be a grateful service to all, particularly to those interested in the linguistic importance of the Avesta to Philology. To write on the subject may not be a thankless task; if some suggestion or hint thrown out lead but a step in the right direction as a guide to others for finding a better way, the labor will be quite repaid. To the linguist, moreover, the comparative table of the various systems of transcription, appended for reference (see Appendix), may not be unacceptable.

In regard to the method of Avestan transliterations, the number of systems is almost legion. Many of them, however, differ from one another only in some minor points; in fact, on most of the ordinary details there is a growing tendency more and more toward uniformity. It is chiefly in a certain few respects—but these points are important ones—that Avestan scholars still mainly disagree. Some of these differences have been due to variations in the Avestan characters of some of the MSS. or to different forms adopted in the editions; but since the new edition has set up a standard, the question of the actual Avestan characters to be transcribed has become practically settled, and it seems as if greater agreement might be brought about. Of course those who have to deal with palaeographic questions of the MSS. will be compelled to add other signs in transliterating, but this need not concern philologists generally. By a few mutual concessions, uniformity and concord in rendering the symbols of the Avestan texts might soon result.

The transcription here offered is presented in a tentative way, in the hope that some of the hints may prove useful for the future. It has been based on personal advice and suggestions upon various points, from names of no less authority—linguistic, palaeographic, philological, and phonetic—than Professors Brugmann, Geldner, Pischel, and Sievers. To these was added weight from the standpoint of epigraphy—Professor Andreas. Practical suggestions have also been received from Professors Delbrück, Collitz, Hopkins, and Lanman. The marshalling of such names is of itself not without significance; the question is one that really is of interest to many scholars. The opinions on the subject of course varied. The transliteration, which I here suggest, is given as a sort of compromise and concession both to the radical and to the conservative side of the question. The system has endeavored to be at the same time strictly scientific and yet as far as possible practical. With a little good will, perhaps out of this system some uniformity of method might be developed and adopted. In America at least we have now the opportunity of uniting; if a few will take the lead, others will follow.

In preparation of this system the various methods of transliteration (Bartholomae, Hübschmann, Justi, de Harlez, Sacred Books, etc.) have been examined: the aim throughout has been to hold the *mediam viam*.—The main features of the system are (1) that it shall be scientific and at the same time fairly practical. (2) Single characters as far as possible are represented by single signs. This latter is far more practicable, and at the same time more requisite, in Avestan than it is in Sanskrit. (3) It makes concessions as far as possible to existing systems, and as far as may be avoids radical alterations and introductions.—The particular points characterising the system are: (1) a remodelling in transcription of the