Religious Texts in Iranian Languages
Symposium held in Copenhagen May 2002

Edited by
Fereydun Vahman & Claus V. Pedersen

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Religious Texts in Iranian Languages

Symposium held in Copenhagen
May 2002

Fereydun Vahman & Claus V. Pedersen

Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab - København 2007
In memory of

Professor Ahmad Tafazzoli.

Professor Jes P. Asmussen.
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Foreword

The present volume is the proceedings of the symposium held in May 2002 at Copenhagen University.

The subject of the symposium, "Religious Writings in Iranian Languages", was an obvious choice for such a gathering. Iran is the birthplace of many spiritual movements within the matrix of a deeply religious people and civilization. This is exemplified by the vigour and the perseverance with which the Zoroastrians have kept their religion and its traditions, which can also be seen in the age-old Jewish and Christian communities of this country who held fast to their beliefs despite centuries of hardship and persecution.

It is equally demonstrated in the truly sublime poetry and prose of the Iranian mystics, whose works mark a significant contribution to the cultural heritage of humankind, opening the path of spiritual transcendence free from religious prejudice and fanatical bigotry. The unprecedented contemporary popularity of the works of Jalal-al Din Rumi in the West is a vivid testimony to the eternal vitality and validity of the elusive yet ubiquitous truths eloquently captured and enshrined in this mystic literature.

To this great Iranian religious tradition one may add the birth of the Bábí and Bahá’í religions at the end of the 19th century, and the valiant steadfastness of thousands of its adherents who suffered death as a testimony of the truth of their Faith, recalling in modern times the heroism of the Christian martyrs at the twilight of Christianity’s emergence.

Most notably in our times, Iran surprised the world when some two decades ago the religious zeal of its Shi’i population gave rise to a theocracy aimed at establishing an unadulterated Islamic state. For centuries, the Shi’i religion and its rich scriptures have been the fountainhead of religious inspiration in Iranian society, but the Islamic revolution gave this heritage an unparalleled contemporary relevance.

Time will not allow me to even mention the hundreds of small creeds and sects within Iranian history and society, each having their own followers and traditions. But one thing is certain: It is the Iranian languages, which, in their different stages of progress have been the driving force behind all these religious movements, a phenomenon which formed the subject of the presentations and deliberations of scholars present at symposium.
In spite of our endeavours, the proceedings is missing some important subjects such as Jewish-Persian literature. The lack of such items are either due to last-minute cancellations by invited scholars, or the Iranian Studies Conference in the United States, which started immediately after this Symposium.

The symposium marked a long and illustrious tradition of Iranian studies in Scandinavia, in general, and Denmark, in particular. The scholars of this country started their studies in the Iranian field when this branch of science was still in its nascent stage.

As early as the 18th century, the Danish king Frederik V (1746-66) sent an expedition to the Orient to collect materials about the Old Testament and the civilization within which it came into being. This ill-fated expedition departed in 1761 and the only member to survive a fatal illness among its members on this long and dangerous journey was Cas ten Niebuhr (1733-1815). Against overwhelming odds, Niebuhr managed to visit Persepolis, where he copied the Achaemenid inscriptions for the first time. His description of the journey, together with a map and drawings was published in Copenhagen and Hamburg in several volumes (1772, 1774-78 and 1837). Thanks to Niebuhr’s work the study of cuneiform inscriptions at Persepolis was undertaken on a scientific basis for the first time.

Another significant contribution was that of Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) who in 1826 published his first linguistic discoveries on Avestan language in Copenhagen. His quest for the origins of Icelandic brought him to Persia and India. He learned Farsi during his stay in Persia in 1819-20 and in Bombay he learned Avestan and Pahlavi. With considerable difficulty, he collected old manuscripts in these two languages which are presently housed in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. N.L. Westergaard (1815-78), the first professor of Indo-Asiatic philology at the University of Copenhagen, continued Rask’s work of collecting manuscripts. On a journey to Persia and India during 1841-44, he was able to buy and copy some old Zoroastrian manuscripts, which are preserved at the Royal Library. Westergaard was the first European who published a Pahlavi text, the Bundahishn (1851). His greatest achievement was the publication of his famous Avestan texts in 1854. Between 1931 and 1944 Arthur Christensen and Kaj Barr published the entire collection of manuscripts assembled by Rask and Westergaard in 12 volumes (Codices Hafnienses). In connection with the history of Oriental studies in Denmark, it should also be noted that Hafiz and Sa’di were taught in different intervals at Copenhagen university since 1895.
The first professor of Iranian studies at the University of Copenhagen was Arthur Christensen (1875-1945), who was appointed in 1919. His exceptional range of scholarship included Sasanian history, Iranian languages and dialects, Persian language and literature, and Iranian religions, ancient and modern. He wrote more than 300 books and articles on those subjects. He visited Persia on three occasions. Christensen was succeeded by his student and later collaborator Kaj Barr (1896-1970), who taught at the university until 1966. Although widely acknowledged as one of the best scholars in the field, he published relatively little. In 1966 Jes P. Asmussen succeeded Barr. He has published a large number of books and articles on Iranian subjects, especially Manicheism and the Jewish-Persian dialect. This in summary is the long and illustrious history of oriental studies in Denmark, and in particular, at Copenhagen University.

This Symposium was held in the memory of Ahmad Tafazzoli Professor of Iranian Studies of the University of Teheran. He was not only a great scholar but also a truly noble person. His works are brilliant testimonies to his vast knowledge of Pahlavi as well as early Islamic literature.

In 1996 Ahmad Tafazzoli was kidnapped in the middle of Tehran. The next day, his mutilated body was found near his car on the outskirts of a village north of the capital. His murderers were never found and it is doubtful whether the government did anything at all to investigate this horrible act or to prosecute its perpetrators. With his murder Iran lost forever one of her most distinguished scholars in pre-Islamic studies. His death cut short his fruitful life and deprived the scholarly world of his further contributions.

Only a few months after the Symposium, the death of Professor Jes P. Asmussen in August 2002 deeply saddened his colleagues and friends. Although in poor health, Professor Asmussen attended diligently the meetings of the Symposium showing his usual keen interest in various subjects. We cherish his memory and honour his valuable contributions to the field of Iranian Studies.

Copenhagen, August 2006
Abstract and a note on the transliteration

The articles in these two volumes deal with a great variety of Iranian languages such as Avestan, Old Persian, Middle Persian, and New Persian (including Classical Persian) as well as Iranian dialects and Persian mixed with Arabic. Because of this variety of languages, and considering the many accepted transliteration systems, we have decided not to apply a uniform transliteration system to the different stages of the Iranian/Persian languages, but to keep the authors’ choice of transliteration.

Acknowledgement

The editors wish to thank the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters and the Carlsberg Foundation for sponsoring the publication of the proceedings of the symposium Religious Texts in Iranian Languages and for letting us use the premises of the Academy for the symposium. We also wish to thank Her Royal Majesty Queen Margrethe and His Royal Highness Prince Henrik’s Foundation, Gad’s Foundation, and the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD/CKU) for generous economic support to the Symposium.

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General Survey
The following observations are partly prompted by the current debate over the Gāthās, their meaning and message. My approach is based on a scheme by which Zoroastrianism would find its place among the religions of the ancient world. I do not think that my suggestions will necessarily find unanimous agreement, but I hope that they may serve as an additional point of view in this exchange of ideas. I shall conclude by making some remarks on the possibility of talking of a canon of scriptures when we refer to the later periods of Zoroastrian literature.

I shall avoid spending too much time on a discussion of the usual questions: Was there a founder of the Zoroastrian religion, and was his name Zarathuštra? If there was, when was he active? What was the precise place in which the Gāthās were formulated? Not that these are uninteresting questions in themselves, but I feel that by now every argument that has a bearing on this question has already been used, and a stalemate has set in. I cannot see a new argument based on the available data that can tip the balance either way.

The history of Eastern Iran, which is the general area where most scholars would place the Gāthās, is largely unknown to us. The considerations for dating the text are relative, rather than absolute. So little is known of the conditions of East Iran around the beginning of the first millennium BCE that even if firm evidence were found for a specific date it would still be just a number, without much concrete substance. The arguments for dating use comparative chronological time-tables for placing the text of the Gāthās. The rate of linguistic change is one such consideration; the rate of religious development another; the hypothetical time-table for the transfer of the Zoroastrian religion from East Iran to the West, is yet another point to take into account. Each one of these movements requires a certain amount of time, which may be measured in generations or centuries – but how many? No one can really claim to know (although some scholars have ready answers). The various “traditional” dates, whether Iranian or Greek, have proved upon inspection to be too flimsy to serve as a solid starting point.

What are we left with? The linguistic, literary and religious compari-
son of the Gāthās with the Vedic literature on the one hand, and a similar comparison with the later Zoroastrian literature – these are the two solid poles on which we can lean. Or can we? We know very little of the background or even of the precise meaning of much of the Rigveda, not to speak of its date of composition. Later Zoroastrian literature is known to have a broken tradition, and it is assumed, as a result, that it sometimes twists the meaning of the ancient literature. It lacks an adequate grammatical comprehension of the text, and is tainted with a religious bias, wishing to read into the ancient texts ideas and practices which were not there. We have at our disposal two inadequate tools for comparison, and a scholar of Zoroastrianism seems constrained to make a choice and declare allegiance either to the Vedicising stream or to the Pahlavi tradition.¹

This, I suggest, is a false dilemma. It is generally agreed that one should bring into the discussion every element that has a bearing on it, and it is obvious that the Vedas (as well as Sanskrit literature in general) give us a wealth of grammatical and lexical information that we should take into account when we weigh the most likely meaning of a passage in the Gāthās or in the Younger Avesta. It also gives us a feel of the religious and literary background against which the Iranian religion may have taken its shape. We should also take careful notice of the traditional interpretation of the later Zoroastrian exegesis, whether by way of direct commentary on Avestan passages or by way of an intertextual allusion to them. None of these procedures excludes the other and none of them is in contradiction to the other. Our choice should be made on the basis of our best understanding of the probabilities concerning the sense of the text, not on the grounds of a preconceived ideology. Our decision may be wrong (scholarly decisions often are), but not because we follow one direction as opposed to the other, but perhaps because we have not been sensitive enough to the context, to the nuances of the text, or to the general drift of what the text tries to convey. The Gāthās are an ancient text with a very restricted corpus containing a wealth of obscure allusions – they provide little possibility of determining a meaning from the context.

¹. Kellens declares that this dichotomy is no longer relevant, but he also says that “it is hardly an exaggeration to say the Old Avesta is the eleventh maṇḍala of the Rigveda, only written in a slightly different dialect” (Kellens 2000:46), disregarding what he himself says some lines before, namely that the religious doctrine [of the Old Avesta] may have been something new.
The aid that we can obtain from the Vedas in trying to understand the Gāthās should not be taken to be a simple semantic identification of meanings between the two sets of literature. Much confusion and misunderstanding has been brought about by the assumption that a word should be automatically assigned the same sense in the Gāthās as in the Rigveda. An obvious example is the verb yaz- and its derivatives. It certainly means originally “to sacrifice”. It lost the allusion to sacrifice in the primary sense of the term early on, and has undergone a change which made it mean something rather vague like “worship, veneration”. Retaining the terms for sacrifice in the Gāthās is an anachronism in many contexts. Religious language tends to be conservative. The main locus of the Christian service, for example, is the altar, but the term does not convey the same sense as in the pre-Christian world.

An etymological relationship between words, as we know, is not a guarantee for understanding the sense of a word. Considerations of context usually carry more importance. In the absence of a clear guidance from context, the development of the sense in the subsequent literature may give us an indication as to the direction which it may have been inclined to take already in the archaic context; it may tell us something about the teleology of the word. There is no point in studying the term manyu in the Gāthās in separation from the rest of the tradition. One may come to the conclusion that it means “opinion”, as Kellens has done,² but then one should reconstruct a history of the semantic development of the word, and establish when, and for what reason, it changed its meaning in the rest of the Zoroastrian corpus from “opinion” to that of “independent cosmic spirit”, or “a mode of non-material existence”, and so on. This observation gains some force from the fact that manyu “opinion” is not a very convincing or natural translation even within some of the Gāthic contexts where it occurs.³

This is just an example of the kind of danger which Zoroastrian studies are facing if the trend of studying the Gāthās in separation from its continuity and from its historical context becomes predominant, the trend of treating them as if they were part of the Rigvedic corpus.

It is legitimate to question the basic claims of the tradition, but it seems futile to make too much of the statement, correct in itself, that there is no proof of the existence of a prophet or seer by the name of Zarathuštra. This is not only a postulate of the Zoroastrian tradition; it is

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³. Some further observations on this and similar points are to be found in Shaked (2002).
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at the same time also the most plausible way of accounting for the appearance of a new type of religion against the background of a common Indo-Iranian heritage, which we can partly reconstruct by comparing the literary monuments of ancient India with those of Iran. Towards the end of the Vedic period, long after the separation of the Indians from the Iranians, Indian civilization shows some inclination towards a monistic view of the world, but this monism assumes a different shape from that of Iran, and it will be several centuries before it is expressed on Indian soil in terms which suggest a radical conflict between good and evil. Zoroastrianism appears right from the very beginning as a religion worshipping a single deity, Ahura Mazda, with a very powerful awareness of an antagonistic power, expressed in religious, ethical, and ritual terms. This monistic dualism exists both on the level of the divine and on that of the human and material world. The dualism of the Iranian type presupposes a monotheistic point of view, not so much in the sense that dualism is always a protest against monotheism, as was claimed by Henning, but because monotheism raises in the most forceful manner the problem of evil, its origin and its position vis-à-vis the deity. This is a question which is far less relevant in a large pantheon, with ramified divine functions, and where the deities are by their nature ethically ambiguous.

Diverting the main thrust of the Gāthās to the ritual field, as is the current fashion among Gāthā scholars, does not mean that the Gāthās do not possess a deeply-felt religious point of view. While ritual is vital in religious life, religion is not normally sustained merely by performing rituals. It is questionable whether any human group, in antiquity or in the modern world, has observed a religion which expresses its feelings and faith exclusively in ritual terms, without interaction with ethics, emotional piety, esthetics, or spirituality. Such a separation of domains is perhaps possible in the language of modern philosophers and theologians, but can hardly apply in the actual religious life of a community.

I suggest that we accept the existence of what may be termed a "new" religion in Iran, whose earliest manifestation is in the Gāthās. I am using this term to designate the creation of a religious community

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whose character is deliberately and consciously at variance with the traditional religion that preceded it. One may distinguish between an old inherited religion, which has no founder and no assigned beginning, and one which was brought into being by a deliberate act of establishing a faith and a community, in opposition to an existing tradition.

It makes little difference for my thesis if this new religion is the creation of a single individual, whose name may or may not have been Zarathuštra, or whether it is the outcome of a development stretching over a period of time and culminating in the composition of the Gāthās. I find that accepting the traditional claim, namely, that this is the work of Zarathuštra, is simpler and more appealing. One recalls earlier scholarly scepticism over the existence of a Moses, a Buddha, a Jesus, or, in recent decades, a Muhammad. One cannot help feeling that this is a case of hyper-criticism. Such expressions of scepticism tend to come and go in waves. Thus, while there is no definite historical proof for the existence of Zarathudtra and for his being the author of the Gāthās, there is no historical or intellectual advantage in rejecting these postulates.

Granted that the Gāthās constitute a ritual text, that is to say one dedicated to be used during a ritual, they can also contain allusions to their faith and to their view of the world. There are references to Ahura Mazda as a creator of the world, to eschatological notions, to a conception of a dualistic split in the divine world and in humanity. These allusions are not spelled out as explicit or systematic statements, for we are dealing with a poetic text, within a ritual context, and in some cases we may assume that the Zoroastrian faith is not yet fully explicated in the Gāthās, and that only a potential is shown by the Gāthic hints. The Gāthās, not surprisingly, also contain elements which may be contrasted with the Zoroastrianism of the Younger Avesta on the one hand, and with the Pahlavi writings on the other.

The dualism of the Gāthās is expressed in terms of two spirits, seemingly subordinate to Ahura Mazda, and thought to be twins. It may be noted that it does not consist of a direct confrontation between Ahura Mazda and his antagonist. It is expressed in terms of life and non-life, not in terms of creation and counter-creation. The creator god is said to be responsible for the creation of both light and darkness, whereas the tendency of the later tradition is to allot the former to God and the latter to Ahreman. The Pahlavi texts display a modification of this dualistic attitude, pulling towards a hardening and rigidity of the dualistic split. The term mainiu- is sometimes used in the sense of an attribute or ac-
tivity of the deity, and also in that of a separate cosmic entity, as in the famous “twin” verse (Y 30:3), where a choice is said to have been made by the two mainiiu-s who have existed from primordial times.

These points may indicate that the Gāthic dualism has a different slant from that which is found in the Pahlavi books. There is a rejection of the pre-Gāthic daēvas, but vestiges of the view that the daēvas can be taken to represent the supernatural pendant to men, thus standing for the whole of the rational world, persist, for example in the juxtaposition of the two terms, daēva- and mašya-. The two terms “gods and men” are retained as a fixed formula, indicating the totality of rational beings (humans and deities), and such a usage also comes up again in the hymns of the Younger Avesta.

The term maθra has a clear cognate in the Indian tradition, and yet it acquired a specific Zoroastrian sense in the Gāthās and in the later Zoroastrian literature. The word is supposed to derive from the root man- “to think”, and initially it was applied to the formula which accompanied rituals. “Very great power was attributed to maθras; and in later Zoroastrian practice every ritual act is not only accompanied by sacred words but set around by them, so that they form an invisible barrier between it and the forces of harm”. Kellens (2000:88f.) observes that the term maθra- denotes a divine word, a divine formula, and stresses that in this respect the Gāthās show a definite break with Indian usage. It becomes however clear from checking the passages that Kellens’s description of it is somewhat one-sided. The divine word, although it is revealed by God, is also an instrument used by the singer and worshipper. Consider the verse 44:17:

\[
\begin{align*}
tagē βā \parasā & \quad araś mōi vaocā ahurā \\
kaθā mazdā & \quad zarēm carāni hacā xšmaṭ \\
āskoitim xšmākām & \quad hīiaṭcā mōi ħiitāt vāxš aēšō \\
sarōi bužpdiiaī & \quad hauruuaṭā amorātātā \\
auuā maθrā & \quad yā raθomō aṣāt hacā
\end{align*}
\]

7. Cf., e.g., Y 45:11.
8. Cf., e.g., Yt 19:26. The theme is discussed by Benveniste 1967.
Humbach’s translation (with some modifications) is:  

This I ask Thee, 
How, O Wise One, 
to your union, 
to activate for the union (?) 
with that formula

tell me plainly, O Ahura,  
I may proceed towards the goal in conformity with You, 
so that I may have a vigorous voice,  
integrity and immortality  
dependent (?) on truth.

The goal of this verse, despite some obscure expressions which it contains, seems to be the proximity of the worshipper to the deity and his union with him, and this is achieved with the aid of the \textit{məqθra}-. The word, the formula, is said here, as in some other passages, to be closely associated with truth. It is used by the worshipper as a link between himself and the deity.

The Gāthās have substantial affinities with the Indo-Iranian past, and at the same time they display significant differences from it. They herald important traits of faith and practice which are also encountered in the later tradition, but the line of connection is not entirely straight. This is to be expected: there is no religious tradition where the development from the beginnings to the more recent periods did not undergo profound change, especially when the span of history is as long as it is in Iran.

At least five different blocks of literature can be distinguished in Zoroastrian Iran, and the differences between them in language, style, and spirit are quite substantial. (1) The Old Avestan texts; (2) the Avestan Yaštśs; (3) the Vendidad and the Herbedestān (all of them components of the Avestan corpus, or what is preserved of it). In addition, one may enumerate (4) the Pahlavi writings and (5) the New Persian Zoroastrian literature, ignoring in this classification the Pāzand and the Gujarati texts. We may add to this list certain other bodies of writings, which were never meant to be part of the Zoroastrian religious literature, such as the Old Persian inscriptions, the Middle Persian inscriptions, and the Manichaean writings. Their relevance to our topic is somewhat like that of an eye-witness account, reporting on Zoroastrian realities without being themselves part of them.

We shall not go here into a closer analysis of the significance of the Avestan Yaštśs. It may be recalled that besides being composed in a lan-

guage which is younger than that of the Old Avestan texts, they use a
different dialect which does not derive directly from Old Avestan. This
linguistic situation can be used as a metaphor for what we have in the
religious sphere: the Younger Avestan texts display a type of religion
which is in some ways younger than that of the Gāthās, but they are not
a direct continuation of the religion of the Gāthās. They are composed
in what may be termed a different religious dialect.

It would not be right to talk of the religion of the Yašt in terms of a
return to paganism or of a turning towards religious syncretism, as is
sometimes done. Although they contain some ancient material, they do
not display a pre-Gāthic type of religion, they are definitely Zoroastrian
and post-Gāthic in spirit. They are based on the recognition of a set of
divine beings to be worshipped alongside of, and in addition to, Ahura
Mazdā, without in any way diminishing the unique status of the
supreme deity, a function that is vested in Ahura Mazdā. In the Younger
Avesta Ahura Mazdā is clearly surrounded by other entities that repre­
sent not only abstract notions, but also have personal traits, and some­
times visual characteristics. Some of these divinities, like Mithra or
Vayu, have roots in the remote Indo-Iranian pre-history; others may be
new creations. The religion that we get in the Yašt is by no means a
new paganism, nor is it a natural development of the Gāthic religion. It
is a new entity, and has to be studied on its own terms.

The most immediate link between the Avestan corpus and the later
tradition is the body of Zand literature, the exegetical compositions in
Pahlavi. These texts have been most often used as evidence for what
later Zoroastrians understood of the Avesta: either as a prop for our
understanding of the Avestan text, or as a way of declaring our scholar­
ly superiority over the traditional exegesis, which, it is claimed, gets
things wrong too often. Kellens has warned us not to trust the tradition­
al interpretation. It is a wager, he says in one of his writings.13 Accord­
ing to him, the only trustworthy method is the grammatical and semi­
tic comparison with the Vedic language. There is however a double er­ror here. The meaning of a word in the Rigveda cannot be dragged into
the Gathas without further ado: cognate languages often use the same
word in different senses. The second point is that judging the Zand by
this standard betrays a misunderstanding of its function. The traditional
commentary on the Avesta is not meant to be a philological study of the
text of the Avesta. Like the study of religious scriptures in other tradi­

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It aims at deriving moral, religious, and edifying lessons from the sacred text, and uses all the devices that are available. It often renders the text literally, but just as often it reads its own ideas into the ancient text, always pretending that this is a straight translation of the text. Among the devices it uses are pseudo-etymological translations, expansions of the text by association, even sometimes what strikes us as outright denial of what the text clearly says. These devices have been used by preachers and religious teachers at all periods in different traditions: this is the method by which a living religious tradition can be faithful to its origins while changing and adapting itself to new conditions or to a new world of ideas.

Since our understanding of the Avestan texts is often deficient, and our perception of the tendency underlying the Zand is unclear, we often find ourselves in a double or even multiple difficulty. We are uncertain whether (a) the Avestan text says what we think it does; or else (b) what the Zand commentator says it says. If there is a gap between what the commentator says and what we think that the Avestan text says, we are still uncertain whether (c) the commentator plays about with the text, which he may have a good grasp of, in order to twist it in a certain direction which he is interested in; or whether (d) he simply misunderstands the text.

The main interest of the Zand literature is not in what it tells us about the text of the Avesta, but in what it tells us about its own concerns. These are the religious and intellectual problems of Zoroastrians in the late Sasanian and early Islamic periods, and they must have been felt to be important enough to be read into the text of the Avesta. It should also be stressed that the Zand literature includes not only the straightforward compositions of commentary on the Avestan texts, but also large portions of other religious books, such as the Bundahishn, the Zadspram, and similar works. Whether or not there existed an Avestan text on apocalyptic and eschatology – Philippe Gignoux, followed by Carlo Cereti, deny this contention – this is not an argument directly related to the text of the Zand i Wahman Yasn. This latter text is clearly a late composition, probably composed in the Abbasid period. It definitely belongs to the category of Zand, and most likely reflects a genre of speculation concerning the end of the world that was current in Zoro-

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In the present stage of knowledge we have little chance of finding out what the Avestan text underlying the Zand may have looked like, and its relationship to similar Jewish and Christian compositions is difficult to determine.

The speculative, theological and scientific literature in Pahlavi, mostly concentrated in the third book of the Dēnkard and in the Selections of Zādsparam, presents a fascinating mixture of local traditional knowledge with many elements borrowed from Greek thought and from India, unabashedly put together and sometimes presenting contradictory points of view within the same text, and yet acclaimed as the original teachings of Zoroastrianism. The composition of man is one big theme which is discussed in these Zoroastrian schools at great length and in great detail. This was the subject of enquiry by Harold W. Bailey in his Zoroastrian problems in the ninth-century books, and has been made the subject of renewed enquiry in Philippe Gignoux's new book Man and cosmos in Ancient Iran (2001), where the problems are presented in their full complexity. One needs some more time to digest the details of Gignoux's discussion and new proposals, and there will probably be another opportunity to come back to this important matter. This is a topic in which we can see how the pride in the Iranian religious heritage blends without clash with some of the main trends and leading ideas of the world around them.

Such a coexistence of local knowledge with borrowed notions is visible, for example, in the field of ethical theory. It can be shown that a binary approach to the opposition of good and evil spirits in man was transformed into a threefold structure of notions, with the ideal quality in the middle, clearly influenced by Aristotelian ethics. The Zoroastrian basis thus has an Aristotelian structure grafted upon it. A further structure, a four-fold one, in which two positive qualities are placed in the middle, and they are flanked by two negative ones in the two extremes, restores a semblance of a binary structure once again. The old Zoroastrian scheme is thereby continued in a new fashion, and at the same time the Aristotelian three-fold structure is partly retained. Ultimately, the Iranian theory of ethics and the Aristotelian idea of the Mean find their place in a unified ethical doctrine, despite the fact that they should be in contradiction to each other. This is a good example for the flexibility and resilience of Zoroastrian theological speculation.

The vast body of literature dealing with ritual and judicial matters, as well as that which contains instructions for everyday behaviour, and that which gives advice in the field of political doctrine, constitutes a group of texts with several different sub-classifications. One can discern schools of thought within each of these disciplines, just as this can also be done in the field of scriptural exegesis, although we lack specific data which would enable us to place these schools in their respective localities or associate them with prominent personalities of the Sasanian period. There are obvious connections between the Zoroastrian schools and the other religious traditions of the Sasanian period; it is easy, for example, to point out affinities between the Zoroastrian legal system and the Jewish and Christian ones. There are, on the other hand, points of continuity from Sasanian Iran to the Islamic world in this field. Some work has already been done on these different problems, but much still needs to be accomplished. The treatises in the field of law are not easily accessible because of the heavy technical nature of their terminology, and we are lucky in having a specialist of the stature of Maria Macuch who dedicates most of her efforts to this field.

It may be noticed with regard to these fields of literature in Zoroastrianism that they have not been codified or systematized. This may be due to the conditions of oppression, exile and fragmentation of the Zoroastrian community in the Islamic period. The important books which we possess are evidence for efforts at assembling the dispersed traditions into large encyclopedic compendia, but the next stage, that of synthesis and harmonization, accompanied, as it can sometimes be, with power of authority, has never been reached. Modi's Religious ceremonies and customs of the Zoroastrians is in some ways a substitute for this; but it is of course not in the same category, and was not meant to fulfill this function: it is a modern attempt at a scholarly description and investigation of the Zoroastrian ritual and religious life, based part-

18. Some elements in the matrimonial law, for example, and some ideas concerning the impurity of believers in other religions, show the proximity of the Zoroastrian tradition to the Jewish schools of Babylonia. Cf. Ahdut 1999; Soroudi 1994. On the continuity from Sasanian Iran to the Islamic world in this field cf. Shaked 1992a.
ly on the author’s interest in anthropology. This attempt has found a continuator in the person of Dastur Feroz Kotwal.21

The Zoroastrian literature, or what is left of it, does not constitute an enormous corpus, but it is much more checkered than can be expected. It contains, as we know, also some pieces which may be classified as “secular” literature, although this is a questionable designation. Stylized history – the beginnings of the Sasanian dynasty, the marvels of Sistān – are more than mere entertainment; even court literature, as where a young servant amazes his king and master by his wide-ranging knowledge of trivial subjects, has some deeper significance for the transmitters and for the audience: it indicates the grandeur and splendour of a Zoroastrian kingdom. This explains the preservation of these works, even if the original motive for producing these works was one of providing enjoyment to the readers.

In our eyes the Manichaean corpus of writings is highly relevant for our understanding of Zoroastrianism. Not only does it make ample use of Iranian topoi in its mythology, not only is its early history closely intertwined with that of the early Sasanians – Manichaeism, even in the eyes of Zoroastrians, could not have been without relevance to the history of their own religion. The Manichaeans adapted their religious language to that of the Zoroastrians in the different provinces of Iran, as they did with regard to Christianity. More seriously, they seem to have adopted a technique of missionary activity according to which they insinuated their religion as a better interpretation of Zoroastrianism. If it is true, as I believe it is, that the term zandīg is derived primarily from their use (or, in the eyes of the Zoroastrians, abuse) of Zand, of the exegesis of the scriptures, it is legitimate to regard Manichaeism, as many Zoroastrians no doubt did, as a Zoroastrian heresy.22 The Zurvanites, whom I regard not as a heresy but as one of several more or less legitimate variants of Sasanian Zoroastrianism, presented their own version of the cosmogony. Babylonian syncretism, as can be seen from the Aramaic magical texts of the Sasanian period, certainly thrived on Zoroastrian materials,23 and so did the varieties of Hellenized Zoroastrianism in other parts of the vast lands dominated by Iranians. Armenian24 and

Georgian cultures made each its own religious concoction, in which Zoroastrian elements were always prominent.

Iranian literature suffered in the course of its history terrible devastation and loss, and appears to us like a table-cloth full of holes. At the same time, however, it shows a high degree of consistency and harmony. Although there are differences in the language and in the perception of the different components of this literature (we are dealing with a long span of time and enormous geographical expanse) there seems to be a hard core which is recognizable as Iranian in all of the different manifestations of this literature. Each one of the chronological phases has to be studied on its own, each genre formulation has some flavour which distinguishes it from the others, and yet there is an internal affinity among them. This is why one feels uneasy at the tendency sometimes displayed to treat one segment of this literature, such as the Gāthās, as entirely separate from the others.

Can we really talk of a unified canon of writings? Technically, of course not. In a specialized sense, only very partially. One should of course distinguish between what would constitute a canon in inner-Zoroastrian terms and what would constitute one in the eyes of the scholar. The Avesta certainly forms such a unity in the eyes of its adherents, although we know that it consists of several disparate layers, and that it must have evolved over a long span of time. Does the *Shahname* belong there? From a certain point of view, but not in the technical sense of the term. The books of Mani and the Aramaic magic bowls are too far removed from Zoroastrian literature, but without them we are in the danger of missing some vital elements of the whole. When there are so many holes to fill, every scrap of information seems to add something essential to our notion of an unofficial canon. In contrast to the closed and deficient canon of the Avesta, the rest of the literature relating to Zoroastrianism can be described as an open-ended canon.

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II

The Avesta and Indo-Iranian
On the compositional structure of the Avestan Gāhs

by Almut Hintze

0. Introduction

In Zoroastrianism, the twenty-four hour day is divided into five watch­es, called asniia- ratu- 'the times of the day'1 in Avestan and gāh in Middle and New Persian. In each of these watches, an Avestan text, called a Gāh, is to be recited in praise not only of that particular time but also of divine and human beings as well as notions, all of which are associated with it and considered to be its co-workers. These texts have been transmitted as part of the Khorde or Smaller Avesta and are recit­ed by both priests and lay members of the community.

Of the literature of the Avesta, the Gāhs belong to those texts that have received least scholarly attention. Like some other Younger Ave­stan writings, such as the Visperad, they have rarely been studied, the last occasion being about a century ago by the French scholar James Darmesteter.2 One of the reasons for this may be that the Gāhs appear to be less attractive literary compositions than other parts of the corpus, both linguistically and from the point of view of their content. For ex­ample, the Gāhs contain little original text: about a third are simply rep­etitions of the Yasna. Moreover, the introductory and concluding por­tions are nearly the same in all of them, the only variation being that of different names, which are substituted at certain points. The most original sections are the central parts. But even they offer little new material because they consist of yazamaide-formulae which just mention the names of various entities worshipped, without much about them.

1. The noun ratu-, which is probably derived from the root ar ‘to fit’ (Mayrhofer, EWAia I 257), is very common in the Avesta. Bartholomae, AirWb. 1498-1502 posits three homonymous nouns ratu-. The first denotes a period of time, the second a ‘judge’ and the third ‘judgment’. However, as rightly argued by Benveniste, Noms-d’agent et noms d’action en indo-européen, Paris 1948, 89, they all belong to one single noun ratu- de­noting ‘the appropriate time’, for instance for a religious ceremony, and also both the ‘regulation’ and the person who presides over it.

In the present article I shall challenge dismissive assumptions about the literary quality of the Gāhs, and suggest that a close structural analysis reveals interesting ‘horizontal’ features about the intertextual relationships between them. The five Gāhs have parallel structures and form an interconnected set of texts. Moreover, it will emerge that the way they are interrelated provides an insight into the underlying religious system of which these texts are an expression.

1. The compositional structure of the Gāhs

All five Gāhs share a common pattern consisting of nine units (see figure 1, below p. 43). Three of the latter comprise the beginning, three the middle and three the end. The pattern according to which these nine units are arranged is that the three central ones (fig. 1, nos. 4-6) are separated from two introductory (nos. 1-2) and two concluding ones (nos. 8-9) by a buffer unit on either side (nos. 3 and 7).

Some of these units are identical in all the Gāhs, while others differ to varying degrees. The three sections consisting of repetitions from the Yasna are indistinguishable. Two of them frame the central portion, setting it apart from the introductory and concluding sections. Thus, Y 71.3-4, which constitute stanzas 3-4 of all five Gāhs, is recited between the introductory and central parts, and Y 71.23-24 between the central and concluding ones. Lastly Y 68.11 and 72.9-10 form the finale of all Gāhs.

Moreover, the introductory and concluding formulae are nearly identical. They vary only in respect of the names of the individual Gāh and its co-workers in whose honour the prayer is recited. Let us take the Usahin Gāh, Gāh 5, as an example. All Gāhs begin with the words xšnaoθra ahurahe mazdā ‘by gratification of the Wise Lord’, followed by three Ašem Vohu-prayers and the first two clauses of the Confession of Faith (Y 12.1):

(1) frauwarāne mazdaiiasnō zaraθuštriś
vidaēusuō ahura.θkaēšō
I have made my choice to be a Mazdā-worshipper, a Zarathustrian, who rejects the daevas, who follows the teachings of the lord.

After the introductory lines just quoted, the formula of Gāh 5.1 runs as follows:
On the compositional structure of the Avestan Gāhs

(2) G 5.1 ūshināi aṣaone aṣahe raθ̩e
yasnaica vahmāica xšnaotrāiça frasastaiiaēca
bōrzjiiäi nmāniīäica aṣaone aṣahe raθ̩e
yasnaica vahmāica xšnaotrāiça frasastaiiaēca
For the truthful dawn-time of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.
For the truthful honour- and house-time of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

This opening is the same in all Gāhs except for the different names (underlined) in whose honour the text is recited. For instance, the first stanza of the Häwan Gāh, G 1.1, runs as follows:

(3) G 1.1 hauuanže aṣaone aṣahe raθ̩e
yasnaica vahmāica xšnaotrāiça frasastaiiaēca
sauuanže visiīäica aṣaone aṣahe raθ̩e
yasnaica vahmāica xšnaotrāiça frasastaiiaēca
For the truthful pressing-time3 of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.
For the truthful morning- and clan-time of truth,
for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

The introductory section is followed by a formula that gives the names of the so-called co-workers, i.e. deities associated with a particular Gāh (fig. 1, no.2). The names and their attributes always appear in the genitive governed by xšnaotrāica 'by gratification of'. The formula concludes with the words 'for worship, praise, gratification and glory' (yasnaica vahmāica xšnaotrāica frasastaiiaēca):

(4) G 5.2 sraošāhe aṣīiehe aṣiwwaṭō vərəθ̩rājanō frādat. gaθ̩ahe
rašnao-bordered razisṭahe
arštātascae frādat. gaθ̩aiiā varaxdaθ̩. gaθ̩aiiā xšnaotra
yasnaica vahmāica xšnaotrāiça frasastaiiaēca
By gratification of Sraoša accompanied by reward, provided with reward, the victorious one, who promotes the living beings,
(and by gratification) of straightest Raśnu

3. The name hauuan- 'pressing-' refers to the ritual action of pressing the Haoma in the Yasna ritual, which starts in this morning Gāh. On the names of the five Gāhs, see Hintze 2003.
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and of Aršāt who promotes the living beings, who makes the living beings grow, for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

As in the initial section, formulae invoking various deities are replaced in different Gāhs, while the syntactic frame, consisting of the expressions ‘by gratification’ and ‘for worship, praise, gratification and glory’, is identical. G 1.2, for instance, runs as follows:

(5) G 1.2 mīṯrahe vouru.gaoııaotōiš hazanjro.gaošahe baêuvara.cašmano aoxto.nāmano yazatahe rāmano x'āstrahe xšnaōdra yasnāica vahmāica xšnaotrāica frasastaiiaēca
By gratification of Mithra, who has wide cattle-pastures, who has a thousand ears, ten thousand eyes, the venerable one, whose name is uttered, (and by gratification) of Peace provided with good pasture, for worship, praise, gratification and glory.

The opening section concludes with a set of lines identical in every Gāh and extremely common in all liturgical Avestan texts:

(6) yađā ahū vairiio
zaotā frā mē mrūte
ađā ratuš ašātciht haca
frā aṣauuva viduuā mraotū
“As he is to be chosen by existence”
the chief priest proclaims to me;
“Thus is the regulation on the basis of truth”
the knowledgeable truthful one shall proclaim!

The introductory invocation is followed by two verses from Y 71 (fig. 1, no. 3) praising Ahura Mazda, Zarathushtra, the choice (frauuasi-) of the latter and the Amōša Spāṇtas:

(7) G 5.3 (= Y 71.3) ahurom mazdām aṣauuanom ašahe ratūm yazamaide zarapatrom aṣauuanom ašahe ratūm yazamaide

4. On frauuasi- see Hintze [2007] on Y 37.3 no. 2 frauuasī ‘choices’.
We worship the Wise Lord, the truthful one, the ratu- of truth.
We worship Zarathushtra, the truthful one, the ratu- of truth.
We worship the choice of truthful Zarathushtra.
We worship the truthful Bounteous Immortals.

Furthermore, they also venerate the choices (frauwași-) of the truthful people, the ratu- 'who is best at obtaining' (apanōtama-)\(^5\) and the gratification of the ratu-s (ratufriti-):

\[(8)\ G\ 5.4\ (=\ Y\ 71.4)\ aṣaonqm\ van'hiś\ sūrā\ spṛṇṭā\ frauwaṣaiiō\ yazamaide
astuuatō\ manahīiāca
apanōtāmāt\ raṭbām\ yazamaide
yaētuṣṭāmāt\ yazatanām
haŋhanuṣṭāmāt\ aṣāhe\ raṭbām
aiṁnasāstāmāt
jaŋmuṣṭāmāt\ aṣaonō\ aṣāhe\ raṭbō
ratufritim\ yazamaide\]

We worship the truthful, good, strong, bounteous choices of the truthful ones.
Of the material and spiritual (life),
we worship that one of the ratu-s who is best at obtaining,
the most firmly established of the venerable ones,
the most successful of the ratu-s of truth,
the one who succeeds most.
We worship the most advanced ratu-pleasing
of the truthful ratu- of truth.

The middle part, which in all Gāhs begins in stanza 5, is characterized by the verb yazamaide 'we worship' and may be divided into three sections (fig. 1, nos. 4-6) each of which takes up and expands on the theme set out in the two initial verses. The first of these central units (no.4) elaborates on the name of the Gāh, which is, in the case of Gāh 5, uṣahi-na- ratu-. The second central unit (no.5), which in some Gāhs is the longest section, venerates the two ratus associated with a particular Gāh, i.e. here barajiiia- and mnāiiia-. The third part (no.6) is dedicated to the co-workers of the Gāh, in Gāh 5 Sraoṣa, Raṣnu and Arštāt.

\(^{5}\) Kellens 1996, 44.
The central section is separated from the concluding verses by another quotation from the Yasna, Y 71.23-24, which again is identical in all Gāhs (fig.1, no.7). It praises the ritual fire, which is the son of Ahura Mazdā, along with other ritual items, namely the libation, the date palm leaf, and the sacrificial straw. Furthermore, it also praises Apām Napāt, Nairya Saṅha, Upama dāmōiś, the souls of those who have died and the fravashis of the truthful ones:

(9) G 5.8 (= Y 71.23) 朋友们对 ahurahe mazda putrəm  
apām apām  
iristānqm urušanqm yazamaide  
yā ašāonqm frahušaiō  
We worship you, the fire, the son of Ahura Mazdā,  
the truthful ratu- of truth,  
(we worship you) together with the libation, together with the date-palm leaf.  
We worship this sacrificial straw, laid out correctly,  
the truthful ratu- of truth.  
We worship Apām Napāt.  
We worship Nairya Saṅha.  
We worship Upama Dāmōiś, the swift venerable one.  
We worship the souls of the dead,  
the choices of the truthful ones.

Y 71.24 praises the lofty ratu-, namely Ahura Mazdā, the Zarathushtrian teachings and all good actions that have and will be done. The recitation concludes with the Yeṣhe Hātqm prayer:

(10) G 5.9 (= Y 71.24) 朋友们对 bərażanqm yazamaide  
yīm ahurqm mazdām  
yō ašahe apanōtəmō  
yō ašahe jaymūšəmō  
vīspa srauša zarəhuštrī yazamaide  
vīspaca huaršta štiaǭna yazamaide  
varštaca varəštianmaca
On the compositional structure of the Avestan Gâhs

yeṅhē hātqm āat yesne paitī
vaṅhō mazdā ahurō vaēϑā ašāt hacā
yâŋhâmca tâscā tâscā yazamaide
We worship the lofty ratu-
Ahura Mazda,
who is the acme of truth,
the most advanced in truth.
We worship all Zarathushtrian teachings.
We worship all well-done actions,
those which have and those which will be done.
We worship those male beings in whose worship
the Wise Lord knows what is best on account of truth,
and likewise we also worship those female beings.

The final section (fig.1, no.8) begins with two Ahuna Vairya–prayers which are followed by the praise of the co-workers and concluded by the Ašēm Vohu–prayer.

(11) G 5.10 yaϑā ahū vairiīō ... (2)
yasṇemca vahṁemca aojasca zauuarœca āfrīnāmi
sraošahe ašiiehe ašiiumatō voroθrājanō frâdat.gaēθahe
raşnaoš razîštahe
arštātasca frâdat.gaēθaiiā varaθdat.gaēθaii?
asēm vohū vahištēm astī ...
Just as he is to be chosen by existence ... (twice)
I bless the worship, the praise, the strength and swiftness
of Sraoša accompanied by reward, provided with reward,
the victorious one, who promotes the living beings,
of straightest Raśnu
and of Arštāt who promotes the living beings, who makes the living beings grow.
Truth is the highest good ...

All five Gâhs end with more quotations from the Yasna, namely Y 68.11 and Y 72.9–10 (fig.1, no.9). They are followed by the Pâzand text Kerba mazd and again close with the Ašēm Vohu-prayer.
2. The sequence of the Gāhās

In the manuscripts of the Khorde Avesta, the Hāwan Gāh usually stands at the beginning. Such is the case, for instance, in the manuscript E1, where the Gāhās start on folio 422v. In his edition of the Avesta, Karl Friedrich Geldner (1889–1896, vol. II 51) followed the manuscripts, and since then, the Hāwan Gāh is usually referred to as “Gāh one”. However, in both Avestan and Pahlavi texts, itemizing of the Gāhās sometimes begin with Hāwan (Geldner’s Gāh 1) but sometimes with Ušahin (Geldner’s Gāh 5). For instance, in Nerangestān 46–51, which describes the time span covered by each Gāh, the first ratu- is ušahina-. By contrast, in the Yasna, the list of the ‘daily times’, asniia- ratu-, starts with hauuani- (Y 1.3–7 and Y 17.2). The same situation is found in the Pahlavi texts. In the Dēnkard, ušahin stands at the beginning of the Gāhās, but in the Bundahišn it is hāwan. This indicates that there was uncertainty as to which Gāh was the first.

This variation in the Avestan and Pahlavi texts seems to reflect liturgical practice. Before the beginning of any ritual, the appropriate Gāh is supposed to be recited. There is one ceremony, the Vendidad, which starts during the watch of the Ušahin Gāh, at midnight, and goes on for about nine hours. At the beginning of this longest and most solemn of all Zoroastrian liturgies, the Ušahin Gāh is to be recited. However, not only the Yasna, but most religious ceremonies begin and are performed in the watch of the Hāwan Gāh, when the sun rises. As Kotwal and Boyd put it, the Hāwan Gāh is considered to be “the ideal time, [when] the fire temple is filled with activity, people coming in with offerings”. This may have been the reason why the Hāwan Gāh acquired the status of the first watch of the 24-hour day.

However, while Ušahin and Hāwan could not both take the position of the first Gāh, the internal structure of the Gāh texts suggests that they were composed with a view to Ušahin being the first Gāh, as was rightly observed by Darmesteter. It will emerge from the following hori-

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zontal analysis that only when the Uşahin Gāh is considered as the first one, does the structure of the texts exhibit a regular pattern according to which there is a development from smaller to larger units and from the abstract to the concrete. Such a progressive structure would not be observed if the list started with Hāwan.

3. The horizontal analysis

3.1. The introductory part

Horizontal analysis entails a comparison of equivalent parts of the various Gāhs, and reveals which terms and names are substituted in the corresponding sections. In the invocation of the ratu-s in section 1, the five watches are correlated with the territorial and social structure of the Iranian lands. It starts in Uşahin Gāh (Gāh 5) with the smallest unit, the house, nmāna-, moves on to the clan, vis- in Gāh 1, the tribe, zantu-, in Gāh 2, the land, daxiu-, in Gāh 3 and culminates in zarāůuštrōtōma- in Gāh 4.12

The names associated with the territorial divisions are also interconnected. The ratu-s of Gāhs 2, 3 and 4 progress in so far as there is a movement from animal to human being and eventually to all good life. Thus, the time of midday of Gāh 2, rapiďšin, is associated with frādatššu- ‘who promotes cattle’, and that of the afternoon, uzērin, with frādatvīra- ‘who promotes men’. Finally, the evening Gāh, ēbšrūsrīm,13 is associated, in the most general way, with the time ‘which promotes all good life’.

The ratu-s of Gāh 5 and 1, in contrast, are different. In Gāh 5, bərəjiia-, the ratu- associated with the house, nmāna-, refers to the welcome, honour and esteem offered to a truthful being. The noun bərəjiia- lexicalizes the idea of the respectful and welcoming spiritual attitude that characterizes the relationship between Ahura Mazdā and those of his creatures that have chosen to side with him. This intimate and personal allegiance is associated with the smallest territorial and social unit, the house, nmāna-, and results from each individual’s choice, frauusahaanši-. The ratu- sāuusahaanši-, connected with the clan (visiia-) and praised in Gāh 1, characterizes the sunlight rising from the east and is

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appropriately associated with the morning watch.\textsuperscript{14} The rising sun epitomizes the natural, cosmic event which brings light and life every morning and thus exemplifies the good functioning of the physical creations.

On the basis of this interpretation, we may establish the following interconnected links between this set of \textit{ratu}-s of the five Gāhs: \textit{bərajiia}-characterizes the good spiritual attitude of respect and esteem between an individual person and Ahura Mazda, while \textit{səuuənhi} represents the benefit for physical life derived from the sunlight. The two terms thus refer, respectively, to the spiritual and physical worlds, whose proper functioning brings prosperity to animals and human beings in particular and to all good life in general. In other words, the prosperity of the animal, human and entire living world depends on the effective operation of the spiritual and the physical worlds.

3.2. The central part

3.2.1. The first section of the central part

The central section of the Gāhs is characterized by the verb \textit{yaza-maide}. The first unit (fig.1, no.4) praises the constituent parts of the Zoroastrian ritual. It begins, in Gāh 5, with the divine beings Ahura Mazda and his spiritual creations, the Aməša Spəntas. G 5.5 venerates Ahura Mazda and four Aməša Spəntas: Good Mind, Best Truth, Desirable Rule and Bounteous Right-mindedness. The Hāwan Gāh praises the two remaining Aməša Spəntas, Wholeness and Immortality, and begins with the praise of texts: the Ahurian question, the Ahurian teachings and the Yasna Haptaŋhāti. The Rapi保定 Gāh continues by praising the five Gathas, which are listed individually, while the Uzērin Gāh extols the eight classes of priests, each mentioned by name. Finally, Gāh 4 praises the implements used in ritual, namely the fire, various utensils and the ritual water and plants.

The movement across the fourth section of the Gāhs is from the spiritual world to the physical one. The spiritual creations, i.e. the Aməša Spəntas, are linked to the physical ones, represented by the priests and ritual implements, by means of the sacred texts, referred to in G 1.5 and 2.5. Correspondences between the physical (G 3.5, 4.5) and spiritual (G 5.5, 1.5) realms may be established in so far as the priests correspond to

\textsuperscript{14} The noun \textit{səuuənhi} is a \textit{vrddhi}-derivative from *\textit{sauuah} - 'morning, east' attested in the name of the eastern clime \textit{sauuahi}, see Bartholomae, AirWb.1572, 1562; Witzel 2000, 299f.
Ahura Mazda, the ritual fire to Truth (ašā-), pestle and mortar to Best Rule (xšaθra- vairīia-), libation (zaodra-) to Good Mind (vohu- man-ah-), water to Wholeness (hauruuatatīt-), and plants as well as sacrificial straw to Immortality (amərətattāt-).

3.2.2. The second section of the central part
The second section of the central part elaborates on the two ratu-s associated with the individual Gāhs (fig.1, no.5). Gāh 5.6 praises the ratu-s ‘belonging to honour’ and ‘to the house’, hdrdjiia- and nmdniia-, and gives more information about what bərəjiia- means. It is worshipped through a respectful attitude towards truth and the Mazdayasnian faith:

(12) G 5.6 (= Y 35.1) bərəji vəŋhūš ašăhe
bərəji daēnatiā vəŋhuiiā māzdaiiasnōiš
with esteem for good Truth,
with esteem for the good Mazda-worshipping belief.

These words are taken from Y 35.1, the YAv. passage inserted between the last stanza of the Ahunavaitī Gatha, Y 34.15 and the first of the Yasna Haptaŋhaiti, Y 35.2. In the corresponding passage of Gāh 1, the Airyaman Išya-prayer is commended as the prayer which overcomes all hostilities (G 1.6). G 2.6 elaborates on the ratu- that promotes the animals by praising the cattle breeder’s manthra (fšūša- mqdra-), which comprises Y 58. Furthermore it also praises rightly spoken words, three of Ahura Mazda’s physical creations (water, earth and plants), the spiritual Yazatas and the Amāya Spāṇtas. After venerating both the ratu- that promotes men, frādat.vīra-, and the ratu- of the country, G 3.6-7 praise the physical creations. They include the stars, sun and moon, the ageless lights, good life, the realization of what is right, the ‘later teaching’, and again the ratu- of the country, daξiiuma.

G 4.6-9 is the longest of all the central portions. After the ratu- ‘that promotes all well-being’, frādat.vispam.hujiiāiti-, it praises Zarathushtra, the beneficent formula (mqdra- spənta-), the soul of the cow, Zarathushtrōtoma and again Zarathushtra (G 4.6), the three social classes, namely priest (āθrāwaaan-), warrior (rāθaēstare-) and herdsman (vāstrīia-fšuiīant-), and finally the lords (paiti-) of the four territorial divisions: house, clan, tribe and land (G 4.7). G 4.8 venerates the truthful youth of good thoughts, words, deeds and belief (daēnā-), as well as a number of praiseworthy activities such as marriage within one’s family (xqāētuua-dāθa-), travelling both inside one’s own country and abroad. The praise of
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a range of female beings begins with the lady of the house (nmānahe nmānā, paθnī-) and continues in G 4.9 with truthful women, Bounteous Right-mindedness and the noblewomen of Ahura Mazda. The latter passage is a Younger Avestan quotation from the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, Y 38.1 yāscā tōi gona ahurā mazdā. As convincingly argued by Narten, the ‘noblewomen’ refer to the personifications of ‘fat-offering’ (ižā-), ‘vitalization’ (yaostī-), ‘perfection’ (faraštī-) and ‘right-mindedness’ (ārmaiti-).

Finally, Zarathushtrōtoma is again venerated, along with the truthful man.

It appears that the second central part is dedicated to the spiritual and practical life of all Mazda-worshippers, both priests and laypeople. Gāhs 2-4 are especially linked in so far as each of them again praises the ratu- of the territorial and social division at the end of the section. This suggests that the longish central portions elaborate on the ratu-s frādat,fsu-, frādat,vira- and frādat,vīspām,hujiāīti-, after which the other ratu- (zaŋtuma-, daξiuma-, zaraduštrō,toma-) associated, respectively, with each of Gāh 2-4 is mentioned a second time.

3.2.3 The third section of the central part

The third central section (fig.1, no.6) is dedicated to the co-workers of each Gāh and thus takes up the theme of the second stanzas, with which this section is virtually identical, apart from the grammatical case. Being governed by the verb yazamaide ‘we worship’, the names of the co-workers occur here in the accusative, while they are in the genitive in stanza 2.

3.3. The concluding part

After the repetition of verses from the Yasna, Y 71.23–24 (fig.1, no.7), the formula of stanzas 2, praising the co-workers, is repeated in the concluding section of the Gāhs (fig.1, no.8). This is followed by further quotations from the Yasna (fig.1, no.9).

4. Conclusion

It emerges from this analysis that the praise of the time sections, ratu-, alternates with that of the co-workers. There are two sections dedicated to ratu-s (fig.1, nos. 1 and 4–5). The first is followed by one unit prais-

ing the co-workers (no.2), the second by two (nos. 6 and 8). Each praise of ratu-s and co-workers is followed by quotations from the Yasna (nos. 3, 7 and 9), thus forming three large blocks of text. While neither the praises of co-workers nor the quotations from the Yasna are original compositions, those of the ratu are. The structure of the Gâhs is a ring-composition in so far as the most original parts are at the centre.

The association of a time-section with a territorial and social division follows a regular pattern. We have seen that, from Gâh 5 through to Gâh 4, there is a progression from the smallest unit, the house, to the largest one, the country, finally culminating in the priest, zarađuštrōtōma-. This structure points to the idea of the all-pervading presence of the Mazdayasnian religion in both time and space. The Gâhs presuppose that the Zoroastrian religion was widespread and that the priests were at the head of the social and spiritual hierarchy. Furthermore, the second group of ratu-s associated with a time division also follows a pattern. The latter consists in the good functioning of the spiritual (denoted by bārajīia-) and physical (sāuuanhi-) worlds and guarantees the prosperity of cattle (frādat.fśu-), men (frādat.vīra-) and all well-being (frādat.vīspqm.hujiāiti-). The main central parts invoke religious life on two levels: priestly ritual in the first section, and the religious life of laypeople in the second. This arrangement expresses the idea that the five-fold division of the day pervaded the lives of both priests and laypeople.16

This analysis suggests that the five Gâhs form an interconnected unit of text. The constituent parts of each Gâh are composed with regard to the equivalent passages in the other Gâhs. Such a thoughtful arrangement indicates that the priests who created these texts had a good command of the Avestan language. The compositional structure of the Gâhs is both an expression of and pointer to an underlying and coherent religious system, which must have been fully developed at the time of their composition.

16. Both priestly and lay ritual are represented, respectively, by the names of the morning (hāuwani-) and evening (aipšraðrina- aibgaia-) Gâhs, while the names of the other day sections derive from either natural phenomena (usahina-, uzaiieira-) or human custom (rapitpīna-), see Hintze 2003, 143, 154.
References:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priestly Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>A priest who performs religious rituals and ceremonies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon</td>
<td>A person who assists the priest in religious duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Server</td>
<td>A person who serves the priest and the congregation during religious services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singer</td>
<td>A person who sings religious songs during services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>A person who reads religious texts during services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Priestly Ranks and Their Responsibilities**

- **Priest**: Conducts major religious ceremonies and rituals.
- **Deacon**: Helps the priest and takes care of administrative duties.
- **Server**: Assists in ceremonial actions and supplies.
- **Singer**: Leads the congregation in singing prayers and hymns.
- **Reader**: Recites scriptures and prayers.

**Relevant Concepts**

- **Yasna**: A prayer text in Zoroastrianism.
- **Gah**: A stanza in the Yasna.
- **Co-workers**: Collaborators in religious activities.
- **Ritat**: A term used to denote religious status.
- **Mithra**: A term used to denote religious status.
- **Soma**: A ritual beverage in Zoroastrianism.
- **Zoroastrianism**: A monotheistic religion that originated among the ancient Persians.

**Figure 1: Compositional Structure of the Gahs**

- **Gah 1**: Stanzas 1-8, 9-10, 11-12.
- **Gah 2**: Stanzas 1-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14.
- **Gah 3**: Stanzas 1-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16.
- **Gah 4**: Stanzas 1-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18.

**Table of Co-workers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-worker</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahrvan-priest</td>
<td>Priest who leads sacrifices and libations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahura Mazda</td>
<td>The supreme being in Zoroastrianism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sraosha</td>
<td>Priest who performs rituals related to fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanta Armaiti</td>
<td>Priest who administers sacrificial rituals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mithra</td>
<td>Priest who presides over specific ceremonies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arda Virafsha</td>
<td>Priest who leads the assembly of the faithful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarathushtra</td>
<td>Prophet and founder of Zoroastrianism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Yasna Belief**

- **Hostilities**: Overcome all hostilities.
- **Truthfulness**: Promote all well-being.
- **Promoting cattle**: Promoting cattle.
- **Promoting men**: Promoting men.
- **Promoting religion**: Promoting religion.
The Composition of the Gathas and Zarathushtra’s Authorship

Martin Schwartz

Recent doubts about the validity of the individual status of the poems (hāti-s)\(^1\) into which the Gathas are traditionally divided (i.e. the OAv. Y(asna-s) 28-34 and 43-51\(^2\)) and about the authorship of the Gathas have prompted me to bring my research results specifically to bear as proof of the integrity of the Gathic hāti-s and, more importantly, (re)establishment of Zarathushtra’s historicity as sole author of this corpus. Here I shall give the gist of my analyses in a cumulative and convergent argumentation.

I shall proceed from the systematic concatenations (linkages, lit. ‘chaining together’) whereby all the stanzas of every poem in the corpus are matched according to concentrically-oriented (ring-compositional) schemes. Delineating the principles of these concentric schemes shall lead to a demonstration that:

1. Some of the Gathic poems contain the earlier concentricity of a first stage of composition (proto-poems completed once and recomposed later).
2. An extension of the ring-compositional principles applies intertextually in the sequential stanza-by-stanza recycling of material from one poem to create the basis of another Gathic poem, so that a key series of poems may be set in chronological order of composition.
3. These mechanically ordered recastings provide a series of trajectories for tracking, from stanza to stanza across various Gathic poems, the evolution of a range of phenomena, including development of theology and eschatology, and alongside these and in their service, progressions of word-play, metaphors, and increasingly

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1. I.e. <hāti->. Here I shall use reconstructions of O(ld) Av(estan) with a slight variant of R. S. P. Beekes’ system in italics for the vulgate text of Old Avestan, and for Y(oung) Av(estan), I use transliterations as per K. Hoffmann, in Roman type enclosed in angular brackets. For contrasting views on the hāti-, see fn. 4.
2. I shall elsewhere treat Y(asna) 53, the last poem in the Gathic canon.
complex phonic cabbalism, and further unfolding autobiographical allusions to events of a poet-priestly career.

The latter allusions mesh with mentions of the author’s quest for patronage in a competitive context, precisely in accord with other archaic Indo-European societies, which stressed individual prestige of both patrons and poet(-priest)s, who were related in a system of reciprocal benefits. Thus we see the explicit naming and praise of patrons, and, as part of a general first-person self-presentation which pervades the Gathas, the foregrounding of the name Zarathushtra (literally central in several poems). The mechanically-based demonstration that there was a single poet-priestly personality who authored the Gathas – an engagingly extraordinary poet-priest, whose profound and promising tidings were set forth in commensurately impressively composed revelations of a divine Lord Wisdom – would go far in explaining Zarathushtra’s success in gaining patrons and overcoming his well entrenched traditionalist rivals. In the face of the foregoing, it is hard to imagine the Gathas as anything but the work of a real individual, Zarathushtra, operating in a historical social situation.

The three basic patterns of centrifocal concatenation (which includes linkage of central to outer stanzas) are as follows:

Type I: Single stanzas in concatenation, i.e. A & Z, B & Y, C & X, etc. Thus Yasnas 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 43, 47, 48, 49, and 50.

Type II: Paired stanzas with regular concentric concatenation as blocks, i.e. A-B & Y-Z, C-D & W-X, E-F & U-V, etc., with occasional further concatenation as in Type I. Thus Yasnas 46, 45, and 31 (in which originally what is now 31.13 followed what is now 31.14-15).

Type III: Single and paired stanzas in regular consecutive alternation, with concentric concatenation of the single and the paired stanzas, i.e. A & Z, B-C & X-Y, D & W, E-F & U-V, etc. Thus Yasnas 44 and 51.

In addition, in each poem of all three types, the central stanza or stanza-pair (itself linked to the stanzas immediately preceding and following), which often condenses a salient theme, concatenates with the first and last stanza or stanza-pair.

3. The main thrust of the above was first given in Schwartz 1991:128-36 as in principle applying to the entire Gathic corpus, with specific treatment of Y 50; further elaborated in Schwartz 1998, with illustration of Y 32 (p. 134) and illustrative chart of the various Gathic patterns (p. 197); see now Schwartz forthcoming (a), with exemplification of Y 29, where it is also argued that 27.13 was the original 11th stanza of Y 29.
Here is a revised "mirror" schema for Y 50:

50.1 īsa-
50.2 hu’ar/n-
50.3c’ [yah nā] artaiš
50.4 wäh; ardra- + ı/sraw (srausānai); iš- (išah gen.)
50.5 awah-; yušmāka-
50.6 (See after chart)
50.7 awah-; yušmāka-
50.8 wäh; ardra-; ı/sraw (frasrutā); *iš- > iž-a- (ižayāh gen.)
50.9c’ [yada] artaiš
50.10 hu’ar/n- (hu’anah)
50.11 īsa-

The central stanza, 6, connects with 5 via manθra’an- (6 manθra’ā & 5 manθrānai) and with 7 via the pronominal stem ma-h- (6d mahya & 7d mahmāi) and with the final stanza via the positional responsion of almost identical phrases 6c’ dātā xrataus & 11c’ dātā ahauš (cf. 3c’ yah nā artaiš & 9c’ yadā artaiš). The subtler connection between central and first stanza comes from ‘my/of me’, 6d’ mahya = 1b’ mana, both genitive, with the equivalent dative enclitic mai in the series 1a’ kat mai ... b’ kah mai ... b” kah mana, and from the quasi-etylological association of 6a manθra’ā and 1b” mana hrātā (which has Sanskrit parallels, e.g. Lakṣmī Tantra 18.44-45 māmṛ trāyate ... mantrajñāṁ trāyate ... sa mantrah), in our Gathic text condensing the poem’s basic theme of reciprocity between Zarathushtra, the poet-priest promoting Mazda, and Mazdā, his protector. This relationship is overtly emphasized within the first and final stanzas, and in the expanded center (stanza 6 flanked by 5 and 7), which is linked to the first stanza through the three occurrences of line-end awah- ‘help’.

In addition to, or in alternation with, concatenations of word-forms, the concentric schemes of the Gathas often also involve correlations of meaning (or narrow motifs). Thus in Y 50 stanzas 2 and 10 amplify references to hu’ar/n- ‘sun’ with combinations of visual and bovine imagery: 50.2 ‘how shall he seek amid many sunbeams’ (pisyan- ‘ray, beam’, cf. Khot. pāśā ‘sunbeam’ and YAv. <-pis-> in Yt 10.3); 50.10 ‘one shall ... have in (a) vision the lights of the sun, the bull of days’. In 50.4 and 50.8 išah/ižayāh ‘of energization’ is elaborated by references to striding: 50.4 ‘he shall locate himself on the path of energization’; 50.8 ‘I shall approach ... with the footsteps (footprints) of energization’.
I stress the participation of every stanza of a Gathic poem in a consistent concentrically oriented pattern of concatenations based on words (form, meaning, or semantic field). This excludes mixture of word-based linkage of individual stanzas, and putative linkage of blocks of stanzas via broad thematic correspondences; my insistence extends even to those poems with structuring devices other than concatenations, such as Y 43, which contains a repeated refrain, but nevertheless shows an independent overall Type I pattern of concatenations based on word-forms⁴: 43.1 & 43.16: aramati- + √dā + arti-. 43.2 & 43.15: wiswa-; wahišta-. 43.3 & 43.14: nā. 43.4 & 43.13: manh(ā); √gam + wu­manah-.. 43.5 & 43.12: √dā + arti-. 43.6 & 43.11: swanta-; ṭwā; jasa-. 43.7 & 43.10: prsa-; √prsfaras. 43.8 & 43.9: īsa- 1st sg; yawat(ā); ṭwā mazdā. 43.9 & 43.1: √was. 43.8 & 43.16 (both c’ end): hya’- + aujah­wat; xšaθra-; √dā. These formal linkages are, characteristically, supported by semantic correlations, e.g. 43.3 ardra- ‘efficacious, reliable, trustworthy’ and huzantu- ‘boon kinsman’ (collocated with šaıt ‘dwell’)) and 43.14. fri’a- ‘intimate’ and fraxšnānai ‘in awareness’ are all terms of hospitality/patronage/cult (institutional gift exchange, xšnaw; cf. 43.14-15; 46.1-2 & 46.18-19; 46.5-6; 46.9-11; 49.1 & 49.12, 49.5 with 49.10; 46.13-14; 44.1-2; 50.4; 51.11-12; 31.21-22; and 29.11). [43.3-13 yield a complete concentrically concatenative poem.]

The majority of Gathic hāti-s show systematic concentric concatenation through word-forms, although these concatenating word-forms are often accompanied by words which concatenate semantically (cf. on Y 50 above). Exceptions are Y 28, Y 32, Y 33, and Y 49, in which the concatenation through word-forms predominates, but some of the concentric pairings are semantic only. Each of these poems, however, contains a core showing systematic concentricity in linkage of word-forms, and such cores represent the first compositional stage of the Gathic hāti-s at issue. These first-stage compositions are completed poems, all showing concatenation of central to outer stanzas; thus 28.1-8, 33.2-10, [43.3-13 and] 46.2-10⁵. We shall see for Y 28 and Y 46 that the (first-stage) proto-poem was reconfigured as the final poem later in the poet’s career.

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⁵. Note also that e.g. 48.7-12 is also a complete poem, onto which the concentrically concatenating 48.1-6 was built in a larger overall symmetrical linkage to form Y 48, whereas to the complete poem 45.1-7 was grafted the brief composition 45.8-11 to form the whole Y 45.
As regards centrifocal concatenation, apart from specific pattern types, I divide the Gathic corpus into those poems in which every stanza has concatenation of word forms (which I regard as compositionally basic), and those poems in which most of the concatenation is via word-form, but some of the linkages of stanzas are of the semantic sort. I exemplified the second category with a “mirror” schema for Y 32 (Schwartz 1998:134); the other such poems are Y 28, Y 33, Y 43 and Y 49. Now, Y 28, Y 32, Y 33, and Y 49, all poems containing some stanzas with only semantic concatenation, contain a core (Stage I of composition) with systematic concatenation based on word-forms. Y 46 also contains such a Stage I core, although the final 19-stanza Type II poem has systematic word-form concatenations. All of the Stage I cores which have been listed display linkage of central to outer stanzas, and are thus complete poems, later expanded to form the final (Stage II) compositions of our corpus.

Y 46 Stage I: 46.2 & 46.10: \( yjwaid \) (waidal/waista); (-)\( nä \); \( dā \) 3rd sg opt (dadit/dāyit) [obj SUPPORTIVENESS] + RECIPROCITY. 46.3 & 46.9: BOVINE (uxšānah/gaus) cf. 46.3 (-)gāh bis ml!; INTERROG ka(+)(a’ kadālkah). 46.4 & 46.8: \( pā \) 3rd sg (pāt/pāyit); abl jyātus-jyātaish bis; šyauðnišs. 46.5 & 46.7: \( ñar \) (dītalididaršata); drugwant- sg. 46.6 & 46.5: yah; artāwan- sg vs drugwant- sg (artāwā drugwantam / drugwāh ... drugwatai; artāwā ... artāwā). 46.7 & 46.6: dayanā (dayanayā; dayanāh); drugwāh nom sg; \( dā \) 2nd sg (dadāh/dāh). 46.2 & 46.6: fr i’ah + RECIPROCITY; (-)\( nā \). 46.10 & 46.6: nā [+HOSPITALITY PROVISION]; wahišta-.

Y 28 Stage I: 28.1 & 28.8: yāšā-. 28.2 & 28.7: \( dā \) (dāwaid/dādi, dās-) + āyafita. 28.3 & 28.6: \( rap \) (rāfbrāi/rāfnah); \( gam \) (jasata/gadi). 28.4c & 28.5a: CONTINUOUS QUEST FOR VISION OF RIGHTNESS (arta-). 28.4 beg & 28.1 end: ru’ānam. 28.5a’ & 28.8a’: xxx ðwā.

Y 33, Stage I: 33.2 & 33.10: zuaušai (of Mazda Ahura). 33.3 & 33.9: wahu- wahišta- manah-; (l)tam mantum/manyum. 33.4 & 33.8: mazdā + aka-lwahu- manah- + \( yaz \) (yazāilyasnam). 33.5 & 33.7: \( ñraw \) (srausam/sruiyai). 33.6 & 33.5c: \( zū \) (zu’ayā/zautā) + arta- + rzuš/rzūš. 33.6c” & 33.7a”: mazdā + \( ñars \) (darštaĩš*darsat). 33.6 & 33.2: \( ñarz \) (wrzdylī/warsatī). 33.6b’ & 33.10c”: xxxxx manahā.

By contrast, Stage I of Y 49 > 49.4-11 may be regarded as merely a tentative composition preliminary to generating the completed 12-stanza Y 49, whose concatenations I also give:

Y 49, Stage I: 49.4 & 49.11: cmpds in duš- (duž-) + PEJOR allit in d- incl (-)daina- + drugwant-. 49.5 & 49.10: ižā-; aramati-; ðwahmi +
DIVINE DOMAIN + HOSPITALITY TERMS. 49.6 & 49.9: ʿsraw (srāway-aimalsrautu); dayanā-. 49.7 & 49.8: wahu- wāhwī-; ʿdā (daʿat/dāh); tat.

Y 49, Stage II: 49.1 & 49.12: RECIPROCITY/INTIMACY (cixšnušā + ādā / frīnā). 49.2 & 49.11: drugwant- + allit d- and a-. 49.3 & 49.10: SET DOWN (nidātam/ni pāhai). 49.4 & 49.9: dayanā-; drugwant-; ʿdā (dāl/*dadans); HERDSMAN-AGRARIAN (fšuyasulfšanhiyah, cf. 31.10); d-allit; ETHICAL DISCRIMINATION. 49.5 & 49.8: ʿthwahmi (ā) xṣabrai; ʿsar (sārstā/saram). 49.6 & 49.7: ʿsraw (srāwayaimalsrautu). 49.6 & 49.8: fra + ʿiš (fra ... išyā / fraʾišṭāha). 49.5 & 49.7: kin (huzantuš/hwauṭuš, etc.). 49.8 & 49.1: āyu- (yawā/yawāi). 49.7 & 49.12: MAZDĀ IN HIS TRIAD TARGETED FOR LISTENING (gušahwa) / BEING INVOKED (zuʾ'anyantāt).

Y 32, Stage I: 32.1 & 32.13: dūta-; QUEST FOR PARADISE. 32.2 & 32.12: aibyah mazdāh + (pati) mraut. 32.3 & 32.11: maz-. 32.4 & 32.10: -jyātaš/jyātaš abl. 32.5 & 32.9: -jyātaš/jyātaš abl; manyu-. 32.6 & 32.7 & 32.8: ainah-; ʿsraw (srāwayataš/srāwi).

My earlier analysis of Y 32, Stage II, and its center and final stanza (Schwartz 1998:134,174-7) should now be taken further and applied to the present account of the ħāti-. The concatenation of the central to the outer stanzas marks the completion of the poem, which it ties up into a ħāti- ‘a (poem) of concatenation (tying up, chaining)’. In Y 32, the most important such concatenation self-referentially illustrates the process of linkage itself:

32.9a dušsastiš srawāh mrdnat hau jyātaš sanhanāš xratum
   b apa ma ištīm yanta brrxām hātim wahauš manahah
   c tā uxtā manyauš mahya mazdā artāi-ca yušmabaya grzai
32.16a yat ainahai drugwatah anu išiʾanḥ ā hāyāyā
32.9. 'The (poet-priest) of evil proclamation diverts words/fame, as he (also diverts) intellect of its vitality, through his proclamings. He has robbed moreover/me (of) the force/drive/sending – the welcome (earning/)tying/(concatenating) poetry – of Good Mind. With this speech of my spirit I complain to You, O Mazdā and/including to Rightness.

32.16c (that) I may tie up the wrongsome for their crime toward those (yet) to be sent.'
32.9 is linked to the other central stanza, 32.8, through √sraw (srāwik srawāh) and probably √yam (yamas-citl(apa) ... yanta): Yima’s crime (ainah-, concatenating with 32.16), as described in 32.8 ‘Yima6 went astray7 swearing8 as a god9, is that he wished to acquire divine glories through false speech. This parallels the evildoer’s action as per 32.9.

This concatenates in sense with 32.1: the daiwa-s, i.e. false gods and their worshipers, who, duplicitous in their action (32.3c dbitānā syaumān), pretending to be among the righteous ranks entreating for Mazda’s bliss (wrāzma) declare an ‘oath for bliss (cf. 32.12b’ *wrāš-uxtī-, from wrāz- = wrāzma, and cf. YAv. <-uxtī- > ‘emphatic statement’, Arm. uxt ‘oath’), we will be Thy messengers, holding (dārayah) those inimical to You!’. With these words the daiwa-group (unlike the righteous) really mean not that they would keep these enemies back, but they would hold on to them, embrace them, maintain them. The theme of deceptive messengers, 32.1, concatenates with that of injury to future missionaries (32.16 isi’anah, concatenating with 32.9 istim as ‘sending, dispatch’).

The central word hāti- as ‘tie, etc.’ (from ḥāy, as against ḥan ‘earn’, as at 32.6b’ hātāmarnai) concatenates with 32.1 dārayah as ‘holding back’ and, most importantly (32.16) the finale ā hāyayā ‘I may fetter’; cf. from the same root 32.13a’ hišat and 32.14a’ ā haiṭbāi, indicating respectively the tying up and entrapment of the evil ones, as per the finale. See further Schwartz 1998, passim, for much of the foregoing.

The compositional principles of the Gathic hāti- ring-composition, with reversal of word-forms after reaching the center, were extended intertextually so that Y 46 produced the verbal underpinnings of the initial core of Y 32, and similarly Y 32 vis-à-vis Y 48, and Y 32 yielding an outward-expanding skeletal core of Y 49 (etc.):

Y 46 > Y 32: 46.19 > 32.7: tu(‘am) mazdā waidištah; √sanh (sans/ sanhatai); √waid (wistāiš/widwāh). 46.18 > 32.8: wiciṭa-; √xšnaw (xšnaušamnah/cixšnušah). 46.17 > 32.9: išti- + wahaus manahah.

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6. Yimal/Yama < Proto-Aryan *Yama-; a god among the Kushan dynasts, Bactrian IAMPO, also attested onomastically; a supreme Kafiric divinity (> Imre); and the Vedic god of the underworld (cf. also Viđēvdād 2).
9. bagā, cf YAv. baya-, OPers. baga-, Sogd. bay-. 
46.15 > 32.10: ya- dāθanāh + (dā (dadat/dadwai) + (non-) DISTINCTION OF RIGHT vs WRONG. 46.14 > 32.11: maz-. 46.13 > 32.12: martiya-/martān- pl; sraw (fra srudyāil srawahā). 46.12 > 32.12: aibyah (...) mazdā + utters. 46.11 > 32.12: karpan-. 46.11 > 32.13: xšādra- instr + TIE IN SUBJUGATION; dmānai of HELL; (mark (mrngdyāilmarxtārah) + ahu- (46.11 ahum, 46.10 > 32.13 ahauš). 46.9 > 32.14: -jyati-/jyatu- + PREVENTION. 46.8 > 32.16: mraw (mraut/mrawi); righteous one vs wrongsome one. 46.7 > 32.16: aynahai + grasp + drugwant', Jdanh (danst-wān/dahmahya). 46.6 > 32.16: (gay (gayā) [cf. 32.14]/ ā gayāyā); wahišta-. 46.5 > 32.16: xšayans.

Y 32 > Y 49: 32.1-2 > 49.7-8: (CENTER AT STAGE I) yāsa-; hwitu- + wrzana- + aryaman-; jwrāz (wrāzma/wrāzištām); sar (sāramnah/ saram); xšādra-; ENVOYS (dūāhahlfra'ištāhah) + ahāma. (28.8 [STAGE I FINALE] via 32.1 yāsāt > 49.8: ṭwā ... yāsā fraṣā' ustrāi ([...]) mabycac; ...wiswāi + yawai. 28.8 wahistam ... wahištā ... yāsā > 49.12d (STAGE II FINALE): yāsans ... wahištā wahištam.) 32.1c-4 > 49.2-6 (6-2): sar (sāramnah/sārsta, sarah) + wahu- manah-; xšātra- + (swantā-) aramati-; artā huṣaxā (hu-, hac), cf. artā hužantus vs. drugwatah haxmanh; mraw (pati mraut/ antar mru'ai, mṛūtaǐ); dbita'ān-; war (warmadilwarnāi); daiwa- + ḏā (dantah/dān); xratauš (cf. dušxratwāvā); sraw (asrudwam/srāwayaima).

Y 32 > Y 4810: 32.16c" > 48.7: ḥāy (ā ḥāyāyā/ḥīθauṣ) [cf. synon 48.7 ḥāy 'TIE' (ni ... dyāta'am, dāmān) < 46.6 dāmān haiθahya (> 32.16 ā ḥāyāyā)]. 32.16c" > 48.6: išī'a- [also fig etym 48.6 ištīš (cf. 32.16 išī'a cc 32.9 ištīm) and synon 48.6 jawarah 'INCENTIVES']. 32.16 > 48.9: xšāya- mazdā (...) yahya mā āθīš. 32.15a" > 48.10: karpan-. 32.14 > 48.10: wisanta(i); kawi- + xratu-; jjan (jadyāāl jān); DEVILISH RITUALS WITH INTOXICANT PLANTS. 32.13 > 48.10: mαntānah/*mαnθrāīṣ; (xšāθra- (PEJ). 32.12 > 48.11: INJURY TO COW vs PASTURING, cf 32.10. (46.3-4 (via 32.13 pa'at ... artahya) > 48.(11-)12 ka- jamaat; sauṣyant- pl; dahyu- gen; sαuθnāīš; sanha; - (maiθ.)

32.1 > 48.1: a- d- allit. 32.2c" > 48.2d: α- w- w- a- allit with post-caesural wahwi(m) in last line. 32.3c-5b > 48.1: šywaw (šyuṃānl- šyutā) + dbittānā; waxša-; martiya- + daiwaw-; amrtāt-; šywaw (šyuṃbāl- šyutā) + (wac (wacahāluxtā). [32.1-3 > 30.1-11.]

The above relationships confirm some of what was suggested above.

46.17 afšmâni sanha'âni ‘I shall proclaim in verses’ vis-à-vis 32.9 sanhanâis ... hâtim brings together the words attested later in Visperad 13.3 as YAv. <afsman-> ‘line of verse’ and <hâiti-> ‘poem’, in an enumeration of the divisions of Gthic poetry (terms which cannot have arisen from the very different prosody and poetic construction of the Young Avesta). The variation of meanings of ādar in 46.3-7 and 49.2 shows that in the textually intermediate 32.1 the ambiguity dârayah ‘holding back’ and ‘clinging to, embracing’ is part of a stylistic continuum.

I shall now restate the essence of remarks in Schwartz 1998 (passim) in the light of my new evidence. The root hây first figures in the central stanza of Stage I poem 46.2-10, at 46.6b: ‘The evildoer will enter into the bond of the trap of hell’. The idea of ultimate self-entrapment/fettering is elaborated at 32.13-16, representing the Stage I and Stage II of Y 32 (with hišat, haiōai, and ā hâyaya). It is thereby implicit that the cooption of Zarathushtra’s hâti- (Y 32, center, concatenating with finale ā hâyaya) results in this fettering (the concluding words ‘may I fetter’ also represents the culmination of a sophisticated poetic equivalent of a formula of magic binding; cf. Oss. xin(aw) ‘magic’ <$hinyā ‘binding’). At 48.7 dâmân occurs again with its verb of binding, hây; here we find both the binding down of the evildoers and the *binding of the righteous ally (hiθâus) to the heavenly house (vs. the house of hell, 32.13), which completes the dualized eschatological ideology of binding implicit in Y 32: as against the fettering of the wrong-ful, the righteous souls will be united in a paradisiac bond with the interconnected “persons” of the divine triad, Mazdâ Ahura, Wahu Manah, and Arta Wahišta. These divine entities are said to be interconnected (v sar) in the divine dominion in the first stanza-pair of Y 32, whence 49.7 (center) and 49.8, which explicitly speaks of a bond (sar-) of the righteous in the divine dominion (or home; cf. further 49.3, 5, and 8, and, with contrast of the evildoers in the house of hell, 49.11).

The Stage I poem seen in 28.1-8 inculcated a doctrine of the homogeneity (28.1 hazauša-) of the three divine entities; from the yâsa- formulas of entreaty 28.1 and 28.8 the doctrine is repeated at 32.1-2, whence 49.8 (and 49.12), again with yâsa-. The doctrine of the interconnected “trinity”, stated overtly in 32.2, is iconically encrypted in 32.1, through the interconnection of the initials of Mazdâ Ahura, Wahu Manah, and Arta Wahišta, in echoic phrases:
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32.1a“ ahya wrzanam mat aryamnā
b mnai ahurahya wrāzmazda’ah

a + w + m + a = (a w) + (wm) + (m a)
m + a + w + m = (m a) + (a w) + (w m)

The basis of this symbolism is the end of Y 46, 46.18-19, with the stanza end phrases manahas-ca wicīdam, (manah-wistais mat wiswāįš ...) mazdā waidīštah, with the symbolic initials (for manah wahu) as at 45.3b-d; cf. w m for wahu manah at 31.17 and 51.8 in phraseologically interrelated contexts. The idea of interconnective overlapping symbolic initials was first worked out in the center of Stage I Y 32, whereby 32.7c“ end (mazdā) waidīštah ahi and 32.8c“ end wicīdai api (w a = a w for arta- wahiśta-, cf. 33.3 < 32.1-2) proceed from the backward recycling of 46.19c“ end mazdā waidīštah and manahas-ca wicīdam; the triadic symbolism was then perfected in 32.1(-2). Furthermore, in 32.1(-2), wrāzma ‘bliss’ (Mazdā’s divine reward for the righteous), collocated with the three social groupings hwaitu-, wrzana-, and aya-man- (family, community, tribe) and with yāsa-, serves as the basis of 49.(7-)8, where wrāziśām (... saram) ‘the most blissful (connection/union)’ is a variant to wrāzma. In the beginning of the Stage I poem of Y 33, i.e. 33.2-3, the mystical message of Y 32 undergoes a transformation: Instead of overt wrāzma plus cabbalistic initials, we have the reward of wrāzma ‘bliss’ stated as a phonic acrostic: wārāi rādanti ahurahya zaušai mazdā’ah ‘they will achieve Mazdā Ahura’s wish and be in His favor’ (and be ha-zauša- with Him, i.e. share the homogeneous divinity of the triad in heaven?). Cf. Schwartz, forthcoming (b).

The Stage I poem of Y 46, i.e. 46.2-10, was composed before Zarathushtra had obtained his hoped-for patronage, and later recomposed as Stage II Y 46 (46.1-19) after he gained his key patrons. In the final version, 46.1 is added to set up an introduction to what was now a "flashback": The three levels of society (family, community, clan) have rejected him so far. In 32.1 these groups now flock to his message of Mazdā’s wrāzma for the righteous, so much so that the rival cultists cooptively try to claim Mazdā for their polytheism. Where, at the end of Y 46 (46.18-19), Zarathushtra confidently proclaims that requitals for good and evil, on behalf of Mazdā, are in his (Zarathushtra’s) decision, in the center of Y 32 (32.8-9) the derived text shows Zarathushtra as bowing to Mazdā’s decision, disclaiming the hubristic behavior shown by Yima, who played god. Zarathushtra probably was accused of simi-
lar behavior by his rivals, as may be seen from 49.1. Note the progression of \(x\text{s}n\text{aw} \text{ and } (wic\text{ith}\text{a})\): 46.18 \(x\text{s}n\text{au}\text{s}m\text{annah} \ldots \text{ wicitham} \); 32.8 \(cix\text{s}nu\text{s}ah \ldots \text{ wicithai} \); and 49.1 \(cix\text{s}nu\text{s}\text{â} \).\(^{11}\)

An improvement in the poet's circumstances and self-image is also reflected in the difference in Y 28 between the Stage I and Stage II forms. The eleven-stanza Stage II, which was composed after Y 46 > Y 32 > Y 49 and 49.12 > 50.1, imitates Y 50, with the name Zarathushtra at the exact centerpoint, and juxtaposition of the name with double allusion to his function as mant(h)ra-composer and a request for divine succor, which connects with the first line, and with the final stanza, which states Zarathushtra's hope of renewing existence. The center of Y 28 (28.6) yields the first of the two central stanzas of Y 43 (43.8), again with the name Zarathushtra, while the second central stanza (43.9) takes up from 28.4c-5a, the center of the 1st Stage form of Y 28.

The central-stanza occurrences of \(zara\text{thu}\text{stra}\) - (28.6, 43.8, 50.6, 51.11-12), like the stanza-end occurrences (33.14, 43.16, 49.12) and the cryptic renditions of the name (44.17-18, and in the center of a First Stage poem, 33.5c-6a), are an index of the importance of prestige to the poet(-priest) in the reciprocal (gift-exchange) relationship of peer individuals which characterized the functionally identical institutions of hospitality and patronage (and served as the model for cultic conceptions) in early Indo-European cultures. The reciprocity between Zarathushtra and patrons (specific or otherwise), and between Zarathushtra and Mazdā Ahura, is prominent throughout the Gathas, where it is often treated within a dualistic and eschatological outlook. Especially notable are the virtual entirety of Y 46, and 51.9-19 (which contains richly nuanced addresses to named patrons). In Y 46 the reciprocity complex is intricately foregrounded in the first stanza-pair, the central three stanzas, and the last stanza-pair. The concern for patronage shown in 46.13, with its rhetorical interrogatives, and its promise of fame for the patron, have precise parallels, e.g. in the archaic Greek lyrics of Pindar, down to terms which are cognate (\(x\text{s}n\text{aw}: \xi\text{e}\nu\text{vo} \text{ for the reciprocal relationship, } \text{sraw > srawah}: \kappa\lambda\epsilon\omicron \text{ 'fame, glorious reputation' }), and cf. further such parallels as \(fri\text{a}: \phi\text{\imath}l\omicron \text{ 'near and dear, intimate' }).\(^{12}\) Also com-

\(^{11}\) See further Schwartz 1998: 191-4.

\(^{12}\) For hospitality/patronage in the Gathas, see provisionally Schwartz 1982, Schwartz 1985, passim (where my remarks on \(a\text{j}\text{\imath}n\text{ and } \text{maga- need revision}); for Zarathushtra and Pindar, see Schwartz forthcoming (b). Cf. also H.-P. Schmidt, "Zarathushtra's Patrons", in the forthcoming Soroushian Gedenkschrift.
parable in detail with Pindaric passages is the Gathic evidence of fierce competition between rival poets (most clearly Y 31, stanzas 1, 11-12, 31.17), which has numerous parallels in Vedic.

In conclusion, the compositional, stylistic, and ideological unity of the Gathas, which is seen to unfold through poems whose relative chronology is now “mechanically” ascertainable, points to a single author, operating in a real social situation of a patronly milieu and in the context of rivalry between poet-priests, and should leave no further doubt of Zarathushtra’s identity as that historical author.

[This article has been radically superceded by Martin Schwarz, “How Zarathushtra Generated the Gathic Corpus: Inner-textual and Intertextual Composition”, Bulletin of the Asia Institute, Vol. 16, 2002 [2006], pp. 53-64; cf. also ibid. p. 64, Bibliography, the last five articles listed under Schwarz.]

Bibliography


The Avestan Yasna: Ritual and Myth

Prods Oktor Skjærvø

Sacrifices in ancient times were commonly patterned on primordial sacrifices performed by gods and men, often in cosmogonical and eschatological context. The myths of the primordial sacrifice and sacrificers provided the rationale for current-day sacrifices. Here, I shall discuss the Zoroastrian yasna from this perspective.

The yasna sacrifice is celebrated daily and serves the purpose of renewing the daily existence, that is, the removal of darkness and the return of the sun. Its model is Ahura Mazda’s primordial sacrifice in the world of thought, by which he established the ordered cosmos. In Iran, we find Ahura Mazda (the All-knowing ruling Lord) himself repeatedly sacrificing in the Avesta and the Pahlavi texts. According to the Bundahišn, for instance, Ohrmazd performed a sacrifice in the world of thought to establish the creation:

Bd.3.20-21
ohrmazd abāg amahrspandan pad rabilhwin (gāh) mēnōy yazīšn frāz

1. Note that the term sacrifice is used here without the necessary implication of immolation of a sacrificial victim; rather it is used here to denote ritual offerings to gods and other entities in the divine world. See, e.g., J. Henninger, “Sacrifice,” in The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. M. Eliade, London, vol. 12, 1987, pp. 544-57, esp. the definitions pp. 544-45. See further below on the verb yaza-.

2. See, e.g., M. Molé, Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l’Iran ancien. Le problème zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne, Paris, 1963, pp. 126-32, for instance (p. 132): “The supreme divinity offers the sacrifice to create the world and thereby establishes an archetypal act. Since then, every sacrifice will be a recreation of the universe...”

3. For reasons of space limitations, it has not been possible to include a full philological apparatus.

4. Ahura Mazda sacrifices with libations to his companion deities in order to be granted his wishes or responding to their call for sacrifices: to Anāhītā for her to allow him to make Zarathustra follow His Daēnā (Yr.5.17); to Tištriia (Yr.8.23-25) and Miōra (Yt.10.53-54, 56) in order to invigorate them and make them benevolent toward men; to Miōra for no explicit reason (Yr.10.123); and to Vaiiu for ability to overcome the Evil Spirit and to annihilate his creations (Yr.15.2-3).
sâxt andar yazišn kunišn däm hamāg bē dād abāg būd frawahr ī mardomān ...  

At Midday, Ohrmazd together with the Life-giving Immortals prepared the sacrifice in the world of thought. During the performance of the sacrifice, the entire creation was established. The fravashis of men were with him.

At the end of the world, he will again sacrifice to establish the perfect world:

**Bd.34.29-30**

ohrmazd ŏ gēšy šawēd xwad zōd srōš-ahlīy rāspīg ud ēbyāhan pad dast āwarēd. ganāg mēnōy ud āz pad ān ī gāhānīg nērang zad abzārīhā wasīyār

Ohrmazd goes down into the world, himself as libating priest and Srōš-ahlīy as auxiliary priest, bringing the sacred girdle in his hands. The Foul Spirit and Āz will be greatly and exceedingly smashed by the magic power of the Gāthās.

It was also by this sacrifice that Ohrmazd became ruler of his creation and received many of his other characteristic qualities, whereby was able to overcome – at least temporarily – the forces of chaos, represented by darkness and death, and to establish order, represented by light and life:

**Bd.1.34**

ohrmazd pēš az däm-dahišnhīn nē būd xwadāy ud pas az däm-dahišnīh xwadāy ud süd-xwāštār ud frazānag ud jud-bēš āškārag ud hamē-rāyēnīdār ud abzōnīg ud harwisp-nigerīdār būd

Before the establishment of the creation Ohrmazd was not ruling Lord, but, after the establishment of the creation, he became ruling Lord, profit-seeker (Av. sūhišta “richest in life-giving strength”), foreknowing, harm-discarding, apparent (Av. haiṭīīa “true, real”), ever-arranging, increasing (Av. spēnta), and all-observing (Av. vīspā hišas).

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5. Mss.: TD1, p. 33: mynwy Y ycšn' pr'c sht'; TD2, p. 38 mynwd Y ycšn' pr'c s'ht'; DH, p. 19 mynwy ycšn pr'c s'ht'; K20, fol. 91r g's mynwd ycšn pr'c s'ht.
This is not the whole story, however; Ahura Mazda is also said to have given birth to the first ordered cosmos, the new state of existence, the ahu. In the Gāthās, he is said to be the birth father of Order, as well as of Ārmaiti, which we know also represents the earth, and of Good Thought, which I believe also represents the luminous cover of the sky:

Gāthā 3, 48.6

āt aśīāi aśā mazdā uruuarā vaxṣaṭ
ahurō aŋhōuś zābōi pauruiehīīā ...  

Thus, for her the All-knowing One by (my/his) Order shall (now) make plants grow, (he), the Ahura, at the engendering/birth of the first ahu.

Gāthā 2, 43.5

spōntom at ūβā mazdā mōṇhī ahurā
hiiat ūβā aŋheuṣ zābōi darāvom pauruūīm
hiiat dā śiiaothanā mīḍdauuān yācā uxdā ...  

Thus, I (now) think of you as life-giving, O All-knowing Lord, as I (now) see you at the engendering/birth of the ahu, when you established, for the first time, actions as fee-earning, as well as (the words) that are to be uttered...

Gāthā 2, 44.3

... kasnā zaṭhā ptā aśahūīā pauruuiō ...  

What man/hero (is), by (his) engendering, the first father of Order?

Gāthā 1, 31.8

at ūβā mōṇhī pauruūīm mazdā yazūm stōi mananḥā
vajhōuś patarūm mananḥō ...  

Thus, I (now) think with (my) thought of you (as) the first, O All-knowing One, yet youthful / father of good thought ...  

7. I have included the number of the Gāthā, since it is often of interest to see where certain themes occur in the Old Avesta and how they are distributed throughout the five Gāthās.
8. The root spā-/sū-/sau- (spōnta-, etc.; sūra-, sauua(h)-, saošiiant-, etc.) properly refers to “swelling,” that is, in religious context, to nature swelling with (the juices of) life. I render words containing this root by means of “(re)vitalizing, life-giving.”
Gāthā 2, 45.4

dam kā āsmān cīyōn az ēn kerd estēd. abzār būd ī cīyōn xwarg ī ātāxš ī pad rōsnīh pāk az ēn ī āsar rōsnīh bē brēhēnīd. u-š hamāg dām ud dahišn az ēn bē kerd. ud ka-š bē kerd būd ā-š andar ē tan burd u-š sē hazār sāl andar tan dāšt u-š hamē abzāyēnīd u-š weh hamē kerd

About this matter: how and from what was the sky made? – The tool was something like a cinder of fire of pure light, which he fashioned from the Endless Light. And he made all the creations and creatures from it. And when he had made it, then he brought it into (his) body. And he kept it for 3000 years in the body, making it grow and making it better.

Bd.1.58-59

dām Ī ohrmazd pad mēnōyīh ēdōn parward kū *tarrīhā estād, amenīdār agrīftār arawāg cīyōn sūsr homānāg... nūn-iz ī pad gētīy pad ēn hangōšdag andar aškomb ī mādār hambawaihēnd ud zāyēnd ud parwarēnd. ohrmazd pad dām-dahišnīh mādārīh ud pidarih ī dahišn ast. ēn ka-š dām pad mēnōy parward ēn būd mādārīh ka-š bē ē gētīy dād ēn būd pidarih

Ohrmazd’s creation was nurtured in the world of thought in such a way that it was in *moisture – unthinking, untouching, unmoving –
like semen ... Still, in the world of living beings, they are formed in the womb of the mother and are born and nurtured in that way. And by the establishment of the creation Ohrmazd is father and mother of the creation, for when he nurtured the creation in the world of thought, that was being its mother, when he put it into the world of living beings, that was being its father.

Once the cosmos was established, however, the forces of evil attacked, and the world fell back into chaos. In order to help living beings in their battle against evil, it was arranged for Zarathustra to be born and become the first human sacrificer. Zarathustra was able to re-establish Order in the cosmos for as long as he lived, and, ever since his death, this task is performed by human sacrificers, whose task is to assist Ahura Mazdā. They do so by replicating the primordial sacrifice and, by their sacrifices, put Ahura Mazdā back in command and provide him with the elements needed to re-order the world.

**Purpose of the yasna sacrifice: birth of the ordered cosmos**

The sacrifice is therefore a process of reconstruction and multiple births, and in the rest of this presentation, I shall discuss in brief detail the role of the sacrifice as an ordering process, the birth and function of Zarathustra, and the role of the fravashis (pre-existing “souls” of living beings) in the birth of the cosmos.

The purpose of the sacrifice is to dispel the forces of evil, of darkness, destruction, and death, and re-establish the world as Ahura Mazdā first ordered it, full of light and life, fertility and growth. In the Gāthās, this is expressed by the image of Ārmaiti, the earth, seeing Order, that is, Ahura Mazdā’s beautiful sky, with the sun in its middle, whereby she becomes able to produce all living things, which are her works (šiiaoth-na):

Gāthā 3, 48.11

_kadā mazdā ašā maṭ ārmaitiš / jimaṭ xšaθrā hušōitiš vāstraunaitē ..._

When, O All-knowing One, will Ārmaiti come together with Order / (and) command, (she) who gives good dwellings and pastures?
Gāthā 2, 43.16

astuvaṭ aṣṭom xiīat uṣṭānā aojōṇhuvaṭ
xā'ōng darasōi x̣āhrō̰i xiīat ārmaïtiš ...

May Order have bones (and) through (my/his) life breath\textsuperscript{10} (be) strong! / May Ārmaïti be in command (and) in full sight of the sun! ...

Note that, in India, the new day is \textit{generated} by Indra’s sacrifice:

RV.2.21.4

\begin{verbatim}
anānudō vrṣabhō dōdhato vadhō gambhirā rṣvō āsamaṣṭakāvyāh
radhracodāḥ śnāthano vīlītās prthūr āndraḥ savyajñā uṣāsaḥ svār janat
\end{verbatim}

He who cannot be pushed back, the male, the weapon against the obstinate, profound, capacious, whose poetic art can never be reached and matched, / who impels the slow, who crushes, fortified, broad, \textit{Indra with his good sacrifice has generated/engendered the dawns, the sun.}

The interaction between the human and divine spheres needed to bring this about takes the form of a permanent cycle of gifts exchanged between gods and men that started when Ahura Mazdā ordered the cosmos, giving all good things to man,\textsuperscript{11} and which will end only at the end of the world. In the sacrifice, everything that god gave to men is offered up to him as gifts, including their bones and life breath, crucial ingredients that must be added to the cosmic foetus before it can be born as a functioning living entity.

Gāthā 1, 31.11

\begin{verbatim}
hīat nō mazdā pauruūm gaēθāscā taśo daēnāscā
θpā manaŋhā xratūscā hīat astuvaṇṭem dadā uṣṭanem
\end{verbatim}

When, O All-knowing One, you for the first time fashioned for us herds and vision-souls / by your thought, as well as (our) guiding thoughts, when you would place (in us) life breath with bones...

\textsuperscript{10} I assume \textit{uṣṭān-} is \textless *ușta- \textquotedblleft invigorated\textquotedblright \textless *vaz- \textgreater + *Hna- \textquotedblleft breath.\textquotedblright

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. the Achaemenid formula: \textit{baga vazgrka Auramazdā haya imām būmim adā haya avam asmnānam adā haya marīyam adā haya śiyātim adā marītyahyā “the great god is Ahuramazdā, who established this earth here, who established yonder sky there, who established man (in his place), who established happiness for man.”}
Thus, Zarathustra is giving as gift the life breath of his own body, even, / (as) the foremost share (of his sacrifice) and (the gift) of (his) good thought to the All-knowing One...

Yasna Haptahāiti 37.3

Thus, up to him we sacrifice (his) Ahurian names: / O “All-knowing One,” O “good one,” O most “life-giving one”! / We are sacrificing (them) to him together with our bones and life breaths.

Once the sacrificer and his assistants have provided god with all the necessary ingredients, in appreciation of their gifts to him, god causes the rebirth of the cosmos as a counter gift of the same (or greater) exchange value:

Gāthā 1, 34.15 (cf. Gāthā 2, 46.19)

O All-knowing One, thus say my poems conferring fame and (my) actions (are) the best! / (Say), you, (that my) repayment (in the form) of praises (is best) on account of that good thought (of mine) and the Order (of my ritual). / You (now) establish by your command, O Lord (and you others, this) ahu (as) Juicy in exchange value, the true one.

Gāthā 3, 50.10-11

Since one of the goals of the sacrifice is to make Order “full of swelling” (Gāthā 4, 51.21: aṣom spānuat), I assume fraša- (if connected with OInd. prks- and if this is “liquid strengthening” of some sort) means “full of the juices of life and vitality.”
Thus, the actions that I shall (now) perform, both (those) that you have wished for / and (those) that (our) eyes on account of (our) good thought deserve (to see, are the bringing back of) the lights of the sun. ...

Thus, I shall declare myself as your praiser, O All-knowing One (and you others), and I shall be — / to the extent I by the Order (of my ritual) can and am able — / the establisher of the (new) ahu *successfully by (my) good thought! / On account of (my) true (utterance) let what is most Juicy in exchange value be produced!

What is born from the foetus that grew in the divine womb is the new ahu, “state of existence” or “(new) life,” a fully grown living being with bones and life.

The introduction to the yasna

This purpose of the yasna is stated clearly in its introduction, which has the following elements:13

It begins with the “profession of faith,” the Frauuarâne, in which the sacrificer takes sides for Ahura Mazda and his creation against the daēuwas, or “old gods.” Then, three entities are introduced, for whose benefit the sacrifice is performed, namely, the two daily ratus of Hāuuani (“time of hauuana ‘haoma-pressing’,” preceding dawn), and that of Sāuuahgi (“time of sauuah ‘life-giving strength’,” following dawn), as well as the fire, son of Ahura Mazdā, that is, the sun. There follows the Frastuiiē “I say forth in praise,” in which the dichotomy of “praise” versus “blame” or “scorn” is established: by his good thoughts, etc., the sacrificer establishes good thoughts, etc., as praiseworthy, but bad thoughts, etc., as blameworthy and to be left behind. Then the Life-giving Immortals are specified as the recipients of the sacrifice, presented as a gift (fērā vō rāhī “I have now given you”) of the sacrificer’s own body and life breath; and there follows the praise of Order, the object of the sacrifice, and a list of entities for whose benefit the sacrifice is performed, all associated with the sun: Ahura Mazdā (father of the cosmic Order and the heavenly fire) and the Life-giving Immortals (his chil-

dren); Miθra (who prepares the path for the sun); peace with good pastures (the outcome of the sacrifice); the radiant sun, good Vaiiu (which the sun travels through); the fire, son of Ahura Mazdā; Mount Ušidarwâna “Crack of Dawn” (presumably the mountain out of which the sun reappears); and, finally, all the gods in the world of thought and that of living beings, as well as the fravashis of the upholders of Order (as birth assistants). Then the hope is expressed that, through the satisfaction of Ahura Mazdâ and the scorn of the Evil Spirit, “the most perfect ahu may be produced as a worthy exchange gift”; and, finally, the Ahuna vairiia prayer is recited for the victory of Ahura Mazdâ and the protection of his ordered cosmos.

We see that all these elements target the production of the new day, which is the rebirth of Ahura Mazdâ’s ordered cosmos.

The Zarathustra myth

In the cosmological myth, Zarathustra is born in order to perform the sacrifice in the world of living beings. According to the Gâthâs, he was chosen by Ahura Mazdâ to perform his sacrifice among mortals. In the only extended mythological passage of the Old Avesta, Yasna 29 (at the beginning of the Gâthâ collection, only preceded by an introduction), we find ourselves in the period after the first attack upon Ahura Mazdâ’s newly ordered cosmos. The situation of living beings is summed up in the plight of the cow that is caught in the clutches of the powers of evil, foremost of whom is Wrath. She is complaining to the inhabitants of paradise, who ask Ahura Mazdâ what he has in mind for the cow. The problem turns out to be the lack of a ratu, a prototype, for the cow, which would protect her and provide the model for a happy life for living beings. The solution is simple. Ahura Mazdâ points out that he already has the ingredients of the sacrifice and that all that is needed is someone who can take them down to the world of the living. It is pointed out that such a one exists, namely Zarathustra, who is there among them. He is ready to do what is needed, namely, sing songs of praise for Ahura Mazdâ and his companions:

Gâthâ 1, 29.8

aēm mōi idā vistō yō nō aēuuō sāsnā gūšatā
zarathuštīō spitāmō huuō nō mazdā vašīī ašāicā
carokērēthrā srāuuaiieyīhē ...
This one (here is the one) found by me who alone listens to our ordinances, / Zarathustra Spitama. For us, O All-knowing One, and for Order, he wishes / to make heard poems of praise...

Zarathustra then conquers the forces of evil by reciting the holy texts and performing the sacrifice and re-establishes Ahura Mazda’s rule in the worlds of gods and men, as told in the Avesta, where Zarathustra’s function as praise singer is often mentioned; according to the hymn to the fravashis, he was the first to praise Order and blame the old gods. Zarathustra’s activity, in turn, serves as a model for every human sacrificer also to praise and take sides for Ahura Mazda, but blame and cast aside the old gods: 14

Yt.13.89
yō paōiriirō stōīś astuuaidhiā stāot ašām nāist daēuuū
fraorēnata mazdaiāsnō zarathuštriś viđaēuūō ahura.īkaēśō
... he who was the first of the (temporal) existence with bones to praise Order and blame the old gods,
to choose to sacrifice to Ahura Mazda in the tradition of Zarathustra, discarding the old gods and holding the *teaching about(?) Ahura (Mazda).

Y.11.17
aibigairiirīā daithe viśpā humatācā hūxtācā huuarštācā
paītiriciiā daithe viśpā dušmatācā dužūxtācā dužuuarštācā
I determine as worthy of songs of praise all (thoughts, words, acts) well thought, spoken, performed.
I determine as worthy of being cast aside/left behind all (thoughts, words, acts) badly thought, spoken, performed.

Y.12.1
nāismī daēuuū
frauuarānē mazdaiāsnozaraθuštriś viđaēuūōahura.īkaēśō
stāotā aməšanəm spəntanəm yastā aməšanəm spəntanəm
I blame the old gods.
I choose to sacrifice to Ahura Mazda in the tradition of Zarathustra; to discard the old gods and hold the *teaching of Ahura (Mazda),

14. On the myth of Zarathustra, see also Skjærvø, “Zarathustra: First Poet-Sacrificer”; on the concepts of praise and blame, see Skjærvø, “Praise and Blame in the Avesta.”
(to be) a praiser of the life-giving immortal (gods), a sacrificer to the life-giving immortal (gods).

Two aspects of the birth of Zarathustra according to the myth must be emphasized: according to the Denkard, Zarathustra was incarnated in the world of living beings when his fravashi was sent down to earth and came to his parents via the haoma:

Dk.7.2.47

ān hōm ud pēm ka hagenēn gumēxt ud ī ohrmazd niwēyīd estad pōrusāsp dugdōw frāz xwarād. ud īdar hangerdīgīh ī būd xwarrah frawahr ud ītan gōhr ī zarduxšt andar 2 *pid

When that hōm and milk were mixed and it had been announced to Ohrmazd, (then) Pōrušāsp (and) Dugdōw drank it. And here the complete assembly of the fortune, fravashi, and body substance of Zarathustra (was) in his two parents.

Thus, both the fravashi and the haoma were crucial elements in the making of Zarathustra. Given the central functions of the haoma and the fravashis in the yasna, one of the effects of this sacrifice, as proposed by Marijan Molé, is therefore to re-engender Zarathustra in the persona of the current sacrificer. Note that the terms niwē- and hangerdēn- are the Pahlavi renderings of niuuaēšāia- and hankāratia- (on which see below), which shows that we are dealing with a (prototypical) sacrifice.

The myth of the fravashis

Let us therefore now turn to the myth of the fravashis. In Yašt 13, the fravashis are described as having assisted Ahura Mazda during the establishment of the cosmos and as having shown their paths to the heavenly waters, which they helped release:

Yr.13.1-2

mraot ahurō mazdā spitamāi zaraθuštrāī
aēuua tē zāuward aojasca x’arēnō auuasca rafnasca
framrāuwa ərzəzvō spitama

Ahura Mazda said to Spitama Zarathustra: So I shall proclaim to you, O upright Zarathustra, the power and strength, the munificence, the help and support of the fravashis of those who uphold Order, strong, unshakeable when they came to my help, when they brought me assistance, the strong fravashis of those who uphold Order. By their wealth and munificence I held out, O Zarathustra, yonder sky (which is) above, luminous and visible afar,

_Yt.13.53-54_

We sacrifice (to) the good life-giving fravashis of the upholders of Order, rich in life-giving strength, who show (their) beautiful paths to the waters established by (Ahura) Mazda, which before this stood set forth (in their places), (but) not (yet) flowing forth, in one and the same place for a very long time. But now those flow forth along the path established by (Ahura) Mazda.

They also act as birth assistants, notably of human children, when the constituents of the body are placed inside the “covering”:

_Yr.13.11_

By their wealth and munificence, I held out, O Zarathustra, the sons in the wombs, enclosed and not dying beforehand until the determined untying (of the bones),
I *assembled in the coverings *in right order the bones and the hairs, the *muscles, the intestines, the sinews and the limbs.

The word “covering” (viid-) has far-reaching implications: etymologically, it appears to mean something braided or woven, that is, a tissue or fabric serving as a covering, which, in the context of birth, is likely to refer to the amnion, or caul, which contains the foetus.

The word is also found in the context of the star Satauuaësa, who, released by the fravashis, pushes the heavenly waters through the viids, where the verb “release” (harz-) is that typically used of releasing male animals in to the flock of females (varșniharșta-), as well as of the release of semen (V.15.7):

Yt.13.43

tā harzēnti satauuaēsəm aŋtarə zəm asmanəmca
*fərat.əpəm18 zauanə.srūtəm tət.əpəm uəxiat.uruuarəm

They release Satauuaësa between heaven and earth, / who *fills the waters when hearing the invocation, who makes the waters fall, who makes the plants grow.

Yt.8.9

äat tə ãpō fraśāuuaiieiti *satauuaēsə auui *hapək.karšuuairīm <zəm>19
viiāhuua yat jasaiti srīrō

Thus Satauuaësa pushes those waters forward over the <earth> with its seven continents, / when he comes among the coverings, beautiful ...

The haoma, too, is associated with the rain myth, and the verb used for filtering the haoma is pairi.harz-, also from harz- “release”:21

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16. caia- “gather together” in groups or layers? – * r-ənt, put together and connected in rows?
18. The manuscripts have tat.əpə, but Yt. 10.61 has frat. in the same expression.
19. The manuscripts have sāta and karšuuairīš.
20. In India, the connection between the rains and the soma is trivial, as is that with dawn; see, e.g., Bergaigne, La religion védique d’après les hymnes du Rig-Veda, Paris, 1878-97 (repr. Paris, 1963), vol. II, §§ III-IV, pp. 30-42 (waters), 42-43 (dawn).
21. Yet another derivative is upa-harz- in upanharṣtaiaē “in order to let (the haomas) flow” in Vr.9.3. The same multiplicity of references is seen in Olnd. srj- “release.”
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Y.27.6

haoma pairi, harəšiiente
the haomas are about to be released through (the filter) ...

The earliest occurrence of the term viia- is in the third Gātha:

Gātha 3, 48.7

nī aēšəmō nī, diiātəm paii rəmən paii, siidədum
yōi ā vaŋhōūs manaŋhō diiðrəzō, diiδi / ašā viiqm ...

Let wrath be tied down! Cut back obstruction / you who wish to (stretch) hither (and) hold firmly the *covering of good thought / through Order! ...

Here, the action of stretching out the viia of good thought depends on that of tying down Wrath, which, in my opinion, is the principal representative of chaos and probably embodies the dark sky, while the “covering of good thought,” in this context, probably refers to the bright covering of the sky, as I have argued in a forthcoming work.

The more exact nature of the fravashis is revealed by a special formula applied only to them:

Y.17.18 (= Y.26.1, 59.18, 71.22)

ašāunqm vaŋ’hīš sūrā spəŋtā frauuaʃaiiō
staomi zbaiiemi ufiiemi yazamaide

The good, life-giving fravashis of the upholders of Order, rich in life-giving strength, I praise, I invoke, I weave. We offer (them) up in sacrifice ...

Here the verb ufiiemi literally means “to weave.” The only attestation of this verb outside of this formula is at the beginning of the first Gātha, where the sacrificer states his purpose to weave Ahura Mazda and his companions, presumably into a poetic web depicting their heroic deeds, as well as into the well-structured tissue from which the macrocosmic Order will be born:

22. Cf. the following Manichean passage from the hymn Sadwēs and Pēsūs (Boyce, “Sadwēs and Pēsūs,” BSOAS 13, 1951, p. 912): M741R (3) cyhrq sdwyys rwšn • nm’yd w hw ’smg ... (6) sfrysyd hw ’smg t’ryg... “Sadwēs shows (his/her) bright appearance to that Wrath ... that dark Wrath is shamed...”
Gāthā 1, 28.3

I who want to weave with Order you (all) and the good thought that had none before it, / as well as the All-knowing Lord, (into my poetic web)...

Thus, the function of the fravashis in the sacrifice, during which they are mentioned about 150 times, I think, is to help weave the micro- and macrocosmic tissues, through which they conduct the heavenly birth waters needed for the rebirth of the Ordered cosmos.

As for Zarathustra’s fravashi, it is invoked repeatedly throughout the first part of the yasna in connection with the haoma and the parahaoma, which shows that the link that we saw in the Denkard between haoma, fravashi, and Zarathustra is already Avestan:

Y.3.2

haoməmca para.haoməmca äiiese yeši xšnūmaine zarathuštrahe
spitāmahe ašaono frauwašiē

By (my) sacrifice, I muster the haoma and the parahaoma for winning the favor of the fravashi of Spitama Zarathustra, upholder of Order.

Y.6.18-19

haoməmca para.haoməmca yazamaide
zarathuštrahe spitāmahe iđa ašaono ašimca frauwašimca yazamaide

We sacrifice (to) the haoma and the parahaoma. / Here we sacrifice (to) Spitama Zarathustra’s, upholder of Order, reward and fravashi.

It is also invoked in a clear reference to Zarathustra’s first sacrifice in the world of living beings:

Y.16.2-3

zarathuštrahe ašaono frauwašiṁ yazamaide ... aŋhuiaos ašacinaŋhō
pauruuā dātā dāmaŋ ašaoniś dātušō ahurahe mazdā ... yazamaide

We sacrifice (to) the fravashi of Zarathustra, who upheld Order ... seeker of the (first) ahu, lover of Order.

We sacrifice (to) the Orderly creations established before (the others), (those) of Ahura Mazda, who has established (everything).

23. According to Boyce (“Frawardīn yaşt,” in Encyclopaedia Iranica X/2, New York, 2000, p. 198), “[n]o act of worship takes place, therefore, without their invocation,” and (p. 199): Yr.13 “is the most frequently recited, after that to Ohrmazd.”
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The yasna sacrifice, part 1

Let us now return to the progression of the yasna sacrifice to see how the sacrificer prepares the rebirth of the ordered cosmos.

To make his microcosmic representation of the divine ordering of the macrocosm,24 the sacrificer assembles the ratus – models or blueprints – of all the ingredients of the first creation. These actions are described by formulas25 that contain verbs in the present indicative in its performative function, used to describe the ongoing actions of the sacrificer. There are three types of actions:

1. the elements of the sacrifice are “introduced” by name and “presented to” the gods: niuuaēdaiiemi (Y.1) and auuaēdaiiamahl (Y.4);
2. the elements are ordered: haŋkāraiemi (Y.1), possibly referring to the elements being assembled while being counted in or accounted for; – ăiiese yešti “I am mustering by my sacrificing” (Y.2-3; also Y.14.3, Y.22, Y.23), with ăiise26 probably for ăiiasa- from the root yam “seize,” that is, “grasp firmly, attach”; – pairi.dadəmahī, literally “to place all around,” that is, in their specific places (Y.4); – ašaiia dadqmi “I am placing in Orderly fashion,” that is, to obtain a perfect order (Y.7); – and ratiș āstaiia “I am setting up (as) models,” i.e., in their places (Y.13);27
3. the elements are sacrificed (Y.6, etc.): by the verb, yaz-, which is ambiguous, as it can mean both “sacrifice something,” with the accusative of the direct object, and “sacrifice to somebody,” with the accusative of the goal of motion; thus, most of the ingredients of the sacrifice are obviously offered up in sacrifice, but the deities are most probably sacrificed to, and I think the main reference of the verb is to the action of actually sending the sacrifice on its way.

Interestingly, terms corresponding to ăiiese yešti and pairi.dā- are found in RV.10.130, a hymn in which the sacrifice is woven:

26. Suggested by comparison with ăiize from ăiiaza-; derivation from ăiiása- “to ask for,” is unlikely, since there is no other example of medial long a > e in this phonetic environment (the a needs to be followed by a nasal, e.g., hācaiiene < *-iiane).
27. Cf. Yt.10.89 yim zaotāram stāiata ahurō mazdā ašauwa āsu.yasvnom borzi.gādram “(Haoma) whom Orderly Ahura Mazdā installed as libator with fast(-speeding) sacrifice, with high(-reaching) songs.”
RV.10.130.1
yó yajñó viśvātas tāntubhis tatā ēkašatam devakarmēbhīr āyataḥ
imē vayanti pitāro yā āyayūḥ prá vayāpa vayēty āsate tāte
The sacrifice stretched out with threads in all directions, *attached
with (to?) a hundred and one divine actions, / these fathers are weav­
ing (it) who have come and are here. They sit by the stretched-out
(web), (saying): “Weave forth, weave back!”

RV.10.130.3
kāṣī pramā pratimā kim nīdānam ... paridhiḥ kā āsīt
... yād devā devām āyajanta viśve
What was the measure? What was the *pattern? What was the fasten­
ing thread. ... What was the *enclosure/frame... when all the gods
sacrificed the god?

It is therefore possible that the Avestan terminology refers to the orga­
nization of the various elements in the way a *loom is set up for weaving,
which agrees with the use of ufiia- “to weave” that we just discussed.

Thus, in these first chapters of the yasna, all the basic elements of the
ordered cosmos are named and put in place, in the same way that Ahu­
ra Mazda originally construed the cosmos by producing all its elements
and placing them in their appropriate places. Note especially that, in
Y.13.4 (with pairi.dā-), the sacrificer presents the life breath of his own
body to the Life-giving Immortals. This is naturally followed by a ref­
ference to the cosmogonic sacrifices of the two spirits and of Ahura
Mazdā and the promise to repay Ahura Mazdā for all the good things he
has given humans, and, in Y.13.7, the three fravashis crucial to the mak­
ing of the first ahu in the world of living beings are sacrificed (to): that
of the cow/bull, that of Gaiia Martān, and that of Zarathustra:

Y.13.4
pairi vā amasā spāntā huṣaṭhrā hudānhō dāqmi
tanuvascīt x’āxiā uṣtanom pairi vīspā hujītaiiō
iṭā mainiũū mamanāītē iṭā vaocātārī iṭā vaūmēraizātārē
I place all around for you, O Life-giving Immortals, who bestow
good command and give good gifts, / the life breath of my own body,
even, as well as all good gains. / Thus the two spirits have ever
thought, spoken, and performed.
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Y.13.7

gōušcā hudāŋhō gāiiexiiäcā marathō ašaonō frauwašim yazamaide
zarathustrahe spitāmahe iđa ašaonō aşimca frauwašimca yazamaide

We sacrifice (to) the fravashi of the cow giving good gifts and of Gai-
tia Martān, who upheld Order. / We sacrifice here (to) the reward and
fravashi of Spitama Zarathustra, who upheld Order.

The yasna sacrifice, part 2

After the sacrifice has been properly structured and its elements sacri-
ficed, its principal purpose is spelled out in Yasna 8: it is to make Ahu-
ra Mazda ruler of the cosmos. This is accompanied by the offering and
consumption of the sacrificial food, the miiazda, after which the sacri-
ficer expresses several wishes, namely, that Ahura Mazda may be in
command and that the waters may put the man who upholds order in
command, but the one possessed by the Lie out of command; that he,
the sacrificer himself, in the persona of Zarathustra, may induce all so-
cial leaders to accompany his daēnā; and that the entire ordered cos-
mos may be comfortable and free from oppression by the forces of
evil:

Y.8.5-6 (= Y.11.12, 22.3, 52.5, 60.8)

vasasca tū ahura mazda ustāca xšaēša hauuanām dāmanām
vasō āpō vasō uruuarā vasō višpa vohū aşaci thu
xšaiamnēm ašauauanēm dāiiata axšaiamnēm druuanēm
vasō.xšathī hiiāt ašauau auuasō.xšathī hiiāt druua
gatō hamīstō nižborātō haca spēntahe mainišṭuš dāmabīō
varōtō auuasō.xšathī

May you, O Ahura Mazda, have command at will and wish over your
own creations! / Place at will, O waters, at will, O plants, at will, O
all good (things) whose seed is from Order, / the upholder of Order in
command, the Lieful one out of command! / May the upholder of Or-
der have command at will! May the Lieful one not have command at
will! / (May he be) gone, discomfited, removed from the creations of
the Life-giving Spirit, / restrained, with no power at will.

Y.8.8

rauwasca x′āthrmca āfrīnāmi višpaiā ašaonō stōiš
azasca dužāthrmca āfrīnāmi višpaiā druuvatō stōiš
I invite free space and good breathing space of (= for) the entire (temporal) existence of the upholder of Order. / I invite narrowness and bad breathing space of (= for) the entire existence of the Lie.

This should probably be seen in connection with a myth found in the Pahlavi Rivayat, according to which Ohrmazd made food offerings (myazd) when he established the world of living beings, when he put the “soul” in Gayōmard (often identified with the Avestan “man who upholds Order”), when Zarathustra was born, and when Zarathustra received the dēn:

PR.16b.1-5
ka-m gehān dād ā-m mēzd-ēw bē kerd ka-m gyān ō gayōmard dād ā-m mēzd-ēw bē kerd ka-t dēn az man bē padērift ā-m mēzd-ēw bē kerd... čē paydāg kū mēzd-ēw pad sē mard ā-š bèwar frawahr ī ašō-ān bē awiš rasēnd zardwxšt ēn pursid az ohrmzd kū mēzd-ēw bē ō yazdān rasēd ā-š daxšag čē ud ohrmazd guft kū ēk daxšag ka wārān abāyēd andar mēzd wārān bawēd

When I established the world of living beings, I made a food offering. When I put the soul in Gayōmard, I made a food offering. When you, Zarathustra, were born, I made a food offering. When you received the dēn from me, I made a food offering. ...For it is revealed that, when one food offering is made by three men, then 10,000 fravashis of the orderly come to them. Zarathustra asked: “What is the sign that a food offering has reached the gods?” Ohrmazd said; “One sign is that, when rain is needed, there will be rain in one food offering.”

The hymn to Haoma then introduces the haoma and Zarathustra as sacrificer and is, logically, followed by the Frauwarāne, in which the sacrificer repeatedly states his side in the cosmic duality and his function as praiser and sacrificer in the tradition of Zarathustra:

Y.12.6
aḥā aṭā cōīt zarathuṣṭrō daēuuaīš sarēm viiāmrūuūīta viśpaēšū fraṃnaēšū viśpaēšū hanjamanaēšū

yāiš aparāsaētam mazdāsca zarathuṣtrasca
aḥā azāmcīt yō mazdaiasno zarathuṣtriš daēuuaīš sarωm vīmruīē
yātha anāiš viāmruuītā yō aśauua zarathuṣtro

And thus, again and again, Zarathustra would forswear the company
with the old gods,
in all the conversations, in all the meetings
in which they discussed, (Ahura) Mazdā and Zarathustra.
And thus do I, too, as a Mazdaiasni in the tradition of Zarathustra,
(herewith) forswear the company with the old gods,
like he would forswear them, Zarathustra, upholder of Order.

The first litany focused on the fravashis is Yasna 23, which opens with
the fravashis’ cosmogonic functions; then the haoma plants and the oth-
er ingredients of the sacrifice are presented to Ahura Mazdā; still more
fravashis are listed, while the preparation of the haoma sacrifice contin-
ues with new references to the sun, as well as a strophe dedicated to the
good Vaiiu, straightest Cistā, and the Mazdayasnian Daēnā:29

Y.25.5
vaēm ašauuanām yazamaide
vaēm uparō.kaηīm yazamaide taradātām aniiāiš dāmān
aētat te vaiio yazamaide yat te asti spantō.mainiaom
razištām cisṭām mazdāśtām ašaonīm yazamaide
daēnām vaṇ’hīm māzdaiasnim yazamaide

We sacrifice to Vaiiu, upholder of Order.
We sacrifice to Vaiiu, whose work is above, set beyond the other cre-
ations –
to this of yours we sacrifice, O Vaiiu, which you have of the Life-giv-
ing Spirit.
We sacrifice to straightest Cistā, upholder of Order, established by
Ahura Mazdā.
We sacrifice to the good Daēnā of those who sacrifice to Ahura
Mazdā.

We are, in fact, approaching the core of the yasna sacrifice, which is the
recitation and sending off of the Old Avestan texts. Since the new ahu is
not yet born, the sacrifice has to travel through the spaces currently oc-

29. Vaiiu had already been invoked in similar terms in Y.0.9 and Y.22.24 in conjunction
with the sun.
cupied by darkness, that is, the dark Vaiiu, where it needs the guidance of Cistä and the Daënä.

The principal invocation of the fravashis in the Yasna comes in Y.26 (repeated in Y.59), from which note the following passage, which refers to the constituents of the human person and to the first and last sacrificers in the world of living beings:

Y.26.4-5 (= Y.59.21-22)

\[
\text{iöa } ašaonqm \text{ ašaoninqmca ahümca daënqmca baoðasca uruùanqmca frauuašिमca yazamaide}
\]

\[
yöi ašäi vaonarə
gōuš hudâŋhō uruùanəm yazamaide
\]

\[
yöi ašäi vaonarə
gaiiehe marødənō ašaonō frauuašिम yazamaide
\]

\[
zaraðuštrahe spitaмаhe iđa ašaonō aśिमca frauuašिमca yazamaide
\]

\[
kauuöis vištāspahe ašaonō frauuašिम yazamaide
\]

\[
isaţ.vāstrahe zaraðuštroīś ašaonō frauuašिम yazamaide
\]

Here we sacrifice – of the male and female upholders of Order – the ahu, the vison-soul, the consciousness, the breath-soul, and the fravashi, (of those) who have ever won for Order.

We sacrifice the breath-soul of the cow that gives good gifts.

(We sacrifice the fravashis of the following ones) who have ever won for Order:

We sacrifice (to) the fravashi of Gaiia Martān, who upheld Order.

We sacrifice (to) the reward and fravashi of Spitama Zarathustra, who upheld Order.

We sacrifice (to) the fravashi of Kauui Vištāspa.

We sacrifice (to) the fravashi of Isaţ.vastra the Zarathustra-son.

Yasna 27, which follows, introduces the Old Avesta. Yasna 27 begins with a text to eliminate the forces of evil and to make prosper the life-giving deities:

Y.27.1-2

\[
aētāt \text{ dim vispanqm mazištəm dazdiīāi}
\]

\[
ahümca ratümca yim ahurəm mazdaqm
\]

\[
snaðāi an̄rahe mainiśūs druuaätō snaðāi aēšmahe xruui.draoš
\]

\[
fradaðāi ahurahe mazdā raēwaatō x'arənaţ'hatō
\]

\[
fradaðāi aməšanqm spəntanqm
\]
fradaśāī tiṣṭriieheca stārō raēuuatō xvarṇenaj'hatō
fradaśāī nārś ašaono
fradaśāī viśpanqm spṇtahe maṁiiḥuš dāmanqm ašaonqm

This (we do?), for him to be established
as the greatest ahu of all and (its) ratu: Ahura Mazda,
for the striking of the Lieful Evil Spirit, for the striking of Wrath with
the bloody club,
for the furthering of Ahura Mazdā, wealthy and munificent,
for the furthering of the Life-giving Immortals,
for the furthering of the star Tiṣṭriia, wealthy and munificent,
for the furthering of the Man upholding Order,
for the furthering of all of the Life-giving Spirit’s Orderly creations.

Then, the haoma plants are strained and the parahaoma mixture of hao-
ma, milk, and water is prepared. Also, the role of the haoma is stated
explicitly: it is the haomas that put Ahura Mazdā back in command and
provide the basic pattern for the ordered cosmos:

Y.27.6

haoma pairi.harāsiieṇte mazda.xšaṭra aša.ratuuō
vaṇḥuš sraośo yō ašahe hacaite mazonaiia
hōca iḍa yōiṭṣa astu

The haomas are about to be filtered, containing the (royal) command
of (Ahura) Mazdā, containing the models of Order. / Good Sraoša,
who is followed by *Aṣi who bestows riches [cf. Y.43.12] – / let him
too have taken up his position here.

Yasna 27 also contains the three most powerful Zoroastrian prayers, in-
cluding the Ahuna Vairiia, by means of which Ahura Mazdā and
Zarathustra overcame the Evil Spirit.

With the recitation of Y.27, all the ingredients – the haoma, the plant,
the milk, the water, and the barsom – have been assembled for the re-
birth of Zarathustra, and the Old Avestan texts, which now follow, con-
clude with the praise of Zarathustra’s successful sacrifice, dire curses
against the forces of evil, and a prayer to divine Airiiaman to come and
heal the world, as he does in the conclusion of the Videvdad.
The Avestan Yasna: Ritual and Myth

The *yasna* sacrifice, part 3

The *Gāthās*, having been recited, are now on their way up to Ahura Mazda, carrying with them all the elements of the new living entity to be born and providing protection:

**Y.55.1-2**

\[
\text{viśpā gaēðāsca tanuuasca azdēbīscu uštānasca}
\]

\[
kōhrpasca tōuíšiscu baoðascu uruuānēmca frauuāšūmca
\]

\[
pairica dadōmahī āca vaēdaiaiamahī
\]

\[
āaat dīs āuuaēdaiaiamahī gāðābīsīō spēntābīsīō ratuṣṣaθrābīsīō aṣaonībīsīō
\]

\[
yā nó hōntī gāðā harēθrāuwaitīsca pāθrāuwaitīsca mainiūs.x'arēθāsca
\]

\[
yā nó hōntī uruṇe uuāēm x'arēθōmca vastrōmca
\]

\[
tā nó hōntī gāðā harēθrāuwaitīsca pāθrāuwaitīsca mainiūs.x'arēθāsca
\]

\[
tā nó hōntī uruṇe uuāēm x'arēθōmca vastrōmca
\]

\[
tā nó buuiq̥ humiže as.mīzdā aš.mīzdā aṣo.mīzdā
\]

\[
parō.asnāi ay'he pasca astasca baoðaŋhasca vi.uruuāštīm
\]

All (our) livestock(?) and bodies and bones and life breaths and forms and strengths and (our) consciousness and breath-soul and fravashi we place all around and make them known. / Then we make them known to the life-giving *Gāthās*, upholders of Order, whose command is according to the models. / The songs which are our guardians and protectors and food in the world of thought, / which are for our breath-soul both food and clothing, / those songs are for us the guardians and protectors and food in the world of thought, / those are for our breath-soul both food and clothing. / May they bring us good rewards, great rewards, the reward of Order, / for a new *ahu* in days to come, after the wrenching apart of bone(s) and consciousness!

There follows an invocation of Sraoša and a long hymn to him. The implication is clear: for the holy texts and the sacrifice to pass through the intermediate space, currently occupied by the forces of darkness, Sraoša is needed. This deity, who is said not to have slept since the creation, protects the world of the living against the forces of evil:

**Y.57.17**

\[
yō nóit pascaēta huš'afa yat mainiīu dāmān dāidītem
\]

\[
yasca spēntō mainiīuš yasca aŋrō
\]

who has never slept since the two spirits established their creations: the Life-giving Spirit and the Evil one.
He is therefore, next after Ahura Mazda himself, the obstruction-smasher, varəθrajan-, par excellence, as already implied in the Gāthās:

Gāthā 2, 44.16

I am asking you this: tell me straight, O Lord! / Who (is) the obstruction-smasher (fit) to protect by your announcement (all those) who are? / Let brilliant (assistance/gifts?) be given to me! Assign, O healer of the ahu, (him as?) the model (protector?)! / Thus, let Sraoṣa (readiness to listen) come to him on account of (my/his) good thought, / O All-knowing One, to him, to whomever you wish!

He smashes Wrath and the other forces of darkness, pitting his own fearless cudgel (darši.dru-) against the bloody cudgel (xruui.dru-) of Wrath, dealing him wounds that make him bleed in return for the bloody destruction he has wrought upon Ahura Mazda’s cosmos:

Y.57.10

who timbers the strong home of the poor man and woman / after the sun has set, / who, with (his) stunning weapon, strikes Wrath (inflicting it) a bloody wound.

But Sraoṣa (“listening”) was also the first sacrificer in the world of thought to sacrifice to Ahura Mazda; he was the first to sing (“make heard”) the five songs of Zarathustra; and he used the holy words as weapons:

Y.57.2

We sacrifice to Sraoṣa of the Rewards ... who, as the first of Mazda’s creation, / at the barsom spread out, sacrificed to Ahura Mazda.
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Y.57.8
yō paoiriīō gādhā frasrāuwaiaitaḥ yā paṇca spitāmahe ašaonō zarāthuśtrahe
who was the first to make heard the Gādhās, the five of Spitama Zarathustra, who upheld Order.

The hymn to Sraoša therefore also recalls his primordial acts, now repeated by the current sacrificer.

As the yasna approaches its end, the words and actions become increasingly aggressive, and numerous spells are invoked against the powers of darkness.

There follows the principal prayer to the fire, son of Ahura Mazda, with requests for rewards, and the principal libation of the waters. Thus, the intention of the sacrifice becomes increasingly clear: it is the release of the birth waters, the delivery of the cosmic foetus, and the birth of the new ahu, the cosmic Order that contains the heavenly fire, the sun.30

Y.65 contains a long hymn to the waters, which is directly followed by a request for the fravashis to come, apparently in their function as conveyors of the birth waters (Y.65.6).

Toward the end of the yasna, the invocations become gradually stronger, and there is an accumulation of expressions referring to life and growth, on one hand, and to the removal of evil and darkness, on the other hand:

Y.71.17
varəzəmcə haomananəŋəmcə yazamaide
haomananəŋəmcə varəzəmcə yazamaide
paitišṭātē təmaŋəqəm paitišṭātē *xšiiasca amiiawnaiəscə
dasuwarəca baēzaŋəmcə yazamaide
fradaŋəmcə varədaŋəmcə yazamaide
paitišṭātē axtinəqmcə astarəmanəmcə

We sacrifice the invigorant and the possession of good thought.
We sacrifice the possession of good thought and the invigorant, for withstanding darkness, for withstanding weeping and *illness.
And we sacrifice *fitness and healing, and we sacrifice furthering and growth for withstanding agues and *paralyses.

30. Compare the combination Ahura Mazdā, Anāhītā, Miθra in the late Achaemenid inscriptions and in the Sasanian period. In a relief at Tāq-e Bostān, Mihr is standing on a lotus leaf, symbolizing his rebirth from the waters.
The prayer from Y.8 that Ahura Mazdā may be in command is repeated, as well as a prayer to see god through Order, his newborn child:

\[ Y.71.30 \ (= \ Y.60.12) \]
\[ a\breve{\text{a}} \text{ vahi\breve{\text{a}}\text{sta } a\breve{\text{a}} \text{ sra\breve{\text{e}}\text{sta } dar\breve{\text{e}}\text{s\breve{\text{a}}\text{ma } \theta\breve{\text{b}}\breve{\text{a}}} \}
pairi \theta\breve{\text{b}}\breve{\text{a}} \text{ jamii\breve{\text{a}}\text{ma } hamom } \theta\breve{\text{b}}\breve{\text{a}} \text{ ham}\breve{\text{a}} \]

Shall we see you (Ahura Mazdā), through best Order, through most beautiful Order? / May we circumambulate you! (May we come) to share company with you

The Yasna comes to a close with the re-establishment of the sovereignty of Ahura Mazdā in the re-Ordered cosmos and the guidance of Zarathustra in the world of the living (Y.71.28).

The Ahuna Vairiia and the other holy prayers are then set in motion between earth and heaven for a last time to remove whatever evil and darkness still remains:

\[ Y.72.1 \ (= \ Y.61.1) \]
\[ ahun\breve{\text{om}}\breve{\text{c}}\text{a vairim } \text{fra\breve{\text{e}}\breve{\text{ii\breve{\text{a}}\breve{\text{m}}}}\text{ahi antar\breve{\text{ro}}\text{ca } zqm } \text{antar\breve{\text{ro}}\text{ca asmanom}} \]
\[ a\breve{\text{zom}}\text{ca vahi\breve{\text{stom}} } \text{fra\breve{\text{e}}\breve{\text{ii\breve{\text{a}}\breve{\text{m}}}}\text{ahi antar\breve{\text{ro}}\text{ca } zqm } \text{antar\breve{\text{ro}}\text{ca asmanom}} ... \]

We send forth the Ahuna Vairiia between heaven and earth, and we send forth the A\breve{\text{zom}} Vohu between heaven and earth...

Power and strength for Ahura Mazdā is once more invited. Again, all the divine aids of the sun are invoked, as well as the sun itself, the fire of Ahura Mazdā, and the fravashis of the upholders of Order; the victorious powers, peace with good pastures, the good Vaiiu, and, finally, the firmament and endless and limited time, crucial elements of Ahura Mazdā's creation, which has now been re-established with the help of the sacrifice:

\[ Y.72.9-10 \]
\[ jasa \breve{\text{m}}\text{e auui\breve{\text{aj}}\text{he mazda amahe hut\breve{\text{a}}\breve{\text{st}}\breve{\text{ahe hurao\breve{\text{d}}\breve{\text{a}}\text{he}}}} \]
\[ vor\breve{\text{h}}\breve{\text{ray}}\breve{\text{nahe ahura\breve{\text{d}}\breve{\text{a}}\text{tahe}}}} \]
\[ vanain\breve{\text{t}}\breve{\text{ii\breve{\text{a}}\breve{\text{d}}\breve{\text{sca } uparat\breve{\text{t}}\breve{\text{to } r\breve{\text{aman}}\text{acscx'v\breve{\text{o}}\breve{\text{hrahe}}}}}} \]
\[ vai\breve{\text{i}}\breve{\text{ao\breve{\text{s}} } upar.\text{ka iriiehe tarad\breve{\text{ato } anii\breve{\text{ii}}\breve{\text{is damaq}}}} \]
\[ a\breve{\text{eta}}t \breve{\text{t}}\text{e vaii\breve{\text{io } yat t\breve{\text{e asti sp\breve{\text{ento } mainiiaom}}}} \]
\[ \theta\breve{\text{ba\breve{\text{sahe x'ad\breve{\text{atahe zruu\breve{\text{a}}\breve{\text{nahe akara\breve{\text{nahe}}}}}}}} \]
\[ zruu\breve{\text{a}}\breve{\text{nahe dar\breve{\text{yro.x'ad\breve{\text{atahe}}}}}} \]

Come to my help, O Mazdā,
(for the help of?) the well-fashioned, well-shaped Force, the obstruction-smashing Strength established by Ahura Mazdā, the victorious Superiority, peace with good pastures, Vaiiu, whose work is above, set beyond the other creations, this of yours, O Vaiiu, which you have of the Life-giving Spirit, of the speedy one (the firmament), which has its own law, of boundless time (and) of time which long has its own law.

We have seen a number of myths in this survey, of which the following were the most important: 1. the creation myth, involving Ahura Mazdā’s sacrifice by which the cosmos was brought into being and ordered; 2. the myth of Zarathustra as the first human sacrificer to re-perform the primordial sacrifice and re-order the cosmos after the attack of the Lie, which plunged it back into chaos; 3. the myth of the fravashis as assistants in the cosmogony; 4. Sraoša’s battle with Wrath, representative of darkness and chaos; and 5. the myth of the gift exchange, which links the human and divine spheres and by which humans aid the gods by reinvigorating them, returning them to power, and enabling them to overcome the powers of evil and chaos.

This brief overview obviously does not address all issues in the Yasna, not even all issues associated with the topics and texts mentioned here, but the interaction between myth and ritual is clear and warrants further study.

About *spəntō.təma*- and *spəništa*-
A few remarks on the concept of *mainiiu*-

*Antonio Panaino*

**Summary**

The present contribution deals with: 1) the distribution in Old and Later Avestan of two superlative stems, *spəntō.təma*- and *spəništa*--; 2) their relevance in the system of relationships between Ahura Mazda and Spənta Mainyu through their evolution in the Avestan religious system; 3) the interpretation of the L.Av. vocative sequence *ahura mazda mainiiō spəništa dātara* ... of Yt. 1.1., Y. 19,1 etc.; 4) the presence of *spəništa*- in the peculiar passage of Yt. 11, 14.

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The distribution of two superlatives of *spənta*- “beneficent”,1 *spəntō.təma*- and *spəništa*-, the former directly built on the positive stem, the latter on the root in the full grade,2 requires careful examination, for it may shed some light on the system of relationships between Ahura Mazda and the concept of *mainiiu*-, in particular with regard to the function and identity of Spənta Mainyu.

*spəntō.təma*- is in fact used exclusively to refer to Ahura Mazda. Two occurrences are found in Old Avestan: Y. 45, 5 and Y. 37, 3.

In Y. 45, 5, *spəntō.təma*- clearly refers to Ahura Mazda, as we can see:

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“I shall proclaim (the word) that the Most Beneficent One told me, the word that (is) the best to be listened to by my mortals, who show obedience to him and respect, and they attain integrity and immortality through the actions of the Good Spirit, i.e. the word Mazda Ahura”.

In the Yasna Haptaqhâiti (Y. 37, 3) *spântô.tamô* is apparently used as one of the names of Ahura Mazdâ:

\[ tôm aț āhûriiâ námôni mazdâ varâ spântô.tamô yazamâidê \]

“We worship him (invoking him) with (the) name belonging to a lord (ahura-): Mazdâ, dear, and most beneficent!”

Following this tradition, *spântô.tamô* is again mentioned in the list of names given to the supreme god in Yt. 1, 12, in the sentence: *maini-iušca ahmi spântô.tamô* (Pahl. tr. *mênôgân ham abzônïgtom*) “I am also the most Beneficial spirit”. This late list thus appears to support the original interpretation of the Old Avestan passage in Y. 37, 3, given by Kellens and Pirart, who believe that *spântô.tamô* was used there as a denomination of Ahura Mazdâ. It confirms Kellens and Pirart’s (1990: 318) statement that such a superlative, in Old Avestan, “paraît réservé à Ahura Mazdâ”, a conclusion from which we need only remove the conditional mood. It should also be noted that *spânah-*, n. “beneficence” or “sanctity” (Pahl. tr. *abzônîg* “increaser, bountiful”) is the tenth name in the first list of names of Ahura Mazdâ referred to in Yt. 1, 8, while

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5. I assume that here *āhuiriiâ* is an instr. sg. in agreement with *nâmôni*, taken as an instr. sg. (cf. Bartholomae, 1904: 346; 1063); see Kellens – Pirart, 1988: 136; 1991: 141. On the other hand, if *nâmôni* is an acc. pl. we should translate “We offer in sacrifice to him (his) Ahurian names (...),” i.e. with a double accusative governed by *yaz-;* see in particular the article of P.O. Skjærvø (“The Avestan Yasna: Ritual and Myth”) to be published in the proceedings of this Symposium; cf. also Narten, 1986: 42; Humbach, 1991, 1: 146. The Pahlavi version translates *spântô.tamô* as *abzônîgîh*.
spananjang-haht- “beneficent, holy, energetic” (Pahl. tr. abzäyênidär “the multiplier”) is the eleventh.

In the Later Avesta the use of spântó.têma- is restricted to references to Ahura Mazda. We can quote the unique example of Y. 1, 1, where the supreme god is referred to as mainiu- spântó.têma-:

niuwaëðaiemi hañkâraraiemi daðuŝô ahûrahe mazdâ ... yô nô dada yô tataša yô tuðruîiè yô mainiuš spântó.têmô “I invite (you to look down at the yasna and to take part in it), I entirely celebrate (the yasna-, i.e. from the beginning to the end) for the creator Ahura Mazda ... who has created us, who has fashioned us, who has nurtured us, he who is the most Beneficent Spirit.”

Apparently, then, in both the Old and Later Avesta spântó.têma- is used only to refer to Ahura Mazda. In the Pahlavi versions it can be translated as: abzônîgtom or (only once; Y. 37, 3) abzônîgîh.

It is probable that the superlative spântó.têma- originates in the attempt, seen already in Old Avestan, to emphasize the special nature of Ahura Mazda as the one who possesses the quality of being spânta- in the highest degree, i.e. as an “absolute superlative”, while, as we will see, spâništâ- corresponds, at least originally, to a so-called “relative superlative” (i.e. the most spânta- among those who possess such a quality).

spâništâ-

The use of spâništâ- in the Old Avesta is very interesting. Here, among nine occurrences, eight refer to the stem mainiu-, the only exception being attested in Y. 53, 3, where spâništâ- can be instr. sg. m./n. or acc. pl. n.

In Y. 30, 5, mainiuš spâništô (Pahl. ahläyîh mênôg abzônîg ohrmazd) clearly refers to one of the two primordial Mainyus

11. See Panaino, 2004: 53-54; cf. Darmesteter, 1892, I: 4-6. The Indo-Iranian background of this formula was already noticed by Hillebrandt, 1897: 11.
12. Translated into Pahlavi as kë az mênôgân abzônîgtom ohrmazd (Dhabhar, 1949: 5; Glossary, 13).
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(mainiuuā). In Y. 36, 3 (mainiuuš vōi ahiīā spōnīštō ahiī “you certainly are his most beneficent Mainyu”),\(^{13}\) the mainiuuš ... spōnīštō clearly belongs to Ahura Mazda. In Y. 43, 16 also, the sentence mainiuūm ... yastē ciścā spōnīštō \(^{14}\) (“your mainiuu- which is the most beneficent”) again refers to a mainiuu- that expressly (tē) belongs to Ahura Mazda and that has been chosen by Zarathustra. In Y. 36, 1 (θβά mainiuī spōnīštā)\(^{15}\) and Y. 43, 2 (θβά ... spōnīštā mainiuu)\(^{16}\) we find the same idea, because θβά without doubt refers to Ahura Mazda in these stanzas. On the other hand, while the use of spēntōtama- was exclusively confined to Ahura Mazda, and did not generally refer to one of his powers or (spiritual or/and physical) manifestations — in other words it is one of his most defining characteristics (see the L.Av. sequence mainiuu- spēntō.tama-) —, the mainiuu- spōnīšta- strictly depends on Ahura Mazda, but is not quite identical with him. The existence of a close link, but at the same time a distinction between Ahura Mazda and his Mainyu, can be clearly observed in the concurrence of two kinds of sequences with or without the pronominal adjective θβα- (referring to the highest god): spēntα θβά mainiuī in 43, 6\(^{17}\) and spēntα mainiuī in 44, 7,\(^{18}\) 45, 6;\(^{19}\) 47, 1,\(^{20}\) 5,\(^{21}\) 6.\(^{22}\)

In Y. 33, 12\(^{23}\) and Y. 51, 7,\(^{24}\) spōnīštā mainiuī (instr.) is again a manifestation of Ahura Mazda’s power, but does not refer to Ahura Mazda himself. In Y. 47, 2a\(^{25}\) the sequence ahiīā mainiuūš spōnīštahiiā vahištēm is a patent variatio of 47, 1a, spēntα mainiuī, vahištācā manājhā. This Mainyu is in any case identical with the one who is called spēntα- in other contexts, and only once (Y. 45, 2) also spōniiiah-(abzōnīgīh)\(^{26}\) probably because he is placed in direct and contrasting

\(^{13}\) ud pad mēnōgīh āgāh ast [ān-iš ast ī ka-š pad wārōnī bē niśnēnd] abzōnīg pad xwad (Dhabhar, 1949: 169).

\(^{14}\) abzōnīgīh (Dhabhar, 1949: 185).

\(^{15}\) pad ēd ī tō mēnōg abzōnīg (Dhabhar, 1949: 169).

\(^{16}\) abzōnīg mēnōg (Dhabhar, 1949: 179).

\(^{17}\) pad tō abzōnīg mēnōg (Dhabhar, 1949: 181).

\(^{18}\) abzōnīg mēnōg (Dhabhar, 1949: 188). On this passage see Kellens, 1995: 272, n. 3.

\(^{19}\) spēnāg mēnōg (Dhabhar, 1949: 196).

\(^{20}\) abzōnīg-mēnōgīh (Dhabhar, 1949: 207).

\(^{21}\) abzōnīg mēnōg (Dhabhar, 1949: 208).

\(^{22}\) abzōnīg mēnōg (ī ohrmazd) (Dhabhar, 1949: 208).

\(^{23}\) abzōnīg mēnōg (ī ohrmazd) (Dhabhar, 1949: 158).

\(^{24}\) abzōnīg mēnōg ohrmazd (Dhabhar, 1949: 224).

\(^{25}\) mēnōg abzōnīg (Dhabhar, 1949: 207); in Y. 47, 1: abzōnīg-mēnōgīh. In Y. 47, 3 we find mēnōg abzōnīgīh.

opposition to *angra-* (mainiiu-). Thus we have a special use of the two superlatives; *spənto.təma-* refers exclusively to Ahura Mazdā (in Old and Later Avestan), while *spənişta-* (in Old Avestan) is attributed to one of his powers which is given a distinct role, notwithstanding the different possible interpretations of the ontology of such a *mainiiu*.

What appears very odd, however, is that in the later Avesta we find a standard formula in which Zarathuṣtra calls Ahura Mazdā *mainiiu*-spənişta (and not *spənto.təma-* as we should expect). This usage is found, for instance, in Ohrmazd Yašt, 1, 1 or in Y. 19, 1:

Yt. 1, 1:

\[ pərəsat zarathuṣṭro ahurən mazdəm  
ahura mazda mainiiño spənişta  
dātarə gaêθanəm astuuaitinəm  
ašāum. \]

"Zarathuṣtra asked Ahura Mazdā:  
O Ahura Mazdā, most Beneficent spirit,  
creator of the material creatures!  
O righteous!"

Y. 19, 1:

\[ pərəsat zarathuṣṭro ahurən mazdəm ahura mazda mainiiño spənişta  
dātarə gaêθanəm astuuaitinəm ašāum. cić auuat vaco aš ahura maz-

da yat mē frāuuacō. \]

"Zarathuṣtra asked Ahura Mazdā: ‘O Ahura Mazdā, most Beneficent Spirit, creator of the material creatures! O righteous!’ Which was that word, O Ahura Mazdā, that you pronounced for me.”

The same sentence appears also in Yt. 14, 1 (etc.), in Vd. 2, 1 etc. (see Schlerath, 1968, II: 19). In addition, both Tistrya and Miūra talk with Ahura Mazdā using the same formula that was pronounced by Zarathuṣtra himself:

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Yt. 8, 10: tištïrim .. yazamaide yô aœxta ahurâi mazdâi uitiaojanô ahura mazda mainiiô spôniôta dôatarô gaëðhanaq astuwuitinaqom ašäum.

“We worship the star Tištîya ..., who spoke to Ahura Mazdâ, saying: O Ahura Mazdâ, most Beneficent Spirit, creator of the material creatures! O righteous!”

Yt. 10, 73: mîθrôm vouru gaœiicoitim ...

“(We worship) the grass-land magnate Mîôra who at times, with outstretched hands, joyfully raises (his) voice saying: «Ahura Mazdâ, most Beneficent Spirit, creator of the material creatures! O righteous!».”

Recently, in a short but seminal article (1995) J. Kellens (followed by de Vaan, 2003: 367-68) has remarked that the vocative occurrences of mainiiô spôniôta (said of Ahura Mazdâ) in all these Later Avestan passages do not seem to represent an original formula; in fact the reading mainiiu, i.e. instrumental (although this form is not the most frequently used), in the manuscript tradition suggests the direct continuity of an Old Avestan pattern, which is particularly striking because of the similarity to some Old Avestan formulae (like Y. 44, 7) that could have inspired those found in Later Avestan. Thus, if the original formula actually was ahura mazda "mainiiu spôniôta dôatarô... “O Ahura Mazdâ, creator through your most beneficent Mainyu...”, we face a number of problems, which Kellens lists, and which directly concern the restitution of the form mainiiu, its origin and relation with the “Stammhandschrift”. The concurrence of the vocative and the instrumental points to a double interpretation of the role of such a mainiiu- spôniôta-, the former (with the vocative mainiiô) identifying Spônta Mainyu with Ahura Mazdâ and the second (the instr. mainiiu), more conservatively, maintaining his independence from the highest god, as in Old Avestan. According to Kellens it is possible that “le sens d’une formule avestique peut être dynamique”, in other words, that it could have a double meaning. This then is a possible solution, but it leaves open many other prob-

lems, which Kellens himself raises. In fact, if the “correction” mainiiō was introduced in opposition to the version attested in the “Stammhandschrift”, but not later than the beginning of the second millennium A.D. (as Kellens, 1995: 274, underlines), it becomes impossible to explain its frequent occurrence in the mss or in the Pahlavi translations, which – although they seem to introduce into the commentary a distinction between mainiiō spōništā and the other vocatives (as Kellens, 1995: 273, rightly emphasizes) – do not support the presence of an instrumental in the formula.

In my opinion we should try to explain the data in a different way. We can without doubt assume that the formula originates in the Old Avesta, but this does not mean that it was impossible for the composers of the Later Avesta to adapt it according to their new religious ideas, in which Ahura Mazda tended to be identified with Spōta Mainyu. This would suggest that the origin of mainiiō was a relatively old one, although its real meaning was subjected to a conservative approach so that some scribes felt compelled sometimes to write the Old Avestan sequence mainiiū spōništā, which was very well known, instead of the more recent one mainiiō spōništā. The impact of the Old Avestan model on the reading mainiiū is also visible in the orthography; in fact, only in Yt. 8, 10 and 10, 73 does the codex F1 and the mss of this line give mainiiū, while the others, which have the instrumental, systematically give mainiiū, which is an Old Avestan orthographic form.

In addition I have some problems with assuming that the invention of the form mainiiō took place in a very late period. Kellens on the contrary suggests that mainiiō seems to be a peculiar form of vocative: we should normally expect *mainiuuō (< *manīāu), because nothing, Kellens argues, could justify the disappearance of -uu- (see, e.g., huxratuuō, ərdzuuō, rašnuuō). But this argument becomes compelling only if we strictly follow the standard explanation given by Hoffmann. But if we do not try to maintain that mainiiō is simply a later,
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mistaken rendering of mainiiu (and of O.Av. mainiiū), or that this kind of orthography was introduced later by somebody who knew Sanskrit, it becomes quite plausible that what we have here is an original phonetic evolution of final -au.

In fact, O.Av. mainiiuā, genitive dual, derives ultimately from *mainju'as (i.e. from a final sequence -juās), and if we start from a form like manjiāu, the expected evolution (according to Hoffmann's interpretation of the evolution of word-final *-au > *-auu > *-óu, with a metathesis of -óu > -uō, i.e. transcribed -uuō) would have been *maini'uuō, and then *mainiuuuō. But this "peculiar" evolution of final -au as -uuō was not as regular and standard in Avestan as we might expect, particularly in the case of the locative singular, where a final -ō can occur instead of the theoretically "expected" -uuō < -au.37 Thus the simple hypothesis that such a phenomenon was only dialectal38 would remove the a priori impossibility of a vocative like mainiid. On the other hand we should consider the recent remarks advanced by Beekes (1998), who seriously questions the validity of Hoffmann's explanation. In primis, he notes that "the weakest point in the supposed development is the metathesis -óu > -uō," a kind of evolution that actually seems very improbable.39 Thus, in the absence of other compelling evidence we have to suspect that the reading mainiiō, in the light of Ved. mānyo, is still quite regular, as in the matching case of vaiiō (the current vocative sg. of vaiiu-). Without embarking on a general discussion of the distribution of Av. -ō and -uuō, I would like to limit my considerations to the striking point, as independently noted by Beekes (1998: 10 n. 5), namely that final -au never evolved to -uuō after -i(-ii-) but always to -ō. This evolution should be compared with and strongly distinguished from the other cases where -au, preceded by a consonant, evolved to -uuō. For these reasons I do not think that mainiiō, as the other vocative forms like haomaiid or vaiiō, simply represents a sort of mirage linguistique.

37. See daśhō “in the land” (Vr. 12, 5; cf. Ved. dásyau) vs. daśhūuō, vaśtō “for desire” (Y. 60, 11; cf. Bartholomae, 1904: 1393), sāttō “in peace” (Y. 60, 11), haṛtō “at the bridge” (Vd. 19, 30), hantō “in prize” (Y. 68, 11 = 71, 29; cf. Ved. sānitau); cf. also the locative dual forms zastaiiō, ubōiiō and uuaiiō; see Hoffmann – Forssman, 1996: 69; Jackson, 1982: 79; Beekes, 1998: 9-10, n. 4, 10, n. 5; de Vaan, 2003: 366-70.
40. See Bartholomae, 1904: 1357-1358.
In addition we should emphasize that mainiiō must be considered a lectio difficilior, precisely because it is not based on an Old Avestan pattern and does not follow the orthographic rule of rendering final -au with -uuō.

Thus far in the discussion of this formula we have taken into consideration only mainiiō, but not spõništā. In fact, we should note that spõništā- was never directly attributed to Ahura Mazda in Old Avestan texts, while, e.g., in Vd. 18, 7 (paiti mām... pērēsāŋ'ha yīm dāduhāŋ'hom spõništōmc āvēdīštōmc... “ask me (i.e. Ahura Mazda), the generous, the most Beneficent and the wisest...”), spõništā- clearly refers to Ahura Mazda without the presence of the stem mainiiu-. This is certainly a minor point, but it shows that it was possible in Later Avestan to attribute such a stem to Ahura Mazda.

Thus, if mainiiō spõništā too can still be considered an epithet for Ahura Mazda, all the occurrences we have discussed above show that the Old Avestan distinction between Ahura Mazda as spõntō.tōma- and Spānta Mainyu as his Mainyu spõništā- (and not only spõnta- and spāniiah-) no longer applied in Later Avestan. It was apparently dissolved by the bold restriction of both the superlative stems, which became the special prerogatives of Ahura Mazda. Thus the formula mainiiō spõnista clearly attests to an absorption of the identity of Spānta Mainyu by Ahura Mazda.

If this account of the evolution is correct, it has two implications: firstly, the identification of Spānta Mainyu with Ahura Mazda and the progressive diminution and limitation of his functions, as attested in the Later Avesta, correspond to a process by which his very name was crystallized. Thus the order of the words used to denominate him became syntactically fixed and stereotyped. Evidence of this standardization can be found in the formation of compounds such as spõntō.mainiīu- (referring to dāman- in Vd. 13, 5), spõntō.mainiīauva- (said of dāman- Y. 1, 11; 3, 13; 7, 13; Vd. 3, 20; 13, 1;43 of the stars, Y. 1, 11;44

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42. Bartholomae, 1904: 1622. See the sequence vīspaṃqmc spōntahe mainiiūs dāmanqmc (e.g. in Y. 1, 16; 4, 21; 7, 18, etc; see Schlerath, 1968, II: 4). Pahl. tr. spępāg mēnōg dām (Anklesaria, 1949: 277).
43. spępāg mēnōg (dām or dāmān).
44. Bartholomae, 1904: 1622-1623; Pahl. tr. spępāg mēnōg.
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Yt. 12, 32) and spəntä.mainiiu- (referring generally to texts containing the mention of Späntä Mainyu). The sequence spəntä-mainiiu- occurs without inversions or variations as in the case of the name of Ahura Mazdā in the Later Avesta, while – on the contrary – we find more syntactical freedom in Old Avestan. This process actually modified the use of the superlative form spənișta-, which was strongly linked to Mainyu in Old Avestan literature. This link was not abolished, but, as we see as in Vd. 18, 7, through the identification of Spänta Mainyu with Ahura Mazdā spənișta- became another appellation for Ahura Mazdā, probably through a process in which the highest qualities were absorbed by the supreme god.

In particular we should note that in Later Avestan, apart from the case of Yt. 11, 14, which is peculiar (and will be discussed below), very few other divine beings were called spənișta-. These are:

1) the Fravašis (Yt. 13, 75: frauwašîš ... spəntä ... spənișta yazamaide “we worship the beneficent, most beneficent Fravašis”);
2) Rašnu (Yt. 12, 7: ... rašnuuô razișta rašnuuô spənișta rašnuuô vaë𝐝ișta ... “O straightest Rašnu, O most Beneficent Rašnu, O wisest Rašnu ...”, where the sequence reminds us of Vd. 18, 7: mqm ... yim daðauwyθêm spəniștemca vaëðiștemca“(ask) me (i.e. Ahura Mazdā) the generous, the most Beneficent and the most knowing);
3) one of the five sacred Fires (Y. 17, 11: aṭrəṃ spəniștem yazamaide “we worship the most beneficent Fire”), which according to the Pahlavi exegesis was the fire that burned in the presence of Ohrmazd.

Thus, while in the Old Avesta spənișta- was (with only one exception) used with close reference to mainiiu- as a syntactical alternative of spənta-, in the Later Avesta we find no evidence of this shift, while the special case of the sequence mainiiô spənișta, embedded in an invocation to the supreme God, confirms the identification of Spänta Mainyu with Ahura Mazdā. This points to a decline in the relative importance of

45. See Bartholomae, 1904: 1621-1622; Pahl. tr. in Nir. 50 and 102 spand-mên (Waag, 1941: 64; 100).
46. ātašì i abzənîg yazam.
47. Windischmann, 1863: 87-88; West. SBE V, 1880: 61-62, 184 and n. 3; Darmesteter, 1892, I: 155; Bartholomae, 1904: 1619; Anklesaria, 1956: 158-159 (Ir.Bd. XVIII, 5).
this Mainyu as an independent being, who is no longer called spənista-, but just spənta-. This evolution should be seen in connection with the different role of Spənta Mainyu in the Later Avesta, where the direct opposition to Aŋra Mainyu, already attested, becomes less important than in the Old Avestan literature. The direct opposition between Ahura Mazdā and Aŋra Mainyu that produced the standard dualistic antagonism of Pahlavi Literature, where Ohrmazd directly faced Ahreman (already evoked by Aristoteles in the Proemion, chapter 8, by Diogenes Laertius and by Plutarch in De Iside et Osiride, ch. 47), in fact evolved, as many scholars have underlined, through a sort of diminution or absorption of the proper functions of Spənta Mainyu, who was more and more frequently identified with Ahura Mazdā.

On this point, it is worth noting that the Pahlavi translations of the texts discussed in this article present us with the following pattern of distribution: in line with the corresponding passages in Old Avestan, spənta-mainiuu- is systematically translated as abzönig-mēnōg, while spēnāg mēnōg is an hapax in the Pahlavi Gāthās (it is attested only in Y. 45, 5); in translations from Later Avestan passages, spēnāg mēnōg is the current version.49 mainiuu- spēnīsṭa- or spēnīsṭa-mainiuu-, according to the changing Avestan word order, correspond to mēnōg abzōnīg or to abzōnīg-mēnōg(ih). Without any relation with mainiuu-, spēnīsṭa- can be translated as abzōnīg tom or, more commonly, abzōnīg.50 With regard to spənto.təma- which belongs exclusively to Ahura Mazdā, the Pahlavi versions, as already stated, show: abzōnīg tom or (only once in Y. 37, 3) abzōnīg(ih).

Appendix: The peculiar case of Yt. 11, 14

A peculiar and still unclear usage of spənīsṭa- in Later Avestan is attested in a curious passage of Yt. 11, 14, which in my opinion has not yet been clearly understood. The passage goes as follows:

sraošəm ... yazamaide yō äxšišca uruuaitišca drujō spasiša
spənīštahē ...

49. See also Jamasp, 1907: 216.
50. See also Jamasp, 1907: 48.
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This sentence presents us with a number of difficulties and the occurrence of *spənīštə*- in particular requires explanation. *spənīštə*- cannot be in agreement with *drujə*, because there are no other instances in which this epithet is used of a Daēvic force, and it seems that Sraosə should be considered as “he who looks at” (*spasıiō*, nom.m.sg. of *spasiiənt-*, perf.part.act. of *spas*) the treaties and truces of the Druj and another being simply evoked with the apparently obscure epithet *spənīštə*- As Darmesteter has already remarked (1892, II: 486), in this passage Sraosə appears to play the role of a supervisor of contracts, a role usually played by Miōra.

Unfortunately the Pahlavi commentary is of no help: srōš ahlāy ... yazēm, kē pad āštih [abāg dāmān] ud dōstīh ān ī druz pāsbānēnīn pāsbānēnēd “we worship Srōš ..., who in peace [with the creations] and friendship watches (carefully) over the Druz”.52

It is clear that the translator has completely misunderstood the value of *spasıiō spənīštə he*, which has been glossed with *pāsbānēnīn pāsbānēnēd*. Thus if we accept the traditional translation of this passage, where *spasıiō* is placed between the two terms of the opposition, *drujə* on the one hand and *spənīštə he* on the other one, we can render it as follows:

“We worship ... Sraosə, who is a seer of the treaties and truces53 between the Druj and *spənīštə*...”.

Thus we may deduce that the text refers to the primordial agreement between the Druj (or more probably Aŋra Mainyu) and Ahura Mazdā himself rather than Spənta Mainyu, because in Later Avestan *spənīštə*- works as an epithet for the highest god (and of a few other beings). In view of the pattern evinced by the formula *mainiīo spənīštə* and the tendency towards merging the identities of the two divine beings, it is clear that in this context “the most Beneficent (Spirit)” could be nobody else than Ahura Mazdā.

On the other hand we should note, and I thank my colleague P.O. Skjervø who attracted my attention to this problem, that the reading *spasiīo* is not very well supported,54 being attested only in Xorda Avesta

52. See Kanga, 1941: 43; Kreyenbroek, 1985: 64-65.
53. See in particular Schmidt, 1958: 137, 141.
About *spənto.təma*- and *spəništa*- and later mss such as K18.22, J16, M12, while F1 and PT1. E1. MB1. JM4 have *spaesō*, J10 *spaesō* and JM4 *spasō*. But if we amend the text to read *spasō*, i.e. with a gen. sg. of *spas*- “seer, spy”, a typical attribution of Miθra (and attested only in Yt. 10), we are compelled to assume that *drujo* and *spasō* form a unique compound *drujō.spasō* “he who is a Druj-watcher”. In this case we should also note that *āxštišca uruuaitišca* are both nom. sg. (and not accusatives pl.) in apposition with *yō* (i.e. with Sraoša) and that they govern the genetival sequence *drujō.spasō spəništahe*. Thus we could translate the passage as follows: “We worship ... Sraoša, who (is) both treaty and truce of the most beneficial Druj-watcher...”, i.e., interpreting the passage as a direct reference to Miθra, the *spas-* par excellence, who for the first time would also then be referred to as *spəništa*.

I confess that I still hesitate to consider this translation definitive, because the passage, as Bartholomae has already underlined, is limited and with no fitting parallel. The syntax and grammar are also peculiar, for instance in the apposition of two abstract stems with *sraošem ... yō*, or in the formation of a compound *drujō.spas-*, which would be unique in Avestan both with *drujō*° as first member, and unique with °*spas-* as the second one. The occurrence of *spəništa*- as an epithet for Miθra presents us with another problem that cannot be answered sine ulla dubitatione. On the contrary, the traditional reading *spasiō*, although problematic, is not without credibility, being both grammatically supported and plausible, and attested in mss. based on a strong oral tradition. Only Jm4 with *spasō*, supports this hypothetical reading, but this is not a perfect manuscript, while F1. PT1. E1. MB1. JM4 with *spaesō* and J10 with *spaesō* and in particular L12 with *spaisō* can be considered corruptions of *spasiō*, where the *-ii-* was lost or miswritten through a metathesis (*spasiō > spaisō / spaisō*, re-analyzed as *spaesō* or *spaesō*). Thus we can suspect that this too is a case where we have to say that recentiores non deteriores.

56. See Duchesne-Guillemin, 1936: 245.
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The mythic theme of the great winter in ancient Iranian traditions

Anders Hultgård

Introduction

The Zoroastrian doctrine of the coming saviours and future world history, as transmitted by the Pahlavi texts, reports for the millenium of Hušēdar the appearance of an evil figure called Malkūs or Markūs¹, who brings with him a terrible period of rain and snow. Humans and animals will die in large numbers, but after this calamity, the shelter (Avestan vara-, MIR.war) built by Yam (the Avestan Yima) will be opened and life will reappear. In the presentation of the myth several differences can be observed among the Pahlavi texts, both in detail and viewpoints. The affinity with the myth of Yima and his vara told in Vidēvdād chapter 2 is apparent, and the Pahlavi texts obviously made use of it, but they seem to draw upon additional sources. Scholars generally treat the Vidēvdād myth of the great winter and the Malkūsān winter of the Pahlavi accounts as only variants of one and the same story. This view is here challenged. The relationship between the Avestan myth in Vidēvdād and the Pahlavi tradition, on one hand, and between the Pahlavi texts, on the other, suggest a more complex relationship than generally assumed. Questions also arise concerning the meaning and character of the Avestan myth of the destructive winter(s) and the vara of Yima, as well as its relationship with similar myths in other cultures.

¹. The Pahlavi word mlkws can be transcribed as malkūs (malkōs) or markūs (markōs). In the following the form malkūs will be used.
The Pahlavi tradition

The mythic theme of Malküs and his rain appears well established in the Pahlavi tradition, since it occurs in almost all descriptions of the great eschatological scheme. Let us begin with looking closer at the forms and variants in which the myth has been transmitted. As to the term used to denote the calamity itself, there is some variation in the tradition. Mostly the word wârân “rain” is used (so Pahlavi Rivâyat, Dâdestân î Dênîg, Bundahišn, Mênôg î Xrad), whereas the Dēnkard and the Ayādgar î Jâmâspīg speak about zamestân “winter”. Irrespective of “rain” or “winter” the event is described in terms of a cold winter with abundant snow-falls and tradition refers to it by connecting it with the demon Malküs but using the form malkûsân “brought about by the dēv Markûs”. The wârân or zamestân î malkûsân thus appears as a kind of technical term. It may be that malkûsân is nothing else than an attribute meaning “destructive” to denote the character of that winter which secondarily has been connected with a demon bearing the same name. A demon named mahrkusâ- “the destroyer” (Air W 1147) is once attested in an Avestan text (Fragm. Westergaard 8) in an obscure context, but there seem to be no convincing reasons for denying an Avestan tradition on this daevic being. Some passages in the Pahlavi tradition referring to earlier sources associate Alexander with the “destructive Malkûs”. When dealing with the history of the Avesta, the Dēnkard Book V (text in Nyberg 1964 p.110,13) gives the epithet zadâr malkûs to Alexander. Conversely, the association of Malkûs with Alexander has inspired the comparison of the evils brought by Alexander on Persia with the damage of the winter, presumably not any winter, but the great mythic winter (Dēnkard VII,7,7).

How is the devastating winter of Malkûs described in the different Pahlavi versions? The most detailed accounts are given by the Pahlavi Rivâyat and the Dēnkard Book seven. The Dēnkard version (Dk VII,9) is a summary in the form of headings of what will happen in the 5th cent. of Hušêdar’s millenium. Appearance for seven years of Malkûs who is qualified as a jâdüg “sorcerer”, coming of the “malkûsân” winter, rasištîn î malkûsân zamestân which during three successive winters causes the destruction of most humans and animals abesîhîn î frahist mardôm (ud) gôspand andar sê zamestân, and so also during a fourth

The mythic theme of the great winter in ancient Iranian traditions

severe winter, andar-iz ān ē ćaharom pad șkēštīh ān zamestān. This fourth winter sees the swift extermination of Malkūs’ progeny who himself has continued with his sorcery. This is attributed to the prayers of the virtuous, dahmān āfrīn, or to a figure named Dahmān Afrīn4. Then follows the opening of Yima’s “enclosure” ahumbīsīn ē yam-kard war. Humans and cattle will abound, there will be prosperity in the world and all humankind will flourish, xwedīh ē hamīstag mardōm (Denkard VII,9,3-4). In this connection the compiler also notes that the winter has been called “the one that disperses and destroys”, guft kū wistarag ud murnīnīdār5, probably referring here to a variant tradition (9,7).

The Pahlavi Rivāyat 48,10-18 places the appearance of the Malkūsān rain after 400 years (pad 400 sāl)6 from the beginning of Hušēdar’s millennium and adds before the description of the winter proper a short story build on the scheme of a widespread folklore motif structure. When the rain is about to come the upholders of the religion, dēn burdārān, instruct the people to store provisions “for there will be rain”, cē wārān bawēd, provisions are stored but no rain will come in that year (ān sāl) The procedure is repeated for the three following years and still there will be no rain. For ten years (“winters”, zamestān) the provisions they have stored are not required and people stop storing provisions. Then the rain comes and it pours down for three years with less and less interruptions.7 In the fourth year – the exact date is given (month of Hordād, day of Dai-pad-Mihr) – snow (wafr) begins to fall and it will not stop even for a little time. The text that immediately follows appears to be incomplete, since it continues directly with the phrase “and then the Mazda-worshippers will curse

4. So Mole 1967 p.93, Williams II p. 231. I prefer with Cereti 1995 p. 65 the interpretation “the prayers of the pious”.
5. The manuscript clearly has wstlīg; for another reading (starag “violent”), see Cereti 1995, p. 63 and 65 n. 73.
6. For the interpretation of pad, see Williams II, p 230.
7. As pointed out by Williams, the presentation of the malkūsān rain including the release of humans and animals from the vara has some features in common with the story of the Flood in Genesis ch. 6, the command to store provisions, the emphasis on the downpour of rain. Since these features are absent in the other Pahlavi versions on the malkūsān winter, the Pahlavi Rivāyat may testify to knowledge of the biblical myth, Williams II, pp. 230- 231. On the other hand influences from the Iranian myth of Yima’s vara can be discernible in Jewish and early Christian traditions on the heavenly Jerusalem, see Philonenko 2000, pp. 139-146.
(him); by the curse of the Mazda-worshippers he will die”8. A powerful demon is however mentioned in the next paragraph whom one will not be able to kill in battle. From the vara of Yima humans and cattle will be brought, they will be “very great in body, very comely, and good workers”.9 Although the order of the events is somewhat confused, the structure and the main contents agree with what is found in the Dēnkard.

According to the version of Bundahišn, Malkūs will appear towards the end of the millenium; his appearance is associated with sorcery and witchcraft and he is made a descendant of Tūr ī Brādarōxš who caused the death of Zarathustra. Malkūs is clearly presented as the one who will produce the terrible Malkūsān rain, which will last for three years, in the cold winter as well in the warm summer, bringing innumerable snowfalls and downpours of hail. This will cause the destruction of all humankind except a few, but a restoration of humans and animals will take place from the “enclosure” (war) of Yima. It is further stated that the war was built for the sake of being a cover for the devastating winter:

Pas ka hazārag ī Hušēdar sar bawēd malkūs sēj-čihr ī az tōxmag ī tūr brādarōxš ī ōš ī zardušt būd ē paydāghī rasēd pad jādūg-snāth10 ud parīg-kāmagīh, sahmgēn wārān (MTL’) ī malkūsān xwānēnd kunēd, sē sāl pad zamestan ān ī sard ud pad hāmin ān ī garm abāg amar wafr ud tagarg dahišn ī abesīhēntār11, ōwōn ī hamāg mardōm bē ōzārak12 ātāxš (?) be abesīhēnd. Pas abāz ārāyiš ī mardōm ud gōspanz az war ī yam-kard bawēd; ēn kār rāy pad nihuftagīh kard ēstēd. Bundahišn ch. 33 § 30.

8. Probably a reference to Malkūs; for this passage, see Williams II, p. 231.
10. The interpretation of the second element is not clear to me, it can be transliterated as gyn(w)yh (so B. T. Anklesaria 1956), dyn(w)yh or sn(w)yh. The reading of M. Bahar, snah(th)iḥ from Avestan snaba-, is here tentatively followed.
11. The form is given as ’psyhynt’l in TD 1 and as ’pyşyn’l (?) in DH and TD 2.
12. TD 1 omits by homoioteleuton the words bē ōzārak – mardōm. After ōzārak DH has ’thš above the line (not so TD 2) for a corrupt ’dnš (?). B. T. Anklesaria interprets the text from hamāg mardōm as “all men will perish by the road of the sacred fire. I read bē ōzārak “except for a few” which is in line with the statements of Dēnkard, Mēnōg ī Xrad and Dādestān ī Dēnīg (see the passages above) that most (frāhist) men will die, i.e. a few will survive. This leaves us, however, with ’thš (ātāxš) for which I have no suggestion.
The presentations of the devastating winter given by the other Pahlavi versions do not convey much new information. The Mênôg î Xrad 28 emphasises the merit (sûd) of Yima in having made the war as a protective reserve of humans, cattle and other living beings and plants (included in the expression dâm ud dahišn) for the restoration of the world once the Malkúsân winter has ceased:

\[\text{didîgar ēn (sûd) kû-š war î yamkard kard î ka ân wârân î malkúsân bawêd čiyôn pad dên paydâg kû mardôm ud abârîg dâm ud dahišn î ohrmazd xwadây frahistân ân î be abesêhêd ud pas ân war î yamkard dar be wišâyêd ud mardômân ud gôspandân ud abârîg dâm ud dahišn î dâdâr ohrmazd az ân war be âyênd ud gêhân abâz ârâyênd.}\]

The Dâdestân î Dênîg likewise asserts that most mortals (frahist ošomandân) will die from snow and enormous cold, and those who are born and survive will face hardship and difficulties (garânîh ud grâyîh). The “enclosure” of Yima will then make the world full again with the seed of excellent humans and animals, as with trees and foods of best quality (DD 36,80; ed. Jaafari-Dehaghi).

The compiler of the BahmanYašt certainly knew the myth of the great winter and the “enclosure” of Yima since he alludes to it in citing the call to the bound Bêwarasp to loosen his chains, because Frêdôn is not alive and the world is full of humans who have been brought (ânîd) from the “enclosure” of Yima (BYt 9,13). The Ayâdgâr î Jâmâspîg 17,3 places the appearance of the malkúsân rain after Hušêdarmah.

There are apparent concordances in terminology and contents between the Pahlavi texts that point to a common source tradition. In fact references to that tradition are found in several passages where the myth of the destructive winter and the opening of the vara is told.\(^\text{13}\)

In their description of the malkúsân winter and the opening of the vara the Pahlavi texts do not indicate its location and character. Some

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\(^{13}\) In general we find a retelling of the myth, as in the Pahlavi Rivâyat, or a summarizing of some features of the myth (e. g. the Dênkard, the Bundahišn). References to an earlier tradition are found in the Dênkard VII,9: “from what is known of this period”, az ägâhîh î im zamânag , in Mênôg î Xrad 28:“as it is revealed in the religion”, čiyôn pad dên paydâg. As to Yima’s vara in Bundahišn 29,14, the chapter is introduced by the formula “one says in the religion” gôwêd pad dên, the gôwêd being repeated in § 14, further Bd. 32,10: “one says” gôwêd.
other passages of the Pahlavi tradition address the issue, however. The Bundahишн states that Yima’s *vara* is a renowned place in the middle of Pärs referring to a tradition locating it underneath the mountain Jama-gän: *war yam-kard mayän pärs pad srawâg, êdön gôwêd* (DH, TD 2: *gôwend*) *kû yam-kard azêr î köf î jamagän*. 14 We are also told that it is a strong mansion concealed beneath the earth, marvellous and bright, neither summer nor winter can overcome it, and all (good) things in the world are found there: *yam-kard rây gôwêd kû azêr zamig pad nî- huftagîh män saxt ast abd rûsn kë hâmîn ud zamestân nê tarwênéd u-š az harwisp xîrân pad gëtiç andar* (Bd. 32,10). The Mênôg î Xrad 62,15 reports that the *vara* is a subterranean place in the Erän-wêz, the mythical homeland of the Iranians.

**The Avestan myth in Vidêvdâd chapter 2**

As is well known, the second fargard (chapter) of the Vidêvdâd contains mythic traditions centered round the figure of Yima. The passage dealing with the coming of winters will be described in more detail whereas the rest of the contents is only summarized. The fargard is clearly divided into two parts. The first part brings the myth telling how Yima receives the command from Ahura Mazdä to let the world of living beings (*gaëðâ*) prosper and to be its protector and guardian. The earth soon becomes full of people and cattle and they find no place anymore upon it. Ahura Mazdä orders Yima to enlarge the world. In three successive stages Yima increases the world by driving the earth (*zam-*) on with two golden tools of which one is a goad or whip (*aštřâ*). The precise nature of the other (*suβrâ*) is not entirely clear; the interpretation “horn” seems the most plausible one, however. 15 The expansions take place after periods of three hundred years and are de-

14. The location to Pärs is also found in Bundahişn ch.32 listing the mansions of the Kayans: *êk ân î yam-kard pad Pärs kë yam-kard gôwêd*, “one is that which was built by Yam, which one calls the building of Yam.”

15. The interpretation of the Avestan word *suβrâ* as “horn” was suggested by Duchesne-Guillemin (1980) and accepted by Kellens (1984; 1999-2000 p. 729). It has also been interpreted as “Pfeil” (Bartholomae AirW 1583), “Stab” (Geldner 1926, p. 28), “anneau” (Söderblom 1901, p.170), “Ring” (though with hesitation, Lommel 1927, p. 204), ”a key” (Herzfeld 1947, p. 338), “a goad” (Boyce 1984, p. 94). The Pahlavi Videvdâd having zay “instrument” (Hoshang Jamasp p. 25) gives no further clue to its meaning.
scribed in the same manner and wording for each instance. Only the introductory formulas are changed in accordance with the progress of time. The first expansion is introduced with the words: “Then three hundred years (properly “winters”) passed under Yima’s rule”, and the third and last with “Then nine hundred years (“winters”) passed under Yima’s rule”.

The second part of the fargard begins rather abruptly with the information that Ahura Mazda convoked an assembly (hanjamanəm) together with the spiritual deities to which also Yima and the best of humans came. Presumably the assembly is held in the Airyanam Vaējah of the good Dāityā since both Ahura Mazda and Yima are praised in the same passage as renowned (srutō) in this very region. Ahura Mazda then announces the coming of winters upon the bad corporeal world, bringing severe and deadly wintercold[16]:

\[ \text{auui ahūm astuuantəm ayəm zimō jaŋhəntu, yahmat haca staxrô mrurō ziā}(§ 22). \]

Thick clouds will let snow fall from the highest mountains down to the depths of the river Ardvī:

\[ \text{pauruūō snaōdō vafrə snaēžät barəzištəbiiō gairibiiō başnubiiō arəduiiā}(§ 22)[17]. \]

The following passage (§ 23) intends to describe the effects of the winters by focussing on the cattle. The meaning seems to be that part of the cattle will perish, irrespective of the way in which one interprets apagam-, which can mean “perish” or “move to escape”[18]. “One third of the cattle will here perish, o, Yima,” or choosing “escape” the mean-

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16. If one interprets yahmat haca in a temporal sense (so Lommel 1927, p. 205 “von da an”) the meaning is “from that time (there will be) severe and deadly wintercold”.

17. The expression başnubiiō arəduiiā is interpreted as “(Schneemassen)...bis zu Tiefen wie sie die Ardvī hat” by Bartholomae in AirW 963; “in der Stärke des Ardvī” by Geldner 1926, p.29; “à une épaisseur d’une ardvī” by Darmesteter followed by Söderblom 1901, p. 172 “à une profondeur d’une ardvī”.


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ing would be that the rest will be lost. The statement is linked to the mention of three different types of habitats from which cattle will escape or in which cattle will perish: “those who are in the most terrifying of places, those who are on the peaks in the mountains, and those who are in the river valleys, in solid houses”:

\[ \text{θριατα} \text{id}a \text{yima} \text{γευ} \text{απα} \text{αγασα} \text{γυ} \text{ατ} \text{α θειαστωνα} \text{ε} \text{α} \text{ασα} \text{γα} \text{m} \text{yα} \text{τ} \text{α} \text{α} \text{η} \text{θα} \text{t} \text{α} \text{ρε} \text{σευ} \text{n} \text{ραι} \text{t} \text{α} \text{γ} \text{α} \text{λι} \text{t} \text{α} \text{gα} \text{ir} \text{i} \text{ν} \text{a} \text{m} \text{yα} \text{τ} \text{α} \text{α} \text{f} \text{nυ} \text{υ} \text{α} \text{υ} \text{a} \text{ρα} \text{o} \text{ν} \text{m} \text{pα} \text{xρυμα} \text{ε} \text{ζ} \text{υ} \text{n} \text{mα} \text{α} \text{nα} \text{ε} \text{ζ} \text{υ} \text{m} (§23).} \]

It is further stated that before the winters the land produced good pastures and water will be abundantly streaming after the melting of the snow and “there will be a marvel for the corporeal world if the footprint of a sheep can be seen”:

\[ \text{παρο} \text{ζιμο} \text{αετα} \text{να} \text{δα} \text{φυς} \text{α} \text{η} \text{θα} \text{t} \text{α} \text{ρε} \text{σευ} \text{vα} \text{ερω} \text{tο} \text{vα} \text{στερω} \text{tο} \text{m} \text{ο} \text{φ} \text{ραυρω} \text{υα} \text{vα} \text{ζαι} \text{δι} \text{i} \text{a} \text{πα} \text{σκα} \text{vι} \text{t} \text{α} \text{t} \text{i} \text{v} \text{α} \text{φ} \text{ραε} \text{hε} \text{α} \text{δ} \text{λ} \text{α} \text{c} \text{a} \text{i} \text{d} \text{a} \text{y} \text{ι} \text{m} \text{a} \text{a} \text{υ} \text{υ} \text{e} \text{hε} \text{a} \text{σ} \text{του} \text{ς} \text{a} \text{στου} \text{ς} \text{a} \text{s} \text{dαι} \text{i} \text{a} \text{τ} \text{α} \text{t} \text{α} \text{i} \text{d} \text{a} \text{pα} \text{sυ} \text{ς} \text{a} \text{νυμα} \text{ις} \text{e} \text{h} \text{e} \text{pα} \text{σε} \text{tο} \text{vα} \text{εναί} \text{τη} \text{e} \text{(§24).} \]

The meaning is somewhat obscure, commentators usually infer that the waters carry the pasture grounds away or that the waters cause a universal deluge. Then Ahura Mazda orders Yima to build a vara-,
its measures are given, the abiding places of humans and animals shall be marked out, water shall be conducted into the vara and fodder shall be stored. The best and fairest of all human and animal offspring (taoxma-) shall be brought into the vara, as also the seed of the best plants and of the most delicious foods. However, those on whom the mark (daxštam) of the Evil Spirit (aŋra-mainiśu-) is set, will not be allowed to enter the vara. Yima shall finally go over the vara and the openings for the light with his golden sufrā-

Yima not knowing how to begin the construction of the vara is then instructed by Ahura Mazdā to work the earth with his heals and hands. Yima did as Ahura Mazdā wanted of him and the preceding exhortative description is now repeated as an act that is being performed. The last passage, paragraphs 39-43, sometimes considered to be an addition, purports to clarify some aspects of the vara and the life of its inhabitants, in particular the question where the light comes from. It is also said that after every forty years each human and animal pair will give birth to twins, a female and a male.

I cannot go into the detail of all the philological problems posed by this in many respects difficult text, nor is it my intention to discuss at any length the various interpretations of the myth of Yima and his vara that have been put forward. The general outline of the myth as here summarized seems nevertheless clear. However, as a necessary background to my discussion of the function and setting of the theme of the destructive winter(s) the main attempts to approach the myth, including the nature of the vara, will briefly be dealt with.

**Interpretations of the Avestan myth**

Vidēvdād chapter 2 is usually seen as composed of different elements or motifs, and even of two heterogenous myths, and this makes the grouping of the various explanations into strictly separated interpretation lines difficult.

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23. The passage enumerating these kinds of persons is obscure. Clearly persons with physical defects are included, cf. Lommel 1927, p. 199 and 206 and also Lincoln, 1991 pp. 27-28 who stresses the general importance of this passage for understanding Indo-European ideas of paradise. A similar list of persons who are to be excluded from the sacrificial ritual is found in Yašt 5,92-93 and expresses the same priestly concern of ritual purity as in early Judaism; see for this Hultgård 1988, p. 422.

The similarities in structure and content with the flood-stories of the ancient Near East, including the one in Genesis chapter 6, have frequently been pointed out and the relationship with the Vidēvdād myth is usually explained by assuming an influence from the Near Eastern stories, though to a varying extent. Flood-stories are known from a large number of cultures and have as general characteristic that they are set in primordial times or in a remote past. Their purpose is to tell the survival of humankind through the preservation of a few among the many who perish. The Greek and Near Eastern myths are in addition characterized by the idea that the flood is caused by a divine decision to exterminate humankind since they have been corrupted or have displeased the gods.

The relationship between Yima and his Indian counterpart Yama, who in the Vedas appears as the lord of the dead in the other world, has been elaborated in particular by Georges Dumézil but comparison with the figure of Yama is also used as a clue for understanding the specific character of the Iranian Yima. He is the constructor of a particular type of paradise, not for the dead but for some chosen humans (together with animals and plants), the Elysian fields were transformed into the vara of Iranian tradition, as Christensen puts it. The myth is moreover to be interpreted from the scheme of mythic historiography and periodization. The 900 years with the three enlargements of the earth form almost a millenium and the Pahlavi Vidēvdād

25. Representatives of this interpretation line are Darmesteter 1892-93, pp. 19-20 (the biblical flood-story was used by Zoroastrianism to fill up the descriptions of the eschatological drama and the role of Noah was transferred to Yima), Usener 1899, p. 208 (a distant reminiscence of the Near East flood-story adapted to the Persian mountain landscape), Christensen 1934, pp. 55-62 (emphasises the differences but admits a literary influence of the semitic Flood-legend), Herzfeld 1947, pp. 332-339 (the myth of the vara belongs to the motif of the ark of Noah), and also Boyce 1975 (see below).
26. See the collections made by Frazer 1923 and Riem 1925. Typologies of Near Eastern flood-stories are found in Usener 1899, pp. 239-240, and Westermann 1974, p. 545.
27. Westermann 1974, p. 536
32. Christensen 1934, p. 55.
The mythic theme of the great winter in ancient Iranian traditions clearly has understood it so, stating that Yima was cut with a saw at the end of the millenium. In support of this an Avestan fragment is cited, saying that with this Yima’s millenium came to an end: paoiriieheca pascaētgā hazajhrō zamāhe ḏbarsō as yimō kōraṇaot (Phl. Vd. 2,20). Yima’s millenium was characterized by the increase in number of humans and animals for a period during which there was neither cold winds nor heat, neither sickness nor death (Vd. 2,5). With the coming of the winters that from now on regularly will appear, a new and harder period of human history begins. From this perspective the story has been connected with the description of the airiīana- vaējah- in Videvdad chapter 1, where it is said that the Evil Spirit (aṇra- mainiiu-) as a counter-creation to the Airyanam Vaējah created by Ahura Mazda produced cold and snow there for ten wintermonths leaving only two summermonths. The hard demon-created winters of Videvdād 1,1 would thus be the same as the winters of the Yima-myth in Videvdād ch. 2. Interpreting the passage on the winters in Videvdād 2,22 as referring to a great winter, caused by the the Evil Spirit, Kellens attributes notwithstanding a positive evolutionary effect to the calamity, because it destroys what is bad in the world but through the vara of Yima the best specimens will be preserved.

The non-Zoroastrian character of the Videvdād myth is often stressed with particular reference to the idea of a bad world and humankind (Vd. 2,22), considered to be irreconcilable with Zoroastrian world-view. On one hand this idea is in agreement with the Near Eastern flood-stories, on the other, however, it can be explained from a Zoroastrian perspective as a corruption of humankind brought about by the Evil Spirit and the demons.

The view of Mary Boyce may serve as a representative conclusion because she integrates different approaches. She emphasises the peculiar character of the Videvdād myth when seen in a Zoroastrian context (the expression “the bad corporeal world”) and agrees with Herzfeld that the myth was shaped under the influence of Mesopotamian leg-

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36. Kellens 1999-2000, p. 732: “Cet hiver est certes une fabrication d’Agra Mainiuu....mais il a ceci de positif qu’il va détruire ce qu’il y a de mauvais dans le monde matériel”.
37. Lommel 1927, p. 199; Widengren 1968, pp. 70-71; Boyce 1975, p. 94. The discussion of what is Zoroastrian or general Iranian seems to me less useful, since the establishment of reliable criteria for making such a distinction is a very intricate matter.
ends. The flood was transformed "into the sort of disaster conceivable on the Iranian plateau". In contrast to Herzfeld, she suggests, however, a rather late date for the part of Vidēvdād 2 that concerns the winter and the vara of Yima (redaction in the Parthian period, for Herzfeld the Median period). The puzzle of the shape and nature of the vara would be explained if its structure derives from a floating ark and was awkwardly adapted to Iranian legend. The placing of the vara beneath the ground is an adaptation to the ancient Indo-Iranian idea of Yima/Yama as lord of the underworld. In time the myth came to be associated with the developed tradition of universal eschatology preserved in the Pahlavi books. Boyce refers the origin of the legend to "Zorastrian scholastic learning" and makes the interesting observation that it never entered popular tradition as represented by the Shāhnāme, where the older myth of Yima's sin and death survives.

The question of possible models for the vara of Yima has been much discussed. The vara of Yima is a mythic building but mythic descriptions in general are often inspired by phenomena and objects in the real world. In addition to the ark which figures prominently in the Near Eastern flood-stories, the origin of the vara has been sought in archaeological remains of clan enclosures in Chorasmia ("Wohnmauern-Siedlungen") and in the vault of heaven. The text of Vidēvdād chapter 2 indicates a place cut off from the day-light. A cavern, inside or below a mountain as stated by the Pahlavi tradition (for these passages, see above), has therefore been considered more probable explanations of the nature of the vara. Another still more plausible model for the vara of Yima is in my opinion the subterranean houses of the Armenian highlands attested from the Urartu-period down to modern times. Xenophon when passing through the region with his Greek mercenaries noticed these strange houses. His description runs as follows:

"the houses were subterranean (κατάγειοι), the opening was like a well (φρέαρ) but down below the insides of the houses were spacious, the entrances for cattle were dug, but people entered on a lad-

39. For the ark as model of the vara, see in particular Herzfeld and Boyce.
40. So Tolstow 1953, p. 104.
42. Lommel 1927, pp. 200-202 argues for this interpretation; also Kellens 1995 p. 48 who emphasizes that Yima constructs the cavern.
43. For this type of houses, see Burney & Lang 1971, p. 185.
der. In the houses there were goats, sheep, cattle and fowl, as well as their offspring. All animals were nourished by fodder. Wheat, barley, beans and wine were kept in cauldrons." Anabasis IV,5,25-26.

Summing up the discussion of the Yima myth in Vidēvdād chapter 2, its relevance for elucidating the function and context of the motif of the great winter must be considered. The preference of one interpretation to another is not without consequences.44

1° If the Vidēvdād myth belongs to the category of Flood-stories and other climatic calamity myths, the great winter replaces the flood and the myth is set in the past. Since the idea of divine punishment is usually implied in the Flood-stories, this would fit rather well with the key word aya- “bad”, which in the Vidēvdād is applied to the corporeal world. Humankind is corrupted and should therefore be punished with the calamity of the great winter. Moreover, if we stick to the imperative of the verbal form in the sentence zimō jarjḥēntu and translate “let winters come”45 the meaning of a divine will as cause of the calamity becomes clearer.

2° If one prefers to see the Vidēvdād-story in the context of mythic historiography, the theme of the winter(s) is likewise part of passed world-history, since it introduces a new and harder period which – from the perspective of the mythographers – still characterizes the natural environment of humankind in contrast to the “golden” age of Yima.

3° Thirdly, if one interprets the devastating winters and the building of the vara as a future event,46 an Iranian variant of the category of Weltuntergangsmythen to use the German term, we have to do with an eschatological myth describing the destruction of the world through terrible winters but also the survival of selected human, animal and vegetative life in the shelter of the vara for the purpose of a future restoration. This interpretation would gain more plausibility on the presupposition that Vidēvdād 2 is composed of two independant and different myths or mythic fragments as has been suggested by some scholars.47

44. Söderblom 1901, pp. 177-178 is aware of this issue.
45. The sentence is rendered as a future by all commentators, “winters will come”.
46. For example, Söderblom, 1901, p. 178, 180 and Christensen 1934, p. 57: “Pour l’Avesta et les auteurs des livres pehlvis ce sont là des évènements futurs”.
47. In particular Söderblom 1901, p. 169 and 174; also Geldner 1881; Darmesteter 1892-93, p. 16.
In my view the Vidēvdād story on the coming of the winters and the building of the *vara* refers in all probability to the mythic past, and it is set in a scheme of world history with particular reference to the people of the Airyana Vaējah, the ancestors of the Iranians. A period of happiness under the rule of Yima is replaced by a new and different period. From now on ravaging winters will mark the existence of humankind, for some there will be a better life in the shelter of Yima's *vara*. The difficulty of this interpretation line lies in the idea of a bad corporeal world which is supposed to be destroyed by the hard winters. Why did the blissful period under Yima generate bad humankind? Other questions arise to which no obvious solution can be presented. The idea of Yima as the builder of the *vara* seems peculiar considering the fact that he has no role to play in its administration. To explain this by assuming a zoroastrianization of a "pagan" Iranian myth is to add yet another unknown factor. Moreover it is difficult to explain convincingly why the myth in its Vidēvdād version abruptly ends without mentioning the destiny of Yima and what will happen to the people of the *vara* in the future.

**Comparison between the Pahlavi versions and the Avestan myth**

Returning to the problem of the relationship between the Avestan myth in the Vidēvdād and the Pahlavi tradition the differences can be summed up as follows:

1° The connection with the figure of Malkūs which is prominent in the Pahlavi texts, is absent in the Vidēvdād myth.

2° There is no mention of the opening of the *vara* of Yima in the Avestan version. The text of Vidēvdād chapter 2 ends rather abruptly with the question of Zarathustra “who is the ruler and master of the *vara*?” and the answer of Ahura Mazdā that it is Uruuatahtnara and Zarathustra himself. By contrast, the Pahlavi tradition makes the opening of the *vara* of Yima one of the main events in the future restoration of the world, but passes over the detailed description of the *vara* and its inhabitants found in the Avesta.

3° The setting of the theme of the destructive winter(s) and Yimas *vara* of the Avestan myth in Vidēvdād 2, 20-43 is most probably past mythic history, in contrast with the *malkūsān* winter of the Pahlavi tradition which is clearly part of universal eschatology.

4° For the Pahlavi tradition the idea of three successive winters is
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constitutive, whereas the Avestan myth speaks only of winters in general and applies the device of triplicity to the description of the disappearance (or escape) of cattle in the snow-masses.

The Pahlavi Vidēvdād being at the same time a translation and a commentary takes naturally an intermediate position, identifying the winters of the Avestan text with the winter of Malkūs, and introducing it by adding the gloss “which they call the Malkūsān (winter)”, ī markūsān gōwēnd (Pahl. Vd. 2,22). The expression “the bad corporeal world” seems to have been puzzling or offensive to the Pahlavi redactors because they change the text into: “over the corporeal world the bad winter will come”, abar gēhān astōmandān ān wattar zamestān rasēd.48

The above mentioned differences suggest a more complex relationship than the assumption that the Pahlavi versions only represent secondary retellings of the Avestan myth in the Vidēvdād. The following hypothesis may afford a tentative solution to the problem of relationship. The Pahlavi versions on the Malkūsān winter are based on an independent tradition of a great eschatological winter in which both the building and the opening of Yima’s vara- were told as part of future events. The Vidēvdād version of the winters and the vara would then represent another myth variant on the theme of climatic calamities and survival of humankind, which in all probability belonged to pasted mythical history. The eschatological winter was known as the “devastating winter”, the Avestan word mahrkuša- being originally an appellativum “destructive”, and it constituted one of the signs or calamities announcing the end of the world. The zamestān ī malkūsān was in later Zoroastrian elaborations on the scheme of future world history transferred from its original context of the calamities preceding the last battle and the restoration (frašgird) to its present setting in a process which was prompted by the need to “fill the empty millenia” of Hušēdar and Hušēdarmāh.50

48. Probably it is this reading that has inspired some scholars to connect aya- “bad” with zimō “winters” the first to introduce it being F. Justi, and Darmesteter II p. 24 “les hivers de malheur”; they were followed by Söderblom 1901 p. 172 “Sur le monde corporel viendront de mauvais hivers...”. (cf. also Olrik 1938). In her Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism (1984 p. 95) Mary Boyce translates the passage of the Avestan Videvdād as “Bad winters will come to the material world...”.


50. The phrasing is that of Mary Boyce 1975, p. 291.
In support of placing the original setting of the great winter in the ultimate period of world history the following arguments can be adduced. The summary of Persian world history given by Plutarch in his tract De Iside et Osiride chapter 47 links the echatological calamities with the destruction of Ahreman towards the end of the last period of three thousand years. Through the reference to Theopomp living in the 4th century B.C. the scheme indicated by Plutarch can be traced back to the late Achaemenian period at least. It is further remarkable that the most extensive descriptions of future calamities are in the present scheme placed at the end of the millenium of Zarathustra which seems rather odd. The fact would be best explained if these descriptions originally preceded the account of the end of the present world. Strikingly, tradition has preserved a clear allusion to an eschatological winter which is not placed in the millenium of Hušēdar. A devastating winter with abundant snow produced by the demons is recorded in the Dēnkard as one of the calamities befalling the Iranian countries towards the end of the millenium of Zarathustra. It goes together with the disappearance of character and wisdom from the Iranian countries:

\[ \text{ëg ka xêm ud xrad fröd wardêd az ërân dehân – kū be šawēd – ëdôn ërân dehân az nazdikih i vôïy ë ham dwärēd nēst-ciših ud zamestân i dewân dād i snexšōmand – kū wārēn-iz kam bawēd – ud sēj i nihān-rawišnīh i frēstar...} \]

(Dēnkard VII,8,19-20; facsimile edition of Dresden p. 319). The passage is part of a Zand-text taken from an Avestan tradition,\(^{51}\) which indicates that the motif in this context is an ancient one.

The destructive winter in Iranian mythology and the Scandinavian great winter

The myth of a future destructive winter is not unique to Iranian traditions but has a correspondance in the “great winter” (Old Norse \textit{fimbulvetr}) of ancient Scandinavian mythology.\(^{52}\) This fact may be used to support the assumption proposed above that there was an ancient Ira-

\(^{51}\) Cf. also Molé 1967, p. 82, and for the character of zand-texts Hultgårð 1983, p. 393. The Pahlavi text is interpolated with glosses marked by \textit{kū} and there is a word in Avestan script \textit{vôïy} from \textit{vôignā-} “flood, dash, onset” (AirW. 1428). The section is presented as taken from earlier authoritative tradition: \textit{ën-iz nisang-ē az-iš đēn göwēd kū.}

\(^{52}\) For a more detailed analysis, see Hultgårð 2004 and a forthcoming article in \textit{Proxima Thule. Revue d'études nordiques} (Paris).
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The mythic theme of an eschatological winter independent of the version found in the present text of Vidēvdād chapter 2.

According to the 13th century myth-compiler Snorri Sturluson, a winter will appear before the end of the world, which is called the “great winter”. Snow will blow from everywhere, there will be much frost and the winds are cold and biting. There will be no warmth from the sun (ekki nýtr sólar) and that winter will be the length of three winters with no summer between them (Edda, Gylfaginning chapter 51, ed. Holtsmark & Helgason). The wording indicates that Snorri draws on a lost ancient poem, and the fimbulvetr was actually part of the ancient mythic tradition as is shown by the eddic poems that have been preserved. In one of these poems, the Vafþrúðnismál, the great winter is referred to as something well-known (maerr) and it is further said that one pair, a woman and a man, will survive the winter in a sheltered place, called holt hoddmimis, “the grove of Hoddmimir”, a place otherwise unknown. Their food will be the morning dew and from them future generations will be born (þáðan af aldir alaz; Vm. 44-45). Another poem, the Hyndluljóð, says that snow-falls and hard winds will announce that the time of the gods shall come to an end:

þáðan koma sníóvar ok snarir vindar, þá er í ráði at rogn um þriðti (Hdl. 42).

An allusion to the great winter is also found in the poem called Völuspá, “Prophecy of the Sibyl” stanza 41, where it is said that when the end of the world (ragnarök) draws near, the sunshine will darken and the weather will be hostile.

The association of the Scandinavian mythic winter with the winter(s) of the Vidēvdād story seems to have been made first by Niels Westergaard and subsequently repeated and developed by other scholars, notably Nathan Söderblom, Axel Olrik and Arthur Christensen.53

53. Priority for Sweden should be given to the writer and poet Viktor Rydberg who, although an amateur, was a forerunner of comparative Indo-European studies, see Rydberg 1886-1889. Söderblom 1901, pp. 189-190, considers independent origin for the myths of a ravaging winter but explains the similarities between Snorri’s description and the malkāsān winter, especially the idea of three successive winters as evidence for a borrowing of the fimbulvetr from Iran. For Olrik important elements of the Ragnarok tradition including the fimbulvetr were diffused from the Caucasus and Iran to Scandinavia. Christensen 1934, p. 60 shares this view. Dumézil 1971, p. 247 notes the parallell but points to the difference that the Vidēvdād myth is not eschatological in function.
The affinities were in general interpreted in terms of a diffusion of the myth from Iran over Caucasus to northern Europe. This appears less probable, however, and the Scandinavian myth of the “great winter” may well be reminiscent of an ancient Indo-European tradition pertaining to the end and renovation of the world. The devastating winter of Iranian eschatology would then be another reflexion of that tradition.

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The mythic theme of the great winter in ancient Iranian traditions


Une métaphore poétique indo-iranienne en arménien classique: arm. varkaparazi*  

Anahit Périkhanian

Le mot dont nous allons parler ici n’est pas un *hapax*. Dans les textes arméniens originaux ainsi que dans ceux traduits du grec, il se trouve attesté depuis le Vième siècle. La majorité des manuscrits le présente sous une forme à syncope de la seconde voyelle -a- (*varkparazi*), ce qui n’est point très rare dans les vocables qui en comportent plusieurs de ce même timbre.

Grammaticalement c’est un adverbe ou adjectif adverbiale à suffixe -i et son sens principal est celui de ‘en désordre, au hasard; en tous sens, à la débandade’. Dans les traductions du grec (Cyrille de Jérusalem, Jean Chrysostome, Timothée d’Alexandrie, Denys l’Aréopagite et autres) arm. *varkparazi* traduit les locutions grecques ὃς ἐτυχε, τυχόν; ἐν παρεκβάσι; on trouve aussi l’acception de ‘négligemment’ (παρέργως).

Il n’y a pas eu de tentative sérieuse d’expliquer ce mot, car on ne saurait prendre au sérieux l’explication donnée dans le Grand Dictionnaire de Venise qui le lie, par une fausse association bien sûr, avec arm. *vark* ‘calcul, considération, comput’, mot qui n’a rien à faire ici.

Avant de procéder à une analyse étymologique du mot, il nous paraît utile de donner ici deux exemples de son emploi dans les textes originaux.

Le premier est tiré du *Buzandaran* (III, 20), recueil de récits épiques du Vième siècle. Voici le contenu du passage où il figure.

Le roi Tiran est informé de la visite prochaine de Sapouh-Varaz, marzpan de l’Atropatène, qui allait arriver pour mener, au nom du roi des Perses, des pourparlers avec lui. Heureux de cette occasion d’établir la paix avec la Perse, Tiran convoque, dans sa chambre, ses courtisans pour leur exposer son plan de la réception. Il leur parle de son intention de faire à son hôte un bon accueil, en l’honorant, comme le protocole l’exige, de banquets, de promenades de plaisance et de parties de chas-

* Communication présentée au Sixième Colloque international de Linguistique arménienne qui fut tenu à Paris le 6 juillet 1999.
se dans son célèbre parc de chasse à Aliorsk1 en Apahunik. Puis il ajoute : «Pourtant, étant donné la malveillance, la jalousie, la malignité et la perfidie de la nation perse, cela ne vaut absolument pas de lui montrer, dans notre pays, les terrains riches en gros gibier. Mais choisissez les endroits au gibier rare par lesquels nous le promènerons, car nous n’allons pas chasser sur les terrains qui abondent en gibier, afin de ne pas faire monter (de la richesse de nos parcs de chasse) en tuant beaucoup de gros gibier. Mais, à cause de la méchanceté de cette nation acerbe, nous allons faire la chasse de manière désordonnée (varkaparazi).» 2

Ainsi, d’après ce plan, la chasse devait être effectuée d’une manière désordonnée, cà et là, d’un terrain au gibier rare et menu, à un autre, aussi peu giboyeux.

Le second exemple est tiré du traité «Sur la Pâque du Seigneur» par Ananias de Sirak (VII s.): «...et ce n’est point fortuitement / au hasard (varkaparazi) qu’il établit la pleine lune (pour la Fête de Pâques), mais bien parce que telle a été la lune au commencement de la Création».

Je passe maintenant à l’analyse du mot dont l’aspect phonétique ne laisse aucun doute de son origine iranienne.

La voyelle finale de la forme attestée relevant de la suffixation arménienne, on partira de arm. varkaparak réflétant m.-iran. * varkâparaz (moyen-mède ou parthe). Cette forme se laisse aisément ramener à l’ancienne * vrka-apa-razah-, composé ayant au premier terme le mot pour le «loup», au second – un ancien neutre en indo-iran. -as (iran. -ah) dérivé de la racine *raz- : rašta- ‘fuir, se sauver en s’enfuyant’ et préfixé de apa-.

Iran. *raz- est connu en moyen-perse manichéen *rah- ‘se sauver, s’enfuir’, ainsi que dans le Psautier pehlevi (123, 7), où l’on lit lsty. Il survit en persan (rastan: rah-) et y a le même sens.

2. La traduction de ce texte en arménien moderne par S. Malkhassiantz (Erivan, 1947) est libre, souvent incorrecte. Dans ce passage varkaparazi de l’original est rendu par jevi hamar ‘pour la forme’ (p. 124). La traduction russe de M. Gevorguian (Istoriya Armenii Favstosa Buzanda. Erivan, 1953) la suit étroitement et l’on y lit conformément ‘pour les apparences, pour la forme’ (p. 42). La traduction anglaise par N. Garsoyân (The Epic Histories attributed to P’awstos Buzand. Harvard University Press, 1980, p. 96) reproduit ici la traduction russe de M. Gevorguian. Le fait que varkaparazi de l’original est largement attesté en d’autres textes et que nulle part il n’a le sens de ‘form, for the form’ qu’elle lui attribue ici n’est même pas mentionné dans son commentaire.
Les formes à préfixe *apa-* sont attestées également. On les voit notamment en sogd. *pr’sit* ‘s’est enfui’, parlant de la fuite de l’empereur de Chine de la ville de Saroug (« Anciennes Lettres », I, 11) et, dans une autre lettre (III, 33), il est dit: « Farxund s’est enfui (‘pr’sit’); les Chinois l’ont cherché, mais ne l’ont pas trouvé ».


Pour le sens reçu par iran. *vrka-aparazah-* et nous le connaissons par l’emprunt en arménien – notons qu’une meute de loups se sauve à la débandade, en désordre. D’où le sens dérivé du composé qui traduit les mouvements (ou une action) désordonnés.

Pour compléter l’examen du mot arménien, on s’arrêtera sur un composé védique *vrka-dvaras-*, un hapax attesté au second mandala du Rgveda (II, 30, 4). Le radical *dvar-* n’étant pas attesté en indien, ce mot restait pendant longtemps incompris. Il fut tiré au clair en 1918 par J. Wackernagel qui rapprocha le second composant de iran. *dvar-*, verbe fort usité dans l’Avesta où il sert à dénoter la course rapide des créatures d’Ahriman. Le pehlevi l’avait adopté, avec la même connotation, bien sûr (m.-perse *dvaritan/dvaristan*). Or, cette spécialisation du verbe avestique était étroitement liée avec la réforme religieuse de Zoroastre. Primitivement, en iranien aussi, il désignait un mouvement rapide en ligne directe, sens qui apparaît dans le composé védique dont le premier membre, *vrka-*, est identique à celui de iran. *vrka-(apa-)razah-*, et le second – un ancien neutre en – *as-* de indo-iran. *dvar-*.  


Véd. *vrka-dvaras-* signifie ‘dont la course impétueuse est comme celle des loups attaquants’, ‘qui courent avec l’impétuosité des loups attaquants’.

Voici le verset védique (II, 30, 4) où figure le mot qui nous intéresse:

«O Bhaspati ! Frappe avec le feu, comme on frappe avec des pierres lancées,
Les hommes d’Asura, (ceux) qui courent comme les loups attaquants!»

Zariadre et Zoroastre

Anahit Périkhanian

Le nom de Zariadre (Ζαριάδρης) figure dans une belle légende mède rapportée par Charès de Mytilène (IV s. av. J.-C.) et conservée chez Athénée (XIII, 5, p. 575). Le lecteur trouvera, dans l’article de M. Boyce,1 une étude détaillée de cette légende : seul le prénom nous intéresse ici.

Mais sous ce nom des personnages historiques sont connus, eux aussi. Ainsi, un général d’Antiochos le Grand, porteur de ce nom (Ζαρίαδρης; Strabo XI, 14, 15), fonda (≈190 av. J.-C.) le royaume arménien de Sophène et frappa la monnaie en y inscrivant son nom. Chez les dynastes de la Sophène ce prénom demeura en faveur jusqu’au IV s. après J.-C. D’après le témoignage d’Appien (Mithrid., 104), le fils aîné de Tigrane le Grand (99-55 av. J.-C.) et de Cléopâtre, fille de Mithridate, roi du Pont, portait ce prénom (Ζαρίαδρης), lui aussi. Or pour l’étymologie de ce nom importent plus les données des inscriptions du roi Artašès (≈189-160 av. J.-C.), inscriptions trouvées en Arménie depuis les années trente.2 Ce monarque y est présenté comme «fils de Zariadre» et le nom de son père y figure à deux orthographes, historique (Zrytr) et phonétique (Zryhr); cette dernière reproduisant son aspect moyen-mède, Zarēhr, forme à laquelle remonte arm. Zareh (<"Zarerh <m.-mède Zarēhr). Que nous ayons ici des graphies historique et phonétique d’un même nom est hors de doute, car elles désignent un même personnage historique, le père du roi Artašès.

On laissera de côté, en attendant, la forme moyen-mède. C’est à partir de la graphie historique zrytr, graphie attestée presque dans toutes les inscriptions connues de ce roi, que l’on essayera une analyse étymologique du prénom. Elle nous autorise de poser, en tant que modèle primaire, iran. *zaryat-rayi ancien composé à rection verbale de type as-


Le second terme iran. rai- ‘richesse’, est largement attesté en indo-iranien. Le sens du composé ‘Zaryat-rayi-’ s’impose comme ‘qui désire les richesses’, ou bien ‘qui prend plaisir aux richesses, qui s’en réjouit’ cf. goth. faihugairns ‘qui convoite les richesses’.

A l’appui de la reconstruction proposée, il importe de rappeler l’ancien usage iranien concernant l’imposition des prénoms. Suivant cet usage, les fils d’un même père recevaient des noms au premier ou second composant identique.5 Dans la tradition iranienne les exemples de cet usage abondent. Il suffit de parcourir la liste du XIIIème Yašt pour s’en convaincre.


Le même phénomène peut être noté dans les prénoms portés par le père et le fils. Ainsi, par exemple, Ašasairyank- (Yt 13, 114), Bastavairi- – celui de Zairivairi-, tandis que


Soulignons aussi que le composé à rayî- au second terme que nous venons de reconstruire pour expliquer le prénom qui nous intéresse ici, ne présente pas, pour l’indo-iranien, un cas isolé. De pareils composés peuvent être cités en série. On a, par exemple, véd. mamhayâd-rayî- ‘qui donne (en donations de réciprocité) les richesses’, épithète de Soma (RV 9, 52, 5 ; 9, 67, 1).7 Son correspondant iranien est représenté par av. mazâ rayî- (Y. 27, 6 ; 43, 12) <iran. *manza(t)-rayî-8. Les composés à réaction verbale ayant, au second terme, sanscr. vasu-, iran. vahu- ‘biens, richesses’, synonyme de rayî-, sont à signaler, eux aussi.9

L’onomastique moyen-perse nous livre un autre composé à rayî-dont l’analyse, à ma connaissance, n’a pas été mise en lumière. C’est le nom propre Tôsar, corrompu en «Tansar»,10 et le gentilice Tôsarakân (m.-perse twslk’n, parthe twsrkn). Il se laisse expliquer comme iran. *tausî-rayî-, lit. ‘qui fait couler les richesses’ > ‘qui offre généreusement les richesses (les offrandes et les libations)’. Ici le composant verbal est tiré de iran. *tus-, *taus- ‘tomber goutte à goutte; couler, faire couler (les libations, par exemple)’ > ‘déverser, offrir en abondance (les

9. Voir n. 7.

Mais revenons au sujet principal de cette étude. Pour en finir avec l’étymologie de gr. Ζαρίκρυς, m.-mède Zarēhr, arm. Zareh il nous reste à relever un point phonologique très important.

Entre iran. *Zaryát-rayi et m.-mède Zarēhr (graphie phonétique zryhr), issu de lui, une forme intermédiaire *Zar(i)yâ6-rayi- (graphie historique zrytry), celle du vieux-mède, s’impose nécessairement. Il s’ensuit donc que le vieux-mède transformait en /θ/, spirante interdentale, sourde, l’occlusive dentale finale /t/ du premier composant. Ce fait ne saurait étonner, vu que, dans un composé, le lieu de la soudure de ses deux termes présente une position phonologique spéciale, position propice aux changements divers. Dans notre cas, il s’agit de la spirantisation de l’occlusive devenue d’intensité faible en position implosive. Un affaiblissement de la dentale implosive – mais sans spirantisation – connu en avestique aussi, où il est régulier dans les composés de ce type.


Alors que le nom du prophète apparaît régulièrement comme Zara-Οustra-, i.e. avec θ, à valeur de la spirante dentale sourde, partout dans le texte sacré, les composés analogues s’écrivent avec /t/, lettre denotant un phonème que K. Hoffmann définit comme dentale implosive.

13. Un excellent compte-rendu de l’histoire des études du nom de Zoroastre et de leur état actuel est donné par M. Mayrhofer dans son Zum Namengut des Avesta, p. 43-53. Pour ne pas alourdir inutilement mon article par un exposé historique du problème, je renvoie les lecteurs à cet ouvrage, où une riche bibliographie est présentée.
Cette définition est correcte. Chr. Bartholomae\textsuperscript{15} voulait y voir une spiranee dentale identique à /θ/. Or outre que /t/ et /θ/ sont nettement distinguées dans la tradition manuscrite du texte avestique et ne sont pas interchangeables, la lettre /t/ est régulière pour iran. /θ/ en fin de mot lorsque la dentale sourde est précédée d’une voyelle. Il s’agit bien d’un allophone implosif de /t/.

Il me paraît utile de donner ici quelques exemples avestiques. Aux prénoms de trois frères (Dārayat-raθa-, Skārayat-raθa- et Frārayat-raθa-) cités plus haut, on ajoutera Frādat-xvarōnah- (Yt. 13, 128), Isaθ-vāstra- (Yt. 13, 98 ; Y. 23, 2 ; Y. 26, 5) ainsi que ordaθ-fādri- (Yt. 13, 142), nom de la femme dont le fils, Astvāθ-σrēta- (Yt. 13, 128, 129 ; Yt. 19, 45, 92) porte un nom de formation différente, ayant au premier terme un adjectif astvant-, mais l’on voit la même altération de la dentale finale du premier composant. Citons aussi quelques appellatifs : frādat-gaθba- (Yt. 10, 21 ; Yt. 8, 33 ; Yt. 10, 139 etc.), barat-ayapta- (Yt. 13, 42), barat-zāoθra (Yt. 10, 126) ; cf. aussi haθat-puθra- ‘enceinte’ (V. 21, 6 ; Yt. 13, 15), haθat-pāθmain (V. 21, 6).

Il s’ensuit donc que, dans le canon avestique, le nom du prophète est donné partout sous la forme non-avestique, sous celle notamment qui était propre au v.-mède, comme le cas de m.-mède Zarēhr< v.-mède Zaryāθrayi- le montre bien. Notons aussi que av. Zaraθuθstra- reflète une réalité linguistique et ne saurait être attribué à une convention d’orthographe quelconque : la forme moyen-mède Zarahuθ(r) (en avenir le le montre bien) qui en est issue régulièrement le confirme.

Très en cours dans l’Aparšahr, elle y concurrençait avec Zaraduθt [<’Zaratuθt(r)], la forme proprement parthe.\textsuperscript{16} On la trouve mentionnée trois fois dans deux hymnes manichéens où ce nom est accordé au Nūθ. En voici les passages:


\textsuperscript{16} Malgré sa présence dans les textes parthes, Zarahuθt est une forme empruntée au moyen-mède ; elle a été considérée – à tort – comme parthe par I. Gershevitch, Zoroaster’s own contribution. – JNES XXIII (1964), p. 38. Le vieux-parthe ne connaissait pas de spirantisation de /θ/ postvocalique, cf. e.g. Sānattruk, n.pr. parthe (sur ce prénom voir nos Matériaux, pp. (pp. 81-82). J’ai eu déjà l’occasion de parler de l’influence moyen-mède sur le parthe et le moyen-perse et d’en signaler d’autres exemples (voir ibidem, pp. 4-26).
**Religious Texts in Iranian Languages**

*M 42, R II 36-42:*\(^{17}\) lwq 'wd zhg’n (37) pdrwft mn wsn’d (38) 'wsxt Zrhwšt 'w (39) shr’d’ryft (40) 'wš nm’d r’štyft (41) wjyd mn hnd’m 'č (42) hft pdgs rwš’n. ‘Le monde et ses enfants étaient en désarroi à cause de moi. Zoroastre (i.e. le Noûç. – A.P.) descendit au royaume (de Pars) et il leur montra/fit agréer\(^{18}\) la rectitude et recueillit mes membres dans les lumières des sept parties du monde’.

*M 7 V I-II (g 86-89):*\(^{19}\) bwj’gr ‘rd’w (87) Zrhwšt kdyš (88) wy’wrd ‘d gryw (89) whybyy. ‘Le juste Zoroastre, le Sauveur, (disait) en s’entre­tenant avec sa propre âme’. Voir aussi *ibid.* g 103-104.

En ce qui regarde l’analyse du nom de Zoroastre, deux hypothèses sont en cours actuellement. La plus ancienne voit un adjectif *zarant* ‘vieux, décrépit’ (cf. véd. jârant-, oss. zârond) au premier terme. Le tout signifierait ‘qui possède de vieux chameaux’. Cette explication (‘des Kamele ait sind’), donnée dans l’Altiranisches Wörterbuch de Chr. Bartholomae (AirWb., 1676), a encore des partisans de nos jours.\(^{20}\) L’autre fut avancée par H.W. Bailey.\(^{21}\) A la différence de la précédente, elle explique Zarathuštra- non pas comme un bahuvrīhi, mais comme un composé à rection verbale ayant, au premier terme, un verbal de *zar* ‘mouvoir’ et signifiant ‘qui met en mouvement les chameaux’, ‘camel­driver’. Depuis la parution de cet article de H.W. Bailey, plusieurs spécialistes ont accepté cette analyse comme la plus plausible, sinon comme la seule possible.\(^{22}\)

Pour expliquer le premier composant, un rapprochement avec i.e. ‘gher- ‘désirer, aimer etc.’ fut suggéré par W. Eilers dans une lettre à M.

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Mayrhofer (voir Namengut, p. 50) qui l’écarta: à son avis, en conformité avec le témoignage indien (cf. véd. hary-), seul un thème en -yade cette raci ne pourrait être envisagé pour l’iranien.

Pourtant, même si la définition du type de composition ne prête à aucune objection, il n’en est pas ainsi avec la racine iranienne *zar- ‘mettre en mouvement’ posée par Bailey. Son existence en indo-iranien est loin d’être bien démontrée. Ainsi, le verbe ossète àwzärñ : àwzärst ‘germer’, ‘apparaître’ (cf. àwzar ‘germe’) ne saurait, pour le sens, être tiré d’une racine signifiant ‘mettre en mouvement’ comme cela a été noté déjà par V.J. Abayev.23 A l’appui deiran. *zar- Bailey cite véd. jar-a- auquel il prête le sens de ‘mettre en mouvement’ y voyant une correspondance indienne de la racine iranienne postulée. Or tous les exemples qu’il donne sont tirés des strophes assez obscures, admettant d’autres interprétations et de moins forcées. Le même peut être dit du prénom indien Jaratkāru- (Mahābhārata etc.), cf. le patronymique Jāratkāravā (Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa), prénom significant, selon Bailey, ‘promoting the interest of the singers’: il se laisse aisément expliquer comme ‘qui célèbre le(s) poète(s), ‘qui fait l’éloge du chantre’, avec, au premier terme, véd. *gṛ- ‘chanter, célébrer’, thème de présent jar-a- cf. iran. gar-/jar- ‘id.’. On sait que, dans le monde védique, le poète était un personnage très vénéré, vu le rôle qu’il jouait dans la vie sociale et dans le culte. Cette explication me paraît d’autant plus préférable que c’est bien le préfixe (pro-) qui confère à lat. promovere et ses dérivés l’acceptation de ‘élever qqn (en grade, aux honneurs), faire réussir, faire des progrès’: cette acceptation ne ressort point du sens de base ‘mettre en mouvement’ du radical simple. A l’appui d’une interprétation à partir de véd. *gṛ- ‘chanter, célébrer’ on citera RV VII, 68, 9: Kārūr jarate süktaîh ‘le poète vous (i.e. le Asvin) célèbre dans les hymnes’.

Si l’étymologie ici proposée de m.-mède Zarēhr < v.-mède *Zariyatθ-rayi- (=iran. Zaryat-rayi-) est correcte, elle nous assure l’existence, en iranien, du thème de présent *zarya-, correspondance parfaite de sanscr. hary- ‘désirer, aimer; se réjouir de; jouir’. Il est à supposer que l’indo-iranien ait possédé de ce même radical (i.e. *ğher-) d’autres formations, mais qui ont été évincées de bonne date par les synonymes. Seul est signalé le substantif gathique zara- (Y. 44, 17), un hapax traduit comme ‘Streben, Ziel’ par Bartholomae (Air.Wb. 1670), qui le rapprochait de


Pourtant à partir d’un verbal tiré du thème en -*a*- de iran. *zar-* ‘désirer etc.’ au premier terme, *Zarat-uštra-* se laisse aisément traduire par ‘qui aime les chameaux’. Pour le sens, les parallèles ne manquent pas: il suffit d’évoquer ici iran. *Friyāspa-* ainsi que gr. Φιλάππος, Χαρίππος, prénoms signifiant ‘qui aime les chevaux’. On sait que, dans l’économie de l’Iran ancien, l’élevage du chameau jouait un rôle très important. L’Avesta nous fournit plusieurs autres prénoms à «chameau»: *Aravaoštra-* ‘qui possède des chameaux en course libre’ (Yt 13, 124),27 *Frašaoštra-* ‘qui a des chameaux merveilleux’ (Y. 12, 17; 28, 81; 41, 16; 49, 8; 51, 17; 53, 2; 71, 1; Yt 13, 103), *Vohuštra-* (pour iran. *Vahuštra-*) ‘qui possède de beaux chameaux’ (Yt 13, 122).

Ce même verbal (*zara-*) peut être relevé dans Zarmihr, prénom porté par un haut fonctionnaire iranien de la première moitié du Vème s. et qui est bien attesté dans nos sources (Lazare de P’arpi, Ţabari, Ferdowsî). Ce nom continue iran. *Zara-miθra-* ‘qui aime le Contrat’. Notons aussi que le thème *zr-au-* a été dégagé par H.W. Bailey d’une formation nominale khotanaise *sauma* ‘désir’ < iran. *zrauma-*.28

Les faits examinés nous paraissent autoriser les conclusions suivantes:

1. L’iranien possédait une racine *zar-* ‘plaire, désirer’ qui remonte à i.-e. *ğer-*, même sens, et de cette racine deux thèmes verbaux *zara-.*

et \textit{zarya-} (cf. sanscr. \textit{hary-}, gr. \textit{χαίρω}) et une formation nominale \textit{zrauma-} 'désir' sont attestés.

2. Iran. /h/ en position implosive que le vieux-mède transformait en spirante sourde (\( \theta \)) devenue /h/ en moyen-mède.

3. L'orthographe (Zara\( \theta \)u\( \delta \)stra-) du nom de Zoroastre dans le canon de l'Avesta reflète la prononciation de ce prénom en vieux-mède, prononciation consacrée par la tradition des mages mèdes.
III

Middle Iranian
God and his adversary in Manichaeism

The case of the “Enthymesis of Death”
and the “Enthymesis of Life”*

Werner Sundermann

The claim of religious dualism to explain in an honest and convincing way the origin of evil is necessarily confronted with a dilemma: it has to admit that god and his adversary are facing each other on equal standing, and it must likewise respond to the hope of its believers for the ultimate victory of the divine part. The dilemma is irresolvable, unless one has recourse to faith and believe. What one can say of Manichaeism, however, is that it took the dualistic component of its doctrine very seriously and made concessions to it that other religions did not, even if those concessions were reluctantly admitted and – as far as possible – minimized.

The best known and most conspicuous example for what I want to say is the Manichaean doctrine, that God and his world, under the impact of demonic aggression, suffered a loss of divine substance which through contact with matter had become so utterly corrupted, that it can never be redeemed and, consequently, the divine world will never be restored to its full integrity, a doctrine which St. Augustine, Simplicius and others made a favorite target of their attacks.1 That this was indeed a well attested Manichaean doctrine follows not only from the testimony of the Christian polemicists,2 but also from one Manichaean text itself.3 In the end it may have been given up by the majority of the believers, for Ibn an-Nadīm says that it was the doctrine of the Manichaean Māsiya sect,4 ‘Abd al-ʿAbbār ascribes it to the Mīqlāṣīya-group.5

* I thank François de Blois, Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst and Christiane Reck for helpful criticism and valuable advice.
Another subject of attacks against the upholders of Manichaeism was their further concession that the world of light in its self-sufficient happiness turned out to be insufficiently prepared for its fight against darkness. It had to create its own means of martial self-defence and of self-liberation. And – we may add – it was only after the attack of the world of darkness that the world of light came to develop a counter-formation against the most forceful demoness.

What I mean is the role of the “Enthymesis of Death” and the “Enthymesis of Life” in cosmic history. The Greek word Enthymesis (ἐνθυμησίας) “consideration, esteem”, but certainly also “forming a plan”, since ἐνθυμησιμαί is i.a. “to think out a thing, form a plan”, corresponds to the Aram. mahšaštā in Mani’s mother tongue, which is “cogitatio”, but can also be rendered as “counsel, piece of advice”. The best translation is, I think, Polotsky’s “(planendes) Sinnen”. It is translated into Middle Persian as handēšīšn, Parthian andēšišn, Sogdian šmārā, Uigur sakīnc and Chinese si, into Coptic as sačne. All these words mean “thought, reflection”. Most remarkable, however, is the rendering in Arabic texts as hammāma, which is a feminine noun belonging to Arabic hammām “a person who plans, intends to do something” and meaning “planning, intending something”. This is a translation of Enthymesis. It is repeatedly attested, as hammāmatu l-maut, a literal translation of “Enthymesis of Death” (cf. note 13), and reduced to hammāma in Ibn an-Nadīm’s Fihrist. My tentative explanation of the

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13. Thus to be read as pointed out to me by F. de Blois who also reminded me of his reference to Arab. hammāmatu l-maut “the h. of death” in ‘Abd al-Ḡabbār’s Al-Muṣnī and Ibn al-Malāḥīmī’s Al-Muṣamad (JRAS 1999, p. 440, n. 1). Monnot 1974, p. 121, n. 2, still read al-hummāma. In any case the form of the word was not standard Arabic as follows from a note by Ibn Abī l-Ḥāḍīd (died 656/1258) in his Šarḥu nahgī l-balāgha: “What they [the dualists] say about the hammāma is well known. It is an expression which belongs to their technical vocabulary, but in the (correct) Arabic language we are not aware of the use of hammāma in the meaning himma (endeavour, intention etc.). What we know is himma, with kasr and fatha, and mahamma.” I owe this passage and its translation to F. de Blois.
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word as *Enthymesis* is in complete agreement with F. de Blois’ results quoted in note 13. G. Monnot who discussed its description in ‘Abd al-Ğabbār’s *Muğnī* came to the implausible derivation of the name from the ancient Accadian Ḥumbaba.

Unfortunately, *Enthymesis* is an ambiguous dogmatic term in Manichaean parlance. Beside its common, non-terminological use as “thought, reflection” it may denote both good and evil beings, and different good and evil beings at that. Most commonly, *Enthymesis* stands for the fourth limb of the human soul and, by analogy, of the five *škynt’* or “dwellings” of the Father of Greatness. It is only in the Middle Persian version of the Manichaean doctrine that its equivalent *handēšišn* ranks as the fifth limb of the soul. As a limb of the soul it can be used without an accompanying attribute. In a Middle Persian Magical text *handēšišn nxwistēn* (hndy[šyšn] nxwstyn) “First *Enthymesis*” is certainly the First Man. The King of Glory, one of the sons of the Living Spirit, is the “Great *Enthymesis*” (Coptic *pnac nsačne*). And last but not least, the deity of the Call of the Living Spirit and the Answer of the First Man is the “*Enthymesis* of Life”.

The *Enthymesis* as a part of the soul and as Call and Answer have their demonic counterparts. The opponent of the fourth limb of the soul is (mostly) called the “Dark *Enthymesis*” (Parth. *andēšišn tārīḡ*). The opposite of the “*Enthymesis* of Life” is the “*Enthymesis* of Death.” But these terms merge. The “*Enthymesis* of Death” is sometimes also called the “Dark *Enthymesis*”. Another case of terminological fuzziness is that in an Arabic source the “First *Enthymesis*”, i.e. the First Man, is called the “*Enthymesis* of Light” (*hammāmatu n-nūr*). On this
remarkable term F. de Blois kindly gives me the following translation\textsuperscript{24} from the \textit{Ṣarḫu nahği l-balāğa} by Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (died 656/1258) which, according to de Blois, is likely to go back to Abū-ī-Qāsim al-Balḫī (died 319/931): “It was reported by Zurqānī in his book of doctrines, and by Abū ʿĪsā l-Warrāq, and by al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā [an-Nau-baḥṭī], and our šaiḥ Abū l-Qāsim al-Balḫī also mentioned in his book concerning doctrines that according to the dualists the powers of resolution (‘azā’im) of the supreme Light and his desire to attack the Darkness and to invade his territory became agitated and a portion of his essence set out, and this is the agitated \textit{hammāma} in his self. And it mingled with the darkness when it attacked it and the Darkness detached it from the supreme Light and it placed itself between the Darkness and the supreme Light. And (similarly) the \textit{hammāma} of Darkness set out attacking the supreme Light, and the supreme Light detached it from the Darkness and mixed it with the particles of its self and the \textit{hammāma} of Light likewise mixed with the particles of Darkness. Then the two \textit{hammāmatān} continued to approach each other and they became mixed with parts of each other until this perceptible world was constructed from them.”

The subject of my paper is the pair of terms “\textit{Enthymesis} of Life” and “\textit{Enthymesis} of Death”. What distinguishes them from the ordinary terminological couples is that in this case the divine part comes into existence long after the demonic one, and the demonic being is not an imitation of the divine one.

The “\textit{Enthymesis} of Death” always existed and always will exist. It is the active energy which sets the world of darkness in chaotic motion, in \textit{ataktos kinesis}, as Alexander of Lykopolis says.\textsuperscript{25} The Sogdian fragment M 7800 which describes i.a. the creation of Adam and Eve calls this force which is virulent in \textit{Ṣaqlūn} and \textit{Pēsūs}, i.e. \textit{Nebrō’ēl}, \textit{mrcync šm’r’ }"z, the “\textit{Enthymesis} of Death, Āz".\textsuperscript{26} Here the “\textit{Enthymesis of Death}” is identical with the demonic greed, «désir bestial, brutal, à demi-inconscient»\textsuperscript{27} which in Iranian and Old Turkish sources is called Āz.\textsuperscript{28} The Middle Persian equivalent, \textit{hndyṣyšn ‘y mrg}, appears in de-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} I have slightly adapted his transcription of Arabic words to the system followed in this article. Text in S.H. Taqizadeh and A.A. Šīrāzi, \textit{Mani wa din-e u}, Tebrān 1335/1956-1957, no. 57.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Cf. Puech 1949, p. 165, n. 300 where further sources are quoted.
\item \textsuperscript{26} M 7800 II /R/7-8/ in Sundermann 1994, p. 45 = 2001, p. 702.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Puech 1949, p. 76.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Cf. Polotsky in Schmidt – Polotsky, 1933, p. 77.
\end{itemize}
fective context in a dialogue fragment M 299c /V/2/, called pwrsyšn 'y mry 'wrhmyzdbgd(’)[d] “The questions of Mār Ohrmezdbagdād”. The identification in Iranian texts is confirmed by the Coptic Kephalaia which mention more than once the “Hyle, the Enthymesis of Death”.29 As Āz it is (in Parthian) m’d cy dyw’n “the mother of the demons”30, (in Middle Persian) m’d ‘y wysp’n dyw’n “the mother of all demons”31. Its activities in the world of darkness are described in both texts quoted here.32 Alexander of Lykopolis makes Hyle, i.e. the concupiscientia of matter, the equal-ranking adversary of the Father of Greatness.33 The concupiscientia is apparently missing in St. Augustine’s quotations from Mani’s Epistula Fundamenti, but it is possible that it is somehow incorporated into the princeps omnium et dux of the world of darkness whose “spirit and origin” (mens atque origo) he also is.34

In its attacks on the world of light the “Enthymesis of Death” suffers more than one defeat at the hand of the divine champions, but it remains the most forceful power of darkness, and its greatest achievement is the creation or rather the procreation of the human beings. Its ultimate overcoming will only happen at the end of the world, when the Spiritus Vivens will bind the “Dark Enthymesis” (so instead of “Enthymesis of Death”), the “producer of every sin”, in the eternal prison of the bōlos.35 The “Enthymesis of Life”, however, is born in mythical history. It is the outcome of the fall and rescue of the First Man. The event is described in Theodore bar Kōnai’s epitome of the Manichaean cosmogony as an awakening call of the Living Spirit directed to the First Man who had been overwhelmed by the powers of darkness, and as the answer of the

29. Kephalaia 1940, pp. 27,5; 31,10; 74,15.
32. Cf. also Psalm-Book p. 9, 17-21: “But the Kingdom of Darkness consists of five storehouses, which are Smoke and Fire and Wind and Water and Darkness; their Counsel (saöne) creeping in them, moving them and inciting(?) them to make war with one another.”
First man. Then the text goes on (I largely follow A. V. W. Jackson’s English translation): “And the Call and the Answer joined together and ascended to the Mother of Life and to the Living Spirit. And the Living Spirit put on the Call, and the Mother of Life put on the Answer, her beloved son.” Theodore’s words are confirmed by the Manichaean cosmogonical text which Andreas and Henning published in Mit­teliranische Manichaica I where the Call is called myzdgt’c yzd “Mes­senger God” or rather “God Bringer of Good News” and the Answer ’zdygr yzd “Herald God”. Ibn an-Nadîm says: “And the Spirit of Life sent a loud call to the First Man, as fast as a lightning, and it became another god.”

The Call and its Answer, archetypal verbal expressions of the desire to redeem and to be redeemed, become a new deity or a pair of new deities, the “Enthymesis of Life”. The Coptic Kephalaia say: “The ‘Enthymesis of Life’ is the Call and the Hearing, the ‘Thought of Life’, which came to the elements.” They are invoked as a pair of deities in the Parthian fragment M 224 II /V/3-9:

hwyn d(w w)cn [w]jydg’n dw bg’n rwšm (dw) fryštg’n ‘s(t’wd)gn xrwštg ’wd pd(w’)xtg ’ndyššn’n jywnd(g)’['](n) wyrgr’ngr’n c(y)[ nrw(?)](r)[w](šn) ’wd fry(’)d[gr’n(?)] cy 7-9 f](rwx’n ᵒ)"

36. The Syriac forms are qry’ and ‘ny’. They were read by Schaeder as qaryä and ‘anya and taken as passive participles, by Jackson in the active sense as qäryä and ‘anya “caller” and “answerer”, i.e. “Appellant” and “Respondant”. That the Manichaeans understood the Syriac words as Schaeder did, follows from the Parthian translation xrwštg and pdw’xtg quoted by Jackson himself (Jackson 1932, p. 231, n. 36), as well as from the Middle Persian form xwndg “Call” which was later identified (Sundermann 1973, p. 44, n. 3). The common Coptic rendering of the twin terms as “Call” and “Hearing” does not go against this interpretation. A. Böhlig has pointed out that the Syriac ‘ny basically means “to react on a call” which could be “to answer”, “to hear” and “to obey” (cf. W. Sundermann, Eine Liste manichäischer Götter in soghdischer Sprache, in: Tradition und Translation, Festschrift Carsten Colpe, Berlin, New York 1994, p. 457 = 2001, p. 838).


39. G. Flügel, Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften, Leipzig 1862, pp. 55, 6-7; 88. Flügel’s translation is no longer tenable.

40. On the replacement of the “Answer” by “Hearing” cf. note 36.


42. For rwšn’n with mark of elision under the first n.

43. For ‘st’w’dg’n, with mark of elision under the g.
Those two chosen (or: holy) voices, two light gods, two praised angels, Xruštag and Padwaxtag, the “Living Enthymesises”, the awokeners of all Light, the help[ers of the] fortunate [...] 44

As for the position and the function of the “Enthymesis of Life” in the Manichaean pantheon, we owe to W.B. Henning the convincing observation that it is almost the same as the figure of the “Boy” or rather “Jesus the Youth” who longs for redemption and who represents the “personifizierte Erlösungswille der Seele”. 45 Concerning the “Enthymesis of Life”, I suggest extending this definition in the following way: It is the aspiration of the World Soul and its parts to be given redemption, but also the ardent wish of the divine beings in the world of light to redeem and regain their lost kin. It is desire in the best possible sense, and as such it is the opposite of the “Enthymesis of Death”. In this way we might understand the statement of Alexander of Lykopolis that “God, too, has desires (οδηγεῖται), but they are all good. And so has Hyle, but those are all bad”. 46 It is evident that it could only come into existence after the World of Light had suffered a loss, the sacrifice of the First Man and his sons, the World Soul. But in its mental force it is desire just as the “Enthymesis of Death” is.

The “Enthymesis of Life”, say the Kephalaia, “moves in all these powers”, i.e. in the elements and in the “Cross of Light”, i.e. the World Soul, in order to waken them, “give them ease and drive them to their movement”. 47 East Manichaean texts are less explicit. Some hymns, it is true, praise the “Enthymesis of Life”, such as the Middle Persian fragment M 170 = MIK 4983 /R/1-5/:

SYNC.

This strongly active one 48 and the “Enthymesis of Life” and the Nous [of Light(?)] who went out in praise and prospered in [...] 49

Another hymn, (Middle Persian) M 209 /V/8-14/, exalts the “Enthymesis of Life” as one of the members of the human soul, an evident testi-

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44. Since the “Enthymesis of Life” is often said to be given to the elements, Kephalaia 1940, p. 58,15 even speaks of the “five Enthymesises” (sacne) of the five elements.
mony to a kind of conflation of the many different Manichaean *Enthymesis* concepts:

[dryst] wys'y hndy(š[yšn] zyndg 'y 'mḥ'°°(ºº) d(r)[ys](t) wys'y pr-
m'ng '(w)zydk°°' y 'mḥ °° dryst wys'y q[ny](g) ['(st)'][ydg]' y 'mḥ °°
Welcome, our "*Enthymesis of Life*", welcome, our departed(?)
*Logismos*;°° welcome, our praised Girl.

There is also a Parthian homiletic text (M 577) 'b(r ')ndys[ysn / q]yrb(kr p)dwhn "On the supplication of the beneficient *Enthymesis*", but apart from its title next to nothing of its text is preserved.

These are, however, rather exceptions from than examples of what was common practice. They do not belie the general impression that the "*Enthymesis of Life*" was a subordinate figure among the redeeming deities of the Third Evocation.

This impression is strengthened by two further observations. First: The close affinity, already mentioned, of the "*Enthymesis of Life*" with an emanation of Jesus the Splendour, called "Jesus the Child" or "Jesus the Youth" or simply "the Small One" or "the Boy" (Coptic *lilou*, Parthian *kumār*). He is created, according to the Coptic *Kephalaia*, as Call and Hearing,°° so that N.A. Pedersen came to the conclusion that Jesus the Splendour "has 're-activated' these gods with special reference to the salvation of man."°°° In another context Call and Hearing are called father and mother of the Youth.°°°° The continuation of the work of the "*Enthymesis of Life*" by Jesus the Youth makes it likely that the

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48. Perhaps the Third Messenger since the headline of the fragment mentione him as the zyn'rys[byj].
49. So regularly in this ms. instead of 'mḥ.
50. So instead of 'wzyd.
51. Since *Logismos* is a part of the soul, the "*Enthymesis of Life*" must here be one of its parts.
53. Pedersen 1988, pp. 177-178. Cf., however, *Kephalaia* 1940, p. 61, 17-28: Jesus gave Call and Hearing to the *elements*. This would still be compatible with Pedersen's thesis, if the elements are here meant to be the parts of the human souls. E. Rose 1979, p. 110, underlines the "offenbar gewollte Dublette" of Jesus the Youth and the "Enthymesis of Life", but otherwise confines himself to state the "Unsicherheit über diese unaßbare Gestalt [of the *Enthymesis*]" which becomes already manifest by the "Häufung der Namen".
“Enthymesis of Life”, too, was a divine being, more in need of help than itself a mighty redeemer.

Second: The 16th Coptic Kephalaion deals with “Five Greatnesses who went forth against the Darkness”. The last one is Call and Hearing, “the Great Enthymesis” (sačne). It came to the elements, mixed with them just as “cool butter ... set ... in hot milk”, and “was established in silence”, and the text repeats, “in silence and quiet,” just as “silence” is an attribute of the suffering World Soul. At the end of time it will arise and stand firm in the great fire. It will gather the souls (which still remain on earth) and form the Last Statue. This seems to purport that the “Enthymesis of Life” plays a somewhat discreet role until the end of time when it becomes instrumental in building the Last Statue. But this relatively modest part played by the “Enthymesis of Life” concerns only its activities as a spiritual faculty of man. I have to repeat at this point that the Enthymesis is more than that, it is also the mythological expression of the divine will to redeem its lost light particles. As such, the “Enthymesis of Life” has become a prominent macrocosmic figure of equal rank with the “Enthymesis of Death”. And what is even more: its macrocosmic position came to be imitated by the powers of darkness in their microcosmic creation of mankind.

It is this idea which has systematically been developed in the multilingual tradition of the “Sermon on the Light-Nous”. The Parthian version of the Sermon says that thirteen divine powers emprisoned the demons in the fortified building of the world, namely the five sons of the Living Spirit, the five sons of the First Man (i.e. the elements of the text quoted above), Call and Answer and the Column of Glory. The sons of the First Man are like a prison, the sons of the Living Spirit are like gaolers, Call and Answer symbolise the ”dyšg which I translated “Nachtwächter” (night-watchmen), following its Chinese rendering he geng, according to Chavannes and Pelliot “ceux qui crient les veilles de la nuit”. The Column of Glory, however, is the “ruler of the whole world”. The demonic mirror image is listed in § 10 of the Sermon. Its members are the five limbs of the body, the five vices which oppose the parts of the soul, and “Greed (Äz) and Lust (Äwarzög) in the middle, in the manner (pad nišān) of Call and Answer”, and, on top of them, the

“devouring Fire”, the adversary of the Column of Glory. Not only did the powers of darkness imitate the order and hierarchy of the macrocosmic divinities, they even imitated the duality of Call and Answer as components of the “Enthymesis of Life” and split the figure of Āz into two demons, Āz “greed” and (MP.) Āwarzōg, (Parth.) Āwarzōg “lust”.

It is tempting to regard the tradition of the Sermon as a particular East Manichaeas development, since the Sermon is only attested in the Eastern literature. But such a conclusion would certainly be wrong. We have in fact a West Manichaeas equivalent in the 38th Coptic Kephalaion. It says: “The Messenger refined ... five intellectuals of life. Also the Call and Hearing were situated there. Now, they made six sons of the Living Spirit, together with the six sons of the First Man. Further: the Messenger placed in them the Great Nous, who is the Column of Glory, the Perfect Man.” What may have been a particular East Manichaeas development is the duplication of the demonic figure of Āz. Wherever its equivalent appears in the Kephalaia it is just “Fire and Lust (ŋōdvō)”.

If the duplication of the “Enthymesis of Death” as “Greed” and “Lust” is indeed a particular East Manichaeas phenomenon, this does not mean that it is a secondary, local development. On the contrary, since it is largely attested already in the Šābuhragan, we may assume that it was introduced by Mani himself.

In their macro- and microcosmic speculation the Manichees overcame the effect of the precedence and preponderance of evil by making the cosmic position of the “Enthymesis of Life” the model of the position of the “Enthymesis of Death”, and by subordinating the “Enthymesis of Death” as ruling in the microcosmos to the macrocosmic “Enthyme-
sis of Life”. Finally I should like to touch on the question how the two Enthymesises took shape in Mani’s creative fantasy. Was there also a precedence of one figure or the other? I rather think that both figures were created as a pair of concepts. An argument in favour of this admittedly speculative assumption is that Mani’s Enthymesises have a Gnostic background which Mani may well have been acquainted with. Henning stated already in 1947 that “in Gnostic parlance the ‘First Reflection’ (ἐνθομήσις) would be the Σοφία: in Manichaeism it should be the First Man”.63 Both statements are correct and yet they simply display the somewhat perplex observation that two totally different figures of the cosmogonical drama are given nearly the same name.64 The Gnostic Sophia, it should be explained, is the so called lower Sophia of the Valentinian myth. The lower Sophia is a personification of the desire, the undue intention of the upper Sophia in the Pleroma, who, for her part, is the ultimate emanation of the divine Fore-Father. It was her desire to behold the Father, the origin of her existence. This turned out to be an illusion, which set the whole divine world in unrest and turmoil. In this chaotic situation the upper Sophia emanated the Enthymesis. I shall cut short the following longa fabula. The passion and desire of the Enthymesises or lower Sophia materializes as the substance of this world. So the lower Sophia becomes the origin of everything material and psychic, from her four “blind passions” the four elements of the world, from her “turning back” to the Giver of her Life the psychical part in the world come into being. In the end the redeemable part of the lower Sophia is rescued and becomes the partner of Jesus.65

I think the passion and desire of the Valentinian Enthymesis and her split nature can best be compared with the Manichaean “Enthymesis of Death and Life”. Since details of the Valentinian myth were already criticised by Irenaeus of Lyons (second century AD) and Hippolytus of Rome (before AD 235), and described in the Excerpta ex Theodoto (before the death of Clement of Alexandria AD 211/215), it is reasonable to assume that Mani drew in his description of the two Enthymesises on a Gnostic, presumably a Valentinian pattern and interpreted it in a strictly dualistic way.

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63. Henning 1947, p. 43. He is indeed the First Man, cf. note 19.
64. The only difference is, so far as I know, that the Gnostic Enthymesis is not called the First Enthymesis, as Henning seems to have assumed.
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On the Legal Nasks of the Dēnkard

Maria Macuch

The Dēnkard, an encyclopaedic work on different aspects of Zoroastrianism containing a vast blend of materials from different ages and origins, is one of the most valuable extant Middle Persian sources not only for the study of religion in the Middle Iranian period, but also for investigating the history and development of Zoroastrian law. As is well known, Books 8 and 9 of this extensive source are dedicated to a more or less detailed description of the contents of the 21 Avestan divisions, or nasks, of the Sasanian canon according to their Pahlavi translation and commentary, the zand. Since the greater part of those Avestan texts which had no function in the liturgy has been irretrievably lost, the synopsis in the Dēnkard remains our main source of information not only on the original Avestan canon, but also on the legal texts included in the Holy Scripture which must have been of the utmost importance for the development of Zoroastrian jurisprudence. Apart from a few passages in the Wīdēwdād, the Hērbadestān, Nērangestān and several Avestan fragments1 in which religious questions are also discussed from a legal point of view, the summary of the Avestan legal nasks in Book 8 of the Dēnkard is in fact the only preserved source on pre-Sasanian Zoroastrian law that reflects a stage in the history of Iranian jurisprudence prior to the sophisticated legal system of the Sasanian period. But although Book 8 of the Dēnkard offers invaluable material from this point of view, innumerable difficulties have stood in the way of interpreting and translating especially the legal nasks in this important source. The shortness of the entries by the compiler, the unknown legal terminology and the often difficult style of the Dēnkard, its ambiguous phrasing and the synoptical character of the text have in fact prevented every attempt to produce a reliable translation which would avoid the pitfalls of the earlier, by now completely antiquated editions by West2 and Sanjana3. Since I have the audacity to attempt a new translation of the legal nasks,

1. For example the Pursišnīha and the Vaēdā nask, see Kellens 1989, p. 37.
2. West 1892 (reprint 1965).
I will try to sketch in the following the main problems to be taken into consideration before entering such an endeavour and to discuss several questions connected with the specific form of presentation chosen by the author4 of Dënkard 8.

According to the well known description in the introduction to Dënkard 85, the 21 Avestan nasks were divided into three main parts (bazišn): the Gathic texts (gāhān), the legal texts (dād/dādidig) and the texts pertaining to the ritual (hādamānsērīg), each of which was again divided into seven sections or nasks.6 This division into 21 sections which corresponds exactly to the number of words in the holiest prayer, the ahunawar, seems to be artificial, since the contents of the nasks - as may be discerned from their description in the Dënkard - do not always fit into the general framework of the main division to which they formally belong. Of the seven legal, or dādidig nasks, with which we are concerned here, only four are in fact dedicated to legal matters. These are, following the sequence of the Dënkard, the nīgādom, the duzd-sarnizad, the huspāram and the sagādom. Interestingly, the names of the first division, nīgādom (<*nikātama- “the lowest”)7, and the last division, sagādom (<*uskātama- “the uppermost”)8, are both constructed in a similar manner and indicate the beginning and the end of the group of the legal nasks proper respectively. The following three dādidig-nasks according to the first sequence of the legal nasks in the Dënkard9 are the

4. The final form of the Dēnkard, which as a compilation absorbed different older Middle Persian works, is attributed to two high-priests of Pars, Ādurfarbay Ī Farroxzādān who lived at the time of the Caliph Ma’mūn (813-833) and Ādurbād Ī Īmēdān from the turn of the 9th to 10th century A.D. (according to Boyce 1968, p. 44) or the second part of the 10th century (according to Tavadia 1956, p. 50). The compiler of Book 8 is not named, but he was probably the latter, Ādurbād Ī Īmēdān. On the authorship of the legal nasks see also West 1892 (reprint 1965), p. XXXVIIIff.

5. DkD 305.4ff.; DkM 677.1ff.


7. See Klingenschmitt 2000, p. 228, 5.18.1.: “Das erste Element ... ist somit als nγk e/nik e/ (vgl. ai. nīcād , unten’ usw., av. niānēc-) ... zu identifizieren ... (5.18.2) Damit ergibt sich ... eine Interpretation als nγk’hwm beziehungsweise nγk’hwm < +nikātama-, der Unterste”.

8. See Klingenschmitt 2000, p. 228, 5.18.1.: “Das erste Element ... ist somit als ... sk e/ /usk e/ < */usk e/ (vgl. av. uskāt , von oben’, usca , oben’, ai. uccā usw.) zu identifizieren. (5.18.2) Damit ergibt sich ... eine Interpretation als ... sk’hwm < */uskātama-, der Oberste’. “

9. Two different sequences are given in DkD 304.5-7/ DkM 678.7-10 in the separate listing of the legal nasks and DkD 304.9-10/ DkM 678.12-13 in the enumeration of the 21 nasks, see the following.
wīdēwdād, the only text which has been completely preserved in the Avestan original, the čihrdād and the bayān yašt. Of these the last two cannot be described as legal by any stretch of the imagination if we follow the summary in the Dēnkard, since the čihrdād, “races created” or “book of descent”, is mainly concerned with the mythical history of Iran, whereas the bayān yašt “hymn to the divinities” consists of hymns dedicated to the deities, as already indicated by the titles and the short synopsis by the author. They seem to have been included in the legal group in order to keep the balance between the formal division of the nasks into three main sections, each consisting of seven nasks. In fact, the author himself mentions that these two latter nasks were introduced by a different propitiation, which leads us to the assumption that they were originally probably not even regarded as belonging to the legal texts at all: ān iō dād pad jud šnūmanīk kard ēstēd čihrdād (ud) bayān +yašt+ “those which were added to the legal (nasks) with a different propitiation (are) the čihrdād (and) the bayān +yašt+”10. Immediately after this sentence he enumerates the 21 nasks in a different sequence (corresponding to the 21 words of the ahunawar), naming the spand (which belongs to the Gathic category of nasks) between the čihrdād and the bayān yašt, followed by the four regular legal nasks and the wīdēwdād (here juddēwdād):11 The two sequences of the legal nasks in the Dēnkard are:

1. nīgādom, duzd-sar-nizad, huspāram, sagādom, wīdēwdād (with a different propitiation:) čihrdād, bayān +yašt+.12
2. čihrdād, (spand, belonging to the gāhān-nasks), bayān +yašt+, nīgādom, duzd-sar-nizad+, huspāram, sagādom, juddēwdād13

This second sequence also indicates that the čihrdād and the bayān yašt do not really belong to the category of juridical texts, even though they are included in the legal nasks in order to fit into the neat pattern of three times seven on which the formal division of the nasks is based.

If we exclude these two nasks from the legal category because of their different contents, four juridical texts remain besides the wīdēwdād. These are, as already mentioned above, placed within their

10. DkD 304.6f./ DkM 678.9
12. DkD 304.5-7/ DkM 678.7-10.
13. DkD 304.9-10/ DkM 678.12-13
own individual framework, beginning with the nīgādom, or "lowest", and ending with the sagādom, or "uppermost". This terminology seems to point to a separate group of legal texts. Interestingly, in both sequences of the Dēnkard the wīdēwda, being concerned in its legal chapters mainly with purification rules and rites, is not included into this framework, but is placed after the group of the legal nasks proper. The separation of the wīdēwda from the other legal nasks could in fact be old, since it is possible that two categories of law were already distinguished in the Avesta, the dāta- vīdaēuva- and dāta- zaraduštri-, both mentioned repeatedly in the Yasna¹⁴, unfortunately with no explanation. However, the terminology could actually reflect an ancient division of religious law, which could explain the specific order of the legal nasks in the Dēnkard. I am indebted to Alberto Cantera, who is presently preparing an edition of the fifth and sixth chapters of the Wīdēwda, for calling my attention to this distinction and to a passage in the fifth chapter, in which an interesting explanation is noted in the commentary. In Vd 5.25 the Avestan phrase dātəm yim vīdōiiūm zaraduštri¹⁵ "this Zoroastrian law (prescribing) abjuration of the demons" is translated into Pahlavi by the corresponding dād ī jud-dēw ī zardušt and explained in the commentary as follows:

   "There is (a commentator) who says: 'this (law, that is, the wīdēwda) is about the Nasuš (= the female demon of the corpse and decay) and that (law) in the nīgādom(-nask) is about (legal) decisions and judgement, and that (one) in the huspārom(-nask) is about the power of the religious service (yazīšn)'."

This passage indicates that the commentator felt the need to distinguish between different categories of law, separating the wīdēwda, mainly concerned with purification laws and rites, from the legal texts in the nīgādom and those pertaining to the ritual in the huspārom. Not only the wīdēwda, but all these nasks together were apparently called dāta- vīdaēuva- zaraduštri-, or dād ī jud-dēw ī zardušt, "Zoroastrian

¹⁴. Y. 1.13; 2.13; 3.15; 4.18 etc.; Bartholomae 1904, 726.
¹⁵. The edition of Jamasp 1907 has the Avestan text and its Pahlavi translation in Vd 5.24 (p. 165, l. 16; p. 166, l. 9 respectively) and the commentary in the next verse, Vd 5.25 (p. 167, l. 1-3).
law (prescribing) abjuration of the demons”, which seems to have been the expression for the legal texts as a whole. There is also further circumstantial evidence that the widêwdâd was regarded as belonging to a different category of legal texts, as may be discerned from the description of the nasks given by Zâdspram:

WiZ 28.2: Dâd-iz ô dô ēk dâd ī jud-dëw i ast +widêwdâd+ ud ēk dâd ī Zardušt ī ast abârîg dâd.

“The legal (nasks are) also (divided) into two (sorts): one (is) the law (prescribing) abjuration of the demons (dâd ī jud-dëw), that is the widêwdâd, and one (is) the law of Zoroaster (dâd ī Zardušt), that is the other laws.”16

Although this is a rather late work, the division into two main bodies of legal texts by Zâdspram could be of older provenance, reflecting the dâta-vïdaëuuua- and dâta-zarâthuštî- of the Avestan sources. I should add, that the separation of texts dealing with purification matters from those concerned with legal subjects also seems to correspond to the distinction made in Pahlavi texts between two different groups of sins or misdemeanours, called winâh ī ruwânîg “sins pertaining to the soul” and the winâh ī hamêmâlân “offences regarding opponents”17. These terms indicate that religious law was divided according to the two main fields of priestly work regulating: 1. moral offences against religious prescriptions (winâh ī ruwânîg), 2. offences directed against other members of the Zoroastrian community (winâh ī hamêmâlân). It seems that it became necessary at some point to distinguish between these two main categories of law, that is between religious prescriptions, which actually belong to the field of theology (or to the ritual), and jurisprudence proper, thus paving the way for the development of law as a more or less independant discipline. This could be already indicated in the terminology mentioned above and have left its mark in the sequence of the nasks in the Dênkard.

Apart from the synoptical character of the text, one of the main general problems of translation and interpretation of the legal nasks arises

16. Gignoux/Tafazzoli 1993, p. 92-93. Again I am indebted to A. Cantera Glera for calling my attention to this passage.

17. Defined in the Frahang ī ôïm as follows: FiÔ 25a: winâh ī andar mardomân winâh ī hamêmâlân ān ī abârîg winâh ī ruwânîg xwânîhêd. “Offences against people are called ‘sins regarding opponents’. Other (offences) are called ‘sins pertaining to the soul’”
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from the comparatively late compilation of the *Dēnkard* (9th to 10th century). Due to this late date, the text contains a vast blend of material from various ages, beginning with the early, not precisely dateable Avestan texts, which are the basis of the legal nasks, up to the Pahlavi commentaries of the Sasanian period, presented from the perspective of a theologian writing in the early Muslim age. Although it is almost impossible to completely untangle the different strata embodied in the text, we will nevertheless have to distinguish between three main periods in the account of the legal nasks:

1. The oldest layer to be taken into consideration reflects the period in which the Avestan books were composed, which are, of course, the foundation of the legal nasks. To these we have, unfortunately, no direct access (apart from the few texts already mentioned above), since the compiler of *Dēnkard* 8 follows the text of the Pahlavi zand, not of the Avestan original, as he himself states.\(^{18}\) We may further assume that he had - at this late date - no knowledge of the Avestan language and was hence incapable of giving a summary of the original sources. His recount of the Avestan nasks depends completely on the interpretation of these texts by theologians and jurists of the Sasanian period, which does not make our task of reconstructing the oldest layer any easier. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw conclusions even under these difficult circumstances on the history and development of Zoroastrian law from the oldest period reflected in the rather simple regulations of the Avestan sources to the complex legal prescriptions of the Sasanian period, as I have already tried to show elsewhere.\(^ {19}\)

2. The second stratum reflects the conditions of the Sasanian period according to the Pahlavi zand in its 4th to 6th century redaction, since the compiler does not distinguish in the least between the mere translation of the Avestan original and its interpretation in the Pahlavi commentary (both called *zand*). The longer Pahlavi commentaries were - as we know from the extant zand - by no means restricted to understanding the wording of the Avestan original, but strove to link its contents to the conditions of the Sasanian period, that is, legal requirements were adapted to the radically changed age in which the Pahlavi commentaries were written. The social

\(^{18}\) In the introduction to Book 8: *DkD* 305.7; *DkM* 677.5.

\(^{19}\) Macuch (2002).
structure of Iranian society had, of course, changed completely during the long period which lay between the composition of the Avestan legal texts and the Pahlavi commentaries, so that one of the main tasks of the commentators was to adapt legal prescriptions of the Avestan text to the necessities of their own time. This is especially demonstrated by the use of specific Sasanian legal terminology which was certainly not applied in the Avestan original or its Pahlavi translation, but only in the commentary. Even though there is no distinction in the text between the translation and the commentary, it is still possible in certain cases to differentiate between the two according to the terminology used by the author, as I will try to demonstrate below with a few examples from the text.

3. The third period which probably left its mark in the text of Book 8 is the early Muslim era, in which the Denkard was compiled. Although the account of the nasks is based on the older material from the Sasanian age with the purpose of preserving the ancient Zoroastrian tradition, we cannot exclude the possibility that the choice of themes and the general theological approach to the legal divisions was partly influenced by the radical changes which took place after the islamization of Iran. Zoroastrian law was no longer practised within the framework of a central state and we must take into account that certain legal terms and juridical passages of the Pahlavi commentary were no longer understood correctly.

An edition of the legal nasks will have to take these different layers in the text into consideration. Moreover, it will have to try to distinguish between the passages in the author’s synopsis taken from the Pahlavi translation (reflecting conditions described in the Avestan original) and those taken from the commentary. This is, of course, not an easy task in those cases in which the original Avestan text is not known (that is, the bulk of the text), but, as I will try to demonstrate below, not completely impossible.

In several cases the terminology used by the author can help us to determine, whether a passage is based on the Pahlavi translation of the original or on the commentary. If Sasanian legal terminology is used in the specific sense known from the Sasanian Law-book Hazār ḏādestān and other Pahlavi legal sources we can be fairly sure that the

20. On the title of this source from the late Sasanian period, see Macuch 1993, p. 10f.
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passage is late and has been taken from the commentary to the nasks, not from the translation. The translators of the Avestan text regularly used in most cases the same Pahlavi expressions for Avestan terms, so that it is also possible to draw certain conclusions if the regular Pahlavi translation of an Avestan term is known from the extant zand. On the other hand, if Avestan terms are adapted without a translation we may be fairly sure that the content of the passage is ancient, in any case pre-Sasanian, no matter whether the text was taken from the translation or the commentary. I would like to illustrate especially the last two points with a few examples from the text.

In a passage of the *duzd-sar-nizad*, enumerating different kinds of judges (dādwar), the Avestan expression vaiūōzušt (from vaiīōo [++uuai-iiō] zuštō “agreeable to both”)\(^{21}\) is adapted in the Avestan script without a Pahlavi translation:

*DkD 280.14ff./DkM 724.5ff.*: abar dādwar ī vaiūōzušt ān ī nē vaiiūōzušt zamān ī az dādwar ī nē vaiūōzušt ān ī vaiiūōzušt.

“About the judge who is agreeable to both (litigants) (and) the one who is not agreeable to both; (on) the date (of the hearing), which (leads) from the one who is not agreeable to both (litigants) to the one who is agreeable to both.”

The Avestan expression is known from the *Frahang Ī Űm*, where it is explained as follows:

*FFO XXVIIb:* vaiīōo (++uuaiīō) zuštō ī dādwar ēn wizārēd kū xwāstār ī waromand niyōštār ī ēwarīth ast.

“The (Avestan term) vaiīōo (++uuaiīō) zuštō ‘agreeable to both’, who (is) a judge, explains this: he seeks that which is doubtful and hears that which is certain.”\(^{22}\)

The definition of the Avestan term is not very clear in these passages, but if we combine the information in both sources we may conclude that vaiīōo (++uuaiīō) zuštō designated a judge

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(1) who investigated a case impartially, distinguishing between doubtful (warōmand) and certain evidence (ēwarīh), according to the general explanation in the Fiū, 
(2) who was approved of by both litigants in a lawsuit, whose decision or judgement was accepted by the conflicting parties, who was thus “agreeable” to both the plaintiff and the defendant.

The idea that the judge should be approved of by the parties in a lawsuit leads us back to an earlier, not exactly datable, but clearly pre-Sasanian phase in the history of Zoroastrian law. As is known from the general development of jurisprudence in segmentated societies with no clear hierarchical structure, one of the first steps towards settling private feuds and conflicts peacefully instead of taking revenge was to appoint certain members of the community as mediators or umpires whose task was to conduct negotiations between the conflicting parties. Since it was in the interest of every settled community to avoid strife and violence over a long period of time, the offended party was urged to abstain from taking revenge in exchange for an amendment from the delinquent or his family, usually in form of some kind of property. This was replaced in a later stage by a fine. In order to reach an agreement, it was necessary that both conflicting parties appoint the persons engaged as mediators and approve of the settlement proposed by these. In the course of this development, the mediators were later replaced by arbitrators and finally by judges whose decisions were binding on the litigants. The Avestan term under discussion is reminiscent of an early stage in which the conflicting parties themselves chose those members of the community who should act as mediators and arbitrators, or at least agreed to accept their ruling. The person called vaīō (+uuaiō) zuštō “agreeable to both” was probably originally a mediator or arbitrator who had to be approved of by both conflicting parties, rather than a “judge” in the strict sense of the word (that is, an official who is not chosen by the litigants, whose judgement is nevertheless binding on all parties). The procedure is known from early Zoroastrian law, since it is described in the very first chapter of the Nīgādom-nāsk, the pahikār-radestān “chapter on (persons envolved in) a judicial dispute”,23 and it was still practised in late Sasanian law, as we may deduce from two expressions that point to the possibility of submitting a dispute to arbitration: the dādwar ī pēšēmār “judge of the plain-

tiff” and dādwar ī pasēmār “judge of the defendant”24. Although the terms are not explained, the construction leaves no doubt that these judges were chosen by the plaintiff and the defendant and that they were engaged as arbitrators with the task of negotiating a settlement between the parties. Needless to say, the term vaiiōzušt in the Dēnkard has been taken from the Avestan original and belongs to the oldest of the three main strata mentioned above.

Even if the Avestan term is not adapted, it is possible to determine in certain cases, whether a passage has been taken from the Pahlavi translation or the commentary according to the terminology used in the translation. For example, Zoroastrian law distinguishes already in the Avestan sources between the “thief” (tāiū- ) and the “robber” (hazanhan- ), defining the former as a person who steals secretly as opposed to the latter who steals openly and violently, using force.25 The difference between the two is also well-known in Sasanian legal terminology and the corresponding Pahlavi expressions duz(d) “thief” and appar or apparag “robber” are defined in exactly the same manner.26 Both words are also used in the Widēwdād and the Hērbedestān to translate the Avestan tāiū- and hazanhan- respectively. However, in several other passages of the zand another expression also translates the Avestan term for “robber”: the Pahlavi stahmag that designates a “violent person” or “oppressor”.27 This translation seems to indicate that the editors of the zand knew exactly that the Avestan hazanhan- was derived from hazah- “force, violence”28 and tried to find a corresponding expression in which the notion of “violence” combined with robbery would be transmitted correctly.29 In Nyāyiśn 1.14: paitīstātī tāiūanmca hazasānmcac “to withstand the thieves and the robbers” is translated by pad abāz- ēstīsīnīh ī duz(d)ān ud stahmagān “in order to restrain the thieves and oppressors”30, and Yasna 61.3 hamistayaēca ... tāiianmca hazasāmca “to suppress ... the thieves and robbers”, has pad hamestārīh ... duz(d)ān ud stahmagān “in opposition ... to thieves and oppressors”.31

A passage similar to the last example is to be found in the Dēnkard:

25. See Bartholomae 1904, 647 and 1799, with references to the sources.
26. See especially Vd 4.1 and Hēr. 6.6 (Kotwal/Kreyenbroek 1992, p. 42f.).
28. See Bartholomae 1904, 1799.
“On the appointment of a true judge who is a (notable) member of the community in opposition (pad hamēstārīh) to thieves (duzān) (and) oppressors (stahmagān) (and) killers of righteous men.”

In the light of the examples from the zand we can be fairly sure that Pahlavi stahmag in combination with duz(d) in this sentence of the Dēnkard is actually the translation of Avestan hazatjhan-. We may, moreover, also conclude that the passage in which it occurs has been taken from the translation of the text, not from the commentary, and therefore belongs to the earliest stratum described above.

The unusual use of certain Pahlavi words in the synopsis may lead us to the same conclusion. The verb abar raftan is used in the sense of “to proceed against, attack, assault”, as in the following passage of the pahikār-radestān in which the different forms of assault are even described:

DkM 693.21-694.1: ud hamāg a-pahikār-radīh kē ka ēk ast a-dādestānīhā abar raft[an] u-š ēwēnagān 5 ī hēnd andar nimūd ud kanišn zaxm ud rēš kardan őzad[an].

“Every (dispute is regarded as) a non-judicial dispute (a-pahikār-radīh) (or: private feud) when someone has proceeded (abar raft) (against another person) unlawfully. And there are five forms: threatening (andar nimūd), plucking (kanišn), wounding (zaxm), injuring grievously (rēš kardan) and killing (őzad[an]).”

It is also used in exactly the same sense in the following passage of the Wizīdagīhā i Zādspram:

WiZ 26.1-2: (1) fradom ēn a-pahikār-radīhā be (ō) kasān ma šawēd. (2) duḏīgar ka-tān a-dādestānīhā abar rawēnd +dādestānōman-dīhā+ pēš abganēd.33

32. See Macuch (2002).
33. Cignoux/Tafazzoli, op. cit. (no. 1), pp. 86-89, translate a-pahikār-radīhā by “contestation non-autorisée” which does not convey the exact legal meaning of the technical term. See Macuch (2002).
“The first (law is) this: do not proceed against other persons in the manner of a non-judicial dispute (=private feud; *a-pahikār-radīhā*). The second (is) this: if (others) go forward against you (*abar rawēnd*) in an unlawful manner, proceed (against them) according to the law!”

In another passage of the *Dēnkard*, however, *abar raftan* is used in the completely different sense of “to copulate with, have sexual intercourse” which is strange, since we would normally expect the verb *gādan* in this context:

*DkD* 288.16-18/DkM 714.17-19: *abar wināh (i) kanīg pad kanīg ayāb any čiš (i) zindag ayāb guftan kū tō ō ān ī man xwāh duxt abar rawē man-iz ō ān i tō abar rawom.*

“On the sin of (pairing off) a girl with a girl or with any other living being; or saying: ‘Have intercourse with my sister (or) daughter (*abar rawē*) and I will have intercourse with yours’ (*abar rawom*).”

This use of *abar raftan* would seem indeed unusual if it did not correspond exactly to the Pahlavi translation of Av. *upaēta-* “copulation”, which is *abar rawišnīh*34. This translation of the Avestan word could even possibly be the result of a correct analysis of *upaēta-* as *upa-* + *ita-* (from *i-* “to go”) by the editors of the *zand*.35 In any case, the use of *abar raftan* in this special sense instead of *gādan* seems to indicate that the expression was taken directly from the Pahlavi translation of the text, not the commentary, even though we cannot be completely sure that it was used in this sense only in the *zand*.

I hope to have shown with these few examples that it is possible to determine to a certain extent, whether the author of *Dēnkard* 8 used the Pahlavi translation or the commentary for his synopsis. This is, of course, not possible in all cases. But, as already pointed out, a careful scrutiny of the text on this basis is our only hope of untangling the different strata involved in this important source. An analysis of the various layers in the text of *Dēnkard* 8 is in my opinion of utmost importance not only for our knowledge of the original contents of the Avestan

34. See Bartholomae 1904, 390.
legal texts, but also for attempting a reconstruction of the history of Zoroastrian jurisprudence from its meagre beginnings to the sophisticated system of the late Sasanian period.

Abbreviations and References

Bartholomae, Chr. 1904. Altiranisches Wörterbuch, Straßburg.


*WIZ Wizidagihā ī Zādspram*

*Y Yasna*

*Yt Yašt*
Some Aspects of the Institution of *stūrīh*

Bodil Hjerrild

In the Zoroastrian community of the Sasanian period, as in later periods when the Zoroastrians were a minority community, the acquiring of an heir was of overwhelming importance, indeed, it was an integral part of the Zoroastrian philosophy of life. Most societies, of course, stress the importance of heirs, but the Zoroastrians carried the idea to the extreme. A person with any property to leave simply must not die without having secured some kind of successor. This is closely bound up with the religious tenet that a man must leave a successor to attend to the rituals for the dead in order to smooth the path for the soul after death, and, most important, to carry on his name.

There is a secular side to the question also. The survival of the name, obviously, depended on the survival of the family. To secure this it was necessary to have a successor who would manage the inheritance in a proper manner, thereby preserving the influence and prestige of the family. Personal property law, of which, of course, inheritance law is one of the basic elements, is at the center of Zoroastrian family law of the Sasanian period.

The Sasanian law book *Matiyān ī hazār Dādistān* bears ample witness to the fact that the laws of inheritance and succession occupy an extremely prominent position in Zoroastrian society. These are furthermore subject to very detailed regulations, and although the laws have their base in Zoroastrian religious practice, the secular implications receive far greater emphasis.

The system of marriage- and succession laws was exceedingly complicated. One of the exceptional points in Sasanian inheritance law was that the succession was direct, which means that in case a person had no heir, the succession and inheritance would *not* automatically go to male

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relatives of testator after the agnatic model, as for instance in Roman Law. This fact is behind extremely inventive remedies employed to secure the succession. Zoroastrian inheritance law does not recognize the principle of primogeniture and accordingly brothers inherited equal shares, although the eldest was usually given the responsibility and advantage of becoming the guardian of the children under age and the women of the family, who incidentally were also entitled to inherit. The simplest way of procuring heirs/successors for a man was to enter a pātixšāy-marriage: that is a marriage in which the wife is under her husband’s guardianship. She is then the mistress of the house, and the wife and husband inherit each other. The children are the legal heirs to their parents’ property, the sons being the successors of the father. If this failed, or sometimes even if it did not, possibly as a safeguard in an age of high mortality rate, there were other possibilities. A man’s pātixšāy-wife might contract another marriage, either while the husband was still alive or after his death. This marriage was entered by a special contract and called cakar-marriage. The issue of this marriage was the legal heir and successor of the woman’s pātixšāy-husband. Another way of procuring heirs for a man without male issue was to let this man’s daughter or sister contract a marriage of which the issue would become the legal heir of her father or brother. In this case the woman was called ayōkēn (Erbtochter). In such a marriage, as well as in the cakar-marriage, the couple did not inherit one another, and the man did not assume guardianship of his wife, although they were living together and must have had joint economy in their daily life.

Adoption was another possible way of procuring an heir, just as we know from Roman law.

In this paper I shall focus upon the institution of stūrīh that was used as yet another way of providing heirs. M. Macuch has treated this in her seminal commentary to MHD and also Schirazi-Mahmoudian. I intend to make a few suggestions concerning the legal, economic and social implications of the institution.


Some Aspects of the Institution of stūrīh

To install a stūr, a proxy, whose function it was to provide the man for whom he/she was stūr with an heir/heirs the testator had to set a sum apart for the purpose, and designate a person to fill this role. This function is corroborated indirectly in MHDA 35.14-16, citing a sentence of Vēhšapuhr (he was magupatān magupat in the time of Khosroe I (531-579 A.D.). It says: “Those who become my children and descendants because of the stūrīh for my honorable name shall conduct the task in such a manner”. The stūr was the curator of the fortune that went with this function, but the fortune was not his to dispose of, only the interest of the fortune, bar, which is mentioned for instance in

MHDA 48.1-2: u Mihrēn bē cigōn tāi zindak (2) u ān x'āstak nēm bar burt4 dastavarīh būt ēnyā-š pas hac ān stūrīh nēst.

“And for Mihrēn, except for as long as he lived and got the income from that fortune (and) held authority, thereafter that stūrīh is not his.” When a son had been born and reached the age of maturity, he would be the successor and heir to the stūrīh-property. It means that the stūrīh-fortune was placed in a trust. This is an early example of what we today recognize as a trust or fund. The stūrīh trust was designed to last for one generation, only, although in one particular case we learn about a man who might accept a stūrīh on behalf of his yet unborn pātīxsāy-child:

MHDA 45.17-46.2: u ka-c mart 1 x'āstak pat stūrīh ō katakx'atāy dahēt katakx'atāy (46.1) bē patigirēt [ī pātīxsāyīhā ī katakx'atāy pas hac ān nax'ist zāyēt ka dātistān ōgōn ī]5 (2) pat ān stūrīh andar apāyēt ān stūrīh nē pātīxsāy bē ka kunēt.

“And also if a man gives a fortune in stūrīh to a lord of a house (and) the lord of the house accepts it, thereafter the first pātīxsāy-child who is born to the lord of the house is obliged to undertake the stūrīh, provided the decision is (made) in such a manner that it is necessary for that stūrīh .”

Whether the father in spe acted as a kind of pre-stūr, before the child could take over and the child’s child would be the successor, is difficult to verify, but it seems an indication that the period of trust might be stretched longer than one generation.6

4. In the MS: x1 and super lineam: x2.
6. M. Macuch 1993 p. 350 is of the opinion that the stūrīh is given by the man as a gift to the lord of the house for whom the stūrīh should be carried out.
The *stūrīh* seems to me to be a contrivance to surmount some of the technical deficiencies of the inheritance laws. It was the means of providing a man with an heir and successor in case he had no son, since the inheritance would not automatically be transferred to any other family members, if no direct heir existed. If, however, the fortune involved was less than the requirements for a *stūrīh*, the fortune would be transferred to his brother:

*MHD* 43.8-9: *ka mart pat baxt šavēt u-š xʾāstak 80 nēst ham⁷ xʾah (9) u brāt hast u ham pat dūtak ī kas stūr u xʾah kas zan ān xʾāstak ā brāt.*

“If a man departs this life, and his fortune does not amount to 80 (and) he has a sister as well as a brother, and both are stūr in someone’s family, and the sister is someone’s wife, the fortune (will pass) to the brother”.

Also it was not dependant on his having a wife of fertile age (*cakar*) or a daughter or sister who could be his *ayökēn*. The task of being *stūr* could be undertaken by women and men, family members or strangers, as it for example appears from:

*MHD* 82.10-12: *u ka gōbēt kū-m frazand ī hac tō zāyēnd pat xʾāstak ī man stūr kart hēnd ē (11) ka ṃ zan ī xʾēš u ē ka ṃ ān ī hac šahr gōbēt hamāī pus u duxt bahr rāst u hamāk (12) pat stūrīh pātīxšāyōmand dāštān.*

“And if he (the testator) says: ’By me are the children who will be born by you made stūrs of my fortune’, whether he says so to his own wife or to a fellow-countrywoman, sons and daughters have always the same share and all shall be considered authorized with regard to that *stūrīh*’.

It seems, though, that relatives were preferred, at least if the *stūr* was the only means of securing the succession:

*MHD* 44.2-3: *stūrīh ka xʾēšāvand hēnd u nē xʾahēnd ādēhīk cigōn (3) hac dātīstān nāmak ī pat gurgān kartak sahist kū paitāk⁹ ā gumārišn.*

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8. M. Macuch 1993 p. 530 corrects, rightly I think, MS 2 to ṃ.
"If relatives exist, but do not want stūrīh, a fellow-countryman shall be appointed, such as it appears from Dātistān Nāmāk which is practiced in Gurgān".

Here relatives exist, but do not want to comply, whereas they do not exist in the following paragraph:

MHD 87.12-14: ka x'ešāvand nabānāzdišt nē paitāk (13) dūtak katakānūṅk pat bē vitīrišnīh stūrīh ō har kē kāmēt dāt pātīxšāy ka x'ešāvand (14) stūrīh nē x'āhēnd an-ham-sardārīh an mart ī įstavār gumaṛtan pātīxšāy ĭhēnd.

"If no relatives or next-of-kin are known, in case of death, the lady of the house is authorized to give stūrīh to whom she may wish. If relatives do not want the stūrīh, they (the authorities) are authorized to appoint another reliable man (as stūr) without appointing him guardian at the same time".

Both sentences give instructions regarding the course of action in case no relative could be found to undertake the stūrīh.

The testator was able to designate his successor himself in which case he was called a stūr ī kartak and if he died without having done so, and provided that his fortune was of the required size, the authorities would appoint a stūr for him, a so-called stūr ī gumārtak.

The institution had considerable advantage inasmuch as it was in reality the only way in which a testator could leave at least part of the inheritance to whom he wished, because it was possible to designate a stūr or for that matter several, even if the testator had pātīxšāy-sons. The opportunity to give away property purely as gifts existed, but the giving in form of stūrīh would pledge the receiver to provide the reciprocal gift in the form of successors and the continuation of testator’s name.

Compare this to the fideicommissa of Roman law, which are known from an early date and were legalized by the emperor Augustus. The core of this institution was in many ways the same as the stūrīh in Sasanian law: it enabled a testator to leave his fortune to whom he wished and to tie it up in a trust. In Roman law, however, the trust was not restricted to last for one generation only, but Justinian made a decree that property might not be tied up beyond the fourth generation.10 For the Romans the institution was not necessary in order to provide heirs in

the same degree as in Iran, because inheritance would automatically be
transferred to agnatic relatives, if no direct heir existed.

The institution of stūr̄h differed in a number of ways from the other
legal measures such as ayökēnīh, cakar-marriage and adoption which
all had the purpose of providing heirs to a man without one. In the first
place the monetary circumstances were not the same. An ayökēn-
daughter/sister and a cakar-wife did not require a certain amount of
money, but to institute a stūr̄h one must place a minimum sum of 80/60
(stēr-drahml) in a trust fund. The interest of this would become the
payment to the stūr̄h, and the sum would be transferred as personal prop-
ty to the heir at his coming of age.

In many instances the required amount was probably exceeded, and a
larger sum of 200 (stēr-drahml?) is mentioned in MHD 47.15-48.2, but
it is nevertheless of great interest to ascertain how much the minimum
amount meant in purchasing power, in order to estimate the attraction
of becoming a stūr̄h on the minimum amount.

A drahm was of approximately the same value as 4 gr. of silver, and
a stēr was four times a drahm which means that 80 st. was 1280 gr. of
silver. The text sometimes gives drahm (ZWZN), but most often it does
not give anything but the number. If it is drahms the amount was equiv-
alent to 320 gr. silver. In MHD 54.13 the estimated value of a grown
slave is 200 st./dr. It seems then that the minimum amount required for
a stūr̄h is a comparatively small amount of money. If the amount was
considered small, it is no wonder that people would refuse to accept the
task of a stūr̄h, and there are several paragraphs concerned with the
way of refusal, but it had to be done in advance. You could not accept
and then refuse:

MHD 82.12-14: ka ̄ o mart 1 gōbēt kū stūr̄h (i) man kun adak-iš (13)
x'ästak 60 pat stūr̄h aviš dāt bavēt. U ka ̄n-ic patigrift (apāc) ēstāt
nē pātixšāyōmand12 (14) ān i ēk apāc ēstēt pat sāl drahnāīi mār-
garz(ān).

“If he (the testator) says to a man: ‘You shall undertake my stūr̄h’, then
there will be given him a fortune of 60 for the stūr̄h, and if he also has
accepted it, then he is not authorized to step back. He who steps back, is
after one year guilty of a margarzān-sin.” (See also MHD 45.17-46.2,

12. prp. ŠLYT" for MS ŠLY".
Some Aspects of the Institution of stūrīh

p. 3). One who violates an agreement of stūrīh is considered on the same level as one who buries bodies and other heinous sinners (MHDA 15.9-12).

For the ayōkēnīh and cakarīh only the women of the family, the pātixśāy-wife and –daughter/sister could function. These functions are well known from other ancient cultures, vide epíkleros in Greece, the putrikā in India,13 the levirate in GT (5. Mos. 5-10 where the male part of the levirate marriage must be a brother of the deceased), and the stūrīh may function the same way. A daughter can be made stūr for her father and a wife for her husband. In such a case one may well ask, what is the difference? In the later law texts, Rivāyat ṭ Ėmēt ṭ Āsvahāštān and Āturfarnbag and Farnbag Srōs14 one finds the expression ayōkēn-stūr. However, just as a wife or daughter might be stūr, so could a pātixśāy-son who would be successor anyway. This is exemplified in:

MHD 82.16-17: u ka zan ṭ xēēš gōbēt kū frazand ṭ hac tō zāyēnd stūrīh (i) man ē kunēnd (17) nipišt kū ka pus 2 duxt 2 zāyēt u pus 1 u duxt 1 stūrīh kunēnd apārīk nē kunēnd.

“And if he (the testator) says to his own wife: ‘The children who are born of you shall undertake my stūrīh’, it is written that if two sons and two daughters are born, one son and one daughter shall undertake the stūrīh, the others shall not”.

Accordingly, even if the stūrīh at times seems to function in the same way as the other institutions, it is different. The institution of stūrīh is quite a sophisticated legal measure characterized by the fixed amount of money placed in a trust. It could be transferred to anybody according to the wishes of testator: a member of his family, male or female, or a person outside the family, also male or female.

Another special feature of this institution is that it does not have to be set up in order to procure children; a stūrīh could be instituted to uphold a fire in one of the fire temples for the testator.15 In this case the stūr would be the manager of the money earmarked for the maintaining of the fire. One remarkable fact is that the testator might be the stūr him-

self. This also points to a fundamental difference between *stūrīh* and *cakarīh* and *ayōkēnīh*.

The man who installs a fire with a *stūr* will have done so to further his credit in the afterlife, but the act will also bring prestige to him in the society he lived in. A man who can afford to give achieves greater prestige and influence than those who can only receive. The gift is a bond between two parts, and the receiving one is pledged to reciprocate by work, by producing an heir, by loyalty and so on. The *stūrīh* is a gift that places the receiver under an obligation to fulfill the requirements stated in the contract. In return he/she would receive an income, and if the *stūr* was a man, he might undertake several *stūrīhs*, and make a living that way.

In continuation of the discussion of the size of the fortune one might suppose that the appointment of *stūrs* would be of greater frequency and greater importance to the higher classes than the lower ones. A well-to-do family had to be careful, how the inheritance was apportioned, if a large fortune or many acres of land were involved. The minutely detailed instructions about the installment of a *stūr* on the basic economical requirement seem nonetheless to point to a widespread use of the institution also among those of limited means. Perhaps it was designed especially for the rural middle classes.

The *stūrīh* had many facets, as I hope to have shown even if in this short form, and was so flexible an institution that it must have been applicable in a number of divers instances. The question is to what purposes in the social context this institution might be employed, and I would like to make a few suggestions based on the rules that must have been made as a reflection of the actual circumstances in the society:

a) As the personal property right was the essential foundation of the Iranian society, the way of preserving property was of fundamental importance. Take for instance a lord of a house who controlled the fortune of his own and of those to whom he was guardian. He could use this institution to decide how the property was to continue after his death by dividing the property into *stūrīhs* and install the persons he thought would be the best managers as the curators, *stūrs*, of parts of his fortune. In this respect it is interesting to see that also the testator’s sons might become *stūrs*, whereas one should have thought that their general right of inheritance would be enough. But a testator had the opportunity of dealing out extra portions of property by way of *stūrīhs*. In this way the testator might cause one of his heirs to be the
one with the greatest influence over the family property. He could personally choose how the estate was to continue after his death and he could try to control the future of the family property. Even while he was still alive, the institution of stūrīh gave testator the implement to rule his family, because the members might contend to be accepted as stūrs, or they might contend to avoid the responsibility of a tied-up property.

b) If we look at the family in a wider sense, the institution had an advantage as a means to tie relatives, who were not directly entitled to inherit, to a man’s family. In this way a man who needed a successor could install his brother or cousin as stūr and so let his name live on through the children of his own male relatives, and have his property stay in the family he was descended from. Also, if he was not actually in want of heirs, he might do the same, provided he was rich enough, in order to strengthen the ties between him and his male relatives. Quite a number of paragraphs concerned with stūrīh deal with women as stūrs. Within the family sphere it could not only be used to give extra portions to the women who already were entitled to inherit (that is wife and daughters), but the lord of the house might, by this means, introduce his sisters or more distant female relatives into his household. The interest of the fortune put aside for the stūrīh would give her a personal income, and apart from that she was bound to live in the family, to work in the household, to produce children who would belong to the family and thereby enlarging the members of the working unit a family was. If the persons were chosen with care they would be of benefit to the common welfare.

c) The institution provided the possibility of making connections with persons outside the family, both men and women. There could be two reasons for this: one, that it might be of value to a family to establish connections with another family for business reasons, for instance, and for this purpose offer a stūrīh to a member of the other family. Another obvious reason would be that a man’s line would die out, if no outsider was brought in to continue the name and perform the rituals for the dead. There are several paragraphs that mention a testator without male offspring or offspring altogether. In these cases the institution is a heaven sent or man made opportunity to enlarge the family, and to secure its further existence. The fact that a great many paragraphs deal with the lack of heirs does not necessarily mean that the birth rate was low, but it does reveal the attitude towards such a contingency which certainly was intensified by a high mortality rate.
To sum up: This institution might by its very flexibility be used not only as a simple way of providing heirs, but also to enlarge a family, to make connections with other families, to attain the benevolence of the clergy by installing fires and to help poorer relatives or strangers by attaching them to the family, always provided, of course, that the promised return was effectuated. A flourishing family with able persons working on the fields or in commerce, and in the household, the ability to take part in the communal society in a large number, the financial ability created by a large working unit all combined to make up the prestige of a lord of the house and thereby of all the family members. Prestige was necessary for survival, at least at a certain level of society. We are aware of this phenomenon in our times, too. A businessman lives very much on his prestige among his confederates, and this is in evidence in the academic world as well. The connections that one makes by being a distinguished member of society will ease the way for new enterprises and so it was, of course, also in Sasanian Iran. And prestige then built on a large and influential family who knew how to hold onto its wealth. Stūrīh was an important part of that game.
How has the Avestan *xvarenah* been interpreted in the philosophical Pahlavi Texts?*

*Philippe Gignoux*

One of the major religious concepts in Zoroastrianism is the notion of Avestan *xvarenah* to which a very large literature has been devoted. My aim here, however, is not to expatiate further on this, but rather to try to show how this central Iranian notion has been understood in the later religious texts, in particular *Dēnkard III*.

I. The Avestan data

In his edition of Yasht 19 dedicated in its most part to the *xvarenah*, H. Humbach, says that this term denotes “a half-personified light phenomenon of heavenly origin, a sort of halo or nimbus”. The word is usually rendered as ‘Glory’, or in W. Hinz’s version as ‘Gleam’. Humbach (p. 14) argues that both translations seem accurate from an etymological point of view, but neither addresses the essential meaning and the nature of the phenomenon. Humbach notes that he himself renders the adjective *duš.xvarenah* as “inglorious”, but that the meaning is rather “of evil personality”.

Humbach defines two kinds of glory, the *Kavyan khvarenah*, i.e. the Glory of the Kavyan dynasty, and the *Akhvareta khvarenah*, the Unappropriated Glory, a definition that is controversial. He rejects A.

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*I am particularly happy that the present colloquium is dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague Ahmad Tafazzoli who so prematurely was lost to us because of religious fanaticism.*

1. Humbach 1998, p. 14. For the numerous works on the theme, see the bibliography, which is, however, far from being complete.
Hintze’s interpretation of the expression which in his view makes no sense.4

The second kind of glory was also created by Ahura Mazda, and the Good and the Evil Spirit were in conflict for the appropriation of the Kavyan Glory lost by Yima.5

In Yasht 19, Humbach distinguishes five kinds of the xvarenah possessed by different categories of beings:

1. the Kavyan glory of the divinities, Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas;
2. the unappropriated glory, which the two Spirits contend for;
3. the glory of the Kavyan dynasty;
4. the glory of the eschatological Saoshyant.

In fact, the Zamyâd Yasht describes the origin of the xvarenah, but does not explain what it is.

In his lectures at the College de France, Jean Kellens6 analyzed the same Yasht, and in line with Humbach, identified the origin of the xvarenah as follows:

“Le xvarenah appartient aux dieux et, à partir d’un certain moment de l’histoire du monde, aussi aux nations iraniennes et à Zarauštra (Yt 19.79)... Les héros humains, quels qu’ils soient, n’en jouissent qu’à titre d’attribut temporaire.” Thus, ownership of xvarenah is passed on to Zoroaster.

Kellens emphasises that the action of the xvarenah is presented in the tripartite time perspective: past/present/future. This perspective is a constant form of rhetoric in the Avestan and Pahlavi literature.7

Kellens also explains the threefold sin of Yima but reminds us that he thrice recovered the xvarenah. But we do not know precisely what Yima’s sin was: a lie, or as Panaino suggests,8 a fault committed in con-

4. Hintze 1994, pp. 237-240. See now Elfenbein 2001, p. 494, on that word which he translates “unfassbar”, and Sims-Williams 2000, pp. 5-6, who believes that the new Bactrian documents can help us define the real meaning of the term, which he translates as “the unpossessed Khwarnah”.
6. Kellens 1997-1998, p. 737: for him, the three editions of the text are not one too many, but “ces efforts convergents ont renouvelé d’une manière extraordinaire notre connaissance du Yasht 19.”
nection with the triple broadening of the earth that Yima had undertaken.

For Kellens, the aim of the Yasht 19 is to describe the history of the quality and of the temporary attribution of the xvarenah from the beginning of universe to the end of time.

Concerning the Kavis, Kellens thinks that the “royal interpretation of the figure of the Kavis is based essentially on the later tradition which makes them indisputably kings”, and he adds: “The history of the possession and of the temporary attributions of the xvarenah constitutes a mythical history of Iran, from one end to the other, from Gayômard to Vîštāspa”.

It is interesting now to see how the notion of xvarenah and its relation to Yima and to the Kavis was developed in the religious Pahlavi texts.

II. The philosophical concept of Xvarrah

A lot of the chapters of *Dēnkard III* deal with our subject: nos. 129, 133, 283, 309, 334, 355-356, 360-361, 363, 366, 382, 412b, but some of them have only a few allusions to the xvarenah.

In his Zurvân, R.C. Zaehner had shown that the xvarenah was identified with xvēskārīh. Reminding us that Bailey had devoted 77 pages of his *Zoroastrian Problems* to the semantic development of Xvarr, he writes that “in Pahlavi Xvarr is identified with xvēskārīh, that is, literally ‘own-work’.” Basing his view on DKM 232.22 to 233.1 (chapter 212) he thinks that the own-work of man is “rather the correct use of his humanity, that is virtue, the incorrect use of it (duš-farragîh) constitutes vice”.

Zaehner adds that he can find no single English word to translate Xvarr: “Personality approximates to it quite closely, but this again does not convey the sense of action implicit in xvēskārīh.” Furthermore, he suggests that “Xvarr can be almost exactly rendered by the colloquial

English ‘job’, which means both an occupation and what a man is intended to do and ought to do. This is not to suggest that Xvarr has not other meanings in other contexts, which, of course, it has”.14

Whatever the relevance of these suggestions may be, it seems to me that Zaehner did not notice that the chapter 356 of Dēnkard III gives us an explicit definition of xwarrah in its relation to xwēškārīh:

Dādar dahišn ō kār dād ō har dahišn xwēš kār paydāgēnīd ān kār ī pad dahišn rawāgīh xwarrah ast ī āy dahišn u-š mādag cand rawāgīh ī kār pad-iš ān ī tan-(ēw)

“The Creator has created the creature for action. To each creature he revealed his own action (xwēš kār); that action, which is for the propagation of the creation, is the xwarrah of this creature and its substance is equal to the propagation of the action in which (is involved) a single body...”15

This philosophical passage clearly indicates that the aim of the xwarrah is to increase the good creation, an action that is the reason for the creation of humanity by Ohrmazd. It is a philosophical definition of xwarrah, not ethical as explained by Zaehner.

Chapter 361 completes this definition:

Hād arz ī mardom cand-iš xwarrah mād u-š xwarrah ī mād cand xwēškārīh16 u-š xwēškārīh mahist abar xwarrah mād.17

“The value of man is equal to the substance of his xwarrah and the substance of his xwarrah is equal to his own action and his own action is superior to the substance of xwarrah.”

By contrast, the non-activity of man results in the lack of xwarrah:

kāstagīh ī-š arz az kamīh ī-š xwarrah ud kamīh ī-š xwarrah cand-iš a-xwēškārīh u-š a-xwēškārīh mahist abar zad (?) xwarrahīh.18

15. DKM 341.11-14.
17. DKM 344.11-13.
18. DKM 344.19-21.
“The diminution of his value (comes) from the paucity of his xwarrah and the paucity of his xwarrah is equal to his non-own action and his non-own action is superior to the (killed?) xwarrah”.

Also, two kinds of xwarrah exist to which are opposed two kinds of duš-farragīh (the ‘evil personality’ as defined by Humbach). We see this distinction in chapter 309:

Hād xwarrah jahāg (?) abar mardom abarīgtar ēn dō ēwēnag: ēk ē purr-nērōgīh ē asn-xrad pad-iš ud ēk *awestwarīhī tuxšāgīh ē pad xwēskārīh ud ēn ē duš-farragīh19 ē dō padīrag ēn ēk wizīr padišīh ē mūdag waran ud ēk xwarrah murnjēnīdār aigahānīh ē az xwēskārīh.20

“The highest xwarrah occurring for human beings has these two forms: one (is) the fullness of power in which (is) innate wisdom, and the second (is) the firm energy in the own-action; but the bad xwarrah has two contraries: one (is) the choice of the (destroyed?) lust and the second (is) the corrupter of the xwarrah and the laziness from the *non-own-action.”21

Like the Avesta, the Dēnkard affirms that it is Ohrmazd who created the xwarrah, as we can see in chapter 363. Here the xwarrah is seen in relation to semen (tōhmag), and virtues such as generosity, justice, gratitude and energy are shown to depend on the “own-action”. So the xwarrah could not be considered as one of the virtues, but as their root, as Zaehner proposed:

xwarrah āfurāg Dādār Ohrmazd... baxšīšn framān ē ē tōhmag <ud> andar tōhmag ē tan mad zamān ē ēn ē kār pad ēn xwarrah andar ēn tōhmag pad ēn tan rāyēndān abāyišnīg ud parvārag ud pāyag ī xwarrah abar tōhmag ud tan ē andar xrad pēšōbāy ud rādīh ud rāstīh ud spāsdārīh ud hunsandīh ud tuxšāgīh ī pad xwēskārīh.22

19. MacKenzie, CPD 29, translates this word by ‘misfortune’, which does not render the concept exactly.
20. DKM 312.10-14.
21. It seems to me that we have to rectify xwēskārīh into a-xwēskārīh. The translation by de Menasce 1973, p. 297: “la paresse à faire son devoir” does not fit.
22. DKM 347.6 and 10-15.
“He who produced xwarrah is the Creator Ohrmazd... The order of distri­bution, which goes to the seed and in the seed to the body, is the Time of the action by the xwarrah in the seed, so that it (the former) is neces­sary for the ruling of the body. What fosters and protects the xwarrah in the seed, and the body, which is (comprised) inside it, is wisdom the guide, and generosity, rectitude, gratitude, satisfaction and energy which (is) in the own-action.”

The end of the chapter deals with the Frašgird period, when the agents of the Renovation will be ‘xwarrahomand’, i.e. endowed with xwarrah, a condition necessary for the success of the Frašgird.

The chapter 409 also links xwarrah and xwēškārīh:

...xwarrah xwēškārīh harwisp šnāyēnīdārīh abzār... xwarrah xwēškārīh *paywandīh paydāg ud ēn dō hunărān hammis abārīg ī nēkīh zahāg ī ast rāy ud xwarrah zrēh pad Dādār Ohrmazd rāyōmand ud xwarrahōmand u-š brāh ud bām paywandišnīg ī dahiōnān.

“The own-action of xwarrah is the instrument of all happiness... It is revealed that the xwarrah is linked to the own-action, and these two arts together with the other beneficial elements, that is the armour of wealth and xwarrah in the Creator Ohrmazd rich and endowed with xwarrah, and its blaze and brightness (i.e. of xwarrah) can be linked to the creatures...”

We see in this last part that the xwarrah is clearly a luminous phenomenon as it is also stated in many other religious texts.

We have noted that xwarrah can both increase and decrease. The short chapter 355 explains the conditions in which this occurs. This is why the xwarrah needs to be protected and safeguarded:

23. De Menasce 1973, p. 328: “l’énergie à faire son devoir” does not fit, because we have not to do with one ethical concept. The translation by Zaehner, p. 370, is also not accurate: “on its proper object”.
24. DKM 394.7 and 8-12.
25. I do not think that the translation by de Menasce 1973, p. 368, “xvarrah-devoir”, is acceptable, for in my opinion the two words here constitute a syntagm.
26. Rather than ‘virtues’, as translated by de Menasce, ibid.
27. Or the ‘ocean’, as understood by de Menasce, ibid. But the two translations (Zaehner and de Menasce) are wrong: the xwarrah cannot generate the xwarrah!
28. I cannot quote here the numerous works on the luminous aspect of xwarrah, but those of Duchesne-Guillemin and Gnoli are in the bibliography below.
Hād xwarrah *pânagēnāgtar î xwarrah bowandag-menēdan î xwarrah baxtār ēstīgān dāstān î-š spās ud tuξšāgīh î pad xwēξkārīh ud rānēnāgtar tarımēnēdan î xwarrah framōšīdan î-š spās ud waṣtan ŏ a-xwēξkārīh.29

“The best protector of the xwarrah is perfect thinking about the bestower of the xwarrah and firmly being grateful towards it and the energy in (its) own action. But the most chaser (of the xwarrah) is despising of the (bestower of) the xwarrah and oblivion of the gratitude towards it and turning to the non-own-action.”

Chapter 334 is, like chapter 360, concerned with the same theme:

Hād kadārīzē pāsīh î xwēξ dām xwarrah pad abēzāg dōstīh ud stāyišn ud spās î xwarrah Dādār ud ka framōšīdār bawēd î dōstīh stāyišn ud spās î xwarrah Dādār î-š *histåt bawēd xwarrah a-pās u-š murnjēnīd xwarrah pad a-pāsīh ud ān î xwarrah murnjēnīdārīh druz.30

“Whatever the keeping of the xwarrah possessed by creatures may be, it is by pure friendship, praise and gratitude towards the Creator’s xwarrah; but when there is oblivion of friendship, praise and gratitude towards the Creator’s xwarrah, which they abandon, so the xwarrah will be without protection and destroyed because of the non-protection and that action of destroying the xwarrah is the druz.”

The xwarrah is likely to increase or diminish, which means that an efficient safeguard is needed, since all creatures are doomed to life or death, as the title and contents of chapter 366 imply:

Abar xwarrah zīndagīh ud margīh ud rasišn ud anābišn. Hād xwarrah zīndagīh az xrad frazānagīh u-š margīh az waran xwad-dōsagīh u-š waxšīšn az dōstīh ud nazdīkīh ud ham-pursagīh ŏ ān xradīg ud frazānag abzōnīg mard u-š nirfšīn az dōstīh ud nazdīkīh ud ham-pursagīh î ān karb duš-āgāh ud kahistag mar.31

“On the life and death of xwarrah,(its) coming and destruction. The life of xwarrah (comes) from wisdom and intelligence and its death from concupiscence and egotism, and its increase from friendship and prof-

29. DKM 341.5-8.
30. DKM 344.5-9.
31. DKM 350.11-17.
imity and communication with the wise, intelligent and good man. Its decrease (comes) from friendship, proximity and communication with the ignorant karb and the least mar.”

III. The possessors of the xwarrah

a) As we have seen, Ohrmazd is the supreme owner of the xwarrah, as are the Fravashis alluded in chapter 382. These possess the xwarrah to regulate the sky, the wind, the waters, the earth, the motion of the sun, moon, and stars. They are the strongest (özömandtar) among the creatures.

b) The Kavis.
The xwarrah of the Kavis rules kingship, as it is said in chapter 412:

...gēhān winnārišn pad xwadāyīh ud... xwadāyīh winnārišn pad kayān xwarrah.33

“The organization of the world (depends) on sovereignty and... the organization of the sovereignty of the Kavyan xwarrah”.
In the same way, the progress of the religion depends on the xwarrah of the zarduštrōtoms:

dēn mazdēsn rawāgīh pad ān ī zarduštrōtomān xwarrah.34

Thus this chapter 412 links kingship and religion, a theme that we also find in chapter 129. Here it is affirmed that the xwarrah of the Religion and the Kingship are united in a single man, i.e. the good Mazdean king. This alliance can destroy the Evil spirit (Gannāg Mēnōg), but this was not always a historical fact!

32. DKM 361.11-14.
33. DKM 396.15-16.
34. DKM 396.17-18.
35. DKM 129.21-130.3.
gēhān hu-dēnīh abāg hu-xwadāyīh pad ēk hu-dēn hu-xwadāy ō ham rasēd pad-iš gēhān pad nizār āhōgīh *ud abzōnīg hubarih ud kast petyāragīh wēš ayārīh.36

“If in Jam the xwarrah of the kingship with higher forces were linked to the xwarrah of the religion endowed with higher forces, or if in Zoroaster the xwarrah of the Good Religion with higher forces were linked to the xwarrah (of the kingship) with higher forces as in Jam, there would be a rapid destruction of the Evil Spirit... And whenever in the world the Good Religion and the Good Kingship are united in a single good Mazdean king, vice is weakened in the world, virtue is reinforced, adversity diminished, help increased...”.

Thus the xwarrah is necessary for the good king, whereas dus-farragīh can lead to all kinds of vices, as related in chapter 283:

ān ī xwadāyān pad xwadāyīh pahlom xwarrah mēhan asn-xrad37 ...ud ān-išān pad xwadāyīh vattom fradom dus-farragīh āgōš Āz ud *viśōb a-rāh waran...38

“The xwarrah (which is) the dwelling of innate wisdom is the best (thing) for the kings in the kingdom... And the worst for them in the kingdom is first of all the bad xwarrah, Az who embraces (?) and Lust the disturber (?) who (leads) nowhere...”

Bibliography


36. DKM 130.5-7.
38. DKM 293.1-3. De Menasce 1973, p. 279, reads wiškof (the word I corrected to *wiśōb), which does not make much sense: “ce dont la concupiscence dévoyée est le bourgeois?”


Remarks on the development of the Pahlavi Script in Sasanian Times

Dieter Weber

0. When one compares the title of this Symposium and of my paper to be presented here you will, at first sight, see no direct relationship between them. But as both Pahlavi and Avestan scripts were the medium for religious literature, it is, in my view, fundamentally important to know of the development of them as exactly as possible. The better we are able to understand this the more reliable our interpretations of the texts by help of philology will be. Now, in my paper, I will confine myself to phenomena in non-religious texts as found in the 7th century corpus of private documents coming from Egypt and Iran proper.

1. First I would like to show you two specimen of cursive Pahlavi writing of the early 7th century. They are rare examples of complete documents, fig. 1* is a small letter on parchment (the size is 6 x 7.5 cm) from the Berlin collection (P.Berol. 8824 = Hansen Nr. 55), the number P. 157 being the running number of a new edition of the Berlin Pahlavi papyri and parchments published in 20031. This short notice is not written in the usual manner of a letter (having three parts, the first and third ones containing the address and the second one the communication or information to be transmitted)2 but rather in the form of a French billet.

Transliteration:  
1 LKW(M) MN drwstyh  
2 Y mylkbw(t') pt'  
3 l'mšn' YHWWNyň MH  
4 hwť' YK'YMWNyň' cygwn  
5 yzdn W LKWM 'byť'

Translation:  
1 You (pl.), (because) of the health  
2 of Mērgbūd, in  
3 peace should be, for  
4 he indeed is (in a state of being) as  
5 it is fitting the Gods and you (pl.).

* See figures at the end of the article.


**Fig. 2** also shows a complete document (the size is 16 x 17.5 cm), on parchment again, from the Vienna collection (P. 373a, at the moment still preserved in St. Petersburg), first published in facsimile by Karabacheck in an exhibition catalogue of 1894 but never read in full. It is a juridical document showing a hole on top where a string fastened a bulla which unfortunately is not preserved. The text is an ayyādgār or ‘memoir’ (mentioned in the first line) reminding some person that 30 jāmag are to be delivered in a certain span of time in the year 35 (of Xusrō II.) = 625 A.D. The document is sealed pad muhr ī Šahr-Ālānyōzān ‘by the seal of Šahr-Ālānyōzān’, the chief tax collector of Egypt under Persian occupation between 619 and 629 A.D. Both documents reveal very clearly the cursive Pahlavi writing of late Sasanian times showing, on the whole, features also known from Book Pahlavi.

2. One feature typical for the late Sasanian cursive Pahlavi writing is the use of two characters for Ṭ transcribed (following Hansen) by [t] and [t]; this was explicitly shown at the 1990 Conference on Middle Iranian held at Leuven in Belgium. There it was possible to show that the ideogram [PWN] in reality is a pseudo-ideogram reflecting by its reading [pt'] an etymologically correct *pati* (see fig. 3), an interpretation underlined by its suffixed form ptš = pad-iš (example given in fig. 4). How this [t] can vary in one document, can well be seen by the word [ʼpspʼlt] = abēspārd ‘entrusted’ which occurs in lines 4 and 8 of (Berlin) Doc. 10 (see figs. 5 and 6). This second [t] seems never to occur on bullae or seals as is e.g. documented by figs. 7 and 8 from Prof.

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3. Cf. J. Karabacheck, *Führer durch die Ausstellung*, Wien 1894, Tafel iii. I owe the photograph used here for publication to Dr. A. Nikitin, St. Petersburg.

4. Unfortunately, at the time of presenting a paper on the Vienna Collection of Pahlavi Papyri to the 23rd Congress of Papyrology (Vienna, July 2001), a complete reading and understanding of this parchment was not yet reached; it has been published with full details in *TYCHE* 17 (2002 [2003]), 185-192.

5. The signs [ and ] are used to denote graphemics.


7. The question why in the 3rd century inscriptions this [PWN] seems to be attested will be discussed elsewhere and should not concern us here.

8. These examples at the same time show the ligatures of [ʼp-] and [-šp-] as known from Book Pahlavi as well as from seals (see Figs. 7 and 8).
Remarks on the development of the Pahlavi script...

Gignoux’ Catalogue (1.2 “en écriture lapidaire” and 1.4 “en écriture cursive” in his words). Both [T]s occur, in our documents and at the end of words, especially as compliment with ideograms, in a special form with a stroke coming down from left and turning to the right under the preceding characters as is easily to be seen in figs. 9 and 10. It may be assumed that this form is the origin of Avestan t mainly used of as a [T] at the end of words (with some exceptions). In some cases the second [t] has been misinterpreted as, for example, in the ideogram [HT] for MP agar (see fig. 11). K. Barr attributed the use of the second [t] and the misinterpretations roused by it to “a merely aesthetic point of view”.

3. In the main part of my paper one of the most frequent words in the papyri and other later documents, viz. the word for ‘Lord, Sir’ as used in addresses will be discussed. There seems to be two ways in which to write this word, but they exclude each other in one and the same document. One way is to use an ideographic spelling as in P. 301, line 2 (see fig. 12), the second one is the usual Pahlavi spelling usually transcribed by Hansen and myself as [hwtk’] as found, for instance, in P. 136, line 1, in an extremely cursive writing (see fig. 13). This spelling is very puzzling as we do not encounter it in any other extant Pahlavi text, and, in the CPD, the only relevant spelling [hwty] is given, which is also used on seals and bullae like the one given above (Gignoux, Cat. 1.2, see fig. 7) and which, by the way, is also supported by Man. Mp. xwd’y. The spelling with a final [-k’] instead of the [–y] to be expected remains unexplainable unless one is inclined to accept it as a simple writing convention not to be found otherwise.

Now there are other fragments of documents from Egypt, which only recently have become known, that totally change the picture we had. Firstly (1) there is a ragged fragment of papyrus from the Bodleian in Oxford (frgm. 2 of a collection of 7 fragments, see fig. 14) published here for the first time (size 10.5 x 15.7 cm) that shows three very badly preserved lines of otherwise beautiful Pahlavi writing of which only the first word of the third line is readable; and it shows in a remarkably

10. Cf. ibid., 396.
good hand writing the above mentioned word for ‘Lord, Sir’ but in the
until now unknown spelling [hwt’yk’]. That only this spelling is to be
accepted, with the characters [-’y-k-’], is clearly to be seen by the three
hooks (not only two hooks for an Aleph) before the final [-k’]: they can
only be interpreted as the sequence [-’y-]. That this spelling is not a
mere imagination is underlined by other fragments from the Vienna
collection of Pahlavi papyri and parchments presented for the first time on
the 23rd International Congress of Papyrologists in Vienna in 2001. (2)
The second example is from (Vienna) P. 327, line 4f. (Fig. 15) which
runs as follows: ‘L hwt’yk’ bwhkt’ Y gwmand’l nc (ō xʷadāyīg Bōxtag ī
gundsālār namāz), (3) the third one is in the address of P. 414 (Fig. 16)
which must be read as: ‘L hwt’yk’ lśnw nc (ō xʷadāyīg Rašn namāz),
and (4) the fourth one is on the Recto-page of P. 559, line 1, first word,
and line 3, last word (Fig. 17). In an interesting fragment from Heidel­
berg, already published in 1992, but not correctly deciphered at that
time,13 the same sequence of characters [hwt’yk’] is clearly to be seen in
line 2 and should be added here (Fig. 18). Now, it has to be noted that
this specific spelling [hwt’yk’], though not present in the CPD, is used
in the Pahlavi text Nāmag-nibēšīnīh or ‘How to write letters’ e.g. in the
very first paragraph in the pl. [hwt’yk’n’];14 thus the spelling in the origi­
nal documents of the 7th cent. A.D. is supported by this Pahlavi text
which certainly originated in Sasanian times but is only transmitted by
MSS. from the Middle Ages. With this evidence I dare to propose that
the reading [hwt’k’] hitherto used in transcribing the word xʷadāy has to
be changed into [hwt’yk’] to be read consequently xʷadāyīg. A transi­
tional form is to be seen in (Vienna) P. 571 V 1 (Fig. 19). That
the stroke to the right of the [-k’] in P. 136, line 1, can be easily read as
[-’yk’] is shown by the ideogram [’YK] for MP kū e.g. in P. 317, line 7
(see fig. 20), vs. P. 136, line 7 (see fig. 21), both also showing a special
form of the [K] (like that of the [T] mentioned above) used for γ both in
Pahlavi and Avestan.

The interpretation of the spelling [hwt’yk’] as xʷadāyīg implies further
corrections to our knowledge of Sasanian letters. As xʷadāyīg itself is,
by its suffix, an adjective formation (cf. CPD 45), it cannot be equalled
with the ideogram [MR ‘H(Y)] which indeed alone stands for xʷadāy.15

15. The identification of [MR ‘H(Y)] with [hwt’yk’] as given in Weber 1992, 172, there­
fore cannot be maintained any longer.
The following synopsis of relevant examples illustrates the syntactic usage:

(Vienna) P. 414: ‘L hw’t’yk’ lšnw nc = ⏟xw’adāyīg Rašn namāz ‘to †Sir Rašn reverence!’

(Vienna) P. 327, 4f.: ‘L hw’t’yk’ bwwhtk’ Y gwndsrd’l nc = ⏟xw’adāyīg Bōxtag i gundsālar namāz ‘to †Sir Bōxtag, the officer, reverence!’

(Philadelphia) P. 5, 1: ‘L hw’t’yk’ štr’l’nywc’n = ⏟xw’adāyīg Šahr-Álānyozān ‘to †Sir Šahr-Álānyozān’.

(Berlin) P. 136, 1: ‘L hw’t’yk’ yzd’nkt nc = ⏟xw’adāyīg Yazdānkard namāz ‘to †Sir Yazdānkard reverence!’

(Vienna) P. 558, 1: ‘L pt’ nwsbht’ whl’n nc = ⏟pad anōšbaxt Wahrām namāz ‘to Wahrām, with immortal luck, reverence!’

(Vienna) P. 571, 1f.: ‘L ‘hwšt’ ‘HY lšn’ nc = ⏟anōšbaxt brād Rašn namāz ‘to (my) brother Rašn, with immortal luck, reverence!’

(Berlin) Dok. 1, 1: ‘L ‘hwšt’ mt(?)hlgwšn(?) nc = ⏟anōšbaxt Mad-xrad-Gušn(?) namāz ‘to Mad-xrad-Gušn(?), with immortal luck, reverence!’

(Berlin) Dok. 2, 1: ‘L ‘nwšt’ hwswl-gwšnk nc = ⏟anōšbaxt Xusrō-Gušnag namāz ‘to Xusrō-Gušnag, with immortal luck, reverence!’

(Berlin) P. 141, 1: ‘L yzd’n’byd’t yzd’nkt nc = ⏟yazdānayyād Yazdānkard namāz ‘to †Sir Yazdānkard, remembered by the Gods, reverence!’

(Berlin) P. 139, 1f.: ‘L yzd’n hm’y phhwtl krť yzd’nkt nc = ⏟yazdān hamē farroxtar kard Yazdānkard namāz ‘to Yazdānkard, made ever more fortunate by the gods, reverence!’

(Heidelberg) P. 80, 7–9: ‘L yzd’n hm’y phhwtl krť pt’ hc’l’nwšt hwswbywltclynwhl’n nc = ⏟yazdān hamē farroxtar kard pad hazār-anōšbaxt Xusrō-Burzēn-Wahrām namāz ‘to Xusrō-Burzēn-Wahrām, made ever more fortunate by the gods, with thousandfoldly immortal luck, reverence!’

From these examples it is obvious that xw’adāyīg stands in an attributive position just as yazdānayyād, yazdān hamē farroxtar kard or pad anōšbaxt and others; therefore it is grammatically correct that xw’adāyīg is an adjective formally which, now, has not to be translated by ‘Sir,
Lord’ but ‘lordly’ (or, in the sense of German ‘edel, herrschaftlich’). Therefore our examples given here from the Vienna collection and clearly showing the spelling [hwt’yk’] must be understood as follows:

(Vienna) P. 414: ‘L hwt’yk’ lšnw \(\text{nc} = \text{o} x^w\text{adayig Rašn namāz }\) ‘to (my) lordly Rašn reverence!’

(Vienna) P. 327, 4f.: ‘L hwt’yk’ bwhtk’ Y gwndsr’dl \(\text{nc} = \text{o} x^w\text{adayig Böxtag }\) i gundsālār namāz ‘to lordly Böxtag, the officer, reverence!’

This observation is supported by the fact that in this position just discussed one does not find the ideogram \([\text{MR’H(Y)}]\) for the noun; there is as far I can see no exception in the documents (letters) from Egypt nor in the recent Berlin documents but only one in an obviously late letter now preserved in Los Angeles and published by Prof. Gignoux some years ago\(^{18}\) where the first two lines run as follows:

(LA 2), 1f.: ‘L hwt’yk’\(^{19}\) pylwchwslyw Y spyhld’t’ BRH Y pn’h W ‘yl MN ’štwk’(?) MT’ \(\text{nc} = \text{o} x^w\text{aday Pērōz-Xusrō i Spihrdād pus i panāh ud ėr az }\) *Astōg(?) deh namāz ‘to Sir Pērōz-Xusrō, the son of Spihrdād (or Spihrdādag), protector and hero, from the village *Astōg(?) reverence!’

There are other cases where \(x^w\text{adayig}\) stands in attributive position after a noun connected by the \(Izāfe\); here, too, the reading \(x^w\text{adayig}\) is acceptable, e.g.:

(Stasrbourg) P: 45, 1f.: \(\text{n’mk’ Y hwt’yk’ QDM l’dynšn Y ... } = \text{nāmag i } x^w\text{adayig abar rāyēnišn ... ‘Lordly letter regarding the arrangement of ...’}, meaning in the first line a letter certainly sent by a high official.

Of course, it is natural that \(x^w\text{adayig}\), after having been used in the introducing address, could be re-used in the following lines of the same document, often in a non-attributive position and perhaps as an substan-

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19. Gignoux’ reading \([\text{MR’H}]\) cannot be maintained as there are no traces of [‘-’] in \([\text{MR’H}]; presumably a non-ideographic spelling [hwt’yk] is to be assumed here (with [hw-] and [-t-] written very closely so that they touch each other).
tivized adjective; in this case it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between \(x^w\text{ad\text{\text{"ay\text{ıg}}}\) and \(x^w\text{ad\text{\text{"ay}}}\) semantically. A good example is (Heidelberg) P. 69, lines 2 and 4 (see also above), where \(x^w\text{ad\text{\text{"ay\text{ıg}}}\) is used after prepositions like a noun. A substantivized form seems to occur also in (Berlin) P. 190, lines 3f.: W hw\text{\text{"t}}'yk' hw\text{\text{"t}} 'L wh\text{\text{"st}}'-plhw' np(š)[t] = ud \(x^w\text{ad\text{\text{"ay\text{ıg}}}\) xw adô Wahišt-Farrox nibil[št], where \(x^w\text{ad\text{\text{"ay\text{ıg}}}\) must be translated as ‘Sir, Lord’ at best (in the sense of addressing the person to whom one is speaking though grammatically 3rd pers.): ‘you, Sir, you wrote indeed to Wahišt-Farrox’; cf. the phrases in (Berlin) P. 138, lines 5 and 9, and (Berlin) P. 136, lines 6 and 9.

This new and more exact reading of some new documents from the first half of the 7th century has led us to a new understanding that could be supported by syntactical arguments. It is therefore necessary, in my mind, to change earlier readings of addresses in those documents and to state that only \(x^w\text{ad\text{\text{"ay}}}\) is represented by the ideogram [MR'H(Y)] but never by the reading ['hw\text{\text{"t}}'k'] which has become obsolete.

4. I hope to have shown that a survey of Pahlavi writings would reveal further important conclusions with regard to the development of the Pahlavi as well as the Avestan scripts in Sasanian times. With regard to the last one mentioned it is clear that Avestan presupposes a stadium of Pahlavi that had been reached rather early, in my opinion already by the 4th century A.D. As the inscription of Istanbul, dated ca. 480 A.D., can no longer be used as a \textit{terminus ante quem} because it seems, as François de Blois has shown, to belong to the 9th century A.D., we must confine ourselves to the internal evidence of the Pahlavi script. Therefore a Corpus of the graphic evidence is necessary which would allow drawing conclusions as I have tried in this paper. But the question why the Zoroastrian clergy invented a special alphabet for their holy scriptures is not touched by the graphic evidence directly; it seems that the impetus for it came from the fact that other great religions like those of the Christians and the Manicheans, at that time, already had specific scripts to be used for their scriptures and the Zoroastrians had not. This idea, actually not new, could perhaps be supported if we gain even more information on the development of the Pahlavi script from the \textit{Corpus} as proposed here.

Correction note: The readings ['nw\text{\text{"s}bht}'] = \textit{an\text{\text{"os}baxt]} and [hc'l'nw\text{\text{"s}bht}] = hazār-\textit{an\text{\text{"os}baxt]} cannot be maintained any longer, but have to be changed into ['nw\text{\text{"s}}'by\text{\text{"y}}t'] = \textit{an\text{\text{"os}-ayy\text{\text{"ad}]} and [hc'l'nw\text{\text{"s}by\text{\text{"y}}t'}] = hazār-

Bibliography


Remarks on the development of the Pahlavi script...

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5
IV

Zoroastrianism in the Islamic Period
Between the 15th and 17th centuries the Indian Parsees sent a series of delegations to their coreligionists in Persia who eventually returned to India with a good number of documents in the New Persian language, some of them written specifically to instruct the Indian believers in matters of doctrine and ritual, others copied from pre-existing manuscripts. These documents were ultimately gathered in the collective manuscripts generally known as the Persian Riwäyats. Within this body of texts there are two substantial dogmatic treatises which, in the manuscripts, rather confusingly both have the same title, \textit{Ulāmā i islām}, 'the sages of Islam', and to which, following the practice of previous authors, I shall refer as 'Ulāmā I and 'Ulāmā II respectively. 'Ulāmā I is a fairly straightforward defence of the principles of Zoroastrianism against Muslim objections. Its general tone is apologetic, rather than polemical, in the sense that the author does not attack the fundamental beliefs of the Muslims, but he does staunchly defend the Zoroastrian position. The author was evidently well informed about Muslim arguments, as can be seen from the fact that he employs a number of technical terms specific to Arabic writings on \textit{kālām}.

'Ulāmā II is quite different in content. The text begins, at least in its published form, with the statement that some time after the year 600 of Yazdgird (that is, in the 13th century of the Christian era) certain Muslim sages posed some questions to the chief \textit{mōbad} of the Zoroastrians and that the latter answered with a book entitled \textit{Ulāmā i islām}. The remainder of the text consists of the \textit{mōbad}'s reply. But despite this introductory narrative, the text does not actually respond to any Muslim objections, but gives a positive account of certain points of Zoroastrian doctrine, specifically with regard to cosmology. It is thus difficult to avoid the conclusion that the introductory narrative is not only extraneous to the content of the work, but also likely to be a textual intrusion.

'Ulāmā I was published in Manockji Unvala's edition of the Persian
Riwayats lithographed in India in 1922\(^1\) and translated, with many improved readings and valuable annotations, in Dhabhar’s English version of the Riwayats, published in 1932.\(^2\) I am not aware of any other complete edition or translation of this treatise. 'Ulamā II was likewise published by Manockji\(^3\) and translated by Dhabhar,\(^4\) but it had also been published previously by Mohl in 1829,\(^5\) and translated in German by Vullers\(^6\) and in French by Blochet;\(^7\) since Dhabhar’s time is has also been translated in English by Zaehner.\(^8\) It has also been the subject of a lot of discussion. The interest that has been accorded to 'Ulamā II can be explained by its partially Zurvanite content, of which I shall have more to say in a moment. But the general neglect of 'Ulamā I is also not entirely surprising. The text published by Manockji is very confused and lacks a coherent argument. But this confusion is not the fault of the author, but results from a fairly clear-cut textual corruption.

The problematic section is the passage beginning (in Manockji’s edition of 'Ulamā I) on page 74, line 7 and ending on page 77, line 4, nearly half of the published text of 'Ulamā I. This section can be divided into two parts: one, which I call 'B', starts on page 74, line 7 (with the words <i>dar tābīstān ba andak čīz-ē...</i>), and the other, which I call 'A', starts on page 76, line 5 (with the words <i>wa 'uqābat ruwān rā bāsad wa pēš az rīstāxēz...</i>) and ends on page 77, line 4 (with the words ... <i>ki agar xwāhand</i>). The basic textual facts are stated actually quite clearly in a footnote in Dhabhar’s translation on p. 443 (note 13). There are two salient points. The first is that in many of the manuscripts examined by Dhabhar the two parts of the section are reversed, that is to say, A comes first and B second. This is, however, indubitably the correct order. Dhabhar’s second point is that in these same, as he calls them, ‘many’ manuscripts, the whole section appears a second time, apparently in the same order, just before the end of 'Ulamā II, on page 85 line 15 of the

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3. MU II, pp. 80-86.
The two Zoroastrian Treatises called 'ULAMĀ I ISLĀM 201
dition (after the words ..hama bihištī šawand). Moreover, Dhabhar
tells us in a footnote to his translation of 'Ulamā II, on page 456 (note
6), that some manuscripts have a blank at this point, indicating that the
copyists were aware that something is missing. The lacuna is not indi­
cated in the printed edition, but its presence is hinted at by the fact that
the first words of the displaced passage 'A' (wa 'uqūbat ruwān rā bāšad
pēș az ristikēz, the last word written defectively) are repeated at this
point. Evidently they were cited as a catchphrase in the margin of the
last page before the lacuna and then (after the displacement of the next
page) copied into the text. Unfortunately, Zaehner, in his supposedly
critical translation of 'Ulamā II, does not show any awareness of this la­
cuna, nor does it seem to have been noted in other modern literature. I
should add that Bartholomae, in his description of the Riwāyat
manuscript in Munich, M55,9 likewise observed that the copy of
'Ulamā II found in that manuscript (and also that in the manuscript M52
of the same collection) contains at this point 'a substantial section'10
that is missing in Mohl's edition and of which Bartholomae quotes the
beginning and the end. This is in fact clearly the section that was subse­
quently published by Manockji as part of 'Ulamā I. This observation by
Bartholomae also seems to have escaped the attention of modern scho­
larship.

As soon as these facts have been taken on board, it becomes very
clear that the section in question does not belong to 'Ulamā I but to
'Ulamā II. What has evidently happened, is that in the manuscript that is
the prototype of all extant copies some pages had become detached and
were then inserted in the wrong place and in the wrong order. The fam­
ily of manuscripts represented by Manockji’s edition copied the proto­
type with the wrongly inserted section as part of 'Ulamā I. Later, the
master copy must have fallen into the hands of a more conscientious
scribe. While copying 'Ulamā I, this scribe noticed that some of the
pages were in the wrong order and attempted to rectify the matter. Then,
when transcribing 'Ulamā II, he noticed that there was a lacuna towards
the end of the text and that the pages that he had already copied as part
of 'Ulamā I actually belonged here. So he copied the section a second
time in its correct place.

Once this extraneous passage has been removed from 'Ulamā I, that

9. Chr. Bartholomae, Die Zendhandschriften der k. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in Mün­
chen, Munich 1915, pp. 152-4.
10. ibid., p. 154: 'ein erhebliches Stück'.
text suddenly makes a lot more sense. It reveals itself as a clearly argued defence of basic dualist positions against monist objections, on the whole very much like the comparable sections in the Škandgumānīg wizār. The statement, in modern secondary literature, that ‘Ulamā I contains elements of Zurvanism is not correct. The Zurvanite material in the published text of ‘Ulamā I is part of the displaced passage and belongs to ‘Ulamā II.

I propose now to look briefly at the contents of ‘Ulamā II and show how the displaced passage fits into the author’s argument. Everyone who has written on the treatise has noted its affinities with the Zurvanite variant of the Zoroastrian creation myth as it is known to us mainly through Christian and Manichaean polemical texts from the Sasanian period. As is well known, this myth states that Ohrmazd and Ahriman are the twin sons of the god Zurwān, or Time, and that Ohrmazd was born of his father’s pious deeds and Ahriman of his doubt. There is very strong evidence that this myth belonged to what was the predominant form of Zoroastrianism under the early Sasanian kings, at the time of Manes, and there is good reason to believe that it remained the official doctrine throughout the Sasanian period, but after the Arab conquest the Zoroastrians of Persia seem very quickly to have reverted to the older doctrine which made Ohrmazd and Ahriman two co-eternal beings without a common origin. This is the doctrine that is very clearly expressed in the great dogmatic compendia put together in the early Islamic period such as Bundahišn or Dēnkard. The cosmology propounded in ‘Ulamā II is not entirely identical with the Zurvanite myth known to us from the polemical authors. The text does state that Ohrmazd and Ahriman have a common source, who is called Zamān, that is, Time, but they are not called twins, or even the sons of Zamān. The Zurvanite myth appears thus in a somewhat abstract, if you like philosophical, form, but the fundamentally Zurvanite, that is to say, non-dualist content of this cosmology is none the less evident. The question that scholars have inevitably posed, is why this so-called heresy, of which there is

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11. I am speaking of the content of the treatise. It is true that the last words before the displaced passage (...pas bē taqdir biud wa) do not fit in very well with the first words after the insertion (bitawanad kard...). It is thus possible that something is missing at this point.

12. The primary sources concerning Zurvanism are enumerated and (briefly) evaluated in my paper ‘Dualism in Iranian and Christian traditions’, JRAS 2000, pp. 1-19, esp. 5-6 and 13.

13. This is indicated most explicitly in MU II p. 82, lines 15-16, translated below.
hardly any trace in the surviving Zoroastrian Middle Persian writings, should suddenly resurface in this manifestly late document\textsuperscript{14} in New Persian. The only plausible answer to this question is that the author of \textquote{Ulamā II} has inserted in his work quotations from a lost Zurvanite treatise from the Sasanian period, a treatise that he found, evidently in a New Persian translation, in some old manuscript. This assumption is supported by the fact that extracts from the same Zurvanite treatise were incorporated into another one of the documents that make up the Persian \textit{Riwayats}, namely the work published without a title by Manockji, vol. II, pp. 428-431, again translated by Dhabhar,\textsuperscript{15} the first half of which had previously been edited and translated by Spiegel.\textsuperscript{16}

On the basis of its opening words, I shall quote this parallel text as \textit{Dar āfrīnīš i jihān}. This work is considerably shorter than \textquote{Ulamā II}, but the shared material is often quoted in a more accurate, or rather, less manipulated, form and its dependence on a source in Middle Persian is indicated quite explicitly. This treatise begins, after a brief enunciation of its contents, with the words:

\textquote{In a Pahlavi book (\textit{dar kitāb ē pahlawī}) it is said that the world is created and (that) it is evident that apart from Zamān everything else is created and that Zamān is the creator’}.

\textsuperscript{14} The published text of Ulamā II begins with the decidedly uncouth sentence \textit{dar ʿahdu d-dīn baʿd az šaš̄ad az yazdīrdī}, better in M55 (Bartholomae, op. cit., pp. 152-3): … \textit{šaš̄ad (i) yazdīrdī}, and in M52 (Bartholomae, op. cit., pp. 87-8) … \textit{šaš̄ad u and (i) yazdīrdī}, that is: \textquote{In the era of Religion, after (the year) six hundred (M52: six hundred and some) of Yazdgird’}. Dhabhar (p. 449, n. 8) remarked that the \textquote{heading} is omitted in the manuscript Bk and I made a note many years ago that the date formula is also missing in all three of the Paris manuscripts of this treatise (Supp. persan 48, 50 and 1002). It could thus very well be an interpolation. But even without the date formula, the fact that the text is in New Persian does not allow a dating very much before the 13\textsuperscript{th} century.

\textsuperscript{15} Dhabhar, pp. 428-431.

\textsuperscript{16} F. Spiegel, \textit{Einleitung in die traditionellen Schriften der Parsen, II: Die traditionelle Literatur der Parsen}, Vienna 1860, pp. 161-166. Spiegel published the text from the Paris manuscript now called Supp. persan 46 and cited the title of the treatise as \textquote{über die unendliche Zeit und die Gestirngottheiten’}, apparently a translation of the Persian title. Unfortunately, Blochet, in his \textit{Catalogue des manuscrits persans de la Bibliothèque Nationale}, Paris 1905-34, no. 201, fails to give either the title or an accurate description of this treatise. The same text is found also in the Munich manuscript M55 (see Bartholomae, op. cit., pp. 120-1), again apparently without a title.
The corresponding passage in 'Ulamā II (beginning p. 81, line 4) reads:

'It should be known that in the Pahlavi religion which the Zar-tuštiyān profess, it is said that the world is created. Then, since we say that the world is created, it is necessary to say who created it, when it was created, how it was created, and why it was created. And it is evident in the religion of Zartošt that, apart from Zamān, everything else is created and that Zamān is the creator.'

There is naturally no such thing as the ‘Pahlavi religion’. It is evident that the compiler of 'Ulamā II has merely attempted to disguise his dependence on a written source by changing kitāb ē pahlawī to din i pahlawi. The assumption that the source of the two extant treatises is a translation from the Middle Persian is further supported by the statement further on in 'Ulamā II that “Avesta is the language of Ohrmazd and Zand is our language”. The Zand, as is well known, is the translation of the Avesta in Middle Persian.

My deduction is thus that both 'Ulamā II and Dar āfriniš i jihān used the same New Persian translation of a Middle Persian Zurvanite treatise. This common source ('Z') can be reconstructed, at least in part, from those passages which the two texts share. It is, however, evident that the author of 'Ulamā II also had a number of other sources at his disposal and that he combined his sources in a rather haphazard manner.

After the account of the creation of the world, which we find in largely identical form both in 'Ulamā II and Dar āfriniš i jihān (though nearly always more accurately in the latter) the former text goes on to discuss some of the implications of this cosmogony. We read, among other things:

'We said at the beginning that Ohrmazd and Ahraman, both of them, came into being from Zamān. If someone says: “Since he possesses all this expertise, why then did he create Ahraman?”, (then) each group replies in a different manner. Some people say that he created

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17. Read jud az zamān. Spiegel's text has the less archaic juz az zamān.
19. MU II, p. 82, line 15 sqq. The sense of the paragraph is much improved if the first sentence of the published text (agar goyad ki čūn in hama ustādit dāšt āhrman xud čīrā méddād) is placed after the second sentence (dar awwal gufta ēm ki ārmazd u ahriman har dō az zamān mawjūd šuda and); the translation given here follows the transposed text.
Ahriman so that Ohrmazd might know that Zamān\textsuperscript{20} is capable of everything. (But) a(n other) group says that he did not need to create (him); \textit{<the needed only>} to say to Ohrmazd: "I am able to do such-and-such and still do not need to impose suffering on (you.) Ohrmazd or on myself."\textsuperscript{21} Another (group) says:\textsuperscript{22} "What suffering or what pleasure does Zamān have from the evil of Ahriman or the goodness of Ohrmazd?" A(n other) group says that he created Ohrmazd and Ahriman so that good and evil might be mixed with each other and the manifold things might come into being. A(n other) group says that Ahriman was (once) an intimate (\textit{muqarrab}) angel and that he was cursed on account of his disobedience. Concerning these matters much has been said.'

This is the first of several passages in which the author contrasts the views of different groups on certain points of doctrine, but differently from the other passages of this type, the author does not give any real indication of which view he considers to be correct. The last mentioned opinion, namely that the devil is a fallen angel, is naturally that of Jews, Christians and Muslims. So, the 'group' that holds this view is not a Zoroastrian sect, but one of the Abrahamic religions. It is therefore possible that the other mentioned opinions are not those of tendencies within Zoroastrianism, but represent the teachings, or perhaps rather a parody of the teachings of non-Zoroastrian creeds, even if it is not easy to identify in each case who is actually the target of the author's polemics. The opinion that the primal god is ultimately indifferent towards good and evil ('What suffering or what pleasure does Zamān have from the evil of Ahriman or the goodness of Ohrmazd?') could very well be a polemical exaggeration of the teachings of those early Christian sects who emphasised the transcendence of the supreme god and absolved him of all responsibility for the creation, for example the Marcionites or some of the gnostics. What, in any case, is missing in this passage is the actual Zurvanite teaching concerning the origin of evil, namely that Ah-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Here, as at several other points both in 'Ulamā II and in \textit{Dar āfriṇiš i jihān}, the text has \textit{zamāna} rather than \textit{zamān}. There is no perceptible difference in meaning between the two and I have generalised the use of the latter spelling.
\item \textsuperscript{21} I take it that this is the argument of a group who denied that Zurwān (Zamān) created Ahriman. As it stands, the sentence seems syntactically deficient. It would be but a slight emendation to add \textit{bāyist} before \textit{bā ṭormazd}.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Read \textit{gōyad}, with Dhabhar's Ms. Bk.
\end{itemize}
riman was produced by Zurvan’s doubt, in other words, that the coexistence of good and evil in the visible world is the result of the moral imperfection of the primal deity himself. Why is this view not mentioned here? Surely, because it has been censored out of the text, either by the New Persian translator of ‘Z’, or — and I should think that this is more likely — by the redactor of ‘Ulamā II.

Let us now look at the last part of the treatise, beginning with page 85, line 14:

‘In the Avesta and Zand He says that all men who were, are, and will be, are, all of them, fit for paradise (bihištī) and that the soul should pay amends before the resurrection.’

Then continuing with the displaced passage ‘A’ on page 76, line 6:

‘And it is said in another doctrine that when a person dies, if he is sinful, he will draw upon himself the suffering of the grave until the resurrection and when they are awakened in the resurrection, the person who has committed sins is thrown into hell, but whoever has practised good deeds is sent to heaven. So each group says that we are (potentially) fit for paradise. Another group says: From time to time they become another person or another species (qawm). It is not (, they continue,) as you have imagined, for the soul goes out of the body and enters into another body and suffering and ease are all in this world and that other (supposedly) distant world is (in fact) near. Of every (such) subject something can be said.’

As can be seen, the author is contrasting three views of the fate of the soul after death. First, what he presents as the Zoroastrian view, namely that all souls will eventually be redeemed and that any punishment will be meted out before the resurrection. Second, the view that the good will go to paradise and the evil to hell, evidently referring to either to Christianity or to Islam. Third, the view that retribution takes place in this world through reincarnation, evidently referring to Indian doctrines.

The author then discusses the views of different religions concerning

23. Read: wa ‘uqūbat ruwān rā bāšad pēš az *ristāxēz. As explained above, this phrase is printed twice in the edition, here and at the beginning of the displaced passage (as ... wa pēš az ristāxēz; where wa needs to be omitted).

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the 'mediator' (miyānji).25 As a specimen of this section I translate from page 76, line 16:

‘The Jews say: Our mediator is the allūf. The Christian says: Our mediator is the *kaššīšā (Syriac qaššīšā, ‘priest’). The Muslim says: Our mediator is the imām. The *Rāfiḍiyān (Shiites) say: Our mediator is the *sāhibu z-zamān (Lord of the Time, a well-known term for the Mahdī in Shiism). But the Zarātūštrīyān say: our mediator should be a person of great intelligence and exalted aspiration,’ etc.

The references to Islam, would, I should think, argue against ascribing this passage to the Zurvanite source ‘Z’. Next, the author compares the fate of man to the four seasons (page 77, line 4):

‘People have compared this matter with the four seasons of the year. They compared the season of summer with this world,26 because if one wishes’

Now, continue with the displaced passage ‘B’ on page 74, line 7:

‘in summer one can maintain oneself with little, and in this world also, if one wishes, one can maintain oneself with little.’

The author then compares autumn with death, winter with the afterlife and spring with the resurrection. Then he develops at some length the idea of man as a microcosm and the discussion of different types of fire. Finally, he returns to the question of Time and, I should think, to the source ‘Z’, (page 75, line 16):27

25. This section is translated in Sh. Shaked, ‘Mihr the judge’, Jerusalem studies in Arabic and Islam, 2 (1980), p. 8 (of 1-31), and has recently been discussed by S. Adhami, ‘Some remarks on ‘Ulamā-ye islām I: A Zoroastrian polemic’, Studia iranica 28 (1999), pp. 205-312, without mentioning Shaked’s study. All of the very few good suggestions made by Adhami were anticipated by Shaked.

26. Dhabhar (p. 441, fn. 1) quotes this passage from one manuscript as: wa dar īn (MU adds: ma‘nā) čahār fašl (MU adds: i sāl) mānand karda and fašl i tābistān mānand karda and ba īn jihān... MU omits (by haplography) the phrase fašl i tābistān mānand karda and.

'The Zartuštiyan hold Yazdān (God, i.e. Ohrmazd) to be mighty and there are those who call him by various (other) names. But concerning the creator, in the true religion (it is said) that if Yazdān and all the amēsha spentas and all the true believers set to work they would not be able to bring a single grain of millet into existence without Zamān, for it would come into existence in time (rōzgār). We have written 'time' because there are many people who do not know that 'time' is (the same as) Zamān. The Religion can be taught in time; a trade can be taught in time; good manners can be taught in time; vineyards and gardens can be produced in time; trees grow in time and yield fruit in time; handiworks can be produced in time and the all things in existence are made right in time. And it cannot be said that the creator was when time was not. If anyone says that time is night and day, then it should be known that there has been much (time) when day and night did not exist and Zamān did exist.'

'As for Ahriman, one group also call him by some name (or other) and they acknowledge evil to be from him but he too can do nothing without Zamān. It is a marvellous thing that in this way you should become evildoers! But it is not proper (either) that people should call him (i.e. Zamān) an evildoer. It would be more wonderful if the

28. The text has mar zartuštiyan with pleonastic mar, a strikingly archaic construction. There is no reason to emend it to *mazdayasniyan (as Shaked does).
29. Read (with Dhabhar's Ms. Bk): ba ḥaqq i āfrīdagār ba dīn i ḥaqq ki.
30. Read (with Bk.): bihīnān.
31. Read (with Bk.): gāwars.
32. Here and in the preceding sentence the text has, once again, zamāna (see fn. 20). The claim that there are people who do not realise that the ordinary Persian words zamān (zamāna) and rōzgār have the same meaning is very strange. Presumably, this is a clumsy rendering of a statement in the Middle Persian original to the effect that people do not realise that the divine name Zurwān (Avestan zruūan-) in fact means the same as zamān(ag), 'time'.
33. Read: wa raz.
34. Read: ki rōzgār.
35. I read (following MU, but with emendations in the pointing): ŝigift kār-ē-st ki bad in kirdār šumā bad-kardār mēbāṣēd (MU: mēbāṣand) wa nā-šāyist ast ki way rā bad-kardār (MU: yōkr'dr) xwānand. Bk. (as reported by Dhabhar) omits part of this sentence, apparently reading ŝigift kār-ē-st ki bad in šumār bad-kardār xwānand, "It is a marvellous thing that on this reckoning they should call (him?) an evildoer."
command were thus that (if) you do evil then in respect to that evil which you do we should prescribe your punishment.'

Then, continuing on page 85, line 15:

‘And it is (even) more marvellous that we send children to school, teach them virtue, and keep them away from evil. But if you do not look out now they will know more evil than good,’ etc.

By reinserting the displaced passage into the final section of ‘Ulamā II it is possible to gain a clearer understanding of the Zurvanite position. The author of ‘Z’ makes it very clear that Ahriman was not only brought into existence by Zamān, but also that he is unable to do any of his evil deeds without the assistance of the primal deity. In Dar āfrīnīš i jihān we read:

‘Then Ahriman, with the help of Zamān (ba yārī i zamān), lifted his head in order to do battle with Ohrmazd’,

and, further on in the same text, we read:

‘And Zamān brought it about (čunān sāxt) that Ahriman bored a hole in the world and rushed into the material creation (gētī).’

It is highly significant that in the otherwise very similarly worded parallel passages in ‘Ulamā II there is no mention of Zamān. This is clear evidence for the censorship of the Zurvanite text by the compiler of ‘Ulamā II. On the other hand, in the section just quoted from MU p. 76, the compiler has allowed the statement to stand that Ahriman ‘likewise can do nothing without Zamān’. But if the supreme god Time is the common source of good and evil, then the question inevitably arises of why we, as mere humans, should do good rather than evil. The author

36. The word should be pointed as farmāyēm. Shaked does not translate this word and his rendering of the whole sentence does not make sense. Dhabhar’s translation is basically correct.
37. I would prefer to read nanigarī and bēš instead of binigarī and pēš.
38. Spiegel’s edition, p. 162, line 6 sqq.
40. Compare the just cited passages with MU II, p. 81, line 15, and p. 82, line 5 respectively.
of ‘Z’ is keenly aware of this problem. He responds that it would be ‘marvellous’ (the word is naturally used ironically) if for this reason men should do evil. It would be more marvellous (now without irony) to avoid evil and to punish those who do evil. And more marvellous still, if we could teach our children to do good.

I hope to have shown that these two documents are very much worth reediting and retranslating on the basis of a rectified text and that they still have much to teach us about the history of Zoroastrianism. Late texts are not always less interesting than old ones.
Some Primary Sources on the Early History of the Parsis in India

Carlo G. Cereti

Very few primary sources are available on the early history of the Parsis of India. This explains why many studies on this period of Zoroastrian history are based almost exclusively on two late, poetic, historical chronicles, the Qešše-ye Sanjān, written by Bahman Kāiqobād Hor-mazdyār Sanjāna in 1600, and the Qešše-ye Zartošyān-e Hendustān written about two hundred years later by Šāpurji Mānekji Bahrām Sanjāna (1735-1805). No doubt, the author of the latter relies heavily on the former, though introducing some interesting variants of the story. Both of these poems were composed many centuries after the date at which the Parsis are assumed to have arrived in Gujarat. Narrative contents of the two poems have been discussed over and over again in the last two centuries and needs not be re-considered here.¹

Similarly, there is no need to re-examine yet again the various dates traditionally put forward for the arrival of the Parsis to Sanjān (V.S. 772, 895, 961; respectively 716, 839, 905 A.D.) which have been satisfactorily explained by Hodivala (1920c:1f.). Yet another possibility is found in a Ms. of the Qešše-ye Sanjān dated 1107 A.Y. (1738 A.D.) and kept in the India Office Library which dates the migration of the Parsis to the caliphate of ‘Omar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (634-44 A.D.),² a date quite close to that given by the Dutch merchant Geleynssen De Jongh, who visited Broach (Bharūc) in the 1620s, and who stated that the Parsis had reached India during the caliphate of Abū Bakr (632-34).³

Let us now turn to our few early primary sources:

The oldest document proving the presence of a Zoroastrian community in India comes not – as one might expect – from Gujarat, but from the south-western state of Kerala. There, on a copper plate dating perhaps from the late ninth century, we find a number of Zoroastrian names. The

¹. For a recent summary of the scientific debate see Stausberg 2002:375ff.
². Unvala 1940:102, see also Stausberg 2002:400.
only early epigraphic documents left by Zoroastrian in the area of Gu­jarat and Bombay – the Pahlavi inscriptions found in cave 90 of the Kanheri Buddhist complex at the outskirts of Bombay – belong to the 11th century.

T. K. Joseph has assigned the Quilon Copper Plates to the fifth year of Sthannu Ravi, a contemporary of the Cōla king Aditya I (877-907) and dates them to approx. 880 A.D. Inscribed on these plates is a grant made by the king Ayyan of Venāt to the Christian community of Quilon led by Šabr-Išō'. From the content of the different sets of plates it may be surmised that these people were most probably a (Persian) merchant community.

On the last plate, the Quilon grant bears the signatures of witnesses belonging to four different religious confessions: Jews, Muslims, Chris­tians and Zoroastrians. The signatures of those belonging to the latter two religions are written in a cursive form of Pahlavi. The paragraph that interests us most reads as follows:

\[ \text{az *weh-dēnān hāmgonag man farrbay ī windād-ohrmazd padiš} \\
\text{*gugāy hom, hāmgonag man mard-farrox ī bōr-śād padiš *gugāy} \\
\text{hom hāmgonag man āzad-mard ī *ahlā padiš *gugāy hom.} \]

"Among those of the Good Religion in like manner I, Farrbay son of Windād-Ohrmazd, am witness to it, in like manner I, Mard-Farrox son of Bōr-Śād, am witness to it, in like manner I, Āzad-Mard son of Aḥlā, am witness to it".

This passage reveals the existence of a Zoroastrian commercial com­munity in Quilon in the ninth century.

All but one of the inscriptions in Kanheri are found in cave 90 of the Buddhist complex, the main three being located respectively on two pillars and over the water tank of the complex. All of them are today very difficult to read.

The earliest inscription, found on the right hand pilaster of the veran-

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5. For a brief resumé of the content of the plates see Joseph 1929:34ff.
6. The script form was so unusual that Winckworth (1930:322) was led to suspect that the plates had been copied by a copyist ignorant of Pahlavi.
da, is incomplete, and bears the date: day Ohrmazd, month Mihr, year 378 of Yazdegard (10th October 1009). The second inscription, on the wall over the water tank, contains the same names found on the first, but is dated forty-five days later, on the day Mihr of the month Ābān, year 378 of Yazdegard (24th November 1009). Most interesting is the third inscription which, according to West’s reading,⁸ begins:

\[ \text{pad nām ī yazadān. māh mihr ud rōz Dēn sād 300-90 ī Yazdegard az} \]
\[ *Ērān ē ēn gyyāg āmad hēnd... \]

“In the name of God. On month Mihr, day Dēn of the year 390 of Yazdegard, ...came to this place from Iran”.

A fourth inscription, also reported by West, bears the same date.

Thus, in West’s interpretation, the third inscription, dated the 30th of October 1021, was written by some men who “came from Iran to this place”. Unfortunately the part of the inscription where the toponym Ėrān is found was partly damaged by a mortise carved in the rock itself. At present only the final letters (‘y)l’n [ērān] can be read with some certainty. Be it as it may, in Kanheri we have irrefutable evidence of the presence of Zoroastrians in western India in the eleventh century. Moreover, be Ėrān the correct reading, this inscription testifies to a visit to India by some Iranian Zoroastrian in the early eleventh century. If it is correct that these Zoroastrians came from Iran, a possible starting place for their excursion to Kanheri might have been the port of Thānā, not far away from Kanheri. This might also explain the presence of the same names on the two inscriptions dated 1009. If the party did indeed come from Thānā, it would be possible to imagine two different trips to the caves at an interval of only forty-five days.⁹

So much for epigraphic evidence. The remaining information can be gathered from a few old colophons.

The Ms. MK of the Pahlavi Texts, written by Mihrābān ī Kay-Husrāw, preserves an older colophon by Dēnpanāh ī *Hērbed ī Dēnpanāh

⁸ West 1880:266.
⁹ Though considering the hypothesis of two different visits by the same party as possible, West (1874:268) prefers to think of a long stay of the party, perhaps due to sickness and consequent death of one of its members.
bearing the date māh Wahman sāl 300 20 4 rōz Day pad Ādur. The colophon further states: andar "Bruč būd, pad ataxš-kadag. “It was in Broach, in the Fire-Temple”. If this date is correct it would testify to the presence of Zoroastrians in Gujarat in the tenth century and even to the existence of a fire temple in Broach at that period. However, this date was first called into question by West and then proved wrong by S. H. Hodivala (1920b), who - while not completely excluding an earlier date - instead suggested 624 A.Y., which would correspond to 1255 A.D. Thus we have no direct evidence of Zoroastrian communities in India for a period of about one hundred and thirty years, from the early eleventh to the mid thirteenth century.

Another important scribe, active in the second half of the thirteenth century, was Rustam Mihrābān, who left Iran to visit India. His name is found in MK, in the Yasna manuscripts Kt and Ks, in the Visperad Ms. K7 and in the Munich codex M51 where his colophon follows the Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag and the Jōst i Friyān. According to the date found in the Paymānag i Kadag-Xwadāy, Rustam Mihrābān wrote the codex from which MK derives in 627 after 20 A.Y. (1278 A.D.). Rustam’s colophon in M51 is dated to day Amurdād, month Šahrewar, Pārsi year 618 (1269 A.D.). The oldest known ancestor to M51 was a Ms. by Hēr-bad Mihrpānāg Sṛōśayār, Hērbed of Nišāpur. It is generally thought that Rustam had written the Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag and the Jōst i Friyān before leaving to India. In this respect we gather no further information from Ks, where the name of Rustam is mentioned, together with the name of his possible home town: *dzwk. The colophon found on fol. 107 of K7b reports the name of the scribe, the place where the Ms. was written, the town of Anklesar (Ankleswar) in India, and the date 637 Pārsi (1288 A.D.). Whether the codex is the original written by Rustam is debatable. Most important in terms of its historical relevance are the three colophons found in Mss. K1, Pt2, Bh11 etc. of the Wīdēwdād.

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12. This is not self evident. It seems to be based on the fact that the codex was copied from an Iranian manuscript. It could as well be surmised that the codex written by Mihrpānāg Sṛōśayār had found its way to India either brought by Rustam himself or before his arrival. All the more so if one considers that the two more ancient codices of the Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag, K20 and M51, are both of Indian tradition.
13. According to Geldner (1896:xxxviii f.) the date should be 627 Pārsi, see however Barr 1944:XIII. Pace Geldner, the colophon is written on fol. 107r.12ff.
Here, however, no year is given for Rustam’s copy. To sum up their contents in the words of Darab Peshotan Sanjana (1895:xl f.):

“The history told in these three colophons is that a manuscript of the Vendidad with Pahlavi, written by Hōmāst Shādān, was copied in 1205 in the province of Sistān, by Ardashīr Bahman, for Māh-yār Māh-Mitrō to take with him back to Aūchak near the river Indus. This copy was transcribed by Rustam Mēhrbān shortly after his emigration into India, which must have been after A.D. 1269, in which year he copied the Ardā Vīrāf Nāmē in Irān, and finally Kī was copied from this transcript in Cambay in A.D. 1324, by his great grand-nephew Mēhrbān Kāī-Khūsrū”.

What we know for certain of this person is that he was active between 1269 and 1288, and that he left his native Iran to go to India, where he was reported to have lived in Anklesar, possibly after 1269. Three decades later a great grand-nephew of Rustam followed in his ancestor’s footsteps and left for India. S. H. Hodivala (1920a) has studied in detail the colophons written by Mihrābān Ī Kay-Husraw and was able to reconstruct to a certain extent his stay in India.

Mihrābān’s name appears in the first of the three colophons found in K20, a colophon whose wording, except for the name of the scribe and the date, is exactly the same as that of the colophon of Rustam Mihrābān found in M51. Here it is Mihrābān Ī Kay-Husraw who writes on day Rašn of month Day of the year 690 Yazdegardīg (1321 A.D.). Like his great-grand-uncle, Mihrābān copied a Ms. written by Hērbed Mihrpānāg Srošayār, hērbed of Nišāpur. Whether he wrote this in Iran or in India is open to debate. Certainly he must have been in India at the time when the two other colophons found in K20 were written, i.e. in 720 and 700 A.Y. respectively. If he came by sea, as is quite possible, he must have landed somewhere on the western coast. We first hear of him settling in Ṭhāṇa, where he wrote the codex MK of the Pahlavi Texts, completing the first part on day Xwaršēd, month Šahrewar 691 A.Y. and the second part on day Frawardīn, month Ādur of that same year. He next wrote the Yasna codex J2, which he completed on day Bahman, month Frawardīn, 692 A.Y. in an unknown place. Seven month later, on day Hordād, month Ābān 692 A.Y. he completed the Widēwdād codex

14. For a translation of these colophons, with earlier literature, see Cereti 1996:447ff.
Lā in Navsāri. However, he did not stop long at Navsāri, for less than three months later, on day Asmān, month Day, 692 A.Y., he completed another Yasna codex, Ks, in Cambay (Khabbaṭ). Here he must have stayed for some time, since the colophon of another Widēwdatd manuscript, Kt, was written on day Dēn, month Tīr of 693 A.Y. He was still in Cambay in 720 A.Y. (1351 A.D.), as overtly stated in the second of the colophons found in K20.

The mention of the port Ṭhānā is of particular interest, since it is precisely in that area and during this period that two of the earliest European travellers, Odoric of Pordenon (1322) and Jordanus (1323), mention the existence of a community of Parsis. Ṭhānā, situated about 21 miles north-east of Bombay city (Maqbul Ahmad 1960:106) had been an active port even earlier, as testified among others by al-Idrīsī, and is not too far from the Kanheri caves.

Mihrābān ī Kay-Husraw came to India invited by a rich Cambay merchant, Čāhil Sāngan. What do we know about Čāhil Sāngan? Once again we shall turn to S. H. Hodivala’s article (1920a), which discloses a number of important details about Čāhil Sāngan. A Sanskrit colophon found in MK informs us on the relationship between Mihrābān and Čāhil Sāngan:

“In the Samvat year 1377, on Wednesday, Kārtikka Sudi 14, on the Frawardin day of month Ādar of the Parsi year 690 [sic], today, here in Ṭhānā [sic], on the shore of the sea, at the time when Sultan Giyasadin was establishing his sway, the Parsi merchant Chāhil, son of the Parsi merchant Sāngan having sent [lit. given] a letter full of compliments and an honorarium for copying, caused this book to be written for the merit of his soul by the Parsi priest Mihirwan who came from the land of Iranland [Persia; *Iranjamdesa-]. Whosoever preserves or reads this book of the Sahname Gustasp, the Pandnāmā [sic] Adarbād Maraspand will reflect merit upon [or: on account of] the merchant Chāhil and also upon his ancestors whose souls have been emancipated.” (H. M. Bhadkamkar apud Hodivala 1920a:124).”

For our present subject, the most important information given in this colophon is that both Čāhil and his father Sāngan are described as (Parsi) merchants. Now, the term “merchant” translates a Skr. abbreviation

15. The sovereign mentioned is to be identified with Ğiyās-od-dīn Togloq who reigned in Delhi in 1320-24.
vyav, found also in the colophon originally belonging to L4, which Hodivala (1920a:125) traces to the noun vyavahāraka- “merchant, trader”. In his opinion this hypothesis is proved by the parallel usage of abbreviating vurā, vorā or voharā (cf. Guj. Voro, Reg. Bohrā, etc.) by vu, vo found in Gujarati documents dating from the 16th to the 18th century.

All what has been said until now fits in with the idea of a Zoroastrian trading diaspora. The earliest document testifying to the presence of Zoroastrians who have settled in India dates to the late 9th century and originates from a merchant community living in Kerala in southern India. Less than 150 years later we have a second group of epigraphic documents, found in the Kaṇhēri Buddhist complex, now at the outskirts of Bombay, dating from 1009 and 1021. The site of Kaṇhēri is not far from the commercial port of Thānā, and this could explain both the presence of two inscriptions by the same group of Zoroastrians written in an interval of forty-five days, and the presence of a party coming from Iran. Later, in the 13th and 14th century we have proof of the visit of an Indian priest to Sistān and of Iranian Zoroastrian scribes to India. One of these scribes, Mihrābān Kay-Husraw, is first reported to have stayed in Thānā, as a guest of a Parsi merchant based in Cambay.

Let us now see if further information from these same colophons can help us to gain some insight in the years from the beginning of the 11th century to the middle of the 13th.

At the end of some of Mihrābān’s colophons we find a rōz-nāmag honouring the ancestors of his patron. Two of Čāhil’s forefathers are remembered on the same day: month Ādur, day Frawardīn. They are father and son, Bahram son of Ādur and Wahman son of Bahram, respectively four and three generations remote from Mihrābān’s own patron. According to the Pahlavi Wīdēwdād month Ādur, day Frawardīn is the established day for commemorating those who had died on an unknown date. According to Hodivala (1920a:127), “it appears as if the father and son had come by their death in some long sea-voyage or land-journey, undertaken for the furtherance of their trade”. Calculating 25/30 years to a generation, Bahram son of Ādur must have lived at the beginning of the 13th century, and he too may have been a Parsi merchant.

17. For the Pahlavi text found in MK see Jamasp Asana 1897-1913: p.169; for a translation of the text as found in Bhn, see Cereti 1996:449f. For a general discussion of the rōz-nāmag, see Hodivala 1920a:126f.
There remains one last colophon, which tells of a visit paid by Māhyār son of Māhmihr, hērbed from India, to Sīstān. This colophon, found in the Pahlavi Wīdēwdāds, was written in 1205 and brought to India.

“Completed in prosperity, happiness and peace. This book was written in the month of Tir, year five hundred and fifty-four, blessed day of Sṛōś, by Ardašīr son of Wahman son of Rōzweh son of Šāhburzēn, son of Šāhmard, may his soul be righteous. It was written from the manuscript of the late hērbed Hōmāst, whose lot is Heaven, son of Šādān son of Ohrmazd, in the province of Sīstān at the behest of Mayānag, teacher endowed with all virtues, of good nature and worthy worship; may his soul be immortal. Māhdād, son of Ādurweh, son of Dēndār paid for the expenses out of his own wealth. Māhyār, son of Māhmihr, hērbed from Hindūgān, from the province of Uča which is on the river Sind, called Wehrod in the religious scriptures, was for six years with the hērbeds of Sēstān. He learned the things of the religion and came to Hindūgān. He had obtained this tome of the Jūd-dēw-dād complete of the Zand, which was in this district, as a righteous gift from there. Among the ones who in those days were in that district the leader was Šāhmard son of Māhyār, the hērbed was Šāhmard son of Māhyār; Šāhzād son of Mihrog arranged and corrected this book, may his soul be immortal”.

The identification of the province called *Uča is not unequivocal. The most plausible hypothesis was put forth by West (1896-1904:82), who proposed to identify it with Ucch in the Panjāb, a relatively important town described in detail in Cunningham’s Ancient Geography of India (Sastri 1924:277-84).

Be that as it may, the important point is that in 1205 a hērbed from India, from a district on the banks of the Indus visited a Persian Zoroastrian community in Sīstān, and returned home with a copy of the Wīdēwdād. The existence of a community in Sīstān comes as no surprise since a revāyat dated 1511 mentions the number of 2,700 Zoroastrians in the region.

These ancient visits of Indian Zoroastrians to Iran and of Iranian Zoroastrians to India were subsequently, for one reason or the other,

forgotten. Thus, in the earliest revāyat the Iranian Zoroastrians are said to be unaware of the existence of their Indian brethren and therefore to have sent texts transcribed in Avestan characters for, according to that same revāyat, the Parsis knew no Pahlavi. In Nārīmān Hušang’s revāyat, dating from 1478, the Iranian clergy invites two Indian priests to come to Iran and suggest, as proper for a priest, a land route:

“The first perditon is that the hirbads do not know well their trade and tools, the decrees and the judges, what is pure and what is impure. If only possible, it is imperative that two wise hirbads come here to learn the Pahlavi script and to comprehend what is proper and what is not proper. Then they shall (be able to correctly) attend the religion of ᪓hrmazd back there (in India) and be diligent in performing good deeds so that they may attain Gorūsmān and the Best Existence, that place which the pious reach. Taking the land route it is near. From Qandahār to Sīstān is the nearest (route) and from Sīstān to Yazd there is nothing to fear”.

To conclude: The primary evidence for the existence of early Iranian Zoroastrian communities in India points to the presence of commercial communities on Indian land. The earliest attestation comes from today’s Kerala and dates from the end of the ninth century. Thereafter we know a group of inscriptions dating back to the 11th century, and colophons which reveal to us that there were interrelations between the Zoroastrians of India and Iran in the 13th and 14th century. All this evidence accords perfectly with a schema of maritime commercial relations. The only colophon that diverges from this interpretation is the one relating the visit to Iran by a priest, who went from the Indian province of *Uča to Sīstān. Possibly the decision to go by land had to do with the religious prohibition on travelling by sea, a prohibition which might also explain the land route suggested by the Iranian clergy in Nārīmān Hušang’s revāyat. What is particularly striking is that all

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21. Vitalone 1987:6ff. The fact that the Parsis knew little or no Pahlavi at the time of Nārīmān’s visit to Iran and, even more, the fact that there seem to have been very few Avestan and Pahlavi texts in India before the thirteenth century, contrasts with an early dating of the famous scribe Neryōsang Dhaval. It must be remembered, however, that Anquetil dated Neryōsang to about three hundred years before 1771 (Anquetil Duperron 1771:II:v).

previous relations seem to have been forgotten by 1478, when Narimān Hušang visited Yazd. Thus the story narrated by the primary sources differs from that found in the *Qešše-ye Sanjān* and the *Qešše-ye Zartoshtyān*. But one must leave open the possibility that these two works preserve the memory of a single, specific migration or, alternatively, that they constitute a sort of a “foundation myth”.

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Some Primary Sources on the Early History of the Parsis in India

Some Notes on the Magic Power of Holy Words in Iranian Tradition

Fereydun Vahman

Despite of the fact that Iran has an ancient tradition of magic and witchcraft, this rich cultural heritage has not fully caught the attention of scholars. There are a few short articles dealing with special magic rituals of the pre-Islamic period. As far as the period following the inception of Islam is concerned, sporadic mention of magic and witchcraft is found in literary works dealing primarily with the folklore and folk traditions of different geographical regions of Iran.

The prophet of old Iran, Zoroaster, introduced his religion to a people who were deeply engaged in magic and witchcraft. They believed in the influence of supernatural powers represented by different gods. In order to appease these whimsical gods people practiced magic and engaged in sacrificial ceremonies. They also used votive offerings combined with various rituals. In Zoroaster’s highly moral teachings, as presented in the Gathas, there was no room for magic or sorcery, but later on such beliefs crept back into his religion. While maintaining Zoroaster’s teachings on the existence of the two great cosmic powers of Good and Evil and rejecting witches (pairika) and sorcerers (yātus), the Younger Avesta created a complex system mixing the teachings of Zoroaster.

1. See for example J.J. Modi’s following articles in his Anthropological Papers, Bombay 1911: “Charms and Amulets for some diseases of the eye” (pp. 42-50); “Two Iranian Incantations” (pp. 340-345); “An Avesta Amulet for Contracting Friendship” (pp. 418-425.)

with the old beliefs of the people who lived on the Iranian plateau. In later centuries warding off the evil spirit and avoiding unclean objects together with cleansing rituals became the main theme of the religion. As Geiger puts it “a system which, like the Avesta, considers the whole world as filled with evil spirits and noxious creatures must naturally be disposed to avert the malignant effects of such beings.” Traditionally magic was one means to dispose of the evil spirit. The popularity of magic in Sasanian Iran can be seen in 9th century Pahlavi books. The accounts of Artāy Wirāz Nāmag, of the punishment in Hell of the magicians, witches and sorcerers – mostly women – show clearly the prevalence of such practices and the negative attitude of the Sasanian priests towards them. In short “Zoroastrianism had a well-developed demonology, which might have come useful for magical purposes, and it had its own magic tradition, preserved in the religious books in Pahlavi to some extent, and also in amulets and magic bowls.”

The use of such amulets has been widespread in Iran and Asia Minor during the Sasanian period. They were used to achieve love of someone, to defeat the enemy, to ward off the power of evil or to heal someone, etc. Iranians also turned to Jewish magicians. The great majority of inscribed Jewish earthenware bowls from Mesopotamia and Iran were intended for non-Jewish clients, mostly Zoroastrians. According to Naveh and Shaked “magic may have been considered to some extent a Jewish specialization and that pagans and Zoroastrians often turned to Jewish practitioners when they sought an effective remedy, protection or curse.”

No talisman, wooden or earthenware has survived Sasanian Iran, though Shaked suggests that “Sasanian amulets (not always recognized as such) appear in the catalogues of various museums, but the texts do

not yield themselves to easy decipherment." It is interesting to note, however, that certain passages of Avesta reveal the origin of this practice as well as the usage of amulets for different purposes.

While we do not have adequate material to reconstruct the tradition of magic and sorcery in old Iran, there are two sources which enable us to create an overall impression of such a tradition. First the popular religious books of the Zoroastrians composed during the Sasanian and early Islamic period, and the second a thorough study of magical tradition in present Iran. No doubt the examples found in today's folklore are deep-rooted in the old Iranian culture.

For the purpose of this study I have investigated some sources from both the Zoroastrian and the Islamic tradition.

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9. In Bahrām Yāst (Yī 14: 34-36) Zoroaster asks what remedy there may be if a man who hates him throws a curse upon him, or utters a spell against him. Ahura Mazda directs him to take a feather of the wide-winged bird vārengana and with it rub the body; 'with that feather you shall curse back your enemies.' ... 'If a man holds a bone of that strong bird, or a feather of that strong bird, no one can smite or turn to flight that fortunate man.' (Darmesteter, "Zand Avesta, II" *Sacred Books of the East*, XXIII 1883, pp. 240-41
10. For the Islamic part I have mainly used *Xvāss-e Åyāt* – Special qualities of the verses of the Koran, a MS. in Persian and Arabic at the Royal Library of Denmark. This valuable MS is acquired by Arthur Christensen on this trip to Iran in 1914. Some years later he published a detailed description of this work and its value for the Iranian folklore. ("Xvāss-e Åyāt, Notices et extras d’un manuscript persan traitant la magie des versets du Coran", *Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser* III, 4, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, København 1920.) The manuscript describes the magical powers of the first thirty Suras of the Koran. Quoting each verse it explains the special quality of the verse in solving different problems, specially different kinds of sicknesses. Most verses are accompanied by a description of a ritual which shall necessarily be performed in order to get the desired result. It states that the explanation of the qualities of the verses of the Koran comes from the sayings of Imām Ja’far Ṣādeq, the sixth Imām of the Twelver Shi’ī creed, and adds that these: “resulted from the experiences and inspirations of the sages of the past.” The book originally written in Arabic, was translated into Persian in 926 A.H. (1520 A.D.) “So that many more will have access to it.” On almost every page one can see how the words and statements of Imām Ja’far Ṣādeq are used to validate the magic traditions and rituals attributed to each verse. The book is translated at the time of the Safavids, when many such works have been produced, among them the voluminous collection of *hadīq*, collected by Majlesī and termed as *Bohār-al-Anvār*. I have also consulted various other works such as the Persian translation of *Ṣavāb-al-‘a‘māl va ‘eqāb al-‘a‘māl* (The rewards and punishments of the deeds) by Sheykh Ṣādūq, (Ibn-e Bābveyh) (d. 381 A.H/991 A.D. (translated by Ali Akbar Ja’farī, Tehran, n.d.) Sheykh Ṣādūq was a famous theologian and the author of more than three hundred books on Shi‘ī theology.
A) The Magic Power of the Holy Word in Healing

The magical effect of Holy Words are emphasised in Zoroastrian sources. In texts dealing with medicine we meet three kinds of healers: those who heal with knife (by surgery), those who heal with herbs and those who heal with the holy word, mantra.

In Vendidad (20: Par. 1-10) the origin of medicine and the power of healing are attributed to Thrita (Srit) son of Sām, father of the famous hero Keresāspa. Ahura Mazda tells Zoroaster that he was the first one who held sicknesses back to the realm of sickness; and held death back to the realm of death. He received “the healing” as a gift, a boon from Khshathra Variya. Khshathra Variya being the ameshaspand protecting metal, makes it probable that the verse points to the usage of metal, in this case a knife, in healing.

In the same chapter (par. 4) Ahura Mazda says that he produced healing trees, in hundreds, in thousands, in ten thousands out of one mystic tree gaokerena (the white Homa). This part of Vendidad’s chapter 20 is followed by some commands addressing different sicknesses: “I command you, run away O death, I command you, run away O sickness; I command you, run away O fever.” Such commands are also addressed to some obscure names, or at least unknown to us (like Sārana, sārastya, azana, azahva.) Immediately after this part follows the same command in another tone: “O disease, I command you, run away, O illness I command you, run away, O fever I command you, run away…”

Ardībehesht Yasht contains specific formulas for healing. Again we find that the doctor can heal the patient either with the power of mantra the holy word, or with a knife, or with plants. But it is stressed, “among all remedies [the one] that heals with the Holy Word; this one is the best-healing of all remedies.”

In Vendidad VII, 44 we read: “When many healers come together, O Spitaman Zarathust! He who heals with the knife, (that is cuts with the scalpel), he who heals with herbs (that gives medicine), he who heals with beneficent mantra. ...He is of healers the most healing who is the healer with the beneficent mantra…”

12. ibid, p. 190ff.
Chapter 22 of *Vendidad* explains the reason for the power of the Holy Word *mantra*. Ahura Mazda talks about the time when he first prepared his radiant abode *Garothmān*. Seeing how luminous it was Ahreman the deadly *Gannah-mainūg* produced 99,999 illnesses. Ahura Mazda asked *Mantra Spenta*, the “personified healing word”, to heal the sicknesses. In return he promised him lots of rewards, horses, sheep, camels, etc. But *Mantra Spenta* did not know how to do it and hence asked for some help. So Ahura Mazda sent his messenger *Neryosang* to the abode of *Airyaman* (the Goddess of healing). *Airyaman* prepared a *Barashnum* ceremony, which together with the Holy Text defeated the demon and his evil power.\(^{14}\)

In many of the passages of Persian *Rivāyats* the legendary hero *Thraētaona*, later on *Frēdōn*, is considered to be connected to the origin of medicine and the art of healing “in the same way as Greek *Asklepios*”.\(^{15}\) There are also amulets and incantations related to *Frēdōn* in Pazand and Pahlavi texts.\(^{16}\) The belief in the healing power of *Frēdōn* has been vividly alive at least until the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century. William Jackson in his trip to Yazd has seen some talismans with the name of *Frēdōn* on it used by Zoroastrians.\(^{17}\)

### The main healing formulas in Zoroastrianism and Islam

In both Zoroastrianism and Islam various sayings as well as texts from the body of Holy Scriptures are considered as a *mantra* for healing the sick, fulfilling any wish and guaranteeing the success of any deed. Believers utter these popular sayings many times daily, thereby summoning assistance from the magic power of the Holy Word.

In Zoroastrianism two sentences are mostly used: The first is from the Gathas, *Ahūnā Vāriya* (*Ys. 27:13*) also known as *honovar*; the second is a prayer starting with *Ashem Vahu*.

The *honovar*, the most sacred formula in Zoroastrianism, has twenty-

\(^{14}\) *ibid*, pp. 400-404  
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one words; each line has sixteen syllables beginning with yathā ahā varyo “just as the Lord in accord with truth must be chosen.”18 Ahura Mazda pronounced this sentence at the time of the first appearance of Ahreman in the universe and “exhibited to the evil spirit his own triumph in the end, and the impotence of the evil spirit, the annihilation of the demons, and the resurrection and undisturbed future existence of the creatures forever and everlasting.”19

The other prayer Ashem Vahu20 “praise of righteousness”, has only twelve words and is recited frequently. The recitation grants different rewards to the incantatory according to the nature of the occasion. For example, the Ashem Vahu if recited after eating has a merit of a hundred Ashem Vahu; if uttered when having turned from one side to the other side in bed has a merit of one thousand and so on.

In Pāzand texts21 there are certain Nīrangās, mantras, for healing sicknesses such as constipation,22 fever,23 protecting children from diseases,24 curing eye disease,25 headache, wounds, the main pains and other pains,26 toothache,27 all kinds of pains,28 for easing childbirth,29 and so on. Usually such Nīrangās or mantras are compositions of passages from Avesta, Vendīdād, Ardībehesht Yasht, honovar and Ashem Vahu or other sacred texts. Some of them are written on special objects that can be tied to the arm or hung round the neck as a talisman.

18. Avestan scholars have given different translations for this sentence. For the recent discussion see: Insler, S. “The Ahuna Varsiya Prayer”, Acta Iranica 4, Monumentum H. S. Nyberg. Leiden 1975, pp. 408-21. Insler’s interpretation: “Just as the Lord in accord with truth must be chose, so also the judgement in accord with truth. In consequence of (this) good thinking, institute ye the rule of actions stemming from an existence of good thinking for the (sake of the) Wise One and for the Lord whom they established as pastor for the needy-dependents.” (p. 420).
20. Ys. 27:14. “Ashem vahū vahishtem astī ushtā astī ushtā ahmāi hyat ashāī vahishtāi ashem”. Darmesteter’s translation: Holiness (Asha) is the best of all good: it is also happiness. Happy the man who is holy with perfect holiness. (SBE, vol. 3. 1989, p. 216.)
22. Ibid, p. 175.
23. Ibid, p. 182, 185, 186.
25. Ibid, p. 188.
27. Ibid, p. 192.
29. Ibid, p. 201.
In some cases the practice of reading the Nirangs is accompanied with different rituals. In order to cure a headache, for example, one must prepare a special ceremonial ink from the mixture of wine, musk and saffron. The mantra is then written with this special ink on a piece of antelope skin, which is tied to the patient’s left arm.30

Similarly in Islam the Koranic phrase bismilläh al-raḥmân al-raḥîm and the sentence containing the salutation to the prophet and his family Allâhomma ṣalla alâ Mohammaden va āl-e Mohammaden are both endowed with great power.31 These sentences are as popular among the Iranian Muslims as Ahuna Variya and Ashem Vahu are among the Zoroastrians.

Beside these holy sentences, all the Sūras and verses of the Koran, like most of the Zoroastrian Yashts and Nirangs, are considered to be powerful means in curing sicknesses as well as solving almost all problems a human being can encounter.

The various illnesses that can be cured through different Sūras of the Koran are mentioned in Xväss-e Āyāt and summarized here; but one should note that the book is reflecting only the Shi‘i tradition of Islam.

Headache (s. 1), eye diseases (s. 1), fever (s.1), blisters (s. 1), tumour (s. 59, v. 21-24), phlegm (s. 97), diseases related to the liver (s. 97), epilepsy (s. 2), paralysis (s. 2), weak eyes, sciatica, backache (s. 1), indigestion (s. 2, v. 57), haemorrhoids (s. 3, v. 138). Stomach-ache and diarrhoea, prostates, (s. 1, v. 69), pain in joints (s. 14, v. 15), baldness (s. 2, v. 261), against the poison of snake (s. 1), weak memory (s. 1). Others facilitate the childbirth and increase lactation (s. 3, v. 31-31), while others (with the help of Bismilläh) are effective against disease in general (s. 1).

The recitation of each verse has to be accompanied by various activities, some quite simple, others more complex. To cure fever, for example, it is enough to recite the relevant verse of the Koran over a bowl of water and recite the verse bismilläh al-raḥmân al-raḥîm forty times, then pour the water on the sick man. Someone who is bitten by a snake can be cured if one recites the bismilläh al-raḥmân al-raḥîm 40 times while blowing the words on the sick man. To cure a weak memory or even stupidity one needs to write bismilläh al-raḥmân al-raḥîm on a glass with special ink. The ceremonial preparation of the ink involves mixing musk and saffron and is similar to that found in Zoroastrianism. The text is then washed with rose water and the liquid is kept in a jar.

Anyone suffering from a weak memory or stupidity can drink the liquid for seven days and regain his powers of memory or strengthen his mental faculties.

**B) Using Holy Words in Daily Life**

*Ahuna Variya* is used frequently during the daily routines and is an intrinsic part of almost every action. A list of the times and circumstances in which it would include: starting work, returning home, talking to someone, going to a learned man or some other dignitary, going to a river or taking a bath, asking someone to pay a debt or when lending a person money, going on a journey (21 times), expressing good wishes for someone, fighting someone (6 times), sowing seeds or ploughing the land, planting a tree (9 times), making love (9 times), meeting a virgin girl (11 times), asking for the hand of a girl in marriage or overseeing the marriage of one's own child (11 times), buying animals (10 times), going to a high place such as a mountain, a tower, a bridge (12 times), or entering a cave or a cellar (12 times), entering a town or village (13 times), and getting lost (12 times).

Likewise *Ashem Vahu* is recited when sneezing, when consecrating the sacred bread *drôn*, when washing one's face, when departing the world (it is then spoken by the dying man's children directly into his mouth), when squatting to urinate (3 times), etc. In general it is prescribed that this sentence be recited as frequently as possible.

The occasions for reciting *bismillâh al-rahmân al-rahîm* are almost identical to those of reciting *Ashem Vahu*. Special emphasis is put on the need to recite when starting work, entering a house or a room, sitting down to a meal, embarking a journey, etc. Reciting *bismillâh al-rahmân al-rahîm* moreover brings certain powers to the reciter: “Whoever utters this sentence God will remove from him the dangers of 70 kinds of calamities. Whoever utters it with a sincere heart, God will, for each letter of *bismillâh*, record for him [the reward of] 4000 good deeds, and will remove from the record of his deeds the [punishment of] 4000 bad deeds. Whoever writes *bismillâh al-rahmân al-rahîm* beautifully and does his best to accomplish this task in the best manner, God shall forgive all his sins. *bismillâh al-

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33. Quoted from *Sad dar* translated in *SBE* vol. xxiv, pp. 256, 284, 294, 324, 343-44.
rahmān al-rahīm has 19 letters and it is said that the fire of Hell also has 19 flames. Whoever recites bismillāh al-rahmān al-rahīm [and repeats it] God for each recitation will turn away from him one flame of Hell.

The other advantages resulting from the recitation of bismillāh al-rahmān al-rahīm can be classified as follows: It brings greater prosperity while reciting it 1000 times, and while saluting the prophet 1000 times it will bring revenge upon tyrants, causing their death or humiliation. Reciting bismillāh al-rahmān al-rahīm 780 times, followed by 132 times salutation to the prophet will bring the fulfilment of whatever wish one might have.34

C) Using the Holy Word to Defy Tyrants

The frequency of certain formulas in both the Zoroastrian and Islamic populist traditions for shielding oneself against tyrant bears striking witness to the prevalence of tyranny in Iranian society both before and after the coming of Islam. For centuries the peasant population of Iran had suffered from systematic injustices at the hands of the landowning elite. Moreover the history of the Zoroastrian societies in Iran after the coming of Islam right up to the first decades of 20th century was one of constant persecution and suffering. It is no wonder, therefore, if members of this community restored to holy formulas (plentiful nirangs in Persian Rivaytats)35 to protect themselves against tyrannical governors, cruel local Muslim clergies or the hostile Muslim community in general. The presence of similar tradition in the Islamic culture suggests however that this suffering was shared by poor or powerless Muslims as well. We find in Xvāṣṣ-e āyāt many magic formulae for protection against tyrants, governors, dignitaries, landlords etc.36

D) Using the Holy Word to Prevent the Death of Sheep

Magic was also used to prevent the death of sheep, which was a great problem in pastoral societies. In Zoroastrian tradition the formula was to write the nirang on the skin of an antelope while performing Ardibe-

34. Xvāṣṣ, pp. 15-22.
35. See as an example: Antiā, ibid, pp. 181-2, 190-1; Unvala, I, ibid, p. 192.
36. Xvāṣṣ pp. 16, 32, 58, 65-6, 70, etc.
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hesht Vaj and having panām⁳⁷ on the face. Next, still performing the Ardibehesht Vaj, one has to take some wool from the testicle of a sheep and attach it to the antelope skin on which the nīrang is written. Then the skin is to be buried where sheep can pass over it. This ritual can prevent the death of a sheep.⁳⁸ A similar nīrang can also be suspended from the branch of a diseased tree in order to cure it.⁳⁹

A similar (Islamic) tradition is recorded from Sarvestān in Fārs. In early spring the sheep owner writes a special talisman and puts it into a box. The box itself shall be decorated with certain prayers. It is then buried in the centre of the sheepfold to ensure the sheep will sleep on or pass over it.⁴⁰ Another method prescribed in Xvāṣṣ-e Āyat goes as follows: “One shall mix three kinds of water together. First take before sunrise on the day of Now Ruz (the New Year) water from a well that is in use, mix it with water from an abandoned well and add rainwater to it. Then write the Koranic verses 10 to 13 of Sūra 16 (Nahl, the Bee) on a leaf of a tree. Reciting the verses three or seven times, wash the leaf in the mixture of the water collected, and pour the liquid on animals and the fodder. This will protect the animal and will also increase the milk.”⁴¹

Antelope skin is widely used as a talisman in both Zoroastrian and Islamic traditions.⁴²

E) The Holy Word and Burying Pared Nails

The ritual of burying pared nails is also strikingly similar in Zoroastrian and Islamic tradition. Sad dar XIV prescribes that when you cut nails you should wrap the paring in paper. You should then take Srōsh Bāz inwardly and utter three honovar and with each honovar recite a part of the Avesta (Vend. XVII, 26-28) which says “Unto thee, O bird Ashó-zusta, do I announce these nails, do I introduce [or make known] these nails. May these nails be such for thee, O bird, as spears and knives, bows, falcon-feathered arrows, and sling-stones against the de-

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³⁷. Panām is Zoroastrian headscarf.
³⁹. Antiā, ibid, p.194; Xvāṣṣ, pp. 31-2.
⁴¹. Xvāṣṣ, p. 138.
⁴². Xvāṣṣ, pp. 28, 41, 179.
mon Mazaiyas.” Afterwards, you should say two more honovars, completing the bāz with each. Then you should make lines in a little (amount of) dust in the midst of the nail paring. Next make hole in the ground four fingers deep and, having placed the nail parings in that spot, cover it with soil. “For Ohrmazd has with favour created a bird, which is called Ashó-zust, and they call it the bird of Bahman. They also call it the owl which eats nails. It is necessary that they do not leave them unbroken, for they would come into use as weapons of wizards. And they also say that if [nails] fall in the midst of food there is a danger of sicknesses.”

In the Islamic tradition the pared nails must also be buried. The Koran verses used for this purpose are verses 26 and 27 of Mursilât “Emis­saries” (LXX). In his commentary on this verse Imām Ja'far Šādeq has recommended burying the pared nails. There is also a tradition stemming from Muhammad that enjoins the burial of four human products: hair, nails, teeth and blood.

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Belief in religious rituals and the magical powers of the holy words has always been and still is a prevalent phenomenon in Iran. These magical powers are regularly invoked in a wide variety of situations, regardless of the supplicant’s class or education.

The examples presented in this article attest to the permeation of Zoroastrian rituals into Islamic practices in Iran. Such beliefs show yet another aspect of the continuity of the Iranian religious identity from the ancient times to the present.

44. The translation: “Have we not made the earth to draw together to itself the living and the dead?”
V

Early and Classical Islamic Period
The Use of Persian as a Religious Language in the Early Centuries of Islam

Nasrollah Pourjavady

It is generally thought that the first religious book to have been written in New Persian was the commentary on the Koran known as the Tarjuma-yi tafsīr-i Tabarī. It is assumed that with the writing of this commentary in the middle of the 4th/10th century, Persian began to be used as a religious language in Iran. Whilst the appearance of this commentary was indeed an important event in the history of the Persian language, this was not the beginning of the use of Persian as a religious language, for in fact, more than two centuries before the Tarjuma-yi tafsīr-i Tabarī was written, Persian had been used orally in religious circles in Iran, particularly in Khurasān, among ascetics, mystics, and even some theologians and jurists. This oral use of Persian in religious discourse is evidenced by sporadic words and phrases in Persian, which have been preserved in mystical treatises and hagiographies in Arabic. This paper will examine Persian fragments attributed to three early ascetics and mystics, namely Ḥabīb ʿAjamī, ʿAbdullāh b. Mubārak, and Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī (or Biṣṭāmī) which appear in some Arabic texts. In most cases, these phrases are to be found in anecdotes about these mystics.

1) Ḥabīb al-ʿAjamī

Abū Muḥammad Ḥabīb b. Muḥammad al-ʿAjamī was an early Muslim saint whose biography appears in Abū Nuʿaym Isfahānī’s Hīyat al-Awliyā and Farīd ud-Dīn ʿAṭṭār’s Tadhkirat al-Awliyā.1 He lived in the second half of the first and the first half of the second century of the Hij-

ra (the first half of the 8th century A.D.). He and his wife were both originally Persians, from the district of Fars, and for this reason he is sometimes referred to as al-Fārṣī. Later they moved to Basra and settled there. They both spoke Persian and Ḥabīb is said to have been ignorant of Arabic. He was a prosperous man who earned his money through usury. However, by listening to the sermons of the famous preacher and traditionist of the town, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), he converted to a life of piety and began to live a virtuous and religious life. The story of his conversion is reported in Arabic by Abū Nuʿaym, and it is through this story that we discover not only that Ḥabīb did not speak Arabic, but also that he could not understand Ḥasan’s sermons, which were entirely in Arabic. Thus, the dialogue between Ḥabīb and Ḥasan, which led to the former’s conversion, was only possible with the help of a translator. Fortunately Abū Nuʿaym has preserved the Persian words spoken by Ḥabīb in the story. Here, I will translate the Arabic phrases and quote the Persian phrases as they appear in the Hilya. There are some obvious mistakes in the Persian phrases in the printed edition of the Hilya. I have attempted to correct these in my quotations.

Ḥasan of Basra used to have preaching sessions every day and Abū Muḥammad Ḥabīb would attend these sessions along with merchants and other worldly people, without understanding or even paying attention to what Ḥasan was saying. One day he became curious and asked [one of the participants]:

این پیر همی در آید، چه گوید؟ (This old man who comes here every day, what does he say?)

"O Abū Muḥammad", this person answered, "we swear to God, he speaks about Heaven and Hell, and encourages people to follow the path that leads to Paradise and says that we should not be attached to the world."

Ḥabīb was impressed by these words and said in Persian: “Take me to him.”

Thereupon Ḥabīb was taken to Ḥasan, where one of Ḥasan’s followers introduced Ḥabīb, saying: “O Ḥasan, this man is Abū Muḥammad Ḥabīb and he has come before you. Please preach to him”.

Ḥabīb went forward and stood before Ḥasan, and said:

این همی گویی، چه گویی؟ (What is it that you keep on saying?)

3. For these anecdotes, see Abū Nuʿaym, Ḥilyat, vol. 6.
[Not having understood what Ḥabīb said], Hasan asked the other man: “What is he saying?”

“He says”, the man replied, “What is it that you keep saying?”

Having heard this, Hasan turned to Ḥabīb and reminded him of Paradise and warned him of the fires of Hell. He urged him to do good and avoid evil, to desire the other world and renounce the life of this world. Having listened to these words, Ḥabīb said:

َابن گوئی؟ (Is this what you keep saying?)

To which Hasan replied: “Yes indeed, and I promise to be your guarantor before God”.

After that Ḥabīb left and gave away all his possessions, leaving nothing for himself, and from then on he placed his trust in God and borrowed money from others to live on.

Ḥabīb life, as indicated in the story of his conversion, was divided into two distinct parts, before and after his conversion, and in both parts he was involved in dealing with other people. In the first part, he was a usurer and dealt with people for his own interest. In the second part, however, he had become a kind, benevolent person who tried to help people who were in need. He even borrowed money for some and tried to pay off their debts. It was because of his care for other people’s financial problems that people came to him when they were in dire need. This is illustrated in the following two anecdotes, in which Ḥabīb’s original, Persian words have again been preserved.

One day a man came to Ḥabīb and complained about being in debt. Ḥabīb told him to go and borrow money, [assuring him] that he would be his guarantor. Whereupon the man went to someone and borrowed five hundred dirhams from him, and Ḥabīb stood surety for him. After a while, the lender came to Ḥabīb and said that he needed his money back, and that if he was not paid right away, he would himself lose money. Ḥabīb asked him to come back the next day. Then he got up, made the ritual ablution, went to a mosque and prayed to God. Next day, when the lender came, Ḥabīb told him to go to the mosque. If he happened to find a sum of money there, it would be his and he could take it. The man went to the mosque as he had been directed, and there he found a pouch containing five hundred dirhams. He took it and went his way. When later he counted the money carefully, he found out that the amount was more than five hundred dirhams. He then returned to Ḥabīb and said: “O Ḥabīb, this money is more than the amount I lent”. Ḥabīb responded by saying:
The only Persian phrase in this story is the last comment made by Ḥabīb. However, since Ḥabīb spoke only in Persian, we can assume that the whole conversation in this story was carried out in Persian, and that there were probably more Persian phrases in the original version. Even Ḥabīb’s pleading with God, which is not narrated in the story, may have been done in Persian.

In another anecdote, a man asks Ḥabīb to pray to God to cure the pain in his leg. Ḥabīb does so by saying:

(O God, do not disgrace Ḥabīb); cure this man’s pain in such a way that he does not even remember which leg had been hurting him.

In the foregoing anecdotes, as we have observed, it is Ḥabīb ʿAjamī himself who speaks in Persian. There is, however, one anecdote in Abū Nuʿaym’s Ḥilyat in which a poor woman comes to Ḥabīb and says in Persian: نان نیست ما را (we have no bread).

Apart from Persian phrases inserted in stories and anecdotes about Ḥabīb, a very significant mystical statement in Persian is also attributed to him, which is quoted in another Arabic source, namely the Kitāb adab un-nafs of Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad Tirmidhī (d. between 295-300/907-912). This statement concerns the extreme joy that Ḥabīb experienced in relation to God. The sentence is unfortunately quoted in a corrupted form by Arab scribes. In the original manuscript of Tirmidhī’s book,4 it appears as: خدا، عجب است کمن از شادی بیمرب کمرو جوختدا. The editors, Arberry and ʿAbd al-Qādir, have rightly noticed that this sentence does not make sense. So, they have altered کمن to ممکن and بیمرب to بیممر. These changes, however, do not bring us to a correct reading of the sentence. In fact, the change of کمن to ممکن, as Fritz Meier has observed,5 is not justified. Meier has suggested that we read the sentence as:

(O God, it is surprising that I die of joy, [for] having a God like you”. This sentence as it

stands requires further correction. Meier has suggested that we read "I don’t die" instead of "I die". This is a sound suggestion, except that it does not correspond to the Arabic translation of the phrase that says “amut-u min al-farah” (I die of joy). There is of course the possibility that the Arab translator was using a corrupt manuscript. In which case Meier’s suggestion would stand. Another alternative is that we change the Persian verb ast into negative form niṣt and read the sentence as:

(O God, it wouldn’t be surprising if I died of joy, for having a God like you).

2) ‘Abdullāh b. Mubārak

Another religious figure from whom some fragments in Persian have been found in two Arabic sources is ‘Abdullāh ibn Mubārak of Marv (d. 118-81/763-97). He is known as a traditionist and is said to have travelled extensively and met many religious scholars of his time. He wrote a number of books, too, some of which have been edited and published.6 His name is included among the forerunners of both the Malāmatiya and the Sufis.

The Persian sayings of Ibn Mubārak appear each in a different biographical work. ‘Abd al-Karīm Sam‘ānī of Marv (d. 506-62/1113-66) has preserved one of the sayings in his famous book entitled Kitāb al-ansāb. Ibn Mubārak’s phrase is not quoted under his entry, but that of another scholar called ‘Umar Ḥafṣ b. Ḥamīd al-Akkāf, for whom Ibn Mubārak is said to have held much respect. In fact, his Persian statement is precisely about this respect. Sam‘ānī quotes directly Ibn Mubārak as having said:

This sentence is obviously corrupted, and it is difficult to guess what the correct form can be. It may have been thus: خرد پیش حفظ گزارت کند (Intelligence does not stretch out its leg before Ḥafṣ)8 or خرد پیش حفظ یا گزارت کند (Intelligence steps in before Ḥafṣ [to help]).

8. In this case the sentence might imply that an intelligent person would (out of respect) not stretch out his legs in front of Ḥafṣ. Alternatively one might read khord (small) instead of khirad (intelligence) in which case the meaning would be: ‘A man of lesser rank would not stretch out his legs before Abū Ḥafṣ’.
The other Persian saying of Ibn Mubarak is preserved in Abu’l-Qāsim Taymī Ḥṣafāhānī’s biographical work called Siyar us-salaf. Isfahānī (d. 535/1142) reports a story in which a man from Khurasān comes to the teaching session of a very learned man called Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī, and begins to talk in Persian with Ibn Mubarak, who is sitting next to al-Fazārī. Fortunately this saying has reached us in a more correct form:

Ibn Mubarak was sitting next to Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī when a Khurasānī man came into the room and asked him a question [regarding religious matters]. Out of respect for Abū Ishāq, Ibn Mubarak pointed the man out to him, indicating to the Khurasānī that he should put his question to Abū Ishāq. The Khurasānī did so, and Abū Ishāq answered his question. Then the man asked Ibn Mubarak in Persian: 

τω χη γοβί? (What is your opinion?) to which Ibn Mubarak replied: 

ما به مجلس مهتران سخن نگویم (We do not speak in the presence of the people who are greater than us).

Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī

The third religious figure from whom a number of Persian words and phrases have survived is the famous third century mystic of Khurasān Abū Yazīd, or as he is better known in Persian sources, Bāyazīd Baṣṭāmī (d. 234 or 261/848 or 874) One of the Persian phrases of Bāyazīd that has come down to us is found in an anecdote which is often quoted by later Persian poets such as Farīd ud-Dīn Āṭṭār and Jalāl ud-Dīn Rūmī. The source for both these poets appears to have been Qushayri’s Risāla, in which the story is related as follows:

Once Abū Yazīd saw a man and asked him: “What is your profession?” “I am a khar-banda (a donkey keeper)”, the man replied. Then Abū Yazīd said: “May God kill your donkey, so that you may be a slave of God”.


This dialogue must have originally been in Persian, not only because a donkey keeper in Bastām would have known no other language than Persian, but also because the whole meaning of the anecdote lies in the pun that Bāyazīd is making with the Persian word khar-banda. Ordinarily the word means “a man who keeps a donkey”, but if it is juxtaposed with the word khodā-banda (“slave of God”) then it suggests the meaning “the slave of a donkey”. It is precisely this latter meaning which Bāyazīd aims at by his play on words in this anecdote. However, the play on words only works when both words (khar-banda and khodā-banda) are written in Persian, as in a more authentic version which appears in the Tahdhīb al-asrār of Abū Sa‘d Khargūshī (d. 406/1015). This latter work may well have been Qushayrī’s source for the anecdote. Khargūshī quotes the complete response of Bāyazīd to the donkey keeper in Persian.

Abū Yazīd asked a man: “What is your profession?” *Khar-banda,* said the man. Bāyazīd answered (آغر خدا بنده بودی به پودی) (It would be better if you were a slave of God).11

One of the best sources for Bāyazīd anecdotes is Abu‘l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Sahlājī’s *Kitāb an-nūr min kalimāt Abī Ṭayfūr”,* collected during the 5th/11th century. Though this book is written in Arabic, it is obvious that most of the anecdotes and sayings in it have been translated from Persian, as several Persian words and phrases have been preserved in their original form.

Among the Persian statements of Bāyazīd which have remained intact in Sahlājī’s book is that which he uttered when speaking about the Divine Essence. When Abū Yazīd spoke about the attributes of God, he seemed to be joyfully at rest.

When he wanted to speak about the Essence of God, however, he would jump up and keep saying: (آمد، آمد، آمد، به سر آمد) (He is coming, He is coming, He is coming, He is coming with His head).12

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Another source for Bāyazīd’s anecdotes is a book entitled the ʿIlm al-qulūb written by an unknown author around the beginning of the 5th/11th century.13 In one of the anecdotes of ʿIlm al-qulūb, there is a relatively long answer, which Bāyazīd gives to a man who asks him why he does not associate with other people.

Once Bāyazīd was asked: “Why don’t you come and live with us and mix with us?”


As we can see, only the last phrase in Bāyazīd’s response is in Persian. But we can assume that all of Bāyazīd’s response and even the entire dialogue were originally in Persian, and while a translator has translated most of the words, for some reason he has left the last few words in the original Persian. This assumption is probably true for most of the sayings of Bāyazīd. In fact, we are told by Sahlahī that one of the first translators of Bāyazīd’s sayings was Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 298/910).15

Sahlahī has preserved not only some of the Persian phrases of Bāyazīd’s himself, but also those of some of his disciples. One of these disciples is a man named Dārī Istarābādī from whom a full verse is quoted in Persian:

ما دلیست کان چون غمین نشود به غمگانان شود و غم فراز گیرد وام

I have a heart [which is accustomed to sorrow] so much so that when it does not feel sorrow,

I will go to those who are sorrowful and borrow some from them.

15. Sahlahī, ibid, p. 139-140.
16. Sahlahī, ibid, p. 64.
Another of Bāyazīd’s disciples was a simple man, a saint, from a village called Kūhiyān. It is said that once people asked Kūhiyānī to pray to God for rain, and he told them to do it themselves. Since these people thought that there must be a special Arabic formula for prayer, they asked Kūhiyānī how they should say it. The answer that the saint gave must have surprised them. He said: “Express your wish in Persian, and say

بار خدا، بارانمان کو (O God, what has happened to our rain?).”

It was not only Bāyazīd and his disciples in Bāstām and the villages around who spoke Persian; we can be certain that mystics and Sufis in cities throughout Khurasān and other parts of the Persian-speaking world expressed themselves in Persian. Some of the great mystics of the 3rd/9th century did not even know Arabic. Abū Ḥafṣ Ḥaddād, the great master of Nishapur, was a blacksmith who could not speak Arabic. However, the sayings of Ḥaddād that are quoted in the oldest Sufi sources, such as the works of Abū ʿAbd ur-Rahmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), are all in Arabic. These sayings, as well as those of many other Persian mystics, must have originally been in Persian, but since the language of religious writing in the 3rd and 4th centuries was exclusively Arabic, those sayings had to be translated into Arabic. Thus, despite the fact that the mystical treatises and other religious texts written in the 3rd and 4th centuries were in Arabic, the living religious language that was used among the Sufis, the Malamatiya and the Karramiya, in Nishapur was Persian. The situation in other cities of Khurasān was no different. In Tirmidh, we know that the prolific writer Ḥakīm Tirmidhī spoke Persian and used Persian words and phrases frequently in his Arabic works. In Balkh, mystics, including Ḥātam Ašām, and even theologians and jurisprudents spoke and taught in Persian. Thus the history of Persian as a religious language begins not with written texts, such as the *Tarjumā-yi tafsīr-i Ṭabarān* but long before that, in the 1st and 2nd centuries, the time when Iranians gradually accepted Islam as their new religion.

17. Ibid, p. 78.
The Development of Koranic Commentaries in Early New Persian

M. J. Yahaghi

Over the two centuries after the Arab invasion, the New Persian language (Dari) gradually abandoned the difficult Pahlavi alphabet and adapted the Arabic one instead. The Arabic language had become the religious language for the majority of Iranians who had converted to Islam at that time.* This conversion prepared the ground for the Iranian national language to become the inter-cultural connection between Iran and Islam. When the first Persian translation and commentary on the Koran appeared in the mid-tenth/fourth century, the New Persian had already established itself by carrying on the epic tradition in great works such as Šāhnāme-ye Abū Maşurī (based on pre-Islamic Iranian history and legends) written in 957/346, and Tarjome-ye Tafṣīr-e Ţabarī (the first translation and commentary of the Holy Koran) written shortly afterwards in 962/351. With its remarkable poetical background New Persian had enabled the court-sponsored poets to bring out the richness of the language in these two major works. It is important to note that these early scholarly works were produced under the patronage of Maşur ben Nūh ben Naşr of the Samanid dynasty.

A Persian translation of Ţabarī’s commentary appeared five years after the Šāhnāme-ye Abū Maşurī, highlighting the political and social circumstances following the Arab invasion of Iran, in particular the need to express national autonomy through the use of Persian and to reproduce Islamic texts in that same language. This trend was underscored by Ferdowsi’s Šāhnāme which appeared almost contemporaneously with the Ţabarī’s Persian commentary. Moreover, this tafsīr provided a point of convergence for Iranian national sentiment and a new religious identity, and, as such, it can be regarded as marking the beginning of a symbiosis between Iran and Islam which has developed dialectically throughout Iranian history.

After Tarjome-ye Tafṣīr-e Ţabarī, which became an important and formally acknowledged translation and interpretation of the Muslim

* See also the article by Nasrollah Pourjavady in the present book.
Holy Book, New Persian developed in the fields of Koranic translation and interpretation, and ushered in a period in which numerous, independent translations and many commentaries appeared from the tenth/fourth century and onwards. This topic is beyond the scope of the present paper and deserves an independent study.

It is important to note that the formal permission granted by the Muslim jurists of Transoxiana to translate the Koran into Persian, paved the way for the advancement of Persian prose in all fields, especially the religious. The permission to translate the Koran into Persian was as important a catalyst in developing the New Persian language as was the sentence that the Saffarid King Ya’qūb supposedly uttered while listening to recitations of the Koran in Arabic: “Why do you say something that I cannot understand?”

This first translation was characterized by simplicity of language and strictness in introducing Arabic terminology to keep the translation accessible to the native Persian speakers. Knowledge of Arabic was not widespread in the far-flung regions of Khorasan, and although learned scholars were thoroughly versed in Arabic, the common people needed information about Islam and its holy book in their own language. Thus, the translation was kept simple and accessible to ordinary people. This point is highlighted in the introduction to the *Tafsîr*:

“And this is a great commentary on the Koran by Moḥammad ḽarī Ṭabarī, may God’s mercy be upon him, in clear Persian. This book has been brought from Baghdad to Amīr Moẓaffar Abū Ṣāleḥ Ṭansūr ben Naṣr ben Aḥmad ben Esmā’īl (may the mercy of God be upon them all). This work was comprised of forty volumes, composed in Arabic with the complete chains of authority. It was difficult for him [the Amir] to read and understand this text in Arabic, and he therefore ordered that it be translated into Persian. Then he called the ‘Olāmā of Transoxiana and asked them: ‘Can we translate this book into Persian?’ And they replied: ‘Yes. Everyone who is unable to understand this text in Arabic, can read and write the interpretation of the Koran in Persian. This is based on a statement of God: ‘We have sent no Messenger save with the tongue of his people.’ Then he summoned the ‘Olāmā of Transoxiana, including such figures as the jurist Abū Bakr ben Aḥmad ben Ḥamīd ben Aḥmad al-Sajestānī from Bukhara,

and Abū Ja'far ben Moḥammad ʿAlī from Balkh, and the jurist Al-Ḥasan ben 'Alī Mendūs and Abū al-Jahm Khāled ben Hānī al-Mottafeq from Bāb al-Hendū; and others from Samarkand, Spejāb and Fargāne who all signed an edict permitting the translation of the Koran. Then he ordered this group to translate [Ṭabarī’s] Taḥṣīr.2

Such statements explaining the origin of the translations can be found in many other sources, such as: Tāj al-Tārijem,3 Baṣāyer-e Yamīnī,4 and Rowż al-Jenān,5 which show that these works were intended for Persian speaking people.

Some scholars have doubted that the Tarjome-ye Taḥṣīr-e Ṭabarī is a direct translation of the Jamʿ al-Bayān fī Taḥṣīr al-Qorʾān, by Moḥammad Jarīr Ṭabarī (840-922/225-310).6 In any case the tradition of composing Persian commentaries on the Koran continued to develop in many parts of Iran, particularly in the areas of Greater Khorasan. Although many of these taḥṣīrs, like other works, have not come down to us, some of the available ones have been published in the last fifty years. These texts are very useful from a grammatical, lexical, dialectical and folkloric point of view. They offer definitions of Koranic terms which represent an important source for the study of the history of translation and lexicography in Persian. The limited scope of this paper does not allow me to make more than a passing comment on this fact. However, I would like to mention some of the titles in question to give some idea of the quantity and significance of the taḥṣīrs in early New Persian:

6. Such doubts were originally expressed by Abbas Zaryab-Khuʿi (Baẓm-Āvard, Tehran, 1989/1368, p. 437), and later by other scholars such as Azartash Azarnoosh (Yeḵī Qaṭre Bārān, Jašn-Nāme-ye Ostād Dr. ‘Abbās Zaryāb-koʿi, be kūš-e Ahmad Tafazzoli, Tehran 1991/1370, p. 551.)
1) *Baksī az Tafsīr-e Kohan*, by an unknown author. The surviving portion of this work contains a commentary on verses 78–274 of the Sūra Baqarah(2). It was probably composed in the late 10th/4th century. Mohammad Rowshan has edited and published this text (Tehran 1972/1351).

2) *Tafsīr-e Qor‘ān-e Pāk*, a part of another surviving text that was written during the late 10th/4th century, contains verses 65–151 of Sūra Baqarah(2). The author of this text is unknown, and it has been published in facsimile (Tehran 1966/1345) and printed in Tehran (1969/1348) by Ali Ravaqi.

3) *Čand Barg-e Tafsīr-e Qor‘ān-e ‘Azīm*, 54 printed pages, contains some verses of Sūra Shū‘arā(26) and Sūra Naml(27). It has been published in Afghanistan (Kabul 1972/1351) by Mayel Heravi.

4) *Tafsīr bar ‘Oṣrī az Qor‘ān-e Majīd*, from the late 10th/4th century, which is one tenth of a great *tafsīr*, starting from Kahf(18) and ending with Forqān(25). The author, and the time and place of its composition are unknown, but it is comparable with two other *tafsīrs*, namely 2 and 5. It has been edited and published by Jalal Matini (Tehran 1973/1352).

5) *Tafsīr-e Qor‘ān-e Majīd, Mahfūz dar Ketābkane-ye Dānešgāh-e Cambridge*, edited by the above editor and published in Tehran (1970/1349). This book contains the second half of a classical Persian commentary, beginning with Maryam(19). The author and the date are unknown, but according to the editor, it was probably composed before the mid-fifth/eleventh century.

6) *Tāj al-Tarājem fī Tafsīr al-Qor‘ān al-‘ājem*, by Shahfūr-e Esfaryenī (d.1078/471), the second complete commentary of the Koran, after *Tarjome-ye Tafsīr-e Tabarī*. This work is edited by N. Mayel Heravi & A.A. Elahi Khorasani (Tehran 1996/1375). The uncomplicated language and the title indicate that it was written for Persian speaking people in Khorasan.

7) *Tafsīr-e Sūrābādī*, by Abū Bakr ‘Ateq-e Sūrābādī (d. December 1100/Šafar 494) is another complete Persian commentary in seven parts. It was composed around 1077/470, a few years after the death of Alp Arsalan of the Seljuq dynasty (d. 1072/465). There are some old manuscripts of this work,7 of which two parts have been published in facsimile (Tehran 1966/1345 and 1974/1353).

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The whole work has, as far as I know, been edited by A. A. Sa’idi Sirjani. There are, however, certain versions based on this tafsir.8 One of the oldest of these, by Mohammad bin ‘Ali al-Nisaburi, was dedicated to Abū al-'As Mohammad ben Sām-e Ġūrī (1203-1163/558-99). This manuscript was endowed to Šeyk Ahmad-e Jām’s Tomb in Torbat-e Jām in 1256/454. It has therefore come to be known as the “Noskhā-ye Torbat-e Šeyk-e Jām”9 This copy is edited by Yahya Mahdavi & Mahdi Bayani and published by Tehran University Press (Tehran 1959/1338).

8) Gozārē’ī az Bakṣī az Qor‘ān-e Karīm, also known as Tafsīr-e Sonqosī. This work is part of an old Koran translation in a Persian dialect, by an unknown translator, which has been edited by M. J. Yahaghi (Tehran 1976/1355). This detailed translation was probably written in the eleventh/fifth century.

9) Tafsīr-e Darvāžjakī, or Laṭā‘ef al-Tafsir, by Ahmad ben Hasan ben Ahmad-e Zarrīn-e Soleyman-e Darvāžjakī-ye Boḵārā’ī (d. 1154/549), who started dictating his tafsīr 8th November 1125/9th Shavval 519. This work, which is still unpublished, is a short tafsīr covering the entire Koran.10

10) Kaṣf al-Asrār va ‘Oddat al-Abrār, by Abu al-Fazl Rašid al-Dīn Meybodi, the Šafe’ī scholar who lived in the 12th/6th century and wrote his tafsīr in 1126/520. The tafsīr is published in 10 volumes. This work is a very famous mystical tafsīr, whose composition is based on Kāje ‘Abd Allah Ansārī’s mystical works. It is also important from the point of methodology and literary style.

We have yet another detailed complete tafsīr from this period known as: Rowż al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān fi Tafsīr al-Qor’ān, which I will introduce later in this paper.

11) Tafsīr-e Nasafi, by Abu Ḥafs Najm al-Dīn ‘Omar-e Nasafi (1070-1144/462-538), a Hanafi scholar from Transoxania: a poetical and rhythmic translation of the Koran dating back to the 12th/6th century. This work has been edited by ‘Aziz Allah Joveini in two volumes (Tehran, Bonyād-e Farhang-e Iran, 1974/1353).

12) Tafsīr-e Başā’er, also known as “Al-Baṣā’er fi al-Tafsīr”, by

Moḥammad ben Maḥmūd Nišābūrī in 1162/577. The first volume has been edited and published by Ali Ravaqi (1980/1359).

13) Al-Balābīl va al-Qalāqīl, by Abū al-Makārem Ḥasanī, a Shiʿi scholar living in the 13th/7th century, who embarked on the work by interpreting all the verses starting with “Qul” (“Say”) throughout the Koran, expressing both Sunnī and Shiʿi views in his work. The book has been edited by Mohammad Hosein Safabakhsh (Tehran 1997/1376).

14) Tafsīr-e Sūre-ye Yūsuf or Jamīʿ al Settin, by Aḥmad ben Moḥammad ben Zeyd Ţūsī. As its name shows, this is a mystical commentary on the Yūsuf(12) chapter, containing 60 sections. It is edited by M. Rowshan (Tehran 1977/1356). There are some similarities between this work and Meybodi’s work (see 10 above).

15) Tafsīr-e Ḩadāʾeq al Ḥaqāʾiq, another mystical commentary, by Moʿīn al-Dīn Farāḥī-e Heravī, the so called “Mollā Meskīn” (d. 1502/908). This work has been edited by Sayyed Jaʿfar Sajjadi (Tehran 1978/1357).

16) Mawāheb-e ʿAlīye or Tafsīr-e Ḥoseynī, by Vāʿez-e Kāsefī (d. 1504/910), which is the most famous and complete mystical tafsīr after that of Meybodi. Kāsefī started this work on the orders of Amīr ʿAlī ˇSīr Navāʾī in 1491/898 and completed it two years later. This work has been published several times in India and Iran. Kāsefī also wrote several incomplete mystical works of which one is:

17) Javāher al-Tafsīr, from the beginning of the Koran until verse 84 of the Nisa(4). This work was composed under the influence of numerology, which was common among the Ḥorūfīs. As such it is regarded as a Ḥorūfī commentary. It has been edited and published by Javad ʿAbbasi in Tehran.12

After the 16th /10th century, when the Shiʿi doctrine emerged in Iran and the the Safavid dynasty was established, the production of religious books concerning Shiʿi observance increased. Consequently, many tafsīrs appeared, both in Arabic and Persian.13

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13. A detailed list of Shiʿi Tafsīrs, both in Arabic and Persian, from their beginning up to the present day, can be found in Dayerat al-Maʿāref-e Tašayyo’ (vol. 6, entry: “Tafsīr va Tafsīr-e Šīʿa”).
Moreover, because so many Shi‘i scholars from Jabal ‘Amel (in Lebanon) and other Arab regions emigrated to Iran, the tendency in the centres of higher Islamic learning was to teach, speak, and write in Arabic. Thus throughout the Persian-speaking world there was a noticeable increase in the writing and sometimes speaking of Arabic. However, one can detect a mixed (Persian-Arabic) language in some *tafsīrs*, which do not possess a high literary quality compared with the early Persian ones. It is probably for this reason that many of these works remain unpublished.

Three centuries before the Safavid period, that is, from the time of the Mongol invasion, the use of Persian increased in the Indian subcontinent. Many Iranians migrated to India and for this reason India became one of the major areas of Persian language usage, producing many literary and religious works in Persian, written by Iranian immigrants and by native Indian scholars who mastered the language. Among these works are several Persian commentaries, including *Tafsīr-e Moḥaddes-e Dehlavī*, which is famous for its very literal and reliable translation of the Koranic verses.

The history of poetic Persian translation of the Koran goes back to the early centuries of the Islamic era: a rhyming translation of the Koran, for example, appeared in 10th/4th century. This text has been published, under the title *Poll MTyan-e Secr-e HeJdv va Aruzi ye Farsi*, by Ahmad Ali Raja‘i (Tehran 1974/1353). As mentioned earlier, the *Tafsīr-e Nasafi* is also in rhyming verse and dates back to the 12th/6th century, whereas the first Persian *tafsīrs* composed in complete prosodic poetry, date back to the Safavid period. Some examples of this type of *tafsīrs* are:

1) *Rowżat al-Qolūb*, by Ebn-e Homam (d. 1533-4/940), in one volume and 206 lines. It contains an interpretation of the Yāsīn(36) chapter only.
2) *Fath Nāme*, by the same author, in 1350 lines containing the *Fath*(48) chapter.
3) *Tafsīr-e Nūr ‘Alīšāh*, attributed to Nūr ‘Alī Šāh ben Feyz ‘Alī Šāh (d.1791 or 1788/1205 or 1202), which includes the *Baqara*(2) chapter only.
4) *Bahr al-Asrār* or *Tafsīr-e Sab‘ al-Maṣānī*, by Šeyḵ Moḥammad Mīrzā Moḥammad Taqī (d. 1800/1215) composed in 5000 lines of couplets.
5) *Tafsīr-e Saḥī ‘Alī Šāh*, which is a most famous poetical and mystical commentary that has gradually gained renown over the last few centuries. It has been published several times.
Rowż al-Jenan va Rowḥ al-Janān

In the second part of my paper I would like to introduce the above-mentioned Emāmi tafsīr known as Rowż al-Jenan va Rowḥ al-Janān fi Tafsīr al-Qorʾān, the 20 volumes of which I have edited over a period of 17 years. This work was composed in the years 1116-39/510-33 and was the most complete and detailed Persian commentary on the Koran until the 12th/6th century. Its author, Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥoseyn ben ‘Alī ben Mohammad ben Ḥāmid al-Ḵoza‘ī-ye Nişābūrī, well known as Abū al-Fotūḥ-e Rāzī, was a great Emāmi scholar and preacher who lived in Rey.

Abū al-Fotūḥ was descended from Bodeyl ben Varqā’ al-Ḵoza‘ī, a companion of the Prophet. He was therefore of Arab origin. His ancestors emigrated to Nişābūr, probably during the 7th or 8th century. We do not know exactly when his father or grandfather emigrated to Rey, where Abū al-Fotūḥ was born around 1087/480. At that time Rey was known as a town of many Shi‘i residents. Abū al-Fotūḥ grew up there and was educated in the curriculum of the Islamic sciences. He also wrote all his scholarly works in Rey, where he eventually died in 1159/554. His body was buried, according to his own wishes, in the shrine of ʿAbd al-Aẓīm.

Abū al-Fotūḥ’s education followed the classical syllabus which included: recitation, grammar, tradition, jurisprudence, history and criticism of transmitted texts. Mastery of these disciplines was a prerequisite for becoming commentator on the Koran. Later on he taught students of his own, among others Montajab al-Dīn Rāzī, the author of the Fehrest, and Ebn Sahrasub author of the Maʿālem al-ʿOlama, both of which have valuable information on their mentor and his life.

Several other works such as Mobāheze-ye Ḥosniyye, Rowḥ al-Aḥbāb and Resāle-ye Yūhannā, have been attributed to Abū al-Fotūḥ, an attribution which remains doubtful. But the Persian commentary on the Koran is certainly by him and, judging from his students’ statements and the early manuscripts, is entitled: Rowż al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān fi Tafsīr al-Qorʾān, known in Persian as Tafsīr-e Abū al-Fotūḥ-e Rāzī. According to the introduction of his tafsīr, he had promised his friends and other scholars to compose two tafsīrs: one in Persian and the other in Arabic. But his own statements suggest that he gave priority to the Persian one. Whether he ever composed any Arabic tafsīr is not known.

The first half of the 12th or 6th century was a vital period in the history of the writing of Koranic interpretations. Indeed, it would be correct to regard this period as the golden age of Islamic *tafsīr* composition. From this period survive at least four very famous *tafsīrs*, whose authority remains intact until the present day. Of these *tafsīrs*, two are in Persian and two in Arabic, one in each language being Sunni and the other is Shi‘i: *Kašf al-Asrār* (composed 520/1126) in Persian, is based on Sunni doctrine; whereas *Tafsīr-e Abū al-Fotūh* (533/1139) also in Persian, is based on Shi‘i doctrine. Of the Arabic ones *Al-Kaššāf an Haqā‘eq al-Tanzīl*, by Maḥmūd ben ʿOmar Zamakṣarī (written 528/1134 in Mecca) is Sunni, while *Majma‘ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qor‘ān* (548/1153) by Abū al-Fażl b. Ahmad Ṭabārī, is Shi‘i. Each one of these eminent exegetes wrote their works without any knowledge of the others and their works. This explains the fact that there are no mutual references in the four *tafsīrs*. Abū al-Fotūh does refer respectfully several times to Zamaḵṣarī, without however mentioning *Al-Kaššāf*. This suggests that Abū al-Fotūh knew Zamaḵṣarī but not his work.

Abū al-Fotūh wrote a very short introduction to his *tafsīr* in which he explained the meanings of the word “Koran” and its variants and commented on the significance of the *tafsīr* genre. On the basis of this introduction, it appears that his method of interpretation was, first, to take up the Koranic verses and translate them word for word into Persian. He would then compose a commentary, based on the verses, from a lexical, grammatical, juridical, and narrative point of view, referring to the remarks of other named commentators (ignoring their various sectarian affiliations), as well as to grammarians, lexicographers, jurists and historians. When he came to subjects that he had previously discussed in connection with other verses, he would refer to this discussion to avoid repetition. Commenting on this method, he states: “Every verse that we mention for the first time, we say everything about and refer [the reader] to the details of our [earlier] statements, when [the subject of these] is repeated.”

There are also comments on the literary and mystical aspects of the Koranic verses in the *tafsīr*, in particular detailed lexical explanations of the precise meaning of certain Koranic words. These comments take up a good deal of space in Abū al-Fotūh’s *tafsīr*. In some cases, Abū al-Fotūh also adopts a somewhat mystical and literary style.

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17. See Rowzd al-Jenān, vol. 1, p. 3.
The word for word translations of the verses of the Koran, particularly in the earliest manuscripts contain many old and dialectal Persian words and phrases, which can be studied in comparison with the translation of the verses in Tarjome-ye Tafsīr-e Ṭabarī. Unfortunately, these word for word translations have been changed in later editions and made to conform with the simple prose that was familiar to the scribes who made copies of the original. Recently, however, an Iranian scholar published a Koran in a Persian translation based on my edition of Abū al-Fotūh with an appendix that contains lexical, grammatical, and dialectal material.

The literary and grammatical aspects of the main text of Rowž al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān, are as interesting as the translation itself, and these should be studied independently. The text contains certain rare and in some cases unique literary and dialectal aspects, probably relating to the old dialect of Rey, which may be useful for linguists and scholars of dialects. Abū al-Fotūh’s style of writing, particularly in the narrative and historical sections, is simple and non-technical, like the Persian works of the 5th/11th century, with certain words that are derived mainly from dialects and are specifically used in commentaries and translated Koranic text. Rhythm, rhetorical figures, and other linguistic arrangements are rare used, and the simple style of the text fits easily with the nature of the Persian language. Arabic adverbs figure frequently in place of their Persian equivalents, which may be related to the author’s vocation and his preaching style. These characteristics, and other grammatical and stylistic features, show the impact of Arabic and the original sources on his work. However, these features have not affected the author’s authentic Persian style.

19. Qor’ān-e Karīm, bā Tarjome-ye Abū al-Fotūh-e Rāzī, be küše-e Mohammad Mahyar, Qom, Maṭbūʿāt-e Dinī, 2001/1380.
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The style and method of *tafsīr*

Abū al-Fotūh chose in his *tafsīr* to use the traditional narrative style and method which was well suited to expressing the views of his juristic school and, moreover, enabled him to develop his views accordance with the *Emāmī* doctrine. The 6\textsuperscript{th}/12\textsuperscript{th} century, as we know, was the age of controversy between the two Shi‘i and Sunni schools. During this period the author’s hometown, Rey, was known for its large Shi‘i population and Shi‘i religious activities. For instance, the Shi‘i scholar ʿAbd al-Jalīl Rāzī-ye Qazvīnī wrote his famous work *Baʿz o Maṣālebeh al-Navāsheb fi Naqz-e Fażā’eh al-Ravāfez,* also known as *Ketāb al-Naqz,* in Rey in 556/1161. Due to the favourable conditions for theological debate in the city, Abū al-Fotūh has cautiously included arguments from both schools in his commentary, without taking a partisan stance. Of course he prefers the *Emāmī* views over the views of their opponents.

As he says himself in the preface to his work, Abū al-Fotūh does not approve of the “interpretation of the Koran through personal opinion” (*tafsīr be raʿy*),\(^{21}\) and always prefers “interpretation through the traditions” (*tafsīr be maʿṣūr*) attributed to the Prophet, his family, and companions. Accordingly he has authenticated his book by narrating traditions from the Prophet, the Imams, and sometimes other companions. Over all, the language used in his work is uncomplicated and easily understood by the Persians. He discusses and explains concepts such as intercession (*šafāʿat*), faith and paganism, sin, compulsion and free will (*jabr va ektīyār*) and so on, instead of engaging in theological and polemical issues.

**Abū al-Fotūh’s sources**

The works and experience of almost two centuries of Persian and five centuries of Arabic exegeses underlie *Rowż al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān* and helped its author to formulate his commentary. There seems to be no evidence to indicate that the author ever made use of any earlier Persian *tafsīrs.* He probably had no need of Persian *tafsīrs* since a large body of Arabic exegetical works was available to him. Moreover, it appears that he preferred his own work to all the previous Persian *tafsīrs.*

\(^{21}\) *Rowż al-Jenān,* vol. 1, p. 5.
It is worth noting that his word for word translation resembles *Tarjome-ye tafsir-e Ţabarî.* Probably Abû al-Fotûh, like many other Persian Koranic translators, chose this way of translating because it had received the stamp of approval from the ‘olamâ. Nevertheless, he makes no reference to *Tarjome-ye tafsir-e Ţabarî.* Although Abû al-Fotûh’s work is a Persian *tafsîr,* both explicitly and implicitly, he refers to, mentions by name, and even directly quotes from Arabic sources throughout the work and makes use of a vast number of very important Arabic *tafsîrs,* both Shi‘i and Sunni. His most important Shi‘i sources were such commentaries as those by ‘Alî ben Ebrâhîm, ‘Ayyâshi, another commentary ascribed to the eleventh Shi‘ite Imam Hasan ‘Askarî, *Tebyân,* by Seyyid Tûsî, and others. His sources from the Sunni side included the works of Qâfâde, Soddî, Abû al-Qâsem Ka‘bî, Abû Moslem Moḥammad Baţr-e Esfahânî, Abû ‘Alî Jobbâ‘î and his son Abû Hâshem, Abû Bakr Aşamm, Rammânî, Zajjâj, Hasan ben Fâzîl al-Bajalî, Sâ‘lebî, Fattal of Niʿâsâbûr and Moḥammad ben Jarîr al-Ţabarî. Among these, Ţabarî appears to have had the strongest influence on Abû al-Fotûh’s work.

Abû al-Fotûh in turn influenced subsequent works by other authors, both Arabic and Persian. Nûr Allâh Šûštârî mentions in *Majâles al-Mo‘menîn* (1/490), where he praises Abû al-Fotûh’s work, that Fâkîr-e Râzî borrowed the fundamentals of his *tafsîr* from Abû al-Fotûh’s work and tacitly added his own wordings to cover up the fact that he had plagiarized Abû al-Fotûh.

Among the Persian *tafsîrs,* *Tafsîr-e Gazor,* by Abû al-Mahâsen of Ḥorjân, was greatly influenced by Abû al-Fotûh and its author sometimes directly quotes long sections from the latter’s work, without mentioning the original. Similarly, Mowlâ Fâth Allâh Kâšânî, borrowed all the main elements of his work, *Manhâj al-Šâdeqîn fi Elzâm al-Mokâlefîn,* and its condensed version, *Kolâše al-Manhâj,* from *Tafsîr-e Gazor,* without mentioning the original source. These two works can thus be regarded as having been intermediately influenced by Abû al-

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22. See M. M. Nasseh, op. cit, p. 316.
25. Edit. Mîrzâ Abû al-Ḥasan Ša‘arânî and has been published several times in Tehran.
Fotūh’s commentary. Al-Zarī’e mentions a certain *tafsīr* from Qāżī Mohammad Ebrāhīme (d.1747/1160), which is very similar to *Rowz al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān*.

Indeed, the influence of Abū al-Fotūh on both Persian and Arabic *tafsīrs* is so important that it deserves a study of its own.

**Manuscripts and printed editions of**

*Rowz al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān*

Abū al-Fotūh’s *tafsīr* has received attention from both scholars and ordinary people since the time of its writing and has been copied several times. Some fifty-three manuscripts have been identified inside and outside Iran in private and public libraries. The oldest manuscript is in Āstān-i Qods Library (No.1336) in Mashhad, is dated Ra’ī al-Avval 556/January 1167, written (i.e. copied) by Heydar ben Mohammad ben Esmā’īl bin Soleyman ben Ebrāhim al-Ardalānī al-Nīsābūrī, and contains Volumes 16-17, only. The copy from Jalāl al-Dīn Moḥaddes Or-mavī’s personal library contains Volumes 11-12, and is dated 2nd Ṣafar 579/11th May 1162, having been made from a copy dated 533/1139. There is another old manuscript in Āstān-e Qods Library (No.1338) dated 24th Jomādā al-Avval 557/11th May 1162, which contains the 20th Volume only. Another copy belongs to Ayātollāh Mar’ashī’s Library in Qom (No: 368), dated 12th Ṣafar 595/15th Dec. 799, written by Abū Sa’īd ben al-Šoseyn al-Kāteb Beyhaqī. The continuation of this manuscript is in the Central Library University of Tehran (No.10050), which in all contains Volumes 9-15.

Of the fifty-three manuscripts, two contain two complete *tafsīrs*, and the remaining forty-nine copies are incomplete. The copy No. 4902 belonging to Patna Library (India), dating from 734/1133, is a condensed copy that contains Volumes 1-13.

*Rowz al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān* is divided into 20 volumes. This conclusion is based upon the author’s own division of the work and his disciples’ and contemporaries’ statements (for instance in Montajab al-Dīn, *Fehrest*, p 5, printed in the end of *Bahar al-Anvār*, vol. 25, and ‘Abd al-Jalīl Qazvīnī, *al-Naqz*, p. 212). Many of the later the copyists have followed the author’s division, but, unfortunately, some of the editors of the early editions ignored it.

The first edition of the book is based on a copy which has been prepared by Ṣabūrī Malek al-Šoʿarā in 5 volumes for the Royal Iranian Li-
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brary. Two volumes of this copy were published – initiated by Mozaffar al-Dīn Shāh – in 1323/1905. Another three volumes based on the same copy were published in 1313-5/1934-6 at the behest of ‘Alī Aşgār Ḥekmat, Minister of Education under the reign of Reżā Shāh Pahlavi. This copy contains a valuable appendix written by the prominent Iranian scholar, Moḥammad Qazvīnī. Another edition was prepared and published in 10 volumes by Mahdī Elahī Qomše’ī in Tehran in 1320/1941. The third edition is the one edited by Mīrzā Abū al-Šasan Ša’ārānī in 12 volumes entitled Rowḥ al-Jenān va Rūḥ al-Janān, which has been reprinted many times since 1382/1964 when it was first published.

The fourth and final edition, in 20 volumes, edited and published in a joint effort, by my colleague Mohammad Mahdi Nasseh and myself, is based on a comparison of thirty-eight old manuscripts and contains a detailed introduction (105 pp) and 10 or 11 indices (Bonyād-e Pažūhešā-ye Eslāmī-ye Āstān-e Qods-e Razāvī, Mashhad, 1986-1997/1365-1376). This edition was reprinted in 10 volumes in Mashhad in 1380/2001. The text has been edited by using the most modern printing facilities, and is supplied with an extensive introduction, and various indices for each volume. As well as a brief general introduction to the manuscripts in the first volume, there is also a more thorough introduction in each of the successive volumes. In addition to the indices of words, names, sects, places, traditions, proverbs (Persian and Arabic), poems (Persian and Arabic), the Persian translations of the Arabic poems are printed next to the original. The edition has been chosen as the best research endeavour by the “Fifth Exhibition of Koranic Sciences” (Tehran 1376/1997) and both editors have received honorary plaques from the Iranian President.

Conclusion

Persian, as the second language of Islam, enjoyed a privileged role in developing Islamic thought in the Persian-speaking world: Iran, the Indian sub-continent, and Central Asia. As one of the first prose texts, the Holy Koran was translated into Persian for the first time in the fourth/tenth century, and together with the Šāhnāme, the translation came to play a major role in the creation of an Iranian national consciousness. Later on, a large number of Persian Koran commentaries were written as part of Iran’s great heritage of Islamic culture. The genre of Persian commentaries was developed particularly during the
6th/12th century in great works like *Kashf al-Asrār* and *Rowż al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān*.

In the Safavid period and later on, there was a tendency to Arabicize Persian prose in general and Persian *tafsīrs* in particular. Earlier pre-Safavid *tafsīrs*, on the contrary, preserved in varying degrees the special diction of early New Persian, including the moderate Shi‘i *tafsīr*, *Rowż al-Jenān va Rowḥ al-Janān fi Tafsīr al-Qor‘ān*. 
In the year 1126 (520 of the Hijra) when Rashīd al-Dīn Maybūdī began to write his commentary on the Qurʾān, the *Kashf al-asrār*, a new literary language had been emerging in Khurasan. This language, born out of the need to express the doctrines of love mysticism, manifested itself not only in Persian poetry but also in Persian prose.

New Persian had been used for the writing of religious texts, including Sufī works, for more than a hundred years. Examples of such works are the *Sharḥ al-taʾarruf* of Mustamīl (d. 434/1042), the *Kashf al-mahjūb* of Ḥujwīrī (d. between 465/1072 and 469/1077), and the *Kīmīyāʾ-yi saʿādat* of Ābu Ḥāmīd Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111). In these texts, Persian was primarily being used to make subjects which could otherwise be expressed in Arabic more widely accessible, and the prose style employed in them tends to be plain and functional. Love mysticism, however, required and forged for itself a more poetic style of prose, rich in metaphor and intrinsically Persian in its intimacy and musicality. Although this style may well have existed earlier in an oral tradition, it first appeared in written form in the late 5th/11th and early 6th/12th centuries, and is exemplified in different ways in the *Sawāniḥ* of ʿAḥmad Ghazzālī (d. 520/1126), the *Tamḥīdāt* of ʿAyn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī (d. 526/1131), the *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ* of ʿAḥmad Samʿānī (d. 

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543/1148),7 and in the mystical sections of Maybudī’s commentary on the Qur’ān, the Kashf al-asrār.

The possibilities which this new literary style presented were, I believe, a significant factor in Maybudī’s having chosen to write his tafsīr in Persian. The ingenious way in which he structured his commentary allowed him the scope in which to develop these possibilities to the full.

The unique ternary structure of Maybudī’s commentary is explained in the introduction to the Kashf al-asrār. The Qur’ān is firstly divided into sessions (majlis-hā) of convenient length. The commentary on each of these sessions is then subdivided into three nawbahs (lit. turns): Nawbat I consists of a succinct rendering of the meaning of the verses in Persian; Nawbat II presents the conventional or exoteric commentary, and includes, as Maybudī explains, ‘facets of meaning (wujūh-i ma’ānī), canonically accepted readings (qirā’āt-i mashhūr), circumstances of revelation (sabab-i nuzūl), exposition of rulings (hayān-i ahkām), relevant traditions (akhbār va āthār), aspects [of meaning] and analogues (wujūh va naẓā’ir) and so on’; Nawbat III is reserved for the mystical commentary, defined by Maybudī simply as: ‘the allegories of mystics (rumūz-i ārifān), the allusions of Sufis (ishārāt-i ṣūfīyān), and the subtle insights of preachers (laṭā‘if-i mudhakkīrān)’.8

The threefold structure of the Kashf al-asrār had a number of advantages. In the first place, it conformed perfectly to its author’s doctrinal and hermeneutical principles; for Maybudī was not only a mystic, he was also a fervent traditionalist. Like his spiritual forbear, ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 482/1089), on whose commentary his own was based,9 he insisted that the literal meanings of the Qur’ānic words should be accepted without question. He believed that there were only two ways of comprehending both the Qur’ān and the Divine reality: outwardly, within the parameters of traditional knowledge transmitted from the Prophet and pious predecessors; and inwardly, through the grace of divine inspiration (ba ilhām-i rabbānī).10 Here, in the ternary structure of the Kashf

al-asrār we have in Nawbat I, a more or less literal representation of
the meaning of the verses; in Nawbat II, the outer interpretation on the
basis of traditionally transmitted knowledge; and in Nawbat III, the in-
ner interpretation, springing from God-given inspiration.

Another advantage of this threefold format, and one which particu-
larly concerns us here, is that it allowed Maybudī to develop, within the
sections of mystical commentary, a distinctive style of prose which was
in keeping both with the contemplative approach of esoteric interpreta-
tion, and with the kind of doctrines which he was communicating. He
was aided in this creative process by the fact that, having commented
on all the verses in the Nawbat II sections, he felt free in the Nawbat III
sections to include only those verses he was inspired to comment upon.
In the mystical sections of the Kashf al-asrār, it is common to find that
several pages of commentary have been taken up with the discussion of
only two or three verses.

Before examining more closely the style of Maybudī’s mystical com-
mentary, a word should be said about the Arabic content of the Kashf
al-asrār, because, ironically, this can throw light not only on the way
Maybudī has used Persian in his tafsīr, but also on his reasons for doing
so. It is not uncommon for Persian tafsīrs to include short passages of
Arabic: for example, shawāhid, poetry used to illustrate linguistic fea-
tures of Arabic, or more commonly ḥadīths, which are usually followed
by a Persian translation. However in the Nawbat II sections of the Kashf
al-asrār, Maybudī has included paragraphs, sometimes pages of Ara-
bic, often without any Persian translation. It is interesting to note that
the proportion of Arabic in the exoteric (Nawbat II) sections of the
Kashf al-asrār, steadily increases during the course of the commentary
from an average of approximately 5% in the first two volumes to
around 80% in the last two. It seems that for his exoteric commentary,
Maybudī compiled a great deal of exegetical material from different
sources, and then set about translating it into Persian, expanding it in
places with his own comments, or with more detailed passages of story
telling. Towards the end of his tafsīr, he was perhaps tiring or running
short of time, so he presented only selected narrative material in Per-
sian, for example, passages concerning stories of the prophets or cir-
cumstances of revelation.
The situation is very different in the mystical commentary (*Nawbat III*) which is almost entirely written in Persian, and where we find that the Arabic content throughout is no more than around 5%, as against 95% of Persian. From these statistics, three points may be inferred about the *Kashf al-asrar*. Firstly, it was the mystical sections in particular which Maybudī wanted to be understood by everyone. This assumption is borne out by the fact that most of his sermonizing about traditionalist doctrine is placed in the *Nawbat III* sections. Secondly, while Persian may have been expendable for his exoteric commentary, it was quite indispensable for his mystical commentary. Thirdly, while most of the material in the *Nawbat II* sections was translated into Persian from Arabic, the esoteric commentary was almost entirely *composed* in Persian.

It was perhaps natural that Maybudī should prefer to express his spontaneous and inspired reflections on the Qur’ānic verses in his mother tongue; but more than this, Persian now provided him with a literary medium that could be perfectly adapted for his purposes.

In the examples which follow I shall attempt to demonstrate the way in which Maybudī has taken up features that had been used by earlier writers – for example, the rhyming prose style of Anṣārī’s *munājāt*, and the metaphorical language and prosymetrum of Aḥmad Ghazzālī’s *Sawāniḥ* – and added other elements to create a style of prose which could beautifully and effectively convey the teachings of his particular ‘school’ of love mysticism.\(^{11}\)

The first two examples below (Ex.1a and Ex.1b) illustrate the way in which Maybudī opens the commentary on a given sūra. In this case it is the beginning of his commentary on Sūrat al-Ahzāb (The Clans). Ex.1a is the opening of his *Nawbat II* commentary, and Ex.1b, the opening of the *Nawbat III* commentary. In all the examples, Qur’ānic quotations are enclosed between *guillemets* (« »). Underlined are phrases, other than Qur’ānic words, which Maybudī has omitted to translate from the Arabic, for example: *ilā ākhir al-āyatayn* or *nusikhat min qawlihi*.

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\(^{11}\) The phenomenon of love in mysticism as a whole has sometimes been referred to as the ‘school’ of love (*madhhab-i ’ishq*), but perhaps it should be thought of as a movement rather than a school, for it embraced different interpretations of the concept of love and distinct approaches to the mystical path.
Sūrat al Ahzāb has seventy-three verses, one thousand two hundred and eighty words and five thousand seven hundred and ninety-six letters. The whole sura was revealed at Medina, with the exception of two verses, according to some exegetes, these being God’s words: «0 Prophet! Lo! We have sent thee as a witness, a bringer of good tidings and a wamer» 12 to the end of the two verses (vs.45-6). In this sura there are two abrogated verses, one of them being: «And incline not to the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Disregard their obnoxious talk...» (v.48), where «disregard their obnoxious talk» is abrogated by the Verse of the Sword (9:29); the other is the verse: «It is not allowed thee to take [other] women henceforth...» (v.52), which is abrogated by «0 Prophet! Lo! We have made lawful unto thee thy wives...» (v.50).13

This passage consists of a simple, though not entirely complete, translation of exegetical material from Arabic. Given the nature of the subject matter here, it is no surprise to find that there is nothing ornate about the Persian prose. Very different, however, is the opening of the mystical commentary on this same sura (Ex.1b, below) where we find a much more literary style. The commentary begins with a short passage of saj’ in Arabic, and this is followed by a lavish passage of rhyming and me-tred prose in Persian.

12. Translations of the Koranic verses are taken from Marmaduke Pickthall’s The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.
In the name of the God Who made creation and all its wonders sweet and beautiful; Who made manifest the secrets of non-existence (sarā'ir-i ādam) 14 on the plain of existence; Who tied [the four] opposite natures to the elements of fire, earth, air and water. From a drop of rain made He the shining pearl; from [bee’s] spittle, pure honey; and from the unadulterated excrement of the [sea]cow, excellent ambergris. 15 He brought forth clear water from solid stone, and placed red rubies within the hardest rock. He made pleasing and wholesome the subsistence of His creatures, and provided for them the means of slavehood. He bestowed all that was needed, and manifested whatever was right. Moreover, whatever He made was worthy of Him not deserved by us. O God! You are Incomparable in essence and Peerless in attribute, You are the Forgiver of sinners and the trusted Confidant of the destitute. Beautiful is Your creation and sweet Your speech. You are the Knower of secrets, and the One Who purchases [us] regardless of [our] faults. You take the hand of those who are stranded and give succour to those in distress. 16

The purpose of this passage of commentary is evidently to stir the heart of the reader (or listener) into a sense of awe and wonder at the Creator, and Maybudī accomplishes this not only through the meaning of the words, but also by the beauty of the prose. Throughout most of the passage, he maintains a consistent end-rhyme: -ā kard, but he also includes the occasional internal rhyme, for example: natīja and ta'bīya, bāyist

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14. I.e. that which was held in the conce Alanment of potential existence.
and shāyist. Immediately before the passage moves into the section of munāţāt (Ilāhī and so on) with its different rhyme scheme, there is significant change of metre: ‘Harchi bāyist ‘āţā kard u harchi shāyist payād kard, va ānchi kard ba sazā-ī khīsh na ba sazā-ī mā kard’, and this break in the rhythm was perhaps intended to alert the reader or listener, in passing, to the important theological point being made, namely, that whatever God grants His creatures, is in conformity with His grace and beneficence, not in any way deserved by them.

Examples 2a and 2b consist of extracts from Nawbat II and Nawbat III commentaries on the Covenant of ‘Alast’ (verse 172 of Sūrat al-A‘rāf): «And remember when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, saying ‘Am I not thy Lord?’ They said: ‘Yea, verily we testify’...» Again we may note in first example (the exoteric commentary) the plain style of prose, and the phrases and sentences that have been left in Arabic (underlined).

Ex. 2a (Nawbat II)

«And remember when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed...» The Meccans and Kufans have the reading ‘dhurriyyatuhum’. The rest read it as ‘dhurriyyatuhum’ in the plural. The meaning [of the verse] is that He took those who would be born of Adam from his back, and those who would be born of the children of Adam from their backs, all those who would be born, one after the other, until the Day of Resurrection. This is why He did not say ‘from the back of Adam’, because they did not all issue from his loins, but one from another, according to the number of children who will be born of their fathers until the Day of Resurrection. The taking of this covenant and pact happened before Adam entered Paradise, that is, between Ta’if and Mecca according to Kalbl. Ibn ‘Abbās states that it took place at Na’mān, a valley close to ‘Arafat. Some say it happened in Paradise. Suddī,
however, is of the opinion that [this event] occurred while Adam was in the heavens between [the time of] his leaving Paradise and his reaching earth. Some say it was in Dahnā, a region of India.17

In complete contrast, both in content and style, is Maybudī’s mystical commentary on this verse. His interpretation is centred on love,18 and as can be seen from the extracts which follow, he has created for this theme a poetic and at the same time lively narrative:

Ex. 2b (Nawbat III)

According to understanding, and in the language of realisation, this verse has another mystery, another taste. It is an allusion to the beginning of the story of lovers, and the binding of the covenant and pact of love with them, that first day in pre-eternity, when God was present and reality attained.

Cupbearer! Let’s drink to that night, to those nights,
Let’s drink to those times when we met at night

The command came ‘O master [Mōhammad]! «And remind them of the days of Allāh» (14:5). Remind those servants of Mine who have forgotten Our pact and become busy

18. In fact, he has interpreted the Covenant of Alast itself as a covenant of love.
with otherness. Remind them of that day when their pure spirits bound the covenant of love with Me, when We placed the collyrium of «Am I not your Lord?» on the eye of their longing.' O needful servant of God! Remember that day when the spirits and persons of lovers drank the wine of affection from the cup of love at the assembly of intimacy. The angels of highest heaven were saying: 'See now how high these people are aiming. We have never even sipped this wine, nor yet had a drop of it, but the clamour of these beggars asking «Is there any more?» had reached the Capella.'

Of that wine which is not forbidden at our religion
You will not find our lips dry until the end of time.  

Several points are worthy of mention in this passage. Firstly, there is the liberal use of the metaphors of wine drinking, which had already become established in love mysticism, and could now be freely employed, even in the context of a commentary on the Qurʾān. The second significant feature to be noted is the way in which Maybudī has incorporated verses of the Qurʾān into his narrative. In conventional commentaries written in Persian, it is common to find that the Persian prose is subordinate and subservient to the Qur'ānic text, and this holds true for the two extracts from Maybudī's exoteric commentary quoted above. But here, the opposite is the case; the Qurʾānic verses have been completely integrated into the Persian, where they are set like jewels, often strategically placed as highlights to add endorsement to the author's discourse. This creative interweaving of Qurʾānic text and Persian prose is one of the most appealing features of Maybudī's mystical commentary. 

Another point to be noted in this passage is Maybudī's use of dialogue, firstly involving God and the Prophet, and secondly the angels. The inclusion of dialogue is a prominent feature of Maybudī's mystical commentary, a charming and lively element of his style. Lastly, we may note that Maybudī has quoted a bayt from Aḥmad Ghazzālī's Sawānīh. This latter work is a complex metaphysical treatise which, although it was written in Persian, was probably intended for a small circle of initiates. However, the style and content of the

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19. The words *hal min mazīd?* (Is there any more?) originally come from Sūra 50 (Qāf), verse 30, where they refer to the Hell's voracity for the fuel of the damned. But these same words later came to be associated with the 3rd/9th century mystic Abū Yazīd Bastāmī (Bāyazīd) who uttered them to express of his insatiable longing for God, and in this latter connection the expression became popular in love mysticism.


21. This is also a notable feature of both 'Ayn al-Quḍāt’s *Tāmḥīdāt* and Samʿānī's *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ*.

Kashf al-asrār suggest that Maybudī’s doctrines of love were intended to be more widely accessible.\textsuperscript{23} The next extract (Ex.3) demonstrates the approachable way in which Maybudī is able to present his teachings in the mystical sections of the Kashf al-asrār. Here, he is discussing the fall of Adam, and emphasizing God’s mercy and love towards mankind.

\textbf{Ex.3 (Nawbat III)}

The situation of Adam at the court of the divine self-sufficiency, with the eternal solicitude may be compared to that of a child whose mother has sewn him some new clothes. She says: ‘Now, son! You be careful. Mind you keep those nice clothes clean.’ The child goes out, gets busy playing with his friends, and dirties his clothes. Then he wants to go home but his clothes are dirty. He hides in a corner, feeling helpless and confused, and keeps saying ‘Mummy, I feel sleepy’. His mother knows that the child is afraid that she will scold him. She says: ‘O love of my life! Come here! I only sent you out because I had soap and water at the ready. I knew what you would do.’\textsuperscript{24}

The style of this passage is comparatively simple, in keeping, perhaps, with the nature of its subject matter. Yet Maybudī continues this section of commentary by expanding his analogy, introducing a dialogue between the angels and God, and adorning the prose with metaphors and Qur’ānic quotations.

One might expect to find at least some of these literary features in the longer sections of narrative in the Nawbat II commentary of the Kashf al-asrār, for example, where Maybudī recounts the stories of the prophets. However, this is not the case, even when the subject matter might have provided considerable scope for literary embellishment, as can be seen in the following extract from his exoteric commentary on the auctioning of Joseph in Egypt.

\textsuperscript{23.} See above note 13.
\textsuperscript{24.} Kashf III, 21-2.
Ex. 4a (Nawbat II)

Potiphar said: 'Zulaykhā, let me buy this slave, so that he can be a child to us, for we have no children of our own.' Zulaykhā replied: 'It is right that we should purchase him, but I shall pay for him out of my own treasury.' They were busy discussing this when a woman named Farāca, the daughter of Ṭalān brought forward the required sum of money. Malik was about to sell [Joseph] to her, when Zulaykhā summoned the auctioneer and said: 'I will give whatever jewels she gives and more, to the sum of thirty pearls each weighing 6 misqāls, and the weight of Joseph in musk, ambergris and camphor, plus one hundred royal garments, two hundred lengths of fine muslin and one thousand [pieces of] Dabīqī cloth.' Malik Dhuʿr said 'The deal is done'. That woman let out a shriek and said 'O Malik, don’t agree to anything. Whatever she gives, I shall give and, in addition, one hundred golden goblets.' Zulaykhā’s slaves rushed forward and brought Joseph to Zulaykhā’s house, whilst the slave girls, who had flasks of rose water and black musk, sprinkled them over the people. Malik Dhuʿr was brought to Zulaykhā’s house, and was paid in full the price they had agreed. As for the woman called Farāca, she became melancholic and died of that grief.

Although the above passage includes plenty of detail, and consists mostly of dialogue, it is purely informative in nature, with no artistic elaboration. The event in itself is dramatic, but Maybudī has done noth-

25. Dabīqī (or Dabiki) was very fine linen, or in some cases, silk cloth, often enriched with weaving or gold embroidery. Originally produced in Dabiq, a village on an island in the Nile Delta. Dabiki cloth was considered to be a luxury item.

ing to highlight the drama. In the sample of mystical commentary below, however, he has used all his rhetorical skill to orchestrate the drama of the story. This is an extract from the *Nawbat* III commentary on verse 30 of Sūrat al-Baqara.

Ex. 4b (*Nawbat* III)

His words, be He exalted: «And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth...» The world was still and at peace. No heart yet burned with the fire of passion, nor could any breast be accused of being in love. The sea of mercy was brimming over, the treasuries of devotion fully laden. No dust of languor had yet settled on the brow of the angels’ worship. The banner of their boasting "We hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee" (2:30) had stretched as far as the Pleiades. In that world27 every subtle substance fell to wishful thinking: the glorious Throne looked at its magnificence and said ‘Maybe this honour [lit. saying] will be written for me’. The Footstool looked upon its amplitude and said ‘Maybe this authority will be assigned to my name’. The seven [lit. eight] heavens looked at their beauty and wondered ‘Will this guardianship be given to us?’ Everything had lost hope of realising its desire, and all had fallen into suspicion and dejection. Suddenly

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27. That is, the world of pre-existence, before the material world had come into being.
from the mighty and glorious Presence the news was given to the kingdom of the angels, «Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth». This was not a consultation with the angels; this was setting out the canons of the greatness and magnitude of Adam. Nor was it a summons for support, but a proclamation of the veneration of Adam. He said ‘The decree of Our wrath has done its work, and We have commanded the pen of beneficence to draw a line through the divān of commandments from the world’s beginning to its end, and to set down what has been decreed for all its inhabitants through the entire extent and duration of creation, so that the place of honour in every realm will be secured for the earthly Adam, his precious breast will become luminous with the light of gnosis, and the graces of Our bounty and the wonders of Our favour towards him will be known...’

In this passage it can be seen how skillfully Maybudī has first of all set the scene, and then gradually built the suspense leading up to the entry of Adam, in order to place the spotlight on the uniqueness of his position in the creation as the one solely designated for the gnosis and love of God. We may note here not only Maybudī’s characteristic interweaving of Qur’ānic words into the text, but also the way in which the particular verse which is the subject of the commentary has been strategically placed at the climax of the narrative. Apart from the abundant use of metaphor, such as the ‘treasuries of worship fully laden’, the ‘dust of languor’ on the ‘brow of worship’, and the ‘banner of their boasting’, another interesting literary feature in this passage is the personification of elements in the creation such as the Throne, the Footstool and the Seven Heavens. Again, this adds to the dramatic effect of the narrative.

The final example in this essay is intended to illustrate how Maybudī’s rhetoric of love even transforms his discussion of a theological doctrine, namely, the doctrine of taqdīr, which teaches that God has predestined some souls for Paradise and others for the fire. This extract is taken from Maybudī’s mystical commentary on verse 11 of Sūrat al-Šūrā (Counsel).


29. The use of ‘personification’ – I have employed here the English literary term – has been identified by N. Pourjavady as part of the important devise in Persian literature known as zabān-i ḥāl, which he has translated as ‘fabulous narrative’. See his series of articles on this subject published in *Nashr-i Dānish* 1379 (2000), nos. 2, 3, and 4, and 1380 (2001), nos. 1 and 3; and idem, *Zaban-i hal dar ‘irfan va adabīyyāt-i Pārsī*, Tehran, Intishārat-i Pārsī, 2007.
He, be He glorified, had Wrath and Gentleness in perfection, and infinite Majesty and Beauty. He wished to distribute these treasures. Thus, He places the crown of favour upon the head of one, in the garden of [His] Grace, whilst He places the brand of wrath on the liver of another, in the dungeon of His Justice. One He melts in the fire of His Majesty, another He cherishes in the light of His Beauty. A candle was lit from His calling: «And Allah summoneth to the abode of peace...»(10:26). Thousands upon thousands of poor grieving souls flung themselves upon that candle and were burned. Yet not one atom of decrease or increase appeared in that candle.

I sorrow and grieve for one who cares naught for me,
I carry out the commands of one who only carries away my heart
I’d buy his harshness and cruelty with my soul a hundred times
He wouldn’t give a barleycorn for my love and faithfulness

At first sight, it might appear that that the theme of love has ‘high-jacked’ the theological discussion here. But in fact, the two themes have been wonderfully combined. Maybudī has identified those who have been summoned to the Abode of Peace who are destined for salvation, with lovers. The introduction of love mysticism’s favourite metaphor of the moth’s flying into the candle, and the candle’s being completely unaffected by their burning, is particularly apt with regard to the doctrine of taqdis, since it reminds us of God’s complete Self-sufficiency (bī-

31. Alluded to in the Koranic verse (10:26) which reads: ‘And Allah summoneth to the Abode of Peace (i.e. Paradise), and leadeth whom He will to a straight path.’
Persian, Language of the Heart

nīyāzī), and thus His ‘lā ubā lī’ (‘it makes no difference to Me’) concerning the handful of Adam’s seed which was destined for Paradise and the handful destined for the fire in the famous ḥadīth.32

Conclusion

In Maybul's Nawbat II commentary, Persian seems still to be living in the shadow of Arabic, for which it acts largely as a medium of translation. The Persian often lapses into phrases or sentences of the Arabic original, or simply yields to it altogether. Even where there are more extended passages of Persian, the prose style of Maybul's exoteric commentary is plain and unadventurous.

In the Nawbat III sections, however, Persian has truly come into its own. Qur'ānic citations have been skillfully integrated into the body of the Persian text, while other Arabic quotations, when they occur, are consciously enlisted to support the Persian, or for rhetorical effect. In the mystical sections of the Kashf al-asrār, Persian has become, in effect, a language of the heart through which Maybul is able not only to express the doctrines of love, but to convey them in a way that could have wide appeal. The result is a prose style that unites two great Persian gifts: those of poetry and of story telling.

At the time when Maybul was writing, the choice of Persian for religious texts was no longer solely to make them more widely accessible; it might also be for aesthetic reasons. These two motives seem to have come together in the mystical sections of the Kashf al-asrār.

32. Among the exegetical traditions concerning the Covenant of Alast is one narrated from Ibn 'Abbās which states, 'When God created Adam, He took his progeny from his back like tiny ants. He took two handfuls and said to those on the right: Enter Paradise in peace! And He said to the others: Enter the Fire! I do not care.' See The History of al-Ṭabarī, vol. I, English translation F. Rosenthal, SUNY 1989 p. 305.
The Alphabetical Body: Ḥorūfī Reflections on Language, Script, and the Human Form

*Shahzad Bashir*

The essence denoted by the thirty two\(^1\) letters
Is the source of the two worlds, whether contents or container
Meaning that the true nature of the letters is that essence
O writer of syntax and explainer of etymologies\(^2\)

This quatrain by ‘Emād al-Dīn Naṣīmī (d. 807/1404-5) describes the general principle at the heart of the religious worldview espoused by the Ḥorūfī sect which flourished during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of the common era in the Iranian world. Like the proponents of other esotericist religious systems, Ḥorūfīs divided the cosmos into base exoteric and superior esoteric realms and stipulated that the two worlds were in fact reflections of the same essence.\(^3\) They contended that the esoteric/exoteric divide could be bridged through the interpretation of external realities, and that it was precisely the ability to lift the veil between the two realms that constituted salvation. While the theory of the system valorized the hidden over the apparent, in practical terms, Ḥorūfīs’ greatest intellectual investment was in exploring ordinary observable reality in order to discover the secrets that lay behind the façades. It is for this reason that the Ḥorūfīs regarded the human body,

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1. The Persian phrase for thirty two (*sî-o-do*) and a number of other words and phrases crucial for the Ḥorūfī religious system are represented by abbreviations and special characters in Ḥorūfī manuscripts. For a list of the common denotations see Clément Huart, *Textes persans relatifs à la secte des houroufīs* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1909).
3. Throughout this paper, I will employ the term Ḥorūfī to denote only the particular sect founded on the inspiration of Fazlollāh Astarābādī (d. 796/1394). In a literal sense, the term can also apply to many other thinkers and practitioners concerned with the qualities of the letters of the alphabet (*Horūf*). The Ḥorūfī sect represents a particular perspective within the general tendency of religious speculation on the alphabet in Islamic thought (cf. Toufic Fahd, Ḥorūfī” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second Edition, 3:595-96).
seen as the best of divine creation, and aspects of human experience, such as languages contained in sounds and letters, as crucial loci for discussion and theoretical elaboration.

In this essay, I aim to illustrate the functioning of Ḥorūfî theory and method by focusing on a particular strand of interpretation that correlates the physical human body to Ḥorūfî ideas about language and the bases and mythical evolution of the cosmos. To connect this specific topic to the study of esoteric traditions in general, my greatest interest here is in Ḥorūfîs’ rationalization of the body and its connections to other hidden and apparent realities. The essay is divided into three parts: first, a look at a version of Ḥorūfî cosmogony that sheds light on Ḥorūfî understanding of the relationships between all existent entities; second, ideas that relate the body to theories of cosmic evolution, indexed in the Ḥorūfî system to the appearance of scripture-bearing prophetic figures such as Moses, Jesus, Moḥammad, and Fażlollāh Astarābādī (d. 796/1394), the founder of Ḥorūfîsm; and third, the salvific potential of the correct understanding of the body, which links Ḥorūfî thought to the particular apocalyptic vision espoused by the sect’s early community in the fifteenth century.4

In addition to the three themes I have outlined, the Ḥorūfîs merit particular mention in discussing “religious texts in Iranian languages” because of their belief that Persian, with its thirty-two letters in the extended Arabic script, was the ultimate language of divine revelation. This elevation of Persian was in part necessitated by the fact that Fażlollāh Astarābādī spoke and wrote in Persian.5 Since the Ḥorūfîs saw themselves as the ultimate bearers of salvation before the dissolution of the cosmos, it was natural that the language of their prophet was the greatest language. However, given their general predilection for rationalizing all propositions, the Ḥorūfîs spent considerable effort showing all the ways in which this status was preordained for Persian from the very beginning of creation. They considered the significance of Per-

sian itself a secret that had awaited exteriorization until the time of As-
tarābādī, and for them the works they themselves wrote in the language
were proofs that the time had come to lay open all cosmic mysteries.

Body and Language in the Myth of Creation

It is appropriate to concentrate on ideas about creation in virtually any
discussion of Ḥorūfīsm since cosmogony is a prominent theme in much
of Ḥorūfī literature. As a group concerned with the end of time, the Ḥorūfīs found the beginning of things a natural point of elaboration as
well. For the understanding of the body, one Ḥorūfī cosmogonic discus-
sion begins with the Koranic idea that when God wishes for something
to exist he says "be!" and it is (konfayakūn).6 This "be!", for the author
of the anonymous Masīhnāme, is the utterance that set the process of
creation into motion, and it is also the magical command that continues
to mark God as the only being who can truly produce an entity out of
nothing.7 Aside from God's special privilege, in the created world, the
interrelationship between linguistic vocalization and materiality per-
sists in a derivative fashion on the basis of the same "be!" reported in
the scriptures.8 In this Ḥorūfī understanding, the actual sound of God's
word and the bodies produced from the command are two facets of the
same event, and the moment of creation can be seen as a bifurcation of
divine attributes leading to a constant relationship between sounds and
bodies in the cosmos. Moreover, by the token of this event, the cosmos
in its totality is an echo of the word "be", with ordinary sounds and bod-
ies representing reverberations of the divine command.9

Going further, the events of creation subsequent to the production of
the material word through the initial "be" contain interactions between
sounds and bodies. The ultimate point in the process of creation is God's

cussed here is not found in other Ḥorūfī works, which have their own interpretations.
Extant Ḥorūfī literature contains multiple interpretations of virtually all theoretical is-
issues and the sect's ideas seem not to have been standardized during its active phase. In
the midst of this diversity, what unites Ḥorūfī literature is the perspective of uncover-
ing esoteric meanings through manipulating words and the letters that constitute them
in written form.
8. Ibid., 96a.
9. Ibid., 96a-b.
bringing forth a being by imprinting his own form onto clay. This is, of course, Adam who becomes a full image of God only once God teaches him the names (asma') before presenting him to angels as an object of veneration as told in the Koran (2:31-34, 7:11, 17:61, 18:50, 20:116).\(^{10}\)

In Ḥorūfī literature, the Koranic names are ubiquitously equated with thirty-two Letters (Horūf) which together constitute a divine metalanguage that provides all entities in the created world their identities through names specific to them. The basic Ḥorūfī idea here is represented in the oft-repeated phrase “the (metalinguistic) name of thing is its very essence (esm 'ayn-e mosammā ast)”. God’s bestowal of the thirty-two letters of the metalanguage on Adam makes the human species capable of language as such, and the Ḥorūfis contend that ordinary languages actually used by humans are weak or corrupted reflections of the divine metalanguage. The difference between them is that in ordinary languages, linguistic signifiers have a non-essential or random relationship with the signified, while the metalinguistic names of the signified are their essences. The fixing of the number of letters of the metalanguage at thirty-two portends the status of Persian as the ultimate ordinary language, a theme to which I will return a little later.\(^{11}\)

To continue with the cosmogonic narrative, the author of the Masihnāme portrays the thirty-two names or metalinguistic letters themselves as sounds that unfold out of the unitary “be”. They are all, in their essence, the same thing as the dot that begins the process of writing, recalling ṬAli’s statement that knowledge was a dot which ignoramuses multiplied into many things.\(^{12}\) Therefore, sound continues to mark the major way through which God’s knowledge in the form of his speech acts upon entities other than God himself. The sound of the first word gets the cosmos in motion, and the incorporation of the thirty-two sounds into a being made in the image of God produces the only entity besides God himself capable of knowing God or replicating his powers in full. The fact that humans are the most creative beings besides God is thus tied fundamentally to the human capacity for language, whose outward manifestations are sounds and letters. It is contended that all sounds in the created world are echoes of the thirty-two metalinguistic

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10. Ibid., 92b, 93b.
11. For a longer discussion of the position of the metalanguage in Ḥorūfī thought see Bashir (Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis, 2005, referred to above, note 4).
sounds, and different beings in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms have sounds peculiar to them derived from these.\textsuperscript{13} Humans come out on top here as well since their vocal chords are capable of the greatest diversity, again evincing God’s bestowing the metalanguage on Adam.

Horufi sources suggest that the interdependence of sound and materiality that is obvious in the act of creation continues into the ever-changing cosmos in front of us, though it is obscured by the irregular diversity of entities that one encounters on first observing the world. Much of Horufi explication of the world is in fact a kind of religious calculus designed to show the interrelationships between all the entities that comprise the cosmos. The details of Horufi numerical speculations are often quite tedious, making Horufi works appear as rambling tables of additions, subtractions, and multiplications with little apparent justification. However, approaching this material with the idea of a system of religious mathematics, we can appreciate Horufi works as sophisticated explorations of reality aimed at maximum disclosure through careful consideration.

Principal aspects of the Horufi religious calculus can be seen by considering five particular numbers that recur consistently in Horufi works: one, four, seven, twenty-eight, and thirty-two.\textsuperscript{14} These numbers can be rationalized as follows:

One: The singularity of God in his essence, related also to the idea that all of reality is a single being.
Four: The elements, earth, wind, water, and fire.
Seven: A number that permeates Islamic and other Near Eastern systems of thought, exemplified most especially in the seven heavens that figure prominently in ascension narratives and rituals such as the number of circumambulations necessary for performing the Hajj.
Twenty-eight: four times seven: The number of letters in the Arabic alphabet.
Thirty-two: four times eight (seven plus one): The number of letters in the Persian alphabet.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 96a.
\textsuperscript{14} A complete discussion of the system would require expanding this list, but these numbers will suffice for the moment in the interest of both space and concentrating on the methodology rather than particular calculations.
Horūfīs’ predilection for producing (or discovering) relationships is already evident from these numbers: one, four, and seven are independent while twenty-eight and thirty-two are derived from addition and multiplication operations on the first three. Equipped with this general understanding of the Ḥorūfī view of the world, we can now move to the evolution of the cosmos.

Cosmic Evolution and the Human Species

After its initial creation, the cosmos is seen to be endowed with internal processes of generation and corruption. The most significant among these is the human lifecycle, beginning with reproduction and birth and ending with death. Here the Ḥorūfīs focus on the male-female human pair, ordained through the relationship between Adam and Eve. We already know that humans have the capacity for language due to God’s primordial teaching, but the Ḥorūfī discourse on Adam and Eve shows that the numbers one, four, seven, twenty-eight, and thirty-two are intimately intertwined in the form of the human body as well. Most significant here is the idea of the seven lines of hair that grace the human face (hairline, two eyebrows, and four lines of eyelashes) and are the bodily equivalents of the first seven verses of the Koran that constitute the “Opening” chapter (Fātiḥa). The Ḥorūfīs therefore very consciously map the material human body on to the sounds and letters of the Koran, God’s speech.

Ḥorūfī numerical speculations on the human face continue beyond the common seven lines as well. The number of lines increases with the maturation of the human body, though the process is different for males and females. On the male face, the appearance of facial hair increases the number to fourteen: two lines each on cheeks, above the moustache, and below the lips, and one at the end of the beard. The female face itself does not acquire seven additional lines, but its equivalent is the capacity to give birth, through which another human face and its lines appear in the world. In both cases, the Ḥorūfīs see the fourteen lines as seals on top of the places on the faces where they occur, so that the significant entities that inhabit the face are in fact twenty-eight: fourteen

16. Ibid., 92a.
17. Ibid., 102b. The author exemplifies the process by referring to Mary giving birth to Jesus.
lines and the fourteen places on the faces on which the lines sit as seals.\footnote{Ibid.} By arriving at the number twenty eight in this way, the Ḥorūfīs show us the parallel between the faces of the human species and the Arabic script with its twenty-eight letters.

In a given human lifecycle, the number twenty-eight is reached as a result of the process of becoming an adult. The human being’s status as a reflection of God’s speech is affirmed when the male acquires facial hair and the female gives birth during teenage years. Up to this point, the person him or herself cannot interfere with the lines and the processes involved are natural. However, the Ḥorūfīs contend that it is a universal human trait to part the hair of the head and, in the case of the male, of the beard as well into two sides, revealing one or two more lines and the places underneath them.\footnote{Ibid., \textit{92a-93a}.} Parting the hair is an act of volition, here representing a deliberate attempt to adorn oneself, thereby becoming both better and civilized. It is in fact seen as the point of becoming fully human since it is now that the face becomes a dwelling place of thirty-two entities – sixteen lines and sixteen places under them – in parallel with the thirty-two letters of the metalanguage. With this we have the completion of the idea of each human face coming to reflect God’s speech in its entirety through the processes of maturing as well as becoming civilized.\footnote{Ibid., \textit{93a}.} Ḥorūfīs see the single line that creates the fully human person reflected throughout nature. For example, the author of the \textit{Masīḥnāme} urges the reader to look at the following single lines: the slit that reveals the eye, the nose that divides the face, the line between the lips that reveals the mouth cavity, the line in the middle of every seed of grain, the line that naturally divides the mane of the horse, the line that splits the lower lip of the camel, etc. In all these cases, the single line is seen as God’s imprint on the bodies in question, recalling the singleness of God’s essence and the production of a pair through God’s creative speech.\footnote{Ibid., \textit{105a-b}.} The unity of the cosmos and the parity between the macrocosm and the microcosm are reflected also in the fact that the eight lines of the human face multiplied by the four elements reflect the thirty-two letters of the metalanguage.\footnote{Ibid., \textit{94a}.}
In slight variance from the *Masīhnāme*, another Ḥorūfī source interprets certain Koranic verses to illustrate the complementarity of male and female bodies. In addition to the issue at hand, in this example we can see the privileging of Persian over Arabic, a common theme in Ḥorūfī ideology. In an epistle (*resāle*), Mir Fāzeli, a Ḥorūfī scholar in the generation after Fażllollāh’s immediate disciples, interprets Koran 30:2-4 which read: “The Byzantines have been defeated in the nearer part of the land; and, after their defeat, they shall be the victors in a few years” (ghulībat ar-rūm; fī adnā l-ārd wa-hum min ba’dī ghalabihim sayaghlabūn; fī biḍ‘ī sinīn).23 Fāzeli explains that the word “rūm” should be taken to mean “writing on the face” because it refers to the Persian phrase “my face” (*ruy-e man*). He justifies the highly unconventional idea of reading Arabic text for Persian through recourse to another Koranic verse (this time referring to its ordinary Arabic meaning): “(there is) nothing fresh or withered, but it is in a clear book” (6:59). Based upon this, the sounds of the words of the Koran can be transposed to languages other than Arabic, freeing the text far beyond literal understandings.

Moving further in the interpretation of the verses, Fāzeli explains that the Arabic word *ar-rūm* refers to the Byzantines, inhabitants of Byzantium, which is expressed as “ahl-e rūm” in Persian. The true meaning of *ar-rūm* then are the seven lines that dwell on the human face. The Koranic text that follows is, therefore, a reference to the creation of Eve after Adam, because the Byzantines’ “defeat in the nearer part of the land” means the creation of a being lesser than Adam at a time after Adam’s creation (defeat equals lesser, nearer equals later). Although Eve may have been initially lesser than Adam, her existence is necessary for the start of the human species, and this species is the most crucial part of the cosmic plan since humans fulfill the purpose of the cosmos by recognizing God. Eve’s “deficiency” with respect to Adam, therefore, is in fact a marker of creation’s perfection, and this is the meaning of the Koranic verse when it states that the Byzantines will be victorious even after being defeated.

The last part of the Koranic text under discussion (“in a few years” [*fī biḍ‘ī sinīn*]) is said to refer to the additional seven facial lines peculiar to males. The “few” in this case means “seven”, and the reference to years corresponds to the fact that males are born with only seven “motherly” lines common to all humans, but acquire the additional “fa-

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therly” lines after a few years. The “victory” of the Byzantines also has an application here since the masculine lines come after the universal feminine ones.

These discussions, and other issues such as a parallel numerological discussion of the number of orifices in the human body,24 highlight the salience of the physical human body for Ḥorūfī theorists. Along with individual life-cycles, Ḥorūfī idea of the history of the cosmos with the human species at its center also reflects a gradual unfolding of cosmic truths through division into three cycles. The first cycle is called that of nobūvat or prophecy, beginning with Adam and ending with Moḥammad; the second is that of valāyat or sainthood, beginning with ʿAlī and ending with Faṭḥollāh Astarābādī; and the third is that of olāḥīyat or divinity, which begins with Astarābādī’s proclamations and is expected to end with the final apocalypse shortly thereafter.25 Numerous events within these cycles are speculated upon in Ḥorūfī sources, though for the discussion of the body, the figures of Adam, Eve, Mary, Jesus, Moḥammad, and Faṭḥollāh Astarābādī are of the greatest relevance.

Adam’s significance has already been discussed in the section on cosmogony and it suffices here that he and Eve figure prominently as the progenitors of the species. All humans born after these two replicate the numerical patterns leading to thirty-two discussed above until we arrive at Jesus, who is anomalous since he is born without a father and through the direct divine command “be!” addressed to Mary’s womb.26 His thirty-two lines are derived not from two parents, but this is amply compensated for by the fact that he is the word of God become flesh. This is significant because in the previous cases, all humans reflected the thirty-two letters of the metalanguage in the parallel but disconnected systems of the body and the language. However, as a direct materialization of god’s word, Jesus’ body is the all-pervasive metalanguage, a situation that differs from all other human beings.27

Besides its other significances, Jesus’ birth is the beginning of a cycle of time within the prophetic cycle that commences a kind of special exteriorization of the divine metalanguage in the human sphere. The teachings of Jesus are the first step in this direction, although the Ḥorūfī idea is that these were not fully understood in his own time and their

27. Ibid., 100b.
significance can be seen only through the further unfolding of the cycle of prophecy.\textsuperscript{28} The next important human person to arrive in the world is, of course, Moḥammad, whose body is nothing out of the ordinary. What he brings, however, is the Koran, God’s speech in the form of twenty-eight letters of the Arabic script. What Jesus’ body represented in its flesh is found in the letters and sounds of the Koran, with the latter possibly superior because it is more clearly comprehensible to the human mind.\textsuperscript{29} The Koran may be easier to read than Jesus’ body but it is also a highly allusive text that requires interpretation. In the Ḥorūfī understanding, this was the primary religious activity of the period of \textit{valāyat} that began with ‘Alī and also counted among its luminaries both the other Twelver Shi‘ī Imams and great Sufis from the dawn of Islam to the proclamations of Fāzlollāh Ṭabarānī in the second half of the fourteenth century of the common era.

Astarābādī was, for the Ḥorūfis, the consummation of all processes of cosmic history. He was given the gift of the final and complete understanding of all the scriptures, particularly the Koran, so that he culminated the cycle of \textit{valāyat} and began that of \textit{olūhīyat}. Furthermore, his body became the repository of the thirty-two letters of the metalanguage through the descent of a revelation so that it became, like Jesus’ body, a direct representation of God’s speech.\textsuperscript{30} The \textit{Masīḥnāme} refers to the second coming of Jesus as a significant marker for the apocalypse, although it is unclear whether the author took the idea literally or saw Fāzlollāh Ṭabarānī as a representation of Jesus. The author cites Jesus himself as saying that he will come back to reveal the complete knowledge of the cosmos in the form of the thirty-two letters/sounds, and that his revelations at this time will fulfill all religions, uniting all human beings in a single religion and a single language.\textsuperscript{31} This is clearly the role assigned to Fāzlollāh in Ḥorūfī theory so that he himself may

\textsuperscript{28} Although the Ḥorūfis rely on the idea of Jesus being the Word of God become flesh, they do not regard the institutionalization of his first coming in the form of Christianity as the final truth. This is evident from the fact that the \textit{Masīḥnāme} addresses Christians directly at numerous points to suggest that they should abandon existing Christian ideas about Jesus in favor of the new Ḥorūf interpretations (93b, 95b, 97a, 98b).

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 96a.

\textsuperscript{30} One Ḥorūfī source describes Fāzlollāh’s presence as the gathering (\textit{mahšar}) of all beings that are supposed to precede the judgment day in Islamic eschatology (Ḵāje Seyyed Eshāq, \textit{Tāḥīqnāme}, MS. Farsça 1132, Istanbul University Library, 41b).

\textsuperscript{31} Anonymous, \textit{Masīḥnāme}, 94b-95a.
have been seen as a form of Jesus, an embodiment of God’s speech in both his physical form (like Jesus in his first appearance) and knowledge.

One of the ultimate proofs of Fazlollah’s status was the fact that he proclaimed himself in Persian with its thirty-two letters, the closest correlate among ordinary languages to the metalanguage. Fazlollah’s works are most thoroughly imbued with Koranic quotations, and taken together they can be considered an extended commentary on the Arabic scripture. Ḥorūfī discourse generally, and the writings of Fazlollah Astarābādī in particular are, therefore, like the parting of the hair of the head and the beard that takes the human face from its natural state to becoming a full reflection of the thirty-two letters of the metalanguage. What shines forth from Astarābādī’s interpretations is the ultimate truth of the cosmos, and he himself and those among his followers who have absorbed his works are the consummate human beings, images of God’s command “be!” in both body and knowledge. At the moment of the creation of the cosmos, the creative utterance bifurcated into materiality and sound; with Fazlollah’s understandings, the perfection of the body is rejoined with the metalanguage, thus realizing the ultimate purpose of the cosmos reflected in the famous extra-Koranic divine statement (ḥadīs-e qodsī) which declares that God created the world in order to become known.³²

The Path towards Salvation

In the last section of the essay, I would like to briefly discuss the issue of the practical ramifications of the theory described to this point. Ḥorūfīs’ theoretical perspective was closely linked to an imminent apocalyptic expectation and the correct knowledge of the body was a necessary precursor to preparing oneself for everlasting salvation. The Mas排The Pit touches on this theme by connecting the idea of the parting line that reveals the truth of the cosmos to a line on the sacred black stone attached to a wall of the Ka‘ba. Citing Mohammad as the source, it states that on the day of resurrection, the black stone will break open to reveal two eyes and a tongue, mimicking the form of the human face. It will then vocalize the primordial covenant, recalling the moment when God asked all souls whether they accepted him as their lord and

they replied with an emphatic yes (bāla). The author represents the souls' response to the divine question as the eighth line that comes after the seven natural lines of the human face. The boundaries between material and sound are, once again, blurred in this scenario so that an inanimate stone first transforms into a human face and then an utterance becomes equivalent to hairlines. The black stone's affirmation of God's powers is paralleled by the role assigned to Jesus in his second coming, though, as discussed above, the Ĥorŭfīs very likely considered Fażlollāh himself as a kind of re-embodiment of him.

As for human bodies themselves, an anonymous Ĥorŭfī work entitled Hedāyatnāme paints the following picture:

God has said in the Koran that one indication of the day of resurrection is that smoke will descend from the sky: "a day when the sky will produce a manifest smoke" (44:10). This "manifest smoke" is the unveiling of the Letters (Ĥorŭf) and the science of Letters ('elm-e Ĥorŭf). Letters can be likened to smoke because they themselves and the science of Letters exhibit their forms in black lines. This is so both in the divine realm - in the case of the creative pen and the way God wrote on the faces of Adam and his descendants - and in the created realm, where people write on paper and in notebooks. That God meant Letters when he said smoke is proven from 'Ali's saying that smoke will descend from heaven before the day of resurrection and will enter the unbelievers' ears to turn their heads into heads of hayna'idhin, which means the roasted head of a calf. For the believers, (in comparison), the smoke will induce a condition resembling the common cold... Smoke usually affects eyes and not ears, but this is a Letter which enters the ears of the unjust and the tradition-bound (moqalladan). They hear it but their great envy compels them not to embrace it. They remain unbelievers as a result of this and their heads become ... like roasted heads of animals, incapable of utilizing the Letters... The believers attract a cold from (the Letters) since a cold cleanses the brain from constricting, impure substances.... When the smoke of Letters enters the ears of the believers, their brains are cleansed of impure and confusing traditional notions and non-existent imaginations regarding the Return (ma'ād) and the End (ākerat). Then, once physical death destroys their bodies, they find

themselves in the highest paradise as a reward for having stopped following the (religion of their) parents blindly and acquiring true apprehensions from a perfected guide. They dwell in it for eternity, never again tasting death, sitting on grand thrones in well-constructed forms, possessing the ability to see God, served by ĥūrīs and ġoŀāms, completely free of dissension and veils, pains and jealousies, having achieved all that a soul desires and presented with all that is savory to the eye.35

While this statement connects to Ḥorūfī theories in a number of different ways, its most remarkable aspect is the description of physical reaction between the Letters coming down from the sky and damned and saved human beings. The general idea is that the Letters are indeed descending now since the end time has arrived, and what matters most is to prepare one’s body so that it becomes a welcoming receptacle for them. Those who reject Fażlolläh Astarâbâdî’s message are forsaking the path of salvation and their bodies are turning into those of dead animals. Although the author does not say so directly, the implication is that these beings are animals incapable of receiving the reward God has promised for the next life. The bodies of Astarâbâdî’s Ḥorūfī followers, on the other hand, are becoming sanctified in anticipation of the time when their redeemed souls will depart from them and reside in bliss for eternity. What is clear is that the only way to bring oneself in line with the times is to accept Astarâbâdî’s vision and become a Ḥorūfī. By mentally recognizing the truth, then, individuals can transform their own bodies into ones like that of Astarâbâdî, representing perfect harmony between materiality and language. At least for those who are alive in the present, the physical bodies they possess are their passports on the imminent day of judgment. The true understanding of the salvific potential of the body is the knowledge referred to in the ḥadîţ-e ḡodsî that states that whoever knows himself (here meaning his body) knows his lord.36

35. Anonymous, Hedâyainâme in Huart, Textes persans, 11.
Conclusion

Through the preceding discussion, I hope to have shown the significance the Ḥorūfīs placed on the human body due to their cosmogonic, cosmological, and historical ideas. Ḥorūfīsm was, in my view, more a religious methodology rather than an ideology, concerned largely with interpreting the world in ways consistent with a particular set of apocalyptic beliefs. Most crucial among these was the supremacy of the message proclaimed by Fażlollāh Astarābādī, which, among other things, placed tremendous importance on the language of scripture. This attitude was the basis on which the Ḥorūfīs regarded Persian as the most truthful language, making their religious worldview a Persian religious cycle superceding the Arabic Koran. This, however, is not to suggest that the Ḥorūfīs considered Mohammad, the Koran, or the Arabic language superfluous. Without Moḥammad and the Koran, Fażlollāh Astarābādī and his works would make little sense; without twenty-eight, the number thirty-two would have little value. Ḥorūfīs did nevertheless see themselves as a step beyond the religion practiced by ordinary Muslims who regarded the Islam instituted by Moḥammad as the final religion. For them, previous religions such as Christianity and Islam had indeed been true for long periods, but they felt that it was wrong to see religious truths as being fixed rather than progressing. One of the most significant markers of the new religious dispensation was the way in which the body was to react with the descending letters based on its preparation, or lack thereof, in conjunction with the truths revealed in Fażlollāh Astarābādī’s works. As reflected in Naṣīmī’s quatrain with which I began this essay, the Ḥorūfīs saw ordinary believers as those stuck in the intricacies of syntax and etymologies, thereby neglecting the real truths of scripture and language and letting pass the possibility of salvation.
Sufi texts as literature or literature as Sufi texts

Bo Utas

We are often using the terms ‘text’ and ‘literature’ rather indiscriminately. ‘Literature’ tends to be a more or less subjectively defined category. The following suggestions for a stricter use of the designation ‘literature’ as well as for the definition of ‘genres of literature’ summarizes parts of an investigation of “Genres in Persian literature 900-1900” that I am making for a comparative project on “Literature in a global perspective”1. In order to be meaningful the designation ‘literature’ should, I think, be taken to refer to a certain kind of texts. ‘Literariness’ implies a specific attitude to a written or oral work. In our project, the literary theorist Anders Pettersson suggests that we should distinguish between informational, directive and representational texts and that only the latter kind should be taken as ‘verbal art’ or literature in a strict sense.2 In the Persian text world such representationality may be seen as having two main forms of expression: elaboration of language for aesthetic effects (sokan-e ārāste) and narration (dāstān). According to this definition Persian literature would include texts in the New Persian language that are either consciously elaborate in form and ways of expression, i.e. in principle all works in bound form (poetry) and some in prose, or narrative, both in bound forms, such as epics, and in prose, such as stories. In practice this distinction is, of course, not so easily applicable to Persian prose.

Considerations regarding the limits of ‘literature’ would seem to have implications for the understanding of how and with what intentions texts are composed and how they are read and interpreted by its readers/listeners. The author’s intention is, of course, one thing and the reception is another. The former is bound to time and place, while the latter will shift widely with time and circumstances. The fate of so-

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called ‘Sufi texts’ is a remarkably instructive example of this. However,
in order to get an instrument for diachronic and comparative studies, it
is useful to make sub-divisions within ‘literature’, that is to try to con­
struct a genre system. Obviously there are no given, neat and independ­
dently existing genres that define Classical Persian texts, and there ex­
ists no specific concept in pre-modern Persian that could be taken to
correspond to some modern western conception of ‘genre’. Anvā‘-e
še’r, for instance, is not used consistently and gives no stable kind of
classification. In his introduction to our volume on genres in the above-
mentioned project (forthcoming), Anders Pettersson describes three
types of genre concepts: the traditional, the classificatory and the com­
municational. The traditional way of referring to types of Persian liter­
ary works is predominantly based on formal criteria: magnavī, qašide,
ḡazal, qeš’e, robā‘ī etc. In a more loose way, reference is also made to
various types of subject matter, such as madh ‘panegyrics’, ḥejā ‘satiri­
cal invective’, margvīe ‘threnody’, etc. Classification according to form
gives a reasonable differentiation as regards the bound forms, poetry,
while from that point of view prose remains on the whole an undiffer­
entiated mass. The little there is of traditional classification of prose
would either be based on subject matter, such as tārīḵ, or compositional
characteristics, such as resāle.
As for “the classificatory view of literary genres” (Pettersson, see
above), one has to conclude that very little of the sort exists, neither in
indigenous nor in Western works on Persian literature. In fact, ‘tradi­
tional’ and ‘classificatory’ genres on the whole coincide up till now, and
what there is of ‘communicational genres’ is rather implicit than explic­
it. Still this seems to me to be a crucial concept, especially for the un­
derstanding of the diachronies of Persian literature. Therefore, I pro­
pose to establish a pragmatic system of Persian literary genres that at­
tempts to include aspects of all the three mentioned genre types. It is
based on the following components:
1. outward form – šūrat or, seen from the phonetic side, lafẓ;
2. subject-matter or content – mażmūn or ma‘nā in a non-philosoph­
   ic sense;
3. aesthetic means (‘style’) – bādī’lbadāye‘, bayān, balāğe, ‘arūz
   and qaftīye;
4. author’s intention – ġaraż,
5. receiver’s anticipation – entezār (‘expectation’).
Thus I see a genre as an ensemble of a specific form, subject matter,
Sufi texts as literature or literature as Sufi texts

aesthetic means, author’s intention and receiver’s anticipation. In this way the literary forms may be taken as more or less precisely or vaguely related to certain topics under certain circumstances, however changing through the thousand years of their use. Consequently a given work might, in principle, shift from one genre to another with changing interpretation.

With regard to form there are, as we know, not only poetry and prose texts but also mixed types, either prose interspersed with poetry or poetry with prose or prose that is partly or completely rhymed (saf‘, pl. mosajja‘āt). The latter is particularly important in Sufi contexts, since from an early stage saf‘ seems to have been a preferred technique among Sufi preachers, from whom it spread to written works. Interestingly, in his Qābūs-nāme (475/1082-83) Key Kā‘ūs advises scribes not to use this device, since it, although highly appreciated in Arabic letters, is considered ugly in Persian. Obviously, the officials of the king were not supposed to write like the Sufis of the kānēqāh. From the point-of-view of the genre model I am using here I shall, however, regard mixed prose and poetry, as well as rhymed prose, as prose works.

Among prose texts that are regarded as Sufi we have both more informational and directive texts, like the Kasf ol-mahjūb by Hujvīrī (d. 465/1072-73) and the Šad Meydān by Anşārī (d. 481/1088), and more elaborate texts like the Savāneh by Āḥmad Ġazālī (d. 517/1123) and the Lamac āt of Ėraqī (d. 688/1289). The former type may be seen as non-literary and the reading and interpretation of such texts as comparatively stable through the centuries. Texts of the latter type, on the other hand, function in a more complex way, and they may be regarded as literary texts, both because of their elaboration and the aesthetic means by which they work. Still the intention of their authors was probably not literary. Their aim was hardly to produce some specimen of adab. The interpretation of the latter type of texts certainly changed much through history.

Let us look at poetry! The simplest classification of poetry takes mağnavīyāt as ‘epic’ poetry, while the qasīde forms are supposed to be ‘lyrical’ poetry. However, mağnavīyāt are not all ‘epic’ in the more precise sense of the word. Among them we also find a rich variety of didactic, religious and mystical texts that are somewhat problematic with regard to the definition of literature that I am using here. If we return to the distinction ‘informational’ – ‘directive’ – ‘representational’ texts,

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according to which only the latter is regarded as literature proper, we might conclude that texts that are aimed at philosophical instruction, moral teaching, religious edification or mystical contemplation rather fall within the first two categories than within the third. On the other hand, such texts are composed like 'verbal art'. They may be described as *adab*, and they use elaborate language with rhetoric devices and conventional imagery and employ all kinds of narratives. Thus they must be regarded as literary texts as regards form, content and style. As far as we can detect, the authors’ intentions would be, at best, mixed and the readers’ reception widely shifting. We do not know enough about the early *masnaviyyāt* (composed by Rūdakī and others) to say anything definite about their character. In all probability they were more didactic and entertaining than religious. In all Iranian literature, be it poetry or prose, there is a strong component of *andarz* ‘good advice’, combining practical wisdom and moral instruction with a frequent use of illustrating stories, parables, fables and allegories.

The already existing *masnavī* form as well as the *andarz* tradition must have been the basis of the didactic or homiletic *masnavī* that was developed in the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th centuries by Nāšer-e Ḵosrow and Ḥakīm Sanā’ī. Both belonged to the learned, literary (*adab*) tradition, the former as a prominent official (*dabīr*) in the Samanid administration and the latter as a court poet in Ghazna. To the tradition of *andarz* and moral instruction they added a strongly philosophical element of the type seen in the *Rasā‘el-e Ekvān as-safā* and the philosophical treatises of Ibn Sina. However, the later reception of the works of Nāšer and Sanā’ī came to differ widely. Since the former became known as a propagandist for the Isma‘īli version of Islam, which was met with so much repression, the reading and influence of his poems remained limited. The *masnaviyyāt* of Sanā’ī, on the other hand, became paradigmatic for homiletic poems for centuries to come. Sanā’ī was a Sunni court poet who found patronage with a Ḥanafī theologian (in the city of Sarakhs). He was probably not a Sufi in any precise sense (i.e. being initiated by a *pīr* or *šeylek* and taking part in Sufi practices), but his poems were soon read as true Sufi poetry. With the help of small changes and interpolations in his texts, later centuries furthermore made Sanā’ī a good Shi‘ī. In Persian tradition though, he anyway remained one of the great esoteric master poets and was read and interpreted according to many different viewpoints and interests.

In the process of the vigorous expansion of the Sufi orders and the establishment of an institutionalized type of Islamic mysticism in the
11th to 13th centuries, the Sanā‘ī type of magnavī became a favorite medium for Sufi teachings. It is well-known how poets like Farīd od-dīn Ṭāṭār and Jalāl od-dīn Rūmī followed in Sanā‘ī’s footsteps, but neither of them chose the metre, kaṭīf, that Sanā‘ī had introduced in his magnavīs but rather the more fluent and narrative ramal (in the Manṭeq ot-teyr and the Moṣḥbat-nāme of Ṭāṭār and the Maṇavī-ye mā‘navig of Jalāl od-dīn) or the fuller, ‘romantic’ metre hazaj-e sālem (in the Asrār-nāme and the Elāhī-nāme of Ṭāṭār). With this they probably wanted to demonstrate differences in mode – something like the choice of key for a piece of music.

At least since the Vis o Rāmīn by Gorgānī the hazaj-e sālem metre tended to signal a romantic story, but after a Sufi interpretation of all kinds of poetry became dominating, romantic stories could always be read as mystic allegories, symbolizing the quest of the human soul for the divine beloved. Thus also the romances written by Neẓāmī, such as Kōsrō o Šīrīn and Leylâ o Majnūn, would be interpreted as true Sufi works by readers with such inclination. Apart from the three 11-syllable meters just mentioned, the 10-syllable meter hazaj-e akrab was also used for Sufi-didactic or homiletic poems, as e.g. in the magnavī Mesbāh ol-arvāh ascribed to Owḥad od-dīn Kermānī. One might take the different metres as constitutive characteristics of various sub-genres of the Sufi-homiletic magnavī. However, the anticipations that are created by certain combinations of subject matter and form – in this case metre – should be studied more closely.

While it seems possible to find a structure in the history of magnaviyāt through looking at the combination of form, subject-matter and intention/anticipation, the situation of the qaṣīde types of poetry is much more complicated. The panegyric qaṣīde, modelled on an Arabic pattern, was only one of the origins of the short forms of Persian art poetry. The other was, obviously, an indigenous tradition of poetry of praise, wine and love that was transmitted orally and sung to the accompaniment of instruments like harp or lute. This pre-Islamic Persian poetry differed from the Arabic in two essential respects: it was not regularly and obligatorily rhymed and the metre was not based on quantitative patterns. It is thus peculiar that, when in the 8th – 9th centuries the first examples of New Persian poetry appear, they are thoroughly shaped according to the Arabic models as regards rhyming patterns and metre (‘arūz), be they formal qaṣīdes that were recited in the Arabic manner or ġazals that were sung in the traditional Iranian way. One wonders what that could have meant for the musical system of the time.
Very soon philosophic-homiletic-didactic contents were introduced also in the qasīde/gazal type of poetry. Again the portal figures were a new kind of moral poets, like Nāṣer-e Ḵosrow and Ḥakīm Sanāʿī. As was the case with the masnavī, this prepared the path for a strong mystic (Sufī) tendency, as seen in the dīvāns of ʿAṭṭār and Jalāl od-dīn Rūmī. This Sufi use of poetry seems to have had two sources. One was the didactic-homiletic tradition just mentioned and the other was a metaphorical reinterpretation of the traditional poetry of love, wine and praise that started in the circles of mystics that during the 11th and 12th centuries crystallized into Sufi ʿtarīqas. Šeyḵs, like Abū Saʿīd b. Abeʿl-Ḵeyr, used quite profane songs and poems in their sessions of samāʿ, re-interpreting and using them in their own symbolic way. Wine would be seen as symbolizing the ecstatic state (ḥāl) of the mystic, carnal love (ʾešq) the love of Truth (ḥaqq, i.e. God), and praise of the patron address to the Perfect Man (ensān-e kāmel) or the symbolic presence of the Divine.

As an example of the use of profane poetry we might look at the following anecdote found in the Asrār ot-towhīd:


> andar ǧazal-e ķiš nehān kāham gaštan / tā bar lab-e to büse daham čūn-š be-ḵānt

‘I shall conceal myself in my ġazal, so that I can give you a kiss when you read it.’ The šeyḵ asked the singer whose that bait was, and was told that ʿAmāre [of Marv] had composed it. The šeyḵ rose up and went together with all the Sufis on a pilgrimage to the tomb of ʿAmāre.”

Soon Sufi poetry adopted this imagery and used it systematically. In fact, from the 12th century onwards most Persian poetry was infused with a Sufi tendency, that is: all poetry had a potential Sufi reading, for whatever purpose it had been written. This tendency was furthermore strengthened by the Neo-platonic view that all worldly phenomena are metaphoric anyway. As a matter of fact, the exceedingly strong influence of Sufi mysticism re-wrought the whole poetic scene from the 12th century onwards. It simply annihilated the generic differences that were based on the various forms (qaṣīde, ġazal, robaʾī, qetʾe and even maš-
The totality of the Sufi claims made minor formal and linguistic differences irrelevant. This is the stage of transition from “the style of Khorasan” (sabk-e korāsānī) to the “style of Iraq” (sabk-e ʿerāqī). In the earlier, East-Iranian “style” the qaṣīde was the central form of art poetry, while in the later, West-Iranian “style” the ġazal came to dominance. At this stage the amalgamation of profane and Sufi imagery became complete. The complex, Classical Persian ġazal had been shaped, a genre that is characterized by a well-balanced ambiguity, an equilibrium between the mystic and the worldly and between the exhortative and the aesthetic. The apogee of this kind of ġazal is found in the dīvān of Ḥāfez (d. c. 1390). This should, indeed, be regarded as a distinct genre, but it is difficult to find a descriptive name for it. It might just be called ‘the Classical Persian ġazal’.

In cultural contexts, equilibrium is probably an unstable state. In combination with profound changes of a political and religious character, the literary scene soon changed again. During the rule of the Safavids, the original Sunni tarīqes were suppressed and more or less disappeared from the central parts of the newly shaped, pre-modern state of Iran. Consequently, Sufi poetry found less fertile soil. The Sufi interpretation of poetry, both previously composed and new-written, was weakened and a more and more aesthetic reading gained the upper hand.⁵

In summary: Of our five genre components, the poetic forms remained stable through thousand years. On the surface the subject-matter was also astonishingly constant, although the shifting practices of metaphorical and allegorical reading brought about profound changes in literary culture, leading to the over-powering Sufi perspective, which in its deepest sense points towards a non-literary experience. As for the use of aesthetic means, we also find little change. The number of rhetoric figures increased through the centuries and the imagery was gradually developed and conventionalized, but not until the 16th century and the introduction of the “Indian style” there was a definite tilt towards aesthetic poetry as a game for connoisseurs. Authors’ intentions, on the other hand, went through dramatic changes, from the minstrel’s role as entertainer mixing with the more stern Arabic panegyric scheme, to the ethically, religiously and philosophically motivated exhortative use of all the poetic forms, followed by the Sufi adoption of

the whole scale of poetic ways of expression for basically non-literary purposes. When the Sufi context was weakened and mystic sincerity faded, the poetic scene was left open for more aestheticizing exercises. The reception followed the same stages with the important difference that the readings and interpretations of each period were also applied to poetry created at earlier stages with different intentions. This was a living tradition, which was reconstructed for the purposes of every new generation.
Is dīvān-e Ḥāfez¹ a religious text?*

Finn Thiesen

This may seem an irrelevant question. On one hand there can be no doubt that dīvān-e Ḥāfez is a religious text since so many pious Moslems consider it to be divinely inspired. On the other hand, if the question is whether Ḥāfez himself intended it to be understood in a religious sense, few scholars will deny, today, that large parts of the dīvān must be interpreted in a secular sense and that Ḥāfez did not think of his work as a body of pious poetry. In this paper we shall therefore not discuss such obviously secular verses as cannot be considered religious except by an arbitrary and at times absurd allegoristic interpretation. Instead we shall discuss a number of verses that lend themselves very well to allegorical interpretation or even appear to be straightforward pious statements and try to show why they are most probably not to be understood in a religious sense. But in order to give the picture more depth I shall first quote three verses from one of those not very numerous ḡazals in which I think almost all scholars will agree Ḥāfez is probably expressing religious sentiments, namely ḡazal No. 300/294². It begins with the verse:

Even if a thousand enemies plot to destroy me
If You are my friend I have no fear.

And it ends:

How possibly could every eye see You as You are,
Everyone understands [only] to the extent of his [power of] vision.

¹ The transcription used in this paper has been changed by the editors without the author’s prior consent.
² The numbers refer to the text editions of Qazvīnī & Ganī (before the stroke) and Nāṭel-Kānlari (after the stroke). The English translations are my own. They are as literal as I can make them without mauling the language. Here and there I have allowed myself a freer translation in order to better convey the meaning (as I understand it). In all such cases the literal sense is given in a footnote. The original Persian text is given in the Appendix.
Hāfez will only then be loved by people,
When he places his head humbly in the dust at Your door.3

Let us now look at the following verse from ġazal No. 283/278:

O heart, I give you good guidance on the road to salvation:
Neither exhibit your sins nor try to impress us with your piety.4

This certainly looks like a straightforward and rather commonplace pious advice of a kind one would expect to see in Āṭṭār’s Pandnāme rather than here. But compare it with the preceding verse:

From the wine house lane they carried yesterday night on their shoulders –
The great prayer-leader5 who was carrying a prayer mat on his shoulder.

Read as a continuation of this verse the Pandnāme-like advice of the following verse becomes a sarcastic allusion to the great prayer-leader. Hāfez’ audience no doubt knew both the prayer-leader and the incident referred to and Hāfez may even have been mocking his way of preaching. Now let us look at a verse in No. 201/196:

Come to your senses, for when the wind of self-sufficiency blows
A thousand stacks of piety have not the value of half a barleycorn.

The interpretation of this verse depends to a large extent upon what we make out of bād-e esteğnā ‘wind of self-sufficiency’. Self-sufficiency is one of the exclusive qualities of God. He is not only utterly independent of all and free from all needs, but there is no one other than He who has this quality. Bād-e esteğnā must therefore be God’s wind. This may be understood as the moment of death, ajal, or the day of reckon-

3. It is possible, however, to read at least some of the verses in this ġazal as panegyric. No. 342/334 may be quoted as a specimen of a ġazal which I think all scholars will agree expresses from beginning to end the soul’s yearning for union with the Eternal Beloved.
4. zohd i. e. strict observance of all the commands and recommendations of Islam. Cf. my article “On the Meaning of the Terms zāhed and zohd in divān-e Hāfez.” (Thiesen D).
5. emām.
6. ta'at lit. ‘obeisance (of God’s commands)”.
Is divan-e Hafez a religious text?

Is divan-e Hafez a religious text?

ing when this wind carries all away. Understood in this way, the verse could be interpreted as follows: ‘Come to your senses and repent and begin a pious life now, for at the day of reckoning, it will be too late. Then no amount of obeisance and service will help. The wind of self-sufficiency will blow it all away like so many stacks of hay.’ This interpretation has at least one weakness. Who will have the time to accumulate a thousand stacks of piety and service at that moment? It rather seems as if Hafez is heaping scorn upon piety and devotion, saying that in the final count it will all be utterly useless, God being totally indifferent to it. Should it then be understood to mean that instead of outward piety we must love God? That, too, is unsatisfactory since God must logically be as independent of our love as of our service. And it is not only this verse that can be interpreted as an attack on ta‘at and zohd. The whole gazal can be read as a refusal to obey commands to abstain from wine and extra-marital love. Let us imagine that Hafez has gone with some friends to a lonely spot or a secluded wine house outside the town to drink and revel when some orthodox believers come and try to persuade Hafez and his friends to give up their sinful ways. The whole of gazal No. 201/196 could be seen as a witty answer to their command:

Pure wine and charming company are two snares on the road From the noose of which the clever ones of the world do not escape.

Depending upon the intonation with which the verse is read, it may mean either that even the cleverest people cannot escape those snares, or that whereas clever people are clever enough not to escape them, fools do what they can to escape. In the context that I have, rightly or wrongly, imagined for this gazal, the second alternative should be chosen.

7. I nevertheless must quote some verses in defence of this interpretation:
   Even though Your beauty is independent of the love of others,
   I am not the one who will give up this love affair. (No. 258/254)
   Hafez, your task is to pray and nothing else.
   Do not depend upon whether He heard [you] or not. (No. 243/238)
8. The divan has several references to such outings as may be seen for instance in Nos. 44/45, 145/141, 275/270.
9. amr be-ma ‘rif-o nahy az monkar
10. Lit. unadulterated wine and a charming cup-bearer.
Though I be drunk and amorous, a scoundrel and no good\textsuperscript{11},
A thousand thanks that [our] friends from the town are sinless.

Hāfez sarcastically says to the intruders: ‘I may be bad, but thank God
that you are absolutely perfect and sinless’. This line is in its own way a
parallel to the Biblical ‘He that is without sin among you, let him first
cast a stone at her’.

Do not cause the congregation of love\textsuperscript{12} to break up,
Having the slaves and thralls [of love] fleeing and running away\textsuperscript{13}.

Oppression is not a dervish-custom or the way of proceeding on the
Path.
Bring wine, for these travellers\textsuperscript{14} are not [genuine] men of the Path.

Hāfez says: 'Do not break up our party, for that would be oppression
and oppression is not the way of pious lovers of God’. And then ad­
dressing his friends: ‘Bring wine, for these dervishes here are not real
dervishes. We need not listen to them’.

Come to your senses for when the wind of self-sufficiency blows,
A thousand stacks of piety are not worth half a barleycorn.

Come to your senses and drink, for all your piety and devotion will in
the end make no difference. A characteristic Hāfezian paradox: Come to
your senses, get drunk and loose your senses.

I respect\textsuperscript{15} the honest drunkards\textsuperscript{16},
Not that band that is having blue clothes\textsuperscript{17}, but black hearts.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item 11. \textit{nāme-sīyāh} ‘having a black record (in the heavenly register of good and bad deeds)’
\item 12. Literally either 'the sweetheart-retinue' \textit{kowkabe-ye delbarī} (with adjectival -\textit{i}); or
‘the retinue of a sweetheart’ \textit{kowkabe-ye delbarī} (with indefinite -\textit{i}). The first alterna­
tive is more likely.
\item 13. Lit. When the slaves flee and the servants leap.
\item 14. \textit{sālekān}.
\item 15. Lit. ‘I am the slave of the high-mindedness of ...’ A frequent idiom in Hāfez.
\item 16. \textit{dordī-kasān} ‘dreg-drainers’; \textit{dordī} is inferior wine (containing dregs), \textit{kasādan} means
to empty the cup to the bottom, a \textit{dordī-kas} is a poor drunkard who has to be content
with inferior wine.
\item 17. \textit{azraq-lebās} having blue clothes’. Commentators and dictionaries agree that \textit{azraq­}
\end{itemize}
Hāfez says: ‘I prefer my drunken friends to your hypocrisy’.

Do not despise poor lovers, for these people
Are uncrowned kings and emperors.

Do not enter the wine house without proper respect
For those sitting at its door are the intimate friends of kings.

Exalted is the station of Love. [Reaching it demands] determination,
Hāfez,
For lovers will not admit mean persons to their company.

Having previously refused to obey their command, Ḥāfez now tells the
intruders that they are not even worthy of his company and that of his
friends. The word Ḥāfez is a pun. It serves not only as Ḥāfez’ signature,
but is also addressed to one of the intruders among whom there may
have been several who had memorized the Koran. Of course, I do not
mean to say that Ḥāfez extemporized this ġazal when he and his friends
were interrupted in their party. The situation described above may nev­
er have occurred, but that does not invalidate my interpretation of the
ġazal. The point is that Ḥāfez as a creative writer wrote a ġazal that fits
such a situation.

Ḡazal No. 167/163 is often considered a eulogy of Muhammad, the
founder of Islam. Looking at the first two verses, this interpretation
seems plausible enough:

A star shone and became the moon of the assembly,
Became the friend and comfort of our troubled heart.

Whether the Sufis, or a certain group among them, really were blue-clad I do not
know. In Ḥāfez and Sa’dī the word has a negative connotation. The secondary mean­
ing ‘Sufi’ may have originated as a pun since azraq looks like an elative of zarq
which in Persian commonly means ‘hypocrisy’ and ‘deceit’.
18. Lit. Love’s beggars.
20. Perhaps the uncrowned kings mentioned in the previous verse.
My darling who did not go to school and did not [learn how to] write
Became, with a twinkle of his eye, the preceptor\textsuperscript{21} of a hundred teach­ers.

Especially the second verse fits the Prophet very well. Without directly
mentioning Muhammad, \textit{Kašīb-Rahbar} paraphrases it as follows: "My
beautiful beloved who did not attend primary school and did not learn
to write, i. e. whose knowledge was not something acquired, with his
glances and signs by means of his intuitive knowledge and God-given
intellect solved the difficult problems of a hundred teachers and profes­sors".\textsuperscript{22} The following verses, too, can be read as a praise of the Prophet
albeit the \textit{vajh-e tašbīh} ‘tertium comparationis’ in each case is less
striking. But then Ḥāfeẓ says:

\begin{quote}
For God’s sake, wipe away the drop of wine from your lip,
For it is seducing me\textsuperscript{23} to thousands of sins.
\end{quote}

Even the most arbitrary allegoristic interpretation would find it difficult
to see this verse as praise of Muhammad. Wilberforce Clarke himself
for once admits in a footnote that “this may be addressed to the
beloved”\textsuperscript{24}. Here then we have a \textit{gazal} part of which may be read a
praising of Muhammad, but almost all of which could be read as de­
picting Ḥāfeẓ love for a handsome illiterate youth. I had to say “almost
all” because as is often the case with Ḥāfeẓ, the last few lines are in
praise of a patron, in this case Jalāloddīn Abolfavāres Šāh Šojā'. This
leads some modern scholars to think that this ruler is the beloved re­
ferred to throughout the \textit{gazal}. Thus the second verse is said to allude to

\textsuperscript{21.} \textit{mas'ale-āmūz} lit. ‘problem-teaching’. But what does that mean? According to
\textit{Enšāfpūr}, p. 1065, it simply means ‘teacher’, ‘teaching [how to solve] problems’. It
should be noted that one meaning of \textit{mas'ale} is ‘question in religious law’ which
again fits the Prophet. However, the passage can without difficulty be interpreted sec­
ularly, too. It would then mean that one irresistible glance from my darling’s eyes
showed a hundred teachers that certain things are beyond explanation. In that case
\textit{mas'ale-āmūz} would have its literal meaning ‘teaching problems’.

\textsuperscript{22.} \textit{Kašīb-Rahbar}, p. 225. My translation.

\textsuperscript{23.} \textit{kāter-am} ... \textit{movasves Šod} ‘became tempting my mind’. All commentaries make
\textit{kāter} the subject of \textit{movasves}. I do not understand how. Since \textit{movasves} is the active
participle of an Arabic verb meaning ‘to tempt with wicked suggestions’ and the
rhyme shows that it cannot be read \textit{movasvas}, its subject must be the lip with the drop
of wine on it.

\textsuperscript{24.} Wilberforce Clarke, p. 436.
the fact that Abolfavāres in spite of his irregular and insufficient schooling was nevertheless a man of some culture, a patron of learning and letters who even wrote bad poetry himself. Nevertheless, I think the ġazal is basically about love for an irresistible illiterate youth, but at the same time it is no coincidence that part of it reads like a eulogy of Abolfavāres or of the Prophet. This ġazal is, to use the words of Korramşahi, dārā-ye esāre-ye madh-āmīz ‘carrying allusions of panegyric intent’. It might be described as double praise in a double sense. Firstly, it is double because it praises more than one person at a time. Secondly, it thereby doubles the praise. If the second verse does contain an allusion to the insufficient schooling of the patron, then it implicitly also says that he is like unto the Prophet, which is the very highest praise. As for that illiterate youth, his similarity with the Prophet and perhaps with the king, too, makes him even more wonderful. Again, this ġazal is no evidence that Ḥāfez once loved an illiterate youth. He may or may not have done so. The ġazal tells us nothing about it. It is simply a poem by a creative writer describing that kind of love. In spite of its obvious allusions to the founder of Islam, it is unlikely that Ḥāfez should have meant it as an expression of piety since the Prophet is not himself the main object of praise, but rather an instrument of praise for others.

One of the characteristic qualities of Ḥāfez’ poetry is his expert use of comparisons. They are almost always very apt and often have more than one vajh-e tašbih ‘tertium comparationis’. In many instances, however, comparisons which are apt and striking when the passage in question is interpreted in a secular way, lose some of their impact when the same passage is read in a religious or mystic sense. An example of this may be seen in the opening line of 276/271:

If the gardener wants [to enjoy] the company of the rose for five days 
He must like the nightingale endure the cruelty of the thorns of separation.

According to an Indian Ḥāfez commentary from the beginning of the 17th century the gardener is the devoted Sufi who is the gardener of

27. Lāhūrī, p. 1876.  
28. ‘āšeq-e sāleḵ.
his own inner life, and five days mean our short life in this world. [This seems to be the source of Wilberforce Clarke’s interpretation: “The gardener (the holy traveller, who, in this Path, is the gardener of his own existence,) if, for a space of five days, (a life-time), the society of the rose (the true beloved) – is necessary for him, …”] But the image does not completely fit the purported mystical message. If the Sufi, having endured the hardship of the thorny Path, finally attains to union with his eternal Beloved, he is in for eternity, not five short days. In that case, ought Ḥāfeẓ not to have said – rather unpoetically – that if the gardener wants to have the company of the rose in all eternity, he must endure the thorns of separation for five short days [this short life]? Some readers may assert that this verse expresses their religious sentiments very well and that my objections are pedantic. But no one can deny that the image fits perfectly if we read the verse as a description of that common human phenomenon that often a person is ready to toil and suffer patiently for a long time for the sake one short moment of glory. Read in this way, pedantic objections seem no longer possible. It is therefore, to my mind, unlikely that Ḥāfeẓ is here expressing a religious sentiment, for in that case we would have to assume that while consciously writing good religious poetry he was unconsciously writing still better secular poetry.

Let us now, for once, look at one of the mystical interpretations prof­fered by Wilberforce Clarke in his Ḥāfeẓ translation from 1891, the only complete translation of Ḥāfeẓ into English. The opening verse of No. 274/269 reads:

In the tulip season, take the cup and be without hypocrisy.
With the fragrance of the rose, be for one moment Zephyr’s comrade.

Wilberforce Clarke translates: “In the (spring) season of the tulip [the morshed], the cup take; and void of hypocrisy – be: With the perfume of the red rose (of ‘Erāq), a moment concordant with the breeze (the morshed) – be.” And proceeds to explain: “gol (rose) signifies: – the red rose of ‘Iraq that from Muhammad’s sweat, fell into this world.” He

29. panj rič dar dār-e donyā.
then paraphrases the line as follows: "In the time of the murshid, the cup of love take; this counsel, with soul and heart, accept; happy of time, be; from the hearts page, hypocrisy efface; in hope of revelations of mysteries, and of the smelling of the perfume of the rose (spiritual mysteries) associate with the wind be; in thy heart, naught scratch; the requisites of the murshid’s society, choose; firm of foot on his order, be; with the word of this or that, thy heart scratch not – that to thee the doors of manifestations may be opened."

Why should a secular interpretation be preferred to this intoxicating mystical imagery? Simply because it is so much more poetic. The word used for season is *dowr* ‘cycle, round, rotation’, which commonly designates the passing of the cup from hand to hand in the drinkers’ circle. So, in the *dowr* of the tulips one should take the cup just as the tulip has taken its cup, and be without hypocrisy and unashamedly show one’s cup to the world just as the tulip shows its cup to the world. To pretend to be abstinent and drink in secret is a hypocrisy to which the tulip would never stoop. By smelling the rose one should become the comrade of the *bād-e sabā*, the spring breeze, which goes on smelling the rose throughout the season. One should become his comrade for one moment, namely the moment one inhales the fragrance of the rose. The word used for moment is *nafas*, the first meaning of which is ‘breath’. So we understand that one is Zephyr’s comrade only while inhaling the smell of the rose as Zephyr does. And the word used for ‘comrade’ is *hamdam* literally ‘fellow blower’ or ‘fellow breather’, a word very well suited to express companionship with the wind. Apart from that, *bād-e sabā* is by poetic convention thought of as the messenger between the lovers who brings the smell of the rose to the nightingale and the fragrance of the beloved’s hair to the lover, truly a desirable comrade. All details in this flawless imagery contribute to create a perfect whole. Reading the line as a mystical allegory considerably weakens its effect. Which is the *vajh-e tasbīh* ‘tertium comparationis’ by which the *morshed* ‘spiritual guide’ is compared first to a tulip and then to the breeze? If Ḥāfez had wanted to express a mystical secret he would have written something where a mystical interpretation would not reduce the poetic effect. He certainly was capable of that.

Ḥāfez continues to say:

31. Wilberforce Clarke, p. 554. The brackets are Wilberforce Clarke’s.
I am not telling you to worship wine all year long.
Drink three months and abstain nine months.

Wilberforce Clarke would have us believe that it means the exact opposite: "I say not – prostrate in austerity and effort ... ever be. For on account of man’s nature, that is difficult and impossible ... Then for a while (three months yearly), in the murshid’s service enter upon austerity and effort; for the rest of life, enter upon ease ...”32 The posthumous transformation of Ḥāfeẓ to a pious Islamic poet of which this is a typical example, has had an amazing effect on the Persian language. It is now accepted as a matter of course that everything should mean the opposite of what the words say, so that an ardent Moslem like Khomeini could write

Hold open for me the wine house door day and night,
For I am disgusted with mosque and school.33

and expect it to be understood as an expression of his piety and orthodoxy. Strange to say, Ḥāfeẓ nowhere uses quite as strong anti-Islamic language as Khomeini does. But it is pretty strong sometimes. Thus he concludes the same gazal with the following broadside:

Ḥāfeẓ, do not be a follower of the religion of strangers.
Nay, be the boon companion of the native34 rogues.

Ḥāfeẓ seems to say that one should not follow the religion of the Arabs, which forbids wine drinking, and unlike Khomeini he may have meant what he said. We should not forget that some of his contemporaries considered him an infidel and are said to have refused to bury him.35 Being in a position to follow his topical allusions, they must have been better able to understand what he said than the later generations that elevated him to sainthood.

Now, let us look at this line from No. 135/131.

32. Wilberforce Clarke, p. 554. The brackets are Wilberforce Clarke’s.
34. ādsnā ‘familiar, known’.
35. Rypka, p. 263.
Vain is life (passing) without wine and sweetheart.
Enough of idleness! From today I shall be working.

This seems to be a typical Ḥāfezian provocation. Time spent without wine and love is time wasted. Idleness means not to be doing that which is really worth doing, namely indulging in drinking and lovemaking. Working has the opposite of its ordinary meaning. It means to feast and enjoy life. However, if someone will assert that this verse should be interpreted in a mystical sense: ‘Wine means the intoxicating love of God and the sweetheart is really to be understood as God himself, the Eternal Beloved of the mystics. Idleness does mean idleness in its ordinary sense and work means leading a pious and spiritual life’. Well, if someone will say that, I shall indeed accept it. The religious interpretation is in this case no less satisfactory than the secular one and I cannot very well object to an allegoristic interpretation of wine and sweetheart since in my worldly interpretation I, for my part, have to give to idleness and work the opposite of their ordinary meanings. Read one way or the other, some of the words have to mean the opposite of what they normally do. Though admitting that the arguments in favour of a religious interpretation of this verse are very good, I personally prefer the worldly interpretation, which seems to be corroborated by the following verse from No. 337/330

My calling has always been lovemaking and roguery.
Henceforth, I shall strive and occupy myself with my own work.

As before, ‘work’ means lovemaking and drinking, but again it can also be interpreted in a way parallel to the religious interpretation of the previous example: Henceforth I shall strive to refrain from lovemaking and roguery and lead a pious life. The final verse of this ḡazal appears to strengthen the religious interpretation:

May it be that Providence\textsuperscript{36} will become [your] guide, Ḥāfez.
Otherwise I shall remain ashamed of my own self forever\textsuperscript{37}.

But Ḥāfez would not have been Ḥāfez if it had not been possible to interpret this verse in a irreverent worldly way as well: ‘Unless by some

\textsuperscript{36} lutf-e azal ‘Grace Eternal without beginning’.
\textsuperscript{37} abad ‘eternal without end’.
miracle the Eternal Grace should one day cause me to change my ways [which of course will never happen] I shall continue my love-making and roguery which is so shameful in the eyes of the pious'. However, a third and more satisfactory interpretation of this line is possible. The ǧazal opens with the following lines which are generally understood to express Ḥāfeẓ desire to get away from Yazd and return to his beloved Shiraz:38

Why should I not try to return to my own country
And become dust in the street of my own beloved?

Since I cannot tolerate the privations of poverty and exile,
I will travel to my own town and become my own master.

Read in this context, the last line becomes a simple expression of Ḥāfeẓ' wish to escape from Yazd so that he will no longer be ashamed of his miserable existence in that wretched place. (Note the special relationship between the beginning and the end of the ǧazal, a typical Ḥāfeẓian trait as I have pointed out elsewhere39.)

Let us now return to No. 135/131. Ḥāfeẓ goes on to say:

Like the candle of the morning it became clear to me from his love/sun
That I am going to spend [the rest of] my life on this affair.

This is one of the many untranslatable lines in Ḥāfeẓ. Persian mehr means both love and sun and it has both meanings here. Ḥāfeẓ is comparing himself to a candle which, having burned all night, wastes away

39. Thiesen (B), p. 119. As I have explained in that paper, Ḥāfeẓ often creates a special rhyme relationship between the first mesrâ' in a ǧazal and the second or the last beyt (or between all three of them), by means of a repeated or extended rhyme. This special relationship may also have other forms. In the ǧazal discussed in the paper (No. 486/477) the rhyme relationship is strengthened by letting the first and last line end with an indirect - some would say direct - reference to Rûmî, namely the words maqâmât-e ma'navî and mowlavî. In No. 337/330 the relationship is established by direct references to Ḥāfeẓ home journey in the first mesrâ' of the first line and the second mesrâ' of the second line and, if my interpretation is correct, by an indirect reference to it in the last beyt.
and dies in the morning. Like the candle that has spent itself waiting for the sun to rise, Ḥāfeẓ too will spend himself in his love for him [or her or it]. Love itself has made it clear to him and since love, mehr, also means sun it is very clear indeed. The eternal question remains: Which love is Ḥāfeẓ talking of? Is he so madly in love with a person of flesh and blood that he is going to devote the rest of his life to this love? Or is it love of God that has seized him and will never again let go of him? Perhaps the answer is both of them or rather all of them since there are other loves than the two just mentioned. Ḥāfeẓ may be singing love itself, regardless of its object, singing passion as such. Passion remains passion whether it is passionate love for Farrok (see No. 99/95) or for God, or it is passionate love of flowers or music. In this line it could it even stand for Ḥāfeẓ' passionate desire to produce the absolutely perfect ḡazal. The reader may fancy it to be his own passionate desire to understand and know what Ḥāfeẓ really says. Ḥāfeẓ če mī-gūyad? But shall we ever know what Ḥāfeẓ really says? I do not think so. And to my mind, instead of pretending to understand what he means we should rather talk of experiencing his poetry if that is the word I am looking for. (I would rather have used the Scandinavian word, opleve/oppleve/uppleva, or perhaps better still German erleben.) Reading Ḥāfeẓ can certainly be ein wunderbares Erlebnis even if we read things into the text that Ḥāfeẓ would never have thought of. Thus, in 490/481 Ḥāfeẓ says

Perchance, the candle may bring the explanation of this point to its tongue.
Otherwise, the moth does not pay heed to any word.

In other words, it is of no use to try to dissuade the moth from flying into the flame of the candle. Only when the candle itself explains to the moth how foolish this is, it understands, but then it will be too late. The game is over. A modern reader might well take this to be a warning against destroying our environment. We will not listen to the warnings and only when it is too late to remedy our wanton destructions and the game is over, only then we will realize what we have done. Needless to say, Ḥāfeẓ cannot have had any such idea in mind. It may be this unique quality of Ḥāfeẓ' poetry, the fact that it can be interpreted in so many ways, its capacity to give words to and express the very different feelings and ideas of all sorts of readers that has lead him to be considered a divinely inspired poet, lesān ol-ġeyb, The Tongue of the Unseen. The
reader of his divan may frequently experience that it seems to be his own joys and sorrows that Ḥāfeẓ is referring to. If he takes an omen, a fāl, from it, i.e. opens the divan at random in order to see what he says, he may very well hit upon a passage which seems to bear upon his own problems. This quality of Ḥāfeẓ’ poetry seldom comes across in translation because a translator is forced to make a choice between all the possibilities in the text.

Since I have acquired the privilege of being able to read Ḥāfeẓ in the original, it may not be out of place to conclude this paper with stating what I myself, in my subjective reading of his divan, feel that it is most of all about. I see that as love. Love itself, regardless of whether it is divine, carnal or “abstract” (if that is the right word). By abstract love I mean love of poetry, love of nature, love of music and similar passions whether mentioned expressly in the divan as the above three are, or not; love as that quality which makes life meaningful. I will let Ḥāfeẓ himself answer those who would object that my interpretation is anachronistic and schwärmerisch. In No. 244/239 he says:

Between the lover and the beloved the difference is great.
When the beloved disdains, go on entreating.

The first advice of Love’s Guide40 is this maxim:
Avoid unworthy friend[s].

In this circle, everyone who is not alive by love,
Though not yet dead, read over him by my fatwa the prayer of the dead.

The last line is unusually clear for Ḥāfeẓ: Life without love is living death. The first line jars slightly as a description of love between two persons or of love to God. But it is perfect as a description of what I have termed abstract love. You may have to practise and persevere for years and years before you are able to play Mozart the way you want to. You may never achieve it. But do not give up. Go on trying. If your beloved disdains you, go on entreating her. But beware; your object of love should be worthy of you. Avoid unworthy friends.

40. pîr-e soḥbat.
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Appendix

The Persian text of the passages quoted in translation.

300/294

316

Religious Texts in Iranian Languages

283/278

258/254

243/238
در این جهان انسان رفته‌ی شاعر
که خودش پژوهش نمی‌کند
پژوهشگر را یاری می‌دهد
چند نگاه که در کتاب‌های مجموعه
پایان‌داده که در این سال کان مردد
بی‌پایان شد و وضعیت دارد
می‌تواند که بخشی از این قلم
налذایش در دو کتاب که در
آن گروه که از ریشه‌های قدیم
شان مردد نگان که در نمی‌نشست
که سال‌ها در صحرا و پرست
که عشایر رو به تنهایی گردد
جان عشق به همدست ببین حافظ

– ۱۶۳ / ۱۶۷

در این جهان که به آتش شد
ناهید شکر دست نشان داد
بنزین که آب‌ریزی دارد همکاریش
لابی‌ان‌تراش می‌پناه گرای‌دام

– ۲۷۶ / ۲۸۰

بانوان گویی روزی به‌دست کلیه‌ها
برچینه نخ‌بردن میل باید بیش
۲۷۴/۲۶۹

کرمان زیستی در زمینه زیست

خانمی

۱۳۵/۱۳۱

بنا می‌گردد و پیش‌تر به استفاده

باشند گزارش‌های درون‌ریخته

۳۳۷/۳۳۰

چراً در قبی غمز و چاپ راه‌پیمایی

خیابان مکتوب کی نمی‌توانم

می‌خواهم مشخص نمایم و مشخص نمایم

پیکره‌ای از زن به‌شمار

شیخ این تصویر گشایه‌ای بارداری ندارد که از آن دوستان پژوهان پروانه

مانع عادت و وطن فرحت بیار. فرحت موعظه سرچشمه‌ای است که از صاحب باطن اثر کار نمی‌کند. برو نزدیک برایی گفتمان نازکسید.
VI

Yezidīs
According to the Yezidi Sheyki tradition, the Yezidis unlike all other peoples who originated from Adam and Eve, had only a primeval father, Adam: Eve played no role in their genesis.

Once, the Yezidi legend tells us, Eve claimed that children were produced by her alone and that Adam had no part in creating them. In order to test her claim they put their seeds in separate jars and closed them. When, nine months later, they opened Eve’s jar, they found serpents, scorpions and poisonous insects, while in Adam’s jar there was a beautiful moon-faced child. They called the boy Şahîd ben-jarr (“Şahîd, the son of the Pot”); he later married a hûrî and became forefather of the Yezidis.

Another version of the same legend mentions two children in Adam’s jar (Siouffi, pp. 259-260; Lescot, p. 59; Drower, p. 91). This account of the origin of the Yezidis is also confirmed in one of the Yezidis’ so-called Holy Books, “The Black Book” (Mash’afe ṭaṣ: Kwaddayî gawra bimâlayikaî got, min Ādam wa Hawā kalq dikim wa diyânkim bi bašar. Li sîrî Ādam Şahr ibn-Safar dibê wa liawîs milatî li sar arz p’aydâ dibê lipâştir milatî ‘Azrayîl ya’nî Malak Tâwûs ki yazîdiyîya p’aydî dibê (Bittner, p. 28). – “The Great God said to the angels: I create Adam and Eve, and make them human beings. From Adam’s essence Şahr ibn-Safar¹ will appear, and from him will originate on Earth a people, who will later give birth to the people of ‘Azrayîl, i.e. Malak Tâwûs, who are the Yezidis.”

However, this Semitic legend with its non-orthodox, probably Gnostic interpretation is not the only popular myth that exists in this syncretic tradition. In the course of collecting materials on one of the charac-

¹. This seems to be the corrupted form of Şahîd bin-jarr, though in both the Kurdish and Arabic versions of the texts published by M. Bittner, the reading is clearly šhr ’bn-sfr (ibid.). As for the name Şahîd, “witness”, it is most probably associated with the Koranic description of God’s Covenant with the souls of non-begotten humans (Qor’an, Al-a’râf, 171). In reply to God’s question: “Am I your God?” (alastu birabbikum?), the answer was: “True, we bear witness” (balâ šahidnâ).
ters in the *Yezīdī* pantheon, a female deity named Pīrā Fāt, we were recently able to record a number of extremely interesting details that point to the existence of another legend concerning the origin of the *Yezīdīs*: one that has Iranian roots and which is probably more authentic than the story of Adam and the jar.

According to the materials we collected among the *Yezīdīs* of Armenia, Pīrā Fāt is the daughter of Malak Farkadin.² Hitherto, nothing had been known of this deity: scholarly works on *Yezīdīsm* make no mention of her existence at all. Ph. Kreyenbroek does refer to a mythical character, Pīr Āfāt, allegedly associated with hail and damage to crops, inundations and storms (Kreyenbroek, p. 109). However, it appears that the author, or rather his informant (ibid.), arrived at this name by misinterpreting the *ezafe* construction, i.e. the feminine *ezafe* formant -ā in pīrā (probably from pīrikā) was understood as a part of the deity’s name itself, which resulted in the form Āfāt (cf. Arabic āfat) meaning “damage, harm”. The presence of the *ezafe* formant in the deity’s name (formally it should be Pīr or Pīrik Fāt) supposedly emphasizes her female nature (just as, for example, the forms Malakēš Tawūs or Sheḵē ‘Adī, compared with the correct forms Malak Tawūs, Sheḵ ‘Adī, underline the masculinity of the characters).

Pīrā Fāt is the patroness of women-in-labour, as well as of newborn babies: she protects them from the evil demon Āl (Asatrian 2001). A parturient woman asks for Pīrā Fāt’s help: “Yā Pīrā Fāt, āli min bīka!” — “Oh Pīrā Fāt, help me!” Those present traditionally express their hope for the deity’s assistance: “Čarā Pīrā Fāt bē hawārā ta!” — “May the seed of Pīrā Fāt help you!” (Celil, Celil 1978a, p.434). The word čar in this formula means “seed”, which developed from its original meaning “means, possibility”, via the interim meaning “liquid, medicine” (cf. Middle Persian čārak, New Persian čāre, also Arm. dial. čar, “medicine”).

This phrase specifically expresses the wish that the woman will give birth to a pure *Yezīdī*, from the original seed of the *Yezīdī* people — since Pīrā Fāt is the traditional preserver of this seed. Similarly, they invoke this seed when embarking on a journey: “Yā Pīrā Fāt čārā ta sar ma” — “Oh Pīrā Fāt, let your assistance (seed) be with us”. Pīrā Fāt is actually the Foremother of the *Yezīdīs*, since she has saved from annihilation the seed from which this people originated.

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² Malak Farkadin (Fakr ad-dīn) is the author of the *Yezīdī* religious code. He is also considered the incarnation of Turail, one of the seven avatars of Malak Tawūs and simultaneously the personification of the Moon.
According to the legend, the seed was given to Pirâ Fât for safekeeping by Sheyk Abû Bakr (Shekobakr), the incarnation of the angel Michael, one of the avatars of Malak Tawûs. Pirâ Fât then preserved it for seven hundred years, or, according to another version, for seven thousand years. Unfortunately no further details of this myth are to be found. One of the religious hymns (qowl) written down from Sheyk Hasane Mahmud merely alludes to the story, and this appears to be the only trace of this legend in the Yezîdî oral tradition.

\[
P'âdşâyê min vê yakê dilşâya, 
Faqîrak šândiya tavaqâ harharê, âvak ânyîya; 
Nâvé wê dâniya šarav, ti'ûn, a'ynil-bayzâya; 
Aw řôţa, av řôţa, mijlisâ mërê ēzdî pê buya âvâya. 
\]

My God [lit. "King"] is happy because
[He] sent once a faqîr [probably Shekobakr]
to the seventh sphere of Heavens; [he] brought a liquid [lit. "water"]; They called it wine, flour, yolk and egg white;³
That day, this day, the community of Yezîdîs appeared.

In the informant’s opinion, this “liquid” consisted of four elements: fire, water, earth and air. The existence of two popular legends of genesis in one and the same tradition is fascinating per se, providing clear evidence of the tradition’s syncretic roots. As mentioned above, the basic legend, which has been perfectly preserved, is most probably a Gnostic hangover of Yezîdîsm. The second myth, which has been preserved only partially, mainly in secondary indirect references to the deity Pirâ Fât, is, no doubt, more typical for the Iranian world. Another indirect reflection of this myth can be found in the following passage from a hymn by Sheyk Arabagi Antûzî: an example of the genre of hymns involving theological polemics with the representatives of other confessions (in fact, the whole contradiction between two popular myths is reflected here):

\[
Nawêrim bik’êlimîm, 
Wâkî az bêţim, sunata barî Ādana, 
\]

3. None of the Yezîdî sheyks whom I interviewed in Armenia, was able to give a convincing explanation of this passage. I think, the whole complex is a group of distorted Arabic forms: perhaps, ti’ûn = Arab. pahîn “flour”, a’ynil-bayza = Arab. a’yn-ul-bayţa, “gist, essence of egg” (i.e. “yolk and egg white”), which fits the context well.
I cannot speak;  
If I say that [the people of the] sunna [here, probably, the Yezidis] had existed before Adam, 
I will be accursed.  
[But] in the precedence of Adam,  
The great meaning [is hidden]...

The name Pīrā Fāt literally means “old woman Fāt”, and apparently, goes back to the name of the Prophet Muhammad’s daughter, Fātima. This character absorbed many of the features of pre-Islamic patron deities of fertility and family, and she is worshipped all over the Muslim world, especially among the Shi’ites. The Virgin Mary (Mariam) has almost the same function in Islam, and women in labour appeal, as a rule, to both these two saints (Asatrian 1995, p. 31). Fāt is shown to be a variant of Fātima by the fact that in certain contexts both forms of the name are used for the Prophet’s daughter. The hymn dedicated to ʿAlī, the Lion of God (Bayt’a A’lī Šērē Kwadē), offers clear evidence of this (Celil, Celil 1978b, p. 403):

Čī sibaka nahīna!  
Digrī A’yūṣ, Fāṭū Zīnā  
Savā hard kurē Ā’līnā.

A’lī dihāta māla,  
Fātimē pēfā šařū qāla;  
Gōta: “Ta girtī kirina zīndānē”,  
Aw Fātimā dēm šalālā.

What a horrible morning!  
Aysha, Fātimā [Fāt in the text] and Zeynab were weeping  
For the two sons of ʿAlī [i.e. Hasan and Huseyn].  

ʿAlī was coming home,  
Fātimā was arguing,  
[She] said [to him]: “You jailed the prisoners!”  
That Fātimā with a shining face!
The shortening of the name Fāṭima, or to be more precise, the omission of the end syllables obviously results from the Kurdish interpretation of the name: Fāṭima (or Fātīma) was understood as the *ezāfe* construction *Fāṭima* (Fātāma), i.e. “our Fāṭ”.

“The palm of Fāṭima”, the symbol of the five main characters in Shi‘ism: the prophet Muhammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, Hasan and Huseyn, is an essential element of the talismans and amulets that offer protection from evil spirits and demons (see Wallis Budge, pp. 467-472). A metal representation of “The palm of Fāṭima” is a significant accessory of any god-fearing Shi‘i house, alongside a portrait of ʿAlī, whose image has also accumulated certain characteristics of Old Iranian mythical personages – from Verethraghna to Rustam.

Many of Fāṭima’s features strikingly resemble those of Anahita (Anāhītā), the Old Iranian female deity (*yazata*) of fecundity, who is directly connected with water. Pīrā Fāṭ’s role as the preserver of the first seed associates her still more with her archetype Anahita. What is especially important here is that Anahita is in charge of the man’s seed, as well as of childbirth: she is the purifier of all men’s seed and all women’s wombs.

Yā vīspanāṃ arṣṇāṃ xšudrā yaoždašāiti,
Yā vīspanāṃ ħārišināṃ zḥai garewān yaoždašāiti,
Yā vīspā hāriššiš huzamito dašāiti,
Yā vīspanāṃ hārišināṃ dāitim raBwim paema ava-baraiti.

(Ardvīsūr Yašt, V, - quoted from: Reichelt, p. 4)

In Darmesteter’s translation this passage is rendered as follows:

Who [Anahita] makes the seed of all males pure,
Who makes the womb of all females pure for bringing forth [so that it may conceive again, - Phl. tr.],
Who makes all females bring forth in safety,
Who puts milk into the breasts of all females in the right measure and the right quality (Darmesteter, p. 54).

Moreover Pīrā Fāṭ’s role as the original seed-keeper also matches that of Armati-Spandaramat in preserving the seed of the First man (Gayōmart) and, hence, ensuring the procreation of the first human couple – Mashyak (Martia) and Mashyanak (Martianak) (Adam and Eve in the Semitic tradition). In Bundahīšn this myth reads as follows: “When
Gayomart was dying and dropped his seed, a part [of it] was imbibed by Spandaramat [Earth]. For forty years it remained in the earth. In forty years, Mašyak and Mašyānak grew up as rhubarb plants out of the earth... Then [they] turned into humans, and xwarr – their soul – entered into them” (Zaehner, pp. 75-76; also Nyberg, pp. 28, 481).

Preservation of the primordial seed in various environments is in general a common mythologeme in the Iranian tradition (cf. The story of Zoroaster’s seed, which was kept for 99,999 years in lake Kansaoya = Hāmūn; the story of Satana and a shepherd in the Ossetic Nart epic, etc.).

The examples given above confirm the authenticity of the myth Pirā Fāt, the seed-keeper in the Yezidi tradition. Although this is not explicitly stated in the extant materials, it was most probably Pirā Fāt who produced the first Yezidi from the primordial seed.

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Milyāk’atē-qanj – The Phallic Deity of the Yezīdíš

Victoria Arakelova

Milyāk’atē-qanj seems to be the only example of the Phallic Deity in all New Iranian folk pantheons. Moreover, there is no evidence of similar personages, either in the ancient or in the Medieval period, though lewdness, for example, was personified in the Old Iranian pandemonium (cf. jahi, jēh, etc.). As far as I know, the only written reference to this deity is to be found in Amin Avdal’s book published in 1957 in Armenian (Avdal, pp. 93-94). Nor is any mention made of Milyāk’atē-qanj in recordings of Yezīdí folkloric texts. Our thorough fieldwork in the Yezīdí communities of Armenia, as well as among emigrants from Northern Iraq, has not added much to the existing data. Most of the female informants, incidentally, tried to avoid the subject altogether, denying the very existence of a phallic deity in the Yezīdí beliefs.

Still, the information gleaned from our research thus far, allows us to reconstruct at least a general idea of this deity.

Milyāk’atē-qanj literally means “Holy Angel”. Qanj in Kurmanjī is usually translated as “good, kind, nice”, but in any religious context it has the unambiguous meaning of “holy, saint” (cf. Qanjē kwadēya – «He is a God’s saint»).

Naturally, Milyāk’atē-qanj is far from being the popular Priapus of ancient myth, who had a variety of functions. The “Holy Angel” is a classic example of an authentic phallic deity charged with the sphere of Eros and impregnation. The comparison with Priapus is significant, for the difference between them points to the more primeval nature of the Yezīdí phallic cult. The authenticity of the Holy Angel is one of his most important characteristics. Any religious form that attempts to rid itself of “historical” accretions will tend to gravitate to its authentic archetype (Eliade, p. 418). Thus whereas the humanized god of the Ancient world expresses resistance to the sacral, and hence a departure from authenticity, Milyāk’atē-qanj in this respect is authenticity itself. He does not merely personify his functions, but is himself the very organ. The Holy Angel is imagined only in a phallic form. Convinced that a child could
be conceived only with the blessing of Milyāk’atē-qanǰ, young brides traditionally wore a silver or stone pendant, called kīyār, i.e. “cucumber”, which was shaped like a phallus to symbolize the deity (similar pendants were recorded among archeological items from Ancient Mesopotamia, see Black, Green, p. 152). “Cucumber” is, definitely, a euphemism, as is the deity’s name – “Holy Angel”. At earlier stages, no doubt, the deity may well have had another name, most probably one that pointed more directly to his functions and was therefore formally tabooed later on and replaced by the euphemistic expressions. Milyāk’atē-qanǰ was supposed to cure sterility and to help women conceive a boy. The Yezīdī women turned to him with the following words:

_Ya, Milyāk’atē-qanǰ, wara hawārā min._
_Bar mi rūnī;_  
_Da’w wa risq ba;_  
_Kur vī, qīz vī_

(Informant – Katuna Kajo, 80 years old, Talin region, Armenia).

“Oh Milyāk’atē-qanǰ, help me (to conceive a child),
Impregnate me (lit. “Sit upon me”);
Let me have yogurt, let me have good;
Let me have a son, let me have a daughter.”

According to the same informant (whose data are indirectly substantiated in Adval’s book (Adval, p. 94)), the Yezīdī women would walk to the mountains after the wedding ceremony and make a sacrifice to Milyāk’atē-qanǰ before large phallic-shaped stones. The sacrifice was considered a guarantee of multiple progeny.

Barren women performed a fertility ritual by sitting down on the phallic-shaped stones and making rubbing motions while invoking the deity: _Yā, Milyāk’atē-qanǰ, mi āvis ka_ – “Oh Milyāk’atē qanǰ, make me pregnant” (the same informant). This formula incidentally offers a very special example of verbal magic. In particular, it should be noted that the word āvis (here meaning “pregnant”) is normally applied only to cattle. The proper terms to apply to a human pregnancy are girān, duhālī or hamla. And if such an aischrology really occurred in the verbal part of the rite dedicated to the Holy Angel, this could be one of the reasons for the taboo (on the role of aischrology in the phallic cults see, e.g., Nilsson, p. 453).

A similar rite existed among the Armenians. A woman rubbed her
navel against a large phallic-shaped stone, and then hammered a nail into a stone crack, transferring her ailment to the stone (Lisic’ian, pp. 284-287). Turkic women living in enclaves in the Zangezur region of Armenia used to perform the same rite (ibid., p. 285).

Generally, a stone as an object of Sexualkult is seen in many different cultures: in some, a bride climbs on top of a stone, or a ritual dance, accompanied by obscene gestures, is performed, etc. All such rituals are aimed at curing sterility and ensuring fertility in general (for details see Meyer I, p. 57). Moreover, stone worshipping in this connection cannot be explained exclusively by the logic of imitative magic, but primarily by the fact that a stone was considered a deity’s abode, one of the universalia of the primitive religions (for details see Fraser, pp. 38-39, 185, 273-280). Present day rites of this kind however have more or less lost their original essence, communion with the hierophany. What they reveal instead is secondary perception, the result of the symbol’s degradation to an object of imitative magic.

Odd traces of the phallic cult have been preserved in the Yezidî festival Baran-bardan, “Releasing of Rams”, celebrated on the fortieth day of autumn, i.e. in the beginning of October. The feast is described by the Kurdish writer Arab Shamilov in his novel Šivân-ê kurd (“Kurdish Shepherd”) and later - in his short story “Barbäng” (‘Day-spring’). “This day the whole world is joyful, as if they were celebrating the wedding of their sheep. Young people dance; some of them fight, bubbling over with joy... The shepherds and wranglers (düşivân) are the most exalted ones, as they receive their payment for the whole summer season [on this day]. During the Baran-bardan, they drive ewes into a sheepfold, and then release the rams, which have been grazed separately the whole summer. They do this in order that the sheep will produce their young simultaneously in the spring. The moment the rams are released to the ewes, people start shooting from rifles, as if they wanted to celebrate the wedding of their sheep.” (Ereb Semo, Šivân-ê kurd, p. 37, – apud: Asatrian, p. 64).

“They hang bunches of coloured wool, small bells and amulets on the sheep’s horns and necks – it seems as if the sheep know themselves that this is their wedding: holding their heads high, they jostle each other, then stand quietly for a while, then try to prove themselves again, looking proudly at the shepherds and the gazing folk around. Then young girls take off their kerchiefs and tie them around the sheep’s necks, and young lads come and take them off: in this way they reveal their secrets, for by taking a kerchief of a certain girl, a lad shows his intention to
marry her (the result of their flirtation during the Summer pasture). The girls’ parents look on from afar to see who will take their daughter’s kerchief…” (üemilov, pp. 60-61. See also a brief reference to this feast in Bayazidi, p. 43, 127). Other details of this feast have been described in the ethnographical literature: red apples were speared on the sheep’s horns; their foreheads are decorated with pieces of mirror; young girls bring the rams to the ewes, holding them by their horns (Davreshian, p.77).

Of course, the ceremonies described above are not directly connected with the cult of Milyāk’âtē-qanǰ. Still, to ensure the fertility of the flock and, to a certain extent, that of the young people attending the feast, ample use is made of phallic symbolism: in the indirect means used to deliver kerchiefs to the girls’ chosen fellows; in the way the young girls hold the rams’ horns; in the use of red apples as tokens of defloration and of mirrors to symbolize doubling and fertility, and so on.

In earlier times the rite probably involved people’s active participation in the “wedding” ceremony as well – if not through outright coitus, then at least through ritual (gestural and verbal) obscenity, etc. In Medieval Iran, as G. S. Asatrian has argued, this feast was probably called *gušn-hilišníh, the exact equivalent for which in Classic Armenian was xoy-t’olowt’iwn, i.e. “the releasing of the rams”. The Middle Iranian form cited above can be traced back to OIr. *waršni-hŷdzana- (cf. Av. varšni-haršta- – “die Zulasung der Widder” – see: Bartholomae, p. 1381; Asatrian).

It should be noted that Yezidîsm is a form of syncretic religion, which emerged from a synthesis of highly developed monotheistic religions. Manifestly the specific character of the phallic deity conflicts with the monotheistic idea, and in this context it is not surprising that the whole complex of cults devoted to Milyāk’âtē-qanǰ has been virtually lost by now. Nevertheless, he may well have been a rather influential deity, who initially had wider functions. It is also quite possible that Milyāk’âtē-qanǰ was the women’s deity par excellence, a kind of secret fetish that was concealed formally, of course, from men.
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VII

The Bābī and Bahā'ī Religions
In the history of modern reform movements in the Muslim world, the Bayani religion of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad the Bab (1819-1850), otherwise known as the Babi Movement (the forerunner of today's Baha'i faith), holds a unique place. It is the only movement which consciously and concretely broke away from Islamic beliefs and community and initiated a new prophetic cycle with its own scripture, sense of community, and vision. The Babi religion nevertheless was the product of the religious environment of Shi'i Iran, and was deeply influenced by the inherent esoteric culture and apocalyptic vision embedded in that tradition. Some features of Babi thought may also be traced back through the Shi'i sectarian milieu to religions and heresies of pre-Islamic Iran. Yet, in many respects the Babi movement was a new phenomenon. This novelty can be observed in its social composition and historical development, but more so in the apocalyptic urgency by which it meant to transform the prevailing religion of its time. As the Bab put it, his religion was “a new [prophetic] creation (khalq-i badi‘)” that had come to advance the cycle of human perfection. “The grand cycle is in progress (kawr dar taraqqist)”, he declared at a time when Iran, like the rest of Muslim world, was beginning to experience a sense of despair in the face of Western hegemonic presence and its material and technological advances. The Bab's call for progress offered an endogenous “modern” answer to the crisis of self confidence which had lurked in the political, economic, and moral fabric of the Iranian society.

Such perspective could perhaps be entertained only in an esoteric (batini) world view with apocalyptic dynamics of its own and with historical precedence in movements ranging from Isma'iliyya and Hurufiyya to the Shi'i-Sufi movements of the early modern period. Yet “esoteric” they all remained, at least so far as articulating new prophetic cycles beyond Islam. The idea of “Perfect Man” in Sufi thought perhaps is the closest alternative to the problem of terminal prophecy in Islam. The only exception in recent centuries, however, is the 14th to 17th century Nuqtavi movement and its advancing of the doctrine of a new
“Persian cycle” (dawr-i ‘ajam) which intended to abrogate Muhammad’s mission and terminate Islam.1 Most esoteric texts, whether speculative or popular, however, are externally conforming to the overarching primacy of Islam as a system of norms and references even though internally they may subvert the sacred text to the level that is beyond the pale of accepted Islam. The Shi‘i doctrine of the Imamate, too, provides a sacred continuity through the line of the Imams only within the frame of Islam. Yet, here, too, the apocalyptic Mahdi in the Final Days brings to an end the rule of the shari‘a and effectively ends what may be defined as normative Islam and establishes the post-millennial heavenly order.

What sets the Babi movement apart from this Shi‘i esoteric tradition is that it eventually escapes the binary of inner (batin) versus outer (zahir) scheme, hence setting about to actualize what may be called the progression of the “divine sacred” from the inner truth into the outer reality. This attempt to “reveal” the inner sacred beyond the perimeter of the adapt (khawas) into the world at large, set Babism at once at odds with both the ‘ulama, as guardians of the external world of the shari‘a, and with the guardians of esoteric truth. The Shaykhi school, out of which the Babi movement first emerged, meticulously negotiated the accepted boundaries of the Islamic inner truth and outer reality. The Bayan of the Bab, the most important text of a religion named after it, thus denotes “revelation” (bayan, lit. ‘explanation’) and has a Koranic connotation that implies divulging the secret truth, presumably to all people.2 The Bab applies the term not only to the Bayan, as the sacred scripture of his new religion, but to the entire body of his writings, which he considers as key to the secrets of past scriptures. The existential truth that he reveals is for all people to grasp. It is a direct appeal beyond the medium of the elite, whether the mystical adept or the ‘ulama of the shari‘a.

The Bayan is primarily a manifestation in words, a written text, sig-


2. From the Arabic root b-y-n (‘to be or become plain, to explain, to come out’) thus bayan denoting clearness, manifestation, elucidation, and explanation. The Koranic verse (3: 138) reads; “This is a clear explanation/evidence for people and is a guide and counsel for those who fear God.” The other occurrence (55:4) implies teaching mankind the sacred word: “God the merciful; taught the Qur’an; He created man; taught him to speak/ the explanation (‘allama-hu al-bayan).”
nifying the ancient Middle Eastern and Indo-European preoccupation with the scripture which culminated in the Qur'an. Muhammad's "proof" (hujja) and "evidence" (bayyina) as repeatedly pointed to in the Qur'an is primarily the miracle of his words. This emphasis on the miraculous quality of the words also appears in the writings of the Bab. He not only deliberately imitates the Koranic style in his Arabic writings, but he offers speed in uttering words and verses as the proof of his divine inspiration. Furthermore, he is preoccupied with the cabalistic quality of letters and words. This, too, is part of an ancient esoteric tradition that stretches from ancient Babylonian, Judaic and Greek past to Sufism and folk Shi'ism. The Bab employs the Qur'an, and especially the esoteric reading of it, as a point of reference for creating his own innovative text.

This revelatory quality of the Bayan can be better understood in the context of the Koranic commentaries that the Bab produced throughout his short prophetic career. Esoteric Shi'ism upholds the view that the existing Qur'an is incomplete and has been corrupted, especially on the issue of 'Ali's succession and the legitimate right of the House of 'Ali. The true Qur'an was believed to be in the Heavens and only to be revealed by the Mahdi on the Day of Resurrection. Thus the Bayan of the Bab, who himself was a sayyid (i.e. a descendent from the House of the Prophet), and the entire body of his work, was perceived as an apocalyptic revelation that was meant to bring down the heavenly book in its entirety and offer it to the people as the true test of their loyalty. Hence the term furqan (the separator), which is one of the attributes of the Qur'an, in the writing of the Bab is used for the Bayan as a text that differentiates between the believers and the deniers. The Islamic "occult sciences" (al-'ulum al-ghariba), specifically the cabalistic al-jafr-i jam'i and its corollary, the numerological al-hisab al-jammal, were viewed as tools to discover the apocalyptic secrets of the scripture and to distinguish between the believers and the deniers. Similarly, belief in the

3. At the time of writing the Bayan, the Bab was familiar with the new Persian translation of the New Testament and therefore must have read John's Book of Revelation. Yet, it is doubtful that he was inspired by it in his composition of the Bayan or in the choice of the title. Henry Martyn translated St. John's Book of Apocalypse (or Book of Revelation) as Mukashifat-i Yuhanna. Nowhere in the Bayan does this term occur in any form. For the Bab's familiarity with the NT see A. Amanat, Resurrection and Renewal: the Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850 (Ithaca, 1989), 197-98. For the new translation of the NT see A. Amanat, "Mujtahids and Missionaries: Shi'i Responses to Christian Polemics in the Early Qajar Period," Religion and Society in Qajar Iran, ed. R. Gleave, London & New York, 2005, pp. 247-69.
magical quality of the awrad (incantations) and adhkar (prayers) put great emphasis on the recitation and chanting of the divine words. The talismanic images and composition (and by extension their calligraphic production) were of equal significance. As evident in the writings of the Bab, including the Bayan, the oral and written texts are not exclusively, or even primarily, viewed for their functional value as means of communication. As a meditative tool, remembrance (dhikr) in the Babi writings, as in Sufi traditions, served an entirely different purpose of intuitively revealing to the reader the divine sacred. The author of the divine words, in this case the Bab, as well as those who utter them, all become part of the magical practice of the incantation (dhikr). The fact that the Bab calls himself the dhikr implies that he is an inseparable part of his own text. This discourse between the text, the author, and the reader is one of the remarkable features of the Babi writings.

The Bayan as a discursive scripture

To better appreciate the innovative character of the Bayan and its place in the Babi corpus we must first look at the circumstances of its authoring and highlight some of its pertinent themes. The Bayan was viewed by the Bab and his followers as well as by his opponents as the most consistent exposition of the Babi theology, law, and world view. First started in 1263/1847 in Maku, where the Bab was incarcerated in a frontier fortress in northwestern Azarbaijan, the Bayan received relatively wide publication within the Babi circles even during the Bab’s own short life. Before his execution in 1266/1850 his followers possessed copies of the yet incomplete Bayan and already were speculating on the identity of the Messiah promised by the Bab. The so-called “He Whom God Shall Manifest (man uzhurullah)” had received an extraordinary preferential treatment in the Bayan as the forthcoming “manifestation” who will complete, alter, enforce and even abrogate the laws of the Bayan.

4. This also corresponds to the NT notion of logos as in John’s gospel.
Yet, as a text consciously conceived as a scripture, the Bayan barely provides a comprehensive social program or even a coherent vision of the communal life. Rather, it is a curious blend of speculative theology with shari’a-orientated legal and pragmatic instructions. Its organization is governed by a sacred numerological order that is replicated beyond the text in the community of the believers and further through the entire divinely-ordained universe. The Bayan was originally perceived of as having 19 units (sg. wahid), each consisting of 19 chapters (sg. bab) to constitute the total of 361 chapters (19 x 19 =361). According to the abjad numerical system the number 361 equals the Koranic phrase “all things” (kullu shay’), a highly charged mystical notion often rendered in Shi’ite speculative Literature as the Being (wujud).

In reality, the Bayan’s divine structure remained incomplete. For uncertain reasons the Bab did not proceed beyond chapter 10 of unit 9 of his book. He may have abandoned it because of lack of inspiration prompted by captivity, homesickness, and grief (huzn), sentiments that mark the writings of the Maku period. No doubt the looming threats of harsher incarceration and even execution were in his mind especially after the 1848 inquisition in Tabriz when he was interrogated by the ‘ulama, humiliated, and physically punished. Later, in his testimonial will the Bab assigned the task of completing the remaining units of the Bayan to his successor, if suitable conditions prevailed. This was interpreted by later Babis as the task of the He Whom God Shall Manifest.

Baha’i apathy toward the study of the Babi texts is particularly disheartening given the immense place that Bayan holds in the evolution of the Baha’i law and outlook. As late as the 1860’s in Edirne, Baha’ullah in the Muslim tradition of addressing the Qur’an, referred to the Bayan as “the mother book” (umm al-kitab). The impact of the Bayan on the Babi-Azali world view is also worth attention. It can be argued that the teachings of the Bayan influenced Babi activists during the Constitutional Revolution. The early Azali treatment of the Bayan was largely in line with the Islamic notion of scripture as a source of the shari’a, as for instance in the writings of Mirza Yahya Subh Azal. A vivid exception is the Ta’rif-i Shari’at-i Bayan, a modernistic commentary presumably authored by Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani which aims to reconcile the Babi teaching with the ideas of the Enlightenment and with the positivistic philosophy then in vogue.

6. See for example Qur’an 21:34. See also Amanat, Resurrection, 191-93.

7. Bayan (Tehran, n.d.) appendix p. 340. The Arabic Bayan, written at the same time period as the Persian version, and with identical structure, was completed up to the end of the unit 11. Based on the Arabic version, Subh Azal added twenty eight units to the Persian Bayan which brought it to the end of unit 11. He left the rest incomplete for the time of glory (‘izza), as the Bab have requested. Baha’ullah’s Iqan and later Aqdas are both viewed by the early Baha’is as addendum to the Bayan.
The Bab produced two versions of the *Bayan*, one in Persian and another in Arabic, presumably during the same time period. Though they are not entirely compatible, they were intended to serve the same purpose. Whereas the Arabic *Bayan*, a summery of the Babi doctrine, was aimed at emulating the Arabic Qur’an, the Persian *Bayan* intended to offer all believers a direct access to the canon of the Babi theology and law free from any human intermediary and linguistic obstacles. This drive toward “democratization” of the scripture, a reminiscent of vernacular translations of the Bible during the Reformation, was in sharp contrast to the Islamic learned culture of the time and the Shi‘i ‘ulama’s textual monopoly. Even by the middle decades of the 19th century, very few works of religious scholarship were written in Persian. The principal of *ijtihad* further reinforced the legal monopoly of the dominant Usuli elite and in effect made the lay access to the sources of the sacred law more difficult. The ‘ulama’s reluctance to employing Persian carried a certain cultural bias in favor of Arabic as the language of religious scholarship. Persian works by the ‘ulama were not rare, ranging from Islamic fundamental creeds to the literature of Muharram eulogy and anti-Sufi and anti-missionary polemics. Yet, by the time the *Bayan* was composed, there was little public access to any sacred text, including any Persian translation of the Qur’an. The printed Persian translation of the New Testament, first published in 1815 and reprinted three times by 1834, was the first widely printed scripture available to the Persian-speaking public. The *Bayan*, which intended to address this cultural lacuna, may have been influenced by the message and tone of the New Testament, given numerous references in the text to Jesus and the Gospels. Yet in the main, the *Bayan* came in a long line of such inspirational literature either of Sufi or apocalyptic character, including Isma‘ili, Hurufi and Nuqtavi texts.

The fact that the Bab recommended the printing of the *Bayan* and other Babi writings only confirms his intention to make his works more widely available. In the *Bayan* he specifies:

About printing (*chap*) and what is ordained. The summary of this chapter is that printing is permitted in the *Bayan* and whatever is written under its wing and according to it, until the manifestation of

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8. The most widely used work of the Shi‘i law available to the general public, for instance, was still Shaykh Baha’ al-Din ‘Amili’s *Jami‘i ‘Abbasi*, a *fiqh* compendium commissioned by Shah ‘Abbas I in the early 17th century.
He Whom God Shall Manifest. By that time if all [people] are empowered in a manner that they could preserve the divine words in a good writing hand, he then will order it [to be done in long hand]. Otherwise, whatever necessitates his generosity and grace, he will permit it. And after that there will be no excuse for any single person before God for not having a [copy of the] Bayan so as to remember He Whom God Shall Manifest. It is [to be produced] in the best of hands, not like what is customary today, to the extent that they print whatever bad writing they can lay their hands on. It has reached a stage that the gift price of the Qur’an has been reduced to 28 nukhud of silver. If it was not out of concern for the poor [financial] capacity of most believers, no doubt this [i.e. printing] would not have been permitted but now [i.e. in future] that all live in the shadow of the essence of God’s grace, by his permission whoever can write the Bayan best, it is favorable for his own being rather than possessing even a well printed copy.9

The above passage demonstrates the Bab’s pragmatic recognition of printing as an invaluable tool of mass communication at the wake of a new era of greater literacy, even at the expense of condoning the decline of his beloved art of calligraphy. Yet the same passage quoted above, typical of the Bayan, betrays some of the peculiarities of the Bab’s style, which made its comprehension difficult even for the educated believers. His fascination with speed in uttering “verses” (ayat), no doubt in the manner of the fragmented style of the Qur’an, is frequently offered in the Bab’s writings as proof of his divine inspiration. Preoccupation with speed as a prophetic miracle nonetheless seriously affected the Bab’s style and hindered its public appeal. His Persian is often hurried, convoluted, and repetitive and as far as grammar is concerned, it leaves much to be desired.

Peculiarities of the Bayan, which makes the text at times disjointed and even incoherent, at least by the standards of conventional Persian, nevertheless betrays a certain degree of originality. It can be argued that the Bayan’s inspirational style was shaped in the form of a discourse with an amanuensis, or more likely, as expressions of the Bab’s inner dialogue with his believers. Frequent use of intimate second person singular and colloquial pronoun un (‘that’), instead of proper an, and similar features of colloquial speech, also indicate a desire to break away

from the formalities of classical Persian so as to incorporate features of the spoken language. His unhappy experience with the madrasa education and his consistent resistance to conventional learning may also have contributed to his improvised style. Many instances in the Bayan, as in his other works, betrays an artistic search for a new medium of expression, in language as in calligraphy and in talismanic images, mostly in his favorite shikasta (broken) style.

Yet, this use of plain Persian in the Bayan is often blended with advanced, and at times obscure, technical terms from hikmat and fiqh literature that carry complex textual references to philosophical and esoteric Shi‘ism. This concoction of colloquial and technical diction, with its philosophical and legal references, once wrapped in the Bab's liturgical style, gives the Bayan a certain surreal quality which may best be called “post modern”, in the vogue of our time. It is this intuitive quality that invites the reader to experience with the author the esoteric dimension of the text; and through the text experience its unifying context in the external universe; a context which becomes readable through the numerological key of verses, words, letters and numbers.

This numerological organizing principal of the Bayan in its external expression divides mankind into the believers and non-believers, or in the Babi idiom, into the letters of the light and the letters of the fire (huruf-i nur wa huruf-i nar). The cornerstone of this communal order is the “point of the Bayan” (nuqta-yi Bayan), or the “primal point” (nuqta-yi ʿula), associated with the Bab himself. Emanated from this primal point is the building block of the community, the letters (huruf) of believers, who are to be organized in words and chapters, identical with the structure of the Bayan. The eighteen “Letters of the Living”, as the Bab designated his early believers, together with the primal point, constituted the foundation of the Babi community and its revitalizing force. The units that are to be generated by the Letters, were to create the Babi community symbolically, the so called “all things” (kullu shay’). The same divine principle is also at work in the organization of time. The new solar Babi calendar of 365 days consisted of 19 months of 19 days each plus four extra days known as the days of ha. The New Year is to be celebrated at the vernal equinox, the Iranian festival of Nowruz. Through numerological equivalents the Bab thus defines as a text the Babi community and the Babi time, a symbolic order that is waiting to be read.

This Neo-Platonic binary system of microcosm and macrocosm, long enduring in the Islamic esoteric circles, is also evident in the Bab’s pre-occupation with talismans and emulates, which are recommended in the
Bayan. The production of a series of pentagram figures known as hayakil and of circular tables known as dawa’ir were intended to connect the sacred text with its human and universal context. This esoteric symbolism may be viewed as an expression of worldly empowerment and a desire for controlling the material surrounding by thaumaturgic manipulation of words and numbers. In its popularized application, the charms (sg. harz) and talismans (sg. tilism) possess protective and remedial qualities which shield their wearers against bad omens, whether physical or metaphysical. The emphasis on this magical power of the words is not accidental. At the time, we may speculate, the Bab, his followers and countrymen had many causes to aspire for a measure of control over intrusive forces that appeared in their surroundings. Among them we may include the Europeans.

Indeed the bipolar division between the believers and non-believers in the Bayan is further complicated, or perhaps modified, by the presence of a new category of people, namely the Christians. The “letters of the Gospel (huruf-i injil or huruf-i alif)” may primarily be read as a reference to the Europeans, towards whom the Bayan remains essentially ambivalent. They are a potential threat to the land of the Bayan, and therefore are to be expelled if they pose an actual danger to the security of the community. This assertion may be taken as a relic of the long-standing Islamic prohibitions against the entry of the infidels into the abode of Islam, reinforced here, no doubt, by the actual menace of European presence. This threat became more tangible to the Bab in Maku, where he witnessed Russian advances in the north after two rounds of war with Iran. Between 1805 and 1828 the Persian defeats resulted in major loss of territory, a sizable population of the émigrés (muhajirin) in Azerbaijan, and a great loss of Islamic confidence and state prestige. Earlier in his career as a trader in the southern port of Bushehr on the Persian Gulf, the Bab also witnessed the growing British commercial and military presence in his homeland, the Fars province.

Yet the Bab’s entrepreneurial background partially overcame his understandable concerns for foreign presence. He states in the Bayan that the letters of the Gospel are not to be entirely avoided, especially if they are “merchants and engage in useful professions.” In these cases they are allowed to settle among the believers, even though trade with them is subject to some regulations. Moreover, Europeans are praised in the Bayan for their demeanor and public conduct, their cleanliness, and

10. Ibid. 7:10 (252). See also MacEoin, Rituals, 14-21.
technological advances. Reference to book printing and regular postal service in Europe may also be seen as his recognition of the importance of mass communication in the spread of his religion. He seems to be anticipating the emergence of the press as the defining character of a modern national community.

On another level, the Bab’s frequent references in the Bayan to Jesus and his mission, demonstrates a deep engagement in the figure of Christ whom he rediscovered in the printed Persian translation of the New Testament. His preoccupation evidently goes beyond the Muslim polemical response to the Christian missionaries on the validity of the Gospels and absorbs the Bab at a personal level. He identifies with the story of Jesus and with his forbearance, suffering and sacrifice. Such an affinity seems to be particularly fitting to the Bab’s nonviolent disposition and his denouncing in the Bayan of resorting to violence as means of spreading his message. Desire for peaceful growth, in contrast to the dominant paradigm of jihad and military conquest, placed the word, rather than the sword, at the center of Bayan’s engagement with power.11

In challenging the prevailing norms of his time, the Bab also encouraged greater inclusion of women in the Babi community. He refers to them in the Bayan with the talismanic name of “possessors of the circles” (dhawat-i dawa’ir), presumably a gender signifier in contradistinction to men as pentagram frames (hayakil). Both sexes are needed for the building of the primeval letters of the Babi community. Reaffirming women’s legal personality similar to the Islamic law, the Bayan further facilitates more communication between the sexes and imposes fewer gender restrictions though it does not altogether escape the patriarchal mores of its time. An indication of the Bab’s favorable view of women’s public role can be observed in the case of Fatima Zarrin-Taj Baraghani, better known as Qurrat al-‘Ayn and Tahira. The Bab conferred on her the title of Tahira (‘the pure’) in defiance of the charges of immodesty which were brought against her because of her attempt to remove her facial veil. Furthermore, he recognized her equal rank among the Babi primal rank of the Letters of the Living, an unprecedented position in the Bab’s communal sacred scheme.12

11. Bayan, 7:6 (245). The Bayan even goes so far as prohibiting the believers from carrying weapons of any sort, an aversion no doubt reflecting the level of violence the Bab witnessed in his urban surroundings and at a national scale.
12. It is questionable however whether the Bab condoned Tahira’s emergence after 1848 as the prime leader of the radical wing of the movement during the Badasht gathering.
Other features of an endogenous communal awareness are evident in the Bayan’s designation of Shiraz, the Bab’s birthplace and the capital of the Fars province, as the “mother of all cities” (umm al-qur’a’) and a place of pilgrimage for all believers. This significant shift of the center of the sacred from Mecca to Shiraz, especially after the Bab’s disillusioning Hajj pilgrimage in 1261/1845, displays a doctrinal autonomy that sets him apart from the prevailing Islamic identity of his time. Even though the shadow of the Shi‘i culture was never lifted from the Bayan, there was an urge for what may be called a constructive disengagement from Islam by inventing a new Bayani shari‘a tradition. A number of revolutionary injunctions in the Bayan, including obliteration of all non-Bayani books (mahw-i kutub), aimed at that doctrinal break. The Bayan unabashedly commands the believers to destroy all books that are not “in support of God’s faith (amr Allah) and His religion.” The Bab’s aversion towards Islamic madrasa schooling, which he considered as a futile exercise in sophistry and fallacy, may be responsible for this ruling. Yet the severity of this apocalyptic injunction has been softened, as virtually in all similar cases, by placing the final judgment at the desecration of the He Whom God Shall Manifest.13 It is as though the Bab viewed his own Bayan, and the religion it represented, as a transitory stage towards establishing a more mature and balanced social order in the future. How near a future remains a mystery but most assertions in the Bayan implies an impending appearance of the Babi Messiah. It is as though the Bab’s disillusionment with prospects of mass conversion and his own incarceration and sufferings persuaded him to project into the future the creating of a utopian order.

The messianic hope for this utopian order to come did not diminish what may be called the divine absolutism of the Bayan, and by implication, the mystic-theocratic order it envisioned. The Bab’s political vision no doubt acknowledged the believers’ collective responsibility, even collective leadership and a shared destiny for the Bayani community. The Bab’s own peaceful and nonviolent disposition was also inclined towards delegation of power to a hierarchical leadership. Yet, the Bayan even more than the Qur’an required from the believer the total submission to the will of a monistic and omnipotent God. Every page of the Bayan acknowledges the all-embracing power of this divine source and man’s sheer powerlessness before him. In this community of hermeneutical symbiosis, the Bab does not arrogate great power to the

13. Ibid. 6:6 (198-200).
Religious Texts in Iranian Languages

'ulama or to the kings, though both parties do appear in the Bayan. The ultimate power rests with the unknowable truth (haqq) that only emanates in the mirror of all people (khalq), but not through the media of the kings and the priests. Rather, he manifests himself through successive prophetic "manifestations" (zuhurat) that appear at the renewal of each cycle and will appear in future cycles of a progressive course of divine revelation. They are in effect the masters of the universe as far as they actuate the unequivocal divine will at their own time.

This unsettling landscape of absolute theocracy in the Bayan, however, is sharply modified even undermined, by frequent emphasis on the changing will of God and the impermanence of human conditions. This divine will, the Bayan insists, requires successive manifestation and frequent change of the shari' a according to the needs of the time, the idea which is at heart of the Babi theory of prophecy. The laws of the Bayan itself, the Bab constantly reminded the believers, will be subject to abrogation upon the appearance of He Whom God Shall Manifest. The believers were repeatedly forewarned that they should anticipate, and indeed welcome, this Messiah's impending advent. Reflecting on his own persecution, the Bab admonishes his own believers from opposing any claim even if it may be false, lest they may impede the appearance of the true Messiah. This state of perpetual manifestation borders on the notion of a pantheistic prophecy whereby any human being can claim to be a manifestation of God.¹⁴

This democratization of the sacred is one of the most important aspects of the Bayan and directly corresponds to the Babi theory of progressive revelation. The very apocalyptic dynamism that the Bab set in motion was a quest for future human improvement. The ever-growing "tree of truth" (shajara-yi haqiqat) with its seasonal turns, a favorite imagery of the Bab, demanded that the course of prophetic revelation continue and even accelerate with the ultimate aim of human spiritual perfection. This perfection, as the Bayan alludes, comes with He Whom God Shall Manifest, who is not only a person but a state of human development.

The Bayan presents a fully fledged version of the Babi theory of prophecy. Like the Qur'an, it considers and recognizes the Abrahamic chain of prophets from Adam on and traces among them a certain historical continuity and doctrinal affinity. Yet unlike normative Islam that

¹⁴. Not surprisingly, after the execution of the Bab the same spirit of democratic epiphany came to haunt the distraught Babi community for decades.
considers Muhammad as the “seal of the prophets” and the end of the prophetic revelation, the Bab, and especially in the Bayan, views divine revelation communicated through the prophets, or rather divine “manifestations”, as an open-ended and unstoppable process. In an ingenious symbolic interoperation of the eschatological doctrine of Resurrection (qiyyamat) in Islam, the Bab considers each resurrection as the end of an old prophetic cycle and the beginning of a new one. The “tree of truth” which in its Babi context stands for divine interaction with humankind, goes through seasonal turns. Each prophetic revelation and religious tradition that it generates has its own cycle with spring of new birth, summer of development, autumn of coming to fruition, and winter of decay and death. The end of each cycle in this theory of progressive prophecy does not terminate the life of the “tree of truth”. Rather in a spiral process of cyclical progression it leads to its growth and further maturation. The Bayani manifestation, in the Bab’s view, is one more in the chain of gradual perfection of human truth (or human wisdom: ‘ilm), but with an important exception. The Bayan seems to suggest that the advent of He Whom God Shall Manifest is not merely another cycle of prophecy, like those of the past and even that of the Bab. Rather, it is a divine manifestation that brings mankind into its full maturation and free from any future prophets, and subsequently, of any shari’a-orientated tradition.

Conclusion

As a text which meant to be a “revelation” (or apocalypse), divulging the esoteric meaning of the Qur’an (and past prophetic revelations as a whole), the Bayan came to mark the final stage of the Babi break with Islam. In attempting to establish a new relationship between humankind and the divinity, between the profane and the sacred, the Babi movement in a way put an end to the long held Sufi-Shi’i taboo of differentiating the esoteric from the exoteric. By declaring an independent cycle of revelation, the Bayan demonstrated a genuine desire to generate in content and language a new scripture. Yet it did not free itself from the very Islamic (or monotheistic) shari’a model that it set out to abrogate in the first place. In contrast to the Islamic clerical emphasis on Arabic, the Bab’s opting for Persian as the sacred language signaled a budding sense of national awareness. Its message of cyclical yet progressive renewal was rooted in the Shi’i as well as the Manichaean and Zoroastri-
an traditions. Both these features, the new language and the message of renewal, presented a discourse of indigenous modernity unique to modern Iranian religious experience.

It may be argued that it was only through revealing the esoteric culture of Shi’i Islam that a self-educated lay like the Bab could improvise a crucial crossing from the traditional religion to an endogenous form of modernity. The essentially progressive, rather than regressive, historical perspective presented in the Bayan offered revolutionary potentials for moral and material transformation of the Iranian society, potentials which remained unfulfilled even in the twentieth century.
The Hidden Words of Bahá’ulláh

Amin Banani

Uttered by Bahá’ulláh in 1858 while striding on the banks of the Tigris near Baghdad and taken down by his amanuenses, The Hidden Words (Kalemat-e Maknūne) is unique among the voluminous Bahá’í scriptures. It is a collection of brief ethical injunctions and mystical visions: 71 in Arabic and 83 in Persian. In the minds of the early Bábís, among whom The Hidden Words circulated in manuscript form, the title connected the Words with the Shí‘í tradition of Mošḥaf-e Fā’eme, a collection of spiritual cantos that were supposedly whispered in the ears of Fatima by an angel to console her upon the death of her father, the prophet Muhammad. No text of these cantos exists today, and it is possible that it never existed. Thus the tenuous connection with Twelver Shí‘í traditions in the minds of the early Bábís is a case of apocryphal tradition of a text.

It has become customary to categorize the writings of Bahá’ulláh during the period of his sojourn in Baghdad (1853-63) as “mystical”. A tacit assumption behind this oversimplified categorization is that Bahá’ulláh underwent a mental evolution, going through a mystical phase before becoming a visionary builder of a new world order. Upon closer scrutiny both the categorization and the assumption it is based upon prove to be too facile. A major work of this period, a historical-hermeneutical treatise, The Book of Certitude (Ketāb-e iqān, 1862), is anything but mystical in its clarity of exposition and directness of style. And The Hidden Words, for all its brevity and the inclusion of certain allusive, mystical passages, may be seen to contain the germs of Bahá’ulláh’s integrated spiritual-ethical, as well as social-political, model for a future society.

In the Arabic introduction to the Kalemat-e Maknūne Bahá’ulláh provides the key to the manifold hidden facets of this work:

“This is that which hath descended from the realm of glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, and revealed unto the Prophets of old. We have taken the essence thereof and clothed it in the garment
of brevity, as a token of grace unto the righteous, that they may stand faithful unto the Covenant of God, may fulfill in their lives His trust, and in the realm of spirit obtain the gem of divine virtue."

It is immediately clear that Bahá’u'lláh intends to provide a link between the received wisdom of the past and the moral-ethical imperatives guiding modern man. What is timeless in the past is revived in the present and built upon for the future.

Although this paper focuses primarily on the formal aspects of the Persian verses of *The Hidden Words*, some introductory words on the contents of the whole work are in order. Close analysis of the text shows that it contains, in highly compressed form, the seeds of Bahá’u'lláh’s principles for regeneration of the individual and society as revealed in his later texts. The mystical vision of the human soul attaining its ultimate goal of transcendence is related to the precepts of social equality, political democracy and economic justice.

Any discussion of the literary form of a sacred religious traditional text evokes a set of familiar problems. Since the Bahá’í Faith developed from the cultural matrix of Islam, one should note the precedence of this issue in that context. Early debates about the originality of the style of the Koran led to the concept of *ejâz* or the miraculous inimitability. Taken to its logical conclusion, this concept leads to the perceptually ludicrous and doctrinally untenable conclusion that God is exclusively Arabophone, but this does not appear to have bothered most devout Muslims. In marked contrast to this view, and perhaps to forestall any such tendencies among his followers, Bahá’u’lláh makes no claim of *ejâz* for his writings. In fact, in *The Hidden Words* (Arabic 67) he says clearly:

"...All that I have revealed unto thee with the tongue of power, and have written for thee with the pen of might, hath been in accordance with thy capacity and understanding, not with My state and melody of My voice."

This may be taken as a definition of revelation in Bahá’í doctrine as a form of language comparable to the language of mankind and not to

2. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
that of God. It is therefore natural that it should be influenced by human speech.

Seen in this light the formal roots of some parts of *The Hidden Words*, especially those in Arabic, may be found in Islamic homiletic traditions such as the *Nahj al-Balaghe* (attributed to 'Ali) and even more so in the *Hadís-e Qodsí*. It is more difficult generically to isolate the Persian parts of *The Hidden Words* and to identify the provenance of their formal features. While they belong entirely within the cultural domain of Persian literature, the overall texture of the work far surpasses any traditional genre in its complexity, variety and originality. In some verses of the Persian *Hidden Words* we can discern an affinity with the genre of *andarz-náme* (Book of Advice), which has strong precedence in Sasanian times and may go back as far as the Parthian era; and both the *saj* (rhymed prose) style as well as the aphoristic tone of certain passages recall the *Golestán* of Sa‘dí.

The very opening of the Persian part of *The Hidden Words*, as Professor Frank Lewis has observed, reads almost like a catalogue of classical motifs:

"O YE PEOPLE THAT HAVE MINDS TO KNOW AND EARS TO HEAR!

The first call of the Beloved is this: O mystic nightingale! Abide not but in the rose-garden of the spirit. O messenger of the Solomon of love! Seek thou no shelter except in the Sheba of the well-beloved, and O immortal phoenix! dwell not save on the mount of faithfulness. Therein is thy habitation, if on the wings of thy soul thou soarest to the realm of the infinite and seekest to attain thy goal."4


Baha’ullah’s true poetic gift is evident in this passage, not just his musical handling of the familiar tropes of Persian classical literature, but also the way in which he imbeds in the subtext of The Hidden Words motifs that have profound cultural associational resonance for any literate Persophone. The hodhod (hoopoe) of the Solomons of love immediately activates a chain of associations with the Conference of the Birds of ‘Attār and the corpus of Qeşşas al-Anbīyā’; as does the mention of ‘anqā’ upon the mountain of Qāf, which resonates with the Simorgh of both ‘Attār and Ferdowsī. In the 7th Persian verse of The Hidden Words, which begins with “O Son of Love” (Ey Pesar-e Hobh),5 there is an even more resonant allusion to the me’rāj, the night-journey of Muhammad. Hobb is the root of Habib, the sobriquet bestowed on the prophet Muhammad, and the mention of rafraf, cushions [of clouds] evokes the highest level to which Muhammad ascended. It ends with the startling assertion that by paying heed to what has been revealed by the pen of Baha’ullah one may even go two steps beyond the terminus of the me’rāj.

“O SON OF LOVE
Thou art but one step away from the glorious heights above and from the celestial tree of love. Take thou one pace and with the next advance into the immortal realm and enter the pavilion of eternity. Give ear then to that which hath been revealed by the pen of glory.”6

What is remarkable is the variety, complexity and novelty of the fabric of the Persian verses, woven of familiar threads. To begin with, despite a surface similarity of style, they cannot be fitted into any one generic mold. They range from clear and unambiguous pieces of advice (andarz) for living a virtuous, chaste and pious life, to mystical visions of the human soul transcending the limitations of this life, to symbolic and allegorical narratives that may have historical allusions, to rhapsodic passages that are song-like in tone, to stern admonitions to the heedless.

rich, the unjust ruler and the thoughtless neighbor. Some are spoken with the voice of God, some clearly with Bahá’u'lláh’s own voice and some with an impersonal voice.

The combination of mystical exhortation and practical ethical advice, which we find in the 3rd Persian verse of *The Hidden Words*, is also characteristic of several others and defies the simplistic characterization of the text as “mystical”. It evokes an otherworldly vision with a sober, worldly moderation, walking the mystic path with practical feet, so to speak, still firmly planted on the ground.

“O FRIEND!

In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love, and from the nightingale of affection and desire loosen not thy hold. Treasure the companionship of the righteous and eschew all fellowship with the ungodly.”

In number 5 there is a succinct rule for the cultivation of healthy human relations.

“O SON OF DUST

Verily I say unto thee: Of all men the most negligent is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance himself over his brother. Say, O brethren! Let deeds, not words, be your adorning.”

Number 18 is one of several of the Persian verses in *The Hidden Words* in which Bahá’u’lláh makes a not very oblique allusion to his own station as the Supreme Manifestation expected by the Bábí community.

7. Ibid., p. 23.
8. Ibid., pp. 23-4.
“O YE DWELLERS IN THE HIGHEST PARADISE!
Proclaim unto the children of assurance that within the realm of holiness, nigh unto the celestial paradise, a new garden hath appeared, round which circle the denizens of the realm on high and the immortal dwellers of the exalted paradise. Strive, then, that ye may attain that station, that ye may unravel the mysteries of love from its wind-flowers and learn the secret of divine and consummate wisdom from its eternal fruits. Solaced are the eyes of them that enter and abide therein!” 9

آی اهل فردوس برین
اهل یقین را اخبار نمایید که در فضای قدس قرب رضوان رواة جدیدی ظاهر گشته و جمیع اهل عالیان و هیاکل خلد برین طائف حوال آن گشته اند پس جهادی نمایید تا بآن مقام درآید و حقائق اسرار عشق را از شفاییش جوئید و جمع حکمتیا بالغه اجدید را از اثر باقیه اش ببابید قرّت ابصار الذين هم دخلوا فيه آمين

Number 19 is an evocation of a mystic gathering and a primordial covenant.

“O MY FRIENDS
Have ye forgotten that true and radiant morn, when in those hallowed and blessed surroundings ye were all gathered in My presence beneath the shade of the tree of life, which is planted in the all-glorious paradise? Awe-struck ye listened as I gave utterance to these three most holy words: O friends! prefer not your will to Mine, never desire that which I have not desired for you, and approach Me not with lifeless hearts, defiled with worldly desires and cravings. Would ye but sanctify your souls, ye would at this present hour recall that place and those surroundings, and the truth of My utterance should be made evident unto all of you.”10

9. Ibid., p. 27.
10. Ibid., pp. 27-8.
The Hidden Words of Baha’u'llah

Numbers 48 and 74 are clear assertions of social equality and its corollary, political democracy. Numbers 49, 53 and 54 set forth the principle of economic justice by reminding the rich of their moral responsibility and entrusting to them the care of the poor.

"O YE RICH ONES ON EARTH! The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease."

11. Ibid., p. 30.
12. Ibid., p. 41.
Numbers 62 and 63 are powerful condemnations of oppression and tyranny.

"O OPPRESSORS ON EARTH!
Withdraw your hands from tyranny, for I have pledged Myself not to forgive any man’s injustice. This is My covenant which I have irrevocably decreed in the preserved tablet and sealed it with My seal of glory.”

Number 77 is a narration of a symbolic event, which may have a historic imprint but carries also a timeless echo of some of Sohravardi’s visionary recitals.

"O SON OF JUSTICE!
In the night-season the beauty of the immortal Being hath repaired from the emerald heights of fidelity unto the Sadratol-Montahā, and wept with such a weeping that the concourse on high and the dwellers of the realm above wailed at His lamenting. Whereupon there was asked, Why the wailing and weeping? He made reply: As bidden I waited expectant upon the hill of faithfulness, yet inhaled not from them that dwell on earth the fragrance of fidelity. Then summoned to return I beheld, and lo! certain doves of holiness were sore tried within the claws of the dogs of earth. Thereupon the Maid of heaven hastened forth unveiled and resplendent from Her mystic mansion, and asked of their names, and all were told but one. And when urged, the first letter thereof was uttered, whereupon the dwellers of the celestial chambers rushed forth out of their habitation of glory. And whilst the second letter was pronounced they fell down, one and all, upon the dust. At that moment a voice was heard from the innermost shrine: ‘Thus far and no further.’ Verily we bear witness to that which they have done and now are doing.”

13. Ibid., p 44.
In numbers 80, 81 and 82 we hear the “practical footsteps on solid ground”. These verses are exhortations to useful labor, fruitful endeavor and avoidance of idleness and sloth.

“O MY SERVANT!
The basest of men are they that yield no fruit on earth. Such men are verily counted as among the dead, nay better are the dead in the sight of God than those idle and worthless souls.”

“O MY SERVANT!
The best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend upon themselves and upon their kindred for the love of God, the Lord of all worlds.”

15. Ibid., pp. 51.
No words can convey the rhetorical richness of Bahá’u’lláh’s *The Hidden Words* and the force of ethical imperatives better than his own conclusion:

“The mystic and wondrous Bride, hidden ere this beneath the veiling of utterance, hath now, by the grace of God and His divine favor, been made manifest even as the resplendent light shed by the beauty of the Beloved. I bear witness, O friends! that the favor is complete, the argument fulfilled, the proof manifest and the evidence established. Let it now be seen what your endeavors in the path of detachment will reveal. In this wise hath the divine favor been fully vouchsafed unto you and unto them that are in heaven and on earth. All praise to God, the Lord of all Worlds.”

Persian language in the Literature of Bahā’ī Worship

Shapour Rasekh

Introduction

Worship is an essential part of all religions, and prayer as a mode of cultic act is one of the most frequent responses to the sacred, to the transcendent power or being.

The Bāb-Bahā’ī religions offer a great number of prayers and other worship materials of various types (ṣalāt, do‘ā, monājāt and kotbe). These are diverse in content and form, many in Arabic, some in Persian, and still fewer in Turkish. These prayers and other materials enrich considerably the existing Persian literature in the field, but at the same time are influenced in their form and content by the Persian language and its past mystical heritage.

There exist a good number of collections of Bahā’ī prayers published in Persian, Arabic, English and other languages; but no compilation containing all of them is so far available.1

Bahā’ī prayers and worship texts are not written only by the cofounders of the Bahā’ī faith, the Bāb and Bahā’u’llāh. Bahā’u’llāh’s son and successor ‘Abdu’l-Bahā has also produced a large number of prayers in Arabic, Persian and to a lesser extent Turkish. A few prayers in both Persian and Arabic were also written by Shoghi Effendi, the late leader of the Bahā’ī faith.

Two sources of Baha’i prayers

Since the Babi-Baha’i religions are born in Iran within the Islamic (Shi’ite) world, one can assume that they were influenced, as far as the literature of worship is concerned, not only by the Islamic tradition (starting from the Koran and continuing with the words of the Shi’ite Imams), and its continuation in the prayers left by the eminent Sufi masters, but also by Zoroastrian worship materials.

It should also be noted that Baha’i prayers by both Baha’u’llah and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are deeply rooted in the classical Persian literature. A great number of terms used in especially the Sufi literature are reproduced in the Baha’i prayers and in the Baha’i literature in general, sometimes with a slightly different meaning.

Like the rest of the Baha’i literature, Baha’i prayers use a good variety of sanaye-e badì’ (rhetoric) for the embellishment of the language. Extensive use is also made of images and metaphors, particularly in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Writings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prayers have a particular musicality; they take benefit of rhythm and even rhyme, reminding us sometime of the famous Käje-‘Abdollâh Anšârî’s monâjâts.

Diversity of Baha’i prayers

Baha’i literature of worship includes the obligatory ritual prayer in Arabic (salat), many do’âs (asking a favour from God) mostly in Arabic and several hundreds monâjâts (dialogue with God) together with a large portion of Persian texts. One should add to this list, a great number of kotbes often to be found at the beginning of a letter or a book, expressing praise of God and thanksgiving without addressing God directly. These are for the most part in Arabic but some are in Persian and written in a highly literary style.

The monâjâts can be divided into two categories:

2. See for example: Sahife-ye Sajjadiyye, which contains over 50 prayers by Imam Zeyn ol-‘Abedin, and Ad’iyye-ye Serr, which includes prayers from Imam Sâdeq and Imam Bâqer. Most of these prayers have been translated into Persian and also commented. See Dr. Z. Safa, History of Persian literature Vol. 5/1, Teheran 1362/1983, pp. 252-253.

General prayers and
Occasional prayers related to some particular circumstances.

The first category covers all the various purposes assigned to prayer, from expression of love and thanksgiving to penitence (imploring God’s forgiveness), to petition for some bounty for oneself or others, asking protection and refuge. In addition to these “personal themes”, Bahá’í prayers address also collective issues, for example requesting God’s assistance for the promotion of peace and unity of mankind, elimination of prejudices, and so on.

Occasional prayers relate to different circumstances of life such as birth, marriage, death, various feasts such as New Year (Now-rūz), intercalary days and times of difficulty or challenge.

The Bahá’í literature of worship encompasses prayers for various kinds of people. There are particular prayers for children, women, teachers and promoters of the faith, for the citizen of certain cities or for certain Bahá’í institutions such as the Local Spiritual Assemblies, and even for some minorities (such as Zoroastrians).

There are many beautiful prayers, and even koṭhēs, by Bahá’u’l-Bahrām and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá written in pure Persian and mostly addressed to the “Parsis” or new believers from the Zoroastrian background.

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4. According to Imam Sajjād (Zeyn ol-‘Ābedīn) people use prayers and monājāts for fifteen different purposes. These are: 1. confession of sins and repentance; 2. Soliciting the help of God to overcome the temptation of his/her ego; 3. prayer inspired by the fear of God, the fear of becoming deprived from God’s contentment; 4. asking God’s favour; 5. asking God to forget the believers shortcomings and continue his mercy; 6. thanksgiving; 7. asking God’s assistance for total obedience to God’s will; 8. expressing devotion to the Cause of God; 9. expressing love; 10. requesting the gift of meeting with God in the kingdom of paradise; 11. expressing needs and shortcomings to receive divine grace and bounty to satisfy those needs and remove those shortcomings; 12. praising God and confessing his/her ability to know God’s essence, using therefore a mystical approach; 13. admitting the inadequacy of whatever mention is made of God and at the same time asking the remembrance of God continue forever; 14. asking protection and refuge and finally 15. prayer of piety (Zohd) and rejection of the material world, seeking nearness to God (see Najvā-ye Qalam, ibid., pp. 25-30.

5. See for example the following books: Yārān-e Pārsī (Bahá’í Publishing Trust, Germany, 1998) and Darāye-ye Dāneş (Bahá’í Publishing Trust, India, 1985).
Different styles

Bahā’u’llāh was a prolific writer in a number of genres or writings designed for worship (‘ebādat). The fine literary style of much of his work has been commended by critics such as Edward G. Browne and a good number of literary men.6

In his prayers and kotbes, he addresses mostly the transcendent aspect of God, tanzihī attributes of God (emphasising the fact that God is pure and sanctified), while his son Abdu’l-Baha refers more to the immanent aspect of divinity, underlining the tašbīhī attributes (or likening God to human beings).

Here are few examples of Baha’ullah’s style in his monājāts (only the beginning of the prayers are given quoted from the Prayers and Meditations7):

“Praised be Thou, O Lord, my God. Every time I attempt to make mention of Thee, I am hindered by the sublimity of Thy station and overpowering greatness of Thy might...”

“Glorified art thou, O Lord, my God. Every man of might confesseth Thy sovereignty and Thy dominion, and every discerning eye perceiveth the greatness of Thy majesty and the compelling power of Thy might...”

“All praise, O my God, be to thee who are the source of all glory and majesty, of greatness and honour, of sovereignty and dominion, of loftiness and grace, of awe and power...”

The difference in ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s style can be seen in the following examples:

“O God, my God. Thou art my hope and my beloved, my highest aim and desire. With great humbleness and entire devotion, I pray to thee to make me a minaret of thy love in thy land, a lamp of thy knowledge among thy creatures, and a banner of divine bounty in Thy dominion...” (Baha’i Prayers, p. 57)

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"O Thou forgiving God. These servants are turning to Thy Kingdom and seeking Thy grace and bounty. O God, make their hearts good and pure in order that they may become worthy of thy love...Purify and sanctify the eyes that they may perceive Thy light. Purify and sanctify the ears in order that they may hear the call of Thy Kingdom..." (Baha'i Prayers, p. 113)

"O God, my God. These are servants attracted in thy days by the fragrances of thy holiness, enkindled with the flame burning in thy holy tree, responding to thy voice, uttering thy praise, awakened by Thy breeze..." (Baha'i Prayers, p. 156)

'Abdu'l-Bahá to a great extent adapts the tone of his prayers to the group concerned. His prayers for children, for example, are usually shorter, using a rather simple language, but are at the same time embellished with poetic images such as: brilliant star, shining lamp, refreshing breeze, attractive flowers, and flourishing plants. Here are examples of two of his prayers for children:

"He is God! O God, my God, bestow upon me a pure heart like unto a pearl."

"O God! Guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful"8

Elsewhere 'Abdu'l-Bahá sometimes paints an elaborate picture based on a particular metaphor to express a spiritual theme, as in the following prayer:

"O God! Educate these children. These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy Garden. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy Love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver, Thou art the Compassionate."9

9. ibid., pp. 35-36
We have already referred to the ornamental character of ‘Abdu’l-Bahā’s writings. We find an abundance of analogies and metaphors in ‘Abdu’l-Bahā’s prayers and also, to a lesser degree, in Bahā’u’llāh’s prayers. Some examples taken from various books of worship are: “the ocean of your generosity”, “the lamp of your faith”, “the pearls of your love”, “the brilliant star of your munificence”, “the clouds of delusive imagination”, “the sea of knowledge”, “the shadow of your tree of justice”, “the fountain of eternal life”, etc.

Why so many prayers?

The central aim of the Bahā’ī faith is to bring about a radical transformation of the world and the civilization. Therefore it is justified to ask why there is such proliferation of prayers in the new religion? One answer may be that a new faith underscores the importance of spirituality. According to the Bahā’īs, the essence of man is his soul and the ultimate reason for his being in this material world, is to develop his spiritual and moral qualities to fit for an eternal life blessed by the nearness of God. While the Bahā’īs endeavour to change the world to a place of peace, unity and justice they also believe that without a spiritual regeneration, no real improvement can be brought to this world. Connection and communication with God through prayer is therefore a great necessity for that regeneration, provided that the prayer leads to the right meditation and the meditation to the right action.

Below I quote a few examples from the Bahā’ī literature concerning the importance of prayer and of praying.

- the state of prayer is the best of conditions, for man is then associating with God (‘Abdu’l-Bahā)
- the obligatory prayers are binding in as much as they are conducive to humility and submissiveness, to setting one’s face towards God and expressing devotion to him. Through such prayer, man holdeth communion with God, seeketh to draw near unto him, converseth with the true Beloved of one’s heart, and attaineth spiritual stations (‘Abdu’l-Bahā)

• chant the words of God and pondering over their meaning transform them into actions (ʻAbdu'l-Bahā)
• all should gather together and harmoniously attuned one to another engage in prayer; with the result that out of this coming together, unity and affection shall grow and flourish in human heart (ʻAbdu'l-Bahā)
• the true worshipper, while praying, should endeavour not so much to ask God to fulfil his wishes and desires, but rather to adjust these and make them conform to the divine Will. Only through such an attitude, can one derive that feeling of inner peace and contentment which the power of prayer alone can confer (Shoghi Effendi)
• prayer and meditation are very important factors in deepening the spiritual life of the individual, but with them must go also action and example, as these are the tangible results of the former. Both are essential. (Shoghi Effendi)

Persian as the language of worship

The use of Persian as a language of worship goes back a long way, and this tradition has continued through both poetry and prose until recent time. In the Bahā'ī religion, the Persian has been highly valued. As Bahā'u'llāh has said in one of his writings Persian language fits whatever praise one make because, “the sun of knowledge has shone from the heaven of Iran” (Daryā-ye Dāneš, p. 4). Bahā'u'llāh considers Arabic the language of eloquence (Logat-e Fosḥā) and Persian as the luminous language (Logat-e Nūrā). He admits however, that both Persian and Arabic are commendable because what is expected from a language is its ability to convey a message which is understandable for the receiver. In addition to this, we know that Bahā'u'llāh from around 1870 had recommended the adoption of an international auxiliary language and scripture.

Through the Persian writings of Bahā'u'llāh, Iranians have access to religious texts revealed in their own language. Through translations into other languages, the style of the Bahā'ī writings has become known to other cultures where the Bahā'ī literature has been translated.

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Beyond the “Seal of the Prophets”:
Bahā’u’llāh’s Book of Certitude
(Ketāb-e Īqān)

Christopher Buck

Introduction

Because of its international audience, Bahā’u’llāh’s Book of Certitude (Ketāb-e Īqān) may now be regarded as the world’s most influential Koran commentary in Persian outside the Muslim world. The basis for this claim is simple: the Īqān is coextensive with the Bahā’ī faith. As its preeminent doctrinal text, the Īqān helped crystallize Bahā’ī identity and lent considerable impetus to its missionary expansion. The core claims advanced by the Īqān have, in principle, been adapted to other religious environments. It is post-Islamic by dint of its claims: the Īqān vindicates the prophetic credentials of Sayyid ‘Ali-Muhammad Shirāzi, known as “the Bāb” (d. 1850), who broke decisively from Islam in 1844, by declaring himself to be the inaugurator of a new religious cycle. “Revealed” in January 1861, the Īqān sets the stage for Bahā’u’llāh’s impending claim to revelation in April 1863 in Baghdad.

The Īqān advances an Islamic argument to legitimate its post-Islamic claims. The Īqān’s most original and dramatic act of Koranic interpretation may well be its argument for how God could (and would) send another prophet after Muhammad, notwithstanding the latter’s station as the “Seal of the Prophets” (Q. 33:40). Bahā’u’llāh’s exegetical strategy is a tour de force – using an essentially Islamic argument to prove something ostensibly alien to orthodox Islam, both Sunni and Shi‘a. More significant than its theological argument, however, is the Īqān’s historical impact. Even though, from the Islamic point of view, the Īqān argued the impossible, Bahā’u’llāh’s discourse on realized eschatology became a self-fulfilling prophecy. The argument for a post-Islamic revelation was not academic. It was historical.

In order to understand the Īqān, it is necessary to know something about the Bābī movement, which provides the Īqān’s immediate historical context. The year 1260/1844-1845 marked the Shi‘i millennium, a
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thousand lunar years since the occultation of the 12th Imam. On 22 May 1844, the Bāb effected a decisive, eschatological break from Islam. The Bāb “proclaimed himself the focus of an Islamic apocalypse” (Lawson, “Structure,” 8). This eschatological end of history presupposes the formal end of the authority of Islam, and the beginning of a new cycle of revelation. The Īqān, therefore, is an extension and further development of the Bāb’s radical break with Islam.

Bahā’u’llāh extemporaneously dictated the Īqān within the space of two days and two nights, at the request of the uncle of the Bāb, who was puzzled about the claims of his martyred nephew. The book is composed in Persian (rather than in Arabic, as would be expected), which rendered the text immediately accessible to its initial Bābī audience.

The questions posed by the Bāb’s uncle make up the structure of the Īqān. These original questions, preserved in family archives, have been published in facsimile. They were penned on two sheets of paper and organized under four headings, all dealing with popular Shi‘i expectations of the Islamic eschaton, the principal actor of which was to be the expected Qā‘em (the Shi‘i counterpart of the Mahdi in Sunni traditions). The questions may be summarized so:

1. The Day of Resurrection: Will it be corporeal? How will the just be recompensed and the wicked dealt with?
2. The Twelfth Imam: How can traditions attesting his occultation be explained?
3. Koranic Interpretation: How can the literal meaning of scripture be reconciled with the interpretations current among Bābīs?
4. Advent of the Qā‘em: How can the apparent non-fulfillment of popular Imami traditions concerning the Resurrecter be explained?

These questions all center on the seeming contradiction caused by the Bāb’s claim to a realized eschaton in the absence of a literal fulfillment of scripture according to popular expectation.

Exegesis established a doctrinal foundation for the faith Bahā’u’llāh was to create, in which eschatology was transformed into spiritual and legislative authority. The Īqān provided an eschatological bridge into a new religious world view. The Bahā‘ī prophet-founder’s most controversial Koranic argument is his claim that Muslim scholars had erred in their interpretation of the “Seal” verse (Q. 33:40) by not recognizing the promise of a post-Koranic revelation just four verses later at Q. 33:44.
In fine, this latter verse refers to the eschatological meeting with God—a beatific encounter reserved for the faithful. Baha'u'llah argues something quite different. His reading of the verse is that it is a veiled reference to the Bab. Since God cannot be seen, then the Koran's promises that the faithful would behold the face of God must perforce be symbolic. To enter into the presence of God is to attain the presence of God's "Manifestation," or Prophet.

Baha'u'llah's novel interpretation is said to be entirely consonant with the deep meaning of the Koran, yet incompatible with the orthodox understanding of it. It achieved a breakthrough in creating a real possibility for a post-Koranic claim to revelation, which the Bab had already advanced. The Iqan expounds apocalyptic passages of the Koran—texts that defied precise interpretation yet inspired a plethora of them. Cambridge Orientalist Edward Granville Browne, writes of the Iqan that "it is a work of great merit, vigorous in style, clear in argument, cogent in proof, and displaying no slight knowledge of the Bible, Koran, and Traditions" (Selections 254).

The Iqan as a Work of Koranic Tafsir

The Iqan is essentially an exposition of the Bahai doctrine of "Progressive Revelation," which is a theory of civilization in which spiritual evolution is the engine of social evolution. However broadly the Iqan expatiates on spiritual "sovereignty"—that is, on the moral and spiritual authority of the prophets of God, the text focuses particularly on the authority of the Bab. In a manner of speaking, Baha'u'llah's thesis is that the Koran, the Hadith, and even the Bible anticipate a future prophet of God who would appear at the end (or culmination) of history. Now, the Koran says nothing about these things outwardly. Therefore, in order to argue that the Koran says something inwardly, it is necessary to enter into a sophisticated religious argument that explores the subtle dimensions of the Koran. It is an argument that depends on rules of inference in order to supersede existing doctrine. To achieve this, the Iqan speaks at length about the nature of the Koran and how its subtleties may be discovered and elucidated.

At the time the Iqan was revealed, the Koran remained inviolable as the primary authority in an erstwhile Islamic context. In the Muslim world, no idea could be entertained, much less accepted, unless it was somehow anchored in the Koran itself. Interpretation of the Koran is
technically known as *tafsīr*. I believe that the most useful introduction to this literature is that of Andrew Rippin’s entry on “Tafsīr” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* (1987); and the most comprehensive Western academic study of *tafsīr*, in all its dimensions and historical contexts, is *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Koran*, edited by Rippin (Oxford, 1988). What kind of *tafsīr* is the *Īqān*? First, it is not a classical *tafsīr*, in that the *Īqān* is not a verse-by-verse running commentary. Rather, the *Īqān* is a work of symbolic exegesis of the Koran and, to a lesser extent, of the New Testament.

Exegesis is typically far more than mere interpretation serving to elucidate a sacred text. Typically, especially in post-classical works of *tafsīr*, the exegete has a definite agenda. Interpretation thus becomes the vehicle for propounding that agenda. While the interpretation serves to elucidate the text, the inverse holds true, too. The interpreter invokes the authority of the Koran as revelation to validate a particular view. In such a case, exegesis is apologetic, written in defense of a position held. The *Īqān* focused on spiritual authority from an Islamic perspective, rationalizing the eschatologically conceived fulfillment of Islam in the advent of the *Bāb*.

The *Īqān* also served to heighten the adventist fervor current in the *Bābī* community, in anticipation of the advent of a Messianic figure foretold by the *Bāb*, eschatologically realized in the person of Bahā’u’llāh himself on the event of his declaration in Baghdad in April 1863. While the *Bāb* (and subsequently Bahā’u’llāh himself) maintained continuity with Islam at a doctrinal level, historically this claim of fulfillment was tantamount to a break from Islam.

**Shi‘i Background**

The interpretive strategies in Bahā’u’llāh’s work are amply attested in the classical Shi‘i heritage. In *Akbari* Shi‘ism, the Koran as a text is functionally inseparable from its valid interpretation. Although interpretation is still a human enterprise, the methodological guarantor of accuracy is reliance upon traditions ascribed to the Imams. In this respect, the sacred text is imbued with the charisma of both the Prophet and the Imams.

The Koran is said to contain coded language. In his extensive studies of the *Bābī* and Shi‘i background of Bahā’i exegesis, Todd Lawson renders, from the French, Corbin’s translation of a statement from the
Bāb’s spiritual precursor, Sayyid Kazim Rashti (d. 1844): “When you have understood that the true meaning, the spiritual Idea of the Koran is a code (ramz) which only God Most High, the Prophets and the members of His House understand, [...] then it will be clear that our understanding of this code varies according to the diversity of our faculties of understanding” (trans. Lawson, “Akhbār Shī‘ī Approaches to Tafsīr,” 204). This “code” obviously requires decoding. Bahā’u’llāh demonstrates that the Koran has a symbolic dimension that only an inspired interpreter might accurately demystify.

**Exegetical Style and Techniques**

Bahā’u’llāh’s interpretations entail some complex and original acts of exegesis. First, it should be pointed out that Bahā’u’llāh’s discourse style is inherently exegetical, with frequent pairings, linked by the Persian metaphorical genitive (ezāfe-ye majāz), of Koranic symbol and referent. The ezāfe is a construct – an enclitic to be precise – used for possessive, partitive, and descriptive purposes. Bahā’u’llāh’s use of this construct becomes, in itself, an important exegetical device. In the course of exegesis, Bahā’u’llāh interprets a verse, explicating a symbol by suggesting its referent. He then uses both symbol and referent together, bound grammatically by the Persian construct, to reinforce his exegesis. Bahā’u’llāh coordinates his various explications by means of extended metaphors, invariably drawn from nature. In other words, Bahā’u’llāh’s very discourse style itself reinforces his symbolic interpretations of Koranic texts (Buck, 2004, p. 123).

Bahā’u’llāh’s repertoire of exegetical techniques exceeds, but includes most of the twelve “procedural devices” attested in classical tafsīr: poetic loci probantes, lexical explanation, grammatical explanation, rhetorical explanation, periphrasis, analogy, abrogation, circumstances of revelation, identification of the vague and ambiguous, prophetical tradition, and anecdote (Wansbrough, QS, Part II and Buck, 2004). Furthermore, although many of Bahā’u’llāh’s interpretations have an elegant simplicity, some of his interpretations actually conflict with traditional Islamic interpretations and often require a rather complex syntactical and semantic analysis.

Generally, Bahā’u’llāh has a two-step procedure for interpreting an eschatological text: first, establish that the text in question is figurative, not literal, and then provide its symbolic purport.
Hermeneutically, the Īqān resonates with five Islamic orientations to symbolism: (1) the semanticism of rhetoric (esp. 'elm-e Bayān, “science of tropes”); (2) the dialectic of theology (kalām); (3) reason (‘aqlīye) and analogy (qīyās) as a reflex of philosophy (falsafe); (4) use of allusion (ešāre) and gnosis (ma’ārefe-ye qalbiye) in Sufi mysticism; (5) recourse to apocalyptic presentism (adducing prophetic proof-texts to instantiate a “realized eschatology”), characteristic of millenarian sectarianism. But before he actually engages in symbolic interpretation, Bahā’u’llāh first establishes the symbolic nature of the Koran itself.

Literal texts require little interpretation beyond explication, whereas symbolic texts are not as they appear to be and require interpretation. For the latter approach to be accepted, the reader must be convinced that a text has a symbolic dimension based on a figurative substrate. The most effective strategy for arguing symbolism, beyond assertion, is to predicate symbolism on figurative language. As tropical discourse, figurative language, by nature, excludes literal interpretation, which would otherwise lead to absurdity. Bahā’u’llāh therefore advances a figuration-based rationale to demonstratively establish Koranic symbolism.

Bahā’u’llāh advances arguments that are, in certain respects, analogous to the strategies of Sunni rhetoricians who demonstrated occurrences of figures of speech in the Koran as a feature of its eloquence and inimitability. The figurative reading of a verse must not lead to absurdity. Nor should a literal reading. In the Īqān, prior to his actual symbolic exegesis, Bahā’u’llāh logically demonstrates the presence of figurative language in the Koran, based largely on appeals to absurdities that result from literal readings. Once the symbolic valence of the Koran has been established, symbols in prophecy are interpreted and then contemporized within Bahā’u’llāh’s own historical present, leaving the reader to accept or reject their fulfillment. Such an interpretive move often involves the verdict of absurdity after having overruled the surface meaning of anthropomorphisms in scripture. Hence, Bahā’u’llāh’s exegetical procedure at Q. 39:67 overrules a literal reading of the eschatological hand of God, as it entails both impossibility and anthropomorphist entrapment:

And now, comprehend the meaning of this verse: “The whole earth shall on the Resurrection Day be but His handful, and in His right
hand shall the heavens be folded together.” [...] And now, be fair in thy judgment. Were this verse to have the meaning which men suppose it to have, of what profit, one may ask, could it be to man? Moreover, it is evident and manifest that no such hand as could be seen by human eye could accomplish such deeds, or could possibly be ascribed to the exalted Essence of the one true God. Nay, to acknowledge such a thing is naught but sheer blasphemy, an utter perversion of the truth (ET 47-48).

Here, the “right hand” of God receives a negative interpretation. Whatever it means, it cannot mean what it literally says. For to assert that God has a “right hand” is sheer anthropomorphism, and a full projection of human attributes onto the Deity. The literal interpretations having thus been overruled, a positive interpretation follows:

On the contrary, by the term “earth” is meant the earth of understanding and knowledge, and by the “heavens” the heavens of divine Revelation. Reflect thou how, in one hand, He hath, by His mighty grasp, turned the earth of knowledge and understanding, previously unfolded, into a mere handful, and, on the other, spread out a new and highly exalted earth in the hearts of men, thus causing the freshest and loveliest blossoms, and the mightiest and loftiest trees to spring forth in the illumined bosom of man” (ET 48).

Note the illustrative use of nature imagery, transported into the psychic realm, where spiritual life is described as an interior landscape, an inner world. The Koran, while rich in symbolism, is not transparent. Divine authority, in both Shi‘i and Babi contexts, is needed to interpret Koranic references to divinity and to resolve the problem of anthropomorphisms in the text. Such interpretation becomes even more sensitive when it comes to the subject of Muhammad himself, as the Koran represents him.

The “Seal of the Prophets”

The Koran dignifies Muhammad as the “Seal of the Prophets” (Q. 33:40). In the earliest currents of Islamic consciousness, this honorific was by no means understood uniformly (see Yohanan Friedmann, “Finality of Prophethood in Islam,” Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
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7 [1986]). The concept of Muhammad being the final messenger of God was firmly entrenched in Islamic doctrine, both Sunni and Shi'a. In Shi'ism, however, the concept of walāya (arab.) allowed for a continuation of divine guidance after the death of the Prophet. Such guidance was considered subordinate to the revelation of the Koran, of course. But the Báb had dared to proclaim himself more than an Imam, and a messenger equal to or greater than Muhammad, with a revelation that surpassed the Koran in scope and authority. This, obviously, challenged the very foundations of Islam.

From the perspective of classical Sunni Islam as well as Shi'ism, Bahā'u'llāh achieved the seemingly impossible: to show that God could reveal a prophet after Muhammad. The manner in which Bahā'u'llāh did so requires some explanation.

First, Bahā'u'llāh applied Koranic concepts of the oneness of the prophets to relativize the idea of the “Seal of the Prophets” as a term that applies to all of the prophets, not just Muhammad. In other words, Bahā'u'llāh relativizes the orthodox claim of Muhammad’s finality in order to supersede it. One of the ways Bahā'u'llāh does this is by refocusing the reader’s attention a mere four verses later (Q. 33:44), where the Koran speaks of eschatological attainment to the presence of God on the Last Day. Central to Bahā'u'llāh’s argument in the Īqān is the argument that the Koranic promise of what Bahā'u'llāh refers to as “attainment unto the Presence of God” is an allusion to the appearance of another Manifestation of God at the eschaton. How is this possible?

Identification of the eschatological encounter with God (Q. 33:44, 10:45, 6:31, 2:249, 2:46, 11:29, 69:20, 13:2, 6:154, 18:111, 29:23) with the advent the Qā'em (Riser/Resurrector) had already been established by Sheykh Ahmad Ahsa’i (d. 1241/1825), founder of the Sheyki School, which was the immediate ideological forebear of Bahā’i thought. Shaykh Ahmad’s approach to eschatological verses - classified as ambiguous (motašābehāt) – was “rational” (interpreting away anthropomorphisms) and allegorical. As for “seeing” God on the Day of Judgment, Shaykh Ahmad rejected a literal interpretation in favor of an Imamocentric one. On the basis of certain Shi’i traditions, Shaykh Ahmad interpreted the Day of Judgment as the Day of the advent of the expected Qā'em, who would bring about changes in the social, moral, and religious life of the world (Rafati 118-119).

By shifting the focus of prophetological attention away from the “Seal” verse itself to refocus on the several Koranic “Divine Presence” verses, Bahā'u’llāh could make an Islamic case for post-Koranic reve-
lation. From a certain point of view, his entire line of argumentation in the *Iqān* is calculated to establish the priority of Q. 33:44 over Q. 33:40. Bahāʾuʾllāh accepts the importance of the Koranic verse designating Muhammad as “the Seal of the Prophets” (Q. 33:40), yet draws attention to an exegetical oversight but four verses later:

> How strange! [...] Even as the Lord of being hath in His unerring Book [the Koran], after speaking of the “Seal” in His exalted utterance: “Muhammad is the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets” (Q. 33:40), hath revealed unto all people the promise (vaʿde) of “attainment unto the divine Presence” (laqā-ye kōdā, cf. Q. 33:44). To this attainment to the presence of the immortal King testify the verses of the Book, some of which We have already mentioned. The one true God is My witness! Nothing (*hič amrī*) more exalted or more explicit than “attainment unto the divine Presence” (aʿzam-e az laqā va ašraḥ-e az ān) hath been revealed in the Koran (*forqān*). [...]  

And yet, through the mystery of the former verse, they have turned away from the grace promised by the latter, despite the fact that “attainment unto the divine Presence” in the “Day of Resurrection” is explicitly stated in the Book. It hath been demonstrated and definitely established, through clear evidences, that by “Resurrection” is meant the rise of the Manifestation of God to proclaim His Cause, and by “attainment unto the divine Presence” is meant attainment unto the presence of His Beauty in the person of His Manifestation. For verily, “No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision” (Q. 6:103). (*Iqān* 169-70/Persian text, 112)

This argument is predicated on an anti-anthropomorphist interpretation of Q. 6:103. It would be safe to say that, for Muslims universally, the Koran’s designation of Muhammad as the “Seal of the Prophets” (Q. 33:40) is possibly the most important prophetological verse of the Koran (certainly it ranks as one of the most crucial verses doctrinally). Yet Bahāʾuʾllāh here points to a verse just four verses later, and makes that verse (and its parallels) the centerpiece of his exegesis and the crux of his entire argument: “Their greeting on the day when they shall meet Him shall be “Peace!” And He hath got ready for them a noble recompense” (Q. 33:44).

While this brief description of the *Iqān* scarcely does justice to its
broader range of Koranic interpretations, the reader should now have a clear idea as to the book’s purpose, theophanic claims, and historical impact. As a heterodox work of *tafsīr*, the *Īqān* advances an Islamic argument to exegetically create the possibility of post-Koranic prophets. For this and other reasons, the *Īqān* preserves its place as the preeminent doctrinal text of the Bahā’ī faith. To claim that the *Īqān* may now be regarded as the world’s most influential Koran commentary outside the Muslim world is simply to acknowledge the historical fact that the Bahā’ī religion has spun out of its Islamic orbit and radiated globally, while maintaining its Islamic roots.

**Literature**


VIII

20th Century Islamic Texts
The Hermeneutics of post-modern Islam: 
The case of ʿAbdol-Karîm Sorûş

Ashk Dahlén

Introduction

Islam has experienced the impact of the manifold potencies of modern life and responded to this challenge in diverse forms and manners. Since the turn of the eighteenth century almost coincident to Napoleon’s intrusion in Egypt, modernity came to have relevance for Muslim peoples. The first direct encounter between traditional Islam and the modern West in Iran was an outcome of the intellectual debates that came to prominence at the beginning of the Constitutional revolution, at the turn of the nineteenth century. Under the ideological challenge of secular forces, Iranian theologians and jurists were then compelled to explain the relation between the Islamic religion and the driving principles of European modernism. Today, contemporary Islam confronts a new epistemic and interpretative situation, which is generally felt as something of an emergency. This emergency in both epistemology and hermeneutics is largely the result of a radical shift of the categories of modern philosophy, science, culture and geography. Since its overall situation is characterised by the dual phenomenon of tradition versus modernity, contemporary Islamic thought is a paradigmatic phenomenon. It epitomises a discursive dialogue between revelation and reason, unity and diversity and idealism and realism. This exchange has generated the possibility of competing paradigms struggling for mastery to the extent that the use of terms like polycentrism seems appropriate to characterise contemporary Islam. A significant factor in the formation of a multiple paradigm phenomenon is the very existence of a paradigmatic field, in which different paradigms coexist and knowledge of different paradigms becomes accessible to others.¹

As some observers have noticed, the intellectual debates and paradoxes that are taking place in contemporary Iran defy any monolithic characterisation of Islam. Partly due to the attempts to apply traditional

Islamic jurisprudence in the political sphere of the modern state, Islam is increasingly ‘crystallised’ into a contested myriad of competing intellectual discourses, where the access to interpretation of the revealed texts has become more plural and the Shi‘i authority of marja‘ al-taqqild (source of emulation) no longer possesses a natural monopoly in spiritual matters. In contemporary Iran, a number of lay Muslim intellectuals participate in developing various discourses on religious epistemology and hermeneutics side by side with the ‘olamā, and the key figure in the criticism against traditional Islamic epistemic considerations is a lay intellectual: the philosopher Hoseyn Ḥāj Farajollāh Dabbāq, more well-known by his pen name ‘Abdol-Karīm Sorūš (1945–).2 The aim of my presentation is to give an explorative account of the methodological and hermeneutical ideas of this Islamic ‘avant-garde’ intellectual.

Sorūš published his first philosophical articles on legal epistemology and hermeneutics in 1988, in which he connects to Kantian notions of second-order cognitive theory. Sorūš’s thought has developed partly as a refutation of Marxist concepts of science and society and partly as a critique of the ‘ideologised’ interpretation of religion as commonly presented by Islamic modernists. From Sorūš’s extensive textual corpus that covers more than twenty years of intellectual output, the present article will concentrate on his post-revolutionary writings, in particular Taffarōj-e son‘ (Excursion of creation, 1987), Qabz va bast-e te‘orīk-e šarı‘at (The Contraction and expansion of legal theory, 1991), Šerāthā-ye mostaqTm (Straight paths, 1998) and Bast-e tajrobe-ye nabavi (Expansion of prophetic experience, 1999).3 As far as the primary cognitive and interpretative questions for contemporary Islamic intellectuals are essentially similar to those of the Western hermeneutical tradition, my concern is to what extent Sorūš’s understanding of hermeneutics as well as conflicting interpretations, is engendered by the cognitive structures of modernity. I presuppose that a connection only may be assumed when explicit and clearly identical Western themes and terminology is present in the Persian texts. By considering Islamic tradition not as a

closed entity but as a paradigmatic epistemic field, and by focusing on processes of reception and communication between cultures, I will initially consider whether it is possible to speak of internal Shiʿī expressions of modernity or not.

**Modernity or modernities?**

Due to the relationship between global modernity and the religion of Islam, the subject matter of Islamic epistemology has come to occupy a wider perspective than its traditional formulations and this raises the question as to whether modernity is categorically conceptualised as an external phenomenon among Iranian religious intellectuals, or if there is instead an effort on their part to develop indigenous forms and expressions of modernity. Whereas early Islamic modernists discussed the adaptability of Islam to modernity, and from the middle of the twentieth century made attempts to ‘Islamise’ modernity, a new formation of Islamic intellectuals emerged after the 1979 revolution, which problematises modernity, but not in a conscious attempt to Islamise it. In contemporary Iran, Islamic intellectuals are concerned with issues such as the existence of Muslim varieties of modernity, possible beneficial aspects of the postmodernist review of Enlightenment modernism, whether modernity at all may be transcended, etc. In this respect, the Iranian intellectual panorama has undoubtedly witnessed a prospering not restricted to traditional Islamic theology, jurisprudence, mysticism, and art, but which also includes modern political philosophy, hermeneutics, gender studies and philosophy of law. As Mehrzad Boroujerdi (1996:157) elucidates, “Far from engaging in esoteric and trivial polemics, the discussions now taking place in Iran are philosophically sophisticated, intellectually sound, socially relevant and politically modern”.

While the dilemma of modernity is more momentous considering the fact that the universal reason of European Enlightenment denies the equality of all cultural traditions, my study takes into account different varieties of modernity. Since there is no one accepted European model or form of modernity, I will instead consider the existence of plural modernities, where the term modernity itself refers to those features

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4. In the view of Enlightenment modernism, all minds are endowed with the potential of attaining an objective truth, but only on the condition of employing the correct cognitive method.
that allow us to speak of a modern age in the first place.\textsuperscript{5} Even if it has its restrained roots and early history in a European context and unmistakably represents a European view of history, modernity can, to begin with, not be considered as characteristically ‘Western’ since it is a reaction against, rather than a direct outcome of, the worldview of traditional Western Christianity (which is evident in the late scholastic condemnations of Descartes’ philosophy) (Ariew 1999). Modernity originates in Europe but it does not spread in terms of direct borrowing or adoption. It is rather a convergence, comprised of a series of transformations that may create new formations: “Modernity may thus be delineated in terms of a conjunction, with global implications, of a set of cultural, institutional, and cosmological shifts.” (Wittrock 2000:53).\textsuperscript{6}

While modernity developed in Europe as a consequence of specific internal conditions born of a break with Christianity, this was not the case in Muslim societies. During the recent century Islamic scholars have been in no position to dispute theological and philosophical questions among themselves without reference to ulterior standards, as they have had the more difficult task of finding their consciences in the midst of two contrasting normative standards of thought. The response of different religions and cultures to the process of modernity has in fact its own unique characteristics that resist any sweeping generalisations:

“In Iran’s case this uniqueness seems to involve a preoccupation with the metaphysical foundations of modernity which has had the important ramification for the more ‘superstructural’ and institutional levels. Perhaps, the root of this peculiarity lies in Iran’s deeply entrenched tradition of monotheism which goes back to its pre-Islamic religions, as well as the relatively long continuity of Iranian sense of cultural identity which again goes beyond the Islamic period.” (Vahdat 1998:412).

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5. I find the term modernity useful as far as it is related to certain normative characteristics that spring from the driving principles of European Enlightenment, such as self-reflexivity, agency, historical consciousness and progress, rationalism and secularisation. Comprising a historical consciousness of evolution and change, more correctly differentiation, modernity in many respects constitutes an epoch that relates itself to the past as a result of the transition from the old (traditional) to the new (modern), and has consequently been described in terms of a new “mode of thinking” (Habermas 1987).

In philosophical terms, modernity has as central to its reality the category of experience itself and might justifiably be thought of as the sovereignty of experience. In so far as there is no higher authority for the modern world than experience, the universality of reason as well as the autonomy of the subject (notions rooted in the Enlightenment thought) equally serve as constitutive components of the philosophical but also social vision of modernity. In the realm of epistemology, the growth of epistemological ‘subjectivism’ is considered to be the underlying ontological foundation of modernity, which gives paramountcy to a moment of self-awareness in the adjunction of knowledge. The turning away from things, the object of thinking, to the subject, having thoughts, is considered to be the mark of modern Western philosophy (Kant is the one credited with articulating the problem of subjectivity as a problem in itself). This idea evolved originally because of the residue of theoretical doubt in cases which other religions and cultures, Islam included, were inclined to call certain knowledge. In contrast to Descartes, who interpreted truth as certainty, premodern philosophers in different religions were, for instance, inclined to interpret truth in terms of beauty and goodness (Judovitz 1988).

One of the unique results of the in-depth encounter between Islam and modernity is the ability of Iranian Islamic intellectuals to examine the very foundations of modernity and thereby give internal synthetic answers within their own religious and cultural context. Some contemporary Islamic intellectual tendencies are as a matter of fact more appropriately analysed by reference to epistemological notions associated almost exclusively with modernity. As far as Sorūš is concerned his affinities with postmodern thought are, for instance, closest in the sphere of hermeneutics, where he initiates a systematic critique of meaning. By turning to the hermeneutics of suspicion, Sorūš considers religious knowledge as overall tentative and conjectural: it is ultimately bold guesswork. Since human understanding, in his view, always is blocked and empowered by the concrete and changing context of a specific hermeneutical situation, the scientific endeavour constantly preys

7. In the present study, the terms ‘subjectivity’ and ‘subjectivism’ are primarily used to designate an empirical subject, whose content is subjective, that is, personal, intentional and individual and it is consequently not restricted to the Cartesian foundation of its conditions of possibility from a transcendent perspective. As a matter of fact, the terms ‘subjectivity’ and ‘subjectivism’ did not figure prominently in Cartesian nomenclature, but are concepts that have emerged later and which are retrospectively used to define the ontological foundations of modernity.
on other interpretations in an endless process. A moment of philosophical doubt clings to all human knowledge claims. In the following, Sorūš’s hermeneutics will be compared to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s phenomenological theory of interpretation and Jacques Derrida’s idea of deconstruction, which can be said to represent two main contemporary Western hermeneutical approaches.

**Transplanting epistemology in hermeneutics**

Following Popper, the Austro-English philosopher of science, Sorūš defines knowledge as hypotheses that have passed critical test and correspond to reality, a process that he calls falsification. In his assessment of the so-called *qabz va bast* (‘contraction and expansion’) of religious knowledge, Sorūš refers to the Kuhnian correspondence principle that the main reason behind scientific evolution is due to the fact that earlier theories are amalgamated and fused into the new ones. Closely resembling the process Darwin called natural selection, he argues that religious knowledge, devoid of sacredness, is one branch of knowledge among others, rather than divine by virtue of its subject-matter. Similar to Popper’s evolutionary epistemology, he suggests that the growth of knowledge advances by means of conjecture and refutations.8

But since all knowledge entails understanding and its presuppositions always postulate other explanations, he believes that all cognitive ambiguities must be assessed in the light of hermeneutics. Similar to Richard Rorty, who announces the end of epistemology by turning to hermeneutics, Sorūš identifies epistemology with the broad, generic task of reflecting on the nature and limits of human knowledge. Epistemology gives way, in other words, to hermeneutics, since the scientific endeavour constantly preys on other readings or interpretations in an endless process and since human understanding always is blocked and empowered by the concrete and changing context of a specific hermeneutical situation. He seems in fact to suggest that the primary task

8. For Sorūš’s views on epistemology and history of science, cf. Dahlén 2001:265-313. Similar to Kant, Sorūš believes history to be inherently characterised by progress, necessity and critical rationality that is ultimately directed to man’s attainment of maturity. Influenced by the Enlightenment insistence on the methodical character of reason, he does not accept reason as theologically ordered toward truth but believes that reason invents itself and constructs its truths by way of critical methodologies.
of contemporary Islamic scholars is to understand science and then to understand hermeneutics and to simply relate the two. The situation is nevertheless much more complex in that the two do not stand in isolation and that hermeneutics must be understood not only in relation to science but in relation to the philosophies of science. In contrast to Rorty, who discards Kantian philosophy altogether, Sorûş's (1996b:57) hermeneutics is not the replacement of epistemology as such but the replacement of one epistemology with another.9 While Sorûş does not attempts to establish a modern Koranic discipline of hermeneutics, he suggests that the theory of 'contraction and expansion' accesses the limitations and possibilities of the human world of every individual so as to see what new ways of understanding can arise in the arena of hermeneutical discourse between the individual subject and religion:

"The essential objective of the theory of contraction and expansion is not to solve the dispute over feqh-e sonnatî (traditional jurisprudence) and feqh-e püyâ (dynamic jurisprudence), to modernise, expound or complete religion nor to relativise or reject truth, but to shed light on religious understanding and the evolution of religious knowledge. As long as the secret of understanding is not revealed, the endeavour to revive religion will remain incomplete. The theory of contraction and expansion is in its essence therefore a naşarîye-ye tafsîrî-ma'refatsenâktî (theory of interpretation-hermeneutics) that is relevant to theology, theosophy and osûl (sources of religious science)." (Sorûş 1996b:57).

By adopting a modern and contemporary view of hermeneutics to solve interpretative contradictions, Sorûş asserts that the traditional terminology of Islamic exegesis is characterised by an overt unpredictability. While his discredit of traditional metaphysical hermeneutics provides a general strategy for interpretation, it makes no distinction between dif-

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9. As Richard Rorty (1979:172) argues, the history of philosophy shows that there are no final answers to the traditional questions about knowledge, truth, and representation. He thinks such questions should be eliminated from philosophy since there is no possibility to get outside of our mind and language. In his view, the whole project of analytical philosophy fails after Sellars and Quine's criticism of the distinction between the logically/conceptually necessary and the contingent, between being true by virtue of meaning and being true by virtue of experience.
ferent interpretations and can from this perspective first of all be con-
sidered as a critique. In *Qabz va bast-e te’orîk-e šari‘at*, he is concerned
with hermeneutics secondary to epistemology and the primary hermeneu-
tical question is whether meaning is historically and sociologically situat-
ed or anchored in metaphysics. Suggesting that meaning is constructed
by the human mind, he compares religious texts to the world of phenom-
enon, which also is represented in a variety of ways through human lan-
guage. In this respect, the text has no well-defined features in terms of
unity, totality, authorship or self-referentiality, and meaning is never
equivalent to the author’s intention. He categorically rejects the notion of
*ma’nî-ye vâqe’î* (true meaning) in the realm of human understanding:

“The allegory of the external world is the only accessible allegory for
the written text. No written text says its meaning twice. It is rather
the human linguistic mind that reads meaning into the text. Phrases
are hungry for meaning rather than impregnated with meaning even
if they are not satisfied with all kind of food either. The meaning of
worldly phenomena is not inscribed on them and neither is it easy to
grasp.” (ibid.:287-288).

“In the textual world, we do not have anything such as truth in the
meaning of conformity with or intention of the author. The author se-
lects a language for his exposition of meaning and takes into account
a specific meaning but there are, indeed, other meanings of that text.
If the author is conscious of the fact that a text communicates mean-
ing disengaged from the intention or objective of its author, he or she
cannot blame others for misinterpretation” (Sorûş 1999d:192).

While intention lends existence to a text, it is hence not the basis of
valid interpretation or an ultimate means for attaining an objective in-
terpretation. The inference to the best explanation of a text is not relat-
ed to the supposed intention of the author, since language by nature
does not search for a unified meaning but essentially possesses a num-
ber of non-fixed possibilities as far as meaning is concerned. In contrast
to the Enlightenment notion that language must be rational and trans-
parent and functions only to represent the real world that the rational
mind observes, Sorûş suggests that there is no firm or objective connec-
tion between the objects of perception and the words used to name them
(between signified and signifier). As Derrida would say, language itself
effects its own ‘deconstruction’ since texts are open to multiple inter-
pretations. This undermines attempts to retrieve or repeat the truth of texts since multiple interpretations tend to mean not plentitude but a paralogy that involves conflict and disruption, as well as the ruptures and gaps in understanding. This is, according to Sorûş, the cold hermeneutic truth: The truth is that there is no truth, no master name or as Lyotard would say 'no metanarrative' that holds things captive. His hermeneutics involves hence in some sense a critique of hermeneutics itself and specifically a critique of any attempt to find the truth of a particular text:

“Language itself never points towards one single specific meaning. Philosophically speaking, the text is a \( \text{fe'liyat-e nā-yāfte} \) (not yet actualised) and a potentiality. The text accepts many formal meanings as a potentiality. [...] At the level of justification, we must infer the best explanation that acknowledges pluralism. We are confronted with a lot of cases and meanings that the texts (whether profane or sacred) have in option together with many denotations and probabilities. The best guess or explanation for clarifying meaning is probably the rule that the text possesses an ambiguous and non-fixed essence of meaning.” (ibid.:195).

**Interpretation – an act of subjectivity**

While from Plato to Hegel, truth consisted in the complete revelation and presence of the things by a purely intellectual inspection to the infinite mind, Sorûş’s hermeneutics does not take place in the wordless realm of the Logos but in finite language. He limits in other words

10. Deconstruction was initiated by Jacques Derrida who launched a major critique of traditional Western metaphysics in a series of books published in French beginning in the late 1960s. He introduced the words \( \text{déconstruire} \) (‘to deconstruct’) and \( \text{déconstruction} \) (‘deconstruction’) in *De la grammatologie* (1967). Amongst other things, his ideas are powerful critiques of phenomenology (Husserl), linguistics (Saussure), Lacanian psychoanalysis and structuralism (Lévi-Strauss). Like Freud’s psychological theories and Marx’s political theories, Derrida’s deconstructive strategies, which take off from de Saussure’s insistence on the arbitrariness of the verbal sign, have established themselves as an important part of postmodernism, especially in poststructural literary theory and text analysis.

11. Lyotard’s (1999) argument is that the epoch of postmodernity witnesses the collapse of all grand ‘metanarrative’ schemas (Kantian, Hegelian, Marxist, etc) that once promised truth or justice at the end of inquiry. A metanarrative is, in his terminology, a ‘grand theory’, a narrative about narratives.
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hermeneutics, the primary philosophical question, to the horizontal and historical by arguing that “science never takes a halt” (ibid.:299). For premodern philosophers, such as Plato and Ibn Sīnā, thinking seemed more like a state of rest or a halting than a movement. From Sorūš’s hermeneutical exposition in Qabż va baṣṭ-e te’orīk-e šarīʿat, it seems that reason is only another term for understanding but it emerges that he has in mind a higher role for reason by insisting that we not only make a lot of judgements about the world but also try to integrate all these bits of knowledge into an coherent scheme with general principles. While intention is not considered to be a valid ground of interpretation, that is, finished decidable meaning, he does not rule out the existence of an exit from the labyrinth of a text. Similar to Gadamer, Sorūš is not interested in reconstructing a text to find the meaning of a text. Since the meaning of a text is provisional and temporal and changes with the historical context, the fixation of meaning becomes difficult:

“We cannot say that the text exists deposed and disengaged from a context, since it does not bear the meaning on its shoulders but must be placed in a context. The text is theory-impregnated and theory-laden and its interpretation is flowing. Preunderstanding influences textual understanding to the same extent as in other areas of understanding and religious texts are not exempted from this ruling. The interpretation of texts is contingent on the arrived external data and subjected to contraction and expansion on account of questions that are posed to them. These data exhibit a manifest and profuse discrepancy. They may be of philosophical, historical or theological character or of a more specific character, such as linguistic or sociological.” (Sorūš 1999a:303-304).

Sorūš considers pre-understanding, or more correctly presuppositions, as the starting-point of textual understanding, even if he is not clear on the point of how the prejudices can be transcended aside from Popper’s theory of falsification. In contrast to Gadamer, he does not believe that ‘tradition’ is the only ground for the validity of prejudices since it fails to provide a critical norm as to the requirement of evaluating tradition.12

12. Gadamer (1989) speaks of tradition and historicality in terms of prejudices and what he has in mind is not just the subjective attitude of expectation and prejudgement but also the cultural formation, the social, political and intellectual constructions within which our encounter with the text occurs and which the text always unsettles.
Sorūš also believes that the possibility of dialogue between present and past cannot be taken for granted since the horizon of the original discourse disappears in interpretation. In his discussion on the poetry of Sa'dī, Sorūš (1996b:297), presumably influenced by Thomas Kuhn's ideas on scientific revolutions, considers meaning to be a paradigmatic phenomenon limited to clearly separated historical periods where the author’s intention is not embedded in meaning. Sorūš’s (1997:242) argument is, in other words, that while every interpretation follows a certain paradigm, there are no brute facts in contemporary hermeneutics since what is fixed in writing always frees itself for a new relationship.\footnote{For Sorūš's reference to Kuhn’s ideas, cf. Sorūš 1994:226.}

In his book Șerāthā-ye mostaqīm, Sorūš (1999d:169) calls to attention the contextual nature of interpretation that renders meaning relative due to its entanglement in formative contexts that are relational. He also asserts that, while language functions to reflect a representation of reality, it does not have a clearly demarcated structure containing symmetrical units and that metaphorical language opens new worlds, worlds of possible levels of meaning. Language at its highest level is open. Even the simplest sentence conveyed by the means of natural language must be interpreted, since words take their actual meaning from the connection with a given context and a given audience against the background of a given situation. He argues that the existence of multiple contextually situated interpretations maintains the sparkle of the originally revealed Koranic text. While this does not amount to saying that the Koran reveals its own being when it is presented in different interpretations, he acknowledges that these interpretations disseminate its multiple meaning, where the inexhaustible character of revelation finds its verification in textual ramifications:

“At the level of interpretation, the arena of the relationship between text and understanding, we are confronted with multiple meanings. The extraordinary variation and quantity of meaning informs us about the structure (of a text), which essentially is non-fixed and leads us to the affirmation of different meanings. In the world of text and symbolism, we are in truth essentially confronted with such a lack of fixed meaning. Even if we consent to the erudition that the ḥakīmān (sages) claim that they possess of the external world (i.e. “if something exists, it can be known”), their claim is objectionable in
the realm of textual analysis, since the inroad of metaphors and allegory into language is beyond the authority or decision of anyone. Language is in its essence metaphorical and it is impossible to communicate meaning without metaphors." (ibid.:191).

Since the text itself, as far as the Koran is concerned, never gives any clues to a correct reading or where language is intended to be metaphorical and where not, Sorūš (1999a:314-315) asserts that metaphors as well as meaning stem from the nature of interpretation and the interpreter’s presuppositions embedded in the process of understanding. Allegory is, in other words, inherent in the text and emerges in the context of interpretation, where the exercise of language is considered to be an internal semantic process in which new meanings can be created, and at the same time an outwardly directed referential process in which our linguistically mediated experience of reality can be changed. Interpretation in this broad sense is a process by which we use all the available contextual determinants to grasp the actual meaning of a given message in a given situation. But Sorūš restrains significantly from explaining what differentiates reading from interpretation and also from establishing a criterion to distinguish between those texts whose meaning is completely transparent and those whose meaning lies deeper than the surface meaning. While he suggests that language does not only refer to itself, he neglects to explain when interpretation is complete by acknowledging various modalities of meaning.

Whereas a large part of modern hermeneutics (from Heidegger to Gadamer and Ricoeur) develops hermeneutics to the range of ontology and maintains that a text only is understood by sharing a common linguistic horizon grounded in the ontological features of the subject matter of the text, Sorūš’s interpretative endeavour never enters the sphere of modern psychology or finite transhistorical consciousness or indulges in any lengthy discussions on objectivity or intentionality. For Sorūš, the anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of the text is an act of subjectivity, which does not proceed from the com-

14. In this respect, Gadamer’s (1989:432) position is essentially that what is produced by understanding is new and original, but the interpreter must not think that she or he is writing a new text but be open to the voice of tradition which reveals Being. He remains faithful to Heidegger’s idea that the intelligible Being is what is disclosed in an authentic act of understanding. What accedes to language in the play of text and interpreter is truth as the disclosure of Being. “Being that can be understood is language”. 
munality that binds us to the ‘tradition’ or participates in the decentred space covering the intention of the author. While the interpreter in a sense is decentred in the act of textual analysis, Sorûş does not adopt Heidegger’s idea of the ‘circle of understanding’, according to which interpretation is neither subjective nor objective but instead the interplay of the movement of the tradition and the movement of the interpreter. In contrast to Gadamer’s (1989:245) notion of the finite effective history consciousness that predetermines individual self-awareness as a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life, he never rules out the pursuit of objective knowledge and is indifferent to the historical horizons of the text and reader. Sorûş has more in common with Ricoeur’s (1976:2) idea that the author’s intention cannot stand outside the text as the criterion for interpreting the text. A text remains the construct of the human mind, since the author’s intention and the meaning of the text ceases to coincide in written discourse.

As the major differences between Gadamer and Sorûş can be found in their conceptions of the text, Sorûş’s position has more affinities with the fundamental Kantian principle of the subjective basis of understanding, which has no emphasis on the role of the past, i.e. affections, concepts and practices of a cultural heritage, in constituting present and future understanding. In the light of Popperian scientific method, Sorûş would also rather consider subjectivity as a process of becoming that never fully is. His subject is, in other words, a modern alienated subject, estranged from the objective and from his or her own divine nature. While Kant (1959) presented a model of the subject that reflects itself out of its own historicality, Sorûş’s notion of subject remains chained in the structural abyss of historical and horizontal contexts. While Sorûş’s reference to the Kantian distinction between noumenon and phenomenon suggests a representational mode of thinking (where meaning in some way corresponds to external reality), his view of human language demonstrates a critical attitude towards meaning and metaphysics as well as towards a structural function of the sacred.¹⁵ Language exposes a far-reaching ambivalence, not merely in symbolic usage, since linguistic description is complicated and multiple. While textual understanding in a sense is limited by the composition and structure of the text, this does not imply that textual meaning is uniform:

"The world of meaning is by definition pluralistic. It is only rarely that one single meaning appears in interpretation. The most important norm of textuality is plurality. As regards 'correct meaning', this type of meaning is produced when we use our full methodological comprehension of texts (i.e. methodological and rational capacity). 'Correct meaning' differs from 'true meaning' since texts do not possess any 'true meaning'. A text can have various correct meanings. Indeed, there are alien meanings and these are the meanings which are not presupposed by you and which are not necessarily wrong, either. The structural boundaries of the text do not provide all kinds of meaning but still the text does not have necessarily one single meaning." (Sorüs 1999d:192).

From a linguistic point of view, the clue to the variety of readings within the structural unity of the text is contingent on the existence of incoherence and contradiction within the text itself, "which is not the design or arrangement of anyone but belongs to the necessity of language itself" (ibid.:191). As far as Sorüs's hermeneutics is disinterested in deciphering any presumable original intentionality of authors, it represents an anti-Kantian perspective that is, nonconceptual and non-representational. In the quest for new paradigms, he actually attempts to extricate himself from the mode of representational thinking so characteristic for Enlightenment thought and rather seems to believe in historical condition as a constitutive element of meaning where past meaning only can be reconstructed in regard to historical conditions. In this case, he has also more similarities with the position of the contemporary Pakistani scholar Fazlur Rahman, who has denied the potential benefits of Gadamer's phenomenological hermeneutics and perceives interpretation merely as methodologically guided understanding and not as a consciousness of historical finitude that endeavours to fuse the horizons of the interpreter and his text. Sorüş (2001:5) shares Rahman's conviction that the crucial point of interpretation is to let a past text speak to the present situation from a universal perspective in order to emancipate human rationality from the authority of tradition as well as his belief that the universal meaning by content is ethical in nature.

While Sorüş does not explicitly discuss the question of language as a tool for human subjectivity, he rules out any transcendental ground for linguistic phenomena where past (tradition) and present (modernity) can have a dialogue on equal terms. While Sorüş's (1996b:167) assertion that the text is šāmet ('silent') has some affinities with Gadamer's
model of the dialogical nature of language, inspired by Platonic dialogue, where interpretation accordingly moves from what is said to what is unsaid within the text, he rejects the transcendental basis of infinite potentiality of meaning as the criterion for historical continuity of the text. In contrast to Gadamer’s notion of ontological ‘effective-historical consciousness’, which argues for a transcendent and ontological feature of the subject matter within the text that sheds light on the meaning of every textual understanding, Sorüš speaks of an ordinary historical consciousness of preconditioning that we can overcome by becoming aware of the presuppositions that govern our point of departure. In contrast to Gadamer, Sorüš tends to reduce the text to its interpretation by taking the particular context of the interpreter as the sole criterion for the appearance of textual meaning. Yet, the issue remains for Sorüš as to how subjective presuppositions are to be transcended after they have been put into play in the act of interpretation. While his logocentrism and belief in scientific objectivity, as well as his method of second-order epistemology, cannot easily be reconciled with the deconstructionist denial of any patterns of rational necessity (since the supplementary nature of reason suggests a non-rational origin of reason), his discourse is, however, not captive to an analysis of truth. In fact, he shares Derrida’s view that the difference between situations is the one and only starting-point for understanding, since the essence of meaning is not separate from the infinitely different possible situations in which it is understood:

“Indeed, our imagination and interpretations are conjectural, miscalculated, adaptable, relative, faulty, one-sided, misleading, partial, cultural-contingent and contradictory. This is precisely what the säheb-e vahy (‘possessor of revelation’, i.e. God) intended. We are imperfect human beings and our portion of truth is such. No human knowledge is sacred and religious knowledge is no exception to this rule.” (Sorüš 1999a:319).

Although Derrida, as well as Gadamer, insists that the text has no fixed meaning in rejecting any notion of a transcendental signified, Sorüš follows Derrida’s more radical step with respect to the problem of textual meaning. For Sorüš, it is not the linguistic community (via the reader) that determines the meaning of a text by means of ‘the fusion of horizons’, but is rather the temporality of language that makes any authentic understanding impossible. But while Sorüš, similar to Derrida, can
find no determined meanings in texts (for it makes no sense to speak about the meaning of a text apart from our reading of it), he takes into account in his theorising that texts have readers to a greater extent than Derrida, by arguing that no reading is context-free. Sorūš, whose thinking is fully part of the humanist tradition, shares neither Derrida’s (1978:292) idea of ‘play’ as a form of anti-humanism nor his venture “to pass beyond man and humanism”, even if Derrida (1988:125-127, 143-144) becomes more disposed to hermeneutical methods in his later works, such as Limited Inc.

**Postmodern ambiguities**

Due to the postmodernist criticism of universal reason, modernism is not any longer able to function as the doctrine, since the recognition of a host of local, historical and contingent reasons renders its discourse pluralistic. By asserting the intractable and arbitrary nature of all truth-claims, postmodernism reduces, so to say, all normative claims of Enlightenment modernism to the status of cultural and historical prejudices. It has hence become common within science as well as philosophy and the arts to speak of ‘postmodernism’. Unlike modernism, postmodernism appears to be no manifesto that one can consult so as to assure oneself that one has identified its ideas properly and the academic community is largely divided on the question of its precise nature. As suggested by the term itself, its perspective is not merely antimodernist sentiment, but the assessment that humanity can and must go beyond the modern.

As David Ray Griffin (1989:xii) argues, postmodernism refers essentially to two quite different positions in philosophical and theological circles, which both transcend the worldview that developed out of the Galilean-Cartesian-Baconian-Newtonian science. On the one hand, there is the deconstructive or eliminative postmodernism, closely related to the literary-artistic and variously inspired by pragmatism, physicalism, Wittgenstein, Derrida, Foucault and other French philosophers. Their work draws upon Marxist, Freudian and Nietzschean insights concerning the dependence of consciousness upon its material conditions and is guided by Kant’s search for the conditions of possibility underlying subjective experience. While this interpretation overcomes modernism through an anti-worldview that “deconstructs or eliminates the ingredients necessary for a worldview such as God, self, purpose,
meaning, real world and truth as correspondence” and hence commonly issues in relativism and nihilism, the second form of postmodernism, called constructive or revisionary, on the other hand, seeks to overcome the modern worldview as such, yet by means of, “constructing a new worldview through a revisionary of modern premises and traditional concepts” (Griffin 1989:xii). From this perspective, postmodernism is not of necessity organically divorced from modernism, despite its specific characteristics such as the questioning of Enlightenment modernism, a spirit of subjectivism, a scepticism and a relativist rejection of final answers. As a form of high modernity, postmodernism is rather the current creed and philosophy of global modernity, in the sense that its epistemic pluralism and relativism are intended to apply as much within the Western world as other parts of the globe. In this context, some scholars, such as Ninian Smart (1998:87) and Akbar Ahmed (1992), have interpreted postmodernism as the reinvention of premodern traditions rather than detraditionalisation per se, that is, a return to the premodern past and a recovery of religious traditions prior to modernity.

While Sorūş’s affinities with postmodern thought are closest in the sphere of hermeneutics, his attitude to some of its major forms, such as deconstructionism, is quite ambiguous. In his book Farbetar az ĭde’oloţǐ (Loftier than ideology), Sorūş criticises postmodern (read deconstructionist) thought from the angle of Popperian scientific method. He rejects relativist (i.e. non-realist) approaches to knowledge, which he believes signals the death of epistemology with their radical doubt and are no longer doing proper epistemology. He disapproves of the postmodern attempt to divorce God from the sphere of human thought and supposes that the postmodernist critique of reason must be considered in the historical context of anti-scientism (Sorūş 1996a:256). While Sorūş (1996a:361) acknowledges that the paradox of modernism is that “it knows that certainty is unattainable but still wants to have it”, neither foundationalism nor deconstructionism seem to be genuine options for him. His epistemological rejection of any foundational pieces of knowledge and the belief that reality is only accessible to us in

16. Foundationalism has taken many different forms with philosophers disagreeing over both the nature of the basic beliefs and their relationship to non-basic, derived ones and was originally a rebuttal of Descartes’ notion of ‘hyperbolic doubt’. Common to all classical versions, foundationalism is the internalist requirement that the justification for a belief must be cognitively accessible to the believer. Generally, one counts three major divisions of foundationalism: the rationalist (essayed by Descartes himself), the empiricist (Locke) and the commonsenseist (Russell and Reid).
terms of how we interpret it (which supposes that there is no reality to be independently compared to our understanding) does in fact not necessarily imply deconstruction, since Popper's principle of falsification also rejects foundationalism. Referring to Rorty's saying that "While Reason replaced God, today we have no God, no Reason and nothing else", Sorūš (1996a:359) concludes that postmodernist philosophy, in its attempts to deconstruct reality has been forced to bring back the premodern modes of expression. As late as 1992, Sorūš (ibid.:363) actually considered mysticism the only secure escape out of the traps of deconstructionist relativism by claiming that "only one way remains and that is to seek shelter among the theosophers". However much Sorūš departs from the traditional metaphysical foundation of philosophical speculation, he revisits the Persian theosophical tradition to interpret its teachings in a non-cognitive sense to signify the mysteriousness of God.

Sorūš's viewpoint on deconstructionism gives the impression that if all knowledge, as Foucault (1977:163) suggests, lacks a "right, even in the act of knowing, to truth or foundation for truth", then there is no longer any meaning of the revealed texts as sources of knowledge. Sorūš disapproves of Foucault's Nietzschean attitude to epistemology which has nothing optimistic to say, if it does not (as Richard Rorty seems to suggests) avoid epistemology altogether in a mistaken attempt to make archaeology the successor subject to epistemology.17 Whereas Nietzsche and his successors abandoned the striving for objectivity or any of its substitutes and the intuition of one truth, Sorūš attempts to defend objectivity by re-describing and grounding a plurality of probable truths. In contrast to Foucault, who is interested in how power produces the subject, Sorūš (1996a:91) considers the aspiration to bring about inter-subjective scientific objectivity a noble one, which implies that all knowledge claims also are caught up by accidental error at the level of 'construction':

The question of objectivity in science concerns whether our human mental faculty generates systematic error or not. It does not concern whether man makes errors at all. The meaning of objective knowledge is not that knowledge corresponds to the external phenomenon nor the presence or the absence of error in knowledge. Objectivity in knowledge means that we are not caught by systematic error at the

level of construction of knowledge. Objectivity is comprised therefore of truth as well as falsehood. It is possible that our perception is objective without being true.

In his book *Râzdânî va rowšanfekrî va dîndârî* (Secret-knowing, intellectualism and religious conviction), Sorûş is occupied with the question of the distribution of knowledge and information as a major component of power. Discussing the ideas of Foucault and Habermas, he argues that modern life corresponds to the nature of the information at disposal in modernity and suggests that this information undoubtedly affects the realm of, for instance, politics and government. In this respect, he refers, for instance, to the fact that the French revolution was expedited by means of clandestine leaflets, the Iranian Constitutional revolution by telegraph wires and the most recent Iranian revolution by audiocassettes. While he does not adopt Foucault’s concept of power, he seems prepared to go along with the French philosopher insofar as the social and historical dimensions of knowledge are concerned:

“Although science and power have always gone hand in hand in the relationship between the two has now become much stronger and more extensive. This is why people speak of *sâktan-e haqlqat* (truth as construction) and *'etebarl budan-e haqlqat* (truth as convention). The conventionality of truth means that we define truth and influence people’s consciousness in such a way as to make them see something as true and something else as false. It is in this context that Foucault’s theory about truth-power comes to light and takes meaning. He claims that truth is inextricably intertwined with power. Habermas put forward a similar position in one of his major works, *Knowledge and human interest*, where he argues that knowledge is underpinned by human interests and that the nature of knowledge or scientific investigation varies depending on whether the underlying interest is understanding, control or emancipation. Knowledge bent on understanding is interpretative; knowledge bent on control is empirical and knowledge bent on emancipation is critical. It is this sense that Habermas speaks of knowledge-constitutive human interests. Values are, in other words, deeply ingrained in modern knowledge. Values are tied up with power.” (Sorûş 1999c:3-4).

As opposed to his strong criticism of deconstructionism (which is not the only represented version of postmodernism), Sorûş is more affirma-
tive to the phenomenon of postmodernism in a 1999 interview with the journal *Kīvān* (‘Source’) on the question of “Religion, tolerance and civilisation”. He is positive to the postmodernist critic of modern rationality that places universal reason under dispute and similarly evinces all signs of having been chastened by the tyranny of the arrogant knight of modern rationality. Sorūš (1999b:28) suggests that “the boundaries of reason are more accurately understood in the postmodern condition” in the sense that “postmodernism represents a revolt against the narcissism of rationality”. While acknowledging that universalism is necessary in the construction of universal ethics and laws such as the Declaration of human rights, he asserts that the contribution of postmodernism to pluralism and tolerance as well as its criticism of the superiority of Reason, is beneficial. “All the stress that postmodernism lays on pluralism and reason’s servitude to interests is found among the remaining favours of postmodernism” (ibid.:28-29). He does not, however, reflect upon Derrida’s assertion that the Enlightenment conception of reason tends to be self-legitimising because it takes one historically and culturally specific notion of reason as its universal standard for all forms of reason. This is a common target of contemporary Islamic criticism concerning the Enlightenment project. Many Islamic intellectuals consider the identification of universal structures of human existence as revealed solely in Western philosophy as a major obstacle to inter-cultural dialogue on equal terms.18

By announcing the decline of the legitimacy of the traditional foundational theory (or, in Lyotard’s words, the meta-narrative) of traditional Islamic philosophy of science, Sorūš abandons the absolute standards and universal categories of the traditional epistemic schemes in favour of locally, historically contextualised types of scientific inquiries. In his book *Bast-e taʃrobe-ye nabavī* (Expansion of prophetic experience), he advocates a deconstructionist method in the endeavour of separating the substances of religion from the accidentals, which in actual fact is the foremost requisite of his redefinition of *ejtehād* (‘independent reasoning’). He believes deconstruction to be the most conclusive method for dismantling the skeleton structure of religion and interpreting the objec-

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18. Cf. Ahmed 1992, al-Attas 1985, Qadir 1988, etc. In this respect, Derrida (1998:12) argues that Judaism and Islam, by recalling monotheism at all costs are “still alien enough at the heart of Graeco-Christian, Pagano-Christian Europe” to alienate themselves from a Western modernity that “signifies the death of God” or “the Christianisation of the world”.
tives of Islamic law in the present-day, increasingly unstable and unpredictable world:

"We have a number of necessary initial and judgmental instruments for entering the setting of religion and contemplating on the exterior of religion: To consider the gradual and historical development of religion and religious texts, to destroy and to split apart its skeleton structure (deconstruction), to determine quasi-preliminary conditions and counter factuals, to infer the maqāṣed-e šarī‘i (objectives of religious law), to deduce the motives of law, to discover the means and the channels of the periodical development of religion and the junctions interfering therein, to expurgate and to determine our expectations of religion and to test the refutability or irrefutability of theoretical and practical elements of šarī‘at" (Sorūs 1999a:54).

In this respect, Sorūš’s position is characterised by a loss of certainty and a ‘God’s eye point of view’ which also decentralises the traditional Unitarian standard of culture, art, ethics and belief. But still, he never embarks on the methodological exercise of exposing and dismantling the various aspects of religious tradition by reference to the Derridean deconstructionist method, but rather refers to the established šarī‘at in order to expand beyond it by reference to ejtēhād, even if it is not clear to what extent he makes a distinction between ejtēhād and interpretation in the more general sense. In this respect, the fragmentary appeal in his writings to deconstructionism is deficient in providing a hardy arsenal of deconstructive tools.

The fact that Sorūš (1999b:28-29) in the above article in Klyān considers Habermas’ work Knowledge and human interest as a work that can be related to postmodernism suggests that his definition of postmodernism in this context is very much connected to the recognition of pluralism as a natural part of human rationality and thought. In contrast to the fundamental uncertainties of the deconstructionism of Foucault (1972:229) concerning human knowledge, whose aim is to “question our will to truth, to restore to discourse its character as an event, and to abolish sovereignty of the signifier”, Sorūš does not agree that all foundations of epistemology have been shown to be unreliable. While Sorūš in his lectures on ejtēhād advocates deconstruction at the level of methodology, writers like Derrida (1987:390) deny that deconstruction is a method since it is not reductive like an ordinary method, whether it is primary or derived. Deconstructionism cannot, however, be a com-
plete non-method as it is not singular and homogenous nor does it advocate uncontrollable free-play.

Similar to Sorüs’s epistemology, deconstruction turns to hermeneutics, albeit poststructuralist, in the sense of disarranging the construction of terms in a sentence and disassembling the parts of the whole. Its purpose is to locate an instance of otherness within a text, an otherness that reflects logocentric conceptuality, and then to deconstruct this conceptuality from the standpoint of alterity (Derrida 1987:387-388). Sorüş’s affinities with postmodern thought are in fact closest in the realm of hermeneutics, where the meanings and significance of texts are not limited to those meanings that conventional historical criticism is designed to recover. Similar to Derrida’s deconstructionism, he believes that language refers only to itself rather than to a transparent extratextual reality and asserts multiple conflicting interpretations of a text. He bases such interpretations on the philosophical, political or social implications of the use of the language in the text rather than on the author’s intention. What creates problems for hermeneutics is language itself, which is not, as the later Heidegger claimed, the ‘house of being’, but humanly constructed. The text is therefore not simply a historical source that reduces meaning to the nexus of historical relationships but rather results from the creative interaction of the reading subject with the text. Textual meaning is the result of interpretation that is generated in the space where the text is put to play so that when “a component of this collection (i.e. mental and scientific capital of the interpreter) changes, the result of this formation and relation of components (i.e. meaning and sense) will also change.” (Sorüş 1996b:182).

In his Șerâthâ-ye mostaqim, Sorüş argues that semantic meaning is relative in relation to the knowledge and comprehension of the interpreter, as there is no original and hidden meaning present in the text. He also argues that hermeneutical divergence is not due to the structure of the text but rather is contingent on the interpreting subject in an absolute sense. By claiming that uncertainty and ambiguity is an attribute of all human language and linguistic communication, including revealed texts, he downgrades textual meaning to subjective understanding:

“Meaning is identical to meaning of understanding. The variety of human minds is identical to the diversity of acquired data. The acquired data comprise the preconditions and presuppositions of meaning. The diversity of meanings of a text, which are located in the human mind, depend therefore in the end on the diversity of human
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minds. The essence of the fact that the range of human minds construct different meanings of a single text is basically that the text is not the measure of multiplicity of meanings but rather gives the option of all possible meanings.” (Sorūš 1999d:195).19

Similar to contemporary postmodernism, Sorūš also seeks to move beyond the conventional historical paradigm of tradition, whether this tradition is Enlightenment, modernity, or premodernity. He is essentially sceptical about the recovery of meaning, since the acquisition of valid knowledge is more complex than the ordinary inductive reasoning of common man. In this respect, he takes the non-realist approach to interpretation and denies the existence of an objective, external world outside the text. While the objects are not as privileged as in premodernity, the subject is not as privileged as in Enlightenment modernism either. Sorūš claims that the text itself cannot communicate any intention but is contingent upon external commodities in the sense that what matters are relations and contexts which constantly shift. In this respect, he wishes, similar to Derrida (1998:158) to empty the ‘presence’ out of the text, approving the latter’s maxim Il n’y a pas de hors-text (‘there is nothing beyond the text’). As Sorūş (1999e) argues, there is no exit from the labyrinth of a text, no finished or decidable meaning:

“My writings are şāmet and remain insignificant until someone reads them. The readers are the subjects, the individual nāteqīn (speakers) of my ideas and thought. There is nothing stable outside the text. Any attempt to recover the intention of the author is in vain. Interpretation is endless.”

Textuality is not only true of the ‘object’ of study but also true of the ‘subject’ that studies. As the text possesses a horizon of indefinite meanings, the neat distinction between subject and object is obliterated, something which also erases the aim of providing objective descriptions. But it seems difficult to see how the inaugurating of an open-ended indefiniteness of textuality, fraught with ambiguities, would provide a way out of the closure of knowledge. The death of the author in Sorūş’s thought is not merely the concluding recognition of the physical absence of the author in the process of interpretation but rather the affirmation of the ultimate metaphysical separation between the text and

its author. That is to say, while the text is the product of the author, the interpretation is that of the reader. Even a signature or a declaration left by the author in the text has no authority for its interpretation, since these are elements of the text that are subject to further interpretation.

In the sense that meaning is solely a function of the reader and interpretation a reflection of the interpreter’s response, Sorūş is critical to the intentionality so characteristic of Enlightenment thought that would support the original intentionality of the sacred as it is revealed in the world. The initial hermeneutical task of the interpreter is, in his view, not to grasp the intentional structure of the sacred by imaginatively recreating the conditions of a sacred manifestation but rather to make it applicable to new endless contexts where the non-religious external data is projected on the text. By distinguishing faith from reason, his epistemological confessions, while not sceptical in the religious sense, suggest no metaphysical position or any structural position for consciousness that would give certainty and hermeneutical plausibility to the interpretation of the religious phenomenon. In Sorūş’s view, there can be no theology of the text since the text is the trace that escapes onto-theological closure even as it inscribes it. By emphasising the non-identity or non-presence that lies at the heart of the Koran or any other scriptural identity, his hermeneutics is not exegesis proper, aimed at drawing (or leading) the truth out of the text but a form of eisegesis that imposes the reader’s beliefs upon or reads them into the text.

Sorūş’s recent ‘turn to the reader’ is, indeed, the application of Kant’s ‘turn to the subject’, where there is, epistemologically speaking, no human escape from her/his own subjectivity and consciousness. In contrast to premodern philosophy, which always maintained that the notions of meaning and truth are intimately related, his relativistic notion of truth includes a metaphysical dichotomy between text and meaning that denies the possibility of true knowledge by rejecting certain meaning, as there are only infinitely possible versions of truth which are also separable from the ‘meta-narrative’ of Islamic tradition. His thought has not merely an inherent pluralistic and subjectivist character but also invokes a decentralisation that denies any position of the symbolism of the centre in the philosophical mode of thinking as, for instance, was the case with the traditional Islamic philosophy, which considered metaphysics as a natural disposition of the philosophical thinker because of the very nature of the intellect. By rejecting that the transcendent and universal referent of the Enlightenment philosophy of Descartes and Kant would provide guidance regarding the ultimate
meaning of human existence and the goal of human history, it is furthmore not an accident that his epistemological discourse gives way to a hermeneutic plurality of immanent, historically contingent and ultimately normless reasons and actualities which are intimately bound up with specific human contexts. The crisis of meaning, which is one of the predominant themes in Sorüş’s thought, is hence nothing but an inevitable consequence of the impoverishment of reason, the denial of its transcendence, which is an outcome of the historicisation of the scientific discourse.

But there is still a vast distance between Sorüş and the deconstructionism of Derrida, who is more concerned with using the tools of metaphysics against itself. Derrida is a post-metaphysical thinker for whom the reality-appearance distinction has entirely lost its hegemony over human thought. By pushing philosophy to its limits, he writes about transcendence and metaphysics on the margins of the Western philosophical tradition. While Sorüş rejects Husserl’s as well as Kant’s notion of transcendence, which only grasps the realm of the possible and claims that the grasp is total, he acknowledges Popper’s conviction that science and epistemology is a noble quest and that the effort to acquire inter-subjective objectivity in the domain of human knowledge must not be given up. In contrast to deconstructionism, which originally is a definite, negative and critical reaction to the intellectual projects of romantic idealistic and Enlightenment representational modes of thinking, Sorüş is not primarily reacting against the background of Enlightenment modernism but against the normative wisdom and paradigm of traditional Islam in its entirety. In contrast to deconstructionism, Sorüş’s religious intellectual background, similar to that of Kant, also makes him hopeful about the fate of humankind. He has faith in the gradual development towards a future characterised by more human ideals and, more importantly, he is deeply concerned about the relation between virtue and happiness (Sorus 1995:2).

Conclusions

Sorus’s thought constitutes a paradigm-shift in Shī’ī hermeneutical reflection. It does not only contest the traditional Islamic belief in epistemic certainty by considering all human knowledge, religious as well as ‘secular’, as hypothetical and conjectural at best. It transcends also the typical modernists’ ideological submission for rational criticism in
the name of truth by rejecting any unshakable foundations on which to adjudicate claims of justified true knowledge and hence also of meaning. Representing the most innovant ‘avant-garde’ thought in contemporary Shi‘î Islam, Sorūş simply argues that the temporality of understanding that merges with its contextuality points out both the finitude and reflexivity of human understanding. To conclude, it is tempting to think of Sorūş as a constructive or revisionary postmodernist who seeks to overcome the modern worldview by means of constructing a new worldview through a revision of modern premises and traditional concepts. Unlike deconstructionism, which overcomes modernism through an anti-worldview, he has not abandoned modern philosophy’s goal of formulating rationality and universality, and he does not altogether reject or eliminate the ingredients necessary for a worldview (God, self, purpose, meaning, real world, truth as correspondence, etc). By considering the contribution of postmodernism to pluralism, tolerance and its criticism of the superiority of reason as beneficial, he is essentially involved with the question of what to do next, given that in central ways modern philosophy has reached a state of exhaustion. By adopting deconstruction at the level of methodology in his lectures on ejtehād, it is evident that his ideas comprise a revision of the epistemic premises of Enlightenment modernism. Sorūş’s thought constitutes the flowering of the deepest impulse in the modern project and represents in many respects a loss of faith in Enlightenment modernism, a spirit of subjectivism and pluralism. His religious discourse is hence situated in opposition to the ‘settled hegemony’ and ‘objective certitude’ of the meta-narrative of Islamic tradition. At the entry to the twenty-first century, Islam is again witnessing the advent of new critical discourses from within its own modes of articulation.

Selected bibliography

The Hermeneutics of post-modern Islam:


(1999e) Interview with the author, Tehran, 26 October.


‘Alī Šarī‘atī and Kavīr

Claus V. Pedersen

‘Alī Šarī‘atī (1933-77) has been one of the most influential ideologist in modern Iran. His thoughts, which draw heavily on modern Islamist discourse, had without doubt an impact on the outcome of the Iranian, Islamic revolution of 1978-79.¹ He was from a family with a long line of religious dignitaries, and he studied both in Iran, Mashhad, and abroad, Paris, where he obtained his degree in the field of social sciences. His father belonged to the, at that time, new branch of Islamist thinkers that tried to make Islam compatible with modern science and Marxist ideology.²

When I was in Iran in the spring of 1999 I stayed in Shiraz for a couple of days. One day walking around in the small streets near the Bāzār-e Vakīl I caught sight of the almost unreadable sign “Book shop” on a small house. I entered only to find that it had just a couple of shelves of old magazines and popular novels. I was about to leave when I suddenly discovered a book, on the back of which was written Kavīr (i.e. “desert”) and the name of its author, Doctor ‘Alī Šarī‘atī. I purchased the book, and that same night and the following nights I read the first chapters.

I should mention that this was before I had read Ali Rahnema’s splendid biography of ‘Alī Šarī‘atī³ and at a time when my knowledge of ‘Alī Šarī‘atī’s writings and ideas was confined to his so called “Islamist” works – for instance Eslām-šenāsī – and some of his speeches.⁴ The reason why I mention this is that my first thought, after having read

3. See note 2 above.
a bit of *Kavîr*, was that it must be a forgery. At that time I knew ʿAlī Šarīʿatī as a Marxist ideologist with a tinge of existentialism who, bluntly speaking, dressed his ideology up in religious terminology. As I understood it, religion *per se* and metaphysics did not mean much to ʿAlī Šarīʿatī. The value of modern science and new approaches to religion, in his case Twelver-Shiʿī Islam, was what ʿAlī Šarīʿatī tried to teach his audiences.

In *Kavîr* it is as if a different man than ʿAlī Šarīʿatī is speaking. But it is not, for the *Kavîr* I bought in Shiraz was certainly not a forgery. It was just another side of ʿAlī Šarīʿatī, which others probably knew of, and the importance of which Ali Rahnema certainly demonstrates that he is aware of in his book on ʿAlī Šarīʿatī.

In the following I will present parts of *Kavîr* and the general outlook on life it contains.

The edition of *Kavîr* in my possession, the second edition it appears, contains thirteen chapters and two introductions (*moqaddame*). The chapters are probably written in the mid-sixties and published a little later. Šarīʿatī insisted that these writings, these chapters, belong to a specific genre. It is true that some of them, or rather, parts of some of the chapters look and sound like the ecstatic words or poems of the Sufis, the ʿṣâḥīḥyyāt. But it is very difficult to keep up the idea of a unifying poetic genre in Šarīʿatī’s *Kavîr*. One would rather think of it as a diary in which Šarīʿatī writes his most secret thoughts. In the extended introduction to the second (?) edition of *Kavîr* Šarīʿatī writes that the book is not an ordinary book or article but “the most confidential of letters which we write to ‘no one’...”. This gives cause to think that Šarīʿatī is in fact writing to himself – the “no one” – to know himself, and only a few lines later he talks about *Kavîr* as the book in which

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5. See my *World View in Pre-Revolutionary Iran*, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002, pp. 188-197, about Šarīʿatī’s world view.
7. Again there is no date (or place) of print, but there is a subtitle to *Kavîr*: “revised and with the author’s latest corrections”. The second introduction of two in this edition is dated 9th of Esfand 1348 (28th of February 1970).
9. Ibid., p. 145 and note 11 on the same page. Šarīʿatī calls the genre for *Kavîrīyyāt* on page noh (9) of *Kavîr*, the first page of the second introduction.
11. صمیمی ترین نامه هایی که به هیچکس می نویسی.», p. bist-o-yek (21).
"...the lonely soul in exile in this desert talks with itself...". Nevertheless, Kavir is a book published for an audience so should we really believe Šarī'atī? It is as if even Šarī'atī himself does not trust his own words, because on the same page he says that a text is never “free”, it is always conditioned by the title (i.e. the subject) of the text and its recipients that is the readers. I will return to this paradox later on.

Before examining Kavir I would like to quote Šarī'atī on a couple of occasions which are typical of Šarī'atī and his political and ideological writings from the same period, that is, the sixties. This is done in order to show, later on, why I originally thought that Kavir could not be from Šarī'atī’s pen. In “Approaches to the Understanding of Islam” Šarī'atī states:

“If today the Muslims are transforming their mosques into centers of activity and are drawing up plans for the instruction of the masses, on the twin bases of the Qur’an and history, they will have laid the firmest foundation possible for a great intellectual expansion and development.”

and

“Islam is not a religion based solely on the mystic intuition of man and restricted to the relationship between man and God; this is merely one dimension of the religion of Islam... Another dimension of this religion is the question of man’s life on earth. In order to study this dimension, use must be made of the methods that have been established in the human sciences of today. Then, too, Islam is a religion that has built a society and a civilization; in order to study these, the methods of history and sociology must be used.”

12. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
13. مخاطب also means “the one you talk with”.
In these two quotations it is clear that Šarīʿatī insists that religion is a starting point for political action, an intellectual endeavour, concerned with the life on earth and not “based solely on the mystic intuition of man and restricted to the relationship between man and God.” This I will ask the reader to bear in mind until we reach the conclusion of the paper.

But what is Kavīr, then? Kavīr, the desert, is both an actual place and a symbol. The desert is the place where you can be alone, left to yourself, isolated from the ordinary mundane world; the place where nothing grows except for thoughts and fantasies. It is also, however, symbolically speaking, the place where we are reminded that this world is void of meaning, but also the place where God is present.16

As a matter of fact the desert is the place where prophets received their revelations and from which they brought their divine messages about the true meaning of life to the cities. It is the place from which the blue sky is seen most clearly reminding one of God’s abode, Paradise. The desert, then, is the actual place where you can find yourself in solitude, but also the barren world which symbolises death and the hereafter, with a way wide open up to the blue sky and Paradise above.17

In the first chapter, the title of which is also Kavīr, Šarīʿatī recollects the summer holidays of his childhood which were spent in a small village, Mazīnān, situated at the edge of the desert in Khorāsān. The village is two things: the Neyestān – with an allusion to Rūmī – from which he is cut off most of the year (living in the materialistic and morally depraved city, in Šarīʿatī’s case Mashhad), and the place of the nīstān, Šarīʿatī’s deceased forefathers.18 This bears witness to an obvious resemblance between Šarīʿatī’s ideas expressed in Kavīr and the philosophy of erfān, the underlying thought pattern of Persian Sufism.

In Kavīr Šarīʿatī takes great pride in the fact that he belongs to a family of religious scholars and ascetics who chose to live in isolation in the desert, and whose lives were surrounded by an aura of holiness and whom the village people believed to be able to perform miracles (karāmāt).19 Of himself and one of his ancestors Šarīʿatī says that

17. Ibid., pp. 19-21.
18. Ibid., pp. 17-18, where Šarīʿatī plays a pun on the Persian word نیستان, neyestān, "rush bed", and makes a new word out of it (by playing with the vocalisation), nīstān, which in this special context means, I believe, the ‘deceased ones’.
19. Ibid., pp. 6-8.
“eighty years ago, half a century before I came into this world, I felt my presence in him. Surely I was in his soul, his pulse, his blood.”

At times Šarī'atī digresses from the description of Mazīnān and the desert. The most conspicuous digressions are those where Šarī'atī scorns the modern obsession with science, science which takes religious feeling out of man’s perception of the world and its Creator. One example of this is Šarī'atī’s recollection of an incident in school. As a child he had been taught and believed that the Milky Way was Imam ‘Ali’s road to Mecca, but as he explained this in class he was ridiculed by his teacher who gave him the correct, scientific explanation severing the young Šarī'atī’s intimate and metaphysical connection to the heaven above. The adult Šarī'atī proceeds to say that “reason” (‘aql) kills man’s, that is, the child’s feeling and religiously inspired instinctive understanding of the God-given beauty of nature, and, in addition to that, that the beauty of the rising sun or a flower cannot be appreciated at close range — that is, in the clear cold light of science — a fact that “reason” never will be able to grasp. Here again Šarī'atī expresses a key notion of the Sufis, namely that the world, beauty and truth only can be understood intuitively through the eye of the heart, češm-e del, through illumination.

Mazīnān and the desert are in Šarī'atī’s memory the lost Paradise, and this topic is given a universal perspective in the last chapter of Kavīr, “God-like man in exile”. Man, in all cultures of the world, feels estranged from the world, Šarī'atī says, because he is akin to the Creator. Man aspires to something higher, to God’s heaven the birthplace of man’s soul. This world, although created by God, is not perfect. Only in a state of sorrow, loneliness and emptiness, that is, in the desert, can one free oneself from the material world and set out for the behešt-e gomsode, Paradise Lost, also named ‘alām-e ġeyb, the hidden world, by Šarī'atī.

20. Ibid., p. 9.
21. Ibid., p. 23.
22. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
23. “‘ آسان خداوگونه ای در تبعید”
25. Ibid., p. 307, in the footnotes.
On the journey towards Paradise there are, says Šarī'atī, three “helpers”.26 The first and most important is religion. Religion purifies man and enables him to return to God and Paradise. The second is 'erfān which can make man discover himself, his identity, and free himself of the the ties that bind him to this world. In a way, 'erfān, in Šarī'atī's understanding, is a mixture of the Sufi path and its stations on the way to perfection and the “know yourself” of modern existentialism. The last of the three is art, by which is meant literature, which to Šarī'atī is man’s expression of his dissatisfaction with this world and the attempt to give the world what it lacks, to beautify the world. The inferiority of the arts is obvious as Šarī'atī states that the arts are the window in the worldly prison while 'erfān and religion is the door out.27

The first and the last chapter of Kavīr are biographical and theoretical respectively. With occasional criticism of the life in the city and the modern world order. In contrast, chapter nine, the longest and maybe most complicated chapter, entitled “Temple”,28 is personal, emotional and ecstatic resembling the šahīyyāt mentioned above. The one word title is clearly a symbol, but what “temple” stands for is not quite clear. It might be the symbol of the inner state of Šarī'atī – feeling at ease with himself, having found himself, the truth and God – but it could also be a station on the way to that same state.

Almost the whole chapter is constructed as a Bildungsroman in which the plot seems to develop out of a dream. Šarī'atī is in the beginning restless, dissatisfied and unable to tell who he is. He lives in the burning sunlight, but then the night talks to him in mysterious ways and slowly conquers his world.29 Then, all of a sudden, a huge fire breaks out and burns up 23 rows of 365 black tents on a plain, probably the first 23 years of Šarī'atī’s life (the 365 tents being the days of the year).30 Then, again suddenly, the fire turns into red roses and, Šarī'atī says, after 15 years of endeavour he finds the way into the light, compared to Nirvana, prophetic revelations, etc.31 Every time the sudden changes in plot occur the language of the text is intensified, becomes

27. Ibid., p. 311.
29. Ibid., pp. 182-189.
30. Ibid., p. 190.
31. Ibid., pp. 206-207.
ecstatic. One example is the place just before the fire breaks out where an almost zekr-like passage begins with the same couple of lines continuing for almost a whole page:

I see this chapter as an allegory of Šarīʿatī’s life, at least his inner life. After a period of an active political life, he feels out of touch with his inner self, finds shelter in the emptiness of the dark night (which bears resemblance to the desert and is compared to death by Šarīʿatī), is illuminated and finally finds inner peace symbolised by the red roses and the clear light. This is of course not an actual description of Šarīʿatī’s life, as he continued his political activities until his death.

A little later in the chapter the vision of the final state of the spiritual development is presented, again in ecstatic words. Being in a temple, a beautiful yet simple mosque, Šarīʿatī says that he has found himself, and that the life after death has begun. The spirit of the holy place has penetrated him, which he corrects to: “No, my spirit has filled the temple, I am the temple.”

I began by saying that I found nothing truly religious in Šarīʿatī’s political writings, except for the rhetoric. Yet, this is not at all the case in Kavīr. I hope to have shown that in Kavīr we meet a truly religious ʿAli Šarīʿatī with an inclination to ḍerfān. I hope to have shown how different the content of Kavīr is in comparison with the intellectualism, worldliness and anti-mystical notions of the quotations from “Approaches to the understanding of Islam” above. The difference is such that at first it made me doubt that Kavīr could have been written by Šarīʿatī.

A final word on the fact that Šarīʿatī considers Kavīr a private conversation with the “self” and at the same time presents the book to the

32. Ibid., p. 189. “The night hovered over my head, and the plain stretched out before my feet, and the road, in front of me, waited for every step I would take, and I, staring at the darkness, walked and walked, and the night still hovered over my head and the plain...”
33. Ibid., pp. 182-183.
34. Ibid., p. 210ff.
35. Ibid., p. 214.
world. I think that Kavīr is both the private conversation with the “self” and Šarī‘atī’s wish to preserve his, to him, true identity for posterity. He was very proud of his ancestors, who were famous ascetics, and through Kavīr he could recreate himself in their picture and present a different image of himself to his fellow countrymen. As Šarī‘atī himself says in Kavīr (albeit in another connection and using the pen name Chandel):

“....words which are bits and pieces of man’s existence... they [the words] are always in search of their recipient مخاطب if they find him/her, they will be found...”

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36. For the use of this pen name and alter ego, see Rahnema, op. cit., p. 161ff.
37. Kavīr, pp. 296-297, from the chapter with the title “Hymn to Creation”.
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