Zoroastrian Rituals in Context

Edited by
Michael Stausberg

BRILL

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ZOROASTRIAN RITUALS
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EDITED BY

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Heidelberg, July 2003   Michael Stausberg

CONTEXTUALIZING THE CONTEXTS.
ON THE STUDY OF ZOROASTRIAN RITUALS

Michael Stausberg

Rituals and the debate on the origins of Zoroastrianism; Models and comparisons—theories and descriptions; Ritual networks and sequences; Priestly and lay-rituals; Congregational rituals and the construction of ritual communities; Imaginations and interactions

Students of Zoroastrianism generally agree that rituals are of paramount importance in that religion. Surprisingly though, except for a few comprehensive studies written by Zoroastrian priests, in particular the book *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* by (Ervad Shams-ul-Ulama Dr. h.c. Sir) Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, first published in 1922 (second edition 1937, reprinted several times afterwards), but still regarded as the classic study,[1] as well as a few contributions to the study of single rituals,[2] this volume may claim to be the first ever collective attempt devoted to that issue.[3]

A guiding principle in approaching the subject is that rituals need to be studied not in isolation, as if they were time- and spaceless entities, but in context. However, just as there is not just one text to be studied in isolation, the contributions gathered in this volume amply attest that there is not just one context to be addressed either. From a historical and geographical perspective, texts and contexts studied in these pages range from antiquity to modernity, all the way from Japan, China, India, Iran, Europe to California. They touch on questions of gender and professional religion (priesthood/lay-people) and are placed in a broad range of social and local settings: from the royal court to the needy, from the rural

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[1] An abridged version of this book (with an extensive introduction) has been prepared by J.K. Choksy and F.M. Kotwal but is still awaiting publication. On Modi see M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 106–108.

[2] Most importantly: F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Studia Iranica, Cahier 8; Paris, 1991).

[3] M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale*, vol. 3 (forthcoming [Stuttgart]) presents an overview of (most) rituals still practiced in living Zoroastrianism.

village to the urban metropolis, from the domestic to the public. What is more, the particular context of each ritual performance makes it a distinctive event.

Apart from the different contexts studied by scholars, there are different discursive contexts in scholarship that need to be taken into consideration. One of these is the usual problem of boundaries between the academic disciplines that are mostly involved in the study of Zoroastrian rituals, such as Iranian philology, ethnology, philosophy, and the history of religions or 'Religionswissenschaft'. Each discipline cultivates a number of specific methods of inquiry, analytical styles, strategies of legitimation, and forms of representational rhetoric. However, occasionally, one finds different paradigms, explicit or implicit theoretical assumptions, models, and concepts at work even within one and the same discipline. These can lead the investigation in different—and possibly even contradictory—directions.[4]

Furthermore, the study of Zoroastrian rituals has a history linking it to the specific framework of Zoroastrian studies and its main debates.[5] One of these scholarly contexts is the problem of the origins of Zoroastrianism. This is because, as one author has put it recently, it seems "reasonable to assume that with the new religion named after its founder a new form of ritual also began."[6] In what follows, this debate will be briefly reviewed because it may serve as a good starting-point to a discussion of some relevant methodological and theoretical studies pertaining to the study of Zoroastrian rituals.

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[4] Some of these issues are discussed in the papers by Jens Kreinath and Jan Snoek.

[5] For an attempt of 'contextualizing' some major contributions to the study of Zoroastrianism and a survey of some important positions in the field (mostly from a British perspective) see J.R. Hinnells, "Postmodernism and the Study of Zoroastrianism", *Zoroastrianism and Parsi Studies. Selected Works of John R. Hinnells* (Aldershot et al., 2000), pp. 7–25. This paper was originally published in *Postmodern Perspectives. Essays in Honour of Ninian Smart*, eds. C. Lamb/D. Cohn-Sherbock (London, 1999), pp. 156–171. I enjoyed the privilege of commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. However, as in another instance, the author did not find it necessary to acknowledge that fact. Apart from that, I would still disagree with the post-modern appearance Hinnells creates around the work of his teacher Mary Boyce (even in the mitigated form in which he presents it as a result of my earlier critique), for Boyce certainly has a very strong 'meta-narrative'.

[6] A. Hintze, "On the Literary Structure of the Older Avesta", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65, 2002, pp. 31–51, p. 50.

RITUALS AND THE DEBATE ON THE ORIGINS OF ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrianism, it is proudly agreed both by its adherents and by its students, belongs to the most ancient religious traditions of mankind still alive.[7] The religion traces its origin back to Zarathushtra (Zaraθuštra, Greek Zoroastres), after whom it is now called.[8] According to Mary Boyce, the leading figure in Zoroastrian studies in recent decades who, in a way, has re-established the subject on the mental landscape of the history of religions,[9] Zoroaster "is the earliest by far of the founders of a

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[7] For a survey of the worldwide Zoroastrian communities and their recent history, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2.

[8] The name 'Zoroastrianism' is a product of colonial configurations. For earlier names of the religion, see M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale,* vol. 1 (Stuttgart et al., 2002), pp. 7–10. For the later *fortuna* of 'Zoroaster' in European religious history, see M. Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra. Zoroaster und die Europäische Religionsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 42; Berlin/New York, 1998).

[9] It should be noted that some leading 19th and early 20th century scholars in the history of religions had Zoroastrianism as their religion of specialization. One may recall the names of the Dutch scholar Cornelis Petrus Tiele, the Swede Nathan Söderblom, the Dane Edvard Lehman, and the Italian Raffaele Pettazzoni. Each of them has published at least one book on Zoroastrianism. One of the reasons of the popularity of the subject among early historians of religions may have been the idea that many key-ideas of Judaism and Christianity possibly derive from Zoroastrianism. Therefore, the study of Zoroastrianism was placed at the crossroads of apologetics and history and was endowed with that sort of 'relevance' that is increasingly required by modern research-sponsoring institutions. After this first generation of scholars, Zoroastrian studies have to a certain extent disintegrated. This may be the result of a process of specialization and division of labor in scholarship: While remarkable progress was achieved in the study of a good number of aspects of Zoroastrian religious history—or neighboring areas—, the study of Zoroastrianism as such was somewhat neglected. Undoubtedly, it is the merit of professor Boyce to have firmly re-established the unity of Zoroastrianism as a subject of scholarly inquiry. The most prominent result of this is her book *A History of Zoroastrianism* for Brill's *Handbuch der Orientalistik* (3 vols. have been published so far). However, in order to emphatically re-establish Zoroastrianism as a unitary subject she has probably overemphasized the continuity and coherence of what she calls 'the faith', and her *A History of Zoroastrianism* in a way is one of the most unhistorical histories ever written. For a sketch of earlier scholarship and a comparison with current approaches, see A. Hultgård, "The Study of the Avesta and its Religion Around the Year 1900 and Today", *Man, Meaning, and Mystery. 100 Years of History of Religions in Norway. The Heritage of W. Brede Kristensen,* ed. S. Hjelde (Studies in the History of Religions 87; Leiden et al., 2000), pp. 73–99.

credal faith".[10] Unfortunately, however, not much is known about the
time and whereabouts of Zoroaster,[11] whose very historicity is occasion-
ally doubted.[12] The question of the 'origins' of Zoroastrianism is largely
a matter of speculation, but it also constitutes a necessary challenge to
scholarly imagination, because every historical (re-)construction of the
religion needs to firmly establish its point of departure. Obviously, dif-
ferent attempts at dating and localising 'the prophet', as Zoroaster is la-
belled among Zoroastrians since Islamic times, open up new ways of
comparison and contextualization—and ultimately create quite different

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[10] M. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism: Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour* (Columbia Lectures
on Iranian Studies 7; Costa Mesa, 1992), p. 52. From a strictly historical perspective,
this idea may seem somewhat anachronistic, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*,
vol. 2, pp. 423–428.

[11] To get a glimpse of the confusing state of affairs, attention could be drawn to the
fact that the date attributed to Zoroaster in different writings of Mary Boyce varies by
roughly five (!) centuries. Moreover, recently, the Italian scholar Gherardo Gnoli, who
himself—in his well-known book *Zoroaster's Time and Homeland. A Study on the Ori-
gins of Mazdeism and Related Problems* (Istituto Universitario Orientale. Seminario di
Studi Asiatici, Series Minor 7; Naples, 1980)—had advocated an early dating (around
1000 BCE) has recently added some fuel to the fire by advocating the so-called 'tradi-
tional date'—258 years before Alexander—that puts Zoroaster between the 7th and 6th
century BCE, see Gh. Gnoli, *Zoroaster in History* (Biennial Yarshater Lecture Series 2;
New York, 2000). What Gnoli shows, in fact, is that there *are* ancient, widespread tradi-
tions according to which Zoroaster lived in that period. However, Gnoli seems to over-
shoot the mark when he argues that the "traditional date of 258 years before Alexander
is not contradicted by any available evidence and cannot be the result of a late fabrica-
tion" (Gnoli, *Zoroaster in History*, p. 164). To my eyes, it is clearly possible that the
'traditional date' was in itself an 'invented tradition'. Contrary to the first, the latter
book by Gnoli does not tackle the problem of Zoroaster's homeland. For a critical re-
view of Gnoli's book see J. Kellens, "Zoroastre dans l'histoire ou dans le mythe? À
propos du dernier livre de Gherardo Gnoli", *Journal asiatique* 289, 2001, pp. 171–184.

[12] This is an approach peculiar to scholars writing in French, most prominently James
Darmesteter, Marijan Molé (see below), and Jean Kellens who, in his review to the
above-mentioned book by Gnoli emphatically states, "Partant, je considère que
Zarathushtra n'appartient pas à l'histoire" (Kellens, "Zoroastre dans l'histoire ou dans
le mythe?", p. 172). As a counter-tendency one might refer to the tendency to 'dupli-
cate' Zoroaster into many individuals sharing the same name, see H. Humbach in col-
laboration with J. Elfenbein and P.O. Skjærvø, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra and the
Other Old Avestan Texts, Part I, Introduction –Text and Translation* (Indogermanische
Bibliothek; Heidelberg, 1991), pp. 48–49. As a matter of fact, contrary to what he may
have thought, the distinction between different 'Zoroastres' was already a recurrent
theme in pre-Orientalist perceptions of Zoroaster in Europe, see Stausberg, *Faszination
Zarathushtra* I, pp. 328–335.

versions of what the religion in its pristine form of origin, Zoroaster as a personality, and the early Zoroastrian rituals may have been like.

A specific problem in any attempt at reconstructing the origins of Zoroastrianism is given by the fact that we have no pre-Zoroastrian texts—let alone other sources—in Iranian languages. The *Gāθās,* five hymns that have been transmitted orally (and largely in a ritual setting) for many centuries,[13] are often held to have been composed by Zoroaster himself[14] (assuming that he was a person belonging to 'history' after all). Probably, these *Gāθās* are the oldest surviving text in an Iranian language—(Old) Avestan—, and it is just in these hymns that the name 'Zaraθuštra' occurs for the very first time in history.[15] On the other hand, comparative linguistics has long since recognised the close linguistic relationship between the Avestan texts and the older parts of the Vedas, and the understanding of the *Gāθās* and other Avestan texts have largely been informed by Vedic grammar.[16]

Comparative (Indo-Iranian, or Indo-European) mythology[17] has in vari-

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[13] In the context of much ongoing research on 'oral literatures', this fact has gained greater importance in recent scholarship, see e.g. Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, "The Zoroastrian Tradition from an Oralist's Point of View", *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute. Second International Congress Proceedings, January 1996* (Bombay), pp. 221-237.

[14] For recent attempts to defend Zaraθuštra's authorship, see L. Olson, *De avestiska gatha'erna. Inledande studie* (Lund Studies in African and Asian Studies 9; Malmö, 1994), pp. 202–209, and Hintze, "On the Literary Structure of the Older Avesta". Hultgård, "The Study of the Avesta and its Religion Around the Year 1900 and Today", reminds us that the question was discussed in a much more complex manner in earlier scholarship.

[15] Apart from some brief, but very important formulae or manthras, there is another so-called Old Avestan text, the *Sevenfold Yasna (Yasna Haptaŋhāiti)* which may have been composed by Zoroaster himself (that is, if he existed at all); see Hintze, "On the Literary Structure of the Older Avesta", p. 46; despite all the learning invested into reloving that question, I would still regard that matter as a point of speculation, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 1, p. 101–102.

[16] Some modern Zoroastrian esotericists in India—on that movement see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 118–127—doubt that 'Indian' grammar can legitimately be applied to Zoroastrian texts. In their view, this method has greatly compromised the reliability of the translation of Avestan texts made by Western philologists.

[17] Due to the suspicion that Georges Dumézil had harbored Nazi-sympathies in the 1930s, that whole discipline has recently come under attack. On the accusations leveled against Dumézil see e.g. C. Grottanelli, *Ideologie miti massacri. Indoeuropei di Georges Dumézil* (Palermo, 1993) and the contributions by M. Horstmann, G.G. Stroumsa, M. Deeg, N. Allen, D.H. Sick, C. Marroquin, C. Grotanelli, and B. Lincoln in *Zeit-*

ous ways helped to fill the gap. While the insight that "the *Old Avesta* also continues *Indo-Iranian poetic traditions*", as Prods Oktor Skjærvø aptly puts it in his contribution to the present volume, can serve as a sound premise to a comparative analysis of many features of the Old Avestan texts—his contribution to this volume and the paper by Antonio Panaino are good illustrations of the results this approach can yield[18]—, such parallels have also tempted a good number of scholars to reconstruct a pre-Zoroastrian 'paganism' as sort of an 'ethnic' or 'folk' religion that has in its turn later on been 'reformed' or 'revolutionized' by Zoroaster.[19]

When assessing this stipulated 'reform' presumably effected by Zoroaster, in some way or the other the concept of ritual always comes to the forefront as a key to interpretation. According to a traditional view which has almost been common-sense in the early stages of scholarship—and which is still popular among a section of Zoroastrians, mainly of the Iranian branch—, in his reform (or revolution[20]) Zoroaster not only rejected the 'polytheistic' deities (or nature-worship) and the ritual-minded attitude of his 'pagan' environment by replacing them with 'monotheism' and individual moral responsibility of the faithful but he also did away with the 'pagan cult' consisting of extensive animal sacrifice and the drinking of the extract of the mysterious *haoma*-plant.[21] This

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schrift für Religionswissenschaft 6 (1998) which review the current state of the debate. Bruce Lincoln, in particular, draws attention to the leanings toward rightwing or even fascist ideologies among many senior scholars in the field apart from Dumézil, see his *Theorizing Myth. Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago, 1999). While Lincoln has drawn the consequence of consciously abandoning the comparative method or field of study, other scholars feel that the field of Indo-European religion as such is not necessarily impregnated with political ideologies.

[18] In recent years, this sort of approach has been stimulated by the works of Skjærvø's colleagues at Harvard, Stephanie Jamison and, most of all, C. Watkins, see his *How to Kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European Poetry* (Oxford/New York, 1995).

[19] On such views see Hultgård, "The Study of the Avesta"; Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 1, pp. 115–117.

[20] According to Pettazzoni, monotheism did not come into being as the result of a historical *evolution*, but rather as the result of a religious *revolution*. Significantly, he has first articulated this position in his book on Zoroastrianism (*La religione di Zarathustra*) published in 1920.

[21] This scheme is even found in a well-known novel: F.M. Crawford, *Zoroaster* (London/New York, 1894). Chapter XV (pp. 194–207) gives a vivid description of a (repugnant) pre-Zoroastrian Haoma-ritual inside a temple, and describes Zoroaster's intervention to reform the service.

school of thought, however, readily had to admit that Zoroaster has ulti-
mately failed in this regard,[22] basically because of the mediocre, weak,
and vulgar character of his later followers.[23] The picture of Zoroaster
emerging from accounts such as the one briefly sketched here, makes
him comparable to the Biblical prophets,[24] and this comparison has oc-
casionally been spelt out in a systematic fashion.[25]

A somewhat mitigated version of this perception—or rather construc-
tion—of the religious personality of Zaraθuštra (Zoroaster) emerges in the
scholarly production of Mary Boyce. According to her, Zoroaster, whom
she continuously refers to as 'the prophet', was a visionary who had ob-
tained a revelation. Thereafter, he "betook himself, inspired by his great
vision, to the daunting task of preaching a new doctrine to his fellow-
men".[26] Zoroaster was "both a visionary prophet and a meditative
thinker",[27] struggling against many odds "to preach his new religion".[28]
According to Boyce, Zoroaster's 'new doctrine' or 'teaching' consisted in
a peculiar form of 'monotheism'[29] which is characterized by dualism and a
complex system consisting of the seven Aməša Spəntas and the seven
creations. Thus, she portrays Zoroaster, "a man of faith",[30] as a preacher/

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[22] See, e.g., Pettazzoni, *La religione di Zarathustra,* pp. 58-59.

[23] See, e.g., J.H. Moulton, *The Treasure of the Magi. A Study of Modern Zoroastrianism*
(Oxford, 1917) pp. 82–83: "But nothing can be clearer than that they wholly failed to catch
the spirit of Zarathushtra in some of the most central elements in his great message. They
could not see how seriously the passionate monotheism of Zarathushtra was compromised
by allowing practically divine reverence to be paid to the old gods whom the Prophet put
away so sternly. Like all priests ... they were conservatives in religion. Cults which had
gone on for ages must go on still. So they paid lip-worship to Zarathushtra's principles ...
His sermons in verse were turned into spells, the mere recitation of which was to accom-
plish magic." In another book, his *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), Moulton even
talks about a Zoroastrian (post-Zarathushtrian) 'Counter Reformation' (pp. 116–119). On
Moulton see also briefly Hinnells, "Postmodernism and the Study of Zoroastrianism", pp.
12–13.

[24] However, it is not at all clear if the Biblical prophets actually did reject the cult as
is generally perceived by an exegetical tradition inspired by Protestantism.

[25] A very late account inspired by this comparison is the one by Walter Hinz, see his
Zarathustra (Stuttgart, 1961).

[26] M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, *The Early Period* (Handbuch der
Orientalistik 1/8/1/2/2A; Leiden/Köln, 1975), p. 185.

[27] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, p. 214.

[28] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, p. 186.

[29] See Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, p. 195, where she discusses the
"monotheism of Iran, preached by Zoroaster".

[30] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, p. 189.

teacher/visionary/prophet. At the same time, she insists that Zoroaster was an educated priest and that he continued to practice as a priest even after he had obtained his revelation and set on his mission as prophet.[31]

Contrary to most earlier approaches, for Boyce there is no conflict between the two roles of the priest and the prophet.[32] There is even more to it, for, while earlier approaches had assumed that Zoroaster had criticized and even abolished many ancient rituals, Boyce argues that it was precisely his priestly training and practice that had put him on the right track. For instance, she speculates that Zoroaster, the priest, "had reached his complex doctrine ... through pondering ... on the daily rituals in which he had been trained since childhood".[33] Far from demarcating a clear rupture with the past, in the picture drawn by Boyce, Zoroaster's 'new religion' rather appears as a modification and sophistication of previous religious practices. According to Boyce, Zoroaster's complete prohibition of any propitiation of the destructive powers seems to have been his "only break with the old tradition of making tangible offerings to the divine beings".[34] Zoroaster's religious innovation has thus, according to Boyce, grown out of his priestly practice, and his 'new teachings' have added a new, moral, dimension to ritual practice:

> Zoroaster's own contribution appears to have been twofold: in meditating on the significance of the ritual for the diverse material creations he reached, it seems, his doctrine of the one supreme Creator, God of gods, who made them all, and to whom every act of worship should be ultimately directed; and he added a further dimension to the meaning of the ritual itself by seeing in it an ethical purpose also ... So through these rituals, performed primarily to benefit the physical world and to honour its Creator, priest and worshippers could also, according to Zoroaster's new teachings, seek a moral good, which likewise was a benefit to the physical creation of Ahura Mazdā, since this, the prophet held, was itself ethical in concept and aim, the work of a Being who was wholly good.[35]

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[31] See, e.g. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, pp. 186, 214.

[32] This question had already been discussed in an extensive review of previous research by K. Rudolph, "Zarathuštra – Priester und Prophet", *Numen* 8, 1961, pp. 81–116, repr. in *Zarathustra,* ed. B. Schlerath (Wege der Forschung 159; Darmstadt, 1970), pp. 270–313 (with a new postscript) and the conclusion (p. 311): "Beide Funktionen vereinigen sich in ihm zu einer originalen Einheit, die die herkömmlichen Vorstellungen sprengt" (referring to the common typologies of religious figures, e.g. in the sociology of religion).

[33] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, p. 219.

[34] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, p. 218.

[35] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, p. 220.

While Mary Boyce thus strives after a careful synthesis of the two images of Zoroaster—the priest and the prophet—, other, more provocative attempts to come beyond the image of the 'pious prophet' had already been made in the course of the debate. For instance, some decades earlier, in his book on ancient Iranian religions published in 1938, the Swedish scholar Henrik-Samuel Nyberg had portrayed Zoroaster as a shaman, the leader of a group of professional ecstatics that had developed a highly sophisticated technique to reach the state of ecstasy.[36] Nyberg explicitly rejects a comparison of Zoroaster with the Biblical prophets; rather, in his opinion, as a religious type Zoroaster should be regarded as related to the Islamic dervishes, and he wonders if the dervishes, at least in Iran, could not be considered as direct heirs to Zoroaster and his group.[37]

In the preface to the reprint of the book published in 1966, Nyberg explains the lacking enthusiasm about his ideas on the part of his former reviewers and colleagues by the ideological circumstances of the time—fascism and the corresponding 'Aryan' ideology shared by some of his colleagues—and personal religious feelings that he may have offended.[38] According to him, at the time when the book was published, shamans were in Aryan-minded circles considered as 'brutes', and comparing Zoroaster to them was perceived as some sort of a sacrilege.[39] Nowadays, of course, that has changed, and 'shamanism' has become almost fashionable. Nevertheless, Nyberg's interpretation has not achieved wider currency.

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[36] See H.S. Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran* (Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-aegyptischen Gesellschaft 43; Leipzig et al., 1938 (repr. Osnabrück, 1966)), p. 265: "Zarathustra ist ein berufsmäßiger Ekstatiker, er besitzt eine wohl entwickelte, ererbte Technik zur Erreichung des ekstatischen Zustands; er ist der Führer einer Gruppe berufsmäßiger Ekstatiker mit geregelten Funktionen im Leben des Stammes".

[37] Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran,* p. 265: "Sollte man aber eine Gruppe besonders anführen, zu der er typologisch am besten in Beziehung gesetzt werden kann, so sind es ohne Zweifel die *Derwische des Islam.* Es kann sogar die Frage gestellt werden, ob nicht eine unmittelbare Linie von Zarathustras maga zu den ekstatischen Übungen der Derwische unter Leitung des Scheichs, wenigstens in Iran, führt."

[38] See Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran,* pp. VII–IX. In particular, he speculates about the religious sentiments of his colleague and archenemy Henning. Henning's student M. Boyce kindly informs me that Nyberg's ideas about the religious opinions of his colleague were quite off the mark.

[39] See Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran,* pp. VII–IX. Robert Langer draws my attention to the fact that shamanism enjoyed a privileged positive position in Turkish nationalist discourse, especially in the anti-Islamic branch of radical (pan-) Turkism.

The usual perception of Zoroaster as a prophet-reformer was further challenged by Ernst Herzfeld and Marijan Molé. In his book *Zoroaster and his World* (1947), the former places Zoroaster in the context of Achaemenian political history, assigning his lifetime to the period from 569 BCE to 492 BCE.[40] According to Herzfeld's somewhat obscure reconstruction which in part reads like a philological or historical novel[41] (and which is meant as a refutation of Nyberg's theory), Zoroaster was a wealthy man from a reputed Median family who had been temporally banished. Later on, however, the banishment was lifted, and "Zoroaster's ethical and political ideas, his monotheism and dualism, [were raised] to the position which one can call a religion of the rulers".[42] However, the "sanction of Zoroastrianism did not mean the eradication of the old cults".[43] While ritual does not play an important role in Herzfeld's reconstruction of events and its challenge to the traditional view of Zoroaster, he nevertheless alludes to a presumed ritual reform that was achieved by the 'poet':

> The whole verse [= Y. 50,8[44]] is very picturesque: Zoroaster executes the divine service according to his own rite by circumambulation, out-stretching of the arms and prostration, and his songs are his sacrifices, yasna, as he calls them in the first verse.[45]

As a key analytical concept, ritual gains a new significance in Marijan Molé's interpretation of ancient Iranian religion. This interpretation, put forward in his book on Ancient Iranian religion of 1963 was heavily influenced by the approach of the then still prominent myth-and-ritual school.[46] While Nyberg, Herzfeld and others attempted to describe Zoroastrianism in historical terms—Nyberg even went so far as to distinguish between different sorts of ancient Iranian religions—, Molé presents a

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[40]   E. Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and his World,* 2 vols. (Princeton, 1947).

[41]   For an influential novel in which Zoroaster appears as an Achaemenian prince, see Crawford, *Zoroaster.*

[42]   Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and his World,* p. 174.

[43]   Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and his World,* p. 174.

[44]   In Humbach's translation, this verse reads as follows: "With footsteps which (in our tradition are) proclaimed (as those) of (personified) abundance, I will attend You, O Wise One, with hands stretched out, (attend) You with truth and in reverence to the Zestful One, (attend) You with the skilfulness of (one of) Good thought", Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra and the Other Old Avestan Texts,* vol. 1, p. 185.

[45]   Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and his World,* p. 243.

[46]   For a survey of that theoretical current and debate, see *The Myth and Ritual Theory,* ed. R.A. Segal (Malden/Oxford, 1992).

structural and systematic account. Where Nyberg and others would observe different stages or forms of religions, Molé would rather see (three) different degrees of perfection, different moral standards, and different communities as parts of one and the same religious system. According to him, this system was tripartite,[47] i.e. it consisted of three parts: ritual, myth, and ideology surrounding a stipulated annual festival of the renewal of time that at the same time evokes notions of eschatology, e.g. the resurrection, and the idea of a periodical renewal of nature.[48] According to Molé, the 'myth' corresponding to the ritual was the legendary biography of Zoroaster. Ultimately, therefore, the figure of Zoroaster did not belong to a historical past, but was the product of a continuous ritual reality.[49] The centre of the ritual is constituted by the $G\bar{a}\theta\bar{a}s$ which are recited in order to produce the renewal ("la Rénovation"). The reconstruction of the Gāthic ritual ("l'office gāthique") makes up a main part the book.[50] This analysis is based on the sequence of the 'ideas' expressed in the text. Interestingly, in the preface, Molé states:

> Nous regrettons de ne pas avoir été en etat d'étudier davantage le rituel zoroastrien tel qu'il est pratiqué encore aujord'hui dans les communautés parsies de l'Iran et de l'Inde; il n'est pas exclu que cette étude ait pu profiter à l'interprétation des Gāthā. C'est là une ligne de recherches à entreprendre.[51]

The Yasna, generally held to be the key priestly ritual in Zoroastrianism, is also dealt with in several contributions to this volume, most extensively by Gernot Windfuhr. While Molé's reconstruction was entirely text-based, recent approaches[52] are almost equally exclusively perform-

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[47] The influence of George Dumézil is not only felt throughout the book, but also explicitly acknowledged in the first paragraph of the "Préface", see M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien. Le problème zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne* (Annales du Musée Guimet. Bibliothèque d'études 69; Paris, 1963), p. VII: "Soulignons, avant tout, ce que nous devons ici à l'enseignement si fécond et aux publications de M. Dumézil dans le domaine de la mythologie indo-européenne, dont le structuralisme nous a inspiré et les découvertes guidé."

[48] See Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, p. VIII–IX.

[49] See explicitly Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, p. XI.

[50] Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, pp. 190–267.

[51] Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, p. IX.

[52] Fundamental to recent scholarship is Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna.* Moreover, a film produced by two American scholars in collaboration with Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal, co-author of the quoted book and a leading Zoroastrian priest, in 1982 proved to be a major source of scholarly inspiration. On this film and its inherent problems, see Jens Kreinath's paper in this volume.

ance-based, that is they take their starting point from the ritual acts per-
formed by the priests in the course of the ritual process and the arrange-
ment of ritual space(s). This implicitly reflects a radical paradigm shift in
ritual studies.[53]

Molé's interpretation was partly inspired by the later Middle Persian
(Pahlavi) treatises which outline legendary biographies of Zoroaster[54] and
other texts which contain a good number of speculations around the
Yasna-ritual (or 'sacrifice', as it is often termed).[55] In contrast to this ap-
proach, Jean Kellens, who in many ways continues the traces that were laid
out by Molé, rejects the validity of later sources for a proper understanding
of the early texts. Just as Molé, but for different reasons, he denies the his-
toricity of Zoroaster,[56] and he strongly emphasizes the importance of the
ritual dimension of the text. In the translation of the so-called Old Avestan
texts, the *Gāθās* and the *Sevenfold Yasna (Yasna Haptaŋhāiti)* which he
published together with Eric Pirart, some ritual flavour is consistently
added to several words (mostly by adding the adjective 'ritual' in paren-
theses). As an example, in the translation by Kellens and Pirart the very
first verse of the *Gāθās* (= Yasna 28,1) reads thus:

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[53] See also Jens Kreinath's paper in this volume. However, as early as in 1892, in the
preface to his translation of the *Yasna*, James Darmesteter had already pointed to the
importance of the ritual action: "Mais ces traductions nous laissent désarmés contre la
principale difficulté, qui consiste en ce que le Yasna et le Vispéred sont des textes *litur-
giques*, c'est-à-dire des textes récités dans l'accomplissement d'un certain cérémonial. Il
est clair que tant que ce cérémonial est inconnu, les textes, qui en sont le reflet ou le
commentaire, ou si l'on aime mieux, qui en sont l'âme, ne se suffiront pas à eux-même.
La chose importante dans le sacrifice, ce ne sont point les paroles, mais les actes qui
accompagnent ces paroles, les actes qui sont l'objet même du sacrifice et son accom-
plissement et auxquels ces paroles font allusion. ... La condition essentielle pour tra-
duire des textes liturgiques, c'est de connaître la liturgie à laquelle ils ont rapport", J.
Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta. Traduction nouvelle avec commentaire historique et phi-
lologique*, vol. 1, *La liturgie (Yasna et Vispéred)* (Annales du Musée Guimet 21; Paris,
1892), pp. II–III. Interestingly, in a public lecture at Heidelberg University in October
2001, Dastur Kotwal presented an account of the Yasna ritual that was entirely based on
the 'meaning' of the different portions of the *text* recited in the ritual (the *Yasna*, a por-
tion of the *Avesta*), thus reminding the audience of the importance of the text (as it were
the main performative event) from an insider's point of view.

[54] See also his posthumously published *La legende de Zoroastre selon les textes pe-
hlevi* (Travaux de l'Institut d'Études Iraniennes de l'Université de Paris 3; Paris, 1993
(second edition)).

[55] For a fresh look on the Yasna in the Middle Persian texts, see Shaul Shaked's con-
tribution to this volume.

[56] See Kellens, "Zoroastre dans l'histoire ou dans le mythe?".

En hommage à (celui qui offre) les secours, les mains tendues, je (vous) demande à tous la (formule) fondamentale du bénéfique état d'esprit, ô Mazdā, avec l'Harmonie et l'acte (rituel) grâce auquel tu choies l'efficacité de la divine Pensée et l'être de la Vache.[57]

The emendation '(*ritual*) act' (or 'action') in the translation is the result of the perception of the text as a liturgical document,[58] and a number of other substantives (e.g. *ahu-*, 'existence'; 'state of being'; *xšaθra-*, 'power') are consistently predicated with the adjective 'ritual' in the translation by Kellens and Pirart. On the one hand, a radical ritual re-reading of the texts is certainly able to avoid some anachronistic interpretations, and Kellens' paper in this volume makes a strong case in point. On the other hand, the problem arises that the texts are transmitted only in—equally ritual—re-elaborations from later time: the Old Avestan texts are part of what has become the Young Avestan Yasna. Therefore, almost nothing is known about the 'original' Old Avestan ritual (provided there was something like this at all).[59]

MODELS AND COMPARISONS – THEORIES AND DESCRIPTIONS

If, as Kellens admits, no details about the historical Old Avestan ritual are known and the later traditions and practices are discarded as unreliable, the validity of the ritual approach to understanding the texts is seriously limited. Kellens, Molé, and Nyberg go different ways in order to make sense of linguistically obscure documents. Nyberg and Molé resort to interpretative models that have been developed and tested in cultural

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[57] J. Kellens/E. Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques*, vol. 1, *Introduction, texte et traduction* (Wiesbaden, 1988), p. 105.

[58] For an alternative translation of Yasna 28,1 see Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra and the Other Old Avestan Texts*, vol. 1, p. 117: "With hands stretched out (and) in reverence of Him I first entreat all (those present), O Wise One, for actions of support for the spirit, prosperous through truth, (for the spirit) with which Thou mightest satisfy the intellect of good thought and the soul of the cow."

[59] See also J. Kellens, *Essays on Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism,* transl./ed. P.O. Skjærvø (Bibliotheca Iranica Zoroastrian Studies Series 1; Costa Mesa, 2000), p. 63: "No concrete detail of the ceremony itself has been transmitted to us, however"; p. 100: "We are ... dealing with ... hymns to the gods, which ... were meant to accompany the stages of a sacrificial ceremony, of which, however, no complete or detailed description is given. The singer neither describes how the sacrifice proceeds, nor does he narrate the exploits of the gods."

contexts different from the Iranian, or Zoroastrian materials. The same, of course, also holds true for those approaches that implicitly or explicitly make use of the model of the 'Biblical prophet'. While the latter, however, makes Zoroaster the champion of an anti-ritual form of 'inner' and 'moral' religiosity, the models preferred by Nyberg and Molé put him in different types of *ritual* contexts: While Zoroaster, and the religion associated with him, in Nyberg's interpretation turn out to represent a version of the Northern Eurasian or Siberian ecstatic practices that had been powerfully established as a genuine *sui generis* form of religion ('shamanism'),[60] in Molé's model ancient Iranian religion turns out to be a variant of the Near Eastern pattern of the (presumed) myth-and-ritual complex. It is, of course, easy to dismiss the resulting interpretations as 'distortions' of any supposed 'authentic', 'indigenous' Zoroastrian identity. On the other hand, though, one has to acknowledge the fact that these paradigms did, indeed, produce coherent interpretations of the empirical material. In a way, the fruitfulness of the approaches confirms both the power of the theoretical models and the elasticity of the material (and, last but not least, the intellectual talent of the authors in applying and modifying the models to the sources). True enough, none of the paradigms is able to explain everything and to entirely overcome the resistance of the empirical material, but still they undoubtedly do shed new light and perspectives on the texts (and hence 'make the sources flow').

Contrary to Nyberg and Molé, Kellens does not *explicitly* take his point of departure from a well-established interpretative model. He at-

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[60] It should be noted that the first edition of Nyberg's book was published before some classical French studies of 'shamanism' that have contributed to the popularity of the concept (such as those by M. Bouteillier [1950], E. Lott-Falk [1953], and, more than any other, M. Eliade [1951]) had seen the light of the day. In his book from 1938 Nyberg refers to the Swedish studies by J. Stadling [1912] and E. Reuterskiöld [1912], and two books that are still regarded as 'classics' – a Finnish book by U. Harva [1933] and a book by G. Nioradze published in German in 1925. In the preface to the reprint from 1966, Nyberg favorably refers to Eliade's well-known book as if it were a confirmation of his hypothesis. Eliade, in return, refers to Nyberg's hypothesis, see his *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaiques de l'extase* (Paris, 1951), pp. 356–358. However, he notes that Nyberg's approach had failed to convince most Iranologists (note 1 on p. 358 refers to O. Paul, W. Wüst, P. de Menasce, J. Duchesne-Guillemin, St. Wikander and G. Widengren) and suggests a larger scenario (p. 358): "Remarquons pourtant que les ressemblences entre, d'une part, les éléments extatiques et mythologiques décelables dans la religion de Zarathustra, et, d'autre part, l'idéologie et les techniques du chamanisme, s'intègrent dans un ensemble plus vaste, qui n'implique nullement une structure 'chamanique' de l'expérience religieuse de Zarathustra."

tempts a fresh look at the Old Avestan sources, and while denying the relevance of the later Zoroastrian tradition—in sharp contrast to Boyce for whom this stipulated homogenous tradition furnishes the key to solve philological riddles—he continues to refer to the Rigveda as the body of text that is most intimately linked to the Old Avestan texts from a linguistic (and possibly also religious) point of view. In its turn, the Rigveda provides one of the classical examples of what is usually termed a 'sacrifice', and ever since the famous *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice* by Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1899) the 'Vedic sacrifice' has stimulated a broad range of scholarship.[61] At least òn an *implicit* level, Kellens seems to draw much of his inspiration from this scholarly tradition. One indication for this is the fact that Kellens consistently refers to the Old Avestan ritual as a 'sacrifice'. This is more than merely a matter of terminological convenience, for the decision to fit the scanty information that we have about the Old Avestan ritual into the frame of a 'sacrificial process'—the *Gāθās* are hymns that "were meant to accompany the stages of a sacrificial ceremony"[62]—endows the text with a logic that goes beyond simple philological facts.[63] Again, then, it is the theoretical model, or paradigm, that makes the texts transparent.

In the case of Kellens, however, the sources flow in a very particular direction: Kellens does not simply reconstruct some sort of a sacrificial process and ideology, but according to his analysis, the Old Avestan texts mirror what one could call a 'reflective ritual'. To quote Kellens:

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[61] Some of the more recent books on this rich topic include M. Biardeau/Ch. Malamoud, *Le Sacrifice dans l'Inde ancienne* (Bibliothèque de l'École pratique des hautes études, section des sciences religieuses 79; Paris, 1976); B.K. Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual, and Religion* (New York/Oxford, 1989); St.W. Jamison, *The Ravenous Hyenas and the Wounded Sun. Myth and Ritual in Ancient India* (Ithaca/London, 1991); J.C. Heesterman, *The Broken World of Sacrifice. An Essay in Ancient Indian Ritual* (Chicago/London, 1993); K. Mylius, *Wörterbuch des altindischen Rituals* (Wichtrach, 1995). On the problematic category of 'sacrifice' in general see J. Drexler, *Die Illusion des Opfers. Ein wissenschaftlicher Überblick über die wichtigsten Opfertheorien ausgehend vom deleuzianischen Polyperspektivismusmodell* (Münchner ethnologische Abhandlungen 12; München, 1993).

[62] Kellens, *Essays on Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism,* p. 100.

[63] The problem of ritual classification is far less innocent than generally assumed. On the problem in general see L. Honko, "Zur Klassifikation der Riten", *Temenos* 11, 1975, pp. 61–77; J.P. Schøjdt [sic (= Schjødt)], "Initiation and the Classification of Rituals", *Temenos* 22, 1986, pp. 93–108; J.A.M. Snoek, *Initiations. A Methodological Approach to the Application of Classification and Definition Theory in the Study of Rituals* (Pijnacker, 1987).

> The singer [of the *Gāθās*] neither describes how the sacrifice proceeds, nor does he narrate the exploits of the gods. Instead he explains the spirit of the ritual to the gods. What we find in the Old Avesta is the answer to certain questions, nothing more: Why is the ritual what it is? To whom should it be addressed? How can we first bring it to the gods' attention, then make them understand it, and finally make it effective? What can the gods expect from it, and what can the humans expect from it in return?[64]

In a mild form, this idea reaches a compromise between a ritual and a theological reading of the sources: The text is linked to the ritual, but at the same time, Kellens reads it as a discursive statement presenting 'the answer' to fundamental questions pertaining to the ritual. The ritual texts reflect upon the ritual, and thus turn it into a reflective ritual process.[65] However, with Kellens the argument goes one step further: Speculations about the ritual dimension of the text are transformed into the notion of "a speculative ritual".[66] According to Kellens, however, 'the answer', or rather this 'speculative ritual' "on no account contains the Mazdean philosophy, but opens up the path along which it will proceed in the distant future."[67]

The different theoretical models discussed so far result in different views (or constructions) of Zoroastrian history. Kellens and Boyce are the extremes: Whereas for Kellens the Old Avestan texts 'open up a path' for a future history, for Boyce there is dense continuity in both directions, both back to the 'pagan' past and forward to 'orthodox' Zoroastrianism.

The different models are informed by different comparative perspectives: It should be clear by now, that it does, indeed, make a difference to take Vedic sacrifice, Siberian shamanism, a presumed Ancient Near Eastern myth-and-ritual model, or the model of Biblical prophecy as the guiding example of textual analysis. The choice of the key-example also stimulates different views of the Yasna, the priestly ritual that has hitherto attracted by far most attention among scholars. Besides the approaches already discussed, there is a long tradition of explicit

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[64] Kellens, *Essays on Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism*, pp. 100–101.

[65] Interestingly Heesterman, *The Broken World of Sacrifice*, p. 6 when analyzing the process that "broke the hold of sacrificial furor" in India and Iran, uses the term "reflective ritualism".

[66] Kellens, *Essays on Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism*, p. 112. On the 'speculative dimension' of the Yasna, see further Antonio Panaino's contribution to this volume.

[67] Kellens, *Essays on Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism*, p. 112.

comparative statements on the Yasna, and these comparisons have opened up a variety of perspectives on this ritual.

One of the earliest and most important attempts at studying Zoroastrian rituals was undertaken by Martin Haug, who, while acting as a professor of Sanskrit in Pune (from 1859 to 1866), established close links with both Brahmans and Zoroastrian priests who even performed part of their rituals for him.[68] The comparative observation of Brahman and Zoroastrian rituals led him to adopt a comparative stance. In his influential *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis* he observes: "Although sacrifices are reduced to a few rites in the Parsi religion now-a-days, we may discover, on comparing them with the sacrificial customs of the Brahmans, a great similarity in the rites of the two religions."[69] Haug identifies a number of similarities between the two ritual traditions, e.g. "terms referring to priestly functions"[70] and ritual implements. Most of these similarities, e.g. the Haoma and the Barsom, pertain to the Yasna-ceremony that he also refers to as the 'Yajishn' or 'Ijashne'. Haug states:

> The Yajishn or Ijashne ceremony as performed by the Parsi priests now-a-days ... contains all the elements which constitute the different parts ... of the *Jyotishṭoma* cycle of sacrifices, the prototype of all the Soma sacrifices. The Agnishṭoma bears a particular resemblance to the performance of Ijashne. Of course, the whole ceremony [i.e., the Yasna] is much shortened, and the rituals changed in accordance with the more enlightened and humane spirit of the Zoroastrian religion.[71]

The latter statement contains both a reconstruction and an evaluation of the historical development of the rituals in question: Haug regards the Zoroastrian version of the ritual as the result of religious reform that led to it being 'shortened' and gaining a more 'enlightened' and 'humane' appearance. The comparative stance here clearly turns into a valuation in favor of Zoroastrianism that must have pleased Zoroastrians—and in particular Zoroastrian 'reformists' who at the time were striving to give Zoroastrianism an even more 'enlightened' and 'humane' shape by purging it from 'superstitions' that were considered to be illegitimate borrow-

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[68] On Haug see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 100–101.

[69] M. Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* fourth enlarged edition, ed. E.W. West (London, 1907 [repr. Amsterdam 1971]), pp. 279–280.

[70] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 280.

[71] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 281.

ings from to the Indian (Hindu) environment.[72] In Haug's interpretation, Zoroastrian "sacrificial rites"[73] are a late and modified version of Brahmanical rituals: In some cases, "the original peculiar significations are lost, and only the general meanings ... have survived"[74]; there are "remnants" of older practices in Zoroastrian rituals, while some implements are simply "changed",[75] but in other aspects, "on closer inquiry, an original identity may be recognised".[76] The hypothesis that Zoroastrian and Brahman practices may have shared a common background but have possibly later on developed in different directions does not at all seem to have affected his way of thinking—even less the idea that the Iranian branch may be a more faithful representative of earlier traditions than the Indian branch of the linguistic family where there are clear traces for transformations and developments.[77] The main difference between Zoroastrian and Brahman practices that Haug consistently stresses concerns the 'crucial' part of the rituals: animal sacrifice.[78]

However, the similarities that Haug detects go way beyond single traits in individual rituals. His rhetoric of similarity reaches out to the whole ritual system. Haug detects similarities and correspondences between major priestly rituals. Thus, the Yasna is a shortened version of the Agniṣṭoma, and the "Barsom [= a bundle of metallic rods held or touched by the main priest in the Yasna] ... refers, in all likelihood, to a peculiar rite at the great Soma sacrifices, yet little known, but about which the author had an opportunity of obtaining oral information";[79] furthermore, in "the Afringân ceremony of the Parsis ... there may be

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[72] Incidently, the passage quoted above is quoted extensively by J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1937; reprint published by the Society for the Promotion of Zoroastrian Religious Knowledge & Education, Bombay, 1995), p. 282. On the reform movement in India, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 66–67, 99–111.

[73] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* pp. 279–285.

[74] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 280.

[75] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 281.

[76] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 282.

[77] On the Indian side, debate and reflection on rituals has obviously been more intense than in Iran. Nevertheless, Indian rituals are often regarded as closer to the presumed Indo-Iranian heritage.

[78] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 285: "But as to animal sacrifice, there is always a great difference between the Brahmanical and Zoroastrian rites."

[79] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 283.

discovered a trace of the Brahmanical Apri ceremony ..., which is pre-paratory to the killing and offering of the sacrificial goats"[80]; moreover, the "*Darsha pûrṇama ishṭi* (new and full moon sacrifice) seems to corre-spond with the *Darûn* ceremony of the Parsis"[81]; and last but not least, the "*Châturmâsya ishṭi,* or the sacrifice offered every four months or two seasons, corresponds to the Gahanbâr ceremony of the Parsis, which is celebrated six times a year."[82]

Haug's reconstruction was the result of a certain view of 'Aryan' his-tory and his comparative observation of rituals performed by Brahmans and Zoroastrian priests in the Indian environment. In a way, then, through their migration to India in the aftermath of the Arabic invasion of Iran[83] the Zoroastrians had returned to a religious environment with which they had shared a history reaching back to their presumed origins. However, the history of Zoroastrian rituals is not exclusively linked to India, and Iran's particular geographical position at the crossroads of East and West connects the ritual traditions of Zoroastrianism to differ-ent cultural contexts.

Comparing Zoroastrian rituals to Middle Eastern traditions puts them in a different light altogether. Lady Drower who is mostly known as a Mandaean scholar has undertaken the most important attempt in that di-rection. In her book of 1956, *Water into Wine,* sub-titled as *A Study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East,* she does not limit her investigation to rituals within a single religious tradition.[84] In her study of what she calls a 'ritual idiom', that is a common heritage of symbols and 'leit-motifs', a particular pattern of ritual expression and performance shared by a num-ber of traditions, she refers to a broader range of Middle Eastern relig-ions such as Judaism, Eastern Christianities, Mandaeaism, Zoroastrian-ism, Yezidism, and Islam.[85] The focus of Drower's interest, however,

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[80] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 284.

[81] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 285.

[82] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis,* p. 285.

[83] On Zoroastrian migrations to India and the emergence of a Parsi identity in India, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras* I, pp. 373–400.

[84] The biblicist S.H. Hooke, a noted myth-ritualist who in his own work tried to un-cover a myth-and-ritual-pattern in the Ancient (Middle) East contributed a foreword to *Water into Wine.*

[85] In this volume, the papers by Sabine Kalinock, Robert Langer, and Beate Schmermbeck shed new light on links between Zoroastrian and Islamic rituals (see be-low). This topic has been largely neglected in previous research for obvious ideological reasons. While a comparison of Zoroastrianism with Yezidism and Mandaeaism did not

clearly are Christian, Mandaean and Zoroastrian rituals, and she has per-
sonally observed the performance of both Mandaean and Zoroastrian
rituals.[86] As a result of her comparative studies, she notes a number of
similarities or resemblances:

> The mass, *masiqta,* and other sacraments resemble one another in the order
> of performance. All three [sic] of the first-named are preceded by prelimi-
> nary rites outside the sanctuary (or *bimanda,* or *yazashnagāh*). The second
> part of the 'mystery' takes place within it, and laymen are forbidden to enter
> the holy place. All three are celebrated (*a*) for the benefit of a deceased per-
> son or persons, the former being often the immediate occasion; (*b*) at sea-
> sonal festivals. ... The essential sacred food consumed at these 'mysteries' is
> bread. The sacred drink is, like the bread, symbolical of life. ... Common to
> all these sacramental meals is a commemoration prayer in which deceased
> persons are named, and this prayer contains petitions for the prosperity of
> the community, living and dead, and of rulers temporal and spiritual, past
> and present. ... 'Mysteries' include ablutions, fire, incense, the pact or pax
> ceremony and other strikingly like details. Then there is recognition of the
> ritual meal as an expression of unity, or belief that the individual soul is one
> with its fellows in this world and the next, and one in a mystical sense with
> the greater Unity from which it is derived. ... Like the Persian and Man-
> daean sacramental meals, the mass is a bridge between this world and the
> next: like them it is, above all else, an expression in dramatic and symbolic
> form of faith in life resurgent.[87]

Once again, this may serve as an example of how the comparative per-
spective changes the outlook of the phenomena which are 'compared':
While the Yasna could appear as a shortened version of the Brahman
Agniṣṭoma to Haug, for Drower it could equally well serve as a perfect
example of a sacrificial meal[88] (exactly as Zoroaster could be a represen-

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cause much objection for all of them are religious minorities, a comparison with Islam,
which is generally seen as the oppressor and persecutor, was implicitly regarded as in-
appropriate.

[86] When she was taken to India as a refugee in 1941, Lady Drower came to know
Dastur Bode who took her to "a new fire-temple a few days before its consecration ex-
plained the purpose of its chambers and cult-objects and allowed me to witness some
Parsi rites in their proper setting. Later, he took me to a seminary for Parsi priests where
I saw rehearsals of ceremonies such as the Yasna and was allowed to interrupt novices
at any stage of the proceedings which called for explanation", E.S. Drower, *Water into
Wine. A Study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East* (London, 1956), p. 4. On Dastur Bode
see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 57–58, 138–140, 363.

[87] Drower, *Water into Wine,* pp. 257–258.

[88] The category 'ritual/cultic community meal' is further explored by Anders Hult-

tative of the type of a Biblical prophet and an Eurasian shaman to different scholars). That approach is not peculiar to Drower, though: Some prominent (Catholic) scholars have explicitly likened the Yasna to the (Catholic) Mass.[89] On the one hand, these comparisons may be helpful in order to widen possible perspectives in the analysis of the Yasna. On the other hand, the contrasting comparisons vividly illustrate the remarkable distortions resulting from forcing a Zoroastrian (emic) ritual into a non-Zoroastrian (etic) pattern—and comparing the comparisons may be important in order to make us aware both of the potentials and the risks of the comparative endeavor. However, it should be remembered that the examples presented above were those of *explicit* comparisons, while in most cases the problems of interpretation probably rather arise from the *implicit,* non-acknowledged comparisons necessarily carried in the back of the scholars' head.

In his contribution to the present volume, Jens Kreinath brings this issues to an even deeper, meta-theoretical level, when he argues that different theoretical options and paradigms have resulted in scholars coming to opposite conclusions in their interpretation of the Yasna, even though they have made use of exactly the same empirical material.

Haug and Drower are good examples of comparative approaches in a traditional sense: both are primarily interested in similarities and resemblances,[90] whereas some more recent comparative attempts rather tend to stress differences and divergences. J.C. Heesterman is a good example of

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gård in his contribution to this volume. Significantly, in a forthcoming essay, Hultgård explores Mithraic cultic meals and their possible Iranian links, see A. Hultgård, "Le repas cultuel dans le mithriacisme – structure, sens et origines", *Das Mahl Gottes/Le repas de Dieu*, ed. C. Grappe (Tübingen, forthcoming). Hultgårds contribution to this volume illustrates the way in which a concept ('ritual/cultic community meal') results in the (eventually successful) hunt for historical data.

[89] R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London, 1961), pp. 90–91, 99; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Symbolik des Parsismus* (Symbolik der Religionen 8; Stuttgart, 1962), p. 63. On Zaehner see also Hinnells, "Postmodernism and the Study of Zoroastrianism", pp. 13–17. Hinnells stresses Zaehner's "'situatedness' as an intellectual, Western Catholic, interested in mysticism and philosophy" (p. 16), whose "attention was focused entirely on what he believed to be parallel with his own Catholic faith" (p. 16). Actually, as Hinnells points out, Zaehner was a convert to Catholicism.

[90] One of the most vivid examples of this approach is Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*: In order to illuminate and legitimize certain aspects of Zoroastrian rituals, the author draws attention to similar phenomena from Egypt, France, Greece, Rome, from the Bible, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, from among the Bene Israel and of course from Hindu practices.

that type of scholarship. In his book *The Broken World of Sacrifice* (already referred to above) from 1993, he comments on the comparison of Vedic ritualism and the 'Iranian fire cult' in the following terms: "The interesting aspect of the comparison, however, lies not in their similarities but in the striking divergence of their development."[91]

In the present volume, both approaches are represented. While the paper by Antonio Panaino represents the classical attempt of explaining an unintelligible aspect of one system by referring to a clearly attested 'similar' aspect in a linguistic/historical related system—here again Vedic and Avestan texts—, Dorothea Lüddeckens, James Boyd/Ron Williams and Gernot Windfuhr drive the comparative agenda one step further in that the validity of their investigation does not depend on the phenomena under investigation being related to each other from a linguistic or historical point of view.[92] Windfuhr's study, though, points to the presence and persistence of a cognitive system—astrology—underlying both the Taoist and the Zoroastrian rituals. In that way, the comparison with Taoist rituals and the discovery of similarities direct the attention to astrological dimensions in the Yasna that hitherto had not been noticed. Thus, the comparison creates the parameters of a re-description and re-visioning of the Yasna. In the case of Boyd and Williams, on the other hand, the Yasna is not the focus of analysis as such but rather serves as an example for a more general attempt at theorizing rituals.[93] While the Yasna, thus, on the one hand illustrates and promotes some general points that the authors make about rituals and art,[94] the analysis

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[91] Heesterman, *The Broken World of Sacrifice*, p. 6. This statement mirrors the well-known call for difference advanced by J.Z. Smith in his essay "In Comparison a Magic Dwells", reprinted in J.Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion. From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago/London, 1982), pp. 19–35, p. 35: "Comparison requires the postulation of difference as the grounds of it being interesting".

[92] In the case of Dorothea Lüddeckens, comparison is used as a method in order to validate a general hypothesis on the interdependence between experiences of death and death-rituals. The comparison here refers to modern Western, in particular German, dealings with the topic of death and contemporary Parsi-Zoroastrian death-rituals (i.e., funerals and related rituals).

[93] During the conference, the Iranologist Philip Kreyenbroek challenged this position. Kreyenbroek argued that this sort of theoretical approach was degrading the informants to mere 'objects'. In his recent book *Living Zoroastrianism. Urban Parsis Speak about their Religion* (Richmond, 2001), Kreyenbroek has presented an attempt to rehabilitate Zoroastrians themselves as subjects of discourse about their religion. For a critical evaluation see my review in *Numen* 49, 2002, pp. 219–222.

[94] On a previous version of their interpretation, its basic assumptions and workings,

of the Zoroastrian rituals on the other hand greatly benefits from the kind of comparative perspective that the authors have adopted.[95] It should be remembered that comparison does not require any 'natural' similarities as its starting-point, but that, as a scholarly method, it is a mental operation solely undertaken "in order to solve *our* theoretical problems."[96]

RITUAL NETWORKS AND SEQUENCES

Most of the contributions to the study of Zoroastrian rituals hitherto mentioned focus on the Yasna. Usually, the Yasna is regarded as the Zoroastrian ritual *par préférence*. In the course of the performance of the Yasna, the Old Avestan texts, including the *Gāθās,* are recited. While the history of the Yasna may ultimately go back to a 'prehistoric' past,[97] its factual history still remains somewhat obscure. It is safe to assume that the Yasna has developed a fixed, 'canonical' form in the period when the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) texts were written down,[98] but it is difficult to get much beyond that. No clear indications for the performance of a ritual like the Yasna can be detected in the Greek and Latin sources, which predate the Pahlavi texts.[99] In order to fill that gap, those

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and other related items see Jens Kreinath's paper in this volume.

[95] Hitherto, all comparative studies were of an inter-religious kind (i.e. they compare the ritual A from religion Z with ritual B from religion Y), while there is yet no systematic attempt at comparing two or several performances of one and the same Zoroastrian ritual (say initiations or weddings in India and Iran or in the 'diaspora' respectively). In previous research, some entire interpretations or theories were based on even one single performance of a ritual; see the paper by Jens Kreinath in this volume. The passage from Manekji's 1865 travel-report published in this volume is an example of a Parsi Zoroastrian describing the ritual practices of his Iranian co-religionists. The report is informed by feelings both of sympathy and alienation.

[96] J.Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine. On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion 14; Chicago/London, 1990), p. 52.

[97] Boyce reflects on this issue in terms of her assumption about a 'pagan background', see her *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, pp. 156–163.

[98] On these texts and their reference to the Yasna see the papers by Philip Kreyenbroek and Shaul Shaked in this volume. However, it should not be forgotten that the Yasna was modified and continued to develop in the post-Pahlavi periods as well.

[99] For a comprehensive survey, see A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi. Zoroastrianism in Greek & Roman Literature* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 133; Leiden et al., 1997). See also the paper by Anders Hultgård in this volume.

who wish to argue in favour of the antiquity of the ritual often produce archaeological 'evidence' (i.e., materials).[100] In particular, the mortars and pestles of polished stone belonging to the Persepolis treasury seem to testify that rituals like the Yasna, in which a mortar and a pestle are used,[101] could have been celebrated already in the 5th century BCE. However, the fact that similar or even identical implements have been used in a ritual context does not in itself constitute a valid proof for the hypothesis that it was 'the Yasna' that has been performed with the help of these vessels.

In his contribution to this volume, Gernot Windfuhr suggests that basic texts have been modified in order to fit into an astrological framework. In her recent work, Almut Hintze illustrates that a philological analysis may provide a key to further investigations of this and related issues. This is because the literary structure of the Avestan texts shows a conscious arrangement.[102] Whereas I find Hintze's suggestion "that not only all of the Avestan texts but also their very arrangement as transmitted in the Yasna liturgy is the original one and derives from the author, Zaraθuštra, himself",[103] somewhat over-enthusiastic—some of the reasons for my scepticism are mentioned above—, her contribution to this volume attests that an analysis of the literary structure of the texts may reveal some of the mechanisms and strategies of the textual fabric and design of the rituals. Much of this yet remains to be explored for the (Younger Avestan portions of) the Yasna, but—as Hintze demonstrates—this approach also yields results when extended to related rituals such as the Visprad and the Vendidad.

As a matter of fact, Zoroastrian priestly rituals constitute an interrelated network that is constructed according to varied degrees of complexity: the Visprad, Vendidad, and Nerangdin are ever more complex ritual elaborations of the Yasna.[104] Furthermore, in order to be enacted in a valid manner, the Yasna requires a pair of initiated priests who maintain a certain degree of ritual purity. The performance of the purification

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[100] By way of example, see Kotwal/Boyd, *The Yasna,* p. 1: "The ritual has its roots in Persian antiquity". While the authors (in note 1) are ready to acknowledge that textual references are mainly from the 9th and 10th Centuries CE, they reason that archaeology "furnishes us with even older evidence."

[101] In the contemporary version of the Yasna, though, mortar and pestle are of metal.

[102] See Hintze, "On the Literary Structure of the Older Avesta".

[103] Hintze, "On the Literary Structure of the Older Avesta", p. 50.

[104] There is evidence to the effect that the network of priestly rituals was much richer in earlier times.

rituals, in turn, requires the presence of another priest and a purifying agent—consecrated bull's urine—, a substance that is produced by means of the most complex Zoroastrian ritual, the Nerangdin. Thus, the material ritual agent—(consecrated) bull's urine—and the special status of the human actors—the priests—link different parts of the 'ritual system' together. Moreover, for the main priest in order to be 'empowered' to celebrate the Yasna, first another ritual, the Baj-dharna, has to be performed.

To a certain extent, the Yasna is a structured arrangement, or compilation, of several units that, in different contexts and with certain modifications, are also performed as independent rituals.[105] Hence, the Yasna is linked to different settings of religious practice. One major instance of this 'ritual doubling' (or 'quotation') is the above mentioned Bāj-dharnā: with some variations pertaining to its textual corpus and the acts performed during the ritual, it can serve both as an independent ritual—mostly referred to as the Bāj-dharnā or the Yašt-i Drōn—and as a sequence in the Yasna, where it can be referred to as "the sacred bread service".[106] However, because of the dominant fixation of attention on the Yasna in previous research the Bāj-dharnā has never been regarded as an object worthy of a study in its own right, although it is actually performed more often than the Yasna in priestly practice. Thus, (Ervad) Ramiyar Karanjia's contribution to this volume, which is a synthesis of the results hitherto achieved in a larger ongoing investigation of this ritual, is an important attempt to the study of the network of priestly rituals. The same may be said about the Stūm (or Staomi), another 'small', but frequently performed ritual that is for the first time ever richly portrayed in the joint contribution by Jamsheed Choksy and (Dastur) Firoze Kotwal.

All of the above-mentioned priestly rituals are linked up with each other, and also with other types of rituals such as initiations and marriages. In his contribution to this volume, Burkhard Gladigow discusses

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[105] On the 'dramatic unity' of the Yasna see W.R. Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry. The Semiotics of Fire and Water in the Zoroastrian *Yasna*", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 56, 1988, pp. 417–442. On Darrow's approach see also Jens Kreinath's paper in this volume. For different attempts to structure the Yasna (according to textual divisions, ritual actions, moves of the priests, etc.), see Gernot Windfuhr's contribution to this volume, esp. his tables 1, 2, 5, 6.

[106] See Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering,* pp. 94–97 and Gernot Windfuhr in this volume.

the 'cross-linking' of rituals and the resulting creation of ritual networks from a systematic point of view. Theoretical and analytical in scope, Gladigow takes his examples from Mediterranean, especially Roman and occasionally also later (Medieval and modern) European religious history.[107] While Gladigow's theoretical approach is clearly informed by this range of examples, it is fascinating to see that many of his findings fall on fertile ground when applied to the study of Zoroastrian rituals. This is another instance of the intricate, multi-layered project of 'comparative religion'.

With his contribution Gladigow aims at the creation of some sort of an analytic model (*Analysemodell*) that permits a (technical) 'notation' and 'sequencing' of rituals.[108] Furthermore, he suggests to explore how these 'inner sequences' of rituals correspond to the rituals' 'external contexts'. As a starting-point, Gladigow reflects on the importance of 'repetition' for understanding rituals.[109] To begin with, he distinguishes be-

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[107] On those concepts see also B. Gladigow, „Mediterrane Religionsgeschichte, Römische Religionsgeschichte, Europäische Religionsgeschichte: Zur Genese eines Fachkonzepts", *Kykeon. Studies in Honour of H.S. Versnel*, eds. H.F.J. Horstmanshoff/H.W. Singor/F.T. van Straten/J.H.M. Strubbe (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 142; Leiden et al., 2002), pp. 49–67.

[108] As Gladigow takes 'sequencing' as a starting-point to arrive at a 'notation' of rituals, the resulting model is necessarily one-dimensional. In this respect, sequencing reminds on the syntactical rules featured by Frits Staal in his ritual theory. Staal's comparison of rituals with grammar and music—see F. Staal, *Rules Without Meaning. Ritual, Mantras, and the Human Sciences* (Toronto Studies in Religion 4; New York et.al., 1989)—is relevant to the notation of rituals, though Staal himself surprisingly does not explicitly address this issue. For some further thoughts on the 'scoring' of rituals see J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams, "Artful Means. An Aesthetic View of Shinto Purification Rituals", *Journal of Ritual Studies* 13, 1999, pp. 37–52, especially pp. 41–43 who link the question of "any abstract notational system for displaying, in skeletal and ideal form, the underlying structure of an object or event, usually an artwork or ritual" (p. 41) to formalism as an aesthetic theory. Another relevant approach to this issue is Nelson Goodman's 'theory of notation'; see N. Goodman, *Languages of Art. An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis, 1976 (second edition)), pp. 127–175. According to Goodman, it should be recalled, "the properties required of a notational system are unambiguity and syntactic and semantic disjointness and differentiation" (p. 156). An attempt to make Goodman's theory fruitful for the study of ritual has been made by I. Scheffler, see his "Ritual and Reference", *Synthese* 46, 1981, pp. 421–437, here pp. 422–424, repr. in I. Scheffler, *Symbolic Worlds. Art, Science, Language, Ritual* (Cambridge et al., 1997), pp. 133–136.

[109] On the significance of 'repetition' for rituals from an ethological perspective, see D. Baudy, *Römische Umgangsriten. Eine ethologische Untersuchung der Funktion von*

tween ritual redundancy and repetition: While redundant rituals conveys the same information or 'function' in different manners (and media), ritual repetition refers to the repeated performance of the same part, element, or sequence of a ritual. This leads to an attempt to differentiate between different forms of ritual activity. [a] There are elements of rituals ('rites') that can be repeated in a recognizable manner within one and the same ritual unit. [b] On a larger scale, a limited number of these discrete elements ('rites') can be combined to form stereotype or typical ritual sequences (*typische Ritualsequenzen*) that structure more complex rituals. [c] Finally, there is the repetition of entire rituals.

Evidently, Gladigow's distinctions can fruitfully be applied to the study of Zoroastrian rituals. As an example, [a] the recitation of the main 'manthric' (Avestan) formula—the *Aṣǝm* and the *Yaϑā*—is part of virtually all Zoroastrian rituals, and they may be repeated several times (i.e., in a recognizable manner) within a ritual like the Yasna. [b] Moreover, by being repeated and combined in a specific fashion—e.g. 4 recitations of the *Yaϑā* followed by two of the *Aṣǝm*—the recitation of these 'manthras' creates ritual sequences such as the verbal framing of specific rituals acts, a technique referred to as 'taking/leaving the bāj'.[110] In that way, complex ceremonies are structured or 'dismantled' into smaller units (which, of course, are much easier to memorize). [c] The repetition of entire rituals is a well-known strategy in Zoroastrianism, e.g., with respect to the 'posthumous rituals' performed on behalf of a deceased Zoroastrian. Moreover, the repeated performance of the Yasna for six consecutive days is considered as a ceremony in its own right and referred to as *gewrā*; it is part of more complex ceremonies such as the initiation into priesthood, and the consecration of bull's urine, the Nerangdin. The Dawazdah Homāst, a ceremony consisting of the performance of a multitude of Yasna- and Vendidād-rituals, is another striking example for the constructive power of that strategy to design new rituals.

Gladigow explores a number of forms these basic modalities of ritual repetition or 'sequencing' may take. Thus, [a] he mentions 'ritual quotations' (*rituelle Zitate*), i.e., sequences that are transposed from one ritual

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Wiederholung für religiöses Verhalten (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 43; Berlin/New York, 1998).

[110] On this ritualistic technique see M. Boyce/F. Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *bāj* and *drōn*–I–II", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34, 1971, pp. 56–73 and 298–313.

onto another one[111] and that are easily recognized as such by the participants. Moreover, [b] there may occur 'ritual abbreviations' (*rituelle Abbreviaturen*), i.e., shortened forms of rituals that are alluded to without being performed in their entirety. Furthermore, [c] as a special way of linking repetition and sequencing, one finds 'ritual stringing' (*Reihungen in Ritualen*), i.e., the repeated performance of a ritual act that may be, for instance, dedicated to different divine or non-human agents.

Again it is tempting to hunt for Zoroastrian examples for these modalities of ritual density.[112] [a] As a matter of fact, Sarah Stewart's contribution to this volume in which she discusses a long Gujarati song, the *Song of Fire* (*Ātaš nu Gīt*), provides a striking example of a 'ritual quotation': the song contains a description of the consecration of an important Zoroastrian temple-fire,[113] and the performance of the song 'quotes' from the 'original' ritual; in this way the 'original ritual' is memorized and kept alive. Within the network of priestly rituals, the Bāj-Dharnā (studied by Ramiyar Karanjia) can be regarded as a quotation from the Yasna. The fact that the relevant chapters of the Yasna which are, with due modifications, recited in the Bāj-dharnā (Yasna 3–8), are usually referred to as the 'chapters of the Srōš Drōn', shows that this is not just a matter of theoretical speculation, but very much part of an insider's (emic) perspective. Recently, Parviz Varjavand has drawn my attention to what he perceived as a specific 'ritual quotation'. According to his observation, in the so-called Mēzd-services where no animal foodstuffs were used, the Iranian priests cut of the fruits, in particular watermelons and pomegranates, "in a method very similar to cutting an animal throat and not at all like how a regular fruit is cut." [114]

[b] While it may be difficult to find Zoroastrian examples for 'ritual abbreviations', the opposite modality, i.e. 'ritual extension', is clearly observable. Thus, both the priestly 'liturgical' rituals and the purification rituals make up a chain of increasingly extended versions of 'simpler' rituals.

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[111] On such structures, from a different angle, see M. Cartry, "From One Rite to Another. The Memory of Ritual and the Ethnologist's Recollection", *Understanding Rituals,* ed. D. de Coppet (European Association of Social Anthropologists; London/New York, 1992), pp. 26–36.

[112] For an exchange of some ideas on what follows I wish to thank Ramiyar Karanjia.

[113] For this ritual, see Mario Vitalone's contribution to this volume.

[114] Parviz Varjavand, E-mail of Wed, 5 Mar 2003, 12:26:18.

[c] Whereas 'ritual stringing' as defined by Gladigow may not be a feature of Zoroastrian rituals, it certainly is a prominent technique in the composition of Zoroastrian ritual texts. By way of example one may refer to the first chapters of the *Yasna*. At the beginning of his extensive commentary on the first eight chapters of the *Yasna* Jean Kellens qualifies the rhetorical genre of the text as a 'litany' and characterizes its style as "dry enumeration".[115] As a matter of fact, this 'dry enumeration' to a large extent consists of the affirmation on behalf of the performer(s) reciting the text that this or that ritual act is done for or dedicated to a chain of gods, i.e. divine beings, who are at the same time venerated in this way; the enumeration turns out to be a 'stringing' of divine addressees of the ritual performance.

[d] Bearing the Zoroastrian materials in mind, one may even suggest a further modality of sequencing, i.e. marking out a certain sequence by specific gestures. Thus, the mention of evil thoughts, words, and deeds occurring in several basic rituals is usually accompanied by producing a sound, either by snipping the fingers during prayer, or by the priest ringing the bell in the fire-chamber inside a temple.

As Gladigow's paper illustrates, sequencing can be seen as a means of both constructing and analyzing complex rituals. As examples of complex rituals—that is rituals which integrate a larger number of elements (rites)—, Gladigow discusses (and re-describes) sacrifices[116] and festivals. The cross-linking of rituals can be achieved by means of the topography of the sacred space (*Sakraltopographie*) such as the temples and, in the dimension of time, through the calendar. Both ways of interlinking rituals and creating complex networks of rituals are also clearly present in Zoroastrian ritual practice.

Moreover, Gladigow claims that the growing complexity of rituals—a process that he finds attested in most religions—is part of a general longterm (evolutionary) process of 'professionalization' (*Professionalisierung*) of religion. That refers to the observation that religion, and rituals in particular, have increasingly become the 'business' of professionals such priests.[117] The process of professionalization has two dimen-

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[115] J. Kellens, "Commentaire sur les premiers chapitres du Yasna", *Journal asiatique* 284, 1996, pp. 37–108, p. 38 ("sèche énumération").

[116] For the standard variety of the sacrifice as it was practiced in the Imperium Romanum, Gladigow draws a list numbering at least 22 elements.

[117] At least in large and wealthy Zoroastrian communities, there is another group of professionals, the *nasesalar*, i.e. a group of professionals who lay out the corpse after

sions that are both well attested in Zoroastrian ritual history (where priests as 'professionals' are largely in control of ritual practice and derive their income from their performance of rituals):

On the one hand, ritual 'work' is basically an activity, an occupation, of specialists (and their patrons, clients, or sponsors) who may adapt rituals to the new circumstances, requirements, and needs. As just one (out of many) example from Zoroastrian history, one might refer to the development of the main ritual of purification, the Barašnūm. From being a ritual performed in order to remove a specific, intense pollution, the priests came to regard the performance of the Barašnūm as a compulsory ritual duty for each and every Zoroastrian. It was held to be an important means to achieve religious merit and a status of ritual purity. At the same time, the professionals granted the option of having the ritual performed vicariously.[118]

On the other hand, due to the process of 'professionalization', the proper performance of rituals tends to get increasingly difficult and therefore needs to be safeguarded, supervised, superintended, and controlled by specialists.[119] Probably, the 'professionalization' of religion (and rituals) has a long history in Zoroastrianism, and much of what is at issue here can be illustrated by the *Nērangestān,* an ancient treatise dealing with matters of ritual. In his contribution to this volume, Philip Kreyenbroek, who is involved in an ongoing new edition and translation of that difficult text which "affords an insight into the discipline of 'ritual studies' as taught by Zoroastrian religious authorities" (Kreyenbroek, p. 319), introduces some of its guiding principles. The *Nērangestān* presents and discusses rules and practices that focus on "(1) the proper way of performing a valid ritual, and (2) the evaluation of adverse circumstances or improper actions which might affect the validity of the ritual and the merit resulting from it" (Kreyenbroek, p. 320). As one central

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death and carry it into the 'towers of silence'. This group represents as it were the negative counterpart to the priesthood. While the priests are experts of the pure, the *nasesalar* are experts of the defiled and are, hence, socially stigmatized. On contemporary Zoroastrian funerals in Bombay see the contribution by Dorothea Lüddeckens in this volume.

[118] See A. de Jong, "Purification *in absentia.* On the Development of Zoroastrian Ritual Practice", *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions,* eds J. Assmann/G.G. Stroumsa (Studies in the History of Religions 83; Leiden et al., 1999), pp. 301–329.

[119] See also J. Rüpke, "Controllers and Professionals. Analyzing Religious Professionals", *Numen* 53, 1996, pp. 241–262.

issue of ritualistic 'professionalization', Gladigow refers to the problem of how errors or mistakes in the performance are dealt with—and this is exactly one of the topics discussed in the *Nērangestān*: To what extent must a performance be repeated if an error has occurred? While some 'mishaps' require the complete abandoning of the actual performance, in other instances it is possible to adapt it. If, for instance, a single verse (of the text recited within the ritual) had been omitted, that could be corrected by repeating the verse in question, whereas the omission of several verses required the repetition of the whole ceremony. This leads to the question of the consequences of a failed performance: While the priest had to take the consequences of any flaws once the ritual performance was considered as completed, prior to that a ritual could be abandoned at any time without serious consequences for the performing priests. Moreover, the *Nērangestān* discusses criteria of accountability. Here, the question of intentionality and responsibility emerge: "there was an apparently general agreement that someone who arranges to be awakened by another in order to take part in the great *Gāhāmbār* celebrations does not become a sinner if the other person fails to wake him in time" (Kreyenbroek, p. 321). Apart from the eschatological dimension of the (ritual) actions—the sins and merits that will be accounted for after death—, occasionally the text mentions punishments inflicted on priests who commit sins during the performance of a ritual: "thus, if a priest omits one word from his recitation of the *Gāthās* he shall be punished with three lashes, or work in the field for a day" (Kreyenbroek).

PRIESTLY AND LAY-RITUALS

The rituals mentioned so far—and the consecration of a temple-fire studied by Mario Vitalone in his contribution to this volume—were all examples of priestly ritual craft, and the *Nērangestān* is one of the major examples of Zoroastrian priestly 'ritual studies'. The fact that Zoroastrian rituals have long since been 'professionalized' to a large extent had already caught the eyes of Herodotus in the 5th century BCE, when he notes that it was not the "custom" of the Persians "to sacrifice without a Magus" (I 132).[120] It seems that the Magus was required in both his ca-

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[120] On animal 'sacrifice' in Zoroastrianism, see A. de Jong, "Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Zoroastrianism. A Ritual and its Interpretation", *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. A.I. Baumgarten (Studies in the History of Religions 93; Leiden et al., 2002), pp.

pacities as an overseer ('controller') of the ritual performance, and as an actor who would sing a 'theogony' or an 'invocation' (I 132).

The 'professional' dimension of Zoroastrian rituals has biased our source-material towards priestly perspectives, for most Zoroastrian religious writings from pre-modern times are products of priestly discourses. Therefore, what we learn about Zoroastrianism from pre-modern Zoroastrian sources is mostly a priestly version of 'the faith' (or is at least mediated through priestly perspectives).[121] This has important consequences, for every account of Zoroastrianism based on 'authentic', 'indigenous' Zoroastrian sources will implicitly lead to the reproduction of priestly perspectives on that religion. Thus, by using such priestly texts as its primary source-material Orientalist discourse has to a large extent echoed and corroborated priestly perspectives.[122] However, because philology as a scholarly ('scientific') discipline claimed to act as the true representative of the 'authentic' textual heritage of the 'faith' (and thus defining its parameters) it has at the same time subtly contributed to undermining and substituting the truth-claims of the priesthood.[123]

In recent decades however, partly following general trends in the study of religion and partly possibly as a result of more intensive interaction with lay-Zoroastrians on the side of some scholars, a new interest in the religious attitudes and ritual practice of the laity has emerged.[124] This tendency has also resulted in a substantial re-evaluation of 'secondary' sources such as the Roman and Greek sources re-studied by Albert (Ab) de Jong.[125] In his contribution to this volume, de Jong addresses another important field of study in this regard: the rituals reportedly performed at the court of the Sasanian kings ruling Iran (and Mesopotamia) from the 3rd to the 7th centuries CE. De Jong raises the question whether Sasanian "court ceremonial and court etiquette can fruitfully be analyzed as a special branch of Zoroastrian rituals". As a matter of fact, Sasanian court rituals have never been considered in that light, and de Jong argues that

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127–148. See also the paper by Anders Hultgård in this volume.

[121] Texts like the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* at least reflect on concerns of the laity, but the answers given are those representing and reaffirming priestly authority.

[122] It comes as no surprise, then, that the question of orthodoxy has come to the forefront.

[123] On this and related problems, see M. Stausberg, "Textrezeption und Sinnproduktion. Zur Bedeutung der Philologie für die zarathushtrische Religionsgeschichte", *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte* 13, 1998, pp. 333–343.

[124] Again, Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism* is a milestone.

[125] De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi.*

much can be gained "if we try to understand Sasanian court rituals as a valid expression of a highly specialised segment of a Zoroastrian society." Of course, this society was highly gendered, and the available descriptions of Sasanian court rituals to a great extent focus on the male king.

As de Jong rightly points out, the Sasanians have inherited many aspects of these rituals from their predecessors and some elements ultimately may even derive from ancient Mesopotamia. An illuminating comparison could be made with contemporary or later Byzantine court rituals, which are generally held to be "an essential characteristic of Byzantine civilization."[126] Despite the specific problems involved in the study of the Byzantine sources, Byzantine court rituals are a much more accessible object of study than their Sasanian counterparts: Contrary to Sasanian Iran we have primary source-material such as the *Book of Ceremonies* compiled by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959 CE).[127] In his study of Sasanian court rituals, de Jong is mostly interested in gaining "a better understanding of the complex and uneasy relations between religion and court in a Zoroastrian empire." However, many of the ritual elements mentioned in his sources, it seems, did not explicitly carry a Zoroastrian message.[128] While many Sasanian kings have publicly asserted their adherence to Zoroastrianism in other media, apparently the rituals attested in the available sources have not been used for this aim. It almost seems as if these ceremonies were leading a life of their own, as a distinct set of rituals. In contrast to that, Byzantine court rituals are inter-ritually linked to Christian rituals in a more visible fashion: Visits to religious places (shrines) and liturgical services were parts of imperial triumph-ceremonies, and there was "a complete intertwining of royal ceremony with the Christian liturgical year";[129] moreover, "the spatial setting of the rituals combines religious

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[126] M. McCormick, "Analyzing Imperial Ceremonies", *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 35, 1985, pp. 1–20, p. 1.

[127] On this work see A. Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual. The Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*", *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, eds D. Cannadine/S. Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 106–136.

[128] This is why de Jong chooses his words very carefully when he states, "That is to say, the Sasanian monarchs were Zoroastrians and the ritual life at court must have expressed this religious identity, or at least cannot have clashed with it too overtly." While this assumption sounds convincing, there may have been different views about what a 'Zoroastrian religious identity' actually entailed.

[129] Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual", p. 117.

and secular areas, and that movement between them is an integral part of the rituals".[130] According to the available sources, Zoroastrian places such as fire-temples, were not part of the Sasanian royal rituals in the same way. Moreover, while processions were important forms of royal rituals in Byzantium, this, it seems, was not the case in Sasanian Iran.

The fact that source-materials pertaining to Sasanian court rituals have been preserved and even remodelled in later centuries illustrates a vivid interest in things Sasanian on the part of the later Islamic cultural and political elite. Despite it being in Arabic, the main source used by de Jong was probably written by an Iranian who clearly possessed a solid knowledge of ancient Iranian culture. As a matter of fact, especially under the 'Abbāsids, we find a good number of Iranians who were holding important offices at the caliphal court and who contributed to the reintegration of a good number of traits of the Sasanian empire into Islamic culture.[131] The Sasanian legacy was particularly prominent in the fields of bureaucracy and administration, especially during the early 'Abbāsid period. Attempts at generating continuity with pre-Islamic culture did occasionally even apply to court ceremonies. Significantly, it is reported that al-Faḍl b. Sahl—a Zoroastrian who after joining the Muslims in 806 CE at the urging of caliph Ma'mun,[132] whose vizier he was to become—had introduced Sasanian rituals into the caliphal court at the time when Ma'mun was staying in Merv.[133]

While it is reported that some Sasanian kings made pilgrimages to famous fire-sanctuaries, the available source-materials do not confirm the assumption that there was an uninterrupted continuity of Zoroastrian pilgrimages from pre-Islamic times down to the present age. However, as Robert Langer points out in his contribution to this volume, Zoroastrian pilgrimages and what he calls 'shrine-cult' has so many parallels with Muslim-Iranian practices and institutions[134] that it seems justified to refer

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[130] Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual", p. 117.

[131] On the emergence, golden age and decline of the Irano-Islamic culture see E. Yarshater, "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World", *The Persian Presence in the Islamic World,* eds. R.G. Hovannisian/G. Sabagh (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 4–125.

[132] See J.K. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation. Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society* (New York, 1997), p. 120.

[133] See R.N. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia. The Arabs in the East* (London, 1993 (originally 1975)), p. 152 (source: al-Jahshiyārī).

[134] There are parallels as legends, popular devotional practices, terminology, administration, and material culture (including architecture).

to "Iranian shrine worship as a whole" (Langer, p. 564).[135] This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that shrines and 'shrine cult' are unknown among Indian Zoroastrians, the Parsis. However, currently the Iranian-Zoroastrian shrines serve as major attractions to the many Parsi tourist-groups regularly touring Iran.[136] While the Iranian and Indian Zoroastrian traditions share much of their priestly traditions—the priestly groups also have a long history of mutual collaboration—, the Iranian 'shrine cult' seems to be a private, family or community affair out of reach of the priestly sphere of control and influence.[137] As a matter of fact, in Iran, the recent history of the 'shrine cult' and the priestly rituals went into opposite directions: Whereas the priestly ritual system to a great extent has disappeared—some key-rituals are no longer performed at all[138]—, the 'shrine cult' seems to have become ever more popular.[139] Robert Langer illustrates the predicament many modern-minded, 'enlightened' priests are caught in: While they on the one hand feel that the 'shrine cult' is somewhat at odds with their ideal of what Zoroastrianism is all about, they simply can not deny its popularity and willingly or not take part in the rituals required by the places and occasions.

It seems that the Iranian 'shrine cult' has benefited from the political circumstances reigning in the Islamic Republic. As I see it, this may have various reasons, among them the stately patronage of martyrdom-ideology. As a matter of fact, a number of Zoroastrian 'shrines' are commemorative structures and come pretty close to a Zoroastrian cult of martyrs. Moreover, the restriction of 'secular' forms of entertainment has led to shifting entertainment from 'secular' to religious places; accordingly, some shrines were modified in order to accommodate larger crowds and serve as places where larger gatherings can take place. In

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[135] Apart from Muslim and Zoroastrian shrines, Jewish, Christian, Yezidi, and Ahl-e Ḥaqq shrines belong to that general Iranian 'shrine cult'.

[136] This Parsi tourist-business has gained momentum since the 1990s. There is no comparable tourism of Iranian Zoroastrians traveling to India. However, there is a long history of migration from Iran to India since the late 18th century, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 153–156.

[137] Actually, one of the shrines mentioned by Langer in his paper, the Pīr-e Māster Xodā-baxš (Yazd), was founded in order to commemorate a teacher who had his share of conflicts with the priestly establishment.

[138] For a survey of ritual change in Iran since the 1950s see the paper by Katayoun Mazdapour in this volume.

[139] What happened, therefore, is probably less a decline but rather a transformation of religion.

that way, new social space was created for the Zoroastrian communities. Apart from enhancing the social dimension of the shrines, as Langer points out, the political circumstances of the Islamic Republic obviously had an 'anti-syncretistic' impact as well: Shrines that formerly were used by Muslims and Zoroastrians alike have nowadays become the exclusive property of the Muslims or—in a few cases—of the Zoroastrians respectively.[140]

Shrines are one of the possible settings for a branch of rituals that also transcends the neat borders of religious communities: the *sofreh*-rituals performed by Iranian women analyzed by Sabine Kalinock in her contribution to this volume. The available sources do not allow any conclusions about the long-term development of the *sofreh* as a ritual form, but the rituals are well-attested in recent Iranian religious history.[141] Like the shrines, the *sofreh*-rituals are beyond the control of the clergy, and as priesthood is an exclusively male domain in Zoroastrianism, many *sofreh*-rituals are completely out of control for the priests because they are performed by women.[142] In their evaluation of these rituals the male religious establishment of Islam and Zoroastrianism seem to agree: They are certainly not propagated by the Zoroastrian clergy, and they are even rejected by the Shiite establishment. In contemporary Iran, Sabine Kalinock argues, the way a *sofreh* is arranged amounts to making a political and cultural statement. In other words, in the Islamic setting, from being merely a marginal ritual, the *sofreh* can easily turn into a 'ritual of resistance'.

While this is not the case in the Zoroastrian contexts where the ritual is held, the needs addressed by the *sofreh*-rituals, as Sabine Kalinock points out, are strikingly similar among Muslim and Zoroastrian participants respectively. The vows made in connection to the *sofreh*-rituals do not aim at "the general communal well-being or accumulating religious merit for the other world" (Kalinock, p. 545). Instead, the vows and wishes revolve round specific, "earthly problems" with the hope of achieving "concrete results" (Kalinock, p. 545) by establishing ritual communication with supernatural beings. These beings, and the modes of communication employed by the women, often do not match those venerated by the male religious establishments, and while the women

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[140] However, a shrine at Taft is nowadays used by both communities.

[141] According to Katayoun Mazdapour, the popularity of the *sofreh*-rituals among Zoroastrianism has increased since (and possibly because of) the war against Iraq.

[142] Men may, however, also take part in some forms of *sofreh*-rituals.

may possess very specific religious competences—they come to be re-
garded as specialists in their own right—, these are not professionalized
in the same way as those of the male religious experts who cater for gen-
eral religious needs such as the life-cycle and calendar transitions and the
well-being of the ancestors. What we see here, can be described as a
gender-related division of (ritual) labor.

With regard to textual sources, similar problems are discussed in
Beate Schmermbeck's contribution to this volume.[143] The literary genre
that Beate Schmermbeck introduces, poetical prayers called *Monājāt,* is
clearly of Islamic origin. However, in the course of time, Zoroastrian
poets from Iran as well as India started to compose *Monājāt* in their own
right. Probably from the 18th century onwards, these Zoroastrian *Monā-
jāt*—whose very existence is often ignored and occasionally even denied
by Western Orientalists and Iranian Zoroastrian intellectuals alike—
have, so it seems, gained a wide currency within the Zoroastrian com-
munities. While these Zoroastrian poems have never made it into the
canon of Iranian poetry, in Zoroastrianism they have been quasi-
canonized from a religious point of view in that they were incorporated
in a good number of editions of the *Xorde Avesta,* the book containing
most of the (Avestan) prayers for daily use.[144] Whereas the bulk of the
texts recited during the prayers (and contained in the *Xorde Avesta*) are
composed in a language incomprehensible to virtually all lay-people and
even to many priests, the *Monājāt* were easily accessible to the people,
for they are composed in their mother-languages, either New Persian
or—later on—Gujarati.[145] Not only the language, but also the style, the
imagery and the whole discourse of the *Monājāt,* as Schermbeck illus-
trates in her paper, are significantly distinct from the priestly ritual texts

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[143]   Like the contribution of Robert Langer, Beate Schmermbeck's contribution is
based on a forthcoming PhD-thesis that is being prepared within the junior research-
group „Religionsgeschichte und Ritualistik" (Institut für Religionswissenschaft; Univer-
sität Heidelberg) directed by the editor of this volume.

[144]   However, as Schmermbeck points out, the same *Monājāt* were often transmitted
orally as well.

[145]   Beate Schmermbeck does not discuss the Gujarati-*Monājāt.* It seems to me that
the Gujarati-*Monājāt* to a great extent were literary adaptations and transformations of
the earlier Persian texts. This 'Gujaratization' of the *Monājāt* presumably started by the
texts being transcribed in the Gujarati alphabet when they were printed in the *Xorde
Avesta*-editions produced for the Indian market. The Gujarati-*Monājāt* require a sepa-
rate study. For some preliminary observations see J.R. Russell, "Parsi Zoroastrian Gar-
bās and Monājāts", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1989), pp. 51–63.

and theological treatises. While Schmermbeck refers to these prayers as the "silent, intimate sisters of the official prayers", Manekji's travel-report published in this volume attests that in earlier times they were also recited in such public religious places as temples and shrines (e.g. during the seasonal festivals and pilgrimages).

Contrary to Langer's 'shrine cult' and Kalinock's *sofreh*-rituals, and despite their Islamic origins, the *Monājāt* belong to a recent layer of a shared heritage of Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians. Their contemporary history, however, goes into opposite directions in both groups: Whereas there seems to be a certain revival of the (Gujarati) *Monājāt*-tradition among the Parsis, e.g. for educational purposes,[146] they are nowadays almost completely ignored and tend to be forgotten among the Iranian Zoroastrians, while the non-Zoroastrian Persian *Monājāt* as part of the classical poetic tradition of the country are still present in Iran. Those Iranians who (according to Beate Schmermbeck's observations) still partly continue the *Monājāt*-tradition are all women, while the male in-tellectuals and priests tend to despise these prayers as a 'foreign borrow-ing' supposedly contaminating the 'pure' and 'genuine' Zoroastrian re-ligion. Also in India, as far as I am aware, these prayers are mainly sung by women, and the recent *Monājāt*-revival is very much a female affair. It should be remembered, however, that all the *Monājāt*-poets mentioned by Schmermbeck are men. Thus, gender turns out to be a complex prob-lem.[147]

In her contribution on a long Gujarati song, the *Song of Fire (Ātaš nu Gīt)*, Sarah Stewart draws attention to a similar situation.[148] As she points out, this "song is unique in that it was composed by laymen for use primarily within a lay context, and it appears to have acquired a reli-gious status independent of priestly usage" (Stewart, p. 443). The song is performed at what the Parsis call 'auspicious occasions', i.e. weddings and initiations. As such it makes part of the repertoire of 'female' rituals, i.e. rituals performed by ladies, forming a counterpart to the rituals of the

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[146] It remains to be seen whether this 'revival' will safeguard the survival of this tex-tual tradition.

[147] For an attempt of 'gendering' the study of Zoroastrianism, see now J.K. Choksy, *Evil, Good, and Gender. Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian Religious History* (To-ronto Studies in Religion 28; New York, 2002). See also Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 401–422.

[148] The paper is based on an unfortunately yet unpublished PhD-thesis. In the mean-while, I filmed the singing of the song in Bombay in March 2002.

male priesthood performed at these occasions.[149] As a matter of fact, the *Song of Fire* is performed by singers referred to as *gōyān*,[150] who must be married ladies and must have given birth in order to qualify; in other words, in order to enhance the auspiciousness of events, the performers must have themselves proven to be 'auspicious' by being 'proven' representatives of the traditional gender-roles as wives and mothers.[151] As males the priests are by gender (i.e., 'naturally') unable to achieve this sort of ritual competence, and their priestly 'purity' alone is clearly insufficient to achieve the required sort of 'auspiciousness'.[152]

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[149] At initiations and weddings one clearly notes a gender-specific division of ritual labor. In general terms, the preparation of food is an important element in 'female' rituals (while this foodstuff may then, in turn, be blessed or consecrated by the male priests). This division of labor is clearly visible in most Iranian rituals, where most, or some, of the ladies usually stay inside the kitchen where they prepare food, while the priests and most of the male participants stay in the hall, or the courtyard. As soon as they are ready and while still steaming, the ladies take the food-items from the kitchen and place them one by one on the ritual table in front of the priest who blesses them by performing the ritual.

[150] All the lady-singers I am aware of are now at least in their seventies. Thus, it is doubtful if the tradition of performing the *Song of Fire* at 'auspicious occasions' has any future.

[151] At least in earlier times, the same sort of logic was also applied to the priests performing the wedding. Thus, in a *Revāyat* from the second half of the 16th century (Kāus Kāmdin) the following question is raised: "About tying the marriage knot. Who should tie it?" The answer is: "For performing the marriage ceremony no person will do other than a worthy Dastur (*i.e.* priest) ... who has himself been married and who has been the master of a family" (a married man – *kad-xodē*), B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others. Their Version with Introduction and Notes* (Bombay, 1932), p. 196. In a note, Dhabhar remarks: "In Nowsari and several other places, it is still the custom that only married priests can perform marriage ceremonies. In large towns like Bombay, this custom is dispensed with." Dastur Firoze Kotwal, a native of Naosari (Nowsari), recalls this practice as well. However, he comments on this development in the following terms: The lay-people prefarably want their weddings to be performed by the high-priests (dasturs), and when the high-priests started to marry many years after they had assumed office, by necessity they had to perform the weddings as unmarried persons. Thus, in Dastur Kotwal's view the reason for this development is not urbanisation but the general increase in the age at which people get married. As a matter of fact, until the second half of the 19th century most Parsis were married in their infancy; this practice was still allowed under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1865, but it was formally abolished in 1929, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 66–67.

[152] As a consequence of this division of labor, women are virtually absent as main ritual performers in the context of funerals. Earlier on, they were explicitly excluded from the

While gender is an important category here, it should be kept in mind that the *Song of Fire* itself was composed by men, and the printed edition published in 1879 which is now taken as the basis for the performance of the song was prepared by a man in order to correct what he perceived to be 'faulty' performances. Hence, it seems that the distinction between priestly and lay domains of religious practice is as complex an affair as gender. Stewart emphasizes, "There are few religious observances that are peculiar to the laity alone; while many functions devolve solely on the priesthood, beliefs and practices which I categorise as 'lay' are almost invariably shared by members of priestly families" (Stewart, p. 447). As a matter of fact, the text as well as the performance of the *Song of Fire* show the attempt of a 'layization' of priestly rituals, a process that I have, following Gladigow's scheme, classified as a 'ritual quotation' above: The elaborate priestly ritual of consecration of the highest-grade temple-fire[153] is commemorated, emulated, re-enacted and at the same time transformed by an equally elaborate song. Stewart refers to that process by calling it the "*domestication* of the sacred temple fire" and a "ritual reconstruction" (Stewart, p. 445).

CONGREGATIONAL RITUALS
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF RITUAL COMMUNITIES

In his contribution to this volume (on Sasanian court ceremonies), de Jong categorically states, "Zoroastrianism is a 'non-congregational' religion, which means that the community does not gather regularly—for example, once a week—for shared rituals" (de Jong, p. 351) He readily qualifies this statement in restricting it to pre-modern Zoroastrianism. De Jong's statement brings the argument back to the question of implicit and explicit comparisons, for he seems to derive his dual typology ('congregational' versus 'non-congregational' religions) from a comparison of Zoroastrianism with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. On the other hand, the bundle of religious traditions now going under the name of 'Hinduism', at least in their pre-modern versions, would probably qualify as belonging to the 'non-congregational' species as well. As we shall see, this leads to questions such as modes of the organization of

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final sequences of the funerals. This, however, is no longer the case. On the current practice in Bombay and its interpretation(s), see the paper by Dorothea Lüddeckens.

[153] On this ritual, see Mario Vitalone's contribution to this volume.

time in religions—the existence or not of the (seven-day) week makes a difference here[154]—and the different institutional set-ups of religions shading different light on such notions as 'congregation' and 'community'.[155]

As de Jong readily admits, the Gāhāmbār and a number of other seasonal festivals such as Nou Ruz and related festivals (Mehrgān, Sadeh, etc.) did and do involve the community as such, although much of their celebration actually happens within, and is organized around, the family. At least for the Gāhāmbār, several texts insist that participation is compulsory and with regard to the Gāhāmbār the *Nērangestān,* a major priestly treatise,[156] introduces an interesting distinction: the 'number of men' versus the 'number of ceremonies' [Ner. 2,4]. According to one commentator, usually the 'number of ceremonies' is more important (lit. "better"), but when it comes to the Gāhāmbār the 'number of men' is more important [Ner. 2,5]. However, it is presented as a generally shared opinion "that a ritual with six men is better than with one, and one with six men is better than three (with one?)" [Ner. 2,4]. While a greater number of ritual actors (or participants) was apparently appreciated, the text also warns that the sheer number is not sufficient: "Not that one should celebrate with five men what one should not celebrate with one" [Ner. 2,4].[157]

For mid 19th century Iran, Manekji's travel-report makes it clear that the Gāhāmbār and Mehrgān were congregational rituals.[158] It was considered rewarding to visit each other without an invitation, people were sitting around in groups, everybody was joining in the communal prayers and it was considered a great merit to take part of the ritually consecrated offerings; moreover, nobody dared to be absent, and, hence, all put their work aside. However, the rituals did not take place at a religious place

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[154] On the significance of the eight- and seven-day week for religious history in the West see J. Rüpke. "Zeitliche Strukturen religiöser Aktivitäten. Historische und gegenwärtige Perspektiven", *Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft* 4, 1996, pp. 3–18.

[155] Such institutions as the synagogue and the church are linked to specific constructions of religious community different from those linked to Zoroastrian temples.

[156] See Philip Kreyenbroek's contribution to this volume.

[157] The translation follows F.M. Kotwal/Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān,* vol. II, *Nērangestān, Fragard I* (Studia Iranica, Cahier 16; Paris, 1995), pp. 31–33.

[158] See the translation of the relevant passage by M. Giara, R. Karanjia and M. Stausberg in this volume.

such as a temple, but in the houses[159]—and this, in fact, may mark a difference to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[160] De Jong insightfully comments on the "remarkable distinction between the daily and regularly returning rituals performed by priests and the ritual life of lay Zoroastrians, which is private or family-based" (de Jong, p. 351), and the 'congregational' festivals once again show the complex sort of interaction between priestly and lay practices: While the performance of priestly rituals is not the dominant activity determining the religious identity of the festival, priestly rituals are certainly integrated into the complex fabric of the ceremony as a whole; as a matter of fact, the Visperad-rituals are elaborations of the Yasna-rituals specifically designed[161] in order to be performed during the Gāhāmbār-festivals.

The available source-materials allow only few glimpses into the 'congregational' or 'communal' side of the pre-modern festivals and rituals.[162] Modern practices are, of course, much more accessible in this regard. Moreover, in the modern period some new 'congregational' practices have emerged (or been transformed). The pilgrimages discusses by Robert Langer in this volume are a striking example. More than anything else, the pilgrimage to Pir-e Sabz, a shrine that Langer classifies as an 'international Zoroastrian pilgrimage centre', has in recent decades developed into a public event that virtually (sic!) involves the Iranian Zoroastrian community worldwide. While the long-term history of the Iranian Zoroastian 'shrine cult' largely remains a matter of speculation, it is safe to say that an overwhelming number of shrines are modern inven-

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[159] To a certain extent, this has changed in contemporary Iran where huge buildings for the holding of communal gatherings have been erected even in small villages.

[160] In all these religions, however, important rituals are performed at home. Hence, all these comparisons are a slippery affair.

[161] On the mechanism of their formation, see Almut Hintze's contribution to this volume.

[162] In his contribution to this volume, Anders Hultgård traces the available evidence for what he refers to as 'ritual/cultic community meals'. For the early modern period, Anquetil's report, which is based on his stay in Surat, is an interesting source when he refers to the Zoroastrian "banquets" and sketches the "repas" taking place in a garden, see A.H. Anquetil Duperron, *Zend-Avesta. Ouvrage de Zoroastre* (Paris, 1771; repr. New York/London, 1984), vol. 3 (=Tome second), pp. 574–576. Somewhat earlier, John Ovington who spent a period of three years in Surat after he had arrived in Bombay in 1689, had stated: "At their solemn festivals ... each Man ... brings with him his Victuals, which is equally distributed, and eat in common by all that are present", quoted by Firby, *European Travellers and their Perceptions of Zoroastrians in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, p. 145.

tions. Furthermore, Bardsīr, one of the places, Langer comments on in his paper and which he classifies as 'a trans-regional pilgrimage centre', illustrates that even the *sofreh*-rituals (studied by Sabine Kalinock) have the potential to develop into large communal rituals. As a matter of fact, the *sofreh*-rituals themselves are 'congregational' rituals, although they are not necessarily (but often are!) performed on a weekly (or monthly) basis, and their 'congregation' is not identical to the local or regional religious community (like a parish)—they rather form their own kind of group. Last but not least, the collapse of many features of the traditional ritual system (analyzed by Katayoun Mazdapour in this volume) should not obscure the fact that some new rituals have been and are being invented. As examples one can cite the new sets of public events such as the summer-holiday sporting competitions that integrate a competitive *Gāθā*-chanting as well as a commemorative ritual on behalf of the Zoroastrian 'martyrs' who have lost their lives during the war against Iraq, and a new series of communal Friday-prayers taking place in some new-style fire temples in Yazd (Kuče Boyuk) and Kermān.[163]

Even in India, we come across this ambivalent process of decline and reinvention. Just as in Iran, the system of the purity rituals has seen a steep decline (even though the funerary structures—the so-called 'towers of silence' (*daxma*)—, in many ways a cornerstone of the entire system, are still preserved in India).[164] Already the early reform-movement in the 19th century had (successfully) tried to diminish what was perceived as ritual 'excess', i.e., what, from an economic point of view, was considered as excessive expenses that the people had to incur in order to get their rituals performed.[165] The later reform-movement was increasingly unsatisfied with many aspects of the ritual culture. However, reformist attempts at creating 'congregational rituals' with a 'devotional' intent and a sermon have failed. Nevertheless, as my own contribution to this volume illustrates, new ritual events have come up and occasionally they have turned out to be a great success. In my own contribution, I am studying two such ritual events taking place at two fire-temples in Bombay (one with roots going back to Surat), which have repeatedly changed

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[163] Unfortunately, all that has not yet been properly documented.

[164] On the long-term development of the funerary structures, see the contribution by Dietrich Huff in this volume.

[165] See Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 66–67. For the same reasons, in Iran Zoroastrians were (and partly still are) reluctant to get married or to get their children initiated.

character. These events attract extremely large crowds—at least for Zo-roastrian standards—, and significantly do so on a weekly basis. Thus, from an unexpected angle, it confirms the idea that there is a connection between the week as organizing principle of ritual timing and the per-formance of 'congregational' rituals.

However, we need to go beyond the question of 'congregational' rituals in order to arrive at a better understanding of what rituals achieve in terms of constructing communities. Possibly, it is not primarily the number of people regularly attending the rituals that is at issue here. This becomes particularly clear when we think of the religious role of fire. While the worship of (or, rather in front of) the fire clearly is an act of individual devotion,[166] the fire itself is very much a communal affair. This communal dimension of the fire emerges from different observa-tions. To begin with, the very consecration of the highest-grade temple-fires—the Ātaš Bahrām studied by Mario Vitalone in his contribution to this volume—involves an effort of the entire community. From a ritual point of view, this is clear from the fact that the process of consecration involves different categories of fires.[167] These represent or exemplify all possible sorts of fires used (and hence possibly abused) by a Zoroastrian community, and which are ritually purified (and hence 'sanctified') within the process of consecration. The final establishment ('enthrone-ment') of the fire inside the respective section of a temple is very much a community event, and it requires substantial funding and logistic ar-rangements. Other established communities also have to consent to it being consecrated. Moreover, the birthday of the fire is usually cele-brated as a community event. In the form of a retrospective—mimetic—performance, the Song of Fire (Ātaš nu Gīt) studied by Stewart confirms and strengthens the intimate connection of consecrating a high-grade fire and constructing a religious community; even the ritualized memory of that event may serve as reconstructing the respective community. In In-dia, prior to 1765, when the Navsāri Ātaš Bahrām was established, it seems that the formation of a religious community—the Parsi-community—was linked to a particular fire, the so-called Irānšāh. This fire-sanctuary was held to incorporate (or rather 'inflame') the cultural memory of the group. It would act as its symbolic center, and serve, as it were, as the

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[166] See e.g. J.R. Hinnells, *Zoroastrianism and the Parsis* (London, 1981), p. 62: "... nor are there any congregational services. Each visit to a fire temple is more like a per-sonal pilgrimage."

[167] This also applies to the second class of fires.

'king' of the community.[168] In Iran, the basic logic was similar, but it was applied in a different way: Instead of one central fire-sanctuary, in the *Revāyat* the idea is expressed explicitly that every Zoroastrian quarter or village—or any group consisting of ten Zoroastrians or more—should have at least a second-grade fire-sanctuary, and if possible also an ātaš Bahrām.[169] The importance that the Iranians attach to the presence of the consecrated fires within every Zoroastrian community probably has to do with a ritual that in its turn constitutes something like a ritual community: the 'gathering of the fires'.[170] This ritual, which is not practiced in India, consists in transferring a 'used' fire—i.e., a fire that has been used e.g. for cooking a number of times—to a fire of a higher rank or class. This practice clearly established a network of fires and a community of fire-users.

These observations may illustrate the point that even 'non-congregational' rituals serve to establish a ritual community. There are more aspects to this topic as well that would merit a further investigation. Here, it may suffice to mention the community of the living and the departed that is achieved by the performance and through the performative power of the priestly rituals and the festivals.[171] Moreover, the rituals evoke a collective agency, a Zoroastrian "we"—as a community of worshippers fighting evil and striving towards a purification and the final transfiguration of the world.[172]

Most Zoroastrian rituals are sponsored privately, and primarily address the well-being of the immortal parts of the deceased relatives.

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[168] See Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 1, pp. 380, 388–389, 423.

[169] See Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others,* pp. 61–62.

[170] See J.C. Tavadia, "Ein alter Feuerritus bei den Zoroastriern in Iran", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 36, 1939/40, pp. 256–276; Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 3.

[171] This point is also emphasized in the joint paper by Jamsheed Choksy & Firoze Kotwal when they state that many Zoroastrian rituals "create in the minds of devotees a pious nexus between the living and the dead across the corporeal and the spiritual realms" (p. 391).

[172] Prototypically, ever since the Old Avestan *Sevenfold Yasna (Yasna Haptaŋhāiti)* this collective agency finds its expression in the verbal form *yazamaidē* ("we worship"; "we venerate"). The individual agency ("I") dominates in the *Gāθās,* but especially in the first *Gāθā* there are some instances of collective ritual agency, e.g. Y. 28,6 ("Grant ... to Zarathuštra and to us, ... by which we may overcome the hostilities of the hostile"); Y. 34,1; Y. 34,5 ("... Mazdā ... we have always declared you [to be] superior to all noxious demons and evil humans").

However, as all rituals invariably contain a textual section that seeks blessings for the whole community, there always is a communal dimension even to those rituals that are sponsored for family-interests. This community-encompassing dimension, it seems, has already been noted by Herodotus in the second half of the 5th century BCE, when he states (I 132) that the Persian who performed a sacrifice "may not ask for the good things for his own private interest alone; instead he prays for the good to befall all the Persians and to the king; for he himself is included among all the Persians." While the royal appeal is no longer of relevance to the majority of contemporary Zoroastrians, the 'Zoroastrian nation' is implicitly present, addressed and maintained in Zoroastrian rituals.

IMAGINATIONS AND INTERACTIONS

From a chronological point of view, Herodotus, the 'Father of History',[173] is amongst the earliest and most important (secondary) sources for the study of Zoroastrian rituals,[174] and the relevant passages from his *Histories*—in particular, I 131-132—have been repeatedly commented upon in modern research.[175] In his view of 'alien religions', which he refers to as 'customs' or 'laws' (*nomoi*), Herodotus is not primarily interested in their 'theologies'. Instead, he mostly focuses on their ritual practices,[176] most of all in terms of sacrifice and—to a lesser extent—

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[173] For a comprehensive survey of the current state of affairs in research on Herodotus see *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, eds. E.J. Bakker/I.J.F. De Jong/H. Van Wees (Leiden et al., 2002); see also R. Bichler/R. Rollinger, *Herodot* (Studienbücher Antike 3; Hildesheim et al., 2000).

[174] The only possibly earlier Greek source on Zoroastrian rituals is the well-known fragment of Herodotus' older contemporary Xanthos of Lydia according to which Zoroaster had instigated the rule against burning dead bodies and defiling fire in any other way.

[175] Most recently and extensively by de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, pp. 76–120.

[176] See also W. Burkert, "Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen", *Hérodote et les peuples non-grecs. Neuf exposés suivis de discussions*, ed. G. Nenci (Fondation Hart. Entretiens 35; Genève, 1990), pp. 1–32, p. 4 („(1) Herodot stellt den Wahrheitsanspruch der Religionen, die 'Theologie' zurück ... (2) er konzentriert sich auf das direkt Beschreibbare, das Ritual"); J. Gould, "Herodotus and Religion", *Greek Historiography*, ed. S. Hornblower (Oxford, 1994), pp. 91–106, pp. 98 and 101 ("Religion, like culture itself, is in large part defined by Herodotus by shared ritual procedures"); T. Harrison, *Divinity and History. The Religion of Herodotus* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 220–221 qualifies the latter statement.

burial, divination, and the taking of oaths. At the same time, these accounts are comparative and contrastive in that Herodotus describes alien religious practice, in particular sacrifice, "almost always in terms of its departure from the ritual of Greek sacrifice",[177] and one may easily reconstruct an account of the standard Greek sacrificial procedure by inverting Herodotus' reports about alien practices.[178] This comparative-contrastive stance is particularly evident in the section about the 'customs' of the Persians. In fact, Herodotus provides an entire list of such differences: the priest chanting a 'theogony' during the sacrifice must strike Herodotus' readers as un-Greek, and the same holds true for the 'national' and royal dimensions of the Persians' sacrificial intentions (both already mentioned above). Further points of difference (as noted by Herodotus) are the absence of statues, temples and altars (instead, the meat is spread out on very tender grass), and the facts that no fire is lit—beforehand, that is, for the roasting of the meat as a Greek would have done—, that the Persians have no libations, no flute music, no garlands, and use no grains of barley. Hence, the very idea of 'sacrifice' at the same time serves as a communicative pattern enabling cross-cultural communication while also maintaining and even highlighting the peculiar character of the practices of the different cultures involved. Interestingly, the category of 'libation' does not work equally well as a cross-cultural communicative devise, for while the Persians in all probability practiced libations Herodotus did not recognize (i.e., classify) them as such.

Herodotus' account is systematic, clear, well written, and also remarkably neutral. Indeed, far from making any derogatory statements about the Persian customs, Herodotus, a Ionian travelling intellectual and *philobarbaros* whose "openness to barbarian habits and influences seem far removed from at least the popular and official attitudes in Athens of the time",[179] takes a stance of distance towards his own culture, when he notes that the Persians attributed foolishness to those who—unlike themselves (but very much like the Greeks)—were erecting statues, temples, and altars (I 131). Furthermore, Herodotus ventures an explanation, when he states that the Persians "do not consider the divinities to be of human form, as the Greeks do" (I 131), hence providing a 'theological'

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[177] Gould, "Herodotus and Religion", p. 98.

[178] See Burkert, "Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen", pp. 19–20.

[179] R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context. Ethnography, Science and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge et al., 2002), p. 273. On Herodotus' intellectual and cultural milieu see pp. 4–27.

rationale for their ritual practice. Unfortunately, he does not say more. Hence, it is left to the scholars to guess what this phrase was intended to imply, and Walter Burkert has put forward the hypothesis that the Persian mirror Herodotus is holding up for his Greek audience was designed as a deliberate alternative to Homeric ideas. According to Burkert, Herodotus has the Persians voice a critique that he himself had wanted to address to the Greeks.[180] Moreover, according to Burkert, the idea that the Persians call the entire vault of heaven Zeus (I 131) was in fact a reconstructed version of the contemporary Greek theory that the radiant sky was the true god.[181] Also with regard to the report about the Persians' critique of anthropomorphism, Herodotus seems to take a stance in contemporary Greek controversy as incited by the sophists.[182]

Herodotus is the first of a long list of Greek writers contributing important information on Zoroastrianism in general and on Zoroastrian rituals in particular.[183] However, it is difficult to assess on what sort of information Greek and Latin authors based their reports on Persian rituals, and to what extent their informants had access to Zoroastrian rituals (if at all).[184] Probably, there may also have occurred a mixture of what they had heard or seen with ideas taken from their own cultural back-

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[180] Burkert, "Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen", p. 21: „Was, laut Herodot, die Perser den Griechen vorhalten oder vielmehr vormachen, ist also eine gezielte Alternative zur 'homerischen' Göttervorstellung, die in der Epoche der beginnenden Naturphilosophie als die eigentlich natürliche erscheint. Bei den Fremden ist sie, wie es Herodot 'scheint', verwirklicht. Herodot lässt die Perser mit ihrem 'Vorwurf' aussprechen, was er selbst den Griechen sagen möchte."

[181] See Burkert, "Herodot als Historiker fremder Religionen", p. 21: „Was so rekonstruierend vorgestellt wird, ist in der Tat eine griechische Theorie, und zwar die damals modernste der griechischen Auffassungen: der ganze strahlende Himmel ist der wahre Gott. So hat man Xenophanes verstanden ..., so formulierte es Euripides ..., so setzt es — wohl später als Herodot — Demokrit voraus". This would not be the only instance where Herodotus is „aware of ideas and arguments that one might assume were later than his writing", Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*, p. 273.

[182] On Herodutus and the sophists see now Thomas, *Herodotus in Context*.

[183] When it comes to an evaluation of secondary sources, Syriac, Armenian, Hebrew, and later also Arabic writings could benefit from closer scrutiny.

[184] In the case of Herodotus, it is interesting to observe the disagreement in the opinions of the experts. Thus, while Gould, "Herodotus and Religion", p. 100 finds that all his "accounts of sacrificial practice ... give every impression of being precisely observed" and "seem ... to be recorded by an observer accustomed to registering the significant detail of ritual behaviour", de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, p. 120 argues that "his description of the sacrifice ... is too fragmentary to support the idea that he had been present at such an occasion."

grounds and its 'imaginary repertory'.[185] The perception of Zoroastrian rituals, or rather the interaction with the so-called *mágoi (magi)*,[186] ritual experts (professionals) in some way or the other linked to Zoroastrian traditions, has given raise to the creation of specific terms (Greek *mageia;* Latin *magia*) denoting a set of 'other', 'marginal', 'inferior', or even 'illegitimate' ritual practices.[187] On the other hand, though, there is a long tradition that sheds positive light on the magi who occasionally are explicitly defended against the accusation of practicing witchcraft ('magic'). Both attitudes, the negative and the positive perception of the magi and their ritual arts, are present in later European history where one finds a renewed interest in Zoroaster and things Zoroastrian ever since Humanism and the Renaissance.[188] For the positive side, one may in particular refer to Neo-Platonist thinkers (such as Marsilio Ficino [1433–1499] and Francesco Patrizi [1529–1548]) who regarded Zoroaster as an ancient sage possessing great mystical and curative, but at the same time 'natural' and 'hidden' powers. On the negative side, Zoroaster's reputation as one of the foremost magicians in ancient history[189] has inspired fearful imaginations. For instance, a German poet of the Baroque period, Daniel Casper von Lohenstein [1635–1683], in *Agrippina* (1665), one of his Nero-tragedies, has Zoroaster perform a magical sacrifice offered to

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[185] Later, with the rise of religions such as Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam the portrayal of Zoroastrian rituals has gained more polemical overtones. From now on, conversions allowed for an influx of intimate knowledge about Zoroastrian ritual practices that may have had a certain impact on the genesis of Islamic ritual patterns; an example often referred to already in the early literature (Darmesteter, Goldziher; recently reviewed Yarshater, "The Persian Presence in the Islamic World"), is the prescription of five daily canonical prayers. As some Syriac sources attest, now as then, conversion necessitates some sort of ritual re-education that also involves elementary body-mechanism (such as the way of speaking, eating, etc.).

[186] See the survey of available Greek and Roman sources in de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi,* pp. 387–403 (and pp. 404–413 on the Magusaeans, a group that is mentioned in Christian sources).

[187] For an attempt to reconstruct that process see J.N. Bremmer, "The Birth of the Term 'Magic'", *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 126, 1999, pp. 1–12; see also M. Stausberg, "Zarathustra och magins uppfinning" [Zarathustra and the Invention of Magic], *Chaos* 27, 1997, pp. 105–111. On the cultural interaction between Greeks and Zoroastrians see now also W. Burkert, *Die Griechen und der Orient. Von Homer bis zu den Magiern* (München, 2003), pp. 107–133.

[188] See Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra.*

[189] On the literary stereotype of Zoroaster as the inventor of magic see Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra,* vol. 1, pp. 503–569.

the dead ("Todten-Opffer").[190] Zoroaster's supposed magic seemed just the right thing to invite for spectacle; hence, in the 18th century Zoroaster, the magician, found himself several times placed on the opera-stage, e.g., in Handel's *Orlando* (1732).[191]

Apart from the Greek and Roman reports from the 17th century onwards travelers brought home new accounts of Zoroastrian rituals.[192] Roughly at the same time, nascent Oriental Studies started to make source materials in Oriental languages— mostly in Arabic, Persian, and Syriac—accessible to a learned audience. Contrary to much received wisdom, however, this did not immediately result in more 'objective', 'value-free' perceptions of Zoroastrian rituals. Just the reverse seems to be the case: Unfavorable Islamic and Eastern Christian stereotypes were added to the mixture of available information. As e.g. Barthélmi d'Herbelot's [1625–1695] *Bibliothèque orientale,* the major Orientalist work of reference throughout the late 17th and the entire 18th Centuries, amply illustrates, apart from 'dualism', the alleged 'fire-cult' (or 'fire-worship') of the Zoroastrians is regarded as an essential feature of their religion.[193] Both topics—dualism and fire-cult—were hotly disputed issues in the 18th century debate on Zoroastrianism (and still influence public perceptions of Zoroastrianism). This debate was part of a larger discourse on ritual and religion.

The right forms of ritual worship had been a question of outmost significance ever since the Reformation, viz. the ongoing reforms and reinventions of Christian rituals that went along with the creation of Protestant churches and Catholic counter-reformation. Therefore, it hardly comes as a surprise that the perception of Zoroastrian rituals came to be linked to confessional polemics. Such is, to take a famous example, the case with Humphrey Prideaux [1648–1724], sometime Dean of Norwich and author of a biography of Mohammad and a Jewish history (*The Old*

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[190] For references and further details, see my *Faszination Zarathushtra,* vol. 1, pp. 542–547.

[191] For further operas see *Faszination Zarathushtra,* vol. 2, pp. 869–884.

[192] See Firby, *European Travellers and their Perceptions of Zoroastrians in the 17th and 18th Centuries.* Unfortunately, there is no similar survey of later travellers' accounts. For an analysis of the accounts of two scholar-travelers from the 19th century see Carlo Cereti's contribution to this volume.

[193] On d'Herbelot, see Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra,* vol. 2, pp. 671–679. On 17th century's debates, see also M. Stausberg, "Von den Chaldäischen Orakeln zu den Hundert Pforten und darüber hinaus: Das 17. Jahrhundert als rezeptionsgeschichtliche Schwelle", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 3, 2001, pp. 257–272.

and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews and the Neighboring Nations, published in 2 volumes, 1716-1718). When discussing the reign of Darius the Great, Prideaux makes a long digression about Zoroastrianism.[194] Here, among many other things, he mentions that the Zoroastrian priests were carrying a mouth-veil in order to avoid polluting the fire. As a result of this, Prideaux moves on to speculate that the priests neglected the proper pronunciation of the prayers and started to mutter them, just as the 'Papists', i.e. the Catholics, were doing. As a further point of similarity between the 'Magians' and the 'Papist' priests, Prideaux mentions the fact that their priests in their rituals employed ancient languages that are incomprehensible to the common man. Furthermore, according to Prideaux, both the Zoroastrian and the Catholic clergy share 'a superstitious folly' making one adhere to 'the old statues against all good reason'. Incidentally and ironically, this sort of reasoning and polemical tone recalls many of the current controversies (between so-called 'orthodox' and 'reformists') raging in the Zoroastrian communities, for instance on the Internet.

Before venturing on his ecclesiastic career, Prideaux had studied Oriental languages at Christ Church College in Oxford, and he was one of the hottest candidates for succeeding the great Orientalist Edward Pococke [1604–1691] on his Oxford chair. Another candidate was the librarian Thomas Hyde [1636–1703] who was appointed as professor of Arabic and later on also took over Pococks chair of Hebrew that in the meanwhile had been entrusted to Roger Altham. Hyde is the author of the *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum religionis historia,* also known under the title *Historia religionis veterum Persarum, eorumque Magorum,* one of the first histories of any single religion, published in 1700 (second edition 1760). Contrary to Prideaux, Hyde draws a very favorable picture of what he refers to as the 'old Persian religion'.[195] As some later scholars in our field, Hyde was concerned with establishing the 'orthodoxy' of his 'old Persians'. In his case, this entailed an attempt to show that the religion of the 'old Persians' corresponds to the idea of an 'orthodox religion' (in the obvious Christian sense of the term) belonging, as it were, to the same historical tradition as Christianity and Judaism. The decisive criterion in this regard is the

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[194] For more details on Prideaux, his ideas about Zoroastrianism and further references see Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra,* vol. 2, pp. 740–756.

[195] On Hyde and his *Historia* see Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra,* vol. 2, pp. 680–712.

notion of 'monotheism', and in his description of the 'old Persian' relig-
ion Hyde was at pains to get rid both of the accusations of 'idololatry'
and 'dualism'.

In his theological purification of the 'old Persian' religion, Hyde pro-
duces a detailed discussion of some elements of Zoroastrian rituals, es-
pecially the priesthood, the fire-temple (*pyreum*), their 'church',[196] their
reverence for the sun and the elements, especially the waters and, of
course, their 'cultus Ignis'. Here, however, Hyde emphatically denies
that the 'old Persians' and their modern successors were to be attributed
a 'true fire-worship'—"*Pyrolatriam* veram"[197]—, and he rejects the
opinion to the contrary that was propagated by Christian missionaries.[198]
His basic assumption of a continuity of the Zoroastrian tradition from the
'old Persians' down to the contemporary Parsis—also in this respect he
seems to foreshadow the theory of Mary Boyce—allows him to supple-
ment ancient written sources with statements made by modern travelers.
Occasionally, he even had his friends make investigations on his behalf
on the spot: "When a friend of mine in East India, encouraged by me,
seriously consulted their priests, *if they, in their cult, directly utter some
prayer towards fire,* they answered, *that they did not utter some prayers
directly towards fire, but that they directed all their prayers immediately
towards God Almighty.*"[199]

Hyde's interest in Zoroastrian rituals or 'cult' was motivated by theo-
logical considerations: It is not the 'cult' as such that aroused his inter-
est, but rather the taxonomic problem if the Zoroastrian rituals necessar-
ily impeded the 'old Persian' religion from being classified as 'ortho-
dox'. In that respect Hyde is no exception to the general tendency—
probably a Protestant heritage—that tends to regard rituals as 'external'
and hence shallow, secondary phenomena merely expressing something
else (such as 'creeds' or 'power relations').[200] The discovery that rituals

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[196] T. Hyde, *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum Religionis Historia* (Ox-
ford, 1760), p. 359: "Dictus Ignis Sacer servatur in *Pyréo,* seu Templo ad hoc extructo,
quod est Magorum Ecclesia." Tab. VIII presents a picture of a "Templum Ignis".

[197] Hyde, *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum Religionis Historia,* p. 11.

[198] Hyde, *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum Religionis Historia,* p. 9.

[199] Hyde, *Veterum Persarum et Parthorum et Medorum Religionis Historia,* p. 11:
„Cùm enim Amicus in *Orientali India,* meo suasu, eorum Sacerdotes seriò consuleret,
An in culto suo aliquas preces fundebant directè ad Ignem? Respondebant, *Quod nullas
preces fundebant directè ad Ignem, sed omnes preces dirigebant immediatè ad Deum
Omnipotentem.*"

[200] It would thus be tempting to speculate that scholars with a Catholic background

are mechanism of world making in their own right and hence merit an independent inquiry was one of the starting points for the recent take-off of 'ritual studies' since the 1970s. It goes without saying that this assumption was a guiding-principle for the making of this book. For the joint fields of ritual theory and Zoroastrian study, the insight that ritual is neither "a decorative addition to religious belief and practice", nor "theology's handmaiden",[201] is one of the lasting achievements of the seminal book on aesthetic theory and Zoroastrian rituals by Ron G. Williams and James W. Boyd.[202]

Let us briefly return to the 18th century. Whereas Hyde was working in his library and was receiving information from his friends in India, with Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil Duperron [1731–1805] a direct link between Western scholars and their 'objects' was finally established. Anquetil's travel to India and his stay among the Parsis of Surat in the late 1750s laid the basis for his (French) translation of most Avestan and some Middle Persian texts. His translation of the *Bundahišn* is followed by a "vocabulaire" and two little treatises. The first one is the "Exposition des usages civiles et religieux des Parsis" of 65 pages. This in many respects still valid account of Zoroastrian rituals is, as Anquetil affirms, based on his own observations ("je présente ce que j'ai vû"[203]). However, his quest for knowledge and participation has lead him into trouble and his (supposed?) visit to a fire-temple has roused a lively controversy in scholarly literature.[204] Anquetil's—from a scholarly perspective—very fruitful relation-

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may have had fewer difficulties in approaching Zoroastrian rituals than their colleagues from the Protestant confessions. However, I do not find much empirical evidence that Catholic scholars have been more committed the study of Zoroastrian rituals than their Protestant counterparts, and sometimes it was definitely the other way round. There are prominent scholars from both confessional groups (such as Darmesteter and Boyce respectively). Possibly the fact of being culturally alienated from a positive attitude towards rituals may be a good stimulus to 'rediscover' their significance in other cultures and religions.

[201] R.G. Williams/J.W. Boyd *Ritual Art and Knowledge. Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual* (Columbia, 1993), p. 142. Some guiding-principles of this book are discussed from a meta-theoretical point of view in Jens Kreinath's contribution to this volume.

[202] In their contribution to this volume, James Boyd & Ron Williams present some further developments of their approach.

[203] Anquetil Duperron, *Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre*, vol. 3, p. 527.

[204] See M. Stausberg, "'mais je passai outre' oder: Zur Frühgeschichte des Orientalismus. Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil Duperron und die Zoroastrier in Surat (1758–1760)", *Temenos* 34, 1998, pp. 221–250.

ship to his Zoroastrian teachers, the Dasturs Dārāb and Ka'us, was rather complicated: full of mutual mistrust, tensions, and conflicts.[205]

Even in later times, though, the study of Zoroastrian rituals strongly benefited from the co-operation between Zoroastrians, mostly Indian priests, and Western scholars.[206] With two Zoroastrian priest-scholars from India (Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal; Ervad Ramiyar P. Karanjia) and a Zoroastrian lady-scholar from Iran (Katayoun Madzapour) attending the conference and contributing papers in the subsequent proceedings published in this volume, our present endeavor is a case in point. From a historical point of view, some collaborative efforts are especially memorable in this respect, in particular the 'teams' Martin Haug with Hoshangji Jamaspji, James Darmesteter with Tahmuras Dinshaw Anklesaria, and Lady Drower with Framroze Ardeshir Bode.[207] In our times, Dastur Kaikushroo M. JamaspAsa has been collaborating with Helmut Humbach and John Hinnells, and Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal has been— and indeed still is—working with a number of scholars from different backgrounds (in alphabetical order: Mary Boyce, James Boyd, Jamsheed K. Choksy (himself a Zoroastrian), William Darrow, Almut Hintze, Philip Kreyenbroek, and James Russell).[208]

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[205] See Stausberg, "'mais je passai outre'".

[206] There is a tradition of exposure and commitment to philological learning among Indian priests that goes back to the mid 19th century, see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 99–111. Iranian priests are not part of that tradition. As a matter of fact, many leading Iranian priests seem to be much too embarrassed about their traditions than that they would undertake a serious study of rituals. If they venture on a study of rituals, then it is mainly done in order to 'reform', 'update', or 'improve' existing ritual practice. I came to be exposed to that attitude when, in March 2002, I filmed the ātaš bozorg kardan, a Zoroastrian ritual that I was especially interested in because it is not practiced in India. The head of the council of Zoroastrian priests in Yazd, an archaeologist by training who is the son of a practising priest but who performs himself only occasionally any ceremony, if at all, found my interest in this ritual somewhat irritating and indirectly tried to discourage both me and the priest who was going to perform it, to have the ceremony done. However, there still *is* a demand for the ātaš bozorg kardan among lay-people, and it is occasionally still executed in Yazd while the priests are now formally prohibited from performing it in Teheran.

[207] In his contribution to this volume, Carlo Cereti mentions the collaboration between the Italian scholar Angelo De Gubernatis and Dastur Jamaspi JamaspAsa who during the former's visit to Bombay (in 1885) even took the foreign scholar to a Parsi club where he performed a ritual for him to witness. Moreover, they corresponded for quite some time.

[208] The present author also gratefully acknowledges the kind and friendly assistance provided by Dastur Kotwal. Apart from co-authoring one paper in this volume (together

This fruitful mutual interaction between Zoroastrian priests and students of Zoroastrianism, however, falls in a transition period. Jivanji Modi's *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis*, mentioned at the outset of this introductory essay, demonstrates that the outsider/insider-communication is always a two-way process, and a complex one at that. In a way, as Modi acknowledges in his preface, the book was a by-product of James Hasting's invitation to contribute 'the closest possible description' of Zoroastrian rituals to his *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (1908–1926; 13 vols.).[209] Modi's *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis* is at the same time directed to students of religion and anthropology, and to members of his own community, and up to the present day, the book is used in both contexts.[210] When writing this book, Modi was aware of the ongoing breakdown of the system of purity rules and rituals, and as a matter of fact, due to his travels abroad, he himself had provoked a *cause celèbre* in priestly circles because travels by sea were hitherto considered as irreversibly nullifying ritualistic qualifications. In the preface, Modi states: "The reader will find that many a ceremony, ritual or custom has been spoken of as having become obsolete ... Many more will be obsolete in the course of a few years."[211] In view of this rapid change—in her contribution to this volume Katayoun Mazdapour provides a systematic account of the many changes that have occurred in Iranian Zoroastrian rituals in the second half of the 20th century—, Modi's book is an ongoing reflection on the roots and validity of the ceremonies, most of all of the purity-rituals. While Modi's solution—his pointing to the sanitary or hygienic merits of the rituals—is nowadays obsolete both from methodological and theoretical points of view, the book nevertheless vividly exemplifies the point that the study of Zoroastrian rituals is clearly involved in contemporary Zoroastrian practice by e.g. providing new interpretations and justifications, raising questions, nourishing doubts, and putting things into historical perspective. As I came to learn both in India and Iran, doing research and fieldwork inevitably changes the field in which we are

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with Jamsheed K. Choksy), one evening of the conference was held as an informal and open discussion with Dastur Kotwal. The session was chaired by Philip Kreyenbroek.

[209] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, p. v.

[210] The high educational standard of many Zoroastrians facilitates their access to scholarly discourse about their religion.

[211] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, p. VI.

navigating.[212] The reflective turn in cultural studies[213] makes us aware that the emphatic distinction between 'subjects' and 'objects' in our studies may in the end turn out to be a rather shallow devise, and this is particularly true when it comes to the study of rituals. Here, different contexts of practice and discourse converge, and it is the hope of the editor of this book that its pages may contribute to creating an intellectual context of mutual collaboration in the young field of the study of Zoroastrian rituals.

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[212] In India, in an interview it emerged that the fact of a foreign scholar (the present writer) studying a recently developed ritual was regarded as a proof for the ritual's prestige, dignity, and efficacy.

[213] See e.g. P. Bourdieu, *Science de la science et réflexivité. Cours du Collège de France 2000–2001* (Paris, 2002²).

SEQUENZIERUNG VON RITEN UND DIE ORDNUNG DER RITUALE

Burkhard Gladigow

1. FORSCHUNGSGESCHICHTE: STRUKTUREN UND SEQUENZEN

Ein Versuch, typische Elemente und Funktionen von Ritualen—und zugleich invariante Sequenzen—zu bestimmen, beginnt in der Religionswissenschaft mit Marcel Mauss, der für das Opferritual drei Phasen, die des Eintritts, der Handlung und des Austritts postulierte. An ihn schließt van Gennep an, dessen 3er Schema von Segretation, liminaler Phase und Aggregation für viele Jahrzehnte die Forschungslandschaft[1] bestimmt hat. Dieser Forschungstradition ist gemeinsam, daß das ‚Ritual‘ über jeweils *eine* Grund-Struktur und *eine* Funktion definiert wird: Diese singularisierende Prämisse, nämlich, daß es grundsätzlich *eine* dominante und strukturgebende Bedeutung des Rituals gebe, bleibt weitgehend unausgesprochen und undiskutiert. Wenn komplexe Rituale höchst unterschiedliche Modi der Präsentation besitzen (wie wohl im Regelfall), unterschiedliche Bedürfnisse befriedigen, dazu noch verschiedene Produkte oder Leistungen (eine Fleischmahlzeit, Gesundheit, oder Kriegsglück), werden sie in je getrennte Kategorien eingeordnet. Eine wichtige Erweiterung des van Gennepschen Schemas erfolgte durch Edmund Leach, der nun die Perspektive des zeitlichen Ablaufs ins Spiel bringt und in der Sequenz der Passagerituale das innovatorische Potential sieht: Die Intervalle zwischen Ritualen, die gesellschaftlich inszenierten Abstände zwischen den ‚Festen‘, seien das Wesentliche, sie generierten ‚Zeit‘. Der Fortschritt in Leachs Interpretation liegt darin, daß er nicht nur die (Binnen-)Struktur von bestimmten (aber: nicht allen!) Ritualen thematisiert, sondern auch jene Sequenz von Festen anspricht, durch die eine Makrostruktur entsteht, für die der Kalender dann so etwas wie die Partitur vorgibt. Tambiah rezipiert in seiner ‚performa-

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tiven Theorie des Rituals'[2] diese Vorgaben für eine „provisorische" Definition:

> Das Ritual ist ein kulturell konstruiertes System symbolischer Kommunikation. Es besteht aus strukturierten und geordneten Sequenzen von Worten und Handlungen, die oft multi-medial ausgedrückt werden.[3]

Tambiah wendet sich aber dann (seiner Themenstellung entsprechend) mehr den Konsequenzen der allgemeinen Charakteristika von Ritualen (Formalität, Verdichtung und Redundanz) zu: Rituale seien in ‚paradoxer' Hinsicht performativ: In dem Sinne paradox, „dass, obwohl die erwartete perlokutionäre Wirkung der Rituale nicht gewiss ist, diese Tatsache ihre performative Gültigkeit nicht in Frage stellt."[4]

Tambiahs Ansatz führt ihn mit einer gewissen Notwendigkeit zur Frage nach der Form des Rituals als regelhafter Anordnung von Gesten, Worten und Handlungen, die er jedoch sehr schnell auf die Frage der „Ordnung der Redundanz" reduziert: „In allen komplexen Ritualen gibt es sichtbare ‚Sequenzierungsregeln' und ‚Einschränkungen des gleichzeitigen Vorkommens'".[5] Dieses Programm einer „horizontalen Analyse" von Ritualen wird dann vor allem dazu verwendet, die „*vertikale* Dimension"[6] des Rituals zu etablieren, in Tambiahs Worten:

> Die zweite Bedeutung, in der ich das Ritual als Performance betrachte, besteht also darin, das Ritual als dramatischen Vollzug zu verstehen, dessen eigentümliche Struktur zusammen mit Stereotypie und Redundanz etwas mit der Produktion eine Gefühls erhöhter gesteigerter und vereinter Kommunikation zu tun hat.[7]

Die folgenden Überlegungen sollen an diesem Punkt ansetzen und in eine Art Analysemodell übergehen, das sowohl eine Notation und Sequenzierung von Ritualen zum Ziel hat, wie Korrespondenzen zwischen internen Sequenzen und externen Kontexten erschließen soll. Die historischen Beispiele werden bevorzugt aus dem Bereich der mediterranen und Europäischen Religionsgeschichte gewählt, mit einer gewissen Prä-

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[2] S.J. Tambiah, „A Performative Approach to Ritual", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 65, 1981, pp. 113–169; zitiert nach der deutschen Übersetzung „Eine performative Theorie des Rituals", *Ritualtheorien*, eds Krieger/Belliger, pp. 227–250.
[3] Tambiah, „Eine performative Theorie des Rituals", p. 230.
[4] Tambiah, „Eine performative Theorie des Rituals", p. 239.
[5] Tambiah, „Eine performative Theorie des Rituals", p. 246.
[6] Tambiah, „Eine performative Theorie des Rituals", p. 248.
[7] Tambiah, „Eine performative Theorie des Rituals", p. 248.

ferenz für die antike römische Religionsgeschichte. Beides aus Gründen einer pragmatischen Beschränkung in der Berücksichtigung historischen Materials, aber auch, weil sich für die entstehende Religionswissenschaft der Bereich der Römischen Religion, für eine gewisse Zeit zumindest, als eine Art ,religio Franca' erwiesen hat.

2. ELEMENTE UND BINNENSTRUKTUR VON RITUALEN

Zunächst einige terminologische und systematische Vorgaben und Vorüberlegungen. Die Bedeutung der Wiederholung für eine Theorie des Rituals ist vielfach behandelt werden:[8] Aus ethologischer Sicht, aus der Sicht einer Handlungstheorie, kultur- und wissenssoziologischer Perspektive bis hin zu einer Rezeptionsästhetik der Wiederholung. Ich setze diese Diskurse voraus und beschränke mich auf eine pragmatische Unterscheidung von Wiederholung und Redundanz, sowie auf eine Differenzierung von Wiederholungen auf der Elementebene, der Ebene typischer Elementsequenzen, und der Wiederholung von komplexen Ritualen.[9] Redundante Riten werden von wiederholten dadurch unterschieden, daß redundante Riten die ,gleiche' Funktion (oder Information) auf unterschiedliche Weise ausdrücken können: Eine Dedikation kann durch den Ritus des Deponierens oder Schmückens, oder eine vorangetragene Weihetafel ausgedrückt werden. Ebenso kann diese Dedikation aber durch die mehrfache Wiederholung derselben Weihungsformel ausgesprochen werden.

Rituelle *Elemente* (,Riten') seien dadurch definiert, daß sie entweder innerhalb desselben Rituals wiederholt werden können, oder daß sie ,erkennbar' auch in anderen Ritualen vorkommen. Erst in der Wiederholung werden sie als diskrete Elemente ,erkennbar' und, wenn sie auch in anderen Ritualen auftreten, ,wiedererkennbar'. Als diskrete rituelle Elemente sind sie aber auch voneinander abgrenzbar, haben ,Grenzen', und sind in unterschiedlichen Reihenfolgen kombinierbar. Typische *Ritualsequenzen* seien dadurch definiert, daß sie eine ,überschaubare' Zahl diskreter ritueller Elemente miteinander verbinden und daß diese Konstellationen in unterschiedlichen komplexen Ritualen vorkommen kön-

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[8] Überblick bei D. Baudy, *Römische Umgangsriten. Eine ethologische Untersuchung der Funktion von Wiederholung für religiöses Verhalten* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 43; Berlin/New York, 1998).

[9] Zum Begriff vgl. B. Gladigow, „Ritual, komplexes", *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe* 4, 1998, pp. 458–460.

nen,[10] daß sie also ‚erkennbar‘ und ‚identifizierbar‘ sein müssen. Mit dieser Wiedererkennbarkeit korrespondiert auf der kognitiven Seite das Phänomen der Mustererkennung als komplexe Form von Gestaltwahrnehmung. Typische Ritualsequenzen, wie etwa die Sequenz ‚Gruß, dreimaliges Umkreisen, Wasserspende‘, gliedern komplexe Rituale, machen sie *überschaubar*, plausibel, vielleicht sogar verstehbar. Die Frage einer ‚Wiedererkennbarkeit‘ von Ritualen ist wohl nicht von ihrer ‚Überschaubarkeit‘ zu trennen: Überschaubarkeit aber wird auch in Ritualen (nicht nur in Literatur und Musik) durch gliedernde Elemente (etwa rituelle Anaphern), explizite Gruppenbildung (typische Riten-Sequenzen), und eine Logik oder Dramatik der Abfolge von Elementen und Elementgruppen hergestellt. Auf die hier nur in plakativen Stichworten angedeuteten Perspektiven einer internen Sequenzierung und der externen ‚Vernetzung‘ von Ritualen sei das Folgende ausgerichtet. Und zwar nicht nur im Blick auf latente Strukturen, sondern vor allem auf explizite ‚Leseanweisungen‘: Was sollte ein Kultteilnehmer tun, sehen, erfahren, vielleicht sogar: glauben,[11] − und wie kann man diese Ziele aus einer systematischen Analyse historischer oder rezenter Rituale erschließen?

3. RITUELLE SEQUENZEN UND ‚RITUELLE ZITATE‘

Die religionswissenschaftliche Forschung hat—wenn sie sich nicht auf ‚den‘ Sinn eines Ritualtyps kapriziert hat[12] —höchstens mitbeachtet, daß es für ein durch Tradition fixiertes Ritual eine Reihenfolge der Elemente gibt, und daß diese Reihenfolge von den Akteuren als formgebunden und invariant[13] betrachtet wird. Die korrespondierenden Charakteristika

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[10] Die hier vorgestellte Differenzierung von typischen Riten-Sequenzen und vollständigen Ritualen ist nicht identisch mit Bergesens Unterscheidung von Mikro- und Makroriten. Bergesen definiert: „Makroriten beziehen sich also auf die Gemeinschaft als Ganzes und drücken damit die spezifisch kollektive Identität ... aus." Mikroriten sind demgegenüber „im sprechenden Subjekt situiert" und drücken das Verhältnis von individuellem Bewußtsein und ritueller Ordnung aus. A. Bergesen, „Die rituelle Ordnung", *Ritualtheorien*, eds Belliger/Krieger, pp. 49−76; hier pp. 63 und 67.

[11] Zu der an E.Th. Lawson und R.N. McCauley anschließenden Diskussion vgl. B. Malley/J.L Barrett, „Can Ritual Form be Predicted from Religious Belief? A Test of the Lawson-McCauley Hypotheses", *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17, 2003, pp. 1−14.

[12] Zur Kritik an einer singularisierenden Perspektive in der Analyse von komplexen Ritualen vgl. B. Gladigow, „Opfer und komplexe Kulturen", *Opfer. Theologische und kulturelle Kontexte*, eds B.Janowski/M. Welker (Frankfurt, 2000), pp. 86−107.

[13] Als Beispiel für Formerfordernisse (*in precibus nihil esse ambiguum debet*, Serv. Aen. VII 120) dient im allgemeinen die römische Ritualpraxis; dazu G. Wissowa, *Reli-*

von Redundanz und Sequenz beschränken sich freilich in diesem For-schungskontext auf ihre Brauchbarkeit für eine Definition (oder We-sensbestimmung) von Ritual – und werden nicht ernsthaft in eine Art ‚Kompositionslehre' des Rituals umgesetzt. Folgt man dieser traditionel-len Analysetradition *nicht*, und stellt man etwa die Frage nach typischen Ritualsequenzen innerhalb unterschiedlicher Rituale (– die von der Be-trachtung gemeinsamer Strukturen von Passage-Riten insgesamt zu un-terscheiden ist), zeigen sich auf einmal nicht nur Strukturen *innerhalb* eines einzelnen Rituals, sondern auch Strukturen einer ‚Querverbindung' zwischen Ritualen, zeigt sich (ich nenne es einmal, in Übertragung des literaturwissenschaftlichen Begriffs der Intertextualität) eine ‚*Interritua-lität*'. Elemente oder Gruppen von Riten innerhalb von Ritualen nehmen auf die entsprechenden Sequenzen in anderen Ritualen Bezug: Zwischen Ritualen und Elementgruppen in Ritualen bestehen Korrespondenzen und Reziprozitäten.

Als Beispiele für solche typischen Ritualsequenzen seien die stereo-type Abfolge von Umgang, Opfer, Agon/Spiel und Festmahl genannt, die sowohl bei Stadtgründungen, wie Lustrationen und Erntedankfes-ten[14] praktiziert wird, oder die Abfolge von Anrufung, Lied oder Tanz und Opfer, die sich als typische Sequenz im Fest der Arvalbrüder und in Frühlingsfesten findet. Wenn solche Ritualsequenzen einerseits hoch-spezifisch sind und andererseits auch in anderen Ritualen erscheinen, könnte man sie als ‚*rituelle Zitate*' bezeichnen. Unter Zitaten von Ritual-sequenzen verstehe ich dabei vom Teilnehmer oder Zuschauer erkennba-re Sequenzen, die in voneinander unterscheidbaren Ritualen vorkom-men, nicht latente oder implizite Mikrostrukturen. Im Unterschied zur ‚bloß historischen' Verbindung zwischen einer früheren und späteren Verwendung (dies die übliche Perspektive) ist das ‚rituelle Zitat' durch eine Intention charakterisiert, die mit der Erwartung verknüpft ist, daß das Zitat auch als Zitat erkennbar ist und erkannt wird. Hinter dieser ver-änderten Analyserichtung steht so etwas wie eine ‚Produktionsästhetik' von Ritualen, – ich werde später kurz darauf eingehen.

Parallel dazu läßt sich ein Phänomen einordnen, daß ich als ‚Ritual in Ritualen' bezeichnen möchte: Für die antiken Religionen etwa ist das Ritual des Tieropfers ein *an sich selbständiges* Ritual, das zugleich in Verbindung mit praktisch allen ‚Großformen', von Ritualen erscheint:

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gion und Kultus der Römer (München, [1912] 1971) pp. 394 sqs.
[14] Beispiel bei Baudy, *Römische Umgangsriten*.

Quis ludus sine sacrificio ?[15] notiert der Christ Pseudo-Cyprian tadelnd. Kein Krieg, keine Tempeleinweihung, kein Triumph und kein Götterfest ohne Tieropfer. Ein Indiz für diese Integration des Opferrituals in fast alle komplexen Rituale der Antike ist das Vorgehen der christlichen Kaiser gegen die paganen Religionen: Mit dem Verbot des Tieropfers im vierten Jahrhundert und den korrespondierenden strafrechtlichen Sanktionen waren die wichtigen traditionellen Formen des Kultus nicht mehr ‚vollständig‘[16] – das heißt eben auch: nicht mehr *rite* praktizierbar.

Für die ‚ungestörte‘ Antike gilt: Der konkrete Vollzug eines Opfer-Ritus—oder mehrerer wiederholter oder unterschiedlicher Opfer—steht jeweils im Kontext eines komplexes Rituals, d.h. eines Rituals, das seinerseits andere Ritensequenzen inkorporieren kann,[17] oder durch Einzelelemente mit ihnen verknüpft ist. Typische Ritualsequenzen, die Wiederholung der gleichen rituelle Elemente innerhalb unterschiedlicher Rituale, können dabei ‚*rituelle Zitate*‘ erzeugen, die ihrerseits so etwas wie eine ‚Inter-Ritualität‘ begründen: Kathartische Sequenzen innerhalb vieler Rituale (Besprengen, Umgehen, Bestreuen) liefern ‚Querverbindungen‘ der Rituale, die über Kathartik und die eng verbundene Divination das gesamte rituelle Netzwerk stabilisieren. Opfer sind zugleich Ritenkomplexe,[18] die gegenüber verschiedenen Götter in weitestgehend gleicher Weise angewendet werden können: Die Opferpraxis kann unter der topischen Verpflichtung „allen Götter zu opfern" ein Pantheon konstituieren.

Eine der Inklusion des Opfers vergleichbare Integrierbarkeit abgrenzbarer Elementgruppen ist von der einschlägigen Forschung immerhin im Verhältnis von Spiel und Ritual angesprochen worden: Ich meine damit nicht die pauschale Gleichsetzung von ‚Spiel‘ und ‚Ritual‘, gar die Umkehrung ihrer Relation (‚der Kult pfropft sich auf das Spiel auf‘[19]), sondern die in der Folge der Huizinga-Diskussion deutlich werdende *Inkorporation* von Spielen oder Spielelementen in komplexe Rituale. Der of-

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[15] Pseudo-Cyprian spect. 4, dazu H. Jürgens, *Pompa Diaboli. Die lateinischen Kirchenväter und das antike Theater* (Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 46; Stuttgart, 1972), p. 216.

[16] Zu den strategischen Implikationen dieses Sachverhalts M.Th. Fögen, *Die Enteignung der Wahrsager. Studien zum kaiserlichen Wissensmonopol in der Spätantike* (Frankfurt, 1993).

[17] Dazu Gladigow, „Ritual, komplexes".

[18] Dazu Gladigow, „Opfer und komplexe Kulturen".

[19] J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens. Vom Ursprung der Kultur im Spiel* (Hamburg, 1981), p. 27.

fene Ausgang von Spielen des einfachen Typs (Loswurf, Würfelspiel, Wette) oder des Wettkampftyps stellt ein divinatorisches Element bereit, das innerhalb von komplexen Ritualen gleichermaßen göttliche Willensbekundung und Dramatik spiegeln kann.

4. ‚RITUELLE ABBREVIATUREN' UND ‚INTERRITUALITÄT'

Für eine Formenlehre des Rituals ließen sich schließlich auch so etwas wie ‚rituelle Abbreviaturen' postulieren (oder zeigen), d.h. Kurzformen ritueller Sequenzen, die zitiert und angedeutet, aber nicht in'ganzer Länge ausgeführt werden. Als Beispiele könnten dienen: der apotropäische Gestus (etwa ein Ausspucken) als Abbreviatur eines eliminatorischen Ritus, wie er sich als angedeuteter Exorzismus im orthodoxen Taufritual findet, oder das christliche ‚Stoßgebet' als Kurzform eines ausgeführten Bittgebets.

Eine Sonderform für eine Verschränkung von Wiederholung und Sequenzierung sind Reihungen in Ritualen (denen Namenkataloge in Hymnen entsprechen): Beim Opferfest von Lade[20] wird viermal hintereinander ein Becher Bier getrunken; ein Rundtrunk auf Odin, einer auf Thor, ein dritter auf Njörd und Frey, ein vierter für Bragi und die toten Verwandten. Die Reihenfolge, in der Götter in einem Ritual auftreten, spiegelt ihren ‚Wert', ihren Ort in den jeweiligen Hierarchien. Besonders gut bei Prozession mit Götterbildern, von der pompa circensis im republikanischen Rom bis zu rezenten Prozessionen in Indien zu beobachten. Um so auffallender eine Abweichung, gar eine gezielte Veränderung der traditionellen (und allen bekannten) Reihenfolge: Neptunus soll nach einer von den Römern verlorenen Seeschlacht seinen angestammten Platz in der Reihe der Götter verloren, und ‚nach hinten' gesetzt worden sein.[21] Hier gehen Empire und Ritual eine besondere Verbindung ein.

Auf der Ebene hochkomplexer Rituale ließe sich das Verhältnis von Pompa Circensis und Triumphzug im republikanischen Rom als Beispiel einer Interritualität verstehen. Jedem Römer war verständlich, ‚erkenn-

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[20] Dazu Å.V. Ström, „Die Hauptriten des wikingerzeitlichen nordischen Opfers", Festschrift Walter Baetke. Dargebracht zu seinem 80. Geburtstag am 28. März 1964, eds K. Rudolph et al. (Weimar, 1966), pp. 330–342.

[21] Sueton, Augustus 15,2, vgl. dazu B. Gladigow, „Zur Ikonographie und Pragmatik römischer Kultbilder," Iconologia sacra. Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift Karl Hauck, eds H. Keller/ N. Staubach (Berlin, 1994), pp. 9–24.

bar', daß in der Pompa circensis das militärische Ritual des Triumphzugs ,zitiert' wird. Das ist in der modernen Forschung zwar grundsätzlich erkannt worden, die Beschreibung des Phänomens erfolgt aber im Schema der genetisch-historischen Erklärung: Die Form der Pompa circensis ließe sich aus dem Triumphzug ,herleiten'.[22] Der ,einfache Römer auf der Straße' hat aber nicht über die ,Herkunft' nachgedacht, sondern wohl sehr schnell ,gemerkt', daß sich beide Rituale aufeinander beziehen sollen. Für die Komposition dieser Interritualität gibt es sogar einen ,Index', der selbst dem unbedarften Römer verdeutlicht hätte, wie die Rituale aufeinander bezogen werden sollen: Der spielgebende Magistrat tritt in der im republikanischen Rom auffallenden Tracht des Triumphators auf – obwohl er gar keinen Sieg errungen hat.

5. SEQUENZEN UND RITUELLE KONTEXTE

Daß über Elemente oder typische Sequenzen ,*Querverbindungen*' oder Vernetzungen zwischen Ritualen hergestellt werden, kann auch auf einer ,materiellen Ebene' Entsprechungen haben.[23] Im antiken römischen Kultus liefert die *mola salsa*, jener von den Vestalinnen in einem besonderen Ritual hergestellte Speltbrei, eine materielle Verbindung zwischen unterschiedlichen Ritualen. *Mola salsa* wird sowohl über den zu opfernden Kuchen[24] wie das Opfermesser und das Opfertier gestreut. Im Kontext des blutigen Tieropfers hat das Bestreuen der Opfertiere immerhin eine so herausragende Bedeutung gehabt, daß *immolare* zum Terminus für das ganze Opfer wurde. Unmittelbar mit dem Ausstreuen der *mola salsa* vergleichbar ist das Ausstreuen von Gerstenkörnern im griechischen Ritual (die *oulochýtai*). Gerstenkörner auszustreuen erscheint bei den Griechen ebenso als selbständiger Spendegestus, wie als typisches Element des Tieropfers.

Noch weiter verbreitet ist die Wasserspende, das Ausgießen oder Aussprengen von (geweihtem) Wasser. Ähnlich wie für die *mola salsa* gibt es für die Gewinnung des im Kultus verwendeten Wassers aus einer bestimmten Quelle besondere Vorschriften;[25] neben der *mola salsa* und dem rituell gesicherten Wasser findet die Asche von bestimmten Brand-

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[22] Zum Verhältnis von Triumph und Ludi vgl. K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (München, 1967), pp. 152 sq.

[23] Bei J. Rüpke, *Die Religion der Römer. Eine Einführung* (München, 2001), pp. 114 sqs. unter ,materielle Theologie' verfolgt.

[24] Varro b. Non 114,17.

[25] Serv. Aen. 11,339.

opfern oder von Opferblut eine Verwendung über das ‚Ursprungsritual‘ hinaus. Die Verwendung des Weihwassers ab dem 5. Jahrhundert im Christentum liefert, der *mola salsa* vergleichbar, ebenso materielle Querverbindungen zwischen verschiedenen Ritualen.

6. DAS OPFER ALS KOMPLEXES RITUAL

Das Opfer, das blutige Tieropfer, Normaltyp des mediterranen Opfers vor dem Christentum und außerhalb des Christentums, paßt außerordentlich schlecht in das van Gennep/Turner- Schema: Indiz dafür, daß das 3er-Schema der Sequenzierung nur einen hochspezifischen Ritualtyp ‚trifft‘. Man hat daher sehr schnell versucht, das Opfer in eine andere Grundstruktur einzuordnen. Ohne gleich eine ‚Latenzstruktur‘ im Auge zu haben, soll im folgenden dieses komplexe Ritual einer ‚offenen Sequenzierung‘ unterzogen werden, die eine für den Teilnehmer (und Zuschauer) unmittelbar zugängliche Abfolge der Elemente in den Vordergrund stellt.

Das blutige Tieropfer, im Imperium Romanum millionenfach praktiziert und demonstrative rituelle Differenz zwischen Christentum und den anderen antiken Religionen, besteht selbst in seiner einfachen Grundform aus mindestens 22 Elementen, die sich benennen und von dem jeweils folgenden Element trennen lassen. Die nachstehende Sequenzierung auf der Elementebene zeigt zugleich, daß der ‚Normalfall‘ des blutigen Opfers bereits drei Opfertypen oder Sequenzen in sich vereint. Die Sequenzen sind in der Tabelle in folgender Weise durch X, H und O notiert:

X mitlaufende Elemente des einfachen Gabenopfers. In seiner selbständigen Form läßt dieser Opfertyp alle Nahrungsmittel zu (Fest.357L.), auch Speck und Fleisch; die Tierschlachtung ist aber nicht Teil dieses Rituals. Das ‚Material‘ wird hier aus einem anderen Ritual ‚importiert‘.

H Elemente des holokaustischen Tieropfers. Die Asche der verbrannten Tiere wird in einigen Fällen (etwa den Fordicidia) in anderen Ritualen weiterverwendet (→Parilia).

O Spezifische Elemente des blutigen Tieropfers mit gemeinsamer Mahlzeit. Die Speisung des Kultbildes über die mensa und die Kommensalität des Opfers vor dem Tempel gehören grundsätzlich anderen ‚Opfersystemen‘ an.

Strukturelle/materielle Interferenzen dreier Opferformen der röm. Republik

,in': → *Opferherr, Opferteilnehmer, ‚Gäste', camilli,*
Opfertiere, mola salsa, Wein, Wasser, Weihrauch, Opfergeräte

1	X	H		purae manus: Reinigung/Keidung der Opferteilnehmer	
2		H	O	hostiam probare, hostia optata Auswahl und Prüfung der Opfertiere	
3			O	(dorsuale), verbenae, infulae, vittae Schmücken der Opfertiere	
4			O	pompa: Opferprozession mit Opfer- herren, victimarii und Teilnehmern	→hostia effugia
5	X			velatio capitis: Kleidungsgestus	
6	X			favete linguis: Kultisches Schwei- gen, Flötenspiel	
7	X			praefatio sacrorum: Voropfer mit Wein und Weihrauch	
8	X	H		Gebet : empfangender Gott, Opfer- herr, Zweck	
9			O	immolatio Weihung des Opfertieres	
10			O	inductio des Opfertiers Zeichnen mit dem Opfermessser a fronte ad caudam	
11			O	Agone?	
12			O	Der popa betäubt das Tier	
13			O	Der cultrarius durchschneidet die Halsschlagader	
14			O	Öffnen des Opfertieres Inspicere exta, extispicium Annahme durch den Gott: litatio	→ Wiederholung usque ad litationem: succidanea hostia
15			O	Zerteilen des Opfertieres: exta	
16			O	Bestreuen der exta mit mola salsa	
17			O	(Zerkleinern und Kochen der exta in einer olla extaris)	
18			O	Abkühlen der exta (exta deforma)	
19	X	H	O	Deposition der exta und der anderen Teile des Tieres (magmentum) auf den Altar: porricere	
20	X	H	O	Verbrennen der exta auf dem Altar	
21			O	Verzehr der viscera durch die Teil- nehmer :profanare	
22		H	O	Vernichtung der Opferreste im Tem- pelbereich (ouk ekphora)	→oder: Verkauf zu- gunstenTempelkasse

,out': *Opferherr, Opferteilnehmer, ‚Gäste', camilli, Opfergeräte* →

Die hier (noch immer unvollständig) vorgestellte Sequenzierung des römischen Opferrituals zeigt zunächst einmal eine *gleichmäßige* Differenzierung der rituellen Observanzen: Dramatischer Höhepunkt ist, wenn überhaupt, das *inspicere exta*, aus dem erst die Annahme des Opfers durch den Gott hervorgeht: *Semper sacrificare nec umquam litare*[26] ('immer erfolglos opfern') kann wie ein Fluch verstanden werden. Neben allgemeinen, externen Störungen der Opfersequenz, etwa in der Form einer *obnuntiatio*, oder der Mitteilung über einen Todesfall in der Familie,[27] gibt es drei Punkte, an denen das Handlungssystem 'Opfer' in einer definierten Weise 'verlassen' werden konnte: Die Flucht des Opfertieres (*hostia effugia*), die einen Neubeginn erforderte, die Zurückweisung des Opfers in der Eingeweideschau, die eine Wiederholung der Opfers (bis zu 20 Mal[28] sind bezeugt) erzwang; schließlich, als angestrebtes Ende des Rituals, im *profanare* des Opferfleisches durch Verzehr am Ort oder Verkauf.

Die gleichmäßige Sorgfalt, mit der die Römer die Durchführung eines Tieropfers *usque ad litationem* begleitet haben, gibt keine Anhaltspunkte für einen *homo necans*, „der sich im tödlichen Axthieb seiner als *homo religiosus* bewußt wird".[29] Noch weniger für Sätze wie den Girards „Es ist die Gewalt, die Herz und Seele des Heiligen ausmacht".[30] Gegenüber diesen aktuellen Interpretationen des mediterranen Opferkomplexes, die ein bestimmtes Element isolieren und zum Focus der Deutung machen, liefert eine quellennahe *Sequenzierung,* die die 'Komplexität' der Ritensequenz Opfer 'bewahrt', und nicht reduziert, ganz andere Ergebnisse. Die moderne, theologisch beeinflußte Ausrichtung auf *ein* Element des antiken Opfer-Rituals und die es tragende religiöse Haltung[31] ist, vor allem in ihrer Tendenz, Riten soteriologisch zu verdichten, das Ergebnis einer anachronistischen Orientierung an christlichen Mustern.

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[26] Plaut.Poen. 489

[27] Serv.Aen. 6,8. 11,2; dazu Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte*, p. 102.

[28] Plut.Aem.Paul.17,6; dazu Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte*, p. 389.

[29] Zitat aus W. Burkert, *Homo necans. Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 32; Berlin/New York, 1972), p. 9, bei R. Schwager, „Vielfalt der Opfervorstellungen und ihre Deutung", pp.2 sq., publiziert im Web-Publishing des Forschungsprogramms Religion-Gewalt-Kommunikation-Weltordnung 17.10.2001.

[30] R. Girard, *Das Heilige und die Gewalt* (Zürich, 1987), p. 5.

[31] Zur Einordnung B. Gladigow, „Opfer und komplexe Kulturen," pp. 86 sqs.

7. SYSTEMATISCHE QUERVERBINDUNGEN UND EXTERNE KONTEXTE

Ein weiteres Charakteristikum von Ritualsequenzen ist es, daß in ihrem Verlauf der Adressat, der Empfänger, das Gegenüber, der Gott performativ definiert und erreicht werden sollen.

In diesem Sinne läßt sich jedes erfolgreich durchgeführte religiöse Ritual als ein Modus beschreiben, Gottesvorstellungen und Erwartungen an die Götter performativ zu präsentieren. Um das ‚leisten‘ zu können, müssen Rituale zugleich komplex und mehrdimensional sein, d.h. beispielsweise, daß erst über spätere Elemente einer Ritual-Sequenz Determinationen geleistet werden, wie im Falle unserer Sequenz die Position 14 die Gültigkeit der 13 vorangehenden bestimmt. Anders ausgedrückt: Komplexe Rituale haben ‚rekursive Schleifen‘; mit der fehlerfreien (ungestörten) Durchführung des Rituals ergibt sich konkludent die Beteiligung des Gottes.

Das Divinationswesen der meisten Religionen stellt eine explizite oder implizite „Rückkopplung" des Ritualsystems mit den intendierten Interaktionspartnern[32] dar. Das Nicken des Kultbildes bei der evocatio, das Niesen eines Opferhelfers, die Namen der camilli, das Stolpern eines Opfertieres, das Aufleuchten der Flamme auf dem Altar, schließlich der Eingeweidesitus des Opfertieres können Zustimmung oder Ablehnung, Akzeptanz oder Warnung signalisieren. Erfolgreich durchgeführte Ritualsequenzen konstituieren über ihre regelrechte Kohärenz zugleich ein Sekurisierungssystem zwischen Ritual und externen Kontexten: Der Feldherr, dessen Opfer vor der Schlacht von den Göttern ‚angenommen‘ werden, kann sich des militärischen Erfolgs ‚sicher‘ sein, der Seefahrer, der sein Votum *rite* verkündet hat, kann erwarten, sein Ziel zu erreichen, das differenzierte Organvotiv vermag den Heilungswunsch erfolgreich zu präsentieren.

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[32] Das hier gewählte Analyseschema operiert mit einer Transformation eines ‚superhuman agent‘, im Sinne der These von E.T. Lawson/R.N. McCauley, *Rethinking Religion. Connecting Cognition and Culture* (Cambridge, 1990) pp. 124 sqs, der sich von einem passiv in das Ritual involvierten ‚agent‘ in einen aktiv handelnden wandelt. Die Dualisierung von Lawson und McCauley wird in diesem Schema insoweit überwunden, als gerade in komplexen Ritualen der Wandel von einer ‚passiven‘ Beteiligung der Götter zu einer ‚aktiven‘ intendiert ist.

8. RITUELLE UND KULTURELLE KOMPLEXITÄT

Im Vorhergehenden wurde zu zeigen versucht, daß Rituale nicht (genaugenommen: nie) ‚allein stehen‘, sondern jeweils in externe, rituelle, aber auch nicht-religiöse Kontexte eingebunden sind. Das zu betonen, scheint trivial, es soll jedoch vor allem—gegen die Tendenz zu einer Singularisierung— auf die grundsätzliche *Vernetzung* von Ritualen verweisen. Rituale ‚beziehen‘ sich nicht nur ‚horizontal‘ aufeinander (das wurde unter den Stichworten von ‚rituellem Zitat‘ und ‚Interritualität‘ behandelt), sondern werden auch, zumindest in komplexen Kulturen, auf demselben Territorium zeitgleich oder zeitnah praktiziert. Oder anders ausgedrückt, zur kulturellen ‚Umwelt‘ von Ritualen gehören wiederum andere Rituale, zu denen sie in einer Beziehung stehen können. Sakraltopographie und Kalender liefern unter dieser Perspektive mögliche räumliche und zeitliche Verknüpfungsregeln. Die ‚Anschlußfähigkeit‘ von Ritualen ist eine Systemeigenschaft, insbesondere von komplexen Ritualen, die bisher nicht hinreichend beachtet worden ist. Rituale haben zwar immer deutlich annoncierte ‚Außengrenzen‘, personelle, räumliche und zeitliche, zugleich aber auch definierte Regeln von Übernahme, Überschreitung und Integration.

Am ehesten sind diese Eigenschaften noch im Falle des Ritualtyps ‚Fest‘ gesehen worden: Im Blick auf Stammeskulturen hatte V. Lanternari für Feste folgende konstitutive Elemente herausgestellt:[33] *socialità* (Geselligkeit), *partecipazione* (Mitwirkung), *ritualità* (rituelle Organisation), *annullamento temporaneo e simbolico dell’ ordine* (zeitlich begrenzte, symbolische Aufhebung der Ordnung). Das Schema, das auch auf Feste der europäischen Traditionen anwendbar ist, zeigt vor allem im Blick auf die marginale oder liminale Phase Berührungspunkte mit van Genneps und V.W. Turners Drei- oder Vier-Phasen-Modellen. Komplexen Ritualen und den Festen kann gemeinsam sein, daß Restriktionen und Mängel der ‚normalen Welt‘[34] aufgehoben und ihre Alternativen in einem Szenario durch-

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[33] V. Lanternari, „Spreco, ostentazione, competizione. Antropologia del comportamento festivo,“ *Festa, antropologia e semiotica. Relazioni presentate al Convegno di studi „Forme e pratiche della festa“*, eds C.Bianco/M.del Ninno (Florenz, 1981), pp. 132—150; vgl. V.W. Turner (ed.), *Celebration. Studies in Festivity and Ritual* (Washington D.C., 1982).

[34] Diese Aspekte sind völlig vernachlässigt in der ‚christlichen Festtheorie‘ J. Piepers, vgl. J. Pieper, *Zustimmung zur Welt* (München, 1963). Gegenmodelle sind entworfen worden von J. Moltmann, *Die ersten Freigelassenen der Schöpfung* (München, 1971) und G.M. Martin, *Fest und Alltag. Bausteine zu einer Theorie des Festes* (Stuttgart, 1973).

gespielt werden. In einem zeitlichen und räumlichen Nebeneinander unterschiedlicher ritueller Komplexe können dann ‚rituelle Welten' (und ‚Gegenwelten') bereitgestellt werden, die mehr Dimensionen bereitstellen, als es etwa eine (einzige) ‚liminale Phase' leisten könnte. Darin scheint die Attraktivität der traditionellen großen Feste zu liegen,[35] daß sie—ähnlich wie die mythische Narrative—unabgegoltene kulturelle Potentiale bereithalten und vor Augen führen. ‚Feste' liefern freilich nicht nur Vorgaben für eine Pluralisierung und damit eine latente Desintegration der Gesellschaft, sondern behalten zugleich Gemeinschaft stiftende, integrierende Funktionen. In einer ‚paradoxen' Funktion verbindet das komplexe Ritual für die Teilnehmer noch einmal, was im Rahmen kultureller Differenzierung ‚sonst' in unterschiedlichen Lebensbereichen stattfindet,[36] oder in ‚überholten' Traditionen vergessen schien.

9. KOMPLEXITÄT UND PROFESSIONALISIERUNG

Ein Anwachsen der *Komplexität von Ritualen*—wie wir es als Grundmuster in den meisten Religionen verfolgen können—scheint Teil des allgemeinen Prozesses der Professionalisierung von Religion zu sein, in einem doppelten Sinne: Die ‚Arbeit am Ritual' ist weitgehend Tätigkeit von Spezialisten (und deren Auftraggebern), die die Rituale neuen Bedürfnissen anpassen, und, zweitens, die regelrechte Durchführung eines komplexen Rituals wird so schwierig, daß sie von den gleichen Spezialisten garantiert und überwacht werden muß (*in caerimoniis nihil debet esse ambiguum*). Die kulturellen Bedingungen der Professionalisierung einer Ritualistik sind kaum beachtet worden, ebensowenig wie in der Religionswissenschaft Prozesse einer Professionalisierung von ‚Religion' behandelt wurden. Wenn überhaupt Ritualspezialisten in der Diskussion auftauchen, dann über die Aufgabe, die regelgerechte Durchführung eines bestimmten Rituals zu garantieren, wenn man so will, immer nur als Kapellmeister, nie als Komponisten.

Die Geschichte einer Differenzierung von Ritualen,[37] Folge zuneh-

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[35] Dies zentrale These von J.-J. Wunenburger, *Le fête, le jeu et le sacré* (Paris, 1977).

[36] Dazu auf verschiedenen kulturellen Niveaus N.Luhmann, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, 3 Bde (Frankfurt, 1993): zur Ausdifferenzierung der Religion ebd., Bd.3, pp. 259 sqs.

[37] Zur Typologie und Differenzierung von Ritualen: Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*; Bianco/del Ninno (eds), *Festa, antropologia e semiotica*; F. Bird, „The Nature and Function of Ritual Forms," *Studies in Religion* 9, 1980, pp. 387—402; D. de Coppet

mender Professionalisierung, kann nicht ohne eine Berücksichtigung der beteiligten Öffentlichkeiten aufgearbeitet werden. Vor allem komplexe Rituale haben nicht nur unmittelbare Teilnehmer am rituellen Prozeß, sondern eine sehr viel größere Zahl an ‚Zuschauern‘, − wobei freilich die Grenzlinie zwischen Zuschauern und Teilnehmern weder zeitlich noch räumlich sauber zu ziehen ist. Umzüge und Prozessionen etwa operieren mit wechselnden Teilnehmern auf unterschiedlichen Wegstrecken. Trotz dieses möglichen Rollenwechsels ist unverkennbar, daß komplexe Rituale vor einer Öffentlichkeit stattfinden, die den Aufwand etwa an Tieren und Gütern, die Pracht der Inszenierung, die Dauer der Festivitäten zu würdigen in der Lage ist. Vor dieser Öffentlichkeit konkurrieren dann Rituale in einem Prestige-Schema miteinander, in dessen Rahmen das Fest des Nachbardorfs, die Prozession der anderen Stadt oder auch nur die Feier des letzten Jahres übertroffen werden soll. Die staatlichen Feste (ludi) der römischen Republik und noch mehr der Kaiserzeit sind einschlägige Beispiele für eine ‚Ausgestaltung‘ von Festen über eine Erweiterung der Elemente auf den verschiedensten Ebenen. Liefert die Hekatombe noch das Beispiel für die einfache Erweiterung eines Elements, der Zahl der geopferten Rinder, konstituieren sich die komplexen Rituale über eine professionelle Kombination und dramatische Sequenzierung höchst unterschiedlicher Elemente. Die mehrtägigen Ludi magni der Römer beispielsweise sind auch unterhalb der Ebene der spielgebenden Magistrate nicht ohne Spezialisten denkbar, die den konkurrierenden Veranstaltern Vorschläge für neue Programme und deren praktische Umsetzung machten. Eine Veränderung, Erweiterung und Differenzierung von Ritualen geschieht, wie die römischen Beispielen zeigen, im allgemeinen unter den Bedingungen von Prestigekonkurrenzen: Das Opferfest der Nachbarstadt, der letzte Triumphzug, die Tempeleinweihung durch den konkurrierenden Magistrat, die Bilderweihe des Nachbartempels sollen übertroffen werden. Für das Verhältnis von Prestige und Aufwand hatte zuerst Marcel Maus auf die Potlach-Rituale verwiesen;

(ed.), *Understanding Rituals* (European Association of Social Anthropologists; London/New York, 1992); W. Haug/R.H. Warning (eds), *Das Fest* (Poetik und Hermeneutik 14; München, 1990); L.Honko, „Zur Klassifikation der Riten," *Temenos* 11, 1975, pp. 61−77; J. La Fontaine, *Initiation. Ritual Drama and Secret Knowledge across the World* (Harmondsworth, 1985); B. Lang, „Kleine Soziologie religiöser Rituale," *Religionswissenschaft. Eine Einführung*, ed. H. Zinser (Berlin, 1988), pp. 73−95; E.T. Lawson, „Ritual as Language," *Religion* 6, 1976, pp. 123−139; V.W. Turner (ed.), *Celebration.*

die aktuelle Religionsökonomie[38] führt dieses Schema von demonstrativer Investion und ‚Wertvernichtung im Kult' weiter.

10. FEHLER IN RITUALEN

Professionalisierungsprozesse in kulturellen Teilbereichen reflektieren nicht nur die ökonomischen Möglichkeiten der Veranstalter, sondern auch unterschiedliche Anforderungs-Niveaus für einen ‚Ausschluß von Fehlern', – zugleich auch die Möglichkeit (oder Kompetenz), Fehler eines bestimmten Typs überhaupt zu entdecken. Für die Professionalisierung einer Ritualistik ist von zentraler Bedeutung, wie mit ‚Fehlern' in der Durchführung eines Rituals umgegangen wurde, wer sie ‚gemerkt' hat, und wie sie dann korrigiert werden können. Fehlerhaft vollzogene Rituale sind natürlich ‚unwirksam' und müssen in der richtigen Weise, und zwar als ganze (!), wiederholt werden. *Auch das* kann die Ansprüche an Rituale von den Ansprüchen an ein ‚Alltagshandeln' unterscheiden. Evidente Fehler wie das Weglaufen der Opfertiere (eine *hostia effugia* muß der Albtraum eines römischen Opferherrn gewesen sein) konnten nicht überspielt werden. Die vielen Vorschriften dafür, wie das Opfertier zum Altar geführt werden sollte und mit welchen Hilfsmitteln eine ‚Freiwilligkeit' inszeniert wurde, zeigen, wie sich auch auf dieser Ebene eine Professionalisierung durchsetzt und in Elemente des Opferrituals eingeht. Der extreme Fall der *hostia effugia* zeigt im übrigen, wie dezidiert Korrekturen *innerhalb* des ablaufenden Rituals ausgeschlossen blieben: Das entlaufene Tier durfte, wenn man seiner wieder habhaft wurde, nicht zum Altar zurückgebracht werden, sondern mußte an der Stelle, an der man es gefunden hatte, getötet werden. Aus dieser Vorschrift kann man schließen, daß das begonnene Opferritual insgesamt— natürlich mit einem ‚neuen' Opfertier— wiederholt werden mußte. Was im Falle eines Routine-Rituals noch unmittelbar plausibel ist, wird im Blick auf komplexe Rituale problematisch: Wie weit reicht hier der ‚Zusammenhang' eines Rituals, konkret: Ab wann muß im Falle eines Fehlers ‚wiederholt' werden, und—nicht zu unterschätzen—welcher ‚Aufwand', welche Investitionen gehen dabei verloren?

Die römischen Sakraljuristen haben für die Wiederholung komplexer, fehlerhaft durchgeführter Rituale einen eigenen Begriff geprägt, den der

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[38] Zur Geschichte dieser Themenstellung B. Gladigow, „Religionsökonomie – Überlegungen zur einer neuen Subdisziplin," *Lokale Religionsgeschichte*, eds H.G. Kippenberg/B. Luchesi (Marburg, 1995), pp. 253–258 mit weiterer Literatur.

instauratio. Er bedeutet, daß das ganze Ritual—und nicht nur der fehlerhafte ‚Teil‘—wiederholt werden müssen. Die Feriae Latinae, immerhin Feste von bis zu vier Tagen Dauer, sind mehrfach wiederholt worden;[39] später auch die Ludi Romani: *ludi Romani ter, plebei quinquies toti instaurati*. Diese Regelung—die vielen Festteilnehmern sicher Freude bereitet hat, den für die Finanzierung zuständigen Magistraten wohl weniger—zeigt gerade wegen ihrer *Kostspieligkeit*, daß bestimmte Ritenkomplexe deutlich als eine ‚Einheit‘, ein komplexes Ganzes verstanden wurden (*toti instaurati*). Dann kann die Korrektur eines Fehlers nicht in ‚Nachtrag‘ im Schema von *addenda et corringenda* erfolgen, sondern—wenn die Weiterführung der Analogie aus dem Buchdruck erlaubt ist—nur als ‚Neudruck‘. Das wird an den Fällen besonders deutlich, an denen die Konsequenzen eines Fehlers besonders weitreichende Folgen haben: Livius berichtet, daß das *ver sacrum* von 195 v. Christus,[40] ein Erstlingsopfer aller in einem Frühling geborenen Tiere und Menschen, ein Jahr später wegen eines ‚Formfehlers‘ wiederholt werden mußte.

11. DER PERSUASIVE CHARAKTER VON RITUALEN ODER: LERNEN IN RITUALEN

Am Schluß dieser allgemeinen Überlegungen seien noch zwei Perspektiven angesprochen, die sich aus einer zuvor vorgestellten systematischen Sequenzierung von Ritualen ergeben. Unter der in einigen Forschungsrichtungen dominierenden Perspektive des Performativen ist wenig beachtet worden, daß in der zeitlichen Sequenz eines Rituals, auf der horizontalen Ebene gewissermaßen, Veränderungen der Beteiligten oder der Zuschauer vor sich gehen. Ritualsequenzen lassen sich nicht nur über die bloße Abfolge ihrer Elemente und ihre Struktur beschreiben, sondern auch—in einer Art ‚Wirkungsästhetik‘—als persuasive oder psychagogische Strategien.

Für Mysterienrituale ist dies auch immer gesehen worden. Die Komposition der eleusinischen Telete ist auf einen Höhepunkt ausgerichtet: die *epoptie*, die Schau des geheimen Mysteriensymbols. Die Abfolge der Einweihungsschritte und Grade scheint wohlüberlegt und—trotz Aristoteles’ gegenteiliger Bemerkung—einen Lernvorgang in ein Visions- und Auditionserlebnis zu überführen. Typische Ritualsequenzen (Bad und Opfer am

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[39] Liv. XXI 63,8; XXII 1,6; XLIV 19,4; Cass.Dio XLVI 33.4.
[40] Livius 34, 44,1–3.

ersten Tag, Prozession und Kultspiel am zweiten, kollektive Schau *epoptie* am dritten) begründen Vorbereitung, Lernschritte und psychische Konditionierung. Damit diese ‚rekursiven Schleifen‘ von den Teilnehmern des Rituals auch ‚richtig‘ wahrgenommen (verarbeitet) werden, bedarf es einer transponierenden Wiederholung, vergleichbar mit einem Schema, das in der modernen Diadaktik als ‚Spiral-Curriculum‘ bezeichnet wird. Ob dieses ‚Lernen im Ritual‘ auch bedeutet, daß das Ritual von den Teilnehmern selbst (oder als Ganzes) verstanden werden muß, formal gesprochen: ob es wirklich selbstexplikativ ist, möchte ich allerdings eher bezweifeln. Wiederholungen in einem Ritual lassen sich in jedem Falle nicht nur als ‚retardierende Elemente‘ oder ‚Kompositionsfugen zwischen typischen Sequenzen‘ interpretieren, sondern als Rekapitulationen und Lernschritte. Damit ist die allgemeine Frage, ob es auch auf der Seite der Teilnehmer und ‚Benutzer‘ eine ‚Kompetenz‘,[41] eine rituelle Kompetenz gegeben hat, noch nicht beantwortet. Hat man eigentlich Rituale ‚geübt‘, wurden für die komplexen, großen Rituale ‚Proben‘ veranstaltet? Für den hier vorgestellten religionshistorischen Bereich hat sich niemand diese Fragen gestellt — anders als für den Sonderfall von Theater- und Musikaufführungen und ihre agonalen Rahmenbedingungen.

Neben dem ‚kognitiven‘ Lernen im Ritual steht ein zweiter Bereich, dessen differenzierte Interpretation ebenso unbeachtet geblieben ist: Der Bereich einer Erzeugung von differenzierten Emotionen durch das Ritual und in der Ritualsequenz. Damit ist nicht die These angesprochen, daß „Emotionen in Rituale umgesetzt werden", wie die eingängige pauschale Formulierung lautet, sondern umgekehrt, wie durch rituelle Sequenzen unterschiedliche Gefühle und Emotionen erzeugt und gesteuert werden können. Das könnte bereits für einzelne Elemente und auf einer einfachen Ebene gelten: Daß man durch ein ‚rituelles Lachen‘ (etwa den *risus Paschalis*) fröhlich wird, oder durch rituelles Weinen (Klagen) Belastungen abbaut, scheinen aktuelle Richtungen der Verhaltenstherapie zu bestätigen und einige Therapeuten versuchen, diese Erfahrungen nutzbringend einzusetzen.

Die Neurobiologie der siebziger Jahre des letzten Jahrhunderts hat der Funktion von Ritualen für eine Koordination zwischen einzelnen Organismen (also auch Menschen) und innerhalb der einzelnen Orga-

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[41] Zu den allgemeineren Perspektiven vgl. B. Gladigow, „Erwerb religiöser Kompetenz. Kult und Öffentlichkeit in den klassischen Religionen," *Religiöse Kommunikation*, ed. H. Binder (Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium 26; Trier 1997), pp. 103–118.

nismen (interorganismic und intraorganismic) zum ersten Mal Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt.[42] Bereits im Rahmen dieser Forschungsansätze wurde deutlich, daß mit der Abfolge ritueller Elemente auf der Zeitachse Synchronisationen auf der Ebene neurobiologischer und endokrinologischer Auswirkungen einhergehen. Vereinfacht und plakativ ausgedrückt, besonders effektive Rituale organisieren und synchronisieren gruppendynamische und soziale Wirkungen auf der einen mit neurologischen und endokrinologischen Effekten auf der anderen Seite. Die im Moment in Nordamerika aufblühende sog. ‚Neurotheologie' setzt hier wieder ein und nutzt die verbesserten Analysetechniken und bildgebenden Verfahren, um ‚hot spots' für Rituale zu finden. Komplexität und zeitliche Dauer von Ritualen sind allerdings auch hier noch nicht konsequent in das Blickfeld gerückt; dies wäre umgekehrt das Feld einer Religionswissenschaft, die die Ergebnisse dieser Forschungen für eine systematische Analyse komplexer Rituale nutzt.

12. ‚NOTATION' VON RITEN UND DAS ‚KOMPONIEREN' VON RITUALEN

Wenn man Forschungslage und Forschungsdefizite vor dem Hintergrund der hier skizzierten Neuansätze zusammenfassend zu charakterisieren versucht, ergeben sich etwa folgende Befunde: Rituale zu ‚erzeugen', zu komponieren, gar unterschiedliche Rituale aufeinander abzustimmen, ein kohärentes System von Riten zu erzeugen—alles Ergebnisse einer hohen Professionalisierung von Religion—erscheint in dem betrachteten Forschungskontext nicht als selbständiges Thema. Oder höchstens indirekt über die pauschalen Topoi von Kultbegründung, Kultreform oder Antiritualismus, den performativen Widerspruch von Ritualen des Antiritualismus eingeschlossen. Ähnliches gilt für die korrespondierende These einer ‚rituellen Kompetenz' als Randbedingung einer rituellen Vernetzung. Damit eng verbunden ist eine der Rezeptionsästhetik und Wirkungsästhetik der Literaturwissenschaft vergleichbare Frage nach der ‚Lesbarkeit von Ritualen': Wie werden Rituale von Akteuren, Veranstaltern, Teilnehmern und Zuschauern ‚rezipiert'? *Ändert* sich in unterschiedlichen Epochen und Kulturen das Verständnis von Ritualen? Können sie gar notorisch ‚falsch' verstanden werden? Wirken sie nur, wenn die Teilnehmer sie verstehen oder an sie ‚glauben'? Oder gilt auch hier die listige Antwort von Max Born, der, vorwurfsvoll auf ein Hufeisen über seiner Zimmertür angespro-

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[42] Dazu E.G.d'Aquili/Ch.D.Laughlin Jr./J.McManus (eds), *The Spectrum of Ritual. A Biogenetic Structural Analysis* (New York, 1979), pp. 32 sq.

chen, antwortete, er glaube nicht daran, habe aber gehört, daß es auch wirke, wenn man nicht daran glaube.

Für die Europäische Religionsgeschichte ließe sich immerhin zeigen, daß mit der Tendenz, eine ‚Lesbarkeit' von Religionen über Texte in den Vordergrund zu stellen,[43] eine ‚Lesefähigkeit' für Rituale nachläßt: Rituale werden, wenn man so will, ‚unleserlich'. Die Auswirkungen eines Gruppendrucks im Schema von Mary Douglas auf dieses Faktum, oder des ‚Zivilisatorischen Prozesses' in der Aufnahme von Thesen von Norbert Elias, wären noch aufzuarbeiten und in verschiedenen kulturellen und historischen Kontexten zu überprüfen. In der Neueren und Neuesten Religionsgeschichte sind immerhin von Fall zu Fall Autoren, ‚Komponisten' von Ritualen bekannt. Dies wird jeweils an den Stellen möglich, an denen die ‚Selbstverständlichkeit' überlieferter Rituale in Frage gestellt wird. Für die verschiedenen Freimaurer-Logen, aber auch die Rituale der Französischen Revolution lassen sich ‚Ritensetzer' benennen. Regelrechte ‚Notationen' oder ‚Choreographien' von Ritualen scheinen aber zu fehlen, sie werden jeweils in verbalisierter Form (letzen Endes der alte Typ der Festbeschreibung) festgehalten. Wenn sich eine solche Verbindung von Notation und Choreographie entwickeln oder aus Musik und Tanz übernehmen ließe, wäre eine effektive Sequenzierung von Ritualen möglich, die Elemente und Strukturen überschaubar macht, – und lehrbar! In der rezenten Religionsgeschichte werden immerhin nicht nur unter *beliefnet.com* die passenden Religionen angeboten, sondern im Internet werden auch schon Kompositionshilfen für Rituale verbreitet: ‚Help for Beginners' heißt es unter *Composing a Ritual*.[44] Auf einer anderen website[45] werden *Components of Ritual* angeboten und schließlich ein ‚*Ritual Design*' entworfen. Ritual-Designer könnte, so gesehen, eine Profession mit Zukunft sein.

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[43] Zu dieser Tendenz und ihren Folgen B. Gladigow, „Von der Lesbarkeit der Religion zum *iconic turn*," *Religiöse Funktionen des Fernsehens?* ed. G. Thomas (Wiesbaden, 2000), pp. 107–124.

[44] www.witchvox.com/teen/teen_1997/ecomposeritual

[45] www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/3790/main/archive/components_of_ritual

'INITIATIONS' IN THEORY AND IN ZOROASTRIANISM

Jan A.M. Snoek

There is just no such thing as a theory-free description of a ritual. Descriptions of rituals are always made "through the glasses" of theories, even if the describers are not conscientiously aware of the theories they hold. Everyone who describes a ritual has some ideas in mind about what a ritual is, what is important about it, what he wants to communicate of it to the reader, etc. And all those ideas are based on a kind of implicit theory which the describer has about rituals in general and about this particular ritual. I think that the quality of our work would improve when we would make ourselves aware of the theoretical preconceptions which we have in mind, and when we would make conscientiously use of both our own theories and those of others in order to see more aspects of the rituals we study, so that we could make more precise and complete descriptions.

For this paper I choose the Indian Zoroastrian *Navjote* ritual, "the initiation of a Zoroastrian child into the fold",[1] as my example. The aims of this paper are: (1) to see whether it is proper to call the *Navjote* ritual an initiation ritual, as is usually done; (2) to show how theory shapes our perception of rituals; and (3) to demonstrate how ritual theories can help to see aspects of rituals which might otherwise have been overlooked. These aims are closely related. The first question is of a kind which is normally not posed; it is taken for granted that you can do it. But can we indeed do it, is it proper, and in what sense then? We will see that it depends on the theory used if the answer is "yes" (aim-1). Other theories may make us perceive *Navjote* differently (aim-2). And accordingly, each theory will be seen to highlight different aspects of the *Navjote* ritual (aim-3).

There are many theories about rituals in general and about initiation rituals in particular. I will present here four theories about initiation rituals, including my own one, viz. those by Van Gennep, Eliade, Snoek and Bloch. I selected these, because (a) three of them (Van Gennep's, Eli-

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[1] J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1922, 2nd ed. 1937, reprint 1995), p. 169.

ade's & Bloch's) are very well known, (b) in my opinion, although some of them (Van Gennep's & Eliade's) were formulated relatively long ago, none of them is outdated, and (c) together they represent both the center (Van Gennep's & Snoek's) and a wider periphery (Eliade's & Bloch's) of the field. Furthermore, the second and third of these theories (Eliade's and Snoek's) are rather in the form of descriptions and definitions, but such higher level abstractions, describing a larger group of phenomena (in this case: initiations), imply much more theory than descriptions of individual performances of rituals; the first and last ones (Van Gennep's and Bloch's) are explicit theories.[2] Since the later authors were aware of the works of at least some of the preceding ones, I will present them in chronological order.

As stated above, it is my intention to apply these theories to one particular description of one particular ritual: the Parsi *Navjote*.[3] A crucial methodological problem here is that, since each description is influenced by the theory or theories that the describer had in mind, there cannot exist a single ideal description of a ritual. In addition, different describers had different performances of the same ritual in mind, and a performance in, say, Bombay in 1998 need not be completely identical to one in, say, a village in Gujarat in 1920 (indeed, it is much more likely that they were not). So, which description should I take to compare the theories with? Early anthropology often gave descriptions of the so-and-so ritual on the basis of the observation of a single performance, assuming that all performances would be identical. Once it was understood that there was variation, scholars often tried to solve this problem by either producing a description, integrating the observations of a number of performances (e.g. Victor Turner's descriptions of the rituals of the Ndembu), or by accumulating a number of different descriptions, hoping to assemble in that way a most complete impression of the ritual they were interested in. Recently, several studies have drawn farreaching conclusions on the basis of an observation or description of a single performance. Since I want to focus on the value of the theories for the production of richer descriptions, rather than on the value of the descriptions for the testing of theo-

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[2] So, all in all, I distinguish three levels at which theories are found: (1) implicit in descriptions of observed performances; (2) included in, or even explicitly built into, definitions or descriptions of concepts at a higher level of abstraction, such as "initiations"; (3) theories, explicitly formulated as such.

[3] In what follows, I will restrict myself to the Indian versions, and will not consider functional equivalents from Iran or elsewhere.

ries, I also prefer to select only one description as my primary point of reference.

Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (1854–1933) was a Parsi priest and scholar in Bombay.[4] His description of the *Navjote* ritual is the most detailed one available,[5] and generally regarded the most authoritative one. It is therefore that I select this description[6] for comparison with our theories. Also when, for convenience sake, I don't mention Modi explicitly, but seem to refer to the *Navjote* as such, I am in fact always and only referring to Modi's description of it. We shall see, however, that sometimes Modi's description can not give the answer to the question if this or that feature, predicted by a theory, is present in *Navjote*, since it is not mentioned in this particular description. This confirms that Modi also had a theory in mind, which directed his decisions about what to include in his description and what not. That does not mean that Modi produced a bad description. All descriptions have this restriction. And it is precisely here that theories are valuable, since on the one hand they make us aware of this limitation, and on the other they can help us to produce richer descriptions, by pointing our attention to aspects which we might otherwise have overlooked.

As an experiment, I asked the participants in the symposium to inform me, during the presentation of this paper—on the basis of their knowledge of the actual practice of *Navjote* today, of ritual texts, and of different traditions—about points where the description by Modi was inadequate for my purpose. Such information was indeed provided by several participants, especially by the two priests present: Dastur Feroze

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[4] On Modi see e.g. M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale,* vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 106–108; M.J. Giara, *Shams-ul-ulama Dr. Sir Ervad Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, An Illustrated Biography* (Mumbai, 2001).

[5] Compare his description for example with those in J.R. Hinnells, *Zoroastrianism and the Parsis* (London, 1981), pp. 42–44; M. Boyce, "Zoroastrianism", *A Handbook of Living Religions* ed. J.R. Hinnells (London etc., 1984, ed. 1991), pp. 171–190, here p. 180; P. Clark, *Zoroastrianism; An Introduction to an Ancient Faith* (Brighton/Portland, 1998), pp. 107–109; Sh.N. Munshi, "Common Parsi Observances," in Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism* (Richmond, 2001), pp. 16–43, here pp. 27–29.

[6] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 169–186. I will not give a description of the *Navjote* ritual in this paper, since I assume that most readers will know it sufficiently well, or else have access to the descriptions of either Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 3 (2003), or some of the descriptions, mentioned in the previous note.

M. Kotwal and Ervad Ramiyar P. Karanjia.[7] I am grateful for their contribution to this paper, which I am happy to acknowledge here. No doubt, without their help this paper would have been less interesting.[8] We have to be aware, however, that there is a time gap of some 80 years between the practices observed by Modi, and those of today. Differences surely developed during this period.

Arnold van Gennep (1909)

In 1909, van Gennep published his now famous book *Les rites de passage*,[9] in which he introduced the 'tripartite pattern' of the *rites de passage* (transition rituals): preliminal − liminal − postliminal, or also separation − transition (*marge*) − incorporation. The non-obvious in this theory is the existence of the liminal, transition period. Van Gennep does not give an explanation for it, but just presents it as the result of his analysis of the material he studied, and many empirical studies have since then confirmed the correctness of his observation for a wide range of rituals. Indeed, van Gennep never claimed that this structure would pertain to all rituals; he distinguished a particular class of rituals which show this feature and called this class the *rites de passage*, transition rituals.

Most scholars agree that initiations are a sub-class of these transition rituals.[10] Therefore, if we want to answer our first question—if it is proper to call the *Navjote* an initiation ritual—the first thing we should do is to verify if it fits van Gennep's criteria of a *rite de passage*.

The most important of these, is that *rites de passage* show a particular structure, which is generally known as three-fold, but is in fact a five-fold one (see figure 1):

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[7] This information is always indicated explicitly so that it can be distinguished from the information provided by Modi's description. Two sets of questions (indicated as such below) could not be posed to the audience for lack of time. Dastur Kotwal and Ervad Karanjia were so kind to answer them later by e-mail.

[8] Of course, the final responsibility for the contents of this paper remains mine alone.

[9] I will quote the English translation: *The Rites of Passage* (London, 1960). On van Gennep, see e.g. N. Belmont, *Arnold van Gennep, The Creator of French Ethnography* (Chicago/London, 1979).

[10] For an exception, see J.P. Schjødt (by mistake "Schøjdt"): "Initiation and the Classification of Rituals," *Temenos* 22, 1986, pp. 93–108.
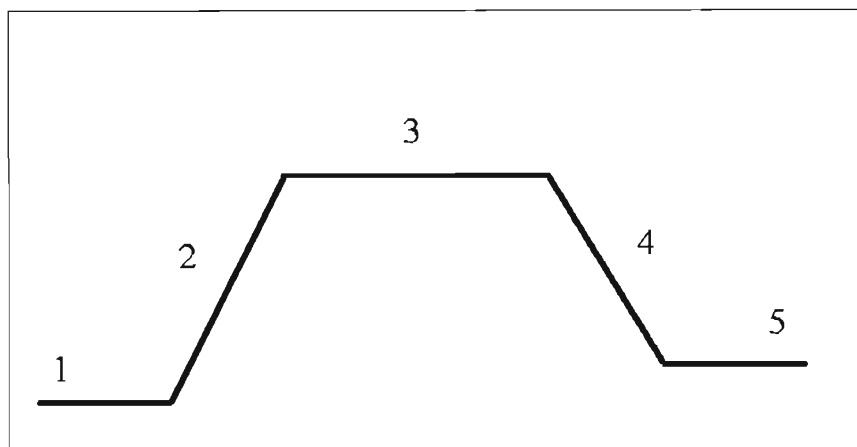
Fig 1: The five-fold structure of transition rituals.

1: original *state* (profane)
2: separation = *process* of dying
3: transition = *state* of sacredness
4: incorporation = *process* of rebirth / resurrection
5: final, new *state* (profane)

Note that in this sequence states, and processes which lead from one state to another, alternate.

This structure is easily recognizable in Modi's description of the *Navjote*: the purification bath (*nāhn*) and the fasting which follows it represent the separation from the initial state; the transition is characterized by the clothing with the *sudreh* ('sacred shirt') and *kusti* ('sacred thread'), accompanied with certain prayers; and the incorporation into the new state is expressed by the recitations of the Articles of Faith, the final benediction, and the festive meal. Most of these elements do not require explication. But in order to make clear that this recitation of the Articles of Faith does represent an incorporation into the final state, it may be useful to quote it here (in Modi's translation):

> The child, after being thus invested with the sacred shirt and thread, announces the last and the most important of the Articles of Faith, given in the 12th chapter of the Yaçna. It runs thus: "O Almighty! Come to my help. I am a worshipper of God. I am a Zoroastrian worshipper of God. I agree to praise the Zoroastrian religion, and to believe in that religion. I praise good thoughts, good words and good deeds. I praise the good Mazdayaçnian religion which curtails discussions and quarrels, which brings about kinship of brotherhood, which is holy, and which, of all the religions that have yet

flourished and are likely to flourish in the future, is the greatest, the best and the most excellent, and which is the religion given by God to Zoroaster. I believe, that all good things proceed from God. May the Mazdayaçnian religion be thus praised."[11]

Whereas the child concerned entered the ritual as someone who is not yet a full member of the Zoroastrian religious community, it here openly declares its adherence to this religion, thus confirming its acceptance of now being a member of this religious community. Therefore I would regard the recitation of this text as a rite of incorporation. Also the text of the benediction indicates the start of a new life. A meal of all participants concludes many transition rituals as an integration ritual.

The question if a particular ritual fits a particular theory is always a matter of interpretation of both [the description of] the ritual and the theory. But in this case, I would claim that it is rather easy to interpret them in such a way that they fit.

Van Gennep's theory about transition rituals, however, is much richer than his finding that they have this particular structure. For example, he also claimed that

> Such changes of condition do not occur without disturbing the life of society and the individual, and it is the function of rites of passage to reduce their harmful effects. That such changes are regarded as real and important is demonstrated by the recurrence of rites, in important ceremonies among widely different peoples, enacting death in one condition and resurrection in another.[12]

Here he uses the term "resurrection" where elsewhere he also uses "rebirth". The recognition that the symbolism of death and resurrection or rebirth is characteristic of initiation rituals is not a discovery of van Gennep; it was there already for several decades when he published his book.[13] This symbolism can also be recognized in the *Navjote*. The preparatory bath can be interpreted as a washing off of the old status (thus a process of dying for the old person), whereas the fasting may be seen as

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[11] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 184 f.

[12] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 13.

[13] E.g. J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. 2 (1st ed. London, 1890), pp. 342 ff.; L. Frobenius, *Die Masken und Geheimbünde Afrikas* (Halle, 1898), pp. 215 f.; H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* (Berlin, 1902), pp. 102–106; H. Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908), pp. 38–40. Also the literature quoted in these works, which extends backwards to even O. Dapper, *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten* (Amsterdam, 1668), pp. 413–419.

an expression of the status of being dead, since the dead do not eat. The investiture with new clothes on the other hand can be seen as expressing the taking on of a new life. The recitation of the *"Tandaruçti* or benedictions" (Modi) also indicate the new life of the candidate: "May you enjoy health, long life ..."[14] Indeed, the date of *Navjote* is by many Parsees celebrated as their 'religious birthday' so it is seen by the participants as a kind of new birth.

Van Gennep was furthermore of the opinion that life cycle rituals do not concern the physiological process, but rather the social change involved.[15] For example: a ritual performed at the occasion of the birth of a new child does not cause its birth, but integrates the child into the community. Likewise, puberty rituals integrate the candidates into the group of adult men and/or women. This too holds for *Navjote*: it integrates the child into the Zoroastrian community, of those who take responsibility for their thoughts, words and deeds.

According to van Gennep, one and the same ceremony may contain different kinds of rites and ritual processes simultaneously,[16] for example both a transition ritual and other rituals and rites, such as fertility, protection, divination, defensive, or propitiatory rites or rituals. *Navjote* includes, in India, such rites as making a red *kunkun* mark on the child's forehead (a protection rite) and the 'showering' of the candidates with a mixture of rice, pomegranate seeds, almonds, raisins, etc. (a fertility rite).

Van Gennep claims that, if a ceremony contains at least one transition ritual, then it is that which gives structure to the ceremony as a whole.[17] Clearly this holds for *Navjote*.

Van Gennep also noticed that the same ceremony may be one kind of *rite de passage* for one (group of) participant(s), and another kind of *rite de passage* for another.[18] For example, a ceremony performed at the occasion of the birth of her first child may transfer the mother to the group of matrons, and at the same time transfer the new born child to the group of living people.[19] Modi gives no information concerning this issue in

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[14] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, p. 185.

[15] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 46.

[16] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp. 11 f., 42, 59, 117, 151, 192 f.

[17] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp. 10 f.

[18] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 118 f., 139, 147.

[19] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 50. The same ceremony may in fact be at the same time a *rite de passage* as well as some completely different kind of ritual. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, pp. 11 f., 51.

relation to the *Navjote*, but Dastur Kotwal confirmed, that the date cho-
sen for a *Navjote* ceremony is often that on which in the past an ancestor
of (one of) the candidate(s) died, thus turning the ceremony into a com-
memoration ritual for some, if not all, of its participants.

From these statements by van Gennep it follows that a ceremony may
be an initiation ritual for the individual candidates, and a group constitut-
ing ritual for the group of candidates (in those cases where there is such
a group). If this is the case, then these are two different rituals, taking
place within one and the same ceremony. For *Navjote*, this is not the
case, however. Even when more than one child is involved in the same
Navjote ceremony (which is usually not the case in India, but quite
common in Iran), then they are not turned into a lasting group.

Van Gennep wrote:

> "mysteries" comprise the ceremonial whole which transfers the neophyte
> from the profane to the sacred world and places him in direct and perma-
> nent communication with the latter. The display of sacra at Eleusis, as also
> in Australia (churinga, sacred bull-roarer) or in America (masks, sacred ears
> of corn, Katcinas, etc.), is the culmination rite but does not itself constitute
> the "mysteries".[20]

In other words: initiation rituals culminate in the revelation of certain
sacra. Modi explicitly referred to the *sudreh* and *kusti* as the "*sacred
shirt and thread*".[21] I wondered if this terminology was not the result of
Western influence, rather than traditional Zoroastrian. Ervad Karanjia,
however, told that the *sudreh* and *kusti* are indeed regarded as sacred
within the Zoroastrian tradition. Still, I am not convinced that they could
be regarded as *sacra* in the sense in which van Gennep is using that term
here, i.e. objects in which the divine is present and through which it re-
veals itself.

Finally, van Gennep noticed that initiates are usually distinguished by
badges, such as those produced by circumcision or scarification. But
such badges do not need to be permanent ones; examples of non-
permanent ones include special dress, masks, or body painting.[22] In the
case of *Navjote*, the *sudreh* and *kusti* obviously qualify. I wondered if the
kunkun mark would also qualify. That would depend on whether *Navjote*

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[20] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 89.

[21] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 169, 172, 177
etc., my italics.

[22] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 74.

is the first occasion when a child gets a *kunkun* mark or not. Ervad Karanjia told that this is not the case. Therefore it is not a specific mark of its passing this process.

Mircea Eliade (1958)

Eliade wrote extensively on initiation rituals.[23] This culminated in the Haskell Lectures of 1956 in Chicago: "Patterns of Initiation", which were published as *Birth and Rebirth (Naissances mystiques)* in 1958.[24] This is probably the best known book on initiation rituals. For our purpose it is significant, in the first place because it gives a definition of initiation rituals, which we may use as a test to see if it is proper to call *Navjote* an initiation ritual, according to Eliade. It also gives a rather large collection of characteristics which, Eliade claims, are found in most, if not all, initiation rituals. Not all scholars would agree that all of these characteristics would apply to all initiation rituals, but it are precisely those which may be thought provocative: they may make us see things in the *Navjote* ritual which we might have overlooked otherwise. Let us start, however, with Eliade's definition:

> The term initiation in the most general sense denotes a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated. In philosophical terms, initiation is equivalent to a basic change in existential condition; the novice emerges from his ordeal endowed with a totally different being from that which he possessed before his initiation; he has become *another*.[25]

From this definition follows in the first place that "the term initiation ... denotes a body of rites", i.e. the rites [= building blocks of ceremonies] involved are not restricted to one ceremonial [composed of one or more ceremonies], performed in one place and time. For example, in Navjote,

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[23] On Eliade see e.g. G. Dudley, *Religion on Trial: Mircea Eliade and His Critics* (Philadelphia, 1977); C. Olson, *The Theology and Philosophy of Eliade. A Search for the Centre* (London etc., 1992); D. Allen/D. Doeing (eds), *Mircea Eliade: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York/London, 1980).

[24] The English version was "Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask," but appeared in 1958, so before the French version, which was only published in 1959. It is therefore, that Eliade could write in the "Avant-Propos" to the French version: "Le texte qu'on va lire présente quelques menues différences avec la version anglaise publiée par Harper sous le titre de *Birth and Rebirth* (New York, 1958)" (Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, pp. 7 f.). Apparently, this remark was added in a late stage of the preparation of the text, since the "Avant-Propos" is dated "Paris-Chicago 1956−1957"!

[25] Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth*, p. x.

first the purification bath (*nāhn*) is performed, after which the child is taken to a different place for the investiture. This characteristic, however, clearly is not a requirement for something to qualify as an initiation; Eliade just mentions that it is possible.

Secondly, these rites are accompanied by "oral teachings". In *Navjote* we find prayers and recitations of sacred texts. As Ervad Karanjia confirmed, the child normally knows these text before the ritual commences, and has even learned most of them by heart. Yet, Modi seems to have regarded these texts as at least partly of an instructive nature, when he states that

> the most important part of these short prayers [from the 12th chapter of the Yasna, spoken immediately after the investiture, JS] is that, wherein the child *is made to believe* in the efficacy of one's own good thoughts, words and actions.[26]

Thirdly, these "rites and oral teachings" pursue "a decisive alteration in the religious and social status" of the candidate. Again, in *Navjote*, the child becomes a responsible member of the community of Zoroastrians.

In the summary at the end of his book,[27] Eliade once more enumerates what he regards the most important characteristics of initiation rituals, some of which were not mentioned in the definition at the beginning of the book. We find here such features as that the ritual death is not necessarily represented by bodily infliction, although this is usually the case. In *Navjote*, there are no bodily inflictions.

According to Eliade, religious rituals, including initiations, always repeat a mythical example of a Divine Being, thereby reactualizing that example.[28] That would mean that there should be a myth or a tradition that *Navjote* was first performed in a divine context introduced by a divinity. Modi does not mention that. But in the discussion Choksy drew my attention to the fact that the mythology does attribute the *Navjote kusti* to Yima.[29] And Ervad Karanjia added that in the *Zarâtusht Nâma*, it is stated that Zarathushtra asked his father for the *kusti*.[30] Although

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[26] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, p. 185, my italics.
[27] Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 128–132.
[28] Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth*, p. 6.
[29] *Dādestān ī dēnīg* 38, 19–21.
[30] Ervad Karanjia referred here to p. 31 in Chapter 2 "Nav-javāni ane din bābeni taiyāri", i.e.: "Youth and preparations regarding Religion" of *A new Zarthosht nameh or An account of the life of Zoroaster, the Prophet*, being a translation of Prof. A.V.W. Jackson's *Zoroaster the Prophet of Iran*, tr. by P.B. Desai (Bombay, 1900). There are

there is no direct reference to the *Navjote* here, it is still significant, since it describes that the *kusti* was required before Zarathushtra could start his spiritual mission.

As a result of this identification with a mythical example, the participants are, again according to Eliade, recast into the mythical Time of the Beginning *(in illo tempore)*, and at the place where the example took place: the center of the World, since the World extended from that place and moment, and it is only there that one can pass between heaven, earth, and underworld.[31] We have just established that Zarathushtra's first binding of the *kusti* may be regarded as the mythical example. We might interpret that as taking place *in illo tempore.* Now, does Zoroastrianism regard the place where Zarathushtra got his *kusti* as the center of the world? This question, not addressed by Modi, caused a lively discussion during the symposium. Besides that all agreed that within Zoroastrianism Iran is the center of the world, there were different opinions when it came to being more precise. My conclusion was, that it would be interesting to see in how far such a theory might make it possible for us to look differently at the usual interpretations of existing texts, and say: well, we never looked at it in this way, but if you look at it from this angle, you may interpret this or that text in this way indeed. Panaino and Choksy mentioned that there exists an interpretation of the *kusti* as a symbol of the *axis mundi.* Which surely would be in line with Eliade's way of thinking.

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several other editions of the *Zarâtusht Nâma,* but they do not have this passage. This edition, however, indicates in a footnote that this episode is also found in the Zâdspram and the Denkard. *Le Livre de Zoroastre (Zarâtusht Nâma) de Zartusht-i Bahrâm ben Pajdû,* publié et traduit par Frédéric Rosenberg (St.-Pétersbourg, 1904), p. 21, note 2 also notes that the: "Zâd Sparam (XX, 1–3) rapporte que, lorsque Zoroastre eut 15 ans, ses frères (car selon le chap. XV, 5 il était le troisième de cinq frères) demandèrent à Pùrshasp leur part des biens paternels. Au partage Zoroastre choisit une ceinture 'dont la largeur était de quatre doigts' c.à.d. le Kôsti, ..." And in the *Zâdspram* (Ph. Gignoux/ A. Tafazzoli: *Anthologie de Zâdspram. Édition critique du texte pehlevi traduit et commenté* [Paris, 1993]), we read indeed in Chapter 13 (sic!): (1) Il est ainsi révélé que, lorsqu'il [= Zoroastre] eut quinze ans, les fils de Porušasp réclamèrent à leur père (leur) part. Et leur part leur fut accordée par Pourušasp. (2) Parmi les vêtements, il y a avait une ceinture, doublée, dont la longueur était de trois doigts et on pouvait l'mener trois fois autour de la taille; Zoroastre l'ayant choisie, s'en ceignit. (3) C'était l'une des directives de Wahman qui était venu en son esprit lors de sa naissance, et il détourna alors de tout ce qui n'est pas la coutume, et en la coutume il le rendit ardent.

[31] Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth,* pp. 6, 70.

Eliade furthermore claims that, by reactualizing the mythical exam-
ple, there takes place a unification between the original Divine Being
and he who performs His part in the ritual performance. Those partici-
pating in the ceremonial thus really enjoy the experience of the presence
of the Divine Being. As a result, the ceremonial realizes a new start for
the community: old time is abolished; a new time, a new cosmogony, is
commenced.[32] Our previous discussion somehow anticipated this issue,
so it seems that there are interpretations of *Navjote* around which are not
too far removed from this kind of theory.

Eliade confirms that initiation rituals symbolize a process of death
and rebirth, an aspect which he analyses extensively.[33] We have seen in
the section on van Gennep that this applies to *Navjote*, so I will not
elaborate on that any more.

Then Eliade describes the denotation of the concept 'initiation', i.e.
those things which he actually regards to be initiations, listing the follow-
ing: puberty rituals for men; initiations into male secret societies; puberty
rituals for women; initiations into female secret societies; other life cycle
rituals; shamanic initiations; Yoga; military initiations; Greco-Oriental
mysteries; initiations into Christianity; initiations into the professions of
smiths and alchemists; initiations in the modern Western world.[34]

When comparing *Navjote* to this list, it seems to me to be on the one
hand a Zoroastrian parallel to the initiations into Christianity. Most cer-
tainly, it is a life cycle ritual too. It has, however, more specifically, also
some similarity to puberty rituals: although no segregation of boys and
girls takes place, and also no sexual symbolism or instructions concern-
ing sexuality or specific sexual role-taking are involved, current Parsee
marriage law states that *Navjote* is a prerequisite for marriage.[35] And it is
typical of many puberty rituals indeed that they qualify their participants
for marriage.[36] That normally the children are biologically not yet in their

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[32] Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 6, 13, 19, 21, 71, 72, 112.

[33] See J.A.M. Snoek, *Initiations: A Methodological Approach to the Application of
Classification and Definition Theory in the Study of Rituals* (Pijnacker, 1987), pp. 104–
107.

[34] See Snoek, *Initiations,* pp. 107–116.

[35] On the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act and later laws on these themes, see Staus-
berg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 38 f. and the literature quoted there.

[36] E.g. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 86. And Dastur F.M. Kotwal wrote: "In
the time of Erachji [1826–1900, JS] both boys and girls were marrying very young,
even before their *Navjotes* were performed, i.e., before the age of seven. In such circum-
stances a temporary *sudre-kusti* was put on by the marrying couple and it was taken off

puberty does in itself not disqualify *Navjote* as a puberty ritual, since, according to ritual theory, puberty rituals are always about social puberty, never about biological puberty. Ervad Karanjia here noted that in the past, sometimes marriage preceded *Navjote*, especially in the cases of child marriages. Based on that information, we decided not to class *Navjote* as a puberty ritual.

Eliade is the first author to take initiations for women seriously, and to explore their similarities with, and differences from, those for men. His conclusions here are that they are highly comparable to those for men; differ in the contents of the secrets communicated; differ in the symbols used; and are usually less elaborate. Also, initiations into female secret societies are even more comparable to those for men than puberty rituals.[37]

It is remarkable that *Navjote* is exactly the same for boys and girls, yes, that even no segregation between boys and girls takes place. That is really exceptional.

Finally, Eliade extends the concept of initiations to other contexts than rituals. He speaks then of initiatory patterns, initiatory structures, or initiatory scenarios which he finds in the literature and the dreams of modern men. They would all have the same function, viz. to satisfy the inborn need, wish or will of men to transcend the profane, natural, given existence, and to partake of the sacred, cultural, revealed existence.[38] *Navjote* also seems to satisfy this description.

Jan A.M. Snoek (1987)

I formulated my own theory about initiation rituals in the form of a definition in my *Initiations: A Methodological Approach to the Application of Classification and Definition Theory in the Study of Rituals*, published in 1987[39] in which I tried to integrate the then existing definitions of the term "initiations". Although many of the characteristics, formulated by van Gennep and Eliade, occur prominently in it, it is not just the

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after the marriage ceremony. The real Navjote ceremony was performed after they had reached seven years of age." F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd (eds & transls), *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion; A Nineteenth Century Catechism with Modern Commentary*, (Chico, CA, 1982) p. 125.

[37] Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 78–80.

[38] Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 130 ff.

[39] Dutch Efficiency Bureau, Pijnacker. A new edition is planned in Peter Lang's series "Toronto Studies in Religion".

sum of these two. For example, it does not include all of Eliade's features, and it adds some, distinguished by other scholars. For our purpose, my definition is significant to see if it is proper to refer to *Navjote* as an initiation ritual. My claim, that it is significant in this way, is based on the fact that it integrates the points of view, formulated in a representative selection of the scholarly literature on initiation rituals. My definition, then, runs as follows:

> Initiations are all those, and only those, *rites de passage*, limited in time, and involving at least one subject participant, which are nonrecurrent transitions in time for their individual objects (the candidates).[40]

From this definition, a number of monothetic characteristics (i.e. characteristics which always apply) can be inferred. In the first place,

> initiations, as *rites de passage*, are a subclass of rituals. As such, they are ritual processes, oriented towards an object (viz. the individual candidates), having some function(s) for that object.[41]

This holds for *Navjote*, which is a *rite de passage* for the individual candidates with the function to change them from children without responsibility into adherents of the Zoroastrian religion, who take responsibility for their thoughts, words and deeds.

Secondly,

> *Rites de passage* have a tripartite structure: preliminal, liminal, postliminal. For initiations, the preliminal rites can be summarized as expressing a symbolic death, the liminal rites as expressing the spiritual condition of the candidate(s), and the postliminal rites as expressing a symbolic rebirth or resurrection.[42]

We have seen that we can interpret *Navjote* in this way.

I then distinguish two kinds of initiations: "Initiations *sensu stricto* - as opposed to initiations *sensu lato* - show culmination rites, expressing a confrontation or identification with a divinity."[43] Modi gives no indication that Navjote would qualify as an initiation *sensu stricto* in this sense, and neither do I see such culmination rites in *Navjote*. Thus I would class it as an initiation *sensu lato*.

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[40] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[41] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[42] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[43] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173. For examples of culmination rites, see table 6.5 in Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 154.

"Initiations may be preceded by preparatory rites."[44] For *Navjote* we might think of the learning of the prayers, and—within the ritual process itself—the purification bath (*nāhn*) may also be interpreted as a preparatory rite.

"The object of a *rite de passage*, and thus of an initiation, must fulfill certain predefined conditions in order to qualify for its role in the ritual."[45] In the case of *Navjote*, the candidates must be born from Zoroastrian parents, have the right age (officially between 7 and 15), and know the required prayers by heart.

The "object of an initiation is an individual person: the candidate."[46] Clearly this is the case with *Navjote*.

> The additional conditions, that initiations are limited in time and involve at least one subject participant, imply (1) that initiations may not take a lifetime, but must come to an end, principally distinctly before the physical death of the candidates, and (2) that at least one initiator should take part in the ritual, which renders 'self-initiation' a contradiction in terms.[47]

Navjote clearly satisfies this criterion.

> The 'transition in time' for the candidates is, simply stated, a change in one or some of their statuses. This change is both expressed and produced by the ritual.[48]

This too applies to *Navjote*.

"Initiations are first-time rituals which cannot be repeated (are nonrecurrent) for the same candidate."[49] Which is also the case with *Navjote*.

Besides such monothetic characteristics, there are also some polythetic characteristics of initiations, i.e. characteristics which initiations have often but not always, and absence of which does not disqualify the ritual as an initiation. In my book I mention these:[50]

"Through an initiation, one usually becomes a member of a group. In that case it is also the only means to become a member."[51] *Navjote*

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[44] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[45] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[46] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[47] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[48] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 173.
[49] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.
[50] These were skipped during the presentation, due to lack of time. Dastur Kotwal and Ervad Karanjia were so kind as to send me their reactions by e-mail later.
[51] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.

clearly has this characteristic, making one a member of the Zoroastrian religious community.

"As a rule, a candidate cannot have a stand-in, but must go through the ritual him/herself."[52] This too holds for *Navjote*.

"Usually, taboos or instructions are supposed to help a candidate to avoid dangerous influences of the sacred during the liminal phase of the ritual."[53] Dastur Kotwal and Ervad Karanjia agree that

> The Nahan ritual which precedes the Navjote is supposed to have a cleansing effect on the candidate and prepares him for the greater event of *Navjote*. However there are no 'dangerous influences of the sacred during the liminal phase of the ritual'

(as Karanjia puts it).

"Usually, a candidate is conducted by one or two guides or instructors."[54] According to Ervad Karanjia

> This holds true for *Navjote*. The priest who performs the *Navjote* is usually a Head Priest (Dasturji) or a matured, pious priest. He leads the child in performance of his first Kushti ritual and blesses him at the end.

And Dastur Kotwal confirms that

> The candidate is conducted [to the dais where the Navjote ritual proper is to be performed] by the priest who has administered the purificatory bath.

"Usually, the initiated can be recognized by (permanent or removable) badges, obtained during their initiation."[55] As we have seen, the *sudreh* and *kusti* have this function for *Navjote*.

> Usually, the background of initiations is the *Weltbild* of the dying and resurrecting nature of life. Usually, an initiation is a reactualization of a myth. If so, the candidate will often be identified with the mythical example. The ritual is usually claimed to be instituted by some mythical being(s) in the beginning of time (*in illo tempore*). Often an initiation is performed at the symbolic centre of the world, representing the place where the mythical example for the ritual took place.[56]

In how far this holds for *Navjote* was discussed already in the section on Eliade.

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[52] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.
[53] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.
[54] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.
[55] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.
[56] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.

> In most initiations, experiential (and sometimes also practical) knowledge is transferred, which is intrinsically (or sometimes explicitly) restricted to the initiates. Since knowledge once acquired cannot be unlearned, initiation is almost always irreversible.[57]

Navjote too is irreversible, and it transfers the experiential knowledge of how it is to pass through it as a candidate.

Finally, I summarized the denotation of initiations as follows:

> Rituals, accompanying the coming of age, becoming a member of a 'secret' society, or a shaman are usually initiations. Other Life cycle and Inaugural Rituals, such as birth, marriage, parenthood, funeral, and enthronement rituals, may be so as well.[58]

Navjote is clearly a life cycle ritual.

Maurice Bloch (1992)

In 1992, Maurice Bloch published his *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience.*[59] Its central theme is, what he calls, "Rebounding Violence", which he illustrates in chapters on Initiation (i.e. puberty rituals, pp. 8–23); Sacrifice (pp. 24–45); Cosmogony and the State (dealing i.a. with death rituals, pp. 46–64); Marriage (pp. 65–84); Millenarianism (pp. 85–98); and Myth (pp. 99–105). Thus, his theory is not targeted to initiation rituals exclusively, and—as in the case of van Gennep—compliance of *Navjote* with it therefore does not answer our question if it is proper to refer to *Navjote* as an initiation ritual. But, as we shall see, it does demonstrate how ritual theories can help to see aspects of rituals which might otherwise have been overlooked, and shows how theory shapes our perception of rituals.

The term "Rebounding Violence" refers to the fact that, in many rituals, two stages of violence may be recognized, which are in a number of ways related and opposed to one another. To illustrate these relations and oppositions, I will restrict myself to the example of the puberty rituals which Bloch describes,[60] since these are from his examples clearly those closest related to *Navjote*.

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[57] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.

[58] Snoek, *Initiations*, p. 174.

[59] For a critical evaluation of Bloch's thesis, see M. Houseman/C. Severi, *Naven or the Other Self; A Relational Approach to Ritual Action* (Studies in the History of Religions 79; Leiden et al., 1998), pp. 172–178.

[60] M. Bloch, *Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience* (Cambridge, 1992), chapter 2, pp. 8–23.

In the first place, then, in such rituals, in a first step, the natural, *internal* vitality of (part of) the community is destroyed (i.e. the candidates are 'killed'): this is the first, symbolic violence. This act moves the community—not only the candidate(s)[61]—into the spiritual world (i.e. the realm of the dead / spirits / gods). In a later, second step, some *external* source of vitality (food, especially that which consists of killed animals) is absorbed: this is the second, real violence. This moves the community, transformed, back into the natural world (i.e. the realm of the living).[62] *Navjote* can be interpreted this way. It makes the meal afterwards a very important part of the ritual! This may not be the usual way to interpret it, but the meal is a standard part of the ritual. So nothing seems to prohibit this interpretation. This is a nice example of a case where the theory makes you look really different at the ritual.

Also, the first violence (the symbolic death of the candidates) is oriented against the own, internal (biological) vitality, given with *natural* birth, whereas the second violence (the killing of the animals which are to be eaten) is oriented against external vitality, which is conquered and appropriated by *cultural* action.[63] Again, *Navjote* can be interpreted this way. It surely implies a form of cultural action.

Furthermore, in the first step, the natural world is left behind as of no value: the 'other' world only is regarded valuable. In the second step, this 'other' world is *not* left behind; the 'natural' world is conquered by it. Those who have gone this path 'really' belong to the 'other' world, and remain part of it, hence their authority over this one.[64] *Navjote* can also be interpreted this way. In Zoroastrianism too, the initiated have authority over this world.

Finally, in the first step, the temporary, unstable, natural world is left behind, in order to share in the permanent, eternal, transcendental world. In the second step, this status of immortality is retained, and allows from now on the moving back and forth between the two worlds (for example in the case of priests, who can move into the transcendental world and come back again), until even after death (the spirits of the dead periodi-

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[61] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, pp. 16 f.

[62] The abstract formulation of the theory in its shortest form is in Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, chapter 1: "Introduction", esp. pp. 5–6. The chapters following it, each illustrate the general form, posed here. See esp. chapter 2: "Initiation", pp. 14–22.

[63] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 16.

[64] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, pp. 19 f.

cally return to the world of the living and are more or less part of it).[65] Although Modi does not mention it in his description, this too can be easily recognized in the case of *Navjote*, since it introduces the child into the community of Zoroastrians, which includes both the living and the dead.

Bloch compares his model with that of van Gennep,[66] pointing out the following differences.[67]

According to van Gennep, the pre-liminal phase of the ritual separates the individual candidates from their society, whereas Bloch sees it as a separation between the vital and the transcendental self of the individual candidate(s), which transfers the whole society into the 'other' world.[68] Ervad Karanjia wrote:

> The Nahan, if it can be called the pre-liminal stage of the ritual, does separate the candidate from the profane world by ritually cleansing him. This is in preparation to the divine blessings he is to receive from the 'other world'.

This statement seems to confirm van Gennep's theory, rather than Bloch's. However, Dastur Kotwal remarked:

> Both Gennep and Bloch seem to be on the right track. The pre-liminal stage of the ritual separates the individual candidate from its society as far as purity is concerned. It also separates the physical from not easily understandable spiritual experience and transfers the devout members of the society into the 'other' world.

It is interesting to see that Dastur Kotwal feels that this part of Bloch's theory might be recognized in the *Navjote* ritual. As a non-Zoroastrian scholar, I find it difficult to recognize here Bloch's model of the killing of the vitality of the candidate in order to release his spiritual side, and Dastur Kotwal himself also wrote to me that: "There is no violence of any sort one can perceive in the pre-liminal ... phase of the [*Navjote*] initiation ritual."

Van Gennep regards the condition of the candidates during the liminal phase as a *passing* condition. Bloch, on the contrary, sees it as the

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[65] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, pp. 20 f.

[66] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 6. Houseman/Severi regard Bloch's model even a "direct transform" of van Gennep's (*Naven or the Other Self*, p. 175).

[67] These were again skipped during the presentation of this paper, because of lack of time, and here too, Dastur Kotwal and Ervad Karanjia were so kind as to send me their reactions by e-mail later.

[68] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 6.

period during which one gains one's *permanent* (i.e. eternal) transcendental identity.[69] This does apply to *Navjote*.

Van Gennep sees the post-liminal phase as a reintegration into society. According to Bloch, however, it is *not* a return to the old world left behind, but its aggressive conquest resulting in a new world.[70] Dastur Kotwal wrote:

> Van Gennep seems right when he states that the post-liminal phase brings the candidate to the mainstream of the devout, initiated society. The *Navjote* is the child's second or spiritual birth,

whereas Ervad Karanjia wrote:

> In the case of *Navjote*, the view of Bloch seems to be more tenable, as the child does not return to the old world (wherein he was uninitiated) but to a new world, with special tools (*Sudreh & Kushti*) as his implements to foster goodness and fight against evil.

I think, however, that there is one problem here: in Bloch's view, the new world is created out of the old world by the aggressive conquest of the old world through the participants in the ritual. Now I could see this aspect in *Navjote* (see below), and Karanjia's statement that the child returns "with special tools (*Sudreh & Kushti*) as his implements to ... fight against evil" indicates the direction in which I am thinking, but this is clearly different from a being (passively) passed into a different world.

Finally, van Gennep sees violence only in the pre-liminal phase of initiation rituals, whereas in the view of Bloch, the violence in the post-liminal phase is much more important:
– it is directed towards other species (usually animals);[71]
– it may flow over to other human groups, resulting in conquering wars, which makes these rituals of political significance;[72]
– it is the result of the attempt to create the transcendental.[73]

Dastur Kotwal responded:

> There is no violence of any sort one can perceive in the pre-liminal or post-liminal phase of the [*Navjote*] initiation ritual. The candidate rather declares in the articles of faith that his religion believes in setting aside

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[69] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 6.
[70] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 6.
[71] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 6.
[72] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 6.
[73] Bloch, *Prey into Hunter*, p. 7.

quarrels, is peaceable and teaches us to live in harmony with our kith and kin.

And Ervad Karanjia wrote:

> The third option, that of an 'attempt to create the transcendental' is more plausible for *Navjote* as the initiation and the word *Nav jot* itself signifies a new offerer of prayers to the transcendental beings.

However, I am not sure that the responses by Dastur Kotwal and Ervad Karanjia to the last two points do justice to either Bloch or *Navjote*. For what I understand of the *Navjote* ritual, it does not only demand from the newly initiated to behave peacefully towards his/her fellow men and to offer prayers to the transcendental beings, but also to actively fight the powers of evil. Zoroastrianism even explicitly demands to do so in the form of killing certain animals (the *xrafstra*).[74] This aspect would be much more in line with what I understand Bloch to refer to. What Bloch is referring to explicitly, however, (as stated above) is the practice of having a meal after an initiation ritual (and many other rituals). Van Gennep interprets this as what we would today call a performative act, announcing as well as creating the group which now for the first time includes the newly initiated in his/her new status. For Bloch, however, this is the group, returned—after its journey through the realm of the transcendental— into the world of natural (biological) vitality, absorbing the vitality of the animals and plants killed for the meal. As to *Navjote*: there is usually a festive meal after the ritual (which Bloch would regard part of the ritual), and the "showering" of the candidate(s) with rice etc. at the end of the ritual could well be interpreted as stressing their fecundity, thus: their biological vitality. Surely, this would make these elements of the *Navjote* much more important than their traditional interpretation would suggest. Modi just mentions them, but does not regard them worth while commenting on. Yet, they are there, and, as I am told by Michael Stausberg, most participants—especially those who do not belong to the close kin of the candidate(s)—only arrive when the meal starts.[75] So, that seems to be regarded significant by the participants.

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[74] See Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 1, p. 139.
[75] See also Clark, *Zoroastrianism*, p. 108.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND PERSPECTIVES

We may summarize the measure to which *Navjote* as described by Modi fits the four theories presented as follows:
– *Navjote* fits van Gennep's theory.
– It also fits Eliade's definition, but not all the characteristics from his summary. That, however, does not disqualify *Navjote* as an initiation *sensu* Eliade, nor does it disqualify Eliade's theory, which, I think, does fit most initiation rituals.
– It also fits the obligatory characteristics of my definition, as well as some, though not all, of the non-obligatory characteristics.
– It can also be interpreted in Bloch's way. Especially in this case, this leads to looking in a completely new way at *Navjote*, which is precisely what makes the existence of so many new ritual theories so interesting.

It follows, then, that *Navjote* fits the criteria, formulated in the definitions of Eliade and Snoek sufficiently well, so that it may properly be called an initiation ritual in this sense.

Furthermore, we have seen how different theories shape the perception of the *Navjote* ritual. For example, although, when looked at from the perspectives of Eliade or Snoek, *Navjote* shows itself as an initiation ritual, Bloch's theory makes us perceive it as a ritual of the "rebounding violence" type.

Also, the different theories helped us to see aspects of *Navjote*, which for example Modi did not describe explicitly. This demonstrates how his perception was restricted by the (implicit) theory which he had in mind when making his description, as well as how different theories complement each other in highlighting different aspects of the same ritual. In our case it were especially the theories of Eliade and Bloch which made us look in new ways at the *Navjote* ritual, and see aspects in it which are not usually included in its description.

Finally, the approach presented opens new perspectives, which have not been followed up here. For example, one could analyze different descriptions of the same ritual, in order to attempt to reconstruct the theoretical approaches behind them. I hope that it will also be perceived as sufficiently worthwhile to stimulate others to apply it to other rituals. At least, I am convinced to have shown that scholars of Zoroastrianism may benefit from knowledge of ritual theories.

META-THEORETICAL PARAMETERS FOR THE ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF TWO RECENT APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE YASNA

Jens Kreinath

The Yasna can be regarded as the Zoroastrian temple ritual *par excellence*. 'Yasna' is used as a term for the text recited during the performance of the ritual as well as for the ritual itself. This ritual has been referred to as a 'high liturgy'.[1] In India, it is daily celebrated by two priests in a special section of major Zoroastrian temples. Although the ritual performance is only accessible to Zoroastrians, no other ritual of the Zoroastrian tradition has drawn so much attention from linguists, philologists, and historians of religion.[2] As the history of scholarly research shows, the Western knowledge of the Yasna was primarily based on the available textual sources.[3] They were mainly studied philologically, linguistically, or comparatively. Just a few scholars interpreted not only the text but also tried to describe the ritual performance itself.[4] The scholarly knowledge of the Yasna performance was for the most part based on the descriptions and explanations given by Zoroastrian priests or sometimes on the observation of rehearsals at priestly schools or staged presentations in unconsecrated temples.[5] However, Western scholars could not

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[1] F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Studia Iranica 8; Paris, 1991), p. IX.

[2] See M. Haug, *Essays on the Sancred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis* (London, 1884); J. Damesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta. Traduction nouvelle avec commentaire historique et philologique I. La Liturgie* (Annales du Musee Guimet 21; Paris, 1893); E.S. Drower, *Water into Wine. A Study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East* (London, 1956), pp. 199–221; M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (Leiden/Köln, 1975).

[3] See, e.g., A.H. Anquetil-Duperron, *Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre* (Paris, 1771); Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*; K.F. Geldner, Avesta. *Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen im Auftrag der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. 1. Yasna* (Stuttgart, 1886); G.H. Mills, *The Zend-Avesta. 3: The Yasna, Visparad, Afrinagan, Gahs, and Miscelleneous Fragments* (Oxford, 1887).

[4] See Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, passim; J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis* (Bombay, [1922] 1995), pp. 246–310; Drower, *Water into Wine*, pp. 201–221.

[5] See Drower, *Water into Wine*, pp. 207, 211.

and cannot study the Yasna in its original setting, namely in consecrated Zoroastrian fire temples. The visual materials available to non-Zoroastrians concerning the practice of the Yasna ritual were confined to some sketches, drawings, or photos, for instance, of the priests, the instruments for the ritual performance, or the arrangement of the ritual space.[6] In scholarly work, these visual media were mainly used to illustrate primarily text-based descriptions or reconstructions of the Yasna.

The visual representation of the ritual performance gained a new quality when, in 1982, James W. Boyd and William R. Darrow produced a videotape of a staged performance of the Yasna, enacted by an Indian high priest (Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal) and his assistant (Ervad Noshir C. Hormuzdiar), in a film studio at Harvard University.[7] Since this visual material became accessible, it has been possible to study more closely the actions and recitations, as well as the postures and gestures involved in this ritual. In that way, the scholarly research of the Yasna ritual has received a broader empirical basis. Moreover, based on this videotape, the American scholars William R. Darrow and James W. Boyd (the latter in collaboration with Ron G. Williams) presented two new theoretical approaches to the study of the Yasna.[8] Darrow employed a semiotic approach for his analysis of the Yasna as a 'dramatic unity', whereas Williams/Boyd developed an aesthetic approach for the interpretation of the Yasna, using 'artistic masterpiece' as their key concept. When one compares these approaches, one finds some surprising peculiarities. Although the authors analyzed the *same* visual material, their approaches are mutually exclusive. Moreover, although they used *similar* concepts for the construction of their approaches, they addressed *different* contexts of the scholarly study of ritual performances.

Starting from these observations, this paper addresses a more general problem, namely: How can the differences between these theoretical approaches be explained? For this purpose, another, higher level of abstraction is required, one that goes beyond the historical reconstruction

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[6] See Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*; Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies*, p. 225; Drower, *Water into Wine*, pp. 203, 206.

[7] J.W. Boyd/W.R. Darrow, *A Zoroastrian Ritual: The Yasna* (Colorado, 1982).

[8] W.R. Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry: The Semiotics of Fire and Water in the Zoroastrian Yasna", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 56, 1988, pp. 417–442; J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams, "Ritual Spaces: An Application of Aesthetic Theory to Zoroastrian Ritual", *Journal of Ritual Studies* 3, 1989, pp. 1–43; R.G. Williams/J.W. Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual* (Studies in Comparative Religion; Columbia, 1993).

or theoretical restatement of these approaches. On this new level, one should be able to correlate significant historical and theoretical components and also to provide tools for an analysis of the more general issues implied. In short, it is necessary to compare theoretical approaches at a *meta-theoretical* level.

COMPARING THEORETICAL APPROACHES

What is meant by a 'comparison at a meta-theoretical level'? At such a level, the theoretical approaches themselves become the object of critical scrutiny.[9] This requires that one analyzes these approaches in such a way that one can specify those components on which they are built and which obviously shape them. Moreover, a meta-theoretical analysis not only looks at how such approaches work and how they are constructed, but also at how they are situated in and applied to a particular field of research.[10]

In particular, one has to analyze the procedures they employ, the rules they follow, and the strategies they pursue. To compare the approaches here under consideration at such a level, three meta-theoretical parameters are addressed: First, the question of *methodology*, that is, how theoretical approaches select and analyze the field of empirical data under scrutiny by applying various methods of scholarly research and how they are confined to the methods they apply for that purpose.[11] Second, the

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[9] As indicated above, in what follows it is not the aim to re-study the theoretical approaches of Darrow and Williams/Boyd or to improve their interpretation of the Yasna. The aim of my meta-theoretical analysis and comparison is concerned with the way these approaches are constructed. For this reason, I focus my argument on those issues of a particular scholarly discourse that bear upon the logic by which these approaches are designed.

[10] Here, I follow the point Dan Sperber has made in his meta-theoretical critique of Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural theory of symbolism. He concludes his *Rethinking Symbolism* by stating that a meta-theoretical analysis has "to define the framework within which a theory of symbolism may be constructed", D. Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism* (Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 153; Cambridge et al., 1975), p. 148. However, "[t]he aim of a metatheory is to make it both possible and necessary to go beyond it", Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism*, p. 148.

[11] Here, I argue along the lines of E. Thomas Lawson & Robert N. McCauley, although their view on methodology is largely restricted to questions concerning the Neo-Kantian distinctions between interpretation and explanation, see E.Th. Lawson/R.N. McCauley, *Rethinking Religion. Connecting Cognition and Culture* (Cambridge/New York, 1990), pp. 12–31. I prefer a broader view on methodology that includes all the

question of the *logic of design*, that is, how theoretical approaches con-
figure a particular architecture of analytical concepts by following the
rules of an underlying pattern of basic assumptions and guiding princi-
ples and how the use of these concepts is restricted by these rules.[12]
Third, the question of *discourse*, that is, how theoretical approaches ad-
dress various issues of scholarly research by pursuing strategies for op-
erationalizing particular methods and concepts to this end and how these
strategies are conditioned by the established standards and paradigms of
the particular discursive contexts of scholarly research.[13]

By focusing on these meta-theoretical parameters, a comparison of
theoretical approaches exposes the 'analytical concepts', 'empirical data',
and 'discursive contexts' that give rise to their construction and can ex-
plain the necessary differences between them. Moreover, such a com-
parison enables a meta-theoretical *critique* of the basic assumptions and
guiding principles of how theoretical approaches are discursively con-
structed. In what follows the guiding intention is to demonstrate how the
use of specific methods and concepts for the construction of theoretical
approaches is embedded in particular contexts of scholarly discourse.[14]

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rules that are used for the elaboration of methods within almost every field of scholarly
research. Methodology, in my view, also includes such procedures as data gathering,
description, and analysis.

[12] The notion of the 'logic of design' derives from Don Handelman, who introduced this
concept for his theory of 'public events', see D. Handelman, *Models and Mirrors. Towards
an Anthropology of Public Events* (New York/Oxford, 1998), pp. 1–81. The use of this
notion is meant to indicate that theoretical approaches can be analyzed and compared on a
level that goes beyond the logic of their internal relations. This is what I refer to as a 'meta-
theoretical' level. Thus, like Handelman, I argue that different 'logics of design' in the
construction of theoretical approaches index or indicate discursive contexts that themselves
are organized in a radically different way, see Handelman, *Models and Mirrors*, p. 7.

[13] Here, I agree with Catherine Bell's position, namely that the "critical analysis of a
theoretical perspective must look not only to the logic of the set of ideas under scrutiny,
but also to the history of their construction," C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*
(New York/Oxford, 1992), p. 5. Although I prefer the terms 'approach' and 'concepts'
instead of 'perspective' and 'ideas', I agree with Bell that the history of discourse has to
be taken into account as a history of construction, see C. Bell, "Discourse and Dichoto-
mies. The Structure of Ritual Theory", *Religion* 17, 1987, pp. 95–118; Bell, *Ritual The-
ory, Ritual Practice*, pp. 13–66. See also the history of scholarly research on ritual in C.
Bell *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York/Oxford, 1997), pp. 1–89.

[14] As Bell has pointed out, theoretical approaches use methods and concepts as 'lenses'
or 'windows' to be looked *through*, see Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, p. 3; within
the frame of my meta-theoretical analysis, I aim to look *at* these methods and concepts and
how they are embedded. In other words, I take the frame of these theoretical 'lenses' or

Heuristic Tools for a Meta-Theoretical Comparison

The present analysis works within the parameters of postmodern episte-mology as outlined above. Based on this framework, a matrix is devel-oped for the meta-theoretical comparison of the complex and interde-pendent relationships between the various components involved. The terms 'theoretical approaches', 'analytical concepts', 'empirical data', and 'discursive contexts', which will be introduced in this section, help to identify and explain the differences between the semiotic and aesthetic approaches to the study of the Yasna.

Theoretical Approaches

Approaches to a particular field of scholarly research are *theoretical* in-sofar as they define the procedures of their research by using theories as the general frame of their argument. A 'theory' is a set of propositions and hypotheses that are stated in an operational form and are applicable to every empirical datum within the particular field of research for which these propositions and hypotheses are held to be valid. In contrast to theories, theoretical approaches use a variety of concepts and methods derived from theoretical propositions and hypotheses in order to organize a particular field of research and to focus on theoretical issues related to the empirical data under scrutiny.

Such approaches presuppose a set of logically interrelated proposi-tions and hypotheses. Moreover, they provide particular procedures in order to operationalize this set of propositions and hypotheses in relation to the empirical data and theoretical issues under consideration. Whereas *theories* can be regarded as explicitly formulated sets of propositions and hypotheses that are applicable to a wide range of empirical data, *theo-retical approaches*, by contrast, are concerned with a particular field of research; for this purpose, they operationalize relevant theories as their general frame of reference for their argument while addressing specific theoretical issues related to the respective empirical data. Only those ap-proaches to the study of a particular field of research, which rely primar-

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'windows' into account in order to analyze how they frame and how they focus on the issues under scrutiny in those approaches. In other words, the frame of theoretical ap-proaches is the focus of my meta-theoretical critique. For this reason I will ask how their methods work, how their concepts can be used for the construction of theoretical ap-proaches and the analysis of the empirical data alike, and how they are part of the scholarly discourse.

ily on theories as their argumentative frame, can strictly be regarded as *theoretical* approaches.

For instance, semiotics, performance theories, and cognitive theories, each with its own general sets of propositions and hypotheses, can be regarded as frames for the construction of a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of rituals. One usually refers to these approaches as 'semiotic', 'performance', or 'cognitive' approaches insofar their 'logic of design' and their operational procedures follow the basic assumptions and guiding principles of semiotics, performance theories, or cognitive theories, respectively. The ways in which theoretical approaches apply or follow such theories as their main frame of reference may differ in a way similar to how these theories themselves differ. Since there is not just one theory of semiotics, for example, the frames of reference among semiotic approaches to the study of rituals may differ.[15] This is valid also for performance approaches,[16] as well as for cognitive approaches,[17] to the field of ritual studies.

Analytical Concepts

Analytical concepts are those that are operationally defined in such a way that they delimit the field of possible research, differentiate the theoretical issues under consideration, and select certain aspects of the em-

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[15] E. Leach, *Culture and Communication. The Logic by Which Symbols Are Connected* (Themes in the Social Sciences 105; Cambridge et al., 1976), pp. 9–16, follows the structural semiotics of R. Jakobson, whereas R.A. Rappaport, "The Obvious Aspects of Ritual", in his *Ecology, Meaning and Religion* (Berkeley/CA,1979), pp. 179–183, applies the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce.

[16] J.W. Fernandez, "The Performance of Ritual Metaphors", *The Social Use of Metaphor. Essays on the Anthropology of Rhetoric*, eds J.D. Sapir/J.Chr. Crocker (Philadelphia/Penn., 1977), pp. 100–131, pp 101 f. refers to Kenneth Burke's performance theory, while B. Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons. Exorcism and the Aesthetics of Healing in Sri Lanka* (Bloomington, 1983), pp. 5–8, 181–187, 193–195, addresses performance theory in terms of Susanne K. Langer's philosophy of the performing arts and Mikel Dufrenne's phenomenology of aesthetic experience. See also B. Kapferer, "Performance and the Structuring of Meaning and Experience", *The Anthropology of Experience*, eds V. Witter Turner/E.M. Bruner (Urbana/Chicago, 1986), pp. 188–203, pp 192–193.

[17] Lawson/McCauley, *Rethinking Religion*, pp. 65–68, use Noam Chomsky's cognitive theory as the general frame for their theoretical approach to the study of ritual, whereas Harvey Whitehouse, "Transmission", *Theorizing Rituals. Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches, Analytical Concepts, Annotated Bibliography*, ed. J. Kreinath/ J. Snoek/M. Stausberg (forthcoming), uses the theories of Dan Sperber and Pascal Boyer as his frame of reference.

pirical data. Furthermore, such concepts are the necessary constituents for the construction of theoretical approaches. As operationalized tools, these concepts are also crucial for the analysis of empirical data. Moreover, analytical concepts are capable of particularizing or extracting those elements which are constitutive of such integrated unities as a 'field of research', a 'theoretical issue', or an 'empirical datum'.

For instance, semiotic approaches often use concepts such as 'syntax', 'semantics', or 'pragmatics',[18] 'signifier' and 'signified',[19] or 'index', 'icon', 'signal', 'sign', and 'symbol',[20] depending on the semiotic

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[18] M. Bloch, "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation. Is Religion an Extreme Form of Authority?" *Archives Eurpéenes de Sociologie* 15, 1974, pp. 55–81, e.g., applies the concepts of 'syntax' and 'semantics' for his analysis of traditional forms of authority in order "to study the nature of the communication medium of ritual", p. 55. By contrast, F. Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual", *Numen* 26, 1979, pp. 2–22, uses the concept of 'syntax' to argue for the meaninglessness of ritual, see pp. 9–11, 19–21, whereas H.H. Penner, "Language, Ritual, and Meaning", *Numen* 32, 1985, pp. 1–16, uses the concept of 'semantics' taken from linguistics and the philosophy of language to place the assertion of the meaninglessness of rituals in doubt, see pp. 3–4. C. Severi, "Talking About Souls. On the Pragmatic Construction of Meaning in Cuna Ritual Language", *Cognitive Aspects of Religious Symbolism*, ed. P. Boyer (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 165–181, takes yet another stance, using instead a contextual concept of 'pragmatics' for his analysis of the construction of meaning in ritual language, see pp. 165–166.

[19] Bloch, e.g., questions the usefulness of the concepts of 'signifier' and 'signified', which were introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure and were first applied by Victor W. Turner to the study of ritual, see Bloch, "Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation", p. 55. However, Penner works with versions of these concepts that were elaborated by Roman Jakobson. Within this framework, he argues that rituals have a semantic dimension and can be regarded as meaningful, see Penner, "Language, Ritual, and Meaning", pp. 9–10. Reference should also be made to Barbara A. Babcock, who uses the concepts 'signifier' and 'signified' to specify the different modes of signification 'one to one', 'one to many', 'many to one', and 'many to many', see B.A. Babcock, "Too Many, Too Few. Ritual Modes of Signification", *Semiotica* 23, 1978, pp. 291–302, p. 294.

[20] Leach, e.g., constructs his structural-semiotic approach on the basis of clear-cut distinctions between these five concepts, see Leach, *Culture and Communication*, pp. 9–16. By contrast, C. Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. M. Banton (London, 1966), pp. 1–46, exclusively uses the concept 'symbol'. Although Geertz refers to different notions of the concept of 'symbol' as it is introduced into semiotics by Charles S. Peirce (e.g., "for anything which signifies something else to someone," "for explicitly conventional signs of one sort or another"), or in literary theory by Burke (e.g., "confined to something which expresses in an oblique and figurative manner that which cannot be stated in a direct and literal one"), Geertz explicitly follows Susanne K. Langer in using 'symbol' "for

theories they employ. With the respective concepts, they study rituals from a linguistic, structural, or pragmatic point of view. Performance approaches, by contrast, mainly use concepts borrowed from performance theory or the philosophy of the performing arts, such as 'drama',[21] 'role',[22] 'participants',[23] or 'audience',[24] in order to analyze their empirical data as 'theatrical performances'. Cognitive approaches use such concepts as 'agency',[25] 'competence',[26] 'frequency',[27] or 'transmis-

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any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception", Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", p. 5. For the use of the concept of 'index' as introduced by Ch.S. Peirce see also Rappaport, "The Obvious Aspects of Ritual", pp. 179–183 and St.J. Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 65, 1981, pp. 113–169, p. 119.

[21] Victor W. Turner uses the concept of 'social drama' to represent sequences of social events that can be shown to have the temporal structure of 'breach', 'crisis', 'redressive action', and 'reintegration', see V.W. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Symbol, Myth, and Ritual 6; Ithaca, 1974), pp. 35–42. See also Schechner, "From Ritual to Theatre and Back. The Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad", *Educational Theatre Journal* 26, 1974, pp. 455–481, pp. 464–468. See further V.W. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre. The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York, 1982). For a recent view, see also R. Grimes, "Performance", *Theorizing Rituals. Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches, Analytical Concepts, Annotated Bibliography*.

[22] E. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual. Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (Garden City/ New York, 1967), pp. 31–33.

[23] See E. Goffman, *Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York, 1974), pp. 43–45; R. Schechner, "Ritual and Performance", *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. T. Imgold (London/New York, 1994), pp. 613–647, p. 626. E. Schieffelin, "Performance and the Cultural Construction of Reality", *American Ethnologist* 12, 1985, pp. 707–724, e.g., uses the concept of 'participants' to address the emergent quality of ritual performances.

[24] Kapferer, e.g., uses the concepts of 'audience' as well as 'participant' to focus on the transformation of context in ritual performances, see B. Kapferer, "Introduction. Ritual Process and the Transformation of Context", *Social Analysis* 1, 1979, pp. 3–19, pp. 6–7. See also F.A. Marglin, "Refining the Body. Transformative Emotion in Ritual Dance", *Divine Passions. The Social Construction of Emotion in India*, ed. O.M. Lynch (Berkeley et al., 1990), pp. 212–236, pp. 224–225, 229–232.

[25] See, e.g., A. Leslie, "A Theory of Agency", *Causal Cognition. A Multi-Disciplinary Debate*, eds D. Sperber/D. Premack/A. James Premack (New York, 1995), pp. 121–147. See also A. Gell, *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford, 1998); K.-P. Köpping, "Agency", *Theorizing Rituals. Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches, Analytical Concepts, Annotated Bibliography*.

[26] Lawson/McCauley, e.g., focus on the concept of ritual 'competence' to "describe participants' *knowledge* about the acceptability of ritual performances," Lawson/ McCauley, *Rethinking Religion*, p. 77. For this reason, they are not concerned with "rit-

sion',[28] which recall the frame and focus of cognitive theory.

Such analytical concepts are used for the construction of the respective theoretical approaches. They function as tools for the formulation of validity claims of theoretical arguments and the analysis of empirical data. However, the use of analytical concepts is determined by the respective theoretical approaches as their main frame of reference.[29] The analytical concepts not only constitute the inventory of theoretical approaches, but also function as a focus and frame through which particular fields of research or aspects of the empirical data are selected, analyzed, and structured. Moreover, the data are delimited and configured by the analytical distinctions that are drawn by means of the particular set of concepts that the respective approaches presuppose.

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ual acts" or "the conditions of actual (ritual) practice," Lawson/McCauley, *Rethinking Religion*, p. 77. For the concept of 'competence' see E.Th. Lawson, "Cognitive Categories, Cultural Forms and Ritual Structures", *Cognitive Aspects of Religious Symbolism*, ed. P. Boyer (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 188–204, pp. 189–196. See also J.L. Barrett/E.Th. Lawson, "Ritual Intuitions. Cognitive Contributions to Judgments of Ritual Efficacy", *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 1, 2001, pp. 183–201.

[27] See, e.g., H. Whitehouse, *Inside the Cult: Religious Innovation and Transmission in Papua New Guinea* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 194–198; R.N. McCauley, "Ritual, Memory, and Emotion. Comparing Two Cognitive Hypotheses", *Religion in Mind. Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience*, ed. J. Andresen (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 115–140, esp. pp. 117–123.

[28] See H. Whitehouse, "Memorable Religions: Transmission, Codification, and Change in Divergent Melanesian Contexts", *Man* 27, 1992, pp. 777–797 and also his contribution "Transmission", *Theorizing Rituals* (forthcoming). For a different use of the concept 'transmission' see also M. Ganeszle, "Transgenerational Changes. The Social Process of Transmitting Oral Ritual Texts Among the Rai in East Nepal", *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals. The Transformation of Religious Rituals within their Social and Cultural Contexts*, eds J. Kreinath/C. Hartung/A. Deschner (Toronto Studies in Religion; New York, forthcoming).

[29] For example, the use of the terms 'sign' and 'symbol' or 'actor' and 'audience' differs between various semiotic or performance approaches. Geertz, e.g., uses the concept of 'symbol' in relation to the concepts of 'model of' and 'model for' in order to construct an interpretative scheme for his holistic approach to religion and culture, see Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", pp. 7–9, whereas Bloch uses the concept of 'symbol' for analyzing the features of articulation when he compares the linguistic aspects of rituals with traditional forms of authority, see Bloch, "Symbols, Song, Dance", pp. 73–77. Although both approaches use the concept of 'symbol' for the purpose of analyzing the empirical data within their particular fields of research, their use differs according to the argument they formulate and the theoretical approach they apply and construct.

Empirical Data

Theoretical approaches as well as analytical concepts refer to empirical data, but they differ in their particular mode of reference. Analytical concepts are used to explore the field of empirical data, whereas theoretical approaches use these data as arguments for operationalized propositions and hypotheses. Therefore, analytical concepts highlight certain aspects of the empirical data that are relevant for the construction of theoretical approaches.

Regarding the empirical data, the question of methodology comes into focus. To explore these data, the methods of scholarly research presuppose a set of analytical concepts in order to select, analyze, and structure the empirical data under consideration. The use of these concepts for the analysis of empirical data uncovers the inherent dialectic of the relationship between concepts and data. The analytical concepts open up the field of possible data and at the same time delimit it by the categorical distinctions they make. By contrast, not every analytical concept can be applied to all kinds of empirical data. Therefore, the concepts in use have to be applicable to the respective field of research. To be applicable, the concepts in use have to be as precise as possible: they are usable in proportion to their degree of precision.[30] Depending on their preci-

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[30] This already starts with the definition of 'ritual' as the key concept for the field of research. According to Kapferer, it would be inappropriate to press particular concepts for an over-arching definition of ritual as, in his view, Rappaport has done: "Too often anthropologists become enmeshed in their definitions, so much so that a particular definition can take on a life of its own and become what it seeks to comprehend," Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons*, p. 3 f. He continues: "Rappaport (1979) discovers the 'liturgical order' of ritual, its formality and invariance, to be its principal and 'obvious' characteristic. It is in the liturgical order of ritual that Rappaport extends an understanding of other obvious aspects of ritual (the communicative, expressive, informational, performative, sacred or 'holy' aspects of ritual, and so on). His approach is undeniably productive of insight into the ritual process, but with his 'over-definitional' orientation to cultural phenomena, Rappaport seems to me to have neglected what is perhaps the most obvious aspect of ritual. Regardless of how one defines the cultural phenomena of ritual, ritual is a social practice where ideas are produced in a determinant and dominant relation to action, and it is a practice where action is continually structured to the idea," Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons*, p. 4. Thus, although over-generalized concepts might explain anything, they are useless for any analytical purpose. Moreover, one can argue that particular theoretical issues have to be approached with appropriate analytical concepts. For instance, see also D. Handelman, "Re-Framing Ritual", *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals. The Transformation of Religious Rituals within their Social and Cultural Religion*, eds. J. Kreinath/C. Hartung/A. Deschner (Toronto Studies in Relig-

sion, concepts enable a distinct perspective on empirical data, but the perspective that these concepts open up is again determined by their conceptual frame and focus.[31] In this regard, analytical concepts function as 'lenses' or 'windows'. They are limited to a particular perspective by which they approach their particular field of empirical data.

This particular perspective on the empirical data depends also on the respective theoretical approaches, of which the concepts are a part.[32] In

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ion; New York, forthcoming), argues that the dynamics of changing rituals cannot properly be approached through the meta-communicative concept of 'lineal framing' as introduced by Bateson, for this model presents the relationship between frame and content as organized in a hierarchical way. He suggests that the concept of 'brading' of a 'moebius strip' would be more appropriate. Viewing the ritual frame as 'moebius'-like, he emphasizes: "The frame is simultaneously inside and outside, appearing and disappearing from view, always in movement, always becoming. There is no clear-cut distinction between that which is inside and that which is outside."

[31] Although Lawson/McCauley as well as D. Hymes, e.g., dwell on the same analytic distinction between 'performance' and 'competence' as employed by Noam Chomsky, their specification of empirical data is determined by the concepts they each prefer. D. Hymes, "Breakthrough into Performance", *Folklore. Performance and Communication*, eds D. Ben-Amos/K.S. Goldstein (The Hague/Paris, 1975), pp. 11–74, esp. 13–15, almost exclusively focuses on ritual 'performance', whereas Lawson/McCauley, *Rethinking Religion*, pp. 65–68, restrict their argument to ritual 'competence' while excluding almost every aspect of ritual 'performance'.

[32] As indicated above, Geertz interprets religion as a 'cultural system' or as a 'system of symbols' and uses as analytical concepts 'model of' and 'model for' in order to distinguish between the different systems of symbols or 'modes of seeing', see Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", pp. 7–8, 26. Furthermore, he uses the concepts of 'ethos' and 'world-view' to distinguish between the 'world as lived' and the 'world as imagined'. Based on this distinction, he argues that "under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms" any religious ritual generates a "fusion of ethos and world-view", Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", p. 28. Proposing the concept of 'cultural performances', he states further that they "represent not only the point at which the dispositional and conceptual aspects of religious life converge to the believer, but also the point at which the interaction between them can be most readily examined by the observer," Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", p. 29. Catherine Bell has shown that Geertz here presupposes a dichotomy between thought and action, which he aims to overcome by fusing them via religious rituals. Moreover, she exposes an "implicit structural homology" in his argument between "the fusion of thought and action" and "the fusion of the theoretical project and its object, ritual activity", Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, p. 28. Thus, she concludes, "a cultural focus on ritual activity renders the rite a veritable *window* on the most important processes of cultural life," Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, p. 28, emphasis J.K. It is precisely the 'window' of his analytical concepts through which Geertz looks at his empirical data from the perspective of his theoretical approach.

other words, their use also depends on the relevance of the empirical data to these approaches.[33] Therefore, the theoretical approaches have an effect on the use of analytical concepts and the process of data gathering, as well as on such procedures as describing, analyzing, interpreting, or explaining the empirical data under scrutiny.[34] Because the description, interpretation, and explanation of empirical data by means of analytical concepts depend on the respective approaches, the use of concepts can be regarded as theory-laden. Moreover, not only the description, interpretation, or explanation of empirical data is theory-laden, but also the entire processes of data gathering.[35] Thus, the methods of scholarly research are mutually related to the construction of theoretical approaches as well as to the respective use of analytical concepts. If this is right, the question arises as to whether the empirical data are constructed in the same way as are the respective theoretical approaches, that is, discursively.

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[33] According to Handelman, "Is Naven Ludic? Paradox and the Communication of Identity", *Social Analysis* 1, 1979, pp. 177–191, it would be inappropriate to describe the *Naven* ceremony of the Iatmul of Papua New Guinea exclusively with the concepts of 'ritual' or 'play' as Gregory Bateson has preferred to do, see his *Naven. A Survey of the Problems suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe drawn from Three Points of View* (Stanford/CA, 1958). As Handelman argues, *Naven* is more appropriately described as a 'carnival' or 'masquerade' within which the insoluble paradoxes of everyday life are communicated as a meta-communicative message, see Handelman, "Is Naven Ludic?", pp. 187–190. In contrast to Handelman and Bateson, M. Houseman & C. Severi argue that the *Naven* ceremony cannot be adequately understood with such concepts as 'meta-communicative message' or 'paradox'. Instead, they favor such concepts as 'relationality' and 'ritual behavior' in order to analyze the respective empirical data, see *Naven or the Other Self. A Relational Approach to Ritual Action*, transl. M. Fineberg (Studies in the History of Religions 79; Leiden, 1998), pp. 31–38.

[34] See, e.g., the different theoretical approaches to the study of the *Naven* ceremony by Bateson, Handelman, and Houseman/Severi. They improved the analytic comprehension and interpretation of this ceremony, making existing theories of play and ritual more explicit by introducing new theoretical approaches. In a similar vein, see also Jan Snoek's methodological reflections on the value of theories for the description of rituals in this volume. He argues that the conscious use of theories improves first and foremost the analytical strength of descriptions of rituals, e.g., Zoroastrian 'initiation' ceremonies.

[35] Lawson/McCauley not only argue that theories guide the interpretation of empirical data, but also that no empirical datum is self-interpreting: "All data-gathering is theoretically inspired. The crucial issue is how aware of their theories data-gatherers are", Lawson/McCauley, *Rethinking Religion*, p. 10.

Discursive Contexts

Theoretical approaches address distinct discursive contexts due to the methodology and logic of design they follow. Contexts of scholarly research are *discursive contexts* when they were shaped by and subsequently shape the construction of theoretical approaches, the use of analytical concepts, and the selection of empirical data.[36] Approaches, concepts, and data are established by and are constantly subject to the critical appraisal and assessment of the scholarly discourse. They are evaluated and negotiated with regard to discursively established standards and principles of scholarly research. This means that theoretical approaches address various theoretical issues of scholarly research that are raised within the discourse and were established by the standards of scholarly research. Moreover, at the same time the approaches are shaped by those issues which they address as their discursive context.

'Discourse' refers to those strategic and argumentative modes of scholarly communication and research that are concerned with the theoretical issues under consideration. Paradoxically, discourses are restricted and delimited by the discursively established standards and paradigms of scholarly research.[37] This implies that the modes in which scholars participate in this process of communication and research are shaped and restricted by the discourse itself. In addition, the mode of participating in a discourse is determined by the modalities of discourse

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[36] The term 'discursive contexts' implies that a number of scholars share a common interest in a distinct field of research, although their methods, concepts, or approaches may overlap or mutually exclude each other. It also implies that a variety of institutions, networks, or schools of research are part of these contexts, which intersect in some respects while being mutually exclusive in others. According to Diane Macdonell discourse "differ with the kinds of institutions and social practices in which they take shape, and with the positions of those who speak and whom they address. The field of discourse is not homogenious", D. Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse. An Introduction* (Oxford, 1986), p. 1. She maintains, "any dicourse concern itself with certain objects and puts forward certain concepts at the expense of others. ... Different discourses elaborate different concepts and categories", Macdonell, *Theories of Discourse*, p. 3.

[37] Here, I apply the concept of 'discourse' developed by M. Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris, 1972). As Tim Murphy has pointed out that Michel Foucault can be regarded as "one of the first theorists to argue that discourses, including scientific discourses, do not mimetically re-present their objects. Rather, the objects of scientific analysis and inquiry are products of discourse", T. Murphy, "Discourse", *Guide to the Study of Religion*, eds W. Braun/R.T. McCutcheon (London/New York, 2000), p. 400. See also R.T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion. The Discourse on sui generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (New York, 1997).

itself—because the only way to participate in a discourse is to participate discursively.[38] Furthermore, because of its reciprocity, the discourse can be regarded as an emergent and continuous mode of communication, for it establishes and questions the standards and paradigms of scholarly research and sets up and negotiates the themes and issues that are relevant for subsequent research. Therefore, the discourse enables and restricts the construction of theoretical approaches, launches the use of analytical concepts, and determines the selection of empirical data. Because 'discourse' presupposes a discursively established frame of standards and paradigms for the reciprocal communication and enforces a specific focus on themes and issues for scholarly research, it is defined here as a mode of a scholarly coded practice of communication and research that constructs its own frame and focus.[39]

Moreover, it is the discourse that determines the acceptance and resonance of the results of scholarly research, the enforcement or suppression of methodologies, the usefulness and adequacy of analytical concepts, or the validity and plausibility of theoretical approaches. For this reason, a discourse leads to the selection of theoretical issues and empirical data, as well as to the elaboration of particular methods and concepts that are supposed to be relevant for particular discursive contexts and subsequent research projects. As a result, the frame established by these contexts directs the process of empirical data gathering, the use of analytical concepts, and the construction of theoretical approaches.[40] Thus, a discourse generates its own field of research and produces its own body of knowledge. It establishes a particular set of concepts and methods that select

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[38] The discourse analysis describes these modes of scholarly discourse. Here I follow G. Nigel Gilbert & Michael Mulkay who argue that discourse analysis "is an attempt to identify and describe regularities in the methods used by participants as they construct the discourse through which they establish the character of their actions and beliefs in the course of interaction", G.N. Gilbert/M. Mulkay, *Opening Pandora's Box. A Sociological Analysis of Scientists' Discourse* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 14.

[39] See Murphy, "Discourse", p. 400.

[40] For example, since ritual studies are an established interdisciplinary field of research, 'ritual' is constructed as a mode of human action *sui generis*. In this regard, Ronald Grimes claimed for this field of research that one can study ritual in its own right, see R. Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Lanham, 1982); R. Grimes, *Research in Ritual Studies. A Programmatic Essay and Bibliography* (Atla Bibliographic Series 14; Metuchen/London, 1985); R. Grimes, "Ritual Studies", *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade (New York, 1987), pp. 422–425. For a critical review of the development of the scholarship on ritual studies in general and the construction of ritual theory as a field of research in its own right, see Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*.

and organize the empirical data in its field.[41] Moreover, it enforces the construction of theoretical approaches, which constantly establish and negotiate the frame of theoretical issues with regard to its relevance for the discourse.[42]

To summarize, scholars discursively configure their own objects of research by using specific concepts and methods, and they generate their own bodies of knowledge by constructing theoretical approaches within the particular discourses in which they participate. For this reason, these approaches can be identified by their specific use of concepts, which points to the particular discourses in which they take part. Therefore, it proves to be a rule that the use of analytical concepts differs between various theoretical approaches because they belong to different discursive contexts. As a consequence, they select and organize their empirical data differently.

TWO THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE YASNA

In this section, first some features of the film on the Yasna are introduced which frame the empirical data with respect to which Darrow and Williams/Boyd employed their particular methods and built their different theoretical approaches. This enables a comparison of their use of analytical concepts as 'lenses' and 'windows' through which they ap-

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[41] Because of their frame and focus, the methods and concepts in the research on rituals determine the way in which the empirical data are organized, so that 'ritual' can be considered, e.g., as a 'system of symbols', 'set of signs', or as a 'work of art' that has to be studied using symbol theories, semiotics, or aesthetics, respectively, see Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," 4–8; Leach, *Culture and Communication*, pp. 33–45; Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons*, pp. 7 f., 181 f., 207–210.

[42] Because of the discursive contexts and the theoretical issues under scrutiny, the attention of scholarly research focuses on specific aspects of the empirical data while neglecting others. In recent research the focus has been on the performance of rituals or the competence to perform them, rather than on the syntax or semantics of a ritual 'script' or 'text' designed for the ritual performance, see Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons*, pp. 4–8; R. Bauman, *Story, Performance and Event. Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative* (Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture 10; Cambridge et al., 1986), pp. 2–6; E. Schieffelin, "Problematizing Performance", *Ritual, Performance, Media*, ed. F. Hughes-Freeland (London/New York, 1998), pp. 194–207, pp. 198 f. For a text-bound study, see also K. Vance Staiano, "A Semiotic Approach to Ritual Drama", *Semiotica* 28, 1979, pp. 225–246. For the interplay of 'texts' and 'ritual', see C. Bell, "Ritualization of Texts and Textualization of Ritual in the Codification of Taoist Liturgy", *History of Religions* 27, 1987, pp. 366–392, esp. pp. 367–369, 390–392.

proach their empirical data of the Yasna performance. In comparing their specific use of concepts, the aim here is to outline the differences between these approaches with regard to the discursive contexts they address. In terms of *methodology*, such issues as how these approaches select the empirical data, how they focus on their particular field of research, and what methods they use are addressed in order to analyze the data under consideration. In terms of the *logic of design*, some of the assumptions and principles on which these approaches are built are employed concentrating on the analytical concepts they use and the categorical distinctions they make. With regard to *discourse*, the question is how the theoretical approaches and their uses of concepts and methods are embedded in particular discursive contexts. Moreover, the particular modalities of discourse are introduced within which these approaches are constructed and focus on how they strategically address the theoretical issues with which they are concerned.

The Various Frames of Empirical Data

With their theoretical approaches, Darrow and Williams/Boyd address the 'performance of ritual actions' enacted by the two priests during the Yasna. As mentioned above, the empirical basis of these approaches is the videotape of one performance. The way in which this film presents the ritual performance already indicates how the empirical data are selected and organized and how these different approaches focus particularly on those theoretical issues in the field of ritual studies, which suit the concepts for the analysis of the visual material. Moreover, the emphasis they place on the sequences of actions or on the use of gestures in the ritual performance not only reflects the particular design of the videotape but also pre-figures the construction of their approaches.

The film, entitled *A Zoroastrian Ritual. The Yasna*,[43] is recorded as a documentation of a performance of ritual action.[44] In the first sequence,

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[43] The film J.W. Boyd/W.R Darrow, *A Zoroastrian Ritual. The Yasna* (Colorado States University, 1982) is available as the first part of the videotape Two Rituals. The Zoroastrian Yasna and Afrinagan Ceremonies (Colorado States University, 1992), min. 0:55–36:03.

[44] Although Williams/Boyd regard the recordings of the Yasna and the Afrinagan as "videotape documentations of the two ceremonies", Williams/Boyd, Ritual Art and Knowledge, p. 1, I doubt that they can be considered as 'documentation' in the strict sense. Even though one might argue that this tape is—at least at a very abstract level—a documentation of a priest ,as if' he is performing some sequences of the Yasna ritual, I

the film frames the presentation of ritual actions in such a way that the narrator gives a short introduction to the religious significance of 'worship' in Zoroastrian religious practice.[45] In the following sequence the narrator maintains that this video this Yasna is "was recorded as a teaching demonstration."[46] He remarks that the original yasna is performed on fire temples not accessible for non-Zoroastrians.[47] This meta-communicative frame of these 'viewing instructions' makes clear that this performance of the Yasna has to be seen as a performance *on stage*.

Then the video shows the high priest Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal[48] sitting in front of the camera dressed in white priestly robes.[49] In a distinct voice, Kotwal describes what rituals mean for him and how he is committed to celebrating the liturgy of the Yasna devotionally.[50] He argues that one can tell from the priest's face whether he is performing the Yasna devotionally or not.[51] After this interpretation of the significance

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would argue that this film is clearly a stage production. It is the documentation of a staged performance in a film studio that differs, e.g., from the documentation of a ritual performance in a Zoroastrian fire-temple in terms of its audience, setting, availability, design, and sponsorship.

[45] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 1:17–1:44.

[46] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 1:45. As the credits mention, this film is 'written and directed' by Boyd and Darrow, Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 35:40. If this tape was produced for the classroom at colleges or universities, it is likely that the performance of the ritual had to meet the requirements of a film production rather than the other way around in order to fulfill the didactic demands at the university.

[47] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 1:46–1:57.

[48] Firoze M. Kotwal is a well-known Zoroastrian high priest who worked until his retirement at one of the four major fire-temples in Bombay. He received his scholarly training under Mary Boyce at the University of London, and his philological research is one of the most important sources for the historical study of Zoroastrian rituals. Due to his ritual competence and his scholarly training, Kotwal was an important figure for Darrow and Boyd, who began to study the Yasna under his guidance. Moreover, he gave them permission to videotape him performing several sequences of the Yasna, which could otherwise not have been studied. Nevertheless, for the recorded performance he neither presented the whole Yasna before a non-Zoroastrian audience nor performed the Yasna at a consecrated fire-temple. Later on, Kotwal not only worked together with Boyd—again, they wrote a book together on the Yasna in which they describe this ritual as a 'high liturgy', see Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*—but also served as the key informant for the theoretical approaches employed by Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 421 and Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. XIII–XV, 1 f.

[49] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 1:58–4:22.

[50] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 2:15–4:22.

[51] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 3:55–4:22. See also Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 28 f.

of worship, the camera fades out and slots in the ritual place of the studio setting and the particular instruments of the Yasna ritual.[52] While the camera focuses on the respective ritual objects, the narrator describes them and their significance for the ritual performance, one after another.

As the narrator continues, when the high priest enters the ritual place, the Yasna proper begins.[53] Subsequently, the video shows for about 24 minutes a selection of several sequences of the Yasna[54] in which ritual actions are performed by Kotwal as the chief priest at the ritual table and by Hormuzdiar as his assistant at the fire vase.[55] The whole film lasts approximately one-half hour.[56]

Although the film does not show a complete performance of the Yasna,[57] it follows the order of the ritual actions. Moreover, the recording of the ritual performance is organized by the particular sequences of ritual actions. Thus, the order of the film does not depend upon or refer to the chapters of the Yasna text, but strictly follows the sequential order of the ritual actions.[58] Therefore, the organizing principle of this film is the sequential order of ritual actions. Most of the sequences in which the chief priest recites the liturgical text without performing ritual actions are left out. The film focuses primarily on those actions in detail in which ritual gestures are held to be significant for the performance of the Yasna. In other words, it shows those parts of the Yasna which the filmmakers, Boyd/Darrow, regarded as relevant for the study of the ritual performance.

Recorded in a film studio at the Video Production Center of Harvard University, even the cinematic setting for this ritual performance was

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[52] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 4:23–7:19. For example, it shows the fire table with the fire vase, the ritual table with a set of objects, the water basin, etc.

[53] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 7:20. The moment at which the priest enters the ritual place is captured in such a way that it coincides with the moment at which the priest comes on the screen, see also Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 29.

[54] The narrator comments on ritual actions, translates some of the recited texts, and explains the significance of the ritual gestures involved. For further descriptions of the ritual sequences and more visual material of the Yasna performance see also Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 85–129.

[55] See also Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 26.

[56] Darrow/Boyd, *The Yasna*, min. 7:20-35:09.

[57] Such a performance would take (at least) two and a half hours, see Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 418 and Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 26, 55.

[58] See Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies*, p. 302–310 and Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 90 n. 82. See also G. Windfuhr in this volume.

arranged for didactical purposes. Two camera positions were used to achieve this aim. A stationary camera shows the total picture of the arrangements within the ritual space with Kotwal as the performing chief priest at the center and Hormuzdiar as the assistant priest most of the time on the left side of the screen near the fire vase. Another, moving camera shows the objects and elements as well as the respective ritual actions and gestures in close-up, focusing on the significant details of the performed ritual actions. The filmstrips of these two camera positions are merged together while the shots taken from the two positions are often faded over one another. Moreover, the positions of the cameras are particularly chosen to emphasize certain aspects of ritual sequences and gestures for this purpose.[59] This design of the film confirms that it is recorded as a teaching demonstration for the classroom: it shows those sequences of the Yasna which are considered crucial for the study of the performance of ritual actions.

As mentioned above, this videotape can be regarded as a turning point in the research on the performance of the Yasna. The different methods and concepts Darrow and Williams/Boyd apply to the visual material of the videotape gave rise to their construction of new theoretical approaches in the field of ritual studies. Although Darrow and Williams/Boyd use the same empirical data of the ritual performance, they select and organize these data differently due to the methods and concepts they apply. Whereas Darrow uses an exegetical method for his analysis of the Yasna performance and focuses thereby on the sequential order of the particular elements involved, Williams/Boyd use a philosophical method for their interpretation of the relationship between art and ritual and so adopt the practitioner's point of view.

Due to his exegetical method, Darrow presents the results of his research inductively. After he exposes unity as a crucial problem in the research on the Yasna, he describes the performance and introduces his semiotic approach. Then he shows how scholars formerly dealt with this problem and, finally, gives his own interpretation of the Yasna. In contrast to Darrow, Williams/Boyd present the results of their investigation deductively in keeping with the philosophical method they prefer. To begin with, they give an overview of the relationships between aesthetics and ritual studies as a theoretical framework. Then they outline the vari-

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[59] The interactions between the priests and the camera operator underline that this performance should fit the purposes of the directors. Ritual actions are recorded in such a way that they fit into the frame of the screen and the framing of the sequences.

ous notions of ritual spaces and ritual knowledge and partially apply these notions to the performance of the Yasna. After some concluding remarks on methodology, Williams/Boyd outline a ritual description of the Yasna in an appendix to their study.

Because the application of different methods influences how the empirical data are presented, it is clear that Darrow and Williams/Boyd must analyze and organize their data differently. However, the semiotic and aesthetic approaches as developed by Darrow and Williams/Boyd are shaped through the 'lens' of one film, based on a selection of some sequences of the Yasna, which are performed principally by Dastur Kotwal. This 'lens' of the visual material functions as a frame for the analysis of the empirical data within which the theoretical approaches are constructed and the analytical concepts are used. Thus, the subsequent research done by Darrow and Williams/Boyd is not only based on the ritual actions performed during the Yasna but is also guided and shaped by the medium of visual representation.[60] Moreover, Darrow as well as Williams/Boyd analyze this videotape by means of analytical concepts that suit the visual material presented in this film and that are deliberately designed to suit it.

My hypothesis here is that the interpretations of the Yasna given by these authors are formed and shaped by the medium of the videotape. At the same time, the analysis of this film is shaped by the 'lenses' of different theoretical approaches and the methods and analytical concepts applied in each analysis.[61] Therefore, a dialectical relationship exists between the empirical data presented on the videotape and the semiotic and

[60] For acquiring the knowledge of the ritual actions involved in the performance of the Yasna, Darrow as well as Williams/Boyd studied this videotape and interviewed Kotwal as their conversation partner, see Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 439 n. 11 and Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 1. Through the lens of the videotape and the eyes of one high priest, they studied one performance of one ritual interpreted by one priest.

[61] As Williams/Boyd explicitly state: "Our collaboration brought together the fieldwork data with aesthetic theory. We began by studying the videotapes of the rituals [Yasna and Afrinagan], endeavoring to remain attentive to the ritual actions themselves and to their Zoroastrian interpretations. We were convinced that these gestural images could fruitfully be looked at through an aesthetic *lens*, applying to them various insights, categories, and theories from the philosophy of art", Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 1 f., emphasis J.K. This counts not only for the analysis of this film but also for its production. For this reason, it would be naive to assume that in this case the staging and editing of the videotape could be seen independently from a prefiguration of various approaches and concepts.

aesthetic approaches employed by Darrow and Williams/Boyd, each with its own method and its own set of analytical concepts.[62]

The Design of Theoretical Approaches and the Use of Analytical Concepts

As mentioned above, it is characteristic of the approaches employed by Darrow and Williams/Boyd that they emphasize—in contrast to text-bound studies of the Yasna—the ritual performance as a particular mode of religious action. For this reason, they use analytical concepts that highlight the specific aspects of the ritual performance. Whereas Darrow focuses his concepts on the syntactical interconnection of 'fire' and 'water' in the various sequences of the Yasna, Williams/Boyd focus with their meta-language on the relation of 'art' and 'ritual' in the perform-ance of ritual gestures. In other words, Darrow looks at the sequential order of ritual actions, while Williams/Boyd focus on the particular ges-tures performed by the ritual actor.

The Semiotic Approach to the Yasna

Darrow uses the notion of 'dramatic unity' as a key concept for analyz-ing the empirical data and interpreting the Yasna performance. Accord-ing to Darrow, the unity of the Yasna can be made clear if one analyzes the semiotics of the elements involved in this ritual performance. Impor-tant for his approach is the question of how the elements 'water' and 'fire'—as material representations of spiritual principles—are intercon-nected in the ritual performance. He claims: "The interconnection and apparent inequality of fire and water provide an indispensable starting point for interpreting the *yasna* and recognizing its dramatic unity."[63]
For heuristic purposes, Darrow considers the Yasna as a 'liturgy'. Ac-cording to him liturgies "'re-present' events that are definitive and 'event-ualize' the structures that pattern events."[64] Although most of the liturgy of the Yasna consists in the recitation of the sacred texts without accompanying ritual actions, Darrow focuses "on actions rather than

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[62] In referring to the film, Williams/Boyd state, "These data provided the pre-theoretic materials for the study of ritual and the Zoroastrian tradition, and later served as the means for testing the appropriateness of our interpretative categories", Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 1.

[63] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 418.

[64] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 420.

text."[65] For him the unity of the Yasna is based on the performance of ritual actions rather than on the liturgical text.

With this focus on ritual performance, Darrow aims at overcoming the dichotomies between text and enactment and between thought and action. He claims that a linguistic notion of performance might be useful as a starting point for interpreting the Yasna liturgy, but even that notion still "remains text-bound and assumes a dichotomy between thought and action."[66] For this reason, he looks at the performance of particular ritual actions while leaving aside the recitation of liturgical texts.[67]

Darrow analyzes the performance of ritual actions in which the interconnection of fire and water play an integral role. Furthermore, he looks at the 'syntactical rules' by which the elements of particular ceremonies are combined. Assuming that the sequential order of 'ritual actions' presupposes syntactical rules, he asks how the Yasna works and how it is governed by such rules. In focusing on the elements of fire and water, Darrow uncovers two rules that the sequential order of the ritual actions in the Yasna performance has to follow. At the most abstract level, he outlines the interconnection of fire and water in such a way that "fire is singular while water is plural, and water always follows fire."[68]

In view of these syntactical rules, Darrow is concerned with the problem of how the Yasna performance can be seen as a composition of the interconnection of the different elements involved. According to him, the particular ceremonies concerning fire and water can be seen as a "conglomeration of smaller rituals with no overall principle of unity."[69] The central problem is that there are 'several ceremonies' in the *yasna*, which are performed independently of one another. In order to conceive the 'dramatic unity' of these ceremonies, Darrow focuses on those ritual actions in which fire and water are involved and looks at the sequential order of these actions and the rules they follow.[70] Due to this focus on the syn-

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[65] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 420.

[66] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 420.

[67] Although there is, according to Darrow, a wide gap between text and action within the Zoroastrian tradition, he mentions that the text of the Yasna "is valued not for its meaning but for its sacrality," Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 420.

[68] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 421.

[69] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 421.

[70] Although it seems that the ritual actions concerning fire and water are performed independently of one another at the various levels of ritual action, Darrow succeeds in finding syntactic rules that determine how the ritual sequences involving fire and water are interconnected.

tactical rules, he claims that the performance of the Yasna does not necessarily require a narrative: the sequences of ritual actions follow syntactical rules despite the fact that "no narrative appears to underlie it."[71]

In a further step Darrow specifies his concept of 'dramatic unity' by applying the notions of 'form' and 'process'. In analyzing the syntactical rules for the composition of the Yasna out of a sequential order of particular elements, Darrow focuses "not on the form of *yasna*, but rather on the process of bringing to completion, the accomplishing that is achieved by the performance."[72] According to Darrow, this 'processual form' is useful because it allows one to emphasize the non-narrative character of the Yasna. Moreover, he argues that, although there is no narrative, one still is able "to recognize that there is a dramatic flow to the processual form."[73]

In focusing on this flow of the processual form, that is, how the ritual performance is brought to completion, Darrow claims that the structure of the ritual actions has a climax. To make this climax of the Yasna plausible, he uses the concept of 'drama' because he maintains, the concept of drama necessarily implies that "there is a climactic structure."[74] It is this kind of structure or processual form that sets up a conflict between the elements of water and fire. In his view, it is the climax, because of which the conflict between fire and water culminates in a final resolution: "The processual form establishes a conflict between the two material representations of spiritual principles [that is, fire and water] ... The conflict and its resolution authorize one to speak of a drama, and the affirmation that it is a unity allows one to treat the *yasna* ... as a unity".[75]

By means of this concept of a 'dramatic unity', Darrow wants to interrelate structure and event as well as form and process whereby the Yasna is regarded as a liturgy. With his semiotic approach to the Yasna, Darrow highlights two different features, namely that the enacted ritual is a composite unity and that the Yasna ritual has a processual form with the structure of a climax.[76]

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71 Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 421.
72 Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 422.
73 Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 422.
74 Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 422.
75 Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 422.
76 Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 426.

The Aesthetic Approach to the Yasna

By contrast, Williams/Boyd use 'artistic masterpiece' as the key analytical concept for their interpretation of the Yasna performance. It is characteristic of their approach that ritual is primarily compared with other forms of performing arts. They consider ritual "as if it were a kind of artwork which like opera, film or ancient drama, combines many of the arts into an internally related whole."[77] Moreover, Williams/Boyd define ritual as an irreducible mode of religious expression and conceive of it as an artistic composition *sui generis*. As they say, it is "an irreplaceable mode of expression not reducible to other forms of religious communication."[78] Aiming at an interpretative study of 'ritual activity' in general, they favor a holistic view for the analysis of the ritual performance of the Yasna.[79]

Analyzing the ritual performance of the Yasna as a kind of artwork, Williams/Boyd explore the relevance of aesthetic theory for the study of ritual with regard to various aspects, such as language, knowledge, expression, and feeling.[80] To specify their concept of the 'artistic masterpiece', they introduce three different dimensions of space to the study of the Yasna.[81] Drawing on concepts of space in the arts, they distinguish between physical, semantic, and virtual 'ritual space'.[82] Physical space encompasses all ritual objects, which are the 'empirical' objects of an 'external reality'.[83] Within semantic or meaning space, objects are seen as symbolic representations of something else.[84] For 'virtual space', 'a term bor-

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[77] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 2.

[78] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 2.

[79] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 46–50. They define their holistic view as follows: "An explanation is holistic if the parts are explained in terms of the whole. The whole is real, and the parts, which are provisional entities abstracted from the whole, have only secondary reality", Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 46. The philosophical setting of this approach becomes clear from the outline of their argument. They state that their "discussion is primarily one of philosophical reflection of ritual action, based on documentary description of certain Zoroastrian rituals." And they continue: "It reflects our comparative interests in the history of religions, art, philosophy, and aesthetics, as we seek better to understand the *nature of ritual activity* and its role in our own time and place", Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. XIII, emphasis J.K.

[80] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 5–11.

[81] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 15–35.

[82] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 15–25.

[83] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 15–16.

[84] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 16–17.

rowed from optics as well as aesthetics',[85] an imaginative 'gestalt-shift' is necessary in order to perceive the presentational illusion of a non-existent object as 'virtually real'. In phenomenological terms, they distinguish between the three dimensions of ritual space as "the *object*, the *appearance* of the object and the *significance* of the object as it appears".[86]

Moreover, Williams/Boyd emphasize the relationship between the different dimensions of ritual space. They argue that a performance of the Yasna is the interplay of the set of physical objects, the symbolic representation of ritual space, and the presentational illusions of a 'hyper-reality'.[87] They analyze the interplay between these dimensions of ritual space and focus on those features of an imaginative 'gestalt-shift' that lie outside the realm of symbolic representation.[88] Separating virtual space from physical and meaning space, Williams/Boyd argue for a distinct position of virtual space in order to "highlight a dimension of the arts (and ritual) which is fundamental to their reality as *artworks*" and to "call attention to the dual role that virtual space plays in relation to the other two spaces."[89] Their main argument for the gestalt-shift is that the performance of an artistic masterpiece such as the Yasna provides 'integrative contexts' that create the virtual space.[90] As a result of the performance, the artistic masterpiece appears not only as 'virtually real' but also, they argue, the 'virtual space' that is created by the ritual performance of the Yasna "is *real*".[91]

Furthermore, Williams/Boyd argue that the integrative contexts of ritual space are internally related. Before they interpret the 'internal relations' of the integrative contexts, they introduce the concept of 'exemplification'[92] in order to explore how a ritual performance symbolizes ob-

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[85] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 17.

[86] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 22, emphasis J.K.

[87] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 34.

[88] See, e.g., Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 20–22, esp. p. 21 n 14.

[89] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 25, emphasis in the original.

[90] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 51–57.

[91] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 33, emphasis in the original.

[92] Williams/Boyd define 'exemplification' as a particular mode of signification, namely how attributes are predicated of an object or event. This mode of predication functions in a way that is opposite to what is usually known as 'denotation', namely how signs refer to objects, see Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 36. Whereas 'denotation' presupposes 'external relations' of signifier and signified (by which the parts constitute the whole), 'exemplification' presupposes 'internal relations' of signifier and signified (by which the whole constitutes the parts).

jects and events. The concept of 'exemplification' allows them to ana-
lyze the ritual performance as an embodiment of abstract or religious
principles.[93] According to them, the ritual performance of the Yasna has
to be analyzed as "a system of internal relations."[94] As a form *sui
generis*, the Yasna creates contexts that integrate the physical, semantic,
and virtual dimensions of the ritual space.[95] They analyze how the differ-
ent types of ritual space overlap and how they are related to the temporal,
gestural, visual, and auditory dimensions of the ritual performance.[96]

A further theoretical issue that Williams/Boyd introduce is the con-
cept of 'ritual repetition'.[97] They maintain that rituals are repetitive and
inherently invariant due to the practitioner's commitment to invariance,
as they argue in accordance with their key informant, Dastur Kotwal.[98] In
their view, the repetition of the Yasna and the commitment to invariance
has a knowledge-gaining function.[99] By repeating the same ritual over
and over again, they argue, the high priest gains a particular kind of bod-
ily knowledge.[100] This knowledge goes beyond propositional meaning
such that "the participant comes to know, in ways not reducible to pro-
positional expression."[101] Moreover, Williams/Boyd interpret the repeti-
tion of the ritual performance in the light of such performing arts as mu-

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[93] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 36. They regard, for example,
the fire in the Yasna as an exemplification of light and divine presence. One could also
add that water can be regarded as the exemplification of ritual purity

[94] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 46.

[95] They argue "The physical, virtual, and symbolical dimensions are viewed as the
real units of activity and meaning. Their combination *is* the ritual performance," Wil-
liams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 46, emphasis in the original.

[96] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 25–35, 47–50, 55–57.

[97] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 83–100.

[98] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 61 f., 70–82, esp. p. 79.

[99] Although Williams/Boyd distinguish between two opposing stances a performer
can take on ritual repetition (ritual is either subject to variance or invariance) and rec-
ognize that rituals change over time, they nevertheless emphasize that ritual is essen-
tially repetitive and that the repeated enactment of an invariant ritual is essential to its
function to gain ritual knowledge. In short, they stress "the importance of ritual invari-
ance for the acquisition of new knowledge while recognizing the fact of historical
change," Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 62.

[100] They argue that this 'tacit knowledge' of the body "can be only incompletely un-
derstood by means propositional explanations", Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowl-
edge*, p. 151.

[101] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 57.

sic, opera, and classical concertos.[102] The Yasna can be seen as an artistic masterpiece because "invariance belongs to the very nature of ritual as it does to certain forms of artwork."[103]

For the construction of their aesthetic approach, Williams/Boyd use such analytical concepts as 'artistic masterpiece' and 'virtual space', which obviously fit the visual material of the videotape and their theoretical approach. In doing so, they establish a set of 'interpretative categories', which they call a 'meta-language'.[104] By using the categories of aesthetic theory, they aim at a more adequate description of the ritual performance and the complexity of its virtual features. They argue that the performance of an artistic masterpiece is the product of a complex interplay of a variety of aesthetic media and the bodily knowledge of the practitioner, which cannot be adequately interpreted without aesthetic categories.[105]

Moreover, Williams/Boyd distinguish between 'ritual action' and 'ritual theory' in order to emphasize the *shift* from action to theory and to mark the limits of theory.[106] For this reason, they refer to their study of the Yasna not as a 'general theory of ritual', but rather as a 'theoretical approach' to the aesthetic features of the Yasna performance.[107] Favoring an 'interpretation without reductionism',[108] they argue that their attempt at theorizing does not replace the constitutive elements of the practitioner's viewpoint on the ritual performance because, they maintain, "theory cannot substitute the difference between event and word, between life and reflection."[109]

Different Settings of Discursive Contexts

In this section, it is argued that the semiotic and the aesthetic approaches to the study of the Yasna as presented above use a particular set of concepts

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[102] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 17, 23–24, 72–73, 80.

[103] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 72.

[104] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 146.

[105] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 80, 141–142.

[106] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 151–152.

[107] They argue that their study is not 'systematic' in the 'traditional sense' because they have made no attempt to *prove* theories. They rather have borrowed from different theories and mage their own use of them. In this sense, they maintain "our approach is pluralistic rather than systematic, and, confronted with other rituals, we might employ different theories and categories as well as extend the present results and methods of analysis," Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 147.

[108] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 152–153.

[109] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 155.

for the analysis of their material in order to address theoretical issues that are relevant for the particular discourses in which they participate. The different use of similar concepts indicates that Darrow as well as Williams/ Boyd address different discursive contexts, although both approaches use the same visual material of a filmed performance as their empirical data and both share some basic assumptions concerning ritual studies. To indicate the differences between these approaches, it is helpful to contrast these differences with the assumptions they have in common: Both emphasize action rather than text and define ritual as a religious action *sui generis*. Despite different nuances, they both are in favor of a holistic view of the ritual action and consider the ritual performance as an integrative unity in which the meaning of the parts is constituted by the whole. Both argue that the performance of ritual actions is not meaningless.

Nevertheless, the differences between these approaches emerge in the different meanings each ascribes to the ritual performance. For Darrow the meaning of the Yasna is constituted by the syntactic rules and the climactic structure of the 'dramatic unity', whereas for Williams/Boyd the meaning lies in the virtual features of the 'artistic masterpiece' outside the realm of propositional representation. Whereas Darrow is primarily concerned with the temporal aspects of the performance of ritual actions, Williams/Boyd focus chiefly on the spatial aspects of an invariant ritual. The point here is that the differences between these approaches to the study of the Yasna can be explained on the basis of the different theoretical issues with which they address different discursive contexts and participate in different discourses.

Contextualizing 'Dramatic Unity'

In his article,[110] Darrow introduces the concept of 'dramatic unity' in order to challenge the philological and historical assumptions formulated in text-bound studies. Based on a review of three scholarly attempts to

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[110]   Darrow delivered an earlier version of this article at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Atlanta, December 1986. His expression of indebtedness goes to Kotwal and Boyd. Referring to them, he writes: "I hope the reading of the *yasna* proposed here is continuous with their methodological strictures", Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 439 n. 11 namely, that "ritual practices ... have their own meaning and value as actions, not only as 'symbols' of concepts. A defensible hermeneutic demands an understanding of rituals on their own terms", F.M Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, "The Zoroastrian *paragnâ* Ritual", *Journal of Mithraic Studies* 2, 1977, p. 33.

grapple with the problem of the unity of the Yasna on a textual basis,[111] Darrow argues that there "remains a place for the interpretation of the dramatic unity of the *yasna* that focuses primarily on the ritual actions and the symbolic content of the enacted rite."[112]

For his analysis of the Yasna, Darrow starts from a view common to text-based studies, namely that the Yasna can be regarded as a liturgy. For this purpose, he adopts a definition of liturgy that Ronald Grimes established for the field of ritual studies. In accordance with Grimes, Darrow defines liturgy as one of the modes of ritual sensibility that is concerned with event and structure.[113] For his assessment of the field of liturgical research, Darrow agrees with one of William Doty's judgments concerning the study of ritual in the history of religions.[114] Following Doty, Darrow argues that the study of liturgies has received less attention in ritual studies because liturgies were formerly the classical focus of the myth-and-ritual school, according to which liturgies are supposed to follow the schema of a mythical narrative.[115] It is this view that Darrow wants to put into question with his concept of a 'dramatic unity' of the Yasna. Moreover, he agrees that the formerly predominate historical or philological study of liturgies mainly disappeared in favor of the study of other forms of ritual action, such as festivals[116] or *rites de passage*[117] which are mainly studied in social and cultural anthropology. In order to justify his approach to the study of the Yasna as a liturgy, Darrow outlines two trends in the recent research on liturgy, which he aims to integrate by means of his semiotic approach. One

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[111] According to him, Boyce, *History of Zoroastrianism*, has employed a cosmogonic interpretation, Marijan Molé, *Culte, Mythe et Cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien* (Paris, 1963), has provided an eschatological interpretation, and G. Windfuhr, "The Word in Zoroastrianism", *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 12, 1984, pp. 133–178, has proposed a mantric mode of seeing the overall structure of the Yasna, see Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", pp. 424–426.

[112] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 426.

[113] See Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, pp. 43–45.

[114] See W.G. Doty, *Mythography. The Study of Myths and Rituals* (Alabama, 1986), pp. 73–79.

[115] See Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 420.

[116] For the study of festivals, see *Celebration. Studies in Festivity and Ritual*, ed. V.W. Turner (Washington, 1982) and *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle. Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, ed. J.J. MacAloon (Philadelphia, 1984).

[117] For *rites de passage* see, e.g., V.W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, 1967), pp. 93–111; V.W. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (The Lewis Henry Morgan Lectures; Chicago, 1969), pp. 94–97, 125–133, 166–178. See also Leach, *Culture and Communication*, pp. 77–79.

trend is concerned with performance and pragmatics and the other trend with syntax and meaninglessness.

According to Darrow, the first trend, which is concerned with performance and pragmatics, depends on speech act theory. It is strongly informed, he argues, "by the illocutionary force of ritual speech deriving from linguistic performance theory."[118] Here Darrow mentions Stanley J. Tambiah, who developed a performative approach to the study of ritual and applied the pragmatics of speech act theory to the analysis of ritual performances.[119] Furthermore, Darrow explicitly refers to the studies in the history of religions by Wade Wheelock, who employed this performative approach to the study of Vedic ritual and the Roman Catholic Mass.[120] In his study of the performative dimension of liturgical texts, Darrow argues, Wheelock restricts his focus mainly to the interrelation between word and action.

Despite the productive impulse of the linguistic performance theory, Darrow criticizes Wheelock's performative approach for still being text-bound and presuming the dichotomy between thought and action "that it then seeks to overcome."[121] Here he prefers the discursive approach employed by Catherine Bell, who questioned the dichotomy between thought and action, which she identified as one of the most powerful assumptions in the history of scholarly research in the study of rituals.[122] Because Darrow wants to address this theoretical issue raised by Bell's discursive approach, he focuses his analysis almost exclusively on the ritual action. In his analysis, he even doubts that a philological analysis of the liturgical text can attain results that would be relevant for the understanding of the unity of the Yasna as ritual.

In Darrow's view the second trend in the recent study of liturgies concerned with syntax and meaninglessness is dominantly represented by Frits Staal's classic article, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual". What Darrow finds useful in this "brilliant if turbulent suggestion"[123] is that it allows one to focus almost exclusively on the syntax of 'ritual action'. In

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[118] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 420.

[119] See Tambiah, "A Performative Approach to Ritual", pp. 127–130.

[120] W. Wheelock, "A Taxonomy of Mantras in the New- and Full-Moon Sacrifice", *History of Religions* 19, 1980, pp. 349–369; W. Wheelock, "The Mass and other Ritual Texts. A Computer Assisted Approach", *History of Religions* 24, 1985, pp. 49–72.

[121] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 420.

[122] See Bell, "Discourse and Dichotomies", pp. 97–99, 111.

[123] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 421.

keeping with Staal's suggestion, Darrow strongly argues that 'ritual ac-
tivity' is "intensively rule-governed behavior"[124] that follows syntactical
rules in a sequential order. Nevertheless, Darrow rejects Staal's view that
the syntactical rules of ritual actions are arbitrary and that this activity as
such is meaningless.[125] But the theoretical issue he finds interesting in
Staal's approach is that Staal's analysis—in contrast to the myth-and-
ritual approach—"directs attention from narrative schemas of rituals to
the unending complexity of rule-governed ritual actions."[126] For this rea-
son Darrow looks closely at the complexity of the syntactical rules that
govern the ritual actions in the performance of the Yasna. Contrary to
Staal, however, Darrow argues that these rules have a meaning. For him
the syntactical rules concerning water and fire imply a sequential order
and a climactic structure of the interconnected elements of water and
fire. Therefore, he argues that the rules carried out in the performance of
the Yasna have a meaning.

In his approach, Darrow combines the theoretical issues of these two
trends in ritual studies with his analysis of the Yasna as a 'dramatic unity'.
Focusing on how water and fire interact in the performance of ritual ac-
tions, Darrow maintains that from the ritual action point of view the Yasna
can be seen as a dramatic unity. Moreover, he uses this concept in order to
address the discourse on 'performance' in the study of rituals. Here Dar-
row refers to the hermeneutics of performance as Lawrence Sullivan intro-
duced it into the history of religions.[127] Following Sullivan, Darrow ar-
gues: "I have chosen the heuristic notion of 'dramatic unity' to emphasize
that it is as performance that I am approaching the ritual."[128] Moreover, he
combines this notion of performance with Victor W. Turner's view of rit-
ual as 'social drama' and focuses not on the form of the Yasna but "on the
process of bringing to completion, the accomplishing that is achieved by
the performance."[129] Darrow uses Turner's concept of the processual form
of performance in order to emphasize that one can "hold to the non-
narrative character of the *yasna*."[130] It is this processual form that Darrow

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[124] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 421.
[125] See Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual", pp. 9, 19–21.
[126] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 421.
[127] L. Sullivan, "Sound and Senses. Towards a Hermeneutics of Performance", *History of Religions* 26, 1986, pp. 1–33.
[128] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 422.
[129] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 422.
[130] Darrow, "Keeping the Waters Dry", p. 422.

uses in order to argue that there is a dramatic flow in the Yasna. Moreover, he takes this generalized notion of drama from Turner's concept of ritual[131] and applies it to the Yasna performance.

As the various discursive contexts and theoretical issues indicate, Darrow aims to solve the central problem in the history of scholarly research on the Yasna, namely how the unity of this ritual can be explained based on the elements involved. To this end, he develops his semiotic approach and employs a number of concepts that are used in different contexts of the scholarly discourse on ritual that he addresses. Apart from the philological and historical research on the Yasna, Darrow focuses his analysis primarily on ritual actions and on the sequential order of the elements involved. Nevertheless, he relates the elements and sequences of the performance— as they are presented in the film—to the liturgical text and makes frequent reference to the results of previous scholarly research. This shows that Darrow aims to question the paradigms of the text-bound studies on the Yasna. To achieve this, Darrow chooses a strategy that allows him to link the concepts employed in ritual studies to the philological and historical research in the history of religions. Hence, he presents his findings in such a way that his analysis of ritual actions can be related to the liturgical text and that it suits the exegetical method he employs. It is most likely for these reasons that the design of Darrow's semiotic approach does not seem to depend on the visual material as presented in the video, although the opposite is the case.

Contextualizing 'Artistic Masterpiece'

In contrast to Darrow, Williams/Boyd are not concerned with the problems of the historical and philological study of the Yasna. Rather, they focus on quite a different set of theoretical issues so as to address the field of ritual studies from the perspective of aesthetic philosophy as their discursive context. In their book *Ritual Art and Knowledge*,[132] Wil-

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[131] Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre*, p. 91.

[132] The results described in this book were first presented at the conference of the Council for World Religions, "Ritual, Symbol and Participation in the Quest of Interfaith Cooperation", held in Harrison Hot Springs, B.C., Canada, 1987, and at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institution conference in Bombay, India, 1988. The first part of the book on the different notions of ritual space was formerly published, J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams, "Ritual Spaces. An Application of Aesthetic Theory to Zoroastrian Ritual", *Journal of Ritual Studies* 3, 1989, pp. 1–43. Although Boyd/Williams mention Darrow, who provided substantial comments on this article, they rarely refer to his semiotic approach.

liams/Boyd privilege the concept of 'artistic masterpiece' in order to introduce aesthetic theory to the field of ritual studies. Therefore, they make use of a variety of analytical concepts derived from aesthetics and ritual studies in order to construct a new theoretical framework for their aesthetic approach to theorizing ritual. To distinguish ritual from other forms of religious communication and to relate ritual to the various forms of the performing arts, they address primarily those issues that enable them to apply philosophical theories of art to the field of ritual studies. Therefore, they use such concepts as 'virtual space' and 'ritual knowledge' by means of which the philosophical issues of aesthetic theory and ritual studies can be linked.

Like Darrow, they refer to Lawrence Sullivan's performance approach.[133] They argue in the keeping with Sullivan that ritual not only relates to text or drama but also to music, dance, sculpture, painting, and architecture. Based on the multiplicity of genres in performing arts, Williams/Boyd want to develop their aesthetic categories as a new metalanguage for the description of ritual performances.[134] In view of their discursive context, it is significant that Williams/Boyd agree with Bruce Kapferer and Richard Schechner that role of aesthetics is important but largely neglected in connection with ritual studies.[135] They emphasize that the scholarly research in ritual studies so far has paid insufficient attention to the aesthetics and aesthetic dimensions of ritual performances.[136]

Furthermore, Williams/Boyd analyze the Yasna performance primarily in terms of ritual spaces. Their concept of virtual space is built on a philosophical concept that Susanne K. Langer developed for the visual arts.[137] Williams/Boyd apply the notion of 'virtual space' in a way that differs from Langer. Whereas Langer introduces the concept for the reception process in the presence of artworks, thereby understanding the

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Moreover, Boyd/Williams dedicate this article to Kotwal and write, "The authors also wish to acknowledge their gratitude to Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal, high priest of the Wadiaji Atash Bahram, Bombay, India, for his untiring dedication to teaching his tradition to us", Boyd/Williams, "Ritual Spaces", p. 34. See also Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. XIV.

[133] Sullivan, "Sound and Senses".

[134] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 7, 11.

[135] See Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons*, p. 179; Schechner, "The Future of Ritual", pp. 5–6, 16; see also Schechner, "Ritual and Performance", pp. 622–632.

[136] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 15 n. 2. See also Boyd/Williams, "Ritual Spaces", p. 34 n. 1.

[137] S.K. Langer, *Feeling and Form. A Theory of Art* (New York, 1953), pp. 69–103.

notion of 'virtually real' as illusionary,[138] Williams/Boyd interpret the
notion of virtual space as a hyper-reality that they take to be 'real'. In
this regard, they extend and transform Langer's concept of virtual space.
They further relate this concept to the concepts of physical and meaning
space in ritual performances.[139]

Moreover, with the concept of exemplification Williams/Boyd adopt
another concept from the philosophy of art, which Nelson Goodman de-
veloped for his aesthetic theory of the languages of art. They mainly fol-
low Goodman's distinction between 'exemplification' to 'denotation' as
opposite mode of signification.[140] With this concept Williams/Boyd
want to overcome the problem of proposition and reference in the study
of ritual performances that Frits Staal formulated in his article on the
meaninglessness of ritual.[141] In addressing this discursive context, Wil-
liams/ Boyd apply the concept of exemplification to the analysis of
meaning space and argue that certain of the ritual implements embody,
manifest, or become instances of sacred principles.[142]

Further elaborating this argument, Williams/Boyd introduce two dif-
ferent theories of metaphor as interpretative categories in order to frame
the meaning of ritual action. According to the first theory, which Max
Black developed, metaphors are an irreducible mode of saying some-
thing that has a meaning of its own.[143] According to the second theory,
which Donald Davidson favors, metaphors have no reference or mean-
ing other than their literal meaning.[144] Williams/Boyd regard these two
theories not as mutually exclusive but as two poles. By using both theo-
ries of metaphor, they aim to go beyond the assumption that the mean-
ing of rituals can be expressed in a propositional form.[145]

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[138] S.K. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, p. 103.

[139] Williams/Boyd explicitly say: "It should be noted that the terms 'physical' and
'meaning space' are ours, and that our treatment of virtual space is not identical with
Langer's", Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, 18 n. 10.

[140] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indi-
anapolis, 1968), pp. 3–6, 52–57.

[141] Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual".

[142] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 36. For this reason they reject
Staal's view that rituals are meaningless, see also Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and
Knowledge*, pp. 43–44.

[143] M. Black, "Metaphor", *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca, 1962), pp. 25–47.

[144] D. Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean", *Critical Inquiry* 5, 1978, pp. 29–45. For a
response, see M. Black, "How Metaphors Work", *Critical Inquiry* 5, 1978, pp. 181–192.

[145] See Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 151.

In this regard Williams/Boyd address the question of how artistic masterpieces can transmit knowledge. Therefore, they focus on the theoretical issue of the repetition and invariance of rituals. Following the theoretical approach of Roy A. Rappaport, they use the concept of 'liturgical order'[146] and argue that "invariance is an essential feature of ritual practice."[147] They relate this concept of ritual invariance to the acquisition of ritual knowledge and the stance a practitioner can take towards ritual repetition. Here Williams/Boyd enter the discourse on the function of repetition for the acquisition of ritual knowledge issued by Theodore W. Jennings, who argued that variance is a necessary precondition for the acquisition of ritual knowledge.[148] Williams/Boyd reject Jennings's view that only variation can have a noetic function. Instead, they accept the conviction of their key informant Dastur Kotwal that the commitment to invariance is essential in order to gain ritual knowledge. With Kotwal, they find "the repetitive enactment of *un*changing rituals to be essential to their knowledge-gaining function."[149] Although Williams/Boyd recognize, in accordance with Kotwal, that rituals inevitably change over time, they emphasize that the commitment to invariance is crucial in order to gain bodily knowledge of ritual performance by repetition. Here their concept of 'artistic masterpiece' again comes into play. Only if one repeats a ritual over and over again is it possible to perform this ritual as an artistic masterpiece, that is to say, in such a way that one can perceive it as 'virtually real' and this means that it can be seen as an 'exemplification' of sacred principles.

As indicated by the discursive contexts addressed, Williams/Boyd are concerned with the development of a new meta-language for their theoretical framework, a language that is capable of relating ritual and performing art and integrating the practitioner's viewpoint. Hence, they relate the performance of ritual gestures—as presented in the film—to the bodily knowledge that the gestures have for the practitioner. For their aesthetic approach, Williams/Boyd constantly address those theoretical issues that allow them to introduce analytical concepts derived from philosophical theories of the performing arts into the study of ritual. Their strategy is to borrow freely from various philosophical theories of art and to use the bor-

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[146] See Rappaport, "The Obvious Aspects of Ritual", pp. 175 f. 192.

[147] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 61.

[148] Theodore W. Jennings, "On Ritual Knowledge", *Journal of Religion* 62, 1982, pp. 111–127, 112–117.

[149] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 62.

rowings for their own purposes. Due to their philosophical method, their aesthetic approach does not seem to depend exclusively on their analysis of the Yasna. Nevertheless, the frame of their aesthetic approach obviously is shaped by the visual material they use and on the interpretative perspective they adopt from the practitioner's point of view.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper has been to analyze and compare two theoretical approaches to the study of the Yasna at a meta-theoretical level. In focusing on such meta-theoretical parameters as 'methodology', 'logic of design', and 'discourse', those components were used that made it possible to contrast the differences between these approaches with their similarities. Therefore, such components as 'empirical data', 'analytical concepts', and 'discursive contexts' with their complex and interdependent relationships were introduced as tools for the meta-theoretical comparison. Using these tools, it is shown in three steps how both theoretical approaches are shaped by the empirical data presented in a videotape, how each is constructed by use of a specific set of analytical concepts, and how they participate in different discursive contexts of the scholarly research on ritual performances. In relating these mutually dependent components, I argue that, although these approaches are based on the same empirical data and despite the fact that they use similar analytical concepts, they are constructed as different theoretical approaches. They use their concepts differently because they address different discursive contexts and are concerned with different theoretical issues.

In view of the evidence adduced, the argument runs as follows: The film of the Yasna performance makes it possible to construct two mutually exclusive approaches. Some of the empirical data the film presents are used for the construction of the semiotic and aesthetic approaches. From the visual material provided by the videotape, the approaches select particular sets of empirical data by using their own set of analytical concepts. Concepts such as 'dramatic unity', 'processual form', 'artistic masterpiece', and 'virtual space' are suggested by and can be linked to the composition of the film. However, not all the concepts that the semiotic and aesthetic approaches use fit the design of this film or could be strictly derived from it as their cinematic pre-figurations. Nevertheless, the visual material of this film can be regarded as the empirical basis for the construction of these approaches.

Moreover, the film itself has become part of the scholarly discourse on the Yasna. Yet while the semiotic and aesthetic approaches are shaped through the 'lens' of this videotape, they differ because of the theoretical issues they each raise in response to the discursive contexts they each address. Also, the aforementioned approaches analyze this videotape by means of those methods and concepts that suit the visual material and are regarded as relevant for the scholarly discourse. So, the theoretical approaches differ not only because the interpretations of the Yasna are shaped by the visual representations of the film but also because the different contexts of scholarly discourse were responsible for the different use of the methods and concepts to which the participation in those contexts lead.

Due to the available empirical data and the analytical concepts in use, the approaches employed by Darrow and Williams/Boyd tend to ontologize the Yasna as an a-temporal entity. For the construction of their theoretical approaches, they both presuppose that there is such a thing as *the* Yasna, arguing that the Yasna as a ritual is a form of religious action *sui generis*. This a-temporal view of the Yasna changes either once other visual material of Yasna performances becomes available for scholarly research or if one uses other concepts for analyzing the ritual performances. Such empirical data and analytical concepts would challenge the basis of the two recent approaches to the study of the Yasna that were presented in the foregoing.

A further result of the meta-theoretical comparison is its demonstration of the existence of a mutual relationship between the construction of theoretical approaches and the analysis of empirical data, as well as between the use of analytical concepts and the participation in discursive contexts. If this argument is valid, a counter-proof is necessary. That is to say, if one of the components changes, it should have an effect on the other components involved. Therefore, it is necessary to test whether, by changing one or more of the components, there is an effect on the other components involved.

For example, if more visual material were to become available, one would be in a position to compare the different styles of ritual gestures, the choreography of different performances, and the habits of different priests. Or if one were to film the rehearsals of the Yasna at the training schools for priests, then one could analyze the process of ritual transmission, the learning of ritual competence, and the practice of ritual knowledge as a mode of bodily memory. Or if one were to film a whole series

of Yasna performances, one would most likely be able to observe how rituals change through slight variations in successive performance.[150] One could also look at the staged Yasna performance on the videotape and apply concepts such as 'agency', 'complexity', 'efficacy', 'habitus', or 're-flexivity'.[151] Then one would likely reach different conclusions and to a different theoretical approach because the empirical data would be organized in a different way. It might even be that different empirical data and related concepts would become necessary. Obviously, different discursive contexts would be addressed which would accordingly change the logic of design. The analytical concepts one uses will in each case alter what empirical data are produced and what theoretical approaches are developed. This again can be seen as part of the dynamics of scholarly discourse on ritual performance as Catherine Bell has convincingly outlined them.

By analyzing and comparing two recent theoretical approaches to the Yasna, we have indicated how useful it is to apply various parameters of a meta-theoretical matrix. These parameters enable one to see—from a different perspective—how various approaches work within a particular field of scholarly research, how they are constructed, and how they are situated within the different contexts of which they are a part. This meta-theoretical perspective also promises to open up further possibilities for looking at theoretical approaches by means of their methodology, their logic of design, and their discourses.

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[150] J. Kreinath, "Theoretical Afterthoughts", *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals. The Transformation of Religious Rituals within their Social and Cultural Contexts*, eds J. Kreinath/C. Hartung/A. Deschner (Toronto Studies in Religion; New York, forthcoming).

[151] See also the various contributions on these concepts in *Theorizing Rituals. Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches, Analytical Concepts, Annotated Bibliography*.

THE ART OF RITUAL IN A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

James W. Boyd and Ron G. Williams

1. INTRODUCTION

Undeniably, many rituals include aesthetic elements.[1] From within a tradition it is not uncommon to say, for example, that beautiful objects and gestures are pleasing to the inhabitants of the spirit realm.[2] But art has a life of its own, and we believe that continual exposure to the aesthetic

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[1] The term *ritual* in this essay refers primarily to liturgical rites, following Grimes' typology; cf. R.L. Grimes, *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice. Essays on Its Theory* (Columbia, 1990), pp. 9 ff.

[2] Within the Zoroastrian tradition, the Āfrīnagān ceremony is an obvious example of aesthetically pleasing offerings made to the Lord of Wisdom and His spirit creation. In addition to the ritual fire and several silver trays containing a variety of offerings such as sandalwood, frankincense, fruits, eggs and bread, water, sharbat, milk and wine, the priests wear white robes of organdy over their white garments and exchange eight flowers – either jasmine, marigolds, red and white roses, or other fragrant flowers of the season; cf. R.G. Williams/J.W. Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual* (Columbia, 1993). The role of aesthetics in the Zoroastrian Yasna liturgy is also important. For example, all ritual items must be made "clean" in the preparatory service and their purity maintained throughout the Yasna proper. Cleanliness/purity is an aesthetic as well as theological category; cf. F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering, The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Studia Iranica, Cahier 8; Paris, 1991). There is also, of course, the radiant light of the fire. Shrine Shinto rituals, likewise, cultivate and affirm the role of aesthetics in their religious tradition. Kishimoto Hideo, "Some Japanese Cultural Traits and Religions", *Philosophy and Culture East and West*, ed. Charles A. Moore (Honolulu, 1962), pp. 245–254, says of Japanese religiosity: "In their achievements religious values and aesthetic values are not two different things. Ultimately, they are one for the Japanese" (p. 251). In the Shinto daily morning service (the Chō Hai) fresh offerings of natural products from the sea, rivers and mountains as well as cultivated foods such as rice and vegetables are artfully placed in the offering area, and the chief priest performs a short musical interlude on drums and bells during the service. The authors have purposely highlighted the aesthetic features of the Zoroastrian Āfrīnagān ceremony and several Shinto rituals in two video documentaries; cf. J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams (eds and producers), "A Zoroastrian Ritual: The Āfrīnagān", video documentary (17 minutes), Office of Instructional Services, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, 1993; J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams (eds and producers), "New Year's Rituals at Tsubaki Grand Shrine", video documentary (33 minutes), Office of Instructional Services, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, 1997.

dimensions of ritual has effects on practitioners and laity that can be phi-
losophically explored. This raises a methodological question that contin-
ues to provoke us: what form (or forms) might an adequate aesthetic ap-
proach to ritual take? The following remarks address this question with-
out providing a final answer.

Our work over the last few years has taken a comparative turn. In ad-
dition to Zoroastrian studies, we have also begun to study Shinto rituals.[3]
The reason for this is specific. In our efforts to study rituals in their own
right and not merely as decorative additions to theology,[4] we looked to a
tradition that arguably is primarily a ritual tradition. The story is told by
Mircea Eliade that when an American philosopher asked a Shinto priest
why there isn't any theology in Japanese Shinto, the priest's response
was: "We have no theology. We dance."[5] This, of course, is a caricature
of Shrine Shinto as it does have an interpretive tradition.[6] However, it is
also correct to say that the central focus of Shrine Shinto is ritual, not
theology, and that in fact there is common reference to *kotoagesezu*
("word not saying" or "no doctrine") among the priests we interviewed.[7]

We have also continued to explore recent Western art and aesthetics
in the hope of furthering our understanding of the role of art in ritual.
Our study of the aesthetic and ritualistic features of the Bulgarian born
American artist Christo has been especially helpful. In this essay, we
juxtapose observations about the Zoroastrian and Shinto ritual traditions
with a brief analysis of a recent Western work by Christo in order to hint
at an approach to the study of art in ritual.

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[3] We wish to express our indebtedness to Dastur Firoze M. Kotwal, Zoroastrian high
priest from Bombay, India, and the late Yukitaka Yamamoto *Gūji*, chief priest of Tsu-
baki Grand Shrine, Mie Prefecture, Japan. Both priests have allowed us the opportunity
to study the liturgical and festival practices of their respective traditions. Our most re-
cent work in Japan entailed living at Tsubaki Grand Shrine for a month in 1996, 1998,
and 2000. It is with great regret that we report the recent death of Yamamoto *Gūji*.

[4] Cf. R.G. Williams/J.W. Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and
Zoroastrian Ritual* (Columbia, 1993).

[5] M. Eliade, *No Souvenirs: Journal 1957–1969*, trans. F.H. Johnson, Jr. (New York,
1977), p. 31. Cf. also G. M. Wilson, "Time and History in Japan", *American Historical
Review* 1980, p. 566.

[6] Cf. e.g., M. Teeuwen, *Watarai Shinto: An Intellectual History of the Outer Shrine
in Ise* (Leiden Research School CNWS; Leiden, 1996).

[7] E.g., Mr. Yuji Inokuma, interview: Jan. 1, 1996.

2. A BRIEF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

2.1 World views

We will begin by briefly contrasting the two world views that provide a context for understanding the Zoroastrian and Shinto liturgies, highlighting three major differences. In so doing, we are sketching the differences with a broad brush and consequently leave undeveloped various other themes or emphases characteristic of each tradition.[8]

2.1.1 Transcendence vs. Immanence

The Zoroastrian tradition affirms a difference in kind between the *mēnōg* (the invisible, spiritual) and *gētīg* (the visible, material) realms that can be expressed as a philosophy of transcendence. *Ahura Mazda,* as invisible among invisibles, inhabiting infinite time, and beyond even the other creatures of the spirit realms, is clearly a transcendent figure of ultimate purity, guaranteeing that consciousness and concept are prior to human action. The Lord of Wisdom, infinite time, truth, and purity are ontologically and logically prior to the mundane.

It is natural in such philosophies to employ the metaphors of ascension and light. The vertical dimension is paramount because the ascent to the source entails increasing grades of purity, and, in the opposite direction, the *gētīg* realm is infused and maintained by the energy flowing to it from above.

Shinto, too, has its images of ascent, usually couched in terms of human beings as descendents of *kami* ancestors. But the center of gravity of Shinto is not in the heights. It is a religion of immanence and, one might say, the horizontality of this world. An immanent world is not created from above, but produced from within. The *kami* are not transcendent, but exceptional phenomena in the only world there is – a world infused by a connective life force continually unfolding and increasing in complexity. In the course of this unfolding, the self and language emerge, products of the underlying forces of nature – at least according to those practitioners who see Shinto as compatible with empiricism and illuminated by Bergson's concept of *élan vital.*[9]

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[8] E.g., the role of history in Zoroastrianism is only briefly alluded to in the above discussion in terms of the role of time, and the importance of ritual repetition in the Shinto tradition could also be developed in a fuller comparative study.

[9] We intend a broad sense of "empiricism" which allows for metaphysical constructs while remaining within the natural order, shunning any appeal to a transcendent reality.

It follows that there are two contrasting views of explanation: Zoroastrianism explains this world in terms of the prior transcendent principles originating in the *mēnōg*, whereas Shinto encourages attention to the underlying intensities in nature, personified as *kami*. One is a tradition of transcendence and its vertical metaphors, the other a tradition of immanence and horizontal images.[10]

2.1.2 Being and Becoming

A second thematic difference has to do with the contrast between a "story already written" and a "story in the process of writing itself out." Zoroastrianism emphasizes being over becoming, insofar as the unchanging, eternal, universal principles, concepts, and laws are already in place at the beginning. It is within the space of these prior possibilities that the mundane world unfolds and the good news is that we have at least limited access to these principles and can play our part in the struggle for increased righteousness. The emphasis on the original vision and the laws that govern the *mēnōg* and *gētīg* worlds quite naturally leads to an emphasis on origin and goal. We are assured of the source of righteousness and ultimate salvation. This is accompanied by a sense of time and memory and expectation emphasizing past creation and future outcomes. In particular, both the ultimate origin and earthly beginnings are to be remembered and celebrated, dictating an emphasis on ritual repetition and a commitment to transmitting rituals unchanged.[11]

Though there are origin myths in the Shinto tradition there is no metaphysics of *a priori* immutable law. The unfolding world generates new complexities and chance encounters within the minimal prior constraint of the *élan vital*. Since it is in the present that the world is becoming, there is an emphasis on being "in the middle of the now"—we are

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For a succinct discussion of this view, cf. G. Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life,* trans. Ann Boyman (New York, 2001), pp. 7–33.The chief priest of Tsubaki Grand Shrine, Yamamoto *Gūji*, urged us to read J.W.F. Mason's book *The Meaning of Shinto* (Port Washington/N.Y., 1967 [1953]), because Mason "was capable of receiving the spirit of Japan...he could be a Shinto priest" (interview: Dec. 27, 1995). Central to Mason's interpretation of Shinto is H. Bergson's notion of *élan vital*, and of existence precedent to force and form.

[10] Yamamoto *Gūji* quite frequently used horizontal images in his conversations about Shinto, and in fact, on one occasion while commenting on the importance of social relations, stated concisely "religion is horizontal..." (interview: Jan. 1, 1996).

[11] Cf. Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual.*

born into a world writing itself out; its origins are a mystery, and the end is yet to be discovered. Such images forefront emergence of the new rather than remembering through ritual repetition the origin and goal of creation.[12]

2.1.3 Morality vs. Ethics

The third theme concerns the differences between morality and ethics, or good vs. evil in contrast to good and bad encounters. Transcendent, universal principles—in this case Zoroastrian principles of righteousness—dictate the moral principles governing the mundane realm. But if the transcendent law is also the law of earth, it is typically imperfectly instantiated on earth. There is, of course, a consequent struggle between transcendent forces of *good and evil*, and the goal is one of *ordering* the world in accordance with the highest, prior, and stable principles.

Shinto, on the other hand, relies in effect on a distinction between *good and bad encounters* – encounters in this world which either enhance or reduce our power to act. On this ethical view there is no *ordering* of the world in conformity with prior principles, but an exploratory ongoing struggle to *organize* human society in ways that promote more good than bad encounters. It is in effect a more pragmatic, experimental approach to the good of society; it requires the ability to attend to the present situation with clarity, to be guided by prior social convention, and to introduce changes with a view to improvement.[13]

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[12] J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams, "Japanese Shinto: An Interpretation of a Priestly Perspective", forthcoming, *Philosophy East and West* 55:1, January 2005.

[13] The distinction between 'morality' and 'ethics' is introduced by Spinoza, transformed by Nietzsche, and developed by Gilles Deleuze. Cf. G. Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. M. Joughin (New York, 1990), ch. 16: "The Ethical Vision of the World" for his recasting of Spinoza's position in the *Ethics*. Cf. also Ph. Turetzky, "Pictorial Depth" (unpublished essay presented summer 2002 at the Philosophy Seminar, University of Canterbury, Christchurch/New Zealand).

2.2 Ritual Mirroring of the Two World Views

Given these contrasting features between the two world views, what then can we expect to find in terms of differences in their ritual practices? Let us turn to specific examples.

2.2.1 Vertical and Horizontal

We have characterized the Zoroastrian world view as a philosophy of transcendence, with its metaphor of ascent, in contrast to the Shinto emphasis on immanence and the horizontal. The aesthetic dimensions of the Zoroastrian high liturgy, the Yasna, and the outer ceremony, the Āfrīnagān, mirror this world view.

In Yasna 62 of the Zoroastrian high liturgy, the chief priest, after sitting in a cross-legged position for most of the liturgy, dramatically stands on the priest's stone seat, holding vertically the barsom bundle in his left hand and one metal wire in his right. Together with the standing assistant priest, he recites a mānthric litany to fire, itself on an elevated stand (cf. plates I/1).[14]

Likewise, in the Zoroastrian Āfrīnāgan ceremony of blessings, there are several exchanges of flowers between the standing assistant priest and the seated chief priest – an interchange repeated with a different set of eight blossoms during each of three Avestan recitations. One interpretation of the verticality of this ritual gesture is that it symbolizes the soul's passage from one realm to the other, connecting the two distinct *mēnōg* and *gētīg* realms with each other. The gesture may also serve as an image of right communication between the higher *mēnōg* and derivative *gētīg* realm.[15]

This verticality is not characteristic of either the ritual setting or the ritual gestures that take place within a Shinto shrine. One's first impression when entering a shrine precinct is the horizontality of the *torii* gate, the entrance to the outer worship hall, and the hall itself. The *torii* is a key symbol of Shinto, marking a shrine or special sacred space (cf. plates

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[14] Cf. Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 51, 119; J.W. Boyd/F.M. Kotwal, "Worship in a Zoroastrian Fire Temple", *Indo-Iranian Journal* 26, 1984, pp. 293–318; J.W. Boyd/W.R. Darrow (eds and producers), "A Zoroastrian Ritual: The Yasna", video documentary (31 minutes), Office of Instructional Services, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523, 1982.

[15] Cf. Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual*.

III/4). The two vertical columns suggest the "unusual" status of the *kami*. *Kami* are "superior" but not metaphysically transcendent manifestations of the life force that generates the whole of Great Nature. But the two horizontal rails, one over the top of the columns and the other penetrating the columns so that the vertical is dominated by the horizontal, suggest the immanence of the life force. Further, the *shimenawa* is a vivid image of the connected, unfolding process (*musubi*) of Great Nature. It is a thickly braided rope of rice straw hung horizontally across the front of the main worship hall of a shrine (cf. plates II/2). Together with the horizontal lines of the shrine itself, it conveys the impression of Shinto being solidly grounded in nature.

There are but a few examples of how Zoroastrian rituals and the Shinto liturgical setting mirror a philosophy of transcendence in contrast to one of immanence.

2.2.2 Ritual Stability and Change

In addition, recall the contrast between the "story already written" in Zoroastrianism and the "story writing itself out" in Shinto. Zoroastrians speak of the origin of the universe and the goal of salvation; their rituals reflect this reality. From an orthodox priestly point of view, the rituals should remain unchanged, as they reflect laws already in place. Likewise, the mānthras are fixed – the Yasna consists of the recitation of 72 chapters. Basically the only alterations are in terms of the time and specific occasions when the Yasna is performed, and these variations are usually said in undertone (*bista*) and in Pazand, so as not to interrupt the framing power of the Avestan mānthra.[16]

Shinto's unfolding story, on the other hand, is mirrored in the tradition's variations among shrines as to the content of even their daily liturgies. Although there are some basic features common to all, such as the bowing and clapping and the waving of the *haraigushi* as a purification gesture, even in the highest liturgy of the year (the *Ō Harae no kotoba* celebrated on New Year's day and mid-year), some of the chants (*noritos*) by the chief priest are his compositions and written anew for each ritual occasion.[17] The emergence of the new is reflected in the very conduct of their liturgies.

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[16] Cf. Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 149–154.

[17] Cf. Boyd/Williams, "New Year's Rituals at Tsubaki Grand Shrine", video documentary.

2.2.3 Ritual Ordering vs. Organizing

Likewise, the Zoroastrian emphasis on morality, with moral principles guiding us in terms of good and evil, are continually reflected in their rituals. Again, to cite but two examples: in the Yasna high liturgy the mānthric praise of righteousness (*ashem vohu*), affirms the *a priori* order of the good creation, and the defeat of evil is dramatically expressed in the pounding of the hōm and its accompanying mānthric recitations.[18]

Shinto, on the other hand, presents us with a ritual of decorum, with the priests and the shrine setting elaborately costumed and organized. Further, the daily message from the chief priest to the congregants (in the Chō Hai morning service) is one of encouraging a positive outlook on community life and efforts to *organize* the community to effect good encounters.[19]

These, then, are but a few selected examples of some of the major differences in thought and practice between the Zoroastrian and Shinto traditions.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF AESTHETICS IN RITUAL THEORY

3.1 Lessons

What this brief comparative analysis has shown us in terms of our previous work on the aesthetics of Zoroastrian ritual is this. First, we note how easy it is to treat rituals as secondary to world views or religious texts. The preceding discussion began with a brief summary of the world views of two traditions and proceeded to relate ritual to them. Such an approach privileges thought over practice and makes the claim that rituals are in some sense *sui generis* more difficult to maintain.

Secondly, this comparison reveals how tempting it is to assume that the aesthetic dimensions of rituals can be isolated and explored on their own. We compared the verticality of the Zoroastrian flower exchange with the horizontality of the Shinto shrine and *torii* gate in the above discussion as isolatable aesthetic features reflective of their respective world views but otherwise as autonomous dimensions of the rituals and their settings.

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[18] Cf. Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 104–109.
[19] Cf. Boyd/Williams, "Japanese Shinto: An Interpretation of a Priestly Perspective."

Regarding the first observation, there is no doubt that rituals do mirror a tradition's world view. Certainly Zoroastrian and Shinto liturgies could not be interchanged – even if rituals share some universal features. However, there are multiple dimensions to ritual, and the mirroring function is only one. As we have argued previously in our analysis of Zoroastrian liturgies, there are unique powers of ritual art. We will address the issue of the *sui generis* role of ritual art later in this essay.[20]

In regard to the second point, we admit to succumbing to the temptation to treat the aesthetic dimension of rituals as if they could exist in isolation and to treat the ritual as a whole as an integrated *artwork.*[21] However, our on-going study of Western art has shown us that our previous work on Zoroastrian ritual lacked sufficient subtlety in this regard. More specifically, it has been our study of the aesthetic and ritualistic features of Christo's art that has helped us realize the extent to which artful means function only in intimate conjunction with other non-aesthetic features of ritual. Let us explore this more fully.

3.2 Aesthetic and Ritual Features of Christo's Art

In 1976 Christo (and his wife Jeanne-Claude) produced *The Running Fence Project*, a short-lived, monumental installation in California first conceived in 1973 (cf. plates II/3).[22] It was a white nylon "fence" 18 feet high and 24 miles long that for two weeks traversed the rolling hills and ranchlands of two counties north of San Francisco before dipping into the Pacific Ocean.

The work's title is instructive. "Project" indicates Christo's intention that the work be understood as *process* rather than merely *product*. This is a major re-conception of an artwork broadening it to include social/political factors traditionally excluded from the realm of the aesthetic. As process, *The Running Fence Project* is complex and long-

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[20] Cf. Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual*, and Boyd/Williams, "Artful Means: An Aesthetic View of Shinto Purification Rituals", cf. fn. 32, below.

[21] Even what counts as an aesthetic element or dimension of a ritual may vary over time or from one situation to another. For an example from the plastic arts, cf. N. Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis/Indiana, 1978), pp. 57–70. We are indebted to Jens Kreinath for this observation.

[22] For a detailed description of Christo's project, cf. B. Chernow, *Christo and Jeanne-Claud: A Biography* (New York, 2002), chs. 11 and 12. Cf. also Maysles Brothers, "Running Fence", video documentary (58 minutes), 1977.

lived; it includes the fence's conception, its aesthetic and engineering design, its financing, legitimization by local government agencies and the communities involved, and finally its construction, documentation, and disassembly. The process results in the short-lived aesthetic object, the fence, and then has an after-life in documentary films, books and museum displays and in the memories of those who participated, directly or as observers.[23]

Along the way, unanticipated events including legal challenges threatened its realization on more than one occasion. But, on the day called *Blossoming Day* the fabric was unfurled along its entire 24 mile length. By evening, it was a pink ribbon of light accenting the contours of the hills and reflecting the setting sun.

What may not be immediately apparent is that both the fence and the extended process speak with one voice. It is a Tolstoyan voice; Tolstoy insisted that artworks ought to unify the community. Good artworks produce "one and the same effect: the loving union of people".[24] Christo's fence conveys unity and integration in several ways at once, connecting land with sea, earth with sky, and artifact with nature; and of course it literally connects the ranches as well rather than dividing them as fences normally do. The process itself powerfully integrates the community in its own way, since now the very evident cooperative feelings experienced by the workers are *internal* to the work (as process) and hence are part of what "the work" expresses.

Note that what the work accomplishes is the result of a very complex interaction between the aesthetic features of the fence and the social/ political/historical processes linked to it. For example, it both relies on capitalist modes of financing and construction while turning them to other than utilitarian uses, and it relies on the history of the winning of the West and the role of the fence in securing private property while at the same time reinterpreting the function of fence – from division to connection.

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[23] Perhaps the best parallel between Christo's work and traditional ritual practices is to view his several monumental projects as recurring festivals.

[24] L.Tolstoy, *What is art?* trans. R. Pevear/Volokhonsky (London, 1995 [1898]), p. 130.

3.3 Analogies with Ritual Artworks

We hope this brief description makes plausible the following points we wish to make by analogy about certain features of Zoroastrian and Shinto ritual practice. We can expect considerable overlap between the complex functioning of a work like *The Running Fence* and the ways in which rituals function by employing "artful means." This in spite of the obvious distance between traditional religious rituals and avant-garde artworks.

First, a ritual artwork is a multiplicity of incommensurable dimensions. The Christo example shows how ritual artworks are multiplicities in the technical sense introduced by Gilles Deleuze: a multiplicity is a set of lines or dimensions which are irreducible to one another.[25] A brick wall considered in itself is merely a complex structure made up of like parts. But a *multiplicity* contains elements of radically different kinds intersecting in radically different ways. Christo's work involves everything from engineering to community politics to financial institutions embedded in a capitalistic social/political order. It involves the history of the West and the role of the fence in that history, as well as art's history, aesthetic theory, and the role of the media. Likewise ritual artworks involve a multiplicity of non-interchangeable dimensions. We begin with the aesthetic, but Christo's work shows that much more than that is at play in art and ritual.[26]

Secondly, a ritual artwork requires a context. To pursue the analogy, Christo's fence requires a complex art historical context allowing environmental works, process art, and performance art to be counted and understood as art. His work also must function in the context of modern capitalist society since he relies on the same economic/political processes as someone coming to town to build a supermarket. Similarly, a set of religious ritual practices assumes an elaborate context possibly including sacred texts, and theological commentary, all embedded in a world view. It should be emphasized that artworks and their context as well as rituals and the world views in which they thrive are intimately integrated. Both the world view and the ritual are multiplicities interacting in an indefinitely large number of ways.

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[25] G. Deleuze/C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson/B. Habberjam (New York, 1987), p. VII.

[26] Cf. Turetzky, "Pictorial Depth", for a succinct example of an artwork as multiplicity. Even an ordinary painting is an assemblage (multiplicity) presenting a physical space (paint on canvas), an abstract mathematical space, and a pictorial space (which may, for example, exhibit depth unlike the canvas). These are co-existent, but irreducible dimensions.

Thirdly, ritual artwork has a *sui generis* function. Although an art ork is embedded within its context, it does what only it can do. It is not replaceable by some other dimension of the context or some other kind of thing or event. It is essential to Christo's fence project, for example, that the powers of capitalism and engineering be harnessed to cooperative aesthetic expression rather than to ordinary commerce. His work can thus rely on modern social structures, mirror them, and subtly turn them to other aesthetic/spiritual ends at the same time. That his is primarily an aesthetic event allows it to perform the unique set of intended functions. The similar point for ritual practice is this: such practices are not independent of the theological contexts that give them life and meaning, but the contribution rituals make, nothing else could make. This hypothesis guides our work, but it must be made plausible case by case.

Finally, both rituals and artworks can be productive in a strong sense. What ritual practices accomplish, in part by aesthetic means, goes beyond merely reflecting or decorating. In the complex interactions between conceptual context and ritual practice, the latter is sometimes the more active partner, becoming a means of exploration or discovery or acting to transform persons, actions, and social structures. As Dastur Kotwal asserted: "The real coherence [of the tradition] is in ritual."[27]

3.4 Application to Zoroastrian and Shinto Rituals

As an example of ritual's being the more active partner, we have claimed in a previous study that Zoroastrian ritual mediates between universal principles and present application in a pro-active way.[28] Consonant with the existence of transcendent, *a priori* principles, Zoroastrian liturgies are undertaken with the intention that they be performed unchanged. As we have said, this mirrors our situation as persons who can grasp the principles (up to a point) but did not create them; that is, we do not have the right to amend principles that are independent of us. But the intention that rituals remain unchanged does not exclude the possibility that the practitioners themselves are the ones who change – they change via repeated exposure to unchanging ritual repetitions. Just, for example, as repeated exposure to Mozart might transform someone, the daily ritual becomes a "companionable form" like an exemplary friend who holds us to higher standards and challenges us to improve.

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[27] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, p. 55.
[28] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 61 ff.

In *Ritual Art and Knowledge* we traced this kind of change to the complex role of the basic image in the Āfrīnagān – the flower exchange.[29] There are multiple interpretations of this gesture, but as an aesthetic image it conveys an image of right communication. As a repeated image, it can act as a stabilizing image, focusing our attention on right communication, while at the same time introducing subtle mysteries that ultimately challenge us to rethink our understanding of the highest principles – thus serving as a mediator between a universal principle and specific daily concerns of the practitioner.

However, in light of the Christo example and the lessons we draw from it, this analysis needs further refinement. For the integrated sequence of the flower exchange now dissolves into a myriad of irreducible dimensions. To put it boldly: there is no such thing as a ritual *artwork* about which one can ask "What does *it* do?" Rather, multiple effects issue from the interaction of various aesthetic and non-aesthetic dimensions "inside" and "external to" the ritual.

For example, with respect to the Āfrīnagān, consider the moment in the flower exchange when one priest transfers a flower to the other priest. Now imagine a "connective path" leading from that aesthetic element to the simultaneous idea of "good thoughts, words and deeds." That idea as part of the world view is a non-aesthetic element connected to aesthetic chanting of the Avestan phrase and thence to the priest himself who has, perhaps, brought some daily concern to the ritual performance. It is the combination of these disparate elements—one path among many—that may be subtly transformative for the priest or an onlooker at that moment.

Such an analysis, in terms of intimately connected multiplicities, is not straightforwardly empirical – we are not investigating causes and effects at a particular place and time. Instead, and like the Christo example, we seek a plausible illustration of how the various elements combine, along multiple paths, to produce a range of results.

This analytical approach can also be applied to Shinto rituals, which not only *mirror* the world view but are *productive* in ways owing to the unique contributions of their aesthetic dimensions. Because Shinto emphasizes an ethic of good and bad encounters, it focuses on the task of *organizing* the world for the better. Consequently, Shinto's attention is on the present situation and possibilities for improvement.

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[29] Williams/Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge*, pp. 118 ff.

There are several important aspects of such efforts. Briefly, one needs to see the present situation freshly, with undistorted attention, to be empowered to amend it, and to bring to bear on it appropriate elements from the tradition. We have argued elsewhere that different kinds of Shinto ritual activity are aimed at the different aspects of these processes of improvement.[30]

The liturgies present an aesthetic image of decorous activity grounded in the tradition; however, there is little in the liturgies that dictates either means or ends or fixed principles of moral behavior. In addition, insofar as these rituals in conjunction with ascetic practices are aimed at promoting healthful living and increasing energy, they are empowering, preparing the participants for the task of promoting good encounters. Finally, Shinto also has a rich and varied festival tradition combined with ascetic practices. These festivals are physically demanding and sometimes dangerous; they are more closely related to the sublime than to the decorous. Together with Shinto's emphasis on our immanent connections with the whole of Great Nature, they can have the effect of putting the practitioner in touch with the immanent unfolding creative powers of life, and those underlying intensities which generate persons and things. That is, among the forms of purification are the cultivation of states of attentiveness that are not mediated by language – thus experiencing, one might say, pure immanence, and creating the possibility for fresh vision.

To offer a brief example: prior to a typical daily ritual, participants are invited to write down supplications that will be read aloud by the priest at a ceremony following the morning liturgy. These petitions express individual concerns such as the wish for better health. The morning service itself contains the formal dance-like movements of the priests, ritual clapping, and brief recitations.[31] There is also a gesture of purification and blessings bestowed on the participants and a final brief talk by the priest exhorting all to energetic and life-affirming action.[32] The cere-

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[30] Boyd/Williams, "Japanese Shinto: An Interpretation of a Priestly Perspective."

[31] The ancient liturgy being referred to is the *Ō Harae no kotoba*, a purification litany invoking peace and harmony in both the earthly and heavenly realms, removing all impediments that obstruct the creative powers of the cosmos, thereby allowing everyone and everything to realize their original brightness, beauty and purity.

[32] Purification requires that the assistant priest take the *haraigushi* (a wooden stick with linen or paper streamers attached to it) and wave it, with a back and forth sweeping motion, over the offerings, the chief priest, and over all those in attendance. Cf. J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams, "Artful Means: An Aesthetic View of Shinto Purification Rituals", *Journal of Ritual Studies* 13/1, 1999, pp. 37–52; J.W. Boyd/R.G. Williams, "Shinto

mony ends with a communal drink of sake.

Guided again by the example of Christo's *Running Fence*, we can imagine various conjunctions of the above elements – for example, a connective path leading from the participant's written supplication, a non-aesthetic element, to the beautiful images of decorous behavior and thence to exhortation to action and the community-affirming partaking of sake. The outcome for the individual will be the result of the interaction among these disparate elements and the worshipper.

As long as one remains within the generalities of this model of ritual production, the actual mechanisms involved remain indistinct. What is intriguing and promising is the detailed analytical task of tracing the interactions among the many levels and dimensions of the ritual practices and the context to see how the work is done. That is, the analytical task is to indicate how these varied rituals, viewed as multiplicities containing aesthetic and non-aesthetic dimensions, interact to produce transformation.[33] This is a potential avenue of future research in our on-going exploration of the role of art in ritual.

Purification Rituals: An Aesthetic Interpretation", Center for Shinto Studies and Japanese Culture web site, University of California, Berkeley: http://www.ecai.org/shinto/charter.html.

[33] While the possibility that both rituals and artworks can transform persons and situations is the focus of our analyses, we do not deny that rituals generally and perhaps primarily reinforce community norms and stabilize social structures.

BRUCH UND KONTINUITÄT IN TODESRITUALEN. BEOBACHTUNGEN ZU WESTEUROPÄISCHEN UND ZOROASTRISCHEN BESTATTUNGEN

Dorothea Lüddeckens

Während die einen professionelle Klageweiber engagieren, verkünden andere den freudigen Anlass der Erlösung vom irdischen Dasein. Wo in manchen Häusern nur noch mit leiser Stimme ernsthaft gesprochen werden darf, wird in anderen die Komik geradezu gesucht. Die Vielfalt kultureller Eigenarten in der Reaktion auf den Tod eines Menschen ließe sich in ihrer Beschreibung endlos fortsetzen. So unterschiedlich diese Reaktionen weltweit ausfallen mögen, so verschieden die Bedeutung, die dem Tod zugemessen wird, auch sein mag, seine physische Dimension führt doch stets, innerhalb welchen kulturellen und religiösen Kontextes auch immer, zu bestimmten Herausforderungen und Konsequenzen.[1] Diese allerdings werden kulturspezifisch gelöst und gedeutet.

ABBRUCH UND KONTINUITÄT ANGESICHTS DES TODES

Im Folgenden wird von der These ausgegangen, dass sowohl die Erfahrung von Bruch als auch von Kontinuität zu der Konfrontation mit dem Tod eines anderen Menschen gehört.[2] Die Erfahrung eines Bruches, im Sinne eines Ab-bruches ergibt sich für die Hinterbliebenen allein schon aus der mit dem Tod einhergehenden Veränderung des physischen Körpers des Toten. Unvermeidlich besitzt ein Leichnam nicht mehr dieselben Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten, die einem lebendigen Körper zur Verfügung stehen. Im Verständnis der Hinterbliebenen kann zwar ein toter Körper weiter zu den Lebenden ‚sprechen', aber seine Sprache ist eine andere geworden. So ist es beispielsweise möglich die Dynamik von Verwesungsprozessen als Mitteilung zu interpretieren. Niemand wird

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[1] Zu denken ist dabei z.B. an den Umgang mit dem toten Körper und den beginnenden Verwesungsprozessen.

[2] Hier und im Folgenden werden die Begriffe Erfahrung und Wahrnehmung in ihrem alltagssprachlichen Verständnis verwendet.

jedoch bestreiten, dass es sich dabei um eine andere Art der Kommunikation handelt, als diejenige, die mit dem Verstorbenen vor seinem Tod möglich war. Was für den soziokommunikativen Bereich gilt, gilt auch für andere Ebenen, da die Handlungsfähigkeit eines physischen Körpers mit dem Tod grundlegend verändert, wenn nicht sogar in vielen Bereichen abgebrochen ist: Eine bestimmte Form physischer Existenz hat für die Hinterbliebenen damit unübersehbar ein Ende gefunden.

Neben dem Ab-bruch ist jedoch auch Kontinuität ein menschlicher Erfahrungshorizont in der Konfrontation mit dem Tod Anderer. Ein Mensch wird in der Wahrnehmung seiner Umgebung mit seinem Tod nicht vollkommen ausgelöscht. In Todesanzeigen finden sich häufig Formulierungen, die beidem Ausdruck geben: der Erfahrung des Abbruches und zugleich der Kontinuität. „Eine Stimme, die uns vertraut war, schweigt. Ein Mensch, der immer für uns da war, lebt nicht mehr, doch immer sind irgendwo Spuren seines Lebens."[3] „Es gibt nicht genügend Worte, die Dich beschreiben und unseren Verlust ausdrücken können. In unseren Herzen lebst du weiter."[4] Deutlich wird hier jeweils der Bruch angezeigt: das Abbrechen einer Stimme, das nicht mehr Da-Sein eines Menschen und der Verlust, der das Aussagbare sprengt. Im Kontrast hierzu wird jedoch Kontinuität versichert, die Toten sind demnach in der Wirklichkeit der Lebenden nicht vollkommen ausgelöscht, selbst nach dem Tod eines Menschen existieren die Folgen seines Lebens, Menschen, Gedanken und Gefühle, die mit dem Verstorbenen verbunden sind, weiter.

Menschliche Erfahrung und Wahrnehmung ist geprägt von den jeweiligen kulturellen Deutungsmustern, die zugleich eben diese Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen für den Einzelnen einordbar werden lassen. Deutungsmuster sind kulturelle Konstruktionen, die unter anderem durch Mythen und Rituale zur Verfügung gestellt werden. So wird es dem Einzelnen und der Gesellschaft ermöglicht, Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen in einen Gesamtzusammenhang einzuordnen und ihnen durch Handlungen Ausdruck zu verleihen. Mythen und Rituale sind damit sowohl Ausdruck als auch Gestaltung menschlicher Erfahrung und Wahrnehmung.

Die unterschiedlichen wechselseitigen Beziehungen zwischen Erfahrungen und konstruierten Deutungsmustern sollen hier nicht weiter entfaltet und diskutiert werden. Entscheidend ist vielmehr die These, dass

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[3] Todesanzeige für Peter Breitschädel, Frankfurter Rundschau, 15.4.2002, p. 23.
[4] Todesanzeige für Julius Giske, Jüdische Allgemeine Nr. 21/11.10.2001, p. 10.

für die Hinterbliebenen mit dem Tod eines Menschen sowohl Abbruch als auch Kontinuität verbunden sind. Beides wird innerhalb konstruierter Deutungsmuster wahrgenommen und zu einem umfassenden in Weltbild in Bezug gesetzt, bzw. hierin eingeordnet. Dabei ist es für den Einzelnen möglich, die Erfahrung von Bruch und Kontinuität unabhängig von einem ausgeführten Ritual oder auch erst mit der Teilhabe[5] am Ritual zu erleben.

So universal das Phänomen des physischen Todes auf den ersten Blick auch erscheinen mag, die kulturellen Deutungen, die Konstruktionen, mit Hilfe derer Bruch und Kontinuität gestaltet, erfahren und erklärt werden, sind höchst unterschiedlich. Auch die jeweilige Gewichtung ist verschieden: Konstruktionen von Bruch und Kontinuität können schwächer oder auch stärker vorliegen. Während manche Traditionen den sich aus dem physischen Tod ergebenden Bruch betonen, versuchen andere ihn weitgehend zu ignorieren. Ebenso kann die Kontinuität sehr stark wahrgenommen oder auch explizit in vieler Hinsicht negiert werden. Dementsprechend werden in Mythen und Ritualen Bruch und Kontinuität hervorgehoben dargestellt oder auch nur sehr schwach in Szene gesetzt.

Ein Kulminationspunkt dieser jeweiligen Konstruktionen, innerhalb derer Erfahrungen für den Einzelnen eingeordnet werden können, sind Bestattungsrituale, oder etwas weiter gefasst, Todesrituale.[6]

Im Folgenden soll zum einen gezeigt werden, wie sich sowohl Bruch- als auch Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen in Todesritualen analysieren lassen. Zum andern soll der Frage nachgegangen werden, inwiefern beide Konstruktionen miteinander verbunden sind. Daran schließt sich die Frage, ob sich eine gegenseitige Bedingtheit feststellen lässt, d.h. ob sich einerseits bei einer starken Betonung des Bruches auch eine starke Betonung der Kontinuität findet und ob andererseits schwache Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen auch schwache Bruch-Konstruktionen zur Folge haben. Besonders deutlich wird die Bezogenheit von Bruch- und Kontinuitätskonzeptionen mit dem Blick auf den historischen Wandel von Todesritualen, was anhand einiger Überlegungen zum westeuropäischen, insbe-

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[5] Teilhabe an einem Ritual kann sowohl die persönliche Anwesenheit als auch z. B. die Rolle als Auftraggeber oder Finanzier bedeuten.

[6] Während Bestattungsrituale im engeren Sinne nur die rituellen Handlungen in Verbindung mit der Leiche bzw. deren ‚Entsorgung' umfassen, bezeichnen Todesrituale alle Rituale, die mit einem oder mehreren Sterbenden oder Verstorbenen in Zusammenhang stehen. Hierzu zählen demnach z.B. auch die letzte Ölung der römisch-katholischen Kirche sowie Jahresgedenktage oder Volkstrauertage.

sondere westdeutschen Umgang mit Tod und Trauer ausgeführt werden wird. Anschließend wird dann mit der Analyse der gegenwärtigen Bestattungspraxis der Parsen in Bombay, in diesem Fall ohne Rückblick auf die Geschichte und den dahinter stehenden Wandel, ein Beispiel starker Konstruktionen von Bruch und Kontinuität vorgestellt.

KONSTRUKTIONEN VON BRUCH UND KONTINUITÄT IN WESTEUROPA

Die ‚Verdrängung des Todes' innerhalb westlicher Gesellschaften in der Moderne ist in vielen wissenschaftlichen Veröffentlichungen der letzten Jahrzehnte, ebenso wie in der teilweise davon beeinflussten Populärliteratur, postuliert und beschrieben worden. In engem Zusammenhang damit wird häufig ein Verlust an ‚Todeskultur' beklagt.[7] Gemeint ist die Behauptung, früher sei das Verhältnis zum Tod ‚natürlicher' gewesen, der Tod habe ‚zum Leben gehört', wohingegen heutzutage eine ‚Tabuisierung' des Todes zu beobachten sei. Mit Recht wird von kritischen Rezensenten nach modernen Projektionen gefragt und zuweilen die Art der Quellenbearbeitung angezweifelt.[8] Ob der Tod in der modernen westeuropäischen Gesellschaft tatsächlich stärker als ‚früher' verdrängt oder gar ‚tabuisiert' wird, sei dahingestellt. Allerdings ist sich die Forschung in der Frage, „in welcher Weise sich die Erfahrung des Todes unter dem Einfluß der Moderne gewandelt hat"[9], in mancher Hinsicht einig. Zum konsensfähigen Befund zählt zum Beispiel die Beobachtung,

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[7] So z.B. Ph. Ariès, *Geschichte des Todes* (München, 1989); J. Baudrillard, *Der symbolische Tausch und der Tod* (München, 1991); J. Ziegler, *Die Lebenden und der Tod* (München, 2000); M. Sax/K.Visser/M. Boer, *Begraben und Vergessen. Ein Begleitbuch zu Tod, Sterben und Bestattung* (Berlin, 1993); D. Tausch-Flammer/L. Bickel, *Wenn ein Mensch gestorben ist. Würdiger Umgang mit den* Toten (Freiburg, 1995). Vgl. hierzu U. Roth, *Die Beerdigungsansprache. Argumente gegen den Tod im Kontext der modernen Gesellschaft* (Praktische Theologie und Kultur 6; Gütersloh, 2002), p. 149–194; A. Nassehi/G. Weber, *Tod, Modernität und Gesellschaft. Entwurf einer Theorie der Todesverdrängung* (Opladen, 1989); A. Nassehi/G. Weber, „Verdrängung des Todes – Kulturkritisches Vorurteil oder Strukturmerkmal moderner Gesellschaften? Systemtheoretische und wissenssoziologische Überlegungen", *Soziale Welt* 39, 1988, pp. 377–396.

[8] So z. B. Ariès *Geschichte des Todes* betreffend: A. Nassehi/M. Schroer/G. Weber, „Soziologie", *Sterben und Tod. Annotierte Auswahlbibliographie* (Interdisziplinäre nordrhein-westfälische Forschungsarbeitsgemeinschaft ‚Sterben und Tod'; Opladen, 1996), pp. 344–420, hier p. 350; F.W. Graf, Rezension von Ph. Ariès, Geschichte des Todes, *Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik* 28, 1984, pp. 339–342.

[9] Roth, *Die Beerdigungsansprache*, p.43.

dass der Umgang mit Sterbenden und Toten von den Familienangehöri-
gen weitgehend an Spezialisten abgegeben wird.[10] Hinzu kommt das
Verschwinden von sozial vorgegebenen Verhaltensweisen. Weder für
Sterbende noch für Hinterbliebene gibt es noch allgemein anerkannte
Regeln. Sicherlich kann die schwindende Präsenz zahlreicher Rituale
rund um den Tod mit dem Verlust allgemein verbindlicher Sinnsysteme
in der Moderne in Zusammenhang gebracht werden. Dennoch ist es be-
rechtigt zu fragen, ob es noch weitere Gründe dafür gibt, warum man-
ches, sobald dies ohne soziale Restriktionen möglich wird, aufgegeben
wurde oder wird. Während noch vor einigen Jahrzehnten auch in Groß-
städten schwarze Kleidung bei Beerdigungen eine Selbstverständlichkeit
war,[11] ist es heutzutage durchaus üblich, ohne explizite Trauerkleidung
auf dem Friedhof zu erscheinen. Während mit dem Tragen von Schwarz
nahe Angehörige in ihrem ersten Trauerjahr einen Hinweis auf das Ge-
schehene gaben, sind Betroffene heute an ihrer Kleidung nicht mehr zu
erkennen. Könnte man darin einen Versuch sehen, den durch den Tod
evozierten Bruch zu nivellieren?

Weitere Anzeichen scheinen auf eine Verflachung von Bruch-Kons-
truktionen hinzuweisen: Immer öfter werden Bestattungsinstitute gebe-
ten, ihre Leichenwägen nicht als solche zu kennzeichnen.[12] Ebenso mag
der Hinweis in Todesanzeigen, die Bestattung werde „in aller Stille"
stattfinden oder auch die Bitte „von Beileidsbezeugungen" Abstand zu
nehmen auf den Wunsch hindeuten, möglichst unbemerkt und ohne aus-
drückliche Anteilname den Todesfall vorübergehen zu lassen.

In christlichen Bestattungen wird der Bruch, das Ende des individuel-
len physischen Lebens, unter anderem durch die am offenen Grab rezi-
tierte Ritualformel „Erde zu Erde, Staub zum Staube, Asche zu Asche"
zum Ausdruck gebracht. Der Körper ist nunmehr unbelebte Materie, die
dem Erdreich überantwortet wird. Evangelische Pastoren beobachten in

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[10] Norbert Fischer zeigt diesen, von ihm als „Entzauberung des Todes" bezeichneten
Prozess vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert auf. „So hat sich der Umgang mit den Toten
mittlerweile zu einer Angelegenheit für Mediziner, Techniker und Friedhofsbürokraten
entwickelt." N. Fischer, *Vom Gottesacker zum Krematorium. Eine Sozialgeschichte der
Friedhöfe in Deutschland* (Köln et al., 1996), p. 130. Siehe hierzu auch Nassehi/Weber,
Tod, Modernität und Gesellschaft, pp. 277–325.
[11] Siehe zur Trauerkleidung z. B.E. Heller-Winter, „Trauerkleidung", *Die letzte Rei-
se. Sterben. Tod und Trauersitten in Oberbayern*, ed. S. Metken (München, 1984), pp.
186–195.
[12] Diesen Hinweis, der sich auch in anderen Gesprächen bestätigte, verdanke ich
Herrn Berent von der Grieneisen-Bestattung, München.

den letzten Jahren, dass Hinterbliebene zuweilen diesen wesentlichen Hinweis auf den tatsächlichen Bruch aus dem Ritual streichen möchten. Nachvollzogen wird bzw. wurde die Formel, indem die Mitglieder der Trauergemeinde den Sarg mit Sand oder Erde bewerfen. Stattdessen werden in den letzten Jahren immer häufiger Blumen auf den Sarg geworfen.[13] Die Konstruktion des Bruches wird damit abgeschwächt, da Blumen z.B. auch bei Hochzeiten gestreut werden bzw. über das Brautpaar ‚schneien‘, während mit Erde nur ein Toter beworfen wird, jemand, der tatsächlich be-erdigt wird.

Rituale und Ritualbausteine, die die Erfahrung und Wahrnehmung des Bruches zum Ausdruck bringen, scheinen innerhalb der letzten Jahrzehnte seltener zu werden. „Die Gesellschaft legt keine Pause mehr ein" beschreibt Philippe Ariès unsere westeuropäische Gegenwart und spricht von „sehr zurückhaltende[n] Leichenbegräbnisse[n]".[14]

Nicht nur der rituelle Umgang mit dem Tod hat sich verändert, auch seine Mythen, die Konzeptionen seiner Bedeutung sind andere geworden. Dieser Wandel drückt sich zum Beispiel in dem Glauben an ein Weiterleben nach dem Tod aus. Einer Meinungsumfrage zufolge glaubten in den 70er Jahren nur noch 48% aller evangelischen und katholischen Kirchenmitglieder an ein Leben nach dem Tod.[15] Selbst ohne statistische Vergleichswerte ist wohl anzunehmen, dass diese Zahl im 19. Jahrhundert höher lag. Allerdings kann, nach verschiedenen neueren Umfrageergebnissen zu urteilen, nicht vorschnell von einer weiteren, generellen Abnahme des Glaubens an ein Leben nach dem Tod ausgegangen werden.[16] Tatsächlich jedoch

> erschwert die Pluralisierung und Segmentierung von Sinnwelten und Subsinnwelten eine einheitliche Sinnintegration durch eine übergeordnete symbolische Sinnwelt. Eine übergreifende Legitimation des Todes scheint nicht

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[13] Diese und ähnliche Beobachtungen berichteten mir mehrere Pfarrer verschiedener deutscher Landeskirchen.

[14] Ariès, *Geschichte des Todes*, pp. 715–740. Trotz aller berechtigter Kritik bleiben Ariès' Studien aufschlussreiche Materialsammlungen und seine Thesen diskussionswürdig. Zur Veränderung der Todesrituale in England siehe auch G. Gorer, *Death, Grief and Mourning in contemporary Britain* (New York, 1965).

[15] H. Hild [Hg.], *Wie stabil ist die Kirche? Bestand und Erneuerung. Ergebnisse einer Meinungsbefragung* (Gelnhausen/Berlin, 1974), p.170.

[16] Siehe hierzu z. B. A. Nassehi, *Ist mit dem Tod alles aus? Das Jenseits der Gesellschaft aus der Sicht eines Soziologen* (Vortrag vor der Katholischen Akademie in Bayern, München, 27. April 2001); K.-P. Jörns, *Die neuen Gesichter Gottes. Was die Menschen heute wirklich glauben* (München, 1999), pp.181–187.

mehr gewährleistet zu sein, die symbolische Sinnwelt scheint brüchig zu werden und in eine Vielzahl nebeneinander bestehender Teilsinnwelten zu zerfallen.[17]

Wirklichkeitsdeutungen, die sich auf den Tod beziehen, werden von der Gesamtgesellschaft und vielen ihrer Mitglieder nicht mehr ohne weiteres von den „kirchlich organisierten Religionssystemen"[18] übernommen. Zum Teil sind statt der Kirchen andere religiöse Institutionen und statt des Christentums andere Traditionen relevant geworden.[19] Für die vielen Mitglieder der westdeutschen Gesellschaft gilt, dass ihre Wirklichkeitsdeutungen, sofern diese sich auf den Tod beziehen, zum einen individueller, zum andern aber auch diffuser und vager geworden sind. Aussagen wie „Ich glaub' schon, dass da noch was kommt" oder auch: „Irgendwie kann ja nicht alles zu Ende sein" implizieren offensichtlich die Annahme einer über den Tod hinaus bestehenden Kontinuität. Deutlich wird in ihnen aber auch, dass für die Wahrnehmung von Kontinuität keine ausgeprägten Konzeptionen vorliegen, auf die im Bedarfsfall zurückgegriffen werden könnte.

Neben den differenzierten religiösen Konzepten für ein Leben nach dem Tod hat auch die Bedeutung familiärer Kontinuitäten abgenommen. Die früher in Deutschland in vielen Kreisen übliche Sitte, Kindern Vornamen der Eltern oder Großeltern zumindest als zweiten Namen weiterzugeben, ist aufgegeben worden.[20] Bewusstsein und Interesse an familiären Genealogien haben abgenommen und erzählte Familiengeschichte engt sich immer mehr auf wenige Generationen ein. In diesen Zusammenhang ist auch folgender Wandel in der Bestattungskultur zu stellen:

> Schwindende familiäre Verbindungen lassen das traditionelle Familiengrab als überholt erscheinen; der Zusammenhang von Tod und Erinnerung in seiner bisherigen, an Grabstätten orientierten Form verliert zunehmend an Bedeutung. Die anonyme Bestattung ist jetzt schon Bestandteil einer neuen Trauerkultur, die anonymen Urnenhaine, an denen Blumenschmuck hinterlegt werden kann, sind zu einem neuen, kollektiven Ort der Trauer auf den städtischen Friedhöfen geworden.[21]

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[17] Roth, *Die Beerdigungsansprache*, p. 42.

[18] Roth, *Die Beerdigungsansprache*, p. 52.

[19] Neben dem Christentum haben natürlich auch andere traditionelle religiöse Traditionen an Bedeutung verloren.

[20] M. Mitterauer, *Ahnen und Heilige. Namensgebung in der europäischen Geschichte* (München, 1993), pp. 405–428.

[21] N. Fischer, „Zur Geschichte der Trauerkultur in der Neuzeit", *Totengedenken und Trauerkultur,* ed. M. Herzog (Stuttgart et al., 2001), pp. 41–57, p. 53.

Während sich somit für den ‚mainstream' der westdeutschen Bevölkerung sowohl Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen bezüglich des Todes als auch die den Bruch darstellenden Momente in Todesritualen abgeschwächt haben, kann andererseits seit den 70er Jahren auch eine ganz bewusste Inszenierung von starken Kontinuitäts- und Bruch-Konstruktionen in Bestattungsritualen beobachtet werden. Dabei handelt es sich um das Phänomen unkonventionell und sehr individuell gestalteter Beerdigungen, das sich unter anderem bei Angehörigen der Schwulen- und Lesbenszene oder auch in esoterisch orientierten Kreisen findet.[22] Neben sehr klaren Symbolen des Abschiedes und der Trennung finden sich hier starke Ausdrucksweisen von Kontinuität – so werden z.B. Briefe an die Toten geschrieben und rituell verbrannt oder auch bei der Beerdigung besondere, mit dem Toten verbundene Gegenstände als Andenken an die Trauergemeinde verteilt.

Ein Beispiel für das Zusammenkommen von starken Kontinuitäts- und Bruch-Konstruktionen bietet folgende Beschreibung:

> Nun liegt die Tochter, reichlich von ihren Mitschülern und Freunden beschenkt, in einem Sarg voller Blumen, so dass von der weißen Dekke [sic] nichts mehr zu sehen ist. Im Arm hat sie einen Stapel Briefe mit letzten Grüßen ...

Von derselben Beerdigung wird berichtet, dass die Mutter auf Anregung der Bestatterin den Sarg nach der Aufbahrung selbst geschlossen habe:

> Mit dieser Unterstützung gelang es der Mutter, den Sargdeckel zu schließen. Dabei fielen noch ein paar Blumen zu Boden. Die hat sie dann Julia [der Schwester der Verstorbenen] mitgebracht als letzten Gruß von Birgit.[23]

In dieser Darstellung finden sich zwei Kommunikationsformen, zum einen die Briefe an die Tote, zum andern der Blumengruß von der Verstorbenen an ihre Schwester. Während damit jeweils Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen gegeben sind, wird mit dem eigenhändigen Schließen des Sarges durch die Mutter das Bewusstsein des vorhandenen Bruches deutlich. Sowohl Deutungsmuster der Kontinuität als auch des Bruches wurden hier offensichtlich rituell inszeniert.

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[22] Siehe hierzu z.B. N. Fischer, „Leitlinien einer neuen Kultur im Umgang mit dem Tod", *Neue Kultur im Umgang mit Tod und Trauer. Dokumentation der Fachtagung am 25. November 1998 in Wuppertal*, ed. Ministerium für Frauen, Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Redaktion P. Timmermanns (Düsseldorf, 1999), pp. 15–29. S. Bode/F. Roth, *Der Trauer eine Heimat geben. Für einen lebendigen Umgang mit dem Tod* (Zürich, 1996).

[23] Bode/Roth, *Der Trauer eine Heimat geben*, pp. 190–191.

KONSTRUKTIONEN VON BRUCH UND KONTINUITÄT
IN DER GEGENWÄRTIGEN PRAXIS DER PARSEN

Die besondere Bestattungspraxis der Parsen zeichnet sich am augen-
scheinlichsten durch die berühmten ‚Türme des Schweigens' aus, rund
gemauerte und nach oben hin offene Anlagen, die dem Ablegen der Lei-
chen dienen.[24] In Bombay stehen diese *dakhmas* auf einem von einer
Mauer umgrenzten parkähnlichem Bestattungsgelände (*doongerwadi*).
Außerdem finden sich dort mehrere als *bangli* bezeichnete Gebäude, die
mit einem Waschraum, einer großen Halle und zum Teil mit Unter-
kunftsmöglichkeiten für Angehörige ausgestattet sind. Hinzu kommen
Verwaltungseinrichtungen und ein Gebäude mit einem kleinen Ritual-
feuer in der Nähe der Türme (*sagri*).

Nach dem Eintreten des physischen Todes wird heutzutage in Bom-
bay möglichst schnell der Leichnam von den Leichenmeistern, den *nase-
salars*, abgeholt und zu den Bestattungsanlagen gefahren.[25] Dort wird er
in einem der *banglis* abgelegt, in dem alle folgenden Rituale bis zum
Forttragen der Leiche zum *dakhma* abgehalten werden. Wesentliche Ele-
mente sind hier die Waschung und erneute Einkleidung des Toten (*sach-
kar*), die Hundebeschau (*sagdid*), bei der ein Hund animiert wird, die
Leiche anzusehen, sowie das im folgenden noch näher beschriebene *geh-
sarna*-Ritual. Anschließend wird von allen Anwesenden dem Toten noch
im *bangli* ‚die Ehre erwiesen', indem alle am Leichnam vorbeigehen
und sich vor ihm verbeugen. Die Leiche wird dann von den *nasesalars*

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[24] Zur Geschichte der zoroastrischen Bestattungsanlagen siehe den Beitrag von D.
Huff in diesem Band.

[25] Früher wurden die Rituale bis zum Fortbringen der Leichen zum Turm zu Hause
vollzogen, wie es heute auf dem Land immer noch der Fall ist. Die vorliegende Unter-
suchung basiert auf Interviews mit Parsi-Informanten, die ich im Februar und März
2002 in Bombay geführt habe, sowie auf folgender Literatur: D.C. Sidhwa, *Four-Day
Death Ceremonies of a Zoroastrian. Based on ‚Gujrelaan Zarthoshti ni Chaar Divas ni
Kriyaa'* (Udvada, 1986); K.P. Mistree, *Zoroastrianism. An Ethnic Perspective* (Bom-
bay, 1982); H. Dhalla, „Funeral Customs and Ceremonies of the Parsis in India", *The
University of Shiraz Bulletin of the Department of Linguistics* (Asia Institut), 2–4, 1978,
pp. 1–46; B.J. Manekashaw, *Parsi Food and Customs. The essential Parsi Cookbook*
(New Delhi, 1996); Ph.G. Kreyenbroek in collaboration with Sh.N. Munshi, *Living
Zoroastrianism. Urban Parsis speak about their Religion* (Richmond, 2001). Siehe
hierzu auch: E.S. Meherjirana, *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion. A Nineteenth Cen-
tury Catechism with Modern Commentary*, eds F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd (Studies in
World Religions 3; Chicago, 1982); M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathustras. Ge-
schichte – Gegenwart – Rituale*, Bd. 3 (Manuskript).

zu den Türmen getragen, gefolgt von den Priestern und männlichen Zo-
roastriern. In den letzten Jahren schließen sich dieser Prozession auch
zunehmend Zoroastrierinnen an. Am Turm angekommen, wird eine wei-
tere Hundebeschau vollzogen, der eine letzte ‚Verabschiedung‘ (sezdo)
folgt. Während sich die Priester und Laien nun vom Turm abwenden
und sich im sagri versammeln, betreten die nasesalars den Turm und
legen den toten Körper in einem für ihn vorgesehenen Bereich ab. Von
dem Abschluss dieser Handlung informieren sie die Hinterbliebenen
durch lautes Klatschen, das bis zum sagri zu hören ist.

Diesen Ritualen, die noch vor Einbruch der Dunkelheit stattzufinden
haben, folgen drei weitere durch Rituale geprägte Tage, während derer
die Angehörigen auf dem Bestattungsgelände bleiben können. Eine be-
sondere Rolle spielt die fünfte und letzte liturgische Tageszeit (zwischen
Mitternacht und Sonnenaufgang) des dritten Tages, in der ein uthamna-
Ritual abgehalten wird.[26] Während dieses Ritual zumindest im Beisein
der näheren Verwandtschaft in der Regel im bangli abgehalten wird, sol-
len im Idealfall für dieselbe Zeit weitere Rituale in einem Tempel in
Auftrag gegeben werden, ohne dass die Hinterbliebenen daran teilneh-
men. Am vierten Tag finden die als chaharom bezeichneten Rituale
statt. Dazu zählen von der ersten rituellen Tageszeit an ein yasna, ein
dron/baj, ein afrinagan, ein farokhshi und drei stum.[27] Angehörige, die
an den Ritualen auf dem Bestattungsgelände teilgenommen haben, keh-
ren am vierten Tag nach Hause zurück.

Die Todesrituale der Parsen sind damit jedoch nicht abgeschlossen,
denn auch nach diesen vier auf den Tod folgenden Tagen gibt es weitere
Verpflichtungen bzw. Möglichkeiten, Rituale für den Toten ausführen zu
lassen. Besonders gilt dies für den 10. und 30. Tag nach dem Tod und den
jährlich wiederkehrenden Todestag. An diesen Tagen werden sowohl das
afrinagan-Ritual als auch die baj-Rituale vollzogen. Hinzu kommen die
jährlichen muktad-Rituale an den letzten 10 Tagen vor Neujahr.[28] Auch
hier werden afrinagan- und baj- sowie stum-Rituale vollzogen.

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[26] Einige Familien praktizieren nur die erste Durchführung des uthamna-Rituals zur
dritten liturgischen Tageszeit, während die meisten das Ritual aber zweimal vollziehen.
Siehe zu diesem Ritual und seiner früheren Bedeutung Stausberg, Die Religion Zara-
thustras III.

[27] Siehe zur Beschreibung dieser Rituale Stausberg, Die Religion Zarathustras III.
Zum stum-Ritual siehe insbesondere den Beitrag von Kotwal und Chosky in diesem
Band.

[28] Manche Familien schließen noch die ersten sieben Tage des neuen Jahres an.

Da alle zarathustrischen Rituale immer auch für die Seelen der Verstorbenen ausgeführt werden,[29] lassen sich die Todesrituale der Parsen im strengen Sinne nicht auf eine bestimmte Gruppe von Ritualen begrenzen.

Abgrenzungen und Ent-räumlichungen: Konstruktionen des Bruches

In der zoroastrischen Bestattungspraxis der physische Körper mit dem durch den Tod erfahrenen Bruch verbunden, während die den Tod überlebende *Seele* für die Kontinuität steht. Am Umgang mit dem toten Körper zeigt sich die rituelle Konstruktion dieser Erfahrung des Abbruches. Der Bruch zwischen dem Leben und dem Tod findet seinen räumlichen Ausdruck in der schrittweisen Entfernung der Leiche von bzw. aus dem Bereich der Lebenden. Im zoroastrischen Ritual, so wie es heute bei den meisten Familien in Bombay ausgeführt wird, geschieht diese Ausgrenzung sowohl in Hinsicht auf den die Leiche umgebenden Raum als auch in Hinsicht auf die Distanzierung der Lebenden vom Leichnam selbst.

Mit der Überführung des toten Körpers auf das Gelände der Bestattungsanlagen wird der Verstorbene aus seinem unmittelbaren Lebensumfeld herausgenommen und in ein von diesem deutlich abgegrenztes Gelände gebracht. Nach dem Waschen und Einkleiden erfolgt eine weitere Ab- bzw. Ausgrenzung, indem in der Halle des *banglis* drei Kreise (*kashas*) um die Leiche gezogen werden. Es handelt sich hier um eine klare, zeitlich begrenzte Markierungslinie, die den bezüglich der Leiche einzuhaltenden Abstand für die Lebenden anzeigt. So wird der tote Körper innerhalb des *banglis*, in dem er sich gemeinsam mit den Lebenden befindet, von diesen ab- bzw. ausgegrenzt. Eine weitere räumliche Distanzierung geschieht mit dem Forttragen des Leichnams zu den Türmen des Schweigens. Der Wegabschnitt von den *banglis* bis hin zu den Türmen darf von Nicht-Zoroastriern nicht betreten werden. Auch von Frauen wurde er bis vor einigen Jahren gemieden, und bis heute halten sich die meisten Zoroastrierinnen an diese Regel. Der Leichnam wird nach dem *geh-sarna*-Ritual aus dem *bangli,* dem Raum, den die toten Körper mit den Lebenden noch teilen, hin zum *dakhma* getragen, zu dem Ort, der einzig und allein den toten Körpern vorbehalten ist. Die ‚Macht des Todes' ist in diesem Zeit-Raum bereits nicht nur an den Leichnam selbst

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[29] Einzige Ausnahme nach Michael Stausberg sind die so genannten Fereshte-Zeremonien, die von manchen indischen Priestern einzig für Lebende ausgeführt werden; Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathustras* III.

gebunden, sondern räumlich so präsent, dass weder Frauen noch Nicht-Zoroastrier dem ausgesetzt werden dürfen.[30]

Am *dakhma* angekommen, öffnen die *nasesalars* das Tor zum Turm und tragen die Leiche hinein. Niemand darf ihnen folgen, der Zutritt zum Turm ist allen verboten, außer den *nasesalars*,[31] die in der Gesellschaft der Parsen eine abgesonderte Stellung einnehmen. Hier befindet sich die Leiche nun endgültig innerhalb eines Raumes, der nicht mehr in den Bereich der Lebenden gehört.

Die räumliche Aus- bzw. Abgrenzung des toten Körpers ist damit jedoch noch nicht abgeschlossen und gerade hierin liegt die Besonderheit des zoroastrischen Rituals der Leichenaussetzung. Der physische Körper erfährt vielmehr eine bewusst möglichst rasch und konsequent herbeigeführte Auflösung. Er wird also nicht nur in einen von dem Raum der Lebenden abgegrenzten Raum der Toten überführt, sondern wird sozusagen ent-räumlicht. Im Idealfall fressen ihn innerhalb kurzer Zeit Geier und Krähen auf, sodass nur noch die Knochen übrig bleiben. Die Dichotomie zwischen fortbestehenden Knochen und vergänglichen weichen Körperteilen, wie sie sich in manchen ritualtheoretischen Analysen von Todesritualen findet,[32] wird hier nicht angetroffen. Denn auch die Knochen werden durch die Sonnenhitze zu Staub und vom Regen in die Mitte des Turmes gespült, wo sie durch einen Filter ins Erdreich gelangen. Da es aus zoroastrischer Perspektive allerdings von großer Wichtigkeit ist, die Elemente, also auch die Erde, nicht mit Leichen zu verunreinigen, wird hier deutlich, dass dieser Knochenstaub offensichtlich nicht mehr als Leichenmaterie angesehen wird. Zwar wurde in den von mir geführten Gesprächen immer wieder der Kreislauf betont, der mit dieser Prozedur gegeben sei. Eine vorschnelle Assoziation mit dem jüdisch-christlichen „Erde zu Erde, Staub zum Staube und Asche zu Asche" wäre aber ein großes Missverständnis. Denn hier geschieht dies in einer meines Erachtens wesentlichen Vermittlung: Zum einen sind es die Tiere, durch deren Verdauungsorganismus hindurch der menschliche Körper nur mittelbar in die Erde eingeht und damit seine Existenz als

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[30] In ihren Erklärungen legten meine Informanten Wert darauf, dass es bei dieser Vorschrift um den Schutz der betreffenden Personen ginge.

[31] Eine Ausnahme bilden hier nur die Reinigungsarbeiten in den Türmen, die in gewissen Abständen stattfinden müssen.

[32] So z. B. bei Robert Hertz: „... the reduction of the corpse to bones, which are more or less unchangeable and upon which death will have no further hold, ..." R. Hertz, *'Death' and 'The Right Hand'* (Aberdeen, 1962), p. 83.

menschlicher Leichnam gewissermaßen schon verloren hat. Zum andern ist es die Sonne, die die Knochen zu Staub zerfallen lässt. Während eine Erdbestattung einen langsamen Prozess der Verwesung im Erdreich nach sich zieht, innerhalb dessen der Körper sich langsam auflöst und zudem als Knochengerüst noch lange übrig bleibt, geschieht hier die Auflösung des Körpers, bevor die Materie überhaupt in die Erde gelangt. Kein langsamer Akt der Verwesung, sondern ein rascher Akt der Zerstörung wird im Ritual der Leichenaussetzung angestrebt:

> The nasâsâlârs then take away the clothes and leave the Tower, so that the body may be quickly consumed by the vultures. It takes about thirty minutes for the large vultures to eat up the flesh completely so that further decomposition of the body is immediately arrested.[33]

Es ist kein Körper, keine Leiche, die Eingang in die Erde findet, sondern Staub und von den Vögeln verdautes Fleisch. Der tote Körper nimmt als Körper, nachdem er diesen Prozess durchlaufen hat, keinen Raum mehr ein, er ist ent-räumlicht.

Weitere im Ritual gestaltete Abgrenzungen des Leichnams von den Lebenden zeigen sich im direkten Umgang mit dem toten Körper und der dort zu beobachtenden Distanzierung. So soll die Leiche direkt nach dem Eintreten des physischen Todes noch von den Angehörigen berührt werden. Nach dem Waschen und Einkleiden (*sachkar*) darf dies jedoch nicht mehr geschehen, von da an stehen nur noch die Leichenmeister in körperlichem Bezug zur Leiche. Alle anderen haben einen bestimmten Abstand zur Leiche einzuhalten, der im *bangli* durch die bereits erwähnten *kashas* festgelegt ist. Während der Prozession zum *dakhma* wahren alle Teilnehmer außer den *nasesalars* eine Distanz von viereinhalb Metern.

Das Überdauern des Todes und die Verbindung zum Toten: Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen

Erinnerungen an einen Menschen und die geistige Auseinandersetzung mit seiner Person werden mit dessen Tod nicht beendet, ebenso wenig wie die ‚Folgen‘ eines Lebens, Hinterlassenschaften oder auch Nachkommen durch den Tod ihres ‚Verursachers‘ ausgelöscht werden. Vielmehr wird all dies in einer Kontinuität über den Tod hinaus wahrgenommen, genauer in einer gebrochenen Kontinuität.

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[33] Dhalla, „Funeral Customs and Ceremonies of the Parsis in India“, p. 20.

Die Konstruktionen, innerhalb derer diese Erfahrungen von Kontinuität wahrgenommen und in einen größeren Kontext eingeordnet werden, können auf sehr unterschiedlichen Ebenen geleistet werden. Möglich ist dies z.B. mit Konzeptionen von Familiengeschichte, durch die sich das einzelne Familienmitglied in einer langen Kette von Vorfahren und zukünftigen Nachfahren aufgehoben weiß. Ebenso können Seelenvorstellungen bzw. Individualeschatologien als Wahrnehmungsmuster für Kontinuität realisiert werden.

Im Fall des Zoroastrismus, wie ich ihn durch meine Informanten in Bombay kennen gelernt habe, sind Vorstellungen eines Weiterlebens der *Seele*[34] nach dem Tod für die Wahrnehmung von Kontinuität von großer Bedeutung. Hinzu kommt die Erfahrung andauernder gegenseitiger Beziehungen zwischen Lebenden und Verstorbenen, die in Todes- bzw. Bestattungsritualen gestaltet werden.[35] Dabei können die individuellen ‚Erlösungsvorstellungen' nicht vom rituellen Vollzug getrennt werden, denn die Rituale werden zumindest als Unterstützung, in der Regel aber sogar als notwendig für die Ermöglichung der erwünschten Individualeschatologie verstanden. Die durchgeführten Rituale und das Schicksal der *Seele* nach dem physischen Tod des Körpers sind so aufs engste miteinander verbunden.

Für die Wahrnehmung einer starken Kontinuität ist es für die Betroffenen nicht unbedingt erforderlich, eine reflektierte, theologisch begründete und komplexe Theorie zu besitzen. Meine Informanten und die von mir bearbeitete Literatur verwenden häufig in engem Zusammenhang mit dem Terminus *Seele* den Begriff *fravashi*. Vor allem von Laien wird selten deutlich zwischen *Seele* und *fravashi* differenziert. Tendenziell läßt sich jedoch sagen, dass als *Seele* (*urvan*) eine dem Menschen zunächst inhärente Wesenheit bezeichnet wird, die unabhängig vom physi-

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[34] Im Folgenden wird mit *Seele* der emische bzw. objektsprachliche Begriff *soul* übersetzt, der von meinen Informanten und der neueren indisch-zoroastrischen Literatur verwendet wird. Mit diesem englischen Begriff soll in der Regel der indigene Terminus *urvan* ausgedrückt werden.

[35] „According to Zoroastrianism the association between the deceased and his beloved relatives continues after death. If the survivors cherish his memory and endeavour to please the departed with their good thoughts, words and deeds, then the departed guide and help the living in their own inscrutable ways." Und etwas später: „On these occasions [Die Zeremonien am vierten, zehnten und dreißigsten Tag nach dem Tod, sowie an den Jahrestagen] the survivors remember the departed with love and respect and pray that the soul may not only find solace but may also progress in the world beyond." Dhalla, „Funeral Customs and Ceremonies of the Parsis in India", p. 42.

schen Tod des Körpers fortexistiert, mit ihm aber weiterhin in gewisser Weise in Verbindung steht. Die *fravashi* hingegen wird eher als ein zugehöriges Gegenüber aufgefasst und oft als „guardian spirit" oder auch „guardian angel" beschrieben. Sie gilt als Orientierung gebende, individuelle Instanz für den Menschen bzw. für seine *Seele*.

Physischer Körper, *Seele* bzw. *fravashi* und ritueller Vollzug stehen während der ersten vier Tage nach dem Eintritt des physischen Todes in einem engen Beziehungsgeflecht miteinander. Dabei wird von den Hinterbliebenen der Kontakt zur *Seele* des Verstorbenen aufrechterhalten, bzw. aufgebaut, der Kontakt zu seinem physischen Körper jedoch schrittweise abgebrochen. Aus der Sicht der Teilnehmer findet parallel dazu auch ein Lösungs- und Angliederungsprozess auf Seiten des Verstorbenen statt. Während letzterer die irdische Welt hinter sich zurücklässt, schließt er sich der jenseitigen Welt an. All dies wird im Ritual gestaltet bzw. durch das Ritual unterstützt, wenn nicht sogar erst ermöglicht.

Kontinuität wird so auf zwei Ebenen konstruiert: Zum einen besteht in der Weiterexistenz von *Seele* und *fravashi* ein individuelles Überdauern des physischen Todes, zum anderen wird die Beziehung zwischen Lebenden und Verstorbenen aufrechterhalten. Letzteres geschieht in den Ritualen durch die direkte Ansprache der *Seelen* bzw. *fravashis* oder auch bestimmter Wesenheiten, die mit dem Wohlergehen der *Seelen* bzw. *fravashis* in Verbindung gebracht werden. Besonders intensiv wird der Kontakt während der ersten vier Tage gehalten, aber auch lange darüber hinaus. Einige Familien lassen noch fünfzig Jahre nach dem Tod eines Verwandten jährliche Zeremonien vollziehen, üblich ist es zumindest in den folgenden vier Jahren.

Unter anderem vom vierten bis zum zehnten Tag nach dem Todestag werden *stum*-Rituale durchgeführt. Mit allen anderen *fravashis* wird auch der Verstorbene angesprochen, dessen *fravashi* und *Seele* das Ritual im Besonderen gewidmet ist. Neben der Rezitation von Yasna 26 spielt eine zeremonielle Mahlzeit eine entscheidende Rolle. Die *Seele* des Toten soll mit dem Ritual ‚versorgt' und während ihres Gerichtes und der folgenden Jenseitsreise unterstützt werden. Die gegenseitige Beziehung zwischen Verstorbenen und Hinterbliebenen wird in dem *stum*-Ritual besonders zum Ausdruck gebracht. Die *fravashis* der Toten bitten die Lebenden um ihre Fürsorge: „Who will laud, venerate, extol, bless us? Who will welcome us with hands bearing food and clothes, with cor-

rectly ordered praise?..."[36] So wie die *Seelen* und *fravashis* von den Hinterbliebenen Fürsorge erfahren, so rechnen die Lebenden mit dem Segen der Toten. Während der *stum*-Rituale und der jährlichen *muktad*-Zeremonien wird von einer Anwesenheit, einer ‚Rückkehr' *fravashis* in die irdische Welt ausgegangen. Kotwal und Choksy betonen in ihrem Aufsatz im vorliegenden Band die enge Verbindung zwischen Lebenden und Toten: „The ritual [das *stum*-Ritual], like other Zoroastrian rites involving both order and afterlife, create in the minds of devotees a pious nexus between the living and the dead across the corporeal and the spiritual realms".[37]

Kontinuität als „Framing" des Bruches innerhalb des Ritualkomplexes

Kontinuität wird auch innerhalb der Struktur des gesamten Ritualkomplexes konstruiert. Dieser gliedert sich in verschiedene Abschnitte, die zum Teil die rituelle Konstruktion des Bruches darstellen. Diese ‚Bruchstellen' werden jedoch von einer Kontinuität gewissermaßen eingerahmt.

Bereits der physische Tod, die Bruchstelle, die die Ursache für die folgenden rituellen Konstruktionen bildet, wird in manchen Familien von einer Kontinuität sozusagen unterlegt. Schon vor Eintritt des Todes wird ein Öllämpchen angezündet und mit der Rezitation des *ashem vohu*[38] begonnen. Weder wird nun die Rezitation mit dem Tod abgebrochen noch wird das Öllämpchen gelöscht, sondern beides wird darüber hinaus noch für einige Zeit beibehalten.

In ähnlicher Weise treffen Bruch und Kontinuität im Ritual bei dem sogenannten *geh-sarna*-Ritual im *bangli* zusammen. Die Priester beginnen ca eine Stunde vor dem Forttragen der Leiche zum *dakhma* mit dem Ritual. Sie rezitieren die erste *Gatha* (*ahunavaiti gatha*) Yasna 28–34,[39] wobei sie bei Yasna 31.4 ihren Vortrag unterbrechen. Nun heben die *nasesalars* die auf einer Steinplattform liegende Leiche auf die Totenbahre. Während dieser Handlung wenden alle Teilnehmer—Priester und

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[36] F.M. Kotwal/J.K. Choksy, „To Praise the Souls of the Deceased and the Immortal Spirits of the Righteous Ones: The Staomi or Stūm Ritual", in diesem Band, S. 391.

[37] Kotwal/Choksy, „To Praise the Souls of the Deceased and the Immortal Spirits of the Righteous Ones: The Staomi or Stūm Ritual", S. 391.

[38] Diese innerhalb zoroastrischer Ritualpraxis häufig rezitierte altavestische Sakralformel findet sich in den Yasna 27, 14. Viele Parsen sehen sie als von Zarathustra stammendes Gebet an.

[39] Die altavestischen Gatha werden von den Parsen auf Zarathustra zurückgeführt.

Laien—die Blicke ab, was mit der durch die Leiche bei Bewegung in besonderem Maße ausgehenden Infektionsgefahr begründet wird.[40] Der tote Körper wird also während der Umbettung in ganz besonderer Weise mit dem Bereich *Ahrimans*[41] identifiziert und die Konstruktion des Bruches mit ihrer zoroastrischen Konzeption des Einbruchs der Kräfte *Ahrimans* in die Welt *Ahura mazdas* findet hier wiederum ihren rituellen Ausdruck. Nach dieser gefahrvollen Umbettung und einer anschließenden Hundebeschau (*sagdid*) fahren die Priester mit der Rezitation der *ahunavaiti gatha* fort. So rahmt die *Gatha*-Rezitation den mit der rituellen Umbettung zum Ausdruck kommenden Bruch ein.

Eine dritte Verschränkung von Kontinuität und Bruch findet sich in dem Zeit-Raum, in dem die Leiche vom *bangli* zum Turm getragen wird. Hier verlässt der Leichnam den Bereich der Lebenden und bewegt sich auf den Bereich der toten Körper, den *dakhma,* zu. Die *Seele* geht diesen Weg nach Ansicht vieler Zoroastrier nicht mehr mit, sie verweilt am *bangli*, an dem Ort, an dem die letzten Zeremonien für den Verstorbenen stattgefunden haben. Körper und Seele haben sich nun bis zu einem gewissen Grad räumlich voneinander getrennt. So steht dieser Weg- und Zeitabschnitt, vom Verlassen des *bangli* bis zur Ablage der Leiche im Turm, für den Bruch. Alle diejenigen, die der Leiche auf dem Weg zum *dakhma* folgen nehmen den *baj*, d.h. sie rezitieren den Anfang eines Gebetstextes und treten in rituelle Verbindung.[42] Wenn sie durch das Klatschen der *nasesalars* von der abgeschlossenen Niederlegung der Leiche im Turm benachrichtigt werden, rezitieren sie den zweiten Teil des *baj*-Textes und lösen die rituelle Verbindung. So wird auch hier die rituelle Darstellung des Bruches durch eine rituelle Konstruktion von Kontinuität eingerahmt.

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[40] „The priests turn their faces away, for it is believed that if eye contact takes place between the priests and the corpse demons, then affliction and harm may befall the priests." Mistree, *Zoroastrianism. An Ethnic Perspective*, p. 57. „It is said that one should turn one's face away from the body when it is lifted on to the bier. The probable reason for this is to avoid inhaling the germs when it is moved." Manekshaw, *Parsi Food and Customs. The essential Parsi Cookbook*, p. 68.

[41] *Ahriman* (mittelpersisch) gilt als „evil spirit", als eine Art Gegenpol der guten Kräfte *Ahura mazdas. Ahura mazda* (avest.) wird von den Parsen im Englischen mit „God" oder „Lord Wisdom" wiedergegeben und gilt als der Gott, auf den Zarathustra sich bezog. Auf *Ahriman* sind böse Einflüsse und letztlich auch der physische Tod zurückzuführen.

[42] Rituelle Verbindung (*paiwand*) besteht, wenn zwei Menschen jeweils ein Stoff- oder Schnurende halten.

Bruch und Kontinuität im Verhältnis von Körper und Seele

Ein weiterer, für das Verständnis der Todesrituale der Parsen wesentlicher Aspekt ist das sich im bzw. mit dem Ritual gestaltende Verhältnis von totem Körper und weiter existierender *Seele*. Da mit dem toten Körper der Bruch, mit der fortexistierenden *Seele* jedoch die Kontinuität verbunden wird, verschränken sich im Ritual auf intensive Weise Bruch und Kontinuität.

Nicht nur die Lebenden und der Leichnam erleben während des Bestattungsrituals die oben erläuterte zunehmende Distanzierung, auch die *Seele* des Verstorbenen und sein toter Körper entfernen sich voneinander. Kurz nach dem physischen Tod befindet sich die *Seele* über dem Kopf des Toten. Sie begleitet den Leichnam zu den Bestattungsanlagen und erlebt dort die Zeremonien im *bangli*. Wenn der Körper jedoch zu den Türmen getragen wird, verbleibt sie im *bangli*, an dem Ort, an dem das *geh-sarna*-Ritual durchgeführt wurde. Diese Konstruktion wird verständlich, wenn man sich vor Augen führt, dass der für den Bruch stehende Körper nach diesem Ritual zum endgültigen ‚Ort des Todes‘ getragen wird. Die *Seele* hingegen steht für die Kontinuität – ja, ist in gewisser Weise die Kontinuität selbst. Die Wege von totem Körper und weiterlebender *Seele* haben sich nun voneinander getrennt, wenn sie auch noch nicht zu ihrem „Ende" oder an ihr Ziel gekommen sind. Verständlich wird diese Konzeption, wenn man die Bedeutung bedenkt, die dem *geh-sarna*-Ritual zugesprochen wird: „... it is believed that the potency of the prayer breaks the shackles of attachment which the soul of the deceased may have for this corporeal world."[43] Die Rezitation der *ahunavaiti-gatha* ist es, die nach der Ansicht meiner Informanten zum Bruch (*break*) zwischen Körper und *Seele* führt. Der aufgrund seiner „Ausströmung" als besonders gefahrvoll angesehene Vorgang der Umbettung von der Steinplattform auf die Totenbahre verdeutlicht diesen Wechsel im Verhältnis von Körper und *Seele*. Wie bereits erwähnt, verbleibt die *Seele* für die nächsten Tage in der Nähe der Steinplattform, der Körper jedoch wird auf der Totenbahre zum *dakhma* getragen. Mit dieser Verortung der *Seele* wird auch die Notwendigkeit begründet, die folgenden Rituale im *bangli* und nicht in einem anderen Tempel auszuführen.[44]

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[43] Dhalla, „Funeral Customs and Ceremonies of the Parsis in India", p. 15.

[44] Wie oben erwähnt wurde, werden allerdings bestimmte Rituale zusätzlich in anderen Tempeln bzw. dem Familientempel in Auftrag gegeben.

Der nächste entscheidende Schritt für die *Seele* geschieht im Zeitraum zwischen der Abenddämmerung des dritten und der Morgendämmerung des vierten Tages. Die *Seele* erreicht nun die *cinvat*-Brücke, den Schwellenraum des Mythos, der Erde und Jenseits miteinander verbindet. An diesem Ort erwartet die häufig als unruhig und ängstlich beschriebene *Seele* ein Gericht, mit dem sich ihr künftiges Schicksal entscheidet, hier verlässt sie den irdischen Raum der Lebenden.[45] Dementsprechend verlassen auch die Lebenden am vierten Tag das Bestattungsgelände, und alle weiteren Zeremonien können zu Hause oder in einem Tempel stattfinden. Dem im Mythos konstituierten Wechsel entspricht auch eine veränderte Ritualpraxis. Das Weiterleben von *Seelen* bzw. *fravashis* begründet die fortdauernde Fürsorge durch die Hinterbliebenen. Zum Tragen kommt nun zum Beispiel ab dem vierten Tag das oben erwähnte *stum*-Ritual, das rituelle Speisen der *Seele* bzw. der *fravashi*. Den Kontinuitäts-Konzeptionen im Mythos entsprechen also die rituellen Konstruktionen von Kontinuität. Zu erinnern ist hier noch einmal im Gegensatz dazu an den radikal der Nicht-Existenz anheim gegebenen Körper.[46]

DIE WECHSELSEITIGE BEDINGTHEIT VON BRUCH UND KONTINUITÄT

Die Beispiele des westeuropäischen, insbesondere westdeutschen Umgangs mit dem Tod zeigten, dass mit der Abnahme von Kontinuitäts-Konzeptionen eine Verflachung bis hin zu einem Verschwinden von rituellen Bruch-Konstruktionen einhergeht. Auf der anderen Seite lassen sich bei neuen, individuell gestalteten Bestattungsformen sowohl betonte Konstruktionen des Bruches als auch starke Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen beobachten.

Ein weiteres Beispiel für dieses Zusammentreffen bietet die Bestattungspraxis der Parsen in Bombay, die in besonders ausgeprägter Weise den mit dem Tod erfahrenen Bruch und ebenso die über den Tod hinaus wahrgenommene Kontinuität rituell umsetzt. Dabei sind beide Konzep-

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[45] Siehe hierzu z .B. Dhalla, „Funeral Customs and Ceremonies of the Parsis in India", pp. 40–41; Mistree, *Zoroastrianism. An Ethnic Perspective*, pp. 51–52.

[46] Der bei vielen Familien mehrmals im Jahr übliche Besuch der Bestattungsanlagen ist möglicherweise als eine Art Pendant der rituellen Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen zu deuten, da mit dem *doongerwadi* der Ort aufgesucht wird, an dem sich der Bruch rituell fassbar ereignet hat.

tionen eng miteinander verbunden und stehen innerhalb der Struktur des rituellen Vollzuges der ersten vier Tage nicht bezugslos nebeneinander. Besondere Bruch-Konstruktionen werden durch Kontinuitäts-Konstruktionen ,eingerahmt'. Die *Seele* des Toten und die Hinterbliebenen erfahren einen Ablösungsprozess vom physischen Körper des Toten und tragen damit dem durch den Tod hervorgebrachten Bruch Rechnung. Gleichzeitig vollziehen sich jedoch auch zwei Prozesse, die mit Kontinuität verbunden sind. Die Hinterbliebenen bauen einen rituellen Kontakt zur *Seele* des Toten auf und diese gliedert sich der jenseitigen Welt an. Aus der emischen Perspektive bedingen diese Prozesse einander sogar. Für eine befriedigende Jenseitsreise, also für die erfolgreiche Realisation von Kontinuität, ist die konsequente Realisation des Bruches, nämlich die Vernichtung des physischen Körpers vonnöten.

Offensichtlich lassen sich beide Erfahrungen, Bruch und Kontinuität, als rituelle Konstruktionen in Todesritualen aufweisen. Zum Teil sind sie zudem in intensiver Weise miteinander verbunden und bedingen einander innerhalb der jeweiligen rituellen Strukturen. Es fragt sich, ob der emischen eine ritualtheoretische Perspektive entsprechen könnte, ob möglicherweise starke Konzeptionen von Kontinuität, die sich in Todesritualen ausdrücken, auch starke Konstruktionen des Bruches ermöglichen oder gar benötigen und ob umgekehrt ausgeprägte Darstellungen des Bruches auch eine Betonung der Kontinuität herausfordern. Das vorgestellte Material scheint jedenfalls darauf hinzuweisen.

ZOROASTRIAN AND TAOIST RITUAL: COSMOLOGY AND SACRED NUMEROLOGY[1]

Gernot Windfuhr

*La conception du Yasna que l'on vient d'exposer
repose, non sur le texte même,
qui à lui seul ne suffirait pas à révéler
le secret qu'il cache,
mais sur le cérémonial.*
James Darmesteter[2]

INTRODUCTION

In a number of publications and presentations I have suggested that the Zoroastrian Yasna ritual is intimately correlated with the Zoroastrian cosmos and calendar, and thus Time, in a nontrivial way.[3] In particular,

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[2] J. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, 3 vols. (Annales du Musée Guimet; Paris, 1892–93, repr. Paris, 1960); cited from vol. 1, p. LXXXIX.
[3] G. Windfuhr, "*Vohu Manah*: A Key to the Zoroastrian World Formula", in *Michigan Studies in Honor of George G. Cameron*, ed. L.L. Orlin (Ann Arbor, 1976), pp. 269–310; "Where Guardian Angels watch by Night and Evil Spirits fail, or Notes on the Zoroastrian Prototypical Heaven," in *Festschrift in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, ed. C. Meyers/M. O'Connor (Winona Lake/Indiana, 1983), pp. 625–645; "The Word in Zoroastrianism", *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 12, 1984, pp. 133–178; "Cosmology and the Zoroastrian *Yasna*-Ritual", paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, October 1986; "The Zoroastrian *Yasna*-Ritual: Space and Time", paper presented at the 197th Meeting of the American Oriental Society, Los Angeles, March 1987; "The Secret of the *Yasna*-Ritual in Zoroastrianism", paper presented at the FEZANA Conference on the Significance of Zoroastrian Ritual, Voorhees, N.J., July 6, 1991; "Das Geheimnis des zoroastrischen *Yasna*-Rituals", paper presented at the Second Meeting of the Societas Iranologica Europaea, Bamberg, Germany, September 30–October 4, 1991; "Significance of Zoroastrian Rituals", *FEZANA Journal* 4, 1991, pp. 14–15; "The Logic of the Holy Immortals in Zoroastrianism", *The Journal of the Research and Historical Preservation Committee*, vol. 2: *Proceedings of the*

it appears that the instruments on the central ritual table correlate with the 12 months of the Zoroastrians calendar. These observations are based on the simple premise that the Yasna ritual, its liturgical texts joined with the chapters of the Visperad, is prominently enacted during the seasonal festivals. This premise would seem to be supported by the likely origin of the ritual in its present form under the auspices of the Sasanian rulers, whose preoccupation with time reckoning and with the revolution of the stars and planets is well recognized.

It is only natural that without support by parallels in other traditions such analysis must remain rather tentative. This paper presents some comparative notes on the Taoist ritual and the Zoroastrian Yasna ritual. Both are the product of two ancient traditions that evolved independently, and are far apart in their histories and social contexts. But they share their cyclical restorative function that is correlated with communal seasonal festivals and with passages in the life cycle of individual members of the community, and both have enjoyed strong royal support for extended periods at one time or another. As such they both have cosmic ramifications. Being preliminary, these observations will initially focus on the more accessible aspect, relatively speaking, that is, the layout the ritual area in the two traditions.

The comparison may contribute to elucidate some cosmological aspects of the Yasna ritual. More cannot be claimed for it is unlikely that a global 'key' will ever be found to its magnificent verbal, temporal, and spatial architecture. It necessarily incorporates a multitude of accumulated layers and interpretations since its archaic beginnings. One has to recognize some basic facts about interpretations, here following Kristofer Schipper in his 'An Outline of Taoist ritual' (numbers added here):[4]

Second North American Gatha Conference, Houston, Texas, 1996, ed. S.J.H. Manekshaw/P.R. Ichaporia. (Womelsdorf/PA, 1996), pp. 237–274; "A Note on *aryaman*'s Social and Cosmic Setting", in *Aryan and Non-Aryan in South Asia: Evidence, Interpretation and Ideology*, eds J. Bronkhorst/M. Deshpande (Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora 5; Cambridge, 1999), pp. 295–336; "Cosmic Numerology in Zoroastrianism: The Four Sacred Manthras", in *Philologica et Linguistica. Historica, Pluralitas, Universitas. Festschrift für Helmut Humbach zum 80. Geburtstag am 4. Dezember 2001*, ed. W. Bisang/ M.G. Schmidt (Trier, 2001), pp. 563–571; "References to Zoroaster and Zoroastrian Time Reckoning in Rumi's Masnavi", in *Proceedings of the 3rd International Congress, K.R. Cama Institute, Bombay, January 6–9, 2000* (Mumbai, 2002), pp. 58–70.

[4] K.M. Schipper, "An Outline of Taoist Ritual", in *Essais sur le rituel*, 3, ed. A.-M. Blondeau/K.M. Schipper (Louvain/Paris, 1995), pp. 97–216; spec. p. 112.

(1) 'Explanations of ritual actions can be numerous; they may be contradictory, and are never exhaustive.'

(2) 'These theories, even when they are clad in scholarly garb, never amount to more than the assumptions on which they are founded.'

(3) 'That same holds to some extent for the diverse traditional interpretations.'

(4) 'The transcription of oral rites into written language by Taoists of all periods certainly did entail an amount of interpretational systematization,' based on the theories current at the time.

In particular, points 3 and 4, that is, repeated reinterpretation by the practitioners and their indigenous exegetes, is worthy of note.

It is a matter of common sense, as it were, that cyclical rituals like the Yasna have cosmic proportions. Like other ritual areas, the yasnic area should represent the cosmos, and its layers, and the passage of the ritual from its beginning to its end should represent cosmic cycles and epicycles. Moreover, a ritual that passed through the ages when the cosmos of the fixed stars was numbered (21 northern, 12 zodiacal, and 15 southern constellations), and numbers and proportions were seen as ultimate determinants, can naturally be expected to show traces of those interpretative overlays.

It is true that it has long been recognized that the grand architecture of the Yasna ritual encodes cosmic patterns. The ritual area and what is in it represents the cosmos. The material creations are the phenomenal representations of the divine, Ahura Mazda and the six Amr̥ta Spantas 'Holy Immortals', who are their spiritual guardian and are inherently present. Individually, for example, Wahu Manah, the guardian of beneficent animals, is represented in the animal products, such as the milk; Amr̥tāt, the guardian of plants, is represented by the various plant materials. The luminaries are represented, the Sun in the Fire, and the Moon in the crescent-shapes stands, and so forth. However, this kind of interpretations is rather elementary, and is therefore inadequate.[5]

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[5] As summarized by J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism. Their Survival and Renewal* (New York, 1966), pp. 85–87: "(the) figuration of the sun, moon, earth are easily recognizable. Fire is a rival or substitute of the sun: that is probably why it is placed on a circular vase. The moon is present in the form of the two metal crescents on which the *barsom* is repeatedly placed—a fecundity rite. As for the earth, it is the table, necessarily square (as earth was supposed to be), in front of which the chief priest sits. This cosmic symbolism is also attested in some details: the *darun* [consecrated bread], according to the Pahlavi Rivayat 56.1, is arranged like the world; it is

One should note that there has never been any suggestion that the *verbal architecture* of the Yasna is simple, at least not as far as the ancient kernel of the ritual text is concerned, that is, the combined Gathic and Haptahāti sections. This was again most recently shown by Almut Hintze,[6] who succinctly brought together research by numerous colleagues and her own. Such work has increasingly revealed the intricate and pervasive symmetric hierarchy that unites those central texts, and the liturgical text as a whole.

It is only proper to note that there are certain indicative passages in the Gathas themselves which, after all, are ritual texts, and replete with ritual terminology, and noted for their multiple, but ordered cross-referentiality and what may be characterized as sustained sacred double entendre, sacred puns.

A case in point is the Gathic term *rwaisa*. When seen in the context of the ritual, its double entendre becomes evident. The term occurs exactly three times in the Gathas, twice at the beginning of the second Gatha, the Uštawatī, Y. 43.4 and 6, and thus immediately following the interstitial seven chapters of the Haptathāti, and once in the fourth Gatha, the Wohuxšaθra, Y. 51.6. Most telling in the present context appears to be Y. 43.6:

ahmī	*spantā*	*θwā manyū*	*rwaisai jasah*
mazdā(h)	*xšaθrā*	*ahmi wahū*	*manahā*
yahya	*šyauθnāiš*	*gaiθāh artā*	*frādantai*
aibyah	*ratuNš*	*sanhati*	*aramatiš*
Θwahya	*xratauš*	*yam nai.ciš*	*dābayati*

"At the turning point (rwaisa) to which you come with your Spanta Manyu spirit, being Mazda through (your) power (Xšaθra), there through good thought (Wahu Manah) by the action of which the possessions are furthered through truth (Arta), rightmindedness (Aramati) pronounces judgments on these here, (the judgments) of your intellect, which nobody can deceive".[7]

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round like the world. Never is the position and orientation of the two priests a matter of indifference. It seems that this completes the cosmic definition of the ceremony in which all the elements take part: fire, water, vegetable and (in a state of weak survival) animal nature, and in which the sun, moon, and earth are symbolically present. The entire universe, as one may infer, is brought into play to avert the demons and death."

[6] A. Hintze, "On the Arrangement of the Avestan Yasna", in *Proceedings of the 3rd International Congress, K.R. Cama Institute, Bombay, January 6–9, 2000* (Mumbai, 2000), pp. 110–123.

[7] Keeping the translation by H. Humbach/P. Ichaporia, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra. A New Translation of the Gathas* (Heidelberg, 1994), pp. 60–61, but with approximate reconstructed phonology.

Already Darmesteter[8] had recognized that the term *rwaisa* implies the metaphor of a hippodrome, and specifically it refers to the far-end of the circular racecourse, as most recently pointed out by Almut Hintze.[9] It appears that the term in this passage, while being recited by the priest, does not only refer to the cosmic racecourse, but also to the ritual table at which he stands, and which is still known as *urwēs/urwīs*.

Cosmic history is most evident in the grand cosmogonic section of Yasna 44. 1–7. But more relevant for the present discussion is a prominent passage that appears in the 'Gatha of the Choice', Y. 30.5:

ayāh	*maniwāh*	*warata*	*yah drugwāh*	*acištā wr̥zyā*
artam	*manyuš*	*spaništah*	*yah xrauždištanh*	*asānah wastai*
yai.ca	*xšnaušan*	*ahuram*	*haθyāiš šyauθnāiš*	*frawr̥t mazdām*

"Of these two spirits the deceitful one chooses to do the worst things, but the most holy spirit, clothed in the hardest stones, chooses truth, as do those who, with true actions, devotedly gratify Mazda Ahura".[10]

This is a passage that would seem to allude to a crucial event in the elaborated myth of eschatological history, specifically the reinforcement of the sky after the attack of the forces of Evil in the middle of time in the year 6000. It also implies not only the protective, but also the soteriological function of the sky, its luminaries and constellations, and their orderly revolution. More remotely, it retains the notion of Father Sky, and the 'stony' nature of the latter. But it is also a reminder of the fact that the knowledge of the physical sky played an essential role in the perception of cosmic truth, which is often an uneasy topic for modern studies.

Turning to sacred numerology, this has always been in plain view, and emphasized by its practitioners, although hardly ever referred to by that technical term. 21 is the number superimposed on the *ahunawar* manthra,[11] the true first stanza of the Gathas, Y. 27.13. It functions as the guiding principle for such diverse sets as the 21 Nasks of the Sasanian canon, and of the 21 barsom twigs in the High Yasna. The number 24 is the number of sections into which the text of the Yasna has been di-

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[8] Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. 1, LXVII n.

[9] A. Hintze, *'Lohn' im Indoiranischen. Eine semantische Studie des Rigveda und Avesta* (Wiesbaden, 2000), p. 235.

[10] Humbach/Ichaporia, *The Heritage of Zarathushtra*, pp. 30–31.

[11] The stanza has 20 words, and two enclitics, but only one is counted to arrive at the number 21.

vided.[12] More closely related to cyclical time, 24 is also the number of the chapters of the Visperad, which are combined with the Yasnic text in the seasonal festivals. The number 72 = 3 x 24, is the sacred number of the sum-total of the chapters of the Yasna. In abstraction, the performance of the five Yasnas on the five extra days, i.e. the 'Gatha' days at the end of the religious year of 360 days, adds up to 5 x 72 = 360 days, and incorporates the number of the year. If seen as a reflex of Pythagorean and later speculation, these five draw the figure of Pentagon in a Circle in Time. The number 12 is that of the months of the Zoroastrian calendar. As I have shown,[13] by their correspondences they form four Trigons, which reflect the Persian astrological notion of the layered cycles of the Triplicities.[14] At the same time, they form two intertwined Hexagons. To the outsider, the continuous insistence on the exact numbers of repetitions, on the various numbers of ritual twigs/wires, and so on, can only be perplexing.

On a larger scale, the daily performance of 72 chapters results in the total of 72 x 360 = 25920 per year. This is the 'standardized' traditional Great Year, reflecting the number of years it takes for one full cycle of the precession of the equinoxes around the axis of the ecliptic, or 12 x 2160, the latter number being the years for the passage of the precession through one zodiacal sign of 30° each.[15]

THE TAOIST RITUAL

Admittedly, I have no more than a most rudimentary understanding of the Taoist ritual, let alone of its cultural and historical context. For this exploratory essay I rely mainly on the works by Kristofer Schipper and Michael Saso.[16]

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[12] Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 155–157.

[13] For example, Windfuhr, "Vohu Manah", p. 296, and Windfuhr, "The Logic of the Holy Immortals", p. 267.

[14] Cf. E. Kennedy, "Ramifications of the World-Year Concept in Islamic Astrology", in *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of the History of Science* (Paris, 1964), pp. 23–45; spec. pp. 30 ff.

[15] Discussed in Windfuhr, "References to Zoroaster and Zoroastrian Time Reckoning in Rumi's Masnavi".

[16] See note 4 and following footnotes.

In brief overview,[17] the Taoist ritual originates in what is characterized as shamanistic ritual, the time roughly contemporary with the Achaemenid empire. It experienced a major consolidation under imperial auspices in the second century A.D., when Buddhist influence is first noted, and later when its ritual texts were finally collected in a canon under the auspices of the post-Mongolian Ming dynasty. Today it is reduced to a marginal status. The fundamental view of Chinese cosmology is based on correlative thought, where the macrocosmos, microcosmos, and the state, are correlated in complex spatial, temporal, and numerological patterns.

In terms of ideological outlook, there is a fundamental distinction between the Yasna and the Taoist ritual: the indifference of the latter with regard to any particular religious dogma or affiliation, in particular Confucian or Buddhist. That is, the Taoist attitude is value neutral and strictly professional healing. The product to be achieved is likewise quite distinct. It is not the preparation of the healing elixir and its oblation to the living water, but the oblation of sacred writs by fire. However, there is a distant similarity between the Zoroastrian mortar and the Taoist incense burner in the center of the area, which ultimately may represent the alchemical furnace from which the elixir of life and precious metals are refined.[18]

To highlight the similarities: Both the Zoroastrian and the Taoist ritual are prominently seasonal, but also involve longer-range cycles, such as 60 years in Taoist communal rejuvenation rites. In both, the layout of the ritual area is cosmic, and represents celestial and terrestrial, as well as temporal cycles and structures. They have restorative function that is applied to both the community and the individual. They involve sacred numerology. Finally, the Taoist ritual area as a whole, like the village temple and the household altar, are modeled on the structure of the triple cosmos, which may be seen as well in the corresponding Zoroastrian structures.

The fundamental correlative thought of Chinese cosmology, interlinking macrocosm, microcosm, and the state, would appear to be largely true for the Zoroastrian view, perhaps even the inclusion of the state in this equation during Sasanian times.

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[17] I also thank my colleagues Phillip Ivanhoe and Robert Sharf at the University of Michigan for some brief discussions. Neither should be blamed for blunders in my inadequate understanding.

[18] M.R. Saso, *Taoism and the Rite of Cosmic Renewal* (New York, 1972; 2nd ed. Pullman/Wash., 1990), p. 10.

On a less mundane level, Kristofer Schipper and Wang Hsiu-huei in their article entitled 'Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual'[19] offer insights into the Taoist ritual which would seem to be eminently appropriate for the Zoroastrian Yasna as well (numbers added here):

(1) 'The oblation of this epistemological model of the universe was, in Taoist thought, not only an act of accomplishment inviting renewal by making way for a new cycle (as a recurrence in keeping with the cyclical phases) but also a way to compel the universe to conform to this model: a sacrifice to make the world sacred.'

(2) 'To oblate the cosmological canon was to make it work, to transform it into reality. Nature thus became a replica of the model, and this mirror image was embedded in the structure of the ritual action itself'.

(3) 'For the Taoists, the theoretical nature cycles illustrated the *ke,* that is the measured, normative, and regulating workings of the Tao.'

(4) 'By making cosmological models the very basis of the ritual structure, rituals became the expression of natural processes.'

(5) 'For this reason, Taoist ritual, Chinese calendrical science, and forms of other Chinese science, such as medicine, share a common set of fundamental representations that form a self-contained epistemological system.'

More specifically, the Taoist cult recognizes abstract cosmological concepts, only, and is centered around the so-called elements. These are not material, but are divisions, or phases, of cosmic cycles: Masculine-feminine Yin-Yang, the 5 Elements, 8 Trigrams, 64-four Hexagrams, 10 Stems and 12 Branches, 24 Energy Nodes, and the 28 Lunar Mansions. All are nested.

The same abstract conceptual approach appears to be true for Zoroastrianism. This may be shown in regard to the so-called elements, or creations, which represent states of matter rather than elements per se, in an intricate complementary pattern; they correspond to the three pairs of Holy Immortals, Amṛta Spantas, who guard these six:[20]

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[19] K.M. Schipper/W. Hsiu-huei, "Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual", in *Time, Science, and Society in China and The West*, ed. J.T. Fraser/N. Lawrence/F.C. Haber (*The Study of Time*, 5; Amherst, 1986), pp. 185–205; pp. 187, 188.

[20] First suggested 1976 in Windfuhr, "Vohu Manah", p. 299.

1	Wahu Manah	Aramati	Good Mind	Proper Mind
2	Arta	Harwatāt	Order	Completeness
3	Xšaθra	Amr̥tāt	Rule	Immortality

soft	1 organic	fauna/'Animals'	earth	inorganic	soft
	2 gaseous	fire	water	liquid	
hard	3 inorganic	sky, metals	flora/'Plants'	organic	hard

TAOIST RITUAL AREA AND ZOROASTRIAN RITUAL AREA
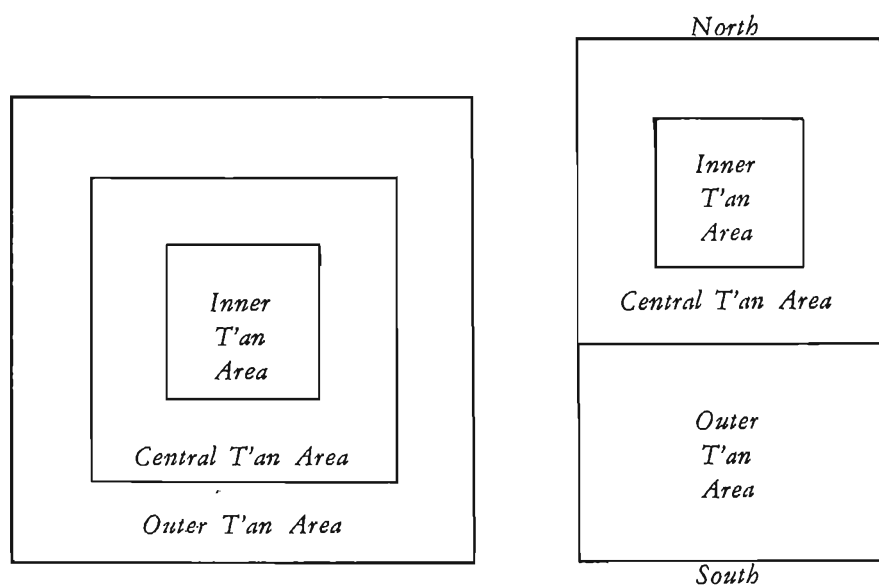
Fig.1. The Taoist altar, square and rectangular shapes

The basic facts about the layout of the Taoist ritual area are the following: The orientation of the sacred area is the South, even though, as seen in fig. 1,[21] the 'present-day' layout has an apparent north orientation, following the western representational custom. The 'older' arrangement consists of three mutually embedded precincts in the shape of squares, visually forming a figure where a central square is surrounded by two frames: Inner T'an Area, Central T'an Area, and Outer T'an Area. (*t'an* 'hut, temporary shelter' for hosting the gods), also called inner, middle, and outer altars. They represent specific components of the cosmos, and together the three vertical levels of the cosmos, as well as the progress from Outer to Inner Time.

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[21] Reproduced from Saso, *Taoism and the Rite of Cosmic Renewal*, p. 64. Repr. by permission from Washington State University. All rights reserved.

The 'present-day' arrangement is the altar used in southern Taiwan to-day.[22] It is the result of a simple shift: The outer area of the older arrangement is removed from the other two. Squares are as follows:

The outer altar
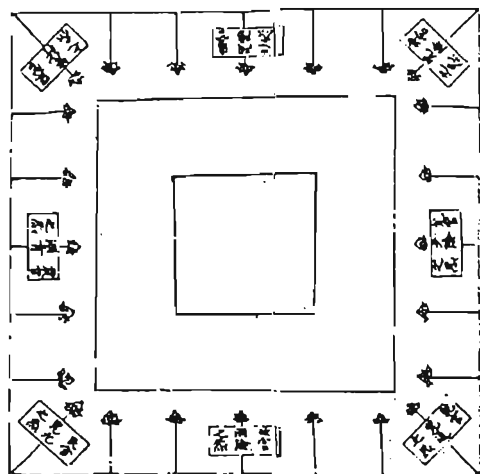
外壇止於離宮開一門出入用長纂九枚
短纂十六枚合二十五枚除離宮外餘悉
欄之播花燈纂相間如上法執威儀者每
壇一面分定三人遇步虛旋繞依次而行
常令一面有三人執威儀旋繞不可令踈
密不均也

Fig. 2. Outer altar

Following Schipper and Hsiu-huei,[23] the outer frame has 24 spaces between twenty-four pickets. It represents the liturgical calendar year of 360 days, divided into 24 solar periods of 15-days, each guarded by transcendent agents, or 'spirits'. They are arranged around the four cardinal points of the year, the equinoxes and solstices, with summer solstice in the South and winter solstice in the North.

Beyond this frame were installed groups of oil lamps (not shown here), which represent the 28 lunar nodes and were lighted after the rite of Making the New Fire.

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[22] Cf. J. Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York/London, 1987), pp. 36–37.

[23] Schipper/Hsiu-huei, "Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual", pp. 190–191.

The middle altar
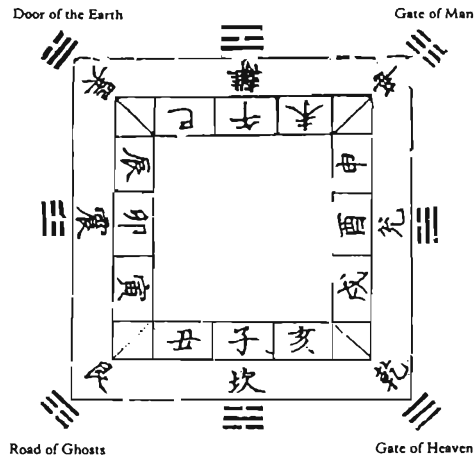
Fig. 3. Middle altar

This is where the rites of passage take place. As shown in fig. 3, its four corners represent Gates, arranged in form of an oblique cross of opposites as follows:

Gate of Earth	SE	SW	Gate of Man
Road of Ghosts	NE	NW	Gate of Heaven

These four corner Gates and the upright cross of the four cardinal points are connected with the eight Trigrams, which are symbolic of cyclical change, formed by triads combining solid and divided lines.

In turn, the Trigrams are correlated with the cycle of the twelve Branches, which are correlated with the twelve Chinese constellations, beginning at winter solstice in the northern center of the square.

The Nine Palaces

Fig. 4 is copied from Bruce Stewart[24] whose article provided further clarifying information and detail on the interrelationship between astronomy and ritual.

Summarizing those and descriptions by other scholars, the middle sphere as a whole is perceived as the basic structure, a nine-field square known as the Nine Palaces, or Halls of Light. Symmetrically, it represents a central field that is surrounded by eight fields, to each of which is assigned one of the eight Trigrams.

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[24] Stewart, "Astronomy in Ancient China", 1999; http://www.scivis.com/AC/hist/chinastro.html.
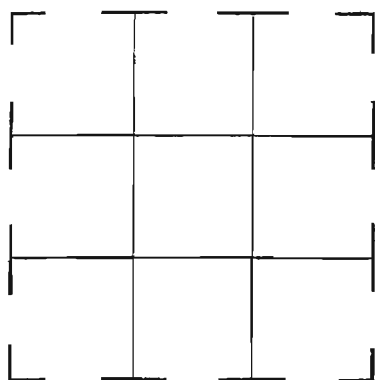
Fig. 4　The nine palaces

The total of twelve outer sides of the eight squares, shown with openings, likewise correlates with the twelve Branches, or constellations.

The origin of this nine-fold square is assumed to be an agricultural arrangement, in which eight farming plots circle a central well. In fact, the central square, when seen with elongated outer sides, which is the shape of an upright double cross, has the shape of the Chinese sign for 'well', *jing*.[25]

The nine-fold square is also the basic structure of the Ming Palace. It had twelve openings, or windows, to the outside, one for each calendrical constellation of the year. Thus, each side represented three months, or a season.

Inner altar

In the very center is the ritual table with an incense burner, at which the main officiant sits with two cantors (not shown here). The arrangement of the inner square is a single upright cross that represents the five directions, i.e. the center point and the four directions.

At each is placed a bushel of uncooked white rice (a measure of life). Inside each is a sacred writ (wooden tablet or paper with secret and unreadable symbols). These are known as the Real Writings, and are supposed to have appeared at the initial, cosmogonic eight-note Big-Bang. This third step in the ritual of constructing the sacred area thus reenacts the very first stage of the creation of the world, which includes the original revelation of the Tao, that is, the basic Taoist texts, the first holy book.

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[25]　The correlation of the 'well' and the Chinese sign was kindly pointed out by Professor Ivanhoe.

This rite completes the construction of the altar. From this point on, a nine-fold ritual of circulation can take place, designated by the general name of 'practicing the Tao'.

COMPARATIVE NOTES

The following observations briefly highlight the most salient similarities between the Taoist ritual and the Zoroastrian ritual practice as standard and authoritative of the Bhagariā priests of Navsari described by Kotwal and Boyd, with focus on the layout of the ritual areas.

The inner five directions

The correspondence between the five Chinese directions, which are correlated with the five virtues or 'elements', and five of the six Zoroastrian elements, or rather states of matter, was discussed by Windfuhr.[26] The additional sixth, which is 'animals' and lacks in Taoism, marks a major difference between the two systems. Following the pattern, 'animals' would provide the third dimension, verticality:

Chinese:	Center	N	E	S	W	
	earth	water	wood	fire	metal	
Iranian:	earth	water	plants	fire	sky, metals	animals

Orientation and Gates

The Taoist ritual area is oriented towards the South; so is the Zoroastrian ritual area as shown in fig. 5. The Zoroastrian main priest enters from the SE (see fig. 5, following page),[27] just like the Taoist officiant enters through the Gate of Earth in the SE.

The four gates in the Taoist altar contrast with the single SE 'gate' in the Yasna ritual area. It is well perceivable that prior to being confined to fixed fire-temples the Zoroastrian ritual area may have had four 'gates' as well.

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[26] Cf. Windfuhr, "Vohu Manah", pp. 300–302.
[27] Detailed in Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 85–86.
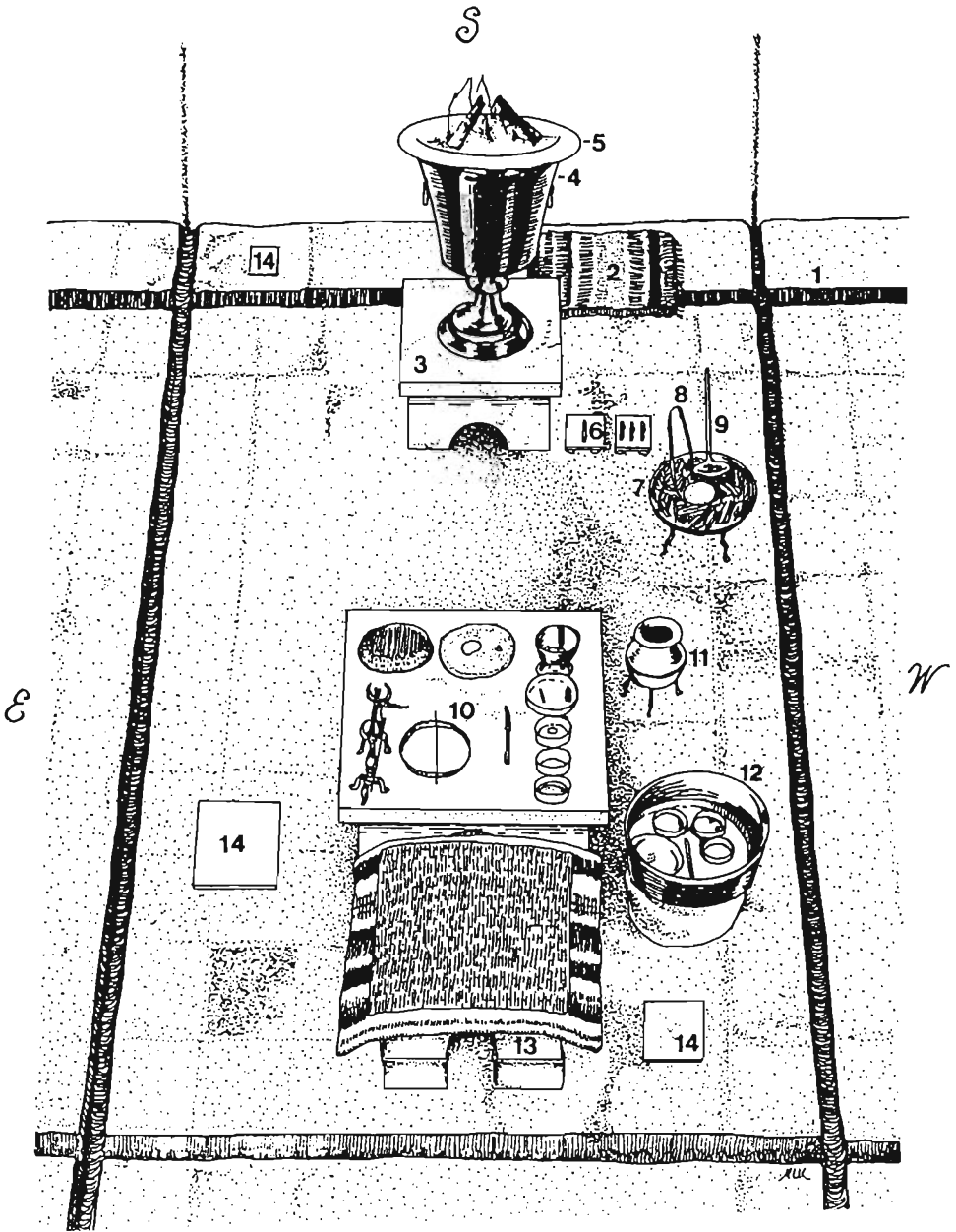
Fig. 5. Zoroastrian ritual area, Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 33.

The triple embedded structure

The Taoist altar consists of three components that represent the three vertical levels of the cosmos, as well as the three steps from outer to inner time. Similarly, the Zoroastrian area consists of three components: the ritual table in the north, the intermediate space (*andarag*), and the southern section with the fire stand. These three together, united by the protective furrow around them, similarly would appear to represent the ground, the atmosphere, and the sky of the luminaries with the Sun. But there is no immediate correlate to the three-step process from outer to inner time. However, given the hosting of the divine in the Yasna ritual, it may encode such connotations as well, especially considering the Zoroastrian notions of limited and unlimited time.

The Zoroastrian ritual area is rectangular. This shape corresponds to the later arrangement of the Taoist altar, which evolved out of a symmetric arrangement. It is likely that the Zoroastrian rectangle did likewise originate in three mutually embedded squares, symbolically arranged around a central fire, or well. This conjecture may be supported by the shift in the shape of the protective area of the major Zoroastrian purification ritual for individuals, the nine-day/night *barešnūm*, from symmetric-circular to rectangular, as has been convincingly suggested by Steblin-Kamensky also for primordial Yima's abode, *wara*.[28]

The twenty-four sections

In the Taoist ritual, there are twenty-four outer sections that represent units of fifteen days each and organize the annual circle of 360 degrees. There does not appear to be a corresponding physical structure in the Zoroastrian ritual. However, the number twenty-four does appear to have played a symbolic function, for it is the number of sections into which the text of theYasna has been divided.[29] More closely related to cyclical time, twenty-four is also the number of the chapters of the Visperad text, which are combined with the Yasnic text in the seasonal festivals. It is therefore possible that their number likewise once signified the twenty-four fifteen-day periods of the year.

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[28] I.M. Steblin-Kamensky, "Avestan *kəmčiṯ paiti čaθrušanam*", *East and West* 45, 1995, pp. 307–310.

[29] As shown by Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 155–157.

The eight-fold pattern

The eight Trigrams in the Taoist ritual are located at the four corners and the four cardinal points of the outer area. Together they mark the eight directions. These locations are exactly those of the eight priests who performed the ritual at the six (plus the great year-end festival) Zoroastrian high seasonal feasts, and are called upon one by one in the third chapter of the Avestan Visperad. Fig. 6 is copied from Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta* I, LXVII, which shows the distribution of the eight priests at a particular point of the Yasna ritual, indicated by numbers and their Avestan terms. However, it should be noted that they are arranged according to their function as given in the Avestan liturgical handbook, Nērangistān, not according to their proper place, which is also given there (see discussion of those positions below).

The Taoist Trigrams are assumed to symbolize patterns of change. It is possible that the combined ritual locations, tasks, and movements of the eight Zoroastrian priests had similar connotations the more so that they are systemically associated with Ahura Mazda, the divinity Srauša 'Auditor' and guide, and the six Holy Immortals, as well as with specific 'continents' (see further discussion below).
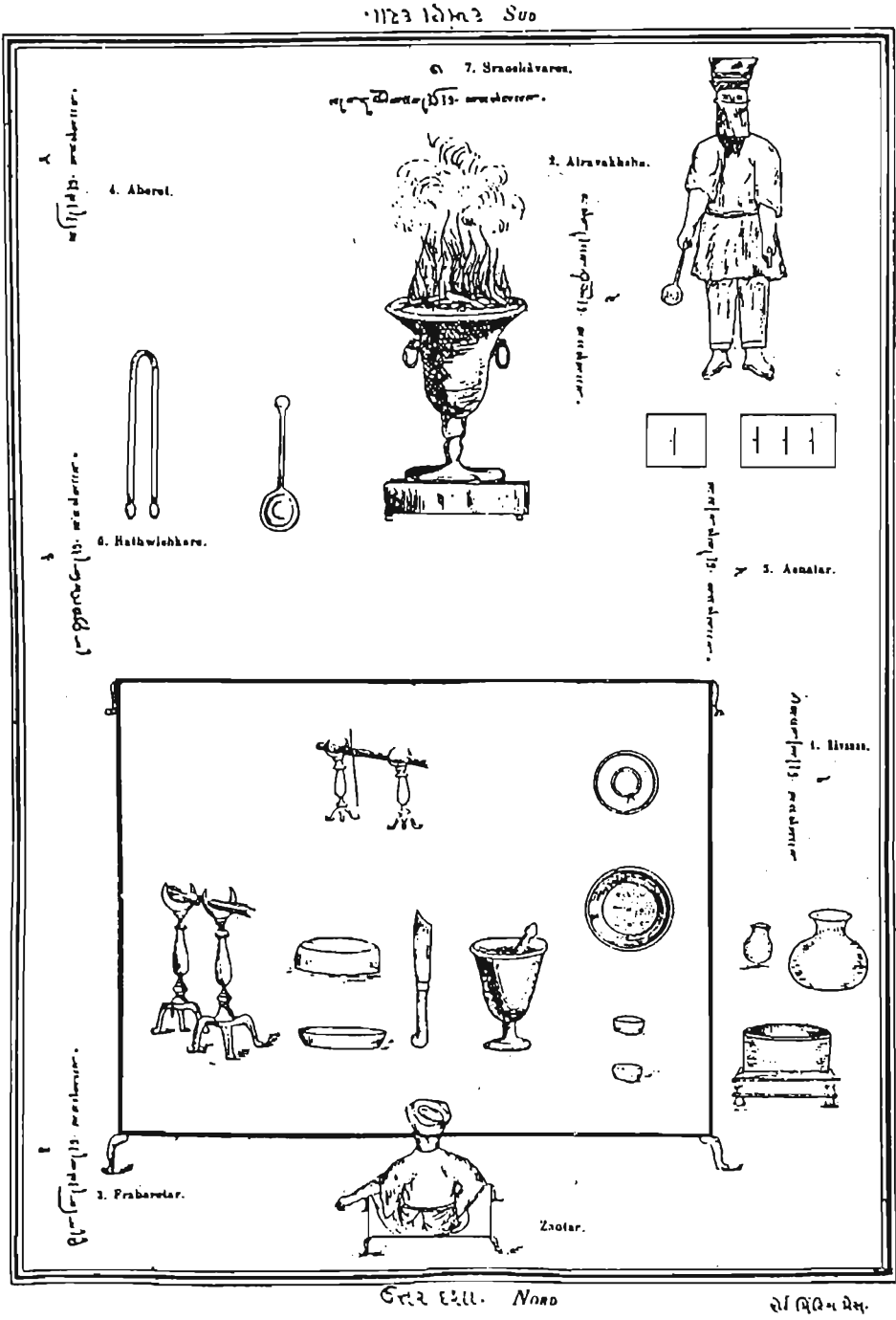
DISPOSITION GÉNÉRALE DU SACRIFICE

Fig. 6. The eight priests, Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta* I, LXVII

The nine-field square


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          II                 I      Hor.      XII
                                     19°
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	♌ Lion ♍ Ear of Corn ☿ *Mercury*	♋ Crab ♃ *Jupiter*	♊ Two Images ♌ *Dragon's* *Head* ♉ ☉x ☽ *Moon*	
III IMC				XI
IV	♎ Balance ♄ *Saturn*	Water Earth	♈ Lamb ☉ *Sun*	X MC
V	♏ Scorpion ♐ Centaur ☋ *Dragon's* *Tail*	♑ Goat ♂ *Mars*	♓ Fish ♒ Pail ♀ *Venus*	IX

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          VI       Occ.     VII              VIII
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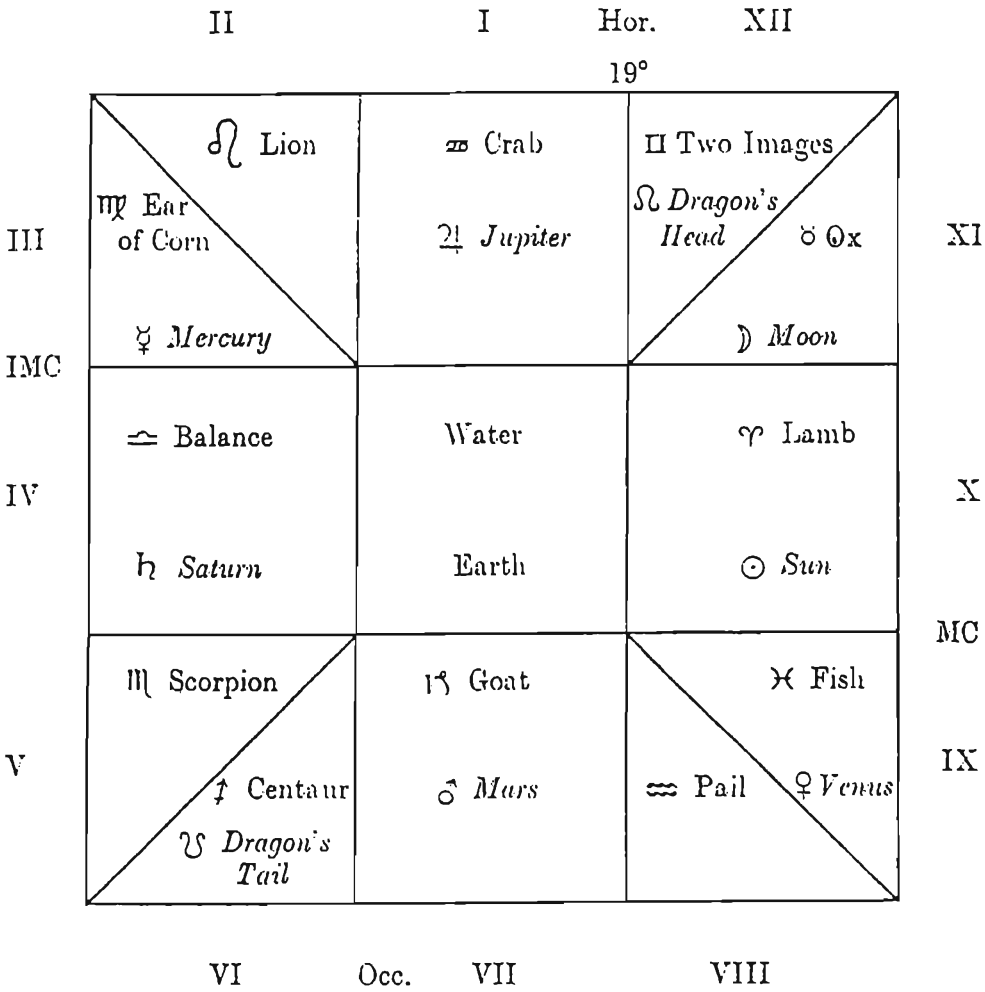
Fig. 7 Zoroastrian thema mundi, Bdh. 5,
MacKenzie, "Zoroastrian Astrology in the Bundahišn", p. 514.

As shown in fig. 4 above, the fundamental layout of the Taoist ritual is the nine-field square, with a central field, and twelve 12 sections, or openings, around the outer margin. These represent the twelve Branches, the Chinese constellations. This arrangement can be compared to two distinct patterns in Zoroastrian tradition: One pattern is highly advanced. It is the nine-field square, shown in fig. 7, that forms the basic pattern

underlying the 'Chaldean', or 'Babylonian', thema mundi horoscope, found in the Bundahišn, chapt. 5, that was discussed by MacKenzie (see further discussion below).[30]

The other pattern reaches far back in time. The origin of the fundamental nine-fold square is assumed in Taoist tradition to be an agricultural arrangement, in which eight farming plots circle a central well. The same fundamental square not only provides the basic shape of the Zoroastrian ritual area as a whole, but occurs twice more in the ritual area, as seen in fig. 8, which is reproduced from Kotwal and Boyd:
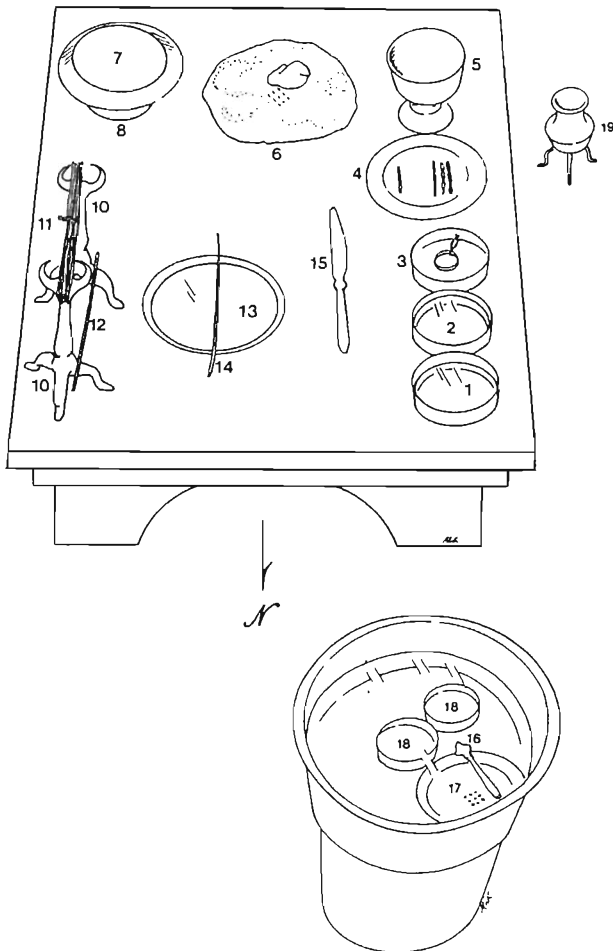
Fig. 8. Zoroastrian ritual table, Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 35.

(1) the nine indentations punched into the consecrated bread on the tray in the middle of the southern side of the ritual table, which is partaken by the main priest in the early phases of the ritual together with the consecrated drink;

(2) the nine holes in the sieve, which is repeatedly removed from and returned to the large water basin to the right back of the main priest, and is used to filter the increasingly potent mixture of the sacred drink.

The nine indentations in the bread would represent the aspect of a central agricultural field, while the nine holes in the sieve would represent the aspect of a central well. The traditional interpretation is that the nine holes represent a triple triad of Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds.[31]

The twelve Taoist openings and the twelve Zoroastrian instruments

Less obvious, the twelve-fold pattern made by the twelve openings around the perimeter of Taoist nine-field square is found on the Zoroastrian ritual table: It is reflected in the arrangements and functions of the instruments. This becomes apparent when all twelve instruments are positioned in their basic position, as shown in fig. 9, which is an abstracted representation of the arrangement of the twelve instruments, suggested by Windfuhr.[32] The instruments form sets of three on each of the four sides of the ritual table as follows:

> on the north side, a *zōhr* 'libation' cup, a knife, and a milk bowl;
> on the south side, a mortar, a bread bowl, and a covered reserve cup;
> on the west side, a twig bowl, a cup with a ring, and a *zōhr* cup;
> on the east side, a N-stand, a S-stand, and a *parahōm* cup.

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[31] J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1922), p. 296.

[32] First presented 1986 in a paper, Windfuhr, "Cosmology and the Zoroastrian *Yasna-Ritual*".
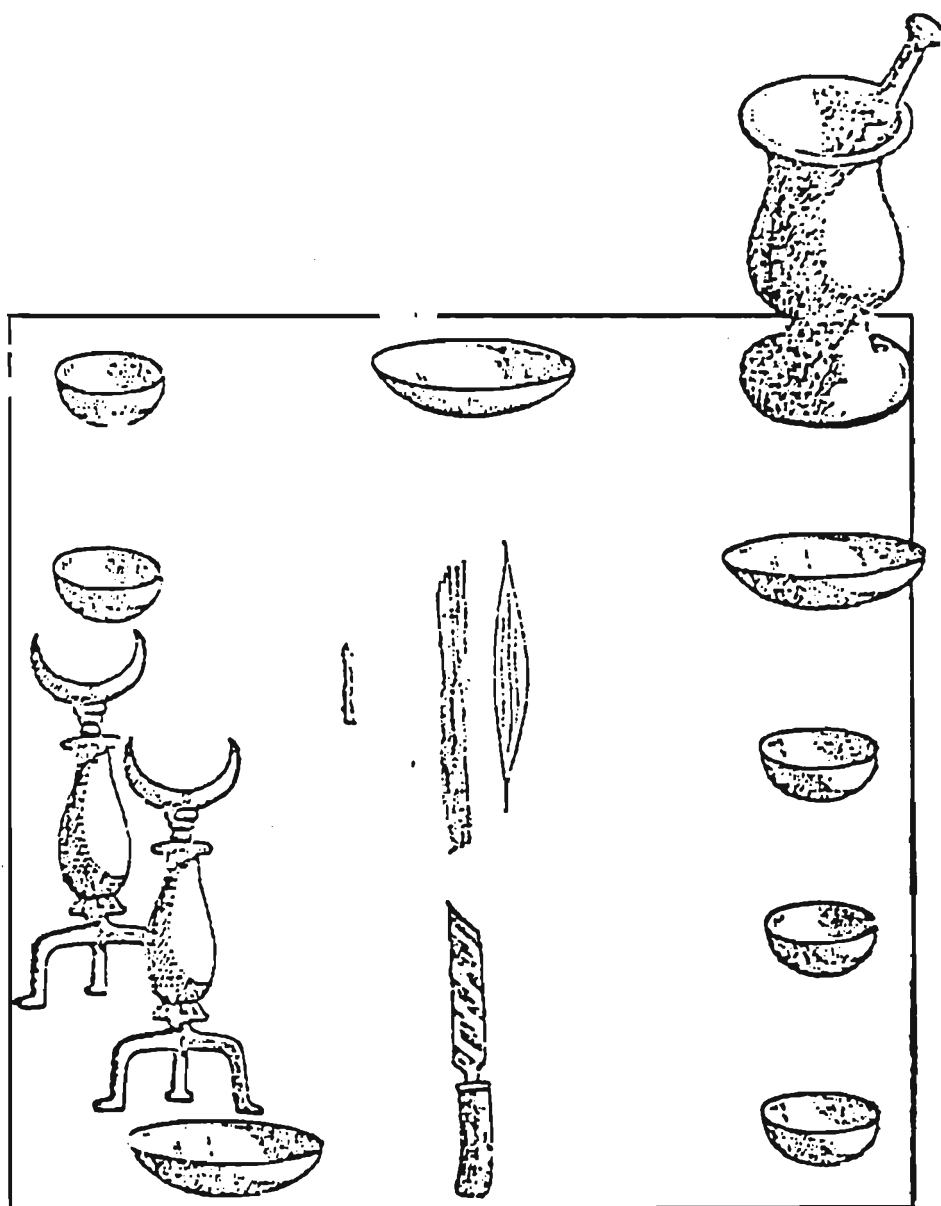
Arrangement of implements

Fig. 9. Idealized arrangement,
Windfuhr, "The Logic of the Holy Immortals in Zoroastrianism", p. 269.

The twelve yasnic instruments and the Zoroastrian calendar
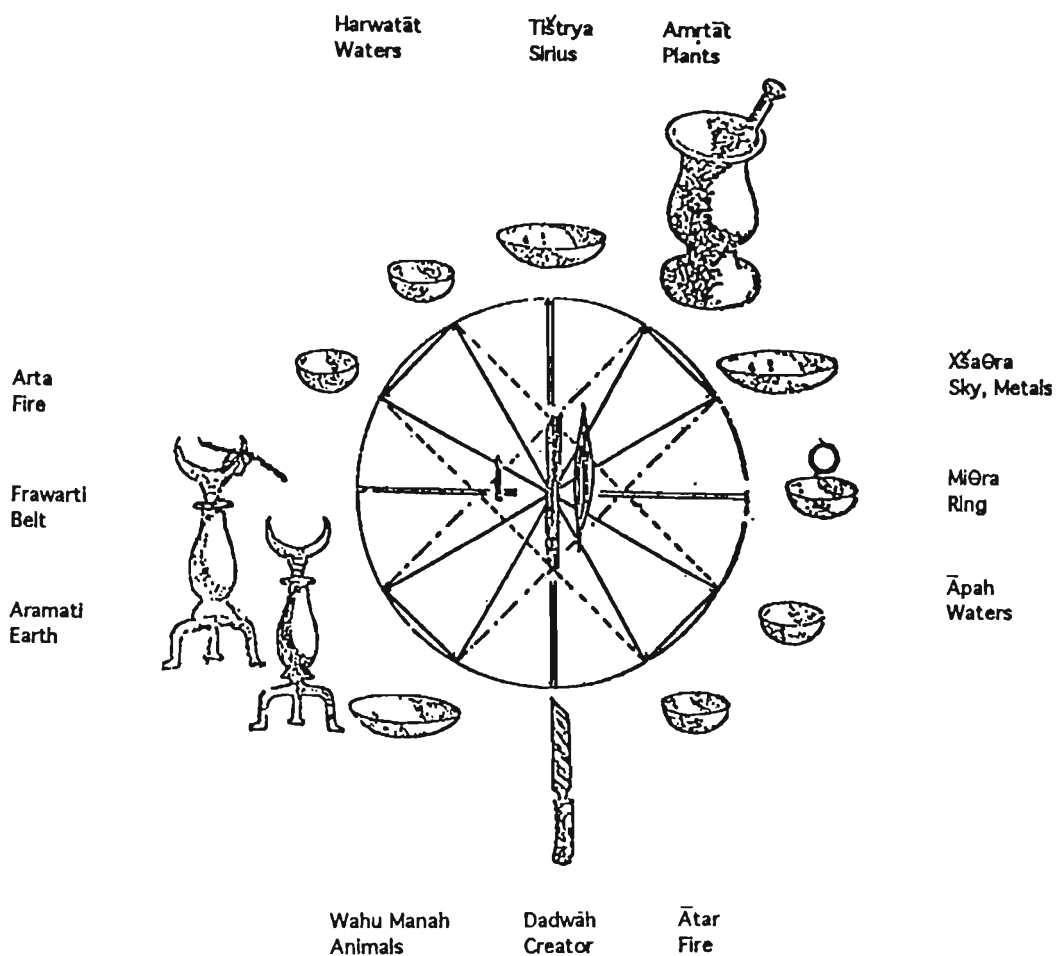
Fig. 10. 12 instruments and Zoroastrian calendar,
Windfuhr, "Cosmology and the Zoroastrian *Yasna*-Ritual".

The twelve openings in the Taoist square represent the twelve Chinese constellations. The twelve Zoroastrian instruments similarly represent the twelve Zoroastrian months, and thus represent the Zoroastrian calendar,[33] as seen in fig. 10. Implicitly then, the arrangement of the twelve instruments on the square ritual table are not unlike the arrangement of the constellations in the Chaldean thema mundi, which are similarly represented in the shape of a square rather than a circle.

At least in some cases the correlation between ritual instrument and Zoroastrian month is fairly obvious. Thus, the mortar in the SW corner of the table correlates with the month guarded by the Holy Immortal Amr̥tāt 'Immortality'. It is she who pounds the ur-plant after the attack of Evil, while Tištrya 'Sirius', traditionally recognized as the harbinger of fall rains, is said to distribute the seeds over the newly arranged seven *kešwar* 'continents'. Similarly, the milk bowl in the NE, directly opposite to Amr̥tāt in the circle of the calendar, corresponds to the month of Wahu Manah 'Good Mind', who is the guardian of beneficent animals, including *gāw aiwa-dāta*, the ur-animal or 'ox' (for the detailed correlation see discussion further below).

Ritual variations (cf. photo[34], plates XVI)

It should be noted that there are certain differences in the arrangements and handling of some of these twelve instruments. A case in point is the position of the mortar. As kindly pointed out to me by Dastur Ramiyar Karanjia, the initial SW location is specific to the Sanjana diocese, where it is kept during the preparatory ritual and for the first fifteen textual chapters in the Yasna proper. Elsewhere it is located in the SE, as seen in plates XVI/1, which shows the arrangement of the Athornan Boarding Madressa located at Dadar outside Mumbai.

The more traditional correspondence of the mortar would thus not be with Amr̥tāt 'Immortality', but with the Holy Immortal with which the latter is constantly paired, Harwatāt 'Completeness', and the difference must have come about by ritual argument and re-interpretation.

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[33] Cf. Windfuhr, "Significance of Zoroastrians Rituals".
[34] The photograph was taken in 1984, and kindly provided by Prof. Jamsheed Choksy.

YASNA: TWELVE RITUAL INSTRUMENTS AND RITUAL ACTION

Schipper in his 'Outline of the Taoist Ritual' details, among other structural features, the 'syntax' of the ritual action. Here cannot be the place to even attempt a comparison with the Zoroastrian ritual action. Instead, this part of the discussion presents the attempt to establish criteria for identifying ritual sections and their boundaries in order to interpret the logic of their sequence and hierarchical structure. The basic premise here is that the determining factor is not the ritual text, but the ritual action of which the text is part. As such this approach differs from previous ones.

Division based on ritual action

The following analysis is entirely based on the ritual action, and takes as main criteria what intuitively appears to be points or actions of transitions, such as standing up, or laying down the *barsom* bundle. By these criteria, one can identify nine sections, which are flanked as a whole by initial entry and final exit, as shown in table 1. The logic of the sequence of the nine sections is highlighted here by cover terms: 1 Preparation; 2 Meal; 3 Tying, preparation; 4 Pounding; 5 Sacred Word (YH, Gathas); 6 Untying; 7 further Untying, laying down the two stands; 8 Mixing; 9 further Mixing. The ritual actions are first listed in short hand.

Table 1. Yasna Proper, 9-fold sequence by major moves

0			Regroup
Zōt SE > fire	*Rāspi* milk *parahōm*/ *R* saced bread/ exit	*Zōt* > NE on seat *R* re-enter	
1			Preparation

Z/R toe over toe, standing

libations	1		
manipulates	2	*barsom*, libation	
2			Meal

tastes bread	8.2	*R* > *Z*	
[*ātaš-zōhr* or animal sacrifice]		[*Frabṛtar* > fire throne or dress animal]	
drinks *parahōm*	11.10	*R* > *Z*	
3			Tying, preparation

ties 2 knots	13.7		
APO loop on W horn	15.2		
LZA datušō twig/loop	15.3	milk twig/saucer/ cup >> *zōhr* cup/twig	
mortar in basin	16.1		
4			Pounding

Z toe over toe, seated	19.1	(*LZA* end of 18)	
mortar inverted	24.1	upright 25.1/sieve 26.11/ pestle/27.1 + circle	
pounding/ringing 3	27.3,4,5		
pounding/ringing 3	31.5–10, 23; 32.3–6		
pounding/ringing 1	33.4	at end, throws residue > *R*	
	34.3	*R* > *Z*, sieve/cup > fire, back	
hōm into cup 2	34.15	arranges mortar + saucer + cup + *zōhr* twig	
5			Word

[*Z gōšudā*]		[*Frabṛtar* > *ātaš-zōhr* at fire throne]	
6			Untying

LZA *datušō/barsom*	59.28		
APO loop off horn	59.28	R > *barsom* / S-stand > fire	
unties 2 knots	60.1		
7			Untying

Z stands on seat	62	*R* burns residue	
milk twig in *barsom*	63.1–2		
APO stands East	64.3–4	lay stands down facing E	
LZA Z 3steps > SE	64.4	*Z barsom* > *Frabṛtar* > *Ābṛtar*, back	
8			Mixing

Z stands E of seat	65.5–7	*R* > *Z*, face W (not *LZA*)	
manipulates		*barsom*/milk saucer/2 cups + circling	
all milk fluid mortar	68.21		
9			Mixing

Z stands on seat	68.22	faces E	
manipulates	68.24	*barsom*/2 cups / top cup tilted in other cup + circling	
manipulates	71.16–24	*barsom* forward/ cups	
ties many knots	72.1–5	*R* > *Z*	
barsom across stands	72.5	after *barsom* twig inserted	
10			Exit

Letters and symbols used in this table: **Z**(ōt) = main priest; **R**(āspi) = assistant priest; > = moves to; [ ] = no longer performed; **APO** = Kotwal and Boyd, *A Persian Offering*; **LZA** = mentioned in Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, mostly Irani practice, or obsolete; **barsom** = bundle of twigs; **loop** = band of palm leaf, girdle around *barsom*; **datušō** = special twig put in knot, not used in India; **hamāzōr** = mutual handshake; **pāwi** = ritual area; **digital numbers** = chapter and stanza.

The details are found in Darmesteter and Kotwal/Boyd (APO)[35] under the number of the chapter and stanza indicated. The ritual actions in brackets are those no longer enacted, but mentioned in the ritual textbook Nērangistān. To justify the identification of the nine sections, the crucial criteria may be highlighted as follows:

Section 0. The initial phase is Regrouping. The assistant priest, *rāspī* (R) had conducted the preparatory ritual alone. Now the main priest, *zōt* (Z), enters the ritual area, *pāwī*, from SE, and faces the fire. The assistant priest goes to fetch the milk, the cup with the *parahōm* fluid (prepared earlier), and the consecrated bread; the main priest then moves to the NE and takes his seat. The assistant priest reenters.

Section 1. Preparation, is marked by the curious upright stand of the two priests, right big toe over left big toe, facing each other across the ritual area, N–S. This is followed by libations and the manipulation of the *barsom* bundle.

Section 2, Meal, is marked by the symbolic consumption of the consecrated bread and the *parahōm* drink, and at one time apparently also included a burnt sacrifice, which was either brought then by the *frabṛtar* priest to the fire throne in the central chamber of the temple, or was initially kept, and later taken to the throne. In this section, there are repeated serving movements to the main priest by the assistant priest.

Section 3, Tying, preparing, is marked by the tying of two knots into the loose ends of the loop, or sacred girdle, made of a date palm leaf, that is wound around the *barsom* bundle. It is then hung on the western horn on the southern, or rather eastern, moon stand. Earlier, a special twig, *datušō*, was stuck upright into knot on the bundle. The section concludes with the return of the mortar, that had been on the sacred table since the preparatory ritual, back into the large water basin in the NW.

Section 4, Pounding, again begins with the curious toe over toe movement, this time by the main priest alone. The mortar is retrieved, followed by an extended series of poundings of *hōm* (*hauma*) twigs and a pome-

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[35] Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta*; Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*.

granate twig, and related movements. At the end, the mortar, bowls, and cups are arranged in a complex three-level structure.

Section 5, Word, is essentially recitation of the seven chapters of the Haptahāti and the second through fifth Gathas, followed by chapters Y. 56–57 to the divinity that oversees the material world, Srauša, and chapters Y. 58–59, on prosperity. Earlier, the burnt offerings were probably presented during this phase.

Similar to the sections preceding section 5, all following sections conclude with complex, but different arrangements of the main ritual instruments handled, which cannot be detailed here.

Section 6, Untying, is marked by the return to ritual movements, after the arrest in section 5. The loop is removed from the horn of the moon stand, back onto the *barsom* bundle, in earlier times also the *datušō* twig was removed. This is followed by the action of untying of the two knots that had been tied in section 3. Here the assistant priest moves to the E side of the ritual table, faces the *barsom* bundle, and returns.

Section 7, Untying, is marked by the upright stand of the main priest on his seat, *barsom* and twig in hand, which he had held from earlier on, and which is his main wand. (It is distinct from the *datušō*.) The residue of the pounding is thrown to the assistant priest, who oblates it to the fire to burn. The main priest then stands to the E of his seat. He lays down the two moon stands, horns facing E.

Section 8, Mixing, is marked by the main priest standing to the E of his seat. He is joined by the assistant priest, both facing W. The main action is the manipulation of the *barsom* bundle, milk saucer, and two cups, filtering and pouring, with repeated circular movements across the rim of the mortar. At the end, all fluids are poured over the sieve into the mortar.

Section, 9, Mixing, is again marked by the main priest standing on his seat, facing E, and complex manipulation, mainly of two cups, one repeatedly set tilted into the other and removed, accompanied by multiple pourings from one into the other, circular movements, the forward movements of the *barsom* bundle, and the tying of multiple knots in the loose ends of the loop around the *barsom*. The assistant priest joins. The *barsom* bundle thus tied is firmly placed across the two moon stands that have been laid down in section 7, thus forming a cross of the two moon stands lying in E–W direction, and the *barsom* bundle with its girdle, lying in N–S direction.

The ritual action of the entire Yasna concludes with a complex of moves. The two priests exchange a tying handshake, *hamāzōr*, holding each other's hands between two palms. The priests then step out into an adjacent ritual area, face E. While the assistant priest moves ahead on the path to the well of the temple, formerly a running stream of living water, the main priest returns to fetch the mortar, presents it to the fire, then joins the assistant priest, to pour the invigorating liquid back into the waters.

The ritual actions no longer enacted are also discussed in the most detailed description so far of the ritual action and text combined by Darmesteter.

For example, section 3 highlights some significant differences between the descriptions in Kotwal and Boyd 1991, and in Darmesteter 1892 I, who reports on the more elaborate Iranian actions. Thus, in sections 3 and 6, according to Kotwal and Boyd, the girdle of the *barsom* bundle is moved onto the W horn of the southern moon stand, while the Iranian action involves also the vertical insertion of a twig into the knot of the girdle.[36] Similarly, Boyce[37] discusses the sacrifice of an animal during section 2. In section 7, the two stands are laid down facing East. In Iran, this action is preceded by the passage of the main priest, *barsom* in hand, in three (or four) steps over the position of three of the eight priests who once participated (see below), the *frabṛtar* to his left in the NE, the *raiθwiškara* along the east side, and the *ābṛtar* in the SE. There he faces the fire, then returns to his place in the N.

It is in place here to insert a mythological interpretation of these steps according to the Varšt.mānsar Nask,[38] as summarized in the Dēnkard 9.43.3–8:[39] This action symbolizes the return of the Holy Immortals, Amṛta Spanta, via the three levels of preliminary paradise, *hu-mata*, *hu-*

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[36] See also F.M. Kotwal, "Two Ritual Terms in Pahlavi. The *datuš* and the *frāgām*", in *Memorial Jean de Menasce* (Louvain, 1974), pp. 267–272.

[37] M. Boyce, "*Haoma*, Priest of the Sacrifice", in *W.B. Henning Memorial Volume*, eds M. Boyce/I. Gershevitch (London, 1970), pp. 62–80, and M. Boyce, "*Ātaš-zōhr* and *Āb-zōhr*", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1966, pp. 100–118.

[38] For a detailed description and discussion of the Avestan texts, cf. J. Kellens, "Avesta", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 3.1, 1988, pp. 35–44, spec. pp. 36b, 40b.

[39] Commentary in Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta*, 1, pp. 400–401; translation of the Dēnkard passage, with commentary, E.W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*. Part 4. *Contents of the Nasks* (Sacred Books of the East, vol. 37; London, 1892), pp. 292–293 (reprint Dehli et al., 1965, pp. 292–293). M. Molé, "Le problème des sectes zoroastriennes dans les livres pehlevis", *Oriens* 13–14, 1960–61, pp. 1–28, spec. p. 8.

uxta, hu-waršta 'well-thought, well-spoken, well-done', into paradise, the seat of Ahura Mazda and the Holy Immortals, after their consultations with Zarathushtra. Presumably they crossed the Bridge of the Weight Piler, between material and spiritual world. This ancient passage thus also gives a glimpse at certain correlations once made between parts of the ritual area and the vertical cosmos:

(1) The first move of the main priest from his seat in the N to the NE corner would correspond to the passage across the Bridge, so that the stretch from N to NE represented the Bridge with its material and spiritual anchors.

(2) The three positions along the eastern side of the ritual area would correspond to the levels of the three preliminary paradises.

(3) The priest's facing the fire from the SE position (from where he had entered at the beginning of the Yasna proper) would correspond to the final passage into the realm of Ahura Mazda and the Holy Immortals. This, however, implies that the fire-stand does not only represent the Sun in the material world, but also the highest spiritual paradise.

(4) Accordingly, it is the fire-priest who was correlated with Ahura Mazda, and, in fact, to this day it is the assistant priest, the *rāspī*, who performs the preparatory ritual, that is, the creative actions preceding the attack of Evil. In turn, the main priest, *zōt*, would correspond not to Ahura Mazda, but to Zarathushtra himself, who in the Gathas identifies himself as *zautar*.[40]

Higher-level six-partite structure

As shown in table 2, the nine section are hierarchically organized into higher units, which number six: 1 Preparation; 2 Sacrificial Meal; 3 Tying, Preparation and Pounding; 4 Sacred Word; 5 two steps of Untying; 6 two steps of Mixing.

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[40] On the levels of the Zoroastrian quasi-Ptolemaic cosmos, based on Yašt 12, see Windfuhr, "Where Guardian Angels watch by Night and Evil Spirits fail". Cf. also the astronomical sources of this three-level spiritual pattern discussed by A. Panaino, "Uranographia Iranica 1. The Three Heavens in the Zoroastrian Tradition and the Mesopotamian Background", in *Au Carrefour des religions. Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux*, ed. Rika Gyselen (Res Orientales 7; Bures-sur-Yvette, 1995), pp. 205–225.

Table 2 Yasna proper, overall 6-step sequence by main action/text

0————————————————————————————————————Regroup

| *Zōt* SE > fire | | *Rāspi* milk *parahōm*/ *R* saced bread/ exit | *Zōt* > NE on seat | *R* re-enter |

1————————————————————————————————————Preparation

Z/R toe over toe, standing			
libations	1		
manipulates	2	*barsom*, libation	

2———————————————————————————————————— Meal

tastes bread	8.2	*R* > *Z*	
[*ātaš-zōhr* or animal sacrifice]		[*Frabṛtar* > fire throne or dress animal]	
drinks *parahōm*	11.10	*R* > *Z*	

3a———————————————————————————————Tying/preparing

ties 2 knots	13.7		
APO loop on W horn	15.2		
LZA *datušō* twig/loop	15.3	milk twig/saucer/ cup >> *zōhr* cup/twig	
mortar in basin	16.1		

3b————————————————————————————————Pounding

Z toe over toe, seated	19.1	(*LZA* end of 18)	
mortar inverted	24.	upright 25.1/sieve 26.11/ pestle/27.1 + circle	
pounding/ringing 3	27.3,4,5		
pounding/ringing 3	31.5–10, 23; 32.3–6		
pounding/ringing 1	33.4	at end, throws residue > *R*	
	34.3	*R* > *Z*, sieve/cup > fire, back	
hōm into cup 2	34.15	arranges mortar + saucer + cup + *zōhr* twig	

4————————————————————————————————————Word

| [*Z gōšudā*] | | [*Frabṛtar* > *ātaš-zōhr* at fire throne] | |

5a————————————————————————————————Untying

LZA *datušō*/*barsom*	59.28		
APO loop off horn	59.28	*R* > *barsom* / S-stand > fire	
unties 2 knots	60.1		

5b————————————————————————————————Untying

Z stands on seat	62	*R* burns residue	
milk twig in *barsom*	63.1–2		
APO stands East	64.3–4	lay stands down facing E	
LZA Z 3steps > SE	64.4	Z *barsom* > *Frabṛtar* > *Ābṛtar*, back	

6a————————————————————————————————Mixing

Z stands E of seat	65.5–7	*R* > *Z*, face W (not *LZA*)	
manipulates		*barsom*/milk saucer/2 cups/circling	
all milk fluid mortar	68.21		

6b————————————————————————————————Mixing

Z stands on seat	68.22	faces E	
manipulates	68.24	*barsom*/2 cups / top cup tilted in other cup/circling	
manipulates	71.16–24	*barsom* forward/ cups	
ties many knots	72.1–5	*R* > *Z*	
barsom across stands	72.5	after *barsom* twig inserted	

7————————————————————————————————————Exit

hamāzōr, *Z*, *R* > steps > next *pāwi*, face E, *R* ahead, *Z* return *pāwi*, get mortar > fire>
well/stream

Twelve instruments and the combined preparatory ritual and Yasna proper

The preparatory ritual tends to be discussed independently. It can be shown that its main ritual actions, too, are six, if one defines action by combined location, items involved, and instrument used. Without going into detail, the six are the following: 1 Getting Water; 2 Getting Plants (twig of pomegranate and date palm leaf, formerly also twigs of *hōm* and of *barsom*); 3 Getting Milk; 4 Filling cups and milk bowl, and arranging them; 5 Arranging and tying the *barsom* twigs; 6 Pounding and mixing.

These appear to be correlated with six of the instruments on the ritual table. However, this is not in random fashion, but in sequential order, as first presented by the author in 1986: 1 Getting Water with *zōhr* cup 1; 2 Getting Plants with knife; 3 Getting Milk with milk bowl; 4 Arranging cups and milk bowl with northern moon stand; 5 Tying *barsom* with southern (actually eastern) moon stand; 6. Pounding with *parahōm* cup 2.

Taking this pattern as a cue, the six main sections of the Yasna proper appear to correspond to the remaining six instruments as follows: 7 Preparation with the reserve cup; 8 Meal with bread bowl; 9 Pounding with mortar; 10 Sacred Word with the twig bowl; 11 Untying with the ring cup; 12 Mixing with *zōhr* cup 2.

Finally, noting that each instrument is correlated with a month of the calendar, and the total of twelve actions in the preparatory and main rituals, there appears an intricate overall correlation linking instruments, actions, and the calendar in 12 steps, as shown in table 3 (following page):

Table 3. Symbolic correlation between ritual action and calendar

#	Action	Instrument	Location	Month
Preparatory Ritual				
Enter Rāspi				
1	Getting water	*zōhr* cup 1	NNW	*Ātar*
2	Getting plants	knife	N	*Dadwah*
3	Getting milk	milk bowl	NNE	*Wahu Manah*
4	Piling/filling cups	N-stand	ENE	*Aramati*
5	Tying *barsom*	S-stand/band	E	*Frawarti*-s
6	Pounding	*parahōm* cup	ESE	*Arta*
Yasna Proper				
Regroup, Zōt and Raspi				
7	Preparation	reserve cup	SSE	*Harwatāt*
8	Meal	bread/meat bowl	S	*Tištrya*
9	Pounding	mortar	SSW	*Amṛtāt*
10	Word	twig bowl	WSW	*Xšaθra*
11	Untying	ring cup	W	*Miθra*
12	Mixing	*zōhr* cup 2	WNW	*Āpah*

Pouring *hōm*-drink into Stream/Well

Arrangement by cross-ties

Upright cross of four cardinal directions

#	Action	Instrument	Location	Month
5	Tying *barsom*	S-stand/band	E	*Frawarti*-s
11	Untying	ring cup	W	*Miθra*
2	Getting plants	knife	N	*Dadwah*
8	Meal	bread/meat bowl	S	*Tištrya*

Oblique cross of mortar, N-stand, milk bowl, twig bowl

#	Action	Instrument	Location	Month
3	Getting milk	milk bowl	NNE	*Wahu Manah*
9	Pounding	mortar	SSW	*Amṛtāt*
4	Piling/filling cups	N-stand	ENE	*Aramati*
10	Word	twig bowl	WSW	*Xšaθra*

Oblique cross of four cups

#	Action	Instrument	Location	Month
6	Pounding	*parahōm* cup	ESE	*Arta*
12	Mixing	*zōhr* cup 2	WNW	*Āpah*
1	Getting water	*zōhr* cup 1	NNW	*Ātar*
7	Preparation	reserve cup	SSE	*Harwatāt*

Superimposed on the detailed analytical chart of the Yasna proper, the correlation between action and the respective calendrical and spiritual guardian appears as shown in table 4 below.[41] These correlations appear to be supported by the material creations associated with these guardians, which are discussed further below (table 6).

Spiritual ties across the calendar and ritual table

The logic of the correlations between the instruments and their spiritual guardians and months may be briefly discussed in terms of the overall system seen in fig. 10, rather than sequentially:

The East–West axis is guarded by the divinity Mithra, the guardian of the fall equinox, represented by the ring cup (W), and the eastern moon stand (E), which is guarded by the Guardian Spirits, the Frawarti-s, at spring equinox. These two represent the horizontal tie across the circle of the year, properly reflected in the ring in the ring cup, and the loop on the western horn of the eastern moon stand, both representing the central circle of the ecliptic, which is the apparent path of the Sun. In actions, these two correspond to action 5, Tying the *barsom* bundle, and action 11, Untying the knots, respectively.

The North–South axis is guarded by Dadwah, the Creator, at winter solstice, represented by the knife (N), and Tištrya, the brightest star of the sky, Sirius. His rising marks the Summer, represented by the bread bowl (S). These two represent the other main tie across the circle of the year. The low point, winter solstice, is the true beginning of the year, when the Sun begins its rise. It corresponds to the knife of the Creator, while the high point of the year corresponds to the bread bowl, representing the summer harvest. In actions, these two correspond to action 2, cutting of the Plants to be brought in for the ritual of renewal, and action 8, the Meal, with the consumption of the consecrated bread and the consecrated drink.

The diagonal ties are as follows: The milk bowl (NNE), guarded by Wahu Manah, the guardian of beneficial animals, is tied across the circle with the mortar (SSW), guarded by the Holy Immortal Amr̥tāt, guardian of the plants, which are pounded and mixed with the consecrated milk. In actions, these two correspond to action 3, Getting Milk, and action 9, Pounding in the Yasna proper, thus tying animal life and plant life.

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[41] Cf. also Windfuhr, "The Logic of the Holy Immortals in Zoroastrianism", p. 269, fig. 5.

The tie between earth and sky, material and spiritual, is represented respectively by the northern moon stand (ENE), guarded by Aramati, the Holy Immortal guarding the earth, and the twig bowl (WSW), which holds the *hōm* and pomegranate twigs, guarded by Xšaθra, the Holy Immortal guarding the sky. In actions, these correspond to action 4, Arranging and piling cups and milk bowl, and action 10, the sacred Word of Gathas 2–5 and the Haptahāti, thus tying the new, reordered physical cosmos with the new spiritual order of the sacred word brought by Zarathushtra.

The four cups represent double ties of the two basic life principles, water and fire: The cup holding the reserve *parahōm* fluid (SSE), guarded by Harwatāt, the Holy Immortal who guards the Waters, is tied across the circle with *zōhr* cup 1 (NNW), guarded by Ātar, the yazata of the Fire in all things. In actions, these two correspond to action 7, Preparation, and to action 1, Getting Water. These two tie the very beginning of the ritual, the first action of the preparatory sequence with the first action of the Yasna proper.

The *parahōm* cup (ESE), which is guarded by Arta, the Holy Immortal of cosmic order and guardian of Fire, is tied across the circle with *zōhr* cup 2 (WSW), holding consecrated water, which is guarded by the yazata of the Waters, Āpah. Actually, the designations of the months are in the genitive, thus the month 'of the waters'. The divinity behind these is evident in the designation of this month in the Cappadocian Zoroastrian calendar, Apām Napāt 'Offspring of the Waters', a divinity of Indo-Iranian age. In actions, these two correspond to action 6, the Pounding and mixing in the preparatory ritual, and to action 12, final Mixing.

Sequentially, then, the 12 actions do not begin with Dadwah and the knife, but with Ātar and *zohr* cup 1. Therefore, the action guarded by Ātar can thus be seen as representing the ultimate nuclear origin of life fluids and energy. In turn, the last of the 12 actions corresponds to *zōhr* cup 2 guarded by Āpah/Apām Napāt, which should represent the final purified state. This conclusion regarding the symbolic beginning and end of the ritual would appear to make eminent sense given that the ultimate action of the entire ritual is the oblation of the consecrated fluid achieved through the 12 actions to the living waters.

Table 4. Ritual Sections and the Calendar

0———————————————————————————Regroup			
Zōt SE > fire *Rāspi* milk *parahōm/ R* saced bread/ exit *Zōt* > NE on seat			*R* re-enter
1————————————————————————————Preparation			
Z/R toe over toe, standing			**Harwatāt**
libations	1		
manipulates	2	*barsom,* libation	
2————————————————————————————— Meal			
tastes bread	8.2	*R > Z*	**Tištrya**
[*ātaš-zōhr* or animal sacrifice]		[*Frabŗtar* > fire throne or dress animal]	
drinks *parahōm*	11.10	*R > Z*	
3a————————————————————————————Tying/preparing			
ties 2 knots	13.7		**Amŗtāt**
APO loop on W horn	15.2		
LZA *datušō* twig/loop	15.3	milk twig/saucer/ cup >> *zōhr* cup/twig	
mortar in basin	16.1		
3b——————————————————————————————Pounding			
Z toe over toe, seated	19.1	(*LZA* end of 18)	
mortar inverted	24.	upright 25.1/sieve 26.11/ pestle/27.1 + circle	
pounding/ringing 3	27.3,4,5		
pounding/ringing 3	31.5–10, 23; 32.3–6		
pounding/ringing 1	33.4	at end, throws residue > *R*	
	34.3	*R > Z*, sieve/cup > fire, back	
hōm into cup 2	34.15	arranges mortar + saucer + cup + *zōhr* twig	
4————————————————————————————Word			
[*Z gōšudā*]		[*Frabŗtar* > *ātaš-zōhr* at fire throne]	***Xšaθra***
5a————————————————————————————Untying			
LZA *datušō/barsom*	59.28		***Miθra***
APO loop off horn	59.28	*R* > *barsom* / S-stand > fire	
unties 2 knots	60.1		
5b——————————————————————————————Untying			
Z stands on seat	62	*R* burns residue	
milk twig in *barsom*	63.1–2		
APO stands East	64.3–4	lay stands down facing E	
LZA Z 3steps > SE	64.4	*Z barsom* > *Frabŗtar* > *Ābŗtar*, back	
6a————————————————————————————Mixing			
Z stands E of seat	65.5–7	*R > Z*, face W (not *LZA*)	**Āpah**
manipulates		*barsom*/milk saucer/2 cups/circling	
all milk fluid mortar	68.21		
6b——————————————————————————————Mixing			
Z stands on seat	68.22	face E	
manipulates	68.24	*barsom*/2 cups / top cup tilted in other cup/circling	
manipulates	71.16–24	*barsom* forward/ cups	
ties many knots	72.1–5	*R > Z*	
barsom across stands	72.5	after *barsom* twig inserted	
7——————————————————————————————Exit			
hamāzōr, Z, R > steps > next *pāwi,* face E, *R* ahead, *Z* return *pāwi,*			**Ātar**
get mortar > fire> well/stream			

YASNA: RITUAL ACTIONS AND RITUAL TEXT

Having analyzed the Yasna on the basis of the ritual action, it is appropriate to compare the suggested results with analyses based on a textual basis. The two examples chosen here, and shown side by side in table 5, are those by Duchesne-Guillemin (Duchesne[42]) and by Kotwal and Boyd. The former bases his twelve-section analysis of the Yasna proper essentially on Modi.[43] The latter two follow the arrangement of T.D. Anklesaria, *Yazashnē bā Nīrang*, and specifically D 90,[44] Mf4, and the colophone of 1478, traceable to 1020 A.D.[45] However, they do not attempt to deviate from the traditional textual divisions even though they provide the most thorough and detailed recent description of the ritual action.

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[42] Duchesne-Guillemin, *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism*, pp. 61–63; Kotwal/ Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 155–157.

[43] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 322–328.

[44] Geldner, *Avesta. The Sacred Books of the Parsis*, text with intro., 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1896).

[45] Geldner, *Avesta. The Sacred Books of the Parsis*,*25, *34.

Table 5. Yasna proper, textual division into 24 and 12 sections

Duchesne		Kotwal/Boyd			Sections by ritual action here
		0		*bun ī yašt*	Begin Yasna
					Section 1 Y 1–2
1	Y 1–2	1	Y 1	*nivaēδayēmi hāt bun*	Begin the "I invite" section
		2	Y 2	*barsom yašt bun*	Begin litany to *barsom*
					Section 2 Y 3–11
2	Y 3–8	3	Y 3–8	*srōš drōn bun, si. hāt*	Begin sacred bread service to *Srōš*
3	Y 9–11	4	Y 9–11	*Hōm yašt bun*	Begin litany to *Hōm* bottom
					Seection 3 Y 12–24
4	Y 12–18	5	Y 12–13	*frastui, 5-om hāt*	"I confess" 100
		6	Y 14–18	**frīt bun, 6-om hāt*	Begin "libation offering"
5	Y 19–21	7	Y 19–21	*bagān yašt, ahunawar bun*	Hymns, Begin *Ahunawar*
6	Y 22–27	8	Y 22–27	*hōm kōftan hāt bun*	Begin *hōm*-pounding
7	Y 28–55	9	Y 28–34	*Ahunavaiti G.*	The Hymn of the *Ahunawar*
					Section 4 Y 35–59
		10	Y 35–42	*yašt ī haft hāt bun*	Begin the Hymn of Seven Chapters
		11	Y 43–46	*Uštavaiti G.*	The Hymn of Happiness bottom
		12	Y 47–50	*Spentā Mainyū G.*	The Bountiful Spirit Hymn
		13	Y 51	*Vohu-Khshathra G.*	The Hymn of Good Dominion
		14	Y 52	*vanghu-ca hāt bun*	Begin chapter on the good (blessings)
		15	Y 53	*Vahištā Īštī G.*	Hymn of best wishes
		16	Y 54	*ērman hāt bun*	Begin chapter on Companionship
		17	Y 55	*wispa gāh bun*	Begin chapter on all hymns
8	Y 56–57	18	Y 56	*Srōš yašt ī keh*	Shorter litany to *Srōš*
9	Y 58–61	19	Y 57	*Srōš yašt bun*	Begin litany to *Srōš*
		20	Y 58–59	*fšuyō maθra, tat sōidiš hāt bun*	Begin chapter on prosperity
					Section 5 Y 60–64 overlap
		21	Y 60–61	*dahma āfrītī/dahmān āfrīn*	Benediction of the pious
10	Y 62	22	Y 62	*ātaxš niyāyišn bun*	Begin litany to fire
					Section 6 Y 65–72 overlap
11	Y 63–69	23	Y 63–70	*āb-zōhr bun*	Begin libation to waters
12	Y 70–72	24	Y 71–72	*wisp yašt bun*	Begin litany to whole

It is evident from this synopsis that the length of texts and actions diverge considerably. There is, moreover, what appears to be significant correlations between the six main ritual actions and six spiritual-calendrical guardians, as shown in table 6 (cf. also table 4):

Table 6. Detailed synopsis: six ritual actions/texts and six guardians

1 Preparation				
Z/R toe over toe, standing			*APO*	Y
libations	1		1 Invitation	1
manipulates	2	*barsom*, libation	2 *Barsom yašt*	2
2 Meal				*Tištrya*
tastes bread	8.2	R > Z	3 *Srōš drōn*	3–8
[*ātaš-zōhr* or animal sacrifice]		[*Frabṛtar* > fire throne or dress animal]		
drinks *parahōm*	11.10	R > Z	4 *Hōm yašt*	9–11
3 Tying/pounding				*Amṛtāt*
ties 2 knots	13.7		5 *Frawarāne*	12–13
APO loop on W horn	15.2		6 **Frīt*, invocations	14
LZA datušō twig/loop	15.3	milk twig/saucer/ cup		
		>> *zōhr* cup/twig	(18 = 47)	
mortar in basin	16.1			18
Z toe over toe, seated	19.1	(*LZA* end of 18)	7 *Bayān*	19–21
mortar inverted	24.1	upright 25.1/sieve 26.11/		
		pestle/ 27.1 + circle	8 *Hōm kōftan* Invoc.	22–27
pounding/ringing 3	27.3,4,5		9 *Gāθā* 1	28–34
pounding/ringing 3	31.5–10, 23; 32.3–6			
pounding/ringing 1	33.4	at end, throws residue > R		
	34.3	R > Z, sieve/cup > fire, back		
hōm into cup 2	34.15	arranges mortar + saucer + cup + *zōhr* twig		
4 Word				*Xšaθra*
[*Z gōšudā*]		[*Frabṛtar* > *ātaš-zōhr*		
		at fire throne]	10 *Yasna Haptahāti*	35–42
			11–17 *Gāθā-s/wispa gāh*	43–55
			18–19 *Srōš yašt*	56–57
			20 *Fšūšō manθra*	58–59
5 Untying				*Miθra*
LZA datušō/barsom	59.28		21 *Dahmān āfrīn*	60
APO loop off *hōrn*	59.28	R > *barsom*/S-stand		
		> fire		
unties 2 knots	60.1			61
Z stands on seat	62	*R* burns residue	22 *Ātaxš niyāyešn*	62
milk twig in *barsom*	63.1–2	*LZA* in *datušō*	23 *Āb-zōhr* (63–70)	
APO stands East	64.3–4	lays stands down facing E.		
LZA Z 3steps > SE	64.4	*Z barsom* > *Frabṛtar* > *Ābṛtar*, back		64
6 Mixing				*Āpah*
Z stands E of seat	65.5–7	R > Z, face W (not *LZA*)	*Ābān niyāyešn*	65
manipulates		*barsom*/milk saucer/2 cups/circling		
all milk fluid mortar	68.21			68.21
Z stands on seat	68.22	face E	*Ahurānī*-s	68.22
manipulates	68.24	*barsom*/2 cups/top cup tilted in other cup + circle		
manipulates	71.16–24	*barsom* forward/cups		
ties many knots	72.1–5	R > Z	24 *Wisp yašt*	71–72
barsom across stands	72.5	after *barsom* twig inserted		

In detail, the correspondence between the ritual actions and calendrical guardians may be highlighted as follows:

(1) Preparation and Harwatāt 'Completeness', guardian of the (ritual) waters. Action: libation of the *barsom* bundle. Texts: invocation of the complete circle of the divine.

(2) Meal and Tištrya 'Sirius', the guardian of the summer and summer harvest, also the distributor of the seeds. Action: partaking of the consecrated bread and drink. Texts: consecration to Srōš/Srauša; then hymn to the sacred plant and deity Hōm/Hauma. Note that both the bread and the drink partaken by the main priest here had been prepared earlier. Also, in earlier times a burnt sacrifice was part of the action here.

(3) Tying, preparation, pounding and Amr̥tāt 'Immortality', guardian of plants. She also pounded the seeds after the destruction of the ur-plant, which Tištrya then distributed. Action: extended pounding of the consecrated twigs, and the first preparation of the new elixir. Texts: profession of faith, exegesis of the three most sacred manthras (Y 19-21), the three sacred manthras, then the first Gatha (Y. 28-34).

(4) Word and Xšaθra 'Rule, Power', guardian of the sky and metals. Actions: recitation of texts only: the ritually central Haptahāti, and the other four Gathas (Y. 43-54), which pronounce the new cosmic rule; followed by the hymn to Srauša, the overseer of the material creations. In fact, the hymn is modeled after the Zoroastrianized Avestan hymn to Mithra, Yasht 10, a borrowing that is implicitly acknowledged by Mithra's guardianship of the next main ritual action. The section concludes with a manthra of prosperity and a prayer proper for the Last Judgment.

(5) Untying and Mithra, guardian of contracts and of the equinoxes, in the calendar of the fall equinox. Action: two phases of Untying; first the removal of the loop off the horn of the moon stand and the untying of the knots; then the oblation of the residue from the pounding to the fire, and the laying down of the two moon stands. Texts: benediction, Dahmān āfrīn, in the first half; then the praise of Fire, and oblation to water.

(6) Mixing and Āpah 'Waters', implicitly Apām Napāt 'Offspring of the Waters'. Action: two extended phases of mixing. Texts: praise of Waters, and the female waters called Ahurānī-s. To note, Mithra and Apām Napāt are also the only two besides Ahura Mazda to be called *ahura* like Mazda Ahura.

To conclude this overview of the correlation between the six calendrical guardians and the combined ritual actions and texts: The exit and

oblation of the elixir to the well and waters is guarded by Ātar, the central Fire in all things. Overall, then, the suggested correlations would appear to show the texts in harmony with the calendar and ritual actions, and with their mythology and functions.

The twelve sections and the World Year

Taking the clue from the calendrical correlations of the twelve main ritual actions, it appears to be worthwhile to correlate them with the Zoroastrian World Year of twelve millennia. This is shown in table 7, where major events and mythical figures connected with the twelve in traditional Zoroastrian teaching are added:[46]

Table 7. Tentative correlation: *Yasna* and the World Year

Action	Instrument	World Year	Religion	Mythical History
I		spiritual creation	Ahura Mazda	
1 Get water	*zōhr* cup 1	0 – 1000		
2 Get plants	knife	1000 – 2000		
3 Get milk	milk bowl	2000 – 3000		
II		material creation	Contract 9000 years	
4 Order cups	N-stand	3000 – 4000	Zar. pre-soul	*Gaya.martan/Gāw*
5 Tie *barsom*	S-stand/band	4000 – 5000		
6 Pound	reserve cup	5000 – 6000		
		Year 6000	Attack	death *Gaya/Gāw*
III		Mixture		
7 Preparation	*parāhōm* cup	6000 – 7000	*Wiwahwant*	*Haušyaha/ Rūpi Az./ Yama*
8 Meal	bread/meat bowl	7000 – 8000	*Āθwya*	*Aži dahāka*
9 Pound	mortar	8000 – 9000	*θrita*	*θraitauna/Kṛsāsp/Kawi-*kings
			end: *Parušaspa Wištāspa*	
			Zaraθuštra	
IV		Mixture/ Revelation/3 posthumous sons		
10 Word	twig bowl	9000 – 10000	end: *Uxšyat.ṛta*	*Pišyauθna, Wahrām*
11 Untie	ring cup	10000– 11000	end: *Uxšyat.namah*	people die: *Yama's war* opens
12 Mix	*zōhr* cup 2	11000– 12000	end: *Astwat.ṛta*	*Kṛsāspa/Hausrawah* vs. *Aži*
		final drama		

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[46] For a detailed table of the Zoroastrian mythological history from initial creation to transfiguration, see E.W. West, *SBE* 47, pp. XXVIII–XXXI, reproduced in A.V.W. Jackson, *Zoroaster* (New York, 1899), pp. 179–181; cf. also M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* I (Leiden/Köln, 1975), pp. 286–293.

The overall arrangement is that of the four seasons. Zoroastrian religious myth intertwines with myth ultimately of Indo-European provenience. Only bare outlines can be given here. Creation begins with spiritual creation, specifically of the six Holy Immortals, and with a spiritual Yasna ritual performed by Ahura Mazda, followed by the six + one material creations in the spiritual, unmoving state: the sky, the waters, the earth, the plants, the animals, humankind, probably followed by the energizing Fire, and accompanied by the coming into being of Zarathushtra's pre-soul created at the end of the first period, appended to first, or at the beginning of the second.

The interstice between these two periods is marked by a primordial event, the mythical encounter between Ahura Mazda and the Evil Spirit in the year 3000, and their contract of Limited Time. The Evil Spirit, having been thrown into stupor by Ahura Mazda's pronouncement of the *ahunawar* manthra (see also discussion below) for 3000 years, awakes and attacks.

After the attack of the forces of Evil, which caused the cosmos and all in it to move in TIME, begins the third cosmic period which is the beginning of the state of Mixture. There is a list of major sacrificers, some of whom are mentioned in table 7, culminating in Zarathushtra's father and himself, then followed by his three posthumous sons. The 'worldly' myth begins with Gaya.martan 'Mortal Life' and the first created Animal. It is followed by 'dynasties', the paradāta 'Fore-given', the interregnum of Aži Dahāka, the 'Human Serpent', followed by the dynasty of the smiths-sages, the Kawi-kings (Kayanians). In between religious and 'worldly' myth are Yama xšaita (Jamshēd); the warrior-healer θraitauna; and the warrior Kr̥sāspa; and the first patron of Zarathushtra, Wištāspa, called *kawi* as well. The post-Zarathushtrian heroes include the mighty Wahrām, hoped for in apocalyptic texts,[47] and certain primordial heroes who return to help in the cosmic fight, including Yama, whose hidden abode opens and its inhabitants repopulate the devastated earth. The drama concludes with a final conflagration, and final Yasna rituals, the last one conducted by Ahura Mazda.[48]

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[47] Cf. C. Cereti, "Again on *Wahrām ī warzāwand*", in *La Persia e l'Asia Centrale da Alessandro al X secolo*, in collaborazione con l'Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Roma, 9–12 novembre 1994 (Roma, 1996), pp. 629–639.

[48] For a detailed discussion of these events, see Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, passim.

Assuming the validity of the correlations between ritual action and the World Year, the transition between the preparatory ritual and the Yasna proper correlates with the attack of Evil in the year 6000. Accordingly, the appearance of Zarathushtra in the year 9000 should correlate with section 4 of the Yasna proper, that is, the section here identified as the Sacred Word, which begins with the recitation of the Yasna Haptahāti, after the first Gathic section, Y. 27.13–Y. 34. This is also the very center of the Gathas and of the Yasna proper. Should this conclusion hold, it would substantiate on entirely independent criteria the keen insights by Molé, 1963, and specifically 1967,[49] that the pounding reenacts the process of the birth and the coming of Zarathushtra, at least as one of its multiple referents.

In turn, the three following sections should correspond to the three millennia from Zarathushtra's coming to the final battle and transfiguration. Each of these cosmic ages experiences initial victory for the religion, brought about by leading religious figures, followed by decline and chaos. The religious figures include Zarathushtra's three posthumous sons, appearing in the years 10000, 11000, and in the end, 12000. It is possible that specific ritual moves reflect this process. Thus, standing up may encode initial strength, while untying, or laying down the stands, may encode threatening dissolution, and so forth. That appears indeed to be the case, but cannot be explored here further.

SACRED NUMEROLOGY

Zoroastrian cosmic cycles

The grand view of a world year of 12 millennia is modeled after the annual solar cycle of 12 month x 30 days, as is its traditional four-seasonal division into four periods of 4 x 3000 years each. It is only natural that such numbers as 3, 4, 12, 30, have assumed even more significance in the context of the Zoroastrianism eschatological outlook. The solar cycle is also the one that is most familiar. But it is only the most prominent cycle. A major cycle less commonly known is the Metonic cycle, captured by the number 19.[50] This is the cycle that involves not only the

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[49] M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien* (Paris, 1963), and M. Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre. Selon les textes pehlevis* (Paris, 1967).

[50] E. Bischoff, *Mystik und Magie der Zahlen*. 2. Auflage (Wiesbaden, 1992, origi-

Sun, but also the Moon, the two luminaries metaphorically seen in Zoro-astrianism as the two eyes of Ahura Mazda. It is defined by the nineteen-year period, or about 235 months, after which all moon phases fall on the same days in the solar cycle, thus marking the interlocking phases of the two main luminaries.

The knowledge of such cycle, one can assume, must have had par-ticular significance in Zoroastrianism as these two luminaries represent the orderly course of the revolution of the sky after the incursion of the forces of Evil in the year 6000. In fact, these numbers are reminiscent of significant numbers in Zoroastrianism. Thus, the total number of stanzas in the Gathas is 238. It is possible that theologians related this number to the Metonic cycle for its fundamental cosmological and eschatological significance, interpreting 238 as 235 + 3, the latter the sacred number three. In fact, the cycle is also found in the number 57, and relates to the final Saušyant, who will be born 57 years before the year 12,000. This number encodes a triple Metonic cycle, 3 x 19.

The four sacred manthras

The reinforcement of the sky, and its orderly arrangement, are said to have been the first act of Ahura Mazda after the attack in the year 6000.[51] It can therefore be assumed that the knowledge about the sky, because of its all-encompassing protective function assigned by Ahura Mazda, was deemed to be of paramount significance and importance.

This most powerful physical-spiritual protective envelope is matched verbally by the protective envelope of the four most sacred manthras around the innermost core and store of knowledge, the combined Gathas and Haptahāti, which is enunciated and enacted in harmony with the ce-lestial cycles at the seasonal feasts.

It must therefore have been of paramount importance to know not only the orderly revolutions of the fixed sky, but also the order, shape, and relative arrangement of the order of the stars and constellations, as set in the sky by Ahura Mazda for protection. In late Hellenistic times that order had become common knowledge and fixed, in what is known as the Ptolemaic system (second century A.D.) of 48 constellations dis-

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nally published 1920), p. 224; also A. Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (New York/Oxford, 1993), p. 224–225.

[51] For the correlation of the Zoroastrian calendar with the major cataclysmic events, see Windfuhr, "A Note on *aryaman*'s Social and Cosmic Setting", pp. 320–321.

tributed in specific sets of the northern, zodiacal, and southern sky, 21, 12, and 15, respectively. It should therefore not be unexpected, as I have shown recently,[52] that the three most sacred Zoroastrian manthras which introduce the Gathas, the *yaθā ahū wariyah (ahunawar)*, *artam wahu* (or *artam wahišta*), and *yeŋ hē hātąm*, Y. 27.13,14,15, encode exactly those numbers by the numbers of their words, 21, 12, and 15, respectively. In addition, the concluding sacred manthra, the *ā aryamā išiyah*, Y. 54.1, has 24 words, which may correspond to the total number of chapters in the Gathas and the Haptahāti combined, 17 + 7:

Table 8. Four manthras and Ptolemaic constellations

yaθā ahū wariyah	21 words = 21 northern constellations	= 21 Nasks
artam wahu	12 words = 12 zodiacal constellations	
yeŋ hē hātąm	15 words = 15 southern constellations	= total 48
ā aryamā išiyah	24 words = 17 chpts. + 7 Haptahāti	

Such verbal encoding is best known from cabalistic practice, but more likely it simply reflects the spirit and practices of Late Hellenistic times. As such, numerical encoding is not fundamentally different from the pervasive acrostic patterns of the sounds A-M, W-M, and so on, in the Gathas, for which see Schwartz.[53]

The cycles in the yasnic liturgical text

In her mentioned study of 1995, Almut Hintze has convincingly argued that the expansion of the Yasna to 72 chapters was organized in such a way that Y. 36, addressed to the fire, Ātar, came to stand in the very center of the liturgy. In fact, this observation is born out by the thread of two interlocking numerological patterns that are based on the numbers 6 and 9, respectively. The two patterns plotted here highlight prominent chapters, by which the centrality of Y. 36 becomes even more prominent. In the following chart, the chapters and sections marking the two cycles are identified by key term only: (1) *bayān*, repeat of Y. 47, the six-stanza chapter on the holy or invigorating spirit, Spanta Manyu, in Y. 18, fol-

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[52] Windfuhr, "Cosmic Numerology".
[53] M. Schwartz, "The Ties that Bind: On the Form and Content of Zarathushtra's Mysticism", in *New Approaches to the Interpretation of the Gathas: Proceedings of the First Gāthā Colloquium held in Croydon, England (5th–7th November 1993)*, ed.F. Vajifdar (London, 1998), pp. 127–197.

lowed by the exegesis of the three most sacred prayers in Y. 19, 20, 21; *ātar*, the central chapter in the Haptahāti; *aryaman*, the manthra concluding the Gathas; *wisp yašt*, the concluding chapter; (2) *hōm*, the *yašt* to Hauma; the three manthras, Y. 27, 13.14.15; *uštawatī*, the second Gatha; *ābān*, the beginning of the litany to the waters. In addition, the other chapters defined by these two patterns also appear to be significant points, such as Y. 12, which is the Zoroastrian confession; Y. 30, which the crucial chapter of the 'choice' of the two Spirits, whose antagonism is also the topic in Y. 45.

Fig. 12. Cycles in the Yasna liturgy

		bayān			*ātar*			*aryaman*			*wisp yt.*		
6	12	**18**	24	30	**36**	42	48	**54**	60	66	**72**	=	12 x 6
9		**18**	27		**36**	45		**54**	63		**72**	=	8 x 9
hōm yt.			*3 manθras*			*uštawatī*			*ābān*				

As indicated by bold face, the sinus curves of the two sub-cycles create the nodes of a major cycle, 4 x 18. This again appears not to be a random result. Just like the Metonic cycle defined by the number 19, so 18 is the astral number of another major cycle, that of the eclipses, also known as the Saros cycle, of eighteen years (and about 10 days) after which the eclipses of the Sun and the Moon recur in the same sequence.[54] Eclipses being considered the work of the forces of Evil, this cycle would fittingly encode the struggle between the two Spirits in human and nature, culminating in the final battle and world-healing Yasna said to be performed by Ahura Mazda himself, just as he performed the spiritual Yasna at the beginning of the binary world.

COMPARATIVE NOTES

Shared Zoroastrian and Taoist numerology

Relative position, movements, and their relative timing are equally crucial in ritual action. This is born out by the complex movements of the priests in the Yasna, as minimally indicated in the synopses above.

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[54] Bischoff, *Mystik und Magie der Zahlen*, pp. 223–224, who also indicates that like all cyclical numbers, 18 is a lucky number, especially if arranged in form of 3 x 6; cf. also Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers*, pp. 224–225.

The priestly movements, and their exact execution, must have been even more crucial, and complex, at the time when eight priests enacted the Yasna at the high seasonal festivals. The significance of this aspect is aptly expressed by Duchesne-Guillemin: 'The position of the seven priests is symbolic of the coming of the future saviors to each of the seven parts of the world, and proper orientation is essential. In this way the officiating priests can feel themselves, in the performance of the ceremony, firmly related not only to the gods but also to the cosmos.' Further, 'The entire universe, as one may infer, is brought into play to avert the demons and death.'[55]

The eight are: *zautar* (Z), the main priest; *hāwanan* (H), the mortar priest; *āsnātar* (As), the priest responsible for washing and filtering the *hauma*; *ātɟwaxš* (At), the attendant of the fire; *frabɟtar* (Fr), the priest responsible for a variety of minor functions, mostly related to the upkeep of the fire stand and wood; *raiθwiškara* (R), the priest responsible for mixing and the distribution of the *hauma*; *ābɟtar* (Ab), the fetcher of water; finally, *srausawarza* (Sr), the overseer.

The priests are called upon by the main priest in the third chapter of the Visperad (Vr), inserted after Y. 11 of the basic yasnic text. Their functions and their proper positions are mentioned in the Avestan liturgical handbook known as the Nērangistān, book 2 (Nēr.). The sequential listings of proper places, functions, and the roll call in Vr. compare as shown in table 9:[56]

Table 9. Sequences of eight priests

Proper place	Nēr	Z	H	**As**	At	Fr	R	Ab	Sr
Functions	Nēr.	Z	H	At	Fr	**As**	R	Ab	Sr
Roll call	Vr. 3	Z	H	At	Fr⁻	Ab	**As**	R	Sr

Even though there is variation in the sequence in which the eight are mentioned, depending on the topic and context, it is the positions that are relevant here. The passage in the Nērangistān is the only such

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[55] Duchesne-Guillemin, *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism*, pp. 85–86.

[56] Nērangistan, book 2: functions of priests, proper place of priests: Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta*, vol. 3, pp. 128–134; S.J. Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān or The Code of the Holy Doctorship and the Code of the Divine Service being Portions of the Great Husparam Nask or the Order, the Ministry, the Officiation, and the Equipment of the Holy Divines of the Noble Zarathushtrian Church* (Bombay, 1915), pp. 391–397; A. Waag, *Nirangistan. Der Awestatraktat über die rituellen Vorschriften* (Leipzig, 1941), pp. 83–88, discussion pp. 127–128.

Avestan record. In abstracted form they may be plotted onto the nine-field grid of the ritual area as shown in fig. 13:

```
                        South
            mortar  Ab  Sr  At
            East    R       As      West
                    Fr  Z   H   water basin
                        North
```
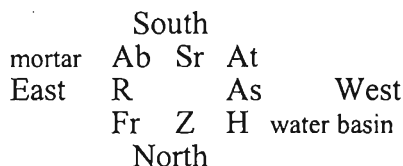
Fig. 13. Position of eight priests, Nērangistān

Two positions in this arrangement would seem to be problematic. As discussed above, the mortar is traditionally located in the SE corner of the ritual table, which would therefore be the proper place for the mortar priest H, rather than at the large water basin to the right of the lead priest in the NW. In turn, that location would seem to be intuitively more proper for the water fetcher Ab. A possible explanation is that the arrangement given for the proper places in the Nērangistān refers to the crucial stage where the mortar priest began the pounding and mixing. This would be supported by the comment, referred to earlier, by Dastur Karanjia, that the mortar remains in the SE corner until Y. 15, then is immersed, and placed in the middle of the northern side of the table at the beginning of the pounding sequence at Y. 24.

Given the involvement of sacred numerology discussed above, it is possible that the arrangement of the priests was similarly interpreted, and overlaid with a numerological figure, that of a magic square. It is such square that is the most prominent numerological feature in the Taoist ritual. It is crucial for the activation of the 'hidden period', as described by Schipper and Hsiu-huei.[57] This is achieved through a rite that combines inaudibly uttered formulas and meditation with a dance called The Paces of Yü, after the mystical demiurge that reordered the world after the flood, and was hemiplegic. Accordingly, the officiant, limping with one foot, the right one for even (yin) days, the left one of uneven (yang) days, crisscrosses the central ritual area exactly according to sequence of the nine numbers. The square encodes the number 15, with 5 as the central number, as shown in fig. 14:

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[57] Schipper/Hsiu-huei, "Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual", p. 199.

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4 9 2
3 5 7
8 1 6
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Fig. 14. Magic square of Yü

It is at least worthwhile to probe whether there may be any similar impli-
cations in the arrangement of the Zoroastrian priests. Taking their posi-
tions in the sequence as given in the passage of the Nērangistān, and in-
serting between them a space representing 5 in the center, their numeri-
cal values would be as follows: 1 *zautar* (Z); 2 *hāwanan* (H); 3 *āsnātar*
(As); 4 *ātŗwaxš* (At); 5 central field; 6 *frabŗtar* (Fr); 7 *raiθwiškara* (R); 8
ābŗtar (Ab); 9 *sraušawarza* (Sr). Plotting these numbers at the nine loca-
tions, the distribution of the eight corresponds exactly to the eight outer
fields of the Taoist magic square, with the only difference that the left
and right columns are inverted, as shown in fig. 15:[58]

Yasna			number			Tao ritual		
H	Sr	At	2	9	4	4	9	2
R		As	7	5	3	3	5	7
Fr	Z	Ab	6	1	8	8	1	6

Fig. 15. Magic square of eight priests and Yü

Whether coincidental, or not, the arrangement of the eight priests here
also corresponds exactly to the one postulated above: The mortar priest
is in the SE, the water fetcher in the NW. The remaining six positions
correspond exactly to the prescriptions of the Nērangistān. With all due
caution, it is therefore possible that the intuitively more proper initial
arrangement, which corresponds to the magic square dance in the Taoist
tradition, is the original one in the Zoroastrian tradition.[59]

The limping dance of Yü may also give a clue to one of the crucial
movements in the Zoroastrian ritual, the first movement of the Yasna
proper, which is the standing of the two priests, one in the North, the

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[58] In fact, this "inverted" square corresponds to the female yin-square in Taoism,
while the male yang-square results by a different rotation of the basic magic square;
cf. Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual*, p. 133.

[59] This arrangement, with the *hāwanan* in the SE, appears to be encoded already in
Y. 47.1, which is one of the shortest, but also most significant chapters of the Gathas,
the six-stanza Spanta Manyu; see Windfuhr, "The Logic of the Holy Immortals", p. 254,
with diagram.

other in the South of the ritual area, right big toe over left big toe. This curious posture is certainly one of humility, given that the priests invoke the Divine, as discussed by Modi.[60] But it is also cosmological. By this move the two priests re-establish the new cosmic axis: The posture is a representation of the Big Dipper at the celestial North Pole, seen as a one-legged figure, just as the limping, or rather one-legged, dance of Yü retraces the stars of that constellation.[61] That is, the ritual not only re-establishes the horizontal dimension, but also the vertical. It is in the North where the *zautar* stands, so as to protect against the forces of Evil who are said to be in the North, opposed to the Divine in the South.

The two arrangements of the eight positions

There may be a further coincidence between Taoism and Zoroastrianism with regard to the eight positions. The arrangement of the eight Trigrams shown above represents the 'later heavens', which are shifted in a peculiar, but systematic way from an arrangement representing the 'prior heavens',[62] that is, the final steps to Inner Time. In Zoroastrianism, there are also two arrangements: the one given above for the Yasna, according to the Nērangistān, and one according to the correlation of the eight priests with the archetypical *kešwar*, or 'continents'. The latter is part of a multiple correlative pattern between priests, the divine, the future savior Saušyant and his helpers at their final Yasna, and the continents, as shown in table 10:[63]

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[60] Thus Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and customs of the Parsees*, p. 323.

[61] Cf. E. Schafer, *Pacing the Void. T'ang Approaches to the Stars* (Berkeley, 1977), pp. 238 ff. Cf. also the brilliant, though somewhat cryptically designed work by G. de Santillana/H. von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill. An Essay on Myth and the Frame of Time* (Boston, 1969), p. 128 et passim, with detailed discussion of similar 'one-legged' beings in celestial myths around the world, though not in Zoroastrianism; see also the updated 2nd ed., in German, *Die Mühle des Hamlet. Ein Essay über Mythos und das Gerüst der Zeit* (Wien, 1994), p. 116 et passim. The insights in the work of these two scholars, one a noted historian of science, the other a noted comparative mythologist, apply to many of the issues touched upon here.

[62] St.R. Bokenkamp, with a contribution by P. Nickerson, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley et al., 1997), p. 17.

[63] Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, p. 94; Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 1, p. 284

Table 10. Correlations of priests with continents and spiritual beings

Priest	Divine	Saviors	Continents	Kešwar	Yasna
Zautar	Ahura Mazdā	Saušyant	hwani.raθa	Center	N
Hāwanan	Wahu Manah	Raucas.caišman	arzahi	E	NW/SE
Ātṛwaxš	Arta	Hwar.caišman	sawahi	W	SW
Frabṛtar	Xšaθra	Frādat.hwarnah	frādat.afšu	SE	NE
Ābṛtar	Aramati	Widat.hwarnah	widat.afšu	SW	SE/NW
Āsnātar	Harwatāt	Waru.namah	waru.baršti	NW	W
Raiθwiškara	Amṛtāt	Waru.sawah	waru.jaršti	NE	E
Sraušawarza				?	S

The comparison between the shifts in Taoism and Zoroastrianism suggests that both are systemic, the main difference being that in Taoism the main axis of shift is from S and N, while it is from E and W in Zoroastrianism, as shown in table 11:

Table 11. Shifts of arrangements of eight Trigrams and eight priests

Taoism			Zoroastrianism		
Prior		Later	Kešwar		Yasna	Priests
S	>	NW	**E**	>	NW	Ab
N	>	SW	**W**	>	SW	At
SW	>	SE	SW	>	SE	H
NW	>	NE	SE	>	NE	Fr
SE	>	W	NW	>	W	As
NE	>	E	NE	>	E	R
W	>	N	(S)	>	N	Z
E	>	S	(C/N)	>	S	Sr

The fact that these shifts are systemic suggests that there must have been a shared conception of change from Inner Time to Outer Time, to use the Taoist term, and from original cosmic order to relative disorder. That is, the suggested comparison may offer a hint at the ritual reflection of the Zoroastrian myth of the break-up of the original earth after the attack of the forces of Evil, and more importantly, from primordial time to the long phase of limited time, and its ultimate transfiguration into a higher order.

The power of the manthras and the alchemical furnace

The powerful application of the revealed, but secret (*gūzra-* Y. 48.3) knowledge is reflected in the power of the most sacred manthras, the *yaθā ahū wariyah*, in Avestan exegetical shorthand referred to as *ahuna* (*wairya*). It is stated in Y. 61.1–3 of the yasnic text itself:

ahunəm.ca wairyīm *fraēšyāmahī aṇtarə.ca ząm aṇtarë.ca asmanəm* ...
hamistayaē.ca nižbərətayē.ca aŋgrahe mainyə.uš ...
hamistayaē.ca nižbərətayē.ca kayaδanąm.ca ... *yātumatąm.ca*

"We set in motion the *ahuna wairya* between heaven and earth ... for the discomfiture and removal of the Evil Spirit ... for the discomfiture and removal of the sorcerers... and magicians".[64]

As shown by Skjærvø, such passages are modeled on Indo-European mythical heroes who wield huge stones. The manthras have become the quasi-physical weapons of Zarathushtra with which he constantly drives the Evil Spirit from the earth. This is repeatedly expressed. Thus, in Yt. 17.20, the hymn to the divinity of Reward, Aši, Zarathushtra continues his self-introduction to that yazatā. Part of his proud self-presentation is his power over the Evil Spirit. He cites the complaint by the Evil Spirit that he, Zarathushtra, alone among humans can approach and withstand him. The complaint is specifically about the power of the manthras, not only the *ahuna wairya*, but also the *artam wahu*, here, as often, referred to as *aša wahišta*:

jaiṇti mąm **ahuna wairya** *awawata snaiθiša yaθa katō.maså*
tāpayeiti mąm **aša wahišta** *mąnayən ahe yaθa ayō.xšustəm*

"He smashes me with the *ahuna wairya* as with a weapon like a stone the size of a house. He heats me with the *aša wahišta* just like molten metal".[65]

It may be suggested that the true and serious origin of this mythical, and edificational, diversion is found in the discussion above: The power of the *ahuna wairya* comes from the fact that it correlates, or in-corporates, the 21 northern constellations. These constellations in the sky of 'stone' are the 'house' over the earth below. In turn, the power of the *aša wa-*

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[64] Cf. Skjærvø, "Zarathustra in the Avesta and in Manicheism. Irano-Manichaica 4", in *La Persia e l'Asia Centrale da Alessandro al X secolo*, in collaborazione con l'Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Roma, 9–12 novembre 1994 (Atti dei convegni Lincei; Roma, 1996), pp. 597–627.

[65] Cf. P.O. Skjærvø, "Eastern Iranian Epic Traditions 3: Zarathustra and Diomedes – an Indo-European Warrior Type", *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, n.s. 11, 1997, pp. 175–182; spec. p. 178.

hišta comes from the fact that it in-corporates the 12 constellations of the zodiac, which is the path of the bright Sun that can burn.

There may be a more direct connection to the ritual as well, when the actions of the two manthric weapons are seen as part of a single setup: The *ahuna wairya* as the northern sky has the shape of the inverted mortar. The *aša wahišta* as the heated zodiac is the circle of the ritual table itself. Thus, indeed, the pounding and smashing during the combined recitations and ritual actions, the ringing of the mortar to drive the forces of Evil away, and all other major and minor details, properly represent the intricate choreography of the cosmic struggle.

But there may be more than these general symbolic meanings. Putting again the two actions together, smashing and melting, these two aspects of the struggle can be directly correlated not only with the pounding in section 4, which is obvious, but also with the otherwise curious action by the main priest at the beginning of section 7, where he throws the residue of the pounded *hōm*-twigs and the pomegranate twig to the assistant priest, who then oblates it to the fire. It is this oblation that would seem to correspond to the burning or melting about which the Evil Spirit complains. If this correlation holds, then, at least in some interpretative traditions, parts of the Evil Spirit, so to speak, must have been perceived as being trapped in the mortar through the actions preceding the pounding, then crushed, and increasingly reduced into metal-like residue through the long and complex manipulations, filterings, and pourings. It is then 'melted' and its evil spirits volatilized by the action of oblating the residue to the pure fire (which is also connected to the highest abode of the divine, as suggested above).

Ultimately, in traditions along these lines, there may be a reminiscence, or overlay, of another type of ritual and its utensils: the image of the alchemical mortar, and, given the crucial clue of the enigmatic *tāpayati* 'he heats', the crucible, and particularly the long kerotakis, with furnace below, and melting metal foil dripping from the top,[66] a line of imagery which cannot be further explored here. These observations would support the similarity suggested above between the Zoroastrian mortar and the Taoist incense burner in the center of the area, which ultimately may represent the alchemical furnace from which the elixir of life and precious metals are refined.

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[66] For a succinct illustrated survey, see F.S. Taylor, "A Survey of Greek Alchemy", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 50, 1930, pp.109–131.

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The preceding notes explored what initially was a rather general impression of certain similarities between the Zoroastrian ritual and the Taoist ritual that appeared to be more than superficial and general, and closer to the Zoroastrian Yasna ritual than any ritual in other traditions. Doing so had the objective of identifying in both similar patterns that are specific enough to allow the profiling of findings in the Zoroastrian ritual, made earlier, by contrast. It is far too early to deduce from the abundant similarities a direct common source. What does appear common, however, is that both reflect a world view and epistemology that in spite of vast differences in ideological setting and spatial and temporal distance reflect an approach and world view to ritual that appears to originate in considerable measure in Late Hellenism and has been left intact to a considerable degree in comparison to other traditions where those overt features have been subdued, or simplified, or eliminated. Here is not the place to go any further in this direction given the fact of my utter ignorance of Chinese culture, civilization and history.[67]

The example of an extraordinarily ancient pattern, and its later expressions, briefly discussed above, was the nine-field square that anciently was well and field, and, by the age of the horoscopes, is applied to such apt representations as the thema mundi.

Ritual instruments, zodiacal constellations, and millennial scheme

A further example for retention of older patterns in the Yasna ritual is the ring cup in the W and the barsom bundle with its girdle in the E of the ritual table, one guarded by Mithra at fall equinox, the other by the Guardian Spirits, Frawarti-s, at spring equinox. Both ring and girdle represent the ecliptic, or rather the zodiac, as mentioned. But the bull's hair wound around the ring makes it clear that the equinoctial constellations are not Aries, the Ram, and Libra, the Scales, but Taurus, the Bull, and Scorpio, the Stinger of Death. These ritual correlations across the table may hint at the animal sacrifice that probably was once performed during the ritual. It is also reminiscent of the tauroctony, Mithras stabbing the

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[67] For a general overview of Chinese science roughly contemporary with Parthian and Sasanian Iran, see the chapter 'The Tao chia (Taoists) and Taoism', and the sub-chapter 'The System of the Book of Changes', in J. Needham/Wang Ling, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2 (History of Scientific Thought; Cambridge, 1956), pp. 33–164, and pp. 304–345, respectively.

Celestial Bull, which is the central scene in Roman Mithraism.

To return to the specific calendrical arrangement of the instruments, it is evident that they retain the arrangement of the zodiac of the cosmic 'age' during which Taurus and Scorpio were the equinoctial constellations.[68]

These clues allow the drawing of conclusions regarding the correlation of the ritual arrangement, and specifically of the twelve sections of the ritual actions suggested above (1 to 12), with the traditional 'Western' constellations. In abstraction, the correlation may be shown as in fig. 16, for which fig. 10 should be consulted:

Fig. 16. Yasna: Correlation of 12 ritual actions with the constellations.
Calendar months, corresp. to 12 instruments on ritual table and 12 actions

<pre>
                                 SOUTH
            Harwatāt   Tištrya   Amr̥tāt
               7   8   9
       Arta   6   10   Xšaθra

EAST Frawarti-s 5   11   Miθra   WEST
      (loop, E horned stand)   (ring, bull's hair)

       Aramati 4   12   Apām (Napāt)
               3   2   1
            Wahu   Dadwah   Ātar
            Manah

                                 NORTH
</pre>

Corresponding constellations, Taurus at spring equinox, millennial scheme

<pre>
ATTACK 6000   Cancer   Leo   Virgo 9000   ZARATHUSHTRA
                     7   8   9
       Gemini 6   10 Libra

       Taurus 5   11 Scorpio equinoxes
       (horned stand)

       Aries   4   12 Sagittarius
       (horned stand)
                     3   2   1   CREATION/
ZAR.   3000   Pisces   Aquarius   Capricorn 0/12000 TRANSFIGURATION
PRE-SOUL
</pre>

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[68] Actually, the Zoroastrian ritual here follows the Babylonian model, which likewise retained the ancient pattern throughout its existence. The true astronomical 'age' of Taurus lasted from ca. 4000–2000 B.C., followed by the 'age' of Aries, which in turn astrology kept to this day in spite of the fact that we have been in the 'age' of Pisces since the time of Christ.

Inner and Outer Time: Ritual progression and regression

A closer look at this twelve-step sequence of ritual actions/constel-lations[69] reveals an oddity: its direction. The twelve steps are to represent the twelve successive astronomical, or rather astrological, ages of the precession of the equinoxes. Those, however, go in the opposite direc-tion. That is, as indicated earlier, astronomically our present age of Pi-sces was preceded by the age of Aries, just like Aries was preceded by the age of Taurus, and so forth. Applying this inversion to the entire se-quence, astronomically the beginning would be between Capricorn and Sagittarius (NW of the figure, corresponding to the large water basin), and from the latter it moves counter-clockwise to the end of Capricorn. Assuming that the designers of the Yasna ritual were aware of this fact, it is possible to conclude that the sequence of ritual actions, i.e. steps 1-12, does not trace the course of the world year forward from the begin-ning of creation, but goes in the inverse directions: It begins at the point of transfiguration at the end of Capricorn = month of Ātar 'Fire'/ *zōhr* cup 1 with *parahōm* mixture, and retraces mythical history to its initial point of primordial creation at the beginning of Sagittarius = month of Apām Napāt/ *zōhr* cup 2 with libation water; that is, as a healing ritual it re-visits the steps of history and concludes by re-establishing the initial order. The correlations between the mytho-historical events and the Zo-roastrian spiritual guardians of the months/world ages would well fit the initial and final events: Ātar alludes to the final ordeal of the molten metal, and the final cosmic Yasna. In turn, Apām Napāt is also known as the creator and fashioner of *nar-* 'men' (Yt. 19.52), that is, the creative agent at the beginning. To note, he is not only the only divine being called *ahura* besides Mazdā and Miθra, but his name, Apām Napāt 'Off-spring of the Waters', is a kenning for 'Fire',[70] that is, the fundamental fire in all, similar to the god Agni in Indian tradition.

If the preceding observations hold, the final and thirteenth ritual ac-tion of the Yasna ritual should represent the essential act. To recall, the

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[69] Note that there are a number of direct correlations between the Zoroastrian ritual table/calendar and the astrological signs. Most evident is the correlation of the two horned moon stands with the two horned zodiacal creatures Taurus and Aries. Less evi-dent are correlations such as that between Amr̥tāt 'Immortality', the spiritual guardian of plants and seeds, with Virgo, whose main star is Spica 'Ear of Corn', which was also the earlier designation of this zodiacal sign.

[70] Cf. C. Watkins, *How to kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford, 1995), p. 254.

priests, after a ritual handshake, leave the ritual area. The assistant priest proceeds to the temple well, or stream of running water. The main priest now exposes the mortar with the *parahōm* elixir to the fire for a final time, then joins the other at the well, and oblates the elixir to the water. In regressive time, this pouring oblation represents the initial *seminal* act of generation.

It would thus appear that the Zoroastrian Yasna ritual involves indeed both progression, and regression in time, similar to the progression, and the regression to Inner Time, in the Taoist ritual.

These few notes may suffice to hint at yet further depths of sacred encoding in the Yasna ritual, which fundamentally is the encoding of the mystery of time. [71]

A more readily perceivable pattern is encoded in the four corners, which reveals them as four-dimensional space-time points of transition that correspond to the four gates of the Taoist ritual area, but not necessarily with the Zoroastrian scheme of the twelve millennia:

6000			9000
Attack of Evil			Zarathushtra
Gate of Earth	SE	SW	Gate of Man
Road of Ghosts	NE	NW	Gate of Heaven
Zar.'s pre-soul			Transfiguration
3000			0/12000

It also becomes evident that the SE—NW axis of this shared pattern corresponds to the astrological theory of *genesis* and *apogenesis*, i.e. entering and exiting mortal life, in western traditions. [72]

Epistemological and metaphysical outlook

With the recognition of shared features, including more esoteric ones such as these, the comparison has led to the better understanding in regard to some basic aspects of the Zoroastrian Yasna ritual, supporting, with due caution, what had been proposed earlier and finding what had never been recognized. At the same time, the comparison reduces to

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[71] The official modern Iranian calendar continues to begin at spring equinox, and retains the Zoroastrian names of the months. In popular horoscopes they are replaced by the astrological signs, beginning with Aries.

[72] See the detailed study by R. Beck, *Planetary Gods and Planetary Orders in the Mysteries of Mithras* (Leiden, 1988), pp. 93–99 et passim. It should be noted that I have deliberately excluded the discussion of planets and planetary theory in the present study.

some degree the danger that what is declared a pattern is wishfully superimposed. Moreover, the most fundamental patterns found are those well known from traditional astronomy and interpretations of the workings of the skies.

To note, the retention of such patterns does not imply continued adherence to those views and beliefs. Ritual actions and texts are partially independent from those and tend to be reinterpreted continuously by its practitioners, and ever so slightly changed. However, the knowledge of the original patterns and of their sources may have continued among Zoroastrian ritual practitioners and ritual scholars. For example, the prescription of using goat's milk in the Yasna ritual, as commonly indicated in modern descriptions, may be just one further item of evidence for the application of such knowledge: It is not so specifically prescribed in the older texts, which allow the milk of any animal. The goat's milk, however, is reminiscent of the zodiacal sign of the Goat(fish)/Capricorn, which as mentioned corresponds to the very first of the twelve ritual actions, and possibly to the beginning of creation. That is, the specification of the kind of milk may have been triggered by such correlative interpretations.

It should be recalled that the knowledge of the sky was emphatically sponsored under both the Parthians and the Sasanians. In particular, as succinctly summarized by Pingree,[73] there were two periods of intensive translation activities: first under Ardashīr I (224–239) and Shāpūr I (239–270), and then, with thorough revisions and new Iranian astronomical and astrological inventions, under Khosrow I Anōšīrwān (531–579). Moreover, there is an indigenous Zoroastrian tradition[74] about the study of scientific works from abroad, and the application of this knowledge to the sacred texts. Such an activity is hinted at by typical (Middle Persian) phrases such as *abāg abastāg abāz handāxt* (Dēnkard 4.21),[75] which may be rendered variously as 'restored to', 'joined with', or 'compared with the Avesta', i.e. the sacred texts. As suggested above, such pious activity may have included the numerological adjustments of the most sacred prayers,

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[73] D. Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology. From Babylon to Bīkāner* (Roma, 1997), chpt. 4, "The Recovery of Sasanian Astrology", pp. 39–50.

[74] M. Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," *Handbuch der Orientalistik*. Erste Abteilung. Vierter Band. *Iranistik*. Zweiter Abschnitt, *Literatur* (Leiden/Köln, 1968), pp. 37–38.

[75] Cf. M. Molé, "Le problème des sectes zoroastriennes dans les livres pehlevis", *Oriens* 13–14, 1961, pp. 1–28, Dk. passage, pp. 5–6.

for which only the number of words was essential.

Another case in point is the thema mundi in Bundahišn chpt. 5, discussed above. In fact, according to Pingree,[76] it is datable to about 500 A.D., and shows the nativity of Gayōmart, the proto-human in Zoroastrian world history. More specifically, it is a skillful Iranian adaptation and development of the Indian horoscope of a *mahā-puruṣa*, the Indian proto-human, including the seven planets in the zodiacal signs of their exaltations. As such, its appearance in the Bundahišn evidences the complex history of the scientific intercourse between Mesopotamia, India, Greece, and Iran.

To return to the epistemological and metaphysical outlook, whatever the specific adjustments may have been:

Overarching all is what may be captured by the notion of compulsive and repulsive harmony. It is to be achieved and is cosmic, in multiple, complex but ordered complementaries and hierarchies, in the chiastic dialectic of unequal pairs. Such are the pairs of the three neuter and three feminine Holy Immortals. Similarly, while Ahura Mazda is superordinate to the pair of the primordial spirits, Spanta Manyu and Ahra Manyu, those two are unequal themselves when seen in the ultimate cycle of the World Year.[77]

The arrangement of the ritual area as three mutually embedded worlds; the arrangement of the ritual instruments in form of a calendar; the arrangement of the eight priests around the 'true earth' of the ritual area: These are seen, it appears, not as composed of entities as such but as parts of, or nodes in, a world matrix of progressive cycles, or rather spirals when seen in time. The example briefly discussed was the six so-called 'elements', which can be recognized as both hierarchically and pair-wise ordered states of matter, reflected in the Zoroastrian myth of the seven 'creations', of which the seventh is humankind. The arrangement of the ritual actions with their texts following the calendar reflects the order of cyclical time towards an end, combining the sacred number nine with twelve. These patterns, it would seem, are at least in part supported by similar pattern in Taoism, including the nine-fold ritual action after the initial establishment of the altar.

As such, what is called sacred numerology captures the notion of a world matrix: the numerological encoding of celestial cycles in the sacred texts, 12 for the year, 18 for the Saros cycle of the eclipses, 19 for

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[76] Pingree, *Astral Omens*, p. 50.

[77] Cf. Windfuhr, "The Word in Zoroastrianism", pp. 159 ff.

the Metonic cycle, and ultimately of the cycle of 25920 years of the precession of the equinoxes, in which a Zoroastrian 'millennium' once would have been understood as not as '1000', but as 'millennial unit', that is 2160 of true years, based on the traditional assumption of 72 years for one degree. This is not different from encoding the arrangement of the physical cosmos in the ritual area, and in the text itself, since language is linear and cyclical, poesis; nor is it different from the encoding in movement of the two magic squares made by the eight priests.

Creating this harmony in one Yasna service prepares for the next in the great cycle, which cannot be interrupted. This harmony is seen as creating the true reality of the natural process, that 'forces' purification and healing.

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ASPECTS OF THE 'INTERIORIZATION' OF THE SACRIFICE IN THE ZOROASTRIAN TRADITION

Antonio Panaino

After an introductory analysis of the different meanings assumed by the Avestan verb *yaz-* ('to worship, consecrate and sacrifice'), this article deals with a number of Avestan passages concerning the 'self-consecration' of the *uruuan-* 'the (inner)-soul' or 'breath-soul', and of other parts of the human being (like the *frauuaṣi-* 'the pre-existing soul' (or simply 'pre-soul'), the *uštāna-* 'the animation', the *ast-* 'the bone(s)'). These passages are discussed in the light of the Indian conception of the 'interiorization' of the sacrifice showing some common patterns with the Zoroastrian one. Such a comparison sheds new light on the exoteric and speculative dimension of the Indo-Iranian ritual thought.

1. MEANING AND FUNCTION OF THE AVESTAN VERB *YAZ-* AND THE QUESTION OF SACRIFICIAL IMMOLATION IN THE ZOROASTRIAN TRADITION[1]

The *yasna* ('the act of worship, sacrifice and consecration') is the centre of the ritual dimension of the Mazdean culture,[2] which presents a deep and complex symbolism and a number of remarkable speculative conceptions. These refer to a meta-temporal and extra-mundane state, where divine and human beings are put in communication. The performance of the ritual, in particular through the action designated with the Avestan verb *yaz-*,[3] involved many different forms of religious behaviour and

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[1] The following abbreviations are used to refer to Iranian texts: Ny. = Niyāyišn; Yt. = Yašt; Y. = Yasna; Vd. = Widēwdād; Ir.Bd. = Iranian Bundahišn.

[2] I have offered a general discussion on the Zoroastrian ritual dimension in my forthcoming text of the Quatre leçons au Collège de France, entitled *Rite, parole et pensée dans l'Avesta ancien et récent. Quatre leçons au Collège de France* (Paris, forthcoming).

[3] On this concept see the different reflections offered by E. Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", *Journal Asiatique* 252, 1964, pp. 45–58; J. Haudry, *L'emploi de cas en vedique. Introduction à l'étude des cas en indo-européen* (Lyon,

aims. The act of *yaz-* can be designated as a 'worship', as it is generally translated in English, but, in the framework of the Indo-Iranian tradition,[4] it corresponds to the idea of "sacrifice" in a strict and a general sense. This in fact is the meaning very often attested in the other Middle Iranian traditions.[5] Actually there are some Avestan passages in which the verb *yaz-* refers to a real immolation.[6] In some special cases this verb probably designates a form of veneration, i.e. the oral expression of a prayer or the immediate mention of the name of a divinity. This is perhaps the case of MiΘra, whom the heads of the countries have to immediately worship on the battlefield before the enemy (Yt. 10, 8–9).[7] Apart from that, we have to remark that the notion of "veneration" was prop-

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1977), p. 49; J. Narten, "Zur Konstruktion von avestisch *yaz*", *MSS* 45 *(Festgabe für K. Hoffmann,* Bd. 2), pp. 171–181 = *Kleine Schriften* Bd. 1, ed. M. Albino/M. Fritz (Wiesbaden, 1995), pp. 297–304; J. Kellens, "Langues et religions de l'Iran", *Annuaire du Collège de France 1999–2000. Résumé des cours et Travaux* (Paris, 2001), pp. 721–751, pp. 741–744; see also Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904), cols. 1274–1279.

[4] See A. Hillebrandt, "Ritual-Litteratur. Vedische Opfer und Zauber", *Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde,* ed. G. Bühler. Band 3,2 (Strassburg, 1897), p. 11.

[5] See Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", p. 47.

[6] It was J. Narten *(Kleine Schriften,* pp. 299–300) who discussed some Late Avestan passages (Yt. 5, 21, etc. and Yt. 9, 3 etc.) which show the verb *yaz-* plus the double accusative (name of the god and a numeral referring to the number of the animals to be sacrificed as, e.g. *tąm yazata ... satəm aspanąm hazaŋrəm gauuąm ...*). She suggested to emend them assuming that in these cases the original construction had the verb *yaz-* governing the acc. of the name of the worshipped divinity but also the locative of the things to be obtained by means of the ritual act *(tąm yazata ... satōe aspanąm hazaŋrōe gauuąm ...* "he worshipped her in order to obtain one hundred of horses, one thousand of bulls"). This interpretation has been independently contested by J. Kellens ("Langues et religions de l'Iran", p. 742) and by me and my pupil Circassia *(L'inno avestico a Druuāspā.* Tesi di laurea in Filologia Iranica. Università degli Studi di Bologna. Facoltà di Conservazione dei Beni Culturali. Sede di Ravenna (unpublished; Ravenna, 1998–99), pp. 47, 101–105). The criticism does not strictly concern the philological points of the emendation to be introduced on the text of Geldner, but the meaning of such a special construction according to Narten's solution. In fact the locative should have an elliptic temporal value according to Kellens ("lorsque l'on offre cent étalons ... lors de la cérémonie où l'on offre cent etalons") or that of limitation ("in the number of one hundred horses ..., or in the amount of hundred horses ...") according to me and Circassia.

[7] See I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to MiΘra* (Cambridge, 2nd ed. 1967; 1st ed. 1959), pp. 76–79. On the other hand, it is impossible to exclude that the text is referring to the complete celebration of a sacrifice before the enemy does so.

erly expressed with *nəmah-* 'veneration, homage' and with the denominative verb *nəmax̌iia-* / *nəmaŋha-* 'to venerate, to pay homage'. We also find expressions in which the construction *yaz- yasnəm* occurs. In many cases this referred to the consecration and veneration of an Avestan text. In this respect I have to underline the fact that the main part of the Gāθic liturgy can be simply described as a "liturgy of the word", i.e., more clearly as an offering to Ahura Mazdā of the most sacred texts practically without the performance of complex acts or of ritual ceremonies.[8] In some circumstances, however, the worship, in particular when accompanied by the oblation of sacrificial 'meat' (*miiazda-*, "Opferspeise"),[9] or by libations of haomic milk and of consecrated water (*zaoθra-*), offerings of bread, butter or simply through the recitation of ritual formulas, can be assumed as representing a direct continuation of a 'sacrificial tradition'. Such a tradition not necessarily has to be understood in the restricted sense of an actual immolation or of an animal sacrifice, but as a symbolic sacrifice or consecration to be offered to Ahura Mazdā, the Aməša Spəntas, the yazatas (i.e. the worshipful minor divine beings) or other abstract and concrete concepts. In addition, also in the circumstances where no action was performed, as in the just mentioned case of the Gāθic liturgy, it can be rightly questioned if *yaz-* exclusively referred to an adoration, more or less in a Christian sense (or more precisely in a certain way of representing the Christian sense),[10] or if we have to do with an abstraction or with a symbolization of an original sacrificial act, which actually was metaphorically transformed—through a substitution—into a vegetal or liquid offering or into

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[8] See A. Panaino, forthcoming.

[9] Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1193; as M. Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis* (London, 1883), p. 139, 2, noted, the Parsis' attempt of interpreting this word as 'fruit' is incorrect.

[10] In fact the mass, especially in the Catholic tradition, contains a real repetition of the sacrifice of Christ in flesh *and* blood, which in any case is assumed to actually represent a real immolation thanks to the so called transubstantiation ("the real change of substance"). In other words, without a physical sacrifice, the bread and the wine are assumed to have been substantially (and not simply) modified and transformed in flesh and blood. Of course, this doctrine does not correspond to the Lutheran and to the Calvinist ones, but it shows how an archaic sacrificial tradition can find a deep persistence. On the other hand, as W. Burkert, *Mito e rituale in Grecia. Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (1979), trans. F. Nuzzacco (Roma/Bari, 1996), pp. 90–91, has shown, the use of bread instead of flesh and of wine instead of blood, is a practice originating in the Bronze Age. With regard to the Zoroastrian tradition see R.Chr. Zaehner, *Teachings of the Magi* (London, 1956), pp. 129–130.

a simple evocation of a primitive sacrifice. It is, for instance, very diffi-
cult to deny that the offering and the pressure of the *haoma-* was an
unbloody[11] 'sacrifice' or at least a "consecration" and that Haoma is a
divine being which can at the same time be worshipped and immolated
(through its pressure) during the ritual enactment of the *yasna-*.[12] Con-
sidering some other famous examples, for instance when Ahura Mazdā
worships (*yaz-*) Tištrya, Miθra, Anāhitā, and Vayu (Yt. 8, 51,[13] Yt. 10,
123–125, 140, 143, Yt. 5, 17–19, Yt. 15, 2–4,), it would be absurd to
imagine that the supreme god was offering an 'adoration' to his divine
(and subordinate) collaborators (Pahl. *hamkarān*). I would like to point
out that specifically in the case of Yt. 8, Ahura Mazdā performs a *yasna-*
in which the individual name of Tištrya is mentioned (*azəm yō ahurō
mazdā̊ tištrīm .... aoxtō.namana yasna yaze* "It is I, Ahura Mazdā, who
worship Tištrya ... with a sacrifice in which (his) name is uttered").[14]
Then the definition of these *yasnas* and of this in particular simply as a
'worship' would result in a pure game of words. On the contrary, I be-
lieve that thanks to this ritual act, i.e. with such a *yasna-* to be under-
stood as a 'sacrifice', he was celebrating a rite aiming at the enforcement
of this divinity, according to a doctrine of the sacrifice which is directly
confirmed in Pahlavi literature[15] and that was well attested in Vedic
India too.[16] I do not know whether the strength that was transferred

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[11] See the discussion of the problem in Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi*, pp. 126–
130. The *haoma-* (Pahl. *hōm*) is the name of an intoxicant plant and of a beverage
obtained trough its pressure; in some cases mixed with milk (haomic milk). The same
term is also used for the divinity associated with this plant.

[12] For the Vedic side see Ch. Malamoud, *Cuire le monde. Rite et pensée dans l'Inde
ancienne* (Paris, 1989), pp. 54–55. We may recall that when Haoma, in Yt. 9, 17, per-
forms the act of *yaz-*, this verb governs only the accusative of the pronoum referred to
the divinity to be 'worshipped' (in this case Druvāspā) while there is no mention of the
animals to be offered to her. As Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacri-
fice", p. 46, has remarked, such a construction in which the verb "est pris absolument"
is different from the other ones attested in the same hymn, where the primordial sacrifi-
cers also offer in sacrifice a number of animals and the verb *yaz-* governs two different
grammatical cases (See again note n. 5). Rightly Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie
iranienne du sacrifice", pp. 46–47, stated that in this very case the value of *yaz-* cannot
be surely established.

[13] See A. Panaino, *Tištrya*. Vol. 1. *The Avestan Hymn to Sirius* (Rome, 1990), pp. 51,
116.

[14] See Panaino, *Tištrya*, p. 50.

[15] Panaino, *Tištrya*, p. 116.

[16] See A. Panaino, "An Aspect of the Sacrifice in the Avesta", *East and West* 36,

thanks to this *yasna* to Tištrya (ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains, ten channeled waters) was just a metaphor or if it referred to a real immolation or consecration of some animals and natural elements whose force was thus to be given to this divine being collaborating in the cosmic battle against the forces of evil. By the way, in this very case, it is difficult to try to say more about a ritual directly performed by the highest god or to try to identify this special kind of *yasna-* with any practical action. In fact we do not have any clear description of it and we do not know what a form of sacrificial behavior was properly attributed to Ahura Mazdā, because his state is completely different from that of the human beings, and, for instance, sacrificial death and ritual immolation probably were behaviors extraneous to his paradisiacal dimension.[17] On the other hand it is clear that the *yasna-* here reveals the nature of the supernatural power stemming from the sacrifice *in se*. This was such a great power that the same Ahura Mazdā had to produce it by means of the act of *yaz-* with a *yasna-*. In other words, the sacrifice was a creative performance.[18] This is particularly true in the case of the ritual sacrifice offered by Zurwān in order to generate a son or in the recitation of the hymns performed by the Indian god Prajāpati.[19] In both cases these rituals were not perfectly fulfilled: Zurwān doubted of the result of his sacrifice and thus generated both Ohrmazd (from the sacrifice itself) and Ahreman (from the doubt); Prajāpati produced the devas (the gods) during the diurnal recitation but generated also the asuras (the demons) during the night.

We should also mention the final great Gāθic ritual that will be held by Ohrmazd (as a *zōt*, i.e. as 'the first officiating priest') and Srōš (as a

1986, pp. 271–274; Panaino, *Tištrya*, p. 116.

[17] However, we have to recall, as otherwise noted in this article, that Eznik considered the sacrifice offered by Zurwān to himself as an immolation, but this interpretation could have been generated by a misunderstanding.

[18] See R.Chr. Zaehner, *Zurvan, A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford, reprint New York, 1972), p. 62.

[19] *Śatapatha* Brāhmaṇa, XI, 1. 6. 6–11; cf. A. Weber, *The Çatapatha-Brāhmaṇa in the Mādhyandina-cākhā with extracts from the Commentaries of Sāyana, Harivāsmin and Dvivedaganga* (Varanasi, 1968), p. 832; see also S. Lēġvi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brâhmaṇas* (Paris, 1889), pp. 27, 44–45; J. Varenne, *Mythes et légendes extraits des Brāhmaṇa* (Paris, 1967), pp. 21–22; W. Doniger, *Le origini del male nella mitologia indù*, trans. V. Vergani: *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology* (Berkeley, 1976/Milano, 2002), pp. 88–89.

rāspīg, 'the second officiating priest').[20] This will be not simply a ritual act but a cosmological performance restoring the perfect dimension of universal beatitude after the *gumēzišn* period, i.e. the period of mixture following the intrusion of evil's forces in the divine creation (Ir.Bd. XXXIV, 22).[21] This ritual will be anticipated by Sōšyans (the final Saviour) and his helpers by means of the actual immolation of the bull Haδayanš (Ir.Bd. XXXIV, 17), which will be slain and its fat used for the preparation of the white *hōm* (i.e. the white *haoma*-).[22] In that case the term *yazišn* is used with the verb *kuštan* — to slaughter (*ud gāw ī hadayāns pad ān yazišn kušēnd* "at that sacrifice they slaughter the bull Hadayanš").[23] Thus, when I will refer in the present work to the sacrificial sphere I do not want to limit the focus on immolation rites, nor to a rude conception of the rituals. However, in the Pahlavi literature we come across a kind of 'metaphysics' of the sacrifice, established and performed by Ohrmazd in the *mēnōg* state (see Bd.Ir., III, 23):[24] *ohrmazd abāg amahraspandān pad rapihwin gāh mēnōg yazišn frāz sāxt andar yazišn kunišn dām hamāg bē dād ...* "Ohrmazd with the Amahraspand at the Rapihwin time (i.e. 'at Midday') prepared the celestial sacrifice" (or "the spiritual (performance) of the sacrifice", if we read *mēnōg ī yazišn*). "During the performance of the sacrifice, the entire creation was created".

Immolations were in any case continuously performed throughout the Iranian and Mazdean religious traditions, from the Achaemenid till the end of the Sasanian periods, as it is confirmed by Herodotus and Xenophon[25] or by the Armenian sources.[26] In the Sasanian inscription of Šābuhr at the Ka'ba-i Zardušt (see, e.g. ch. 35 and ff.) we find an impressive number of lambs (Pahl. and Parth. *akbrīd*; Gr. πρόβατον) to be offered in sacrifice together with 'bread' (Pahl. and Parth. *nān*; Gr.

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[20] Zaehner, *Zurvan, A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, p. 69.

[21] Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi*, p. 150.

[22] Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi*, pp. 148–149.

[23] See Zaehner, *Zurvan, A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, pp. 210–211, n. 8.

[24] Cf. H.S. Nyberg, "Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéeennes", *Journal Asiatique* 1929, pp. 193–310, pp. 236–237; B.T. Anklesaria, *Zand-Ākāsīh, Iranian or Greater Bundahišn* (Bombay, 1956), pp. 44–45; on the notion of *mēnōg* see Sh. Shaked, "The Notions 'mēnōg' and 'gētīg' in the Pahlavi Texts and their relation to Eschatology", *Acta Orientalia* 33, 1971, pp. 59–107, in particular pp. 59–61; reprinted in Sh.Shaked, *Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts* (Norfolk, 1995).

[25] See Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", p. 46.

[26] See Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", p. 48 and *passim*.

ἄρτος) and 'wine' (Pahl. *may*; Parth. *maδ*; Gr. οἶνος) in favor of the souls (*pad ruwān*) of the king and of the members of the royal family and of the court.[27] The focus of Pahlavi literature rather lays on the interdiction of 'unlawful killing' of the animals (*a-dādīhā kuštan ī gāwān ud gōspandān*), i.e., to avoid unnecessary killing of animals and in particular of young animals, than on the interdiction of slaughtering animals in general. On the contrary, it was allowed to strangle them.[28] Chapter XI of the Šāyest nē-Šāyest carefully describes how a *gōspand* which has been slaughtered has to be divided in pieces (*gōspand ka kušt ud pārag kard*), that belong to the singular divinities.[29] In any case, as noted by Benveniste,[30] according to the Armenian sources, the clear Persian loanwords, *yašt* 'sacrifice' and *yazel* 'to sacrifice' evidently refer to an animal immolation; it is also to be remarked that, in the description of the sacrifice celebrated by Zurwān, Eznik uses the expression *yašt(s) arnel* 'to offer sacrifices', while Ohrmazd is *yaštacin* 'born from the sacrifice'; in particular Eznik makes a polemical issue of such a primordial sacrifice performed by Zurwān, wondering about "what did he offer at all", if the animals were not yet created? As again Benveniste has shown, it means that some forms of *yasna-* were no doubt violent (i.e. with real immola-

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[27] See Ph. Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Ka'aba-i Zardušt (ŠKZ), Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*. Part 3. *Pahlavi Inscriptions*. Vol. 1. *Royal Inscriptions with their Parthian and Greek versions*. Texts 1. 2vols (London, 1999), vol. 1: p. 48 ff.; vol.2: pp. 111–112; cf. Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", p. 48.

[28] See in particular Sh. Shaked, "The Moral Responsability of Animals. Some Zoroastrian and Jewish Views on the Relation of Humans and Animals", *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Anders Hultgård*, ed. M. Stausberg/ O. Sundqvist/A. van Nahl (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 31; Berlin/New York, 2001), pp. 578–595, p. 585, and Ph. Gignoux, "Dietary Laws in pre-Islamic and post-Sasanian Iran: a comparative survey", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 17, 1994, pp. 16–42, pp. 21–22. It is peculiar that the habit of strangling the sacrificial animal, as suspected by J. Kellens, *Zoroastre et l'Avesta ancien*. Quatre leçons au Collège de France (Paris, 1991), p. 50, seems to be condemned in the Gāθās; see in particular Y. 44, 20. We have also to recall that the Persians (and Iranians in general) were not strictly vegetarian. See now also A. de Jong, "Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Zoroastrianism: A Ritual and its Interpretation", *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. A.I. Baumgarten (Studies in the History of Religions 93; Leiden et. al., 2002), pp. 127–148.

[29] See F.M. Kotwal, *The Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest nē-Šāyest* (København, 1969), pp. 22–25.

[30] Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", pp. 49–54.

tions of animals).[31] This is also clear if we think about the sacrificial cooking (*pac*) of domestic animals [*pasu-*] that is doubtless referred to in Yt. 8, 58–59 and in the parallel passage of Yt. 14, 50–51, a rite to which the enemies of the Good Religion were not admitted.[32] Moreover, we have to consider the references to the immolation of horses, bulls and rams [*aspa- aršan-*; *gauu-*; *anumaiia-*] in the catalogues of the Yašts 5, 9 and 17.[33]

Coming back to the oldest Avestan periods, we do not know in detail the actual situation and we have to consider the possibility that a sacrificial immolation could have been simply evoked but not really done through a kind of bloodless sacrifice offered as a substitution of the cruel one. Apropos, we have also to consider the fact that the Hindu traditions, when they have assumed a strong vegetarian orientation, did not eliminate or erase the Vedic ritual, but this has actually assumed only a metaphoric value without any direct correspondence to the ancient rituals of animals' immolation evoked in the recited texts. In the Zoroastrian milieu, for instance, no animal is killed, but, as already Haug[34] underlined, "only some hair of an ox is placed in a small vessel and shown together with the other things, to the fire. This is nowadays the only remnant of animal sacrifice on this occasion, but formerly they used a piece of meat besides".

2. THE 'INTERIORIZATION' OF THE SACRIFICE ACCORDING TO THE AVESTAN TEXTS

In the following pages I would like to focus on some Avestan texts presenting us with a particular conception which concerns a kind of 'interiorization' of the *yasna* according to a pattern that—as we will see—can find very close correspondences in the Brāhmanical literature. Such a developed and speculative conception of the sacrificial rite does not appear only in the Later Avesta, and then in the Pahlavi texts, but it is already attested in the first two paragraphs of chapter 39 of the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, where it is stated:

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[31] Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice", pp. 50–51.

[32] Panaino, *Tištrya*, pp. 81–82, 145–146.

[33] See S. Circassia, *L'inno avestico a Druuāspā*; cf. J. Kellens, "Langues et religions de l'Iran", pp. 741–744; Benveniste, "Sur la terminologie iranienne du sacrifice".

[34] Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, p. 281.

(1) *iθā āṯ yazamaidē gə̄uš uruuānəmcā tašānəmcā ahmākə̄ṇg āaṯurunō pasukanąmcā yōi nå̄ jījišəṇtī yaēibiiascā tōi ā yaēcā aēibiiō ā aṇhən (2) daitikanąmcā aidiiūnąm hiiaṯ urunō yazamaidē aṣ̌āunąm āaṯ urunō yazamaidē hudō.zātanąmcīṯ narąmcā nāirinąmcā yaēṣ̌ąm vahehīš dāenå̄ vanaiṇtī vā vą̄ṇghən vā vaonarə̄ vā.*

"(1) Thus we worship the *uruuan-* of the cow and (its) Fashioner; then we worship our own *uruuan-* and (those) of the domestic animals that try to gain our favor, and the favor of those for whose disposition they are and the favor of those that are at their disposition, (2) and we worship the *uruuans* of the savage animals, if harmless; we worship the *uruuans* of the followers of Aṣ̌a, wherever they were born, men and women, whose good *daēnās*[35] win, shall win or have won".[36]

To this text we can compare *Y.* 59, 28 and 71, 18 and also *Xwaršēd Yašt* (*Yt.* 6, 4 = *Ny.* 1, 9):

Y. 59, 28: *vərəθraγnəm ahuraδātəm yazamaide. saošiiaṇtəm vərəθrājanəm yazamaide. imaṯ barəsma haδa.zaoθrəm haδa.aiβiiå̄ṇhanəm aṣ̌aiia frastarətəm yazamaide. haom uruuānəm yazamaide. hauuąm frauuaṣ̌īm yazamaide.*

"We *worship* Vərəθraγna created by Ahura (Mazdā). We worship Saošyaṇt breaking the obstacle. We worship this *barəsman-* spread out according to *aṣ̌a* with the libation and with the girdle. We worship our own *uruuans*. We worship our own *frauuaṣ̌is*".

Y. 71, 11: *vīspaēca aēte aṣ̌iš.hāgaṯ ārmaitiš.hāgaṯ yazamadaēca nipātaii-aēcā nišaṇharətaiiaēcā harəθrāicā aiβiiāxštrāicā hauuaṇhum mē buiiata. gāθābiiō spəṇtābiiō ratuxšaθrābiiō aṣ̌aonibiiō zbaiiemi yazamadaēca nipātaiiaēcā nišaṇharətaiiaēcā harəθrāicā aiβiiāxštrāicā hauuaṇhum mē buiiata. māuuōiia hauuāi urune zbaiiemi yazamadaēca nipātaiiaēcā nišaṇharətaiiaēcā harəθrāicā aiβiiāxštrāicā.*

"We worship all these (hymns) in a way according to Aṣ̌i, in a way according to Ārmaiti[37] for (our) protection, watching, guard, and overseeing; may you be a good livelihood for me! I invoke and we worship the beneficial *Gāθās*, ruling on the *ratus*, followers of Aṣ̌a, for (our) protection, watching, guard, and overseeing; may you be a good livelihood for me! I invoke and we worship my (and) our own *uruuans* for (our) protection, watching, guard, and overseeing".

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[35] This word here refers to the soul-vision representing the positive or negative acts done during human life. In other contexts it can also mean "Religion".

[36] Cf. J. Kellens/E. Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques* 1 (Wiesbaden, 1988), p. 139.

[37] J. Kellens, *Les noms-racines de l'Avesta* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 298–300.

Y. 71, 18: *vāca haṇkərəθa yazamaide. gāθanąm auuāurusta yazamaide. gāθā̊ spəṇtā̊ ratuxšaθrā ašaonīš yazamaide. staota yesniia yazamaide, yā dātā aŋhōuš paouruiiehiiā. hauruuąm haṇ dāitīm staotanąm yesniianąm yazamaide. haom uruuānəm yazamaide. hauuąm frauuašīm yazamaide.*

"We worship the words entirely pronounced,[38] we worship the omitted words of the *Gāθās*. We worship the beneficial *Gāθās*, ruling on the *ratus* and followers of Aša. We worship the *Staota Yesnyas*[39] which (are) the laws (of foundation) of the primordial existence. We worship the entire composition of the *Staota Yesnyas*. We worship our own *uruuans*. We worship our own *frauuašis*".

Yt. 6, 4 = *Ny.* 1, 14:

yō yazaite huuarə yaṱ	"Whoever worships the Sun,
aməšəm raēm auruuaṱ.aspəm	the immortal, brilliant, with swift horses,
paitištātāe təmaṇhąm	for the resistance of the darkness,
paitištātāe təmasciθranąm daēuuanąm	for the resistance of the Daēvas (having their seed) in the darkness,
paitištātāe tāiiunąmca hazasnąmca	for the resistance of robbers and bandits,
paitištātāe yātunąmca pairikanąmca	for the resistance of the Yātus and the Pairikās,
paitištātāe iϑiiejaŋhō marəšaonahe	for the resistance of the trouble of the decrepitude,[40]
yazaite ahurəm mazdā̊m	he worships Ahura Mazdā,
yazaite aməšə̄ spəṇtə̄	he worships the Aməšā Spəṇtas,
yazaite haom uruuānəm.	he worships his own *uruuan-*.
xšnāuuaiieiti vīspe	He satisfies all the
mainiiauuaca yazata gaēθiiāca	mental and living Yazatas
yō yazaite huuarə yaṱ	whoever worships the Sun
aməšə̄m raēm auruuaṱ.aspəm.	who is immortal, brilliant, with swift horses".

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[38] I assume that *haṇkərəθa*, here expressly referred to *vāca* "words", has to be put in close connection with the technical verb *haṇkāraiiemi* (e.g. Y. 1, 13, etc.), that, in its turn, has to be explained, as already Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, cols. 447, 448, n. 21 did, as a present stem [apparently causative] of ¹*kar*. Then *haṇkərəθa-* clearly corresponds to Skt. *saṃskṛta-* "confectus", and refers to the act of performing the recitation of a text with a perfect language and in a complete form (i.e. without mistakes and omissions). See also Hillebrandt, "Ritual-Litteratur", p. 11.

[39] *Staota Yesnyas* (Pahl. *Stūd Yasn*) "Prayers worthy to be worshipped"; this is the title given to a collection of some ritual texts of the Yasna; see Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1589.

[40] See E. Benveniste, "Avestica", *Donum Natalicium H.S. Nyberg oblatum* (Uppsala, 1954), pp. 17–26, pp. 20–23. Cf. Z. Taraf, *Der Awesta-Text Niyāyiš mit Pahlavi- und Sanskritübersetzung* (München, 1981).

In all these passages, we have found that the worship (or also the 'sacrifice' in a wide sense of 'consecration') can be offered not only to Ahura Mazdā, to the Aməša Spəṇtas, to the other Yazatas or to ritual texts such as the *Gāθās* or the *Staota Yesnyas*, but also to the *uruuan-* and sometimes to the *frauuašis* of the worshippers/sacrificers themselves. In particular in *Yt.* 6, 4, it is stated that the worship of the Sun implies that of Ahura Mazdā, of the Aməša Spəṇtas and of the *uruuan-* of the priest performing the ceremony. This kind of climax is very important; in fact, through the act of *yaz-* the *uruuan-* of the worshipper/sacrificer himself was elevated into the sphere of the divine world.

The importance of these passages has already been underlined by Shaked, who noted that some formulas as *ruwān ī xwēš rāy, az bahr ī ruwān* "for the sake of the soul, of one's own soul", which are attested throughout the Pahlavi literature, depend on a doctrine in which the sake of the *uruuan-* was considered as a basic concept. It is for this reason that whoever is sinful becomes also an 'enemy of (his own) soul', and thus can be considered as a *ruwān-dušman*, according to Dēnkard VI, 236.[41] In fact, like Ahreman, he produces his own destruction, in other words, the destruction of his own soul. Shaked has rightly underlined the seminal impact of this Iranian doctrine concerning the sacrifice for the sake of the soul on some Islamic traditions and Muslim literature. In addition he has also remarked how such an idea of the worship of the *uruuan-* might be connected to the doctrine of the superiority of the immortal parts of the human personality, such as the *frauuaši-* and the *daēnā-*, and, of course also the *uruuan-* which would have been given a sort of divine honor. However, there seems to be another important reason for this kind of worship. Thus, we may mention the fact that Skjærvø[42] has recently stressed the importance of this particular kind of worship of the *uruuan-* and of the *frauuaši-*, to be considered as "contributions to the regeneration of the new *ahu*" ('life'). In particular he has also emphasized the deep significance of the sacrifice twice offered in the *Frawardīn Yašt*, st. 149, 155, to all the basic and essential components of the human being (*ahūmca daēnąmca baoδasca uruuānəmca*

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[41] Cf. Sh. Shaked, *The Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages* (Dēnkard VI) *by Āturpāt-i Ēmētān* (Boulder/Colorado, 1979), pp. 92–93; Sh. Shaked, "'For the sake of the soul': a Zoroastrian idea in transmission into Islam", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13, 1990, pp. 15–32; Shaked, *Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts*.

[42] P.O. Skjærvø, *Weaving a World of Thought. The Myth of the Fravashis and the Old Iranian Ritual* (Paris, in press), pp. 21, n. 31, 396–397, 398–399.

frauuaṣ̌īmca yazamaide "We consecrate (to) the *ahu* (life), the *daēnā*, the consciousness, the (inner)-soul (and) the pre-soul").

Referring to this idea of the sacrifice we may also quote the Gāθic sanza Y. 33, 14:

aṯ rātąm zaraθuštrō tanuuascīt x^va ̇xiiā̊ ustanəm
dadāitī pauruuatātəm manaŋhascā vaŋhə̄uš mazdāi
šiiaoθanahiiā aṣ̌ā.yācā uxδa ̇xiiācā səraošəm xšaθrəmcā.

"Then Zaraθuštra gives (in return) as a gift the *uštāna-* ('animation') of his own body, the first (portion) of (his) Good Thought (Vohu Manah) to Mazdā and to Aṣ̌a the obedience and the power of (his) action and of (his) word".

What does it signify to *yaz-* the *uruuan* (in particular the sacrificer's *uruuan-*) or to *yaz-* the *frauuaṣ̌i-*? What is the meaning of the gift of the *uštāna-*? We have to recall that, in the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, the worship offered to the *uruuan-* of the Cow and to Gə̄uš Tašān ("the Fashioner of the Cow") is given the same importance as that of the *uruuans* of the worshippers/sacrificers, of the animals, and in general of the followers of Aṣ̌a. But the reference to the *uruuans* of the animals cannot be considered as completely independent from the idea of an animal immolation, real or simply (and perhaps more probably) only symbolic during that ritual. Does this mean that the worship/consecration of the *uruuan-* is also a metaphoric sacrifice of the *uruuan* itself? Or that, at least symbolically, it represents the sacrifice/consecration of the *uruuan-* of the worshipper/sacrificer himself? These questions are not only theoretical; in fact, if we consider Y. 37, 3, the interpretation of the following passage in particular raises a number of problems:

tə̄m ahmākāiš azdəbīšcā uštānāišcā yazamaidē
tə̄m aṣ̌āunąm frauuaṣ̌īš narąmcā nārinąmcā yazamaidē

We can prudently translate this passage as "We worship him (i.e. Ahura Mazdā) with our bones and animations. We worship him with (our) *frauuaṣ̌is* of followers of Aṣ̌a, men and women". With this translation we do not avoid the problem of the meaning of such a worship with, through or by means of "bones, animations and *frauuaṣ̌is*". It is far-fetched to understand the passage in a proto-Christian sense, as "by offering to him a worship with all our body and soul" with a devotional meaning like "with all my heart". I suspect that the literal and inner meaning was another one: "We sacrifice (or better 'we consecrate') to him our bones and animations. We sacrifice (or 'we consecrate') to him (our) *frauuaṣ̌is* of followers of Aṣ̌a, men and women". If such a transla-

tion seems to be provocative, I would like to emphasize the fact that it has not to be explained as an immolation of these spiritual parts, i.e. as a sort of ritual suicide, but as symbolical offerings given to Ahura Mazdā. In addition, it is not by chance—I believe—that after the mention (in Y. 34, 13) of the 'path' (*aduuan-*) and of the 'prize' (*mīžda-*), the following stanza (Y. 34, 14a) refers to the gift offered by Mazdā to the corporeal animation (*astuuaṇt- uštāna-*).[43]

3. THE 'INTERIORIZATION' OF THE SACRIFICE
ACCORDING TO *THE ŚATAPATHA BRĀHMAṆA*

All these Avestan passages mentioning the consecration of the soul should be discussed in the light of some Brāhmaṇical speculations about the sacrifice. In this respect I would like to attract the attention of the reader in particular on a noteworthy passage of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XI, 2, 6, 13–14 (which I quote according to the translation of Eggeling:[44]

XI, 2, 6, 13–14:[45]

> (13) *tad āhuḥ ātmayājī śreyān devayājīty ātmayājīti ha brūyāt sa ha vā āt-mayājī yo vededaṃ me 'nenāṅgaṃ saṃskriyata idam me 'nenāṅgam upadhīyata íti sa yathāhis tvacó nirmucyetaivam asmān martyācharīrāt pāpmano nirmucyate sa ṛimayo yajurmayaḥ sāmamaya āhutimayaḥ svar-gaṃ lokam abhisambhavati. (14) atha ha sa devayājī yo veda devā́n evā-ham idaṃ yaje devā́nt saparyāmī́ti sa yathā śreyase pāpīyān baliṃ hared vaíśyo vā rājñe baliṃ hared evaṃ sa sa ha na tāvantaṃ lokaṃ jayati yāvantam itaraḥ.*

> (13) "As to this they ask: "Who is the better one, the self-offerer, or the god-offerer? Let him say, 'The self-offerer;' for a self-offerer, doubtless, is he who knows, 'This my (new) body is formed by that (body of *Yajña*, the sacrifice), this my (new) body is procured thereby.' And even as a snake

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[43] *taṯ zī mazdā vairīm astuuaitē uštānāi dātā* "You, indeed, give this desirable (prize) to the corporeal animation". See A. Hintze, *'Lohn' im Indoiranischen. Eine semantische Studie des Rigveda und Avesta* (Wiesbaden, 2000), pp. 143, 157, 160, 252–253.

[44] J. Eggeling, *The Śatapatha-Brâhmaṇa according to the Text of the Mâdhyandina School*. Part 5. S.B.E. 46 (Oxford, 1900, reprint Bombay, 1994), p. 38.

[45] Text edited by A. Weber: *The Çatapatha-Brāhmaṇa in the Mādhyandina-çākhā with extracts from the Commentaries of Sāyana, Harivāsmin and Dvivedaganga*, pp. 842–843.

frees itself from its skin, so does he free himself from his mortal body, from sin; and made up of the *Ṛk*, the *Yajus*, the *Sāman*, and of the offerings, does he pass on to heavenly world." (14) "And a god-offerer, doubtless, is he who knows, 'I am now offering sacrifice to the gods, I am serving the gods,'—such a one is like an inferior who brings tribute to his superior, or like a man of the people who brings tribute to the king: verily, he does not win such a place (in heaven) as the other."[46]

Biardeau has commented on this passage[47] by noting: "Par le sacrifice qu'il se fait à lui-même, l'homme se donne un 'corps' capable de naître au ciel". Such a kind of interiorization of the sacrifice has also been discussed by Malamoud,[48] who has in particular remarked that the *saṃnyāsin* becomes an *ātma-yājin* ("he who sacrifices to himself—or—who 'sacrifices himself")[49] by heating his *tapas* to a temperature where there are no more distinctions among the divinities, the priests offering the sacrifice and the victims. This conception emphasizes a complete renunciation on the side of the offering priest and, at the same time, gives, for instance, an explanation to the peculiar funeral reserved only for the *saṃnyāsin*. He, in fact, has not to be burnt or cremated but can simply be inhumed. Actually this happens because the *saṃnyāsin* has already been 'cooked' during his life and thus it is unnecessary that he will be burnt again.

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[46] Cf. M. Biardeau/Ch. Malamoud, *Le sacrifice dans l'Inde ancienne* (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des hautes Études – Sciences Religieuses 79; Louvain/Paris, 1996), pp. 57–58: "On dit: "Lequel est supérieur, celui qui sacrifie aux dieux ou celui qui sacrifie au Soi (ou à lui même – *ātman*)?" On doit répondre: "Celui qui sacrifie au Soi." Celui qui sacrifie au Soi, c'est celui qui se dit ceci: "Par ce (sacrifice), mon corps que voici est formé, mon corps que voici est fondé." Comme un serpent est débarrassé de sa peau, il est débarrassé de ce corps mortel et mauvais et, fait de *Ṛc*, de *yajus* et de *sāman*, fait d'oblations, il naît dans le monde céleste. Tandis que celui qui sacrifie aux dieux, c'est celui qui se dit: "J'offre ce sacrifice aux dieux, je fais cette offrande aux dieux." Comme un inférieur offre un *bali* à un supérieur ou un *vaiśya* à un roi, c'est ainsi qu'il offre, et il ne gagne pas une place aussi importante que l'autre (dans l'au-delà)". See also Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brâhmaṇas*, pp. 78–79.

[47] Biardeau/Malamoud, *Le sacrifice dans l'Inde ancienne*, p. 58.

[48] Malamoud, *Cuire le monde*, p. 65 = (Italian trans.) *Cuocere il Mondo. Rito e pensiero nell'India antica* (Milano, 1996), pp. 70–71.

[49] Cf. A.K. Coomaraswamy, "*Ātmayajña*: self-sacrifice", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6 = (Italian trans.) F. Collino, "Ātmayajña: il sacrificio di sé", *Perennia verba* 4, 1942, pp. 3–58.

According to Lévi[50] (1898: 78), such a sacrifice to the *ātman-* was the result of a different and fresh orientation of the ritual doctrine, described by the French scholar as "étrangère ou plutôt contraire aux Brâhmaṇas". It is quite probable that such a conception, as Lévi wrote, "s'achemine vers l'Upanisad qui clôt le Çatapatha".[51]

It is clear that the present comparison is limited to the common pattern of a sacrifice, or of a consecration, which was directed in favor of—or—directed to the "ipseity" of the priest(s) celebrating the ritual. Still, it opens some fresh perspectives on the speculative dimension of the Mazdean *yasna*, which, for instance has been focused on by Gh. Gnoli[52] with reference to the concept of *maga-*[53] and more recently and with different arguments by Kellens.[54] The possibility that the Avestan speculations on the ritual and on the doctrine of the interiorization of the sacrifice—or of the self-consecration—have known an evolution, at least partly comparable with that of the Brāhmaṇical tradition and of the oldest Upaniṣads, seems to me worthy of discussion.

Of course, such a comparison needs some strict clarification. No doubt that the Avestan *uruuan-* and the Vedic *atman-* do not correspond to each other on the etymological side. In addition, they refer to two different systems in which they play an important role. On the other hand, both concern—each one in the limits of its cultural dimension—a particular aspect/function which[55] was fundamental for any living being. Therefore the Avestan *uruuan-* and the Vedic *atman-* can both be considered as reflecting comparable concepts. More precisely, the Avestan passages here quoted mention a special kind of worship/consecration of the *hauua- uruuan-* 'his own (inner) soul' (*haom uruuānəm yaz-*), and of the *hauuā- frauuaṣi-* 'his own pre-existing soul' (*hauuąm frauuaṣīm yaz-*), but also the gift of the *uštāna-* (the animation). This kind of consecration was performed according to a conception which, at this point of the discussion, can be directly compared to that of the sacrifice to the

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[50] Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brâhmaṇas*, p. 78.

[51] Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brâhmaṇas*, p. 78.

[52] Gh. Gnoli, "Lo stato di 'maga'", *Annali dell'Istituto universitario Orientale di Napoli*, N.S. 16, 1965, pp. 105–117.

[53] See now Ph. Gignoux, *Man and Cosmos in Ancient Iran* (Roma, 2001), pp. 68–69.

[54] See Cl. Herrenschmidt/J. Kellens, "La question du rituel dans le mazdéisme ancien et achéménide", *Archive de Sc. soc. des Rel.* 84, 1994, pp. 45–67.

[55] Cf. for instance L. Renou, "On the word ātmán", *Vāk* 2, 1952, pp. 151–157, with regard to the Vedic side. Reprinted in L. Renou, *Choix d'études indiennes*. Réunies par N. Balbir/G.-J. Pinault (Paris, 1997), Tome 2, pp. 877–883.

(and of the) *ātman-*, in the light of the relevant passages of Y. 37, 3,[56] where the act of *yaz-* Ahura Mazdā was done by means of the consecration of the *ast-*, of the *uštāna-* and of the *frauuaṣi-* of the worshippers and of the followers of Aṣa. Apropos we have to recall that the *ātman-* is not only a reflexive pronoun,[57] but that such a stem can refer to the body, sometimes to the very person, to the 'ipseity' or to the animated breath.

4. CONSECRATION AND SELF-CONSECRATION.
THE RITUAL PATH AND THE ASCENT OF THE SOUL

Without entering into far-fetched hypotheses, I would like to stress the inner aspect of this particularly meditative and psychological dimension of the *yasna-* offered to the *uruuan-* as mentioned in these Avestan texts (with or without the presence of the sacrifice to the *frauuaṣi-*, as, e.g., in the case of Y. 71, 18). These sources seem to presuppose a ritual consecration of the components of the human being. I think that this religious doctrine does not simply refer to a sort of journey of the *uruuan-* on the celestial path, as Kellens has rightly suggested.[58] In the Later Avesta and in the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti this is expressed through the doctrine of the ascension of this *uruuan-* to the divine level of Ahura Mazdā and the Aməṣa Spəṇtas. This elevation or ascension seems to have been obtained also by means of an interiorized consecration. It is not by chance that the ritual act of *yaz-* directed to the *uruuan-* and to the *frauuaṣi-* in Y. 71, 18 followed that directed to the *Staota Yesnyas*, because the worship of the inner soul, i.e. of the *uruuan-*, and of the protective and pre-existent soul, the *frauuaṣi-*, was linked to the consecration offered to the sacred word and to its primordial energy. These texts are in accordance with the same tradition attested in Y. 55, 1 where all the components of the spiritual and physical dimension of the human being are offered as a gift to the *Gāθās*.

However, I would like to stress another important consideration advanced by Malamoud[59] regarding the subject of the interiorization of the

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[56] See J. Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (Wiesbaden, 1986), p. 181, n. 51.

[57] In this respect the presence of *hauua-* (his own, *suus*) before the mention of the *uruuan-* and the *frauuaṣi-* has to be taken into consideration.

[58] Kellens, in Kellens/Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques* 1, p. 34; Kellens, *Zoroastre et l'Avesta ancien*, pp. 50–51; Herrenschmidt/Kellens, "La question du rituel dans le mazdéisme ancien et achéménide", p. 49.

[59] Malamoud, *Cuire le monde*, pp. 10–11.

sacrifice. He writes: "offrir un sacrifice au Soi c'est poser d'emblée que sacrifiant et divinité coïncident". But, in order to become like a god, worthy of sacrifice, *devatā*, it is necessary that the sacrificer becomes in his own turn the matter of the oblation of the sacrifice. Thus, we can perhaps find out an additional argument in favor of Kellens' supposition[60] concerning the voyage of the cow's *uruuan-* to heaven in company of the *daēnā-* of the priest performing the act of *yaz-*, because a doctrine concerning the ritual elevation, through the consecration, of the components of the soul is doubtless attested and is a result of parallel Indian and Iranian speculations.

We have to note that, apparently, the worship offered to the *daēnā-* is not stressed in these later sources as in the case of those passages referring to the *uruuan-* and to the *frauuaṣi-*. We can suspect that this happened in force of a special reason, possibly reflecting the Later Avesta systematisation of the concept of afterlife. In fact, while the individual *daēnā-* corresponding to the soul-vision in the Later Avesta represents the final result of the entire human life in female form and conception, the *uruuan-*, as the male component *par excellence* of the soul, is the part in which the priest mostly might identify himself.[61] It is this *uruuan* that the sacrificer desired to launch on the sacrificial road through the act of the sacrifice.

The data attested in the parallel Indian sources suggest that also the Avestan passages here discussed present us with a special meaning of the symbolical offering or consecration of the *uruuan-* and of the *frauuaṣi-* to Ahura Mazdā. In this way these parts of the human soul can be put in motion on the ritual path and rise to heaven. Thus, while the animal *uruuan-* was offered (being the animal 'killed', truly or symbolically), that of the sacrificer was *only* symbolically consecrated and then offered to god. This is only a hypothesis, based on the comparison with the Indian practices and conceptions of the so called *ātmayajña-*, which sheds new light on some aspects of the Mazdean tradition that could be considered ecstatic and esoteric, and in same cases even shamanic.[62] I would like to remark that this act of raising and launching some inner

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[60] J. Kellens, *Essays on Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism*, trans and ed. P.O. Skjærvø (Costa Mesa/California, 2000), pp. 102–103.

[61] See on this A. Panaino, "*nāirikā* e *jahikā-* nell'aldilà zoroastriano", *Bandhu. Scritti in onore di Carlo della Casa,* vol. 2 (Torino, 1997), pp. 831–843.

[62] For an up-to-date discussion of the problem see now Gignoux, *Man and Cosmos in Ancient Iran*, p. 65–94.

parts of the psychic dimension of the human being, in other words some components of his own soul, could also be defined as a kind of 'exteriorization', but the Indian parallels and the fact that the sacrificial dimension strongly modifies the vision and the religious experience of the sacrificers allow the common definition of 'interiorization'. In the framework of an esoteric dimension, that also involves an exteriorized aspect.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this framework we also have to take into consideration the interesting hypothesis proposed by Pirart[63] who expressly has developed some perspectives already focused on by Malamoud about the symbolic meaning of a Vedic ritual called *dīkṣā*, which concerns the *yajamāna-*, i.e. "the person for whom the sacrifice is offered" and not the "sacrificer" *stricto sensu* as the person who performs the ritual. Unfortunately, such a distinction does not expressly exist in Iran, because we do not have a strict term of comparison. In any case, the *dīkṣā* shows that the *yajamāna-* who desired to ascend and to enter in the world of the gods, but who was not an initiated priest, might be elevated to the dimension of the *sacrum* thanks to his consecration. In other words, he had to be ritually "sacrificed".[64] Without a real immolation, but simply through that of the *soma*—symbolically corresponding to his own soul—, the *yajamāna-* was thus immolated in favor of the gods by the priests, who in force of the privilege of their birth and initiation already belong to the world of the sacred. In fact, the priest—through the *dīkṣā*—gave to the *yajamāna-* all the necessary means to substitute his own spiritual function. Such a mime of the human sacrifice[65] in some aspects seems to recall the hidden pattern underlying the concept of a worship offered to the *uruuan-* and/or to the *frauuaṣi-* by the priests (and perhaps also by the protectors of the sacrifice) performing the *yasna-*. This ritual tradition presupposes a consecration of the inner components of the human identity. Moreover, Pirart mentions the offering of milk taken by a sacrificial

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[63] E. Pirart, "Le sacrifice humain dans l'Avesta", *Journal Asiatique* 284, 1996, pp. 1–36.

[64] See Ch. Malamoud, *Cuire le monde*, pp. 60–61. Cf. also J.Gonda, "Vedic Gods and the sacrifice", *Numen* 30, 1983, pp. 1–33.

[65] See Kellens, *Zoroastre et l'Avesta ancien*, p. 51; cf. Herrenschmidt/Kellens, "La question du rituel dans le mazdéisme ancien et achéménide", p. 49.

cow mixed with a juice of *haoma-*, which, according to his interpretation, would represent the *daēnā-*.

In conclusion, this kind of worship and consecration does not simply reflect a common Zoroastrian pattern in which everything could have been worshipped, but presents us with a special view of the *yasna-*, in which all the components of the human ontology, mortal (as the *uštāna-*) and immortal,[66] inner as the *uruuan-*, or external as the *frauuaṣi-*, were worshipped, venerated and at the same time consecrated. This is true in particular in the case of the *uruuans* of the worshippers/sacrificers, souls which could perhaps also metaphorically represent all the human *uruuans*. In our texts, however, the *uruuans* strictly belong to the priests performing the ceremony, while the mention of the *uruuans* of the *aṣauuans* (Y. 39, 2) seems to refer to all the members of the community in a general sense, living or dead.

I would like to point out that there is a difference between the reflexive act of worshipping/consecrating his/their own soul(s) and that of worshipping/consecrating the *uruuans* of other beings, animals or humans. As a matter of fact, through the consecration of his own *uruuan-*, the priest was directly referring to his present ritual act, and became able to make his inner part capable of meeting god through the symbolic gift of his soul. In fact, as Kellens has remarked: "Offrir aux dieux l'immortalité implique que le sacrifice comporte l'offrande de quelque chose qui est considéré comme immortel".[67] The references to the consecration of the *uruuans* of the animals, wild or domestic, like that of the *uruuan-* of the Cow, as again mentioned in Y. 39, 1–2, can perhaps in their own turn represent the (symbolic?) offering of the souls of these animals suitable to be immolated,[68] and which will probably take the place of the soul of the priests.[69] In any case they remain on a different level with respect to the doctrine of the self-consecration of the soul of the sacrificer. In this connection, we have to quote, following Kellens,[70] the important passage of P 33: *gaospəṇta gaohudā̊ baoδasca uruuānəmcā fraēši-*

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[66] J. Kellens, "L'âme entre le cadavre et le paradis", *Journal Asiatique* 283, 1995, pp. 19–56, *passim*.

[67] Kellens, *Zoroastre et l'Avesta ancien*, p. 50.

[68] See in particular Kellens' remarks in Kellens/Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques* 1, p. 34.

[69] See Kellens, *Zoroastre et l'Avesta ancien*, p. 50.

[70] Kellens/Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques* 1, p. 34; Kellens, *Zoroastre et l'Avesta ancien*, pp. 50–51.

iāmahi nazdišta upa θβarštaraocā̊ narš cašmanā̊ sūkəm. "Beneficial Cow, generous Cow, we send your consciousness (*baoδas*), your *uruuan-* towards the closest lights which have been fashioned, the light of man's eyes". This text shows that the *baoδah-* (consciousness) and the *uruuan-* of the Cow were sent to men's eyes, i.e. to the eyes of the priests performing the ritual, i.e. that they were offered through the immolation of the Cow. The technical meaning of this sentence is not clear; perhaps it signifies that thanks to human intermediation the gods invited to the *yasna-* might see the offerings and take part of them.

These ideas of the ritual and initiatic death of the worshipper/ sacrificer and in particular that of the self-consecration of the soul underline the importance of the speculative dimension of the Indian and Iranian rituals and deeply emphasize the crucial position of the priest during the ritual performance, as the actual protagonist of the 'sacrifice' and of the meeting with the divinity, to which he has to ascend with his soul.

SMASHING URINE: ON *YASNA* 48.10

Prods Oktor Skjærvø

In this paper, I shall discuss a passage in the Old Avestan *Gāθās*, the ancient Iranian hymns that, according to the post-Gathic tradition, were sung by Zarathustra.[1] Although the passage in question is grammatically straightforward, at least by Old Avestan standards, yet, opinions have varied greatly about how to interpret it. I shall propose that an interpretation based on the *apparent* meaning of the words is not to be dismissed off hand, since it points to a well-known Indo-Iranian myth. This is the myth of the dragon-slaying and the release of the fertilizing heavenly waters upon the earth.[2]

I shall conclude that the passage contains a disparaging statement to the effect that the rival poet-sacrificers' sacrifice of the *haoma* has not had the desired effect of removing the forces of chaos. This, in turn, would seem to imply that *our* poet-sacrificer's sacrifice does have the desired effect, and provides an argument for assuming that the *haoma* sacrifice, which played a central and crucial role in the Young Avestan sacrifice, the *yasna*, had the same function in the ritual performed in Old Avestan times.

THE BATTLE AGAINST CHAOS

We know that the *Gāθās*, at least as early as the Young Avestan period, a few centuries after they were composed, were recited on the five days preceding the New Year, that is spring equinox, and, as ritual texts, they

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[1] Cf. *Yasna* 9.1 *hāuuanīm ā ratūm ā haomō upāiṯ zaraθuštrəm ātrəm pairi yaoždaθ-əṇtəm gāθāsca srāuuaiiaṇtəm* 'At the model (time) of the *haoma*-pressing, Haoma approached Zarathustra as he was making the fire ritually pure and making heard the *Gāθās*'. It was, however, the divine Sraoša who was the first to sing them: *Yasna* 57.8 *yō paoiriiō gāθå frasrāuuaiiaṯ yå paṇca spitāmahe aṣaonō zaraθuštrahe* '(Sraoša) who was the first to make heard the five *Gāθās* of Orderly Spitama Zarathustra'. The five *Gāθās* are today recited in the middle of a long text, the *Yasna*, which accompanies the *haoma*-sacrifice, the *yasna*.

[2] See C. Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (New York/Oxford, 1995).

were probably one of the poet-sacrificer's contributions to bringing back the Ordered cosmos after periods of chaos.

Among the ancient Indians who composed the *Rigveda*, this purpose was mythically achieved by giving the gods, especially Indra, through the *soma*, strength enough to overcome and smash the dragon of chaos and release the heavenly waters. The central concept of "smashing" (smiting, striking down) is expressed by the verb Old Indic *han-*, Old Iranian *jan-*, as in the well-known hymn to Indra, where the god's cosmogonic feat is well described:

Rigveda 1.32.1–4

índrasya nú vīryā̀ṇi prá vocaṃ yā́ni cakā́ra prathamā́ni vajrī́ |
áhann áhim ánv apás tatarda prá vakṣáṇā abhinat párvatānām ||

Indra's valiant deeds I shall now proclaim,
    the first ones he ever performed, the *vajra*-bearer.
He smashed the dragon. He broke out the waters.
    He split open the bellies of the mountains.

áhann áhim párvate śiśriyāṇáṃ tváṣṭāsmai vájraṃ svaryàṃ tatakṣa |
vāśrā́ iva dhenávaḥ syándamānā áñjaḥ samudrám áva jagmur ā́paḥ ||

He smashed the dragon reclining on the mountain.
    The divine carpenter has ever fashioned the resounding *vajra* for him.
Like lowing cows spreading (out of their enclosure),
    the waters have ever come down to the ocean.

vṛṣāyámāṇo 'vṛṇīta sómaṃ tríkadrukeṣv apibat sutásya |
ā́ sā́yakam maghávādatta vájram áhann enam prathamajā́m áhīnām ||

He chose the *soma*, (thereby) growing with virile strength.
    Among the *trikadruka*s, he drank of the pressed juice.
He, the holder of the exchange gifts, took hold of the *vajra* to throw it.
    He smashed that one, the first-born of dragons.

yád indrā́han prathamajā́m áhīnām ā́n māyínām ámināḥ prótá māyā́ḥ |
ā́t sū́ryaṃ janáyan dyā́m uṣásaṃ tādī́tnā śátruṃ ná kílā vivitse ||

When you, O Indra, smashed the first-born of dragons,
    then you also diminished the *transformations of the *transformer.
Then, engendering the sun, heaven, and dawn,
    since then you have really never found an enemy.

The Iranian myths were similar, also involving gods and heroes who would fight, overcome, and smash the powers of chaos.

Equally important, it is the task of the Avestan *sacrificers* to smash the Lie, the cosmic deception that causes chaos:

Yasna 61.5 = *Yasna* 72.5

kaθa drujəm nīš ahmāṯ ā nīš.nāšāma
nīš.nāšāma saošiiaṇtō
drujəm kaθa nīš.nāšāma yaθa hīm janāma
xšaiiamnō axšaiiamnąm
vīspāiš haca karšuuąn yāiš hapta
hamistōe nižbərətōe vīspaiiå druuatō stōiš

"How we shall *dispel (?) here from us the Lie" [from *Yasna* 44.13]
We shall *dispel (it, we,) the Revitalizers (i.e., the successful sacrificers).
How shall we *dispel the Lie so that we can smash it,
(as) he who commands (*dispels her) who does not command from all the
  seven continents,
for the discomfiture and removal of the entire Lieful (temporal) existence?

FORMAL ANALYSIS OF *YASNA* 48.10

Such is the context also of the strophe I shall discuss here. The text of the strophe with the principal manuscript variants is as follows:

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 48.10

kadā mazdā	*mąnarōiš narō vīsəṇtē*
kadā ajən	*mūθrəm ahiiā madahiiā*[3].
yā aṇgriiā[4]	*karapanō urūpaiieiṇtī*
yācā xratū	*dušə.xšaθrā dax́iiunąm*

Christian Bartholomae translated the stanza as follows:[5]

Wann, o Mazdāh, werden die Ritter die Botschaft verstehen lernen?
Wann wirst Du den Unflat dieses Rauschtranks treffen,

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[3] The manuscripts: *madahiiā*: Persian Pahlavi Yasna family [in Mf1 corrected to *maga*], Indian Pahlavi Yasna, Sanskrit Yasna, Persian Videvdad Sade (K4); *maṯ.ahiiā*: Yasna Sade; *magahiiā*: PVS (Jp1), Indian Videvdad Sade (L2, Dh1). — The reading *magahiiā* of the junior member of the PVS and the late (vulgate) IVS is clearly secondary.

[4] The manuscripts: *aṇṇraiiā*: PPY (Mf1); *aṇŋhriiā*: PPY (Mf4, Pt4); *aṇgraiiā*: IPY, SY, PVS (Jp1); *aṇgriiā*: YS, PVS (Mf2, K4), IVS (L2). The readings in *-iiā* and *-aiiā* are thus equally well supported.

[5] C. Bartholomae, *Die Gatha's des Awesta. Zarathustra's Verspredigten* (Straßburg, 1905).

durch den böslich die Karpan
und durch den mit Absicht die üblen Herrscher der Länder betrügen?

Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin's French translation from half a century later is only lightly modified:[6]

Quand, ô Sage, les guerriers apprendront-ils le message?
Quand frapperas-tu cette ordure de liqueur,
Grâce à laquelle les sacrificateurs, méchamment,
Et les mauvais prêtres des pays, volontairement, exécutent leurs super-
cheries?

Jan Puhvel's English translation from almost yet another half century later combines the two:[7]

When, O Mazdāh, will the warriors get the message?
When will you crack down on this booze-urine
whereby the mumbler-clergy[8] wickedly bring on vomiting,
as do the willfully evil rulers of the lands?

The important thing for the moment are the translations of the second and third lines, which render faithfully what has been the general understanding of the sentence throughout the twentieth century, namely, as a question to god with a disparaging reference to an intoxicant, presumably the *haoma*, the Iranian equivalent of the Old Indic *soma*.

The strophe is in the form of a series of questions addressed to god, a literary device found also elsewhere in the *Gāθās*. Most often these are questions about the future with the verb in the present or aorist subjunctive, as in the following three examples, in which the poet evidently asks about something he hopes will come about:

Gāθā 1, *Yasna* 29.9

kadā yauuā huuō aŋhaṯ yā hōi dadaṯ zastauuaṯ auuō

When will he ever be present, who shall be giving her help with his hands?

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[6] J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre. Étude critique avec une traduction commentée des Gâthâ* (Paris, 1948).

[7] J. Puhvel, *Comparative Mythology* (Baltimore/London, 1987), p. 97.

[8] This translation is based on W. B. Henning's suggestion that the word is related to Chorasmian *karb* 'to mumble' (*Zoroaster. Politician or Witch-Doctor* [London, 1951], p. 45). Earlier, the word was connected with Old Indic *kalp-* and thought to refer to priests who were too preoccupied with the technical aspects of the sacrifice, hence Duchesne-Guillemin's 'sacrificateurs'. Other suggestions have also been made, but the exact meaning remains uncertain.

Gāθā 2, *Yasna* 46.3

> *kadā mazdā   yōi uxšānō asnąm*
> *aŋhōuš darəθrāi   frō ašahiiā frārəntē*

When, O All-knowing one, shall those who are the oxen of the days rise and move forth for the upholding of the (new) existence?

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 48.11

> *kadā mazdā   ašā maṯ ārmaitiš*
> *jimaṯ   xšaθrā   hušəitiš vāstrauuaitī*

When, O All-knowing one, shall Humility come through/with Order with/by (your) royal command (and) providing good dwellings and pastures?

Questions about the past are rare, but are also found, as in *Yasna* 44.20, where the answer is fairly obviously "no, never":

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 44.20

> *ciθənā mazdā   huxšaθrā daēuuā ǎŋharō*

What, O All-knowing one! Have the *daēuua*s ever had good royal command?

Questions in the present indicative include the first line of *Yasna* 48.10. Similar rhetorical questions are found in the *Rigveda*, for instance:

Present indicative:

Rigveda 6.21.3cd (Indra)

> *kadā́ te mártā amŕtasya dhā́méyakṣanto ná minanti ...*

When do mortals not harm/diminish your, the immortal one's, establishment, when they wish to obtain things by their sacrifice?

Imperfect:

Rigveda 1.32.14ab

> *áher yātā́raṃ kám apaśya indra hŕdí yát te jaghnúṣo bhī́r ágachat |*

O Indra, whom did you see as revenger of the dragon, when fear would come into your heart when you had smashed him?

Aorist injunctive:[9]

Rigveda 4.5.13cd

> *kadā́ no devī́r amŕ̥tasya pátnīḥ sū́ro vár̥n̥ena tatanann uṣā́saḥ* ||
>
> When spɹɑll tɹɪ goddesses, ladies of immortality, the dawns,
>   have stretched out for us (their rays) with the color of the sun?

The important point about these questions is that they are usually rhetorical and the answer is obvious.

Let us now concentrate on the line *kadā ajə̄n mūθrəm ahiiā madahiiā*. None of the five words of which the line consists presents any immediate problems and can be analyzed at *face value* as follows:

> *kadā* 'when?'
> *ajə̄n*, augmented imperfect = Old Indic *áhan*: 'he smashed (smote, struck down, killed), he would (habitually) smash, used to smash'
> *mūθrəm* nom.-acc. sing.: 'urine'
> *ahiiā* gen. sing.: 'of this, his, this one's'
> *madahiiā* gen. sing.: 'of ... intoxication'

Note especially that *ajə̄n*, if taken at face value, is identical with Old Indic *áhan*, that is, it is an augmented imperfect, denoting incomplete or repeated action in the past,[10] as in the case of Indra's repeated smashing of the obstructions preventing the free run of the heavenly waters. Note that there is a similar rhetorical question in *Rigveda* 1.81.3: "whom will you smash (be smashing)?" (appropriately in the present subjunctive) accompanied by another question, which, this time, is answered explicitly.[11]

Rigveda 1.81.3c–d

> *yukṣvā́ madacyútā hárī kám hánaḥ kám vásau dadho 'smā́m̐ indra vásau dadhaḥ* ||

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[9] Apparently in the sense of a future past (*futurum exactum*), as in *Yasna* 45.11 *yastā daēuuā̊ṇg aparō maṣiiąscā / tarāmąstā* "(He) who, on account of that (good thought?) in the future shall have scorned the *daēuuas*."

[10] See K. Hoffmann, *Der Injunktiv im Veda* (Heidelberg, 1967), p. 151: "Das Imperfekt ist das eigentliche Tempus der Erzählung, des historischen Berichts. ... Das Imperfect antwortet auf die Frage *wann war das?*"

[11] It is unanswered in *Rigveda* 8.13.22 *kadā́ ta indra girvan̥a stotā́ bhavāti śáṃtamaḥ| kadā́ no gávye áśvye vásau dadhaḥ* 'O Indra, you who enjoy (our) songs, when will our praiser have all blessings? When will you place us in wealth consisting of cows and horses?'

Attach your two tawny coursers, impelled by (your/their) intoxication!
Whom will you smash? Whom will you place in wealth?
It is us, O Indra, whom you shall place in wealth.

Note also that the translation of *ajə̄n* as future by Bartholomae, etc., was based on insufficient understanding of the use of the injunctive at the time. It was to remedy this situation that Karl Hoffmann undertook the study of the injunctive in the *Rigveda*.[12]

The only moderately ambiguous word in the line is the gen. sing. *ahiiā*, which can be anaphoric 'his', referring to an already mentioned or an unknown entity, or a demonstrative 'this', either going with *madahiiā* 'of this intoxication' or 'this one's', referring to the speaker or someone in the immediate context of the hymn or in the speaker's vicinity.

The only syntactic ambiguity is in the function of the neuter noun *mūθrəm*, which can be the subject or direct object of *ajə̄n*.

At face value, the sentence can therefore be rendered as:
  1. When would the urine of (t)his intoxication smash ...?
  2. When would he smash the urine of (t)his intoxication?
The expected answer, again, is probably "never".

With either translation, the problem remains that neither is the context immediately clear about the implications of the statements, nor does the rest of the *Avesta* contain any similar statements. No wonder then, that scholars in the past have tried various ways of making sense of the strophe.

The main tactics have been to do things to the verb *ajə̄n* and to the subject or direct object *mūθrəm*. Thus, Bartholomae, followed by most scholars in the first half of the century, analyzed *ajə̄n* as a *2nd* singular from a compound verb *ā-jan-*, hence his translation: 'When will you (i.e., O God) deal a blow to the filth of this intoxication?'

In the late 1950s, however, it was shown by Avestan scholars that the analysis as *2nd* singular of the verb *jan-*, Old Indic *han-*, is impossible. If from *jan-*, the form must be a *3rd* singular, differing from the 2nd singular as follows:

	Indo-Europ.	Indo-Iranian	proto-Iranian	Old Avestan
2nd sing.	$*e\text{-}g^{uh}en\text{-}s$	$*a\text{-}j^{h}an\text{-}s$	$*a\text{-}jan\text{-}h > *ajaŋh$	$*ajə̄ng$
3rd sing.	$*e\text{-}g^{uh}en\text{-}t$	$*a\text{-}j^{h}an\text{-}t$	$*a\text{-}jan\text{-}t$	$ajə̄n$
			(in *Young Avestan* replaced by *janaṱ*)	

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[12] On the assumed future use of the injunctive, see Hoffmann, *Der Injunktiv im Veda*, pp. 27–29.

Thus, Helmut Humbach, who also took the form to be from *ā-jan-*, in his English translation, rendered the line as 'When will (someone) kick over the (vessel of) urine of that (demon of) intoxication'[13] implying that it was the *vessel* containing the *haoma* that was overturned. This is not a likely meaning of the compound *ā-jan-*, however, as Rigvedic *ā-han-* means 'striking sth. into sth'.

After Humbach, still other ways of circumventing the problem have been tried. Thus, Jean Kellens and Eric Pirart in their edition of the *Gāθās* proposed a slightly different analysis, taking *ajə̄n* to be the 3rd singular aorist of *gam-* 'go, come',[14] which did not much improve the meaning.

	IEur.	Indo-Iranian	proto-Iranian	Old Avestan
3rd sing.	*e-gʷem-t*	*a-jan-t*	*a-jan-t*	*ajə̄n*
		(cf. OAv. *uzjə̄n* 'he has come up')		

A third approach, by which both the morphological and the semantic problems are obviated, has been to analyze *ajə̄n* as a 3rd *plural* of a verb *aj-* or *aja-*, otherwise not attested in Avestan or elsewhere in Iranian languages, and assuming a different meaning for *mūθra-*. This approach has been tried by Stanley Insler and Martin Schwartz.

Insler posited a verb *aj-* meaning 'to fear', comparing Greek *ák-homai*, etc., and derived *mūθra-* from *mū-* 'be deluded, foolish', also not attest- ed in Avestan or elsewhere in Iranian languages.[15] He argued that Young Avestan *mūθra-* means 'feces', not 'urine' (against the Old Indic evi- dence, where *mūtra* apparently means only 'urine'), and that the common Young Avestan word for 'urine' is *maēsman-*. In this way, he obtained the meaning: 'When shall they fear the folly of that intoxicating drink?'

We shall return to *mūθra-* in moment.

Schwartz posited a verb *aj-* meaning 'to ban, taboo, remove unclean objects', comparing Greek *ágos* 'fault', etc., and took *mūθra-* to mean 'waste, excrement', but he *also* read *magahiiā* from *maga-* 'ditch, pit', and thus obtained the following meaning: 'When will they get rid of the

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[13] H. Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra and the Other Old Avestan Texts*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg, 1991).

[14] J. Kellens/E. Pirart *Les textes vieil-avestiques*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1988, 1990, 1991); see also J. Kellens, *Le verbe avestique* (Wiesbaden, 1984), p. 381.

[15] S. Insler, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra* (Acta Iranica 8; Tehran/Liège, 1975), p. 290.

filth of that 'ditch (pit)'?'[16] As we have seen, however, the manuscripts do not favor such a reading.

THE INDO-IRANIAN MYTH

All these interpretations have to a certain extent been predicated on the assumption that the poems express the reformed teaching of the Old Iranian prophet Zarathustra, who, according to some scholars, abolished the use of the *haoma* in the ritual.[17] The alternate approach I shall adopt here is based on the well-established and universally recognized fact that the *Old Avesta* also continues *Indo-Iranian poetic traditions*.

If we approach the text from this angle, then we can apply to it the time-honored methods of philology and comparative Indo-European mythology and, I believe, arrive at a relatively satisfactory interpretation of the line and the strophe. I say *relatively*, because, on one hand, I have found no exact or close parallels either elsewhere in the *Avesta* or in old Indo-Iranian literature. On the other hand, in the *Old Avesta* as in the *Rigveda*, myths are never spelled out: we only have fleeting references to them, which would be understood by the poet's colleagues, and, of course, by the gods, but leave modern readers perplexed.

Let us therefore go directly to the mythological implications of the three principal words in the line: *ajən*, *mūθrəm*, and *madahiiā*. In my analysis of these three terms, I follow the principle that we should proceed to emend a manuscript reading or propose alternate interpretations of apparently common words only after having shown by all means available to us that they are quite unlikely to be what they seem.

ajən

Taken at face value, *ajən* is the Avestan equivalent of Old Indic *áhan*, which refers to the removal of the forces of chaos by a divine or human hero with the aim of re-establishing the cosmic order; see the exhaustive discussion in C. Watkins's book.

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[16] M. Schwartz, "Scatology and Eschatology in Zoroaster: On the Paronomasia of *Yasna* 48.10 and on Indo-European H_2EG 'to Make Taboo' and the Reciprocity Verbs *$K^WSEN(W)$* and *MEGH*", *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce* (Leiden, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 473–496.

[17] See, e.g., Bartholomae, *Die Gatha's des Awesta*, pp. 33–34.

One of the reasons why scholars have been reluctant to accept this obvious analysis has no doubt been the fact that, differently from the Old Indic verb, the verb *jan-* is very rare in the *Old Avesta*. There are, in fact, only two more instances, notably in two passages formally and conceptually related to the present one with obvious parallels with our strophe. One of them is in *Yasna* 32.14, in which we note especially that *dūraoša*, epithet of the *haoma*, parallels *mada* 'intoxication' in *Yasna* 48.10.

Gāθā 1, *Yasna* 32.14

> *ahiiā grə̄hmō ā hōiθōi   nī kāuuaiiascī̆t xratūš nī.dadat̰*
> *varəcå hīcā fraidiuuā   hiiat̰ vīsə̄ntā drəguuaṇtəm auuō*
> *hiiat̰cā gāuš jaidiiāi mraoī̆ yə̄ dūraošəm saocaiiat̰ auuō*

> The "glutton" and the "poets" deposit (their) "guiding thoughts" here in his cord-work,
> (their) "*miracle-works", by daily pouring, when they *are ready to be help for the one possessed by the Lie
> and when the cow has been mistreated to (the point of) being killed (by him) who "purifies" the *haoma* by burning.

Yasna 32.14

> *kāuuaiiascī̆t*   *xratūš*   *vīsə̆ntā*
> the "poets"   guiding thoughts are ready to be

>   *jaidiiāi*   **dūraošəm**
>   to be smashed   *haoma*

Yasna 48.10

> *karapanō*   *xratū*   *vīsə̆ntē*
> the "mumblers" by guiding thought are ready to be

>   *ajə̄n*   **madahiiā**
>   he smashed   of intoxication

madahiiā

Our strophe also contains the only instance of *mada-* in the *Old Avesta*, but the term is well known from the *Rigveda*, where it is conceptually closely linked with the term *áhan* in the figure of the god Indra, who, when drunk on *soma*, smashes the obstructions that keep the heavenly waters from flowing forth and fertilizing the world:

Rigveda 1.56.5c–d

svàrmīḷhe yán máda indra hárṣyā́han vṛtrám nír apā́m aubjo arṇavám ||

> When *you* in the contest to earn the sun, O Indra, *in your intoxication*,
> you, excited, *smashed the obstruction*, you made the current of the wa-
> ters swell.

Rigveda 1.81.3c–d

yukṣvā́ madacyútā hárī kám hánaḥ kám vásau dadho 'smā́m̐ indra vásau dadhaḥ ||

> Attach your two tawny coursers, *impelled by* (your/their) *intoxication!*
> *Whom will you smash?* Whom will you place in wealth?
> It is us, O Indra, whom you shall place in wealth.

Rigveda 8.96.5a–b

ā́ yád vájram bāhvór indra dhátse madacyútam áhaye hántavā́ u |

> ... when you, O Indra, take the *vajra* in your hands in order to *smash* it,
> *impelled by your intoxication*, at the dragon.

In the *Young Avesta*, *maδa-* is one of the features of the *haoma* that allow the sacrificer to overcome the forces of evil, including the *kauui*s and *karapan*s 'poetasters and mumblers', as described at length in the hymn to the *haoma*:

Yasna 9.17–18

> *nī tē zāire maδəm mruiiē*
> *nī aməm nī vərəθraγnəm*
> *nī dasuuarə nī baēšazəm...*
> *nī taṯ yaθa gaēθāhuua*
> *vasō.xšaθrō fracarāne*
> *ṯbaēšō.tauruuå drujim.vanō*

> I call down, O tawny one, *your intoxication*
> and your force and *your obstruction-smashing strength*
> and your talent and your healing ...
> (I call) down (all) that so that I may go forth
> among living beings commanding at will,
> overcoming hostilities, conquering the Lie!

> *nī taṯ yaθa tauruuaiieni*
> *vīspanąm ṯbišuuatąm ṯbaēšå*
> *daēuuanąm mašiiānąmca*
> *yāθßąm pairikanąmca*
> *sāθrąm kaoiiąm karafnąmca ...*

(I call) down (all) that so that I may overcome
the hostilities of all hostile ones,
of *daēuua*s and men,
of sorcerers and witches,
of tyrants, *poetasters*, and *mumblers* ...

Moreover, the intoxication of the *haoma* is the only one that has the
effect of re-establishing cosmic Order; all the others have the opposite
effect of bringing back Wrath and the forces of chaos, as stated further
on in the same hymn and in the hymn to Aṣi, goddess of the rewards:

Yasna 10.8, 19

 vīspe zī aniie maδåŋhō
 aēšma hacinte xruuī.druuō
 āaṯ hō yō haomahe maδō
 aṣa hacaite uruuāsmana ...
 rǝnjiiō vazainte maδō vārǝθrayniš

 For all other intoxicants
 are accompanied by Wrath with the bloody club.
 But the intoxication which is that of the haoma
 is followed by Order (and) bliss. ...
 The intoxications fly more fleetly, obstruction-smashing.

Yašt 17.5

 haomaheca nǝmō
 mąθraheca *aṣa onō zaraθuštrahe
 aṯciṯ bā nǝmō haomāi
 yaṯ vīspe aniie maδåŋhō
 aōšma hacinte xruuī.druuō
 āaṯ hō yō haomahe maδō
 aṣa hacaite xᵛaēpaiθe

 Homage to Haoma
 and to the poetic thought of Orderly Zarathustra!
 So far then: homage to Haoma!
 For all other intoxicants
 are accompanied by Wrath with the bloody club.
 But the intoxication which is that of the haoma
 is followed by its own Order.

mū̄θrəm

So far, we are well within the reach of a likely interpretation, so now we need to fit *mūθra-* 'urine' into our mythological scenario. Comparing the Rigvedic Indra, we note that one effect of Indra's inordinate consumption of *soma* is on his bladder, which he needs to empty, thereby releasing thundering streams of fertilizing liquid over the world in the form of rain, as also happens to his companions, the Maruts and their horses.

Rigveda 8.4.9–10 (to Indra)

> *aśvī́ rathī́ surūpá id gómām̐ íd indra te sákhā |*
> *śvātrabhā́jā váyasā sacate sádā candró yāti sabhā́m úpa ||*
> *ŕ̥śyo ná tŕ̥ṣyann avapā́nam ā́ gahi píbā sómaṃ vá́śām̐ ánu |*
> *niméghamāno maghavan[18] divé-diva ójiṣṭham dadhiṣe sáhaḥ||*

With horse and chariot, and handsome indeed,
    possessing cows (is) your friend, O Indra.
He is endowed with *the swelling*[19] conferred by his vigor.
    Always resplendent he enters the assembly.
Like a thirsting antelope buck to the watering place,
    come here! *Drink the soma according to wish!*
Pissing[20] *it down day after day*, O holder of the exchange gift,
    you have received the strongest force.

Rigveda 1.64.5–6 (to the Maruts)

> *... duhánty ū́dhar divyā́ni dhūtayo bhū́mim pinvanti páyasā párijrayaḥ||*
> *pínvanty apó marútaḥ sudā́navaḥ páyo ghr̥távad vidátheṣv ābhúvaḥ |*
> *átyaṃ ná mihé ví nayanti vā́jinam útsaṃ duhanti stanáyantam ákṣitam ||*

They milk, shaking them, the heavenly breasts.
    They swell the earth with milk, plowing it.
They *swell* the waters, the generous Maruts,
    (and) the milk containing butter, efficient in the rituals.
They lead aside their courser *to piss*.
    They milk the thundering source, the undiminishing one.

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[18] Note the assonance *megh ~ magh*, which indicates that the fertilizing rain is a gift from the god to humans in return for their sacrifices.

[19] On the root *śvā-*, see below, note 34.

[20] On the phonetic influence of *meigʷʰ-* on *meiĝh-*, see M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* (Heidelberg, 1986–), II/15, p. 381.

Rigveda 9.74.4 (to Soma)

> *ātmanván nábho* duhyate *ghṛtám páya ṛtásya nā́bhir amṛtaṃ ví jāyate* |
> *samīcīnā́ḥ sudā́navaḥ prīṇanti tám̐ náro hitám áva* mehanti péravaḥ ||

A cloud endowed with breathing *it is milked* into ghee, milk,
  the navel of Order, immortal, it is born far and wide.
Acting toward the same goal, the ones with good *gifts accept him as their
  friend.
The *swollen* men/heroes (= the Maruts) *piss* down (the fluid) set in motion.

In Zoroastrianism, the importance of urine is well known.

Firstly, in the *Videvdad*, a long Young Avestan text on ritual cleans-
ing, we are told that one of the places where the earth is most happy is
where people and animals urinate the most and where it is cultivated,
which shows that there is a link between urine and fertility:

Videvdad 3.6

> *dātarə gaēθanąm astuuaitinąm ašāum*
> *kuua puxδəm aṅhå zəmō šāištəm*
> *āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdå*
> *yaṭ bā paiti fraēštəm maēzəṇti*
> *pasuuasca staorāca*

O Orderly establisher of the bony world of living beings!
Where, fifthly, of this earth is it happiest?
Then Ahura Mazdā said:
Wherever animals, small and large, piss the most.

Secondly, cow's or bull's urine, or even the urine of people married to
their closest relatives, Young Avestan *maēsman-*, is used to make living
beings and objects "ritually pure" and to remove pollution by dead mat-
ter, which belongs to the forces of evil.[21]

Videvdad 8.12–13

> *dātarə ... ašāum*
> *caiiō āaṭ aēte maēsma aṇhən ...*
> *yaēibiiō aēte nasukaša frasnaiiåṇte*
> *varəsåsca tanūmca*
> *pasuuąm vā *staoranąm vā*
> *narąm vā nāirinąm vā*

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[21] See M. Boyce, "Cleansing", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 5, 1992, pp. 693–700, and "Gōmēz", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 11, 2002, pp. 120–21.

āat̰ mraot̰ ahurō mazdā̊
pasuuąm vā *staoranąm vā
nōit̰ narąm nōit̰ nāirinąm
paragat̰ duuaēibiia yōi aŋhat̰
xᵛaētuuadaθasca xᵛaētuuadaiθīšca
aēte maēsma maēzaiiaṇta
yaēibiiō aēte nasukaša frasnaiiāṇte
varǝsā̊sca tanūmca

Orderly creator ...
Which must these urine (washings?) be ...
with which these corpse-cutters can wash
their hair and bodies:
of small or of large domestic animals,
of men or of women?
Then Ahura Mazdā said:
of small or of large domestic animals,
but not of men and women
except those two who are
men and women in consanguineous marriages,
these should make urine
with which these corpse-cutters can wash
their hair and bodies.

In chapter 9 of the *Videvdad*, we have a long description of how washing *with cow's urine* someone afflicted by the demon of dead matter makes the demon flee from body part to body part and finally out of the body.

On the other hand, *mūθra-* from dead matter pollutes the earth, as we are told in the *Videvdad*:

Videvdad 6.6–8

dātarǝ ... ašāum
yezi vasǝn mazdaiiasna ząm raoδiiąm
hixtaiiaēca karštaiiaēca parakaṇtaiiaēca
kuθa tē vǝrǝziiąn aēte yōi mazdaiiasna
āat̰ mraot̰ ahurō mazdā̊
aētaδa hē aēte mazdaiiasna aŋhā̊ zǝmō pairišaiiaṇta
aētaŋhąm astąmca *varǝsanąmca[22]
*spāmanąmca *mūθranąmca vaŋhutātąmca [23]
dātarǝ ... ašāum

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[22] The manuscripts have *varǝsąm*.
[23] The manuscripts: *spāmąmca muθrąmca vaŋhutātąmca* (Pt2, K1), *°tātǝmca* (Mf2, Jp1, L2, L1).

yezi nōiṯ *pairišåṇte[24]
aētaŋhąm astąmca *varəsanąmca
**spāmanąmc*a **mūθranąmca vaŋhutātąmca*
kā hē asti ciθa

O Orderly creator ...
If the Mazdayasnians wish to irrigate, plough, and scatter
earth for growing(?),
how should these Mazdayasnians behave?
Then Ahura Mazdā said:
Here these Mazdayasnians should search the earth
for these bones and hairs,
*excrements, *urine*, and *traces of blood[25] (i.e., in order to remove them).
O Orderly creator ...
if they do not search
for bones and hairs, *excrements, *urine*, and *traces of blood,
what is the penalty for that?

From this and other passages, we see that in this case, as in the case of other objects connected with the body, Young Avestan has two terms for urine, one used to refer to items in the good world (the ahuric term), *maēsman-*, and the other to items in the world of evil (the daēuuic term), *mūθra-*.[26] Although the Young Avestan evidence does not prove the existence of ahuric *maēsman-*, daēuuic *mūθra-* in the *Gāθās*,[27] the combined Old Indic and Young Avestan evidence does prove the existence of *mūθra-* 'urine' in Indo-Iranian, hence there is no need a priori to think that *mūθra-* does not have this meaning in our passage.

Depending on whether *mūθrəm* is subject or direct object, our sentence can thus be paraphrased as follows:

1. Subject: When was the (evil) urine produced by the drinking of *haoma* capable of smashing (the forces of barrenness and death)?

2. Direct object: When was (...) able to smash the urine produced by the drinking of *haoma*?

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[24] The manuscripts: °*aiiåṇti* Pt2, °*te* Mf2, Jp1, L2, Br1, K10, L1; *upairi.ṣaoṇti* K1.

[25] Bartholomae, in his *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904), rendered *spāman-* as 'spit, phlegm'; *mūθra-* as 'feces'; and *vaŋhutāt-* as 'blood, *sanguinitas*'.

[26] This was, in fact, already suggested by Ilya Gershevitch: "An Iranist's View of the Soma Controversy", *Mémorial Jean de Menasce*, eds Ph. Gignoux/A. Tafazzoli (Louvain, 1974), p. 46.

[27] Note Old Avestan ahuric *cašman-*, daēuuic *aši-* 'eye'. Other Old Avestan examples are less certain.

The second alternative is obviously more difficult to account for than the first, which can be interpreted relatively easily as follows. Water, which is a creation of Ahura Mazdā's, in the form of rain produced by the successful sacrificer, purifies the world, ridding it of the Evil Spirit's creation. The "water" thus produced by the inefficient sacrificers does not, however, have this effect.

Water is not otherwise said to "smash", but it is said "*not* to smash" Ahura Mazdā's creation:

Videvdad 5.8

> *āfš narəm jainti vā ...*
> *āfš narəm nōit̰ jainti*
> *astō.viδōtuš dim bandaiieiti*

> Does water smash a man?
> Water does not smash a man.
> The demon who disconnects the bones binds him ...

And in the later Zoroastrian texts, rain is said to kill (*ōzan* < *aua-jan-*) evil creatures:

Bundahišn 6B.6

> *ān xrafstarān ī zamīg hamāg pad ān wārān bē ōzad*

> Those evil creatures on earth were all killed by that rain (made by Tištar).

THE CONTEXT OF *YASNA* 48.10

Let us now see how such an interpretation would fit into the context of the strophe as well as the larger context of *Yasna* 48 of *Gāθā* 3 and of *Gāθā* 3 as a whole. Most importantly, we need to discuss the syntax of *mūθrəm*. There are two questions that need to be answered: What was it that was not smashed and who or what was it that was not up to the task?

As for the first question: the object *may* be expressed in the next line by the instr. *angriiā*, a derivative of the adjective *angra-*, which, in the *Avesta*, is the standing epithet of the evil spirit, the lord of darkness and death. Exactly what kind of evil is expressed by the word *angra* is, unfortunately, not clear.[28] Also, since the antecedent of the pronoun is

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[28] It is probably from proto-Iranian *ahra-*, Indo-Iranian *asra-* and perhaps cognate with Old Indic *ásita-* 'dark', used of the dark chaos hidden by Dawn (e.g., *Rigveda* 4.51.9 *gúhantīr ábhvam ásitam* 'hiding the dark informity'). The corresponding noun appears to be *ạsta-* in an unclear passage in *Yasna* 34.8: *θβahiiā mazdā ạstā uruuāta-*

inside the relative clause, we cannot be sure that it represents the direct object. In principle, the direct object might be a gapped noun, on which *aŋgriiā* would depend, but it could also be in other cases, giving: 'When did the urine of (t)his intoxication smash the evilness by which ...'. or, for instance, 'When did the urine of (t)his intoxication smash the (...) *of* the evilness by which ...'. Or, if the direct object is gapped: 'When did the urine of (t)his intoxication smash (...), (this) evilness by which ...'.

Similar ambiguities obtain if *mūθrəm* is direct object: 'When did he smash the urine of (t)his intoxication, (this) evilness by which ..'. or, for instance, 'When did he smash the urine of (t)his intoxication *with* the evilness by which ..'. and so on.

As for the second question, who was the inefficient smasher?—again, it could be the evil spirit himself, implied by *aŋgriiā*. The use of *ahiiā* to refer to the evil one himself in *Yasna* 32.14 cited above may support such an interpretation.

On the other hand, we may note that, in the later Zoroastrian texts, the opponent assigned to Best Order, the cosmic principle of order opposing chaos, is, in fact, Indra, who in Iran was demoted together with the *deva*s, as stated in the *Bundahišn* (*Bundahišn* 1.33–35: description of the good and evil creations; *Bundahišn* 5.1: about the opposing forces in the worlds of good and evil):

Good forces	*Evil forces*
Ohrmazd	Ahrimen
Wahman (good thought)	Akōman (evil thought)
Ardwahišt (best order)	*Endar* (Avestan Indar, Old Indic Indra)
Šahrewar (choice command)	Sāwul (Avestan Sauruua, Old Indic Śarva)
Spandarmad	Nānghaiθ (Avestan Nåŋhaiθiia, Old
(life-giving humility, Earth)	Indic Nāsatya)
...	
Srōš (Avestan Sraoša)	Wrath
truth (*rāstīh*)	lies and false statements (*drō ud mihōxt*)

Note also the use of *narō* 'men, heroes' in the first line of *Yasna* 48.10. Elsewhere in the *Gāθās*, the word *nar-* 'man, hero' is used, on one hand, to denote the successful sacrificer, the *nā spəṇtō*, or 'the life-giving man'; on the other hand, it is used about the great heroes of the past,

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hiiā '(you frighten them), O All-knowing One, with the *q̇sta* of *your* (side of) the deal (with them)', apparently referring to the dire effects on humans of breaking the universal agreements with god.

such as Frašaoštra, and others. In the *Rigveda*, the term *naras* is used in particular of the *Maruts*, as in *Rigveda* 9.74.4 cited above, with its *náro ... mehanti* 'the men/heroes piss down', which also recalls *Yasna* 48.

It is, therefore, at least conceivable that the themes of Indra's drinking of the *soma/haoma*, as well as his inordinate urinating were both adapted by the Iranians, but in a negative sense.

On the other hand, in a Young Avestan list of contraries, Best Order is countered by Wrath, which is a significant fact in the larger context of *Yasna* 48:

Yašt 19.46

> yahmi paiti *pərətaēθe[29] spəṇtasca mainiiuš aŋrasca
> aētahmi paiti *yaṯ[30] ax^varəte
> aδāṯ *aštə̄[31] fraŋharəcaiiaṯ *āsištə̄[32] katarascīṯ
> spəṇtō mainiiuš aštəm[33] fraŋharəcaiiaṯ
> vohuca manō aṣəmca vahištəm ātrəmca ahurahe mazdå puθrəm
> aŋrō mainiiuš aštəm fraŋharəcaiiaṯ
> akəmca manō aēšməmca xruuī.drūm ažīmca dahākəm
> spitiiurəmca yimō.kərəṇtəm

... over which they fight, the life-giving and the Evil Spirit,
over this, the unseizable one.
Thence they each sent forth messengers, each of them (their) fastest.
The Life-giving Spirit sent forth as (his) messenger(s)
Good Thought and Best Order and the fire, son of Ahura Mazdā.
The Evil Spirit sent forth as (his) messenger(s)
Bad Thought and Wrath with the bloody club and the giant snake
and Spitiiura, the Yima-cutter.

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[29] The manuscripts: *parax^vāiθe* F1; *pərəxaiθe* J10; *pərəxaiti* D. The reading of the archetype may have been *parəθaiθe (Av. *x* and *θ* are minimally distinct), a simple error for *pərətaēθe, with the 3rd dual. mid. ending -*aēθe* beside common -*ōiθe* and -*aēte* (J. Kellens, *Le verbe avestique*, pp. 212–13).

[30] The manuscripts: *aṯ* F1; *aδa* J10; *ada* D; K.F. Geldner in his edition *Avesta, the Sacred Book of the Parsis*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1896), suggests *yaṯ.

[31] The manuscripts: *ašte* F1; *ašti* J10, D.

[32] The manuscripts: *āsište* F1; *āsišta* J10, D, K12.

[33] F1, H3, K12, Ml2 jump to the next *fraŋharəcaiiaṯ*; in E1 the missing text is added in the margin.

THE LARGER CONTEXT OF *GĀΘĀ* 3, *YASNA* 48

In order to discover what the further implications and references of our strophe may be, let us now look at the larger context of this strophe in *Yasna* 48:

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 48.9

> *kadā vaēdā   yezī cahiiā xšaiiaθā*
> *mazdā ašā   yehiiā mā āiθiš duuaēθā*
> *ərəš mōi ərəžūcąm   vaŋhə̄uš vafuš manaŋhō*
> *vīdiiāt saošiiąs   yaθā hōi ašiš aŋhat*

> When shall I know?—For if you (all) are (now) in command of any (reward?),
> O Mazdā, through (by my?) Order, (you) to whom my *worry (is) a *matter of concern(?),
> (then) let the web of my good thought be spoken correctly!
> *May the Revitalizer know how his reward will be!*

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 48.10

> *kadā mazdā   mąnarōiš narō vīsəntē*
> *kadā ajə̄n   mūθrəm ahiiā madahiiā*
> *yā aŋgriiā   karapanō urūpaiieintī*
> *yācā xratū   dušə.xšaθrā dax̌iiunąm*

> When, O Mazdā, are the heroes ready (to be those of = on the side of?) the *memorizer?
> When did the urine of his intoxication smash (...),
> (this) evilness by which the "mumblers" are causing indigestion,
> and (what about this) "guiding thought" by which they have bad command over the lands?

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 48.11

> *kadā mazdā   ašā mat ārmaitiš*
> *jimat xšaθrā   hušə̄itiš vāstrauuaitī*
> *kōi drəguuō.dəbīš   xrūrāiš rāmąm då̄ntē*
> *kə̄ng ā vaŋhə̄uš   jimat manaŋhō cistiš*

> When, O Mazdā, will Ārmaiti (the earth) come
> *together* with Order and command, (she) who gives good dwellings and pastures?
> Who (are *those* who) will obtain peace in spite of the bloody ones possessed by the Lie?
> To whom will the *brilliance of good thought come?

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 48.12

> *aṯ tōi aŋhən   saošiiaṇtō dax́iiunąm*
> *yōi xšnūm vohū   manaŋhā hacåṇtē*
> *šiiaoθanāiš aṣ̌ā   θβahiiā mazdā sə̄nghahiiā*
> *tōi zī dātā   hamaēstārō aēšəm.mahiiā*

Thus, those shall be the *Revitalizers of the lands*
who with good thought shall pursue (your) *favor
by the actions of (= according to) *your* announcement, O Mazdā, by the Order (of their ritual?).
For, indeed, they have been established as *opponents of Wrath*.

In this part of the poem, the poet is talking about how to perform a successful sacrifice, its effects on the worlds of gods and men, and the rewards for it. The successful sacrificer is the *saošiiaṇt* -, that is, literally, he who shall make the world swell with the juices of fertility, that is, he who will revitalize or rejuvenate the world.[34] The two references to the *saošiiaṇt*s and their rewards in strophes 9 and 12 thus frame our strophe 10 (see also *Yasna* 61.5, cited above).

Strophes 10 and 11 contain two sets of rhetorical questions: one implying the inefficiency and failure of rival sacrificers and one implying the success of *our* sacrificer. While the *xratu*, or guiding thought, of the rival sacrificers has been unable to guide the oxen pulling dawn across the sky, as they do in *Yasna* 46.3:

Gāθā 2, *Yasna* 46.3

> *kadā mazdā   yōi uxšānō asnąm*
> *aŋhōuš darəθrāi   frō aṣ̌ahiiā frārəṇtē*
> *vərəzdāiš sə̄nghāiš   saošiiaṇtąm xratauuō ...*

When, O All-knowing one, shall *those who are the oxen of the days*
rise and move forth for the upholding of the (new) existence,
by (our) announcements grown (more powerful, namely), *the guiding thoughts of the revitalizers?*

That of the successful sacrificers, among them *ours, will* bring back the cosmic Order, and it is by *their* successful actions that the sun will return

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[34] The root Old Indic *śvā-/śū-/śav-*, Old Iranian *spā-/sū-/sau-* (*spəṇta-*, etc.; *sūra-*; *sauua(h)-*, *saošiian t-*, 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'. The traditional renderings of the first and third as 'holy' and 'savior' are based on a Christian-type understanding of these terms, which is hardly relevant.

with its life-giving light and warmth, which will warm and revitalize the earth, which will then produce all good things necessary for living beings to live in peace and absence of need.

Finally, the sacrificers need to combat and remove Wrath (*aēšma-* 'wrath, fury'), as stated in the preliminaries to our text:

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 48.7

> *nī aēšəmō nī. diiātqm paitī rəməm paitī.siiōdūm*
> *yōi ā vaŋhəuš manaŋhō dīdrayzō. duiiē*
> *ašā viiqm ...*

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

Here, the cosmic reference of the last statement appears to be the stretching out of the cover of the luminous sky (good thought) throughout the luminous spaces of heaven (Order). *Our* sacrificers successfully do so, while the rival sacrificers only manage to bring back Wrath, as explained in *Yasna* 49.4:

Gāθā 3, *Yasna* 49.4

> *yōi duš.xraθßā aēšəməm varədən *rəməmcā*
> *xᵛāiš hizubīš fšuiiasū afšuiiaṇtō*
> *yaēšqm nōiṱ huuarəštāiš vqs duzuuarəštā ...*

(Those) *who by* (their) *bad "guiding thought" shall increase Wrath* and obstruction[35]
by (the utterances of) their own tongues, who tend no cattle among those
    who do,
(and) not (one) of whom has overcome bad deeds by good deeds ...

SRAOŠA AND WRATH

The greatest opponent of Wrath, however, is Sraoša, who protects the world of Ahura Mazdā against the powers of darkness at night, as described in the hymns to him:

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[35] Cf. *Yašt* 13.138 *aēšmō. varədanqmca druuatqm* '(to withstand) those possessed by the Lie who increase Wrath'.

Yašt 11.15

> *sraošəm ašīm ... yazamaide*
> *yim daθat̰ ahurō mazdå ašauua*
> *aēšmahe xruuī.draoš hamaēstārəm*

We sacrifice to Sraoša of the Rewards ...
whom Orderly Ahura Mazdā established
as the opponent of Wrath with the bloody club.

Yasna 57.10

> *yō driyaošca drīuuiiåsca amauuaû nmānəm hąm.tāšti*
> *pasca hū frāšmō.dāitīm*
> *yō aēšməm stərəθβata snaiθiša vīxrūmaṇtəm xᵛarəm jaiṇti*

(Sraoša) who timbers the strong home of the poor man and woman,
who, after the sun has set,
with (his) paralyzing weapon smashes Wrath (inflicting it) a bleeding
wound.

Yasna 57.25–26

> *uuaēibiia nō ahubiia nipaiiå*
> *āi sraoša ašiia huraoda*
> *aheca aŋhə̄uš yō astuuatō*
> *yasca asti manahiiō*
> *pairi druuatat̰ mahrkāt̰*
> *pairi druuatat̰ aēšmāt̰*
> *pairi druuat̰.biiō haēnābiiō*
> *yå us xrūrəm drafšəm gərəβnąn*
> *aēšmahe parō draomābiiō*
> *yå aēšmō duzdå drāuuaiiāt̰*
> *mat̰ vīdātaot̰ daēuuō.dātāt̰*

May you protect us from both existences,
both this existence *which has bones*
and that which is of thought,
O well-shaped Sraoša of the Rewards,
from the Lieful destruction
from the Lieful Wrath,
from the Lieful *armies
who raise the bloody banner
before the incursions/deceptions of Wrath,
which Wrath giving bad gifts made them do,
together with the Dismemberer established by the *daēuuas*.

aδa nō tūm sraoša ašiia huraoδa
zāuuarə daiiå hitaēibiiō
druuatātəm tanubiiō
pouru.spaxštīm t̰bišiian̂ tąm
paiti.jaitīm dušmainiiunąm
haθrā.niuuāitīm hamərəθanąm
auruuaθanąm t̰bišiian̂ tąm

May you give us then, you, O well-shaped Sraoša of the Rewards,
endurance strength for (our) teams,
health for (our) bodies,
ability to espy many hostile ones,
the ability to smash back at (our) enemies,
the ability to lay low at once (our) opponents,
the hostile ones who do not abide by the deals.

This, however, appears to be one of the functions of Sraoša in the *Old Avesta*,
as well, as suggested by the strophe that contains the only Old Avestan occur-
rence of *vərəθra.jan-* (= Old Indic *vr̥trahan-*) 'smasher of obstructions':

Gāθā 2, *Yasna* 44.16

tat̰ θβā pərəsā   ərəš mōi vaocā ahurā
kə̄ vərəθrə̄m.jā   θβā pōi səṇghā yōi hən̂ tī
ciθrā mōi dąm   ahūm.biš ratūm cīždī
at̰ hōi vohū   səraošō jan̂ tū manaŋhā
mazdā ahmāi   yahmāi vašī kahmāicīt̰

I am asking you this: tell me straight, O Ahura!
Who (is) the smasher of obstructions (fit/ready) to protect all who are by
your announcement?
Let brilliant (things)[36] be given to *me*! Assign, O healer of (this) state, (me
as?) a model (winner?)!
Thus, let readiness to listen/Sraoša come to *him* with/on account of (my/his)
good thought,
O Mazdā, to *him*, to whomever you wish![37]

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[36] Kellens/Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques* 3, p. 181, compare *Yasna* 43.4 *hiiat̰tā*
zastā yā tū hafšī auuå 'when those assistances that you hold firmly in (your) hand
(come)', *Yasna* 34.4 *ciθrā.auuaŋhəm* 'providing brilliant help'. Also possible is *ciθrā*
(rādå) 'brilliant gifts', cf. Yasna 33.7 *ciθrå rātaiiō* and *Rigveda* 1.17.7 *indrāvaruṇa*
vām ahámhuvé citrā́ya rā́dhase 'O Indra and Varuṇa, I invoke you for a brilliant gen-
erous gift'. – Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional and expresses the poetic identity of
the two objects, as well as an allusion to dawn, cf. *Rigveda* 4.51.2 *ásthur u citrā́ uṣásaḥ*
purástān 'The brilliant dawns have taken up position in the east'.

[37] Either, let one of the other gods listen to my hymns and thereby receive the invigo-

Here, the question in the second line appears to be answered in the fourth line, but the verb *jaṇtū* is probably from *gam-/jam-* 'go, come', rather than from *jan-*, though the phonetic similarity may well be significant.

What is important, however, is that, by this evidence, Sraoša is the "smasher of obstructions" and, by the evidence of the *Young Avesta*, he is the smasher of Wrath. Thus, the conclusion is hard to avoid that the inefficient smasher of *Yasna* 48 is being compared to the efficient smasher Sraoša and that, what he has not been able to smash, is Wrath, the embodiment of darkness and chaos.

This also gives us a clue to the meaning of the last statement in *Yasna* 48.10, which must refer to the inability of the rival poets's *xratu*s, their guiding thoughts, to guide dawn across the sky. Thus, whereas, the sacrifice of the good poet-sacrificers have enabled Sraoša to smash Wrath and the powers of darkness and their guiding thoughts have brought back dawn, the sacrifice of the rival poet-sacrificers has been unable to do so.

Yasna 48.10 is located about half-way through the third *Gāθā*, the *Spəṇtāmaniiū gāθā*, the hymn to the life-giving spirit or inspiration, that is about the middle of the *Gāθā* collection. It is therefore recited approximately at the climax of the Gathic ritual. After this, the sacrifice takes its inevitable course toward success, that is, the return of dawn or the new year, as the case may be. Let us therefore, for the sake of curiosity, look at the conclusion of the *Gāθā* collection. In fact, in the fifth and last *Gāθā*, the final effort of the sacrificer is displayed and the effects of the successful sacrifice are summarized in terms referring to several of the themes we have been discussing. In *Yasna* 53.8, the inefficient sacrificers and their gods are mercilessly ridiculed for their lack of virility and cursed back to darkness:

Gāθā 5, Yasna 53.8

> *anāiš ā dužuuarəšnaŋhō   dafšniiā həṇtū*
> *zax́iiācā vīspåŋhō   xraosəṇtạm upā*
> *huxšaθrāiš jə̄n arạm xrūnərạmcā   rāmạmcā āiš dadātū   šiieitibiiō vīžibiiō*
> *īratū īš duuafšō huuō   dərəzā mərəθiiaoš mazištō   mošucā astū*

> On account of those (utterances/performances) of theirs let them be there (at the judgment, as men) *of bad virility*, *dupes,

---

ration needed to perform his protective function, or: let Sraoša, a protector par excellence, come, cf. *Yasna* 57.2. The fact that the person to whom readiness to listen is to come is left undetermined may indicate the former alternative, as otherwise we might expect 'to me, to this one', or similar.

and *ridiculed* all (of them)! Let *them* be *howled upon!

By those who have good command *let them* (now) *be smashed and bled*!

—And let (*this one?*) *give peace* by these (actions of ours?) to the settled towns! —
Let *torment huddle *them* off as their greatest (*share),[38] the one with the
fetter of death, and let it be soon!

Even more interestingly, there is an inverse echo of *Gāθā* 3, *Yasna*
48.10–11: as a reward for the rivals' ineffective "smashing" and their
"bloodshed", they will now themselves be smashed and bled:[39]

Yasna 48.10–11

| *ajə̄n* | *dušə.xšaθrā* | | | |
| he smashed | with bad command | | | |

| *xšaθrā* | *hušəitiš* | *xrūrāiš* | *rāmąm* | *dånt̰ē* |
| command | good dwellings | *bloody* | peace | obtain |

Yasna 53.8

| *huxšaθrāiš* | *jə̄narąm* | *xrūnərąmcā* |
| with good command | *let them be smashed* | *let them be bled* |

| | *rāmąmcā* | *dadātū* | *šiieitibiiō* |
| | peace | give | to the settlements |

Interestingly, we may have the same imagery in the hymns to Sraoša
(*Yašt* 11 and *Yasna* 57), who smashes Wrath with the bloody club, giv-
ing him a bleeding wound:

Yašt 11.15   sraošəm ... aēšmahe **xruuī.draoš** hamaēstārəm

'Sraoša ... opponent of *Wrath* with the *bloody* club'

Yasna 57.10   sraošəm .. yō aēšməm ...**vīxrūman̰təm** xᵛarəm **jain̰ti**

'Sraoša ... *smashes Wrath* (inflicting it) a *bleeding* wound'[40]

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[38] Compare *maz- maga-* 'great gift exchange' ('exchange of great gifts = rewards, shares')
in *Yasna* 46.14: *zaraθuštrā kastē aṣ̌auuā uruuaθō | mazōi magāi* 'O Zarathustra, what (sup-
porter?) do you have for the great gift exchange, a sustainer of Order, one who abides by the
universal agreements?' and Pindar's *Nemean Ode* 8.25: *megíston d' aiólōi pseúdei géras
antétatai* 'the biggest honorific portion is handed over to intricate Deceit' (see G. Nagy, *The
Best of the Achaeans. Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore/London,
1979), p. 225).– Or: 'greatest (torment)', that is, capital punishment?

[39] The forms *jə̄narąm* and *xrūnərąm* have been analyzed variously; most recently as
genitive plural of *jan-nar-* and *xrū-nar-* 'man-killing' and 'man-wounding' (thus H.
Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra and the Other Old Avestan Texts*; see also J.
Kellens, *Les noms-racines de l'Avesta* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 387–88), but the inter-
pretation as 3rd plural imperative middle (like Vedic *duh-rām*) is straightforward.

[40] E. Benveniste, *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, eds M. Boyce/I. Gershevitch

The parallels between *Gāθā* 3, *Yasna* 48.10–11 and *Gāθā* 5, *Yasna* 53.8 also make me wonder if the ineffective "urine" of the rivals does not also refer to their sterile semen, implying that they are, indeed, 'of bad virility'. We may recall that the difference between urine and semen was not always well understood in ancient times, and, in the *Rigveda*, the rain is sometimes referred to as urine, sometimes as semen, for instance:

Rigveda 1.100.03 (to Indra)

> *divó ná yásya rétaso dúghānāḥ pánthāso yánti śávasā́parītāḥ|*
> *taráddveṣāḥ sāsahíḥ paúṃsyebhir marútvān no bhavatv índra ūtí́* ||

> He whose paths go—impossible to block because of his (life-giving, swelling) strength –
> like (the streams) of *the semen of heaven when milked,*
> overcoming the hostilities, overpowering *by his male attributes,*
> followed by the Maruts, let Indra be for us with his help!

In the later Zoroastrian texts, semen and urine are both listed as kinds of water:

Bundahišn 11B.1

> *pad dēn 17 sardag āb gōwēd ... panǰom šusr ī gōspandān ud mardōmān šašom gōmēz ī gōspandān ud mardōmān*

> In the *dēn* there are said to be 17 species of water: ... the fifth: the semen of animals and men; the sixth: the urine of animals and men.

FINAL REMARKS

I would like to make two remarks to finish:

First: since *mūθra* in the *Videvdad* is a substance that falls into the general category of dead matter, the Gathic passage may well imply that, not only is the urine of the powers of evil unable to smash anything in Ahura Mazdā's creation, but it will itself be smashed by the good waters of *his* creation.

(London, 1970, p. 39) argues that this word means 'bloodless, non bleeding', adducing *Videvdad* 4.30 and 34, where a *vīxrūmaṇt- xᵛara-* is listed as less serious wound than a *tacaṯ.vohuni- xᵛara-* 'a wound from which the blood flows', and also that the weapon stuns. The formation of the word and the meaning of its components are unclear, however, and it is hard to believe that Sraoša's blow does not result in bleeding. Recall also "the Lieful *armies who raise the bloody banner" in *Yasna* 57.25 (above). The "bloodiness" asociated with the powers of darkness may well be the poetic-mythical interpretation of the sunset.

Second: according to the later Zoroastrian texts, Zarathustra himself was the greatest smasher *ever* of the forces of evil. The etiological myth justifying the ritual cleansing procedures is told in *Videvdad* chapter 19, where it is Zarathustra himself who is described as "smashing" evil, including dead matter.

Videvdad 19.5

> *uzuuaēdaiiat̰ zaraθuštrō aŋrəm mainiiūm*
> *dužda aŋra mainiiō*
> *janāni dąma daēuuō.dātəm*
> janāni nasuš *daēuuō.dātəm*

> *Zarathustra* *threatened the Evil Spirit:
> O Evil Spirit of evil gifts,
> I shall smash the creation established by the *daēuua*s,
> *I shall smash the corpse* established by the *daēuua*s ...

But Zarathustra was also the product of the *haoma* and heavenly semen as rain. In the Zarathustra myth in the *Dēnkard*, it is described how the rain containing the elements needed for the making of Zarathustra, got into the milk of a cow, which was mixed with the *haoma* in ritual fashion and drunk by his parents:

Dēnkard 7.2.37–38

> *čiyōn dēn gōwēd ēg ka ohrmazd ān ī zarduxšt dahišn frāz brēhēnīd būd gōhr ī tan ēg pēš-nēmag ī ohrmazd dahišn ī zarduxšt abar grād abar hordad ud murdad abar ō abr*
> *ēg abr āb frōd burd nōg nōg srišk srišk bowandag ud garmōg*
> *pad ēd šādīh ī *gōspandān wīrān ān ī and šusr čand 2 gāw ī kištār-wardišn*
> *pad ān abar urwar rust hēnd harwisp ī az harwisp srādag abar pad ān zamān ka ān ī anī urwar sist ud abar-iz hušk ud gōhr ī zarduxšt az ān āb ō ān urwar mad.*

> As the *dēn* says: Then when Ohrmazd had fashioned forth the creature of Zarathustra, i.e., the substance of his body, then the creature of Zarathustra fell <from> before Ohrmazd upon Hordad and Mordad (= water and plants), upon a cloud.
>
> Then the cloud brought (its) water down, again and again, drop by drop in perfect measure and warm.
>
> By this joy for beasts and men, there was as much semen as (that produced by) 2 ploughing oxen.
>
> Thereupon all the plants grew up, of all species, at a time when other plants are wilted, and even upon dry (ground). *And the substance of Zarathustra came from that water to those plants.*

Dēnkard 7.2.46–47

> *paydāg kū pas pōrušāsp ān hōm az dugdōw abāz xwāst u-š ān kust u-š ō*
> *ān gāw pēm kē tan gōhr ī zarduxšt awiš mad estād gumēxt ēdar frawahr ī*
> *zarduxšt u-š tan gōhr hagenēn ō ham mad*
> *ēk-ēw paydāg kū ān hōm ud pēm ka hagenēn gumēxt ud ō ohrmazd ni-*
> *wēyīd estād pōrušāsp dugdōw frāz xwārīd. ud ēdar hangerdīgīh ī būd*
> *xwarrah frawahr ud tan gōhr ī zarduxšt andar 2 *pid.*

It is revealed: Afterward, Pōrušāsp asked for that *hōm* back from Dugdōw,
and *he pounded it and mixed it with that cow's milk* into which the body
substance of Zarathustra had come. Here the pre-soul and the body sub-
stance of Zarathustra came together.

One thing that is revealed: *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"[41] of the Fortune, the pre-soul, and the
body substance of Zarathustra, (was) in his parents.

It is therefore not impossible that the literary device of *scorning* the ri-
vals seen in our strophe implies the *praise* of the successful sacrificer
par excellence, namely Zarathustra himself.[42]

In conclusion, then, it would seem that our text refers to the ritual
myth of the *haoma* and the intoxication of the divinity, the victory over
the forces of anti-fertility, and the fertilizing of the world by means of
the heavenly rain/urine/semen.[43]

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[41] The terms *niwēyīd* 'announced' and *hangerdīgīh* 'complete assembly' correspond
to the Avestan technical terms *niuuaēδaiiemi* 'I announce' and *haṇkāraiiemi* 'I assem-
ble', which introduce the litany in *Yasna* 1; this shows that the making of Zarathustra is
a ritual process.

[42] On praise and blame in the *Gāθās*, see P.O. Skjærvø, "Praise and Blame in the
Avesta. The Poet-Sacrificer and his Duties", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 26,
2002 (Studies in honor of Shaul Shaked).

[43] For parallels in the Old Indic cosmogony, see, e.g., J. Varenne, *Cosmogonies
Védiques* (Paris, 1982), passim.

LES PRECAUTIONS RITUELLES
ET LA TRIADE DU COMPORTEMENT

Jean Kellens

Le premier chapitre du Yasna s'achève par une formule qui n'est pas répétée dans les litanies parallèles de Y2, 3, 4, 6 et 7 : Y1.21 *yezi ϑβā diduuaēša yezi manaŋha yezi vacaŋha yezi šiiaoϑna yezi zaoša yezi azaoša ā tē aŋhe fraca stuiiē nī tē vaēδaiiemi yezi tē aŋhe auuā. urūraoδa yaṭ yasnaheca vahmaheca.* Y1.22 *ratauuō vīspe mazišta ašāum ašahe ratauuō yezi vō diduuaēša yezi manaŋha yezi vacaŋha yezi šiiao ϑna yezi zaoša yezi azaoša ā vō aŋhe fraca stuiiē nī vō vaēδaiiemi yezi vō aŋhe auuā.ururaoδa yaṭ yasnaheca vahmaheca.*

La version de Y1.21 et celle de Y1.22 ne diffèrent que par le nombre des formes pronominales de deuxième personne. C'est que la première s'adresse à chaque *ratu* pris séparément (Y1.20 *hāuuane ašaum ašahe ratauuō* etc.), tandis que la seconde s'adresse à leur ensemble (*ratauuō vīspe*). Cette formule présente un certain nombre de difficultés, que j'ai envisagées dans un article qui peut encore être considéré comme récent.[1]

1. La structure syntaxique tout d'abord. La proposition principale est clairement *ā tē aŋhe fraca stuiiē nī tē vaēδaiiemi*. Elle s'ordonne avec deux subordonnées conditionnelles en *yezi* disposées en ciseaux. L'une, *yezi ϑβā diduuaēša*, est antéposée et prolongée par une répétition coordonnante de *yezi* avec une série d'instrumentaux de moyen, l'autre, *yezi tē aŋhe auuā.urūraoδa yaṭ yasnaheca vahmaheca*, est postposée et clôture la phrase. Comme la forme surcomposée *ā + fra + stu* n'est pas plausible et que l'on attend par ailleurs le schéma corrélatif * *yezi... āaṭ... yezi*, il est probable que *ā* initial de phrase soit une réalisation graphique de *āaṭ* suivi d'un mot à dentale initiale (* *ā̆d te > ā tē*). Cette graphie a dû contaminer la variante plurielle et provoquer la substitution de *ā vō* à * *āaṭ vō*.

2. La subordonnée de protase présente une difficulté sémantique mineure : la signification de *zaoša... azaoša*. Le sens littéral de *zaoša-* est « approbation »[2]. Les traductions « avec intention ou sans intention » de

[1] « Commentaire sur les premiers chapitres du Yasna », *Journal Asiatique* 284, 1996, pp. 104–108.

[2] J. Kellens et E. Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques*, vol. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1990), p. 320.

Darmesteter ou « wenn absichtlich wenn unabsichtlich » de Bartholomae
sont purement contextuelles, mais ne peuvent être tout à fait fausses. La
glose pehlevie *pad nigīrišn… pad sūdagīh* « en prenant garde à mes ac-
tes ou par indolence » suggère que « en (m')approuvant ou sans
(m')approuver » était compris comme « consciemment ou inconsciem-
ment », étant entendu que « consciemment » n'implique pas nécessaire-
ment l'intention de la faute, mais peut-être seulement le fait de la remar-
quer une fois qu'elle a été faite.

3. Le problème majeur est celui de la syntaxe régie par *stu* avec le pré-
verbe *fra*. Les traductions de Darmesteter et de Bartholomae, fondées sur
la traduction pehlevie, sont identiques. Le premier donne « pour cela, je
te loue [de nouveau] » [3] et le second « (so) preise ich und lobe ich dich
dafür » [4] Cette interprétation combine une irrégularité et une bizarrerie
que Bartholomae admet explicitement. L'irrégularité : *tē*, datif-génitif
enclitique du prénom de la 2ème personne, a fonction d'accusa-tif. [5] La
bizarrerie : *aṅh e* serait une reprise de phrase, celle de la proposition en
yezi. Cette fonction est très rare et, lorsqu'elle se présente, c'est sous une
forme syntaxique beaucoup plus cohérente, comme dans le presque pa-
rallèle de Y68.1 *aṅh e auuaiiąm dąnmahi yaṯ ϑßā diduuīšma* « nous te
donnons réparation de ceci, à savoir que nous t'avons nui », où il est
clair que *aṅh e* fonctionne en corrélation de la subordonnée explicative
en *yaṯ*.

Ces anomalies paraissent d'autant plus suspectes que la grammaire
du passage est remarquablement conservatrice : corrélation impeccable
et complexe (en ciseaux), usage cohérent du parfait, répétition coordon-
nante d'un outil syntaxique, usage persistant de l'accusatif singulier en-
clitique du pronom de la deuxième personne, °*ca* inverse dans la coordi-
nation des verbes principaux. La liste est impressionnante et pourrait
faire argument en faveur d'un état de langue que Tremblay nous propose
d'appeler « moyen avestique ».

Le verbe *fra* + *stu* n'est pas fréquent. Il est encore attesté dans deux
fragments, H1.7 et N48, et, surtout, dans l'ensemble de quatre formules
qui constituent le début extrême du Yasna (Y0.1−6) et qui sont répétées
en clôture du Hōm Stōm, à la fin de Y11 :

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[3] J. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta* (Paris, 1892), p. 19.
[4] Apud F. Wolff, *Avesta* (Straßburg, 1910), p. 8.
[5] C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Straßburg, 1904), col. 1595 : « Statt
Akkusativ ».

Y11.16

frauuarāne mazdaiiasnō zaraϑuštriš vīdaēuuō ahura.ṭkaēšō...

Y11.17

frastuiiē humatōibiiascā hūxtōibiiascā huuarštōibiiascā
mąϑβōibiiascā vaxəδβōibiiascā varštuuōibiiascā
aibigairiiā daiϑē vispā humatācā hūxtācā huuarštācā
paitiriciiā daiϑe vīspā dušmatācā dužuxtācā dužuuarštācā

Y11.18

fərā vā̊ rāhī aməšā spəṇtā yasnəmca vahməmca
fərā manaŋhā fərā vacaŋhā fərā šiiaoϑana fərā aŋhuiiā fərā tanuuascīṭ
x˅axiiā̊ uštanəm

Y11.19

staomī ašəm

Dans Y11.17, *frastuiiē*, qui régit la triade du comportement sous sa forme passée (*humatōibiiascā...*) et sous sa forme future (*mąϑβōibiiascā*), ne se construit pas avec l'accusatif, mais avec un cas qui, vu la simplification des cas obliques en avestique récent, peut être l'instrumental ou le datif-ablatif. Cet assemblage est d'autant plus surprenant qu'il ne correspond pas au commentaire que H 1.7 fait de ce passage : *ašəm staoiti frastauuanō humataca hūxtaca huuarštaca nizbarəmnō dušmataca dužūxtaca dužuuarštaca*. Ici, les termes de la triade sont bel et bien à l'accusatif pluriel, étant donné que *niž* + *bar* est régulièrement transitif.

Cette surprenante divergence entre le texte et sa paraphrase a conduit Bartholomae, dans le *Wörterbuch* cité ci-dessus, à poser une alternative entre le datif et l'accusatif dans la rection d'un verbe signifiant « sich angeloben an... sich feierlich verpflichten an ». La paraphrase de H 1.7 fait une autre suggestion. Les termes constitutifs de la triade sont à l'instrumental pluriel et *frastuiiē* a *yasna-* et *vahma-* pour objets sous-entendus, comme ils le sont explicitement de *frā... staomaide* dans N48 *frā tē staomaide... yasnąsca vahmąsca*. Donc : « je fais l'éloge préliminaire (du sacrifice et du chant) au moyen de (pensées) qui ont été bien pensées... au moyen de (pensées) qui seront (bien) pensées... ». Y11.18, où *yasna-* et *vahma-* sont objets du verbe principal, non seulement constitue un argument en faveur de cette hypothèse, mais fait apparaître que l'ellipse de l'objet, dans Y1.17, est une ellipse d'anticipation.

N48 comporte un autre enseignement : *fra* + *stu* peut se construire avec le datif du bénéficiaire. Nous voici en mesure de donner de Y1.21 une traduction qui suppose chaque forme grammaticalement correcte :

1. *tē* est datif du bénéficiaire.

2. *aŋhe* est un génitif partitif en fonction d'objet direct et représente les termes de la triade mentionnée dans la subordonnée de protase.

3. il faut le comprendre aussi dans la rection des verbes *nī... vaēδaiiemi* et *auuā.urūraoδa*. *ni* + *vid* « faire l'annonce-préliminaire » et *auua* + *rud* « omettre, négliger » sont des verbes transitifs. Depuis le début de notre philologie, il est admis que *niuuaēδaiiemi* avec génitif, e.g. *ahurahe mazdā̊*, dans les litanies de Yasna 1, sous-entend le nom du sacrifice (« je fais l'annonce-préliminaire (du sacrifice) à Ahura Mazda »). Le traducteur pehlevi le confirme en explicitant sa traduction en mot à mot par *yazišn bun kardan*. *auua* + *rud* régit directement un élément de la triade dans une de ses trois attestations : N42 *vācim... auua.raoδəṇti*.

4. *aŋhe* est aussi antécédent de *yaṯ* selon un strict schéma de corrélation pronominale.

Nous obtenons ainsi la traduction suivante : « si je t'ai nui par une pensée, un mot, un geste, consciemment ou inconsciemment, si je t'ai frustré d'une (pensée, d'un mot ou d'un geste) du sacrifice et du chant, (à nouveau) je fais pour toi l'éloge-préliminaire et l'annonce préliminaire de cette (pensée, de ce mot, de ce geste) ».

Y1.21 n'exprime pas une idée d'ordre général, mais se réfère de manière précise au texte dont la récitation est en train de s'achever. Le chantre s'inquiète des omissions qui pourraient avoir affecté sa performance et il entend les réparer en recommençant la récitation de Y0 (*fraca stuiiē*) et de Y1 (*nī... vaēδaiiemi*). Et Y1.23, effectivement, reproduit Y0.1. Il s'agit d'une précaution visant à conjurer les éventuels manquements à la perfection rituelle.

La formule de Y1.21−22 n'est pas la seule déprécation des fautes rituelles que l'on trouve dans l'Avesta. Prêtons attention à la deuxième partie de Y0.4 = Y11.17, qui met en opposition, d'une manière ou d'une autre, la bonne triade et la mauvaise. Cette phrase n'a pas souvent été commentée et la question si longtemps controversée des infinitifs a contribué à ce qu'on la tienne dans l'obscurité. Bartholomae, en effet, faisait de *aibigairiiā* et de *paitiriciiā* des infinitifs. Comme il s'agirait

des deux seuls infinitifs de formation instrumentale répertoriés, Benveniste a voulu les écarter comme locatifs de noms-racines, ce qui est morphologiquement plausible. [6] La confrontation entre les deux doctrines extrêmes sur l'infinitif avestique, celle qui les multiplie au point d'en faire un *joker* grammatical et celle qui tend à les réduire à la seule catégorie en *–diiāi*, a longtemps fait oublier que de Harlez, déjà, avait bien vu que *aibigairiiā* et *paitiriciiā* étaient en réalité les accusatifs neutres pluriels d'adjectifs d'obligation en *-iia-*[7] La phrase est donc structurée par la construction, qui est usuelle, de *dā* en double accusatif au sens de « conférer à *1er acc.* la qualité de *2ème acc.* »

Il reste cependant à éclaircir une question qui peut paraître de détail, mais dont dépend le sens exact qu'il faut accorder à cette phrase. *daiϑē* est une forme moyenne. On ne peut donc traduire simplement « j'établis, je considère que les bonnes pensées, etc. sont à accepter, les mauvaises pensées etc. à rejeter ». Le moyen de *dā* construit en double accusatif peut avoir deux valeurs :

1. Il est réfléchi indirect, ce qui implique que le lien établi avec le sujet porte sur le deuxième accusatif. [8] Cela donne : « je considère que je dois accepter les bonnes pensées, que je dois rejeter les mauvaises pensées ». Dans ce cas, le chantre du début du Yasna se fixe à lui-même une règle de conduite. Cela paraît naturel et correspond aux diverses traductions que l'on a données de cette phrase, quelle que soit par ailleurs l'analyse morphologique que l'on ait faite de *aibigairiiā* et de *paitiriciiā*. Je doute cependant que la réflexivité du moyen puisse porter sur le deuxième accusatif.

2. Il est réfléchi direct, ce qui implique que le premier accusatif est une composante du sujet. [9] Un argument fort plaide pour cette interprétation : la valeur réfléchie directe est nécessairement celle de *nizbarəmnō*, qui correspond à *paitiriciiā daiϑē*, dans la glose de H 1.7. Le sens est alors : « j'établis que mes bonnes pensées doivent être acceptées, que mes mauvaises pensées doivent être négligées ». Il s'agit d'une autre déprécation des imperfections rituelles. D'entrée de jeu, le chantre demande que

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[6] E. Benveniste, *Les infinitifs avestiques* (Paris, 1935), p. 27.

[7] C. de Harlez, « Les infinitifs avestiques et les dissidences des Zand-scholars » *Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen* 25, 1899, pp. 189–190. Sur la question, voir J. Kellens, *Les noms-racines de l'Avesta* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 22–23.

[8] J. Kellens, *Le verbe avestique* (Wiesbaden, 1984), p. 67.

[9] Kellens, *Le verbe avestique*, p. 55.

la divinité tienne compte de ce qu'il a fait de bien et ne tienne pas compte de ce qu'il a fait de mal. Les formules de Y0.4 et de Y1.21–22, soudées formellement par la répétition du verbe *fra + stu*, constituent le premier élément de clôture en miroir ou, si on préfère, de « Ringkomposition » dans la liturgie du Yasna. Deux précautions rituelles, l'une en début du chapitre introductif (Y0.4), l'autre à la fin du premier chapitre (Y1.21–22), ponctuent le début du texte et la première précaution, enjambant la seconde, réapparaît à la fin du Hōm Stōm. De tels traits confirment que le Yasna n'est pas une épave fortuite, mais une construction réfléchie.

Il faut admettre que la pensée, la parole et l'acte dont parlent Y0.4 et Y1.21–22 ne traduisent pas le comportement humain en général, celui qu'un homme peut avoir dans n'importe quel domaine de sa vie. Ils sont les éléments constitutifs du *yasna* et du *vahma*, le sacrifice et le chant, c'est-à-dire les trois niveaux d'existence et de présence par lesquels l'homme se manifeste dans le rituel. Cette conclusion est en accord avec la formule des Yašts qui fait de la pensée, du mot et du geste le moyen du sacrifice rendu aux dieux (e.g. Yt10.6 etc. *miϑrəm ... yazamaide... mąϑraca vacaca šiiaoϑanaca*). Pour les passages qui nous occupent du moins, ce qui vaut aux termes de la triade le préfixe péjoratif *duš*, ce n'est pas le manquement à l'éthique, mais l'imperfection rituelle.

Nous devons à Bernfried Schlerath une étude de synthèse exhaustive sur la triade du comportement et ses origines indo-iraniennes. [10] L'auteur a cru pouvoir conclure qu'elle n'avait ni la même importance, ni la même signification dans les Gâthâs et dans les Yasts. Si l'analyse qui vient d'être faite est correcte, le caractère strictement rituel de la triade vaut pour l'ensemble de l'Avesta récent. Et puis, est-il si sûr qu'il en va autrement dans les Gâthâs ? Schlerath n'en doute pas : « Mit dieser Formel wird die moralische Existenz des Menschen im umfassenden Sinn angesprochen. Das ist unbezweifelt ». On a vu argumentation plus serrée. En réalité, la nature éthique de la triade est affirmée en tant que principe, puis illustrée par des citations traduites en fonction de ce principe. La démonstration est à la fois imparable et sans valeur. Le fait est que nous ne comprenons pas bien les Gâthâs et les passages où intervient la triade pas mieux que les autres. Y reconnaître l'expression d'une éthique abstraite étrangère au passé indo-iranien comme au futur de l'Avesta récent relève seulement de la stratégie du désir ou de la crispation sur

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[10] B. Schlerath, « Gedanke, Wort und Werk im Veda und Awesta », *Antiquitates Indogermanicae. Gedenkschrift für Hermann Güntert* (Innsbruck, 1974), pp. 201–221.

l'habitude. Si les diverses traductions des Gâthâs sont profondément divergentes, ce n'est pas un scandale dû à la frivolité de quelques savants irresponsables. C'est tout simplement une situation inévitable. La confrontation des traductions ne sert à rien si elle vise à établir celle qui est correcte. Dans la plupart des cas, aucune ne l'est (et celle à laquelle j'ai contribué pas plus que les autres). Par contre, cette confrontation est instructive s'il s'agit d'identifier la difficulté inexpugnable à laquelle chacun, quelle qu'ait été sa méthode, est venu se heurter.

Nous pouvons cependant entretenir une certitude, que Schlerath a justement soulignée. Le caractère systématique de la triade, même organisée comme analyse de l'activité rituelle, est un trait qui distingue la religion iranienne de la religion indienne, laquelle restreint son exercice à l'art du poète. Ce trait est aussi sûrement distinctif que les choix spécifiques qui ont présidé à la formation du panthéon des allégories divines.

ON THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF THE YASNA HAPTAŊHĀITI

Almut Hintze

"Le Yasna se compose de soixante-douze chapitres ou Hās (*hāiti*)
qui se suivent dans un ordre dont le principe n'est pas apparent."

J Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta* vol. 1, p. LXXXI.

INTRODUCTION

Ritual has always played a significant part in religious practice. This is particularly true of the Zoroastrian tradition, in which it proved to be crucial for the survival of the faith. For it was because of ritual that the ancient sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrians—the Avesta, composed in Old Iranian, and its Middle Persian translations and commentaries, the so-called Zand—have survived the vicissitudes of the history of Iran.

The scriptures of the extant Avesta fall into two groups, both defined by their ritual application. The first comprise texts recited in priestly rituals. These are the Yasna (abbreviated: Y) 'worship', Visperad (Vr) 'all masters' and Videvdad (Vd) 'law of those who reject the demons'. The second group consists of devotional hymns called the Yašts and prayers which can be recited by any member of the community. They constitute the extant 'Small' or Khorde Avesta. All these texts have survived as a result of the religious requirement to recite them in the original, Avestan, language at certain times of the day. Those texts which had no ritual function were generally lost or, at best, have been transmitted very badly.

The Yasna ceremony is undoubtedly the most important of all Zoroastrian rituals. It is celebrated daily, at the request of a member of the community, and starts at sunrise in the morning watch of the Hāwan Gāh. Nowadays it is performed by two cultic officials, a chief priest (*zōt*) and an assistant priest (*rāspī*) in the inner parts of the fire temple. They carry out the ceremony on behalf of the member of the community who has requested and paid for it. Laypersons may be present during the ritual, but do not have to be.

Not only the ritual, but also the Avestan text recited during it bears the name *yasna-*, which constitutes the highest liturgy of Zoroastrian ritual. It consists of 72 chapters, each denoted in the Avestan language by *hāiti*. This noun is a *ti*-abstract derived from the root *hā* (= Vedic *sā*) 'to bind' and literally means 'binding'. Presumably it lexicalizes the idea that a *hāiti* is a self-contained literary 'bundle' or composition. In religious practice, the 72 *hāiti-* of the Yasna are represented symbolically by the 72 strands from which the sacred girdle of the Zoroastrians, the *kusti*, is woven. The Yasna has always been held in particularly high esteem by Zoroastrians because it includes at its centre all of the surviving Old Avestan texts. Of the latter, the hymns called the Gathas are traditionally attributed to the prophet and founder of the religion, Zarathushtra. The Gathas again also contain an important text at their centre, the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti (abbreviated: YH), the "Worship in Seven Chapters". As the name indicates, this text consists of seven *hāiti*.

Thus, at the centre of the 72-chapter Yasna, there is another, shorter, 7-chapter Yasna. However, while the name of this shorter Yasna is found throughout the Avesta, that of the 72-chapter text is probably not.[1] It appears that neither the Avesta itself nor its manuscripts refer to this text as *yasna*. This is confirmed by the fluid state of Middle Persian terminology, where *yašt*, *yazišn* or *yasn* denote the Avestan high liturgy. Similarly, as Antonio Panaino has shown, the Yašts are frequently referred to as *yasn*.[2] Jean Kellens concluded that the use of *yasna* as the name of the 72-chapter text was a product of early nineteenth century scholarship, having been reinstated by Burnouf.[3]

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[1] The earliest attestation of this use of *yasna* is probably found in Mas꜀ūdī, who died in 956 C.E., if what he calls *isnād* in Arabic is a corrupted rendering of *ysn* = *yasna*, see Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d'or*. Texte et traduction by C. Barbier de Meynard/Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1863), vol. 2, p. 125; J. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*. Traduction nouvelle avec commentaire historique et philologique. 3 vols. (Paris, 1892–93, repr. 1960), vol. 1, p. LXXXVIII, cf. J. Kellens, "Considérations sur l'histoire de l'Avesta", *Journal Asiatique* 286, 1998, p. 479; A. Shboul, *Al-Mas꜀ūdī and his World. A Muslim Humanist and his Interest in non-Muslims* (London, 1979), p. 288. The New Persian term *jašn*, which is the regular continuation of a reconstructed Old Persian **jašna-*, denotes, however, an outer liturgical ceremony.

[2] A. Panaino, "Philologia Avestica IV: Av. *yaštay-/yešti-*; *yašta-*; phl. *yašt*. Quelques réflexions sur les titres des hymnes de l'Avesta", *Studia Iranica* 23, 1994, p. 176 f.; F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Paris, 1991), p. 90, n .82.

[3] Kellens, "Considérations sur l'histoire de l'Avesta", pp. 480 f.

In this article, I propose to examine the role of the YH within Zoroastrian high liturgy in order to determine the extent to which the Younger Avestan parts of the Yasna liturgy are informed by, or indeed dependent on, that central Yasna. I shall discuss the position the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti takes, first, within the 72-chapter Yasna and, second, in the two other Zoroastrian high liturgies, which are based on the Yasna, namely the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies. We shall see that the YH is positioned at the centre of each of the three Zoroastrian high liturgies, and I shall argue that such a position indicates that the YH is *the* focal text of Zoroastrian high ritual. This view will derive further support from an examination of the usage of the word *yasna-* in the Avesta, as a result of which it will emerge that, throughout the time Avestan texts were composed, the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti was perceived as *the* Worship, or *yasna-*, par excellence and provided the model for the Younger Avestan eulogistic invocations characterized by the verb *yazamaide* 'we worship'.

THE YASNA HAPTAŊHĀITI AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE YASNA

It has already been stated above that the text recited during the Yasna ritual is divided into 72 chapters or *hāiti*. This number, however, is achieved artificially by means of repetition of certain individual chapters. For example, Y 5 consists of the wholesale repetition of Y 37, which is the third chapter of the YH, and the entire Gathic hymn Y 47 is repeated twice, in Y 18 and in Y 68. There are numerous other instances in the Younger Avestan parts of the Yasna, where verses from the Older Avesta are included. Yet the division of the Yasna into *hāiti-* seems to be old.

The Yasna falls into three larger units, two Younger Avestan sections enclosing an Old Avestan middle. The central part of the Old Avestan texts, the Gathas, is flanked on either side by sacred prayers and has the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti at its heart. The Yasna thus exhibits a concentric compositional structure.[4] The outer circles consist of liturgical praises to Ahura Mazdā and all his good spiritual and physical creations. The first half of the Yasna, Y 1–27, is characterized by three sections of invocations, comprising Y 1–8, 14–18 and 22–26. They address, in order, Ahura Mazdā, the Aməša Spəntas, the various divisions of time, called

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[4] See A. Hintze, "On the literary structure of the Older Avesta", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65, 2002, pp. 31–51.

ratu-, and other entities. These sections alternate with texts and praises devoted to special subjects, such as the praise of Haoma (Y 9–11), the Mazdayasnian Creed (Y 12) and the commentaries to the three holy prayers (Y 19–21). The part following the Old Avestan kernel, Y 55–72, contains few of such invocations and mainly texts with a certain theme. These include the hymn to Sraoša (Y 56–57), the manthra of the cattle breeder (Y 58), the Benediction of the house of the Mazdayasnians (Y 60), the praise of fire (Y 62) and the Ritual of the Waters (Y 63–70).

The exact centre of the 72 chapters of the entire Yasna consists of Y 36 and 37, the second and third chapters of the YH. Y 36 is about Ahura Mazdā's heavenly fire, which is invoked and invited to come down and merge with the ritual fire. During the ritual, this process must take place between stanzas 2 and 3, because in stanza 3 the ritual fire is identified with both Ahura Mazdā's heavenly fire and with his most bounteous spirit:[5]

(1) Y 36.3
ātarš vōi mazdā̊ ahurahiiā ahī
mainiiuš vōi ahiiā spə̄ništō ahī
hiiaṯ vā tōi nāmanąm vāzištəm
ātarə mazdā̊ ahurahiiā
tā θβā pairijasāmaidē

'You are indeed the Fire of the Wise Lord.
You are indeed his most bounteous spirit.
We approach you,
O Fire of the Wise Lord,
With what is the most powerful of your names.'

At the end of this chapter, in stanza 6, the ritual fire is addressed as Ahura Mazdā's most beautiful shape:

(2) Y 36.6
sraēštąm aṯ tōi kəhrpə̄m kəhrpąm
āuuaēdaiiamahī mazdā ahurā
imā raocā̊
barəzištəm barəzimanąm auuaṯ
yāṯ ⁺huuarə auuācī

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[5] All English versions of the passages from the YH quoted in this article are adaptations of the German translation by J. Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (Wiesbaden, 1986), pp. 38–48. The interpretation of Y 36 presented here is based on Narten, *ibid.*, p. 26, cf. Hintze, "On the literary structure of the Older Avesta", pp. 46–50.

'We proclaim, O Wise Lord,
That these lights
Are your most beautiful shape of shapes
Since that highest of heights
Was called the sun.'

It must therefore be assumed that from *that* moment of the ritual on-wards, the worshippers believe themselves to be in the presence of Ahura Mazdā, who has become visible to them in the form of the ritual fire before which they stand.

The worship enters its central part in chapters 37–39. The latter are characterized by the frequent use of the verbal form 'we worship', in Avestan *yazamaidē*, which occurs seventeen times altogether in this short text. Indeed, in Old Avestan, this particular form is confined to these three chapters, which contain the worship formulae proper.[6]

First Ahura Mazdā is praised and identified as the creator of the cow and truth, of the waters and plants, of the lights and the earth and of all that is good:

(3) Y 37.1
iϑā āṯ yazamaidē ahurəm mazdąm
yə̄ gąmcā aṣ̌əmcā dāṯ
apascā dāṯ uruuarā̊scā vaŋᵛhīš
raocā̊scā dāṯ būmīmcā
vīspācā vohū

Y 37.2
ahiiā xšaϑrācā mazə̄nācā hauuapaŋhāišcā
tə̄m aṯ yasnanąm pauruuatātā yazamaidē
yōi gə̄uš hacā š̌iieiṇtī

'Thus we now worship the Wise Lord,
who has created the cow and truth.
He has created the waters and the good plants.
He has created light and the earth
and all that is good

Y 37.2
by his rule and greatness and creativity.
We worship him with the primeness of worship,
(we) who dwell on the side of the cow.'

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[6] See Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, pp. 167 f.

This stanza takes up the theme of the Gathic hymn Y 44.3–5 and is also linked to Y 33.14 by the expression *yasnanąm pauruuatātā* 'with the primeness of worship'. In the following verse, Ahura Mazdā is worshipped in his Ahurian names and for guiding the choices (*frauuaṣ̌i-*) of the truthful men and women (Y 37.3). His Ahurian names are listed individually in the two stanzas concluding this chapter. They are: 'Best truth' (Y 37.4), 'Good Mind' (*Vohu Manah*), 'Good Rule' (*vohu xša 9ra-*), 'Good Vision' (*vaŋᵛhī- daēnā-*), 'Good Joy' (*vaŋᵛhī- fsəratū-*),[7] and 'Good Right-mindedness' (*vaŋᵛhī- ārmaiti-*, Y 37.5). The worship continues in chapter 38 with praise of the earth and of the ladies (*gənā-*) who belong to Ahura Mazdā (Y 38.1). These are identified as powers such as fat-offering (*īžā-*), purification (*yaoṣ̌ti-*), perfection (*fərašti-*), and right-mindedness (*ārmaiti-*) active during the ritual. Moreover, good reward (*aṣ̌i-*), invigoration (*īṣ̌-*), libation (*āzūiti-*), praise (*frasasti-*) and blessing (*parəndi-*) are worshipped. In the central chapter of the YH, Y 38, the worship culminates in the praise of the waters (Y 38.3–5).

The third and last chapter of the *yazamaide*-section, Y 39, praises the soul of the cow, the maker of the cow, furthermore the worshippers' own souls as well as those of domestic and non-obnoxious wild animals (Y 39.2), and of the truthful ones (Y 39.2) and, finally, the male and female Aməṣ̌a Spəṇtas. In the last stanza, all power is conferred on Ahura Mazdā (Y 39.4).

For a long time, the religious and literary importance of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti has been underestimated precisely because of this *yazamaide*-section. It was felt that the YH was similar to the lengthy and repetitive *yazamaide*-formulae characteristic of some parts of the Younger Avesta. However, following the study of Johanna Narten (1986), it is now recognized that the YH belongs, together with the Gathas and holy prayers, to the same homogeneous body of Old Avestan literature. This re-evaluation of the YH also changes the way the Younger Avestan texts may be viewed. For it is not the case that the YH is similar to the YAv invocation formulae. Rather, the reverse is true, since the latter result from an attempt to compose more texts which are similar to the central portion of the YH. The most obvious indication of this is the consistent

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[7] On *fsəratū-* see Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, pp. 186–188. The meaning 'joy' is based on the etymological connection with Ved. *psáras-* 'enjoyment, delight', see H. Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra and the Other Old Avestan Texts* (Heidelberg, 1991), vol. 2, p. 124; M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*, 3 vols. (Heidelberg, 1986 ff.), vol. 2, p. 198.

use of the Old Avestan form *yazamaide*, 'we worship', in the Younger Avesta.[8]

As in the YH, the Younger Avestan eulogies and invocations start with the praise of Ahura Mazdā:

(4) Y 1.1

niuuaēδaiiemi haṇkāraiiemi
da ϑušō ahurahe mazdā̊
raēuuatō xᵛarənaŋᵛhatō
mazištaheca vahištaheca sraēštaheca
xraoždištaheca xra ϑβištaheca hukərəptəmaheca

'I invite, I perform
(the worship) of the creator Ahura Mazdā,
who has wealth and glory,
the greatest, best, most beautiful one,
the firmest, wisest, most shapely one.'

The superlative expression *mazištaheca vahištaheca sraēštaheca* characterizes Ahura Mazdā at the beginning of the Yasna (Y 1.1) and recalls the first *yazamaide*-section of Y 37.1–2, where Ahura Mazdā is said to have created all that is good 'by his greatness' (*mazənā* Y 37.2). The latter is echoed in the YAv. formula *masanaca vaŋhanaca sraiianaca* 'through greatness, goodness and beauty', which also occurs in the genitive *masānascā vaŋhānascā sraiianascā* in the pseudo-OAv. Y 58.4.[9] Furthermore, as suggested by Jean Kellens[10], Ahura Mazdā's attribute *hukərəptəma-* 'most shapely' in Y 1.1 could be interpreted on the basis of Y 36.6, where the ritual fire is addressed as his most beautiful body. The worship of Ahura Mazdā is followed, in Y 1.2, by that of the Aməša Spəṇtas, who are listed individually:

(5) Y 1.2

niuuaēδaiiemi haṇkāraiiemi
vaŋhauue manaŋhe
aṣāi vahištāi
xša ϑrāi vairiiāi
spəṇt aiiāi ārmatəe

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[8] On this form, see Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, pp. 167 f.

[9] See Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, p. 173 n. 18 (text passages). Y 58 has been studied in detail by E.V. Pirart, "Les fragments vieil-avestiques du Y 58", *Annali del Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 52, 1992, pp. 225–247.

[10] J. Kellens, "Considérations sur les premiers chapitres du Yasna", *Journal Asiatique* 284, 1996, pp. 37–108, p. 44.

hauruuaṯbiia amərətaṯbiia
gə̄uš tašne gə̄uš urune
āϑre ahurahe mazdā̊
yaētuštəmāi aməṣ̌anąm spəṇtanąm

'I invite, I perform (the worship)
for Good Mind,
for Best Truth,
for Desirable Rule,
for Bounteous Right-mindedness,
for the two, Wholeness and Immortality,
for the Maker of the Cow, for the Soul of the Cow,
for the Fire of Ahura Mazdā,
who of the Bounteous Immortals has taken his position most.'

This list largely agrees with that of the YH, Y 37.3–4 and Y 39.1, al-
though not all the entities praised in the YH are mentioned in Y 1.2. This
may be because in the YH the Aməṣa Spəṇtas are not a fixed group of
seven, as they usually are in the Younger Avesta. Interestingly, however,
Y 1.2 also praises the Maker of the Cow and the Soul of the Cow, just
like Y 39.1. Moreover, the Fire (*ātar-*) is explicitly called an Aməṣa
Spəṇta. Theologically, Y 1.2 therefore agrees more with the ideas of the
YH than with those of the standard YAv. system. A further allusion to
the YH could be the fire's epithet *yaētuštəma-* 'who has taken his posi-
tion most' because it could refer to Y 36.[11]

This initial invocation is followed in Y 1 by those of the various divi-
sions of time: of the day (Y 1.3–7), of the month (Y 1.8), of the year (Y
1.9) and of all the time divisions (*vīspe ratauuō* Y 1.10). The list con-
tinues with an invocation of 'the two, Ahura and Mithra' (Y 1.11), of the

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[11] Kellens, "Considérations sur les premiers chapitres du Yasna", pp. 45–46. In the
discussions which took place during the conference, Professor Jamsheed Choksy
suggested that a theological extension from Y 1.2 *āϑre ahurahe mazdā̊ yaētuštəmāi*
aməṣ̌anąm spəṇt anąm may explain the depiction of figures emerging from the flames
on the reverse of Sasanian coins from Hormizd II on, cf. R. Göbl, *Sasanian Numis-
matics*. With 16 minting Tables and 16 Plates (Manuals of Middle Asian Numismatics,
vol. 1; Braunschweig, 1971), p. 19 and plates 5.80, 81, 83, 85, 86; 6.102; 8.136; 9.157.
While the uncrowned figure has been commonly believed to be Ahura Mazdā, Göbl
draws attention to a coin of Varhrān V. where the bust wears the crown of the corres-
ponding king (plate 9.157). He interprets the image not as that of Ahura Mazdā but of
the king himself emerging from his own regnal fire. In that case, the king would be
represented as Ahura Mazdā's imperial representative on earth emerging from the fire.

Fire (*ātar-*), of both Ahura Mazdā's son and all fires, and of the waters and plants:

(6) Y 1.12

> *niuuaēδaiiemi haṇkāraiiemi*
> *tauua āϑrō ahurahe mazdā puϑra*
> *maṯ vīspaēibiiō ātərəbiiō*
> *niuuaēδaiiemi haṇkāraiiemi*
> *aiβiiō vaṇᵛhibiiō*
> *vīspanąmca apąm mazdaδātanąm*
> *vīspanąmca uruuaranąm mazdaδātanąm*

> 'I invite, I perform (the worship)
> of you, the Fire, O son of Ahura Mazdā
> together with all fires.
> I invite, I perform (the worship)
> of the Good Waters,
> and of all waters created by Mazdā,
> and of all plants created by Mazdā.'

Y 1.12 recalls Y 37.1, where Ahura Mazdā is praised as the creator of the waters and good plants. These observations suggest that the first *hāiti-* of the Yasna is inspired by the praises of the YH. The same applies to the other chapters of praise, i.e. Y 2–4 and 6–8 as well as Y 14–18 and 22–26 (which contain repetitions from Y 3 and 4), because their structure is parallel to that of Y 1. The Yasna Haptaṇhāiti, being the worship· text par excellence, offered the model for many of the *yazamaide*-formulae in the YAv. parts of the Yasna.

The link between the initial chapters of the Yasna and the YH is reinforced by the repetition of Y 37, which is the same as Y 5 and divides the eight initial *hāiti* of the Yasna into half. Y 5 is followed, in Y 6, by *yazamaide*-formulae praising a series of divinities identical to those of Y 2, Y 17 and 59, while Y 7 is identical to Y 3, differing only in the verb. Y 7 concludes in sections 24–25 with verses again taken from the YH (Y 41.5–6).

Each of the chapters of the YH finishes with the *yeṅhē hātąm*-prayer. The YH shares this feature both with the *yazamaide*-portions of the YAv. part of the Yasna and with the Yašts, where it concludes each Karde.[12] This feature of Avestan eulogistic literature may be explained

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[12] On the *yeṅhe hātąm*-prayer, see C.G. Cereti, *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn*. A Zoroastrian Apocalypse (Serie Orientale Roma 75; Roma 1995), p. 197 with references. A

by the content of the *yeŋhē hātąm*-prayer, which justifies and enjoins the worship of a wide range of male and female entities besides Ahura Mazdā. Such worship is the theme of both the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti and the Younger Avestan eulogistic parts of the Yasna, as well as of the Yašts.[13]

THE POSITION OF THE YH
IN THE VISPERAD AND VENDIDAD CEREMONIES

The text of the Yasna is organized in such a way that it includes at its centre all of the surviving Old Avestan texts, which probably constituted the oldest liturgical kernel of Zoroastrian ritual. In post-Old Avestan times, this central core was further expanded not only by the addition of more texts of different origin placed both before and after the original Older Avestan kernel, but also by the insertion of YAv. sections into the Old Avestan core. These insertions invariably occur at key points. Most interestingly, two of these, Y 35.1 and Y 42, are found in the direct vicinity of the YH, one before and one after it. The third insertion is Y 52 after the fourth Gatha, thus separating it from the fifth Gatha constituting Y 53.

Moreover, the Yasna was enlarged by more chapters and thus became the Visperad ceremony. The latter was in turn further extended to constitute the longest of all Zoroastrian rituals, the Vendidad ceremony. The content of the Vr sections, or Kardes, is dependent on the chapters of the Yasna before or after which they are recited. For instance, Vr 16, which is recited after the YH, praises that text. In contrast, the content of the twenty-two chapters (*fargard*) of the Videvdad does not relate either to the Yasna or the Visperad passages into which they are inserted. Obviously their consistently pairwise arrangement is a purely mechanical one. However, it is noteworthy that the pairs of Videvdad chapters are only inserted in and around the Older Avesta.[14]

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detailed analysis of this prayer and its YAv commentary in Y 21 is given by J. Narten, *Die Aməṣa Spəṇtas im Avesta* (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 80–97.

[13] As aptly stated by Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. 2, p. 332, a Yašt is a *yasna-*, a 'worship' dedicated to one particular divinity, cf. Panaino, "Philologia Avestica IV: Av. *yaštay-/yešti-*; *yašta-*; phl. *yašt*", p. 171.

[14] See K.F. Geldner, "Awestalitteratur", *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, ed. W. Geiger/E. Kuhn (Stuttgart, 1896–1904), pp. 10–12; Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. 1, p. LXVII.

The pattern of this arrangement is as follows: A Gatha, for instance the Spəntamainyu Gatha, Y 47–50, is both preceded and followed by a Karde of the Visperad, Vr 18 and Vr 19 respectively. Vr 18 is in praise of the preceding Uštavaiti Gatha, while Vr 19 praises the Spəntamainyu Gatha, after which it is recited. Thus, the Gathas alternate with the Kardes of the Visperad. In the Vendidad ceremony, the Videvdad chapters 13–14 are recited after the Visperad Karde 19, which praises the preceding Spəntamainyu Gatha, and before the Vohuxšaϑra Gatha, which comprises Y 51 (see next page, fig. 1).

By contrast, this basic pattern changes when it comes to the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti. After the last *hāiti* of the Ahunavaiti Gatha, Y 34, Vr 14 is recited in praise of that Gatha. In the Vendidad ceremony, this is followed by fargard 7–8 of the Videvdad. However, the recitation does not then move directly on to the Yasna, as in the case of the Gathas, but an additional Visperad chapter is inserted – as if serving to mark, in a special way, the beginning of a new section. Moreover, the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti is followed by a chapter in Younger Avestan. This has become part of the extant Yasna as chapter 42, a text which resembles the Visperad portions in praise of preceding Gathas. Y 42 praises the Aməša Spəntas, the YH, and Ahura Mazdā's physical creations, in particular the waters, mountains and lakes. Y 42 is followed by two (not one) Kardes of the Visperad, Vr 16–17, both of which praise the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti. In the Vendidad ceremony, they are followed by two fargards of the Videvdad, Vd 9–10. This arrangement suggests that both the Yasna and the Visperad give particular prominence to the YH by their insertion of additional chapters both before and after the latter. The entire Visperad seems to be geared towards the recitation of the Older Avestan texts, which are invoked, in Vr 1.3–8, at the very beginning of the Visperad.

The Yasna extended by the Visperad and Videvdad

Yasna	Visperad	Videvdad
1.1–8	1	
1.9–2.8	2	
2.9–11.8	3.1–5	
11.9–11.15	3.6–4.2	
11.17–14	5	
15	6	
16–17	7–8	
18–21	9	
22	10–11	
Ahuna Vairya Ašəm Vohu Yeŋhē Hātąm 23–27	12	1–4
Ahunavaiti Gatha I 28–30	13	5–6
Ahunavaiti Gatha II 31–34	14	7–8
Yasna Haptaŋhāiti 35–42	15	
	16–17	9–10
Uštavaiti Gatha 43–46	18	11–12
Spəntamainyu Gatha 47–50	19	13–14
Vohuxšaθra Gatha 51	20	15–16
Second Yasna Haptaŋhāiti (Vr 21) 21–22		17–18
Vahištōišti Gatha 52–53	23	19–20
Aryaman Išya Prayer 54	24	21–22
55–72		

There is, however, more to it than that. Vr 21, recited between Vr 20 and 22, praises 'the second Yasna Haptaŋhāiti'. While Bartholomae thought that the expression *apara- yasna- haptaŋhāiti-* meant the Younger Av. chapter Y 52,[15] there are two problems with his interpretation. First, the kardes of the Visperad usually follow, rather than precede, the *hāiti* of the Yasna which they praise. Secondly, although Y 52 contains praises of Ahura Mazdā and his creations, it is a text quite different from the YH, both linguistically and contentwise. It is by no means self-evident why Y 52 should be called a 'second' or 'later' Yasna Haptaŋhāiti.

Much more likely, therefore, is the interpretation proposed by Darmesteter but rejected by Bartholomae. According to Darmesteter, the above expression referred to the second recitation of the YH at the beginning of Vr 21.[16] As indicated by Geldner in his edition of the Avesta, not only is the whole of the YH, Y 35–41, recited a second time at the beginning of Vr 21, but so also is the Younger Avestan appendix consisting of Y 42. It thus makes perfect sense to assume that the expression *apara- yasna-haptaŋhāiti-* refers to the second recitation of the Yasna Haptaŋ-hāiti, one which takes place in the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies at the commencement of Vr 21.

In a personal communication, Dastur Kotwal has pointed out that, in the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies, the second recitation of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti marked a particularly beautiful phase of the ritual. Since the second YH was recited not by the chief priest, the *zōt*, but by his assistant, the *rāspī*, the former was allowed to enjoy some rest at this stage. This second recitation of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti sounded particularly sweet and beautiful, because the *rāspī* tended to recite it slowly and with additional emphasis, thus setting it apart from the preceding lengthy Vendidad and Visperad portions. The beauty of that moment was further enhanced by the fact that, during the Vendidad ceremony, it was dawn by the time Vr 21 was reached, and people would be beginning to visit the firetemple.

The point is that in the Vendidad ceremony, Vr 21 is treated just like the first recitation of the YH in Y 35–42. Vr 21–22 constitute the only instance in which two Videvdad chapters are recited both before and after *Visperad* sections, whithout an intervening *hāiti* from the Yasna. The

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[15] Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Straßburg, 1904), cols. 1272 f.

[16] Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 487 f. with n. 4; cf. K.F. Geldner, *Avesta. The sacred books of the Parsis*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1889–1896), vol. 2, p. 28 ad Vr 21.0 n. 3.

only explanation available is that this is so because the whole of the YH, namely the *apara- yasna- haptaŋhāiti-*, is recited in between the Videvdad pairs. In this way, the second recitation of the YH is given special prominence. Moreover, in the Visperad ceremony, this repetition of the YH and its praise in Vr 21−22 as the 'second Yasna Haptaŋhāiti', the *apara- yasna- haptaŋhāiti-*, is followed by Y 52, a Younger Avestan chapter inserted into the Old Avestan material.

After the second recitation of the YH, that text is worshipped in Vr 21: the waters are praised, the plants, the guiding choices (*frauuaṣ̌i-*) of the truthful ones (Vr 21.1) and finally, in verse 4, the *apara- yasna-* itself:

(7) Vr 21.4
aparəm yasnəm yazamaide
aparahe yasnahe yasnəm yazamaide
aparahe yasnahe yazamaide
hāitišca afsmanāca vacasca vacastaštīmca

'We worship the Second Worship,
we worship the worship of the Second Worship,
we worship the chapters, syllables,
words and stanzas of the Second Worship.'

The larger context of this verse suggests that *apara- yasna-* is short for *apara- yasna- haptaŋhāiti-*.

The treatment of the YH in both the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies points to the elevated status of this particular text. The liturgical arrangement of all three texts of the Zoroastrian high ritual centres around the YH. The latter constitutes the focus not only of the Yasna, but also of the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies. While the Yasna ceremony has a single climax in Y 35−41, the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies reach, in addition, another one in Vr 21 with the second recitation of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti.

No ritual action takes place while the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti and succeeding Gathas Y 43−54 are recited.[17] This is remarkable as ritual action accompanies the recitation of the other parts of the high ritual. Be that as it may, rather than assuming that the rituals have been lost, it is likely that their lack may be an ancient feature, because it agrees with the con-

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[17] Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 112−115. This observation was confirmed by personal communications from both Dastur Dr F.M. Kotwal and Ervad Dr Ramiyar Karanjia.

their lack may be an ancient feature, because it agrees with the content of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, whose purpose is the praise of Ahura Mazdā and his physical and spiritual creations.

THE YH AND THE RITUAL OF THE WATERS

It has been argued in section 1 above that the invocation- and *yaza-maide*-formulae of the Younger Avestan parts of the Yasna are inspired by the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti. A further instance, where a Younger Avestan ritual could have been influenced by the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti is the Ritual of the Waters, the *āb zōhr*, which constitutes a part of the Yasna liturgy (Y 62.11–Y 70).[18] This ritual opens in Y 62.11 with the formula:

(8) Y 62.11
aißi.gərəδmahi apąm vaŋʷhīnąm
frāitīmca paititīmca aibijarətīmca

'Of the good waters, we welcome
the coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming.'

It concludes in Y 70.6 with a variation of the same formula:

(9) Y 70.6
apąm vaŋʷhīnąm yazamaide
frāithmca paititīmca aibijarəthmca

'Of the good waters, we worship
the coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming.'

The two formulae differ only by virtue of the verb, because *aißi. gərəδmahi* 'we welcome' in Y 62.11 is replaced by *yazamaide* 'we worship' in Y 70.6. Y 62.11 and Y 70.6 respectively introduce and conclude the Ritual of the Waters. Their position at the beginning and end indicates that the almost identical formula of the two stanzas probably refers to that ritual.

While there is no Old Avestan attestation of the first two words *frāiti-* and *paititi-*, the sound shape of the third term of this formula, *aibijarəti-* 'welcoming', suggests that it is, like *yazamaide*, an Old Avestan loan

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[18] According to Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 119 f. n. 138, the *āb zōhr* begins with Y 62.11 and ends at Y 70.8. It must be noted, however, that Y 70.7, the final stanza of Y 70, is a repetition of Y 57.4, and Geldner, *Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 232 does not have Y 70.8. The rite of the *āb zōhr* is discussed by M. Boyce, "*Ātaš-zōhr and Āb zōhr*", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1966, pp. 110 ff.

word, displaying the preverb with intervocalic -b- instead of the Younger Avestan bilabial spirant -β-. The verbal abstract *aibijarati-*, which as in other YAv. passages occurs only in its OAv. form, belongs to a group of derivatives from the compound *aibi-jar* 'to greet, to welcome'. Semantically these words refer to the greetings and welcome accorded the divine beings when they accept the invitation and come to the place of ritual worship. The persistent retention of the Old Avestan form in the Younger Avestan passages indicates that this group of words continued to be perceived as being firmly established in the Old Avestan texts and borrowed from there for use in the Younger Avestan eulogies.

The only Old Avestan passage where a form of *aibi-jar* occurs, is in the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti. In its first stanza, Y 35.2, the worshippers declare:

(10) Y 35.2
> *humatanąm hūxtanąm huuarštanąm*
> *iiadacā aniiadacā*
> *vəraziiamnanąmcā vāuuərəzananąmcā*
> *mahī aibī.jarətārō*
> *naēnaēstārō ⁺yaθənā vohunąm mahī*

> 'We are welcomers
> of good thoughts, good words, good deeds,
> which are done and have been done
> here and elsewhere.
> We are not blamers of (what is) good.'

The initial expression in this introductory stanza of the YH, 'we are welcomers', may have provided the model for the opening (Y 62.11) and concluding (Y 70.6) formulae of the Ritual of the Waters.

While in Y 62.11 and Y 70.6 the actions of 'coming forwards, going back and welcoming', *frāitīmca paititīmca aibijarətīmca*, are characterized as being those 'of the good waters', the expression occurs without a genitive in Y 71.6:

(11) Y 71.6
> *vīspaēca paṇca gāθā̊ ašaonīš yazamaide*
> *vīspəmca yasnəm*
> *frāitīmca paititīmca*
> *aibijarətīmca yazamaide*

> 'And we worship all five truthful Gathas;
> and we worship the entire Worship
> and the coming forwards and going back,
> and the welcoming.'

It is reasonable to assume that the expression 'coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming' refers here, as it does in Y 62.11 and 70.6, to the 'good waters'. Since in Y 71.6 these actions are worshipped together with texts, namely 'five Gathas' and the 'Worship', it is probable that the formula also refers to a text. The latter could be the Ritual of the Waters, the *āb zōhr*, which, in the arrangement of the extant Yasna, consists of Y 62.11–Y 70.

Bartholomae assumed that the first two terms of the expression *frāitīmca paititīmca aibijarətīmca* meant 'coming forwards' and 'going back', and referred to ritual action involving water.[19] Narten, in contrast, and on the basis of Vedic evidence, reversed their meanings, so that *frāiti-* became 'going away' and *paititi-* 'coming forwards' ('Weggehen und Herangehen').[20] Some clarification as to the more precise meaning of the expression *frāiti-* and *paititi-* of the 'good waters' could come from the Nerangestan, where the fourth and last attestation of the word *frāiti-* 'coming forwards' is found:

(12) N 48
   kahmāṯ haca apąm ⁺vaŋᵛhīnąm ⁺frāitiš frajasaiti
   haca hū ⁺vaxšāṯ ⁺ā ⁺hū ⁺frāšmō.dātōiṯ ⁺pairi.sacaite
   taṯ hama taṯ ⁺aiβi.gāme

   yō āpe zaoϑrąm frabaraiti
   pasca hū ⁺frāšmō.dāitīm para hū vaxšāṯ
   nōiṯ vaŋhō ahmāṯ ⁺šiiaoϑnəm vərəziieiti
   yaϑa yaṯ hīm ažōiš ⁺višāpahe ⁺gastrəm ⁺paitiiāpta karšōiṯ

   'Whence does the "Coming Forwards" of the good waters proceed? –
   It evolves from sunrise to sunset.
   This (is so) in summer and this (is also so) in winter.

   The one who brings a libation to the water
   after sunset (and) before sunrise,
   does not do a better deed than
   as if he poured it into the mouth[21] of a poisonous serpent.'

This passage forms part of the description of the five watches given in N 46–51. N 48 comprises an additional section appended to N 47, which characterizes the morning watch, called *hāuuani-*. In his edition of the Nerangestan, Waag seems to have considered the passage N 48 as being

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[19] Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, cols. 1010 and 829.

[20] Narten, *Der Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, p. 90 with n. 15.

[21] On ⁺*gastrəm* instead of transmitted *vastrəm*, see A. Waag, *Nirangistan. Der Awestatraktat über die rituellen Vorschriften* (Leipzig, 1940), p. 139.

out of order, because he moved it to follow chapter 109. However, the
position of N 48 adjacent to the chapter discussing the morning watch
(*hāuuani-*), during which the Yasna ceremony is celebrated, makes sense
if the 'coming forwards of the good waters' is interpreted as referring to
a ritual action, perhaps one that may both form part of the Yasna ritual
but could also be performed on its own. Such an action must be that of
the 'Ritual of the Waters', the *āb zōhr*, which, as stated by Kotwal and
Boyd, should only be recited during daylight.[22]

In contrast to another passage praising the 'streaming forwards of the
waters' (*apạm fəra-xšaostra-*) in

(13) Y 42.6
apạmcā fəraxšaostrəm yazamaidē
vaiiạmcā fərafrao θrəm yazamaidē

'We worship the streaming forwards of the waters,
we worship the flying forwards of the birds',

which seems to describe purely natural phenomena, *apạm frāiti-*, the 'com-
ing forwards of the waters' in Y 62.11, 70.6, 71.6 and N 48 is probably a
technical expression of Zoroastrian ritual. All contexts in which *frāiti-*
'coming forwards' and *paititi-* 'going back' occur have a ritual connota-
tion. In particular, the pair seems to characterize a certain process taking
place during the ceremony, because the flowing forwards and back of the
waters is precisely what happens during the *āb zōhr* ritual. This is enacted
in such a way that the chief priest (the *zōt*) pours a ritually prepared and
consecrated libation, the *zōhr*, from a cup in his left hand into a cup in his
right hand, then from the cup in his right hand back into that in his left and
so on. Thus, the mixture is repeatedly poured backwards and forwards.[23]
Accordingly, the collocation *frāitīmca paititīmca* may be the Avestan ex-
pression describing these movements of the waters taking place during the
āb zōhr ritual. If that is the case, it would constitute an instance of agree-
ment between the content of the text recited during the Yasna ceremony
and its accompanying ritual action. Such agreement would suggest that the
Avestan text of the *āb zōhr* contains sections composed with a view to the
ritual action. If this is so, the Ritual of the Waters, the *āb zōhr*, goes back
at least to the Younger Avestan period.

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[22] Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 121 n. 140, point out that this injunction is
also observed in the Vendidad ceremony, which begins at midnight, because the
daylight watch of the Hāwan Gāh has begun by the time the ritual reaches Yasna 65.
[23] Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 121, cf. p. 124.

The Younger Avestan passages referring to the Ritual of the Waters bear traces of dependence on an Old Avestan model. This is indicated by the noun *aibijarəiti-* 'welcome', which is a loanword from the Older Avesta. It forms part of the formula 'the coming forwards and going back, and the welcoming of the good waters', introducing and concluding the *āb zōhr* in Y 62.11 and Y 70.6. The connection of *aibi-jar* with the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti also emerges from attestations of the verb *aiβi/auui-jar* 'to welcome', which exhibit the Younger Avestan form of the preverb instead of OAv. *aibi*. This verb occurs in verses introducing a new section not only in Y 62.11 *aiβi.gərəδmahi* 'we welcome', but also in the other two of its three attestations. The second occurrence of the verb *aiβi/auui-jar* refers explicitly to the YH:

(14) Vr 17.1

aiβi.gərəδmahi
yasnahe haptaŋhātōiš
humataca hūxtaca huuarštaca
aiβi.gərəδmahi ašəm vohū

'We welcome
the good thoughts, good words, good deeds
of the Worship in Seven Chapters.
We welcome good truth.'

This passage is from the Visperad-Karde recited after the YH and praising that text. The words *humataca hūxtaca huuarštaca* are probably a quotation from the opening words of the YH in Y 35.2 (no. 10), where a form of *aibi-jar* also occurs. The third attestation of this verb is found in Vr 21 in its first two verses, which are recited after the 'second Yasna Haptaŋhāiti' and similarly praise that text:

(15) Vr 21.1

auui apąmca vaŋᵛhīnąm
uruuaranąmca xᵛaβrīranąm
ašaonąmca frauuašinąm
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca
auui ą̊hąmcit yā̊ vaŋᵛhīš
yā̊ āpō yā̊sca uruuarā̊
yā̊sca ašaonąm frauuašaiiō
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca

'We welcome the worship and praise
of the good waters,
of the fruit-bearing plants,

of the guiding choices of the truthful ones.
We welcome the worship and praise
of those who are good:
namely the waters, the plants,
and the guiding choices of the truthful ones.'

Vr 21.2
auui gə̄uš auui gaiiehe
auui mą ϑrahe spəntahe
aṣ̌aonō vərəziiaŋᵛhahe
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca
auui tauua ahura mazda
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca
auui tauua zara ϑuštra
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca
auui tauua ratuuō bərəza
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca
auui aməṣ̌anąm spəntanąm
yasnəm gərəδmahi vahməmca

'We welcome the worship and praise
of the cow, of *Gaiia*,
of the bounteous formula,
the truthful one, whose life-force is energetic.
We welcome the worship and praise
of you, O Wise Lord.
We welcome the worship and praise
of you, O Zarathushtra.
We welcome the worship and praise
of you, O high Ratu.
We welcome the worship and praise
of the Bounteous Immortals.'

Moreover, another trace of the language of the YH in Vr 21.1–2 is the expression *yasnəm ... vahməmca*, a collocation which is first attested in the YH (Y 35.7). Thus, although the verb *aißi/auui jar* appears in its Younger Avestan form, it always occurs in contexts which are dependent on the YH. Indeed, all attestations of this family of words recall the the YH in one way or the other.

The link between the Ritual of the Waters and the YH consists in the fact that the worship of the Waters constitutes the central part and focus of both texts. The OAv. form *aibi.jarəiti-* in the formula introducing and concluding the *āb zōhr* belongs to Old Avestan ritual terminology. The

connection between the two texts is further reinforced by the quotation of a line from the YH, *apō aṱ yazamaide* 'we worship the waters' (Y 38.3a) in Y 63.3, with OAv. *aṱ* but no lengthening of the final *-e*, and, moreover, by the repetition of entire sections of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti: the praise of the waters, comprising stanzas 2–5 of Y 38, is twice repeated in the Ritual of the Waters (Y 67.6–8 and Y 68.20–21).

THE WORD *YASNA-* IN THE AVESTA

We have already seen from Vr 21.4 (no.7), that the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti could be referred to just by *yasna-*, without its epithet *haptaŋhāiti*. The question, however, is whether there is any Avestan evidence for the use of *yasna-* alone as the name of the 72-chapter text. Accordingly, in the following discussion of its usage in the Avesta, passages where it could refer to a *text* will be of particular interest.

The Avestan word *yasna-*, which means 'worship', corresponds exactly to the closely related Vedic *yajñá-*, which is the ordinary noun for 'sacrifice' or 'worship'. In most of its Avestan attestations the word *yasna-* refers to the 'worship' of Ahura Mazdā and his creations. Particularly frequent is the collocation

(16) *yasnāica vahmāica xšnaoϑrāica frasastaiiaēca*

'for worship, praise, gratification and glory',

in invocation formulae of the Younger Avesta.[24] The object of the worship is usually either Ahura Mazdā himself or one of his truthful spiritual or physical creations, though occasionally the expression is also used of Daevas, e.g. in

(17) Vd 16.11

daēuuanąm yasnāica vahmāica

'for the worship and praise of the Daevas'.

Moreover, *yasna-* refers to a certain text bearing that name. In most instances, this text is unequivocally identified by the epithet *haptaŋhāiti-* as 'the Worship in Seven Chapters', e.g. in the formula

(18) Y 41.8 (Y 71.12, Vr 16.0 and 2.7)
yasnəm sūrəm haptaŋhāitīm
aṣ̌auuanəm aṣ̌ahe ratūm yazamaide

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[24]   E.g. in Gāh 1.1 and numerous other passages, see Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 557.

'we worship the strong Worship in Seven Chapters,
the truthful one, the Ratu of Truth'.

In addition, however, there are six passages, where *yasna-* alone appears to denote a certain text. We have already discussed Vr 21.4 (no.7), where *aparəm yasnəm* refers to the second Yasna Haptaŋhāiti recited at the beginning of Vr 21. Y 71.6 (no.11) praises the texts that have just been recited, i.e. the Gathas, the Yasna, and, probably, the *āb zōhr*. One could argue here that *vīspəm yasnəm* 'the entire Yasna' meant the 72-chapter text, at the end of which this stanza is recited. However, the Gathas, too, are referred to as *vīspaēca ... gāθå* 'and all Gathas', and we know for sure that they constitute only a part of the 72-chapter Yasna liturgy. Therefore, since the Gathas and *āb zōhr* are clearly defined parts of the Yasna liturgy, Bartholomae was probably right in his interpretation that *vīspəm yasnəm* meant the YH.[25]

The remaining four passages, where *yasna-* alone refers to a text, are found in the Nerangestan (N 20,[26] 22, 24 and 40). In N 22, the recitation of the Gathas is contrasted with that of the *yasna-*:

(19) N 22
⁺*srao̱θra* ⁺*nā gāθanąm* ⁺*ratufriš*
paiti.astica yasnahe
aδa fšūšō mąθrahe

ahe zī nā ⁺*srauuaŋhō*
⁺*aframərəiti āstriieite*
ya̱θa gāθanąmcit̰
gāθå srāuuaiiō
yasnəm yazəṇtəm paitištāiti
vīspanąm gāθanąm ratufriš
yasnəm yazāiti
gāθanąm ⁺*srāuuaiiamnanąm paitišti*
yasnahe aēuuahe ratufriš
aratufriš gāθanąm

'A man pleases the Ratus by the recitation of the Gathas
and by standing by at the Worship,
and equally at the Formula of the Cattle Breeder.

For a man commits an offence
by not recalling this word
just as (in the case) of the Gathas.

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[25] Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1272.
[26] On N 20, see below n. 29.

The one who, while reciting the Gathas,
stands by the one celebrating the Worship,
that one pleases the Ratus of all the Gathas.

If one celebrates the Worship
while standing by during the recitation of the Gathas,
that one pleases the Ratu with regard to the Worship alone,
(but) does not please the Ratus with regard to the Gathas.'

The passage is about the recitation of texts from the Older Avesta, in which the YH is embedded. One indication that *yasna-* refers to the YH,[27] is not only that it is contrasted with the Gathas, but also that another text of the Yasna liturgy is mentioned, the 'Mantra of the Cattle Breeder', *fšūšō mąθra*, comprising Y 58. This would not make sense if *yasna-* referred to the entire 72 chapter text. Furthermore, if *yasna-* does refer here to the YH, this passage provides evidence for the view that the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti was considered as part of the Gathas.

The discussion of the declamation of the sacred texts continues, in the Nerangestan, with the question of simultaneous recitation by two priests and the objectionable behaviour of one who, while celebrating the Worship (*yasna-*), listens to the recitation of the other priest instead of concentrating on his own.[28] Such behaviour does not 'please the Ratus':

(20) N 24

yā yasnəm ⁺yazəṇti
⁺afsmainiiuuą vā vacastaštiuuaṭ vā
uua ⁺ratufriia
hąm.sruṭ.⁺vāciiāδa ⁺yazəṇti
⁺uua aratufriia

kaṭ hąm.sruṭ.vācimca
yaṭ hakaṭ ⁺āmrūtō
afsmainiiuuąnca ⁺vacastaštiuutca
auui ⁺ainiiō ⁺surunuuaiti nōiṭ ainiiō
aēšō ratufriš yō nōiṭ ⁺aiβi.surunuuaiti

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[27] As suggested by Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1272.

[28] F.M. Kotwal/Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2: Nērangestān, Fragard 1 (Paris, 1995), p. 51 n. 95 comment that priests in Naosari are still trained to concentrate entirely on their own recitation and ignore that of other priests next to them in the ritual precinct. Philological details of N 24 are discussed in A. Hintze, "When the stars rise: the Avestan expression *aiβisrūθrima- aibigaiia-*", *Religious themes and texts of pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia: studies in honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli on the occasion of his 65th birthday on 6 December 2002*, eds. M. Maggi et al. (Wiesbaden, 2002), pp. 138–140.

'If they celebrate the Worship
in verse lines or stanzas,
both of them satisfy the Ratus.
If they celebrate while listening to one another's words,
neither of them satisfies the Ratus.

And what (is) 'listening to one another's words?' –
When both pronounce simultaneously
in verse lines and stanzas
(and) one listens, but the other does not,
the one who does not listen pleases the Ratus.'

Although the figura etymologica *yasnəm yaz* could be translated with
Kotwal and Kreyenbroek as 'to perform the act of worship',[29] the larger
context of N 22–24 supports the interpretation that the passage is about
the recitation of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, as is clearly the case in N 22
(no. 19) and some Pahlavi passages[30].

An opposition between *hāiti-*, referring to the Gathas, and *yasna-*, re-
ferring to the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, is found in N 40:

(21) N 40
⁺*kahiiācit̰ nā dahmanąm zao ϑrāδa ratufriš*
⁺*nāirikaiiā̊scit̰ apərənāiiūkahecit̰*
yezi vaēϑa hā ϑanąm ϑβarəsə̄sca frataurunā̊sca
aṇtarə hāitišu yasnəm ⁺*frāiiazōit̰*

'One pleases the Ratus with the priest-office of either anyone (male) of the
    community,
or of a woman or of a minor child,
if the one knows the beginnings and ends of the chapters,
(and) recites[31] the Worship in between the chapters.'

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[29] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2, p. 49. The figura
etymologica *yasnəm yaz* occurs also in Yt 1.24, where *yasna-* means 'worship' but does
not appear to refer to a specific text bearing that name. In N 81, *yasna- haptaŋhāiti-* is
mentioned after *ahuna- vairiia-*. In N 20, where *yasna-* is governed by a middle form of
yaz (*yasnəm yazəmnahe*), it is, unlike in N 81, not characterized as *haptaŋhāiti-*. However,
it may refer to that text, because it occurs, as in N 81, after *ahuna- vairiia-*. On *yasnəm yaz*
cf. also the comments by Kellens, "Considérations sur l'histoire de l'Avesta", p. 481.

[30] Cf. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1272 with n. 2.

[31] Transmitted *frāiziš* was corrected to ⁺*fraiiazōit̰* by Waag *Nirangistan*, p. 58 and to
⁺*frāiiazōit̰* by H. Humbach, "Textkritische und sprachliche Bemerkungen zum Nirangi-
stān", *Kuhns Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung* 77, 1961, p. 108.

In the most recent edition of this text, Kotwal and Kreyenbroek replace *yasnəm* with *yeŋhē hātąm*.[32] However, there is no need for such a substitution if *yasnəm* is interpreted as referring to the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, which is recited in between the *hāiti* of the Gathas.[33]

It emerges from this survey that, where *yasna-* denotes a text in Av. passages it is referring to the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti. One may wonder whether the expression *staota- yesniia-*, which in the Younger Avesta denotes the central part of the Yasna,[34] may be translated as 'praises belonging to the worship', in the sense of 'praises arranged around the *yasna-*', the latter referring to the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti. In the oldest form of this liturgy, the *staota-*, 'praises', would have been the Gathas.

CONCLUSION

Although the language of the YH is also the Old Avestan idiom, it differs from the Gathas in a number of ways. From a formal point of view, the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti—unlike the Gathas—is not composed in a syllable counting metre, but in rhythmic speech.[35] Furthermore, while the ritual function of the Gathas does not emerge clearly, that of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti is obvious. The predominant use of the first person plural 'we' in the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti, in contrast to the singular 'I' of the Gathas, indicates that this text was meant to be recited by or on behalf of the community of worshipping Mazdayasnians. As we have seen, there are also unequivocal references to the ritual fire, in front of which the worshippers stand. Moreover, while the Gathas abound with references to the rejection of evil, the latter is not even mentioned in the YH.

It appears, therefore, that the YH is *the* text of worship par excellence, being entirely dedicated to the worship and praise, *yasnəmcā vahməmcā* in the language of the YH, of Ahura Mazdā and his spiritual and physical creations. Furthermore, in this text the worshippers express their commitment to dedicating their thoughts, words and deeds to

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[32] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2, p. 123 with n. 437.

[33] On *hāiti-* as referring specifically to the Gathas, see Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1801.

[34] Cf. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, col. 1589.

[35] See Hintze, "On the literary structure of the Older Avesta", p. 32 n. 3 (with references).

strengthen and support what is good. Being a text of ritual worship, the YH, much more than the Gathas, lent itself to being imitated in later periods. The practice of deriving inspiration and borrowing expressions from the YH when composing eulogies in YAv., as well as its central and pivotal position in the arrangement of the Yasna, Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies, indicate that the priests of the Younger Avestan period were aware of both the ritual and doctrinal importance of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti.

RITUAL AND RITUALS IN THE NĒRANGESTĀN

Philip G. Kreyenbroek

Oral transmission plays an important role in the history of the sacred and religious texts of Zoroastrianism. While many scholars hold that Zarathustra, to whom the Zoroastrian tradition attributes its origin, lived in pre-history—perhaps around 1200 or 1000 BCE—no alphabet that was suitable for representing the sound system of the Old Iranian language of its sacred texts appears to have been known in Iran until such a script was developed in the course of the Sasanian period (226–651 CE). Until that time the corpus of Old Iranian sacred texts, the Avesta, must have been handed down orally. In the course of time, the centre of Zoroastrian culture shifted from Eastern Iran to the west of the country, the heartland of the Achaemenian Empire (ca. 550–330 BCE), where 'Avestan' was a foreign language. It has been argued[1] that the relative unfamiliarity of the sacred language led the West Iranian priesthood to memorise all religious texts *verbatim*, which in turn led to the fixation of the many texts that may until then have been transmitted more freely. Possibly at the same time or perhaps a little later, when the 'Old Iranian' period gave way to the 'Middle Iranian' stage in the development of the languages of the Zoroastrian communities, the 'Avestan' language came to seem increasingly obscure, and a simple word-for-word translation into contemporary Iranian languages came into being. This enabled the priesthood to understand the meaning of the Avesta to some extent, while the simplicity of the translation technique enabled scholar-priests (*hērbed*) to memorise and study a surprisingly large number of Avestan texts with their translation (which was known as *Zand*), apparently without relying on written sources. The translations of the Zand were not always illuminating, however, and in the course of time scholar-priests' comments were memorised along with the actual translations. The extant Zand texts are all in Middle Persian or Pahlavi, although similar texts must have existed in other Iranian languages.

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[1] See Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, "The Zoroastrian Tradition from an Oralist's Point of View", *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, Second International Congress Proceedings,* ed. H.J.M. Desai/H.N. Modi (Bombay, 1996), pp. 221–237.

In a group of texts such learned comments came to be far longer than the original Avesta-and-Zand, and in some cases the Avestan original seems to be little more than a pretext allowing a priestly teacher to discourse on a topic he regarded as important. Prime examples of such texts are the *Wīdēwdād* or *Vendīdād*, which is now used as a liturgical text, and the *Hērbedestān* and *Nērangestān,* with which this article is primarily concerned. These texts originally seem to belong to the learned—rather than liturgical—tradition of Sasanian Zoroastrianism.[2] While the *Vendīdād* eventually came to be recited as part of a Zoroastrian liturgy (see below), the *Hērbedestān* and *Nērangestān* retained their exclusively learned character. Among other things this meant that, unlike liturgical texts, which were regularly recited by groups of priests who would correct any mistakes they noticed in each other's recitation, they were handed down by a single teacher to his students, who would not be in a position to correct the teacher's lapses.

Given the corruptions resulting from oral transmission by a single authority, combined with the fact that the *Hērbedestan* and *Nērangestān* were composed by priests for priests, and deal with highly technical questions in a terse style not intended to enlighten outsiders, scholarly enthusiasm for these examples of Sasanian learning has so far been limited. Darab Dastur Peshotan Sanjana brought out a facsimile of Ms HJ in 1894[3] and in 1915 S.J. Bulsara published a relatively unenlightening translation of the whole text.[4] A. Waag's German translation of the Avestan passages appeared in Leipzig in 1941.[5] The text has aroused little scholarly interest since then, until Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal of Mumbai decided to devote his energies to the work. Together with J.W. Boyd he brought out a facsimile edition of Ms TD,[6] and since the late 1980s Dastur Kotwal has collaborated with the present writer on an edition and annotated translation of the *Hērbedestān* and *Nērangestān,* which has so far led to the publication of two volumes.[7]

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[2] This tradition also included texts which were not based on an Avestan original, such as the legal work *Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān.*

[3] D.P. Sanjana, *Nirangistan: a Photozincographed Facsimile* (Bombay, 1894).

[4] S.J. Bulsara, *Aêrpatastân and Nîrangastân* (Bombay, 1915).

[5] A. Waag, *Nirangistan: der Awestatraktat über die rituellen Vorschriften* (Leipzig, 1941).

[6] F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *Êrbadīstān ud Nīrangistān: Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript TD* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 1980).

[7] F.M. Kotwal/Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*: Volume 1, *Hērbedestān* (Paris, 1992); Volume 2, *Nērangestān, Fragard 1* (Paris, 1995).

Like many Zoroastrian texts the extant *Nērangestān* (hereafter *Ner.*) retains many characteristics of an 'oral' text. There are many grammatical imperfections, both in the Avestan and the Pahlavi sections of the text, and mutually exclusive judgements by different priestly commentators are mentioned side by side. Given the impossibility, in an oral system, of comparing traditions in detail, no method was developed to establish the relative validity of the judgements of qualified authorities (*dastwar*). The *Ner.* reflects a system of case law; it contains judgements on a range of questions connected with ritual. Besides the actual rules and regulations, the text yields important information about the way of thinking that informed the judgements. Thus the work affords an insight into the discipline of 'ritual studies' as taught by Zoroastrian religious authorities.

The evidence of the text can be regarded as synchronic insofar as it must have been approved by some religious authority when it was written down; at the same time, it is also a multi-layered document, reflecting the views of generations of Zoroastrian priestly teachers. Unfortunately we cannot be certain whether the opinions found there originated mainly in pre-Islamic or Islamic times; insufficient data have so far been found to offer definite proof either way. The absence in the *Ner.* of any references to the *Vendīdād*, which is regularly mentioned as a source of authority—and probably as a liturgical text—in the relatively late *Supplementary Texts to the Šāyist-nē-Šāyist*[8] suggests that the *Ner.* reached its final form well before the *Supplementary Texts,* but this is no more than relative chronology.

In the following pages, it is intended to examine the evidence of the *Ner.* on the subject of (1) the performance of rituals, and the way of thinking that informed the judgements recorded there; and (2) some individual rituals mentioned in the text, and their mutual connections.

PART 1: RULES CONCERNING THE PERFORMANCE OF RITUALS

As in many other religions, Zoroastrian rituals were normally dedicated to divine beings and performed by priests for the sake of the souls of those who commissioned the ceremonies. Religious merit was thought of

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[8] See F.M. Kotwal, *The Supplementary Texts to the Šāyist nē-Šāyist* (Copenhagen, 1968), pp. 33, 35.

as a definite and measurable quantity, not unlike savings in a heavenly account, which would eventually determine the fate of the soul after death. That priests could help the laity acquire religious merit in a range of different ways is shown by the following passage:

> (7.5) *Mard ka abēr tuwānīg yazišn pad mizd pādixšāy kardan; harw 2-ēn kirbag ōh bawēd. Pad drahm-ē be dahēd harw 2-ēn radīhā. *Kehīhā kirbag *ōh bawēd... Mard ka abēr tuwānīg xrafstar ī grift pad wahāg frōxtan pādixšāy; harw 2-ēn 2 kirbag *ōh bawēd, *ōh griftan rāy ud *ōh ōzadan rāy.*

> (7.5) If a priest is very able, it is permissible for him to perform an act of worship for a reward; thus both parties acquire merit. If he gives it (i.e. the ritual) for a *dirham*, both act in an authorised manner. If (he does it) for less, then there is still merit... If a priest is very able he may sell vermin which he has caught, for a price; both parties thus acquire twofold merit, once for catching it and (once) for killing it.

Priests, in other words, could promote the eventual well-being of other people's souls by 'selling' (or indeed giving away, *Ner.* 7.3) the performance of a ritual, but also by the more unexpected practice of catching and killing vermin and 'selling' these acts. Clearly, however, the composers of the *Nērangestān* were generally preoccupied with the performance of rituals. Insofar as one can speak of a 'discipline' of ritual studies reflected there, this focused on (1) the proper way of performing a valid ritual, and (2) the evaluation of adverse circumstances or improper actions which might affect the validity of the ritual and the merit resulting from it.

As in many similar systems, notably in Islamic *fiqh*, norms and definitions play a crucial role in Zoroastrian case law: while performing a ritual is expected to yield merit, severe mistakes may have the opposite effect and add to one's sins. To know what constitutes a sinful mistake one needs to be aware of the requirements for each individual ritual. However, what is a sin in one ritual may be permissible in another, and in some cases one can redefine one's ritual actions as constituting another, usually lesser, ceremony than was intended, in which a lapse does not constitute a sin. Neither merit nor sin accrues, moreover, if the ritual was not, after all, a ritual; it is necessary, therefore, to know under which conditions what was intended to be a ritual can be redefined as having been no more than an exercise.

The *Ner.* normally gives the general rule first, followed by a discussion of the consequences of mishaps. General rules and definitions tell

one, for instance, when each of the watches (*gāh*) of the day begins (e.g. 28.1; 29.1); which rituals may be performed during certain *gāh*s (e.g. 29.5); which dedicatory formulas (*šnūman*) are appropriate (29.16); which animals may be sacrificed (36–40); how many priests should take part (25.7); the minimum level of audibility (8, 9), and of cleanliness of water that is to be consecrated (30.15).

Degrees of guilt are measured in the same way as those of merit; the various degrees of sin have been discussed by Kotwal.[9] The evidence of the *Ner.* shows that an important consideration was that of intention: there was an apparently general agreement that someone who arranges to be awakened by another in order to take part in the great *Gāhāmbār* celebrations does not become a sinner if the other person fails to wake him in time (*Ner.* 2). Norms and definitions again play a prominent role: if one fails to celebrate the *Gāhāmbār* because one is drunk the crucial question is whether or not the amount of drink one has consumed is lawful, and thus to be defined as 'nourishment', or an 'excessive'. In the latter case one becomes a sinner (*Ner.* 11), in the former one does not (*Ner.* 12). The commentator Sōšāns says that one may have three draughts to go with one's food, and an additional three draughts; Kay-Ādur-bōzēd, on the other hand, holds that "two draughts and a bit on top of that" is too much.

A ritual is by definition imperfect if the main celebrant or one of the assistant priests is sinful or—less seriously—'doubtful'. Apart from this, mishaps may take place during the performance: a sudden loud noise can render part of the liturgy inaudible, for instance; or something may fall into the holy water (*zōhr*); a priest may omit part of the text or make mistakes in his recitation; or two chief celebrants (who may officiate sitting next to each other, but whose performances are regarded as wholly independent) may recite part of the text 'n unison'(i.e. together), which is a sin[10] unless they agreed beforehand that they would recite in this manner.

Imperfections in the formal performance of a ritual may have a range of consequences. It is regularly said that the offending priest becomes a sinner to an extent commensurate with the offence.

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[9] *The Supplementary Texts to the Šāyist nē-Šāyist*, p. 115.

[10] Presumably because it may be due to a lack of concentration.

(26.5)[11] *Ēwkardag gāhāmbār nē yazēd, pad jud. Gāhāmbār ī ēwkardag [pad ham-hayyār] nēm tanāpuhl pāyag.* Pairi auuahe varštə̄ *e xə̄ṯ Ast kē ēdōn gōwēd hād pad-iz yāt pāyag ast.*]

(26.5) He should not recite the *Gāhāmbār* in unison, but separately. A *Gāhāmbār* recited in unison [with his fellow celebrants](amounts to) a degree of half a *tanapuhl* sin. Let there be *refraining from that.* There is one who says: "It even (amounts) to the degree of a *yāt* sin.

In Avestan passages of the *Ner.* and their Middle Persian translation, punishments are sometimes mentioned: thus, if a priest omits one word from his recitation of the *Gāthās* he shall be punished with three lashes, or work in the field for a day (24.15, 16; 25.1; 27.4); an offence that is too great to be atoned for by means of punishment remains in one's account (27.1–4). Another form of punishment, it seems, was of an economic nature. Drinking alcohol during the *Gāhāmbār* celebrations is referred to more than once, suggesting that is was a common problem. If a priest was culpably drunk he could finish the ritual he was engaged in, but no merit would go to his account for this. If his status in this respect was 'doubtful', part of the merit of the ritual would accrue to him; in neither case could the priest participate in the—presumably lucrative – 'votive offerings'.

(24.5) *Any bawēd ka-š xwarišn abēr nē *xwarīd estēd tā ka-š xwarišn abēr *xwarīd estēd; ā-š *drāyān-jōyišnīh *ō bun. Ka drāyīd estēd ā-š yašt-ē tuwān kardan; nē kunēd wināh ī garān [garzišnīg wināh] nē kard estēd. Rōšn guft hād ēn *any bawēd ka-š pad wināhgarīh drāyīd estēd (ud) drāyēd, any-<tom> wattom ka nē yazēd ...*

(24.6) *Ka-š drāyīd estēd ā-š gāhāmbār nē bawēd u-š rapihwin nē bawēd, u-š *ustōfrīd nē yazišn. U-š xwarišn ka gumānīg ā-š gāhāmbār yašt u-š rapihwin nē yašt bawēd, u-š ustōfrīd nē yazišn u-š *ōh xwarišn ...*

(24.5) It makes a difference whether one has not drunk very much or if one has; in the latter case the sin of 'chattering while eating'[12] goes to his account. If he has 'chattered' he can (still) complete a single ceremony. If he does not complete it he has not committed a grave sin [a sin one must complain about]. Rōšn said: "It makes a difference if he has 'chattered' and 'chatters' sin-

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[11]   In the Iranian text the Pahlavi translation and commentary are printed in italics, while the Avestan original is not; in the English translation passages and Avestan and Pahlavi terms and translations of Avestan passages are italicised.

[12]   Talking while eating is a sin in classical Zoroastrianism, and the concept is extended to include similar offences.

fully; otherwise it is worse if he does not celebrate ..."

(24.6) When he *has* 'chattered' he does not count as having performed the *Gāhāmbār* or the *Rapihwin* (ceremonies) and he should not celebrate the *Ustōfrīd*. And when his drinking is doubtful he counts as having celebrated the *Gāhāmbār* and not having celebrated the *Rapihwin*, and he should not celebrate the *Ustōfrīd* but may still partake of it ...

Other offences, such as the omission of a quarter of the *Gāthā* liturgy, could similarly undo the merit resulting from the rite (24.6). However, if a shortcoming was excusable, some of the merit would accrue: if a priest legitimately has to leave the ritual early, he may omit the recitation of certain texts, and a (reduced) merit of 'a thousand sheep' will still be his; if he returns in time to complete the ritual, however, he obtains the greater merit of 'a thousand cattle'.

(24.13) *Mard kē xwēškārīhā pad kār-ē kāmēd šudan pad ēd dārēd kū-m andar gāh abāz madan nē tuwān u-š* pañča tišrō dasa *u* raϑßąm *abāz hilišnīh u-š gāhāmbār be yazišnīh u-š* hazaŋrəm maēšanąm *kirbag ōh bawēd. Ka andar gyāg abāz āyēd ud be yazēd ā-š* hazaŋrəm gauuanąm *kirbag ōh bawēd.*

(24.13) If a priest *wishes* to leave for (another) affair in accordance with his proper duties and he thinks that he will not be able to return in time, then he may omit *pañča tišrō dasa* and *ra ϑßąm*[13] and celebrate the *Gāhāmbār,* and the merit of *a thousand sheep* will still be his. If he returns immediately and does celebrate (the full ritual), then he has the merit of *a thousand cattle.*

A special way of calculating merit is expressed by the Avestan verb *fra.mar-* to 'concentrate' (on ritual activity, as opposed to actually performing it), Pahlavi *frāz ōšmurdan*. The concept implies that, if a priest participates in a ritual that is flawed through no fault of his, he still acquires the merit of 'concentrating' on the liturgy. In other words, as much merit would accrue as would derive from studying a sacred text, memorising it, or repeating it to keep one's memory fresh.

(20.1) Dahmō zaōta tanu.pərəϑa upa-sraōtārō; *ka dahm zōt u-š tanāpuhl abar-srōdār [kū margarzān hēnd],* (20.2) ẏezi diš tanu.pərəϑō vaēϑa; *agar hān az awēšān tanāpuhlagīh āgāh,* (20.3) aēuuatatō ratufriš ẏauuaṯ framaraiti; *hān and-iš radīhā cand-iš frāz ōšmārēd [kard ī xwēš].*

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[13] Probably a reference to the dedicatory formulas of the *Gāhāmbār* ceremony.

(20.1) *If a pious man is the zaotar (but) people whose body is forfeit are the assistant celebrants*; if the chief priest is pious, but his assistant priests are grave sinners [i.e. they are in a state of mortal sin], (20.2) *if he knows them to be in a state where their body is forfeit*; if he is aware of their gravely sinful state, (20.3) *he satisfies the Ratus* [14] *to the extent that he concentrates on the recitation*; he (acts) in an authorised manner to the extent that he concentrates on the recitation [of his own section of the liturgy].

If an imperfection occurs during the performance of a ceremony, various actions are possible. First of all, it may be best to continue as though nothing has happened:

(28.39) *Ka srōš-drōn xward ud barsom nē pad nigērišn apādyāb be bawēd ā-š be šōyišn u-š be rāyēnišn u-š gumānīg *pardāxt bawēd. Ka gōspand pad yašt ā-š*ōh kušišn; ka yašt pad zōhr ā-š zōhr *ōh dahišn.*

(28.39) If he has partaken of the sacred bread and the *barsom*[15] accidentally becomes ritually impure he should wash it and carry on with the ritual, and he has accomplished (the service) doubtfully. If there is a sheep (to be sacrificed) for the service, it should still be killed; if it is a service with fat offerings (*zōhr*) then the *zōhr* should be offered.

When notice has to be taken of the mishap, it is often possible to adapt the performance. If a dedicatory formula has not been recited, the priest must repeat the liturgy from the point where the omission occurred (18.4). If more than a verse (*wacast*) of the liturgy has been omitted during the *Drōn* service (on which see below), the whole ceremony should be repeated (10.51; similarly for the *Gāhāmbār*, 25.5); if it was no more than a verse, only the verse in question should be recited (10.52). If sacred bread becomes polluted before it has been partaken of, the ceremony must be started afresh (28.33). If a cup intended to hold consecrated water falls on the ground, it should be washed and put away and may not be used for ritual purposes (28.19), which implies that another cup must be substituted.

In other cases the ritual must be abandoned altogether. This is the case, for instance, if the flaw occurs early on in the ritual: if between the recitation of *frastuiie* in *Yasna (Y.)* 0.4, and of the *bāj* in *Y.* 0.13, the priest 'grows damp' (i.e. loses some bodily fluids), 'chatters', or leaves to answer a call of nature, all Teachings (of the great authorities) say that

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[14] I.e. his performance is acceptable.
[15] I.e. the bundle of branches or metal wires held by the priest.

the ritual should be abandoned.[16] If the seat of the fire is made of clay on gypsum, and it breaks, one should also terminate the performance:

(28.33) *Ātaxšgāh az gilēn šāyēd ud gacēn šāyēd; hān pad pādyāb bawēd. Ast kē ēdōn gōwēd ay hād nērang-ē pas guft bawēd kū-z dārēn šāyēd. Ka sarāsar darrīd estēd ā nē šāyēd. Ka-š kāh-ē andar sarāsar andar be estēd ēdōn bawēd ciyōn sarāsar darrīd estēd.*
Ast (*kē ēdōn gōwēd ay hād) ka be škihēd, yazišn sar.

(28.33) A seat of the fire (made) of clay is permissible, (one made of) gypsum is also permissible; these can be purified. There is one who says thus: "A ritual direction has later been given that even a wooden one is permissible."
It is not permissible if (the seat of the fire) is split from top to bottom. If a straw is (visible) in it from top to bottom it is as if it is split from top to bottom.
There is one who says thus: "When it breaks, the act of worship should be terminated."

As the above passage shows, some mishaps were too serious for remedial measures. In such cases the main question was whether the vitiated ritual resulted in a sin on the part of the priests, or if this could be prevented. As some Commentators pointed out or implied,[17] a ritual which has not been formally completed is not yet a ritual and may be abandoned without leading to serious consequences. If, on the other hand, the chief priest has handed the *barsom* to one of the assistant priest while reciting *Y. 72.5*, the ritual has formally been concluded and must count as a ceremony, so that the priests must take the consequences of any flaws.

The consequences of some flaws may also be avoided by re-defining the ritual as one in which the occurrence would not constitute an offence. Thus, a *Yasna* ceremony may only be performed during one watch of the day; any transgressions detract from the merit of the ceremony (28.8,9). On the other hand, no such restrictions exist in the case of the—shorter and less meritorious—*Drōn* service, most of whose components also occur in the *Yasna*, so that a re-definition of the ritual as a *Drōn* may allow one to avoid incurring a sin, and indeed to save at least some merit. The same stratagem can be employed in several other contingencies:

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[16] *Ner.* 19.9: *Hād pad hamāg cāštag pad hān zamān bawēd ka zōt pad* frastuiiē *ī bun be šawēd tā ka zōt pad wāz-gīrišnīh pad* frastuiiē *ī bun be šud, zōt ay ka be namēd, ay ka be drāyēd, ay ka kār-ē wizārdan šawēd, hamāg yazišn sar.*

[17] See Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān* Vol. 2, pp. 109 (19.7 with notes 372–374).

(19.11) .... *Ka yašt, ay ka be naméd, ay (*ka) be *ō kār wizārdan šawēd, ā az-iš bāzāy ud drōn ōh yazišn; ka be drāyēd ā nē yazišn. Hād Wehšābuhr ay *pāyag ī xwārtar guft. Pas guft bawēd kū bāzāy, drōn pad jud az yazišn *hamē ōh yazišn... Drōn sar andar šab barēd ā šāyēd..*

(19.11) ... If it is a *Yasna*, and he (the chief priest) grows damp (with sweat?) or leaves to answer a call of nature, then it is a *bāzāy* sin on his part, but he should still perform a *Drōn* ceremony. If he 'chatters' he should not be perform (any ceremony). Thus Wehšābuhr said: "It is the lighter degree (of sin)". Therefore it has been said that, in case of a *bāzāy* sin, a *Drōn* ceremony should always be performed, as opposed to a *Yasna* ... It is permissible to finish a *Drōn* ceremony at night.

A *Yasna* ceremony, moreover, could be performed by priests in order to obtain the highest degree of ritual power (*khūb*),[18] rather than as a service primarily intended to gratify Divine Beings. A flawed *Yasna* could be re-defined in this sense so as to avoid sin (28.45): *Ēdōn uskārd kū kār ī xūb be kunēd be nē rāyēnēd ā šāyēd,* "It was considered that if one performs it (the *Yasna*) to obtain the *khūb,* but does not define (the ritual as a proper service), then it is permissible".

PART 2: INDIVIDUAL RITUALS

The *Nērangestān*, or 'Text of Ritual Directions', reflects the ritual traditions and realities of a bygone age, and thus invites a comparison with modern practice. In later Zoroastrianism the services now known as *Yasna, Vīspered, and Vendīdād* play a prominent role. The core of all three rituals is the liturgy of the *Yasna.* For the *Vīspered* ceremony the text of the *Yasna* is interspersed with the 23 chapters (*karde*) of the text known as *Vīspered.* The liturgy of the *Vendīdād,* a long night office which some scholars regard as being of post-Sasanian origin[19] consists of the *Yasna* and *Vīspered* liturgies, to which the *fragards* (chapters) of the *Vendīdād* are added.[20] A shorter service, the *Drōn,* forms part of the *Yasna* liturgy but can also be celebrated as a separate, short ritual.

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[18] See F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna: a Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Paris, 1991), p. 85, n. 68.

[19] M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians: their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London et al., 1979), p. 156.

[20] See J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1922), pp. 331–332.

The evidence of the *Ner.*, particularly Ch. 28, shows that a ritual similar to the modern *Yasna* was known to the authors. References are found there to the introductory rites now known as *Paragnā*; to the beginning of the service proper (*Y.* 1–3); to the *Drōn* ceremony (*Y.* 3–8); the *Hōm Stūt*, or 'Praise of Haoma' (*Y.* 9–11); the *Frastuiie* (*Y.* 11.15– 13); the libation (*Y.* 14–18.8); the Hōm-pressing service or *Hōmāst* (*Y.* 22–27); the *Gāthās* (*Y.* 28–34; 43–51; 53); the *Yasna Haptanghāiti* or *Yasn ī Haft Hād* (*Y.* 35–42); the *Fšūšō Manthra* (*Y.* 58–9); the *Āteš Niyāyeš* (*Y.* 62.1–10); and finally to the *Āb zōhr* (*Y.* 62.11–*Y.* 70).

Curiously, however, *Ner.* 28 appears refer to a night office taking place in the Ušahin watch whereas, then as now (29.5), the *Yasna* proper must be performed in the first daylight watch (Hāwan). The only night office known in modern practice is the *Vendīdād*. Since the ritual sequence of a modern *Vendīdād* largely corresponds to that of a *Yasna*, the passage presumably refers either to a predecessor of the *Vendīdād,* or to that ceremony itself.

The *Vīspered* (*Visp.*), on the other hand, is frequently referred to in the *Ner.* The term is either used independently, probably referring to what is now called a *Vīspered* liturgy, consisting of *Yasna* and *Vīspered* texts, or as 'the *Vīspered* of' certain rituals (*Dwāzdah-Hōmāst, Raθβō. Bərəzaṯ, Ardāfraward*, 13.4; and of the otherwise unknown *Artō.kartēn,* 28.21, 24), meaning presumably that the *kardes* of the *Visp.* were added to the basic liturgies of these offices. In several places the *Vīspered* is mentioned together with an office called *Bagān Yasn,* e.g. (29.5): *Ēn and yazišn andar gāh ī hāwan kunišn: nōg-nāwar... wīsparad ud bagān yasn.* "The following services should be performed in the Hāwan watch: the ... *Nōg Nāwar* (i.e. *Yasna* without additional ritual), the *Vīspered,* and the *Bagān Yasn.*"

Similarities in status between the *Yasna, Vīspered,* and the *Bagān Yasn* are further suggested by:

> (28.41) *Zōt ka* hāuuanānəm āstāiia *nē gōwēd [ka nē pad kardag mad estēd] u-šān pad yašt ī keh be *rāyēnīd; pad wīsparad ud bagān yasn šāyēd bū-dan. Rāspīg ka azəm vīsāi nē gōwēd ī pad kār andar yazišn, pad tis-iz kār nē šāyēd. Ka ēk pad gāh-ē hamē be gōwēd, pad hamāg kār šāyēd.*

> (28.41) If the *zōt* does not recite *hāuuanānəm āstiia* [if (the service) does not include *kardes*], then they have arranged it as a lesser service (*yašt ī keh*); this may happen in the case of the *Vīspered* or the *Bagān Yasn.* If the assistant celebrant does not recite *azəm vīsāi*, which must be recited in the ritual, then he is not fit for any ritual work. If he says it once, in any *gāh*, then he is fit for all ritual work.

The words *hāuuanānəm āstāiia* form part of *Visp.* 3.1, and are still recited in the modern *Vīspered* liturgy after *Y.* 11. Evidently this *Vispered* text was also recited as part of the liturgy of a ritual known as *Bagān Yasn.* This implies that, as in the case of the modern *Vendīdād*, the *Vīspered* formed part of the *Bagān Yasn* liturgy. The question remains, however, what ritual the term *Bagān Yasn* refers to. In the Pahlavi Books, the term *Bagān Yašt* or *Bagān Yasn* [21] are used to refer either to *Y.* 19–21 (which contain frequent references to the word *baya-* 'prayer'), or to the contents of an ancient Avestan text, the *Bagān Nask.*[22] The latter text contained the *Yašts*, the hymns to the Divine Beings which are now mostly read as prayers, but are generally too long to have served such a purpose before printed prayer books were available. There appears to be no indication in the *Ner.* of any connection between the term *Bagān Yasn* and *Y.* 19–21. On the other hand, the liturgies requiring the recitation of *hāuuanānəm āstāiia* are defined as being *pad kardag*, 'with *karde*s', which makes it seem likely that, like the modern Hymns (and the *Vīspered*), the *Bagān Yasn* was divided into sections known as *karde.*

The above passage could therefore be taken to imply that, like the modern *Vendīdād* service, the *Bagān Yasn* consisted of the liturgy of the *Yasna*, interspersed with texts from the *Vīspered.* Instead of texts from the ancient *Wīdēwdād Nask* (i.e. the *Vendīdād*),[23] they would further have contained additional liturgical texts from the *Bagān Nask* (i.e. *Yašts*). That the *Bagān Yasn* was indeed connected with the recitation of our '*Yašts*' is confirmed by another passage, whose interpretation is made difficult by the polyvalence of the terms *yašt* and *yasn*, both of which can be used for the ritual as a whole but also for some of its constituent parts:

(29.10) *Ka bagān yasn yazēd tā srōš yasn nērang hamāg ēdōn bawēd ciyōn pad wīsparad.*

(29.11) *Pad srōš yasn-ē, pēš-iz ud hān ī pas u-š harw yasn-ē, pad bun wāz frāz gīrēd ud pad sar be gōwišn. Be hān ka-š az yasn guft [ā-š az yašt guft bawēd], cē-š hān nē gōwišn. Ast kē ēdōn gōwēd ay hān-iz ōh gōwišn cē-š az yasn guft bawēd. Ka nē, bagān yasn yazēd, az hān kē šnūman az hān gyāg jud az srōš yasn.*

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[21] The terms *yasn* and *yašt* were used more or less synonymously.

[22] See *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol 3, p. 406.

[23] The term *Nask* is used for a compilation of Avestan texts which were felt to belong together; when the Avesta came to be written down the *Nask*s could be thought of as the 'Books' of the Avesta. Most of the *Nask*s are no longer extant.

(29.10) When one performs the *Bagān Yasn*, up to the *Srōš Yasn* the ritual directions are all as for the *Vīspered*.

(29.11) In the *Srōš Yasn*, for the first the last and each *karde* (*yasn*) one takes the *bāj* at the beginning and leaves it at the end.[24] Except if one recites it as part of a service (*yasn*) for him (Sraoša) [i.e. when one has recited it as part of a ritual (*yašt*) dedicated to him], for one should not recite it (so) for that. There is one who says thus: "Even if he recited it as part of a ritual for him, he should recite it thus." If not, he celebrates a *Bagān Yasn*, since the dedications differ from that of the *Srōš Yasn* from there on.

The obviously imprecise use of the word *yasn* (once elucidated in the text by the equally polyvalent *yašt*) forces one to interpret the words as the context seems to demand. The above interpretation is based on the similarity between the contents of the passage and the modern Parsi practice of reciting each *karde* of the Hymn to Sraoša (*Y.* 57) with special formulae, except if the whole *Yasna* is dedicated to Sraoša, in which case these special honours were evidently felt to be unnecessary.[25] If this analogy is valid, the passage means that if one recites the *Bagān Yasn* as part of a liturgy which also comprises the *Vīspered* there are no additional ritual directions (the same is true of the modern *Vendīdād*), except that one should recite each *karde* of the Hymn to Sraoša with special formulae unless the entire service is dedicated to Sraoša. If one fails to do this, the ritual is still valid, but is to be defined as a *Bagān Yasn* rather than a *Srōš Yasn*.

The passage implies, moreover, that the hymn to Sraoša was one of several parts of the *Bagān Nask* that were recited during this service: only the recitation of the *Srōš Yašt* is said to have needed special attention, implying that there were other additional texts. This makes it seem possible that the *Bagān Yasn* comprised hymns (or parts of hymns) to all Divine Beings (*Yazad*) to whom a day of each month was dedicated. This would, incidentally, help to explain the survival of these texts while most non-liturgical texts have been lost.

It seems possible in view of all this, that liturgies structured along the lines of the *Bagān Yasn* served as a model when the *Vendīdād* came to be used as a liturgy. The evidence from the *Ner.* suggest, moreover, that passages from the ancient *Hādōxt Nask* could be used in the same way in

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[24] The term *bāj* refers here to a prayer recited at the beginning and end of a ritual or a part of a ceremony.

[25] Information I owe to Dastur Dr. F.M. Kotwal.

a ceremony known as *Hādōxt* (*Ner.* 24.8,10,11; according to 24.10, the *Hādōxt* was a high ritual that could be performed at great festivals such as the *Gāhāmbār*s). The assumption that texts from the ancient Avestan *Nask*s could be added to a sequence of texts from the *Yasna* and *Vīspered* would account, moreover, for a passage in the 9th-century work *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (*DD.* 65), which refers to a ritual priest (*hāwišt*), who "has five *Nask*s of the Avesta by heart but knows no Zand at all", and to a scholar-priest (*hērbed*) who "has the *Vendīdād* and five *fragard*s of the *Nērangestān* by heart, the Avesta with the Zand", but "cannot recite a single *Nask* as a chief priest in his own right."[26] The ability to recite several *Nask*s as part of the liturgy could thus be represented as a normal accomplishment for a ritual priest when the Zoroastrian religion was already in decline. In the long run, however, such long rituals presumably made demands on the priesthood that were difficult to meet at a time when Zoroastrianism had been reduced to a marginal religion and communities were impoverished. This may account for the disappearance of the *Bagān Yasn* and the *Hādōxt* from the later ritual tradition.

While the texts we know as *Yašt* evidently formed part of the long *Bagān Yasn*, *Ner.* 29 also describes a shorter ritual, normally dedicated to the *Yazad* of the day, which seems to have consisted essentially of the consecration and ritual consumption of a sacred bread (*drōn*), and whose liturgy included the appropriate prayer for the watch of the day, and the *Yašt* to the divinity to whom the day was dedicated. The following passage was clearly intended to show how such services should be structured:

(29.12) *U-šān harw yazišn-ē [yasn] pādixšāy guftan ka rōz hān gyāg rōz; ka nē, hān ī meh.* ....

(29.13) *Yasn pādixšāy [ka yasn yazēd]: barsom ī 7 tāg, aiwyāhan ī gaštag ud drōn ēk, ud yasn-iz ī gāh ī dārēd pad *ēd yasn ul guft estēd. Ka cāšnīg kunēd ā-š barsom pad war be nihišn....*

(29.15) *vaiiaoš uparō.kairiiehe taraδātō aniiāiš dāmąn aētat̰ tē vaiiō yat̰ tē asti spəṇtō* (**mainiiaom*) *xšnaōθra; u-š wāz frāz gīrišn u-š yazāi apəmca bayəmca bun kunišn ud sar be kunišn.*

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[26] See [Ph.] G. Kreyenbroek, "The *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* on Priests", *Indo-Iranian Journal* 30, 1987, pp. 195–196.

(29.12) They may lawfully recite any act of worship [i.e. *Yašt*] when the day in question is the *rōz* (the day dedicated to the divinity); if not, (they should recite) the greater one...

(29.13) If a *Yašt* is permissible [when one celebrates the *Yašt*] (the ritual includes): the *barsom* of seven twigs, a firmly tied leaf tie, and one sacred bread (*drōn*); and one should have recited the prayer (*yasn*) for the *gāh* of this ritual (*yasn*). When one makes *cāšnī* (i.e. partakes of the *drōn*), one should lay the *barsom* aside....

(29.15) (Recite) *vaiiaoš uparō.kairiiehe taraδātō aniiāiš dāmąn aētaṭ tē vaiiō yaṭ tē asti spəṇtō (*mainiiaom) xšnaoϑra* (the dedication to the *Yazad* Vayu); then one should take the *bāj* and begin (the recitation of) *yazāi apəmča bayəmča* (i.e. *Yašt* 15), and finish it.

It would seem, therefore, that most of the rituals mentioned in the *Nērangestān* can be divided into two basic categories: (1) Short services which essentially consisted of a *Drōn* offering with appropriate dedications, ritual, and liturgy; the latter could include the Hymn (*Yašt*) to the divinity of the day. (2) High rituals, which always included the recitation of the *Gāthās*. The basic structure of these was formed by the sequence of ritual acts and liturgical texts which characterises the modern *Yasna* ceremony; to these could be added the *karde*s of the *Vīspered,* as well as texts from *Nask*s such as the *Bagān* and *Hādōxt* and presumably the *Vendīdād.*

THE YASNA RITUAL IN PAHLAVI LITERATURE

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Being familiar with the text of the Yasna seems to have been an accomplishment which a well-brought-up educated man was expected to possess in the Sasanian period. We have some evidence for that in the small composition *King Xusrō and the court-servant*, which forms part of the collection of *Pahlavi Texts* issued by Jamasp-Asana.[1] The reading of the relevant passage may however be subject to different opinions. Here are the opening phrases of that book:

1 xīrān-winnārd[2] kawādīg rēdag-ē wāspuhr <xwaš-ārzōg>[3] nām xwarr-ēragīh<ā>[4] pēš ī šāhān šāh ēstād.

2 u-š stāyišn ud āfrīn was kard.

3 u-š guft ku šāhān šāh anōšag ud jāyēdān haft-kišwar xwadāy ud kāmag-hanjām bēd

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[1] PhlT (= Jamasp-Asana, D.M. 1897. *Pahlavi texts*; Bombay, 1913), pp. 27–38; cf. J.M. Unvala, *The Pahlavi text "King Husrav and his boy"*, being an English version of the thesis for the degree of "Doctor of Philosophy" of the University of Heidelberg, Germany (Paris, 1917); M. Moīn, *Majmū'a-ye maqālāt*, ba-kūšeš-e Mahdokht Mo'īn, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1364), pp. 80–102; Y.M. Nawabi. "Nokte-ī cand dar bāre-ye tashīh va tarjome-ye matn-e pahlavī-ye xosrow qobādān va rīdak az unvālā", *Opera minora*, 1, ed. M. Tavoosi (Shiraz, 1976), pp. 382–397 (First published in: *Našriyye-ye Dāneškade-ye Adabiyyāt*, Tabriz, 7/1, pp. 97–112); "Middle Persian literature; The Manichaean literature in Middle Iranian", *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 4. Bd. Iranistik-Literatur (Leiden/Köln, 1968), pp. 31–66; 67–76; 63; S. Kiā, "Sur quelques termes de 'Xosrow et son page'", *Acta Iranica* 3, 1974, pp. 209–219; D. Monchi-Zadeh. "Xusrō ī Kavātān ut rētak. Pahlavi text, transcription and translation", *Acta Iranica* 22, 1982 (Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne, 2), pp. 47–91.

[2] Or *ērān-winnārd*? *ērān nēw-ard*?

[3] Monchi-Zadeh's conjecture, on the basis of Tha'ālibī, Abū Mansūr 'Abd al-Malik b. Muhammad, *Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-furs wa-siyarihim*, ed. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900, repr. Tehran, 1963), and further in this text, §§19, 125.

[4] Unvala: *dast aδar kaš* "with the hands under his shoulders [with crossed hands], lit. the hands under the armpit", which does not seem appropriate. The reading offered here assumes that we are dealing with an adverbial expression ending in *-īhā*. Reading the first word *xwarr* seems slightly preferable to reading the phrase: *dast ēragīh<ā>* "while his hand (or power) is down".

4 framāyihēd niyōšīdan. dūdag ke man azeš būd hēm āzādīh ⁺ī wehān⁵ niyā-
gān ī šmāh rāy hamāg nāmīg ud tawāngar ud kām-zīšn⁶ būd ⁺hēnd.

5 u-šān xīr pad abāyast ī xwēš ēstād.

6 u-m awe ī pid pad aburnāyīh be widard ud mād ke man pus būd hēm be
man ēnyā an pus ne būd.

7 azešān bahrag ⁺rāy⁷ pad sūr⁸ ī pid {ī} pārag ī stabr ud xwarišn ī gōnag gō-
nag ud brahm ī xūb cābuk nēk dāšt hēm.

8 pad hangām ō frahangestān kardan dād hēm u-m pad frahang kardan sāxt
ud ōštāft hēm.⁹

9 u-m yašt ud hadōxt ud nān (?) <ud> yasn ud jud-dēw-dād ērbadīhā warm
gyāg gyāg zand niyōšīd ēstād.

10 u-m dibīrīh aōn ku xūb-nibīg ud raγ-nibīg bārīk ud dānišn-kāmag ud kār-
angust ud frazānīg-saxwan hēm.

Translation

1 A young (court) servant of the family of Kawād, with accomplished mat-
ters,[10] princely, <Xwaš-ārzōg> by name, his fortune down,[11] stood before
the King of Kings

2 and uttered much praise and blessing.

3 He said: King of kings! May you be immortal and eternal ruler of the
seven climes whose desire is achieved!

4 May it please (His Majesty) to listen. The family of which I descend were
all renowned, wealthy, and living according to their desire, thanks to the
bounty of the good ones, your ancestors.

5 Their matters stood as befitted them.

6 My father departed (this world) in (my) childhood. My mother, of whom I
was the son, had no other son except me.[12]

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⁵ Unvala reads *yazdān*, which Monchi-Zadeh wishes to retain in the sense of "majes-
ties", honorific title for kings, like *baγ*. The reading *wehān* was suggested by Nawābī.

⁶ This is a curious expression.

⁷ MSS *LA*. Jamasp-Asana and Unvala emend to *L* = *man*, but the emendation pro-
posed here, reading *ĭ'd*, gives a more coherent text.

⁸ Unvala emends to *stūr* "trustee, guardian", but this is hardly warranted.

⁹ The use of the pronoun for the first person both in *u-m* and in the verb *hēm* seems
irregular. One would rather prefer *u-šān* or the like.

¹⁰ This presumably means "of perfect accomplishments".

¹¹ This is a curious expression, meaning probably "in bad circumstances".

¹² The translation of this phrase is somewhat doubtful. Instead the following alterna-
tive may be considered: *ud ham ke man pus būd hēm...* "and although I was his son,
except for me he had no other son". The occurrence of the mother here seems irrelevant

7 From their[13] share, I got in the feast[14] of (my) father a substantial portion, food of all kinds, and good, fine and worthy clothing.

8 At the (proper) time I was sent away to learn at school, and in my studies I was fashioned and moulded (?).[15]

9 I memorized like an *ērbad* the Yašt, the Hadōkht, the prayer over bread (?),[16] the Yasna,[17] and the Vidēvdād, and listened, passage by passage, to their *zand*.

10 My scribemanship is such that I am a calligrapher and a fast writer, (a writer of) fine (script),[18] a philosopher,[19] a man of nimble fingers (?)[20] and of clever words.

The court servant goes on to enumerate his various accomplishments, but what follows will not be relevant for our present purpose.

Part of the intellectual formation of a well brought-up gentleman in the Sasanian period consisted, as we see from this text, of memorizing certain key passages from the Avesta, accompanied by their Pahlavi version, the Zand. It is not the Yasna ritual which is mentioned, it is the ability to recite the text and the Pahlavi version corresponding to it by heart. This is an important point for the history of the Avesta: even

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to the situation.

[13] I.e., my parents'.

[14] I take it that a commemoration feast is intended, in which the inheritance of the father is assigned, but have no evidence for such a feast in Iran. Or is *sūr* by extension also "estate"?

[15] *ōštāftan* is "to oppress", perhaps also "to press". I assume that the verb has here the sense of to press into shape. Unvala reads *saxt ud ōštāb* and translates "steadfast and ardent", emending the reading of the first word, and twisting the meaning of the second.

[16] What is transcribed here *ud nān <ud> yasn* is written something like **W n'nysn**. I take it that *nān*, if the reading is correct, is the prayer called *nān xwarišn* (or *wāz*?), but its place in this list is somewhat incongruous and raises doubts whether the reading is correct. Unvala reads *u ān i yasn*; Monchi-Zadeh "Xusrō ī Kavātān ut rētak. Pahlavi text, transcription and translation", p. 64, *bagān*.

[17] The term *yašt* is often used in the Pahlavi literature for the *yasna* ceremony.

[18] It may be assumed that *bārīk*, which means on its own "thin, fine, subtle" (D.N. MacKenzie, *A concise Pahlavi dictionary* (London, 1971, repr. 1986)), is here another designation for a writing skill, perhaps in a compound such as **bārīk-dibīr*, the latter part of which may have been omitted in the manuscript tradition.

[19] *dānišn-kāmag* is the literal equivalent of "philosopher". It is hard to tell what exact scribal accomplishment is meant by this term here.

[20] I.e., malleable, flexible fingers, a characteristic of a good scribe? One could also think of a compound such as "having fingers (suitable for the) work".

though the text may have already existed in written form, the way to study it continued to be oral, as is still the case up to our time. Another point worth noting is the fact that despite a certain tendency for restricting the teaching of Zand, a good courtier was not bound by this observance. It may even be argued that the restriction had a more theoretical value than a practical one, or that it was a sectorial restriction, to be applied only outside the well-tested circles of the clergy, the court, and similar groups.

Another text which alludes to the same phenomenon is *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag*, where, however, the people who are said to have memorized the Avesta are women:

> ud awe wirāz rāy haft xwah būd ud awēšān harw haft xwahān wirāz ceōn zan būd hēnd. u-šān dēn warm ud yašt kard estād (AWn 2:1–2[21]).

The (said) Wirāz had seven sisters, and those seven sisters were like wives to Wirāz. They had memorized the Avesta and performed the Yasna.

The *yasna* as a Zoroastrian ritual has tremendous power. It fulfils a telling role in the story of creation.

> fradom ardīg-stawīh abar nibard tištar būd u-š abar paywahīd ō ohrmazd <ī> zōr aōn <ō> tištar burd pad yasn ud niyāyišn ud nām-barišnīh be mad zōr aōn abar ō tištar cand dah asp ī gušn dah uštar ī gušn dah gāw ī gušn dah kōf ka abganēnd ud dah rōd ī nāydāg ka pad āgenēn frāz ānayēnd.[22]

The first defeat in battle was of Tištar. He made supplication to Ohrmazd, who gave so much power to Tištar, – so much power came to Tištar through *yasna*, *niyāyišn* and the invocation by name, as of ten male horses, ten male camels, ten male bulls, as when one throws together ten mountains, as when one brings together ten navigable rivers.

The function of the Yasna, the Niyāyišn and the invocations in the story of creation is, as is to be expected of such teleological situations, to underline the enormous anti-demonic power of the ceremonies concerned.

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[21] AWn = *Ardā Wirāz nāmag*; cf. Ph. Gignoux *Le livre d'Arda Vīrāz*. Translittération, transcription et traduction du texte pehlevi (Bibliothèque iranienne No. 30; Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, Cahier No. 14; Paris, 1984); F. Vahman, *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag. The Iranian 'Divina Commedia'* (Monograph Series, No. 53; London/Malmö, 1986).

[22] Zs 3:15 (=*Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsparam*), following the edition of Ph. Gignoux/A. Tafazzoli, *Anthologie de Zādspram*, édition critique du texte pehlevi, traduit et commenté par Ph. Gignoux et A. Tafazzoli (Studia Iranica Cahier 13; Paris, 1993); my translation here and in some other quotations is slightly different.

It is paralleled in relation to eschatology: the *yasna* will be celebrated to bring about the *frašēgird* (the new world of eschatology). Celebrating the Yasna ritual five times by the Sōšāns accompanies the Resurrection and brings it about (PhlRiv 48, 56; Zs 35, 26–29). The demon is chased away by another performance of the Yasna (PhlRiv 48, 76, but the text here seems somewhat corrupt).

It is the merit of Molé[23] to have shown how the very notion of the celebration of the Yasna is designed in Zoroastrianism to evoke, to foreshadow and to anticipate the eschatological events of the Frašēgird, and in particular the Resurrection. In a sense, the Yasna ritual is expected to bring them about, to actualize them. The Zoroastrian doctrine of the sacrifice, he has demonstrated, is a constant evocation of the unity of the notions of creation and eschatology. There is perhaps no other religion in which the beginning and the end of the world are so closely held together, apart from Manichaeism, which is modelled on the Zoroastrian myth. Creation in the Zoroastrian theology has no other aim but to lead towards eschatology; eschatology has no meaning but as completing the work of creation, and both, taken together, are two crucial stages in the battle against evil.

One of the culminating points of the Yasna text, as observed by Molé,[24] is the wish expressed as part of the liturgy:

aṭčā tōi vaēm xiiāmā // yōi īm fərašəm kərənaon ahūm (Y 30:9a).

Thus may we be those who will make existence brilliant.[25]

In this verse it seems to me that one has to be single-mindedly idiosyncratic to deny an eschatological connection. It is "existence" (*ahu-*) that the worshipping community wishes to make "brilliant" or "wonderful" (*fraša-*), not "(ritual) existence", as claimed by Kellens and Pirart.[26] The term "existence" does not necessarily exclude the ritual aspect, but if one insists, without any internal evidence, to take "existence" in the narrow

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[23] M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien. Le problème zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne* (Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'études, t. 68; Paris, 1963).

[24] Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, pp. 172–175.

[25] I am using the translation in H. Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra and other old Avestan texts*, by H. Humbach in collaboration with J. Elfenbein/P.O. Skjærvø, 2 vols. (Indogermanische Bibliothek, Reihe 1; Heidelberg, 1991).

[26] J. Kellens/E. Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1988/91), 1, p. 112.

ritual sense, one precludes the wider connotation of existence. It is un-
likely that for the ancient worshippers existence would have been sliced
up into small compartments; if it were, would they not take the trouble
of specifying which kind of existence they had in mind? I know that
quoting the Pahlavi rendering of this verse would not be a relevant ar-
gument for its original meaning in the eyes of Kellens and Pirart, but, on
the other hand, does the fact that something is taken in one particular
sense by the Zoroastrian tradition already constitute a proof that it is
wrong? Here, in any case, is the Pahlavi version of the text:

> ēdōn-ez amāh ke tō hēm [ke tō xwēš hēm amāh] ēn fraškerd-kunišn andar
> axwān (PhlY, p. 137[27]).

> Thus too, we, who are yours, are those to whom belongs the performance
> of eschatology in existence.

The Pahlavi translation is clumsy and literal, and may betray an imper-
fect understanding of the Gāthic language, but there is no reason to
doubt that the Zoroastrian tradition as reflected in this rendering took the
phrase *fraša- kṛ-* to mean the performance of eschatology. It is possible
to drive the single-minded insistence on ritual to an extreme by claiming
that the Pahlavi *axwān*, which looks like a plural form (and may refer to
the two types of existence, *mēnōg* and *gētīg*; or to the two times of exis-
tence, the here-and-now as well as the world-to-come),[28] also refers nar-
rowly to ritual existence. This would however be a subjective construc-
tion without solid basis.

At the end of time, no *yasna* is necessary any more. Like other sacred
objects and observances, the *yasna* will be replaced at the end of times:

> gōhrīg yašt yazišn stāyišn ī abar frašēgird-kardārīh ī wehīh (Zs 35:15).[29]

> Instead of celebrating the Yasna, (there will be) praise concerning the ac-
> complishment of goodness through eschatology.

Notwithstanding the tremendous power and significance of the Yasna, it is
there for a very specific purpose, that of combating evil. Once the Renova-
tion comes about, the Yasna is dispensable and can give way to songs of

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[27] PhlY = *Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad*, ed. E.B.N. Dhabhar (Pahlavi Text Series
8; Bombay, 1949).

[28] *axvān* is attested several times as an equivalent to *ahu* "existence" in the singu-
lar; cf. e.g. PhlY 9:1d; 28:11c; *Dādestan ī dēnīg* 15:5; Zs 22:6.

[29] A somewhat different interpretation of this phrase is in Molé, *Culte, mythe et
cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, p. 93.

praise and thanksgiving. The time of the Renovation is introduced by a chanting of the Yasna of the accomplishment of the Renovation by Sōšāns and the six agents of the Renovation (Zs 35:19). That performance of the Yasna is a reflection of the golden age of Yima (Zs 35:20).

Some of the legalistic details around the Yasna ritual are interesting. In a passage of the book *Šāyast ne šāyast* we have the following passage:

> yazišn ī andar mān ī ātašān kunēnd ka ne xūb ō dēwān ne rasēd. ud ān ī abārīg gyāg kunēnd ka ne xūb kunēnd ō dēwān rasēd. ce yazišn miyānag ne bawēd ayāb ō yazdān ayāb ō dēwān rasēd (ŠnŠ 9:5).[30]

> A *yasna* ceremony which one performs in the house of fire does not go to the demons (even) if it is not performed well. When such a ceremony is performed elsewhere, it goes to the demons if it is not performed well. For the *yasna* is not in the middle; it goes either to the divine beings or to the demons.[31]

In other words (if my understanding of the text is correct), the harm caused by an inappropriate performance of the Yasna ritual is not inherent to the performance itself. It depends on the place where it is performed as well as on the degree of ritual fidelity of the performance. Performing it in a consecrated place like a fire temple is already a guarantee that it will not increase the power of the demons.

The notion that a bad ritual reaches not the divine beings but the demons is recurrent in the Pahlavi texts. Here is another example. When the idea of sending someone to the other world to retrieve information as to whether the religious duties performed by the believers are effective or not is considered, here is the wording of the deliberations:

> ud pas az ēn mardomān ī ērānšahr ēk abāg did <pad> āšōb ud pahikār būd ud ceōn-šān xwadāy ud dehbad ud sālār ud dastwar ī dēn-āgāh ne būd. ud pad ciš ī yazdān <pad> gumān būd hēnd {ud} was-ēwēnag kēš ud warrawišn <ud> jud-ristagīh ud gumānīh ud jud-dādestānīh andar gēhān be ō paydāgīh āmad. tā ān ka zād hu-fraward anōšag-ruwān ādurbād ī mahraspandān ke padeš passāxt ī pad dēn-kard rōy ī widaxtag abar war rēxt. ud cand dādestān ud dādwarīh abāg jud-kēšān ud jud-warrawišnān be kard ud ēn dēn andar šēbišn ud mardomān andar gumān būd hēnd. ud pas mōmardān ud dastwarān ī dēn ane būd hēnd. az ān mar andōhōmand ud purr-

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[30] ŠnŠ= *Šāyast-nē-šāyast*, ed J.C.Tavadia, *Šāyast-nē šāyast. A Pahlavi text on religious customs* (Hamburg, 1930).

[31] Tavadia translates the last phrase: "because the medium of the *yazišn* [ceremony] is not there, — hence it reaches either unto the *yazat*-s or unto the *dēv*-s, [as the case may be]". This translation does not convey much sense to me.

pīm būd hēnd. u-šān pad dar ī pērōzgar ādur ī farrbay hanjaman xwāst. ud
was-ēwēnag saxwan ud uskār abar ēn būd ku-mān cārag xwāstan abāyēd tā-
mān kas-ē šawēd ud az mēnōgān āgāhīh āwarēd ku mardomān ī andar ēn
āwām hēnd be dānēnd ku ēn yazišn ud drōn ud āfrīnagān ud nērang ud pād-
yābīh ud yōšdāhrīh ī amāh pad kardag āwarēm ō yazdān rasēd ayāb ō dē-
wān ud ō frayād ī ruwān ī amāh rasēd ayāb ne (AWn 1:8–15).

After this the people of the kingdom of Ērān were in turmoil and fight against
each other. As they had no lord, no ruler, no chief and no religious authority
who was versed in religious matters, and as they were in doubt concerning the
matter of the divine beings, faiths and beliefs and heresies and doubtful views
and deviant laws of many kinds appeared in the world, until the time when
there was born Ādurbād son of Mahraspand, of good *fravaši*, of immortal
soul, on whose breast molten bronze was poured in his ordeal following the
(proper) religious act.[32] He conducted numerous legal battles with the holders
of deviant faiths and beliefs, for (?)[33] this religion was in confusion and people
were in doubt. Afterwards the simple priests and the religious authorities be-
came different. On that account they became worried and pained, and sought
an assembly in the court of the victorious Farrbay fire. There was much dis-
course and discussion concerning the following: "We must seek a means so
that someone should go and bring information from the *mēnōg* entities so that
the people who are in this world should know whether this Yasna, Drōn, Āfrī-
nagān, Nērang, Pādyāb (ritual cleansing) and Yošdāhrīh (ritual purification)
which we perform reach the divine beings or the demons, and whether or not
they come to the help of our souls.

This is not the only place where we hear of doubts and anxieties con-
cerning the religious truths and the efficacy of the religious observances,
and indeed the whole of the story of the righteous Wirāz revolves around
the need to prove that the injunctions of the religious are borne out by
the evidence of the inhabitants of the other world, the world of *mēnōg*.

An injunction to invite the divine beings (the *yazad*s) and the spirits
of the righteous (the *fravaši*) to attend the *yazišn* ceremony is heard:

pad hamāg yazišn pad bun ī yazišn ud bun ī drōn yazdān ud ahlawān
frawahr be ō yazišn niwēyēnišn (ŠnŠ 9:11).

For the whole *yazišn* ceremony, one should invite the divine beings and the
spirits of the righteous to the *yazišn* at the beginning of the *yazišn* and at the
beginning of the *drōn*.[34]

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[32] Gignoux maintains that this is an allusion to the book *Dēnkard*.

[33] Instead of **W** one would expect here something like **MH**.

[34] Tavadia's translation is slightly different.

Although such an invocation is not actually attested in the ceremony, it makes good sense, and it is probably present there, at least implicitly.[35]

The texts dealing with eschatology give us a good indication as to the relative weight of meritorious deeds or sins. We thus see that the performance of the Yasna ritual figures in the visit made by Ardā Wirāz to the other world:

> ud pas naxust gām frāz nihādam ō star pāyag pad humat ān gyāg ku humat pad mehmānīh ud dīdam ān ī ahlawān ruwān ke-šān ceōn star ī rōzāg rōšnīh azeš hamē waxšīd. u-šān gāh ud nišast abēr rōšn ud burzāg ud purr-xwarrah būd. u-m pursīd az srōš ahlaw ud ādur yazad ku ēn gyāg kadām ud ēn mardom kadām hēnd. u-šān guft srōš ud ādur yazad ku ēn gyāg star pāyag ud awēšān ruwānān hēnd ke-šān pad gētīg yašt ne kard ud gāhān ne srūd ud xwēdōdah ne kard u-šān xwadāyīh ud dehbedīh ud sālārīh ne kard estēd. pad abārīg kirbag ahlaw būd estēnd (AWn chapter 7).

> I then made a first step into the star region through Good Thought, that place where Good Thought is at home. I saw the spirits of the righteous like stars of which the bright luminosity spreads out of them. Their place and seat was very bright, lofty and full of splendour. I asked Srōš the Righteous and Ādur the divine being: "What is this place? What are these people?" Srōš and the divine Ādur said: "This is the region of the stars. Those are the spirits who did not perform the Yasna in *gētīg*, and did not chant the Gāthās, and did not practise Xwēdōdah (next-of-kin marriage), and did not fulfil the function of a lord, a ruler, a chief; (but) were righteous in (doing) the other good deeds.

People who did not distinguish themselves while they lived in the material world by performing the Yasna and the other major requirements of piety: chanting the Gāthās, performing the next-of-kin marriage, as well as being at the head of the community, are still allotted a place among the righteous for performing the lesser meritorious acts, and are not considered utterly wicked. In a late composition, the *Sad-dar Bundahišn*, it is said that those who performed the Yašt (i.e. Yasna) will be given at the Resurrection garments of gold, silver and precious stones (SDBd, p. 176, §35).[36]

One aspect of the Yasna ritual as it is developed in the Pahlavi books is the curious ambiguity which exists around the notion of sacrifice and the immolation of the good creatures, like the bovines, which are des-

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[35] Cf. the note in Tavadia's edition of ŠnŠ, p. 120, n. 11:3–3. An elaboration of this theme is in the next paragraph of the text (9:12).

[36] SDBd (= *Sad-Dar Nasr and Sad-Dar Bundehesh*), ed. B.N. Dhabhar (Bombay, 1909). Translated in Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, 3, p. 111.

tined to be consumed by humanity. While it is definitely not vegetarian, the Zoroastrian tradition is inclined to restrict the consumption of meat by demanding that it be within measure (this means primarily not to kill young animals before they reach maturity). It apparently wishes to minimize the suffering of animals when they are being killed, hence the preference for suffocation rather than slaughter, and it also means avoidance of blood sacrifice, although the ritual consumption of meat is part of certain ceremonies. The great sympathy shown to the suffering of animals in the texts, right from the Gāthās, where the figure of the "soul of the cow" occupies a prominent role, is remarkable.[37]

The Yasna ritual, as it figures in the Pahlavi sources, has a multiplicity of forms and meanings, as can be expected to exist in a great religious tradition. The text of the Yasna forms part of the education of a Zoroastrian. The text was memorized if not by all members of the community, at least by all members of a certain elite class, and its recitation is a commonplace ritual undertaken with considerable frequently. The ritual of the Yasna, as it is set out in the Pahlavi texts, carries an enormous burden of significance and power, both symbolic and actual, representing, as it seems to do, primarily the eschatological notion of *frašēgird*, the Renovation of the World, originally perhaps in both its aspects: *hic et nunc*, and in the remote end of time. It also brings forth to consciousness the intimate connection between creation and eschatology.

Embedded within this ritual is the reminiscence of a sacrifice, and, somewhat paradoxically, the conscious desire to avoid as much as possible the immolation of cattle and the causing of unnecessary suffering to living creatures. The cow represents a double position in the Yasna text: on the one hand, it stands for the suffering of the animal, the object of a regular sacrifice, but the blame of its suffering is diverted from the sacrificer to the wrong-doers, to the daēvas; at the same time it seems to symbolize the suffering of all the righteous innocent, and it may thus be said to stand for the suffering of humanity under the oppression of the demons. For the last point let us look at the conclusion of Y 29, which is

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[37] On this subject cf. particularly Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, pp. 193–202. See also Sh. Shaked, "The moral responsibility of animals. Some Zoroastrian and Jewish views on the relations of humans and animals", *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Anders Hultgård zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 23.12.2001*, eds M. Stausberg/O. Sundqvist/A. van Nahl (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 31; Berlin/New York, 2001), pp. 578–595.

dedicated to the complaint of the cow concerning the oppression and the suffering which has befallen her. In the last line of the last verse of that Yasna we read: "O Ahura, (come) down to us now, to us, in accordance with the munificence of those such as you".[38] The Pahlavi version renders this as follows:

> ohrmazd nūn amāh kāmag ān ī ō amāh rādīh ī az šmāh [nūn ka afdīh ī šmāh wēš dānēm ham nēkīh az šmāh kāmag-tar būd ke gōwēd ēd nūn ka dēn rawāg be būd man ud hāwištān ī man mizd az tō kāmag].

> Now, Ohrmazd, our desire is that liberality (should come) to us from you [*gloss:* Now that I know your marvel more, I have more desire (to have) also the goodness (which comes) from you. Some said thus: Now that the religion has become widespread, I (=Zoroaster) and my disciples desire (to get) reward from you.]

The suffering of the cow and the implied help that is promised her by Ohrmazd are directly interpreted as holding a promise to give also some help and assistance to human suffering and even more: to give Zoroaster and his disciples, the believers, a reward for their good deeds, which include, primarily, the performance of the Yasna.

These are just some of the themes which emerge from the interpretation of the Gāthās in the Pahlavi literature. There are several other topics scattered in the Pahlavi literature. Does the Pahlavi literature faithfully reflect the original ideas of the Gāthās? This is an unfair question. The later Zoroastrian tradition continues, elaborates and amplifies the texts of the Gāthās. It often reads into them new ideas which were not and could not be part of the ancient texts. It often distorts the meaning of the ancient texts whether unwittingly or deliberately; either in order to make a point, or because of insufficient philological training—these are well-known ways by which a religion develops and changes. Some misunderstandings are constructive for the later development of a religious tradition, but in many cases what looks like a misunderstanding is really a deliberate play on words and meanings of the sacred text.

It seems to me meaningless to ask whether the Pahlavi tradition is a direct continuation of the message of the Gāthās. The answer in Zoroastrianism, as in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism is: yes and no. There is no religious movement which remains immutable without undergoing development and change. There are, however, very few religious phenomena which present a clean and radical break with their ori-

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[38] Humbach's translation.

gins. The ancient texts are neither separated by an unbridgeable gulf from their more recent successors, nor are they preserved wholesale in the later periods. The existence of a living historical succession implies both change and continuity.

SUB SPECIE MAIESTATIS:
REFLECTIONS ON SASANIAN COURT RITUALS

Albert de Jong

Apud Persas persona regis sub specie maiestatis occulitur
Iunianus Iustinus

The Sasanian kings, who ruled Iran and Mesopotamia from the third to the seventh centuries CE, were Zoroastrian kings. This is clear from the monumental inscriptions some of them left behind, from their coins, from the iconography of royal art in rock reliefs, seals and silver plates, and, of course, from the whole body of literature devoted to their dynastic, political and military history.[1] The fact that the Sasanian kings were Zoroastrians should not, by itself, pose too many problems. With the exception of the comparatively short period of Seleucid domination (from Alexander of Macedon (330 BCE) to the early second century BCE), the dynasties that ruled (parts of) the Iranian world before the Sasanians (the Achaemenians from 550 to 330 BCE; and the Parthians from the third or second century BCE to 224 (or 226) CE) were also Zoroastrians. In most scholarly literature, however, the religious sentiments and politics of the Sasanian dynasty are considered to have been of a much stronger quality and intensity than those of their forerunners. The Sasanian kings themselves carefully fostered this image of a greater attachment to Zoroastrianism in their dynasty, but it is in reality little more than a pious fiction. The question is not whether Sasanian kings did or did not adhere to Zoroastrianism—this they obviously did—but whether their ideas on their predecessors correspond to reality. This does not seem to be the case. The dynastic history of Iran that was created in the Sasanian period

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[1] For introductions to the Sasanian Empire, see A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944); J. Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia from 550 BC to 650 AD* (London, 2001), pp. 151–221; E. Winter/B. Dignas, *Rom und das Perserreich. Zwei Weltmächte zwischen Konfrontation und Koexistenz* (Berlin, 2001), all with references. Convenient collections of (chiefly Greek and Roman) sources are found in M. Dodgeon/S. Lieu, *The Eastern Roman Frontier and the Persian Wars, AD 226–363* (London, 1991); G. Greatrex/S. Lieu, *The Eastern Roman Frontier and the Persian Wars. Part 2: AD 363–630* (London, 2002).

culminated in a (lost) text known as the *Xwadāy-nāmag* or "Book of Kings."[2] Although the text itself did not survive, the outlines of its view of the pre-Sasanian history of Iran are sufficiently known through later adaptations of the text in Muslim authors. Most strikingly, the Achaemenian dynasty has been almost totally effaced from memory, surviving only in the tragic figure of its last monarch, Darius III (Dārā the son of Dārā), whose chief function in the narrative is that he was defeated by Alexander.[3] Between Alexander and the rise of the Sasanians, the period of the Seleucid and Parthian dynasties in Iran, we find the so-called "petty kings" (Middle Persian *kadag-xwadāy*, Arabic *mulūk al-ṭawā'if*), who chiefly represent the fragmentation of a realm (Iran) that was meant to have been united. This fragmentation, which eventually led to the restoration of Iran under the Sasanians, was evident not only from the military failures and internecine quarrels of the "petty kings", but also from the fact that they had built too many fire-temples without the proper (i.e. royal) authorization.[4] These fire-temples were subsequently destroyed by the first Sasanian king, Ardašīr I (r. 224–240), who "restored" a centralized kingdom with a centralized church in Iran. It is very well possible that something similar in fact happened, but the general tendency of Sasanian sources (and sources based on these Sasanian traditions, which are the main sources to have survived) of presenting the rise of the Sasanians in terms of the establishment of order out of chaos makes it difficult to disentangle facts from fantasies in this respect. The third-century

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[2] For the *Xwadāy-nāmag*, see especially E. Yarshater, "Iranian National History", *The Cambridge History of Iran 3. The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. E. Yarshater (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 359–377; A.Sh. Shahbazi, "On the Xᵘadāy-nāmag", *Iranica Varia. Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater* (Acta Iranica 30; Leiden, 1990), pp. 208–229.

[3] This historical amnesia with regard to the Achaemenians is still hotly debated. For recent overviews of the question, see Ph. Huyse, "La revendication de territoires achéménides par les Sassanides: Une réalité historique?", *Iran. Questions et connaissances. Actes du IVe Congrès Européen des Études Iraniennes I. La période ancienne* (Studia Iranica Cahier 25; Paris, 2002), pp. 297–311; T. Daryaee, 'Memory and History: The Construction of the Past in Late Antique Persia,' *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 1, 2001/2002, pp. 1–14.

[4] This is evident from the *Letter of Tansar*, a Sasanian text purporting to have been written by the priest Tansar in the reign of Ardašīr I, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty. The text only survives in a Persian version, included in the thirteenth-century *History of Tabaristān* of Ibn Isfandyār. For the passage on the fire-temples, see M. Boyce, *The Letter of Tansar* (Roma, 1968), p. 47 (translation), with her notes on pp. 16–17.

sources we have—chiefly "official" inscriptions—do not help us much further, because they are the first indications of this type of historiography. This is particularly true of the four inscriptions of the priest Kerdīr, which contain a very large number of historical problems.[5] Kerdīr claims, *inter alia*, to have founded fire-temples, persecuted all non-Zoroastrian religions and to have brought back to orthodoxy all Zoroastrian priests in the many provinces and lands of the new empire. Some of his claims are certainly unfounded; the persecutions of Jews, Christians and others are almost entirely absent from the literature of these religions themselves and seem never to have taken place.[6] Unlike the Manichaeans, in whose traditions Kerdīr does occur, the Zoroastrian church supposedly organised by Kerdīr has completely forgotten him. He simply does not occur in any Zoroastrian Middle Persian text, a fact that still awaits analysis. With his campaign against the religions being a pious fiction, we should seriously consider the possibility that his other claims, chiefly the restoration of orthodoxy, were equally produced by his desire to meet the requirements of a high priestly authority in the service of a powerful king.

The fact is that we know very little of the religious sentiments of many Sasanian kings; we know several who seem to have been devout Zoroastrians, but we also know some who seem to have had a keen interest in other options, chiefly Manichaeism and the Gnostic movement associated with the name of the "arch-heretic" Mazdak.[7] Some Sasanian queens were themselves non-Zoroastrians and others were said to have had a keen interest in, for instance, Judaism.[8] Alongside this evidence

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[5] The inscriptions have been gathered and translated conveniently by Ph. Gignoux, *Les quatre inscriptions du mage Kirdīr. Textes et concordances* (Studia Iranica Cahier 9; Paris, 1991; see also D.N. MacKenzie, "Kerdīr's Inscription", *The Sasanian Rock Reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam. Naqsh-i Rustam 6. The Triumph of Shapur I*, ed G. Herrmann (Iranische Denkmäler 13; Berlin, 1989), pp. 35–78.

[6] This problem is discussed (with references) in A. de Jong, "Zoroastrian Religious Polemics and their Contexts: Interconfessional Relations in the Sasanian Empire", *Religious Polemics in Context*, eds A. van der Kooij/Th. Hettema (Leiderdorp, forthcoming).

[7] For Sasanian interest in Manichaeism, see M. Hutter, "Manichaeism in the Early Sasanian Empire", *Numen* 40, 1993, pp. 2–15; for Kawād and Mazdak, see now P. Crone, "Kavād's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt", *Iran* 29, 1991, pp. 21–42.

[8] This subject is discussed in De Jong, "Zoroastrian Religious Polemics." There appears to be no basis for the suggestion in J.K. Choksy, *Evil, Good, and Gender. Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian Religious History* (Toronto Studies in Religion 28; New York, 2002), pp. 85–86, that these non-Zoroastrian queens were supposed to lead Zoroastrian lives. There were large numbers of non-Zoroastrians at court, in all sorts of ca-

for interest in other religions than Zoroastrianism, we have, of course, iconographic, numismatic and textual evidence to show that the Sasanian kings all protected and sponsored Zoroastrianism, but the exact relations between court and church are very imperfectly known. This is caused at least partly by the fact that it is more than likely that with a few exceptions, the Middle Persian books that have been preserved—and they are our chief source of information on Zoroastrian theology—do not originate in court culture. These texts were mainly collected, edited and copied in the ninth century, in a time when the number of Zoroastrians was rapidly decreasing and when royal support for the religion was a vague remembrance from the past.[9] We cannot estimate the loss of ideas, texts and traditions properly, but there seems to have been a pattern of preserving "useful" texts rather than an attempt to preserve what was still there. Many aspects of Iranian learning characteristic of the Sasanian period, especially the more technical subjects of courtly learning, such as geography and the sciences, *belles lettres* and behaviour at court have been lost in their Middle Persian versions, but survive in translations and learned works from the new dominant religion, Islam.[10] We can, therefore, estimate the extent of Sasanian traditions fairly accurately, and it is not difficult to see why they were lost in their original version. For the administration of a large empire, geography is a much more necessary science than for a community that cannot be expected to gather enough funds for travelling through the country. Besides, the knowledge of geography was there for many to use; it is only the language in which it was available that had changed.[11]

A few specimens of courtly literature have survived in Middle Persian. The most important of these is the charming story of *King Husraw and his Page*, which has been studied mainly for its unusually large amount of *hapax legomena*, because its core consists of catalogues of the

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pacities, and not a single author has ever recorded that specific requirements were made of them, with the exception of the court etiquette to be discussed below.

[9] For a survey of these Middle Persian texts, see now C.G. Cereti, *La letteratura pahlavi* (Milano, 2001).

[10] The most important study of this process is D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture. The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society* (London, 1998), pp. 1–60.

[11] Dan Shapira's assessment that there was no geographical science in Sasanian Iran ("Was there Geographical Science in Sasanian Iran?", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54, 2001, pp. 319–338), presented with his customary learning, fails to convince in this respect.

best types of food, music, women, perfumes, etc.[12] The text does not only survive in Middle Persian, but also in Arabic; it is found in al-Tha'ālibī's *History of the Kings of the Persians*, alongside other translations of Middle Persian texts; interestingly, the (Zoroastrian) religious information in the Middle Persian text has been carefully removed from the Arabic version, which shows at the very least how easy it must have been to adapt Zoroastrian texts to a new environment.[13]

The present contribution will present some materials on the subject of court ceremonial or court rituals and attempt to analyse them in terms of what they can tell us about the relations between Zoroastrianism and the Sasanian dynasty. The information we have for that subject is enormous in quantity and consists of texts, images, and objects. The Middle Persian Zoroastrian texts, by contrast, are very silent on these matters, but an attempt will be made to relate the development of court rituals as much as possible to discussions in the study of Sasanian Zoroastrianism.

The representation of the Sasanian kings in texts ultimately deriving from Sasanian traditions, in Arabic and early Persian literature, differs remarkably from representations of these kings in the literature produced by Christians in and around the Sasanian Empire. This is probably what one would expect, but in a subject as vulnerable to stereotypes and *topoi* as descriptions of royalty, one is likely to find many things one had expected beforehand. The differences between these Arabic and Persian texts on the one hand and the Christian texts on the other take many shapes. The most important difference concerns the moral evaluation of the king's character, a subject explicitly forbidden to speculate about according to Persian etiquette, at least where it concerns the living monarch.[14] Christians, not bound by such rules, regularly present the kings as spiteful and hateful characters, driven by lust and greed and consumed by a desire to destroy everything the Christian authors themselves held sacred. Arabic and Persian sources have a few kings they clearly do not like, but in general they present the king as mild, just, and wise. A second eye-catching difference concerns the kings' health. Persian and Arabic sources usually present the king as a handsome man, excelling in sports, able-bodied and in excellent health. Christians, on the other hand,

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[12] For the text, see D. Monchi-Zadeh, "Xusröv I Kavātān ut rētak. Pahlavi Text, Transcription and Translation", *Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne II* (Acta Iranica 22; Leiden, 1982), pp. 47–91.

[13] H. Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois des Perses* (Paris, 1900), pp. 705–711.

[14] *Kitāb al-tāj*, p. 61. For references to this text and its translation, see note 32 below.

excel in giving details of the many diseases and ailments tormenting the kings and their families. Leprosy, skin-diseases and especially headaches are the favourite diseases Christian authors found in the Sasanian family. These diseases serve as an easy plot to introduce either miracles, in the form of unexpected healings brought about by Christians at court, or to introduce an even more desirable accomplishment: martyrdom. Martyrdom is achieved in those cases where wicked Zoroastrian priests, or sometimes Jews, manage to convince the king or his courtiers that a certain Christian had worked magic on the poor suffering prince or princess.[15] In the *Church History* of Socrates of Constantinople, such a plot suddenly present us with a glimpse, however imaginary, of a subject rarely found in any source: the private devotion of the king. The king regularly withdraws to a private oratory, to pray in order to be healed. This oratory, called *oikiskon* ("little room"), does not, of course, offer the king a real retreat from the world. It rather serves as a machine for evil Zoroastrian priests, who hide under the floor and speak in the name of their gods, asking the king to punish the Christians or else continue to suffer his unbearable headaches. In this case, the priests are found out and the Christians are richly rewarded.[16] The story, without any doubt, does not reflect actual history. The stories in Arabic and Persian literature, on the other hand, presenting the king as handsome and healthy, do not inspire much confidence for those who are looking for "hard facts" either. As narratives and interpretations, however, these stories are of great interest and these narratives—both in words and in sequences of acts or ritual—are the subject of the present contribution.

Zoroastrian rituals have been at the centre of the history of Zoroastrianism as it has been pursued in the past forty years.[17] The evidence for most Zoroastrian rituals, however, in any period before Persian Zoroastrian literature (i.e. the thirteenth century), is very meagre. We have

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[15] The theme of sickness in the Sasanian family is also prominent in Manichaean sources. As is well known, Mani introduces himself as a physician. For that image, see H.-J. Klimkeit, "Jesus, Mani and Buddha as Physicians in the Texts of the Silk Road", *La Persia e l'Asia Centrale. Da Alessandro al X secolo* (Roma, 1996), pp. 589–595.

[16] Socrates, *Church History*, 7.8.3–17.

[17] To illustrate this, it suffices, perhaps to refer to three major efforts at interpreting (early) Zoroastrian history, which share virtually nothing but the claim to be based on "ritual" as the main tool of interpretation: M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien. Le problème zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne* (Paris, 1963); M. Boyce, *The History of Zoroastrianism 1. The Early Period* (Leiden, 1975); and J. Kellens/E. Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques 1. Introduction, texte et traduction* (Wiesbaden, 1988).

many words (ritual terminology) and we have at least three clusters of rituals that are known in somewhat greater detail. These are the *barašnūm* and other rites of purification, the rituals associated with death, and the rites of animal sacrifice.[18] For these, we can reasonably well set up a sequence of texts and acts, but for most other rituals, this has either never been attempted or is plainly impossible.[19] The development of the *Yasna* as ritual, for instance, is extremely vague and its history is almost entirely unknown.[20] A further problem in the study of Zoroastrian rituals is that the evidence we have has led us to focus mainly on priestly rituals with priestly interpretations.[21] Zoroastrianism is a "non-congregational" religion, which means that the community does not gather regularly—for example, once a week—for shared rituals.[22] There are, of course, the Gāhāmbār or seasonal community festivals, participation in which is compulsory or at the very least highly meritorious, and there are other community festivals, but essentially, there is a remarkable distinction between the daily and regularly returning rituals performed by priests and the ritual life of lay Zoroastrians, which is private or family-based.[23] Since the majority of Pahlavi texts were written

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[18] For the *barašnūm*, see A. de Jong, "Purification *in absentia*: On the Development of Zoroastrian Ritual Practice", *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions*, eds J. Assmann/G.G. Stroumsa (Studies in the History of Religions 83; Leiden, 1999), pp. 301–329; for the rituals associated with death, see M. Boyce, "Corpse, Disposal of, in Zoroastrianism", *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 6, 1993, pp. 279–286; for animal sacrifice, see A. de Jong, "Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Zoroastrianism: A Ritual and its Interpretations", *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. A.I. Baumgarten (Studies in the History of Religions 93; Leiden, 2002), pp. 127–148.

[19] This situation is likely to change in the future, with the publication of the third volume of the *Nērangestān* by F.M. Kotwal and Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, as well as in several of the contributions offered to the present volume.

[20] The best work we have in this respect is probably Almut Hintze's contribution to the present volume.

[21] The standard reference work on these priestly rituals still is J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1937[2]), which will hopefully one day be replaced and updated by Dastur Kotwal and Professor J.K. Choksy.

[22] The focus of the present contribution is firmly on pre-modern Zoroastrian traditions, although these can never be wholly separated from modern varieties of Zoroastrianism. Even though it is written in the present tense, these statements should be taken to reflect the situation of pre-modern Zoroastrianism and do not necessarily represent the ritual reality of modern Zoroastrians.

[23] Traces of the religious lives of lay Zoroastrians are certainly to be found in reports on the religion of the Persians in Greek and Latin literature (for which, see A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi. Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Religions in the

by priests, and often on technical priestly subjects, there is a definite un-
balance in the repertoire of Zoroastrian rituals we can distinguish and
interpret. Here again, it would seem to be unwise to discard the very rich
ritual life of contemporary Zoroastrians, focussing especially on the
Gāhāmbār and family rituals, as a late phenomenon, but it is very diffi-
cult to reconstruct the history of Zoroastrian dress, family customs, the
preparation of certain foods or the distribution and use of the large num-
ber of symbolic objects–mirrors, flowers and herbs, sweets, etc.–which
are characteristic but very different in both the Parsi and the Irani Zoro-
astrian communities.[24]

The virtual exclusion of lay Zoroastrians from participation in the rit-
ual life that is believed to sustain the world and the religion, would al-
most naturally lead to the development of special and meaningful lay
rituals. This, at least, is what emerges from the study of most other relig-
ions and there is no reason to suspect that Zoroastrianism would in any
way be different. In her brilliant study of the religious lives of elderly
Kurdish Jewish women in Jerusalem, for instance, Susan Sered has
shown how such a process might work.[25] These women are illiterate and
are excluded by convention and by their gender from participating in
central aspects of Judaism: the study of Torah and the gatherings in the
synagogue. At the same time, their activities—whatever it is they are do-
ing, mainly house-keeping, visiting a day centre and visiting tombs of
Jewish saints, graves of soldiers, and other symbolic places in the state
of Israel—are all very religious. That is to say, these women assign spe-
cial religious significance to activities that the men observing them or
even their children do not consider overly religious: food preparation,

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Graeco-Roman World 133; Leiden, 1997), as well as in Christian texts from the Sa-
sanian period, chiefly in Syriac and Armenian.

[24] For non-priestly aspects of Parsi Zoroastrianism, see Ph.G. Kreyenbroek/Sh. Mun-
shi, *Living Zoroastrianism. Urban Parsis speak about their Religion* (Richmond, 2001).
A very rich source of information on all subjects mentioned (clothing, food, private
rituals, etc.) is Ph.J. Godrej/F. Punthakey Mistree (eds), *A Zoroastrian Tapestry. Art,
Religion & Culture* (Ahmedabad, 2002). For the rituals and the devotional year of Irani
Zoroastrians, K. Nīknām, *Az nowrūz tā nowrūz. Ā'īn-hā va marāsem-e sonnatī-ye zar-
toštīyān-e īrān* (Tehran, 1379/2000), is very convenient.

[25] S. Sered, *Women as Religious Experts. The religious Lives of Elderly Jewish
Women in Jerusalem* (New York, 1992). An early attempt to use Sered's insights in the
study of Zoroastrianism is an essay I submitted for the Jamshid Soroush Soroushian
Memorial Volume (De Jong, "Women and Ritual in Medieval Zoroastrianism"), which
will hopefully be published soon.

the cleaning of the house and especially the care of the dead, more par-
ticularly of those who have died in military service. To give an example,
Yom Kippur, the holiest or most solemn day of the Jewish year, a day of
fasting spent by them and by their husbands in synagogue, does not have
a great religious significance for these women, whereas Pesach, which is
much more family-based and has a very extensive repertoire of house-
cleaning and the preparation of special types of food, is the centre of
their year. Sered makes a strong case for the re-recognition of the con-
cept of "domestic religion" in order to explain the religious lives of these
women and largely follows Robert Redfield's model of a "great tradi-
tion" and a "little tradition" within Judaism: the simultaneous existence
of various separate but interlocking repertoires of religious beliefs and
practices.

If it is possible to reconstruct meaningful layers of religious beliefs
and practices in the lives of groups that enjoy less social prestige than
the group responsible for the "normative" variety of a religion—the vari-
ety that is often considered to be "real" embodiment of a traditon—it
seems reasonable to at least ask the question if such a special repertoire
of beliefs and practices could also have existed among groups who oc-
cupy the highest positions in social stratifications. For Sasanian society,
that would mean that we could ask the question whether court ceremo-
nial and court etiquette can fruitfully be analysed as a special branch of
Zoroastrian rituals.[26] Sasanian court rituals have rarely been taken seri-
ously as Zoroastrian rituals but in a sense they are. That is to say, the Sa-
sanian monarchs were Zoroastrians and the ritual life at court must have
expressed this religious identity, or at least cannot have clashed with it
too overtly. Much can be gained, it seems, if we try to understand Sa-
sanian court rituals as a valid expression of a highly specialised segment
of a Zoroastrian society.

The first thing that can be noted at the Sasanian court is the relatively
humble position of the chief representatives of Zoroastrianism as a relig-
ion: the priests.[27] They are there, of course, but they do not perform the

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[26] The obvious comparison to be made is with Byzantine court culture, which is gen-
erally held to have reflected and strengthened the Christian identity of the Byzantine
Empire in a very strong way. See, for instance, A. Cameron, "The Construction of Court
Ritual: The Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*", *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial
in Traditional Societies*, eds D. Cannadine/S. Price (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 106–136.

[27] The position of priests at court has not been stable throughout the Sasanian period.
In the late Sasanian Empire, especially the period after the destruction of the Mazdakite

most important ritual functions and they do not seem to have designed the rituals.

These rituals are known in great detail, but it is very difficult–if not impossible–to devise a chronological patterning of court culture. Many Arabic and Persian authors attribute the most important aspects of Sasanian court culture to the earliest Sasanian monarchs, Ardašīr and Šāpūr. Most modern scholars believe that they can only refer to the Sasanian Empire of the sixth century.[28] There is an enormous amount of work to be done in this respect and the remarks in the present contribution should only count as being very provisional. Some of the more thorny questions pertaining to Sasanian Iran will not be addressed here, especially the problem of feudalism.[29] More dramatically, perhaps, the most extensive work done on the subject, the work of Geo Widengren, will be ignored in the present contribution. It focuses heavily on a dragon-slaying drought-defeating New Year king in the capital of the empire, whom the present author considers to have been a scholarly myth, at least for Sasanian Iran.[30] The question of origins, finally, will only be assessed here very briefly, but it must at least be mentioned. Sasanian court ceremony bears an uncannily close resemblance to Byzantine court ceremony and even closer, perhaps, to the court life of the 'Abbāsid caliphs in Baghdad. It is held almost axiomatically in modern

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movement in the late fifth and early sixth century, priests are much more conspicuous than in earlier periods.

[28] For a good introduction to these problems, see Z. Rubin, "The Reforms of Khusro Anūshirwān", *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East 3. States, Resources and Armies*, ed. A. Cameron (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam; Princeton, 1985), pp. 227–297.

[29] Feudalism as a heuristic instrument of historical research has come under attack even for the societies that were thought to have invented it, the Western European kingdoms in the Middle Ages. See M. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals. The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994). For Sasanian Iran, the concept has been used very enthusiastically by F. Altheim/R. Stiehl, *Ein asiatischer Staat. Feudalismus unter den Sasaniden und ihren Nachbarn* (Wiesbaden, 1954), and by G. Widengren, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran* (Köln, 1969). Their interpretations of Sasanian society seem bizarre at the moment. For cautious remarks on the subject, see M. Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society. The Origins of Ayyārān and Futuwwa* (Wiesbaden, 1995), pp. 13–22.

[30] Summaries of Widengren's ideas are to be found in G. Widengren, "The Sacral Kingship of Iran", *The Sacral Kingship / La regalità sacra* (Studies in the History of Religions 4; Leiden, 1959), pp. 242–257; *id.*, "Iran, der große Gegner Roms. Königsgewalt, Feudalismus, Militärwesen", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.9.1 (Berlin, 1976), pp. 219–306, esp. pp. 229–236.

scholarship, that both the Byzantines and the 'Abbāsids simply copied Sasanian court ritual. In the case of the 'Abbāsids, this is extremely likely and it is done even self-consciously.[31] In the case of the Byzantines, it is less likely, but certainly not impossible. It is important, however, to stress one fact: the Sasanians did not design or devise these rituals. Several key aspects of them are, in fact, much older and seem to derive ultimately from the rituals governing the life of the god in his temple and the life of the king in his palaces in the cities of ancient Mesopotamia.[32] Such key elements as the use of a curtain to separate the king from his audience and to create a special epiphany by drawing it away; the arrangements of thrones and stools for relatives, equals, and intimates; and the set order of meals, beverages, and fragrances offered to the king can be traced back several millennia. As interesting as the high antiquity of several of the ceremonies may be, however, it cannot really contribute much to a proper understanding of their meaning in Sasanian Iran.

We shall look at some of the rules and rituals at court in detail and then try to make some sense of them. For practical purposes, a single text has been chosen as the most important witness: the celebrated *Kitāb al-tāj*, or "Book of the Crown", attributed (falsely) to the famous ninth-century Arabic author al-Jāḥiẓ.[33] The amount of additional information

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[31] Much information can be found in A. Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship. Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Polities* (London, 1997). L. Marlow, *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 66–90 gives a fascinating interpretation of some of the most important underlying intellectual trends.

[32] J. Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago, 2001), pp. 114–170, is a highly readable introduction with a strong focus on the temple cult. See also A.L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago, 1977²), pp. 183–198. For connections with Iranian traditions, see A. Panaino, "The Mesopotamian Heritage of Achaemenian Kingship", *The Heirs of Assyria*, eds S. Aro/R.M. Whiting (Melammu Symposia 1; Helsinki, 2000), pp. 35–49, with references.

[33] The text was edited by A. Zakī Bāšā (A. Zéki Pacha), *Kitāb al-tāj fī axlāq al-mulūk al-jāḥiẓ* (Cairo, 1914; henceforth KT). A convenient translation with a good introduction can be found in C. Pellat, *Le livre de la couronne* (Paris, 1954; henceforth LC), who shows that the book must have been written by an Iranian, whose knowledge of Persian culture was vastly greater than the elegance of his Arabic. For the text, see also the interesting observations by F. Gabrieli, "Etichetta di corte e costumi Sāsānidi nel *Kitāb Aḥlāq al-Mulūk* di al- āḥiẓ", *Rivista degli studi orientali* 11, 1926–1928, pp. 292–305. For the Middle Persian genre of the *Tāj-nāmag* or "Book of the Crown" and its many reflexes in Arabic literature, see the survey in M. Mohammadi, *La traduction des livres pehlevis en arabe dans les premiers siècles de l'Islam. Tome 1: Les "Tadjnamaghs" et "Ayennamaghs"* (Beyrouth, 1964; *in Arabic*), pp. 18–228.

in Arabic and Persian texts (al-Ṭabarī, al-Thaʿālibī and al-Masʿūdī in particular, with a late reflex in the Persian *Sīyāsat-Nāmeh* of Niẓām al-Mulk) is truly staggering, but for the purposes of our analysis this single text will, hopefully, prove adequate.

The body of a king had to be intact. Deformations, missing body parts, blindness and failing mental capacities automatically disqualified a person for becoming king. This opened the way, as one can imagine, for maiming and especially blinding potential rivals, thus barring them from any claim to the throne. These procedures are mentioned with great regularity.[34] As long as he was mentally and physically unobjectionable, everything else about the king and his body could be helped. For public occasions, occurring daily as far as we know, but especially for larger or more important public appearances, the king's body was perfumed, his face was covered in make-up, his beard was gilded and his body was clothed with vestments shining with gold and jewels. His head was covered with a diadem and more elaborate headgear, leaving only knotted tresses of hair floating freely or tied with coloured ribbons.[35] The horse of the king was by definition the finest horse around and those who accompanied the king had to make sure that their horse was no match for the king's, and also that it would neither whinny nor urinate.[36] The whereabouts of the king at night were unknown. No one was allowed to know where the king would sleep. Several authors mention the fact that the king had forty bedrooms and chose one at random; he often ended up sleeping in none of them, but falling asleep on a chair, using his arm for a pillow.[37]

The most detailed rules governed public and private audiences in the palace. These are the occasions where the curtain comes in. The king would be seated on a bench with three pillows, wearing his costly gar-

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[34] See the comments of C.E. Bosworth to al-Ṭabarī's remark that it was a Persian custom not to raise "anyone to kingly power who had a physical defect." C.E. Bosworth, *The History of al-Ṭabarī V. The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakmids, and Yemen* (Albany, 1999), p. 42 with n. 128. See also J.N. Bremmer, "Medon. The Case of the Bodily Blemished King", *Perennitas. Studi in onore di Angelo Brelich*, ed. G. Piccaluga (Rome, 1980), pp. 68–76.

[35] Such descriptions of the king are collected by M. Abka'i-Khavari, *Das Bild des Königs in der Sasanidenzeit. Schriftliche Überlieferungen im Vergleich mit Antiquaria* (Texte und Studien zur Orientalistik 13; Hildesheim, 2000), a most uncritical work that is mainly useful for its patient listing of passages from Ferdowsī's *Šāhnāmeh*.

[36] KT 77–78; LC 106–108.

[37] KT 124; LC 144.

ments, right under the jewel-studded golden crown, which was so heavy that his head could not support it: it was suspended from the ceiling by means of an "invisible" golden chain.[38] A curtain separated the king from the rest of the audience hall. At some occasions, the curtain could suddenly be drawn away. This seems to have happened at the largest type of public audiences, involving not only the courtiers themselves, but also many others drawn to the palace from among the common people. On many occasions, however, the king remained hidden from sight behind his curtain, eating alone until the moment came for laughter and enjoyment. At that moment, the king summoned the keeper of the curtain, *xurram-bāš*,[39] and gave him instructions: such and such a song must be played or jokes must be told. While the king was conferring with the *xurram-bāš*, no one was allowed to speak. During the laughter, music and general merriment, the king would drink wine and receive written requests from the courtiers and assess those. Those who tried to take advantage of the king's inebriated status would eventually be punished.[40]

The court knew a very strict, but never very stable hierarchy expressed in sitting arrangements: princes of the blood, high priests, military leaders, fellow kings and emperors all had their assigned places in the audience hall. They sat at specified distances from the curtain. Interestingly enough, a place of considerable honour was reserved for jesters and musicians, who also performed an important role in the daily gatherings. Generally, of course, one can say that Zoroastrianism values happiness and laughter and merriment. We know so little about music in Zo-

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[38] For these matters (with the relevant references to the plaster copy of this type of crown with chain that was found in the Umayyad palace in Khirbat al-Mafjar), see Sh. Shaked, "From Iran to Islam: On Some Symbols of Royalty", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7, 1986, pp. 75–91. The bench with the three pillows is most famously illustrated on the Sasanian engraved rock crystal that is the centre of the so-called "Cup of Solomon" from the treasury of the abbey of Saint-Denis, currently in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris.

[39] This is a problematic title. It seems to be proper Persian and means "be happy." If the title is genuine (it has not been preserved in Middle Persian), it must derive from the words spoken by this official to introduce people to the king. Such phrases are extant only in Arabic, but the one given by pseudo-Jāḥiẓ is not an invitation to be happy or at ease, but one to hold one's tongue (KT 28; LC 56). The prescribed formula for greeting the king is much better attested. It consisted chiefly of the wish "May you be immortal!" (Middle Persian *anōšag bawēd*).

[40] KT 28–29; LC 56–57.

roastrian history, however, that it is difficult to assess the importance of musicians at the royal court. One thing is clear: the presence of jesters, clowns and musicians signalled the stability and prosperity of the Empire.[41] When all was quiet in the Empire; when there were no wars along its long and indefensible borders; and when there were no heretics threatening to disrupt everything, jesters would perform their tricks and singers would sing their songs. In cases of adversity, however, they were banned from the audience hall, together with the tables and stools, thrones and most of the courtiers. Only a select number of people remained, sharing a single table next to the king, on which there would be bread, salt, vinegar and vegetables only. Meals were sober and there was no time for merriment. When the affair had been settled, court life would resume as usual.[42]

Many more details could be added, but it is perhaps more interesting to ask some pertinent questions and see where all this is leading. We shall encounter more antiquarian details as we survey the field. As anyone who has ever worked on these materials will realise, the life at court clearly is the reflection of an image of society. In various gatherings and ritual institutions, the classes of society, the religious communities of the Empire, as well as representatives from outside the Empire—ambassadors and spies—were all represented and recognised at the Empire's centre. At the two main festivals of the year, Nowrūz and Mihragān, the ties that bound the various groups and communities to the king were reestablished in a very intricate display of exchanging gifts.

Since the king was the undisputed centre of the system, his central and unique position was constantly given shape. Literally everything that pertained to the king was different: his perfumes, his dress, the way he wore his hair, the presence or absence of diadem, turban, or crown, where he would sleep or sit or eat. When the king spoke or ate, no one was allowed to speak; when the king moved his hand towards his plate, no one was allowed to approach his plate any longer; when the king took a bite of food, no one was allowed to chew. When the king was bled or used medicine, no one was allowed to do so. Most of these examples are from the *Kitāb al-tāj*, a text that is literally obsessed with this notion of

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[41] The combination of kings and clowns inevitably brings to memory the breathtaking study of D.D. Shulman, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry* (Princeton, 1985), which is a most valuable study, particularly because it shows that court rituals can be developed in very unexpected religious directions.

[42] KT 173–174; LC 190–191.

the display of royal difference.

The required characteristics of the king also found many external shapes: his manliness and strength were underscored by his hunting trips and sports competitions. His being in control of the Empire was made manifest in his ability to enjoy music, wine, and laughter. His patronage of Zoroastrianism is evident from endowments made to important fires, the sponsoring of festivals and other religious institutions. His most important role as guarantor and dispenser of justice found a well-known ritual form in the greatest of the public audiences, those associated with Nowrūz and Mihragān, during which—at least in theory—every single inhabitant of the Empire could come forward and demand justice.

Pseudo-Jāḥiẓ as a very interesting description of such a public audience, which one may suspect to have been an engineered ritual beginning of such ceremonies. He says that during the public audiences of Nowrūz and Mihragān, complaints against the king took precedence: they were heard first. Such complaints as there were were gathered. The king would summon the Grand Mowbed, the Grand Secretary and the Chief of the Fire-Priests—whoever he may be—and a herald shouted: "Let he who has a complaint against the King come forward!" At that moment, when the complainants came forward, the king would kneel before the Grand Mowbed, among his accusers, and give a lengthy speech. In this speech, he outlined that the greatest evil of all is to be found in an unjust king. The Grand Mowbed would hear the case and examine it. If the complaint was found to be just, the king had to make amends. If not, the complainant was arrested, punished for all to see and thrown into jail. When the complaints against the king were finished, he would rise, praise God, put on his crown, sit on the throne and explain to his intimates that in the King's justice, the most intimate friend and the most unknown subject, the weakest and the strongest were all equal.[43] In reality, one would have to believe that it would be extremely hazardous for anyone to bring forward a complaint against the king, and very unlikely that his main priest, the *mowbedān mowbed*, would ever rule against him. The text of pseudo-Jāḥiẓ strongly suggests that the accusations against the king, their treatment by the Grand Mowbed, and their settlement were carefully doctored and that these accusations were, in fact, a ritual manifestation of the king's justice.

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[43] KT 159–163; LC 179–182.

Where the social, political, and economic aspects of these rituals are fairly clear, in the sense that we can understand how they work—and they seem to have worked very well—the ideological and religious aspects of the rituals are much less clear. Obviously, the easiest solution would be to say that there are no religious aspects, that they are all secular rituals. This, however, does not seem to be the case, but it is by no means easy to assess the relations between these rituals and the religious traditions of Zoroastrianism. The argument presented here will, therefore, be rather schematic, but hopefully, it will be clear.

There is a definite tension between the Zoroastrian idea that every man and every woman can equally contribute to the common goal, the maintenance of the religion and the battle against evil, and the very unique position of the king.[44] The system of monarchy requires that the king must not be entirely like his subjects. The stricture of Zoroastrianism on this requirement is that he cannot be entirely unlike his subject, that is to say, he cannot be a god. These, it seems, are the boundaries that are constantly being negotiated and probably one of the main reasons why the ritual worked. There is massive evidence in Zoroastrian traditions for the practice of associating people very closely with the gods. There is no evidence whatsoever of people actually turning into gods.[45] The ninth-century theologian Zādspram can mention the *yazadān-cihrīh* or "divine nature" of Zarathustra without any problems and the Sasanian kings an use almost the same words to claim their divine rights to the throne, because no contemporary would ever assume that they had in that sense crossed the line between what is normal—attempting to em-

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[44] For the much-discussed "religious equality" of all men and women, see A. de Jong, "Jeh the Primal Whore? Observations on Zoroastrian Misogyny", *Female Stereotypes in Religious Traditions*, eds R. Kloppenborg/W.J. Hanegraaff (Studies in the History of Religions 66; Leiden, 1995), pp. 15–41, esp. pp. 23–25; De Jong, "Purification *in absentia*", passim.

[45] There are, as always, some troublesome exceptions. Yima, the first king, seems to develop into a god sometimes. For Yima, see Sh. Shaked, "First Man, First King. Notes on Semitic-Iranian Syncretism and Iranian Mythological Transformations", *Gilgul. Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religions. Dedicated to R.J. Zwi Werblowsky*, eds Sh. Shaked/D. Shulman/G.G. Stroumsa. (Studies in the History of Religions 50; Leiden, 1987), pp. 238–256. Ferīdūn also receives divine honours in some late prayers and turned into a god in Manichaeism, eventually even reaching "Western" types of Gnosticism: A. Böhlig, "Jacob as an Angel in Gnosticism and Manichaeism", *Nag Hammadi and Gnosis*, ed. R.McL Wilson (Nag Hammadi Studies 14; Leiden, 1978), pp. 122–131, esp. pp. 127–129. Both, however, seem to be special cases and at least for more recent men, deification is unknown.

body the aspects of the world of good—and what is insane—claiming to be a god.[46] Jamšīd's life-story circles around this problem and it is well-known that, in later traditions, he ended up in hell and was only gradually moved up to Lord of Limbo because of his confession to Zarathustra.[47]

Foreign observers and later Muslim reports, it is true, interpreted things differently and emphatically affirmed that the Sasanian kings presented themselves or thought of themselves as gods. Their reliability, however, appears to be heavily compromised by discussions on proper religious behaviour with regard to the king in their own religious traditions, Christianity and Islam.[48]

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[46] For Zādspram, see *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram* 12.9 in Ph.Gignoux/A. Tafazzoli, *Anthologie de Zādspram* (Studia Iranica Cahier 13; Paris, 1993), *ad locum*. The Sasanian kings, in the early inscriptions, refer to themselves with the words *kē cihr az yazadān*, "whose origin/essence/nature is of the gods." These words have been discussed very often and there seems to be a general consensus that they do *not* present the kings as gods, but lay a claim to the divine rights of the kings to their throne. Most references to recent discussions, but disappointingly little in terms of interpretation, can be found in Ph. Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Kaʿba-I Zardušt (ŠKZ)* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum III.I.I; London, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 11–12. The best discussion still is W. Sundermann, "Kē čihr az yazdān. Zur Titulatur der Sasanidenkönige", *Archiv Orientální* 56, 1988, pp. 338–340. Much the same should be said about the practice of reserving the title *bay* ("Lord") for the kings. There is no doubt that the word can also mean "god", but it seems to have acquired the more general meaning of "lord" in a comparatively early period. See, for instance, R.N. Frye, "Gestures of Deference to Royalty in Ancient Iran", *Iranica Antiqua* 9, 1972, pp. 102–107; M. Boyce, "Varuna the Baga", *Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne I* (Acta Iranica 21; Leiden, 1981), pp. 59–73. Huyse's decision to retain the meaning "god", because Iranians would always have known the "original" meaning of the word is logically obscure.

[47] For this episode, see the *Pahlavi Rivāyat* 31, in A.V. Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser 60; Copenhagen, 1990), with commentary *ad locum*.

[48] For a survey of such information, see M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 209–210. For Muslim discussions, see al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*; for Byzantine realities (though mostly of a later date), see G. Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris, 1996). Underlying many of the discussions are the difficulties of interpreting the cult of the emperors in the Roman Empire. See, for instance, S. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1984); M. Clauss, *Kaiser und Gott. Herrscherkult im römischen Reich* (Stuttgart, 1999). Interesting observations, partially overlapping with suggestions made in the present contribution, are given by P. Veyne, "Qu'était-ce qu'un empereur romain? Dieu parce qu'empereur", *Diogène* 199, 2002, pp. 3–25.

The elaborateness of court ceremony has another important effect: it separates the personality of the king as much as it can from his function. The chief complaint of most authors against those kings, who went out of favour, is that they could not live up to their function, but allowed personal feelings and ideas to influence the affairs of the realm. The most notorious example is the universally hated king Yazdegerd I. This king, who earned the epithet "the Sinner" (*bazakkar*) in the Sasanian tradition, is also said–not surprisingly–to have introduced fundamental changes in the most important royal ritual, the public audiences at Nowrūz and Mihragān.[49] He is characterised by al-Ṭabarī as follows:

> [H]e was rough and harsh and possessed many defects. One of the worst and most serious of these last, it is said, was that he did not use his keenness of intellect, his good education, and the wide-ranging varieties of knowledge he had thoroughly mastered in their proper place, and also his extensive delving into harmful things and his use of all the powers he possessed for deceiving people, using his sharpness, wiles, and trickery – all this together with his keen mind, which had a propensity toward evil-doing, and his intense enjoyment in employing these faculties of his."[50]

Here too, there seems to be an opening for an important distinction: the office of the king has clear religious implications and meanings, but these do not pertain to the king as person. It is a strange fact that there are no kings in heaven. We know of several legendary and historical men, who travelled to the hereafter in this life: Ardā Wīrāz, Kerdīr, king Wištāsp, the patron of Zarathustra, and Zarathustra himself. None of them ever mentions meeting or seeing a "king" (Middle Persian *šāh*) in heaven.[51] Ardā Wīrāz sees sovereigns and rulers in heaven, but the title "king" is conspicuously absent from his account.[52] It would seem, therefore, that kingship is an office left behind when the king dies, because as on earth, there can only be one king in heaven and that is Ohrmazd.[53] Heaven, certainly in the *Book of Ardā Wīrāz*, is described as a palace, with Ohrmazd as king and his fellow gods as his intimate courtiers; with the same organisation of gifts and displays of sovereignty. Since this imagery is absent from the

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[49] KT 163; LC 181–182.

[50] Bosworth, *The History of al-Ṭabarī 5*, p. 70.

[51] For the theme of heavenly journeys, see S. Shaked, "Quests and Visionary Journeys in Sasanian Iran", *Transformations of the Inner Self*, eds Assmann/Stroumsa, pp. 65–86.

[52] For the journey of Ardā Wīrāz, see Ph. Gignoux, *Le livre d'Ardā Vīrāz* (Paris, 1984).

[53] For Ohrmazd as king, see the remarks in de Jong, "Jeh the Primal Whore?", p. 34.

Avesta, one can assume that it was copied from earthly practices, but in Sasanian times, of course, these traditions must have been old and people may have been inclined to see the relation in reverse terms.

The dramatic language and performance of hiding and revealing forms an important part of court ritual. Certainly, the large audiences, with the king dressed in gold and jewels, sitting under the crown on his bench, holding a sceptre, in a magnificent giant hall that was painted, decorated with mosaics and gold revealing cosmic symbols, would in the eyes of many almost reveal the king to be a god. But the "almost" is important here. Man can neither be nor create a god. In his breathtaking analysis of the "construction" of religious images in Graeco-Roman antiquity, Richard Gordon has suggested how subtly ancient Greeks and Romans could "gamble with the impermissible", by at once asserting and denying that statues or painted figures are alive: "'Living' is broken down into its denotations: breath, sight, feelings, movement, skin-sheen, facial expression. So far as one or two of these denotations may be taken as 'sufficient' evidence of 'life', the images live. But the whole inventory is never present, and the attempt to pass into the realm of the impermissible always fails."[54] Something similar seems to apply to Sasanian (and other) court rituals. Zoroastrians believed that piety and justice could manifest themselves in persons. One of the ways in which they could do that is, simply, success.[55] The display of the king in the grand audiences certainly presents the king as a cosmic ruler, but it would always be possible—and we indeed find this—that the wealth and good looks of the monarch are presented not to paint him as a semi-divine being, but as the chief model of piety and justice, the accomplishment of mankind.

This leads to a central problem: the notion of *xwarrah* or "divine glory." This notion has been discussed extensively and is often thought to have been the single most important aspect of Iranian kingship, from its inception up to and including the rise of the 'Abbāsids.[56] Every animal in Sa-

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[54] R.L. Gordon, "The Real and the Imaginary: Production and Religion in the Graeco-Roman World", *Art History* 2, 1979, pp. 5–34, esp. pp. 10–11 (reprinted in: R.L. Gordon, *Image and Value in the Graeco-Roman World. Studies in Mithraism and Religious Art* (Aldershot, 1996), nr. 1).

[55] *Sad dar Bondaheš* 88 and *Sad dar Naṣr* 56, for instance, both contain the ruling that the observance of the rules concerning urinating will ensure that one's words will be well received by the king and that one will be successful in one's dealings.

[56] For the notion, see A. de Jong, "Khvarenah", *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, eds K. van der Toorn/B. Becking/P.W. van der Horst (Leiden, 1999²), pp. 481–483, with references. For *xwarrah* in the Sasanian Empire, see below.

sanian art as well as every pearl, ruby, emerald, ribbon, and tress on the king's body has been explained by art historians as visible manifestations of *xwarrah*.[57] If *xwarrah* can manifest itself so profusely in Sasanian art, one would almost have to believe that it was a very common commodity, which it certainly was not. The fact is, that *xwarrah* is almost entirely absent from royal inscriptions. There are a few exceptions: in the inscription of king Narseh (r. 293–301) in Paikuli, the (less than fortunate) king is urged by one of his supporters to bring back the Glory and the realm and his throne and honour that used to belong to his ancestors. On the coins of some late Sasanian monarchs, moreover, we find the legend *GDH 'pzwt* (*xwarrah abzūd*), which could mean "Glory has increased."[58] The coins offer a real problem; especially the late occurrence of the legend may illustrate the increasing importance of the concept of *xwarrah* in Sasanian royal ideology. It is important, however, to stress that in the Paikuli inscription the king does *not* claim to possess *xwarrah*, but is urged to reclaim it by a second party. On the coins, the phrase can mean many things, but the most natural interpretation of the phrase appears to be that Glory has increased in the realm, not that it attaches in any special way to the king.

In similar cases, the possession of *xwarrah* is quite commonly attributed to the king: the Sasanian dynastic history almost routinely ascribes possession of *xwarrah* to the ruling monarch. Obviously, the dreams and portents in the *Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān*—images of radiance and the appearance of the royal Glory in animal shapes—fulfil this function.[59] In the Islamic traditions on the Sasanian kings, the concept is ubiquitous. We have no textual evidence, however, to suggest that the Sasanian kings claimed *xwarrah* for themselves.

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[57] I may perhaps be forgiven for referring to only one book, precisely because it is such a remarkably good book. J. Kröger, *Sasanidischer Stuckdekor* (Baghdader Mitteilungen 5; Mainz, 1982) contains an admirable discussion of the relations between art and religion in Sasanian Iran, on pp. 264–276. Throughout the book, one finds references to the ram, birds, hunting and the body of the king, all interpreted in terms of *xwarrah*.

[58] For the inscription of Narseh, see P.O. Skjærvø, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli 3.1 Restored Text and Translation* (Wiesbaden, 1983), § 18 on pp. 34–35; and P.O. Skjærvø, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli 3.2. Commentary* (Wiesbaden, 1983), p. 51; for the Sasanian coins (of Husraw II, r. 590–628), see the discussion of R. Gyselen, "Un dieu nimbé de flammes", *Iranica Antiqua* 35, 2000, pp. 291–314 (although it will be evident that I do not share her interpretation).

[59] For editions and translations of this text, see Cereti, *La letteratura pahlavi*, pp. 192–200.

The imbalance between these perceived art historical data and the virtual absence of textual data makes the assumption that *xwarrah* was a central concept in Sasanian royal ideology difficult to uphold. The notion does not seem to have been exploited widely—at least not overtly—in royal ritual, royal art or royal ideology. If this is found to be true, one can suggest only one likely background to this fact: *xwarrah* is this mysterious element bestowed by the gods, which one can never presume to possess oneself. That would be the closest one could get to a Zoroastrian parallel to the Greek notion of *hybris*. Others are necessarily the judges of one's possession of *xwarrah*. To claim *xwarrah* for oneself is a dangerous presumption, but there is an even more important danger: that others would believe that the king could actually dispense some of his *xwarrah*. That, I would suggest, would be the breaking point at which the borders that cannot be crossed, between man and god, would have been crossed. There are, of course, examples in the Islamic world, for instance, and in medieval Western Europe, of the king dispensing *baraka*, blessing and healing, but there are no indications of similar beliefs in Sasanian Iran—where the king dispenses justice only—and they are in fact unlikely to have existed.

It has become fashionable in some circles to see or present religion, art, and statehood as symbolic languages or taxonomies of power.[60] While we may not all be as fashionable as that, it would seem that such a perspective could enable us to reconstruct the intricate ways in which these three symbolic languages interacted and influenced each other. That is a vast project, which cannot be dissolved into ready-made categories or concepts,[61] but which will ultimately enable us to gain a better understanding of the complex and uneasy relations between religion and court in a Zoroastrian empire.[62]

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[60] Gordon, "The Real and the Imaginary", passim.

[61] Much can be gained if we abandon questions such as "Did the Sasanian practise 'divine kingship' or 'sacral kingship'?" although one can easily admire the learning evident from J.K. Choksy's attempt to answer that question: J.K. Choksy, "Sacral Kingship in Sasanian Iran", *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, N.S. 2, 1988, pp. 35–52.

[62] An exemplary study in this respect is M. Whitby, "The Persian King at War", *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, ed. E. Dąbrowa (Kraków, 1994), pp. 227–263.

RITUAL COMMUNITY MEALS
IN ANCIENT IRANIAN RELIGION

Anders Hultgård

Rituals have in general received much less attention in studies of pre-Islamic Iran than mythology, doctrines and the figure of Zarathustra.[1] This becomes particularly obvious when one considers the practice of religious community or congregational meals. Functions, contexts and details of the ritual itself are incompletely known, and the religious ritual community meal appears in the sources of Iranian religion as a somewhat diffuse phenomenon.

Seen in a comparative perspective, community meals are essential to the ritual repertory of many religions. In the ancient cultures of Europe, the Mediterranean area and western Asia sacrificial meals with a communal character were a prominent feature of the ritual order, and some religions like Christianity, Mithraism and Manichaeism[2] developed new and specific forms of ritual community meals.

The main purpose of the present study is the search for practices in ancient Iranian religion that correspond to the category of ritual communal meals, and to elucidate, if possible, their enactment and meaning.

1. THE CONCEPT OF RELIGIOUS RITUAL COMMUNITY MEALS

The type of rituals indicated by the term 'religious ritual community meals' needs to be discussed in more detail. To begin with, meals can be ritualized in the way that the distribution and partaking of food and drink

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[1] Cf. C. Herrenschmidt/J. Kellens, "La question du rituel dans le mazdéisme ancien et achéménide", *Archives de Sciences sociales des Religions* 85, 1994, pp. 45–67, pp. 45 and 56. The part written by Kellens is available in English under the title "The Speculative Ritual in Ancient Mazdaism", J. Kellens, *Essays on Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism*, transl. and ed. by P. O. Skjærvø (Costa Mesa, 2000), pp. 99–112.

[2] The literature pertaining to the Christian holy communion is immense, and readers are referred to the special bibliographies. For Mithraism see J.P. Kane, "The Mithraic cult meal in its Greek and Roman environment", *Mithraic studies*, ed. J.R. Hinnells (Manchester, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 313–351, and A. Hultgård, "Le repas cultuel dans le mithriacisme – structure, sens et origines", *Das Mahl Gottes/Le repas de Dieu*, ed. C. Grappe (in print). For Manichaeism, see J. D. BeDuhn, *The Manichaean Body. In Discipline and Ritual* (Baltimore/London, 2000).

follows a certain order among the participants of the meal, and that it is accompanied by certain stereotyped behaviours (e.g. sitting or reclining, raising toasts etc) and recurrent verbal utterances (like 'bon appetit' or opening and concluding speeches). In a sense these types of meals are ritual meals but not religious ritual meals which presuppose a religious element. In the cultural area with which we are concerned the term 'religious' is in the first place qualified by references to a suprahuman dimension, represented predominantly by belief in divine beings. We will also use the term 'cultic community meals' as a synonym to 'religious ritual community meals'.

Ritual meals may be performed individually or in groups of varying size. The term 'community meals' does not just refer to meals taken by any group of individuals, but includes also the connotation of common social and religious interests. The composition of the group transcends the domestic and family sphere. Ritual meals may be a *pars pro toto* performance or constitute a full consummation of food and liquid, and they are usually more or less symbolic in character. Using the term 'meal' in this connection should involve the real partaking of at least a minimum of food and/or drink.

The religious elements of ritual communal meals may be more or less prominent and take different expressions. The place of enactment contributes to the religious aspect of the meal when it is celebrated in a building or an open space that is used for cultic purposes. Similarly the community meal may be set within the frame of larger ritual complexes or liturgical orders, thus reinforcing its religious character. Ritual community meals may be performed at different occasions and within different cultic contexts such as sacrifices, initiations, acts of periodic worship, seasonal festivals, and funerals.

In many religious traditions ordinary as well as festive meals are introduced and/or completed with prayers ('grace before and after the meal'). From one point of view we have to do with ritualized religious meals which also may present the character of community meals (in the sense defined above). One could argue, however, that in this type of meals the acts of eating and drinking, necessary for humans to maintain life, are here the primary concern. They have been set in a religious ritual framework which can be interpreted as a secondary concern, whereas cultic community meals in a strict sense are motivated by and enacted primarily for symbolic and religious concerns.

As an example to illustrate the above discussion we may use the Christian 'holy communion'. Regardless of its varying modes of expression, the Christian ritual meal appears to be a strongly symbolic, *pars pro toto* meal, usually performed in a religious building, a 'church' or another type of community locale. It is normally set in the context of a larger liturgical service. As is well known, the enactment and function of the 'holy communion' have changed over the centuries and the meaning given to it by the principal Christian denominations differs clearly.

2. RITUALS AND SETTINGS OF CULTIC COMMUNITY MEALS IN ANCIENT IRANIAN RELIGION

With the above discussion in mind, we will now address the question of religious ritual community meals in ancient Iranian religion. In the following the qualifying term 'religious' will be omitted, because this is inherent in the object of our study. However, the concept 'ancient Iranian religion' is vaguer and needs some delimitation. It includes a wide variety of religious forms and cultural manifestations having their roots in the traditional religion of Iranian-speaking groups or peoples in pre-Islamic (pre-Christian and pre-Buddhist) times. The use of religion in the singular implies that none of the various forms known to us presents such a distinctive character that it can be marked off from the other forms as a religion of its own.[3] Historically seen the most important form of ancient Iranian religion is Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism, an historical entity which in its turn gives rise to problems of delimitation.

From the methodological point of view there is a difficulty in the fact that the rituals of contemporary Zoroastrians, both in Iran and India, can be observed and studied in great detail. This would seem an advantage for the approach to the study of the rituals in past periods but involves at the same time a dilemma. On the one hand the modern rituals can be assumed to have preserved ancient structures and elements, on the other hand they can be shown to have changed in ritual details, in place and

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[3] From this position it follows that a) Zoroastrianism/Mazdaism cannot clearly be distinguished from such supposed categories as Iranian 'paganism' or pre-Zoroastrian religion b) Manichaeism is a religion of its own and c) the evidence is insufficient to justify the use of religions (in the plural) referring to ancient Iran if not the presence of Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity within that geographical area is intended. For a discussion of different approaches to the study of Zoroastrianism/Mazdaism, see M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 12–20.

time of performance and in function and purpose. In addition the present terms used to denote rituals or parts of them differ often among Irani and Parsi Zoroastrians, and some ritual concepts, like Pahlavi *wāz* (*wāj*), "word, formula", New Persian *bāj*, have developed new meanings.[4] The Avestan *draonah-* "portion owned" denotes in the Pahlavi texts (in the Middle Iranian form *drōn*) both the consecrated breads and the ceremony in which they are offered. Moreover, changes may be expected to occur more frequently in rituals with a looser structure.

We will thus have to rely on sources pertaining to the Sassanian and earlier periods, the Avesta, Graeco-Roman writers, the bulk of the Pahlavi texts and information drawn from Arabic writers, in the first place Albiruni. In some cases references to later ritual practice are useful, however.

In the Indo-Iranian tradition the sacrificial rituals were as a rule performed by the priests on behalf of individuals or the community.[5] For that service they expected to have their reward (Old.Ir. *mīžda-*, Skr. *mīdhá-*). The key function of the Iranian priests for performing a sacrifice was noted by Herodotus (I,132) who states that for the Persians it is not customary (or lawful; οὔ σφι νόμος ἐστί) to sacrifice without a priest (μάγος). Once the priority of the priests in sacrificial matters had become undisputed the position and the privileges of the priestly class were reinforced and the ritual role of the non-priestly elite and the common people was gradually reduced. Records of classical authors, e. g. Strabo and Pausanias, focus on the role of the priests, and pay little attention to the ritual activity of the non-priestly worshippers.

The cultic community meal which presumably took place in connection with animal sacrifices in ancient Iran seems largely to have gone unnoticed in the sources that have come down to us. The liturgical texts were preserved by religious specialists, the priests, who might have been less interested in transmitting the type of ritual ceremonies represented by cultic community meals. In the absence of any ancient source describing the complete performance of a cultic community meal, we have first to identify and analyze known ritual texts which indicate the enactment of such community meals. Secondly we shall look for the broader settings in which rituals with communal meals were used.

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[4] Cf. M. Boyce/F. Kotwal, "Zoroastrian Bāj and Drōn", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34, 1971, 1, pp. 56–73 and 2, pp. 298–313, esp. 57–67.

[5] Cf. the general remarks of M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 1 (Leiden/Köln, 1975), pp. 176–177.

2.1 Rituals indicating cultic community meals

In some Pahlavi passages references occur to various rituals that apparently were of great concern to the Zoroastrian communities in the Sassanian and early Islamic periods. Ardā Wirāz Nāmag, for example, enumerates in 1,15 the following six ceremonies: *yazišn, drōn, āfrīnagān, nērang, pādyābīh, yoǰdahrgārīh*. The list in Bahman Yašt 4,51 presents both rituals and seasonal festivals: *usōfrīt ī yazadān, yašt, yazišn, gāhānbār* and *frawardīgān*. Among the rituals and festivals mentioned in these passages the yasna (*yazišn*), drōn, usōfrīt and āfrīnagān rituals, as well as the gāhānbārs and the frawardīgān festivals appear to have a particular bearing on the issue of ritual community meals and will therefore be discussed in more detail.

2.1.1 *The* yasna *and similar sacrificial rituals*

The first ritual to be discussed is the *yasna*. In the present *yasna*-ritual which is accompanied by the recitation of in parts very ancient texts, there is a moment when the chief priest partakes first of the consecrated drink and then of the consecrated bread (the *parahōm*-mixture and the *drōn* respectively).[6] After the *yasna*-ceremony or after the *drōn*-rite (Y. 3-8), those of the lay-people present in the fire-temple may, if they wish, partake of the *drōn*.[7] This eating of the sacred bread called the *drōn*-

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[6] For details, see F. Kotwal/J. Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Paris, 1991), pp. 94–100.

[7] The information of J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, 2nd ed. (Bombay, 1937, reprint 1995), pp. 281 and 305–306, can be interpreted in the way that the eating of the consecrated bread by members of the community in his time took place during the *yasna*-ceremony directly after the consecration of the *drōn* but outside the "Yazashna-gâh". J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Religion of ancient Iran* (Bombay, 1973), p. 58 and presumably his translator Jamasp Asa, state that "During chapter 8, the *dārun* is eaten by the *zōt* and, after the ceremony, by those members of the congregation who wish to partake of it". I take this statement to mean "after the yasna-ceremony". Analogous information is presented by Lady Drower who visited India in the 1940s. E.S. Drower, *Water into Wine. A Study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East* (London, 1956). She states that at the conclusion of the service, "the *rāspi* or other priests in the sacred area may partake of the *dārūns* if they wish." Having seen only a rehearsal she goes on to say that "no communicants were present" but she was told that at the conclusion of the *bāj*-prayer pieces of the bread were "passed out of the sacred area and consumed by such of the laity as consider themselves worthy" (p. 214). E.W. West, *Pahlavi Texts, Part I* (Sacred Books of the East 5; Oxford, 1880), p. 284, commenting upon the *drōn*-ceremony says that "after consecration, pieces are broken off the drōns by the officiating priest and are eaten by himself and those present, beginning

čašni, is clearly a matter of the individual believer and cannot in my opinion be categorized as a cultic community meal. How far this custom dates back in time cannot be determined with certainty. It may well be, however that in the Sassanian and earlier periods the partaking of the *drōn* (and also the *hōm* -drink?) by others than the priests had the more distinct appearance of a ritualized community meal. Actually there are indications in the Yasna text of chapter 8 that suggest a ritual consumption of the offerings, the *miiazda-*, not only by the officiating priests but also by others present at the cult act.[8] An exhortation to partake of the offerings addressed, as it seems, to non-priestly participants is recited by the sacrificial priest(s) in Yasna 8, § 2: *xvarata narō aētąm miiazdəm ...* "eat, o men, this offering". In the following paragraphs (§ 3 and 4), which have a parallel in the Nērangestān 71,[9] two categories of Mazdā-worshippers are mentioned who commit ritual transgressions. The first category (§ 3) includes every one who in the ceremony "destroys the world of Truth through sorcery", although he declares himself to be a Mazdā-worshipper and adherent of Aša: *mazdaiiasnō aojanō aṣahe rāθma jīštaiiamnō yāθβa gaēθå aṣahe mərəyəṇte*. The term *yātu-* indicates here probably deviating ritual practices. The second category (§ 4) refers to a person among the adult worshippers present in the ceremony being summoned to recite some ritual formulas (*vācō*) but who refuses to do so; he will be punished on account of sorcery: *yasca aētaṣ̌ąm mazdaiiasnanąm pərənāiiunąm aiβi.zūzuiianąm imą vācō nōiṯ vīsaiti framrūite aētąm ā yātumanahe jasaiti.*

These passages (Y. 8, §§ 2−4) are of particular interest for their references to the enactment of a ritual community meal. The partaking of the offerings by the worshippers who are present is explicitly indicated by the exhortation in § 2 but is implicitly also referred to in §§ 3−4 by the use of the deictic pronouns "the one(s) here" reinforced once by the locatif: *yō aēṣ̌uua mazdaiiasnaēṣ̌uua* (§ 3), further *yasca aētaēšąm mazdaiiasnanąm ... imą vācō* in § 4. Thus, the formulations of the passage (Y. 8, §§ 2−4) suggest some sort of ritual community meal which is being enacted during the recitation of chapters 2 to 8, or immediately after

with the priests".

[8] Indicated by J. Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* (Paris, 1892), vol. 1, p. 75.

[9] References are to the edition of F. Kotwal/Ph. G. Kreyenbrook, *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2: *Nērangestān, Fragard 1* (Paris, 1995) and for passages not covered by this edition to A. Waag, *Nirangistan. Der Awestatraktat über rituelle Vorschriften* (Leipzig, 1941).

the concluding sacrificial ritual. Possibly the meal also included the partaking of the *haoma* drink during the recitation of Yasna 9–10.

The *yasna* was presumably used in different contexts and at different occasions but its central position in the ritual tradition indicates that it functioned as the main text to be recited during public sacrificial rituals in fire-temples or elsewhere in pre-Islamic times. However, the form of the text, in particular the elements of its composition, that has come down to us in the medieval manuscripts may not correspond to the one used in Sassanian and earlier times.

The reports of Iranian sacrificial rituals given by Greek writers emphasize what appeared striking to them, the worship of fire and the peculiar features in the ritual performance of the magi. Cultic community meals, which were well known also to the Greeks, presented a less distinctive character and would not, therefore, attract the same attention. The short accounts of Strabo and Pausanias (1st and 2nd cent. CE respectively) are nonetheless crucial for our knowledge of western Iranian rituals.[10] Most importantly, these authors show the role played by recitation of texts during the enactment of the sacrificial ritual. In his general account of these rituals [11] Strabo asserts that the magi make their invocations for a long time (πολὺν χρόνον). In describing the fire temples (πυραιθεῖα) of Cappadocia and their altars with ever burning fire, Strabo states having seen that the magi enter daily and make invocations for about an hour (ἐπᾴδουσι ὥραν σχεδόν τι) holding before the fire their bundle of rods (Geography XV,3,15). Similarly, when visiting the Persian sanctuaries in the cities of Hierokaisarea and Hypaipea in Lydia Pausanias observes in both places how a Magian priest enters a building (οἴκημα) bringing wood with him which he places on the altar. He puts the cap on his head and then chants invocations of the gods "in a Barbarian language not understandable to Greek ears", ἐπίκλησιν ὅτου δὴ θεῶν; ἐπᾴδει βάρβαρα καὶ οὐδαμῶς συνετὰ Ἕλλησιν. Pausanias adds that the priest is reciting the invocations from a scroll (ἐκ βιβλίου).[12] Both reports are stated to be partly based on the authors' per-

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[10] For a discussion on the main testimonies of the classical authors on Iranian cult practices, see E. Benveniste, *The Persian Religion According to the Chief Greek Texts* (Paris, 1929) and A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi. Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 133; Leiden et al., 1997), esp. pp. 126–156 and 343–386.

[11] Strabo makes a distinction between what he has observed himself and what he has drawn from literary sources; cf. also de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, p. 130.

[12] This remark has been subject to much discussion on orality and literacy in the

sonal observations that were subsequently summarized and adapted to a literary framework. Probably the rituals witnessed by Strabo and Pausanias represent an early form of the *yasna* ceremony. Details of the sacrificial performance of the magi as recorded by Strabo and Pausanias are confirmed by iconographic evidence from western Asia Minor (Daskyleion) dated to the 5th cent. before CE.

Strabo's general description of Persian sacrifices is partly dependant on Herodotus but presents also genuine information which indicates that the sacrificial ritual was concluded by a cultic community meal. According to Strabo, the priest who directs the sacrifice (probably an allusion to the *zaotar-*) divides the meat and those who have got their shares go away (ἀπίασι διελόμενοι) without granting a portion to the gods. The informants of Strabo explain this practice by referring to the idea that the gods want the soul of the victims but nothing else (Geography XV,3,13). This appears to be in accordance with ancient Iranian ideas on sacrifice.[13] Behind the remark of Strabo we may imagine a situation in which the sacrifiers receive back their shares and "go away" to consume them in a common sacrificial meal. The Nērangestān confirms the importance of animal sacrifices and supplies ritual details to the accounts of Strabo and Pausanias. A cultic community meal is alluded to in several passages of the Nērangestān. Drinking the lawful shares of the sacrificial libations (*dāitiia draonāxvarō maδaite*) does not imply a transgression even if one gets drunk and fails to recite the cult hymns (ch. 11–12).[14] The food-offerings (*pāpiθuua-*), consisting mainly of meat, are to be consumed when one gathers around the sacred strew of herbage, *yat pairi barəsma hanjasaṇte* (Nēr. 62). When sacrificing to the divine waters, it is stated that the chief priest (the *zaotar-*) may eat as the first one from the bovine (*gauu-*) sacrificed and he is thereby addressing himself to the men and women present (Nēr. 71).

2.1.2 drōn-*rituals*

The part of the present *yasna* ceremony which consists of the consecration of bread, the *drōn* proper, together with butter, the *gōšodāg*, i. e.

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transmission of the Avesta, see for example G. Widengren, *Les religions de l'Iran* (Paris, 1968), pp. 275–279 and de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, p. 365.

[13] As emphasized by Kellens, *Essays*, p. 73.

[14] The Pahlavi version interprets the text in the way that one should drink moderately according to religious duties, *pad paymān, xwēškārīhā*. Those who drink large quantities, however, and get drunk and fail to recite the hymns are guilty of transgression.

chapters 3 to 8 of the Yasna, could with some modifictions form a sepa-
rate ritual called *yašt ī drōn* or *yašt ī keh* "the minor *yasna*", which in
modern Zoroastrianism can be performed in various contexts.[15] Since the
ritual text itself includes allusions to a ritual partaking of the offerings,
as has been shown above, it can be assumed that cultic meals usually
were celebrated during or after the enactment of the separate *drōn-*
rituals. Additional information may be gleaned from passages in the Pah-
lavi books, in particular Pahlavi Rivāyat chapter 58.[16] The *drōn*-ritual
could be performed individually, by the household or by larger groups.
The problem is, however, to know when the compilers or authors refer to
the *drōn*-liturgy within the *yasna*-ceremony or to *drōn*-rituals outside the
yasna. The liturgy and ritual of the *drōn*-ceremony are in modern Zoro-
astrianism invariable except for the choice of the divine being to whom it
is dedicated, the number of *drōn* offered and the number of twigs in the
barsom.[17] It is difficult to decide whether this was the case also in the
pre-Islamic period.

2.1.3 usōfrīt-*rituals*

The Avestan word *usəfriti-* [18] is known only from Vidēvdād 18,12 and is
there used to denote a category of offerings mentioned together with *mi-*
iazda-, that are not to be given to adversaries of Aša.[19] In later usage (the

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[15] For this type of ritual, see Modi , *The ceremonies*, p. 281 and Boyce/Kotwal, "Zo-
roastrian Bāj and Drōn", pp. 63–65; R. P. Karanjia, "Barsom in the Bāj-dharnā (Yašt-ī-
drōn) Ritual", *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte*, ed. M. Stausberg
(Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 31; Berlin/New
York 2001), pp. 464–470; see also the contribution of R. Karanjia in this volume.

[16] See for this chapter, K.M JamaspAsa, "On the *drōn* in Zoroastrianism", *Papers in
Honour of Professor Mary Boyce* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 335–356.

[17] Boyce/Kotwal, "Zoroastrian Bāj and Drōn", p. 64, where also the main forms are
discussed.

[18] See Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904; Neudruck zu-
sammen mit den Nacharbeiten und Vorarbeiten, Berlin/New York, 1979), col. 408. The
term may perhaps be explained as a compound containing the verbal stems *vas/us*
'wish' and *frī* 'please' with a possible meaning 'wish for a benefit that pleases the sacri-
fier (or the deity)'.

[19] The act of one who "gives pressed haoma, or food-offerings (and) votive (?) offer-
ings", *hutahe haomahe daδāiti miiazdinąm vā usəfritinąm*, to a wicked person is, ac-
cording to the text, no better than a devastating army penetrating into the villages of the
Mazdā worshippers. For "food-offerings" the manuscript tradition varies between
miiezdinąm, miiazdinąm and *miiazdinąm* (see the apparatus in Geldner's edition). In the
case of the first (and probably also the second) reading, there would be the gen. plur. of
an adjective of the *in*-stems, *miiezdin-* 'having *miiazda*'; in the third variant there is the

Sassanian period) the term *usōfrīt* or *ustōfrīt*[20] refers both to the offerings made and to the ceremony itself. From several passages in the Pahlavi books it appears that the *usōfrīt-* rituals functioned as a sort of votive-offerings.[21] With reference to a written source (*gyāg-ē paydāg kū*) the compiler of Pahlavi Rivāyat states "that if a man declares: 'if this benefit (*nēkīh*) comes to me, I shall make an *Ustōfrīt* offering'..." (PR 20,1).[22] The consecrated offerings were apparently consumed in a ritual meal which in all probablity could be arranged as a community meal. The passage mentions three categories of persons to whom one is not authorized to distribute food and drink in the ceremony. The consecrated offerings that have not been partaken of by potential communicants should be given to the dogs and the birds (PR 20,4). The meaning is that the consecrated food should be eaten by righteous people; if not, the offerings must be disposed of properly, *i. e.* one shall give them to righteous creatures.[23]

Pahlavi Rivāyat 58,85 enjoins that if one has accepted to perform an *usōfrīt-*ritual, one has also accepted that it be performed with a sacrificial worship and a *drōn-*ceremony: *ā-š yašt-ē ud drōn padīrift bawēd.*[24] The term *yašt* seems here to denote the rite of an animal sacrifice as is suggested by the following statement of sacrificing sheep in one single piece: *čē ka gōspand pad ēw-kardagīh ul yazēd.*

2.1.4 āfrīnagān-*rituals*

In scholarly usage Āfrīnagān denotes a group of liturgical texts transmitted in the Avesta and this meaning is also found in the Pahlavi texts as is shown by phrases like *āfrīnagān guftan* (PR 17a2; 40,5; AWN 3,11). In

gen. plur of the *a*-stem noun *miiazda-*. However, the attestations of the *in*-stem adjectives in Avestan are few and to a large extent uncertain, see K. Hoffmann/B. Forssman, *Avestische Laut- und Flexionslehre* (Innsbruck, 1996), p. 146. The Pahlavi version renders the expression *miiazdinąm vā usəfritinąm* with *ēg ān ī ul franāft mēzd*.

[20] On these forms, see J. C. Tavadia, *Šāyast nē-Šāyast. A Pahlavi Text on Religious Customs* (Hamburg, 1930), pp. 92–93.

[21] See Pahlavi Rivāyat ch. 20 and the passages from the Dēnkard and the Nērangestān collected by B.N. Dhabhar, *Translation of Zand-i Khurtak Avistāk* (Bombay, 1963), pp. 112–113.

[22] Translation of A.V. Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, Part 1 and 2 (Copenhagen, 1990), part 2, p. 44 (except for *nēkīh*).

[23] I follow the interpretation of Williams, *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, part 2, p. 169.

[24] For text and translation, see JamaspAsa "On the *drōn* in Zoroastrianism", pp. 335–356; Williams, *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, part 1, pp. 216–217 and part 2, p. 104.

contemporary Zoroastrianism *āfrīnagān* also stands for the ritual in which the Afrīnagān prayers are recited.[25] This usage can be followed back to the Sassanian period. Fruits (in Parsee terminology *myazd*) and wine are consecrated in the ritual in which the priests and lay people partake of these offerings in a ceremonious way.[26] The Pahlavi texts sometimes enumerate the rituals considered to be particularly important and the occurrence of *āfrīnagān* (in the sense of a ceremony) in such listings besides other rituals indicates its status as an independent ritual in Sassanian times (Ardā Wirāz Nāmag 1,15 (P.3,1 ed.Vahman). The expression *āfrīnagān kardan* "to perform the *āfrīnagān*" (Kārnāmag 12) refers in the first place to the ritual. The enactment of a community meal in the *āfrīnagān* ritual is strongly suggested by the contents of the Avestan Afrīnagān über die Gāhānbār (A. 3).

So far the main ritual texts and categories (the *yasna-*, *drōn-* and *usōfrīt-* and *āfrīnagān*-rituals) indicating ritual meals have been discussed. The focus will now be on the various settings in which sacrificial liturgies are stated more explicitly to have been accompanied by cultic community meals.

2.2   Settings of ritual community meals

2.2.1 Seasonal and other periodic festivals

The main sources are here the Pahlavi texts and to some extent information gleaned from Greek writers and Greek inscriptions. The periodic festivals celebrated by eastern Iranians are known to a certain extent through the information given by Albiruni.The importance of the seasonal festivals, the *gāhānbār*, is emphasized in many Zoroastrian texts. At the mythical level there is the account of Ahreman and Xēšm and the three essentials things in the world which is derived from Sassanian religious tradition (*andar dēn guft ēstēd kū...*).[27] The demon Xēšm rushed before Ahreman and growled (*drāyīd*) that he would not go into the world because of three things about which he could not do anything at all, the *gāhānbār*, the *mēzd* and the *xwēdōdah*. Ahreman gives him advices how to overcome the first two ones.[28] If the attendants steal any-

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[25] See Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies*, pp. 354–384.

[26] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies*, pp. 368–372

[27] The reference to religious tradition is explicit only in Šāyast nē-Šāyast.

[28] The *xwētōdah* cannot be broken after man and wife have had intercourse four times.

thing from each other the *gāhānbār* is broken (*škast*), if they chatter the same happens with the *mēzd* (Šāyast nē-Šāyast ch. 18 , Pahlavi Rivāyat 56, 13-16).[29] The negative consequences of not performing a seasonal festival are often stressed (ŠnŠ 12,31; 13,29, Dk VIII,29,8; 45,4. PR 15a13).[30] On the positive side the merits for those who celebrate a *gāhānbār* are emphasized (PR 16a1−3). The Bahman Yašt list as one of the signs announcing the end-time the neglect of celebrating the *Gāhānbārs* and the *Frawardīgān* (BYt 4,51).[31]

Information on the seasonal festivals was contained in the *pājag* nask of the Sassanian Avesta according to the summary in Dēnkard Book Eight chapter 7. The procedure of slaughtering an animal lawfully for the worship of fires, waters and libations in connection with the *gāhānbār* was dealt with: *pājag mādayān abar gōspand dādīhā pad ēzišn ī ātaxšān, ābān, zōhr, gāhānbār māzdēsnān ayārīh rāy kuštan* (7,1). Further details in the *pājag*-nask concerned places and times of the festival, the feast assembly, the giving of food and drink for the *mēzd*, the modalities of preparation and distribution (i. e. of food and drink) and also the benefits that come from generous giving:

> *ud čē abar gāhānbār kū ān šaš gāh, ka kunēd, ka be sazīhēd, hanjaman ī gāhānbār ud dahišn ī ō mēzd kū ka kunišn tuwān passazag pad čē paymānīg be dahišn, ka sāzišn ud baxšišn kū-š sūd ud nēkīh ī wēh dahišnān mēnōgīhā ud gētīgīhā* (7,3; Dresden p. 301 lines 14−17, Madan p. 682).[32]

There was also information on the tasks of the master of the *gāhānbār* ceremonies, his arranging of the assembly and its religious benefits, as well as useful matters for the *mēzd*:

> *abar xwēškārīh radpassag sālārīh kū-š māzdēsnān az kardan ī gāh ud frāz raftan ī ō hanjaman ud ka āgāhēnišn kū ān hanjaman abērtar abar wirāstan ī āhōg padīdan tōzišn ī winās ud niyābagīg be dād ī tis ō mēzd* (7,5; Dresden p. 301 ; Madan p. 682).

Choosing the foremost seat at the *mēzd* (*pēšgāh mēzd wizīdan*) was likewise discussed in the nask (7,6).

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[29] The different wording in the Pahlavi Rivāyat suggests that this version is more of a free summary of the common Sassanian source than the one in Šāyast nē-Šāyast.

[30] References to chapters and paragraphs follow the edition of Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat*.

[31] For the text see C. G. Cereti, *The Zand ī Wahman Yasn* (Roma, 1995).

[32] Dēnkart. *A Pahlavi Text. Facsimile edition of the manuscript B of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Bombay*, ed. M.J. Dresden (Wiesbaden, 1966); *The Complete Text of the Pahlavi Dinkard*, ed. D.M. Madan (Bombay, 1911).

The allusions to eating and drinking in connection with a *gāhānbār* that are found in other Pahlavi texts may refer to a ritual community meal. In stating the merits for those who perform the seasonal festivals, the Pahlavi Rivāyat (16a1−2) distinguishes, as it seems, different moments in the ritual performance of the attendants, "when one prepares (*sāzēd*), sacrifices (*yāzēd*), consumes (*xwarēd*) and gives (*dahēd*) generously and sincerely...". According to Pahlavi Rivāyat 58,71−72 there was among Sassanian priests, a discussion on the size and kind of animals to be used in the meat offering (*gōšudāg*) at a *gāhānbār* which probably has a bearing on the cultic community meal. With reference to ancient tradition it is stated that the greatest and best *mēzd* is that of the seasonal festivals: *paydāg kū mēzd ān meh ud weh ī gāhānbār* (PR 16a4).

The Pahlavi term *mēzd* (from Avestan *miiazda-*) is crucial for the understanding of the importance attached to ritual community meals. In the Avesta *miiazda-* denotes in the first place the food-offerings (meat, fruits, corn and vegetables) for the sacrifices (cf. Afrīnagān 3,1−6), but seems also to have acquired the sense of "cultic (community) meal" in which the food-offerings were redistributed to be consumed by the participants (e.g. Nērangestān 10.36 and 10.44 ; ed. Waag 72; 81; 83).

In the Pahlavi texts *mēzd* is used to denote the offerings, the ceremony in which they are offered, and in many cases also the ritual community meal proper.[33] A detailed study of the various uses of *mēzd* in the Pahlavi texts is beyond the scope of the present article, but it seems that the sense "cultic community meal" can be established from the phrasing and the context. When the texts speak about "giving to the *mēzd* "(Dk VIII,7), invitation and coming to the *mēzd* (PR 16b7), or use expressions like "at the *mēzd* of a seasonal festival", the meaning "sacrificial meal" is intended. Besides the examples given above we may adduce further passages from the Pahlavi Rivāyat and Šāyast nē-Šāyast. Referring to authoritative tradition (*paydāg kū*) the Pahlavi Rivāyat says that when three men gather for a *mēzd*, 10 000 frawašis of the righteous come to it, *be awiš rasēnd* (PR 16b3). When a good, fine, worthy man who has not been invited (*nē xwand ēstēd*) to the *mēzd* arrives at that *mēzd* they shall receive him (PR 16b7). In Šāyast nē-Šāyast 12,19 the phrase *pad mēzd ī*

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[33] Cf. also B.N. Dhabhar, *Pahlavi Yasna and Visperad* (Bombay, 1949), Glossary p. 158 "orig. sacrificial flesh, meat offering: hence sacrificial repast, banquet, festivity, meal". Further Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *Nērangestān*, p. 75, n.196. The expression *mēzd rāyēnīdan* (e. g. AWN 3,11; Kārnāmag 12) deserves closer study. The usual translation "make an offering" for which one has *mēzd kardan* (e. g. PR 45,1) seems too vague.

gāhānbār seems to denote the community meal taken in connection with a seasonal festival[34] and in 13,25 it is said that the passage *θwōi staotarasca* (Y. 41,5) is to be recited for the praise of *yazišn* and *mēzd*.[35] The frequent mentioning of the *mēzd* in connection with the seasonal festivals includes in all probability references to the ritual community meal.

The Frawardīgān[36] festival celebrated at the end of the year and related to *hamaspaθmaēdaiia-*, the last of the six *gāhānbārs*, was dedicated to the *frauuaši-*, semi-divine beings associated with the souls of the ancestors. During the festival the *frauuaši-* were thought to visit the living who should welcome them with offerings, as indicated by Yašt 13, 49–52. According to Albiruni the Persians put food at the feast of *Farvardajān* "in the halls of the dead and drink on the roofs of the houses, believing that the spirits of their dead during these days come out from their places of reward or punishment". They also "fumigate their houses with juniper, that the dead may enjoy its smell".[37] The food offerings to the *frauuaši-* presumably included also a meal for the living.[38] The Frawardigān customs point to a domestic ritual with a cultic meal which could have assumed the character of a ritual community meal at some occasions.

By contrast the Mithrakāna festival presented a strong communal and national character.[39] Information on the rituals and customs of Mithrakāna is sparse and comes almost exclusively from Greek sources and Albiruni. There is no explicit mention of community meals but judging from the importance of the festival and some details of the king's ritual

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[34] Cf. F. Kotwal, *The Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest-nē-šāyest* (København, 1969), p. 99.

[35] Cf. Kotwal, *The Supplementary Texts*, p. 104.

[36] The Middle-Iranian name is known from the Sassanian period.

[37] *Chronlogie orientalischer Völker von Albêrûnî*, ed. E. Sachau (Leipzig, 1878), p. 224; *The Chronology of Ancient Nations. An English Version of the Athâr-ul-bâkiya of Albîrûnî*, transl. and ed. E. Sachau (London, 1879), p. 210.

[38] Albiruni reports a similar custom among the Soghdians and the Khorasmians when they celebrate the feast corresponding to the Frawardīgān in the last days of the year. *Chronology*, text p. 237, transl. p. 226.

[39] The Old Iranian name of this festival, **mithrakāna-* can be reconstructed from Greek transcriptions (a 1st. cent. C.E. inscription from Phrygia τοις Μιθρακανοις; Strabo, Geography XI,14,9 τοῖς Μιθρακανοις ορ Μιθρακηνοις) and the Middle Iranian form *mihragān*. On the festival, see Boyce, *A History*, vol. 1, pp. 172–173 and vol. 2, pp. 34–36, 109–110; M. Boyce, "Mihragān among the Irani Zoroastrians", *Mithraic Studies*, ed. J.R. Hinnells (Manchester, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 106–118; de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, pp. 371–377.

drinking and dancing noted by Athenaeus,[40] Albiruni's remarks on the mythic models of the feast, and references to drinking wine at Mihragān in Arabic and New Persian sources strongly suggest that a cultic community meal belonged to the ritual of the festival.

Most festivals mentioned for the Soghdians have names ending with the element -*xwāra* "food and drink" which reveals the importance of community meals held at these festivals.[41] Albiruni actually refers to such meals in some passages. On the 28th of the month Nausard there is a feast for the magi of Bukhara during which people gather in a fire temple (*bēt nār*) in the village Rāmuš and then, as it seems, continue the celebration alternately in each village by coming together in the house of each chieftain where they eat and drink. The day after *Nēm-sarda* ("the half of the year") is a feast called *Man īd*(?) *xwāra* when people assemble in the fire temples and eat a particular dish prepared from the flour of millet and from butter and sugar. On the first of the month Umri the Xorasmians celebrated a feast called *Azdā kand xwār* "eating the bread prepared with fat". Perhaps this was done in order to remember on that day an episode of their mythic history, if we interpret the wording of Albiruni as an allusion to the reason for celebrating the festival:

> On that day they sought protection from the cold, and assembled for the purpose of eating the bread prepared with fat, around the burning fire-grates (Chronology ed. Sachau p. 236, transl. p. 224).

Other periodic rituals with probable community meals include royal court rituals and sacrificial ceremonies having a national dimension. In the inscriptions of Šāpuhr I from the end of the 3rd cent., daily sacrifices of one lamb, bread and wine are prescribed to be offered in the fire-temples of the kingdom for the immortal soul of the king and his family (Middle Persian text: *pad amāh ruwān*, Greek version: εἰς τὴν μνείαν ἡμῶν).[42] These offerings were probably consumed by the officiating priests and other persons present.

According to Athenaeus who draws on earlier sources, Persian court rituals included at public festivals a communal meal "in the great hall"

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[40] See for this G. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran. Eine religionsphänomenologische Untersuchung* (Uppsala/Leipzig, 1938), pp. 158–163 and de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, pp. 257–260.

[41] Albiruni mentions five such feasts (*Chronology*, text pp. 234–235, transl. pp. 221–222).

[42] Texts in M. Back, *Die sassanidischen Staatsinschriften* (Acta Iranica 18; Leiden, 1978), pp. 335–337.

(Deipnosophists 4.145c).[43] The ritual performed once a year in the month of Day consisted, according to Albiruni, of a gathering of the *dehgān* and the farmers in which the Sassanian king offered a banquet ("eating and drinking with them"). This may well have had the character of a cultic community meal.[44]

In the Hellenistic kingdom of Commagene the ruling dynasty and aristocracy had strong ties with Iranian culture and religion which can be seen among other things in the pantheon where the main deities have both Iranian and Greek names and correspond in character. The worship directed towards the rulers is well known through the impressive remains of cult places denoted ἱεροθέσια like Arsameia at Nymphaios and Nemrud Dagh. The Greek inscriptions found at these places give detailed instructions for the establishment of a cult (τιμή) in honour of the dynasty.[45] At Arsameia (Dörner & Goell inscr. lines 69–73), Antiochos prescribes sacrifices and public gatherings (θυσίας τε καὶ συνόδους) to be performed on the monthly birthdays of his father Mithradates Kallinikos and himself together with a common feast of the community (μετὰ κοινῆς ἑορτῆς πολιτῶν). Further details of the cult that are given in lines 111–141 suggest that we have to do with a ritual community meal. The priest shall bring rich sacrifices (θυσίας τε πολυτελεῖς) and perform a common sacrificial feast meal for the garrison and the citizens (κοινὴν εὐωχίαν ἐπιτελείτω). The inscription at Nemrud Dagh states that there shall be a two-day yearly festival with large sacrifices and plentiful feast meals. To celebrate these sacrificial feasts the inhabitants of the kingdom shall come together in the cult places (τέμενα) that are nearest to their respective villages and towns (Ditt. Or. Graec. Inscr.nr 383 lines 90–100). At both places the *nomos* of the inscriptions emphasize the richness of food and drink to be offered the people in these community feast meals. The religious ritual character of the banquets is shown by their sacrificial framing and by the remarks that the feasting takes place during holy days (ἐν ἱεραῖς ἡμέραις) and that the participants shall serve themselves with the consecrated drinking vessels as long as the community festival is enacted within the sacred

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[43] Cf. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi*, p. 375; for Sassanian court rituals, see also de Jong in this volume.

[44] *Chronology*, text p. 225, transl. p. 212.

[45] See W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1903) no. 383–405, in particular no. 383, and F.K. Dörner/Th. Goell, *Arsameia am Nymphaios. Die Ausgrabungen im Hierothesion des Mithradates Kallinikos von 1953–1956* (Istanbuler Forschungen 23; Istanbul 1963).

area: τοῖς τε ἐκπώμασιν οἷς ἐγὼ καθιέρωσα διακονείσθωσαν ἕως ἂν ἐν ἱερῶι τόπωι συνόδου κοινῆς μεταλαμβάνωσιν (Or. Graec. Inscr nr 383 lines 159–161; Dörner & Goell inscr. Arsameia lines 138–141).

The details of the sacrificial rites are not stated in the inscriptions. With respect to the mixed cultural background of the ruling elite, the question must nevertheless be raised to what extent the sacrifices and the community meal were performed in the Iranian way, and if the officiating priests in Commagene were magi. Antiochus emphasizes that the cult with sacrifices and feasts which he establishes, draws upon the ancient tradition of both Persians and Greeks, καθ᾽ ἃ παλαιὸς λόγος Περσῶν καὶ Ἑλλήνων – ἐμοῦ γένους εὐτυχέστατη ῥίζα – παραδέδωκε, κοσμήσας, θυσίαις δὲ καὶ πανηγύρεσιν (Ditt. Or. Graec. Inscr. no. 383 lines 29-34). Further on, he states, however, that he has instituted priests of Persian lineage (Περσικῶι γένει) to serve in the cult with appropriate garments (ibid. lines 71–72). The explicit ruling that the priests shall officiate "in Persian clothing" should in my opinion be interpreted as referring to the ritual appearance of the magi as described by Strabo and Pausanias and as shown on the Daskyleion relief, with their typical head cap covering the mouth and the *barsom* twigs in their hand.

2.2.2 Funerary-ceremonies

The custom to perform *drōn*-rituals dedicated to Srōš during the three days following a person's death is known from the Pahlavi texts. The Pahlavi Vidēvdād enjoins that the worship should be addressed to Srōš during these days, *andar ān sē rōz yazišn hamāg ān ī srōš kunišn* (8,22). In addition, on the third night at dawn three drōn-rituals should be performed, one dedicated to Rašn and Aštād, one to the Good Wāy (*wāy ī weh*) and one to the righteous genii (*ardā frawahr*). The Dādestān ī Dēnīg develops the reasons for performing the worship (*yazišn*) and *drōn*-ritual of Srōš during these days, and explains also the purpose of performing separately the three additional *drōn*-rituals DD 27,1 and 29,1–4); instead of the righteous genii in the Pahlavi Vidēvdād the third ritual is dedicated to the Glory (*šnumān ī xwarrah*).

In these funerary *drōn*-ceremonies the ritual was performed by the priests on behalf of the soul of the deceased and in all probability without the enactment of a cultic meal although the ritual tasting might have

included members of the family. Evidence from the Pahlavi Vidēvdād 8,22 suggests that the funerary *drōn*-rituals were to be performed with minor changes pertaining to the non–enactment of the cultic meal. Fried (?)[46] meat should not be used during the three days and nights, *andar sē rōz ud šabān gōšt tābag pad kār nē gīrišn*. According to one priestly school the passage in the *drōn*-ceremony exhorting the participants to eat should not be recited: *ast kē ēdōn gōwēd ēd pad-iz drōn xvarata narō nē gōwišn*. It is also stated that the ritual for the worship of Srōš shall be the same as other sacrificial ceremonies except for the complete libation, *u-š nērang hamāg ēdōn bawēd ciyōn abārīg yazišn bē hamāg zōhr*.

On the fourth day, however, a full ritual meal was performed which in all probability had a communal character. The Aogəmadaēcā ritual, which was probably enacted at dawn of the fourth day,[47] was apparently concluded by a cultic meal. The liturgy itself addresses at the very end of the ceremony "those pious ones who have come to this cultmeal (*mēzd*) and have partaken (*bahr grift hēnd*) of these offerings (*mēzd*)"; the officiant then pronounces blessings over them (§§ 105–108 and 110, ed. JamaspAsa).[48]

The Vidēvdād prescribes that on the fourth day the Mazdeans of the house of the deceased may give a cultmeal with offerings of both meat and wine: *vasō pascaeta mazdaiiasna ahe nmānahe miiazdəm daiθiiārəš* [Pahl. text precises *rōz ī tasum*] *gaoməntəm maδuməntəm* (Vidēvdād 8,22).

2.3 Other settings with ritual meals having a congregational character

Daily meals which are set in a religious framework and gather groups beyond the domestic sphere represent undoubtedly one type of ritual communal meals, but its occurrence outside periodic festivals and *rites*

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[46] The word t'pk can be transcribed as *tābag* and may be connected with the verb *tāftan, tāb-* "to heat, to burn". A noun *tābag* "frying pan" is listed in D.N. MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (London, 1986) and attested in Ardā Wirāz Nāmag 94,1. For the phrasing one could compare with the expressions *gōšt poxtag* "cooked meat" and *gōšt brištag*, "roasted meat"; both categories are judged proper for the sacrificial ceremony (PR 58,69). Here another quality of the meat is referred to. B. T. Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Vendidâd*. Bombay 1949, p. 198 f. has *tâza* and translates "fresh". Cf. also D. Kapadia, *Glossary of Pahlavi Vendidad* (Bombay, 1953).

[47] See K. M. JamaspAsa, *Aogəmadaēcā. A Zoroastrian Liturgy* (Wien, 1982), p. 9.

[48] JamaspAsa, *Aogəmadaēcā*, p. 87 comments upon these concluding paragraphs that they "are addressed to the assembly attending the ceremony".

de passages (initiations, marriage, funerals etc.) seems to have been more or less occasional. The Pahlavi literature offers some examples of cultic meals enacted at particular occasions. The settings may be fictional but the accounts nevertheless reflect the way in which a religious ritual meal (be it of communal character or not) was enacted. The communal character of the meal is not explicitly brought out in these literary descriptions but they allude to such situations.

In the Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr there is an account of two brothers, Burzag and Burzādur, giving hospitality to the fleeing Ardaxšīr, who presents himself as one of the horsemen of Ardaxšīr. The brothers conducted him to a seat befitting his rank; the king was sorrowful and in deep thoughts but the brothers performed the drōn-ritual and asked the king to recite the sacred formula, take his meal and not to keep his sorrow and grief:

> *Ardaxšīr was andōhgen būd hamāg handēšīd ud awēšān drōn yašt, ō Ardaxšīr xwāyišn kard kū wāz framāy griftan, xwarišn xwar ud andōh ud tēmār ma dār* (Kārnāmag 12).[49]

They said to him that Ohrmazd and the Amahraspandān would help him in his difficult situation. In considering these words Ardaxšīr was filled with joy, recited the sacred formula and took his meal. Having no wine they brought beer, arranged the food-offerings and performed the Afrīnagān prayers:

> *Ardaxšīr pad ān kē-š mēnišn xwaš be būd, wāz grift ud xwarišn xward, u-šān māy nē būd, be wašag ō pēš āwurd ud mēzd rāyēnid, āfrīnagān kard* (Kārnāmag 12).

A similar account of a ritual meal is found in Ardā Wirāz Nāmag 3,11 (P.7 in the edition of Vahman).[50] When Ardā returns from the otherworld his first request is to eat and the community, who has gathered around him,[51] provides food and "cold water and wine". Then, it is said, they performed the *drōn*-ceremony and Wirāz recited the sacred formula, ate his meal and arranged the food-offerings, left the sacred formula, praised Ohrmazd and the divine entities and said the Afrīnagān prayers:
u-šān drōn yašt ud Wirāz wāz grift ud xwarišn xward ud mēzd rāyēnīd,

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[49] *Kârnâmak-i Artakhshîr Pâpakân*, ed. E.K. Antia (Bombay, 1900).

[50] Ph. Gignoux, *Le Livre d'Ardā Wirāz* (Paris, 1984) and F. Vahman, *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag. The Iranian 'Divina Commedia'* (London/Malmö, 1986).

[51] It appears from the text that various categories of people were present, his seven sisters/wifes, priests, community leaders and common worshippers: *haft xwahān, hērbadān, mowbadān, dēn-dastwarān, māzdēsnān* (pp. 6 and 7).

wāz be guft ud stāyišn ī ohrmazd ud amahraspandān...ud āfrīnagān guft. Focus is on the role of Wirāz but the expression *u-šān drōn yašt* indicates the enactment of a communal meal.

Royal ritual banquets arranged under special circumstances are referred to in the Šāhnāme and the accounts display much the same ritual framework as for the meals in the Pahlavi descriptions.[52] These banquets may have a historical core and can be regarded as a type of cultic community meals.

3. REMARKS ON THE STRUCTURE AND MEANING
OF IRANIAN RITUAL COMMUNITY MEALS

The first point to be noted is that cultic community meals were part of a larger sacrificial ritual. The divine beings were invoked with praise-formulas and sometimes extensive liturgies during which the offerings were handed over to the divine sphere. In this mediating process the sacrificers, the priests, had an essential role and represented the sacrifiers, on whose behalf the sacrifices were accomplished and who contributed economically to their realization.[53] The community meal appears usually as a concluding ritual which in most cases presupposed animal sacrifices.[54] The offerings were by this particular ritual redistributed to the sacrifiers. Its procedure can be assumed to have varied over time and according to different religious milieus. One ritual scheme which is based on literary accounts of ordinary (or feast) meals (setting no. 3 above) can be traced back to the Sassanian period. Roughly this scheme consisted of an introductory *wāz* in which the *yašt ī drōn* (Y. 3–8) was recited and performed including the ritual tasting of the offerings, Middle Iranian *čāšnīg*, followed by the meal proper eaten in silence. The ritual was concluded by a final *wāz*.[55]

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[52] For details, see Boyce and Kotwal, "Zoroastrian Bāj and Drōn", 2, pp. 299–302.

[53] The distinction is roughly that of H. Hubert and M. Mauss, "Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice", *L'Année sociologique* 1898; English transl. by W.D. Halls (Chicago, 1964). Cf. also A. Hultgård, "The Burnt-Offering in Early Jewish Religion", *Gifts to the Gods*, eds T. Linders/G. Nordquist (Uppsala, 1987), pp. 83–91.

[54] For the ritual of animal sacrifice, see A. de Jong, "Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Zoroastrianism. A Ritual and its Interpretations", *Sacrifice in Religious Experience*, ed. A.I. Baumgarten (Studies in the History of Religions 93; Leiden et al., 2002), pp. 127–148.

[55] The ritual structure of this type of *drōn*-ceremonies is elucidated in more detail in Boyce/Kotwal, "Zoroastrian Bāj and Drōn", 2, pp. 298–302.

Some Avestan texts seem to have been particularly connected with the seasonal festivals (*gāhānbār*) during which they were recited. The Visprad 1 and 2, as well as the Afrīnagān 3, refer to the seasonal divinities (*yāiriia-*) to whom worship is to be directed.[56] The recurrent mentioning in Afrīnagān 3 of offering the *miiazda-* may point to a role of this text in the ritual community meals at the seasonal festivals. In fact, the Pahlavi Rivāyat 17a2 refers to the obligatory recitation of the Afrīnagān in the *mēzd*-ceremony at the *Gāhānbārs* and some other occasions.

As to the interpretation of meaning and purpose of religious ritual community meals in general, we have to start with the individual religious and cultural traditions. Since the epoch-making study of Robertson Smith[57] the tendency has prevailed to emphasize the character of sacrificial meals as a communion and sacrament.[58] Careful analysis and comparison may in fact reveal similar ideas of function and purpose, especially when a cultural area as the Mediterranean and western Asian is concerned that presents many common features in religious ideas and practices. Differences also exist, however, and interpretations claiming general validity should be critically considered.

The interpretation of the *yasna*, especially the *drōn*-ceremony (Y. 3–7), as a sacramental meal has been put forward by some scholars.[59] One may find a support for this in the recurrent formula introducing Yasna 3, 7 and 8 in which the food-offering (*xvarǝθa- miiazda-*) is equated with the divine entities Haurvatāt and Amǝrǝtāt (in a dvandva compound) and with the Beneficient Cow (*gāuš huδā*). The passage is however best understood in the way that the sacrificial matter is denoted by the officiant as Haurvatāt, Amǝrǝtāt or Gāuš huδā.[60]

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[56] Waag, *Nirangistān*, p. 114 refers to the Visprad as a liturgy for the seasonal festivals.

[57] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1889, 3rd ed. revised by S.A. Cook (London, 1927).

[58] See for example, J. Wach, *The Comparative Study of Religions* (New York/London, 1958), pp. 112–113; G. Widengren, *Religionsphänomenologie* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 303–320. For a discussion of the term 'sacrament' as a category in the study of religions, see T.W. Jennings, Jr., "Sacrament. An overview", *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 18, ed. M. Eliade (Chicago, 1987), pp. 500–504.

[59] Notably Drower, *Water into Wine*, esp. pp. 256–258; R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London, 1961), pp. 93–94. To this cf. the remarks of Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 1, pp. 164–165.

[60] For details, see J. Kellens, "Commentaire sur les premiers chapitres du Yasna", *Journal asiatique* 284, 1996, pp. 37–108, esp. pp. 51–53.

On the other hand the belief in the spiritual presence of the deities invoked during the cultic meal was certainly firm and can be assumed by the invitation formulas. It is thus said in the Šāyast nē-Šāyast 9,11 that the deities and the genii of the righteous are to be invited to every *yasna*, in the beginning of the complete ceremony and particularly in the beginning of the drōn-ritual in which the cult meal is enacted: *pad hamāg yazišn, pad bun ī yazišn ud bun ī drōn yazadān ud ahlawān frawahr be ō yazišn niweyēnišn.*

TO PRAISE THE SOULS OF THE DECEASED
AND THE IMMORTAL SPIRITS OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONES:
THE STAOMI OR STŪM RITUAL'S HISTORY AND FUNCTIONS

Firoze M. Kotwal and Jamsheed K. Choksy

INTRODUCTION

The Zoroastrian ceremonial term *stūm* (also *stum*) or *satūm* (also *satumī* in New Persian, occasionally called *astam* in Gujarati by the Parsis in India) was derived from Avestan *staoma-* (< Av. *stav-*, Phl. *stūdan, stāy-īdan, stāy-*, Pz. *stāīdan*, N.Pers. *sutūdan, sitūdan*, cf. Skt. *stóm-* < IE **st-*, **st(ə)*) "to praise, to profess." This term's presence in the first line of recitation granted the ritual its name: *aṣāunąm vaŋuhīš sūrå spəṇtå frauuaṣaiiō staomi* "I praise the good, strong, holy immortal spirits of the righteous (or orderly) ones" (*Yasna* 26:1; cf. *Yasna* 6:19 and *Sīrōza* 2:19 where the phrase, however, ends with *yazamaide* "we venerate").[1] Those words were in keeping with a Gathic passage attributed to the devotional poet or prophet Zarathushtra: *yasnəm mazdā xšmāuuatō aṭ vā aṣā staomiiā vacå* "Veneration for one such as you, O Mazda, plus words full of praise through order" (*Yasna* 33:8).[2] This outer ritual action now is commonly referred to as *Stūm-nō kardō* and the ceremony with consecration of a food offering is termed *Stūm-nu bhōnu* by Parsis.

HISTORY

The ritual or portions of it may have ancient origins, although this is by no means certain. Theopompus wrote in his *History* during the fourth century B.C.E., as cited by Athenaeus in the second century C.E., that a table of food would be set for the immortal spirits of Achaemenian

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[1] *Avesta*, ed. K.F. Geldner, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1886–1895, reprint Delhi, 1982), vol. 1, pp. 93, 31, and vol. 2, p. 266, respectively. On the terms see C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Straßburg, 1904, reprint Berlin, 1979), cols. 1590, 1594–1595; H.S. Nyberg, *A Manual of Pahlavi*, pt. 2 (Wiesbaden, 1974), p. 180; and D.N. McKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (London, 1986[2], reprint 1990), p. 77.

[2] *Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 121.

kings—a practice paralleling the *Staomi* or *Stūm* ritual both in terms of food offering and location in the outer precinct of a fire temple, a communal building, a home of a deceased or living person, or a house of an individual honoring a deceased or living person.[3] Moreover, the special text for consecration of the food offering or *gōšudā* (< Av. *gāuš.hudā̊*) is the Avestan *staomi* liturgy. In its antique form, the *Staomi* or *Stūm* may very well have developed as a separate ritual out of the three night ceremonies for souls of the deceased (which is attested from Sasanian and post-Sasanian times as the *Sedōš*). The *Stūm* ritual's continued popularity is evidenced for late medieval and premodern times by references in the *Persian Rivāyats* (composed 1478–1773 C.E.) and the *Rahbar-i Dīn-i Jarθuštī* (composed by Dastur Erachji Sohrabji Meherjirana in 1869 C.E.), and for modern times by contemporary Indian practice and an equivalent Iranian one.[4]

THEOLOGICAL MEANINGS

The *Stūm* ritual, like others associated with maintenance of *aṣ̌a* or righteous order, became integral to the Zoroastrian or Mazdean belief that death is merely a temporary state resulting from Angra Mainyu's *drug-* or confusing evil. In that belief, partially described during medieval times as a primordial covenant, each individual continues to exist after death because his or her *uruuan-* (Phl. *ruwān*, P.Gj. *ravān*) or soul is immortal (Av. *an.aoša-*, Phl. *anōšag*) and departs the *tanū-* (Phl. *tan*) or body upon corporeal death (*Yasna* 26:6, 55:1; *Bundahišn* 3:13, 23–24).[5] So when the

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[3] W. Sherwood Fox/R.E.K. Pemberton, "Passages in Greek and Latin Literature Relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism", *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* 14, 1929, p. 26. See also M. Boyce, "Death", in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 7 (Costa Mesa/California, 1996), pp. 179, 181. Ritual offerings mentioned in the Derveni papyrus (ca. 500 B.C.E.) would seem to be the oldest attestation of the *Āfrīnagān* ritual, where *drōn* or marked flat, round, wheat breads are presented, rather than the *Staomi/Stūm*, where *drōn* are nor used. See further J.R. Russell, "The Magi in the Derveni Papyrus", *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 1, 2001, pp. 49, 51–52, 54–55; and J.K. Choksy, "Drōn", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 7 (Costa Mesa/California, 1966), pp. 554–555.

[4] *Persian Rivāyats*, ed. M.R. Unvala, 2 vols. (Bombay, 1922), vol. 1, p. 159, trans. B.N. Dhabar (Bombay, 1932), p. 172; *Rahbar-i Dīn-i Jarθuštī*, trans. F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd (Chico/California, 1982), pp. 91, 93, 153.

[5] *Avesta*, vol. 1, pp. 94, 192; and *Bundahišn*, ed. T.D. Anklesaria (Bombay, 1908), pp. 34, 38–39, respectively.

Stūm is performed in memory of the soul of an individual who is deceased (Phl. *anōšag-ruwān*, P.Gj. *anōše-ravān*), it is believed to give the *uruuan-*comfort and protection during its transition to individual judgment and spiritual afterlife. After the soul has been tended, the immortal spirit (Av. *frauuaṣ̌i-,* O.Pers. *fravarti-,* Phl. *frawahr*) of a deceased Zoroastrian also must be honored periodically. According to the antique *Frawardīn Yašt,* the immortal spirits return to the corporeal world asking: *kō nō stauuāt̰ kō yazāite kō ufiiāt̰ kō frīnāt̰   kō paiti.zanāt̰   gaomata zasta vastrauuata aṣ̌a.nāsa nəmaŋha kahe nō iδa nąma āyairiiāt̰ kahe vō uruua frāiieziiāt̰ kahmāi nō tat̰   dāθrəm daiiāt̰ yat̰   hē aŋhat̰   x^vairiiąn ajiiamnəm yauuaēca yauuaētātaēca* "Who will laud, venerate, extol, bless us? Who will welcome us with hands bearing food and clothes, with correctly or-dered praise? Whose name among us will be invoked now, whose soul among us will be venerated now? To whom among us will that gift be be-stowed, whereby one shall have unlimited food forever?" (*Yašt* 13:50).[6] Through offerings (Av. *miiazda-,* Phl. *mēzd,* N.Pers. and P.Gj. *myazd*) and the fragrances of those offerings—cooked food items in contemporary praxis—that are made holy during the ritual, it is believed a symbolical gathering together of all *frauuaṣ̌i-* occurs (*Yašt* 13:64). So at such gather-ings the immortal spirits can be propitiated by the living and in turn those spirits presumably bless the living, it is believed.[7]

Over time, and by the premodern period at the latest, the *Stūm* became an obligatory performance to attract and honor deceased humans—fulfilling their wish to be appeased—based on lines such as: *iristanąm uruuąnō yazamaide yā̊ aṣ̌aonąm frauuaṣ̌aiiō* "We venerate the souls of the deceased, who are the immortal spirits of the righteous ones" (*Yasna* 26:7; partially cf. *Yasna* 16:7, and also 37:3.3 which appears to be a later insertion to the Gathic passage).[8] The ritual, like other Zoroastrian rites involving both order and afterlife, create in the minds of devotees a pious nexus between the living and the dead across the corporeal and the spiri-tual realms. As important as the offering of praise and food by living per-

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[6] *Avesta,* vol. 2, p. 179. See further M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism,* vol. 1, (Leiden, 1989[2]), pp. 117–129.

[7] On the *frauuaṣ̌i-* see further M. Boyce, "The Absorption of the Fravašis into Zoro-astrianism," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungarium* 48, 1995, pp. 25–36, with reference to earlier scholarship.

[8] *Avesta,* vol. 1, pp. 94, 68, 132–133, respectively. Earlier studies of the ritual are found in J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1937[2], reprint Bombay, 1986), pp. 402–404; and F.M. Kotwal, "A Link With the Spiri-tual World – The Stum Ritual", *Ushta* 20, 1999, pp. 2–3, 14.

sons to seeking *frauuaṣ̌i-* is the receiving of blessing and material welfare from those well content immortal souls: *āaṯ yō nā hīš frāiiazāite gaomata zasta vastrauuata aṣ̌a.nāsa nəmaŋha ahmāi āfrīnəṇti xšnūtå ainitå aṯbištå uyrå aṣ̌āunąm frauuaṣ̌aiiō* "Then the mighty immortal souls of the righteous ones, satisfied, unoffended, and unharmed, will bless the person who propitiates them with hands bearing food and clothes, with correctly ordered praise," (*Yašt* 13:51).[9] This concept of reciprocity, an exchange of *maga-* or gifts, between humans and spiritual entities has constantly permeated Mazdean rituality from Zarathushtra's eponymous time to the present day.[10]

The *Stūm* ritual can be performed for living persons as well. Essentially, its enactment is permissible as a preemptive action to ensure that the religious path to the afterlife has been prepared properly for an individual's soul and immortal spirit in case death transpires within a setting where funerary rites cannot be performed appropriately. In that situation, the corporeal existence (Phl. *zīndag-ruwān*, P.Gj. *zinda-rawān*) of the person(s) whose *uruuan-* and *frauuaṣ̌i-* are honored prior to death is noted carefully. Contemporary Parsi practice permits the *Stūm* for a living person to be performed in conjunction with a year-long *zinda-ravān*.[11] Likewise, when the *gāhānbār* (N.Pers. *gāhanbār*, P.Gj. *gāhambār*) feasts are celebrated on behalf of the entire Zoroastrian community (Phl. *hamāg hanjaman*, P.Gj. *hamā anjoman*), then the *Stūm* may be performed for persons still alive. This concern with ensuring that nothing stands in the way of the soul and immortal spirit making a successful transition to the afterlife was captured by the medieval magi with the phrase: *pad gētīg rāyēnišnīh nērang 1000 nē ciš ud pad mēnōg rāyēnišnīh nērang ēwag ciš ān* "In corporeal matters, a thousand rites are nothing; in spiritual matters, a single rite is that thing (or paramount)" (*Dēnkard* 6:E14).[12]

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[9] *Avesta*, vol. 2, p. 179.

[10] J. Kellens, *Essays on Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism*, ed. and trans. P. O. Skjærvø (Costa Mesa/California, 2000), pp. 102–103.

[11] On the year-long *zinda-ravān* see Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 417–418. It should be noted that the year-long *zinda-ravān* is dedicated to Sraosha, Arda Fravash, and Siroza as the case may be. During the first three days after death the ceremonies are dedicated exclusively to Sraosha, and thereafter to the other divine entities mentioned. The general trend is to perform the *zinda-ravān* during the first four days.

[12] *Dēnkard*, ed. D.M. Madan, 2 vols. (Bombay, 1911), pp. 576–577.

RITUAL PROCESSES

The *Stūm* ritual may be conducted in any ritually clean area such as a Zoroastrian house or fire temple, on a carpet or table, where outer ceremonies are performed. It presently consists of five stages:[13]

1. *Šnūman* (Av. *xšnūmaine-*) or dedicatory formula,
2. *Yasna* 26 or the rite proper,
3. *Dībāca* or prefatory recitation,
4. A series of propitiatory recitations,
5. *Bāj* (Phl. *wāz*) which serves as a closing recitation.

1. Recitation of the *Šnūman* should be dedicated by the priest (Phl. *mowbed*, N.Pers. *mōbad*, P.Gj. *mōbed*) to the *yazata-* (Phl. *yazad*) or venerable spirit in whose name the *Stūm* is performed (plates IV/1). This *Šnūman* consists of *Sīrōza* (or litany for the entities presiding over the days of month) 1:1 to Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas, together with *Sīrōza* 1:19 to the Arda Frawahr/Arda Fravash (*ardā frawahr/ardā fravaš*) or all righteous immortal spirits: *ahurahe mazdā̊ raēuuatō x^varənaŋuhatō aməšanąm spəṇtanąm* "For Ahura Mazda the radiant and glorious, for the Amesha Spentas," and *ašāunąm frauuašinąm uyranąm aißiθūranąm* "For the mighty, victorious, immortal spirits of the righteous ones."[14] So the creator deity, the beneficent immortals, and the spirits of the dead are honored. Sraosha is the only praiseworthy spirit in whose sole name a *Šnūman* can be performed without mention of Ahura Mazda at the beginning as is done in all other dedicatory formulas. Sraosha is regarded as the manifestation of *mąθra.spəṇta-* (Phl. *mānsar-spand*, *māraspand*) or the holy word and, therefore, is in charge of prayer itself.[15]

2. *Yasna* 26 is performed, next, by the priest beginning with the words *staomi zbaiiemi* "I praise, I invoke" (26:1 without the first stanza). This is a chapter (Av. *haiti-*, Phl. *hād*) of scripture that belongs to the *haoma-*

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[13] On the prayers see also R.D. Meherjirana, *Āfrīngānō, āfrīnō, frawaši stōmnā kardā temaj bājdharnā sāthē* (Bombay, 1954, reprint 1988, 1991), pp. 613–627.

[14] *Avesta*, vol. 2, pp. 260, 262. This *Šnūman* as given by Geldner should include the text of *Sīrōza* 1:19 note 2.

[15] On Sraosha's role as the divinity of prayer see further Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *Sraoša in the Zoroastrian Tradition* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 129–130, 143–145; and F.M. Kotwal/ J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering, The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Studia Iranica Cahier 8; Paris, 1991), p. 91, n. 87.

pounding section of the liturgy.[16] Names of the *frauuaṣi*- are recounted: First of Ahura Mazda (26:2), then of the Amesha Spentas (26:3), followed by those of the earliest devotees (26:4), of Gayo Maretan the legendary first androgyne, Zarathushtra, Kavi Vishtaspa, and Isat Vastra the eldest son of Zarathushtra (26:5), of living, dead, and future Zoroastrians—men, women, and children (26:6–10), and finally of the Saoshyant (Av. *Saošiiant-*, Phl. *Sōšāns*) or future savior (26:10). In that manner an honoring of every immortal spirit occurs (27:11), uniting the community's members past, present, and future in the cosmic struggle against confusion and in the yearning for resurrection of the body when the universe is renovated.

3. The *Dībāca* follows, murmured by the priest in *bāj* or undertone, because it is a Pazand passage recited between two sections of the Avestan scripture (plates IV/2).[17] Initially it is stated that the *Dībāca* is recited in the hope that through the good thoughts, good words, and good deeds of living Zoroastrians (especially those persons commissioning and performing the ritual) the *Stūm* will be efficacious and religiosity will be spread throughout the world (secs. 1–2). It is believed that upon being pleased with the offering, the *frauuaṣi*- will reciprocate by bestowing joy, prosperity, and wellbeing to residents of the locality (province, city, town, or village) which is named (secs. 3–4). Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas (as a group), and the *frauuaṣi*- again collectively are invoked (secs. 4–8). Then the individual or individuals or persons—dead or living—on whose behalf the *Stūm* takes place is named plus the person or persons (if different) who has commissioned the ritual (sec. 8). The names of Zarathushtra and possibly other notable figures—legendary such as Gayo Maretan and Saoshyant, and historical such as Adurbad i Maraspand and Neryosangh Dhaval—of the ancient, medieval, and modern Zoroastrian communities in Iran and India (and elsewhere if necessary) are invoked as well. All those names are recited in *bāj* using the formulaic phrase: *nāmcištī anaošah ravān ravāni* ... (name of individual) ... *aēdar yāt bāt* "May the soul of ... (name of individual) ... be especially remembered here among the immortal souls." Each person's religious title of *ērvad* (Phl. *hērbed*, perhaps "teacher priest, theologian"), *ostā* (N.Pers. *ustād* "teacher" < Phl. *hāwišt*, "disciple, pupil"),

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[16] *Avesta*, vol. 1, pp. 93–95. See further Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 106.

[17] Text, translation, and variants of the Pazand *Dībāca* are provided by Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, pp. 149–153, with reference to previous scholarship.

and *behdīn* (Phl. *wehdēn*, "member of the good religion") is prefixed to his or her name. Then *hamā ašō farōhar* "all the righteous immortal spirits" are *aēdar yāt bāt* "remembered here" again in connection with especial mention of the particular Zoroastrian for whose soul and immortal spirit the ritual has been *framāyašni* "commissioned" possibly by another named person. The immortal spirits of Zoroastrians past, present, and future (secs. 9–12), of family members (sec. 13), of all social classes (sec. 14), and of people on every continent (sec. 15) are honored by mention as well. In that manner through the *Dībāca*, the sphere of devotion is extended until it encompasses the righteous actions of each and every devotee (sec. 17).

4. A series of propitiatory recitations by the priest commence with *Yasna* 26:11.1 only (the rest of 26:11 is not recited in the *Stūm* ritual): *vīspå frauuaṣaiiō aṣāunąm yazamaide iristanąm uruuąnō yazamaide yå aṣaonąm frauuaṣaiiō* "We venerate all the immortal spirits of the righteous ones, we venerate the souls of the deceased, who are the immortal spirits of the righteous ones."[18] *Yasna* 6:19 (cf. *Yašt* 13:26.1) *aṣāunąm vaṇuhīš sūrå spəṇtå frauuaṣaiiō yazamaide* "We venerate the good, strong, holy immortal spirits of the righteous ones" and 6:20.1 *vīspe aṣauuanō yazata yazamaide* "We venerate all the righteous venerance-worthy spirits" follow.[19] *Yasna* 6:20.2 is not recited during the *Stūm* because it refers to the *ratu-* or spiritual chiefs of ritual. *Yasna* 6:20.3 comes next with variation according to the *gāh* or period (watch) of the day. The *Yeṅhē Hātąm* prayer (*Yasna* 27:15.3) is chanted: *yeṅhē hātąm āąt yesnē paitī vaṇhō mazdå ahurō vaēθā aṣāt hacā yåṇhąmcā tąscā tåscā yazamaide* "In accordance with order, Ahura Mazda knows those male and female entities who are better for veneration. We venerate those male and female entities."[20] Then the priest utters, in *bāj*, a short Pazand formula based on the *Xwaršēd Niyāyišn* (*Niyāyišn* 1:16.2): *hōr-mezd i x*ᵛ*adāe i aβazūnī mardum mardum sardagą hamā sardagą ham-bāyast i vahą vaem vahə dīn i māzdayasną āgāhī āstuuąnī nēkī rasą-nāṭ ēdun bāṭ* "Lord Ahura Mazda, increaser of people, the human species, all species, and all good coreligionists, may knowledge, steadfastness (of belief), and virtue come to the good ones of the Mazdean relig-

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[18] *Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 95.

[19] *Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 31, vol. 2, p. 173.

[20] *Avesta*, vol. 1, p. 98. On the role of this *mąθra* in concluding series of propitiations see further Kotwal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 95, n. 91.

ion. So may it be."[21] That formula is common to litanies (*Niyāyišn/ Niyāyiš*) and hymns (*Yašt*).

5. The *Bāj* or closing recitation commences. The *Ahunawar* prayer is chanted twice. Then comes *yasnəmca vahməmca aojasca zauuarəca āfrīnāmi* "I bless the veneration, adoration, power, and ability of" plus the name of the *yazata-* in whose honor the *Stūm* ritual is performed (e.g., *ahurahe mazdā̊ raēuuatō xᵛarənaŋhatō* "For Ahura Mazda the radiant and glorious," also see above sec. 1 on *Šnūman*). One *Ašəm Vohū* prayer is said. Thereafter, the unit of four prayers—namely, *Ahmāi Raēšca, Hazaŋrəm, Jasa Mē Avaŋhe Mazdā, Kərfə Muzd*—should be recited.[22] This concludes the *Stūm* ritual.

The entire ritual must be conducted in the presence of a holy fire on a fire vase (P.Gj. *āfrīngānyu, afargānyu*). Sandalwood (P.Gj. *sukhar* < Gj. *sukhad*) and frankincense (P.Gj. and Gj. *lōbān*) is provided to the fire by the officiating priest during the ritual. Family members of the deceased or living person (for whose soul the ritual was conducted) also offer wood and incense to the fire after the ritual has concluded.

OCCASIONS AND OFFERINGS IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE

Traditionally, among Parsis, when the *Stūm* is first performed it takes place on the fourth (Phl., N.Pers., and P.Gj. *cahārom*) day after death and follows the *Yasna*, *Āfrīnagān*, and *Bāj* rituals. So during the *hāwan gāh*, around midmorning, this ritual is performed with a food offering and, as mentioned previously, referred to as *Stūm-nu bhōnu*. The ceremony makes holy those food items. Priests who have carried out the rites in honor of Sraosha, at a prayer hall near a funerary site or at a fire temple, during the three preceding days for the spiritual welfare of the deceased person are requested to honor both Ahura Mazda and the departed soul by gratefully consuming the food after taking the *Bāj* of *Ohrmazd*.[23] Essentially the food is viewed as an offering of charitable

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[21] *Avesta*, vol. 2, p. 42. Cf. *Zand-ī Khūrtak Avistāk*, ed. B.N. Dhabar (Bombay, 1927), p. 22 (section 16 paragraph 2), trans. (Bombay, 1963), pp. 38–39.

[22] See further M. Boyce/F.M. Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *Bāj* and *Drōn* 1", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34, 1971, p. 59.

[23] On this mealtime *bāj* see M. Boyce/F.M. Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *Bāj* and *Drōn* 2", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34, 1971, pp. 302–304; and Kot-

good deeds (N.Pers. *xayrāt*), and so any Zoroastrian may eat of the offer-
ing as well. In Iran, during the 1960s, a equivalent ritual—called *Yašt-i
šavgīra* or hymn of the night period—would be conducted for the first
time in memory of a deceased Zoroastrian's soul and immortal spirit dur-
ing the *ušahin gāh* of the third night after the fourth *drōn* service in
honor of *ardā fravaš* has been performed. It also seems to have parallels
with the four *bāj* services performed by Parsis in India.[24] This custom
may have arisen from late medieval practice, where recitation of the
Stūm would be substituted if the *drōn* service in honor of *ardā fravaš*
and *faroxšī* could not be performed.[25] Zoroastrians in the region of Yazd
included cloth for the ritual undershirt (Phl. *šabīg*, N.Pers. *sedra*, *šīv*,
šabī, P.Gj. *sudra*), a ritual cord (Phl. *kustīg*, N.Pers. *kōštī*, P.Gj. *kustī*),
and a silver coin or ring (a practice perhaps assimilated in antiquity from
Greek propitiation).[26] Among Parsis, another *Stūm-nu bhōnu* is per-
formed during the *uzērin gāh* or evening.

The *Stūm* also might be performed by Parsis three times each day—in
the early morning and midmorning (*hāwan gāh*) and in the early evening
(*uzērin gāh*)—on the fifth through tenth days after the death occurred.
Additional *Stūm* rituals for the soul of a deceased or living individual
may be performed on monthly and annual anniversaries of death, on the
six *gāhānbār/gāhāmbār* or feast days especially on the all souls days
(Av. *hamaspaθmaēdaiia-*, Phl. *frawardīgān*, N.Pers. *panjī*, P.Gj. *muk-
tād*), on *frawardīn rōz* or day of the immortal spirits (which is the nine-
teenth day of each month), on *jašn* (P.Gj. *jašan*) or festival days (where
the day and month dedicated to a divine entity coincide such as *mihr rōz
mihr māh* or day of Mithra and month of Mithra), and on the day before
marriage (P.Gj. *varadh patra* < *varadh* "ancestor" + *patra* "correspon-
dence") in honor of bygone relatives.[27] On each of those occasions, the
Stūm is commissioned by a family member and the food made holy is

wal/Boyd, *A Persian Offering*, p. 77.

[24] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, p. 81.

[25] *Persian Rivāyats*, ed. M.R. Unvala, vol. 1, p. 502; trans. B.N. Dhabar, p. 337. M.
Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Oxford, 1977, reprint Lanham/Mary-
land, 1989), pp. 154–155, and "Death", pp. 179–180; M. Boyce/F.M. Kotwal,
"Farōkši", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 9 (New York, 1999), pp. 311–312; and Choksy,
"Drōn", p. 554.

[26] Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, p. 155, and "Death", p. 180.

[27] On the *varadh patra* contra Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the
Parsees*, p. 20. On the ritual occasions see also Russell, "The Magi in the Derveni Papy-
rus", p. 54.

ceremonially partaken by relatives, friends, and priests (except at the *va-radh patra* which is an auspicious family occasion when the holy food is reserved for relatives and friends).

The food offering, representing the sacrifice, is placed before the priest, next to the fire vase. In Parsi practice, the traditional food offering for the early morning *Stūm* consists of sweet dishes (P.Gj. *mīthī vāṇī*), porridge (P.Gj. *khīr*), and well water (P.Gj. *kuvā-nu pāṇī*, whose ritual purity can be determined unlike running water from faucets) in a metal vessel placed in the center of the individual items of the offering. The midmorning food offering may include rice and lentils or spilt peas with sheep, goat, or chicken meat (P.Gj. *gosht-nu dhānshāk*) or without meat (P.Gj. *dhānshāk*), meatballs (P.Gj. *kabāb*), fried fish (P.Gj. *tarelī machhī*), gourd with meat (P.Gj. *dōdhī-nu gosht*), a vegetable salad with radishes plus limes and lemons (P.Gj. *kachumbar-linbu*), wine, and a pot of well water. At the early evening ritual, the consecrated meal comprises thin flat wheat bread (P.Gj. *rōtlī*, Gj. *rōtī*), potatoes with meat (P.Gj. *papetā-nu gosht*), fried fish, cream custard, wine, and a pot of well water (plates IV/3). Some orthodox families, at locales like Navsari, Surat, and Udvada, continue to follow this pattern of food offerings. The more common custom among Parsi families in Indian cities like Bombay (Mumbai), in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and western countries—where it is now considered a novelty for the traditional offering to be made—is to prepare a sweet meat, a couple of fried eggs, a flat bread, and a pot of water, or even more frequently to purchase and present fruits in lieu of cooked foods, for the early morning *Stūm*. A couple of cooked dishes and a pot of water constitute the offerings for the midmorning and early evening *Stūm*. The *varadh patra* offering, less frequent in recent years, may include large crisp cream of wheat doughnuts (P.Gj. *varadh-varān*), vermicelli (P.Gj. *sev*), fried fish, and pieces of unrefined palm sugar or jaggery with wafers (P.Gj. *gol-pāpdī, gor-pāprī*). All purity laws relating to preparation of food should be followed for each offering —including ensuring that the metal cooking utensils and containers are clean and that the food is cooked at home by Zoroastrians.[28] Moreover, if the site where the ritual is to be conducted lays outside the home—such as at a fire temple—then purity of the offerings must be ensured during transporta-

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[28] See further J.K. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism: Triumph over Evil* (Austin, 1989), pp. 103–104; and Russell, "The Magi in the Derveni Papyrus", p. 54, on the means for maintenance of the purity of the offerings and variations in the food items as a result of simplification.

tion. Hence the increasing popularity of fruits as the main item proffered. During each offering, an oil lamp is present on the right side of the priest.

An earlier Navsari practice, no longer prevalent, involved preparing a relish called *vaghār* or onion and ghee (clarified butter) on the evening before the *anjumanī gāhāmbār* or congregational feast by the communal elders wearing *jāma-pichhōrī* or ceremonial white robe and sash at the Khurshed Wādī or feast garden founded in honor of Ervad Khurshedji Tehmulji Desai, an illustrious leader of the eighteenth century C.E. The *vaghār* mixture, fried in oil, also contained turmeric, garlic, and cumin and was used to flavor brown rice for the food offering during the *Stūm* ritual associated with the *gāhāmbār*. The *tan-dorostī* (a set of Pazand dedicatory passages) was recited in honor of the congregation by all persons present. That Navsari food offering derives from an older Iranian custom. It is recorded, for example, that rue (N.Pers. *sedōw*) was sent from Iran to India by the *dastūrān* or chief priests of Yazd via the Parsi emissary Bahman Asfandyar around the year 1627 C.E. for use in preparation of the *anjumanī gāhāmbār*. In Iran, when the first cauldron for that feast was placed on the stove, priests would be present and their leader would pour in milk, rue, and vinegar, among other food items. The practice continued at Sharifabad during the early 1960s, when rue, turmeric, garlic, cumin, coriander, pepper, and salt would be fried, then vinegar and water added, and the resulting preparation eaten with mint and bread as a ceremonial meal—called *sīr o sedōw*—associated with Sraosha and supposedly first prepared by the legendary Yima Xshaeta or Jamsheed to stifle Angra Mainyu's voracious appetite.[29]

Another traditional feature of the Parsi version of the *Stūm* ritual was to set aside, in a dish, a small portion of each food offering either for family dog(s), dogs living at fire temples and funerary sites, or even stray dogs. This meal for the dog (P.Gj. *kutrā-nō būk*), done not only after rites but even after regular meals, acknowledged the role of canines in Zoroastrian rites—such as funerary ones—and eschatology. Hence, on the occasion of the *Stūm* it is proffered in the name of soul and spirit of the person for whom the ritual was conducted. Moreover, the dog's importance is acknowledged by feeding it first, even prior to the priests and laity. Among traditionalist villagers at Sharifabad in Iran, during the early

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[29] B.B. Patell, *Parsee Prakash*, vol. 1 (Bombay, 1888), pp. 12–13; M. B. Belsare, *An Etymological Gujarati-English Dictionary* (Ahmedabad, 1895), p. 687; and Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, p. 42.

1960s, a meal for the dog (N.Pers. *cum-i šwa*) prepared by the householder would be presented on many ritual occasions including the *gahāmbār* feasts.[30] Alternatively, the same food would be given to destitute persons.[31] Now, however, the rite of ceremonially feeding dogs is observed only infrequently by urban Zoroastrians of Iran, India, and elsewhere.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dastur Rustamji Behramji Sanjana of Surat (1720–1791 C.E.) composed New Persian couplets written in the Gujarati script, before describing the *Stūm* in his manuscript of the complete or *Tamām Khorde Avesta*, instructing:

navīsam satumī ayā kārdān
  ba har xāna cun ruzgār-i ravān
bi-āyad dar ān xāna yak mōbadī
  wa yā pāk u pākīza tan hirbudī
bi-āyad ki bar xordanī-yi ravān
  bi-xānad mar īn rā ba šīrīn zabān
pas az xāndan-i īn satumī tamām
  xōrd jumla behdīn-i pāk ān tamām
gar az niyat-i īzadī xōrdanī
  pazīda kasī muflisō yā yanī
bar ān xōrdanī nīz xāndan ravāst
  ki īn hukm-i dīnast u qaul-i xudāst

"O intelligent one the *Stūm* is written (for) when the soul's death anniversary occurs in every house. A *mōbed* or *ērvad* of pure and holy body should come into that house. He should come (and) recite this (*Stūm*) with a sweet voice over the food for the soul. After recitation of this complete *Stūm*, all pure good religionists must eat that (food) completely. Whether an indigent person or a rich one cooked the food in honor of a divine entity (matters not). It is proper to recite (the *Stūm*) over the food, for this is the commandment of the religion and the word of God."[32]

It should be clear that the *Staomi* or *Stūm* ritual was developed as a means of praising the soul and the immortal spirit of each Zoroastrian. It is intended as a soliloquy of remembrance that links the present to the past and the future, uniting the living with the dead. Devotees may remember as many names of the deceased as wished. Thereby, the ritual

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[30] Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 44, 55, 143–146, 218, 224.
[31] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, p. 404.
[32] Ed. K. Dadabhay (Bombay, 1902[4]), pp. 477–478.

manifests Zoroastrian beliefs in the life and the afterlife of the soul and the immortality of the spirit, and reminds the congregation that thoughts, words, and deeds should be directed at ensuring righteousness during life and salvation after death.

ABBREVIATIONS

Av.	Avestan
Gj.	Gujarati
IE.	Indo-European
N.Pers.	New Persian, particularly the Zoroastrian Dari dialect
O.Pers.	Old Persian
P.Gj.	Parsi Gujarati
Phl.	Pahlavi
Pz.	Pazand
Skt.	Sanskrit

THE BĀJ-DHARNĀ (DRŌN YAŠT)
AND ITS PLACE IN ZOROASTRIAN RITUALS

Ramiyar P. Karanjia

Rituals play an essential role in the living Zoroastrian faith. They are an integral part of the philosophy of religion and are woven into the fabric of the daily religious lives. Zoroastrian theology sees two primeval, primordial principles of Good and Evil working in the world. If man has to progress and prosper, then he has to remain on the side of the good, not only because that is the right thing to do, but also because it fortifies him against the onslaught of evil and empowers him to actively fight evil. Rituals are one of the chief means given by the religion to fulfil that purpose. They enhance the good, inhibit the power of evil and protect the good from its onslaught. Moreover, rituals also have the power to consecrate the mundane in order to elevate it to the pedestal of being worthy for the sacred.

Another important purpose of Zoroastrian rituals is an eschatological one. Laities enjoin the priests to perform rituals, on payment of certain fees (which till the last century used to be more in kind, than in cash), in memory of dear departed ones on particular occasions like death anniversaries.

Rituals have always been held sacrosanct in Zoroastrian religion. Contrary to the theory for ritual, by T.W. Jennings, that there should be continual emendation of ritual practice to reflect our changing knowledge, Zoroastrian rituals undergo negligible variation through time and that too out of necessity.[1] The changes are not wilfully executed to reflect change in knowledge, but are more a result of change in circumstances.

In India, Zoroastrian rituals are classified into two groups, variously referred to as the Outer and Inner rituals, Higher and Lower rituals or Major and Minor rituals. Though the Bāj-dharnā is generally regarded as belonging to the group of Inner rituals, along with rituals like the Yasna, Visperad and Vendidād, there are some disagreements as to its exact place in Zoroastrian rituals. The final section of this paper considers the criteria which determine the place of Bāj-dharnā in Zoroastrian rituals.[2]

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[1] R.G. Williams/J.W. Boyd, *Ritual Art and Knowledge* (South Carolina, 1993), p. 134.
[2] This paper is a part of a much larger study on the ritual.

I. THE TERM *BĀJ-DHARNĀ*

The word 'Bāj-dharnā' is the colloquial Parsi Gujarati term for the ritual previously known as the *Drōn Yašt*. In Pahlavi this ritual is also referred to as *wāz-grift̄an, yašt-ī-drōn, drōn yaštan* and *gōšōdāg yaštan*[3] or simply *drōn*.[4] In New Persian books, especially the Rivāyats, the *Bāj-dharnā* is referred to as *bāj-ī-nān*.[5] In the Iranian tradition it was referred to as *yašt-ī-barsom*, or just *drōn*. The Indian tradition often refers to it just as *bāj*. In Parsi priestly parlance it is known as *drōn chāšni* or *gōšodō bhantar*.[6] Amongst certain inner circle of priests it is also referred to as the *vispaēšqm* or *gāuš hudāo*.[7] An old manuscript, which has colophons in Old Gujarati and Pazand, has the word *Drōn Yašt* in Pazand and the word *Bāj-dharnā* in Gujarati for this ritual.[8]

Each of the above terms used for the Bāj-dharnā refers to a requisite or aspect of the ritual, which will be further explained later on. In this article, the term *Bāj-dharnā* will be uniformly used, and the term *Drōn Yašt* will be used when the original references necessitates it.

The term *Bāj-dharnā* is made up of two components. The first component *bāj*, has multifarious meanings and variegated functions in the Zoroastrian tradition.[9] Often, just this first part of the compound by itself is used to signify the ritual.

The second component of the compound *dharnā,* is a Gujarati word, which means "holding, taking" (Phl. *griftan*, N.P. *griftan*). The word *dharnā* signifies that the priest performing the ritual 'holds' the 'ritual observance' to consecrate the items offered in the ritual. The Gujarati

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[3] P. Gignoux, *Le livre d'Ardā Virāz* (Paris, 1984), ch. 3.11

[4] A.V. Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg,* 2 vols. (Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskap Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser 60 Part 2; Copenhagen, 1990), ch. 9.2, p. 17 etc.

[5] M. Boyce/F.M. Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *bāj* and *drōn*" 1–2, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34, 1971, pp. 56–73, 325–343; p. 65.

[6] Boyce/Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *bāj* and *drōn*", p. 64.

[7] *vispaēšqm* is a key word in one of the variations of invocation of the Bāj-dharnā ritual, whereas the words *gāuš hudāo* are recited several times in all performances of the Bāj-dharnā. The priests, in their parlance, used to give names for rituals like the one above. Other instances are *vispāos, ašāunqm, gaomaēzəm* and *nəmascā* for the Stum, Yasna, Vendidad and Bareshnum rituals respectively.

[8] J.J. Modi, "An Old Manuscript of the Kitāb-ī Darūn Yasht", id., *The Cama Oriental Institute Papers* (Bombay, 1928), pp. 6–25; pp. 6 f.

[9] See Boyce/Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *bāj* and *drōn*", pp. 56–60.

word for the ritual, thus, is a translation of Pahlavi *wāz-griftan* one of the Pahlavi terms used for the ritual.

The word *Bāj-dharnā* is also used technically in a secondary sense by Zoroastrian priests to signify the set of Avestan texts which follow the texts of Visperad and Vidēvdād proper while performing the respective rituals. These texts closely approximate the texts recited during the Bāj-dharnā ritual.[10] When the word *Bāj-dharnā*, is used in this secondary sense, the entire word is used, and a single component by itself is never independently used.

II. THE BĀJ-DHARNĀ RITUAL

In India, the Bāj-dharnā is performed several times on a daily basis in almost all fire-temples. Not only is it an invariable preliminary requisite for all Inner rituals (including performance of the Bāj-dharnā itself), it is also a part of the quartet of rituals performed in memory of departed ones on the Chāhrōm (fourth day), Dasmā (tenth day), Sīrōzā (thirtieth day) Māsisā (first month), Rojgār (subsequent monthly commemorations), Chhamsi (sixth month), Varsi (first death anniversary), subsequent death anniversaries, as also on other important days of the Zoroastrian calendar such as the Parabh[11], Gāhāmbār, and Fravardegān days. It is generally performed at the behest of the laity in memory of their departed ones. It is also performed for several different purposes, with variations in dedicatory formulae, depending on the day, purpose and event of performance.

1. Purposes and invocations

The Baj-dharnā fulfils several ritual, theological and social purposes. A study of the various purposes of its performance reveals the paramount importance of this ritual and the important place it held and holds among Zoroastrian rituals. It also reveals some present and some forgotten Zoroastrian customs, festivals and observances. However, primarily the Bāj-dharnā is performed for consecration and commemoration.

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[10] N.K. Bhesania, *Vendidād bā Nirang* (Mumbai, 1893), pp. 383–390; P.K. Rabadi, *Vendidād bā Nirang* (Mumbai, 1885), pp. 489–503.

[11] Snsk. *parva* "festival". These occur when the day (roz) and the month (māh)in the Parsi calendar are dedicated to the same divine being, for instance the day dedicated to the divine being Mihr comes in the month dedicated to Mihr.

An old Manuscript dating 1119 A.Y. mentions 65 different kinds of invocations for the Bāj-dharnā. Moreover from the same manuscript it seems that some of these were introduced later on in India from Iran during the period of Rivāyats.[12]

2. Duration

Presently in India, it takes about twenty to thirty minutes for the performance of a Bāj-dharnā. Though it is generally performed daily in most fire-temples at the instance of the laity, priests have to first perform it for their own selves, before they can perform it on behalf of others.[13]

3. Qualifications

In India, till the 1940s, only priests observing the ritual power of the Barešnum were able to perform the Bāj-dharnā.[14] Since then, this restriction has been relaxed and a priest can perform it even without this ritual power. However, in the olden times, as today, the performance of daily obligatory prayers before the consecration of Bāj-dharnā is a must. No excuses, not even a physiological drawback was allowed to overlook this injunction.[15]

4. Merit

In merit this ritual was considered lesser than the Yasna. In fact, when the Yasna ritual went wrong somehow or errors were committed in its performance, its merit decreased to that of a Drōn Yašt.[16]

5. Timing

As a rule, the Bāj-dharnā can be performed in any gāh, that is, at any time of the day. However some of its performances are restricted to specific gāhs only. For instance, the performance for the Panj-tāe could be performed only in the Hāvan, Rapithwin or Uzirin gāh.

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[12] Modi, "An Old Manuscript of the Kitāb-ī Darūn Yasht", pp. 9, 10.

[13] Such a performance is technically referred to as the *nāni khub* "the shorter performance for ritual power".

[14] H.M. Pavri, *Bājdharnāne lagti pāvmehelni kriyāo* (Bombay, 1938), p. 55; Ms. K17, p. 1; Ms.J4, p. 1.

[15] B.T. Anklesaria, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag-srōš*, 2 vols. (Bombay, 1969), ch. 146.2.

[16] F.M. Kotwal/Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, vol. 2, *Nērangestān, Fragard I* (Paris, 1995), p. 18.

Manuscript J4 altogether omits giving the Aiwisruthrem gāh, from which it can be deduced that some priests were not in favour of performing any variation of the ritual in the Aiwisruthrem gāh, that is, from sunset to midnight. Most of the other manuscripts however, give all the five gāhs which means that they were not against the practice of performing most variations of this ritual at any time of the day.

Though the Nērangestān categorically states that the Drōn Yašt can be performed into the beginning of the night, that is, in the Aiwisruthrem gāh,[17] modern Parsi practice avoids the performance of all Inner rituals, at this time.[18]

6. Posture

Priests performing the Bāj-dharnā could either sit or stand during the ritual. Presently, priests of the Sanjana diocese prefer to sit and perform it, however priests of the Bhagaria and other diocese prefer to stand and perform the ritual. In the past, priests were expected to stand during the whole of the ritual except the beginning and end, when the major ritual actions were performed.[19] If a priest was not able to stand during the entire ritual, he was expected to stand during the passages which were recited twice and thrice, while reciting the invocatory formulae *(xšnumans)* and a section of *īθā āat āat yazamaide*.[20] But, if that too was not possible, then he was permitted to sit and perform the ritual.[21]

III. REQUISITES FOR THE BĀJ-DHARNĀ

1. Drōn

The drōn is an inevitable requisite in all inner rituals, including the Bāj-dharnā. The word *drōn* is variously rendered into English as "sacred bread", "sacramental bread", "unleavened round bread",[22] "unleavened

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[17] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, p. 117.

[18] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, p. 117, fn. 412.

[19] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, ch. 58. 27, 28, pp. 97 f.

[20] Ch. 3 of the text of the Bāj-dharnā.

[21] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, p. 75.

[22] J.J. Modi, *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis* (Bombay, 1922), pp. 335, 279.

wheat bread made into thin round cakes", "unleavened bread",[23] "consecrated bread",[24] "sacred cake",[25] etc.

Presently only one drōn is used in the performance of all Inner rituals, except for the Bāj-dharnā wherein four or six drōns are used for each performance. Under the term drōn, three similar types of preparations are used in the Bāj-dharnā:

a) Drōn: It is the unleavened bread with nine marks on it. It looks like a small flat bread (chapāti for Indians), about 0.5 mm. in breadth. Pahlavi and Persian texts consider the round drōn as a metaphor for the world, with its edge representing Mount Harborz. The flat middle section of the drōn is used to symbolise men, cattle and plants.[26]

b) Frasast: Plain unleavened drōn without any markings on it.

c) Chityā: Chityā are the smaller unmarked drōn (frasast), about 3 inches in diameter. They are used specifically for the Bāj-dharnā of Panjtāe which is performed for acquiring ritual power (Guj. amal) for performing other rituals. The Rivāyats describe them as having almost one-third the weight of the frasast.

2. Gōšodāg

The word gōšodāg (Av. gāuš huδā̊ "of the well-created cow") signifies a representative offering from the animal kingdom. Generally clarified butter (Guj. ghī) is used in the Bāj-dharnā and it is partaken in the end by the priest while doing the chāšni. Nowadays, a small teaspoonful of gōšōdāg is placed on the drōn in the middle.

3. Urvar

Urvar (Av. uruuara) signifies a ritual requisite referring to vegetables and fruits like pomegranate, date fruit, plantain or raisins. In the olden times herbs (Phl. spraham), fruits/vegetables (Phl. tarrag) and dry-fruits (Phl. mēvag) were also used as urvar.

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[23] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, p. 246.

[24] Boyce/Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *bāj* and *drōn*", p. 64.

[25] S.J. Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, Engl. translation with notes (Bombay, 1915), p. 86.

[26] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, p. 92, ch. 56.1.

4. Āp

The word *āp* refers to water (Av. *āpa*) used for the ritual. Water for use in any Zoroastrian ritual has to be collected from a moving source of water like the river, stream or well and never from a stagnant source. Water thus collected passes through stages of ritual purification at the commencement of the ritual, and only such ritually purified water is used for the ritual.

Water is used during the Bāj-dharnā ritual for washing hands and cleaning utensils. It is also consecrated and used later for dipping the drōn and sipping during the ritual tasting. For washing and cleaning, it is filled in larger metallic utensils (Guj. *kahārnu* and *kalašyā*) and for ritual tasting it is used in a smaller metallic utensil (Guj. *fulyu*).

5. Esm-bōy

The word *esm* (Av. *aēsma* "wood, fuel") and *bōy* (Av. *baoiδi* "incense, fumigation") indicate three pieces of firewood with lumps of incense over it which are used during the ritual. Presently, as in the past,[27] they are placed on a stone slab on the ground, on the right hand side of the hindholā on which the fire-vase is placed. The three pieces of fire wood symbolise good thoughts, words and deeds.[28]

6. Barsom (Tāe)

Barsom are thin metallic rods (Guj. *tāe;* Phl. *tāk, tāg, tāe*; NP *tāk*) which are used in all inner rituals: the Yasna, Visperad, Vidēvdād and the Bāj-dharnā.[29] In the past, twigs from trees were used as barsom. The Avesta refers to such barsom as *uruuarā baresman*. Any type of tree was permissible, provided it did not have perforations on its trunk.[30] Later the twigs of trees were replaced by thin metallic rods. This development is reflected in some Bāj-dharnā manuscripts as they include rituals for obtaining and tying both types of barsom.

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[27] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, p. 97, ch. 58.20.

[28] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, p. 93, ch. 56.7.

[29] See R.P. Karanjia, "Barsom in the Bāj-dharnā", *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Anders Hultgård zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 23.12.2001*, eds M. Stausberg/O. Sundqvist/A. van Nahl (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 31; Berlin/New York, 2001), pp. 464–470.

[30] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, p. 433.

Presently, the consecrated barsom can be re-used thrice-that is, the initial portion of the Bāj-dharnā where specific passages are recited while tying the chain on the barsom may be omitted-provided the dedicatory formula does not contain the secondary invocation starting with the word *vispaēšām*.

7. Aiwyāonghan

Aiwyāonghan (Av. *aiwyå̊ŋhana* "[that which is] tied around") is either a date palm leaf or metallic chains (Guj. *sānkli*) tied around to secure the rods (tāe) of the Barsom. Presently in the Bāj-dharnā the use of date palm leaf has been discontinued, and only two metallic chains of unequal length are used. The longer chain is about 18 inches and the shorter one about 12 inches. When the tāe are tied with a date palm leaf, only one leaf is used. The reason for using two chains seems to be that metallic chains on metallic barsom rods tend to slip, and hence double chains are used for better grip.

8. Metallic utensils

The following metallic utensils are required for the performance of a Bāj-dharnā.

a) Kahārnu: A large metallic pot used to draw out water from the well. It usually stores about 5 to 6 litres of water. It is kept on the *hind-holā* and water from it is used to refill the metallic urn.

b) Kalashyā: A small metallic water container, which stores about a litre of water. Water from it is used to wash hands as well as other ritual requisites. It is re-filled several times from the larger metallic pot (Kahārnu).

c) Fulyu (Phl. *āb-gīr*): A small metallic cup, which holds a couple of drafts of water. It is used to place water for the purpose of ritual tasting and sipping. It is placed next to the Drōn-tray.

d) Khumchā (Phl. *drōn sazāk*): The tray in which drōn, frasast and other ritual requisites are placed. It is about ten to twelve inches in diameter, and is ritually purified before the requisites are placed in it.

e) Langri; (Phl. *padišxwar*): A deep tray used if there are any additional edible (plantains, boiled eggs etc.) or inedible (clothes, etc.) offerings to be placed in the Bāj-dharnā. It does not form a part of the regular requirement of the ritual.

f) A metallic knife (optional): It was generally used to cut the date-palm leaf, when it was to be used as *aiwyāonghan*. Nowadays, since me-

tallic chains are used as *aiwyāonghan*, the knife is not required for the ritual.

9. Fire

As in all Zoroastrian rituals, fire plays an important role in the Bāj-dharnā ritual too. It is placed on a metallic fire-vase (G. *afargānyu*) upon the hindholā (Phl. *urvis*).

However, it seems that in olden times, fire was not an integral and indispensable requirement of this ritual. Manuscripts of the ritual categorically give two distinct prayer formulae which have to be recited alternatively in the presence or absence of a fire.[31] Still, it seems that the presence of fire was necessary in certain types of invocation.[32]

10. Demarcated place

Like all other Inner rituals, the Bāj-dharnā is performed in a place enclosed by furrows on the ground, called *pāvis*. A room adjoining the fire-temple, having permanently marked furrows on the ground, known as the *urvis gāh*, is the place where such rituals are performed. If the Bāj-dharnā is to be performed outside the *urvis gāh*, the place has to be specially cleaned, washed and marked with temporary pāvis, generally made of sand.

IV. RITUAL ACTS PERFORMED DURING THE BĀJ-DHARNĀ

Several ritual actions have to be performed during the performance of the Bāj-dharnā. Some of them precede the performance of the ritual proper. Each of the diverse ritual actions is an invariable and integral component of the ritual as a whole.

1. Ritual cleansing of requisites

The metallic ritual implements including *kalashyā, kahārnu, fulyu, tāe* and *sānkli* have to be first washed (Guj. *sāf*) and then made ritually clean (Guj. *chokkhā*). First the priest takes two *kalashyā* (or one *kahārnu* and one *kalashyā*) and washes them with water drawn from well. Then he subjects them to the second grade of cleansing, by the threefold washing

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[31] Ms. J4, pp. 11, 19, 24, 32.

[32] Modi, "An Old Manuscript of the Kitāb-ī Darūn Yasht", p. 22.

with water from the well and thus makes them ritually clean. He then fills them with well water and brings them within the '*pāvi*' and places them either on the *hindholā* or in the *khumchā*.

Thereafter he takes a *fulyu*, five *tāe* and two *sānkli*, which too are subjected to the first two types of washings, and places them within the *pāvi* next to the *kalashyā*.

2. Placing of *ēsm-bōy*

The priest keeps the fire-vase on the ground on the right hand side, places a slab of stone[33] to its right and puts three fire-wood pieces (*ēsm*) on it, with a small lump or a few grains of incense (*bōy*) on each of the three fire-wood pieces.

3. Ritually purifying the *kalashyā*

The priest places both the *kalashyās* (or one *kahārnu* and one *kalashyā*), filled with well water, on the ground or on a *khumchā*.[34] Then he picks up the *kahārnu* or a *kalashyā*, which is previously filled with well water, and pours the water, while reciting certain textual passages, into the second water filled *kalashyā*. This is done in such a way that the water overflows.

4. Action for ritually purifying the left hand, tāe and sānkli

The priest takes the five metallic *tāe* of the barsom and the two *sānkli* in his left hand. In his right hand he holds the *kalashyā* from outside, and while reciting certain Avestan texts, pours water over his left hand holding the *tāe* and the *sānklis* thus making his hands and the requisites ritually pure.

Then he keeps his left hand uptil the wrist along with the *tāe* and *sānklis* in the *kalashyā*.[35] Thereafter, while thus holding the *kalashyā*, he pours water over the right hand while reciting certain Avestan texts.

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[33] Pavri, *Bājdharnāne lagti pāvmehelni kriyāo*, p. 51.

[34] As per the practise of Sanjana priests from Udwada, the two *kalashyās* (or one *kahārnu* and one *kalashyā*), are placed on the *hindholā*.

[35] As the left hand is ritually pure, it cannot hold the *kalashyā*, which is not ritually pure, from outside.

5. Tying of the *aiwyāonghana*

The priest holds the *tāe* of the barsom in his left hand, and the two *sānk-lis* in his right. One end of the shorter *sānkli* should be held in the left hand along with the *tāes*. He then recites certain Avestan passages and ties the chains one after another.

6. Glancing at the ritual requisites

During the course of the ritual the words *gāuš huδå āpē urvar aēsma baoiδi* occur several times in the text. Whenever these words occur, the priest is supposed to glance at the clarified butter, water, fruits, fuel and incense respectively.

7. Ritual tasting

The priest partakes of the drōn and frasast in the ritual with or without water, fruits and other edible requisites. This ritual tasting is called *chāšni*. During the end of the ritual, the tasting is done five times and then water is sipped. After the ritual is over, the individual/family at whose behest the ritual is performed, and other members of the congregation also do the *chāšni*.

The partaking of *chāšni* is considered an act of great merit, as it implies that the partaker has actively participated in the ritual. The ritual tasting by the laity is either done in the place where the ritual is performed, or the drōns are sent to the house of the persons who had requested the performance of the ritual. The person who takes the consecrated items, and the persons who eats them, have to be Zoroastrians.

V. TEXTUAL STRUCTURE OF THE BĀJ-DHARNĀ

The performance of the Bāj-dharnā comprises of the recitation of Avestan and Pazand texts. These texts include certain variable components, both in Avestan and Pazand, inserted at several places. These variable components are invocatory formulae (Phl. *xšnuman*) in honour of divine beings to whom the performance of the Bāj-dharnā is dedicated.

Thus, the texts recited during the Bāj-dharnā constitute 1. A fixed text, and 2. variable texts.

1. Fixed text

a) Introductory portion

The fixed text of the Bāj-dharnā contains an introductory portion made up of short formulae to accompany ritual actions and the *Dibācheh*. This is a Pazand prayer in which departed ones are remembered by their names. It forms an integral part of all Zoroastrian rituals.

b) Main text

The main text of the Bāj-dharnā is sourced from chapters 3 to 8, 23 and 26 of the Yasna. The main text has a shorter variation and a larger one. The larger variation has additional paragraphs and an extra recitation of the *Dibācheh*.

The usage of either of the two versions of the main text depends on the invocatory formula recited within the main text of the Bāj-dharnā.

2. Variable texts

The variable texts are the different invocatory formulae inserted into the body of the main text at appropriate places, depending on the purpose for the performance of the Bāj-dharnā.

The invocatory formula to each divine being has three variations as follows:

a) Pazand
b) Shorter Avestan xšnuman
c) Larger Avestan xšnuman

The variable texts are sub-divided into two categories, distinguished by the inclusion of a secondary invocation beginning with the word *vīs-paēšąm*.

Those versions of the Bāj-dharnā wherein the secondary invocation is included are considered more important than the Bāj-dharnā belonging to the other category.[36] The barsom consecrated and tied in the performance of a Bāj-dharnā with such an invocation, cannot be re-used for the performance of another Bāj-dharnā. The variable texts pertaining to the following invocations belong to this category:[37]

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[36] F.M. Kotwal/J.W.Boyd, "Some notes on the Parsi Bāj of Mihragān", *Journal of Mithraic Studies* 1, 1976, pp. 187–192, p. 188.

[37] R.D. Meherjirana, *Āfringāno, Āfrīno, Fravaši Stōmnā kardā sāthe, temaj Bāj-dharnu sāthe* (Bombay, 1954), p. 65.

1. Dae-pa-ādar rōz	5. Sīrōzā	9. Haft Amšāspand
2. Dae-pa-mihr rōz	6. Xordād Sāl	10. Panj-tāe or Hamkāra
3. Dae-pa-dēn rōz	7. Avardād Sāl Gāh	11. Panth
4. Dahm	8. Rapithwin	12. Šahen

Though the invocations for the divine beings Ardāfravash, Gāthā and Mēnōg Nāvar do not contain the secondary invocatory formula of *vīspaēšąm*, they too belong to this category.

There was a time, when Iranian priests were of the opinion that the Bāj-dharnā with invocations containing the secondary invocation cannot be consecrated in the tenth month (Dae) of the Zoroastrian calendar. However, priests in India do not maintain such a distinction.[38]

The differences maintained for these two types of variable texts may be due to the fact that the invocatory formulae with a secondary invocation contain venerations to more than one divine being.

VI. NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE BĀJ-DHARNĀ

The history of the Bāj-dharnā or Drōn Yašt as a ritual goes back at least to Sasanian times (3rd to 7th centuries C.E.). Apart from the short Pahlavi text *Cim ī Drōn*, which exclusively deals with the Drōn Yašt, several Pahlavi texts either have chapters dedicated to it or have references to its performance. The *Ardā Virāz Nāmag* mentions the performance of various rituals among other consecration (Phl. *yašt*)[39] and the performance (Phl. *kard*),[40] of drōn.

The Bāj-dharnā was an essential ritual during the times when most of the Pahlavi texts were composed. The Nērangestān, an ancient ritualistic text in Avestan and Pahlavi,[41] mentions that "when there arises to a person no desire for the Holy Service of the sacred Drōn, that must be wrong."[42]

During Sasanian and post Sasanian times, the Drōn Yašt was a necessary and important ritual expected to be performed after death. The Pahlavi Rivāyats recommend the consecration of this ritual as the least one

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[38] Pavri, *Bājdharnāne lagti pāvmehelni kriyāo,* pp. 184–85.

[39] Gignoux, *Le livre d'Ardā Virāz,* ch. 1.15, 2.14, 3.11.

[40] Gignoux, *Le livre d'Ardā Virāz,* ch. 13.4, 17.3.

[41] On the Nērangestān, see also the paper by Ph. Kreyenbroek in this volume.

[42] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān,* p. 943.

could do to fulfil one's obligation towards a departed one.[43] In the Pahlavi Rivāyats, questions are often asked regarding performance of *Drōn Yašt*. Apart from stray references, entire chapters are dedicated to the *Drōn Yašt*.

The Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg, (9th/10th century c.e.)[44] refers to the Drōn as well as the Drōn Yašt at several places. In fact, chs. 56 and 58 of this text are exclusively devoted to this ritual and its requisites. Ch. 10 of Fragard I of the Nērangestān is very similar in contents to Ch. 58 (1–66) of the Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg, though the sequence of passages differ.[45]

In the *Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag*, belonging to the first half of the ninth century,[46] *Drōn Yašt* stands out as one of the most commonly performed ritual of those times, and also as an important component of after-death rituals. A study of this text throws interesting light on several aspects of the ritual.

The *Pahlavi Rivāyat of Farnabag-Srōš* is almost entirely devoted to the performance of drōn ritual. Bearing the date 1008 c.e.,[47] it is posterior to the previous Rivāyat almost by a century, but because of the preponderance of questions relating to the performance of drōn and related topics, it seems that either the importance of this ritual must have radically increased with the passage of time, or it may have become more intricate and difficult to perform. Of the thirty questions in this Rivāyat, eighteen are directly pertaining to the consecration of Drōn,[48] and seven to matters related to preparatory or related rituals.[49]

In the second paragraph of the Pazand Dibācheh, three rituals have been mentioned: the Yasna, Drōn (Yašt) and Myazd. Of these, the first two are well known and performed to this day. The last mentioned ritual, Myazd, seems to be the Āfrīngān ritual with minor variations.[50] The fact that Drōn Yašt finds a mention in this passage once again establishes it as one of the essential rituals performed in memory of departed ones.

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[43] Anklesaria, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag-srōš*, ch. 128.1.

[44] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, p. 8.

[45] A note of the above texts as well as the similar text of Cim ī Drōn has been made by K.M. Jamasp Asa,"On the Drōn in Zoroastrianism", *Papers in Honour of Prof. Mary Boyce* (Leiden, 1985), pp. 335–356.

[46] Anklesaria, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag-srōš*, p. 1.

[47] Anklesaria, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag-srōš*, p. 2.

[48] Pursišn I–III, VI–X, XII–XIV, XVIII–XXIII and XXX.

[49] Pursišn IV, V, XI, XV–XVII, XXIV.

[50] Pavri, *Bājdharnāne lagti pāvmehelni kriyāo,* p. 217.

VII. THE PLACE OF THE BĀJ-DHARNĀ AMONG ZOROASTRIAN RITUALS

In terms of ritual merit, the Bāj-dharnā is considered of lesser impor-
tance than other Inner rituals, the reasons perhaps being the derivative
text and the shorter duration of ritual and recitation. However, some Pah-
lavi texts place its importance in certain aspects even as greater to that of
the Yasna.[51] Since it is an essential pre-requisite for the performance of
other Inner rituals, it enjoys a central position in Zoroastrian rituals.

The performance of a Drōn Yašt is considered in merit equal to one
tanāpuhl[52] and its "wondrousness and victoriousness and power and
strength" is great enough to powerfully strike demons after sunset.[53]
However, if the Bāj-dharnā is caused to be performed by sinners, it
looses its efficacy and merit, and instead becomes a tool in the hands of
the evil.[54]

In ancient times the efficacy of the performance of the ritual differed
in accordance with the basic ritual requirements offered in it. For in-
stance, if the drōn was consecrated along with the gōšodāg, with the in-
vocation of Ohrmazd, its merit was considered 300 times greater than an
ordinary performance of the ritual.[55] However, presently, the drōn and
gōšodāg form the usual minimum requirements of this ritual, and the
invocation of Ohrmazd is one of the many invocations, and does not
proffer any special merits or increase the efficacy of the ritual.

As indicated earlier, in India, Zoroastrian rituals are classified into two
groups. It is not clear as to when this classification exactly came along. The
distinction is made on the basis of various criteria like ritual purity of the
performing priests, implements required for the performance, place of per-
formance, and the source of the text recited during the ritual. These two
groups are variously referred to as the Outer and Inner rituals (on the basis
of place of performance), Higher and Lower rituals (on the basis of ritual
purity required of the performer), Major and Minor rituals (supposedly on
the basis of the texts recited for the performance – the rituals included in
the scriptures of Yasna, Visperad and the Vidēvdād, are generally regarded
as the Major ones, and the rituals associated with the text of Khorde
Avesta and the Yašts are generally regarded as the Minor ones).

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[51] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, ch. 10.38, p. 71, fn. 180.

[52] A tanāpuhl (Av. *tanu-pərətha*) is a measure used in reference to virtues and sins.

[53] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, ch. 9.1–3, p. 17.

[54] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, ch. 43.8, p. 71.

[55] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, ch. 9.9, p. 17.

In Gujarati the two groups are referred to as 'Pāv-mahel' and 'Hush-mordi' rituals. This distinction is made on the basis of the place where the rituals are performed. The word 'Pāv-mahel' is derived from the word *pāvi*, which refers to furrows or grooves on the flooring used to demarcate ritually pure areas. There is a room adjoining the main hall in all Indian fire-temples, known as the 'urvis-gāh',[56] in which *pāvis* are permanently made to facilitate performance of rituals.

The distinction between two type of rituals, and the place of *Bāj-dharnā* in it, is very necessary from the priestly point of view in India, where presently, the 'Inner rituals' can be performed only by priests who have undergone the higher priesthood initiation of 'Marātab'. Those who have only undergone the basic initiation of Nāvar can only perform Outer rituals.

Though the rightful place of all other Zoroastrian rituals is clearly determined in either of the two groups of rituals, there has been no clear cut demarcation regarding the place of the Bāj-dharnā.

Two sets of rituals, the 'yašt ī meh' "the greater ritual service", and the 'yašt ī keh' "the shorter ritual service" are mentioned in Pahlavi.[57] From certain references it appears that the 'yašt ī meh' referred to the Yasna ritual and 'yašt ī keh' to the *Drōn Yašt*.[58]

At one place, a commentator refers to the Drōn Yašt as the 'yašt ī keh',[59] which gives the impression that it was either a narrowly used, but not the generally accepted nomenclature for the Drōn Yašt, or perhaps just one of the many understandings of that term. At another place in the same text, the 'yašt ī meh' is qualified by the phrase *ī srōd ī gāhān* "which (is) the chanting of Gathas",[60] which implies that the 'yašt ī keh' may be the recitation of the text of the Yasna, without the chanting of the Gathas, a usage attested to even in present times.[61] Such an abridged service is sometimes performed to impart ritual power to priests for per-

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[56] The term *urvis* refers to the stone seat on which a priest performing Inner rituals sits.

[57] Boyce/Kotwal, "Zoroastrian *bāj* and *drōn*", p. 64.

[58] Also see Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, unpublished Vol. 3 of Nirangistan, ch. 29.12, fn. 20, where the Drōn Yašt is referred to as the 'yašt i keh'. I thank Professor Kreyenbroek for sharing relevant paragraphs of the unpublished manuscript of the forthcoming book.

[59] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, ch. 9.9, p. 17.

[60] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, ch. 21a.10, 11, 14, 15, 17, p. 45.

[61] Dastur Kotwal states that the 'yašt ī keh' refers to the abridged version of the Yasna ritual dedicated to Minō Nāvar: – Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, p. 111, fn. 392.

formance of other Inner rituals. [62]

It also seems that in the olden times the dedicatory formulae for the 'yašt ī keh' and 'yašt ī meh' were different for the same divine being, at least in some cases. However, here we find that the lesser and greater services may both be the Yasna service in different forms as they include the recitations of chapters 65 and 68 of the Yasna.[63] This is however not the case now, as the dedicatory formulae in all rituals whether Inner or Outer is the same for all divine beings. A special number of barsom twigs (13) are instructed to be used in the 'yašt ī keh', which indicates it to be a ritual independent by itself.[64]

We shall now examine ten criteria for determining a Zoroastrian ritual as an Inner or Outer one, in order to ascertain the place of Bāj-dharnā:

1. It is generally maintained that a Marātab is necessary for performing the Bāj-dharnā ritual.[65] A senior and much respected priest from Navsari,[66] representing the oral tradition of yester years, maintains that Bāj-dharnā cannot be performed without a Marātab initiation, because he considers it to be an Inner ritual.

The present practice in India corroborates this tradition. However, in India, since the term *bājyo*, has evolved for a priest who has not become Marātab, it may mean that somewhere down the line the Bāj-dharnā may have been performed by priests having just the Nāvar initiation.[67]

2. The Panj-tāe performance of the Bāj-dharnā, also known as the *nāni khub*, "the shorter (performance for acquiring ritual) power"[68] forms the basis of all other Inner rituals. Its performance is invariable before the performance of any Inner ritual like the Yasna, Visperad or the Vidēv-dād, as it imparts the requisite 'ritual power' for the performance of other Inner rituals.

3. In the past few centuries, in manuscripts as well as in printed books, the text of Bāj-dharnā was grouped more often with the texts of Khorde Avesta and Āfrīngāns than with the texts of the Yasna, Visperad or

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[62] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, p. 127, fn. 4.

[63] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, pp. 380–383.

[64] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, p. 436.

[65] Modi, *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis*, p. 197.

[66] Mobed Erachsha E. Karkaria.

[67] Boyce/Kotwal, "Zoroastrian bāj and drōn", p. 67.

[68] This is in apposition to the *moti khub* "the larger (performance for acquiring ritual) power" referring to the performance of the Yasna ritual.

Vidēvdād. The former group of texts constitute the Outer rituals, whereas the latter group constitute the Inner rituals. This would prompt one to consider the 'Bāj-dharnā' as an Outer ritual.

4. The division can also be recognised on the basis of the texts for the rituals. Within one group are the rituals which have exclusive texts of their own, and in the other group rituals whose text/texts have been borrowed from texts of other rituals. Thus Āfrīngān Ardāfravaš is derived from *Fravardēn Yašt*, Āfrīngān Dahm and Āfrīngān for other divine beings from *Yasna* 60; Āfrīngān Srōš from *Srōš Yašt sar šab* I to III; Faroxši from *Yasna* 26, *Pazand Dibācheh* and *Fravardēn Yašht*; Stum from *Yasna* 26 and the *Pazand Dibācheh* etc. However, some Āfrīngāns like those of Gāhāmbār and Rapithwin have exclusive texts. In such a classification, Bāj-dharnā would belong to the group of Outer rituals like Āfrīngān, Faroxši and Stum, because like the texts recited in the above rituals, the text recited in the Bāj-dharnā has also been sourced from the text of the Yasna.

5. All inner rituals use the barsom, and use a drōn in its offerings. Both these are also essential requisites for the Bāj-dharnā. If one considers the place of Bāj-dharnā on the basis of ritual requisites, it would have to be included along with Yasna, Visperad and Vidēvdād, which are Inner rituals, since none of the Outer rituals utilise barsom or drōn as ritual requisites.

6. The Bāj-dharnā, unlike other Inner rituals can be performed by one priest alone, which may prompt one to consider it as an Outer ritual. In the past, however, more than one priest used to participate in the Bāj-dharnā performed for partaking meals.[69] Also, there is reason to believe that in the past, the Bāj-dharnā too was performed by two priests: Zōt (officiating priest) and Rāspīg (assisting priest).[70] There are references in the Nērangestān about there being a 'helping priest' along with the 'leading priest'. There was also a difference of opinion as to whether the 'helping priest' should make the ritual tasting of the drōn.[71] There are passages where the prayers to be recited by the 'leading priest' and 'helping priests' are discussed,[72] as also their positions with respect to the fire.[73] These 'helping priests' may have been seven, as described in

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[69] Modi, *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis*, p. 351.

[70] Ms. D-6 at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute, p. 15; Ms. J-4, pp. 30, 36.

[71] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, p. 95.

[72] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, pp. 103, 104.

[73] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, p. 364.

the Uzairin Gāh, since some of them like the Hāvanān, Frabortār and Sraŝoāvarez are also mentioned in the Nērangestān.[74]

7. Presently, the performance of Bāj-dharnā is restricted mainly to the ritual precincts where Inner rituals are performed. Even when its associate services of Āfrīngān, Faroxŝi, Jaŝn and Farestā are performed in places outside the precincts of the fire-temple, the corresponding Bāj-dharnā is performed in the *pāvis* within the fire-temple.

Most of the Gujarati books on Bāj-dharnā, brought out in the last century, have the word 'Pāv-mahel' in their title, which means "rituals performed inside specially demarcated precincts". All other rituals described in these texts are also Inner rituals, hence here again there is a strong reason to believe that Bāj-dharnā was expected to belong to the group of Inner rituals.

8. Though an essential after death ritual, the Bāj-dharnā is invariably not performed near the precincts of Tower of Silence (Dokhma), whereas its associate services of Āfrīngān and Faroxŝi can be performed over there.[75]

9. The period of the day (gāh) in which a ritual can be performed, is also an important indication as to which category that ritual belongs. As a rule, the Bāj-dharnā can be performed in any gāh, though some of its performances are restricted to specific gāhs only.

None of the outer rituals are performed in the Aiwisruthrem gāh, that is, from sunset to midnight. Though Ms. J4 altogether omits giving the Aiwisruthrem gāh for the performance of Bāj-dharnā, most other manuscripts give all the five gāhs, which means that this ritual, or at least some variations of this ritual, was permitted to be performed at any time, including the Aiwisruthrem gāh. The Nērangestān categorically states that the Drōn Yaŝt can be performed into the beginning of the night, that is, in the Aiwisruthrem gāh.[76] However, modern Parsi practice avoids the performance of the Bāj-dharnā at this time.[77]

10. Some books[78] and manuscripts[79] dealing with the Bāj-dharnā, state that only a priest holding the ritual power (Guj. *amal*) of the Bareŝnum

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[74] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, pp. 370, 371.

[75] R.D. *Meherjirana, Āfringāno, Āfrīno, Fravaŝi Stōmnā kardā sāthe, temaj Bāj-dharnu sāthe*, p. 95.

[76] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, ch. 19.11, p. 117.

[77] Kotwal/Kreyenbroek, *The Hērbēdēstān and Nērangestān*, p. 117, fn. 412.

[78] Bulsara, *Aērpatastān and Nīrangastān*, pp. 132, 145.

[79] Ms. K17, p. 1 (1682 C.E., Navsari, India), and Ms. J4, p. 1 (1822 C.E., Navsari, India).

can perform certain variations of the Bāj-dharnā. In India, till the 1940s, only priests observing the ritual power of the Barešnum were able to perform the Bāj-dharnā.[80] Since then, this restriction has been relaxed and a priest can perform the Bāj-dharnā even without this ritual power.

Moreover, as per the old tradition of the Bhagarias in Navsari,[81] a minimum of four Barešnum purifications should be undergone by the person who performs the Bāj-dharnā, (two at the time of Nāvar, one at the time of Marātab and then a special one to enable the priest to perform Inner rituals). He also maintains that the performer of Bāj-dharnā has to regularly wear the priestly attire and maintain the stringent rules of ritual purity in his daily life, like the priests performing other Inner rituals, to enable him to maintain the ritual power of the Barešnum.

We shall examine the above data in a tabular form. The sign '√' indicates that that criteria is present and the sign 'X' indicates that that criteria is absent from that particular group of rituals.

Criteria	Inner rituals	Outer rituals	Bāj-dharnā
1. Marātab initiation required	√	X	Unresolved
2. Base ritual (Panj-tāe) required	√	X	√
3. Incorporated with texts of Inner group	√	X	√(Mostly)
4. Contents of the text exclusive	√	X	X
5. Use of barsom and drōn as ritual requisites	√	X	√
6. Two priests invariable	√	X	√ (in the past) X (presently)
7. To be performed in Urvisgāh	√	X	√. (rare exceptions)
8. Can not be performed near the Towers of Silence	√	X	√
9. Can not be performed in the Aiwisruthrem gāh	√	X	√ (rare exceptions)
10. Power of Barešnum required in the past	√	X	√

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[80] Pavri, *Bājdharnāne lagti pāvmehelni kriyāo*, p. 55.
[81] Recounted by Mobed Erachsha E. Karkaria

Out of the above criteria, in five (2, 3, 5, 8, 10) Bāj-dharnā fits the category of Inner rituals, in one criteria (6) it has undergone a change, in two (7, 9) it has rare exceptions, in one (4) it fits the category of Outer rituals, and in one (1) it is unresolved. From the above one can draw a conclusion that the Bāj-dharnā should be covered under the group of Inner rituals.

VII. GLOSSARY

Āfringān : Name of an Outer ritual

Barešnum : The highest purificatory ritual, requiring a period of seclusion of nine days and nine nights, observation of restraint and strict rules of diet and purity.

Chāšni : Tasting of items consecrated in a ritual

Faroxši : Name of an Outer ritual

Fulyu (Guj.) : Small metallic cup in which water is kept to be used in rituals.

Gāh : Watch of the day. In Zoroastrian religion, a day is divided into 5 gāhs.

Hindholā (Guj.) : A stone stool about a foot high used either for placing ritual requisites or a fire-vase or for sitting by priests, during higher rituals.

Kahārnu (Guj.) : Large metallic pot in which water is stored for use in rituals.

Kalašyā (Guj.) : Medium sized metallic urn in which water is stored for use in rituals.

Khumchā : Metallic tray, about ten to twelve inches in diameter

Pāvi : Furrows or grooves on the flooring used to demarcate ritually pure areas for performance of Inner rituals.

Sānkli (Guj.) : Metallic chains used to tie the *tāe*.

Tāe (Guj.) : Thin metallic rods used in barsom

Xšnuman : Dedicatory formula

Yasna : Name of an Inner ritual

Yašts : Avestan prayers, generally in honour of individual divine beings

VIII. ABBREVIATIONS

Av.	Avestan	*N.P.*	New Persian
Guj.	Gujarati	*Phl.*	Pahlavi
Ms(s).	Manuscript(s)		

FIRES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF *ĀTAŠ BAHRĀMS*
IN THE ZOROASTRIAN TRADITION

Mario Vitalone

Fire occupies a central place in Zoroastrian devotional life. Considered to be the son of Ahura Mazdā, and closely associated with the divinity of Aša ('Truth', 'Order'), it is always present in the main liturgies and is greatly venerated and respected by the faithful.

Temples to the cult of fire, however, do not seem to have been instituted before the late Achaemenid period.[1] In none of the most ancient parts of the Avesta are fire temples spoken of, nor has any information in this sense reached us from archaeological discoveries.[2] Such references, on the other hand, are plentiful as far as the following Sasanian period is concerned: archaeological testimonies and epigraphic and literary documents testify to the widespread presence of fire temples in this period. Indeed, it is probably just in this period that the Zoroastrian priests gradually developed the differentiation of the temple fires into the three categories, which in the Islamic period were called *Ātaš Bahrām*, *Ādarān* and *Dādgāh*.

The distinctions between the three types of fire consist mainly of the different methods that are required for their constitution, consecration and maintenance.[3]

The ritual for the lesser grade fire, the *Dādgāh*, is very simple. It is enough to consecrate a single domestic fire, for which no particular

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[1] M. Boyce, "Ataš", *Encyclopædia Iranica* 1989, p. 1; cf. also M. Boyce, "On the Sacred Fires of the Zoroastrians", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 30, 1968, pp. 52–68.

[2] For a presentation of archaeological and literary information on the fire temples in ancient Iran, see K. Schippmann, *Die iranischen Feuerheiligtümer* (Berlin/New York, 1971).

[3] Whatever its grade, however, each fire constitutes a separate entity. It must not be allowed to go out and it cannot be divided up. Moreover, whereas a fire of a lesser grade cannot be raised to a higher grade, as this would require it to be separately established and consecrated, a fire of higher grade can, should it be impossible to comply with the more complex and demanding prescriptions required by its maintenance, be down-graded.

process of collecting or purification is required. After the building in-
tended to accommodate it has been purified, by washing it three times
with water, the domestic fire is placed inside the temple and this starts
off the consecration ceremony that lasts for four days. During the first
three days, the priests celebrate a *Yasna* in the morning and, after mid-
night, a *Vendidād*; with the celebration, on the fourth day, of a further
Yasna, the consecration ceremony is complete and the fire becomes
Dādgāh. Although the presence of priests is necessary for the consecra-
tion, the *Dādgāh* can subsequently also be cared for by a lay person and
does not require the *buy dādan*[4] ceremony to be carried out, it being
enough to make a simple offering of wood and incense,[5] or in any case a
much less complex form is carried out than that required for the first
grade fire.[6]

For the consecration of the second grade fire, the *Ātaš Ādarān*, four
kinds of domestic fires selected from four different social classes, i.e.
priests, soldiers, farmers and artisans are required. The individual fires
are purified by undergoing a process of nine successive kindlings re-
peated three times[7] and consecrated by celebrating a *Yasna* and a *Vendi-
dād* over them for two days; on the third day, the four fires are combined
into one and over this another *Yasna* and another *Vendidād* are cele-
brated; the following morning a further *Yasna* is recited and then the fire
is installed in solemn fashion in the temple. An *Ādarān* can be fed only
by a priest and the care it requires is not so intricate or complex as that
necessary for the *Ātaš Bahrām*.[8]

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[4] The religious service by which the fire is fed daily and which provides, among other
things, for a ritual offering, five times a day, of sweet-smelling wood. This ritual prac-
tice in India involves the use of sandalwood whereas in Iran preference is given to
pomegranate wood, followed by apricot wood or pistachio (M. Boyce, *A Persian
Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* [London, 1977], p. 75). For a detailed description of the
ceremony see J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bom-
bay, 1922), pp. 218–226; Y. Yamamoto, "The Zoroastrian Temple Cult of Fire in Ar-
chaeology and Literature 2", *Orient* 17, 1981, pp. 93–95.

[5] Boyce, "On the Sacred Fires of the Zoroastrians", p. 54.

[6] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 219–221.

[7] The purification process is substantially the same as that for the fires of which the
Ātaš Bahrām is composed, with a sole difference in the number of times the process has
to be repeated: a perforated ladle containing inflammable material is placed, at a certain
distance, above the fire until the heat causes the substance to burst into flame; the fire
produced in this way is placed next to the first fire and fed. When the preceding fire
grows cold, the process is repeated until the ninth kindling.

[8] It is not mandatory to keep the fire always burning with live flames, and the priests

For the latter, in fact, performance of the whole ceremony of the *buy dādan*, is required five times a day at the beginning of each of the five periods (*gāh*) into which the day is divided; the fire is kept burning brightly night and day and the priests who take care of it have necessarily to have passed the second degree of priesthood (*martab*) and have gone through the *barašnom* and *xub* ceremonies.[9] Only they are allowed to enter the room of the temple where the fire is located and no ceremony can be carried out or prayer recited that is not in honour of the fire itself.[10]

As far as the establishment of the *Ātaš Bahrām* is concerned, this extremely long and elaborate ritual consists, essentially, of the collecting, repeated purification, consecration, and final unifying of sixteen different kinds of fires.

THE AVESTAN AND PAHLAVI SOURCES

The eighth chapter of the *Vendidād* is generally related to the establishment procedures of the *Ātaš Bahrām*. Paragraphs 81–96, in particular, include a list of sixteen fires that it is considered meritorious to purify through a process of nine successive kindlings in order then to take them to what is defined by the *Vendidād* as the *dāitya gātu,* the 'appointed place'. These are fires, which have been made impure by the particular use that have been made of them, or which in any case are in a state of 'oppression'. The merit to be gained from freeing them or rescuing them is directly proportionate to the degree of impurity, or torment, that they have undergone. In a classification of this type, then, greater merit is to be acquired by rescuing a fire that has burned a corpse and lesser merit by purifying the fire of one's own hearth. The similarity between this list and the sixteen fires that are used for founding the *Ātaš Bahrām* is considerable as we shall see further on, but it seems, nevertheless, that no

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can also feed the fire with their bare hands. (Boyce, "On the Sacred Fires of the Zoroastrians", p. 54).

[9] The *barašnom* is the major ritual of purification, whose effect lasts until personal or external causes are verified (for example, non compliance with certain dietary rules or entering into contact with impure substances or persons), which would invalidate it. With the *xub*, which consists of reciting the whole *Yasna*, the priest acquires the 'ritual power' (*'amal*) necessary for carrying out certain liturgical services; it lasts four days, unless invalidating phenomena occurred earlier.

[10] Boyce, "On the Sacred Fires of the Zoroastrians", p. 53.

direct dependent relationship can be established between the prescriptions of the *Vendidād* and the procedures for establishing the sacred fire.

Unequivocal references to the procedures for the establishment of the *Ātaš Bahrām* are contained in a Pahlavi work of post-Sasanian compilation that is known as *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*,[11] dated between the last part of the ninth century and the first quarter of the tenth. This text, according to Williams,[12] contains material that seems to derive directly from knowledge of the Pahlavi versions, both oral and written, of the Avesta, as well as from original material that it is not possible to find in other sources. Furthermore, this may be considered the model on which the later Persian *revāyats* were based.

The *Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* dedicates part of Chapter 18 (18e1–18e24) to the methods for establishing the *Ātaš Bahrām*, dwelling (18e1–18e2) above all on the characteristics and the total number of fires to be collected:

> (In) one place (it is) revealed: "When someone establishes a Victorious Fire, the greatest possible number of fires which are unprotected and untended should be collected by him"

> There was an authority who said thus: "1,001 should be collected."[13]

What follows, then, is a list of fourteen kinds of fire that it is necessary to gather (18e6–18e19) and the laying down of some rules for the maintaining of the fire, such as the offering of fat[14] and its feeding with wood and incense (18e20–18e21).

It is perhaps relevant to give the list of fires in parallel with those of the *Vendidād*:

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[11] A.V. Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (Copenhagen, 1990).

[12] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, vol. 1, pp. 8–9.

[13] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, vol. 2, p. 38.

[14] On the ritual offering of fat to the fire, *ātaš-zōhr*, and the occasions on which it was performed, see M. Boyce, "Ātaš-zōhr and āb-zōhr", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3–4, 1966, pp. 100–118.

	Vendidād	*Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*[15]
1.	Fire in which dead matter has been burnt	The first fire which must be collected is the one threatened with cooking carrion
2.	Fire in which impure liquid has been burnt	And the second that by which unclean matter is cooked
3.	Fire in which dung has been burnt	And the third that by which filthy dung is baked
4.	Fire from the kiln of a potter	The fourth that by which pots are fired
5.	Fire from a glazier's kiln	The fifth that by which bricks are baked
6.	Fire from *aonyaṯ parō.bərəjyāṯ* [16]	
7.	Fire from goldsmiths	The sixth that from goldsmiths
8.	Fire from silversmiths	The seventh (from) silversmiths
9.	Fire from blacksmiths	
10.	Fire from steel-workers	The eighth from swordsmiths
11.	Fire of an oven	The ninth from ovens
12.	Fire from under a cauldron	The tenth from cauldrons
13.	Fire from *aonyaṯ taxairyāṯ* [17]	
14.	Fire from the way of shepherds	The eleventh from donkey-drovers and villagers
		The twelfth from musicians (who play) before noblemen
15.	Fire from the (army) camp	The thirteenth from brave horsemen
16.	Fire from the nearest fire	The fourteenth from other work

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[15] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, vol. 2, p. 39.
[16] Meaning unkown.
[17] Meaning unkown.

It is not possible to ascertain with any certainty whether the list[18] and the proceedings described by the *Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dāde-stān ī Dēnīg* are a Sasanian inheritance or were developed during the Islamic period. The absence of references to elements that could lead to non-Zoroastrian contexts,[19] but above all the reference, in the paragraphs immediately following (18e22–18e24), to a figure that could be identi-fied as a founder of the fire leads us to assume that the first hypothesis is justified. The practice, in fact, of founding sacred fires even by single individuals is widely attested to in the Sasanian period,[20] while it is im-probable that it was current practice during the first centuries of the Arab conquest, in a period, that is to say, in which the gradual but inexorable spread of Islam proceeded at the same pace as the destruction, or trans-formation into mosques, of the fire temples.[21]

THE IRANIAN TRADITION

Quite apart from any transmission of a Sasanian practice, the *Pahlavi Rivāyat* certainly had a determining influence on the development of a subsequent tradition on procedures for the establishment of the *Ātaš Bahrām* as this has reached us, above all through the Persian *revāyats*;[22]

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[18] It should be noted that, differently from the texts of more recent tradition, the *Pah-lavi Rivāyat* does not indicate in what quantity each kind of fire has to be taken.

[19] In the subsequent tradition it is explicitly prescribed for some of the fires that they should be taken from fires belonging to followers of other religions, probably in the belief that such fires are more oppressed and thus the merit gained from rescuing them is the greater.

[20] Cf. Boyce, "On the Sacred Fires of the Zoroastrians", pp. 60–65.

[21] It was probably at the beginning of the eleventh century that the Zoroastrians were subjected to the destruction of the last great fire temples and of the great collections of their sacred books that still existed. Cf. M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London, 1979), pp. 161–162.

[22] Scrupulously preserved in India, the individual letters then provided the material for the compilation by seventeenth-century Parsi scholars of collections of *revāyats*. The most complete and systematically organized is the one carried out by Dārāb Hor-mazdyār, of which three autograph copies still exist: one was started in 1678 and com-pleted the following year, another was started in 1673–74 and completed in 1680–81 and the third was completed in 1692. It was of the latter that M.R. Unvala made his lithographed edition *Darab Hormazyar's Rivayat*, 2 vols. (Bombay, 1922), translated into English by B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and oth-ers. Their version with introduction and notes* (Bombay, 1932). For a list of the Persian

in other words, through the letters written by Zoroastrians in Iran in re-
sponse to questions mainly concerning matters of religious practice,
asked of them by Parsis of India between the end of the fifteenth century
(the first *revāyat* is dated 25 June 1478) and the end of the eighteenth
(the last *revāyat* is dated 18 April 1773).[23]

The rituals of establishing and consecrating the *Ātaš Bahrām* are
spoken about extensively in two *revāyats*: the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur[24]
and the *revāyat* known as *Ithoter*.[25] The first is dated 1558, and is ad-
dressed to Dastur Padam Ramyār of Broach and bears the signatures of
the *dasturs* of Torkābād, Šarifābād, Kermān and of the Khorasan and
Sistan. The second, brought by Yazd and Kermān from Mullā Kāus and
addressed to Dastur Dārāb Sohrāb and other members of the communi-
ties of Surat and Broach, is dated 1773.

In both it is prescribed that in order to establish an *Ātaš Bahrām*,
1,001 fires are necessary[26] deriving from sixteen different kinds of fire,
each taken in specified quantities and then submitted to an elaborate
process of purification and consecration before their final unification.

The lists of the sixteen fires prescribed are given below:

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revāyats with the addition of bibliographical references, see M. Vitalone, *The Persian
Revāyats. A Bibliographic Reconnaissance* (Napoli, 1987).

[23] The interruption in this epistolary relationship was one of the consequences of
dividing the Indian community into *Qadimi*, which maintained a general superiority of
the Iranian religious practices, and *Šāhānšāhi*, which opposed this in the name of de-
fending a Parsi tradition. Involved in these polemics against their will, the Zoroastrians
of Iran, considered to be supporters of the *Qadimi*, were no longer consulted by the
Šāhānšāhi majority of the Parsis. Cf. M. Vitalone, "La controversia del calendario e la
revāyat persiana del 1635", *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 52,
1992, pp. 403–42; M. Vitalone, *The Persian Revāyat Ithoter. Zoroastrian Rituals in the
Eighteenth Century* (Napoli, 1996), pp. 9–13.

[24] The *revāyats* are known, in general, by the name of the recipients or, as in this
case, by the Parsi messengers who went to Iran.

[25] Differently from all the other *revāyats*, this *revāyat* took its name from the number
of questions and answers (*ithoter* 'seventy-eight' in Gujarati) it contained.

[26] The total of individual fires recorded by the *revāyat Ithoter* is effectively 1,001,
whereas the total of fires listed by the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur is, contrary to what is
declared, 1,102.

	Revāyat of Kāmdin Šāpur[27]		Ithoter Revāyat[28]	
1.	The fire whereon *nasā* (*i.e.* dead matter) has been burnt, *i.e* the fire *morde suz* (*i.e.* a corpse-burning fire)	91	Fire in which *nasā* has been burnt, that is, the *morde suz* fire	91
2.	The fire whereon impurities have been burnt, *i.e.* of the dyer	80	[Fire] on which impurities have been burned, that is, dyes wherever colour is set to boil, in other words where cloth is dyed	80
3.	The fire on which impure cow-dung has been burnt *i.e.* the fire of the hot bath	70	That on which impure dung has been burned, that is, a *hammām*, a bathing place of the *darvands*[29]	70
4.	That on which pots have been burnt, *i.e.* of a potter	60	[The fire] on which pottery is baked, that is, a potter, where clay vessels are baked	60
5.	That of the goldsmith	60	That of a goldsmith, that is, of a gilder	60
6.	That of the silversmith	55	That of a silversmith, that is, those who work with silver	55
7.	That of a *zahargar*[30] *i.e.* a carpenter	50	That of a coppersmith, where cups, plates, trays made of brass, zinc and copper are produced	50
8.	That of *ankuhar*[31] *i.e.* of burnt bricks	75	[From the place] where bricks are baked	75
9.	That of an oven, *i.e.* whereon a pot has been boiling or bread is baked	61	From [the fire] of an oven whereon a pot of the *darvands* has been boiling or bread is baked	61

[27] Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and others*, pp. 63–64; for the Persian text see Unvala, *Darab Hormazyar's Rivayat*, vol. 1, pp. 74–75.

[28] Vitalone, *The Persian Revāyat Ithoter. Zoroastrian Rituals in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 45–46, 141–143.

[29] Non-Zoroastrians.

[30] The meaning of the term *zahrgarān* is obscure. It could be a repetition of the preceding term *zargarān* 'goldsmiths'.

[31] Cf. Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, 18e10: *panjom ān kē āgur padiš pazēnd* "The fifth that by which bricks are baked".

10.	That of the cauldron (*i.e.* of the coppersmith)[32]	61	From [the fire] of the pot, in other words [from the fire] of the *darvands* who upon the grave prepare food to be distributed to the poor in suffrage of the deceased one	61
11.	That of a muleteer of the villages	61	From [the fire] of the muleteers of the *dehqāns*, that is, of the heads of the villages who govern the country by decree of the sovereign in quality of *xāns* and *hākems*	61
12.	That of the Mazdayasnians	40	From [the fire] of those who produce bullets, in other words where lead is melted and bullets for guns are produced	40
13.	That of the cavaliers on march	35	From [the fire] of the festivals and of the sad occasions, festivals meaning the occasion when a *darvand* is married and sad events meaning on the occasion of the death of a *darvand* when incense is burned and lamps are lit	35
14.	That of the *behvâr-hazâr* *i.e.* of the watch-keepers	30	[From the fire of] the watch-keepers, meaning the sentinels who stand on guard at all the country's gateways	30
15.	That from the lightning of the sky	90	From [the fire] of blacksmiths	90
16.	That of the *herbad* and that of a Behdin (who produces fire from the friction) of pieces of wood and from flints	40 143	From [the fire produced by] a follower of the Mazdean religion with wood and flint	82

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[32] The gloss by Dhabhar "*i.e.* of the coppersmith" is unjustified.

The two lists differ only in two of the sixteen fires:[33] the *revāyat Ithoter*
contrasts the fires of the Mazdā-worshippers and of lightning, which the
revāyat of Kāmdin Šāpur records respectively as twelfth and fourteenth
fires, with that of the bullet-makers and blacksmiths. The use of fires
such as those of the Mazdā-worshippers and lightning is openly con-
tested by the *Ithoter*, which also makes explicit the doctrine on which the
establishment of the sacred fire should be based:

> it appears to these humble ones that in the books possessed by the people of
> India, in relation to the *ātaš varharām*, in the twelfth place are written forty
> fires from the homes of the *behdins* and in the fifteenth place, ninety fires
> from lighting. What is the meaning of this! The fire must be collected there
> where it is oppressed and this is the great merit.[34]

If we compare the texts of Persian *revāyats* with that of the *Pahlavi
Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, it becomes evident that
the lists of the Persian *revāyats* are partly the Parsī rendering, i.e. Pahlavi
in Persian script, of the list of fires recorded in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat*:

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[33] The difference between the thirteenth fires is only apparent. The term *surān* 'festi-
vals' given by the *Ithoter* is probably a false reading of *savārān* 'horsemen'; cf. also
Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, 18e18: *aswārān
nēwān* 'brave horsemen'.

[34] Vitalone, *The Persian Revāyat Ithoter. Zoroastrian Rituals in the Eighteenth Cen-
tury*, p. 145.

	Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg	Revāyat of Kāmdin Šāpur	Ithoter Revāyat
1.	az nasā poxtan	nasā poxdan	ātaš-e nasā poxtan
2.	ān kē-š *hixr padiš pazēnd	ānkes hedr padeš pazend	hejr padeš
3.	ān kē-š sargēn ī *hixrōmand padiš pazēnd	ātaš-e sargin-e hedromand poxtan	anke sargin-e hedromand poxtan
4.	ān kē-š dōsēnag padiš pazēnd	ānkes došin padeš pazend	dušin padeš pazend
5.	ān kē āgūr padiš pazēnd	ān ankuhar	ānkehar
6.	ān ī az zarrīgarān	ān zargarān	ān zargari
7.	asēmgarān	ān simgarān	ān simgarān
8.	az čēlāngarān	ān zahrgarān	ān zahrgarān
9.	az tanūr	az tanur	az tanur
10.	az dēg	az dig	az dig
11.	az xarbandagān ud *dahigānān	az xarbandegān dahigān	az xarbandegān dihgān
12.	az pēš mahistān huniyāgārān	az piš-e māzdayasnān	az kār-e golulesāzān
13.	az aswārān nēwān	az savarān-e vadardegān	az surān va derangān
14.	az kār ī abārīg	az kār-e bahvār hazār	bah havār
15.		az barq-e āsmān	az kār-e āhangarān
16.		hirbad behdin andarun-e cub va sang	az nazdik-e dinveh-e māzdayasnān az cub va sang

In fact, the Pahlavi *revāyat* must have been well known to the writers of the Persian *revāyats*. One of the religious books that were sent to India together with the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur was the *Sad dar Bundaheš*,[35]

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[35] Edited by B.N. Dhabhar, *Saddar Nasr and Saddar Bundehesh* (Bombay, 1909); for the English translation see Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and others*, pp. 497–578.

a Zoroastrian text in New Persian, which incorporates approximately three quarters of the *Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*,[36] It is significant, moreover, that the instructions for the consecration of the *Ātaš Bahrām* were not sent, as was customary, inside the text of the questions and answers, but rather as a small autonomous tract,[37] whose source could have been precisely the *Pahlavi Rivāyat*.

The main difference between the texts of the two Persian *revāyats* and that of the Pahlavi *rivāyat* lies in the presence in the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur and in the *Ithoter*, of two additional fires, and there are two elements that give cause to the belief that they have effectively been "added": their position at the end of the list, in fifteenth and sixteenth place and, above all, their different characteristics, making them alien compared to the rest of the fires that are all consistent with the doctrine on which the ritual of establishment of the *Ātaš Bahrām* is based, and according to which the fires have to be taken from where they are oppressed or polluted.

The presence, at the end of the list, of fires such as that of lightning or fire produced from the friction of wood and flint can be explained, then, only by referring to the classification of fire into the five categories that the Zoroastrian priests developed, probably in the Parthian period, on the basis of the five epithets of the fire shown, in ascending order of dignity, in *Yasna* 17.11: *bərəzi.savah* 'of high benefit', *vohu.fryāna* 'loving the good', *urvāzišta* 'the most joyful', *vazišta* 'the swiftest(?)', *spəništa* 'the holiest'.[38] However, what is relevant for our purposes is with what, in the Pahlavi, New Persian or Gujrati texts, the last two fires, the most worthy, are associated: *vāzišt* is constantly associated with lightning and *spēništ* is associated without distinction to the material world, to the same *Bahrām* fire, or even to the fire produced through friction.[39]

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[36] Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, p. 9. The oldest copy of this text can be found in the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Khambāyati, known also as Kāmā Āsā (but the name in reality was Šāpur Āsa), dated 1527, only 31 years before the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur.

[37] Unvala, *Darab Hormazyar's Rivayat*, vol. 2, p. 459.15; Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and others*, p. 618.

[38] Boyce, "Ataš", p. 3.

[39] *Bundahišn* 18.2–7, B.T. Anklesaria, *Zand-Akasih. Iranian or Greater Bundahishn* (Bombay, 1956), pp. 157–159 ; *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram* 3.77–82, Ph. Gignoux/A. Tafazzoli (eds), *Anthologie de Zādspram* (Paris, 1993), p. 55; Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and others*, p. 59; Kotwal/Boyd, *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion*, p. 60.

Both the *revāyats* are not limited only to a list of the fires, but also describe the procedures used for purifying, consecrating and enthroning the sacred fire. The process of purification and consecration of individual fires is substantially the same as the one discussed above for the *Ātaš Ādarān* except, obviously, for the number of times that the process of the nine successive kindlings and the celebration of the religious services is repeated.[40] The *revāyat Ithoter* also describes in very great detail the procedure for removing a corpse-burning fire and the subsequent operations for consecrating the fires up to their final unifying on the first of the *gaθā*[41] days and the solemn installing in the temple on the day of *sroš* in the month of *farvardin*, in other words, the seventeenth day of the first month of the year.

THE PARSI TRADITION

According to the Parsi tradition recorded in the *Qesse-ye Sanjan*,[42] a work in verse composed at Navsari in 1600 and based almost exclusively on oral traditions, an *Ātaš Bahrām* was founded at Sanjan by the Zoroastrians coming from Iran a few years after their arrival on the Gujarat coasts in 936. In fact, we do not know with any certainty when this fire was founded or, above all, how it was established. The *Qesse-ye Sanjan* is rather vague about the procedures carried out for its establishment:

> In those days, all the arts and industries (*lit.* workshops) were in the hands of the People of the Good Faith. Things were everywhere easy for them for they had brought along with them all the tools (or means)[43] from Khorasan. With all those resources derived from Khorasan, they were able to accom-

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[40] Thus, for the corpse-burning fire the nine successive kindlings are repeated 91 times and a religious service is held over each one for a total of 91 *Yasnas* and 91 *Vendidāds*. The same proceedings, by the number of times listed, is observed for the other fifteen fires. The Parsis, as far as the kindlings are concerned, adopted a different system: again in the case of a corpse–burning fire, for example, this was subjected directly to 91 successive kindlings. See Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 201–204.

[41] The five days which are added to the twelfth month in order to create the 365 day calendar.

[42] Unvala, *Darab Hormazyar's Rivayat*, vol. 2, pp. 343–354, trans. S.H. Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History* (Bombay, 1920), pp. 92–117.

[43] In the text *ālāt* 'instruments', the sacred implements and the other items required for religious services.

plish their task without any trouble. The reason was that several parties of Dasturs and Laymen of holy lives had also arrived at that spot. In their company were several alchemists also and the favour of the Lord thus made things easy for them. They had brought along with them ample resources and they thus consecrated the Fire according to the dictates of religion.[44]

It seems that this fire stayed at Sanjan until the city was destroyed by the Muzaffarid ruler Mahmud Begada, probably in 1465, when the priests carried it to safety in the mountains around the city and subsequently to the village of Bansda. During this period of time, which lasted approximately fourteen years, the fire would have been without a fixed temple until it was moved to an appropriate building in Navsari.

The promoter of transferring the sacred fire to Navsari was Changa Asa, a rich and influential layman in the city, who also convinced his coreligionists to send the first Parsi messenger to Iran.

The *revāyat*, dated 1478, with which Narimān Hošang made his return to India, is the first historical document from which we can obtain reliable information about Parsi knowledge on the methods of establishing an *Ātaš Bahrām*.

In this letter are recorded two questions and their relative answers,[45] from which the following considerations can be drawn: already before this *revāyat*, and thus with even more reason before the arrival in India of the subsequent *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur, the Parsis were aware that it was necessary to take fires from different workshops in order to establish an *Ātaš Bahrām*; the Iranian *dastur* excluded the possibility that the fire of lightning, a fire of high rank, could be used to establish the *Ātaš Bahrām*.

After the *revāyat* of Narimān Hošang, further and more detailed instructions arrived from Iran with regard to sacred fires like those contained in the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur to which reference has been made above. Despite, however, repeated invitations on the part of the Iranian *dasturs* to found *Ātaš Bahrāms* wherever Zoroastrians were living, no other sacred fire was created by the Parsis until 1765.

A direct cause of the decision to found a new *Ātaš Bahrām* in Navsari was the dispute that arose between the priests of this city and the priests of Sanjan who had followed the sacred fire to Navsari, on the rights of the latter to celebrate not only the religious services required to take care of the sacred fire, but also all the others that were more remu-

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[44] Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, p. 106.
[45] Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and others*, pp. 62, 63.

nerative. The result of this dispute was the decision, on the part of the Sanjan priests, to leave Navsari in 1741, taking away with them the *Ātaš Bahrām,* which was installed in a new temple in the village of Udvada, where it is still to be found today.

An account of the founding of this new fire temple at Navsari is found in the *Qesse-ye Zartoštiān-e Hendustān*[46] composed by Shapurji Maneckji Sanjana in 1765–90. Here reference is made repeatedly to a volume that was the work of Dārāb, and can be identified with the classified *revāyat* of Dārāb Hormazdyār. It was precisely on the basis of this volume of Dārāb, and thus probably of the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur that it contains, that, according to this account, the *Ātaš Bahrām* of Navsari was established.

This fire was installed only three years before the departure of Mullā Kāus for Iran and it is clear that the intention of the *Qadimi* group to have also their own fire temple was one of the main reasons for the mission.[47] The instructions given in the *revāyat Ithoter*, with which Mullā Kāus returned to India, were then used for the *Ātaš Bahrām* founded in 1783 in Bombay by Dady Nusservanji Seth and whose first *dastur* was in fact Mullā Kāus.

Apart from the three referred to above, a further five *Ātaš Bahrāms* were founded in India, all in the nineteenth century.[48] We know the list of the sixteen kinds of fires used for the H.B. Wadia Ātaš Bahrām of Bombay.[49] For ease of reference, they are listed here, together to those recorded by Dastur Erachji Sohrabji Meherjirana in his catechism of 1869[50] and by J.J. Modi in his volume of 1922 on the religious ceremonies of the Parsis.[51]

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[46] C.G. Cereti, *An 18th Century Account of Parsi History. The Qesse-ye Zartoštiān-e Hendustān* (Napoli, 1991), pp. 112–125.

[47] Cf. Vitalone, *The Persian Revāyat Ithoter. Zoroastrian Rituals in the Eighteenth Century*, p 140: "some families of the *mobeds* and *behdins* who follow the *qadim* calendar hope to raise in India a new *ātaš varharām* according to the *qadim* calendar".

[48] Three in Bombay, founded respectively in 1830, 1844 and 1898, and two in Surat, both founded in 1823.

[49] J.W. Boyd/F.M. Kotwal, "Worship in a Zoroastrian Fire Temple: the H.B. Wadia Ātaš Bahrām", *Indo-Iranian Journal* 26, 1983, pp. 295–299.

[50] F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd (eds), *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion. A Nineteenth Century Catechism with Modern Commentary* (Chico, 1982), pp. 141–142.

[51] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, pp. 209–210. Modi's source, according to what he himself declares, is Dastur Meherjirana, but the two lists are slightly different.

	H.B. Wadia Ataš Bahrām	Dastur Meherjirana		J. J. Modi	
1.	Cremation fire	Cremation fire	91	Fire of a burning corpse	91
2.	Fire of a dyer	Dyer's fire	80	Fire of a dyer	80
3.	Fire of a potter	Public bath fire	70	Fire of a king or ruling authority	70
4.	Fire of a brickmaker	Potter's fire	61	Fire of a potter	61
5.	Fire of a fakir	Brickmaker's oven fire	75	Fire of a brick-maker	75
6.	Fire of a goldsmith or alchemist	Fakir's or *kansa-ra's* [one who makes bronze vessels] fire	50	Fire of an ascetic	50
7.	Fire of a blacksmith	Goldsmith's or al-chemist's fire	60	Fire of a goldsmith (or alchemist)	60
8.	Fire of a weapon-maker	Minting fire for coins	55	Fire of a mint	55
9.	Fire of baker	Blacksmith's fire	61	Fire of an iron-smith	61
10.	Fire of an idolater	Weapon-maker's fire	61	Fire of an armourer	61
11.	Fire of an army chief	Bakers's oven fire	61	Fire of a baker	61
12.	Fire of a shepherd	Brewer's or idola-ter's fire	61	Fire of a brewer, distiller or idol-worshipper	61
13.	Fire of a Zoroastrian priest or house-holder	Army chief's fire or the fire of a de-parted army	35	Fire of a soldier or traveller	35
14.	Fire used in public baths	Shepherd's fire or one from a stable for horses and cam-els	30	Fire of a shepherd	33
15.	Fire used in minting	Fire caused by lightning	90	Fire of atmospheric electricity	90
16.	Fire caused by light-ning	Fire from the house of a priest or a lay-man	40	Fire from a Zoroas-trian, *i.e.* a Dastur, a Mobad, or a lay-man and a friction by flints and pieces of wood	40
		Fire made from flint or two logs rubbed together	144		144

The lists are identical[52] to each other, except for the fakir/ascetic, idolater/brewer/distiller and army chief/soldier/traveller variants. These fires are also those that, together with the fire of an alchemist and the fire of a mint, never appear in the Persian *revāyats*. It should be noted, moreover, that although the lists cited above all derive from the circles of the *Šāhānšahi* group, two fires are recorded there, i.e. the fire of the weaponmakers and the fire of the blacksmiths, which appear in the *revāyat Ithoter* but not in that of Kāmdin Šāpur.

In conclusion, it can be said that despite the central role fulfilled by the *Ātaš Bahrāms* since the institution of fire temples in the late Achaemenid period, no information is available on how these fires were established in the historical period preceding Islam. The purification practices of sixteen kinds of fire described in the eighth chapter of the *Vendidād* are not necessarily linked to the establishment of an *Ātaš Bahrām*, even if it cannot be excluded that these may have been the inspiration behind the subsequent elaboration of the ritual. The first reference to the procedures for the establishment of an *Ātaš Bahrām* is found in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, compiled in the post-Sasanian period, where the gathering of 1,001 unprotected and untended fires belonging to fourteen different kinds of fire are prescribed. The characteristic of the work and some details of the text cause us to think that this may have been a ritual already practised in the Sasanian epoch, in the period, that is, when the fire temples in all the Iranian territories were most widespread. For the centuries subsequent to the spreading of Islam in Iran, we have no other documentary evidence on the subject, until the taking up again of contact between the two Zoroastrian communities of Iran and India. Since the first *revāyat* of 1478, the Parsis asked questions of their co-religionists regarding the methods of establishing the *Ātaš Bahrām*, to which the Iranian *dasturs* answered in complete fashion with the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur of 1558. This *revāyat* fully incorporates the list of the fourteen fires of the *Pahlavi Rivāyat Ac-*

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[52] An exception is the "fire of the king or ruling authority", which Modi records in the place of the one "used in public baths". It is the only occurrence of a fire of this type in a list for the establishment of the *Ātaš Bahrām*. This is even stranger if it is considered that Modi's source is Dastur Erachji Sohrabji Meherjirana. Other lists are given in K.N. Seervai/B.B. Patel, "Gujarát Population", *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay, 1899), vol. 9, part 2, p. 214 , which records a list identical to that of Dastur Meherjirana and in E.K. Antia, "The Revayets on 'Fire'", *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume* (Bombay, 1918), p. 577, which records the fire of taverns rather than bakers.

companying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg, with the addition of two more: the fire of lightning and the fire produced from the friction between wood and flint. We do not know whether this addition was brought directly by the authors of the *revāyat* or whether it is linked to a preceding tradition developed, we may hypothesize, in order to make the number of fires tally with the sixteen fires listed in the *Vendidād.* In this second case, however, the increase in the number of fires could not predate 1478, the year in which the *revāyat* of Narimān Hošang was drawn up. In this letter, in fact, the Iranian *dasturs* replied to a precise question from the Parsis, excluding the possibility that the fire of lightning could be used for the establishment of *Ātaš Bahrām.* The same firmness in excluding the fire of lightning, or in any case, the use of fires that were not oppressed, is to be found also in the last *revāyat,* the so-called *Ithoter* of 1773.

Already prior to the arrival in India of the 1478 *revāyat,* the Parsis were familiar with a procedure for the formation of sacred fire, even if we have no information about the level of their knowledge. The tradition that placed the founding of an *Ātaš Bahrām* a few years after their arrival on the Gujarat coasts is based on a text, the *Qesse-ye Sanjan,* which is historically not fully reliable and in which the description of the procedures followed is vague and confused. The *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šapur, on the other hand, had a decisive influence on the forming of the Parsi tradition concerning the ritual for establishing a sacred fire. Even if, over the years, the Parsis brought to it small amendments or adaptations, especially with regard to the kinds of fires prescribed, it is substantially on the basis of the methods recorded therein that the majority of the *Ātaš Bahrāms* now existing in India were founded.

THE *ĀTAŠ NU GĪT*: A PARSI LAY RITUAL

Sarah Stewart

INTRODUCTION

The surviving religious literature of Zoroastrianism, namely the extant portion of the *Avesta*, is largely related to priestly matters. As a result, religious traditions that have emanated from non-priestly sources have often been ignored. In this paper I discuss the Gujarati song, the *Ātaš nu Gīt*, 'Song of the Fire', which celebrates the founding of an *Ātaš Bahrām*, 'Victory Fire', the highest-grade fire of the Zoroastrian faith. I shall examine the way in which the song works as a ritual within the context of lay devotional life, and suggest that through its structure and content, it functions as a reconstitutive ritual of recital.

We are told in the song that it was composed by two brothers, Jeva and Dosa Bharucha; according to oral tradition, it was composed in celebration of the founding of the second *Ātaš Bahrām* in India (the first having been founded soon after the purported arrival of Zoroastrians from Iran in the early 10th century AC), an event that took place in Navsari in 1765. The song is unique in that it was composed by laymen for use primarily within a lay context, and it appears to have acquired a religious status independent of priestly usage. It describes the construction of the *agiāry*, 'House of Fire', and the formation and consecration of the *Ātaš Bahrām* which is installed within it. According to Parsi tradition, the song with its accompanying ritual has always been performed by women especially trained for the purpose. The stated purpose of the song is to make merit: in the text there are frequent references to the families of those who commission its performance for auspicious occasions, such as a wedding or a religious initiation (*naujote*),[1] in order to obtain merit. The explanation is that whoever commissions this song will be given righteousness, good fortune, prosperity, sons, long life and, ultimately, a place in heaven. It is this aspect of the *Ātaš nu Gīt* which sets it apart from other joyful songs of celebration, and transforms it into an

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[1] [Note by the editor: On this ritual, its description and interpretation, see the paper by J.A.M. Snoek in this volume.]

act of religious devotion. It is at the same time a prayer, an act of worship and a ritual performance.

Jenny Rose and James Russell have, at different times, witnessed and subsequently written about full perfomances of the song,[2] and they refer to aspects that highlight its ritual significance. Rose describes the house where a performance is to take place as being decorated in much the same way as the *agiāry* described in the song: garlands (*torans*) are hung and chalk marks (*rangoli*) are put on the thresholds; the singers are welcomed with the silver tray (*sēs*), and a vermilion spot (*tilah*) is put on every family member in the household. The performance must take place in the presence of an oil lamp (*divo*), and incense (*lōban*) must be burnt. At the mention of Ahura Mazdā, the divinities (*yazatas*) or the *Ātaš Bahrām,* the singers (*gōyāns*) touch their foreheads in reverence. With the word *nērang*, 'consecrated cow's or bull's urine',[3] the palm of the hand is turned upwards; at the mention of *nahn,* 'ritual purification', hands are swept downwards in a cleansing motion.[4] Russell notes that no menstruating woman was allowed to touch the book in which the text was written.[5] Evidently the *gōyāns* learnt their repertoire simply by accompanying others, and learning did not start until well after marriage and childbirth, at around the age of thirty-five.[6]

Traditionally, the *Ātaš nu Gīt* could be performed within the precincts of an *agiāry* as well as within a person's house. Today it is rarely performed; however, it is still possible to find households where a hearth fire is kept solely for ritual purposes, and where women sing the song from time to time, particularly when preparing the fire for the *Ādar māhinō nu parāb,* 'the name-day feast of fire'.[7] In a sense, the song

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[2] J. Rose, *The Traditional Role of Women in the Iranian and Indian (Parsi) Zoroastrian Communities from the 19th to the 20th Centuries* (M.A. dissertation, SOAS, London, 1986; the article published from the dissertation [*K.R.Cama Oriental Institute* 56 (1989), pp. 1–103], omitted material on the *Ātaš nu Gīt*); J. Russell, "Parsi Zoroastrian Garbas and Monajats", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1989, pp. 55–63. [Note by the editor: I filmed a staged performance of the song in March 2002.]

[3] The use of *nērang* as a purifying agent has all but disappeared among the Parsi laity today; however, at the time of the composition of the *Ātaš nu Gīt* it would still have been commonplace.

[4] Rose, *The Traditional Role of Women*, p. 88.

[5] Russell, "Parsi Zoroastrian Garbas and Monajats", p. 51.

[6] Rose, *The Traditional Role of Women*, p. 89.

[7] Two days before the 'birthday' of the fire, the kitchen is given a thorough spring cleaning and sometimes whitewashed. The hearth fire, which in my informant, Mrs

represents a *domestication* of the sacred temple fire, in that its ritual re-
construction takes place in people's homes as well as in the *agiāry*. It is
thus a tradition that has remained linked to domestic worship and there-
fore to women within the community. It was in this context that I first
came across it when, in 1989, I was researching lay devotional practices
in Bombay and Navsari. My main informant, at that time, was Mrs
Shehnaz Munshi, and it was she who translated the song for me from a
printed version of the text, which had been published in 1879.

In subsequent visits to India, I have looked at a number of different
versions of the song, in particular one dedicated to the *Iranšāh* fire in
Udwada which belongs to 4 *gōyāns*, now all in their seventies, who
agreed to give a studio recording of the song. The owner of the studio
recognised the lead singer as having performed the *Ātaš nu Gīt* at his
own *naujote*. He said that his grandmother had commissioned the song
for every major family occasion. In another handwritten copy of the song
belonging to Mrs Munshi's grandmother, it is said to have been sung in
the *agiāry* on the day of *varadhni rit,* i.e., the special ceremony that
takes place on the third day of wedding celebrations.[8] On this day,
women make the sacred bread (*drōn*), and they then go to the *agiāry* for

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Shehnaz Munshi's kitchen had been specially built and was not used for cooking, was
sometimes kept alight during the whole of *Ādar māh* (the month dedicated to Fire) oth-
erwise it was lit in the *Rapithwin gāh* (the mid-morning to mid-afternoon watch of the
day during spring and summer) of *Dēp-Ādar rōj* (the creator's day before the day dedi-
cated to Fire) and kept alight until the *Ušahīn gāh* (the midnight to dawn watch) of
Ādar rōj, thirty-six hours later. The silver *sēs* (tray) was prepared, all the items being
cleaned with ash from the fire place. The picture of Zarathuštra near to the fire was gar-
landed. The words *Khšnaothra Ahurahe Mazdā* "homage unto Thee, O Ahura Mazdā",
were written on the tiles of the fireplace in a paste made of turmeric powder and wheat
or rice flour; also a picture was drawn of the tongs and ladle in a mixture of vermilion
powder and water on the sides of the fireplace. The vermilion powder is held to repre-
sent the sacrificial element; Mrs Munshi informed me that at weddings in the old days,
the blood from an animal sacrifice was smeared on the bridegroom's forehead. The tur-
meric represents the light of the sun. When I saw Mrs Munshi perform this ceremony, a
picture of the fire was also painted on the side of the fireplace. Chalk designs, (*rangoli),*
were put on the floor around the fireplace; either seven impressions were made, repre-
senting the seven *Ameša Spentas* (divine beings), or nine, representing the *Ameša Spen-
tas* as well as Ahura Mazdā and Zarathuštra. The fire was then kindled with sandalwood
and those standing before it did the *kustī* (tying and untying the sacred girdle), and recited
various prayers.

[8] See Ph. Kreyenbroek in collaboration with S.N. Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism,
Urban Parsis Speak About Their Religion* (Richmond, 2001), p. 32.

the religious ceremony (*varadh ni bāj*) which is done in memory of the departed members of the family. The interesting point about this version is that it is sung as part of a *bāj* ritual, thus promoting it into an otherwise exclusively priestly domain.

I shall focus here on the 1879 text for the reason that its author was evidently preoccupied with the *ritual* nature of the song and its correct performance, instructions for which are written into the text. Although this version is 'fixed' in written form, its compilation bears the hallmarks of an oral text in the way that different layers appear to have been added. I have suggested that two independent structures operate within this text: the first of these pertains to the way in which the author has organised the text, both recognising its character as an oral text and at the same time allowing for the addition of new material; the second is a thematic structure that reflects cosmological and eschatological ideas.

I shall look at the content of the song and then comment on its structure as a means to gain insights into Parsi lay devotional life both today and in recent history. There is much archival and historical documentation about this period from which an account of certain events can be given. The song gives a narrative version of these events: it provides a unique socio-religious commentary and displays the vitality of different aspects of lay life. I shall also draw on some contemporary accounts of religious life in order to illuminate certain customs and traditions alluded to in the song, but which are not described in any detail.

Some comments on the use of the term 'laity' are in order. We cannot tell from the ancient Zoroastrian texts what was the precise status of priests, i.e. those who were referred to by the term *zaotar* or *athorvan*. There is no indication that the priesthood was a hereditary institution, and one can only guess at the extent to which the rest of the community participated in what, later, were solely priestly rituals. Again, it is impossible to draw conclusions, as to the relationship between 'ritual specialists' and the 'laity'. It is not possible, therefore, to give a clear definition of the term 'priest' let alone that of 'lay' for the early period. In modern times, the priesthood is a hereditary calling that is passed down through the male line. However, members of priestly families, including women (referred to as *oosta*), and those who choose not to become practising priests (referred to as *oosti*), consider themselves to be from the priestly class and do not refer to themselves as *behdin* (lay members of 'the good religion'). There are thus further ramifications with respect to the concept of laity within modern Parsi terminology. There are few religious observances that are peculiar to the laity alone; while many functions

devolve solely on the priesthood, beliefs and practices which I categorise as 'lay' are almost invariably shared by members of priestly families. When looking at 'lay religion' in modern times, I have included the everyday practices of religious life; these may or may not be reflected in the sacred texts, and may or may not be shared by priests.

CONTENT OF THE SONG

The song begins with an invocation to go to the fire and introduces the women in the chorus: "all four of us shall sing: O friends let us go to the fire". This is a short dedicatory section which begins with the names of Dādār Hormazd[9] and the prophet Zarathuštra, and goes on to name the heads of the families and women of the house who have commissioned this particular performance of the song. This type of dedication is a familiar opening to many Zoroastrian religious texts and shows a willingness on the part of the lay composers to observe the accepted form of composition. It is a format which is reminiscent of the dedicatory prayers (*šnumans*) which occur at the beginning of the *Niyāyiš* prayers and which, together with the closing formulae for worship, enclose the main body of those prayers. It is also very similar in form to the *pazand*[10] preface (*Dībācha*) which precedes all liturgical services and which includes the name of the person for whom the ceremony is being performed, as well as the names of those who have commissioned its service. This dedicatory section ends with a direction to the *gōyāns*, inserted by the author of this particular text, to change the tune in which they have been singing so far and begin the next section of the song.

The group of *gōyāns* comprises one leader who chants the text and the chorus who repeat the refrain. There are thus two 'voices' constantly interacting with each other throughout the song. Although there is a difference between the two voices, the voice that is chanting, with few exceptions, is always represented as plural: both the singular voice which articulates the text, and the combined voices of the chorus use the plural form 'we':

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[9] Referring to Ahura Mazdā, the central deity of Zoroastrianism.
[10] Late Middle Persian written in Avestan script.

"Let us call the son of the builder and let us get the plan drawn for the
   agiāry
O friends let us go to the fire
Let us call the son of the painter, and let us get paint for the *agiāry*
O friends let us go to the fire"

The 'we' of the individual presumably embodies the united will of community, whereas the group voice of the chorus extols everyone to join in going to the fire, i.e., to maintain that collective/united will. The interlacing of the two voices thus works as a repeated assertion of community and at the same time as a narrative. The refrain: "O friends let us go to the fire" is both distinctive, repetitive and insistent as a call, gathering people together; it is also a device to bring in all the people of the 'good religion', as it were, 'under one roof'. Within a few lines of the beginning of the first phase of the song, this refrain is being repeated between each and every line of text, and later, between each and every name. The vocative 'O friends' implies the exclusion of *non*-friends, that is, those who do not belong to the community, for if they are not 'friends' then they cannot be part of this religion. The line also has another function, namely to keep one essential feature of the song in focus, that is to remind people that they *must* go to the fire. This monotonous and seemingly only formal refrain is actually, then, the subtle conditioning of the song, which like many religious texts is self-perpetuating. Thus prosperity, happiness and ultimate salvation are all associated with an awareness of going to the fire. The frequent, almost obsessional repetition of the refrain may also demonstrate the dynamic feature of the psychology of a minority mentality: it forever insists in repeating its call to gather people together. At the same time, it is this particular 'voice' which gives the song a soothing, almost hypnotic character.

The first stage of the song begins with the laying of the foundation, the building of the well and the *agiāry*. There is a reference to the family priest and to the sacred garments: shirt (*sudre*), cord (*kustī*), hat (*topi*), mouth covering (*padan*), and to the donation of money for the establishment of the *Ātaš Bahrām*. It can be seen that most of the song is actually summed up in this opening section together with the introduction. We are told the place where the song is to be performed, the people for whom it is to be sung, the essential requirements for the establishment of fire, and the name of the prophet Zarathuštra and also that of the current family priest. This first section is a microcosm of the whole poem.

Several lines are devoted to the time at which the land for the *agiāry* should be purchased, for it is most important that this be an auspicious moment, and various honours are accorded to the astrologer. The juxtaposition of the Hindu calendar with the Zoroastrian one shows an awareness of the Hindu majority amongst whom the Parsis are obliged to live, yet at the same time it emphasises the distinctiveness of the Zoroastrian religion.

From the subject of time, we move to that of place: the ground is prepared by labourers and then measured; gold and silver nails are called for and also two priests for the consecration of the foundation. It is possible here to trace ideas that have been carried through from earlier texts for example, in the *Qesse-ye Sanjān* lines 205–6, there is a short section devoted to a description of the *Iranshah:*

"Thereupon the prince commanded,
   And endowed the *dastur* with a pleasant place.
Straightaway the Hindu Raja Jādi Rāna
   Had this land cleared on all sides.
For three *farsangs* around the *juddins*
   Were removed: no person remained except the Zoroastrians."[11]

Following the foundation of the *agiāry*, the various people who are to be involved in the building process are invoked. While this is a way of establishing the community, at the same time it is a device used to include the audience in the performance. Everyone in the audience would be able to identify with one profession or another; it emphasises the shared and constructive nature of the text: through the invocations and assertions of the text, the process of the construction of the building is also the process of the construction of the community. Everyone is free to add their bit to the building of the *agiāry* and at the same time the song is developed.

The text then moves to the construction and decoration of the inner sanctum *(ijašne gāh)* and to the planting of the date palm, pomegranate tree, jasmine, banana plant and orvar, i.e., to those elements of religious life which will be practised within the *agiāry*. This is followed by a description of the decoration of the *agiāry* with leaves, garlands of betel leaf creeper, pearls and drawings of the moon in turmeric powder; it seems likely that all these tasks would have been carried out by women. In modern times, it is customary for women to decorate their hearth fires with a paste made from turmeric powder drawn in the shape of a moon exactly as described in the song.[12]

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[11] A.V.W. Williams, *Qesse-ye Sanjān,* publication forthcoming.
[12] See above footnote 7.

In the next section comes the subject of the various payments made to all the artisans, the gifts of saris and bangles which are made to their wives, and gifts to the high priests *(dasturs)*. It is not possible to determine the social significance of these payments, but there is no doubt that this is the means by which the hierarchical structure of the community is affirmed in the text.

After everything is said to have been built, decorated and paid for, there begins another section that describes the various rituals necessary for the consecration and enthronement of the Fire. The astrologers are called again to determine the time of consecration, and then follows the collection of *nērang* both for the purification of the whole *agiāry* and the sacred precinct *(hindora)* where the *yasna*, 'act of worship', will be performed. It is interesting here to note that the laity appears to be significantly involved in activities which are normally exclusively the domain of priests, including things for the performance of a *yasna*: e.g. the pomegranate, date palm, and vessel for consecrated water *(kundi)*, and the 'pair of goats' to produce *jīvam* 'fresh goat's milk'. The remaining lines of this first stage of the song refer to the *bōy* ceremony of the feeding of the sacred fire with sandalwood and incense.[13] The song continues: "Let us get sacred books from Iran, O friend; let us ask *dasturs* to recite them." It is possible that these books refer to the *Rivāyats,* in particular to the *Rivāyat of Kamdin Šapur*, which is part of the collection of *Rivāyats* compiled by Darab Hormazdyar,[14] and which, according to the *Qissa-ye Zartoštian e Hendustān,* was consulted prior to the founding of the Navsari *Ātaš Bahrām.*[15] By the end of this stage in the song, we have witnessed the entire process of building, decorating and consecrating the *agiāry*. There is a sense of timelessness about this phase of the song for this could refer to any *Ātaš Bahrām* real or imagined. We have witnessed an idealised process which begins with Zara-

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[13] The *bōy* ceremony or ritual feeding of the sacred fire takes place five times every day at the beginning of each of the five *gāhs* (divisions of the 24 hours), although the ceremony varies in length according to the grade of fire, in all cases the *padyāb-kustī* (i.e., the untying and retying of the *kustī* preceded by ablutions) is performed together with the *kustī* prayers which include the *Khuršīd* and *Mihr Niyāyiš* during the daytime *gāhs*. The priest then goes into the sacred chamber, places one or more pieces of sandalwood on the fire and recites the *Ātaš Niyāyiš*; in the case of the second or third grade fires, *Ātaš Ādarān* and *Ātaš Dādgāh*, the *Niyāyiš* is recited once, but for an *Ātaš Bahrām* it is recited several times.

[14] B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Homazyar Framarz and Others* (Bombay, 1932).

[15] C.G. Cereti, *An 18th Century Account of Parsi History, The Qesse-ye Zartoštian-e Hendustān* (Etnolinguistica dell'area iranica 3; Naples, 1991), p. 11.

thuštra, and which describes the perfect creation of a 'House of Fire'.

The song now moves into real time in the real world which is a place of conflict. Here we have references to historical characters and events (which are documented in other sources), and to geographic locations. Although the refrain continues to be recited between each line, there is now a change of tone, which contrasts sharply with the repetitive quality of the preceding stage which ended with the work of the religion having begun. Now comes a change of humour from that of joyous celebration to one of consternation, and for the first time direct questions are asked:

> The entire Anjuman is pondering over this ...With what shall we do the acts of the religion....the acts of the *Vendidad* ... acts of the *ijašne* ... acts of *Srōš* ... The *Sanjānas* were all perturbed.

This section is likely to refer to the confrontation and struggle between the *Sanjāna* and *Bhagaria* priests which is described in full in the *Qesseye Zartoštian e Hendustān*. The solution to this quarrel, which had been going on for some two hundred years, came with the intervention of one Desai Khuršed, a member of a priestly family who was a leading member of the Navsari community and benefactor of the *Bhagaria* priests. Desai Khuršed pleaded the Bhagaria cause with the Hindu ruler of Baroda, whose verdict was that *Sanjāna* priests should leave Navsari taking their sacred fire with them. Eventually, it was decided amongst the *dasturs* and *herbads* and *behdins* of Navsari, i.e., priests and laymen, that a new *Ātaš Bahrām* should be established. According to the song, the 'new' fire was created with *paiwand* (where two or more people link together usually by holding a cord), and then comes a reference to the *Khuršed Wadi*, the *Jamšed Bag* and the *Desai Wadi*. These gardens are all in Navsari and would have been the places where some of the fires necessary for the founding of the *Ātaš Bahrām* would have been purified.

The following section is a ritual of remembrance: "All these people have gone to the House of Song." Thus the text invokes Dādār Hormazd, Jamšed Pādšāh and Rustam Pahlevān; it then moves to take the names of the founders of the four *Ātaš Bahrāms* established between 1765 and 1879, that is up until the time of the compilation of our text.

In the song there are plenty of references to the 'ceremony of Sraōša', and it is not surprising to find that this divinity plays an important part in the prayer ritual of the *agiāry* for, according to the Pahlavi books, Sraōša is described as the protector of Fire, both being *hamkars* of Urdwahišt.[16]

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[16] Ph. Kreyenbroek, *Sraōša in the Zoroastrian Tradition* (Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina 28; Leiden, 1985), p. 118.

In the song, Sraōša is linked with his own bird, the cock. The crowing of the cock at dawn awakening the *Ātaš Bahrām* presumably refers to the rekindling of the fire by priests and also serves to remind people of the *Ušahin-gāh* prayers. There is also a reference to the sacrifice of a goat, which is a ritual not recognised by Parsis today, although there is some disagreement as to when it was abandoned.

Thus the conflict between the two priesthoods has been resolved to everybody's satisfaction: there are *Ātaš Bahrāms* established in various different places, and now the text reflects on the rewards, both material and spiritual, which will result from such meritorious acts:

> The Parsis are great doers of good acts ... That good act which he has done
> will have a spin off on the entire *tolah* ... The wealth of that person will be
> well spent ... All his wishes will be fulfilled ... He will go to heaven.

The third and final stage of the song is about the community. In the first stage society was created in an abstract way with the naming of all the professions. Now this process is repeated and through the naming of individuals, the community is re-established. This is the Resolution, in which the fire, the song and the process is taken into *every* house. The repetition of names is not only a device to identify or re-create the community, but also to root the religion in every single member of each family, thereby making the text relevant to every single name.

The text continues to celebrate the merit of the whole community, first, by naming the men in the family who are 'very religious', and then the women who bring good fortune.

Here we have the personification of the Fire: as in the *Ātaš Niyāyiš*, the Fire is referred to as "Son of Ahura Mazdā", and it is the Fire which is said to have the power to *break* mistakes. It is interesting to note here the contrast between these sentiments and those held by the Reverend John Wilson writing some thirty-five years before this publication:

> Many of my readers, I have no doubt, will be *astounded* at the blasphemous
> worship of fire, as set forth in the *Ātaš Niyayish,* which has now been brought
> to their notice. No translation which can legitimately be made of the Zand, can
> render this worship in the smallest degree less revolting to the understanding
> and reason of man... I look forward with joy to the day, when the 'sacred fire'
> shall no longer blaze on their hearths... and when the fire-temples throughout
> Bombay and Surat, shall, by their own hands... be levelled with the dust...[17]

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[17] J. Wilson, *The Parsi Religion: as contained in the Zand-Avesta, and propounded by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, unfolded, refuted and contrasted with Christianity* (Bombay, 1843), p. 236.

In fact, far from fire temples being razed to the ground, at this time in the 19th century, money was being spent by wealthy Parsi benefactors on the founding of new fire temples and the refurbishing of old ones. The song continues with a long recitation of the virtuous lay community ending with the name of the prophet, followed by a list of those leading members of the laity who have founded *agiārys*. It has been possible to identify 19 out of the 33 *Ātaš Adarāns* mentioned in the song from the list of *agiārys* given in the Bombay Gazetteer for 1901.[18] Of these fires, it is noticeable that, with the exception of one, the *Ātaš nu Gīt* refers only to those established in the nineteenth century, and mainly in the Bombay area, which suggests that it was the newly found wealth made possible by commerce which enabled this particular form of 'making merit'.

Ātaš nu Gīt	Bombay Gazetteer	
Maneckji Seth	Manockji Nowriji Seth,	Bombay 1733
Jeejeebahi Dadabhi	Jijibhoy Dadabhai	Bombay 1836
Jehangriji Wadia	Jehangir Nusserwanji Wadia	Bombay Fort 1830
Muncherji Wadia	Dadabhoy & Muncherji	
	Pestonji Wadia	Bombay Fort 1834
Soonabai Hirji	Soonaiji Hirji Readymoney	Bombay Fort 1842
Jamšed Jijibhai	Sir Jamsetji Jijibhoy	Navsari 1853
		Surat 1854
Aslaji	Aslaji Bhiccaji	Bombay Fort 146
Naoroji Narielwalla	Nowroji Cawasji Narielwalla	Bombay Fort 1822
Cawasji Ashburner	Cawasji Maneckji Ashburner	Bombay Fort 1832
Shapurji Kapawalla	Sharpuji Sohrabji Kapawalla	Bombay 1857
Merwanji Patel	Merwanji Manockji Patel	Bombay 1808
Nuswanji Karani	Nussarwanji Hirjibhoy Currani	Bombay 1847
Bamanji Mewawalla	Bomanji Merwanji Mevawalla	Bombay 1851
Hormusji Patel	Hormasji Dhunji Patel	Bombay 1834
Sohrabji Batchagandhi	Sohrabji Vachaghandy	Bombay 1858
Sohrabdaru Thuthi	Cuvarbai, widow of	
	Sohrabji Cursetji Thoothy	Bombay 1858
Sohrabdaru Rangi	Sohrabji Hormusji Ranji	Bombay Fort 1868
Beheramji Batalawalla	Chandanbai Byramji Batliwalla	Bombay Fort 1865
Merwanji Pande	Merwanji Framji Panday	Bombay 1865

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[18] K.N. Seervai/B.B. Patel, *Gujerat Population: Musalmans & Parsis,* Appendix I "Fire-temples throughout India" (Gazeteer of the Bombay Presidency 9/2; Bombay 1899), pp. 247–251.

The concluding section of the final stage of the song repeats the names of the family who have commissioned the song and who were mentioned in the introduction. Whereas the introduction encompassed the whole song in the sense that it hinted at that which was to come, the conclusion has a reflexive structure. This is where the text of the song refers to itself, i.e., to the two brothers who composed it, and to those who were the patrons of the singers. Mention is made of the benefits which are brought by the song to those who commission its performance: "Seven sons were born to my *Pirojbai,* to my sister Širinbai Dādār Hormazd smiled"; to those who participate in the singing: "Whoever sings this song does a meritorious act..." There is also benefit for those who "listen attentively", i.e., the audience: "Whoever listens to the song of the fire attentively – he will be blessed with virtuous acts". In other words, the whole community stands to be rewarded by a performance of the *Ātaš nu Gīt.*

It can be seen that, by virtue of its content, the song works to publicise the Good Religion by describing and praising certain activities such as the founding of an *agiāry,* visits and offerings made to the Fire, and the commissioning and performance of the song; in this way it sets an example to the community, suggesting how people should conduct their lives. The references to the Hindu religion serve to remind people that they belong to a minority group and that their sense of identity, as a group, is an important aspect of survival. By the time this text was published, the ever present threat of conversion to other faiths had been exacerbated by John Wilson in his attack on the religion and attempt to convert Parsis to Christianity. The strength of the faith is reinforced by endogamous marriage; the song emphasises the importance of the institution of marriage by reference to all the married couples, none of whom have 'married out'.

STRUCTURE OF THE SONG

There appear to be two structures that operate within the text. The first of these refers directly to the 1879 text which structure bears many of the characteristics of oral literature in the sense that the concept of time often appears convoluted. As the actuality of one time becomes the memory of another, it is often very difficult to determine whether the author is referring to his own or past time. In the *Ātaš nu Gīt* it seems that material has been added at different periods to what may have been an original

corpus. The author of the 1879 text has inserted a number of breaks in the text to allow for directions to be given to the singers; they also serve to make the content of the song comprehensible to the reader who is not witnessing the performance. Whereas meaning can be conveyed in the performance by ritual gestures or a change of rhythm or tune, these have to be written into the text. Most of the breaks in the text are accompanied by a pattern or motif which serves to emphasise the instruction being given by the author. The directions tell the singers when to change the categories of names they are taking, depending upon where the song is being performed and for what type of occasion. Sometimes, the instruction is simply to indicate a technical change in the way the song is to be chanted. In all, there are fifteen breaks which are as follows:

	1) Take the names of the ladies of the house
	2) Change the tune and begin the song
Stage I	3) Take the names of the marrying couple
	4) Change the tune
	5) *large motif* – ladies should sing about the installation of the fire – *small motif*
Stage II	6) Ladies – up to now you have sung half the song
	7) *small motif* – take the names of the sons, master or mistress of the house for whom the song is being sung
	8) *small motif* – take the names of the menfolk of the family
	9) *small motif* – take the names of the women and their sons
	10) *small motif* – change the tune and sing with a great lengthening of voice (this section begins with the praise of Ahura Mazdā).
Stage III	11) *large motif* – take the names of the head of the family, son or mistress of the house and their sons, i.e. those people who have consecrated a sacred fire – well known Parsis – *small motif*
	12) Take the names of all the *agiārys*
	13) *small motif* – take the names of the relations of the mistress of the house
	14) *small motif* – lady of the house takes everyone to the *agiāry*
	15) Take the names of the ladies of the house

It can be seen that over half these directions refer to the names of various members of the household where the song is being performed. As such, they create *explicit* slots which are intended to take different material. In this way, the text demonstrates a high degree of fluidity in that it is open to variation, yet at the same time it has to be highly structured in order to

allow this device to work. Then there are *implicit* slots or occasions where names are mentioned without being flagged by a text break and it may be that they have become 'fixed' in that; for various reasons, these names have entered the main body of the text. Within these sections, changes of theme or differences in 'time', where certain names from the historical past are juxtaposed alongside ones from the 'present', are sometimes marked by the name of Zarathuštra.

The second structure, I suggest, is thematic in the sense that it refers implicitly to Zoroastrian theological ideas. In other words, while on one level the song tells the story of the founding of an *Ātaš Bahrām* and all that this entails, there is at the same time a level of meaning in which the song is itself an expression or affirmation of the faith. With respect to Alan Williams' work on the *Qesse-ye Sanjān* (forthcoming), he suggests that the story of this epic journey is primarily a myth that accounts for the transition, both social and geographical, of the Iranian community from Iran to India. It has the characteristics of A. Van Gennep's rite of transition which is constituted by three stages. The *Qesse-ye Sanjān* falls clearly into three parts: 1) the history of the faith in Iran up to departure, 2) the crossing and intermediary period in Diu and entry to India with its consequent upheavals, and 3) the settling of the community down to the time of composition circa 1600. In developing this idea further, it appears that in the *Ātaš nu Gīt*, the role of the community is replaced by that of the sacred fire. As is often the case, the later text refers to the older one: in the *Qesse-ye Sanjān,* we find the motif for the *Ātaš nu Gīt* in the story of the sacred *Iranšāh,* 'King of Iran', the first *Ātaš Bahrām* to be consecrated on Indian soil soon after the arrival of the Zoroastrians from Iran. Later, the fire is forced into 'exile' after a battle in which the Muslim army of *Ulugh Khan* is triumphant over the joint forces of a Hindu Raja and the Zoroastrians of Sanjān. After several years of itinerancy followed by a brief sojourn in the town of Bansda, the *Iranšāh* is brought finally to Navsari and re-established there. It is this account of the first sacred fire which in a sense foreshadows the *Ātaš nu Gīt,* in which we have three stages (referred to on p. 455 above): 1) the creation of an *Ātaš Bahrām,* 2) its removal as the result of a quarrel and the establishment of a new fire, and 3) with the establishment of a new fire comes the 're-creation' of society.

When a diaspora community has both lost autonomy and homeland, it has been suggested that this double loss conditions its subsequent self-

perception as a 'people to be restored'.[19] According to Zoroastrian theology, this restoration or resolution takes place at the end of time when all creation will be restored to its former state of perfection. The state, in Pahlavi *wizārišn,* is implicitly referred to in the song − as it unfolds, so the *agiāry* is constructed and the community is re-created.

There is another, recurring structural theme in the song which links the terrestrial world to the cosmological world by means of the worshipper and the divine, and that is the cycle of petition, offering and reward. The commissioning of the song is a meritorious act: through its performance, righteousness or *aša* is brought regularly into the world. In the first two stages of the song, we have a repetitive structure which entails the calling or collecting together of people, followed by an activity such as the building and consecrating of the fire, or the performance of ritual, and this in turn is followed by the rewarding of the same people. This is a theme that can be traced back through a number of Zoroastrian texts, beginning with the *Yašts* where we have the calling of the deities to partake of the sacrifice, the offering or oblation itself, and the boons which are granted in return.

THE *ĀTAŠ NU GĪT* AND LAY DEVOTIONAL LIFE

In the final part of this paper, I shall comment briefly on evidence provided by recent accounts of lay devotional life as a means by which to illuminate certain aspects of the song. Some of these accounts form part of an oral studies project that resulted in a recent publication by Philip Kreyenbroek and Mrs Shehnaz Munshi, and in which I took part in its early stages.[20] I mentioned at the start of this paper that within the category of 'laity', a prominent role is ascribed to women in the *Ātaš nu Gīt.* It is the married women who seem to be accorded the highest status in the song, and they who are mentioned most frequently in the households where the song is performed. This dominant female role is mirrored 'outside' the text in the sense that it is women who commission the *gōyāns* for a particular occasion, and pay them; women are responsible for the domestic arrangements essential to any celebration.

Today, women appear to have a more prominent role in religious life than men. Much of routine daily life involves activity which is either di-

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[19] A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), p. 114.
[20] See Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism.*

rectly or indirectly linked to religion, whether it concerns the preparation of food, the keeping of purity laws, the *lōban* 'incense' ceremony, the making ready of the hearth fire for a *parāb*, or the teaching of prayers; perhaps as a result of this, it is women who are generally responsible for perpetuating what might be termed the more traditional religious observances within the community. Unless lay men are part of some policy-making body such as the *anjuman*, they do not seem to have a particularly active role as far as religious matters are concerned. Although within the last century there has been a decline in the authority of the priesthood, a diminution of their status within the community, and a drop in their earning capacity, nevertheless for those who choose to become priests, their role is clearly delineated. Likewise, for those who become leaders within the community, their role is not without status, and their work has a purpose. Others make a name for themselves by endowing a foundation or becoming the benefactors of a particular project. However, in day to day religious observance, the majority of lay men whom I met did not appear to have as substantive a role as their female counterparts.

One of the aspects of religious life repeatedly referred to in the song is the nature of food offerings, but it is only through talking to people and being present at gatherings (for example a *jašan*) that one is made aware of the great significance of commensality and the array of different dishes which are prepared for different occasions. While I was inclined to discourage conversations about food during interviews, there is no doubt that for many women, when asked to describe the observances around which their devotional lives centred, the preparation of special foods turned out to be an essential part. This was something they spoke about with confidence; it was familiar territory in a way in which the 'meaning' of prayers was not. The preparation of food was, and still is, a way of bringing people together, as it expresses the solidarity of the community in a similar way as a performance of the song.

Another aspect of the song which is worthy of comment is the relationship between fire and worshipper. I mentioned earlier that there were other versions of the *Ātaš nu Gīt* addressed to different *Ātaš Bahrāms*. This gives these *agiārys* and the fires within them an individual character which is in keeping with the way in which people themselves tend to refer to certain fires. The way in which devotional life focuses on one fire rather than another is felt to endow that fire with a 'personality' and make it more of an icon than a symbol. It seems that the *agiārys* are not so much anchored to a geographic location, but derive their unique character from a particular history or legend which

acter from a particular history or legend which may be attached to them. Thus whilst people may refer to the *Udwada Ātaš Bahrām* as being particularly special, it is not so much the *agiāry* itself as the *Iranšāh*, which was founded in a different place, as well as being itinerant for some years. The attachment to a particular fire, as opposed to its location, seems also to be the case in the Zoroastrian villages in Iran, to judge from the accounts of the Parsis who have visited them recently. While people tend to hold special affection for certain fires (not necessarily the great ones), they will still perform what might be termed 'generalised worship' in any *agiāry*, the important thing being that they are praying before a consecrated fire.

Through listening to people's accounts of religious lives, it emerged that much of lay devotional life continues in the oral transmission of texts and religious observance. While the Parsi community in India now belongs to a predominantly literary culture, this does not mean that literacy is necessarily thought relevant to all categories of knowledge. It may, for example, be applied in the schoolroom but not be thought relevant to prayer or religious matters generally. There is a tendency to assume when oral texts are committed to writing that, almost by definition, their contents become more accessible and that people will read them. We know that by the seventeenth century most of the Pahlavi texts had been translated into Gujarati, thereby making them available to all members of the community; however, there does not seem to be any evidence that these texts were widely read, other than by priests. It emerged through talking to people that for many, the meaning of prayer was not directly related to a literal understanding of the words. Several people mentioned the importance of pronouncing the sounds of the Avestan words correctly, and the manner in which the prayer was recited, with the correct breathing. For those who pray from a book, the translation is often provided alongside the text of the prayer, but this was not mentioned as forming a significant part of the meaning. One might consider here what the content of a *Yašt* or a *Niyāyišn* would convey: the imagery of these ancient hymns and prayers are not easily transposed to contemporary life, nor do they contain much that can be identified as Zoroastrian in terms of doctrine or theology. The most important element, it seems (whether or not a person was praying in a language which he or she understood), was the power attached to the prayer. There were numerous occasions when people described some event or circumstance in which the strength of prayer alone was seen to have achieved a desired goal. This attitude towards prayer accords well with the perceived efficacy of a per-

formance of the *Ātaš nu Gīt,* the stated purpose of which is to make merit.
Also, it explains the preoccupation on the part of the author of the 1879
text to ensure that it was recited properly, for it was the way in which peo-
ple were reciting it with which he found fault and wished to correct.

CONCLUSION

Through the brief exposition of this complex text, it is hoped that the
reader will gain an insight into the way in which the recital of the *Ātaš
nu Gīt* can be viewed as a religious ritual by virtue of its content and
structure, and with reference to contemporary devotional life. It remains
to situate this particular lay ritual within the context of the religious tra-
dition and I suggest that the function and purpose of the song is to recon-
stitute or re-establish both society and the 'Good Religion'. Insofar as
the song appears to have originated in connection with a local event, it
seems possible that the affirmation of the community refers, in the first
instance, to the conflict between the Bhagaria and Sanjana priesthoods.
In this way, it works to heal the divisions of the past and establish a new
hierarchy and social order after the civil strife of the dispute.

In a wider context, the formal cataloguing of all the artisans and trades
people, priests, and members of households is the means by which the
song assembles the community, both literally and symbolically. A recital of
the *Ātaš nu Gīt* is thus not only a ritual re-enactment of the construction of
an *Ātaš Bahrām,* but also a way in which Parsi religious identity is reaf-
firmed. This is a social re-creation of the world; the song gives us an in-
sight into both rural and urban life, social events, domestic and priestly
rituals, historic episodes, and personalities both real and fictional.

The way in which the song is structured allows for the re-estab-
lishment of the fire after a period of conflict, thus implicitly acknowledg-
ing Zoroastrian theological ideas. Finally, the domestic rituals described
in contemporary accounts of lay life demonstrate the way in which the
song can be recited as part of a ritual reconstruction of the sacred fire
within a domestic context. It is through the fire that the song acquires a
liturgical focus.

PREJUDICE VS. REALITY.
ZOROASTRIANS AND THEIR RITUALS AS SEEN BY TWO
19TH CENTURY ITALIAN TRAVELLERS

Carlo G. Cereti

Though endowed with a vast and interesting literature dealing with Iran
—rather: with a western representation of the Iranian world—mainly
linked to a never forgotten interest in classic antiquity,[1] an important part
of which deals with Zoroaster,[2] it is only in the 20th century that Italy
developed Iranian studies as an independent field of research. Among
the pioneers were the philologist Angelo Lignana (1827–91), who had
studied under Christian Lassen and Friederich von Spiegel, and Italo
Pizzi (1849–920), who translated the *Šāhnāme* in verse.[3] Thus the two
reports about the Parsis which shall be discussed in the present article,
though written by two scholars, Angelo De Gubernatis and Paolo
Mantegazza, whose main interests lay outside the field of Iranian studies,
are among the earliest witnesses of an interest in the Zoroastrian com-
munity in modern Italy. Therefore, though both accounts are found in
works that best classify among travel accounts, it was thought worth-
while to draw the attention of the reader to these little known exposés, in
that they provide some insight in the approach of the European general
public to Zoroastrianism in the late 19th century, as well as a somewhat
interesting picture of the Bombay Parsi community.

The two authors with whom we are dealing have played a significant
role in the cultural life of late 19th century Florence. De Gubernatis was

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[1] For a comprehensive bibliography of works on Iran published in Italy in the modern
period up to 1982, see A.M. Piemontese, *Bibliografia italiana dell'Iran (1462–1982)*, 2
vols. (Istituto Universitario Orientale, Seminario di Studi asiatici, Series Minor 18; Na-
poli, 1982).

[2] On Zoroaster in the western world from Antiquity to the modern period see more
recently A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi. Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Litera-
ture* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 133; Leiden, 1997), and M. Stausberg,
Faszination Zarathushtra (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 42; Ber-
lin, 1998).

[3] Firdusi, *Il libro dei re. Poema epico recato dal persiano in versi italiani da Italo
Pizzi*, 8 vols. (Torino, 1886–1888).

the founder of the "Museo Indiano", a relative short-lived Florentine institution, which was inaugurated on the 14th of November 1886,[4] while Mantegazza had grounded the "Museo Nazionale di Antropologia e Etnologia" only a few years earlier, in 1869.[5] In the early years of the 20th century the museum founded by Count De Gubernatis merged into the Anthropological Museum, which today houses a small, but interesting collection of Parsi objects, the main part of which it has inherited from the "Museo Indiano". Among the Zoroastrian objects is a complete set of ritual implements which were donated by Dastur Jamshedji Jamasp Asa to the Italian count.

Some years ago, while preparing a survey of Zoroastrian manuscripts in Italy, I came across a small collection of Zoroastrian manuscripts, reported by Unvala,[6] but now unfortunately lost, which counted among the possessions of the "Museo Indiano"[7] and took a more general interest in the personality of its founder. From further research on the activity of De Gubernatis, it soon became evident that the greater part of the Indian articles preserved in this museum was collected by this scholar and his colleague and antagonist, Mantegazza. Both scholars had visited India in the later part of the 19th century and both, once landed in the subcontinent, had become acquainted with the Parsi community of Bombay. The first to reach the Indian town was Paolo Mantegazza (Monza 1831 – Lerici 1910), a physical anthropologist who was the first to hold a university chair in Anthropology in Italy, his chair being grounded in 1869 at the Istituto di Studi Superiori di Firenze. A few years later, between 1881 and 1882, he traveled to India with the main aim to visit the Todas in the Nilgiri area,[8] but, as most travellers in that period, he landed in

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[4] See M. Taddei, Angelo De Gubernatis e/l Museo Indiano di Firenze: "Un'immagine dell'India per l'Italia umbertina", *Angelo De Gubernatis. Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, ed. M. Taddei (Napoli, 1995), pp. 1–37.

[5] On this museum see most recently S. Ciruzzi, "Il Museo Indiano dell'Università di Firenze", *Archivio per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia* 120, 1990, pp. 271–185. The Zoroastrian collections are object of the yet unpublished article: C.G. Cereti, "Angelo De Gubernatis" (ed. i Parsi), *Angelo De Gubernatis. Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, vol. V, ed. A. Sorrentino (Napoli, *forthcoming*).

[6] J.M. Unvala, *Collection of Colophons of Manuscripts Bearing on Zoroastrianism in some Libraries of Europe* (Bombay, 1940), pp. 159–166.

[7] Cf. C.G. Cereti, "Zoroastrian Manuscripts in Italy: Past and Present", *Proceedings of the Third European Conference of Iranian Studies Pt. 1 Old and Middle Iranian Studies*, ed. N. Sims-Williams (Wiesbaden, 1998), pp. 153–161.

[8] Cf. A. Sorrentino, "Un 'igienista' tra i Toda: Paolo Mantegazza", *La conoscenza*

Bombay and there met the Parsis, then the leading commercial group of the town, drawing a brief but vivid account of the Zoroastrian community in his *India*.[9] Angelo De Gubernatis (Torino 1840 – Roma 1913), a very eclectic character, taught Sanskrit and historical linguistics in Florence (1863–1890) where he founded the "Società Asiatica" and the "Museo Indiano" and later Italian literature and Sanskrit in Rome (1890–1908), where he was to be the first director of the "Scuola Orientale" at the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia. It should also be remembered that De Gubernatis was the teacher of Francesco Cannizzaro, who in the early years of the 20th century translated the *Widēwdād*[10] as well as a correspondent of many of the leading Iranists of the time, among whom one, L.H. Mills, took to the study of the Pahlavi language while serving as Junior Rector of the American Church of Florence from 1875 on. De Gubernatis, as well, reached India through Bombay and included a chapter on the Parsis in his *Perenigrazioni indiane*.[11]

Once landed in Bombay in 1885, De Gubernatis was taken under the protective wing of the learned Dr. Gerson Da Cunha who, among other things, introduced him to the Parsi community. Quite differently from that by Mantegazza, De Gubernatis' description of the Zoroastrians is acute, though not without prejudices.

In the following pages the chapters which the two authors have written on the Zoroastrian community will be presented side by side, in order to show which were the characteristic traits most apt to strike a traveller in those days. The different personality of the two scholars should also be taken into account. As we have seen, one, De Gubernatis, was an Orientalist and an Indianist, a disciple of Max Müller, more at home with books than with the living tradition; the other, Mantegazza, had no specific interest in India, if not as a field of application of his anthropological theories.

The renewed Italian interest in India owed much to commercial reasons. It was in those years that Italy had won over Assab (1882) and

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dell'Asia e dell'Africa in Italia nei secoli XVIII e XIX, vol. 2, eds A. Gallotta/U. Marazzi (Collana "Matteo Ripa"; Napoli, 1985), pp. 435–449.

[9] P. Mantegazza, *India* (Milano, 1884), vol. 1, pp. 73–95.

[10] F. Cannizzaro, *Il Vendidad reso italiano sul testo zendico di C.F. Geldner...* (Messina, 1916; Milano, 1990²); A. Panaino, "Cannizzaro, Francesco Adolfo", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 4, ed. Eh. Yarshater (London/New York, 1990), p. 760.

[11] A. De Gubernatis, *Peregrinazioni indiane*, vol. 1: *India centrale* (Firenze, 1886), pp. 105–137.

Massaua (1885), thus conquering a footing and controlling commercial ports in Eastern Africa, and the perspective was to increase the trade with British India. In this outlook, the Parsi traders played an important strategic role. On the other hand, the community proved to be quite receptive, its interest being clearly shown by the number of Parsis, some of whom belonging to the most illustrious Indian families, which counted among the sponsors of the Museo Indiano in Florence. Proof of this is that twenty one of forty nine founding members are Parsis.[12]

In fact, both authors mention the commercial capabilities of the Parsis and, probably influenced by this parallel, as well as by some contemporary trends, compare the Parsis to the Jews. Thus De Gubernatis speaks of the Parsis saying:

> Se il Gujarat è una delle grandi porte, una delle grandi chiavi dell'India, può dirsi che quella porta, quella chiave trovasi principalmente nelle mani de'Parsi. Essi furono chiamati gli Ebrei dell'India, per le grandi somiglianze fisiche e morali che presentano con gli Israeliti; ma non portando in sé stessi il marchio della persecuzione occupano sulla scala sociale un grado più alto degli infelici dispersi figli d'Israello. Fu detto che essi sono discendenti di una delle dieci tribù, ma senza recarne alcuna prova. È certo che essi provengono dalla Persia; ma in Persia, più che altrove, nell' Afghanistan, nel Belucistan, nel Penjab e nel Cashmir trovansi frequenti uomini di tipo fisico giudaico che parlano una lingua aria, e seguono il costume ario [...] I rapporti evidenti poi che furono trovati fra il dualismo, il principio del bene e il principio del male, in lotta, quale si manifesta nell'antica religione giudaica e in quella de'Magi rimasta quella de'Parsi, stanno a provare l'originaria comunanza e forse l'identità di stirpe degli antichi Parsi e degli antichi Ebrei. Per questo criterio generale e fondamentale parmi che molti problemi etnologici, che fin qui ci hanno sgomentato, possano lasciarci la speranza di una probabile soluzione...[13]

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[12] More specifically fifteen count among the thirty four patrons (to mention them according to Donati's spelling: Dastur Dottor Giamaspji Minocehergi Giamasp Asana, Dastur Khorsedgi Begiangi, Sir Giamsetgi Gigibhoy, Dinshaw Manokgi Petit, Nosservangi Manokgi Petit, Nanabhoy B. Gigibhoy, Giamsetgi Nosservangi Petit, Kovasgi Dinshaw of Aden, Dhangibhoy Framgi Patel, Framgi Nosservangi Patel, Behramgi Dadabhoy Keranvalla, Dadabhoy Nosservangi, Gialbhoy Ardeshir Shet, Nosservangi Mody, Gehanghirgi Nosservangi Mody) and six among the fifteen "soci benemeriti" (Firozshav M. Mehta, Hormusgi Ardeshir Hormusgi Wadia, Hormusgi Bomangi Gigibhoy, Dadabhoy Bomangi Gigibhoy, Giamsetgi N. Tata, Kovasgi Geanghir Readymoney); cf. G. Donati, *Catalogo del Museo Indiano* (Firenze, 1887), p. 7.

[13] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, pp. 107–108. The identity of the Parsis and the Jews had been upheld in the 18th century by Thomas Hyde (*Historia religionis*

Gujarat can be considered one of the main doorways, one of the main keys to India. If this is true it might well be said that that doorway, that key is firmly in the hand of the Parsis. For their great physical and spiritual resemblance to the Israelites, they have been called the Jews of India. However, since they have never suffered persecution, on the social scale they are situated higher than the unhappy, scattered children of Israel are. It has been said that they are the descendants of one of the ten tribes, but without any proof. It is certain that they come from Persia; but in Persia, more than anywhere else, in Afghanistan, in Baluchistan, in Panjab and in Kashmir it is common to find people who though belonging to the Jew physical type speak an Aryan language and follow Aryan customs [...] The clear relation which has been established between the dualism, the Good and the Evil principle, in conflict, as they are manifest in the ancient Judaic religion and in that of the Magi, which has become that of the Parsis, demonstrate the original community and possibly even identity of the race of the ancient Parsis with that of the ancient Jews. Following this general and fundamental criterion I believe that many ethnological problems, which until now have defied us, may have hope to find a possible solution....

Mantegazza, driven by his profession as physical anthropologist and his belief in Darwin's evolutionism, remarks that the Parsis:

Son bianchi, pallidi e presentano due tipi, uno che chiamerei l'esagerazione del tipo giudaico, l'altro grasso, tondo, bonario. Le loro donne più che mai rammentano la bellissima fisionomia delle nostre più belle ebree, dall'occhio nerissimo, grande e sensuale, dai denti di perla. Ho veduto qualche fanciulla Parsi, che avrebbe fatto impazzare un santo e a cui non avrebbe saputo resistere neppure il Sant'Antonio del nostro Morelli.

Non è solamente nella fisonomia che i Parsi assomigliano assai ai nostri israeliti. L'analogia della loro storia con quella di questi li ha ravvicinati anche nel carattere. Essi infatti sono avidissimi di denaro, laboriosi, vani, ma differiscono nella smania di spendere essendo non avari, ma prodighi.[14]

They are white, pale and present two different types, one, which I would call the exaggeration of the Judaic type, and the other fat, round and good-natured. Their women remember the comely physiognomy of our most beautiful Jew women with their dark eyes, large and sensuous, and their pearl-like teeth. I

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veterum Persarum, eorumque Magorum; Oxford, 1760[2]), on whom see recently Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra*, pp. 680–718; by the time of De Gubernatis it had become clear that there was no question of identity, though authors such as Friedrich Spiegel (*Iranische Altertumskunde*, Leipzig, 1872) supported the idea of a Semitic influence on Zoroastrianism.

[14] Mantegazza, *India*, p. 94.

have seen Parsi maidens at whose sight a saint would have gone crazy, and to whom not even Morelli's St. Anthony would have resisted.

The Parsis resemble to our Israelites not only in the physical aspect. The analogy of their history to that of the Jews has made them similar one to the other also in the character. They are greedy of money, industrious, vain, but they differ from the Jews in that they are not stingy, but prodigal.

Further, both authors observe that Parsi women are much more free and independent than Hindu and Muslim ones, but if Mantegazza limits himself to the fleeting remark, De Gubernatis further states that though as a rule beautiful, Parsi women share with their men a general feebleness of body, a trait that will be remarked upon—with some exaggeration—by some modern anthropologists.[15]

As is to be expected, both scholars were interested in the Parsi traditional dress as well as in the practice of wearing the *kosti* and the *sedr* . As a consequence of this interest, the collection of different Indian garments part of which used to be in the possession of the Museo Indiano in Florence, and which now belongs to the Museo Nazionale di Antropologia e Etnologia preserves a number of specimens of Parsi clothing.

The description made by Mantegazza is somewhat detailed,[16] while

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[15] "Basta vedere come uomini e donne Parsi camminano, come facilmente si sdraiano, come a pena hanno acquistata una certa agiatezza si fanno scarrozzare, per comprendere che, se l'ingegno dei Parsi è vivo e l'animo suo generoso, la sua natura fisica si è alquanto effemminata. Uomini e donne sono generalmente pallidi, e tendenti, più o meno, ad una obesità che rallenta i loro movimenti" [To comprehend that the physical nature of the Parsis is as effeminate as their wit is lively and their soul generous, it is enough to see how Parsi men and women walk, how readily they lay, how they take to the habit to be carried about as soon as they can afford it. As a rule both men and women are pale and tend to fattiness, which slows down their movements]; De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni Indiane*, p. 111; in more recent times cf. T. M. Luhrman, *The Good Parsi. The Fate of a Colonial elite in a Postcolonial Society* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 1996).

[16] "Anche il loro vestito, meno pochissimi particolari, è strettamente indù o come usa nel Guzarat. Il loro turbante è il vecchio Khirkidar indù, che si portava una volta in tutta l'India del Nord e che qualche volta si vede oggidì in Calcutta. I Parsi portano anche oggi sulla pelle una camicia di mussolina finissima, chiamata *sadrà*, la cui parte più sacra è una piccola tasca posta presso il collo e che chiamano *gerian*, forma vernacolare della parola persiana *girivan*, che vuol dire collo. Dicesi che sia un simbolo delle armature che si obbligarono a lasciare, ma è probabilmente un errore, perché del *sadrà* si parla fino nell'Avesta. I Parsi danno pure grandissima importanza al *kusti*, corda intrecciata di 72 fili di lana e che ogni giorno è santificato per sei volte da una preghiera e che è portata da uomini e da donne. Forse è un ricordo del braminico *paità*, che però porta-

De Gubernatis only mentions the matter fleetingly.[17] Both authors further underline a typical characteristic of the Zoroastrian dress of the time, the need for men and women alike to cover their heads. Thus De Gubernatis says:

> Le donne Parsi hanno bellissimi capelli neri, ma poco si vedono, poiché come un Parsi che si rispetti non deve mai deporre il suo berrettone o scoprirsi il capo, così il capo di una donna Parsi dev'essere sempre coperto di un velo bianco, detto *mathabana*, simile a quello delle monache, sormontato dall'elegante *sarri*, lungo sei yardi, che le fa pure da manto e da tunica.[18]

> Parsi women have beautiful black hairs, but these can seldom be seen, since just as any respectable Parsi should never drop his hat or uncover his head, so should the head of a Parsi woman be always covered by a white veil, called *mathabana*, which is similar to the one worn by the nuns, topped by the elegant *sarri*, six yards long, which serves both as a mantle and a tunic.

Whereas Mantegazza recalls that: "I Parsi attribuiscono una grande importanza ad una piccola calotta, che portano sotto il turbante, e al cuoio che deve trovarsi sotto la pianta dei loro piedi" [The Parsis accord great importance to a cap, which they wear under the turban, as well as to the leather, which should be under the sole of their feet].[19] Today this custom is not felt any more as mandatory, being followed only by members

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no solo gli uomini. Questa corda porta un nodo, che si scioglie pregando, e serve ad allontanare il male. *Sadra* e *Kusto* si danno ai bambini, quando hanno sette anni, e il sacramento è solennizzato in gran pompa" [Their clothing too, exception made for a few particulars, is similar to the Hindu one or else follows the Gujarati fashion. Their turban is the old Hindu Khirkidar, which once was worn in the whole North India and which nowadays may be sometimes seen in Calcutta. Today the Parsis wear on their skin a shirt of very fine muslin, which is called *sadrà*, the most sacred part of it being the small pocked placed near the neck which they call *gerian*, vernacular form of the Persian *girivan* which means 'neck'. It is said that it be a symbol of the armours that they were forced to leave, but it is probably an error, since even the Avesta speaks of the *sadrà*. The Parsis also consider very important the *kusti*, an interwoven cord made of 72 woollen threads which is sanctified by prayer six times a day, and which is worn both by men and women. Maybe it is a memory of the Brahminic *paità*, which, however is worn only by men. This cord bears a knot, which may be untied while praying and which keeps evil away. *Sadra* and *Kusto* are given to the children when they are seven years old and this sacrament is celebrated with great pomp]; Mantegazza, *India*, pp. 82–83. On the *sudra* and the *kusti* see Modi, *Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsis*, pp. 171–179.

[17] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, p. 115.

[18] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, pp. 111–112.

[19] Mantegazza, *India*, p. 83.

of the clergy and by a few of the more orthodox among the laity. However, in the late 19th century the debate was flaring, as we learn, among other, from a letter written by Gerson da Cunha to De Gubernatis in 1883:

> The Parsees of Bombay have two important subjects of social and religious matter on the topics for discussion. One is whether the Zoroastrian doctrine allows his followers to go bare headed, and the second whether a dead body can be carried in a hearse, or must be always conveyed to the Tower of Silence on the shoulder [...] of the Parsees called Nasasalars, who stand to the other class of the Parsees in the same relation as the pariah to the Brahman.[20]

Turning to the aspect that interest us most in the present context, it should be said that among the many Parsi religious customs, both Mantegazza and De Gubernatis report mainly those which are apt to strike most European imagination. However, De Gubernatis' narration contains a few elements which again reveal a better knowledge and understanding of the community than that by his colleague. Quite on the contrary, Mantegazza's description is more impressionistic, though, as we shall see, it may preserve some interesting trait.

As to be foreseen, both authors were struck by the funeral ceremonies of the Parsis and by the Towers of Silence. However, while De Gubernatis provides a sober description of the death rituals, Mantegazza indulges in a very colourful description which only very partially corresponds to reality. The latter author begins his narration by describing the garden where the Dakhmas are built, a funerary procession of the Parsis and the Towers themselves:

> Una magnifica strada sul Malabar-Hill fatta tutta a spese di Sir Iamshidji Jijibhoi vi porta sopra l'alto d'un colle, dove sopra una porta misteriosa leggete: *Qui nessuno fuori che i Parsi può entrare*, e che vi mette in un giardino incantato, pieno di alberi splendidissimi e di fiori, e dove nessun cattivo odore vi fa ricordare che in quel luogo centinaia di cadaveri son distrutti dal becco e dagli artigli degli avvoltoj e dei corvi. La vista che voi godete dall'alto di quel giardino incantato, è una delle più belle dell'India. Ai vostri piedi si stende tutta la parte orientale dell'isola, tutta l'immensa città colle sue torri, coi suoi monumenti, e fra essa e voi una gran festa di cocchi, che vi nasconde nelle sue onde di smeraldo le povere casipole degli indiani,

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[20] Cf. M.L.Cusati, *"Teu do Coração..."*, José Gerson da Cunha ad Angelo de Gubernatis, *Angelo De Gubernatis. Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, vol. 4, eds †M. Taddei/A. Sorrentino (Napoli, 2001), p. 278.

che vi stanno come appollaiate. Potete aver la fortuna di veder ascendere su per le gradinate dei morti, cento Parsi in lunga schiera, a due a due, e che accompagnano una bara. Accanto ad essa, due uomini dalla lunga barba, ai quali solo è concessa l'entrata nelle torri.[21] Portano guanti e non toccano le ossa umane che con lunghe pinzette. In quel recinto vi sono cinque torri: la più grande costa 30,000 sterline, le altre minori ne costano in media 20,000. La maggiore è alta 25 piedi ed ha una circonferenza di 276. A otto piedi di altezza dal suolo vi è un apertura nella torre, alla quale si ascende con una scala di muratura di pochi gradini. Nell'interno una piattaforma che non si può vedere dal di fuori è divisa in tre zone concentriche con un pozzo nel mezzo. Nella più interna si pongono i cadaveri dei bambini, nella mezzana stanno le donne, e nella più esterna i maschi adulti. È là che si depongono i cadaveri affatto nudi, gli uni accanto agli altri. Appena uno di essi è messo nella Torre, i mille avvoltoj e corvi che stanno sugli alberi vicini, vi si precipitano, e in meno di un ora lo riducono in scheletro, che poi il sole e la pioggia imbiancano. Quando non rimangono più che le ossa, i sacerdoti con pinze e guanti le precipitano nel pozzo, dove si dice che le ceneri vanno al mare trascinate dalle piogge e dalle correnti sotterranee. Queste ceneri umane si accumulano nel pozzo con tal lentezza, che in quarant'anni non formano che uno strato di cinque piedi.[22]

A wonderful street on Malabar Hill all paid for by Sir Jamshedji Jijibhoy, leads on top of a hill, where on a mysterious door one may read "Here none except the Parsis may enter". The door introduces you into an enchanted garden, full of most beautiful trees and flowers, where no unpleasant smell remembers one that in that place hundreds of corpses are destroyed by the beak and the talon of vultures and ravens. The view that you may see from that enchanted garden is one of the most beautiful of India. At your feet lays the whole eastern part of the island, the huge city with its towers and monuments, and between you and the city a feast of coconuts hiding in its emerald waves the poor houses on the Indians. Being lucky, you may have the occasion to see a hundred Parsis climbing the dead men stairs two by two accompanying a bier. Near to the bier are two men with a long beard, the only ones allowed to enter the towers. They wear gloves and only touch human bones using long pliers. In that enclosure there are five towers: the largest costs 30,000 Pounds, the smaller ones 20,000 Pounds in average. The largest one is 25 feet tall and has a circumference of 276 feet. At a height of eight feet from the ground there is an opening in the tower, which is to be reached by a masonry stair counting a few steps. Inside, a platform, which cannot be seen from the outside, is divided in three concentric areas with a pit in the centre. In the inner-

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[21] The reference is to the *nasā-sālār*.
[22] Mantegazza, *India*, pp. 74–75.

most area are placed the corpses of the children, in the middle one the women, and in the outermost adult men. There the corpses are laid one by the other, naked. Once that one of them is placed in the Tower, the thousands of vultures and ravens which roost on the nearby tress rush forward and in less than one hour reduce the corpse to skeleton, which will be whitened by sun and rain. Once that nothing is left except for bones, the priests with tweezers and gloves throw them into the pit where it is said that the ashes will reach the sea carried by rain and underground streams. These human ashes grow in the pit so slowly, that in forty years they build only a five feet high layer.

Both Mantegazza and De Gubernatis share an uneasy feeling faced with the peculiarity of the exposition of the dead body to the birds of prey. The former says:

La prima domanda che si fa un europeo, visitando le *Torri del Silenzio*, è questa: come mai un popolo così intelligente e fino come i Parsi lascia divorare i propri morti dagli avvoltoi e corvi? Come possono essi vedere senza orrore quegli uccellacci appollaiati sui tamarindi, obesi di carne, senza pensare che essi stanno forse digerendo le carni tenerelle del proprio bambino, o il cuore della mamma? – Essi vi rispondono: gli elementi sono santi e non devono essere polluti dal contatto della carne umana, che è impura. Il cadavere umano non deve esser bruciato, perchè il fuoco ne sarebbe contaminato; non deve essere sepolto perchè la terra ne sarebbe sconsacrata; non deve essere gettato nel fiume o nel mare, nè lasciato imputridire a ciel sereno, perchè nè l'aria nè l'acqua devono divenirne impure. Dunque il corpo umano passa dall'uno all'altro organismo, e si compie la parola di Zoroastro, il quale ha detto che la morte deve riunire poveri e ricchi. Infatti il primo milionario di Bombay è deposto nella Torre accanto all'ultimo mendicante, e lo stesso pozzo travolge nello stesso abisso le ceneri di entrambi.[23]

The first question that a European visiting the *Towers of Silence* asks himself is the following: "How can an intelligent and refined people such as the Parsis leave its dead to vultures and ravens"? How can they observe without horror those fowls roosted on the tamarind trees without thinking that they might be digesting the tender flesh of their own child, or the heart of the mother? – They answer: The elements are holy and they should not be polluted by contact with human flesh, which is impure. The human corpse cannot be burned, since it would pollute the fire; it should not be buried, since the earth would thereby be desecrated; it should not be thrown in a river or a sea, nor left to rot in the open air, since neither water nor air should be polluted. Thus the human body passes from one to the other organism, and Zoroaster's word is fulfilled, in that he said that death should unite the poor and the rich. In fact the richest

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[23] Mantegazza, *India*, p. 76.

millionaire is placed in the Tower side by side with the humblest beggar, and their ashes gather in the same pit.

Quite similar are the comments by De Gubernatis:

> La cerimonia era semplice e grave. Ma una madre nostra non reggerebbe di certo all'idea di abbandonare le spoglie della sua creatura allo strazio certo che ne faranno in breve i sordidi corvi ed avoltoi; ciò che si consuma nelle fiamme va bensì perduto; ma il freddo orrore della morte non vi fa almeno schifo; il pensare invece che una parte del vostro sangue, delle vostre carni, che le vostre forme predilette vanno a perdersi ignobilmente nelle fauci voraci d'animali ingordi che verranno poco dopo a digerire il pasto infame sul tetto stesso della vostra dimora, ripugna talmente a tutti i nostri sentimenti morali ed estetici che mi meraviglio grandemente della tenacità con la quale gli odierni Parsi tanto ingentiliti custodiscono la loro usanza, e mi fa vivamente desiderare che i loro teologi dimostrino non dommatica la necessità del *dokhma*, perché si possa dare ai loro estinti una più decente e gentile sepoltura.[24]

> The ceremony was both simple and grave. However, one of our mothers would never accept the idea to abandon the mortal remains of her child to be torn to pieces by filthy ravens and vultures. What flames consume is nonetheless lost, but the cold horror of death is less disgusting, yet to think that a part of your blood, of your flesh, of your beloved forms may be ignobly lost in the voracious jaws of greedy beasts which shall soon digest the infamous meal perched on the roof of your own house, is so repugnant to all our moral and aesthetic feelings, that I wonder greatly about the tenacity with which today's refined Parsis cling to their custom, and I keenly hope that their theologians may demonstrate that the need to use the *dokhma* is not dogmatic, thus that it may be possible to bury their dead in a more decent and gentle manner.

However, what is more striking about the report by Mantegazza is the long final passage on the funerary customs of the Parsis. According to this researcher, in case of death the Parsi mourn for days and days:

> I funerali dei Parsi, o *paternas*, sono i più tristi che possano vedersi, ma oggi vi è una reazione contro l'eccesso dei loro pianti. Figuratevi che per un bambino si deve piangere quattro giorni, per un adulto nove. Il pianto e i gemiti durano dalle 9 antemeridiane alle 2 pomeridiane, e si piange e si geme dalle donne della famiglia, dalle loro parenti vicine e lontane, dalle vicine e dalle amiche delle amiche. Le visite di condoglianza giungono in casa del morto per tempo, aspettando l'ora del pianto, che è annunziato da un

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[24] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, p. 137.

primo gemito del capo piagnone, che in note alte e basse si lamenta, pic-
chiandosi il petto con colpi così forti, che si possono udire anche nella via.
Gli uomini stanno al di fuori silenziosi. Le donne invece, piangendo l'una
dopo l'altra, devono raccontare le virtù dell'estinto, le vicende della malat-
tia, gli sforzi dei medici curanti, le ultime volontà del morto. Tutto ciò si
canta fra lamenti e singhiozzi, terminando ogni detto con una monotona e-
sclamazione a guisa di ritornello e poi scoppiando in un accesso di lagrime
e di singhiozzi isterici. Ogni piagnone deve parlare per 10 o 15 minuti al-
meno.[25]

The funerals of the Parsis, or *paternas*, are the saddest to be seen, but today
there is a reaction against the excess in crying. Imagine that for a child you
should mourn four days, for an adult nine days. Mourning and crying begins
at nine in the morning to end by two in the afternoon, and it is the women of
the family, their near and far relatives, their neighbours and the friends of
the friends who are called to mourn and cry. The those who visit to express
their condolence come early to the house of the dead person, and wait for
the time set to mourn, which is announced by the first wail of the chief
moaner, who laments in high and low notes, hitting his chest with such
strong blows that they may be heard even on the outside road. The men
stand outside, silent. The women, instead, crying one after the other, must
describe the virtues of the departed, the vicissitudes of the illness, the ef-
forts of the doctors, the last will of the dead person. All this is sung while
mourning and moaning, and every sentence ends in a monotone exclama-
tion, as if a refrain, followed by a burst of tears and hysterical moans. Each
moaner must speak for at least 10 to 15 minutes.

This peculiar tract is not confirmed by De Gubernatis who, quite on the
contrary, speaks of a ceremony which is both "simple and solemn".[26] It
should also be remarked that coherently with the entire Zoroastrian
priestly tradition, lamenting is assigned to the fifth unhappy land in
Widēwdād 3.11, a passage which inspired a similar one found in the
Dādestān ī Mēnōg ī Xrad (VI, 13) which lists the land where there is
much lamentation and weeping as the tenth unhappy land. Moreover, the
57th chapter of the *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag* describes the punishement suf-
fered in hell by a woman who mourned and grieved. That the question
was still felt in the 19th century is demonstrated by a Gujarati catechism,
written in 1869, which strongly condemns the habit of mourning for a
deceased one.[27]

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[25] Mantegazza, *India*, pp. 89–90.

[26] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, p. 137.

[27] Cf. F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion. A Nineteenth*

The other practice that struck the two Italian scholars—as well as many others—was the use of purified bull urine, the *nirang*. Mantegazza speaks of a growing reaction against this custom:

> Non tutto è poesia nei riti sacri dei Parsi. Essi hanno un culto nefando per l'orina della vacca, che chiamano *nirang*. Con essa si aspergono il volto ogni mattina, nelle loro preghiere, e se ne spruzzano anche durante il giorno qualora una seconda purificazione fosse necessaria. Quando non si può avere il *nirang* vi si può sostituire orina di capra, e in mancanza di questa, succo di limone. La crescente generazione però reagisce contro questo culto orinoso.[28]

> Not everything is poetry in the holy rites of the Parsis. They have a nefarious cult for cow urine, called *nirang*, which they use to besprinkle their face every morning, during their prayers, and also to besprinkle themselves during the day if there arises the need of a second purification. When the *nirang* is not available it can be substituted with goat urine and, if even this is lacking, with lemon juice. The growing generation, however, reacts against this urinary cult.

During his stay in Bombay, Angelo De Gubernatis was invited by Dastur Jamaspji Jamasp Asa, with whom he had had previous contacts by letter, to assist to a Zoroastrian marriage ceremony. While conversing with Jamaspji's son, Firuz, De Gubernatis asked his learned host about the *nirang*:

> [...] io approfitto dell'occasione per domandare al dastur Firoz quanto di vero si trovi nell'opinione che i Parsi non pure nelle loro cerimonie sacre, ma anche ne' loro cibi facciano grande uso d'orina di vacca. Il buon dastur sorride compassionevolmente alla strana domanda; nega in modo reciso che la cosa stia così; l'orina di vacca dice riserbata a rari casi di solenne purificazione, ne' quali per mondare l'interno del corpo, poche gocce del sacro umore vengono inghiottite; del resto, soggiunge l'accorto prete, che vuole scagionare i Parsi d'ogni sospetto d'idolatria, dell'avere i nostri padri scelto nelle purificazioni l'orina di vacca si adduce pure una ragione medica; l'orina di vacca contiene molto acido, e questo acido serve mirabilmente a purgare, a ripulire, a mondare il corpo umano da ogni suo umore maligno. Gli lascio credere che mi contento della spiegazione, e non domando altro.[29]

Century Catechism with Modern Commentary (Studies in World Religions 3; Chico/California, 1982), pp. 83–84.

[28] Mantegazza, *India*, p. 83.

[29] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, p. 132.

I take profit of the occasion to ask to Dastur Firoz if the common opinion that the Parsis use cow urine not only in their holy ceremonies, but also in their food corresponds to truth. The good Dastur smiles compassionately at the curious question. He denies that this opinion correspond to reality saying that cow urine is used only in rare cases, when solemn purification is required. Then, to clean the inside of the body, a few drops of the holy humour are swallowed. The sagacious priest, wishing to acquit the Parsis of any suspect of idolatry, adds that: "anyhow, the choice by our forefathers to employ cow urine in purification is justified also by a medical reason. Cow urine contains much acid and this acid is quite useful in purging, cleaning and washing the human body from any malignant humour". I let him believe that I am happy with his explanation, and ask no more.

De Gubernatis' doubting attitude towards the rational explanation given by his host is a typical trait of his character, and also in other occasions he does not accept the rational argumentation through which the reformist part of the Parsi community tries to justify its beliefs. Moreover, if one takes as parameter the descriptions that the two authors make of these two aspects of the Zoroastrian cult which may appear as the most striking and loathsome to 19th century westerners, it is easy to see how De Gubernatis' description is much more rational and trustworthy than the impressionistic picture drawn by Mantegazza. However, though some aspect of the report written by the latter author may largely draw on second-hand knowledge, the information he gives about the custom of mourning the dead might rather be a witness of a popular custom, not accepted by the clergy nor, as far as we can see, by Zoroastrian tradition.

Popular religiosity is, moreover, the subject of a long paragraph by De Gubernatis, who describes the Parsis praying out in the open for long hours:

Chi arriva a Bombay ed esce dal Watson Hôtel per i prati dell'Esplanade che si distendono sino alla marina o percorre l'Hornby Row è colpito dal gran numero di devoti Parsi che in varie attitudini, isolatamente, stanno, ne' loro abiti bianchissimi, mormorando in pubblico le loro preghiere o leggendo trascritto in moderno carattere gugiarati il piccolo Avesta in lingua zenda che non capiscono più affatto. Rimangono talora, nella stessa attitudine, delle ore intiere; chi non può uscir di casa s'affaccia alla finestra, e stando con la finestra aperta prega verso il sole che nasce o tramonta. I meno vaghi d'ostentazione pregano nel santuario della casa, innanzi al fuoco domestico, altri si raccolgono presso i templi del fuoco, mettendosi in fila sulle panche a sedere con le gambe incrociate e per lo più con un piede ignudo incrociato

sul ginocchio nella mano; altri s'accoccolano a terra coi ginocchi sconcia-
mente aperti, e le mani congiunte; altri fanno di un albero il loro altare divi-
no e all'albero sembrano rivolgersi per ottenere da Dio l'invocata protezio-
ne. Il Parsi non intende più il testo delle antiche preghiere che recita; sa tut-
tavia che la sua preghiera ha la virtù di scacciare il demonio, il genio tene-
broso, il genio del male, e di rendere propizio il genio del bene, il genio lu-
minoso, Dio creatore e conservatore di tutte le cose buone [...] In nessuna
religione forse si prega più lungamente che in quella dei Parsi; è una mor-
morazione vaga di parole incomprese, una lettura materiale in un libro inte-
so soltanto più da pochi dotti, ma molto venerato dal popolo. Dal principio
alla fine delle preghiere, l'animo, la voce dell'orante rimangono sempre as-
sorti; egli non s'interrompe da sé; ma, se qualcuno passa, con cui abbia af-
fari, nulla impedisce che egli si fermi un istante per ricordare al viandante il
piccolo affare che gli sta a cuore, per rammentargli il piccolo debituccio di
cui aspetta il pagamento, per fargli un saluto se amico, o lasciargli correre
dietro una piccola impertinenza se malevolo. Tutto ciò non guasta la santità
della religione, né l'efficacia stessa della preghiera; perché la preghiera è
potente in sé stessa, e, se si dice tutta, il beneficio è sicuro. Così, ritornan-
dosi a pregare cinque volte al giorno, i più devoti tra i Parsi consumano ta-
lora orando da sei ad otto ore [...].[30]

Whoever arrives to Bombay and leaves of the Watson Hotel to walk
through the Esplanade lawns which stretch to the marine, or goes along
Hornby Row, is struck by the number of Parsi believers who stand in vari-
ous attitudes, isolate in their white clothes, and openly murmur their prayers
or read the Khorda Avesta in the Zend language, which they understand no
more at all, transcribed in the modern Gujarati character. At times they stay
hours in the same attitude. Those who cannot go out from their homes stand
by the open windows, praying towards the rising or setting sun. Those who
are less eager to appear pray in their home sanctuary, near the domestic fire;
others gather near the fire temples, sitting in a line on the benches with
crossed legs, mostly setting a naked foot on the open hand laid on the other
knee, still others squat down on the ground with their knees obscenely open
and the hands joined; others again make an altar out of a tree and appear as
if turning to the tree to obtain the wished protection from God. The Parsi
understands no more the prayers he says. He knows, however, that his
prayer has the virtue to drive away the devil, the dark spirit, the evil spirit,
and to propitiate the good spirit, the light spirit, God the creator and pre-
server of all good things [...] Possibly in no other religion one prays as long
as in that of the Parsis; it is a vague murmur of words which are not under-
stood, a material reading in a book which is only understood by a few

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[30] De Gubernatis, *Peregrinazioni indiane*, pp. 105–106.

learned ones, but which still is much venerated by common people. From the beginning to the end of the prayers, the soul and the voice of he who prays are always absorbed, he never interrupts himself, but if someone with whom he has to do passes by, he sees no obstacle to stop for a moment in order to remind to the passer by the small business which he may care for, or to remind him the small debt still awaiting to be paid, to greet him, be he a friend, or to utter an impertinence at his back, be he a foe. All this does not ruin the sanctity of the religion, nor the efficacy of the prayer itself, because the prayer is powerful in itself and if said completely the benefit is assured. Praying thus five times a day, the more devout among the Parsis spend six to eight hours every day in prayer...

As already mentioned, De Gubernatis was a long time correspondant of Dastur Jamaspji Jamasp Asa, and, once in Bombay, he was invited by the learned Dastur, head of the She(he)nshai faction of the Parsis, to assist to a ceremony expressly organised for the visiting scholar at a "Parsi club". The service performed was in all probability the Yasna, limited to the *Paragṇā*:

Sul pavimento, nel mezzo della sala, s'era, con la cenere, tracciato un rettangolo, ad indicare il sacro recinto. Tre tavolini figurano tre basi di pietra; sopra uno di essi, è un vaso di metallo, contenente il fuoco sacrificale, sul secondo un pajuolo contenente acqua; sopra il terzo si lavano e si purificano, prima di adoperarli, i singoli strumenti sacri. Presiede la cerimonia un dastur molto erudito nelle cose avestaiche e molto intelligente; disgraziatamente per me egli parla solo il gugiarati [...] Egli leva, da prima, una piccola brocca contenente acqua di fonte, e la versa nel pajuolo ripieno di acqua, per purificarla. In quell'acqua vengono tuffati tutti gli utensili sacri, che si lavano e purificano ad uno ad uno, recitando per ciascuno speciali preghiere; si legano quindi, con una foglia di palma divisa in sei fili, intrecciati fra loro come una cordicella, i 21 *beresman* purificatori di metallo (simili a piccoli aghi da calza), che si collocano sopra due sostegni di metallo, di cui le due estremità superiori sono voltate a semicerchio e figurano la luna falcata. Fatta, con le relative formole, la purificazione degli strumenti, incomincia la vera e propria cerimonia dell'*homa*, destinata, nel suo primo intendimento, a rinvigorire, ringiovanire, fecondare la vita de' devoti. Purificato il mortaio e il suo pestello, scongiurato lo spirito maligno, battendo col pestello, come con un batacchio, di dentro e di fuori il mortaio, come fosse un campanello, il prete prende il legno *homa*, versa un po' d'acqua purificata nel mortaio, vi depone l'*homa*, e lo pesta per fare uscire un po' di succo; un anello sacro, probabile simbolo del disco solare, dopo essere esso stesso purificato e legato, viene adoperato come suggello della cerimonia. Pestato l'*homa*, l'acqua che ne raccolse il succo vien fatta passare per una scodella

a nove buchi, entro un vasetto, dal quale il sacerdote, libando, beve. Il legno *homa* da cui fu estratto il succo, deve finalmente essere buttato nel fuoco e bruciato insieme col sandalo e col belzoino.[31]

On the floor, in the centre of the room, a rectangle had been drawn with the ashes, to symbolise the sacred enclosure. Three small tables represented the three stone bases; a metal vase, containing the sacred fire was placed on one of these, on the second one a pot containing water; on the third the single sacred implements are washed and purified before use. In charge of the ceremony is a very intelligent Dastur learned in Avestan matters. Unfortunately for me, he only speaks Gujarati [...] First of all he rises a small pitcher containing source water and pours it into the pot containing the water, in order to purify it. All the sacred implements are dipped in that water. They are washed and purified one by one, while reciting special prayers for each of them. Thereafter the 21 purifying *beresman* made of metal (similar to small knitting needles) are tied together by way of a palm leaf divided in six threads, which are intertwined into a string. They are put on two metal props of which the upper part is turned upwards and represents the lunar crescent. Once that the purification of the implements is completed with all needed formulas, the most genuine part of the *homa* ceremony begins, being thought, at first intent, to reinvigorate, rejuvenate and fecundate the life of the believers. Having purified the mortar and its pestle, exorcised the evil spirit, hitting with the pestle, as if it was a clapper, the inside and the outside of the mortar, as if the latter was a bell, the priest takes the *homa* wood, pours a bit of purified water in the mortar, puts in the *homa*, pounds it to obtain some juice. A sacred ring, probable symbol of the solar disc, is employed as seal of the ceremony. Once pounded the *homa*, the water which received its juice is filtered by way of a bowl with nine holes into a vessel from which the priest, libating, drinks. The *homa* twig from which the juice was extracted should in the end be thrown in the fire and burned together with sandal and benzoin.

Other interesting details reported by De Gubernatis, but not to be found in Mantegazza's account, are, to my mind, his observations on the social structure of the Parsi community, remarking that the community, though wealthy, retains a deep interest in spiritual matters and his comments on the theology and cultic practice of the Zoroastrian, of which he has knowledge, in all likelihood, through the She(he)nshai faction. About the social structure he says:

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[31] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane,* pp. 128–129. On the rite itself, see most recently F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd, *A Persian Offering. The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy* (Studia Iranica Cahier 8; Paris, 1991).

Il culto è per i Parsi cosa molto seria, e si leggerà con qualche stupore in Europa che sopra i quarantottomila Parsi della città di Bombay si trovano ben ottocentocinquantacinque preti, ossia persone che attendono al servizio religioso. Ma, a mostrare meglio la capacità spirituale di questo popolo, vuolsi aggiungere ancora che in Bombay si contano cento quarantun maestro e trentaquattro maestre Parsi. È evidente che la cura degli interessi materiali, promossi con tanta intelligenza dai Parsi, non li rende indifferenti alla conquista del mondo dello spirito, nel quale essi vedono saggiamente la ragione, il principio e il fondamento ideale di tutti i loro beni terreni. Né a chi vegga ed ammiri il grande svolgimento delle costruzioni nella città di Bombay, sarà inutile il conoscere che in una città di oltre 723,000 abitanti, ove i Parsi sono una sola quindicesima parte, sopra ottantaquattro ingegneri civili , si contano trentatre Parsi. I Parsi sono pur lieti di riconoscere che su circa dieci mila mendicanti nella città di Bombay la statistica segnalò appena sei Parsi, che fra le numerose prostitute indigene non si segnalò una sola donna Parsi, e che la mortalità tra i fanciulli Parsi è minore che fra gli altri fanciulli indiani. Eppure non può dirsi che i più robusti tra gli Indiani siano i Parsi e che le Parsi siano le più sane tra le donne dell'India...[32]

For the Parsis worship is a very serious matter and one may read with some surprise that among the forty eight thousand Parsis of the city of Bombay there are as many as eight hundred fifty five priests, i.e. persons who perform the religious service. To prove even more the spiritual capacity of this people, I shall add that Bombay counts one hundred and forty one male Parsi teachers and thirty-four female Parsi teachers. By this, it becomes quite evident that the care for the material interests does not make them indifferent to the conquest of the spiritual world, in which they wisely see the ideal reason, principle and fundament of all their material goods. To him who sees and admires the great development of building in the city of Bombay, it may be useful to know that in a city that counts 723,000 inhabitants of which only one fifteenth are Parsis, out of eighty-eight civil engineers thirty-three are Parsis. The Parsis are also happy to know that out of the ten thousand beggars reported in the city of Bombay, statistics only marked six Parsis that among the numerous indigenous prostitutes there is not a single Parsi woman, and that among Parsi children mortality is lower than among other Indian children. And still it cannot be said that Parsis are the hardiest among the Indians, nor that Parsi women are the healthiest among Indian women...

De Gubernatis correctly observes that the representation of their own creed given by the Zoroastrian reformist clergy of the 19th century is

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[32] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, pp. 110–111.

little in harmony with what we know about their religion from the sacred texts, though he fails to realise entirely the importance of Zoroaster's reform which forged a monotheism—that peculiar form of monotheism which we are used to call dualism—out of the original indo-iranian polytheism:[33]

> Stando poi nell'India, i Parsi tolsero agli Indiani molte delle loro pratiche domestiche e religiose; ma i Parsi più colti dell'età nostra negano che in tali pratiche consista la loro vera religione, la quale non si fonda sull'idolatria, ma sul culto di un Dio solo creatore e supremo benefattore del mondo; lo stesso culto del fuoco è spiegato da essi così: noi non veneriamo il fuoco come Dio, ma solo come un mezzo per renderci propizio l'Essere supremo, come un simbolo della luce divina, e come un purificatore perfetto; così guardiamo verso il sole come alla più luminosa manifestazione di Dio, ma non crediamo che il sole stesso sia Dio. Noi dobbiamo ora accettare tali spiegazioni degli odierni dastur come sincere ed autorevoli, per indicare la riforma religiosa che si operò nel seno dell'antica religione zoroastrica; ma il mitologo che ha letto l'Avesta, non può certo persuadersi che Mithra, il dio solare tanto celebrato, tanto venerato dagli antichi Persiani, non fosse per sé stesso un vero e proprio nume, e che perciò il primo culto zoroastrico, come il primo culto vedico non fosse politeistico. S'affermò quindi sempre più il principio dualista, e la figura divina di Ahura Mazda in opposizione alla figura satanica di Anhro Mainyu, diventò sovrana, onde la teologia zoroastrica riuscì finalmente ad un alto monoteismo; ma ciò non toglie che, nelle prime origini del culto, come in molte delle superstiti pratiche superstiziose dei Parsi, si trovino indizii numerosi del politeismo popolare sopra il quale la fede zoroastrica si creò e si mantenne.[34]

Living in India, the Parsis took from the Indians many of their domestic and religious customs, but the more learned among the Parsis of our times deny that the their true religion, may consist of such practices, since it is not idolatrous, but rather based on the worship of one only God who is the sole creator and benefactor of the world. They explain the worship of the fire as follows: we do not worship the fire as God, but rather as a mean to propitiate the Supreme Being, as a symbol of the divine light and as a perfect purifier. Moreover, we look at the sun as the most luminous manifestation of God, but do not believe the sun to be God. Nowadays, we must accept the explanation of the modern Dasturs as both sincere and authoritative, and depending on the religious reform which operated within the ancient Zoro-

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[33] It should, however, be understood that De Gubernatis uses the definition "antica religione zoroastrica" to mean the pre-Zoroastrian religion of the Iranian people.

[34] De Gubernatis, *Perenigrazioni indiane*, pp. 110.

astrian religion. But the mythologist who has read the Avesta, can never be persuaded that Mithra, the solar god who was so venerated and worshipped by the ancient Persians, was not an independent deity, and thus that the earliest Zoroastrian cult was not polytheistic, just as the earliest Vedic cult. Thereafter dualism established itself more and more, and the divine figure of Ahura Mazda became sovereign in opposition to Anhro Mainyu, and as a consequence Zoroastrian theology attained in the end to a lofty monotheism. Nonetheless, in the earliest attestations of the cult, so as in many of the surviving superstitious practices of the Parsis, one may find countless clues which hint to the popular polytheism from which the Zoroastrian creed was born and developed.

To conclude, we may well say that both the description of the Parsi community by Mantegazza and the one by De Gubernatis reflect the interests of the respective authors, providing an insight on the picture of the Parsis that the western—and here specifically Italian—general public had in the late 19th century, and on the manner in which two scholars, pioneers respectively in the field of Anthropological and Oriental studies, described the community. From the point of view of modern Zoroastrian studies we may well say that interesting as they may be, the two reports provide scanty new material on the religious practice of the community itself, by then quite well known to western scholars.

MANEKJI ON THE RELIGIOUS/RITUAL PRACTICES OF THE IRANIAN ZOROASTRIANS: AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A PASSAGE FROM HIS TRAVEL REPORT IN GUJARATI (1865)

Marzban Giara / Ramiyar P. Karanjia / Michael Stausberg*

INTRODUCTION [MSt]

Although he is hardly known outside the Zoroastrian community, Manekji Hoshang Limji Hataria (1813–1890) is one of the main actors on the stage of modern Zoroastrian history.[1] As is well known, in 1854 Manekji, an experienced traveller, was sent to Iran as the first emissary of the 'Society for the Amelioration of Poor Zoroastrians living in Iran', a Parsi organization founded some two years earlier in Bombay. In Iran, this organization came to be referred to as the *Anjomān-e akāber-e pār-siān,* the 'Society of the Parsi nobles'. The many achievements of Manekji and this organization in Iran in improving the living conditions and the political circumstances of Iranian Zoroastrians—most importantly the abolishment of the poll tax (*yezye*) in 1882—are extensively discussed in the literature.

Apart from helping to improve the general ('secular') living-conditions and the educational level of the Iranian Zoroastrians, Manekji also made a strong impact on the religious establishment. Undoubtedly, Manekji did much to strengthen the traditional ritual infrastructures. Thus, on behalf of the above-mentioned society Manekji had a good number of ritual structures repaired and furnished with requisites and items needed for the performance of rituals; thus, he arranged for a good supply of necessary goods such as wood and oil in order to safeguard the functioning of the temples. Moreover, Manekji arranged for festivals, initiations, and weddings to be performed, and got prayer books and ritual garments distributed. However, all this is clearly more than a simple

'revival' of 'orthodox' patterns, for he tried to influence and modify things in what he perceived to be the right way (e.g., by abolishing the slaughter of cows at a shrine[2]). Manekji's many links to Iranian religious dissidents may be worthy of note in this context.[3]

In retrospect, it is clear that the improvement of the living conditions of their Iranian co-religionists never did gain a top position on the impressive list of charitable projects endowed by wealthy Parsis, and occasionally the whole project was severely criticized in India. Manekji, in turn, tried to convince his critics and to steer enthusiasm for further projects.

After some years of service to the above-mentioned society, Manekji drew up a report on its activities. This report was printed and published in 1859.[4] In 1863, after a stay of almost eight years in Iran—interrupted by one year that he had spent at Baghdad—Manekji returned to Bombay, while his son Hormuz Manekji Hataria stayed behind in Iran. As a later report on Manekji's activities published in 1871 states, after Manekji's return to India in 1863 tremendous efforts were made to find a replacement for Manekji, but to no avail. Even advertisements in newspaper brought no results. Eventually it was decided to once again entrust the work to Manekji.[5] A new agreement was drawn up, and in 1865 Manekji returned to Iran where he was to remain until his death.

While Manekji was staying in Bombay, the 'Society for the Amelioration of Poor Zoroastrians living in Iran' called for a Special Meeting that took place at the residence of its secretary, Seth Merwanji Faramji Panday, on 20th March 1864—the eve of the Iranian New Year—with over 100 Parsi gentlemen attending.[6] At this meeting Manekji read out a lengthy report. Together with some other materials, this speech was to form the bulk of the first 18 out of 22 chapters of a book that Manekji published the next year (1865; 1234 Y.). 1,500 copies of that book, entitled *An Essay on the Account of a Voyage to Iran* (see below) and printed at the Union Press in Bombay, were published.[7]

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[2] See also Robert Langer's paper in this volume.

[3] See Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 199–200.

[4] A typed English translation (77 pp.) entitled "A Report on the Charitable Institution Set up to Ameliorate the Condition of Poor Zoroastrians in Iran" is located at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute (Mumbai). The shelf-mark is E 360 Ira/Ira.

[5] *Mi. mānekji hātariā ane īranī pārsīo (Mr. Manekji Haratia and the Parsis of Iran)* etc., part IV. A copy is available at the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute (Mumbai), shelf-mark Guj 915.479 Hat/Man.

[6] From the available records, it seems that no women were present at the meeting.

[7] Some years back, I have discussed some aspects of this report in my (forthcoming)

In chapter VIII, one of the longest chapters of the book running into 40 pages [pp. 12–52], Manekji presents a thorough survey of "The Condition of the Parsis in Iran" (as the title to that chapter puts it).[8] Here, Manekji discusses the following issues: first, their diet [pp. 12–13], second, their dress [pp. 13–14], third, their dwellings [pp. 14–15], fourth, their work and subsistence [pp. 15–16]. After his discussion of the Iranian Zoroastrians' work as farmers, messengers, peddlers, and traders [p. 16], Manekji states:

> [p. 16] Fifthly [...] despite their condition and enduring a thousand calamities and remaining labourers in worldly affairs, yet according to the religion, they have preserved their way of life in five other matters so well that we cannot fail to be happy. Therefore, there is hope that from the following details the Parsis of India will better their welfare by selecting to follow the Iranians and by arranging the marriage of their children and dress of their women and children, as well as festivals, jašans, [p. 17] birth of children and rituals for their dear departed, etc.

This passage clearly states the rationale behind Manekji's attempt to support the religious practices of the Iranians, for he plainly regarded these as constituting the core identity of the Iranian Zoroastrians. He explicitly states what was to be done: weddings were to be arranged, the attire of their women was to be safeguarded, and their festivals and life-cycle practices were to be strengthened. Remarkable throughout is his enthusiasm for the ritual practices of the Iranians, which he clearly perceived to be the 'original' Zoroastrian ones—and as such, he recommended them to his Indian audience as an example worthy of emulation. By supporting the Iranians, Manekji seems to suggest, the Indians were to remain true to their own religious heritage.

In order for the Indian Parsis to appreciate the Iranians' "way of life", as he puts it, he provides a detailed description of what he felt were five of its crucial aspects: their marriages and weddings [pp. 17–39], the women's garments [pp. 39–42], their festivals [pp. 42–46], their practices concerning pregnancies, child-birth, infancy, and menstruation [pp. 46-48], and, last but not least, their funerals [pp. 48–52]. An English translation of this entire passage is given below.

Manekji's description is important for several reasons. To begin with, from a historical perspective, Manekji's book is unique in that it contains

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contribution to the *Jamshid Sorush Sorushian Commemorative Volume* ("Manekji Limji Hataria and the Rediscovery of Ancient Iran").

[8] Manekji always uses the ('ethnic') term 'Parsis' even when referring to the Iranian Zoroastrians. This corresponds to a widespread usage.

the first description provided by an insider/outsider.[9] Manekji's position is exceptional in that, as an Indian Parsi, he had full access to the ritual practice of the Iranians. Thus, contrary to the Western travellers' reports, Manekji provides a first-hand and an insider's perspective, and his descriptions are based on long-term observations 'in the field'. Manekji must also have observed one and the same ritual being performed in different locations.[10] On the other hand, though, as an outsider (an Indian in Iran) he did not just take things for granted but had to become familiar with a semi-alien set of practices. This situation is clearly mirrored in the way he organizes his descriptions. Manekji thus provides remarkably detailed, clear and full accounts of the practices that he has observed in Iran. Occasionally, he even discusses the prerequisites and consequences of the practices he is describing. For instance, in his description of the weddings, far from describing only the core ritual, he discusses the processes of matchmaking, the criteria of eligibility, and basic rules of inheritance, thus allowing for unique insights into the Iranians' 'mentality', 'ethos', and 'habitus'. Although he occasionally comments on priestly practices, these are beyond his primary focus, and this is not surprising, for Manekji himself was not a priest (and had his share of troubles with the Iranian priesthood). In this way, Manekji's account is also an important testimony to lay ritual practices, and he mentions several rituals and parts of rituals that are not attested in priestly sources.

Manekji not only describes what he sees, but occasionally he also comments on what he describes. As in the report as a whole, these comments address his Indian listeners (and readers), and they vividly show Manekji in his unique position on the border between Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrian cultures and in his double role of interpreter/reformer. Manekji's comments may thus serve different purposes.

Sometimes he tries to explain the background and the social consequences of what he is describing in order to make his readers/listeners better understand what he is describing. Occasionally, he may even express his own feelings. For instance, Manekji mentions that the observation of a particular practice (such as the drinking of wine [p. 45]) made him happy.

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[9] Manekji was not the first Parsi to participate in Iranian rituals. For instance, a letter from Torkābād mentions that the Parsi messenger Behdin Bahman Aspandyar had undergone purification rituals, respected the purity rituals, served the first-grade fire and went on a pilgrimage while staying at Torkābād, see B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others. Their Version with Introduction and Notes* (Bombay, 1932), p. 593. However, Bahman Aspandyar has left no description of these rituals.

[10] His descriptions, though, are synthetic, i.e., they abstract from specific settings.

Sometimes, he comes up with positive statements about the Iranians. Thus, he repeatedly praises instances of the Iranians' family life [p. 33]. He draws an almost romantic picture of the 'unity' of husband and wife [p. 34], and even addresses his Parsi audience by suggesting that the man who does not make his wife happy is "lost" [p. 35]. Repeatedly, he comments on the Iranian Zoroastrian women: They are "understanding and patient, faithful and obedient to their husbands" [p. 39]; he also praises the "industrious" character of the Iranian women, drawing a sharp contrast with the "ladies of our community" (the Indian Parsis) [p. 46].

Here, his report contains an explicit critique of the Indian Parsi community. In other instances, a sharp critique against Indian customs is articulated in an implicit fashion. To begin with, this concerns financial aspects of the wedding arrangements, for instance, when he comments on the low costs that the groom and the bride had to incur for their wedding in Iran [p. 34], or when he praises the Iranians for not demanding a dowry [p. 34].[11] Moreover, it seems that he implicitly objects to the Indian practice of entrusting infants to wet nurses [p. 48].

On the other hand, Manekji occasionally presents an outright critique of some Iranian customs. Invariably, this is the case when it comes to the Iranian practice of ritually killing animals, and he even has his own ideas as to how this practice, that was hard to reconcile with his ideas about religion, has crept into the community [p. 51]. Moreover, he explicitly deplores that the Iranian priests did not know the 'meaning' of the texts they were reciting when they did perform a wedding [p. 31].

Sometimes Manekji comes forward with speculations about historical origins. This may have positive connotations like when he opines that 'hurrah' was a borrowing from Iran [p. 21] or when he suggests that the practice of the youngest son staying in the parental home and taking care of the rituals for the parents may be "very ancient and ideal" [p. 35]. However, this sociogenetic approach may also serve the purpose of explaining why something that strikes him as strange is as it is (like the fact that the bride is not acting herself during the wedding, which Manekji suggests is a borrowing from Islam [p. 32]; the same explanation is given for polygamy [p. 39]).

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[11]   However, he also describes the practice of making 'gifts' [p. 33] as well as fixing the 'Meher-o-Nīkā' [pp. 31 and 35]. In the *Revāyat,* the question of settling the *mahr* is also discussed, see Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats,* pp. 196–197. In one instance, the *mahr* is here equated with *nekāḥ-* 'dowry'.

As already mentioned, the part of the book containing the passage translated below, was first presented by Manekji as a speech. That is why, in the book, the text continuously appears as a quotation (from the speech). Obviously, Manekji did not make any efforts to revise the text in order to enhance its literary quality. In the translation, an attempt has been made to preserve Manekji's particular style. At the same time, the syntactic structure has been somewhat altered in order to make the text more accessible to modern readers. Mostly, these changes consist of breaking down very long sentences into smaller units. As he was talking to a Parsi audience, Manekji uses ritualistic terms familiar to his audience. As any attempt to replace them by English words invariably leads to questions of accuracy and consistency, these terms are kept (without the use of diacritics), but a glossary is appended. Many of Manekji's observations (like the high marriage-age he is giving) would invite comments, but it was felt that providing a commentary would have made the text too long.[12] It is therefore left as it is, in the hope that it may catch the readers' interest and that the translation may be useful for further scholarship.[13]

TRANSLATION

An Essay / On the Account of a Voyage to Iran / that is / A Report on the Summary of the Travels in the Country in Iran / Prepared in the Service of the Mazdayasnan Anjoman which has come and settled in India, and for all learned Readers / Prepared by / and Printed and Published by / the Humble Traveller Manekji Limji Hoshang Hataria / Printed at the Union Press in Bombay / 1234 Y. 1865 A.C. (174 pp.)[14]

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[12] An obvious comparison to be made is with the accounts on marriage, childbirth, and funerals that a certain Borzu has prepared for D.L. Lorimer in Yazd in the summer of 1914. These texts were recently republished (with notes) by F. Vahman/G. Asatrian, *Notes on the Language and Ethnography of the Zoroastrians of Yazd* (Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser 85; Copenhagen, 2002).

[13] A first draft of the translation was prepared by Marzban Giara. Subsequently, this draft was revised first by Ramiyar Karanjia and then by Michael Stausberg who also had the chance of checking the translation with Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal during the latter's visit to Heidelberg in May 2003. Dastur Kotwal suggested some improvements, which were gratefully incorporated.

[14] A copy of the book in Gujarati is available at the library of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute. The shelf-mark is 915.5 Hat/Ris.

From chapter VIII: "The Condition of the Parsis in Iran"

[Marriages and weddings]

[p. 17] Among our Iranian brethren, it is the rule of marriage that both boy and girl should be of age, and they pay much attention to whether or not the boy earns his livelihood. If the boy's parents are wealthy but the boy is not industrious, nobody will give a girl in marriage without consideration to such a boy, and no girls are willing to be the wife of a lazy boy who sits on a pile of unearned wealth. Similarly, a girl should be able to spin, weave or stitch, embroider or farm the land and be able to make her own clothes. Only then is some boy willing to marry her. Because the custom is that every girl, after going to her husband's house, must be able to make her clothes out of the money earned by her own efforts, and to cut, design, stitch and wear her clothes.

After girls attain a minimum of 15 to 20 years of age, and boys attain a minimum of 20 to 30 years of age, they find their own mates. If the parents wish to get their children married, they ask their children or inquire through another person, and after many discussions and much counselling obtain their consent. The work of making a match is not done by parents using their authority or command, but is left to the wishes of the children. Together with the adverse conditions and the cold climate this is one of the reasons why many girls are spinsters till the age of 30 to 40 years; and several boys are bachelors even at 50 to 60 years of age, because only when they can run their family well will they marry.

A boy and girl think of getting married after reaching maturity and achieving confidence in their ability to maintain themselves. Those whom they love, the boy and girl keep secret. The boy very often makes rounds near the girl's house to catch a glimpse of her. [p.18] Similarly, if the girl is in love, she sees the boy on the pretext of some work. Thus their behaviour is noticed by neighbours and relatives and the rumour is spread that NN and NN love one another. When it is known that both are willing, the parents or elders of both make enquiries about one another's family. If one of them finds the other family not suitable, they explain the reasons to their child. Thus, the young ones listen to their elders and out of respect for the family, they change their desire. If the unmarried boy or girl, one or both, do not have parents living, they seek the consent of their close relatives, and consider their advice beneficial. For, in such a situation, to follow the advice of parents and elders in the family is like following the will of God. If both families like one another, then they

help fulfil the desires of their children and take pleasure in seeing them married.

Marriageable young people fall in love if they find their life-partners among their cousins, such as the children of their maternal or paternal uncles or aunts who are a match in their behaviour, temperament and age. On reaching the age of discretion, their mutual love increases and they tie the knot of matrimony. If they can find a close relative, they do not seek matrimony outside the family.

When a boy and girl find their mates according to their own wishes, and the parents and family like the choice, then they make enquiries about one another's family on various matters publicly as well as in private.

[p. 19] First, they pay greater attention to the family name or surname by which it is known and the reputation of the whole family, because the surname runs in the family from father to son for a long time. If any person has a blemish, the whole family's name is tarnished and no one would readily give their daughter or son to such a family, for instance the Mahoshuri family has been detested for twelve hundred years.

Secondly, the reputation of their parents, their occupation, and more importantly, whether they are creditors or debtors. This is because in Iran, a father's debt must be paid off by his sons, and one relative's debt will cause the creditors to harm the other relatives.

Thirdly, in what company of friends does the boy move about, with which friends the girl meets, and what is the reputation of these companions. More attention is paid to this because the behaviour of young men and women is generally affected by the company they keep.

Fourthly, they carefully check what is the boy's occupation and how industrious and well-paid he is, for he has to maintain his family and raise children. Similarly, they make detailed enquiries as to the behaviour of the girl and how talented she is in her own work, because she has to earn for herself, look after the house, maintain peace and understanding in the family and educate her children.

Fifthly, which relatives in both the families have been converted, and their condition and reputation. For many of those converted to Islam are unworthy, and their relatives will suffer the harm that comes from this.

Sixthly, apart from the public appearance, whether either have any diseases or not and their state of health generally. [p. 20] That is checked thoroughly because all family members hope that children born to them will be healthy, courageous, hardworking and strong.

After making all those enquiries both sides separately meet the village headman, the chief of their street, and also the dastur and seek their advice as to whether the boy and girl have been committed to marriage elsewhere. If there is no other objection, then they give their consent.

Thereafter, for the first time, five to nine married ladies from the boy's family carry in their hands a plate containing two lumps of sugar, a little sugarcane plant, a sweet called sākar-paneer in the shape of a fish, a few dry dates, kismis (currants), dry fruits etc. The plate is covered by a green silk handkerchief and taken to the house of the girl who is to be engaged. The sākar-paneer sweet and a lump of sugar is given to the bride-to-be, the sugarcane plant is given to the girl's mother, the other lump of sugar to the girl's father, dry fruits to the girl's brother, sister, aunts and other close relatives by name, all these the girl's family receives as a gift and gives in return respect to those ladies, sprinkles rose water on their face, shows them their face in the mirror, serves a glass of sharbat and gives each one of them a flower or fruit and sends them back with their hands full.

One to two weeks after the sweets from the boy's house reach the girl's place, a cap, a handkerchief, a woven bag, like a money purse, a pair of petāva (ankle socks), are taken for the boy from the girl's house and given to the boy. The same day the girl distributes the gift of sweets and dry fruits that were received by her relatives and friends and declares her engagement; and both sides give the village headman and also the chief of their street and the dastur lumps of sugar and declare the engagement. It is well-know to everybody that this exchange on both sides is considered as lighting the lamp which is called nām jad [zad] sud [shud], that means the boy's and the girl's name have been fixed. From that time onwards, the girl's name is taken with that of the boy in all ceremonies.

[p. 21] After the above ceremony on the first day of the celebration (jašan), the boy takes a pomegranate and makes small holes in it and pierces it, in the form of a map, with 7 to 33 rials, that is the local currency, which is about half a rupee in value. Moreover, some sweets are placed in a handkerchief that has come from his in-laws. Accompanied by his father, uncle, brother, etc., he takes with him about 7 to 15 men and an equal number of close female relatives and the handkerchief. Together, they go to the girl's house, also taking with them shoes and a silver ring. After reaching the girl's house, the women join the ladies of the house, the men mingle with the men, and they sit down on opposite sides. Next, rose water is sprinkled and a mirror is shown, then the girl

stands or sits a little aloof from everyone else, the boy himself goes to her side and personally gives her the decorated pomegranate and sweets in the presence of all. Thereafter, the ladies from the boy's side put on the shoes on the girl's feet, and the ring on her finger. At that time, it is said that lady NN has put her feet into the shoes of behdin NN (co-religionist) and became his wife. On this being said, all men raise shouts of joy, putting their hands on one another's necks and three times calling out loudly, "hābhrō" (Listen! Listen!). Then the master of ceremonies replies "šābāš" (Well done!).

Know that the Europeans exclaim "hurrah" at all happy functions. This word, I guess, must have been borrowed originally from the Iranians ("hābhrō! hābhrō!"), and the same word is used also by the Russians. I think this word must have entered their vocabulary from the early Iranians or Tartars. The word šābāš which the behdins say in reply must originally have been "šād bāš", meaning, "may you be happy", but with the passage of time, the 'd' has been dropped and 'šā' only is retained, so it seems.

After the girl has put on the shoes and the ring, her parents and the elders of the house [p. 22] put on a cap on the boy's head and the men accompanying him. Then they all sit down for a meal. Food is served according to each one's choice, which will certainly include grape syrup, curd and wine, so that through this engagement our mouths may be sweetened and our souls purified by happiness. Such a ceremony is performed in order that that couple may endure forever. Thus, after the engagement, on every celebration and festivity, the boy, on his own and without any invitation, goes to his in-laws' house, and takes along and gives to the girl some sweets, dry fruits and, as mentioned earlier, puts some silver coins in a pomegranate or orange or apple. Then, if the mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother or sister-in-law are at home, the boy has a meal with them and returns.

So, too, when the first winter after the engagement arrives and the first snow falls, the boy sends 5 to 7 maund of nān (bread), which would be 35 to 50 pounds, and about 10 pounds of til (oilseeds), halwā (sweet) for the girl's father, and brother. Then they have a meal with the one who brings these items. Afterwards, they drink wine and send him back.

Similarly, when there is a festival, the girl goes to the fair (melā) with her friends and close relations, then the boy also goes with his friends and personally presents to the girl in the presence of all, 3 to 4 metres red silk cloth, various sweets, almonds, grapes, pistachios and dry fruit.

Then, after the boy and his friends sit and have a meal, the girl presents the boy with a money purse woven by her. Thus, through this exchange of gifts, all persons from the villages assembled at the fair may know that they have become engaged.

Thus, by reciprocal exchange, the engagement is fixed and love and affection between the boy and girl increases [p. 23] and in such a way at least a year passes. But, if one party is in poor health or of advanced age, then the engagement and marriage are finalised in ten to twenty days. If on the other hand, due to some misfortune, obstacles arise, as much as five to seven years may elapse.

When the time of marriage arrives, preparations are made for a separate house and according to their capacity, a house is built or bought or rented. If they cannot afford this, then they make such provision for a few days, until another house is found. Or, if there is only one son, then preparations are made for marriage in the parent's own house. But if a separate house can be provided, that is ideal.

The day of marriage is determined by both sides who get together and agree to one of the thirty days in a month; but the period of the first three months after Jamšedi Navroz during spring season is best. After this, marriages are preferred during the three months of summer, but in the three months of autumn, no marriages are performed; if there is urgency, then as a last resort, marriage can take place in winter, during the last three months of the year.

On dusk of the appointed day, the guests assemble at the boy's house. After the priest arrives, a dāhmobed, viz. the village religious leader, takes five to seven persons from the boy's side and goes to the girl's house. At that time, the girl is dressed up and seated respectfully in the centre of several ladies with the veil pulled over her head, and when the dāhmobed calls out her name, the girl out of respect and modesty does not reply. Therefore, the dāhmobed pleads and affectionately says loudly several times that "I, an elder, have come before you [p. 24] along with other elders, and am addressing you but you are not replying, then what do I do? Now I am tired of shouting". After he has said this several times, the girl softly replies in a sweet voice. Then the dāhmobed asks her to raise her voice so that all can hear. Thus, after one or two more rounds of question and answer, the dāhmobed says that NN, son of NN, desires to tie the knot of matrimony with you, girl, named NN, daughter of NN. You have the right to say yes or no. Your father has the right to consult, discuss and advise as an elder. So, if you are yourself willing

and your father consents, then say who you are appointing as your inter-
cessor (vakeel [literally advocate]); on hearing this, the girl in reply gives
the name of one of her close male relatives; then the dāhmobed listens
and says "bale bale" meaning "yes, yes"; then the dāhmobed tells the
behdins accompanying him "lady NN has appointed behdin NN as her
intercessor, are you witness for that?" In reply they all say, "Yes, we saw
with our own eyes and heard with our ears".

Thereafter, along with the intercessor, they return home, the elders in
the gathering and the dastur who blesses the couple are addressed by the
dāhmobed, telling them "lady NN has appointed behdin NN as her inter-
cessor. For this the persons who were present as witnesses". The wit-
nesses say "yes" and give their consent at that time. In the meantime, a
pair of garments for the boy arrives from the girl's house, which after-
wards the boy puts on. The boy and the girl's intercessors both perform
the kusti pādyāb. The boy is seated to the right of the dastur and the
girl's intercessor is seated on the dastur's left side. Seven types of dry
fruits are placed in the intercessor's right hand. [p.25] The boy holds the
contract in his right hand, and the dastur reads out the following admoni-
tions in the Dari language:

"Today is an auspicious day, and as directed by the immortal-souled
prophet Ašo Zartošt Spitaman (Zarathustra Spitama), I tell you and in-
form you so that you may listen and conduct yourself accordingly, and
also direct your children to follow suit. Whatever good deeds you have
done to date, are counted ten for one, and sins one for one. But now after
marriage, if you commit sins, then for every one, ten will stick to your
conscience, and whatever good deeds you do, will be considered the
same. The works of merit in the Mazdayasni religion are limitless, and
out of them some are extremely important, and by doing them it will be
considered meritorious and not doing them would be a sin. Thus, I tell
you that you should not miss doing good deeds.

"Firstly, daily morning, noon and evening, it is fitting to pray the
Khoršed - Meher Niyaiš in havan, rapithvan, and uziran geh. If you do
not know to pray this, instead you may recite each time 135 Yathā and 5
Ašem. So, too, do not omit to pray the Avesta in Aiwisruthrem, Ušahin
geh and at dawn.

"Secondly, recite the Māh Niyāiš on the occasion of the full moon,
moonless day and crescent, i.e. at the commencement of the lunar
month. If you do not know how to recite, then it is fitting to pray 75
Yathā and 5 Ašem.

"Thirdly, there are six gahambār festivals every year, of which one gahambār every year must be celebrated and the righteous faithful must be fed. If you cannot host the whole gahambār, you can host a ½, ¼ or ⅛th part also, and if that is not possible either, then you must participate in the āfringān ritual, wherever a gahambār is held. Sit and mingle with the Mazdayasnis and taste the čašni.

"Fourthly, once every year, panjevyāhā and panjemukhtārā, [p. 26] that is for ten days of farvardigān, perform or have performed darun, myazd, āfringān, which are for all the departed souls, and through their blessings your savings [= store of merit] and courage will increase in every respect.

"Fifthly, you should continue to gladden the souls of your mother, grandmother, father, grandfather, brother, sister, etc, friends who have departed, by performing darun, myazd, and āfringān, in order for them to obtain provisions in heaven.

"Sixthly, know that six months in a year, rapithvan is high in the sky and for six months below the earth. Therefore, between Hormuz roz and the next five days of Farvardin month, once rapithvan should be consecrated; and if that is not possible, then for those 5 days during the period of rapithvan geh, there should be no movement; you should sit in one place and recite the Avesta, which is equivalent to consecrating rapithvan. If you have tossed pollutants in water or fire or have not removed such items fallen in it, the sin of any such errors and mistakes committed by you in the last year will be forgiven if you perform the above ceremony.

"Now remember that in this world, growth, protection and care of life are due to rapithvan and all insects, trees, plants, and ... owe their existence to rapithvan. Therefore rapithvan should be consecrated or you should be a participant in a consecration ceremony.

"Also know that among those who follow Hormuzd's religion, a child upon reaching the age of ten must wear the sudreh and keep the kusti tied around the waist. Being a Mazdayasni, if you do not wear the sudreh kusti, for every step you walk on earth, there is a sin worth twelve hundred dirhem and you become one of the sinners in the seven regions of the earth. If you wear the sudreh kusti, for every step you receive a reward of twelve hundred dirhem and become [p. 27] one of the rewarded persons on this earth. Hence, as long as you live, keep the sudreh and kusti on your body, and at the change of every geh, or after answering the call of nature, perform the kusti, which is equivalent to performing the setāyesh of Hormuzd.

"So also, five persons have a right over faithful children; first mother and father, next teacher, thereafter mother-in-law and father-in-law. Hence if you keep these five happy, this is equivalent to your having prayed to Dādār Ahura Mazda himself, and if all of them or one of them is displeased with the offspring, even if that child does a thousand good deeds, that one cannot attain heaven. For parents give birth and bring you up, similarly, a teacher imparts knowledge and nourishes the soul, and the in-laws give their child in marriage. Hence, they all should be considered as parents and respected.

"Among the best things, know that 30 days are named after spiritual Amshaspandas, among them Meher Yazad, Ram Yazad, Astad Yazad.[15] Anyone whom you like, select one as your secret friend or spiritual helper, who will help you to get over every secret calamity, and on the day corresponding to that Amshaspanda's name, perform āfringān or have it performed, with offerings of darun and myazd.

"Distribute something to the poor behdins. In order to obtain advice and counsel about religious activities, cultivate friendship with a dastur and for all religious rituals that may be performed, seek and act according to his advice. For on that righteous path, he will show you the reward. Similarly, for engaging in worldly activities wisely, keep a wise and religious man as your first friend. Consulting him and taking his advice in every activity will result in avoiding loss or error, for any activity done with proper guidance pleases Ahura Mazda [p. 28] and any activity done without consultation is pleasing to Ahreman.

"In revering the seven Amšāspandān, there are seven obligations full of wisdom that you should fulfil.

"The first obligation, to Hormuzd, consists in the following: When you meet people, whether small or big, then first try to obtain their affection, greet them, and every traveller or guest who comes to you, treat him well according to your ability, and when they seek help from you, then know that it is equivalent to pleasing Dadār Hormuzd.

"Secondly, fulfilling the obligation to Bahman Amšāspand consists in the following: If there is any conflict or quarrel among people, then intervene and make peace, create understanding; and care for animals by offering them grass, water, keeping them safe from cold and heat and do not make them work more than necessary. Thus, if you please men and beast, then you have pleased Bahman Amšāspand.

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[15] Manekji's note: These are names of 3 angels. Actually, it should be 5: Meher – Rašne – Behram – Astad – Aneran.

"Thirdly, offering the following virtues to Ardibehešt: In all actions use righteous words always, and never tell a lie, for the lord of all rewards, the first and original source of charity and fruitful prayer, is to walk on the path of righteousness. Of all sins the greatest sin and the first among all sins is telling lies. Hence, to love righteousness and tread the path of righteousness and revere all types of fire and not touch fire with soiled hands or unclean body and not to burn any foul items, only fragrant dry wood; not to allow the hearth-fire to go out, all that is equivalent to pleasing Ardibehešt Amšāspand. Ardibehešt Amšāspand is in charge of the splendid heaven. Hence those righteous people who respect fire will always find a place in heaven.

"[p. 29] Fourthly, offering these virtues to Šehrevar Amšāspand: God created all persons at one time, but everyone becomes poor or rich according to their own actions. Hence, there is not a single old family in which there is not a person of low, poor condition. So, without despising any poor person, we should, as far as possible, guide them, and an able person should take care of the weak. Moreover, take care of metallic objects, and continue to observe purity and not allow anything to become stale or rusty, this will please Šehrevar Amšāspand.

"Fifthly, offering these virtues to Spandārmad Amšāspand: One may possess wealth, skill, knowledge, power, status, yet with pleasant manners, affection and humility, behave courteously with others, so that just as the humble earth which is below our feet becomes fertile and is praised, so may you be praised in the world. Just as those who rear dry fruit trees fulfil their wishes and are joyful, so may you make all who come to you hopeful and cheerful; and attempt to keep the house, garden, fields and roads clean. These things will please Spandārmad Amšāspand.

"Sixthly, offering these virtues to Khordād Amšāspand: The way God keeps you in this world, be contented with your lot and be grateful and thankful to Him. Do not be greedy, envious or spiteful on seeing other's wealth or property. Keep water precious and away from nasā. Daily on awaking, take nirang or dry fruit or juice of leaves, and while washing the hands and face, use 'āberavān' or 'ābeambar', viz. water from a flowing stream and river or well and pond. Take the water in a separate vessel, go to a dry place and wash so that the dirty water [p. 30] does not mix with pure water. Whilst drawing water in one's own or another's field or garden, first look around that place to make sure that there is no nasā in the way, and allow water to flow so that no nasā may mix with water. Such practices will please Khordād Amšāspand.

"Seventhly, offering these virtues to Amardād Amšāspand: Any work that is due in the world should be liked by the entire anjuman. Hence, consult and seek advice of more than one person because even a wise one is liable to err and a single person does not have as much wisdom as he ought to. Hence, after consulting many people, each activity should be carried out. Since vegetation provides nourishment to living beings, make every deserted place fertile and prosperous by planting trees with courage and labour, so that the food that is produced feeds every animal. By such practices Amardād Amšāspand can be pleased."

After reading out the above admonitions, the dastur who performs the wedding says, "Whatever happened up to now is over and may you be well; hence you should repent of past sins so that you may be happy and hereafter be good and follow the laws of the religion, as also your children should observe them. May God bless you with wisdom and may you be happy." On hearing these words, the boy and the girl's intercessor start reciting the patet and on behalf of the wedding couple, all present at the function also recite the patet.

After the patet is over, the bridegroom is made to take an oath in 'fārs-e-kadim' or 'dari' which translates as follows: "Since such-and-such a lady, who is the daughter of NN, has the right to get married, and her father has the right to counsel her as the head of the family, by her own desire and with the consent of her elders, as also their guidance, [p. 31] I have accepted her as my wife to keep with my body and soul forever." Thereafter, the intercessor of the bride is asked to make a declaration of the girl's marriage in slightly different words.

After obtaining the declarations from both, the dastur recites Avesta prayers. Here he recites the Aiwisruthrem Geh prayers and a paragraph from Hormuzd yasht called nipāyoiš mashim. After completing the Avesta prayers, the āširwād in Pahlavi follows. After reciting these again, some Avesta prayers are recited, including a Hā from the Yasna,[16] and Avesta prayers for consecrating the darun.[17] It would be much better if the dastur or mobed knew the meaning of these Pahlavi āširwād or Avesta prayers.

Once again the bride's intercessor is asked to repeat the declaration as made earlier: "inasmuch as such-and-such a lady has the right and privilege of marrying according to her father's counsel so as to be a couple in this world and the next, and is a household lady treading the path of re-

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[16] This refers to Yasna 54.
[17] This has never been the practice in India, and is no longer done in Iran either.

ligion with body and soul and looking after the house and the master of the house, I personally make the contract and agreement and have her wedded to behdin NN."

The boy also makes a similar declaration and says that he accepts and takes an oath in the following words:

"I promise that I will never turn away from my word; that I will not allow any sorrow to be caused to my better half whose hand I have held; that she will join me in my happiness, that her work I will know as mine, that whatever her needs may be I will fulfil them, and I promise that the when she wants to give the predetermined 'Meher-o-nīkā'[18] to someone, I will not oppose this; I shall always [p. 32] keep her in dignity like my own self, and promise to fulfil all her desires. May Meher, Sarosh and Rashne yazatas be my witnesses; Adar-kharuh (khoreh?), Adar-gušasp [sic] and Adar-burzinmeher be my witnesses, the pious Fravaši of Zarathuštra Spitama be my witness. May my soul and religion be my witness. All the behdins who are present here be my witnesses. Mobeds who are present be my witnesses, you dastur NN who ties my knot of matrimony, be my witness."

After the boy takes the above oath, the bride's intercessor is made to swear as before, and finally he says three times, "Man dādam" i.e. "I gave (her)". Then the boy replies three times, "Man pajiraptam" that is, "I have accepted (her)". Then the priest says, "May you live a long, auspicious, good life with good fortune, lovingly till the end of your life." Aidun bād, Aidun taraj bād, Ašem (one) until the āširwād that unites the couple. Now, the religious ritual performed by the mobed is complete.

While the mobed is performing the above ceremony, someone stands with some dry fruit, a raw egg, a scissors and green silk thread in his hand close to the head of the bridegroom. When the mobed finishes the ceremony, he does āchhu michhu, that is, dispelling evil over the boy's head at that time, and the groom tosses the raw egg away high up in the air.

(While performing the ritual, instead of the bride sitting with the groom, one person from the bride's side becomes the intercessor and sits and makes the agreement on behalf of the bride; this practice I think is akin to the Islamic laws, and the behdins must have adopted it.)

After this activity is over, a pair of clothes are taken from the groom's house and put on the bride along with some ornaments. Then the girl's family feeds those who bring the dress or a little dry fruit and sweets are

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[18] Manekji's note: It is an ancient practice that whatever 'Meher'-bride's money is decided upon, the bridegroom must give.

served, wine [p. 33] sipped, men and women all together. Each one carries a lighted candle in their hands, and goes with the bride to the groom's house. Afterward, according to the capacity of the bride's parents, ornaments, clothes, utensils, bed-sheets, etc. are given and taken to the groom's house. That is called 'dahej' (gift).

On arriving at the groom's house, the bride lights the fire in a high pot at one place. Around it on one side the ladies stand and the men on the other side. In their midst and in the presence of all, the groom holds the bride's hands and both go round the glowing fire three or seven times. Men and women standing nearby all together shower dry fruit on the couple at that time and salute them. Sometimes one or two mobeds, if present, stand and sing songs. Thus, after making the rounds, the groom leads the bride by the hand into a room in the house, comes out after seating her, bids farewell respectfully to the audience and girl's relatives, and they[19] stay separately in their own place.

Subsequently the wedding guests are invited to their house for two or four days or a week, in turns, some in the morning, some at night and some both times. During meals each guest is individually served, and each has a chaperone.

During such festivities, the parents, brothers and sisters of the wedded couple and other relatives all come and go as guests. Then those close relatives invite the wedded couple to their house as guests. Thus, by mutual love and affection, the people there have preserved the tradition of enjoying family bliss.

(The readers of this account will certainly have compassion in their hearts for the innocent daughters of our country (India) [p. 34]; their mothers-in-law, like fiends, treat them so badly and cause sorrow to those budding flowers of delicate build, and turn them into old women; and like stupid illiterate children, find excuses in everything to create unpleasantness among in-laws and close relations. Therefore, if we had the practice whereby the couple lived separately after marriage like our Iranian brethren, then such sad incidents would be undoubtedly very few amongst the Parsi families in India.)

On the 3rd, 4th, or any other day within a week after marriage, the groom steps out of the house accompanied by five to seven close relatives in the evening during Uziran geh. Meanwhile, his wife goes to the terrace with dry fruit and dried leaves called 'ābšan' in a vessel and

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[19] i.e. bride and groom.

showers them onto the head of her husband. Then the boy goes to a stream of water with milk and sugar and dry fruits called 'sanjat' in his hands and, while reciting Ā Hātāmča Hā (Yasna 65) of Āvān Niyāiš, pours these into the water. On returning home before entering the house, his wife welcomes him as before.

The marriage ceremony (kriyā) as described above does not cost the groom more than Rs.100/- to Rs.1000/- and the bride's family spends an equal amount; apart from this, there is no quarrel about or promise about things like jewellery, or clothes, etc. Both the husband and wife consider their life together as a unit, and do not consider anything individually. Not only that, ever since they first desired to get married to each other until the very end of their lives, they love each other dearly just like the pair of Sāras birds (swans) who are as united in happiness as in sorrow;[20] they spend their time in this world governed by fate in mutual understanding and contentment, as is said in the Hindi couplet:

"Parētam pateea tolke jo kuch antar hoy
Amtum jēvrā ekēye dekhan ke tan doye"[21]

[p. 35] (For a learned person it is no secret that a husband who does not keep his better half with befitting love, or makes her unhappy and like an old woman, he himself is lost, he will lose his invaluable asset of health, the fountain of love and fruits of love, and will become a penniless mendicant.)

When the boy marries and separates from his father, the father gives him his share of the inheritance, dividing up his business for the purpose. Afterwards he has no share in the father's assets or property. So, if someone has more than one son, each of them on marriage receives separate shares. The youngest son stays in the father's house, and he inherits the capital or property, because he stays in the family house and is responsible for performing rituals (kriyā) for the dead and the living.[22] (This practice seems to be very ancient and ideal and we therefore see in history that Šāh Kayomarz had designated his youngest son Siamak, Faredūn Aptin his youngest son Irach, Kaikaūs had designated Siāvoush and Šāh Guštasp had named his second son Aspandiar as heirs to the

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[20] This alludes to an Indian saying about these birds.

[21] "Let there be no distance between the beloved and her husband/Though by sight we are two, may we live like one life."

[22] In India, this duty generally resides with the eldest son. Occasionally, however, a trust is established.

throne, and thereafter their children are found to have obtained the crown and throne.)

Until the girl is married, the parents or brothers should look after her and meet the marriage expenses according to their capacity. Except whatever is given to her as gift (dahej) at the time of marriage, she gets nothing more from the father's assets. But whatever the girl's mother has, e.g. ornaments, cash, clothes or garden, fields, including the mother's privilege of Meher-o-nīkā all that will go to her on the mother's death. If, therefore, there is more than one daughter, the mother's property is distributed. Thus, if the assets are shared, there will be no quarrel in the family.

[p. 36] And whatever the girl has received from her husband or in-laws or from her in-laws in any form can not be taken away by anyone; neither her in-laws nor parents nor brother nor sister nor anyone else has any rights to her assets or property. Therefore, whatever she may have in the way of capital or immovable property will be passed on only to her own daughter. That is, the mother's property is not given to her son and whatever she has only goes to her daughter—but if a lady has no daughter, then she may bequeath her wealth to whomsoever she will.

As said earlier at the time of the āširwād, a girl is called 'pādšāhājani' (= befitting a king).

Depending on the condition of the girl, she is called by different names and given different titles. Accordingly, there are 5 types of women considered for marriage and their descriptions are as follows:[23]

The spinster who marries with the counsel of her parents and close relatives is given the title 'pādšāhājani' at the time of marriage.

A spinster who desires to get married without the counsel and permission of her parents and close relatives, but following her own will, is given the title 'khudrāhijani', but she does not get respect and status.

A woman who is widowed and marries a second husband is called 'chākar[24] jani' at the time of marriage. (It seems that this term must have originally been 'chakarjani'.) If the lady who remarries has no children from the first husband, or if they all died and none are still living, and if she marries again and has more than one child with her second husband, then half the children are considered the children of the first husband and so they are linked with his name.

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[23] In India, only two categories are distinguished.

[24] Gujarati: 'servant'.

[p. 37] A girl who is a spinster and marries but whose father has no male issue is called 'suthurjani' at the time of marriage; for, when she gives birth to the first baby boy, that boy is called the son of his maternal grandfather. His father has no rights over the son, and the maternal grandfather's name is used with the boy's name instead of the father's name, e.g. the Kayanian King Darab's name is taken with that of his maternal grandfather Bahman Šāh, and the Pešdadian King Minocher's name is recited with his maternal grandfather Irach Šāh and Sikander's [Alexander's] name is recited with that of his maternal grandfather Pheelkush [Philip].

A woman who, after marriage, has unfortunately had some bad experience with her husband, if they have been separated for a long time and later a settlement is reached—it is advisable to have āširwād performed again. This applies also to any unfortunate event after divorce from her husband—if she desires to marry another man, then too in the āširwād this lady's name is recited as 'aiyougjani'.

Amongst our Iranian brethren, there is no sudden separation between the husband and wife. If any unfortunate event takes place, their relatives intervene and make every effort to restore peace. As mentioned above, they have the āširwād performed a second time and have the couple reunited. If the interveners are not successful with their advice, then out of helplessness, they ask the couple to seek divorce. Even if unfortunate incidents or circumstances have brought the separation about, separation of a man and a woman is nevertheless recognised as a great sin. If, therefore, in the course of three years peace cannot be restored, then, recognising that divorce is the only solution, they are taken before a dastur. The dastur explains to them that according to religion, breaking of wedlock is a serious sin. He gives them a few days to seek relief and desires them to make peace. However, if that does not happen, then in the end, sorrowfully, the amount promised at the time of marriage, or according to the capacity of the husband, or something more or less, [p. 38] is given to the lady. Both are brought to the ātaš behrām and perform kusti pādyāb. The dastur says in the presence of several men and women: "You were tied in wedlock by God's ways and according to the prophet's directives, but Ahreman raised doubts in your hearts and did not allow you to rest calmly; now the sin of breaking the wedlock rests on the heads of those who wanted to bring sorrow to you or, if you have made such attempts, then on your own head; hence you will have to answer in the presence of Meher, Saroš, Rašna Yazad." After the dastur

says this, the husband and wife hold one other's arms and are made to say the following words: "Until today, we were husband and wife. During that period, if one or the other has caused any disrespect, mistake or omission, may God forgive us and also you. From today, we both have become like brother and sister; hence we shall not bear any animosity or seek revenge for the past, now we shall always do our duty as brother and sister to love and be affectionate to one another." After saying more such words, both do hamāzor and are sent back; then they go to their respective houses and live as they please, and do as they like, and no one is obligated to the other.

Despite the small numbers of our Iranian brethren, many are seen to have two wives. If a husband, besides his married wife, wants to have a second wife, despite the first [wife], the rule is such that he should in every case please the first wife and let her give oral evidence before the dastur and the elders of the village and state: "I have myself given permission to my husband to have a second wife." If possible, the first wife may plead that others may help her husband to get another wife, or the first wife may give her consent in writing and efforts may be made to find a new wife through her only, or the man may make his own arrangements. Then both those ladies may live in the same house or in separate houses, and both together run the household, and [p. 39] any children born of them will be given equal affection and given equal rights to share in the inheritance, so there is no conflict between them. Our Iranian Parsi women are very understanding and patient, faithful and obedient to their husbands. Despite any hatred, yet in order to act according to their husband's wishes and to please him, they do not quarrel or exchange words amongst each other. This practice, according to my thinking, has crept in amongst the [Iranian] Parsi community due to contact with Muslims.

In Iran, the daughters of priests marry behdins and the daughters of behdins marry mobeds. Such marriages used to be the practice and still are. The inhabitants of Kerman still follow it without any hindrance, but some mobeds of Yazd, if they come to know of their sister or daughter wanting to marry a behdin, then first other mobeds create resentment in the family, and after a few days, make peace with a good heart and do not miss the opportunity to entertain each other, drink wine and raise a toast to each other.

[*Women's garments*]

Secondly, the Muslims frequently cause harm to our Iranian brethren and have inflicted tyrannical laws on them, including changing their dress to such an extent that the men's dress has completely changed, but undoubtedly there is little change in the women's dress. The dress of our Iranian sisters, therefore, is better than that of our Iranian brothers. Their body is well covered. The costume is useful both in summer and winter seasons and there is no difficulty in moving about or doing work. This costume is affordable for both the rich and the poor, the body looks graceful and it is also comfortable while travelling.

They wear a large garment like a khalkā (loose gown) over the sudreh-kusti. It looks like a long flowing robe extending from the neck right down to the calves of the legs. [p. 40] Its two sleeves are wide and reach to the wrist. Due to this, the arms are fully covered, yet while working the sleeves can be rolled up. The garment is cut narrow at the top and broad towards the bottom, so that there is no difficulty while moving about or travelling.

The garments of young ladies are made of cotton or silk of various colours, striped or embroidered with chikan rings. As for elderly women, they wear garments of a single colour. In order to avoid any hindrance at the time of performing the kusti, they tie the kusti round the garment; but at night when they take off the garment, the kusti remains on the sudreh itself.

Their pyjamas are long and reach down to the ankle. Inside, at each end, a thread is inserted in order to make it narrow at the ankles, just like the mobeds here in India while performing rituals of yaozdāthragari[25] wear a narrow-ankled pyjama with a wide opening up to the ankles. Similarly, they wear 'ijār' (pyjamas), for that is comfortable while moving about slowly or fast or riding.[26] That ijār, like the upper garment, is made of cotton or silk, of striped cloth, or embroidered with chikan work or plain. The pyjamas that our priests wear are called surwāl which originally comes from the word salwār. Hence, the ijār of Iranian women is also called salwār.

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[25] i.e., the high-rituals which are performed within the pavi, the so-called'inner rituals'.

[26] In India, the word 'ijar' designates women's pyjamas. At the same time, it also refers to the tight legging, which the priest puts above the piyama. As Dastur Kotwal explains, the narrow piyamas are put above the wide dress in order to make sure that the clothes may not inadvertently touch the ritual requisites.

In winter, they wear socks and shoes with or without khade.[27] Those residing in villages and working in fields, especially those working in snow and walking in mud, can never do without shoes with khade. Those living in towns, as also wealthy ladies, wear high quality shoes called kafšesāghri [donkey-skin], some of which are made with khade and some without khade.

According to their capacity, over the top garment they wear [p. 41] a shawl around their waist, so that they get more energy to work and the bodily constitution remains strong; and in winter, it protects against the biting cold. Some do not tie it around the waist during summer, and there is not much resentment against not tying it around the waist.

There is a kurtā (shirt), which is worn over the top garment. It is called 'farji' and made of wool or silk cloth or chīt (???) with long sleeves down to the wrists, and from the neck down to the thighs, and in the centre there is a lining that fits like a bra just as our ladies wear a choli or blouse, and cover their body respectably and look charming, they also look graceful.

For the head, they weave plaits and keep them loose at the back, and wear an ear-shaped cap of silk cloth and tie its threads below the neck. Over the cap they tie a silk handkerchief like a phetā. Over it is tied a veil called magna which is tied like a veil over a long flowing robe. It reaches down to the elbows of both the arms, and the breasts are fully covered and over the back it drapes down to the thighs and looks decent and respectable. Those who can afford to tie silk scarves put these over the other with two or three coloured phetās and wrap a veil in two or three colours which are decorative like a peacock in coloured hues and do not fail to impress.

They fix old silver coins as ornaments and make garlands of them and tie them over their head like a row of flowers. Some wear gold or silver earrings and some wear small nose rings as is the custom. They do not wear bangles; but on the other hand some young ladies wear a bracelet of beads when they go out.

When they go out, besides the above-mentioned dress, they put a veil (chador) like a shawl over their head, keeping their dress and entire body covered, exposing only the face and hands, and while travelling, they can, like men, ride on any animal and cover a long journey.

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[27] Khade refers to the counter that can be raised to make a shoe for outdoor usage (= "with khade"), or tucked onto the sole to make an open-back sandal for ease of removal for indoor usage (= "without khade").

[*Festivals*]

[p. 42] Thirdly, among all festivals, our people consider Mehergān, Jamšedi navroz, Pateti, the day of consecrating rapithvan and Khordad sāl as the best. On the occasion of performing religious rituals, they do not go to each other's house without an invitation. However, for the gahambār or Mehergān jašan, all consider it rewarding to participate without any invitation. At the house of those, who host a gahambār, men and women all assemble and openly sit in groups in rooms in the same house. Before the āfringān of gahambār begins, everyone performs the kusti and prays the obligatory Avesta prayers. When the priests start the āfringān, all participants start reciting āfringān. Some pray orally and some from the book, and those who do not know, recite Yathā Ašem.

While performing the āfringān, in India, our zoti and rathvi pray facing opposite each other, whereas there [in Iran], the mobeds do not sit opposite each other, and all persons sit in one line and pray. Water is filled in a vessel called 'nava' in āfringān. A branch of the myrtle tree (murd) or pomegranate tree with leaves is dipped in the vessel. During the ritual, it is moved in different [by the priest]. When starting a new kardā, at the word āfrināmi, everyone present picks up a flower or a leaf, and raises a finger of his right hand. Then, [p. 43] while reciting up to vispo khāthrem, they raise the second finger and while reciting the Yathā, they keep it down. This is repeated for every kardā.

When the āfringān commences, another person sits separately and recites the names from the nām grahan book. When he stops he says "khudā biāmurjād" i.e. be blessed by God. Thus, the names of famous men and women of each and every village, which are recorded in the book, are recited every time a jašan is performed. In the midst, the reciter says, let all souls from Kayomarz to Soshyosh be blessed by God ("khudā biāmurjād"). Moreover, the names of former kings, pious men and heroes are recited with the Khšnuman. There are more than thirty such books in Yazd province. In many of them, this speaker [Manekji] had the names of our philanthropic leaders recorded, and these are recited at every jašan accordingly.

After the recitation of āfringān is over, at the end, twenty-one Yathā and twelve Ašem are recited, when all men and women join in reciting them loudly. Then the dāhmobed who is present as the administrative head recites a khutbot (a sort of monājāt). Its main theme is that Mazdayasni religion may prosper and the strength of the wicked may be broken. Those who donate for care of the religion and those who participate

in the gahambār will be the co-sharers of the day's blessings. May the souls of the departed, as well as the souls of those who die hereafter, go to heaven. May the wishes of all, small or big, native or foreigner, be granted and may your end be good. After saying many such words, the dahṃobed takes a mud pot containing the fire next to āfringān in his hand, takes it to each one and holds the fire near to their faces and wishes hamāzor; then everyone in the audience inhales the fragrance of the incense, and they rub their hands over the face saying hamāzor hamā ašo.[28]

[p. 44] After the ritual is over, the čāšni of dry fruits is distributed, and those who can afford it, make a čāšni of one nān with salad. At that time, there is no commotion or hurry, and everyone gets an equal share, the right quantity. In Yazd and the villages together there are about two thousand jašans performed in this way, providing food for two to three months to the poor people.

Each man or woman considers it his/her duty to perform a gahambār jašan once every year during his/her lifetime at his/her own expense. Those who desire to have the gahambār ritual in their memory performed perpetually even after their death, make a document or will, giving to charity Rs.100 to Rs.1,000 in the name of their heir or an elder of the village or a leader or a dastur. The performance of gahambār may then continue out of the interest received on their funds. The expense on that is Rs.5 to Rs.50.

People participate very enthusiastically in the gahambār function in every way. They taste the čāšni and consider it a great reward. Rich or poor, old or young, women or men, all are present, and if someone is pre-occupied and cannot attend, he himself feels embarrassed that others may rebuke him. Therefore, for the five days of the gahambār all put their work aside and go to the gahambār jašans. As the gahambār is held in many houses, at each festival time gahambār āfringāns are performed in turn continuously from 7 a.m. in the morning to 9 p.m. at night.

Depending on the population of the village, each villager prepares a minimum of 100 nāns (bread) and a maximum of 2000 nāns for distribution at the gahambār. But those people who want to incur less expense, make the nān very thin and small. Those who spend well, make them thick and large. But, in every case, they must be adequate in number so

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[28] Dastur Kotwal comments on this passage by drawing attention to a similar practice from Naosari: At big jašans, when the Pazand Afrin is recited, all the participants get up, and the assistant priest goes round making hamāzor with everybody.

that everyone can get one. In larger or smaller quantities dry fruits offerings are provided to all.

[p. 45] Amongst those who host the gahambār, some persons, of their own desire, invite their close relatives as guests for one or two days and serve them meals. However, there is no religious directive to that effect; rather that has been done by imitating each other. Along with meals, there is the practice among them to serve wine. Moreover, at every jašan ritual or at weddings and sad occasions, meals are served, and also wine is served as a custom.

At a feast, a reliable man is entrusted with the work of serving wine. He takes a bottle of wine in his hand and first pours wine into his own bowl saying some words of blessings as a 'monājāt'. Then he himself drinks the wine from that bowl, while the audience greets him with the word "nošejān". Then that wine server pours wine for everyone according to their pomp and status, and they too greet each other, raise the toast and drink the wine from their respective bowls. They are [in turn] greeted respectfully by the wine server. Thus, every time and on every occasion the custom of drinking wine is prevalent. To see that makes one happy.

Jamšedi Navroz is considered the biggest day among them. Originally, its celebration lasted for 40 days, then 30, and thereafter 22, and finally for 13 days, but nobody can do without it. When celebrating these days, there is lot of change in the condition of men and women. Whatever they can afford, they spend and eat during those days. They dress up and do not miss any opportunity to enjoy themselves with their families. So also, at the time of Mehergān jašan, the celebration lasts for 3 to 5 or 7 days.

[Pregnancies, child-birth, infancy, and menstruation]

Fourthly, like the men, our Iranian sisters engage in activities according to their status and suitability. They go out and labour, and keep busy [p. 46] in travel and riding and are not idle through tenderness or pampering. Pregnant ladies continue to work as they were accustomed, and are industrious. Unlike the ladies of our community, they do not sit idly and become careless. For the fifth month ceremonies for a pregnant woman, her relatives stitch small coloured dresses and gifts for the lady, congratulate her on being pregnant, and wish her a safe and easy delivery. So also, in the seventh and ninth months, some bring presents, then the

pregnant lady thanks them with flowers, fruits, and roses, serves a meal and bids them farewell.

At the time of delivery, a suitable quiet room in the house is selected, swept and cleaned. Channels marked like pāvi, and a line of stones are arranged to demarcate the border. A fire or an oil lamp is lighted. Among her neighbours or friends, mature, intelligent, charming, and good-natured ladies to the number of five or seven are present there. Only they are allowed there, noise is avoided, and the most competent one amongst them is entrusted the work of a nurse.

The newborn child is to be first given sugar or shir kheš (a sugary preparation) or made to lick honey syrup. A pious lady performs the kusti, recites Avesta prayers and herself makes it pure and keeps ready. When the child cries, it is made to lick the sugar. Keeping the limbs of the child stretched, it is swaddled in a nice cloth and until it becomes six months old, it is swaddled in this way, and each child's body is kept under control and its form and shape is straight and it grows like a cypress tree.

On the tenth day after delivery, the mother purifies her body, wears clean clothes, moves about anywhere in the house or in the street or goes to see relatives and friends; but she stays away from water, fire, food items and keeps her food and drink separate. Thus, for forty days, she stays aloof. On the forty-first day [p. 47], a capable and gentle lady of a mobed family gives her a nāhn and she becomes pure, and starts working in the house. But after delivery, she considers it an act of merit to take barešnūm. Thus, when they exceed the age of delivery and menses, a mobed family.

The delivery clothes, after being sprinkled with nirang, are kept in the sun separately for a few days. Then they are washed with water and stocked away in order to be used again for similar work or during menses.

When the newborn child is to be named, the mother, father, grandparents, close relatives, etc. each think of a name silently. On the child's sixth or tenth day, they all meet and express their thoughts. If one of these names is selected by the child's mother, that name is used. Usually, if he is a boy, then his paternal grandfather's name or father's grandfather's name is used, and if it is a girl, the maternal grandmother's name or grandmother's mother's name is used, and if the boy's father dies while the child is in the womb, then after birth the boy is named after his father, e.g. if the boy's father is named Kaus-e-Behram, then that boy is called Kaus-e-Behram. After the ceremony, all present are given sweets, dry fruits and sharbat and then they depart.

Each child's day and date of birth is recorded on one side of a wall or in the back of an Avesta prayer book on a piece of paper in order to reckon his birthday and age in years.

So that the boy can sleep in a clean place instead of the cloth rocking-cradle used in India, all have small and simple cradles in their homes. In this, the child sleeps and grows up healthy. The body is not bent, and as the cradle is simple and light in weight, it is easy to take from one place to the other and it costs no more than Rs.1 or Rs.2.

[p. 48] Every mother, if she does not have enough milk to breastfeed her child, desires to increase her milk by taking medicine, but does not consider it right to give another woman's milk. If the mother of a child falls sick or dies, then the child is entrusted to a lady from among close relatives in a good family who is lactating. Under no circumstances do they give milk to their child from a woman of a low-grade family or from a lady of another community. This is resented because a child gets the qualities of the lady whose milk it drinks and grows up to become negligent in religious activity, and the child who has had milk from a lady respects her as her mother, and even when it grows up does not fail to thank her.

Just as the Iranian women maintain seclusion at the time of delivery, so also, during menses, they sit aloof and do not touch anything. They eat food with a spoon, and the vessels used are always kept separately and as far as possible from each other. They do not allow their gaze to fall on fire, water or a pious man. In order not to get bored sitting in a corner, they go from one house to another, but as far as possible, they are careful to avoid touching bricks or wood or stepping on them, and all those undergoing menses from different houses meet at a predetermined place and get together; then, after four to five hours, they all go to their respective houses. In this way they maintain isolation until the period of menses is over, when they have a head bath.[29] The clothes of that period are washed with nirang and water and then put to use. Some take up embroidery, stitching or knitting during menses and when they take a bath to purify themselves, they also wash these items and make them pure.

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[29] i.e., a bath from head to foot.

[*Funerals*]

Fifthly, regarding the death ceremonies, there is a practice that if anyone dies, the men bathe a male corpse and the women bathe [p. 49] a female corpse with nirang and water. Then the sachkār and sagdid rituals are performed. If the nasākhānā is nearby, 4 persons in pairs carry the corpse there. At the spot where sachkār is done, a line is drawn, a lamp is lit, and flowers are kept for three days. If there is no nasākhānā, people perform sachkār at home and keep the corpse there.

After the sachkār, a pair of mobeds or more starts the geh sārnā. At that time, the behdins present also recite the geh sārnā karda. Thus, the entire anjuman does geh sārnā. After all the rituals are over, the nasesālārs who bring the gehān and are present [during the geh sārnā] put the corpse in the gehān and entrust it to the khandiās. The close relatives form pairs and walk ahead at a short distance. The khandiās follow, and then, at some distance, those attending the pāidast follow in pairs reciting prayers.

After the corpse is taken to the outskirts of the village, those who are to return, they halt there, go home and perform kusti pādyāb. The rest goes up to the dokhmā. The women also gather amongst themselves and assemble in a group near the dokhmā. After the corpse is placed in the dokhma, some men and ladies return to their houses, [where they] perform the kusti pādyāb or take bath and purify their bodies. The rest stay at the dharamšālā near the dokhma. They do kusti pādyāb and sit and recite Avesta prayers. So if some one comes to know and wants to express sorrow and desires to go to the dokhmā, one can go there till the evening, but no one visits the deceased's house.

The nasesālārs put the body in the dokhmā and go their way, i.e. take bath, change clothes and drink (wine), but they stay away from the mobeds, behdins, prayer houses (ebādat-khāne) and jašan ceremonies. [p. 50] So also the khāndiās go to their respective houses, take bath, change clothes, keep those clothes separate, sprinkle nirang, dry, wash and may use the clothes. Some keep a pair of clothes separately for this purpose. When someone dies, the close relatives act as khāndiās; but nasesālārs are two or three predetermined people, and only they can go into the dokhmā.

After the corpse has reached its final destination [is placed in the dokhmā], a male family member brings some food and wine near the dokhmā [in order to] feed and serve wine to people who come there and invite them to come home. There is no mourning at home and if some close relatives

feel strongly and their hearts are full, quietly they shed tears, but none mourns loudly, and even shedding tears is considered a sin.

On the third or fourth day after death, visitors bring flowers, fruits, and green herb and place them near the oil lamp where the corpse was placed. They offer a few words of condolence to the head of the family and depart. Some perform the kusti and recite the patet and on the third day evening in uziran geh, close relatives and some mobeds assemble and recite obligatory avesta and patet and go to their respective places. Gatherings take place neither at the deceased's house nor at any other place. Whatever rituals are to be performed for the departed soul, are done at the mobed's place, and no rituals are performed in the ādariān.

The chāhrum ceremony is performed at dawn and many persons, young and old, women and men, even uninvited persons come. At the time of reciting āfringān, animal fat is offered to the fire [p. 51] as a duty. Generally, dried fat with fragrance is kept at the house of priests for this purpose, which is brought and put on the fire. (I think somebody started this custom for making money, so just for this some have an entire goat slaughtered). Those present at the ritual all recite avesta and patet in memory of the deceased. After prayers, the consecrated čāšni is distributed. For this, a salad of radish, onion, pomegranate seeds, dry fruit and boiled egg is made, and a fistful of it is placed on a nān. Then all take bāj and partake of a morsel of the čāšni, and the rest they take home. Everyone considers it a meritorious act to partake of the čāšni of chāhrum.

For the chāhrum ritual, a mobed is given as siāv called sudreh, 18 gaj of narrow width khādi cloth for a man and 12 gaj for a lady. The mobed washes it, makes it pure, consecrates it and keeps it. Besides that, no other cloth or vessel nor any other item is given as siāv.

After the chāhrum, on the tenth day, except an āfringān, no other ritual is performed; but on the 30th day (1st month), rituals are performed for two days, when a goat is slaughtered and many people are fed. Thereafter, every month, nothing is done, but just half a seer (250 gms) wheat and an egg, some money, few dry fruits are given to the mobed in order to recite an āfringān. On the annual day, just like on the first month day, a goat is slaughtered; but they all agree that this practice of slaughtering an animal on the anniversary of the deceased is for being one up on the others and not according to the directives of the religion. Afterwards, on the occasion of other monthly or annual bāj, only wheat, an egg, some money, dry fruits are given to the mobed, and darun and āfringān are performed at the mobed's house.

Concerning the soul, they believe that if the deceased was a meat eater, the death anniversary rituals should be performed for thirty years, so that the deceased's soul may be free from the sin of eating meat. For a man or woman who has never eaten meat during one's lifetime, there is no need to have the rituals performed for more than twelve years.

[p. 52] Every bachelor or a married man who dies at the age of over 15 years and who has no son can [posthumously] adopt the son of a close relative [as his own son]. Instead of his native father's name, the boy will then use the adopted father's name along with his name. On behalf of the deceased, he will have the rituals performed as he would have done for his own father.

For pleasing all the souls of the departed, there is the practice of arranging muktād from Āstād roz of Spandārmad month till the last gatha for ten days. Then, amongst the rooms in the house, a room that is open and can be used as a sitting room and where there is a cupboard in the wall is selected. The walls and the floor are covered with white mud and made smooth. A carpet is spread and flowers, fruits and leaves are kept day and night in the cupboard as also on the ground. Five to six times, all persons, small or big in the house, recite Avesta prayers, and whatever items are placed there, are eaten and served to others; and other items are placed there. During these ten days, each one calls women and children of close relatives as also of poor people and feed them according to their capacity.

GLOSSARY [MSt]

Ā Hātāmcha Hā = A chapter from the āvān Niyāiš
Āchhu michhu = A lay rite performed at auspicious events
Ādariān = Fire temple
Adar-khoreh, Adar-gušasp and Adar-burzinmeher = three famous (spiritual) fires
Āfrināmi = Word recited in the āfringān
Āfringān = A priestly liturgy
Ahunavar = Name of a prayer (= Yathā)
Aiwisruthrem = Fourth watch of the day (from 3 pm to sunset)
Anjuman = Community
Ašem [vohū] = Name of a prayer
Āširwād = Marriage blessing

Āstad roz = The day āstad (i.e., the 26th day of the month)

Ātaš behrām = Fire (temple) of the highest rank

Āvān Niyāiš = A prayer in praise of the waters

Bāj = (1) Framing of an act which is then done silently (e.g. eating); (2) death anniversary

Barešnūm = A long purification ritual

Behdin = Lay Zoroastrian

Chāhrum = Ritual performed on the fourth day after death

Čašni = Offerings consecrated during a priestly ritual and tasted/partaken of subsequently

Dāhmobed = Ritual actor who is not a priest in the strict sense

Dari = dialect spoken by the Iranian Zoroastrians

Darun = A priestly ritual [see Ramiyar Karanjia's paper in this volume]

Dastur = (High) priest

Dharamšālā = Rest-house

Dokhmā = Structure for the disposal of the corpse ('tower of silence') [see Dietrich Huff's paper in this volume]

Farvardigān = Festival during which the souls/spirits of the deceased return to earth

Farvardin month = First of the twelve months of the Zoroastrian calendar

Gahambār = Seasonal festival(s)

Gaj = 27 inches

Geh = Watch of the day

Gehān = Pall

Geh sārnā = Chanting of the first Gatha (Y. 28–34) as part of the funeral ceremonies

Hā = Chapter from the Yasna

Hamāzor = A ritual handshake

Hāvan geh = The first watch of the day (sunrise to midday)

Hormuz roz = First day of the month in the Zoroastrian calendar

Jamšedi navroz = The New Year festival at spring equinox

Jašan = āfringān ceremonies performed at festive occasions; festival

Kayanian = A legendary dynasty

Kardā = Textual unit in ritual texts

Kayomarz = Mythical first human being

Khandiās = pallbearers

Khordad sal = Festival held on the sixth day after New Year; birthday of prophet Zarathushtra

Khoršed - Meher Niyāiš = Prayers in praise of the sun

Khšnuman=Dedicatory formula

Kusti = 'Girdle', or 'thread' that is worn around the waist and untied/tied ritually (accompanied with reciting certain prayers)

Kusti pādyāb = Ritually untying and tying of the kusti preceded by washing of hands and face.

Māh Niyāiš = Prayer in praise of the moon

Mazdayasni = (a) Zoroastrian

Mazdayasni religion = Zoroastrianism

Mehergān = A festival (nowadays) held in autumn

Meher-o-nīkā = An amount of money/wealth received by the wife at her marriage; bride's money

Mobed = Zoroastrian Priest

Monājāt = Devotional poem [see Beate Schmermbeck's paper in this volume]

Muktād = Annual festival commemorating the deceased

Myazd = A priestly ritual

Nān = Bread

Nāhn = A purification ritual

Nām grahan = Book containing the names of the deceased to be used for ritual purposes

Nasā = corpse, dead matter

Nasākhānā = A place/building to which the corpse is brought after death and prior to its expose in the dokhmā

Nasesālārs = Professionals taking care of the corpse and putting it into the dokhmā (not to be confused with the khāndiās)

Nirang   = Consecrated bull's urine

Nošejān = May that drink be beneficial (lead to long life)

Pāidast = Funeral procession

Panīr = Homemade cottage cheese

Pāvi = Furrows that mark off a ritual precinct

Pešdadian = A legendary dynasty

Phetā = A Parsi-style head-covering

Patet = Prayer of penitence, confession of sins

Pāvi = Furrows in the ground, which mark the ritual precinct in which the so-called 'inner' priestly rituals are performed

Rapithvan = (a) A watch (geh) of the day (from noon to 3 pm), (b) a celebration (Yasna, Dron, and Jašan) to be held once a year after New Year (on the third day of the first month)

Rathvi = Assistant priest in a priestly ritual

Sākar = A rock like lump of sugar

Sachkār = The final bath and subsequent laying out of the corpse.

Sagdid = Dog's gaze

Setāyeš = Worship

Sharbat = Cold drink prepared from concentrated flavoured sugar syrup

Siāv = Piece of cloth presented to a priest (for consecration or as remuneration)

Sošyoš = Main hero in the events taking place at the 'end of time'

Spandārmad Month = The last of the 12 months of the Zoroastrian calendar

Sudreh-kusti = The religious garment consisting of shirt (sudreh) und girdle (kusti)

Ušahin = Last watch (geh) of the day (from midnight to daybreak)

Uziran geh = Third watch (geh) of the day, from 3 pm to sunset

Vispo khāthrem = Words recited in the āfringān

Yathā = Name of a prayer

Zoti = Main priest in priestly rituals

ZARATHUSTRA DER PRIESTER UND PROPHET IN DER LEHRE DER MANICHÄER

Werner Sundermann

Daß unter den großen Religionsstiftern Zarathustra zugleich Prophet und Priester, also Künder einer neuen Lehre und Bewahrer eines alten Kultes war, ist bekannt und anerkannt, sofern man denn Zarathustra als eine prägende Gestalt der Geschichte anerkennt. So hat Kurt Rudolph seinen 1961 erstmals erschienen Forschungsbericht über den damaligen Stand unseres Wissens von Zarathustra unter den Titel „Zarathuštra – Priester und Prophet" gestellt.[1] Zarathustra, so scheint es, fügt sich nicht in Max Webers religionssoziologische Typisierung der geistlichen Autorität, die legitimiert ist durch das persönliches Charisma des Propheten oder die institutionelle Würde des geistlichen Standes, deren Träger also entweder ein prophetischer Neuerer oder ein bewahrender Priester ist.[2]

MANI UND ZARATHUSTRA

Erinnern wir uns, worin die Bedeutung Zarathustras für Mani bestand. Mani hatte Zarathustra als einen seiner prophetischen Vorgänger anerkannt, ja neben Jesus und dem Buddha war er sein wichtigster Wegbereiter. Alle diese Propheten, so lehrte es Mani, hatten die Botschaft der erlösenden Gnosis empfangen und verkündet, doch hatten sie es versäumt, diese Botschaft auch aufzuschreiben, so daß es ihren Jüngern überlassen blieb, sie weiterzutragen. Die Jünger aber hatten sie mißdeutet und entstellt, und erst der schreibefreudige Mani vermochte es, die eine Wahrheit der Erkenntnis, die auch die Wahrheit Jesu, Zarathustras und des Buddha war, bis an die Enden der Welt und zum Ende ihrer Zeit zu verkünden.

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[1] K. Rudolph, „Zarathuštra – Priester und Prophet. Neue Aspekte der Zarathuštra- bzw. Gāthā-Forschung", *Numen* 8, 1961, pp. 81–116. Nachdruck in: *Zarathustra*, ed. B. Schlerath (Darmstadt, 1970), pp. 270–313.

[2] M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie* 1 (Tübingen, 1956), pp. 140–148.

Es ist oft gesagt worden, daß Mani unter seinen Vorgängern eigent-
lich nur von Jesus eine gute Kenntnis hatte. Das trifft zu insofern als er
zweifellos von Jesus mehr und Richtigeres wußte als von den beiden
anderen Propheten. Denken wir nur daran, daß in Manis eigenen Schrif-
ten die Folge der beiden Vorgänger Jesu widersprüchlich angegeben
wurde: im *Šābuhragān* geht der Buddha Zarathustra voran, im „Buch
der Giganten" steht Zarathustra an erster Stelle und der Buddha folgt
ihm, so wie es auch in der Wirklichkeit gewesen sein muß.[3] Aber die
Erschließung der in Turfan gefundenen Texte hat doch gezeigt, daß die
manichäische Tradition eine regelrechte Zarathustra-Legende besaß.[4] Sie
adaptierte Motive der zarathustrischen Zarathustralegende und apo-
krypher Überlieferungen. Sie stellte Zarathustra als einen gegen alle An-
schläge seiner Feinde gefeiten Erwählten der Gottheit dar.

Ehe ich mich den manichäischen Zarathustrazeugnissen zuwende,
muß ich aber eine Schwierigkeit hervorheben, die sich allen Untersu-
chungen entgegenstellt, die auf Material in iranischen Sprachen zurück-
greifen: die Abgrenzung genuin manichäischer von zoroastrischen Über-
lieferungen. Diese Abgrenzung ist klar zu ziehen, wenn Texte in mani-
chäischer Schrift geschrieben worden sind, denn die Zoroastrier haben
sie nie verwendet. Diese Abgrenzung ist nicht gegeben für Texte in
soghdischer Schrift, die allen Religionsgemeinschaften Zentralasiens zur
Aufzeichnung ihrer Texte diente und auch zu säkularen Zwecken ver-
wendet wurde.

Das Problem würde sich trotzdem nicht stellen, wenn die Manichäer
des Ostens nicht ihre Sprache so sehr der zoroastrischen Terminologie
angepaßt hätten, daß man sie nach Bekanntwerden der Turfantexte für
eine Gemeinde zoroastrischen Ursprungs gehalten hatte. Das betrifft
nicht nur zahlreiche Eigennamen der religiösen Sphäre, sondern auch die
Selbstbezeichnung ihrer Kirche als (soghd.) *δēn mazdēzn*.[5] Ein charakte-

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[3] W. Sundermann, „Manichaean Traditions on the Date of the Historical Buddha",
The Dating of the Historical Buddha 1, ed. H. Bechert (Göttingen, 1991), pp. 429–433.

[4] W. Sundermann, „Bruchstücke einer manichäischen Zarathustralegende", *Studia
Grammatica Iranica. Festschrift für Helmut Humbach* (Münchener Studien zur Sprach-
wissenschaft, Beiheft 13, Neue Folge; München, 1986), pp. 461–482; P.O. Skjærvø,
„Zarathustra in the Avesta and in Manicheism. Irano–Manichaica IV", *La Persia e
l'Asia Centrale da Alessandro al X secolo* (Roma. 1996), pp. 597–628.

[5] W. Sundermann, „A Manichaean View on the Resurrection of the Body", *Bulletin
of the Asia Institute* 10 (Ames, Iowa, 1996 [1998]), pp. 190, 192b = Manichaica Iranica,
Ausgewählte Schriften von Werner Sundermann 1–2, eds Chr. Reck/D. Weber/Cl.
Leurini/A. Panaino (Roma, 2001), pp. 755, 757 (geschrieben δyn mzt'yzn).

ristisches Beispiel ist der schon von F.W.K. Müller publizierte panegyrische, einen hohen Geistlichen der manichäischen Kirche preisende mittelpersische Hymnus M 543.[6] Der Text bezeichnet den Geistlichen als pyšw(b)'y 'y dyn m'zdys ‚Vorsteher der mazdayasnischen Kirche' und r'yn'g 'y whydyn'n „Führer der Rechtgläubigen" (M 543 /R/ 2–5/), so wie im 9. Jh. der zoroastrische Priester Ādurfarnbāg ī Farruxzādān *hudēnān pēšōbāy* war,[7] und wie das mittelpersische *wehdēn* in der Pahlavi-Literatur sein Vorbild hat und im neupersischen *behdin* als Selbstbezeichnung der Zoroastrier fortlebt. Der ganze Titel würde wie der eines zoroastrischen Geistlichen erscheinen, wenn man nicht genötigt wäre, sein erstes Wort als [s]nngbyd, „Herr des *saṁgha*" wiederherzustellen, also als eine ungewöhnliche mittelpersisch-indische hybride Wortbildung, die buddhistischem Milieu entstammt.

ZARATHUSTRA ALS PROPHET UND OFFENBARUNGSEMPFÄNGER IN DER MANICHÄISCHEN LEHRE

Was das Wirken Zarathustras des Propheten und Offenbarungsempfängers betrifft, so kennen wir drei soghdische Textzeugnisse, zwei neu ediert von N. Sims-Williams,[8] das dritte ediert von Y. Yoshida.[9] Von diesen drei Texten ist der zweite Text, den Sims-Williams veröffentlicht hat, mit Sicherheit manichäischen Ursprungs, weil er die manichäischen Elektengebote zum Gegenstand hat. Der andere Text seiner Edition weist zwar bemerkenswerte Details zoroastrischen, ja avestischen Ursprungs auf, darunter eine Version des *Ašǝm vohu*-Gebetes, doch hält Sims-Williams auch in diesem Fall einen manichäischen Ursprung für nicht unmöglich.

Der von Yoshida veröffentlichte Text sei hier wiedergegeben:

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[6] F.W.K. Müller, „Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan. II", *Abhandlungen der Königlich-Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1904, Anhang, Nr. 2, p. 79.

[7] *Škand-gumānīk vičār. La solution décisive des doutes*, ed. P.J. de Menasce O.P. (Fribourg en Suisse, 1945), Kap. 4, 107; 10, 56, pp. 58, 116.

[8] „The Sogdian fragments of the British Library", *Indo-Iranian Journal* 18, 1976, pp. 46–48 (Fragment 4) und pp. 48–51 (Fragments 5 and 6).

[9] „On the Sogdian Infinitives", *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18, 1979, p. 187.

'XRZY 'ps' xw 'rt'w zr'wšc ZKw 'BY-' xwp' 'δδγ prm'y 'P-ZY my
'wn'kw wy-δβ'γ 'krty 'cw 'P-ZY 'sty w'nkw βytkw ZY 'yδ 'rw'ntw 'cw ZY
prm z'y myrty rty pts'r w'nkw βytkw 'sty 'PZY kw xypδ δm'nh ''γ-tw
'wβ'y 'WZY L' rtms wyn'y cnn mwrtw k'r'y 'pštrw ZKw 'BYw z'tkw
'PZY xw ZK z'tkw ZKw 'BYw ZY ZKh m'th ZKw δγwth 'PZY-n ZKh
δγwth ZKwh m'tyh 'PZY ZKh xw'rh ZKw xw'rh 'PZY xw 'βr't ZKw
'βr'tw ZY tm txmy ZKw txmw 'PZY ZK γwtm ZKw γ-wtm 'PZY ZK xwt'y
xwštk ZKw xwt'y xwy-štk 'WZY L' rtkδ xw z'tk šyr wβ''y rtšy 'sty ZKn
'BY' 'rw'ny xws'nty-'kh

Meine weitgehend Yoshida folgende Übersetzung ist:

Ferner fragte der gerechte Zarathustra den Vater, den guten *Āδvay*: „Geruhe mir
zu erklären, was vorbestimmt ist,[10] und (von) diesen Seelen – (diejenige,) die
auf Erden stirbt, ist ihr dann vorbestimmt, daß sie zu ihrem Haus kommt oder
nicht? Und daß nach dem Tode der Vater den Sohn und der Sohn den Vater und
die Mutter die Tochter und die Tochter die Mutter und die Schwester die
Schwester und der Bruder den Bruder und[11] der Nachkomme den Nachkommen
und ein Elternteil[12] den anderen[13] und der Freund den Freund sehen werden oder
nicht? Und wenn der Sohn gut ist, hat dann des Vaters Seele Freude?"

Der Gegenstand der Fragen dieses Textes, ob es ein Wiedersehen der
Verwandten und Freunde nach dem Tode geben werde, ist kein eindeu-
tig manichäisches Anliegen. Er paßt umso besser zur großen Rolle, die
die Familie in der zoroastrischen Ethik spielt, und, was die Pflichten des
guten Sohnes betrifft, zu den von ihm zu vollziehenden *Frawardīgān*-
Ritualen.[14] Yoshida hält es daher für möglich, wie er mir mündlich mit-
teilte, daß dieses Stück einem apokryphen Text zoroastrischer Herkunft

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[10] Hier und im folgenden schließe ich mich der Yoshidas Artikel auf p. 195 beigege-
benen Übersetzung von βytkw als ‚fated', wtl. ‚gegeben, zugeteilt', durch N. Sims–
Williams an. Yoshida selbst hat seine Übersetzung ‚separation' (mit Hinweis auf mp.
'bybxtgy<u>h</u> ‚ohne Zwiespalt') aufgegeben.

[11] Im Text ZY tm. Am wahrscheinlichsten ist tm ein nicht ausgestrichener Fehler für
das folgende txmy. Oder für tym ‚dann' stehend?

[12] Im Text γwtm ZKw γ-wtm. Der erste Buchstabe des dritten Wortes ist deutlich vom
folgenden getrennt, was für seine Deutung als γ und nicht als x, wie bisher allgemein
angenommen, spricht. B. Gharib hat in traditioneller Schreibung γwtm, das sie aber
xwatam liest, *Sogdian Dictionary* (Tehran, 1995), p. 178; eine andere Etymologie, die
allerdings auch *x* voraussetzt, findet sich, woran N. Sims–Williams mich erinnert, bei
H. Humbach in: *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 30, 1972, p. 45.

[13] Man erwartet eher: die Nachkommen die Eltern und die Eltern die Nachkommen.

[14] Cf. J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay,
1922), pp. 465–470.

angehörte. Daß die Angehörigen einer Familie nach der Auferstehung der Toten wieder zusammenfinden, wird auch in der Pahlavi-Literatur ausdrücklich bestätigt. Im *Bundahišn* heißt es dazu:

> *har kas zan ud frazand dahēnd abāg zan māyišn owōn kunēnd čiyōn kū nūn andar gētīg bē frazand zāyišn nē bawēd*

> Einem jeden geben sie (*Sōšyans* und seine Helfer) Weib und Kind. Mit der Frau vollziehen sie solcherart dem Beischlaf, so wie jetzt auf Erden, aber Kinder werden nicht geboren.[15]

Auch B.T. Anklesaria, dessen Übersetzung ich nur zum Teil übernehmen konnte, hat dies als Wiederherstellung der irdischen Familie in der Endvollendung verstanden.[16]

Das neupersische *Sad-dar Bondeheš* beschreibt denselben Vorgang in einer Weise, die fast wie eine Antwort auf die in dem soghdischen Text gestellten Fragen klingt:

> The father recognizes the son; the brother recognizes the sister; the sister recognizes the brother; the husband recognizes the wife; and all the relatives recognize one another and in this way, the relatives, the near ones, companions, co-workers and acquaintances, all should have recognized and they (thus) recognize one another.[17]

Können wir also die zoroastrische Literatur um einen mit Sicherheit bestimmbaren zoroastrischen Text in soghdischer Sprache bereichern? Die einleitende Formel: „Und der gerechte Zarathustra fragte den Vater, den guten Āδvaγ" spricht auf den ersten Blick dafür. Sie erinnert an die sich immerfort wiederholenden Einleitungsworte zu Offenbarungen Ahura Mazdās im *Vidēwdād: parəsaṭ Zaraθuštrō Ahurəm Mazdąm* „Es fragte Zarathustra den Ahura Mazdā" (*Vid.* 2,1; 7,1; 9,1; 10,1; 11,1; 14,1; 17,1; 18, 14; 20,1). ‚Der gerechte Zarathustra' bildet das avestische *aṣauua Zaraθuštrō* nach. Daß Ahura Mazdā im Soghdischen als *Āδvaγ* bezeichnet werden kann, ist sicher.[18] Dafür, daß dies kein ausschließlich manichäischer Name war, spricht sein Vorkommen in dem soghdischen Text

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[15] *The Bûndahišn*, ed. T.D. Anklesaria (Bombay, 1908), p. 226, ll. 9–11.

[16] *Zand-Ākāsīh. Iranian or Greater Bundahišn*, trl. B.T. Anklesaria (Bombay, 1956), pp. 290–291.

[17] The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and others, transl. B.N. Dhabhar (Bombay, 1932), p. 576.

[18] W. Sundermann in *Altorientalische Forschungen* 6, 1979, pp. 102, 129–130, n. 217.

P 3.[19] Daß auch die Benennung des Gottes als des „guten (oder: ge-
schickten) Āδvay" ein Vorbild im avestischen *ahurō mazdå huuapō* be-
sitzt, hat Sims-Williams gezeigt.[20] Ungewöhnlich für den zoroastrischen
Sprachgebrauch ist aber die Bezeichnung Ahura Mazdās als ‚Vater', die
m.W. nur auf sein Verhältnis zu den Aməša Spəntas bezogen wird.[21] Zu
den Namen Ahura Mazdās, die in *Yašt* 1, 12–15 aufgezählt werden, ge-
hört ‚Vater' nicht.[22] ‚Vater' ist aber in allgemeiner Formulierung üblich
als Attribut des manichäischen Ohrmazd.[23]

    Diese Beobachtung spricht gegen einen zoroastrischen Ursprung die-
ses Textes. Daß er nach der Fortdauer der Familienbande über den Tod
hinaus fragt, ist ein verständliches, allgemein menschliches und so gewiß
auch manichäisches Anliegen. Leider kennen wir die Antwort auf seine
Frage nicht. Da aber der gläubige Manichäer sich von seinen irdischen
Verwandten lösen und den Wesen der Lichtwelt als seinen wahren und
ursprünglichen Verwandten zuwenden soll,[24] so kann die Antwort des
manichäischen Gottes nur die gewesen sein, daß es Zarathustra bei sei-
ner Frage nicht um die irdischen sondern um die himmlischen Verwand-
ten des Menschen gegangen sei.

    In den hier besprochenen Fragmenten erscheint Zarathustra in der
Rolle, die für die Manichäer die am leichtesten zu akzeptieren war. Er

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[19] P 3 /207/ in: E. Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens* (Paris, 1940), p. 68.

[20] „The Sogdian fragments of the British Library", pp. 47–48.

[21] Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904), cols. 905–906.

[22] Vgl. dazu auch L.H. Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions* (Bombay,
o.J.), p. 21.

[23] Vgl. W. Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen
Inhalts* (Berliner Turfantexte 11; Berlin, 1981), p. 74, l. 157. Mani fordert seine Beglei-
ter auf: „Erhebet euch vor dem Vater, bittet ...". Daß damit der Urmensch, also der Gott
Ohrmazd, gemeint ist, folgt aus einem Fragment der koptischen Version derselben Ge-
schichte (H.J. Polotsky, *Manichäische Homilien* (Manichäische Handschriften der
Sammlung A. Chester Beatty 1; Stuttgart, 1934), p. 52, l. 2. Ein soghdischer Text nennt
''δβγ einen 'BY'Wn'kw Gott, was ich als ‚väterlich' (*pitarane*) wiedergegeben hatte (in
Tafazzoli Memorial Volume, ed. A.A. Sadeghi (Tehran, 2001), p. 74). Yoshida wies
mich darauf hin, daß ich fälschlich 'BYW'n'kw geschrieben hatte. Das trifft zu, doch
erhalte ich meine Übersetzung des Wortes aufrecht.

[24] Vgl. z.B. im koptischen Psalm-Buch: „I became a stranger to the parents of the
flesh, my brothers, my kinsmen; for I found thee father and mother and brother, a God
(?) unperishing, with whom I dwelt in the Light before I was joined with the Dark-
ness."; *A Manichaean Psalm-Book* 2, ed. C.R.C. Allberry (Manichaean Manuscripts in
the Chester Beatty Collection; Stuttgart, 1938), p. 86, ll. 6–9. Vgl. auch p. 87, ll. 29–32;
p. 169, 23–27.

ist Offenbarungsempfänger und Prophet. Wie aber stellten die Manichä-
er sich zu Zarathustra dem Priester, der die sakralen Opfer vollzog?

ZARATHUSTRA ALS PRIESTER IN DER MANICHÄISCHEN LEHRE

Daß Zarathustra ein Priester war, geht aus den ihm zugeschriebenen
Gathas des Avesta, so wie die meisten Fachgelehrten sie verstehen, her-
vor. Dies ist auch die Meinung der mittelpersischen Literatur der Za-
rathustrier, und Mani und die Manichäer haben sie übernommen. Wie
aber haben sie diesen Gegenstand behandelt? Nicht nur hatten die Mani-
chäer mit der sakralen Praxis der Zoroastrier nichts gemein, die zoroast-
rischen Priester, die Magier der manichäischen Texte, wurden auch als
gnadenlose Feinde Manis und seiner Jünger perhorresziert. Trotzdem
trug das Avesta, das heilige Textcorpus der Zoroastrier, zum manichäi-
schen Zarathustra-Bild bei, Zarathustra blieb der Priester unter den Vor-
gängern Manis, und selbst seine Befolgung der Riten wurde nicht gänz-
lich ignoriert. Dies soll der zweite Gegenstand meines Beitrages sein. Ich
will an zwei Beispielen untersuchen, in welchem Maße die manichäische
Überlieferung etwas von der priesterlichen Wirksamkeit Zarathustras
oder auch nur von deren Darstellung im Avesta bewahrt hat.

Ein wichtiges Zeugnis, allerdings mit weitestgehend negativem Be-
fund, ist das sog. parthische Zarathustra-Fragment, das erstmalig Ri-
chard Reitzenstein 1909 bekanntgemacht hatte.[25] Die definitive Ausgabe
erschien 1934 und sei hier, der Übersetzung von F.C. Andreas und W.
Henning teilweise folgend, zitiert:[26]

'g k'myd 'wt'n 'bdys''n 'c wyg'hyft t͟šyy pydr'n hsyng'n *
bwj'gr 'rd'w zrhwšt kdyš wy'wrd 'd gryw wxybyy *
gr'n mstyft kw xwft 'štyy wygr's' 'wd 'w mn wyn'h͟ *
drwd 'br tw 'c šhr r'myšn cy 'z wsn'd t͟w fršwd hym *
hwyc wy'wrd srwš'w 'n'z'r kw 'z 'z hym n'zwg z'dg *
wmyxt 'št'm 'wd z'r wyn'm 'zw'ywm 'c mrn 'gwz *

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[25] R. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (Leipzig, 1920; Abdruck
eines 1909 gehaltenen Vortrages), pp. 125 ff.

[26] F.C. Andreas/W. Henning, „Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan"
3, *Sitzungsber. der Preuss. Ak. der Wissensch., Phil.-hist. Kl.*, Phil.-hist. Kl. (Berlin,
1934), p. 872; Abbildung W. Sundermann, *Iranian Manichaean Turfan texts in early
publications (1904–1934)* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum. Supplementary Series
Vol. III; London, 1996), pl. 16.

zrhwšt 'w hw pt̲ drwd pwrs'd wcn hsyng mn'n hnd'm *
jywndg'n z'wr 'wd msyšt gyh'n drwd 'br tw 'c pdyšt̲ wxybyy *
hxs'h̲'w mn nmryft̲ z'dg pwsg rwšn pd sr 'wyst̲' *
t'wg'n z'dg ky kyrd 'yy ʿskwh̲ kw cyd byxšyh̲ pd hrw wy'g'n
**

Wenn Ihr es wünscht, werde ich Euch aus dem Zeugnis der uranfänglichen
Väter belehren. Der gerechte Zarathustra, der Erlöser, als er sich mit seiner
Seele besprach, (sagte:) „Schwer ist die Trunkenheit, in der Du schläfst, er-
wache und schau auf mich! Heil über Dich von der Welt des Friedens, denn
ich bin Deinetwegen ausgesandt worden." Und sie antwortete: „Ich, ich bin
der zarte, unschuldige Sohn des Srōšāw,[27] ich bin im Zustand der Vermi-
schung und erlebe Leid. Führe mich heraus aus der Umklammerung des To-
des." Zarathustra erbat Abschied von ihr,[28] (er,) die uranfängliche Stimme
(und) mein Glied, (mit den Worten):[29] „Der Lebendigen Kraft und der höchs-
ten (*lit.* größten) Welten Heil (komme) über Dich aus Deiner Heimat. Folge
mir, Sohn der Milde, setze Dir den Lichtkranz aufs Haupt. Du Sohn Mächti-
ger, der Du so arm gemacht bist, daß Du gar betteln mußt an allen Orten ...".

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[27] Der parthische Text lautet: srwš'w 'n'z'r kw 'z 'z hym n'zwg z'dg. Daß er in dieser
Gestalt unverständlich ist, hat Henning mit Recht betont (F.C. Andreas/W. Henning,
„Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch–Turkestan" 3, p. 872, Textanm. zu 97–99.)
Auch seine Korrektur zu 'z 'z hym srwš'w 'n'z'r n'zwg z'dg halte ich für überzeugend.
Seine Übersetzung, „Ich, ich bin der zarte, leidlose Sohn des Srôschâv", ist aber miß-
verständlich, denn sie scheint zu besagen, daß die Weltseele, bekanntlich der leidende
Teil der Gottheit, keine Leiden erduldet. Henning macht aber p. 894 klar, daß er 'n'z'r
‚leidlos' im Sinne von ‚der niemandem Leids zufügt' verstand. Daher übersetzten J.P.
Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature* (Delmar/New York, 1975), p. 48 und H.-J. Klimkeit,
Gnosis in the Silk Road. Gnostic Texts from Central Asia (San Francisco, 1993), p. 48
‚innocent'. Es wäre aber auch grammatisch möglich, 'n'z'r auf srwš'w zu beziehen. Zu
srwš'w als einer Bezeichnung des manichäischen Urgottes vgl. Henning in Andre-
as/Henning, „Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan" 3, pp. 866, n. 3
und 911, sowie in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 1. Abt., 4. Bd., 1. Abschn. (Leiden/Köln,
1959), p. 100, n. 1.

[28] Als er seine Mission beendet hatte und aus dieser Welt schied.

[29] Der parthische Text lautet: zrhwšt 'w hw pt̲ drwd pwrs'd wcn hsyng mn'n hnd'm,
was Henning so übersetzte: „Mit ‚Heil' sprach Zarathustra fragend zu ihr das uralte
Wort: ‚(Bist Du) mein Glied?'" Ich verstehe pt̲ drwd, wtl. ‚mit Heil' im Sinne des np.
padrūd, bedrūd ‚Abschied, Lebewohl' und pt̲ drwd pwrs'dn als ‚um (die Erlaubnis)
Abschied (zu nehmen) bitten'. wcn hsyng ‚uranfängliche Stimme' beziehe ich auf Zara-
thustra selbst, weil er der erste der vier großen Propheten der Menschheit war, gefolgt
von Buddha, Jesus und Mani. Er ist, wenn meine Erklärung zutrifft, als mn'n hnd'm
‚mein Glied', Teil dessen, der die ganze Geschichte erzählt (des Licht-Nous?). As-
mussens Übersetzung ist: „With ‚grace' Zarathustra asked of it: ‚(Are you) the Word of
Old, my member?'" (Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature*, p. 48).

Eine gewisse Nähe dieses Hymnus zu zoroastrischen Vorstellungen ist offensichtlich. Man braucht nur das parthische 'rd'w zrhwšt „der gerechte Zarathustra"[30] mit dem avestischen *ašauua zaraθuštrō* usw.[31] zu vergleichen. Diese Nähe erschien Richard Reitzenstein so groß, daß er den Text einst als ein manichäisches rifacimento eines echten zoroastrischen Werkes auffaßte, das nur zufällig nicht im Avesta erhalten sei.[32] Reitzenstein begründete darauf die Hypothese von der Existenz einer alten iranischen ‚Volksreligion', die viele Ideen der manichäischen Lehre vorweggenommen habe, wie z.B. die Lehre vom ‚erlösten Erlöser'. Aber diese Annahme konnte nie bewiesen werden, und die weitere Forschung hat den manichäischen Hintergrund des Textes deutlich gemacht.

Tatsächlich erklärt sich das manichäischen Anschauungen so nahekommende Zarathustrabild dieses Textes aus der Tatsache, daß hier Zarathustra in typisch manichäischer Manier zu einem Mani vor Mani oder Jesus dem Glanz nach Jesus dem Glanz gemacht wird. Er erscheint als ein Erleuchter und Erlöser der kosmischen Seele, die in dieser Welt eingekerkert ist. Das folgt schon aus der Tatsache, daß der Text, den ich hier übersetzt habe, nur eine Episode aus den parthischen *grīwzīwandagīg*-Hymnen, d.h. den Hymnen an die Lebendige Seele, ist.

So wurde Reitzensteins These sogleich von H.H. Schaeder[33] und W. Henning[34] widerlegt. Henning ging so weit zu behaupten: „Der Name Zarahušt ist das einzige Zarathustrische in dem Hymnus; an seiner Stelle könnte auch Seth, Buddha, Jesus, Mani oder sonst wer stehen, ohne daß das den Inhalt des Hymnus änderte".

All dies ist wahr mit Ausnahme des ersten Satzes: „Der Name Zarahušt ist das einzige Zarathustrische in dem Hymnus." Der manichäische Hymnus besteht, so wie er erhalten ist und ich ihn deute, aus zwei Teilen: 1. der Anrede Zarathustras und der Antwort der Lebendigen Seele (M 7 /86–102/, im Text von Buchstabe ' bis w), 2. den Abschiedsworten Zarathustras samt seiner Aufforderung an die Seele, ihm in das Lichtreich zu folgen (M 7 /103–118/, im Text von Buchstabe z bis ṭ). Der ers-

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[30] M 7 /86–87/, Andreas/Henning, „Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan" 3, p. 872.

[31] Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, cols. 249–250.

[32] Reitzenstein, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium* (Bonn, 1921), p. 4.

[33] H.H. Schaeder, *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems* (Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1924–1925; Leipzig/Berlin, 1927), p. 105, n. 3.

[34] Andreas/ Henning, „Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan" 3, p. 872, n. 1.

te Teil ist nach dem Schema eines manichäischen Erlösungsdialogs kon-
struiert, wie er in klassischer Gestalt in der Erweckung des Urmenschen
durch den Lebendigen Geist und der daraus folgenden Entstehung des
Götterpaares ‚Ruf‘ und ‚Antwort‘ vorgebildet ist. Er ist nachgebildet in
der Erweckung Adams durch Jesus ‚den Freund‘, so wie Theodor bar
Kōnai beide Ereignisse der Heilsgeschichte geschildert hat.[35] Dabei fällt
auf, daß insbesondere die Antworten der Erlösten durchaus verschieden
in Formulierung und Inhalt sind. Der Urmensch sagt: „Komme in Frie-
den, der du bringst die Fracht von Frieden und Heil! Wie geht es unseren
Vätern, den Söhnen des Lichts in ihrer Stadt?" Adam beklagt sein irdi-
sches Los: „Wehe, wehe über den, der meinen irdischen Leib gebildet,
und den, der meine Seele gefesselt hat, und die Rebellen, die mich unter-
jocht haben." Wiederum anders formuliert ist die Antwort der Leben-
digen Seele, wenn wir ihr Gespräch mit Zarathustra in die Reihe dieser
Erlösungsdialoge stellen: „Ich, ich bin der zarte, unschuldige Sohn des
Srōšāw,[36] ich bin im Zustand der Vermischung und erlebe Leid. Führe
mich heraus aus der Umklammerung des Todes." Sie steht zwar der
Antwort Adams nahe, insofern die Seele sich als ein leidendes Wesen
vorstellt. Die Besonderheit ihrer Antwort besteht aber zum einen in ihrer
unmotivierten Selbstvorstellung – Zarathustra wußte ja sehr gut, zu wem
er entsandt worden war – und in der Hervorhebung ihrer Identität, die
erzielt wird durch Verwendung, ja doppelte Verwendung des Personal-
pronomens ’z ‚ich‘. Ihre Antwort beginnt mit den Worten ’z ’z hym ‚ich,
ich bin‘. Diese Eigenheiten, die formelle Selbstvorstellung und die Be-
tonung der Identität, kann man vergleichen mit der Selbstvorstellung des
Gottes *Haoma* in dem avestischen Hymnus *Yasna* 9, dem sogenannten
Hōm-yašt, der ein Kernstück der zoroastrischen Opferliturgie bildet.
Dort beantwortet *Haoma* die Frage Zarathustras nach seiner Identität mit
den Worten: „Ich, o Zaraθuštra, ich bin der ašaheilige Haoma, der To-
dabwehrer!"[37] (*azəm ahmi zaraθušta haomō ašauua dūraoṣ̌ō*). Er ver-
wendet sowohl das Pronomen in seiner volltonigen Form wie das Hilfs-
verb ‚sein‘ in der ersten Person.[38]

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[35] A. Böhlig/J.P. Asmussen, *Der Manichäismus. Die Gnosis III* (Zürich/München,
1980), pp. 104–105, 107–108.

[36] Vgl. dazu Anm. 27.

[37] *Avesta. Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen*, übers. von F. Wolff (Strassburg, 1910), p.
31.

[38] Zur hervorhebenden Verwendung von *azəm* im Avestischen vgl. H. Reichelt, *Awe-
tisches Elementarbuch* (Heidelberg, 1909), §§ 593 und 714.

Während aber der avestische Text aus einer logisch aufeinander bezogenen Frage und Antwort besteht, fehlt dem parthischen Text diese Logik. Ich vermute, daß er mit Kenntnis des *Hōm-yašt* geschrieben wurde und dessen stilistischen Einfluß erkennen läßt.

Was dem manichäische Text völlig fehlt, ist ein Hinweis auf die rituellen Akte, die aber auch der zoroastrische Hymnus nur am Rande erwähnt. Zweifellos ist hier Zarathustra zum manichäischen Lehrer der Gnosis geworden, und ein Bezug auf zoroastrische Sachverhalte ist auf einen Namen (zrhwšt), ein ehrendes Beiwort ('rd'w) und auf stilistische Anklänge reduziert.

Trotzdem müssen wir uns nicht mit der Feststellung begnügen, daß die Manichäer Texte der Avesta-Überlieferung gekannt, in ihrem Sinne verwendet und entritualisiert haben. In priesterlicher Funktion erscheint Zarathustra in einem ebenfalls von Andreas und Henning publizierten mittelpersischen Fragment (M 95) des Hymnen-Zyklus *Gōwišn ī grīw zīndag*, der ,Rede der Lebendigen Seele'.[39] Andreas und Henning haben dies sogleich erkannt, und M. Boyce hat den Sachverhalt in ihrem Aufsatz „*Ātaš-zōhr* and *Āb-zohr*" ausführlich beschrieben.[40] Ich gebe den Text in meiner Umschrift und folge der Übersetzung von Andreas und Henning nur teilweise, weil ich einige Ergänzungen und Korrekturen vornehmen konnte:[41]

'n hym 'dwr 'y cyyd zrdrwšt

'wš prm'd(wm) 'w 'hlw'n cyydn

cynydwm (')wd (gšn)[g] (m)' qwnyd

'wd m' '(.)r(3–5[42] c)['w](n) mr''n

'c hft 'dwr yštg 'y hwbyd'(g)

'wm bryd 'w 'dwr wxšn ywj(dhr)

'ymg 'yg p'q ''(wryd)[43]

'wd bwy 'yg nrm 'wd bwyy('g)

'brwcydwm pd d'nyšn[44]

'wm dyyd zwhr 'y p'q

[39] Andreas/Henning, „Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan" 2, *Sitzungsber. der Preuss. Ak. der Wissensch., Phil.-hist. Kl.* (Berlin, 1933), pp. 319–320.

[40] In *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1966, pp. 100–101.

[41] Ich beabsichtige, das Fragment im Rahmen meiner Gesamtedition des *Gōwišn ī grīw zīndag* erneut vorzulegen. Meine folgenden textkritischen Angaben beziehen sich auf mein Editionsmanuskript. Abb. des Fragments Sundermann, *Iranian Manichaean Turfan texts in early publications (1904–1934)*, p. 62.

[42] 'zr.byd??

[43] Var. ''wrᶜyd.

[44] Var. d'nᶜyšn.

'n hym 'b 'yg pscq
kwm 'bzwhr[45] dyy(')d[46] kw zwrmnd bw'n

(kw) ny whwr'n '(c)[2–3](g) nyrwg
c'šnyg 'wd (xw)šy<u>h</u>

'(n)y hym wrg 'y(g)[3–7]š
('w) zr(d)rwšt xwnd '[2–3]('w)[.]

Ich bin das Feuer, das Zarathustra aufgeschichtet hat, (und) mich aufzu-
schichten hat er den Wahrhaften befohlen. Schichtet mich auf und laßt mich
nicht hungern,[47] und nicht *raubt mich aus[48] wie die *Schurken.[49] Aus sieben
geweihten, duftenden Feuern (sammelt mich), und tragt mich zur geläuterten
*Feuerstelle.[50] Reines Brennholz bringt herbei und feinen, duftenden Duft-
stoff. Zündet mich kundig an und gebt mir reinen Opfertrank.
Ich bin das Wasser, das geeignet ist, daß ihr mir das Wasser-Trankopfer
gebt, auf daß ich kräftig werde, daß ich nicht *abirre von [   ] Kraft, Ge-
schmack und *Wohlgeschmack.[51]
Ich bin das Lamm, das [   ] zu Zarathustra rief

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[45] Var. 'b zwhr.

[46] Var. dy'd.

[47] Zu gšng vgl. np. *gušna* ,hungry' vgl. F. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian–
English Dictionary* (London, 1963 = 1892), p. 1091, wtl. „und machet nicht hungrig".

[48] Falls 'zrwbyd gelesen werden darf, so ließe sich ein bisher unbezeugtes *uzrōbēd
,ausrauben' annehmen, das zu mp. *rōb* ,Raub' (D.N. MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi
Dictionary* (London e.a., 1971), p. 72), np. *robudan* ,rauben', chwar. rwby ,rauben,
wegnehmen' (M. Samadi, *Das chwaresmische Verbum* (Wiesbaden, 1986), pp. 173–
174), vielleicht avest. *urūpaya-* und aind. *rōp* ,Leibschmerzen haben' (M. Mayrhofer,
Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen II (Heidelberg, 1994), p. 469) gehört
und mit Präfix *uz-* (vgl. z.B. av. *uz-i-* ,hinausgehen') verbunden wird. Allerdings würde
man eher 'wzrwbyd erwarten (vgl. mp. 'wzyh- ,hinausgehen').

[49] *mar* ,Schurke' ist bisher nur im Pahlavi belegt, vgl. R.C. Zaehner, *Zurvan a Zoro-
strian Dilemma* (Oxford, 1955), p. 470; MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, p. 54.

[50] Henning übersetzte wxšn durch ,*Zutaten' und die ganze Zeile: „Bringet zu mir,
zum Feuer, die reinigenden *Zutaten!", Boyce gab für wxšn die Bedeutungen ,kindling,
firewood' an (*A Word-List of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* (Acta Iranica
9a; Leiden e.a, 1977), p. 94). Ich sehe in *waxšan* ein von *waxšīdan* ,burn, blaze, kindle'
(MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, p. 88) abgeleitetes *nomen loci* und verstehe
'dwr wxšn daher als ,Ort, wo das Feuer brennt'. Das Wort ist wohl nicht von dem ave-
stischen Priesteramt des *ātrə-uuaxš-* bzw. *ātra-uuaxš-* (Bartholomae, *Altiranisches
Wörterbuch*, cols. 318–319) zu trennen.

[51] xwšy<u>h</u> ,Güte, Schönheit' gehört gewiß zu parth. wxšyft, das nicht nur ,pleasantness',
sondern auch ,sweetness' übersetzt wird (Boyce, *A Word-List of Manichaean Middle Per-
sian and Parthian*, p. 94), und das im „Sermon von der Seele" als ,Wohlgeschmack' anzu-
nehmen ist (W. Sundermann, *Der Sermon von der Seele. Eine Lehrschrift des östlichen
Manichäismus* (Berliner Turfantexte 19; Turnhout, 1997), pp. 72–73, § 6).

M. Boyce weist in ihrem Artikel auf verschiedene rituelle Praktiken hin, die die Zoroastrier z.T. bis heute befolgen: die Gewinnung eines *ātaš Bahrām* aus einer läuternden Folge von sieben Feuern,[52] die dem Feuer gespendete Opfergabe von Brennholz, Weihrauch und *(ātaš-)zōhr*,[53] und die dem Wasser gespendete Gabe des *āb-zōhr*.[54]

Als drittes Bild wird, wie nun aus meinem ergänzten Text hervorgeht, das ‚Lamm' genannt. Leider gestattet die Unvollständigkeit des Fragments keine sichere Aussage über seinen Inhalt. Tritt hier das Lamm an die Stelle des Rindes, dessen Seele *Yasna* 29 zufolge vor Ahura Mazdā Klage führte und Zarathustra zum Schutzherrn erhielt? Im zoroastrischen Opferkult trat ja das billigere Lamm an die Stelle des teureren Rindes, das dann *gōspand*, wtl. ‚wohlwirkendes Rind', genannt wurde.

Für den Autor des manichäischen Hymnus sind das Feuer, das Wasser und gewiß auch das Lamm Bilder für die Lebendige Seele, was um so leichter verstehbar war, als ja die Lebendige Seele in ihrer materiellen Gestalt aus den Lichtelementen Äther, Wind, Licht, Wasser und Feuer bestand.[55] Was alle rituellen Akte, die der Text nennt, bewirken, ist eine Zunahme, Sammlung und Kräftigung von Feuer und Wasser.[56] In diesem Zusammenhang wird vom ‚Aufschichten' *(cydn)* des Feuers geredet, gewiß ein charakteristischer zoroastrischer Terminus, wie Andreas und Henning anmerken,[57] doch ebenso auch ein Schlüsselwort der manichäischen Mythologie. Von *čīdan* ‚sammeln, aufschichten' abgeleitet sind die Begriffe (mp.) rw'ncyn ‚soul-gathering; charitable' und rw'ncynyẖ ‚gathering of souls, redemption'.[58] Das hat man sich ganz wörtlich vorzustellen: die in der Welt und so auch in den menschlichen Körpern zer-

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[52] M. Boyce, „Ātaš-zōhr and Āb-zōhr", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1966, p. 101.

[53] Boyce, „Ātaš-zōhr and Āb-zōhr", p. 104.

[54] Boyce, „Ātaš-zōhr and Āb-zōhr", p. 161.

[55] Sundermann, *Der Sermon von der Seele,* pp. 11–14.

[56] Dem widerspricht freilich Hennings Übersetzung der Schlußzeilen des Textes: „Ich bin das Wasser, das geeignet (ist), daß mein Wasser Weihwasser *(zōhr)* werde (?), auf daß ich kräftig *(zōr-mand)* werde" (Andreas/Henning, „Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan" 2, p. 320). Diese Übersetzung beruht aber auf der Verlesung von dyy'd (var. dy'd) „ihr gebet" zu bw'd „es werde". Die richtige Übersetzung findet sich bei Boyce, „Ātaš-zōhr and Āb-zōhr", p. 112: „I am the water which (is) fit that you should give me 'the offering of the water' that I may become strong."

[57] Andreas/Henning, „Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan" 2, p. 320, n. 1.

[58] Boyce, *A Word-List of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*, p. 79.

streuten Teile der Weltseele werden im Erlösungsprozeß aus ihren Kör-
pern herausgezogen, in der Säule der Herrlichkeit gesammelt und in das
Lichtreich heimgeführt. Übrigens ist diese Idee des Sich-selbst-Sammelns
der Weltseele nicht auf den Manichäismus beschränkt. Sie findet sich
auch in gnostischen Schriften.[59]

So sind die Aufschichtung des Sakralfeuers und die Nährung von Feu-
er und Wasser ein für den Manichäer leicht durchschaubares Bild der
Sammlung der Weltseele im Verlauf ihrer fortschreitenden Erlösung.

Die Person, die das Feuer aufschichtete, wird im manichäischen Hym-
nus genannt. Es ist Zarathustra. Er wird, seines priesterlichen Amtes wal-
tend, dargestellt. Allerdings sind den Manichäern die minutiös beschrie-
benen und auszuführenden sakralen Handlungen des zoroastrischen Pries-
ters nicht als solche bedeutsam. Wichtig sind sie für sie ihrer symboli-
schen Ausdeutbarkeit wegen in Hinblick auf die Erlösung, die ‚Einsamm-
lung' der Weltseele. In dieser Umdeutung hat Zarathustra der Priester sei-
nen Platz auch in der Lehre Manis behauptet.

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[59] H. Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist* 1, Göttingen 1964, pp. 139–140.

SUPERNATURAL INTERCESSION TO EARTHLY PROBLEMS: *SOFREH* RITUALS AMONG SHIITE MUSLIMS AND ZOROASTRIANS IN IRAN

Sabine Kalinock

Taking a first look on the religious calendar of Zoroastrians and Shiite Muslims in Iran the differences are striking. The Shiite ritual cycle is dominated by mourning ceremonies commemorating the martyrdom of the Imams. Mourning as an expression of one's empathy with the sufferings of the members of the prophet's family and a source for salvation, and fasting as a means to control one's worldly desires play a prominent role. To Zoroastrians asceticism and self-mortification are foreign. Their religious year is marked by joyous occasions with feasting and food sharing.

Despite those main differences between the Zoroastrian minority and the Shiite majority one can also discover a lot of similarities. These become obvious when one has a further look on the rituals that are performed by both communities, especially those which are out of the framework of orthodoxy. One of the rituals that the two religious communities have in common is the so-called *sofreh*. The term *sofreh* literally designates a tablecloth which is traditionally spread on the floor for the daily meals. During the ritual a prescribed selection of foodstuff and objects is displayed on it.

In the Zoroastrian context a *sofreh* is part of many of the religious rituals. It plays especially a part in the cyclical *gahāmbārs,* the six feasts of obligations. Through prayers and the liturgical recitation of the priest the food put on the *sofreh* becomes blessed and is then shared by the whole congregation. Beside the regular communal five-day feasts, there are also personal *gahāmbārs*. These might be hold to show one's devotion, as contrition for some committed offence or as thanksgiving for escaping some kind of misfortune. In these cases they may be connected with a vow.[1]

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[1] M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Persian Studies Series 12; Lanham et. al., 1989), pp. 53–54; L. Jamzadeh/M. Mills, "Iranian Sofreh: From Collective to Female Ritual", *Gender and Religion: on the Complexity of Symbols*, eds C.W. Bynum/S. Harrell/P. Richman (Boston, 1986), pp. 24, 28.

Further—as a more marginal rite—the Zoroastrians have votive *sof-rehs* dedicated to some supernatural beings. On each of this *sofrehs* selected foodstuffs and other objects are displayed and a special folktale is told in a ritual fashion.[2] The common *sofrehs* are:

1. *Sofreh-ye Šāh-e Parī*: for this *sofreh* a room in the house is set apart. Once a year, on the same day, the *sofreh* is spread. The date is chosen by the hostess and differs from family to family. Black hens are killed and prepared. In some families this ritual is a tradition for many years.

2. *Sofreh-ye Vahman-rūz* (*sopre-ye vahme rū*): this *sofreh* might be displayed monthly on the day of Vahman (*rūz-e Vahman*); a more elaborate rite is performed on the day of *Vahman* in the month of *Bahman*. A sheep[3] is slaughtered a day before the ritual takes place; it is put on the *sofreh* on *rūz-e Vahman* and consumed on the following day.[4]

3. *Sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* (the lady of Tuesday), *Bībī Ḥojjat* (the lady of aspiration) and *Bībī Morād* (the lady of desire): this ritual is held on Tuesdays. It will be described in detail later.

4. *Sofreh-ye nohūd-e mošgel gošā* (the problem solving chickpeas): this *sofreh* can be displayed any day. Traditionally chickpeas and raisins are used in the rite; today they are often mixed with other dried fruits and nuts—a mixture which is in Iran called *ājīl*.[5] The rite of *nohūd mošgel gošā* can be a separate ritual but is also part of all other *sofrehs*. It will also be described in detail later.

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[2] See F. Mazdāpūr,"Dar-āmadī bar sofreh-hā-ye moqaddas-e zardoštī", *Yād-e Bahār. Yād-nāmeh-ye Doktor Mehrdād Bahār* (Tehran, 1376 AHš/1997), pp. 383–387. ("Introduction to the holy Zoroastrian sofrehs", *In memory of Bahār*. Doktor Mehrdād Bahār memorial volume); M. Sohrāb, "Sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh", *Fravahr* 24.3–4, 1368AHš, 1989, pp. 42–45; M.J. Fischer, *Zoroastrian Iran between Myth and Praxis* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1973).

[3] According to Boyce it could also be a goat or hens. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 89.

[4] Because *Bahman* is the lord of cattle the month and the day of *Vahman* are *na-būr* (non-killing), none of its creatures may be slain or consumed. In the month of *Bahman* this rule is transgressed. K. Mazdāpūr, *Wāženāmeh-ye gawiš-e behdīnān-e šahr-e Yazd, fārsī beh gawiš hamrāh bā māṭāl*, vol. 1 (Ā–b), (Teheran, 1374 AHš/ 1995), p. 83, footnote 1; Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 89–90.

[5] Shiite women have a similar rite that is called *ājīl-e mošgel gošā* (the problem solving *ājīl*). Some Muslim women told me that traditionally *ājīl* only consisted of raisins and chickpeas. Chickpeas play an important role in folk beliefs and are also used in fortune telling (*fāl-e nohūd*).

Thus the Zoroastrians have different votive *sofrehs*, which might be displayed on a daily, a weekly, a monthly or a yearly basis.

The votive *sofrehs* can also be found among Shiite Muslims in Iran.[6] Iranian Muslims also display *sofrehs* in the secular New Year ceremony (*sofreh haft sīn*) and the wedding ceremony (*sofreh ye ʿaqd*), but these *sofrehs* are nondevotional and do not include the display of a ritual meal on the *sofreh*.[7] The most common *sofrehs* in connection with a vow (*sofrehhā-ye naẓrī*) are:

1. *Sofreh-ye Abū-l Faẓl* (the brother of the third Imam)
Among Shiite women this is the most popular and abundant sofreh. It includes the preparation and consummation of different dishes, which are displayed on the *sofreh*. The meal normally consists of *adas polo* (lentil rice), *āš* (a thick soup), *šoleh zard* (a rice pudding with saffron and rosewater), bread, *ajīl*, fruits and dates.

2. *Sofreh-ye Imām Ḥasan* (the second Imam)
The ritual resembles the *sofreh-ye Abū-l Faẓl* but everything put on the *sofreh* as well as the table cloth itself has to be green.

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[6] See e.g. A.H. Betteridge, "The Controversial Vows of Urban Women in Iran", *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures*, eds N. Auer Falks/ R.M. Gross (San Francisco, 1980), pp. 141–158; A.H. Betteridge, *Ziarat: Pilgrimage to the Shrines of Shiraz* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1985), pp. 230–231, 339–340; Z. Kamalkhani, *Women's Islam. Religious Practice among women in today's Iran* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bergen, 1996), p. 18; I. Šokūrzādeh, ʿ*Aqāyed wa rosūm-e mardom-e Ḥorasān* (Teheran, 1346 AHš/ 1967), pp. 28–45.

[7] At the turn of the year (*nowrūz*) the whole family gathers around a *sofreh*, on which seven items are displayed which begin with the initial „س" (*sofreh-ye haft sīn*). One can select between *sabzeh* (sprouted seeds of grains and legumes), *sombol* (hyacinths), *sīb* (apple), *sīr* (garlic), *somāq* (sumach), *samanū* (a thick paste made of germinating wheat), *serkeh* (vinegar), *senjed* (the fruit of the oleaster), *sangak* (a flat bread backed on small stones) und *sekeh* (coins). A living goldfish, a mirror, candles, coloured eggs and a Koran or the Diwān of Hafez complete the selection. During the wedding ceremony (*marāsem-e aqd*) the bride and groom sit in front of the *sofreh-ye aqd* facing Mekka. At the other end of the *sofreh* stands a mirror. Candles, a Koran, prayer utensils (*jā-ye namāz*), gilded or silvered eggs and walnuts, pastries and bread with herbs and white cheese are also displayed on the *sofreh*. The exact selection of things displayed on the two *sofrehs* differs from region to region and family to family but the symbolic meaning always expresses fertility and regeneration. For further information, cf Jamzadeh/Mills, "Iranian Sofreh: From Collective to Female Ritual", pp. 37–40; A. Betteridge/H. Javadi, "ʿAqd", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 2, ed. E. Yarshater (London, 1982), pp. 189–191.

3. *Sofreh-ye Ḥaẓrat-e Roqiyyeh* (the daughter of Imam Hussein). This sofreh is simpler. The foodstuff displayed on the *sofreh* only contains bread, white cheese, herbs, and dates.

4. *Sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* (the lady of Tuesday), *Bībī Ḥūr* (the Ḥūrī lady) *and Bībī Nūr* (the lady of light):[8] this ritual is less orthodox as it is dedicated to supernatural beings of unclear origin. Like the Zoroastrian *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* it is held on Tuesday. In the following it will be described in detail.

Except for the *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh*, where a story is told,[9] other Muslim *sofrehs* normally include a sermon and a *rowzeh* (a recitation recalling the sufferings of one of the Imams) followed by the *do'āy-e tawassol* (a Shiite supplication for intercession). Then, the food displayed on the *sofreh* is consumed in a ritual meal or distributed. The date of the *sofrehs* is chosen by the hostess. Very often a religious holiday is favoured. Mostly it is a single event after a wish fulfilled; in other cases the hostess has vowed to hold the *sofreh* regularly on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis.[10]

The aim of this paper is to compare the votive *sofrehs* of Shiite Muslims and Zoroastrians in today's Iran. The findings are based primarily on fieldwork.[11] To get an impression of the course as well as the atmosphere of the ritual I will first describe a *sofreh* that both communities have in common: the *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh*.

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[8] The Persian term *Bībī* designates a respected lady. In colloquial language it is also used as a title for the grandmother as well as for female saints instead of *hazrat* (dignity), eg. *Bībī Fāṭemeh* instead of *Ḥaẓrat-e Fāṭemeh*.

[9] For one account of the story see Šokūrzādeh, *'Aqāyed wa rosūm-e mardom-e Ḥorasān*, pp. 29–32. For a comparable ritual among Ismaili muslim women in Iran called āš-e Bībī Murād where also a story is told see M. Mills, "A Cinderella Variant in the Context of Muslim Women's Ritual", *A Cinderella Casebook*, ed. A. Dundes (New York/London, 1984), pp. 180–192.

[10] If the *sofreh* coincides with a mourning day a *rowzeh* is recited. If it corresponds with the anniversary of the birth of Holy Beings (*mowlūdī*) it might also be combined with joyous *mowlūdī-ḫānī*, the singing of poems praising the prophet's family, although many of the women were convinced that crying is more effective for the fulfilling of wishes. A lot of *sofrehs* take place in Ramadan, here the ritual meal matches with the fast-breaking meal (*efṭār*).

[11] *Sofrehs* are part of my PhD research in progress on the religious life and rituals of Shiite women in Teheran. The fieldwork has been conducted primarily between 1998 and 1999, followed by regular shorter visits to Iran. In March and April 2002 I had the possibility of taking part in Zoroastrian *sofrehs*. I am indebted to the women who allowed me to enter into their religious meetings.

A MUSLIM *SOFREH BĪBĪ SEH ŠANBEH*

A Tuesday morning in Teheran – Resālat. I arrive at the house of my friend's mother who is supposed to accompany me to her neighbour, where the *sofreh* will start early in the morning. She is reluctant to show me the place where the ritual takes place. Yesterday she had a conversation with her niece who does religious studies in Qom and advised her not to take me there. To her mind those rituals are nothing else than superstition. She proposed instead to have a conversation with a clergy at Qom. She was afraid that taking part in the *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* would let me get a wrong picture of Islam. Finally my friend arrives and convinces her mother to show me the place and accompany me there. The door of the courtyard is open, so that anyone can enter. About fifteen women, mostly neighbours from the traditional under middleclass neighbourhood, are sitting on the floor around a white *sofreh* spread with bread, cheese and fresh herbs. Most of them wear a black *čador*, some only a scarf. The clothes of two women show that they come from some better quarters in the north of Teheran. For each guest there is also a small plastic bag with *ājīl*, a mixture of chickpeas, nuts, dried fruits, and *noql* (small sugar candies). The women are reading in the *mafātīḥ*, a Shiite prayer manual.[12] The hostess, a woman in the sixties, welcomes us, especially my friend's mother, because it is the first time that she takes part in the ritual although she is a close neighbour. She tells us that if we have a wish (*hojjat*) we can go to the kitchen to stir up the *kāčī*, a pudding made with flour, sugar, oil, and saffron. Because it is the first time that we take part in the *sofreh* the fulfilling of our wishes is especially auspicious. The window of the kitchen is closed with a curtain.

More than thirty years ago the hostess vowed to arrange this *sofreh* every week if she recovered from a severe illness. Her wish was granted and since then she has displayed the *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* every Tuesday. Female family members, friends, neighbours, and women from other parts of the city who heard about the miracles that have occurred come here to initiate their own vows. Some bring sweets and dates for distribution, some offer money to contribute to the expenses; others vow to sponsor three complete *sofrehs*. Two *sofrehs* are displayed before the fulfilment of the wish, the third more abundant one is held as a pledge

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[12] The *mafātīḥ al-janān* (lit. 'the keys to paradise') is the most spread compendium of Shiite supplications. Together with the Koran it is used in nearly all religious rituals in Iran.

(*gerow*)—as the women say—until the wish is fulfilled. In these cases the hostess displays the *sofreh* in the name and in the intention (*niyyat*) of the sponsor.

During the morning other women arrive, tea is served, and from time to time one of the women sends *salawāt*, blessings to Mohammad and his family for the health of all participants and especially the hostess, for all people that are ill, for the souls of all deceased and for the return of the 12. Imam.

Then the *kāči* is filled in small bowls, each covered with a plate, and put on the *sofreh*. After the lights have been turned off the hostess starts to recite the *do'ā-ye tawassol*, a supplication for intercession, which ends in appeals that the wishes of all participants be granted, that all debts may be paid back, that all people suffering from cancer be healed, that all their sons may find a suitable bride and that all young people may follow the path of Islam. The women join in the choruses. Some start to cry.

THE STORY OF THE OLD THORN DIGGER

Then the hostess starts to recite the story of the old thorn digger (*pīr-e ḥārkan*). His daughter suffers under her stepmother. She orders the girl to take the cow and the sheep to the pastures and spin the wool. After a windstorm scatters the wool and the girl loses the animals she meets three women, *Bībī Seh Šanbeh*, *Bībī Hūr* and *Bībī Nūr,* who solve her problem. While they are cooking *kāči* they tell her that she will meet the Shah's son and marry him and that she must then cook the *kāči* every Tuesday. Everything they foretell her comes true. But when on Tuesday the girl refuses the luxury food in the palace and instead cooks the *kāči*, the prince's mother sees her and gets angry because she behaves like a beggar. The prince gets upset, too, and kicks the pot with the *kāči*. Then he goes hunting and loses his way. Two melons in his saddle bag turn into severed heads and he is imprisoned. In prison he dreams of the three *Bībīs* who tell him that his wife only performed her vow and that his mother had to apologize to his wife. This is done, his wife cooks the *kāči* again and the prince is freed from prison.

After the end of the story the women once again send *salawāt*, blessings to Mohammad and his family for the health of the living and for the well-being of the souls of the deceased. Then every woman removes the

plate from her *kāčī* and looks for imprints on it, which are a sign that the Holy Being has been present and that the vow will be accepted. Tea is served and everybody starts to eat the *kāčī*. The women wrap cheese and herbs in the bread and take them home together with the *ājīl* for other family members, especially for the ill. The women start conversation telling each other their family problems, their disputes with their daughters or mothers in law or the illness of family members and exchange their experiences with other forms of vows (*naẕr*), like distributing food among the poor or sending a number of *salawāt*. My friend's mother expresses that her attitude to the *sofreh* has changed completely. She tells me that she is impressed by the purity of intention (*holūs-e niyyat*) of the hostess and her guests and that she is now happy that she has accompanied me. At about 12.30 p.m. the women start to leave.

A ZOROASTRIAN *SOFREH BĪBĪ SEH ŠANBEH*

On another Tuesday morning in Teheran Pars a Zoroastrian *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* takes place. A white tablecloth is spread beside the kitchen-stove, a smaller green one is laid over it. At the back there are a mirror, a picture of Zoroaster, the Avesta, an electric light burning all the time, a rose water flagon and two sugar cones wrapped in green paper (*qand-e sabz*) and decorated with a silver bracelet. Three walnut shells are filled with oil and lit. Three *sirog* (a thin round of leavened dough fried in oil), an egg, a bowl of water with *owišan* (marjoram leaves) and three *senjed* (the fruit of the oleaster) and three coins, a glass with *šarbat* (water mixed with syrup), a white board with salt, sugar, herbs, and nuts, a plate with fruits cut open and another one with pastries are displayed on the *sofreh*. In the front there is a tray with chickpeas. A big pot with *āš* (a thick soup) is boiling on the stove.

The women, about 25 persons, arrive early in the morning. Most are wearing fashionable clothes. Some bring along with them oil for the *sirog*, others *nohūd* (chickpeas) and *kešmeš* (raisins) or *ajīl* which they pour on the tray in front of the *sofreh*. Others leave some money on the *sofreh*. Tea is served and the women start to converse.

The hostess sometimes arranges the *sofreh* for the fulfilment of her own wishes, sometimes in the name of another woman who has made a vow. This time a friend of hers, living in India, has called her and asked her to spread a *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* for her.

THE STORY OF *BĪBĪ SEH ŠANBEH*

The women, then wearing a scarf, gather around the *sofreh* and the hostess starts to tell the story of *Bībī Seh Šanbeh*. The story is told more elaborately with much more details, but in it's content it is very similar to the one told at the Muslim *sofreh*: a girl from a poor family that suffers from her stepmother can escape her bad luck by making a vow at a *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh*. She then marries the prince but is prevented by his family from fulfilling her vow. The prince gets accused for murder, but is freed after he asks his wife to make a vow for him. From then on they display an abundant *sofreh* each week.

After the end of the story the hostess gives all the women a small amount of the water with *owišān* and a spoonful of *šarbat*.

The ritual is continued by telling the story of *nohūd-e mošgel gošā* (the problem-solving chickpeas). While the story is told, the women clean the *ajīl*, picking out the chaff that is mixed with it and separating the pistachio shells. They pour the cleaned *ajīl* into bowls that have been put on the table. Throughout the story a small girl keeps on saying *baleh* (yes).

THE STORY OF NOHŪD-E MOŠGEL GOŠĀ

The story is about a wood gatherer and his daughter. They are so sunk in poverty that the father despaired. One day three beings clad in green appear to him asking him some favours and bid him to buy *nohūd* (chickpeas), perform the rite of *nohūd-e mošgel gošā* and distribute them. As a gift they give him some small stones. These turn out to be jewels and he and his daughter become even richer than the king himself. His daughter befriends the princess but when her father goes on a pilgrimage his daughter neglects the rite of *nohūd-e mošgel gošā*. She is accused of stealing and put in prison. Her father returns and the three beings appear to him again in a dream advising him to continue to perform the rite of *nohūd-e mošgel gošā*. He does so and thereafter the innocence of his daughter is established; she marries the prince and goes on performing the rite.

After the end of the *sofreh* the women speak some personal prayers wishing each other that their wishes may be fulfilled. The *āš* is filled in bowls and distributed among the guests. Then tea and fruits are served. Some women, who had made a vow, fasted in the morning. The women who brought along *nohūd*, *kešmeš* or *ājīl* are given a share of the cleaned

ājīl. The hostess advises them that they should distribute it in handfuls among the people whom they meet. She gathers the chaff to throw it into flowing water later on.

After the women sat together and chatted, the hostess accompanied by some of the women goes to the fire-temple nearby pouring some of the *ājīl* on a tablet in the temple for everybody to eat.

FORMAL SIMILARITIES

The description makes clear that the votive *sofrehs* dedicated to *Bībī Seh Šanbeh* among Muslims and Zoroastrians share a lot of formal similarities:

- A table cloth is spread on which special foodstuff is displayed;
- Most of the *sofrehs* are displayed at home, traditionally in a room where no light falls in. Others might be spread at a shrine: a Zoroastrian *pīr* or a Shiite *imāmzādeh;*
- A story is told and prayers are recited—the exact story differs at various *sofrehs* but the plot and the structure are always the same: the existence of unjust suffering, the possibility of escaping one's own misfortune and poverty by performing the rite. Furthermore, the stories deal with female difficulties: the problems with the in-laws and the unfairness of husbands;
- By telling the story the food becomes blessed;
- Part of the food is consumed in a ritual meal, part of it taken home and distributed;
- The *sofreh* is held to initiate or fulfil a vow. Other women use the ritual to make their own vows.

Votive *sofrehs* among Zoroastrians and Muslims have—beyond their formal similarities—a lot of common features and functions which will be considered in the following.

A WOMEN'S RITUAL

In both communities it is a ritual, which is performed primarily by women. As mentioned in the literature and some interviews, other Zoroastrian *sofrehs* like the *sofreh-ye Vahman rūz* may also be performed by men but it seems that the ritual is much more common among women. At one Zoroastrian *sofreh-ye nohūd-e mošgel gošā* I went to, men were

only allowed to sit in the room beside but did not take part in the course of the ritual. Here the common roles of men and women in official rituals were reversed. At the *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* men are strictly excluded. Some Zoroastrian women argued that the supernatural being invoked is a woman and therefore *nā-maḥram* (not allowed to non-kin males).[13] This exclusion even concerns pregnant women because they might be expecting a boy.

According to Muslim traditions men seeing the *sofreh* would risk getting blind and pregnant women would endanger a male child. The *sofreh* can so be seen as an expression of female power. The women are in contact with supernatural beings that are dangerous especially for men, but might also be beneficial if their power is mediated by the women in the right way. Although the notions about the dangerous effects of the *sofrehs* are told more or less jokingly today, men are not yet allowed to enter the house during the ritual. The exclusion of men is especially pronounced at the *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* but is also true for nearly all other Muslim *sofrehs*. Betteridge and Mills/Jamzadeh mention sexual integrated rituals but during my nearly two years' fieldwork in Teheran I never came across a Muslim *sofrehs* where men participated.[14]

On the other hand, what most of the time is ignored in the literature, the women—Muslim as well as Zoroastrians—sometimes display the *sofreh* in the name of a male family member or acquaintance who pays for the expenses. Especially if the person concerned is not a close family member he normally adds some extra money to compensate for the woman's effort. In these cases the women act as intercessors between the believer and the supernatural being. This forms a contrast to the religious guidance by male religious authorities elsewhere.

Whereas in the *gahāmbār* feasts the blessing of the food is done by a priest no official religious authority is involved, in the *sofrehs*. The contact with the Holy Beings takes place directly and not through male mediation. Preparation and accomplishment of the ritual are completely under the control of the hostess and her female guests. It is through telling the story that the foodstuff gets blessed. The same is true for the Muslim votive *sofreh*. Even in *sofrehs* where a preacher is invited, his or her role is much more marginal than in other Shiite rituals like *rowzehs*. On the other side the ritual gives women of both communities the possibility of

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[13] Sohrāb, "Sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh", p. 42.

[14] Betteridge,"The Controversial Vows of Urban Women in Iran", p. 107; Jamzadeh/ Mills, "Iranian Sofreh: From Collectivity to Female Ritual", pp. 41–42.

acting as ritual specialists without having a religious education. They only have to know the correct wording of the story and the traditional instructions to be able to display the *sofreh* for other woman.

Muslim women's behaviour in the public, their participation in the official religious rituals and their access to religious posts is restricted. The same is true, while to a lesser extent, for Zoroastrian women. Although many sources emphasise the higher gender equality among Zoroastrians,[15] women are as well excluded from higher religious positions and cannot become priests. In most of the orthodox rituals they play a marginal role. In contrast, the *sofrehs* express female autonomy and influence and reflect female experiences.[16] The story told deals with common problems of women like disputes with mothers and sisters in law that can be overcome with the help of the ritual. The essential point of the ritual is the preparation, consummation and distribution of food. Food is one of the few resources controlled by women. Here the women reproduce their traditional roles as nurturers and carers of their families. At the same time they imbue with higher meaning their everyday domestic labour. The women whose presence at the official places of worship is restricted turn the domestic space of the house into a place of worship. They use their domestic skills to get in contact and strengthen their ties with the supernatural to use these forces for their own purposes and the well-being of their relatives. In her study on the religious life of Jewish women Susan Sered has called this process the "domestication of religion".[17]

A RITUAL OUT OF THE FRAMEWORK OF ORTHODOXY

In both communities votive *sofrehs* are more or less marginal rituals, which are not mentioned in the religious writings. Most of the Zoroastrian priests *(mobed,* Pl. *mobedān)*, reject the votive *sofrehs* as pure superstition. Whereas the making of vows—referring to several verses of the Koran—is accepted by the Shiite clergy and its rules are extensively discussed in their religious writings, *sofrehs* are criticized as an unislamic invention *(bed'at)*.

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[15] For a critical review, cf. J.K. Choksy, *Evil, Good, and Gender. Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian History* (Toronto Studies in Religion 28; New York et al., 2002).

[16] About female religious participation and women in ritual and symbolic roles, cf. J. Hoch-Smith/A. Spring (eds), Introduction to *Women in Ritual and Symbolic Roles* (New York/London, 1978), pp. 1–23.

[17] S. Sered, *Women as Ritual Experts: The Religious Lives of Elderly Jewish Women in Jerusalem* (New York/Oxford, 1992), pp. 6–10.

Some female preachers even refuse to offer their services. The Islamic government in Iran, which instrumentalizes other religious rituals for their own ideological purposes, also discards the *sofrehs*.[18]

Another point of criticism which especially concerns the *sofreh-ye Bībī Seh Šanbeh* is the obscure identity of the supernatural beings invoked. Muslim women gave different answers about the identity of *Bībī Seh Šanbeh* (the lady of Tuesday), *Bībī Hūr* (the Hūrī lady) and *Bībī Nūr* (Lady of Light); some referred to them as the daughters of the 7. Imām, others as the wives of Imām Ḥasan or identified them as Fāṭemeh (the daughter of the prophet Moḥammad), Ḥadījeh (the prophet's wife) and Zeynab (the sister of Imam Ḥuseyn).[19] Some women also called the ritual *sofreh-ye Fāṭemeh* instead of *Bībī Seh Šanbeh* to avoid criticism. Instead of telling the story they chant a *rowzeh*. Most of the Zoroastrian women I asked about *Bībī Seh Šanbeh* referred to the story and told me that there are three ladies called *Bībī Seh Šanbeh*, *Bībī Hojjat* (lady of aspiration) and *Bībī Morād* (lady of desire) that have the power to assist people in trouble, without further specifying their identity. Here it is strange that the *sofreh* is dedicated to a lady called *Seh Šanbeh* (Tuesday) although the Zoroastrians do not have a division in weeks. A m*obed* in Yazd was of the opinion that the votive *sofrehs* were an alien loan from the Muslims, a view also mentioned to Jamzadeh by one of her informants.[20] According to another view the history of the *sofrehs* dates back to pre-Zoroastrian times.[21]

In the Muslim context there is a long debate about the *sofrehs*. Criticism concerns especially the way the *sofrehs* are held.[22] As they require

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[18] Although there are no official declarations.

[19] Šokūrzādeh was told that Bībī Ḥūr und Bībī Nūr were the daughters of the prophet Moḥammad and Bībī Seh Šanbeh a holy women who accompanied the two. Šokūrzādeh, *ʿAqāyed wa rosūm-e mardom-e Ḥorāsān*, p. 28.

[20] Jamzadeh/Mills, "Iranian *Sofreh*: From Collective to Female Ritual", p. 52.

[21] For the sofreh-ye Šāh Parī, cf. K. Mazdāpūr, "Afsāneh-ye Parī dar hezār wa yek šab", *Šenāḥt-e howiyat-e zan-e īrānī, dar gostareh-ye piš-e tārīḥ wa tārīḥ* ("The story of Pari and Thousand and one night", *The Quest for Identity, the Image of Iranian Women in Prehistory and History*), eds Šahlā Lāhījī and Mehrāngīz Kār (Teheran, 1377 AHš/ 1998), p. 296; and personal conversation with K. Mazdāpūr, Teheran, 1.4.2002. Because there are no written traditions and historical accounts it seems difficult to trace back the history of the Muslim as well as the Zoroastrian *sofreh* rituals. Calmard dates the formation of the Shiite *sofrehs* into the late 19th century but does not mention any sources; cf. J. Calmard: "Azādarī", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 3, ed. E. Yarshater (London, 1987), p. 176

[22] For criticism cf. F. Adelkhah, *La revolution sous le voile: femmes Islamiques*

some financial means they are especially common among the better-off middle and upper classes that use them for an ostentatious display of their own wealth and good taste. Women's magazines of the Shah's time gave advice where to order the best pastry and flower arrangements. A large amount of different dishes is prepared and consumed. The women are dressed in the latest fashion and the meeting normally ends with music and dancing. Thus the *sofrehs* have been criticised as a pseudo-religious excuse for a party. For many women from traditional families it is much easier to spend time and money on a female religious gathering if they can refer to a religious reason.[23] Compared to Zoroastrian *sofrehs* it seems that the preparation of different dishes and the ritual meal play a far more important role at Muslim *sofrehs*. For Zoroastrians the feature of food sharing is more pronounced during the *gahāmbārs*. As the separation of sexes and the restrictions of women are stricter among Muslims it seems that the informal meeting following the ritual itself is therefore more important.

For many more modern Muslim women the *sofrehs* have assumed a folkloric character. Hospitality, the preparation of traditional dishes, the communal meal, and the cooperation of the women are seen as an expression of Iranian culture and tradition. Further one can observe a secularisation of the ritual that becomes obvious in the things displayed on the *sofreh*. A volume of the Qur'ān, the prayer utensils *(jā-ye namāz)*, and a rosary *(tasbīh)* which have traditionally been put on the *sofrehs*—equivalent to the Avesta and the picture of Zoroaster on the Zoroastrian *sofrehs*—are no longer displayed.[24]

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d'Iran (Paris, 1991), pp. 128–131 ; Jamzadeh/Mills, "Iranian Sofreh: From Collective to Female Ritual", pp. 35–36; Betteridge, "The Controversial Vows of Urban Women in Iran", p. 104; Ḥanomhā-ye Tehrānī wa sofreh-ye Ḥażrat-e ʿAbbās, *Bānewān* (Teheran 1350/1971), p. 12 (The women of Teheran and the *sofreh* for Ḥażrat-e ʿAbbās).

[23] For the way women use religion to forward their own purposes and negotiate worldly concerns, compare Lewis' study on the zar cult: I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion. A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London, 1989/1971).

[24] In the Muslim context many of the traditional rules have lost their significance. The women should have obtained the ingredients for the meal by begging from households who had a family member named Fāṭimeh. The *sofreh* with a volume of the Qur'ān, prayer utensils *(jā-ye namāz)*, and a rosary *(tasbīh)* as well as some ingredients for the meal had to be spread the evening before the ritual and kept in a locked room. The next morning the hostess looked for signs that the supernatural beings had been present. Thus it was believed that the visit occurred over night and in the private, not during the ritual itself. At least in the urban context these rules are no longer observed in most cases.

The private character of the ritual as well as the fact that the Islamic establishment, which exercises power in Iran, rejects it, has increased its popularity especially among the Shiite women who are critical to the government. In today's Iran the way the *sofreh* is held is also a political statement. An example is a *sofreh* with music and dance that took place on the anniversary of Khomeini's death.

SPACE FOR INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

The rules concerning the way the *sofreh* should be displayed are not written down but passed on from generation to generation by oral traditions. Each *sofreh* has its own fittings, character, and atmosphere, which depend on the beliefs and taste of the hostess and her guests and emerges in the interaction of all participants. The absence of written traditions about *sofrehs* among Zoroastrians as well as Muslims leaves broad space for innovation and creativity.

In a Zoroastrian *sofre-yeh Bībī Seh Šanbeh* that I went to see, pictures of Maria, Jesus, and a Sikh leader were placed next to the picture of Zoroaster. As the hostess explained, a women clad in a white long dress had appeared to her in a dream advising her to do so. This is an example for an innovation that would be impossible at an official ritual. Dreams play an important role in connection with Zoroastrian as well as Muslim *sofrehs*. Sometimes it was a dream that made a woman initiate a *sofreh*. In dreams the women were told where and when to spread the *sofreh*, which items to put on the tablecloth and which *sofreh* they should choose.

The aesthetic and ludic elements play an important part at the *sofrehs*. Muslim women spend long time on the preparation and decoration of the dishes served. The *ājīl-e mošgel gošā*—part of all *sofrehs*, although the telling of the story has passed out of use—is wrapped in lace and tied with red ribbon. At a *sofreh-ye* Imām Ḥasan the women wore green eye shadow and nail polish because everything connected with the *sofreh* should be green.

Sofrehs offer women a space for self-expression. They can communicate their perceptions, feelings and aspirations and share and negotiate them with others.[25]

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[25] For a description and similar interpretation of women's secular dramatic games see S. Safa-Isfahani, "Female Centered World Views in Iranian Culture: Symbolic Representation of Sexuality in Dramatic Games", *Signs* 6, 1980, pp. 33–53. For the role of

SUPERNATURAL INTERCESSION TO EARTHLY PROBLEMS

In Zoroastrian as well as in Muslim *sofrehs* the focus is making and ful-filling vows (*nazr*). Muslim as well as Zoroastrians emphasise that the inner intention (*niyyat*) is most important. Different from *gahāmbārs* in the Zoroastrian context, or *rowzehs* and prayer session in the Shiite ritual cycle votive *sofrehs* do not aim primarily at celebrating the general com-munal well-being or accumulating religious merit for the other world but achieving concrete results for actual earthly problems. The supernatural being is invoked to get active now and in this world. In return, the women promise to display *sofrehs*. They try to bind the Holy Beings into the system of gift exchange. Here the women use their domestic skills to establish a privileged relationship to the supernatural being.[26] At the same time they strengthen their social networks. These networks also include Iranians living in exile and Parsis in India who mediate their vows by telephone calls. The common problems addressed are not bound to religion, but concern human and especially female problems: to find a suitable husband, to get pregnant, to bear sons, to be cured from an ill-ness, to pass the University exam or to solve financial problems. Beside private problems the women also make more general vows though this is more seldom. During my fieldwork some Muslim women vowed for the victory of the Iranian football team or the success of the religious reform-ists in the elections.

Sometimes the motive addressed in the story told at the *sofrehs* – misfortune that came over the wood gatherer's daughter after she ne-glected the rite—is picked up in the history of one's own life. Some Muslim as well as one Zoroastrian women told me that they used to dis-play a *sofreh*, and then neglected the rite due to financial problems or the change of their house. They then became ill or lost their wealth, but after

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religious rituals in the life of Muslim women, cf. A. Torab, "Piety as Gendered Agency: a Study of Jalaseh Ritual Discourse in Iran", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2, 1996, pp. 235–252; M.E. Hegland, "The Power Paradox in Muslim Women's Majales: North-West Pakistani Mourning Rituals as Sites of Contestation over Reli-gious Politics, Ethnicity and Gender", *Signs* 23, 1998, pp. 391–429; E.W. Fernea, "Variations in Religious Observance among Islamic Women", *Scholar, Saints and Sufis. Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*, ed. N.R. Keddie (Berkeley, 1972), pp. 385–401.

[26] In many cultures food plays an important part in establishing good relations with gods and other supernatural beings and enables women to take over mediating roles, c.f. C.M. Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body. Gender, Meaning and Power* (New York/London, 1999), pp.14–17.

spreading the *sofreh* again, their problem was solved.

Especially in times of crises the miraculous solving of problems becomes more appealing giving the actors a feeling of control. During the war with Iraq *sofrehs* have increased between Muslims as well as Zoroastrians. Among both religious communities there are a lot of stories about miracles that happened at the *sofrehs*. These stories have a decisive influence on the number of participants. A Zoroastrian man reported that a *sofreh-ye Šāh Parī* near Kerman became so popular and attracted so many female visitors that the *mobedān* even asked help from the local police to prevent the women's activities. Their efforts failed because of the women's resistance. I was recounted a similar accident concerning a regular Muslim open-house *sofreh* held in Teheran for more than twenty years. Every week it attracts several hundred women who have heard about the miracles that have occurred. The brothers of the hostess forced her to sell their parents' home where the *sofreh* took place. With the support of other women, the hostess managed to buy a building nearby and to continue with the ritual.

An important reason that the *sofrehs* are criticized in both communities by the primarily male religious orthodoxy is that they are an initiative undertaken by women independently and unsupervised. The women thus evade male dominance in the domestic as well as the religious domain. The reference to a higher reality enables them to agency. Every vow fulfilled is a proof of the rightness of one's own believes irrespective from all criticism by men and the religious orthodoxy.

„O HERR, ERHÖRE UNSER MONĀǦĀT".
ZARATHUSTRISCHE TRADITIONSLINIEN EINER PERSISCHEN
GEBETSGATTUNG ZWISCHEN INDIEN UND IRAN

Beate Schmermbeck

„Zarathustrische Monāǧāt" ist ein Terminus, der bei den meisten westlichen Orientalisten mindestens stirnrunzelndes Erstaunen, in der Regel aber eher eine belehrende Mimik auslöst: Ein Missverständnis müsse vorliegen, denn Monāǧāt, das seien ausschließlich islamische mystisch inspirierte Gebete, die in der großen Tradition des persischen Dichters ʿAbdollāh Anṣārī stünden. Von zarathustrischen Monāǧāt hingegen habe man noch nie gehört. Auch unter den Zarathustriern stiftet dieser Begriff häufig eher Verwirrung als dass er geeignet schiene, indigene Erinnerungen oder Assoziationen zu wecken. „Monāǧāt", so lautet die allgemeine Reaktion, „sind islamische Gebete und können daher schon *per definitionem* nicht zarathustrisch sein."[1] Mit diesem Argument begegneten vor allem die höhergebildeten Zarathustrier Irans meiner Frage nach der Existenz und Bedeutung von Monāǧāt unter den heutigen Mazdayasnan. Die Reaktion der theologisch gebildeten, ‚schriftkundigen' Zarathustrier reichte sogar noch weiter: Als islamischem Brauchtum, das sich auf unlautere Weise in die zarathustrischen Traditionen eingeschlichen habe und sich damit der ‚reinen Lehre Zarathustras' als ‚ketzerischer Tand' beigeselle, wurde diesem Gebetsgenre schlichtweg seine Daseinsberechtigung im zarathustrischen Milieu abgesprochen. Während meine Nachforschungen in den genannten Kreisen der zarathustrischen Gemeinden Irans mehrheitlich Entrüstung und Gegenwehr provozierten, stand die junge Generation meinen Erkundungen gänzlich unvoreingenommen gegenüber: So wenig waren sie bisher in ihrem religiösen Alltag von Monāǧāt berührt worden, dass sie—von der Existenz dieser Gebete völlig überrascht—auf meine Fragen in stumme Meinungslosigkeit verfielen.

Sollten die schönklingenden Gebetslieder, die ehemals zum festen religiösen Ritual-Repertoire gehörten, im heutigen religiösen Alltag der Zarathustrier Irans wirklich keine Rolle mehr spielen?

Bevor diese Frage beantwortet wird, soll zuerst die islamische Monāǧāt-Tradition skizziert und der Weg der Gebete aus dem islamischen Kontext hinaus in das zarathustrische Umfeld beschrieben werden. Darauf folgt eine Betrachtung der historischen und gegenwärtigen Bedeutung von Monāǧāt bei den Parsen Indiens, die den Blick dann zunächst in vergleichender Weise auf die heutige Rolle der Gebetslieder bei den Zarathustriern Irans lenkt. Zwei Textbeispiele aus dem iranisch-zarathustrischen Milieu dienen dazu, das Gebetsgenre inhaltlich vorzustellen und seine Eingebundenheit in den rituellen Alltag der Zarathustrier Irans zu illustrieren.

1. ISLAMISCHE MONĀǦĀT-TRADITION

Die Ursprünge des Gebetsgenre Monāǧāt reichen zurück bis in den Iran des frühen 10. Jahrhunderts. Damals soll bereits der Sufi-Meister al-Ǧoneyd auf Arabisch ein *Kitāb al-Munāǧāt* verfasst haben, von dem heute jedoch nichts mehr erhalten geblieben ist. Ähnlich erging es den Monāǧāt von Šehāb al-Din al-Sohrawardi, die—ebenfalls in arabischer Sprache verfasst—verloren gegangen sind.[2] In der ganzen islamischen Welt bekannt wurden demgegenüber die Monāǧāt von Ḫʷāǧe ʿAbdollāh Anṣāri (gest. 1089), des berühmten Dichters persischer Poesie und Prosa, der im Orient in einem Atemzug mit Monāǧāt genannt wird. Die Monāǧāt Anṣāris sind, wie die meisten seiner Werke, erst nach seinem Tod von seinen Schülern niedergeschrieben und später zu sogenannten „*Monāǧāt-nāme*" kompiliert worden. In unzähligen, zum Teil prunkvollen Editionen wurden die Gebete Anṣāris im vergangenen Jahrhundert einer breiten Öffentlichkeit zugänglich gemacht und sind heute im ganzen Orient erhältlich.[3]

Die in rhythmischer Reimprosa verfassten Gebete beginnen typischerweise mit der Invocatio *Elāhi* („mein Gott") und künden von der

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[2] C.E. Bosworth, "Munādjāt", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* New Edition, vol. 7, 1993, p. 557.

[3] B. Utas, "The Munājāt or Ilāhī-nāmah of ʿAbduʾllāh Anṣārī", *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 3, 1988, pp. 83–87. Ein Beispiel für eine von vielen in Iran verbreiteten Monāǧāt-nāme-Ausgaben: *Monāǧāt-e Ḫʷāǧe ʿAbdollāh Anṣāri*, ed. E. Nežād Fard Lorestāni, Entešārāt-e ʿelmi (o.O., 1407 h.q. [1987]).

Einzigartigkeit Gottes und seinen Eigenschaften als Schöpfer. Trotz
sprachlicher Schlichtheit hochkünstlerisch komponiert und mit einer bei-
spielgebenden, mystisch inspirierten Metaphorik versehen, gelten die
Monāğāt Anṣāris in ihrer Schönheit bis heute als unübertroffen. Schon
früh wurden sie zum Vorbild für die Anṣāri nachfolgenden Poeten. Sa-
nāʾi (gest. 1130), ʿAṭṭār (12. Jh.) und Saʿdi (gest. 1292) ließen sich in
ihrer Dichtung von seinen Monāğāt anregen[4] und legten damit Zeugnis
ab von der großen Popularität, die seine Gebete bereits kurz nach seinem
Tod erreicht hatten.

Im Kreis der Familie anlässlich religiöser Feste oder in Momenten
innerer Besinnung und Zurückgezogenheit rezitiert, sind Monāğāt auch
heute noch lebendiger Bestandteil der religiösen Alltagskultur der Iraner.
Nicht wenige beherrschen eine bisweilen stattliche Anzahl von Anṣāris
Gebetsversen auswendig und können sie aus dem Stegreif aufsagen. Die
Sprache der Monāğāt ist Persisch und damit den meisten Iranern—im
Gegensatz zum Arabischen der offiziellen Gebete—von Kindheit an ver-
traut. Unabhängig von einem institutionellen Rahmen können sie immer
und überall gebetet werden und entsprechen damit dem Bedürfnis des
Gläubigen nach individueller, konventionsloser Hinwendung zu Gott.
Jan Rypkas Definition des Terminus Monāğāt betont diesen besonderen
vertraulichen, informellen Charakter, wenn er das Monāğāt als „einen
intimen Dialog der Seele mit Gott in Form eines Monologs" bezeichnet.[5]
Durch die freie Wahl von Gebetszeit, -text und dem Persischen als Spra-
che unterscheiden sich Monāğāt von den offiziellen muslimischen Gebe-
ten, wie etwa dem ṣalāt, und konstituieren auf diese Weise einen eige-
nen Gebetstypus.

2. MONĀĞĀT IM ZARATHUSTRISCHEN KONTEXT

Von der westlichen Forschung unbemerkt hat dieses Gebetsgenre weni-
ge Jahrhunderte nach Anṣāri seinen ursprünglich islamischen Kontext
verlassen und wird seitdem auch von den Zarathustriern gepflegt, die
sich von den islamischen Vorbildern zum Verfassen eigener Monāğāt
inspirieren ließen.[6] Weitgehend ungeklärt ist, wer diese islamische Tradi-

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[4] J. Rypka, *Iranische Literaturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1959), pp. 218, 243.

[5] Rypka, *Iranische Literaturgeschichte*, p. 218.

[6] Hier sollte angemerkt werden, dass auch die Forschungen auf dem Gebiet der isla-
mischen Monāğāt bisher nicht sehr umfangreich sind. (Neben dem oben erwähnten Auf-
satz von Bo Utas sind in diesem Zusammenhang vor allem die Arbeiten von Serge de

tion erstmals in den Rahmen der zarathustrischen Religion stellte. Die
ältesten zarathustrischen Monāğāt gehen wahrscheinlich zurück auf Zar-
tošt Bahrām ben Paždu und finden sich in seiner gereimten persischen
Fassung des *Ardā Wirāz nāmag*.[7] Die Lebensdaten von Zartošt Bahrām
werden von Frédéric Rosenberg und François de Blois für das 13. Jahr-
hundert angesetzt.[8] Weitere prominente frühe iranisch-zarathustrische
Verfasser von Monāğāt waren Šah-mard Malek-Šāh und Mollā Rostam
Esfandyār (17.Jh.).[9] James Russell nimmt an, dass die gelehrten Parsi-
Priester Dastur Dārāb Pāhlan und Dastur Mollā Firuz diese Gebetsform
ab dem 18. Jahrhundert bei den Zarathustriern Indiens einführten.[10]
Zahlreiche Verse, die uns heute als Monāğāt vorliegen, waren allerdings
schon vor dem 18. Jahrhundert von Zarathustriern in Indien verfasst
worden. Zu ihnen gehören u.a. die Zweizeiler von Dastur Dārāb Hor-
mazdyār, dem Kompilator persischer Sendschreiben, der im 17. Jahr-
hundert lebte.[11] In den Rang einer in Indien an Popularität weit um sich
greifenden Gebetsgattung scheinen diese Gott preisenden Verse jedoch
letztlich erst von Dastur Dārāb Pāhlan (1667–1734/1735) und Mollā
Firuz (1757–1830) erhoben worden zu sein. Während ersterer insgesamt
drei Monāğāt verfasste,[12] komponierte Dastur Mollā Firuz, der auf seiner

Beaurecueil erwähnenswert.)

[7] *Ardā Wirāf-nāme-ye manẓum-e Zartošt Bahrām Paždu*, ed. R. ʿAfifi (Mašhad,
1343 h.š. [1964/1965]), pp. 6–9, 9–16, 66–67.

[8] Vgl. F. de Blois, *Persian Literature*, vol. 5, Part 1 (London, 1992), pp. 171–173
und *Le livre de Zoroastre (Zarātusht Nāma) de Zartusht-i Bahrām ben Pajdū*, ed. F.
Rosenberg (Sankt Petersburg, 1904), pp. xxxiii–xxxiv. M. Haug, *The Book of Arda
Viraf* (Bombay/London, 1872), p. xix, nimmt hingegen das 16. Jahrhundert an.

[9] Vergl. J.J. Modi, *The Persian Farziāt-nāmeh and Kholāseh-i Din of Dastur Dārāb
Pāhlan. Text and Version with Notes* (Bombay, 1924), p. 135. Die Schreibung von Šah-
mard Malek-Šāh richtet sich nach einem Zitat aus dem *Ṣad dar naẓm* (vgl. M. R. Un-
vâlâ, *Dârâb Hormazyâr's Rivâyat*, vol. 1 (Bombay, 1922), p. 23). Die Lebensdaten von
Šah-mard Malek-Šāh sind nicht sicher überliefert. Von ihm und Mollā Rostam Esfan-
dyār liegt jeweils ein Monāğāt in Gujarati-Transkription vor (z.B. in: *Khorde Avesta*,
verlegt von J.B. Karani and Sons (Bombay, 1922), pp. 717, 730–732).

[10] J.R. Russell, "Parsi Zoroastrian Garbās und Monājāts", *Journal of the Royal Asi-
atic Society*, 1989, pp. 51–63, hier p.54.

[11] Vgl. R. Šāhmardān, *Farzānegān-e zartošti* (Tehrān, 1330 y. [1960/1961]), pp. 486–
487. Zwei Monāğāt von Dārāb Hormazdyār finden sich in dem oben genannten *Khorde
Avesta*, verlegt von Karani and Sons, pp. 728–730, 750–753 (in Gujarati-Transkription).

[12] Zwei Monāğāt von Dastur Dārāb Pāhlan finden sich bei Modi, *The Persian Farzi-
āt-nāmeh and Kholāseh-i Din of Dastur Dārāb Pāhlan*, pp. 73–77 (im persischen Text-
teil). Ein drittes ist in Form einer Gujarati-Transkription (z.B. in: *Khorde Avesta*, verlegt
von Karani and Sons, pp. 721–722) zugänglich.

Iranreise zwischen den Jahren 1768 und 1780 sicher sowohl mit ira-
nisch-zarathustrischen als auch mit islamischen Monāğāt in Berührung
gekommen war, mehr als ein halbes Dutzend Gebetslieder. Ein großer
Teil von ihnen ist in seinem 1780 fertiggestellten und 1872 erstmals ver-
öffentlichten *Pand-nāme* zu finden.[13] Mollā Firuz zählte im 19. und frü-
hen 20. Jahrhundert in Indien zu den beliebtesten Monāğāt-Autoren,
dessen Gebete auch zu einem Zeitpunkt, als Persisch nur noch von we-
nigen Parsen verstanden wurde, große Popularität genossen.[14] Die Plat-
zierung seiner Gebete an prominenter Stelle in vielen Ausgaben des
Khorde Avesta, dem Gebetskompendium der Zarathustrier, mag Folge,
möglicherweise aber auch Ursache ihrer weiten Verbreitung gewesen
sein. Neben Mollā Firuz und Dastur Dārāb Pāhlan verfassten im 18. und
19. Jahrhundert noch zahlreiche andere Parsi-Gelehrte Monāğāt. Zu den
bekanntesten unter ihnen zählen z.B. Shāpurji Māneckji Sanjānā (gest.
1854)[15] und Erachji Sohrābji Meherji Rānā (1826–1900).[16]

Nachdem mit dem Niedergang des Mogulimperiums das Persische
als Literatursprache und *lingua franca* Nordindiens seine Bedeutung
verloren hatte, verfasste man zarathustrische Monāğāt auch auf Gujarati.
Die meisten persischen Monāğāt wurden zudem seit Ende des 19. Jahr-
hunderts in Gujarati-Lettern transkribiert, da die Bedeutung der persi-
schen Ausdrücke zwar noch bekannt war, die arabische Schrift jedoch
selbst von gebildeten Parsen kaum noch beherrscht bzw. die Gujarati-
Schrift präferiert wurde.

Die umfangreichsten schriftlichen Sammlungen von persischen Mo-
nāğāt finden sich—zum Teil in transkribierter Form—in den Ausgaben
des *Khorde Avesta*.[17] Viele der in Gujarati-Schrift transkribierten Mo-

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[13] Die biographischen Angaben zu Mollā Firuz beruhen auf Šāhmardān, *Farzānegān-
e zartošti*, pp. 533–539. Zu seinen Monāğāt siehe Mollā Firuz, *Pand-nāme* (Bombay
1949), pp. 2–9, 44–46.

[14] Russell, "Parsi Zoroastrian Garbās und Monājāts", p. 56.

[15] Datierung nach Šāhmardān, *Farzānegān-e zartošti*, p. 664. Für seine Monāğāt sie-
he *Khorde Avesta*, verlegt von Karani and Sons, pp. 722–723, 764.

[16] Datierung nach E.S. Meherjirana, *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion. A Nine-
teenth Century Catechism with Modern Commentary*, hg. und übers. von F.M. Kotwal
und J.W. Boyd (Studies in World Religions 3; Chico, 1982), p. XXVII. Ein 1238 y.
[1868/1869] von ihm komponiertes, 127 Bait umfassendes Monāğāt befindet sich als
Manuskript (F47) in der Meherji Rānā-Bibliothek in Navsari (Gujarat).

[17] Die wohl umfassendste Monāğāt-Sammlung bietet die 1922 in Bombay von Jahan-
gir B. Karani and Sons verlegte *Khorde Avesta*-Ausgabe. Mit der Verzeichnung von
insgesamt 36 persischen Monāğāt in Gujarati-Transkription, die von mehr als einem

nāğāt sind in ihrer ursprünglich persisch-arabischen Schrift jedoch bis heute nur in Form von zum Teil stark angegriffenen Handschriften zugänglich, die in den zarathustrischen Bibliotheken Westindiens aufbewahrt werden.[18]

Entsprechend ihrem Platz im Anhang des *Khorde Avesta* werden Monāğāt oftmals im Anschluss an die offiziellen zarathustrischen Gebete rezitiert und muten dadurch wie eine persönliche Ergänzung des avestischen Gebetspensums an. Es existieren besondere Monāğāt für das Zubettgehen und das morgendliche Aufstehen sowie Verse, die unabhängig von den offiziellen Gebeten anlässlich zentraler Ereignisse im Lebenszyklus, wie zum Beispiel Hochzeiten, rezitiert werden.[19] Shernaz Cama, die derzeit im Rahmen eines von der UNESCO geförderten Projekts die Bedeutung von Monāğāt unter den Zarathustriern Indiens untersucht,[20] stellt fest, dass die Rezitation von Monāğāt bei den Parsen bis in die zweite Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts weit verbreitet war. Besonderes Augenmerk widmet sie der Tatsache, dass viele beliebte Monāğāt nicht schriftlich fixiert waren, sondern häufig mündlich von den Eltern an die Kinder, in der Regel von der Mutter an die Tochter weitergegeben wurden. Hervorzuheben ist, dass Monāğāt nicht aufgesagt, sondern gesungen wurden. Da dies häufig im Chor im Kreis der Familie oder Gemeinde stattfand, erfüllten Monāğāt zudem eine identitätsbildende und das Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl stärkende Aufgabe.[21]

Im Zuge einer Bewegung unter den Parsen Indiens, die sich seit einigen Jahren verstärkt um die Revitalisierung bereits verschollen geglaubter alter Traditionen bemüht, rücken auch Monāğāt wieder in den Fokus der Aufmerksamkeit. Eine von vielen Bemühungen, die Popularität die-

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Dutzend verschiedener Autoren stammen, scheint diese Ausgabe einen großen Teil der persischen zarathustrischen Monāğāt erfasst zu haben. In diesem Zusammenhang danke ich besonders Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal, der mir für meine Untersuchung freundlicherweise seine private Sammlung alter *Khorde Avesta*-Ausgaben zur Verfügung stellte.

[18] Vor allem dem Cama-Institut in Bombay oder der Meherji Rānā-Bibliothek in Navsari (Gujarat).

[19] Russell, "Parsi Zoroastrian Garbās und Monājāts", p. 59.

[20] Sh. Cama, "The Monajats: Enduring Tradition", presented at the International Workshop, Sruti – Transmission of Oral Tradition. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and South Asia Institute University of Heidelberg, 2000.

[21] Hinweise und Beispiele für die Verwendung von Monāğāt bei den Zarathustriern in Indien finden sich auch im Interviewteil der Studie von Ph.G. Kreyenbroek/Sh.N. Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism. Urban Parsis speak about their religion* (Richmond, 2001), pp. 61, 74, 107, 213.

ses religiös-literarischen Erbes zu erhöhen, ist seine musikalische Neuin-
terpretation mithilfe beliebter indischer, aber auch westlicher Rhythmen
und Melodien. Die so in den Kreis moderner Unterhaltungsmusik ge-
stellten Monāğāt sollen dem aktuellen Zeitgeschmack Rechnung zollen
und damit die Verbreitung der Gebetslieder unter den Zarathustriern för-
dern.[22]

3. BEDEUTUNG VON MONĀĞĀT BEI DEN ZARATHUSTRIERN IM HEUTIGEN IRAN

Während sich die Monāğāt-Tradition somit in Indien gegenwärtig eines
neu erwachten Interesses erfreut, scheint dieses Gebetsgenre in Iran fast
gänzlich aus dem religiösen Alltag der Zarathustrier verschwunden zu
sein. Auf den ersten Blick zeugen lediglich die Veröffentlichungen ein-
zelner Monāğāt in den wenigen erhalten gebliebenen alten *Khorde
Avesta*-Ausgaben davon, dass die Gebetslieder zumindest bis in die
fünfziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts hinein eine gewisse literarische Be-
deutung hatten.

Diese alten *Khorde Avesta*-Editionen wurden bis zur Mitte des 20.
Jahrhundert in Indien erstellt und bedienten von dort aus den iranischen
Markt. Auf diese Weise verbreiteten sich auch Monāğāt von Parsi-Autoren
unter den Zarathustriern Irans und wurden von ihnen in das persönliche
Gebetspensum integriert. Besondere Beliebtheit schienen auch hier die
Gebete von Mollā Firuz zu genießen, dessen Monāğāt in den Augen der
meisten von mir befragten Zarathustrierinnen gleichsam als Synonym für
das Gebetsgenre insgesamt gelten.[23] Daneben erschienen in den Editionen
des *Khorde Avesta* jedoch auch Monāğāt, die von iranischen Za-
rathustriern verfasst worden waren. Unter diesen iranischen Monāğāt-
Autoren ragten zarathustrische Gelehrte wie Mubad Šahreyār Ḥodābaḫš
(19. Jh.) oder Bahrām Rāvari heraus.[24] Damit wurde nun auch von irani-

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[22] Zwei Beispiele für musikalische Neuinterpretationen nennt Russell, "Parsi Zoro-
astrian Garbās und Monājāts", p. 54. Audio-Kassetten mit Aufnahmen von gesungenen
Monāğāt mit instrumentaler Begleitung werden produziert und verbreitet von: Zoro-
astrian Studies, K.R. Oriental Institute Bldg., 136, Bombay Samachar Marg, Mumbai
400 023, India.

[23] Wie in Indien sind auch in Iran die Monāğāt von Mollā Firuz in den Ausgaben des
Khorde Avesta zahlenmäßig besonders häufig vertreten.

[24] Datierung auf der Basis von Šahmardān, *Farzānegān-e zartošti*, p. 456. Die Le-
bensdaten von Bahrām Rāvari sind nicht überliefert (Šahmardān, *Farzānegān-e zartošti*,
p. 409).

scher Seite wieder an die eigene zarathustrische Monāğāt-Tradition ange-
knüpft, die mit Bahrām Paždu ihren Anfang genommen hatte.

Den ältesten Nachweis eines 87 *Bait* langen Monāğāt von Mubad
Šahreyār Ḥodābaḫš in einem *Khorde Avesta* fand ich in der 1872 in
Bombay erschienenen Edition von Mubad Tirāndāz Mubad Ardašir. Ein
148 *Bait* umfassendes Gebet von Bahrām Rāvari scheint zum ersten Mal
1853 in einem *Khorde Avesta* Aufnahme gefunden zu haben. Beide Ge-
bete handeln von der Einzigartigkeit und der Schöpfertätigkeit Gottes
und sind Bitt- und Dankgebet zugleich. In das Monāğāt von Bahrām Rā-
vari ist zudem die Schilderung einer individuellen Glaubensfindung und
die Beschreibung des postmortalen Gerichts eingeflochten.

Da die Anführung eines der beiden Monāğāt in seiner ganzen Länge
den Rahmen dieses Aufsatzes sprengen würde, möchte ich mich im Fol-
genden nur auf die Erwähnung einer Kurzvariante des Gebetes von Bah-
rām Rāvari beschränken. Sie wird von Šāh-Bahrām Belivāni am Ende
seines 1986/1987 erschienenen Büchleins über zarathustrische Wallfahr-
ten[25] genannt und ist infolge ihrer Kürze (11 *Bait*) um den literarischen
Einschub der Beschreibung des postmortalen Gerichts und der individu-
ellen Glaubensfindung beschnitten.

1	*ḫodā-yā bozorgi to-rā ḫʷod sazā-st*	*ke dar har dō giti-at farmān rawā-st*
2	*tō dānātar az ğomle dānandegān*	*tō ruzi-deh-e ğomle bandegān*
3	*sepās az tō ey ḫāleq-e dastgir*	*sepās az tō ey qāder-e har faqir*
4	*ḫodā-yā sepās az tō har nafas*	*ke ruzi-resān-i wa faryād ras*
5	*sepās az tō ey dāwar-e kerdegār*	*sepās az tō dādār-e parwardegār*
6	*ḫodā-yā tō az lotf dast-am begir*	*agar če gonahkār-am ʿoẕr-am paẕir*
7	*be ruy-am dar-e raḥmat-at bāz kon*	*ma-rā dar dō giti sarāfrāz kon*
8	*naḫʷāham kasi čun tō kas bāši-am*	*ke dar har dō giti tō bas bāši-am*
9	*man-am ġarq-e daryā-ye ğorm ō gonāḥ*	*walikan be lotf-e tō dāram negāh*
10	*ḫodā-yā tō az lotf benawāzi-am*	*dehi dar har dō giti sarāfrāzi-am*
11	*tō bepaẕir yā rabb monāğāt-e mā*	*bedeh yā rabb az lotf ḫāğāt-e mā*

1 O Gott, Größe ist Dir wahrhaft würdig,
   denn Dein Befehl gilt in den beiden Welten

2 Du bist weiser als alle Gelehrten,
   Du bist der Spender des täglichen Brotes für alle Geschöpfe

3 Dank sei Dir, o helfender Schöpfer,
   Dank sei Dir, o Mächtiger über alle Armen

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[25] Š.-B. Belivāni, *Maǧmuʿeʾi az zeyārat-nāme wa čegunegi-ye bargozāri-ye marā-
sem-e dini-ye zartošteyān* (o.O., 1365 h.š. [1986/1987]), p. 37.

4 O Gott, Dank sei Dir bei jedem Atemzug,
   denn Du bist der Spender des täglichen Brotes und der Helfer

5 Dank sei Dir, o Schöpferrichter,
   Dank sei Dir, Schöpfergott

6 O Gott, ergreife in Deiner Güte meine Hand,
   obgleich ich ein Sünder bin, nimm meine Entschuldigung an

7 Öffne die Tür Deiner Barmherzigkeit für mich,
   mache mich in den beiden Welten glücklich

8 Ich will niemanden, wenn Du mir Beistand leistest,
   denn in den beiden Welten bist Du mir Genüge

9 Ich bin untergegangen im Meer der Schuld und Sünde,
   aber blicke zu Deiner Gnade

10 O Gott, liebkose mich mit Deiner Güte,
    lass mich in den beiden Welten glücklich sein

11 Erhöre, o Herr, unser Monā ğāt,
    erfülle, o Herr, gütig unsere Bedürfnisse

Das Gebet entspricht formal den Regeln der persischen Dichtkunst. Jeweils zwei Halbverse sind durch Endreim miteinander verbunden und bilden einen Zweizeiler (*Bait*), der inhaltlich eine unabhängige Einheit formuliert. Durch die Aneinanderreihung mehrerer *Bait* nach dem Muster a-a, b-b, c-c etc. entsteht ein *Maṣnawi*, d.h. ein seiner Form nach endlos weiterzuführendes Versmuster, das in der persischen Poesie häufig als Basis für episch angelegte Werke benutzt wird. Inhaltlich ist das *Maṣnawi* zweigeteilt: Die *Bait* 1–5 sind durch Gott lobende und dankende Sequenzen geprägt, während in *Bait* 6–11 an Gott gerichtete Bitten und Erwartungen formuliert werden. Damit entspricht das Gebet einem für schriftlich fixierte Monā ğāt häufig verwendeten Grundmuster, das nach dem Lob und Dank Gottes inhaltlich die Bitte folgen lässt.

Die Anerkennung bzw. das Lob Gottes drückt sich in der Verwendung beschreibender Formulierungen aus: Gottes „Größe", seine Allmacht (*Bait* 1) und seine alle Menschen überragende Weisheit (*Bait* 2) werden gepriesen. Die Beschreibung Gottes als „Spender des täglichen Brotes" (*Bait* 2 und 4) sowie der in *Bait* 3 ausgedrückte Gedanke einer besonderen Hinwendung Gottes zu den Armen („Mächtiger über alle Armen") skizzieren das Bild eines fürsorgenden, materielle Mangel beseitigenden Gottes. Während Gott zunächst Objekt von Dank und Verehrung ist, zeigen ab *Bait* 6 Verben im Imperativ an, dass nun er zu Handlungen aufgefordert ist, während der Betende empfängt: Appelle,

die an Gottes Güte und Barmherzigkeit gerichtet sind (*Bait* 6, 7, 10 und 11), und die damit verbundene Hoffnung auf Vergebung begangener Sünden beschreiben den Wunsch des Gläubigen, von Gott angenommen zu werden und damit „in den beiden Welten" (*Bait* 7, 8 und 10), d.h. im Diesseits wie im Jenseits, begünstigt zu sein. In *Bait* 6 und 10 schafft dabei die Verwendung einer physischen Metaphorik eine persönliche Beziehung zwischen Gott und dem Menschen: „ergreife ... meine Hand", „liebkose mich mit Deiner Güte".

Das Gebet transportiert eine Metaphorik, die weitgehend der islamischen Poesie entlehnt ist. Mit Bildern, die einen „das tägliche Brot spendenden", den Menschen zugewandten, verzeihenden Gott beschreiben, knüpft das Gebet an gängige Motive persisch-islamischer Populärliteratur an, die in den zarathustrisch-theologischen Schriften keine Erwähnung finden, sondern teilweise sogar in Spannung zu ihr stehen. So erwähnen die Priester-Schriften zwar einen gerecht urteilenden und handelnden Ahura Mazda, versagen dem Menschen jedoch Gnade und Sündenvergebung beim postmortalen Gericht.

Das Monāğāt scheint daher in seinen Aussagen in besonderem Maße jenen Bedürfnissen des Gläubigen zu entsprechen, die von der theologischen Literatur unbeantwortet bleiben. Dabei begegnet es dem Betenden in seinem Wunsch nach Vergebung, Annahme und Nähe zu Gott und bereitet ihm so eine sehr persönliche und private Ebene der Kommunikation mit dem Göttlichen.

Waren die Gebetslieder von Bahrām Rāvari, Šahreyār Ḥodābaḫš und Mollā Firuz bis in die fünfziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts noch regelmäßig in die in Iran verbreiteten Ausgaben des *Khorde Avesta* integriert, so ist seit etwa 40 Jahren zu beobachten, dass Monāğāt in den Neudrucken der Gebetsbücher nicht mehr erscheinen.[26] Die Gründe dafür mögen in dem im 20. Jahrhundert im Iran aufgekommenen religiösen Diskurs liegen, der zur Hinterfragung alter Rituale und Gebräuche führte und teilweise von einer Fixierung auf die Zarathustra zugeschriebene avestische Literatur, insbesondere die *Gāthā*, charakterisiert ist. Vor diesem Hintergrund waren sicher auch Monāğāt in das Sperrfeuer der Diskussion geraten und einseitig wegen ihres in islamischen Traditionen

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[26] Eine Ausnahme ist die 1363 h.š. [1984/1985] erschienene *Khorde Avesta*-Taschenbuchausgabe von Dinyār Šahzādi. In ihr ist am Ende ein Monāğāt des iranischen Dichters, Komponisten und Sängers Abu'l-Qāsem ʿĀref Qazvini (1882–1934) aufgeführt, das fünf *Bait* umfasst und im patriotisch-modernistischen Stil verfasst ist.

wurzelnden Ursprungs als „unzarathustrisch" disqualifiziert worden.[27]

Mit dem Verschwinden der Gebetslieder aus dem *Khorde Avesta* scheint auch ihre Verbreitung unter den Zarathustriern in die Marginalität gerückt zu sein. Es ist die kleine Gruppe der über 60jährigen, die heute noch lebendige Erinnerungen an eine Monāğāt-Tradition hat.[28] Diese Generation war noch mit den Gebetsliedern aufgewachsen und hatte sie von den Eltern bzw. Großeltern oder im Religionsunterricht gelernt. Unberührt vom modernen religiösen Diskurs standen diese Männer und Frauen den althergebrachten Traditionen noch vorbehaltlos gegenüber und pflegten sie intensiv. In Teheran machte ich die Bekanntschaft einer älteren Dame, die die Verse von Bahrām Rāvari regelmäßig im Feuertempel singend rezitierte; in Yazd traf ich einen älteren Herrn und einige älteren Damen, die sowohl die Monāğāt von Bahrām Rāvari als auch die von Mollā Firuz gelegentlich in privater Umgebung beteten, wobei die Frauen die Verse im Gesang vortrugen. Zahlreiche Personen berichteten, sich daran zu erinnern, dass ihre verstorbenen Eltern oder Großeltern des öfteren Monāğāt beteten. Zwar vermochte keine der befragten Personen ein Monāğāt der oben erwähnten Autoren auswendig aufzusagen, jedoch zeigte die große Gewandtheit beim Vortragen der Gebete aus dem *Khorde Avesta*, dass sie mit Text und Rezitations- bzw. Gesangsrhythmus durchaus vertraut waren.

Während die Gebete von Bahrām Rāvari und Mollā Firuz, die als Texte im *Khorde Avesta* in Iran bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts weit verbreitet waren, kaum memoriert sondern abgelesen wurden, erinnerten sich viele befragte Zarathustrierinnen noch lebhaft an ein Gebet, das sie aus dem Gedächtnis heraus vortragen konnten. Seit seiner einmaligen Veröffentlichung in einer *Khorde Avesta*-Ausgabe aus dem Jahre 1905[29] ist das Monāğāt in keiner mir bekannten Ausgabe des Gebetsbuches mehr erschienen. Da angenommen werden kann, dass diese fast 100 Jah-

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[27] Dass Monāğāt zumindest in Indien in der Auseinandersetzung der so genannten ‚Reformer' und ‚Orthodoxen' zwischen die Fronten gerieten, beschreibt M.N. Dhalla, *History of Zoroastrianism* (Bombay, 1994³ (1963¹; Erstveröffentlichung 1938)), pp. 496–497.

[28] Im Rahmen zweier in Teheran und Yazd im Jahre 2001 durchgeführter Feldstudien hatte ich Gelegenheit, Zarathustrier nach Monāğāt zu befragen. Die folgenden Angaben basieren auf Gesprächen, die zu diesem Thema geführt wurden.

[29] Es handelt sich dabei um die Ausgabe von Dastur Tirāndāz Mubad Ardašir (Bombay, 1275 y. [1905/1906]). Der Herausgeber führt am Ende dieser *Khorde Avesta*-Ausgabe eine Anzahl fragmentarisch erhaltener persischer Gebete ohne Nennung eines Autors an. Zu dieser Sammlung gehört auch das im Folgenden zitierte *Yā wāğeb al-woğud*.

re alte Buchausgabe in Iran kaum noch verbreitet ist, scheint das Gebet über mehrere Generationen hinweg ohne direkten Bezug auf einen verbindlichen Quellentext weitervermittelt worden zu sein. Der Eindruck einer informellen, eventuell mündlichen Tradiertheit wird unterstützt durch die zahlreichen Varianten, in denen das Monāğāt erscheint: Je nach Interpretin weist es in Hinblick auf Inhalt, Reihenfolge und Anzahl der Verse zum Teil erhebliche Unterschiede auf. Die einmalige Verschriftlichung schien also nicht zu einer endgültigen Standardisierung des Textes geführt zu haben.[30] Da der Verfasser des Monāğāt nicht bekannt ist—ein mögliches Indiz für die nicht schriftliche Vermittlung des Gebets bereits schon vor seiner Niederschrift—sind Herkunft und Entstehungsdatum nicht eindeutig zu ermitteln.

Die folgende Variante des Monāğāt stützt sich auf die mündlichen Angaben einer etwa 60jährigen Zarathustrierin aus Teheran.

1   *yā wāğeb al-woğud*
2   *hasti, budi, ḫʷāhi bud*

3   *ey karimi ke baḫšande-ye ʿaṭāʾi*
4   *ḥakimi ke pūšande-ye ḫaṭāʾi*
5   *ey izadi ke az edrāk-e mā ğodāʾi*
6   *ey tawānāʾi ke ḫodāʾi rā sazāʾi*
7   *ey parvardegār ke gomrāhān rā rahnemāʾi*

8   *del-e mā rā ṣafāʾi deh*
9   *čašm-e mā rā żiyāʾi deh*
10   *guš-e mā rā šenwāʾi deh*
11   *dast-e mā rā gerāʾi deh*
12   *pā-ye mā rā peymāʾi deh*
13   *mā rā az fażl wa karam-e ḫʷiš ān deh ke ān deh*
14   *yā rabb del-e mā rā az raḥmat ğān deh*
15   *dard-e hame rā be ṣāberi darmān deh*
16   *in bande če dānad ke če mibāyad goft*
17   *dānande tōʾi har če ḫʷāhi ān deh*

18   *elāhi dar piš ḫaṭar wa z-e pas rāh-am nist*
19   *dast-am gir ke čoz tō pošt ō panāh-am nist*

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[30] Da Monāğāt in Iran – genauso wie in Indien – meistens innerhalb der Familie von den Müttern an die Töchter weitergegeben wurden, entzogen sie sich den für die offizielle Priesterliteratur üblichen Kontroll- und Konsolidierungsprozessen. Im täglichen Gebrauch unterlagen sie daher häufig Veränderungen, die durch persönliche Umstände, wie dem ästhetischen Empfinden oder dem Erinnerungsvermögen der Betenden, oder durch äußere Gegebenheiten (Ort des Gebets und die dafür zur Verfügung stehende Zeit) bedingt waren.

20 *ey dānā, ey tawānā, ey pāk, pākize*
21 *ḫodā-ye dādār harwesp āgāh*
22 *ey baḫšande wa baḫšāyešgar*
23 *ruzi-dehande*
24 *āmorześ-resānande*
25 *ḫʷod-at hasti ō bas*

26 *ey rafte z-e čougān qaża hamčun guʾi*
27 *čap mi-row ō rāst mi-row wa hič ma-guʾi*
28 *k-ān kas ke to-rā fakand andar takāpuʾi*
29 *u dānad wa u dānad wa u dānad wa u*

1   O Gott (dessen Sein notwendig ist)
2   du bist, warst und wirst sein

3   O Hochherziger, der Geschenke spendet
4   Weiser, der die Fehltritte verdeckt
5   O Gott, der Du von unserem Verstand getrennt bist
6   o Mächtiger, der Du des Gott-Seins würdig bist
7   O Schöpfer, der Du den Irregeleiteten ein Führer bist

8   Gib unseren Herzen Reinheit
9   Gib unseren Augen Licht
10 Gib unseren Ohren Gehör
11 Gib unseren Händen Griff
12 Gib unseren Füßen Gang
13 Gib uns von Deiner Gnade und Großmut das, was das Beste ist
14 O Herr, gib unseren Herzen aus Barmherzigkeit Leben
15 Gib den Schmerzen aller durch Geduld Heilung
16 Was weiß dieses Geschöpf, was es sagen muss
17 Du bist der Wissende, gib alles was Du willst

18 Mein Gott, vor mir Gefahr und hinter mir habe ich keinen Weg,
19 ergreife meine Hand, denn ohne Dich habe ich keine Stütze und Zuflucht

20 O Wissender, o Mächtiger, o Reiner, o Makelloser
21 Gerechter Gott, Allwissender
22 O Spender und Barmherziger
23 Spender des täglichen Brotes
24 Spender von Vergebung
25 Es gibt Dich und sonst niemanden

26 O wie der Poloball vom Schläger getroffen,
27 so läuft das Schicksal mal nach links und mal nach rechts
28 Sage nichts, denn jene Person, die Dich durcheinander gebracht hat,
29 (die) kennt Er, kennt Er, kennt Er und Er

Das Gebet steht sowohl formal wie auch inhaltlich in der Tradition der Monāǧāt von H^wāǧe ʿAbdollāh Anṣāri. Es ist wie die Monāǧāt Anṣāris in rhythmischer Reimprosa (Saǧʿ) verfasst und folgt keinem einheitlichen Reimschema.[31] Auf einem einfachen Prosastil unter gelegentlicher Verwendung von gleichklingenden Satzfiguren am Ende aufeinander folgender Verse (Epipher) basierend, lässt es Passagen persischer Poesie—wie das Robāʿi (Vierzeiler) in Zeile 26–29—wie zufällig eingestreut wirken. Der Eindruck einer formalen Ähnlichkeit mit den Monāǧāt Anṣāris wird inhaltlich durch die wörtliche Entlehnung einzelner Reimsequenzen aus seinem Monāǧāt-nāme verstärkt. So markieren die Zeilenpaare 3/4 und 18/19 direkte Übernahmen,[32] die Zeilen 18/19 sind zudem durch die für die Monāǧāt Anṣāris typische Invocatio „Elāhi" gekennzeichnet, welche die meisten seiner Gebete einleitet. Parallelen zu den Monāǧāt Anṣāris finden sich auch in anderen Zeilen: So erinnert die aneinandergereihte Aufzählung der Eigenschaften Gottes (Zeile 20–25) an ähnliche Sequenzen im Monāǧāt-nāme.[33]

Das Gebet macht jedoch auch Anleihen bei anderen Dichtern: Bei dem das Monāǧāt abschließenden Robāʿi handelt es sich um einen so genannten „wandernden Vierzeiler" (Robāʿi-ye gardande), der häufig ʿOmar Ḥayyām zugeschrieben wird.[34] Die Entlehnung einzelner Passagen aus den Werken anderer Autoren widerspricht der Option, dass es sich um ein einheitliches Gebet aus der Hand eines um Originalität bestrebten Verfassers handeln könnte. Vielmehr entsteht der Eindruck einer variablen Sammlung populärer Verssequenzen.

Auf der semantischen Ebene fällt in dem Gebet zunächst die Übernahme einer stark islamisch geprägten Terminologie auf: Ahura Mazda wird mit elāhi („Allāh"), wāǧeb al-woǧud („dessen Existenz notwendig ist"), rabb („Herr"), ḥakim („Weiser") und karim („Hochherziger") angerufen - Gottesepitheta, die dem islamischen Kontext entstammen. Aber auch Bilder, die teilweise den aus dem Monāǧāt von Bahrām Rāva-

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[31] In der *Khorde Avesta*-Ausgabe von *Dastur* Tirāndāz Mubad Ardašir erscheint es daher auch—abgesehen von dem *Robāʿi*—als fließender Text ohne Verseinteilung.

[32] Vgl. *Monāǧāt-e H^wāǧe ʿAbdollāh Anṣāri*, ed. Nežād Fard Lorestāni, pp. 17, 27.

[33] Beispiel: *Elāhi yektā-i bi hamtāʾi, qeyyum-e tawānāʾi, bar hame čiz bināʾi, dar hame hāl dānāʾi, ...(Mein Gott, Du bist einzigartig und ohnegleichen, der mächtige Gott (Ewig Existierende), der alles Sehende, der alles Wissende,...)*, aus: *Monāǧāt-e H^wāǧe ʿAbdollāh Anṣāri*, ed. Nežād Fard Lorestāni, p. 13.

[34] Zu Problemen bezüglich der Autorenschaft von Vierzeilern siehe J.T.P. Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry, An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Persian Poems* (Richmond, 1997), pp. 10–13.

ri bekannten entsprechen und Gott als „Spender des täglichen Brotes",
"Spender von Vergebung" sowie „Führer der Irregeleiteten" beschreiben
und seine Gnade und Barmherzigkeit betonen, finden Verwendung. Ob-
gleich sie in der Priesterliteratur des Zarathustrismus keine Rolle spielen,
sondern primär persisch-islamischen Poesietraditionen entlehnt sind,
scheinen sie—da sie in fast allen Gebetsliedern auftauchen—Leitmeta-
phern für das Monāğāt -Gesamtkorpus zu sein. Die Beschreibung Gottes
als dem menschlichen Verstand nicht zugänglich, die in Zeile 5, 16 und
17 sowie dem Vierzeiler zum Ausdruck kommt, verleiht dem Gebet ei-
nen mystischen Charakter, der ebenfalls eher Parallelen in der islami-
schen Poesie als in der zarathustrischen Priesterliteratur besitzt.

Die aus der theologisch-zarathustrischen Literatur bekannten Begriffe
wie *izad* („Gott"), *harwesp agāh* („Allwissender") und *dādār* („Gerech-
ter Gott"), die zu den 101 Namen Ahura Mazdas zählen, sowie die Be-
tonung der Reinheit und Makellosigkeit Gottes (Zeile 20) sind die einzi-
gen relevanten Indizien für einen zarathustrischen Hintergrund.

Während das *Yā wāgeb al-woğud* rhythmisch sprechend rezitiert
wurde, trugen einige Damen die Monāğāt von Bahrām Rāvari und Mollā
Firuz im Gesang vor. Dabei folgten die Vortragenden unterschiedlichen,
offensichtlich individuell geprägten Rhythmen. Den Angaben der Infor-
manten zufolge gibt es keinen vorgeschriebenen Rezitationsmodus, so
dass die Interpretation der Monāğāt dem persönlichen Geschmack folgen
kann. Auch die Wahl der Gebetszeit und des Ortes scheint uneinheitlich
und keinem festgelegten Muster unterworfen zu sein. Zwar gab eine
Dame an, Monāğāt vorzugsweise im Anschluss an die avestischen Gebe-
te im Feuertempel zu singen, die anderen Informanten beantworteten
meine diesbezügliche Frage jedoch unbestimmt mit „immer, wenn es
sich ergibt" und nannten als Ort den häuslichen Rahmen.

Einer Reisebeschreibung des Parsi-Emissärs Manekji Limji Hataria
aus dem Jahre 1865 zufolge war die Rezitation von Monāğāt in Iran
noch Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts in den Ritualablauf der Feier der Jah-
reskreis-Feste (*gāhambār*) eingebettet.[35] Auch Mary Boyce berichtet,

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[35] Vgl. Manekji Limji Hataria, *Riśāle ejhāre śīāte Irān iāne Irān deśni safarnā sarnō
rīpōrt* (Bombay, 1865), p. 43: "After the recitation of āfringān is over, at the end, twen-
ty-one Yathā and twelve Ašem are recited, when all men and women join in reciting
them loudly. Then the dāhmobed who is present as the administrative head recites a
khutbot (a sort of monājāt). Its main theme is that Mazdayasni religion may prosper and
the strength of the wicked may be broken. Those who donate for care of the religion and
those who participate in the gahambār will be the co-sharers of the day's blessings. May

dass in der ersten Hälfte der 1960er Jahre an den Heiligtümern (*pir*) Monāǧāt gesprochen wurden.[36] Während die Gebete in der Vergangenheit offenbar noch einen festen Platz im gemeinsam gefeierten Ritual besaßen und auch in den zarathustrischen Schulen ein Forum der Verbreitung hatten, scheint sich die Rezitation der Gebetslieder heute der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung fast gänzlich zu entziehen. Waren Monāǧāt—bei den Zarathustriern ebenso wie bei den Muslimen—schon immer die stillen, intimen Schwestern der offiziellen Gebete gewesen, so ist zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhundert ihr vollständiger Rückzug ins Private zu konstatieren.

Es ist bezeichnend, dass sich unter jenen Informanten, die selbst noch Monāǧāt rezitieren, niemand befand, der jünger als 60 Jahre war. Damit ist das Verschwinden der Gebetslieder aus dem religiösen Alltag der Zarathustrier in Iran abzusehen. Anders als in Indien werden zarathustrische Monāǧāt in Iran dann bald nur noch literarische Relikte ohne lebendige Traditionen sein.

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the souls of the departed, as well as the souls of those who die hereafter, go to heaven. May the wishes of all, small or big, native or foreigner, be granted and may your end be good. After saying many such words, the dahmobed takes a mud pot containing the fire next to āfringān in his hand, takes it to each one and holds the fire near to their faces and wishes hamāzor; then everyone in the audience inhales the fragrance of the incense, and they rub their hands over the face saying hamāzor hamā ašo."

[36] M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Oxford, 1977), p. 246. Auch in dem von Šāh-Bahrām Belivāni verfassten Büchlein wird das Monāǧāt von Bahrām Rāvari in den Zusammenhang von Wallfahrten gestellt.

FROM PRIVATE SHRINE TO PILGRIMAGE CENTRE: THE SPECTRUM OF ZOROASTRIAN SHRINES IN IRAN[1]

Robert Langer

A picture of the famous Zoroastrian 'mountain shrine' Pīr-e Sabz (plates XIV/10) is found in many Zoroastrian households in Iran and in the diaspora. Even in some fire temples and minor shrines a picture of the so called "Green Pīr" or "Čakčakū"—the "dripping mountain" (*čak-čak-kūh*), as the name is often popularly etymologized—is on display. This virtual omnipresence of Pīr-e Sabz which has become a major pilgrimage centre (*zeyārat-gāh*) for Zoroastrians not only from Iran but from all over the world, is in sharp contrast to the wide range of less well known—or almost only locally known—Zoroastrian shrines in modern Iran.[2] These are to be found mainly in the city of Yazd, its suburbs and surrounding villages, and in and around Kermān.

The Zoroastrians of Iran (Zartoštī) refer to their shrines as *pīr*, in plural *pīrān*, or *pīrūn* in the colloquial form. Although the Zoroastrian *pīr* shows some personalised features in legends and stories surrounding the 'holy', literally 'clean' or 'pure' places (*gāh-e pāk*), they do not refer to 'historical' saints or holy persons as is the case in Muslim usage. Zoroastrian *pīrān-gāh*, as shrines are also called, can be affiliated with historical persons (pre-Islamic or modern) or Zoroastrian 'deities' (*īzedān*, sing.: *īzed*). However, what is seen in the *pīr* as an acting force seems to be some more abstract or 'numinous' power which occasionally can take 'human' shape.[3] Since the shrines are 'visited' (*zeyārat-kardan*) by the

believers, the common Middle Eastern term *zeyārat* for '(a honouring) visit' is used in connection with the Zoroastrian *pīrān* too, and accordingly they are referred to as *zeyārat-gāh* ('pilgrimage place'),[4] especially when regular group pilgrimages are involved. Derived from the same Arabic root as *zeyārat-gāh*, the corresponding Arabic local noun *mazār* ('place of visit') is also used.

ZOROASTRIAN *PĪRĀN* AND THE IRANIAN SHRINE CULTURE

In order to analyse Zoroastrian shrine worship in Iran we have to take a look at the history and structure of Iranian shrine worship as a whole (i. e. mainly Muslim:[5] Shiite[6] and Sunnite, but also Jewish,[7] Christian,[8] Yezīdī[9] and Ahl-e Haqq[10]). This is especially important if we contextual-

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Oshidari, *An Encyclopaedia of Zoroastrianism: Explanatory Dictionary of the Religion of Zoroaster*, (čāp-i-duwwum; Tihrān, 1378 hš [1999]), p. 207b.

[4] K.-H. Kišāwarz, *Farhang-i Zartuštiyān-i ustān-i Yazd. Baḫš 2: Gūyiš: Wāža-nāma + gufta-hā + mutūn. Baḫš 3: Wāža-hā-yi Fārsī wa muʿādil-i ān-hā dar gūyiš-i Zartuštiyān-i ustān-i Yazd* [*Vocabulary of Yazd Province's Zoroastrians. Part 2: Pronunciation: Word List + Expressions + Texts. Part 3: Fārsī Words and Their Equivalents in the Pronunciation of the Zoroastrians of Yazd Province*] (s.l., 1993), p. 26.

[5] See in general H. Massé, *Croyances et coutumes Persanes suivies de contes et chansons populaires* (2 parts; Les Littératures populaires de Toutes les Nations: Traditions, Légendes, Contes, Chansons, Proverbes, Devinettes, Superstitions N.S. 6; Paris, 1938), part 2, pp. 387–404.

[6] For a thorough study of Shiite shrine cult in Šīrāz see A.H. Betteridge, *Ziārat: Pilgrimages to the Shrines of Shiraz* (Chicago, University, Department of Anthropology, Diss.; Chicago/Ann Arbor, 1985); A.H. Betteridge, "Specialists in Miraculous Action: Some Shrines in Shiraz", *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. A. Morinis (Contributions to the Study of Anthropology 7; Westport/London, 1992), pp. 189–209; A.H. Betteridge, "Women and Shrines in Shiraz", *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East*, eds D.L. Bowen/E.A. Early (Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies [1]; Bloomington/Indianapolis, 1993), pp. 239–247; A.H. Betteridge et al., "Festivals: iii. Shiʿite", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 9, 1999, pp. 550a–553a.

[7] See A. Netzer, "Festivals: vii. Jewish", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 9, 1999, pp. 556a–559a.

[8] For recent Armenian group pilgrimages in Iran see A. Arkun, "Festivals: viii. Armenian", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 9, 1999, pp. 559a–561a.

[9] See Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism – Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition* (Texts and Studies in Religion 62; Lewiston et al., 1995), pp. 69–90.

[10] See Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, "Modern Sects with Ancient Roots: The Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq of Kurdistan", *A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art, Religion & Culture*, eds P.J. Godrej/F.P. Mistree (Ahmedabad/Middletown, 2002), pp. 260–277, here esp. pp. 271 and 276 (= endnote 29 to p. 271).

ise Zoroastrian shrines in the Iranian society whose population in its majority is (Shiite-)Muslim since many centuries. To take this broader historical and cultural context into account is justified by two facts. First, we do not have historical accounts on Zoroastrian shrines dating from before the 17th century. Second, the structural parallels between Zoroastrian shrines and the Shiite *Emām-zāde*—the most prominent example for Iranian 'holy places'—are striking. Both phenomena include devotional practices focused on a specific locality, in the form of either a single, individual visit (*zeyārat*) or as (mass) pilgrimage, which even Zoroastrians sometimes refer to with the Muslim term *haǧǧ*.[11] The parallels of Shiite and Zoroastrian conceptions of 'holy persons' are most striking when stories of the disappearance (*ǧeyb-šodan*) of a member of the Sāsānian dynasty are told in connection with a Zoroastrian shrine. Just as the twelfth *Imām* of the *Itnā-ʿašariyya* ('Twelve Shiites') disappeared (*ǧaybat* = 'disappearance'), so also the Sāsānians fleeing the Arabo-Muslim invaders were 'rescued' by God who made them disappear into rocks, mountains, or wells. In that case the term *mazār* is most likely to be used by Zoroastrians. It has to be noted here that in modern Fārsī (New-Persian) *mazār* has gained the semantic connotation of 'tomb' or (underground) 'grave'. When revered persons—such as family and court members of the last Sāsānian ruler—were dislocated and thereby 'saved' from Arabo-Muslim attack, it seems appropriate for Zoroastrians to use *mazār* (in the meaning of 'underground grave'), because these Sāsānian princesses and princes were in most cases saved from attack by being "taken into the earth" ("be-hāk seporde šode ast")[12] or "swallowed by

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[11] In a Muslim context *haǧǧ* is of course reserved for the pilgrimage to Makka. For the Shiite ʿatabāt at an-Naǧaf and Karbalāʾ in al-ʿIrāq Persians have used and still use the term *zeyārat-gāh*, and *zeyārat* for the pilgrimage to them. See the references to an-Naǧaf and Karbalāʾ throughout Nāsir-ad-Dīn Šāh Qāǧār, *Šahriyār-i ǧādda-hā: Safar-nāma-i Nāsir-ad-Dīn Šāh ba ʿatabāt, ba kūšiš-i M.-R. ʿAbbāsī/P. Badīʿī* [Naser-al-Din Shah, *The King of Roads: Diary of Naser-al-Din Shah on His Journey to Atabat*, eds M.R. Abbasi/P. Badii] (Intišārāt-i Sāzmān-i Asnād-i millī-i Īrān [Publications of Iran National Archives Organization] 120; Tihrān, 1372 hš [1993]).

[12] Ǧ.S. Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān = Farhang-e Behdinān* / J.S. Sorushian, *Zoroastrian Dictionary*, ed. M. Sutūda (Tihrān, 1335 hš [1956]), pp. 207–208. Surūši-yān is writing here about the "Mazār" of "Bībī Morād" at a place called "Āb-e Morād [= wishing well]": "zeyārat-gāh-ī ast dar čahār farsang-ī-e maǧreb-e Kermān ke dar ān-ǧā čašme-hā-ye motaʿadded-e āb-e maʿdanī bā hovż-hā-ye motaʿadded voǧūd dār-ad. Zar-tošteyān va Moslemīn be-īn mahall moʿtaqed-and va dar īn āb-hā āb-tanī mī-kon-and. // Sāhtemān-hā-ye zeyād-ī ham dar īn mahall be-vasīle-e afrād-e Zartoštī benā šode. Īn mahall be-nām-e Anǧoman-e Zartošteyān-e Kermān be-sabt rasīde ast. Maʿrūf ast ke

the mountain" ("kūh dehān bāz kard va ū bed-ān-ğā forū raft").[13]

Those striking parallels gain even more importance in the light of the well attested mixed use of some shrines by both Muslims and Zoroastrians until recently.[14] However, this cannot lead to a simple conclusion about an absolute chronology of inventions, influences, adoptions, and adaptations. Although Muslim shrines are documented for a much longer span of time than Zoroastrian ones, the data on the actual practices at those places from before the 12th century is almost absent.[15] Therefore, the greater historical depth of Muslim shrine cult, always taken for granted, is partly a reprojection of modern practice onto the preserved medieval structures. The comparison of Muslim and Zoroastrian shrines in Iran brings to light a common Iranian shrine culture. The fact that there are no Indo-Zoroastrian (Pārsī) shrines adds to the argument that

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dar īn maḥall mazār-e Bībī Morād yek-ī az darbāreyān-e Šāh Yazdegerd būde ast va baʿż-ī moʿtaqed-and ke ḫᵛāhar-e Šāh-e Harāt dar īn-ğā be-ḫāk seporde šode ast. [It is a pilgrimage place four *farsang* (= 24 km) West of Kermān which has in its vicinity numerous mineral wells with many ponds. The Zoroastrians and the Muslims believe in (the holiness of) this place and bath in the waters. // Numerous buildings were erected at this place, funded by Zoroastrian persons. This place was registered in the name of the Zoroastrian council of Kermān. It is known that at this place the 'shrine' of Bībī-Morād (the 'Lady of the Wish') is to be found who was one of the ladies of the court of king Yazdegerd; and some believe that the sister of the king of Harāt was consigned to earth at this place.]"

[13] Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 204, writing about the daughter of Yazdegerd III, "Bānū Pārs".

[14] Those are Šeyḫ-ʿAlī-Bābā in Se-Gūš (or Segōč) near Māhān, Kermān province (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 211), the already mentioned Mazār-e Bībī-Morād at Āb-e Morād, Šahrestān-e Kermān (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, pp. 207–208), Zeyārat-gāh-e Bābū-Kamāl at Bābā-Kamāl, Šahrestān-e Kermān (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 208), Zeyārat-gāh-e Šeyḫ-ō-Šāh in Sal-Sabīl (or Sar-Sabīl), Kermān (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 211), Zeyārat-gāh-e Kūh-(e) borīde in Zerīsf, Kermān (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 211), Zeyārat-gāh-e Češme-Šīr-Dūš, Kermān (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 209), Pīr-e Čerāġ in the Ābādī-e Bī-Deh, Meybod, Yazd province (R. Šahmardān, *Parastiš-gāh-i Zartuštiyān [Zoroatrian Places of Worship]*; Našriyya-i Sāzmān-i Ğawānān-i Zartuštī-i Bumbaʾī 8; Bombay, 1336 y [1966–67], p. 155), Pīr-e Bābā-Šarafoddīn in Mobārake, Taft, Yazd province (Šahmardān, *Parastiš-gāh-i Zartuštiyān*, p. 170), and Pīr-e Ḫᵛāğe-Ḫeżr, Maryam-ābād, Yazd (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 205). For further information on these shrines see my dissertation *'Pīrān' und 'Zeyārat-gāh'*.

[15] T. Leisten, *Architektur für Tote: Bestattung in architektonischem Kontext in den Kernländern der islamischen Welt zwischen 3./9. und 6./12. Jahrhundert* (Materialien zur iranischen Archäologie 4; Berlin, 1998), pp. 64b–65a, states that customs in connection with tomb buildings are not documented for the Islamic middle ages.

we have to analyse Zoroastrian shrines in a specific Iranian (and in addition to that even Middle Eastern) context.

This context encompasses the general 'folk-religious' and devotional practices which are shared by Muslim as well as Zoroastrian Iranians.[16] Moreover, terminology, administration, and architectural structures of Muslim and Zoroastrian shrines in Iran show significant parallels. At the same time some ideological concepts and the theological framework of both religious contexts are diametrically opposed. This is especially true if we look at the central Muslim idea of a saintly *tomb* which is not present in Zoroastrian shrines: up to the 20th century Iranian Zoroastrians did not have graves but exposed the corpses of their deceased to the sun and weather in special architectural structures which were called *daḫme*.[17] Hence it is justified to speak of an Iranian shrine cult, which shows specific differences along the lines of the various religious traditions involved.[18]

Apart from a few exceptions, Zoroastrian shrines are neither mentioned in common handbooks on the Zoroastrian religion written by Zoroastrians themselves nor in standard monographs written by Western scholars. Known to a wider public is only the above mentioned famous Zoroastrian shrine Pīr-e Sabz North of Yazd. But in the Zoroastrian villages around Yazd, the city of Yazd itself, in and around Kermān, and even in the modern Iranian capital Tehrān and other recent Zoroastrian city-communities of Iran (e. g. in Ahvāz) one finds many Zoroastrian shrines ranging from pilgrimage centres with many buildings down to small shrines of a more private character consisting of only one light

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[16] See B.A. Donaldson, *The Wild Rue: A Study of Muhammadan Magic and Folklore in Iran* (London, 1938, repr. ed.: The Middle East Collection [11]; New York, 1973).

[17] But even the *daḫmes* were connected to shrines ritually, as regular visits for commemoration of the deceased at the *daḫmes* were combined with pilgrimage circuits to some of the greater shrines. The dead were commemorated there and at the *daḫmes* as they are today at different shrines and at modern Zoroastrian cemeteries. See for Yazd M.M.J. Fischer, *Zoroastrian Iran between Myth and Praxis* (Diss., Fac. of the Division of the Social Sciences, Dep. of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1973; faksimile: UMI T-24573; Chicago/Ann Arbor, 1973, faksimile: 1995), p. 220; a commemorative inscription (*vafāt-nāme*) at one ritual building (*ḫeyle*) near the *daḫmes* of Yazd is reproduced in R. Rainer, *Anonymes Bauen im Iran* (Graz, 1977), p. 126.

[18] This holds not only for Zoroastrian and Muslim but also for Jewish shrines in Iran. For a comparison of the documented Zoroastrian material with Muslim and Jewish examples and a deeper analysis and comparison of the data see my dissertation *'Pīrān' und 'Zeyārat-gāh'*.

niche which is the (architecturally) most simple form of *pīrān* venerated
by Iranian Zoroastrians. This wide range of *pīrān-gāh*s is rarely men-
tioned in the literature and the majority of them have never been docu-
mented in scholarly research before.

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

It was not until 1956 that a first scholarly publication appeared which
dealt—among other aspects of Zoroastrian language and culture—with
shrines. The systematic research which lead to this *Farhang-e Beh-dīnān*
[*Zoroastrian Dictionary*] was undertaken by the late Ğamšīd Sorūš
Sorūšeyān—a renowned and much respected scholar of Zoroastrianism
and a (Kermānī) Zartoštī himself—in the first half of the 20th century.
His dictionary has as an appendix a chapter entitled "Zeyārat-gāh-hā va
amkān-e motabarreke-e Zartošteyān-e Yazd-ō-Kermān [Pilgrimage
Shrines and Holy Places of the Zoroastrians of Yazd and Kermān]".[19]
This chapter consists of a list of Zoroastrian shrines in Iran with short
descriptions, providing some historical as well as legendary background
(the latter at least for the major shrines). As Sorūšeyān was himself of
Kermānī origin, this list is much more comprehensive for the Kermān
area than it is for the province of Yazd.

The first long-time field research among the Zoroastrians in Iran was
conducted by the British Iranologist Mary Boyce in 1963-4. She was the
first who gave a detailed description of the pilgrimages to the 'mountain
shrines' around Yazd. The major part of her data was published in her
book *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* in 1977.[20] But also in
most of Mary Boyce's articles on Iran, published from the 1960s on-
wards, one can find accounts of several smaller shrines.[21] With a highly
sympathetic attitude towards her 'object of research' she connects field
records with her vast knowledge of Iranian history and philology. In that
way Boyce sets recent folk religious practices in the context of classical
Iranian studies (which sometimes—especially for the *pīrs*—drives argu-

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[19] Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, pp. 204–212.

[20] M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism, based on the Ratanbai Katrak
Lectures, 1975* (Oxford, 1977; repr. Persian Studies Series 12; Lanham et al., 1989),
esp. pp. 236–270.

[21] See A.D.H. Bivar/J.R. Hinnels/D.M. Johnson, "Professor Mary Boyce. Writings of
Mary Boyce (Books and Articles)", *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, vol. 1
(Acta Iranica 24; Leiden, 1985), pp. XI–XXVI.

mentation into the direction of speculation). Nevertheless, by combining recent ethnographic data with classical Iranian studies she brings those, until then mostly ignored lay peoples' practices to the attention of more conservative scholars and a wider public. This is to be seen as one of Mary Boyce's (many) achievements in the young field of studies on 'living Zoroastrianism'.[22]

In 1973, the American anthropologist Michael Max Jonathan Fischer completed his dissertation on Zoroastrian Iran. His intensive fieldwork conducted around 1970 among not only Zoroastrians but also Jews, Shiite Muslims, Christians and Bahāʾī in Yazd contributed much to the research on Zoroastrian shrines and shrine worship.[23] Because he gives a detailed outline of the religious, economical, social, etc., context of that multi-religious urban settlement based on first-hand data, his—unfortunately unpublished—thesis can still serve as a kind of handbook for pre-revolutionary, 20th-century life in Yazd. Fischer's work as a cultural anthropologist is also an excellent addition to the historico-philologically oriented work done by Mary Boyce.

Independently of the philological and anthropological research represented by Mary Boyce and Michael Fischer respectively, German archaeologists of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Teheran took interest in the Zoroastrian shrines in the 1960s in order to gain comparative material for their archaeological data. For instance, Gerd Gropp published an article on some of the shrines at Yazd, Kermān, and Tehrān in 1971.[24] Gropp's work is of special importance because he gives ground plans of the shrines he visited, which were partly reprinted later on by Afšār (see below). These shrines were renovated and partly rebuilt in recent years. Therefore, those published ground plans are nowadays a historical source by themselves.[25]

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[22] For the most recent work in that field with an uncompromising emic approach see Ph.G. Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism: Urban Parsis Speak about Their Religion*, in collaboration with S.N. Munshi (Richmond, 2001).

[23] Fischer, *Zoroastrian Iran between Myth and Praxis*, pp. 206–229.

[24] G. Gropp, "Die rezenten Feuertempel der Zarathustrier (II)", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* N.F. 4, 1971, pp. 263–288, plates 51–55. Another German archaeologist who investigated architectural structures at Zoroastrian shrines in Iran in order to gain data for long time comparisons is Dietrich Huff. This material is unpublished so far. For his work on funeral structures, see for instance D. Huff, "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars: I. Gräber", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* [N.F.] 21, 1988, pp. 145–176, tables 44–55.

[25] Unfortunately, I had no chance of preparing ground plans of the visited shrines

It was also in the 1960s that Iranian scholarship took interest in the Zoroastrian *pīrs*, which so far were surveyed from the Iranian side by Sorūšeyān only (see above). In 1967 the Zoroastrian priest and scholar Rašīd Šahmardān published his book *Parasteš-gāh-e Zartošteyān [Zoroastrian Places of Worship]*[26] which partly relies on the work of Sorūšeyān but adds much material on the Yazd region, Tehrān, and even other places such as Ahvāz, where Zoroastrian shrines had been established. In 1969 Īrağ Afšār, a scholar of the (architectural) monuments of Iran and editor of many historical texts, published the first volume of his work on the monuments of the Yazd region[27] which was followed six years later by a second volume on the monuments of Yazd proper[28] supplemented by a volume with pictures and indexes.[29] This handbook includes all the Zoroastrian shrines described by Šahmardān.

The works mentioned above, together with the surveys of Zoroastrian rituals and history executed and the materials collected by Michael Stausberg, the head of our junior research group "Ritualistics and History of Religions: Zoroastrian Rituals in Changing Cultural Contexts", and some popular literature from the last two decades written by Zoroastrian authors[30] were the starting points for my own research. With a list of Zoroastrian 'holy places' compiled from the above mentioned sources I started my fieldwork in Iran during which I succeeded in locating and visiting many more shrines than mentioned in the literature so far. In spring to summer 2001, I visited Tehrān, Yazd, and Kermān. In the

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during my fieldwork.

[26] Šahmardān, *Parastiš-gāh-i Zartuštiyān*, on the *pīr* in Iran see esp. pp. 158–177.

[27] Ī. Afšār, *Yādgār-hā-yi Yazd: Muʿarrifī-i abnīya-i taʾrīḫī wa āṯār-i bāstānī. Ğild-i awwal: Ḥāk-i Yazd [Monuments of Yazd: Presentation of the Historical Buildings and Relics of Antiquity. First Volume: Yazd District]* (Silsila-i Intišārāt-i Anğuman-i Āṯār-i millī 68; [Tihrān], 1348 hš [1969]; čāp-i duwwum: Ganğīna-i Īrān 22; Silsila-i Intišārāt-i Anğuman-i Āṯār wa Mafāḫir-i farhangī 116; Tihrān/Yazd, 1374 hš [1995–96]).

[28] Ī. Afšār, *Yādgār-hā-yi Yazd. Ğild-i duwwum: Muʿarrifī-i abnīya-i taʾrīḫī wa āṯār-i bāstānī-i šahr-i Yazd [Monuments of Yazd. Second Volume: Presentation of the Historical Buildings and Relics of Antiquity of Yazd City]* (Silsila-i Intišārāt-i Anğuman-i Āṯār-i millī 116; [Tihrān], 1354 hš [1975–76]; čāp-i duwwum: Ganğina-i Īrān 23; Silsila-i Intišārāt-i Anğuman-i Āṯār wa Mafāḫir-i farhangī 116; Tihrān/Yazd, 1374 hš [1995–96]).

[29] Ī. Afšār, *Yādgār-hā-yi Yazd. Ḍamīma-i ğild-i duwwum [Monuments of Yazd. Supplement to Volume Two]* (Silsila-i Intišārāt-i Anğuman-i Āṯār-i millī 116 alif; [Tihrān], 1354 hš [1975–76]; repr. undertitled as *Ğild-i siwwum. Ḍamīma-i siwwum: Aṣāwīr marbūṭa ba ğild-i duwwum*; Ganğīna-i Īrān 24; Silsila-i Intišārāt-i Anğuman-i Āṯār wa Mafāḫir-i farhangī 116 alif; Tihrān/Yazd, 1374 hš [1995–96]).

[30] For bibliographical details see my dissertation *'Pīrān' und 'Zeyārat-gāh'*.

course of this survey I took photographs of almost all *pīrs* I knew or came to know during my trips.[31]

For some of the shrines I found informants who could tell me about the history and legends connected to the *pīrs*. In addition to the oral sources, I documented all the inscriptions on the shrine buildings. As I visited many shrines in a relatively short period, I could observe rituals only in some cases. Some shrines I found without personnel at the time I visited them but even then the research assistants who were with me (all of them Zoroastrians) behaved according to their customs so that I can give a general impression and outline of contemporary ritual practice.

In total I identified 104 shrines or shrine-like structures (of which I could visit 77): Besides five in Tehrān city and province, and one in Ahvāz, most of them are found in the villages and mountains around Yazd and in that city itself (80), a lesser number in and around Kermān (17), and one in Bardsīr, a small town in the province of Kermān.

ZOROASTRIAN SHRINES IN IRAN: SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A Zoroastrian shrine (Pīr-e Bānū-Pārs) is first mentioned in the 17th century in the New-Persian *revāyāt*, the correspondence between the Iranian Zoroastrians and the Indian Pārsīs (15th to 18th centuries). It is a letter written in the year 1626 (996 yazdegerdī) in Tork-ābād, a Zoroastrian village North of Ardakān-e Yazd. The writers report to their Pārsī addressees that their Pārsī visitor—in addition to purification rituals—went to visit the "pilgrimage place" of the "Lady Bānū-Pārs" to "serve" her ("hedmat-e Hātūn-Bānū-Pārs ke zeyārat-gāh-st ham kard").[32]

Another account from the 17th century—this time mentioning Pīr-e Sabz—can be found in the *Ǧāmeʿ-e Mofīdī*,[33] a historiographic work with focus on Central and Southwestern Iran, written by Mohammad-e Mofīd-e Mostovfī-e Ebn-e Naǧmoddīn-e Bāfqī. He writes that the Zoro-

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[31] Hopefully, the publication of that research in the form of my dissertation will include a substantial part of this visual documentation on CD-ROMs. The total of that material comprises more than 1,000 pictures.

[32] M.R. Unvâlâ, *Dârâb Hormazyâr's Rivâyat*, 2 vols. (Bombay, 1922), vol. 1, p. 35; vol. 2, p. 159, l. 3.

[33] M. Mufīd Mustawfī [Ibn-Naǧm-ad-Dīn] Bāfqī, *Ǧāmiʿ-i Mufīdī* [*The Collection of Mofīd*], ed. Ī. Afšār, 3 vols. (Tihrān, 1340–42 hš [1961–64]), vol. 3, p. 828, quoted from M. Rūh-al-Amīnī, *Āyīn-hā wa ǧašn-hā-yi kuhan dar Īrān-i imrūz. (Nigariš wa pažūhiš-ī-i mardum-šināhīī)*, wīrāyiš-i duwwum (bā afzūda-hā) (Tihrān, 1378 hš [1999–2000]), pp. 144–145.

astrians of Yazd ("maḡūs") once a year gather at a mountain which they call "Čakčakū" ("ān kūh-rā Čakčakū mī-nām-and"). He further records that they offer sacrifices, make 'celebrations' and enjoy themselves ("qorbānī kon-and va ǧašn-hā va ʿeyš-hā karde"). The date given in the text is 1085 ("sane-e ḥams-ō-ṣamānīn-ō-alf") in the last days of the (heḡrī-qamarī) month Rabīʿolāḥer ("dar avāḥer-e šahr-e Rabīʿolāḥer"), which corresponds to end of July / beginning of August 1674.

It is not until the 19th century, though, that we have other records of Zoroastrian shrines. At least two of them—Pīr-e Sabz and Pīr-e Bānū-Pārs, another pilgrimage centre in the province of Yazd—were visited by the Indian Zoroastrian emissary Manekji Limji Hataria who travelled to Iran in the second half of the 19th century and stayed there on behalf of the Bombay Pārsīs in order to improve the situation of their fellow believers under Qāǧār rule until his death in 1890.[34] He mentions the shrines he visited in his writings (in Guǧarātī) to the Indian Pārsī institutions which financed his charitable work.[35] Shrine worship was not common amongst Indian Zoroastrians, as there are no Zoroastrian shrines in India,[36] and especially cow sacrifices (which were still practised in the 19th century by Zartoštīs at their shrines) were very embar-

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[34] See M. Boyce, "Maneckji Limji Hataria in Iran", *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume* (Bombay, 1969), pp. 19–31; M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras: Geschichte – Gegenwart – Rituale*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart et al., 2002), pp. 352–356, 435; vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 2003), pp. 154–168; *Asnād-ī az Zartuštiyān-i muʿāṣir-i Īrān (1258–1338 [h]š) [Documents from Contemporary Zoroastrians of Iran (1879–80 – 1959–60)]*, ed. T. Amīnī ([Tihrān], 1380 hš [2001–02]), pp. 1–13, 15–90; R. Šamardān, *Taʾrīḥ-i Zartuštiyān: Farzānagān-i Zartuštī [History of Zoroastrians: Zoroastrian Learned Men]*, [2nd imprint] (Tihrān, 1363 hš [1984–85]), pp. 618–643.

[35] Manekji Limji Hataria, *Risāle eḡhāre šīāte Īrān iāne Īrān dēšnī safarnā sārnō rīpōrt* [Guǧarātī] *[Essay on the Description of a Travel to Iran, that is, Report about a Travel through the Country of Iran]* (Bombay, 1234 y [1865]), pp. 57–58, 69–70. An unpublished translation of the passages from Guǧarātī into English was kindly placed at my disposal by M. Stausberg.

[36] Nevertheless, Pārsīs visit the famous fires, wells, and, in modern times, 'historical' commemoration places, which is often referred to in the literature as "pilgrimage". Individual believers also visit 'holy places' of other religions, e. g. Christian shrines or graves of *Ṣūfī*-saints. See Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 227 (pilgrimage to a Christian shrine in South-India), p. 128 (graves of *Ṣūfī*-saints). Especially in the town of Nav-Sārī, Pārsīs practice(d?) the veneration of small *Ṣūfī*-shrines *(dar-gāh)*. See p. 189: "Mr. Tamboly answers that such places are in deed much respected by Navsari Parsis and that his mother-in-law used to take him to such a place when he came to visit her. When she died the practice was discontinued in his family."

rassing to Zoroastrians of Indian background. Consequently he intervened and finally succeeded in abolishing sacrifices of cattle.

The *revāyāt*, Mofīd, Manekji's reports as well as the early Western literature[37] only mention some of the greater ('mountain') shrines. Smaller places of worship—especially those inside settlements—were not recorded at that time. This poor historical record makes it difficult to evaluate the origin and development of Zoroastrian shrine worship without slipping into speculation.

If we take a look at the available sources from antiquity and the middle ages, we can not detect anything like Zoroastrian shrines.[38] Nevertheless, we can observe an early 'religious geography' together with travels of individuals, motivated by religion.[39] 'Religious' space was mainly landmarked by fire temples[40] which may have been visited on some occasions (or maybe certain renowned living priests were visited rather than the fires themselves).[41] Such places of 'fire worship', the *čahār-ṭāq*s from Sāsānian times, square shaped buildings with a round cupola on top, are considered as a starting point for Muslim shrine and even mosque architecture in Iran by scholars of archaeology and architectural history.[42] The parallels of modern Zoroastrian *pīr*s to Muslim shrine structures and practices may to some extent reflect common pre-Islamic roots (e. g. in the case of the above mentioned *čahār-ṭāq*). Also in this perspective Zoroastrian shrines can be placed in the context of Iranian or Middle Eastern religious history.

An interesting development which apparently took place in the second half of the 20th century could be recorded during my survey. Whereas e. g. Ğamšīd Soruš Soruševān often states that shrines are used by

[37] For Pīr-e Sabz and Pīr-e Bānū-Pārs see R.G. Watson, *A History of Persia from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Year 1858* (London, 1866), p. 185. See also P.M. Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia or Eight Years in Iran* (Second Impression, London, 1902), p. 156 (Pīr-e Bānū-Pārs), p. 189 ("Plan of Kermán" with "Pir-i Sangi" = Pīr-e Šāh-Varahrām-Īzed, and "Tandarustan" = Zeyārat-gāh-e Kūh-e Tanderestūn); P.M.Sykes, "The Parsis of Persia", *Journal of the (Royal) Society (for the Encouragement) of Arts* 8 (June 1906), pp. 754a–762b, here p. 759a (Pīr-e Bānū-Pārs).

[38] See Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 3 (forthcoming).

[39] Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 3 (forthcoming).

[40] On the Islamic sources see B.M. Tirmidhi, "Zoroastrians and Their Fire Temples in Iran and Adjoining Countries from the 9th to the 14th Centuries as Gleaned from the Arabic Geographical Works", *Islamic Culture* 24, 1950, pp. 271–284.

[41] Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 3 (forthcoming).

[42] For an overview see M. Boyce, "Ātaškada", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 3, 1989, pp. 9a–10b; Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 260–262.

Zoroastrians as well as Muslims (see above note 14), today most of the places are clearly differentiated into either exclusive Muslim or exclusive Zoroastrian places of worship respectively. Some of the places Sorūšeyān mentioned are today taken over by Muslim religious institutions and are therefore no longer (at least openly) visited by Zoroastrians (Zeyārat-gāh-e Šeyḫ-ō-Šāh, Sal- or Sar-Sabīl, Kermān; Pīr-e Borǧ and Zeyārat-gāh-e Šāh-zāde-Fāżel, both Yazd, old city centre); others are today exclusively Zoroastrian, enclosed by walls and doors, and no Muslim would visit them (e. g. Pīr-e Ḥᵛāǧe-Ḥeżr, Maryam-ābād, Yazd). This process was obviously reinforced by the legal system of the "Islamic Republic of Iran" defining its subjects by their religious denomination, although this development may have started even earlier during the Pahlavī era. An exception is—again—Pīr-e Sabz together with a handful of other Zoroastrian shrines, which are visited as tourist attractions by non-Zoroastrians from Iran and from abroad. I could observe only one shrine which is still visited and cared for openly by Zoroastrians and Muslims together: Pīr-e Bābā-Šarafoddīn in Mobārake (Taft, Yazd province). The central room of this shrine is decorated with symbols of both religions side by side.

ACTIVITIES AT ZOROASTRIAN SHRINES

Different religious activities ('rituals') are conducted by the believers at the shrines. These 'rituals' are embedded either in the context of individual visits to a shrine or in larger ceremonies with more than one person taking part. Both cases—the individual and the group visit to a shrine—are called *zeyārat*. Regular group pilgrimages which require travelling over greater distances are also called *haǧǧ* by some Zoroastrians, especially in the usage of the village Šarīf-ābād (near Ardakān-e Yazd).In addition to these pilgrimages, believers also meet at certain shrines in their neighbourhood or in other city quarters on occasion of religious holidays or commemoration ceremonies for deceased relatives.

This spectrum of occasions for individual or group devotion corresponds to a range of types of shrines serving different socio-religious functions. In most cases no priests are involved, and if they are, they do not take part in their specific priestly function. Only commemoration rituals, and sometimes *ǧašn*-rituals at larger shrines, are conducted by priests.

INDIVIDUAL DEVOTION

As I observed during my fieldwork, individual devotion can be carried out at any shrine, private or public. The 'rituals' performed by believers include prayer, lighting of candles, oil lamps, or incense sticks, lighting of temporary fires, and touching the 'object of devotion'. In most cases this is an altar-like structure in the middle of the shrine, sometimes also an old water winch for irrigation which is preserved in the shrine building. Mainly at the 'mountain shrines' outside settlements (see above), there are natural sources of water or caves, which are visited and where prayers can be spoken. Often there are trees (plane or cypress) at the shrines. Wish-ribbons—sometimes even elaborated, decorative textile structures like garlands—are tied up to such trees. In the case of the most prominent shrines, the five 'mountain shrines' around Yazd, the central 'object of devotion' is a solid rock inside the shrine building. With the exception of Pīr-e Herīšt, the 'mountain shrines' all have 'holy' trees as well as water sources. Their waters are collected in a pool, which at most of the shrines dries out in summer, when there is no sufficient flow of water from the well.

The lighting of candles, oil lamps, incense sticks or fires is not carried out at every visit. Even prayer can be optional. However, I observed the touching of the shrine's 'altar' in almost every case. While entering the shrine, the *pīr* is called upon by his name, e. g. "yā Pīr-e Morād (Oh, Pīr of the Wish)!". This is also done when leaving the building after the 'altar' has been touched.

At shrines which are more popular and offer more space to the believers some other actions can be performed in addition to these basic acts of devotion. First of all, this can be the donation of money, which is an important means of funding. Money is left on the 'altar', unless there is a special box for donations. Besides money, candles, bottles of oil for the lamps, and incense sticks are left at the shrine as donations.

Some visitors leave fresh or dried fruits (*āǧīl*), sweats, as well as roasted nuts and chickpeas (*nohūd*) at the shrine. Chick peas and dried fruits (e. g. raisins) are often left on the 'altar' in connection with the *moškel-gošā* ritual.[43] This ritual of the 'problem solver', which is the literal meaning of *moškel-gošā*, is performed either at home or directly at the shrine. It is arranged by a woman who wants to solve an urgent personal problem. During the ritual women sort and clean roasted chick

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[43] See Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 59–61, 66, 247.

peas on a tablet and a legend is told.[44] Then, the cleaned chick peas are given to the accompanying persons or brought to a shrine. When they are given directly to other persons—an act which is said to increase the efficacy of the ritual—the person giving them says "yā moškel-gošā (Oh problem solver)!" and the answer is "moškel-e hame-rā bo-gošā (Solve all problems!)". If there is no shrine in the vicinity, the remaining chick peas can also be brought to a fire temple. Other visitors of the shrine or temple can take and eat from them in order to contribute to the 'problem solution'.[45]

Rituals like the *nohūd-e moškel-gošā* usually comprise a vow (*nazr, nozūr*) that something special is done if the problem is solved or the wish (*morād*) fulfilled. This can include a *zeyārat* to a shrine. If the wish is fulfilled, donations, which are called *nozūrāt*, referring to the vow (*nazr, nozūr*), will be given to the shrine, or even greater donations to a *pīr* are endowed as a charitable foundation by the believer. This kind of foundation is a general socio-religious practice conducted in connection with shrines. It is called 'foundation for the soul', *šād-ravānī*,[46] literally 'gladdening the soul (of a deceased relative)'.[47] It is also called *vaqf*, analogous to the corresponding Muslim institution.[48] The founded money can be used for repairs, renovation or enlargement of a shrine

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[44] For the legend see Ǧ. Pīšdādī, *Ḫāṭirāt-i 365 rūz yā pāra-ī az sunnat-hā-yi Zartuštiyān dar sada-i guḏašta* [*Memories of 365 Days, or a Selection of the Customs of the Zoroastrians in the Last Century*] (s.l., 1374 hš [1995]), pp. 200–212.

[45] This ritual is also known to the Pārsī of Nav-Sārī in Guǧarāt (India); see J.R. Russell, "The Rite of Muškil Āsān Behrām Yazad amongst the Parsis of Navsārī, India", *Barg-i Sabz / A Green Leaf: Papers in Honour of Professor Jes P. Asmussen*, eds J. Duchesne-Guillemin/W. Sundermann/F. Vahman (Acta Iranica 28; Leiden, 1988), pp. 521–534, tables XXIII–XXIV.

[46] Charitable foundations were already common in pre-Islamic Zoroastrianism. See M. Macuch, "Charitable Foundations (MPers. "ruwānagān" lit. "relating to the soul" [...]: i. In the Sasanian Period", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 5, 1992, pp. 380a–382a; M. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism: Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour* (Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies 7; Costa Mesa/New York, 1992), p. 141.

[47] Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, p. 160.

[48] For the development in Islamic times and a discussion of the connection between the Zoroastrian concept of a charitable foundation and the Islamic *waqf* see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 1, pp. 219–220; J.R. Hinnells/M. Boyce/S. Shahrokh, "Charitable Foundations [...]: ii. Among Zoroastrians in Islamic Times", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 5, 1992, pp. 382a–385b; M. Boyce, "The Pious Foundations of the Zoroastrians", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31, 1968, pp. 270–289.

building, to the purchase of furnishing or decoration, or in order to finance the preparation and distribution of food for regular festivities at a shrine, which then provides occasions for collective devotion.

COLLECTIVE DEVOTION

The distribution of food at a shrine is an occasion for a collective festivity. This food is financed by charitable foundations ([*vaqf-e*] *ḥeyrātī*) endowed for the welfare of the souls (*šād-ravānī*) of deceased parents, grandparents or other relatives. It is cooked in big cauldrons on open fire, or nowadays over gas burners, and is referred to as *āš-e ḥeyrāt* ('soup of charity').[49] This kind of festivity has great importance in the collective religious practice of Iranian Zoroastrians, especially since Zoroastrianism does not have an institutionalised collective gathering which could be compared to the Muslim Friday prayer or the Christian mass.

Dates for the arrangement of an *āš-e ḥeyrāt* can be fixed in different ways. Sometimes these gatherings take place at days of remembrance for the shrine, e. g. on the day dedicated to the Zoroastrian 'deity' (*īzed*) connected with the shrine. (The shrine is not always named after that *īzed*.)[50] Once a year, when the month and the day of the respective *īzed* coincide,[51] they may take the form of large communal festivities (e. g. at Pīr-e Morād near Qāsem-ābād, Yazd). This calendrical occasion is called *vaqt-e vaqt*, literally 'time of [all] time[s]'. Another possibility is to give the *āš-e ḥeyrāt* on the actual date, when the deceased person, whose soul shall be benefited by the charitable foundation, is commemorated once a year (*sāl*).

When there is no *āš-e ḥeyrāt*, at least the typical oil-fried bread, called *sīrog*, is prepared whenever a greater group of people gathers at a shrine. Also the *sīr-ō-sedāb* is still prepared at communal gatherings.[52] For *sīr-*

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[49] M. Boyce, "Āš: iii. Among Zoroastrians", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 2, 1987, pp. 693b–694a, here p. 694a.

[50] E.g. Pīr-e Šāh-Fereydūn at Čahār-Deraḫt in Šarīf-ābād-e Yazd. This *pīr* is connected with Mehr-Īzed. A *gahanbār-e tōǧī*, another term for a founded *āš-e ḥeyrāt*, was prepared there on late afternoon of the first day of Mehrgān, the festival dedicated to Mehr-Īzed. See Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 87–88; Šahmardān, *Parastiš-gāh-i Zartuštiyān*, pp. 169–170; Fischer, *Zoroastrian Iran between Myth and Praxis*, p. 234.

[51] The Zoroastrian calendar does not have a week but the days of the month are named after 30 *īzedān*. The months themselves carry the names of twelve of these 'divine beings'.

[52] Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 106; Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, p. 42.

ō-sedāb, garlic (sīr) and rue (sedāb) are roasted in oil, optionally to-
gether with other spices. All this is sprinkled with vinegar (serke) which
causes a pungent smell. Referring to this, sīr-ō-sedāb is described as an
apotropaic meal by my informants, who said that its smell drives away
forces of evil. It is often poured over slices of sīrog placed in a bowl.
This, like the above mentioned chick peas from the ritual of nohūd-e
moškel-gošā, is left behind at the shrine for ritual consumption by later
visitors. Shrines where food preparation and gatherings are conducted
usually are provided with a kitchen (āš-paz-hāne), bread ovens (tanūr),
sanitary installations, courtyards or gardens, and sometimes even assem-
bly halls (sālon). Larger pilgrimage centres can have more than one
kitchen and other additional facilities (like water storages etc.), espe-
cially if people use to stay there for several days and nights.

PILGRIMAGES

Besides the individual visits to smaller shrines and the communal gather-
ings at medium sized shrines yearly mass pilgrimages take place to each
of the six 'major shrines' in the region of Yazd. These events are called
haǧǧ or vaqt-e vaqt ('time of [all] time[s]') by the Zoroastrians. The
most well known among these major shrines—even mentioned in most
of the tourist guide books on Iran (there often referred to mistakenly as a
"temple")—is Pīr-e Sabz(-e Čakčakū). All, with one exception (Pīr-e
Setī-Pīr), lie in the mountains around the Yazd plain.[53] Additionally, one
new centre of pilgrimage emerged during the last decade at a small
shrine in Bardsīr near Kermān (see below).[54] During the vaqt-e vaqt—at
least at Pīr-e Sabz—priests perform rituals (ǧašn) in the shrine-building.
Lay people come into the shrine in order to pray. They gather around the
pīr-building in pavilions, called heyles, in a picnic-like atmosphere for
several days, while preparing food, eating, singing, dancing and having
fun. Novices to the haǧǧ of Pīr-e Sabz are initiated by a special ritual.
They are shouldered by other pilgrims and symbolically beaten on their
feet until they donate a fixed amount of sugar cones which are used to
prepare sweets for the pilgrims.[55]

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[53] Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 236–270.
[54] The Pīr of Bardsīr has not been mentioned in literature so far. For a detailed de-
scription see my forthcoming *'Pīrān' und 'Zeyārat-gāh'*.
[55] A picture and a description is given at Pišdādī, *Hātirāt-i 365 rūz yā pāra-ī az sun-
nat-hā-yi Zartuštiyān dar sada-i gudašta*, p. 174. This ritual was filmed by the Yazdī

CLASSIFICATION OF ZOROASTRIAN SHRINES

Zoroastrian shrines can be classified in several ways. A first possibility is to look at the protagonists of the legends connected with them. This method roughly results in two groups. First, there are shrines linked to legendary protagonists from the family and court of the last Sāsānian king Yazdegerd III (Yazdegerd-e sevvom), who were fleeing the Arabo-Muslim invaders. Most of those shrines, connected to human, 'historical' protagonists, are located in the desert mountains around the city of Yazd.[56] Up to the first half of the 20th century shrines of this group also existed in the vicinity of Kermān.[57] It seems that these are no longer frequented by the Zoroastrians of Kermān, as they were either not known to my Kermānī informants or never visited by them. The shrines of the second group—the vast majority of *pīrān*—have as legendary protagonists angel-like, 'extra-human' beings who appear to the founders-to-be of the shrines in their dreams.

Another possibility is to classify the shrines according to the names of the *pīrs*. This leads to one major group of shrines named after the different *īzedān* (Zoroastrian 'deities' or 'angels'), like the many *pīrs* named after Šāh-Varahrām-Īzed or Mehr-Īzed. Then we have a group of shrines named after the common Oriental mythological figure Ḫᵛāǧe Ḫeżr[58] who

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film director Sohrāb Yazdānī. The scene is included in his film on the pilgrimage to Pīr-e Sabz in the year 1976 (when the newly built shrine-building was inaugurated), broadcasted by "National Television of Iran".

[56] These are the five 'mountain shrines' (Pīr-e Nārakī, Pīr-e Bānū-Pārs, Pīr-e Herīšt, Pīr-e Sabz, and Pīr-e Nārestāne). Three other shrines connected with Sāsānians are located in the city of Yazd: Pīr-e Setī-Pīr, Pīr-e Borǧ (disappearing place of Farīborz, son of Yazdegerd III; see Šahmardān, *Parastiš-gāh-i Zartuštiyān*, p. 171), and Zeyārat-gāh-e Šāh-zāde-Fāżel ("madfan", or "funeral place" [sic], of Ardašīr, son of Yazdegerd III; see Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 206; Šahmardān, *Parastiš-gāh-i Zartuštiyān*, p. 171).

[57] These are Āb-e Morād (or Mazār-e Bībī-Morād), Šahrestān-e Kermān (according to the legend, Bībī-Morād was either a 'lady in waiting' of Yazdegerd III, or a sister of the Šāh-e Harāt Šāh-Vīr, a governor of Yazdegerd III, maybe his son; see Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, pp. 207–208) and Zeyārat-gāh-e Šāh-e Harāt, Šahrestān-e Kermān, the disappearing place of Šāh-e Harāt Šāh-Vīr (Surūšiyān, *Farhang-i Bih-dīnān*, p. 211).

[58] K. Vollers, "Chidher", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 12, 1909, pp. 234–284; I. Friedlaender, "Zur Geschichte der Chadhirlegende. Alexanders Zug nach dem Lebensquell und die Chadhir-Legende", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 13, 1910, pp. 92–110, 161–246; I. Friedlaender, *Die Chadhirlegende und der Alexanderroman: Eine sagengeschichtliche und literarhistorische Untersuchung* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1913); P. Franke, *Begegnungen mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionellen Islam* (Beiruter Texte und Studien 79; Stuttgart, 2000).

is known in Arabic as 'Ḥaḍ(i)r' or 'Ḥiḍr'[59] and in Turkic languages as 'Ḫıẓır'.[60] Some shrines are called Pīr-e Elyās. Elyās is normally seen as a twin of or another name for Ḥeżr.[61] One argument for the prominence of that kind of names is that it served as a disguise vis-à-vis the Muslim majority, because such a shrine could not be recognised as being exclusively Zoroastrian.[62] However, there is a larger probability of these 'Muslim-named' shrines to be taken over by the Muslim population, which was for example recently the case with one Ḫʿāǧe-Ḥeżr-shrine near Yazd. The Zoroastrian population had left the village of Maḥmūd-ābād (Merẓ-ābād), the Muslims took over the shrine and consequently no Zoroastrians came there for a visit anymore. Ḥeżr and Elyās are most often associated by Zoroastrians with the 'angel' Sorūš, and some of the Elyās-*pīr*s are explicitly named Pīr-e Sorūš-Īzed by Zoroastrians.

Another group of shrine-names refers to an important function of a *pīr*: to make a wish come true. Those are called Pīr-e Morād, Pīr-e Manzel-e Morād (*morād* is Arabic for 'wish'; *manzel-e morād* means 'house of the wish'), or Pīr-e Maṭlab (*maṭlab* is Arabic for 'wish' or more exactly 'place of wishing').

Some *pīr*-names refer to special features of the place or the architecture of the shrine, e. g. Pīr-e Sarv (Cypress Pīr), Pīr-e Čahār-Deraḫt (Four Trees' Pīr), Pīr-e Čehel-Čerāġ (Forty Lights Pīr), etc.

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[59] T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (repr. from *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*) (Luzac' Oriental Religions Series 5; London, 1927), pp. 120–125; R. Kriss, "St. Georg – al-Ḥaḍr (Ḥaḍir, Ḥiḍr)", *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 1960, pp. 48–56.

[60] A.E. Uysal/W.S. Walker, "An Ancient God in Modern Turkey: Some Aspects of the Cult of Hizir", *Journal of American Folklore* 86, 1973, pp. 286–289; P.N. Boratav, "Hızır: Türklerde Hızır [Ḫıẓır: Ḫıẓır among the Turks]", *İslâm Ansiklopedisi: İslâm Âlemi Tarih, Coğrafya, Etnografya ve Biyografya Lugati*, vol. 5/1 (İstanbul, 1950, repr. 1993), pp. 462b–471a; A.Y. Ocak, *İslam Türk İnançlarında Hızır Yahut Hızır-İlyas Kültü* [Ḫıẓır *in Islamic-Turkic Religious Believes or the Cult of* Ḫıẓır-İlyās], 2. basım (Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınlari; Ankara, 1990).

[61] A.J. Wensinck, "Ilyās", *Handwörterbuch des Islam*, eds A.J. Wensick/J.H. Kramers (Leiden, 1941), pp. 204b–206a; M. Seligsohn/G. Vajda, "Alīsaʿ", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition, vol. 1, 1960, 404a–404b; A. Augustinovic, '*El Khader*' *and the Prophet Elijah* (Jerusalem, 1972).

[62] M. Boyce, "Iconoclasm among the Zoroastrians", *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty. Part Four: Judaism after 70, Other Greco-Roman Cults, Bibliography*, ed. J. Neusner (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 12; Leiden, 1975), pp. 93–111, here p. 108, footnote 77.

Then we have shrine-names referring to the legend of the *pīr*, e. g. Pīr-e Čehel-Bačče (Pīr of the Forty Children). It is told that forty, i. e. many, children were killed there.

The most recent kind of names is those of commemoration shrines. Here the *pīr* is named after a historical person who is commemorated at this place. The most prominent example is Pīr-e Ostād Master Ḥodā-baḫš in the Zoroastrian Maḥalle of Yazd. Master Ḥodā-baḫš was a reform-minded teacher who was killed in 1917 because of his liberal attitude.[63] This shrine is often visited by pupils and students before exams because Ḥodā-baḫš was a teacher. Another example is Pīr-e Bahḡōlī also in the Maḥalle. According to the story, which is remembered by the Zoroastrians in the neighbourhood, Bahḡūl was a girl who was kidnapped by a Muslim. This meant forced conversion and forced marriage. She was raped by her 'husband' and committed suicide. As suicide is disapproved by Zoroastrianism the incident is classified by Zoroastrians as 'murder'. Her fate is commemorated at this shrine.

THE SPECTRUM OF ZOROASTRIAN SHRINES: LOCATION, FUNCTIONS AND PRACTICE

Despite the different other possibilities to classify Zoroastrian *pīr* as described above, I chose a typology of Zoroastrian shrines according to spatio-geographical and architectural points of view, in order to give an overview of the wide range of different types of shrines. A comparison

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[63] For accounts on the life of Ḥodā-baḫš and on the Pīr-e Ḥodā-baḫš established shortly after his murder in 1917 see Afšār, *Yādgār-hā-yi Yazd. Ǧild-i duwwum: Muʿarrifī-i abnīya-i taʾrīḫī wa āṯār-i bāstānī-i šahr-i Yazd*, p. 841; Fischer, *Zoroastrian Iran between Myth and Praxis*, pp. 108–109, footnote 1; Ǧ. Pīšdādī, *Gul-barg-hā yā sunnat-hā-yi pasandīda-i niyā-kān. Barg-i naḫust: Gahanbār. Duwwum-īn-i barg: Ziyārat-gāh-hā* / J. Pishdadi, *The Petals. Proud Traditions of Our Ancestors: First Petal Gahanbar. Second Petal Shrines* (Simi Valley, 1376 hš [1997]), pp. 15/13; Pīšdādī, *Ḫāṭirāt-i 365 rūz yā pāra-ī az sunnat-hā-yi Zartuštiyān dar sada-i guḍašta*, pp. 37–45, 105–111; S. Safīd-waš (d. 1308 hš [1929–30]), [*Kitāb-i*] *yādārīn* [*Memoirs*] (Tahrān, 132 badīʿ [Bābī era; 1976–77]), pp. 127–129; Šahmardān, *Parastiš-gāh-i Zartuštiyān*, p. 171; Šahmardān, *Taʾrīḫ-i Zartuštiyān: Farzānagān-i Zartuštī*, pp. 611–616, esp. p. 616; Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras*, vol. 2, pp. 243–244; S. Stiles [Maneck], "Early Zoroastrian Conversions to the Baháʾí Faith in Yazd, Iran", *Studies in Bábí and Baháʾí History*, 2 vols., vol. 2: *From Iran East and West*, eds J.R. Cole/M. Momen (Los Angeles, 1984), pp. 67–93, here pp. 88–89; S. Stiles [Maneck], *Zoroastrian Conversions to the Baháʾí Faith in Yazd, Írán* (unpubl. M. A.-thesis, University of Arizona, 1983) [non vidi].

of all available data led me to the conclusion that typical architectural and geographical features of distinguishable classes of shrines reflect their different social and religious functions, resulting in a spectrum 'from private shrine to pilgrimage centre'. In the following section I will describe my classification with the help of typical examples.

PRIVATE 'SHRINES'

This group comprises shrines or 'proto-shrines' which are localised in the private area or on the border of private to public space. If we take a look at the spatial structures for religious practice in the private area, i. e. inside residential buildings, we first of all find arrangements—mainly in living rooms—which could be called 'domestic altars' (plates XIII/2). Those areas in private houses where portraits of Zoroaster, commemoration photographs of deceased family members, *Fravahr*-emblems, and decorative elements (like vases, plastic flowers etc.) are put on display are not referred to as *pīr* or 'altar'. But in their function of personal commemoration places they show a nucleus which may develop into a commemoration shrine (therefore: 'proto-shrine'). Moreover, the ritual practice performed in front of them could take place in the precinct of a larger shrine in the same manner. These include the laying down of fresh or dried fruits, nuts, sweets, and cypress twigs on festive occasions as well as, in connection with that, conducting commemoration rituals for the deceased. These 'domestic altars' are found in most Zoroastrian homes and houses in Iran.

A second structure, which is only found in some residential houses and more seldom in flats, are special rooms in which ritual meetings are held, referred to as *sofre*s, where food is served and legends are told.[64] Just as the 'domestic altars', these *sofre*-rooms are not referred to as *pīr*. But they serve the same function as some shrines where *sofre*s are executed regularly, and separate rooms are reserved there for that purpose. Some larger shrines are specific *sofre-pīr*s, gaining their fame primarily from particular *sofre*s which are conducted there exclusively. A famous example is the *vahme-rū*-shrines (the shrines of 'Bahman-rūz', dedicated to the day and 'deity' Bahman). In residential buildings sometimes rooms are reserved for the *parī* ('fairies') of the house and a *sofre*, dedicated to their queen (*Dohtar-Šāh-Parī*), is conducted there. These *parī-*

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[64] On the *sofre*-rituals see the paper by S. Kalinock in this volume.

rooms may contain some requisites like portraits of Zoroaster, vessels for incense, fire and candles, electric candles etc. (plates XIII/6). These rooms are also used for the commemoration of deceased family members, most likely those who instituted the *sofre* performed there, and during the *Nov-rūz*-festival plastic vessels with water and a coin as well as *sabzī* (tablets with fresh wheat sprigs) are put there, just as they are put in the central *īvān* of the house, the *pesgam-e mas*.[65] A room for the *Šāh-Parī-sofre*, as shown in plates XIII/6, is normally a secret, hidden room. This chamber is accessible through a small, inconspicuous door from the main yard. Usually it is situated on one side of the *pesgam-e mas* and has a connection with the central water supplies of the house.[66] Other *sofre*-arrangements may be found in traditional kitchens where an electric candle marks the place of the *sofre*.

On the border between private and public space we find different forms of light niches which are generally referred to as *pīrūn* (colloquial for *pīrān*).[67] Those are found in the walls of lanes and buildings in Zoroastrian city quarters or villages, mostly on one or both sides or opposite entrance doors, sometimes also in courtyards and 'private' lanes between two or three residential buildings (plates XV/15). Light niches were found in the lanes generally before the invention of public electric lighting. But some of them survived till today when they were (and are) cared for by individuals or families. In most cases their dedication to special persons (deceased or living family members) or 'deities' is only known to the families who take care of 'their' *pīrūn*. But sometimes they gain a local popularity, are supplied with additional brickwork, small glass

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[65] For pictures of traditional courtyard houses in Yazd, Kermān and Bāfq (Yazd province) see Rainer, *Anonymes Bauen im Iran*, picture section. Detailed descriptions and considerations on how to date the architectural structures are given by M. Boyce, "The Zoroastrian Houses of Yazd", *Iran and Islam, in Memory of the Late Vladimir Minorsky*, ed. C.E. Bosworth (Edinburgh, 1971), pp. 125–147. For the *pesgam* (here "peskem") as the religious centre of the house and its role as a "connection between the living and the dead" see P. Jamzadeh, "Remarks on Some Zoroastrian Architectural Features", *Studia Iranica* 30, 2001, pp. 17–29, here pp. 18–19; K. Nīk-nām, *Az Naw-rūz tā naw-rūz: Āyīn-hā wa marāsim-i sunnatī-i Zartuštiyān(-i Īrān)* [*From Nov-rūz to Nov-rūz: Ceremonies and Traditional Customs of the Zoroastrians (of Iran)*] (Tihrān, 1379 hš [2000–01]), pp. 25–27.

[66] Until the invention of pipe water in the 20th century the houses got their water from *qanavāt*. The water was drilled up from the *qanāt* by a wooden winch, which was placed in a separate room in one corner of the courtyard.

[67] Jamzadeh, "Remarks on Some Zoroastrian Architectural Features", pp. 19–21; 25, fig. 4; 26, fig. 6–8; 27, fig. 9–10.

doors or steps, and their name gets more widely known.[68] Those light niches can get even more elaborate, when someone decides to built an 'altar' in front of the niche (plates XIII/4), where fruits, nuts, cypress twigs etc. can be laid down. The Pīr-e Ḥodā-parast in the so called *Mūbedān* (= "priests") part of the Zoroastrian quarter of Yazd (Maḥalle-e Zartošteyān), shown in plates XIII/4, was built by a person living nearby in front of an older light niche in a nowadays private lane in be-tween three residential buildings. Some persons claim that the main pur-pose to care for and venerate this *pīr* is to keep the passing open and ac-cessible for the families living nearby, as one house is empty and there could arise some interest of a potential new owner to include the lane in a new building. If a light niche inside a courtyard is getting venerated as a *pīr*, sooner or later the whole building can be referred to as a *pīr*. The beginning of such a conversion of an abandoned residential building with a light niche in its courtyard into a 'public' building by referring to it as a *pīr* was observed by the author in the Zoroastrian quarter of Yazd.

In most cases private shrines and comparable structures function as places of commemoration. They structure and demarcate the private space by means of 'religious' symbols. The religious practice involves only members of one family or of the nearer neighbourhood, who also look after, take care for and finance the structure.

LOCAL SHRINES

Shrines of local relevance are found inside, on the edge and outside of Zoroastrian settlements, i. e. villages, or villages that became city sub-urbs in the second half of the 20th century. Inside settlements one can distinguish between free standing structures, buildings integrated into lane facades and complex buildings with more than one room.

In this context 'proto-shrines', i. e. nuclei for shrines with architec-tural structures, are big solitary cypress (*sarv*) or plane (*čenār*) trees which are venerated in Iran not only by Zoroastrians.[69] These trees form

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[68] An example of an elaborated *pīrūn* in Zeyn-ābād (Yazd province) which is dedi-cated to Šāh-Bahrām-Īzed is given in F. Dastur/F.P. Mistree, "Fire Temples and Other Sacred Precincts in Iran and India", *A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art, Religion & Culture*, eds P.J. Godrej/F.P. Mistree (Ahmedabad/Middletown, 2002), pp. 300–323, here p. 316, picture 20.

[69] Muslims often connect trees with legends of saints, descendants of the Prophet Moḥammad or of the Emāms (*Emām-zāde*). See Donaldson, *The Wild Rue*, p. 142: "Other trees are sacred because of their connection with some special event. They are

a characteristic feature of some Zoroastrian villages South of Yazd, e. g. Čam, Zeyn-ābād, or Mobārake. In some cases around Yazd, small solitary buildings which only consist of a brick structure with a light niche were built under a cypress tree, e. g. in the village of Zeyn-ābād Southwest of Yazd (plates XVI/16). Some cypress shrines are connected to a fire temple, as in the case of the famous Sarv-e Čam in the village Čam near Zeyn-ābād.

Another type of local shrines inside settlements consists of solitary buildings with one small room and one entrance door, where only one or two persons find place to light temporary fires, incense or candles. This is the case with Pīr-e Na-mīr in the village Mazraᶜe-e Kalāntar North of Yazd (plates XIII/7). In this case the shrine is not connected to a tree but to a *qanāt*, an underground water stream which supplies water from the mountains to houses and fields.

Another type of this group of shrines is characterised by single room buildings—either built explicitly as a *pīr* or converted from a room of a residential building—which are accessible from the lane, while their facade is integrated into the adjacent house facades or walls. A typical example is Pīr-e Mīrzā-Soruš, also situated in the village Mazraᶜe-e Kalāntar (plates XIII/3). This polygonal single room structure was apparently built explicitly as a shrine. An example of a room from a residential building that was converted into a *pīr* is the above mentioned Pīr-e Bahğōlī. Both shrines are named after individuals who are remembered by the people living in their neighbourhoods, the murdered girl Bahğūl who is commemorated here and the founder of the shrine Mīrzā Soruš respectively.

A typical example of a local shrine that became so famous and important locally that more and more rooms (kitchen, storage etc.) and a courtyard were added, is the Shrine of the reformist teacher (*Ostād*, sometimes also referred to as *Moᶜallem*) and Bombay educated (*Māster*) Ḥodā-bahš from Nersī-ābād-e Yazd (the village of Naṣr-ābād, today a

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called *Murád dahanda*, or 'desire giving' trees. Perhaps at one time a holy man, or a descendant of the Prophet, sat under such a tree, or ate of its fruit or used its leaves for healing, or in its shade he may have prayed or slept or dreamed. Sooner or later either he himself or some simple villager was ready to regard it as holy and thus it came to be venerated. It is called the 'desire giving' because the credulous, the afflicted and the needy, who have heard the story about it, tie rags and strings to its branches, and at the same time they make a request and take a vow that they will perform some meritious act if the request is granted."

North-Western suburb of Yazd) (plates XV/14 and XV/13: these pic-
tures show the typical 'pillar altar'[70] with fire vase and incense burner.
Also a commemorative photograph of one lady who was in charge for
the shrine[71] until her death is on display as can be seen in plates XIII/8).
Māster Hodā-bahš was murdered in 1917 in connection with an intra-
communal religious-political struggle on the very spot in the Zoroastrian
quarter of Yazd where some years later his commemoration-*pīr* was
erected. This shrine—as well as the above mentioned types of local
*pīr*s—was founded on private initiative. Smaller local shrines are usually
financed by single persons or families, but are used as places of venera-
tion by members of the whole population of a quarter or village. The
administration is rather informal. Bigger structures like Pīr-e Māster
need formal approval by the local community council (*angoman*) and are
co-financed by irregular donations or even regular foundations by
wealthier members of the community.

Another group of local shrines comprises those structures which were
originally located on the border between a settlement and its irrigated
gardens or fields. Nowadays they are situated within modern settlements
because fields or gardens surrounding the shrines were partly or totally
converted into building plots during the last decades. These local shrines
on the edge of (pre-modern) settlements are typical 'agricultural shrines'
and often a water winch (*čarḥ-e čāh*), which was the nucleus of the
shrine, is still found inside the buildings. Probably the general veneration
of, or rituals in connection with water were the starting point of some of
those shrines. These structures for irrigation are no longer in use because
the old *qanavāt* fell dry after the invention of deep water wells and dis-
tribution of water via pipes since the second half of the 20th century.
Therefore, these shrines are the only places where old irrigation devices
have been preserved until today (plates XV/14). The old water winch
with oil lamps and bottles with lamp oil shown in plates XV/14 is part of
a Pīr-e Ḥvāge-Hežr. This shrine—like many 'agricultural *pīr*s'—is

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[70] It is usually called *kalak*, sometimes also *āḏohš*, in Kermān vernacular *maġreb*. See
M. Boyce, "The Fire-Temples of Kerman", *Acta Orientalia (Le Monde Oriental)* 30,
1966, pp. 51–72, here p. 56: "Such 'stone' pillars holding the sacred fire are called in
Kermān *maġreb*, a term which none could explain. In Yazd they are called *kalak*, a
word used generally in local dialects for a container of fire", and p. 62; for "āḏohš" see
M. Boyce, "Mihragān among the Irani Zoroastrians", *Mithraic Studies: Proceedings of
the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies (Manchester 1971)*, ed. J.R. Hin-
nells, vol. 1 (Manchester, 1975), pp. 106–118, here p. 114 (Mazraʿe-e Kalāntar).

[71] Those 'servants' of a *pīr* are called *ḥādem* (male) or *ḥādeme* (female).

named after the famous Middle Eastern 'immortal' saint and prophet Ḫᵛāǧe Ḥeżr and is located in the former garden area of Maryam-ābād, nowadays a Northern suburb of Yazd. 'Agricultural shrines' are often named after Ḫᵛāǧe Ḥeżr who is commonly associated with 'green' or cultivation (which is the original Arabic meaning of Ḥeżr, Arabic 'Haḍir') and water, i. e. cultivation of land by irrigation.[72] Pīr-e Blās-ger in Ḥasan-ābād-e Mošīr (nowadays part of Maryam-ābād-e Yazd) is another example for this type of shrine. In plates XIII/5, it can be seen that these shrines typically preserve a piece of garden land. If they become famous and are endowed with donations and regular foundations, they are extended with additional buildings or rooms, such as kitchens, sanitary installations, and storage rooms.

Many local shrines are found outside settlements in the middle of the irrigated agricultural land surrounding the village. Sometimes they are connected to a field water storage (āb-anbār) whose stairway and wind towers (bād-gīr) are shown in plates XIII/9 (the entrance to Pīr-e Maṭlab is the door left to the āb-anbār's stairway). Often, they are simple mud-brick buildings with only one or two small rooms, e. g. the Pīr-e Maṭlab ("the shrine of the wishing place") shown here. Sometimes they were rebuilt in baked brick as bigger structures with two or even more rooms. Minor structures in the fields that were built or became venerated as a pīr were used as a shelter for field guardians. Bigger shrines in the fields serve—like those inside settlements—for communal gatherings and are maintained by private donations and / or regular foundations. They are sometimes placed under the administration of the respective village angoman.

TRANS-LOCAL SHRINES

Some local shrines gained trans-local quality in that respect that they are visited not only by the population of one particular settlement but by larger groups from different villages or city quarters. This happens on the occasion of communal meals which are founded by a private person in order to commemorate deceased relatives (āš-e ḥeyrāt). A typical exam-

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[72] See e.g. A. Krasnowolska, *Some Key Figures of Iranian Calendar Mythology (Winter and Spring)* (Kraków, 1998), pp. 141–59 ("Hazrat-e Xezr"); A.J. Wensinck, "al-Khaḍir, al-Khiḍr", *Handwörterbuch des Islam*, eds A.J. Wensinck/J.H. Kramers (Leiden, 1941), pp. 286b–290a; A.K. Coomaraswamy, "Khāǧā Khaḍir and the Fountain of Life, in the Tradition of Persian and Mughal Art", *Ars Islamica* 1, 1934, pp. 172–182.

ple of such a *vaqt-e vaqt* at a trans-local shrine is the *aš-e ḥeyrāt* of Pīr-e
Morād near Qāsem-ābād, Southwest of the centre of Yazd. Many people
gather there nine days after Nov-rūz (March 29/30). Pīr-e Morād seems
to have developed out of a small 'agricultural shrine' located in the
fields of Qāsem-ābād. This old shrine once was connected with water
storage. Its staircase still can be seen next to the entrance to the shrine-
yard. That the old *pīr*-building was quite small is still reflected in the
small main chamber with a 'pillar altar', shown in plates XV/12, which
is supposed to be the original shrine. It seems that the "shrine of the
wish"—which is the translation of "Pīr-e Morād"—was not at all popu-
lar in the first half of the 20th century, since it is listed by neither
Sorūšeyān nor Šahmardān. It even was partly destroyed and cut off of its
water supply when the Yazd-Kermān railway was built just behind the
shrine in the middle of the 20th century. At the same time or shortly be-
fore its *qanāt* run dry, maybe because of the railway construction works.

It is noteworthy that many Zoroastrian shrines in Iran were either
thoroughly enhanced or even reinvented to some extent from the 1970s
onwards, as for example an inscription at Pīr-e Morād of Qāsem-ābād
shows. Interestingly, this process of enhancement and (re-)invention sig-
nificantly increased after the 'Islamic Revolution', and the process is still
going on: e. g. Pīr-e Morād was provided with a solid-built assembly hall
in the year 2000. This was financed by a wealthy member of the com-
munity now living abroad.

REGIONAL SHRINES AND PILGRIMAGE CENTRES

Nowadays the group of regional shrines consists mainly of the greater
pilgrimage centres in and around Yazd. Probably until the middle of the
20th century this kind of 'mountain shrines' also existed around the city
of Kermān, but due to the migration of the complete Zoroastrian rural
population of the province of Kermān into the larger cities, those Ker-
mānī 'mountain shrines' lost their popularity. Today, even the location
of some of these former *zeyārat-gāh*s is unknown to the average Ker-
mānī Zoroastrian.

In and around Yazd, in modern times a group of six *pīr*s which
Zoroastrians refer to as their 'great shrines' (*pīr-e bozorg*) developed
into an almost canonical set of six shrines and some smaller places
which are visited at regular pilgrimages. These pilgrimages are usually
made in several sets of 'pilgrimage circuits'.[73] This group of regional

several sets of 'pilgrimage circuits'.[73] This group of regional shrines includes the shrine of Setī-Pīr near Maryam-ābād in Yazd which lies in the plain and not in the mountains. The other five are located in the mountainous areas surrounding the Yazdī plain ('mountain shrines'). These are (from the South in clockwise motion) Pīr-e Nārakī, Pīr-e Bānū-Pārs, Pīr-e Herišt, Pīr-e Sabz, and Pīr-e Nārestāne. Pīr-e Sabz developed into an international Zoroastrian pilgrimage centre (see below). A picture of Pīr-e Nārakī is presented as an example of one of the less prominent 'mountain shrines' (plates XIV/11). It is the only one of the five *pīr-e bozorg* whose formation legend has a son of Yazdegerd III as protagonist. The other five 'great shrines' are connected with female members of the court of Yazdegerd III, either with his daughters, his wife, or her female servant.

The 'mountain shrines' have the appearance of little mountain villages consisting of numerous buildings, most of them shelters for the pilgrims (*ḥeyle*). As many inscriptions show, these structures were erected from the end of the 19th century onwards, with an increase in building activity after World War II and especially after the 'Islamic Revolution'. The canon of the six 'great *pīrs*' developed into a prominent feature of Iranian Zoroastrian identity. Sets of pictures of these shrines are common in the recent Zoroastrian iconography in Iran, e. g. most 'official' Zoroastrian pocket or wall calendars include pictures of these shrines. This does not mean that they are regularly visited by the whole community but they form a kind of virtual pilgrimage repertoire. All of the 'great shrines' are administered by local Zoroastrian community councils (*anǧoman*) from different Zoroastrian villages and city quarters and are officially recognised as Zoroastrian places of worship by the "Islamic Republic of Iran", although none of them is yet registered as a monument of 'cultural heritage' by the "Sāmān-e Mīrās̱-e farhangī-e Kešvar (Cultural Heritage Organization of Iran)". Attempts in that direction have been undertaken by Zoroastrian individuals but with no result so far. The 'great shrines' are financed by several private foundations which are approved and administered by the *anǧoman* in charge of the respective *pīr*.

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[73] M.M.J. Fischer, "Sacred Circles: Iranian (Zoroastrian and Shi'ite Muslim) Feasting and Pilgrimage Circuits", *Sacred Places and Profane Spaces: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, eds J. Scott/P. Simpson-Housley (Contributions to the Study of Religion 30; New York et al., 1991), pp. 131–144.

A NEW TRANS-REGIONAL PILGRIMAGE CENTRE

Zoroastrians from Kermān rarely partake in the Yazdī pilgrimages (apart from those to Pīr-e Sabz). Recently, however, in the province of Kermān a pilgrimage centre developed which is visited also by many Zoroastrians from Yazd, mainly women. So it is justified to classify it as a trans-regional pilgrimage centre. This shrine is located in the small town of Bardsīr (Mašīz), Southwest of Kermān (plates XII/1: Pīr-e Bardsīr).

The shrine of Bardsīr developed out of a *sofre* (ritual communal meal) which was instituted after an apparition of the 'fairy queen' (*Doḫtar-Šāh-Parī*). It is not absolutely clear when the *sofre* was 'spread' for the first time, but by the age of the woman in charge of the sofre (*ḫādeme*) it can be guessed that it must have been around 1980. In the course of the last decade it developed into a trans-regional pilgrimage place. The shrine is located inside a modern farm house belonging to a Zoroastrian family. It is a small room, decorated with gifts brought by pilgrims. The free standing chamber is surrounded by assembly halls which were built by the family as the popularity of the *sofre* increased and more and more pilgrims were visiting the shrine for the *zeyārat* in the month of Ordī-behešt (= 21. April − 21. May). At this date the house is full of visitors for several days and in the night when the first apparition occurred they visit the *sofre*-chamber one by one. As at other Zoroastrian pilgrimages, the main activities during the pilgrimage days are singing and dancing as well as the preparation and communal eating of *āš*. The shrine is popular especially amongst women because the lady who instituted the *sofre* was healed from epilepsy which had caused her many miscarriages. Pīr-e Bardsīr is administered by the family living in the house where the *pīr* is located and it is financed by pilgrims' donations. It is not 'officially' recognised by any Zoroastrian *anğoman* or priest. Its popularity and power to mobilise numerous adherents even seemed so dangerous to the *Anğoman* of Kermān and the local 'Council of Priests' that they tried to prohibit the pilgrimage in the 1990s. But it could not be prevented, even though the interfering institutions called in the local police.

THE INTERNATIONAL ZOROASTRIAN PILGRIMAGE CENTRE
AND ITS VIRTUAL RAMIFICATIONS

As mentioned before, Pīr-e Sabz, the famous 'mountain shrine' North of Yazd, developed into an international Zoroastrian pilgrimage centre (plates XIV/10). It is by far the most popular Zoroastrian shrine. This

popularity not only results in crowds of tourists from both inside and outside Iran visiting the shrine on holidays and in the travel season, but also to a yearly mass pilgrimage of Zoroastrians, coming from every-where in Iran (especially Tehrān) as well as from the different diaspora communities all over the world. Even Indian Zoroastrians now visit Pīr-e Sabz together with other Iranian shrines while on their round trip through the 'homeland of Zoroastrianism',[74] although they do not come especially on occasion of the *vaqt-e vaqt* in summer. Then, from 15th to 18th of June, several thousand people gather there and stay over night. This is a common feature of pilgrimages to the 'great shrines' during the 20th century but it is in Pīr-e Sabz where this custom is still observed widely whereas the other shrines are nowadays most of the time only visited during the day while people return home with their car during the night.

The popularity of the pilgrimage to Pīr-e Sabz resulted into two phe-nomena which are worth mentioning in the context of classification and typology of Zoroastrian shrines. On the one hand, a 'virtual reality' exis-tence of the "Green Shrine" developed in the time of the World Wide Web. The shrine can be found on display on several (Zoroastrian and Iranian) homepages and can be classified in this context as a kind of 'vir-tual shrine'.[75] On the other hand, the Zoroastrian community of Vancou-ver invented a sort of 'substitute pilgrimage'. Once a year, at the date of the *ḥaǧǧ* to Pīr-e Sabz, they gather at a particular place in the mountains near Vancouver, and there prepare and consume food, dance and sing, just as if they were at the 'real' shrine.[76]

CONCLUSIONS

Today, Zoroastrian shrines serve as a means to create specific identities. On a regional level a specific Zoroastrian identity is enhanced in contrast to the Muslim majority population. For the whole Zoroastrian commu-

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[74] See Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 307, where visits of Pārsī 'neo-trad-itionalists', organised by *Zoroastrian Studies*, at Zoroastrian shrines in Iran are re-ported.

[75] See e.g. J. Varza, "A Visual Pilgrimage to Pir e Sabz, Near Yazd, Iran", *http://www.vohuman.org/SlideShow/Pir-e-Sabz/Pir-e-Sabz-1.htm* (Vuhūman/Vohuman.Org: A Zoroastrian Educational Institute. Journal; bahār 1372 yazdigirdī/spring 2003).

[76] See F. Demehri, "Pir-e Sabz Festival in Vancouver", *FEZANA Journal: Publica-tion of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America* (Fall 1999/Paiz 1368 y), pp. 15a–15b.

nity of Iranian origin shrine worship adds to a special Iranian-Zoroastrian identity in contrast to the Indian Pārsī-Zoroastrianism which does not have the socio-religious institution of shrine worship. This is especially important in the context of mixed Zoroastrian communities in the diaspora all over the world, where Zoroastrians of Indian as well as Iranian origin live together.

At least at a folkloristic level, this identity enhancing function of the *pīrs* even applies to those members of the community (mostly intellectuals and priests or both in the same person) who do not believe in the beneficent effectiveness of *pīrs* and sometimes do not recognise them as a part of their religion at all or at least reject them as 'superstition' in other contexts. But even modernist priests who uttered such views to me felt obliged to pay reverence to the *pīrs* while visiting them together with me, either out of habit or because of social pressure when other Zoroastrians were present.

There is a wide range of Zoroastrian 'holy places' in Iran which were seldom—if ever—seen as an important part of Zartoštī religious life in previous research. Despite modernist points of view the veneration of these shrines is well alive. Although some old shrines disappeared or are not used anymore, we can also observe the restoration and reinvention of older *pīrs* as well as the emergence of new ones in our time.

For the Zoroastrian community the shrines form important landmarks for a mental mapping of space and time. They are an integral part of daily religious life and of Zartoštī identity in Iran and even in the diaspora communities all over the world where especially Pīr-e Sabz and the pilgrimage to it are commemorated supported by pictures, and communal gatherings which are held during the time of the pilgrimage.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF ZOROASTRIAN FUNERARY PRACTICES

Dietrich Huff

The Zoroastrian funerary practice of exposure of the dead was one of the most peculiar cultural habits of the ancient Iranians in the eyes of their western neighbours, who could not appreciate its reason: to prevent pollution of the sacred elements of earth, fire, and water by decomposing bodies of the believers in Ahura Mazda. The practice was already mentioned by Herodotus[1] and subsequently reported in a sometimes misunderstood and even defamatory manner by antique western authors.[2] It is practiced by Parsi communities in India until today.[3] Although never fully accomplished it was obviously a rather strict rule in the Sasanian Empire, to the distress of the then considerable Christian minorities in Iran, who often suffered desecration of their earth burials.[4]

Probably during that period the *Videvdat* was codified, which contains, among other subjects, the precise regulations for the exposure.[5] Two steps are clearly distinguished: the first—exposure on a dry, high and deserted place where the perishable parts of the body are quickly devoured by vultures and wild dogs—is compulsatory. The second—

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[1] Herodotus, *Histories* 1,140.

[2] Agathias 2,22,6–2. 2,31,5–9; Cicero, *Disputationes Tusculanae* 1,45,108; Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni* 7,5,40; Procopius, *De Bello Persico* 1,11,34. 1,12, 4; Strabo, *Geographikon* 11,3,3. 15,1,62. 15,3,20; P. Trogus apud Justin 41,3,5.

[3] J.J. Modi, *The Funeral Ceremonies of the Parsees, Their Origin and Explanation* (Bombay, 1905), pp. 1 ff.; E.S. Meherjirana, *A guide to the Zoroastrian Religion,* ed. and transl. F.M. Kotwal/J.W. Boyd (Chico, 1982), pp. 76 ff.; M. Boyce, "Corpse, Disposal of in Zoroastrianism", *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* vol. 6 (Costa Mesa, 1993), pp. 279–288, p. 285; F.M. Kotwal, "The Parsi Dakhma: its History and Consecration", *Au carrefour des religions. Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux* (Res Orientales 7; Bure-sur-Yvette, 1995), pp. 161–170, pp. 160 f.

[4] Menander Protector 182,21 f.; G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 39 f.; J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 283 f.; D. Huff, "Ein christliches Felsgrab bei Istakhr", *Archaeologia Iranica et Orientalis. Miscellanea in Honorem Louis Vanden Berghe II,* eds L. de Meyer/E. Haerinck II (Gent, 1989), pp. 713–729, pp. 718 f.

[5] Vendidad VI, 44–51.

treatment of the cleaned bones—is optional; they may be collected and preserved in specially described bone receptacles, if this can be afforded by the family; if not they can be left on the exposure ground, rotting away. There is no religious preference. With the vast majority of the population certainly being poor, we cannot expect the development of rich burial ensembles or sumptuous funerary architecture. More remarkable is the fact that the archaeological monuments which may attest exposure or at least Zoroastrian tendencies in funeral practice are more or less limited to the western Iranian plateau, with a clear focus on the Persepolis–Naqsh-i Rustam area. There are sub-centres, e.g. in southern Fars, Elymaïs and Kurdistan, but there is utmost scanty evidence in eastern Iran.[6] The great variety of doubtlessly Zoroastrian pottery ossuaries in Central Asia[7] proves that, beside other funerary customs, exposure was practiced also there, but with a tradition of its own, the ossuaries perhaps deriving from cremation urns. No clear evidence for comparable pottery ossuaries is known from Iran proper,[8] where only some stone ossuaries were found at the Gulf coast near Bushir.[9] Of relevance for the early development of exposure of the dead may be the interesting fact that the rich burial culture of inhumation stops short with the end of Bronze Age civilization in large areas of Central Asia, the supposed homeland of the Iranians, where subsequently Iron Age burials are nearly completely lacking.[10]

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[6] A Sasanian bone burial was found in a tower chamber of an abandoned Parthian mud brick fort in Shahr-i Qumis. J. Hansmann/D. Stronach, "A Sasanian Repository at Shahr-i Qumis", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1970, pp. 142–155, p. 142.

[7] F. Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation* (Paris, 1984).

[8] Sherds of pottery vessels which are thought to have come from ossuaries were found in subterranean rooms in Ghubayra, Kerman province. A.D. Bivar, *Excavations at Ghubayra, Iran* (London, 2000), pp. 41, 45, 54. The identification however is not certain.

[9] J.J. Modi, "Astodan", *Anthropological Papers I. Read before the Anthropological Society of Bombay* (Bombay, 1912), pp. 7–22, pp. 7 ff. The interpretation of other stone boxes as ossuaries, found in different places in Iran, is uncertain. Cf. D. Huff. "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars I. Gräber", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 21, 1988, pp. 145–176, pp. 173 ff.

[10] H.P. Francfort, *Fouilles de Shortughaï. Recherches sur l'Asie centrale protohistorique* I/II (Paris, 1989), p. 437. A not yet finally solved problem offer the stone tumuli, the cairns, covering the mountains of Fars, Kerman and further east (see C. Lamberg Carlovsky/J. Humphries, "The Cairn-burials of Southeastern Iran", *East and West* 18, 1968, pp. 269–276; C. Lamberg Carlovsky/W. Fitz, "Cairn Burials in the Soghun

EXPOSURE SITES

The ancient places for exposure can scarcely be identified today. The rocky, mountainous topography of Iran offers an abundance of sites for this purpose without need for special preparation. The only presumable pre-Islamic exposure ground which shows traces of workmanship for this destination is the south western slope of the mountain ridge behind the ruin city of Bishapur, on either side of the gorge with the Sasanian rock relieves, where also the Sasanian quarries next to Shapur's fortress were used as a cemetery. Great numbers of low platforms,[11] only some centimetres high, were chiselled from the bedrock with a surrounding strip of evenly smoothened rock, producing locations similar to the *pavis* in the recent towers of silence, on which the bodies of the dead are laid out[12] (plates IX/16). They indeed look like places of exposure, although they deserve further discussion. Together with these are oblong troughs of similar dimensions cut into the bedrock with varying depth. The majority, especially those at the foot of the mountain, seem to have been destroyed by recent quarrying. The few remaining ones however, as well

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Valley, Southeastern Iran", *Orientalia Josephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata,* eds G. Gnoli/L. Lanciotti (Roma, 1987), pp. 747–770; D. Whitcomb, *Before the Roses and Nightingales. Excavations at Qasr-i Abu Nasr, Old Shiraz* (New York, 1985), pp. 211–216; R. Boucharlat, "Cairns et pseudocairns du Fars", *Archaeologia Iranica et Orientalis. Miscellanea in Honorem Louis Vanden Berghe II,* eds. L. de Meyer/E. Haerinck (Gent, 1989), pp. 675–712. They were used or reused still in Parthian and early Sasanian time. As they always were built high up on barren, rocky ground, they might have been regarded as fulfilling the Zoroastrian purity prescriptions. A similar way of burial, called *sang-chin,* heap of stones, was practiced in 19th century Iran by small Zoroastrian communities, which could not afford a *dakhma.* The corpses were carried up to a remote, barren place in the mountains, "piled around with stones and covered with a slab" (W. Jackson, *Persia Past and Present* (New York/London, 1906), pp. 393 f.). The same method was chosen in a more recent accident. When a boy of a Zoroastrian family was found dead, after he had got lost in the desert mountains behind the Zoroastrian shrine of Pir-i Sabz near Yazd, the body was left on the spot and encased in a small mound of lofty set up boulders. (Information by Mr. Sami Kalantari from Mazr-i Kalantar).

[11] R. Ghirshman, *Bîchâpour* I (Paris, 1971), pp. 180 f. They are alternatively regarded as unfinished troughs (R. Boucharlat, "Pratiques funéraires à l'époque sasanide dans le sud de l'Iran", *Histoire et cultes de l'Asie centrale préislamique* (Paris, 1991), p. 74, fig. 3 d). – The possibility that they are traces of a rather queer method of quarrying blocks of square stone may also be considered.

[12] J.J. Modi, *The Funeral Ceremonies of the Parsees, Their Origin and Explanation.* Ground plan of a Tower of Silence, View of the Interior.

as the published photographs[13] show that they were surrounded by a small ridge, and outside, a strip of the bedrock was carefully levelled. In one case a protruding block, left over from the ancient quarry activities, was sculptured in the shape of a sarcophagus, cut from the living rock. The troughs are interpreted as exposure pits and they might have served for this purpose perhaps in secondary use. The problem of this type of tomb will be discussed later.

CHAMBER-*DAKHMA*S FROM EARLY ISLAMIC
UNTIL ACHAEMENIAN TIME

Undoubted Zoroastrian bone receptacles are rather small caverns and niches, carved into the cliffs around the Marvdasht plain, especially abundant near Naqsh-i Rustam and Istakhr.[14] Too small for containing more than a skull and some bones, they often have Pahlavi inscriptions with rather uniform content, saying that this *dakhma* 'was made by ..., for..., and paradise be the reward for the soul'.[15] *Dakhma,* nowadays the word for the Zoroastrian tower of silence, was obviously a word for the tomb in the widest sense of the meaning; every attempt to limit its interpretation to one special type of burial seems obsolete. It is used in all known inscriptions in the Marvdasht area, here as an equivalent for the more precise term for a bone receptacle, *astodan,* which occurs in other regions.[16] For palaeographic reasons and especially from some dates in the inscriptions it becomes clear that the small cavern-*dakhma*s belong to the late Sasanian and even early Islamic period.

Small grooves and ledges at the openings of these small *dakhma*s indicate that they all were closed by slabs of stone (fig. 1). Some characteristic features are of special interest, as we will later see. Frequently the

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[13] Ghirshman, *Bîchâpour* I, pl. VII. XXXIV.

[14] Huff, "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars I. Gräber", pp. 115 ff.; R. Boucharlat, "Pratiques funéraires à l'époque sasanide dans le sud de l'Iran", pp. 73 ff. – Christian rock tombs, well known from Kharg island are characterized in the Istakhr region by a narrow, long chamber with resting bench for the head. One tomb has a cross above the entrance (Huff, "Ein christliches Felsgrab bei Istakhr", pp. 713 ff.).

[15] G. Gropp/S. Nadjmabadi, "Eine Reise in West- und Südiran", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* NS 3, 1970, pp. 173–230, pp. 205 ff.

[16] E.g. in a funerary inscription at Girreh, see A. Hassuri, "Two Unpublished Pahlavi Inscriptions", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 134, 1984, pp. 92–97, p. 93.

caverns are arranged in pairs, not identical but with slight differences in size and height, obviously indicating close relationship in rank of the buried person; one may think of husband and wife, father, and son etc.
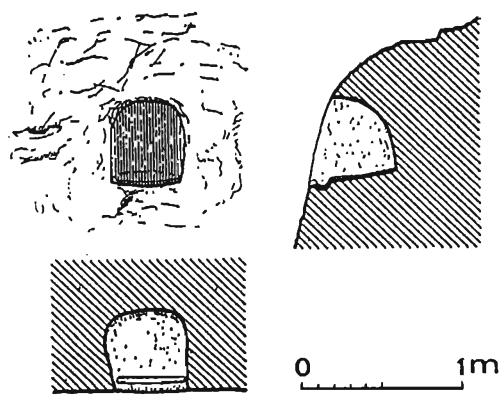
Fig. 1. Hussein Kuh. Niche-*dakhma* near Hadjiabad; late- or post-Sasanian

The facades often have simple picked or carved decorations: framings around the opening and curved or gabled cappings on top, obviously representing roofs of vaults or domes, often with conical pinnacles; they clearly try to imitate tomb buildings with the elements of contemporary, Sasanian-style architecture (plates VIII/14). However, there are also allusions to the glorious past: a small, round tomb chamber has a huge facade with the outline of a royal Achaemenid rock tomb, roughly cut into the vertical cliff of Kuh-i Ayyub in the Persepolis plain[17] (fig. 2. 3).

The frequency of cavern- or chamber-*dakhma*s diminishes towards the earlier periods. At the same degree the identification as bone receptacles of the earlier rock tombs becomes more problematic. An important example, showing stylistic and constructive developments during the course of time is the small dynastic cemetery of Akhur-i Rustam in the flanks of Kuh-i Rahmat, south of Persepolis[18] (plates VII/7). There we can observe the tendency that the oldest tombs are placed high up in the

[17] Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie de l'Iran ancien* (Leiden, 1959), p. 45, pl. 62 f.; D. Huff, "Observations at Minor Monuments in the Persepolis Area", *Mesopotamian History and Environment. Mesopotamie et Elam. Actes de la 36ème Rencontre Assyrologique internationale, Gand 10.–14.7. 1989* (Louvain, 1991), pp. 197–200, p. 198 f.; D. Huff, "Sassanidische Architektuur", *Hofkunst van de Sasanieden* (Brussel, 1993), pp. 45–61, p. 58 f., fig. 41–42.

[18] H. v. Gall, "Zu den 'medischen' Felsgräbern in Nordwestiran und Iraqi-Kurdistan", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1966, pp. 19–43, pp. 28, 38.

cliff, with well cut chambers and upright entrances, partly showing sockets of doors, whereas the later ones are lower down and cut into the rock as wide, oblong niches, with traces of a closure by stone slabs only.
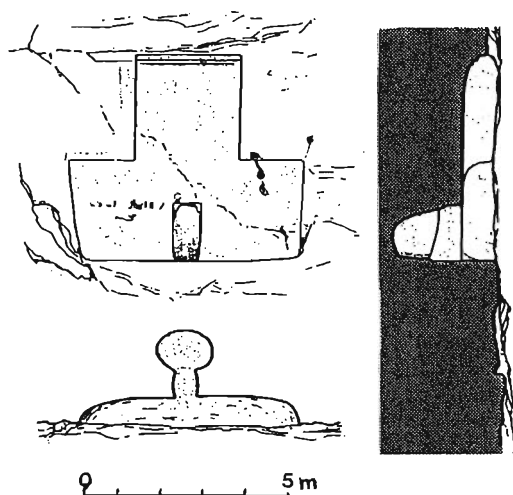
Fig. 2. Kuh-i Ayyub. Cavern-*dakhma*,
facade imitating royal Achaemenian rock tomb; Sasanian

The decoration of the facades clearly refers to the royal Achaemenid rock tombs: the topmost and probably oldest one imitates an Achaemenid palace gate, certainly with the typical Egyptianized fluted cornice above, inserted with a separate block of stone, perhaps a reused Achaemenian fragment, or even modelled from plaster and now vanished. A later chamber, somewhat lower down, has a square entrance, flanked by two relief-columns with bull-head capitals. The squat proportions of the columns differ sharply from their slender Achaemenid ancestors and the workmanship of the bull-heads resembles those of the so-called Anahita temple at Bishapur; the tomb may belong to the late Parthian or early Sasanian period. The lowest and probably latest tomb is only a niche with a wide, oblong opening. All chambers are big enough for a body stretched out; other similar but smaller examples in the Istakhr area have dimensions which limit their use to that for a bone receptacle. Even the bigger chambers may have served as bone receptacles for a family over a long period of time. Chambers of similar size in Khuzistan are filled up with the bones of great numbers of individuals even today.
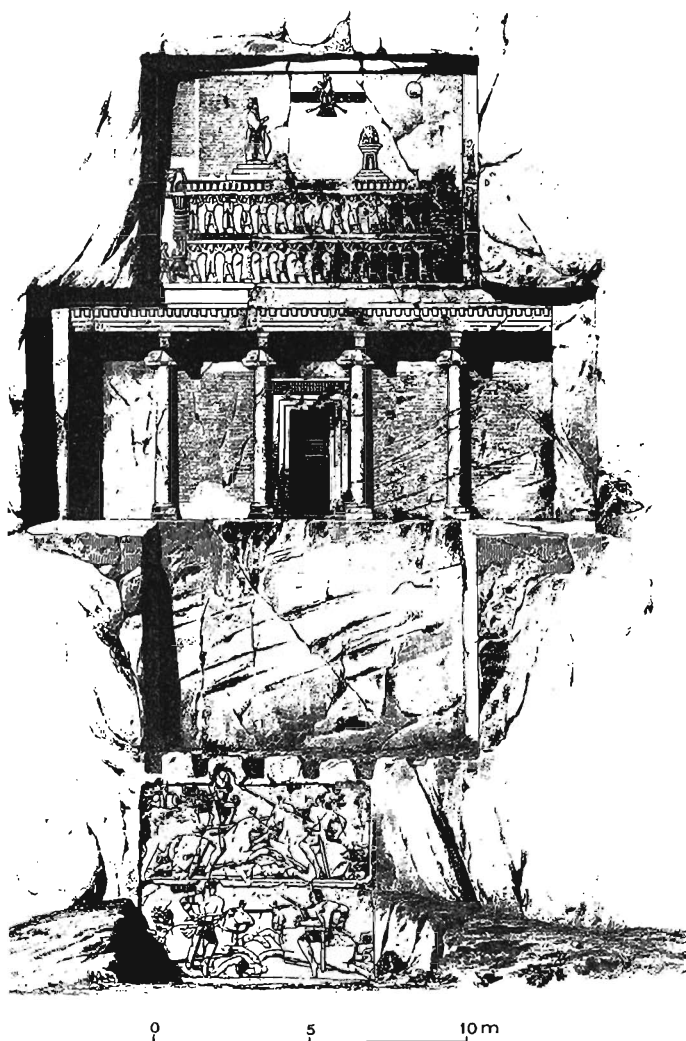
Fig. 3. Naqsh-i Rustam. Tomb of Darius I.

A north Iranian counterpart to the south Iranian Akhur-i Rustam group is the rock tombs of Deh-i Now/Surkhadeh, also known as Issakvand, near Kermanshah[19] (plates VIII/15). Once more the tomb highest up in the cliff has an upright gate with two-winged door sockets and is probably the oldest. The lower ones again are wide niches, formerly closed by stone slabs. A rather roughly cut relief of a praying man above one of

[19] E. Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien* (Berlin, 1920), pp. 6 ff.; v. Gall, "Zu den 'medischen' Felsgräbern in Nordwestiran und Iraqi-Kurdistan", pp. 28 ff.; H. v. Gall,. "Deh-e Now", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 7 (Costa Mesa, 1996), pp. 211–214, pp. 211 ff.

them dates it to the late first century B.C. or the early first century A.D. During a still later reuse of the tomb the relief was enlarged by a small adoration scene with a fire altar and an incense burner, which may even be Sasanian.[20]
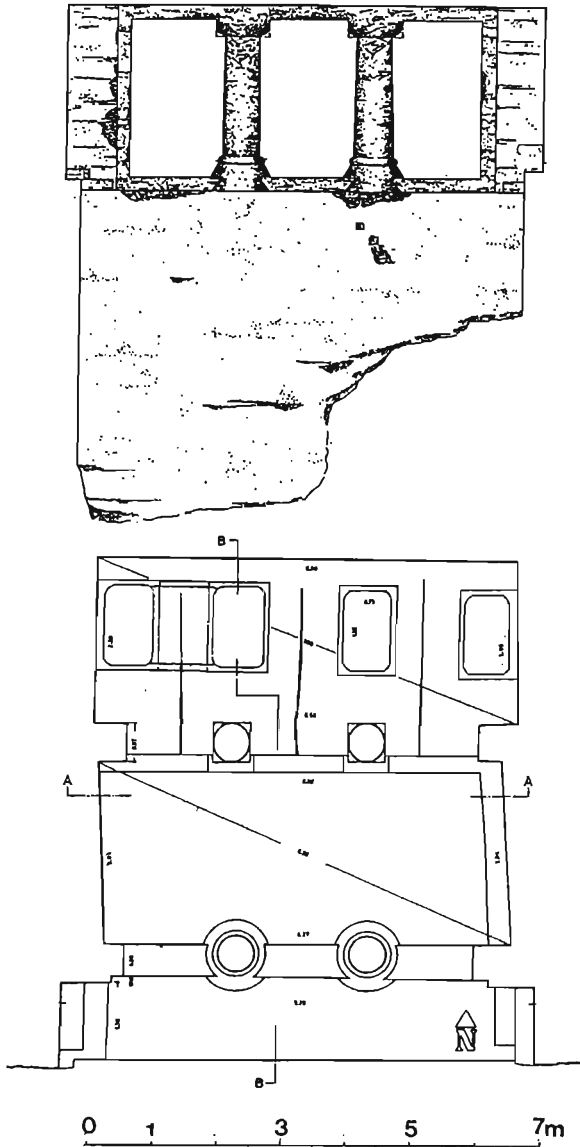
Fig. 4. Fakhrika, Kurdistan. Post-Achaemenid rock tomb; conus bases derived from bell-shaped Achaemenian column bases. Four small *astodan* troughs for bone burials inside; the two *astodan*s on the left later unified as cist for body burial.

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[20] D. Huff, "Das 'medische' Grabrelief von Deh Now", *Studia Iranica* 28, 1999, pp. 7–40, pp. 7 ff.

The tombs of Issakvand belong to the so-called Median rock tombs, which can be called Median only in regard of their location in Media, since their former dating in the Median period had been definitely rejected.[21] Even an Achaemenian date is very unlikely for stylistic, historical and political reasons. Instead the tombs very probably belong into the period between the downfall of the Achaemenid and the establishment of the Sasanian Empire, when, under the decentralized Seleucid and Parthian rule, petty kings and local dynasts, while strictly adhering to their Iranian nationalism and religion, freely made use of modern western influence on decorative achievements of their monuments.[22] Some of the „Median" rock tombs have rather small burial cists which perhaps can be taken as evidence for bone burials after exposure, e.g. those at Fakhrika[23] (fig. 4), Kur-u Kich and Qizqapan.[24] The most archaic and probably earliest of the group however, that at Sakhna, with tomb chambers at two levels, similar to some Urartian tombs, has huge, sarcophagus-like troughs in the upper chamber, like the royal Achaemenid rock tombs, which obviously both were designed for intact bodies. However, already Herzfeld has pointed out that the sarcophagi at Sakhna unlike those of the royal Achaemenian tombs seem never to have been covered by lids, perhaps in order to give access to vultures.[25] One may add that the single trough, which fills the lower chamber at Sakhna is largely oversized and disproportionate for the burial of a single person, as important as he may have been. Therefore at least this trough might have been used as a collective ossuary of cleaned bones.[26] In any case, strong evidence for the Zoroastrian context of the Sakhna tomb comes from the winged disc

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[21] v. Gall, "Zu den 'medischen' Felsgräbern in Nordwestiran und Iraqi-Kurdistan", pp. 29 ff.

[22] M. Boyce/F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrismus* 3 (Leiden/New York, 1991), pp. 94 ff.; D. Huff, "Das Grab von Doğubayazit. Seine Stellung unter den uratäischen und iranischen Felsgräbern", *Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara 22.–26.9.1986,* 1 (Ankara, 1990), pp. 87–95, pp. 91 ff.; Huff, "Das 'medische' Grabrelief von Deh Now", pp. 10 ff., with further literature on post-Achaemenid dating in footnote 10.

[23] D. Huff, "Das Felsgrab von Fakhrikah", *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 21, 1971, pp. 161–171, pp. 161 ff.; S. Shahbazi, *The Irano-Lycian Monuments* (Teheran, 1975), pp. 130 ff.

[24] H. v. Gall, "Das Felsgrab von Qizqapan. Ein Denkmal aus dem Umfeld der achämenidischen Königsstraße", *Baghdader Mitteilungen* 19, 1988, pp. 557–582, pp. 562 f.

[25] Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, p. 9 f.; 14 f.

[26] It has not yet been checked whether the lower chamber is contemporary with the upper one.

above the entrance door, which may have been the Achaemenian symbol for *khvarnah*.[27] As such the symbol would be an argument for a post-Achaemenid date of the tomb, because its appearance on a non-royal monument would never have been tolerated or survived during the period of Achaemenid rule, whereas after the fall of the dynasty a petty king easily might have claimed a royal status for himself.

There can be no doubt, that the royal Achaemenian rock tombs were the ancestors of all rock tombs in Iran, from the so-called Median ones to the smallest *dakhma* niches in Fars (fig. 2 and plates VIII/14). Whereas these latest niches were certainly ossuaries, the interpretation of the earlier ones remains doubtful, and the royal Achaemenian tombs can be scarcely regarded as anything else than veritable sepulchres for complete bodies. Exposure, however, must have existed already in Achaemenid Iran, because Herodotus, a contemporary, describes the practice so precisely that it could not have been invented.[28] His report seems to be remarkably authentic, as he stresses the secrecy with which the Persians obviously surrounded the practice towards foreigners, and as he does not conceal that his information was vague to some extend. Although claiming first that exposure was the general burial practice of the Persians, he afterwards restricts this only to the Magi, obviously the priests, but perhaps also a tribe of Medes, and in the end he somewhat desperately adds that the Persians cover the body with wax, before they bury it in the earth. It seems doubtful whether his last remark can be taken literally, but very clearly had he understood that the earth had to be protected from dead and decomposing matter. The royal Achaemenian tombs seem to have fulfilled this prescription by their position on or in stone, high above the humid fertile soil of the living.

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[27] D. Huff, "Probleme um Ahura Mazda und Khvarnah", *Avesta-Symposium, Akademie der Wissenschaften Berlin–Brandenburg und Botschaft der Republik Uzbekistan, Berlin 9.10. 2001* (in press).

[28] Herodotus I,140; M Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* 2 (Leiden/Köln, 1982), pp. 210 f.; M. Boyce, *Zoroastrianism. Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour* (Costa Mesa/New York, 1992), p. 131.

TROUGH-*DAKHMA*S, FROM ACHAEMENIAN
UNTIL EARLY ISLAMIC TIME

It has been only superficially noticed that beside the rock-chambers and -niches, there is rich archaeological evidence of another type of burial places which existed parallel to the chamber types in time and region. These are rock troughs of differing size and making, cut into the slopes and cliffs of the mountains of Fars, especially at Kuh-i Rahmat.[29] The obviously older type has great similarity with the rock-cut sarcophagi in the royal rock tombs and may therefore be dated in the Achaemenid or early post-Achaeminid period (plates VII/5). Straight and precisely cut they are deep and long enough for a stretched out body and are surrounded by a carefully smoothened, sunk down or at least flat rim as impost of a massive lid, which is preserved only in few cases. They are often interpreted as exposure troughs, and they may have served as such in primary or secondary use, but as the lids show, they were covered like coffins, at least in their original destination. Many of them, however, are still covered with rough, natural boulders, perhaps from a later, secondary use. All these big, coffin-like troughs as well as the later, smaller ones have drains around their rim for leading off surface water, and many of the older type are placed under overhanging rock or in grottos, probably also for protection from rain.

At a not precisely definable time, but at least in the Sasanian period, an inconspicuous but decisive technical innovation was introduced. In addition to the sunk down or levelled impost rim a small, elevated ridge was left standing out from the rock around the edge of the trough proper. Its purpose was clearly twofold: an additional protection against intruding surface water and to provide a safe, undisplaceable seat for an overlapping lid.[30] Troughs with ridge differ widely in size and quality of workmanship (fig. 5). Some are of body-size, up to 1.80 m long. To them belong the above mentioned so-called exposure pits in Bishapur. As for the low *pavi*-like 'exposure platforms' in Bishapur, their surrounding levelled strip of bedrock seems to have been specially prepared

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[29] Huff, "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars I. Gräber", pp. 164 ff.; Boucharlat, "Pratiques funéraires à l'époque sasanide dans le sud de l'Iran", p. 75.

[30] There is a parallel development in Iranian pottery types, where vessels with Y-shaped rim and overlapping, conical or convex lids appear in Sasanian time. – The very properly carved so-called fire altars on the acropolis of Limyra at the south coast of Asia Minor seem to belong to the same type of trough-*dakhma*s. See D. Huff, "Feueraltäre in Limyra", *XI. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara 5.–9.9.1990* (Ankara, 1994), pp. 295–299.

as an impost for a hollowed out lid, so that after the period of decarnation the remaining bones on the platforms, as well as in the troughs, may have been safely covered. Significantly, it was in the region of Bishapur, that several fragments of stone lids with funeral inscriptions were found.[31]
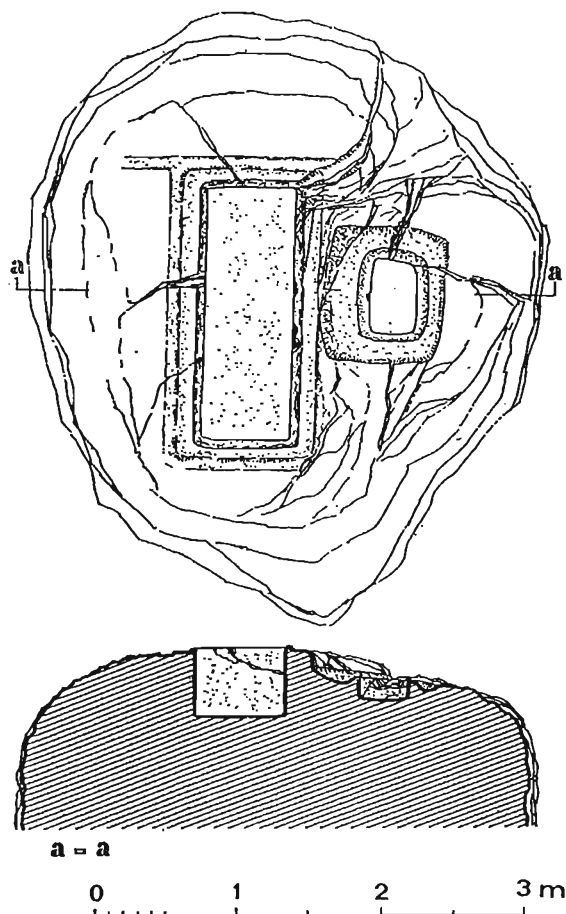
Fig. 5. Hussein Kuh, near Naqsh-i Rustam. Two post-Achaemenian burial troughs
with surrounding ridge; the larger, older one for body burial,
the small *astodan* for bone burial; lids missing.

[31] Ph. Gignoux , "Notes d'épigraphie et d'histoire sasanides", *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à E. Benveniste* (Paris, 1975), pp. 213–223, pp. 221 ff.; A. Tafazzoli, "L'inscription funéraire de Kazerun II (Parisan)", *Studia Iranica* 20, 1991, pp. 197–202; F. de Blois, "Middle-Persian Funerary Inscriptions from South-Western Iran", *Medioiranica. Proceedings of the International Colloqium, Leuven 21.–23.5.1990* (Leuven, 1993), pp. 30–43; A. Tafazzoli/E. Sheikh-al-Hokamayi, "The Pahlavi Funerary Inscription from Mashtan (Kazerun III)", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 27, 1994, pp. 265–267.

In the region of Persepolis only a minority of the trough-*dakhma*s is rather well cut with straight outlines. The vast majority however is very small, ca. 0.50 m; medium sized ones measure between 0.80 and 1.30 m. They often are crudely carved with irregular, rounded edges, and especially the small ones widen towards the bottom, to gain interior volume.

The best known and most important example of a trough-*dakhma* with ridges is the so-called Houz-i Dukhtar-i Gabr at Eqlid with its long but damaged and confusing inscription, which carries a date corresponding to 638 A.D., briefly before the fall of the Sasanian Empire[32] (plates VIII/12). The problem for the interpretation of this well cut, medium sized (ca. 1.30 m) but rather shallow (ca. 0.30 m) monument is the occurrence of the term *dakhma* twice and in different contexts of the inscription. Like in the inscriptions of cavern- and niche-*dakhma*s the trough at first is called a *dakhma*, which was ordered to be made by a high official, a margrave of Bishapur, for another person, "the dear son of ..." The text continues with the date of the death and gives the following day as the date for placing the body at the *dakhma*, in any case the exposure site. Consequently a discussion arose, whether the monument was the place for exposure, or an ossuary, or the container for a metal coffin. For a realistic understanding we have to consider that this *dakhma* was not prepared by a person for himself in advance as his own future sepulchre, but by one person for somebody else, who, as the inscription insinuated, died all at a sudden. This would exclude an interpretation of the monument as an exposure site, because its preparation must have taken quite a long time; it never could have been finished from the day of death until exposure, which had to follow as soon as possible, that means from one day to the other. The same consideration also rules out the idea of a double function, at first exposure site and later preserving the cleaned bones by closing the lid. In addition, the situation of the tomb at the foot of a rocky outcrop, very close to fertile soil and running water, is scarcely in accordance with the prescription for an exposure site, but was frequently chosen for *astodan*s. All this, together with the ridge, indicating a vanished lid, speaks clearly in favour of a bone recep-

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[32] G. Gropp, "Einige neuentdeckte Inschriften aus sasanidischer Zeit", W. Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 229–261, pp. 237 ff.; R.N. Frye, "Funerary Inscriptions in Pahlavi from Fars", *W.B. Hennig Memorial Volume* (London, 1970), pp. 152–156, pp. 155 f.; de Blois, "Middle-Persian Funerary Inscriptions from South-Western Iran", pp. 34 ff.; P.O. Skjærvø, "Medioiranica", *Kratylos* 41, 1996, pp. 107–113.

tacle, into which the remains of the skeleton were brought from an expo-
sure site and covered by a lid, after the body had been exposed for de-
carnation for about one year's time. Taking into account a double mean-
ing of the term *dakhma*—exposure site as well as *astodan*—offers the
most probable solution for overcoming the dilema.

The so-called sarcophagus of Dorudzan was, at the time of its discov-
ery during road construction, the sole completely preserved monument of
this type[33] (fig. 6).
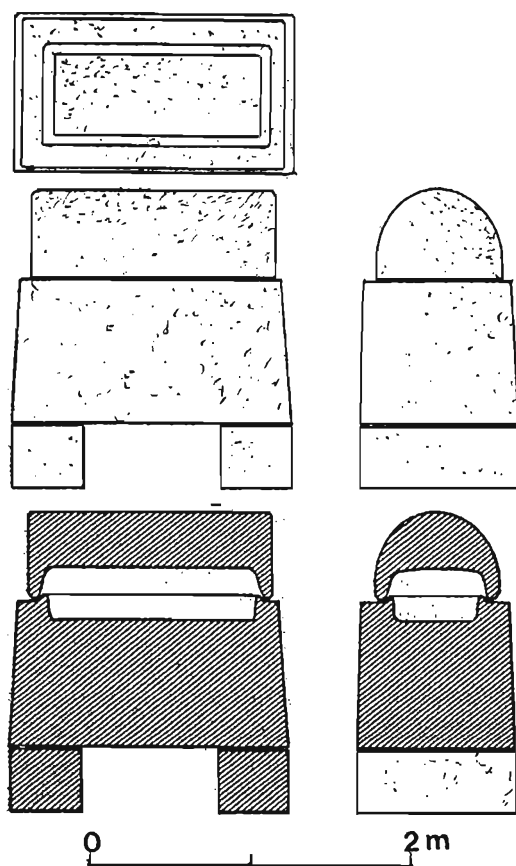
Fig. 6. Dorudzan. Sarcophag-*dakhma*; lid reconstructed from fragments.

Nearly identical in size with the Houz-i Dukhtar-i Gabr, it was not
carved from the living rock but as a freestanding stone cube with a high
lid, shaped like a barrel vault, thus imitating a small vaulted building.

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[33] M. Nicol, "Rescue Excavations near Dorudzan", *East and West NS* 20, 1970, pp.
245–284, pp. 283 f.; Huff, "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars I. Grä-
ber", pp. 165, 172.

The trough cut into its surface, is even less deep than that in Eqlid (15 cm) but space was gained by the hollowed out lid. The bottom of the block with 75 cm has five times the depth of the trough. This and two stone baulks, lifting the block above the gravel ground of the mountain slope where it was placed, were perhaps meant to isolate the earth from the bones, although these were regarded as ritually clean after exposure. The different parts of this monument are dispersed now, the lid smashed to pieces, exemplary for the fate of all the other lids of trough-*dakhma*s.

Contrary to the larger troughs, which are generally regarded as tombs of some kind, the very small ones were interpreted as fire bowls or secondary fire altars. In fact, however their original purpose as ossuaries is proven beyond doubt by three of the four well known and repeatedly published *dakhma* inscriptions of Istakhr/Takht-i Ta'us[34] (plates VI/3 and VII/8). With their texts precisely following the phraseology of the inscriptions at niche- or cavern-*dakhma*s the tablets are chiselled in a vertical cliff of Kuh-i Rahmat, immediately under a step back of the bedrock. On the horizontal surface of the step back three troughs are cut into the bedrock, each directly above one of the inscriptions; beyond any doubt the troughs are the mentioned *dakhma*s. With elevated ridges, water drains and with similar dimensions they are perfectly corresponding with the other pseudo fire bowls.[35] The trough above the tablet of poorest quality, obviously the latest one, is very shallow and perhaps unfinished. The two other tablets have the dates 33 and 43 of the Yazdegird area, or 664 and 674 A.D.,[36] that is immediately after the Arab conquest.

Looking at the archaeological monuments we have to recognize that beside the chamber tombs, which developed from sizable, properly cut rooms to small, poorly carved caverns and niches, there was a parallel development of rock- or stone-cut tomb cists, originally covered by lids,

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[34] Gropp, "Einige neuentdeckte Inschriften aus sasanidischer Zeit", pp. 285 ff.; Frye, "Funerary Inscriptions in Pahlavi from Fars", pp. 152 ff.

[35] Huff, "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars I. Gräber", pp. 170 f., fig. 15, p. 173, pl. 54, 2–4; D. Huff, "'Feueraltäre' und Astodane: Untersuchungen zur zoroastrischen Grabarchitektur", *Proceedings of the Second European Conference of Iranian Studies, Bamberg 30.9.–4.10.1991* (Roma, 1995), pp. 297–303, pp. 299 ff., pl. XXXIII f.; D. Huff, "Fire Altars and Astodans", *The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Persia. New Light on the Parthian and and Sasanian Empires*, eds. V. Sarkhosh Curtis/R. Hillenbrand/J.M. Rogers (London, 1998), pp. 74–83, pp. 78 ff., pl. VIII ff.

[36] Gropp, "Einige neuentdeckte Inschriften aus sasanidischer Zeit", pp. 259 f. – According to personal information by G. Gropp the date in the last inscription might also be read as 33, due to its poor quality.

which also started in the Achaemenid period with body-sized sepulchres and ended up as small trough-*dakhma*s in early Islamic time. Evidence that both, and other, still to be mentioned types were constructed at least up to the 9th cent. A.D. can be derived from remarks in the Dadistan-i Dinik, a book of religious opinions and rules, composed by the high priest of Fars and Kirman, Manuchihir, probably shortly before 881 A.D. Concerning the preservation of bones after exposure,[37] he first summarizes the passages of the Videvdat, and then recommends as more authoritative a "vault of solid stone" which should be covered or closed also by a "single stone"; this ought to have a hole (to let sunlight in) and should be fixed with "stone and mortar". The text obviously cannot be understood and translated in a sufficiently clear and precise way, especially the term *nihumbag*, which must mean the closing slab of stone or the lid, defying any unambiguous definition.[38] Regarding his differing recommendation, Manuchihir seems to have been somewhat disproving of the prescription of the Videvdat, which originally seems to mean a built up, free standing construction. His recommendation could be applied to both types, the cavern- and the trough-*dakhma*s. However, regarding technical details as well as the aspect of security for the *dakhma*s, which certainly had turned precarious after the Islamic conquest, when Zoroastrians became a tolerated, but clearly inferior caste of the society and exposure was abhorrent for the ruling Muslim class, the cavern- and niche-*dakhma*s might have been the preferred type at that time. They could be placed high enough in the cliffs to be out of reach for unequipped vandalizing hooligans, whereas the trough-*dakhma*s, as well as separately built constructions, could be easily desecrated and destroyed. Moreover, a hole in the 'cover' of a rock-*dakhma* is more likely in the stone slab which closed the niche or cavern, than in the lid of the troughs, where it could let in rain water; and mortar and (small) stones are essential for fixing a vertical stone slab, but not for a fitting lid.

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[37] Dadistan-i Dinik, by Manuskihar, transl. E.W. West (Sacred Books of the East 18; Delhi, 1882), pp. 43 f., xviii, 2–4.

[38] According to information by A. Tafazzoli (letter from 11.5.1984) "nihumbag ... means any kind of 'covering'".

FREESTANDING FUNERAL MONUMENTS
(ROCK-CUT AND CONSTRUCTED)

The *dakhma* inscriptions of Istakhr/Takht-i Ta'us do not only prove that the so-called fire bowls in fact were ossuaries or *astodan*s. They are also determining the interpretation of the small but well-known and famous group of the so-called rock-cut fire altars, with the twin monuments at Naqsh-i Rustam as their most prominent representatives (plates VIII/9). It were in fact these rock 'altars' which instigated the interpretation of the 'fire bowls' as inferior altars, because the troughs or 'bowls' of both have identical dimensions, shapes and details: a ridge around the opening and a widening interior towards the bottom. The Naqsh-i Rustam twin monuments laid the ground for the definition as altars, although already in 1897 Ferdinand Justi wrote that "the usual assumption that the Naqsh-i Rustam monuments were fire altars can not be sustained, because a sacred fire can burn only in a dark room".[39] According to the ritual prescriptions the sun must not shine on a consecrated fire, because its super power would abash the fire; and for similar reasons two sacred fires should never burn side by side[40]; for incense burners or non-consecrated fires the pair seems rather too luxurious. On the other hand the monuments fit in well as reliquary-like shrines for the remainders of e.g. a couple; we had seen that niche- and cavern-*dakhma*s very frequently were arranged in pairs and always slightly different in size, certainly as tombs of closely related persons, differing in rank. This also is true for the Naqsh-i Rustam twin monuments, with the left one being markedly smaller than the right one. Like the niche-*dakhma*s and in some cases also the sarcophagus-like trough-*dakhma*s, the Naqsh-i Rustam twin monument clearly imitates contemporary Sasanian architecture, with columns, arches, pinnacles and—restored—with cupola-shaped lids (fig. 7). The Kuh-i Shahrak monument[41] as well as others may have had a barrel-shaped lid, corresponding with the Dorudzan sarcophagus, which stood on the opposite slope of the valley.

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[39] F. Justi, "Die älteste iranische Religion und ihr Stifter Zarathustra", *Preussische Jahrbücher* 88, 1897, pp. 55–86, p. 65, footnote 24.– For the following see also Huff, "'Feueraltäre' und Astodane: Untersuchungen zur zoroastrischen Grabarchitektur", pp. 299 ff. and Huff, "Fire Altars and Astodans", pp. 78 ff.

[40] B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz* (Bombay, 1932), pp. 56 f.

[41] D. Stronach, "The Kuh-i Shahrak Fire Altar", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 25, 1966, pp. 217–227, pp. 217 ff.

Most of the so-called rock altars, including the Naqsh-i Rustam twins, are much too high to be used and attended as fire altars. The gigantic, vertically cut cube of the Darrehbarreh monument near Naqsh-i Rustam[42] has on its platform in more than 3 m height three 'bowls' or troughs and in addition a niche-*dakhma* in the barrel shaped central outcrop. To minister and maintain any kind of fire there would have been rather inconvenient, whereas the place might have been an ideal Zoroastrian clan- or family-cemetery.
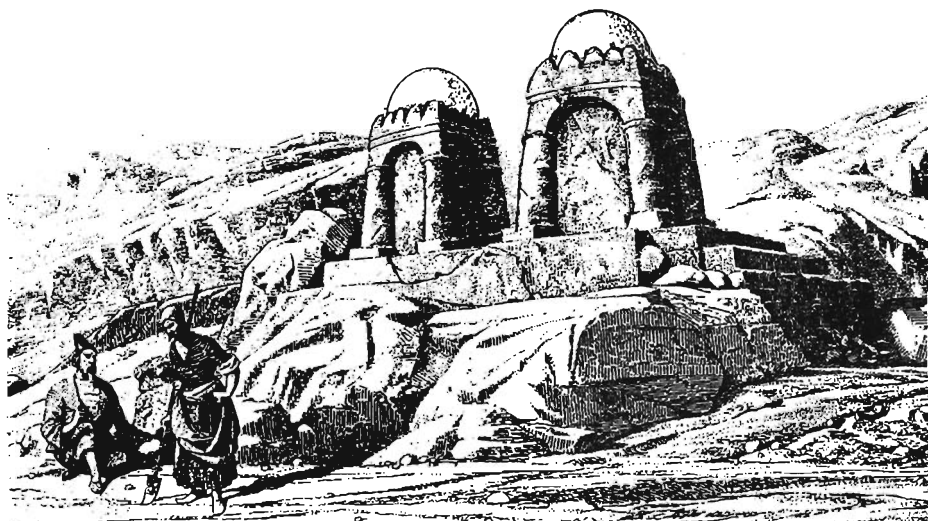
Fig. 7. Naqsh-I Rustam. So-called twin fire altars. Monumental trough *dakhma*s, restored with cupola-shaped lids
(After E. Flandin/P. Coste, Voyage en Perse, Paris 1843–1854, vol. IV Pl. 180)

Also three meters high is the monolithic pillar at Tang-i Karam. Restored with a cupola-shaped lid, covering the oval trough on its top, it becomes an impressive tower- or pillar-*dakhma* (fig. 8). Most of its badly weather-worn inscriptions are illegible or uncertain at least; some deciphered passages however are in perfect accordance with *dakhma* inscriptions.[43]

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[42] Stronach, "The Kuh-i Shahrak Fire Altar", p. 224.

[43] Gropp/Nadjmabadi, "Eine Reise in West- und Südiran", pp. 204 f. L. Trümpelmann, "Sasanian Graves and Burial Customs", *Arabie orientale, Mesopotamie et Iran méridional de l'Age du Fer au début de la période islamique* (Paris, 1984), pp. 317–329, p. 325, correctly understood the funerary character of the inscription. But his reconstruction as support for a pithos grave is unlikely and unnecessary.

The Tang-i Karam monument, which is not cut from the living rock but erected as a monolithic pillar, opens up our view for a large group of columnar monuments, of which one example has been preserved with all its details. Near the remote village of Pengan stone fragments were found, parts of which were interpreted as another open-air fire altar, regardless of its height of more than two meters.

Fig. 8. Tang-i Karam. Pillar-*dakhma* with traces of funerary inscription, Sasanian; restored with cupola-shaped lid (After W. Ouseley, Travels in Various Countries of the East, London 1819–1823, vol. 2 Pl. 32).

In fact, all components can be composed to one single monument, consisting of a footing boulder, a massive, round column shaft, a square block with a round trough with surrounding ridge and a massive, high, globular-conical lid, slightly carved out from below[44] (fig. 9).

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[44] L. Vanden Berghe, "L'autel du feu de Qanat-i Bagh", *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin Emerito Oblata* (Acta Iranica 23; Leiden, 1984), pp. 511–518, p. 514, pl. 64; D. Huff, "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars II. Das Säulenmonument von Pengan", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 25, 1992, pp. 207–217, pp. 207 ff.
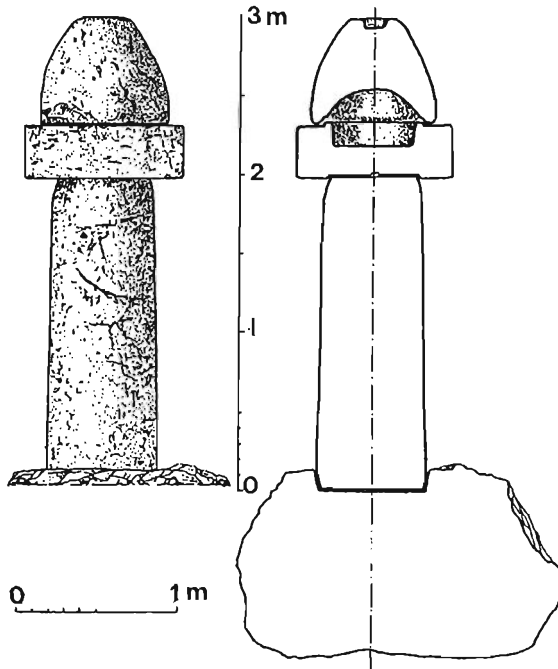
Fig. 9. Sasanian pillar-*dakhma* near Pengan

There is scarcely any other explanation than that of an *astodan*, perhaps of a pious landlord in the loneliness of his hunting grounds. Smaller but essentially of the same type is the pillar monument at Qanat-i Bagh[45] (fig. 10).
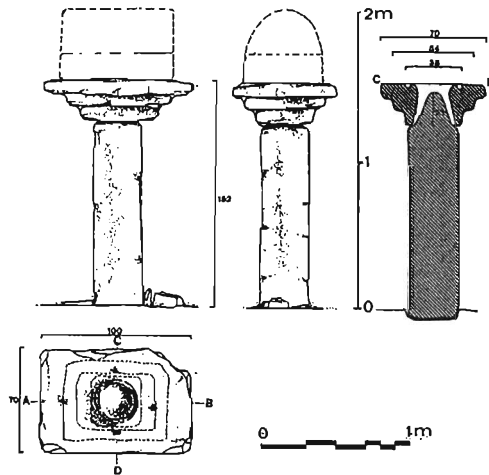
Fig. 10. Sasanain pillar-*dakhma* at Qanat-i Bagh (after Vanden Berghe 1984);
ossuary-box hypothetically restored.

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[45] Vanden Berghe, "L'autel du feu de Qanat-i Bagh", pp. 511 ff.

Here a rectangular three-stepped slab of stone was fixed on top of the square shaft by a hollow and a plug. Some kinds of dowel holes indicate that something was safely fixed on the slab. The monument stands on a rocky mountain crest, and like the Pengan monument in a lonely, deserted landscape, distant from any settlement and with no traces of a building around it or nearby; instead of an unusual rectangular 'fire bowl' we may assume that it carried a box-shaped ossuary.

A well-known specimen of columnar monuments, and the only one still *in situ,* is that on the western spur of Hussein Kuh, above the relief of Ardashir I.[46] (plates XII/27). It stands fixed in a perfectly fitting circular hollow in the rocky ground. Dozens of similar hollows prove that the Naqsh-i Rustam column was not unique (plates VII/5). The hollows, erroneously interpreted as fire bowls too, must not be mixed up with the trough-*dakhma*s. Unlike those they are distinguished by a smaller size, lack of a ridge, a mostly precise circular, rarely square outline and a cylindrical, vertical interior, not widening towards the bottom. Some of them are not just cut into the natural bedrock but in the surface of rock-cut sculptures, which also are regarded as 'fire bowls'. In fact these do not only look like column bases, but they are bases[47] (plates VIII/10). Contrary to western classical technique, plugging stone columns was normal use in post-Achaemenid Iranian architecture. The occurrence of columnar monuments or their footings mostly together with *dakhma*s, and especially frequent in the vast sepulchral area on Hussein Kuh, indicates that they also belonged into a funerary context (plates VI/4). Although we cannot exclude, that they too carried bone receptacles, like the much more massive shaft of the Pengan monument, there is no proof of that possibility; the plain, horizontal top of the Naqsh-i Rustam column at least does not show any traces of bonding like the Qanat-i Bagh shaft does. There however, a rather crude technique was chosen, and the Naqsh-i Rustam columns and other ones might have been plugged with their upper end into a precisely fitting, cylindrical hollow in the bottom

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[46] K. Schippmann, "Hinweise auf einige kleinere Monumente bei Naqš-i Rustam", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran NS* 4, 1971, pp. 187–191, pp. 189 f.

[47] L. Vanden Berghe, "Monuments récemment découverts en Iran Méridional", *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 10, 1953, pp. 5 f., fig. 2–3; L. Vanden Berghe, "Archaeologische Navorsingen in de Omstreken van Persepolis", *Jaarbericht No. 13. Ex Oriente Lux* 1953–1954, pp. 394–408, pp. 406 f. pl. 87 a. d.; D. Huff, "Nachtrag zur zoroastrischen Grabarchitektur in der Persis: die sogenannten Feuerlöcher", *Koldewey-Gesellschaft. Bericht über die 36. Tagung für Ausgrabungswissenschaft und Bauforschung 23.–27.5.1990 in Kronach* (Bonn, 1992), pp. 31–33.

or support of an ossuary, so that no traces can be seen at the column.

Another explanation than support of a bone receptacle may be insinuated by the Middle-Persian inscription on the reused Achaemenian column from Bagh-i Lardi, now in Persepolis, which obviously had been reworked to be bonded with another block of stone. The inscription deplores the death of the poor, miserable Farrukhzad and seems to refer to solemn meals, but according to the translations, without mentioning the term *dakhma*.[48] It seems therefore, that this column was a memorial monument for somebody who had not got an *astodan*, and if this proves correct, this would imply that there was a tradition of funeral monuments without a tomb. The Naqsh-i Rustam column does not have a memorial inscription. However, in Pasargadae four assumed 'fire bowls' were observed in the vicinity of a flat outcrop of rock with some badly eroded Pahlavi inscriptions, two with clearly funerary character. One of them obviously begins with the usual "this *dakhma*", another promises paradise as reward. One of the hollows is described as a typical footing hollow of a column, with vertical side wall and flat bottom. Another one, the deepest, seems to have a surrounding ridge and to widen downwards, according to the published photograph; this could be a round trough-*dakhma*.[49] Although there is no proof for the correlation of the inscriptions and the hollows, which are clearly the surviving traces of funeral monuments, there is the possibility, that any kind of funerary inscription might have been engraved in the bedrock nearby instead on the monument itself.

There were other free-standing *dakhmas*, and keeping in mind the prescription of the *Videvdat*, which clearly speaks of a built, not rock-cut construction, they seem to have been the prevailing type, at least in Sasanian time. That they vanished with few exceptions and only the rock-cut *dakhmas* survived is easily understandable, regarding their extremely endangered situation under Islamic rule, a situation which may have been the background for Manuchihr's recommendation in his Dadistan-i Dinik.

In fact, Iranian funerary architecture began with freestanding monuments, the tomb of Cyrus in Pasargadae (plates V/1) and its unfinished

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[48] J. de Menasce, "Inscriptions Pehlevis en écriture cursive III. L'inscription sur colonne trouvée à Persepolis", *Journal Asiatique* 244, 1956, pp. 428–431, pp. 428 ff.; W.B. Henning, *Iranistik* (Handbuch der Orientalistik 1,4; Leiden/Köln, 1958), p. 48; Frye, "Funerary Inscriptions in Pahlavi from Fars", p. 156.

[49] Stronach, *Pasargadae* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 163 ff., pl. 137 b.c.

duplicate the Takht-i Gohar or Takht-i Rustam near Istakhr.[50] That the Achaemenid kings were not exposed after death is not only proven by the huge sepulchral cists in the rock tombs but even more clearly by the Greek reports about the looting of Cyrus' tomb, where the evidently mummified body, not bones, was torn out from the golden coffin, probably of a tub-like Mesopotamian type.[51] The fact that the tomb chamber was not an underground vault but a veritable house on top of an artificial stone mountain, separating it from the ground of the plain, may well be understood as the intention to observe the Zoroastrian interdiction of polluting the good earth, while at the same time avoiding exposure.[52]

Although Darius definitely replaced the freestanding type by the from now on obligatory royal rock-cut chamber tomb, the Cyrus-type reappeared later with the Gur-i Dukhtar[53] at Buzpar near Sarmashhad (fig. 11). Whether this rather weak remake of the original can still be dated in the Achaemenid period seems very doubtful for stylistic and technical reasons. The disproportion of the low, three-stepped substructure and the comparatively big tomb-house may be a result of the character of the building, now as a mere bone receptacle, of which no pollution was expected. The low, squad door, wider than high, corresponds with the door proportions of the later type of post-Achaemenian rock tombs like Issak-vand / Deh-i Now and Akhur-i Rustam. The walls are not built of layers of freestones, but composed of comparatively thin but large slabs and the roof is a sophisticated, unweighty construction of a barrel-shaped cover, like a lid, hidden between horizontal and sloping slabs and two gabled front parts. Highly developed building techniques like that are untypical for Achaemenid architecture. The Gur-i Dukhtar very probably is a post-Achaemenid copy of the free-standing Cyrus-type of a royal tomb in a similar way, as the Da-u Dukhtar at Fahlian,[54] the Persian relative of the

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[50] Stronach, *Pasargadae*, pp. 302 ff.

[51] Strabo, *Geographikon* 15,3,7; Arrian, *Anabasis* 6,29,1–7; J. Curtis, "Late Assyrian Bronze Coffins", *Anatolian Studies* 33, 1983, pp. 85–95, pp. 85 ff.; A. Alizadeh, "A Tomb of the Neo Elamite Period at Arjan, Near Behbehan", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 18, 1985, pp. 49–73, pp. 49 ff.

[52] Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* 2, pp. 56 f.; Stronach, *Pasargadae* (Oxford, 1978), p. 43; S. Shahbazi, "Astodan", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 2 (London/New York, 1987), pp. 851–853, p. 852; G. Ahn, *Religiöse Herrscherlegitimation im achämenidischen Iran* (Acta Iranica 31; Leiden/Louvain, 1992), pp. 125 f.; J. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism* (Austin, 1989), p. 17.

[53] Stronach, *Pasargadae*, pp. 300 ff.

[54] Stronach, *Pasargadae*, p. 304; H. v. Gall, "Da-o Doktar", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*,

so-called Median rock tombs, is a post-Achaemenid copy of the Darius-type of the royal rock tombs of Naqsh-i Rustam and Persepolis.
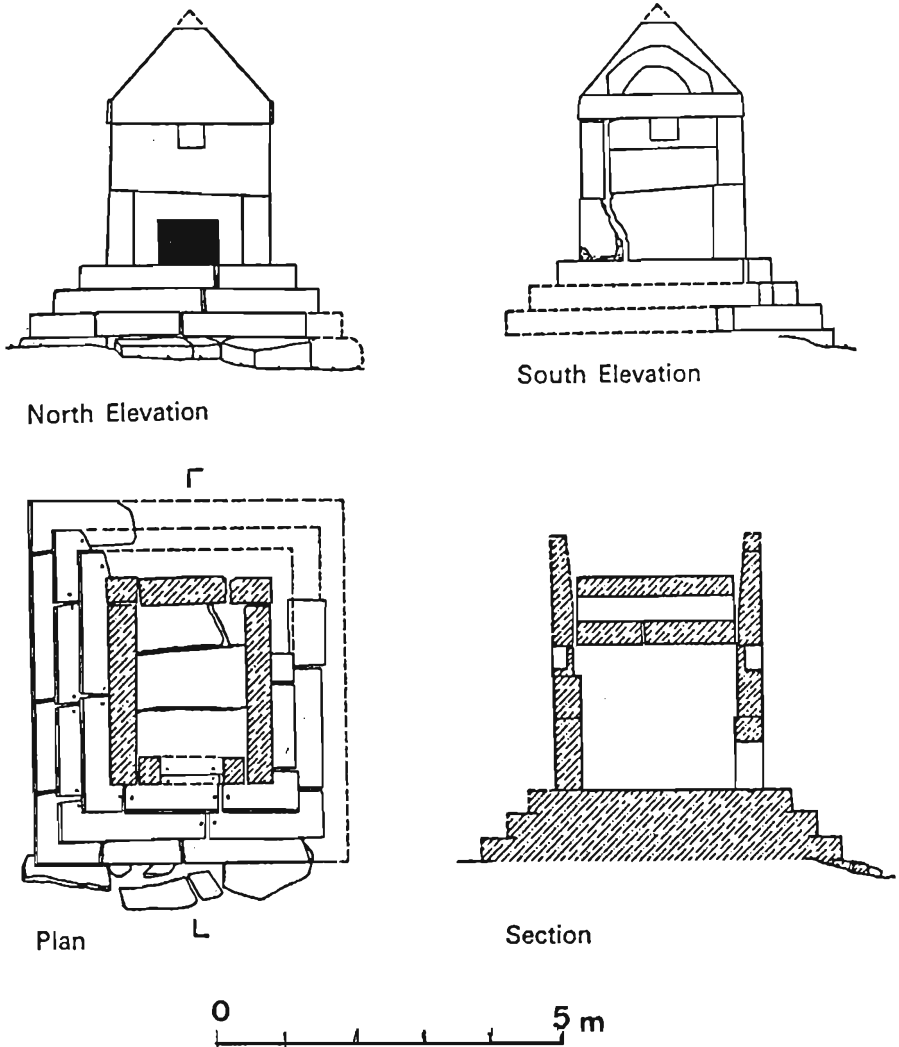
Fig. 11. Buzpar, Gur-i Dukhtar. Post-Achaemenian imitation of tomb of Cyrus
(after Stronach 1978).

On the plateau of Hussein Kuh, the lower, rock-cut parts of two rooms are preserved, one with a Hellenizing *cline,* another with a small ante-chamber with polished floor for the mourners, whereas the interior is only cut roughly[55] (fig. 12). It is unknown whether and how the now

vol. 6 (Costa Mesa, 1993), pp. 529–530, p. 529.

[55] W. Kleiss, "Beobachtungen in der Umgebung von Persepolis und Naqsh-i Rustam",

vanished upper part, probably built of mud bricks or stone, was covered. Regarding the funeral character of the whole mountain, there can be no doubt that these were mausoleums, certainly of post-Achaemenid date.
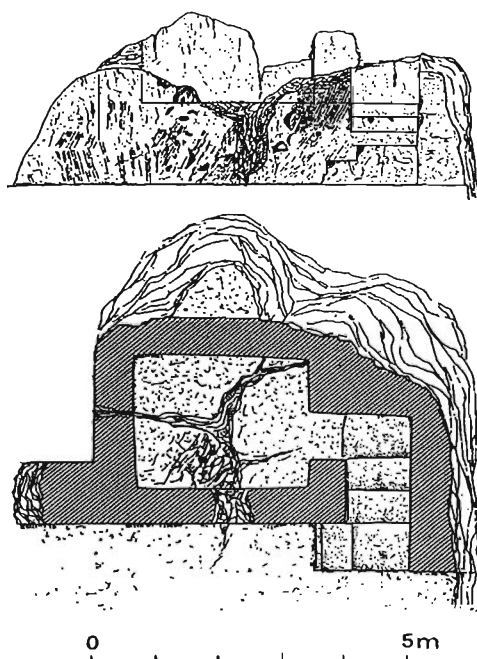
Fig. 12. Hussein Kuh. Rock-cut remainders of presumed mausoleum above Naqsh-i Rustam; post-Achaemenian.

The much-debated tower of Nurabad has not yet found a more convincing explanation than that of a *dakhma* or *astodan*[56] (plates V/2). It per-

Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran NS 9, 1976, pp. 131–150, pp. 145 f.; K. Schippmann, "Hinweise auf einige kleinere Monumente bei Naqš-i Rustam", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran NS* 4, 1971, pp. 187–191, pp. 188 f.; Huff, "Zum Problem zoroastrischer Grabanlagen in Fars I. Gräber", pp. 125 ff.

[56] D. Huff, "Nurabad", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, NS 8, 1975, pp. 167–209. The possibility that the tower also served for exposure, as postulated by F. Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation*, p. 234, can not be excluded. But its design is only in accordance with the Videvdat prescriptions for the bone receptacle, whereas it fails to meet the preconditions for an exposure site, because it prevents access for dogs and similar animals, which originally were at least as important for decarnation as vultures. References to *naus* and the *dakhma*s of Kerman are not substantial. The 10th century 'sutudan' of Ray seems to have had similar features as the Nurabad tower. However, we have to consider that it was built more than half a millennium later and under the completely different conditions of an Islamic environment. See below and Nizam-al Mulk, *The Book of Gov-*

fectly fits in with the prescriptions of the *Videvdat*, and it might have been stylistically inspired by the tomb towers of Palmyra; according to its building technique it clearly belongs to the early Sasanian architectural group of nearby Bishapur. Highly intriguing is its possible relation to the tower of Paikuli, although the long inscription of Narse there does not mention a funeral purpose.[57]

To sum up, we come to the conclusion, that there was a surprisingly great variety of funerary monuments in pre-Islamic Iran, which can be regarded as Zoroastrian or Mazdayasnian, all starting with the Achaemenids and continuing, at least partly, into early Islamic time.[58] Beside the two well represented types of rock-cut chamber-*dakhma*s and trough-*dakhma*s there were different kinds of free-standing tombs, of which the type of the major so-called rock altars essentially were nothing but specially elaborate trough-*dakhma*s. There is no firm archaeological evidence for a wide-spread practice of exposure of the dead in Achaemenian time, although it must have existed according to Herodotus, and the comparative scarcity of Achaemenid earth burials on the inner Iranian plateau may be taken as an evidence 'ex silentio'. It seems that the Zoroastrian rules of purity were alternatively followed by at least keeping away the dead body from humid and fertile soil. Exposure may have been a funerary practice, but not for everybody, similarly as it is practiced by some Buddhist societies until today.

It seems that exposure gained ground during the Parthian period, according to western reports as well as to rock chamber-tombs, which can be regarded as *astodan*s, and it became more or less obligatory under the Sasanians. With the 'exposure platforms' at Bishapur we have perhaps the only archaeological evidence for exposure itself, and from the Sasanian period comes the overwhelming majority of different types of bone receptacles. It obviously was the rock-cut *dakhma*s, which mainly survived the Arab conquest, but also some free-standing *dakhma*s must have been built in early Islamic time.

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ernment or Rules for Kings, transl. H. Darke (London, 1978), p. 167.

[57] E. Herzfeld, *Die Aufnahme des sasanidischen Denkmals von Paikuli* (Abhandlungen der Königlich-preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse 1; Berlin, 1914). The Sasanian re-use of the Ka'aba-i Zardusht with its inscriptions of Shapur I. and Kartir deserves interest in this context. See A. Demandt, "Studien zur Ka'aba-i- Zerdoscht", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1968, pp. 520–540, pp. 528 f.

[58] Huff, "Sassanidische Architektuur", pp. 58 ff.; Huff, "'Feueraltäre' und Astodane: Untersuchungen zur zoroastrischen Grabarchitektur", pp. 297 ff.; Huff, "Fire Altars and Astodans", pp. 74 ff.

ISLAMIC PERIOD

Nizam-al Mulk reports the characteristic story of an *astodan* ('sutudan'), which was built by a rich Zoroastrian for himself on a mountain outside Ray in the late 10th century.[59] It was expropriated by a Muslim zealot, who went up on its top just before it was taken into use and shouted the Islamic call for prayer. No description of the building is given, except for the enigmatic specification *bi du pushish* "with two envelopes". The term *astodan,* if it was chosen intentionally by the author, would define the structure as a bone receptacle; but the term seems to have been a synonym for grave, like *dakhma*, an indication that Zoroastrian bone receptacles were omnipresent in early Islamic Iran. The later popular name of this 'sutudan', "The General's Look-out", as well as the information, that this 'tower' could only be entered by ladders, proves that it was rather high with no entrance at ground level. All this perfectly fits in with a structure like the early Sasanian tower of Nurabad. However, from the fact that its platform was used as the daily meeting place for a group of 30 to 40 people, it can be concluded that it also was rather spacious. Therefore it could have served for exposure as well. If we insinuate that "with two envelopes" means two-storied (in its upper part), we might reconstruct a tower with a massive lower part, a roof-platform for exposure and with vaulted room or rooms in between for preserving the clean bones; of course this remains a purely hypothetical solution.

Nevertheless, the *astodan* of Ray may perhaps have been some kind of predecessor of the modern so-called towers of silence, which serve for exposure and storage of the cleaned bones alike. There is, however, no evidence that a combined type of *dakhma* already existed in pre-Islamic time, when there was no need for this combination. The towers of silence are thought to have evolved in Iran during the early Islamic centuries and the design to have been taken over by the Indian Parsis.[60] Enlarged and enriched by a central well or shaft for the cleaned bones the structure found its final and canonical form in the impressive, circular type of buildings which even today is called *dakhma* by the indigenous people in India and Iran, and tower of silence by Westerners[61] (fig.

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[59] Nizam-al Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, p. 167.

[60] M. Boyce, "An Old Village *Dakhma* of Iran", *Memorial Jean de Menasce,* eds Ph. Gignoux/A. Tavazzoli (Louvain, 1974), pp. 3–9, p. 4; M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London, 1987), pp. 157 f.

[61] Modi, *The Funeral Ceremonies of the Parsees. Their Origin and Explanation*, pp. 19 ff.; Kotwal, "The Parsi Dakhma: its History and Consecration", pp. 161 ff.

13). This type was introduced or re-introduced from India to the surviving Zoroastrian communities in Iran, Yazd, Kerman and, in a slightly different way at Teheran, in the second half of the 19th century by the Parsi agent Manekji Limji Hataria.[62] It is remarkable that up to the beginning 20th century the remembrance was alive among Iranian Zoroastrians, that the common and combined *dakhma* was a result of the Islamic conquest, and that originally, under Sasanian rule one person had his proper *dakhma*[63]; remembered were of course only the individual *astodan*s of the rich.
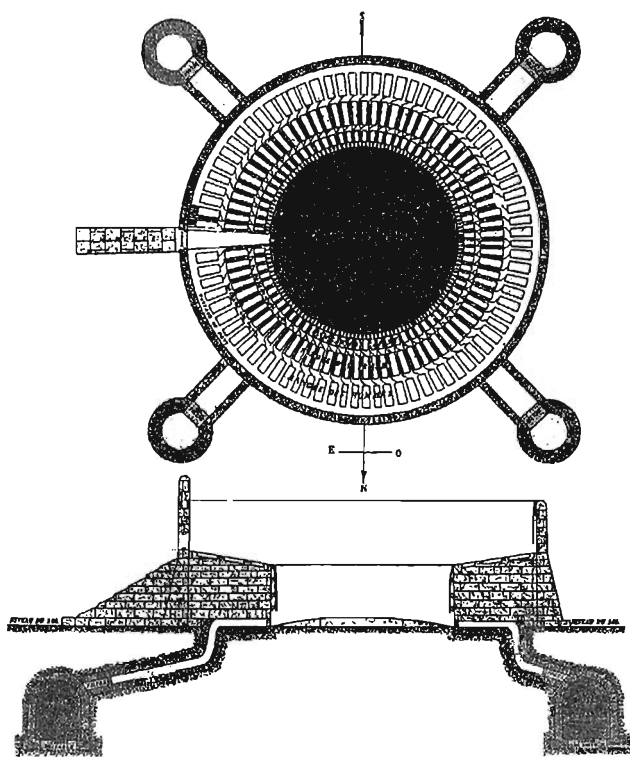
Fig. 13. Developed standard type of round tower of silence (after Modi 1905).

A very simple and still unevolved specimen of a type of circular tower of silence, certainly of pre-nineteenth century date, is preserved at the formerly Zoroastrian village of Qanat-Ghesan near Kerman[64] (plates IX/17). It has no central well in its narrow interior. With its floor ca. 2.5 m above

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[62] M. Boyce, "Manekji Limji Hataria in Iran", *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume* (Bombay, 1969), pp. 19–31, pp. 19 ff.

[63] Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, p. 398.

[64] Boyce, "An Old Village *Dakhma* of Iran", pp. 6 ff.

the surrounding terrain and with its high wall, which prevents looking in but also looking out, it scarcely can match the type of the early Islamic "General's Look-out" at Ray, but it obviously was not unique at its time, as the older Indian towers of silence also were without a central well.[65]

Doubtlessly developed to a higher degree, although not necessarily later than that of Qanat-Ghesan was the 17th century round tower of silence of the Zoroastrian community of Isfahan, which was very precisely described with its central well by Chardin.[66] The Zoroastrians of Isfahan had been brought there by Shah Abbas I., mainly from the Yazd area, for their special skills. According to European visitors[67] they were quite well off at the beginning, but very quickly their situation deteriorated and soon they became so miserable that they could not even sustain a fire temple. It is an interesting question how this poor community got an elaborate stone *dakhma* 200 years before that type effectively spread in Iran under the patronage of Manekji Hataria. Ruins of abandoned round *dakhma*s are repeatedly mentioned, but they were not of stone, but mud brick buildings and none is described in detail or properly documented.[68]

According to archaeological evidence another type of *dakhma*[69] had been popular in Iran proper with shrinking autonomy and increasing pressure of Islamic domination at least since Saljuq rule. The pauperized communities seem to have followed the original Videvdat prescription, adequate to their situation: leaving the bones on the exposure ground, i.e. the barren mountains which were at hand nearly everywhere on the Iranian plateau. Two of these mountain-*dakhma*s at the Zoroastrian centres of Yazd and Kerman were in use up to the middle of the 19th century,

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[65] Kotwal, "The Parsi Dakhma: its History and Consecration", pp. 165, 168.

[66] J. Chardin, *Voyages en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient* IX (Amsterdam, 1711), pp. 148 ff.; D. Menant, *Les Parsis* (Paris, 1898), pp. 214 ff.

[67] N.K. Firby, *European Travellers and their Perceptions of Zoroastrians in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, Ergänzungsband 14; Berlin, 1988), pp. 42, 55, 60, 71.

[68] Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, pp. 397 f., 403 f.; Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Oxford, 1977), p. 192. – The circular earth wall with surrounding moat (= khandak) within an abandoned settlement near Sar Mashhad (see Trümpelmann, "Sasanian Graves and Burial Customs", pp. 317 f.) is clearly no *dakhma* but a fortification. A ruined tower between Yazd and Cham (W. Kleiss, "Der Turm des Schweigens bei Teheran/Rey", *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* 20, 1987, pp. 369–372, pp. 371 f.) is probably the Dakhma-i Kuhna, already dilapidated and used only for suiciders and stillborn or abortive children at the beginning of the 20th century. See Jackson, *Persia Past and Present*, p. 397.

[69] Boyce, An Old Village *Dakhma* of Iran", pp. 3 f.

when new *dakhma*s of the modern standard type were built by Manekji.
At Yazd a mountain plateau, bordering the plain towards south and slop-
ing southwards, had been enclosed by a roughly rectangular wall, a ne-
cessity under non-Zoroastrian rule[70] (plates X/24). At Kerman a conical
ridge was chosen and surrounded by an irregular, curving wall[71] (plates
X/23). Some similarity with the old *dakhma* of Kerman has the long
abandoned and badly ruined site of Takht-i Rustam (plates IX/20) on a
rocky peak of the hill chain bordering the long and fertile plain between
Teheran and Qazwin to the south. A mountain plateau with a trapeziform
circumvallation further west, Takht-i Kaikaus, reminds us of the old
mountain-*dakhma* of Yazd.[72] Both monuments are interpreted as so-
called high places of the Zoroastrian cult of fire in archaeological publi-
cations. However, especially the more conspicuous Takht-i Rustam is
regarded as an old mountain *dahkma* by members of the Zoroastrian
community of Teheran. Takht-i Rustam is a rather complex arrangement
of ruins; in addition to tilted terrace walls, which encircled the peak in
two tiers, there was an artificially built up, lozenge-shaped plateau at half
height of the mountain, with a small, vaulted building nearby.

SUBSIDIARY FUNERARY BUILDINGS

The funerary site of a traditional Zoroastrian community, which gener-
ally is called *dadgah,* does not consist of the *dakhma* or 'tower of si-
lence' alone. With considerable regional differences the *dakhma* is ac-
companied by more or less numerous auxiliary structures, which are
needed for the procedure of exposure itself, for the annual cycle of
ceremonies for the soul of the deceased, or just for private commemora-
tion and mourning. The *zad-o-marg* or *nasa-khana,* a place for ceremo-
nies preceding the final exposure, may stand far off, on the way to the
dakhma.[73] The most conspicuous buildings near the *dakhma* are the so-
called *kheileh*s, vaulted halls open to the front side (*aiwan*s) which are

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[70] Quoting a description by Westergaard from 1842. Menant, *Les Parsis*, pp. 217 f.

[71] Boyce, "An Old Village *Dakhma* of Iran", p. 4; M. Boyce, "Some Points of Tradi-
tional Observance and of Change Among the Zoroastrians of Kerman", *Arbab Jamshid
Sorushian Memorial Volume* (in press).

[72] M. Siroux, "Takht-e Rustam et Takht-e Kaikaus", *Athar-e Iran* 3, 1938, pp. 93–
110, pp. 93 ff.

[73] Boyce, "Some Points of Traditional Observance and of Change Among the Zoroas-
trians of Kerman".

arranged in a row or crosswise, and which can contain well equipped kitchens, places for religious performances, stables and store rooms (fig. 14; plates IX/18–19, IX–XI/21–26). They served to shelter the mourners during the ceremonies, for private devotion and the obligatory common banquets.[74] Today many of these duties are performed in the compound of a fire temple in the city or village or at home.

Most important is a small structure, or a room, generally integrated into the *kheileh,* where a lamp, a candle or a *dadgah* fire is kept burning at least during the three nights after death, for consolation and support of the soul of the deceased, which is thought to be lingering about at its places on earth during that time. The room is called *atashsuz,* or *sagri* (in India). It must have a window or opening towards the tower of silence, and the wall of the tower generally is perforated by a hole ca. 15 cm wide, lying in a straight line, so that the light—theoretically—can shine into the *dakhma.*[75] There must also be a small structure near the *dakhma* for the *salar*s, who bring the deceased into the *dakhma,* which is inaccessible for everybody else. Larger *dakhma* complexes or *dadgah*s have a permanent guardian, the *dakhmaban,* who lives there with his family and cattle in a veritable farmer's house, closed to the outside, with inner court and all necessary facilities. If a permanent *dadgah* fire is kept burning in the *atashsuz,* it is looked after by the *dakhmaban.*

The most impressive Zoroastrian cemetery or *dadgah* in contemporary Iran is doubtlessly that of the city of Yazd with its three successive *dakhma*s, the old mountain-*dakhma*, formerly known as Dakhma-i Jamshid, which has vanished at the end of the 20th century, the tower of silence built by Manekji in 1864, and the Gulistan *dakhma* as the last one, which had been built next to the old mountain-*dakhma* again (plates X/24). The mountain-*dakhma* was divided into a northern, upper part, where the deceased bodies were laid down, and a southern, lower part, where the clean bones were brought to,[76] it is not clear whether this was an original design. The *kheileh*s of the mountain-*dakhma* were built on

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[74] Boyce, "Corpse, Disposal of in Zoroastrianism", p. 284; D. Huff, "The Dadgah of Kerman", *Arbab Jamshid Sorushian Memorial Volume* (in press). – For a detailed description of ceremonies see Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, pp. 151 ff., 195 ff.

[75] Modi, *The Funeral Ceremonies of the Parsees, Their Origin and Explanation,* pp. 25 ff.; B.M. Pande, "Parsi Monuments in Diu", *Persica* 12, 1987, pp. 97–121, p. 116; Kotwal, "The Parsi Dakhma: its History and Consecration", p. 165.

[76] Menant, *Les Parsis,* pp. 217 f.

the northern slopes of the next ridge towards south, so that people could look into the *dakhma,* across the valley, which divides the two ridges (plates IX/21 and X/24). The whole complex was invisible from north, from the side of the plain and the city of Yazd. It was only in the second half of the 19th century, when Zoroastrians had achieved a certain degree of freedom and security that, together with Manekji's *dakhma,* the extensive complex of *kheileh*s developed along the northern hill foot on the side of the open plain. The first of these new *kheileh*s has probably evolved around the *atashsuz* (plates IX/18), which contains a *dadgah* fire altar, built of stones and mortar and still filled up with ashes (plates IX/19). There was an opening, facing the Manekji *dakhma,* in the long wall of the room which is destroyed now. The *atashsuz* maintained its function when the last *dakhma* was built. As this was situated in another direction, with a deviation of nearly 90°, the short wall of the room, looking towards the new *dakhma* was perforated by holes,[77] later a small shelter was added to the outside of the *atashsuz* (plates IX/18), in front of the holes, and according to the remaining ashes, also here fire was lit occasionally. Both of the new towers of silence have the above mentioned holes in their walls corresponding with the light openings of the *atashsuz* and the attached shelter.

There is no proof for an *atashsuz* at the old mountain *dakhma* of Yazd and its *kheileh*s, because of their ruined condition. But there was plenty possibility for an adequate arrangement. Light could shine into the old *dakhma* from any room of the *kheileh* below the crest of the opposite ridge, and the remainders of a small structure on the very summit of the crest might well have been an *atashsuz* proper (plates IX/21).

At the other rather well preserved ancient mountain *dakhma,* that of Kerman, no evidence for a contemporary *atashsuz* is preserved; not even a contemporary *kheileh* did survive there. But the *dakhma* itself with its huge walls mostly standing up to the top is an extraordinarily impressive monument (plates X/23). The new tower of silence of the standard type was erected by Manekji in 1867 on the next mountain spur, some hundred meters off, and for this later on a rather modern *kheileh* was built with an elaborately vaulted kitchen and partly two-storied *aiwans*[78] (fig.

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[77] An analogous development can be observed at the *dadgah* of Sharifabad, north of Yazd, where in the original *atashsuz* with its fire altar a hole was pierced through the wall in direction of the new tower of silence, built in 1961/63. See also Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism,* pp. 194 f.

[78] The date 1292 had been scratched in the fresh plaster of a wall (1913 A.D., if ac-

14). The *atashsuz* too was installed in this *kheileh* with an eight-cornered, domed room on the upper floor at that corner of the building which overlooks both *dakhma*s. It is not clear from the evidence in the ruined building, whether this *atashsuz* had a veritable *dadgah* fire, like those in the Yazd area;[79] the crown of the cupola above has fallen down and covered the centre of the room with an amass of debris, which now might cover the altar.
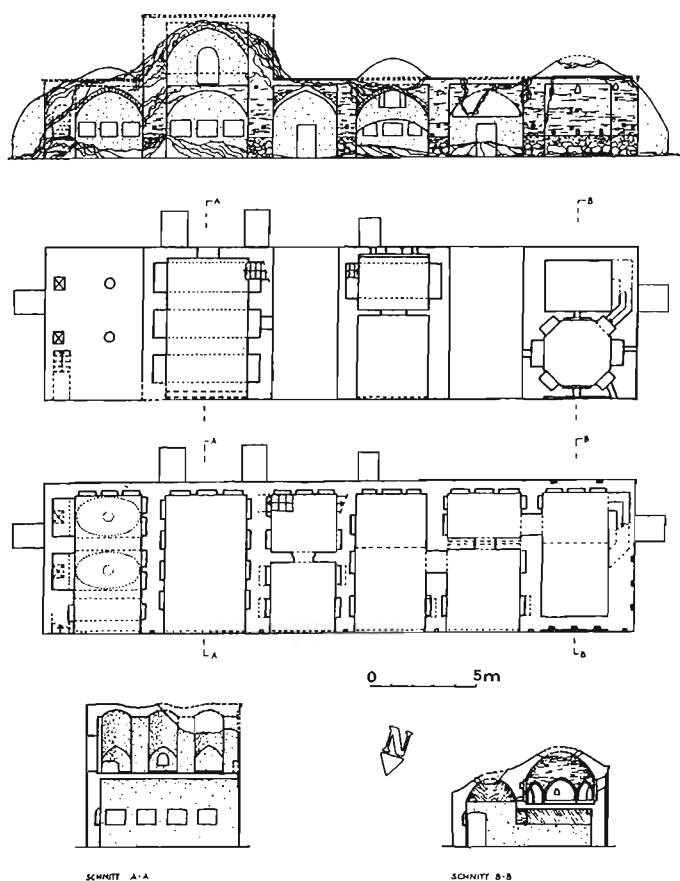
Fig. 14. Kerman, *dadgah. kheileh* and *atashsuz*, plans and sections.
Corner upstairs: octogonal fire- or light-room (*atashsuz* proper).

There is a niche in the back wall of the room, blackened from candles or oil lamps, which could shine through the main window straight towards the new *dakhma* at the point where its wall is pierced by the obligatory

cording to the solar calendar). See Huff, "The Dadgah of Kerman".

[79] However, see Boyce, "Some Points of Traditional Observance and of Change Among the Zoroastrians of Kerman", last paragraphs.

opening. Moreover, there is an oblique window, cutting diagonally through the corner wall of the *atashsuz* in the direction of the old mountain-*dakhma,* clearly showing the intention to shed light also into the ancient exposure site. As parts of the old *dakhma* wall opposite the the *atashsuz* are destroyed we cannot ascertain whether a light opening had been pierced subsequently through the wall of the old mountain-*dakhma* as well.

Immediately below the rocky spur with the new tower of silence, and clearly belonging to its funeral environment, is a small house consisting of an *aiwan* and one room with fire place and chimney (plates X/23). It is nearly identical with the building below the Takht-i Rustam near Teheran[80] and in both cases it probably served for the guardians of the *dadgah* or for the *salars.* An even simpler house with one room only stood below the other north Iranian presumable mountain *dakhma,* Takht-i Kaikaus.

The greatest variety of subsidiary buildings at a *dakhma* in Iran is preserved at Cham, between Yazd and Taft, built by and for the surrounding villages. The tower of silence was built in front of a theatre-like scenery of mountains. An impressive, paved access way with flights of steps leads up to a platform where, in front of the door high up in the *dakhma* wall, a deep *aiwan* on a high substructure sheltered the mourners when they said their last farewell to the deceased before the body was brought into the exposure place by the *salars.*[81] Down in the valley several *kheilehs* and a large house for the *dakhmaban* surround a tiny garden with a well shaft and a structure, which was probably the earliest *atashsuz* (plates IX/22). This is a very small and narrow *aiwan* with lateral benches for max. 6 persons to sit in, and a semicircular shelter for a fire place, attached to the *aiwan* opposite the *dakhma* (plates XI/25). The shelter essentially is comparable to that in front of the *atashsuz* at the *dadgah* of Yazd. But, whereas there the shelter is a later addition to the room with a fire altar, in Cham the sequence of the buildings is vice versa, as we shall see. The fire place could be served with fuel from the *aiwan* and the fire could shine out through 5 windows. – A second *atashsuz* was built in the shape of a small round tower with a spiral staircase on the slope just behind the *kheilehs* (plates IX/22). There was no space for a fire altar in the small domed room on top, but up here in the

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[80] Siroux, "Takht-e Rustam et Takht-e Kaikaus", p. 96, fig. 56.

[81] P. Jamzadeh, "Remarks on some Zoroastrian Architectural Features", *Studia Iranica* 30, 2001, pp. 17–29, pp. 28 f., fig. 11–14.

lofty height and with three large windows a storm lantern would have been required anyhow during windy nights. The purpose of the tower was confirmed by an inscription, calling the structure *ja-i chiragh,* place for the lamp, and giving a date in the early 1940's as time of construction by a pious person.[82] Of the three windows, only the largest one is directed straight towards the *dakhma;* the others give on to the plain with the villages. It seems that the tower was not only used as an *atashsuz* but also as a look-out, to watch approaching people, e.g. the processions of the mourners with the corpse.

An *atashsuz* of the type, which was the oldest at Yazd, was to be built in Cham as the last one. It is a square, domed room which was attached to the house of the *dakhmaban* (plates IX/22), accessible through a low, hidden gate from the *dakhmanban*'s kitchen, probably for security's reason. The room was nearly filled out by a massive fire altar of stone and clay, which, however, seems to have never been taken into use. Instead a slender pier was set against the back wall of the room, up to the spring of the dome, and above its horizontal top the vault is blackened with soot, obviously form candles or oil lamps, which were kindled there instead of a fire (plates VII/6). Light could shine out towards the *dakhma* through an opening in the opposite side of the dome (plates IX/22). All three light-houses stand more or less in a line directed to the point where the obligatory aperture is left open in the wall of the *dakhma*, several meters to the right from the *dakhma* gate.

It is worthwhile to observe the great variety of architectural solutions for an *atashsuz* which were developed all for the same purpose: to let some kind of light shine into the *dakhma* during the nights after a funeral, and in addition at any night as often as possible. The importance of this ritual obligation is also shown by the fact that, as we have seen, even abandoned *dakhma*s were provided with light from the *atashsuz*. This is most impressively demonstrated at Sharifabad, north of Yazd. When a new tower of silence was built there, the old *atashsuz* continued to be used and, like in Yazd, an opening was pierced through its wall in direction of the new *dakhma*. At the same time the old abandoned *dakhma* was surrounded by a second circular wall as a protection against desecration. Also this new outer *dakhma* wall was pierced by a hole exactly in line with the window of the *atashsuz* on the one side and the opening in the old inner *dakhma* wall on the other.

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[82] Kind information by letter of Prof. Mary Boyce from March 13, 2000.

The tradition of the *atashsuz* is carried on in the most recent development of Zoroastrian cemeteries, the *aramgahs* which replaced the towers of silence when exposure ceased to be performed about the middle of the 20th century. The *aramgahs,* where the dead now are buried underground, with different attempts of protecting the earth from pollution,[83] still have a room in their compounds of subsidiary buildings, from which light is shining out into the graveyard through a window during the three nights after the funeral.[84] (plates XI/26)

It is scarcely possible to trace back the history of the *atashsuz* into the remote past with help of archaeological evidence; however, there are some literary arguments. Chardin reports that about 50 paces distant from the Isfahan tower of silence there was a small mud brick building, from which, after the corpse had been brought into the tower, the priest allegedly observed through 'a hole', which eye of the deceased was hacked out first by vultures and crows; from this he allegedly could tell the waiting relatives whether the soul of the deceased would go to paradise or hell[85]. Chardin himself was sceptical about this 'ridiculous superstition', and gave more credit to another and reasonable information: that the house served for some kind of ceremonies for the dead before exposure. Whereas the eye-magic and similar soothsaying legends, widespread and persisting among all kind of non-Zoroastrian believers, was pure malicious invention, the 'hole in the wall' may be a realistic fact, because a reasonable, although false, argument for its existence was given: that the priest had to make his observation from outside the tower in order not to scare away the vultures. It seems probable, that the non-Zoroastrian population noticed a hole, which of course must have been in the *dakhma* wall, not in the small building, and not knowing its true purpose fell upon an explanation, which was in accord with their mischievous view of Zoroastrian religious practices. That Zorastrians were

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[83] In Teheran, where exposure was stopped already in 1937, iron coffins and lining the grave with cement is reported (Boyce, "Corpse, Disposal of in Zoroastrianism"). In Kerman and Yazd *aramgahs* (since 1939 and 1960) and *dakhmas* were used together up to the 1970s. In Yazd at present the corpse is wrapped with white bandages and, using much incense (*sir va sedow*), laid in a grave, the lower part of which is somewhat narrower than the upper, and is covered by concrete slabs, so that a rather solid subterraneous chamber is established in the hard and dry clay-and- gravel ground. The upper part of the grave is filled in with the excavated material.

[84] Boyce, "Some Points of Traditional Observance and of Change among the Zoroastrians of Kerman", last paragraph.

[85] Chardin, *Voyages en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient* IX, p. 51.

very restraint in giving information about their religious practices, certainly due to bad experiences, is stated by nearly all European travellers. Chardin's report thus leads to the conclusion, that the 17th century tower of silence in Isfahan had its auxiliary building for funerary ceremonies, including the function of an *atashsuz*, closely similar to the situation at a 19th–20th century *dadgah*. And that the tradition of *dadgah* fires goes further back is proven by the fact that they are mentioned already in the instructions which the Parsis of India received from Zoroastrian priests of Persia in the 14th century.[86]

The idea that light is beneficial for the soul of the dead is certainly to be seen in context with the imagination of the importance which was attributed to light in general and especially to the sun in Zoroastrian religion. The seemingly casual remark in the *Videvdat*, that the bones of those who cannot afford an *astodan* should be laid down on the ground, "clothed with the light of heaven, and beholding the sun"[87], in fact gives us the basic reason of the instruction in the Dadistan-i Dinik for those whose bones were brought into a bone receptacle: that in this *astodan* "for the sake of light coming to it" a hole is made therein, and that the 'covering' of the *astodan* "is to construct ..... of a single stone which is cut perforated".[88]

The archaeological monuments can scarcely provide sufficient material to follow up in detail Zoroastrian funerary practices as we know them today back to the Achaemenian period. But they clearly give proof of the importance in general, which these ceremonies persistently maintained throughout the centuries. Striking evidence comes from the rather pretentious buildings with differentiated ground plans which were excavated in front of the royal rock tombs above the terrace of Persepolis.[89] We may presume that similar ancient *kheilehs* stood in front of the royal tombs at Naqsh-i Rustam, where they must have been destroyed by later occupation.[90] The plateau of Hussein Kuh above the royal tombs is covered with

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[86] M.R. Unvâlâ, *Dârâb Hormazyâr's Rivâyat* (Bombay, 1922), p. 62. 145; Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz*, pp. 58 f.

[87] *The Vendidad*, transl. J. Darmesteter (Sacred Books of the East 4, ed. F.M. Müller; Delhi, 1880), VI, p. 51.

[88] Dadistan-i Dinik, XVIII, pp. 3, 14

[89] F. Krefter, *Persepolis. Rekonstruktionen* (Teheraner Forschungen 3; Berlin, 1971), pl. 1,2. 3. plan 36.

[90] The possibility that the enigmatic Ka'aba-i Zardusht is part of the funerary complex of Naqsh-i Rustam is contravened by the fact that its duplicate, the Zendan-i Sulaiman in Pasargadae stands alone, with no funerary monument in its vicinity; the tomb

extensive areas of non-local clay, evidently the debris of ancient mud brick buildings, which contains abundant pottery sherds, mainly Sasanian.[91] Fragments of pottery can also be found beneath rock tombs like those of Akhur-i Rustam, Da-u Dukhtar and those in Media and Elymais.

At Issakvand sherds of Parthian cinnamon ware under the rock tombs corroborate the suggested Parthian date of tombs and relief, and lead us to the probable seat of the tombs' owners, an archaeological site on a rock above the Gamasiab River nearby, with the same type of sherds, presumably the palatial complex of a local dynasty.[92] The polished surfaces of rock-cut shelves under the tombs stand out in contrast to the other roughly chiselled surfaces, and indicate that they were used for some kind of ritual performances within the funeral and commemorative ceremonies. The same goes for the before mentioned rock-cut 'mausoleum' on Hussein Kuh, where the carefully flattened entrance stair and the floor of the small antechamber indicates, that only this area, not the main room, was prepared for the public, i.e. for frequent visitors and mourners, certainly in connection with funerary ceremonies of some kind. The abundance of pottery sherds at the ancient funerary places gives evidence that the tradition of common meals after a funeral and at the recurrent days of commemoration goes back to the early times of Iranian Zoroastrian history. It may even attest a widespread minor habit like the smashing of pitchers after the meal, which is reported for Iran in the recent past[93], and which is indicated by the great quantities of glass sherds which litter the ground at the old *kheileh*s of the early mountain-*dakhma* of Yazd, probably the sherds of wine bottles.

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of Cyrus is beyond the opposite limits of the palatial area.

[91] Kleiss, "Beobachtungen in der Umgebung von Persepolis und Naqsh-i Rustam", pp. 142 ff., fig. 13, 20.

[92] Huff, "Sasanidische Architektur", pp. 28 f.

[93] Boyce, "Corpse, Disposal of in Zoroastrianism", p. 284.

KONTINUITÄT UND WANDEL IN DEN RITUALEN DER IRANISCHEN ZARATHUSTRIER

Katayun Mazdapour[*]

Die Rituale der Zarathustrier in der Sasanidenzeit können anhand der alten zarathustrischen Texte rekonstruiert werden. In diesem Beitrag werden die heute noch praktizierten Rituale der Zarathustrier Irans mit den schriftlichen Überlieferungen verglichen und die in den Ritualen aufgetretenen Veränderungen analysiert. Die Beschreibung der heutigen Rituale der Zarathustrier Irans beruht dabei auf eigenen Erfahrungen und Augenzeugenberichten anderer.[1]

Jedes Ritual besteht einerseits aus unterschiedlichen Teilen und bildet andererseits eine übergreifende Einheit, die diese einzelnen Teile in Beziehung zueinander setzt und auf diese Weise einen Gesamtverband konstituiert. Als eine unabhängige Einheit übernimmt das Ritual sodann eine bestimmte Funktion in der Konstruktion gesellschaftlicher Kultur und nimmt einen bestimmten Platz im Leben des Einzelnen ein. Vor diesem Hintergrund kann man drei Formen von Veränderungen bei Ritualen unterscheiden: Erstens Veränderungen in jedem einzelnen ritualkonstitutiven Teil, zweitens die Zu- oder Abnahme der Anzahl der ritualkonstitutiven Teile und drittens Veränderungen in Ort und Funktion der einzelnen Teile im Gesamtritual.

Auf den ersten Blick scheint es, als beruhten diese Veränderungen lediglich auf den geistigen Voraussetzungen und Interessen der Mitglieder der Gesellschaft und der Ritualakteure. Bei näherem Hinsehen sind sie jedoch auch realen Bedingungen und äußeren Faktoren unterworfen. Die geistigen Voraussetzungen und Interessen der Individuen sowie die äußeren Rahmenbedingungen sind die Voraussetzung für Kontinuität oder Wandel von Ritualen. Sie müssen jeweils einmal in Hinblick auf die einzelnen ritualkonstitutiven Teile und einmal in Hinblick auf den

Gesamtverband, den sie bilden, diskutiert werden. Verständlicherweise muss sich dieser Beitrag dabei auf die Erwähnung einiger Punkte beschränken, wobei auch das Problem der für die Durchführung erforderlichen Orte und Gegenstände erörtert wird.

HISTORISCHER RÜCKBLICK

Die Rituale der zarathustrischen Gesellschaft stützten sich bis zum Ende der Sasanidenzeit auf die Protektion einer der mächtigsten Regierungen der Welt. Daher waren sie niemals Zweifel oder Kritik ausgesetzt, und die Autorität des Glaubens und der Rituale war aus Sicht der Anhänger der zarathustrischen Religion unumstößlich. Es ist anzunehmen, dass die Stimmen der Kritiker (wie z.B. der opponierenden Christen) weder das einfache Volk noch die religiösen Führer erreichten. Dieser Zustand änderte sich jedoch mit dem Niedergang der Sasaniden, in dessen Folge die zarathustrischen Geistlichen und die alten Rituale in die Defensive gedrängt wurden. Opfer gravierender Veränderungen wurden die alten Rituale jedoch erst, nachdem die zarathustrische Gemeinde Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts mit westlicher Kultur und Moderne konfrontiert wurde.

In der Schrift *Nāmagīhā ī Manuščihr* werden wir mit der Beschreibung eines Disputs zweier Priesterbrüder im 9. Jh. Zeugen eines Streites über die Veränderung religiöser Rituale. Im Verlauf der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Manuščihr, dem geistlichen Führer der Provinzen Fārs und Kermān, und seinem jüngeren Bruder Zādsparam wird letzterer aus der Gemeinschaft der Gläubigen ausgeschlossen und somit das Reinigungsritual *barašnum* vor Veränderungen bewahrt. Als über 1000 Jahre später die Priester (*mubad*), denen die Rolle der Bewahrer und Vollzieher der alten offiziellen Rituale zukam, mit den neuen Formen, Werten und Annehmlichkeiten des modernen Lebens konfrontiert wurden, vermochten sie es nicht mehr, die alten Traditionen gegenüber den neuen Herausforderungen zu beschützen. In der Folge beugten sich die Rituale und Traditionen der Zarathustrier, die sich bis dahin kaum verändert hatten, dem Druck westlicher Vorstellungen und Kultur.

Das in *Nāmagīhā ī Manuščihr* erwähnte Datum 250 Yazdegerdi (881 n. Chr.) muss als historisches Ende der religiösen Dispute im Anschluss an die Sasanidenzeit und als Beginn einer Phase der Konsolidierung zarathustrischer Rituale und religiöser Vorstellungen nach der islamischen Eroberung verstanden werden. Seit dieser Zeit erschienen die religiösen Rituale in versteinerter Form und blieben von Veränderungsprozessen,

die aus der Sasanidenzeit zum Beispiel in Schriften wie dem *Zand-i fragard-i widēwdād* überliefert sind, unberührt.

Es waren die fünfziger Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts, in denen die alten Traditionen dem Ansturm neuer, aus dem Westen kommender Einflüsse erlagen und sich mit großer Geschwindigkeit veränderten. In den darauf folgenden Jahren verstarb die alte Generation, die noch an die uneingeschränkte Gültigkeit von Ritualen und religiösen Vorstellungen geglaubt hatte. Dieses grenzenlose Vertrauen gegenüber den alten Traditionen hatte seinen Nährboden in der Isolation und Weltfremdheit, die das Leben vieler Zarathustrier bis dahin bestimmt hatten. Nun übernahmen Generationen die Führung, die nicht nur die neuen (technischen) Errungenschaften der westlichen Welt benutzten, sondern auch mit den Werten und Ideen der Moderne vertraut und aus der Isolation der alten Welt herausgetreten waren. Damit war der alte Kreis durchbrochen: Sowohl die geistigen Vorraussetzungen und Vorstellungen als Fundament von Ritualen als auch die einzelnen ritualkonstitutiven Teile, ihr Platz und ihre Rolle in den Gedanken und dem Leben der Menschen hatten sich verändert.

Seit den fünfziger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts ist die Zahl jener Zarathustrier, die ausschließlich die alten Glaubensvorstellungen in bezug auf die Rituale kannten, stark zurückgegangen. Demgegenüber ist die Zahl derjenigen angestiegen, die nicht nur mit den Glaubensvorstellungen der meisten anderen, nicht-zarathustrischen Iraner und den Erscheinungsformen der westlichen Kultur sowie deren Ausdrucksformen in Iran vertraut waren, sondern auch neue Einsichten in ihre Religion und ihre eigene kulturelle Vergangenheit gewonnen hatten. Sie lebten in modernen wirtschaftlichen Verhältnissen und hatten keinen Bezug mehr zu den Ritualen und Glaubensvorstellungen der alten Welt. Die Sicht dieser neuen Generation auf die alten Rituale brachte ein neues Verhältnis gegenüber den Traditionen zum Ausdruck und zerstörte schließlich die alte geistige Ordnung, die grundlegend für die Beständigkeit der Rituale gewesen war. Das neue Bewusstsein, mit dem die meisten muslimischen Iraner der zarathustrischen Gemeinde begegneten, und die Ideen aus der westlichen Welt, denen einige Zarathustrier neuerdings wieder besonders nahe stehen, hatten bedeutenden Einfluss auf die Einstellung der Zarathustrier zu ihren alten Ritualen.

Die Auswanderung aus Yazd und Kerman in Städte wie Teheran war ein weiterer Faktor, der neue Bedingungen für die Durchführung von Ritualen schuf. Das Dorf, die vertraute Umgebung Kermans oder Yazds

wurden ersetzt durch die Großstadt, in der die moderne, ungewohnte Architektur der Häuser die Lebensgewohnheiten veränderte und die moderne Ökonomie an die Stelle der bäuerlichen, kleinstädtischen Wirtschaftsweise trat. Der neuen Umgebung wurden schließlich auch die Ritualgegenstände angepasst. Weitreichender war jedoch die Veränderung zwischenmenschlicher Beziehungen—ob innerhalb der zarathustrischen Gemeinde oder in Kontakt zu Nicht-Zarathustriern—, die wiederum Einfluss auf die Durchführung der Rituale hatte.

In der Folge wurden die ritualkonstitutiven Teile, ihr Zusammenhang und ihre Funktionen neu definiert. Die Fähigkeit der einzelnen ritualkonstitutiven Elemente, den neuen Herausforderungen zu widerstehen oder sich anzupassen, ist individuell verschieden. Sie basiert auf den Eigenschaften des Elements und seiner Position auf der individuellen und kollektiven Werteskala. Darüber hinaus ist sie abhängig von den anderen Elementen, die ihrerseits einen bestimmten Rang in der bewussten oder unbewussten Wertehierarchie der ritualpraktizierenden Gesellschaft und der Individuen einnehmen; daher ist sie fortwährend den jeweiligen Verhältnissen unterworfen.

Natürlich spielt auch der Einfluss anderer gesellschaftlicher Gruppen, die mit der zarathustrischen Gemeinde in dominanter Weise in Beziehung stehen, eine bedeutende Rolle bei der Wertschätzung eines Rituals durch die Ritualakteure.

EINE AUSWAHL ZARATHUSTRISCHER RITUALE VOR DEM HINTERGRUND VON WANDEL UND KONTINUITÄT

In den neun Abschnitten dieses Beitrags wird eine Auswahl alter schriftlich fixierter zarathustrischer Rituale vorgestellt und mit der heutigen Ritualpraxis in Iran verglichen. Auf diese Wiese sollen Kontinuitäten und Veränderungen aufgezeigt werden.

1. Die *mubad* und die offiziellen Rituale

Die formale Durchführung der alten religiösen Rituale und das Wissen um die einzelnen ritualkonstitutiven Teile obliegen in der Praxis den Priestern (*mubad*). In Iran begegneten die *mubad* den sozialen Veränderungen, die seit der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts Einfluss auf das religiöse Leben der Zarathustrier in Iran gewannen, ohne Gegenwehr. Statt Neuerungen und Veränderungen zu bekämpfen, wandten sich viele Priester einem neuen Erwerbszweig zu, so dass es schließlich zu einem Mangel

an *mubad* für die Durchführung der Rituale kam. Entgegen der Tradition fanden daher zwischen 1981 und 1983 auch Personen aus Laienfamilien Zugang zu dem bis dahin den Söhnen der *mubad* vorbehaltenen Bereich. Unter dem Namen *mubadyār* (Priestergehilfe) führen sie heute zusammen mit den *mubad* die offiziellen Rituale durch. Die Rolle, welche die *mubad* bei der rituellen Leitung der zarathustrischen Gemeinde innehaben, muss vor dem Hintergrund ihrer großen Autorität in der Vergangenheit betrachtet werden, in der sie u.a. das Recht des Schiedsspruchs und der Festlegung des Strafmaßes von Verbrechen besaßen. Während früher die Oberpriester (*mubad-e bozorg*) sowie deren Stellvertreter zur Anfertigung religiöser Rechtsgutachten (*fatwā*) befugt waren, werden letztere heute von dem iranischen Priesterrat (*kankāš-e mubadān*) erstellt, der in der Praxis identisch mit der Teheraner Priestervereinigung (*kankāš-e/anǧoman-e mubadān-e tehrān*) ist.

a. Rituale im Inneren des Feuertempels

Die von den *mubad* und *mubadyār* durchgeführten oder unter ihrer Aufsicht zur Ausführung gelangenden Rituale wurden stark vereinfacht. Diese Simplifizierung hat sich auch auf den Vollzug von Ritualen übertragen, die in den Feuertempeln oder ‚Festhäusern' (*gāhambār-ḫāne*) ausgeführt werden. Diese Rituale werden entweder in sehr reduzierter Weise durchgeführt oder ganz ausgelassen. Während viele religiöse Zeremonien, die sich der Aufsicht der Priester entziehen, wie der Besuch von Schreinen, das Ablegen von Gelübden oder das Ausrichten ritueller *sofre*, aufwendig gefeiert werden, werden die ‚Festhäuser' und andere Stätten, die für die Durchführung des *yasešn* und des *vendīdād* sowie anderer langer alter Rituale (*niyāyeš*) bestimmt sind, vernachlässigt und stehen leer.

b. Rituale außerhalb des Feuertempels

Den größten Teil der heute noch praktizierten zarathustrischen Rituale bilden Rituale, die von den *mubad* und *mubadyār* außerhalb der Feuertempel durchgeführt werden. Dabei handelt es sich hauptsächlich um die *gāhambār* und die Todesrituale. Zu den offiziellen Todesritualen nach der Bestattung gehören das *sewwom* (der ältere Begriff dafür ist *sed*), das *čahārom* (der ältere kermaner Begriff dafür lautet *čāromun*), das *dahe* (*daha*), *siruze* (*siruza*) und *ruze* (*ruza*). Das *ruze* wird nach dem Tod ein Jahr lang monatlich durchgeführt. Wenn sich das Datum des Todes jährt, findet das *sāl*-Ritual statt, das 30 Jahre lang jedes Jahr begegangen wird.

Dieses Ritual ist in Iran umfangreicher als in Indien und schließt eine
Bewirtung der Gäste mit ein. Zu den Todesritualen zählen in der Praxis
auch die *gāhambār*. Sie besitzen eine lange Tradition und werden nor-
malerweise im Namen eines Verstorbenen durchgeführt. In Teheran e-
xistieren für die Durchführung dieses Rituals Stiftungsgebäude wie der
„Iraǧ-Saal", das „Kulturzentrum Mārkār", das „Haus Narges" und die
zahlreichen Versammlungsräume der Feuertempel. In allen von Za-
rathustriern bewohnten Städten sind für diesen Zweck Örtlichkeiten ge-
schaffen worden.

c. *Ǧašan-ḫʷāni* und *gāhambār-tuǧi*

Das *ǧašan-ḫʷāni* fand bis in die fünfziger Jahre in den Privathäusern
statt. Es wurde zu positiven, freudigen Anlässen wie dem Kauf oder Bau
eines Hauses begangen und heiter und fröhlich zelebriert. In der Praxis
war das *ǧašan-ḫʷāni* eine Einladung mit Bewirtung, an der die Priester
teilnahmen und das *niyāyeš* gelesen wurde. Heutzutage wird das *ǧašan-*
ḫʷāni nur noch selten in seiner traditionellen Form gefeiert. In der Praxis
findet zwar noch eine Bewirtung mit Gästen statt, auf das Lesen der *niy-*
āyeš und der Gebete verzichtet man allerdings.

  Gāhambār-Feiern und Varianten des *ǧašan* können heute auch an öf-
fentlichen Orten und in Stiftungsgebäuden beobachtet werden. Daneben
werden die Jahreszeiten(?)-*gāhambār* in Form (?) der *tuǧi* gelegentlich
auch von Seiten der *Organisation der Zarathustrier* und anderen Grup-
pen, bisweilen aber auch von Privatpersonen ausgerichtet. Das *gāham-*
bār-e tuǧi kann jederzeit problemlos durchgeführt werden.

d. Der Todestag Zarathustras

Der Tag *ḫur* des Monats *dey* ist der Todestag Zarathustras. Die Rituale
für dieses Ereignis wurden früher individuell in den Privathäusern aus-
geführt. Lediglich Familien, in denen erst vor kurzem eine Person ver-
storben war, begingen den Tag in offizieller Weise unter der Anwesen-
heit von Priestern. Heute wird dieses Ereignis öffentlich und aufwändig
unter der Teilnahme von *mubad* gefeiert. In Teheran findet diese Zere-
monie auf dem Friedhof *qaṣr-e firuze* statt.

e. *Forudog*

Forudog oder *farwardingān* (im *dari* der Zarathustrier: *prudog*, im Dia-
lekt der Stadt Yazd: *forudog*) ist heute der Name für den Tag *farwardin*
des gleichnamigen Monats (der erste *farwardin*-Tag im Jahr bzw. der 19.

Tag des Jahres). Der Name *frawadigān* oder *frawardiyān* ist in den Texten überliefert und bedeutet ‚den letzten Tag des Jahres befreien'. Es ist überliefert, dass die Seelen an den zehn Tagen des *frawardiyān*—aus dem Paradies oder aus der Hölle—auf die Erde zu ihren Häusern zurückkehren und am Tag *ormazd* des Monats *farwardin* (in der Morgendämmerung des Neujahrstages) zu ihrem Platz—in der Hölle oder dem Paradies—zurückkehren. Heutzutage ist diese Vorstellung nicht weiter entfaltet worden, es wird aber implizit angenommen, dass die Rückkehr der Seelen am Tag *farwardin* des Monats *farwardin* stattfindet. An diesem Tag wird eine umfangreiche Zeremonie auf dem Friedhof *qaṣr-e firuze* in Tehran vollzogen.

Vor den 1950er Jahren gab es eine derartige Zeremonie nicht. Als *forudog* bezeichnete man den Tag *farwardin* des Monats *esfand*, und die Rituale für diesen Tag fanden im privaten Kreis in den Häusern statt.

f. *Porse-ye hamegāni*

Früher versammelten sich die Zarathustrier am Tag *ormazd* des Monats *tir* und am Tag *ormazd* des Monats *esfand* in den Häusern, in denen sich ein Trauerfall ereignet hatte, um ihr Beileid zu bekunden. Heute findet an diesen beiden Tagen im Beisein von Priestern das *porse-ye hamegāni* statt.

g. *Yašt-e rapatwan*

In der Vergangenheit versammelten sich die Zarathustrier an den ersten fünf Tagen des Sommerneujahrs zwischen 12 Uhr bis 15 Uhr mittags (entspricht der liturgischen Tageszeit *rapatwan* (mp. *rapihwin*)) in den *gāhambār-ḫāne* und widmeten sich in absoluter Ruhe und Ungestörtheit ihren Gebeten. Die Beachtung der totalen Ruhe, das Unterlassen jeder überflüssigen Bewegung sowie das Bestreben, unbedingt jeden Kontakt des nackten Fußes mit dem Fußboden zu vermeiden, gehörten zu den besonderen Verhaltensweisen bei der Durchführung des *jašt-e rapatwan*. Am Ende der Zeremonie wurde eine spezielle Speise mit dem Namen *loqme-ye rapatwan*, die aus einem speziellen Brot und einem Stück Obst bestand, an die Anwesenden verteilt. Gleichfalls wurde die Pflanze *houm* gepresst und mit Milch zu einem Getränk vermischt, von dem jeder Anwesende eine Flasche für seine Angehörigen mit nach Hause nahm. Heute führen nur noch die Priester in den Feuertempeln dieses alte *niyāyeš* durch. Den Laien ist dieses Ritual nicht mehr geläufig.

2. Todesrituale

Die Abschaffung der Leichenaussetzung im *dahme* (der zarathustrische Ausdruck dafür ist *dādgāh)*, war die einschneidendste Veränderung, die sich bei den zarathustrischen Ritualen in Iran ergeben hat. Zuerst wurde 1937 in Teheran der Friedhof *qaṣr-e firuze* gegründet, dann entstanden entsprechende Begräbnisstätten in Kerman (1939) und in Yazd (1957). Das von Manekji (1813−1890) in Teheran errichtete *dahme* musste seinen Betrieb aufgeben, so dass bis zum Bau des Friedhofs *qaṣr-e firuze* durch Arbāb Keyhosrow Šāhroh in Teheran die Bestattung der Leichen auf dem privaten Grundbesitz der Zarathustrier stattfand.

a. Das *sagdid*-Ritual

Um die Leichendämonin (*diw-e nasuš*) aus dem Körper des Verstorbenen zu vertreiben, wurde beim *sagdid*-Ritual ein Hund an den Leichnam zur Beschau herangeführt. Da man durch Erfahrung wusste, dass Hunde Tote von Lebenden unterscheiden können, wurde hier die natürliche Sinneswahrnehmung des Hundes für die Feststellung des Todes genutzt. Das *sagdid*-Ritual wurde offiziell noch bis 1950 in Yazd durchgeführt − in einigen Dörfern der Umgebung mag es inoffiziell allerdings auch heute noch praktiziert werden. Grundsätzlich ist es jedoch außer Gebrauch gekommen. Bereits vor den fünfziger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts hatte sich das *sagdid*-Ritual insofern verändert, als anstelle der Leichenbeschau durch den Hund oder ein ihm ähnliches Tier ein Stück Brot auf die Brust des Verstorbenen gelegt und das Wegnehmen des Brotes durch den Hund als Beweis für den Tod des Menschen gedeutet wurde.

b. Leichentransport und -wäsche

Das Ritual, den Leichnam (zum Bestattungsplatz) zu tragen hatte sich—verglichen mit der in den alten Schriften überlieferten Ritualpraxis—bereits vor den 1950er Jahren verändert. Seitdem hat das Ritual nochmals wesentliche Veränderungsprozesse durchlaufen, die vor allem durch den Transport des Leichnams mit dem Leichenwagen bedingt waren.

Bei der Leichenwäsche finden heute auch Wein und Rosenwasser Verwendung. Das Waschen des Leichnams ist der Beruf einiger Personen, die heute nicht mehr als besonders unrein gelten. Gelegentlich übernehmen auch Verwandte des Verstorbenen die Leichenwäsche.

c. Die *niyāyeš* und die nichtoffiziellen Todesrituale

Die Rituale (*niyāyeš*), die in den ersten drei Tagen nach Eintreten des Todes im Namen der Gottheit *soruš* für den Verstorbenen vollzogen werden, werden heute in den Familien sehr unterschiedlich vollzogen. Insbesondere die *patit*-Gebete (mp. *petīt*, Reue- und Gnadengebete) sind weit verbreitet. Ab dem späten Nachmittag des dritten Todestages gewinnen die Rituale einen offiziellen Charakter und werden unter Teilnahme eines Priesters durchgeführt.

Am ersten, zweiten und dritten Todestag wird die persönliche Habe des Verstorbenen gereinigt und unter den Anwesenden aufgeteilt. Die Schulden des Toten werden beglichen und wenn jemand zu Lebzeiten des Toten von ihm beleidigt oder gekränkt wurde, verzeiht er ihm. Als Zeichen für seine innige Vergebung legt die Person etwas Wohlriechendes auf das Feuer. Diese Rituale, die nicht in den Schriften überliefert sind und von denen wir nicht wissen, wann sie den Todesritualen hinzugefügt wurden, werden noch heute in einigen Familien praktiziert.

d. Die Unreinheit des Leichnams

Dem Gedanken der durch den Kontakt mit einem Leichnam verursachten rituellen Unreinheit (mp. *rēmanīh*) wird seit der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts immer weniger Bedeutung beigemessen. Zwar werden Bett und Laken des Toten immer noch selbstverständlich weggeworfen, da sich der Tod heute allerdings meistens in Krankenhäusern ereignet, kann auch diese Vorschrift nicht in jedem Fall eingehalten werden. Vereinzelt besteht heute auch die Tendenz, die Idee ritueller Unreinheit als grundsätzlich überflüssig und bedeutungslos zu betrachten. Dabei handelt es sich jedoch um Einzelpositionen, die von der Mehrheit der Zarathustrier nicht geteilt werden.

3. Das Ablegen von Gelübden

Aus dem *šāyest nāšāyest* geht hervor, dass man beim Erbitten eines Wunsches (np. *ḥāǧat*, mp. *āyaft*) und beim Ablegen eines Gelübdes mit der Gottheit in Verbindung trat. Bei dieser Gottheit handelte es sich meistens um den Gott *māh*, in dessen Namen besonders häufig Gelübde ausgesprochen wurden. Erfüllte sich der Wunsch, so wurden bestimmte Rituale (*ostufrid-e izadān*, mp. *ustōfrīd ī yazadān*) vollzogen, für die die Teilnahme von Priestern belegt ist. Neben dem *šāyest nāšāyest* berich-

ten auch Schriften wie das *Saddar Bundehesh*[2] und das *Revāyāt-e Dārāb Hormozyār* von Ritualen, die das Ablegen von Gelübden betreffen.

Heute scheint anstelle des *ostufrid-e izadān* und dem Lesen der *niyāyeš* eine der folgenden Praktiken üblich zu sein: Man tritt mit einer Gottheit (wie *bahrām, aštād* oder *mehr*), dem Feuer *ataš bahrām* oder einem *pīr* (*pir-e sabz* oder *pir-e nārestāne*) in Verbindung bzw. legt ein Gelübde ab, indem man entweder ein *sofre* ausrichtet (wie z.B. das *sofre-ye dohtar-e šāh-e pariyān, sofre-ye bi-bi sešambe, sofre-ye bahman amešāspand, sofre-ye moškel-gošā*) oder für ein *sofre*, das eine andere Person ausgerichtet hat, etwas mitbringt. Das Gelübde im Namen von *nohoud-e moškel-gošā* gehörte in der Vergangenheit zu den häufigsten Gelübden und wird auch heute noch abgelegt. Zu den Ritualen, die noch heute nach Erfüllung eines Wunsches praktiziert werden, gehören Wallfahrten und das Spenden von Geld, Kerzen oder Dingen, die an ein Gelübde geknüpft waren: Man opfert Schafe, kocht *āš-e nodri* oder *siroug*, kauft und verteilt *nohoud-e moškel-gošā* und erzählt die dazugehörige Geschichte. Eine Sitte, die heute kaum noch üblich ist, ist das Gelübde, an Tagen wie dem *aštād ruz* auf den Verzehr von Brot oder Speisen, die aus Weizen hergestellt werden, zu verzichten.

In Bezug auf das Ablegen von Gelübden verdienen folgende Punkte Beachtung:

a. Vergleicht man die gegenwärtige Praxis mit den Überlieferungen aus dem *šāyest nāšāyest* und dem *Saddar Bundehesh*, so ist zu konstatieren, dass die Gläubigen heute seltener mit den Gottheiten in Verbindung treten. Gelübde im Namen der Gottheit *māh* werden nur noch an ganz bestimmten Tagen abgelegt: Fällt zum Beispiel der Tag *māh* auf einen Samstag, so wird dieser Tag *māhšambe* genannt und man kocht *āš-e nodri* oder *siroug*. Wenn die Gläubigen heute mit einer Gottheit in Verbindung treten wollen, so wird zunächst ein Gebet (wie z.B. das *bahrām yašt*) zur Eröffnung gelesen. Das Kochen einer Suppe oder *siroug* am Tag der Gottheit *bahrām* oder beim *ataš bahrām*–Feuer stellt heute die Ausnahme dar.

b. Der Besuch von Wallfahrtstätten und *pir* ist aufgrund der Verfügbarkeit moderner Transportmittel heute sehr viel stärker als in der Vergangenheit verbreitet.

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[2] S. 115–116

c. Das Ausrichten religiös motivierter *sofre* und das Ablegen von Gelübden im Namen von Gottheiten erfreuen sich besonders seit dem Iran-Irak-Krieg großer Beliebtheit. Priester und viele Sozialreformer stehen diesen *sofre* jedoch kritisch und distanziert gegenüber.

Die Priester spielen bei dem Ausrichten der oben genannten Rituale keine Rolle und stehen häufig sogar in Opposition zu ihnen. Sie werden—außer zum Lesen der *niyāyeš* für die Gottheiten—nicht zu den Veranstaltungen eingeladen. Es sind hauptsächlich Frauen, die Gelübde ablegen und die damit in Zusammenhang stehenden Rituale durchführen. Auch die *sofre*-Geschichten werden hauptsächlich von Frauen erzählt.

4. Menstruation und Geburt

Das dritte Kapitel des *šāyest nāšāyest* ist der Unreinheit von Geburt und Menstruation und den daraus resultierenden Formen von Enthaltsamkeit und Reinigung gewidmet. Veränderungen, die sich für Rituale ergeben, die in diesem Zusammenhang durchgeführt werden, können in zwei Gruppen unterteilt werden:

a. Es bestehen große Unterschiede zwischen den Angaben im *šāyest nāšāyest* und anderen Pahlavischriften im Vergleich zu den Ritualen und Vorstellungen, die bereits vor den 1950er Jahren existierten. So ist es den Frauen heute z.B. nicht mehr gestattet, während der Menstruation das *niyāyeš* zu lesen, obgleich dies im Widerspruch zu den alten Vorschriften steht. Früher war menstruierenden Frauen die Teilnahme an Leichenprozessionen erlaubt, während es ihnen heute nicht gestattet ist, sich einem Toten zu nähern oder gar einen Leichnam zu sehen. Die Vorschrift, die es den Frauen während ihrer Menstruation verbot, den Mond, die Sonne oder die Sterne anzuschauen, wurde auch schon vor den 1950er Jahren nicht mehr befolgt.

Meinungsverschiedenheiten existierten in den alten Textes auch bezüglich der *daštānestān*, d.h. speziellen Häusern für die menstruierenden Frauen eines Dorfes oder einer Stadt. Abgesehen von Gerüchten, die über einzelne *daštānestān* kursierten (z.B. in Taft bei Yazd), liegen aus dem vergangenen Jahrhundert faktisch keine zuverlässigen Informationen über diese Menstruationshäuser vor.

Ebenso wurden auch Menstruationsvorschriften, wie das Vermeiden von Wasser für die Körperreinigung sowie das Arbeitsverbot und die Isolation in der Praxis häufig nicht beachtet. Die wichtigste Verände-

rung, die sich für diese Rituale bereits vor der Mitte des 20. Jahrhundert ergeben hatte, war die Abschaffung des Tabus, während der Menstruation Wasser für die Körperreinigung zu verwenden. Einer alten Vorschrift zufolge war es einer menstruierenden Frau nicht erlaubt, mit Wasser in Berührung zu kommen. Dennoch existierte schon vor den 1950er Jahren der Brauch, Frauen gleich nach Eintreten der Menstruation am ganzen Körper rituell mit Wasser zu waschen. Hierbei wurde sowohl das Prinzip ritueller Unreinheit als auch das der Heiligkeit des Wassers missachtet.

b. Im Zuge der Veränderungen des 20. Jahrhunderts und der Emigration vieler Zarathustrier aus den Dörfern in die Großstädte haben sich die Vorstellungen von ritueller Unreinheit während Menstruation und Schwangerschaft rapide verändert. Die Einhaltung der alten Menstruations- und Schwangerschaftsvorschriften wäre bei den Nachbarn in der neuen Umgebung auf Erstaunen und Verwunderung gestoßen. Da Frauen meistens nur gemeinsam mit ihren Ehemännern wegzogen, waren sie in der neuen Umgebung auf sich allein gestellt. Es gab keine andere Frau, die während der menstruationsbedingten Isolationszeit ihre Pflichten im Haushalt übernommen hätte, während sich in Yazd die Frauen der Nachbarschaft in Notsituationen gegenseitig halfen.

Die wichtigsten Gründe für die Veränderungen der Schwangerschafts- und Menstruationsvorschriften waren:

1. Das alte Gesetz, demzufolge Wasser durch den Kontakt mit dem Körper einer menstruierenden Frau verunreinigt wird und diese Verunreinigung des Wassers eine Sünde ist, geriet in Vergessenheit. Dementsprechend war es nicht mehr erforderlich, dass menstruierende Frauen den Kontakt mit Wasser mieden und von der Körperpflege mit Wasser sowie der Erledigung der täglichen Arbeiten im Haushalt Abstand nahmen.

2. Im Gegensatz zu früher besaßen die modernen Häuser keinen besonderen Trakt, der den rituellen Reinheitsvorschriften entsprach (wie z.B. der *nān-o-sofre*-Raum oder der *pesgam-e bozorg*, d.h. ein großer Raum für die Durchführung religiöser Zeremonien). Auch die Küche galt nicht mehr als heiliger Ort, weil das traditionelle Holzfeuer dort alsbald durch ein mit Öl betriebenes ersetzt wurde. Da die Frauen somit während der Menstruation häufig keinen speziellen Ort mehr für die Wahrung ihrer Isolationszeit besaßen, hielten sie sich gezwungenermaßen in allen Räumen des Hauses auf.

3. Die alten religiösen Rituale wurden nur noch sehr selten in den Privathäusern abgehalten. Daher war es nicht mehr zwingend notwendig,

das Haus ganz oder zum Teil rituell rein zu halten.

4. Ein bedeutender Teil der Gesetze im dritten Kapitel des *šāyest nāšāyest* betrifft den medizinischen Bereich. Heutzutage werden Schwangerschaft und Geburt nicht von dem Priester, sondern dem Arzt betreut. Dadurch wird die Einsicht gefördert, den außergewöhnlichen Zustand der Frau während der Schwangerschaft und der Niederkunft als medizinischen Prozess und nicht als Form ritueller Unreinheit zu begreifen.

5. Moderne Hygieneartikel und neuer technischer Komfort in den Wohnhäusern übten auch auf die Zarathustrier eine große Anziehungskraft aus. Sowohl die Laien als auch die Priester wollten mit dem Erwerb der neuen Produkte ihren Alltag bequemer und komfortabler gestalten. Die neuen Produkte der täglichen Hygiene erleichterten viele Probleme, die sich bis dahin in Zusammenhang mit der Menstruation ergeben hatten.

6. Trotzdem ist es menstruierenden Frauen bis heute nicht gestattet, heilige Orte zu betreten oder an Zeremonien teilzunehmen, die als heilig gelten. Man achtet sogar darauf, dass die Braut, wenn sie an dem *girān-sofre* Platz nimmt, rituell rein zu sein hat, d.h. sich nicht in der Menstruationsphase befindet. (Vor den 1950er Jahren vertrat der Vater oder ein Bevollmächtigter die Braut bei diesem Heiratsritual.)

5. Individualrituale und -gebete

Individualrituale und persönliche Gebete (*niyāyeš*) nehmen einen großen Teil der heutigen zarathustrischen Rituale in Iran ein und waren in besonderem Maße Veränderungen ausgesetzt. So wird zum Beispiel das traditionelle Geburtstagsfest, das man früher *sāl-giri* nannte, heute in europäischer Weise gefeiert. Desgleichen haben auch die umfangreichen Hochzeitsrituale ein europäisches Aussehen bekommen. Diese Entwicklungen hier im Einzelnen zu beschreiben, würde den Rahmen des Aufsatzes sprengen, zumal diese Themen auch in der Literatur nur ansatzweise behandelt werden.

Bei den Individualritualen und *niyāyeš* sind folgende Veränderungen erwähnenswert:

a. Das *sedre-puši*-Ritual

Beim *sedre-puši*-Ritual wird den Kindern zum Zeichen der Initiation in einer speziellen Zeremonie das *sedre* angezogen und das *košti* um die Taille gebunden. Dieses Ritual war bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts keineswegs flächendeckend verbreitet, obgleich Manekji (1813−1890)

seine Wiederbelebung vorangetrieben hatte. Heute wird es im Rahmen eines großen Festes von den Priestern durchgeführt. Verglichen mit den in den alten Texten enthaltenen Vorschriften, hatten sich die Breite des *koÊti,* seine Qualität sowie die Qualität des *sedre b*ereits schon vor den 1950er Jahren verändert.

b. Die täglichen Gebete (*niyāyeš*)

Bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts war das tägliche fünfmalige Lesen der Gebete (*niyāyeš*) und die Rezitation bestimmter Gebete an den ‚Lieblingstagen‘ (*ormazd, mehr, bahrām* und *soruš*) üblich. Obwohl die Gläubigen kein Avestisch beherrschten, sprachen sie trotzdem bestimmte kleine Verse der Gebete mit. Zwar gibt es heute sogar noch unter den Jugendlichen Personen, die die täglichen Gebete verrichten, aber die ausführlichen, laut zu rezitierenden Gebete werden kaum noch gesprochen.

c. Das *barešnum* und das *yašt kardan*

Das *barešnum* oder *nošwe* bezeichnet die rituelle Waschung des ganzen Körpers, die sich über 9 Nächte und Tage erstreckt und entsprechend der schriftlichen Überlieferung unbedingt von jedem Gläubigen mindestens einmal im Leben vollzogen werden muss. Das obligatorische *nošwe* war bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts noch nicht ganz aufgegeben. Nach dem Iran-Iraq-Krieg ist das *nošwe* jedoch offenbar vollständig aus dem Gebrauch gekommen, und es gibt heute niemanden mehr, der dieses alte Reinigungsritual noch stellvertretend für andere Personen durchführt.

Jenes Ritual, das im *šāyest nāšāyest* mit dem Begriff *yašt kardan* bezeichnet wird, ist wahrscheinlich mit dem heutigen *giti ḫarid* identisch. Unter *giti ḫarid* versteht man die Ausführung einer bestimmten Anzahl von Ritualen (*niyāyeš*). Sie ist für jeden Gläubigen mindestens einmal im Leben verbindlich. Allerdings ist es erlaubt, gegen Bezahlung stellvertretend einen Priester mit der Durchführung dieses Rituals zu beauftragen. Im Laufe der Zeit hat sich diese Art der *niyāyeš*-Lesung zu einem festen Ritual entwickelt, das von den Priestern für die Verstorbenen durchführt wird.

d. Andere Gebete (*niyāyeš*)

Abgesehen von dem *avestā- ye t̤aʿāmḫordan* waren die *čameš*-Gebete (d.h. bestimmte Gebete für das Urinieren und Ausscheiden von Exkrementen) sowie eine Reihe von Ritualformeln für das Nägelschneiden

und ähnliche Tätigkeiten alle bereits vor den 1950er Jahren in Vergessenheit geraten.

6. *Bāž-e nān ḫʷordan*

Die Pahlavischriften pochen immer wieder auf das Sprechen von Gebeten *(niyāyeš)* und das Wahren von Stille bei den Mahlzeiten. Bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts sprach man häufig zu Beginn und am Ende der Mahlzeiten ein bestimmtes Gebet *(niyāyeš)*, das unter dem Namen *avestā-ye ṭaʿām ḫʷordan* bekannt ist. Desgleichen wurde auch empfohlen, das Essen in Stille und *bāž* einzunehmen. Heutzutage ist von diesen Ritualen fast nichts mehr erhalten. Besonders nach dem Krieg wird man kaum noch eine Familie finden, die ihren Kindern das *bāž-e nān ḫʷordan* beibringt und sie dazu anhält, beim Essen Stille zu bewahren.

7. Das *barešnum* und das *si šur*

Das *barešnum* bzw. *nošwe* Reinigungsritual dient der rituellen Reinigung von *rimani*, d.h. von ‚Verschmutzung‘ oder ‚Unreinheit‘. Eine Deutung bringt den Zustand von *rimani* mit Krankheit und Tod in Verbindung, eine andere Erklärung stellt einen Zusammenhang mit Geburt und Tod her. Ein großer Teil der Deutungen von *rimani* bezieht sich auf die rituelle Unreinheit der Frau, den Geschlechtsverkehr und den Samenerguß sowie auf den Leichnam und den Kontakt mit ihm. In Schriften wie dem *šāyest nāšāyest*, *zand-e fragard-e vendidād* und *vendidād* nehmen die Gesetze zur rituellen Unreinheit und rituellen Reinigung einen großen Stellenwert ein. Das *nošwe* und die rituelle Reinigung *si šur* (d.h. die dreizigmalige Reinigung mit Wasser und Rinderurin) waren noch bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhundert gebräuchlich. Über das obligatorische einmalige *nošwe* hinaus, das jeder Gläubige vollziehen mußte, war für Frauen, die ein behindertes Kind geboren hatten und für alle, die einen Leichnam berührt oder getragen hatten, entweder das *nošwe* oder mindestens das *si šur* zwingend vorgeschrieben. Zuerst geriet das *si šur* und dann auch das *nošwe* in Vergessenheit, ohne dass der Priesterrat in Teheran den Erhalt dieser rituellen Reinigungszeremonien angemahnt hätte. Obgleich diese alten Rituale in Orten wie Sharifabad eventuell noch lebendig seien mögen, weiß andernorts seit dem Krieg kaum noch jemand um die Bedeutung von *rimani*, und niemand lehrt sie mehr den Kindern. Desgleichen ist auch die Verwendung von Rinderurin für die

Reinigung gänzlich aus dem Gebrauch gekommen, und in bestimmten Situationen, wie z.B. bei der Leichenwäsche, verwendet man stattdessen Rosenwasser. Das Trinken von *nirang*, einem Getränk aus Rinderurin, das nur zu außergewöhnlichen Anlässen zubereitet und angewendet wurde, war bereits vor den 1950er Jahren nicht mehr üblich.

8. Feste

Im Gegensatz zu den *gāhambār*, die unter Mitwirkung von Priestern durchgeführt werden, richten die Gläubigen Feste wie das *nou-ruz*, *ḥordād-ruz wa farwardin māh*, *tirgān*, *mehrgān*, *sade* und auch *čahār-šambe-suri* in eigener Regie aus. Bei einigen dieser Feste rezitieren die *mubad* allerdings in den Feuertempeln bestimmte, dem Anlass entsprechende Gebete (*niyāyeš*). Im Vergleich zu der Zeit vor der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts sind heute auch bezüglich der Feste Veränderungen aufgetreten: So wird das *čahār-šambe-suri* beispielsweise—von einigen wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen—erst neuerdings wieder gefeiert. Für die Festlegung der Feste stehen zwei Kalender zur Verfügung: Der alte Kalender, der die *kabise* nicht berücksichtigt, war bis in die 1950er Jahre vor allem in Yazd und in Kerman gebräuchlich. Nach mehreren vergeblichen Versuchen, den alten Kalender durch einen neuen zu ersetzen, wurde letztendlich fast überall erfolgreich der neue Kalender eingeführt. Dieser entspricht in etwa dem modernen iranischen Kalender.

a. *Nou-ruz*

Das Neujahrsfest wurde bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts in Yazd und Kerman an zwei verschiedenen Daten gefeiert: Zum einen beging man das *ormazd ruz* bzw. *panǧe* (*nou-ruz-e mordegān*), das sich an dem alten Kalender orientierte und in den Sommer fiel, und zum anderen feierte man das *nou-ruz-e faṣli*, dessen Datierung dem offiziellen Kalender des Iran entsprach und auf den Frühlingsbeginn fiel. Auch die Rituale dieser beiden Neujahrsfeste unterschieden sich voneinander: Zehn Tage vor Beginn der beiden Neujahrsfeste (an dem ‚kleinen *panǧe*‘ und dem ‚großen *panǧe*‘) fand der Hausputz statt. Fünf Tage vor dem Sommer-Neujahrs-Fest wurde das *gāhambār-panǧe* ausgeführt, das vor allem den Verstorbenen gewidmet war. Heute führt man dieses *gāhambār* in Teheran ausschließlich vor dem Frühlings-Neujahr durch, während es in Yazd sowohl vor dem Frühlings-Neujahr als auch vor dem Sommer-Neujahr gefeiert wird.

Im Vergleich zu heute fiel das *sofre nou-ruzi*-Ritual des Frühlings-Neujahrs weniger umfangreich aus und wurde im *nān-o-sofre*-Zimmer unter dem *wiǧu*[3] durchgeführt. Wie heute säte man auch früher Samen für das *sabzi* aus, das sich jedoch von dem *sabzi* für die Verstorbenen und dem des *panǧe* des Sommer-Neujahrs, dem so genannten *šeša*, unterschied. Die rituellen Praktiken der beiden Neujahrsfeste sind äußerst umfangreich. Während dem Sommer-Neujahrsfest in Teheran heute kaum Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wird, feiert man demgegenüber das Frühlings-Neujahr wesentlich ausführlicher als in der Vergangenheit.

b. *Ḫordād-ruz wa farwardin māh*

Dieses Fest, das in den Schriften „großes Neujahr" genannt und mit dem zarathustrischen Begriff *habdoru* oder auch als „Fest des Königs Keyḫosrou" bezeichnet wird, wurde bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts in der Regel während der Sommer-Neujahrsfeierlichkeiten durchgeführt. Heute feiert man es—besonders in Teheran—während des Frühlings-Neujahrs. Während dieser Tage war es üblich, eine Divination (*fāl-e kuze*) vorzunehmen und um die Mittagszeit in den Privathäusern ein bestimmtes *sofre* zu arrangieren sowie ein spezielles Gebet zu sprechen. Heutzutage wird dieses Fest mehr unter dem Motto der Geburt Zarathustras und seiner Prophet-Werdung in moderner Weise—d.h. begleitet von zeitgenössischer Musik und einer Ausstellung—in öffentlichen Versammlungsorten und Stiftungsgebäuden begangen. Abgesehen von der Rezitation des Gebets haben die Priester keinen Anteil an dem Fest.

c. *Tirgān*

Dieses fröhliche und mit Gesang zelebrierte Fest wird in der lebendigen zarathustrischen Tradition *ǧašn-e tir-o-teštar* genannt und ist ein Fest des Wasserspielens und -spritzens. Am Tag der Gottheit *tir* des Monats *tir* knotet man sich Seidenfäden in sieben Farbtönen (Regenbogenfarben) um das Handgelenk, um die verknoteten Fäden am Tag der Gottheit *bād* des Monats *tir* zu öffnen und dem Wind preiszugeben. Dieses Ritual und einige seiner Details bestehen noch heute fort. Da, wenn die Hitze im Monat *tir* ihren Höhepunkt erreicht, das Spritzen von Wasser auf Köpfe und Gesichter anderer eine spaßige Angelegenheit ist, erfreut sich das Fest sogar zunehmender Beliebtheit.

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[3] Das *wiǧu* ist eine aus Schilf geflochtene, quadratische Schale, die an der Decke aufgehängt ist und auf die man Lebensmittel und Gegenstände legt, damit diese vor Katzen und Insekten geschützt sind.

Das berühmte Gedicht *Araš-e kamāngir* von Seyāwoš Kasrā'i, das
den mythologischen Ursprung des Festes *tirgān* zu neuem Leben er-
weckte, hatte großen Anteil an der Bekanntheit des Festes *tiregān* und
des Bogenschützen *Araš* in der heutigen Zeit. Im Jahre 2002 wurde das
tirgān-Fest im ganzen Land mit neuer Intensität gefeiert. Während des
Festes wurde auch eine Divination (*fāl-e kuze*) vorgenommen.

d. *Mehrgān*

Das Fest *mehrgān* findet in den religiösen Texten der Zarathustrier keine
besondere Erwähnung. Es geht heute mit dem Opfern eines Schafes oder
Huhnes und dem Rösten des Tieres im *tanur* einher. Einer alten Traditi-
on entsprechend, die noch bis in die 1950er Jahre in Dörfern wie z.B.
Ḫorramšāh bei Yazd praktiziert wurde, wurde das Schaf von der Dorf-
gemeinschaft gemeinsam gekauft, geopfert und gebraten. Man trieb das
Schaf mit Musik und Gesang durch die Wohnviertel der Zarathustrier,
um es schließlich im Gebäude des *šāwarahrām izad* zu schlachten. Nach
der Rezitation entsprechender Gebete wurde das Fleisch dann unter den
Anwesenden aufgeteilt. Diese Sitte ist heute noch in einigen wenigen
Dörfern—wie z.B. Mubārake bei Yazd—üblich. In Kermān wurden
auch Hühner geschlachtet, und im Morgengrauen wurde auf den Dä-
chern der Häuser das *mehr izad sofre* ausgerichtet.

Heute werden diese Rituale nicht mehr praktiziert. Seit dem Krieg hat
man in Teheran sogar das Rösten des Schafes im *tanur* und die Bewir-
tung von Gästen beim *mehrgān*-Fest aufgegeben. Die Gründe dafür sind
zum Teil in den modernen Lebensumständen zu suchen, da in den mo-
dernen Häusern weder ein Platz für das Schlachten von Schafen noch ein
tanur für das Rösten derselben zur Verfügung steht. Selbstverständlich
sind Schafe auch teuer, und es gibt niemanden mehr, der sich darauf ver-
steht, das Schaf im *tanur* traditionsgemäß zu rösten.

e. *Sade* und *čahār-šambe-suri*

Während früher in Yazd weder beim *sade* noch beim *čahār-šambe-suri*
das Entzünden eines Feuers üblich war und das *sade* eigentlich nur in
Kermān (in seiner vollständigen Form) gefeiert wurde, werden heute
beide Feste glanzvoll zelebriert. Das *sade* hat sich zu einem großen all-
gemeinen Fest entwickelt, an dem auch die Priester teilnehmen. In Shari-
fabad bei Yazd wird das *hirombā*-Ritual des Feuerentzündens heutzuta-
ge im Frühling prachtvoll gefeiert.

f. *Šab-e čelle*

Das *šab-e čelle* wird von den Zarathustriern wie von den meisten anderen Iranern zu Winterbeginn begangen. Das alte *ḫorram-ruz-*, *ormazd-* oder *deymāh*-Fest war bereits vor den 1950er Jahren in Vergessenheit geraten.

9. Mikrorituale

Kleinere Ritualabläufe, die bis zu den 1950er Jahren verbreitet waren und zum Teil auch heute noch einen Platz im Alltag der Zarathustrier haben, können bis auf die alten Schriften zurückgeführt werden. Beispiele dafür sind:

a. Wohlriechendes auf das Feuer legen

Bis zur Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts war die Sitte, etwas Wohlriechendes auf das Feuer zu legen, weit verbreitet. Die Häuser und Gassen, die man vor Sonnenaufgang gefegt und mit Wasser besprengt hatte, waren vom Duft wilder Raute (*esfand*) und Weihrauch (*kondor*) sowie dem Summen der Avesta-Rezitation erfüllt. Heutzutage—besonders nach der Auswanderung vieler Familien aus Yazd und Kermān—wird dieser Brauch kaum noch praktiziert.

b. Waschen von Gesicht und Hände bei Tagesanbruch

Morgens nach dem Aufwachen die Hände, das Gesicht und den Mund zu waschen, ist heute eine in Iran weit verbreitete Sitte. Trotzdem ist festzustellen, dass das Beten des *ashem vohu* während des Hände- und Gesichtwaschens heute seltener praktiziert und auch den Kindern kaum noch beigebracht wird. Schon vor den 1950er Jahren war der Brauch, Gesicht, Hände und Mund mit Rinderurin zu reinigen, in Vergessenheit geraten. Lediglich menstruierende Frauen und Leute, die sich dem *nošwe*-Reinigungsritual unterzogen, wuschen ihre Hände mit Rinderurin. Heute gehören Reinigungsrituale mit Rinderurin gänzlich der Vergangenheit an.

c. *Niyāyeš-sofre*-Rituale

Wenn die Priester anlässlich der *gāhambār* oder im Rahmen von Totenritualen *niyāyeš* lesen, legen sie Lebensmittel und Gegenstände auf das *sofre*. Einige dieser auf dem *sofre* platzierten Dinge, wie z.B. Milch, Wein, Raute (*sodāb*), Knoblauch und Zweige von Pflanzen und Blumen,

.sind in den alten Schriften erwähnt. Daneben werden heute jedoch auch Lebensmittel auf das *sofre* gestellt, die für dieses Ritual eine Neuerung darstellen. So finden z. B. Kartoffeln großzügige Verwendung. Eine Ursache für die immer umfangreichere Gestaltung des *sofre* ist sicherlich der wirtschaftliche Wohlstand und der Einsatz moderner Küchenmaschinen. Entgegen dem, was in den Schriften verzeichnet ist und vor 1950 Sitte war, nimmt man heute jedoch bei dieser *sofre* in der Regel vom Opfern eines Schafes und dem Verzehr von Fleisch Abstand.

ERGEBNISSE

Wenn die oben getroffene Auswahl zarathustrischer Rituale dem Anspruch des Themas gerecht wird, sollte deutlich geworden sein, dass Rituale ihre Basis in den Überzeugungen und Vorstellungen der Ritualakteure haben. Diese Glaubensvorstellungen waren seit der Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts verstärkt den Einflüssen einer durch wissenschaftlichen und technischen Fortschritt geprägten Zeit ausgesetzt. Gegenüber den neuen Werten der profanen Welt konnten sich die alten Glaubensvorstellungen, die der sakralen Welt angehörten, nicht behaupten und verloren ihre Gültigkeit.

Die religiösen Konsolidierungsprozesse im 9. Jahrhundert hatten die alten Glaubensvorstellungen und Rituale nicht mit Beweisen und Argumenten untermauert, sondern lediglich durch Verweis auf die Tradition und die Verbundenheit mit den Ahnen. Dadurch fehlte es den nachfolgenden Priestern an Argumenten, um die religiösen Vorstellungen und Praktiken vor Neuerungen zu schützen. Obgleich die zarathustrischen Priester unter den Gläubigen Respekt und Achtung genossen, vermochten sie es daher nicht, den Ansprüchen der Neuzeit zu begegnen und ihre Religion mit Mitteln der Moderne zu verteidigen. Damit war der Weg für Veränderungen, die Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts in massiver Weise eintraten, bereitet.

Obgleich das alte Verständnis von ritueller Unreinheit (*rimani*) zum Teil schon vor den 1950er Jahren seine Bedeutung eingebüßt hatte, wurden die mit dieser Vorstellung in Zusammenhang stehenden traditionellen Handlungen und Verhaltensweisen noch eine Zeit lang beachtet. Nachdem jedoch die neuen Werte und Maßstäbe der profanen Welt das Denken der Menschen bestimmte, muteten die alten Reinheitsrituale fremd und sonderbar an. Sie verloren ihre Gültigkeit und wurden nicht mehr an die nachfolgenden Generationen weitergegeben. Da kein Bewusstsein mehr für rituelle Reinheit existierte, schienen auch die auf diesem Prinzip aufbauenden Rituale und Traditionen sinnentleert und über-

flüssig. Alte Reinigungsrituale, Menstruations- und Schwangerschafts-
vorschriften sowie Regeln im Umgang mit Toten verloren daher ihre
Bedeutung und wurden nicht mehr beachtet.

Daher ist heute z.B. für einen jungen zarathustrischen Medizinstu-
denten der Umgang mit einem toten Körper im Rahmen seiner Anato-
miestudien völlig unproblematisch, obgleich die Tradition in solchen
gravierenden Fällen ritueller Unreinheit überaus umfangreiche Reini-
gungsrituale vorschreibt.

An diesem Beispiel wird klar, dass, wenn es der zarathustrischen
Gemeinde nicht gelungen wäre, sich für ein bestimmtes Maß an Verän-
derungen zu öffnen, sondern alternativ in Abwehr zu den neuen Ver-
hältnissen verharrt wäre, sie entweder auf den Anschluss an die Moderne
(in Form von Ausbildung zarathustrischer Ärzte) verzichten oder den
totalen Bruch mit den religiösen Traditionen erleben müsste. Der beson-
dere Mechanismus, der dafür sorgt, dass Veränderungen in den Ritualen
keinen absoluten Bruch mit den Traditionen bedeuten, besteht darin,
dass Rituale aus verschiedenen Teilen bestehen, die einer bestimmten
Ordnung entsprechend organisiert sind und eine unabhängige Einheit
bilden. Werden nun einzelne Teile dieser Einheit verändert oder gar eli-
miniert, so bleibt dennoch das unabhängige Ganze—eventuell in leicht
veränderter Gestalt—bestehen. Dieser Mechanismus garantiert ein hohes
Maß an Flexibilität im Umgang mit Neuerungen.

Im Ergebnis können wir einen langsamen Veränderungsprozess bei
den schriftlich fixierten Ritualen feststellen, der stets die Harmonie mit
den bestehenden sozialen und mentalen Bedingungen in der zarathustri-
schen Gemeinde gesucht hat. Obgleich daher, verglichen mit Schriften
wie dem *šāyest nāšāyest*, nur wenige Rituale in ihrer ursprünglichen
Form erhalten geblieben sind, haben sich viele gerade durch ihre Anpas-
sung an die jeweilige Situation zu grundlegenden Konstanten der
zarathustrischen Religion entwickelt.

Die Abschaffung der Kopfsteuer (1882) und die neue Wertschätzung,
die der zarathustrischen Gemeinde seit Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts von
Seiten der iranischen Muslime entgegengebracht wurde, wirkten sich auf
bestimmte Rituale positiv aus: So erlebten einige Feste einen neuen Auf-
schwung und werden heute ausgiebiger als früher gefeiert. Auch be-
stimmte Todesrituale wie das z.B. das *sāl* werden heute umfangreicher
ausgeführt. Ein Grund dafür mag sicherlich auch der wachsende Wohl-
stand der zarathustrischen Gemeinde Irans sein.

Die Fähigkeit der ritualkonstitutiven Teile, durch Anpassung an die neuen Verhältnisse erhalten zu bleiben, beruht zum einen auf den individuellen Eigenschaften des ritualkonstitutiven Teils und hängt zum anderen von seiner Beziehung zu anderen ritualkonstitutiven Elementen und den Normen der Gesellschaft ab. So haben sich z.B. die Breite des *košti* und die Qualität des *sedre* verändert, während das *bāž-e nān ḫ^wordan* ganz verschwunden ist. Die Verwendung von Knoblauch und Raute (*sir-o-sodāb*) ist hingegen bis heute üblich.

Die Priester (*mubad*), die seit Jahrtausenden die zarathustrischen Rituale bewahrt und diese u.U. sogar geschaffen haben, stehen heute den rituellen Veränderungen positiv gegenüber. Diese Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber Neuerungen, die übrigens schon in den alten Schriften belegt ist, stellt eine Ursache für die große Vielfalt zarathustrischer Rituale in Iran dar. Neben den erwähnten sozialen und mentalen Ursachen hat sie wiederholt als unabhängige Kraft beim Wandel von Ritualen mitgewirkt. Solange diese Faktoren die Veränderungen von Rituale fördern und dadurch ihre Kontinuität in neuer Gestalt, Umgebung und Rolle garantieren, ist anzunehmen, dass auch in Zukunft die meisten zarathustrischen Rituale erhalten bleiben werden.

MONDAY-NIGHTS AT THE BANAJI, FRIDAYS AT THE ASLAJI: RITUAL EFFICACY AND TRANSFORMATION IN BOMBAY CITY

Michael Stausberg*

> But this is very good for the Parsi community
> because it gives hope, and hope is the best medicine
> that keeps people alive and kicking. ...
> At times it is a pitiable sight, depressing sight,
> [to see] that so many people are coming for hope.
> And God willing they get their answers in this life.
> [MrFB]

Ever since its foundation in colonial times, Bombay (nowadays Mumbai) has been a multi-religious venue. The 'city of gold', or the 'city of dreams', as Bombay is often referred to,[1] houses a multitude of gods and protagonists of the divine who are exhibited and worshipped in numerous temples, shrines, *mandirs*, mosques, *dargahs*, synagogues, churches, water tanks, wells and plenty of other religious places and spaces.[2]

Contrary to many such buildings, the gates of the Parsi (Zoroastrian) fire-temples are hermetically locked to non-Zoroastrians. Signposts placed at the entry-gates warn "No admission except for Parsees" (or similar), occasionally even threatening with legal consequences in case of transgression. Access to the 'towers of silence' (dokhme; doonger-wadi), which most travel guidebooks still rank as one of the city's main tourist attractions, has long since been denied to tourists and non-Parsis in general by the Parsi authorities (the Bombay Parsi Punchayat).

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[1] G. Tindall, *City of Gold. The Biography of Bombay* (New Delhi, 1992 (1982)); M.D. David, *Bombay. The City of Dreams* (Bombay et al., 1995).

[2] See also David, *Bombay*, p. 178: "Three hundred and fifty and more temples, housing almost a thousand deities, that crowd this island city ... give it as much claim to be called the City of Gods as the City of Gold." Taking into consideration that there are 50 Zoroastrian fire-temples in Bombay, a total of 350 is a very moderate guess, indeed.

Even Zoroastrian festivals such as New Year (Navroz) are, nowadays at least, celebrated in an inconspicuous manner mainly inside Parsi homes or buildings such as community halls (Baug) and fire-temples. The main exception confirming the rule is the 'birthday of the waters' (Ava mahino Ava roj, i.e. the festival when the month and the day named after the [deity of the] waters [Ava] coincide). On that day, many Parsis, not the least Parsi-ladies in white dresses, in the evening before sunset can be seen at the beaches, the seashore, and the wells, in particular the Bhikha Behram Well, where they pray and place their offerings such as flowers and coconuts.[3] Compared with that, some Muslim and Hindu festivals such as Coconut Day, Holi, Diwali, and most of all the Muharram- and Ganesha-processions are celebrated on a grand scale, virtually involving the entire population. This includes many Parsis as well, whose lives in various ways are affected by these festivals and who, moreover, may participate in these celebrations in different capacities and roles (as actors, spectators, or 'objects').[4]

EXTRAORDINARY POPULAR SANCTUARIES IN BOMBAY CITY

Bombay does belong neither to the classical or traditional nor to second grade or the modern Indian pilgrimage places (tirtha). Nevertheless, the city possesses some places of worship that enjoy a special reputation among its inhabitants, the Bombayites. Probably the best-known temple is a temple devoted to Mahalakshmi. This temple—I am not aware of its history—is located at the shores of the Arabian Sea and seems to draw large crowds on a daily basis, but especially, I was told, on Fridays.[5]

Right opposite this temple, in the middle of a small bay, there is the sea-mausoleum of Haji Ali, which during low tide is regularly visited not only by Muslims, but by devotees belonging to different communities, especially, it is reported, on Thursdays (at noon and 4pm).[6] The history of

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[3] See Ph. Kreyenbroek (in collaboration with S.N. Munshi), *Living Zoroastrianism. Urban Parsis Speak about their Religion* (Richmond, 2001), p. 23.

[4] In the 19th century, Parsis were occasionally satirised in the Moharram-actions, see J.C. Masselos, "Spare Time and Recreation. Changing Behaviour Patterns in Bombay at the Turn of the 19th century", *South Asia* 7, 1984, pp. 34–57, here pp. 39–40; this paper also discusses some other festivals; on the history of Moharram see J.C. Masselos, "Change and Custom in the Format of Bombay Mohurrum during the 19th and 20th Centuries", *South Asia* 5, 1982, pp. 47–67.

[5] Because I did no research at Mahalakshmi I am unable to verify this latter statement.

[6] As I am not a regular visitor of Haji Ali, I cannot verify this claim. Note the contrasting timings of Haji Ali (Thursday) and Mahalakshmi (Friday).

that Dargah is somewhat obscure; possibly the saint lived at the end of the 18th century.[7] At Mahim, an island (and nowadays a suburb) to the North, already in 1431 a shrine was erected in the memory of a learned Muslim by the name of Makhdum Fakih Ali Paru. Still today, on the death-anniversary of the saint, in December, a ten-day fair is held that draws large crowds.[8]

In 1543, also at Mahim, the Franciscans built the oldest surviving church of the city, St. Michael's, which nowadays is a very popular venue for its Novenas taking place on Wednesdays.[9] These Novenas are well known among Bombayites from all communities whom I have been talking to during my visits to the city (in 1991, 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2002). North of Mahim, at Bandra, another Christian sanctuary, Mount Mary, attracts people from different communities, especially during the fair that is held in September (10th through 17th) and on the festival of Mary's birth (September 8th).

Close to the now posh area of Malabar Hill, where the 'towers of silence' are located, there is both a big Jain temple with a constant flow of devotees, and Walkeshwar temple—the present structure was built in 1715—, "the most famous and ancient Śiva sanctuary of Bombay",[10] to which a big and renowned water tank, called Banganga, is attached. Close by, another temple where a Shiva-lingam is venerated is to be found, the Babulnath temple, built in 1780. This sacred precinct also attracts worshippers from different communities who mainly come there on Mondays. Reportedly also more than 200 years old is the Siddhivinayak-temple housing a large black-stone figure ('idol') of Ganesha (with the trunk turned to the right instead of to the left) in central Bombay. This temple is reported to attract thousands of people daily, and on Tuesdays, the main day of worship, the queue of devotees is said to stretch over several miles.[11] Tuesday is also the chief day of worship at one other of the city's main places of worship, the Mumbadevi temple, housing the tall stone statue of the former Koli-deity Mumbadevi who,

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[7] See David, *Bombay*, p. 77.

[8] See David, *Bombay*, pp. 12–13.

[9] On Wednesdays, the mass is celebrated at 6.15am, 7am, and 7.45am. There are further services at 8.30am, 9.30am, noon, 5pm, 6pm, 7pm, 8pm, and 9.30pm. Unfortunately, I know neither when the Novenas started, nor when they gained popularity.

[10] K.K. Klostermaier, "Hinduism in Bombay", *Religion* 2, 1973, pp. 83–91, p. 88.

[11] The Tuesday *ārti* has developed an extension into virtual space, for it can be followed live on the official website of the temple, see http://www.siddhivinayak.org/main.asp

according to the politically correct interpretation, has given the name to 'Mumbai'. After it was shifted from its former location, the present structure was completed in 1753.[12] It is located not too far off from Babulnath and Walkeshwar. In fact, the three of them are reached by the same train-station (Marine Lines/Western Railways). Apart from these 'historic' sanctuaries, some place of more recent origin are much frequented. As was to be expected, this is especially true of the Sai Baba mandirs, which are crowded on Thursdays.

Of course, there are many more religious places around, and some of them—temples, churches, mosques, etc.—may be well frequented, and large-scale religious events such as visits or performances (puja; ārti) of gurus, matas, or other (semi-) divine personalities occur quite regularly.

In the preceding section, I have highlighted those places that are especially well known for attracting visitors across the boundaries of religious communities and that have a trans-local renown[13]—i.e. they are attended by people who travel to these sanctuaries, occasionally over greater distances in the city, and who may (or may not!) do their 'ordinary' worship at some local place in the vicinity of where they are living. The reader will have noted that most of these 'extraordinary'—or at any rate extraordinary well known and popular—places are linked to special timings such as festivals and fairs (Makhdum Fakih Ali Paru, Mount Mary, and many others) or, for the present discussion more importantly, to specific days of the week. Based on the foregoing, one may sketch the following weekly itinerary of a prototypical, extremely religiously inclined Bombayite: Mondays to Babulnath, Tuesdays to Siddhivinayak and/or Mumbadevi, Wednesdays to St. Michael's, Thursdays to Haji Ali and/or a Sai Baba mandir, and Fridays to Mahalakshmi. Only the weekends are conspicuously absent.[14]

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[12] See David, *Bombay*, p. 179.

[13] Brief sketches of these and some other places, which according to my knowledge do not attract people from different communities in large numbers (such as the ISKCON Hare Krishna Temple, the Afghan Church, St. Thomas Cathedral, and the Jumma Masjid) can be accessed at http://www.mumbainet.com/travel/religious.htm (where they are grouped as "Places of Worship in Mumbai").

[14] Of course, this is not to stay that there are no rituals performed on Saturdays or Sundays. As to Sundays, one may well argue that one could certainly go to some church or the other, but as far as I know, the ordinary Sunday-services are far less popular than the 'special' services at St. Michael's and on Mount Mary. As to Saturdays, in certain periods, Maruti (Hanuman) is especially worshipped in his temples (on the so-called 'wealth-giving Saturdays'), see already R.E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (New Delhi, 1990 (1924)), pp. 188–189. According to David, *Bombay*, p. 178 in this city the

EXTRAORDINARY (POPULAR) PARSI-SANCTUARIES

Contrary to Iranian Zoroastrians, the Parsis do not have shrines (pir; zeyārat-gāh).[15] Nevertheless, in India there are some sacred places, which enjoy a special religious reputation. To begin with, the Iranshah fire-sanctuary now housed in a temple in the small village of Udvada, in Southern Gujarat,[16] is some sort of a Parsi pilgrimage centre. There are a number of Parsi hotels and four guesthouses (dharamshalas) catering to the needs of the pilgrims. Furthermore, the second Atash Behram temple, which was founded in Navsari in 1765,[17] is held in great esteem, and so are the remaining six Atash Behram-temples, two of which are located in Surat, and four in Bombay. Apart from the pilgrimages to Udvada (and sometimes Navsari), often undertaken at specific days, which are regarded as auspicious for that regard, there is the idea of a visit to all eight—or, for Bombayites, all four—Atash Behrams in a row within a fixed span of time such as one day, or two days, during the festival dedicated to the spirits of the ancestors (muktad), or—in the case of Bombay—within one of the five daily gehs (watches of the day).[18]

Some Parsi travel agents offer organised trips to all eight Atash Behrams. The anniversary or 'birthday'-celebrations (salgireh) of the Atash Behram-fires are events that are celebrated on a grand scale, with thanksgiving services (yashan) and speeches held. These public events often attract several hundreds of devotees. Moreover, a good number of Parsis make it a point to visit the Atash Behram regularly for individual prayers.

Another sanctuary, which is extremely popular among the Parsis, is the above-mentioned Bhikha Behram Well, named after its founder who had migrated from Broach in Gujarat to Bombay in 1715. The well was founded in 1725 as an act of thanksgiving. It is reported that some Mara-

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"God of wind, Maruti, also called Hanuman, seems to evoke more devotion than any other". In Bombay, the Maruti/hanuman-worship mostly takes place in smaller, local temples.

[15] On these shrines see Robert Langer's paper in this volume.

[16] On the history of this fire-sanctuary and its shifting locations see M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte– Gegenwart – Rituale,* vol. 1 (Stuttgart et al., 2002), pp. 379–380, 402–405, 418–423.

[17] On the historical background leading to the consecration of this fire-sanctuary see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 1, pp. 418–423.

[18] It seems that this practice was very much promoted by a recent esoteric movement, see M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte– Gegenwart – Rituale,* vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 2002), p. 124.

thas captured Bhikha Behram when the latter was on his way to Bombay. However, they did let him go when he showed his ritual garments, the shirt (sudreh) and the thread (kusti). Although it is pretty close to the sea, the well carries sweet water that is believed to contain blessings and to fulfil wishes. The present roof-structure was erected in 1954. The well may not be approached by non-Parsis,[19] and whenever passing by I invariably saw a number of devotees inside the precinct. It is reported that the well is visited by roughly 300 Parsis on 'auspicious' days, and on the 'birthday of the waters' (Ava mahino Ava roj) the number is reported to go into the thousands. The popularity of the well, which because of its structure comes pretty close to the idea of a 'shrine', may well have to do with its location in the vicinity of the main business and administrative district and Churchgate station, the starting point for many trains going to the suburbs. In this way, there is easy access to the well for Parsis travelling to the main city district.

There are also some 'ordinary' (i.e., non-Atash Behram) fire-temples, which for the Parsis seem to be surrounded by a special aura, viz. a spiritual reputation that goes beyond the fact that these places are 'old' or 'well-maintained'. In Surat, the Goti Adarian which is located a little outside the city close to the Tapti River,[20] seems to enjoy such a reputation, and during two visits to Surat (in 1994 and 1997), several Parsis drew my attention to the special quality of this fire-temple (agiary) as a special resort when other avenues of solving crucial problems had failed. It seems that the Goti Adarian has more devotees attached to it than Surat's two Atash Behram-temples, and even people from Bombay make it a point to pay a visit to the Goti Adarian whenever they happen to be in Surat.[21]

In Bombay, currently there are two temples, which seem to be invested with a special aura that attracts especially many worshippers, albeit necessarily Parsis only. These are the Aslaji Bhikhaji Agiary and the Banaji Atash Behram. However, whereas the Goti Adarian at Surat, at

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[19] However, Mrs Marfatia informs me (by e-mail) that "a tank has been installed on the Churchgate side of the well which is meant for the use of non-Zoroastrians."

[20] The literature provides contradictory information on the date when the fire was consecrated and the temple was built; see e.g. M.J. Giara, *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples* (Mumbai, 2002 (second edition)), p. 137.

[21] I was also told that people from Nagpur (which has its own Agiary) have much faith in the fire-temple at Akola (Maharashtra) which houses a Dadgah-fire (i.e. a fire of the lowest category) consecrated in 1869 (date according to Giara, *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples,* p. 67).

least as far as I am aware of, is not visited on any special days apart from the usual ones applying to all fire-temples—the 'birthday' (in this case Tir mahino Sarosh roj) and the days especially linked to fire (Adar roj, Ardibehesht roj, Behram roj, Sarosh roj)—, the two above-mentioned Bombay-temples are visited each on a particular day of the week: on Mondays (Banaji) and on Fridays (Aslaji) respectively. While this is somewhat unusual in view of the structure of the Zoroastrian calendar, where the concept of a week is irrelevant, this sort of behavioural pattern, which seems to be a genuine Bombay development, is much in line with the extraordinarily popular (non-Zoroastrian) sanctuaries introduced in the previous section of this paper. Hence, the visits to the Banaji (on Mondays) and the Aslaji (on Fridays) may be added to the weekly religious itinerary of a pan-religious Parsi-Bombayite. As is the case with the non-Zoroastrian sanctuaries, again the weekend is not affected.

APPROACHING (THE STUDY OF) THE PLACES

The above-mentioned events under scrutiny are not much liked by the spokesmen of the different schools presenting their version of 'Zoroastrianism'.[22] However, exactly because of their popularity both places and the ritual events taking place over there, attracted my attention ever since I accompanied my friends Rusi and Veera Khambatta to the Aslaji on what happened to be the festival in honour of Mithra (Meher mahino Meher roj) in March 1994. Long queues of worshippers were standing in the narrow lane outside the temple waiting for their turn to enter. In November 1997 I made some further researches while in Bombay, including some preliminary interviewing. Finally, in 2000 I decided to take a closer look at what was going on at these places. Eventually, for reasons specified below, this investigation focused more on the Banaji than on the Aslaji.

In this endeavour I was assisted by Mrs Zarin Marfatia, a married, (at the time of writing) 56 years old Parsi lady with one daughter living abroad. For several years, Mrs Marfatia had worked as Steno/Secretary and as a manager in a beauty parlour. In 1992 she obtained a BA in history (as an external student from Mumbai's SNDT University), and in 2000 an

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[22] In Kreyenbroek/Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism,* pp. 50–51, the events are classified as "Parsi Cults and Venerated Figures". This somewhat derogatory classification is informed by the neo-traditionalist affiliation of this otherwise ground-braking publication.

Avesta/Pahlavi diploma at BA level from the Sir J.J. Madressa. Mrs Marfatia was (and still is) not a regular visitor to any of the places, and while she is clearly committed to and interested in her religion—witness her studies at the Madressa—she is not attached to any of the dominant 'schools' or 'movements' in contemporary Indian Zoroastrianism (such as 'neo-traditionalism', 'esotericism', 'orthodoxy', 'liberalism').

We basically worked on our project for a period of three weeks in September 2000, and for a further brief period of two weeks in February/March 2002. Mrs Marfatia cleared the way with the relevant authorities that allowed us to study the places and to talk to the people on the spot.[23] She also attended the places herself (where she would first perform her own prayers) in order to observe what was going on. Moreover, Mrs Marfatia conducted two types of interviews. (a) A series of brief interviews, totalling 93, out of which 53 at the Banaji[24] and 41 at the Aslaji.[25] These interviews were mainly based on a short questionnaire comprising some ten questions.[26] They were conducted on the spot—that is, mainly when people kept on arriving—and hence were not supposed to take more than five minutes (in order not to interfere too much with the devotees' routine).[27] Moreover, Mrs Marfatia conducted (b) a number of 12 structured in-depth-interviews (with 11 Parsis),[28] which were

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[23] Mrs Marafatia wishes to express her gratitude to Ervad Nariman Panthaky who was very helpful to her throughout the interviews.

[24] 53% of the respondents at the Banaji were male.

[25] 56% of the respondents at the Aslaji were female.

[26] One person was interviewed twice. The second interview was made in order to throw further light on some points made during the first session. The design of the questionnaire was based on previous inquiries and available information. The wording was a joint product. It should be noted that our research started before *Living Zoroastrianism* by Kreyenbroek (and Mrs Munshi) was published. The core of this book consists of extended interviews with urban Parsis (all from Bombay). The interviews are set within a neo-traditionalist meta-frame.

[27] At the Banaji, a serious limit to this method of recruitment was posed by the fact that it left out latecomers who would arrive just prior to the main event. This was because, on the one hand, these people were generally not inclined to loose time in order to be interviewed and hence take the risk of missing what they've come for; on the other hand, Mrs Marfatia herself went inside and thus was prevented from meeting latecomers. At the Aslaji, these restrictions did not apply because there is no main event; people keep on arriving throughout the day. This, in turn, was a serious challenge to us, and was one of the factors that had led me to abandon the study of the Aslaji.

[28] The main structure was the same as that used for the on-the-spot-interviews. However, Mrs Marfatia was free to follow tracks of the conversation as it unfolded, and occasionally she made her own points and shared her own impressions.

conducted at the interviewees' office or home. Most interviewees for that category (b) were contacted on the spot, and while the brief interview was conducted agreed to be interviewed again. That is why, in eight cases, there is an overlap between both categories. Among the 11 in-depth-interviews 8 are pertaining to the Banaji Atash Behram (with two also covering the Aslaji), while three are related to similar or historically akin places and events.29 Moreover, in relation to the Aslaji, Mrs Marfatia held three informal conversations (two of which with priests working at this temple), which she subsequently put into notes.

Hence, as to its representational rhetoric and the empirical material this study is based on, this paper results from a number of nested framings of outsider-insider relationships: While the present writer is the insider to the reader, he is the outsider to Mrs Marfatia (who is the insider in terms of religious affiliation and ritual participation); Mrs Marfatia in turn is the outsider in relation to the insiders she was interviewing (i.e., the visitors to the places); during that process, however, she also became an insider and started to talk to people on these terms.

During my several trips to Bombay, I repeatedly went to the respective places. At the Banaji, at the time when the ritual event went on, I used to sit at a particular bench overlooking both entries to the temple and would try to count people as they came and went.[30] This attracted a certain amount of curiosity. Invariably, people started to chat with me, and in this way, I was able to hear (and subsequently note down) some further stories and opinions about what was going on. As I did that three times in a row, I sort of became a regular feature of the scenario, and made friends with some attendees whom I would look forward to meeting again the next week. Some people offered their help in my work and supervised my counting (which almost everybody found a very odd thing to do). Occasionally, I also came to run into people whom I had met in other contexts such as in the reading room of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute. During my second trip, my colleague Dr. Dorothea Lüddeckens, who had come to Bombay in order to study the funeral ceremonies of the Parsis,[31] assisted me on the spot by also counting people.

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[29] These three interviews were not made use of for the present study.

[30] Of course, it was out of the question that I entered the building. Mrs Marfatia informed me that the interior was so crowded that it was impossible to count people inside.

[31] See her paper in this volume.

In a reflexive turn, at least in one instance, in one in-depth interview conducted in relation to the Banaji, it emerged that the presence of an outside scholar studying the place was seen as a further proof for the significance both of the place and of the event.

THE ASLAJI

The Aslaji Bhikhaji Agiary is a medium sized fire-temple in one of Bombay's most crowded and congested areas (Grant Road).[32] It is located next to Shapur Baug, a small Parsi housing colony, which provides a primary clientele for the temple. Seth Aslaji Bhikaji—hence the name of the temple—had the fire consecrated and a first building erected in 1849 as a private place.[33] The birthday of the fire is celebrated on Behram roz, Aspandad mahino.[34] After Seth Aslaji Bhikaji's death, his wife transferred her rights to a Mr. Vakil who was her nephew as she had no issue. The birthday of the fire is celebrated on Roz Behram, Mah Aspandad, the day Janghirji Vakil repaired the agiary and opened it on 7th September, 1865. He passed away in 1905 and the property was inherited by his three sons, and they had it repaired in 1923. On March 15th, 1937 the Bombay High Court declared the hitherto private sanctuary a public institution and in that way it was deemed legal for the trustees to raise funds enabling them to have it repaired again in 1942. A floor on top of the old structure was added by the munificent donation of

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[32] Mrs Naju Panthaki, the wife of the priest in charge of the temple, has kindly commented upon the subsequent sections of this paper. (Not all her suggested modifications were incorporated though.) Mrs Panthaky was born and brought up at the Aslaji.

[33] Information provided by Mrs Panthaky who also stated that she had 'full faith' in the founder of the temple whom she referred to as 'Aslaji Bawa' (= 'father Aslaji' or 'respected Aslaj'; on the term *bawa* see also below). She said that she 'prays to him for family's health and happiness'. While I did find this ritual attachment to the founder of a temple somewhat unusual, Mrs Marfatia enlightened me that "we [the Parsis] consider these departed souls as our benefactors and just as we remember our departed souls we add them to our list. For example my sister in law who stays in Cushrow Baug has a photo of Mr Wadia (the founder of Cushrow Baug), and often mentions gratitude towards his charities whereby the residents enjoy such pleasant homes. Similarly I often remember Bai Motlibai Wadia of N M Wadia Charities for the comfortable and beautiful home and surroundings enjoyed by us."

[34] In 2003, this day corresponds to July 6th. The *panthaki,* i.e., the priest who is in charge of the temple (since 1998, when his brother-in-law had passed away) explained to Mrs Marfatia that the fire is reinstalled every year on its birthday after the painting of the premises. This year (2003), however, the practice was not followed because the entire premises were under renovation.

Sir Shapoorji Broacha in the subsequent years.[35]

One priest who is performing rituals ('praying') at the Aslaji since 2 years[36] found that the temple had "something special" about it. While this perception may be shared by many regular visitors, on three occasions the Aslaji attracts larger crowds than its usual visitors: (a) on the festival of Mithra (Pguj. Meher; Np. Mehr), i.e., when the day and the month dedicated to this ancient deity coincide (Meher mahino Meher roj); (b) on each day in any month dedicated to Mithra (Meher roj); (c) on Fridays—and it was on three Fridays that Mrs Marfatia conducted the above-mentioned on-the-spot-interviews. However, the main event is certainly Meher mahino Meher roj when the number of visitors easily goes into the thousands.[37] The maximum, of course, is when Meher mahino Meher roj falls on a Friday.

Meher Yazad and Shah Faridun

These facts present somewhat of a puzzle, for neither the link of the Aslaji to the deity Mithra and the corresponding days in the Zoroastrian calendar, nor the link of the Aslaji to Fridays—or the corresponding connection between Mithra and Fridays—have found a satisfactory explanation yet. For the devotees, to be sure, these links present rather a matter of fact, but nothing much to worry, bother, or reflect about.

Both links, it seems, are of an indirect kind; they are created via the figure of the mythical hero Shah Faridun. During her visit to the Aslaji on September 14th, 2000, it was reported to Mrs Marfatia that the site of the temple had been "a desert area until the footsteps of Shah Faridun descended upon the place, [and] he lid a diva [oil-lamp] of milk."[38] Moreover, the managing priest (panthaki) of the Aslaji explained to Mrs Marfatia (also on September 14th, 2000) that the temple houses a locked

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[35] Information provided by Mrs Panthaky (based on trust deeds). The information provided by Giara, *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples*, p. 42 needs to be amended accordingly.

[36] This and all subsequent similar dates pertain to the time when the interviews were conducted (i.e., 2000, and 2002, unless indicated otherwise).

[37] This number is a guess based on one visit to the Aslaji at this day and many reports. Unfortunately, I was only once in Bombay when that festival occurred. This is another reason why I decided not to follow up the study of the Aslaji and to focus on the Banaji instead.

[38] Other respondents, however, who came to know about that legend in the course of the research-process did not know about that legend and disliked the idea of it.

wooden box containing silver portraits of 'Kukadaru Saheb'[39] and Shah Faridun.[40] It almost seems as if these silver pictures—just as reliquaries in shrines—are the storehouse of the miraculous powers attributed to the Aslaji, which is by some regarded as the mythical place. While there is no apparent connection between Kukadaru Saheb and Mithra/Fridays, there are some traces leading from Shah Faridun to Mithra.

The history of the figure that eventually became 'Shah Faridun' goes back all the way to the Indo-European past and Avestan texts in which he appears as Thraētaona, the son of Athbiia, the second mortal to press Haoma. Hence, the figure is part of the priestly tradition. Thraētaona, the most victorious of the victorious (vərəθrauuananąm vərəθrauuastəmō) apart from Zarathushtra, is renowned for having slain the powerful dragon Aži Dahāka (Yt. 19,36–37). For that purpose, the heroic Thraētaona used a victorious weapon (Yt. 19,92). According to the later traditions, also vividly remembered by Zoroastrians, Thraētaona, now under the Middle and New Persian names of Frēdōn and Faridun respectively, is reported to have chained the dragon (now as Zohāk) onto Mount Demawand. The structural link between Thraētaona and Mithra—a mortal and a deity—is made explicit in that both captured the charisma (xᵛarənah-) when it left Yima: Mithra captured it when it first left Yima, and when it went away for the second time, it was captured by Thraētaona (Yt. 19,35–36). Moreover, there are some traces of common ancient poetic traditions related to the killing of the dragon.[41] With some other protagonists of the divine both share the attribute, or epithet, of being 'victorious'; both are related to the slaying of the dragon, expressed with the Avestan word *jan-* (derived from the root *$gh^{u}en$-*)—in the case of Mithra, however, it is Vərəθragna, flying in front of Mithra, who does the striking and smashing (Yt. 10,70–71)—; both carry a weapon for this purpose, Mithra his "beautiful and easily brandished mace" (Yt. 10,131)[42] that he is holding in his hand (Yt. 10,96) and with

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[39] 'Dastur' Jamshedji S. Kukadaru (1831–1900) was a priest who has become famous for his pure lifestyle and the miraculous powers of his prayers. There are popular bust portraits of his. These, it seems, are believed to transport some of his 'manthric' powers.

[40] Moreover, there are painted tiles of Dastur Kukadaru, Shah Faridun and Zarathushtra on the way to the well.

[41] See the comprehensive study by C. Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon. Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford/New York, 1995).

[42] The translation is Gershevitch's, see I. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra. With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 121.

which he is striking the demons (Ny. 1,15).[43] This weapon, or mace, at the same time is linked to the priesthood,[44] for the newly initiated priest, who is to perform rituals within the section of the fire-temple known as the Gate of Mithra (dar-e Mehr), carries an ox-headed mace (gurz)[45] that sometimes, it seems, is also referred to as the mace (gurz) of Faridun.[46]

In Sharifabad, a small village in Iran, a shrine (pir) that was first named after Mehr, was later on, after a divinatory experience in which Shah Paridun (= Faridun in the local idiom) appeared to a villager, referred to as shrine of Shah Paridun.[47] More to the point when it comes to the calendar and the Aslaji is the tradition, already reported by al-Biruni, according to which the festival in honour of Mithra—Mehragān, corresponding to Meher mahino Meher roj, when people flock to the Aslaji—was held in memory of Faridun's victory over Zohak.[48] The main element of this tradition was and is still known among the Parsis.[49] This tradition is further unfolded by the statement of a priest working at the Aslaji who told Mrs Marfatia that Shah Faridun's birthday was on Meher roj.

The link between the Aslaji, Shah Faridun, and the days and festival dedicated to Mithra (Mehr) thus seems to be founded on a long tradition and gains a certain plausibility when read in the light of a traditional his-

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[43] On the etymological connections between the words referring to Mithra's (*vazra-*) and Thraētaona's (*vaδəm*) weapons respectively, see Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon,* p. 332.

[44] In the case of Thraētaona the link to the priesthood is provided by the fact that he is the son of the mythical second haoma-presser.

[45] The link between this mace and Mithra is made by J.J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1937; reprint published by the Society for the Promotion of Zoroastrian Religious Knowledge & Education, Bombay, 1995), pp. 193–194.

[46] See M. Boyce, "On Mithra's Part in Zoroastrianism", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 32, 1969, pp. 10–34, here p. 26, note 82.

[47] See M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism based on the Ratanbai Katrak Lectures, 1975* (Persian Studies Series 12; Lanham et al., 1989 (1977)), pp. 87–88.

[48] See *The Chronology of Ancient Nations. An English Translation of the Arabic Text of the Athár-ul-Bákiya of Albírúní ...,* translated and edited with notes and index by E.C. Sachau (London, 1879), pp. 207–209; see also A. Krasnowolska, *Some Key Figures of Iranian Calendar Mythology (Winter and Spring)* (Kraków, 1998), pp. 81–100.

[49] See *A Guide to the Zoroastrian Religion,* eds. J.W. Boyd/F.M. Kotwal (Studies in World Religions 3; Chico/California, 1982), p. 161; Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees,* pp. 432–433; see also Kreyenbroek/Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism,* p. 268: "Mehragan is for Shah-e Faridun" (interview with Ervad Yazdi Nadersha Aibara).

torical-religious approach. In an almost apodictic fashion, the point was confirmed by one respondent, Mr JB (62), who regularly has visited the Aslaji since 25 years, when he stated: "On Meher roj if you ask for help from Shah Faridoon it is given." As many other visitors, he did experience that help in his own life (in his case by his dog recovering from a critical illness). A 25-year-old lady reported that she was looking out for, and did eventually get, a job—a fact she ascribes to "Meher Yazad's help." She also remarked: "Somehow or other if we ask for something we always get it."

The connection of the temple (Agiary) to the Fridays seems somewhat more difficult to reconstruct, though. It is said that Faridun, or Shah Faridun as he is now referred to, did kill many demons and hence was clearly attributed powers that could be made use of in other contexts. The 9th Century priest-theologian Zādspram in passing matter-of-factly mentions that Frēdōn (Faridun) is summoned to remove those who inflict harm [32,3]. Moreover, two Persian Revāyat witness the fact that the hero was held to be a powerful fighter against diseases, and they recommend the performance of a Yasna in the name of Faridun in order to avoid pestilence or remove sickness.[50]

Occasionally, the name of Faridun is also referred to in certain 'manthric' formulae ('spells'; 'incantations'), the so-called *nērang (nirang)*, e.g. in spells against fever and a spell for health (in manuscript K 27).[51] In Middle Persian, the word *nērang* also refers to 'ritual' in general. For New Persian, the meaning of the word *nirang* is (by Steingass and others) given as 'fascination', 'incantation', 'magic', 'sorcery', 'deceit', etc. In this sense it corresponds to the word *afsun* (Middle Persian *afsōn*), also signifying 'spell', 'incantation', and 'fascination'. Hence, it does not come as much of a surprise when we find amongst the Parsis a short prayer known as *Afsun-e Shah Faridun,* or, in a pleonastic, semi Persian, semi Gujarati fashion, as *Afsun-e Shah Faridun-ni nirang* (lit. *Spell of Shah Faridun's Incantation*). Today, this prayer is contained in small booklets (in Gujarati and English letters), which usually also contain some other prayers considered to be efficacious.[52] These booklets are

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[50] See B.N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others. Their Version with Introduction and Notes* (Bombay, 1932), pp. 278–279.

[51] See J. Hampel, *Die Kopenhagener Handschrift Cod. 27. Eine Sammlung von zoroastrischen Gebeten, Beschwörungsformeln, Vorschriften und wissenschaftlichen Überlieferungen* (Göttinger Orientforschungen III/2; Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 46–47; 50–51.

[52] By way of example, Mrs Marfatia possesses a booklet published by a gentlemen "In pious memory of my beloved wife—DAULAT PADAM SABAWALA" containing

sold in the small stores selling sandalwood and other religious items in the vicinity of some fire-temples; they are also distributed at other places. One of these booklets praises the *Afsun-e Shah Faridun-ni nirang* in the following terms:

> Shah Faridun's Nirang helps to ward away evil spirits, black magic and the bad stars of our horoscope and helps us in giving us good health, our daily bread and fulfil our wishes. This prayer should be prayed sincerely and full faith & time alone will show the power & force of this prayer.[53]

Hence, side by side with the promise of the prayer's efficaciousness, the text also anticipates an explanation for any eventual failure (= lack of 'full faith' and 'time'). However, there are plenty of reports about the prayer having the desired effects.[54]

The history of the prayer is not entirely clear. It seems not to be part of 19th century prayer books, but in 1931, along with another *Shah Faridun Nirang,* which is meant to be written and carried as an amulet, it is printed in a book entitled *Pāzand Nirang bā māeni* by Ervad Phiroze Shapur Masani, a prominent spokesperson of the 'esoteric' or 'mystical' movement known as *Ilm-e Khshnoom*.[55] Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia who has drawn my attention to this publication also informs me (by e-mail) that

> it has been stated that Faridun was taught these Afsun by saintly men in the Alburz mountains when he was brought up there.[56] We are also told that he used these Afsun in his life at different occasions like when he saw a boulder tumbling and coming towards him or when he wanted to cross the river Jahun to go to Zohak's palace.

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the *101 Names of Dadar Ahura Mazda, Byram Yazad Nirang, Shah Faridun's Nirang,* a Nirang for Desiring Health, a Nirang to bring fulfilment of desires, *Setayash-I-Shaherevar,* and the *Khudavind o Khavind* Monajat.

[53] *Byram Yazad, Shah Faridun ni Nirang & Murad bar Lavvani Bandagi,* pp. 12–14. This booklet of 32 pp. carries neither a date, nor a place of publication. On the last page, the usual picture of Dastur Kukadaru is given.

[54] For two examples see Kreyenbroek/Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism,* pp. 41–42 (the desired effect—to get a job—already occurred on the second day!); p. 217: "I tell you when my son was very ill I was given that small book of *Pak-afsun-e Shah Faridoun.* So for three days, at a certain time only, and on certain days only, you had to say the whole prayer, and recite that long prayer for three days at a fixed time. And I must say that it has healed him."

[55] On this movement and Masani see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 118–124.

[56] Probably, this tradition belongs to 'Ilm-e Khshnoom' as well.

Oral traditions pertaining to that spell seem to go back roughly to the same period when it was first printed in Masani's book (1931). There is the example of a lady, born in a small village in 1935 where her father was acting as a practicing priest: When she was small, her father taught her Shah Faridun's Nirang.[57] Interestingly, at the same period the spell was also used in Iran. Teheran's Mobed Mehraban Firouzgary informs me (by e-mail): "I remember that my own mother prayed it for my younger sister, some 65 years back, when she was seriously ill." It should be pointed out that all these testimonies—both from oral histories and the printed book—come from priestly circles.[58] The very idea of the special powers of Shah Faridun is, as we have seen above, firmly grounded in ancient priestly traditions as well. Nowadays, in Iran, the prayer seems to have come out of use; Mobed Firouzgary notes: "I can say that since then it has been hardly used and [it] has been removed from all the recent Prayer books knowing that our religion does not allow mere superstitions."[59] In India, however, it is still very much alive.

In ritual practice, the *Afsun-e Shah Faridun-ni nirang* often goes along with prayers to the 'victorious' and 'successful' deity Behram (Behram Yazad; Avestan Vərəthragna). Behram is one of the favourite divine beings (yazad) of contemporary Parsis,[60] and these prayers cater for similar, if not the very same needs. Apart from specific prayers, such as the *Behram Yasht* and a short formula (nirang) linked to it, there is a ritual event called the *Mushkel Aasan* (Behram Yazad),[61] which is generally held on the day named after that divinity (Behram roj) and on Fridays (or on Tuesdays). It is precisely this timing that, together with the structural and functional connection of Shah Faridun to Behram Yazad, may possibly if not 'explain', so at least give a glimpse of why the Aslaji is popular on Fridays. Thus, with its connections both to Meher Yazad

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[57] "Mrs A": Kreyenbroek/Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 95.

[58] See also Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism*, p. 63: "... Paridon or Pariyon ... who was endowed with powers of healing and whom Zoroastrian priests regularly invoke, with a special Avestan prayer, for help in times of sickness."

[59] This is merely one incident of the powerful 'purification' of ritual practice witnessed by Iranian Zoroastrian history in the course of the 20th century. See also Katayoun Mazdapour's paper in this volume.

[60] See Kreyenbroek/Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 22.

[61] For a short description see Kreyenbroek/Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 20. For related rituals in Iran see the paper by Sabine Kalinock in this volume. See also M. Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras. Geschichte– Gegenwart – Rituale*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart, forthcoming).

and to Behram Yazad, the figure of Shah Faridun, whose silver portrait is kept inside the temple, seems to be at the centre of the timings at which crowds are attracted to the Aslaji, and the power attributed to Shah Faridun seems to correspond to the power attributed to the Alsaji; hence, the temple seems to be considered as a storehouse of the positive powers emerging from Shah Faridun and Meher Yazad.

While the fact that a silver portrait of Shah Faridun is stored inside the temple was mentioned to Mrs Marfatia by the managing priest, at least one of our respondents created a link between the special powers of Shah Faridun and the Aslaji by referring to the temple-well. Mr JKS, a pious 76-year-old gentleman who since his childhood daily visits the Aslaji where he prays for three hours—he also visits the Wadiaji Atash Behram "365 days a year", as he stated, and occasionally another temple as well—, casually remarked that Shah Faridun had been praying at the well.[62] Furthermore, Mrs GW, a very religiously inclined lady (63) who visits all major fire-temples on their 'birthdays'[63] and regularly goes to the Aslaji on Fridays (previously also on every Meher roj),[64] stated, when Mrs Marfatia asked her about the association of Fridays with the Aslaji:

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[62] He also mentions that he is generally asked by friends and family–members to offer sandalwood to the fire on their behalf.

[63] She prays twice a day and that takes her about 2 hours. While praying, she usually neither talks nor answers the phone. Moreover, she visits her local fire-temple at least twice a week, sometimes also 4–6 times a week. She does the *Mushkel Aasan* on Fridays, has an oil-lamp (*diva*) lit throughout the day, takes incense (*loban*) around the house "and we put sandalwood over it also and pray the Atash Nyaish" [= the praise to the fire]. She sends sandalwood to the Iranshah fire-temple at Udvada on every Behram roj. "I make the payment for the whole year to be placed on Behram roj every month. ... My cousin goes every month so I give her the money for the whole year to be put on Behram roj and recently my son also did 12 Behram roj. ... he would come from Ahmedabad and would return the next day. He would not come here (Mumbai), he would return directly from there. And even when he was here if it fell on a Sunday he would go without fail on Behram roj."

[64] When visiting the Aslaji on Meher roj she does the following: "this I offer on Meher Roj, 33 sandalwood sticks for 33 Farishtas ['angels']. ... And 2 sandalwood sticks one for the Dadgah fire and one after praying the Atash Nyaish I offer to the fire seeking blessings. [Mrs Marfatia asks: After reciting the Atash Nyaish?] Whatever I had to offer I first put, but we follow this system of holding one piece of sandalwood in hand whilst praying the Atash Nyaish and after completing it offer to the fire. If we have prayed the Atash Nyaish we have to offer something. We get their blessings, what else do we require, we get their blessings, that's all."

I do not know but it is believed that on Fridays at the well there is Pariya-
mai. There is a tree there; we used to believe in it so we used to go there.
And there is power (sat) in the tree and it was said that going there on Fri-
days is good so we used to go on Fridays. And Friday is also the day associ-
ated with Mushkel Aasan so one goes to any temple (agiary). So one goes to
any temple. So earlier, as I was able to go, [I thought that] then I may as
well go there [= to the Aslaji].

This statement confirms the hypothesis that the popularity of Fridays
may have to do with the *Mushkel Aasan* (via the link Shah Faridun/ Bah-
ram Yazad) and it also introduces two further elements: the tree[65] and the
well. The idea that there is power (*sat*, lit. 'truth') in a tree—also the
power contained in an amulet is referred to as *sat*—seems to imply that
there is some sort of a divine being residing in it and providing special
force to the tree, which is mostly applied for healing purposes.

While our interviewee does not specify what sort of power is associated
with the tree, in the case of the well she mentions the presence, weekly on
Fridays, of a *pariyamai*. As Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia informs me, a
Pariyamai is usually considered to be "a benign feminine divine being"
generally thought to reside in a well. The word *pariyamai* is a composite
consisting of the words *mai* (Guj.) meaning 'mother', but also used as a
suffix of endearment and expressing respect, and *pariya*. This word ex-
presses affection for the *pari*, a word that both in Gujarati and Persian de-
notes a 'fairy', who, in this case, is clearly a positive being having nothing
or little to do with the witches or she-demons of Zoroastrian scriptures
sharing the same semantic root (Middle Persian *parīg*, Avestan *parikā*).
66In the form 'Shah Pari', known from Iran, *pari* can also be seen as an
abbreviation for 'Paridun' (= Shah Faridun).[67] Hence, a different explana-
tion of the word may be considered, according to which the *pariyamai* is a
female 'relative' of Shah Faridun ('dear Pari-mother'), just as Iranian Zo-

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[65] See also Mrs X (born in 1935) in Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism,* p. 210 re-
ferring to the Aslaji: "And there are Parsis praying to the *peepul* tree also". She con-
nects that to "a Hindu belief because Shiva is supposed to be in the *peepul* tree."

[66] While the Pari are negative beings in the Zoroastrian scriptures, in Classical Per-
sian literature and modern Iranian folklore, they are often presented as being of a
friendly nature; they are considered as beautiful, able to fly and they often help the hu-
mans; see M. Omidsalar, "Peri (Pari)", *Enzylopädie des Märchens,* vol. 10, 2002, pp.
744–746.

[67] This, at least, is attested from Iran, see Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroas-
trianism,* p. 63. Boyce also reports that the village women "were positive that Shah Pari
was male".

roastrians know the mysterious figure(s) of the 'daughter(s) of Shah-Pari' (= Faridun), held to be very powerful (and dangerous at night). Significantly, some Iranian Zoroastrian houses of Yazd have special rooms reserved for these beings—and these rooms are invariably connected to the main source of water supply of the respective house,[68] just as the Pariyamai at Aslaji is believed to be located in the temple-well. Indirectly, then, the Pariyamai possibly brings us back to Shah Faridun.

Visitors and visits

Just as the *Afsun-e Shah Faridun-ni nirang* is attested since at least 72 years—possibly it is much older—visits to the Aslaji on the dates tuned to Meher Yazad and Shah Faridun are equally well-established traditions. Among our respondents, apart from persons going to the temple, often daily, since their childhood—partly because it is their 'regular' temple and they are staying close by (e.g., in Shapur Baug)—, there are others who attend the Aslaji on the specific dates since several decades. By way of example, the 63 years old lady quoted above with her statement referring to the Pariyamai residing inside the well,[69] mentioned that

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[68] For an example, see Robert Langer's contribution to this volume with plate XIII/6.

[69] Also in other respects, water is a key element in her religious practice: When the month devoted to the Waters comes, for 40 days she used to visit a particular temple in order to pray the *Ava Yasht* there. (She has also started to recite the Behram Yasht which she feels is rather a challenging practice: "I also pray the Bahman Yasht in Bahman Mah for 40 days but when praying this no word should be mispronounced and every word should be properly recited without interruption, then your prayer breaks. So when I pray it I lock the bedroom and pray inside and do not answer anyone, however much they knock. [Mrs Marfatia asks: Why only for Bahman Yasht and not other Yashts?] They say that you should pray with good attention otherwise it should not be prayed. Otherwise adverse effect can take place. Somebody told me so, otherwise I do not know. And even for Behram Yasht if you pray at one time at one place it has a better effect. ... So at around 10.30 or so I lock the room and start the a/c so I can pray slowly and peacefully. But in Behram Yasht if you get up, talk, then it is totally useless. But that also I am not able to do, sometimes I start to do 40 (Behram Yasht), but can do only for 14 days, sometimes 20 days, sometimes even one day is left and it is broken.") This is how she describes her visits to a local fire-temple: "The buoy ceremony is done at 6.15, 6.20, when it is very dark, the ceremony is done at even 6.30 or 7am, but now it is early. Then I am there for about two hours, go to the well, light the divas, light the diva at the well, I pray the Ava Ardvisur at the well, at home I take some water in a glass and pray the Ava Yasht." She is also involved in practices making use of water that is blessed because Mrs Nergish Aibara—Mrs GW refers to her as "aunty"—who is held to possess special powers has prayed over it. She explains the practice in the following terms: "we fill the water bottles and take from home and at night time before

she visits the temple "since the last 40 years, or whenever in town" (she stays in a suburb, and it must take her at least one hour to reach the Aslaji).[70] When asked if she remembered how it came that she started to go to the Aslaji, Mrs GW replied:

> No, nothing particular, but people used to believe and go there to [the] Aslaji, they used to talk, so even I felt like going there and I started going. I was spiritually inspired.

Hence, even 40 years back, it seems that the Aslaji had a certain reputation, and one further respondent, Mrs KKB (59)[71] mentioned that she, time permitting, comes to the Aslaji on every Meher roj and on most Fridays since her earliest childhood. As a child Mrs KKB used to live in Shapur Baug, the Parsi residential colony next to the Aslaji. Her family would have rituals performed there and she has very pleasant memories of the temple. Mrs KKB reported that until about 55 years ago the temple was a quiet place mostly attended by the Shapur Baug tenants, but that it afterwards became popular thanks to the efforts of the then managing priest(s) and that then the rumour started spreading that one's problems would be solved if one went to the Aslaji on Fridays or on a Meher roj.

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going to sleep we have to take two drops of water from the bottle and recite 2 Yathas and 1 Ashem, drink the water and then go to sleep. She [= Mrs Aibara] gives it to help during problems. It is a matter of faith. Some have some problems, others have other problems. We have been doing this every day since years. My husband has been having health problems since years and she used to give it for him. Once she mentioned that 'you come for him so often and get prayers said for your husband, why do you not get water for yourself, why did you not tell me? Next time when you come bring water for yourself also, I will pray over it.' Sometime back my elder brother-in-law was operated upon and his health was deteriorating, his pressure was falling down, there was some problem with his hands and legs, there were other problems, his lungs also was giving problem, so I asked her and she said 'generally his health will go on like this but he will recover and come home'. So whenever there is some problem we ask her questions." They need to go there every 40 days in order to change the water or for prayers. It should be remembered that Mrs GW suffers from a serious leg problem.

[70] She adds that because of a leg problem since three years she discontinued going of Fridays and now she goes on every Meher roj instead. Her husband always accompanies her, and so does her son whenever he is in Bombay (he lives in Ahmedabad). Her leg problem prevents her from visiting other temples where she has to climb too many stairs.

[71] Mrs KKB has made a very successful career in the legal profession. She does not attend any other temples, but has a (female) guru by the name of Mrs Kamla Diwan who reportedly has Durga Mata's blessings within her. Mrs KKB related incidents of what she perceives to be miraculous help that she has experienced thanks to her guru.

While there were few people among our respondents who would re-
call the early days of the 'Aslaji-boom', there are some who are visiting
the temple since a considerable span of time. One lady, Mrs AP, also
residing in a suburb and with her 60 years belonging to the same age
group as Mrs GW and Mrs KKB stated that she comes to the Aslaji on
every Meher roj and on every Behram roj since 32 years. Mrs FN (67)
and her husband attend the Aslaji always on Meher roj since over 30
years.[72] Mr JB, a 62-year-old gentleman—who thus belongs to the same
age-group—remarked that he comes to the Aslaji since 25 years "when-
ever time permits". Mr NM, a gentleman who is slightly younger (53)
said that he came to the Aslaji on Fridays since 20 years. A lady, Mrs.
MW, 54 years old and also residing in a suburb remarked that she always
comes on Fridays and Meher roj since 16 years, and a gentleman who is
63 years old said that he comes on all Fridays and always on Meher roj
since 15 years.

These reports may create the impression that visits to the Aslaji are
basically an old peoples' pastime. However, this is far from true. While I
did not execute any demographic survey and every selection of respon-
dents is necessarily subjective and accidental, among the people who
accepted Mrs Marfatia's invitation to share their experiences there was a
good number of younger people: all in all 9 (= 22,5%)[73] of the respon-
dents belonged to the age-group of below 29—a vast majority of them
being females (7 females/2 males) —, and 6 from the age-group of 30-
44, equally divided according to gender. All respondents belonging to
the latter age cohort turned out to be regular visitors, most of them at-
tending since 4–6 years, one lady since 10 and another one since more
than 20 years; the shortest span of time was given as one and a half years
(a lady of 32 who since one and a half years always comes on Fridays
and occasionally on Meher roj as well[74]). Among the younger people,
three said that they were always coming since their childhood—a lady of
25 who since 5 years always comes on Fridays mentioned that her par-

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[72] They were encouraged to do so by Mrs FN's mother-in-law.

[73] Here and in the following percentages do *not* claim any statistical probability or
precision (the size and nature of our sample preclude any such conclusions); percent-
ages are just given in order to help the reader to grasp the size of the fractions con-
cerned.

[74] She remarked that her husband used to accompany her to the Aslaji but waited out-
side while she went inside. Recently, however, he also developed faith and now comes
inside with her.

ents have been going there for 25 years[75]—, and three stated to come since one, 3–5 or 5 years respectively.

Among the 41 respondents, just two persons were new arrivals on the scene: One gentleman (53) had come for the second time and because he experienced miraculous help in connection with the Aslaji he is likely to become a regular, while a lady of 26—a lawyer by profession who lives in a suburb—who had also come for the second time was not at all happy with her experience. While she had been put off by the crowds during her first visit, the second visit did not give her more satisfaction; she stated that she did "definitely not feel attracted because [she] did not get peace of mind or spiritual upliftment, though it was better than last time but not as well as experienced elsewhere." Hence she will likely drop out again. Apart from these two persons and a lady of 51 years, who said that she comes just "occasionally", all the remaining respondents claimed to be regular visitors (attending either on a daily basis, or coming on Fridays or/and Meher roj or/and Meher mahino Meher roj).[76]

30% of the respondents who provided information on that topic[77] come there alone, while the majority is joined by other family members. 30% of the respondents come together with their respective spouse (or fiancé)—most of them regularly—, and almost as many come with their children or parents, while some others are accompanied by their sibling. Some of the regular visitors explicitly stated that they come in order to accompany somebody (e.g., the mother).

Among 18 respondents who commented on that issue, four persons—three of them belonging to the youngest age cohort—said that it wouldn't matter if they for some reason or the other were unable to attend. Many others, however, expressed sentiments of attachments that make their regular attendance definitely appear as more than a simple habit. One lady who is a regular on Fridays said to "consider [it a] duty to go every Friday, if possible, even if not well". Several respondents stated that they "feel bad" if they can't attend. Others said to feel "missed out", or that there was "something lacking". If it does happen, a gentleman said that he asks for forgiveness. Others have strategies of compensation: They go on the next day, a Behram roj or any other day to "make it up", or ask somebody else to put sandalwood on their behalf. One lady reported that her daughter used to attend regularly both on Fri-

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[75] This is not the only case of trans-generational continuity.

[76] One respondent did not answer this question.

[77] Two respondents did not.

days and Meher roj; after her daughter migrated to Australia she continues to do so at her request.

Without a single exception, all our respondents said that they are praying on a daily basis, most of them once or twice a day—with two people (a girl of 14 and a lady of 21) praying thrice, and one lady, Mrs AP (60 years), four times a day.[78] Most respondents guessed that they spend about 15 to 30 minutes on prayers every day—again with some exceptions (all of them among the more aged): 5 persons stated to pray for at least one hour, but some considerably longer, the extremes going into two and three hours. Most (but not all) of the persons who invest much time into prayers are also those who are long-time regulars.

Out of the 31 persons providing information on this topic, 10 stated to spend 15 minutes inside the Aslaji. This would be roughly the time needed to do one 'full visit', including the purification, preparatory prayers, and the visit to the fire with the offering and the prayer. 9 persons said that they stayed there for 25 minutes to half an hour, two spend 45 minutes inside the temple, and three persons more than one hour (one of them a full three hours!).

Among the 41 respondents who were interviewed on three Fridays in September 2000 and March 2002, 5 stated that they are not frequenting any other fire-temple, but most persons visit several temples. In other words: For almost 90% of the respondents, the Aslaji is an important ingredient in a cluster of several Zoroastrian fire-temples, which they usually attend. Apart from the Aslaji many respondents reported that they visit the oldest Atash Behram fire-temple, the Iranshah, which is located some hours north of Bombay; more often than not the Iranshah is mentioned alongside one or several of the Atash Behram-temples in Bombay—the Wadiaji most frequently—and one or several of the local temples.

More than half of our respondents—24 out of 41 persons[79]—positively stated that they also visit non-Zoroastrian sanctuaries.[80] By far the most popular places are those relating to the Sai Baba of Shirdi.[81] 8 out of our 41 respondents (= 19%) have been to the Sai Baba sanctuary at Shirdi, and some go there regularly.[82] Five respondents (12%) visit

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[78] One person did not provide any information.

[79] One informant did not provide any information on that topic.

[80] One lady of 37 who comes to the Aslaji since 6 years but does not go to other fire-temples remarked that her "whole family was used to going to all sorts of places."

[81] Only one respondent did refer to the Sathya Sai Baba.

[82] One respondent, a gentleman of 53 who comes to the Aslaji since 20 years, re-

one of the Sai Baba Mandirs in Bombay. In this connection, it should be noted that the city's most prominent Sai Baba Mandir, called Sai-Dham, is in the close vicinity of the Aslaji, and at least one lady, a long time Friday and Meher roj regular to the Aslaji, explicitly stated that she goes to the mandir any time she visits the fire-temple. Five persons (12%) stated that they go to St. Michael's church, some occasionally, others regularly. Furthermore six persons (15%)—five of them ladies (the youngest being 37 years old)—remarked that they go to Mount Mary, some of them regularly. 'Hindu' places were listed comparatively less often—two persons (5%) mentioned the Siddhi Vinayak temple—, and there is a conspicuous absence of Muslim shrines.

As far as I can see, there is no significant correlation between visits to those extraordinary popular sanctuaries on the one hand and gender or age on the other. One thing that emerges, though, is that out of the 9 respondents who reported that they pray for more than half an hour daily, just one attends non-Zoroastrian places.[83] However, the nature of the cause-effect relation is not clear here: Are they just too consumed up by their own religion for being able to invest any time in visits to other places? Or are they just happy with their religion and spend so much time with it for this reason? Or have they not discovered yet that there are other worlds to explore as well? Our material just doesn't permit any conclusions—not even a well-founded hypothesis.

A further guess—for methodological reasons it would be exaggerated to call it a hypothesis—is that at least some of the people who don't visit any non-Zoroastrian places may experience (or have experienced) at the Aslaji what others are seeking in different contexts. As a matter of fact, apart from a general 'faith' in (the power of) the Aslaji, or devotional benefits such as a 'good feeling', 'peace', 'that kind of peace', 'peace of mind', 'spiritual upliftment', or just the 'feeling to go there', which were given by the majority of the respondents—26 out of 39[84]—as important factors drawing them to the temple, more than half of the respondents (24) said that they come to the Aslaji in connection to 'extraordinary' experiences such as supernatural help (15), miracles (10), the fulfillment of wishes (3) or the 'asking for blessings', the latter explicitly described

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ported to get 'callings' to go to Shirdi.

[83] However, among those who pray for half an hour (and, hence, longer than most others), several go to 'other' places.

[84] Three persons did not comment on this topic.

by the respective interviewee as "a little selfish attitude".[85] Two persons commented on this issue by declaring that they come as an act of thanks-giving or "for well-being" (a gentleman of 66 coming daily since 7 years). While there seems to be a general tendency for respondents from the upper age group to ignore the 'special benefits' in favour of the more devotional factors, this can probably not be made a general rule. There is little variation as to gender, with slightly more women (13) mentioning 'special benefits' than men (11). However, two ladies (but not a single man) remarked that they did not find the Aslaji especially beneficial.

While some respondents chose rather general expressions such as "wishes [are] fulfilled if [you have] faith in the Aslaji", "wishes [are] granted", a "wish [made] with sincerity gets fulfilled", "in every way always helped", "in every way [I] feel better about everything", or that they "feel prayers [are getting] answered", others are reporting specific instances of divine assistance that they attribute to (their visits to) the Aslaji. In one case, the successful recovery from a heart attack (a lady of 45) was attributed to the Aslaji.[86] In some cases, these concern financial matters and general success in economic life such as obtaining a satisfy-ing job (both for oneself or for other family members) or improvement in housing. Some other respondents mentioned bliss in family life: one lady mentioned that (unspecified) family-problems were resolved after she started to go to the Aslaji—initially she was advised to attend 9 consecu-tive Fridays making it some sort of a Parsi novena—and she also said to have become much more religious than before; one gentleman ascribed the fact that he has a happy family with two girls doing well and being married to Parsis to the beneficial power of the Aslaji. One lady—the one who attends at the request of her daughter who migrated to Austra-lia—gave the following example of a 'miracle' that she had witnessed in connection to the Aslaji: a son of hers was "moving around with a non-Parsi girl, but now is married to a Parsi."

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[85] Several people mentioned more than one of these key-terms.

[86] See also the interview with Mrs X (born in 1935) in Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroas-trianism*, p. 210: [Question:] *"Do you go to the Aslaji on Meher mahino Meher roj?* No, but since the last three months I have done it for my daughter's health, and there is an improvement!" It should be added that Meher mahino Meher roj occurs only once a year. Hence, when Mrs X states to go there 'since the last three months', probably this refers to her going to the Aslaji on Fridays or on Meher roj.

Jalbhai

During the last decade or so, the miraculous power of the Aslaji has seen a further development in that it has 'incarnated' in the figure of a gentleman by the name of Jal Mistry, whom our respondents more often than not referred to as 'Jal uncle' or 'Jalbhai'. This elderly gentleman (who kindly answered some of our questions but did not want to be formally interviewed) generally makes himself available at the Aslaji from 4pm to 8.30pm. As Mrs Marfatia witnessed, people queue up in order to seek his help, guidance, or advice. At 8pm on one Friday, Mrs Marfatia saw around 15 persons queuing up for him. From the remarks of one respondent it emerges that one occasionally has to wait for more than half an hour before one's turn comes.

Jal Mistry feels to be blessed by Hormazd (Ahura Mazda) and the 'holy fire', and that this blessing confers upon himself the ability to help people. In general terms, 'Jalbhai' advises to pray "with good consciousness"—even if it should be the bare minimum—and to wear decent clothes (including the sudreh and kusti[87]).

From Mrs Marfatia's description it seems that 'Jal uncle' gets inspiration from the fire, or creates a link between the persons and (the powers of) the fire. People queue for him near the lesser consecrated fire, the Dādgāh, where 'Jalbhai' listens to their problems. He then proceeds to the second-grade consecrated fire, the Ādarān, which is located on the opposite side of the inner room. There he prays, only to return some time later in order to give advice to the people concerned. As Mrs Marfatia observed, he also took the photographs of people, for whom others sought help, to the presence of the fire, where he held his hands over the face of the person on the photo and prayed. In this way he obtained "divine, spiritual guidance", as he explained to Mrs Marfatia. Some respondents also mentioned that they get water blessed by 'Jal uncle' to be applied at home. It was also reported that he 'gave prayers' to be recited and recommended to burn incense-sticks (agarbatties).

'Jalbhai' also visits hospitals or homes where he attends the sick and aged in order to help them. This is why he does not come to the Aslaji daily.

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[87] To Mrs Marfatia he related the incident of refusing to speak to a lady who had come to the temple without her ritual garments; he asked her to leave the temple (including the outer premises) immediately.

Exactly half of our responds—20 out of 40 who commented on this issue—was aware of 'Jalbhai', while the other half was obviously not. Among those who were, apart from one lady of 27, who had come to the Aslaji for the first time and who expressed doubt and even commented about a "nasty incident" that she claimed to have happened with a friend of her, most reported overwhelmingly positive experiences. Four respondents—including a priest working at the temple—reported to 'take his blessings'. Some further respondents mentioned special benefits that they experienced as a result of Jal Mistry's intervention. Some mentioned problems with jobs, others with health, which were resolved thanks to 'Jal uncle'. One lady who is a Friday and Meher roj regular in detail reported several 'miraculous' incidents related to children, and a couple told the story about the way they, thanks to the help extended by 'Jal uncle', had been able to retrace and re-establish ties to their son who had 'disappeared' for some time to another city. One further interviewee also related the incident both of a missing person—this time an aunt—and of a missing item; both were retraced exactly as predicted by Jal Mistry.

There will certainly be many more stories to be told by people who have gratefully experienced what they perceive to be Jal Mistry's help. 'Jalbhai' is not the first pious old man who was apparently able to extend divine ('miraculous') 'help' to people requiring that sort of divine intervention[88]—and in view of the frail living-conditions in Bombay it hardly comes as a surprise that many people are in need of 'special' help. Moreover, by giving blessings and prayers, Mr Mistry provides services of the type which otherwise could be sought from priests, but which is actually provided by few members of the priestly class. Although he is well aware of the power of his blessings and prayers, Jal Mistry states that these powers ultimately derive from Hormazd and the fire; actually, he seems much too modest a person for claiming the status of a ([semi-] divine) 'Baba'.[89] Interestingly, 'Jalbhai' presents himself at the Aslaji

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[88] When I visited the late Behram Pithawala in Bombay in November 1997, I found some persons around telling me that they were coming regularly for Mr Pithawala who had helped them through his prayers and his astrological counselling. (For Behram Pithawala see the interview in Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism*, pp. 246–253 where this aspect of his activity is not touched upon). The prayers given by the late Ervad Nadersha Navroji Aibara and his wife Nergishbanoo were/are also perceived as very efficacious.

[89] This is why I find it biased and inappropriate that he is classified as a 'Baba' who has "rapidly acquired a relatively large following" by Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 51.

each Friday, and his appearance can be seen to be an extension of the spiritual presence and efficacy of Shah Faridun who in turn is linked to Meher Yazad.

THE BANAJI

For some people, the fact that Mr Mistry carries the name of 'Jal' links his appearance to the emergence of a ritual event that had started to take place at the Banaji fire-temple some years earlier. It seems entirely justified to refer to what goes on at the Banaji as a (public) 'event'[90] for contrary to the Aslaji, where people (can) come anytime at a Friday or/and Meher roj, most visitors to the Banaji make it a point to be there at a certain time of each Monday, namely at the beginning of the Aiwisruthrem geh, the watch of the day stretching from sunset to midnight.[91] At that time of the day, a communal worship takes place. Hence, whereas the Friday and Meher roj regulars at the Aslaji share a common praxis with similar experiences and expectation, at the Banaji we come across the formation of a ritual assembly that is led and orchestrated by the most senior priest at this temple. However, from a historical perspective, this seemingly simply structured and comparatively short event reveals complex roots. Before entering that discussion, some words about the location, the Seth Cowasji Behramji Banaji Atash Behram, are in order.

Contrary to the Aslaji, the Banaji belongs to the Kadmi group ('sect'), which is a minority within the Parsi community. Inspired by Iranian practices this group came into being in the 18th century. The Kadmis are distinguished by a slightly different calendar and some specific practices (often following Iranian patterns) distinct from the majority, the so-called Shehenshahis.[92] However, in spite of the Banaji being a Kadmi temple, at the ritual event studied here, the Kadmis are a clear minority—out of 40 people who answered to this question during the on-the-spot interviews, just three (= 7,5%) turned out to be Kadmis.

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[90] Participation in which, though, is restricted to Parsis only.

[91] One informant drew my attention to the fact that this timing may cause a hindrance for some potential participants; regarding her son, Mrs KT stated: [he comes] "Only if he has got an off or something because he works in shifts. He loves to but he cannot. Mostly he goes to the Aslaji because he can't attend this. Aslaji does not have a fixed time. You can go and come anytime."

[92] On these groups see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 1, pp. 434–440. There are no statistics available on the demographic distribution of the groups.

While the Aslaji Bhikhaji Agiary is a second-grade fire-temple which is neither particularly old nor in any other 'exterior' way especially significant, the Banaji is a temple housing an Atash Behram-fire, i.e. a fire of the highest category. The fire was 'enthroned' on December 13th, 1845, as Bombay's third Atash Behram (now there are four).[93] Before the 'enthronement' ceremony, the building was kept open for inspection by the general public (especially the non-Parsis who would want to see a Zoroastrian temple from inside) and according to a chronicle, 16.000 Parsis were present when the fire was receiving its offering for the first time.[94]

In 1916, for the first time in Bombay, a fund for the celebration of festive gatherings including meals (gahambar) was established for (Zoroastrian) ladies and children (all previous gahambars were exclusively male affairs). In 1922, a similar fund was established and gahambar meals for ladies and children were arranged.[95] This was done inside the compound, which is furnished with facilities for the celebration of larger group ceremonies and events. Possibly this is part of the Iranian traditions practiced by the Kadmis.

Just as the other two Kadmi Atash Behram fire-temples—one in Bombay, one in Surat—the Banaji has no High Priest (dastur). The last High Priest passed away in 1916. At present, five priests are working at the Banaji,[96] which is one of the two fire-temples in Bombay where a temple-bull (varasyo) is kept.

The Banaji is located in a crowded area at what is one of Bombay's most busy roads (Maharishi Karve Road, formerly Queen's Road). There is a train station (Charni Road Station) right across the road from the temple, with easy access by a fly-over. This location provides very convenient access to the temple, especially for those commuting from the suburbs. However, thanks to a garden surrounding the temple, the compound breathes a rather calm atmosphere providing a welcome shelter from the vibrant surroundings.

Near the entrance of the temple-compound, which is surrounded by walls and protected by an iron-gate watched over by watchmen, there is

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[93] On the consecration of these fires in general see the paper by Mario Vitalone in this volume.

[94] See M.J. Giara, *A Brief History of the Banaji Atash Behram (1845–2001)* (Mumbai, 2001), pp. 18–20.

[95] See Giara, *A Brief History of the Banaji Atash Behram*, p. 31.

[96] At the Banaji, the priests tending the fire, the buoywallas, have a particular shift-system. They have turns of 15 days each.

a little shop selling sandalwood and all sorts of religious items, including prayer books.[97] The temple building itself is rather inconspicuous: a square one-floor building with a low roof and no exterior decoration. The main entrance is marked by a porch, from which a flight of steps leads into the building. Opposite to the porch a little square structure was erected in 1984 in order to provide a shelter to perform the ritual ablutions, which are required prior to entering the temple. This enclosure consists of two rooms, one for women, one for men. However, at busy periods such as Monday-nights, the space provided by that structure does not suffice in order to accommodate the crowd. That clearly indicates that larger crowds were not anticipated when this structure was erected in 1984. Passing between this structure and the porch, and then turning to the left behind the temple-building, on its North West side, one enters a walled enclosure that is further provided with furrows in the floor, which demarcate it as a ritual precinct. Inside this precinct, there is a palm tree and a pomegranate shrub—both requirements for the performance of so-called 'inner' priestly services[98]—and a huge well with a little structure into which one can place oil-lamps (divo).

On all its four sides, the inside of the main temple building is surrounded by a corridor with a number of light-boxes (non-transparent, but translucent 'windows') to the outside and French windows to the inner rooms. Apart from a priests' room, which functions as the temple-office, a resting-room for the priest on duty and a storage room for ritual requisites, the space inside the temple is divided into three main units: The biggest unit, located on the South-western side, is a rectangular hall, decorated with portraits (of Zarathustra and members of the family of the founders) and mirrors. From this hall, a window and a door each lead to the other two spatial units. On the Southern side, one has a view into and access to the Dar-e mehr, i.e. the room where the so-called 'inner' rituals are performed (within ritual precincts, the urvis-gah). Here one also finds a consecrated fire of the lowest category (Atash Dadgah), which is needed for the performance of those rituals. Apart from the hall, there is direct access to this room both from the corridor and the priest's room. The third spatial unit consists of two interconnected rooms. For the devotees there is no direct access to this spatial unit from the surrounding corridor, and they necessarily have to enter it by way of the hall.

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[97] For a fuller description of the temple, see Giara, *A Brief History of the Banaji Atash Behram,* pp. 43–47.

[98] On this category, see Ramiyar Karanjia's paper in this volume.

From there they can reach a smaller rectangular prayer hall which is lighted from the adjoining domed fire-room, the so-called 'sanctum sanctorum', which is located right in the middle—and symbolic centre—of the building and which is illuminated by the Atash Behram-fire. Contrary to all other Atash Behram-temples, the Banaji "has the payer hall and the openings on one side only",[99] that is towards the square prayer hall, which on the opposite side of the main hall can also be entered from the priest's room.

The ritual event in its current form

As a rule, crowds of devotees flock to the fire-temples on auspicious dates, i.e. days linked to fire (such as the day and month dedicated to 'Fire', i.e. the divine being and element), on the 'birthday' (salgireh) of a specific fire, in particular of the Atash Behram-fires, during the festival honouring the spirits of the deceased (muktad) and the subsequent morning of the New Year's day (Navroze). In the case of the Banaji, however, all these events are overshadowed by what goes on at Monday night when the entire building is packed by devotees who find it difficult to move inside.

There are more visitors to the Atash Behram on Mondays than on any other day of the week. Most people start arriving in the evening, between 6 and 7pm. Before entering the Atash Behram-building, the devotees make their ablutions, and many pay a visit to the well(s), where they say prayers and light an oil-lamp. Hence, when night falls, the sight of the many oil-lamps at the well makes quite an impression. The main event drawing the crowd takes place at the change of the ritual watches (geh) at night, i.e. at the beginning of the Aiwisruthrem geh stretching from sunset to midnight (and hence the exact timing is slightly shifting according to the seasons). On Mondays, a communal prayer called Humbandagi precedes the feeding of the fire that is performed by a qualified priest (buoywalla).

On September 18th, 2000, the communal prayer started at 7.15pm and continued until 7.35; one week later it started at 7.05pm and continued until 7.25pm; on February 24th, 2002, it started at 7.08pm and went on until 7.28pm. Including the feeding of the fire(s), the main event thus takes 25 to 30 minutes. After the feeding of the fire(s) by the priest, many if not most devotees perform individual acts of worship in connec-

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[99] Giara, *A Brief History of the Banaji Atash Behram*, p. 46.

tion to the fire(s). Then they leave the temple. The last persons leave the temple by around 9pm to 9.15pm when the gates are locked.

The communal prayer (humbandagi) is conducted by Ervad Aspi Framroze Nalladaru, the most senior priest at the Banaji. Throughout the service, the priest is standing on a sort of lectern that is placed in the main hall, next to the wall connecting the main hall to the room housing the Atash Behram, the 'sanctum sanctorum'. The event starts with the singing of three songs. Then follow four prayers composed by Ervad Aspi Nalladaru (see below). The text of the prayers can be found in a booklet that is for sale in the shop at the entrance to the temple. Hence, those who don't (yet) know the prayers by heart can participate in the communal prayers by reading them out from the booklet. Previously, Ervad Nalladaru would also deliver brief talks ('sermons'), but that has been discontinued (for reasons given below). As we will see, this is not the only change that has occurred during the years.

Beginnings and changes

In the course of my research, I came across different views about the origins of the Monday-night-event. It is fair to say that it gained a wider publicity in 1992, when the community magazine *Parsiana* devoted the cover story of its July edition to this event. In that article, it is stated:

> While initially it was a select following that came to the Atash Behram religiously on Mondays, as word spread it has become a mass phenomenon, more so in the last four to five months. Nearly 200 Zoroastrians come to the Atash Behram every Monday from near and faraway.[100]

The author, Parinaz Gandhi, quotes two (male) devotees to the effect that they were coming regularly since three or four years' time. It seems that the beginnings must have been sometime in the mid or late 1980s. As a matter of fact, one of our on-the-spot respondents, Mr CC (55) who stated he goes daily to the Banaji for the last 25 years, felt that the event was started approximately around 1985 with 10/12 people attending at that time. Later on the event increased. Some of our other respondents claimed to attend the event since at least ten years, which would be around 1990. Mr JP, one of our main respondents was very firm in stating that he would come to the Banaji on Monday-nights since 1990/91,

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[100] P. Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", *Parsiana* 15, 1992 [July], pp. 14–16, p. 14.

for he very well remembered that he started going there in a period when his mother was hospitalised thrice.

Eight out of the 45 respondents whom Mrs Marfatia interviewed on three consecutive Mondays in September 2000 stated that they were attending the event since 7 years, and six of them did so continuously.[101] The period of seven years is significant because it was exactly in 1993 that Ervad Aspi Nalladaru did redesign the event (see below). Interestingly, this change was not clearly recalled by any of our respondents who all felt that apart from the fact that Ervad Nalladaru had discontinued with the talks ('sermons') the character of the event had basically remained unchanged. However, from the interviews made by Mrs. Marfatia and myself plus other source-materials it becomes evident that the event did indeed change character. While timing, space and the main priestly actor have remained the same—with an increasingly larger audience—, the logic of design of the event has been intentionally altered. Obviously, as the sheer number of participants shows, this change has done no harm to the popularity of the event—quite on the contrary. The nature of the change can be labelled as a transition from a ritual of invocation to a ritual of devotion.

While the 'ritual of invocation'-pattern is linked to a mysterious figure by the name of 'Jal Bawa', the 'ritual of devotion'-design is linked to a ritual pattern known as 'Humbandagi' ('communal prayer'). The 'Humbandagi' is a well-established ritual pattern in Parsi ritual practice (see below), and everyone I've been talking to had an idea about what it refers to. However, the Monday-night Humbandagi at the Banaji has set a new standard for the type of ritual design called 'Humbandagi' both when it comes to the crowd it attracts and the regularity and continuity by which it is enacted. The success of this particular Humbandagi seems to have inspired others to follow suit, and currently we are witnessing the blossoming of this sort of ritual format among the Parsis.[102] However, while the Humbandagi is the current ritual design, it is the link to 'Jal Bawa' that may explain both the initial attraction and the timing (and partly also the space) of the event.

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[101] With one exception, a man of 27 (who is not a regular), all the others are between 49 and 65 years of age.

[102] In recent years, weekly Humbandagis were introduced at two fire-temples in Bombay as well as in Poona and Surat.

Jal Bawa

In the current ritual practice, for a vast majority of participants, the figure of 'Jal Bawa' is of no importance whatsoever. As a matter of fact, among the 53 on-the-spot respondents, just 8 had heard the name before. From those respondents, who commented on this issue, four sorts of opinions about 'Jal Bawa', who evidently was held to be a male figure, emerged. One gentleman of 53, who keeps coming to the Banaji on Mondays since seven years,[103] remarked: "He was a saint, his spirit comes on Monday evenings at the time of Aiwishruthrem Gah. Wishes are granted." Similarly, a lady referred to a statement made by a priest of the Atash Behram to the extent "that Jal Bawa is a spirit who comes here on Mondays and fulfils everyone's wishes." Another respondent, one of the few Kadmis among our interviewees, a 55 years old gentleman who took part in the event since more than ten years, but now had discontinued to do so—nevertheless he was around to do his prayers at the change of geh—, referred to Jal Bawa as a "spirit in the well"; hence he considered it "helpful" to pray near the well. Three respondents answered by telling the story of a priest who had overslept his duties and woke up when he heard that the bell inside the 'sanctum sanctorum' rang out of its own.[104] However, opinions differed as to the question if Jal Bawa was the name of the negligent priest or of the figure miraculously doing the ritual on his behalf. One lady (55) who attended the Humbandagi since 4 years stated that Jal Bawa was "some mobed [active priest], saintly person from the Atash Behram."

None of our main interviewees had very clear ideas about Jal Bawa and already in 1992, the author of *Parsiana's* cover story felt at a loss when referring to the "new cult figure named Jalbawa" who "lures crowds to the Banaji Atash Behram on Monday evenings":[105] "Who was Jalbawa? No one seems to have any definite replies. There are no pictures of him ... The absence of knowledge leaves everyone free to rely on their own imagination."[106] However, as the author readily admits, there is more to it: "Of Jalbawa as a person, nothing is known, yet in his prayers is reposited considerable faith."[107] As one of our interviewees,

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[103] However, he deliberately avoids the communal event by coming slightly earlier.

[104] The ringing of the bell is a fixed part of the ritual of feeding the temple-fire (in the Indian version).

[105] Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", p. 14.

[106] Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", p. 15.

[107] Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", p. 14.

Mrs GW put it: "Everybody says that there is power (*sat*, lit. 'truth') in Jal Bawa."[108]

As a matter of fact, the lack of knowledge about Jal Bawa clearly did not cause much concern to the people nor did it prevent our respondents to refer to him in their ritual practice. This dissonance between cognition and practice is clearly expressed (with an apologetic nuance) in the following passage from the interview with Mr JP (33), a person who described himself as very orthodox, and who is a long-time regular to the Banaji on Mondays:

> Jal Bawa, well, there is no Jal Bawa. It had started with the belief in Jal Bawa, ... but as such I have never heard a story of himself or never seen a photograph about himself or never seen nor in the Atashbehram or nor anywhere, just heard the name Jal Bawa.

[At this point Mrs Marfatia who herself had never heard about Jal Bawa before joining me on this project adds the information that the priest leading the communal prayer himself had said that there is no such person. JP continues:]

> That's what I was wondering that we have been hearing since so many years that there is Jal Bawa, so when we also pray we just add his name mentally, there is no harm whatsoever, he is there or not there, maybe he has been there or not there, there is no harm taking his name. But I have never heard the story about him nor have I seen a photograph of him in the Agiary or Atashbehram or in the Humbandagi booklet. Nothing of that sort.

The practice of 'taking the name' of Jal Bawa or 'adding his name mentally' despite (or just because of?) the mystery surrounding this figure lies at the heart of what I have termed the 'ritual of invocation'. On the basis of the statements of our respondents, one can distinguish between two versions of this practice. According to one version, it seems that the devotees silently ('mentally') or even loudly audible mention the name of Jal Bawa while the priest performs the buoy-ceremony (i.e. the feeding of the fire with fragrant wood at the beginning of the respective watch of the day, accompanied by the recitation of certain prayers). According to the second and more clearly expressed version, it consists in the devotee uttering the name while personally offering sandalwood to the fire after the performance of the buoy-ceremony, i.e. while putting

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[108] See also, above, Mrs GW's statement about the *sat* in the tree inside the compound of the Aslaji.

the 'offering' on the ladle that the priest uses in order to convey the offerings of the worshipers onto the fire. (In turn, with the help of this ladle, the worshipers receive a portion of the ashes from the fire, which many put on their forehead.) Mrs GW describes this process in the following terms:

> And I even like the buoy-ceremony and immediately thereafter we offer the sandalwood in the name of Jal Bawaji, which we are holding in our hand. The priest brings out the khumcha [ladle] especially and we put the sandalwood on it taking Jal Bawaji's name.[109] When I first go I put the sandalwood but I keep a special one for Jal Bawaji, which I offer after the buoy-ceremony.

Some respondents were very explicit about the efficacy of that procedure: "any boon asked will be granted", as Mr CC (55) puts it. This attitude is confirmed by other respondents and by some remarks mentioned in the article published in *Parsiana* in 1992. A lengthy excerpt from an interview with a family of Kadmi-priests that I conducted in November 1997, is particular relevant in this regard:[110]

> Many years back there was a gentleman by the name of Jal Bawa. It was a saying: If you remember him on a Monday, in the Aiwisruthrem geh, and, with your real inner being, means, if you remember ... him with full faith, then your wishes are going to be fulfilled and granted. So this was—nobody had confirmed it—, but it was a saying, for a very long time back, and it has been handed down from father to son, like my grandfather used ...[111] was told about it, and whenever there would be an unsolvable problem, as a last resort, my father would say, that this is supposed to be—ah—it works sometime, if you have got faith, you just have to, means, nobody knows who this man is or whatever, the whole story is not very well known, but this is the sort of thing, so, about two three times when people were in great difficulty, they found that when they did this, sort of, Monday, you just have to do your normal prayers as you use to do them and only after Aiwisruthrem Geh buoy [ceremony] that means, after the Aiwisruthrem geh [prayers], you have to offer sandalwood in the name of Jal Baawa and you have to make a mental wish or a mental note that whatever is my difficulty whatever it is just let it get solved ...

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[109] The suffix *-ji* denotes respect.

[110] The interview was conducted with two priests. My friend Rusi Khambatta was present at the interview, partly acting as an interpreter.

[111] Unfortunately, this part of the sentence was incomprehensible on the tape-recording.

I will return to some of the information provided by this excerpt in due course, but here it suffices to draw attention to the ritual practice described by the interviewee: the making of a 'mental wish', or the placing of a 'mental note' while offering sandalwood in the name of Jal Bawa subsequent to the buoy-ceremony of Aiwisruthrem geh on Mondays. It was held that this wish would invariably be fulfilled.

While this was a silent ritual practice, an inner mental affair of the single devotees, who were united in their individual efforts just by a process of synchronisation—everybody would be making his or her own 'mental wish' after the buoy-ceremony—, there are some indications that these wishes were uttered in a clearly audible fashion. These utterances could even be heard from outside the temple. Mrs FN, a 67 years old lady with a priestly family background, provided the following account in March 2002:

> I had an aunty who used to stay there in that complex or Atashbehram whatever.[112] She used to tell me that previously people used to shout at the time of change of buoy that "Jalbhai Mama,[113] Jalbhai Mama". They used to shout like that. But I have never heard of it—she used to tell me. Maybe it was previously, now it is not there.[114] They are saying that there is some sort of a soul, now if there is a picture of Jalbhai Mama I do not know, but people believe in his power, and that if you ask Jalbhai Mama he does help you. So in my desperate situation with my cousins when they were in great trouble, I just stood there, not knowing where Jalbhai Mama is or what that particular thing is, I did close my eyes and I did ask Jalbhai Mama "wherever you are, guide me and help us out with this trouble that was coming to our cousin and I will be absolutely obliged." And I just say "thank you", I do not know what it is. But I feel that people say that there is some kind of a spiritual presence there. I felt I should ask this Dasturji but I have never got the chance to do so.

[Mrs Marfatia comments on this by saying that when she had interviewed people in 2000 nobody seemed to be aware of Jal Bawa, whereas several people whom she had interviewed in 2002 had answered in the affirmative. Mrs FN goes ahead:]

> Yes I have heard, my aunty herself told me that "you will be surprised F.[115] I can hear it right into my house the way they shout." They say he is somebody from Surat, she told me.

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[112] It seems that she is here referring to some Parsi blocks close by the Banaji.
[113] Mama = maternal uncle.
[114] Mrs FN attends the prayers irregularly since 3 to 4 years.
[115] Here the name of Mrs FN is omitted.

The Surat link will be explored further below. Here, two things shall be commented upon. First, the ritual practice of 'shouting out' the name of Jal Bawa. Second, the process by which out of sheer desperation, as a 'last resort', a person seeks help in resolving trouble—in this case, other people's trouble[116]—from Jal Bawa (or 'Jalbhai Mama'[117]), a figure otherwise completely unknown to her. And it has helped—at least this is what she claimed. Mrs GW provides another instance for this procedure:[118]

> ... I told her mother if you want to do it otherwise it is your wish, then for three Fridays or three Mondays or five Mondays, either you take her with you or go alone, go when [the] Jal Bawa ceremony is going on, offer sandalwood and ask for blessing for your daughter's recovery. Then she met me once and she said "Thank you very much, my daughter has recovered and has got married and now has a child". Everybody says that there is power (sat) in Jal Bawa. Even though I cannot go I remember him every night.

Mrs GW had herself started with a sequential pattern:

> ... At first, for several years I used to go every Monday. There might be a rare Monday I would miss. ... Earlier when I had started I had decided to do 5, then I did 7, then 9, I did like that, then missed one and restarted. Then I just continued unless there was some problem. Though I am not going now every evening I pray and remember, every evening, especially on Mondays because it is connected to Mondays.

This sequential pattern is a challenge for practical reasons. For women it is virtually impossible to stick to for an extended period of time, for they won't enter the fire-temple during menstruation. Mrs KT, however, felt that she wanted to do it at least once, as sort of an extra-effort, after all the years she was regularly attending the event.[119] In 1992, Parinaz Gan-

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[116] Mrs FN stated: "Not only that much I, mostly 90% I do not ask anything for myself, but I have to ask for others so I always feel that God is there to help others also. Up until now I have always asked for others, up until now, and I feel that there is help, there is help definitely."

[117] The fact that she calls Jal Bawa by this name probably implies confusion with the Aslaji's Jal Mistry who is addressed as 'Jalbhai'. Mrs FN and her husband go to the Aslaji and are familiar with Jal Mistry. However, it is very clear that what Mrs FN is describing here pertains to the Banaji.

[118] The passage refers to a 22 years old girl who was suffering from serious kidney trouble forcing her to wear a special mask in order to prevent possible infections.

[119] Mrs KT: "But then you know it is very difficult to do 9 Mondays in a row; something or the other comes up. But I have done it once at a stretch. [Mrs Marfatia: With a

dhi refers to an informant (mentioned by name) who had stated that three years back—that would be in 1989—he was advised by Ervad Aspi Nalladaru, the priest who is now leading the Humbandagi, "to come regularly for seven or nine Mondays, then take a break for one Monday, and if he so chose, start the round again."[120] Apart from the numbers 7—an auspicious number in Zoroastrianism—and 9—possibly an adaptation of the Novena-pattern familiar to most Parsis from St. Michaels—, the number 11 occasionally crops up.[121]

In general terms, the sequential order seems to be an expansion of the calendar-pattern that is otherwise an alien instrument to synchronise ritual practice in Zoroastrian traditions. The sequential pattern may be a strategy to elaborate on the wish-motif, for it requires greater efforts on behalf of the devotees. It also provides an instrument to rationalise the turn of events should the fulfilment of the wish fail—contrary to what was expected. In any way, the sequential extension of the visits is a mechanism that originally may have contributed to create a continuous adherence to the service. Probably it was a powerful incidence of turning an occasional participation into a regular habit.

Be that as it may, in many ways the Jal Bawa events proved to be a success in the long run. The fulfilment of wishes was probably one, if not the most important, factor contributing to that success. However, from the interviews and the article by Gandhi it clearly emerges that it took several years before the event drew so large crowds that it became an affair everybody was aware of. The popularity of the event attracted the attention of a community magazine such as *Parsiana,* and *Parsiana's* cover story in turn made it a primary community issue. It seems that initially not more than a handful of persons attended the ritual of Jal Bawa invocation. Then it spread—with the fulfilment of wishes and the miracles operating as the gravity pull—and starting like a snowball it eventually turned into an avalanche.[122] The process seems to have accel-

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mind?] Yes, with a mind, otherwise it is just not possible, after 6 or 7 something comes up, so I said, I must do it at least once since I have been going for so many years."

[120] Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", p. 14.

[121] Among the Parsis, odd numbers are in general considered to be more auspicious than even numbers. In this context, Ramiyar Karanjia pointed out to me (by e-mail): "This idea has gone so far that many people started believing that even navjote should be undergone at the age of 7 or 9 and not at 8".

[122] In November 1997, a priest at the Banaji described that process to me in the following terms: "... two, three times out of say five, people started getting results so what started spreading by word of mouth that 'if you do this sort of things it is going to help'

erated shortly before July 1992.[123] The 200 participants mentioned by Gandhi—200 people *is* a big crowd by Parsi standards—may have been something like the culmination of that phase of the process. It is in the course of that development that the ritual eventually changed character, turning into a well-orchestrated communal prayer (humbandagi) or devotional ritual. At the same time, we can observe a turnover of participants, with some old ones dropping out—or not coming regularly any more— and many new ones starting to attend (see also below).

In an interview that I conducted in November 1997, one Kadmi priest working at the Banaji drew a very down-to-earth picture of the religious needs of his coreligionists:

> I mean, most of the people who come here, certainly want something, I mean wherever most of them pray, somebody is asking for something, so basically, [the] basic purpose of prayer is this, and I mean on one pretext or the other people are coming to the temple, and I mean if you would have told them "you just go and pray there" they wouldn't be doing it, but if you tell them, I mean, if you tell them that "you are going to have some sort of benefit from that"—I mean that is human nature ...

According to the priest, then, the prospect of benefits draws the people to the ritual. The problems and the 'miracles' reported in connection with the early Jal Bawa Monday-events are of a similar kind as those we encountered in connection with his namesake (Jal Mistry) at the Aslaji: stories concerning family disputes, healing and recovery, and divination (e.g. in finding out who had committed a theft or a murder).

... as time went by more and more people started coming and started believing in this ... what started off Mondays or on Mondays was actually this sort of thing, but later on because of, nowadays what happens, it has become, I mean one person goes there and says ke [= that] 'I am going to Banaji fire temple', Parsis have got a habit of following the ... so if one person follows the other one also wants to follow ... This person must have told another person, the other person must have told a third person ... First, we used to have a gathering of 15–20 people, and it slowly started becoming 30–50 people, and as the people in half of them would not know what is going on, they would just say, 'oh, on Monday you should go', and they would come and when a lot of people started coming ..."

[123] Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", p. 14: "While initially it was a select following that came to the Atash Behram religiously on Mondays, as word spread it has become a mass phenomenon, more so in the last four to five months." Note the implicit valuation: the initial religious circle standing against the current 'mass phenomenon'.

The Surat connection:
Zāl, the battle of Variav, and the problem of mixed marriages

While Jal Bawa has attracted the attention of a wider public as a 'cult figure' emerging in Bombay in the late 1980s, there is in fact a longer tradition behind the figure. This tradition goes back to Surat.[124]

The members of the Kadmi priestly family, originally from Surat, working at the Banaji interviewed by me in 1997, were very firm that Jal Bawa was known since at least 3 generations and that this tradition was "more than 80–100 years old". This was confirmed by other sources. Among our respondents, Mr CC (55) voiced the opinion that Jal Bawa was "originally from [the] Surat Atash Behram. People had faith that one should offer on Mondays in Aiwisruthrem geh". This opinion received confirmation from Surat where Mrs Marfatia conducted two interviews in March 2002. One 71-year-old gentleman recalled that people were offering sandalwood in Jal Bawa's name at the Kadmi Atash Behram[125] on Mondays in his childhood days. He professed to know nothing about Jal Bawa, "but it is said that he was a person of an angelic majesty and he used to say: 'Lead a simple life'." Kersasp Nalladaru, the former managing priest (panthaki) of Surat's Kadmi Atash Behram who was born in 1930[126] remembered:

> ... my father also used to tell us that Zarthoshtis had a practice of offering sandalwood here in the name of Jal Bawa. [Mrs Marfatia: Any particular day or time?] On Mondays, they used to give me also sandalwood, which I used to offer here.[127] [Mrs Marfatia: But who was he? Even your father was not aware of his story?] No, no one knows, they used to offer sandalwood in Jal Bawa's name, but nothing else was done. [Mrs Marfatia: Was he a saintly mobed or dastur?] No, nothing is known, I have heard this from my grandfather and my father, but no one knows who and what he was. This had gone on for sometime but in between this had stopped but it has now restarted.[128]

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[124] See also Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", p. 15.

[125] The Seth Pestonji Kalabhai Vakil Kadmi Atash Behram was established in 1823.

[126] From a genealogical point of view, Ervad Nalladaru was entitled to follow in the footsteps of his father and forefathers as a Dastur after his father passed away in 1968. The trustees, however, much to his frustration have denied him this right in 1975 (after he had challenged the policy of the Surat Parsi Punchayat). He tried to fight for what he considered his right and went to the High Court where his case is pending since 1980!

[127] This refers to the time when he was performing the buoy-ceremony.

[128] By this statement, Ervad Kersasp Nalladaru refers to the fact that Humbandagis

Later on in the interview, the conversation returned to the Jal Bawa issue, and this is what Ervad Nalladaru said:

> Even in Bahmanji Khurshedji Kumana's time[129] sandalwood was offered in the name of Jal Bawa. My father used to say that. He expired at the age of 86 years on 23rd April 1934 ... Even at that time sandalwood was being offered in the name of Jal Bawa. [Mrs Marfatia: So we do not know how this story started?] At that time people used to say that on Mondays offerings should be made in the name of Jal Bawa. Many Behdins[130] used to give me money for sandalwood and I also used to put the sandalwood on their behalf. Only in Aiwisruthrem geh.

Hence, the figure of Jal Bawa remains a mystery, but it is sufficiently clear by now that there was a practice of offering sandalwood to the Kadmi Atash Behram at Surat in Aiwisruthrem geh on Mondays, and the existence of this practice is attested since the 1930s at the very latest; possibly it already existed some decades earlier. In the 1980s, this ritual of invocation, which seems to partly have fallen into oblivion in Surat by the time, was transferred to the Banaji Kadmi Atash Behram in Bombay where it gained an unprecedented popularity and later on came to be redesigned.

If factually nothing is known about Jal Bawa, his name at least merits closer scrutiny. Hitherto, the name 'Jal Bawa' has simply been taken for granted—and so it was by our respondents. There second part—the word *bawa*[131]—is a common Parsi designation for 'father'. The word is also used as a term of respect, often referring to elders such as the grandparents in the house. Hence, 'Jal Bawa' may be rendered as the 'respected Jal' or 'father Jal'.[132]

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similar to those held at the Banaji were introduced in the Surat Vakik Kadmi Atash Behram starting from January 7th, 2002. They use the booklet from Bombay. Recently, the attendance was at around 8–10 persons (information given to Mrs Marfatia on a trip to Surat in July 2003).

[129] Ervad Bahmanji Khurshedji Kumana (1848–1934) "has had the enviable record of 52 years of unbroken regular service at the sanctum of the Surat Kadmi Atash Beheram where he was proud to toll the Prayer Call till 82 years of age", H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil,* vol. 1 (Bombay, 1939), p. 71.

[130] I.e., lay Zoroastrians.

[131] I don't see any reason to emendate 'Bawa' to 'Baba' as is done by Kreyenbroek and Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 50. Probably, their emendation is a result of their neo-traditionalist likings: Because 'Jal Bawa' seems to be a comparatively recent phenomenon (but see below), it can not be 'Zoroastrian' in the 'classical' sense and hence must be a leaning from somewhere else, in this case from the 'Baba-cult' of popular 'Hinduism'.

[132] *Bawa* is also a colloquial Gujarati term for 'Parsi', often also used with an added

In my opinion, also the first member—'Jal'—can be easily explained by the phonetic change from 'Z' in Persian to 'J' in Gujarati. The most prominent example of this process is the name of Zarathushtra, Persian Zartošt, that turned into Jartošt in Gujarati. Hence, Persian Zāl is lurking behind Gujarati Jal, and 'Jal Bawa' signifies 'respected Zāl', or 'father Zāl'. The occurrence of that name in this context requires an explanation. In what follows, I will present two hypotheses of an admittedly somewhat speculative nature.

Zāl, the vassal king of Sistēn, is a legendary figure appearing in Ferdowsi's epic *Šāh-nāmeh* and in the writings of some Arabic historians. However, Zāl is nowhere mentioned in the Avestan texts. Nor is he a prominent figure in Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature, but he is occasionally remembered as the son of Sām and the father of the great hero Rustam in Zoroastrian textual traditions,[133] and his name is invoked in a list of the ancient heroes that is recited as part of several rituals. Moreover, Zāl is a recognised, albeit rare, proper name among the Parsis.

As is well known, within the epic traditions, Zāl is a very peculiar hero. In many ways, Zāl is an anomalous person, a hero of inversion.[134] To begin with, when he was born, he was a beautiful baby, but he had white hair. He had the appearance of an 'aged child'. When his father, Sām, saw the child he referred to the baby as an 'Ahremanic' and a 'demonic' child. As he was scared that the nobles would ridicule him, Sām abandoned the baby, but it was found by the Simurgh-bird, who took the child to its nest and reared the boy with his own young. Following a dream, many years later, Sām went to search for his son and when he eventually found him, he took him home. When the child was about to leave the Simurgh, the bird tells him that he had given him the name of *dastān-e zend* (referring to *dastān* - 'trickery', 'strategem'). Furthermore, upon the child's departure, the Simurgh gives the future hero one of his feathers in order for the child to remain under the wings of his power.

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suffix of respect ('Bawaji'). As the term is mostly used in a scornful or ironic sense, this meaning of the term is probably less relevant here.

[133] See, e.g., Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others*, p. 581. The origin and history of the legends of Zāl and Rostam is a much debated topic, see E. Yarshater, "Iranian National History", *The Cambridge History of Iran. Volume 3(1). The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. E. Yarshater (Cambridge et al., 1983), pp. 359–477; O.M. Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings* (Myth and Poetics; Ithaca/London, 1994).

[134] On the anomaly of Rostam and his ancestors (first of all his father Zāl) see Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*, p. 76.

The bird advises him to throw this feather into the fire if he should happen to be in great danger. Should he throw the feather into the fire, the Simurgh promises that its powers will assist him.

Hence, his specific destiny—he was born with white hair and was for a period living away from the human habitation and was raised by the Simurgh-bird—certainly puts him in a very special position, and Zāl alias Dastān is clearly invested with miraculous powers. My first hypothesis then would be that the 'taking the name' of Jal Bawa is a way to activate these powers. To offering of sandalwood to the fire in the name of Jal Bawa is like throwing the miraculous feather into the fire, and just as the Simurgh had promised to Zāl that his powers would emerge, the worshippers evidently placed their hopes in the effect resulting from their ritual acts.

While this first hypothesis links the Jal Bawa to Zāl's childhood, the second hypothesis is linked to the circumstances of Zāl's marriage.[135] Here, again we come across an inverted structure. To briefly resume the story: A very positive horoscope is cast for Zāl who is prepared for his future royal duties. Zāl makes a tour through the empire and happens to arrive at Kabol. There governs a brave and wise king by the name of Mehrāb who, however, by race was an Arab and an offspring from the dragon-monster Zohak (chained by Faridun). Hitherto, Mehrāb had been ignored by the nobles, for he was considered as a devil-worshipper who would follow a different religion and path. Zāl, however, falls in love with Mehrāb's beautiful daughter Rodābeh (of a pari-like face), and their desire to get married causes troubles because apart from the lovers all concerned parties are agreed that this would imply an illegitimate genetic-racial-religious mixing (Arabs/Iranians; dragons/heroes; devil-worshippers/God-worshippers; magic/religion; idolaters/God-worshippers).[136] Repeatedly, the idea of such a union is compared to the mixing of water and fire, or medicine and poison, and the reigning supreme

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[135] E. Yarshater, "Iranian National History", p. 464 refers to this as "the most moving love story in the *Shāh-nāma*". D. Khaleghi Motlagh, *Die Frauen im Schahname. Ihre Geschichte und Stellung unter gleichzeitiger Berücksichtigung vor- und nachislamischer Quellen* (Inaugural-Dissertation Köln, 1971), p. 39 calls it "eine der schönsten Erzählungen der persischen Dichtkunst" (on pp. 31–39 he gives a summary).

[136] See also Khaleghi Motlagh, *Die Frauen im Schahname*, p. 39: "Am Anfang gleicht der Aufbau der Erzählung dem eines Dramas. Die notwendigen Gegensätze sind vorhanden: zwei verschiedene Religionen, zwei verschiedene Nationalitäten und eine alte Feindschaft zwischen den Vätern der beiden Liebenden, also zwei völlig verschiedene Welten, eine ferīdūnische und eine żaḥḥākische".

king, Minocher, is clearly concerned about the qualities of the offspring such a union would produce.

Zāl, however, is able to conquer the resistance, because Sām, his father, had promised him that he would never go against his wishes when he was returned to him by the Simurgh. Hence, Zāl was in a position of a moral superiority vis-à-vis his father (another inverted structure!) who was forced to reluctantly accept his son's decision. Zāl, in turn, favoured by a promising horoscope was able to convince the king and to successfully pass a test made by the priests. Eventually, Zāl and Rudābeh got married, and Rostam, the greatest warrior hero of all, would be an offspring of this union between the daughter of a demon and the foundling of a bird.[137]

This account, it should be noted, certainly strikes an anathema in the Parsi context where 'mixed marriages' (of the type Zāl/Rudābeh) have become a taboo issue in the early 20th century.[138] It is tempting to speculate that the figure of 'father Zāl' in some way or the other alludes to this problem, or that he may possibly even have originated in this context. As a matter of fact, in the famous law Suit (Nr. 689 of 1906, the 'Parsi Punchayat Case') at the Bombay High Court,[139] (possibly doubtful) evidence was produced to the effect that it was a practice in the surroundings of Surat for Parsi males to have non-Parsi mistresses and that the children who were born from such unions were occasionally invested in the Zoroastrian faith. Seen from this angle, the fact that 'father Zāl' made his first appearance in Surat may strike a note.

However, there is more to it, for a Kadmi priest in Bombay whom I interviewed in 1997, reported a legend that is based on well-known material while at the same time substantially transforming it. The episode he alluded to is known as the 'battle' or 'massacre of Variav'. It seems to have first been transmitted orally before Parsi historians such as D.F. Karaka, S.M. Desai and J.J. Modi reported about the incident.[140] The

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[137] The further heroic deeds of Zāl in the defence of Sistan and as a wise advisor of the Kayanian kings are irrelevant in this context.

[138] Interestingly, though, current Parsis are not aware that Ferdowsi here clearly describes a case of what by Indian standards would otherwise be termed a 'mixed marriage'. The reading of the text is evidently under the power of conceptual schemes that permit the very idea of a 'mixed marriage' in the *Šāh-nāmeh*.

[139] See Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 52–57 with the relevant literature.

[140] For a review of early scholarship see H.E. Eduljee, *Kisseh-i Sanjan* (Bombay, 1991), pp. 100–105.

historians have tried to link the report to historically documented cases of violence against the Parsis.

No two accounts agree on what exactly was at stake, and it is unclear when—and if at all (!)—this 'battle' or 'massacre' happened. However, the main narrative pattern is quite clear. After the Parsis had settled (at a certain place), (for some reason or the other) they were attacked (by some group), but the Parsis were able to defend themselves. There are two versions about the following events. According to one (reported by Karaka) the frustrated aggressors repeated their attack and took the Parsis who were attending a feast by surprise. The entire Parsi community—men, women, and children—was massacred. According to the other version (reported by Desai) the attack was repeated when the Parsi men had gone away to attend some feast or the other. However, the Parsi women, masking themselves, put on the armour of the men and fought the enemies. They were about to repel the aggressors when the veil fell off a woman's face. When the aggressors discovered that they were fighting against women, they doubled their efforts and eventually killed many of the women. Afterwards, they also attacked the men who had fallen asleep after enjoying the festive meal. Those Parsis who made it to escape, fled to Navsari.

The story as I was told it by the Kadmi priest in 1997 follows the second version. However, the set-up of the story was changed in three respects. To begin with, the priest held that the event had occurred after the arrival of the Parsis to India and hence did pertain to the entire Indian Parsi community (and not to one local community alone). Hence, from a local legend, it is transferred to the history of the Parsi community as such; from a local episode it was transformed into a prototypical event. Second, as the priest told it, the massacre did only pertain to the women and their children. This is consequential, for taking into account that narration places this massacre in an early period; it thereby pertains to most women and children of the entire Parsi population. Hence, after the massacre, the Parsi men, when they awoke from their sleep, were left without most women and children. This is exactly where the third and most crucial transformation comes into play, for the priest continued his version of the story by saying that the Parsis, who were bereaved of (most of) their women, in order to make up for the shortage of girls and women decided to admit high-caste Hindu spouses for marriage. The children stemming from those marriages, the priest continued, were then referred to as 'behdin' (lay Zoroastrians).

Many Parsis will possibly find this narration offensive, and it is probably unreliable from a historical point of view. In any case, the story conveys a sort of genetic supremacy of the priesthood and it has the appearance of being a priestly fabrication, possibly of Kadmi origin. It is the only time that I have heard this version of the story—hence it may be dismissed as one priest's idiosyncrasy—, but significantly I came to hear it in the context of an interview devoted to the Jal Bawa phenomenon. The (admittedly speculative) second hypothesis hence is that the figure of Jal Bawa, i.e. 'father Zāl'—Zāl, who intermarried just as the Parsis after the incident at Variav (at least according to that version of the legend)—is in different ways linked to the extremely sensitive issue of 'mixed marriages'. Possibly, Jal Bawa is a posthumous offspring of a version of the 'massacre of Variav' that was still commemorated in Surat in the late 19th century.[141] Significantly, it was in Surat, where the Jal Bawa events are attested at least since the early 20th century.

Re-designing the event:
The invention and development of the Humbandagi

Mrs Marfatia had herself never heard about a figure by the name of 'Jal Bawa' before venturing on the project with me. When she, in the course of an interview with Ervad Aspi F. Nalladaru of the Banaji that was held on September 21st 2000,[142] asked him about 'Jal Bawa' his reaction was outright denial. This may come as somewhat of a surprise, for in *Parsiana's* "cover story" Ervad Nalladaru was indirectly quoted in connection to Jal Bawa. Ervad Nalladaru was furious about that and he felt that he should sue the magazine. As a matter of fact, it seems that about half a year after *Parsiana's* July 1992 issue was published, the ritual event that took place on Mondays in the Aiwisruthrem geh was entirely redesigned: the individual prayers and invocations which had already implicitly acquired a communal dimension by the sheer mass of people present was intentionally redesigned into an organized ritual of communal devotion, a so-called Humbandagi. As the Humbandagi is not mentioned in the article published in *Parsiana*, it seems to be a later addition. A priest at the Banaji explained this process in the following terms:

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[141] See D.F. Karaka, *History of the Parsis* (London, 1884), p. 49.

[142] I would like to take the opportunity to thank Ervad Nalladaru for his cooperation throughout the project. He gave two interviews to Mrs Marfatia and did not object to me being in the compound of the Banaji on Mondays.

> ... when many people started coming here, the Trustees here, they decided ... that since so many of Zoroastrians are coming here ... so they ... told another priest ... to hold a sort of congregation and to hold some sort of prayers here, collective prayers ...

> ... and when a lot of people started coming, the Trustees suggested to [Ervad Aspi] Nalladaru ... "why don't you have some sort of Humbandagi done so that more people come to attend" ...

I find it doubtful that the trustees of the temple actually should have wanted to attract ever more people; probably they rather wanted to streamline the religious physiognomy of the event. Similarly, Ervad Aspi Nalladaru recalls[143] that 'there used to be huge crowds who would assemble in front of the kebla[144] and would not allow others to come close to the kebla and immediately after the buoy[145] they would rush out and others would try to get in. This used to cause chaos and therefore permission from the trustees was sought to form a system in order to avoid unpleasantness amongst the devotees.' Ervad Nalladaru drafted the prayers, which were then approved by the trustees. Ervad Nalladaru remembered that on one Sunday the then managing trustee rang him requesting him to start with the Humbandagi, and 'a board was put up saying that Humbandagi would be started from the next day itself'. The first Humbandagi, Ervad Nalladaru recalls, was held on April 12th 1993.

Humbandagi:
Transformations of a ritual pattern

The word *humbandagi* (or *hambandagi*) is a Parsi-Gujarati term, which is a compound of two Persian words: *ham* – 'together', 'in the same manner', and *bandagi* – 'devotion', 'prayer'. It is not clear when the term was first coined. Despite the word *humbandagi* being constructed out of two Persian terms, it is not a Persian word, nor does it—to my knowledge—occur in the New Persian writings of the Zoroastrians. As a matter of fact, there is no term univocally denoting 'communal worship' in Pahlavi either.[146]

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[143] Because Ervad Nalladuru did not want to have the interview taped, the following transcripts were made by Mrs Marfatia based on her notes and memory. This sort of information is indicated by the use of inverted commas ('...').

[144] I.e., the chamber in which the Atash Behram fire is housed.

[145] I.e., the feeding of the fire performed by the priest.

[146] The possible exception is *mēzd*. On this term see Anders Hultgård's paper in this

Probably the term *humbandagi* was invented as a result of a change in ritual practice, i.e. the establishment of communal worship. This may be the result of the fact that there was a decrease in the individual performance of the ritual duties; correspondingly, people started to pray together.[147] It seems that the Humbandagis were invented as a ritual pattern employed in public events and on festival days such as the New Year festival and festive occasions such as the 'birthday' of the temple-fires.

One of the first references to the practice of Humbandagi's comes from Calcutta, where a Humbandagi was conducted on the request of the government in order to pray for the First World War to end.[148] The practice of heaving Humbandagi prayers during the festival honouring the spirits of the deceased (Muktad), which is still observed in some fire-temples in Bombay, is already attested from Karachi in the middle of the 20th century.[149] Nowadays, such Humbadagis are also conducted in the West (e.g. in New Orleans).

Usually, a Humbandagi consists of reciting the most important prayer-formulae (manthras): two *Yathā Ahū Vairyō* plus one *Ashem Vohū*. This is the primary ingredient that can be supplemented by other materials such as the *Stum-no-kardo* during Muktad or a portion of the *Khorshed Niyayesh* during spring New Year (Jamshedi Navroz). Instead of inserting further prayers, one can also add the (Gujarati or English) translation of the text and a speech or a 'sermon' of different length. The simple varieties of Humbandagis are performed on many occasions.

In the case of the Monday-night-humbandagi at the Banaji, Ervad Aspi Nalladaru designed the prayers,[150] and the amount of text recited

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volume. Datsur Dr. F.M. Kotwal has voiced the following opinion (by e-mail): "I think the term *myazd* is used for a religious assemblage in which people participate in prayers with the priests keeping a hand-contact (payvand) with one another. Old prayer books indicate that such myazd festivals should be celebrated five times in a month: Mihr, Rashn, Bahram, Ashtad and Aneran."

[147] This explanation was suggested by Dastur Dr. F.M. Kotwal in the following terms (e-mail): "Hambandagi means congregational prayer. The concept seems to have been evolved in later times when a number of Parsis found it difficult to say their obligatory prayers individually. Again, it instils in them a spirit of harmony and devotion."

[148] This is stated in the *Athornan Nameh* (reference kindly supplied by Ervad Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia.)

[149] See Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 212.

[150] In an article published in *Jame Jamshed Weekly*, on December 7th, 1997 (in Gujarati), Ervad Nalladaru briefly described the way in which the prayers were "getting written".

has gradually grown.[151] Because Ervad Nalladaru compiled the texts (from different sources), the participants could not simply fall back upon their common prayer books or the texts they had learnt by heart. This is why Ervad Nalladaru had photocopies of the prayers distributed. Initially, this was one sheet only, but afterwards the number slowly increased. As this turned out to be increasingly unpractical some benefactor started to have little booklets containing the prayers distributed. In 2000, Mrs Marfatia picked up a booklet of 19 pages that had been published in June 1999 "by A Well Wisher for Zoroastrian community" [sic].[152]

According to that booklet, which was in use at the time of our work with the Banaji, in September 2000 and in February 2002, the Humbandagi starts with three songs, followed by four prayers.[153] Each prayer starts with two *Yathā Ahū Vairyō* plus one *Ashem Vohū* and is concluded by one *Yenghe Hātąm*—the third of the most ancient manthras—, followed again by one *Ashem Vohū* plus one *Yathā Ahū Vairyō* and finally two *Ashem Vohū*. The *Yathā Ahū Vairyō/Ashem Vohū*-sequence is thus used as an embedded, inverted double frame [of the type YYA ... HAYAA].[154] This frame-structure includes a compilation of 15 to 25 verses from different texts. In each prayer, at least one piece from the prayer in praise of the Moon (Māh Niyayesh) is inserted. Moreover, apart from the second prayer, the prayers contain one passage—different in each case—that is to be recited thrice.

When Mrs Marfatia interviewed Ervad Nalladaru on September 21st 2000, the priest explained to her that the first prayer is in honour of the (consecrated temple) Fire (Atash Padshah), the second in honour of the Moon (Mah Bakhtar), the third in honour of the divine protector Sarosh Yazad, and the fourth in honour of Shah Faridun. However, the set-up of this latter prayer is completely different from the usual *Afsun-e Shah Faridun* (see above). Instead, it combines a section from the prayer in

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[151] Several interviewees vividly recalled this process.

[152] *Banaji Atash Behram / Kavali-Ahurana-o-Jartosht / Dadar Hormazda ne vinanti / Khudavind Khavind / Hum Bandagi / and / Afsun Mantra.* Apart from the prayers, the booklet contains an Introduction, a Qawwāli (text only), a Gujarati song ("Dadar Hormazd ne vinanti"), a Monājat together with a synopsis in English, and several pictures. In 1997 and 2000 I have seen earlier booklets as well, but I am not aware when the first were printed.

[153] According to the booklet (p. 10), the first prayer is to be recited thrice. However, Mrs Marfatia informs me that it is recited one time only during the Humbandagi.

[154] H = *Yenghe Hātąm*; Y = *Yathā Ahū Vairyō*; A = *Ashem Vohū*.

praise of the Moon (Māh Niyayesh), one verse from the first *Gatha* (Y. 32,4) and from the *Stum*-prayer. Moreover, in the first prayer, a specific (otherwise unknown) formula directed to Shah Faridun occurs that is to be recited thrice. The text which is composed to in honour of Sarosh Yazata neither explicitly refers to Sarosh, nor does it make use of any of the available materials (hymns) dedicated to this divine being. The second prayer, in honour of the Moon, combines a verse from the prayer in praise of the Moon with a verse from the *Vanant Yasht* that is generally regarded as a powerful text for purposes of healing.

In the booklet, the explanation kindly provided by Ervad Nalladaru is not echoed. Instead, the four prayers bear the following titles: "Humbandagi (No. 1)"; "Afshun for all Difficulties (No. 2)"; "Afshun Mantra (No. 3)"; "An Effective Afshun Mantra to Elevate any Type of Physical Body Ailment (No. 4)".[155] As even the first prayer contains a spell in the name of Shah Faridun, the entire set of prayers can be regarded as a spell (afshun). From the textual side, then, the Humbandagi is a communal worship based on textual materials, which Ervad Nalladaru has reframed as spells. In other words: 'Ordinary' prayer-materials are turned into spells, and through the Humbandagi the spells obtain a communal dimension.

The efficacy ascribed to these prayers—and the appeal to their efficacy may be at the bottom of terming them 'spells'—is made explicit in the booklet, where each of the three spells is given a specific purpose ranging from "quarrels of difference of opinion with other persons" (No. 2), "Peace in the Family" (No. 3), reducing weakness and increasing vitality or fighting against "severe illness" (No. 4); moreover, directions for the application of the spells are added (No. 2.: "most effective when recited Seven times in a Span of 24 hours"; No. 3: "thrice daily, at any time of the day"; No. 4: "thrice at any time of the day" or, in more severe cases, seven times daily).[156]

Because Ervad Aspi Nalladaru, the leader of the communal prayers, had composed new texts (out of already existing ones) the Banaji Humbandagi has emerged as a new format for the Humbandagi as a ritual pattern.[157] The Humbandagi at the Banaji was designed as a distinctive

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[155] To Mrs Marfatia Ervad Nalladaru confirmed the efficacy of the second and the fourth prayer by referring to personal experiences.

[156] All quotations are from the booklet *Banaji Atash Behram* etc.

[157] According to the booklet (*Banaji Atash Behram*, p. 2), the prayers were "composed taking in to [sic] consideration varuous [sic] factors, viz. Monday, Aiwisruthrem Geh, Mahbakhtar, peace of mind".

event. This process was powerfully reinforced by the introduction of the booklet, and the new medium allowed for a transfer of the Humbadagi as a weekly community event held at a temple to the individual prayers performed at other times and places. Indeed, two of our interviewees refer to their (or their relatives) using the booklet for their prayers privately (at home, or when travelling), in part, but not necessarily so, in case they can't make it to the event at the Banaji itself. Ervad Nalladaru also mentioned that some people are visiting hospitals where they recite the Humbandagi prayers near the beds of the patients.

Apart from a collection of single spells designed as remedies for specific problems, though, the Humbandagi was clearly invented as an overarching unity for communal worship, and the fact of praying together is by many participants believed to increase the inherent efficacy of the prayers. The booklet, for instance, states: "All prayers can also be recited individually ... and are most beneficial when recited in a group."[158] In one of the interviews with Mrs Marfartia, Ervad Nalladaru remarked 'that joint prayers bring blessings to everyone, even those sitting in the garden, just as a king[159] would bestow small tokens to everyone he meets. It gives help, confidence, strength, etc. to the participants. For example, when participants in a manifestation march together it gains strength, so does nature observe the togetherness of the participants and gives bigger award with the blessings of the Atashbehram.'

The idea that it is better for a group of people to say joint prayers instead of each and everybody praying individually is generally emphasised by the Parsis, but in ritual practice it is rather the exception than the rule. Apparently, for many participants in the Humbandagi, the experience of a group of people—and, by Parsi standards, an extremely large group of people—praying together is a major attraction: "even if you pray Yatha Ahu Vairyo or Ashem Vohu, whatever the complete book has it, it is fantastic because 200 to 300 people are praying it" (Mr FB).[160] That "the feeling is really great", as one interviewee (Mr JP) puts it, may be a by-product of the large gathering. Several respondents emphasised that the Humbandagi 'feels nice'/'feels good'.

Out of 46 respondents commenting on that issue, 30 (= 65%) stated that 'praying together' was one of the main things attracting them to the

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[158] *Banaji Atash Behram*, p. 4.

[159] The consecrated temple-fire is usually referred to as a king (*padshah*).

[160] It should be noted that Mr FB has been deeply involved in a religious movement that stresses communal prayers.

Banaji on Monday nights; 12 respondents (= 26%), eleven of whom were attending since at least a year, even considered it to be the most important factor. One young respondent (16 years) felt that the communal prayer "increases concentration", and two respondents did refer to the 'sound vibrations' produced by the communal recitation of the texts. One lady, Mrs FN (67), expressed herself in the following terms:

> I feel that at times often 'elation' feeling is there, you know. You feel that I am proud to be a Parsi and I am here with all so many praying together, it gives you that strength, I feel a moral strength in it, that's all.

Possibly, for a miniscule community as the Parsis, the experience of a crowd of coreligionists gathering may indeed provide an experience of (communal) 'strength'. One interviewee, Mrs GW (63), clearly reflected the fact that communal prayers are indeed somewhat of an odd experience in the Parsi context:

> Though there are too many people and we would feel hot, we would get disturbed, some pray in some manner, some others in another manner, yet I like it very much. ... I have never seen this before—they are coming in such big numbers.

For some others, though, the crowd seems to be a scaring experience, and a number of devotees have made it a point to visit the Banaji on Mondays while avoiding to come (or sitting outside) when the Humbandagi is going on.

In some instances, where Humbandagis are held, the prayers are followed by talks ('sermons'). Also Ervad Nalladaru started to give brief talks sometime after the Humbandagi sessions had taken roots.[161] However, later on—probably around 1998—he discontinued with the talks. Partly this was because he felt that preparing these talks created so much tension in him that it affected his health, and partly because a number of people were getting impatient, for they felt that the Humbandagi and the subsequent buoy-ceremony were unduly delayed by these lectures. This critical stance was also emphasised by one of our female interviewees, whereas according to Mr JP the talks "used to actually pull the crowds

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[161] Judging from the recollections of our interviewees, these sermons were addressing a number of different issues. In part Ervad Nalladaru has conveyed very practical advise, e.g., when to pray what (such as praying the *Khorshed Niyayesh* in order to please one's boss). At other times he seems to have talked about the formation of the planets. One interviewee reported that the priest had made a precise prediction about an earthquake.

previously". He also felt that the 'sermons' should be restarted "the sooner the better".

The priest and the blessings of the moon

At this point, it may be appropriate to say some words on the biography and background of Ervad Nalladaru.[162] Aspi Faramroze Fardunji Nalladaru was born in Surat in 1930. His paternal uncle was the then head priest (dastur) of the Vakil Kadmi Atash Behram, where the Jal Bawa rituals took place since the early 20th century. In 1936, he had his Navjote done, i.e. he was initiated into the religion.[163] Ervad Nalladaru's father, however, did not work as a priest, but as a weaving master and a dealer in silk fabrics. In that capacity he used to come to Bombay. There, at the Banaji, Aspi Nalladaru's first-grade initiation into priesthood (Nawar) was performed under the care and tutelage of the then managing trustee who at the gathering after the initiation would announce that he wanted to make the boy the temple's future buoywalla (priest responsible for the ritual care of the fire). However, as he was about to perform the 101st birthday of the Banaji, Ervad Nalladaru got measles. In that way, his priestly career was briefly interrupted. His second-grade initiation into priesthood (Martab) was performed in 1945 at Surat's Vakil Kadmi Atash Behram. For a short while, he worked as a priest in the village of Siganpore near Surat. Back in Bombay, at the Banaji, the managing trustee was facing some troubles with the buoywallas, and Ervad Nalladaru was made a buoywalla of the Atash Behram in 1946.

At that time, there was no fixed salary for buoywallas. They had to live on the offerings made by the devotees. Since 1952 he was paid a regular salary. In 1996, when he completed 50 years of service, his salary was 1750 Rupees per month, which is a ridiculous amount when compared to 'secular' jobs. During the course of his service, Ervad Nalladaru performed virtually all priestly rituals including such complex ones as the Nirangdin—he did 20 Nirangdins—, the consecration of a new temple bull (varasyo), which he did thrice, and the shifting of the Atash Behram fire when the building was repaired (in 1960 and 1962). Ervad Aspi Nalladaru is married, has four children and several grandchildren.

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[162] The following account is based on Ervad Nalladaru's curriculum vitae and information provided by him during an interview with Mrs Marfatia on September 21st, 2000.

[163] On the question, if the Navjote is properly classified as 'initiation' see Jan Snoek's contribution to this volume.

Apart from this official and comparatively successful priestly career culminating in the Humbandagi (since 1993), there is another—complementary—side to his activity, and that is astrology.[164] His father, the silk dealer, was an astrologer who would give free services four evenings a week and as Ervad Nalladaru recalled, long queues would be waiting outside. A paternal uncle of his, who was also a silk salesman, brought Ervad Nalladaru in touch with another reputed Parsi astrologer who would then teach him to draw charts (according to both Indian and foreign systems). Ervad Nalladaru himself offers astrological advice (free of charge, as he explicitly added). Apart from his astrological competencies, Ervad Nalladaru remarked that in his dreams he often gets 'warnings and good tidings', i.e. experiences of a divinatory kind.

His commitment to and his reframing of the Humbandagi is the result of a fruitful combination of his priestly, astrological, and divinatory experiences. While the process leading to the introduction of the Humbandagi by the trustees of the temple seems to be accidental from a historical perspective, in the eyes of the priest the opposite is true: In an article published in the *Jame Jamsheed Weekly* of August 28th 1994, Ervad Nalladaru recounts three divinatory experiences that had occurred to him at night inside the temple during his turn of service as buoywalla. In his eyes, all these experiences, which he links to the subsequent establishment of the Humbandagi—"I was informed 48-49 years back about the start of Mondays at the Banaji Atashbehram"[165]—, witness the power residing inside the temple and the power of the moon shining at night.

Ervad Nalladaru even explains the somewhat mysterious timing of the Humbandagi—Mondays in the Aiwisruthrem geh—in astrological terms.[166] For according to him, the Moon (Mah Bokhtar, Mah Yazad [the Moon Distributor, the Moon Divinity]) is the only planet that is 'suit-

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[164] Mostly thanks to the studies of Antonio Panaino the significance of astrology in ancient Iranian culture and religion has recently found the attention it deserves (see, e.g. A. Panaino, *Tessere il cielo. Considerazioni sulle Tavole astronomiche, gli Oroscopi, e la Dottrina dei Legamenti tra Induismo, Zoroastrismo, Manicheismo e Mandeismo* (Serie Orientale Roma 79; Rome, 1998). The importance of astrology for later forms of Zoroastrianism is understudied. Some hints can be found in Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism,* pp. 78, 88, 108sq. (all from a 'traditionalist' background), 213, 249 and 271.

[165] *Jame Jamshed Weekly,* December 7th, 1997.

[166] The following is based on two articles published by Ervad Nalladaru in the *Jame Jamshed Weekly* (August 28th, 1994 and December 7th, 1997). Both articles are in Gujarati. It should be noted that the timing of weddings according to astrological calculations is a general practice.

able' for each and everybody from amongst the planets, which are linked to the week. Furthermore, he recounts that Dadar Hormazd (Ahura Mazdah the Creator) had first given authority and control to the Sun, i.e. Khorshed Yazad. However, the Sun, Ervad Nalladaru explains, did realize that it (he) is not suitable to mankind because of its (his) heat and it (he) has to wander around from one celestial body to the next in 30 days. For this reason Khurshed Yazad selected a female divine being (farishta), the Moon, i.e. Mah Bokhtar Saheb. According to Ervad Nalladaru, the Moon with her "most beautiful body in which coolness abounds" and her "great capacity for love" distributes many blessings:

> She gives to the humans the strength to think, she causes good offspring to be born, she is the giver of happiness in married life, removes quarrels and bitterness, and causes the work to be done with love.

> In the presence of Mah Bokhtar humans can have enjoyment, can procure love, as a result of which good children can be born. She is a helper of women during their menstruation.

> If one chooses to have fun throughout the day then this is not possible, but if one chooses to have fun all night then it is possible because both serenity and love are given.

> She gives to a woman a good husband and to a man a virtuous wife. She gives a woman the status of a queen in her married life. She keeps her decorated with gold and jewellery. She gives a woman unlimited help.

> She is a provider of total happiness in the fields of music, dance, song, entertainment as also towards religion.

> She provides total help to a person during operations, accidents, or illness. And she assists in many such cases.

The Humbandagi, then, is regarded as an effective means of distributing those blessings of the Moon (such as peace, enjoyment, joy, happiness, and help) to the worshipers. In order to safeguard that process, the timing of the event is crucial: it is held on Mondays, i.e. the day linked to the Moon (in the secular calendar), and in the evening geh, for Ervad Nalladaru argues that "the strength of Mah Bokhtar Saheb increases after sunset".[167]

The idea that the Moon is instrumental in distributing heavenly blessings to the earth is already attested in the Pahlavi literature.[168] Apart

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[167] *Jame Jamshed Weekly,* August 28th, 1994. Moreover, it is believed that the powerful divine being Sarosh bestows his blessings in the Aiwisruthrem geh.

[168] For the relevant texts see A. Panaino, "Manichaean Concepts in the Pahlavi Commentary of Māh Nyāyišn, par. 4?" *Studia Manichaica. IV. Internationaler Kongreß*

from many other conceptual differences, however, in the older texts this process is always linked to the waxing and waning or the different phases of the moon. A New Persian text, the *Ṣad dar Bondeheš* (56,1), has it that "they should know that every benefit which the Creator Ormazd bestows on the men of this world is (first) entrusted to the glorious moon and the moon bestows these benefits on men."[169] The text concludes that everybody should recite the praise to the Moon when it is new moon (56,2). The Moon is also linked to certain vows (22,1; 44,28). Despite the continuity in the idea of the Moon being the Dispenser (Bokhtar) of blessings, different astrological parameters have obviously resulted in a transformation of the whole pattern. Be that as it may, judging from our interaction with the participants this sort of a priestly justification for the timing of the event, while providing a deep-structure plausibility is both unknown and irrelevant to the visitors, none of whom ever made any reference to the Moon.

Visits and visitors

When *Parsiana* published its cover story—roughly at the peak of the 'ritual of evocation'-period and shortly before the introduction of the Humbandagi—Parinaz Gandhi estimated that the event had almost 200 participants.[170] When I went to the Banaji on three consecutive Mondays in September 2000 and once in February 2002, the numbers I counted were considerably higher. As matter of fact, the number had more than doubled.

I did not restrict my counting to the number of people entering the compound—later on I realised that this would have greatly facilitated my work—, but my ambition was to count the people who were actually inside the temple. The counting turned out to be a rather difficult undertaking, for, much to my surprise, I found that people were constantly moving in and out of the temple; they did not just remain inside, once they had entered, but kept on coming out, before entering again,[171] and this would recur many times.

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zum Manichäismus, Berlin, 14.–18. Juli 1997, eds R.E. Emmerick/W. Sundermann/P. Zieme (Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berichte und Abhandlungen. Sonderband 4; Berlin, 2000), pp. 465–479.

[169] Translation by Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others*, p. 546.

[170] P. Gandhi, "If it's Monday, it must be Banaji's", p. 14 (quoted in full above).

[171] To give just one example: On September 25th, 2000, between 6pm and 6.15pm 29 people went inside the temple, while 24 came out.

At all three occasions, before 6pm around 60 people were inside the temple. Most devotees came rushing to the event between 6.30 and 7pm. According to my calculations, an average of 459 persons was attending the prayer meetings.[172] That puts the number at around 0,85% of the entire Parsi population of Bombay.

This extraordinary high number of weekly visitors is certainly beneficial for the persons who are deriving their income from the temple. Ervad Nalladaru publicly addressed this aspect in an article published in the *Jame Jamshed Weekly* of December 7th, 1999:

> Now let us see what are the benefits of these Mondays.
> Firstly, whosoever it is—the watchman, or paniwalla[173] or battiwalla[174] or the buoywalla, everyone earns some money and a good quantity of sandalwood is offered to the Atash Padshah saheb. So even the sandalwood seller earns.

On all four occasions when I made attempts at counting the number of devotees, there was an almost equal distribution by gender, whereas the number of children was clearly below 3%. Remarkably, however, the youth of the community is very well represented among the participants, and several among the younger people give the event a particular flair in that they stay on at the spot after the Humbandagi. They are meeting their friends,[175] chatting, presenting their vehicles, dresses and haircuts—while obviously enjoying themselves.[176] One interviewee, Mrs YP (48) stressed the importance of the social dimension of the gathering, when she said:

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[172] September 11th, 2000: 427 persons; September 18th, 2000: 462 persons; September 25th, 2000: 435 persons; February 24th, 2002: 511 persons. I have no clear idea why the number on the last-mentioned date was (10-20%) higher than on the previous occasions. It may have happened by chance, it may have been the season—or the event has become even more popular during the intervening period of one and a half years.

[173] The 'paniwalla' fills water (pani) into the containers storing the water that is used for the ritual ablutions.

[174] The 'battiwalla' prepares the oil-lamps (batti) that are lit by the devotees.

[175] One 17 year old respondent explicitly mentioned 'meet friends later' as an attraction to the event.

[176] One interviewee, a gentleman of 33, voiced the opinion that "they should improve in their dressing. They are visiting the Atash Padshah, they are visiting Agiaries and Athashbehrams, they should have a bit of sense what they wear and come. [Mrs Marfatia inquires if he was specifically referring to the girls.] Not only the girls, I tell you, to the boys also, you see they wear some pyjamas with checks, long T-shirts, they do not have a cap on their head ... at least some decency should be maintained, some respect has to be given, you are not attending a disco or a party".

At least community-wise you are meeting together and the young generation is also coming, it is good, means because in our community gathering is not there, and our children are being converted by the Catholics.

One long-time regular—a gentleman of 33 who has come for 10 years—did refer to the event as a meeting place for youngsters and old people and emphasised the gossip prior to and after the Humbandagi.[177] One lady of 60 said that she 'likes the atmosphere' of the place.

However, when asked about what attracts them to the Banaji on Monday nights and in what way their participation in the event had been beneficial to them, almost all respondents predominantly referred to religious or spiritual motives and experiences. Apart from the experience of praying together, the idea of 'peace of mind' turned out to be a major stimulus for many people to attend.[178] This idea is also referred to and partly promoted by Ervad Nalladaru, when he, in the above-mentioned article published in the *Jame Jamshed Weekly* of December 7th, 1999, highlights the following benefit of the Humbandagi:

> Secondly, every devotee comes here with some form of problem. Some have problems of children, some marital, some with society or monetary problems, court cases or health, etc and which have been helped by the Atash padshah saheb's blessings. They have received peace of mind and are still getting all those blessings from the Atash padshah saheb ...

Hence, the priest is well aware that the people come with specific problems on their mind,[179] and just as with the Aslaji, many people place their hopes in the Banaji, and from the Jal Bawa-events the Humbandagi has inherited the expectation that problems can be solved in a miraculous fashion. As a matter of fact, out of 46 respondents who commented on that topic, 7 (15%) mentioned miracles as an important factor attracting them to the Hambandagi.[180] Reports about 'miracles' and 'things happening' also came to the forefront in two interviews.[181] Independently of

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[177] One interviewee, however, lamented: "gossiping has increased".

[178] 20 out of 46 people (= 43%) who commented on this issue, mentioned 'peace of mind', mostly in combination with 'praying together' (and other options).

[179] See also the statement by the other Kadmi priest quoted in full above.

[180] One lady (34), however, who is not a regular, voiced exactly the opposite opinion: "I do not believe in Humbandagi with these brief prayers—miracles will not happen. Any prayer will help." She wants to say that any ordinary prayer has the same power as the Humbandagi.

[181] One interviewee stated: "That was a miracle ... for me after the prayers I had recited" [at the Banaji]. However, later on he added: "I am not asking much for it, not on

each other, two respondents told different versions of a story according to which a Gujarati (= Hindu) businessman was miraculously stopped from committing suicide because he offered sandalwood to the Banaji Atash Behram.[182] One interviewee alluded to a story—reportedly told by Ervad Nalladaru during one of his 'sermons'—about a miracle in relation to a mysterious horse carriage that had stopped at the temple.

However, even many among those respondents, who did not explicitly refer to 'miracles', were clearly convinced that the Humbandagi is an efficacious event. They claimed that their participation has borne results and that it has helped them in different ways. These beneficial aspects can be expressed in rather general terms such as 'wishes fulfilled', 'general help', 'bad time has gone away', 'it definitely helps in an unknown way', 'now showing the way more clearly'. As one interviewee put it: "things improve, it does not harm".

8 respondents mentioned concrete results: 'good marks' (at school), 'passed exams', 'sobered down', 'brother's transfer was stopped', 'benefit in health', 'speedy recovery', 'saved from accident', 'helped in job', 'financial help' (by getting a house), leg troubles, and a son who married a Parsi girl.

Some respondents, it must be said, explicitly denied the intention of obtaining any reward of that type. For them it is 'faith' alone that matters, the feeling that 'something good is got', that it 'feels nice' or that they are simply fulfilling a religious duty. Not everybody, it should be stated, asks boons for himself, but often wishes are made for others (mostly family-members), and at least one respondent frankly admitted that the desired aim has not (yet) been achieved: the trouble has not been solved.[183] From some remarks it becomes clear that a number of people

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every Monday I want some miracle to happen..."

[182] One respondent claimed that this story had been reported in the *Mumbai Samachar*, a Parsi newspaper read by many Gujarati business-people.

[183] This interviewee (Mr FB) expressed a rather inconsistent attitude towards the event. On the one hand he is highly critical towards any attempts of "ordering God or blackmailing God". He described himself as "a firm believer" and he professed: "I just go in a nice way when the Humbandagi is there." On the other hand, though, he frankly admits that he initially came with a specific purpose: "... in fact coincidentally it happened that I had some housing problem which I was doing and that's the reason I went to Atashbehram and I said 'lets go to the Atashbehram' and my wife said 'yes' and since this is there, we went on one Monday and it became a habit to go on, to continue." Later on he admitted: "To be completely honest, for what I had gone, it has not happened yet."

connect their visits to the Banaji to oaths.[184]

Among our respondents, the majority were regulars.[185] An overwhelming majority of them (36 out of 44 [81%]) kept on coming for more than a year, and two third (29/44 [65%]) for more than two years. Significantly, however, even among those who came for less than a year, some mentioned that they were coming regularly, if not always. In other words, they have already made it a habit. Somebody (63) expressed the desire to make it at least to 11 consecutive visits. In this way, a constant flow of new participants is added to the fold of the participants. Hence, it seems that the event is not under threat of dying out.

Among those who have recently joined the event, some express feelings of attachment in that they 'bother' in case they are for some reason or another unable to attend. For that case, 12 (= 42%) out of 28 visitors expressed negative feelings such as 'feeling bad', 'guilty', 'unhappy', 'uncomfortable', 'bothering' or 'missing something'. 8 respondents (= 29%) mentioned strategies of compensation such as coming on another day or earlier on Monday, saying the prayers at home from the booklet or asking somebody else to put sandalwood on their behalf. Another 29%, however, including some long-time regulars, felt that missing the Humbadagi had no great effect on them.

Apart from some respondents who did not comment on this issue, all respondents pray at least once a day (51% [25 out of 49]), if not twice (29% [14/49]) or even three times (20% [10/49]). Moreover, with one single exception (plus one who did not give any statement to this question), all respondents occasionally or regularly attend other fire-temples apart from the Banaji. The different temples mentioned by the respondents indicate that many come from the suburbs (such as Andheri, Bandra, Dadar, Jogeshwari). Significantly, however, the temple mentioned most frequently was the Aslaji (it was mentioned explicitly by 19%, but may be implied by others as well). As a matter of fact, there probably is a good deal of cross-linking between the Aslaji and the Banaji, for more than half of our respondents from the Aslaji reported that they go to the Banaji on Mondays.

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[184] One interviewee (Mrs YP) stated: "my husband had suffered an accident, so I had taken an oath that if he gets OK, I would do 108" [visits to the Humbandagi].

[185] 11% stated that come sporadically or occasionally. Among the regular visitors, some claimed that they come 'always' (in some cases since 6–7 years).

Moreover, almost half (47%) of our respondents also attended non-Zoroastrian sanctuaries.[186] Some respondents remarked that they went to some places out of curiosity once or twice, or just in order to accompany friends. Others, however, said to 'respect all religions', or 'believe in all' and to have 'no hesitation'. The distribution of the non-Parsi places is similar to the picture drawn by the respondents from the Aslaji. However, some differences emerge: Most popular among the Banaji-respondents is Mount Mary—19% [Aslaji: 15%] of the respondents, mostly females, have been there, and many go there regularly—, closely followed by the Sai Baba sanctuary at Shirdi (17% [Aslaji: 19%]). The local Sai Baba mandirs and St. Michael's are equally attractive (8% each [Aslaji: 12% each]). Compared to the Aslaji, more people (9% [Aslaji: 5%]) visit the Siddhi Vinyak (Ganpathi) temple. Two respondents mentioned that they had gone to the Muslim dargah of Haji Ali, and some people referred to 'other' places.

There is neither a correlation of the frequency of visits to non-Zoroastrian places with the frequency of visits to the Banaji, nor with the frequency of prayer, age or gender of the participants. It should be mentioned, however, that those who also attend non-Zoroastrian sanctuaries are not the miracle-seekers, i.e. those who have mentioned miracles as a major force attracting them to the Banaji.

BY WAY OF A CONCLUSION

To many readers, the fact that roughly half of our respondents are in some way or the other involved in different forms of non-Zoroastrian religious practice may come as somewhat of a surprise. However, while there are no reliable statistics on this question, judging from conversations with a good number of Parsis over the years, I am not inclined to believe that our respondents are in any way exceptional in this respect.[187] Obviously, in a city like Bombay, exposure to non-Zoroastrian religious practice is hard to avoid. Already in the early 19th century, the Bombay Parsi Punchayat, the main body representing the Parsis to the govern-

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[186] The number is slightly less compared to the respondents at the Aslaji (58%).

[187] Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 296 states that "[o]bservances with non-Zoroastrian associations ... were mentioned by some of those we interviewed." This creates the idea that these were a minority. However, as far as I can see, Mrs Munshi did not make a systematic attempt to touch upon this issue in the interviews she conducted. Possibly (or indeed probably), the topic may have come up in more interviews had she done so.

ment, made repeated attempts to curtail the adherence to non-Zoroastrian practices among the Parsis, especially the ladies.[188] There is some evidence to the fact that the participation in non-Zoroastrian religious practice also occurred, and still occurs, in Gujarat,[189] but possibly it did and does so to a lesser extent.

While the Parsis are free to attend many non-Zoroastrian places, non-Zoroastrians are prohibited from directly sharing Zoroastrian practices.[190] Within the orbit of the Parsi community, however, the two Bombay fire-temples studied in this paper partly function according to a pattern similar to many of the city's most popular sanctuaries in that both are held to be particular efficacious on one particular day of the week. In different ways, this posits them both inside and outside of the confined area of Zoroastrian ritual practice. In both cases, we are dealing with official, time-honoured places. In both cases, what goes on at these places is backed by the relevant religious authorities (the priests and the trustees). Hence, we are dealing with 'genuine', 'authentic' Zoroastrian developments.[191] On the other hand, though, the relevant ritual forms do not quite match the patterns provided by traditional Zoroastrian ritualistic. In both cases, contemporary history allows us to perceive ongoing elaborations, modifications and transformations over a period of several decades.[192]

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[188]   See J.R.B. Jeejeebhoy, "Communal Discipline among the Bombay Parsees in Olden Times", *M.P. Kharegat Memorial Volume I. A Symposium on Indo-Iranian and Allied Subjects* (Bombay, 1953), pp. 295–323, p. 305.

[189]   For some instances see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 89–99.

[190]   However, indirectly they may share in the blessings produced by Zoroastrian rituals, e.g. by having sandalwood offered to a fire through Parsi mediation.

[191]   In the case of the Banaji, the priest offers an astrological reasoning for the event. In the case of the Aslaji there are mythological roots.

[192]   On the distinction between 'modification' and 'transformation' in ritual change see J. Kreinath, "Theoretical Afterthoughts", *The Dynamics of Changing Rituals. The Transformation of Religious Rituals within their Social and Religions Context*, eds J. Kreinath/C. Hartung/A. Deschner (Toronto Studies in Religion; New York, in press): "a modification is a change *in* ritual whereas in transformation is a change *of* ritual." In the case of the Banaji, we are dealing with both kinds of ritual change. Whereas we would from an emic perspective tend to describe the transition from the Jal Bawa ritual of invocation to the Humbandagi ritual of communal devotion as an instance of ritual transformation, from an emic perspective this development would rather appear as a modification. In his essay Kreinath also introduces some other concepts that might fruitfully be (and indeed have been implicitly) applied to the present contexts. I am here thinking of the concepts of continuity and discontinuity (describing the temporal dimension of ritual change), the distinction "between changes of which participants are aware or un-

While both places attract large crowds on a specific day of the week, this is connected to two different ritual formats: Individual devotion throughout the day (and an expert of the divine after 4pm) at the Aslaji, communal worship—first by evoking a mysterious figure and later by singing songs and praying spells—at a specific time of the day at the Banaji. While the visitors to the Aslaji pray and make offerings at a fire and may also consult an expert of the divine, the hundreds flocking to the Banaji on Monday-nights are actors and participants in a ritual event. The design of this event picks up and at the same time transforms threads of established ritual forms. In unprecedented ways, what goes on at both places testifies to the productive vitality of Zoroastrian traditions. Once again, contemporary religious history turns out to be a transformation rather than a decline of religions, religiosity, and ritual practice.

The same can be said about the implications of urbanisation for religion. Often, it is assumed that urbanisation is dysfunctional for religion. This should then be particularly true for such a megalopolis as Bombay that is known to be an industrious business-centre. Contrary to received wisdom, however, this does not necessarily imply that its inhabitants, the Bombayites, are an irreligious lot. Quite to the contrary, one may even put forward the hypothesis that the perils and the stress invoked by a city like Bombay may give rise to needs for safety and security, which are often handled in a religious manner. In other words, it may well be the case that a 'secular city' like Bombay with its extreme living-conditions in terms of pollution, over-crowding, transport, family-structures and housing creates very concrete needs that, for many people concerned, are (still) most efficiently catered for by religious practices. These needs range from problems affecting health, money, marriage and social status to a lack of 'peace of mind'. In this perspective, the two phenomena studied here can be read as developments in religious practice, which are specific to the urban setting. While it is certainly true that "a strong sense of the menacing reality of the powers of evil disappeared"[193] in contemporary Zoroastrian history, the need for divine protection and assistance is as vital as ever and it is dealt with in ritual formats such as those studied in this paper.

When seen in this light, these phenomena can be grouped together with some other rituals mentioned, such as the *Mushkel Aasan* (Behram Yazad) or the recitation of the *Afsun-e Shah Faridun-ni nirang* and the

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aware of" and the fact that changes may be "intended or unintended by the practitioner".

[193] Kreyenbroek, *Living Zoroastrianism*, p. 294.

Behram Yasht. All these rituals, ritual acts, ritual events and ritual places have one thing in common: they address, and are by many participants even judged to solve problems of a very tangible and practical sort.[194] In our case, the traditional religion supplies the 'spaces' (and the 'texture') to deal with these issues in a ritual fashion that is elaborated upon in different ways. The phenomena studied here are held to be effective means to obtain divine help and assistance for the actors/participants themselves (or their relations)—and not so much for the souls and spirits of the deceased who are in the focus of the traditional priestly rituals. This shifting emphasis also lies behind the different timings of the events. While rituals such as the Yasna and the Bāj-dharnā are performed on the anniversaries or other memorial days of the ancestors—hence in the time set by the ancestors—, the Aslaji and the Banaji attract their devotees on specific days of the week—hence in the very time-frame that also governs their 'daily' life.

However, apart from their (ascribed) capacity to solve pressing problems, the phenomena presented and discussed here supply ritual frames to obtain religious satisfaction, and the Humbandagi at the Banaji clearly illustrates the process of ritual transformation which enabled the event to accommodate different dimensions of ritual practice and at the same time to address different religious needs and expectations. All this clearly invites for and challenges ideas and theories about emotions, participation, agency, and efficacy in rituals, a discussion of which, however, would go beyond the scope of this paper (and the limits of this book).

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[194] For Iranian Zoroastrianism, the *sofreh*-rituals and the shrines can be seen in the same perspective; see the papers by Sabine Kalinock and Robert Langer.

APPENDIX:

BIO-SKETECHES OF SIX MAJOR RESPONDENTS

Mr FB: 35 years of age, originally not from Bombay; now stays in a posh Parsi living colony; married, no children; graduated in commerce; self-employed in gift items business; has mostly Parsi friends; has for some time been actively involved in the Pundolist movement;[195] attends the Humbandagi "maybe for a year", accompanied by his wife (unless she has her period) and occasionally his mother and siblings.

Mrs FN: 67 years of age; originally not from Bombay; MA in Psychology; with her husband she stays in a Parsi building in a cosmopolitan area; two sons, both in the United States; both she and her husband are from priestly stock (athornan); housewife; attends the Humbandagi since about 4 to 5 years, but is no strict regular.

Mrs GW: 63 years of age, stays in the suburb of Andheri (W); married, two children; before she started to develop leg problems she used to work as a sales person in a textiles show room; attends the Humbandagi since "about 10 years or so".

Mr JP: 33 years of age, unmarried (because of his orthodox leanings, as he said), stays in a building close to a Parsi housing colony; college (commerce) graduate; now works as head cashier with an international transport agency run by Parsis; almost exclusively socializes with Parsis; attends the Humbandagi since "10 plus" years.

Mrs KT: 53 years of age, originally not from Bombay, stays in a cosmopolitan area; married, one son; college (science); works as a confidential secretary with Marwari lawyers, but has no non-Parsi friends; upper middle-class; regularly attends the Humbandagi since 4 to 5 years, accompanied by her husband and often also her son.

Mrs YP: 48 years of age, originally not from Bombay, stays in a cosmopolitan housing colony in a suburb; college (arts), and BA in Economics; married; has some non-Zoroastrian friends; "3 past years I am there for the Humbandagi", wants to make it at least 108 times (in order to fulfil a vow related to her husband's health).

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[195] On that movement see Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathushtras,* vol. 2, pp. 124–125.

ABSTRACTS*

James W. Boyd / Ron G. Williams (Fort Collins)
The Art of Ritual in a Comparative Context

What form (or forms) might an adequate aesthetic approach to ritual take? This essay addresses this question by juxtaposing observations about Zoroastrian and Shinto ritual traditions with an analysis of a recent Western artwork by Christo. After briefly contrasting the two world views that provide contexts for understanding the Zoroastrian and Shinto liturgies, examples are given of how the aesthetic dimensions of the liturgies mirror these two perspectives. Implications of such an approach for the role of aesthetics in ritual theory are noted: it privileges thought over practice and assumes that aesthetic features of the liturgies can be isolated and explored on their own. An analysis of the aesthetic and ritualistic features of Christo's art provides an analogy that hints at a more satisfactory approach to the study of art in ritual. Christo's *Running Fence Project* suggests that a ritual artwork can be understood as a multiplicity of incommensurable dimensions (in Gilles Deleuze's technical sense of "multiplicity"), and demonstrates how a ritual artwork requires a context yet maintains a *sui generis* function. The potential for such an analytic approach to the study of artful rituals is briefly explored by applying it to selected features of the Zoroastrian Āfrīnagān and Shinto morning service in order to suggest how each of these rituals, viewed as multiplicities, contains aesthetic and non-aesthetic dimensions that interact to produce transformation.

Carlo G. Cereti (Rome)
Prejudice vs. Reality. Zoroastrians and their Rituals as seen by two 19th Century Italian Travellers

This paper summarizes the accounts on the Zoroastrian community in Bombay written by two Italian scholars, the Indologist Angelo De Gubernatis and the Anthropologist Paolo Mantegazza. Both were active in Florence in the late 19th century. (De Gubernatis later moved to Rome though.) By analysing their accounts, the author attempts to illustrate the representation of the Parsis then current in Italy. Moreover, the author analyses the stereotypes, which were put into, and discusses their possible correspondence with reality. Here, the focus is mainly on ritual. Thus, the paper discusses De Gubernatis' description of a Yasna ceremony that was performed explicitly for him in a Zoroastrian clubhouse and the vivid picture that he gives of the Parsis praying out in the open. Furthermore, the paper outlines Mantegazza's interesting, though unorthodox,

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* The abstracts were kindly provided by the authors, unless indicated otherwise.

description of the funeral customs of the community. Moreover, the paper gives a number of passages dealing with the social standing of the community and with the interpretation given by the two scholars to Zoroastrian beliefs. Though at times interesting, their accounts are not always unbiased and reveal a number of prejudices such as the parallel drawn between the Parsis and the Jews.

Marzban Giara / Ramiyar P. Karanjia / Michael Stausberg (Mumbai / Heidelberg)
Manekji on the Religious/Ritual Practices of the Iranian Zoroastrians: An English Translation of a Passage from his Travel Report in Gujarati (1865)

In 1865, Manekji Hoshang Limji Hataria (1813–1890), an Indian Zoroastrian who had spent many years in Iran in order to ameliorate the living-conditions of his Iranian coreligionists, published his *Essay on the Account of a Voyage to Iran.* In this book, Manekji gives a vivid, detailed and in many respect unique description of the Iranian Zoroastrians' way of life, including their marriages and weddings, the women's garments, their festivals, their practices concerning pregnancies, child-birth, infancy, menstruation, and, last but not least, their funerals. At several instances, Manekji comments on what he describes. The paper provides an English translation of the relevant passage.

Burkhard Gladigow (Tübingen)
Sequenzierung von Riten und die Ordnung der Rituale
(Sequencing Rites and the Order of Rituals)

Typical structures of rituals have been a feature of ritual studies since Marcel Mauss. However, a further attempt to sequence rituals has so far never been made. This programmatic essay presents a systematic analysis of a sequential order of ritual elements. As such, it goes beyond the well-known distinctions between different phases in rituals for it is only by sequencing as many rites as possible (on the level of ritual elements) that specific constellations emerge, which hitherto remained largely inconceivable. These constellations pertain to sequences of rites that are 'quoted' in other rituals, a connection between rituals by means of similar ritual sequences ('interrituality'), shortened forms of ritual sequences ('abbreviations'), and, last but not least, incorporations of rites into more extended rituals ('complexity'). A sequencing of rituals according to this scheme may indicate to what extent the composition of rituals is the result of a process of professionalisation. An increasing degree of professionalisation on the one hand results in an increased demand to control the accuracy of the ritual performances and on the other hand to take into account the reactions of participants and audience. Here, it is important that the participants and the audience are transformed and that they 'learn' something in the course of the temporal unfolding of a complex ritual. (Transl. Michael Stausberg)

Almut Hintze (London)
On the Ritual Significance of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti

This article examines the role of the "Worship in Seven Chapters", the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti (YH) within the three Zoroastrian high liturgies, the Yasna, Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies. It argues that the Younger Avestan eulogistic portions of the Yasna are informed by, or indeed dependent on the YH. It examines the place of the seven-chapter Yasna in the seventy-two chapter Yasna and in the two other Zoroastrian high liturgies, which are based on the Yasna, namely the Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies. The Visperad and Vendidad ceremonies, in which the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti is recited twice, give prominence to that text by the way the *karde* of the Visperad and the *fargard* of the Videvdad are inserted in between the *hāiti* of the Yasna. The YH constitutes the centre and highpoint of each of the three Zoroastrian high liturgies, a position interpreted as indicating that the YH is *the* focal text of Zoroastrian high ritual. This view derives further support from an examination of the usage of the word *yasna-* in the Avesta, as a result of which emerges that, throughout the time Avestan texts were composed, the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti was perceived as *the* Worship, or *yasna-*, par excellence and provided the model for the Younger Avestan eulogistic invocations characterized by the verb *yazamaide* 'we worship'. Moreover, this article argues that the Ritual of the Waters (*āb zōhr*) is also influenced by the worship of the Waters in the YH.

Dietrich Huff (Berlin)
Archaeological Evidence of Zoroastrian Funerary Practices

The Zoroastrian practice of exposure of the dead seems to have become compulsory in Iran during Sasanian times (3rd to 7th centuries). Archaeological evidence for this practice is scarce. Apart from some individual types, most monuments were developed from the royal Achaemenian tombs in Pasargadae and Naqsh-i Rustam. These were obviously designed for the disposal of complete bodies. However, having high substructures of stones or being placed high up in a rocky cliff, they obviously represent an attempt to avoid the pollution of earth and water. The best-known types of bone receptacles are rock-chamber tombs. In the course of history, they diminished in size from the royal rock tombs via the so-called Median rock tombs to the tiny niches in Fars. Pahlavi inscriptions on those niches identify them as *dakhma*, a general term for a tomb. Some inscriptions carry late Sasanian and early Islamic dates. Almost identical inscriptions denote small rock-cut troughs as *dakhma*s. This type of funeral boxes evidently derived from large rock-cut sacrophagi in the royal Achaemenian rock-tombs. Moreover, there are embellished sub-species of the trough *dakhma*s. These are free-standing rock-cut monuments like the twin receptacles at Naqsh-i Rustam and others, wrongly held to be fire-altars. Apart from that, there were other free-standing, constructed monuments of different

types such as Tang-i Karam and Nurabad. After the Arab conquest, the formerly open exposure sites had to be surrounded with walls, and finally a central pit became the common bone receptacle. The whole arrangement was now called *dakhma*. Different buildings nearby served for funeral ceremonies, including a chamber for a *dakhma* fire or lamp. Archaeological traces in front of ancient *dakhma*s indicate that rituals for the souls of the deceased were performed in antiquity as well.

Anders Hultgård (Uppsala)
Ritual Community Meals in ancient Iranian Religion

Ritual community meals in ancient Iranian religion are incompletely known and this paper makes an attempt to elucidate this phenomenon. The concept of (religious) 'ritual/cultic community meal' is discussed and a definition is proposed. From a methodological point of view, it is problematic to explain ancient rituals by referring to current practice because rituals and the meaning of terms pertaining to rituals have changed over time. The survey of ancient source-materials starts with rituals that indicate the enactment of community meals such as the *yasna, drōn, usōfrīt* and *āfrīnagān* ceremonies. Then the different settings in which ritual community meals were or might have been performed are discussed (the *Gāhānbārs* and other periodic festivals, funerary rituals and other settings). It seems that the Middle Iranian term *mēzd*, apart from other connotations, has been used to denote the ritual community meal. The picture of cultic community meals that emerges from passages in the Avesta, the Pahlavi texts, Graeco-Roman literature and Albiruni shows the importance of such rituals as a means of redistributing the sacrificial offerings. Some remarks on the structure and meaning of ritual community meals conclude the paper.

Albert de Jong (Leiden)
Sub Specie Maiestatis: Reflections on Sasanian Court Rituals

The Sasanian Empire (3rd to 7th centuries CE), is generally seen as a "Zoroastrian" state. Most Sasanian kings are therefore represented, in the historical tradition and in modern scholarship, as kings with a profound commitment to their religion. The exact relations between religious and state organisations and ideologies in the Sasanian period, however, are by no means clear. The present article attempts to shed some light on this question by analysing information on court ceremonial, deriving mainly from the Islamic tradition. As was the case in many contemporary cultures, the special position of the king in the state organisation found an expression in a large number of rules for behaviour at court that distinguished the king as much from his subjects as possible. Since these rules seem to have been shared by the contemporary Byzantines and flowed into Islamic court culture, the question of the religious background or sanction of Sa-

sanian court ceremonial becomes very urgent. Several aspects of court ceremonial suggest that neither the concept of "divine kingship" nor the indigenous category of *xwarrah* ("royal glory") seem to have been very prominent, but that the rituals associated with the king are an expression of the Zoroastrian notion that piety and morality reveal themselves in the life of every individual and, on a very grand scale, in the righteousness and wealth of the king.

Sabine Kalinock (Frankfurt)
Supernatural Intercession to Earthly Problems: *sofreh* Rituals among Shiite Muslims and Zoroastrians in Iran

Despite profound differences in the religious doctrines of Zoroastrians and Shiite Muslims in Iran one can also discover similarities. One religious tradition that the Zoroastrian minority and the Shiite majority have in common is the *sofreh*, a ritual meal dedicated to supernatural beings or a saint. In both communities, it is a marginal ritual performed mainly by women, which is disapproved by the primarily male religious orthodoxy. The article examines the *sofrehs* as an expression of female experiences. The women reproduce their traditional roles as nurturers of their families and use their skills to get into contact with the supernatural in order influence these forces for their own interest. The women's main concern is the making of vows (*nazr*). The reference to a higher reality enables the women to agency. It is argued that the women have created for themselves a space where they can express their thoughts, hopes and feelings and negotiate them with others. Zoroastrian and Muslim women share a lot of common experiences and aspirations as women living in a patriarchal society. The participation of Zoroastrian as well as Muslim women in the official rituals and their access to religious positions is limited. Thus women in both groups have developed their own rituals, which reflect autonomy, creativity and power.

Ramiyar P. Karanjia (Mumbai / Heidelberg)
The Bāj-dharnā (Drōn Yašt) and its Place in Zoroastrian Rituals.

This paper on the Bāj-dharnā (previously, Drōn Yašt), a Zoroastrian ritual, begins with explaining the role of rituals in Zoroastrian tradition. At the outset the term Bāj-dharnā is explained and the different words used to describe the ritual are examined. The ritual is then described in perspective and its important role in the contemporary Parsi life is considered. The paper examines the various purposes for which the ritual is performed and the different divine beings invoked for various performances. Other aspects of the ritual like the duration of performance, the qualifications of the priest, the merit of the ritual, time at which the ritual can be performed and the posture required of the priests while performing the ritual are also discussed. Moreover, the paper gives a brief description of the various requisites needed in order to perform the ritual, and

discusses the ritual acts performed during the Bāj-dharnā. The textual structure of the texts recited during the ritual is analysed and the fixed and variable components of the text are identified. The paper then gives a brief history of the Bāj-dharnā-ritual and the various Pahlavi texts in which it is dealt with at length. Finally, by examining various criteria, an attempt is made to ascertain whether the Bāj-dharnā belongs to the categories of 'Outer' or 'Inner' rituals into which Zoroastrian priestly rituals are currently divided in India.

Jean Kellens (Paris)
Les précautions rituelles et la triade du comportement
(Ritual precautions and the Triad of Behaviour)

A philological investigation of Y. 1,21–22 comes to the conclusion that this formula does not express a general idea, but rather constitutes a ritual precaution in order to ward off imperfections that may have occurred while reciting chapters 0 and 1 of the Yasna. Y. 0,4 and Y. 11,17—both verses are identical—manifest a similar concern. In all these passages, the triad thought/word/action pertains to rituals rather than to ethics. (Transl. Michael Stausberg)

Firoze M. Kotwal / Jamsheed K. Choksy (Mumbai / Bloomington)
To Praise the Souls of the Deceased and the Immortal Spirits of the Righteous Ones: The Staomi or Stūm Ritual's History and Functions

This article examines historical, theological, and performative aspects of a ritual of praise still popular among Zoroastrians. The introduction commences by tracing developments in the technical term, staoma- or stūm, of the ritual. Next, various Avestan or scriptural passages that refer to the ritual are discussed briefly. The ritual's history and historiography—from Achaemenian times to the present—are outlined in the following section. The theological meanings of the ritual as associated with the concept of order, with the notion of death of the body as a temporary state, with the notion of the immortality of the soul and spirit, with the belief that each soul and spirit should be propitiated by living humans, and with the notion that each act of praise receives reciprocation, are analyzed within textual and doctrinal contexts. Then the five stage ritual process itself—from the dedicatory formula through the rite and recitations to the closing statement—is documented and explained in conjunction with texts, translations, and visual depictions of an actual performance. Thereafter, the occasions on which the ritual is performed and the food offerings that are consecrated on each occasion are scrutinized, as are variations in performance at various locales and at different times. Again, visual documentation from an actual performance is presented. Finally, concluding remarks return to the continued relevance of the stūm ritual to the lives of Zoroastrians.

Jens Kreinath (Heidelberg)
Meta-Theoretical Parameters for the Analysis and Comparison of Two
Recent Approaches to the Study of the Yasna

This paper discusses the approaches of William R. Darrow and Ron G.
Williams & James W. Boyd to the study of the Yasna. In focusing on such
meta-theoretical parameters as methodology, logic of design, and discourse it is
possible to analyze and compare these semiotic and aesthetic approaches. As
tools for the meta-theoretical analysis and comparison, such terms as 'empirical
data', 'analytical concepts' and 'discursive contexts' with their complex and
interdependent relationships are introduced. Using these tools, it is shown how
these approaches are shaped through the empirical data presented on a
videotape, how they are constructed by use of a set of analytical concepts and
how they participate in the different discursive contexts of ritual studies. In
relating these mutually dependent components, it is argued that although the
above-mentioned approaches study the same empirical data they construct
different theoretical approaches while using similar analytical concepts. They
use these concepts differently, because they address different discursive
contexts and are therefore concerned with different theoretical issues. These
parameters enable one to see—from a different perspective—how theoretical
approaches work within a particular field of research, how they are constructed,
and how they are situated within the particular contexts of scholarly discourse.

Philip G. Kreyenbroek (Göttingen)
Ritual and Rituals in the Nērangestān

The *Nērangestān* is a text dealing with questions of ritual, which clearly formed
part of the learned tradition of the Zoroastrian priesthood. The core of the text
is in the ancient sacred language known as Avestan, with translations into Mid-
dle Persian. Furthermore, the text contains lengthy additional comments by
scholar-priests. These reflect the realities of contemporary ritual practice, thus
affording some insights into the way Zoroastrian priests understood the nature
of rituals, and sought to solve any problems that might occur. Moreover, the
text suggests that several ceremonies, which are mentioned as separate rituals in
the Middle Persian literature, in fact represent variations on a standard se-
quence of liturgical texts and ritual actions. Another conclusion to be drawn
from the evidence of the *Nērangestān* is that the *Yašts* (hymns to various divine
beings which are now regarded as independent prayers and do not form part of
any ritual), could be recited as part of a short rite on the day of the month when
the divinity in question received special worship. This helps to explain the links
between the *Yašts* and the 'calendar divinities', and also the fact that these texts
have been preserved as part of the living tradition.

Robert Langer (Heidelberg)
From Private Shrine to Pilgrimage Centre: The Spectrum of Zoroastrian
Shrines in Iran

In Iran one finds numerous Zoroastrian shrines, the so-called *pīr* (pl.: *pīrān*).
Most of these shrines are connected with one of the Zoroastrian divine beings
(*īzedān*) or other mythological characters. In contrast with the Muslim context,
neither the place nor the term refer to 'saintly persons'. Nevertheless, it is pro-
posed that Zoroastrian and Muslim shrines share common roots and a history of
mutual influence. Hence, Zoroastrian shrines have to be seen in the larger con-
text of a common 'Iranian' culture of shrine worship and 'folk religious' prac-
tice. Historical data on the shrines prior to the 20th Century is rare. Evaluating
literary sources and ethnographic approaches (during two fieldtrips to Iran in
2001), the present author attempted to survey all historical and recent Zoroas-
trian shrines. This data is used to place the *pīrs* in their socio-historical context
and to describe the activities ('rituals') which are conducted at and in connec-
tion with the shrines. The rituals encompass acts of individual devotion, com-
munal festivities, and collective pilgrimages. The main section of the paper
proposes a classification of Zoroastrian shrines along spatio-geographical and
architectural criteria, which reflect the different social and religious functions of
the *pīrs*. Typical examples of different 'private', 'local', 'trans-local', and 're-
gional shrines', as well as 'pilgrimage centres' are discussed and illustrated
with pictures. In concluding it is argued that the *pīrān* are an important means
for establishing contemporary Iranian-Zoroastrian identity.

Dorothea Lüddeckens (Heidelberg)
Bruch und Kontinuität in Todesritualen. Beobachtungen zu westeuro-
päischen und zoroastrischen Bestattungen
(Break and Continuity in Death Rituals. Some Observations on Western
European and Zoroastrian Burial)

Death always confronts the survivors with an experience of both rupture and
continuity. The manifold possibilities of communication, which are inherent in
the relationship with a physically living human being, are broken off. At the
same time however a certain continuity beyond death is provided through
memories and the goods which the deceased has left behind. Death rituals offer
the opportunity to analyze structures which express both the rupture and the
continuity and render both experiences perceptible, though the respective de-
gree of significance accorded to the two modalities for experiencing death can
vary greatly. In Western European death rituals, one observes a marked de-
crease in the construction of rupture upon the death-event during the last cen-
tury. At the same time, however, the constructions of continuity in the sense of
a life-after-death were also on the decline. Recently new and alternative funeral

practices are once again showing strong structures of both rupture and continuity. One can observe the same in the death ritual of the Parsees in contemporary Mumbai: On the one hand the disposal of corpses in "Towers of Silence" signifies a banning of the dead from world-space and even more: their "Enträumlichung" ('de-spacialisation') – and thus a strong construction of rupture. At the same time, the ritual link between the survivors and the souls of the dead indicates a strong construction of continuity. This would suggest that strong constructions of rupture and continuity are reciprocally conditioned.

Katayun Mazdapour (Teheran)
Kontinuität und Wandel in den Ritualen der iranischen Zarathustrier (Continuity and Change in the Rituals of the Iranian Zoroastrians)

A ritual consists of several elements and at the same time it makes up a generic unity that puts the single elements in relation to each other. Hence, ritual change can be located on three levels: changes concerning single elements within rituals, the increase or decrease of elements within rituals, and changes pertaining to the place and function of single elements within overriding ritual units. These changes can be brought about by single actors, but they ultimately depend on social forces and circumstances. In the modern period, when the Iranian Zoroastrian community came to be dominated by persons who affirmed Western ideas and values, the mental order, on which the ancient rituals were based, was destroyed. Other factors leading to a change in rituals were new urban environments and new forms of social interactions and relationships. This process of ritual change, which to a large extent can be seen as an accommodation to new intellectual, social, urban and economic environments, was not fought against but rather embraced by the priesthood. There were two main periods of ritual change: the 1950s and the war against Iraq (1980-1988). The main part of the paper presents a survey comparing current ritual practice with written prescriptions contained in the old normative scriptures, mainly the *šāyest- nēšāyest.* This survey is divided into nine sections: the priests and the 'official rituals'; funeral ceremonies; vows; practices pertaining to menstruation and birth; individual rituals and prayers; the main rituals of purifications; festivals; elements of rituals and smaller ritual acts (microrituals). The conclusion emphasizes the accommodative power of the rituals and its single elements and the open-mindedness of the priesthood warranting the diversity and change of the rituals and thereby guaranteeing their continuity in new forms, environments and roles. [Michael Stausberg]

Antonio Panaino (Bologna/Ravenna)
Aspects of the 'Interiorization' of the Sacrifice in the Zoroastrian Tradition

The first part of this article analyzes different meanings of the Avestan verb *yaz-* ("to worship, consecrate and sacrifice", both in the sense of "immolation"

as well as in its "symbolic" results). The paper argues that the speculative dimension of the Zoroastrian ritual (*yasna-*) is to be understood as a meta-temporal dimension where the final liberation from the "mixed status" (*gu-mēzišn*) of the physical world is anticipated. Thereafter, the paper discusses a number of Old and Later Avestan passages concerning a particular aspect of the *yasna-*. In these passages one finds references to a "self-consecration" of the *uruuan-* ("[inner]-soul" or "breath-soul"), and of other parts of the human being, like the *frauuaṣi-* ("pre-existing soul" or simply "pre-soul"), the *uštāna-* ("animation"), and the *ast-* ("bone[s]"). These Avestan sources are analyzed in the light of the Indian conception of the "interiorization" of the sacrifice. In particular, this idea is attested in the Brahmāṇic literature (and has already been studied by Ch. Malamoud and M. Biardeau). This comparison suggests some common patterns with the Zoroastrian ritual tradition. Through the worship offered to his own "soul", the sacrificer is raised up to the divine dimension, where he can meet Ahura Mazdā and the other gods. The comparison sheds new light on the initiatory, exoteric and speculative dimension of the Indo-Iranian ritual.

Beate Schmermbeck (Heidelberg)
„Oh Herr, erhöre unser Monāğāt". Zarathustrische Traditionslinien einer persischen Gebetsgattung zwischen Indien und Iran
("O Lord, hear our Monāğāt". Zarathustrian Traditions of a Persian Genre of Prayer between India and Iran)

In contrast to the classical Zarathustrian literature, which has been the subject of academic research for more than two centuries, scholars have ignored Zarathustrian monāğāt. These songs of prayers composed either in a rhythmical, rhymed prose or in stanzas, are considered to be the epitome of a confidential nearness to god; they are the faithful's intimate communication with god. Originally deriving from Islamic traditions, these prayers have been reflected in Zarathustrian religious literature ever since the 13th century and have given rise to a variety of monāğāt of a more or less Zarathustrian character. Until a few decades ago, these mystically inspired prayers were a constituent part of the Zarathustrian religious everyday culture in Iran as well as in India, passed on as a rule by the female members of a family. This essay follows the ways of tradition of the Zarathustrian monāğāt, presents the contents of the prayers in two examples, and thus illustrates the Zarathustrians' ritual everyday life. (Transl. Astrid van Nahl)

Shaul Shaked (Jerusalem)
The Yasna Ritual in Pahlavi

From the Pahlavi texts, it is possible to conclude that the ability to recite the Yasna by heart was one of the accomplishments expected of a courtier. Some women were considered to have the same ability. In the eyes of the Pahlavi commentators and theologians, the power of the Yasna ritual came into expression by the fact that it re-enacted the act of creation and foreshadowed that of eschatology, the two being intimately linked together. At the end of time, the Yasna ritual will no longer be necessary, and will be replaced by songs of praise. For the ritual to be effective, it has to be performed in the fire temple, where its place of performance guarantees that it will not go to the demons; when performed in other places, any failing in its performance causes it to go to the demons. The idea of the Yasna as a sacrifice raises the question of the somewhat paradoxical position of the original sacrifice, on the basis of which the Yasna was instituted. The bovine, the animal that undergoes immolation in the primordial sacrifice (and in eschatology) undergoes suffering not because of the sacrifice but because of the interference of the evil powers, and it can thus symbolize the suffering of humanity under the oppression of evil.

Prods Oktor Skjærvø (Cambridge, MA)
Smashing Urine: On Yasna 48.10

Yasna 48.10, a passage in the Old Avestan Gāθās, an ancient Iranian text ascribed to Zarathustra, has frequently been discussed by Western scholars, both philologists and historians of religion. Once the passage was taken as proof that Zarathustra rejected the use of haoma, although haoma played a central and crucial role in the Young Avestan sacrifice, the yasna. However, this is not the opinion of all modern scholars. The passage is grammatically straightforward by Old Avestan standards, but opinions have varied about its interpretation. I suggest that the prima facie meaning of the words points to the well-known Indo-Iranian myth of the dragon-slaying and the release of the fertilizing heavenly waters upon the earth. In my opinion, the passage contains a disparaging statement about the rival poet-sacrificers' sacrifice of the haoma, which does not have the desired effect of removing the forces of chaos, implying that our poet-sacrificer's sacrifice does have the desired effect. This, in turn, indicates that the haoma sacrifice had the same function in the ritual performed in Old Avestan times as in Young Avestan times.

Jan A.M. Snoek (Heidelberg)
'Initiations' in Theory and in Zoroastrianism

This paper compares the features of the Parsee *Navjote* ritual as described by the Zoroastrian priest and scholar Jivanji Jamshedji Modi (1922/37), with those

which are predicted by four theories about transition rituals (*rites de passage*) in general or initiation rituals in particular, viz. those by Arnold van Gennep (1909), Mircea Eliade (1958), Jan Snoek (1987), and Maurice Bloch (1992). These theories are briefly introduced, and it is demonstrated that the different theories focus attention to different features of the same ritual. On the one hand, thus, using different theories when analyzing and describing rituals may lead to a more detailed and more complete description. On the other hand, it is argued that descriptions of a ritual are necessarily influenced by the theory each author has in mind. Therefore, it is necessary for scholars to make themselves aware of the theoretical preconceptions they have in mind. By conscientiously making use of both their own theories and those of others scholars may come to see more aspects of the rituals they study and produce richer descriptions. The paper also demonstrates that the Navjote ritual may properly be regarded an initiation ritual, according to the definitions proposed by the authors investigated.

Michal Stausberg (Heidelberg)
Contextualizing the Contexts. On the Study of Zoroastrian Rituals

In this introductory essay, which to a varying degree is based on the single contributions to this volume, the editor of this volume discusses a number of contextual settings for the study of Zoroastrian rituals. To begin with, the author reviews the importance assigned to rituals in the debate on Zarathushtra and the origins of Zoroastrianism. As this debate often argues with explicit and implicit comparisons the author goes on to discuss some methodological and theoretical problems in applying comparative perspectives to the study of the Yasna-ritual. While most of these studies have focused on the Yasna, it is evident that Zoroastrianism possesses a network of interrelated rites and ceremonies. Most rituals are administered by male priests, and the 'ritual system' shows some characteristics of professional religion. At the same time, there is a complex interplay between priestly and lay rituals. Moreover, there are instances of gender-specific division of labour. A particular problem is the (lacking?) 'congregational', or 'communal' dimension of the rituals. Starting from antiquity (Herodotus), Zoroastrian rituals have aroused the curiosity and stimulated the imagination of outsiders. In the modern period, the study of Zoroastrian rituals has increasingly involved the interaction between Zoroastrians and foreign scholars.

Michael Stausberg (Heidelberg)
Monday-Nights at the Banaji, Fridays at the Aslaji: Ritual Efficacy and Transformation in Bombay City

The vast majority of Indian Parsis live in Bombay (Mumbai). This megalopolis is a multi-religious venue. Whereas it is no traditional religious centre, it nevertheless houses some (Muslim, 'Hindu', Christian, and other) sanctuaries that

many Bombayites (including Zoroastrians) flock to on certain days of the week. While the week as a temporal unit is of no importance within traditional Zoroastrian ritualistic, currently there are two fire-temples in Bombay that draw comparatively large crowds on specific days of the week. These are the Aslaji Bhikhaji Agiary and the Seth Cowasji Behramji Banaji Atash Behram. Whereas the Aslaji is visited mainly on Fridays and the days linked to Mithra in the Zoroastrian calendar, at the Banaji a communal ritual event (Humbandagi) takes place at the beginnings of the fourth watch of the day (sunset to midnight) on each Monday. A counting of the number of worshippers attending this event conducted in September 2000 and in February 2002 revealed an average of 459 Parsis attended. The present paper is based on interviews that Mrs Zarin Marfatia conducted with worshippers and priests at both places. It discusses the devotees' practices, expectations and experiences with regard to the Aslaji and the Banaji and beyond. Based on oral history and some published documents, the study retraces the historical developments of the phenomena including their ongoing modifications, ramifications, and transformations. Moreover, it explores some hitherto unperceived religious coherences lying behind what is going on from the perspective of the history of religions.

Sarah Stewart (London)
The *Ātaš nu Gīt*: A Parsi Lay Ritual

The *Ātaš nu Gīt* or Song of the Fire is a Gujarati text said to have been composed by two brothers in honour of the founding of the second Zoroastrian sacred fire *Ātaš Bahrām*) in Navsari in 1765; it appeared in publication in Bombay in 1879. In this paper, I look at the content of the song and the way in which it works both as an oral text and as a ritual performance. I examine its significance as a lay composition and the purpose it serves for the lay community – in terms of its religious content, and in providing a narrative account of certain historical events. These events pertain to the Parsi community as a whole and also refer to the local community in Navsari at the time of the composition of the song. In the latter context, the song works as means by which to re-establish the solidarity of a community divided by internal issues. I also examine the way in which two structures operate within the text. The first of these has been imposed upon the published version by the compiler of that text and gives us an insight into Parsi society in the mid nineteenth century. The second is a thematic structure that expresses certain theological ideas and is reminiscent of a number of older Zoroastrian religious texts. Finally, I look at the way in which contemporary accounts of lay religious life illuminate references in the song to customs that are not described in detail and, in some cases are no longer observed but remain part of living memory.

Werner Sundermann (Berlin)
Zarathustra der Priester und Prophet in der Lehre der Manichäer
(Zarathustra the Priest and Prophet according to the Manichaean Teaching)

The aim of this paper is to show that although Manichaeism has much in common with the Zoroastrian doctrine as developed by the third century A.D., but nothing with Zoroastrian ritual practice, the Manichaeans did accept the person of Zoroaster in their own interpretation not only as a teacher of truth, a prophet, authorized, inspired and sent by the World of Light, but also as a priest. Zoroaster is the only forerunner of of Mani's to fulfill his message by the word of gnosis and by ritual acts. In the first part of the paper, Zoroaster's role as a teacher of the divine revelation is exemplified by a Sogdian text published by Yoshida in 1979. The particular Manichaean interpretation of a genuine Zoroastrian piece of doctrine is underscored. In the second part, texts are presented and discussed which testify to a familiarity of Manichaean authors with details of the Zoroastrian ritual, namely the famous Parthian "Zoroaster fragment" and the Middle Persian fragment of the "Speech of/on Living Self" on Zoroaster. The Manichaean authors approve of the Zoroastrian sacrifice and purification ceremonies as symbolic acts pointing out the redemption of the Living Soul from the bonds of the demonic matter.

Mario Vitalone (Naples)
Fires and the Establishment of *Ātaš Bahrāms* in the Zoroastrian Tradition

Fire occupies a central place in Zoroastrian devotional life. It is probably only in Sasanian period that the Zoroastrian priests gradually developed the differentiation of the temple fires into the three categories, which in the Islamic period were called *Ātaš Bahrām, Ādarān* and *Dādgāh.* The first reference to the procedures for the establishment of an *Ātaš Bahrām* is found in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg,* compiled in the post-Sasanian period. For the subsequent centuries, we have no other documentary evidence on the subject, until the taking up again of contact between the two Zoroastrian communities of Iran and India. The Persian *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šāpur dated 1558 fully incorporates the list of the fourteen fires of the *Pahlavi Rivāyat,* with the addition of two more. As for the Parsi tradition, already prior to the arrival in India they were familiar with a procedure for the formation of sacred fire, even if we have no information about the level of their knowledge. The subsequent tradition was certainly influenced by the *revāyat* of Kāmdin Šapur and it is substantially on the basis of the methods recorded therein that the majority of the *Ātaš Bahrāms* now existing in India were founded.

Gernot Windfuhr (Ann Arbor)

Zoroastrian and Taoist Ritual: Cosmology and Sacred Numerology

The author had previously suggested that the Zoroastrian Yasna ritual is intimately correlated with the cosmos and calendar, and thus Time, in a nontrivial way. In particular, the instruments on the central ritual table correlate with the 12 months of the Zoroastrians calendar, and with other cosmological and metaphysical patterns in Zoroastrian thought. Such patterns reflect the fact that the Yasna ritual, its liturgical texts joined with the chapters of the Visparad, is prominently enacted during the seasonal festivals. So far, these patterns appeared to be unique to Zoroastrianism. This article suggests that the Taoist ritual is closer to the Yasna than any ritual in other traditions, and explores striking similarities between the two. Even though both are the product of two independent ancient traditions, they both enjoyed strong royal support for extended periods at one time or another, and reflect a worldview and approach to ritual that appears to originate in Late Hellenism. The similarities include the arrangement of the ritual area as three mutually embedded worlds; the arrangement in form of a calendar; the arrangement of the eight priests/eight trigrams; positional shifts in forms of a magic square and other numerological patterns, and numerous others. Moreover, in both, the ritual arrangements, acts, and moves, are seen not as entities as such, but as nodes in a world matrix of progressive and regressive cycles. A significant contribution to this investigation is the dialectic analysis of the ritual in terms of the sequence of acts, rather than of the liturgical texts, in the Yasna ritual.

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James W. Boyd / Ron G. Williams

Firoze M. Kotwal / Jamsheed K. Choksy

Dietrich Huff

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III/4 Boyd/Williams

IV/1

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V/1 Huff

V/2 Huff
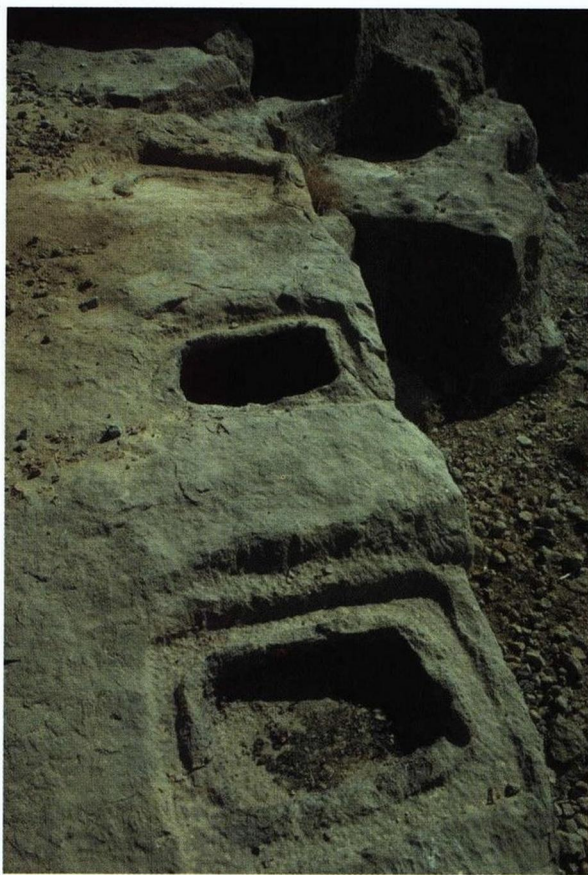
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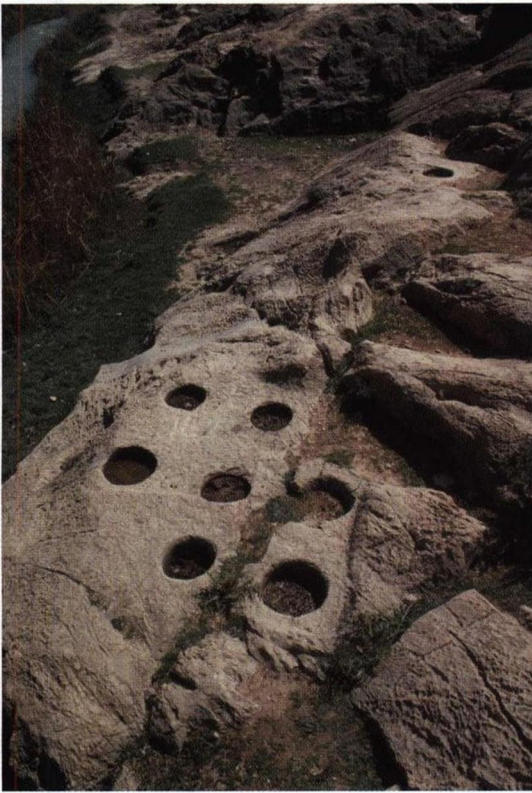
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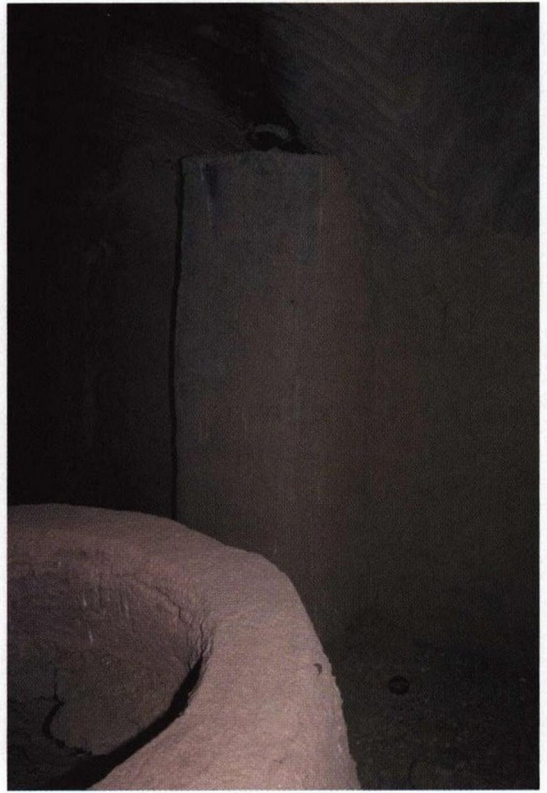
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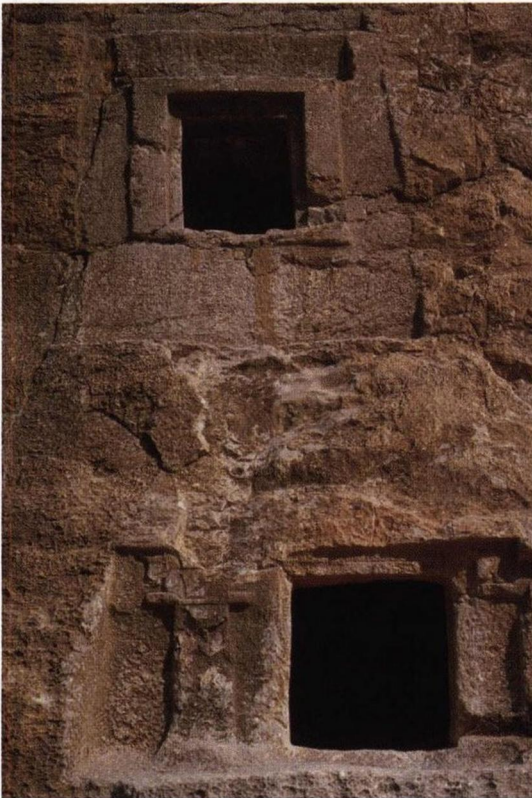
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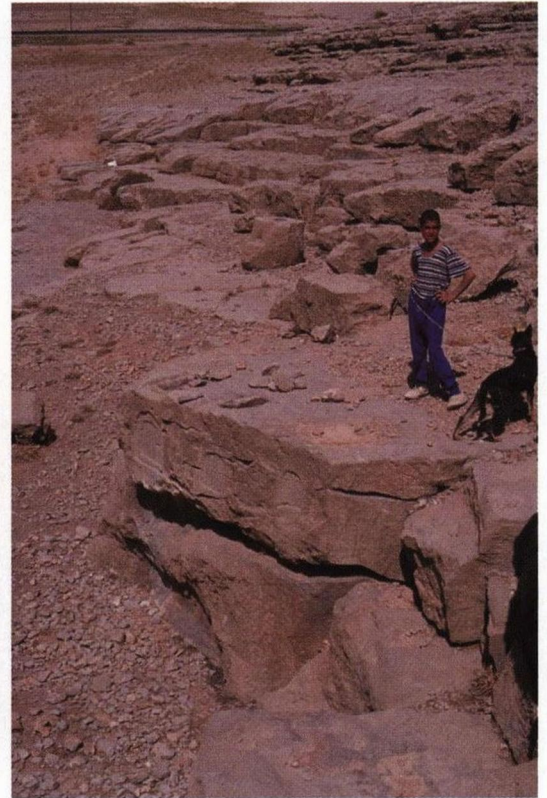
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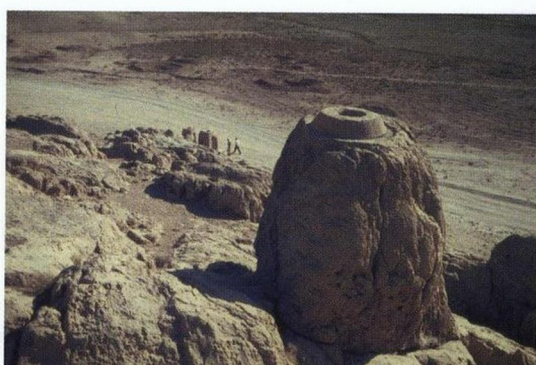
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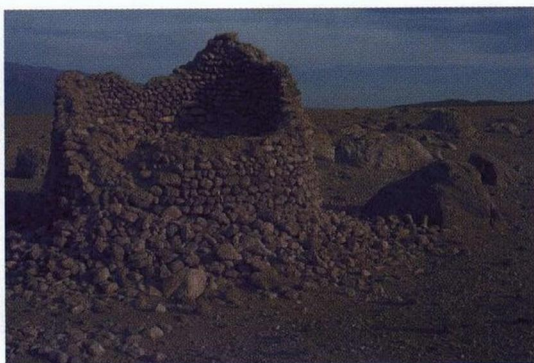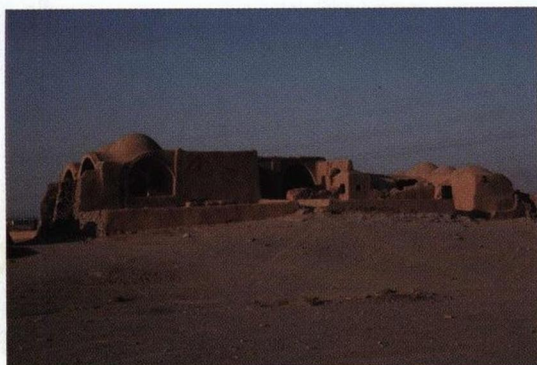VIII/11 Huff
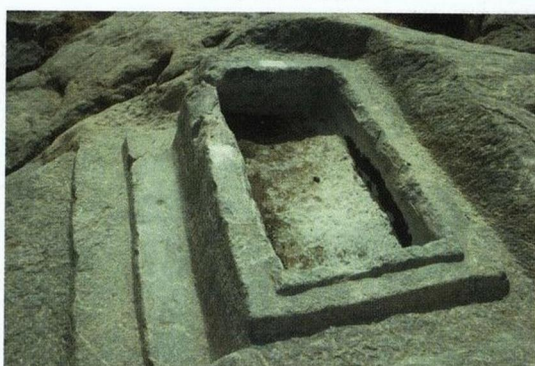
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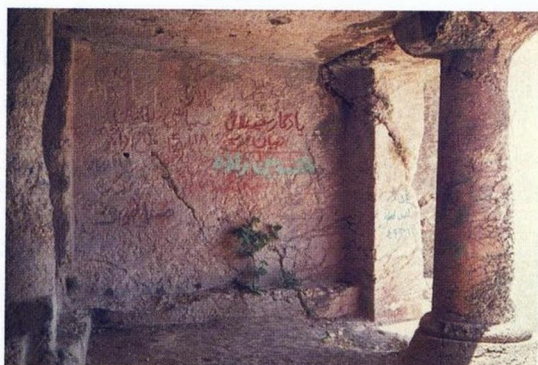
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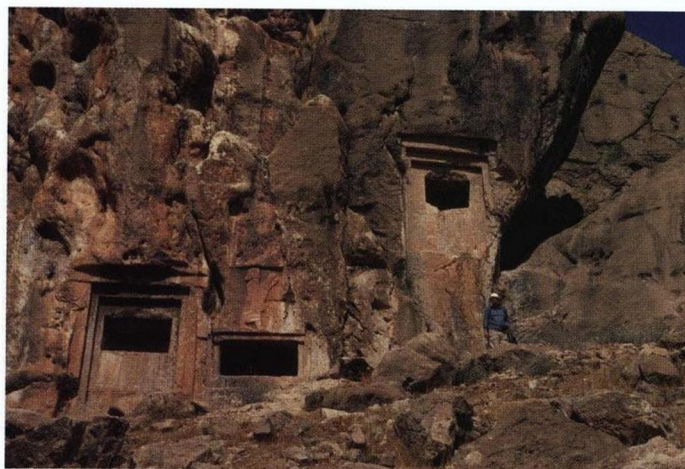
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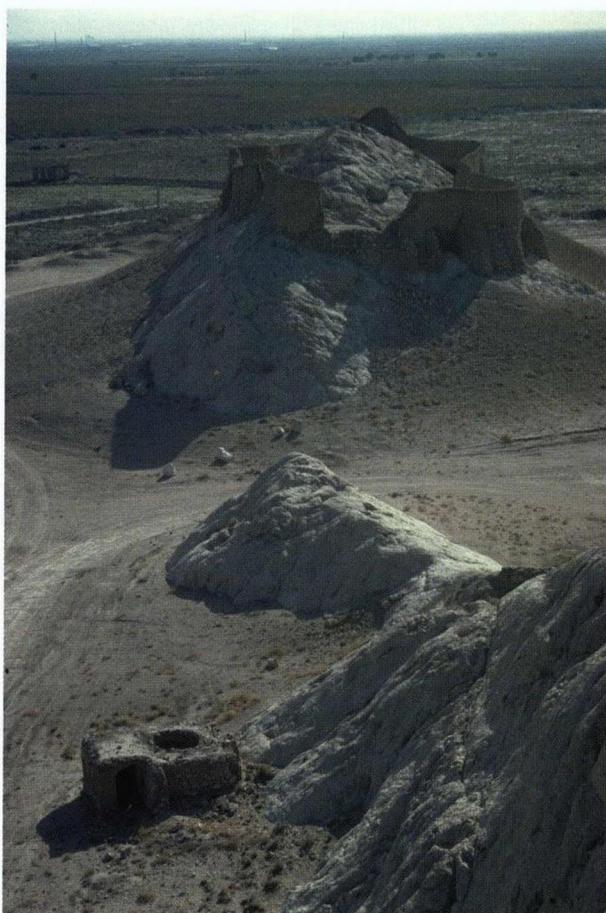
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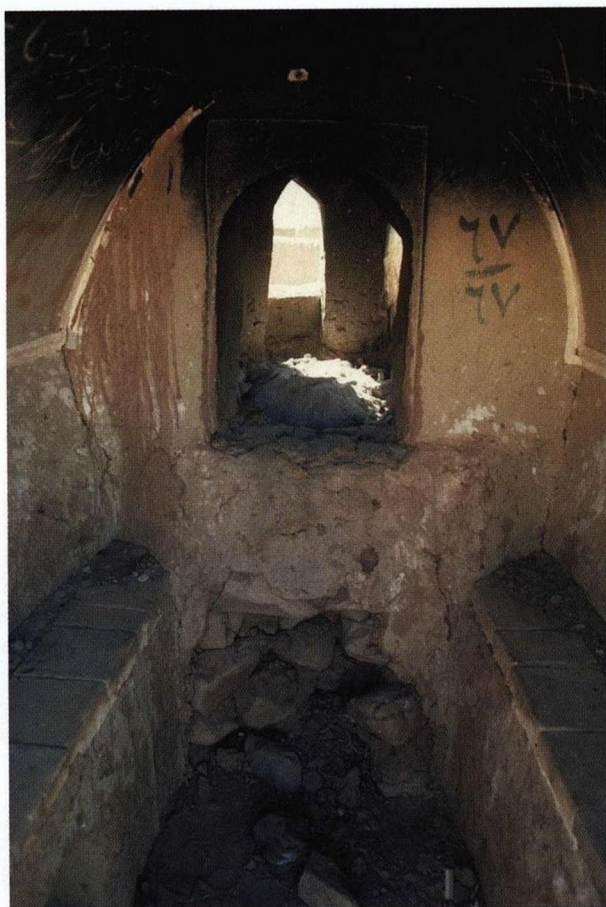
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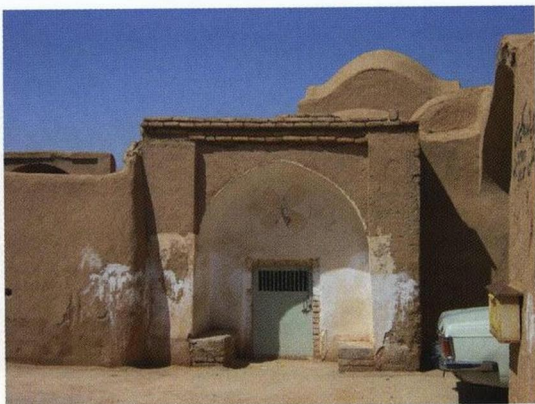
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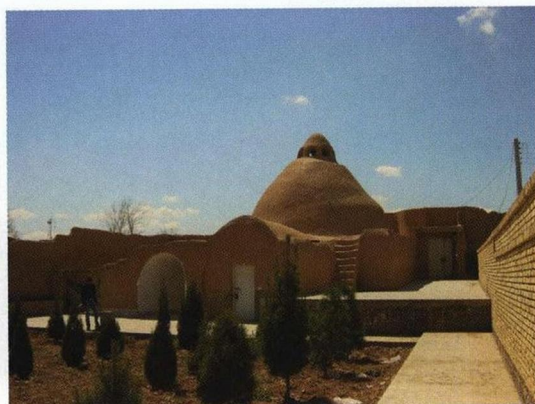
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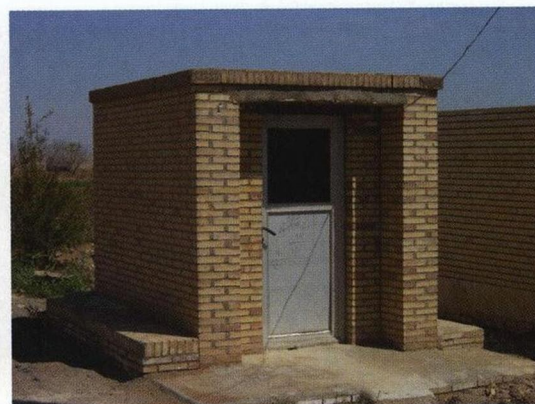
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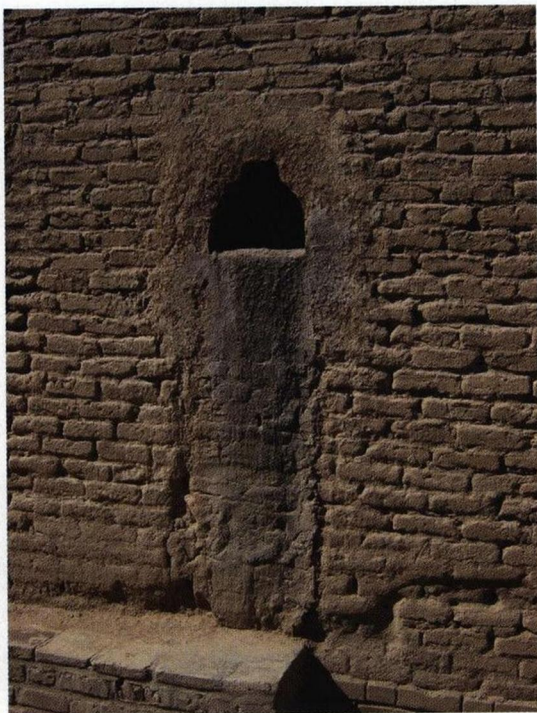XIII/8 Langer
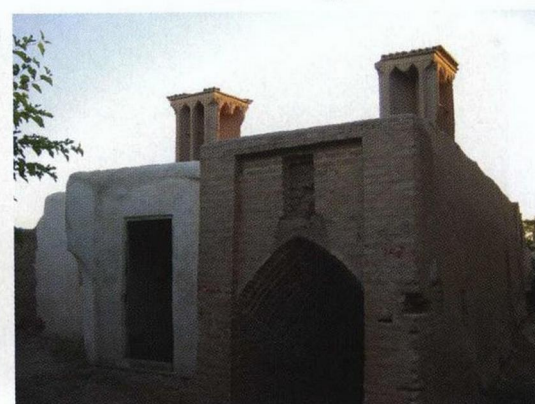
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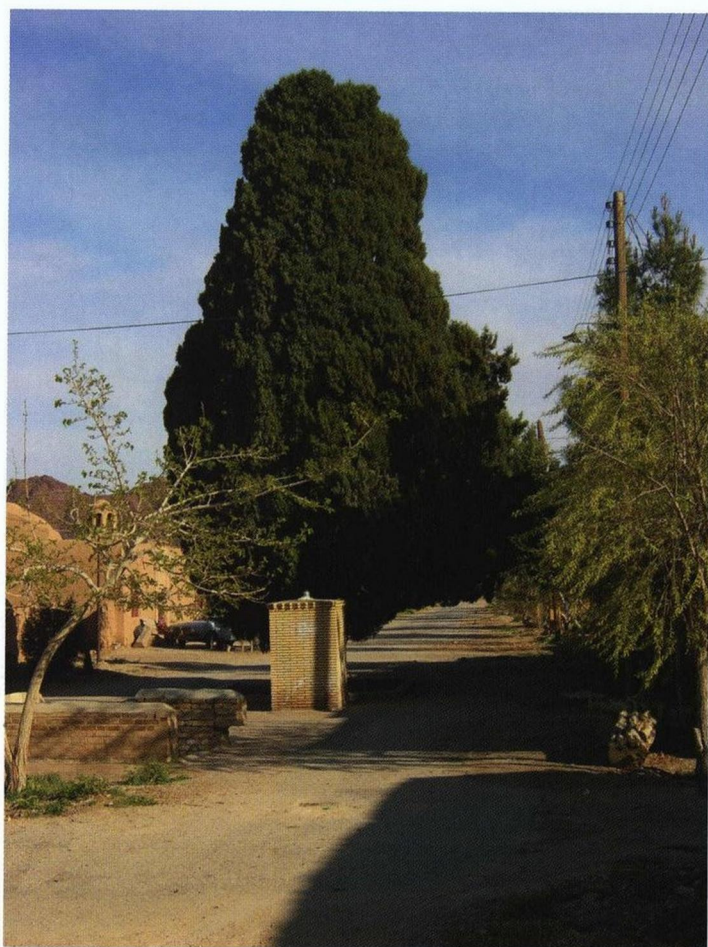XIV/10 Langer

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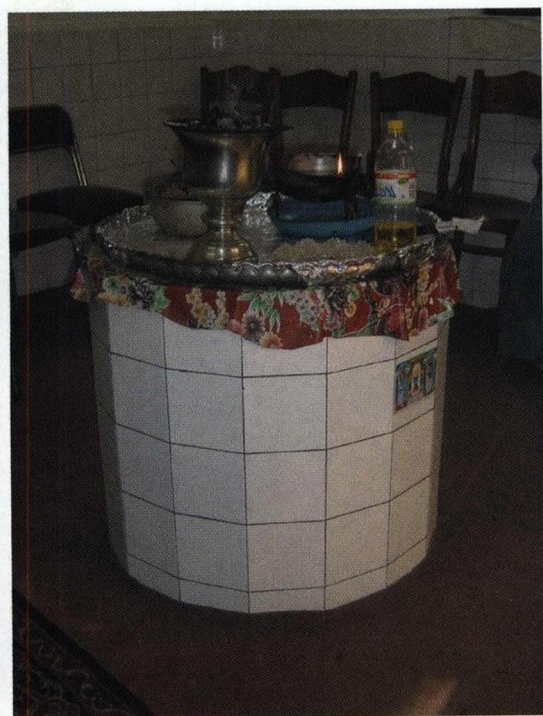
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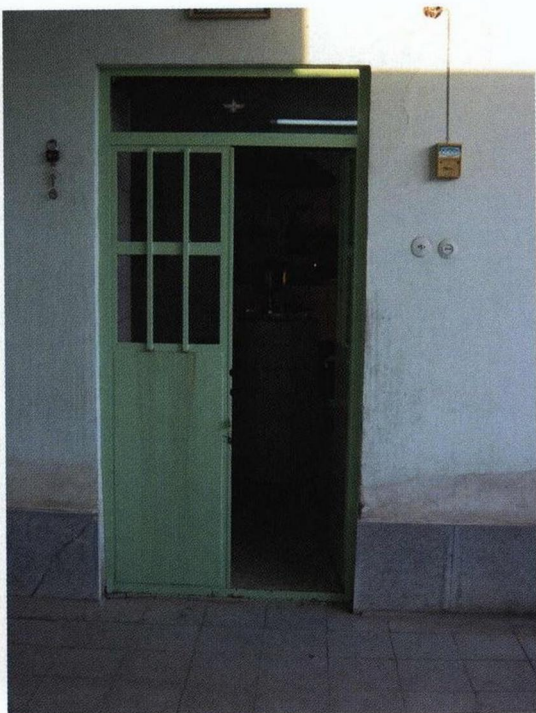
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Rituals, it is agreed, play a prominent role in Zoroastrianism, one of the oldest continuous traditions of mankind. In this book, scholars from a broad range of disciplines make the first ever collective effort to address this issue. From a historical and geographical perspective, texts and contexts studied in these pages range from antiquity to modernity, all the way from Japan, China, India, Iran, Europe to California. The essays touch on questions of theory, ritual texts, change and performances, gender and professional religion (priesthood/lay-people). The rituals studied are placed in a broad scope of social and local settings ranging from the royal court to the needy, from the rural village to the urban metropolis, from the domestic to the public.

Michael Stausberg

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