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J. Duchesne-Guillemin

★ RELIGION OF ANCIENT IRAN



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Religion of Ancient Iran

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JACQUES DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN

English translation of
La religion de l'Iran ancien

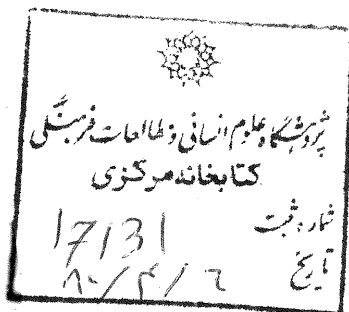
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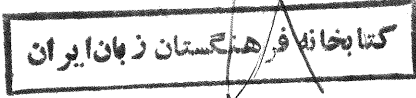
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FOREWORD

While introducing the English translation of a monumental work by Professor Jacques DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN, we feel just pride and great pleasure in appreciation of the immense labour and time involved in preparing such an encyclopaedic survey of the message of Zarathuštra. The copious footnotes and cross-references to various authors on matters of belief and customs are evidence of the great scholarship and impartial judgment of this scholar of Iranian religion, who, by this work, has shown Parsis how they should exercise a fair and liberal attitude in studying their scriptures.

The plan and scope of this book is truly vast. With a balanced judgment he outlines contemporary beliefs (disputed or accepted) and ritual practices not generally known even to Parsi laymen. Vast periods of time are also surveyed, prehistory, Achaemenian, Parthian, Sasanian and Islamic empires, as well as relations between Zoroastrianism and other religions. The analysis of the development of basic doctrines under alien influences, often corrects the misconceptions that have permeated the Parsi faith. Two Parsi scholars—UNVALA and DHABHAR—figure prominently. He does not leave out theosophists like N. F. BILIMORIA.

Perhaps he is justified in his pessimistic warning (p. 10) :

‘Since the Independence of India in 1947, the position of the Parsis is threatened and encroached upon by a regime which leans towards a form of socialism or State capitalism and attacks private fortunes.

‘Since henceforth there can be no survival without State aid, Parsi schools, for instance, will be forced to admit non-Parsis or to perish. Soon there may be nothing left of the Parsis’ beliefs and customs, of their inclination even to form a group, and of their determination to support it. It is conceivable that the Parsi community will one day disappear, melted in the crucible of the new India. The smallest of the great religions will then cease to exist’.

However, the ominous prophesy may not materialize from outside factors. The Religion has successfully passed through the heresies of Mani and Mazdak, or the attacks of Christianity and Islam—as well as changes of a political character under the Assyrians, Medians, Achaemenians, Greeks and the Parthians. Even Alexander could not erase its essential character. But the modern materialistic pursuits of wealth and power, and apathy towards ancient principles may succeed in disrupting the inner faith of this small community. In all ages and in all countries there have been feuds between conservative orthodoxy and rational approaches leading to scepticism. Even old scientific theories are being similarly assailed by new speculative assumptions. The learned author has himself analysed the impacts of various new doctrines on our religion. The Parsis, who are *Ahura.ḡkaēšas*, must have full faith in God’s dispensations. Materialism is eroding the inner faith of many other larger communities also.

The Parsis must confess that just a handful of their scholars are left to guide the community aright, and this book is welcome at a time when it is needed the most. It should similarly be conceded that many European and American scholars have taken (and are still taking) considerable interest in the many complex problems concerning Zoroastrianism from the

standpoint of comparative religion. Zoroastrian literature—religious, historical, social—is not one entity but contains an assorted combination of many doctrines added as time passed. The author examines many controversial extraneous elements that became mixed up.

The Parsis have to declare it as an essential part of their creed that their *dēn* is a Revelation from Ahura Mazdā through Zarathuštra. It is not a man-made thesis or system of speculative philosophy.

Ethnology teaches us about the emergence of various races with their outer features and inner traits. Perhaps *Airyana.vaējah* was the original home of the Aryan races (distinct from Semitic, Negroid and Mongolian races) that sent out offshoots to many countries, including Iran, from its Central Asian plains and mid-Caucasean valleys. Yima Vivarhan (Vedic, Manu Vivasvat) was the leader of the Iranian branch in the original homeland. The connotation of Aryan being 'noble' may perhaps be interpreted in the light of the fact that the Aryan ethical code and spiritual faith were distinct from those of other clans — a new civilization and culture distinguished them from the Turanians, hence the long conflict with the latter as described in the *Epic* of Firdausi.

Ritualistic forms have changed with the passage of time and have sometimes been misinterpreted if their rationale is not properly understood. European scholars have not done sufficient justice to this aspect of the Religion, where symbology-mythology-angelology and the doctrine of sacramental communion are concerned. We believe in angelic co-operation and in the Presence (*nīrang*=force) rather like some Christian beliefs in the Eucharist. But we cannot see the spiritual (*mēnōk*) effect of some ceremonies. Besides, Parsis 'worship' or adore Nature in its entirety and through it, somehow, realize the 'worthship' (as Carlyle put it) of Nature's Creator. We adore all aspects of Nature: oceans, mountains, forests, light in all forms, etc., wherein we see Divine Presence.

Parsi history contains many legends and traditions. Firdausi's *Epic* takes a big leap from the Kayanian to the Sasanian dynasty—mixing up names. It was, however, no fault of his, as it was a prehistoric era of vicissitudes neither recorded nor remembered. But in matters of religion, the pre-Zoroastrian fundamentals of the Mazdayasnian faith (preached by kings right upto King Vištāspa) remained the core, and these in turn, throw some light on ancient history.

Our thanks are due to Mrs. Monica BOSE for extending her help in the translation of this book. We also express our gratitude to the Presses Universitaires de France (Paris), for granting the necessary permission to publish the English translation from the original French.

We recommend this book to all Parsis and to western readers alike for serious study. Our hearts go out in gratitude to the author who has studied our doctrines so reverently. In the words of a Christian hymn: 'We are lost in wonder, love and praise'. May the Parsis be encouraged to follow in the author's steps to learn more of the ancient Revelation and strengthen their inner devotional faith.

PREFACE

BY WAY OF FRONTISPIECE

India attracts us by the lofty splendour of its snows, but discourages us by its endless abundance.

Nearer to Greece and to the roots of our Europe, mid-way between the sublime Himalayas and the archipelagos of philosophy, Iran appears almost familiar to us. Its arid plateau has its own merits. Under its clear sky, the serious seeker learns that sources are rare, that no stone must be left unturned, that mirages must be penetrated. Bare paths lead to the Mazdean religion, a heedless princess who, courted by two princes, one Hindu, the other Arab, has so far yielded to neither.

*

*

*

During my long initiation into Iranian linguistics, my stand-bys have been E. Benveniste, Aug. Bricteux, W. Henning and L. Renou.

It was Georges Dumézil who, by commissioning a work on Zoroaster, prompted me to take up again a project long-abandoned. The reading of Simone Pétrement's theses were my reintroduction to Hellenism and philosophy.

Kaj Barr has kept his promise of reading my book in manuscript. Fr. de Menasce, Marijan Molé and A. Maricq have also rendered me valuable assistance, the former, in reading and annotating two successive stages of this work, Molé in furnishing the manuscript of his two theses, Maricq in correcting my pages on Kušan coinage.

My guide in archaeology and iconography has been Édith Porada, in numismatics: Göbl and Miles, in Greek archaeology and religion: Nock and Schwabl.

Numerous colleagues, by sending me their works even before these were printed, have compensated for the great dispersal of publications on Iranology and for the physical isolation in which I work.¹

I am indebted to J. M. Unvala for sending me not only his own works, but also a number of books published in Bombay and difficult to find in Europe.

My affectionate thanks are due to H.-Ch. Puech for his great patience in following the slow completion of this work.

¹ I mention—though in doing so I run the risk of omitting a few, who will be kind enough to excuse me—ASMUSSEN, BAILEY, BAUSANI, BIANCHI, BONFANTE, Dr. BOYCE, BRANDON, BURKERT, Mlle CHAUMONT, CORNÉLIS, COLPE, CLOSS, CORBIN, DÖRNER, Lady DROWER, DUMONT, EILERS, ELIADE, FRYE, GEIGER, GERSHEVITCH, GHIRSHMAN, GRANTOVSKY, HARMATTA, HINZ, HIRABAYASHI, HOFFMANN, HUMBACH, JEFFERY, Mlle KAMMENHUBER, Ervad KANGA, KLIMA, G. KUHN, KUIPER, LENTZ, LOMMEL, MAYRHOFER, MESSINA, MINORSKY, MORGENSTIERNE, NOBER, NYBERG, PAGLIARO, RINGBOM, RINGGREN, SCHAEDEER, H.-P. SCHMIDT, SPULER, STRÖM, SZEMERÉNYI, TAVADIA, THIEME, TUDENS, VANDEN—BERGHE, WIDENGREN, WIKANDER, WÜST, YARSHATER and ZAEHNER.

It will be noticed that in my transcriptions, I have systematically used *s* for the French *ch*, *x* for the German *ch*¹, *u* as in the French *ou*, *c* as in *tch*. As far as Pahlavi is concerned, I am guilty of certain inconsistencies. The experts will know that this is inevitable.

Liège, 17th May 1960

1 Except in Xerxes and Artaxerxes, in Taxila (a town in India), and in Greek names.

INTRODUCTION

A. A Living Tradition

The Parsis, who number just over 100,000, have settled in Bombay and in a few towns and villages further north. They form a community which strictly speaking, cannot be called a caste since it is not Hindu, but which nonetheless, is one of the most distinctive in the whole of India.

The community was the first to be exposed to European influence (under British rule), and this is probably one of the reasons for its prosperity. On the other hand, it is a closed community: its members marry only between themselves and, though they cling to their ancestors' beliefs and customs, which distinguish them from others, they do not seek to propagate them.

As their name indicates, they are descended from Persian immigrants. With the Parsis, and their cousins, numbering about 10,000, who have remained on Iranian soil in the districts of Yazd and Kerman, has survived the religion which was that of all Iran before the Muslim conquest. They profess faith in the God Mazdā or Ōhrmazd and in his prophet Zardušt, *alias* Zarathuštra or Zoroaster.

The most salient features of their religion are the Fire Cult and the Towers of Silence.

For a long time, under Hindu princes and their Muslim successors, they were simple cultivators of the soil. It was on the advent of the British, whose most loyal collaborators they became, that they took to commerce.

On their coming to settle in Bombay at this time, Bombay started to develop.¹ Previously their settlements had been successively at : Sanjan, Navsari, Surat, Bulsar and Udvada. Surat was still their chief centre when Anquetil visited them.

Since the middle of the 19th century, whatever heavy industries have been founded in India—naval constructions, railways, iron works, spinning mills, etc., were founded by them.

They became renowned not only for their wealth but for their beneficence and education. They strove to relieve misery by founding hospitals, orphanages and schools, without distinction of caste or creed. In the past they had adopted the language (Gujarati) and the dress of their Hindu milieu; they were attracted to astrology and mysticism but these did not gain ascendancy over the religion proper which is as far removed from fatalism as it is from asceticism. They adopted British customs, British dress, the education of girls and the abolition of child-marriage. In their enterprises as well as in their charities they followed the example of the West.

¹ Bombay was ceded to the English by the Portuguese in 1668.

Several were knighted by the British Crown. There have been a Parsi *baronet* and two Parsi *Members of Parliament*.

People have sought a reason for the excellence of the Parsis. Huntington, an American geographer, while making a general study of the effects of race and environment on the development of civilization, cites the Parsis as the type of community put to the test and strengthened by natural selection, which permitted only the best to survive. It had required courage to escape from Islam, then during the exile in the mountains and the exodus towards India in successive stages upto the time of their settlement, which too, was precarious at the start, fatigue, disease and despair eliminated the weaker ones. In this way the small band of survivors possessed energies, at least latent ones, which awaited only the right opportunity to be put forth. In this respect they are compared to the *Pilgrim Fathers*, those English Puritans, who, fleeing from religious persecution, left to found in the midst of perils, what two centuries later came to be the American power. (Their descendants still occupy today the highest positions in the economy, politics and 'society' of the United States).

However the question remains whether the rise of the Parsis—as was the case in fact with the Puritans—was not aided by their religious commandments.

From the pen of a Parsi contemporary¹ comes this succinct summary of the orthodoxy:

"The Universe is the creation of Ahura Mazdā, the Creator, but it was not created out of nothing. The goal of creation is the happiness and well-being of man. The order of creations differs from that of the Bible: first the sky was created with all the celestial bodies, then water, the earth, plants, animals and finally man. The duration of the creation from the beginning to the renovation of the world (*Frašokart*) amounts to twelve millenniums. All creation is bound by the law of production and destruction. The power of Ahura Mazdā has two poles of which one, the *Spānta Mainyu*, causes all to prosper and maintains all, the other, the *Anra Mainyu*, is the force of destruction. It is only in the Sasanian period (226—631) that Ahura Mazdā, the Creator, came to be positively identified with *Spānta Mainyu*, his sustaining pole. This identification had already been started at the time of the *Vidēvdāt* and henceforth *Anra Mainyu* (Ahriman) appeared as a counterpart of *Ahura Mazdā* (Ōhrmazd). Thus a certain dualism was formed, but not one which, as a strict dualism would have done, went so far as to oppose as rivals two divinities which are eternally co-existent. *Ahura Mazdā* only, is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent and of eternal duration, while *Anra Mainyu* is limited both in duration of time, and in power, and is ignorant. His destructive will-power will only last till the resurrection of man and the renovation of the world. He will then be annihilated; with his evil cohorts, and all evil will be destroyed.

"Man is a compound of matter and spirit, that is to say, part body, and part vital breath, the faculty of discernment, conscience, soul and a *Fravaši*. When the vital breath leaves the body, discernment and conscience perish; only the soul and the *Fravaši* have an existence after death. Man is born pure, and not, as Christianity teaches, with the stain of mortal sin. To safeguard his soul from sins, the faculty of discernment is given to him, by which he can distinguish between good and evil and can choose, with a free will, between them. To lead him on the right path, a *Fravaši*—comparable somewhat to the 'Ideas' of Plato—is set over him. It is not only a man's soul which has a *Fravaši*, but the whole of creation as well, whether animate or

¹ J. M. UNVALA, *Wörter und Sachen*, 1937, pp. 161 sq.

inanimate. The duty of the *Fravaši* is to watch over the prosperity and the orderly growth of the world and to guide man during his life on earth.

“Life after death unfolds, according to the Avestan conception, in heaven, hell and an intermediate region. The decision rests with the Yazatas Mihr, Srōš and Rašn, who give their verdict on human acts. The latter are the product of a free will. The acts of children not yet received into the religious community are entirely the responsibility of their parents; the responsibility for the acts of persons below the age of fifteen is borne half by them, half by their parents. The Parsi recognizes neither original sin nor fatalism. Parsism teaches that one should strive with all one’s strength to obtain the promised happiness and to escape from the threatened danger. At the ultimate end there will be the resurrection of man, which will wipe away all distinction between good and evil by annihilating the evil, and which will establish an existence in human form, in family groups, exempt from all sin, and the source of eternal felicity. All increase in the human species will be excluded; from which it is apparent that the doctrines of rebirth and metempsychosis are foreign to the Parsi religion”.

It may be noticed that the author, while defining his religion, has been careful to differentiate it from Christianity (original sin), from Islam (fatalism) and from Hinduism (transmigration); and to place it above the reproach of absolute dualism.

He concludes his exposition with a brief account of the ethics :

“The only advocates of the soul at the celestial judgement, after death, are the deeds he has performed on earth. He must therefore lead a good life on earth. The whole moral doctrine of Zoroastrianism can be summarized in three principles : good thoughts, good words, good deeds. They contain all that this religion teaches regarding virtue, order and purity, truth and uprightness, obedience and humility, compassion and gratitude, love for parents, family and fellow-countrymen, the kind treatment of subordinates, the care of useful animals, as well as activity, zeal, chastity, self-confidence, hospitality and generosity. Vices on the contrary, arise from evil thoughts, evil words and evil deeds”.

B. Geographical and Historical Sketch

Modern Iran covers only a part of the territory occupied by the Iranians in the course of their history. The ancient boundaries included at least Afghanistan, south-west Pākistān (Baluchistan), Russian Turkestan up to the Syr-Daryā River, the Aral and the Caspian Sea, as well as a region in southern Russia extending to the shores of the Black Sea.

Iran, the shortened form of *Ērānšahr*, means “land of the Aryas”. Before invading the country, the Aryas formed part of a common group with the future inhabitants of India, who were also called Aryas. Their relationship is proved, not only by their identical names but also by a comparison of their languages. It is moreover found reflected in the religion.

Where was the dwelling place of these Indo-Iranians, this detached off-shoot of the Indo-European nation? They have not left any identifiable material trace. It is known only that they entered India by the north-west, that they first occupied the Punjab (the Indus and its tributaries) before reaching the Ganges, and spreading over the Indian continent and beyond. As for the occupation of Iran, no one knows how this took place.

From the 16th century B.C., there is evidence of the presence of Aryas, recognizable by their names, among the Kassites who dominated Babylonia during this period, among the Mitanni who reigned over Upper Mesopotamia, and even in Palestine, where their names figured on cuneiform tablets datable from 1600-1250 B.C.

But it is not possible to ascertain exactly whether they were more closely related to the Aryas of India or to those of Iran.

On the other hand, the big dialectal divisions of Iran, which become noticeable in the historical period, give a brief indication of the distribution of the tribes. Four principal regions can be distinguished, each of which has had its own role in the history of the nation.

The east, separated from the west by the great central desert of the Iranian plateau, except for the series of oases running south of the Caspian, saw the birth and the initial development of the Zoroastrian religion. It was there that the most ancient parts of the *Avesta*, the sacred book of this religion, were composed.

The north-west, that is to say, south of the Caspian and the Caucasus, was the land of Medes, whose King Déiocès founded the first Iranian empire, (Herodotus I, 96), with Ecbatana as his capital. They are mentioned for the first time in 835 B.C. in a cuneiform document recording a campaign conducted against them by Salmanassar III, king of Assyria. The Magi, according to Herodotus, were a Median tribe.

The south-west, or more exactly, that part of the plateau bordering the Persian Gulf was the territory of the Persians, who had a very distinctive dialect. This region alone deserves the name of Persia (modern Fars), which we will reserve for it. The Persian king Cyrus, in the middle of the 6th century B.C., supplanted the Medes, conquered Babylon (from which he liberated the Jews) and founded the Achaemenian empire which was to threaten Greece and which succumbed only to Alexander (331 B.C.).

The Achaemenians : Cyrus who reigned from 558 to 530 B.C. had Pasargadae in Persia as his capital.

Cambyzes (530-522) conquered Egypt.

The religion of the Achaemenian empire is sketchily known from the inscriptions which Darius (522-486) and his successors had engraved on the Behistun rock (on the road rising from Babylon to Ecbatana), and in their capitals, at Persepolis (near modern Shiraz), Susa (near Shustar in ancient Elam or Susiana, directly to the north of the Persian Gulf). They worshipped Ahura Mazdā, but they do not mention Zarathuštra. The Magi were their priests.

Xerxes (486-465) forbade the cult of the *daivas* (ancient gods, cf. in Sanskrit *deva* "god"). In 482 he destroyed Babylon in revolt, and suppressed the religion of Marduk, tolerated by his predecessors.

Artaxerxes I, known as Longimanus (465-425) in order to secure the loyalty of Jerusalem against Egypt in revolt, charged Ezra, the chief of the Jews who had remained in Babylon, to reorganize Jerusalem, and Nehemiah, appointed Governor in 444, to raise up its walls again.

Under Artaxerxes II, known as Mnemon (405-359), the Iranian cult which till then had been without idols, acquired statues in the Grecian manner: effigies of the goddess Anāhitā,

the Iranian Artémis, were introduced into Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana, and her cult spread to Persia, Bactriana (eastern Iran) and Sardes (Asia-Minor). The royal inscriptions, which till then mentioned only Ahura Mazdā, now name Anāhitā and Mithra as well.

The north was occupied by nomads, the Sakas or Scythians, who, by their incursions southwards, played an episodic role. Their domain extended upto southern Russia where the Greeks knew them. Herodotus described their religion and their customs.

The Arsacids: One and half centuries after the death of Alexander (323), western Iran passed under the domination of the Parthians, an Iranian tribe from south-east of the Caspian Sea. Mithridates I (171-138) was the real founder of the Arsacid empire, which acted as a check to the Roman power. Its capital, Ctésiphon, was built a short distance away from Seleucia, not far from the future Bagdad.

The Iranian religion seems to have become merged, since the time of the Seleucids, with foreign elements of Greek, Semitic and Indian origin. Since the time of Xerxes, the Magi had penetrated into the regions conquered by the Empire, and it is probably there that the *Mithraic Mysteries* originated. These Mysteries became widespread in the Roman world, especially from the second century A.D. onward.

The Semitic element is predominant in the Parthian towns of Mesopotamia, such as Dura-Europos on the Middle-Euphrates.

In eastern Iran, the Iranian, Greek and Indian religions existed side by side, without much intermingling. This region, superficially Hellenized by Alexander and the Indo-Bactrian kings who succeeded him (Ménander was the most famous of them), was subjected to several conquests at this time. That of the Sakas, Iranians from the north, gave to a part of the country the name of Sākastana, or the 'land of the Sakas' (modern Seistān or Sistān, situated astride Afghanistan and Baluchistan). The Pahlavas succeeded them; Gondopharnes, was known in Christian legend as having welcomed the Apostle Thomas, and also as one of the three Magi (Gaspar) who came to worship at Bethlehem.

Until then, the ancient Iranian religion seems to have been submerged beneath Hellenism. It re-emerged during the reign of the Kušans, the greatest of whom was Kaniška. Greek, Iranian and Indian gods figured on their coinage. As they also reigned over India, the Iranian religion reached this country, and in the same way, Buddhism was introduced into eastern Iran (attested, for instance, by the colossal Buddha statues of Bāmiyān, near Kabul).

The Sasanians: From circa 226 A.D. the political centre of Iran returned to Persia, under the Sasanians, who reigned till the Muslim conquest. Zoroastrianism—whose history till then is obscure—became the official religion of the empire. It had to fight, not only against Christianity but against a new religion as well, Manichaeism, preached by Mani. This was a gnosis formed of Greek, Jewish, Mesopotamian and Iranian elements and characterized by an absolute dualism between a good god and an evil demon, eternal like him and the sole author of creation.

Artaxšēr (Ardašir) founder of the Sasanian dynasty reigned from 226 to 241. His son and successor was the famous Šāpūr or Sapor (241-272), who humiliated the Roman Emperor Valerian, an exploit commemorated on the bas-reliefs carved notably on the rock at Naqš i

Rustam¹ (near Persepolis, destroyed by Alexander), above the rock-cut tombs of the Achaemenian kings, and also in an inscription opposite to this rock, carved on the base of a monument known as Ka'ba i Zardušt, where it was found again only in 1936.

The magus Kartēr, subsequent to this inscription, had another engraved. Both give us information on the beginnings of Sasanian Mazdeanism. Kartēr survived his master and under Varhrān I (273-276), had Mani accused and imprisoned. Mani died in chains at the age of 60.

The site of Naqš i Rustam was one of the two religious centres of Sasanian Iran; the other was at Šīz in Media, modern Taxt i Soleimān.² The political centres were at Ctésiphon (the ancient Arsacid capital), at Susa, and at various places in Persia.

Under Ōhrmazd II (303-309), the Iranian empire regained its eastern provinces by annexing the northern kingdom of the Kušans.

His successor Šāpūr II had a very long reign (309-379) during which the persecution of Christianity, which, since Constantine, had become the official religion of the Roman empire, took a political turn.

A century later, Kavād (488-531) championed a new religion, Mazdakism which was both fatalistic and egalitarian. His son Xosrau (531-578) re-established the traditional order and consolidated the Mazdean Church by defining the orthodoxy and by giving the *Avesta* its final form. He took or received the title of Anošarvān, "of immortal soul". On the other hand, the last Greek philosophers from the Athenian Academy, when their school was closed by order of Justinian in A.D. 529, found asylum at the court of Xosrau, at Ctésiphon.

After Xosrau, the Sasanian empire declined till its fall, half a century later: it offered only a sorry resistance to conquering Islam which won at Qadisiya (Mesopotamia) in 635 A.D. a decisive victory over the armies of Yazdakart III, the last Sasanian king.

Islam: Islam, in principle, tolerated the ancient religion, but conversions by persuasion or force were massive in many provinces.

However, Mazdeanism continued to be a ferment of rebellion and brought persecutions upon itself. There were pockets of survival, if not resistance, chiefly in Fars, the ancient centre of the Achaemenian and Sasanian empires. This region saw a sort of Zoroastrian renaissance, characterized by the production of works in Pahlavi (that is to say, in the official language of Sasanian Iran).

One of these works, the *Škand gumānik Vicār* (*Final Dispelling of Doubts*), is a defence of Mazdeanism against Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Manichaeism. Another, the *Dēnkart*, is an encyclopaedia, apparently intended to save the essentials of the religion from a threatened disaster. It contains chiefly, a summary of all the *Avesta* as it still existed then.

As a matter of fact the disaster did occur, without our knowing exactly why. The movement of national revival was proscribed and deterred by dynasties of Turkish origin—the Ghaznevīds (962-1186) and the Seljuks (1037-1300) who took the support of orthodox Islam

1 The popular name, due to a confusion with the legendary hero, Rustam.

2 Another popular attribution—this time to a personage belonging to the Jewish tradition: Solomon.

(Sunni) against both the Shiite heresy and Zoroastrianism. Mahmud of Ghazni (called thus after his capital of Ghazna in Afghanistan) commissioned Firdausi to sing the past of Iran in a vast epic poem, the *Book of Kings*, which opens with an invocation to Allâh.

Zoroastrianism survived partly in the form of those elements incorporated into the Muslim religion of Iran, and notably in the mysticism of Sohrawardi. There have been also a few Mazdean works in the Persian tongue such as the *Zardušt Nāma* or *Book of Zoroaster*, in verse (13th century). But independently it subsisted only in small isolated areas, like those of Yazd and Kermān today, to the east of Persia.

The Emigration: From the 10th century onwards (and apparently not from the 8th as is generally taught) one or more groups of Zoroastrians reached the Persian Gulf, then India, where they found asylum in Gujarat. Their connection with their co-religionists in Iran seems to have been almost totally broken till the end of the 15th century. Re-established in 1477, it was kept up chiefly in the form of an exchange of letters till 1768. These letters, of which 18 are preserved, are the *Rivāyats*. They contain the questions and answers exchanged between the Parsis of India and their cousins in Iran on practical points of law, ritual, etc.

In the 16th century, Emperor Akbar tried to found a syncretistic religion, chiefly based on Zoroastrianism and Islam.

In the 17th century, under Akbar's grandson, some Zoroastrian mystics from Persia, inspired a work, the *Dabistān*, vaguely universalistic and mainly in the form of allegories.

In the 18th century, Parsism divided into two sects over a question of calendar and of ritual, following contacts with the ancient tradition preserved in Iran. While the upholders of this tradition tried to instruct their co-religionists in India, the latter on their part, were ready to give their explanation of the *Avesta* to the Frenchman, Anquetil Duperron, who translated it in 1771.

The research on Mazdean traditions which was started by European scholars and which has made considerable progress, especially since the "*Commentaire sur le Yasna*" (i.e. commentary on a part of the *Avesta*) begun by Burnouf in 1833, has in turn helped the Parsis to rediscover their religious past.

Because they have been accused of dualism by Christian missionaries, the Parsis tend to minimize this aspect of their religion. In this they received the powerful support of the German scholar, Haug, in a lecture delivered at Poona in 1861, and subsequently in his works and those of his successors, which lay stress on the monotheism of Zarathuštra.

This return of the elite to its religious origins brought about a division into reformists and reactionaries. They disagreed chiefly over the value of prayers and ceremonies for the benefit of the dead.

In spite of efforts to purify it, Parsism remains encumbered with adventitious elements. Astrology is current in it. Theosophical doctrines have infiltrated into it. The Parsis of India have done much to aid their poor brothers in Iran, whom the Muslims call Gabars (that is to say, "infidels"), and to procure for them a better social status from the Iranian government.

Since the Independence of India in 1947, the position of the Parsis is threatened and encroached upon by a regime which leans towards a form of socialism or State capitalism and attacks private fortunes.

Since henceforth there can be no survival without State aid, Parsi schools, for instance, will be forced to admit non-Parsis or to perish. Soon, there may be nothing left of the Parsis' beliefs and customs, of their inclination even to form a group, and of their determination to support it. It is conceivable that the Parsi community will one day disappear, melted in the crucible of the new India. The smallest of the great religions will then cease to exist.

C. General Bibliography

1. The four following works should be constantly at hand:

A. V. W. JACKSON, *Zoroastrian Studies*, New York 1928. Reproduces chiefly Jackson's contribution to *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, Strasbourg 1904 and brings out the bibliography and supplementary paragraphs by GRAY. A book to read and re-read and to memorize as far as possible, for it contains all the essential *facts* (if not the *problems*).

L. H. GRAY, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, Bombay 1929. More detailed index of references. To be referred to rather than read.

Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics by HASTINGS, 12 volumes and an index volume, Edinburgh 1908—1926. Contains 95 articles or important portions of articles relating to the Iranian religion and constitutes the most complete collection on the subject to have been published. There are naturally some inequalities and contradictions (due to diverse authors and dates—the publication having ranged over 13 years) and some lacunae (certain articles announced have not appeared, etc.). It is nevertheless the most convenient store of information and of bibliographic reference.

G. WIDENGREN, *Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte*, Numen 1955. Is indispensable for the bibliography it brings out; reveals most of the problems, first in a systematic order, then in a historical order. Is too personal to be of use as an introduction to study. Lacks an index.

The most recent general exposition, R. C. ZAEHNER, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, London 1961 (in—8°, 371 p.), calls for a few reservations which are formulated in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, VI.

Bibliographies periodiques: A bibliography was published annually from 1878-1913. Another was started in 1952. There have been none in the interval.

Jahresbericht der Geschichtswissenschaft, 1878-1913; with JASTROW, *Handbuch der Literaturberichten in Anschluss an die Jahresberichte*, 1891. The Iranian part (*Medien und Persien*) was entrusted from 1878-1893 to SPIEGEL; from 1893-1913, to E. WILHELM, who made of it a veritable annual review of Iranism.

From the year 1952, we have the *Bibliographie internationale de l'histoire des religions*, Leiden.

For the years 1914 to 1951 we are forced to depend on reviews of the history of religions and of orientalism, as well as on the works listed below.

2. A number of titles are to be found in *Subject-Wise Catalogue of Books in the Possession of the Trustees of the Parsi Panchayet*, Bombay 1958, as well as in Arnold WILSON, *A Bibliography of Persia*, Oxford 1930, and in *List of Works in the New York Public Library relating to Persia*, 1915.

Since Delphine MENANT's work, left unfinished, *Les Parsis, histoire des communautés zoroastriennes de l'Inde*, Paris, Musée Guimet, of which only Volume I has been published, dedicated to the community life of the Parsis, 1898¹, the latter have not been the object of any systematic or deep study. The best general summary is also by Delphine MENANT in *ERE*, 9, 640—9: "Parsis".

The most recent work, that of J. J. MODI, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, Bombay 1922, new edition, 1937, does not give precise or sincere information on actual present-day usages and is in no way a sociological study.

Since the most important ceremonies of the cult were strictly forbidden to infidels, all we know depends on the information furnished, in writing, or orally, by the Parsis, who are no longer reluctant to do so as in the time of Anquetil Duperron.

After Anquetil, Haug, then Darmesteter, and more recently, Delphine Menant, have had the different rites explained to them in detail. The last two, obtained photos of the *Yasna* and *Barəšnūm*².

In our time, Lady Drower has witnessed a simulated *Yasna* performed for her in a temple as yet unconsecrated.³

On the Zoroastrians in Persia:

A. V. W. JACKSON, *Persia Past and Present*, New York 1906: D. MENANT, Gabars, in *ERE*, 6, 147—156; Les zoroastriens de Perse, *Revue du monde musulman*, 3, 1907, 193 sq. and 421 sq.

Modern usage is badly determined. The authority of the *Rivāyat* is invoked i.e. the advice given in former times, by the Zoroastrians of Persia, whom their co-religionists consulted from the 15th to the 18th centuries.

The first general exposition is by a European, ANQUETIL DUPERRON, in his *Zend-Avesta*, t. II, 527 sq: "Exposition des usages civils et religieux des Parses".

Still the best today is that of DARMESTER at different places of his *Zend-Avesta*, 1st Vol., Introduction, chap. III, "Le culte" and chap. IV. "Paragra", pp. XLIX to LXXX, and Vol. II, Appendix A, "Cérémonies funèbres chez les Parses", and Appendix B, "Les Dakhmas ou Tours du Silence", 146—158. DARMESTER's work has been reprinted in 1960 by A. Maisonneuve.

1 English translation in 2 volumes, with additions and notes by MURZBAN, Bombay 1917. Instead of the second volume of MENANT's work, which was to have dealt with religious customs, we have, by the same author, *Sacerdoce Zoroastrien à Nausari*, conf. Mus. Guimet, 1911, 221—289.

2 They are found in DARMESTER, *Le Zend-Avesta*, I, pl. III, IV and V, and in D. MENANT, *Sacerdoce*, 273—276.

3 Lady DROWER, The role of fire in Parsi ritual, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 1944, pp. 75 sq. By the same author, *Water into Wine*, London 1956, a work that is hardly methodical. Correct *passim*, *dārūn* to *darūn*. Note that this last term is not attested in the *Mystères de Mithra*, contrary to what CUMONT's note cited on p. 45 and p. 60 gives one to think. The etymologies given for *zōr*, p. 208, n. 4, and for *myazd*, p. 213, n. 4, are of no value. In n. 2 on p. 204, there is a confusion between Visparad and Vendidad.

V. HENRY, *Le parsisme*, 1904 is still useful.

The first indigenous history of the Parsis was the *Parsi Prakāś* in Gujarati by B. B. PATEL, a work made use of by D. MENANT.

D. F. KARAKA, *History of the Parsis*, Bombay 1858, ²1884.

K. N. SEERVAI and B. B. PATEL, *Gujarat Parsis from the Earliest Time*, 1898.

M. M. MURZBAN, *The Parsis in India*, Bombay 1917.

A brief summary of the history of the Parsis is in UNVALA, article quoted from *Wörter und Sachen*, 1936 and 1937.

HUNTINGTON, *Mainsprings of Civilization*, Yale 1945, chapter on "The Parsis".

G. HERMES, Zur Soziologie der Lehre Zarathustras, *Anthropos*, 33 (1938), pp. 181 sq. and 426 sq. (quoted by F. KÖNIG, Die Religion des Zarathustra, in *Christus u. die Religionen der Erde*, II, 1956, p. 612), does not live upto the promise of its title.

3. **Map:** A map of Alexander's empire, to be found in any historical atlas is enough for a general orientation. For greater detail, maps of Iran and neighbouring countries can be utilized.

CHAPTER I

THE TEXTS

A. NON-IRANIAN

1. Cuneiform Texts

The history of the Iranians begins with cuneiform texts. The first mention of them is in a text recording a campaign conducted against the Medes by Salmanassar III, in northern Zagros in 835 B.C. The Parsuas, ancestors of the Persians are also mentioned. Their country lay to the west of Lake Urmia¹. Subsequently, there are frequent references to Medes and Persians in cuneiform texts.

Much earlier than this, there are traces of other Aryan peoples, but their exact relationship with the Iranians is not known.

In the 16th century B.C., the Kassites or Kosséens (circa 1530–1150) worshipped the sun under the apparently Indian name of *Šuriasš*², and were familiar with the Maruts (*Maruttas*), and the word *bhaga* or *baga* (bugaš) “god”.

At the period of the El-Amarna tablets, i.e. about 1400 B.C., the presence of dynasties with names reflecting the Aryan language and religion³, is attested in Asia-Minor, especially in Palestine. The most interesting of these names are *Suwardata*, whose literal meaning is “given or created by the sun” and *Artamanya* “inspired by Arta”.

At about this time, or more exactly, about 1380, a treaty concluded between the Hittite king, Suppiluliuma and the Hurrian king of the Mitanni, Matiwaza, enumerates the Mitannian gods, amongst which are: “the gods Mitra-(V)aruna (variant of Uruvana) as a couple, the god Indara (var. Indar), the two gods Nasatya”⁴. Who were these people—Iranians, Indians or Indo-Iranians as yet undifferentiated? There is nothing, with the possible exception of the variant *Uruvana*, to indicate they were Iranians.

On the other hand, a technical term in horse-training borrowed by the Hittites from the Mitannian language: *aika-vartana* “a round of the course”, recalls the Sanskrit *eka*—“one” but in an archaic form, prior to the transition of *ai* to *ē*. On the whole, it seems safest to designate these people as “Para-Indians”.

1 F. W. KÖNIG, *Die älteste Geschichte der Meder u. Perser, Der alte Orient*, 1934. CHRISTENSEN, *Die Iranier*, Munich 1932, pp. 232 sq. NYBERG, in *Historia Mundi*, III, Bern 1954, pp. 59 sq.

2 CHRISTENSEN, p. 209.

3 *ibid.*, cf. also P.E. DUMONT, *JAOS*, 1947, pp. 251 sq., and appendix to O'CALLAGHAN, *Aram Naharaim (Analecta Orientalia)*, 1948); MAYRHOFER, *Die Indo-Arier im alten Vorderasien*, 1966. Annelies KAMMEN-HUBER's *Die Arier im Vorderen Orient*, 1968, is hypercritical.

4 DUMÉZIL, *L'ideologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*, pp. 36 sq. Prior to it, WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufgaben*, p. 105. Cf. following note.

The only one to have given a satisfactory explanation of this list of gods is Dumézil, *Naissance d'archanges*, pp. 19sq, who recognized in it the three "functions" typical of the social and religious ideology of the Indo-Europeans.¹

There are alleged traces of the Iranian religion in other cuneiform texts.

First, the Median name of *Mazdaku* figures in an inscription of Sargon dating to the 8th century, but this name is not necessarily that of a Mazdean god².

Another text—a list of gods—gives the words *Assara Mazaš*, and yet another gives *Mitra* or what can be taken as the name of this god. Ungnad, however, has shown that these words cannot possibly be designations of Ahura Mazdā and Mithra³.

Finally, the Nuzi tablets, dating back to the 13th century give a name, *Za-ar-wa-an* and the compounds, *It-hi-za-ar-wa*, *Ar-za-ar-wa* and *Du-uk-ki-za-ar-wa*, in which Widengren⁴ would recognize the god Zurvan. But this is not the only explanation possible for as Bailey⁵ has shown, if we suppose *za-ar-wa-an* to be Iranian⁶, the word could simply have meant "who sets in motion", an epithet applicable to a charioteer, hunter or leader. However, the existence of another Luristan plaque⁷ which Ghirshman has interpreted as a representation of Zurvan, lends support to Widengren's hypothesis.

The cylinder of Cyrus, in which this sovereign relates his conquest of Babylonia, in the language of that country, gives no information on the religion of Iran, except that Cyrus did not impose it on conquered lands. He does not even mention it. As for himself, he professes to be a follower and protégé of Marduk.⁸

A similar attitude towards the Greek religion is evinced in Darius' letter to Gadatas, cf. *infra*, p. 19.

2. Mediterranean Antiquity

The classical world had several reasons to be interested in Iran, especially in its religion.

a) Since the Median wars, and even earlier, the Persian nation both intrigued and disquieted its neighbours on account of its power, absolute regime, customs and beliefs.

1 THIEME, *JAOS*, 1960, would explain the presence of the above-mentioned gods in the Mitanno-Hittite contract, other than by the three functions: each god has something to do with contracts. But what Thieme does not explain, is the order in which they are enumerated. And it is precisely this order, coinciding with that of the Indian castes which does not appear to be fortuitous. See now DUMÉZIL, *Les 'trois fonctions' dans le Rgveda et les dieux indiens de Mitani*, *Bull. Ac. Roy. de Belg.*, 1961, 265 sq.

2 Cf. TAVADIA, cited by WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufgaben*, 84.

3 OLZ, 1943, 193 sq.; WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufgaben*, 106.

4 *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran*, Upsala 1938, 310.

5 *Transactions Philol. Soc.*, 1953, 39.

6 Which is by no means certain, for according to E. SPEISER, *Annual Amer. Sch. or. Res.*, 16 (1936), 99, nos. 47 and 48, the name is to be read *Zorwa(n)*, a Hurrian goddess, probably a deified place-name.

7 Cf. below, p. 106.

8 The text of the cylinder, with translation appears in PRITCHARD, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 1950, 315.

The Greeks never learnt the Persian language any more than any other 'barbarian' tongue, and Aeschylus' *Les Perses* can hardly be said to have been drawn from life. The brief notice in which Zoroaster is mentioned for the first time, and which Clement of Alexandria attributes to Xanthos of Lydia may not be by him. If not, then Herodotus "the father of history" was the first to inform his countrymen about Iran. Although he may not have travelled as far as Persia, he had Persian informants in Babylonia and Asia-Minor. He liked to stress the contrast between Persian and Greek customs: The Persians, he says, have neither temples, nor altars, nor idols; they ascend to lofty places and worship the full circle of heaven. They do not consume their offerings. They expose their dead bodies to the dogs and birds, or coat them with wax.

Their moral doctrine seems reasonable: a single fault does not count but the balance of each person's good and bad deeds does. Their education is simple and essential: they are taught to mount the horse, to draw the bow and to speak the truth.

✗ Their clergy are the Magi—a Median tribe according to Herodotus—who have very distinctive doctrines and practices. Their conflict with certain reputedly noxious animals, is all that Herodotus seems to have known about the Iranian dualism. He points out, though, that certain acts were forbidden, such as spitting or urinating in a river.

Other historians were to complete this picture: Ctésias, who like Heraclides of Cumae, Deinon, etc., is the author of a *Persica*, reports, as does Xanthos, that the Persians married their mothers. Little by little the essential doctrines are brought to light. Xenophon makes what is still only an indirect reference to the resurrection of the dead. Theopompus gives an exposition to which his successors add nothing essential till Plutarch. Only Strabo and Pausanias made new observations for themselves in Asia-Minor.

b) The philosophers were no less interested in Iran. Not to speak of the Pre-Socratics, particularly Heraclitus, Anaximander and Empedocles, Plato was certainly conversant with Iranian doctrines. He alluded to them, if only to refute them, while discussing the two Souls of the world. The Platonic dialogue, *Alcibiades* (I, 121) is the first Greek text to mention Zoroaster and Ohrmazd.

The name of magic, if not the thing, comes from Iran. And the author of the dialogue is careful to discriminate between the common, malevolent magic and the true magic of the Persians, which he regards as a form of the Divine Cult, $\theta \epsilon \omega \nu \theta \epsilon \rho \alpha \pi \epsilon \iota \alpha$. In this he is followed by Apuleius, Vitruvius, Porphyrius, the pseudo-Lucian, "Suidas", etc. In fact, usage more and more confused the Magi of Iran with the sorcerers and astrologers of Chaldea.

But the philosophers maintained the distinction, and Aristotle was able to cite the doctrines of the Magi in his lost treatise, *Peri Philosophias*, and to declare in his *Magikos* (this treatise may be by Antisthenes of Rhodes, 150 B.C., but it matters little here), that they knew nothing of magic. He regarded them—with Phérécydes in Greece—as the earliest precursors of Plato's dualism.

He did not thereby conclude that Greek thought was of Iranian provenance, as has subsequently been done; while he merely pointed out the two systems were analogous, others have claimed they were historically connected.

Earlier, Theopompus had expounded the dualism of the Magi according to which, a good god, Oromazes is in conflict with a bad god, Areimanios, and for periods of three thousand years, reigns alternatively with him over the world. which in the end will enjoy a state of felicity.

Eudemus of Rhodes seems to have gone deeper into the matter and to have asked some Magi, whether they recognized two principles or only one.

c) Alexander's conquest of the East, and the permanent relations that resulted from it, led to a change in the ideas held by the Greeks regarding their past. The view emerged with Hecataeus of Abdera (320), as quoted by Diodorus, that Pythagoras and all the early philosophers had studied at the school of the Eastern sages. This idea was the invention of the Easterners and was their way of resisting the onslaught of Hellenism and of safeguarding their own superiority. The Greeks adopted it, when their philosophy, departing from the path of reason, turned more and more towards mysticism from the 1st century B.C. onward, and Pythagoreanism was revived as a sort of religion. It became a common belief, that Pythagoras had been the pupil of Zoroaster and that Plato had visited or wanted to visit the Magi of Persia, etc.¹

The Magi yielded nothing in authority or antiquity to the sages of Egypt who were also claimed as the initiators of philosophy. Sotion (200–150) dedicated to the Diadochè, i.e. to the succession or line of philosophers, a treatise made use of by Diogenes Laertius (which mention, after Zoroaster, Ostanès, Astrampsyschos, Gobryas and Pazatas).

d) Thus, the Graeco - Romans had a new motive for looking toward the East, not to speak of the skirmishes between Romans and Parthians, and later between Romans and Sasanians.

There was one more reason: the East was the homeland of the Mysteries—the mysteries of Isis, the Attis and Mithra, which at this period, penetrated the Mediterranean world, and which till the end of antiquity, were the real rivals of Christianity.

No one could ignore the fact that Mithra was an Iranian god, for one of the degrees of initiation to the Mysteries was called 'The Persian'. The god Arimanius was also venerated. And it was probably to throw light on the origin of the Mysteries that Plutarch wrote his *De Iside et Osiride* and that Porphyrius cited Mithra in his *De Antro Nympharum*. Before them Dio of Prusa (Brusa, in Asia Minor) known as Chrysostom, had narrated and translated the hymns "sung by Zoroaster and the children of the Magi"; while Lucian in his *Ménippe*, speaks of the disciples of Zoroaster's Magi, who by their incantations open and close the gates of hell.

e) The infatuation for the East reached such proportions that there was no better way of lending weight to a work on magic, alchemy, astrology or any other pseudo-science—not to speak of the Apocalypses—than to ascribe it to Zoroaster or some other supposed Magian, Ostanès or Hystaspès for instance². The real authors of these treatises or at least some of them, could have been Iranian "emigrants" in regions which had formerly formed part of the

1 HOPFNER, *Orient u. griechische Philosophie*, Leipzig 1925, 6 and 7.

2 To the collection compiled by BIDEZ and CUMONT, *Les mages hellénisés*, Vol. II, 1938, and the Chaldean Oracles collected at the Renaissance by Gemistus Pletho. They are found in JACKSON, *Zoroaster*, New York 1898. Cf. also, Hans LEWY, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the later Roman Empire*, Cairo 1956, especially pp. 99 sq. on the Aion, 201 sq. on the Fire, 279 sq. on Hadès-Ahriman.

Persian empire¹ but who spoke Greek. It is easy however, to exaggerate the importance of these "hellenized Magi"; what should be remembered is that, the part of Iranian doctrines contained in these writings is *vanishingly small*.

f) The Neo-Platonists took an interest in Iranian doctrines for a loftier reason, and in a more honest manner so to speak. The afore-mentioned Porphyrius, the biographer of Plotinus and Pythagoras, was searching for the origin of the Mithraic Mysteries. Proclus, according to the Epicurean Colotes (3rd century), while commenting on Plato's *Republic* identifies Er the Pamphylian with Zoroaster. Damascius, one of the last masters at the Academy, cites Eudemus on the subject of the One Principle, Space or Time, superior to Ōhrmazd and Ahriman.

g) Iran had cause to interest the Jews also, and later the Christians.

1) The Old Testament contains only a few definite traces of contacts between Jews and Persians, but these must have been much more widespread.

Isaiah, 45, 7, makes the Lord speak thus to Cyrus, his anointed: "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create adversity". Possibly the point of this speech is directed against the Iranian dualism.

Jeremiah, 39, 3—13, speaks of a "Chief of the Magi" at the court of Nebuchadnezzar. And Ezekiel 8, 16, brands as one of the abominations of Jerusalem, the presence of sun worshippers "who put the branch to the nose" (an obvious allusion to the *barsom*, cf. *infra*, p.56).

Esther, 1, 19, and Daniel 6, 15, cite "the law of the Medes and Persians" according to which, as Daniel tells us, "all decrees of the king were inalterable".

2) Later on, the Jews, in order to retain their intellectual superiority in face of the Persian domination², created spiritual genealogies which went to the extent of identifying Zoroaster with Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe. In this way all the wisdom of the Iranians was made to spring from Palestine.

3) Besides Simon the Magian, who is mentioned for the first time in Acts 8, 9, and who was one of the initiators of Gnosticism, Christian tradition welcomes the Magi as the three kings who came from the East to prostrate themselves at Bethlehem. This is an ancient legend since we find it already in Matthew, but it probably dates from shortly after the voyage to Rome of Tiridates, king of Armenia, who had come accompanied by some Magi, to visit Nero³. It obviously arises from the desire of presenting Christianity to the Iranians as the culmination of their own religion.

The Apologists furthered this reconciliation. The *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, depicts the priests of Iran watching the sky from generation to generation, on the "Mons Victorialis", in the hope of seeing the rise of a certain star, the sign of their Saviour, till the day comes at last when a star appears to them, bearing a cross and the image of a child...

1 BARDESANE., *ap.* EUSEB., V. CLEMEN, *Fontes Religionis Persicae*, Bonn 1920, 69.

2 The view of Anquetil, cf. JACKSON, *Zoroaster*, p. 166. Another explanation by S. de SACY, *ibid.*

3 DIETERICH, *Die Weisen aus dem Morgenland*, ZNTW, 3 (1902), and USENER, *ibid.*, 4 (1903).

The legend of the Magi was considerably elaborated in the literatures of Asia, from Syriac to Turkish¹.

4) Christianity in Sasanian Iran was almost in constant conflict with the native religion. Hence the Christian missionaries were to a certain extent familiar with the religion they were opposing. There is evidence of this in their writings in Greek, Armenian and Syriac, although these were in the form of polemics.

The most important of these writers in the Greek language is Theodore of Mopsuestia (died A.D. 428). A summary of his work has been preserved for us by Photius, 81. It pertains to "the pernicious dogma of the Persians, introduced by Zarades about Zourouam, generator (*αρχηγὸν*) of all things, whom he also calls Fate; offering sacrifices to engender Ormizd, he engendered him as well as Satan..."

The chronicle of Malalas gives an account of Mazdak, the 5th century communist reformer. The so-called *Conversation religieuse à la cour des Sassanides*, *Ἐξηγησιζ των πραχθεντων εν περσιδι*, is a Christian memoir dating from about the 4th century and belonging to the same line of tradition as the Magi of Bethlehem. There is nothing Iranian in it, not even the name of the purported king of Iran, Arrhinatos, who is not known elsewhere. Cf. E. Bratke, *Das sogenannte Religionsgespräch am Hof der Sasaniden*, Leipzig 1899.

The Armenian writer, Eznik of Kolb has drawn, probably in part only, from Theodore of Mopsuestia, for his detailed, colourful, somewhat caricatural account, depicting Zurvan at the beginning of all things, offering sacrifices for 1000 years to obtain a progeny. Giving birth to twins, one good, bright and sweet scented—Hormizd, the other, evil, dark and foul-smelling—Ahriman, he divides the sovereignty between them. Ahriman will reign over the world, but Hormizd will be above Ahriman.²

The principle documents written in the Syriac language which show knowledge of the Iranian religion are the *Polemic* of Adur-Hormizd and Anahed, *The Eleventh Book of the Scholia* by Théodore bar Konaï, the *Acts of Thomas* and the *Acts of the Persian Martyrs*³.

The *Acta Sanctorum* written in Syriac, as well as in Latin, Greek and Armenian, have so far only been partially exploited as sources on the Iranian religion.⁴

5) The *Talmud* of Babylon, which was composed after centuries of relations with Iran, and within the Sasanian empire, has not yet been exploited systematically as an indirect source on the Iranian religion⁵.

1 U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Le leggende orientali sui magi evangelici*, 1952.

2 Add: GRAY, Two Armenian Passions of Saints in the Sasanian Period, *Mél. Paul Peeters*, Brussels 1949, t. I, 36 sq.

3 For all these sources, cf. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 74-83. Add the treatise on law by Jésus-Boxt, edited by SACHAU in 1914 in the *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, 3, and the Chronicle of Zuqnin.

4 L. H. GRAY, Zoroastrian Material in the Acta Sanctorum, *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Soc.*, 1913-1914, 37 sq.

5 Michael RODKINSON, *Babylonian Talmud, Text and Translation*, 20 vols., New York 1896-1903. E. SPICEHANDLER, Notes on Gentile courts in Talmudic Babylonia, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 1955. 333 sq. Rabbi Dr. I. EPSTEIN and others, *The Babylonian Talmud*, 35 vols., London 1938-1952.

6) The Christians borrowed the teachings of the Jews and tried to incorporate Zoroaster into their own tradition, by identifying Zoroaster with Ezekiel, Nimrod, Seth, Balaam and Baruch, and finally, through the last, with Christ himself¹.

7) If Zoroaster appears thus as a precursor (or even more) of Christianity, on the other hand he is held responsible for the worst of superstitions: astrology and magic. In the *Pseudo-Clémentines* he figures as the arch-heretic². He is also indirectly said to be the author of Manichaeism. While there was no doubt as to the Iranian origin of this heresy, it was difficult to see its connection with the Mazdean religion. The latter, nonetheless, attracted a good deal of attention for having produced in its Manichaean offshoot, one of the most powerful rivals of Christianity.

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h) *Inscriptions*. 1) Darius' letter to Gadatas, Governor of Magnesia, about the excessive taxation levied on lands consecrated to Apollo³.

2) The Aramaic inscription on the tomb of Darius (Naqš i Rustam, near Persepolis dating as Henning has shown⁴ from the earliest Séleucus Nicator (who reigned till 280 B.C.), is too doubtful for use as a religious document.

3) Antiochus of Commagène in the first century B.C., had some reliefs and an inscription⁵ engraved on the Nimrud-dagh. The latter, which is in the Greek language, mentions some Iranian gods, designating them by their Iranian names and also by one or more Greek equivalents.

1 J. D. G., *The Western Response*, 5, n. 1. The stand taken by HINZ, *Zarathustra*, 1961, represents a curious return to the apologetic preoccupations of antiquity.

2 SCHOEPS, *Iranisches in den Pseudoklementinen*, *Zeitschr. f. die Neutest. Wiss.*, 1960, 1 sq.

3 DITTENBERGER, *Sylloge*², n. 22. Cf. OLMSTEAD, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago 1948, 156.

4 Mitteliranisch (*Handb. der Orientalistik*, I, IV, I), 24. Aramaic text in HERZFELD, *Altpersische Inschriften*, Berlin 1938, 12.

5 They are found in HUMANN and PUCHSTEIN, *Reisen in Klein-Asien*, 1890, and in CUMONT, *Textes et monuments relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, II, Brussels 1896, 89 sq. The inscription also appears in the collection of Ch. MICHEL, *Sylloge*, n°. 135, and in JALABERT and MOUTERDE, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, I, 1929, 12 sq. with detailed notes and finally VERMASEREN *Corpus Inscriptionum... Rel. Mithriacae*, I, 1956, 54 sq. The finest reproduction of the bas-reliefs, representing Antiochus and Mithra is in H. von DER OSTEN, *Die Welt der Perser*, Stuttgart 1956, pl. 91.

4) The Aramaic inscription of Arebsun (Arabissos) probably dates from the 2nd century B.C.¹

5) The bilingual inscription (Greek and Aramaic) of Rhodandros-Farasa-Ariaramneia (Cappadocia) bearing the words $\epsilon\mu\alpha\gamma\epsilon\nu\sigma\epsilon$ $\text{M}\dot{\iota}\theta\rho\eta$: see Cumont, *Anatolian Studies*... Buckler, 68; Nock, *AJPh* 1942, 349; Vermaseren, *Corpus Inscript. et Monum. Relig. Mithriacae*, I, The Hague 1956, 50.

3. The Arabs

The Arabs took an interest in the history of the great Sasanian empire which they had conquered, and in the Iranian religion which Islam almost completely supplanted.² Moreover, the old and new religions partially intermingled and interacted, one with the other.

a) *The Historians*: In dealing with the ancient history and legends of Persia, Muslim historians made use of Pahlavi sources, especially the *Xvadāy-nāmag*. This was one of the numerous Pahlavi works to be translated into Persian or Arabic. Similarly, the *Epistle of Tōsar* was rendered into Arabic by Ibnu'l-Muqaffa (the translator also of the *Xvadāy-nāmag*). The translation was the base for an abridged Persian version, preserved for us in Isfandyar's *Chronicle of Tabaristan*, while extracts from it, in Arabic, are found in *Mas'ūdī*, and in Persian, in the *Fārsnāma*.

The oldest historians are Ya'qūbī, Ibn Qutaiba, Dīnāvārī (all three from the end of the 9th century). Then from the 10th are Tabarī, Bal'amī, Mas'ūdī with his *Golden Meadows* and Hamza al-Isfahānī with his *Annales*. From the 11th, we have Tha'ālibī.

From the 9th century also, are the geographers, Ibn Xurdādbih, etc. The historian and geographer Birūnī (or al-Bērūnī, known in the West as Aliboron) is of particular interest for his *Chronology of Ancient Nations*.

b) *The Moralists*: A literature of moral instruction, *adab*, developed in the style of the Pahlavi *handarz*. See Henning's recent study³ on Miskawaih's Arabic version of certain Pahlavi treatises on wisdom.

c) The principle work on religion, written *ex professo* is the *Kitābu'l-milal wa'n-nihal* of Šahrastānī (died in 1153). A new edition has been published⁴. A text of Jayhānī (10th century) has been translated and commented on by J. de Menasce⁵. From the end of the 11th century we have the notices on religion in the Persian work, *Bayānu'l-adyān* (*Explanation of Religions*) of Abu'l-Ma'ālī.

Nyberg has drawn a picture of Sasanian Iran according to the testimony of Muslim

1 CHABOT, *Répertoire d'épigraphie semitique*, III, 1785, 188; CUMONT, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, *1929, 275, n.33. REICHELT, *WZKM*, XV, 54.

2 For Arab sources pertaining to the Sasanian period, v. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, Copenhagen 1944, 59-74. Add R. GOTTHEIL, *References to Zoroaster in Syriac and Arabic Literature*, Class. St. in honor of H. Drisler, New York 1894, 24 sq. and various extracts given by HARTMAN, *Gayomart*, Upsala 1953, 130 sq. Also, ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, 1961, and articles by Menasce and Henning cited below.

3 *ZDMG*, 106, pp. 73 sq.

4 MUH. BADRAN. Cairo 1950. Prior to it, CURETON, 1846, German translation HAARBRÜCKER, 1850.

5 Le témoignage de Jayhānī sur le mazdéisme, *Donum*... Nyberg, Upsala 1954, 50 sq.

sources, in his *Ratanbai Katrak* lectures. These have not been published, except for an important extract in the *Journal of the Cama Oriental Institute*, 39 (1958).

What is of particular importance in these sources is the distinction Šahrastānī makes between the different Mazdean sects¹. Besides the *zarāduštiyas* who form the orthodoxy, this author distinguished the *zarvānīyas*, the *gayōmarthīyas* and the *saisānīyas*. This last sect, also called Bihāfaridiya, came into existence under Islam and seems to reflect it to a certain extent. Of the other two, the more important is the *zarvānīya* which places Zurvān, Time, at the origin of all things and of the gods. Šahrastānī's testimony is supported by a number of documents of diverse origins. Now, since Ōhrmazd and Ahriman figure in this system as the twin sons of the god Zurvān, the question arises whether a religion of Time ever existed independently of the Mazdean religion. Broadly speaking, what connection was there between the two systems? Were they two sects or only two different shades of opinion? And did one have the ascendancy over the other? Did the entire Sasanian religion bear the impress of Zurvānism? If so, then why is there so little evidence of it in the *Avesta* and the greater part of Mazdean writings? These were the questions that were bound to arise. Šahrastānī on his part, found a solution in sects, like the sects in Islam. Western scholars put the questions differently and we shall come across them again from time to time.

Sects or not, Šahrastānī, is familiar with several kinds of *zurvānīya*. According to some, Zurvān the greatest person, divine, endowed with spirit and light, emanated from the Light, doubted something, and Ahriman arose from that doubt. According to others, who contradict the former, Zurvān "mumbled" prayers for 9999 years to obtain a son. Not obtaining one, he said to himself: "Perchance is this knowledge as nothing?": Ahriman arose from this thought, and Ōhrmazd arose from this knowledge.

Still other *zurvānīya* believe there is always something evil with God, either an evil thought or an evil corruption, and that this is the origin of Satan.

As for the remaining sect, that of the *gayōmarthīyas*, it takes its name from a personage, the mythical first man, *Gayōmart*, who however, is not exclusive to the sect. On the other hand, what is peculiar to it is that it represents Ahriman as a creature of God and not eternal like him. He sprang from a doubt of God².

This last characteristic recalls the *zurvānīya*, while in respect of the others, the *gayōmarthīyas* are closer to the orthodoxy², or, on the contrary, to religions foreign to Mazdeanism, about which Šahrastānī also speaks—Manichaeism and Mazdakism.

B. IRANIAN TEXTS

1. THE "AVESTA"

We cannot advise a beginner to read the Avesta like another Koran or Bible, for as Antoine Meillet used to say, when we try to read the Avesta, we realize soon enough that it is unreadable. It is an agglomeration of hymns, formulae, narratives and laws³.

1 Cf. E. EDWARDS, *ERE*, 11, pp. 346 sq.

2 Neither in the accounts of the *Gayōmarthīya* nor in those of the *Zarāduštiya*, is Ōhrmazd named. God is named *Yazdān* in them, literally meaning "gods, adorables, those whom we worship".

3 Voltaire had exclaimed on reading Anquetil's translation: "L'abominable fatras qu'on attribue a ce Zoroastre ferait douter de la nature humaine ..., etc."

We do not have the complete Avesta today, as it still existed in the 9th century, when the original or a Pahlavi version was summarized in the *Dēnkart*. It originally comprised 21 books or *Nasks*, of which only one has been preserved in its entirety—the *Vendidad* [the word is a corruption of *Vidēvdāt* (*The Anti-demoniac Law*)]. The rest of the extant Avesta is made up of fragments from other books assembled together for liturgical purposes. It is estimated¹ that three-fourths of the Avesta has been lost.

a) Summary of the Avesta

If the beginner does not read the Avesta he can at least glance through it so as to get a brief idea of its contents. He can make use of Darmesteter's translation which is the only complete one so far. It was published in two volumes (plus a volume of fragments) in 1892 and 1893, and has been reprinted in 1960.

The Avesta falls into 3 main parts: the *Yasna* or "sacrifice", with a supplement (the *Visprat*), the *Yašt*s or "worship" and the afore-mentioned *Vidēvdāt*. There are also a few minor texts grouped under the name of *Xorda Avesta* (*Small Avesta*).

1) The Yasna

The *Yasna* (Darmesteter, vol. I) is the book recited by the priests during the ceremony of the same name (corresponding with the Sanskrit *yajña*, "sacrifice")². It consists of 72 chapters—a mass of invocations and dedications from which a few interesting pieces emerge. The first eight chapters are dedicated to the offerings of bread, water and milk libations. Chapters 9 to 11 form the *Hom Yašt* or *Hymn to Haoma*, the sacred juice. Chapter 9 is an imaginary dialogue between Zarathuštra and Haoma personified. It reflects some ancient myths dating back to the Indo-Iranian period. Zarathuštra asks Haoma who were the first four mortals to have prepared and offered the Haoma in sacrifice, and with what blessings they were rewarded. He learns that all four obtained a progeny.

Vivaŋhan, the first, obtained a son, Yima, whose reign was the Golden Age (cf. Sanskrit Vivasvant, epithet of the sun, and his son Yama).

Athwya, the second, obtained a son, Thraētaona who slew the serpent Dahāka created by Aŋra Mainyu (the Spirit of Destruction).

Thrita, the third, obtained two sons, one (Urvāxšya) a law-giver, the other (Kərəsāspa) a slayer of dragons.

1 Avestan passages are quite frequently quoted in the Pahlavi commentary. But these are to be found in the extant Avesta only in the proportion of 1:4. It is roughly estimated from this that the extant Avesta is one-fourth of what it was originally.

2 The ceremony will be described under the section dealing with Ritual.

Pouruṣaspa, the fourth, became the father of Zarathuṣtra, who chased underground all the demons who formerly walked the earth in human form.

The rest of the chapter is a series of prayers to Haoma, recalling his powers. Haoma notably has deposed a certain Kərəsāni who opposed the diffusion of the religion.

Chapter 10 continues these prayers and praises. Chapter 11 tells of the curses which will befall those who do not treat the bull, horse and Haoma as it is prescribed that they should be treated. There is an allusion to the sacrifice of animal victims of which certain parts (the jaw, tongue and left eye) were assigned to Haoma.

Chapter 12 beginning with the word *Fravarānē* "I profess" is the Zoroastrian profession of faith. The faithful first execrates the demons, then proclaims himself to be a worshipper of Mazdā, and affirms his adherence to Zarathuṣtra, the cult of the Beneficent Immortals and the practice of consanguineous marriages, etc.

Chapter 13 continues 12 by exalting the *ratus* or protective lords of the different social classes and conditions.

Chapters 14 to 19 constitute a fresh beginning similar to chapters 1 to 8. Chapter 14 invokes the Beneficent Immortals, so does chapter 15, which invokes Ahura Mazdā as well. Chapters 16 and 17 invoke all divinities (chapter 17, the different kinds of fire).

Chapters 19 to 21 form the *Bagān Yašt*, an eulogy and commentary on the three principal prayers found in chapter 27. All three are in the Gāthic dialect.

Chapters 22 to 26 inclusive, continue the sequence of invocations to the sacrifice.

Chapter 27 contains the three prayers already commented on, namely, the *Yenḥē hātqm*, the *ašəm vohū* and the *Yathā ahū vairyō* (or Ahuvar), as well as the *Airyēmā išyō*.

Chapters 28 to 53 (except 42 and 52) are likewise in the Gāthic dialect. They form the most sacred, ancient and obscure passages in the whole of Zoroastrian literature.

The first *Gāthā* is made up of chapters 28 to 34. Chapters 35 to 41 constitute the *Yasna of seven chapters* (*haptanḥāiti*). Chapter 42 is not in the Gāthic dialect.

The second *Gāthā* comprises chapters 43 to 46; the third, chapters 47 to 50.

The fourth *Gāthā* is Chapter 51; the fifth, chapter 53.

The *Gāthās* are our only direct source on Zarathuṣtra and his doctrine. They are obscure. Darmesteter's translation gives us only an approximate idea of their contents. His translation depended partly on the Pahlavi version, and this in turn was a word for word translation disregarding the functions of syntax, which had been forgotten. At best, the Pahlavi translators had an idea of the subject-matter.

The structure of the sentences is clearer to us than it was to the Pahlavi translators because of the close affinity existing between the language and the Sanskrit of the Vedas. Still we must make allowance for the changes that are bound to have occurred in the religion since the Indo-Iranian period, chiefly due to the influence of Zoroaster himself.

The Gāthās, except for the last one, no longer seem to be sermons as was once believed by almost all modern scholars to the exclusion of Barr, Hoffmann, Humbach and Molé. To these, they now appear to be hymns addressed to divinities, as are the Vedic hymns. They contain even less of the tenets of the religion than was once believed, although they presuppose them.

The similarity of style between the Gāthās and the Vedic hymns confirms the authenticity of the Gāthās, while their undeniable unity of style and subject-matter indicates they are the work of a single author. This refutes the theories (Darmesteter, Molé) which would deny the historicity of Zarathuštra.

The Gāthās are arranged according to metre: a different metre and one only characterizes each of them. The attempts made to justify this arrangement (Molé)¹, or to substitute a better one for it (Nyberg, Duchesne-Guillemin, etc.), are not conclusive. It has to be taken as it is.

In spite of the general unity of style and content, each chapter has its own peculiarities of subject-matter or detail. A summary of each chapter, mainly after Humbach's commentary, appeared in *RHR*, 1961, 47. Humbach's book *Die Gatha des Zarathustra*, 2 vols., Heidelberg 1959, is indispensable, but difficult to read.

Yasna 54 is the last Gāthic text in the collection. It consists of the prayer, *Airyāmā išyō*. *Y* 55 is an eulogy on the Gāthās and also on the *Staota yesnya*, a group of texts difficult to identify.

Y 56 exhorts obedience to the cult of Ahura Mazdā, the *Fravašis* (protective spirits) and the *Amāša Spəntas* (the Beneficent Immortals).

Y 57 eulogizes Obedience as the initiator of rites, victorious over daēvas and protector of the righteous.

Y 58 contains invocations and an eulogy on prayer.

Y 59 is mostly made up of fragments occurring elsewhere.

Y 60 is the blessing on the house of a pious worshipper.

Y 61 invokes the efficacy of the principal prayers.

Y 62 is in praise of fire; *Y* 63-69 relate to the water ritual, which *Y* 65 eulogizes, *Y* 66 and 67 offer as libation, and *Y* 68 invokes, calling it Ahurānī "(wife) of Ahura (Mazdā)".

Y 70 to 72 consist of invocations to the different divinities of which *Y* 71 is supposed to give a complete list.

¹ According to MOLÉ, *Le problème zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne*, the five gāthās which are recited at a New Year ceremony, anticipating the end of the world, form a coherent whole. But if so, we cannot understand why they are twice interrupted to make room for texts which have nothing to do with eschatology: the *Yasna* of the seven chapters and chapter 52. Cf. the discussion between MOLÉ and D-G., *Numen*, 1960 and 1961.

2) The Visprat

The *Visprat* is a *Yasna*, augmented here and there by additional invocations and offerings of homage to the *ratus* (lords) of the different classes of beings, hence its name, *vispē ratavō* "all the *ratus*". In the Parsi language, it is *Vispered*.

3) The Vidēvdāt

The *Vidēvdāt*, a *nask* of the old Avesta, is the "Anti-demoniac Law" (*Vendidad* in the Parsi language due to a corruption of the Pahlavi word). It consists of rules falling into 20 sections (*frakart* or *fargard*) and an introduction of two sections recounting how the Law was given to man.

Fargard 1 is introductory and describes the creation of the different regions of Iran by Ahura Mazdā. In opposition to each, Aṇra Mainyu creates a plague. The first region created is *Airyanəm-vaējō* "Aryan Expanse" and the first counter-creation is the red serpent and winter. The second region, *Gava* or *Sughdha* and the second counter-creation, the locust, and so on, till the sixteenth antithetic pair.

Farg. 2 is in honour of Yima xšaēta "Yima the splendid", king of the Golden Age, who did not accept the task of receiving the Law and transmitting it to men, but only of making men prosperous and immortal. This is recounted in the first part of the chapter. The rest narrates how Yima, at the bidding of Ahura Mazdā, built a fortified enclosure to preserve living creatures from the coming winter.

The essential part of the anthology begins in *Farg.* 3 with the laws relating to the earth, the cultivation of the earth, and those against its defilement.

Farg. 4 deals with contracts and assault.

Farg. 5 to 12 treat of uncleanness due to contact with the dead and the purifications prescribed. Part of *Farg.* 7 relates to the practice of medicine; *Farg.* 8 to funerals; *Farg.* 9 to the great purificatory ceremony, the *barəšnum*.

Farg. 13 is in praise of the dog; 14 deals with the crime of killing a water-dog.

Farg. 15 treats of the five mortal sins; adultery and abortion; the obligations of the illegitimate father toward mother and child; the treatment of a pregnant bitch; and of the breeding of dogs.

Farg. 16 is on the uncleanness of a woman during menstruation.

Farg. 17 is on the disposal of nail-parings and hair-cuttings.

Farg. 18 deals with the character of the unworthy priest; the holiness of the cock; the four sins (*viz.* refusing alms to the righteous, urinating standing, having a nocturnal pollution, not wearing the sacred girdle and shirt over the age of fifteen) that make the *Druj* (Lie) pregnant with a brood of fiends; the evil caused by the *jahi* "prostitute"; and how intercourse with a woman during menstruation is to be atoned for.

Farg. 19, "the temptation of Zarathuštra" recounts how he resisted the attacks of the *Druj* Būiti who wanted to kill him and of Anra Mainyu who invited him to abjure the good religion of Ahura Mazdā. Zarathuštra's defensive arms are the stones given by Ahura Mazdā, the sacred words and sacrificial implements. Zarathuštra then asks Ahura Mazdā, who consents, to instruct him in the good Religion, including its rites and prescriptions; and, above all, the mysteries of the spiritual world. It is revealed to him that the righteous soul is met by its conscience in the form of a maiden accompanied by dogs, who helps it across the Bridge of the Separator, and by Vohu Manah, the "Good Mind" who conducts the soul to Ahura Mazdā and the House of Song. Zarathuštra, now instructed, invokes the creation of Ahura Mazdā and the demons are routed.

Farg. 20 to 22 deal with three types of medicine: one that heals with the knife, one with herbs and one with sacred spells.

4) The Sīrōza

The *Sīrōza* "30 days", is the enumeration of the deities that preside over the 30 days of the month. It has two forms, the Minor and the Major *Sīrōza*.

5) The Yašts

The *Yašts* are hymns, each addressed to one of the 21 divinities. They are not of equal importance. The principal ones, together with the *Gāthās*, are the most interesting part of the *Avesta*. Some of them are in 8 syllable lines.

The first four are not of great interest. *Yāšt* 1 addressed to Ōhrmazd is an eulogy on the names of the deity, followed by invocations. *Yt.* 2 to the Beneficent Immortals, is made up of quotations from other passages. *Yt.* 3 is addressed to *Aša Vahišta* "Excellent Justice", and to the prayers *Ašəm vohū* and *Airyēmə išyō*. *Yt.* 4 is to *Haurvatāt* "Health".

Yt. 5, which is important, is dedicated to *Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā* "the humid, the strong, the immaculate", the goddess of the waters. It falls into 5 parts:

§§ 1–15 are in honour of Anāhitā.

§§ 16–118 enumerate the first ones to have sacrificed to her, beginning with Ahura Mazdā himself who offered haoma and milk to her. When the sacrificer is a deceiver she does not grant him the boon he asks for, as in the case of the serpent Dahāka, although he offered 100 stallions, 1000 cows and 10,000 sheep. But when Thraētaona, who makes the same offering, asks her for the power to overcome the serpent she grants him his request. Other evil doers are Fraŋrasyan the Turanian, and Vaēsaka's son. The list of the virtuous includes the epic heroes Haošyaŋha, Kərəsāspa, Kavi Usan, Haosravah, Tusa, and Paurva who flew through air like a bird and implored the goddess to bring him down to the earth again, etc. The list continues with some personages belonging to the Zarathuštra legend—Jāmāspa, Vistauru, Yōišta of the Fryāna clan who entreats the goddess with true statements. The list is interrupted §§ 84–96 by Anāhitā's instructions to Zarathuštra. It resumes, §§ 97–118 with Zarathuštra himself, followed by Vištāspa and his brother Zairivairi.

§§ 119–132 describe the goddess as a beautiful maiden "with her girdle fastened high so as to show off her breasts and to be pleasing," etc. *Yt.* 6 is addressed to *Xvar xšaēta* "Splendid Sun" with the swift horses and *Yt.* 7 to *Māh* "Moon", which contains the seed of the bull.

Yt. 8 is dedicated to *Tištrya*, the star Sirius, which produces rain. It narrates the battle between this deity in the form of a white horse and the demon of drought, *Apaoša*, in the form of a black horse. *Tištrya* overcomes him as well as the *Pairikās* (*pari* in Persian).

Yt. 9 to *Drvāspā* goddess of horses, enumerates those who sacrificed to her in the past. They include *Haošyāṇha*, *Yima*, *Thraētaona*, *Haoma*, *Haosravah*, *Zarathuštra*, *Vištāspa*, etc.

Yt. 10 is devoted to *Mithra*, lord of wide pastures; guardian of treaties, god of warriors, god of the dawn, who rises on mount *Harā* and surveys at a glance all the Aryan land; terrible toward perjurers, obtaining for others victory and prosperity, surrounded by spies in his service, who makes the rainfall and who bestows prosperity, who travels in a chariot driven by *Aši* (Fortune), who drives before him *Vərəθrayna* (god of Victory) in the shape of a boar; who is the undecivable judge; succouring those who invoke him; the healer worshipped by *Haoma* on mount *Harā*; armed with the thunderbolt even *Anra Mainyu* fears; escorted (at first) on the right by *Sraoša* "Obedience", on the left by *Rašnu*, all around by the waters, plants, and the *fravašis* of the righteous; warrior with the white horses, with the swift arrows, etc., whose long arms reach everywhere to those who violate contracts; who must be worshipped after three days and three nights of self purification; whose chariot adorned with stars and wrought by spirits is drawn by four white immortal horses, shod with gold and silver; accompanied (now) on the right by *Rašnu*, on the left by the goddess *Cistā*, image of the Mazdean religion; followed by the image of creation in the shape of a boar; preceded by the burning fire which is the Fortune of the *Kavis*¹.

Yt. 11 and 12 are dedicated to *Sraoša* and *Rašnu* (*Mithra's* acolytes).

Yt. 13 dedicated to the *Fravašis* of the righteous, comprises two parts. The first part, 1-84, according to Darmesteter, p. 504, "is a glorification of the *Fravašis* as the powers which maintain beings and enable them to subsist (1-25); as the dreaded warriors who fight for their kindred and their nation (26-39, 45-48); as the benefactresses who send the rain to the land which loves them and who make the plants grow" (43-44, 53-58, 64-68).

The second part is a list of the *Fravašis* of the Mazdean heroes from *Gaya marətan* down to *Saošyant*. They are divided into seven groups: "85-95: *Fravašis* of the gods; of the first man, *Gaya marətan*; of the first law-giver, *Zarathuštra*; and of his first disciple, *Maiḍyōimāṇha*; 96-110: *Fravašis* of the first apostles of Zoroastrianism and of its first champions, most of them belonging to the epical cycle of king *Vištāspa*; 111-117: *Fravašis* of the heroes belonging to the legend of *Pourudaxšti* and others; 118-129: *Fravašis* of heroes from foreign lands, the *Fryānas*, etc., and of *Saošyant's* collaborators; 129: *Fravašis* of *Saošyant* (the last Saviour); 130-138: *Fravašis* of heroes before the time of Mazdeanism; 139-142: *Fravašis* of the holy women of Mazdeanism from *Hvōvi*, *Zarathuštra's* wife down to *Srutat-fəδrī* *Vaṇhu-fəδrī* and *Ērədat-fəδrī*, the mothers of *Zarathuštra's* three unborn sons."

Yt. 14 dedicated to *Vərəθrayna* "Victory", can be divided into 4 parts. §§ 1-28 enumerate the ten incarnations in which this deity appeared to *Zarathuštra*: as wind, bull, horse, camel, boar, youth, falcon², ram, buck, and as man; §§ 30-33: the power given by *Vərəθrayna* to *Zarathuštra* as a reward for worshipping him; §§ 34-46; the

¹ GERSHEVITCH, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge 1959.

² *Vārəngan* is the falcon, see STRICKER, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 1964, 310 sq.

magical powers ascribed to a falcon's feather in battle; §§ 47-64: the worship and glorification of *Vərəθrayna*.

Vərəθrayna is invoked in company with *Vanainti Uparatāt* "the Victorious Superiority".

Yt. 15 though generally known as *Rām Yašt* (another of Mithra's companions), is devoted to Vayu, the space between the sky and the earth, part of which belongs to the Bounteous Spirit and part to the Evil Spirit. §§ 1-41 enumerate those who sacrificed to Vayu: Ahura Mazda, Haošyaŋha, Taxma Urupi, Yima, Aži Dahāka (whose request was not granted), Thraētaona, Kərəsāspa, Aurvasāra, Hutaosā and the Iranian maids; §§ 42-58 are the enumeration and glorification of the names of Vayu¹.

Yt. 16 called *Yašt of Daēnā*, the Mazdean religion, is dedicated to Cistā, another personification of this religion.

Yt. 17 to *Aši Vanuhi* "Good Fortune", can be divided into three parts: §§ 1-22 praises of A.V., and a description of the riches she brings to the houses of the devout; her love for Zarathuštra; §§ 23-52; an enumeration of the heroes who have sacrificed to her: Haošyaŋha, Yima, Thraētaona, Haoma, Husravah, Zarathuštra, Vištāsra; §§ 53-61 the worship of A.V., from which children and courtesans are excluded.

Yt. 18 to *Arštāt* "Truthfulness".

Yt. 19 is called *Zamyād* "genius of the earth" on account of the list of mountains that fills §§ 1-8. However, the rest of the *Yast* is devoted to *Kavaem Xvarənah* "the Fortune of the Kavis". Ahura Mazda, the Beneficent Immortals and all the deities are said to have their *Xvarənah* (9-29). A *Xvarənah* has been transmitted since the beginning of the world in two successive lines of descent, that of the Parađāta and that of the Kavis. A king belonging to the former line, Yima the splendid, who at first made men immortal, became corrupt and untruthful with the result that the *Xvarənah* escaped from him in the shape of the Falcon. §§ 46 and those that follow, recount the struggle between the two Spirits for possession of this *Xvarənah*.

Under the second dynasty, the *Xvarənah* reaches Zarathuštra, then Vištāsra. It will pass on, at the end of time, to the last son of Zarathuštra, the Saošyant Astvat-ərəta "Justice Incarnate", who through it will triumph over deceit.

Yt. 20 to *Haoma* is an extract from *Yasna* 9-11.

Yt. 21, a very short one, is dedicated to the star *Vanant*.

The *Hađōxt Nask* is made up of two fragments (according to Darmesteter they are *Yt. 21* and *22*). The first lauds the prayer *Ašəm vohū*. The second describes the fate of the soul after death, like *Vidēvdāt* 19, but in greater detail. The soul meets its religion (*daēnā*) in the shape of a young girl. She is beautiful if the man has been virtuous, ugly if he has been deceitful. In the former case, the soul reaches in four steps, good thought, good word, good deed, the infinite (or uncreated) light, where food in the form of spring butter awaits him. In the second, the soul proceeds by evil thought, evil word and evil deed, to the endless darkness where foul food awaits him.

1 S. WIKANDER, *Vayu*, I (only volume published), Upsala 1941.

Yt. 23 the *Āfrīn* of the prophet Zarathuštra comprises the legendary words of blessings pronounced by him on king Vištāspa.

Yt. 24 made up of fragments from the *Vidēvdāt* recounts how Zarathuštra gave Vištāspa a summary of the law.

6) The Xorda Avesta

The *Xorda Avesta* or *Small Avesta* first contains the various customary prayers said on putting on the girdle, on washing, and at dawn. These are followed by the Nyāyī¹, prayers addressed to the Sun, Mithra, Moon, Waters and Fire. They are mainly composed of fragments from the corresponding *Yashts* (except for the one to Fire which is an extract from Y 62 and the *Sīrōza*).

The *Āfrīngān*, according to Darmesteter, p. 722, are prayers accompanied by blessings which are recited on four different occasions and in four different forms; in honour of the dead (*Āfrīngān Dahmān*); on the five concluding days of the year, or Gāthā days (*Āfrīngān Gāthā*); at the six seasonal feasts commemorating the different acts of creation (*Āfrīngān Gāhānbār*); at the beginning or end of the long summer (*Āfrīngān Rāpīthwīn*).

Avestan Fragments:—Darmesteter gives the text and translation of a series of Avestan fragments in volume 3 of his *Zend-Avesta*: (1) Westergaard's fragments; (2) Fragments quoted in the *Farhang* (Zand-Pahlavi dictionary); (3) Fragments quoted in the Pahlavi version of the *Yasna*; (4) *ibid.*, of the *Vidēvdāt*; (5) Tahmuras fragments or the *Pursišnīhā*, "Questions"; (6) *Nīrangistān* or *Ritual*; (7) Sundry fragments; *Aogəmadaecā*.

The *Nīrangistān* consists of two parts. The first part, the *Herpatistān* (1-18) deals with the priest who officiates while out of his house and to the student priests. The second part, (19-109) is the *Nīrangistān* proper². It treats of the two officiating priests and the assistants who participate in the recitations; the *drōn*; abstention from strong drink during the sacrifice; the recitation of the *Gāthās*; the sacrifice when performed by a priest in a state of sin; the sin of not celebrating the several *Gāhs*; the limits of the several *Gāhs* (Watches of the day); offerings of the *Gāhānbār* (seasonal feast); libations; blood sacrifice, functions and places of the Zōt and Rāspī during the *Yasna*; the *kustī* (girdle) and the *sadre* (shirt); and of the preparation of the *barəsmān*.

The *Aogəmadaecā* is a funerary text almost entirely in eight syllable lines³.

b) The Recording of the Avesta in Written Form

The correct interpretation of the Avesta depends a great deal on knowing when and how the text came to be established in the written form.

One of the disputed questions is: Before the Avesta came to be written down in the Avestan alphabet, was it already recorded in the Pahlavi script in the Arsacid period? We know that the Pahlavi script is a consonantal alphabet derived from the Aramaic alphabet and that it took shape in the Arsacid period with several variants, epigraphical or cursive, Parthian

¹ DHALLA, *The Nyaishes or Zoroastrian litanies*, New York 1908.

² Re-edited by WAAG, *Nīrangistān*, 1941.

³ Re-edited by DUCHESNE - GUILLEMIN, *JA*, 1936, I, 241 sq.

or Persian. The Avestan alphabet was the result of modifying the Pahlavi alphabet by the differentiation of certain signs and the addition of others. This perfected alphabet was designed to record the pronunciation of the Avesta with greater precision.

But the Avestan alphabet was also used to transcribe Pahlavi texts. A Pahlavi text transcribed in Avestan characters is a Pazand text. Because of the ambiguous nature of Pahlavi signs this system called *uzvārišn* admitted of much uncertainty and in order to employ it, the Mazdeans made use of Pahlavi-Pazand lexicons¹.

The authorities we have on the writing down of the Avesta appear to be contradictory.

Saint Basil (about 377) while on the subject of the Mesopotamian Magi in Asia Minor, reports, "they have no books nor masters of dogma". And, according to the *Book of Artāy Vīrāf*, Artaxšēr collected together the Avestan and Zand texts known by heart by the priests he had summoned to the capital. Lastly at the time of the Muslim conquest, the Mazdeans were considered to have no claim to be called a "People of the Book" like the Jews and Christians. We can deduce from these sources that almost certainly Mazdeanism did not have a book playing the same part as the Old and New Testament played in Christianity and the Koran in Islam.

Basil's testimony relates only to peripheral provinces and it would be unwise to give it wider application. As for the *Artāy Vīrāf*, it reflects the importance of the oral tradition without categorically denying the existence of written texts at the beginning of the Sasanian period.

On the other hand we have it from Pausanias (v. 29-6, Clemen, *Fontes*, 63) writing in the middle of the 2nd century, that in Lydia, the Magian accompanied the ceremony chanting from a book. But his remarks may have been valid only for this province. At any rate, it contradicts common usage which was for priests to recite from memory. It was not the custom to use a book during ceremonies².

But that a book did exist before the time of Mani, seems evident from a passage in the Coptic *Kephalaia*³ which reads: "Zoroaster did not write any books, but his disciples after his death remembered and wrote the books which they read today". Moreover, if the Zoroastrians had relied only on oral tradition, Mani would have been quick to say so. There seems to be no doubt, therefore, that a written Avesta existed in the Arsacid period⁴.

1 The Pazand transcriptions were often far removed from the actual pronunciation of the Pahlavi text due to two reasons:

(a) The actual pronunciation was no longer known at the time the lexicons were composed.
(b) Above all, the lexicons were intended not so much to enable the Pahlavi to be read, as on the contrary, to permit the writing down in Pahlavi of a word known orally. For example, in order to write the word *Ōhrmazd* in Pahlavi, the Pazand form of this word, *Anhumā*, had to be known. No one thought God was called *Anhumā*.

2 The exceptions were the *Vendidad* which was read during the ceremony of the same name, and the *Fravardin Yašt* in honour of the dead, see TAVADIA, *Indo ir. Studies*, II, Santiniketan 1952, 4.

3 Found in Egypt in 1930, edited by POLOTZKY in 1935. The passage in question (Keph., p. 7, 30-33) was brought to light by HENNING, *The Disintegration of the Avestic Studies*, Transact. Philol. Soc., 1942 (1944), 47.

4 We can no longer write like NYBERG in 1937 (*Die Religionen des alten Iran*, 422 in the German edition): "Since we have no proof of the existence of a written Avesta in the Arsacid period..." (the printed text reads Sasanian, due to an oversight).

Abbé Nau¹ cites the testimony of the Syriac "*Story of Jesus Sabran*": "For the harmful teaching of Zaradost is not written in the letters (or signs) of the spoken word". But this is no argument, as Menasce has shown, *BSOAS*, IX, 587, n. 2, for the passage can be understood quite differently as: "the pernicious teaching of Zoroaster is not written in intelligible signs, meaning: in a script that everyone can read". Menasce conjectures that this may be an allusion to the Arsacid text, written in the Pahlavi script. But since the *Story* was written about 630 and the episode supposedly took place in 580, it seems unwise to affirm that a Sasanian text in Avestan script still did not exist at this time. We shall simply speak, as Bailey does, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 164, n.3, of the difficulty of the Avestan script and, in regard to Zand, of the *uzvārišn* system.

The earliest native testimony is the notice dating from Xosrau Anōšarvān which is inserted in Book IV of the *Dēnkart* (Madan, 411-413). According to this text, the *Avesta* was written down before Alexander, was destroyed or scattered by him, collected together again by an Arsacid king, Vologeses, then by Artaxšēr, was enlarged and authorized under Šāpūr I and finally completed and provided with a full translation by Šāpūr II.

Now that we have analysed and criticised the evidence, we can give our version of the writing down of the Avesta, with due regard to the text itself.

First, we can say that there was a written Avesta, probably as early as the Arsacid period, recorded in the Pahlavi alphabet (which made no distinction between certain consonants and did not note the vowels as such).

This text was only a sort of a standard, deposited in the Royal Treasury or in the "House of Archives".² It was not in general use. (There were perhaps not more than two copies).

The oral tradition was held in higher esteem than the written. It must have been excellent: both accurate and faithful, for our extant text which was recorded later in a perfected alphabet, reflects a host of phonetic nuances which the Arsacid alphabet had been unable to record. This refutes Andreas' theory, advanced half a century ago, that the Avesta was written down in the Arsacid period and later transliterated, not very intelligently, at a time when the oral tradition was forgotten and the language of the Avesta was a dead language. This theory which disregards the significance of the orthographical details in our Avesta, found followers in Lommel, Benveniste and in the latter's pupil, J. Duchesne-Guillemin. It has been refuted simultaneously and independently by three scholars, Henning, Morgenstierne and Bailey³. A system of simplified, "phonematic" transcription is still advocated by Benveniste⁴.

1 F. NAU, *Etude historique sur la transmission de l'Avesta et sur l'époque probable de sa dernière rédaction RHR*, 1927, p. 180.

2 *bwn x'nk*: the name given to the *Ka'ba i Zardusht*, see HENNING, *Corpus Inscr. Iran.*, *Naqš i Rustam*, Introduction.

3 HENNING, article cited, *The Disintegration of the Avestic Studies*, published in 1944 in London; MORGENSTIERNE, *Orthography and Sound-System of the Avesta*, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskab*, XII, Oslo 1942; BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, lectures delivered in 1936 but published only in 1943 at Oxford. We see due to what extraordinary circumstances these three scholars remained unaware of one another's work. That their results still tallied, makes them all the more convincing.

4 *Bulletin Société Linguistique*, 1968, 53 sq.

All the same, some orthographical details of the Avestan script are best explained as resulting from a mechanical transliteration. Andreas' theory is applicable so far.¹ Bailey doubted the existence of an Arsacid Avesta, but admitted, page 172 n. 3, that "the negative is hard to prove".

Certain details represent not so much a scrupulously preserved oral tradition, as the spoken language at the time the text was written down. This was how Schaeder explained the word *zanda*, a pseudo-Avestan word which in reality, is a Pahlavi word disguised as an Avestan word. Bailey, 171, knows of no other sure examples of this system, but Szemerényi proposes a whole series of them in his study *Sogdicisms in the Avesta*². This is a possible explanation which should be borne in mind, even if most of Szemerényi's examples are doubtful or are not so much sogdicisms as "pahlavisms"³.

Tradition and especially the *Dēnkart* (which we can go back to now for complementary information) consistantly speak of *Apastāk* and *Zand*. The meaning of these terms has been elucidated only recently due to Wikander's studies. *Apastāk* was the recited text, *Zand* the explanation added to it. The *Zand* was sometimes written in the same language, but once the language of the *Apastāk* was no longer in common use, that is, in the Arsacid period, it comprised henceforth: (1) the Pahlavi version of the *Apastāk* and (2) commentaries and other supplementary writings, composed either in Pahlavi or—to what extent we do not know—in the ancient, sacred language, handled more or less skilfully.

We read in the *Dēnkart* (M 412, 17-21) that: "Šāpūr, king of kings, son of Artaxšēr, assembled and united with the *Apastāk*, books of the Religion on medicine, astronomy, motion, time, space, substance, creation, genesis, passing away, change and growth, and other arts and crafts which had been scattered in India, 'Rome' and other countries."

Bailey, Menasce and Molé⁴ have identified several Sanskrit and Greek treatises adopted in this way by the Mazdeans: Indian logic and grammar, the science of computing time or horoscopy, the Indian *kośa* and Ptolemy's *Almageste*.

All these works were supposed to have been taken from Iran, in the past, some by Alexander, others by India⁵. Mere fables, designed to disguise as the recovery of a loan, what was in fact the acquisition of a neighbours's goods. Wikander⁶ rightly compares them to the Jewish falsifications which sought to prove that ancient Greek writers borrowed from the Old Testament.

We do not know whether these 'recoveries' were written in Pahlavi or Avestan, for the summary given in the *Dēnkart*, books 8 and 9, our only means of judging what the Avesta

1 KUIPER has likewise shown in *Indo-Iran. journ.*, IV, 40, that Andreas' theory deserves consideration. See also D.-G., *L'étude de l'iranien ancien au 20e siècle*, *Kratylos*, 1962.

2 Ap. ALTHEIM, *Aus Spätantike u. Christentum*, 1951. The idea originated with ALTHEIM, *Lit. u. Gesel.*, II, 1950, p. 203.

3 Bailey likewise supposes two successive editions, the first of the 6th century, the second after the fall of the Empire. The confusions between vowels and consonants are explained not as errors of transliteration but as the result of the oral tradition which "had continued to modify the text after the earliest writing down". (*Zoroastr. Probl.*, 193). This last point (between quotation marks) seems arbitrary to us. We prefer to say that the oral tradition modified the text only when the Avesta came to be written down in the perfected characters and not subsequently. But we cannot absolutely deny the possibility of a post-Sasanian re-edition.

4 BAILEY, *Zoroastr. Problems*, 81 sq., MENASCE, *Notes iraniennes*, *JA*, 1949; MOLÉ, *Deux aspects de la formation de l'orthodoxie zoroastrienne*, *Mél. Grégoire*, IV, 311 sq.

5 MOLÉ, *ibid.*, 319.

6 *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran*, Lund 1946, 138, n. 2.

once contained, is clearly based on the Pahlavi translation of the Avesta¹. This is important, for even if we cannot tell how far Sasanian material was put into the Avestan language and embodied into the Avesta, the very fact that a text existed in this language tells us it dates no earlier than the Sasanian period. We should remember this when writing the history of the exchange of ideas between Iran and the Mediterranean world.

In fixing a more exact date for the recording of the Avesta, we may refer to the aforementioned notice in the *Dēnkart* which indicates that an edition of the Avesta was made under Xosrau, who divided it into books (*nasks*); we are not sure that these are the same 21 books enumerated elsewhere in the *Dēnkart*² nor that there was no edition prior to it. According to Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, 169, we can deduce from the form *Vār i Cēcast* used in the *Dēnkart* to designate Šiz, that the Avesta was established in the written form before western Iran adopted the legend of the kavis, that is to say, before Kavād's reign, or in the 5th century. Henning goes further and writes (without explaining why) that the writing of the Avesta in a new alphabet could have taken place in the 4th century³. He is evidently thinking of Šāpūr II whose efforts, assisted by Āturpāt, to establish and defend the Mazdean canon are known to us from the same notice in the *Dēnkart* (see chap. on the Sasanians). And in fact, we don't see why the reign of Šāpūr II is too early for the invention of the Avestan characters, which, inspired by the Greek alphabet, perfected the Sasanian Pahlavi script.

Three more theories relating to the recording of the Avesta, advanced by Wikander, Altheim and Molé, have now to be examined.

Wikander⁴ distinguishes two legendary traditions. First, that of Staxr, represented by the *Artāy Virāf*, Tōsar, Tabarī, Tha'ālibī and the *Fārsnāma*, which does not speak of the religious tradition being re-established in the form of a book, and secondly, that of Šiz, illustrated by the *Dēnkart*, Mas'ūdī and Firdausi, which speaks of writings and seeks to belittle and reject Staxr's. Wikander deduces that according to the former, the term *Apastāk* did not signify a book, but only an oral tradition. But it is difficult to accept this, since the *Apastāk* is supposed to have been burnt by Alexander (DkM, 405.22, 406.1 : *ān i pat diz i nipišt ō sōcišn*).

Altheim⁵ claims that the words in the *Dēnkart*: *ut-aš ō-ic yōnayik uzvān vicārt* mean "(Alexander) transcribed into Greek characters". But Tavadia⁶ has shown that *vicārt* is the usual word for "translated". Altheim wished to see in this "transcription", the origin of Zoroaster's twelve million verses that were preserved in the library in Alexandria, according to the testimony of Hermippus, quoted by Pliny. This would explain why these verses could be read, but not understood.

In fact, the existence of this vast poem is attested nowhere else. And the use of the Greek alphabet for writing down the Iranian is attested only by the Kušans, that is to

1 BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 171. Cf. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 142: "Many of these texts in the Avestan language were probably composed by the writers of the Sasanian Avesta, and it is even possible that some of them, first existed in Pahlavi before their Avestan version was incorporated into the body of the sacred books". Cf. also NYBERG, *JA*, 1931, II, 26 and 46.

2 See below, p. 34

3 *Disintegration*, p. 44.

4 *Feuerpriester*, 133.

5 *Nouvelle Clio*, 1951, 64 sq.

6 *Die mittelpersische Sprache u. Literatur*, Leipzig 1956.

say, at least four centuries after Alexander. Altheim's contention that it was used much earlier is based on a wrong interpretation of inscriptions, as when Altheim thought he was reading Iranian in an inscription, when in fact it did not contain a single word of this language.¹

Molé² would introduce as a factor, contributing to the recording of the Zoroastrian orthodoxy, the desire to imitate Manichaeism (or Islam). Tavadia has shown³ that this reason is superfluous.

The 21 books of the Sasanian Avesta were arranged in various ways. We shall not speak of the order in which they were listed because its underlying principle escapes us, in spite of the explanations given in *Dēnkart* VIII, I, 15-17.

Their distribution into three classes is more interesting⁴. The first class, called *gāsānik* (relating to the *Gāthās*) comprises first the *Stōt-yašt*, a liturgical book probably containing the text of the *Gāthās*, among others; then three books of commentaries on the *Gāthās* which are analysed at some length in Book 9 of the *Dēnkart* viz. *Sūtkaṛ*, *Varšt mānsar* and *Bag*; a book called *Vaštāg* of which nothing was remembered when the *Dēnkart* was compiled; the *Hadōxt*, another book of commentaries; and lastly the *Spand*, a mythical book which has a special opening formula.

The intermediate class, *hādak-mānsarik* treats of the "sacred formulae" (*manōra-*) relating to behaviour and for ritual use, but the first two books and the last one are different from the rest. The first book, *Dām-dāt*, deals with cosmology; the second, whose title should read *Naxtar*, according to Anklesaria⁵, relates to astronomy. The third and the fourth, *Pājak* and *Raθwištaiti* and also the sixth, *Kaš-kay-srav* treat of ritual, while the fifth, *Bariš*, contains maxims and admonitions relating to the hygiene of body and soul. Finally, the last book *Vištāsp-sāst* is of a mythical nature.

The third or lowest class, *dātik* or "legal", consists of five books that are strictly legal, from the *Nikādūm* down to the *Vidēvdāt*. This last seems to be the only book preserved in its entirety in our extant Avesta. Books 6 and 7, which have a special opening formula (like the *Spand* in the first class), are the mythical *Citradāt* and the liturgical *Bagān-yašt*.

Each class is inadequately designated. The author of the *Dēnkart*, 8,I,13, was well aware that each class appears to contain books which rightly belong to one of the other two. It is best, therefore, to see the difference between these classes as being one of degree. This was Molé's theory, taking as its basis a text from Book 6 of the *Dēnkart* (M 516,17-517,4): in the ascending order, a *dātik* man communes with the Aryans; a *hādak-mānsarik* man communes with the righteous; a *gāsānik* man with the gods. There are, it seems, three forms of religion, of increasing perfection.

¹ Cf. HENNING, *BSOAS*, XIII, 80 sq. ALTHEIM's latest book, *Zarathustra und Alexander*, Frankfurt 1960, is as full of fantasy as the preceding ones.

² Art. cited on *Deux aspects* . . , 289 sq.

³ *Die mittelpersische* . . , 67.

⁴ They are given in tabular form in GELDNER, *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, II, 20, with commentary 21sq. See also TAVADIA, *Die mittelpersische Literatur*, 69 sq. I have also made use of an essay by Molé, still unpublished but substantially incorporated into his thesis, defended in the Sorbonne on 3rd July, 1958, now published as *Culie, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, 1963.

⁵ Cited by TAVADIA, *op. cit.*, 70.

It now becomes understandable why each class of *nasks* contains mythical books, liturgical books, and books which are neither but which relate to three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the Gāthās which is the most perfect, is found in books 2, 3, and 4, in the first class; then comes the science of the universe, cosmology and astrology in books 1 and 2 in the intermediate class; finally the ethical sciences are dealt with in the first five books in the third class.

The same gradation prevails among liturgical and mythical books. Among the liturgical, the *gāthās* are naturally placed below the *Stōt-yašt* in the first class, while at the other extreme, at the tail-end of the third or lowest class, is the *Bagān-yašt* relating to those non-gāthic divinities, honoured by the *Yašts*. The intermediate class accommodates the rest of the ritual, equidistant from the *Gāthās* and the *Yašts*.

Among mythical books, the *Spand*, containing as it does the life of Zoroaster, has the honour of being in the first class, while the *Vištāsp-sāst* dealing only with the prophet's protector and first convert, Prince Vištāsp, has the right only to a place in the intermediate class and finally, the *Cihr-dāt*, which honours only the heroes before the advent of Zoroaster, is relegated to the lowest class.

The contents of all these books are indicated with more or less details in the *Dēnkart*. Book 8 briefly reviews the 21 books in the order in which they are listed. Book 9 takes up in detail what may be the first book in the first class (*Stōt-yašt*) and certainly the three following books, which are commentaries on the Gāthās. The last book in this class, the *Spand*, dedicated to the legend of Zoroaster, is the object of Book 7 of the *Dēnkart* which perhaps borrows also certain elements from the liturgical books in the other two classes, namely, the *Vištāsp-yašt* and *Bagān-yašt*¹.

In the formation of the Avesta, two traditions juxtaposed and partially fused. A sacerdotal tradition was responsible for the *Gāthās* and the *Yasna of the seven chapters*. A heroic tradition produced the great *Yašts* (5, 8, 10, 13, etc.). The fusion of these two traditions is evident in pieces like *Yasna* 9-11 (*Hōm- Yašt*) and the *Vidēvdāt*.

More generally, we can, like Christensen², place on the one hand, the religious tradition represented by the entire Avesta and some Pahlavi works, and on the other, the national tradition, recorded for the first time under the Sasanians, in the *Xvadāy-Nāmag* (*Book of Kings*, now lost, but which was used by Firdausi).

If, on the contrary, we try to analyse the Avesta in detail, as Wikander or S. Hartman has done in our time, we enter the realm of conjecture, and distinguish new divisions which have nothing in common (in spite of deceptively identical terminology) with those divisions we have just recognized above.

Wikander in his book on *Vayu*, 1941, has attempted to define, within the *Yašts*, a smaller grouping, the Fryāna group, characterized by certain peculiarities of dialect, the cult of Vayu and Anāhitā, the muttered prayer and a particular fire ritual. A few years later, in *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran*, 1946, he tried to follow the destiny of this complex, to which he now attributed a Zurvānite tendency, dating from the time of its first implantation

1 TAVADIA, *Die mittelpersische Literatur*, 68.

2 *Les Kayanides*, Copenhagen 1907, and *Les Gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique*, Paris 1936.

(this too is hypothetical) in Persia, and continuing throughout the Sasanian period. This opened a door, which till now has led nowhere.

Hartman, in his *Gayōmart*, Upsala 1953, has carried detailed analysis to extremes in untangling the threads of the Avestan fabric. He distinguishes at least four "traditions". First, that of the Gāthās. Secondly, a Zurvānite tradition based on a tendentious exegesis of *Yasna* 30 (the two Spirits) and reflected in *Yašt* 13, 86 sq., *Yasna* 68,22 and the *Nyāiś* I,5, and II, 5. Also Zurvānite are *Yašts* 5, 15 and 19. Thirdly, those two groups of Zurvānite texts in which the tendencies they represent are combined and drawn up together in a spirit of monotheism by "mystical monists" standing for the national, heroic tradition. And finally, the orthodox dualists, representing the religious sacerdotal tradition, who, taking inspiration from the Gāthās, drew freely from all the other traditions and composed the Pahlavi works.

Hartman's exposé is difficult to follow¹. But it is evident that he builds hypothesis upon hypothesis.

It is more essential to know what the Pahlavi translation of the Avesta is worth and its date of composition. The Pahlavi translation and commentary, as we see them in manuscripts, are broken up into small sections, each inserted into the Avestan text, immediately after the words they translate and comment on. Tavadia has shown² that it was not always thus. Till about the 9th century, there existed manuscripts giving only the Avestan text, while others gave only the Pahlavi translation and commentary.

The Pahlavi commentary seems to have been completed before the time of Xosrau, for no commentator later than this period is mentioned in it³. Probably the work of translating, paraphrasing and exegesis was spread over several centuries. It is only natural that this work should have been started when the need for it arose—that is to say, in the Arsacid period, when the language of the Avesta was no longer fully understood.

Obviously, as far as the Gāthās were concerned, it was already too late. The translation hardly helps us to understand the original. It only tells us, as does the commentary, how the original was understood through the ages.

The translation of the rest of the *Yasna*, and the *Vidēvdāt*, appears to be more exact, and here, the commentary is particularly useful for the information it provides on usages and rituals.

The Pahlavi translation of the Avesta is difficult to read, often more difficult than the original it attempts to clarify. The system employed by the Pahlavi exponents was a singular one and requires a certain bent of mind to appreciate it. It does not frighten Menasce, who writes⁴: "The milieux from which these works emerge seemed to us to be considerably nearer to western milieux, especially to the Jewish world (*masore, targum, midraš, halaxa*) and to the Christian world (oriental versions of the Bible giving rise to the invention of national alphabets) than to the oriental Buddhist milieux". No doubt, but we are surprised

1 I am not even sure, after reading it thrice, that I have understood what he means by horizontal traditions and vertical traditions, in chapter IV.

2 Zur Pflege des iranischen Schrifttums *ZDMG*, 98, 332 sq.

3 TAVADIA, *Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur*, 41 sq.

4 *Ann. de l'Ec. prat. des Htes Et., sc. rel.*, 1951-52, 37.

(unless it is *lapsus calami*) that the comparison did not extend to Vedic commentaries. It is here that it would have been instructive. In fact, the comparison had already been made, and Darmesteter¹ while speaking about the Pahlavi commentary, refers to the most famous of Vedic exegetists: "Foolishness in the Sāyaṇa manner abounds in it".

The Pahlavi translation was in turn the basis for a Sanskrit version² by a certain Neryosang who appears to have flourished in the beginning of the 12th century³, that is to say, at a time when no one knew Pahlavi well any more. The chief value of this translation to an European, is that it served as a basis for the first detailed study of the *Avesta* by Burnouf.

c) Present Utilization

Our extant *Avesta* represents only part of the one summarized in the *Dēnkart*. The Pahlavi commentary quite frequently cites Avestan passages but these are only found in the present-day *Avesta* in the proportion of 1:4. We can deduce from this, *grosso modo*, that the extant *Avesta* is only one-fourth of what it was.

The texts that have been preserved, almost all answer to practical needs.

The *Yasna*, the *Visprat* and the *Vidēvdāt* have liturgical uses as we have shown above.

The *Yašts* are not in such general use, although they were originally written to accompany the sacrifice, with the result that their Pahlavi translations have not been preserved, except for the later ones. Tavadia⁴ furnished us with information in this respect, which we might have sought in vain elsewhere:

"Today the *Fravardīn Yašt* (*Yt* 13) with some additional matter—is recited in honour of the dead—from the book. Next, but far below in importance comes the *Apān Yašt* (*Yašt* 5). Others like the *Varhrān Yašt* (14) are recommended by the astrologers and the like, but that is evidently a different matter. Such also is the case with the recitation of the *Ōhrmazd Yašt* (*Yašt* 1) and other later compilations, which may truly be said to form part of the *Xorda Avesta* for the use of the laity.

"The usual treatment of the older *Yašts* is not at all strange or astonishing. They were composed in honour of special gods, whose worship was practically (or rather theoretically!) discontinued on the adoption of the one supreme God, Ahura Mazdā, preached by Zarathuštra⁵. Their inclusion in the pantheon is indeed a fact, but that is represented by their mention in the *Yasna*, the ceremonial text *par excellence*. It is a wonder that the original hymns in their honour were not destroyed or neglected altogether; but the scarcity of the Mss. of these hymns—*Yašts*—shows the tendency towards this end. The absence of the Pahlavi version points to the same attitude of neglect".

MODERN EDITIONS OF THE AVESTA UTILIZABLE TODAY

Avestan Texts—Almost the complete original, has been edited in the past by Westergaard, then revised finally by K. F. Geldner: *Avesta, die heiligen Bücher des Parsen*, 3 vols.

1 *Etudes iraniennes*, II, 1883, 55.

2 *Neriosangh's Sanskrit-Uebersetzung des Yasna*, herausg.u.erl. von F. SPIEGEL, Leipzig 1861.

3 According to S. H. HODIVALA, quoted by BAILEY, *Zor. Probl.*, p. 183.

4 *Indo-Iranian Studies*, II (1952), 4.

5 This is obviously an over-simplified view of Iran's religious evolution.

Stuttgart 1885 sq. (or: *Avesta, the sacred books of the Parsis*, in which the prolegomena are in English. This edition is cited by Bartholomae under the codex *NA* (*Neue Ausgabe*).

Completing it, we have, for the *Nīrangistān*, the edition of A. Waag, 1941, (Avestan text and part of the Pahlavi text); for the other fragments, especially the quotations contained in the Pahlavi commentary, see Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, vol. III, 18-93. For the *Aogamadaecā*, *JA*, 1936, I, 241sq.

As for modern translations of the Avestan text, the only completed one is Darmesteter's *Le Zend-Avesta*. 3 vol. 1892-1893. It cannot be used for the Gāthās. These have been translated by Bartholomae, *Die Gāthā's des Awesta*, Strassburg 1905; an English version of this translation was given by Moulton in the appendix to his *Early Zoroastrianism*, London 1913.

The Gāthās have also been translated by:

1. Andreas and Wackernagel (completed by Lommel) *Nachr. Götting. Gel. ges.*, 1909, 1911, 1913, 1931, 1934-37
2. Maria W. Smith, *Studies in the Syntax of the Gāthās*, Philad. 1929
3. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre*, G.-P. Maisonneuve 1948
4. H. Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra*, Heidelberg 1959 (with transliteration, paraphrase and notes)
5. W. Hinz, *Zarathustra*, 1961.

The rest of Geldner's edition of the *Avesta* has been translated by F. Wolff, *Avesta*, Berlin-Leipzig 1924; the *Yāsts* by Lommel, *Die Yāsts des Awesta*, Göttingen 1927.

For the *Nīrangistān* and other fragments, see the editions.

The *Vaeθā Nask* has been edited by H. Humbach & Kaikhusroo M. Jamasp Asa, *Vaeθā Nask, an apocryphal text on Zoroastrian problems, translated and annotated*, Wiesbaden 1969.

Pahlavi Texts — The text has been published by F. Spiegel, *Avesta, pehlevitext*, I: *Vispered u. Yasna*; II: *Vidēvdāt*, 1853.

Also, B. N. Dhabhar, *Pahlavi Yasna and Vispered*, Bombay 1949, with glossary; D. P. Sanjana, *Pahlavi version of Vendidad*, Bombay 1895; Hoshang Jamasp. *Vendidad*, 2 vols. Bombay 1907; B. N. Dhabhar, *Zand i Khurtak Avistāk* (Pahlavi text of the *Small Avesta*), Bombay 1927; English translation, Bombay 1963.

There is still no translation of the entire Pahlavi translation of the *Avesta*, because of the difficulty of the text. Most of the partial translations so far published are mediocre. *Yasna* 9 to 11 is transcribed (but not entirely translated) by J. M. Unvala in his work on the Sanskrit version of this text, see below. *Yasna* 9 is transcribed by Mills, *JRAS*, 1900, pp. 511 sq. and *JAOS*, t. 23, pp. 1 sq. and translated *JRAS*, 1903, pp. 313 sq. and *JAOS*, t. 24, pp. 66 sq. (§§ 49-103). *Yasna* 10 is transcribed by Mills, *ZDMG*, 56, pp. 117 sq. and translated *JRAS*, 1903, pp. 495 sq. *Yasna* 11 is published and translated by Hübschmann, *ZDMG*, t. 26, pp. 453 sq., transcribed by Mills, *ZDMG*, 56, pp. 518 sq., translated by the same, *JRAS*, 1904, pp. 75 sq. and

by Bang, *Bull. Acad. Roy. Belg.*, 1889, p. 255 sq. *Yasna* 22, 66 and 68 are translated by Mills, *JRAS*, 1907. *Yasna* 71 and 70, *ibid.*, 1909.

Yasna 30 and 57 are edited and translated by Hübschmann, *Ein Zoroastrisches Lied*, München 1872 and Sitz. Berlin 1873, pp. 651 sq. *Yasna* 28 and 32 are translated by Haug, *Essays on the sacred language*, London ²1878, pp. 338 sq.

Vidēvdāt 1 is translated by W. Geiger, *Die Pahlavi Version des ersten Capitels des Vd.*, 1877. The entire *Vidēvdāt* is transcribed and translated by B. T. Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Vendidad*, Bombay 1949. A glossary of this text has been given by D. D. Kapadia, *Glossary of Pahlavi Vendidad*, Bombay 1953.

The Pahlavi *Yašts* have been translated by M. F. Kanga, *Pahlavi version of Yašts*, 1941.

The Sanskrit translation of *Yasna* 9 to 11 has been edited and translated by J. M. Unvala, *Neriosangh's Sanskrit Version of the Hōm Yašt*, Wien 1924.

Edition of the Mss. in facsimile: 1. Mills, *The ancient ms. of the Yasna*, Oxford 1893, 2. *Codices Avestici et Pahlavici Universitatis Hafniensis*. 11 vol., Copenhagen 1931-1944.

There are two approaches to the *Avesta*, and the Pahlavi translation and commentary is only one of them. The other, is the study of the text with constant reference to Vedic usages. These two approaches reflect an old rivalry between schools (the *ecole éranisante* or traditional school and the *ecole védisante*, cf. below, p. 259). They should complement each other but in fact, it is rare to find a scholar having the double disciplines of Sanskrit and Pahlavi. One of the methods always tends to dominate over the other. The difficulty of the Pahlavi commentary, its manifest errors and its anachronistic view which makes it project into the past, the usages and beliefs of its time, are so many reasons for preferring the Vedic approach. However, this too, carries certain risks.

Among the Iranists of the younger generation, the Pahlavi method is represented by Molé, the Vedic method by H. Humbach.

Apart from choosing between one of the two approaches, anyone attempting to interpret the *Avesta* should set out to place the text in two perspectives: on the one hand, it should be related to the *realia* as revealed by Iranian history and archaeology, on the other, the Iranian religion should be related to its origins. The religion of the Iranians before their arrival in Iran is not known to us from any direct source but it is to a certain extent accessible from a comparison with the Vedic religion, and more distantly, with that of other peoples sprung from the Indo-European nation. This work of comparison is intricate, but indispensable.

2. PAHLAVI BOOKS¹

a) Dated or Datable Works

1) THE BUNDAHIŠŊ

The *Bundahišn* (*Primal Creation*) or *Cosmology*, etc., was brought back from India by Anquetil Duperron and translated by him at the same time as the *Avesta*. But the text is in a mutilated condition. It has been named the Indian *Bundahišn* or *Bundahišn* of Copenhagen (*BdK*) or the edition of Justi (*BdJ*). The complete text, found in Iran, is the Iranian *Bundahišn* or *Greater Bundahišn*; it was edited in facsimile by Anklesaria (hence the sign *BdA*) in 1908 and his transcription and translation were published after his death in 1956².

The work comprises 36 chapters, of which nine have an appendix. The chapters fall into four sections, the first three having a well-defined subject.

The first section (chapters 1–7) is the *Cosmogony* proper. The first chapter was transcribed and translated by Nyberg and Zaehner and translated by Molé³. Ōhrmazd, the light on high, though separated by the Void from Ahriman, the darkness down below, is nonetheless attacked by the latter. So as to be able to finally defeat him one day, he creates the world in Time and Space, after concluding a treaty with his adversary limiting the duration of their conflict. Creation first exists in spiritual form only, then in material form also.

The first created beings are the Beneficent Immortals. Corresponding with each of them is a demon created by Ahriman. The material world is fashioned in six seasons: creation of the sky, water, earth, plants, the Primal Bull, and of Gayōmart “as broad as he is tall”.

Chapter 2 treats of the creation of the Luminaries. It has been transcribed and translated by Henning⁴.

Chapter 3 has been transcribed and translated by Nyberg and by Zaehner⁵. It deals first with the “Three Creators” co-eternal with Ōhrmazd: Religion (white, symbol of priesthood), Space (red, warrior), and Time (blue, husbandman); then with the Beneficent Immortals and the beings they adopt: Ōhrmazd himself, who is connected with the sun, adopts man Vahuman (Good Mind) who is connected with the moon, adopts kine, Artavahišt (Excellent Truth) fire, Šahrēvar (Desired Kingdom) metals, Spandarmat (Bounteous Devotion) the earth, Hurdāt (Perfection) water, and Amurdāt (Immortality) plants.

Finally, Ōhrmazd gives the *Fravašis* of men the choice of remaining eternally immortal or of being incarnated in the material world so as to assure the final victory over the Lie.

1 WEST, *Grundriss*, II, 90 sq; TAVADIA, *Die mittelpersische Sprache u. Literatur der Zarathustrier*, Leipzig 1956; KLIMA, *Die mittelpersische Zeit*, in RYPKA, *Iranische Literaturgeschichte*, Leipzig 1959. Short sketches by PAGLIARO in *Storia della letter. Persiana*, 1960, and by Mary BOYCE in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*.

2 Under the title *Zand-Akāsīh*, Bombay 1956. The transcription and translation are based on a better manuscript than that used for the facsimile. A copy of this better Ms., which was made for Darmesteter, is in the B. N., in Paris.

3 NYBERG, *Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéennes*, *JA*, 214 (1929) 206 sq; ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, Oxford 1955, 276 sq; MOLÉ, *Naissance du monde*, 1959, 315 sq.

4 HENNING, An astronomical chapter, *JRAS*, 1942, 229 sq.

5 NYBERG, *Questions*, 228 sq., ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 321 sq.

Chapter 4 has been partly transcribed and translated by Zaehner¹. Ahriman whom Ōhrmazd has reduced to powerlessness by reciting the *Ahuvar* prayer and by creating Gayōmart, remains inactive for 3000 years. Then the Whore instigates him to attack the sky, earth, water, etc., and reptiles, scorpions, etc., are unleashed. Each of Ōhrmazd's creations is opposed by one of Ahriman's.

Chapter 5 gives the horoscope and topography of the world.²

Chapter 6 takes up in detail Ahriman's onslaught against the creation of Ōhrmazd. He attacks successively the sky, water, earth, plants, the Primal Bull, whose dead body produces the plants and whose seed is collected and filtered in the moon for giving birth to the different kinds of animals, and Gayōmart whose body produces the metals and whose seed, collected and filtered in the sun, gives birth to the first human couple (at first in the form of a rhubarb plant), finally it deals with the fires, etc.

Chapter 7 is a variant of chapter 6.

Chapters 8 to 24 and 28-29 describes the terrestrial world: 8 the countries, 9 the mountains, 10 the seas, 11 the rivers, 12 the lakes, 13 the animals and 14 humanity. The 14th chapter was transcribed and translated by Schaeder,³ as well as several of her passages relating to the Primal Bull and Man, also translated by Zaehner⁴. Two-thirds of Gayōmart's seed is preserved by Neryosang while Spandarmat, the Earth, accepts the remaining one-third, which gives rise to a rhubarb plant from whose stem springs the first human couple Mašya and Mašyāne. The couple disobey Ōhrmazd and worship the *dēvs*, they take nourishment, dress and procreate. Chapter 15 deals with procreation by man and animals, 16 by plants, 17 the heads of each species, 18 fire, i.e. first the five kinds of natural fire, then the three kinds of ceremonial fire, to which are added the Varhrān fires which maintain all the others.

Chapter 19 deals with sleep, 20 sounds, 21 wind, cloud and rain and notably with the battle Tištar (Sirius) wages against Apaoš, demon of drought, and the battle (which is the storm) between the fire Vāzišt and the demon Spənjagrya.

Chapter 22 treats of noxious beasts, 23 of the wolf, chapter 24 of different beings namely the tree *gaokərəna* or white *haoma* which will be used in the Final Renovation, and the fish Kar which protects it from a lizard sent by Ahriman; a giant tree with numerous seeds standing in the middle of the Fraxvkart ocean, where are also the ass with three legs, six eyes, nine mouths, etc., bulls and fantastic birds; animals (vultures, dog, beaver and cock) created in opposition to the noxious animals.

Chapter 25 describes the year, seasons, days and their parts; the difference between the lunar and solar year⁵; chapter 26, as a corollary to 25, indicates the role of each

1 Zurvan, 359 sq.

2 For the horoscope, see JUNKER, *Über iranische Quellen der Aion-Vorstellung*, Leipzig 1922, 165, n. 4. For the topography, conflicting attempts at reconstruction by Wolfgang SCHÜTZ, *Zeitrechnung und Weltordnung*, 1924 (cf. DIEZ, *Die Siegestürme in Ghazna als Weltbilder*, *Kunst, des Orients*, I [Steiner, Wiesbaden] pp. 37 sq., which cites another reconstruction by F. W. KÖNIG) and Ferd. BORK, *Die Geschichte des Weltbildes*, 1930. The end of chapter V has been translated by NYBERG, *Texte zum mazdayasnischen Kalendar*, Upsala 1934, 22 sq.

3 SCHAEDEER ap. REITZENSTEIN-SCHAEDEER, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, 225 sq.

4 *The Teachings of the Magi*, London 1956, 57 sq.

5 NYBERG, *Texte z. mazd. Kal.*, 10 sq.

divinity worshipped during the year, namely, Ōhrmazd, Vahuman, the Moon, etc. (without homogeneous order), and this chapter is in opposition to the following, 27, which describes the role of Ahriman and the demons.

Chapter 28 treats of man the microcosm, and of the heptads. It has been transcribed and translated by Götze¹.

Chapter 29 takes up again the topic of 17 and treats of the lords of the regions². Chapters 31 and 32 which deal with regions and places should be placed here.

Chapter 30 treats of the fate of the soul after death. For three days it remains in the vicinity of the corpse, on the fourth, it leaves this world and meets its religion in the form of a young girl, then it crosses over the bridge, which is wide if the soul is virtuous, narrow if the soul is evil. It treats also of heaven, hell, and the *hamēstagān* for those whose good deeds are exactly equal to their bad deeds.

Chapter 33 treats of the millenniums of the mixed state (viz. the last six before the end of the world) and their respective calamities:

- 1 From the time of the Bull and Gayōmart down to Yam xšēt who was sawn in two
- 2 The evil reign of Až Dahāk
- 3 The reigns of Frētōn and Manušchir, and the calamities that befell Afrāsyav, killed by Kay Kāūs, who on account of the *dēvs* loses the *Xvarr*, etc., down to Lohrāsp and his son Vištāsp
- 4 The millennium in which we are living opens with the advent of Zartušt. Vištāsp accepts from him the religion of Ōhrmazd and propagates it; Alexander conquers Iran, slaughters the Magi, extinguishes many fires, steals and burns the *Avesta*; Artaxšēr restores the Empire and the Mazdean religion; Šāpūr vanquishes the Tāji (Arabs!); Kavād and Mazdak's reforms; Xosrau 'of immortal soul' kills Mazdak and re-establishes Mazdeanism; Yazdakart succumbs to the Tājis, who establish their bad religion (Islam). There is a prophecy on the end of their rule, following Turkish and Roman invasions, to the effect that the country will be saved by king Kay Varhrān and by a son of Vištāsp, Pešōtan
- 5 The millennium of Ušētar, Zartušt's son, will be terminated by the winter of Malkūš which will be survived by the beings protected in Yim šēt's enclosure (a primeval myth carried forward into the future). Diseases will disappear
- 6 The millennium of Ušētarmāh, Zartušt's son, which ends with scourges; down to the advent of Sōšyans, son of Zartušt, the Saviour *par excellence*.

Chapter 34 continues the series of prophecies by dealing with the Resurrection of the Final Body. It is partly a return to the primeval myth. The first couple were the first to consume, successively, water, plants, milk and meat. The last men, under Ušētarmāh will give up eating,

1 GÖTZE, *Persische Weisheit in griechischem Gewande*, ZII, 1923.

2 On Gopat-šāh (also MX, 62.31sq.), cf. JUNKER, *Über ir. Quellen*, 173 sq.

in reverse order, meat, milk and plants. How will Ōhrmazd put together again for the resurrection, what the wind has dispersed? Ōhrmazd answers Zartušt, that to remake is not more difficult than to make. The Renovation is only a "taking back"—Gayōmart, the Primal Man is resurrected first. Then all resurrected men will be judged in the assembly of Isatvāstar, Zartušt's son. Each one will bear the consequences of his deeds. Each will endure the ordeal of the molten metal, which to the righteous will seem like hot milk. Fathers and sons, brothers and friends will be reunited. Sōšyans, with his assistants, "in order to restore the dead", will kill the Bull Hatayōš, whose fat with the *hōm* will constitute the beverage of immortality (eschatological sacrifice taken from the primordial slaughter). Each demon will be vanquished by his own adversary, Akōman by Vahuman, etc. The Evil Spirit will sink forever into Darkness. In the renovated world, there will be no more mountains¹.

Chapter 35 treats of the race and lineage of the Kavis. It describes further the third millennium of the mixed state. Also treats of the family of the *mōpat* (priests).

Chapter 36 deals with the twelve millenniums associated with the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

1–2–3: state of *mēnōk* when creatures are without thought, without movement and without touch

4–5–6: material state with opposition: Gayōmart lives 3000 years (Ahriman is powerless)

7–8–9: Gayōmart is killed; birth of the first couple, etc., the 8th millennium is Dahāk's reign, the 9th begins with Frētōn's

10: Zartušt's millennium down to the present time (80 after the Muslim conquest). The last chapter of the *Bundahišn* ends here without the usual prophesies on the last millenniums.

2) THE DĒNKART

The *Dēnkart* is an encyclopaedia in nine books. The first two books are lost, so is the first folio of the third². Perhaps these lost portions contained information on the authors. All we know is that the first of them, Āturfarnbag, son of Farruxzāt was a contemporary of Caliph Ma'mūn. His work was continued by Zartust (probably the son of Āturfarnbag, then by Āturpāt son of Ēmēt³.

Books 3, 4 and 5 are in the nature of rational apologetics. Book 6 comprises moral maxims; 7, 8 and 9 are exegetical.

Book 3 is without an overall plan, but certain groupings can be discerned. It treats of all kinds of questions, especially moral, but also theological, often in the form of polemics

¹ Chapters 33 and 34 have been transcribed and translated by MESSINA, *Orientalia*, 1935, 252 sq.

² J. de MENASCE, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne le Dēnkart*, 1958; TAVADIA, *Die mittelpersische...*, pp. 45 sq. numerous passages transcribed and translated by ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*. A facsimile edition has been published by Mark DRESDEN, Wiesbaden 1966.

³ An Ēmēt was known to Hamza al-Isfahāni and in the *Fihrist* of al-Nadim, which places him in the 10th century. According to MENASCE, 10 sq. an allusion to the fall of the Khazar kingdom (965) indicates the end of this century. However, Mary BOYCE reviewing MENASCE's book, *BSOAS*, 1960, 149, claims that the 9th century is more likely than the 10th.

directed against Islam, etc. It treats also of medicine, etc. The table of contents, with its 420 chapter headings has been published and translated by Menasce, pp. 82 sq. and the principal topics brought to light, p. 16: "The theme of dualism, developed on the plan of cosmic dualism, was proof and sign of the transcendent dualism, and made intelligible the physical co-existence of opposites; as for cosmogony and anthropology, they were in answer to the search for a science of physics (theory of motion, becoming, passing away, the powers of the soul, etc.) which was sought to be integrated with dualistic metaphysics". The *Cosmogony* is not a repetition of that given in the *Bundahišn*, for the latter book essentially narrates, while the *Dēnkart* discusses.

Book 4 contains, among other badly arranged material, "a mixture of metaphysics and doctrinal history"¹, a philosophical interpretation of the Amahraspands and their emanation, one from the other, starting from the First Principle. It also contains a passage relating the introduction into Iran of foreign books (Greek and Indian) during the time of Šāpūr.

Book 5 is concerned with the sayings of Āturfarnbag son of Farruxzāt (mentioned above). It first summarizes the history of mankind, then gives in more detail, that of the Iranian race, and of the prophet who sprang from it. The second part is made up of 33 answers to the questions asked by a Christian, on metaphysics, the conditions of the revelation, worship and ritual purity².

Book 6, the easiest and best translated³, is an anthology of moral sayings attributed to the "ancient sages".

Books 7–8–9 form a thesaurus of exegetical material. Book 7 is a compendium of Zoroaster's life (legendary), expressing a philosophical history which places the person of the prophet right in the middle of the chain of prophesies running from Gayōmart down to Sōsyans⁴.

Book 8 summarizes the *Avesta* as it still existed at that time and Book 9 takes up part of it in greater detail⁵.

3) THE GAJASTAK *ABDULLĀH

This work, whose title is generally read *Gajastak Abāliš*⁶, is the account of a theological disputation, either real or imaginary, held before Caliph Ma'mūn, between Āturfarnbag (the author) and Dadv Ōhrmazd, a Manichaean, known in Islam as Abdullāh.

4) THE RIVAYAT OF ĀTURFARNBAG

Āturfarnbag's well-known Pahlavi Rivāyat has now been translated by B. T. Anklesaria.⁷ It deals with ritual and legal, religious and social customs.

1 Analysed by MENASCE, 23 sq.

2 TAVADIA, 61; MENASCE, 29.

3 SANJANA's translation is utilizable for once. It runs from vol. X, 1 sq. according to the second pagination, from vol. 11, 24, according to the first.

4 Book 7 was translated by WEST, *SBE*, XLVII; transcribed, translated and annotated by MOLÉ, *La légende de Zoroastre* (complementary thesis); see also TAVADIA, 66; MENASCE, 63 and NYBERG, *Zaratuštrabioğrafien i Dēnkart, Religion och Bibel*, 1955, 3-19.

5 Books 8 and 9 were translated by WEST, *SBE*, XXXVII; cf. TAVADIA, 68 and 72, MENASCE, 56 and 67, MOLÉ, *Le problème zoroastrien, passim*.

6 The new reading is MENASCE's, *Une encyclopédie*. .p.11 and n. 3; cf. TAVADIA, p. 53. Ed. and transl. of A. BARTHELEMY, Paris 1887.

7 *The Pahlavi Rivāyat of Āturfarnbag and Farnbag Srōš*, vols. I & II, Bombay 1969.

5) THE SELECTIONS OF ZĀTSPRAM

Zātspram deals with the same subjects as the *Bundahišn* and Book 7 of the *Dēnkart* (*Cosmology and the life of Zoroaster*), but in a more systematic manner. It depicts the history of the world in three phases. 1) Before the mixing of good and evil; 2) the mixed state, and the life of Zoroaster; 3) after the separation: the Renovation of the world¹.

6) WORKS OF MANUŠCIHR, ZĀTSPRAM'S BROTHER

a) THE EPISTLES (NĀMAKĪHĀ)

The epistles, which are three in number, have as their full title: "*Epistles and public proclamations relating to the purification of a man made unclean by contact with a dead body*". The author objects to his brother Zātspram's order, which declares unnecessary the great purificatory ceremony called *Barəšnum*².

b) THE DĀTASTĀN ī DĒNĪK

This "Religious Code" is in reply to the 92 questions raised by Mihr-Xvaršēt, son of Āturmāh, on all sorts of subjects, moral, ritual and pertaining to customs³.

b) Non-Datable Works

1) THE ŠKAND GUMĀNĪK VICĀR

The Final Dispelling of Doubts of Martānfarrux son of Ōhrmazddāt: is an apology of the Mazdean religion directed against foreign religions such as Manichaeism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam⁴. The following are its principal themes:

Ahriman's attack of Ōhrmazd is justified by the logic of opposites.

Ōhrmazd, although all powerful, cannot make evil good. Power to do all, is not power to do what is absurd.

Astrological explanation of good and evil, as due to the influence of the stars (creatures of Ōhrmazd) and of the planets (creatures of Ahriman).

Attack against atheists, materialists, sceptics and hedonists.

Necessity of two principles (and only two). The world is an instrument created by God for the eviction of evil.

1 TAVADIA, 83; transcription of chapters 29 and 30 in BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 209 sq.; transcription and transl. of various passages by SCHAEFER *apud* REITZENSTEIN—SCHAEFER, *Studien z. ant. Synkretismus*, 214, sq., by ZAEHNER, *Zurvan, passim* and by MOLÉ in his two theses, *passim*. Now edited by B. T. ANKLESARIA, *Wizidagihā-yi-Zadspram* Bombay 1964.

2 TAVADIA, 89

3 TAVADIA, 87 sq. The second part, questions 41-92, a continuation of the publication of T. D. ANKLESARIA (1911), has been prepared by P. K. ANKLESARIA (Doctoral dissertation, London 1958). Transcription and translation of the various passages in MOLÉ.

4 TAVADIA, p. 92. MENASCE's publication, 1945, contains detailed analyses and discussions. On the anti-Christian polemic, see ASMUSSEN, *Kristendommen i Iran og dens forhold til Zoroastrismen*, *Dansk Teol. Tidsskr.*, 1959, 209 sq.

All things in the visible world have their seed in the invisible world.

The Adversary is anterior to creation.

Our soul feels it has strayed away, hence there is a Deceiver.

Against Islam: mu'tazilites and aš'arites are dismissed without preference. The God of Islam, author of evil, disobedience and the sufferings of hell, is contrasted with the Mazdean god, exclusively good and beneficent.

Against the Jews: criticism of Genesis, etc.

Criticism of Christianity (making use of Muslim, Jewish and Manichaean polemics)¹, particularly of the incarnation, trinity and redemption.

Criticism of Manichaeism, especially of the doctrine according to which God and the Demon are co-eternal.

2) DĀTASTĀN Ī MĒNŌK Ī XRAT

The Code of the Spirit of Wisdom is the lucid and easy summary of a doctrine based on reason. It is in the form of replies to 62 questions. A number of passages, relevant to Zurvānism have been transcribed and translated by Nyberg or Zaehner².

3) CĪM Ī KUSTĪK

*Symbolism of the sacred thread*³. The same topic is dealt with in the *Dāstastān ī Dēnik*, 38–39. The original Pahlavi text is lost, only the Pazand and Sanskrit versions are extant. The Pahlavi text has been restored by T. D. Anklesaria.

4) THE HANDARZ AND OTHER PRACTICAL HAND-BOOKS⁴

a) The Major collection (58–71 of *Pahlavi Texts*, ed. Jamasp Asana) has been translated by Zaehner.

b) The other collection (144–153), likewise⁵.

c) *Pand Nāmak ī Zartušt* or *Vicītak Handarz ī Pōryōtkēšān*. *Book of the Teachings of Zoroaster* or *Selected Counsels of the Ancient Sages*, was re-edited by Nyberg, edited and translated by Kanga, translated by Zaehner and Corbin⁶.

d) *Abiyātkār ī Vazurk-Mihr ī Bōxtakān*. *Memorial to Vazurg-Mihr son of Bōxtak, for the education of princes*. The author is probably none other than Burzōē, minister of Xosrau I⁷.

¹ MENASCE, 209.

² NYBERG, *Questions*, 198 sq.; ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 367 sq.; cf. TAVADIA, 98. (Errata, 98, l. 2: *ein bestimmtes Gebiet wie...*; 100, l. 14 from the bottom, *passen nicht auf...*).

³ TAVADIA, 102. Since then, edition of JUNKER under the title: *Der Wissbegierige Sohn*, Leipzig 1959.

⁴ TAVADIA, 103; the numbers in brackets correspond to the page numbers in Jamasp Asana's edition.

⁵ *The Teachings of the Magi*, 101 sq. and 110 sq.

⁶ NYBERG, *Hilfsbuch des Pehlevi*, I; M. F. KANGA, *Cītak Handarz ī Pōryōtkēšān*, Bombay 1960 ZAEHNER, *Teachings*, 20 sq.; CORBIN's translation, *Poure Daoud Memorial Vol.*, II (1951), 124 sq., has escaped the attention of TAVADIA, 104.

⁷ TAVADIA, 104. A. CHRISTENSEN, *La légende du sage Buzurjmihr*, *Acta orientalia*, 8, 81 sq.

e) *Doctrine of the twenty-five things* is attributed to the same sage¹. Translated by Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 408.

f) *Minor works in the Jamasp Asana Collection*.

1. Attributed to Āturfarnbag
2. Six parts of the medicine for happiness
3. The qualities of the different types of human beings. Cf. Tavadia, 105.

There exists an Arabic version of some Pahlavi writings in this style: cf. Henning, *ZDMG*, 1956, 73 sq.

5) TEXTS RELATING TO MORALS AND RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS

a) ŠĀYAST NĒ ŠĀYAST, *It is proper, it is not proper*, treats of prayer, confession, and above all of ritual, on which it gives many interesting details².

b) PAHLAVI RIVĀYAT introducing the *Dātastān ī Dēnik* treats of morals, usages and ceremonies, but also of cosmogony, eschatology, legends and folklore³.

6) VICĪRĪHĀ Ī DĒN Ī MAZDĒSN⁴

Religious decisions or decisions on the Mazdean Religion.

7) ARTĀY VĪRĀF NĀMAK

The Story of the righteous Vīrāf. To find the good tradition which has been lost, Vīrāf takes a narcotic. He feigns death to reach the spiritual world from which he brings back a description of heaven and hell, and of the pleasures and pains which await the virtuous and the wicked, respectively. A work similar to several Muslim works, for instance, the *Libro della Scala*, probable source for *The Divine Comedy*. It was known in Europe as early as 1816, thanks to the translation (based on Persian and Gujarati versions) of J. A. Pope⁵.

8) YAVIŠT Ī FRYĀN

Is a small work composed of the replies given by the sage of this name (known in the *Avesta*, *Yt* 5, 81 sq.) to the riddles asked by a sorcerer. Published and translated by Haug in the appendix to his *Artāy Vīrāf*.

9) APOCALYPTICAL TEXTS

a) The JĀMĀSP NĀMAK and ABIYĀTKĀR Ī ZĀMĀSPĪK

The prophecies of the sage Jāmāsp on the end of Zarathuštra's millennium and the later version of the same (in Pazand, Parsi and Persian) make allusion to the universal history of Iran⁶. Vištāsp asks Zāmāsp (who has received instruction from Zoroaster) to relate to him the story of the creation through Ōhrmazd's voice, of the first celestial and terrestrial creatures

¹ TAVADIA, 105.

² TAVADIA, 111. TAVADIA's edition, Hamburg 1930, transcription and translation comprises only 10 chapters: the *Šāyast nē Šāyast* proper. WEST's translation in *SBE*, V, 249 sq., contains 13 additional chapters; on their source, cf. BARTHOLOMAE, *Die Zendhandschriften der Münchener Bibliothek*, 1915, p. 8, 47, 105 sq. See now, F. M. KOTWAL, *The Supplementary texts to the Šāyest nē-Šāyest*, Copenhagen 1969.

³ TAVADIA, 111.—Actually, there are two Pahlavi *Rivāyats*, one before, the other after the *Dātastān*, as CHRISTENSEN realized, *Codices Avestici et Pahlavici*, III, 6.

⁴ TAVADIA, 114. See now, K. M. JAMASPASA, Henning Memorial Volume, London 1970, 201-218

⁵ TAVADIA, 116. Cf. MOLÉ, Les implications historiques du prologue du Livre d'A.V., *RHR*, 1951, 36 sq.—On the Arabic sources for *La divine comédie*, see Levi della VIDA, *Nuova luce sulle fonti islamiche della Divina Commedia*, *Al-Andalus*, 1949, 377 sq.

⁶ TAVADIA, 124 and 125.

first kings and inhabitants of the different regions of the world. He obtains a prediction on what will follow: the succession of kings from the time of Vištāsp; the coming of a man from Pātašvārgar, Kay Varhrān, who will wage a battle as a prelude to the advent of Pēšōtan and Ušētar; and finally, the advent of Ušētar, Ušētermāh and Sōšyans.

b) ZAND Ī VAHUMAN YASN OR BAHMAN YAŠT

Pahlavi version of the Yašt to Vohu Manah gives the history of the world from the time of Zoroaster, in the form of visions communicated to the prophet by Vohu Manah (Good Mind)¹.

Two versions of the text appear to have fused. Zoroaster has the vision of a tree with four branches (then of one with seven) made of gold, silver (bronze, copper, and lead) steel and iron, representing respectively the reigns of Vištāsp, (Artaxšēr the Achaemenian), Artaxšēr the Sasanian (Vologeses, the Arsacid, in reverse order with the forerunner of Varhrān V), Xosrau 'of immortal soul', and the end of Zoroaster's millennium.

The disasters and abominations which will mark the end of this millennium (still to come when this work was written) are announced: the reign of the dishevelled *dēvs*, Iran under the domination of the Turks, Arabs, Byzantines, "men with the leather belts". Ušētar, son of Zoroaster, with Varhrān the splendid (here said to be his son) and Vandithim, together with Cīhrmiyān-Pēšōtan, son of Vištāsp, will wage battles, restore the religion and re-open a golden age.

The last millenniums are briefly mentioned: under Ušētermāh, the resurrected hero, Sām, will once again kill the dragon Až Dahāk; finally Sōšyans will bring about the resurrection and the "Final Body".

10) MĀTĪKĀN Ī HAZĀR DĀTASTĀN

*Book (or Principles) of the thousand Opinions*², alludes occasionally to religion: Chapter 8 is concerned with the Dastavars (high priests, dastūrs), chapter 11 deals with Ordeal; 12, 15 (*partim*) and 42 and 43 (*partim*) with the foundation of fires and other matters, 40 and 44 (*partim*) with the duties of magupats (priests) and of their superiors. See also Bulsara's Index.

11) RIVĀYAT Ī HĒMĪT Ī AŠVAHIŠTĀN

A Pahlavi Rivāyat, text edited by B. T. Anklesaria, Bombay 1962.

12) PURSĪŠNĪHĀ

"Questions", being answers to 59 queries ranging from religious to social and legal matters³.

13) PROFANE WORKS

- a) *Draxt ī Asūrīk ut buz (The syrian tree and the he-goat)*, Tavadia 133
- b) *Husrav ut Rētak (King Xosrau and his page)*, T. 124
- c) *Abiyātkār ī Zarērān (Memorial to Zarēr)*, T. 135

1 TAVADIA, 121. Add: B. T. ANKLESARIA, *Zand ī Vohuman Yasn*, text, transliteration and translation in English, Bombay 1957 (anastatic re-impression of an edition published in 1919).

2 TAVADIA, 129. Add the articles of PAGLIARO in the *RSO*. Parts of this work have been studied by MENASCE in *Feux et fondations pieuses*, 1964, and by Mary Boyce, *BSOAS*, 1968, 52 sq., 270 sq. A complete edition is being prepared by Anahit PERIKHANIAN, Leningrad.

3 *Pursišnīhā, a Zoroastrian catechism*, by K. M. JAMASPASA and H. HUMBACH, Wiesbaden 1971.

- d) *Kārnāmak ī Artaxšēr ī Pāpakān* (*Book of the Legend of Artaxšēr son of Pāpak*), T. 137
- e) *Māh ī Fravartīn rōc ī Xvardāt* (*The sixth day of the year*), T. 139
- f) *Vicārišn ī Catrang* (*Explanation of chess*), T. 139
- g) *Šahrastānīhā ī Erān Šahr* (*The provinces of Iran*) and *Apdīh ut sahiķīh ī Sakastān* (*The wonders and curiosities of Sakastān*), T. 141.

3. TEXTS IN PAZAND, PARSI, PERSIAN AND GUJARATI

Certain Pahlavi works are preserved only in the text transcribed in Avestan characters, that is to say, in Pazand. Such texts are the *Škand gumānik Vicār* (chapters 6 to 16), the *Abiyātkār ī Zāmāspik*, *Cīm ī Kustik*, etc.

We do not know whether certain other Pahlavi texts were based on a Pahlavi original or not, as in the case of blessings, eulogies and confessional formulae (*patēt*). The existence of a Pahlavi original can be deduced from the mistakes in the Pazand text or from references to the Sasanian period.

Two collections of Pazand texts have been published:

1. *Tir Andāz*, Bombay Year 1242 of Yazdakart
2. Antia, *Pazand Texts*, Bombay 1909.

Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta*, vol. 3, pp. 167 sq., gives the translation of a *Patēt*, an *Āfrīn gāhānbār* (Seasonal praise) and a prayer to Ōhrmazd.

Pazand texts are sometimes, in their turn, transliterated in Arabic characters which results in Parsi texts.

There is a Pahlavi text, surviving in the Persian version, which in turn is based, not directly on the Pahlavi original, but on its Arabic version, of which a quotation is preserved (in Mas'ūdī): this is the *Epistle of Tōsar*¹ whose Persian version and French translation have been published by Darmesteter, *JA*, 1894. If the letter is apocryphal, the personage is historical, being the Tōsar who was charged by Artaxšēr I with the re-organisation of the Mazdean religion. The letter, addressed to a king of Tabaristān (northern Iran), is written in defence of Artaxšēr, accused of wrongfully claiming to be a restorer of the faith, dividing men into four classes, being cruel, making sumptuary laws and laws of inheritance, employing spies, etc.—According to the latest translator, Dr. Mary Boyce², the *Epistle* is basically authentic.

There is extant a Mazdean literature, written directly in Persian, generally in verse³.

In the 13th century or 15th century, Zartušt Bahrām, a mobad's son, who knew Pahlavi, made a paraphrase in verse of Zoroaster's life⁴ as told in the 7th Book of the *Dēnkart* and in the *Artāy Virāf*. He composed also the poem, *Caṇraṇhāca*, recounting Zoroaster's discussion with a Hindu sage of that name.

¹ Rather than *Tansar*, cf. MENASCE, Une encyclopédie..., 57, n. 1.

² *The Epistle of Tansar*, Rome 1968.

³ WEST, *Grundriss*, II, pp. 122sq.; MOLÉ, Deux aspects de la formation de l'orthodoxie zoroastrienne, *Ann. Inst. Phil. et Hist. Orient.*, XII, 1952, 311sq., lists the principal works several of which are in un-edited Ms. at the B.N.; see also D. MENANT, *ERE*, 6, 152 (Gabars) and the bibliographical notes of F. ROSENBERG, *Le livre de Zoroastre*, Saint-Petersbourg 1904.

⁴ F. ROSENBERG, *Le livre de Zoroastre*, Saint-Petersbourg 1904. Cf. new edition of DABIRSIYAGI, Teheran 1959.

The *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, the *Book of Zāmāsp*, etc., were also put into verse. In 1600 the poem *Qissa i Sanjān* was written, our only source on the history of the Parsi exodus to India.

But the strictly epical themes are almost completely absent from this literature as if they had become the monopoly of the great literature flowering under the aegis of Islam. "They were satisfied with versifying isolated myths, accounts of Gayōmart, Jamšēd and Garšāsp."¹

The *Sad dar* (*Hundred chapters*), a small practical handbook on Mazdeanism is extant in verse and in prose. It was the first Mazdean work to be known in Europe: Hyde translated it completely².

Another work which has hundred chapters, but which is in greater detail, is entitled *Sad dar Bundeheš* (*The hundred chapters of Cosmogony*) or *Sad Darband Hōš* (*The hundred paths of Wisdom*). It is often cited in the *Rivāyats*. Its complete translation is in Dhabhar: *The Persian Rivāyats of Hormazyār Framarz*, 1932, 497-578. It is packed with interesting details. For instance, in chapter 5, Ōrmazd tells Zoroaster: "I created you better than all the other Amšāspands and Yazatas". Chapter 44 deals with the consecration of the heads of cattle in fulfilment of vows. In Chapter 54, instead of the 'choice' of the *Fravašis*, recounted in the *Bundahišn*, there is an anecdote about man, fire and cattle, who at the time of creation, refuse to descend into the world, but are persuaded by Ōrmazd to do so.

Another important text cited in the *Rivāyats* is the treatise entitled *Ulemā i Islām* (*The doctors of Islam*). It is extant in two versions of which there is a full but imperfect translation in Dhabhar: *The Persian Rivāyats*, 438-457. Certain passages are often cited in connection with the problem of Zurvānism, especially by Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 409 sq., who gives some good translations of them. It is, in fact, the Mazdean work which affirms most explicitly, the priority or supremacy of Time. For example, we read in § 8 of the second version: "In the religion of Zoroaster it is thus revealed. Except Time all other things are created. Time is the creator. . ." And in § 9: "Then it created fire and water; and when it had brought them together, Ōrmazd came into existence..."

In 1478, Nariman Hōšang brought back from Iran the first replies to questions asked by the Parsis. The relationship between the two groups was to last for almost three centuries. It was broken off in 1768, when Kermān fell to the Afghans. West classifies them (*Grundriss*, II, pp. 125 sq.) under 22 titles. Eighteen *Rivāyats* are described by Dhabhar in the introduction to his work: *The Persian Rivāyats of Hormazyār Framarz and others*, Bombay 1932. Most of them are partially translated in the same work. The text of several is accessible in the lithographic edition by M. R. Unvala, *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, with an introduction by J. J. Modi, 2 vols., Bombay 1922.

They are listed as follows:

- 1 *Rivāyat* of Nariman Hōšang (1478)
- 2 of the same (1486)

¹ MOLÉ, *Deux aspects...*, 313.—Some extracts from the *Rivāyats* in verse, on Tahmuras, Jamšēd and Garšāsp have been published by SPIEGEL, *Die traditionelle Literatur der Parsen*, 317-348.

² WEST, *SBE*, 24, pp. 25 sq.; cf. DARMESTER, *Z.-A.*1, CXVI, n. 3.

- 3 *Rivāyat* (1511)
- 4 Letter sent with the *Rivāyat* of Kaus Kāmdīn
- 5 Letter sent with the *Rivāyat* of Jasa (1516)
- 6 *Rivāyat* of Asfandyār Sohrāb or Maktūb i Maneck Canga
- 7 *Rivāyat* of Kāma Bohra (1527)
- 8 Maktūb i Maneck Canga: *Rivāyat* of 1535
- 9 Letter from Kāmdīn Šāpūr (1559)
- 10 Letter from Farīdūn Marzbān
- 11 Letter from Dastūr Ardešīr Nōšarvān of Kermān to Dastūr Kāmdīn Padām of Broach (1598)
- 12 *Rivāyat* of Kaus Māhyār (1599-1601)
- 13 *Rivāyat* of Bahman Asfandyār (1627)
- 14 *Rivāyat* of Dastūr Barzū (1646)
- 15 Letter addressed to Dastūr Rustam Pēšōtan and others on the controversy over the new Daxma in Surat (1668)
- 16 Letter to the priests in Surat (1670)
- 17 Letter from Kaus Kāma (1593?)
- 18 *Rivāyat* of Šāpūr Bharuci.

The *Rivāyats* allude to questions of a practical nature in the social or liturgical sphere. In the civil sphere, they treat of marriage, of which five types are named. Consanguineous marriage is recommended. They also treat of divorce; adultery; laws of succession; qualifications of judges and witnesses; non-Zoroastrians; priests; the competence of *dastūrs* and *herbads*; the difference between Parsi usage relating to the fires and that of the Gabars; funeral rites; *āfringāns*; and of various feasts and ceremonies; etc.

Besides its importance for the study of law and ritual, the *Rivāyats* give valuable information on conditions in the Gabar community.

For the *Dabistān* and *Desātīr*, see p. 246.

Texts in Gujarati are of three kinds:

- a) Translations of the *Avesta* and of Pahlavi works, etc., see Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta*, I, pp. CXII sq.
- b) Historical studies, etc., such as the *Parsi Prakāś*
- c) Ritual texts or *nīrang*. Three editions of the *Avesta* with the ritual in Gujarati are mentioned by Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta*, I, p. xc:
 - 1) The edition made in 1850 by *Ervad Aspandyār Fram Rabadi*
 - 2) The *Akhbāri Saudāgar*, big edition in four volumes in -8°, known as *Tamām Avastā* (complete Avesta), 1871.
 - 3) The edition of Tahmuras Dinshaw Anklesaria: *The Sacred Books of the Parsis*, Part I: *Yasna bā Nīrang*, Bombay 1888. This latter edition was the one used by Darmesteter.

In addition, the *Sarnāme i rāz i Yazdān*, in Persian and Gujarati, has been edited by P. J. L. Hatara in the year 1255 of Yazdakart.

Zoroastrian manuscripts are mostly preserved in the following libraries:

a) BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, Paris

E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits mazdéens de la B.N.*, Besançon 1900, 2 ed. Paris 1905.

ibid., *Catalogue des manuscrits persans de la B.N.*, III and IV (where are described the Ms. of the *Bundahišn* of Darmesteter and a few others).

b) OTHER LIBRARIES IN EUROPE

1 *Bibliothèque de l'Université de Copenhague*: Westergaard, *Catalogue*. Most of the Mss. have been reproduced in facsimile in *Codices Avestici et Pahlavici Universitatis Hafniensis*, 11 vols.

2 *Staatsbibliothek München* :

Chr. Bartholomae, *Die Zendhanschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*, 1915.

3 *India Office Library, London* :

H. Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian mss. in the Library of the India Office*, I, 1903; Dhalla, *The Avesta and Pahlavi mss.* .

Iranian Mss. in the Library of the India Office, *JRAS*, 1912.

4 *British Museum*.

5 *Bodleian Library, Oxford*:

E. Sachau, then H. Ethé, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish and Pushtu mss. in the Bodleian*, 1889.

The Ms. J2 has been published in facsimile by Mills, *The ancient ms. of the Yasna*, 1893.

The Bodleian also possesses the complete photograph of the Ms. of the *Yasna* lent by Sanjana. Darmesteter made use of its references to ritual in Pahlavi.

6 *Royal Asiatic Society, London*:

Menasce, A provisional Handlist of the late E. W. West's Papers preserved in the Library of the RAS, *JRAS*, April 1950.

An unedited commentary on the *Videvdāt* was halfcopied and this copy is in the RAS among West's papers (Menasce).

7 *University Library, Cambridge*:

E. G. Browne, *Catalogue of Persian mss.*, 1896.

8 *The John Rylands Library, Manchester*.

9 *Bibliothèque de l'Université de Florence:*

Useful information on these collections and other things is to be found in the preface of J. M. Unvala's: *Collection of Colophons of mss. bearing on Zoroastrianism in some libraries of Europe*, Bombay 1940.

c) LIBRARIES IN INDIA

1 *Mulla Feroze Library, Bombay:*

B. N. Dhabhar, *Descriptive Catalogue of some mss. bearing on Zoroastrianism and pertaining to the Mulla Feroze Library*, 1923.

2 *Meherji Rana Library, Navsari:*

B. N. Dhabhar, *Descriptive Catalogue of all mss. in the First Dastur Meherji Rana Library*, Navsari 1923.

3 *Library of Bombay University.*4 *Maneckji Limji Hoshang Hātariā Library* (housed in the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Bombay).4. IRANIAN INSCRIPTIONS¹

a) Achaemenian

The inscriptions of Darius and his successors furnish us with a little information on the religion. They were found in the Achaemenian capitals of Persepolis and Susa, and at Naqš-e Rostam near Persepolis, at Hamadān (Ecbatana), at Suez, and at Behistūn (on the road from Babylon to Ecbatana), etc.

At Behistūn, Darius had his mighty deeds inscribed, chief of which was his bringing all the provinces of Iran under his authority. The inscription is surmounted by a relief, which alone is visible from the foot of the rock-wall; the inscription is inaccessible, without a perilous climb. It was therefore not meant to be read, but was in the nature of a standard, facing the sky and eternity. Replicas of it were made for men to read, written in the language then in use throughout the Empire—Aramaic. Fragments of such a replica have been found at Elephantine.

Darius' great innovation over Cyrus is not only that he writes the inscription and subsequent ones in the different languages of the Empire, while Cyrus wrote his only for the Babylonians, but above all, that he proclaimed in this inscription and others, the supremacy of a god whom Cyrus did not even mention: "Ahuramazda, the greatest of the gods."

Darius owes his throne to Ahuramazda, but he has deserved it for his justice. In *Behistūn*, IV, 61sq., he proclaims: "Ahuramazda and the other existing gods have helped me because I have been neither a liar, nor cruel, nor more of a tyrant towards the weak than towards the strong; and because I have acted with rectitude".

1 The Iranian inscriptions are the object of a *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, being published in London by Lund Humphries & Co.

The glorification of the universal majesty of Ahuramazda heads several inscriptions at Susa and Naqš i Rostam: "A great God is Ahuramazda who made this earth and yonder heaven, who created man, and happiness for man, who made Darius king."

In the Naqš i Rostam B inscription, Darius draws a moral and physical portrait of himself. Following Ahuramazda's example, he is the friend of justice and no friend of those inspired by the Lie (*drauga*).

The Old Persian text of the inscriptions is readily accessible, transcribed and with the English translation in R. G. Kent, *Old Persian*, New Haven (E.-U.), 1950, revised 2nd edition, 1953.

Very important from the point of view of religious history is the inscription in which Xerxes proclaims: "And among these countries (in revolt) there was one where formerly the *daivas* were worshipped. Then, by the favour of Ahuramazda, I destroyed this sanctuary of the *daivas* and proclaimed: 'Let no one worship the *daivas*!' Where formerly the *daivas* were worshipped, there I shall worship Ahuramazda" (Xerxes, *Persepolis*, H, 35 sq.).

Another passage in this inscription furnishes us with the only information we have on the Achaemenian concept of life after death: "Whoever respects the law of Ahuramazda and worships Ahuramazda. . . . will be happy while living, blessed (*artāvan-*) when dead". This text implies a doctrine of retribution. The meaning of the adjective *artāvan-*, is cross-checked by means of the Greek gloss *Artaioi: Hērōes, Persai*¹.

Under Artaxerxes II (405-359), Mithra and Anāhitā are mentioned for the first time.

b) Sasanian

1 *Dipinti* of the Synagogue of Dura-Europos². These inscriptions are of interest to religious history in so far as they mention names of people, days and months.

2 The inscriptions of the Sasanian kings and their ministers. A list of them is given by Christensen: *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 51sq. Two more inscriptions should be added to it, those of Kartēr at the Ka'ba of Zoroaster and at Sar Mašhad³. We shall deal with them below.

The most important of these inscriptions are enumerated in Frye: *Notes on the Early Sassanian State and Church*⁴.

Artaxšēr I in the short inscription engraved on the relief depicting his investiture at Naqš i Rostam, claims to be a god (*bag*) and a *mazdēs*n (worshipper of Mazda).

Šāpūr, following the example of the great Achaemenians, had the account of his mighty deeds inscribed. This inscription⁵ was discovered on the walls of the Ka'ba i Zardušt excavated

1 Hésychius. For the words *artācā brazmaniy*, left here untranslated, see D-G., *BSOAS*, 1962.

2 Cf. below, p. 158.

3 The inscription of Hajjiābād has been republished by NYBERG in *øst og Vest (Mélanges Christensen)*, 1945, 62.

4 *Studi. . . . Levi della Vida*, I, Rome 1957, 314 sq.

5 It is sometimes called, since ROSTOVITZEFF, *Res Gestae divi Saporis* (after *Res Gestae divi Augusti*). Provisional edition in SPREGLING, *Third Century Iran*. Also, the Greek text in E. HONIGMANN and A. MARICQ, *Etudes sur les Res gestae divi Saporis*, Brussels 1953, and more recently: A. MARICQ, *Syria*, 1958, pp. 295 sq.

during 1936-1939. (It is well placed for it faces the rock-cut relief illustrating pictorially the same high deed that forms the climax of the inscription, namely, the humiliation of Valerian, the Roman emperor). The end of this inscription is filled with a list of religious foundations, more specifically the foundations of religious fires. These fires are at times called "Anāhit fire" (this is also the name of one of the royal wives), sometimes "Varhrān fire."

Following this inscription is the one engraved by Kartēr, Šāpūr's *magupat*, who survived Šāpūr and served again under Ōhrmazd I, Varhrān I and Varhrān II¹. The *dēn mazdēsn* "Mazdean religion" is mentioned in it three times. Other versions of the Kartēr inscriptions exist on the rock of Naqš i Rustam, at Naqš i Rajab, and at Sar Mašhad. The Naqš i Rajab text has been published and translated by Richard Frye: *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 1965, 211 sq. The Sar Mašhad text is published by Phillipe Gignoux: *Journal Asiatique*, 1969. In it, Kartēr tells of a vision he had of the after-life.

The inscription at Paikuli, which is attributed to Narseh, son of Šāpūr I, though in a very mutilated condition, is important for the history of the Mazdean Church at the beginning of the Sasanian period. See R. Frye: Remarks on the Paikuli and Sar Mašhad Inscriptions, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 1957, 702 sq.

The coins and monuments relevant to our study will be cited and described in their proper place in the following chapters.

¹ Provisional edition in SPRENGLING, see preceding note.

CHAPTER II

THE PRACTICES

A. THE RITUAL¹

1. THE “YASNA”

Yasna means “sacrifice” (Sanskrit *yajñah*). It is essentially a sacrifice of *haoma* (the sacred juice) celebrated before the fire. The place in which it is performed, the *urvīsgāh*, is not the same as that where the fire is preserved constantly.

The rite of the *Yasna* proper is preceded by the *paragra*, comprising various preliminary operations, the last of which being the preparation of the juice necessary for the sacrifice. The others, which are subordinate to it, are as follows:

— the rite of the *zōhr* or sacred water, which is the consecration of the water drawn from a well attached to the temple. The water is poured back into the well, at the completion of the *Yasna* ceremony, during a rite called the mixing of the *zōhr*, that is to say, the re-uniting of the *zōhr* water with the water of the well from which it was taken;

— the rite of the *barsom* or bundle of twigs, which are replaced today by metal wires, but whose name recalls the *barhiṣ*, the grass strewn as a seat for the gods during the Vedic sacrifice. During the Parsi rite, some sacred water is poured over the *barsom*. The symbolism of this act is clear, as Darmesteter writes in *Zend-Avesta*, I, 397, and Modi confirms in *Religious Ceremonies*, p. 266: “The *barsom* represents the vegetable creation while the sacred water stands for rain: the *zōhr* is put in ideal contact with the *barsom* to ensure the fertility of the whole vegetable creation and the soil”. During the *Yasna*, the *barsom* is placed on two crescent-shaped stands, also obvious symbols of vegetable fertility;

— the rite of the *aiwyaonghan* or “tie”. A date-palm leaf is first washed in the ritually purified water, then divided into six thin strips which are twisted into a single band and knotted at both ends. It is used to bind the *barsom* into a bundle; a single wire from the *barsom* bundle is placed on the legs of the crescent-shaped stands, while the *zōhr* wire is placed, at the end of the *paragra*, on the *jivam* dish;

— the rite of the *urvaram* or “plant”. A twig of the pomegranate tree is washed in sacred water;

— the rite of the *jīvam*¹ or “living (milk)”. A goat is milked (as a substitute for a cow);

— *Gōṣhudō* is the liturgical name for clarified-butter or *ghee*, which is one of the ingredients of the *darūn* and is also used to butter it;

— the rite of the preparation of the *darūn*, the sacred bread. This bread is eaten by the chief priest, *zōt*, at a certain moment during the ceremony (Y 8) and by the other celebrants, if they wish, after the ceremony.

¹ On prayer in Mazdeanism, see D.-G., in *La Preghiera nelle varie religioni*, 1962.

The preparation of the *hōm* in itself constitutes an entire ceremony. Branches of the *hōm* plant, *ephedra* (which has given its name to ephedrine) are imported into India from Iran. They are washed in the sacred water, then pounded in a mortar whose sides are first struck with a pestle whilst formulae of exorcism are repeated.

The demons are particularly sensitive to the blows struck against the sides. The stalks are crushed together with the *urvāram* or pomegranate twig, with the addition of a little sacred water. In the meanwhile the priest recites the principal Parsi prayers several times over. The juice thus collected is strained through a sieve made from the hairs of a sacred bull¹, to the accompaniment of recitations, some uttered in a 'suppressed tone'.

The juice prepared in this way is the *parahōm*, or preliminary *hōm* and is consecrated during the *Yasna* proper.

"The *Yasna* proper", as Modi writes, "mostly consists of the recital of the 72 chapters of the *Yasna* with some ritual here and there".

The ceremony requires two priests, of which the first, the *zōt*, alone recites. The second priest, the *rāspī* gives the responses at intervals, but his essential function is to tend the fire before which the ceremony is performed.

Channels, to carry away the water used during the ceremony, run round the room and also divide it in horizontal strips called *pāvis* or "pure areas". The *zōt* sits on a square slab or low table, facing the fire-censer and small stone-slabs on which the fuel is kept. Before the *zōt* there is another table which holds all the ceremonial implements. On his right there is a water-vessel and a pot with water in it. When facing the fire he should face the south.

Hindu priests, on the contrary, during the sacrifice avoid turning towards the south. How can we explain this difference? *Prima facie* we can say that India being a tropical country, fears the heat and hence the south, while Iran, being further north has no greater enemy than winter, or the north. However when we examine more closely the reasons put forward by each, another more likely explanation emerges. The Indians avoid the south because it is the abode of the evil spirits, and since, the spirits (*pitaraḥ*) and the gods (*devāḥ*) are in opposition, we can infer that the north is the dwelling-place of the gods. It is only natural that the Zoroastrians who rejected the worship of the ancient gods or *daēvas* should turn their back to them. It is from the north that the *Druj* of the dead is supposed to come, *Vidēvdāt*, 7.2.

The position of the priests and the directions they face, always have a significance². They serve, as it were, to put on a cosmic plane a ceremony into which the elements enter, namely, fire, water, vegetable creation and (now in an attenuated form) animal creation, and in which, as we shall see *infra* p. 75, the sun, moon and earth are present symbolically. The whole universe, so to say, is brought into play to repulse the demons and death.

Generally there is no direct relation between the rite and the recited text accompanying it. They coincide only in their main divisions, except for a few passages.

¹ This 'straining' is only a pretence: the *hōm* is poured through a metallic dish on which is placed a metal ring around which are entwined three hairs of the sacred bull.

² According to *Zātspram*, 35.17, the position of the seven priests corresponds with that of the seven eschatological renovators.

Before beginning the first chapter, the two priests wash their hands and take up their positions. They then recite, in a suppressed tone, the *dībāca* which enumerates the divinities associated with the ceremony, and then name the person for whose benefit the ceremony is being celebrated.

The *barsom* is removed from its crescent-shaped stands, sprinkled with sacred water and then held in the right hand. This is then passed through several times during the recitation of the *dībāca* and the second chapter, and then placed on the stands.

The ceremony can be said to fall into twelve stages, the 72 chapters of the *Yasna* being divided between them as follows¹:

- 1) Chapter 1 consisting of invocations to the different divinities; chapter 2 'enlisting' the sacred water and the *barsom*, and repeating, with some variations, the enumerations made in chapter 1.
- 2) The consecration of the *darūn* (or *myazda*) and of the *gōšhudō*. Here begins the offering of the bread. This section may constitute a separate funerary ceremony, in which case the offering is made to the psychopomp angel, *Srōš*. Chapters 3 to 7 list these offerings and the divinities to which they are addressed. During chapter 8, the *darūn* is eaten by the *zōt* and, after the ceremony, by those members of the congregation who wish to partake of it.
- 3) Chapters 9 to 11 form the *Hōm Yašt* in praise of the *hōm*. They end with the drinking of the *hōm* juice previously prepared during the preliminary ceremony (*paragra*). The *rāspī* washes his right hand, again feeds the fire, and making a round from east to west, simulating the sun², he takes the *hōm* cup, touches it to the *barsom* and holds it out to the *zōt* who drinks thrice from it.
- 4) Libations of water and recitation of chapter 12, the Zoroastrian profession of faith beginning with the execration of demons. Libation of the *jīvam*. The ends of the *aiwyaonghan* are tied to the crescent-shaped stand in chapter 13. Washing of the mortar in chapter 16. Chapters 13 to 18 consist of invocations and dedication of the cult objects.
- 5) Chapters 19 to 21, forming the *Bagān Yašt*, are an eulogy and commentary on the three principal prayers, namely, the *Yathā ahū vairyō*, the *Ašəm vohū* and the *Yenhe hātqm*. The *jīvam* rod is touched to the band with which the *barsom* is tied together, during chapters 15, 18, 22, etc.
- 6) The same rite takes place during chapter 22, which forms an introduction to the second preparation of the *hōm*, lasting from chapter 25 to chapter 27. The juice is pressed out and strained, but is not drunk by the *zōt* during this *Yasna*. Chapter 23 invokes the *Fravašis* and forms part of the *Srōš darūn* (see under 2). Chapter 27 contains the prayer *Ahuna vairyā* (= *Yathā ahū vairyō*). In this chapter, actions and text correspond exactly when the *zōt* strikes the walls of the mortar with the pestle.

¹ Cf. MODI, pp. 303 sq.; DARMESTETER, *Z.-A.*, I, pp. 5 sq.; and DROWER, The role of fire in Parsi ritual, 83sq.

² DROWER, *The role of fire ...*, p.84, n. 20.

- 7) But this agreement ceases from chapter 28 onwards. Now, while the mortar is struck, the *hōm* strained and poured out, then the mortar and *hōm* cup turned over, it is the *Gāthās* which are recited, the most ancient and sacred texts in the whole liturgy. In the order in which they are recited they unfold the history of the world from the beginning (*Ahuna vairya*, Y 27) to the end (*Airyāmā išyō*, Y 54), cf. *Dēnkart*, 9, 46, I.

Chapter 55 is in praise of the *Gāthās* and another group of texts called *Stōt yasn* (not well identified).

The essential part of the ceremony is now over. The remainder is only a sort of deconsecration¹ or desanctification. The implements are put back in their places.

- 8) Chapters 56 and 57 eulogize *Srōš*.
- 9) Chapter 58 is the prayer, *fšušā (mqθra)*. Chapter 60 constitutes another well-known prayer, invoking blessings on the house of the righteous; chapter 61 invokes the efficacy of the principal prayers.
- 10) The correspondence between actions and words is resumed, but not very exactly, during several chapters. The two priests, while reciting chapter 62, an eulogy on fire, *Ātaš Nyāiš*, perform various actions while looking at the fire and offer the *hōm* to it, etc.
- 11) During the recitation of chapters 63 to 69, relating to water and its consecration, *āb zōhr*, water is mixed with the *hōm* and *jīvam*, and poured over the *barsom*, etc.
- 12) The last three chapters, invoke the Entities and praise the good creation of *Ōhrmazd*.

To complete the *Yasna* ceremony, the sacred water, as we mentioned earlier, is poured back into the well from whence it came.

This then, is the principal ceremony of the Parsi cult. It is celebrated before the sacred fire and is addressed, through it, to *Ōhrmazd* and all the gods. It is performed by one or more pairs of priests for the benefit of the faithful who pay², or of those who are paid for by others. The faithful are not present in large numbers. (In fact infidels are forbidden to attend).

There is no prayer said in common, nor any regular preaching³.

2. THE FIRE

A. THE CARE OF THE FIRE

A fire is present during most rites—in the death chamber, near the Tower of Silence, in the *Yasna* ceremony, etc.

¹ DROWER, *The role of fire* . . . , p. 75.

² According to the *Rivāyats* (DHABHAR, 335), if one pays for a *Yasna*, for someone who could have paid for it himself, the *Yasna* has the opposite effect.

³ All Parsis must pray—five times a day, if possible—at home or in the fire-temple; and must venerate the sun, moon, fire, light and water.

Its primary function seems to be the repelling of demons, as it is for a number of semi-savage peoples (Oldenberg, *Relig. du Veda*, 1903, 287). There persists the memory of another use—also universally widespread—that of receiving the flesh or fat of the sacrificial victims. The third day after the funeral, a little animal fat used to be offered unto the fire. The *Nirangistān* expressly states (65, Waag, p. 71) that offerings of meat and fat are made to the fire, in a rite called the *zōhr i Ātaš*.

During the *Yasna*, the fire receives no offering, either solid or liquid, and some think it is present as a witness only, or to provide a sweet fragrance¹. This disregards the fact that during the entire ceremony the priest faces the fire and that several times he addresses it directly (*Y* 35), looks at it, offers the *haoma* to it, etc. (*Y* 62).

It is called the fire of Ōhrmazd, or son of Ōhrmazd, and is considered to be the visible sign of this god's presence, whose Justice (*Asa*) it symbolizes also. Moreover, the fire of the highest grade, the *Varhrān* or *Bahrām* fire, is said by two Pahlavi texts, the *Dēnkart*, M 522.21 and the *Pahlavi Rivāyat*, Dhabhar, 57.10., to have the power to attract all the gods. The *Varhrān* fire is the communicating door between heaven and earth. When the celestial gods (*mēnōkān yazatān*) come down to earth (in the *gētē*), they go first to the *Varhrān* fire, before they visit other places. Which is why the sacrifice performed before the fire is addressed to the *yazatān* or *yazdān*. Since, on the other hand, it is eminently addressed to Ōhrmazd also, the two appellations were bound to become equated in time, and I think that here lies the reason why *Yazdān* has become synonymous with Ōhrmazd.

The *Bahrām* fire which is maintained in first grade temples is treated like a king. A crown is suspended above it. Several Pahlavi texts (for example, the *Kār Nāmak*) call it the king of fires. When established, it is said to be 'enthroned'. And perhaps this explains why the fire-altar frequently depicted on the back of Sasanian coins, sometimes has lion paws. The presence of the latter has never been explained, but surely they were intended to give the altar the appearance of a throne (like Darius's for instance, on the reliefs of Persepolis and elsewhere), and to invest the fire with royal dignity.

In this connection we may quote a passage in Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, 8.3, 11, describing a procession in which the Achaemenian king is preceded by a sky-chariot, a sun-chariot and a fire-chariot².

Preserving the fire alight constantly and making it a crime to allow it to extinguish, is not peculiar to the Iranian religion alone. We find the same practice in the Vestal cult, for instance. The cult of the household fire had probably already assumed this form as early as the Indo-European period, and the Iranians came to inherit it. The ministrations they rendered to the fire were in part at least, older than the Iranian nation. Hence the word they used to designate its purification: *yaoždā*³, is of Indo-European origin.

1 Such is the conclusion of Lady DROWER, *The role of fire...*, p. 89.

2 L. SCHMIDT, *Der Gordische Knoten und seine Lösung*, *Antaios*, I, 1960, 305 sq., draws attention to the sacred character of the chariots, but makes no attempt to interpret the sequence Sky-Sun-Fire-King, whose importance Fr. Cornelis has pointed out to me.

3 DUMÉZIL, A propos de latin 'jus', *RHR*, 134 (197-48), 95-112. There is nothing to be learnt from the article of J. de BIE, *Yaozdā*, *Muséon*, 1955, 145-161. I have so far been unable to consult W. KRISTENSEN, *Leven uit den Dood*, 116, and *Verzamelde Bijdragen*, 239, to which KUIPER refers *III*, 1960, 246, note.

However, in Iran, the care of the fire has certainly undergone a special development. Exactly what this development comprised is yet to be determined. Wikander, in his book, *Feuerpriester*, suggests that there is a fundamental difference between the commonplace rite in which the fire was used to burn the victims or receive the libations, and, the fire preserved for itself which was the object of a cult in its own right. The latter cult was new, and was associated not so much with Mazdā, as with Anāhitā. Unfortunately, he does not succeed in proving that it is specially linked to Anāhitā¹.

We know how the fire is to be cared for, from Pahlavi and Persian sources, as well as from modern usage.

The texts describing the fire-ritual—Tavadia has made a special study of them, *ARW*, 1939, pp. 256 sq.—appear to be both obscure and contradictory. The *Rivāyat* of Kāmdīn Šāpūr (text in *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, 1922, I, p. 67, English trans: *The Persian Rivāyats of Hormazyār Framarz*, 1932; German trans: Tavadia, *art. cit.*, p. 263), states that the flame alone is to be carried to a fire of a higher grade, and from there to the fire of the first grade or *Bahrām* fire. Exactly, Tavadia remarks, as the purified soul, and not the body, proceeds to the Endless Lights. Collecting the flame in this way is analogous to the processes leading to the establishment of a new fire.

But on the other hand, the Pahlavi *Rivāyat* (introducing the *Dātastān ī Dēnik*; text edited by Dhabhar, 1913, p. 115, German trans: Tavadia, *art. cit.*, p. 265) states that: "Once the fire has been used and the work is over, it should be collected. A flame should be taken from it and conveyed elsewhere, and the remainder (*apārīk*) should be carried to the brands of the *Varhrān* fire." It is obvious from this more ancient text, that it is not the flame, but on the contrary, the "remainder" or incandescent embers, which are carried away. How can this difference between the texts be explained?

Tavadia was so embarrassed by it that he hesitated to give his version of the Persian *Rivāyat*. I wonder, whether in fact, this text did not combine two traditions and confuse two rites, which it behoves us to distinguish one from the other.

The first is the *purification* of a fire by refining it. The flame alone is carried away and united with similar ones, in order to establish a superior fire. This is the rite developed by the Parsis.

The second is a *regeneration* of the fire by carrying the used fire (i.e. the incandescent embers without flame) to a fire of a superior grade already in existence. The fire is thus brought back to its origin and to its master, so as to have its strength restored. Tavadia writes, p. 263: "The original idea was that fire is the one and only master which tolerates no rival. That is why, only a cooled fire can be brought to the superior fire, a blazing fire would give it umbrage". This recalls the custom, observed practically the world over, of renewing the fires at the New Year (Tavadia, p. 275), and probably, for the rite to have had its full significance, it must have concluded with the return of the superior fire or part of it, to the hearth from which it came. However, this rite is no longer observed by the Parsis. But it appears to have been of great importance under the Sasanians. We can guess what a vital role it must have played then, for

¹ To establish this link, he bases himself on a *tertium comparationis* viz., the function of the *herpat*, anc. *aēθrapaitī*, whose name he interprets as "master of the fire", by deriving *aēθra* from the root **aidh* as in *aēsma* "wood for burning". But this root can only give *aēθra*, not *aēθra*.

it re-affirmed by a frequently repeated symbolic action, the allegiance owed by the household fires to those of the village, and by the village fires to those of the provinces, and so on, up the whole political pyramid. It is by no means fortuitous, that in the Pahlavi and Persian *Rivāyats*, the superior fire is generally the *Varhrān* (or *Bahrām*) fire, that is to say, the king of fires.

It is understandable, that when the Parsis went into exile, they gave up this rite, together with the political organization it symbolized. Later in the 18th century, when relations with Iran were renewed, the Qadimis tried to re-establish this practice.

But by this time the rite of regeneration had long (at least since the time of Kāmdīn Šāpūr, 1559) become confused, as we have seen, with the rite of purification by refining.

What then do the Parsis do, after a fire has been used, since they do not remove the brands, and extinguishing it is forbidden? They follow the alternative practice enjoined by the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*: they cover up the fire, leaving it to smoulder under the ashes till the following day (Tavadia, *art. cit.*, p. 267).

The rites by which a fire is established have remained long and elaborate.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRE

The sacred fire of the Parsi rites is the product of collecting, purifying and consecrating sixteen different kinds of profane fires that have been used for a variety of purposes and are more or less defiled by them.

The process that is common to all sixteen kinds of fire is a series of successive ignitions varying in number from 35 to 91 according to the kind of fire. These ignitions are made on the ground, in the open air. By the side of the fire being ministered to, and in the direction of the wind, is placed a small heap of easily combustible substance such as sandalwood, frankincense, etc., to which the fire is soon transmitted. Another ignition is started by the side of it, and so on.

The fires are classified into sixteen different kinds of fire, as we have just said, but they can also be divided into three main categories according to the processes that apply to them.

The first category corresponds with the first kind of fire—that used for burning a corpse (according to the Hindu religion). It is an extremely impure fire and should be collected either by a non-Zoroastrian, or by a special procedure: a perforated ladle containing the usual combustible material, sandalwood or frankincense, etc., is held over what remains of the funeral-pyre. The combustible is ignited by the heat of the fire, not by the flame, which should not touch the ladle. This new fire is then deposited on the ground, in a place exposed to the wind, and undergoes a process of 91 successive ignitions.

The fires in the second and third category are not impure and collection is by bodily lifting up a portion of the burning mass. The second category comprises the fires of different tradesmen, from the potter to the shepherd (the list has varied in the course of the years), as well as the fire produced by the fall of lightning. These fires are said to be neutral¹.

¹ However, those of tradesmen could be impure: TAVADIA, *ARW*, 36, 260.

It may be wondered why, if the object of all these manipulations is to produce the purest fire possible, it should be necessary to use the most impure fire imaginable—that which has burnt a corpse. Perhaps the reason is that fire too, has to be freed from defilement, or *redeemed*. This recalls the process of delivering the light, practised by the Manichaeans, and was perhaps its prototype.

The third category corresponds with the sixteenth kind of fire, which is neither defiled nor neutral, but already somewhat sacred, since it is the household fire of a pious Zoroastrian. This fire is ministered in the same way as a neutral fire with one point of difference, justifying our putting it in a separate category: after the fire has been purified by 40 successive ignitions, there should be added to it, two fires produced artificially by friction, one by the friction of flints, the other by that of pieces of wood. What is the explanation of this? Perhaps that the household fire, though sacred, needs to be rejuvenated, hence the addition to it of new fires (newly produced). Whatever it is, the fires are united into one and go through a further process of 144 ignitions, may be to blend them perfectly.

These processes just described are carried out by laymen. They are then repeated from beginning to end by two priests. The sixteen fires are at last ready for their consecration.

The consecration, which is likewise performed by two priests, entails collecting a portion of each fire and reciting over each the *Yasna* and *Vidēvdāt*. This rite is repeated once a day as many times as there have been purifications (that is to say, 91 times for a fire taken from a funeral-pyre, etc.), and is in honour of the divinity presiding over that particular day.

Since the rite is repeated for the 16 kinds of fire, the ceremony would take 1128 days to be completed if there was only one pair of priests to perform it. But generally, there are more than one pair to share the work, so that the ceremony lasts only about a year.

Now, the fires thus collected, purified and consecrated have to be united. This is done at the end of the year, on the first of the five intercalary days, in other words, at the New Year, an appropriate time for a rite which corresponds with New Year festivals of fire, the luminaries and the winter solstice, etc., celebrated by so many people, throughout the world.

The united fires then undergo a final consecration, in an appropriate place. For 33 consecutive days the *Yasna* and *Vidēvdāt* are recited. Finally, the fire is carried to the fire-temple, where it is 'enthroned' in a chamber that has been consecrated before-hand by the recitation on three consecutive days of the *Yasna* and *Vidēvdāt*¹. The stone slab on which the fire-censer stands, and where the fire is fed five times a day and preserved indefinitely, is spoken of as its throne and a crown is suspended over it.

This, in broad outline, is the rite by which a *Bahrām* fire is established, the most important and sacred of all fires. There are only eight of them for the whole Parsi community, 4 in Bombay, 2 in Surat, 1 in Navsari and 1 (the oldest) in Udvada.

An *Ādarān* fire, which suffices for the temple of a village where about ten Zoroastrian families reside, has a simpler but similar rite to that described above.

However, the fire of the third grade, the *Dādgāh*, a simple household fire, is carried to a little temple (*Dar i Mihr* or *Agiari*) in a rite that lasts only four days.

1 According to the *Rivāyat*, DHABHAR, 66, a *gōspand* was sacrificed on these days.

The use of the railways was long forbidden to Parsi priests, as they supposedly entailed the contact of fire with water, see Modi, *apud* M. Unvala, *Darab Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, p. VII.

In the light of the foregoing, we can better interpret what were Zoroaster's alleged actions, while performing the *pairi-yaoždā* rite "cleaning up (as gardeners say) around the fire". It could only mean he was bringing back to the fire the unburnt fragments remaining around it.¹

The meritorious deed, *par excellence*, for a Mazdean king, was the establishment of a fire, that is to say, having a sanctuary built, appointing its *hērpats* and endowing it with revenues.²

Several fires were supposed to have been set up by legendary kings. But we know of fires founded by Artaxšēr, Šāpūr I and II, Kavād and Xosrau I and II. They were usually founded at the time of the coronation or to mark some other pompous occasion.

The coronation itself may not always have taken place in the fire-temple³, but we know from Ibn Xordādbih, that after the coronation at Ctésiphon, the king used to make a pilgrimage to the *Gušnas* fire in Āzarbaijān.

A king might also endow existing fires.

A powerful citizen like Mihr-Narseh⁴ could likewise erect or endow a fire; it was not the prerogative of royalty.

And finally, the temple was open to king, nobles and common people alike for purposes of prayer or making an offering. Artaxšēr went to pray before the *Farnbag* fire before going into battle with Artabān. Pērōz did likewise during a famine, etc. The nobles entreated the *Burzēn* fire to ward off an attack by the Arabs. Thanksgiving was also made to the fire after a victory. Or the people might flock to the temple in gratitude for a fiscal relief.

The light of the sun should not be allowed to fall on the fire, because the power of the fire is lessened thereby (Dhabhar, 56). For the same reason a fire should not be carried to a fire, unless it is allowed to cool first.

C. FIRE MONUMENTS

1 Towers

Three towers in Fārs were perhaps fire-temples, namely the Zindān i Soleimān at Pasargadae, the Ka'ba i Zardušt at Naqš i Rostam, and the tower of Nūrābād. The first two must have looked very much alike. The Zindān was perhaps⁵ built by Cyrus, destroyed by

1 Or, in the light of ritualistic practices, it could also mean that he was cleaning the stone-slab, on which the fire-censer is placed, a rite resorted to at the commencement of every *Yasna* and offering of *Bōi* to the *Bahrām* fire.

2 For all that follows I rely chiefly on K. ERDMANN, *Das Iranische Feuerheiligtum*, Leipzig 1941, 36 sq., which may be consulted for references. See also GODARD, *Les monuments du feu, Athār e Iran*, 1938; CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*², Copenhagen 1944, 160 sq., and WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien u. Iran*, Lund 1946.

3 Like the election of Yazdakart III at Staxr.

4 See below, p. 194.

5 As suggested by W. HINZ, *Geistige Arbeit*, 9 (1942), 1sq. (cited by K. SCHIPPMANN, *Iranische Feuerheiligtümer*, p. 208).

Gaumāta and replaced, by order of Darius, by the Ka'ba; that is, in case they were places of worship, *āyadana*. But it is still debated whether they were such, as Stronach recently inferred¹, or tombs, an opinion upheld by Eilers². If the Ka'ba was a fire-temple, then it might be that of Anāhitā at Staxr, which Mas'ūdi writes was at a distance of one *parasang* from the town (which tallies with the distance between the town and Naqš i Rustam). The description he gives of it does not exactly apply to the Ka'ba, but no other ruin has been found near Staxr which might be the sanctuary of the goddess. We must therefore, with Mlle Chaumont³, confess our ignorance. The question could be settled if it was certain that these towers were represented on coins of Persis, between the king and a standard, with Ōhrmazd hovering above. But Stronach denies it⁴.

A third possibility appeared, at least for the Ka'ba, with the deciphering of the Šāpūr inscription engraved upon it, namely, that it was a *bun-xānak*, i.e. a "house of (documents of) foundation". But it is not certain if the term applies to this building.

The third tower, at Nūrābād, was built later since mortar was used, it may date from the third century B.C., and it was more probably, than the other two, a fire-temple, for it had stairs leading up to the roof, on which Ghirshman⁵ saw traces of two fire-altars. This might then be the tower shown on the coins⁶.

The purpose of the so-called fire-tower at Jūr (Fīruzābād) is uncertain⁷.

2 The temple of Dahan i Ghulāmān in Sīstān is absolutely unique in its lay-out. It is still doubtful, despite Scerrato's study⁸, if it goes back to the Achaemenian period. A large court contained in its centre a row of three rectangular altars, 3 m. by 2m. 15, with traces of fire inside. On the West side of the court a great quantity of bone fragments prove that animal sacrifice were performed. On the East and North sides of the court were two rows of seven altars. Two different attempts have been made by Gnoli at explaining this unique ensemble.⁹

3 Terraces

At Masjid i Soleimān in Xūzistān it appears from recent excavations¹⁰ that the terrace was used as a sanctuary in Parthian times.

1 D. STRONACH, "Urartian and Achaemenian tower temples", *JNES*, 1967, 278 sq.

2 W. EILERS, *Zeitschr. f. Assyriologie*, 53 (1959), 254; 17. Deutsch Orientalistentag (1968), Suppl. zu *ZDMG* 1970, 971.

3 Marie-Louise CHAUMONT, "Le culte d'Anahita à Staxr et les premiers Sassanides" *RHR* 153 (1958), 155 sq.

4 D. STRONACH, "The Kūh-i Sharak Fire Altar", *JNES*, 1966, 220 sq.

5 R. GHIRSHMAN, *Syria*, 1944-45, 175sq. But the traces of fire altars are only mentioned in a letter to K. Erdmann, referred to in Schippmann's *Iran. Feuerheiligtümer*, p. 156.

6 As suggested by SCHIPPMANN, *Iranische Feuerheiligtümer*, p. 156.

7 K. SCHIPPMANN, *ibidem*, pp. 100 sq.

8 U. SCERRATO, *East and West* 16 (1966), 9 sq.

9 Firstly in *La Persia e il mondo greco-romano*, Accad. dei Lincei, Quad. 67, 1966, 471 sq.; secondly in an appendix to U. SCERRATO's *L'edificio sacro di Dahan-i Ghulaman* (announced, with a summary, in Gh. GNOLI, *Ricerche storiche sul Sistan antico*, 1967, 107 sq.

10 R. GHIRSHMAN, *Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des Inscr. et Belles-L.*, 1968.

The sanctuary of Bard i Nišandeh, 10 km. to the North-east of Masjid i Soleimān, was made up of a large terrace, 162 by 94 meter, with a square podium, which was rebuilt first in that same shape¹, then under the Parthians (1st or 2nd century A.D.) in a rectangular shape. The fire was kept in a small cell.

At Šami, South-east of Masjid i Soleimān, 45 km. North of Malamir, there was a similar cultic platform, in the open air.

The purpose of the terrace called Taxt i Nišin at Jur (Fīrūzābād) is doubtful.

Other terraces are found at Taxt i Rustam and Taxt i Kaika'us in Iraq i 'Ajami, both undatable.

4 Naos-temenos temples

At Kangavara, South of the Hamadan-Behistūn road, columns with Doric capitals remain from the temenos of the temple of Artemis, which according to Isidorus of Charax had been founded by Darius and must therefore have been a temple of Anāhitā, rebuilt in the Greek style before the 1st century B.C.

The temple at Xurha had Ionic capitals²: that of Staxr had Corinthian ones³.

5 At Panjikent in Sogdiana, temples, immediately prior to the Muslim conquest, differ in their architecture both from the Buddhist or Christian sanctuaries and from all the fire-temples known in Iran. Belenitsky writes⁴, that "the temples were a complex of buildings connected by large courts; the main buildings were erected on stylobates, inside the courts. They were tetrastyle opening on the East, with a passage leading to the cella situated on the West and surrounded on three sides by corridors or covered galleries. Etc."

6 Square rooms

At Susa a sanctuary—no trace of which is now extant—was explored by Dieulafoy in 1886, 4 km. North-east of the Achaemenian palace. A square room, 10 m. by 10, with four central columns probably surrounding the fire altar, was itself surrounded by a corridor and opened through a two-columned porch into a square court, 18 m. by 18 in which could be performed public ceremonies.

At Persepolis, some 300 yards (not "at the foot", as Erdmann writes)⁵ from the terrace, lie ruins referred to by modern scholars as the Frātadāra-temple. There was a square room with four columns in the middle and surrounded by a corridor, as at Susa.

1 According to GHIRSHMAN, *Syria*, 1964, 301 sq., 1965, 289 sq., the first terrace was Achaemenian but SCHIPPMMANN points out, *Iran. Feuerheiligtümer*, p. 252, that there is no definite proof that it was earlier, than the Seleucid-Parthian period.

2 VANDEN BERGHE, *Archeologie de l'Iran ancien*, 1959, pl. 160 c.

3 E. HERZFELD, *Iran in the ancient East*, 1941, 285.

4 A. BELENITSKY, *Asie centrale*, 1968, 185 sq.

5 K. ERDMANN, *Das iranische Feuerheiligtum*, 1941, 29.

It is doubtful if the Kūh i Xwāja sanctuary in Sīstān goes back to Achaemenian times, as Gullini deduces from the thickness of the bricks and from the ceramics¹. There was probably a sanctuary in the Parthian period with a fire-room surrounded by a corridor. Part of the room was replaced under the Sasanians by a *cahār tāq*, see below.

At Hatra in Mesopotamia, in the great temple² built in Parthian times, there is, on the West side of the southern *iwān*, a square room within a square room.

At Surx Kotal in Bactriana, "we are reduced to conjecture as to the purpose of the sanctuary," writes D. Schlumberger³. "From what we know of Iranian cults in general, the lay-out of the temple and its resemblance to that of Susa indicate a fire sanctuary. This conjecture is corroborated by the presence of a stone podium, with stairs of access, in the middle of the cella, a podium large enough to serve for cultic actions."

7 Vēh-Šāpūr

Adjoining Šāpūr's palace at Vēh-Šāpūr, a city he is likely to have founded after his victory over Valerian in 260, is a large square room, the pavement of which is 7 m. below ground level, with a flight of stairs leading down to it from the palace. It was probably covered with a flat ceiling, Achaemenian fashion, for there are remnants of bull protomes on top of one of the walls. In the room a sort of side-walk runs along the four walls, determining a smaller, depressed square in the middle. This was connected by a system of pipes with a tank outside the Western corner of the room and at a much higher level. The room, on the whole, since no traces of a fire-altar have been found *in situ*, looks less like a fire-temple than like a temple to the waters, or Anāhitā⁴, or, as I should humbly suggest, like a bath, very aptly situated underground, for the sake of coolness. As a fire-temple it would be unique in type.

A fire-cult was perhaps performed elsewhere, namely at a distance of 525 m., on both sides of a statue of Šāpūr erected in 266.

8 *Cahār tāq* ("four arches"). In this form, predominant in the Sasanian period, the square room has lost its four central pillars or columns and consists of four arches supporting a dome.

9 a) Great ensembles, containing a *cahār tāq* with a corridor.

At Taxt i Soleimān (Šīz), in Āzarbaijān, with its remarkable lake on its circular plateau, a *cahār tāq* surrounded by a corridor was part of a palace probably built by Xosrau I; there are also remains of a fire-altar⁵.

At Qasr i Šīrin, the Sasanian palace in Kurdistān, it is uncertain whether the *cahār tāq* was surrounded with a corridor.

Kūh i Xwāja, Sīstān, had in the Sasanian period a *cahār tāq* with corridor.

1 G. GULLINI, *Architettura iranica*, 1964, 240 sq. Discussion by SCHIPPMANN, *Iran. Feuerheil.*, p. 60.

2 A temple, not a palace: cf. D. SCHLUMBERGER, *Der hellenisierte Orient*, 1969, 134 sq.

3 *ibid.*, 62 sq.

4 R. GHIRSHMAN, *Parthes et Sassanides*, 1962, 149.

5 R. NAUMANN, "Sasanidische Feueraltäre", *Iranica Antiqua* VII, 1967, 73 sq.

Kunār Siyāh must have been one of the chief centres of Persis in Sasanian times¹. The Varhrān fire or provincial fire was probably kept there. An enclosure, 70 m. by 45, contained at its centre a cahār tāq surrounded with a corridor for the fire ritual, at one of its angles a fire-chamber for keeping the fire, and at another, several rooms for the priests or the fuel.

b) Smaller ensembles

The monument of Xurmā Yak in Fars is of more modest dimensions and must have housed only an *Ādarān* or village fire. Such was also the case of the Tall i Jangi in Fars, which Herzfeld had described and Erdmann commented on² before Vanden Berghe visited it and gave a thorough study of it.³ A central cahār tāq with a cupola and surrounded with a barrel-vaulted corridor with four small cupolas at its angles was connected on both sides by a wall to small chambers for keeping the fire and the fuel, and housing the priests. These buildings were perhaps made by Mihr-Narseh, minister to Varhrān V⁴.

Other instances of architectural ensembles are found at Kala i Duxtar near Qum,⁵ at Šahristān in Sīstān⁶, and at Šahristānak at the border of Māzandarān⁷.

On the whole, of the 37 cahār tāqs known, 19 are surrounded by a corridor.

c) Isolated cahār tāqs without a corridor

Such a structure is found on many high places. Thus at Neisar, Iraq i 'Ajami, probably built by Artaxšēr I⁸; in several places of the Jirreh valley in Fars (near the Sarvistan palace), at the Coran gate at Shiraz; at Natanz in Iraq i 'Ajami, etc. The lack of a corridor, as well as the lofty situation, allowed the fire to be seen from afar. In addition to that kind of monstrance canopy, a room with closed walls was necessary to preserve the fire. An instance of this has been found at Tang i Cak Cak, in Fārs⁹.

The distribution of the known cahār tāqs in the different provinces is as follows. Out of a total of 37, 19 are in Fārs, 6 in Iraq i 'Ajami and 6 in Kīrmān. Xuzistān has 2, Sīstān, Kurdis-tān, Āzarbaijān and Xorāsān one each.

d) Altars

The two altars at Pasargadae may have served, one for the fire, the other for animal sacrifices.

There are other altars in the region of Naqš i Rustam in Fārs. At Naqš i Rustam itself, not far from the investiture relief of Artaxšēr, stand two twin-altars hewn in the rock. They have often been considered of Achaemenian date, but it is now generally recognized that they cannot

1 L. VANDEN BERGHE, "Récentes découvertes de monuments sassanides dans le Fars", *Iranica Antiqua* I, 1961, 163 sq.

2 K. ERDMANN, *Das iran. Feuerheiligtum*, 1941, 59 sq. and fig. 14.

3 L. VANDEN BERGHE, *loc. cit.*, 182 sq.

4 Cf. above, p. 64.

5 ERDMANN, 55; SIROUX, *Athar-i-Iran*, 1938, 113 sq.

6 ERDMANN, 56.

7 *ibid.*, SIROUX, *loc. cit.*, 123 sq.

8 K. SCHIPPMANN, *Die iran. Feuerheil.*, p. 442

9 L. VANDEN BERGHE, *Archéologie del'Iran ancien*, 1959, pl. 19.

be earlier than the Sasanian period, since they imitate an architectural structure, the *cahār tāq*, which does not appear until that time. A third altar of the same type has been found 40 km. North-west of the other two, at Kūh i Sharak, and studied by Stronach¹. And two fire-holes in the vicinity of the Naqš i Rustam altars have been discovered and studied by Schippmann².

D. LOCATION OF THE MAIN FIRES

The *Farnbag*, *Gušnasp* and *Burzēn-Mihr* fires were connected respectively to the priests, the warriors and the husbandmen.

The *Farnbag* fire was at first in Xwarizm,³ until in the VIth century B.C. Vištāsp, according to tradition, transported it to Kābulistān, or, perhaps, to a territory which in the VIth century came to be part of the oriental toparchy. Then Xosrau I in the VIth century A.D. transported it to the ancient sanctuary of Kariyan in Fārs. The latter however has not yet been identified⁴.

The *Gušnasp* fire was the ancient fire of the Magi (in Media). *Bullae* have recently been found in great numbers at Taxt i Soleimān (Šiz), dating approximately from 400 to 425, with the inscription: "*magupat*, of the sanctuary of the *Gušnasp* fire"⁵. This fire was therefore situated there, at that time at least. Already Artaxšēr sent gifts to Šiz. Varhrān V sent in the jewels of his beheaded Hephtalite enemy. Xosrau I and II deposited there the booty of their victories. According to the *Dēnkart*, 406 and 412 sq., Šāpūr ordered a copy of the Avesta to be deposited at *Ganj-i šēcikān* (=Šiz). Even if the information is incorrect, it implies that at the time of its redaction under Xosrau⁶, Šiz was already famous as the religious centre of the empire. In short, the *Gušnasp* fire "was the symbol of the monarchic and religious unity, the symbol of the Sasanian kingship strengthened by its alliance with the clergy."⁷

The *Burzēn-Mihr* fire never ranked with the other two. The peasants, unlike the king and the clergy, never possessed any sovereignty. Their fire seems to have been on mount Rēvand, North-west of Nēv-Šāpūr, in Xorāsān. But it has not yet been localized⁸.

E. FIRE IN NATIONAL LIFE

The faithful did little more than stream past the fire, along the corridor surrounding the fire chamber. It seems however, that there were also certain ceremonies in which the fire was exhibited, judging from the *cahār tāqs* which were open on all four sides and situated on hilltops as if to be seen, at night, from as far as possible. However, no text speaks of such a usage.

Procopius mentions a fire oracle, but that is all we know about it. Mazdak claimed in front of Kavād, and so did Bishop Maruthas in front of Yazdakart, to be conversant with the fire (an accomplice was hidden under the altar).

1 D. STRONACH, "The Kūh-i Sharak Fire Altar", *JNES*, 1966, 217 sq.

2 K. SCHIPPMANN, *Die iran. Feuerheil.*, pp. 185 sq.

3 Gh. GNOLI, "La sede orientale del fuoco Farnbāg", *RSO*, 1965, 301 sq.

4 K. SCHIPPMANN, *Die iran. Feuerheil.*, pp. 86 sq.

5 R. NAUMANN, *ILN* 16-1-65, 24.

6 Below, p. 70.

7 A. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*², 167.

8 K. SCHIPPMANN, *loc. cit.*, p. 29.

The fires formed part of national life and had hence to share in the vicissitudes of the State.

There were a great number of fires. We are told by an Arabian author, that Xosrau Parvēz established 352 of them, which is perhaps an exaggeration. But we know of two sanctuaries at Fīrūzābād, Staxr, Kazerūn, the Gates of Šāpūr, and three at Šīrāz, etc., while the inscription of Šāpūr I on the Ka'ba mentions the founding of five *Varhrān* fires.

The fires were often named after their founders, thus the *Narsiya* fire was erected by Narseh. And in the same way a person could be named after a fire: one of the wives of Šāpūr I was called Ātur-Anāhīt "the fire of Anāhītā", and many names in Ātur have been attested, for instance, on intaglios¹.

The fires were not all of the same grade. They formed a hierarchy corresponding with that of the priests who served or administered them. But this hierarchy was a heterogeneous one and quite probably it was not possible to impose a simple structure on it for long. The actual criterion of the classification was either political, geographical or social.

According to one theory the three fires *Farnbag*, *Gušnasp* and *Burzēn-Mihr* represented the three social classes instituted by Zoroaster's three sons: priests, warriors, agriculturers. On the other hand, the *Farnbag* fire seems to have been a Persian fire, whilst the *Gušnasp* fire was the old fire of the Magians (of Media). We unfortunately do not know for sure where the *Farnbag* fire was situated.

The two versions of the *Bundahišn* differ on this subject: the Indian one speaks of Kabul, the Iranian one is corrupted. All the same, the latter, according to the possible interpretation of it as given by Jackson², situates the fire in Kāriyān in Persia, on a source of naphtha. It is this fire that Artaxšēr visited before fighting against Artabān.

The *Gušnasp* fire was probably situated in Šīz, (Taxt ī Soleimān) in Āzarbaijān. It was from all the fires in the kingdom, the principal one, and it is possible that it had replaced the fire *Farnbag* at this high rank when Artaxšēr had beaten Artabān and conquered the empire. In fact, Artaxšēr sent some gifts there. Varhrān V, Xosrau I and Xosrau II had deposited there the spoils of their victories. It is also there, according to the *Dēnkart*, that Šāpūr I had a copy of the Avesta deposited. Even if this is inexact, it presupposes an established reputation as a religious centre in the empire. In short, writes Christensen³ very correctly, this fire was the symbol of monarchic and religious unity, the symbol of Sasanian royalty, fortified by its alliance with the clergy. According to the *letter* of Tōsar, the Sasanians had reserved for themselves the right to maintain in Ganjāk (=Ganzak=Šīz) the fire symbolizing the supreme power.

The *Burzēn-Mihr* fire has never had the rank of any of the other two. The peasants had never been, like the king and the clergy, holders of sovereignty. Their fire was on mount Rēvand, to the North-west of Nēv-Šāpūr⁴.

¹ HORN-STEINDORFF, 29 sq.

² The Location of the Farnbāg Fire, *JAOS*, 1921, 81 sq., cited by CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran*..., 165. Cf. ERDMANN, *Iran. Feuerheil.*, 42.

³ *L'Iran*..., 167.

⁴ On the fire in Armenia, v. *ERE*, I, 796 sq.

Besides these three individual designations, the fires were classified into two categories: the *Varhrân* fires and the *Ādurân* fires. The latter were merely village fires and present no problem, but the *Varhrân* fires were provincial fires and the question arises whether these did not in fact include one or more of the principal individual fires, *Farnbag*, *Gušnasp* and *Burzēn-Mihr*. For it is hardly admissible that the fires whose foundation Šāpūr commemorates on the walls of the Ka'ba, and the *Varhrân* fire (if it is one)¹ depicted on the royal coins, should have been inferior to any other. In other words, "*Varhrân* fire" was the generic term, in no way precluding the individual name.

F. ORDEALS

Ātar, the Fire, was invoked, (Y 62.4), as Agni was in Vedic India, to obtain eloquence².

Fire was also an instrument of ordeal. Ordeal or the invocation of God's judgement, is no longer practised by Mazdeans, but it is abundantly attested in Pahlavi books, and in at least two passages of the *Avesta*. In § 3 of Yt 12, Ahura Mazdā orders the preparation of a *varah* (Avestan term for "ordeal") in which fire, *barəsman*, butter and the sap of plants are to be utilized. Chapter 4 of the *Vidēvdāt* mentions two other kinds of ordeal, one (46) by boiling water, the other by water containing brimstone and molten gold (54 sq.). The *Gāthās* which make several allusions to a future ordeal, contain one (Y 32.7) to ordeal as an actual practice. Tradition (*Dēnkart* VII, chapter V, 4-6) attributes this practice to Zoroaster. According to Zātspram, the prophet himself submitted to ordeal by fire, to prove the excellence of his religion.

This appears to be a legendary projection of an actual practice, of which there is one probable historical example: under the reign of Šāpūr II, Āturpāt, son of Mahrspand, in order to prove the truth of his doctrine, had molten metal poured upon his breast. The event is reported in the *Dēnkart* and in other Pahlavi texts, see Christensen, *L'Iran* . . . , 304.

According to the *Dēnkart* again, (VII, V, 4), there were 33 kinds of ordeal. The *Šāyast nē Šāyast* distinguished six 'hot' ordeals (by fire, molten metal, boiling water, etc.) and some 'cold' ordeals (poison, etc.).³

Ordeal was partly in the nature of an oath and partly in the nature of a divination. The expression "to drink brimstone water" has survived in the Persian language as synonymous with "to take an oath".

It is worth pointing out, that the *Avesta* makes several allusions to a particular form of oath-taking and one to divination. In Yt 5. 76-78, a divine favour is sought by stating a truth: "If it be true that . . . , grant me . . ." This was equivalent to the Indian *satyakriyā*.

In Yt 14. 43-45, when two armies confront each other, four feathers are thrown into the air between them. It is understood that the position in which they fall indicates the side which will be victorious.

1 Cf. p. 190.

2 KUIPER, *Indo-Iran. Journal*, 1960, 248 sq.

3 On ordeal in general, see ERE, 9, *Ordeal*, 507 sq.; on Iranian ordeal, see EDWARDS' article, *ibid.*, 524 sq. Ordeal is confirmed among the Western Turks in the 6th century: (*Fragm. histor. Graec.*, IV, 225 sq.) and among the Mongols in the 13th century (Plan Carpin, *Historia Mongolorum*, ed. G. Pule, *Studi it. filol. indo-iranica*, IX, 1913, 61 b).

G. MYTHS AND LEGENDS ABOUT FIRE

There are several myths and legends centering around the *Farnbag*, *Gušnasp* and *Burzēn-Mihr* fires. The natural phenomenon known as "Saint Elmo's fire" seems to have given rise to the legend that during the reign of Tahmuras, when mankind emigrated "on the back of the cow Sarsök" into other parts of the world, and when the storm threw into the water the sacred fires placed on the back of this cow, three fires arose in their place, which shone and lighted mankind until the sea had been crossed (*Bd*, ch. 18).

When Yima was slain, the *Farnbag* fire saved the "royal Fortune" from the serpent Dahāk. According to the *Kārnāmak*, 132 sq., Artaxšēr was saved from being poisoned at his wife's hand, by the *Farnbag* fire which had taken the shape of a red cock.

When Kay Xosrau destroyed all the ancient idols, the fire *Gušnasp* alighted on his horse's mane (an allusion to the name *Gušnasp*, *asp* meaning horse).

Finally, the *Burzēn-Mihr* fire accomplished many miracles under Vištāsp, when Zoroaster proclaimed the new religion.

These traditions are obscure as A. Pagliaro remarks in *Notes on the History of the sacred fires of Zoroastrianism*¹. In regard to their origin, he theorises that all three were connected with Mithra. While this is manifestly so in the case of the third fire, whose name unambiguously means "the exalted Mithra"; it is more doubtful in the case of the other two. The fire-temples do bear the name: *dar i Mihr* or "house of Mithra", but this may equally signify that the fire is assimilated to Mithra or that the edifice is used, not solely for purposes of the cult, but also (and such is the actual case) for the administration of justice. For Mithra has not entirely lost his function as god of contracts, and he is still one of the three judges in the next world.

The three fires are not mentioned in the *Avesta*, but there are allusions to them in the *Sīrōza*, 1.9, Darmesteter *Z.-A.*, I, 152.

The threefold classification considered so far (into *Farnbag*, *Gušnasp* and *Burzēn-Mihr* fires) and the twofold (into *Ādarān* and *Bahrām* fires) pertain only to ceremonial fires. There is another, more general classification, reflecting a physical speculation, which is at least as old as the other two, for it is attested already in the *Avesta*. It distinguishes five fires (*Av.*, Y 17.11; *Bd*, chapter 18): 1. The *Bərəzisavah* fire, which shines before the Lord; 2. the *Vohufryāna* fire in the bodies of men and animals; 3. the *Urvāzišta* fire in plants; 4. the *Vāzišta* fire which battles against *Spənjagrya* in the clouds; 5. the *Spəništa* fire which is used for work.

This classification supposes a physical doctrine of fire as a universal principle. And in fact, except for the fifth kind, the domestic fire, which is therefore a useful fire, if somewhat sacred too, from its name (*spəništa* "very beneficent"), the other four form a system when read in ascending order. For the fire of lightning produces rain which nourishes plants, from which it can be retrieved by the friction of two pieces of wood; but plants also nourish men and animals, and in them the fire is found as vital heat. Finally, "the fire which shines before the Lord" as the culminating term of this series, can be taken as the human or animal soul after its ascension into heaven (originally, in the flame of the funeral-pyre), conforming with the astrobiological myth which situates the bull's seed in the moon and that of men in the sun². The

¹ *Oriental Studies*... Pavry, Oxford 1933, 378.

² All the same, it is simpler to interpret the fires "which shine before the Lord" as the altar fires. (Note of correction).

connection between fire and the human race also finds illustration in the fact that *Apqm napāt*, the fire kindled in the waters, is described, (*Yt* 19.52), as the god who created man and who fashioned men.

These speculations are very ancient, even if they have been modified in the course of the ages. It is no mere accident if India, chiefly in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad, also knows three kinds of sacrificial fires (*gārhapatya*, the domestic fire; *anvāhārya*—*dakṣina*, the fire which repels demons; *āhavanīya*, fire of the oblation to the gods)¹ and of five kinds of natural fires (*asau lokah*, the celestial world, from which Soma is born; *parjanyaḥ*, the storm or rain; *pṛthivī*, the earth, from which food comes; *puruṣaḥ*, man, from whom sperm comes; *yosd*, woman, from whom the embryo comes). These speculations are similar to those surviving in Iran².

Certain legends about the origin of the fire cult were current during the Middle Ages among the Christians of the East³. According to one legend, related in the *Book of the Treasure Cave* (in Syriac) and the *Book of Adam and Eve*, Nimrud seeing fire springing from the earth, instituted its cult⁴. Other legends connect the fire cult to the gift Jesus gave the Magi in exchange for the gifts they had brought to Bethlehem for him. A Uigur text found at Bulayiq near Turfan, recounts that he gave them a stone, which they grew tired of carrying and finally threw into a well. As they were proceeding on their way they saw a great glow in the sky and turned round to find a flame rising from the well. They understood then that the stone was divine and that the fire was worthy of adoration⁵.

Mas'ūdī writes, *Golden Meadows* IV, pp. 79. sq., that it was Mary who rewarded the Magi for their gifts with a round loaf. The Magi put it under a stone and it disappeared into the depths of the earth. They dug a well and two jets of flame issued from it⁶.

These legends were widespread in Syriac, Ethiopian, Arabic, etc., and Marco Polo was familiar with them⁷.

The *Bundahišn* (Ankī, 123) gives another, less sophisticated doctrine about the five fires and their "food". The two classifications persist in the *Rivāyats*, which however, designate the *Farn*- fire by a non-Persian equivalent: *Xvarn*- in turn corrupted into *Xordād*. The non-Persian term : *Ātur Xvarrah* was already in use in the *Bd*.

3. HAOMA

Haoma is much more than a plant or juice, it is a god. Sacrifices were offered to it and certain parts of the blood sacrifice were allotted to it (*Y* 11. 4-5). Being a god, it is killed by pressing. The Brāhmaṇas say the same of Soma : *devo hi somo ghnanti vā enam etad yad abhiṣunvanti* (*Śatapatha*, 3.9, 4.17): "Soma is god; pressing it they slay it".

1 These fires, according to DUMÉZIL, *L'idéologie*, 89, correspond with the 3rd, 2nd and 1st function, respectively and hence with the *Burzēn-Mihr*, *Gušnasp* and *Farnbag* fires. Recent bibliography in DUMÉZIL's, *Hommages à Hermann*, Brussels 1960, 321.

2 TAVADIA, Middle Persian Evidence for the Avestan conception of Fire, *Studia* W. Geiger, Leipzig 1931, 237, has tried in vain to 'verify' the theory advanced by HERTEL in a series of works, *Die Arische Feuerlehre*, etc.

3 Ugo MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Le leggende orientali sui magi evangelici*, Rome 1952.

4 MONNERET, 112 sq.

5 MONNERET, 69 sq.

6 MONNERET, 71, 105. Other texts, *ibid.*, 106, relate that Mary gave the Magi some of the Child's swaddling clothes. When thrown into the fire, the clothes were not consumed by the flames.

7 MONNERET, 81 sq.

The Haoma sacrifice is therefore the sacrifice of a dying god to a god. What is more, after the oblation, the priest and the faithful consume the victim in pledge of everlasting life and resurrection. The conception seems to us, as it did to Zaehner¹, strikingly similar to that of the Catholic Mass.

We should, however, at once correct this impression by adding that the two religions greatly differ in the importance they lay on this idea. What is central to the Christian liturgy, is just glimpsed at in the Mazdean ritual, which moreover bears no reference to a historical fact like the crucifixion of Christ.

After a study of texts and legends, we can say that the *haoma* sacrifice, or the *Yasna* ceremony as a whole, is essentially a life-giving operation.

One aspect of this function is procreation. The heroes who were the first—according to the *Hōm Yašt*—to press the *haoma*, each obtained a progeny as his only reward.

For the same reason Zurvān sacrificed for 1000 years, and in India (*Taitt. Brāhmaṇa*. 2.1, 2.1-3) Prajāpati offered up *ghee* to the fire. Just as the most dreaded adversary of Prajāpati is Mṛtyu “death” (Sylvain Lévi, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, pp. 18 sq.), so is Haoma the enemy of the *daēvas* and death. *Hōm* used to be administered to the dying as a *viaticum*, being the food of immortality. Likewise the Vedic bards who drank the Soma became immortal. According to the *Brāhmaṇas* (S. Lévi, 88), the sacrifice elevates the sacrificer to the celestial world.

The battle against the *daēvas* is waged chiefly by striking the mortar with the pestle, and likewise in India, for the *Maitr.*, 4.8.1 says: “Manu had vases, when they were struck, all the Asuras ceased to exist on that day”. A different interpretation is given tardily in the *Dabistān*: the sound of the pestle has an eschatological significance. It recalls, or announces the thoughts, words and deeds which will take place on the advent of the Saviour.

The vivifying nature of the *Yasna* is continually demonstrated during the ceremony—by the bringing together in the same rite, of the water, barsom and crescent-shaped stands, the implication of which we have already noted, by the pomegranate twig, a banal symbol of fertility, and by the milk, precisely called *jīvam* “living”. Moreover, the thrice repeated ceremonial process of pouring water into the haoma mortar is interpreted by the *Dātastān ī Dēnik* 48.33, as demonstrating to the world the three processes of evaporation, rain formation and condensation. In the case of the crescent moon, there appears to be a confusion between its ‘natural value’ and its ‘social value’. Modi writes, (*Ceremonies*, 262), that the moon and its crescent give an idea of growth. But according to *Dātastān ī Dēnik*, 48.17, the crescent is present during the rite as the emblem of royalty. It is true, of course, that the fire is a king, and that the crescent appears in the iconography of Sasanian kings: from which comes this interpretation of the *Dātastān*.

The *Yasna* is most often performed for the benefit of the dead—understandably so. And it is for the dead that the offering of the *darūn* (bread) and *gōšhudō* (*ghee*), is specially intended, a rite which as we have seen, may constitute a separate ceremony addressed to Srōs, the psychopomp archangel.

¹ He has twice shown, *Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths*, London, 1959, 222, and *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, 1961, 99, that Haoma speaks of Ahura Mazdā as a Father (Y 11.4). It seems however exaggerated to say that Haoma is “the son of God, offering himself to his Celestial Father”.

The deconsecration concluding the *Yasna* (after the recitation of the *Gāthās*) and in which water plays an important part, not of fertilisation but of purification, corresponds to the Hindu *avabhṛtha* or final cleansing.

We are hence fully justified in comparing the rite of *haoma* with that of *soma*, and in trying to find their original common significance, as V. Henry has done in the appendix to Caland's *Agniṣṭoma*, 1907, 467 sq., entitled *Esquisse d'une liturgie indo-éranienne*.

To summarize his three main points:

- 1 The sacrifice is certainly one of communion, between the faithful, on the one hand, and an imaginary being who in both religions has been deified. It is likely that originally in both religions the whole congregation partook of the beverage, and that only later was the act restricted to the priestly class which had come to be formed. However, the Indo-Europeans were not totemists.
- 2 a) The god must be pleased by our gifts, so that in return he may bestow his on us.
b) He must be invigorated, and his ardour stimulated for the performance of beneficent exploits, cf. *Yt* 8.24.
- 3 We read in *RV* IX, 108.10 addressed to Soma: "Clarify yourself into rain from the skies". The identification of rain with *soma* must be the result of various association of ideas, traces of which could be found in Avestan mythology.

As for the difference in preparing the juice: *haoma* being prepared with the aid of a mortar, and *soma* with that of a press, Henry remarks that the press represents an innovation over the mortar (which still finds mention in the *Veda*) designed to meet the needs of multiple libations or the *haoma's* consumption by an ever increasing number of celebrants.

If we compare the Vedic and Avestan officiating priests, we see that there was a general similarity between these also. The Mazdean priests, now reduced to two, were originally eight in number. They are still named in the *Visprat*. If we deduct from both sides the superintending priest who says nothing or very little, namely, the *sraoṣāvarəz* and *brahman*, we are left in Iran with the *zaotar* and six others, and in India, with the seven *hotṛs*, that is to say, the *hotṛ* and six others. But it is not possible to tally the names on one side with those on the other. Only the functions correspond, and that too, only in part. Corresponding with the Vedic *potṛ* "strainer", is the *āsnātar* who washed and strained the *haoma*; with the *neṣṭṛ*, the *frābərətar* who brought the cups and other requisites and the *ābərət* who drew and brought the water. Finally, only the role of the **zhautar* is attested for the Indo-Iranian period.

To complete V. Henry's exposé, we should consider also the general lay-out of the sacrifice as well as its seasonal character.

The disposition of the sacrifice—The symbols of the sun, moon and earth are easily recognizable in the *mise en scène* of the *Yasna* and the Vedic rite. Fire is the substitute for or rival of the sun, which is no doubt why it is kept on a circular vase. The moon is present under the appearance of the two metal crescents on which the *barsom* rests, representing a fertility rite.

The earth is present as the table, which must be square (as the earth was believed to be), and before which sits the chief priest. The cosmic symbolism of another detail is confirmed: the *drōn*, according to the *Pahl. Riv.*, 56.1, is made up in imitation of the world and is round like the world, etc.¹

The seasonal character of the sacrifice—In a recent study², Kuiper has tried to show that the Vedic sacrifice [by which one expected to obtain: 1. fertility and material welfare; 2. success at the track, in battle or games; 3. inspiration bringing victory in debate] was essentially a New Year ceremony, the commemoration and re-enacting of a cosmogonic myth at the winter solstice. This theory is similar to Molé's, without being identical with it.

Was the *Yasna* apocalyptically oriented, as Molé maintains? Do the *Gāthās* form a coherent whole, tracing the history of the world from its creation to the Final Renovation? But then why is the course of this recital twice interrupted by interpolated texts? What we can accept as probable is that the *Yasna*, like its Vedic counterpart, was a seasonal celebration, a periodical ritual by which the universe was to be recreated.

Its cosmogonical significance is confirmed by *Bd* 3.20, which states that before the advent of the Aggressor, it was always midday. At midday, Ōhrmazd and the Amahraspands fashioned the idea of sacrifice. By performing the sacrifice all creation was created, or rather "creation was completed"³.

If the *Yasna* has assumed an eschatological significance also, as the anticipation of the Final Renovation, this is a secondary development, which dates from before the composition of the Pahlavi commentaries, at any rate, after that of the *Gāthās*.⁴

4. BLOOD SACRIFICE

Traces of blood sacrifice still persist today:

- 1 In the *zōhr i Ātaš*—the rite mentioned in connection with the fire. On the fourth day after the removal of the corpse, some animal fat is thrown into the sacred fire. The same rite is repeated at each season (*gāhānbār*) during the ceremonies consecrating a *Bahrām* fire⁵.
- 2 In the *jašn i Mihrgān*, which the Gabars still celebrate today, by the sacrifice in every house of a sheep or goat, or failing which, of a chicken⁶.
- 3 Tavadia⁷ recalls that the Parsis, he knew in his childhood days, used to sacrifice goats, chickens, or hens at the fire-altar in the fire-temple. This practice, he says, was borrowed from low-caste Hindus.

Zarathuṣtra seems to have attacked certain sacrificial rites (*Y* 32.14; 44, end; 49; 51.11-14); but there is no proof that he condemned blood sacrifice as such.

1 MOLÉ, *Culte, Mythe et Cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, 1963, 120 sq.

2 The ancient Aryan verbal contest, *IJ*, 1960, 217 sq.

3 Text and translation in ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 336.

4 See the discussion of MOLÉ's thesis in *NUMEN*, 1960 and 1961.

5 MODI, Introduction to *Darab Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, I, 1922, 32.

6 JACKSON, *Persia, Past and Present*, 371 sq. But it is perhaps an imitation of the Muslim 'aid qurbān.

7 Ormazd and Ahriman, *Journ. Bombay Branch Roy. Asiat. Soc.*, 1954, 41.

However, the Avesta makes numerous allusions to animal sacrifice. *Yt* 11.4 tells which parts of the victim were allotted to Haoma, without specifying what the animal was. *Yt* 8.58 and *Vd* 18.70 specify that sheep were to be immolated. According to the *Āfrīngān i gāhānbār* 3, the young of the inferior species of small cattle should be sacrificed.

The sacrifice of bulls is still mentioned, (as well as that of horses and sheep) in the *Avesta* (*Yt* 5.21, 25, 29, 33, 37, 108, etc.) but only when recounting a legend.

Blood sacrifice was practised on a grand scale by the Achaemenians. Herodotus described the manner of its performance—the animal was cut into pieces, the pieces were seared in the flame then laid down on a bed of herbs. He reports also that Xerxes immolated at Ilion, 1000 bulls to Athena and that the Magi sacrificed white horses on the Strymon (7.13). The bas-relief of Daskyleion, dating from the fifth century, depicts two Magi sacrificing a bull and a sheep.

Sacrifice under the Parthians is described by Strabo who borrows partly from Herodotus. Plutarch also speaks of blood sacrifice (*De Iside et Osiride*, 46) but pertaining to the Ahriman cult only, in which a wolf was immolated. The Armenian language also confirms the practice of blood sacrifice, for the word *spandaran* meaning “slaughter-house” is taken from the Iranian *spānta* “sacred”.

As for the Sasanians, we know from Šāpūr’s inscription that for the founding of his fires he allotted one lamb (πρόβατον, AKBRYT) per day for the sacrifice. The historian Elise tells us that Yazdakart II celebrated his victory over neighbouring peoples by sacrificing on the fire-altar a multitude of bulls and shaggy he-goats. Similar instances are found in different passages of the *Acta Sanctorum*¹.

According to the testimony of Mār bar Hadbešabbā, Bishop of Halvan (Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 439), Zoroaster taught that one should not cut the throat of animals, as Hormizd is in them, but that one should first stun them by striking them with a log on the side of the neck, so that they do not feel any pain when killed. Strabo reports the same practice among the Magi of Cappadocia.

Five Pahlavi texts refer to blood sacrifice. According to the *Dēnkart*, 8, chapter 6, one of the chapters of the *Avesta* dealt with this question, indicating to which divinity each part of the victim was to be offered. The question is taken up by the *Šāyast-nē-Šāyast*, 11.4 (West, *Pahlavi Texts*, I, pp. 335 sq., Bartholomae, *Zendhandschriften*, 51). The *Nīrangistān* gives diverse instructions regarding the offering of meat and fat, the plants suitable for a sacrifice, which parts of the head are to be offered, the defect making a beast unfit for sacrifice, etc. (Waag, *Nīrangistān*, p. 151, etc.). The *Dātastān ī Dēnik* (chapter 88.6) mentions “four pure *gospands*” used for flesh offerings. The first epistle of *Manušcihr*, chapter 8.6 speaks of the flesh of ass and pig sacrificed at the *Gāhānbār* feast and of the proper quantities to be offered to the fire. The *Rivāyats* treat in detail of animal sacrifice, v. Dhabhar, *Pers. Riv.*, 64-67, 271 sq., with the proper way of killing; 264, enjoins that the head of any animal to be eaten should be consecrated. Cf. again Bartholomae, *Zendhandschriften*, 231 sq.

The memory of bovine sacrifice seems to be preserved in the very word used to designate sheep in Pahlavi, namely *gōspand*. This term was first used to translate Av. *gāv* “bull” with or

¹ GRAY, Zoroastrian Material in the *Acta Sanctorum*, *Journal of the Manchester Egypt. and Orient. Soc.*, 1913-1914, 48, 51-52.

without the stock epithet *spānta*: we find it with this connotation in the Pahlavi translation of the *Avesta*.

Later on it came to designate all cattle, as in the expression *gōspand varzītan* "to rear cattle" used in the *Pand Nāmak*, 20.2. Finally, in Pahlavi usage, which was continued in Persian, the term took on the special sense of "small cattle, sheep". We find the two terms in opposition, *gāvān u gōspandān*, "big and small cattle". The epithet *spānta* indicates that the reason for the depreciation of the term is to be sought in religious usage. As early as the time of Šāpūr, judging from his inscription, sheep were being sacrificed instead of bulls, but the name "sacred bulls" had been transferred to these more economical substitutes, and they bear it still.

The name of the bull still appears in the adjective *gaomant*, "containing meat", and in the Modern Persian *gōš* "meat".

Myazd, the solid offering made chiefly during the seasonal feasts¹, is synonymous with *darūn*. But originally, in Avestan, *myazda* meant an offering of meat and wine, it was *gaomant* and *maḍumant* (*Vd* 8.22). When Šāpūr founded his fire-altars, he made provision for a certain quantity of bread and wine, besides the daily sheep. And the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, 56.5, speaks of the wine accompanying the *drōn*, as the "water of the lakes". "Wine, it says, should be poured in full, lest the water does not fill the lakes". Till late, wine was necessary for the Parsi ritual. When the Congress government in India adopted Prohibition in 1939, the Parsis obtained by special concession, the annual distribution of 24,000 pints of wine for ceremonial purposes².

5. FUNERARY RITES, PURIFICATIONS AND INITIATIONS

a) *Funerary ceremonies*

The prayer for the dying, which is recited by two priests at least, is the *patēt* or *confiteor*. The dying man repeats it also, or in case of urgency, the *Ašəm vohū* prayer.

Until a few years back, according to Modi, 52, it was usual for a few drops of *hōm* (consecrated during a *Yasna*) to be poured into the mouth of the moribund. If unavailable, pomegranate juice could be substituted.

The deceased is first washed with *gōmēz*, or cow's urine, then with water³. He is dressed in a clean garment, of white cotton, which will be destroyed since it cannot be used again, and in the *kustī* or sacred girdle (which the person had worn all his life since the day of his initiation). Then two persons sit by the deceased and keep themselves in contact with him while a third recites the *Ašəm vohū* over him. His near relations and friends kiss him or approach him for the last time. After which he is supposed to pass into the power of the *Druj i Nasu* or demon of corpses, and should not be touched except by the corpse-bearers. He should never be left alone, or in the presence of only one person.

The corpse-bearers, who are at least two in number, are linked together by a cloth band called *paivand* (Persian "band"), which they hold between them. Before and after their work, they should bathe, change their clothes, and tie and untie their *kustī*.

¹ According to the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, 16B, Ōhrmazd offered a *myazd* when he created the world, another when he created Gayōmart, etc. (MOLÉ, *Culte, Mythe* . . . , p. 126).

² Sir Rustom MASANI, *M. P. Khareghat Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1953, 14 and sq.

³ Formerly, only with *gōmēz*, DHABHAR, XLV.

They take the body to a ground floor room which has been cleaned beforehand and place it on stone-slabs or directly on the ground, taking care that the head does not point towards the north.

They trace around the body three *kašas* or circles with a nail or metal bar.

This operation should take place before the gaze of a dog, brought before the corpse. The dog should preferably be a 'four-eyed' one, that is to say, it should have a spot above each eye, as this is said to increase the efficacy of its look. This rite called *sagdid* (Pers. "glance of a dog"), is repeated at the change of every *gāh* "watch", as long as the body is there.

After the first *sagdid*, fire is brought into the room where it is kept burning until three days after the removal of the corpse to the Tower of Silence.

This removal must be done during the day-time. The corpse-bearers enter the house, reciting in suppressed tone (*bāj*)¹, with closed lips, the prayer to the angel Srōš, the protector and psychopomp. While they lay the body on the bier, two priests recite the first *Gāthā* (*Ahnavaiti*), composed of chapters 28-34 of the *Yasna*.

Another *sagdid* is performed, then the relations, friends and acquaintances (excluding non-Zoroastrians) file past the body, whose face alone is left uncovered.

After the removal of the body, *gōmēz* is sprinkled over the place where the body rested and on the way by which it was carried out of the house.

The funeral procession is made up of persons clothed fully in white, holding the *paivand* between them. They walk in silence, except for the recitation of prayers in suppressed tone.

The interior of the Towers of Silence is built in concentric circles, like Dante's hell, except that there are only three circles, one each for men, women and children.

The corpses are exposed there naked. The vultures do not take long — an hour or two at the most — to strip the flesh off the bones, and these dried by the sun, are later swept into the central well. Formerly, the bones were kept in an ossuary, the *astodān*², to preserve them from the rain and animals (*Dāstān i Dēnik*, 18.2).

No less interesting are the rites performed on the days following the funeral.

All members of the family are required to bathe and to abstain from eating meat for three days.

At the commencement of every "watch" (Pers. *gāh*) or division of the day, two or three priests and the relatives of the deceased recite the *patēt* and the prayer to Srōš in whose honour they also recite at night the *Āfrīngān* prayer or benediction. These prayers are said for three days and nights, that is to say, for as long as the soul of the dead man is supposed to be still within

1 The term *bāj* "in suppressed muttering tone" is probably derived from the Old Ir. *vāc* "speech" and should not be confused with its homonym, *bāj* "offering" derived from the Old Pers. *bāji*—"tribute, etc." MODI, *Religious Ceremonies* . . . , 333-353, gives a description of the different kinds of *bāj* (offering). We have already dealt with the offering to Srōš, in the *Yasna* called *Srōš darun* or *Srōš bāj*. On *bāj* of the five twigs, see DROWER, *The role of fire* . . . , 86 sq. On the *Āfrīngān*, cf. MODI, 354-384.

2 *Astodāns* with heads of deities are shown in GHIRSHMAN'S *Parthes et Sassanides*, 1962, figs. 210 and 434.

the precincts of this world. At the same time, in the fire-temple, the *Yasna*, and, on the third night, the *Vidēvdāt* are recited in honour of Srōš.

On the third day there is a public announcement of the bequests made by the deceased, to charities or for the repose of his soul. If the deceased is over the age of fifteen, and has left no son, a son is given to him in adoption. On the same day, some animal fat was offered to the fire.¹

This is the *zōhr i Ātaš* rite. Some have sought to connect it with the spring-butter which is the food for the soul on its arrival in heaven according to the doctrine of the *Hadōxt Nask*, 2.18. In fact, it is a relic of the blood sacrifice. Only a century ago it was the custom to kill a *gōspand* (literally, "sacred bull") and to put its fat on the Bahrām fire.²

The morning of the fourth day is the most solemn occasion, for it is then that the departed soul reaches the next world and appears before the angels who are to pass judgement over it. Hence benedictions (*āfrīngān*), eulogies (*satūm*, the beginning of *Yasna* 26) and offerings (*bāj*) are addressed to these judges and to the psychopomp angel.

The priest consecrates, together with the sacred bread and other sacrificial articles, fruits, water, ghee, etc., a white suit of clothes which is later given to him or to the poor.

These ceremonies are repeated on the 10th and 30th day after death, and on the death anniversary.

The word for the Tower of Silence, *daxma*, has been variously interpreted³.

The Achaemenian rulers, Herodotus tells us, had themselves encased in wax. Their tombs were cut in the rock. According to the same author, the practice of exposing dead bodies to dogs and birds was exclusive to the Magi and sprang from the desire not to defile the earth, fire or water. Throwing a body into water was considered as great a sin as burying it or "cooking" it.

The funerary rite is described in the *Vidēvdāt*, but it was still not the general practice as can be deduced from *Vd* 3. 8 which names the most awful place as that wherein most corpses are buried.⁴

There has been no essential change in the ritual since then, except for a few details which have fallen into disuse. But the whole practice may be dying out. For instance, in modern times, some Parsis of Bangalore — where there is a Tower of Silence—have been buried at their request. In Teheran, Parsis place the body in a concrete coffin which is buried. Even in Yazd and Kermān, according to a young Frenchman who was there in 1959 to make a study of the Mazdeans, burying is becoming the custom.

Exposure of the corpse was the only mode practised in eastern Iran. Strabo reports (XI, p. 786), that the Bactrians left their dead to dogs especially kept for this purpose. Cicero

1 DHABHAR, *The Persian Rivāyats*, XLIII.

2 MODI *apud* UNVALA, *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, I, 32.

3 The word formerly meant an open tomb, cf. HUMBACH, *KZ* 77 (1961), 99 sq.

4 Cf. A. KAMMENHUBER, *ZDMG*, 1958, 306.

(*Curtius*, VII, 24) says the same about the Hyrcanians, and Strabo and Diodorus (17.105) about the Orites. We may conclude thereby that this custom was brought by the nomads of Central Asia.

Agathias (2.22-23) thought it strange that those bodies not immediately torn to pieces by birds and vultures should be considered to be wicked persons.

As Darmesteter rightly perceived, *Z.-A.*, 2, 146 sq. : "Funeral ceremonies are of two orders : those which relate to the disposal of the body, and those performed for the benefit of the dead man's soul. . . . The principle which governs those of the first order is the fear of contagion". After the body has been washed, dressed and laid out on the ground, it can no longer be touched, except by the corpse-bearers, who undergo purifications before and after their work. The fire, the circles traced on the ground and *sagdid* all contribute to prevent the spread of infection.

The rites for the soul of the deceased consist of the *patēt*, the administration of *haoma* or pomegranate juice (a rite which nowadays has fallen into disuse), prayers and the offering of the *Yasna* and *Vidēvdāt* to Srōš, the psychopomp angel, also animal sacrifice (now reduced to the offering of sandalwood to the fire).

b) *The Purifications*

As we have just seen, the corpse-bearers have to wash before and after their work, and, likewise, the place in the house where the body lay is cleansed before and after. Purification is thus a process having a double purpose: it enables an object or person to enter the sphere of the sacred, and it enables him or it to leave it.

Purifications are resorted to in many different circumstances. There are three types of purifications, in order of increasing importance: the *pādyāb* or ablution, the *nāhn* or bath and the *barəšnūm*.

The *pādyāb* consists first in invoking Ōhrmazd and reciting the *Ašəm vohū*; then in washing face, hands, and feet if bare; finally, in untying and re-tying the *kustī*. This rite is performed on rising from bed, before taking meals, on answering calls of nature and before reciting prayers.

The *nāhn* begins like the *pādyāb*, except that it requires the services of a priest. One chews a pomegranate leaf, then drinks some *gōmēz* or consecrated urine mixed with a little ash from the fire-temple. After the recitation of the *patēt* or *confiteor* one finally takes a bath after rubbing oneself with *gōmēz*. This purification is applicable on the following occasions: 1) The *Naot* or investiture of a child with the sacred shirt and girdle (*kustī*); 2) marriage; 3) at the end of the 40 days following child-birth; 4) on any one of the last ten days of the year.

The first two kinds of purification, the *pādyāb*, performed daily, and the *nāhn*, marking the most important occasions or milestones in life, can be gone through by all the faithful. This is not the case, however, with the third kind.

The *barəšnūm* or great purification is essentially a purificatory ceremony for priests and corpse-bearers. The latter also submit to it on leaving the profession (the question does not arise for priests, who are priests for life).

It is a complicated ceremony. Its name first occurs in the Avestan text of the 9th chapter of the *Vidēvdāt*, which describes it.

The place where it was carried out was formerly prepared as follows. A clear site, as deserted as possible was selected. It was then surrounded by a furrow. Within the enclosed space, nine pits or *magas* were dug in a line. The first three pits were surrounded by a triple rectangle of three furrows or *karšas*. The next three pits were likewise enclosed. Then these rectangles were in turn surrounded by three others. Finally, these last rectangles and the remaining three pits were together surrounded by three more rectangles. The ground was then covered with sand or dust to absorb the moisture¹.

Nowadays there are permanent sites for the *barəšnūm*. The pits have been replaced by sets of five stones, with a few additional sets of three. They are left in place between one ceremony and the next, and today, it is the fresh drawing of the furrows each time which constitutes the preparing of the *barəšnūmgāh* (place of the *barəšnūm*).

The candidate first takes his place outside the western boundary of the ground, within an enclosed *pāvi*, or place surrounded by a furrow. He undergoes there a purification of the second kind, or *nāhn*, described above.

As the candidate enters the *barəšnūmgāh*, the two priests who are to purify him, take their place, each in an *ad hoc pāvi*—one priest stands in the *pāvi*, within the *barəšnūmgāh*, on the south side, where the consecrated articles are kept, while the other priest stands in a *pāvi* outside the *barəšnūmgāh* proper, on the north side, and holds a dog on leash. The candidate undresses and takes his seat in a rectangle or *pāvi* inside the *barəšnūmgāh* on the first set of stones (which represent the first pit, in the ancient ritual). The first priest now comes out of his *pāvi* where he had taken refuge and approaches the candidate without, however, entering the *pāvi* of the latter. It is clear that the furrows have the function of enclosing or circumscribing the fluid, whether unclean or sacred, with which the candidate is charged. The *maga*—pit or stone—acts as a lightning conductor, or rather as an earth connection, by which this fluid can escape and vanish into the earth.

The candidate covers his head with his right hand; and the priest places on it the flat spoon-end of a nine-knotted stick which the candidate covers with his left hand. The priest recites three *Ašəm vohūs* and the *Bāj* to *Srōš* and removes the stick. He then goes to the *pāvi* where the consecrated objects are kept to fetch some *gōmēz* which he pours into the hand of the candidate who applies it to his whole body. This is repeated three times. The sacred liquid is supposed to carry away the impurity, by way of the *maga* into the earth. The process is repeated at each of the first six *magas*, then with sand at the 7th (15 times) and water at the 8th (3 times), at the 9th (6 times) and finally, on the stone-slab (9 times). The priest now recites, with the candidate repeating it after him, a formula of praise to the feminine archangel, *Ārmaiti*; who is present not as "Purity of thought" as Modi writes, p. 127, but rather as the Genius of the Earth, since it is to the earth that the impure or sacred fluid is yielded up.

¹ MODI, 119, criticizes the plans made by Anquetil, Harlez, Spiegel, Darmesteter and West, in respect of the orientation of the *barəšnūmgāh* and the arrangement of the furrows.

When passing from one *maga* to the next, the candidate touches with his left hand the left ear of the dog brought before him by the second priest (while the first, takes shelter from any possible infection, within his *pāvi*).

Finally, the candidate sits on a stoneslab (a modern addition) where he is washed three times with the sacred water by the first priest. The process of touching the dog, presented to him by the second priest, is repeated three times.

After the *barəšnūm*, the candidate makes a 9 day retreat in the fire-temple. If he happens to have a nocturnal pollution during one of the first three nights, he must repeat the whole *barəšnūm* purification¹.

What is more, if he has taken the *barəšnūm* so as to qualify for consecrating the *gōmēz*, a nocturnal pollution during any of the nine nights of the retreat vitiates the *barəšnūm*, which must be repeated.

Generally speaking, the priest who has gone through the *barəšnūm* is in a state of ritual purity and is qualified to perform the ceremonies in the fire-temple, viz. the *Yasna*, *Visprat*, *Vidēvdāt* and *Bāj*. But he may lose this qualification for any of the following infringements: 1) Eating food cooked by non-Zoroastrians; 2) non-observance of the *Bāj* or "grace"; 3) going on long voyages by land or sea²; 4) swearing or taking oaths; 5) allowing the turban to fall off his head. In all these cases, he has to undergo a fresh *barəšnūm*.

In actual practice, priests frequently take a *barəšnūm* without there being any necessity for it. The rite has become a sort of prelude to the *Yasna*, etc., and like the latter, is performed for the intention of the person paying for it (if this person is unable to pay, some one else can defray the expense). Originally a "purificatory" ceremony, today it seems to be performed more vaguely for the benefits accruing from it.

We must stress that in fact, there is no sharp distinction between rites of purification and rites for obtaining material welfare and fertility, etc. *Gōmēz* which is the purificatory agent *par excellence* is also a vital fluid. It effectively combats impurity, especially that resulting from contact with the dead, precisely because it is an essence of life. Moreover, while cow's urine (the usual translation) is sufficient for ordinary purifications (and can even be replaced by urine from an ox, goat or any other domestic animal), the urine utilized in the *barəšnūm* is that of a bull, an obvious fertility fluid.

The *barəšnūm*, like the funerary ceremonies, has changed but little since the time of the *Vidēvdāt*, as can be seen from Dhabhar, *The Persian Riv.*, 358 sq.

Sagdid—Various reasons have been advanced as to why the *sagdid* is performed especially during the funerary rites : the dog is supposed to smell if life is extinct or not ; the eyes of the dog have a magnetic power; the dog is present in recognition of its loyalty and valuable services to the living; dogs eat dirty things; the dog symbolizes the destruction of immoral passions (Modi, *Religious Ceremonies*... , 58 sq.).

¹ According to Vd. 18. 54-57, a nocturnal pollution makes the *Druj* pregnant, thereby multiplying the race of fiends. The *barəšnūm* like the *nāhn* can only be performed during daytime, not by night, and only during the dry season: for the rains might spread the infection.

² This custom was abolished in 1922, cf. MODI, *ap.* UNVALA, *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, vol. I, p. VIII. For examples of its application in ancient times, *ibid.*, 35 and 43.

In the Vedic religion, it is enjoined that while a sacrificial horse is bathed, a low-caste man should fell with a blow from a club a 'four-eyed' dog, probably symbolizing all the hostile forces. The difference between this rite and the *sagdid*, is due to the veneration in which the Mazdeans hold the dog.

There is certainly a connection between the funerary *sagdid* and the belief that two dogs guard the Bridge of the Separator, as described in *Vidēvdāt*, 13.9. These dogs, in turn, have their counterpart in India (*RV* X, 14.10 ; *AV* 18.3.13) in the two "four-eyed dogs" who are the messengers of Yama, god of death.¹

The look of the dog in the *sagdid* has the opposite effect to that of the evil eye, see chapter 18 of the *Vidēvdāt*, which describes how the look of the *jahī*, or prostitute, "dries up one-third of the waters, arrests the growth of one-third of the plants and withers in the faithful one-third of his good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, one third of his strength, etc."

Gōmēz—The *gōmēz* is prepared and consecrated in a complex ceremony, comprising practically all the others already described.

The two priests who are to perform it, first undergo a *barāšnūm*. They should not have a nocturnal pollution during the entire duration of the rite—which is 10 days.

The 11th day, one of the priests celebrates the complete *Yasna*. The next day it is celebrated by the other priest. For the next six days they perform the *gewrā*, i.e. each day, during the ritual of the *Yasna*, they exchange the roles of first and second priest. After which, each makes an offering (*Bāj*) and consumes the bread consecrated by the other. They then ritually purify the utensils in which the bull's urine is collected.

A white, non-castrated bull that has been consecrated beforehand with full ceremony, is brought into the temple, and its urine and that of other bulls is collected before sun-set. The urine is then consecrated as follows : One of the priests conducts the *paragra*, which is preliminary to the sacrifice or *Yasna*. At midnight, before the fire, they perform the *Vidēvdāt* ceremony which finally consecrates the *gōmēz*. It is now known as *nīrang* or *nīrangdīn*.

The hairs of this consecrated bull are used to strain the *haoma*. If the bull dies, all ceremonies wherein its hairs are used are stopped and another bull to succeed it is immediately sought out and consecrated. At the time of the *Rivāyats*, however, it was forbidden to replace the sacred hairs; only those in use since ancient times could be utilized. These relics were sometimes sold.²

The properties of *gōmēz* are exalted in legends like that in the *Rivāyat* of Bahman Punjyā (Dhabhar, *Persian Riv.*, 295), relating how Jamšēd, who had contracted leprosy after touching the body of Tahmuras, was cured by bull's urine. These beliefs and practices are common to the folklore of many countries "from India to Lower-Brittany", as Darmesteter writes, *Z.-A.*, 2, p. 266, n. 49. See also Eug. Wilhelm, *On the use of beef's urine according to the Precepts of the Avesta*, Bombay 1889, and Voigt, *Die Wertung des Tieres* . . ., 1937, 46 sq.

1 LOMMEL, *Die Rel. Zarath.*, Tübingen 1930, 190; Wolfgang VOIGT, *Die Wertung des Tieres in der zarathustrischen Religion*, München 1937, 50. On an Irish parallel, cf. SCHLERATH, *Der Hund bei den Indogermanen*, *Paideuma*, VI, 25 sq.

2 MODI *apud* UNVALA, *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, 12-13 and 34.

The Mazdeans attach great importance to the impurity of women during their menses and during the period following child-birth. Contact with them at such times is as defiling as contact with a dead body and necessitates similar purifications. This question is dealt with at length in the *Rivāyats*, cf. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivāyats*, 211-238.

c) Penance

Penance entails reciting the *patēt*, the firm resolve not to sin again and the confession of sin to a *dastūr* (high-priest) or, failing which, to an ordinary priest. The human witness can even be dispensed with and confession may be made to the sun, moon, fire, *hōm* or *barsom*, etc. Once a sin has been confessed, it is struck off the great celestial book and the soul, instead of going to hell, goes to the *hamēstagān*, the intermediate region for souls when their good and evil deeds are exactly equal.¹

One *Rivāyat* recommends that confession should be made at least once a year, preferably on the day of *Rām* in the month of *Mīhr*.

According to Pettazzoni (*Modi Memorial Volume*, 437 sq.), the Mazdean penance is borrowed from Christianity. However, "Pettazzoni's opinion seems to be contradicted by the fact that the *patēt* is found in the *Šāyast-nē-Šāyast* (and abundantly in Buddhism) and most of all in Manichaeism. It is very similar, in form, to the Manichaean *Xvāstvānift*" (Menasce).

d) Initiations

All young Parsis must be initiated when they reach the age of seven (in India) or ten (in Persia)². The ceremony consists essentially in investing the child with the shirt (*sadre*) and the girdle or thread (*kustī*). In India the ceremony is called *Naojot*³ and in Iran *Jašn i sadre pušī* or "feast of putting on the shirt".

This rite recalls the Brahmanic initiation. However, the "Brahmanic cord" is a comparatively recent innovation, for originally a piece of the garment passed over the left shoulder and under the right armpit.⁴

From this it would seem that there have been parallel developments in India and Iran starting from a common Indo-Iranian basis.

Various symbolisms are attached to the *kustī*. It is the sign of obedience, since a servant about to carry out an order "girds his loins"; it also symbolizes the body's division into a noble part above and an ignoble part below. These two interpretations are given in the Pahlavi treatise, *Cīm i Kustik*. On the other hand, in the *Avesta* and *Zātspram* 4.6⁵, the girdle is the Mazdean Religion.

Two recent interpretations are derived from false etymologies: *kustī* is that indicating the right direction (*kust*); or it is a ship (*kašī*) which carries us to a safe haven of righteousness.

1 DHALLA, *ERE*, V, 664 sq.

2 J. D - G., "L'initiation mazdéenne", in *L'Initiation*, Leiden 1965, 112 sq.

3 JUNKER has shown, *Der wissbeg. Sohn*, 1959, 27, that this term is derived from the Persian **nauzāt* "newly-born".

4 RENOUE and others, *L'Inde classique*, I, 364.

5 Cf. also *Bd Ankl.*, 193-194; *Dāt. i Dēnik*, 39. 11 sq.; JUNKER, *Über iran. Quellen*, 136 and n. 36.

The 72 threads which make up the *kustī* also have a significance, for they correspond to the 72 chapters of the *Yasna*. The threads are further divided into 3 strands of 24 threads each symbolizing the 24 sections of the *Visprat*, and so on. Details are given in Modi, *Religious Ceremonies...*, 175 sq.

The Parsi unties and re-ties his girdle several times a day when reciting his prayers.

e) *The Priests*

The Parsi priesthood is hereditary, but birth alone is not sufficient qualification; all priests have to go through one or more ceremonies of investiture according to their grade, over and above those gone through by all the faithful.

A *herbad* is a priest initiated into the first degree or *nāvar*. He is qualified to conduct benedictions (*āfrīngān*), the investiture of children, marriages, etc. He cannot perform more important ceremonies like the *Vidēvdāt*, *Nirangdīn*, etc.

The candidate for *nāvar* first undergoes two *barāšnūms*, the first for his own purification, the second for the intention of his patron, i.e. the person who pays for the expenses of the ceremony. This takes 19 days counting the days of retreat. As we have just seen, if a nocturnal pollution occurs during the retreat, the *barāšnūm* is vitiated. To lessen the risk, the initiation is undergone before the age of fifteen. If during the ceremony, the patron should happen to die, or, if it is a lady and she should have her menses, the ceremony has likewise to be started all over again.

Once the candidate has taken two complete *barāšnūms*, he is initiated by two priests who have just taken the *gewrā*, that is to say, for six consecutive days they have alternatively performed the functions of *zōt* and *rāspī* in the *Yasna* ceremony. The priest who was the last to perform the role of *zōt*, initiates the candidate.

The candidate takes a bath, puts on a new set of white clothes and a white turban. In his left hand he carries a shawl, in his right a *gurz* or mace, Mihr's weapon.

The fire-temple to which the candidate goes in procession for his initiation is called *Dar i Mihr*, the Persian for 'door or house of Mihr'.

The priests assembled there are generally seated on carpets. The initiate goes to the *yazišngāh* or chamber of sacrifice, where he removes his upper garments, makes an ablution and puts on a *padān* or mouth-veil. Then he is brought before the assembly by one of the two priests who asks their permission to initiate him. This is generally granted, provided he does not have leprosy or any wound oozing blood.

He returns to the *yazišngāh* where he recites the *Yasna* (which he has learnt by heart) taking the part of the first priest or *zōt* while his initiator takes that of his assistant or *rāspī*. In the afternoon he offers the *bāj*, the abridged *Yasna* without *hōm*, in which the essential offering is the *darūn*, then recites the *āfrīngān* or benediction.

The second and third day he is permitted to have only one meal. The three ceremonies are repeated on these days, the second day in honour of *Srōš*, the third day in honour of the *Sīrōza*, the divinities presiding over the thirty days of the month. The fourth day, the rites are addressed to Ōhrmazd and the *Yasna* is recited with *Visprat*, the rite of the seasonal festivals.

In the *Visprat* the *zōt* calls the roll-call of seven other kinds of priests, of which six are now obsolete. The *rāspī* alone replies, but as each name is called he takes up a different position in the *pāvi*, in the centre of which stands the fire-censer and table with accessories.

Nowadays, many young men of the priestly class go through the *nāvar* initiation, with no intention of becoming priests. They may be future doctors, lawyers, businessmen, etc. In that case the *Yasna* is not memorized completely, nor is it recited from beginning to end.

The initiate is now a *herbad*. If he does not go through the second stage of priestly initiation, he can never at all perform the *Vidēvdāt*.

The *Vidēvdāt* is the only new feature of the second initiation or *martab*. A priest who has been initiated into the *martab* is known as a *mobad*.

The candidate for the *martab* first undergoes the *barəšnūm* after which in the company of a priest he conducts the *Yasna* of *Minō Nāvar* on the first day, and on the second day in honour of *Srōš*, the guardian angel and psychopomp; (according to Darmesteter, *Z.-A.*, II, p. LIII, in honour of *Srōš* or of the *Fravašis*). Finally, on the same night, at midnight, he performs the *Vidēvdāt*.

The *Vidēvdāt* ceremony consists of the recitation of the 22 chapters of the book of that name, intermingled with chapters from the *Yasna* and *Visprat*, during which the appropriate rites are performed. The *Vidēvdāt* ceremony is thus a *Yasna* or sacrifice in the fullest sense of the word, containing as it does the *Yasna* text supplemented by the *Visprat* and *Vidēvdāt*. The ceremony lasts about eight hours. The *Vidēvdāt*, as its name indicates (Anti-demoniac Law), has essentially a function of exorcism. Which is no doubt why it is recited at night¹, although neither Modi, p. 331, nor Darmesteter, *Z.-A.*, II, p. LIII (who in fact has referred to Modi and others) mention this.

Above the ordinary priests, *herbads* and *mobads*, are the *dastūrs*, the high-priests or rather the bishops who direct and administer one or more important temples. Theirs is a hereditary function but they are nonetheless 'elected' by the notables. As a matter of fact, one can procure the title *dastūr* without the function, by studying theology at a school like the *Jamšetjee Jejeebhoy Madressa*.

6. HOLIDAYS AND THE CALENDAR

The principal holidays in the Parsi year are the six seasonal festivals or *Gāhānbārs* and the days in memory of the dead at the year's end. Besides which, each day of the month and each month of the year is dedicated to a divinity, hence in each month, the day named after the month, is the great feast day of that particular divinity—which makes twelve more holidays.

Seasonal festivals (Gāhānbārs)—Each of the seasonal festivals lasts five days, the last day being the most important. Two ceremonies are obligatory: the benediction (*āfrīngān*) and offering (*bāj*); two ceremonies are optional: the *Yasna* with *Visprat* and the *Pāvi*, which is the offering of milk.

¹ The *Nirangistān*, in a passage of doubtful interpretation, (WAAG, p. 66), says that every night there were gatherings and invocations in honour of the *dēvs*. Possibly *Vd.* 7,53-58 also alludes to the cult of the *daēvas* as is claimed by CHRISTENSEN, *Essai sur la démonologie iranienne*, Copenhagen 1941, 30. Demons were supposed to be about at night; they had therefore to be worshipped or exorcised at night.

The communal eating of the items offered in these ceremonies forms an important part of the celebrations, which all the faithful are expected to attend. Dinners are held for 2,000 or 3,000 people, either by invitation or by public subscription. Families bereaved during the year, privately observe the seasonal festivals in honour of the deceased.

Holidays in commemoration of the dead (Farvardīgān)—The five days of the sixth *Gāhānbār* are also the last five days of the year. They are intercalary days (days representing the difference between the lunar calendar having 360 days and the solar having 365 days). It is a belief common to many nations that these days — outside time as it were — belong to the dead. This period has been extended to include the five days before (and nowadays, the eight days after, also. However, according to Modi, p. 440, certain families have reverted to the custom of observing only the original ten days). On these days, each family honours its dead or *farvardīn*. A vase containing flowers is placed in a room that has been cleaned and whitewashed beforehand, and a fire is kept burning there with sandalwood and frankincense for the greater part of the day. Visitors feed the fire with their own hands.

Various ceremonies may be performed requiring the help of priests. Related families come to an arrangement between themselves to bear their costs turn by turn each year. During the first five days priests sometimes recite in private houses the benediction (*āfrīgān*), eulogy (*satūm*)¹ and the *faroxšī*² which is a *satūm* with the hymn or *Yašt* to the *Farvardīn* (*Yt* 13). In the fire-temple they celebrate the *myazd*³ and the offering or *bāj* of *darūn*, fruits, water and *ghee*. Lay people during these days recite the 20th chapter of the *Yasna* or, if this is not possible, they repeat 1200 *Ašəm vohūs*, with an offering prayer (*bāj*).

The five following days are the most sacred, being both seasonal holidays and intercalary days. On each of these days, the faithful recite one of the five *Gāthās* (in the same order as in the *Yasna*), each *Gāthā* being recited on the day which bears its name. (If the layman does not know the *Gāthās*, he can recite instead 1200 *Yathā ahū vairiyōs*).

During the *farvardīgān* days the spirits of the dead are supposed to revisit the world, those of the righteous during the first five days, those of the wicked on the last five (*Sad darband Hōš*, 52). According to *Zātspram* 35.19⁴, the ceremonies performed on these days symbolize the Final Resurrection.

Besides the New Year days, the *farvardīn* have two other days sacred to them during the year: the 19th day (named after them each month) of the ninth month, the month of Fire, which was the last month of the year in ancient times, and the 19th day of the first or *Farvardīn* month which bears their name. On these days many Parsis go to the hills on which stand the Towers of Silence, taking with them sandalwood for offering to the sacred fire.

Festival of the divinities—Just as the day named after the *Farvardīn* in the month also named after them is sacred to them, so too, the eleven divinities presiding over the remaining months have each their festival when day and month both bear their name. On that day a *Yašt* is recited in their honour.

1 MODI, *Religious Ceremonies* . . . , 402–404.

2 *ibid.*, 385–401.

3 *Nirangistan*, ed. WAAG, 86.

4 The return of the *fravašis* may also symbolize the creation of the world (MOLÉ, *Culte, Mythe* . . . , p. 98 sq.).

For example, Ardibehešt has his feast day on the day Ardibehešt in the Ardibehešt month (3rd day of 2nd month): and *Yašt* 3 is recited. Xordād is honoured on the 6th day of the 3rd month with the recitation of *Yašt* 4. It should be noted that the days of the month are not in the same order as the months of the year.

The most important of these feast days are Tir's, known as Tiragān (13th day of the 4th month), when *Yašt* 8 is recited; Mithra's, Mihragān, well-known in antiquity¹ (16th day of the 7th month), *Yašt* 10; Spandarmad's (5th day of the 12th month), which is the feast of cultivators²; Ābān's, when hundreds of people go to the seashore and river-banks to recite prayers in honour of Ābān, who presides over the waters (*Yašt* 5); and finally Ādar's, who presides over fire. Since there is no particular *Yašt* dedicated to the latter, the prayer to the fire, *Ataš Nyāiš*, is recited.

New Year Festival—Falls on the 1st day of the 1st month. Parsis greet each other with a special handclasp: each holds between his hands the hands of the other.

The 6th day is a 'Special New Year's Day', formerly observed by the king and nobility, while the 1st day was for the common people. It was also known as the 'New Year Day of Xordād'. The *drōn*, *yasna*, *āfrīgān* and *myazd* ceremonies are performed, and as a symbol of renewal, a new suit of clothes, consecrated during the *drōn* ceremony is given away to the poor. It is on this day that there took place or will take place the great events marking the beginning and end of the world, and the prophet's revelation³.

The 3rd day is known as the 'day of mid-day' or *Rapithwin*. Because it is the day of Ardibehešt, the divinity most closely associated with the fire, it was chosen, according to Modi, p. 431, to celebrate the winter solstice, that is to say, the return of the light.

On four days of the month, the days of Bahman⁴, patron of the ox, all meat is forbidden. Beef is generally not eaten, and cock never. Meals are eaten in silence.

It seems we can date to the reign of Artaxerxes I the adoption of a new calendar, of obvious religious significance. The earlier ancient Persian calendar was a peasant's calendar, in which only two, or at the most three, of the names of the months, referred to the religion. It is apparent from the *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*⁵ that, as Gershevitch observed⁶, this ancient calendar only was in use under Xerxes and for at least the first five years of Artaxerxes' reign (till 459). This accords with the calculations of Hildegard Lewy and S. H. Taqizadeh, who date the adoption of the new calendar from 441. The order of the months in the latter has been the object of several studies⁷. In order to explain it, we must take the old calendar as our starting point.

1 For the testimonies of antiquity, DARMESTETER, *Zend-Avesta*, 2, 443. Description of the festival in the *Rivāyats*, DHABHAR, 343.

2 DHABHAR, 341.

3 *Rivāyat* of Dārāb Hormazyār, I, pp. 5 sq., trans. DHABHAR, 339; *Sad darband Hōš*, 32 and 49. (MOLÉ, *Culte, Mythe* ..., p. 110).

4 That is to say, that of Bahman (2nd) and those of his associates (*hamkār*) Māh (12th), Gōs (14th) and Rām (21st).

5 Published by G. CAMERON, 1948.

6 *Asia Major*, 1951, 133.

7 Cf. DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1953, 17, and WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufgaben*, 1955, 107 sq.

The order of the old calendar which has been definitely established, thanks to Babylonian and Elamite equivalents¹, is as follows: *Adukanuīsa*, *Θūravāhara*, *Θāigraci*, *Garmapada*, **Darnabāji*, *?*, *Bāgayādi*, **Varkazana*, *Āçiyādiya*, *Anāmaka*, *?*, *Viyaxnu*.

If we compare this list with that of the new calendar, such as has been confirmed for Cappadocia in Greek texts on astronomy², we notice that the months which had, in the old calendar, a religious significance, have remained in the new list, under a new name, in the same numerical order. Thus *Āçiyādiyā*, 'when one honours the fire'³ which was number 9, has become ΑΘΠΑ, month of 'Fire'. *Bāgayādi*, 'when one honours Baga (a god closely associated with Mithra)' at number 7, has become ΜΙΘΡΗ. If we place the two lists in juxtaposition, other parallels become apparent:

	Adukanīša	1	APTANA (<i>Artavnām</i> , 'of the blessed')
	Θūravāhara	2	ΑΡΘΗΥΕ (Σ) ΤΗ (<i>Arta vahišta</i>)
	Θāigraci	3	ΑΡΟΑΤΑΤΑ (<i>Harvatāt</i>)
Hot month (<i>garma</i> - <i>'hot'</i>)	Garmapada	4	ΤΕΙΠΙ (<i>Tīr</i> , identified with Tištrya the Dog-Star)
	*Darnabāji	5	ΑΜΑΡΤΑΤΑ (<i>Amaratāt</i>)
	?	6	ΞΑΘΡΗΠΙΟΦ (<i>Xšaθra vairya</i>)
'Honouring Baga'	Bāgayādi	7	ΜΙΘΡΗ (<i>Miθra</i>)
	*Varkazana	8	ΑΠΟΜΕΝΑΠΑ (<i>Apām Napāt</i>)
'Honouring the Fire'	Āçiyādiya	9	ΑΘΠΑ ('Fire')
'Without a name'	Anāmaka	10	ΔΑΘΥΣΑ (the 'Creator')
	?	11	ΟΣΜΑΝΑ (<i>Vohu Manah</i>)
	Viyaxna	12	ΣΟΝΔΑΠΑ(ΜΑΤ) (<i>*Santā Ārmaiti</i>)

The month 'without a name' appears to allude to the nameless Creator (like the Hebrew Yahweh), provided of course, that we can make use of the revised list to interpret the old.

As for the revised list, we can accept, with Nyberg, that in ancient times the year started with the month of the Creator and therefore ended with that of Fire. The rest of the list can then be explained almost entirely in the light of the tripartite ideology, cf. *BSOAS*, 1950, 638.—On *Θāigraci*, see EILERS, *A locust's leg*, *Studies... Taqizadeh*, 62.

The festivals observed in Sasanian times are known to us from Mazdean or Arabic sources⁴. They fall into 4 groups:

1. The six seasonal festivals or *gāhānbārs*, described by the *Dēnkart* and Bērūni. The sixth one was the *Farvardigān*, the holidays in commemoration of the dead.
2. The *Naurōz* or New Year festival. There were four different ones, relics of successive reckonings:

¹ POEBEL, *AJSL*, 1938, 141 sq. On *Θāigraci*, EILERS, *A locust's leg*, *Studies... Taqizadeh*, 62.

² FATHER DE LAGARDE, *Gesamm. Abhandl.*, 258 sq.

³ Henning has rejected this etymology, although defended by both SZEMERÉNYI, *apud* ALTHEIM, *Gesch. d. lat. Spr.*, 1951, 80, n. 1, and J. D-G., *BSOAS*, 1950, 638, n. 2, whose arguments, arrived at independently, are contributory to one another.

⁴ CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran...* 168 sq.; NYBERG, *Texte zum mazdayasnischen Kalender*, Upsala Univ. Årsskrift, 1934. HENNING, *Zum soghdischen Kalender*, *Orientalia*, 1939, 87 sq. On the feast days according to Firdausi, Mas'ūdi and others, see MODI, *The Religious Ceremonies*, 435, sq.—See now Mary BOYCE in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. III.

- a) The six days following the *Farvardīgān*. They are dealt with in the *Dēnkart*, the *Pahlavi Texts*, pp. 102 sq., and in Bērūnī, etc. The king carried on his throne as if on a *Sedia gestatoria*, became a new sun (Bērūnī, *Chronology*, Sachau, 202),
 - b) The 16th day of the month of Mihr or *Mihragān*,
 - c) The 1st of the month of Ātur, known as *Vahār jašn*, or spring festival, in Arabic as *kavsaj* (Bērūnī and Mas'ūdi),
 - d) The 1st and the 16 of Dadv.
3. In each month, the day named after the month was a holiday. Apart from the 16th of Mihr already mentioned, special mention must be made of:
- a) The 13th of Tir,
 - b) The 7th of *Šahrēvar*, feast of the household fires and first festival of fire,
 - c) The 9th of Ātur, second festival of fire,
 - d) The 15th of Dadv,
 - e) The 5th of Spandarmad, festival of women.
4. The following were still celebrated:
- a) The 14th of Dadv: *sir sūr* or festival of garlic,
 - b) The 10th of Vahman, third festival of fire: *sādag*,
 - c) The 30th of the same month, festival of *ābrizagān* or irrigation,
 - d) The 19th of Spandarmad, *Naurōz* of all living waters.

The sequence of months was as in the 'Cappadocian' calendar.

That of the days, which formed the base of the Avestan *Sīrōza*, was divided, according to the *Bundahišn* (3. 1), into four sections, each headed by Ōhrmazd or Dadv ("the Creator"), as follows :

- I. Ōhrmazd, Vahman, Urtvahišt, Šahrēvar Spandarmat, Xvardāt, Amurdāt,
- II. Dadv, Ātur, Ābān, Xvar, Māh, Tir, Gōš,
- III. Dadv, Mihr, Srōš, Rašn, Fravartīn, Varhrān, Rām, Vāt,
- IV. Dadv, Dēn, Ard (Av. Aši), Aštāt, Āsmān, Zamdāt, "the Earth", Mahraspand "Sacred Formula", Anagrān "Endless Light".

We have no data as to when this calendar came to be compiled. We only know that it must have been in use as early as the reign of Šāpūr, for the entries of paintings in the Dura-Europos synagogue, which belong to this period, are almost all dated and the names of the days can all be found in our list. The same list is attested on Mount Mugh, Sogdiana, just before the Muslim conquest, except that Mihr is replaced by Bag.¹

Dadv, who thrice substitutes for Ōhrmazd in this system, is identical, as Zaehner has shown², with Time, Wisdom (or Religion) and Endless Light (or Space).

1 HENNING, 'A Sogdian God', *BSOAS*, 1965, 242 sq.; J.D-G., 'L' expansion de Baga', *Festschrift Eilers*, 1968, 157 sq.

2 Zurvan, 196 sq., cf. *Bund.*, 3.2 and 11 and the *Pahlavi Sīrōza*.

Earlier, two other scholars, Schaefer and Nyberg¹, by a different analysis of the list, had also arrived at the conclusion that it was Zurvānite in character. According to them, the four sections begin respectively with Ōhrmazd, Ātur, Mihr and Dēn, divinities in which they would recognize four aspects or faces of Zurvān. Proof in their eyes is that, the series is similar to the one found on the monument of Commagène, which is Zurvānite. Even if we concede this last point, the fact remains that the alleged similarity between the lists is far from conclusive. Mihr who occupies 3rd position in one list, is 2nd in the other. Corresponding to Dēn in one, is 'My country Commagène' in the other. It may be that both terms refer collectively to the body of the faithful but there is a still more serious discrepancy : instead of Artagnēs (*Vərəθrayna*) of the inscription, the calendar has Ātur. We may accept that Varhrān has a special connection with fire, but then why, if Ātur is merely a substitute for Varhrān, does Varhrān himself not appear in this position, instead of being relegated ingloriously to a place three quarters of the way down ?

The list of days has been compared by Wikander² with the list of *Yašts* in the *Avesta*. The parallels are too numerous to be fortuitous. How can this be explained ?

Wikander thought that the first list is based on that of the *Yašts*. Taking up a suggestion made by West, he theorises that there were once thirty *Yašts*, one for each day of the month. However, this is by no means proved by the particular passage in the *Dēnkart* (M 692) on which West founded his conclusion. The passage says that the *Bagān Yašt* section of the *Avesta* contained an eulogy on Ōhrmazd and the divinities (*bagān*) visible or invisible, who gave their names to the days. But this does not mean that each of the thirty divinities was the object of a separate *Yašt* !

According to Wikander's theory, the ancient list, represented by the series of *Yašts*, was a pre-Zoroastrian one and it was by adding the *Aməša Spəntas* to it, that the reformed Zoroastrian calendar was created. Wikander felt that it was 'naturally easier to modify the calendar in this way than a collection of Avestan hymns'. I don't see why. Besides which, the difference between the lists by no means consists solely in the presence or absence of the *Aməša Spəntas*.

Wikander believed that the very title, *Bagān Yašt*, was pre-Zoroastrian, for the Zoroastrians call their divinities *yazatas*, not *bagas*. But could this not have meant that when the titles were given to the different sections of the *Avesta*, *yazatān* had already come to designate Ōhrmazd ? In order to refer to the *yazatas* themselves, they were obliged to resort to the ancient term: *baga*³.

S. Hartmann⁴ has attempted to justify the sequence of the *Yašts* such as it is. And in fact, in the series, Mithra who is tenth, occupies the central position, followed immediately by his two acolytes, Sraoša and Rašnu.⁵ The other *yazatas* are arranged around them, provided we place them in two dimensions, beginning above, continuing on the right, then on the left and finally below, recalling the general arrangement of Mithraic bas-reliefs, in which Mithra and his companions, Cautes and Cautopates⁶, occupy the centre.

¹ Cf. NYBERG, Questions.....JA, 1931, II, 131 and note.

² *Feuerpriester*, 229 sq.

³ If they did not want to call them *Amahraspands*, as the *Bd* 3.2 does, by extending the meaning of the term.

⁴ La disposition de l'*Avesta*, in *Orientalia Suecana*, 1956, 30 sq.

⁵ In the table on p. 30 of the above cited article, VII Rašn, is a printing error and should read XII Rašn.—To understand better the rest of the article, read the term 'small class' as 'sub-class' (which is what the author meant).

⁶ The only one to suggest a plausible explanation for these two names is SCHAEFER, *ZDMG*, 1928, xcv sq. That of GERSHEVITCH, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, 151, is hardly convincing.

The list of *Yašts* appears therefore to be the more ancient. The list of days was obtained from it by inserting the following:

1. The names of the Aməša Spəntas not having their own *yašt* :
Šaθrēvar (4), Spandarmat (5) and Amurdāt (7)
2. The name 'Creator', thrice repeated at equal (as far as possible) intervals : Dadv (8, 15, 23), really meaning respectively Time, Wisdom and Space, and making up with Ōhrmazd (1) the divine quadrinity.
3. The names of the Fire, Ātur (9), Wind, Vāt (22), Sky, Āsmān (27) and Endless Light, Anagrān (30).

Only the substitution of Mahraspand (29) for Vanant remains unexplained.

B. THE ETHICS

The ethical precepts of the Mazdeans can be considered under two aspects: the maintenance of life and the battle against evil.

In order to maintain life, one has to provide for one's subsistence by cattle-breeding or agriculture and one must procreate. The battle against evil lies in fighting the demons and the beings - men or animal - that belong to them. In a sense, these two points of view meet, if one considers the forces of evil to be also the forces of death. Good is opposed to evil, as light to darkness and life to non-life. (Y 30.3). And in fact, precepts of living are interchangeable with precepts of battle, for instance, Zātspram interprets eating and drinking as a battle against the demoness Āz.

But in another sense, these two points of view contradict one another, for how can one fight the forces of evil without destroying some lives, those of noxious animals for example? In such a case, the second point of view prevails. Iran knew nothing, even in theory, of the universal respect for life as preached by Buddhism, or which is the *raison d'être* of vegetarianism among the Brahmins of India.

And if it is a question of human lives, which point of view prevails then? Are the enemies of life to be killed? On this point, Mazdeanism has not always been consistent. Zarathuštra demanded that the forces of the lie be defeated by force of arms. Under the Sasanians, right from the time of Kartēr, Manichaeans, Christians, Buddhists, etc., were persecuted. But under Islam, and in exile, Mazdeanism lost all its aggressiveness. There is only one instance when death is preferable to life: when the Mazdean chooses death to escape from apostasy¹.

There remains the duty of harming the wicked, as expressly enjoined by Zarathuštra.

The 'vitalist' point of view contains in fact, its own condemnation: for the living lives off the living, which he must kill. Āturpāt, son of Mahraspand recommends²: 'Abstain rigorously from eating the flesh of kine and all domestic animals. . . for though you eat but a mouthful, you involve your hand in sin, and though a camel be slain by another man in another place, it is as if you (who eat its flesh) had slain it with your own hand.' This interdiction is in the same strain as Zarathuštra's alleged condemnation of the sacrifice of oxen. One could live on bread, milk, plants and water, and at any rate, one should cultivate the earth and rear cattle for milking (*Vidēvdāt*, 3). Abstention from eating meat will prelude the Resurrection. But in no case does Mazdeanism advocate fasting, for it weakens the faithful in his battle against evil. There

1 Rivāyat of Šāpūr Bharuchī, cited by DHABHAR, *Pers. Riv.*, p. 275.

2 *Pahlavi Texts*, 144 sq.; trans. ZAEHNER, *Teachings*, 111.

are several references to meat-eating in the *Avesta*, surviving, perhaps, from pastoral days, when only the sacrificial meat was eaten.

Sexual activity being subordinate to the duty of procreation, it is understandable that homosexuality was proscribed, as well as traffic with a courtesan or prostitute. These latter were typified by the Jēh (Av. *jahi*), the Primal Whore, whose activity is interpreted in dualistic terms, in that she mixes the seed of the good with that of the wicked, instead of separating them.

Understandable also, that celibacy and complete chastity had to be forbidden, for the human species must be propagated in order to assist Ōhrmazd in his struggle against Ahriman. Mazdeanism roundly condemned the asceticism practised by Christians, Manichaeans, etc.

It is less obvious why adultery and polygamy should be condemnable on the same principle.¹ For, if satiation extinguishes desire—as eating combats the demon of hunger—then means such as these should have been authorized. In fact, Mazdak recommends the communizing of women. If marriage and conjugal fidelity triumphed in the end, it was due to reasons of a social or economic nature.

Social considerations too must have been behind the institution of next-of-kin marriages, held by the *Rivāyats* to be almost the most meritorious of all acts, second only to ordering a priest to perform all the rites.

The *Rivāyats* (Dhabhar, *Pers. Riv.*, 292 sq.), interpret it as a marriage between first cousins. It has been ascribed this meaning, since the date of the *Dēnkart*'s (III. 82) composition, down to the present day. But it was not always thus.

Gray's excellent study in *ERE*, 8, pp., 456 sq., is worth summarizing.

The *Avesta* mentions *xvaētvadaθa* only in five late passages, without giving the exact connotation of the term. Zarathuštra does not so much as mention it.

Greek and Latin writers reported marriages between parents and children, and between uterine brothers and sisters, not only among the members of the Persian royal family, but among Persians generally, especially among the Magi. The custom was still practised under the Sasanians.²

Pahlavi texts warmly recommend it and define it in unambiguous terms. According to the *Dēnkart*, its basis was a desire to preserve the purity of the race, to increase chances of harmony between husband and wife and of affection for their children. The Pahlavi *Rivāyat* gives the reason, doubtless well founded, that under Arab domination, exogamy could easily lead to laxity in religion, even in perversion to another faith.

It appears to have been more of a theoretical ideal than an actual practice, and was foreign to Zarathuštra's doctrine. However, it may go back to the Indo-European period, for practically identical practices occurred among the ancient Irish. In Iran it was the Magi especially, who during the reign of the Sasanians and the first few centuries of the Arab occupation, tried to impose on the faithful 'this form of endogamy pushed to its extreme' (Gray). But it was resisted by the body of the faithful and finally disappeared.

¹ GEIGER, *Ostiranische Kultur im Altertum*, Erlangen 1882, 274 sq.

² CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran*..., 324 sq.—See also CUMONT, *CR Ac. Inscr.*, 1924, 53 sq., and MENASCE, *BSOS*, 1938, 596 sq.

Distributive justice is regulated by two principles: truthfulness and respect for contracts. A promised salary must be paid, said Zarathuštra. Acquisitiveness and usury, in particular, are condemned as serious sins (*Rivāyats*). (But a fair interest is permitted, *Sad darband Hōš*, chapter 38).

Zātspram condemns lust and avarice.

Works of charity are meritorious: "Whosoever shall give meat to one of the faithful", says Ahura Mazdā (*Vd* 18.29), "as much of it as the body of this Parōdarš bird of mine, I need not interrogate him twice; he shall go directly to Paradise". They are even one's duty, for the *Vidēvdāt* 18.34 likewise states: "Whosoever being entreated by the faithful, does not give him anything, be it ever so little of the riches he has, makes the Lie conceive progeny, as other males make their females conceive by their seed".

The interests of religion were identical with those of the social organization¹: Religious law dominated, at least in theory, one's entire life (as in Islam). Artaxšēr is reported as saying² that religion and kingship are two brothers, and neither can dispense with the other. Religion is the foundation of kingship and kingship protects religion. For whatever lacks a foundation must perish, and whatever lacks a protector, disappears.

It is essential for the prosperity of the world that each man does his own job, that is to say, that dictated to him by his class (*Dk M*, 45, 15-19 cited by MOLÉ, and *The Epistle of Tōsar*).

The economic order which was threatened by Mazdak's communist teachings, was re-established by a king, Xosrau Anōšarvān. What the Destructive Spirit fears most, is that the crown and the good religion should be combined in a single person (*Dēnkart*, Madan, p. 129). And at the end of time, the deeds of a king, Varhrān the Splendid, will prepare the way for the task of the Saviours.

Iranian moralists generally do little more than enumerate merits and sins. The list of virtues are found in *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, chapter 37, *Rivāyats*, Dhabhar, 330; the list of crimes in *Artāy Virāf*, chapter 19 sq., *Rivāyats*, Dhabhar, 286, *Sad darband Hōš*, 531³.

Occasionally we come across a theory of virtue and vice like that singled out by Menasce, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne*, 39, which resembles a well-known Greek system, the *Ethics of Nicomachus*. Menasce compares several passages, marking each with a letter, and summarizes their doctrinal contents as follows: "Text A, while dealing with the repression of vices, stresses that it should not lead to the suppression of virtues which the vices may resemble. In B, the formula requires that virtues should be kept pure of all admixture with vices which, according to Ca, seek to take their place. The well-being of the soul depends on a right proportion which guarantees the adjustment and interconnection of powers and safeguards them from an adulterative admixture with antagonistic elements (F)".

¹ See now ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight*..., 1961, 284 sq.

² MAS'ŪDĪ, *Golden Meadows* II, 162, cited by ZAEHNER, *Teachings*, 85.

³ Cf. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran*..., 432 sq. In respect of the *Artāy Virāf*, the introduction by HAUG-WEST to the 1872 edition.

This doctrine supposes another—that of the Mean (*patmān*)¹, which Iran claims as something essentially its own (as Islam does also). “Iran has always commended the mean,” remarks the *Dēnkart*, M. 429.11, “and censured excess and deficiency. In the Byzantine empire, the philosophers, in India the sages, and elsewhere the specialists, have in general commended the man whose argument showed subtlety, but the kingdom of Iran has approved the wise”, Iran was perhaps so inclined², but the doctrine itself is nonetheless lifted bodily out of Aristotle, as noted by Menasce, Bailey and Zaehner.³

This theory of the Mean in Iran, met with the cosmogonic concept of the *patmān*, as the treaty between Ōhrmazd and Ahriman. The two ideas were sometimes confused, as Zaehner has shown, *Zurvan*, 250.

Such a maxim was hardly that of an uncouth or primitive race, but rather that of a disciplined nation capable of civilized manners, such as are reflected in the sayings of Āturpāt, son of Mahraspand: “Do not harbour vengeance in your thoughts, lest your enemies catch up with you. Consider rather what injury, harm and destruction you are liable to suffer by smiting your enemy in vengeance, etc.”⁴

This is a long way from Zarathuštra preaching a holy war and the duty of doing evil to the wicked!

And Āturpāt carries morality to the point of disinterestedness: “Do good”, he writes, “simply because it is good”.

Man’s destiny depends on the choice he makes at every moment and in the smallest details of his life, between Righteousness and the Lie, between good and bad thoughts, good and bad words, and good and bad deeds. And he has the power of choice. Zarathuštra also said so, in Y 31.11 chiefly, and there is a Pahlavi term which expresses it: *āzāt-kām* “whose will is free”.⁵

Why is it then that misfortune often befalls the righteous? How can all-powerful Fate be reconciled with freedom of choice? The Mazdeans too asked themselves this question. Their clearest and most striking solution is that formulated in the Pahlavi *Vidēvdāt*: *gētē pat baxt, mēnōk pat kunīšn* “whatever is material results from one’s fate, whatever is spiritual results from one’s actions”. In other words, we depend on fate for the material side of life, while on the spiritual plane, we are masters of our actions.

Perhaps the Iranians arrived at this concept on their own. However, we are well aware, as they were too perhaps, that the neo-Platonists held a similar notion, at least in content, having discovered this way of “escaping from determinism”, of so to say, identifying the *heimarmenē* with the Physis, leaving the Soul free.

However much the Iranians might have been attracted to this idea, they did not borrow it in its entirety. Plato had taught that the Soul, apart from the body, is free; but the Iranians—

1. ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight*..., 1961, 286 sq.

2. MOLÉ, *RHR*, 1959, 179.

3. MENASCE, *Škand Gumānik Vicār*, 30; BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 79; ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 252. However, Mary BOYCE, *BSOAS*, 1960, 149, claims there was no borrowing.

4. Trans. ZAEHNER, *Teachings*, 110.

5. JACKSON’s study, *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of the Freedom of the Will*, *Zoroastrian Studies*, 219 sq., should be completed and corrected by TAVADIA’s, *ZII*, 8, 119 sq. The topic is taken up again by ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 254 with texts Z, 33 sq.

unless they were Manichaeans—did not despise matter and did not envisage the Soul disconnected from it.

The concept upheld man's responsibility for his actions, by limiting the efficacy of effort to the moral sphere, to the *mēnōk*, or future life. But, in this form, it proved to be too rigorous, and in practice it was twice mitigated.

On the one hand, it seemed superhuman to resign all the things of this world to a destiny over which one was powerless. Is it really impossible, in the material sphere, to modify one's fate? Surely it can be done in certain cases. One can surely bend the gods. To nourish this hope, Pahlavi works made a distinction between *baxt* "fate" and no more, and *bagō*. *baxt* or "fate dispensed by the gods" which is theirs to modify, on rare occasions, depending on the prayers or merits of a person. See Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 254 sq.

On the other hand, future life should be determined by the balance of one's good and bad deeds, thoughts and words in the course of this life. This principle is stated in rigorous terms, even to the point of foreseeing a special place, the *hamēstagān*, for those whose good deeds are exactly equal to their evil deeds.

But in fact, this principle too was modified to make allowance for human weakness. Sins need not all be inscribed and weighed forever in the balance. There are two ways of effacing them: the first is through confession, with repentance and penance: "This penance have I performed", says the *patēt* formula translated by Zaehner, *Teachings*, 123, "to wipe out my sins, in order to obtain my share of reward for good deeds done (which are therefore not enough) and for the comfort of my soul, etc."

The second way is by the transfer of supererogatory merits (the equivalent of our "Communion of Saints"): "Should it happen to me", continues the above *patēt*, "that I leave this world without having done my (final) penance and someone from among my near relations should do penance on my behalf, I agree to it".

Such a transfer of merits justifies prayers and ceremonies for the dead. However, the ceremonies are supposed to be efficacious in themselves, irrespective of the merits of those who conduct or order them. They may, as a matter of fact, be conducted during the lifetime of the beneficiary, whether he is considered to be *in articulo mortis* or not (if he is, they are *gētē-xarīd* "purchase here below [of the other world]"; if he is not, they are *zinda-ravān* "living soul"). And the *Sad darband Hōs* (trans. Dhabhar, *Pers. Riv.*, 533), states that however great one's sins, if the *gētē-xarīd* has been conducted, the soul, after death, is helped across the Bridge of the Separator by the Spirit of the *Gāthās* which supports it and prevents it from falling into hell and the hands of Ahriman. As for the *zinda-ravān*, its benefits have fixed rates: there is 700 times more benefit in having a *Yasna* performed in a continuous manner, by four priests, relaying one another in pairs, for three days and nights.

Mazdeanism is therefore not as ethical as it seems at first sight¹. Even the picture we have sketched is deceiving in the importance it gives to free will. In real life, the Mazdean is

¹ Cf. JACKSON, *Zoroastrian Studies*, 138: "The ideal picture must not be overdrawn"; and LEHMANN, *ERE*, 5, 515: "The reverse of this ethic is an abstract stiffness that will not accommodate itself to life and whose irrational consequences are often inimical to life. The monotonous opposition of good to evil and evil to good leaves no room for the intermediate stages of real life, for the individual and spontaneous states in the soul of man. The Persians cared little for the emotions of disinterestedness; even in the religious feelings we feel too often the want of lyric elements; on the contrary, we always feel the burden or the juristic spirit."—However, "there are nonetheless, in *Dēnkart* 6, certain less utilitarian, more disinterested features. . . . But it would seem that the high ranking Mazdean clergy was anything but ascetic" (MENASCE).

constantly engaged in so intricate a battle against the contagion of death, a thousand causes of impurity and the menace of demons present everywhere, even in his sleep, it cannot be often, that he has the sense of leading his life freely or ethically.

Marginal to the Mazdean attitude towards fate, is its extreme form, fatalism. Fatalism forms the principal theme and mainspring of the epic, as Ringgren has demonstrated, *Fatalism in Persian Epics*, Upsala 1952. It accords well with Zurvānism, which in turn is often coloured by materialism. There is a passage in the *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, picked out in the course of their studies by Christensen and Zaehner¹ which reads: "Though (one be armed) with the valour and strength of wisdom and knowledge, yet it is not possible to strive against fate. For once a thing is fated and comes true, whether for good or the reverse, the wise man goes astray in his work, and the man of wrong knowledge becomes clever in his work; the coward becomes brave and the brave cowardly; the energetic man becomes a sluggard and the sluggard energetic. For everything that has been fated, a fit occasion arises which sweeps away all other things".

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On the whole, however, as Zaehner writes, *Teachings*, 97, "the theological premises (of Mazdeanism) are based on an essentially moralistic view of life".

1 *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, 23, 4-7. CHRISTENSEN, *L' Iran sous les Sassanides*, 435; ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 257.

CHAPTER III

QUESTIONS OF ORIGIN

A. ZARATHUŠTRA

1. Date

All Greek authors who assign a date to Zoroaster—Plutarch, Aristotle, Eudoxus and Xanthos¹—place him six thousand years before Plato, or before Xerxes, or again, five thousand years before the Trojan war.

This fantastic figure is not without significance since it is found also in the traditional Iranian chronology. The *Dēnkart* states that Zarathuštra, before coming into the world existed in celestial form for six millenniums. The *Avesta*, as it has come down to us, does not contain this millennial system, but according to Plutarch, who cites Theopompus, it existed as early as the 4th century, and in all likelihood it was known already to Xanthos, Eudoxus and Aristotle, as Jackson suspects, p. 152. But we need not suppose, like this author, that the Greeks misunderstood the Iranian doctrine. Their information stemmed from milieux which could very well have equated the spiritual creation of the Prophet with his actual birth.

It is also² superfluous to suppose, with Jaeger and Benveniste, that the Greeks had perceived a connection between the Iranian doctrine of millenniums and their own concepts. It is enough that they reproduced the Iranian notion.

Finally, according to Nyberg³, it is the Iranian informant himself who sought to parallel Zoroaster and Plato by presenting the first as the precursor, reincarnated in the second. I don't see the use of this supposition either.

The native tradition places Zarathuštra 258 years before Alexander. So far, it has not been possible to disprove this⁴.

However, it is surprising that so precise a detail should have been preserved down to the Sasanian period. In fact, as Barr remarks⁵, by that time the Iranians no longer remembered the Achaemenians, and had only a vague recollection of the Arsacids, of the period immediately before. All that is contained in Iranian books, regarding Alexander the Great, is taken from Graeco-Syriac romance. How then, could a tradition regarding this point alone, the time lapse between Zoroaster and Alexander, have been faithfully transmitted from generation to

1 Classical references to Zoroaster are assembled in GRAY *apud* JACKSON, *Zoroaster*, 226 sq. (and *Muséon*, [Louvain] 1908, 311 sq.). Discussion on the date of Z. in the same volume, 150 sq.

2 Arthur Nock, *Journ. Hell. Stud.*, 1929, 112.

3 *Die Religionen des alten Iran*, 27.

4 In spite of Nyberg's attempt, refuted by HENNING, *Zoroaster*, London 1951, 37 sq.

5 *Avesta*, Copenhagen 1954, 39.

generation for 900 years.¹ More likely, the date was fixed by the Sasanian priesthood, in whose interest it was to fix an exact date for their prophet. It is understandable too, that they should do so with reference to the 'accursed Alexander' who, according to orthodox tradition had burnt or stolen the *Avesta* and whose irruption into Iran was the great catastrophe in the history of that country.

All we can say is that, at the latest, Zoroaster flourished in 600 B.C. And perhaps there are reflexes of this approximate date in Greek authors, who without assigning an exact date to him, make him a contemporary of Pythagoras. Thus both Aristoxenus, a pupil of Aristotle, and Diodorus of Eretria², wrote that Pythagoras had made the journey to Babylonia to study under Zoroaster. Now, Pythagoras was supposed to have been born in 572, and Aristoxenus tells us he emigrated to Italy at the age of 40, owing to Polycrates' tyranny, which commenced in 532.

It is no doubt an attractive idea that Zoroaster made his appearance not only at the time of the early Greek philosophers, but with the Buddha and Confucius as well. Similar conditions, almost simultaneously, would have produced parallel phenomena. But is it a fact that civilization everywhere advances in step?

The argument generally adduced for an earlier date is based on linguistic evidence. Since the language of the *Gāthās* and the Vedas is at a similar stage of development, it is claimed that the *Gāthās* should also be dated back to 1000 B.C. But we know that two neighbouring languages can evolve at different rates: Danish, for instance, developed much more rapidly than German, or even Swedish.

We might situate Zoroaster in history if we could identify Vištāspa, his protector, with the father of Darius. But such an identification has not been possible.

2. Place

Sasanian and post-Sasanian sources situating Zarathuštra in western Iran are contradictory on points of detail. Certain sources place him in Media, others in Atropatane (Azerbaijān), and others again, more to the East, in Ragha (near modern Teheran). Our distrust of these increases when we find that other testimonies, in Arabic (Tabarī), or, even more ancient in Greek (Théon, 130, Justin, circa 120, etc.) make him a Bactrian from the East.

1 In a recent article, *The Date of Zoroaster*, *Archiv Orientalni*, 1959, 556 sq., O. KLIMA has attempted to make use of the Manichaean tradition in resolving the question of Zoroaster's date. Mani who was born in 216, identified himself with the Paraclet, which has been known for a long time, and with Maitreya, as the Turfan texts show. If it could be proved that he also, as Spiegel supposed, identified himself with Ušētar (the future Saviour, coming 1000 years after Zoroaster), then we could deduce that Mani believed himself to have come 1000 years after the Mazdean prophet, that is to say (taking into account 30 years of 'private life'), born 970 years after him. Now this figure of 970 years can be broken down as follows: 216 A.D. (the date of Mani's birth) + 522 B.C. (date of Darius' accession) + 232 (total years of reign between Zoroaster and Darius). Zoroaster's revelation would then fall in 522 + 232 = 754 B.C. and his birth in 784 B.C. As for other traditional dates for the advent of Zoroaster, notably 258 years before Alexander, they are ascribed to an erroneous reckoning of Achaemenian reigns. In the same way, it was not known that 150 years separated the reigns of Darius I and Darius III. Unfortunately, we have no concrete proof that Mani identified himself with Ušētar. Moreover, it seems unlikely that tradition retained an exact recollection of the time lapse between Zoroaster and Darius, when it had none of the kings' names. For this period, Mazdean tradition knows only Vištāsp (90 years), Vahuman (112 years!) and Humāy (30 years).

HINZ, *Zarathustra*, 1961, thought he could confirm the traditional date of '258 years before Alexander' by means of the *Dabistān*. But this source, of very late date, is of little value.

2 Both cited by HIPPOLYTUS, *Refut. Haeres.*, I, 2, 12.

Let us turn to the *Avesta*. What strikes us at once, is its complete silence on the subject of western Iran, whether it be the Median empire, the Assyrians, or later, the Achaemenians, or Greeks, etc. On the contrary, all place-names mentioned in it point to the same conclusion: that the geographical horizon of the *Avesta* was limited to eastern Iran, and more particularly to the North-East. Even the *Vidēvdāt*, a later work than the *Gāthās*, when enumerating all the provinces in which the religion had spread, knows nothing further west than Ragha. We are hence justified in saying that the scene of Zoroaster's ministry was in the North-East.

The traditions that contradict this conclusion are easily explained away. They all date from the Sasanian period when, as Henning remarks¹, and in all this, we follow him, the political-cum-religious centres of the Empire were all situated in West Iran. The eastern provinces were in fact lost to Sasanian authority for a time. The Sasanian priesthood found it to its advantage to credit legends locating Zarathuštra in the West. Pahlavi commentators transferred place-names given in the *Avesta*, to western sites. Sanctuaries competed among themselves for the honour and advantage of having been the birth-place of the prophet, or the scene of his visions, triumphs and death, which accounts for conflicting details in sources dating from this period.²

We can go now into the traditional evidence situating Zarathuštra in the North-East.³ Airyanəm Vaējō 'Aryan expanse' which is the Avestan name for the homeland of the Zoroastrian religion, is probably only a mythical appellation, but since it heads a chain of regions extending from North to South⁴, we can locate it north of Sogdiana and Margiana which are named after it, that is to say, in Chorasmia. Zarathuštra's birthplace was therefore Chorasmia, as Markwart had proposed as early as 1900, followed by Benveniste, Nyberg, Messina, Henning and Barr. This conclusion seems to be confirmed⁵ by Henning's recent linguistic discoveries. Henning stresses that the term Chorasmia should be taken in an extended sense, for as Hecataios and Herodotus relate, at the time of Zarathuštra, or shortly before Cyrus' integration of Iran, the Chorasmians exercised some measure of suzerainty over a large part of eastern Iran. Henning argues, p. 42, that Cyrus' rapid overthrow of these states, implies that they were organized in the form of a political unit, otherwise it would have taken him much longer to conquer them one by one. But this is a far cry from saying that Vištāspa, Zoroaster's patron and protector, was the ruler of such a confederation. There is no positive evidence⁶ that Vištāspa was more powerful than other neighbouring princes, or that Cyrus had to deal with a confederation. After all, the defeat of one or two of the tribes could well have brought about the rapid collapse of the rest. Barr postulates that both confederation and conquest were posterior to Vištāspa's time.

Archaeological excavations in Chorasmia and Bactriana have brought to light an urban civilization which flourished as early as the first half of the millennium. Since Zarathuštra

1 Zoroaster, 43.

2 It should be pointed out, however, that competition was limited to North-West Iran. Why did Persia not participate in this pious fraud, although it was the centre of political power and of important sanctuaries? In my opinion, this derives from the fact that the true authors of Zarathuštra's 'westernisation' were not the Sasanians, so much as the Median Magi.

3 HNZ, *Zarathustra*, 1961, 22 sq., locates the birth and death of the prophet, respectively, in Bactriana and Khorasan; but on the sole basis of Marco Polo's testimony!

4 *Vidēvdāt*, 1, 1 sq. The principle underlying the list seems to be a purely geographical one. MOLÉ's attempt JA, 1951, to distinguish in it a 'functional' classification is hardly convincing.

5 In spite of what ALTHEIM has to say, *Parola del Passato*, 1951, pp. 321 sq.

6 BARR, *Avesta*, 29.

ignores the existence of this civilization, it follows¹ that if he did live in Chorasmia, it could have been no later than the first few centuries of the millennium. Diakonov, p. 390, sets the composition of the *Gāthās* in Media in the 8th century, or alternatively in Chorasmia or Bactriana before the 6th.

3. Life and Personality

Zoroaster's life and personality are described in legends,² but even if we try to eliminate the miraculous from these, we are not left with a historical residue. Nor can we emulate Jackson, who has tried to reconstitute a biography by assembling at each stage all stray allusions of varying dates and sources, interpolating here and there his own somewhat naive remarks.³

On the question of the historicity of Zarathuštra, there are two diametrically opposed points of view.

The first, represented notably by Herzfeld and Nyberg, holds that it is possible to reconstruct Zoroaster's earthly career and to describe his life, at least its public period. But these two authors write it quite differently. Herzfeld connects him with Darius and his father whom he identifies as Zoroaster's protector. Nyberg, on the other hand, from Avestan texts alone, deduces the existence of two rival communities, one following the doctrine of the *Gāthās*, the other worshipping Mithra. When war breaks out between them, Zarathuštra appears in the first community to defend it against the depredations of the second.

According to the other point of view, Zoroaster is not a historical personage at all. This was Darmesteter's original opinion, and adopting the methods of the naturalistic school, in his maiden book *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1877, he made Zarathuštra a personification of thunder. This view was soon abandoned, even by Darmesteter himself. It was by quite a different line of approach that Molè eighty years later, prompted by the excesses and contradictions of the historical school, also sought to deny the historicity of Zarathuštra. To him, the prophet is only a liturgical entity. For instance, when Zoroaster's mother is said to be pregnant with him after absorbing the *hōm*, this is only the interpretation in terms of mythology, of the ritual mixing of *hōm* and milk. This method which takes inspiration from the Anglo-Scandinavian *Myth and Ritual* school, does occasionally give results in explaining the *Gāthās*. But the non-historicity of the prophet is only proved, if the whole of the *Gāthās* can be interpreted as reflections of the ritual. And it is at once evident that certain passages do not lend themselves to such an interpretation. For instance, how can liturgy account for the following (Y 51.12):

*Petty Prince Vaēpya at the Bridge of winter
Offended Zarathuštra Spitāma by refusing him shelter
When he and his draught horses came to him all shivering with cold.*

1 DIAKONOV, *Istoria Midii*, Moscow 1956, 48; ORANSKII, *Vvedenie v iranskaia Philologii*, Moscow 1960, 91 sq.

2 They are found summarized in DARMESTETER, *Z-A.*, III, chapter VI.

3 JACKSON, *Zoroaster*, 30, 35, 60, 95. Why does Jackson 'draw the line' at the evidence of certain foreign sources like that of the Scholiast of the Platonic Alcibiades and Pliny, etc.? How can 'the realm of fanciful legend' be distinguished from 'the more solid ground of tradition' (p. 127)? Why discard a tradition merely because it is a late one, such as that of the Brahman *Caṇṇaṇhāc* (p. 86), and why call absurd the story of the black horse (p. 64), but suppose another account to have a 'rationalistic background of truth' (p. 29)?

A single passage like the above is enough to refute those who would deny Zoroaster's historicity. In fact, we can sum up with Geldner by saying, that what proves that Zoroaster existed, is the authentic note, found here and there, in the *Gāthās*.

Thus reassured, we may venture to take a middle course, seeking only to salvage a few details about the life of the prophet.

In this respect Y 46 is particularly interesting. In verse 12, Zarathuštra lauds the descendants of Fryāna of Tura, who have given proof of their pious zeal and who have paid heed to his message. The people of Tura are known to us from the Later *Avesta*. They were a nomadic people hailing from between the Caspian and Aral, and regions bordering the Oxus and Jaxartes. The Lower Oxus district of Xwārizm was known in Sasanian times as Tur "whose name," as Barr writes, *Avesta*, 27, "certainly represents a survival of the presence of the Tura people". In the epic, the Turas or Turanians, stood for all that was non-Iranian, but it is evident from such proper names as have survived, that their ruling class, at least, was of Aryan descent.

It is difficult to accept that Zarathuštra sought refuge with these nomads of the Steppes, even if they were Aryans, and that this is the interpretation we should give to stanza I of the same poem:

*To what land can I go? Whither shall I flee?
My family and tribe forsake me
Neither the village nor the country's cruel chiefs
look in favour upon me
How then, can I obtain your favour, O Lord?*

But we can follow Barr¹, in supposing that a branch of the Turas had become sedentary settlers on Iranian soil, and that it was with them that Zarathuštra found the refuge denied him by his kindred. However, it is also possible, as Humbach suggests, that Zarathuštra never fled at all. His failure makes him consider flight, that is all. When he asks "Whither shall I flee?", he is in effect saying: "I have nowhere to go".

In our search for Zarathuštra's homeland, we should not forget the importance he gave to the ox. Now, according to the information communicated to me by two experts, Morgenstierne (by letter in 1948) and Cameron (verbally in 1957), there is no district today, in the whole of Iran and Afghanistān, where one could make a living from cattle-rearing.

On the other hand, Airyanəm Vaējō (Aryan Expanse) was also, as several texts tell us, the area of the good river Dāityā. Its name is no doubt as mythical as that of the country's, but it was a real river all the same, and sacrifices were offered to it, as the source of all prosperity and fecundity. If it was the Oxus, then we can easily imagine that its waters, once much more plentiful than they are now, watered a vast pasture land of which the oasis of Xiva, in medieval and modern Xwārizm, is only a fragment. The epithet *vaṇuhi* 'good' survives in the medieval name of the Oxus; Wēhrōt². It is true that this epithet survives also in the name itself of the Ochus, a river flowing close to Herat in Afghanistān; but as Barr points out,³ the lake Vourukaša, which plays such an important part in the *Yašts* is none other, under a mythical

1 *Avesta*, 28.

2 MARKWART, *Wehrot u. Arang*, 1938.

3 *Avesta*, 31.

name, than the Aral Sea, into which flows the Oxus. This argument, together with that of the oxen, goes to support our first identification of Zarathuštra's homeland as Chorasmia.

Zarathuštra preached to a sedentary, pastoral people, whose chiefs, known as *kavis*¹, surrounded themselves with priests known as *karapans* "mumblers" and *usigs* "sacrificers". Zarathuštra too, was a priest or *zaotar*, and was conversant with the tradition of the chanter-priest,² although he himself may have belonged to an equestrian family, as suggested by his name, *Spitāma*, "of brilliant attack," and as his father's name, *Pourušaspa* "with the dappled horse" seems to confirm. Although a man of rank, and a priest, Zarathuštra was not rich. It is because he has "few men and flocks" (Y 46.2), that he is forced to seek a protector.

His political horizon was limited. The *Gāthās* are untouched by urban civilization and Cyrus had not yet joined the country to the main stream of history.

Even under his successors, the Zoroastrian community remained remarkably aloof during the whole time the *Avesta*, as we know it, was being composed.

In a passage (Y 42.6) that immediately follows the *Yasna of seven chapters*, there is mention of "priests travelling afar to those who seek the Truth". How far did they go?

The *Yašt* to Mithra gives us a glimpse of the Zoroastrian country. It tells us that Mithra preceding the sun, rises at dawn from behind mount Harā. He climbs to the golden heights and from there surveys the whole land inhabited by the Aryans, where warriors prepare for the attack, where well-watered slopes provide pasture for cattle, where lakes are broad and deep, where surging rivers rush towards "Margiana which belongs to Haraiva", and towards Sogdiana and Xwārizm. Mithra sees all parts of the world, and notably, the central clime, Xvaniratha, abode of cattle, which is another name, apparently, for the Aryan country. The expression "Margiana which belongs to Haraiva" must mean, as Barr³ notes, that Margiana (Merv country) came under the suzerainty of neighbouring Haraiva (Herat country). Such a state of affairs could very well represent the confederation Cyrus is said to have dealt with when he invaded these provinces.

A little later, if we refer to *Yašt* 19 (in honour of Xvarənah), the community had spread southwards, for there is mention made of the powerful Haētumant river flowing into lake Kaṛsaoya. The river has been identified with the Hilmand, and the lake with lake Hamūn, at the present frontier of Afghanistan and Pākistān. It was in this region that the legend of Zoroaster grew⁴.

4. His Doctrine

Zarathuštra's teachings are all contained in the *Gāthās*. The salient features may be summarized as follows:

- a) It is forbidden to worship the *daēvas*, and at least in a certain manner, sacrifice the ox and the *haoma*.

1 An archaic word related to Skr. *kavi*- "sage".

2 Mary BOYCE, Zoroaster the priest, *BSOAS*, 1970.

3 *Avesta*, 33.

4 Gh. GNOLI, *Ricerche storiche sul Sistān antico*, Rome 1967.

- b) Ahura Mazdā the "Wise Lord" alone, with his entourage, is worthy of worship. It is he who created light and darkness, the sky, the earth, the movement of the world and the moments of the day. He is the father of Aša (Justice), Vohu Manah (Good Mind) and Ārmaiti (Devotion).
- c) He is also the father of one of the twin Spirits, Spənta Mainyu (the Bounteous Spirit), and by implication, of the other, Aṇra Mainyu (the Spirit of Destruction). These two Spirits have, at the beginning of all things, made their choice between Aša (Justice) and Druj (Falsehood). Following their example, men too make their choice. The *daēvas* chose Falsehood.
- d) According to the choice they have made, men will be requited, after death, at the Bridge of the Separator. Some will be admitted to the House of the Song, others will fall into the House of Falsehood.
- e) The *daēvas* will be defeated and the Wise Lord will triumph in a renovated, resplendent world¹.
- f) There is no mention made of Mithra or of the *fravašis*.

What part of these doctrines was original to Zarathuštra and what part was traditional?

If we had proof that the religion of the Achaemenians was untouched by Zarathuštra's reforms, we might deduce from it what the Iranian religion would have been had the prophet never existed, and by comparison, we could determine how far his teachings were original. But such proof is lacking.

Since we are unable to take the Achaemenian religion as an immediate background, we must resort to a comparison between Iranian and Indian data, so as to gain access—always somewhat hypothetically—to the more remote background of the Indo-Iranian religion, and to reconstruct, further back still, that of the Indo-Europeans. We shall also use ethnological facts to situate the Iranian doctrines among various more or less primitive nations.

B. IRAN TILL THE END OF THE ACHAEMENIAN EMPIRE

1. Prehistory²

Prehistoric objects furnish us with little definite information on the religion of Iran. Predominant among them are the cult figurines, representing, for the most part, a goddess of fecundity³.

1 Did Zarathuštra preach the resurrection of the dead? It seems logical, if each is to get his just reward on the advent of the new world, that those who died before this event should be resurrected also to get their share. Such was Lommel's reasoning, *Die Religion Zarathustras*, 1930, 232. But are we justified, in the absence of textual proof, in attributing such a doctrine or reasoning to Zarathuštra? Cf. F. KÖNIG, *Der Glaube an die Auferstehung in den Gathas*, *Festschrift Viktor Christian*, Vienna 1956, 69 sq., and *Zarathustras Jenseitsvorstellungen und das alte Testament*, 1964.

2 L. VANDEN BERGHE's volume, *Archéologie de l'Iran antique*, Leiden 1959 is very detailed as regards prehistory; PAGLIARO, v. *infra*, p.110 n. 3.

3 Phyllis ACKERMAN, *Survey of Persian Art*, I, 195 sq.

What are known as Luristan bronzes, form a separate category altogether. They reflect the animal portraiture of Mesopotamia but we do not know which people were responsible for them. Their dating too, presents certain difficulties, and the extreme limits lie anywhere between 2500 and 550 B.C.¹

Two of these bronzes are of exceptional interest. The first is a plaque in the *Metropolitan Museum* which has been studied by R. Dussaud² and Dumézil.³ According to Dumézil, it illustrates the list of "para-Indian" gods enumerated in the Mitanni treaty found at Boghazköi, which will be dealt with below.

The second is a plaque in the Cincinnati Museum, which Ghirshman⁴ claims, depicts Zuryān as an androgynous god giving birth to twins (which emerge from his shoulders) and receiving the *barsom* from three processions representing the three ages of man.

2. Substrata

Two races, the Elamites and Urartians inhabited western Iran before the coming of the Iranians. They had attained such a high degree of civilization that the Iranians must have inherited it in part.

The Elamites occupied Elam or Susiana. Their language was one of the three used by Darius in his trilingual inscriptions. It shows traces of borrowings from the Iranian language. And vice-versa, Elamite must have influenced Iran, although this is difficult to prove.⁵ We are more certain, that the goddess Nanaia occupied an important place in Elam (and in Babylonia) and that her cult resembled, and probably influenced, that of the Iranian goddess Anāhitā.

The Urartians were a nation of Hurrian descent, and their Empire, in the 10th century centred around lake Van. They appear to have taught the Iranians⁶ cyclopean construction, among other things. There is some affinity between their myths and those of the Iranians, as has been proved in two instances.⁷

Darius owed his throne—the detail is given in *Hdt*, 3, 82—to the ruse employed by his equerry, Waibara (Οἰβάρης) to make Darius' horse neigh before that of the other competitors. Now, according to a historical text, Rusa, king of the Urartu, conquered his throne thanks to his horses and charioteer.⁸

Secondly, Herodotus reports the legend (3,140), that Darius obtained a boon of Syloson of Samos. And the great deliverer of Rusa of Urartu is Ullušunu or Šullušunu, king of the Zamua country.

1 R. DUSSAUD, *Survey of Persian Art*, I, 254, sq. The excavations now conducted by Vanden Berghe give of more accurate dating.

2 Anciens bronzes du Luristan et cultes iraniens, *Syria*, XXVI, 196 sq.

3 Dieux cassites et védiques, *Rev. hittite et asianique*, 1950, 18 sq.

4 *Artibus Asiae*, 1958, 37 sq.

5 MOULTON, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 1913, has not succeeded in proving that the Magi came from Elam.

6 GHIRSHMAN, *Syria*, 1950, 205 sq.; v. also, *Studies...Taqizadeh*, 1962, 85 sq.

7 GHIRSHMAN, *ibid*.

8 F. W. KÖNIG, *Die älteste Geschichte der Meder u. Perser (Der Alte Orient*, 33), 46.

The sojourn of the Persians in the vicinity of Urartu and Assyria left its mark on them in two ways. The names of Cyrus and of certain others may have been of Hurrian origin, while Achaemenian art betrays a strong Assyrian, rather than Babylonian, influence.¹

3. The Scythians

The Greeks knew as Scythians, the Assyrians as *Ašguzai*, the Hebrews as *Aškenaz* (a graphical error for *Aškuz*), the nomadic Iranians from the North, whose incursions are attested since the 8th century and who, at the time of Herodotus, had spread to central Europe and the Pamirs. The Scythians called themselves Sakas, Sarmatians, Sauromatians, etc. Their only direct descendants, today, are the Ossetes.

Darius refers to them as Sakas, and distinguishes among them a tribe called the Saka *haumavarga* (in Greek, Ἀμάργιοι), an interesting name from the point of view of religion. We are tempted to recognize in it the Avestan *haoma*. The second term in the compound, *varga*, has till now resisted etymological interpretation², but we can compare it with a word in the Saka language of Khotan, *aurgā*, *orgā*, "adoration, cult, homage".³ The *haumavarga* would then mean "the haoma revering."

The Scythian civilization is known to us through archaeology and the Greek historians.

Archaeological evidence includes the excavations in South Russia and Russian Turkestan, and numerous objects representing the art of the Steppes.⁴

On religion, our principal and practically only source is Herodotus, Book 4. The sky-god, according to him, was called *Papaios* or "Father", and was the husband of the Earth, whose name, *Apiā*, recalls that of Water⁵ in most Iranian dialects. The sea-god was *Thagimasadas*, a name whose meaning is still not known. That of *Tabiti*, goddess of the hearth, presents less difficulty and seems to signify "burning". *Goitosuros*, whom Herodotus identifies with Apollo hence presumably with Mithra, can be tentatively interpreted by slightly modifying the etymology proposed by Markwart⁶, as "champion (Av. *sūra*) of cattle (Av. *gaēθa*)". Finally, *Argimpasa*, the "celestial Aphrodite", is differently interpreted by Markwart and Nyberg.⁷

Archaeology has brought to light the figures of two deities: the "Scythian goddess" and the Sun-god on his chariot, both of which are depicted on the Kuban gold plaque, reproduced in Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*², fig. 23.

1 Sidney SMITH, Parsuash and Solduz, *Poure Davoud Memorial Volume*, II (1951), 62 sq., refers us, on the question of names, to the works of Stephens, Gelb and König.—Vanden Berghe has recently attempted to interpret the gold vase of Hasanlu (south of lake Urmiya), but his demonstration published in the *Gentsche Býdragen* (in Dutch), 18, 1959-60, p. 11 sq., is not convincing, and can in no way replace the studies made by E. PORADA, *Expedition*, 1959, 19 sq., and M. MELLINCK, *Iranica Antiqua* (Mélanges Ghirshman, I). A very clear drawing of the vase, on an enlarged scale, is found in the article of DYSON JR., *Archaeology*, 1960, 118 sq.

2 KENT, *Old Persian*, s. v., enumerates the interpretations proposed: "preparers of hauma", "drinkers of hauma", but they remain *in vacuo*, since it has not been possible to connect them.

3 See J. D-G., *Hommages à Dumézil*, 1960, 97.

4 Recent works on Scythian archaeology: Tamara RICE, *The Scythians*, London, 1953; TOLSTOV, *Drevnuy Xorezm*, 1948; *Auf den Spuren der althoresmischen Kultur*, Berlin.—On the Pazyryk excavations, S. I. RUDENKO, *Kultura naselenia gornovoitaia v skifskoe vremia*, 1953. —Cf. also R. GROSSET, *L'Empire des Steppes*, Paris 1939, G. FRUMKIN, *Archéologie soviétique en Iran*, *Asiat. Stud.*, 1957-1958, 73 sq.; MONGAIT, *Archaeology in URSS*, London, Pelican.

5 NYBERG, *ap.* PEDERSEN, *Illustreret Religionshistorie*, Copenhagen 1948, 460.

6 *Untersuchungen z. Gesch. v. Iran*, II, p. 90. But NYBERG, *Die Religionen des alten Iran*, 1938, 254, cites the form Oitosuros and would explain it as **vaitāsūra* 'champion of the meadows'.

7 Works cited in the two preceding notes.

The Scythians had a legend which is recorded in *Hdt.* 4, 5 sq., regarding the origin of their nation and of the king's power. This legend has been elucidated by Benveniste and Dumézil¹, who connected it to the tripartite ideology of the Indo-Europeans and found traces of it surviving among the popular legends of the modern Ossetes.

The Scythian legend is about certain gold objects which fell from the sky and which relate respectively, to the third function (plough and yoke), to the second (axe) and to the first (chalice, probably cultic). It is the possession of the latter which confers royal power.

The Ossetic tradition divides the Nartes, who were the heroes in antiquity, into three families; the Boriatae, rich in flocks; the Alaegatae, strong in intelligence; and the Æxaertaeg-katae², noted for heroism and vigour, and strong in men.

Herodotus informs us also on their sacrificial rites. Horses, animals and prisoners of war were sacrificed annually in honour of the god of war, represented by an iron sword set up on a constructed mound. The head of the victim was first sprinkled with wine, etc. Sacrifice of victims to other gods was done by strangulation, cooking in a pot, etc.

Archaeology completes this information, if we can accept as Scythian the figure of a man wearing a mouth-veil (*paitidāna*) and holding the *barāsmān*, discovered in the Treasure of the Oxus³, also the Kuban axe (7th century B.C.) in the Leningrad Museum, which Scheftelowitz⁴ has brought to our notice, and provided the goblet of Rostovtzeff⁵ is indeed the representation of the Sun god, holding out the sacred elixir to the king.

The Scythians practised divination in two different ways, according to Herodotus (IV, 67 sq.). The Ênarées (or Non-men) who were soothsayers by grant of the goddess *Argimpasa*, utilized the best of the lime-tree. Nyberg⁶ compares them to the Shamans who dress like women, speak with women's voices and live like women to the extent of marrying men⁷. Other soothsayers were the followers of Goitosuros, the Scythian Apollo.

We may, with Nyberg, attribute a religious significance to the Scythian practice of becoming intoxicated, while uttering cries of exultation, on the fumes of hemp seeds roasting on heated stones. Herodotus saw nothing more in it than a manner of taking a vapour bath. It was perhaps a means of ecstasy.⁸

The burial rites of a Scythian king are described by Herodotus, 4, 71 sq. The body was coated with wax and taken in procession on a carriage. Servants, horses and a concubine were sacrificed on his tomb and these sacrifices were repeated after a year. Archaeological finds in South Russia have confirmed much of Herodotus' information. What is more, the peculiar Scythian custom of mounting dead horses by passing a pole through their body, resembles the way in which horses were put to death by 19th century Shamans.⁹

1 Lastly, DUMÉZIL, *L'idéologie tripartite*, Brussels 1958, 9; E. GRANTOVSKII, *Indoiranische Kastengliederung bei den Scythen*, XXV Congrès des Oriental., Moscow 1960.—Cf. now, DUMÉZIL, *IIJ*, 1962, 187 sq.

2 Their name derives from *aexsar* (r) "bravery", corresponding with Skr. *kṣatra*.

3 DALTON, *The Treasure of the Oxus*, London, 1926, pl. XV.

4 *Acta Orientalia*, 11, 333.

5 *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Oxford 1922, 104.

6 PEDERSEN's *Illustreret Religionshist.*, 461.

7 DUMÉZIL, Les "enarées" scythiques..., *Latomus*, 1946, 249 sq.

8 *Hdt.* 4, 75. See lately NYBERG, *Illustr. Religionshist.*, 462.

9 A striking description is found in RADLOV, *Aus Sibirien*, I, 1884, 332.

The Massagatae (*Μασσαγέται*) also appear to have been a northern Iranian tribe, especially if we follow Christensen¹ in explaining their name as **mas-sagata* or, more older still, as **mas-sakata*, that is to say, 'great Sakas'. What we know about these people is also from Herodotus, I, 215 sq. After telling us about their matrimonial customs and diet, he adds: "Of all the gods, they worship only the Sun. They sacrifice horses to it, because they think it proper to immolate the swiftest of animals to the swiftest of the gods".

4. The Medes

The Medes make their first appearance in history in the inscription of Salmanassar III, 835, already mentioned above, p. 13: which contains a reference to the Mada country in Upper Zagros.²

Sargon's testimony from the end of the 8th century, essentially confirms what Herodotus says about a certain Dayaukku-Deiocès, a Median king, whose name is clearly non-Iranian. Herodotus, I, 98, ascribes to him the construction of Ecbatana, a town with seven concentric enclosures, each of a different colour, which may have an astral and religious significance, for the innermost enclosure was golden and the next silver, as if relating to sun and moon. But perhaps Herodotus was merely remembering the astral religion of the Babylonians.

Dayaukku's successor, according to the Assyrians, was named *Kaštariti*, that is to say *Xšaθrita*, literally meaning "endowed with power". However, Herodotus calls him *Fraortes* "the defender", a name he likewise gives to the father of Deiocès.

During the first three-quarters of the 7th century, Media was under the domination of nomadic invaders from the North, the Scythians and Cimmerians. In 625, Kyaxarès or *Hvaxšāθra* "the autocrat", son of Kšaθrita, founded the Median Empire. He was succeeded as emperor by his son Astyagès in 585. Cyrus conquered the Empire in 553.

Of the five rock-cut tombs presumed to belong to the Median period,³ three have reliefs of a religious nature. At Saxna, a winged disc represented the god of the sky, in the traditional iconography of Egypt and Asia-Minor. At Dukkan i Daud, a man wearing a cap covering his mouth, holds a bundle of twigs, probably the *barəsman*, while at Kizkapan (Qyzqapan) there is the portrayal of a four winged deity, and two discs—in one there is a human figure on a crescent moon, in the other, a six pointed star. On the same facade, two men face each other on either side of a fire-altar. They wear the cap with mouth-piece, their left hand rests on a bow, while their right fore-arm is raised in an attitude of prayer. They appear to be Magi. Herodotus, I, 101, names the Magi as one of the six Median tribes. Amongst them were oneiromancers whom Astyagès consulted.

As Diakonov notes, *Istoria Midii*, 375 sq., the term *maga* is used in the Behistūn inscriptions, exactly in the same way as *Bābiruviya*, *Pārsa* and *Māda*, that is to say, as an ethnical term. Darius, in this instance, accords with Herodotus.

¹ *Die Iranier*, 250. Rather than as 'fish eaters' (Tomaschek, followed by MARKWART, *Unters.*, II, p. 136).

² On the Medes, the most recent book is DIAKONOV, *Istoria Midii* (in Russian) 1956; the most important document is the treaty between Ésarhaddon and the Median king, Ramateia, see WISEMAN, *Iraq*, XX (1958), 82; PAGLIARO, v. *infra*, p. 110 n. 3.

³ VON DER OSTEN, *Die Welt der Perser*, Stuttgart 1956, 56, and pl. 38 and 39.

The earliest references to the Magi are contained in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Jeremiah, 39, 3 and 13, mentions a *Rab Mag* or "Chief of the Magi"¹, among the embassy sent to Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, in 586.

Ezekiel, 8, describes as the greatest abomination of all some twenty-five men who, with their backs turned to the temple, were worshipping the sun towards the East, putting the branch (probably the *barasman*)² to their nose. (The Medians—according to Dinon, circa 350—divined with rods).

To sum up: at the time of the Median Empire, the Magi appear to have been a priestly caste, practising a solar cult, divination and oneiromancy. They were in the employ of the kings of Media and Babylon. In the following period, they reappear in the service of the Achaemenians.

5. The Achaemenians

A. CYRUS

By his conquests in the West, Cyrus (558–530) brought Iran into contact with the Mediterranean world³. What is more, his victories in the East—where he was to meet his end fighting the Massagatae—brought under one sceptre for the first time, western Iran, Medo-Persia and eastern Iran, which was Zoroastrian country. This was to have important repercussions on the future. As for Cyrus himself, however, we do not know whether he had heard of the Zoroastrian religion, and if he had, what might have been his reactions towards it. Quite possibly he did not have the time to concern himself with it.

His religious policy is known to us from the inscription he had drawn up in the Babylonian language, and from the Bible. It appears to have been an innovation over that of his Assyrio-Babylonian predecessors who had demolished temples and removed statues with the aim of destroying the culture of the conquered nations and of obliterating in them any signs of independence. Cyrus, on the other hand, not only granted the Babylonians their religious freedom, but himself worshipped their gods, and posed as the protector of their religion. His inscription reads: "When I entered peacefully into Babylon, I took up my lordly residence in the royal palace among rejoicing and pleasure. Marduk, the great Lord, inclined towards me the noble heart of the Babylonians, and I daily practised his cult. Marduk was pleased with my pious deeds and graciously blessed me, Cyrus the King, who worships him, and my son Cambyses, and all my soldiers, and we in sincerity and joy praised his exalted godhead"⁴.

This text gives the impression that Cyrus followed a policy of religious toleration, and, in fact, this is the opinion currently held.⁵ However, he did not scruple to use one religion against the other when politically expedient. He conquered Babylon with the help of Marduk's priests and followers who were hostile to Nabonidus. The latter was an innovator in the religious sphere, in so far as he tried to replace Marduk, as the supreme god, by Sin, the Moon, who

1 MOULTON, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 187 sq., shows there is no valid reason why this interpretation should be rejected.

2 MOULTON, 189.

3 The latest work on the Achaemenians is ASMUSSEN's collection, *Historiske tekster fra Achaemenide tiden*, Copenhagen 1960. For the political aspect, see H. SCHAEFER, *Das persische Weltreich*, reprinted in *Der Mensch in Orient u. Okzident*, 1960, 48 sq., PAGLIARO, *Iran Antico*, in *Civiltà dell' Oriente*, 1956; J.D.-G., "Politique et Religion, de Cyrus à Xerxès", *Persica*, 3, 1968, 1 sq.

4 After NYBERG, *Historia Mundi*, Bern III, 1954, 67.

5 An opinion refuted by Hildegard LEWY, *Archiv Orientalni*, 1949, 56 sq.

instead of being a mere national deity like Assur in Assyria, and Marduk in Babylon, was a supra-national god. His cult had been spread by Aramaic nomads, and he was worshipped in Assyria (Harran), Babylonia (Ur) and Amurru (Temā). By venerating Marduk, Cyrus sided with the religion favoured by the Babylonians. He burnt, pillaged and ravaged the sanctuaries Nabonidus had piously built, and reinstated the statues which this usurper had confiscated and removed.

Thus "the Babylonian Captivity" virtually came to an end for which Deutéro-Isaiah hails Cyrus as the Lord's Anointed, that is to say, as a kind of Messiah¹.

Cyrus' policy, as Nyberg remarks², was not one of religious toleration in the modern sense of the term. It was aimed at securing as closely as possible his dominion over conquered lands. "Of course", Nyberg writes, "he professed the ancient faith which he had inherited from his forefathers. It was a very primitive and undeveloped religion in respect of ritual, hierarchy and doctrine. He must have been impressed by the Babylonian religion's rigid hierarchy, its splendid and awesome temples and its elaborate ceremonial. At the same time, he probably did not feel there was an insurmountable difference between it and his own Aryan faith, with its worship of the great Sky god, clan gods and natural phenomena³. His Aryan religion was simple enough and broad enough to be a common denominator of all other religions. The Yahweh of the Jews was, in Persian eyes, none other than the "Sky God". In fact, this was the appellation the Jews themselves used when they treated of religion with their Persian sovereigns, as evidenced by the book of Ezra and the Elephantine documents, and it certainly dates from Cyrus' time. The policy laid down by him served as a model to all his Achaemenian successors. The Assyrio-Babylonian policy of violence and extirpation was replaced by an imperial policy, both magnanimous and supra-national, which, at least in the religious sphere, brought about a 'world peace'—an event of incalculable importance".

Cyrus had a capital at Pasargadae (thought to be a corruption of **Pārsa-garda* "camp of the Persians")⁴. His tomb may still be seen there, of a shape recalling a Nordic house, unless it recalls the Babylonian *ziggurat*.

Pasargadae has two other monuments of a religious character. One is a bas-relief picturing a figure with two pairs of wings of uncertain interpretation⁵. The other is a pair of not quite identical stepped altars. We can suppose that one was meant for the sacred fire and the other for the blood sacrifice⁶. Some Sasanian coins⁷ also show two altars, only one of which is topped with a fire.

B. CAMBYSES

Cambyses (530–522) conquered Egypt. For his religious policy, we have only the conflicting testimonies of Herodotus, the Jews of Elephantine and Egyptian sources. It seems

¹ Which is why the name Cyrus is still frequently found among the Jews.

² *ibid.*, 67 sq.—Cf. now Hildegard LEWY, *Studies...Taqizadeh*, 139 sq.

³ Nyberg anticipates the description given by Herodotus.

⁴ Other etymologies are cited by CHRISTENSEN, *Die Iranier*, 237, where a summary of Herzfeld's discoveries is also found. See also HERZFELD, *Archaeological History of Iran*, London 1934. Excavations are now conducted at Pasargadae by D. Stronach, and published in *Iran*.

⁵ *Survey of Persian Art*, IV, pl. 78.

⁶ ERDMANN, *Das Iranische Feuerheiligtum*, pl. II b.

⁷ WILSON, *Ariana antiqua*, pl. XVII, 10 (text, 403).

likely that he followed his father's Babylonian policy¹. Cambyses died "his own death" in 522², while hastening towards Persia where an usurper had arisen.

C. DARIUS

Darius (522–486) was only a cousin of Cambyses, and had to seize the throne by force of arms.

Cambyses who had married two of his sisters, Atossa and Roxana, was childless. Herodotus tells us that he had his brother, Bardiya-Smerdis, assassinated. A Magian, known as Gaumāta, was supposed to have impersonated this dead brother while Cambyses was away on his Egyptian campaign. At any rate, this is the account Darius gives in his great Behistūn inscription. But Olmstead, and after him Nyberg³, give reasons for doubting the reliability of this story. Three years had elapsed between the alleged death of Bardiya and the usurper's seizure of power, and it seems unlikely that the secret of his death could have been kept for so long. It is possible, as Nyberg suggests, that Bardiya was not dead at all, and that it was he who seized the throne. Darius invented this story of the pretended Bardiya, so as to discredit the one he wanted to supplant, and who actually had more right to the throne than he.

It remains to be explained why Darius represented the false Bardiya to be a Magian. To Nyberg it meant "that the active forces of the former Median Empire were involved, for the Magi were the dominant sacerdotal class in Media. The struggle between Darius and Bardiya, whoever he was, was in fact a struggle between Persians and Medes, whose empire Cyrus had taken over only a generation before. It is easy to suppose that Bardiya formed an alliance with some powerful Magi. Cyrus, for all purposes, had been a Median king, it is as one that he had made his conquests, the political problems of the Median Empire had determined his own policy, and he and his family had taken up residence at Ecbatana. In fact the Cyrus branch of the Achaemenians had become Medianised, and this was perhaps one of the main reasons why Darius revolted against it".

These considerations are indispensable for our understanding of Darius' motive in restoring the *āyadana* (place of worship) which Gaumāta the Magian had destroyed (Behistūn Inscript., I, 63 sq.). Underlying these religious differences was a conflict of political interests. Darius, in fact, was seeking to suppress Median influence⁴.

Darius' victory over Gaumāta and his quelling of rebellions throughout the Empire are the object of his great inscription written in three languages (Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian) on the Behistūn rock (in the mountains, on the highway from Babylon to Ecbatana).

¹ NYBERG, *ibid.*, *Historia Mundi*, III, 73.

² As expressed by Darius, W. SCHULZE, *Sitz. Berl.*, 1912, 685 sq., followed by SCHAEDE, *Nachr. Gött.*, 1946–1947, 24 sq., and ASMUSSEN, *Histor. Tekster*, 145 sq., has demonstrated that it was not suicide. But PAGLIARO, *Altri Saggi*, 1962, 119 sq., excludes also a "natural death". After all, what mattered to at Darius was that no one should be held responsible for it.

³ OLMSTEAD, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago 1948, 109; NYBERG, *Historia Mundi*, Bern III, 1954, 76.

⁴ This episode has often been understood differently without any account being taken of its political aspect. It has been supposed that Gaumāta, who was both a Magian and Zarathuštra's disciple—this is by no means proved—sought to introduce the Zoroastrian reform by doing away with altars for the blood-sacrifice, and that Darius restored the ancient cult. Or, just the opposite, that Gaumāta—this supposition is equally unsupported by evidence—was the enemy of the Zoroastrian faith, whose champion was Darius.

For yet another hypothesis, according to which the *āyadana* were Elamite temples, see K. ERDMANN, *Das Iranische Feuerheiligtum*, 70, n. 19.

Above the three texts, Darius is depicted in bas-relief, trampling underfoot Gaumāta, and receiving the homage of prisoners in chains.

Darius built himself a residence at Susa, and another at Persepolis. But Persepolis furnishes us with no religious data, and Susa contains none which can be dated to his reign.

But at Naqš i Rostam, on the facade of Darius' rock-cut tomb, we find the most complete and important religious portrayal of his times. Standing on a large podium borne by slaves, Darius faces a lighted altar, his right hand raised in an attitude of worship, his left holding a bow resting on the ground. Between the king and the altar, and above them, soars the winged disc with the bust of Ahuramazda. Behind the latter, in the top right hand corner, there is a full disc with a raised crescent on its lower rim, which may be the depiction of sun and moon.

Darius proclaims Ahuramazda as the greatest of the gods, but does not deny the existence of other gods. This would have gone against the religious policy of Cyrus, which was no doubt necessary for so vast and varied an empire. Darius' letter to Gadatas, Governor of Magnesia¹, confirms the king's toleration—or even more—towards an established cult. In this letter, preserved only in the Greek version, Darius reproaches his officer with having imposed taxes on those cultivating lands consecrated to Apollo, thereby forcing them to cultivate secular lands. "By doing this", he writes, "you misrepresent the sentiments of my ancestors towards this god, who has never expressed anything but the truth to the Persian people".

D. XERXES

Xerxes (486–465) sought to strengthen the imperial authority by humiliating Egypt and Babylonia. Instead of having himself proclaimed king of Egypt, as his two predecessors had done, he converted the country into a satrapy. As for Babylonia, he made a change in his titulary, putting king of Media and Persia before king of Babylon.

Babylon rebelled and was terribly chastised in consequence. The fortifications built by Nebuchadnezzar were dismantled, and temples including that of Marduk, with its *ziggurat*, were demolished.

The 18 foot statue of Marduk, in solid gold, was carried off and melted down². In this way Xerxes suppressed all signs of autonomy.

Xerxes was probably referring to this revolt in the inscription cited above³. He states that after quelling the revolt, he proscribed a *daeua* cult and replaced it by that of Ahuramazda⁴.

1 See above, p. 19.

2 OLMSTEAD, *History of the Persian Empire*, Chicago 1948, 237.

3 P 54.— Cf. however, D-G., *Volume du 2500e Anniversaire de Cyrus*, 1963.

4 This is the interpretation proposed by HARTMANN, *OLZ*, 1931, 158, followed by WIDENGREN, *Religione dell' Iran antico*, in *Le Civiltà dell' Oriente*, III (1958), 553 sq., who take *daivas* to mean generally, the ancient pre-Zoroastrian gods of whom Xerxes was the declared adversary like Zarathuštra. But it would be surprising if their cult was limited to a particular place—a certain *daivadāna*. Moreover, surely if Xerxes had wished to declare war on the *daivas*, he would have written: "Everywhere where the *daivas* are worshipped..." From the context he was clearly speaking of the religious aspect of a particular political action, viz. by their revolt the Babylonians deserved that their gods should go under the same name as the degraded Aryan gods. The degradation of the latter dates from before the time of Zarathuštra, as we shall see, below p.133sq., and the fact that Xerxes despised them does not necessarily mean he was a Zoroastrian.

E. ARTAXERXES I, SURNAMED LONGIMANUS

Another revolt in Egypt obliged Artaxerxes I (465-425) to secure Jerusalem's loyalty. Towards this end, he entrusted a special mission to the scribe Ezra, Chief of the Jews in Babylon and representative of the religious interests of all the Jews. The directives he gave Ezra (Ezra 7, 12 to 26) form a remarkable document. As Nyberg writes¹: "From it we see, on the one hand, what respect the great king had for religions besides his own, and how subtly he could play on the religious sentiments of a nation when he hoped to get something in return, and, on the other, with what authority he intervened in the religious life of a nation if something was not in order. He (or his successor) permitted Ezra to lead back to Jerusalem all the Jews who wished to go. He manifested the greatest interest in the religion of Jerusalem. Above all, he enjoined Ezra to set up judges to administer justice to all those who recognized the law of his God. (. . .) In early April 458, Ezra duly set forth with his caravan and arrived in Jerusalem on 2nd October. There, he assembled all the people together and read out the edict to them. However, by his breaking of mixed-marriages, he brought upon himself the displeasure of the interested parties and the hatred of the Samaritans. So much so, that when he sought to fortify the town and to reconstruct the walls demolished by Nebuchadnezzar, the Samaritans complained to the great king. The latter ordered the work to be suspended, but bided his time, for the fortifications could prove useful to him".

After the revolt of the satrap of Syria, known as Mégabyze (*Baga-buxša* "saved by the god"), Palestine's loyalty became all the more desirable. "The representatives of the Jewish community at the court of Susa took advantage of the quarrel between Jerusalem and Samaria to send Nehemiah to state their grievances before the great king. The latter ordered Nehemiah to proceed to Jerusalem to complete the construction of its walls, which was done in 445. In the following year, Nehemiah was named Governor of Jerusalem, an office which he held till 433. Judah owes her Statehood and national religion to him" (Nyberg, *Historia Mundi*, III, 104 sq.).

Herodotus' inquiry dates from the reign of Artaxerxes. It is therefore surprising that he makes no reference to Zoroaster's doctrines, Ahuramazda or the fire-cult. He may have been describing the religion at a popular level, from which these features were absent. However, quite frequently he appears to be lacking in information, as when he describes Mithra as a goddess. He may also have been actuated by the desire to astonish his reader by emphasizing the strange features of a religion having no idols, temples or altars (as we shall see below, this was not even a half-truth), and to charm him with the picture of a religion that was as natural as possible—the sky and elements were venerated, the meats served to the gods on the grass, etc.

What Herodotus has to say about the Magi is of greater interest to us. Without a Magian it was not lawful to offer sacrifices (I,132). In other words, the Magi had secured the monopoly of the priestly profession. They had come a long way from the day when Gaumāta was crushed². As for their customs, which Herodotus contrasts with those of the Egyptian priests, they exposed their corpses to birds and dogs (I,140) and slew with their own hands all animals, except the dog.

Xanthos ascribes to them the practice of next-of-kin marriages, but not so Herodotus, who merely says that before Cambyeses, the Persians were not wont to marry their sisters.

1 *Historia Mundi*, 103.

2 Herodotus tells us that earlier Cambyeses, before setting out to conquer Egypt, had entrusted his house to a Magian. According to Xenophon, it was Cyrus who officially established the Magi in Persia. All this was before Darius' anti-Mede reaction.

Finally, in the eyes of the Greeks, the Magi were specialists in magic (which takes its name from them), and in astrology.

All this has little to do with Zoroastrianism and the question arises, what was initially and subsequently the relation between the Magi and the Gāthic reform.

Perhaps as early as the reign of Artaxerxes, the fusion had been effected between the Achaemenian and Zoroastrian religions. The Magi who had secured a supremacy of priestly affairs, now passed as Zoroaster's disciples, and Zoroaster himself was held to be a Magian in several Greek sources, including Xanthos and Dinon, from whom Hermippos borrows in his *Peri Magōn*, a lost work, but one utilized by Pliny and Diogenes Laertius. In modern times, this view has been developed and defended by G. Messina in his work, *Der Ursprung der Magier*, Rome 1930. But it encounters a serious difficulty, for, nowhere in the *Avesta*, except in a passage of late date, are the priests called Magi.

The question is further complicated by the fact that the Gāthic language has the word *magavan-* which, according to some—Messina, for instance—is the ancestor of *magu-*, or of a term of which *magu-* is a kind of hypocoristic. It is easier to concede, that the Median Magi, although ultimately their name may be related linguistically to *magavan-* and *magu-*, had in fact no historical connection with the Avestan tradition.

F. ARTAXERXES II, SURNAMED MNEMON

The reign of Artaxerxes II is notable for the fact that for the first time inscriptions make mention of Anāhitā and Mithra by name, in addition to Ahuramazda. This does not prove that these deities were not worshipped before. They may have been among the gods of whom Ahuramazda was the greatest. Probably a new form of their cult, with Greek-style statues, was introduced at this time. This is confirmed for Anāhitā by Berosus, whose testimony has been preserved by Clement of Alexandria¹. According to him during the reign of Artaxerxes, statues of the goddess were set up in Babylon, Susa and Ecbatana, and her cult spread to Persia, Damascus and Sardis.

As for Mithra, perhaps there was also something new about his cult, for his name now took on a different form. Formerly he had been known under the Persian version of his name, viz. *Miça*. This name is attested in the proper name *Vahumisa*, and is also found in the *Μεσορομασδης* of which Plutarch speaks,² and in which it is coupled with Ahuramazda.

G. NON-DATED MONUMENTS

Archaeology has its own contribution to make to our knowledge of the Achaemenian period.

The Persepolis Treasury excavations furnished a few details on religious usages, but shed little light on the relation between these usages and the *Avesta*. Among the finds were mortars and pestles for *haoma* (on one of the pestles the word *hwn* was found in Aramaic characters: *hāvan* meaning 'mortar'). This corroborates the evidence furnished by a personal name, *hwmdt* (= *Haumadāta*)³, which occurs in the Elephantine papyri, and also confirms

1 *Protreptica*, V, 65, 4.

2 WIKANDER, *Orientalia Suecana*, 1952, 66.

3 A. COWLEY, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century*, B.C., 8, 1.2 and 9, 1.2.

the cult and deification of Haoma. The tablets treat of expenses incurred on wine and flour for ceremonial purposes, also of a "guardian of the (sacred) fire" and a "giver of libations"¹. It has been shown² on the basis of new material from Persepolis, that army officers had functions connected with the *haoma*.

Representations of Altars: A fifth century relief discovered at Daskyleion, seat of the Persian satrap of Asia-Minor, depicts two Magi, wearing Phygian bonnets which cover their mouths. They hold the *barəsman* and raise their hand in an attitude of prayer. Before them, on a sort of altar made out of twigs, rest the heads of a bull and a sheep ready for the sacrifice³. There is also a column surmounted by an abacus, which may be a fire-altar.

The first altar seems to have been fabricated on the spot, which would agree with Herodotus' account. On the hills, platforms have been found⁴ which were perhaps meant for the erection of such temporary altars. But in the absence of any other construction or object, these sites are impossible to date.

There were also some permanent altars, although Herodotus testified to the contrary. We have mentioned a pair of altars at Pasargadae and pointed out that their slight asymmetry may indicate one was meant for the fire and the other for the blood sacrifice. They were found in the courtyard of a vast sacred enclosure⁵.

The two altars cut in the rock at Naqš i Rostam are probably later than the Achaemenian period, for, as Erdmann⁶ rightly observes, they imitate in their relief, the *cahār tāq* or tetrapyle, which is only attested for a later period.

A rock-cut chamber which adjoins and communicates with one of the sacred platforms mentioned above, is located at Tamar on the north-western shore of lake Urmia⁷. It seems likely that fire was maintained there.

At Susa, toward the close of the Achaemenian period, the edifice comprised both a fire-chamber where the fire was preserved, and a platform facing a courtyard which was used for public ceremonies⁸. This type of edifice was continued after the Achaemenian period in the sanctuary near the terrace of Persepolis (E. Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, 56), see below, p. 163⁹.

The Ka'ba i Zardušt at Naqš i Rostam has been discussed above (p. 64). Two similar towers existed in Achaemenian times at Pasargadae and Nūrābād.

Seals: Achaemenian coins do not depict any religious subjects.

1 CAMERON, *Persepolis Treasury Tablets*, Chicago 1948, 5 sq., from which anything appearing to relate to *raēθwiš-kara*, should be cancelled out, since it was simply question of a cart-wright.

2 See now STRONACH, "The Kūh-i Sharak Fire Altar", *JNES*, 1966, 217 sq., by Bowman at the Vth Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology, Tehran 1968.

3 Photo in *Survey of Persian Art*, IV, pl. 103 B, and NILSSON, *Gesch. d. griech. Rel.*, II, pl. 15.

4 ERDMANN, *Das Iranische Feuerheiligtum*, 7 sq.

5 *ibid.*, 13.

6 *ibid.*

7 *ibid.*, 8.

8 ERDMANN, 15 sq. with fig. 2.

9 Then at Kūh i Xwāja, but with an important modification, for here the chamber where the fire was once preserved, becomes the hall for visitors, while the fire-chamber itself is removed to another, more secret part of the building. (Following ERDMANN, 32 sq.)

The seals do, but they display an uneasy admixture of themes traditional to Babylonian glyptic art, with motifs reflecting the actual religious usages of Iran. Several seals and seal impressions found at Persepolis¹ unquestionably relate to the Mazdean religion. Seal 20, for instance, pictures together the fire-altar, *haoma* mortar (similar to those found in the ruins), a "Magian", and a winged disc dominating the scene, while seal 23 has a fire-altar flanked by two personages, over which hovers the winged disc.

The winged disc motif is an heritage from the iconography of Asia-Minor. It derives ultimately from Egypt, reaching Iran by way of the Hittites, Mitannians and Assyrians, as H. Frankfort² has demonstrated, following Goblet d'Alviella and with the support of new documents. The disc may have brought with it other popular motifs, such as the tree of life, eminently associated with the god Assur, which is found on several Achaemenian seals. Other motifs, as for instance, the hero overcoming two more or less fantastic beasts, have nothing specially Mazdean about them.

But the winged disc, with or without the bust, was certainly used by the Persians, at Persepolis and Behistūn, as a symbol of their great god Ahuramazda³. Was it borrowed directly from the Assyrians, by either Persians or Medes? No image of Marduk of this kind has been found in Babylon, but this may be due to the general paucity of our Babylonian material⁴. However, the image of Ahuramazda on Achaemenian seals displays some remarkable features.

Sometimes the bust surmounts the winged disc⁵, as on the great reliefs of Behistūn, Naqš i Rostam and Persepolis, once in a second pair of wings (123 B, Wiseman, 106). But, in three instances, the bust seems to have descended from its flying vehicle and to be situated beneath it in two other pairs of wings (123 D), or in a sort of ring (123 K, 124 X, left hand side, Wiseman, 101, 102); while in 124 X and in Wiseman, 102, there are two different depictions side by side, one with the bust on the pair of wings, the other with the bust below, in a ring.

This ring is not the ecliptic, as Phyllis Ackerman claims in her exegesis, which is not easy to accept⁶, but rather, the crescent moon as Alföldi and Miss Segall⁷ have observed. This is evident from the swollen appearance of the ring in 123 K, 124 X, and Wiseman, 101, 102, which we can take as a variant of the crescent portrayed in 123 J⁸, where it bears the divine bust, being itself supported by a giant kneeling on one knee, and flanked by two Orants.

In order to explain why Ahuramazda is here depicted both as Sun-god and Moon-god, we would do well to remember that the followers of Marduk aided Cyrus to overthrow Nabonidus and to conquer Babylon, and that this Nabonidus was a worshipper of the Moon-god,

1 E. SCHMIDT, *Persepolis II*, Chicago 1957.

2 Goblet d'ALVIELLA, *La migration des symboles*, 1891, 251 sq., FRANKFORT, *Cylinder Seals*, Chicago 1939; followed by BOSSERT, "Meine Sonne," *Analecta Orientalia*, 1957.

3 Only the Parsis can still doubt of this identification today—UNVALA, *Modi Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1930, 2 sq. Their only argument is that their great god Ahura Mazdā is not representable. But they have to admit that he was represented on Sasanian reliefs, and earlier on Kušan coins, as we shall see below.

4 According to Edith PORADA's verbal suggestion.

5 *Survey of Persian Art*, IV, 123A, 124X, right hand scene; WISEMAN, *Cylinder-Seals of Western Asia*, London s.d. (1956 ?), n° 102.

6 *Survey* 1, 389 sq.

7 B. SEGALL, Notes on the Iconography of cosmic Kingship, in *The Art Bulletin*, 1956, 75 sq. L'ORANGE, Expressions of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World, in *La Regalità sacra*, 1959, 481 sq., recognized the circle as a clipeus, on the basis of faulty sketches.

8 Cf. the neo-Babylonian seal (WISEMAN, 94) and the one given by SEGALL, *art. cit.*, photo 2.

Sin, an international god with shrines from Babylon to Sinai. Although defeated, Sin may not have perished completely. Darius may have judged that Ahuramazda should succeed not only the local deity Marduk, but also the great god Sin. This would explain why both the popular motif of the winged disc (undoubtedly a solar symbol) and that of the crescent moon appear together. As a matter of fact, as Miss Segall has shown, the conjunction of the solar and lunar gods is already found among the Assyrians.

Sometimes the winged disc is upheld by one, but usually by two, more or less mythical figures, which is also a traditional motif in the iconography of Asia-Minor, expressing the myth of the earth's separation from the sky.

On seal 124 V of Arsaka, son of Aθyābaušta (=Wiseman, 103), the personage who supports the disc is a kind of god Bès (of the Egyptian pantheon) assisted by two men. (On another intaglio, the same god performs the feat of Gilgameš, beneath the winged disc, 124 R).

On one of the *Persepolis* II seals, the figures are on horseback, on another they are double-headed—these two seals will be interpreted below, p.143. On Dieulafoy's¹ figure 251, two upright griffins with two pairs of wings prop the winged disc, while on the seal Wiseman, 102, there are two Men-bulls, also with two pairs of wings. The animal traits in these figures, which are also traditional, may derive from the fact that atmospheric gods were constantly associated with animals².

Intaglio 124 W and Y portray a goddess wearing a crenellated crown, and holding a flower and bird, who appears to be the goddess Anāhitā.

Did the Achaemenian kings consider themselves to be gods? Al-Bērūnī, who describes the accession ceremony of Iranian kings, says that it symbolized the rising of a new sun. Although he was referring to Sasanian kings, it has been claimed³ that such a scene is already depicted on the *Persepolis* reliefs, where Darius is borne aloft on a platform by his subjects, under the image of the sky. And Widengren, in the preliminary publication of his studies on the sacral kingship in Iran⁴, reconstructs the concept of kingship under the Achaemenians as an heritage of the Indo-Iranian period⁵. However, although he demonstrates that the person of the Iranian king was sacred, and recalls that the practice of prostration at the Achaemenian Court was borrowed from Assyria, he fails to show that the Achaemenians considered themselves divine, as later did the Arsacid and Sasanians, which we shall see later.

It is evident from Achaemenian inscriptions, that Darius and his successors are the protégés of Ahuramazda, who aids them because they are righteous. They are not gods.

The kings are portrayed as heroes no doubt, but not as gods. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Achaemenian iconography was derived from Mesopotamia, where the king, unlike the Pharaoh, was not divine⁶, although he called himself "My Sun" (that is to say, "the Sun I

1 *L'art antique de la Perse*, 1884-1889.

2 J. D.-G., *Festgabe Lommel*, 1960, 210 sq.

3 L'ORANGE, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship*, Oslo 1953.

4 The sacral kingship of Iran, in *La Regalità Sacra*, supplement to *Numen*, 1959, 242 sq.

5 ALFÖLDI, Königsweihe u. Männerbund bei den Achämeniden, in *Arch. suisses des Trad. popul.*, 1951-52, pp. 11 sq., by comparing a characteristic of Artaxerxes' enthroning ceremonial with the legend of Cyrus, relates them both to a mythico-ritual whole.

6 Cf. SCHÄDER, Das persische Weltreich, in *Der Mensch in Orient u. Okzident*, 1960, 48 sq.

am"). In any case, Darius had himself depicted as a hero and strong man, which accords well with the Naqš i Rostam B inscription in which he boasts of his expert horsemanship, skill with the bow, etc.

The heroic feat of bare-handed combat with a lion is pictured on the great reliefs of Persepolis, and on seals 123 L and 124 B. Scenes of the hunt are sometimes simply rendered in a realistic and profane manner (123 O, Q, R, S). Mention should be made of the mythical character of the prey in Wiseman, 101, and in Survey, 123 M (where it is symmetrically duplicated, popular motif recalling the "Gilgameš story"), of the steed in Survey, 123 B and G, 124 C and L, of the presence of the winged disc of Ahuramazda which dominates the scene in 123 B and M, and of a priest or Orant opposite an altar or censer or under a crescent moon (123 C). The winged disc with the bust of Ahuramazda may also hover over a realistic hunt, in which the king, on his chariot, shoots arrows at a lion standing erect between two palm-trees (123 A).

On the other hand, in a more fantastic vein, we see the king himself seizing a Man-bull who wears a crown like himself (Wiseman, 104), or two horned monsters (Wiseman, 110), or a Man-scorpion drawing his bow against a prey, under the signs of the moon and sun (Survey, 123 N). The same personage without the crown, is at rest in 123 H, before a priest, apparently, who raises his right hand towards him as a sign of worship, while behind him can be seen a small quadruped (a dog?) and a palm tree. Or the king is depicted as a winged bull with human face, in the style of the Assyrian colossus, seen at Persepolis (124 G).

Sometimes, the struggle is between animals only, one mythical and the other not, under the signs of the moon and sun (or star?); occasionally two or three protomes are found gathered together (124 U and K). Or, on the contrary, the hunt is a man-hunt, 124 D, over which Ahuramazda presides (123 E, 124 A and X).

At other times, there is neither man-hunt nor war, but only armed men, like those in 123 F, who stand in an attitude of worship on either side of a crenellated fire tower (?) (with a central screw-ring?) above which hovers Ahuramazda.

Does the duel between king and lion have a symbolic significance, and if so, what? The most obvious is that the king, by vanquishing the lion, replaces himself as the solar power.

Profusely illustrated on the great Persepolis reliefs is yet another kind of combat—a lion attacking a bull—which is a very ancient popular motif. It cannot be the symbol of the victory of good over evil, for in what way is the bull evil? Rather it is the expression of a very archaic myth about the solar power, found also at Megiddo, Mari and Byblos, and in Africa, where the sun is depicted either by a lion or a bird—two very clear symbols—and the vanquished animal, as Lommel remarks¹, is not an evil creature.

In any case, the size and prominent position of the lion and bull reliefs at Persepolis, give the impression that they allude to royal power.

H. THE RELIGION OF THE ACHAEMENIANS AND ZOROASTRIANISM

Several times during the last few years, I have wavered in my opinion regarding the Zoroastrianism of Darius². I shall briefly review here the arguments for and against it.

1 *Der arische Kriegsgott*, Frankfurt 1939, 73, n. 1; cf. FROBENIUS, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas*, Zurich 1933, 144.

2 First against: *Zoroastre*, 1948, 120 sq., then for: *The Western Response*, Oxford 1958 (lectures delivered in 1956), 53.

If we compare Achaemenian documents with the *Avesta*, there appear to be five omissions and five divergences.

Omissions—The prophet is not mentioned by name but this is not conclusive, nor is the omission of the term *spənta*, which is important, but perhaps too specialized. That of *Aṇra Mainyu* can be explained by the fact that in the *Gāthās*, the name of the Evil Spirit had not yet crystallized. However, the omission of all the entities, so characteristic of the Gāthic doctrine, is a serious objection against the Zoroastrianism of Darius. Finally, none of the commandments of the *fravarāne* creed is mentioned. Xerxes is closest to the Avestan doctrine, with his fight against the *daiva* cult.

Divergences—Darius uses the verbs *pat* and *mar*, in their non-daevic sense of “to fall” and “to die”, but it is only in the Later *Avesta* that these words came to have a daevis connotation. Darius is therefore not at variance with the *Gāthās*. The same applies to the omission of the word *yazata*, although this word seems to have been expressly invented or given importance by the reformed religion, in order to avoid the use of the word *baga*, which Darius uses without any hesitation.

Old Persian *drauga* is close enough to Avestan *druj*, which has the same meaning of ‘lie, deceit, evil’, to be considered as a simple dialectal variant. This is the case also with Old Persian *magu* “Magian” as against Gāthic *magavan*. It is noteworthy however, that the word *magu* has been almost completely avoided in the *Avesta* (where it occurs only once in the compound *moyu.ibiš-* “enemy of the Magi”). The epithet *brazmaniya* “reverent” is not found in Darius; but Xerxes could hardly have taken it from the *Avesta*, for it has no counterpart there. It is, in fact, an archaic Indo-Iranian word, untouched by the Zoroastrian religion.

The practice of burying contravenes only the Later *Avesta* (the *Gāthās* do not allude to it), while blood sacrifice is not formally condemned either by the *Gāthās* or by the Later *Avesta*¹. The same is true of the belief that Ahuramazda was merely the greatest of the gods, for neither the *Gāthās* nor the rest of the *Avesta* assert an absolute monotheism in the Israelite sense.

As for the omissions and divergences found in Herodotus, they may be due to Herodotus himself, or else he describes the religion at a popular level, which should not be confused with that of the Achaemenian rulers, or of the *Avesta*.

To sum up: it is difficult to concede that the Zoroastrian reform was known to Darius. At the same time, for several reasons, it is difficult to accept that it was not known to him.

The very name of Ahura Mazdā seems to reflect the genius of the reformer, who united in it² the two aspects of sovereignty. However, there is no formal proof that it was his invention. He may have had precursors, as is probable for the condemnation of the *daevas*, possible for *Vərəθrəyana*³; so why not also for Ahura Mazdā?

The Zoroastrians designated themselves by the term *mazdayasna*, “worshippers of Mazdā”, a word they would not have chosen had it not been peculiar to their religion. This

1 This point has been dealt with in the chapter on Ritual, pp. 76sq.

2 According to BARR, *Avesta*, 37 and 208.

3 See below, p. 126.

argument is not particularly convincing, for to argue from a comparison, did the Protestants cease to call themselves Christians because the Catholics did so too? On the contrary, they held fast to a title, to which they thought they had eminently the right.

A final argument is that, had Ahura Mazdā been pre-Zoroastrian, we should expect¹ a special old *Yašt* in his honour, whereas the *Yašt* bearing his name, in the *Avesta*, is obviously of late composition, intended to complete the collection. This argument also is not conclusive, if we consider that all the *Yašts*, even the oldest, were composed from old material, no doubt, but in the wake of the Zoroastrian reform. They were to be added to the *Gāthās*, which there was no need to duplicate by another homage to Ahura Mazdā.

In spite of the paucity of proofs, the Zoroastrianism of the Achaemenians has been accepted by Barr, Cameron and Gershevitch. The latter first put forward an elaborate theory² that the fusion between the Gāthic doctrine and the ancient religion took place at the court of Cyrus, and that this fusion finds reflexes in the *Yašts*.³ Then he claimed⁴ that the amalgam must have taken place on Darius' initiative.

The considerable differences—by omission or divergence—which we have pointed out, may be accounted for, partly as the result of the evolution of the Gāthic doctrine since Zoroaster's death, partly as its deliberate adaptation by Darius to the needs of his composite empire.

The original doctrine of Zoroaster altered considerably in the course of the centuries, as is evident from the Later *Avesta*. The form in which it reached Persia, probably by way of the Magi of Media, may have coincided in part with the Avesian picture, especially in respect of concessions made to polytheism and tolerance of blood-sacrifice⁵, but have differed from it on other points. Be that as it may, Darius probably gave only a modified version of the doctrine as known to him. Being the ruler of so many diverse provinces and nations, he had no use for the dogmatic, sharply-defined system of a specialized clergy. The time had not yet come for a Mazdean "Church" in the Sasanian manner. This would, in fact, have been contrary to Darius' whole attitude towards his young empire.

Gaumāta's revolt, while primarily of a political nature, had nonetheless a religious side which can best be described as an attempt on the part of a priestly class to throw off the restraints imposed on its ambitions by an astute ruler. The Darius who restored the *āyadanas* destroyed by the Magi, where presumably "all other gods that are" were worshipped, was the same man who eliminated from Mazdeanism all that might have lost him the good will of his people and impeded the consolidation of the empire. He had, for instance, no use for the eschatological value of *xšaθra-/xšaça-*; while the Gāthic insistence on the future life seemed to him out of place, for what mattered, was to give out his own rule as God's rule, already materialized. As for the other entities, they may have seemed superfluous to him since Ahura-mazda contained them all.

1 With TAVADIA, *J. Bombay Roy. As. Soc.*, 1953, 175.

2 *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Introduction; but a more complete demonstration is given in the *Handbuch der Orientalistik*.

3 But on the contrary F. KUIPER, in his review of D-G., *The Western Response*, III, 1960, 182 sq., concludes that the Achaemenians were not Zoroastrians.

4 "Zoroaster's own contribution", *JNES*, 1964.

5 Provided of course, that polytheism and blood sacrifice were ever fully proscribed.

Molé rejects (since Haug) the traditional position that a primitive Zoroastrian community adhering to the Gāthic doctrine was succeeded by a religion re-admitting the beliefs and practices current before the prophet's time, and that this religion eventually reached western Iran at some indeterminate moment during the Achaemenian period.

Instead of this historical perspective, Molé, posits a structural scheme in which, as if in three concentric circles, three states of religion co-existed simultaneously, corresponding to the three parts of the complete *Avesta* as known to and summarized by the compilers of the Pahlavi encyclopedia, the *Dēnkart*:¹

- 1) In the centre, an esoteric religion, having strict observances, represented by the *Gāthās*.
- 2) Around this circle and within the second, the religion of the rulers, represented by the *Yašts* and the Achaemenian inscriptions, etc. A polytheistic religion, more or less dominated by Ahura Mazdā, but in which the Aməša Spəntas are given only slight importance in the whole pantheon.
- 3) Between the second and third circles, the popular religion, which is what Herodotus describes.

This thesis, as can be seen, eliminates the question—which is what interests us, in this chapter—of the Zoroastrianism of the Achaemenians. But the thesis as a whole is not acceptable².

C. COMPARATIVE RECONSTRUCTIONS

1. The classes, functions and gods³

A THE TRIPARTITE IDEOLOGY

We have seen that the ritual is partly inherited from the Indo-Iranian period. A comparative study also throws light on the origin of the gods.

The Iranian *Miθra* and the Indian *Mitra* formed one, before the separation of the Indians and Iranians. Indra is a god in India, but a demon in Iran, or more generally, the *daevas* of Iran, who are the counterpart of the *devas* of India, have become demons, etc. Why?

We understand better how this happened since it has been recognized that the Iranian pantheon, like that of the Indian, reflects the particular analysis these people traditionally made of their respective social structure. This has been demonstrated for the Indo-European people generally, by Georges Dumézil, notably in his *Idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*⁴. To summarize what he says regarding Iran:

1 See above, pp. 34 sq.

2 Cf. *Numen*, 1960, and 1961, the discussion between Molé and D -G.

3 The textual references pertaining to each god and demon are conveniently listed in GRAY, *Foundations of Iranian Religion*, Bombay 1929.

4 Brussels, *Latomus*, 1958. This work resumes and revises twenty years of research. The notes contain most of the bibliography, of which special mention must be made of *Les dieux des Indo-Européens*, Paris 1952.

The three classes in Iranian society, priests, warriors and husbandmen, correspond with those in India, although the designations differ¹. The antiquity of this tripartition is confirmed for Iran by the legend reported in Herodotus, 4, 5-6, and Quintus Curtius, 7, 8, 18-19, about the origin of the Scythians, in which the three functions are symbolized respectively by a cup (for libations), an axe or a lance and arrow, and lastly by a plough and cart. The three classes have also left their trace in the name (corresponding to Skr. *kṣatriya*), of the second of the three Nartes families figuring in the Ossetic epic, namely, the Alaegatae, strong in intelligence, the Æksaertaegkatae, strong in men and vigour, and the Boriatae, rich in flocks.

This tripartition was reflected in many spheres. Darius, in his Persepolis inscription, asks Ahuramazda to protect his empire "from the enemy army, the bad year and the Lie", a formula which has its equivalent in India. Likewise, the *Avesta* (*Vidēvdāt*, 7.44) distinguishes three types of healing; by the knife, by plants and by incantations, a classification of Indo-European antiquity.

The Indo-Europeans, and following them, the Indo-Iranians, and Iranians, symbolized the three functions by white, the colour of priesthood, red or multicoloured, that of warriorhood, and dark blue, that of the husbandmen.

According to a legend in the *Abiyātkār ī Zāmāspik*, 4.40 sq., Frētōn divided the world between his three sons, each of whom desired, respectively, "great riches", "valour" and "religious law". Yet another legend, *Yt* 19.34 sq. and *Dēnkart* 7.1.25 sq., relates how Yima, as a punishment for his sins, is deprived of his sovereignty whose visible sign, the Xvarənah or "Fortune", departs from him in three successive parts to lodge in three personages corresponding to the three social types, husbandman, warrior, and wise minister of the ruler.

The tripartite ideology is reflected in the pantheon, notably, directly and without change, in the lists of the Vedic gods, and of the Para-Indian gods of the Mitanni: Mitra and Varuṇa are the sovereigns of the universe, Indra is the warrior *par excellence*, and the twins, Nāsatyas or Aśvins, are the healers, bestowers of prosperity and of all sorts of material benefits.

This ideology can also be recognized as forming the basis of the Zoroastrian Beneficent Immortals, although a series of reforms, culminating in that of Zarathuštra, altered the original classification. We would do well to take this classification into consideration, even for an understanding of the gods and demons of Iran.

B MITHRA

Thieme and Gershevitch have attempted², independently, to explain Miθra-Mitra solely on the basis of the etymology of the name which clearly means "contract", and of the hymns consecrated to him in the *Veda* (*Rg* 3.59) and the *Avesta* (*Yt* 10). All the functions and attributes of the god can be ultimately brought back to the notion of the Contract personified, one function or attribute being derived from the other. But this is too facile a game and full of pitfalls. Can one say, for instance, that Mithra bestows "wide pastures" as a reward for respecting contracts, or to ensure their being respected? And why should the Contract be white-haired? By refusing all comparative constructions so as to "keep to the facts", one risks falling into arbitrary improvisations.

1 A fourth class in Iran, that of the artisans, which is mentioned only in one passage of the *Avesta*, and then in Pahlavi, seems to be a later accretion. BAILEY, "Iranian Arya- and Dahi-", *Trans. Philol. Soc.*, 1959, pp. 71 sq., was therefore wrong to treat it on a par with the others.

2 THIEME, *Mitra and Aryaman*, Yale 1958; GERSHEVITCH, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge 1959, Cf. also, THIEME, *JAO*, 1960. *Contra*: KUIPER, *IJ*, 1961, 36 sq., and DUMÉZIL, *Bull. Acad. Bel.*, 1961, 265 sq.

These facts are much better explained if we accept that the Contract is the new name given to an ancient god, or, what amounts to the same thing, a new god admitted into pre-existing framework. This framework is the tripartite ideology, which alone can account for contrasts such as are found in the Brāhmaṇas, between Mitra and Varuṇa, as night and day, "this world" and the "next world", etc. These oppositions, by means of which Dumézil, following Bergaigne and de Güntert, has reconstructed the two aspects of sovereignty, are considered unimportant by Thieme and Gershevitch, on the ground that they are only of recent attestation. But what can the lacunae of the *Ṛgveda* prove against the concordant testimonies of numerous Indo-European peoples?

In fact, the opposition Mitra-Varuṇa in the form it was to take in the Brāhmaṇas, is already suggested in two passages of the *Atharvaveda* and in at least one of the *Ṛg*¹ so much so, that the *Ṛgveda*, with its relative silence, far from representing the former state of things, and the only legitimate basis of comparison, appears in this instance to be an innovator².

We can then give due importance to the fact that Varuṇa bears the same relationship to Mitra, as in Iran, Aša does to Vohu Manah: Varuṇa and Aša are more remote from mankind while Mitra and Vohu Manah are closer, and just as Vohu Manah is the protector of the ox, so is Miθra the god "of wide pastures" whom the ox, in the Miθra *Yašt*, invokes as its protector.

The warrior-like nature of Miθra which is not shared by Mitra, appears to be adventitious. Perhaps Indra who was reduced to the rank of demon, came to be replaced partly by Vərəθrayna, and partly by Miθra.

The couple Mitra-Varuṇa survives in Iran in the Avestan expression *miθra ahura bərəzanta* meaning "two great ones, Mithra and Ahura". There can be no doubt that in this expression, Ahura is a designation of Varuṇa who, in India, was the *asura par excellence*. In Iran, as a rule, his name is qualified by the epithet *mazdā* "wise", somewhat resembling the adjective *medhirā* ascribed to Varuṇa in *RV* 1. 25, 20. This does not mean that Ahura is identical with Varuṇa, an opinion which Lommel and Gershevitch have rightly disparaged. The god was greatly modified as a consequence of the Iranian reform, but the resulting disparity should not prevent us from finding a single point of departure³.

According to K. Barr⁴, Ahura Mazdā "continues" not only Varuṇa, but the whole compound Mitra-Varuṇa, the associate Miθra having been replaced by his epithet *mazdā*

1 Passages cited by KUIPER in the review of THIEME's book, *Indo-Ir. Journ.* 1959, 210 and 211. However, in an article, *III*, 1961, 36 sq., KUIPER formulates differently to us the contrast between Mitra and the Vedic Varuṇa: opposed to Varuṇa "the detainer", is Mitra "the deliverer", Varuṇa reigns over the nether world, the abode of *ṛta* and the primeval waters, and over the nocturnal sky, etc., Mitra functions "in the victory of life over death, of light over darkness, in the sunrise and the release of the waters, in delivery and childbirth as well as in defecation." Only now, are we able to understand—still according to Kuiper—why he is the Contract: he is that aspect of the nether world that is turned towards the upper world and cooperates with the heavenly gods, he is the link that connects both cosmic halves and as such he is the Mediator *par excellence*. This thesis can only be discussed within the framework of a general comparison between Dumézil's theory and the Vedic religion.

2 Cf. KUIPER, *III*, 1959, 211: "When the authors of the Brāhmaṇas contrast Mitra (*day*) and Varuṇa (*night*), we must assume that they had good reasons for doing so, and the real problem is rather why the *Rgveda* is silent about it."

3 We can therefore dispense with Gershevitch's subtle hypothesis in the *Avestan Hymn*, Cambridge 1959, 47 sq.

4 *Avesta*, Copenhagen 1954, 37 and 208.

which describes his "providential" activity. However, if Ahura Mazdā has thus assimilated Miθra (which would explain the absence of Miθra's name in the *Gāthās*), we have to admit that the Achaemenians, at any rate, were no longer aware of it, since Plutarch records that they worshipped Μεσορομασδης, that is to say, both Miθra and Ahuramazdā¹.

Barr would see in this amalgamation of Varuṇa and Mitra into one god, the stamp of Zarathuṣtra's genius and the proof that Ahura Mazdā was first proclaimed by this prophet. But we have no positive indication as to whether Ahura Mazdā existed before Zarathuṣtra or not². But surely Zarathuṣtra enriched and filled out his personality by associating him with the entities, who had been independent till then, as we shall see in § 4.

C AIRYAMAN

Mitra had two associates, Aryaman and Bhaga, the first of whom has survived in Iran, if not in the *Gāthās* (which ignore him as they do Miθra himself), at least in the Gāthic prayer, *Airyāma išyō*. While Bhaga's concern was chiefly material welfare, Aryaman's was the maintenance of the people, *ārya*, from which he got his name. This is why the Zoroastrian prayer calls on him to come "for support of Zarathuṣtra's men and women (disciples)"³.

In Zarathuṣtra's system, Aryaman seems to have been replaced by Sraoša, as Bhaga was by Aši, see below, § 4.

D VEREθRAYNA

Three theories have been advanced to explain this god. It is a question of interpreting the quasi-identity of the term with Skr. *vrtrahān*, the epithet of Indra. India associated Indra with a dragon slaying, for which she gives him the title *vrtrahān* "slayer of *Vṛtra*." Iran knows a god who shares many of Indra's traits, except precisely (at any rate in the Avestan version) that of dragon-slayer. Iran knows no dragon called *Vərəθra*. This word is a neuter and means "defence".

According to general opinion today, *Indra vrtrahān* dates from Indo-Iranian times, and was a warrior-god and dragon-killer. He survived in Iran in the form of a *Vərəθrayna* who is not accredited with a dragon slaying as the result of a kind of sublimatory process, which however, was not applied to the entire Iranian domain since *Vahagn*, the Armenian counterpart of the god, who is a direct borrowing from Iran, does kill a dragon and since, as Menasce⁴ has shown, the myth of *Vərəθrayna*'s dragon slaying is not as totally absent from Iranian tradition as was formerly believed. "We must admit", this scholar concludes, "that this Avestan god has undergone a modification, probably a deliberate one, which has impoverished him. Something of the anti-mythic morality of the *Gāthās* persisted in the composers of the *Yašt*s, with the result that dragon slaying came down one degree". This was Wikander's opinion too, who earlier wrote⁵: "The sacred book of the Zoroastrians was obviously reluctant to attribute dragon slaying to a god, but compensated for it by recounting the dragon slaying exploits of numerous national heroes".

1 PLUT., *Ad Principem*, explained by WIKANDER, *Orient. Suec.*, 1952. Still more important, as KUIPER remarks, *III*, 1960, 186 sq., the term cited, which reflects the archaic expression *miθra ahura*, could hardly have been formed after Zoroaster had condemned this expression. The epithet *mazdā* came to be added to it, and not *Miθra to ahuramazdā*.

2 From the preceding note, we must conclude in the affirmative.

3 The interpretation proposed by BAILEY, *Trans. Philol. Soc.*, 1959, 86, sq., "possessor, hence distributor of riches (*ārya*)", ignores the difference in meaning established by DUMÉZIL, between Aryaman and Bhaga.

4 La promotion de Varhrān, *RHR*, 133, 1947, 5 sq., Varhrān is charged with binding Shriman.

5 *Vayu*, Lund 1941, 133.

For Benveniste-Renou¹, who develop an idea of Harlez, in the Indo-Iranian period there was a victorious god, **Vṛtraghan*, literally "he who overcomes the defence," as well as a dragon slaying *hero*. Iran kept the first, who became a dragon killer only by chance in Armenia (even if, as Menasce has shown, he was later charged with enchaining Ahriman); and turned Indra into a demon. India elevated Indra to the rank of god and invested him with the attributes of **Vṛtraghan*, especially the capacity of metamorphosis.

Bianchi² has recently pointed out the difficulties of these two theses. He has pronounced himself in favour of an intermediate position, but does not explain it very clearly.

We can, with Bianchi, allege against the traditional theory that Vahagn's dragon slaying exploit is not exactly identical to that in India³. While that of restraining Ahriman, which the Later Avesta attributes to him, is not characteristic enough, for it merely results from his enrolment in Ōhrmazd's militia. Furthermore, Jarl Charpentier's⁴ attempt to equate Indra and *Vərəθrayna* on the ground of their metamorphosis has failed, for of ten *avatārs*, only one is common to both gods. Since metamorphosis is banal to all gods in general, it cannot constitute a special link between the two gods in question.

Against the second theory we can allege first, that Indra was originally a god, not just a hero, as is proved by the occurrence of his name in the Mitanni treaty. Moreover, even if *Vṛtra* came only secondarily to mean "dragon" in the Veda, it does not necessarily follow that this word, the first member of the compound, *Vṛtrahan*, never designated anything other than the notion of "defence against the aggressor", which seems a little too abstract.

We are thus brought back to the first thesis, which we will modify only by remarking, with Kuiper,⁵ that the epithet *Vṛtrahan* "denotes a *quality* which characterizes several mythical figures that partake in the process of creation, e.g. Soma no less than Indra and Agni. Since in the Avesta the same title (*Vərəθrajan-*) is given to Haoma, we are driven to the conclusion that at one time also the Iranians must have known the notion of *vərəθra* as a *cosmogonical* obstacle, no matter whether or not this obstacle was mythologically thought of as a dragon".

Hence *vṛtraghan* was connected as early as the Indo-Iranian period to a god's cosmogonical feat of overcoming the obstacle or agent detaining the waters. India identified this obstacle or agent with the dragon Dahāka, which she also calls *Vṛtra*. Mazdean Iran discarded the cosmogonical myth, apparently so as to reserve for Ahura Mazdā alone all that was concerned with the work of creation, and retained *Vərəθrayna* as the genius of Victory, that is to say, the victory of the fierce warrior, boar, camel at rut, etc., over Evil. Later Mazdeanism, no doubt, gave a more concrete form to this combat. As for the dragon slaying feat of the Armenian *Vahagn*, it is impossible to say now how far it was inherited from a demiurgic dragon killing and how far it occurred by chance, for a commonplace notion like victory over evil

1 *Vṛtra et Vərəθrayna*, 1934.

2 *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, Torino 1958, 35 sq.

3 Indra is reborn from the lotus after killing the dragon, Vahagn is born (but not reborn) before his exploits; also he strangles the monsters while Indra transpierces *Vṛtra*.

4 *Beitrag zur indoiranischen Mythologie*, Upsala 1911.

5 Review of BIANCHI's book in *IJJ*, 1959, p. 214. Cf. earlier, LOMMEL's *Der arische Kriegsgott*, 1939: *Vṛtra* is not only defence in general, but also the barrage detaining the waters, whose analogue is to be found in African rain myths and rites.

could quite easily have merged with the equally banal myth of dragon combat. Besides, we see in the *Yāsts* the rudimentary beginnings of the heroisation which was completed in the epics.

The Ossetic hero *Eltayan* has been adduced as supplementary evidence on *Vərəθrayna*. But Benveniste has recalled¹ all the difficulties opposing such an equation.

E VAYU

Indra, in the *Veda*, is sometimes associated with the wind-god, Vayu. The analysis of the *Mahābhārata*, undertaken by Wikander², enables us to push our theorizing further back than the *Veda*, and to define more exactly the relationship between Vayu and Indra. Both patronize the warrior caste, but the former with brutality and fury, the latter with beauty and skill. Iran knows the same distinction with its brutal *Kərəsāspa* armed with the mace, who is linked with the cult of Vayu, and its more attractive heroes like *Θraētaona*.

Like the Vedic Indra, Vayu dwells in intervening space, that is to say, he reigns between this world and the next, or between the earth and sky, or between the realms of *Öhrmazd* and *Ahriman*. Between this world and the next, he is the path, according to the *Aogəmadaecā*, which the dead must traverse to reach the next world: "the path of the pitiless Vayu." In other words, the Bridge between this world and the next is surrounded only by emptiness or wind, which is Vayu.

Between the earth and sky, Vayu is the first to receive the offering rising towards the gods³. He is, in a general way, god of beginnings, as Dumézil⁴ has shown, who compares him to the Roman Janus.

Between *Öhrmazd* and *Ahriman*, that is to say, between the light above and the darkness below, Vayu constitutes a frontier zone, a kind of *no man's land*, according to Pahlavi cosmogonies.

On Vayu, see also below, under Major Deities and Dualism.

F THE FIRE

The ancient word for fire, which survives in India as *agni*, has left only a doubtful trace in the Iranian proper name *Daštāyni*⁵. Fire is known in Iran as *ātar*, which is also the name of a god, as *Agni* is in India. Can we conjecture with Wikander⁶, that the change in name corresponds with a change in cult? It seems probable that the appearance of the new term *ātar*, was not an unrelated one, seeing the special importance attached to the fire in Iran, but we are unable to say more.

1 *Etudes sur la langue ossète*, 1959, 130.

2 *Religion och Bibel*, 1947, 27 sq. Cf. for the rest of the bibliography, DUMÉZIL, *L'idéologie*, 105.

3 According to the interpretation of LÜDERS, *Varuṇa* I, Göttingen 1951, 217 sq.

4 *Tarpeia*, 1947, 66 sq.; *Les dieux des Indo-Européens*, 1952, 84 sq.

5 According to the analysis proposed by WIKANDER, *Der arische Männerbund*, Lund 1938, 77.

6 *ibid.*, 77 sq. The Swedish scholar holds that *agni* was a term pertaining to the religion of the "Männerbünde" groups of warrior-like men with special morals, known as *marya* in Skr., and *mairya* in Avestan. The elimination of *agni* was a consequence of the ousting of these groups and their religion by Zoroastrianism. All this is highly conjectural, including the existence of the Aryan Männerbund itself.

Fire is not specially connected with any one of the three functions, rather it is the patron of each, under three different forms, as we have seen above¹.

Dumézil has recognized, besides, the fire's role as god of the end, symmetrical to that of Vayu-Janus.

Nairyō. saṇha, corresponding with Skr. *Narāśansa* "human Message", is closely linked with fire, in so far as he is addressed to the gods, but in Pahlavi notably, (as Neryōsangh, Narseh), he is also a messenger of the gods to men.

G ANĀHITĀ

India has a river-goddess, Sarasvatī, who is sometimes associated with the Aśvins, that is to say, with the third function. On the other hand, she is defined by her epithets as pure, heroic and maternal, which means she is trivalent. Dumézil and Lommel have independently shown², that Anāhitā was the Iranian counterpart of Sarasvatī, both being descended from the same Indo-Iranian goddess, and that the complete, triple name of Anāhitā, Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā "the humid, the strong, the immaculate", obviously refers to the three functions. Anāhitā, who was a goddess of fecundity, seems to have been identified with the Babylonian or Elamite goddess Nana, and later with Artemis, goddess of wild beasts.

Apām Napāt, a god of the waters, who is the Indian Apām Napāt, plays only an insignificant role, except that he is called an *ahura*.

H OTHER GODS

Among the other gods, those that were also clearly an inheritance from Indo-Iranian antiquity, are Haoma, Pārəndī and Tašan.

Haoma is the Vedic Soma. The *Gāthās* make no mention of him by name, and refer only disparagingly to the sacrificial liquor (Y 29.1; 32.10.12.14; 48.10; 51.4). The Later *Avesta* devotes much place to him, as do Pahlavi works. According to Y 11.4, Ahura Mazdā is his father. He is attested as a god in the Achaemenian period, in the personal name *Hwmdt* "given (or created) by Haoma" which occurs in two of the Elephantine papyri³.

Pārəndī, goddess of abundance, is the Vedic Pūṛaṇḍhi.

Rašnu has been explained by Dumézil⁴ as a sublimation of Viṣṇu's Indo-Iranian ancestor. Viṣṇu's name, whatever its etymology, seems to have been understood as containing the prefix *vi*, meaning "dispersion", and was replaced as a deliberate reform, by the more moral adverb *ra-* (cf. *raṇiθwin*, etc.), meaning "justly", which was more in keeping with the Zoroastrian system of ethics.

The prehistory of Tašan, "the Fashioner", has recently been elucidated⁵. In Indo-Iranian times there was a god **Twarštā*, who became *Tvaṣtar* in the Veda, and *θwōraštār* in the non-Gāthic Avesta. Zarathuštā, not wishing to reject this god, but not being able to

1 P. 70.

2 DUMÉZIL in *Tarpeia*, 56; LOMMEL in *Festschrift Weller*, Leipzig 1954, 405 sq.

3 COWLEY, *Aramaic Papyri*, London 1923, C 2 and D 2.

4 Viṣṇu et les Maruts, *JA*, 1953, 1 sq.

5 LEUMANN, *Asiatische Studien*, VIII (1954), 78 sq.

adopt him as such, renamed him, by joining the synonym *tašan* to the complement *gəuš* "of the ox", and identified him either with Spənta Mainyu (Y 31.9, cf. 47.3), or with Ahura Mazdā (Y 46.9, cf. 44.6 and 51.7).

For a number of other gods not cited above, Drvāspā, Hvar, Māh, Tīr, Tištrya, Xvarənah, etc., Gray's collection may be consulted. We should only draw attention to Gershevitch's¹ explanation of *Dāmōiš Upamana*, literally "likeness of the creator", as the *alter ego* of Vərəθrayna.

2. "Major Deities"

Besides Ahura Mazdā there were other claimants to the rank of supreme god, but who were they²? We are relatively sure only of Vayu and Zurvān; less so of Mithra, although this god appears to have added to his own attributes those of his neighbours in the hierarchy, viz. the two war-gods, Vayu and Indra³, and to have enjoyed sufficient popularity in western Iran for the Mithraic Mysteries to be named after him. We cannot be absolutely sure that he was the god *par excellence*, to the extent of being designated simply by a common noun *baga* "god" (a title Yt 10 gives him), in the Achaemenian month-name *bāgayādiš*⁴, and the name of an Armenian village *Bagayarinc*, in which there was a temple to Mithra. However, Mithra's great feast known as *Mihragān* in Pahlavi, is called *baṭagān* in Sogdian, which is convincing enough⁵.

A VAYU

That Vayu occupied the position of sovereign god, seems practically indisputable⁶. Indeed in the hymn dedicated to him (Yt 15), Ahura Mazdā not only pays him homage but calls him "Vayu of superior action". A follower of Ahura Mazdā can hardly be expected to have made his god subservient to Vayu in this manner. We must therefore be in the presence of compromise. But how are we to connect it historically?

Nyberg does not hesitate to speak⁷ of a "Mithragemeinde" and a "Vayugemeinde", and he goes so far as to localize the Vayu worshippers on the Middle or Upper Jaxartes⁸. The hostility of a third community, "the Gāthāgemeinde", against them, especially the first, leads to the birth of the Zoroastrian movement.

Ten years after his big book, Nyberg was less rash. In his contribution to *Illustreret Religionshistorie* of J. Pedersen, published in 1948, he no longer speaks of "communities," but of "circles of initiates". Widengren remarked about it: "It is difficult to tell to what extent the socio-religious system of the Indo-Iranians, with its pantheon of functional gods, had relaxed,

1 *The Avestan Hymn*, 166 sq. On Xvarənah, see D-G., *AION*, 1962.

2 The question is the object of a big work by Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran*, Upsala 1938, in which he follows the path traced by Nyberg.

3 This is demonstrated for Vayu, by WIKANDER, *Vayu*, 1941, 33 sq., and for Indra by GÜNTERT, *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland*, Halle 1923, 56 sq.

4 In spite of Henning, whom I think to have refuted, *BSOAS*, 1950, 638, n. 2.

5 See now D-G., 'L' expansion de Baga', *Festschrift Eilers*, 1967, p. 167 sq.

6 But see GNOLI, *SMSR*, 34 p. 91 sq. On the connection between Vayu and *vaeyig*, the Ossetic name for legendary giants, see BENVENISTE, *Etudes sur la langue ossète*, 131.

7 *Religionen*, 300, etc.

8 But the province which Vd I calls *Vaēkarəta* has nothing to do with Vayu as is proved by the Skr. cognate *vaikṛtika*.

so that each god could emerge with his own circle of worshippers, as the supreme and dominant god¹."

Dumézil, on his part,² warns that a "chronological" interpretation of Vedic gods may be too facile. The parallels existing between the Vedic pantheon, that of the Para-Indians and Zarathuštra's theology (see below) preclude our considering Indra as a "great god" whom "the social and moral conditions obtaining at a time of conquest, were in the process of substituting in place of a more ancient 'great god', Varuṇa, who in turn had just a while before increased his prestige at the expense of a still older god Mitra".

K. Barr, in his *Avesta* (1954), displays all commendable prudence by representing Vayu, Ōwāša, Zurvān and Ātar not as "supreme gods" but as "sovereign gods"³.

The first three together are well characterized in a passage, *Vidēvdāt* 19.13, in which there also seems to be an attempt at syncretism since Ahura Mazdā orders Zarathuštra to worship "the sovereign Ōwāša, the infinite Zurvān and Vayu of superior action."

Of these three gods, Ōwāša "Space" need detain us the least, for he appears to be little more than a more abstract version of Vayu.

B ZURVĀN

Zurvān is the most interesting of the three. Nyberg localizes him as the supreme god in western Iran, and hence beyond Zarathuštra's horizon. The paucity of our sources does not warrant such a conclusion, but it is a fact that Zurvān is first attested in west Iran.

The earliest of these testimonies are, to tell the truth, not devoid of ambiguity. The name Zurvān appears in the Nuzi tablets dating from the 13th to 12th century B.C., but we have no proof that he was "a great god"⁴. A Luristan plaque preserved in the Cincinnati Museum, appears to depict a god of Time in the company of twins. Ghirshman's interpretation⁵ of the twins as Ōhrmazd and Ahriman is unacceptable, since Ōhrmazd came to be identified with the Bounteous Spirit only in the Later *Avesta*, which means several centuries later than the probable date of this plaque. But they may have been the mythical twins (whatever their name) which Zarathuštra supposedly knew, and in which he saw the two Primeval Spirits.

The earliest text to be comparatively clear and well dated is the notice of Eudemus of Rhodes, quoted by Damascius, the neo-Platonician. The latter asks himself what Intellect or the All-Infinite might have been for the ancient Iranians, and he answers, following Eudemus, that for some, it was Time, and for others, Space, from which Ōhrmazd and Ahriman proceeded, or else light and darkness before these.

The importance of Time in Iranian speculation is thus attested in the 4th century B.C. Time occupies but a small place in the *Avesta*, as we shall see, in spite of its epithet describing it as a sovereign god. Its lack of importance may be the result of a systematic process of elimi-

1 *Stand und Aufgaben*, II, 57.

2 *L'idéologie*, 45

3 By sovereign, he means "foreign to the tri-functional system" which no longer appears true of Vayu; and also "designated by the Avesta itself as sovereign", which certainly is the case with Ōwāša and Zurvān.

4 And we can even doubt, with BAILEY, that it refers to Zurvān at all. Cf. above, p. 14.

5 *Artibus Asiae*, 1958, 37 sq.

nation. And Zarathuštra's silence is perhaps deliberate also. For he likewise ignores Mithra; he never once mentions the father of the twin Spirits, and the interrogative form of Y 44.3-5, may well dissimulate a polemic attitude.

In the Later *Avesta*, we have seen that Zurvān is mentioned either (*Vd* 19.29) as the creator of the path of death (a role analogous to that of Vayu in the *Aogəmadaecā*), or, (*Vd* 19.13 and 16) as Infinite Time, together with Ōwāša and Vayu. Furthermore, a distinction is made, Y 72.10 (and again in Nyāyiš 1.8), between *Zurvān akarana* "Infinite Time" and *Zurvān darəyō. xvaðāta* "Time of long dominion". This implies the existence of a certain theory of the production of time, which is dealt with in Pahlavi works (*Bd* 1.20 and *DkM* 282): Time of long dominion proceeds from Infinite Time, lasts 12000 years and returns to it¹.

A passage in the *Dēnkart* (M 829.1-5) about the exegesis of the Gāthic text on the twin Spirits, Y 30.3, condemns the theory that Ōhrmazd and Ahriman were brothers in the same womb. Already in the 3rd century, a Manichaean hymn (Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 431 and 439) had condemned the same doctrine. But the Manichaeans called their supreme god Zurvān, which goes to prove, that in the Iran in which their prophet preached, Zurvān occupied this position, and not Ōhrmazd. The question that arises, regarding the relation between Zurvānism and Mazdeanism, will be taken up later, under the chapter on the Sasanians.²

The Zurvānites have probed deeper into the problem of evil, which they claimed Zarathuštra had not sufficiently elucidated by the myth of the twin Spirits' choice. According to Eznik's evidence, after Zurvān had sacrificed for one thousand years, twins were born to him, Ōhrmazd as a result of the sacrifice, Ahriman as a result of Zurvān's doubt regarding its efficacy³. Among Šahrastānī's Zurvānites, some thought that Zurvān, who proceeded from the light, had a doubt, and that Satan arose from that doubt; others believed there was always something evil with god, either an evil thought or a corruption, and that it was the origin of Satan. As for the Gayōmarthiyas, Šahrastānī records that they believed Ahriman was born from an idea that God (Yazdān, the only Eternal) had regarding the possibility of an adversary.

The Zurvānite speculation gave a good deal of importance to the divine quaternity. We know this chiefly from a number of testimonies in Syriac⁴, which name, besides Zurvān, three others, *Ašōqar*, *Frašōqar* and *Zarōqar*, given out as other gods, but who in reality are hypostases of Zurvān. As Nyberg has noted⁵, *Ašōqar* and *frašōqar* were originally the Avestan epithets *aršō. kara* "who makes virile" and *frašō. kara* "who makes bright", while *zarōqar* is a plausible substitute for another Avestan adjective, *maršō. kara* "who makes old". The three names describe time in relation to the three moments in human life: puberty, maturity and old age.

That it really is a tetrad, is proved by the Manichaean tradition which describes Zurvān, the supreme god, "father of greatness", as a four-faced god (*tetraprosōpos*)⁶. But Zurvān's four-fold nature was manifested under other forms as well, which have been studied in detail by Zaehner. For instance, the anonymous Syriac text F 9 (Zaehner, 440) connects the tetrad with

1 ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 106 sq.

2 In Armenia, Kevān, the name of Saturn, has been replaced by Zrvan, cf. JUNKER, *Über iran. Quel.*, 169.

3 Cf. MENASCE, *JA*, 1953, 307.

4 ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, F 5, 8, 9, 10.

5 *Questions*, 89 sq.; cf. ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 221.

6 MIGNE, *Patrol. gr.*, I, col. 1461; KESSLER, *Mani*, 403; cf. ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 54.

the four elements. The most interesting tetrad is that associating Light, Power and Wisdom with Zurvān, for this may have been the origin of the Mazdean tetrad¹.

Both the supreme gods, Zurvān and Vayu, have so much in common that one wonders whether, in fact, one is not the duplication of the other.

Did Zurvān have a counterpart in the Indian religion? Indian theories of time, *kāla*, are recent developments and cannot be projected back to the Indo-Iranian past². But India had another great god, Prajāpati, whose history is strikingly similar to Zurvān's³. Just as Zurvān offered sacrifice, at the beginning of time, in order to obtain a son, so too, Prajāpati, the great god, with the same aim, was the first to perform the *dakṣayana* offering. It therefore appears likely, that already in the Indo-Iranian period there existed a myth about a god performing sacrifices, before the creation of the world, to obtain a progeny⁴. It is by no means certain that in the archaic form of the myth, the god gave birth to twins, for there is no trace of this in India. But there are a number of concordant details in the two traditions which seem to have gone unnoticed and which confirm the myth's antiquity. Zurvān, while sacrificing had a doubt. Likewise Prajāpati⁵ "practised burning austerities; . . . he wiped his forehead and there was *ghee*. He held it out towards the fire, but was seized by a doubt. Should I offer it? Should I not offer it?"

The similarity of the myths figuring Zurvān and Prajāpati, enables us to appreciate the fact that Prajāpati, Lord of Creatures and Primal Man, if he is not Time strictly speaking, is yet identified, not only with the Sacrifice and the Spirit, but with the Year as well.

As we have seen, Vayu, in the *Aogəmadaecā*, is the creator of the path of death, but the *Vidēvdāt* assigns this role to Zurvān.

These two gods alone merit the epithet *darəyō. xvađāta* "of long Dominion".

But though their roles might have been identical, we cannot conclude that the gods themselves were, or, with Nyberg⁶, that it is unlikely they ever co-existed in the same cosmological system. That Time and intervening space should both preside over the death journey is but natural, and the fact that their epithets are identical only shows—which is a good deal—that they had been recognized, in the cosmogony, as two homologous categories.

Their relationship is formulated differently in the myth which makes Zurvān the father of Vayu, if we accept the transposition of these figures into the epic heroes, Zāl and Sām-Rustam⁷. It is only to be regretted that this epic testimony, furnished by the *Šāhnāma* of Firdausi, should be such a late one (10th century).

1 Cf. below.

2 SCHEFTELOWITZ, *Die Zeit als Schicksalsgottheit in der indischen und iranischen Religion*, Stuttgart 1929.

3 WIDENGREN, *Religionens Värld*², Upsala 1952, 71.

4 This refutes, as Widengren saw, the theory of SCHAEDEER, *ZDMG*, 1941, 290 sq., viz., that the myth in which Zurvān is the father of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, was merely a malicious invention of the Christians.

5 *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, 2.1.2, 1-3, cited by Sylvain LÉVI, *La doctrine du sacrifice*, 1890, 28.

6 Questions . . . , *JA*, 1931, II, 207.

7 WIKANDER, *Nouvelle Clío*, 1950, 310.

The role of great god seems to have devolved locally upon Yima, as evidenced by the Kafirs of the Hindukuš with their Imre (Yama Raja), a supreme divinity and creator, and by certain Turkish tribes of the Altaï with their Šal Jimä¹.

3. Dualism

A AHURAS AND DAĒVAS

The opposition between *ahuras* and *daēvas* is an ancient one since India too opposes *asuras* and *devas*. Already in the Indo-Iranian past, the *asuras* formed a distinct class from the *devas*, endowed with special occult and moral powers.

In India this opposition finds expression in the numerous allusions made by the Upaniṣads and Brāhmaṇas² to a conflict between the two groups. In Iran, it was perhaps linked to a dualistic structure of society, if we can accept the interpretation of the Soviet scholar Tolstov³, regarding certain ritual combats, opposing the two halves of the population, which still took place in several Central Asian towns several centuries after the Muslim conquest, on the authority of Maqdisi.

In India, after the Vedic period, the notion of *asura* deteriorated due to the accentuation of its occult, hence baleful side, and the *asuras* were reduced to the rank of demons. In Iran, on the contrary, the *ahuras* were elevated and it was the *daēvas* who were debased.

Was Zarathuštra responsible for elevating the *ahuras*? We cannot say for certain. We can only observe that the word *daēva*, as used by Zarathuštra, seems to have signified three things:

- 1) In the *daēvāišca mašyāišca* formula (Y 29.4, 34.5 and 48.1) there appears to be a survival of the archaic god-men dichotomy. *Daēvas* here may not have had a derogatory sense.
- 2) In most cases, *daēva* is synonymous with non-*ahura*. In this sense of the term certain gods are designated (in the Later *Avesta*) as *daēvas*, for instance, Indra, Saurva (ancient Śarva, the alternative name for Rudra), Nāṇhaiθya (ancient Nāsatya), etc. It is both striking and essential that all these are ancient gods belonging to the 2nd and 3rd functions. Miθra and Airyaman, on the other hand, although Zarathuštra ignored them, are never called *daēvas*, for they belong to the first function.

It may be asked why then are Anāhitā and Vayu not *daēvas*? The answer is that Anāhitā, as we have seen, was trivalent, while Vayu was double and ambiguous. Only one half of him was condemned, the other half, assigned to the Bounteous Spirit, was retained. Vayu's ambivalence seems therefore to have been anterior to the dualistic reform, far from being a consequence of it, as some would have it⁴. In Pahlavi books there are definitely two Vāys, a good Vāy and an evil one.

1 MORGENTHAU, *Act. Orient.*, 1952, 163 sq. ; CHRISTENSEN, *Le premier homme*, 2, Upsala 1934, 136 sq.

2 *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 1.3; *Chāndogya*, 1.2, etc.

3 *Drevnyj Xorezm*, 1951, 307 sq.

4 Finally, Mary BOYCE, *BSOAS*, 1957, 310.

- 3) Finally, the word *daēva* designates demons who had never been ancient gods, such as Aēšma “Fury”, Druj “Lie” (Skr. *druh*), Apaoša “Drought”, Astō.viḍātu “Body Dissolution”, Āzi “Greed”, Būšyastā “Temporization”, Būiti, Dužyāirya “Bad year”, Gandarəwa (Skr. Gandharva), etc.¹ In these, there survives a certain class of beings, demons of all kinds, who in Indo-Iranian times, existed side by side with the *asuras* and other *devas*.

The condemnation and debasement of the ancient gods to the rank of demons, in Iran, was presumably the work of Iranian priests, since it was restricted exclusively to gods belonging to the two non-priestly functions. Zarathuštra gave impetus to this movement (if he was not its author) by strictly forbidding the worship of the non-*asuras*. They were supposed to have made the wrong choice between two parties, which precluded them forever from serving as messengers between gods and men.

A very similar idea of choice is found in Vedic and Brahmanic India. In *RV*, 1.12.1, and elsewhere, Agni is chosen as priest, messenger and sacrificer. And according to the *Śatapatha*, 11.5.9.3, the *devas* and *asuras* competed for the sacrifice, who was their father, Prajāpati. He shall be ours, said the first. No, ours, said the others. Zarathuštra was hence not without models for his great ideology of choice.

From the above, it should not be inferred that Zarathuštra, the priestly reformer, neglected or rejected the second and third classes. They do figure in his system, but represented by entities, subordinated to Mazdā², thereby assuring the supremacy of the first class.

B AŠA-DRUJ

The moral dualism expressed in the opposition *Aša-druj*, goes back at least to Indo-Iranian times, for the *Veda* knows it too, in the opposition *ṛta-druh*. Perhaps the contrast is not as sharply defined as in the *Avesta*, but it is enough that it actually existed, and that there are instances when *Ṛta* has for antagonist, the sorceress Druh, an incarnation of Falsehood (*RV*, I, 133, 1-2); that *ṛtāvan* (in the liturgical sense) is the antithesis of *abhidruh* “false”; and finally, that often derivatives of the root *druh* are used in opposition to *ṛta*, as in *RV*, V, 68, 4, where Mitra and Varuṇa are said to be “guardians of *ṛta* by means of *ṛta*, free from falsehood”, etc.³

Due evidently to an Iranian development, *druj* and *drəgvant* are regularly opposed to *aša* and *ašāvan* in the *Avesta*. But this opposition was already known in Indo-Iranian antiquity. It survived in India, to combine with the opposition of *devas* and *asuras*, since we read in the Brāhmaṇas that “Prajāpati made the gods from truth, and the *asuras* from falsehood.”

This was not the only kind of contrast, for the *Veda* knew also⁴ the contrast between what is *sat* “existent, true, good, etc.” and what is *asat*. This contrast had a universal value in the cosmogony, since it divided the world into two halves, the *sat* above, the abode of men, light and gods, and the *asat* below, the dark, infernal world of demons.

1 GRAY, *Foundations*, 185 sq.

2 Cf. below, § 4.

3 OLDENBERG, *NGG*, 1915, 179; GEIGER, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, Vienna 1916, 164 sq.

4 N. BROWN, *JAOS*, 1941, 76 sq.

There was a similar opposition between the *devas*, gods of the day and sky, and their enemies, the *asuras*, gods of the infernal world and nocturnal sky¹. (This concept apparently results from a complete recasting of the gods, since the gods we know from linguistic comparisons to be the most archaic [Skr. *deva*, Av. *duēva*, Lat. *deus*, etc.] figure as new gods ousting the *asuras*)². In this conflict accredited with a cosmogonical, demiurgic role, the leading part is played by Indra, seconded by Uṣas, goddess of Dawn, who repulses the powers of darkness and evil, viz. *tamas* "darkness", *dveṣas* "hostility", *durita* "misfortune", *druh* "falsehood", etc. It is evident, that the *devas* in India have assumed a role exactly similar to that of their adversaries in Iran.

C "ETHNOLOGICAL" DUALISM

To understand the origin of the Iranian dualism, we should go beyond the framework of Indo-Iranian comparisons.

Dualism is widespread throughout the Euro-asiatic continent, in fact, almost in all parts of the world, and a well-known question arises: are the dualistic traits found among diverse peoples³, traces of borrowings from Graeco-Iranian dualisms, or, on the contrary, are they part of a common stock, the matrix from which historical dualisms have sprung⁴?

These dualistic manifestations are in essence the opposition between a rival demiurge and a "basic creator" who does not claim for himself all creativity or absolute sovereignty; the usual corollary of this being a cult of the rival demiurge.

They are to be found among peoples least likely to have come under the influence of historical dualisms, like the ancient Siberians and American Indians. The first know the Crow, who collaborates in, or rectifies the work of the creator-god; the second have the Coyote, who is essentially the same as the "demiurge-trickster" of the Palaeo-Siberians.

4. The Entities

The entities which, in Zarathuṣtra's thought, form the entourage of Ahura Mazdā were already very ancient, some of them such as Aṣa (Ved. *Ṛta*) and Ārmaiti (Ved. *Aramati*) going back to the Indo-Iranian period⁵. Most of the others were already formulated at this time, if only partially personified, as we shall see.

a) Aṣa

It has been denied that *Ṛta* was personified in the Veda. But while he may not have been represented in human form, he was a person nonetheless, since RV, I, 75, 5, says that Agni owes homage not only to Mitra-Varuṇa and other gods, but to exalted *Ṛta* as well, who is also invoked for aid, together with other gods, as "the great *Ṛta*" (X, 66, 4).

- 1 Cf. KUIPER, *III*, 1960, 217, sq., especially 225; already *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde*, 107, 1, 5 sq.
- 2 We cannot therefore make use of this concept, as such, for reconstructing the Indo-Iranian religion nor consequently can we contrast it with the "tripartite ideology".
- 3 See especially DÄHNHARDT, *Natursagen*, Leipzig I, 1907, s. v. Iran.
- 4 The question has been studied by U. BIANCHI in his book *Il Dualismo religioso*, Rome 1958. Cf. D-G., *Antiquité classique*, 1959, 285 sq.
- 5 Finally, WIDENGREN, *Stand . . .*, II, 61; prior to it, J. D-G., *Zoroastre*, 57 sq.

Indeed the high antiquity of this personification is attested in the personal names of the Aryan chiefs of the Mitanni in Syria and Palestine¹, which contain the term *Arta*: *Artamanya*, *Artasumara*, *Artadama*, *Artamna*. This tradition was continued in historic Iran, chiefly by Median kings, for cuneiform tablets under Salmanassar III (858-824) yield the name *Artasari*; and under his successor, *Artasari*². In Persia, Artaxerxes' name was actually *Artaxšaθra*³.

What was the meaning of *aša-ṛta*?

After the authors of the Sanskrit dictionary of Saint-Petersbourg, whose opinion was adopted by Bergaigne and Oldenberg, we have become accustomed to see *ṛta*, not merely as Truth (*ṛtaṃ vad* meaning "true speech"), but as the true Order of things in nature, liturgy and moral conduct. It was possible to infer that the Indo-Iranians had the conception of a great Cosmic Order regulating both the course of the heavenly bodies and men's actions.

Lüders, in 1910⁴, made a stand against this interpretation, but his detailed demonstration was only published after his death⁵. In substance it is as follows: The Vedic authors did not have the notion of a universal order. *Ṛta* is simply Truth, the non-Lie, and it acts on the heavenly bodies and human conduct, ritual or otherwise, owing to the magic power of spoken truth, the exact formula proffered during worship. This power is evoked during the *saccakiriyā* ceremony of Pali texts, which is a well-known one, though not attested in Sanskrit. When seeking to obtain a favour from a god, a truth is stated (not necessarily a past favour granted by the god) and this assures the success of the request.

This theory rapidly found supporters, and already in 1911, Andreas and Wackernagel applied it to the *Gāthās*, rendering *aša* as "Truth". They are still followed today by Gershevitch, Humbach, Thieme, etc. It was however rejected in favour of the former theory by Oldenberg in 1915, and by Geiger in 1916 and 1934⁶. These authors pointed out that it was impossible to understand *anṛta* as "non-Truth" in certain passages. The most explicit instance is *RV*, 7.86.6, in which a sinner addressing Varuṇa, pleads forgiveness for his unintentional sins. "It was not my own intent, O Varuṇa, it was seduction, liquor, anger, dice, and not even sleep is the averter of *anṛta*". The meaning of the last word is indisputably "fault, sin, violation of the law".

Lüders, who prides himself on taking into account all passages, as opposed to his adversaries, does not take up this particular one in the detailed demonstration he gives in pp. 402 to 654 of his book. He cites it only in his introductory summary, p. 36, persistently translating *anṛta* as "lie" when the whole context, as he himself recognizes, speaks of fault or sin.

After all, Lüders' analyses did lead to a positive result, by throwing light on the "magic" origin of the cosmic value attached to *ṛta*. (For while continuing to translate it as "truth", he speaks of it as a "cosmic force" and a *magische Potenz*.) But he believed he had got hold of a process within the *Veda*, by means of which a simple statement in the mouth of men became a

1 Above, p. 13.

2 Cf. NYBERG, *Die Religionen*..., 333.

3 Other names beginning with *Arta* dating from Xerxes and Artaxerxes I, are cited by SCHEFTLOWITZ, *Die altpersische Religion*, Giessen 1920, 3.

4 *Sit. Preuss. Akad. Wiss.*, 1910, 931.

5 H. LÜDERS, *Varuṇa*, 2 vols. in consecutive pagination, Göttingen 1951-1959.

6 OLDENBERG, *NGG*, 1915, 167 sq.; GEIGER, *Die Amasa Spāntas*, Vienna 1916; *Rta und Verwandtes*, *WZKM* 1934, 107 sq.

universal force. In this, we find it more difficult to follow him, for we do not see such a process unfolded in the *Veda*, but only its consequence: the conception of *ṛta* as a cosmic and moral force. This conception was not exclusively a Vedic one, since it is found in Iran also, as we shall show.

Ṛta was manifested as light, as Lüders himself has shown, p. 619. Likewise, in Iran, according to Zarathuštra (*Y* 31.7), Aša filled the wide spaces with light.

The Avestan *ašāvan* "follower of Aša," must have early come to mean "just, righteous" (as opposed to *drəgvant* "follower of the Druj"), which is the sense of Pahlavi *ahrav* also. However, since it may be objected that this is a purely Iranian development, even a purely Zoroastrian one, we had best exclude it from the argument and consider only the Old Persian term *artāvan*. This term denotes a quality of the dead ("and may I be *artāvā* when dead", says Xerxes, Persp., h, 48), which, as Kuiper¹ has shown, tallies perfectly with Ved. *ṛtāvan*, epithet of gods, the deceased fathers and death. The essential point is, that *ṛta* is connected with the realm of death: "It is regularly hidden where they unharness the horses of the sun" (*RV*, V, 62, 1).

All told, we must accept that the concept of *ṛta* was expressed as a cosmic power during the Indo-Iranian period. After that, it matters little whether we insist on rendering it as "truth", recalling its distant origin, or whether, preferring not to overload the word with acceptations it does not have in our languages, we adhere as closely as possible to Geiger's definition of the Vedic term: "Das (den Begriff der Wahrheit einschliessende) Recht als kosmische Potenz, Norm für das sittliche Verhalten, Richtschnur für alle Handlungen²".

b) *Ārmaiti*

There can be no doubt that *Ārmaiti* is the equivalent of Vedic *Arámati*, in spite of Bailey's³ attempt to separate them. *Arámati* is indeed a person, for *RV*, V, 43, 6 invokes her as "the great, consenting *Arámati*, the divine woman". What is even more, if *Sāyaṇa*'s gloss which identifies her with the Earth is in itself of no value, it tallies with the unanimous testimony of Iranian texts associating *Ārmaiti* with the Earth, from *Y* 43.3 which states that "the Spirit has created, as a pasturage for the ox, *Ārmaiti*," down to Spandarmat's "patronage" of the earth in Pahlavi works. We can therefore conclude with Wesendonk⁴, that already in the Indo-Iranian past, there existed a goddess *Aramati*, not only of Piety, Devotion, Application, etc. (according to the etymology of her name "Conforming Thought"), but also of the Earth.

The other entities do not figure as persons. All the same, two of them can be shown, indirectly, to have been personified in antiquity.

c) *Haurvatāt and Amərətāt*

These two entities, in the Avesta, rule over the waters and vegetation, and already a *Gāthā* (*Y* 51.7), in a significant manner, puts the two couples parallel: "O thou that didst create the Ox and Waters and Plants, grant me Immortality and Wholeness". Now, as Darmes-

1 *III*, 1959, 215.

2 I have translated *Aša* as "Righteousness", not to anticipate the meaning *ahrav* had in the following centuries, so much as to obtain a substantive and adjective from the same root: 'Righteousness' and 'righteous for *aša* and *ašāvan*.

3 *BSOS*, 1935, 142.

4 *Arəmati als arische Erdgottheit*, *ARW*, 1929, 61 sq.

teter has shown¹, the idea that the waters and plants are capable of healing and of averting death goes back to Indo-Iranian times. What is more, between the Indian myths of the Aśvins and the Muslim legends about Harūt and Marūt (medieval forms of the two entities), there are too many distinct points of resemblance for these to be fortuitous². We must conclude that Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, if not with the Indo-Iranians, at least in Iran, before the fall of Nāṛhaiθya to the rank of demon, were personified, and the subjects of myths.

Another entity, Xšaθra, though not personified, was at least well characterized in Indo-Iranian times.

d) Xšaθra

In the Veda, the primary meaning of *kṣatra* is "power, might"; whereas its derivative means only "sovereign". But already a passage (*RV*, 8.35, 17) demonstrates the specialization by which *kṣatriya* in classical Sanskrit, came to designate the warrior caste: verses 15 and 18 state, respectively: "Favour the *brahman* and the prayers" and "Favour the cows and the *viśaḥ*," but the intermediate verse contains the phrase: "Favour the *kṣatra* and the warrior".

We might have taken this development to be a late one and particular to India, were it not that its Indo-Iranian antiquity is attested by the word *Æsaertaegkatae* meaning "distinguished by their valour",³ occurring as the name of one of the Nartes families in Ossetic legends.

It seems doubtful that the two entities we have yet to consider, Vohu Manah and Spənta Mainyu, already existed in Indo-Iranian times.

e) Vohu Manah

The Vedic term *mānas*, lacks only the epithet "good", to be the parallel of *vohu manah*. To find a Vedic word corresponding more closely to the sense of the Iranian term, we might consider, with Geiger⁴, the term *sumatī*. This word, having the same root as *mānas-manah*, is indeed specialized, for it designates exactly the benevolence of gods and the prayers of men. But this results from a secondary evolution, and Geiger does not hesitate to conclude that "the concept of Good Mind had attained personification as early as the Indo-Iranian period".

f) Spənta Mainyu

In the Vedic language, *manyú* means "impetuosity, passion, ardour, etc.". Hence in *RV*, I, 139, 2, Mitra and Varuṇa maintain the disorder far from order "by the impetus (*manyúnā*) of their will". A whole hymn, X, 83, studied by Güntert,⁵ is addressed to Manyu personified. Manyu is the psychic or divine force, which makes one triumph in combat, etc.

But the meaning given to *mainyu* in the *Avesta* cannot be directly traced to that in the *Veda*. Perhaps the Zoroastrian tendency particularly affected this term, to the point of severing it from its origins.

1 *Haurvatāt et Amərətāt*, 1875.

2 *Naissance d'archanges*, 1945, chap. V.

3 Above, p. 108.

4 *Die Amāša Spəntas*, 241.

5 *Der Arische Weltkönig u. Heiland*, 104 sq.

g) *The Order of the Entities*

The question that arises regarding the entities as such, or as part of Ahura Mazdā's *entourage*, is why were these chosen in particular, and not others? Was there a principle governing their choice?

To answer this question, we shall have to study their order. They are not enumerated haphazardly, but following a list that remains remarkably fixed, except for certain variations we shall deal with later. The list as it appears in chapter I of the *Bundahišn*, is as follows. We may first note that Spənta Mainyu, at the head of the list, is replaced by Ōhrmazd himself, with whom this Spirit had coalesced: Ōhrmazd, Vohu Manah, Aša, Xšaθra, Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt.

According to Gershevitch¹, this order is justified by that of the "elements" or other material creations over which the entities preside, namely, man, cattle, fire, metal, earth, water and vegetation. The list of entities might be supposed to represent a certain physical analysis of the universe.

This explanation is not convincing, for this heterogeneous succession of "elements", in which fire and metal are inserted between cattle and earth, and from which wind is absent, itself needs to be justified. Even if we admit this strange analysis of the physical world, can we suppose it forms the basis of the system of entities and that each of these is derived from the element he patronizes. This was attempted by Gray in his article: *The double nature of the Iranian Archangels*². But the very fact that the entities bear abstract names condemns in advance all attempts to find a concrete origin for them³.

We must therefore seek another principle for the list. And such a principle becomes evident, the moment we recognize, with Dumézil that the list corresponds with the three functions of Society and to the gods representing them. This parallelism (in itself, improbable), is not fortuitous, for each entity bears an affinity with the god who is his opposite number, which can be demonstrated elsewhere. To resume briefly what has been fully demonstrated by Dumézil⁴, and which we have touched on above:

Vohu Manah protects kine, just as Miθra is the god with wide pastures. Aša is identical with Vedic Ṛta, whose guardian is Varuṇa. Xšaθra is *kṣatra*, whom Indra protects. Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, as we have already seen, were closely associated with the Iranian counterparts of the two Nāsatyas. If we leave out for the time being Ōhrmazd and Ārmaiti, we obtain a list of entities exactly parallel to that of the Mitanni gods:

{ Vohu Manah	Mitra }
{ Aša	Varuṇa }
Xšaθra	Indra
Haurvatāt/Amərətāt	The two Nāsatyas.

The list enumerates, in proper order, the three social functions: sovereignty (in its two aspects), war, and fecundity.

1 *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, 9 sq.

2 *ARW*, 1904, 349 sq.

3 Hence NYBERG's attempt, *Religionen*, to explain the entities as the sublimation of collectivities.

4 *Naissance d'archanges, Les dieux des Indo-Européens*, etc., and especially *Kratylos* IV, 1959, 97-118.

There remains to explain the position of Ārmaiti and Ōhrmazd, and the change in the order of Vohu Manah and Aša.

Ārmaiti was trivalent and could occupy any position, but since her homologue Anāhitā was especially a goddess of fecundity, and more important than the Nāsatyas, it was fitting that she should come immediately before them. As for Ōhrmazd, previously Spēta Mainyu, it was only natural that as supreme god or creator, he should head the list. It is unnecessary to invoke the affinity, however plausible, between Spēta Mainyu, the "twin" of Aṣra Mainyu, and Vayu's "good" half (the "twin" of the god's evil half), or to recall, that besides being a warrior-god, Vayu-Janus was also a god of "beginnings". But it should be noted that while Vayu may have formerly figured in this list, the element wind (which he obviously patronized) would figure in the list of material creations, from which it is now surprisingly absent¹. On the presence of man at the head of the Pahlavi list, we shall have more to say under the chapter on Cosmogony.

As we said, the position of Vohu Manah and Aša varies. Three Gāthic texts (Y 27.15, 37.4 and 35) state that the first and greatest of the Aməša Spēntas is Aša. Everywhere else Vohu Manah is placed first. Aša's priority accords with that of Varuṇa, whilst Vohu Manah's reproduces the precedence of Mitra in the compound *mitrāvaruṇa*, a priority due simply to the linguistic rule that in a *dvandva*, the shorter of the terms precedes. Hence, even in this variation, the list of Aməša Spēntas would seem to reflect the divine hierarchy and its linguistic expression.

The tripartite ideology casts light on the list of material creations patronized by the entities. In the case of some of them, the connection is self-evident: earth, water and plants are quasi-identical with Ārmaiti, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt; the fire as the sacrificial fire, is like in the Veda, associated with Aša, since Ṛta-Aša is the norm of the cultus. We read in *RV*, V, 12.6: "Whoever, O Agni, reverently honours your sacrifice, guards the *ṛta*." In the same way, Aša is associated with the sacrificial fire in the *Gāthās* (Y 43.9).

But in the case of cattle and metal, the connection is not obvious. It is elucidated by the tripartite ideology. Vohu Manah protects the ox, as Miθra is lord of wide pastures. Xšaθra, the entity which is connected with the warrior function, patronizes metal, from which arms are made.

h) Zarathuštra's system

We now have an insight into the nature of Zarathuštra's reform. He had before him an ancient double system of gods and entities, but he did not *replace* the first by the second: if there had been such a substitution, why should Varuṇa (or Ahura, in Iranian) have *two* replacements, Aša in the list, and Mazdā above it, or, in other words, if Aša was the substitute for the former Ahura, why was it necessary to have Ahura Mazdā again? Instead, Zarathuštra eliminated from these two lists all the gods, except one, ignoring Mithra and condemning all the others who were merely *daēvas*; and retained all the entities, annexing them or subordinating them to Ahura Mazdā.

This annexation was chiefly effected through a process of "filiation". Indeed in the *Gāthās*—and this presumably² is why Herodotus records that while performing the sacrifice,

1 ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, 1961, 126 sq., has tried to prove that the two Spirits had replaced, not the two aspects of Vayu, but the twins Mithra and Yima. See the review of this work by J.D.G., in *IJ*, 1962.

2 As briefly pointed out by SCHAEFER, *ZDMG*, 1940, 404.

the Magi recited a theogony—Ahura Mazdā is the father of Spənta Mainyu (Y 47.3), of Aša (47.2), of Vohu Manah (31.8) and of Ārmaiti (45.4); but he is only said to possess the last three beings on the list—his was Xšaθra, his was Haurvatāt and his was Amərətāt. This does not mean that he was not their father at the same time. The two manners of speaking are used in respect of Ārmaiti (Y 45.4, 31.9), and according to a later text (Yt 17.16), Aši is said to be the daughter of Ahura Mazdā and of Ārmaiti.

We have so far not spoken of Aši and Sraoša because they do not form part of the system of Aməša Spəntas, although Pahlavi works add Sraoša to it. The list was not closed, and even Varhrān who was not an entity, came to be added later¹.

Sraoša—The entity Sraoša “discipline”, corresponded, as shown by Dumézil, with the archaic god Airyaman, whom Zarathuštra ignored, as he did Miθra. He was, in fact, a kind of auxiliary to Mitra, specialized in the protection of the people, as we have seen above².

When Miθra is once again honoured in the Later *Avesta*, Sraoša appears as his acolyte, together with Rašnu. All three preside as judges at the entrance to the next world, presumably because of Miθra’s role (owing to his position between two worlds) as “mediator”, the *μεσότης* whom Plutarch mentions.

Aši—This entity, signifying “retribution, recompense” has been the object of a long article by Wolfgang Schulze³, and has been recognized by Dumézil as the counterpart of the Indian Bhaga, Mitra’s auxiliary who specialized in the distribution of wealth.

The epithet *vaṇuhī* “good”, accompanies Aši. Aši *Vaṇuhī*, together with Miθra and others, enjoyed great popularity in Bactriana of the Kušans⁴.

Ahura Mazdā and the Entities—Zarathuštra had other ways of expressing the supremacy of Ahura Mazdā than by speaking of him as the father or possessor of the entities.

Ahura Mazdā would seem to have absorbed into himself all sovereignty, all *ahuraship*. But Y 30.9 still uses the plural term “the *ahuras*”.

Zarathuštra’s poems are manifestly a meditation on the entities, and it would seem that the prophet’s personal spiritual experience, the daily bread of his life, so to speak, consisted in rethinking these entities, refining them and defining their exact relationship with the one god.

His first illumination—tradition ascribes it to him at the age of thirty—could well be that forming the refrain of Y 43. Just as Isaiah sang: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord....”, so too Zarathuštra exclaims:

I recognize thee as bounteous, O Wise Lord....

The ray of light spreads, and recognition comes that bounteous too, is one of the Primal Spirits, and bounteous will be Ārmaiti.

The epithet *vohu* “good” is likewise ascribed to several entities. It goes with that half of the *manah* which is ranged on the side of the Bounteous Spirit: Vohu Manah, a stereotyped

1 MENASCE, La promotion de Varhran, *RHR*, 1947.

2 P. 125.

3 In *Oriental Studies*.....Pavry, Oxford 1933, 407 sq.

4 Below, p. 164.

name under which the "human," "mithraic" aspect of the divine sovereignty was to survive. Vohu Manah is a kind of Providence: God inclined towards man, revealing himself to him and succouring him. It is, besides, the human virtue or faculty of "good thinking".

Vohu is also used with *xšaθra* "Kingdom or Dominion", the former appanage of Indra, which henceforth becomes the "Good Dominion of Ahura Mazdā".

The same adjective is used again, but in the superlative as if to emphasize his prominence, to exalt Aša, henceforth known as Aša vahišta, the "Best Order". He is the ideal law, the divine order—formerly that of Varuṇa—and the standard of all human activity, but, contrary to Vohu Manah, he does not come into contact with man.

And finally, the adjective *vairya* "desirable, who ought to be chosen", modifies the meaning of *xšaθra* "dominion", projecting this entity into an eschatological perspective. The Good Dominion is the kingdom anticipated to come in the near future, and in view of which a choice has to be made. It will be the reward of the righteous.

In this way, by the revelation of new epithets, Zarathuštra defined the organization of Ahura Mazdā's cortège, in the face of evil.

With Ahura Mazdā and his 'family' of entities, but above all with the doctrine of twin Spirits and their free choice, Zarathuštra proposed a monotheistic solution to the ancient Aša-Druj dualism. His god is creator of light and darkness, and master over time.

The doctrine of entities enabled him, by virtue of their being at once divine and human, to put all his followers in communion with the absolute god. The "divine" aspect being the most frequent and explicit, we shall content ourselves with citing a few cases in which the "human" aspect is predominant, for instance, *Y* 28.2: "I who would approach you, O Wise Lord, with *good thought*"; *Y* 51.8: "He (Zarathuštra) who upholds *justice*"; *Y* 46.4: "Who so robs the Liar of *dominion* or of life"; *Y* 45.5: "They who will render me *obedience*", etc. We shall finally cite, with Schaeder¹, two contrasting passages: "Ihnen antwortete der Weise Herr, mit dem Guten Sinn vereint, durch die Herrschaft, wohlbefreundet mit dem sonnenhaften Recht: Eure heilbringende Gute Frömmigkeit erwählen wir uns, sie sei unser" (*Y* 32.2); and "Durch den Heilbringenden Geist und den Besten Sinn, gemäsz unsern auf das Recht gegründeten Taten und Worten möge uns Vollkommenheit und Unsterblichkeit der Weise Herr mit der Herrschaft und der Frömmigkeit gewähren" (*Y* 47.1). Im ersten Beispiel, observes Schaeder, steht das Recht auf der göttlichen, die Frömmigkeit auf der menschlichen Seite, im zweiten gilt das Umgekehrte.

The tripartite ideology casts light on the origin of the entities. But in the historic period, the entities or Aməša Spəntas no longer represented this ideology. Zarathuštra himself, if he inherited this doctrine, was less concerned with distinguishing the various functions than with subordinating them all to Ahura Mazdā. Later on, in the Later *Avesta* or in Pahlavi works, the functions or the classes which assumed them are represented not by the Aməša Spəntas, but by haoma, the horse and the bull (*Y* 11.1-6); by colours (very archaic, cf. above, p. 123): white, red, or multicoloured and dark blue (*Bd*, chapter 3, etc.), or by legendary characters like Frētōn's three sons (above, p. 123), etc. As for the Aməša Spəntas, they continue to be symbols, but of something else: either of an analysis of the

1 *Gott und Mensch in der Verkündigung Zarathustras*, 1937, re-edited in *Der Mensch in Orient und Okzident*, 1960, pp. 94 sq.

material world, through the elements they patronize, or of a "psychological" system such as we see in chapter 28, 4 of the *Bundahišn*, where Ōhrmazd and the six Amahraspands are compared severally to "the soul, intellect, discernment, sentiment, thought, knowledge and explanation".

Moreover, in chapter 26,8, they are grouped around Ōhrmazd, in a manner which bears no relation to the tripartite ideology: the first three (males) are on his right, the last three (females) are on his left, with Sraoša opposite to him¹.

5. Cosmology

a) *Surviving Cosmogonies*

Traces of a demiurgic myth are to be found both in the epithet *varəθrajan*, given to various gods, and corresponding with that of Indra *vytrahan* in India, a dragon-slayer and hence deliverer of the waters which were also cows and the dawns², and in the name of the god *Varəθrayna*.

The *Gāthās* preserve a slight trace of the myth of the earth's separation from the sky in Y 44.3, where Zarathuštra asks who holds (or, held) the earth below and prevents the cloudy vault from falling. This myth may be depicted in Achaemenian seal impressions³, in which one sees the winged disc (symbolizing the sky supported by diverse characters, an iconographic motif imported from Asia-Minor (Hittites, Tell-Halaf, etc.), and ultimately from Egypt. The Hittite reliefs chiefly depict two personages, standing, or with one knee on the ground, their arms raised to head level, who support the winged disc—in the same position as Atlas. Who can they be, situated thus between earth and sky, if not atmospheric deities, personifications of the wind? In Egypt, in fact, the air god upholds the starry night vaulted above him. Persepolis presents some interesting variations: the winged characters are two faced—apparently in allusion to the double nature of Vayu; and twice, they are pictured on horseback, bringing to mind the continuation of the Gāthic passage cited above: "Who gave steeds to the winds and clouds?"⁴

Naturally, the *Gāthās*, in the spirit of Zarathuštra's reform, ascribe all initiative to Ahura Mazdā; and in Yt 13.2, he is said to keep apart the sky and earth, with the help of the *fravašis*.

Yima, according to *Vidēvdāt*, 2.11 sq., extended the earth three times, which recalls Viṣṇu's three steps, and earlier still, in Hesiod and Plutarch, the measured distances, between the different parts of the world.

The names of several primal men, notably Manu, Gayōmart and Yama, can, through comparison, be restored to Indo-Iranian mythology. Manu who prospered in India, survives in Iran only in an attenuated state in the personal name Manušciθra, literally meaning "race of Manu"⁵. Gayōmart, Av. *gaya marətan* "mortal life", has been compared⁶ with the Vedic

1 Cf. JACKSON, *ARW*, 1898, 363 sq. The distinction between male and female Aməša Spəntas is already found in the *Yasna* of seven chapters.

2 Cf. above, p. 126.

3 E. SCHMIDT, *Persepolis*, II, figs. 16-19.

4 J.D.-G., *Festgabe Lommel*, 1960, 210 sq.

5 CHRISTENSEN, *Reste von Manu-Legenden in der iranischen Sagenwelt*, *Festschrift Andreas*, Leipzig 1916, 62 sq.

6 K. HOFFMANN, *Mārtāda und Gayōmart*, *MSS*, 1957, 85 sq.

solar deity, Mārtānda, who plays an analogous role in the myths. Yama, in India, became the god of death, but survives in Iran as the first king, the institutor of bovine sacrifice, etc.¹ He is said to be the son of Vivasvant (Av. Vivanhan), a personage about whom we know nothing, except that his name in Sanskrit means "sun". Yama's solar affinity is confirmed for Iran by the stock epithet *xšaēta*, which he shares only with *hvar*, another of the names given to the sun (from which Pers. *xoršid* "sun"), and with Mithra².

The fact of Yama's solar affinity should be brought into relation with the statement of the *Bundahišn*, that the human species is preserved in the sun, for it furnishes a key to it. The first man, the ancestor of ancestors, was very naturally the chief or king of his descendants. And as king, he had sprung from the sun, according to a concept that is widespread in the world, and attested already in Babylonia and Egypt. But this solar quality, which was his, by virtue of his function, became inseparable from his person. *Gaya marātan*, who took his place as first man in the Zoroastrian tradition, had this same quality which he transmitted to the whole race.

Zarathuštra rejected Yima and only mentions him to condemn him for being "the first to give men portions of ox flesh to eat". But in developing his dualistic myth of choice, which holds so important a place in his doctrine and which involves eschatology as well as cosmogony, he drew on existing traditions. The twins mentioned by him, Y 30.3, are presumed known. In fact, traces of an ancient cosmogony featuring marvellous twins—a cosmogony common to many peoples—persist in Iran, first, in the character of Yima himself, since, as in India, he has a twin sister, and since the name itself must once have meant "twin", unless as Güntert claims, it meant the "double", a monster having both male and female features³. Then the couple who sprang from Gayōmart were twins according to a legend of later attestation⁴, and perhaps a memory of Yima's original "duplicity" survives in the story, already alluded to in the *Avesta*, of how Yima was sawn in two.

We are reminded of Aristophanes' myth in Plato's *Banquet*, in which primordial man, who was spherical in shape, was cut in two "as one cuts an egg." And in fact, Gayōmart, who is the Zoroastrian substitute for Yima, is said by the *Bundahišn*, chapter I, 13, to be as large as he is tall, which presumably means, spherical.

Man's sphericity imitates, so to say, that of the earth, as Ziegler has shown in respect of the Greek myth⁵, and it therefore pertains to the notion of man as a microcosm.

This idea finds illustration in the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 365. Endless Light made a giant body whose various parts became the sky, earth, water, plants, ox, etc., fire and man. Several texts develop the idea that Ōhrmazd, before producing the creation, carried it in his body. The above cited *Rivāyat* is not very clear on this point, and we cannot

1 A. CHRISTENSEN, *Le premier homme et le premier roi dans l'histoire légendaire des Iraniens*, I, 1918, II, 1934.

2 The double meaning, both "royal" and "splendid" of Av. *xšaēta*, Skr. *kṣaitavant*, has been clarified. WIKANDER, *Studia Linguistica*, 1951.

3 ALFÖLDI believes he has found a trace of this in the iconography: *Der iranische Weltreise auf archäologischen Denkmälern, Jahrb. d. Schweiz. Ges. f. Urgesch.*, 1949-50, 17 sq.

4 Cf. below, pp. 146 and 219.

5 Menschen- und Weltenwerden, *Neue Jahrbücher f. d. klass. Altert.*, 16, 1913. 529 sq.—As for the image of the egg in Iranian cosmogony, apart from Plutarch's notice, its role is nothing more than that of an image: according to the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, ZAEHNER, p. 365: "the earth was like an egg with an unhatched bird inside it", and according to the *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, 44, 10, or *Zātspram*, chapter 34, 20, ZAEHNER, p. 349: "the earth was in the sky like the yolk in the middle of an egg". Cf. however, pp. 214 and 217.

tell whether the body is Ōhrmazd's (Bailey), or a body created *ad hoc* as an instrument of creation (Zaehner). But the doctrine according to Jayhani¹ is clearer. Ōrmuzd says: "I created the whole world from myself; from the hairs on my head, the souls of the righteous, etc."

Widengren concluded as to the existence of a pantheistic doctrine², but Bianchi points out that the person of Ōhrmazd remains distinct from the created world³. However, the Iranian authors were anxious to explain the act of creation, not to justify a monistic pantheism in which God would be identical with the world.

The idea of man as a microcosm occurs elsewhere in the form of a myth, according to which a primal giant is put to death, and the different parts of the body give birth to the parts of the universe. With the Scandinavians, Ymir is slain by Odin, Vili and Ve, and from his flesh they make the earth, from his blood, water, from his bones, mountains, from his hair, trees, from his skull, sky, etc. This recalls the cutting up of Puruṣa (Man) in *RV*, X, 90, and the murder of Gayōmart by Ahriman in the *Bundahišn*⁴. Grimm's *Mythologie*, 4th edition, had already drawn attention to the Cochinchinese parallel which Olerud took up in his thesis⁵. It is even more interesting that our knowledge of the myths of intermediate peoples in Central Asia and China, has been filled in, thanks to the studies of Harva and Eberhardt, cited *ibid.*, p. 148, who find with Altaic peoples and the Chinese a very similar myth of cosmogonical dismembering. The Chinese say that when the giant P'an-ku dies, from his breath is born the wind, from his voice the thunder, from his left eye the sun, from his right the moon, from his hair the plants, etc.

The Chinese documents enable us to date back at least to the 11th century B.C. this very archaic myth which as Rönnow has shown⁶, forms part of the ideology of human sacrifice, and as such, was widespread in the world. It was found in ancient Babylonia with the killing of Tīāmat giving birth to the world, and that of Kingir engendering mankind. Most probably it was current with the Indo-Europeans too: for why should they be the exception?

Linguistic evidence seems to confirm this conjecture. Data on this subject has been collected by Bonfante.⁷ The cosmic tree implied in the Gothic word for "world", is in turn compared to a man, whence the word for "root" in Sanskrit (*mūla*), derived from that for mouth (v. Isl. *muli*, cf. German *Maul*). Furthermore, the sun was spoken of as "the eye of the firmament" or "the eye of the world" which is why the ancient word for sun has given the Irish language the word for eye: *suil*.

The notion of man as a microcosm would then be a common inheritance of the Germanic peoples, the Iranians and the Indians. The Greeks, it is true, appear to have forgotten it, till its reappearance in the 5th century, in the *De Hebdomadibus* and elsewhere, but enriched and elaborated by the science of Babylon⁸.

1 Published by MENASCE, *Donum...* Nyberg, 1954, 52; cf. also the colophon of Mf 4, cited by Tavadia, *ZDMG* 98, 321 sq.

2 *Stand und Aufgaben*, 19 sq.

3 *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, 198.

4 Cf. below, p. 218.

5 *L'idée de macrocosmos et de microcosmos dans le Timée*, Upsala 1951, 147.

6 In his studies on the Pravargya (*Monde Oriental*, 1929, 113 sq.), on Zagreus och Dionysos (*Religion och Bibel*, 1943, 14 sq.) and on *Dionysos och Orfeus* (cited by OLERUD, 143, n. 1).

7 Microcosmo e macrocosmo nel mito indoeuropeo, *Die Sprache*, 1959, 1 sq.

8 And not as a direct borrowing from Iran, as claimed by GÖTZE and REITZENSTEIN. Cf. J.D-G., *Harvard Theolog. Rev.*, 1956, 115 sq.

b) *The Ages of the World*¹

The Iranian doctrine of millenniums is comparable to the Indian doctrine of the ages of the world. One detail, at least, is common to both sides: according to the *Bahman Yašt* (IV, 20, Anklesaria), the end of Zarathuštra's millennium will be marked by the degeneration of the human race; and in India, at each *yuga* the race becomes smaller and feebler.

Widengren, who brought to light this parallel², ascribes great antiquity to the entire myth. The world being the body of God, the four cosmic periods are the four ages of the god who is conceived of either as a man or as a tree with four branches. At each period a Saviour intervenes (in India, the successive *avatārs* of Viṣṇu)³. At the end of the four periods, the process begins all over again, the world renewing itself endlessly, just as each new year brings about the renewal of all things.

This theory regarding an Indo-Iranian doctrine of four ages encounters several difficulties. If the ages of the world are the ages of the god, we should expect to find three of them, corresponding to Zurvān's three epithets ("who makes virile", "who makes splendid", and "who makes decrepit"), and not four. To say that the fourth is the sum of the three others, considered as an additional period, is a facile deduction, which was inspired to Widengren by the fact that Zurvān, in spite of his three epithets, is a four-faced god. But while this fact may help to explain the divine quaternity, it can hardly be applied to periods, and we are at a loss to understand how the sum of three or four periods can equal any one of them. Indeed, this is not what the figures tell us, either in Iran or in India: Iran knows equal periods of 3 000 years each; India, periods of 4 800, 3 600, 2 400 and 1 200 years, respectively.

As far as soteriology is concerned, the objections are just as serious. The idea of a saviour for each age, who is a different incarnation of the same god, is exclusive to India. In Iran, the line of saviours starts only with Zarathuštra and continues with his three sons, the third and last being the Saošyant *par excellence*. No doubt, Zarathuštra had his precursors, but to say there was one Saviour with successive reincarnations, is to read too much in the statement of *Yt* 13.145: "From Gaya marətan to the Saošyant". At the most, it represents the rudimentary beginnings of the idea: the Gnostic notion of the "new Adam" was still a long way off.

The heroes of antiquity, from Gayōmart down, are neither saviours, nor the Saviour. They simply transmit something to each other, a deposit or mission. According to the *Dēnkart* (VII, 1.4-5), the Good Religion was given to Gayōmart, from whom it passed to Mašya and Mašyāne (the first couple) and to their descendants, Hōšang the Pēšdāt, Taxmōrup, Yim whose reign was the golden age, and to other kings of the Pēšdāt dynasty "created first", then to those of the Kay (Kavi) dynasty, beginning with Kay Kaβāt. These heroes did not transmit solely the Word (*vaxš*), but also a *xvarr*, a charisma, Fortune or Dignity, which was not a privilege of royalty since Mašya and Mašyāne had theirs, as Zarathuštra had his. The *Bd* 14, 2 states that when Mašya and Mašyāne were still merged in a single, undifferentiated rhubarb stem, their *xvarr* hovered over them, this being the *xvarr* of mankind. It was hence in a way

1 See in *ERE*, the articles Ages of the world (Indian by JACOBI and Iranian by SÖDERBLOM).

2 *Religionens Värld* ³, 353, then *Stand u. Aufg.*, 42.

3 ABEGG, *Der Messiasglaube in Indien und Iran*, Berlin 1928, 44.

their "human form", a cause which would give them the human appearance they still lacked. A few lines later the gloss on *xvarr* is given as *xvēškārīh* "own work", and then as *ruvān* "soul" (on *xvarənah*, see now D-G., *AION*, 1962).

Finally, was the notion of a periodical renewal of the world, which India associates with transmigration and which is found in Greece, but not in Iran, known to the Indo-Iranians? Was it inspired by the annual renewal of nature, or by astronomical observations? Was it known to Zarathuštra? For him, we know, the world was to be renewed once and for all, in the victory of Ahura Mazdā.

6. The Avesta in perspective

After Zarathuštra's death, a symbiosis took place between the old religion and the religion preached by him¹. The entire *Avesta*, from the *Yasna of seven chapters* onwards, bears witness to such an adaptation.

Where did it take place? Also in East Iran, for the *Yašts* were composed there, but with a gradual spread towards the South (the region of the Hilmand river and of lake Hamūn)².

Nonetheless, the modified religion finally reached West Iran. *Yasna* 19 calls the town of Raga, "the Zoroastrian", which enables us to situate there this part of the Avesta. But, as shown by Gershevitch,³ this Raga can hardly be the one situated near Tehran. Some moderns consider the *Vidēvdāt* to be the work of the Magi of Media,⁴ because of the rigid dualism it displays, which accords with what Herodotus tells us about the usages and beliefs of this "Median tribe". But the first chapter, at any rate, cannot be attributed to them, since the list of Mazdean provinces mentions no place further west than Raga. It is hardly conceivable that the Magi would have breathed no word of Ecbatana. The document must have been composed well to the East since its geographical horizon does not reach as far as the capital of the Median empire (even if this empire was no more than a memory at this time).

Yt 13 catalogues the heroes and heroines of Zoroastrianism, but none of them is known to history. Legend makes special mention of Saēna, as the first to open a school for priests. It situates him in the district of Hamūn (Sistān), about fifty years after the death of the prophet⁵.

*The Yasna of seven chapters*⁶—This part of the Avesta represents the first stage in the adaptation of Zoroastrianism to the traditional religion. It makes no mention of Zarathuštra, but his message comes through all the same. The work emanates from priestly milieu, since the authors request Ahura Mazdā (40.3) that warriors and peasants be subordinated to them. Priests are designated by the terms *staotar* and *mąθran*. Great emphasis is laid on the use of the right formula or name (36.3).

1 It is not impossible, as Nyberg would have it, that Zarathuštra himself initiated the synthesis.—For MOLÉ (*Le problème zoroastrien*...), there is no problem since the Gāthic doctrine always co-existed with that of the rulers and the common people, like three concentric circles.

2 This is admitted even by Gershevitch, for whom the syncretistic movement was initiated by Darius.

3 Zoroaster's own contribution, *JNES*, 1964, 36.

4 Notably MOULTON, *Early Zoroastrianism*, chaps. VI and VII.

5 Cf. O.G. von WESENDONK, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Yasna haptanhaiti*, Bonn 1931, 1.

6 WESENDONK, work cited in preceding note, is fundamental. Excellent also, ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight*... 1961, 62 sq.

The predominance given to the fire by the prophet in his cult and theology is retained and enhanced. It is addressed as "the fire of Ahura Mazdā", and "the joy of Ahura Mazdā". It is not only proclaimed the equal of Aša, it is identified with the Bounteous Spirit (36.1,3).

Great dignity is attached to the Light, both as terrestrial light and the sun in the sky: together they form "the very beautiful body of Ahura Mazdā" (36.6). Porphyry refers to this when he records, *Vie de Pythagore*, 41, that the body of Horomazes is like the light, while his body corresponds to truth. And in eastern Iran, the name of Ōhrmazd sometimes designated the sun.¹

In the *seven chapters* Ahura Mazdā is represented as having two series of wives, one spiritual, the other material (these being the waters). More exactly, the waters are the wives of Ahura (not of Mazdā)².

The first series comprises, Ārmaiti, Aši, together with Zeal, Diligence, Good Counsel, Good Repute, etc. The second list names only the waters, adorned by laudatory or descriptive epithets. If we include Ārmaiti as the Earth in this list, we find, recalling that Ahura Mazdā was the god of the sky, clothed in stars according to *Yt* 13.3, a relic of an archaic hierogamy, the marriage of the sky and earth³.

As he is both the father and husband of Ārmaiti, he sets the example of consanguineous marriage.

What is more, he takes the place of his Bounteous Spirit: he himself created all things (37.1). Thus tended to be lost Zarathuštra's solution to the problem of Evil—by making Ahura Mazdā the father of the twin Spirits⁴. The delicate system of relationships uniting him to the Entities was spoilt. Henceforth, known as Aməša Spəntas "Beneficent Immortals," and divided into male and female, they tend to be mere "divinities" like the others⁵.

The *Gāthās* depict Ahura Mazdā as the father of most of the Aməša Spəntas. The Later *Avesta* assigns still more children to him. Fire in the *seven chapters*, is "Ahura Mazdā's" and in the rest of the *Avesta*, more explicitly, he is "the son of Ahura Mazdā". According to *Yt* 17.16, Ahura Mazdā is the father of Aši, Sraoša, Rašnu and Miθra (we see how the group was formed: Aši calls Sraoša, who, in turn, brings Rašnu, the other acolyte of Miθra, and finally Miθra himself), as he is of the Mazdean religion.

Polytheism, which was henceforth accommodated into the Zoroastrian religion, finds expression in a newly created word to denote "god", for God was no longer the only god. The noun *daēva* being out of question, as well as *baga* (because of its special link with Mithra), recourse was had to the convenient and uncompromising *yazata*, literally meaning "worthy of worship".

Zaehner has shown⁶ how Mithra, whom Zarathuštra had ignored, was integrated into Zoroastrianism, notably in *Yašt* 10.

1 Cf. below, p. 203.

2 ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight*..., 1961, 65.

3 Cf. CUMONT, *Textes et Monuments*, I, 155; BIDEZ-CUMONT, *Mages hellénisés*, I, 94.

4 Cf. above, pp. 105, 140.

5 However the memory of their intimate union with the Lord is not altogether lost: A text refers to them as the "body of A.M.": but according to the same text, the soul of the Lord is the sacred formula.

6 In an excellent chapter of his *Dawn and Twilight*..., 1961, 97 sq.

The notion of *fravaši*, which was ignored in the *Gāthās*, now makes its appearance, but adapted to the Zoroastrian dualism. The first time the term is mentioned (37.3), it is accompanied by a complement which defines it by adding the moral connotation it previously lacked: *ašaonqm, fravašiš narmcā nāirinmcā* "(we adore) the *fravašis* of righteous men and women". Once assimilated to Zoroastrianism, the term kept its moral significance which there was no need to specify again, for it was understood, that only the souls of the righteous were worthy of veneration. But the sense of the term was extended in two other directions. *Yt* 13, which is consecrated to the *fravašis*, speaks of them as the souls of men yet to be born, meaning they were pre-existent. The term also came to designate a kind of celestial double not only of each mortal creature, but of the divinities as well, and even Ahura Mazdā had his *fravaši*.

Gāthic prayers—The *Ahuvar* or *Ahunavairyā* prayer, which begins with the words *Yaθā ahū vairyō*, seemingly still reflects Zarathuštra's pure doctrine. But its meaning is uncertain¹.

The *Airyēmā išyō* prayer, on the contrary, represents a stage of syncretism, since it features the god Airyaman whom Zarathuštra ignored: "May the desirable Airyaman come to the aid of Zarathuštra's men and women disciples, through Good Mind, through which conscience will obtain the precious reward. I ask for the desirable reward of Aša, which the Wise Lord remembers".

The other two prayers, although literally intelligible, are difficult "to place."

Yasna 42—In this chapter, forming an appendix to the seven preceding ones, there are three innovations. Priests journeying afar on missions are called *āθravan*. *Haoma* is the centre of a cult: he is said to prolong life and avert death. The prophet too is worshipped. He is mentioned in the same breath with the Wise Lord: "We adore Ahura Mazdā and Zarathuštra".

The Fravarāne (*Y* 12)—The Zoroastrian Profession of Faith was perhaps a sort of *credo* employed by missionaries. It expresses dualism which is systematic but still impregnated with the doctrine of the *Gāthās*, although not written in the Gāthic dialect. Ahura Mazdā and the Aməša Spəntas alone are worshipped, and of the latter only Aša and Ārmaiti are mentioned. Zarathuštra occupies the same position as in *Yasna* 42.

Yašt 13—Veneration for the prophet grows, and with it his legend: at his birth the waters and plants rejoiced, and all beings created by the Bounteous Spirit felicitated each other. He was not only the first priest, he was also the first warrior and husbandman. He was the institutor, in his person, of the three social orders. And, just as he played the role of founder, so will he participate in the eschatology, in the person of his sons, miraculously born of his semen which 99 999 *fravašis* protect in lake Kāsaoya.

The archaic concept of the *fravašis* finds reflexes in this *Yašt*, notably, the demiurgic myth in which they liberate the waters, cause the plants to grow and the stars to move.

Yašt 19—The doctrine of the twin Spirits combines with ancient heroic themes. The twin Spirits fight dramatically for possession of the *Xvarənah*.

1 See finally GERSHEVITCH, *BSOAS*, 1958, 156, n.2, and HINZ, *IJJ*, 1960, 154 sq., who do not accept the translation proposed, *IJJ*, 1958, 66 sq.

Eschatology develops, to include the belief in resurrection, and is also enriched by legendary motifs. Hence the Saošyant Astvat-ərətā "Justice Incarnate", despite his abstract name, is armed with the mace of mythical heroes, and, emerging from lake Kāsaoya, he overcomes the Druj and puts to flight Aēšma "Fury", thus prelude the general battle in which the demons will be finally defeated.

Vidēvdāt—Instead of the opposition between the twin Spirits, Ahura Mazdā is directly the antagonist of Aṇra Mainyu (cf. *infra*, 209).

The whole book is marked by the most stringent dualism. Its very title means "law against the demons". It is concerned with preserving the purity of Ahura Mazdā's creation, and in the case of this purity being befouled, with re-establishing it by rites and expiations. All animals are divided into "good" animals which it is forbidden to kill, and "noxious" ones which it is one's duty to kill. The universal cleavage extends to the vocabulary too: there are alternative words for "walk", "eat", "head", "mouth", etc., depending on whether the creature belongs to the good or evil creation¹.

Further Avestan passages worth citing are Fragment 4, Westergaard² and *Vidēvdāt*, 18.51.

7. Iran and the Philosophers, from Heraclitus to Plato³

When a point of similarity between Iran and Greece arises, we hesitate between two possible explanations—a common heritage or historical borrowing. Greece, like Iran, retained something of the archaic socio-religious structure of the Indo-Europeans. The three classes described by Plato in his *République*—philosopher kings, warriors, and producers of wealth—correspond in India, not only to the three castes, but also to the three principles who rule over souls as they do over societies, viz. *dharma* "moral law", *kāma* "passion", and *artha* "economic interest"⁴. The tripartite ideology also finds expression in the legend of the Judgment of Paris: the three goddesses symbolize, respectively, sovereignty, victory, and the power of desire⁵.

1 Underlying this difference, there is probably as GRAY thinks, *Foundations*, 10, and *Journ. Roy. Asiat. Soc.*, 1927, 427, an ancient dialectical variation, utilized towards this new end.

2 G.C.O. HAAS, An Avestan fragment on the Resurrection, in *Spiegel Memorial Volume*, 1908, 181.

3 Opinion varies greatly as to the importance of Iran in Greek thought. EISLER, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, Munich 1910, exalts the Iranian influence, placing it at the very origin of Greek philosophy and of Orphism; REITZENSTEIN who represents Plato as greatly indebted to Zoroaster, took over Eisler's views notably in his lecture. *Altgriechische Theologie und ihre Quellen*, 1924, and extended them, with the collaboration of H. SCHAEFER, an Iranian, with whom he published *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, Leipzig 1926. J. BIDEZ was a more moderate exponent of the same tendency. His attention had been drawn by W. JAEGER, *Aristoteles*, 1923, to the historically attested contacts between the Magi and the Academy. In his book *Eos, ou Platon et l'Orient*, Brussels 1945, he has shown what the Greek thinkers might have owed to Iranian doctrines.

Other scholars have set about refuting these theories, and it is remarkable that two of them should have published independently, without knowing each other due to troubled times, two books with identical negative conclusion, viz. J. KERSCHENSTEINER, *Platon und der Orient*, Stuttgart 1945; and W. KOSTER, *Le mythe de Platon, de Zaratustra et des Chaldéens*, Leyde 1951.

Many Hellenists simply prefer to ignore the question. Finally, there are those who without deciding the question historically, yet recognize its interest from a comparative (the modern term is 'phenomenological') point of view, for instance, F.M. CORNFORD, *From Religion to Philosophy*, 176.

4 DUMÉZIL, *L'idéologie tripartite*, 24.

5 *ibid.*, 28.

The resemblance between the story of the Ouranids and the lineage of Yim i šēt-Aždahāk-Frētōn, which is dealt with below¹, must be discarded for reasons we shall state later.

It is difficult to determine how far the myth of Atlas, and the dicephaly of the Wind were inherited and how far they were borrowed².

According to Götze, followed by Reitzenstein, Greece borrowed the idea of the microcosm from Iran. As we saw above³, this idea was probably of Indo-European antiquity, and the particular form in which it appeared in Greece, from about the 5th century B.C.—more than 1 000 years before the *Bundahišn*—was Graeco-Babylonian. What is more, the notion of a primal giant who was spherical in shape, a smaller replica of the cosmic egg, is found, as Ziegler saw, not only with the Greeks, but in Pahlavi works as well, as we shall see below⁴. Was it an heritage or a borrowing, and a borrowing in which direction? Our Greek sources are too full of lacunae, and our Iranian sources are too late for us to be able to answer readily.

The Greeks had many reasons for taking an interest in Iran, as we have outlined above⁵. During the Achaemenian period, and at first through Ionia, there were probably contacts between the Iranian religion and the nascent philosophy.

A borrowing from Iran had perhaps already been effected in Milet's school, for Anaximander taught that the rings of luminaries followed each other, starting from the Earth, in this order: *stars, moon, sun*. (And after him, in spite of Anaximenes, who declared the stars to be further away, Parmenides, Empedocles, Leucippus and Metrodorus of Chios taught that the sun marked the limit of the world). Now, according to the *Avesta*⁶, the soul advances in three stages, the *stars, the moon and sun*, to reach the Endless Light.

We might think to recognize in Heraclitus' Logos and Fire, the Indo-Iranian connection of Fire with *Ṛta-Aša*. But actually, the principal role had already been given to the Fire by Hippasos of Metaponte; and as for the Logos, with Heraclitus it did not yet have the significance of a cosmic principle, which the Stoics were to give it later, and which made it comparable to *Aša*⁷. Luigia Stella⁸ points out other "Iranian" traits with Heraclitus, but these are less convincing, viz. his disdain of anthropomorphic images and of the blood sacrifice, his contempt for corpses as objects worthy of being thrown on the rubbish heap. But what is there in common between the Magian practice of exposing the dead and Heraclitus' hostility to all funerary ritual? Heraclitus is the adversary of all religious practices; he does meet the Iranian attitude on two points: the absence of all divine images and the proscription of blood sacrifice.

1 Cf. below, p. 225

2 Cf. above, p. 143.

3 Cf. above, pp. 145. sq.

4 Cf. below, pp. 212 sq.

5 Cf. above, pp. 14 sq.

6 As EISLER was the first to notice, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, I, 90.—According to CUMONT, *Lux Perpetua*, 1949, 143, this doctrine is also found in the Upanisads. D-G., *Il fuoco nell' Iran e in Grecia*, East and West (Rome), 1962, *Il Logos nell' Iran e in Grecia*, Filosofia (Torino) 1962, *Heraclitus and Iran*, History of Religions, 1963, 34 sq., and *D'Anaximandre à Empédocle: contacts gréco-iraniens*, La Persia e il mondo greco-romano, Rome 1966, 423 sq.

7 H. SURIG, *De betekenis van Logos bij Herakleitos*, Nijmegen 1951. Cf., all the same, D-G., art. cited in previous note.

8 *Eraclito, Efeso e l'Oriente*, *Rendiconti Accad. Lincei* 1927, 517 sq. Aug. GLADISCH, *Herakleitos und Zoroaster*, 1859, was refuted by ZELLER, cf. HOPFNER, *Orient u. griech. Philosophie*, 83.

But the latter feature is not peculiar to Iran (nor common to the whole of Iran), while another feature with him is at variance with Zarathuštra : he is equally against the Fire cult, which Zarathuštra extols.

Empedocles retains something of the Ionian naturalism, but as the heir also of the Orphic pietism of Greater Greece, his dualism is much more rigid than Heraclitus' doctrine. He safeguards the permanence of the Parmenidian Being by positing irreducibly eternal elements (as against the One of the Ionians, the "Exchange" of Anaximander or the "Harmony" of Heraclitus). These elements are gods.

To the four elements he adds, so as both to combine and separate them, two principles, Neikos and Philia, of the same rank as they, and taken from Parmenides' world of appearances (hence ultimately from Hesiod). He does not believe, like Heraclitus, that Neikos (Hate) produced Philia (Love) : for him they are two rival powers.

These two powers reign alternatively in parts—plants, animals and men—and in whole, according to necessity which fixes the moment when each 'ascendant' declines : the phase in which love grows to the point of perfection (where one finds the Perfect, in the shape of the sphere of Parmenides), is followed by the irruption of hate, and so on.

We can see in this doctrine a reflex of the Iranian system in which Ahura Mazdā and Aγra Mainyu reign alternatively¹. We may note, in particular, the similarity between the irruption of hate into the perfect sphere, and that of Aγra Mainyu and his demons into the Egg in which Ahura Mazdā had enveloped the gods, according to Plutarch's notice. Bidez and Cumont enumerate a few other Iranian traces with the philosopher of Agrigent, and conclude that: "It was no doubt due to his acquaintance with Pythagorean milieus that he could have some notion of the beliefs of the Mazdean clergy." Although Empedocles' dualism contains an essential trait, the Eternal Return, which is absent from the Iranian doctrine, the parallelism is nonetheless striking. It continues in the cult of the elements, and perhaps in that "sort of apotheosis by the ordeal of fire" which Empedocles seems to have sought when he threw himself into the Etna.

As for Plato, both his dialectic and his myths seem to show particular influences of Iran².

1 BIDEZ-CUMONT, *Les mages hellénisés*, I, 239.

2 Cf. J.D-G., *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1953, 99 sq.

CHAPTER IV

FROM ALEXANDER TO MOHAMMED

A. THE PARTHIAN PERIOD

It is impossible to write a history of the Iranian religion during the half millennium from Alexander's conquest to the advent of the Sasanians. We can only try to group together the information drawn from diverse sources¹.

There is no reference to the subject in traditional Mazdean works. The *Dēnkart* (Madan, 412) merely states that Valaxš son of Valaxš (a King Vologeses, but which one ?) ordered the *Avesta* and *Zand*, stolen by Alexander, to be assembled. What is more, the statement is dubious².

It is certain, on the other hand, that the Iranian religion at this epoch, merged with foreign imports, either Greek or Semitic, but the actual importance of these is difficult to estimate.

1. THE ARSACIDS

The Arsacids³, while ousting the Seleucids during the course of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 2nd, gradually became hellenized. They took the title of Philhellenes, adopted Greek writing and art, and had Greek gods engraved on their coins. Did they believe themselves to be gods? This is attested for three of them⁴: a beardless king, perhaps Phriapitius, who calls himself *theos* on his coin; Artaban II who took the title of *theopatōr*; and Phraatēs IV, to whom the Greeks gave unofficially the title of all-powerful god.

Ammianus Marcellinus (23, 6.4-6), noting that the Sasanians called themselves brothers of the sun and moon, connects this with the cult of the deified Arsak, but does not say if the cult was practised during his lifetime, which seems unlikely. Probably the Arsacidian deification of the living king was a borrowing from the Greek dynasts, following Alexander. With them, the custom is first attested for Antimachus (son of Euthydemus), whose coins call him a god, then for several Seleucids⁵, then for Antiochus IV, who (in 175) assumed the radiate crown of the god Hēlios⁶ and (in 169) the title Épiphānus, believing himself to be an incarnation of Zeus.

1 UNVALA, *Observations on the religion of the Parthians*, Bombay 1925. To be brought up to date by means of the works cited below, especially WIDENGREN, *Die Religionen Irans*, 1965, 174 sq.; D-G., in *Cambridge History of Iran*, III.

2 Cf. pp. 29 sq.: "The Recording of the Avesta in Written Form".

3 The Arsacids (from the name of their ancestor, Arsak) originally came from Parthia. This region has seen much archaeological activity during the last twelve years, especially Nisa. The finds made should throw light not only on the origin of the Parthians, but on their entire history as well. Good bibliographical references are found in SZNYCER, *Ostraca d'époque parthe trouvés à Nisa* (U.S.S.R.), *Semitica*, 5, 65 sq. - Then see, DIAKONOV-LIVŠIC, *Dokumenty iz Nisy*, Moscow 1960, and *Peredneasiatskii Sbornik*, II, 1966, 134 sq.

4 TARN, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1950, 92.

5 E. BIKERMAN, *Institutions des Séleucides*, 1938, 243 sq.

6 Before him, Alexarque d'Ouranopolis had called himself the sun and had put the sun on his coins. TARN, 92 and 210.

There are different views held on the origin of this Seleucid usage, which preluded the cult of the Roman emperors. In my opinion it goes back to the example of Alexander; this is specially clear in the case of Antiochus, who openly considered himself to be a second Alexander and the restorer of his Empire.

As for Alexander, even if he did not proclaim himself a god, the oasis of Ammon episode was in itself sufficient to accredit the legend of his divinity.

Phraatès (181-174)¹ had himself depicted on his coinage with a club on his shoulder, that is to say, as Héraklès².

Under Mithridates I (171-138), the real founder of the Arsacid empire, we see Zeus Aetophoros, Héraklès, Nike and Demeter make their appearance for the first time. The first two, and the Dioscuri, figure also on the coinage of Greek cities subjected to Mithridates. The coin-type of Zeus Aetophoros goes back to Alexander, while Héraklès was the gentile hero of the Seleucids³. We find him likewise invoked in a Greek inscription on Mt. Kerefto, in Kurdistan⁴.

Phraatès II (138-127) appears with the head-dress of the Dioscuri (as did before him Seleucus, Eucratides and others), Nikè and Déionysos; Antiochus VII (129) with that of Pallas Nikephoros; Phraatès III (70-57) with that of Nikè and Pégasus; or with the mace; he also has himself portrayed holding the eagle surmounted by a Poliad Tychè.

Phraatès IV (37-2) introduced Apollo in his character of sun-god, as well as Janus, Aequitas, a bacchic genius, and perhaps Harpocrates⁵; he was imitated by Gotarzès (40-51 A.D.) and Vardanès (41-45).

Two inscriptions of the Parthian M. Ulpius Chresimus (circa 118) venerate the Asiatic god, Men, together with Artémis, the Sun, Moon and Zeus Dolichènus⁶.

However, from the middle of the first century A.D., a reaction against hellenism took shape. Iranian gods started to reappear; perhaps they had never completely vanished under their Greek disguise. An exceptional circumstance was needed to prove this, such as the monument of Antiochus of Commagène. The names of Arsacid kings point in the same direction, for Mithridates, Tiridates, and Artabanus would hardly have taken these names had they not venerated Mithra, Tir (Mercury), and Arta⁷.

1 For the dates, I follow NEWELL, *The Coinage of the Parthians*, *Survey of Persian Art*, I, 475 sq. MORGAN, *Numismatique de la Perse antique*, 1927-1933, is a useful repertoire. On general historical facts, see JUSTI, *Geschichte Irans*, *Grundr. der iran. Phil.*, II, 395 sq. One can consult also the *Cambridge Ancient History*, IX, X, and XI and DEBEVOISE, *A political History of Parthia*. - B. Ph. LOZINSKI, *The original homeland of the Parthians*, 1959, is upto date in its bibliography, but false both in its method and results. - A great corpus of Parthian coinage is to be published by A. SIMONETTA, of Florence, and a comprehensive study is expected from NASTER of Louvain.

2 UNVALA, 10.

3 UNVALA, 7. MORGAN, pl. I to III.

4 WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien*, Lund 1946, 171, and n.l.

5 UNVALA, 8. Other attestations in BELLINGER, *Final Report... Dura Europos VI: Coins*, 1949.

6 P. 18 and 19.

7 The personage most often met with on the reverse of all Arsacid coins (from Mithridates I onwards) is the beardless archer seated on the *omphalos*, recalling the Apollo on Seleucid coins, although he is clad in Iranian dress. Some would recognize Mithra - this was HOWARTH's view, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1906, 221 sq. The presence of the legend of Arsakès, eponym of the dynasty and the title assumed by each ruler, together with the fact that sometimes he is identical in appearance with the sovereign on the obverse, prompts one to interpret this personage as Arsakès himself. Such is the belief, notably of BELLINGER, *Final Reports on Dura Europos*, VI: *Coins*, 1949, *passim*.

We know from Tacitus¹, that Mithra was worshipped throughout the Parthian empire, and from Dio Cassius, that Tiridates, king of Armenia, flattered Nero by saying he would worship him like Mithra.

It is on a coin of Vologeses I (51-58) that the Pahlavi script makes its first appearance²; the Greek legend, on the other hand, has become almost illegible. We can therefore conveniently date from his reign, the Iranian reaction against hellenism. This corroborates the *Dēnkart*'s statement cited above³.

The *ostraca* of Nisa have been placed at the beginning of the 1st century B. C. They use the Zoroastrian names of months and days⁴. The Avroman parchment which probably dates from 53 A.D.⁵, mentions Haurvatāt. Vohu Manah appears to figure in a Pahlavi inscription belonging to the Arsacid period⁶.

One more Iranian trait with the last Arsacids is the fire-cult, although the fire-altar appears only once on their coins; on a coin of Vologeses IV, last but one in the dynasty⁷.

The priests of the Arsacids were the Magi.

The Parthians buried or burnt their dead⁸. But these are customs they could just as well have inherited, indirectly, from the Achaemenians, or from the Greeks.

No Mazdean literature clearly assignable to the Arsacid epoch has been preserved⁹.

It was with Parthian help that the Maccabees were able to resist the Idumean Herodus, Pompey's protégé; and the Jews never gave up hope of seeing a new Cyrus arise from among the Parthians, even after the debacle of 70, to which Vologeses contributed by his neutrality¹⁰.

As for territories beyond the suzerainty of the Arsacids, on the west as on the east of their empire, we find the same Iranian survival under the same hellenic intrusion.

2. HATRA ASSUR, DURA

Three sites in Mesopotamia, excavated during this century, Hatra, Assur and Dura, give us an insight into the religious situation as it obtained in these cosmopolitan towns on the western borders of the Arsacid empire.

The predominant religion in these heterogeneous towns, was the astral religion of the Semite population, fused with Greek and Iranian imports¹¹.

1 *Ann.*, 12.13; DIO CASSIUS, 63.5; cited by UNVALA, p. 17.

2 HENNING, *Mitteliranisch (Handbuch der Orientalistik)* Leiden 1958, 40.

3 But we do not know which of the Vologeses the *Dēnkart* had in mind.

4 DIAKONOV-LIVŠIC, *Peredneas. Sborn.* II, 134 sq.

5 HENNING, 29.

6 P. JENSEN, *SBAW*, 1919, 1048; but not on a coin, DROUIN, *Rev. Numism.*, 1889, 249 sq., 382 sq., WIKANDER, *Vayu*, 36.

7 UNVALA, 23.

8 UNVALA, 29 sq. According to JUSTINUS, 41.3, 5-6, they had borrowed their funerary customs from the Medes.

9 On the origins of the *Hymn of the Pearl*, see p. 185.

10 UNVALA, 38 sq. WIDENGREN, *Quelques rapports entre Juifs et Iraniens à l'époque des Parthes, Vetus Testamentum*, Supplément IV, 1957, 194 sq.

11 The Arsacid Court of Justice at Babylon, during the time of Septimius Severus, is described by PHILOSTRATES, *Vita Apollon*, I, 25, as a vaulted chamber which had the astral gods painted on the vault. Cited after L'ORANGE, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship*, Oslo 1953, p. 35.

a) *Hatra*

There is in the great sanctuary of Hatra¹, an adventitious construction, square in shape, and with all the appearance of a fire-temple. An interior room opens, by a single door, into a passage running around it. Access to the passage is from the back, or from the same side as the aforementioned door, but not in the same axis, as if to prevent a visitor, entering the passage, from seeing into the room. We can surmise, therefore, that the latter contained the sacred fire. This interpretation is confirmed by the presence of a Helios-Mithra relief on the lintel of the temple door.

The architectural origin of the Hatra square room has often been discussed, ever since F. Oelmann² compared it both with the Susa temple³ and with Nabatean shrines, namely the temple of Ba'al Šamīn in the Hauran, built in 33-32 B. C., that of Dūšarā next to it and those of Sur and Saḥr in the Lejjā (1st century B. C.—1st cent. A. D.), the last one almost identical with the Susa structure. It must be maintained with Schippmann⁴, and contrary to the opinion of some other scholars⁵, that the Saḥr temple derived in a straight line from the Susa temple, which in turn had developed out of Persepolis buildings, namely the central hall and the Xerxes entrance. Bull *protomes* in the Ba'al Šamīn temple make the argument irrefutable. The other Nabatean temples and the Hatra square room are then further offshoots from the same archetype.

In the town, the centre of which is occupied by the great temple, two other shrines have been brought to light⁶. A bust of the Sun in bas-relief has been found in the first temple, and another of the Moon (Séléné or Nanai)⁷ in the second. The latter is again depicted in this shrine, on another relief, where she stands besides two feminine characters.

Other symbols of the astral religion have been discovered, especially in this same first shrine. A statuette represents the goddess Samai "Sky", mentioned by Lucien in his *De Læa Syria*, 33. It was possible to make a play on the Semitic word for "sky" and the Greek word *σημετον* "standard or *signum*". Hence standards made up of five or six "planetary" discs doubly deserved the name *σημετα*; both as standards and as symbols of the sky.

Three of these standards are depicted at Hatra. First, (in the first shrine) an eagle, which is a solar bird, faces a *sēmēion* composed of a crescent, a solar disc, a full disc and three rings.

Then, an identical standard is flanked by Orion and his dog Sirius⁸.

1 That it was a sanctuary and not a palace as formerly surmised has been shown by LENZEN, *Sumer*, 1955, 95; cf. D. SCHLUMBERGER, *Der hellen. Orient*, 1969, 60.

2 *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1921, col. 279 sq.

3 Above, p. 67.

4 K. SCHIPPMANN, *Iranische Feuerheiligtümer*, p. 484.

5 H. SCHAEFER, *JAOS*, 1942, 61 sq., tried to derive the Susa temple from ancient Syrian structures of the hilani type. F. WACHTSMUTH, *Archiv f. Orientforschung*, 1952, sought a Babylonian origin. This is still the position of G. GULLINI, *Architettura Iranica*, 1964, 263 sq., and of M. aš-SAMS, *Hatra* (in Arabic), 1968.

6 By excavations commenced in 1951. All that follows is after INGHOLT, *Parthian Sculptures from Hatra, Memoirs Connecticut Academy*, 1954.

7 On Nanai, see HOFFMANN, *Auszüge persischer Märtyrer*, 1880, 130 sq. Nanai was the Semitic counterpart of Anāhitā, just as Artēmis was her Greek equivalent. Cf. WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester...*, 74.

8 The relief is preserved in the Istanbul Museum.

Finally, a third standard with an additional disc, figures in a more complex relief on the first shrine. Cerbèrus is held on a leash by Hadès standing in the middle of the scene, depicted in front view, with the standard planted on his right. The axe he carries (besides a long sword) recalls that of Nergal. On the other hand, his Iranian dress, and even more so, two snakes and two scorpions, seemingly assimilate him to Ahriman. In the background, on the top right, is the statue of a seated Atargatis, holding a similar kind of standard. (A statuette of Atargatis from Hatra is in the Istanbul Museum.)

The same Hadès-Nergal-Ahriman, seems to be depicted once again in the first shrine: On the relief of an altar dedicated to a deceased, named KNZYW, and represented by a statuette, the hairy, bearded deity is dressed in the Parthian manner and brandishes an axe and two snakes.

At the centre or pinnacle of this predominantly astral religion, was the god whom the inscriptions invoke as MRN "Our Lord". He was evidently superior to Baal Shamin "Master of the skies", who is named several times in company with him. He formed a triad with Martan "Our Lady" and Bar Marayn "Son of the two Lords (that is to say, of the Lord and Lady)". Also named with him are the goddesses Atargatis and Allāt, and the lunar god, Šahrū¹.

b) *Assur*

On Assur, see O. Reuther, Parthian religious buildings, *Survey*, I, 435.

c) *Dura-Europos*

The same essentially Semitic and astral religion prevailed at Dura-Europos: there is an altar there as Ingholt² has shown, depicting a *vexillum* and invoking, by the same sort of pun explained above, the goddess CHMIA, or Semaia.

Dura, originally a Seleucid fortress, then a caravan-town under the Parthians, finally became a bastion of the Roman files on the Euphrates. It has yielded a great variety of religious documents from which, at first sight, the Mazdean religion is conspicuously absent³.

Under the Seleucids, Dura seems to have worshipped Greek gods exclusively: those of the reigning dynasty, Zeus Olympios, Apollo and Artémis. These gods survived under the succeeding reigns, but it was hardly more than an official and nominal survival. Actually the religion, like the majority of the people, was Semitic. Dura worshipped deities from Babylonia (Bel, Šamas), from Babylonia or Elam (Nanaia), Mesopotamia (Aphlad, Artemis, Azzanath-cona), North Syria and Anatolia (Hadad, Atargatis), Phoenicia (Adonis), Palmyra (Ba'al shamin, Malaxbel, Jahribol, Aglibol) and Arabia (Arsu).

These deities and their cults were not merely juxtaposed. Certain equivalences had developed between them and they tended to fall into three types: a sun-god, a sky-god and a great goddess. The trend towards unification was to go further and to culminate in the predominance of the solar god, in a kind of monotheism, which was seized upon, first by Greek philosophers, then by Roman emperors, and which no doubt spread towards the east as well⁴.

1 INGHOLT, *Parthian Sculptures*, 28 and 47.

2 INGHOLT, *Parthian Sculptures*, 48.

3 Pending the full publication of the *Final Reports* on the archaeological mission of Yale University (published: *Coins*, 1949, *Synagogue*, 1956), we have the provisional *Reports*, notably the *Preliminary Report on the VII and VIII Seasons*, 1939 (containing the *Mithreum*). CUMONT's work, *Les fouilles de Dura-Europos*, 1926, is superseded by that of ROSTOVITZ, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, 1938 (with a general survey, 58 to 68, of the religious data).

4 Cf. *infra*, p. 168.

The Greeks in Dura did not find it difficult to worship, under their Greek names, these great Semitic divinities who already had several names: Apollo, Zeus, Artémis, were but one more appellation. Indeed, no deity was worshipped according to Greek rites, or in a Greek-style temple.

The Parthians apparently adapted themselves just as easily to this situation. Not a single fire-temple has been found, nor has the name of Ōhrmazd or of any other Iranian deity, but this does not mean they were forgotten or that certain equivalences had not been recognized. This was particularly easy in the case of the sun god, for the conception of this god, on a chariot drawn by horses, answered to the description of Mithra in the *Yas̄ts*¹.

The sky-god was presumably just as easily identified with Ōhrmazd, under his Semitic appellations, *Bel*, *Ba'al shamin*, *Gad*, etc.², or his Greek ones, *Zeus megistos*, *olympios* or *kyrios*; similarly, the Syrian Great Goddess, already confused with Artémis, could well have been with Anāhitā as well.

However, we should not draw too clear cut a picture of these equivalences. In fact, the god with the chariot does not bear the Greek name of *Apollo*, as might be expected, but of *Zeus theos*. Presumably, the solar-god, who was in a fair way to become the only god, already surpassed the sky-god. But then, what did the Iranians call him, Mithra or Ōhrmazd?

Indeed, even the division into three main types did not include all the gods venerated at Dura. For instance, Héraklès, frequently met with in this town, appears to lie outside this framework, and was perhaps merely there to represent the Iranian Hercules, *Vərəθrayna*.

Under the Romans, three new religions gained a foothold in Dura: Mithraism, Christianity and Judaism. The Synagogue, decorated with frescoes on which Pahlavi inscriptions are superimposed, dates from 245, hence from the Sasanian period³.

The *Mithraeum*, representing the Mysteries that were widespread in the Roman world, bears witness, indirectly to the Arsacid religion, in so far as it was derived from this religion⁴.

3. THE GOD WITH THE CHARIOT

Apparently we should also date from the Arsacid period, that is to say, the 3rd century B.C., the first depiction of the god with the chariot. It appears on the ritual head-dress of a Saka queen, found in a tumulus at Karagodeuashch (South Russia). According to Rostovtzeff⁵, "the worship of the god with the chariot, during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, in Mesopotamia and in other regions of the Near East, goes back to Iran and to the earliest times in her history". However, Tarn is less positive: "It still remains to be ascertained whether the original Greek and Iranian conceptions of the quadriga were independent of each other or, if not, how they were related"⁶.

1 The Iranians merely took back what was theirs, if we accept an Iranian origin for the god with the quadriga. Cf. below.

2 Gad is the masculine Tychè, the great protective city-god (Palmyra, Dura, etc.); on his identification with Ba'al shamin, cf. *Preliminary Report of the VIIth and VIIIth Seasons*, 260. On the significance and importance of Tychè in hellenistic religious *koinè*, BUSSAGLI, *RHR*, 1951, 135, n.

3 On the contacts between Jews and Iranians during the Parthian period, see WIDENGREN, *Vetus Testamentum*, supply. IV, 1957, 197 sq. More generally GRAY, *ERE*, 7, 562, and MARMORSTEIN, *ZNT*, 1927, 231 sq., cited by MENASCE, *Škand gumānik* Vicār, 180.

4 Cf. below, p. 171.

5 *Dura-Europos and its art*, Oxford 1938, 63.

6 TARN, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1938, 211.

4. RELIGIOUS CENTRES

The religious centres of Iran during the Arsacid epoch seem to have been Staxr and Šiz. Šiz may have been on the present site of Taxt i Soleimān ("Throne of Solomon"), in Azerbaijān, famous for the lake within its walls¹. But it contains no ruins of Arsacid edifices.

Classical writers enrich our knowledge of the religion during the Arsacid era. Erdmann² summarizes some of these testimonies as follows:

"Strabo records that in Cappadocia the Magian tribe is very numerous to serve the numerous shrines of the Persian gods. Besides these shrines, where blood sacrifices are offered, there are also *Pyrattheia*, comprising a large chamber, in the middle of which there is an altar with a perpetual fire upon it. Every day, the Magi enter the chamber and chant for about an hour before the fire, holding a bundle of rods and wearing headgear which comes down on both sides for the cheek-pieces to cover the mouth. The same rites are practised in the shrines of Anāhitā and Omanos, who also have chambers dedicated to them.

"Diodorus recounts that on the death of the king, the fire was extinguished.

"Pausanias, speaking about the Lydians, says that in every shrine there was a house containing an altar with ash upon it, of a different colour to ordinary ash. When a Magian entered bringing fresh wood for the fire, he first put on a tiara, then chanted an invocation to the gods, in a barbaric tongue unintelligible to the Hellènes. The wood had to be lit without fire, and the flame made to spurt from it.

"Appian describes in detail a sacrifice made by Mithridates to Zeus Patrios. Even if he did not tell us that the Persian kings practised the same rite, we could tell it was a form of the fire cult"³.

According to Isidore of Charax⁴, an "eternal fire" burnt in Asaak's sanctuary⁵, where the first Arsacid had had himself crowned.

There are a number of testimonies regarding the cult of Anāhitā. Isidore of Charax⁶ bears witness to a shrine of Anaītis at Ecbatana "where there is a permanent sacrifice", in other words⁷, where the fire was kept perpetually lit. In the same town, according to Polybius, there was a statue and temple of Ainē (a corruption of Anaītis), which Antiochus III wanted to pillage in 209 B.C.⁸

1 A. GODARD, *Les monuments du feu, Athâr e Iran*, III, fig. 25 and 26; K. ERDMANN, *Das iranische Feuerheiligtum*, Leipzig 1941, 25 and pl. IV. These two studies and K. SCHIPPMANN's *Iranische Feuerheiligtum* are the best we have on the archaeology of fire temples of all epochs. RINGBOM, *Graaltempel und Paradies* Stockholm 1951, is a fantasy. Cf. p. 187.

2 *Das iranische Feuerheiligtum*, 24. The same author, 80, n. 186, collects the evidence—STRABO, XVI, 1,4; PLINY, *Hist. nat.*, II, 105-107; YAKUT, 77; OUSELEY—on the naphta springs or natural fires at Démétrias near, Arbēla, at Susa and at the frontier of Fars. Henceforth, according to GHIRSHMAN, *Syria*, 1950, 205 sq., we must discard Masjid i Soleimān ("Solomon's Mosque"), for there were no inflammable emanations there. Two terraces survive, one of cyclopean construction, dates, according to Ghirshman again, to the beginning of the Achaemenian period. During the Arsacid epoch there may have been underground rooms guarding a perpetual fire.

3 STRABO, XV, 3, 15.—DIODORUS, *Bibl. hist.*, XVII, 114, 4.—PAUSANIAS, *Graec. descr.*, V, 27, 3 sq.—APPIAN, *Mithridate*, 66.

4 *Stationes Parthicae*, 11, quoted by WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*..., p. 76.

5 The exact location is not known.

6 *Stationes*, 6.

7 WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*..., 69.

8 POLYBE, X, 27. WIKANDER, 69.

Aelian¹ mentions a temple of Anaïtis in Élymais, where tame lions were kept.

Some Arsacidian figurines and reliefs appear to be representations of Anāhitā², as for instance, the bronze statuette from Nihavand (in the Teheran Museum), one in baked clay from Susa (in the Louvre) and one preserved in Berlin³ which has certain traits, namely, Anāhitā's emblem, the rosette-star (the planet Venus), confirming the identity of the goddess⁴.

Anaïtis was especially popular in Lydia, Phrygia (Philadelphia, Hierocaesarea, Hypaipa), Pontus (Zéla), and Cappadocia⁵. Strabo tells us⁶, that prostitution was practised at Zéla in honour of the goddess. Was this a feature of the Iranian cult? We cannot absolutely deny it. Wikander, p. 89, suggests that "the polemic directed against the whore, in various passages of the Avesta, particularly in the *Yašt* to Anāhitā, was in fact directed against certain current forms of her cult admitting this usage".

Plutarch⁷ was referring to another kind of cult, when he speaks of the "temple of the martial goddess who can be compared to Athena". "This is obviously an allusion to Anāhitā", writes M.-L. Chaumont⁸, "but it is not certain if the expression *thea polemikè* referred to the Anāhitā venerated by Artaxerxes II, or to what she had become in Plutarch's time". Anyway, Plutarch's passage makes it clear that the militant character of this goddess, to whom the Sasanians later consecrated the heads of their defeated enemies, goes back at least to the first century of our era. And perhaps we can go further back still, thanks to Herodotus, who testifies that Xerxes sacrificed, before going to war, to the "Trojan Athena".

Anāhitā was equally popular in Armenia.

5. ARMENIA

Armenia came under Iranian influence as early as the days of the Median empire. This influence was predominant from the religious point of view, till the Christianization of the country, which took place chiefly in the second half of the third century (Gregory the Illuminator). Our sources on Armenian "paganism" date from the Sasanian epoch, but the situation they describe was much the same in the Arsacid epoch; in a general way, the great borrowing of Parthian words into Armenian, attests that Armenia was Iranized mainly during this period.

Agathangelos, the historian of the conversion⁹, writes that Tiridates proclaimed Aramazd "the creator of heaven and earth; father of all the gods, especially of Anahit, Mihr and Nanê; bestower of abundance and fatness". Moses of Chorène polemises against Aramazd, saying that he does not exist. Agathangelos connects him with the New Year festival. His great sanctuaries were at Ani, Bagavan, and on Mount Palat. Aramazd is the archaic form of his name, prior to those given to him from the 5th century A.D. onwards: Ormizd and Hormizd.

1 *De natura animal*, XII, 23. WIKANDER, 70.

2 WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*..., 61.

3 SARRE, *Survey of Persian Art*, IV, pl. 134 B. The three documents are taken up in L. RINGBOM, *Zur Ikonographie der Göttin Ardvi Sūrā Anāhitā*, *Acta Academiae Aboensis*, 1957. The first two are in GHIRSHMAN, *Iran* (Penguin), 1954, pl. 28 d and 39 a.

4 Phyllis ACKERMANN, *Survey*, I, p. 215.

5 These shrines are listed in WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*..., 77 to 91.—WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufg.*, 116, would also, without evidence, recognize Anāhitā in "my all-nurturing country, Commagène".

6 XII, 3, 37.

7 *Artaxerxes II*, chapter III.

8 *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 1958, p. 161.

9 Cited by ANANIKIAN, *Armenia*, *ERE*, I, 794, from which I have taken all that follows. The article should perhaps be rewritten with the help of unpublished works from Vienna (Convent of the Mekhitarist Fathers).

Spandaramet was used by the 5th century Christian writers to translate Dionysos (although they also made use of the expression Ormazdakan gad). *Sandaramet*, the "Persian" equivalent, meant, in the plural, "hell". We see how the significance of the Amšāspand protecting the earth came to be variously deformed. Haurvatāt-Amərətāt, similarly, coalesced into *haurotmaurot*, denoting a flower.

The most popular deity was Anahit¹, as testified already by Strabo, Pliny and Plutarch, before Agathangelos and Moses of Chorène. Strabo remarks that prostitution was practised in her honour in Akilisène, as in Zéla; while Plutarch tells us, that Lucullus saw in Aštišat, herds of heifers dedicated to the goddess.

Certain days and months were consecrated to the sun and moon. (Already, Xenophon records in his *Anabasis* that horses were sacrificed to the sun).

Mihr (Mithra) was, as we saw, the son of Aramazd. Agathangelos tells us that he had a temple in Bagayarinc². His popularity is confirmed by such personal names as Mihran, Mihrdat and Mehruzan. However, he had a rival in Vahagn < Vərəθrayna³, who formed, according to Agathangelos again, an ancient triad with Aramazd and Anahit⁴.

The Armenians were likewise familiar with Ahriman, the *druj*, the *yatuk*, Aždahā and Višap. They believed in a Bridge which the souls of the dead had to cross, and in a middle region between heaven and hell.

A *hurbak* fire is attested, probably < **farnbāg* fire. Moses reports that the Arsacid kings had let the fire of Aramazd become extinguished when it should burn permanently, and that Artaxšēr⁵ had commanded that it should be kept burning perpetually.

According to Tacitus, the Armenians offered horses as sacrifices to the Euphrates, and divined by its waves and foam. We can perhaps recognize Apām Napāt in the name of Npat, the *Niphatēs* of Strabo.

An adapted Zoroastrian calendar was in use. The month of Tir was called Trē, and the same Tir or Tiur figured in Armenian mythology. The month of Mithra was called Mehekan, that of Fire, Ahekan, and that of the *Fravašis*, Hrotič.

Armenian writers substitute in the list of planets, *Zruan*⁶ for *Kevan*, which was the traditional appellation of Saturn, going back to its ancient Babylonian name.

To sum up: "It is probable that the ancient Armenians themselves conceived their pantheon as containing the following deities: Aramazd, as chief god; Anahit, as chief and favourite goddess; Vahagn, as the national god of war and heroism; the Sun and the Moon; Mihr; Tir, as god of human destiny, whose relation to learning and eloquence has a Greek flavour. There were also an Elamite goddess Nane, the Syrian Astlik and Baršam (Ba'al Šamin)"⁷. But the Armenians knew Zuvān as well.

1 MARKWART, *Wehrot u. Arang*, Leiden 1938, 186.

2 A name supposing the Iranian **baga-yada* "worship of *baga*", and which proves that *Baga* was a close associate of Mithra.

3 By a queer error, Ananikian classes Vahagn among the *Fravasis*. There is no doubt as to his identification with *Vərəθrayna*.

4 On VAHAGN, see DUMÉZIL's article, "Vahagn", *RHR*, 1938, 152 sq.

5 Actually it was Šāpūr, Artaxšēr's son, who conquered Armenia.

6 JUNKER, *Über iran. Quellen*, 169.

7 ANANIKIAN, p. 802.

6. SUSIANA AND PERSIA

Two Iranian provinces, in Parthian times, are of particular interest on account of their coinage: Elymais or Susiana and, above all, Persia or Persis.

In Elymais¹, the most ancient coins have purely Greek legends, subjects and styles. About 80 B.C., Parthian influence on the style becomes discernible; at this time also, the symbol (of Elamite origin?) of the sky (?) first makes its appearance. To this sign are later added the crescent and star, notably under Orodes (between 50 and 100). The prince has nothing, except for the name, in common with the Parthian Orodes. What does this "star" signify? For Unvala, *Observations*, p. 9, it is the sun, and indeed, this is the significance the sign has long had in the East², when found in association with the crescent. All the same, can we not conjecture that it stood for a planet—notably Venus? The Moon and Venus would then indicate Artemis, who is figured either as a woman with a walled, radiate crown, or as a huntress³. Artémis was the Greek counterpart of Nanaia, whose homeland was notoriously Elam. Antiochus IV pillaged the shrine of this goddess in Susa⁴.

In Persia, we can, with Hill⁵, provisionally distinguish four periods⁶. Right from the beginning, the legends are written in Pahlavi, and the motifs are not exclusively Greek. For the first period, down to about 150 B.C., we have the coins of some four princes: Bagadates, Vahuberz, Artaxerxes I, and Autophradates. The reverse generally shows a "temple" similar to the ones at Naqš-e Rostam, Pasargadae and Nūrābād, and as already depicted on an Achaemenian intaglio (*Survey*, 123 F), although Stronach⁷ would rather see in it a modified form of an already well established form of tower-altar. The edifice may be surmounted by three horned altars⁸ with the king standing on the left, and a standard planted on the right⁹. Or else the temple has two stepped altars¹⁰, above which hovers a winged Ōhrmazd¹¹. At times a Victory stands behind the king crowning him¹².

These princes took a title on their coins whose reading is uncertain: *fratarak*, *fratakar*, or *fratadar*. The last two readings have been interpreted as compounds, meaning "he who produces, or he who nourishes the fire", with a first component resembling the Armenian *hrat* 'fire'. However, since these compounds are not attested elsewhere, it is safer to keep to

1 HILL, Coinage of ancient Persians, *Survey of Persian Art*, I 404 sq. J. de MORGAN, *Numismatique de la Perse antique*, 2 vols., 1933.

2 H. BOSSERT, *Meine Sonne*, *Orientalia*, 1957, 97 sq.

3 MORGAN, pl. XXXVI 10 bis to XXXVII 4.

4 TARN, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 26 and 463 sq.

5 *Survey*, I, p. 402.

6 Leaving aside the mysterious coinage of Andragoras, HILL, *Survey of Persian Art*, I, 401 sq. They show, notably, a winged bull with human head, crowned with the legend, *wxsw*, which could read Oxus, cf. OXFO on Kušan coins; but the iconographic type is quite different.

7 JNES, 1966, 220 sq.

8 GHIRSHMAN, *Syria*, 1944-1945, 181, interprets, without adequate ground these horns as flames. They may, after all, be nothing more than battlements.

9 MORGAN, XXVII, 2 (*Survey*, 126 F), 3, 4, 6-14. A similar one with Ōhrmazd hovering above, *ibid.*, 15, 16, 18, 19, XXVIII, 1-3.

10 GHIRSHMAN, *ibid.*, 181.

11 MORGAN, pl. XXVIII, 1-10.

12 MORGAN, XXVIII, 4 (*Survey*, 126 G) and 5.

the reading '*fratarak*', which is found also in the Elephantine papyri¹, where it simply meant 'Governor'².

The second period, circa 150-100, relates to Darius I and Autophradates II, who took the title of king. On the reverse, instead of a Victory, there are stepped altars, an eagle on the standard and Ōhrmazd hovering above. On the obverse, the king's head is surmounted by an eagle, then by a crescent. Later Ōhrmazd hovers lower down, nearer to the battlements, and his wings become very stylised, resembling rather branches³. It seems wrong to speak of flames (Phyllis Ackerman) or of a fire-altar (Hill), for it is still the "temple".

During the third period (Darius II, Oxathrès, Artaxerxes II), the "temple" is replaced by the fire-altar⁴. At the same time, the inscription is arranged in the form of a square, in the Parthian manner. Artaxerxes wears a turreted crown, recalling the altars surmounting the "temple".

During the fourth period, from the Christian era down to the Sasanian advent, all allusion to the fire cult disappears (with the exception, perhaps of the walled crown worn by Namopat (?) in the 1st century, and later, by several princes (MORGAN, XXXIV, 12, 13, 14, 16). The king worships a luminary, either a star or sun, held between the horns of a crescent. Hence, during this period, Persian coins virtually resembled those from Elymais: they are no longer distinguished as in the three preceding periods, by Mazdean symbols, the temple, altar or image of Ōhrmazd. This is a sign of these princes' lack of interest in the Mazdean religion, which contrasts strongly with the religious fervour of Artaxšēr, the future founder of the Sasanian dynasty.

Indeed, with Artaxšēr, the fire-altar reappears on the reverse of a coin struck when he was still only "king of Iran," not "king of kings of Iran". The motif persisted on Sasanian coins⁵.

The Nūrābād tower, on the road to Persepolis is, according to Ghirshman⁶, a fire-temple similar in type to those at Pasargadae and Naqš-e Rostam. Ghirshman assigns it to the 3rd century B.C.

In Persepolis, not very far from the Terrace, there are the ruins of what may be a fire-temple from the beginning of the Arsacid period⁷. The Greek names which occur in some of the inscriptions may designate Iranian deities, if we are to go by the monument of Commagène. Zeus Megistos, Apollo Helios, and Artémis Athena would then be none other than Ahuramazda, Mithra and Anāhitā, continuing the tradition attested for the Achaemenians since Artaxerxes II.

1 It is one of the Iranian terms figuring in these documents, letters and deeds pertaining to the Jewish colony in Elephantine and its relations with the Achaemenian government. The word in question is found notably in *El.*, I, 5.

2 ALLOTTE DE LA FUYE, *JA*, 1928, I, 190.

3 MORGAN, pl. XXIX; *Survey*, 126 H, J, K.—We can trace on MORGAN's plate, the progressive deterioration of the motif.

4 MORGAN, pl. XXX, *Survey*, 126 L.

5 M.-L. CHAUMONT, *Le culte d'Anāhitā et les premiers Sassanides*, *RHR*, 1958, 154 sq., claims that nothing permits us to allege that the power of Sāsān and his immediate descendants ever extended beyond the territory of Staxr; the Prince of Persis at the time of Artaxšēr must have been Gocihr, whom he first got rid of before proceeding to attack the emperor Artabān, if we are to believe the Kār Nāmak. But the coins of Artaxšēr give the title of king not only to him, but to his father Pāpak as well.

6 *Syria*, 1944-1945, 175 sq.

7 E. SCHMIDT, *Persepolis I*, Chicago 1953, 56.

Presumably the Greek names were only a manner of speaking, or of writing even, without there being any encroachment on the pure Iranism of the religion of Persis.

It was from this conservative province that the national renaissance was to spring, with Artaxšēr and the Sasanians.

7. EASTERN IRAN

a) Before the Kušans

In eastern Iran, the native religion was long masked by the hellenism of the Indo-Bactrians (Yavana): Eukratidès, Démétrius, Ménander, etc., then of the Sakas: Mauès, etc., and of the Pahlavas: Vononès, Spalisirès, Azès II, Orthagnès, Gondopharnès, Abdagasès, Pakorès and Sanabarès. However, Anāhīt can be recognized beneath the Artémis radiate on the coins of Démétrius (for we know she had a temple in Bactra¹), and even on the coins of Mauès struck in India at Puṣkalāvati².

The Pahlava kings who took the title King of Kings, bore Iranian names, two or three of which are interesting from a religious point of view. Orthagnès (a contemporary of Gondopharnès, who for a time was his vassal in Arachosia) takes his name, written OPΘATNH³ from Vərəθraγna, Victory incarnate. Perhaps the Victory figuring on his coins is an allusion to his name, as Rapson suggests⁴, who noticed the same motif on the coins of the Arsacid Vononès, whose name too, means "the Victorious".

Gondopharnès, who reigned for 50 years, was well-known to Christian tradition for having welcomed Thomas the Apostle, and as one of the three "Magian Kings" (Gaspar) who went to prostrate themselves at Bethlehem⁵. He bears a name already attested under the Achaemenians: *Vindu-farnah* "he who obtains the royal Fortune".

From Sanabares, who was the last Pahlava king to strike coinage, we have some coins dated 56/57 and 66/67.

b) The Kušans

During the Kušan period⁶, the ancient religion reappeared. It is better and better known, although still in a very fragmentary manner, from numismatic, epigraphic, archaeological and literary evidence.

We can distinguish between two groups of coins, Kušan coins strictly speaking, which were struck by Kušan kings, from Vima Kadphisès down to Bahrām IV, and the coins of Sasanian governors in Kušan territory, known as Kušano-Sasanian.

1 Cf. the above chapter on the Achaemenians. For the coins, P. GARDNER, *British Museum Coins, Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, 1886, pl. III, 1. On the entire period, W. TARN, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*², 1950; Johanna LOHUIZEN DE LEEUW, *The 'Scythian Period'*, 1949; Alb. SIMONETTA, *An Essay on the so-called Indo-Greek Coinage, East and West*, 1957; by the same author, *A new Essay on the Indo-Greeks: The Sakas and Pahlavas*, *ibid.*, 1958.

2 TARN, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge 1938, 135 sq.

3 KONOW, *Kharoṣṭhi Inscriptions*, 1929, p. XLV. From Orthagnes we have a coin dated 13/14 B.C.

4 *Cambridge History of India*, I, 578.

5 RAPSON, *CHI*, 578-580.

6 The dates of the Kušan period depend on Kaniška's date which is still disputed, in spite of many discussions, and two symposiums held in London on this question, one in 1913, the other in 1960 and one in Dušambe (Soviet Union), in 1968: the beginning of his reign has been variously assigned to dates between 78 to 150 A.D.

Kušan coins.—Thanks to the recent studies of R. Göbl and A. Maricq¹, we can trace the history of Kušan coinage as follows.

Vima Kadphisès, who conquered India, was responsible for a gold and silver issue figuring his own portrait, and the god Śiva with his bull and trident. The art of these coins is the same “Scythic” art of the royal statues at Mathura and Surx Kotal (see below). Their legends are either in Greek on the obverse, or in Middle-Indian (kharoṣṭhi), on the reverse².

Under *Kaniška* two great changes took place. First the reverse became Greek in its legends and in the gods depicted, namely ΗΦΑΙΣΤΟΣ, ΗΛΙΟΣ, ΚΑΛΗΝΗ and ΝΑΝΑΙΑ (the hellenized version of the goddess Nana, of Semitic origin). This phase was of short duration and may signify that the sovereign sought to begin his reign with the support of the Greek element.

Then, perhaps once he had succeeded in extending his power over all the peoples of his empire, he was able, through his religion, to assert his claim to world domination. Only the script and artistic types remained Greek, the language was Iranian; so were most of the deities with the exception of a few Hellenistic ones like ΝΑΝΑ, or Indian like ΟΗΪΟ (Śiva)³, ΟΜΜΟ (Umā), ΒΟΔΔΟ, ΚΑΚΑ ΜΑΝΟ ΒΟΗΔΟ, . . . ΡΓΟ ΒΟΗΔΟ (the Buddha).

The change over can, so to speak, be seen taking place. The artistic types of Hephaestus and Hēlios remained the same, but the name of Hephaestus is changed to ΑΘΪΟ (Fire), and that of Hēlios to ΜΙΠΟ, ΜΙΟΡΟ, ΜΕΙΡΟ, ΜΙΗΡΟ (Mithra). Likewise, Nanaia becomes ΝΑΝΑ or ΝΑΝΑΪΑΟ. As for Sélène, her identification with ΜΑΟ, and her resemblance to Nana, seem to have caused her to disappear. On the other hand, new divinities were introduced: ΜΑΝΑΟΒΑΓΟ (the Moon-god), ΔΡΟΟΑΓΟ (Drvāspā), ΟΪΛΑΓΝΟ (Vərəθrayna), ΦΑΡΡΟ, ΦΑΡΟ (*Xvarənah*), ΑΡΔΟΧΪΟ (*Aṣi vaṇuhi*)⁴, ΟΑΔΟ (Vāta), ΟΧΪΟ, ΟΑΧΪΟ (Oxus)⁵ and ΜΟΖΔΟΟΑΝΟ⁶ (*Mazdā vanō* “victorious Mazdā.”).

It is evident from these coins that Kaniška was not, as some would make him, the Clovis of Buddhism. He was a tolerant ruler, who made room for the Buddha, besides the predominantly Iranian deities of his empire⁷.

The same policy was continued by *Huviška*. The same gods are represented, notably ΜΙΠΟ and ΜΑΟ (the Sun and Moon). Ahura Mazdā appears under the form of ΩΟΡΟΜΟΖ-ΔΟ⁸.

1 R. GÖBL, Die Münzprägung der Kušan von Vima Kadphisēs bis Bahrām IV, *apud* ALTHEIM-STIEHL, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike*, Frankfurt 1957, 173 sq. with 15 pl. photos picturing 345 coins; A. MARICQ, Légendes monétaires des grands kušans, Appendice à la grande inscription de Kaniška, *JA*, 1958, pp. 421sq. —A decisive step was taken in the interpretation of these coins by Aurel STEIN in 1887, *Zoroastrian Deities on Indo-Scythian Coins*, *Babylonian and Oriental Record*, I, pp. 115 sq., an article reproduced with some additions in the *Indian Antiquary*, 17 (1888), p. 89-98. Subsequently, the principal work is A. CUNNINGHAM's, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1888-1893. Among the most recent bibliographies: BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 1943, 63 sq.; MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Orientalia*, 17, 1948, 217; Gh. GNOLI, *La religiosità Kušana*, 1963.

2 GÖBL, 176 sq. and 236 sq.; pl.1 (p. 405).

3 ΟΗΪΟ, that is to say, *Viso*, Skr. *Vṛṣaḥ*, “Bull”, MARICQ, 425.

4 BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 65 sq.

5 MARKWART, *Wehrot u. Arang*, 33, Kirste, cited by TARN, *Greeks in Bactria*, 509, wrongly reads OKPO.

6 GÖBL, 58 (Am. Num. Soc.), cf. Vonones and the epithet “victorious” Kaniška gives himself on the inscription of Surx Kotal. On this coinage, see J. D-G., De la dicéphalie dans l'iconographie mazdéenne, *Festgabe Lommel*, Frankfurt 1960, 213 sq. The interpretation of this coinage proposed by HUMBACH, *ibid.*, is not acceptable.

7 GÖBL, 186 sq., 237 sq. and pl. 2 and 3 (till coin 59).

8 J. D-G., *art. cit.* above.

We see the following deities make their first appearance: the Iranian $\bar{\text{X}}\text{ša}\theta\text{ra}$ *vairya*), the Śivaite MAACHNO (Mahāsenā), CKANΔO KOMAPO (Skanda Kumāra) and BIZAT'O (Visakha), and the Hellenistic HPAKIAO, CAPIIO (Serapis), ΩPON (Horus), OANINΔA, OANINΔO (Vanainti 'the Victorious', translating Nikè¹), and ΠIAH (probably a graphical error for PIOM or ROM)².

Some have sought³ to draw important conclusions from what appears to be a female Mithra (Göbl, pl. 11, 249). The name is certain. But as the type is exactly the same as that of APΔOX̄PO (Göbl, pl. 11, 252), a woman carrying a cornucopia, Cumont concludes⁴ this as an engraver's mistake. However, Bussagli and Gnoli would rather see in this a tendency, of which there are other instances, to merge the two deities.

ZEIPO or ZEPO or MEIPO was, as Aurel Stein saw, TEIPO (Tir) and not Nana as alleged by Göbl, p. 202⁵.

ĀAEIX̄PO, a masculine deity, should therefore be distinguished, although the names are similar, from APΔOX̄PO. Perhaps, as Aurel Stein thought⁶, he was the entity Aša vahišta.

Under *Vasudeva*, we again come across Nana and OH̄PO. He was succeeded by Vasudeva II, Kaniška II and Vasudeva III, and then the northern Kušan kingdom passed under the domination of Öhrmazd II, the Sasanian.

Kušano Sasanian coins—Show Buddhist and Mazdean features. The fundamental work on this topic is: A.D.H. Bivar, The Kushano-Sassanian Coin Series, *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XVIII, 1956, pp. 13-42⁷.

c) *Surx Kotal*

Surx Kotal in Afghanistan, is the site of a temple sanctuary whose ancient name is known to us, thanks to a fragmentary inscription in Greek characters: ΒΑΓΟΛΑΓΓΟ, designating a still more ancient **bagadānaka* "temple, altar, sanctuary." An inscription running to 25 lines has been deciphered with great difficulty⁸.

The disposition of the edifice indicates the religion to which it belonged. There is a fire chamber, of which the devotees made a ritual circuit, either along a circumambulatory, or on the outside.

1 "Je doute fort que Huviška ait jamais rendu un culte à une iranienne Oanindo". (Maricq's note).

2 J. D-G., Rom oder . . . was ?, *Pratidānam* (Kuiper Volume) 1968.

3 Recently BUSSAGLI, Royauté guerre et fécondité (à propos d'une monnaie kušane), *RHR*, 1951, 129 sq.

4 CUMONT, *Textes et mon. . . . Mystères de Mithra*, II, 187, followed by GÖBL, 206.

5 Cf. GÖBL, *Iranica Antiqua*, 1962.

6 Cf. MARKWART, *Das erste Kapitel der Gāthā uštāvaitī*, Rome 1931, 49.

7 See also below, p. 192 (*Sasan.*, *Öhrmazd II*).

8 On the archaeological site, D. SCHLUMBERGER, *JA*, 1952, 433 sq., and 1954, 161 sq. On the identification, HENNING, *BSOAS*, 1956, 366 sq. On the inscription, MARICQ, La grande inscription de Kaniška, *JA*, 1958, 345 sq., HENNING, The Bactrian Inscription, *BSOAS*, 1960, 47 sq. and GERSHEVITCH, The well of Baghlan, *Asia Major*, XII, 90 sq., Bactrian Inscriptions and Manuscripts, *Indog. Forsch.*, 1967, 27 sq. An unsuccessful attempt at deciphering in HUMBACH, *Die Kaniška-Inschrift von Surkh Kotal*, Wiesbaden 1960.

Two other sites belonging to the Arsacid era have been excavated in eastern Iran, and still further east : the temples of Kūh i Xwāja and Taxila.

d) *Kūh i Xwāja*

Kūh i Xwāja "Mount of the Lord" is a hill in Sistān rising 150 metres above lake Hamūn. On the southern slopes, the ruins of a temple and palace have been excavated by Aurel Stein, E. Herzfeld, and Gullini¹. The fire chamber in the temple appears to have consisted of a *cahār tāq* or tetrapyle (a cupola on four corner-piers) surrounded by a circumambulatory. The fire was apparently not preserved here, for this required a place where, unlike inside this tetrapyle, the fire could be viewed only indirectly and from a distance. More likely, the fire was brought here for public ceremonies.

Herzfeld² claims he has found in Kūh i Xwāja the actual *Mons Victorialis* where, according to the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, the Magi kept watch from generation to generation for the advent of the Saviour, until the day he appeared in the form of a star.

Herzfeld recalls also the legend recorded in the *Codex Germanicus*, in Munich, according to which the Magi, after returning from Bethlehem, built a chapel there to St. Thomas. The mount is called Mons Victorialis, and the town from which it is reached Sodola. "The legend", writes Herzfeld, "is one of those about St. Thomas, the apostle of India. In the Acts of St. Thomas, the apostle landed in India, the kingdom of Gundopharr (one of the three Kings, Gaspar), at the port of Sandrokh, a slight clerical error for Sindroth, the 'river Sindh', hence modern Karachi, old Daibul". And "we too," adds Herzfeld, "from Teheran, went to Kūh i Xwāja via Karachi". "In the *Opus imperfectum*, he goes on, the name Sindroth is further disfigured into Sodola, Sodella, very comprehensible when transcribing a Persian name through the medium of Syriac into Latin." And he concludes: "It is evident that the Mons Victorialis is not 'the victorious mountain' 'but the mountain of the victorious one', of the Saošyant Vṛθ-ragna³, the Mount Ušīdā of the *Avesta*".

This theory, which is accepted by Messina⁴, is summarily rejected as fantastic by Monneret de Villard⁵, who takes *Mons Victorialis* as a simple synonym of "Mount of Splendours", an appellation due to the presence of the Treasure Cave in which the gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense were kept. But why this variation? May we not—should we not—see here the memory of something else?

For the fact remains that Kūh i Xwāja, as independently observed by Aurel Stein⁶ and Jackson⁷, is none other than the Avestan Ušīdā.

1 GULLINI, *Architettura Iranica*, 1964.

2 *Archaeological History of Iran*, 61 sq.

3 Herzfeld means the Saošyant Vərəθrāgan: he confuses this epithet with the yazata Vərəθrayna, the personification of Victory. It is true that in the Parthian epoch, the two terms may no longer have been distinct, since both were said *Varhrān*.

4 *I Magi a Betlemme e una predizione di Zoroastro*, Rome 1933.

5 *Le leggende orientali sui Magi evangelici*, Rome 1952, 23 sq. The author localizes the *Mons Victorialis* at Sabālan. Ringbom, who is followed on this point by WIDENGREN, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung*, 79 sq., places it at Šīz. But the excavations on the supposed sites of Šīz., Taxt i Soleimān, have in no way confirmed RINGBOM's often fantastic theories, cf. below, *Legend of the Holy Grail*.

6 *Innermost Asia*, 1928, 909 sq.

7 *Zoroastrian Studies*, 1928, p. 284. Jackson has unfortunately reserved for elsewhere a fuller discussion of this point.

No less than three interpretations have been proposed as to the significance of Kūh i Xwāja and the testimony of the *Opus imperfectum*. We can first eliminate Phyllis Ackerman's¹: "It was this ancient solar concept which Zoroaster attempted to rationalize, with the help of the Hebrew notion of a Messiah, into the promise of a Redeemer . . ." First we should be able to show that there did exist at this place a cult (solar or otherwise) prior to Zarathuštra; and that Zarathuštra was familiar with the religion of Israel.

Widengren sees in the story, reported in the *Opus*, evidence of a belief and usage that was prior to Christianity and, consequently, one of the sources of the Messianic belief (in hellenistic Judaism and Christianity)².

Finally, there is Herzfeld's solution. It is best to cut out from it the sentence: "We, too, went to Kūh i Xwāja via Karachi". For this implies, without foundation, that Thomas on landing at Karachi (which too, is to be proved) could only have gone to Kūh i Xwāja. As for the rest, Herzfeld seems to have seen clearly enough "that this story is one of the many interpretations of Zoroastrian prophecies which substitute the Messiah for the Saošyant". This particular interpretation could date from just before the 6th century, the date of the *Opus imperfectum*. It reflects a contact, at this time, between the Christian and Zoroastrian traditions.

e) *Taxila and the penetration of Mithra into India*

Under the Kušans, perhaps, earlier, the Iranian religion reached India. We have archaeological, onomastic and literary evidence of this.

A temple has been found at Taxila, having an essentially hellenic construction, like the peripteral of Assur, but with Iranian traits: a facade with *iwāns*, and for purposes of the fire ceremonial (?) an enclosed *cella*³. We do not know if Philostratos is referring to this temple in his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, when he speaks of seeing the depiction of the exploits performed by Porus and Alexander. There is no proof to the contrary, for we do not know exactly under what form the Iranian religion reached these parts.

The spread of a cult of the solar Mithra is profusely attested in Sanskrit⁴. According to the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, the solar cult was introduced into India by the Magas. The latter, who wore the *abyaṅga* thread (that is to say, *Av. aiwyāṇhana-*), claimed to be the descendants of Mihira and one of them was called Mihiraṃśu—"Mithra's ray". According to the legend, Mihira had a son Jarasavda (obviously a memory of Zarathuštra's name). Besides the thread, the Magas made use of the mouth-veil and *barəsman*, and were bound by many taboos as were the Iranian Magi or the Parsi priests. Among the eight companions of their god Mihira, there were two hailing from Iran: Rajna and Srauša, who are none other than Rašn and Srōš. But all this surely dates from after the Parsi immigration into India.

1 *Survey of Persian Art*, I, p. 375.

2 *Stand u. Aufgaben*, p. 130 of the proof; *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*, 1960, 62 sq. But D-G., *ZDMG*, 1961, 469 sq.

3 U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, The Iranian Temple of Taxila, *Survey of Persian Art*, I, 445 sq.

4 On this subject, BHANDARKAR's pages in the *Grundriss der Indo-arischen Philologie*, III, 6, 151 sq., *The Sect of Sauras and the northern Sun-worship*, have been largely superseded by I. SCHEFTELOWITZ, Die Mithra-Religion der Indoskythen, *Acta Orientalia*, 11, 293 sq., who, however, exaggerates the importance of the Sakas, to the point of ascribing them a part in the composition of the *Mihr Yašt*.—The article on Saura and Magas, announced in *ERE*, has never appeared.

All the same, a number of sun temples are known in India from the 5th century onwards, from Multān to Gujarat, either through archaeological finds, or through Sanskrit, Chinese (Hiuen-Tsang), and Arabic (Bērūni, etc.) sources.

Legend makes the Magas come from the land of the Sakas, and all concurs to support this. Their cult was eventually assimilated by fusing with the Hindu Saura sect, the "Sun-worshippers." The process of Indianisation may have begun already in the time of the Kušans, judging from the Śivaite and Buddhist traits of Kušan coins.

The presence in India of Mihr, Sun and Saviour, raises the question of what was the connection between India and Iran in the development of Buddhism.

It does not concern the origin of Buddhism itself whose "first appearance" as Przyluski¹ wrote, "almost coincided with Darius' conquest of the Punjab and consequently, is placed at a time when Iranian ideas had easy access into India. Under these circumstances it is extremely unlikely that the analogy between the name of Mithra, the Iranian Messiah, and that of Maitreya, the future Buddha, could be fortuitous." But in fact, Maitreya is not a Buddhist figure at all during the first centuries and has nothing in common with the Iranian religion².

It may be a different matter if we consider, not the birth of Buddhism, but its transformation into Mahāyāna Buddhism. This transformation was elucidated recently by E. Lamotte³. "We think we can assert that during the Kušan epoch, especially under Kaniška, the great movement which was to revolutionize Buddhism sprang up spontaneously in several parts of India, particularly in the North-West, and in the Khotan district, where it met with sensational success". Spontaneously, writes our Indianist, evidently avoiding reference to Iranian influence. But what he could not prevent was, that in showing Mahāyānism to have arisen, not in South India, as was generally believed, but in the North-West, and in the land of the Sakas (Khotan), he made more plausible the influence of the religion of Mihr the Saviour on the genesis of a form of Buddhism whose most distinctive feature was to have conceived (in Lamotte's own words) "a compassionate Messiah (Maitreya) besides the transcendent Buddha"⁴.

The name of another Bodhisattva, Amitābha "Infinite Light", points in like direction, to the luminous gods of Iran.

However, Buddhist art, as it originated in Gandhara, appears to contain some Iranian traits : this is especially so of the solar symbols which figure on the frescoes surrounding the colossal Buddhas of Bāmiyān⁵.

1 La croyance au Messie dans l'Inde et l'Iran, *RHR*, 1929, 10.

2 D. SPOONER, *JRAS*, 1915, 63 sq. and 405 sq., thought he could date from Alexander's invasion a "Zoroastrian period in India's history". His thesis has been rejected, see ref. in JACKSON, *Cambridge History of India*, 341, n. 4, and *Zoroastrian Studies*, 173, n. 13; also, Sh. K. HODIWALA, *Parsis of ancient India*, 1920, 95 sq.

3 *Asiatica (Festschrift Weller)*, 1954, 389 sq.

4 All the same, it has been shown by FILLIOZAT, Maitreya, l'Invaincu, *JA*, 1950, that in spite of his appearance Maitreya has nothing to do with Mitra or Mithra.

5 B. ROWLAND, Buddha and the Sun God, *Zalmoxis*, 1938. See also, in the same line of thought, G. Tucci, On a sculpture of the Gandhara, *East and West*, 1958; K. LEHMAN, Dome of Heaven, *Art Bulletin*, 1945, and A. C. SOPER, Dome of Heaven in Asia, *Art Bulletin*, 1947, 225-248.—However, as noticed by B. GEIGER, *WZKM*, 1933-1934, 120 sq., the luminous and solar character of the Buddha already belongs to the earliest Buddhism: it is hence more a question of meeting with Iran, than an Iranian influence.

GRÜNWEDEL, *Die Teufel des Awesta u. ihre Beziehungen zur Ikonographie des Buddhismus Zentralasiens*, Berlin 1924, is the work of a great scholar gone mad.

B. THE ROLE OF IRAN IN HELLENISTIC THOUGHT

1. The hellenized Magi

As the aftermath of Alexander's conquest, Iran became hellenized. We have seen to what extent the Greek language, religion and art left its mark on the Seleucids, Arsacids and the Kušans. In Asia-Minor, particularly, there is evidence of a symbiosis: Greek gods were identified with their Iranian counterparts, and Ōhrmazd was just another name for Zeus, Mithra for Apollo or Hermes or Helios, Anāhitā for Artémis, etc.

Through this prolonged contact, the Greeks were able to gain a more intimate knowledge of Iranian doctrines. At any rate, Iran grew in stature in their eyes. An entire literature came to be written in the Greek language to expound the supposed doctrines of Zoroaster and his disciples, Hystaspes (Vištāspa) and Ostanès (who is not known in Iranian sources)¹. But, in fact, Iran's contribution to these works dealing with the natural sciences, "precious stones", astrology, magic, alchemy and the apocalypse, was small, and it is impossible to determine how far they were due to hellenized Iranians (the "Magusaeans"), and how far to the Greeks seeking to enhance the value of their own lucubrations by placing them under the authority of the great Magi.

However, Iran probably exerted her influence more than through Zoroastrian apocrypha alone, chiefly owing to Mithraism. But it is difficult to be more precise. We may quote on this question, Nilsson, the historian of the Greek religion (p. 651) :

"Zarathuštra's doctrine brought great and profound ideas, which met with Greek thought : an only god, high above all things and all men, a dualism between good and evil powers, an imageless cult, a final world catastrophe, and lastly, Zurvānism... The influence of Persian ideas on the Greeks has been great, but its path obscure and devious; often it was exercised not directly, but through other peoples, who likewise had caught the power of Iranian thought".

Among these peoples we should name especially the Semites of Babylonia, Syria, etc. Their contacts with Iran have recently been the object of a study by WIDENGREN, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*, Köln 1960, 51 sq.

2. Babylonian Planets and the Greek Order

The planets in Iran still bore trace of their Babylonian origin: at any rate, the first one, Saturn, retained its Semitic name, Kaivān². As for the others, the names of the gods to whom they had been dedicated by the Babylonians underwent the *interpretatio iranica*, parallel to the *graeca* : Jupiter was called Ōhrmazd, Mars Varhrān, Venus Anāhid and Mercury Tir. These names are borne by the planets in Pahlavi books, but this in itself is not sufficient to date them exactly. However, we can assume that these names were prior to the condemnation, under Manichaean influence, of the planets as malign creatures. We do not see, otherwise, how they could have been called *yazatas*, and not *daēvas*. Greek astronomers had discovered the "real" order of planets, at the latest in the 2nd century B.C. The planets, including the sun

¹ BIDEZ-CUMONT, *Les mages hellénisés*, 2 vols., 1938, is the basic work.

² Except when this name was replaced, in Armenia, by that of Zurvān, cf. above p. 160.—*Kaivān* could be the Arabic name, substituted secondarily for an Iranian name, but such a substitution, for which we see no reason, is unlikely.

and moon, were listed according to the velocity at which they travelled on the celestial vault, namely, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon. This order was unknown to the Babylonians, but known to Zātspram (30.12, Bailey, *Zor. Prob.*, p. 221) who lists : Kaivān, Ōhrmazd, Varhrān Mihr, Anāhīt, Tīr and Māh.

On the whole, it is likely, that Iran's knowledge of the planets goes back to the spread of Graeco-Babylonian astrology, towards the beginning of our era.

3. Chronos and Aiōn

Did Iran play any part in the personification and divinization of Chronos and Aiōn? There is such a gap between the generally accepted or philosophical meanings of these terms, and the cult and representation of the gods they designate, that there appears to be room for a foreign influence. This oft-discussed question has been reviewed in the light of works by Zepf, Nock, Benveniste and Festugière, in *La Nouvelle Clío*, 1960, 1 sq.: Aiōn et le Léonto-céphale.

4. The Mysteries of Mithra

a) Sources

The Mysteries of Mithra which were widespread in the Roman world and its borderlands, are known to us from fragmentary documents of diverse origins and importance, as from numerous monuments and shrines with statues, bas-reliefs, paintings and inscriptions.

Many more of these monuments have been brought to light by excavations since the great synthesis advanced by Cumont in his *Textes et monuments relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, Brussels 1896-1899. The elements of a new synthesis are assembled by Vermaseren in the *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, The Hague, 2 volumes, 1956-1960.

A brief summary, which we will utilize below, is given by the same author in *Mithras, de geheimzinnige God*, Amsterdam-Brussels 1959. Mithraism is well defined, in six points, by Arthur Nock, in *The Genius of Mithraism*, *Journ. Roman. Stud.*, 1937, 108 sq. See also the brief exposé of A. Grenier, *Les religions étrusque et romaine*, coll. "Mana", 1948, 213 sq. and 229 sq.; also Widengren, *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 1961, and *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung*, 1960, 51 sq.

b) The Problem

Mithraism is an amalgamation of Iranian, Babylonian, Graeco-Roman and Judeo-Christian elements. In spite of this multiple origin, it displays an unmistakable unity throughout the immense domain it penetrated, although inevitably, there were some differences of detail. The problem is to tell how far these diverse elements were combined and fused, and how far they were merely juxtaposed. For instance, did an image of Vulcan convey to the Mithraists the Iranian Fire, or not ?, etc. On this point, Cumont's views should be revised, for he gives undue importance to the identification of Iranian and classical conceptions.

c) *Initiation and degrees*

Like most hellenistic mysteries, Mithraism was a religion of initiates. Initiation included a vow, trials¹, perhaps the simulation of death and resurrection, and lastly, a handshake exchanged with the Father.

The Father held the highest grade. We know from Saint Jerome and numerous documents, what the seven degrees of initiation were, and the characteristics and symbols pertaining to each. In ascending order, the grades were: *Cora*, *Nymphus*, *Miles*, constituting the three lowest, subordinated to the other four: *Leo*, *Perses*, *Heliodromus* and *Pater*.

Each of these grades was placed under the protection of a planet; and each bore a special relationship to Mithras².

d) *The Life of Mithras*

From bas-reliefs and paintings it is possible to reconstruct the various episodes in Mithras' life on earth, from his birth from a rock to his ascent into heaven.

The birthday of *Mithras Saxigenus* was celebrated on the 25th December. He was born from a rock as the lightning bursts from the heavens. Present at his birth were Cautes and Cautopates, his two companions, representing the rising and setting sun. With them, he, as *mesitēs*, formed a sort of trinity: the *Mithras triplasios* of the pseudo-Denys.

On the other hand, *Caelus* and *Oceanus* witnessed the birth of *Mithras dēmiourgos*, presumably as gods of origins who had prepared the task of the demiurge. And Saturn hands him the dagger with which to kill the bull, the cosmogonical act *par excellence*.

This act is the culmination of a series of episodes. First the bull is at pasture, or aboard a boat (probably the moon), or lying in a house. Next, Mithras tries to seize him, and the bull gallops away dragging him along on his back, then Mithras, after overpowering the bull, bears him away on his shoulders (Commodian compares him to Cacus). After this series of exploits worthy of Hercules, Mithras drags the bull into a cave, the vault of which represents the starry sky, and slays it.

This is the scene most frequently portrayed, and it was reserved the place of honour in the apse of all the *Mithraea*. The position assumed by Mithras, who has his left knee on the back of the animal, which he seizes by the nostril with his left hand, while he stabs it in the flank with his right, is inspired by the classical Greek motif of the bull-slaying Nikè, except for one detail: Mithras rarely looks before him³, but averts his gaze upwards and a little to the rear. Apparently he is looking through the entrance of the cave at the Sun, who has ordered the sacrifice. The sun and moon are depicted in the two upper corners of the relief; the twelve Signs of the Zodiac along the vault; with either *Sarapis* on the Leontocephalous at the crown of the vault.

1 We know of them from Suidas and Gregory of Nazianza, and from paintings such as those at Capua.

2 J.D-G., *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism*, New York 1965.

3 Except in the group in high-relief at Ostia (presumably for aesthetic reasons) and on the relief at Rome where Mithras is shown after the slaying, standing on the dead bull. Most of the other reliefs depicting Mithras looking before him are restorations in which the head has been badly re-attached or re-made.

Cautes and *Cautopates* are present, as well as the messenger raven, and sometimes the cock, a solar bird from Persia. A dog and snake lap up the blood flowing from the wound. At times there are a *crater* and a lion; almost always a scorpion holds in his pincers the scrotum of the bull, whose tail sprouts into one of three spikes of wheat.

In another scene, Mithras is depicted as a hunter on horseback armed with a bow. He is occasionally escorted by a lion, or by a lion and snake.

In yet another, he is shown causing the waters to spring from a rock by the discharge of his arrow, an exploit recalling, not the Iranian myth of the liberation of the waters, so much as the story of Moses and the rock of Horeb.

Diverse reliefs illustrate Mithras' relationship with the Sun. These two gods are only identified in the very elastic play of syncretistic identifications. Otherwise, Sol is distinct from Mithras, and even appears superior to him, since it is he who orders the slaying of the bull; although elsewhere he kneels before Mithras, or is invested as a knight(?) by him. They are also shown clasping hands over an altar, but most often, Mithras and the Sun partake of a meal together.

Finally, Mithras, accompanied by Mercury, is conveyed in the solar chariot into heaven, or towards the Ocean.

e) *Graeco-Roman Gods*

As may have been inferred, Graeco-Roman gods play an important part in Mithraic mythology. It would be a wrong approach, however, to take any god or detail of the Graeco-Roman religion, figuring in Mithraism, as a mere translation of an Iranian god or trait. When Jupiter is represented by his eagle, thunderbolt and globe, we should not see an allusion to Iran, no more than when he is surrounded—as in many German reliefs—by other Olympian gods. For instance, what would be the Iranian counterpart of Juno? There is none, either, for Saturn transmitting the scepter and thunderbolt to Jupiter, a scene taken from Hesiod, rather than the *Avesta*, or for Saturn handing the halberd or dagger to Mithras. Jupiter, the combater of giants, is, at the most, analogous to Mithras the hunter.

Mithraism likewise incorporated a motif belonging to the Dionysiac Mysteries, as the altar decoration at Ptuj shows; as well as the Myth of Atlas, in two different forms (at Osterburken and Neuenheim), the second of which identifies Atlas, by the Phrygian cap, with Mithras.

The myth of Phaëthon, pictured on the great Dieburg relief, obviously reflects an eschatological role of the Iranian Mithra, which brings to mind the Magian cosmology reported by Dio of Prusa¹.

f) *The Elements*

The lion, *crater*, snake and crow may represent severally, fire, water, earth and air. This accords, perhaps accidentally, with Herodotus' statement that the Persians venerated the elements. It may simply be a question of the Greek doctrine of the four elements.

¹ Cf. below, p. 230.

g) *The Sky and Time*

1) *The Zodiac, Seasons, Winds and Planets:* The vault of the *Mithraeum*, like that of the cave in which Mithras slew the bull was, according to Porphyrius, a symbol of the universe. It was adorned with stars, as the cave was with the band of the Zodiac. The four seasons or four winds were depicted likewise, sometimes both together.

The planets were arranged in different ways. The order of the seven gates in Celsus (the gates are pictured in mosaic in a *Mithraeum* at Ostia) was the same as that of the week days; it is found again on a relief in the Brigetio *Mithraeum* (Vermaseren, 1927), but there it begins with the Sun and ends with the Moon. Another order corresponding to the seven grades of initiation is also depicted at Ostia (Felicissimus), and at Rome (Santa Prisca), but it is not the real order either. The three lower grades are assigned to Mercury, Venus and Mars, the least important of the planets, after which Jupiter follows naturally, but before Saturn are interpolated the sun and moon. In this way, while the sun remains near the highest place, this is given to Saturn—doubtless because he was considered to be the supreme deity. He was not only identified with Mithras, Jupiter and Sarapis, but, being Kronos, he was, in the Orphic confusion, Chronos as well. But this brings up the question of Time in Mithraism. What were the respective roles of Time and Mithra in the Mysteries? And first of all, in West Iran?

2) *Mithra and Time in West Iran:* Ahura Mazdā is almost entirely absent from Kušan coins, which represent him only twice or thrice. Armenia certainly knew him, and he figures under his Greek name in the Arsacidian temple at Persepolis, while the Commagène monument expressly equates him with Zeus.

The Arabissos inscription is ambiguous. It reads: "The Mazdean Religion who is queen, sister and wife speaks thus: I am the wife of Bel, the king. Then Bel spoke thus to the Mazdean Religion: My sister, you are wise and more beautiful than the goddesses, which is the reason why I have taken you as my wife." This is an Iranian god, since he is both brother and spouse of the Mazdean Religion, although he has taken on here a foreign name: *Bel*. But who can he be? Either Ōhrmazd (since it is the *Mazdean* religion) or, as Reichelt prefers, Mithra, who, elsewhere too, figures in this region and epoch as the supreme God.

The Arsacid kings of Pontus and Armenia frequently bear the name Mithridates¹. Mithra in Armenia has a serious rival only in Vahagn.

On Mithra's supremacy, the evidence in our datable sources is confirmed by the Avesta. As Tavadia points out², the third chapter of the *Vidēvdāt* opens by describing the first blissful abode as the place where the rites are performed with all the requisite accessories, wood for fuel, the *barəsman*, milk or meat, and the mortar for pounding the *haoma*. Now, this cult is surprisingly not addressed to Ahura Mazdā, but to Mithra (and to his assistant Rāma)³.

Vohu Manah seems to have been particularly venerated; indeed Strabo mentions some statues of Omanos⁴, and the inscription, images of Lord Vahman. His special position

1 CUMONT, *Textes et monuments*, II, 77 sq.

2 Ormazd and Ahriman, a History of the dualistic view of life (review of J.D-G., *Ormazd et Ahriman*), *Journ. Bombay Branch Roy. Asiatic Soc.*, 1954, p. 40.

3 The arrangement of the *Yašts*, as elucidated by Hartman, quoted above p.92, would be evidence in this direction.

4 Omanos is interpreted differently by DARMESTETER, *Zend-Avesta*, II, 366, and by MARKWART, *Wehrot und Arang*, 129 sq.

in the cult accords well with the fact that it is Vohu Manah, of all the Aməša Spəntas, who seems to have been equated with Mithra.

What about Zurvān? What position did he hold during the Arsacid period? His name is not attested even once.

Some would find his name in the inscription on the Commagène monument. In two different passages of this inscription, a distinction is made between *aiōn apeiros* and *chronos apeiros*, but this owes nothing to Iran.

A third passage enumerates the gods, and Junker and Schaeder claim that Zurvān is concealed in it, but they do not agree on the way in which this was done. The list in question is as follows :

Zeus Oromasdes (Ahuramazda)
Apollo Mithras Hélios Hermès¹
Artagnès (Vərəθrayna) Héraclès Arès
My all-nurturing country, Commagène.

Junker sees in Apollo-Mithras-Hélios-Hermès the four-fold god with "four faces" or "in four persons"². For Schaeder, followed notably by Nyberg and Christensen, it is the four gods on the list (including the goddess Commagène) who represent Zurvān's four facets.

But why is Zurvān not named?³

We should hence, in my opinion, definitely reject this interpretation, and thus clear the way for the one advanced by Dumézil⁴. The first two gods represent the function of sovereignty under its two aspects, while Artagnès-Héraclès-Arès represent the warrior function, and "my all-nurturing country, Commagène" just as pertinently represents the nourishing function. The list corresponds almost exactly with that of the Mitanni gods.

In any case these gods are purely Iranian, since their list is only explained by Iran. The Greek names they bear are merely a veneer.

The most important of these four gods was undoubtedly Mithra, although he is—traditionally—placed second. For he is equated with three Greek gods, Apollo, Hélios and Hermès. He is likewise found at Arsameia on the Nymphaeos where Antiochus raised a monument to his father, Mithradates (circa 69-34)⁵.

Antiochus also had his own Tychè, as had the other kings of his time, and earlier, the Greek cities.

1 On the identification with Hermès, cf. the Mithraic inscription *Deo invicto Mithrae Mercurio*, and the note of JALABERT-MOUTERDE, 16 : the planet assigned by the Persians to Mithra is given by the Greeks to Apollo or Hermès. Another reason for identifying them is that both are psychopomps. But in the last analysis it is Mithra's identification with Nabū which explains the Mithras-Hermès equation.

2 MIGNE, *Patrol. gr.*, I, 1461; KESSLER, *Mani*, 403.

3 "Why is this divine unity so veiled" asks NOCK, *Harvard Theol. Rev.*, 1934, 81.

4 *Jupiter Mars Quirinus*, 1941, 63.

5 F. DÖRNER and Theresa GOELL, *Arsameia am Nymphaeos*, Berlin 1963.; H. DÖRRIE, *Der Königs kult des Antiochos von Kommagene*, Göttingen 1964.

3) *Mithras and Time in the Mysteries*: Wikander¹ has unsuccessfully tried to prove that the Mithras of the Mysteries is not the Iranian Mithra. The name alone is sufficient to betray his Iranian origin.

The epithet *Nabarzes* often given to him is Iranian too. We should, with Markwart and Zaehner², interpret it as Av. *nā bərəzā* (*vir magnus*)³.

Iranian too, is the formula *Nama Sebesio*, in which we can recognize Av. *nəmah* "praise"⁴, and, less certainly, Av. *saošyant* "saviour".

Mithras in the Mysteries, as in Iran, was a solar and moral God. His Mysteries differed from all the others in the discipline it imposed on its followers, a trait which is not unrelated to the ethical dualism characterizing the Iranian religion.

That Mithra was already a saviour-God in his homeland is attested, as early as the 4th century B. C., by names like *Mithrobouzanès*, and later by Sasanian seals⁵. In the Mysteries, it was apparently by the bull-sacrifice that Mithras performed his task of salvation.

Was Mithras awaited as the Saviour coming at the end of time?

This thesis has been defended by Windischmann, Darmesteter and Cumont⁶, and in our time by Widengren. See below, p. 180.

Was Mithra the mediator between this world, held in thrall by Ahriman, and a supreme God whose identity we have yet to determine? This role would conform to the theme of Mithra's mediation, of which there are several versions known. According to Plutarch: "Oromazes resembles chiefly light and Areimanios, on the contrary, darkness and ignorance, and between the two is Mithra; wherefore the Persians also call him the mediator (*mēsiten*)"; with Bērūnī, Mithra is intermediate between light and darkness; with Eznik he is a judge, that is to say, an intermediary also, between Ōhrmazd and Ahriman; finally, according to a passage in Porphyrius, he is the demiurge⁷.

1 *Etudes sur les mystères de Mithra*, Lund 1950. Refutation by WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufg.*, 114 sq.

2 Postscript to Zurvan, *BSOAS*, 1955, 240.—WIDENGREN's explanation, *Stand u. Aufg.*, 116, n. 210, of *na* as "the negation" plus *barz* "great", hence "such as there is no greater", supposes an unwarranted kind of compound. Hence it cannot be accepted, and the parallelism with *invictus* and *anikētos* is misleading.—The comparison with Persian *nabard* "victor" is phonetically impossible.

3 Can we compare it with the term employed by the Sakas of Khotan to designate the Buddha: *balyä* "the great one"? At any rate it recalls the *Burzēn Mihr* fire.

4 The explanation of *nama*, which is known to all beginners in Avestan, was given by SPIEGEL, *Eran. Altertumskunde*, 2, 84, n. 4, and by CUMONT, *Textes*, I, 314, n. 2, before ROSTOVITZEFF asked Benveniste for it, and published it in *Excavations at Dura-Europos*, Yale 1939, 122.

5 SCHEFTELOWITZ, *Acta Orientalia*, XI, 305. But see BENVENISTE, *Titres et noms propres en iranien ancien*, Paris 1966, 105 sq.

6 WINDISCHMANN, *Mithra*, 1859, 73; DARMESTER, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1877, 328; CUMONT, *Les religions orientales*,⁴ 1929, 147 sq.

7 But we must reject Mithra as "the contract between the Sun and Moon", which is a wrong translation of *Yt* 6.5, as GERSHEVITCH saw, *The Avestan Hymn*, 228.—We have seen before, p. 124 n. 1, how Kuiper interprets Mit(h)ra's role as mediator.

Numerous reliefs and statues of a God with a human or lion head, whose body is wrapped in the coils of a serpent, unquestionably represent Aiōn, according to an iconography which, as Pettazzoni has shown¹, was elaborated in Egypt. The serpent, the Signs of the Zodiac, the keys to open and close the doors to luminaries or souls, the four wings symbolizing the seasons and winds are all characteristic of a great cosmic god; while the lion-head as well as the serpent recall the Aiōn of magic papyri².

We can nonetheless wonder if, in the play of equivalences of which we have already noted many examples, Aiōn is not something else as well³.

What connection is there between reliefs of Mithras as bull-slayer and Pahlavi texts in which the primal bull is slain by Ahriman? In our time, some have expressed the opinion that the reliefs, which are seven centuries older than datable Pahlavi texts, also represent the older doctrine: originally, Mithra was the slayer of the bull, but as a consequence of the Zoroastrian condemnation of blood sacrifice, this role was transferred to Ahriman. But only recently, Gershevitch⁴ has given good reasons for coming back to the current interpretation, which Cumont had accepted: the role of bull-slayer, originally vested in Ahriman, passed to Mithras as the giver of life.

This interpretation seems confirmed by the identification of Mithras to Ahriman. For it becomes clear, that just as the reliefs of Mithras the reaper depict Mithras as Saturn, and those of Mithras carrying the world evoke a Mithras-Atlas, so too, Mithras as bull-slayer assumes a function of Ahriman⁵.

It would be a mistake to see in Mithraism a supreme god situated beyond this world, like the "unknown Father" of the Gnostics⁶. Jupiter-Caelus, even when called *summus exsuperantissimus* (which translated the Greek ὑψίστος), remains a cosmic god just as the mystic of Aiōn, is a cosmic mystic⁷.

It would be just as erroneous to seek one name only for this great god. In accordance with the syncretistic character of Mithraism, he had many. But there is no indication that Zurvān was one of them.

Iranian influence was exercised during the hellenistic epoch on Christianity, Gnosticism, Manichaeism, etc. But as these movements depended also, more or less directly, on Judaism, we should first study what the latter owed to Iran.

1 La figura mostruosa del Tempo nella religione mitriaca, *Antiquité classique*, 1949, 265 sq. See also, FESTUGIÈRE, *Rev. d'Égyptol.*, 1951, 63 sq.

2 Cf. above, p. 171.

3 Cf. our article in *La Nouvelle Clío*, X, 1960, Aiōn et le Léontocéphale, Mithras et Ahriman, of which the conclusion is taken up in the text.

4 *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge 1959, 62 sq.—However, KUIPER, *IIIJ*, 1961, 36 sq., is of another opinion.

5 One can say that in this sense Mithras has contributed to a *mögliche Beseitigung des Dualismus* as expressed by HUMBACH, *Festgabe Lommel*, Frankfurt 1960, 79, and that this was perhaps a reason for calling him *mesitēs* (Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 46). But HUMBACH's article is generally vitiated by a wrong interpretation of Μοῖδοοαο: cf., in the same volume, J. DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN, *De la dicéphalie dans l'iconographie mazdèenne*, 35 sq.

6 Cf. R. M. GRANT, *Gnosticism and early Christianity*, New York 1959.

7 Cf., for the first, CUMONT, *Archiv f. Religionswiss.*, 1906, 236 sq., and for the second ZEPF, *ibid.*, 1927 225 sq.

5. Iran and Israel

Although the Jews felt themselves in honour bound not to acknowledge any debt to their neighbours in religious matters—Yahweh being a jealous god—they did adopt several religious features from external sources. This is easy to show on several minor points; less so in more important questions like dualism, angelology, and eschatology. It should, however, be stressed, with Bertholet¹, that in spite of all these borrowings, the Jewish religion retained its individuality. Honour was safe, after all.

The cosmopolitan empire of the Persians, and, later, that of Alexander had the result in all the Near East, of detaching religion from politics. We know that this transformation was manifested in Greek mentality, by a more and more apolitical philosophy, centred on the happiness of the individual, and by the decline of national cults for the benefit of a universalistic theism. The religion of Yahweh underwent a similar evolution, which can be accounted for, as in the case of the Greeks, without the influence of the doctrine of Zarathuštra.

Does the image of Yahweh, in particular, owe anything to Mazdā? The Book of Daniel, most suspected of borrowing from Iran, depicts the god in the form continued in our traditional conception of God the Father: as that of an old man "with hair like the pure wool and raiment as white as snow". Even admitting that a Jew could not have drawn this imagery from his national tradition, we do not see what might have served him as model in Iran, where no text gives such a description of Ahura Mazdā.

¹ *Das religionsgeschichtliche Problem des Spätjudentums*, 1909.—The influence of Iran on post-Exilic Judaism has been estimated as decisive not only by Iranists like Mills who, in somewhat prolix style, has dealt with the question in several books, from *Zarathuštra, the Achaemenids and Israel*, 1906, to *Our own Religion in ancient Persia*, Leipzig 1913, but also by numerous theologians like STAVE, *Ueber den Einfluss des Parsismus auf das Judentum*, Haarlem 1898, and E. BÖKLEN, *Die Verwandtschaft der jüdisch-christlichen mit der parsischen Eschatologie*, 1902, or by BOUSSET, whose *Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, in its 3rd edition, reviewed by GRESSMANN, Tübingen 1926, is still the best representative of this tendency. The same view is defended by a scholar who seems equally at home in Semitic and Iranian studies, namely, G. Widengren; besides his *Stand und Aufgaben*, we should mention his *Juifs et Iraniens à l'époque des Parthes, Vetus Testamentum*, supplement IV, 1957, 223 sq. which gives an additional bibliography, and *Iranisch-Semitische Kulturbegegnung*, Köln 1960.

The historian E. MEYER also shared these views in his *Geschichte des Altertums* and, more fully, in his *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, II, 1921. Von GALL, in his *Basileia tou Theou*, Heidelberg 1926, gives a detailed list of points of similarity, concluding in favour of a Jewish dependence on Iran.

As for Ch. AUTRAN, author of *Mithra, Zoroastre et la préhistoire aryenne du christianisme*, 1935, and *La préhistoire du christianisme*, 2 vols., 1941-1944, we can see in him one of the victims who, as Schaefer used to say, periodically yield to the temptation of seeking in Iran the secret sources of Christianity. Earlier Volney, to name only the most famous of them, attributed to Parsi influence, such beliefs appearing in post-exilic Judaism as the immortality of the soul, hell and paradise, the revolt of the Angel, chief author of the ills of mankind, etc. (*Les ruines*, 1791, chap. 21).

Many authors still accept this hypothesis as a demonstrated fact, as for instance, Rudolf OTTO, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn*, 1934. On the other hand, some, following in the tracks of KOHUT, *Ueber die jüdische Angelologie und Eschatologie*, 1866, and of GASTER, *ERE*, IX, 637 sq., appear to refuse any borrowing from the Gentiles. SCHEFTELOWITZ, in *Die altpersische Religion und das Judentum*, Tübingen 1920, displays such zeal in defending his native religion against all suspicion of dependence that he often shoots beyond the mark. When he finds the same fact on both sides, he refuses to admit an Iranian origin even if it is attested much later on the Jewish side. For instance, the dogma that the souls will enjoy God's company, and that Paradise is an abode of light, a belief already taught by Zarathuštra, does not appear in Jewish literature before the Talmud, Enoch and the Psalms of Solomon. Nonetheless, according to SCHEFTELOWITZ, it must be of Jewish provenance.

Christian scholars, like Father J. LAGRANGE, who, in his article *La religion des Perses, la réforme de Zoroastre et le judaïsme*, *Revue biblique*, 1904, is one of the few to adopt Darmesteter's view on the Philonian origin of the *Gāthās*; the Lutheran Bishop, N. SÖDERBLOM in the last part of *La vie future d'après le mazdéisme*, 1901; and the Rev. J. H. MOULTON, *Early Zoroastrianism*, London 1913, chap. 9, found it difficult, as Christians, to admit that Iran exercised any great influence on the origins of their religion. The Rev. James Moffatt, as we shall see below, when treating of Christianity, took up a more liberal attitude. See now, F. KÖNIG, *Zarathustras Jenseitsvorstellungen u. das Alte Testament*, 1964.

Abstract entities, diversifying the divine power, make their appearance in Jewish literature. The "Wisdom of God" is mentioned in Proverbs, Jesus ben Sirach, the Wisdom of Solomon, the Slavonic Enoch, etc. She is the beloved and the counsellor of the Lord, the friend and guide of men. Her intrusion into Judaism is so abrupt that *a priori* a foreign influence seems likely. But we are embarrassed to find for her an Iranian prototype. Was it Good Mind or Devotion?

Added to Wisdom, there is the Spirit or Holy Spirit comparable to Spēta Mainyu, as well as the six powers of God according to Philo's speculation.

The Bounteous Immortals of Iran were known to the Greeks, and it is not surprising that Philo knew them. Indeed¹, Philo mentions the Persian doctrine of the virtues of God as something familiar. But the resemblance does not extend to individual correspondences, it is limited to a general analogy. After all, the Jews could have developed the faculty of abstraction under the general influence of hellenism.

Jewish texts also speak of a more physical quality of God, the glory or splendour of Yahweh (*kebōd Yahweh*). The term was already current in the ancient tradition, and it is but natural that the Apocalypse should have made place for it. Its resemblance to Av. *xvarənah* may therefore be, contrary to the view of von Gall, *Basileia tou Theou*, 238, a pure convergence.

The conception of Satan underwent a radical change².

The *Manual of Discipline*, found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, gives us a small treatise on the two spirits³: Several scholars have supported an Iranian origin for this doctrine, but decisive proof is still lacking⁴.

Another new idea is that of the fallen Angels. For the brief reference in Genesis, chapter 6, verse 4, to the Sons of God marrying the daughters of men, who gave birth to a race of heroes, is not sufficient source for the development in Enoch and the Book of Jubilees, of the myth of the Fall as we know it. But the idea is Gnostic, and it resembles the Iranian myth of the *daēvas* only distantly. There is a world of difference between a fall and a choice. . . In fact, the Jewish dualism does not seem to have been imported in one piece, "ready-made", but to have evolved gradually. Hence in the Slavonic Enoch, as noted by Otto, *Reich Gottes*, 1934, 150, the dualism is still only a cosmic one, between light on high and darkness below; it is already combined with the opposition Life-Death, but not yet with that of Good and Evil: for God "found good" also the dark lower creation (Slavonic Enoch, 26), ruled over by Archas.

Satan and his demons undoubtedly bear a great resemblance to Aṇra Mainyu and his cohorts. But probably there was no direct borrowing.

After the Exile, traditional expectations of a Messiah-King, from the House of David, who would restore Israel as an independent nation and cause her to triumph over her enemies,

1 As observed in Nock, *Journ. Hell. Stud.*, 1929, 114.

2 J. D-G., *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1953, 73 sq.

3 The text is found in the work of DUPONT-SOMMER, *Les écrits esséniens découverts près de la mer Morte*, 1958, a book which was henceforth a classic.

4 This theory, supported notably by J. D-G., *Le zervanisme et les manuscrits de la mer Morte*, III, 1957, 96, is not accepted by C. COLPE, *Werfen die neuen Funde vom Toten Meer Licht auf das Verhältnis von iranischer und jüdischer Religion?*, in *Akten des 24. Orientalisten-Kongresses*, Munich 1957, 479 sq.

yielded to a conception at once more ethical and universal. The salvation of Israel was still essential, but it was to take place in the setting of a general renovation. The appearance of the Saviour would signify the end of this creation and the birth of a new world; his judgment of the enemies of Israel would be a general judgment, separating mankind into the good and the wicked.

The transformation was a gradual one, so that, for instance, to the second Isaiah, the hope of a universal Kingdom of God, a hope which had replaced that of Israel's restoration, had nothing eschatological about it: it had nothing to do with the end of the world, a notion unknown to this author. In spite of this, the new conception with its universal and moral character recalls Iran so strongly, that several scholars do not hesitate to attribute it, with Bousset, to the direct influence of that country, especially as there was no personality powerful enough in Israel during the last centuries before our era, who could account for such a profound change.

However, the resemblance between the Messiah and the Saošyant remains rather vague and general unless we make much of the following points: The notion of an eschatological Saviour appears linked, in Iran as in Judaism, with that of a Primal Man. On the other hand, the Saviour himself may be a victim, so that he redeems himself in redeeming mankind. This requires closer examination.

First, can the Son of Man be compared to Gayōmart? The former, as he appears in Daniel and Enoch, seems to be a purely eschatological figure, quite distinct from the Primal Being mentioned by Job and Ezekiel¹. All the same, the very expression "Son of God" does imply a sort of archetype or prototype. But it is on the Iranian side that the comparison is wanting, for Gayōmart was essentially a cosmogonical figure, and is not attested in an eschatological role before the Pahlavi books. The fact that the *Avesta* places him in the same series as Zarathuštra and the Saošyant, in no way implies that all three were considered to be one and the same being, or even in the same line of descent.

As to the second point, the notion of a saved Saviour, *der erlöste Erlöser*, whatever its starting point in Judaism—probably Isaiah's Man of Sorrows (chapter 53) — or its affinity with the widespread theme of the Suffering Just One, its appearance in Iran is, except for a late and dubious allusion, strictly limited to Manichaeism, so that Reitzenstein's conjecture of an Iranian *Erlösungsmysterium* is baseless, unless we contend that everything in Manichaeism comes from Iran, which is begging the question.

A third possibility of exact comparison is indicated by Widengren²: the notion of a god incarnate, of a divine saviour, has its origin in Mithraism. But, on the one hand, the legendary data he has collected on the religious role of caves in Afghanistan, Iran, Turkestan, Armenia and Asia-Minor are of late date and uncertain interpretation; and, on the other, the texts he takes as his basis, are not conclusive. The *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* and the Chronicle of Zuqnin are Christian works going back no earlier than the 4th century A.D.,

1 Job, 15. 7-8: "Art thou the first man that was born? Or wast thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God?" Ezekiel, 28, 2 sq.: "Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, etc."

2 *Stand und Aufgaben*, 105 sq; *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung*, 62 sq. A more detailed discussion on WIDENGREN's theory is given in D-G., *Die Magier in Bethleem und Mithras als Erlöser*?, *ZDMG*, 1962.

and in any case their allusions to Mithraism are very veiled¹. Another text is the apocrypha, partly preserved in quotations and in Greek or Latin adaptations, and probably entitled *Oracles of King Hystaspes* (Chrēseis Hystaspou tou Basileōs)². In this text, as in all the others, the Zoroaster legend recounted in the *Dēnkart*, *Pseudo-Clementinae*, and the writings of Theodore bar Konaï on Zoroaster's prophecy regarding the Messiah, it would be foolhardy to see the Iranian source of Christian Messianism.

The only point attested prior to Christianity is the star which appeared at the birth and accession of Mithridates Eupator. Even if the motif of the cave and the star are very ancient, nothing goes to prove that their occurrence together in the legend of a saviour, in Iran, was prior (and foreign) to the legend of the Nativity. It seems more likely that it was the Christian apologists who transposed and applied to Iran and the Magi a story originally elaborated about Jesus.

In a recent article³, J. Hinnells has shown Iranian influence in the saviour's defeat of the demons, his gathering of men for the judgment scene, his raising of the dead, and his administration of the judgment. The occasion of this influence "lay in the Jewish-Parthian contacts which began in the 2nd century B.C., but which came to a climax in the middle of the 1st century B.C."

The idea of dividing history into periods is not necessarily Iranian. The periods of Daniel do bring to mind the four metallic ages symbolized by the tree in the Bahman Yašt, but then they do equally, a myth attested much earlier with Hesiod. The myth doubtless sprang up somewhere in Asia-Minor with the mining of iron and was propagated with it.

The Babylonians, on the other hand (according to Berossus who is cited by Seneca), conceived history as a series of conflagrations and deluges provoked by certain planetary conjunctions.

The Numbers of Jewish chronology do not evince a special affinity with Iran. They vary from four to seven thousand years, and not once do we find the nine, ten or twelve thousand years of Mazdeanism or Zurvānism⁴.

An Iranian influence on Palestine has been conjectured in respect of some other points of resemblance: the last judgment, the book in heaven in which are recorded men's good and evil deeds, the resurrection and last transformation of the world⁵.

1 MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Leggende*, 63, declares that the Chronicle of Zuqnin is imbued with Iranian elements. WIDENGREN has undertaken in *Iranisch-Semitische Kultur.*, 73 sq., to bring these out. But most of those he finds, light, life, etc., are simply Gnostic—and it has not been demonstrated in spite of Widengren, see below, that Gnosticism comes from Iran; the square shape of the universe has nothing to do with the *palkān i asmān* which, as Pagliaro has shown, *Studi. Levi della Vida*, II, 1956, 252 sq., is the celestial vault. Little else is left: only enough to prove that the authors knew how to give their writings some Iranian "local colour".

2 BIDEZ-CUMONT, *Les mages hellénisés*, I, 215 sq., II, 361 sq.

3 *Numen*, 1969, 161 sq.

4 Von GALL gives himself unnecessary trouble, *Basileia*, 275, trying to reconcile the two traditions.

5 See J. D-G., *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 79 sq., which gives two other coincidences in detail which cannot be fortuitous: the complaint of the animals in the Slavonic Enoch which recalls that of the Ox in the *Gāthās*, and the demon Asmodeus in Tobit, in which we can recognize the *daēva* Fury, *Aēšma daēva*.—Add H. CORNELIS, O. P., La resurrection de la chair, et les croyances païennes sur les fins dernières, in *La Résurrection de la chair*, 1962, 21 sq. See also Rudolf MAYER, *Die biblische Vorstellung vom Weltenbrand*, Bonn 1956. On Iranian traits in the Book of Esther, see notably J. LEWY, The Feast of 14th day of Adar, *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 1939, 127, sq. *Βορυσάκος* (Esth. 3,1) derived from *baga*; *Φορβάρια* (old name of the *pārim*) (Esth., 9,26 sq.) reflecting *fravahr*. More recently, RINGGREN, *Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok*, 1955, 1 sq.—See also, J. DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN, Les noms des eunuques d'Assuérus, *Muséon*, 1953, 105 sq.

6. Iran and the Sources of Christianity

In the borrowing from Iran into Christianity, we should, in principle, distinguish between what came via Judaism and what came directly¹. But there are few facts available for making such a distinction².

"By common consent it is recognized", writes Moffatt, p. 769, "that behind the 'seven holy angels' of the Apocalypse, who continue the doctrine of Enoch and Tobit, there lies the Iranian concept of the Amšāspands".

On the contrary, the belief in guardian angels does not appear in the Judaeo-Christian tradition before the New Testament (Matthew, 18. 10; Acts, 12. 15; Apocal., 1. 16, 20). Possibly the belief in *fravašis* merged with that of the Greeks and Romans in protective *genii*.

Most of the alleged Iranian borrowings relate to the last end. The idea of resurrection which was known to Judaism, but which became a general belief only with the Christians, had been in existence in Iran for centuries, according to Theopompus (cited by Diogenes Laertius and Aeneas of Gaza). The objections raised by Söderblom against such a filiation are refuted by Clemen, p. 150.

Clemen admits, p. 151, with Bousset, that the heavenly journey of the soul and the Ascension of Jesus are Iranian motifs.

The battle between Ōhrmazd and Ahriman over the soul of the deceased referred to in *Vidēvdāt*, 7. 52 and 19. 28, may be at the origin of the statement in Judas' Epistle that Michael and the Devil fought over the body of Moses. The resemblance is heightened in the *Midras rabbā* (*ad* Deuter., 31. 14), where Samaël and Michael do battle, not over the body of Moses, but over his soul.

The comparison of the resurrected body with a celestial vestment undoubtedly recalls the investitures abounding in Mazdean theology. And the notion that the bodies of the righteous will shine is best explained (Clemen, p. 153) by the Persian religion of light.

The idea of a Messianic meal recalls the food of immortality which, at the Renovation, will consist of white *hōm* and the fat of the immolated bull.

St. Matthew's description of hell, as an abode of darkness and cold, vaguely evokes the fireless hell of the Mazdeans (Clemen, p. 153).

But the slaying of a dragon during the final battle is a widely known motif and if it is of foreign provenance, it could stem from Babylonia just as well as from Iran. As for the two prophets, in the 13th Book of Revelation, who will prelude the coming of the last Saviour, we can hardly compare them, as do Böklen, Bousset and Moffatt (Clemen, p. 144), with the Saviours of the Mazdean apocalypse who will precede the Saošyant by 1 000 and 2 000 years respectively. Finally, Söderblom is probably right, as opposed to Böklen and Bousset (Clemen, p. 139), when he says that the worsening of ills preceding the last end appears only late in the Iranian apocalypse (in the *Bahman Yašt*), whereas it accords with the pessimism of subjugated Israel. However, it has a parallel in India (cf. above, p. 146), which seems to confirm its antiquity.

1 This distinction is indicated by MOFFATT, Zoroastrianism and primitive Christianity, *Hibbert Journal*, 1903, 763 sq., and 1904, 347 sq. A copious catalogue of possible borrowings from Iran into Christianity is included and discussed in C. CLEMEN's, *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testamentes*, Giessen 2nd ed., 1924.

2 On the divine Saviour, God incarnate, see above, Iran and Israel.

The most interesting comparison is, without a doubt, that made by Clemen, p. 319, between Paul delivering a murderer to Satan, so that at the last judgment his soul might be saved (I Cor., 5.5), and the Parsi idea of expiation by death: according to the *Šāyast-nē-šāyast*, 8.5 sq. (and already *Vidēvdāt*, 3.20 and 9.49), one guilty of a mortal sin, whose head is cut off on the order of the high-priest, is purged of his suffering in the next world.

On the other hand, certain comparisons not mentioned above, but found in Clemen, are hardly convincing. For instance, how can the three impure spirits issuing from the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, be said to resemble the demoniac animals enumerated in *Vidēvdāt*, 14.5 and 18.73?

To sum up, these comparisons are interesting and it would be unwise to deny an Iranian influence on Christianity, either directly or through Judaism. But generally, one concludes too readily as to a transfer of ideas from Iran to Christianity, without envisaging the opposite possibility. In one instance at least, we think we can prove¹, a borrowing from Christianity into Iran: namely the formula "Fear not", which passed from Luke's Gospel into the legend of Vištāspa.

7. Iran and Gnosticism

Adolf Harnack has defined Gnosticism as "the acute hellenizing of Christianity", a definition not fashionable any more, since attempts have been made at showing that Gnosticism was not a deviation from Christianity, but an independent movement², that it was greatly indebted to eastern religions³; and that its notion of gnosis bore little resemblance to the Greek concept of knowledge.

Whereas Anz studied only the myth of the soul's ascent through the celestial spheres, attributing its origin to Babylonia, Bousset and Reitzenstein studied also Primal Man and the notion of the redeemed redeemer, tracing them back to a supposed Iranian original with secondary Babylonian elements. Reitzenstein is guilty of some gross anachronisms—in the fever of the Iranian discoveries—made at the beginning of the century—which excuses him somewhat. On the ground that a Manichaean hymn contains the name of Zarathuštra, Reitzenstein attributes to him, although he had been dead for one thousand years, the doctrine contained in the hymn, namely, the myth of the soul. This anachronism was exposed by Henning⁴: "the name of Zarathuštra is the only thing Zoroastrian in the hymn; they could just as well have put that of Seth, the Buddha, Jesus or Mani, it would not have changed the contents in the least".

That Gnosticism owed its structure to Greece, although part of its material was oriental in origin, was Schaefer's suggestion in his lecture, *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems*, 1927. This partial reversion to Harnack's idea was criticized by H. Jonas, *Gnosis und*

1 Cf. p. 228.

2 See R. GRANT, *Gnosticism and early Christianity*, New York 1959 and CORNELIS-LÉONARD, *La gnose éternelle*, 1959. However, SIMONE PÈTREMENT, in a long article, *La notion du gnosticisme*, *Rev. de métaph. et de mor.*, 1960, 385 sq., demonstrates all this notion owes to Christianity. See lastly, *Rev. mét. et mor.*, 1969.

3 The oriental element was stressed by ANZ, *Ursprung des Gnostizismus*, 1897; by BOUSSET, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, 1907; by REITZENSTEIN, *Poimandres*, 1906; *Die Göttin Psyche*, 1917; *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 3rd edition, 1927, *Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*, 1921, and, with SCHAEFER, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, Leipzig 1926.

4 In his publication of the hymn in question (M 7), *Mir. Man.*, III, SBAW, 1932, 872.

spätantiker Geist, Göttingen 1934, who stressed the irrational character of the term gnosis, and the fact that Gnosticism was not a speculative so much as a mythological system.

Jonas also pointed out the defect in Reitzenstein's method which, for instance, projects a Gnostic myth, that of Anthropos in the *Poimandrès*, into a distant Iranian past which can then be conveniently invoked as its source¹.

Zaehner, observing² that "the idea that the evil deity has control of this world and that the good deity rules on high and far removed from the world is pure Gnosticism", concludes that "the idea is un-Iranian and would, therefore, be borrowed from a foreign source", thus taking "Gnostic" and "Iranian" as mutually exclusive terms.

But J. Doresse³ discovers in the Gnostic books of Nag-Hammadi some "indubitably Iranian" elements. First, there is the theme of the three primordial "roots": Light, Darkness and the intermediate Spirit—as Iran conceived it, in analogous terms, in the *Bundahišn*. There is the notion of the highest god, without beginning or end; that of the supreme Tetrad, and that of all-powerful Wisdom. There is the horrible silhouette of the lion-headed and serpent-bodied Ialdabaoth so near to Mithraic statues of Aion, and also to Ahriman and the spirits of evil, these too being the rivals of the highest God. There is the Zurvānist theory of the "two souls", a preliminary sketch for the Gnostic notion of "the counterfeiting spirit" which is also found in the teachings of the sectaries of the Dead Sea. There is the very notion of Gnosis, attested in Iranian texts by explicit recurrence of the questions "Who am I? To whom do I belong? Whence have I come? And where am I returning to?" There are, not only the figures of saviours born of the seed of Zoroaster—becoming with our Gnostics "the seed of the great Seth"—but also, that very well defined theme which has been known since Reitzenstein discerned its main outlines, as the myth of the "Saviour saved", which is that of a higher light power who is at work freeing the sparks of his own light which are dispersed throughout the lower creation. There are, again, many of the facts and images of this salvation; the glorious raiment put on by the Enlighteners when traversing the heavens, and the description of the celestial goal as a Treasury. Finally, and even more characteristically, there is the geographical setting in which these revelations occur, for our apocrypha situate the most mystic and secret spot of the universe on the dark shores of the eastern Ocean, on that Mountain of Lights in which is the Cave of the Magi"⁴.

Widengren goes still further, since, for him⁵, all that is essential in Gnosticism, its very principle even, is Iranian. He first compares the notion of redemption in Iran and India and claims it is virtually the same on both sides, proceeding as it does from the wish to transcend the world by uniting one's soul with the Great Soul.

1 Whereas C. KRAELING gives a large part to Iran in his article The Influence of Iranian Religion upon Hellenistic syncretism in the Orient, in *Studies...Pavry*, 223 sq., Fr. FESTUGIERE, adopts a decidedly evasive attitude in his four volumes on *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 1949-1953. He contents himself with writing a history of Hermetism "plutôt, dit-il, que de me perdre dans la recherche, assez vaine, des sources grecques, juives, égyptiennes ou iraniennes de ces doctrines", but in fact he derives everything from Plato. A general exposé of Gnosticism is given by JONAS, *The gnostic Religion*, New York 1958.

2 *Zurvan*, 79.

3 *Les livres secrets des gnostiques d'Égypte*, 1958, 312.

4 See also the notes of DORESSE, p. 345 sq.

5 Der iranische Hintergrund der Gnosis, *ZRGG*, 1952, Heft 2. This article has been criticized by Alois CLOSS, *Die gnostische Erlösungsidee und Zarathushtra*, *Festschrift Schütz*, Graz-Köln, 1954.

We can reply that on the Iranian side the evidence for this pessimistic anti-cosmic strain, admittedly not commonly imputed to Iran, is meagre indeed, and has generally been overlaid and held in check by Zarathuštra's ethical and optimistic dualism.

The means of salvation were present in the Gāthic system, in the form of man's union with the entities, especially in the union of his Vohu Manah with what later came to be called the "Great Vohu Manah" (Manwahrnēd). This was studied by Widengren in his book: *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God*, Upsala 1945. His principal thesis is plausible, even if we refuse to allow that *avarhānē* (Y 33.5) is a reference to ecstasy and not to death.

The role of Vohu Manah is attested in later Mazdeanism, in *Vidēvdāt*, 19.31 sq., where Vohu Manah welcomes the soul to heaven and accompanies it to the golden throne of Ahura Mazdā, a scene which, as Wikander observed, has an Indo-Iranian origin¹.

The remaining evidence is less important, being either less precise or of later date. Less precise is the use of the concept "knowledge" in the Gāthās. It is, of course, essential to know before choosing, but this is by no means the same as the gnosis, which is a direct means of salvation. Of later date are some Pahlavi passages, the commentary to the *Aogāmadaecā*, the *Pandnāmak*, 3, 5 and 31, as also the compound names meaning "saved by Mithra" or the like. To adduce these facts, as well as Zurvānism, as evidence in the present discussion, is really to beg the question, although we must admit, as far as the names containing Mithra are concerned, that their importance is greatly enhanced by the Avestan evidence on Vohu Manah, since the latter was according to Dumézil's system, the substitute for Mithra.

The *pièce de résistance* in Widengren's argument is the conception of the saved saviour. In the *Hymn of the Pearl*, for instance, the Saviour descends into Matter to save the pearl, which is the soul, or souls, but to accomplish this work of salvation he needs himself to be saved from the power of material existence. Widengren concludes from the presence of Parthian terms in this Syriac allegory, as to a Parthian origin for the work itself.

The symbolism of this well-known Syriac hymn, preserved in the *Acts of Thomas*, had been intensively studied by Reitzenstein². The pearl is a symbol of the soul, of the divine spark, which man, in the legend of the king's son, has lost and tries to retrieve.

Now Widengren supposes³ that this tale goes back to a Parthian original, because the Syriac text contains a number of Parthian loan-words. On the other hand, Wikander has shown⁴, in favour of an Iranian origin for the hymn, that in Persian the word *gohr* means both "pearl or jewel" and "substance or essence", also that according to Firdausi's *Šāhnāma*, during Xosrau's coronation a pearl is said to have issued from the Farr (or Glory) of God.

We can say, first of all, that the presence of Parthian loan-words in the Syriac text is easily explained as a reflection of the cultural relations generally existing between Iran and Syria during the Arsacid period, and not as a result of the Iranian origin of this particular text. Under the circumstances, Wikander's remarks must be judged in the context of the symbolism

1 Cf. below, p. 222 sq.

2 Whose entire prolific output is, as EDSMAN remarks, *Le baptême du feu*, 1940, 193, n. 4, but a commentary on this hymn.

3 Der iranische Hintergrund der Gnosis, in *Zeitschrift f. Religionsgesch.*, 1952, Heft 2.

4 In his review of EDSMAN's, *Le baptême du feu*, *Svensk Teol. Kvartalskrift*, 1941, 228 sq.

of the pearl, which is very widespread; too many people share with the Persians and Syrians a special quasi-magical respect for the pearl, for us to draw any conclusions as to the Iranian origin of the Syriac legend.

Indeed, even if we suppose a Parthian original for the *Hymn of the Pearl*, this would not exclude the possibility that the theme itself first originated elsewhere; either in Greece, as suggested by A. Closs (p. 74), or in Babylonia. Widengren himself had shown in his *Mesopotamian Elements in Manichaeism*, 1946, that the prototype of the Gnostic myth may have been the drama of Tammuz who descends, fights, suffers and is imprisoned before he rises from the dead, a myth already interpreted by a late Babylonian text, cited by Widengren (p. 178), as symbolizing the destiny of mankind.

Mandaeism is a religion of the Gnostic type, probably incorporating several elements of Iranian origin: the dualism of light and darkness with their two respective kings; the fate of the soul after death; the garments of light; the judgment of souls, etc.¹

8. Iran and Manichaeism

Whatever might have been the part of Iran in Gnosticism in general, Manichaeism is certainly a form of Gnosticism in which this part was especially great².

When the Manichaeans searched the Iranian religion for an equivalent of their "inaccessible" god, aloof from the world he did not create, they did not choose Ōhrmazd or Mithra, but Zurvān—that is, in the texts that were written in Persian. In the Parthian texts they used other terms, *bag* "god", *pidar*, "father", *rāštēgar* "chief judge", or *Srōšāv*³.

Ōhrmazd, in Manichaean as in Zurvānite speculation⁴, designated Primal Man, whose fall set off the temporal process⁵.

Mithra, likewise, plays an important role, conforming to that attested for him elsewhere⁶. In the Persian texts, Mihryazd ("the *yazata* Mithra") is the Living Spirit, both saviour and demiurge, which accords well with his role in the Mysteries. He is to save the soul of Primal Man (Ōhrmazd). He flays the Archons, and from their skin, flesh and bones, builds the universe (a cosmogonical sacrifice).

1 On Mandeism, see H.-Ch. PUECH in MORTIER and GORCE, *Histoire générale des religions*, 1945, 67 sq.; more recently, Lady E. DROWER, *Water into Wine*, London 1956 (where the Mandaean rites are compared with Christian and Parsi rites) and K. RUDOLPH, *Die Mandäer*, 2 vols., 1960-1961. Cf. also WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufgaben*, II, 96 sq., and *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit*, 1960, 56 sq.

2 On Manichaeism in general, which cannot be dealt with here, we have excellent books of H.-Ch. PUECH, *Le manichéisme*, 1949, WIDENGREN, *Mani und der Manichäismus*, 1961, and Asmussen's article in the *Historia Religionum*, Leyden 1969, 580 sq. On the relations between Manichaeism and Zurvānism, see WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufg.*, 126 sq. See also O. von WESENDONK, *Die Verwendung einiger iranischer Götternamen im Manichäismus, Monde oriental*, 7, 114 sq.

3 HENNING, *Mir. Man.*, III, 65 sq. The fact that Zurvān is absent from Parthian Manichaeism, whereas he is present in Persian Manichaeism, contradicts WIDENGREN's theory in *Stand u. Aufg.*, 113 and n. 200 on Medo-Parthian Zurvānism. Wikander, on the contrary, situates Zurvānism in Persia, by connecting it (without sufficient evidence) with the function of *herbad*. Cf. below, p. 189.

4 Cf. above, pp. 130 sq.

5 The inferior role played by Ōhrmazd did not prevent the Manichaeans from taking as the name of their own religion, that of the Mazdean religion, *dēn mazdēs* (*dyn m'zdys*), cf. HENNING, *JRAS*, 240, n. 3.

6 Cf. below, p. 232. CUMONT was only able to get a glimpse of Mithra's role as mediator in Manichaeism. When writing his *Fin du monde chez les mages occidentaux*, *RHR*, 1931, only two texts were known to him, those published respectively by F. MÜLLER, *Abh.*, Berlin 1904, and by von LE COQ, *Türk. Manich.*, *ibid.*, 1919. In the latter fragment, the 'true Mithra' is opposed to the 'false Mithra' who appears to be a sort of Anti-Christ, straddling a bull, pretending to be the true son of God and demanding to be worshipped.

In Parthian and Sogdian texts, Mihryazd or Mišēbayē is the Third Messenger (whose other name, Narisafyazd "the *yazata* Nairya Saṇha, i.e. Human Messenger"; in Persian, Rošnāhryazd "the *yazata* of the Realm of Light," was the only one known to Cumont). He is the inventor of a machine for recovering the particles of light, and the father of the twelve Virgins of Light (the twelve months). In order to seduce the Archons, he revealed himself as a female¹ to the males, and as a male to the females. The seed of the males fell on the ground; that part which met with moist earth gave birth to Mazan, who is slain by Adamas Light, one of the sons of the Living Spirit, Mihryazd. (Reading like a fragmented version of the Myth of Mithra killing the bull and creating the world). That part which fell on dry earth, gave rise to five trees, whence all vegetable life.

The females miscarry, and from their embryos spring the animal species.

The Amahraspands were likewise included in the Manichaean system, but solely as (luminous) elements. The *fravardin* co-mingled with them, in the sense of "ether or subtle air"².

A special fate was reserved in this system for Vahman (who, as we saw, occupied an important position in the Arsacid period in general, as Strabo and the Assur inscription testify). He is the "Lord of the Religion", fourth member of the Tetrad, etc³. Moreover, his name in all likelihood enters into that of Manwahnēd, the Great Soul, towards whom the souls rise to merge in him⁴.

The Earth, Spandarmad, according to a Sogdian fragment, was the fourth son of the Living Spirit⁵.

Narisah or Narisaf has been mentioned above.

Išya, the epithet, meaning "desirable, dear", of Airyaman, was connected, by Mani, with Jesus⁶.

Ahrmen, together with Āz "Concupiscence", was the principal adversary of Ōhrmazd⁷.

9. Iran and the legend of the Holy Grail

Several theories attempt to account for the legend of Parsifal and the Holy Grail, which is not explained by the literature of medieval Europe, by supposing that its sources are to be found in the East.

L. von Schröder⁸ connects, not very convincingly, the legend with Indian myths of the sun and moon.

Fr. R. Schröder⁹ traces its origin to Manichaeism—through the medium of the troubadours—whereas Fr. von Suhtschek¹⁰ searches for it in the direction of the Persian epic,

1 Some have not failed to see here additional proof of an androgynous Mithra, for whom the two principal pieces of evidence boil down, one to an error of Herodotus, the other to an error of the engraver. Cf. BOYCE, *Studies*. . . *Taqizadeh*, 1962, 44 sq.

2 HENNING, *Mir. Man.*, I; BOYCE, *BSOAS*, 1957, 311 n. 2; W. LENTZ, Mani und Zarathustra, *ZDMG*, 82, 200

3 HENNING, *Mir. Man.*, II, 70.

4 WIDENGREN, *The Great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God*, 1945.

5 LENTZ, *ZDMG*, 82, 199.

6 WESENDONK, *Die Verwendung* . . . , 158.

7 HENNING, *Mir. Man.*, I, 47. On the other demons, WESENDONK, *art. cit.*, 175, n. 2.

8 Die Wurzeln der Sage vom heiligen Graal, *SWAW*, 166 (1910), 16 sq.

9 FR. R. SCHRÖDER, *Die Parzivalfrage*, Munich 1928.

10 FR. V. SUHTSCHEK, Die iranischen Quellen in Wolframs Parzival, *ZDMG*, 1928, LXXXII sq.; see also *ZDMG*, 1930, *106 sq., *Forsch. u. Fortshr.*, 1931, 139 sq., and *Klio*, 1932, 50 sq.

a thesis opposed by Reichelt, but accepted—provided its import is not exaggerated—by Henning¹, who, unfortunately does not state his reasons.

More recently, Ringbom would find the solution of the problem in Mazdean Iran. His demonstration, running to a voluminous book, *Graaltempel und Paradies*, Stockholm 1951, takes as its starting point Strzygowski's explanation of a Sasanian silver dish², on which is depicted an edifice standing in a garden surrounded by an arcade of 22 arches. Ringbom, unlike Strzygowski and Reuther, is not satisfied with restoring the edifice, in which he sees a fire-temple, but claims to have found its site at Taxt i Soleimān, ancient Šīz, the sacred capital of the Sasanians. The excavations carried out there, with the assistance of the author, have so far yielded no trace of this gigantic arcade, nor any definite remains of the main building. But Ringbom is not discouraged. He still maintains that this monument, which is both palace and fortress, was the original model of Montsalvat (before the transplantation of the Iranian legend to Spain), furthermore that the Grail mystery is but a transposition of the Haoma mystery which must have been celebrated in the sanctuary, and that the Grail chalice must have been cut from a single precious stone, which was itself but a variation or counterpart of the Pearl, whose quest forms the theme of the Syriac *Hymn of the Pearl*.

All this is highly ingenious, and the restorations of the Iranian castle, complete with *Gāthās* inscribed under the arches (there are 17 *Gāthās* for 22 arcades, but this does not matter) are remarkable, to say the least. They introduce an element of humour in an order of study from which it is only too lacking.

In his latest book, *Paradisus Terrestris* (in Swedish, with a brief summary in English), 1959, the author seems to have retreated somewhat, in the sense that while studying the same monument, he no longer speaks of the Grail, and limits himself henceforth to trying to show that this palace and gardens, the whole extraordinary site of Taxt i Soleimān, served as a model more or less directly, for the Garden of Eden, which haunted the imagination of Medieval Christians.

The excavations at Taxt i Soleimān were resumed in 1959, and the results of this expedition communicated to the *Congress of Persian Art*, held in New York in April 1960³. Nothing has been discovered there dating earlier than the 6th century A. D.

C. THE SASANIANS

1. Chronology

The Sasanian king believed that he was descended from the gods: both the inscriptions and coins bear witness to this. He called himself *bay* (θεός) "god", and *kē cihr hac yazdān* (ἐκ γενους θεῶν) "whose lineage is from the gods"⁴.

1 REICHELT, *WZKM*, 40, 37 sq.; HENNING, *ZDMG*, 90, 1 sq.

2 *Survey of Persian Art*, IV, 237.

3 Due to the initiative of Arthur UPHAM POPE, editor of the *Survey*, who is one of the god-fathers, so to say, of Ringbom's theories. The *Survey* itself, an invaluable work hard to replace, is partly vitiated, in respect of doctrine, by its Iranian bias.—On the excavations at Taxt i Soleimān, see now, R. NAUMANN, III. *London News*, 16-1-65, 24 sq.

4 As on Šāpūr's inscription on the Ka'ba; Artaxšēr's coins, etc. On the coin-legends, GÖBL, *ap. ALTHEIM*, *Asiatischer Staat*, Tables 1 and 12 and p. 127. According to Ammianus MARCELLINUS, XVII, 5, 3, Šāpūr II called himself the brother of the sun and moon, a usage which goes back, according to the same author, to Arsaces.

He was invested by a god, either Ōhrmazd, Mihr or Anāhitā. What is more, he tried to assimilate himself to a god, as is confirmed by the shape his crown takes on reliefs and on the obverse of coins. Each king had his individual crown—their history has been written¹, but certain traits are common to several of them. Right from the time of Artaxšēr, we see the turreted crown, evidently copied from Ōhrmazd's. It appears again with Šāpūr I, Šāpūr II, Varhrān IV, Yazdakart I, and all remaining kings of the dynasty.

Varhrān I has a pointed or radiate crown, which perhaps recalls Mihr. With his successor, Varhrān II, we first see the pair of wings, an attribute of the god Varhrān², "protector" of kings. The boar-head on several coins of the same king, also invokes Varhrān, for the boar was one of his incarnations. The wings reappear with Ōhrmazd II, then with Varhrān IV who displays them in front view, which is henceforth how they are portrayed with Pērōz (whose name is synonymous with Varhrān "Victorious"), Xosrau II, Artaxšēr III, Burān, and with all those who follow.

The pre-eminence of Varhrān on the royal crowns corresponds with the illustration of what I take to be a Varhrān fire on the obverse of coins, and with the foundations of this fire commemorated by Šāpūr's inscription on the Ka'ba³.

Finally, the shape of the crown could be inspired by Anāhitā too, as we see in the case of Narseh⁴.

Mazdeanism, already officially recognized at Nisa in the first century B. C., became under the Sasanians, the state-religion.

We know from Tabari, p. 5, that Sāsān, Artaxšēr's ancestor and eponym of the Sasanian dynasty, was chief of a fire-temple of Anāhitā at Staxr; and Artaxšēr probably succeeded him in this office. Agathias tells us, *Hist.*, II, 26, that Artaxšēr (226-241) "was initiated in the Magian rites and himself performed the mysteries" (that is, such rites as were hidden from public view). In 224, he hung up the head of his suzerain, Artabān, in Anāhitā's temple, continuing a warrior rite which Herodotus and Plutarch appear to have attested earlier.

Wikander undertakes to prove false the tradition which makes this monarch, aided by his high-priest, Tōsar, the founder of the Mazdean Church⁵. Wikander, indeed, would see a conflict between the rank and function of the *ehrpāt* who was specially linked to the cult of Anāhitā, and those of the *magupāt*, who became predominant in the Mazdean hierarchy. From this he concludes, that true Mazdeanism, the religion of Mazdā in the pure Zoroastrian tradition, was instituted only under Ōhrmazd I (272-273), of the significant name, or under his successor Varhrān I (273-276), during whose reign Kartēr, who till then had been a mere *ehrpāt*, now took the title of *magupāt*. The facts of the *Kār Nāmak* and *Dēnkart* would therefore be merely legendary; as for the *Epistle of Tōsar*, Christensen⁶ already considered it to be an apocrypha dating from the reign of Xosrau I.

1 K. ERDMANN, Die Entwicklung der sasanidischen Krone, *Ars Islamica*, 1951, 87 sq.; D-G., *Symbolik des Parsismus*, 91 sq.

2 HERZFELD, *Arch. Mitt. aus Iran*, 1938, 110, has proved the above significance of the wings by comparisons with Kušan coins on which Ošlagno is crowned with the whole bird. Cf. ERDMANN, *Sasan. Krone*, 97.

3 We shall speak of this again below, p. 192 and 204.

4 ERDMANN, *Sasan. Krone*, 98.

5 *Kār Nāmak i Artaxšēr i Pāpakān; Denkart*, III and IV; *Epistle of Tōsar*. WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran*, 1946.

6 *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 1944, 63. See now, Mary BOYCE, *The Epistle of Tansar*, Rome 1968.

Without a doubt, the substitution of *magupats* for *ehrpats*, or rather, their superposition in relation to them, does constitute a major modification in the cult and religious organization¹. But we should not exaggerate its importance to the extent of denying Artaxšēr the qualities of a good Mazdean. These are confirmed for him by at least three facts not brought out by Wikander : 1) On his inscriptions at Naqš i Rustam, Artaxšēr professes to be a worshipper of Mazdā (*mazdēsn*). 2) On the reliefs of Naqš i Rustam², he receives the kingship from Ōhrmazd. 3) His crown-types indicate, according to Göbl³, that he was invested by Anāhitā and Ōhrmazd.

We might be tempted with Herzfeld⁴, to identify Kartēr, known only from inscriptions and a few Manichaean texts⁵, with Tōsar, who belongs to the only non-epigraphic literary tradition there is. However, as Menasce points out⁶, the fact that Kartēr's role was one of organization and persecution, presupposes an existing orthodoxy, an established canon. And since Kartēr was not the author of this canon (he would have boasted of it, if he was), it must have been the work of his predecessor : Tōsar. In short, as Menasce writes: "It must be Tōsar who, under Artaxšēr, codified the Avesta, which is why the *Dēnkart*, 3. 420, mentions him in connection with the history of the transmission of the sacred text"⁷.

Artaxšēr founded the town of Artaxšēr-Xorra "Majesty of Artaxšēr" with a fire-temple, and threatened Artabān that he would expose his head there⁸. According to the *Kār Nāmak*⁹, he also founded a Varhrān fire "the king of fires" (*āturān šāh*) at various places.

On his coins¹⁰, in the line of Persian coinage, he had a fire-altar engraved. But this altar has a singular appearance : it seems to stand on lion paws at the four corners (two of which are visible). No one has commented on these; Göbl¹¹ describes them without giving any explanation, but I wonder whether they were not meant to denote a throne and hence to characterize the king of fires, a supposition which the evidence of the *Kār Nāmak* seems to confirm.

Šāpūr granted¹² Mani full freedom to preach his religion throughout the empire, and eventually the "Church of Justice" extended from India to Egypt and to the frontiers of the Roman empire.

However, Šāpūr's *ehrpāt*, Kartēr, was in the service of the *dēn mazdēsn*, mentioned thrice in his inscription which follows Šāpūr's on the Ka'ba i Zardušt : "All kinds of recitation of the *dēn* and other rites of the gods", "the *dēn mazdēsn* and the Magi", "these *yašts* and these rites of the *dēn mazdēsn*"¹³.

1 Cf. *infra*, p. 201.

2 Commented on notably by CHRISTENSEN, 90 sq.

3 Investitur im sasanidischen Iran und ihre numismatische Bezeugung, *WZKM*, 1960, 38.

4 *Archaeological History of Iran*, 1935, 102, followed by TAVADIA, *Die mittelpersische Sprache u. Literatur*, 1957, 55 sq.

5 M. BOYCE, *Asia Major*, 1955, 50.

6 *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne, le Dēnkart*, 1958, 57.

7 MENASCE, 58. See also above, p. 29 sq.

8 TABARĪ, I, 818.

9 VIII, 17, X 18, etc.

10 On Sasanian numismatics, we have the intensive study of R. GÖBL, *Aufbau der Münzprägung*, *apud* F. ALTHEIM u. R. STIEHL, *Ein asiatischer Staat*, 1954, 51 sq. For illustrations, we may resort also to J. de MORGAN, *Numismatique de la Perse*, II, 1933, and to PARUCK, *Sasanian Coins*, 1924.

11 P. 69.

12 Not right from the time of his accession on 9th April 243, but a few years later; cf. A. MARICQ, *Les débuts de la prédication de Mani*, in *Mélanges Grégoire*, 1951, 245 sq.

13 Cited by MENASCE, *Dēnkart*, 57.

In lines 11 to 15, Kartēr tells us that he re-established the orthodox religion "in the land of Anērān, reached by the horses and men of the King of Kings", that is to say, in regions formerly won by the Iranians—in Asia-Minor, Syria, etc.—but where the religion had partially degenerated: "On the *dēn mazdēs*n and the good Magi I bestowed great honour and authority in the land. Heretics or degenerates in the Magian community who, in matters of the *dēn mazdēs*n and the cult of the gods, led an improper life, I chastised and reprimanded. They improved and I granted charters and rights for numerous fires and Magi. With the aid of the gods and the King of Kings, I founded a number of Varhrān fires in Iran, and I arranged many consanguineous marriages; many who had lapsed (from the faith) were reconciled, and many who had subscribed to the teachings of the demons, were by me, brought over to the worship of the gods"¹.

The reverse type of Šāpūr's coins is a fire-altar flanked by two figures standing with their back to it, who may be the king and a Magian², or else the king depicted twice over for purposes of symmetry³. Each holds an object, which at first glance can be taken, one, for a lance and the other for a short sword, but which on closer examination are discovered to be a kind of sceptre or crook, and, (if we can judge from subsequent coins) a sort of fire-rake.

Šāpūr, whose reign lasted for more than thirty years (241-272), left a number of bas-reliefs, chiefly at Vēh-Šāpūr (a town founded by him), and a triumph in several scenes, one of which, although in a damaged condition seems to depict his investiture, in the same style as his predecessor, Artaxšēr (with an additional suppliant kneeling between two horses facing each other)⁴.

The forms of his crowns indicate, according to Göbl, p. 41, that he was invested by Anāhitā and Ōhrmazd.

The *Dēnkart* (M 412, 17-22), recounts that Šāpūr assembled the books scattered in India and Greece, and added them to the Avesta, of which he placed a copy in the Šiz treasury. Šāpūr's reliefs, in contrast to those of his predecessors, display a recrudescence of Graeco-Roman influence, evident likewise in the mosaic art of Vēh-Šāpūr⁵.

We can attempt to reconcile Šāpūr's Mazdeanism with his tolerance towards Manichaeism, in two ways: either his Mazdeanism had a Zurvānite tendency, but this would hardly be sufficient to bring it close to Manichaeism, or rather, his Manichaean sympathies did not outlast the first few years of his reign and were replaced by a more orthodox attitude. As regards Ōhrmazd I (272-273), it should first be noted that his name is clearly Mazdean; then, that under his reign, Kartēr became "the *magupat* of Ōhrmazd"⁶; and finally—but how can this fact be reconciled with the preceding ones?—that his coins depict, on the reverse, his investiture, over a fire-altar, by Mithra, then by Anāhitā and Ōhrmazd. Under Varhrān I (273-276), Kartēr had Mani, then sixty years old, accused and brought to trial. Condemned to rigorous imprisonment, he died after twenty-six days of suffering.

1 J. de MENASCE, La conquête de l'iranisme et la récupération des mages hellénisés, *Ann. Ec. Prat. des Htes Et., Sc. rel.*, 1956-1957.

2 GÖBL, 69 writes *moba*d, but there is no proof, as we saw, that this title already existed.

3 GÖBL, *ibid*.

4 *Survey of Persian Art*, p1. 155 B.

5 GHIRSHMAN, *Bichapour II, Les Mosaiques sassanides*, 1956.

6 Kartēr's inscription on the Ka'ba, line 5.

or their viceroys, one of whom seems to have been called Varhrān¹. Sasanian rule was maintained over the land for a century, till the reign of Varhrān IV and the Hephthalite invasions. As regards the religion: the reverse-type is of Śiva, with his trident, at times also with his bull.—The Khotanese were familiar with Spōtā Ārmaiti, since they gave her name (ššandrāmata) to Śrī Lakṣmī².

Under Šāpūr II (309-379), the Mazdean Church asserted its authority and the persecution of Christians assumed proportions and a severity not witnessed before. The two phenomena are linked to a third; Constantine's conversion of the Roman empire to Christianity. Henceforth, in the eyes of the Sasanians, Christianity was the religion of the enemy; and Mazdeanism consequently, a means of national defence³.

This is no doubt what prompted Widengren to say in *Stand.*, 142, that from the reign of Šāpūr dates "the definite elevation of Zoroastrianism to the status of State religion". But what does this statement exactly mean? According to Barr, *Avesta*, 21, it was only two centuries later, under the reign of Xosrau I, that the "*dēn ī mazdēs'nān*" became indisputably the State Church. And indeed, however great Šāpūr's work was against the Christians, Manichaeans and heretics, and for the benefit of the orthodoxy, the authority of the Mazdean Church, as we shall see further on, continued to be limited.

In his struggle against "non-conformity"⁴, and the evil religion, the *Dēnkart*, tells us, Šāpūr was assisted by Āturpāt, son of Mahraspand. The *Book of Artāy Viraf*, I, 15 sq., recounts that: "Many wrong customs, doubts and false decisions appeared in the world until the birth of Āturpāt, son of Mahraspand, of noble *fravart* and immortal soul, who submitting to ordeal, to vindicate his beliefs, had molten brass poured on his chest".

Great as was the work of this priest in the cause of orthodoxy, Mazdeanism seems in fact to have been greatly mitigated by the cult of Anāhitā and by Zurvānism. The heads of Christian martyrs were offered to this goddess⁵. Šāpūr founded a temple to the Waters, in other words, to Anāhitā, which may, as Barr writes⁶, indicate a religious policy aiming at uniting the local cult with a State Church still in the process of formation. On investiture according to the crown, see Göbl, *Investitur*, 46.

The very doctrine of the Magi, at least such as the Christians saw it, or feigned to see it, was impregnated with Zurvānism. According to the *Acts of Pusai*⁷, "the Magi say that Ōhrmazd is the brother of Satan".

Finally, the martyrdom of Mar Mu'ain⁸, bears witness that the official religion was widely eclectic. Indeed, Šāpūr II enjoined these Christians to worship, besides the sun, moon,

1 Written OPOHPONO. These legends are among the most difficult to read. Göbl, reproduces 21 Kušano-Sasanian coins, pl. 14 and 15 of *Finanzgeschichte*.

2 BAILEY, *BSOS*, 8, 142.

3 On the persecution of Christians, cf. J. LABOURT, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, 1904, CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, chap. VI: "les Chrétiens de l'Iran"; J. P. ASMUSSEN, Kristendommen i Iran og dens forhold til Zoroastrismen, *Dansk Teol. Tidsskr.*, 1959, 209 sq.

4 BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 156.

5 *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, Bedjan, II, 581 sq., cited by WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*, 53. WIKANDER would also press argument from the martyrdom of Mar Mu'ain, but see below.

6 *Avesta*, 21.

7 M. BOYCE, *Some reflections on Zurvanism*, 307. Quotations after ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 432.

8 HOFFMANN, *Auszüge.. persischer Märtyrer*, Leipzig 1880, 29.

and fire, "the great god Zeus, Nanai, the great goddess of the whole earth; the mighty gods Bel and Nabo."

It is under Šāpūr II that we last hear of Anāhitā, till the reign of Pērōz, a century later; and that inscriptions appear for the last time in Persia¹. The political and religious centre now shifts to Media.

Artaxšēr II (379-383) had himself portrayed at Tāq i Bostān (Media), standing besides Ōhrmazd, who tramples underfoot a defeated enemy (perhaps Ahriman, as in the reliefs depicting the investiture of Artaxšēr I at Naqš i Rostam). But behind the king is the figure of Mithra, with radiate nimbus, standing on a lotus and holding a *barsom*. Modern Parsis believe the effigy to be Zarathuštra, and it is currently reproduced, sold and honoured in Parsi homes and temples as a portrait of the prophet². But comparisons with the monument of Antiochus of Commagène, and with coins, support the view that it is actually Mithra³.

The crown of Šāpūr III resembled Anāhitā's at Tāq i Bostān. Under his reign the throne altar disappeared, but it was to return under Varhrān IV and Yazdakart (399-420).

Till Šāpūr III, every Sasanian king makes some allusion to Anāhitā, except for Varhrān I and Artaxšēr II.

Varhrān V, known as Varhrān Gōr (420-438), seems to be the first king crowned at Šiz⁴; and apparently it was under his reign that the title *mōbadān mōbad*⁵ was created.

Mihr-Narseh, his Prime Minister (*vuzurg-framātar*), who had occupied this office under the preceding sovereign, and was to do so again under Yazdakart II (438-457), appears to have pursued his own individual policy, distinct from that of Varhrān. He established four fires⁶, one for himself and one for each of his sons, on one of whom he conferred the title of *ehrpātān ehrpat*, ignoring that of *mōbad* and its derivations. This son was called Zurvāndād, an indication perhaps of his father's Zurvānite leanings, as is the fact that the latter had 12,000 trees (a characteristic Zurvānite figure), planted in his sanctuaries⁷.

Under the reign of Varhrān V, the Christian Church of Iran broke away from the Western Church. Henceforth, Christians ceased to be, on account of their religion alone, the allies of the Romans and hence the enemies of Iran⁸.

On the coins of Varhrān V, the fire-altar shows a new variation: the flames are replaced by a crowned radiate head. Cf. above, the head in the fire.

Yazdakart II (438-457), with his minister Mihr-Narseh, imposed Zoroastrianism on Armenia, in the face of Christian opposition. An edict addressed to the Armenians, which may

1 WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*, 55.

2 JACKSON, *Zoroaster*, 1898, 288 sq.

3 On the significance of the lotus, see J. D-G., *Symbolik des Parsismus*, 1961, 81.

4 WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*, 149, interpreting the information given by Tabarī and Tha'ālibi.

5 WIKANDER, *ibid.*, 51, according to the Christian polemic.

6 The account is in TABARĪ, I, 869 sq. Cf. WIKANDER, *Feuerp.*, 177, and CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 277 sq. On Mihr-Narseh and his edict, see ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 40 sq.

7 WIKANDER, *ibid.*

8 LABOURT, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse*, 1904, 119 sq.; ASMUSSEN, *Dansk Teol. Tidsskr.*, 1959, 212.

be authentic, is preserved by the historian Lazar of Pharp¹. According to another historian, Elisaeus, Yazdakart studied all the religions of his realm, comparing them with Zoroastrianism, which he ultimately found the best. But whether Elisaeus got his information first hand is dubious². The same historian tells us that Yazdakart II celebrated his victory over diverse neighbouring peoples by sacrificing on the fire-altar numerous white bulls and shaggy he-goats³.

The coinage of Yazdakart II shows the altar flanked by two figures facing it. That of Pērōz likewise. Pērōz ordered himself represented, at Tāq i Bostān being invested by Anāhitā. Under Valāš, there reappears the type inaugurated by Varhrān V.

Pērōz's son Kavād (488-531) was the first Sasanian to bear an ancient heroic name and the title *kai* (kavi), as attested by his coins. His reign saw the birth and development of the Mazdakite movement, which disrupted the social order⁴. Mazdak had a precursor called Zartušt of Fasā. The latter, according to Christensen, was none other than a certain Bundos who makes his appearance in Rome, under Diocletian, preaching his doctrine⁵; but this identification is more than doubtful.

We owe the information we have on Mazdak's doctrine chiefly to Malalas and Šahrastānī⁶. The evil god had been defeated by the good god, and the Victor was to be venerated; the Darkness unlike the Light did not act willingly or deliberately, but blindly and at random. One could therefore hope to triumph over it more easily than in Manichaeism. The method employed was, in principle, the same: abstinence and chastity. But the Mazdakites added to them the abolition of social inequalities, as the principal cause of all hatred. And this preoccupation with the communizing of wealth, including women and other possessions, ultimately defeated the maxims of fasting and celibacy.

We do not know how the king came to know of Mazdak or why he adopted his doctrines. Possibly he had a political motive: by breaking down social distinctions and reducing the people to a mass of individuals, he may have hoped to make the task of government easier. At any rate, this is what the nobles seem to have understood, and they did not stand for it. In league with the Mazdean clergy, who also enjoyed privileges under the traditional order, they succeeded in dethroning Kavād, imprisoning him and replacing him by his brother Jāmāsp, in 496. Two years later, Kavād made his escape and re-seized the throne, but he had learnt his lesson; henceforth he turned his back on his revolutionary dream. However, Mazdakism was not wiped out and some peasant revolts flared up. Kavād evidently felt that the situation not only called for ruse and a massacre (in which Mazdak seems to have perished), but certain social measures besides. He was aided in his task by his son and heir-apparent, Xosrau. The latter, when he came to the throne (531-578), continued his father's work, so much so that Mazdakism seems no more than the growing crisis of the Sasanian State and Mazdean Church which emerged more established and stable than ever.

1 LANGLOIS, *Historiens de l'Arménie*, II, 278 sq. Cf. ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 41 sq. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sass.*, 284.

2 CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran*, 284.

3 WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufgaben*, 46.

4 CHRISTENSEN, *Le règne du roi Kawādh I et le communisme mazdakite*, 1925, then *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 1944, 335 sq.; O. KLIMA, *Mazdak*, Prague 1957.

5 MALALAS, *apud* MIGNE, *Patrol. Graeca*, 97, p. 465.

6 Transl. HAARBRÜCKER, I, 291 sq. The interpretation of Šahrastānī's notice proposed by ALTHEIM, *Nouvelle Clio* 1953, 356 sq., is not convincing.

The work of political reconstruction undertaken by Xosrau I, consisting virtually in a fiscal reform, is known to us from Arabic sources, and has recently been studied¹. Only his religious works need detain us.

Xosrau, like his father, bore a heroic name and the title *kai*. This signifies that the old legends of East Iran, the national epic² of which the Avesta preserves a record, were now given fresh importance. We may perhaps infer from this that the epical part of the Avesta was known and acknowledged as a sacred text from this time onwards³. Wikander sees additional evidence in the fact that Xosrau completed the organization of Šiz as the politico-religious centre. This fact emerges from the notices of Ibn al-Faqīh and Mas'ūdī, and from the legend of Kay Xosrau as recounted by Firdausi, who doubtless drew inspiration from the historical Xosrau. According to Ibn al-Faqīh, the *Gušnasp* fire, formerly established in Azar-baijān by the legendary Xosrau, was transported to Šiz by the Sasanian Xosrau, Xosrau Anōšarvān "of the immortal soul". Mas'ūdī tells us that the latter carried the fire from Šiz to the Fountain (al-Birka), which probably means⁴ that Šiz had not until then been situated at Taxt i Soleimān⁵. He reports too that Anōšarvān destroyed the idols in the temple at Šiz. (This feature is also found in Firdausi's legend of Kay Xosrau). It may be a legend inspired by the story of Mohammad. All the same, it could refer to a purge similar to that boasted of by Kartēr⁶.

Xosrau was given the title Anōšarvān by the grateful *mobads* for crushing the Mazdakites and causing the Good Religion to triumph. The *Dēnkart* preserves the record of this mighty deed in a notice, which if it is not contemporary with his accession, at any rate dates from Xosrau's reign since it refers to him as: "His present Majesty (*im bag*).” This passage, of cardinal importance in the history of the Mazdean Church, is worth quoting in full⁷:

"His present Majesty, the King of Kings, Xosrau, son of Kavād, after he had put down irreligion and heresy with the greatest vindictiveness according to the revelation of the religion⁸ in the matter of all heresy, greatly strengthened the system of the four castes⁹ and encouraged precise argumentation and, in a diet¹⁰ of the provinces he issued the following declaration: The truth of the Mazdean religion has been recognized¹¹. Intelligent men can with confidence establish it in the world by discussion. But effective and progressive propaganda should be based, not so much on discussion, as on pure thoughts, words and deeds, the inspiration of the Good Spirit and the worship of the gods paid in absolute conformity to the word. What the chief Magians of Ōhrmazd have proclaimed, do we proclaim; for among us they have been shown to possess spiritual insight. And we have asked and ask of them the

1 ALTHEIM-STIEHL, *Finanzgeschichte der Spätantike*, Frankfurt 1957.

2 CHRISTENSEN, *Les Gestes des Rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique*, 1936.

3 It seems excessive to apply this conclusion to the entire Avesta, as WIKANDER has done, *Feuerpriester*, 152.

4 If we allow the interpretations of *al Birka* given by MINORSKY, *BSOAS*, XI, 249 sq., and cited by WIKANDER.

5 Cf. p. 188.

6 Kartēr's inscription on the Ka'ba, line 10. Cf. M.-L. CHAUMONT, *RHR*, 1958, 154 sq.

7 *Dk*, Madan, 413, 9, following the translation and commentary of ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 8 sq.

8 That is to say, according to the Avesta.

9 An anti-Mazdakite reaction.

10 Reading uncertain.

11 Probably during the course of the debate to which Mazdak was lured and where he met with his death.

fullest exposition of doctrine, both of that which concerns spiritual insight and of that which deals with conduct on earth, and for this we give thanks to the gods. Fortunately for the good governance of the country, the realm of Iran has gone forward relying on the doctrine of the Mazdean religion, that is the synthesis of the accumulated knowledge of those who have gone before us throughout the whole inhabited world¹. We have no dispute with those who have other convictions, for we (ourselves) possess so much both in the Avestan language through pure oral tradition or reduced to writing in books and memoranda and in the vulgar idiom through oral transmission, in short the whole original wisdom of the Mazdean religion. Whereas we have recognized that, in so far as all dubious doctrines, foreign to the Mazdean religion, reach this place from all over the world, further examination and investigation prove that to absorb and publish abroad knowledge foreign to the Mazdean religion does not contribute to the welfare and prosperity of our subjects as much as one religious leader who has examined much and pondered much in his recital (of the ritual); with high intent and in concert with the perspicacious, most noble, most honourable, most good Magian men, we do hereby decree that the Avesta and Zand be studied zealously and ever afresh so that what is acquired therefrom may worthily increase the knowledge of our subjects."

Xosrau then seems to make an allusion to the Zurvānites². "Those who tell our subjects either that it is not possible to acquire, or that it is possible to acquire in its entirety, knowledge of the Creator, the mystery of spiritual beings, and the nature of the Creator's creation are to be deemed men of insufficient intellect and free-thinkers".

Finally, Xosrau seems to recognize the possibility of attaining truth other than by Avestan revelation alone:

"Those who say that it is possible to understand Being through the revelation of the Religion and also by analogy, are to be deemed researchers (after truth). Those who expound this clearly, are to be deemed wise and versed in the Religion. And since the root of all knowledge is the doctrine of the Religion concerning both ideal potentiality and material manifestation, a man speaks wisely about it even though he derives the doctrines from no Avestan revelation. So he should be esteemed as speaking in accordance with the revelation of the Religion, the function of which is to give instruction to the sons of men."

The last paragraph may refer³ to Greek philosophy and wisdom, for Greek thinkers and their doctrines were well received by Xosrau. His liberalism in this respect made him as famous with the Byzantines, as he was with the Magi, for his defence of orthodoxy.

Xosrau was familiar with Greek philosophy (as far as he could understand it) either through militant Christians like Paulus the Persian, or through the victims of Christian intolerance, such as the last Academicians.

Paulus the Persian composed for the use of the king, a digest of Aristotelian philosophy, in Syriac⁴, in which we read notably: "There are some who believe in only one God; others claim that he is not the only God; some teach that he possesses contrary qualities; others say that he does not possess them; some admit that he is omnipotent; others deny that he has power over everything. Some believe that the world and everything contained therein have been

1 Free translation. Literally: 'In the whole of Xvaniras,' the central clime of the world.

2 ZAEHNER, 48 and n. 4.

3 ZAEHNER, 48.

4 CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran* 427, with bibliographical references.

created. And there are some who maintain that the world was created *ex nihilo*; according to others, God drew it out from pre-existent matter. . . ."

Furthermore, when the School of Athens came to be closed on the order of Justinian in 529, the last philosophers, including Damascius¹ and Priscian the Lydian, etc., took refuge at the court of Xosrau at Ctésiphon.

Xosrau, who was curious about philosophy², seems to have interrogated them; perhaps it was at his request that Priscian compiled a summary of psychology, physiology, etc., whose Latin version has been preserved under the title *Solutiones eorum de quibus dubitavit Chosroes Persarum rex*³. It would be interesting to look for traces of this treatise in Pahlavi literature, as part of the search for evidence of Greek influence on Mazdean doctrines.

However, the philosophers did not feel at home. But Xosrau did not hold it against them, and in a peace treaty concluded with Byzantium, he negotiated for their return home⁴.

If Greek philosophers gained little from their stay in Iran, the Iranians of the Sasanian period owed much to Greek philosophy and science. Greek treatises on astrology and agriculture were translated into Pahlavi before being translated into Arabic⁵; Ptolemy (the astronomer) is cited by Manuščihir in his *Epistles*. Notions of movement, time, space, nature, the process of becoming, decay, alteration and growth are taken over from Aristotle's books on Physics⁶. Mention was made above, of the work of Paulus the Persian on Aristotelian dialectic. Iran was also familiar with Greek treatises on geometry⁷, but it was above all, in the knowledge of man, that Greek influence made itself felt.

In medicine, Iran borrowed the doctrine of four humours⁸ from the Corpus of Hippocrates. The definition of man as a living, rational mortal (*zīvandak gōβak mērak*) is a direct reflection of Aristotle's definition⁹. The "visible form" (*cihr*) is exactly the same as the εἶδος¹⁰. The idea that the soul gives light to the eyes undoubtedly comes from Greece, although it was opposed by Aristotle¹¹. The Aristotelian theory of the three faculties of the soul, ἀνάμνησις, μνήμη and νοῦς, is taken over in the distinction made between *vīr*, *ōš* and *xrat*¹².

Zātspram, as well as Āturfarnbag drew extensively on Greek anthropology¹³. Finally, the notion of *vaxš*, the archaic word for "voice", which became synonymous with *mēnōk*, seems to owe something to the λόγος of the Christians and the Gnostics¹⁴.

1 It is he who preserved for us the notice of Eudemus of Rhodes on the Iranian religion.

2 PROCOPE, *Anecd.*, 18, 29.

3 Edited by BYWATER, in *Supplem. Aristotelicum*, 1, 2, 1885.

4 The episode is in Agathias, II, 30 sq., summarized by CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 428 sq.

5 Cf. the articles of NALLINO, cited by BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 80 sq.

6 BAILEY, *Zor. Probl.*, 82. The borrowing may have taken place later and more indirectly; the *Peri geneseōs kai phthoras* was rendered into Syriac by HUNAIN (809-876).

7 BAILEY, 86.

8 BAILEY, 105.

9 MENASCE, *JA*, 1943, 339; ZAEHNER, *BSOAS*, 1955, 232.

10 BAILEY, 91.

11 *ibid.*, 98.

12 BAILEY, 102.

13 BAILEY, 104.

14 *ibid.*, 118 sq. But see GNOLI, *Ricerche storiche sul Sistan antico*, 1967, quoting GERSHEVITCH, *BSOAS*, 1955, 478 sq.

A Greek influence is evident too in Book 4 of the *Dēnkart*, where the creation of the Amēša Spēntas is conceived in terms of a "procession" starting from the One¹.

Iran was to a certain extent open to Indian influence, and already from the time of Šāpūr if we can believe the *Dēnkart*². But according to tradition, it was during the reign of Xosrau, that Iran imported the game of chess and the famous *Pañcatantra* fables which, through successive translations, eventually reached medieval Europe. The physician Burzōē, author of the Pahlavi translation, voices certain remarks in his preface³, analogous to those expressed by Paulus the Persian, thereby enabling us to accept these translations as dating authentically from Sasanian times. But the author, after examining all religions, without settling for any, comes to a decision which may owe as much to India as to Greece: to renounce the world and take up a life of asceticism. Mazdean Iran, hitherto resolutely hostile to all forms of asceticism, was beginning, inevitably, to be permeated by the ideal preached alike by the Christians, Philosophers, Gnostics, Manichaeans, Mazdakites and Hindus.

In short, the reign of Xosrau seems to have been both "orthodox" and "liberal". We may explain this apparent contradiction by supposing he was first the one, and then the other; however, the edict cited by the *Dēnkart* already appears to reconcile the two attitudes. Zaehner sees Xosrau first as an orthodox Mazdean, then as a Zurvānite, and hence liberal in outlook. But this consequence is denied by Mary Boyce who shows⁴ that Zurvānism does not necessarily imply tolerance. In the case of Xosrau, it is likely that his condemnation of Zurvānism, eagerly cited by the authors of the *Dēnkart*, whose tendencies are thus revealed, represented the official policy (perhaps temporary), but not the popular view, judging from the witness of Mār Abhā⁵: which clearly reflects Zurvānism.

On the reverse of his coins, Xosrau continues the two types of his father : a single figure holding a ring with bands or ribbons (a Byzantine influence), and the altar, whose servers are shown full face. Only the latter type continues till the end of the empire, but for two exceptions to be dealt with further on.

After Xosrau, the Sasanian empire declined till its fall half a century later. Thus, the reign of Xosrau Anōšarvān may be regarded as the high water-mark of the Mazdean Church, coming between the Mazdakite anarchy and the final decadence.

Xosrau II (590-627) known as Parvēz ("the Victorious"), succeeded Ōhrmazd IV and Varhrān VI and is the last Sasanian of importance. His wife was a Christian and he himself embraced Christianity according to Eutychius⁶. He was a believer in all kinds of superstitions, and surrounded himself with astrologers and sorcerers, even dabbling in astrology himself⁷. He has gone down badly in Mazdean tradition. According to the Persian *Book of Jāmāsp*⁸, by practising tyranny and injustice, he caused the religion to decline. However, he founded no

1 MENASCE, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne*, 23 sq.

2 Above, p. 191.

3 Translated by NÖLDEKE in 1912. Cf. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran...*, 429 sq.

4 Some reflections on Zurvanism, *BSOAS*, 1957, 306 sq.

5 BIDEZ-CUMONT, *Les mages hellénisés*, II, 98 sq. Cited by BOYCE, 307.

6 Reported by TABARĪ, cf. ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 51.

7 ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 51.

8 ZAEHNER., *ibid.*, 50.

less than 353 fire-temples¹, but this was not necessarily to the liking of orthodox Mazdeans (which seems to prove Wikander right, as we shall see). We should perhaps not attach too much importance to the fact that the *ehrpats* (there is no mention of *magupats*) appointed by Xosrau to serve his temples numbered 12 000, a Zurvānite figure. We are certain, however, of the king's devotion to Anāhitā. He had himself portrayed at Tāq i Bostān in a significant scene: he stands between Ōhrmazd and Anāhitā (who is recognizable by her pitcher, a fertility symbol) and both deities hand him a crown.

Anāhitā's elevation to the rank of Ōhrmazd may explain a fact not taken into consideration by Wikander when attempting to solve what Göbl² calls "the greatest enigma" of Sasanian monetary iconography. Several coins of Xosrau (and of this king alone) show on the reverse, instead of the usual fire-altar, a woman's head with radiate nimbus. Surely it is Anāhitā, whose connection with the fire is thus strikingly brought out. We can then cite the testimonies, till now unconnected, of Firmicus Maternus and the *Syriac Acts* of the martyr Hašu (Gray, *Zoroastrian Material*, p. 46). The Latin author writes: "Ignem in duas diuidunt potestates, naturam eius ad utrumque sexum transferentes et uiri et feminae simulacro ignis substantiam deputantes" (*De errore profan. relig.*, I, 5). As for Hašu, she declares that "the fire is no daughter of God", which seems to imply the identification of the fire with Anāhitā. Perhaps a connection was seen between Anāhitā, as god's daughter, and the son of God, Ātaš, until eventually she became nothing more than his feminine version³.

Was Anāhitā's reappearance, as Wikander suggests⁴, indicative of a return "to the origins", to Persia, homeland of the dynasty? We have no proof of this as far as Xosrau II is concerned. But at the end, at the time of great peril, it was in Artaxšēr's temple to Anāhitā, at Staxr, that Yazdakart III was elected king⁵.

2. Institutions

The king is possessed of a *xvarr* "majesty or glory", recalled by the legends and symbols of certain coins, and symbolized not only by the ring of investiture but, also, according to Göbl⁶, by the bands so often seen accompanying the crown, or connected with the fire-altar on the reverse.

The lunar crescent is commonly found on coins together with a luminary, either a star or the sun. When the sun is present, the king associates himself with the two heavenly bodies, calling himself their brother.

According to Peter Chrysologus⁷, the Sasanians sat on their thrones with the celestial orb beneath their feet, in the belief they were trampling underfoot heaven itself, thus assuming the place of God; their radiate crown gave them the appearance of the sun, or else they wore crescent horns "womanizing themselves as the moon", or they took other astral shapes, losing

1 TABARĪ, cited by ZAEHNER, 51.

2 Aufbau der Münzprägung, ap. ALTHEIM, *Ein Asiatischer Staat*, 72; cf. table X and pl. photo no. 24.

3 Some have supposed, without proof, cf. MORGAN, 725, that these coins had been struck at Multān and represented the solar goddess Sūryā (Morgan by mistake writes, 724, the solar goddess Ādityā).

4 *Feuerpriester*, 55.

5 TABARĪ, I, 1067, cited by WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*, 56.

6 *Aufbau der Münzprägung*, 61.

7 *Sermo* 120, *Patrol. lat.*, MIGNE, 52, 527, cited after L'ORANGE, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the ancient World*, Oslo 1953, 38.

their human appearance, as indeed seems to have been the case on the intaglio¹ depicting, in the Achaemenian tradition, a winged and crowned bull, between the sun and moon.

The Klimova plate, in the Hermitage Museum, portrays the king on his throne, on top of what appears to be a lunar chariot drawn by four zebus—an animal depicted elsewhere on an intaglio² between the sun and moon. They are driven by two Cupids³.

Other representations of the lunar chariot are found on two intaglios⁴; as for the solar chariot, see above, p.158.

On the Qazvin plate, the royal throne is borne by two lions, surmounted by the lunar crescent, and with each post decorated with a ring of seven birds, seven being an astral number⁵.

The Sasanian clergy comprised *mogpats* and *ehrpats*, the latter subordinated to the former. Wikander has attempted to show⁶ that the *ehrpats* were linked with Persia, and the *mogpats* with Media and Azerbaijān. The Sasanians, were responsible for the synthesis, by making the *ehrpats* subordinate to the *mogpats*, when they shifted the religious centre of the kingdom from Persia to Azerbaijān. But the researches of Menasce⁷ “do not seem to confirm the thesis of the Swedish scholar” regarding the geographical distribution of *ehrpats* and *mogpats*. We should therefore go back to the view which was virtually that held by E. Stein⁸: during the first two reigns there were only *magus* or *mogmart*s, some of whom were *ehrpats*. *Magu* or *mogmart* was the generic term; it is the term found on the Sasanian intaglios (*magu*) and in the Kārnāmak (*mogmart*)⁹. *Ehrpat* denoted, not the priest belonging to Anāhitā and of a particular fire ritual¹⁰, but, traditionally, the instructor.

When a beginning was made towards the formation of a hierarchy, apparently under Ōhrmazd and for the sake of Kartēr, and it became necessary to express the subordination of several Magi to one Magian, the term *magu-pat* “master of Magi” was created, whose structural resemblance to *ehr-pat* “master of knowledge” was only superficial.

Later, perhaps under Varhrān V, when a supreme ecclesiastical rank was created, the title *mogpatān mogpat* was copied from Šāhān Šāh “king of kings”¹¹, which had also yielded *bānbišnān bānbišn* “queen of queens” and *satrapēs tōn satrapōn*¹². We may recall, with Wikander¹³, that during this same epoch the prime-minister, Mihr-Narseh, gave the title “great *ehrpāt*” to one of his sons. Did he, as Wikander believes, deliberately ignore the title *mogpat*? Perhaps

1 In Copenhagen: L'ORANGE, *Studies*, fig. 20 d.

2 In Copenhagen also: *ibid*, fig., 20 c.

3 L'ORANGE, *Studies*, fig. 18, and the whole chapter ‘The astral transformation of the Sassanian Throne’.

4 L'ORANGE, *Studies*, fig. 40 B and C.

5 L'ORANGE, *Studies*, fig. 17.

6 Feuerpriester, *passim*.

7 *Ann. Ec. prat. Htes Et., Sc. rel.*, 1952-1953, 36.

8 *Byzant-neugriech. Jahrbücher*, 1920, 50 sq., cited by WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*, 39.

9 HORN-STEINDORFF, *Sassanidische Siegelsteine*, 1891, 23 sq.

10 The etymology of *aēθra* (the Av. ancestor of *ēhr-*) proposed by WIKANDER, who connects this word with that for wood used for burning, *aēsma* (Indo-Ir. root **aidh-*), meets with difficulties, as the author himself admits, in respect of phonetics: we should expect *aēθra*, or *aēstra*.

11 WIKANDER, *Feuerpriester*, 48.

12 WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufg.*, 1939, n. 331.

13 *Feuerp.*, 177. Cf. above, p. 189.

being merely the prime-minister, the creation of *mogpats* was not within his competence. On the ecclesiastical hierarchy, see M.-L. Chaumont, *Ann. Ec. Htes Et., sc. relig.*, 1956-1957, p. 81 sq.

We know from Ammianus Marcellinus¹ that in his times, the Magi formed a sort of aristocracy, owning lands and castles.

The Magi prayed in a suppressed tone, which astonished the Westerners, used to praying aloud. Prudentius speaks of *Zoroastrei susurri*, Apuleius of *magicum susurramen*². The Arabs were no less amazed and described it as *zamzam* or *zamzama*. This usage, designated in Avestan by the verb *dr̥n̥jaya-*, in Pahlavi by *dranjišn* and later on by *bāj*, was studied by Wikander³, while Widengren has added⁴ a particularly interesting Syriac text. It draws a picture of the Magi, gathered from all parts of the empire to their masters, from whom they learn the "senseless murmur", and with whom they move about in groups "jabbering and grinding their teeth like wild pigs", which might be a description of wandering *dervishes*⁵.

The remaining classes of Sasanian society are not well defined. The list given in Tōsar's *Letter* does not correspond with that in Tha' ālibī. In all probability the theoretical list did not accord with the actual divisions of society. The first document obviously takes over the three Avestan classes, merely transcribing their names: *āθravan-* "priest" becomes *asrōn*; *raθaēštar-* "warrior", *artēštar*; *vāstryō*, *fšuyant-* "cultivator", *vāstryōš*. It adds only, after an Avestan passage, *huiti-* "artisan", whence *hutuxš*, a new term, literally meaning "industrious", and the *dipīrān* "scribes", who are placed third. Apart from these last two concessions to the new facts of Sasanian times, the classification gives one the impression of being an artificial revival. As Benveniste⁶ rightly saw and said: "In order to tear away Persia, already riddled with heresies, from the incursion of foreign religions, the Sasanians established the collected canon of the Avesta and elevated Mazdeanism to the rank of State Religion. For the same reason, they were obliged to revive the cadres of Avestan society. For they had to annihilate the heritage of the Arsacidian feudal system, that hierarchy of "sovereigns" (*šahrdārān*), princes (*vīspuhrān*), grandees (*vazurgān*) and nobles (*āzātān*), which relegated to a confused "third estate" all those having neither noble rank nor office".

But Tha' ālibī, who had no reason to substitute an orthodox order for the actual order, is perhaps closer to the truth when he lists⁸: 1) warriors; 2) physicians and priests; 3) scribes and reckoners⁹; 4) traders and artisans¹⁰.

1 Cited by WIDENGREN, *Stand und Aufgaben*, 144.

2 Quotations with BIDEZ-CUMONT, *Mages hellénisés*, II, 285. sq.

3 *Feuerpriester*, 29 sq.

4 *Stand u. Aufg.*, 143.

5 For further details on the Sasanian clergy, see CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran.*, 116 sq.

6 Firdausi, as shown by BENVENISTE, *Les classes sociales dans la tradition avestique*, *JA*, 1932, II, 132 sq., seems to have preserved an archaic variant of the same classification, from which the scribes are still absent.

7 *ibid.*, 133.

8 This hierarchy, probably a heritage from the Arsacid epoch, is found in Šāpūr's inscription at Hajjiābād, see CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 99 sq.

9 *Histoire des rois de Perse*, ed. Zotenberg, 12.

10 On the dignitaries of the Empire, see CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran.*, 518 sq.

3. The Pantheon

The best method of obtaining a general picture of the Sasanian religion is to first examine contemporary and native evidence—the very same as we utilized above—and to exclude foreign or late sources. The attempt is useful since it leads to a conclusion totally different to Christensen's final statement. "The supreme gods of the Sasanian pantheon", writes this scholar¹, "were Zurvān, Ōhrmazd, the Sun (Mihr), the Fire (Ātur) and Bēduxt (= *Dēn mazdēsn*)". This formula, which we will criticize later, can be provisionally set aside. As our starting point we may accept—subject to verification—that the chief gods were those with whom the kings sought, as we saw, to identify themselves, namely, *Ōhrmazd*, *Mihr*, *Anāhitā* and *Varhrān*. We have then only to see what we can learn about each of these gods from the mass of evidence.

Ōhrmazd was of course the chief god, whom all the kings profess to worship. He is represented on the reliefs of Artaxšēr at Naqš i Rajab, Naqš i Rustam, etc. He gives the ring of investiture to Šāpūr I as well as to Varhrān I and II, Narseh, Ōhrmazd II, Artaxšēr II. Kartēr is made magupat of Ōhrmazd under Ōhrmazd-Artaxšēr, and, after the latter's coronation Ōhrmazd supersedes Mithra and Anāhitā as giver of investiture. Varhrān IV, in his crown, imitates that of Ōhrmazd.

Ōhrmazd's name (under the form *Urmaysde*) in the Saka language of Khotan, means the sun². This may be explained in two ways : either Ōhrmazd underwent the same treatment as the Amahraspands in Manichaeism, where they are reduced to "elements of light", or else, the Sun god assumed such pre-eminence that he eventually took the name of the Sky god, as we saw at Dura, the god with the chariot taking the name of Zeus. The second hypothesis is the more plausible one, seeing the importance of the solar cult with the Saka-Kušans, who carried it as far as India³.

The two lists of gods preserved in Syriac texts bring supporting evidence : both the martyrdoms of Sābhā and of Mu'ain mention Zeus (that is to say, Ōhrmazd), either first in the list, or qualified by the epithet "great". Šāpūr, according to the *Acts* of St. Akindunos, Gray, p. 44, exclaims on entering the fire-temple: "Great is the power of Zues".

We may note, that under the reign of Šāpūr (in the *dipinti* of Dura-Europos) the name *Yazdān*, a designation of Ōhrmazd, appears in the personal name *Yazdān-tuxm* "issued from Yazdān".

Mihr invests Ōhrmazd I, Varhrān II, Ōhrmazd II, Artaxšēr II. Varhrān I copies his crown. No Sasanian bears the name of Mihr, perhaps merely so as to be different from the Arsacids. But a prime-minister was called Mihr-Narseh; an intaglio⁴ belonging to a certain Humihr shows a radiate Mihr climbing on a chariot. The god with the chariot is again found

1 *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 159.

2 Hence, with the Turks and Mongols, *Khormuzta* denotes Indra, whereas Brahman is called *Āzruā*.

3 Cf. also the proper name *Mitrōharmazde*: JUSTI, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, Marburg 1895, 216; SCHEFTELOWITZ, *Acta Orientalia*, 11, 296.

4 Berlin Museum, CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran...*, 145, quoting HERZFELD, *Jahrbuch der preuss. Kunstsamml.*, t.41, II, 408. *Survey of Persian Art*, 255 E.—Sasanian intaglios do not furnish much clear data on the religion. It is impossible to follow Phyllis ACKERMAN, *Survey*, I, 784, sq., in her numerous conjectures regarding the symbolic significance of all these objects. J. M. UNVALA, *Khareghat Memor. Vol.*, Bombay 1953, 51, has risen in protest against this essentially arbitrary method.

on a piece of material of Sasanian type¹. Mihr gives his name to the great feast of *Mihragān*, and to the *Burzēn-Mihr* fire². In Sogdiana he was replaced by *Baga*³. Foreign sources⁴ furnish supporting evidence.

Anāhitā invested most of the kings till Šāpūr III, and many of them imitate her crown. She had at Staxr, a temple served by Artaxšēr and his successors, probably until Varhrān II⁵. It was in this temple that Yazdakart III was elected king. There are some *Anāhitā* fires, and one of Šāpūr's wives was named after her. Šāpūr II founded a temple to the Waters, presumably to *Anāhitā*.

Under the name of Nanai, she is listed in the martyrdom of Mu'ain (in the time of the same Šāpūr II), and is attested in Sogdian. *Anāhitā* is depicted also on several intaglios; she is not named, but there is no doubt that it is she, holding a flower, bird or child⁶.

The three divinities dealt with so far are identical with those the *Acta Sanctorum* (Gray, p. 44) had in mind, when saying that Šāpūr II ordered the Christians to worship Jupiter, Apollo and Diana.

The *Fire*, the element essential to the ritual, is likewise venerated. It is designated either by its appellative, found amid a host of personal names, or by the name of *Varhrān*. The latter name is borne by several kings. From the second of these kings, the pair of wings, symbolizing the winged incarnation of Vərəθrayna figures frequently on the crowns. *Varhrān* is the generic name of the royal fires⁷. Šāpūr, and later Kartēr, founded several of them. Perhaps it is the *Varhrān* fire that is denoted by the throne-altar seen on the reverse of certain coins, and by the head in the altar flames, on others.

It seems likely that *Varhrān* is frequently represented on intaglios by one or other of his *avatars*⁸. Of the many representations of the altar, there is one clearly relating to the *Varhrān* fire, namely, the intaglio in the University Museum of Philadelphia (*Survey of Persian Art*, IV, 255 T), which shows a great bird on the altar. This bird is obviously not a cock as H. Jänichen⁹ would have it, but a falcon, the bird of *Varhrān*. The temple of Mars at Jerusalem in the time of Xosrau II, mentioned in the *Acta Sanctorum* (Gray, p. 44), is almost certainly a *Varhrān* fire.

The four gods just studied are obviously supported by a greater number and variety of documents, than the gods which remain, namely : Xvarr, Šaθrēvar, Mahraspand, Narseh and Zurvān.

1 Musée du Cinquantenaire, Brussels, CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran* . . 145.

2 Above, p. 70 sq.

3 HENNING, "A Sogdian god", *BSOAS*, 1965, 20; J. D-G., 'L'expansion de Baga', *Festschrift Eilers*, 1967, p. 157 sq.

4 To CHRISTENSEN's references, 143, 144, and 158, add those collected by GRAY, *Zor. Relig. material in the Acta Sanctorum*, 43, 44.

5 M.-L. CHAUMONT, *RHR*, 1958, 154 sq.

6 Cf. Phyllis ACKERMAN, *Survey*, I, 794 sq.; cf. also RINGBOM, *Zur Ikonographie der Ardvī Sūrā Anāhitā*, with the review of J. D-G., in *Artibus Asiae*, 1960.

7 Cf. above, p. 70.

8 Phyllis ACKERMAN, *Survey*, I, 791 sq. (on p. 793, l. 1, read Pl. 253 D).

9 *Die Bildzeichen der Kgl. Hoheit bei den Iranischen Völkern*, Bonn 1956, 16.

The name of Xvarr or Farn "the royal Glory" appears in that of one of the three great fires of the Empire, besides occurring as a personal name. The *Acts of Anastasis* (Gray, p. 41) mention the worship of metals (that is to say, of the Amšāspand Šaθrēvar). Narseh gives his name to a king, and, combined with Mihr's to a celebrated minister. Zurvān figures only in the name borne by one of this minister's sons : Zurvāndād¹. The rare occurrence of Zurvān's name contrasts with abundant references to him in foreign sources, which brings up the problem of Zurvānism, now to be discussed. However, before we begin, we should briefly review the ground we have covered.

So far, the pre-eminence of four gods, Ōhrmazd, Mihr, Anāhitā and Varhrān, has found nothing but confirmation. Now, the resemblance between this list and that of Commagène calls for our attention. The only divergence between them is more apparent than real if we allow that "My all-nurturing country Commagène" is merely a special, local expression of fecundity. One feature of the documents examined above that we have yet to mention is the frequent occurrence of astral symbols, either the crescent or star. They are present on almost all the coins and crowns, and on intaglios. The latter frequently depict animals as well, whose interpretation, as Phyllis Ackerman² herself admits, is delicate, but which in most cases seem to represent constellations.

The "Sasanian Monograms" have been diversely interpreted : Besides Phyllis Ackerman 805, see Unvala, *Khareghat Mem. Vol.*, I, Bombay 1953, 44 sq., L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography*, 1953, and Jänichen, *Die Bildzeichen...*, 1956. The last two authors, independently of each other, have thought to recognize a representation of the lunar chariot. But Humbach, *Die sogenannte sarmatische Schrift (Die Welt der Slaven*, 1961, 225 sq.), recognizes in them, in Greek stylised letters, the names of Hélios, Apollo and Dionysos. According to Menasce, *Déchiffrement de motifs alphabétiques d'époque sassanide (Bull. hist. franç. d'Archéol. orient.*, 1960, 309 sq.), we should interpret several of these motifs through the medium of Pahlavi.

Two silver plates dating from Sasanian times bear witness to a lunar cult. The first one, *Survey*, IV, pl. 257, depicts the moon on a chariot drawn by four zebus, the second, pl. 253, is a rather enigmatic dancing scene in honour of a female divinity who holds a mythical animal ; but its lunar character is confirmed by two crescents with busts. What is more, certain accessories of the male and female dancers, namely, the vase of lustral water and the flowers, recall Anāhitā.

This evidence accords with what we know of Xosrau II, and the vogue of astrology which dates back to the Parthian period, and which finds illustration, notably, in the "king's horoscope"³ on the monument of Commagène.

4. The Problem of Zurvānism

The insistence on time in Antiochus' inscription, the diffusion of astrology, the cult of the Tychè—whether individual, royal or collective—all go to prove that conditions already existed at this epoch for the divinization of time. This is not to say, however, that it was initiated in Iran.

1 To which we should perhaps add the representations of Time (shown with two pairs of wings) on some intaglios, Phyllis ACKERMAN, *Survey*, I, 801.

2 *Survey of Persian Art*, I, 788 sq.

3 Actually, the figure under discussion, showing a lion and stars, is not the horoscope of Antiochus: according to Neugebauer's reckoning, it represents the actual conjunction of three planets, Jupiter, Mars and Mercury in Leo, which took place in 62 B.C., the date on which Antiochus was confirmed in his kingdom by the Romans (*Illustrated London News*, 18th June 1955, 1096). See now, H. DÖRRIE, *Der Königskult, in Kommagene*, 1964, 201 sq.

The parallel drawn by Christensen¹, between the list of Commagène and that of the *Acts of Mār Sābhā* is misleading. In the *Acts*, a *mobad* enumerated "our gods, Zeus, Kronos, Apollo, Bēdox and the rest". At which Christensen declares: "Here is another Zurvānite tetrad". Now, neither the Commagène series, nor the other, is a tetrad. We may grant Christensen that *Bēdox*, that is to say, *bēduxt*, *bagduxt* "daughter of God", is the equivalent of "my country, Commagène", not in the way he says, but because she is the equivalent also of Anāhitā (Ōhrmazd's daughter and a "nourisher" besides), rather than of the *dēn mazdēs*n. What is less explicable, is that Zurvān, who is supposed to embrace the entire Commagène tetrad, loses this supreme position and enters Sābhā's list by taking, without compensation, Varhrān's place. The parallelism is therefore unreal, and thus collapses the mainstay of Christensen's final solution, cited at the commencement of this section².

The other documents from which he presses argument are, first, yet another Syriac list, that given by Mar Mu'ain, but Zurvān is conspicuously absent from it³; and secondly, the numerous testimonies on Zurvān in "foreign" sources, that is to say, Manichæan and Christian.

Most of these documents attack Zurvānism as the essential dogma of the Sasanian religion. They therefore contradict the evidence of native sources.

To explain this contradiction—which constitutes, so to say, the "problem of Zurvānism"—four solutions have been successively advanced in our times. We can conveniently refer to them under the names of their authors.

a) Christensen's solution.

According to this scholar, followed notably by Nyberg, Sasanian Mazdeanism was dominated by Zurvānism. The Avesta and its commentaries were impregnated with it. If this is not more evident from the Avesta as it has come down to us, or from the summary of the complete Avesta given in the *Dēnkart*, or with a few exceptions, from the whole of Pahlavi literature, it is because in the wake of the Muslim conquest, and so as to better fight the new religion, an anti-Zurvānite reaction set in, leading to the expurgation of the sacred texts⁴: "They retrenched or altered the religious traditions, they allowed to fall into oblivion or simply caused to disappear such parts of the Sasanian Avesta as were infected with Zurvānism".

This theory encounters two difficulties, the first being, as Christensen himself admits, that "the reform is nowhere mentioned in Parsi books", the second, that it is not clear to us how the anti-Zurvānite reaction is supposed to have made Mazdeanism better able to stand up to Islam. Was it by emphasizing the contrast between the two religions? Might it not have been better to reduce it? Was it by a fresh outburst of energy, founded on a return to origins, to an ethical and militant dualism, too long eclipsed by a Zurvānite fatalism? It is just such an awakening of conscience that Christensen envisages. We do not find any definite trace of it, but this aspect of the theory, by opposing Mazdeanism to Zurvānism, as puritanism to relaxation, or orthodoxy to liberalism, contained the seed of a second explanation.

1 *L' Iran* . . . , 157.

2 P. 203.

3 This list was given above, p. 193.

4 CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 435 sq.

b) *Wesendonk's solution.*

G. von Wesendonk's theory, advanced in 1927¹ and taken over and extended by Zaehner in his monumental work *Zurvan*², sees the religious history of Sasanian Iran as a series of pulsations, relaxations alternating with orthodox reactions. Each time Mazdeanism waxed strong, Zurvānism waned; each time orthodoxy relaxed, the real religion—Zurvānism—became predominant. This would explain the discrepancy between the indigenous and foreign sources: the latter reflect the religion as it actually was, the former as it should have been, that is to say, as it was defined at periods of Mazdean orthodoxy.

At the same time, since this reaction was supposed to take place in successive stages, the theory eliminates the difficulty of a single massive reaction of which tradition preserves no memory.

However, this theory³ was battered by the author of the third, below.

c) *Boyce's solution.*

In her criticism of Zaehner's book, Dr. Boyce⁴ shows that it is by no means proved that each period of "Mazdean reaction" was marked by anti-Zurvānism. Zaehner regards Kartēr, under the reign of Šāpūr II and his three successors, as the champion of anti-Zurvānism. But, first, Kartēr started his career under the preceding king, Šāpūr, and he "hardly sounds the man to change his doctrines with his prince"; secondly, there is nothing in his inscriptions to prove his orthodoxy. He did fight the heretics, and among them the *zandīks*; who perhaps favoured a form of Zurvānism, but he may have supported another.

As for the reign of Šāpūr II, Āturpāt is extolled by the *Dēnkart* for his reforms. But we have no evidence that they were directed against the Zurvānites, whereas, on the contrary, we know of his sovereign's sympathies for this doctrine. Moreover, Šāpūr I, who is considered to have Zurvānite leanings, is equally honoured in the *Dēnkart*.

Lastly, the evidence of Mār Abhā "casts similar doubt on the Mazdean orthodoxy of the time of Xosrau Anōšarvān⁵". Thus, Dr. Boyce is able to conclude that there is a lack of proof for the Mazdeanism of any Sasanian king. Hence, the question arises again: If the Sasanians were Zurvānite, how is it that the Avesta and Pahlavi works are so much less so?—The theory of Wesendonk and Zaehner, which posits successive phases, is transposed by Dr. Boyce, who abandons time for space, into a theory of regions, as follows: the fact that Manichaean texts written in Persian, but not the texts written in Parthian⁶, use Zurvān's name to designate the supreme god, suggests that in the 3rd century Zurvānism was predominant in the south-west of the empire, but not among the Parthians⁷. And this, Dr. Boyce goes on to say, gives support to what is an inherent probability, namely, that "orthodox Zoroastrianism remained strongest in those regions nearest Zoroaster's homeland, and farthest from

1 *Das Wesen der Lehre Zarathustras*, 19 sq.

2 *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian Dilemma*, 1955.

3 To which I adhered in my Notes on Zervanism, *JNES*, 1956, 108 sq. But refer *infra*.

4 Some reflections on Zurvanism, *BSOAS*, 1957, 304 sq.

5 BOYCE, 307.

6 Cf. above, p. 187.

7 As Dr. Boyce adds, this does not prevent Widengren from maintaining that it was among the Parthians that Zurvānism flourished and not among the Persians. Nyberg was already of this view.

Babylonian and Greek influences, i.e., in northern and eastern Iran. These regions being remote also from the foreign observers of Sasanian times, it is not surprising that they should have been screened from their notice by the Zurvānites of the west. At the Muslim conquest, their position enabled these areas to hold out longest, and to remain the strongholds of the old religion".

However, this reasoning is opposed by two facts, one of which Dr. Boyce quite honestly mentions in a note : "Zurvān's name was used to translate Brahma's in Sogdiana"¹. Hence Zurvānism must have reached eastern Iran. The second fact, complimentary to the first, is that the flowering, under Muslim Iran, in the 9th century, of a non-Zurvānite Pahlavi literature, took place, not in east Iran, the homeland of the prophet, but on the contrary in Persia, the region supposedly the first to be won over to Zurvānism.

Hence the "geographical theory" too, appears to be inadequate². The above criticisms meet those made by Frye, who in an article³, seems to have considerably elucidated the question.

d) *Frye's solution.*

According to Richard Frye, Zurvānism and Mazdeanism are two religions in their beliefs, but one in their practices. There is no evidence for the existence of a separate Zurvānite cult or Church. We can only envisage Zurvānite groups flourishing within the Mazdean Church, especially at the courts of the kings.

Such a variation of doctrine, we may add, is reflected in Christian sources, which are far from being unanimous : they do not always designate Zurvān as the supreme god of Mazdeanism, but sometimes Ōhrmazd (under the name of Zeus, or the "Great Zeus"⁴), more often Mihr (under the name of the Sun)⁵, and at times both⁶.

In Frye's view, the decline of Zurvānism, after the Muslim conquest, is explained by the fact that the leading Sasanian class, together with the court, the *dehqāns*, and certain *mobads* embraced Islam, in the hope of retaining a small particle of power by collaborating with the conquerors. It seems likely that it was they who introduced into Islam the time speculation, which was to occupy so important a place under the Abbasids.

This hypothesis, however, does not solve the entire problem. We should also elucidate the relationship between Zurvān and Ōhrmazd. It is not enough to say the second is the son of the first, etc. Bianchi, *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, 1958, 242, holds that Zurvān is the god of beginnings, and Ōhrmazd the sovereign god, as are, respectively, Ouranos and Zeus.

Menasce sees their relationship differently. In a lecture delivered at the Musée Guimet in 1959 (still unpublished), he describes Zurvān as a First Principle that is completely undefined—resembling somewhat what there was in the beginning according to *RV* 10. 129—but which will give rise to the defined. He is not a creator-god, and therein lies his supreme and charac-

1 BOYCE, 309, n. 1.

2 Cf. MOLÉ, Le problème zurvanite, *JA*, 1959, 431 sq.

3 Zurvanism again, *Harvard Theological Review*, 1959, 65 sq.

4 *Acts of Sābhā and Mu'ain*.

5 Elisee LANGLOIS, *Historiens de l'Arménie*, II, 197-9, 234. *Actes de Simon Barsabba'e*, Bedjan, II, 131 sq.

6 Under the names of Mihr and Bel, Théophylactus IV, 16, 5.

teristic "quality" : he needs offspring in order to create. In this sense he is more "undefined" than, strictly speaking, above good and evil. And this explains why he became the great god of Manichaeism, for this religion had at heart a horror of creation, which is far from being the Mazdean attitude. (Cf. *Studies...Taqizadeh*, 1962, 182 sq.).

D. THE MAZDEAN COSMOLOGY¹

1. Cosmogony

a) *The Creator*

Pahlavi books make no reference to the choice made by the two Spirits, at the beginning of all things, between good and evil. For the ancient opposition between Spənta Mainyu and Aηra Mainyu, still finding illustration in *Yt*, 19.46 sq., where they dispute possession of the Xvarənah, is already replaced in the *Vidēvdāt* by the opposition between Ahura Mazdā and Aηra Mainyu (*Vd*, *farg.* 1,1 sq.).

The *Bundahišn*, like other Pahlavi books, straightaway depicts Ōhrmazd and Ahriman as two adversaries having contrary and incompatible natures, one luminous, and the other dark, one on high, the other below, with between them Space or Void (Vāy). They seem to have existed in this state from the beginning till the envious attack of Ahriman sets things into motion. . . . The question of their origin is not even raised. Now, this question had been raised and an answer found in current speculations on Zurvān. Hence, the omission was deliberate and in keeping with the *Dēnkart* passage (mentioned above, p. 131) condemning the doctrine whereby Ōhrmazd and Ahriman are brothers in the womb of the same mother.

Ōhrmazd is good, Ahriman is evil, this is stated as the primary fact. Good and evil are contrary realities just as much as are light and darkness, fragrance and stench, life and death, health and sickness, truth and falsehood (*Šk. gum. Vic.*, 8.1), justice and injustice, etc. As Martānfarrux² demonstrates, since material facts derive from spiritual truths, it follows that the latter too are divided into good and evil, and are ultimately traceable to two contrary first causes.

If God is good, he cannot produce evil. If God is perfect, nothing can be added to him. If he creates, it is solely (*ŠgV*, 8.51) so as to repel and ward off the injury that might be caused by the Adversary, and this is the whole reason and occasion for creation. This statement implies that God could suffer injury, and our author is therefore wrong in saying God is omnipotent and wholly perfect. For his power is limited by that of Ahriman (in the *Bd*, likewise, he occupies only half of space). But this limitation is only temporary, it will end with the triumph of Ōhrmazd. Ōhrmazd is potentially omnipotent, and will be wholly so after Ahriman's defeat.

This conception differs from Manichaeism as much as from Christian or Muslim monotheism. In Manichaeism, there are two eternal principles, but the first is pure spirit, the second, pure matter, and the world is evil, since creation is the result of a fall into Matter, whereas in Mazdeanism, creation is the work of Ōhrmazd, and his weapon of defence and battle against the Adversary, although the latter partly invades and holds sway over it. In Christianity and Islam, God is omnipotent, and hence responsible for evil, for who else could be? This is also what the Mazdeans hold against the Zurvānite speculation.

1 An elementary exposition of Pahlavi doctrine is given in ZAEHNER, *The Teachings of the Magi*, chaps. 2, 3, 4 and 10, and in greater detail, *Dawn and Twilight* . . . , 1961, 248 sq.

2 Cf. ZAEHNER, *Teachings*, 57.

However, the speculation contaminated them in spite of themselves. Indeed, we read in the *Bd* that Ōhrmazd has three other names, Time, Space and Religion, and these equivalents are included in the calendar as the names of the days, Ōhrmazd figuring first under his own name, then twice more under the name of Dadv, who covers severally, Time, Space, and Religion¹.

This quaternity can hardly be explained other than as adaptation of the Zurvānite quaternity, studied above, p. 132, in which Ōhrmazd replaces Power, Light is called Space, and Wisdom, Religion.

But why this borrowing? It was not merely a question of "neutralizing" Zurvānism; the role played by Time and Space in the genesis of the world had to be accounted for. Ōhrmazd decides to create in order to exterminate Ahriman. For this he must create the world—for a limited time determined by a treaty—and in the intermediate space (between himself and his adversary). Time and Space are therefore necessary to him. Can it be said that they are superior to him? This would have been a blasphemy in the eyes of the Mazdeans. They resolved the difficulty by making them identical with him.

The idea itself of a pact may be Zurvānite in origin. According to Zātspram², it is Zurvān who suggested it to Ahriman; but it is not clear to us why he should have found it necessary to speak about it to Ahriman at all, if—as the Mazdeans hold—he knew the battle would end with his victory. In the Zurvānite speculation, on the contrary, Zurvān shared the power equally between his two sons.

Anyhow, the treaty displeases Ahriman, and the *Mēnōk ī Xrat* (27.33) tells us that to get rid of it, he swallowed it.

Another Zurvānite import is traceable³ in Zātspram's account. Zurvān hands Ahriman the treaty in the form of an implement or ash-coloured garment. Ōhrmazd, on the other hand, invests himself with the white robe of priesthood and wisdom. However, the two passages of the *Dēnkart* narrating this double episode only become coherent and grammatically correct if we suppose, with Zaehner, that in the original myth both Ōhrmazd and Ahriman were invested with their garments by Zurvān.

Other myths current in Zurvānism were not so easily assimilated into Mazdeanism. One relates⁴ how Ōhrmazd, having created all things, was at a loss how to create light. He asked Satan who counselled him (or allowed the secret to be wrested from him) to marry his mother who would give birth to the sun, and his sister who would give birth to the moon. As Bianchi recognized, this is a version of the myth of the conquest of light.

Another myth attested only in the Acts of Ādurhormizd and Anāhēd⁵, recounts that Ahriman, when the water came up to him, said to Ōhrmazd: "Your animals should not drink of my water". Ōhrmazd is perplexed, till a demon inspires him to reply: "Take away the water

1 As witnessed by the *Sīrōza*, cf. above, p. 91. Another form of this doctrine is found in *Dk* (Sanjana) XII, p. 85, § 83, 2, which cites Time, Creation and Knowledge as the three *mēnōk* things maintaining the world; cf. JUNKER, *Über iran. Quellen*, n. 33.

2 In ZAEHNER's interpretation, *Zurvan*, 101.

3 According to ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 118 sq.

4 ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*; 147 sq.

5 ZAEHNER, F 5.

from my earth'. Then the frog, created by Ahriman, drinks up all the water, and Ōhrmazd is once again distressed, till Ahriman's creatures come to his aid : a fly enters the frog's nose and makes it vomit the water. In this account also, Bianchi¹ traces an archaic mythical theme, that of the obstructed waters delivered by a demiurge.

b) *The Mēnōk*

In Mazdean cosmogony, creation, before becoming material, was first produced in the *mēnōk* form, a term not adequately translated by 'spiritual, celestial, or invisible.'

Because of the difficulties of translation, it appears to have acquired two very different meanings, at any rate, when designating the primordial state of creation. Either it is understood as perfect, or on the contrary, as an outline or embryo.

According to the *Dāstān ī Dēnik* (37.3 sq.), whatever is *mēnōk* is perfect, and we know from the *Dēnkart* (9.37, 5) that creation was at first exempted from old age and death: "Immortal was my world and the existence of the righteous was all light"; so much so, that for several authors (notably Zātspram, 34.25 sq.), the final renovation of the world will consist of a return to its original perfection.

However, the *Bundahišn*, 1.6, describes the *mēnōk* state as one which, for three thousand years, was "without thought, without movement and without touch". This primordial immobility has an analogue, as Zātspram tells us (1.25), in the material creation: "For three thousand years, creation was corporeal and static. The sun, moon and stars had stopped in the heights and did not stir". (At the end of this period, Ōhrmazd requests Zurvān to set creation back in motion). This is reminiscent of the myth narrated in the Avesta, *Yt*, 13.53 sq., according to which the waters long remain motionless at the beginning of the world, plants do not grow and "the stars, moon, sun and endless lights remain fixed at the same spot", till the good, strong, holy Fravašis of the righteous make the waters flow, the plants grow and the luminaries move.

The first of these two concepts is undoubtedly the more refined, even if it contains the archaic myth of the golden age. It asserts the "primacy of the spiritual" so to speak, and bears some affinity to Orphism and Manichaeism. It is also found expressed in the Zurvānīte doctrine according to which Infinite Time precedes Time of Long Dominion which will return to it, the world being, so to say, but an interlude in eternity.

This concept may have been borrowed from Greece, during Iran's hellenization. As Darmesteter had already written²: "It is impossible not to be struck by the wholly Platonic character of this concept, which is the application of the doctrine of ideas to Magian cosmogony". Only we should distinguish better than he, between the Greek import and the original Iranian substratum.

The second concept, in which we again find the archaic myth of the liberation of the waters, is certainly the more primitive of the two, creation being understood here as a gestation. This is explicitly expressed in *Bd* 1.38 where we read that: Ōhrmazd is like the mother of the ideal form, for he bears it in his body; he is like the father of the material forms he produces.

¹ *Zamān ī Ōhrmazd*, 233 sq.

² *Zend-Avesta*, 3, p. LII.

The last comparison is found also in a *Dēnkart* passage, cited by Junker¹, dealing with the relationship between *mēnōk* and *gētē* and which should be rendered as follows: "The basis and seed cause of *mēnōk* are seen in the actualization (or realization) of *gētē*, like the self that is diffused and hidden, (like) gold in the crown, silver in the cup, iron in the spade, wood in the door, the root in the fruit, and the father in the son".

The *fravašis* likewise were created and form part of the spiritual creation. Zarathuštra's *fravaši*, notably, was created 3.000 years before the Assault (that is to say 6.000 years before the birth of Zarathuštra, whence the figure of the Greek authors). Before Ahriman's Assault, they are given the choice by Ōhrmazd (*Bd*, 3.23 sq.): of remaining in the spiritual world, safe from the assault, or of descending into the material world to participate in the battle. They choose the second alternative, knowing that Ahriman will be vanquished in the end.

c) *The Material Creation*

Several doctrines are found juxtaposed in the cosmogonical account given in chapter I of the *Bundahišn*. The joint is particularly visible in § 17: "I shall now speak of the ideal creation, then of the material". But the ideal creation has already been dealt with in the 16 preceding paragraphs. As the second narrative is strongly impregnated with Zurvānism, as we shall see, we may conclude with Nyberg, followed by Zaeher, that it is in fact a Zurvānite insertion².

Molé is against this interpretation, and defending the unity of the chapter—and of the Mazdean doctrine—he maintains³ that there is no discontinuity since what precedes § 17 concerns the *mēnōk*, *stricto sensu*, and what follows deals with the *mēnōk* state of the material creation. But in fact, the two moments are not separated in time: the *mēnōk* form of the material creation belongs to the first cosmogonical phase, as may be clearly read in *Zātspram*, 1.4; and the fashioning forth of the first creature, described in § 24 of the *Bundahišn*, takes place simultaneously with the creation of the instrument of defence recounted in § 16. Hence there is undoubtedly the insertion of a second narrative from § 17. This insertion extends down to § 32, not inclusive, since this paragraph, in turn, begins with the words: "First he created . . ."

The interpolated portion comprises essentially of the following: Just as Finite Time or "Time of Long Dominion" was created for 12.000 years from Infinite Time, so Vāy of Long Dominion was fashioned forth from Time or Power, or, as Zaeher suggests, p. 126, from infinite Zurvān, who is identical with infinite Space.

The rest of the chapter juxtaposes at least three other theories. According to one of them, § 32 sq., the material creation proceeds first from the Amahraspands, then from Vāy of Long Dominion.

According to another theory, § 41, from Endless Light (ideal form) is shaped the fire (first material form), which in turn gives rise (by progressive condensation) to the wind, whence water, and finally the earth. This second, purely physical theory is obviously borrowed from

1 *Dk Sanjana*, V, 228, § 191: JUNKER, *Über iranische Quellen*, n. 25. On these two conceptions of the original state, we now have BIANCHI's pertinent remarks, *Religione, Mito e Storia, Atti del XV Convegno del Centro di Studi Filosofici*, Brescia 1961, 302 sq.

2 There is no need to speak of an interpolation, implying two successive states of the text. The text right, from the start, is of a rhapsodic nature.

3 *La naissance du monde dans l'Iran préislamique*, in *La naissance du monde*, 1959, 315. Awaiting the publication of his thesis: *Le problème Zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne*.

Greece. It can be recognized in an adapted form in a third doctrine, § 42 sq., according to which, forms are engendered one from the other, starting from the sky (in the shape of a crystal egg), which gives rise to water (and to the wind), water to the earth, the earth to plants, plants to cattle and finally to man, in six stages, corresponding to the six seasons of the year; whereas fire (derived from the sky) gives rise directly to the seed of cattle and men, and the wind (derived likewise from the sky) animates and maintains all the others. We are reminded of the doctrine of natural fires, studied above, p. 72 sq.

Several passages dealing with the creation of the celestial sphere may be assembled to reconstitute a doctrine, which is akin to that of man as a microcosm.

As we have just seen, in § 43, the sky is said to be shaped like a crystal egg. The Zurvānite insertion, without naming the sky, states in § 26, that Ōhrmazd created "the form of his creatures from his own essence which is material light: a form of fire, luminous, white, round and manifest afar".

In § 29, we read that Ōhrmazd fashioned forth, from Endless Light, what is generally translated as "the body of a priest". Zaehner has rejected this translation and adopts the reading *asar karp* "Endless form". But we may retain the reading *asrōk* interpreting it as *asrō* (that is to say Av. *āθrō*) "Fire"¹. Gayōmart, the Primal Man, was also conceived of as spherical, in the sky's image, like the spherical men of Aristophanes. If man resembles the sky, the sky resembles man, and we can quote several texts in which the world has a human form. Two of these have already been stated above: in *Bd*, 1.38, Ōhrmazd bears in his body, like a mother her child, the ideal form of the world; while according to the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, endless light gives rise to a giant body, whose parts become the different parts of the world². There are besides, Jayhānī's text and the colophon of Ms. Mf. 4. Finally, a text, chapter 64 of the *Dātaštān ī Dēnik*, furnishes an additional detail about the "form of fire", namely, that its name was Ōhrmazd³.

This last text, in turn, evokes those in which Ōhrmazd invests himself with the white robe of priesthood (*Bd*, 3.4, and the two passages of the *Dēnkart*, quoted above, p. 210, dealing with the investiture of Ōhrmazd and Ahriman). As Zaehner himself recognized in respect of this investiture (p. 119), Ōhrmazd's garment is identical with the "luminous, white, form, round and manifest afar". We might adduce the "mantle of stars" worn by Ahura Mazdā in the Avesta, and, in the *Gāthās*, the Bounteous Spirit "clad in the hardest sky".

To sum up, the celestial sphere, Ōhrmazd's garment (which is the white garment of priesthood) and the "form of fire" are all three identical: in other words the universe is conceived of as a spherical giant.

However, it may seem a little surprising that this creature should be called Ōhrmazd. What does it mean, then, that Ōhrmazd created a body called Ōhrmazd? It all becomes clear, it seems to me, if we recall that in Manichaeism, Ōhrmazd is the name of the cosmic Man,

1 With *ōk* noting final *ō*. We can thereby avoid "multiplying the beings": it is the same form as is described in § 26 just discussed. This is confirmed by another text, *Dātaštān ī Dēnik*, § 64. Cf. D-G., "The form of fire", *Dr. Unvala Memorial Volume*, 1964, 14 sq.

2 ZAEHNER, 136 sq., dismisses this text as a borrowing from India.

3 ZAEHNER, *BSOAS*, 1959, 367, eliminates this passage and this "awful body of a priest" by translating as follows: "Ōhrmazd, the universal lord, fashioned forth an endless form (or headless form) from the Endless Light whose creation (not whose name) was Ōhrmazd's and whose light was that of fire". But see D-G., article cited above.

son of the god Zurvān. Our Pahlavi books likewise reflect the Zurvānite doctrine, that it is Zurvān who creates Ōhrmazd and invests him with the priesthood. This is particularly clear in chapter 3 of the *Bundahišn*, where Ōhrmazd invests himself with the white priestly garment, while only a few lines above, Zurvān can be recognized in the Mazdean quaternity.

From where did the Pahlavi books get the doctrine of a cosmic giant in the shape of a sphere? I think we should distinguish between two ideas which have fused together here: that of the world as a giant, and that of the world as a sphere. The first is a primitive idea which can be connected to an archaic myth, more ancient still than the Indo-Europeans, and perhaps as old as the blood-sacrifice and the dismembered human victim who gives rise to the different parts of the universe.

The second idea that the universe is, or started by being a luminous sphere, inevitably brings to mind the concept which occupied so important a place with the Greeks, and not only with Parmenides and Aristotle. Since, as we know, the Iranians of the Sasanian epoch read Greek treatises on astronomy, it seems likely that this was how they became conversant with the doctrine. This is confirmed by the term, or rather one of the terms, which in Pahlavi designates the sky: *spīhr*, whose most plausible linguistic explanation is that it was borrowed from the Greek σφαῖρα.

Mazdeanism absorbed Zurvānism in two ways¹. One was the quaternity. Ōhrmazd is co-eternal with Time and infinite like it; Finite Time proceeded from Infinite Time and will return to it; Ahriman is not infinite, but is nonetheless wholly independent of Ōhrmazd and violently opposed to him.

The other position, while not coming so close to Zurvānism, admits that nothing is infinite except Time and Space. There is no reconciliation between Zurvān and Ōhrmazd; neither Ōhrmazd nor Ahriman are infinite. This is the stand taken by *Bd*, 1.5 and the author of *Škand gumānik Vicār* (16.71 sq. and 86 sq.).

d) *The Millenniums*

Why does the pact have to last 9 000 years? Is it so that Ōhrmazd and Ahriman might reign successively, for three millenniums each, till Zarathuštra's advent inaugurates the last of the three?

The text of the Indian *Bundahišn* is as follows: "Ōhrmazd knew that within these 9 000 years, 3 000 years would pass entirely according to the will of Ōhrmazd, three thousand years in mixture would pass according to the will of both Ōhrmazd and Ahriman, and that in the last battle, the Destructive Spirit will be made powerless".

In the Zurvānite account (*Eznik*, etc.), the 9 000 years of the pact are also the 9 000 years of Ahriman's reign. Zarathuštra's advent evidently does not change the course of things.

Actually, Ahriman's reign is considered to be lasting still (reckoning simply in millenniums, not in tri-millenniums): hence the author of a *Rivāyat*, Bahman Asfandyār², writes:

1 ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 233.

2 M. R. UNVALA, *Dārāb Hormazyār Rivāyat*, II, 160, line 1. Bahrām Varjāvand is one of the precursors of the future Saviour.

“Know that Ahriman’s millennium is coming to a close and Ōhrmazd’s approaches, and we hope to see the face of the royal and victorious Varjāvand.”

Furthermore, the principle of the three phases corresponds to that of the “three times” fundamental to Manichaeism¹: in the first, the light and darkness, or the two Adversaries are separated; the second is the time of admixture; in the third, the original separation is restored. This system appears to have inspired the author of the Iranian *Bundahišn* (even more clearly than that of the Indian *Bd*), who represents things as if right from the start of the third period, Ōhrmazd’s supremacy was restored as before the second. He does not even mention a figure for this third period, as if it already formed part of the Final Renovation, which it anticipates: “In the last battle, Ahriman will be made powerless”.

However, the threefold scheme does not adequately explain the entire Mazdean doctrine of millenniums, in which other motifs of symmetry appear to play a part. For instance, once it was accepted that Zarathuštra would be succeeded by his three sons, each for one thousand years till the final redemption, it became natural to suppose that before him there was equally three thousand years, and to accommodate into these three millenniums the entire history preceding him².

We are tempted to think the scheme was originally as simple as this. But it is doubtless an illusion. We know from Greek authors that Zarathuštra was supposed to have lived 6 000 years before Plato. We should therefore add to the scheme, at least from the 5th century B.C. onwards, three millenniums “before the state of mixture”, making 9 000 years in all. This calls for an explanation of Theopompus’ notice which in itself is not at all clear. The notice preserved by Plutarch, is as follows: Ōhrmazd and Ahriman reign in turn for 3 000 years, then for the next 3 000 years they battle and destroy one another’s domain, but finally Ōhrmazd triumphs.

The obscurity of the text is due to the expression ἀνὰ μέρος. Can it be taken to mean “3 000 years each”? This rendering, although the most obvious, has been opposed on the ground that Ahriman’s supremacy is unimaginable on Zoroastrian principles. The alternate reigns are therefore understood as lasting 3 000 years in all, which does not resolve the difficulty (since Ahriman according to this theory does have periods of supremacy after all) and which makes a total of 6 000 years, instead of the 9 000 years posited, as we have just seen, by Greek notices on Zoroaster’s date.

Actually, the period of 3 000 years before Zarathuštra’s advent could be called, in contrast to the preceding and following ones, the reign of Ahriman. *Before*: Ōhrmazd reigned alone (having overcome Ahriman by reciting the Ahuvar prayer), during which time he created the world. *After*: Zarathuštra had come and the battle took a different turn.

Is the Greek text reconcilable with the Mazdean position? We should first be able to interpret the last phrase, which at first sight implies that the battle begins only with the last three millenniums. Now this battle had already covered the three preceding ones, the “reign” of Ahriman. We will therefore interpret the phrase as: “for the last three millenniums, the battle is equally waged”.

1 PUECH, *Le manichéisme*, 157, n. 284; ASMUSSEN, *Histor. Religionum*, 1969, 580.

2 As do Zātspram, 34.49 (ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 353), *Bd*, chap. 33 and *DkM*, 323.8.

On the whole the statements of the *Bd* and Theopompus can be harmonized with those of Greek authors on Zoroaster's date, and the legendary history of Iran as follows:

—Creation of Zarathuštra's *fravaši*

6 000 years before Plato	{	3 000 years:	Ōhrmazd reigns.	}	6 000 years of legendary history.
		3 000 years:	Ahriman attacks and dominates Ōhrmazd in the battle		
	— Zarathuŝtra.....				
	{	3 000 years:	Ōhrmazd and Ahriman wage an equal battle		

—Final Renovation.

It may be noticed that Ōhrmazd's reign preceded that of Ahriman. If it had been the opposite, as Benveniste writes¹, Ōhrmazd's reign would have immediately preceded the advent of Zarathuštra, so much so that the latter would have lost his *raison d'être*, instead of, as in the correct picture, changing the course of things. *Y*, 9.15 supports this, by saying that before him the demons were at large, in human form, on the earth; after his advent, they hide beneath it.

The table above only deals with the 9 000 years of the treaty. What took place before it?

The *Bundahišn*, 1.24, clearly saw that Ōhrmazd's decision to create finite time should be placed at the beginning of the reckoning of years (for there could be no years before time existed); thus if the total is 12 000 years, this decision must have antedated the pact by 3 000 years.

Zātspram did not see this, since he wrote, 1.5 sq., that after 3 000 years, Ōhrmazd decided to limit the conflict by making Time intervene.

The *Bundahišn*, in chapter 3, says likewise that Time was fashioned "at the time of attack", hence 9 000 years before the end. Hence the conclusion of the treaty and the creation of Time were contemporary. The only way of escaping this proposition is to admit that nothing preceded this moment, in other words, in the beginning there was no *mēnōk* tri-millennium².

If we thus allow that according to a certain version of the doctrine, the duration of creation comprised only nine millenniums, it remains to be explained why and how this figure was not adhered to.

In fact, in Eznik's account, the 9 000 years of the treaty were preceded by 1 000 during which Zurvān sacrificed to obtain a progeny and bore it within himself. With Zātspram, as we have just seen, 3 000 years elapsed before the pact³. Now, Zātspram obtains this prior

1 *The Persian Religion*, 1929, 108-109, following Junker. But Junker's statement referred to a Zurvānite system (anterior to the Mazdean) : that Ahriman's was the first reign is confirmed, according to Junker, by the *Acts of the Martyrs* (the creation of lights) and by Eznik : 9 000 years after Ahriman's reign, Ōhrmazd will reign 3 000 years. This last trait is not in the text, and in any case, neither the *Acts* nor Eznik attribute to Ahriman a reign limited to the first tri-millennium.

2 NYBERG reached this conclusion, *Questions . . .*, *JA*, 1931 II, 231.

3 As can be seen, neither the figure 12 000 nor 9 or 10 000 are specially Zurvānite.

supplementary period apparently by doubling the episode of Ahriman's defeat through the *Ahuvar* prayer¹. He seems to be anticipating pleonastically this episode when he writes, § 4, that Öhrmazd in order to repulse Ahriman from his domain, overcomes him "by the pure word of the law", which is very likely merely another way of designating the *Ahuvar*.

The 4 tri-millenniums are described in the Pahlavi *Vidēvdāt*, 2.19 (Bailey, *Zor. Probl.*, 122).

2. The 3 000 years from the Attack (till the coming of Zarathuštra)

a) *The Whore*

After lying prostrate for 3 000 years, Ahriman who, till then has resisted the exhortations of his demons, is incited to attack by Jeh, the Whore. He is at last roused from his stupor. The ensuing scene, recounted with some variations by Zātspram, the Bundahišn and Theodore bar Konaï², recalls the Manichaean myth of the "Seduction of the Archons"³.

It is interpreted by Zaehner, who supposes a lacuna in Zātspram's text, as the union of the Whore and the Righteous Man, Gayōmart⁴. But in a recent article⁵, Molé has shown that we should adhere to the text and the traditional interpretation. Jeh joins herself to Ahriman who defiles her. From this, stems the fact that all women are afflicted with menstruation and some with sterility.

b) *The Attack*

Ahriman then attacks Öhrmazd's creation. He floods it with his own creatures, all impure and evil, from reptiles to planets. Plutarch's version preserves the memory of the cosmic egg: Öhrmazd, having made twenty-four gods, puts them in an egg (which is obviously the celestial sphere); Ahriman engenders an equal number of evil spirits which bore through the egg, whence the mixture of good and evil.

The entire universe is divided between Öhrmazd, the Amahraspands and the other *yazatas*, on one side, and the opposing demons, on the other.

Yazatas and demons form two separate lists in *Bd* 26 and 27, prefaced naturally enough (chap. 25) by a study of the calendar, since the months and days are consecrated to the various *yazatas*.

Theoretically, each *yazata* corresponds to a demon; but actually the correspondence only extends to the more important ones, that is to say, Öhrmazd and the Amahraspands, and their personal enemies. These lists are commented on by Jackson, in *Zoroastrian Studies*, 37 sq. : Host of Heaven, and 67 sq. : Legions of Hell.

Of the luminaries, the stars belong to Öhrmazd and the planets to Ahriman. This is the teaching, notably, of the *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, 8.18. See on this subject, Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 158 sq.

1 ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 94.

2 Zātspram, 34.30 sq. ; *Bd*, 4.4 : THÉODORE, ZAEHNER F 10. Cf. BENVENISTE, Le témoignage de Théodore bar Konay sur le zoroastrisme, *MO*, 26, 170 sq.

3 CUMONT, *Recherches sur le manichéisme*, I, 61 sq.

4 *Zurvan*, 185 sq.

5 *RHR*, 1959, 183.

c) *The Slaying of the Bull*

Ahriman slays the Primal Bull whose marrow gives rise to nourishing or medicinal plants, and whose seed, collected in the moon (*Bd*, 13.4), produces useful animals.

It is likely that there is a connection between this myth and that of Mithra sacrificing the bull which finds illustration in so many Mithraic bas-reliefs. But what was the nature of this oft-discussed connection? Since these reliefs antedate by seven centuries the Pahlavi texts, we could conclude¹ that they express the more ancient form of the myth, and that the ascription of the slaying, in Pahlavi texts, not to Mithra but to Ahriman, results from the Zoroastrian reform. Pahlavi writers no longer understood—or feigned not to understand—at a time when blood-sacrifice was no longer the usage, or was at any rate proscribed, that it actually represented a creative sacrifice, and consequently, they made the Demon responsible for it.

This interpretation does not satisfy Gershevitch, who proposes² a return to the former one, namely, that Mithra only secondarily became the slayer of the bull in the Mysteries. It is only natural, after all, that Mithra, the god who bestows life and makes plants grow, should take over, in the religion in which he was the supreme god, the act that gave rise to plants and animals³. It may also be alleged against the first interpretation that the role of Mithra as bull-slayer hardly accords with his description as a god of wide pastures, and with Vohu Manah's protection of the ox.

There remains the difficulty that the more recent myth is attested seven centuries earlier than the more archaic myth. Above all, there remains the strange fact—whatever the interpretation accepted—of the total absence of allusion, in Mazdean sources, to a bull-slaying Mithra. *Non liquet*.

d) *The Slaying of Gayōmart*

Next, Ahriman slays Gayōmart who falls to the ground. His body gives rise to metals. We are reminded that the *Bd* pictures the veins of metal in the earth as the skeleton in the human body: and we should not forget that Gayōmart is not, properly speaking, a man; he is a spherical giant in the image of the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should contain the substance of metals.

His seed is purified in the light of the sun; then two-thirds of it are preserved by the god Neryōsang, while the remaining one-third falls to the earth and gives rise to the rhubarb plant from which springs the first human couple.

There is a connection between living things and the luminaries expressed in mythical terms both here and in the slaying of the Bull. These myths are the model of what takes place at the death of every man and animal. A part of man—his "type", *advēnak*—goes to the sun: it is the medieval equivalent of the *ciθra* (in the Av. compound *gao.ciθra* "containing the seed or race of the ox"). Likewise, a part of the animal goes to the moon. As for plants,

1 With LOISY, *Mystères paléens et mystère chrétien*, 1919, 192, n.2, and PETTAZZONI, *I Misteri*, 258. Cf. also. LOMMEL, *Mithra und das Stieropfer, Paideuma*, 1949, 207 sq., and earlier *Die Religion Z.*, 1930, 182 sq.

2 *The Avestan Hymn*, 1959, 62 sq.

3 On Mithra's "assumption" of Ahriman's role, cf. *Nouv. Clío*, 1960, 1 sq., and above, p. 177.

their *karp* or form goes to the stars¹. This is how the stability of the species is illustrated or explained. However, when animals die, their *aḏvēnak* goes to the moon, but their *mēnōk*, "so as to preserve the species," goes into the presence of Vahman. This gives us the impression of being a "sham window", invented to complete the parallelism with what is taught about man.

The latter, indeed, through his *fravahr*, the supreme part of himself, is in the presence of Ōhrmazd. The correspondence with animals is again stressed by ŠgV 5.82, in which the *fravaš* is what maintains the *cihr* (Av. *ciθra*) of the body: by so saying, this text reduces the *fravaš* to the position occupied by the *aḏvēnak* in the *Bd* passage, cited below, p. 222.

e) Anthropology²

1. *Man in the Universe*—The idea of microcosm, already illustrated in the cosmogony, is further developed in the various systems found in chapter 28 of the *Bundahišn*. First, the different parts of the body are compared with the different parts of the universe³, the soul with Ōhrmazd and the faculties of knowing with the Amahraspands. Notably, just as Ōhrmazd abides in Endless Light, and in the Abode of Song, from which his energy spreads everywhere, so the soul resides in the head and heart from which its energy spreads to the whole body. And, just as Ōhrmazd is on high and Ahriman below, man has two winds in his body, one, the wind of life or the soul (warm and moist) is in his head; the other, the wind of sin (cold and dry) is in his anus⁴.

Then the Amahraspands are compared, not to the faculties of the soul, but to the different components of the body, according to such affinities as can be inferred from the elements they patronize: flesh is compared to Vohuman (protector of the ox), the veins and fat to Ašvahišt (i.e. to the sacrificial fire, constantly associated with this Amahraspand; because fat is offered to the fire?), the skeleton to Šahrēvar (Amahraspand of metals—because the veins of metal are like the skeleton of the earth?), the marrow to Spandarmat (earth), blood to Xurdāt (water), hair to Amurdāt (plants); whereas life, any light of life, intelligence, conscience, etc., belong to Ōhrmazd.

The place of man in the universe is diversely defined by the *Dēnkart* and by *Manušcihr*. According to the former, Madan, 42.8 sq., beings are divided into inseparable immortals (the gods), separable immortals (men and animals, temporarily separated from body when they die) and separable mortals (the *daēvas*, separated from their bodies since the advent of Zarathuštra, the wolves and *xrafstras*, "vermin").

According to *Manušcihr*, *Dātastān ī Dēnik*, 2.1 sq., the righteous man is superior to the stars, moon, sun and the fire of Ōhrmazd, that is to say, to the four steps in the ascent of the soul towards the Lord.⁵

The human condition was corrupted by the first couple, at Ahriman's instigation. This is narrated in *Bd* 14. Mašya and Mašyāne, as soon as they acquired their human form, were

1 TAVADIA, *ZII*, 10, 197.

2 See now, ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight*..., 1961, 265 sq., and 302 sq.

3 This passage constitutes the starting point of GÖTZE's article, *Persische Weisheit in griechischen Gewande*, *ZII*, 1923. Cf. J.D-G., *Harv. Theol. Rev.*, 1956, 115 sq.

4 The comparison extends to the sacred thread (*kusti*), the replica of the celestial girdle—probably the Milky Way—the visible manifestation of the Mazdean Religion. Cf. ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 155 and 163.

5 Cf. above, p. 151.

admonished by Ōhrmazd to do only what was good in thought, word and deed, not to worship the demons and, apparently, to abstain from food and not to kill animals. They first acknowledged Ōhrmazd as their creator. But the Aggressor assailed their minds and conquered it, and they proclaimed the Destructive Spirit, creator of water, the earth, plants and other things. For this lie they were damned.

They fasted thirty days. Then they sucked a little goat's milk, but pretended afterwards to have disliked it. This was their second lie, and the demons were strengthened.

After another thirty days they killed a head of cattle, built a fire and roasted it, offering a portion to the fire, and one to the gods, by throwing it towards the sky. A vulture passing over them carried it away; and a dog was the first to eat of this flesh.

The demons, emboldened by the ingratitude of Mašya and Mašyāne (towards Ōhrmazd), inspired them with envy. They attacked each other, and made an offering of cow's milk (permitted in itself) to the demons.

For fifty years they had no intercourse with each other. Finally, so as to beget offspring, they united, after which they said: "This is what we should have done during the last fifty years".

A pair of twins was born to them, a girl and a boy. So sweet were they, that the mother devoured one and the father the other. Ōhrmazd took away the delicious taste of children, so that in future, parents might let them survive. Mašya and Mašyāne had other pairs of twins, from which the entire human race has sprung.

*
* *
*

Since the attack of the Aggressor, man is mortal. But he does not die altogether.

Yt 13.149, in a formula found thrice repeated elsewhere, divides the immortal parts of man into *ahu* "life", *daēnā*, *baodah* "knowledge", *urvan* "soul" and *fravaši*. The presence of both *daēnā* and *fravaši* in the same list must have been embarrassing to commentators¹, since *fravaši* appeared to be a doublet of *daēnā*, personifying like it, the act of choice. The difficulty is removed if we interpret the term as follows. As Söderblom has rightly shown the *fravaši* was a kind of genius, in the strict Latin sense of the term, which was protector and promoter of life. This meaning clearly emerges from the long invocation of *Yt* 13 in which the *fravašis* are said to preside over conception, pregnancy, child-birth and the irrigation of plants. Furthermore, just as the Roman *genii* protected those who offered them worship, the *fravašis* are invoked in combat. Their significance has long been misunderstood by scholars, but as Bailey shows², Iranian tradition had already perverted the meaning by explaining the term on the basis of its etymology either as choice, food or growth. In fact, the word appears to belong to the root from which *varəθra* "defence, resistance" is derived, and to be related to Middle-Persian *gurt* "hero", a fact which throws light on the personal name Φραορτης—*Fravrtiš*, literally "Pre-eminent hero"³. The conception which caused this term to be applied to the

1 LOMMEL, *Die Religion Zarath.*, 1930, 168; WESENDONK, *Urmensch u. Seele*, Hannover 1924, 192.

2 Zoroastrian Problems, 109.

3 This name, like the word *fravaši* itself, should therefore be distinguished from Av. *fraorati* "profession of faith".

“mânes”, or *pitarah* of Iran, is that of a defensive protective power which continues to emanate from a chief, even after death¹. This originally aristocratic notion seems to have been vulgarised, in the same way as, in Greece, any dead person came to be deemed a hero, or, in Egypt, an Osiris. Every man—at least every righteous man had his *fravašī*²—and was the retainer after death of a protective force, which it may be noted did not act in his interest as would a guardian angel, but for the benefit of those invoking him.

Zarathuštra ignored the *fravašī*; perhaps because of their connection with the second function. On the other hand, he was familiar with the *daēnā*. It is listed, Y 45.2, by one of the two Spirits when pointing out to the other how they differ in all respects: “Neither our thoughts, nor teachings, nor wills, nor beliefs, nor words nor deeds, nor our *daēnās*, nor souls agree”. *Daēnā*, with *fravašī*, is perhaps the Iranian term that has lent itself most to controversy. It admits of two interpretations which do not appear immediately reconcilable: in one sense, it is part of the personality, especially in the Gāthic passage we have just quoted, or in the famous account in the *Haḍōxt Nask* of the soul’s encounter after death, with “its own *daēnā*” which comes to meet it in the form of a young girl; in the other sense, *daēnā* denotes “the religion”. However, the two meanings are not irreconcilable. The dual sense should be interpreted as in the case of the entities, which were regarded either as personal virtues or as divine beings.

Several etymologies for *daēnā* have been proposed. The first derives it from the root *day* (Skr. *dhī*) “see”. Thus the word literally denotes either the faculty of “sight” (the “conscience”), or the object of this sight (the “religion”).

The second etymology is defended by Widengren³. On the basis of the fact, to be taken up below, that the theme of the encounter with the *daēnā*-maiden has an Indian parallel in the meeting of the apsarases, this scholar connects *daēnā* with Skr. *dhēnā* “female”.

A third etymology is given by Pagliaro⁴, who goes back to the root *day* “see”, but invokes the Graeco-Latin parallel *εἶδος*-species, concluding that “in correlation with *gaētha* “living being”, which denotes the material form, *daēnā* is used to designate the image, the species; the ultimate meaning being that of model, type, species, kind, and finally, of nature, essence. As for the religion, it is “the essence” of Ahura Mazdā.

But the best etymology for *daēnā* would seem to be one which, while postulating that the word derives from the root *day* “see” (whose Skr. equivalent, *dhī*, also means “think”, etc.), takes into account also its morphological similarity with Skr. *dhēnā*. It is sufficient that this last word does not always mean “female, milch-cow”, but at times, as shown by Oliphant, Bloomfield, Geldner and Renou⁵, “song”, “discourse”, or “prayer”. This sense accords, as Molé saw⁶, with that of *daēnā* “religion”, conceived first and foremost as a cult.

1 That the *fravašī* belong to the second function was first recognized by DUMÉZIL, *JA*, 1953, 1 sq., who compares them to the Maruts, while observing that the latter, contrary to them, have no connection with the dead. On the other hand, they recall the Valkyries in Germanic mythology.

2 Below, p. 249.

3 *Stand und Aufgaben*, 33. Rapprochement avec gr. *δαίμων* Mikkola, *WuS* 1910, 217.

4 *Samjñāvyākaraṇam*, *Studia Indologica Internationalia*, Poona-Paris I, 1954, 9.

5 Renou, in his *Etudes védiques et paninéennes*, I, 11.

6 *Daēnā*, le pont Cinvat et l’initiation das le mazdéisme, *RHR*, 1960, 155 sq.

Whatever it is, we see the *daēnā* disappear from Avestan usage, in its subjective meaning. The list of *Y* 55.1 ignores it, although it is a systematic enumeration running from what is most material to what is least: *gaēθa* "living being", *tanu* with *asti* "the body with the bones", *uštāna* "vital energy" (which does not survive), *kəhrp* "form", *təvīši* "force", *baodāh* "knowledge," *urvan* "soul", *fravaši* "protection".

On the other hand, the *daēnā* still figures in the *Hadōxt Nask*'s account of the soul's meeting "with its own *daēnā*", as we have just seen. But the Pahlavi paraphrasers of this passage substitute for it *kunišn* (cf. Skr. *karman*), and not *dēn*, which tends henceforth to have only the non-subjective sense of "religion". Zātspram replaces it by *ruvān i rās*¹. In the *Škand gumānik Vicār*, *dēn* is a principle intervening in creation, together with *dānākīh* (another abstract term), etc., and not one of the "spiritual faculties" enumerated next (chap. I).

It does not appear in any Pahlavi analysis of the "spiritual faculties"². For instance, *Bd* 3.11, says the following about man : his body (*tan*), the material part, rejoins the earth ; his life (*jān*), which is linked to the wind—the inhalation and exhalation of breath—rejoins the wind ; his soul (*ruvān*) is that which with the senses (*bōd*) in the body hears, sees, speaks, knows, unites with the *fravahr* so that the demons cannot destroy it and goes before the Lord Ōhrmazd, whereas the form (*advēnak*) reaches the station of the sun.

DkM 241,13 sq. gives the following analysis : *ruvān* which is the *axv* "soul", *jān* "without which the body dies", *fravahr* "without which the body becomes etiolated" (Av. *fravaši*, wrongly etymologized from the verb *fravart* "nourish"), and *bōd*, "without which the body is insensible", etc.

2. *The Journey in the here-after*—The Indo-Iranians, like most peoples, had a confused, complex, naively contradictory idea of the next world³.

In the *Veda*, the abode of the dead, the kingdom of Yama, appears either as a paradise of light, or as a sinister subterranean, infernal abyss, to which a steep path gives access. And *post-mortem* felicity appears to be the privilege of the great, of the heroes.

There are common traits in the Indian and Iranian beliefs, which probably go back to the Indo-Iranian period : the journey to heaven, the bridge to be crossed, the interrogation, the two dogs guarding the bridge, the golden throne⁴; these traits are taken up below.

These conceptions seem to have acquired a certain moral character as early as the Indo-Iranian period, for the same term, Vedic *ṛtavan*, and Old Persian *artāvan*, "righteous" is connected with the here-after⁵.

1 BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 115. The term is also found in the *Sad darband Hōš*.

2 On Mazdean "psychology" see BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, chap. III; WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufg.*, I, 30 sq., MENASCE, ed. of *ŠgV*, 75 sq.

3 SÖDERBLOM, *La vie future d'après le mazdéisme*, 1901; J. D. C. PAVRY, *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of a Future Life*, New York 1926, deals only with the first phase (of the three he distinguishes) of life after death, but enumerates and utilizes all the sources; D. C. E. PAVRY, *Iranian Studies*, Bombay 1927; LOMMEL, Some corresponding conceptions in old India and Iran, in *Modi Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1930, 260 sq.; ZAEHNER, *Teachings*, chap. IX; WIDENGREN, *Stand u. Aufg.*, I, 34 sq.

4 WIDENGREN, 36, n. 99, citing Wikander.

5 Cf. above, p. 137.

Three motifs were juxtaposed in Mazdean eschatology: the meeting with the maiden, the bridge, and the judgment or weighing. All three were ancient: Mazdeanism inherited them or borrowed them; but gave them all an uniformly moral character, with the result that they became repetitive. They were combined, as is often the case, by placing them end to end, and there were several variations in their arrangement. According to the *Mēnōk ī Xrat* and the *Bundahišn*, the souls meet the *daēnā* after the judgment; but in other texts it meets her before, as early as the morning of the fourth day. We shall examine below other variations of this kind.

i) The Meeting with the Maiden

In the Indian belief, the soul is welcomed by five hundred *apsarases* (*Kauṣītaki Up.*, 1,3 sq.). This celestial harem has already undergone¹ a partial transformation in the abstract, if not moral sense: two of the beloveds are called *Manasī* and *Cakṣuṣī* “the intelligent one” and “the clear sighted one”, that is to say, they incarnate two spiritual faculties which the soul needs in its new state—or else two virtues evinced by it.

In Iran, this process culminated, by dividing into two the maiden, in order to personify the virtue or vice of the deceased. The righteous man meets “the most beautiful maiden” he has ever seen: “Though I was pleasing you made me more pleasing (by your good thoughts, good words, good deeds and good religion); though I was beautiful you made me still more beautiful; attractive, still more attractive. . . .” (*Ha dōxt Nask*). The evil man, on the contrary, meets a hideous hag, who says just the opposite to him.

Manichaeism combines Mazdean morality with Hindu naturalism. According to a Sogdian text², the dead man first meets his own religion in the form of a virgin, then is led by other maidens to Paradise.

The young girl is again found at the bridge, accompanied by two dogs (*Vd*, 19.30), who likewise date from the Indo-Iranian past.³

ii) The Bridge

The bridge itself is a very ancient motif common to many peoples. Very often it represents a trial of strength and skill⁴ for the dead man. With the most primitive peoples, the “bridge” is still nothing more than a tree-trunk, or creeper, etc. The ancient Germanic tribes identified this bridge leading to the here-after with the rainbow, and some scholars would explain the Mazdean bridge likewise, but there is no ground for such a hypothesis. Whatever it be, the bridge is found in India also, from the *Yajur Veda* down to the *Upaniṣads*⁵. Since it leads to the next world, it has to some extent assumed a moral value: it may be crossed on condition one has performed the *dakṣinā*. Furthermore, in typically Indian style, in the *Śatapatha* and the *Upaniṣads*, it is invested with a mystical value, being identified with the *Ātman*.

The bridge links the earth to heaven, which is why⁶ the soul encounters the wind, *Vāy* (good or evil), in other words, intermediate space. This motif occurs at other stages of the

1 As observed by R. OTTO, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn*, 170. Cf. WIKANDER, *Vayu*, 47 sq.

2 HENNING, *BSOAS*, 1943-1946, 476 sq., cited by WIDENGREN, 39.

3 Cf. above, p. 84.

4 G. A. Frank KNIGHT, *Bridge*, in *ERE*, 2, 852.

5 *YV Kathakam*, 28 4; *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*, 4. 8, 3; *Taittiriya*, 6. 5. 3, 3 and 7. 5, 8, 5; *Śatapatha Br.*, 14. 7. 2, 27; *Chāndogya*, 8. 4, 1; *Kathaka Up.*, 3, 2; *Śvetāśvatara Up.*, 6, 19 (after LOMMEL, *art. cit.*, p. 265).

6 As LOMMEL saw, *art. cit.*, 271.

journey : either after the meeting with the *daēnā* (*Mēnōk ī Xrat*) or before (other texts), the soul is surrounded by fragrant or foul-smelling winds.— Its connection with the idea that at death a part of man unites with the wind (above) is almost as evident. These traits accord perfectly with the *Aogəmadaecā*'s statement, that the path of death is the path of Vayu.

If the meeting with the maiden is placed before the crossing of the bridge, the latter is superfluous, for the beauty or ugliness of the maiden is proof the soul has already been judged. The *Mēnōk ī Xrat* and *Bundahišn*, perhaps intentionally, reverse the order of the episodes.

iii) The Judgment

Anyway, why should another judgment be necessary? The difficulty is so acute, and the doctrine so confused on this point, that Pavry finds himself wondering, p. 53, as to where, when and by whom judgment is to be passed. According to Pahlavi texts, the judges are Mithra, assisted by Sraoša and Rašnu (the latter holding the scales). But the *Gāthās* make no allusion to them. Perhaps Ōhrmazd was believed to be the judge of souls, since it was with him that the record of good and evil deeds was kept. It is he then, who is designated by the term *cinvant*, whatever might be its exact meaning : "separator (sorter, decider)" or "retributor". In any case, the bridge itself becomes superfluous. Two concepts, belonging to two different levels, the primitive trial of strength and the moral tribunal, are combined here without harmonizing completely.

As for the three judges, they have a clear parallel in Greece, with Minos, Eacus and Rhadamanthus, whose names are probably pre-hellenic¹; and the weighing of souls was well known in Egypt. The question of the historical relationship between the three myths is easier to raise than to solve.

A very primitive eschatology, perhaps partly modified by Mazdean beliefs, is attested for the Ossetes² : the dead man receives a horse, on which he must cross the river, after being interrogated by Aminon, whose name means the "Counsellor".

iv) The end of the Journey

The soul ascends into heaven in four stages, the first three corresponding respectively to its good thoughts (the stars), good words (the moon) and good deeds (the sun). The *Veda* does not know this progression, but its paradise is called "the world of good action" (*RV*, 10.85, 24), which is reminiscent of the third Mazdean step.

The supreme paradise, called the Abode of Song, is situated in the Endless Light. The soul is welcomed by Vohu Manah, who leads it before the golden throne of Ahura Mazdā. Vohu Manah is thus the *Aməša Spənta* nearest to the Lord, which conforms with the reshuffling mentioned above³. His role of psychopomp, anticipated by the importance accorded to him in the *Gāthās*, is doubtless at the origin of the Manichaean figure of Manwahnmed.⁴

1 On a "Scythic" etymology for the third, cf. JUNKER, *Über iranische Quellen*, 154, n. 3.

2 WIDENGREN, *Stand*, I, 37 sq., after MILLER and DUMÉZIL.

3 P. 139 : it will be noted that, in the *Bundahišn*, Vohu Manah replaces Aša Vahišta as creator of the lights and space. He is therefore not out of place in the Endless Lights.

4 WIDENGREN, *The great Vohu Manah and the Apostle of God*, Upsala 1945.

Hell, symmetrically like heaven, comprises of four stages¹. What is more, for souls whose good actions exactly balance their evil deeds, there is an intermediate place called the *misvan gātu* in the Avesta and the *hamēstagān* in Pahlavi. It is incorrect to speak of it as a "purgatory". As Zaehner remarks, *Teachings*, chap. IX, a far closer parallel to the Christian purgatory is the Zoroastrian hell, which, like it, is only temporary.

In heaven, the soul enjoys delicious food, of which there is a noxious counterpart in hell. This notion is already found in the *Gāthās* and the "spring butter" (*raoγan zarəmayā*) mentioned by the *Hadōxt Nask* has an exact equivalent in the *ghrta* of the *RV*, 10.154.

v) The Royal Ideology

In one respect Mazdean eschatology appears to have been exempted from the moralising reform which affected the entire system². According to the *Acts* of Ātur-Hormizd, whosoever is exalted in this world, will be in the next. This may seem to be a calumny to a Christian, a kind of parody of the Beatitudes. But its echo is found in a Mazdean work, *Zātspram's* (chap. 32 and 33) and, in fact, is not peculiar to him since he quotes an authority (not known elsewhere). If a man, on the ground of his aptitudes, has merited a high position, he will have an analogous one in the *mēnōk*. It is true that merit is here implied. But as membership of the castes was, in fact, more a question of heredity than of personal effort, we can see here the presumption of the Sasanian upper classes, who thought their privileges eternal.

f) Legendary reigns

The 3 000 years from the Attack to the advent of Zarathuštra are divided into legendary reigns.

The line *Yim i šēt, Aždahāk, Frētōn* was compared by Wikander³ to the legend of the Ouranids. It is true that there are common traits: Frētōn restores justice by his victory over the baleful Aždahāk, just as Zeus triumphs over Kronos and the Titans, thereby establishing the rule of law, etc. Furthermore, seeing that the emasculation of Ouranos recalls the rite of the kings' consecration in India⁴, and that the story of the Ouranids resembles that of Kumarbi with the Hittites⁵, we may be tempted to conclude with Wikander, that the Iranian legend is an heritage from Indo-European antiquity. But the basis for this conclusion will be found to vanish.

In fact, there is nothing in common between Varuṇa and Ouranos, apart from the name perhaps; the rite of the king's humiliation is not peculiar to Indo-European races: it is found in Egypt and in Babylonia as well. The Greek myth is certainly similar to the Hittite myth, very probably received from the Hurrites, and concerned with a characteristic succession in three stages, even in four, but these myths, including that attested by Philo of Byblos for the Phoenicians, were related historically, not by heritage⁶. Such a situation only increases the

1 All these levels, both celestial and infernal, are traversed by Artāy Virāf, in the Pahlavi book of the same name.

2 ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 258 sq.

3 HETHITISKA MYTER hos GREKER och PERSER, Lund, Vetenskaps-Societätens Arsbok, 1951, 37 sq.; summarized in *Les Cahiers du Sud*, 1952.

4 DUMÉZIL, *Ouranos-Varuṇa*, 1934.

5 GÜTERBOCK, *Kumarbi*, Zürich-New York 1947.

6 LESKY, *Hethitische Texte und griechischer Mythos*, Vienna 1951; SCHWABL *Weltschöpfung*, in PAULY-WISSOWA, 1961.

difficulties of Wikander's comparison: Yim i šēt is sawn in twain, not emasculated; Aždahāk is neither the son of Yim i šēt, nor the father of Frētōn; he is not even a man, but a serpent; finally, and above all, this threefold scheme of succession is entirely absent from India, so much so that we cannot even carry it back to the Indo-Iranian period. In fact, it is not attested before the *Bundahišn* (and, more fully, in the Persian epic).

3. Zarathuštra

The advent of Zarathuštra is the pivot of the history of mankind, occurring 3 000 years after the beginning of this history, and 3 000 before its end. He is the central figure; Manušcihr speaks of him as the middle of creation¹. And he has knowledge of the past, present and future.

We can distinguish three stages in the development of his legend, as reflected in the Avesta, Pahlavi and Persian books².

In the *Avesta*, the cult of Zarathuštra appears as early as Y 42 (one of the "seven chapters"), for the prophet is mentioned together with Ahura Mazdā, as being worthy of adoration.

In *Yašt*s 13 and 17, Zarathuštra is described as an exceptional being, whose birth restored the waters and plants to life, and who fulfilled the desire of all creatures of the Good Spirit (Yt 13.93, 94); he was the first priest (Yt 17.18) and the first missionary (Yt 13.94). His advent, more effective than that of all the *yazatas*, put to rout the Evil Spirit (Yt 17.19). He is thus the Saviour. Cf. also *Yasna* 9.15: the *daēvas* who roamed freely before the coming of Zarathuštra, are, since, hidden in the depths of the earth.

Vidēvdāt 19 recounts his temptation and victory over the Evil Spirit.

In the introductory formulas of the *Yasna* and *Visprat*, there appears a divinity protecting the highest degree in the hierarchy of priests. This divinity is designated by the superlative form of Zarathuštra's name, *Zarathuštrō.tama*, implying that Zarathuštra himself is a divinity.

The lost portions of the *Avesta*, notably the *Spand*, *Vištāsp Sāst* and the *Cihrdāt*, must have contained the elements of a legendary life, narrated by Pahlavi works like the *Dēnkart*, *Dātaštān ī Dēnik*, *Zātspram*, etc. Zarathuštra is the perfect man, simultaneously first priest, first warrior and first shepherd, whose birth was miraculously prepared by the union of three principles, *xvarr*, *fravahr* and *tan i gōhr*, in the womb of his mother; his sons will be the future saviours. These sons will be born at the end of the first, second and third millenniums, of his seed preserved in lake Kāsaoya (lake Hamūn) and in a virgin. (These saviours, Uxšyat.ərəta, Jxšyat.nəmah and Astvat.ərəta, are known to the extant Avesta, but not as descendants of Zarathuštra). The legendary biography incorporates elements dating from Gāthic times, such as Zarathuštra's visions, or his conversations with Ahura Mazdā and the entities, Vištāsp's conversion, and the war against the *daēva* worshippers.

Likewise in the *Sad dar*, 81.4-5.

The legend's formation itself should be studied. This work was undertaken in our times by de JONG, but nothing has yet been published. MOLÉ's two theses, especially the second, *La légende de Zoroastre d'après les textes pehlevi*s, are important contributions to such a study. We may profitably make use of ROSENBERG's numerous notes, in his edition of *Livre de Zoroastre*, Petersburg 1904.

In its Persian versions, the legend seems to have undergone only a few changes of detail, such as the episode of the Brahman Caṇṇaṇhāca, narrated in the book of the same name.

The idea of writing a life of Zarathuštra arose from the need of competing with the Gospels. Nyberg¹ brings out a detail in its composition which recalls particularly St. Luke's Gospel. The *Dēnkart*'s account starts with the prophet's birth and what prepared it, then goes on to trace his genealogy back to Gayōmart, exactly as Luke, chap. 3.23 sq., after narrating the birth of Christ, reascends from him to Adam.

Another specific detail seems to confirm this hypothesis. The three heavenly messengers sent by Ōhrmazd to convert Vištāsp, on appearing before the king say to him: "Fear not". This formula, rare in Iranian literature, is a common-place in the Bible. In the Old Testament, it is always in answer to a fear, experienced prior to the statement and provoking it. With Luke—in the mouth of the angel who appears to Zachariah—the only fear would be that of the apparition in itself, and it is the same in the Iranian account².

The birth of the prophet is prepared by the separate coming into the world of three elements, which unite to form his person. His *Xvarr*, "vital light" (cf. p. 146) enters into his future mother, *Duydō.vā* even before her birth. Hence, on coming into the world, she is surrounded by a great light. — The prophet's *Fravaši* is brought to the material world by Vohuman and Ašavahišt, in the form of a *haoma* stem which is given to his future father, Pourušaspa.—The *Tan Gohr* or corporeal essence is combined with milk by Xurdāt and Amurdāt. Mixed with *haoma*, it is drunk by both the parents³.

The mixing of *haoma* and milk is obviously an allusion to ritual.

The demons attempt to prevent his birth. He laughs at birth, and a great light shines around him⁴. The demons flee into the depths of the earth.

Some sorcerers seek to destroy the child by burning him, having him trampled to death by horses, and by oxen. In a wolves' den he is suckled by an ewe⁵.

He refutes the heretics, as Jesus did the doctors. He puts on the *kustī* at the age of fifteen, and retires to the desert.

At the age of thirty, Vohu Manah appears to him on the banks of the Dāityā and leads him into the presence of Ahura Mazdā and the Aməša Spəntas. Zarathuštra receives instruction and initiation. In six other visions he converses successively with the Aməša Spəntas, and Vohu Manah entrusts him with the care of cattle, Aša with that of the fire, and so on.

1 Zaratuštrabiografien i Denkart, *Religion och Bibel*, 1955, 17.

2 Since it is likely that this part of the *Dk* rests on an Avestan original (NYBERG, 12 sq.), we may have proof here that Avesta was still being written in the Christian era.

3 K. BARR, Z. som teleios Anthropos, *Festschr. Hammerich*, Copenhagen 1952, would see here the symbols of the three functions or classes uniting to form the man who, as we know, is the prototype of the priest, warrior and cultivator. MOLÉ in his thesis points out that all men, not only the perfect man, were formed of these three elements. We should note, in any case, that even if the tripartite ideology is present here, Vohuman and Aša do not play the role that might be expected of them.

4 The first trait was already familiar to the Ancients. The second is Buddhist (cf. NYBERG, *Zaratuštrabiografien*, 7).

5 A theme common to many miraculous childhoods, Romulus, Zeus, etc.

At the age of forty, he is attacked by Ahriman. First Būiti, the demoness charged with killing him, is defeated by the recital of the *Ahuvar* prayer, the worship of the waters, and the Mazdean profession of faith. Ahriman tempts him by offering him power¹, if he will renounce the Good Religion. Zarathuštra withstands all temptation. He will vanquish Ahriman, and his creation, with the *haoma* mortar and cup.

He converts Maiḍyō.māh. Then he miraculously cures Vištāsp's black horse. Here belongs the incident adduced above: Vištāsp receives the visit of three envoys from Ōhrmazd: Vohuman, Ašvahišt, and the Fire. The latter says to him: "Fear not", and exhorts him to accept Zarathuštra's religion, to recite the *Ahuvar*, to exalt justice and to refuse to worship the *daēvas*. As Vištāsp is not convinced, Ōhrmazd sends a fourth messenger, Neryōsang, who gives him some *haoma* and a narcotic to drink. Vištāsp falls asleep and on awakening, summons Zarathuštra to learn from him the religion of Ōhrmazd.

Zarathuštra's religion brings to Vištāsp and his people justice (by ordeal), victory (over Arjāsp the Xyon), health and prosperity (the secrets of medicine and other arts). Furthermore, Vištāsp obtains wisdom for his minister Jāmāsp, invulnerability in combat for his son Isfandiyār, and immortality for his other son Pēšōtan².

Zarathuštra, who unites in his person the three functions, preaches the doctrine and establishes fires; heals the sick; and joins in the Holy War that Vištāsp, aided by Isfandiyār and his own brother, Zarēr³, wages against the invader, Arjāsp, who is driven by the demon of Fury.

Zarathuštra dies at the age of 77, killed by the Turanian Brātarvaxš in a fire-temple⁴.

We can easily recognize in this legend several common-place mythical motifs such as the childhood escape, temptations, etc.

Several stories belong to edifying literature: the compassion shown by Zarathuštra in his youth, the display of his powers, as in the cure of the four-year old bull that had lost its virility or of Vištāsp's black horse, and the healing of the blind man; the wisdom which enabled him to discuss, at a tender age, with the doctors or to triumph over the Brahmans, Greeks, etc.

At times there is a flagrant imitation: the Book of Daniel has obviously inspired the episode of Zarathuštra at the court of Vištāsp.

The sphere of action of Zarathuštra's legendary travels has been extended, between the time of Tabarī (10th century) and that of Ibn al Athīr (13th).

It may not be fortuitous that his father's name, *Pourušaspa*, contains the word for horse (literally: "with the dappled horses"), and his mother's name, *Duydō.vā*, that for cow (literally: "milker of cows"), while his own, ends with that for a still more precious animal—the camel. The seven visions paraphrase the chapter Y 43 of the *Gāthās*, in which Zarathuštra communes with the Wise Lord and the Entities.

1 There is perhaps a reflection here of the Biblical account of the temptation of Jesus.

2 Hence the tripartite ideology finds illustration in his person as in that of his dependents.

3 On Zarēr and the Zariadrēs of Greek sources, see the study of Mary Boyce, *BSOAS*, 1955, 463 sq.

4 According to the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, 47.23 (DHABHAR, 141), cited by MENASCE, *Anthropos*, 35-36, 452, the slayers of Zarathuštra had disguised themselves as wolves (an Ahrimanic animal).

To give a complete and correct picture of the prophet as the Mazdeans saw him, we must recall that the Avesta shows him in *Y 9*, engaged in purifying the fire, singing the *Gāthās* and celebrating the *haoma* sacrifice; we know also from several Pahlavi and Persian texts¹, that when he asked for immortality Ōhrmazd made him understand that it is less desirable to be immortal (in this world of tribulation and injustice) than to have a progeny to perpetuate the race, till the Final Renovation.

More miracles occur during Vištāsp's lifetime, and till the collapse of the Aryan empire. They are narrated in *Dēnkart VII*. Furthermore, *Dēnkart*, 9.8, which summarizes the *Sūtka Nask* of the Avesta, divided Zarathuštra's, millennium into four periods symbolized by gold, silver, steel and iron. As may be seen, the Hesiodian myth of four ages is inserted into the Iranian doctrine of millennia, from which it is really quite distinct.

In the *Zand ī Vohuman Yasn (Bahman Yašt)*, these four ages reappear in the form of the four branches of a tree which Zarathuštra sees in a vision (1.6 sq.), and in another passage of the same work (3.19 sq.), the tree has seven branches: the number of ages and metals has been increased by three², why, we shall see below.

4. The Future Saviours and the Final Renovation

The *Gāthās* make several allusions to the "last turn" of the world and its "renovation" (*frašō.karēti*); and the Later Avesta, in various passages, shows the development of the motif: *Yt 19*, notably³, speaks of a new, resurrected, immortal humanity; *Astvat.ərətā*, the Saošyant, son of *Vispataurvairi* "she who is victorious over all," will emerge from lake *Kašaoya* and, with the weapon of *Θraētaona*, overpower the *Druj* and put the *Fury* to flight; his look will make creation immortal; following his example, *Vohu Manah* will destroy *Aka Manah*, and *Haurvatāt* and *Amərətāt* will destroy *Hunger* and *Thirst*.

But the theme is only treated in a systematic manner in the Pahlavi books, where it is given an important place. Besides the two apocalyptic texts, the *Bahman Yašt* and *Jāmāsp Nāmag*, the worth of whose prophecies is in a way guaranteed by the predictions, supposedly made in the past, of events which later did take place, the *Bundahišn* and *Dēnkart* devote a few chapters to the topic, as does *Zātspram*, the brother of *Manušcihr*, and the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, etc⁴.

These sources, reflecting orthodox Mazdeanism, are not datable prior to the 9th century A.D. On the other hand, a series of Greek and Latin testimonies, represent a doctrine more or less fused with western traditions. This doctrine should be reconstructed first, since it is attested earlier⁵.

1 Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, 36, sq.; *Zand ī Vohuman Y.*, 3.1-18; *Sad darband Hōš* 36; *Zartušt Nāma*, 1279 sq.

2 Cf. SÖDERBLOM, *Ages of the World*, *ERE*, 206.

3 Cf. above, p. 28.

4 *Bundahišn*, chaps. 33, 34 and 35; *Dēnkart*, 7.8; analysed together with the *Bahman Yt.*, by ABEGG, *Der Messiasglaube*, 210 sq., 220 sq. and 230 sq.; *Zātspram*, chap. 34 (transcr. and transl. by ZAEHNER, *Zurvan*, 343 sq.); *Dāstān ī Dēnik* 27, 36, especially 37; Pahlavi *Rivāyat*, 45, 48, 49, 50 54; *Bd* 34 is translated and commented on by ZAEHNER, *Teachings of the Magi*, chap. X.—On the whole question, see WIDENGREN, *Stand und Aufg.*, II, 39 sq.

5 CUMONT has attempted this reconstruction in *La fin du monde selon les mages occidentaux*, *RHR*, 1931, 29 sq.

a) *The Iranian Apocalypse according to Greek and Latin texts*

Diogenes Laertius records¹ that, according to Eudemus of Rhodes, the Magi taught that man will be resurrected and immortal.

According to Plutarch, who draws on Theopompus², there will come a time when Areimanios must be destroyed by the plagues he brought; the earth will become flat and men will form a single nation, all speaking one tongue. He adds, expressly citing Theopompus, that they will neither need food nor cast shadows.

Dio of Prusa, from the 1st century A.D., reports that a cosmology was "chanted by Zoroaster and the children of the Magi who learnt it from him". A chariot drawn by four horses and driven by an invisible charioteer who is supreme wisdom, eternally circles round the universe, regulating its movement and events. The outer horse is the strongest and most powerful since he makes the biggest round, it is Zeus, etc. Cumont would recognize Zurvān in the invisible charioteer, dominating the world through Ōhrmazd (who is given the name of Zeus in the current identifications of which the Nimrud dagh monument is an example). Nyberg³ supports this interpretation, taken over likewise by Cumont in his *Mages hellénisés*, p. 91 sq. There is certainly, as these scholars admit, a strong stoical colouring in the myth, which explains, for instance, why the supreme god bears also the name of Zeus (genitive *Dios*, as opposed to the horse, called *Zeus-Zēnos*). But in any case, writes Nyberg, there is one trait not explained by Greece. This is the cult of the horses of Nisaion, fed by the Magi for the sovereign god.

Cumont presses the argument from still another detail. When the first horse, becoming enraged—as the chant of Dio's Magi goes—sets fire with his fiery breath to the mane of the fourth horse, a general conflagration ensues, which Dio compares with the myth of Phaethon, (the image, with the Stoics, of this conflagration). Now, it is evident from a Mithraic monument, namely, the Dieburg bas-relief, that the myth of Phaethon was current in Mithraism. Hence, concludes Cumont, the teachings of the Magi were accurately recorded by Dio.

This exaggerates the importance of the Greek motif of Phaethon. As Nilsson writes⁴, the Dieburg relief does not bear witness of the intrusion of Mazdean ideas, so much as of the penetration of Greek mythology into Mithraism.

Celsus, cited by Origen, writes⁵: "we find in the doctrine of the Persian Mithra a symbol of the two revolutions of the sky, that of the fixed stars and that of the planets, and of the soul's crossing through the last two. The symbol is as follows: a ladder with seven gates and on the top of it, an eighth gate." The first door is made of lead and consecrated to Saturn (the softest metal for the slowest planet), the second of tin is to Venus, and so on, following in inverse order, the days of the week.

But why in this order? Why does the soul, when it ascends from earth to heaven, not cross the planetary rings in order of their increasing distances, that is to say, in the "real" order: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, etc.? To overcome this difficulty, Cumont

1 *De vita phil. prooem.*, 5, 9.

2 PLUTARCH, *De Iside et Osiride*, chap. 47. Translation and notes in MOULTON, *Early Zoroastrianism*, London 1913, 401.

3 Questions de cosmologie, *JA*, 1931, II, 91 sq.

4 *Gesch. der griech. Religion*, II 649, n. 1.

5 *Contra Celsum*, 6.22; text in CUMONT, *Textes et monuments*, II, 32; partly translated in *La fin du monde*, 46.

theorizes that this ladder was never in fact, or primarily, what Celsus holds it to be, but instead, a representation of the ages of man and of the world. He finds supporting evidence in the fact that the *Bahman Yašt* recasts the myth of the *four* ages into a myth of *seven* metallic ages, an amplification which must have been made under the influence of planetary system.

But why in reverse order to that of the week days? Because, since the order began with the age of Saturn it was thought desirable to end it with that of the Saviour (as the *Oracle of Hystaspes* teaches), and to place next to last, that of the worst ills, the lunar age¹. For this, all that had to be done was to take the week backwards.

After the reign of the Sun² will come that of the eternal Sky or Infinite Time: the eighth gate of Celsus' ladder.

The *Oracle of Hystaspes* contained a whole collection of doctrines, analogous to those of the *Bahman Yašt*. They are preserved for us by Lactantius, who partially adapted them to Christianity. The history of the world unfolds in six millenniums dominated by evil, and which will be succeeded, like the seventh day after the six days of creation, by Christ's millennium. After which, the Demon will, for the last time, take the ascendant, then will come the resurrection and the new creation. It is likely³, that in the original text it was a matter of planetary ages. We know from Lydus, *De Mensibus*, 2.4, that Hystaspes mentioned the ascription of week-days to the planets.

The first catastrophe heralding the end of the world will be the fall of Rome, a commonplace in both Jewish and Christian apocalypses. What is more, according to Hystaspes, the reign of Rome will be succeeded by that of the East, a notion by which the subjugated Orient nourished the hope of revenge.

The rest of the *Oracle* is probably cited more exactly by Lactantius⁴. It offers some very exact parallels with the *Bahman Yašt*: for a time numerous wars ravage the world⁵; the years, months and days grow shorter⁶; the mountains are levelled⁷; only one-tenth of the human race⁸ and planets⁹ survive; it is a time of all iniquities¹⁰; the righteous will take refuge in the mountain, where they will be besieged by the enemy¹¹, but from which a saviour will come to deliver them.

Lactantius calls this saviour (*rex magnus de caelo*)¹². The *Sibylline Oracles* (3.652) define him as a king sent by the sun. Likewise the *Potter's Oracle* (which we will examine again below) speaks of a king hailing from the sun. There is no question but that it is Apollo's reign, of which Celsus and Virgil spoke.

- 1 On the sinister character of the lunar age, the doctrine of astrologers is constant, see CUMONT, *La fin du monde*, 60 and n. 2.
- 2 *Toto surget gens aurea mundo... iam regnat Apollo*, VIRG. *Bucol.*, 4. 4-10.
- 3 CUMONT, *La fin du monde*, 71.
- 4 The testimony of Lactantius is confirmed by that of CLEMENT, *Stromata*, VI. 54.3, 11. Cf. CUMONT *Fin du monde*, 75 and n. 1.
- 5 LACTANTIUS, *Institut.*, 7.16; *Bahman Yašt*, *passim*.
- 6 LACT., *Inst.*, 7.16, 10; *B Yt* (Ankl.), 4.16.
- 7 LACT., *Inst.*, 7.16, 11; *Bundahišn*, 34.33.
- 8 LACT., 7.16, 14.
- 9 *B Yt*. 4.19.
- 10 LACT., 7.15, 7; 17.9; *B Yt*, 4.20 sq.
- 11 LACT., 7.17, 10; *B Yt*, 6.10.
- 12 LACT., 7.17. 11.

In texts written in the Persian language, Mithra plays only an inferior role. He appears in the *Bahman Yašt* as Ōhrmazd's subordinate, in charge of his armies. When sent to rescue Pēšōtan (one of the precursors of the Saviour), he puts to flight Aēšma "Fury", thereby helping to restore the true religion.

On the coming of this great king—continues Lactantius¹—a divine fire will judge men: it will burn the wicked, but the good, by the force of their innocence, will feel nothing. According to the *Sibylline Oracles* (2.196 sq., 3.82–93, etc.), the fire, besides being the instrument of men's judgment, is also that of the world's destruction (these two aspects of the fire are found in Pahlavi texts too, see below, but with them the first aspect predominates).

In the depiction of the last felicities, one trait is worth nothing; Lactantius refers to it in his *Epitome* (67.5): the living will cease to kill in order to live. This is Greek, and at the same time Iranian. "With the Greeks too", writes Cumont², citing Carcopino, "the vegetarianism which prevailed in the beginning must be repeated at the end of time during the golden age." In Iran, according to Pahlavi texts (*Bd.* 34.1), men progressively abstain, at the coming of each successive saviour, from meat and other food.

Lastly, a text which appears to preserve the beliefs of the "Western Magi" is the *Potter's Oracle*, a Greek text from Egypt³, which mentions the "king hailing from the sun". Its most striking similarity with the Pahlavi text lies in its description of the enemy as "wearers of belts" (*zōnophoroi*), a term applied to the Turks by the *Bahman Yašt*, which calls them "dishevelled demons with leather belts."

Cumont, with the help of all these Greek texts, reconstructs the part played by Mithra in the Apocalypse, according to the "Magusaeans". Mithra, besides being the chief judge, as he is in Iranian texts of all epochs, is also Ōhrmazd's deputy in the extermination of evil; he is responsible for the resurrection, the eschatological sacrifice of the bull, and the river of fire. All these roles devolve, in the Pahlavi texts, upon Saošyant, the Fire and Airyaman, That Mithra is the slayer of the bull is attested by Mithraic reliefs; that he is responsible for the river of fire, Cumont deduces from two considerations, one *de jure*, the other *de facto*: in principle it is in order that it should be the sun, in other words, Mithra, who on his accession causes the metals of the mountains to melt; factually, that the sun sets the earth on fire is confirmed by Dio of Prusa, and by the identification of Mithra with Phaethon. But as we saw above, this last trait confirms the penetration of Greek myths into the Mysteries, but not its adoption by the Magi of Asia-Minor.

However, on the basis of this reconstruction of the Magusaeen Apocalypse, an attempt should be made, at a second stage, to reconstruct the (strictly speaking) Iranian Apocalypse during the Arsacid epoch.

The great popularity attested to Mithra during this period, as we have already seen⁴, encourages us to think that he then occupied a more important place in the eschatology than the Pahlavi books alone give one to believe. In one instance, Mithra replaced the Saviour

1 LACT., 7.21.4.

2 *La fin du monde*, 90, n. 3.

3 Its "Iranian" origin is defended by REITZENSTEIN-SCHAEDEER, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus*, 38 sq.

4 Cf. p. 174.

Astvat.ərəta, namely in putting Aēšma to flight (cf. *Yt*, 19.95). And Mithra retained this function even in the Pahlavi books (*BYt* 7.34). In other respects, however, he may have lost ground.

b) *The Apocalypse in the Pahlavi books*

The doctrine of the Pahlavi books is generally similar, but offers some variation in details. Thus in the *Bundahišn*, resurrection precedes Ahriman's defeat, whereas with *Zātspram*, it follows after it.

A few main ideas emerge from the mass of material. First, that of a return at the final end to the state of things in the beginning.

1. *The Return to the Beginnings*—The first human couple consumed water first, then plants, milk and lastly, meat. The men of the last millenniums, on the advent of each of the three saviours, will abstain, in reverse from the eating of meat, milk, plants, and finally will live only on water. (In fact, as the *Bundahišn* remarks, this is the order of things when an aged person nears his end). In this way, the demoness Āz or Gluttony, will lose all her strength.

Gayōmart, who was the first man, will also be the first resurrected. He has no other part to play in the eschatology; he does not return as a victim in repetition of the sacrifice by which he gave rise to metals and the human race. It is therefore erroneous to see here the Gnostic idea of the same saviour being reincarnated over and over again.

Not that the idea of a cosmogonical sacrifice repeated at the end of time was absent. But it was the sacrifice of the Bull. Echoing the slaying of the Bull by Ahriman during the Attack, the bull Haḍayōš (or Haḍayanš), about which the *Bd* says "in the beginning men journeyed on his back from region to region and at the resurrection life will be drawn from it", will be sacrificed, and from its fat or marrow mixed with the white *haoma* (i.e. *gōkart*, Av. *gaokarəna*, a plant whose name recalls the bull), will be prepared the elixir of eternal life to be drunk by all men after the resurrection. (The presence of a blood sacrifice would seem to indicate that Mazdeanism had not eradicated the practice after all).

The combats of the beginning also had their echo at the end of time. Especially the demiurgic exploit of a Frētōn slaying the dragon Aždahāk to liberate the obstructed waters. This dragon reappears at the resurrection and, according to the *Bahman Yašt* (9.13 sq.), Srōš and Neryōsang are requested to revive Frētōn lest the fire refuse to spread and the waters to flow (this last trait is reminiscent of the detained waters), but it is Karsāsp (Sām) who is resurrected and who renews the primeval battle.

A last great battle opposes the armies of good and evil. Each one has his predestined adversary. Can it be said that this final combat is the counterpart of the first fought between Ōhrmazd and Ahriman? Much more likely, the last battle has the purpose of re-establishing conditions as they were prior to the conflict. Anyhow, Ahriman and Āz are the last to be defeated, and their personal adversaries are Ōhrmazd and Srōš (*Bd*, 34.23). But why Srōš? We are reminded of the saying of *Vidēvdāt* 9.51, that if a country be infested with heresy, not only must the heretics be exterminated, but Srəoša should be worshipped. This explains why he vies with Ōhrmazd in the final restoration of peace. And how do they set about

procuring it? They perform the *kustik* ceremony. This recalls the first initiation (*naojōt*): a rite of birth, hence of rebirth.

The re-established peace entails the cessation of evil. Contrary to what is taught by Christianity or Islam, the wicked will be cleansed of all their sins by the last punishment. This punishment takes the form of an ordeal. The Fire and Airyaman will melt the metals of the mountains and hills, and from them will flow a flood of molten metal. All resurrected men will be made to pass through this river which will burn only the wicked, and to the righteous seem like warm milk. This fiery flood has a cosmic function as well. It will cause the valleys to be filled and the mountains to disappear; in it will perish the stellar serpent Gocihr, dragged down from the sky¹; finally the molten metal will seal up all openings between the world and hell.

But the sufferings of the wicked in the river of fire lasts only three days, after which all mankind dwells in eternal bliss. On the levelled earth, men and women, henceforth without shadows, as they are without sin, enjoy family life in a kind of Paradise. Hell is sealed off for ever. Ahriman is eternally reduced to powerlessness (*Mēnōk ī Xrat* 8,11-15). According to other texts (*Dk* XII, 13, § 297), he is annihilated. The *Bundahišn* and *Māh Fravartīn* (§ 38), recount that he is led back to the hole through which he first entered the world (cf. Plutarch, *De Iside*, 47), and according to the second of these texts, he is then decapitated.

The idea of a return to the origins seems to have been pushed to extreme limits in a fragment of which, unfortunately, we have only the title—but it is a significant title (*Dk*, 6.279): “All creations which Ōhrmazd has created will in the end be taken back by him”. The theme is analogous to that of Finite Time proceeding from Infinite Time and returning to it. Logically speaking, it threatens the eternal existence and survival of the creations—which brings us to other difficulties.

2. *Contradictions*—Man is a stranger to this world. As *Dk* 245 says, his essence is *mēnōk*, the *gētē* was only added to him like a vestment for him to fight against the *druj* on the side of the Creator. He battles so well that he returns after death to his original state, the *mēnōk*. Souls dwell in bliss in the Abode of Song, in the light, in God’s presence. Why then, should there be a resurrection? What need is there of bodies, the instruments of battle, once the battle is over?

The difficulty was sensed by the author of the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*², who attempted to find a solution (48.98) by lifting the Earth (the abode of the resurrected) towards the Abode of Song (the abode of the chosen souls) so that they meet half-way in the station of the stars: “Then Ōhrmazd, the Amahraspands, all the gods and all men will be in one place”.

But Manušcihr (*Dātastān ī Dēnik*, 30.9) clearly saw that this only served to shift the difficulty. If the souls of the righteous have attained to Paradise only after they have been judged and undergone penance, what is the necessity for a second judgment? Now it is written that the latter will take place in the “assembly of Isatvāstar” (*Bd*, 34.7), and a molten flood formed of the metals from the mountains melted by the Fire god and Airyaman will try the

1 It has been demonstrated by B. GEIGER, *WZKM*, 1933, 108 sq., that Gocihr, whose name is an archaic epithet of the moon (Av. *gao. ciθra*), designated an imaginary line joining, from star to star on the celestial value, the two lunar nodes. One node was known as the “head”, the other as the “tail” (*Bund.*, chap. 5 A 5). They move, as we know, along the ecliptic in about 18 years and 11 months.

2 As BAILEY saw, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 116 sq.

good and the wicked. Evidently, two doctrines are combined here: that of the immortality of the soul, and that of the body's resurrection. The difference between them is the same as that between the two values ascribed to *mēnōk*; perfection, and the embryonic state¹.

Other difficulties encountered have been solved. How can God, it may be asked, resurrect the dead when they are reduced to dust? The reply, *Zātspram* and the *Bd* (34) give, is that it was much more difficult to create men and all things when nothing existed².

Another difficulty is implicit: how can family life be resumed if each one died at a different age and at a different period of life? Presumably, it is in answer to this that we are told all adults will be resurrected as at the age of forty, and all others as at the age of fifteen. Furthermore, husband and wife will enjoy sexual relations, but no more children will be born. Finally, those who in this world remained without a progeny, will be given *Spandarmat* (the earth) as their wife.

3. *The Royal Ideology*³—The perfect society is that in which, according to *DkM*, 129.17⁴, royalty and the good Religion are united in the same person. Yim, of yore, was a king only⁵; Zarathuštra was a priest only. The *Saošyant* will be both, which is why the Renovation will take place.

When the Mazdeans came under the domination of Islam, the awaited Renovation became synonymous for them with the restoration of political autonomy: the saviour would be essentially a liberator. Which explains why, among the precursors of the last Saviour, it is *Varhrān* who assumes a special importance: for above all he is a victorious king⁶; in fact, he is Victory itself.

Varhrān's career is recounted all through the *Bahman Yašt*, in which he eclipses not only the other precursors, but the saviours themselves (*Zarathuštra*'s three sons). He restores Iran's independence, and unites the throne to the altar (so to say)⁷.

The name *Varhrān* is reminiscent of the epithet *varəθragan* given in the *Avesta* to the *Saošyant*; it is also the name borne by several great Sasanian kings⁸; finally (and perhaps above all) it is the name of the fire, which from a political point of view is the most important of all already from the time of the first Sasanians, and which given the title king of fires is honoured like a king⁹.

1 Cf. above, p. 211 sq.

2 This point is current in Islam, cf. below, p. 239.

3 See now ZAEHNER, *Dawn and Twilight...*, 1961, 248 sq.: The Religion and the King.

4 Cited after MOLÉ, *Le problème*, § 34.

5 Even if the king is sacred and inviolable, as WIDENGREN has shown, *La Regalità sacra*, 245 sq., he cannot perform the office of a priest.

6 Like the national Messiah of the Jews.

7 *Varhrān varjāvand* figures likewise in the late Pahlavi text, JAMASP-ASANA, *Pahlavi Texts*, 160 sq., reproduced and translated by BAILEY, *Zoroastrian Problems*, 195.

8 Cf. ABEGG, *Der Messiasglaube*, 235, n. 4.

9 Cf. above, pp. 60, 63, 190.

CHAPTER V

MODERN TIMES

A. IRAN AND ISLAM

1. Conversion and Survival

Even prior to the conquest, Islam had gained a foothold in Iran. Tabarī tells us that Arab contingents of the Persian army had gone over to the new faith; and the movement had spread to some Iranian officers and non-officers¹.

The military success of the Muslims led to the conversion of numerous officers who thereby hoped to keep their position. The civilian population likewise embraced the new faith, although it is an exaggeration to say that the conquerors were welcomed as liberators for having put an end to Sasanian rule.

Conversions were doubtless more often effected by violence than our Muslim sources are prepared to admit².

Some religious risings which occurred in Xōrāsān, in the second half of the 8th century, were put down by force of arms. In 820, Caliph al Ma'mūn pushed a crusade as far as Transoxiana; ten years later the Governor of Tabaristān proceeded in like manner against the Dailamites.

In 642, thirty Ispahanis, refusing to come to terms with the Arabs, emigrated to Kermān, a distant prelude to the exodus which was later to take place, not in the 8th century, as some persist in repeating, but in the middle of the 10th³.

Economic reasons evidently played a part in conversions, since those embracing Islam escaped the special tax (*jizya*) levied on infidels. And the difference in rites and beliefs was not so great as to constitute an insuperable barrier. On the contrary, certain basic similarities may have facilitated the passage. As Spuler writes: "The power of Good and Evil could be found likewise in Allāh and Iblis; the creation of the world in six periods or six days, resurrection and hell, angels and demons, and the innocence of the First Man were to be found on both sides, and the five daily prayers may have passed from Zoroastrianism into Islam".

There was nonetheless a veritable movement of proselytisation on the part of those Muslims for whom the proclamation of the new faith was a serious matter and, consequently, a great part of Zoroastrian literature produced in this period is in the form of polemics⁴.

1 TABARĪ, I, 2278, etc., cited by SPULER, *Iran in früh-islamischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1952, 134.

2 SPULER, 137. Cf. F. C. DAVAR, A Glimpse into Iran after the Arab Conquest, in *Jackson Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1954, 149 sq.

3 Below, p. 237.

4 As is becoming more and more evident to us, cf. J. de MENASCE, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne, le Dēnkart*, 1958.

Since Zoroastrianism had lost its main support with the fall of the Sasanians, feasts like Nourūz and the Mihragān¹ retained only a traditional value. Bon-fires in the Zoroastrian manner were still the usage about 935, in the province of Ispahan, on the anniversary of Mohammed's birth. The legend of lake Vourukaša, where Zoroaster's seed was to give birth to the future prophets, was adapted to Islam: Lake Savā dried up on the night of Mohammed's birth².

Fire-temples were still in use here and there; such as the one at Šīz (presumably Taxt i Soleimān, south-east of lake Urmiah) in Azerbaijān, which was still in use in 943³, but had lost its position as the politico-religious centre.

In the Caspian region, religious survival went hand in hand with a certain measure of political independence, both being favoured by very particular conditions. There was a Dailamite dynasty, and apparently it is to one of its kings that part of the *Dēnkart* is addressed, exhorting him to maintain the old religion. The very same region, Māzanderān, is known in the epic for its *dēvs* (demons).

But the main pocket of Zoroastrian survival was to be found in the south (it still is). In Xūzistān and Kohistān in the 10th century there were still numerous Zoroastrians. Istaxrī, writing in the middle of the same century, could say about Persia, that there was no country to equal her, the ancient citadel of their temporal power, religion and literature. "There is hardly a town or district in Persia from which a fire-temple is absent"⁴.

These same regions were the scene of a kind of Zoroastrian renaissance in the 9th century, during which the principal Pahlavi works were produced: the *Bundahišn*, *Dēnkart*, *Škand gumānik Vicār*, etc. Mazdeanism seems to have rallied and re-organized its defences. The *ŠgV*, especially, polemises against Islam, Christianity, Manichaeism and Judaism.

The only Pahlavi works that are dated or datable, with any degree of certainty, are those belonging to the 9th century, or (as in the case of the *Dēnkart*) at least partly to the 10th.

The 10th century proved to be the great turning-point. At first the fortunes of Mazdeanism appeared to brighten and some belonging to the Šucūbiya movement could dream between 921 and 931 of throwing off the yoke of the Caliphs and of re-establishing a Zoroastrian State in Iran⁵. However, disaster was on the horizon. There was one more Zoroastrian uprising in Šīrāz in 979, but its suppression only underlines the general defeat of the ancient religion.

What was the reason for this set-back? Before we look into the question, let us first note that the Zoroastrian exodus dated precisely from this period, conforming perfectly with the

1 SADIGHI, Les mouvements religieux iraniens au I^{er} et au II^e siècle de l'Hégire, 1938, 75.

2 SPULER, 189.

3 SPULER, 190. Bibliographie des Temples du feu, *ibid.*, 191, n. 3.—SADIGHI, 76 sq.

4 ISTAXRĪ, 139, 12, cited by ERDMANN, *Das iranische Feuerheiligtum*, 44.

5 SPULER, 192 sq., and 233 sq.

general situation, since the date has been re-determined by S. H. Hodivala¹ as 936, instead of 717, which Spuler and others still write. The new date situates the event a few years after the Šu'ūbiya's defeat, which is consistent.

Now, why this set-back? Can it be said that the Zoroastrian revival was tolerated so long as it was not translated on the political plane? It was undoubtedly the case, and the might of the Caliphs was able to prevent such a development—but whether it could have done so permanently, we do not know. However, during the course of the same century, the movement of national resurgence was diverted and monopolized by dynasties of foreign origin, the Ghaznevids and Seljuks, who had nothing in common with Zoroastrianism. These Turks, who were new-comers, championed the Sunni orthodoxy against both the Shi'ite heresy and Zoroastrianism. Indeed, they were forced to, for Shi'ism and Zoroastrianism aimed at restoring a Sasanian rule, that is to say, strictly Persian rule, with which the Duodecimans expressly connected the line of Imāms². It was a master stroke on the part of the Ghaznevids and the Seljuks to appropriate the Iranian Renaissance, begun under their predecessors, the Samanids, by integrating it with orthodox Islam. This guaranteed the ruin of Mazdeanism: the life force of the nation flowing in the double epical and mystical tradition—the first represented by Rudaki, Daqīqī and Firdausī, the second by diverse movements we shall deal with below—was annexed to and absorbed into Islam. The glories of the past and the literary force of the epic were brought under the banner of Islam. Mazdeanism, whose literature was too exclusively priestly and without charm, was left with little with which to combat the new literary wonders.

Nonetheless, an attempt was made. In the wake of the amorphous Pahlavi literature, there arose a Mazdean literature in the language of Firdausī, and most often in verse.

Something of the Iranian religion survived in Islam in three ways: first, right from the start Islam possessed certain traits in common with the Iranian religion; then, the contacts between Islam and Iranism in conquered Iran produced diverse politico-religious movements; and finally, Iranism furnished certain symbolic themes to the Sufis, poets and philosophers.

2. Iranian traits in Islam³

Already in the Koran, Islam drew from Iranian sources, not directly, it is true, but through the medium of Judaism, Gnosticism or Manichaeism. In certain cases, the borrowing may have been in the opposite direction; in fact the Koran was known to the author of the *Dēnkart*, as demonstrated by Bausani⁴.

The same scholar has brought out the following concordances between the Koran and Iran. First, the episode of men's primordial choice (Koran, 7. 172) is comparable to the choice

1 S. H. HODIVALA, *Studies in Parsi History*, Bombay 1920, 70. The demonstration of this author is opposed by his name-sake Sh. K. HODIVALA, *Parsis of ancient India*, Bombay 1920, 30 sq., but taken over and re-asserted by J. C. TAVADIA, *Zur Pflege des iranischen Schrifttums*, *ZDMG*, 98, 303: the discrepancy of 200 years is due to a misreading of the figures. However, S. H. HODIVALA himself wrote six years after his first book: "of the many puzzles and problems connected with the early history of the Parsis, the date of their first arrival in Sanjan is perhaps the most hopelessly insoluble" (*Journal of the Cama Oriental Institute*, 8, 1926, 68).

2 SPULER, 178.

3 BAUSANI, *Persia religiosa*, 1959, 138 sq.—On Iran and Islam, see the bibliography given by MENASCE, *Une encyclopédie... le Dēnkart*, 53, n. 2.

4 Due citazioni del Corano nel *Dēnkart*, in *Scritti in onore di Furlani*, 1957, 455 sq.

of the *fravašis* and to the episode in the *Abiyātkār ī Zāmāspik* (ed. Messina, p. 37 and 38) where the Amahrāspands proclaim the excellence of Ōhrmazd.

The entities Haurvatāt and Amərətāt became the angels Harūt and Marūt, whose story recalls also the myth of the Nāsatyas¹.

The shooting stars, launched against the demons seeking to invade the sky, recall the functions of certain stars in Mazdeanism, especially according to *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, 49.

One of the Koran's favourite arguments against those denying the possibility of the resurrection, is that it is easier for God to recreate what he has already created rather than to start from nothing. Cf. above, p. 235. Perhaps, in this case, borrowing took place in the opposite direction, and likewise in respect of the two following points.

The Koran is familiar with the expression "the dye of God", found in the *Dēnkart* (Koran 2.138; *Dēnkart*, cited by Zaehner, 379 and 381).

According to the Koran, 56.89, the blessed will enjoy in paradise *rauḥ* "perfumed breezes" and the fragrance of *raiḥān* "basil" which accords with Mazdean eschatology (*Mēnōk ī Xrat*, 7 and elsewhere).

Koran, 6.38, states that each species of animal forms a separate community, as do men; and in Mazdeanism each species has its *ratu* or patron.

It is in the eschatology that most similarities are found: the weighing, the angels clad in green; the levelling of the earth, the "fathers separated from their sons", etc.²

Finally³, the Koran (7.44-47) speaks of a place called al-A'rāf, whose inhabitants see those of Paradise and those of the Fire. The most current explanation given in the commentaries is that the A'rāf is the intermediary state for those who have merited neither paradise nor hell, because their good deeds exactly balance their bad deeds⁴. It corresponds to the *misvan gātu* of the Avesta.

The *hadīths* or non-Koranic traditions, contain other traits occurring also in Mazdean literature, chiefly in the chapter on eschatology.

The first feature is the soul's "meeting with the maiden", the personification of his deeds, who appears shining, beautiful and perfumed if the deeds were good, but hideous, dark and foul smelling if they were bad⁵. But with most commentators, this figure is of the male sex, instead of the female sex as in Mazdeanism.

The Bridge in the individual eschatology of the Mazdeans was transposed in Islam to the end of time: on the day of the last Judgment, the Bridge (*al-Širāt*) will be thrown over the back of hell and all will be forced to cross it. The righteous will cross it with ease; the wicked

1 Cf. above, p. 138 sq.

2 BAUSANI, *Persia religiosa*, 138-143 and the notes.

3 A trait omitted by Bausani.

4 TABARĪ, *Tafsīr*, 8.137 sq.; MURTADĀ, *Ithāf*, 10.472; AL-ŠA'RĀNĪ, *Muxtaṣar al-Tadhkira*, 55. Cf. IBN MAXLŪF, *al-'Ulūm al-fāxira*, 2.22, and AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *al-La' āli al-maṣnū'a*, 2.239.

5 IBN MAXLŪF, *al-'Ulūm al-fāxira*, 1.70; IBN QAYYIM, *Kitāb al-Rūh*, 63; *Hādī al-Arwāh*, 290; AL-ABYĀRĪ *Bāb al-Futūḥ*, 136; AL-ŠA'RĀNĪ, *Muxtaṣar al-Tadhkira*, 39.

will fall into hell¹. Other traditions add that, for the righteous it will be broad as a main road, but for the wicked it will be narrower than a hair and sharper than a sword blade².

Bausani omits the two preceding traits but points out others³: the restriction against wearing silk, the miraculous purificatory opening made by the angels in the breast of Mohammed, as in that of Zarathuštra, according to the *Zarduštnāma* (Rosenberg, p. 31); the restriction against urinating while standing, the torment inflicted by the angels in the grave and the *mi'rāj* or ascension of Mohammed.

3. Religious movements in Muslim Iran⁴

In circa 745, the Zoroastrian Bih-āfrid "attempted to adapt his religion to Islam by ridding it of all that was most shocking to the Muslims: next-of-kin marriages, the consumption of wine and slaughtered animals, the adoration of the fire and the murmuring of the canonical books (at least while eating). On the other hand, he venerated Zoroaster and advocated, like him, the protection of domestic animals, and that of bridges and roads. To suppress such an attack on their beliefs, the Zoroastrians did not hesitate to address themselves to the Muslim authorities and to the Abbassid propagandist Abū Muslim. The latter seized this opportunity to intervene in the affairs of the Zoroastrians, at the request of the community itself, and had the innovator arrested and executed.⁵"

Abū Muslim was, in turn, executed by order of Caliph Mansūr, in 755. His follower, Sunpadh, known as the Magian or the Gabar, sought vengeance for this execution, with the support of the Mazdeans, Shi'ites and Hurramites. He stirred up revolts in several provinces, tried to put an end to Arab domination, to destroy the Ka'ba and to replace the *qibla* by the Sun. He was killed at the end of sixty-six days. A *sumbadiya* sect⁶ was still known to Šahrastānī.

Ishāq, another partisan of Abū Muslim, preached his doctrine in Transoxiana, proclaiming that Abū Muslim was the emissary of Zarathuštra, who would come himself to restore his religion⁷.

In 767, the prophet Ustādsīs rallied to himself the Zoroastrians of Sistān, Herat and Badagēs, as well as those still following Bih-āfrid. This movement survived till the 9-10th centuries. But to speak the truth, the part of Zoroastrian doctrines in his teachings is not known, and only *à priori* likely.

We are better informed about the Hurramites, whose movement centred round the great revolt of 816-817 to 838, on the frontier between Azerbaijān and Arrān, under the leadership of Pāpak⁸. This movement mixed Zoroastrian elements with others, themselves of a composite origin, namely, the beliefs of the disciples of Muqanna'. The latter, combining the Indian dogma of the migration of souls with Gnostic ideas of the emanation and succession of

1 BUXĀRĪ, I, 207, IV, 245; MUSLIM, I, 130, 8. 128; AL-TAYĀLIŞ, *Musnad*, n. 2179, etc.

2 KANZ AL-'UMMAL, 7, n. 2323, 2326, 2484; AL-GHAZZĀLĪ, *Ihya al-'Ulūm*, 4,436. These references were communicated to me by the regretted Arthur JEFFERY.

3 *Persia religiosa*, 144 sq.

4 SADIGHI, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au II^e et au III^e siècle de l'Hégire*, 1938.

5 SPULER, 197; SADIGHI, 111 sq.

6 SADIGHI, 132 sq., JUSTI, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, 314.

7 SADIGHI, 150 sq.

8 SPULER, 201.

prophets, believed a divine emanation had been incarnated, through Adam, Noah, Jesus, etc., and through Abū Muslim to Hasim, surnamed Muqanna' "the Veiled", who was executed under Caliph al-Mahdī, son of al-Mansur, in 783¹.

Although Pāpak incorporated such elements in his doctrine, its essential part consisted in the Mazdean *credo*, the belief in the two principles of Light and Darkness, veneration of the fire, purity, the permission to marry one's mother, sister or daughter. The doctrine of the succession of prophets can be traced—apart from some confusion—to the Mazdean religion. Certain elements of Mazdakite (polygamy) and Christian (agapes) origin may have entered into the composition of this essentially syncretistic and tolerant movement.

It had spread to the north-west and to the centre of the Iranian domain, reached the Caucasus and received the support of the Byzantines, when after a long siege, in 838, Pāpak was forced to flee, and was finally captured and executed in Baghdād. The movement divided into several branches, but survived in Xōrāsān, Ray, Ispahan and Azerbaijān till about 975.

Although eventually suppressed, it has left its mark, as has Mazdakism, on the Shi'ite conceptions relating to the Imāms².

4. Iran and Sufism

The remembrance of Mazdeanism is more subtly perpetuated in Sufi literature, both verse and prose. The motifs or metaphores alluding to it have been recently studied, with the poets, by Muhammed Mo'in (or Möin) in a book entitled *Mazdayasnā va ta'athir-i ān dar adabiyyāt-i Pārsi* (*The influence of Mazdeanism on Persian literature*, that is, 'on poetry'). The main object of this work, as Henry Corbin writes in a 36 page summary in French, is the study "of "ideograms" or "figures" by which Sufis and poets sought to express, in terms of Mazdean reminiscences, their longing for a free, spiritual religion transcending the official religious Law." But Bausani has established another perspective by distinguishing between a purely verbal Mazdean theme remounting to Firdausi and other epic poets, and Gnostic and Neo-Platonic components originating in the "great injection of Hermetico-Pythagorian, then Neo-Platonic ideas through the Arabic translations of the 8th to 10th centuries." The combination of these themes may have created the illusion of a direct derivation from Mazdeanism. The principal symbols are the Wine of the Magi, the Cup, the Tavern and the old man or "ancient" of the Magi³. These various symbols have been studied by Mo'in in the 'erfāni poets, who make constant use of them.

In respect of the philosophers, a parallel study has made a good start and is being zealously pursued by Henry Corbin especially in regard to Sohrawardī, along the path traced by Horten⁴.

1 SPULER, 198. On Muqanna', cf. SADIGHI, 163; on the Hurrmites, 187 sq.

2 SPULER, 204 sq.; SADIGHI, 229 sq.; BAUSANI, 155 sq.

3 J. D-G., *Symbolik des Parsismus*, Stuttgart 1961, 102.

4 HORTEN, *Die Philosophie der Erleuchtung nach Suhrawardī*, 1912. Cf. by the same author, *Die Philosophische Systeme der spekulativen Theologie in Islam*, 1912, and *Die Philosophie des Islam*, 1924.—The theses of H. CORBIN are developed in *Les motifs zoroastriens dans la philosophie de Sohrawardī*, Teheran 1946, in the *Prolégomènes* to his edition of the *Œuvres philosophiques et mystiques de Sohrawardī*, I (Bibl. Islamica, 16), Istanbul 1945, II (Bibl. iranienne, 2), Teheran, 1952, and in diverse contributions to the *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 1949 (Le récit d'initiation et l'hermétisme en Iran), 1951 (Le temps cyclique dans le mazdéisme et dans l'ismaélisme); cf. *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabi*, 1958. BAUSANI, 181 sq., studies the Iranian elements in the *Ummu'l Kitāb*, about which an exhaustive thesis is being prepared by Dr. Tydens, Maastricht.

Sohravardī, who died in 1191, felt himself, or wished to be, the inheritor of both Greece and Iran.

He founded his philosophy on "the doctrine of the Orientals, that is to say, of the Persian sages, which asserted two sources, one the Light and the other Darkness"¹. But the difference between them is interpreted by him on Peripatetic principles: "They are, indeed", he writes, "a symbol of necessity and possibility".

Light is often designated by one or two typically Zoroastrian terms: *Xorra*, "the royal and divine glory" (ancient *xvarənah-*), and *rāy*, an almost synonymous term, but one which Sohravardī's immediate commentators no longer seem to understand. Thus, Qotbaddīn Šīrāzī explains this word as the singular of the Arabic word *ārā'*. Corbin wonders how the commentators could have lost sight of the Avestan significance of the word *rāy* and he concludes: "In the not only correct but characteristic use, which Sohravardī makes of it, by combining *khorrā* and *rāy*, is there not an indication that he had access to some authentic sources, either written or oral?" I think we do not have far to look: indeed the two terms occur in the most commonly used formula in Mazdeanism, a Pahlavi formula repeated before beginning any action (especially writing a book) and which seems to imitate the Muslim *bismillāh*. The complete formula is as follows: *pa nām ī yazdān ī rāyōmand ī xvarrōmand*. Knowledge of this formula proves only the minimum of familiarity with Zoroastrianism. But after all, turning one's back on the obvious and seeking something else, has it not been, in all ages, a characteristic of exegetists?

This glorious light gives rise to beings called *anwār qāhira*, a term which strikes Corbin as having a Zoroastrian sound and which he proposes, after some fumbling, to translate as "lumières victorales". I think the allusion is still more exact than he thinks: for *anwār qāhira* appears to be the transposition (in the plural) of *Ātaš Bahrām* and hence to refer to the principal fires of the Mazdean nation. An adequate designation indeed for a celestial hierarchy.

Sohravardī is cognisant with the names of the Amšāspands, and places Bahman first among them, which conforms to Mazdean doctrine. However, with him, these Amšāspands proceed from the light of glory by a procession recalling, on the contrary, the hypostasis of Greek philosophy. We are no longer surprised at this mixture, since we know it is already attested in Mazdeanism, namely in Book IV of the *Dēnkart*².

Indeed, Sohravardī's theory of procession is highly complicated compared to Avicenna's, for instance. He distinguishes between three series of hypostasis: the first series forms the world of the "Mothers", transcendent beings who are completely "aloof" (in the Gnostic sense); the second is the order of Archangel-Theurges, person-archetypes or Lords of the Species; the third comprises the Angel-Souls, the moving forces of the celestial orbs or of human beings.

Now, the Amšāspands do not all belong to the same series, but to two separate ones. Bahman alone belongs to the first, in the world of the "Mothers"; the other Amšāspands who rule, as they do in Mazdeanism, over the different provinces of the universe, are listed by name with the Lords of the Species. Esfandarmoz, angel of the Earth, Ordibehešt, of the Fire, Xordād and Mordād, of water and plants. This represents a cutting, *un écartèlement*, as Corbin

1 *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica*, II, Appendix, 301, gloss 13, in CORBIN's translation, 24.

2 J. de MENASCE, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne, le Dēnkart*, 1958, 23.

writes, from the original list of archangels, a good indication of the liberties Sohravardī took with his Iranian sources. This brings up the question of principles, about which we shall say a few words. But let us note first, so as to be done with, Mazdean terms that Sohravardī gives, the name *espāhbad*-Lights to the energies of the third order. Pahlavi literature ascribes the appellation *spāhpat* "general or commander" to the Signs of the Zodiac around Ōhrmazd, and to the planets around Ahriman¹, and finally, to the powers of the soul².

We may now examine the relative importance of the Zoroastrian element in Sohravardī's thought and his fidelity to sources. We must stress the fact, recalled above, that Sohravardī's synthesis had already been initiated, in a way, in Mazdean tradition, which had incorporated the Greek doctrine of the procession of hypostasis, to explain the series of Archangels.

Could Sohravardī have thought, then, that his philosophy, drawn from this double source, faithfully reflected each of them? He may have believed he was continuing either one or the other, because he found the same truth in both. Objectivity is easier for one who is not a believer. But for a scholar who attempts to reconstitute a thought which remains foreign to him, and for a mystical philosopher who is stirred by it and makes it his own, which one can be said to have best assured its survival and perpetuation? Sohravardī by placing himself in both the Iranian and Greek line of descent, acted no differently to the later Greeks who claimed descent from Pythagoras and, through him, from Zoroaster. While believing they were having access to eternal truth, they were renewing human thought. And it is a fact that the Zoroastrian heritage, transmitted and reproduced age after age, has never known a renovation comparable to the Sohravardian re-orientation³.

Mazdeanism, indeed, after the catastrophe of the 10th century, seems to have had the strength only to survive, not to develop. Since then, what marks its growth and gives it a kind of history, are the shocks of its encounters with different worlds: with Islam (as we have just seen), then India, and lastly Europe (as we shall see in the next chapter).

As a counter experience: when the Mazdeans come into contact with other Mazdeans, the Parsis who emigrated to India with the Gabars who remained behind in Iran, there is no result.

B. THE PARSIS

(Their relations with the Gabars, with Hindu and Muslim India, and with Europe)

Relations between the Parsis and their co-religionists in Iran appear to have been almost entirely broken off till the end of the 15th century. We know only that during the preceding century "a certain Māhyār, a traveller from the city of Uch, on the Indus, stayed six years with the *herbads* of Sīstān, he was taught by them the Zoroastrian faith and returned to India. He brought with him a copy of the *Vidēvdāt* which had been made in Sīstān in 1205, by one Ardešīr Bahman. From this copy the oldest copies of this text were made"⁴.

1 *Mēnōk ī Xrat*, VIII, cited by CORBIN, 45.

2 *Zātspram*, 30.38 (BAILEY, *Zor. Probl.*, 213).

3 BAUSANI, 241sq., shows that Sohravardī's "Mazdean" ideas are tainted with Manichaeism.

4 D. MENANT, Gabars, *ERE*, VI, 152.

But in a letter written in 1511, the Zoroastrians of Iran confess that they did not know, till the decline of the Arab dynasty and the accession of the Turks (i.e. till 1258), whether any faithful existed in India or not.

It was in 1477 that contact was renewed at the suggestion of Changašāh of Navsari. A certain Nariman Hošang¹ arrived that year in Yazd and the following year brought back the first *rivāyat*, that is to say, the first answers to the questions asked by the Parsis. This intercourse was to last for almost three centuries, down to the year 1768, when it was interrupted by the fall of Kermān to the Afghans.

Certain hopes of an apocalyptic nature were at times expressed in the *Rivāyats*. Thus Bahman Asfandyār "hopes to see the face of the royal and glorious (Varjāvand) Bahrām"².

Was this optimism actuated by some happy event? Perhaps it was the good treatment of the Gabars during the reign of Šāh 'Abbās. On this subject we are informed not only by another *Rivāyat*³, but by the testimonies of European travellers like Pietro della Valle, Don Garcias de Silva y Figueroa and Tavernier⁴, who describe the Gabar suburb of Ispahan.

But the joy was short-lived. In 1628, barely two years after Bahman Asfandyār's letter, a persecution against the Gabars was unleashed, about which Bahrām Ardešīr laments in his letter: two have been killed and the sacred books lost⁵; and whose results Chardin⁶ was able to observe: the Gabar quarter, from which they had been expelled, was transformed into a place of amusement, with bazaars, baths, mosques and palaces.

The coming of the Saviour, Bahrām Varjāvand, is postponed to a later date⁷.

Westergaard wrote in 1854, that the Parsis had never troubled themselves with the sacred books of their religion. This was not the case at the time of the *rivāyats*, at least, when on several occasions the Parsis called for texts which were sent to them by the Gabars.

In India, the Zoroastrians had little to complain of as far as their rulers, Hindu or Muslim, were concerned⁸.

On obtaining lands for cultivation in the territory of Sanjan, they assured their religious freedom by presenting the Rana with a *credo* drawn up so as to shock the susceptibilities of

1 The Parsis were traditionally called by a personal name followed by their father's name to which was frequently added the suffix -*ān*. To each of these two names the honorific syllable -*ji* (or -*jee*) might be affixed as well. During the last century, family names in the European style were created. They are added to the two preceding names for example: The son of Maneck (ji) Rustam (ji) Unvala is called Jamshed (ji) Maneck (ji) Unvala.

2 Cf. above, p. 235.

3 *Rivāyat* of Bahman PUNJIA (not included in DHABHAR's list), f. 481, line 15, cited after MODI, Introduction to the *Rivāyats* ed. by Unvala.

4 Cited by D. MENANT, Gabars, *ERE*, VI, 149.

5 MODI, Introduction to the *Rivāyats*, 10.

6 Cited by D. MENANT, *ibid*.

7 To the year 1642, according to Bahrām Ardešīr, cf. MODI, *ibid*.

8 All that follows is from a single source, the *Qissa i Sanjan*, 1600, of which a lithography is found in M. R. UNVALA, *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, II, 343-354, and the translation in S. H. HODIVALA, *Studies in Parsi History*, 92-117. The work has also been edited and translated by R. B. PAYMASTER, 1915.

the Hindus as little as possible. Its essential points were as follows¹, the adoration of Ōhrmazd, the sun, moon, fire, water, wind, earth, sky and the ox; the wearing of the *kusti* the precautions to be observed by women during menstruation and after child-birth.

The Parsis had occasion to prove their loyalty to their Rana in 1490, by joining in the resistance against the Muslim invader, Alp Khan². After the latter's victory, they were forced to leave Sanjan, but found peace again at Navsari and later at Surat.

Zoroastrianism formed an essential element of the religious reform Akbar sought to introduce, from the year 1579³. This great Moghul, who believed the Mohammedan religion could last only for 1 000 years, and who welcomed to his court Christian missionaries with whom he maintained relations till his death, had a very special respect for the ancient Persian religion. He sent to Navsari for some Parsis, and to Iran for one Ardešīr. He did not have a *credo* drawn up. Far less did he formulate one himself; he could neither read nor write. But essentially he proclaimed that there was only one God whose visible image was the sun, which was adored in the form of fire, and of which he, Akbar, was the human representative or vicar.

When promulgating any ceremony, or recommending or imposing any usage, he seems to have left the proportion between the different religions of his empire, to be decided by itself, according to the advice of his ministers and the reaction of his subjects. His reform has been and will always be diversely judged. Elphinstone saw it as pure deism supplemented by some ceremonies permitted in consideration of human infirmity. Beveridge, on the other hand, barely conceals a missionary's disappointment. Akbar, for refusing to accept Christianity, unless the Trinity and Incarnation were intelligible to him, is dubbed a sceptic.

On the practical plane, too great a sympathy for Christianity would have turned his Muslim subjects against him, as was demonstrated to him by the rebellions in Bihar and Bengal. Despite his counsellors, he was also averse to imposing his religion by force. He adopted the Persian Nourūz festival and some twelve others, enjoining their observance on his provincial governors, but as his historiographer Badāyūnī writes⁴: "His Majesty was convinced that confidence in him as a leader was a matter of time and good counsel, and did not require the sword." He was first and foremost a statesman, for him it was a matter of establishing his reign in the conscience of his people.

The terms he uses to describe the royalty go back to the ancient epic tradition of Iran: *Kiyān Xwarah*, the ancient glory of the Kavis, in more modern parlance *farr-izīdī*, the Divine Glory. Does this not seem like a transposition on the political plane, of Sohravardī's sublime lights? It is, in fact, more than just a manner of speaking, for an ideology resembling the Iranian mystic had already taken root in India—by combining with a new element, yoga.

These Zoroastrian mystics of India are known to us only from the work of a Sufi, Mohsan Fani, the *Dabistān*⁵, compiled in the 17th century under the reign of Akbar's grandson.

1 The supposed translation given by D. F. KARAKA. *History of the Parsis*, 1884, I, 31 sq. and which SÖDERBLOM (unsuspectingly) follows in *ERE*, IV, 247, is only a very free version. Cf. Sh. K. HODIVALA. *Parsis of ancient India*, 1920, 66 sq., where the (Persian) text given by the Qissa is compared with the original document (Sanskrit). The latter was edited by the same author in the *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1918, 70 sq. See also the critical study of H.-P. Schmidt.

2 The date of the fall of Sanjan has been established by D. MENANT, *Rev. du monde musulman*, 8 (1909), 145 sq.

3 H. BEVERIDGE, Akbar, *ERE*, I, 271 sq.

4 Cited by BEVERIDGE, *ibid.*, 273.

5 Or: *Dabistān al-mazāhib*. I have seen only its translation by D. SHEA and A. TROYER, 3 vols., Paris 1843.

In itself, it is representative of the vague universalism characterizing the spiritual climate of India and which Akbar's experiment undoubtedly encouraged.

The author of this work met in Patna, Kashmir and Lahore certain Zoroastrian mystics. The most illustrious of them was Azar Kaivan, who had arrived from Persia in the preceding century and settled in Patna where he led a hermit's existence. His disciples—we know four of them by name—broadly applied the allegorical method for the interpretation of Zoroastrian doctrines and the legendary epics of ancient Iran. At the same time, they practised more or less fantastic yogic mortifications and austerities, being in close contact with Hindu ascetics

Their theology, like Sohravardī's, seems to combine Mazdeanism and Neo-Platonism. We should know more if we had the twenty-three different works referred to by the *Dabistān*¹, but only one has been preserved, the *Desātīr*². The *Desātīr*³ is a forgery⁴ supposed to go back to the Sasanian epoch (but more likely dating from the 16th century) which claims to establish by a long genealogy that the afore-mentioned mystics preceded Zoroastrianism. Sohravardī went up to the Primal Man, Gayōmart. The *Desātīr* does still better, by finding for the Primal Man, a whole series of ancestors, the first of them being one Mahābād.

It is more interesting to see that the *Desātīr* and *Dabistān*⁵ explain the creation of the Amšāspands by the same Neo-Platonic scheme of a procession of beings emanated one from the other, as was adopted by the *Dēnkart* and known to Sohravardī: the tradition was being continued.

The 18th century, Anquetil's century, was also that of the division of Parsism into two sects. The exchange of epistles between Parsis and Gabars had this result at least. More exactly, it was the voyage of a Gabar to India which started the controversy.

We know only of one precedent for this voyage: two Iranians, Kāūs and Asfad, in 1536, visited Navsari and wrote a poem, a copy of which is in the *Mulla Firoz Library* in Bombay⁶. (There is no evidence that Ardešīr, called from Kerman by the Emperor Akbar, ever visited the Parsis of Gujarat).

In 1720, the *mobad* Jāmāsp Vilāyatī came to India. He noticed notably, that the Parsi calendar was one month behind that of the Gabars. A few years later a Parsi adopted the Gabar reckoning and founded, with a few partisans, the sect of the Qadimis or Ancients, which survives to this day. The others became known as the Šāhinšāhīs or Imperials.

The two sects, after periods of bitter hostility, co-exist peacefully today. Their controversy might appear futile, but more was at stake than a mere question of reckoning. The Qadimis, indeed, were anxious to return to the origins of their religion: they adopted the Iranian practice, not kept up by the Parsis, of carrying each year, during one of the five *Gāthā* days, their household fires to the main temple or Ātaš Bahrām, and leaving it there to extinguish. So violent a quarrel was kindled by this extinction that they gave up the reform⁷.

1 The list is drawn up by SHEA and TROYER in their introduction, xvii.

2 The *Desātīr* was translated by Mulla FIRUZ, in 2 vols., Bombay 1818.

3 Arabic plural of Pers. *dastūr*.

4 Despite the efforts of SHEA and TROYER, *ibid.*, p. xix, to demonstrate its authenticity.

5 Translation, I, 353.

6 D. MENANT, Gabars, *ERE*, VI, 153, whom I follow to the letter.

7 DHABHAR, *The Persian Rivāyats of Hormazyār Framarz*, xliii, which cites a pamphlet of 1847,

The Gabar Jāmāsp Vilāyatī, on arriving in India in 1720, found his co-religionists very ignorant indeed. He brought them a Pahlavi *Vidēvdāt* and managed to persuade three intelligent priests (one of them, Dārāb Kumānā, *dastur* of Surat, was later to be Anquetil's teacher) to learn something of the language of the *Avesta* which was no longer understood. The *Vidēvdāt* he brought was one of the texts from which Dārāb instructed Anquetil, by dictating to him a Persian version.

But the attempt of the Parsis to rediscover their religion, which was given its first impetus by a Gabar and pursued by a Parsi, then an European, could not be really fruitful till it became possible to read the texts in the original; in other words, till the studies of Burnouf and his successors. In the meanwhile, with the establishment of British rule in India, another aspect of European civilization, Christian mission, irrupted on the scene and shook the Parsis out of their theological apathy.

The Anglican clergyman Wilson, who had read Anquetil, set out to demonstrate to the Parsis that their religion was false. In his book *The Parsi Religion*, 1843, he sought to make them feel ashamed of their dualism and to ridicule their first principle, Zurvān. The Parsis met the first accusation¹, by resorting to the traditional allegorical explanation, according to which Ahriman simply signified man's evil passions. As for the second charge, the Parsis protested that Zurvān had never meant anything more to them than an abstract principle which, far from being superior to Ōhrmazd, was on the contrary, one of his creations.

The most painful encounter between the two religions occurred when two Parsi children were converted to Christianity. The missionary was accused of taking advantage of his position in plucking his young protégés from their natural milieu. Proceedings were instituted against him, and the judgment made the repetition of such an incident impossible. Parsism remained unbreached.

The Parsis were to benefit otherwise from their contact with Europe, and in a manner that tended to arm them against Christianity.

They rapidly adopted the western style of education, in English, for all classes and both sexes². They were consequently prepared to listen to an European explaining to them their own religion provided he was a layman and a scholar, such as Dr. Haug. The latter was the first to read the *Gāthās* in the original, to seize something of their content and to communicate his findings to the Parsis. He was eagerly welcomed for demonstrating that the pure religion of Zarathuštra was monotheism, and that it was due to its corruption that it had taken on the appearance—shocking to “modern” thought—of a dualism.

The more enlightened Parsis went to study their religion at the European school. K. R. Cama went to Paris to study under Oppert and to Erlangen to study under Spiegel. He founded the *Zartošti Abhyās* (*Zoroastrian Studies*), a periodical publishing translations of articles written by German scholars. He is the real founder of the scientific study of Mazdeanism among the Parsis, and the *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* is named after him. Henceforth it was no longer possible to translate or comment on the *Avesta*, without recourse to the

1 *Tālim i Zurtoosht* (anonymous); ASPANDIĀR, *Hādie Gum Rāhān*, cited by DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, New York 1938, 492.

2 See D. MENANT, *Les Parsis*, 1898, chap. VII: “Education”.

original, merely on the basis of Pahlavi commentaries, as was attempted for the last time in the Gujarati translation published in the first half of the century¹.

The return of an intellectual elite to the origins of its religion, and more generally, the adoption of an European mode of life by the more affluent Parsis, tended inevitably to separate them, in their conception of the religion, from the more humble members of the community. Already the *Panchāyat*, at the beginning of the century, had taken steps, doubtless under indirect European influence, to eliminate from usage such practices as had been borrowed from the Hindus or Muslims: for instance, the offering of coconuts to the Holi or cups of oil to Hanuman², and the recourse to *mullāhs* for charms or horoscopes³.

What the *Panchāyat* failed to do by compulsory measures, was sought to be achieved by propaganda. In 1852, a society composed of wealthy and influential Parsis and some educated young men was formed, under the name *Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha* (*Religious Reform Society*), which took as its aim the "regeneration of the social condition of the Parsis and the restoration of the Zoroastrian religion to its pristine purity"⁴. It functioned—in spite of opposition—through public meetings, pamphlets, the subsidizing of religious education in schools and the institution of a fund. The latter, notably, invited entries of essays written on the following subject: "Origin and history of the *Zand-Avesta*, with an account of the investigations of European authors regarding the Zand books, suggestions for enhancing religious education among the Parsis, and particularly among the priests". (The prize was awarded to Sorab Sapurji Bengali, former Secretary of the Society).

This movement was essentially due to the initiative of laymen, knowledge and funds not being on the side of priests. But as was its object, it did spread to the priests. Not only have there been scholars among the priests in the Society, but institutions established for the instruction of future priests raised the general level of the clergy. Of the first, we can cite⁵ Dastur Peshotan Sanjana, editor and translator of Pahlavi works, Dastur Jamaspji Jamasp-Asa, author of a Pahlavi dictionary, Dastur Hoshang Jamasp, Professor of Persian in the *Deccan College*, Poona, and editor, under Haug's direction, of ancient Zand-Pahlavi and Pahlavi-Zand glossaries and of the *Book of Artāy Virāf*. At a lower grade of the hierarchy, the Ervads Kavasji Edalji Kanga, Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha and Edalji Kersaspji Antia were the first to win distinction as philologists.

As for institutions imparting instruction to future priests, we can cite four: The *Mulla Firoz Madressa*, the *Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy Zand and Pahlavi Madressa* and the *Seth Jejeebhoy Dadabhai Madressa* in Bombay, and the *Sir Cawasji Jehangir Readymoney Madressa*, in Navsari⁶.

The progress in studies served to emphasize the rediscovered ideal of a pure sublime religion and traditional practices. There ensued a cleavage into reformers and conservatives.

1 DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 477, which mentions also Gujarati versions of Pahlavi (*Artāy Virāf*) and Persian (*Zardušt Nāmeḥ*), etc.

2 KARAKA, *History*, II, 229.

3 DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 495.

4 KARAKA, *History*, II, 230.

5 Following KARAKA, *History*, II, 231 sq.

6 On Navsari, we have the genealogical tables of Meherji Rana, *The genealogy of the Navsari Parsi Priests*, s.l.n.d.

The former attacked, for instance, the use of unintelligible prayers, "which neither the priest himself nor the layman understood"¹; to which the orthodox vehemently retorted that "the Avestan language was divine and as such it possessed inherent magical efficacy. Miraculously composed as these prayers were, they had an indescribably objective value, quite independent of the motive of one who recited them"². The quarrel on this point, at least, gradually abated as knowledge of the sacred texts grew.

This was not the case, however, with the question of prayers and ceremonies for the dead. According to the general belief, these rites either procured the soul the remission of its sins or helped it to emerge from hell, or to rise through the graded heavens of the hereafter. It was with this hope that survivors periodically performed complicated ceremonies, such as the offering of choice and abundant food, especially the food and drink preferred by the deceased during his lifetime. Moreover, on the last day of the Farvardin festival, when the souls were supposed to return to the other world, food and drink were offered to them for the return journey, as well as a few copper or silver coins as travelling expenses³.

The reformers claimed to have restored an ancient distinction, which had disappeared since the end of the Pahlavi period, between the soul of the dead man and his *fravaši*. According to them, the greater part of funerary rites were for the benefit of the *fravaši* only. The soul's fate was decided at death according to the sum of merits or demerits accumulated during a more or less virtuous life; it did not depend on the intercession of the survivors. It is true, they conceded, that the benefit of the ceremonies performed for the dead accrues to the soul during the first three days after death, but rites performed from the morning of the fourth day were of no help to it at all.

It meant re-establishing a lost belief in the *fravašis*, as distinct from the soul; it meant also going against the deepest and the most natural of sentiments, that of filial piety and love between near ones, in favour of an austere moral concept. The relief that might be afforded to the survivors by ridding them of the burden of costly ceremonies was not compensation enough.

To the orthodox who held that these rites had been instituted as much for the consolation of the living as for the welfare of the dead, the reformers retorted that each age, each level of mental development, had the practices that suited it best: it was time to progress beyond certain gross forms of the cult and to give greater importance to the ethical substance. The reformers, as we see, championed progress, as much as a return to the past. The orthodox, who accused them of being Protestants, were not far from wrong.

All the same, the controversy, which continues to this day, never went so far as to result in a schism⁴. On the whole, as it generally happens in such cases, the practices were retained, and each side interprets them as best it can.

Indeed, several Parsi commandments or restrictions have been allowed to fall, more or less tacitly, into disuse, as a result of contact with European civilization. Parsi historians hardly mention this fact, being always pre-occupied with preaching or pleading: neither Dhalla nor Karaka breathe a word of it. But the exact details are to be found in Modi's preface to the

1 DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 496.

2 DHALLA, *ibid.*

3 DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 499.

4 DHALLA, *History*... , 500 sq.

work of M. R. Unvala, *Dārāb Hormazyār's Rivāyat* (1922). The old restriction on making sea voyages, mentioned by Tacitus when speaking of Tiridates' visit to Rome, was in force during the whole of the 19th century. Priests belonging to the higher grades could not go on long voyages. Otherwise, not only was the *barāšnūm* vitiated, but they could not go through it again on their return. "Thus the priests who went to Aden to consecrate the new Fire-Temple built by Cowasji Dinshaw Adenvala, were, on their return to India, prohibited from officiating for the rest of their lives". Now, as Modi remarks, "time is the greatest innovator and reformer: the conservative priests of Navsari, meeting at a public meeting this year, have of their own accord done away with the restriction against voyage on the sea"¹.

A similar restriction existed against travelling on the railways (because they implied inevitable contacts between water and fire; or between Parsis and non-Parsis). Later, it only applied to long distance travel, through the force of usage.

Parsi laymen were ahead of their priests in giving up scruples of this kind, or else naval constructions, trade with China, and railway undertakings would not have prospered as they did.

Another restriction seems on the way to extinction, according to Modi². Parsis, on principle, eat food only if prepared by Parsis. Moreover, for priests of the higher grades, it must be prepared by Parsis of the same priestly class, and they must eat separately, not in contact with laymen. Each priest generally has a separate tray. Now, "at a public dinner in honour of the Dastur of Navsari, though a separate table was prepared for him and his confreres, and each was provided with a separate metallic tray, still the table had a common table-cloth". M. R. Unvala, disapproving of this innovation, left the gathering and did not sit down to dinner till the table-cloth was removed³.

The fall of Kerman to the Afghans in 1768 put an end to the correspondence, exchanged between Gabars and Parsis, which had been languishing since the end of the Safavid dynasty. During the early 19th century there were no more contacts worth mentioning between the two.

The destinies of the two communities during this period were diametrically opposed to each other. Whereas the Parsis, under British protection, and because increasingly westernized, prospered in commerce and industry, the Gabars, ruined by the sack of their town and engaged almost exclusively in agriculture, were subject, as non-muslims, to a tax (*jizya*) which became heavier and heavier and out of proportion to their resources⁴. A relentless persecution was exercised against them in a hundred different ways : "They were threatened with forced conversion; the property belonging to a Zoroastrian family was forfeited for the use and benefit of the proselytes, in spite of the rights of the legitimate heirs, and property recently acquired could be taxed to the advantage of the *mullāhs* upto the fifth of its value; it was forbidden to build new houses or to repair old ones; the merchants were subjected to taxes besides the ordinary customs duties. The murderers of Zoroastrians were not punished; and their sanctuaries were often desecrated. They could not wear new clothes or ride on horse, only mules or asses. Again, any intercourse with the Gabars being impure, all lucrative occupations were forbidden to them"⁵.

1 J. J. MODI, *ibid.*, VIII.

2 *ibid.*, VI sq.

3 Modi narrates the incident, *ibid.*, VII. It was he who intervened to put matters right.

4 D. MENANT, Gabars, *ERE*, VI, 150.

5 MENANT, *ibid.*

This situation greatly affected their brethren in India, who were now prosperous and able to take action for their relief. The *Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund* was founded in Bombay in 1854, and sent its agent, Maneckji Limji Hataria, to make enquiries on the spot. From this report, it was deemed the most important to procure from the Iranian government the abolition of the *jizya*. It took twenty-five years to bring this about (in 1882)¹. In the meanwhile, the *Anjuman Naseri* was founded in Yazd and Kermān by the successor of M. L. Hataria, and the Bombay Fund continued to function.

"There was at Bombay, in 1881, an inn for the use of destitute Iranians who came to India to find employment and help, and a fire-temple for the exclusive benefit of the Persian Zoroastrians. The head-priest was an Iranian *mohad* and the ritual purely Iranian".²

Parsism in India, as in Iran, hardly knows any apostasies, nor does it make any converts.

There was a time when things were different. With the beginning of economic prosperity, Parsis adopted the practice of purchasing as slaves, low-caste Hindus, who were invested with the sacred Zoroastrian shirt and thread. But those members of the community who were opposed to this practice (on grounds of keeping the race pure) denied these converts the full privileges of the believer³. The masters of these slaves, on the contrary, found it convenient to be able to partake of food prepared by them and even permitted them to prepare the sacred cakes used for sacrificial purposes. The Gabars were consulted.

The Gabars, who were an oppressed minority, could not share the Parsis' anxiety to safeguard themselves from the influx of undesirable elements. They considered it a sin to refuse anyone all the benefits of the Good Religion.

The Parsis, under pressure of prevailing social conditions, acted as they thought best. If Parsism had spread among the upper classes, there would have been no objections raised. But seeing that the influx was from the lower classes, they barred entrance into the community. Proselytizing was viewed with disfavour. Conversions were permissible only in the cases of children born of non-Zoroastrian mistresses to Parsi fathers, anxious to have them admitted into the fold⁴.

Today, it seems Mazdeanism refuses to make converts. Thus the late Pour-e Daoud, an Iranian scholar of Zoroastrianism, wanted to become a Mazdean, but no one wanted him, no more in Iran than in India (Menasce).

In one respect, the influence of India combined with that of Europe (or America) to shape the Parsi religion: through theosophy⁵.

Lesser educated Parsis, hemmed in between prosaic tradition and dry reforms (as we saw notably in respect of funerary rites), felt the need of more satisfying food for the spirit.

1 Some unpublished documents of the Gobineau Fund of Strasburg show that the exoneration was as much due to Gobineau as to Rawlinson.

2 MENANT, *ibid.*, 151.

3 DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 474.

4 DHALLA, *ibid.*, 476.

5 BILIMORIA, *Zoroastrianism in the light of Theosophy*, Bombay 1898.

They were not to blame if the religion did not seem able to furnish it¹. Once again it was from without, that the religion was to be renovated—for what it was worth.

The Parsis who adopted the theosophical esoterism adhered to the syncretism of Azar Kaivan and, at the same time, continued the tradition of allegorical interpretation. Theosophy with them, at least, was the very opposite of a form of modernism. It enabled them to vindicate the most archaic rites and beliefs by placing them outside the pale of philological criticism and plain common sense. This earned it the approval of the priesthood, which saw in it the best defence of faith and ritual against rationalism and materialism.

In respect of prayer, for instance, theosophists joined the orthodox camp supporting traditional and unintelligible formulae. The Avestan syllables were so mysteriously adjusted to each other that they had an automatic efficacy, not only on account of their hidden meaning but because they set forth “in the ether” some good “elementary forces” against the bad.

Theosophists made free with the dogmas. If a doctrine did not figure in the tradition, it was said to have existed in the lost part of the *Avesta*. In this way they legitimized the belief in the transmigration of souls. This was used to interpret Zarathuštra as the reincarnation of an Amšaspand. Innovation and deformation knew no bounds.

Even when citing the authority of texts, it was possible to diverge from the traditional *consensus* and to betray aspirations entirely foreign to the orthodox religion. Thus, so as to be modern, the doctrine of a personal and limited God (Ōhrmazd) was discarded by exalting over him Zurvān, the infinite and impersonal principle.

Such trends could not indefinitely deceive the priesthood. Dhalla, notably, denounces the “novel type of Zoroastrian ideological literature” sprung from the theosophic aberration².

Naive faith in Mazdean dogma received a fatal shock more than a century ago: Hoshang Jamasp, cited by Haug in the preface to his edition of the *Book of Artāy Virāf*, in 1872, p. LV, recalls with nostalgia his childhood days when Parsi men, women and children wept and moaned at a reading of the sufferings of hell.

Spiritualism and theosophy tend to fill the void left by the disappearance of traditional beliefs³. It therefore seems indispensable to the survival of Parsism that it safeguard itself, on the one hand, from modern scepticism, and on the other, from astrological, theosophical and spiritualist corruptions. Will it find in India and in Europe, where these dangers arise, the strength to fight against them? Will it find the strength in itself? Only the future will tell.

1 As a Dastur writes: “The Parsi priesthood, as custodians of the conscience of the community, zealously guarded and conserved the dogmatic teachings and traditions, but they were unable to work for the adaptation of the traditional material to the contemporary situation. They were incapable, at the time, of helping the community in its religious crisis, (DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 502).

2 DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 508. See also, BROWNE, *A Year Amongst Persians*, 413: the doctrine of metempsychosis incorporated in the *Desātīr*, has spread to the Zoroastrians in Persia.

3 On spiritualism in the Parsi religion: Peshotan SANJANA, *Spiritualism through Zoroastrian eyes*, cited by PERTOLD, *Fulcrum of Spiritualism in the Zarathuštrian Religion*, in *Studies.....Pavry*, 386 sq.; J. N. FARQUHAR, *Modern religious Movements in India*, New York 1915, 84 sq. and 343 sq.

CHAPTER VI

THE HISTORY OF IRANIAN STUDIES

Throughout our Middle Ages, Zoroaster was remembered as the Prince of Magi¹. In Faust's story he figures as the author of a book which Faust studies with such diligence that he earns the title of a second *Zoroastris*. The book passes into the hands of his pupil, Christopher Wagner, who studies it likewise².

The invention of the Kabalah is commonly ascribed to Zoroaster. Certain European authors like Bodin, in his *De Magorum Daemonomania*, 1581, repeat about him the stories told in the classics and the Church Fathers. Conversely, it is sometimes thought that the Persians stole the sacred fire from the Jews. Such was the opinion of the Basler Khunrath, author of *De igne magorum philosophorumque secreto, externo et visibili*, written about 1600³.

The hellenistic practice of sheltering a philosophical or "scientific" work under cover of Zoroaster's authority was revived at the Renaissance by Joh. Jessenius, doctor to Emperor Rodolph II, who wrote *Zoroaster, Nova brevis veraque de Universo Philosophia*, Wittenberg 1593.

The assimilation of Zoroaster to the Chaldean astrologer-magi had been initiated by the Graeco-Romans. It culminated at the beginning of the Renaissance, in the attribution of the *Chaldean Oracles* to Zoroaster, or to his disciples, by Plethon, and decidedly to Zoroaster himself by Plethon's copyists and editors⁴. Plethon made these writings—which contain nothing Iranian—the basis of his *Compendium* of Zoroastrian and Platonic doctrines. His *magnum opus*, the *Laws*, was even placed under the double patronage of Zoroaster and Plato.

Plethon started the long and chequered history of the Humanism-Christianity relationship. Among those who attempted to effect a compromise between Christianity and Platonism, the latter supposedly derived from Zoroaster, we may cite not only Bessarion, Pico della Mirandola, Marsile Ficino and Erasmus, but also Franciscus Patricius, the editor of the greater recension of the *Chaldean Oracles*, who wrote that: "Zoroaster, first of all men, came near to laying the foundations, however rudimentary, of the Catholic faith"⁵, and whose miscellany, *Nova de universis philosophia*, contains a work entitled *Zoroaster*.

Ponyus de Tyard, drawing from Ficino's *Theol. Platon.*, sees in Oromasis, Mitra and Araminis an anticipation of the Trinity⁶.

1 MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Le Leggende Orientali sui Magi* . ., Rome 1952, 181 sq.

2 REMY, *The influence of India and Persia on the Poetry of Germany*, New York 1901, cited by DHALLA, *History of Zoroastrianism*, 311.

3 Cf. C.-M. EDSMAN, *Le baptême du feu*, Upsala 1940, 139.

4 J.D-G., *Western Response*, 4, n. 2.

5 *Western Response*, 4, n. 4.

6 Cf. Frances YATES, *Giordano Bruno*, 1964, p. 174.

Barnabe Brisson, who in 1590 published his *De regio Persarum principatu*, was apparently unaware of the ascription of the *Oracles* to Zoroaster, for he does not include them among his sources. He does, however assert, after several Ancients, that Pythagoras visited the Persian Magi.

Brisson's work belonged to the humanist tradition, in that it was based exclusively on ancient sources and dealt with the Persian religion as a thing of the past. Brisson apparently had no inkling that it had survived in Persia and India where it could be observed as a living reality. A century later, this was still the position of Thomas Stanley, author of the first comprehensive history of philosophy, with chapters on the Chaldeans and Sabaeans. It was left to others to collate ancient sources with modern evidence from Persia and India.

European travellers in Persia and India have been rapidly surveyed by D. Menant in her book on *Les Parsis*, 1898, and in *ERE*, 9. 640. It can be used to complete the pages on this subject in *The Western Response*, 1958¹.

As for original sources on Zoroastrianism, the small fragments of the *Avesta* known to Europeans could not be used, being still undeciphered, but Hyde had a copy of the *Ardā Virāf* in Persian, and a few late compilations like the *Zardušt Nāma*, the *Sad Dar* and the *Farhang i Jahāngirī*.

The Cambridge Platonician Ralph Cudworth, in his *True Intellectual of the Universe*, 1678, bases his knowledge of Zoroaster on other texts than the *Chaldean Oracles*, cf. Yates, p. 427.

Stanley's aforementioned *History of Philosophy* had a second edition in 1687, and was condensed the same year in the *Bibliothèque universelle* of Le Clerc, the famous Protestant Polemist, who also translated it into Dutch in 1702. This increased the non-conformist flavour of the original whose author had for uncle, Marsham, the well-known free-thinker.

In Herbelot's *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 1697, we read this laconic statement: "The ancient Persians claim that Zoroaster is more ancient than Moses, and there are Magi who even maintain he is none other than Abraham and often call him Ibrahim Zardušt". The bearing of this contention on Christian apologetics is not touched upon.

An openly anti-Christian attitude was that of people like Marsham in his *Chronicus Canon Egyptiacus*, London 1672, or John Spencer, whose *Dissertatio de Urim et Thummim* was published at Cambridge in 1670. To them, the coincidences were due to the fact that the Jews had borrowed from neighbouring peoples. It is likely, as Dupront has shown in his book *Pierre-Daniel Huet et l'exégèse comparatiste du XVII^e siècle*, 1930, that these were the adversaries against whom Huet directed his *Demonstratio*.

On the other hand, the priority of Moses had been vindicated by Joh. Henr. Ursinus, author of *De Zoroastre Bactriano, Hermete Trismegisto, Sanchoniathone phoenicio eorumque scriptis et aliis contra mosaicae scripturae antiquitatem*, published at Nuremberg in 1661².

Pierre-Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, published three years earlier, takes up the odd problem : how is it that pagan religions have certain

1 By mistake in *Western Response*, 6 and n. 2, I have confused two works: P. Raphaël du MANS work, *L'Etat de la Perse*, 1660, and S. N. SANSON's, of the same title, 1694.

2 He cites a Joh. Bisselius, otherwise unknown to me.

features in common with Judaism and Christianity? Church Fathers Justinus Athenagoras Clement and Origen, had tried to show that paganism had either preserved something of a primitive revelation, or else, had borrowed from Judaism. They believed either argument would facilitate the conversion of pagans. In the 17th century, a period of intense religious controversy, we find Grotius saying : "Nulla est causa cur inter impossibilia habeatur restitutio dissoluti corporis, cum viri eruditi, Zoroaster apud Chaldeos, Stoici prope omnes, et inter Peripateticos Theopompus, eam et fieri posse et futuram crediderunt".

Huet generally revived the arguments of the Church Fathers, merely supplementing them with evidence drawn from all peoples and all times. The danger of this position was at once evident to Bossuet who wrote: "J'en ai vu qui disaient que si l'on trouve tout dans les livres des payens, on reprochera au christianisme de n'avoir rien appris au genre humain".

Hyde's monumental work, *De vetere religione Persarum*, Oxford 1700, is the first attempt at a synthesis on the subject. Utilizing all sources available at the time, it marked an era and was to influence all subsequent research. It reflects also all previously held ideas about Zoroaster and is, moreover, eminently representative of 17th century mentality¹.

Hyde and Anquetil are separated by two events of fundamental importance, one being, of course, the discovery of the *Avesta* by Anquetil himself, the other, the intellectual revolution, recently termed *Crise de la conscience européenne* (Paul Hazard) which made the century of Voltaire so different from that of Bossuet.

Whereas Hyde's treatise was the work of an apologist, one for whom everything in the history of mankind revolves around Christianity, Anquetil, although a faithful Catholic, claims in the preface of his *Zend-Avesta* to have only one interest : man. Anquetil was a man of his age, an age characterized by the secularization of knowledge and a return to Renaissance humanism.

Before Voltaire's works and Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, probably the greatest book to appear in the first half of the 18th century, was most representative of the new attitude. Bayle, who made a special study of Manichaeism, and introduced into the French language the word *dualisme*, coined in Latin by Hyde, saw the weakness of the latter's argument on the supposed monotheism of the Zoroastrians. Šahrastānī's testimony on the supremacy of Ōhrmazd could be explained as follows : "Zoroaster's followers have charitably lent to their reformers, in their own interest, the doctrine according to which the evil principle has been created by God. They have done this ever since they were submitted to the harsh rule of the Mohammedans who abhor them and call them idolaters and fire-worshippers. They wanted to avoid exposing themselves further to their hatred and insults."

Bayle's attack against Hyde was resumed by l'Abbe Foucher. In the interval, Hyde was faithfully followed in England by Prideaux, Dean of Norwich, who, in his *History of the Jews*, 1715-1718, devoted a chapter to the Persian religion².

Parallel to the line Hyde-Prideaux-Anquetil, we can trace another, running from Bayle down to Voltaire, through A.M. Ramsay.

1 *Western Response*, 10 sq.

2 *Western Response*, 12 sq.

The publication of Anquetil's *Avesta* in 1771 in no way abated the vigour of Foucher's attack or deflected him from his line of thought. In his article of 1777, *Supplément au traité historique de la religion des Perses*, he clearly sees the contradiction between the Zurvānism of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the dualism of the *Avesta* and *Bundahišn*, where traces of a supreme god are indeed rare. But, as we shall see, Anquetil Duperron was up against the same difficulty.

Before Anquetil had even set foot on Indian soil, Voltaire had entered the ideological fray; in his *Essai sur les mœurs*, 1756, he admits, like Foucher and others, that there were two Zoroasters. But the main reason for his interest in either prophet was that they provided him with a weapon against Christianity, a means of *écraser l'infâme*. Moses was not unique: truth could as well be found in a non-Christian religion. Thus, Huet's *Demonstratio Evangelica*, that exhaustive catalogue of resemblances between paganism and Christianity, boomeranged at last, as foreseen by Bossuet, and challenged the Church's monopoly of truth, for the benefit of "natural religion".

Anquetil's departure for India raised high hopes in the ranks of the philosophers. This chapter has been dealt with in a masterly manner by Raymond Schwab in his *Vie d'Anquetil-Duperron*, Paris 1934. I can therefore be very brief on the subject. One reference to Voltaire is perhaps worth adding. It is a marginal note of his to a letter of Fabry de Moncault who wrote to him, in 1765, "il me paraît très évident que Moïse est beaucoup plus ancien qu'Homère et Hésiode". Voltaire scribbled in the margin: "Ouy, mais non pas que Zoroastre"¹.

Anquetil, both in his letters from India, and on his return, little by little shattered the Encyclopedists' hopes by refusing to see anything in the *Avesta* which might be used against Christianity. Voltaire, Grimm and Diderot were visibly disappointed. In the article on "Zoroastre" in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, Voltaire stressed Anquetil's *courage* and Hyde's *compétence*. And he avenged himself for his disappointment by his impertinent paragraph on "l'abominable fatras que l'on attribue à ce Zoroastre", a phrase too well-known to need quoting in full. "Yet", he adds, "people speak a lot about Zoroaster and will go on speaking about him". Yes, indeed!

I need but briefly touch on the attacks directed against Anquetil from other quarters. England was definitely annoyed to see its celebrated Hyde lose his supremacy in Iranian studies. It took more than thirty years for the last resistance to the *Avesta's* authenticity to be overcome².

Meanwhile, the attitude of Voltaire or Diderot was perpetuated almost without change³: to a Goethe in his *Parsi Nameh* (*West-östlicher Diwan* with *Notes on the ancient Persians*) to a Heinrich von Kleist exhorting his compatriots to seek liberty, in 1810, with his *Prière de Zoroastre*⁴, to a Byron in *Childe Harold*, and to a Wordsworth in the *Excursion*, the Persian

1 Cf. *Eighteenth century French Literature*, Oriel Press, 1969, 57.

2 In Germany, Anquetil's results had been accepted at once, thanks to KLEUKER's translation of his work, Riga, 1776-1777, and to subsequent studies by KLEUKER and others. Cf. Werner SCHÜTZ, *Die Bedeutung J. F. KLEUKERS für die persische Religionsgeschichte*, Bonn 1927 (Inaugural-Dissertation).

3 See also PASTORET, *Zoroastre, Confucius et Mahomet*, 1787; VOLNEY, *Les ruines*, 1791, etc. Zoroaster figured also among the heroes of the *Dictionnaire des Athées* of Sylvain MARÉCHAL, 1800, and as Sarastro in MOZART's, *The enchanted Flute*.

4 See SCHAEFER, Gott u. Mensch in der Verkündigung Zarathustras, reprinted in *Der Mensch in Orient u. Okzident*, 1960, 83.

religion remained the model of a natural, rational religion, eventually corrupted by priestly fanaticism.

Richter wrote in 1819 in his *Christentum und die älteste Religion des Orients*, that all the principal doctrines of Christianity had already been stated in India and Persia. The same year Keats wrote to his brother and sister : "It is pretty generally suspected that the Christian scheme has been copied from the ancient Persian and Greek philosophers... Seriously I think it probable that this system of soul-making may have been the parent of all the more palpable and personal schemes of Redemption among the Zoroastrians, the Christians and the Hindoos¹. Shelley struck a more personal note in his famous discourse of the Earth in *Prometheus Unbound* :

Ere Babylon was dust

*The Magus Zoroaster, etc.*²

What is more, there persisted in the wake of encyclopaedism the tendency to find an Iranian origin for Christianity, or as Schaefer puts it : "With the knowledge of the Avesta there arose the temptation to search the Iranian religion for the hidden sources of primitive Christianity". Already Lessing, in his *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, had been unable to resist this temptation; Herder succumbed to it, and upto our time it regularly exacts its victims"³.

The Avesta became really accessible only thanks to the discovery of Sanskrit and the affinities existing between this language and that of the Avesta.

Bopp was the first to note the connection between Avestan *daēva* and Sanskrit *deva*, between Av. *ahura* and Skr. *asura*. The idea of a common origin of the civilizations of Iran, India, etc., led to some interesting, if premature conclusions, in J. Rhode's *Die heilige Sage und das gesammte Religionssystem*, 1820, and in Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie*, 1819-1821⁴, etc., which claimed the Iranian origin for all culture.

Lamennais, in his book *Amschaspands et Darvands*, 1843, freely used the Zoroastrian doctrines, of which he had read in Anquetil Duperron's *Zend-Avesta*, as a veil for his own reformistic views⁵.

But the first scholar to combine direct knowledge of the original texts, with the desire of achieving a historical synthesis, was Martin Haug⁶. Out of the bulk of the Avesta, he singled out the *Gāthās* as the only works attributable to Zoroaster, and made them the basis of a reassessment of the prophet's doctrine. He distinguished between the prophet's monotheism and the dualistic views reflected in later works such as the *Vidēvdāt*, as well as between his theology which was monotheistic, and his speculative philosophy, which was dualistic. The

1 Cited by J. MOFFATT, *Hibbert Journal*, 1903, 763 sq.

2 Cf. *The Western Response*, 16.

3 SCHAEFER, *Goethes Erlebnis des Ostens*, Leipzig 1938, 134. KARAKA, *History of the Parsis*, II, 215 sq., cites on the Persian religion, the favourable verdicts of Bishop Meurin, Forbes, Gibbon, Hanway, Sir John Malcolm, Sir William Ouseley, Captain J. Pope, Niebuhr, Butler and Rollin.—MICHELET, in his *Bible de l'humanité*, pays homage to the Zoroastrians remaining in Iran.

4 GOERRES in his *Mythengeschichte*, cited by CREUZER, had made a nice parallel of dogmas and forms of the Iranian and Indian religions.

5 Cf. Guido VERUCCI, Félicité Lamennais, *Dal cattolicesimo autoritario al radicalismo democratico*, Napoli 1963 (a reference I owe to G. Pugliese Carratelli).

6 See GÖTZ VON SELLE, Martin Haug in Poona, in *Oriental Studies* .. Pavry, 1933, 450 sq.

latter distinction enabled Haug to state that "a separate evil spirit of equal power with Ahura Mazdā, and always opposed to him, is entirely foreign to Zarathuštra's theology"¹.

As for the two creative Spirits, "they form only two parts of the Divine Being. But in the course of time, this doctrine of the great founder was changed and corrupted, in consequence of misunderstanding and false interpretations. Spentomaiyush was taken as a name of Ahuramazda himself, and then, of course, Angromaiyush by becoming entirely separated from Ahuramazda was regarded as the constant adversary of Ahuramazda; thus the dualism of God and Devil arose. Each of the two spirits was considered an independent ruler endeavouring to destroy the creation of the other, and thus both waged constant wars. This dualism is best perceived in the first *fargard* of the *Vidēvdāt*", whilst on the other hand, the ancient Aryan paganism reasserted itself in the *Yashts*. This dualism, in turn, produced a reaction in the form of a new monotheism, namely Zurvānism, a common belief in Sasanian times.

This theory was not only eagerly adopted by the Parsis, to whom it was put forward in a lecture delivered at Poona in 1861, because it seemed to vindicate their original monotheism against Wilson's accusation, it also became a classic in Europe.

Indo-Iranian philology had been established. It was to accumulate positive results. Outside this new discipline, Zoroaster continued to interest the public, which however did not know him well.

Significantly, the only literary work to call him by his real name, Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, 1885-1887, presented a picture of him that was almost the exact opposite of the truth. This was deliberate on the part of Nietzsche, who was not ignorant of the real Zoroaster, but who wished to make use of him as his mouthpiece. The public, however, did not see the difference, and Nietzsche's enormous irony was wasted. We have his own disillusioned confession on the subject in *Ecce Homo* :

"I have not been asked, I should have been asked what the name Zarathuštra means in my mouth, in the mouth of the first immoralist : for what makes this Persian a fantastically unique figure in history, is just the opposite of it. Zarathuštra was the first to see in the battle of good and evil, the prime mover of all things : the translation of morals into metaphysics, as a power, cause and end in itself, was his work" (p. 117 of Insel's edition)².

However, in a less known note written towards the end of his career, Nietzsche justified differently, the use he had made of Zarathuštra³. He had long been seeking a name for the ideal human being he had glimpsed in his youth, and first thought, under Hölderlin's influence, of calling him Empedocles; but in the end he felt obliged to pay a Persian this honour for "the Persians were the first to think of history as a whole, as a series of developments each presided over by a prophet for a duration of 1,000 years."

Elsewhere he writes again: "Zarathuštra is more truthful than any other thinker. His doctrine alone makes Truth the supreme virtue. To speak the Truth and to draw the bow well, these were Persian virtues".

1 *Essays on the sacred language, writings and religion of the Parsis*, 2nd edition by WEST, 1878, 303.

2 "I do not know why," Menasce writes to me, "nobody seems interested in the fact that Lou Salomé, after refusing to marry Nietzsche, the inventor of the false Zarathuštra, married one of those who fathered the real Zarathuštra — Andreas".

3 E. ABEGG, *Nietzsches Zarathuštra und der Prophet des alten Iran*, in *Conférences prononcées à Genève en 1944*, 64 sq., which carries further the parallel between Nietzsche's Zarathuštra, and the other one. The note referred to is published in tome 14 of the *Werke*, 303, no. 117.

However, Zoroaster was utilized to emancipate modern man from Christianity. This was in the Voltarian tradition¹.

Iranian philology played a part in the disputes between the "schools", which, one after the other, dominated religious science. Thus James Darmesteter, in his *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1877, unreservedly adopted the "naturalistic" school of Kuhn and Max Müller, and thought to prove that Zoroaster was a personification of thunder. After this *péché de jeunesse*, he abandoned *l'école étymologique ou védique* for *l'école traditionnelle ou historique*², and ended by producing not only his monumental translation of the Avesta, but also a theory of its origin and composition³ which found few followers: the system of abstract entities surrounding Ahura Mazdā reminded him so strongly of Neo-Platonism that he concluded that the *Gāthās* must be late forgeries, written under the influence of hellenizing Jews, like Philo of Alexandria.

This was an unexpected variant on the theory of Semitic influence on Mazdeanism, a theory which had been advanced by Spiegel in his *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, Leipzig 1872, and was later taken over by de Harlez, and finally by Pettazzoni in his *Religione di Zarathuštra*, Bologna 1920⁴. Whereas, for Darmesteter, both monotheism (such as is illustrated in Achaemenian inscriptions) and dualism were, in Iran, anterior to Semitic influence, the three other scholars were in agreement that monotheism derived from Palestine.

Spiegel tried to show that the Hebrews had given Iran not only the idea of God, but also their notion of creation *ex nihilo*, the part played by the number six in creation, and the deluge, (conversely the Hebrews had received from Iran their Paradise and their Tree of Life)⁵. Harlez, followed by Pettazzoni, restricted the alleged source of influence to the great Jewish prophets, whose message was supposed, however indirectly, to have reached Zoroaster.

This view has an almost automatic corollary in respect of Zoroaster's originality. If he had thus received from the Jewish prophets their massive monotheism, he could have invented dualism only; in fact, his attitude, if original at all, could best be described as "a protest against monotheism"⁶.

This theory of a Hebrew influence on Iran is no longer tenable, since it has become apparent that Zoroaster lived in east Iran and had no contact with the west. It is therefore very unlikely that Jewish monotheism influenced nascent Zoroastrianism.

Mention should be made of Tiele and Justi⁷ in the last years of the century.

The turn of the century was marked by the completion of the *Sacred Books of the East*, and the publication of F. Cumont's *Textes et monuments relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, Brussels 1896-1899, by Jackson's book, *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, New York

1 The sympathy of positivism for the Iranian religion can already be seen in John Stuart Mill's father, according to whom Zarathuštra's explanation of the problem of Evil had not yet been put to the test. (Cited after M. N. DHALLA, *Indo-Iran. Studies...Sanjana*, 1924, 116).

2 *Zend-Avesta*, I, VIII sq.: "Histoire des études zoroastriennes".

3 *ibid.*, vol. III, III sq.

4 PETTAZZONI abandoned this view in his subsequent studies on monotheism. See his *Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden 1954.

5 *Eran. Alterth.*, II, 449 sq.

6 The phrase is in HENNING's *Zoroaster*, 46, who tells me however, that he had not read SPIEGEL, *Eran. Alterth.*, II, VI.

7 *Western Response*, 25.

1898, by a collection, compiled by L. Gray, of all classical passages relating to the prophet; and above all, by the publication of three invaluable works: the *Avesta* edition by Geldner, Stuttgart 1886-1895, the *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, Strassbourg 1895-1904, and Bartholomae's dictionary, the *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1904, which provided students of the Iranian religion with almost all the best tools available. They might have been expected therefore to make considerable progress, but on the contrary, the years that followed can, at best, be described as a period of consolidation. In his review of the Iranian religion, 1900-1910, published in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1914, Lehmann deplored that the study of Mazdeanism had no recognized master; he denied this title even to Bartholomae, who, according to him, had no flair for theological problems. (Jackson's contribution to the *Grundriss* was rather disappointing too, in its absence of problems).

Moulton's book, *Early Zoroastrianism*, had not yet appeared. The American, L. Mills, was taking unnecessary pains to refute Darmesteter's theory.

Meanwhile, the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, the last great monument to an age perhaps gone forever, was beginning to appear and to offer an important collection of articles on the Iranian religion. But the attention of the researchers was somewhat diverted to Middle-Iranian texts, especially those of Manichaean content, owing to the discoveries in Central Asia. The notable exception was the new translation of the *Gāthās* by Andreas and Wackernagel.

In his *Early Zoroastrianism*, London 1913, Moulton insisted on Zoroaster's monotheism, attributing to the Median Magi (as Nyberg was to do) the radical dualism which characterizes Zoroastrianism from the Later Avesta onwards. He particularly studied the special relationship between Ahura Mazdā and the Aməša Spəntas. He stressed, as had Jackson, the doctrine of Free Choice. Finally, he devoted a balanced chapter to the relations between Zoroastrianism and Israel. His last book, *The Treasure of the Magi*, appeared after his death, in 1917. He wrote it, not only as a scholar, summarizing the results arrived at in *Early Zoroastrianism*, but as a Christian missionary who had, in the intervening years, acquired a direct knowledge of the Parsis in India. In this respect, he renewed Wilson's well-known venture. But while his predecessor had tried to win over the Parsis by pointing out the absurdity of their religion, Moulton was motivated by the principle set forth in the Bible: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil", and tried to represent Christianity as the culmination of Zoroastrianism.

E. Reuterskiöld's study of the position of Zoroaster in the history of religions, *Zarathuštras Religionshistoriska Ställning*, attracted little attention, doubtless because of the date of publication (December 1914). The author, who had made a previous study of Lappish culture, stressed the social aspect of Zoroaster's reform, which he closely connected with the adoption of sedentary life. For the rest, his book, based on years of study of the best authorities from Jackson's *Zoroaster* and Lehmann's *Zarathuštra, en bog om Persernes gamle tro*, Copenhagen 1899-1902, down to Bartholomae's *Gāthās*, was largely forestalled by Moulton's work.

In 1916, B. Geiger's study, *Die Aməša Spəntas*, Vienna, fully sets forth the problem of the nature and origin of the entities.

In 1918, Bartholomae at last gave his own synthesis of Zoroastrianism, in his lecture *Zarathuštra's Leben und Lehre*, published in Heidelberg in 1924. He advanced the thesis, which he admitted could not be supported by quotations from the *Gāthās*, that Zarathuštra's reform

had developed in three stages. In the first, the prophet had the revelation of monotheism and began to preach it in his homeland, Media. As he encountered some opposition, he was obliged to accommodate Evil in his system, and evolved the theory of the two principles. Finally, he had to flee to eastern Iran, a less developed, still mainly nomadic country, where he found acceptance at last by introducing the sedentary way of life.

Meillet, in the last of his *Trois conférences sur les gâthâs de l'Avesta*, delivered in Upsala in 1924 (and published the following year), stressed the social character of Zoroaster's reform. The blood sacrifice, he condemned, was clearly the affair of the rich rulers, their instrument of power. Zoroaster preached for the benefit of the poor, of the oppressed shepherds. This accounts for the abstract nature of the new theology. The husbandman, according to Meillet, was not interested in an "aristocracy" of gods removed from him; he thought only of a "democracy" of forces that might serve or harm him. But since justice is impossible in this world, it was proclaimed that retribution is reserved for the life here-after.

This conclusion, which was thought to be inspired by the Marxist theory of religion, was rejected by O. von Wesendonk in his book *Das Wesen der Lehre Zarathuštras*, published in 1927¹.

It is interesting to note that Wesendonk discusses also the Zurvānite problem. The importance of Zurvānism had lately been brought out by Junker, Schaefer and others², partly under the influence of the theory of an Iranian influence on the Greek religion of Time, advanced by Eisler in his *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt*, Munich 1910. The problem of Zurvānism was also briefly dealt by Christensen in his *Etude sur le zoroastrisme de la Perse antique*, Copenhagen 1928, a work otherwise concerned with establishing a relative chronology of the *Yâsts*.

Benveniste, in his Ratanbai Katrak lectures delivered in 1926, published three years later under the title, *The Persian Religion according to the chief Greek texts*, Paris 1929, distinguished between Zurvānism and Mazdeanism in classical sources on Iran. His little book is characterized throughout by a method which in Antiquity would have placed him among the *χωρίζοντες*. While his predecessors, among them Clemen, editor of the *Fontes religionis persicae*, Bonn, and author of *Die Griechischen und Lateinischen Nachrichten über die Persische Religion*, 1920, strove to harmonize all the testimonies into one comprehensive picture, Benveniste kept them separate, postulating as many religions as seemed necessary to him. Herodotus informs us about Iranian paganism, the Achaemenian inscriptions about a cult of Ahuramazda untouched by Zoroastrianism (the position already adopted by Meillet); while Theopompus and Plutarch described Zoroastrianism, and seem to have known Zurvānism, which in turn was the object of Strabo's notice.

Referring to this book, Christensen, in the *Monde oriental*, 1931, asked: "Was there a Zurvānite religion?"

Benveniste's tendency to fragmentation, was to be illustrated ten years later in Nyberg's book with the significant title, *Die Religionen* (in the plural) *des alten Iran*, 1937-1938³. But

1 *Western Response*, 29.—The Marxist interpretation of Zarathuštra's reform: Abaev, *Arch. Or.*, 1956, 23 sq.

2 JUNKER, *Ueber den iranischen Ursprung der hellenistischen Aionvorstellung*, 1922; SCHAEFER, *Urform und Fortbildungen des manichäischen Systems*, 1927; ALFARIC, *Zoroastre avant l'Avesta*, *RHR*, 1921, 1 sq., (refuted *ibid.*, 1922, 1 sq.); BLUE, *The zervanite system, Indo-Iranian Studies*. . *Sanjana*, Bombay 1925, 61 sq.

3 Text in Swedish, 1937; German translation, Leipzig 1938. Reprint, 1966.

before coming to this or other works by Nyberg, we must mention four other books of a more or less comprehensive character.

Meillet's *Conférences* gave a filip to Maria Wilkins Smith's *Studies in the Syntax of the Gāthās of Zarathuštra*, Philadelphia 1929, which, besides a transliteration and word for word translation, advance a theory of the Aməša Spəntas as "aspects" of Ahura and "virtues" of man, somewhat along the lines already followed by Hübschmann in *Ein Zoroastrisches Lied*, 1872, and by Moulton.

L. H. Gray, in his Katrak lectures, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, Bombay 1929, tried to give an exhaustive repertory of source references, both Iranian and foreign, and of modern interpretations. But his book turns out to be a collection of little monographs on all Zoroastrian gods and demons, rather than a synthesis.

Lommel, in *Die Religion Zarathustras*, Tübingen 1930, draws a systematic (perhaps too systematic) picture, while discussing the views of his predecessors, but does not give precise references to their works.

Christensen's exposé *Die Iranier* (in the *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*), Munich 1933, like Lommel's book, gives a comprehensive picture, and like Gray's, references to modern studies. But he stops with the end of the Achaemenian period.

To come back to Nyberg, his *Questions de cosmogonie et de cosmologie mazdéennes*, JA, 1929 and 1931, made a decisive contribution to the study of Zurvānism by singling out Zurvānite fragments in the *Bundahišn*. He brings out both the antiquity of Zurvānism and its predominance during the Sasanian period. Along the same lines, Christensen, in his book, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, Copenhagen 1936, arrives at the conclusion that the Sasanians were Zurvānites, and that only at the time of the Arab conquest did a reaction set in, with the expurgation from the sacred texts of most of the Zurvānite portions.

Nyberg worked several years on his voluminous book. This very personal and "dynamic" work is characterized by the use made of ethnological comparisons, in respect of two points especially. Leaning on the researches of Swedish ethnologists and on Pettazzoni, Nyberg maintained that Iran must have shared, with most archaic peoples, the belief in a great god who, after creating the universe, withdrew into a state of indifference. Zurvān had been such a god from very primitive times in West Iran. Ahura Mazdā had been another, but in the East—long before the birth of Zoroaster—and in Persia. This line of research was soon carried further by two of Nyberg's disciples, G. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran*, Upsala 1938, and S. Wikander, *Vayu*, Upsala 1941.

Nyberg had something new to say on Zoroaster. This was the second point on which he made use of ethnography. Two studies which appeared simultaneously in 1935, seem to have urged him to consider Zoroaster in the light of Shamanism. One was an Upsala dissertation, by D. Strömbäck, *Sejd, Textstudier i nordisk religionshistoria*, in which Shamanism was yoked to the explanation of *siðr*, viz., soothsaying, in Old Norse Sagas; the other was an article by the Swiss scholar, Meuli, on *Scythica*, published in *Hermès*, which interpreted the Scythian custom of bathing in hemp fumes as described by Herodotus, 4, 75, in the light of modern accounts of Shamanism. Nyberg saw in this the key to the *Gāthās*: all he had to do was to find supporting evidence in these texts that Zoroaster was a kind of Shaman.

What is more, Nyberg combined, with this ethnographical point of view, a new and bold application of the analytical method which Christensen had brought to bear on the *Yašts*, in the hope of reconstructing Zoroaster's historical milieu, as well as the circumstances and phases of his activity. Zoroaster emerged not as a reformer so much as a defender of the tradition of his Gāthic community against the encroachments of the neighbouring, more revolutionary, "Mithra community".

It should be mentioned that soon after an attempt was made, partly as a protest against Nyberg, to place Zoroaster in a concrete milieu, this time in the full light of the Achaemenian Court; reviving, after Hertel, the old identification, made by Ammianus Marcellinus, of Vištāspa, Zoroaster's protector, with his namesake, Darius' father, E. Herzfeld, a versatile archaeologist, discoverer and decipherer of inscriptions, built up with amazing obstinacy, what amounts to little more than a very learned novel: *Zoroaster and his World*, Princeton 1947.

Both attempts were to be the target of Henning's witty criticism in his Katrak lectures *Zoroaster, Politician or Witch-Doctor?*, London 1951.

One should guard, however, against too negative an opinion, especially as far as Nyberg is concerned. Indeed, Widengren's recent study, *Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte*, Numen, 1955, is mainly in vindication of his master's ideas, in the moderate form in which they appeared in Pedersen's *Illustreret Religionshistorie*, Copenhagen 1948. It was very very useful, to fight the tendency to judge Zoroaster either as a philosopher of the Greek type, or as a modern social reformer.

But an even more decisive advance was made from another direction. Comparative mythology had fallen into discredit about eighty years earlier, owing to its own excesses, and given place to ethnographical research, led by Andrew Lang.

It was left for scholars like Lommel or Güntert in *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland*, Halle 1923, to revive the former method by combining it with certain results obtained by its rival, the ethno-sociological method. In its new form, the method compared not words so much as ideas and practices, and took care to distinguish between universal facts, revealed as such by ethnological research, and facts peculiar to Indo-European peoples, and, therefore, utilizable for purposes of reconstruction.

The chief exponent of this method is still G. Dumézil. Even in his earliest books, *Le festin d'immortalité*, 1924, and *Le crime des Lemniennes*, we see the characteristic combination of Indo-European linguistics and socio-ethnology. These books produced a reaction on the part of Benveniste, in a study, written in collaboration with L. Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛthraṇa, Etude de mythologie indo-iranienne*, 1934, under the dictum: "Mythologie comparée si l'on veut, mais d'abord, mythologie séparée".

For twenty years, Dumézil has unceasingly sought the application and refinement of his method. In 1945, with his book *Naissance d'archanges*, it bore fruit in the Iranian sphere, by providing an almost complete explanation of the list of Zoroastrian entities. Since then, numerous books and articles either by Dumézil himself, or by scholars adhering to his views, like Wikander, Barr, etc., have extended and confirmed his discovery, which is, on the other hand, opposed by Gershevitch, Lentz and Thieme. The case of the problem was stated in 1952 by Dumézil in *Les dieux des Indo-Européens*; in 1958, in *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*,

Brussels. Duchesne-Guillemin's *Zoroastre*, 1948, was written under the stimulus of these ideas. *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1953, by the same author, is a brief sketch of the present book. *The Western Response to Zoroaster*, Oxford 1958, is the text of the Katrak lectures which trace the history of Zoroastrian studies in the West. Also by the same author is *Symbolik des Parsismus*, 1961, fasc. 8 of the *Symbolik der Religionen*, Stuttgart, translated into English as *Symbols and Values in Zoroastrianism*, New York 1965. Other principal works published are those of Bailey, Wikander, Zaehner, Bianchi, Widengren, Menasce, Molé, Barr, Gershevitch, Humbach, Bausani, Vermaseren, Hinz, Dandamaiev and Lukonin.

Bailey in his Katrak lectures of 1936, published in 1943 under the title *Zoroastrian Problems in the 9th Century Books*, Oxford, redirected the attention of scholars, too long diverted by Manichaean discoveries, to Mazdeanism under the Sasanians, and subsequently. The revival was strengthened by the discovery of Sasanian inscriptions on the Ka'ba i Zardušt of which there is a provisional edition by Sprengling in *Third Century Iran*, Chicago 1953.

Wikander, *Die Feuerpriester in Kleinasien und Iran*, Lund 1946, by means of literary and historical analyses, attempted to reconstruct the history of Anāhitā's cult, and the formation of religious tradition under the Sasanians.

Zaehner, *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford 1955, deals with the Zurvānite problem by reconstructing the Zurvānite system from all sources dating from the Sasanian to the Muslim period. The author has promised us a book on orthodox Zoroastrianism as a counterpart to the one on Zurvānism. Besides his *Teachings of the Magi*, 1956, consisting of translations of Pahlavi texts with introductions, we now have his voluminous book *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, 1961. But the *Twilight* is much better than the *Dawn*.

U. Bianchi's *Zamān i Ōhrmazd*, Torino 1958, is almost entirely devoted to a refutation of Zaehner, and of the views expressed by Widengren on the same subject.

G. Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte*, Leiden 1955, summarizes systematically the results of studies published by him, such as *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran*, Upsala 1938, *Religionens Värld*, Upsala 1952, *Iranische Geisteswelt*, 1961. His volume *Die Religionen Irans*, 1965, (with a French translation), though not the expected synthesis, is nevertheless the best comprehensive exposé on the subject.

J. de Menasce, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne: le Dēnkart*, 1958, is the text of the Katrak lectures delivered in 1946, devoted mainly to the third, fourth and fifth books of the *Dēnkart*. Father de Menasce concentrates, as do his students, on the renaissance, started by Bailey, of studies on medieval Mazdeanism.

One of these students, the late Marian Molé, in his thesis, defended in the Sorbonne in 1958, published in *Ann. du Mus. Guimet*, 1963, as *Culte, Mythe et Cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, has boldly formulated, in new terms, the big questions regarding the religious development of Iran. See the discussion in *Numen*, 1961.

Devoted specifically to the Avesta is K. Barr's excellent synthesis *Avesta* (in Danish), 1954.

Gershevitch, in *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge 1959, and Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, Yale 1959, have both attempted separately, but along the lines laid down by Lüders, *Varuṇa*, Göttingen (posthumously, 1951 and 1959), to trace the prehistory of Mithra.

Humbach, following his master Karl Hoffmann, has resolutely put the *Gāthās* back in the full light of comparisons with the Vedic language and religion, in *Die Gathas des Zarathustra*, Heidelberg 1959.

Bausani, just as resolutely, tackles the Iranian problem from the other end, through Muslim Iran: *La Persa religiosa*, Torino 1959.

Vermaseren has succeeded Cumont as a specialist on Mithraism. Besides the *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis mithriacae*, The Hague 1956-1960, we have a little book by him: *Mithras, de geheimzinnige God*, Amsterdam 1959; French ed., *Mithras, ce dieu mystérieux*, 1960.

Hinz, *Zarathustra*, 1961, reflects an entirely personal mysticism.

M. Dandamaiev, *Iran pri pervyx Axemenidax*, Moscow 1963, is well documented and devotes a chapter to the religion, with original views. V. Lukonin's *Kultura sasanidskogo Irana*, Moscow 1969, is based on first-hand study of the coins and full of personal ideas.

Dr. Mary Boyce has stayed for a whole year with Zoroastrians in Iran. The very important results of her investigations are being published, mainly as articles, in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.

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