

The *Bundahišn*

The Zoroastrian Book of Creation

Edited and translated by

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Foreword

The *Bundahišn* Account of Creation: Myth, Speculation, and Paradox

Shaul Shaked

Undertaking a translation of the *Bundahišn*, one of the essential books of Zoroastrianism, requires some courage. Several renowned scholars have worked on this text over the past century and have not managed to bring their work to fruition. It seems almost a miracle that the present translation is now completed. Access to the *Bundahišn* in contemporary English translation based on the latest scholarly literature will certainly benefit those who are interested in the Zoroastrian religion, one of the oldest and still living religions in the world, and perhaps to its contacts with other religions.

This treatise got its written shape more than a millennium ago, perhaps after a period of oral transmission. It presents the Zoroastrian view of the world, beginning with an outline of its history, from creation to its transformation into the new world of eschatology. The world “of the mixture,” the actual universe in which we live, receives a detailed description, including an enumeration of minerals, vegetation, the animal kingdom, the types of human beings, and much more. It opens up for us in a compact scope the complex and intricate reflection of a religion that has its roots in the Indo-European tradition. Understanding and translating it is far from a simple matter, for it uses a language and script that are not always easy to interpret due to an adaptation of a variety of Aramaic scripts for rendering the Middle Persian language.

An earlier phase of Zoroastrian literature has partly survived. We still have access to portions of the ancient canon of scriptures, the *Avesta*, which has a long history of oral transmission. The Zoroastrian religion and its scripture suffered also from a tumultuous political history that ended with the Islamic conquest of Iran. How far back was the emergence of the sacred scripture, which was composed in more than one variety of Old Iranian, is not entirely clear. Most scholars nowadays would place the earliest parts of the *Avesta* more than three thousand years ago.

The *Bundahišn* was created in the second major phase of Zoroastrian religious literature, where it occupies a very prominent position. It presents a mature and sophisticated formulation of the original tradition. Zoroastrianism, like other great religious traditions, went through phases of change and adaptation. It is not always easy to follow in detail the transformations that this tradition underwent because so much of its early existence has been lost in the rise and fall of dynasties and the loss of literary and material artifacts. While preserving and promoting several key themes that are part of the ancient scriptures, the *Bundahišn*'s version of the Zoroastrian religion reflects to some extent the intellectual currents prevalent at the time of its composition in the ninth century CE. This includes some elements of Greek thinking and science as well as ideas that became popular in the Islamic period. It deals with the structure of the material world and provides an understanding of how and why the creation of this world was necessary, indeed almost inevitable. Knowledge of the material world is as much a fundamental part of the faith as an understanding of the divine world and of the world to come, the eschatological world.

There is a marked element of dualism in all phases of Zoroastrianism. Dualism is naturally the central theme in the *Bundahišn*'s treatment of the myth of creation. Two types of dualism are clearly present in this account. One is ethical: it distinguishes between good and evil entities. The other is ontological, referring to the distinction between that which is visible and tangible—we may call it “material” (*gētīg* in Middle Persian)—and that which is invisible and intangible, or “spiritual” (*mēnōg* in the language of the Zoroastrian texts). In contrast to the more familiar types of dualism in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the Gnostic schools, these two types of dualism operate in Zoroastrianism independently of each other. In other words, the invisible (or spiritual) form of existence is not necessarily good, and the material world is not necessarily evil. Good and evil entities can each be spiritual or material.

Contrary to what we may expect, it is good, and not evil, that is more closely associated with material existence. While both good and evil have a spiritual form of existence, they do not function in the same manner in the material world. The visible world is exclusively a creation of Ohrmazd, while the evil entity, Ahriman, has no real share in the material mode of existence. He is nothing but a destructive spirit; his activity is aimed at creating havoc and bringing about destruction.

The Hellenistic world exercised a strong influence on the formation of late Judaism and on the religions that emerged from it, in particular Christianity

and Islam. The association of evil with the material world is derived from the trends of thought that were developed in the schools of Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. Zoroastrianism, in contrast, rejected the claim that the Evil Spirit is a product of the material world. He is regarded in Zoroastrianism as a spirit who invaded the material world in order to destroy it. It may be noted that the sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the only form of ancient Judaism that is close in structure to this Iranian point of view.

There are still further examples of binary thinking in the *Bundahišn*. One of them consists of the opposites “limited” and “unlimited,” and the other posits the two complementary notions of “time” and “space” next to each other. These two pairs of terms are important for understanding the theology that lies at the base of the myths recounted in the *Bundahišn*.

The first set of terms is used to describe a noun like “time.” The term appears in the first phrase of the first chapter: “Ohrmazd was on high in omniscience and goodness, (he) was in light for an unlimited time” (1:2, translation somewhat modified to emphasize the use of the terminology). The author’s aim is to highlight Ohrmazd’s unlimited existence in time. This is followed by another phrase: “Light is the throne and place of Ohrmazd. Some call it ‘Endless Light’” (1:2). “Endless Light,” as we learn from the context, is the unlimited space of Ohrmazd. It imitates “Endless Time,” which is also an attribute of Ohrmazd. The Evil Spirit resides symmetrically in what is called “Endless Darkness.” But it may be pointed out that he does not have the attribute of “Unlimited Time.”

As an element of surprise, we encounter here a third abode, one that is allotted to neither of the two contending powers, Ohrmazd and Ahriman. It is a “void” that serves as a no man’s land. The need for this separation, this space that is *located* in no-space, is understandable: there can be no zone shared by the two antagonistic spirits in primordial times. There can be no point of contact between them. We know from the *Bundahišn* narrative that the Evil Spirit was initially unaware of the existence of Ohrmazd.

Another interesting point to note is that the two uncreated spirits are described as both limited and unlimited. This statement appears to go against common sense, but it is required by the logic of the theological narrative. The text gives us a somewhat lame explanation as to how this apparent contradiction is possible (see 1:6–11). When we are dealing with cosmic powers it is impossible to avoid such paradoxes. The upper powers evidently operate on a level that is beyond human comprehension. To justify attributing a duality of finite and infinite to the two powers, the author adduces a range of arguments.

The two spirits are finite in space by the fact that they are limited by the area of space held by their antagonist, and yet they are infinite in the other directions. Both spirits are “finite in their own bodies,” although we may observe that as spirits they are not bodies.¹ The omniscience of Ohrmazd implies that all the objects are contained within the all-encompassing knowledge of Ohrmazd, making it necessarily finite. (But does it? We may wonder.) The final paradox of finitude against infinitude establishes that the idea of eschatology implies infinity to the creatures of Ohrmazd in the world to come, while the creatures of Ahriman must be judged as lacking infinity because they are to be destroyed in the world of eschatology. This statement is different from the preceding ones. It distinguishes the creatures of Ohrmazd from those of Ahriman. Does the author forget that the creatures of Ohrmazd are created, hence they lack infinity in time past? The author’s position may be valid if it is accepted that the creation of Ohrmazd’s creatures is not a creation *ex nihilo* but consists of transference from the spiritual to the material form of being.

These observations may strike us as highly scholastic, but the *Bundahišn* consists of an enormous intellectual endeavor to articulate the deeper significance of Zoroastrian dualism and its implications.

The narrative of the world’s creation is interesting not only because it explains the structure of the material world and how it reflects so perfectly the aim of the battle of good against evil. It tells us not only how Ohrmazd created the world, but also how this creation was, in a sense, an act of creating the deity, who with this act became the Creator (see 1:33). Certain contemporary scholars have denied that Ohrmazd was a creator god. The Zoroastrian tradition celebrates Ohrmazd as a creator. He is present in this capacity in the Zoroastrian calendar.

The *Bundahišn* presents time as a concept without which movement and life cannot fulfill their function and the world cannot really fulfill its destiny (1:35–36). Unlimited time was there before creation, one of the unchanging elements in the immaterial world. But in its function as enabler of change and motion, time had to be re-created as an entity that enables change, as a Time of Long Dominion (1:38). There follow further observations concerning different attributes that were created as a chain of events from the Time of Long Dominion, but we cannot go into this here.

The *Bundahišn* (and other exegetical and speculative works of the second phase of Zoroastrian literature) contains several cases of midrashic-type explanations of words and expressions, pretending that they are based on etymology. An example of this is the explanation of the word *kārezār* (battle,

battlefield), a compound word that can be rendered as “the field of the troops.” The author of the *Bundahišn* supplies a pseudo-etymological explanation of this expression: “an action conducted by stratagems” (1:37).²

Among the paradoxes encountered in the narrative of creation of the *Bundahišn* are two rare cases of a single deity split into two. Way, a deity of wind and air and also a deity of the void in between, serves as a barrier between the good and evil spirits. Neutrality in the battle is not recognized in Zoroastrian theology, and would hardly be appreciated there. But the function of a barrier is required in the plot of creation. The barrier consists of air and is represented by Way. There is, however, a difficulty in having a good spirit acting as an arbiter between the two antagonistic powers. Can he be an evil entity? Not if he is a deity. The only way to reconcile the double function of Way as a middle entity is by tearing his essence apart. We therefore have in Zoroastrianism two separate entities: one is the “Good Way” and the other is called the “Evil Way.” Way is in a sense similar to Zurwān, the deity of Time, who is the source of both good and evil according to the “Zurvanite” story of creation. However, Zurwān is placed *above* the two entities of good and evil, not between them. He can be aloof to some degree. He favors Ohrmazd, but according to the myth of Zurwān, he comes to accept Ahriman as a product of his own seed. He is betrayed and cheated by his evil son but is unable to interfere in the combat that ensues between his sons. Thus we end up having two deities in the narrative who act outside the dualistic pattern. One of them (Zurwān) stands above the dualistic split of the spiritual world, while the other (Way) occupies a place between the two. The conclusion of this primordial ontology is that we have a dualism that is mitigated to a certain extent by a third entity. It may strike us as a paradox that a dualism has to have recourse to a triangular structure, but this is in fact not a very rare phenomenon.

If we wish to create a table of religions arranged typologically according to the worship of deities, and if we make a sequence consisting of monotheism-dualism-polytheism, we shall stumble into an error. Dualism does not refer just to a number between one and many. If dualism is different from monotheism, they are still much closer to each other than the distance that separates both of them from polytheism. All forms of monotheism have within them a certain element of dualism. In a dualistic system based on good and evil fighting each other, the two powers cannot be equal. Worshippers of the deity representing the attribute “good” are urged to loathe the evil power (who is never viewed as a deity).

Monotheism would become a dualism if the evil power is placed at a level that is high enough in the hierarchy. If evil is almost as powerful as the deity, we are dealing with dualism even if the position of these two powers is not entirely symmetrical; in fact, as we have seen, it cannot be. If evil is viewed as low down compared to the deity, the ensuing religion is definitely monotheistic. There is, however, no monotheism that has no dualistic element in it, sometimes called Satan, an angel of God; otherwise the blame of promoting evil would be ascribed to God. On the other hand, every dualism of the ethical type is articulated as a conception of two unequal or asymmetrical powers. It comprises faith in one power who has to deal with a mighty rival. The different polytheistic religions are not easily grouped together under one heading, but in general they are based on a different religious structure, marked by a diffusion of divine sources of power, even if they recognize one divinity as the chief power in the universe. Zoroastrianism, as it emerges from a reading of the *Bundahišn* and other Zoroastrian treatises, may well be viewed historically as a dualistic faith that emerged from an earlier polytheistic religious system, such as is familiar from ancient Indian and other Indo-European literary works.

The book presented in this volume not only offers insights on the structure of Zoroastrianism as a dualistic religion, but can also throw light on other aspects of religion in general.

Introduction

Bundahišn: The Search for Lost Time

Creation, the *Bundahišn* tells us, begins with time. Before the physical world came to be, there was a vast realm of the spirit, infinite in all directions but divided in two: on one side, the dominion of good and light; on the other, darkness and evil—the primordial, opposing forces of the cosmos. Light was the realm of the benevolent deity Ohrmazd, while in the dark resided the vile and ignorant Evil Spirit Ahriman. When Ahriman noticed the light above, he rose to attack it; he was beaten back, but undeterred.

Ohrmazd in his omniscience knew that only by limiting their battle to a fixed amount of time could good ultimately triumph, so he proposed that the two agree to fight for nine thousand years. Ahriman acceded. But when Ohrmazd revealed to him evil's ultimate destruction at the end of the battle, which would be fought within the bounds of the space of the earth, Ahriman collapsed in shock. Then, out of eternity, the wise creator started to fashion time. “From eternity he created Time of Long Dominion; some call it ‘finite time.’ From Time of Long Dominion he created imperishability; that is, the things of Ohrmazd do not perish. Blisslessness was revealed from imperishability, so that the demons will have no bliss” (1:38). But why time first? Why not the heavens and the earth and “Let there be light,” or “In the beginning was the word”? What could this temporal fixation mean?

A central source for our knowledge of Zoroastrianism, the ancient Iranian religion, the *Bundahišn* has been studied by western scholars ever since the first manuscript was brought to Europe in the late eighteenth century, its language parsed by philologists, its geographies and genealogies mined by historians, and its theology dissected by scholars of religion. For though the book’s name means “primal creation,” the *Bundahišn* discusses not only Zoroastrian cosmogony but cosmology and eschatology as well. Despite having been composed some two millennia after the prophet Zoroaster’s revelation, it is nonetheless a concise compendium of ancient

Zoroastrian knowledge, drawing on and reshaping earlier layers of the tradition.

For the most part, scholars' efforts have focused on what the *Bundahišn* reveals about Zoroastrian theology and anthropology, especially in light of the ethical dualism that is one of its distinguishing features. All of creation is the field for a battle between good and evil: good stars opposed to evil planets, good animals opposed to evil vermin, heroes opposed to witches and sorcerers. In addition to Ohrmazd and Ahriman, the *Bundahišn* tells us that the universe is populated by a host of deities who face off against hordes of demons (*dēw*) and fiends (*druz*). Does that make Zoroastrianism polytheistic or dualistic or perhaps monotheistic? This has been a matter of intense disagreement; the likely answer is that none of these concepts quite fits.

The universe is also split by a second, separate division between the spiritual (*mēnōg*) and material (*gētīg*) realms. Good and evil exist both in the intangible *mēnōg* and in the tangible *gētīg*; Ahriman's first assault on the good occurs only in the realm of the spirit. Considerable energy has been devoted to the question of how the *Bundahišn*'s various chapters portray this double division and to a comparison between it and other Zoroastrian books: the much more ancient sacred scriptures, the *Avesta*, and commentaries and treatises, like the *Bundahišn*, written in the Zoroastrian form of Middle Persian, better known as Pahlavi (one of the precursors of the language of Iran today) in the ninth and tenth centuries CE.

Generally these studies have not touched on the question of time, apart from one important and interesting exception. Non-Iranian sources in Greek, Syriac, Armenian, and Arabic relate an alternative version of the Iranian creation myth. The myth features a primordial god of time, *Zurwān*, who is the father of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman; Ahriman, the myth says, came into being from his father's moment of doubt during a sacrifice, and then Ohrmazd was born. Puzzlingly, however, this story is not mentioned in extant Zoroastrian literature. Confronted with this incongruity, scholars imagined Zurvanism to be a "heresy" that was originally present in Zoroastrian works but had later been "repressed" and all reference to it "expunged." Passages that were seen as hinting at Zurvanite ideas were collected and analyzed. The most prominent example of this trend is Robert C. Zaehner's 1955 *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, which includes a number of *Bundahišn* passages with an alleged Zurvanite coloring, including the portion of chapter 1 quoted earlier.

In recent decades the Zurvanite hypothesis has been effectively debunked. (A witty and cogent summary of the debate can be found in Albert de Jong's entry on the subject in *Encyclopædia Iranica*.) As a consequence, any consideration of time's role in creation might seem tainted with revanchist Zurvanism. This is unfortunate not only because of what the *Bundahišn* tells us about time's prominent place in the order of creation but also because time seems central to the order of the work itself. Time—in the guise of calendars, histories, horoscopes, solar and lunar cycles, genealogies, chronologies, and apocalyptic visions—is a recurring theme of the book's thirty-six chapters. And in a wider frame, the overarching structure of the *Bundahišn* mirrors the nine-thousand-year history of the world, proceeding from creation in chapter 1 to the vanquishing of evil at the end of days in chapter 36.

It seems right, then, to introduce the *Bundahišn* through the lens of time. For new readers, the theme of time can mark a trail through what may appear at first like an unfamiliar forest of religious terminology and obscure allusions, though, perhaps, as Seamus Heaney wrote concerning *Beowulf*, those coming to the book for the first time are likely to be as delighted as they are discomfited by the immediate lack of known reference points. For those already familiar with the *Bundahišn*, we offer this temporal reading as an example of how this text might be considered differently: not only as theology, but also as a complex and intentional literary whole.

The *Bundahišn* is conventionally dated to the ninth century CE, when the Abbasid caliphate ruled a domain stretching from Egypt to Central Asia, including all the former territories of the Sasanian Persian Empire, which had been conquered in the first waves of Islamic expansion two hundred years earlier. While Abbasid rule in the capital, Baghdad, remained strong, by the end of the ninth century control was starting to fray around the edges; in Khorasan, in today's southeastern Iran and Afghanistan, and on the shores of the Caspian Sea, former vassals were asserting their independence and modeling their courts and their cultures on those of the long-vanquished Sasanian king of kings. This was the period of the first flowering of classical Persian literature and also of new ways of writing and thinking by Muslim, Christian, and Jewish authors, some of whom were familiar with each other's work. The ongoing transition from mostly oral to mostly written culture—evidenced, for instance, by the writing down of the rabbinic debates in the Babylonian Talmud and the compilations of the *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad—played an outsized role in this innovation.

The *Bundahišn* is clearly at home in this time. Several chapters refer explicitly to the seventh-century Muslim conquest of Iran. These sections, at least, must postdate that cataclysmic and transformative event, the most important turning point in Iranian history. But beyond these explicit textual markers, the book's philosophical, scientific, and literary features reflect its early Islamic environment. In its scope, eclecticism, and focus on natural history at the expense of discussions of ritual or religious law, the *Bundahišn* resembles Islamic encyclopedias, in particular the contemporary *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*. The references to creation by emanation in chapter 1 recall Neoplatonic creation theories widely adopted in the Islamic world. As commentary, the *Bundahišn* resembles the style of some late Jewish midrash. The *Bundahišn* is manifestly in conversation with the same amalgam of Hellenistic, Indian, Babylonian, and Iranian medical, scientific, and other intellectual traditions that were available to thinkers at the time.

The *Bundahišn* is not alone. It is one of a group of Zoroastrian works dated to this period that share similar content and concerns. Some of these “Ninth Century Books,” as they have been called, like the massive, eclectic *Dēnkard* (Acts of the Dēn) or the wisdom dialogue *Mēnōg ī Xrad* (Spirit of Wisdom), are anonymous or pseudepigraphic. Others, such as the *Dādēstān ī Dēnīg* (Religious Judgments), a series of responsa written by the high priest Manuščihr, or the *Wizidagīhā* (Anthology) by Manuščihr’s brother Zādspram, do name their authors and can be more reliably dated. A close analysis of the priestly genealogy given in chapter 35 of the *Bundahišn* shows that one of the priests named there, Farrōbag son of Ašwahišt, who speaks in the first person and may be a late redactor of the work as a whole, was a contemporary and perhaps relative of Zādspram, who lived in the last quarter of the ninth century.

However, as much as the *Bundahišn* seems to be an Islamic-era work, it is equally clear that it looks back to a much more ancient time. The roots of the Zoroastrian religion lie in the Bronze Age, around the year 1000 BCE. It was at this time that some scholars claim that the priest and poet Zoroaster, perhaps a member of one of the Iranian tribes living in the Central Asian steppes, began promulgating his revelation of the supreme deity Ahura Mazdā (the source of the Middle Persian name Ohrmazd). Expressed in a series of seventeen intricate, elaborate hymns called the *Gāthās*, Zoroaster’s revelation attracted followers and patrons until, some scholars contend, it became—through processes and developments that remain unclear—the state religion of the Achaemenid Persian Empire of Xerxes and Darius. The *Gāthās*

served as the core of the Zoroastrian sacred scripture, the *Avesta*, written in two dialects of an otherwise unattested eastern Iranian language scholars call Avestan. The *Gāthās* and the *Yasna Haptāyñhāti* (Worship of the Seven Chapters) in Old Avestan, a language almost identical to Vedic Sanskrit, make up the more ancient portion of the *Avesta*. The Young Avestan portion includes other hymns, prayers, purity regulations, and more; the *Avesta* as a whole still serves as the ritual text for Zoroastrian worship, the *yasna*. However, a list of the contents of the Sasanian-era *Avesta* preserved in the *Dēnkard* indicates that the sacred scripture originally contained four times as much material. Almost everything that did not bear directly on the ritual ceremony, it seems, was lost.

Early Zoroastrianism remains a subject of fierce debate. Scholars disagree about when and where Zoroaster lived: opinions have ranged from 1500 BCE Kazakhstan to sixth-century BCE Persia. Some scholars doubt if he even lived at all. Some say that Zoroaster (*Zaraθuštra* in Avestan), whose name appears in the *Gāthās*, is only one of a number of poet-priests mentioned in the hymns, and not their author in the modern sense. Others contend that Zoroaster is a collective author, like the Homeric poet, and not an individual. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the poetic and self-referential language of the *Gāthās* is particularly elusive. Even if this were not the case, scholars simply lack enough material to properly understand Old Avestan grammar and vocabulary; the four major contemporary scholars and translators of the *Gāthās*, Helmut Humbach, Stanley Insler, Jean Kellens, and Martin Schwartz, have produced such radically dissimilar versions that they seem like different poems to the untrained eye.

Just as contentious as the life of the prophet and his work is the issue of Zoroastrianism's innovation and development. Did Zoroaster's dualistic revelation come to reject and supersede an earlier Indo-Iranian polytheistic faith like Vedic Hinduism, or was he continuing an already existing tradition? How and when did Zoroastrianism come from its place of origin to the plains of contemporary Iran, and how much did it change on the way? Was the religion of the Achaemenids, some of whose ceremonial inscriptions refer to Zoroastrian deities like *Anāhitā* and *Mithra*, identical to the religion of the *Avesta*? Were they—or, for that matter, the later Parthian dynasty (third century BCE to third century CE)—Zoroastrian in the way that the *Bundahišn* understands it at all? And the biggest question by far is whether and to what degree Middle Persian works can reliably fill in the missing pieces of the *Avesta*, dated to thousands of years before.

As far as the *Bundahišn* goes, it is clear that it is unbreakably linked to the Avestan tradition. Much like Jewish or Christian commentaries on the Bible or Muslim works on the Quran and *hadith*, every page of the *Bundahišn* alludes to or cites a passage from the sacred scriptures. These quotations and references are the bricks of the book, and sometimes only the thinnest layer of narrative mortar binds them together. They include references to lost portions of the *Avesta*, and the *Bundahišn* as a whole seems to be based on the *Avesta*'s now-missing *Dāmdād Nask* (the “bundle” or “book” of creation), one of the twenty-one sections of the Sasanian *Avesta*.

Turning the pages of the *Bundahišn*, however, one will notice that the word *Avesta* (*abestāg*) hardly appears. Instead the *Bundahišn*'s author ascribes his sources to the *dēn*. But what is the *dēn*? It is a central concept of Zoroastrianism that is notoriously difficult to translate. Etymologically, *dēn* (Avestan *daēnā-*) comes from the ancient Iranian word for sight or seeing, and one of its meanings is directly related to vision and envisionment. The *dēn*, as chapter 30 tells us, is a part of the soul, one's own inner consciousness, that appears to the individual after death: the righteous see their *dēn* as a beautiful girl, and the wicked as an ugly hag.

But *dēn* is also used in a way that overlaps somewhat with the modern concept of religion. In this sense, the *dēn* is the good religion (*hu-dēn*), the *Mazdā*-worshiping religion, Zoroastrianism, in its widest sense: not just the *Avesta* but its commentaries and translations, the *Zand*; not just Zoroastrian works proper, but all wisdom and truth. After Alexander the Great conquered Iran and burned the *Avesta*, a story mentioned briefly in chapter 33 of the *Bundahišn*, the *Dēnkard* tells us that generations of Sasanian kings gathered the scattered fragments of the *dēn* wherever they could be found, even preserved in foreign philosophies and sacred books. That is how wide the *dēn* can be. There are also evil *dēns*, for instance, the *dēn* of the sorcerers (21E:7) and those of rival religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

While reading the *Bundahišn*, one can feel torn in time: at once pulled backward to the distant past of revelation and drawn firmly down into the narrator's continuous present as he attempts to map the width and breadth of his living world. Scholars have found it difficult to provide a definitive date for the book's composition: is it essentially a Sasanian—or earlier—book with some later additions, or essentially an Islamic-era composition that reworks more ancient sources? The answer has as much to do with how one sees the Zoroastrian tradition as a whole: conservative and unchanging, innovative and flexible, or somewhere in between.

The reader's sense of temporal displacement, though, seems linked to a basic structural feature of the book. The *Bundahišn* is ordered along temporal lines, proceeding, with some exceptions, from the beginning to the end, and in space from the outermost spiritual realm to the domain of human affairs.

The *Bundahišn* opens with the myth of creation, which also serves as the foundational narrative of Zoroastrian theology. The book's first six chapters depict the cosmogonic process beginning with the first confrontation in the spiritual realm between Ohrmazd and Ahriman. The *Bundahišn* describes Ohrmazd's creation of the world in a perfect state of rest and Ahriman's assault on the created world through a breach in the firmament. The first section describes the damage that the Evil Spirit causes to the primal elements, polluting them with evil. The sky, the earth, water, the stars, and the sole primordial plant, cow, and man, called Gayōmard, fight back against Ahriman and the demons. This first section also includes two chapters on the movement of the stars, planets, and other astral bodies located in the celestial sphere.

The long middle section of the text contains a description of the world as it stands after creation and Ahriman's corrupting assault. As opposed to the first section's concern with *bundahišn*—creation as such—the text now turns to the age of *gumēzišn*: the Mixture. While good and evil continue to exist separately in the spiritual, *mēnōg* realm, Ahriman's attack on the material, *gētīg* world mixes polluting evil into the originally good creation.

Each of the twenty-four diverse chapters that make up this part of the *Bundahišn* is devoted to a different aspect of the world and describes its attributes. These include both natural features, such as rivers, mountains, and the different good and evil species of birds and animals, and mythical beings. Many of these chapters include detailed lists of creatures, plants, spirits, deities, and demons; accounts of their names and functions; and explanations of natural phenomena.

The final section of the *Bundahišn* turns to eschatological and genealogical topics. Included among these chapters are discussions of individual eschatology, including one of the most important depictions of the judgment of the soul after death. This section also addresses the stages of the eschaton. At the end of days, the prophet Zoroaster's sons will bring about the final confrontation between good and evil in which Ahriman and the demons are vanquished and the world restored to its former state of equilibrium and stability. Just as the previous sections of the book are focused on the first two stages of the history of the cosmos, that is, creation and the Mixture, the final

section is concerned with *wizīrišn*, the separation of good from evil and the purification of the created world.

The *Bundahišn* refers to this eschatological process and the final state of the world as the Restoration, *frašgird* (Avestan *frašō.kərəti*), literally the “making brilliant” of the world after its defilement by evil. The dead, both sinners and the righteous, will be resurrected (*ristāxēz*) and undergo a final purification in a river of molten metal, at which point they will assume their ultimate, perfect physical form, the Final Body (*tan ī pasēn*), on the renovated earth.

Myth is central to the *Bundahišn*, from chapter 4’s story of the first human couple, the twins Mašyā and Mašyāne, to chapter 32’s fantastical description of the palace of the sorcerer Frāsyāb. It is in the final section of the book, however, that the *Bundahišn* most closely echoes the classical formation of Iranian myth as it appears in Abu al-Qasim Ferdowsi’s tenth-century epic, the *Shahnameh*, or *Book of Kings*. Readers of Ferdowsi will find the poet’s familiar villains and heroes here, though with somewhat different names—Jam, Dahāg, and Rōdstahm, instead of Jamšēd, Zahhak, and Rustam—and only allusions to their adventures rather than fully fleshed-out tales.

It should be expected that the *Bundahišn* engages with Iranian myth. These stories are more ancient even than Zoroaster’s revelation, some dating back to the time in prehistory before the separation of the tribes that eventually became Indians and Iranians. The themes of heroism, sacrifice, and tragedy that reach their fruition in the *Shahnameh* are already present in the *Avesta* and later appear in Middle Persian accounts.

One of these themes is the importance of *xwarrah*, Glory, a term that appears in the *Avesta* as *xvarənah-* and in classical Persian as *farr*. *Xwarrah* is at once the charisma of the leader and the mantle of kings, a royal glory bestowed by grace that can also be taken away as punishment for transgression. *Xwarrah* may be envisioned as a shining corona or halo—that is how it appears in the depictions of Sasanian kings on their coins—as a bird as it flies away from Jam as punishment for his sin, or as the ram who follows Ardašīr, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty (*Kār-nāmag ī Ardašīr ī Pābagān* 4:11–24).

In the *Bundahišn*, Glory is associated especially with the prophet Zoroaster. Interestingly, while the book does not contain a biography of the prophet, or even an account of his revelation, it does refer to certain aspects of Zoroaster’s life and mission. Zoroaster is named as the chief of the central continent of Xwanirah (chapter 29); his conversion of King Wištāsp to the new religion and his role in the eschatological drama are described in

detail in chapter 33, a history of the world from creation to apocalypse. The chapter describes how, after his death, Zoroaster's Glory will be deposited in the Kayānsē Sea for safekeeping. Three times, three virgins bathing in the lake will be impregnated with the prophet's Glory and each will give birth to a son, three saviors who will herald the end times and lead people through the apocalyptic age.

Chapter 33's millennial history, which, like the book as a whole, proceeds through the three eras of created time, is not the *Bundahišn*'s only time-keeping text. Like the sound of ticking in a clockmaker's shop, the *Bundahišn* is filled with discussions of how to measure time's flow. Explicit references to the length of the year and the thirty days of the month—there are no weeks in the Zoroastrian scheme—are scattered throughout the text. Chapter 1 includes just such a passage as an addendum to creation, and chapter 25 is wholly devoted to calendars and chronography. But the theme of marking time, in the present, the past, and the future, appears in other ways as well. Chapters 5 and 6 turn to reckoning by the stars and include retrospective horoscopes for creation and the first human being, Gayōmard. Chapters 13, 14, 16, 22, and 23 deal with the genealogies and taxonomies of animals, human beings, plants, and evil vermin, retracing their family trees from the beginning to the multitude of species and races we see today. Chapter 15 deals with birth and lists the length of each stage in the reproductive cycle for different animals. Chapter 19, on sleep, prescribes the length of time a person should sleep each day. Chapters 29, 31, 32, and 35 delve into the mythic past, and chapters 30 and 33 chart the eschatological future. Chapter 36, "On the Chronology of the Arabs," combines astrological reckoning, myth, and millennial history to present a world chronicle up to the narrator's present day, 1178 CE: "Now it is the year five hundred and twenty-seven of the Parsīg era" (36:10).

The *Bundahišn* does not focus on time to the exclusion of other subjects. The book's significant and lengthy discussions of geography, meteorology, and the microcosm do not seem to have any temporal connection. However, the recurrence of the theme of time is striking, especially when one considers what is missing from the *Bundahišn*. Purity and pollution, ritual, and religious law—all of which are such central concerns of the *Avesta* and other Middle Persian works that it is difficult to imagine Zoroastrianism without them—are mentioned, at best, only in passing. Philosophy, in the sense of ontology, a major concern of the *Dēnkard* and of Abbasid-era Muslim thinkers like Averroes and Avicenna, only really finds its place in the first

few chapters. And while we know that some Zoroastrians at the time were engaged in fierce polemics against Judaism, Christianity, and Manichaeism, as well as Islam, the *Bundahišn* does not seem very interested in heresiology. Arabs come up for scorn, it is true, and sorcerers are denounced, but this is a far cry from, for instance, the *Škand Gumanīg Wizār*'s casuistic arguments, which quote chapter and verse against the major tenets of rival religions.

Already in the *Gāthās* in *Yasna* 30, the history of the world from creation to apocalypse was compared to a race between two chariots, one good and the other evil, around the circular track of time. The poet foresees good's triumph and evil's fatal crash in the last turn, but, as in any contest, the true winner cannot be known until the race has been run. It is here that the believing Zoroastrian has the power and duty to influence the cosmic outcome: his or her good thoughts, good words, and good deeds help ensure Ohrmazd's victory in the contest.

What is certain, however, is the shape of the course, that is, how time has and will flow from beginning to end. Or, one imagines, so ninth-century Zoroastrians hoped. The Muslim conquest of Iran and the downfall of the Sasanian dynasty was an event of unprecedented destructiveness and disruption in Iranian history, far surpassing Alexander the Great's triumph over the Achaemenids. This destruction reverberated throughout Sasanian society (though, it should be said, there was much continuity as well) but particularly affected Zoroastrian religious institutions. As scholars continue in their efforts to reconstruct Sasanian Zoroastrianism, the central role of the royal court in sponsoring and promoting the Zoroastrian priesthood becomes increasingly clear. When the court disappeared, so did those priests' patrons as well as centuries of knowledge, much of it passed down orally. In this light, the conquest must have seemed an enormous derailment of time itself, as fundamental an aberration as a sudden abrogation of the law of gravity. If we found ourselves floating, but still breathing and alive, between the clouds above and the grass below, would we not question everything that we thought we knew?

The *Bundahišn* is a literary machine for setting right this disrupted time. In the *Bundahišn*, time proceeds reliably, regularly, unwaveringly, marching through the cosmic ages of the world as through the five divisions of the day and the months and years. Readers can go back to the origins of everything and to the roots of an animal's family tree, and forward to the fate of the soul after death and the final melting of the mountains that will plug the hole

of hell. Time in these chapters is not like the languid dissolution of Dalí's clocks or the dilation and contraction of a moment in a mystic's mind. There is no possibility of escape from the regimented temporal flow and no desire to do so.

In the end, this is a book of solace. The *Bundahišn* comforts readers that time has not, despite appearances, gone off track and that the promise of salvation still holds true. Time is the medicine, but healing is the goal.

Bundahišn: The Translation

In 1771 Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, a French adventurer and Orientalist, produced the first modern translation of the *Bundahišn*. That translation, based on a manuscript that Anquetil-Duperron himself had brought back to Europe from India some ten years earlier, was published as part of his massive, three-volume *Le Zend Avesta*, alongside a translation of the *Avesta* and accounts of his journeys among the Zoroastrian community, still known today as Parsis, living in Gujarat on India's western coast.

Anquetil-Duperron completed his translation easily enough—maybe too easily, as he claimed to have translated the entire *Avesta* in less than a year. A century would pass before the first English translation of the *Bundahišn* by the pioneering scholar Edward William West was published in 1880 as part of Max Muller's series *Sacred Books of the East*. West, who also translated most of the rest of the extant Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature, taught himself the language while working as a railway engineer in British India. West's version of the *Bundahišn*, while impressive for its time, was hampered by the fact that it was not based on the oldest manuscript of the text, the sixteenth-century copy known as TD1, which was brought from Yazd, Iran, to India in 1870.

Since then there have been several other attempts to render the *Bundahišn* in English, all of which have been beset by difficulties. The most recent published translation was completed by the Parsi scholar Behramgore Tehmuras Anklesaria in 1935, but a fire at the printing press in Bombay destroyed almost all the proofs, and the book was published on the basis of a surviving copy only in 1956. Anklesaria's translation is idiosyncratic and sometimes incomprehensible without a thorough grounding in Middle Persian, but nonetheless is often cited in the scholarship for lack of a better option.

In 1933 Harold Walter Bailey, who became one of the preeminent scholars of Iranian Studies in the twentieth century, produced a richly annotated translation of the *Bundahišn* for his Oxford doctoral dissertation, samizdat copies of which were later circulated among a small group of scholars. Bailey continued refining the translation throughout his life, but it was never published. David Neil Mackenzie began but never finished a revised translation based on Bailey’s work. Separately Dan Shapira, Kaj Barr, and perhaps others also embarked on their own, ultimately unfinished translation projects.

The reason for these failures is simple: the *Bundahišn* is complicated, daunting, and often inscrutable, full of obscure vocabulary, complex idioms, and generations of copyists’ blunders. As two newly minted PhDs, it was dumb pride that first sparked our idea of translating the *Bundahišn* a decade ago, and only dogged stubbornness that enabled us, despite the obstacles, to finish it after all.

Our goal from the outset was to produce not only an up-to-date English version from a scholarly perspective—reflecting the many advances in research on Zoroastrianism and Iran since West, Anklesaria, and Bailey—but also a new kind of translation. The *Bundahišn*, we believe, is not only a scholarly tract; it is also a great work of literature in its own right and ranks alongside the creation accounts of other ancient traditions: Genesis, the Babylonian *Emunah Elish*, Hesiod’s *Theogony*, and others. We wanted our translation to reflect the aesthetic quality, literary style, and complexity of this important work. After all, different chapters of the *Bundahišn* have their own style and tone, from spare lists and concise commentaries to philosophical discourses and flowing, poetic eschatological visions. We see this translation as an opportunity to raise the profile of Zoroastrian literature by producing an English text that is fluent, powerful, and engaging.

In this way, we believe, this translation can find an audience beyond the small circle of experts in Zoroastrianism: students of the histories, cultures, religions, and literatures of the Middle East, and, we hope, intellectually curious readers of all stripes.

To facilitate this goal, each chapter is preceded by a brief introduction that discusses the chapter’s main points and provides readers with the necessary background and references to further studies. An annotated index of names, locations, and concepts appears at the end of the book.

Within the translation itself, we have decided to retain proper names and some terms in Middle Persian, following the current standard of

transcription, rather than rendering them according to their English equivalents. This occasionally requires the reader to confront long lists of words sporting accents, vowel markers, and other typographical embellishments. The reason for this is twofold. On the one hand, maintaining the standard form of the names of deities, demons, natural features, etc. will aid further research by students and scholars in the field. On the other hand, and just as important, any reader wishing to delve further into a particular topic will find it much easier to discover more with the proper forms of names in hand.

There are a few important exceptions to this rule. The name of the prophet Zoroaster has been retained in its well-known English form, ultimately derived from the Greek, rather than as Middle Persian *Zarduxš* or Avestan *Zaraθuštra*. Glory (*xwarrah*) has been translated throughout, as have the names of stars and constellations (when known) and the names of the familiar countries Iran (*Ērānšahr*), China (*Čīn/Činestān*), India (*Hindugān*), and Rome (*Hrōm*), even if the *Bundahišn*'s conception of their boundaries does not match our own modern map-sense. The issue of deities and demons is particularly complicated. Many Zoroastrian supernatural characters are hypostasized elements of the natural world. For instance, the wind (*wād*) is both an anthropomorphized deity and the familiar movement of the air. When such names are clearly meant to indicate abstract concepts or natural forces, we have translated them, and when they are meant to indicate personified deities or demons, we have retained their original form. Certain names, which appear in slightly different forms in the manuscripts, have been standardized throughout; such changes have not been indicated in the notes.

Luckily for us, and for the *Bundahišn*, recent years have seen tremendous progress in scholarship on ancient Iran. In 2005 the Iranian scholar Fazlollah Pakzad produced a critical edition of the longer and more complete Iranian recension of the *Bundahišn* that includes the variants of the other, Indian recension; the text exists in two separate manuscript traditions, known as the Indian and Iranian versions based on their places of origin. While we consulted multiple editions in preparing this translation, readers who would like to compare our translation with the Middle Persian original are encouraged to consult Pakzad's version. In order to facilitate readers who wish to refer to the Middle Persian source, the translation includes the verse numbers that accompany the text in the manuscript tradition. These appear as superscript, italicized numerals at the beginning of each passage.

Alongside a host of excellent recent research on Zoroastrianism, the Sasanian period, early Islam, and other topics within the scope of the *Bundahišn*—the most relevant of which are indicated in the brief bibliographies that accompany each chapter—three resources have been invaluable for our work and will interest any reader who wishes to pursue further topics only hinted at here. One is *Encyclopædia Iranica*, the ever-expanding print and digital encyclopedia of the Iranian world founded by the late Ehsan Yarshater and available online at www.iranicaonline.org. The second is the 2015 *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*, edited by Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina. The book's essays, written by leading scholars in the field, present introductions to a host of topics, including Zoroaster's time and homeland, the character of Sasanian Zoroastrianism, and Zoroastrianism in India and in the modern diaspora. Finally, we have benefited from the recent translation of sections of the *Bundahišn* by the leading researcher Prods Oktor Skjærvø in his 2011 anthology, *The Spirit of Zoroastrianism*. While our translation often takes a different path than his, we have been rescued from error more than once by his keen eye and erudition. Any readers looking to delve deeper into Zoroastrian literature are strongly recommended to consult his work.

A shared project, when successful, is the most satisfying of scholarly labors. While both of us contributed to all aspects of this book, Domenico took primary responsibility for the editorial work on the Middle Persian text, which is found in the critical apparatus, and supervised the philological accuracy of the translation, while Samuel was in charge of the translation's English style and voice and edited the volume as a whole. Samuel prepared the general introduction and Domenico prepared the chapter introductions and the annotated index.

Our translation has benefited from colleagues' exceptional generosity. The Ancient India and Iran Trust in Cambridge, England, shared with us digital copies of Bailey's thesis and his unpublished later work on the *Bundahišn*. Our special thanks go to Almut Hintze and Nicholas Sims-Williams in making this essential connection. Carlo Giovanni Cereti, Touraj Daryaei, Paolo Delaini, Frantz Grenet, Mauro Maggi, Enrico Raffaelli, Adriano Rossi, Martin Schwartz, Shai Secunda, and Prods Oktor Skjærvø read individual chapters and suggested solutions to particularly difficult philological puzzles. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to Antonio Panaino, Yuhan Vevaina, and Lena Salaymeh, who painstakingly reviewed the entire translation. We are grateful to Guy Stroumsa not only for his important afterword but for sage advice at a crucial moment. Above all, thanks and appreciation are due

to Shaul Shaked for his contributions throughout this project, from the preliminary idea to his careful review of the translation and the foreword to this book. Professor Shaked has been a generous teacher and guide for both of us at critical stages in our academic careers and was also the unintentional matchmaker who first brought us together and made this translation possible. All of these colleagues' corrections, recommendations, and suggestions have saved us from uncountable blunders; any mistakes that remain are our responsibility alone. We are happy to have the opportunity to express our thanks.

David Shulman first introduced us to Oxford University Press and to our editor Cynthia Read, and we owe a debt to both for their unflagging support for this book. Thanks also to our agent Diana Finch for all her attention and advice. A special note of appreciation goes to the Iran Heritage Foundation, which supported the work of the translation with generous grants in 2013 and 2018. Finally, we want to take the opportunity to thank our families, Noa, Edoardo, and Rafael, and Tehila and Noam, for their patience as this book slowly plodded to completion.

Prologue

⁰ Praise to the Creator Ohrmazd! Majestic, glorious, omniscient, wise, mighty, the greatest in good thoughts, words, and deeds in thinking, speech, and action, and to all the spiritual and material deities.

¹ With good fortune and with a happy omen I would wish to write—secondly¹ with the good star and under the supervision of that friend of god, all-wise, sower of righteousness, friend of good deeds, who knows god, seer of the spiritual world, beloved of the best, the authority of the good Mazdaean *dēn*, Spandyād Māh-Windād Rōstam Šahryār of immortal soul—the writing of primal creation [*bundahišn*].

² Since the coming of the Arabs to Iran, and their promulgation of an evil *dēn* and evil will, they have turned away from the good *dēn* of the Kayanids and from respect for the upholders of the *dēn*, and from the god-given² secrets³ of the deep and wonderful⁴ *Gāthās*, and the proper logic of things, right thinking, proper action, and meaningful discourses have passed from the memory and knowledge of the common people.

³ On account of these evil times, even those of noble and Kayanid families and the upholders of the *dēn* have mixed with the customs and manners of those of evil *dēn*. For prestige's sake, they have held the words, customs, and rites of the good *dēn* to be no more than blemish and error.

⁴ One who sought instruction in this tradition and these secrets, could only gain it for himself through effort, toil, and trouble, wandering from place to place—and still they did not succeed.

The primordial existence of good and evil is one of the fundamental truths revealed in the earliest Zoroastrian sources. The *Gāthās* of the prophet Zoroaster describe a choice made at the dawn of existence by two spirits or mental powers, Angra Mainiu and Spənta Mainiu (an epithet of Ahura Mazdā), the first for “deceit” (*druj-*) and the second for “rightness” (*aša-*). This choice mirrors human beings’ choice for good or evil in their own lives, the consequences of which are made manifest in reward or punishment after death.

Bundahišn chapters 1 and 1A continue the Zoroastrian tradition of cosmogonic speculation. These chapters, and indeed the book as a whole, serve as a commentary on the canonical accounts of creation contained in the *Gāthās* and other Avestan sources. The *Bundahišn* is based, in part, on a Middle Persian translation and exegesis (*Zand*) of now lost sections of the *Avesta* known as the *Dāmdād Nask*, meaning literally “the section on the creation of the creatures.” The numerous citations from the *dēn* in this chapter and elsewhere are an indication of the *Bundahišn*’s reliance on its Avestan sources and their *Zand* translations-cum-commentaries in Middle Persian as well.

Like their counterparts in the *Gāthās*, Ohrmazd and Ahriman are *mēnōg*, spiritual, as opposed to *gētīg*, material, beings. These two concepts are central to the Zoroastrian dualist worldview as articulated in Middle Persian literature. The term *gētīg* alludes to the material, visible, physical, and tangible aspect of the world; *mēnōg* refers to the aspect of the world that is essentially spiritual, mental, invisible, and intangible. The distinction between the material and spiritual worlds is not an ethical division; good and evil exist in both states of existence. At the same time, *mēnōg* was prior to *gētīg* in the process of creation (1:43–44), and every *gētīg*, physical being has a *mēnōg*, spiritual counterpart.

However, owing to ongoing elaboration and reworking of this central pillar of Zoroastrian belief in the *Young Avesta* and later sources, the creation story that the *Bundahišn* relates is very different from that of the *Gāthās*. Here it is the good and perfect Ohrmazd himself who faces off with the evil and false Ahriman.

The first part of chapter 1 describes the original state of the two spirits' separation and Ohrmazd's omniscience (1:1–13); Ahriman's belated discovery of Ohrmazd's existence—a result of the former's *pas-dānišnīh*, literally “afterthought” or “realization after” and his failed attack (1:14–18); Ohrmazd's peace proposal and Ahriman's rejection of it (1:19–23); the two spirits' agreement to fight for a limited period of nine thousand years (1:24–27); and Ohrmazd's revelation to Ahriman of good's final victory over evil (1:28–31).

This revelation is accomplished through Ohrmazd's recital of the *Ahunawar* prayer. *Ahunawar* is the Middle Persian rendition of the Avestan phrase *Yaθa Ahū Vairiīō*, the incipit of the prayer (Avestan *mqθra-*) that introduces the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* 27:13). Ohrmazd's revelatory recitation of this particular prayer is significant because the twenty-one words that make up the original Avestan text are understood in Zoroastrian interpretation to encapsulate within them the entire contents of the *dēn*.

The conflict between the two deities that sets in motion the creation of our material world is told in a vivid narrative style. From a literary point of view, this is one of the most gripping sections of the *Bundahišn*; Ohrmazd and even more so Ahriman seem to be fully anthropomorphized characters rather than unapproachable transcendent beings.

From this perspective, the second half of chapter 1 and the entirety of chapter 1A represent a dramatic—and complementary—shift away from myth and toward theology. These passages discuss Ohrmazd's creation of the material world, a process involving the transformation of infinite light, time, and space into their finite counterparts and the formation of the creatures, first in spiritual and then in material form.

This section also describes the creation and aid of other deities (1:52), especially the Amahraspands (“beneficent immortals,” from Avestan *Amāšā Spānta*). These six spiritual emanations—totaling seven with Ohrmazd—are both attributes of Ohrmazd and independent divine beings. Wahman is Good Thought, Ardwhāšt is Best Righteousness, Šahrewar is Desirable Dominion, Spandarmad is Holy Devotion, Hordād is Integrity, and Amurdād is Immortality. In addition to referring to this group of seven deities, the term “Amahraspand” is also applied to a host of other good spiritual beings. This second half of chapter 1 also describes Ahriman's fabrication of the demons (1:46–48), a false counterwork to Ohrmazd's true creation.

Chapter 1A describes the six first material creations (1A:1–18): the sky, water, and earth, and the first plant, the first cow, and the first man, Gayōmard. The latter three archetypical beings were created in Ěrānwēz (Avestan *Airiiānəm Vaējō*), the “area of the Aryans.” Chapter 1A also

records when these six were created during the calendar year. This passage seems to refer to the tradition of celebrating the six creations of Ohrmazd with six one-day festivals followed by five intercalary rest days called *gāhānbār*.

Time plays an important role in the *Bundahišn*'s account of creation. Time is described as the first creation, as Time of Long Dominion, that is, the limited time span of twelve thousand years (including the three thousand years of spiritual creation before the Evil Spirit's initial attack) that will end with Ohrmazd's defeat of Ahriman (1:41–42). The period of the conflict, according to our text, is divided into three eons of three millennia each: the first dominated by the will of Ohrmazd; the second, the period of the Mixture (*gumēzišn*); and the third, as we know from other chapters of the *Bundahišn*, begins with the birth of the prophet Zoroaster and ends with good's triumph in a final eschatological battle. Ohrmazd's creation of finite time, no less than his creation of the physical world, serves as a trap for the Evil Spirit. While Ahriman must fight within those temporal and spatial limits, Ohrmazd remains outside, in infinity.

The importance of time in the *Bundahišn* has been attributed by some scholars to the influence of an alternative monist creation myth. In this version, the clearest description of which is found in a famous passage of the fifth-century Christian Armenian author Eznik of Kolb, a god called *Zurwān*, Time, is the father of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman.

The exposition of Ohrmazd's creation, at least in part, as a descending chain of generation (1:38) is reminiscent of the Neoplatonic theories of creation by emanation that were adopted by some contemporary Islamic thinkers. In this case and others, it seems likely that the *Bundahišn*'s account of creation is in dialogue with early Islamic philosophy and theology.

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⁰ This is the knowledge of the *Zand*. First, on the primacy of Ohrmazd, and the onslaught of the Evil Spirit. Then on the nature of the world and the creatures, from the primal creation to the end, as is revealed by the Mazdaean *dēn*. Then on the things that the world contains with an explanation of their essence and their qualities.

¹ Thus it is revealed in the good *dēn*:

“Ohrmazd was on high, in omniscience and goodness, for eternity in the light.”

² That light is the throne and place of Ohrmazd; some call it “endless light.” And that omniscience and goodness and eternity existed just like Ohrmazd, his throne, his *dēn*, and time.

³ Ahriman was in darkness, afterthought, and aggression, down deep.

⁴ Aggression was his nature and darkness his place; some call it “endless darkness.”

⁵ Between them was a void. Some say it was Way, in which there is the Mixture.

⁶ Both spirits were finite and infinite. ⁷ For above was what is called endless light, unbounded. Down deep was endless darkness, and that is infinite. ⁸ At the border both were finite, for between them was the void, and they did not touch. Again, both spirits were finite in their own bodies.

⁹ Moreover, on account of Ohrmazd’s omniscience, all things are finitely within Ohrmazd’s knowledge, for both spirits know their measure.

¹⁰ Furthermore, at the Final Body, the creatures of Ohrmazd will have perfect power for ever and ever; that is infinity. ¹¹ And at that time, the creatures of Ahriman will be destroyed, so that the Final Body can come to be; that is finitude.

¹² Ohrmazd in his omniscience knew that the Evil Spirit exists, what he was planning to do in his jealousy, how he would mix creation from the beginning to the end, and with how many instruments; so he fashioned the creatures spiritually with the necessary instruments.

¹³ For three thousand years, the creatures were only spiritual; that is, they were unthinking, unmoving, and intangible.

¹⁴ On account of his afterthought, Ahriman was not aware of Ohrmazd’s existence. He rose up from the depths and came to the boundary within sight of the light. ¹⁵ When he saw Ohrmazd’s light, intangible and blazing,¹ because of his aggression and jealousy he attacked to destroy it. ¹⁶ Then, when he saw valor and victory greater than his own, he scurried back into the darkness and fabricated many demons, those destructive creatures hungry for battle.

¹⁷ When Ohrmazd saw the creatures of the Evil Spirit, they seemed to him awful, rotten, bad, and evil, and he did not praise them. ¹⁸ Afterward, when the Evil Spirit saw the creatures of Ohrmazd, they seemed to him profound and honorable, and he praised Ohrmazd's creation.

¹⁹ Then Ohrmazd, knowing the nature of creation and the end of the affair, went to meet the Evil Spirit. He proposed peace and said:

“Evil Spirit, give aid to my creatures and offer praise, so that, as a reward, you may become immortal and ageless, without sensation or decay. ²⁰ If you do not provoke a battle, you will not become powerless yourself and you will bring benefit to us both.”

²¹ The Evil Spirit snarled:

“I will not help your creatures and I will not offer praise! No, I will destroy you and your creatures for ever and ever! I will incite all your creatures to hate you and to love me.”

²² The explanation is that he believed that Ohrmazd had offered peace because he was helpless against him. He did not accept it, and made his vow.

²³ Ohrmazd said:

“You are not omnipotent, Evil Spirit. You cannot destroy me nor can you prevent my creatures from returning to my possession.”

²⁴ Then Ohrmazd in his omniscience realized:

If I do not set a time for our battle, he will be able to do to my creation as he vowed, and the strife and Mixture will be forever. During the Mixture, he will be able to mislead² the creatures and make them his own.

Just so, now during the Mixture, there are many people who commit more sins than good deeds; that is, they always do as the Evil Spirit desires.

²⁵ Ohrmazd said to the Evil Spirit:

“Let us set a time, so that by this pact our battle will be limited to nine thousand years.”

For he knew that in this time he would render the Evil Spirit powerless.

²⁶ Thereupon the Evil Spirit, because of his inability to foresee the end, became a party to that agreement, just like two men who set a time for a duel, saying, “Let us do battle on such and such a day until nightfall.”

²⁷ Ohrmazd, in his omniscience, knew as well that in these nine thousand years, three thousand would go entirely according to his own will; three thousand, during the Mixture, would go according to the wills of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman; and in the final battle, it would be possible to make the Evil Spirit powerless and to keep evil from creation.

²⁸ Then Ohrmazd recited the *Ahunawar* prayer—that is, he uttered the twenty-one words of the *Yaθa Ahū Vairiō*—and he showed the Evil Spirit his final victory, the powerlessness of the Evil Spirit, the destruction of the demons, the Resurrection and the Final Body, and the creatures' deliverance from the Adversary for ever and ever. ²⁹ When he saw his own powerlessness together with the destruction of the demons, the Evil Spirit was stunned and senseless and fell back into the darkness. ³⁰ As it says in the *dēn*:

“When he had said one-third of the prayer, the Evil Spirit cringed with fear; when he had said two-thirds, the Evil Spirit fell to his knees; and when he had said it all, the Evil Spirit became powerless and unable to do evil to Ohrmazd's creatures.”

³¹ For three thousand years he lay³ stunned.

³² I will first describe material creation in its spiritual form and then in its material form.

³³ Before creation, Ohrmazd was not Lord, but after creation he became Lord, beneficent, wise, harmless, manifest, ever-arranging, bounteous, and all-observing. ³⁴ At first, he created the essence of creation, goodness, that spirit through which his own body was made good when he thought of creation. For he became Lord through creation.

³⁵ With his clear vision, Ohrmazd saw that the Evil Spirit would never turn from his attack, that the attack could not be made powerless except by creation, for the creatures would not become animated and begin to move without time, and when time was created the creatures of Ahriman would also be animated.

³⁶ So, of necessity, in order to render the Adversary powerless, he created time. ³⁷ The reason was that the Evil Spirit could not be made powerless except by battle. The explanation of battle [*karezar*] is that it is an action [*kār*] that needs to be done by taking strategies [*čārōmandīhā*].

³⁸ From eternity, he created Time of Long Dominion; some call it “finite time.” From Time of Long Dominion, he created imperishability; that is, the things of Ohrmazd do not perish. Blisslessness was revealed from imperishability, so that the demons will have no bliss. Immutability of the spirit, the spirit that preserves the things of Ohrmazd unchanging as they were at the primal creation, was revealed from blisslessness. The perfect desire of the creatures of the world was revealed from immutability of the spirit, for the righteous creation of the creatures is harmony.

³⁹ Ahriman fabricated ignorance and injustice in his sinful creation. ⁴⁰ The reason and explanation for this is that Ahriman strove with Ohrmazd the

Lord; during creation, the wisdom, unity,⁴ excellence, and imperishability of Ohrmazd, and the inability, self-love, inferiority, and afterthought of the Evil Spirit were made manifest, ^owhen [Ohrmazd] created.^{o5}

⁴¹ He fashioned Time of Long Dominion as the first creation that was infinite. Before the Mixture, the perpetuity of Ohrmazd was fashioned finite from the infinite. For from the primal creation, when he created the creatures, to the end, when the Evil Spirit will become powerless, there is a measure of twelve thousand years, which is finite, and then it mixes with and turns into infinity. That is, the creatures, too, will be eternal and pure with Ohrmazd. ⁴² As it says in the *dēn*:

“Time is more powerful than both creations, the creatures of Ohrmazd and those of the Evil Spirit. Time is the measure of all things. Time is the most covetous of those who covet. Time is the most questioning of those who question. (That is, it is possible to decide in time.) Our time was laid down limited; in time, what is built up⁶ falls down. No mortal man escapes it, not if he flies upward, nor if he digs down a deep well and sits in it, nor even if he goes down under the spring of the cold waters.”

⁴³ Ohrmazd fashioned the forms of his creatures from his own essence, from light existence, in fire-form: bright, white, round, and distinct. ⁴⁴ ^oAnd from the material form of that spirit that carries away evil in both creations—some call it power, and others call it time^{o7}—he fashioned the form of good Way, because Way was needed. Some call it Way of Long Dominion. ⁴⁵ With the aid of Way of Long Dominion, he fashioned his creatures, for in creation Way, too, was one of the instruments he needed for his work.

⁴⁶ The Evil Spirit fabricated his own creatures from material darkness, in that form: black, ashy, of dark worth, and evil, like the form of the most sinful vermin. ⁴⁷ From material self-love he fabricated bad, formless lust, as befits lust.

⁴⁸ First, he created the essence of the demons, evil-doing, that spirit through which Ohrmazd’s creatures were corrupted. For he created endless darkness from material darkness, from endless darkness came lying speech, and from lying speech the harm of the Evil Spirit was revealed. For he fabricated creatures by which he made himself worse, that is to say, through which he will become powerless. For he fabricated the form from endless darkness, and made his⁸ creatures in that form. He will become powerless because of his own creation.

⁴⁹ Ohrmazd created truthful speech from material light, and from truthful speech the abundance of the creator was revealed in creation, for he fashioned

the fire-form from endless light. He also created all the creatures in fire-form. This fire-form was separate from the passage of time. The *Ahunawar* came forth from the fire-form, the spirit of the verse *Yaθā Ahū Vairiō*, in which both the beginning of creation and its end are manifest, which is the *dēn*. For the *dēn* was created along with the creatures. The spirit of the year came forth from the *Ahunawar*. Now, during the Mixture, it is half light and half dark, three hundred sixty-five days and nights, which is the division of Time of Long Dominion.

⁵⁰ Both creations existed within it, in strife. ⁵¹ As it is said:

“Ohrmazd’s creatures abided in lordship, authority, adherence to justice, and were elevated in ease.⁹ The Evil Spirit’s creatures abided in insolence, oppression, sinfulness, and lowness in distress.”

⁵² When Ohrmazd created the Amahraspands, he became limited. He needed to create these six spiritual masters for the material world, and, later, at the time of the Final Body, he will need them once more to remove evil from it.

He maintains his spiritual creations spiritually. He first created the material creatures spiritually, and then created them again in material form. He first created the Amahraspands, the six principles, and then the rest, and the seventh was Ohrmazd himself. Among the material creatures created in spiritual form, there were first six, and the seventh was he himself, for Ohrmazd is both: first spiritual, and then material by means of the Amahraspands.

Afterward, from Way of Long Dominion he first fashioned Wahman, by whom Ohrmazd’s creatures were set in motion. ⁹The Evil Spirit first falsely fabricated Akōman, and Ohrmazd first the sky, of the material creations.^{9¹⁰} He first fashioned Wahman from goodness and material light, and the good *dēn* of the Mazda-worshipers was with him. This means that he knew what would happen to the creatures until the Restoration.

Then he fashioned Ardwahišt, then Šahrewar, then Spandarmad, then Hordād, and then Amurdād. The seventh was Ohrmazd himself; the eighth was right speech; ninth Righteous Srōš; tenth Māns^arspand; eleventh Néryōsang; twelfth the Exalted Judge Ratwōbrazat; thirteenth Rašn the Just; fourteenth Mihr of the Wide Pastures; fifteenth Good Ahrišwang; sixteenth Pārand; seventeenth sleep; eighteenth wind; nineteenth adhering to justice; twentieth advocacy—that is, the state of having both plaintiff and defendant, which increases peace.

⁵³ The first of the material creations was the sky, second water, third earth, fourth the plant, fifth the cow, sixth the man, and seventh Ohrmazd himself.

He fashioned his creatures with the help of Way of Long Dominion, for when he fashioned Way of Long Dominion he, too, was an instrument he needed for creation.

⁵⁴ In his antagonism, the Evil Spirit fabricated first Akōman, then Indar, then Sawul, then Nanhais—who is¹¹ Tarōmad—then Tariz and Zariz, and afterward the other demons. Seventh was the Evil Spirit himself.

⁵⁵ The Evil Spirit never thinks, speaks, or does anything righteous, nor does he need the goodness of Ohrmazd's creatures. Ohrmazd's creatures, likewise, do not need the goodness of Ahriman's creatures.

⁵⁶ Ohrmazd does not think of anything that he cannot do, but the Evil Spirit thinks of things he cannot do and, moreover, vows to do them.

⁵⁷ Ohrmazd's creatures were nourished in the spirit such that they are moist, unthinking, intangible, and immobile, like semen. After this moist state, they became mixed, like semen and blood mixed together. After the mixture they became an atom,¹² like an embryo. Then, after the atom stage, there was a separation, like hands and feet. After this separation was a hollowness, like eyes, ears, and a mouth. After the hollowness was a trembling, when it began to move. So too now, in the material world, creatures are conceived, born, and nourished in their mothers' wombs in just this way.

⁵⁸ In creation, Ohrmazd is both mother and father of his creatures: mother when he spiritually nourished the creatures, and father when he created them in the material world.

1A

On Material Creation

¹ When the Evil Spirit was dazed and powerless, as I have written earlier, he lay stunned for three thousand years.

² While the Evil Spirit was powerless, Ohrmazd fashioned the creatures for the material world. From endless light, he fashioned fire; from fire, wind; from wind, water; and from water, earth and everything corporeal in this world. ³ As it says in the *dēn*:

“At first, all creation was a single drop of water; that is, everything came from water except for the seed of humans and animals, for that seed is the seed of fire.”

⁴ He first created the sky for repelling the enemy; some call it “the first.” He created water second, to strike the fiend of thirst. Third, he created the earth and all corporeal being. Fourth, he created plants to aid the beneficent cattle. Fifth, cattle to aid the righteous. Sixth, he created the righteous man to destroy and make powerless the Evil Spirit and all the demons. ⁵ Then he created fire as embers and latched brilliance to it from the endless light, well-formed as the fire wished. Then he formed the wind in human likeness as a fifteen-year-old youth,¹³ who would sustain the water, plants, cattle, righteous man, and all things.

⁶I will describe their natures.

⁷ First, he created the sky: bright, visible, distant, in the form of an egg; made of shining iron, its essence steel; male; joined at the top to the endless light. He created all the creatures inside the sky, a stronghold, like a fortress in which are stored all the weapons needed for a battle, or like a house in which things are kept. The root foundation of the sky is as broad as it is long, as long as it is high, and as high as it is deep, of equal measure.

Like a good workman,¹⁴ the spirit of the sky is endowed with good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and it is aware, bountiful, and decisive. It accepted its role to be an enduring fortress against the Evil Spirit, preventing him from scurrying away in retreat. Like a heroic warrior who has donned his armor so that he can fearlessly survive the battle, so, too, the

spirit of the sky preserves the sky. To aid the sky he created joy. He fashioned joy in it so that even now, in the era of the Mixture, creatures live in joy.

⁸ Second, he fashioned water from the essence of the sky. Just as when a man places his two hands on the ground and crawls on his hands and feet, the liquid in his body collects in his belly, so too the water then flowed from on high. He created wind and rain to aid it; that is,¹⁵ mist, sleet, and snow.

⁹ Third, he created the earth from the water: round, with wide open spaces, neither basin nor range: uniform, its length equal to its width and its width to its depth; he fixed it in the very middle of the sky.¹⁰ As it says:

“He fashioned the first third of the earth hard as stone; he fashioned the second third of the earth filled with dust; he fashioned the final third of the earth of soft clay.”¹⁶

¹¹ In the earth, he created the essence of the mountains that would later grow from it. To aid the earth he created iron, copper, sulfur, borax, and lime: all the species of the hard earth, apart from fossils,¹⁷ which belong to a different family. He fashioned the earth hard, like a man who wraps many layers of clothes tightly around his body.¹² Underground there is water everywhere.

¹³ Fourth, he created the plant. It sprouted up initially in the middle of the earth several feet tall, without branch, bark, or thorn, moist and sweet. Its nature contained all the species and vital force of plants. To aid the plant he created water and fire, for every plant’s stalk has a drop of water at its tip and fire four fingers down. It continuously grows by that power.

¹⁴ Fifth, he fashioned the sole-created cow in Ērānwēz, in the middle of the world, on the bank of the good river Dāitī. It was white and bright like the moon and three measured rods in height. To aid it, he created water and plants, for these are its strength and sustenance during the Mixture.

¹⁵ Sixth, he fashioned Gayōmard, bright as the sun, as tall as four measured rods, his width equal to his height, on the bank of the river Dāitī, which is located in the middle of the world. Gayōmard was on the left side of the river, and the cow was on the right. Their distance from each other, and their distance from the water of the Dāitī, was equal to their heights. He had eyes and ears, a tongue, and a mark.¹⁸ °Gayōmard’s mark means this: men will be born from his seed in his likeness.^{°19}

¹⁶ He created sleep, the giver of rest, to aid him. Ohrmazd fashioned sleep in the form of a tall, bright, fifteen-year-old man.

¹⁷ He fashioned Gayōmard and the cow from the earth. From the light and golden freshness of the sky, he fashioned the sperm of men and cattle, since these two are from the seed of fire, not the seed of water. He created them in the bodies of the cow and Gayōmard, for the multitude of men and animals would come from them.

¹⁸ He created these six creations in the six divisions of the year. He calculated that a year would be three hundred sixty-five days in twelve months: in each month thirty days, apart from one month of thirty-five days. He fixed the name of an Amahraspand to every day.

¹⁹ I will describe their natures.

²⁰ First, he fashioned the sky in forty days, namely from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Frawardin (the first day of the year) to the day of Ābān of the month of Ardwahišt (the tenth day of the second month). He rested five days, until the day of Day-pad-Mihr (the fifteenth day of the second month). Those are the five festival days called Midspring [Mēdyōzarm]. The explanation is that on those days the abodes of the sun, moon, and golden freshness are revealed.

²¹ Second, he created the water in fifty-five days, namely from the day of Mihr of the month of Ardwahišt (the sixteenth day of the second month) to the day of Ābān of the month of Tīr (the tenth day of the fourth month). He rested five days, until the day of Day-pad-Mihr (the fifteenth day of the fourth month). Those are the five festival days called Midsummer [Mēdyōšam]. The explanation is that on those days he made the water bright, which at first was dark.

²² Third, he created the earth in seventy days, namely from the day of Mihr of the month of Tīr (the sixteenth day of the fourth month) to the day of Ard of the month of Šahrewar (the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month). He rested five days, until the day of Anagrān (the thirtieth day of the sixth month). Those are the five festival days called Harvest [Pēdišah]. The explanation is that on those days he revealed the tracks and movements of the creatures on the earth.

²³ Fourth, he created the plants in twenty-five days, namely from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Mihr (the first day of the seventh month) to the day of Ard²⁰ of the month of Mihr²¹ (the twenty-fifth day of the seventh month). He rested five days, until the day of Anagrān (the thirtieth day of the seventh month). Those are the five festival days called the Homecoming of the Herds [Ayāsrim]. The explanation is that then leaves, scents, colors, and golden freshness appear.

²⁴ Fifth he created cattle in seventy-five days, namely from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Ābān (the first day of the eighth month) to the day of Day-pad-Mihr in the month of Day (the fifteenth day of the tenth month). He rested five days until the day of Wahram (the twentieth day of the tenth month). Those are the five festival days called Midwinter [Mēdyārim]. The explanation is that he then revealed his winter storehouse to his creatures.

²⁵ Sixth he created man, Gayōmard, in seventy days, namely from the day of Rām of the month of Day (the twenty-first day of the tenth month) until the day of Anagrān of the month of Spandarmad (the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month). He rested five days until the day of Spandarmad (the thirtieth day of the twelfth month). Those are the five festival days—some call them intercalary days and some call them stolen days—called Hamspasmēdim. The explanation is that he then revealed great hosts in the world, for people's *frawahrs* assembled in hosts. ²⁶ The names of those five intercalary days—which some call the five days of the *Gāhān*, and others the good five—are, in religious terms, Ahunawad Gāh, Uštawad Gāh, Spandmad Gāh, Wohuxštr Gāh, and Wahištōišt Gāh.

²⁷ Thirty days make a month: Ohrmazd, Wahman, Ardwahišt, Šahrewar, Spandarmad, Hordād, Amurdād, Day, Ādur, Ābān, Xwar, Māh, Tīr, Gōš, Day, Mihr, Srōš, Rašn, Frawardīn, Wahram, Rām, Wād, Day, Dēn, Ard, Aštād, Āsmān, Zāmyād, Māraspand, Anagrān. ²⁸ The names of the twelve months are also from the Amahraspands: Frawardin, Ardwahišt, Hordād, Tīr, Amurdād, Šahrewar, Mihr, Ābān, Ādur, Day, Wahman, and Spandarmad. ²⁹ I will describe their natures one by one.

2

Astronomy and its companion, “applied science” of astrology, were central features of the intellectual landscape of the early Islamic period. As this chapter and chapter 5 show, the *Bundahišn* is no exception. Observation of the heavens as well as the science of astronomy have long pedigrees in Iranian culture generally and Zoroastrian texts specifically. During the Sasanian period, Babylonian, Greek, and Indian traditions were synthesized in a single science that was then translated and adapted as part of the Islamic intellectual tradition. A special class of professionals was active at the Sasanian court, producing horoscopes and predictions, as well as serving as translators and specialists on mathematical and scientific issues.

This chapter of the *Bundahišn* reflects this multiple heritage. David Pingree has argued for the influence of Indian astronomy, especially in the chapter’s focus on the lunar mansions of the zodiac (also part of the Greek tradition) (2:2), and the idea that planetary motion is affected by cosmic chords. Walter Bruno Henning noted the chapter’s preservation of clearly pre-Achaemenid ideas, such as the sun and the moon being further from the earth than stars (2:1), the size and speed of the stars (2:18–19), and the complete absence of the planets. The chapter also reflects several elements related to the Greek astronomical tradition, such as the discussion of stellar magnitudes (2:7).

The Hellenistic tradition is central to the *Bundahišn*’s astronomical discussions; even the word for the firmament, *spīhr*, comes from the Greek word that is the source for our own English “sphere.” This is not only because of the centrality of Greek science in Islam, but because of an earlier translation and cultural adaptation movement under the Sasanians. Sasanian kings, in particular Šāpūr I (241–272 CE) and Khosrow I (531–579 CE), aimed to “recover” those parts of the *dēn*, which included all human knowledge, that tradition claimed had been scattered by Alexander the Great’s conquest of Iran. Many of the Greek and Indian works on astronomy and astrology, as well as medicine, mathematics, and other topics, first translated into Middle Persian at this time were likely retranslated into Arabic, sometimes via Syriac, during the more famous Arabic translation movement under the Abbasid dynasty.

Further Reading

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On the Fashioning of the Lights

¹ Ohrmazd fashioned the lights and set them between the sky and the earth: the “fixed” stars and the wandering stars, then the moon, and last the sun.

²This is how:

First, he fashioned the firmament and set the “fixed” stars in it, foremost among them the twelve signs of the Zodiac called Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces.

These are further divided and reckoned in twenty-seven lunar mansions that are called Padēwar, 41 Arietis, Pleiades, Aldebaran, λ Orionis, Betelgeuse, Raxwat, Canis Minor, ζ Hydræ, Regulus, Mayān, Abdom, Māšāha, Spur, Husraw, Srū, War, Dil, Drafš, Vega, Gāw, Altair, Muri, Bunya, Kaht-sar, Kaht-mayān, and Kaht. ³ Each of the first, primal material creations made one of them its dwelling, so that when the Adversary came, they could do battle against their particular antagonists, and save the creatures from their adversaries, like an army and troops arrayed for battle.

⁴Six million four hundred and eighty thousand small stars were fashioned to help those constellations. That is how the astrologers now reckon them, apart from the countless stars that are also there to help them.

⁵ He appointed four generals over those stars, one for each of the four directions, and he appointed a single general over these four. He appointed many well-known, counted¹ stars, in every direction and everywhere, with the aim to invigorate and strengthen the stars. ⁶ As it says:

“Sirius is the general of the east, Deneb is the general of the south, Vega is the general of the west, and Ursa Major is the general of the north.”

Polaris, which they call “the stake² in the center of the sky,” is the supreme general. The star Pārand, the star Mazdā-dād, and others of this kind are also district commanders.

⁷ Astronomers now call these inerrantes stars, and instead of “large,” “small,” and “medium,” they use the expressions “first magnitude,” “second magnitude,” and “third magnitude.”

⁸ He established the firmament like the year: the twelve constellations are like the twelve months, and each constellation has thirty degrees, just as each month has thirty days.

⁹ He appointed Ursa Major in the north, where hell would be established after the Adversary's onslaught. In order to arrange the continents during the Mixture, a band ties each of the seven [*haft*] continents to it. That is the reason why it is called Ursa Major [Haftōring].

¹⁰ Ohrmazd established the sphere of the stars like a spinning wheel, so that during the Mixture it would keep revolving. ¹¹ He fixed other, unmixable stars above these, so that when the Adversary came they could repel him in battle and keep him from carrying his pollution higher up. He appointed the Glory of the good Mazdā-worshiping *dēn* as general over them. That place is called "the core of the battle," the manifestation of purity in the Mixture.

The reason why they are called unmixable stars is because the Adversary did not pollute them. Astronomers call this "the sphere above the sphere." This sphere has no reckoning and progression, for they cannot observe in the pure ones any characteristics of the mixable ones.

¹² Above that he fashioned the moon in which the seed of cattle is stored, ¹³ and above that the sun whose horses are swift. ¹⁴ He appointed the sun and moon as captains of the mixable and unmixable stars; that is, they are all bound to the sun and moon. ¹⁵ Above the sun he fashioned the place of the Amahraspands, which are fastened to the endless light, the throne of Ohrmazd.

¹⁶ These are the six stations of the six creations, corresponding to the six material creations.

¹⁷ Between the earth³ and the firmament he appointed the wind, the clouds, and the Wāzišt fire. So that when the Adversary came, Sirius, with the help of those great spirits, could seize the waters and cause the rain to fall. He bound these also to the sun, the moon, and the stars. Thus Sirius is the general of the east, the helper and assistant of the Wāzišt fire, the wind, and the clouds.

¹⁸ Among these stars, the large ones are like a piece of rock the size of a house, the medium ones are like a rolling wheel,⁴ and the small ones like a cow's head. The moon is the size of a two-*hās*^ar racecourse; each *hās*^ar is equal to an average earth *frasang*. The sun is the size of Ērānwēz.

¹⁹ Before the coming of the Adversary, the moon, sun, and the stars stood still and did not move. They passed the time in purity under a perpetual noon. After the coming of the Adversary, they began moving and will not stop until

the end.²⁰ The motion of the sun is like that of a giant, three-feathered arrow that a giant man shoots from a giant bow. The motion of the moon is like a medium sized three-feathered arrow that a medium sized man shoots from a medium sized bow. The motion of the stars is like a small three-feathered arrow that a small man shoots from a small bow.

²¹ Among the stars, these are the swiftest: Sirius, Betelgeuse, Canis Minor, ζ Hydrae, Padēwar, and 41 Arietis.²² The interval of time from the sun leaving a constellation until its reaching it again is as much as it takes for a man to pick up a stone and throw it.

3

Like chapter 1, chapter 3 tackles the topic of creation, but from a different point of view. The chapter describes Ohrmazd's final preparations before Ahriman's attack on the material world. Ohrmazd appoints each of his six Amahraspands and himself as protectors of human beings, cattle, fire, metal, earth, water, and plants, and designates different spiritual assistants to aid them (3:12–22).

This section contains an important passage for the understanding of Zoroastrian theories of psychology and the soul: a description of Ohrmazd's creation of human beings in five parts—the body and the four spiritual elements of vital breath (*gyān*), soul (*ruwān*), form (*ēwēnag*), and *frawahr*—and the function of each (15). The last element, the *frawahr* (Avestan *fravaši-*), is a concept unique to the Zoroastrian tradition. References to the *frawahrs* occur throughout the *Avesta* and subsequent literature, and they are addressed in their own Avestan hymn (*Yašt* 13). Scholars continue to disagree over the precise meaning and origin of the term, which encompasses at once a vast host of ancestor or warrior spirits and the divine, preexisting component of each man and woman. *Frawahrs* inhabit the upper air, nurture the water and plants, and protect sons in the womb.

The last section of the chapter (3:26–27) contributes to the understanding of the Zoroastrian conception of free will. The final defeat of evil and the following salvation and purification of creation are the result of the battle of Ohrmazd's creatures against the forces of Ahriman. Human beings are granted the choice to do good or evil through their thoughts, words, and deeds. This choice, which each individual makes during the course of his or her own life, reflects a similar choice made by the *frawahrs* at the beginning of creation. Ohrmazd presented the *frawahrs* a foretaste of the fight against Ahriman and offered them the choice of whether or not to come to earth and battle against evil. The *frawahrs* freely decided to come to the material world, thus setting in motion, in a way, the long universal process that leads to the eschatological Restoration (*frašgird*).

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On How and Why Creation Went to Battle

¹ Ohrmazd assigned the names of the thirty Amahraspands to the thirty days of the month in this way: The first day is Ohrmazd, then six Amahraspands, making seven; the eighth is Day, who is the creator. Then again six Amahraspands, making seven; the eighth is Day, who is the creator. Then seven Amahraspands, which makes eight; the ninth is Day, who is the creator. Finally, seven Amahraspands, which makes eight. In this way, he placed his own name four times in the month: Ohrmazd, and the three Days. One is the name, one is the throne, one is the *dēn*, and one is time—these have always been.

² When the Evil Spirit attacked, Ohrmazd fashioned Time of Long Dominion in the form of a shining, white-eyed, tall, and powerful fifteen-year-old man, whose power comes from virtue, and not from thievery and oppression.

³ He himself put on a white garment of priestly splendor, for knowledge is always with priests who convey it to people, and everyone teaches a portion of it. ⁴ Furthermore, Ohrmazd's duty was creation, and creatures can be made only through knowledge. That is why he wore the garments of the wise; that is, the clothes of the priesthood.

⁵ Good Way put on a garment of gold and silver, studded with gems, red and many colored, the clothes of a warrior: for pursuing enemies, striking the Adversary, and protecting creatures. ⁶ As it says:

“Way's duty is removing¹ evil from both creations, for the Good Spirit created him in order to put an end to the Evil Spirit during the battle, and to increase Ohrmazd's creatures and destroy those of the Evil Spirit.”

⁷ From time he fashioned the firmament, the body of Zurwān of Long Dominion, Lord of Fate. He put on a blue garment, the clothes of a farmer. For his duty is fostering good in the world, just as farmers were fittingly created to cultivate the land.

⁸ Just as Ohrmazd inserted his own name between that of every six Amahraspands in the calendar, he created the spiritual and material creations in the same manner. Thus, in the spiritual world, too, Ohrmazd was

accompanied by the six Amahraspands—Wahman, Ardwahišt, Šahrewar, Spandarmad, Hordād, and Amurdād—and thus the sky has seven levels as well: first the cloud station; second the firmament of the stars; third the unmixable stars; fourth paradise, where the moon resides; fifth heaven, also called “infinite light,” where the sun resides; sixth the place of the Amahraspands; and seventh the throne of Ohrmazd in the endless light.

⁹ Similarly, he also fashioned the seven creations: first the sky, second water, third earth, fourth plants, fifth cattle, sixth human beings, and seventh fire, clothed in the splendor of the endless light, Ohrmazd’s place.¹⁰ He fashioned fire and distributed it among all his creation like the master of a house who enters his house and puts his garments² in their proper places.³ ¹¹ He commanded fire to serve men during the onslaught of evil: to cook food and to overcome cold.⁴ When men blow on kindling, fire emerges, and when they set wood upon it, it catches fire.

¹² He appointed and placed all the Amahraspands to help and to fight together with creation so that when the Adversary came, each one would challenge his own opponent in battle, without need of a new command.¹³ I will describe their natures further:

¹⁴ First among the spirits is Ohrmazd. He chose human beings for himself from the seven fundamental material creations. His helpers are those three Days: the throne, *dēn*, and time, the name of “All Creator’s Day” [Wisp-Day-nām], which is the spirit of all creation.¹⁵ He created human beings in five parts: body, vital breath, soul, form, and *frawahr*. The body is material. Vital breath is tied to the wind and the inhaling and exhaling of breath. The soul, together with perception, is in the body, and hears, sees, speaks, and knows. The form resides at the sun station. The *frawahr* waits before Ohrmazd the Lord. He fashioned it because, when men die during the onslaught of evil, their bodies join the earth, their vital breath joins the wind, and their forms join the sun, but their souls join the *frawahr*, so that the demons cannot destroy the souls.

¹⁶ Second among the spirits is Wahman, who was appointed over cattle of different species of all the material creations. He created the moon, Gōš, Rām, Zurwān without origin, lord of the firmament, and Zurwān of Long Dominion as his helpers and assistants.¹⁷ He fashioned cattle in five parts: body, vital breath, soul, form, and spirit, so that, during the onslaught of evil, Gōšurwan would receive animals’ seed from the moon station, through the aid of good Rām, and spread it forth in the world. When they die, their bodies join Gōšurwan, their souls join Rām, their forms join the moon, and their spirits join Wahman, so that⁵ they cannot destroy them.

¹⁸ Third among the spirits is Ardwahišt, who was appointed over fire of all the material creations. He created Ādur, Srōš, Wahrām, and Néryōsang as his helpers and assistants. For during the onslaught of evil, Wahrām established fire in the home: he defends it and Srōš protects it. When a fire is extinguished, it leaves Wahrām to join Srōš; from Srōš, Ādur; and from Ādur it returns to Ardwahišt, so that the demons cannot destroy it.

¹⁹ Fourth among the spirits is Šahrewar, who chose the metals for himself among the material creations. He created the sun, Mihr, the sky, Anagrān, good Sōg, Ardwīsūr, divine Hōm, divine Burz, and Dahmān Āfrīn as helpers and assistants. For the solidity of metal is from the sky, and the basic essence of the sky is metallic, arranged by Anagrān. Anagrān means “infinite light”—a golden abode, studded with gems, joined on high to the place of the Amahraspands. Because of this partnership, during the onslaught of evil the demons cannot destroy the metals.

²⁰ Fifth among the spirits is Spandarmad, who was appointed over earth of all the material creations. She created Ābān, Dēn, Ard, Māns^arspand, Aršišwang, Ardwīsūr, and Anāhīd as her helpers and assistants: Ābān is the spirit who purifies the earth and the seed of the waters; before her is Māraspand, that is Māns^arspand, the word of Ohrmazd. Ard and Dēn are in the house of glory. There is one who says Aršišwang is the glory of heavenly righteousness. Ardwīsūr and Anāhīd are the father and mother of the waters. Because of their partnership, everything was prepared for the onslaught of evil. These partner spirits keep watch⁶ over Glory.

²¹ Sixth among the spirits is Hordād, who was appointed over water of all the material creations. He created Tīr, Wād, and Frawardin as helpers and assistants: Tīr is Sirius, who, during the onslaught of evil, gathers the waters with the aid of Frawardin—some say: with the *frawahrs* of the righteous—and entrusts them spiritually to Wād. Wād swiftly disperses water to the continents, carrying it by means of the clouds. With these assistants, he makes it rain.

²² Seventh among the spirits is Amurdād, who was appointed over the plants of all the material creations. He created Rašn, Aštād, and Zāmyād as his helpers and assistants. During the onslaught of evil, these three glories judge the souls of men for good and bad on the Činwad Bridge.

²³ Other innumerable spirits have been tasked with aiding creation, as has been written above regarding the firmament of the “fixed” stars.

²⁴ He also divided each day of the month into five periods, and assigned a spirit to each: dawn to the spirit Hāwan; noon to the spirit Rapihwin; evening

to the spirit Uzērin; sunset to the spirit Ēbsrūsrim; and night to the spirit Ušahin.²⁵ He appointed them as assistants to other spirits: Hāwan to Mihr; Rapihwin to Ardwahiš; Uzērin to divine Burz; Ēbsrūsrim to the righteous *frawahr* and Wahrām; Ušahin to Srōš and Rašn. They were tasked as assistants because he knew that when the Adversary came, the day would be divided into these five periods. Before the Adversary's coming it was noon all day; that is, Rapihwin.

²⁶ It was at noon that Ohrmazd and the Amahraspands forged the spirit of worship. During the celebration of the worship, he created all creation. He consulted with men's perceptions and *frawahrs*, instilling in them all-knowing wisdom. He said:

“What seems more profitable to you: That I fashion you in the material world, fighting bodily against the demons and destroying them, so that in the end I will restore you, whole and immortal, and I will return you to the material world undying, ageless, and unopposed for ever? Or, that you always require protection from the Adversary?”

²⁷ With their all-knowing wisdom, the *frawahrs* of men saw the evil that would befall them in the material world from the demons and Ahriman. But because in the end the Adversary would be vanquished and they would become whole again and immortal forever in the Final Body, they agreed to go to the material world.

4

As described in chapter 4, Ahriman’s attack on creation quite literally sets the world in motion. After awaking from a fainting spell lasting three thousand years (4:1–3), Ahriman and his demonic minions launch their onslaught against Ohrmazd’s creation (see chapter 1A).

The demon Jeh (Avestan *Jahī-*), the primordial whore, has a prominent role in reviving Ahriman. She announces her plans to pollute creation and attack the righteous man and the cow, stealing their Glory (Middle Persian *xwarrah*, Avestan *x'arənah*), the divine light or charisma granted to kings and other worthy beings. A satisfied and reassured Ahriman kisses her head, which causes Jeh to menstruate (4:4–5). This episode provides an etiological myth for an important component of Zoroastrian purity law—menstruating women are considered impure and contaminating—and, like the similarly female demon of impurity caused by corpses and other “bodily refuse,” Nasā (Avestan *nasu-*), points to the role gender plays in the Zoroastrian conception of evil.

The second section of the chapter describes Ahriman’s penetration (*andar dwāristan*) of the sky and his attack on the created world. Here as elsewhere, the ontological distinction between good and evil also extends to language. The verb *dwāristan* is used only to describe the motion of Ahriman and the demons; we have translated it “scurrying,” “scuttling,” “creeping,” and, in the case of this verb, “burrowing through.” Similarly, the verb *dawīdan* (4:2, 4, 6, etc.), translated as “howling,” “whining,” or “snarling,” is used only of demonic speech, and *kirrēnidān*, “to fabricate,” only of Ahriman’s creation.

The word we have translated here and elsewhere as “corporeal,” *astōmand*, literally means “boney,” or “having bones,” and comes from a term used to describe the material world in the *Avesta* (*astuuāñt-*).

Other Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts, particularly *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* (chapter 2), describe Ahriman’s attack on the seven primal creations—the sky, water, earth, the plant, the cow, Gayōmard, and fire—in similar terms. In his dissertation, Harold Walter Bailey argues that this section of the chapter, especially the different creations’ declarations to Ahriman (4:12, 14, 16, etc.), reflects a now-lost Avestan source.

In the case of chapter 4A, however, we do have the original text in the *Avesta*. This section describes the complaint of Gōšurwan, the soul of the sole-created cow, to Ohrmazd after the death of Gayōmard. Gōšurwan is worried that creation will now have no protector against evil (4A:2), but Ohrmazd reassures it by revealing the *frawahr* of Zoroaster. While Ohrmazd easily placates Gōšurwan in the *Bundahišn*'s version, in *Yasna* 29, one of the Gathic poems, it is not satisfied with this answer and complains that Zoroaster is too weak and powerless to fulfill his task. Like the *Gāthās* overall, this poem has been the subject of much scholarly debate—a fact that can be attributed in large part to the difficulty of the Old Avestan language in which the poems were composed. Helmut Humbach, for example, has argued that the poem evidences sacrificial mysticism and spiritual esotericism, in the context of the cessation of animal sacrifices in Zoroaster's new religion. Martin Schwartz, in contrast, has focused on the structural aspects of the *Gāthās*, arguing that the prophet used encryption, alliteration, and ring-composition techniques within and between poems in the corpus in their composition, thus showing that *Yasna* 29 is Zoroaster's first poem and a declaration of his poetic and prophetic mission.

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On How the Adversary Burrowed Through to Creation

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

When the Evil Spirit saw that he and the demons were powerless over righteous men, he fell down stunned, and remained in a stupor for three thousand years. ² During his stupor, the chiefs of the demons came to him one by one, howling:

“Get up, father! For we will make war against the material world, and Ohrmazd and the Amahraspands will strain and suffer because of it.”

³ And they counted off all their evil deeds in detail one by one. ⁴ But the wicked Evil Spirit was not comforted and did not rise from his stupor because of his fear of the righteous man. Finally, after three thousand years had passed, evil Jeh came to him. She whined:

“Get up, father! For during the battle I will so harm the righteous man and the plowing cow that their lives will not be worth living. I will steal their glory. I will torment the waters, the earth, fire, plants, and all of Ohrmazd’s creation.”

⁵ As she enumerated these evil deeds in detail, the Evil Spirit was comforted. He awoke from his stupor, and kissed Jeh on her head. At that very moment, the filth called menstruation appeared on her body. ⁶ The Evil Spirit snarled to Jeh:

“I will grant you whatever you desire.”

⁷ But Ohrmazd, in his omniscient wisdom, knew that in that moment the Evil Spirit could fulfill Jeh’s every wish. So, in order to profit from it, he caused the Evil Spirit, who was like a frog to look at, to appear to Jeh like a fifteen-year-old man,¹ and bound her thoughts to him. ⁸ Jeh howled to the Evil Spirit:

“Grant me the desire for men.”

That means: “I want to stay at home under a man’s authority.”

⁹The Evil Spirit snarled:

“I will not tell you what to ask, for you know to wish only for what is damaging and bad.”

Once she had asked, the time for wishes had passed. He was not able to give her anything else.

¹⁰Then the Evil Spirit and all the powerful demons rose up against the lights. He saw the sky, which had already been shown to them spiritually before it had been corporeally created. He attacked it with jealous desire.

The sky was at the star station, but Ahriman dragged it down into the void—which, as I have written earlier, was originally between the light and the darkness—so that one third of the sky remained above the star station. He wished that, like a snake, the sky would fall down² and break apart on the earth. He burrowed through at noon on the day of Ohrmazd in the month of Frawardin; the sky feared him like cattle fear a wolf.

Then he came—as I have said—to the water that had been made ready under the earth, and he burrowed through the middle of the earth and went inside. He came to the plant and to the cow and Gayōmard, and then he came to the fire. Like a fly, he scuttled over all of creation. ¹¹He made the world so dark that noon seemed like dark night; he darkened everything under the sky and above the earth.

¹²The spirit of the sky said to the Evil Spirit:

“I must keep watch to the furthermost time, so I will not let you out.”

¹³He gave the water a bad taste. ¹⁴The spirit of water said:

“The creation of Wahman, Ardwahišt, and Šahrewar”; that is, thus he makes it come to me; that is, “now that the Adversary has come, where is my reward³?⁴”

¹⁵Ahriman loosed vermin over the earth, now made firm: biting, poisonous vermin like dragons, snakes, scorpions, lizards, turtles, and frogs. He did not leave so much as a pinpoint of the earth free from them. ¹⁶The earth said:

“I will be avenged against these vengeful beings through the creation created against them.”

¹⁷He raised so much poison in the plant that it withered away at once.

¹⁸The spirit of the plant said:

“Because of his reverence for them, Ohrmazd will cause the plants to grow.”

¹⁹He set lust, need, danger, pain, disease, greed, and sloth on the cow and Gayōmard.

²⁰ Before the Evil Spirit reached the cow, Ohrmazd fed it healing henbane—which some call *bang*—and rubbed some on its eyes to lessen its discomfort from the evil, damage, and blows. The cow at once became weak and sick, it spilled its seed, and passed away.

²¹ The cow said:

“Excellent work and labor should be ordered for created cattle!”

²² Before the Evil Spirit reached Gayōmard, in the time it takes to utter one strophe of the *Gāthās*, Ohrmazd brought sleep to him; for Ohrmazd fashioned sleep in the form of a tall and bright fifteen-year-old man. ²³ When Gayōmard woke from his sleep, he saw that the world was dark as night. Not even a pinpoint of the earth was free from scurrying vermin. The firmament was turning, the sun and moon were moving, and the earth echoed with the roar of the giant demons battling the stars.

²⁴ The Evil Spirit thought:

“All of Ohrmazd’s creatures have become powerless except for Gayōmard.”

He loosed Astwihād on Gayōmard with a thousand deadly demons, but because his fate was fixed, they found no means to kill him. ²⁵ As it says:

“At the primal creation, when the Evil Spirit attacked, the length of Gayōmard’s life and lordship was fixed at thirty years.”

That is, after the coming of the Adversary he lived thirty years more.

²⁶ Gayōmard said:

“Now that the Adversary has come, all mankind will be from my seed; they will perform good deeds, and that is a good thing.”

²⁷ The Evil Spirit came to the fire and mixed it with smoke and darkness.

He mixed the seven planets, with the aid of many demons, into the firmament to battle the stars. Like fire fills everywhere with smoke, he defiled all creation and fought to reach and mix the place of the heavenly beings. For ninety days and nights the divine spirits were locked in combat with the Evil Spirit and all the demons in the material world, until they overcame them and cast them into hell. They made the sky a stronghold so the Adversary cannot mix anything beyond it.

²⁸ Hell is in the middle of the earth, where the Evil Spirit first pierced the earth and burrowed through.

So it was that all the treasures of the material world were revealed by the double movement of opponent and adversary, up and down, in the Mixture.

4A: The Cow's Complaint

¹ It also says this:

When the sole-created cow passed away, he fell to the right side. Then Gayōmard passed away and fell to the left side.

² Gōšurwan—that is, the soul of the sole-created cow—came out of his body and stood beside it. It complained to Ohrmazd in a voice as loud as a thousand men crying together:

“To whom have you given authority over creation, now that the earth lies injured, the plant is withered, and the water defiled? You said: I will create a man who will protect you with his words. Where is he?”

³ Ohrmazd said:

“You are ill, Gōšurwan. You have been infected by the sickness of the Evil Spirit and the malice of the demons. If I could have created that man in time, the Evil Spirit's tyranny would never have come to be.”

⁴ Gōšurwan ascended to the star station and complained; he ascended to the moon station and complained; he ascended to the sun station and complained. ⁵ Then Ohrmazd showed it the *frawahr* of Zoroaster and said:

“I will create him in the material world and he will protect you with his words.”

“Gōšurwan was appeased and satisfied. He said:

“I will nourish creation.”

That is, he agreed to be re-created in the material world as cattle.

5

The struggle between good and evil extends throughout creation, from the earth to the heavens. Good and evil spirits, creatures, and attributes are paired in opposition, as can be seen with the list of antagonists that opens chapter 5. As in the case of chapter 2, the focus of these three chapters, though, is the firmament, the stars, and the planets. Like other material beings, astral bodies are divided into good and evil camps: the good stars and the sun and moon on the one hand, and the evil planets and their accomplices on the other.

Scholars believe that the demonization of the planets occurred in the Sasanian period. The Avestan corpus reflects an earlier, pre-Ptolemaic model of the cosmos that does not distinguish between planets and stars as such and pits evil “falling stars” (i.e., comets) against the good “fixed” stars. Even in the *Bundahišn*, the evil association of the planets is not absolute, and certain passages present them positively, such as 5B:12 and 28:4.

The planets’ apparent retrograde motion in the celestial sphere, as opposed to the regularly moving stars, is a central part of the planets’ demonization. This distinction is also reflected in the etymology of the words for “star”—also meaning constellation—and “planet,” *axtar* and *abāxtar*. However, the terms also have the wider meanings of “good celestial body” and “evil celestial body,” which sometimes compounds the confusion of the *Bundahišn*’s already technical astronomical and astrological discussions.

In addition to the five evil planets, there are two other demonic celestial bodies, both of which appear in the *Avesta*: Mūš Parīg, likely a comet, and the celestial dragon Gōzihr, who spans the sky between the two lunar nodes (those points where the moon’s orbit crosses the plane of the ecliptic, causing lunar and solar eclipses).

Chapter 5A contains a “world horoscope” (*zāyč ī gēhān*), known in Hellenistic astrology as a *thema mundi*, that provides the positions of the astral bodies at the beginning of the universe. In this case, the horoscope depicts the very first moment of material existence in the seventh millennium of time. Like the horoscope for Gayōmard in chapter 6, this horoscope draws from both Greek and Indian astrological traditions. The seven planets—apart from Mercury—occupy their exaltations, each one’s point of maximum strength and influence in the Zodiac, and the horoscope makes

use of the Greek astrological system of twelve houses or “places” (*gyāg*) (5A:2). Different *Bundahišn* manuscripts provide slightly different diagrams of the horoscope.

Chapter 5B provides further information about the nature of the planets, as well as an ancient cosmographic model, found already in the *Avesta*: a flat, circular earth is surrounded by the Harburz mountain range, and the sun revolves around the peak of Tērag, located at the center of the world. A corollary of this model of solar movement is found in the Sanskrit *Purāṇas*, which depict all the astral bodies revolving around Mount Meru. The chapter also describes the Zoroastrian model of the division of the earth into seven continents, known by their Middle Persian names of Avestan origin. Six are arrayed around the central continent Xwanirah, the homeland of the Iranians (5B:8–11).

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On the Opposition of the Two Spirits

That Is, How the Demon Chiefs Came Spiritually
to Oppose the Spiritual Deities

¹ They are:

Ahriman against Ohrmazd;
Akōman against Wahman;
Indar against Ardwahlīšt;
Sawul against Šahrewar;
Nanhais, whom they call also Tarōmad, against Spandarmad;
Tariz against Hordād and Zariz against Amurdād;
Xēšm against Srōš;
Lie and falsehood against truth;
The sorcerer's spell against Māns^ar;
Excess and deficiency against moderation, which is the good *dēn*;
Evil thoughts, words, and deeds against good thoughts, words, and deeds;
Astwhād, which is called Evil Way, against Rām, which is Good Way;
Trackless Waran against innate wisdom;
The evil eye, which is repudiation, against the spirit of watchfulness;
Indolence against diligence;
Sloth against sleep;
Vengeance against peace;
Pain against pleasure;
Stench against fragrance;
Darkness against light;
Poison against antidote¹;
Bitterness against sweetness;
Miserliness against generosity;
Waste against discriminate giving;
Winter against summer;
Cold against heat;
Dryness against freshness;

Hellishness against heavenliness;
 Sin against rectitude;
 Heresy against sanctity;
 Old age against youth;
 Night against day;
 Blame against compassion;
 Corruption, which is contentiousness, against bountifulness;
 Filth against cleanliness;
 Impurity against purity;
 Sadness against happiness;

² And other demonic spirits against divine spirits, such as the demons, fiends, sorcerers, and giants against the deities, lords, and Amahraspands.

³ So, too, in the material world:

Darkness against the sky;
 Thirst against water;
 Excrement, vermin, and frogs against the earth;
 Burning² against plants;
 Hunger and thirst against animals;
 Death and sickness against health;
 Pains of all kinds against mankind.

Also:

Extinction and burning against fires: that is, when people and cattle are burned by dryness.

In the corporeal state:

Lions, wolf species, and cheetahs³ against dogs and cattle;
 Frogs against fish;
 Owls and other winged vermin against birds;
 Heretics and sinners against the righteous;
 Jeh against women;
 Sinful weaponry against honest weaponry;
 The fiends' destruction⁴ against the vitality of renewing generations;
 Other material fiends came to oppose the material deities.

⁴ So, too, in the firmament:

The dark sun came to oppose the sun, and the dark moon the moon bearing the cow's seed. They bound them to their own chariots by cords. Other sorcerers and witches, with the thirty-fold⁵ destructive planets, against the stars, and the generals of the seven planets against the generals of the seven constellations: the planet Mercury against Sirius; the planet Jupiter against Ursa Major; the planet Mars against Vega; the planet Venus against Deneb; the planet Saturn, who is supreme commander of the planets, against Polaris; and Gōzihr and the tailed comet Mūš-Parīg against the sun, moon, and stars.

⁵ The sun bound Mūš-Parīg to its chariot by a cord in order to keep it from causing too much damage. But when it becomes free, it causes great evil before it is caught again.

⁶ So, too, at the cloud station, Spinjaruš came to oppose the Wāzišt fire, and the demon Apōš opposed Sirius and his assistants. ⁷ Other demons from the same source⁶ came to oppose the deities who make wind and rain.

There are many more details. Their motion, ^otheir struggle in progressing,^o and their length are revealed astrology.

5A: On the World Horoscope and How It Came to Be

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

"The Adversary burrowed through at noon on the day of Ohrmazd in the month of Frawardin, when day and night are equal."

² The Souls were in Cancer passing at the nineteenth degree in the lunar mansion ζ Hydræ; the star Sirius was inside, and among the planets there was Jupiter. Purses⁸ was Leo, the Brothers were Virgo, the Fathers were Libra; there was Saturn. The Sons were Scorpio, the Sick were Sagittarius; there was the tail of Gōzihr. The Nuptials were Capricorn; there was Mars. The Deaths were Aquarius, the Travelers were Pisces; there were Venus and Mercury. The Medium Caeli was Aries; there was the sun in the lunar mansion Pēš-parwēz.⁹ The Fortunate were Taurus; there was the moon. The Unfortunate were Gemini; there was the head of Gōzihr [see Figure 5.1].

³ When these planets burrowed through the firmament, they fought against the fixed stars in this way:

The dark sun and the dark moon against the sun and the moon, princes among lights;
 Jupiter against Ursa Major, general of the north;
 Venus against Deneb, general of the south;
 Mars against Vega, general of the west;
 Mercury against Sirius, general of the east;
 Saturn against Polaris, the supreme commander.

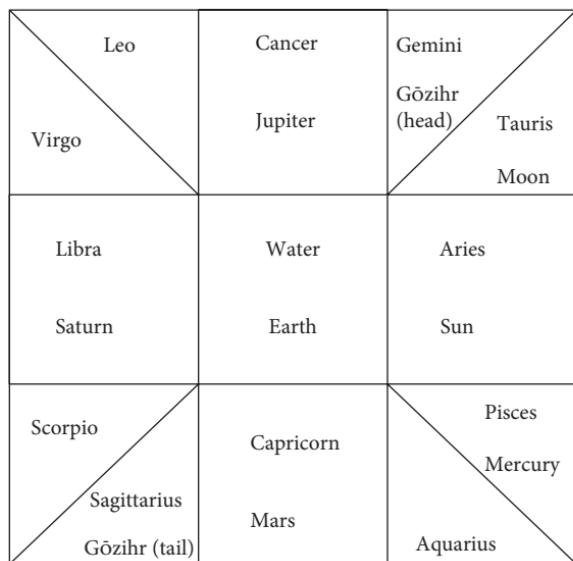


Figure 5.1 This twelve-sectioned horoscopic diagram depicts the positions of the planets in the signs of the zodiac, and of the zodiac relative to the horizon, at the time of Ahriman's attack on creation. Versions of this diagram are found in different manuscripts of the *Bundahišn*. However, this version, based on manuscript TD1 (20v), is the only one that corresponds to the text; we have added "earth" and "water," which were omitted from the central square in the original. Horoscopic astrology, which uses such diagrams as the basis for predictions, was common throughout the ancient world, and similar figures can be found in Islamic and Latin sources. These diagrams from the *Bundahišn* are the only extant Zoroastrian examples (see further Raffaelli 2001, 74–75, 97–99). Pakzad's (2005, 77) edition includes a slightly different version of the diagram.

⁴In the sky, there was the same division among the planets:

Mercury was general of the east, Mars general of the west, Venus general of the south, Jupiter general of the north, Saturn supreme commander, and the dark sun and the dark moon princes among the darkness. ⁵Gözihr stood in the middle of the sky like a snake, with its head in Gemini and its tail in Sagittarius. In this way, there are always six constellations between its head and its tail, and its fiendish movement is retrograde; every ten years, its tail returns to the place where its head was, and its head takes the place of its tail.

⁶The sun bound the winged and tailed Mūš-Parīg to its chariot to keep it from doing harm. When it becomes free, it causes great damage in the world until it is bound again to the sun by a cord.

⁷Among these planets, the dark sun and Mūš-Parīg are bound during the Mixture by a cord below the sun to the sun's chariot, and the dark moon is bound to the chariot of the moon.

⁸The other planets are also bound to the same chariot of the sun in their elongation and conjunction. They cannot go further away than the length of that cord. Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars are each bound at a maximum distance of one hundred eighty degrees from the sun; Mercury at a distance of twenty-two degrees and thirty minutes; and Venus at a distance of forty-seven degrees and thirty minutes from the sun.

⁹The house, detriment, exaltation and dejection, terms, trigons,¹⁰ decans, happiness, and affliction, and many other positions of these planets in the firmament of the twelve constellations have been revealed. ¹⁰They destroy all the order of time that, as can be clearly seen, is connected with the "fixed" stars; they turn it upside down, and increase the diminished. Their motion is also not like the "fixed" stars, for they move sometimes fast and sometimes slow, sometimes retrograde and sometimes stationary. They are named "planets" [*abāxtarān*] because they are not stars [*nē axtar*]. The light that shines from them is the same light of Ohrmazd, like villains dressed in knights' armor, like the light in the eyes of vermin. The benefit from it is this: on the one hand, because they are adorned in this light, they do less harm, and on the other, men seeing them are not afraid—so too the "fixed" stars move.¹¹ For this reason, when these demons of old age and evil-doing run across the firmament, its light is agitated and becomes visible.

¹¹It says in the *dēn*:

"If a person looked directly at these fiends, his eyesight would fail."

5B

¹ Mount Harburz surrounds the world and Mount Tērag is in the center of the world. The sun's revolution is like a crown around the world in purity. It revolves around Tērag, above Mount Harburz. ² As it says:

"My sun, moon, and stars return from behind the peak [*tērag*] of Harburz."

³ For in Harburz there are one hundred eighty windows in the east, and one hundred eighty in the west. Every day the sun comes in through one window and leaves through another window. The moon and the "fixed" stars, and even the planets, are all connected to and move according to the sun. Every day its light heats three and a half continents.

⁴ As can be clearly seen, every year day and night are twice of equal length.

⁵ For at the beginning of the battle, when the sun progressed from the first lunar mansion of Aries, day and night were equal; this is the season of spring. Then, when it reaches the first lunar mansion of Cancer, the days are the longest; this is the beginning of summer. When it reaches the first lunar mansion of Libra, day and night are equal; this is the beginning of autumn. When it reaches the first lunar mansion of Capricorn, the nights are longest; this is the beginning of winter. When it reaches Aries anew, night and day are again equal.

⁶ So, from the time it turns from Aries until it reaches Aries again, in three hundred sixty days plus the five intercalary days, it enters and leaves from the same window. These windows were not spoken of, because if they had been mentioned, the demons would have discovered the secret and would have caused harm.

⁷ From the place where the sun rises on the longest day to where it rises on the shortest day is the east, the continent of Arzah. ⁸ From the place where it rises on the shortest day to where it sets on the shortest day is the direction of the south, the continents of Fradadafš and Wīdadafš. ⁹ From the place where the sun sets on the shortest day to where it sets on the longest day is the west, the continent of Sawah. ¹⁰ From the place where it rises on the longest day to where it sets on the longest day is the direction of the north, the continents of Wōrūbaršn and Wōrūjaršn.

¹¹ When the sun rises, it heats the continents of Arzah, Fradadafš, Wīdadafš, and half of the continent of Xwanirah. When it sets on the other side of Tērag, it heats the continents of Sawah, Wōrūbaršn, Wōrūjaršn, and half of the continent of Xwanirah. When it is day here, it is night there; for night appears because of Mount Tērag.

¹²In the beginning, when the Adversary burrowed through, it so happened that the dark sun and dark moon were unable to cause harm because of the common cord of the chariot of the sun and moon.

Ursa Major and Deneb were stronger than Jupiter and Venus, and they prevented Jupiter and Venus from causing harm. This is the reason why astrologers call them “benefic.”

Mars was stronger than Vega and Saturn than Polaris, and their harmfulness is evident. For this reason, astrologers call them “malefic.”

Mercury—who is the demon Apōš—came to battle Sirius. Both are equal in strength and equal in power. This is the reason why astrologers say that Mercury is beneficent with the “benefic,” and is maleficent with the “malefic.”

“One says: Apōš is not Mercury”

¹³This is the reason why they say that Jupiter is the planet of life and Saturn is the planet of death. For Jupiter, because of its powerlessness in this conflict, distributes what its opponent wishes; that is, it gives life, greatness, and wealth. Because Saturn triumphs over its opponent, it does what is detrimental; that is, death, evil, and poverty. This is the reason why it is called “the adversary.”

¹⁴One says that Venus is of a watery nature, since its opponent Deneb is of a watery nature. They say that Mercury is airy since its opponents are Sirius and Wād, the rainmakers.

¹⁵Again, a period of six thousand years elapsed before the Adversary came: three thousand years in a spiritual state and three thousand years in a pure material state. Those six thousand years were from Aries to Virgo, each constellation ruling one thousand years.

¹⁶When the lordship of the millennium passed to Libra, which is the dejection of the dejections of the sun, the Adversary burrowed through from underneath. ¹⁷Saturn was in Libra, and because Libra was its exaltation, Saturn received lordship of the millennium. As Libra was down and Aries up, Saturn the lord of darkness and the sun the lord of light, the opponent of darkness, so too Libra became the exaltation of Saturn and the dejection of the sun and Aries the exaltation of the sun and the dejection of Saturn.

¹⁸On account of the long yoke of Saturn and Libra, during this millennium men were taller and bigger. ¹⁹The sun, too, lord of light, stood above all the fixed stars, while Saturn, the lord of darkness, stood above the planets.

²⁰The time it takes for the sun to advance and to return to the place where it began is one year, reckoned as three hundred sixty-five days, five hours,

and a fraction. Every day is twenty-four hours, half of which is dark and half light—night and day. And the five periods of the day and night were revealed.

²¹ Just as each creature battles its own opponent, so too, day opposes night, as the six months of increasing day oppose the six months of increasing night.

²² Other astrological principles are manifest, and the most explicit are those revealed in the good Mazdaean *dēn*.

²³ That sign in the sky, which is called the Milky Way, is the brilliance of Gōzihr that is like a snake in the firmament, as mentioned in detail above.

6

Chapter 6 turns the previous chapter's astrological focus in a mythic direction. The chapter overall discusses the ten battles that Ohrmazd's creation fought against evil during Ahriman's attack on the world. That onslaught and creation's reaction are responsible for the nature of the world as we know it today, including the growth of the mountains (6C and compare *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* 3:26–33) and the proliferation of plants (6D) and animals (6E). As discussed further in chapter 34, at the end of days, after the Restoration of the world to its original state and the final vanquishing of evil, the earth will be again made flat and the mountains leveled to the ground.

Two parts of this chapter have received considerable scholarly attention. Section 6B retells the story of the battle between the star Sirius (Tištrya), the brightest star in the sky that is sometimes confused with the planet Mercury (Tir) in ancient sources (e.g., 6B:12), and the demon Apōš (meaning “drought”). One of the most important and complete astral myths preserved in the Iranian tradition, the *Bundahišn*'s version is based on the hymn to Sirius in *Yasna* 8 and other Avestan sources. As here, the *Avesta* describes how Sirius first assumed three forms, that of a man, a horse, and a cow, and made rain for ten days in each form. Then Sirius descended to earth in the form of a horse and was defeated in a contest against Apaōša, as he is called in the *Avesta*. After Ahura Mazdā himself offered a sacrifice, Sirius returned with renewed strength and bested his opponent, releasing the rain; the Avestan hymn goes on to describe Sirius's fight against the shooting stars.

This myth connects the lack of rain during the dry Iranian summer with two astral phenomena. The first is the month-long heliacal rising of Sirius, when the star is visible on the eastern horizon just before sunrise, in July, and the second is the meteor showers in August and September that precede the return of the rain in the fall.

Interestingly, the *Bundahišn*'s comparison of Sirius's strength to an arrow (also referred to as *tīr*) in 6B:13 may reflect another Iranian mythic tradition. Islamic-era historians Thā'ālebī, Ṭabarī, and Bīrūnī relate the story, only hinted at in earlier sources, of the archer Āraš (Avestan Ǝrəxšā, *Yašt* 8:6) who shot an arrow a superhuman distance to establish the borders of Iran.

Chapter 6F discusses Gayōmard's horoscope, which provides an astral explanation for his life and death at the hands of the Evil Spirit; while one generally thinks of horoscopes as predictive, retrospective horoscopes were common in late antiquity. At the moment of Ahriman's attack, the beneficent planet Jupiter was able to counterbalance the influence of the maleficent planet Saturn, causing Gayōmard to live on until the age of thirty (compare 5B:12–13 and the similar account in *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* 2:21). He dies when Saturn is again in its exaltation, at the height of its power, but Jupiter is in its dejection. This section also introduces other topics, such as the birth of the first man and the first woman, that are discussed in detail in chapter 14.

Further Reading

Lincoln, Bruce. 1983. “‘The Earth Becomes Flat’: A Study of Apocalyptic Imagery.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25: 136–153.

Panaino, Antonio. 1990. *Tištrya, Part I: The Avestan Hymn to Sirius*. Rome: IsIAO.

Panaino, Antonio. 1995. *Tištrya, Part II: The Iranian Myth of the Star Sirius*. Rome: IsIAO.

On the Stages of the Battle of Material Creation against the Evil Spirit

6A

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When the Evil Spirit burrowed through the sky, and he saw the usefulness of creation, the supremacy of the deities, and his own impotence, he wanted to scurry back out the way he came.² But the spirit of the sky arrayed himself against the Evil Spirit like a brave warrior clad in metal armor—that is the very description of the sky itself—and vowed to remain until Ohrmazd constructs around the sky a stronger defense than the sky itself.³ He set the *frawahrs* of the righteous warriors, with valiant horses and spears in hand, around the fortress like hair crowns the head, like righteous men guarding a fortress; that fortress, in which the righteous dwell, is called the Knowledge of the Righteous.

⁴ But the Evil Spirit did not find a way to scurry back; he saw the destruction of the demons and he himself made impotent, just as clearly as Ohrmazd saw his ultimate victory and the achievement of the Restoration of his creatures forever and ever.”

⁵ This was the spirit of the sky’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6B

¹ The waters fought the second battle.

² On the very day that the Adversary burrowed through, the star Sirius, which was in the water sign of Cancer, in the lunar mansion of ζ Hydræ—which some call Souls—reappeared higher¹ in the evening in the west.

³ For each month has its own zodiacal sign. The month of Tīr is the fourth month of the year, and Cancer is the fourth constellation from Aries. So the (natural) possession of Cancer, which belongs to Sirius, showed signs of

making rain. It caused the water to ascend to the clouds by the power of the wind.⁴ Sirius's assistants are Wahman and Hōm for guidance, divine Burz for assistance, and Ardā Fraward for determining the right measure.

⁵ Sirius transformed into three forms: the form of a man, of a horse, and of a cow. For thirty days and nights he flew through the light, and made rain for ten days and nights in each form. As astrologers say, "Each constellation has three forms."

⁶ Every drop of rain became as big as a basin of water used to celebrate the festival of Ābānīgān;² water covered the earth as deep as a man's height.⁷ The earth's vermin were all killed by the rain apart from a few, small winged ones who hid in the holes of the earth.

⁸ Then the spirit of the wind—who remained unmixed—moved through the wind in the atmosphere like the soul moves in the body, and swept the water to the edges of the earth, where it formed the Frāxkard Sea.

⁹ The dead vermin were left lying on the ground, their poison and stench mixing in the earth. In order to remove their venom, Sirius descended to the sea in the form of a white, long-tailed horse. The demon Apōš, in the form of a black, short-tailed horse, charged him and chased Sirius a *frasang* away.

¹⁰ Sirius asked Ohrmazd for strength, and Ohrmazd made him strong.¹¹ As it says:

"At once, the strength of ten young³ horses, ten young camels, ten young bulls, ten mountains, and ten rivers came to Sirius."

¹² He chased Apōš back one *frasang*.¹³ That is why they say:

"An arrow [*tīr*] with Sirius's strength."

¹⁴ Then Sirius took up water in the clouds—some say that a jug is the measuring instrument for that work—and he made it rain as fiercely as possible, the drops the size of a cow's head and a man's head, handfuls⁴ and fistfuls, large and small.

¹⁵ During the rainmaking, Spinjaruš and Apōš battled against them, and the Wāzišt fire brandished his mace, making the water boil in the clouds. Spinjaruš roared and bellowed from the blows of the mace, just as now the thunder and lightning from that same battle can be seen when it rains.

¹⁶ He made it rain for ten days and nights. The vermin's poison, which had been in the earth, mixed with the water. It made the water salty for it remained in the earth. From those seeds the vermin are still conceived.

¹⁷ Then, after three days, the wind calmed the waters all over the earth in the same way. Three great seas and twenty lakes were formed, and two sea-springs appeared: Čēčast and Sōwar, which are connected to the source of the

seas.¹⁸ He also caused two rivers to flow from the north. One went to the east and the other to the west: these are the Arang and the Weh rivers.

¹⁹ As it says:

“Ohrmazd first drew⁵ the depth and the courses of these rivers with his finger.”

²⁰ Both rivers circle the earth and mingle again in the Fräxkard Sea.²¹ When they began to flow, eighteen navigable rivers also flowed from the same source, then other waters flowed from those navigable rivers. All pour back into the Arang and the Weh, which bring benefit to the world and long life to the creatures.

²² This was water’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6C

⁰ The earth fought the third battle.

¹ When the Evil Spirit burrowed through, the earth shuddered. As the earth quaked, the essence of the mountains, which had been created in the earth, at that moment caused the mountains to begin to move.

First Harburz of good fortune, and then the other mountains throughout the earth. For when Harburz grew, all the mountains began to move, since all grew from the roots of Harburz. At that moment, they came up from the earth like trees whose branches stretch above and whose roots reach down below, and their roots crossed each other and made a web.² Afterward the earth could no longer tremble.³ As it says in the *dēn*:

“The mountains are the great bond of the earth.”

⁴ The route to the source of the waters lies in the mountains, below and above the roots of the mountains; that is, it flows through them, like the roots of trees in the earth, and like the blood that brings strength to the body through the veins.

⁵ Finally, apart from Harburz, all the mountains rose from the earth over the course of eighteen years, and men are helped and profited by them.⁶ As it says:

“They were created for the banquets of priests, warriors, and farmers.”

⁷ This was the earth’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6D

⁰The plant fought the fourth battle.

¹When the plant became withered, Amurdād, because he was appointed over plants, pounded a small part of it and mixed it with the water Sirius had brought. Sirius then made that mixture rain over the whole earth. ²Plants grew over all the earth like hair on the head.

³Ten thousand plants sprouted from that one, unique plant in order to counteract the ten thousand diseases that the Evil Spirit fabricated against creation. ⁴From these ten thousand, another one hundred thirty thousand different species of plants grew.

⁵The Tree of Many Seeds, created from the seeds of all those plants, sprouted in the Frāxkard Sea. The seeds of all the species of plants continue to grow from the seeds of that tree. ⁶Nearby was the Gōkarēn tree, created to withstand the foul breath of old age. It gave perfect aid to the world.

⁷This was the plant's first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6E

⁰The sole-created cow fought the fifth battle.

¹When it passed away, because of the plant essence within it, fifty-five species of grains and twelve species of medicinal plants grew from the limbs of the cow, from the earth.

²The light and strength in the seed of the cow was entrusted to the moon.

³The seed was purified in the moon's light, adorned with colors, and instilled with life.

⁴From there, a pair of cattle, male and female, then two of each species, which makes two hundred eighty-two, appeared on earth.

In the same way, it says in the *dēn* that two *frasang* makes eighteen *hās^ar*.

⁵The cattle's abode is the earth, the birds' is the air, and the fish swim in the water, which provide abundant nourishment for creation.

⁶This was the cow's first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6F

⁰ Gayōmard fought the sixth battle.

¹ It was determined in the horoscope of Gayōmard that, in the battle between the planets and the stars, he would live on for thirty years after the onslaught of evil.

² As it was said in the time before the onslaught of evil:

“Valiant Gayōmard was created for thirty winters of life and lordship.”

³ When the Adversary came, the star Jupiter was in the water sign of Cancer, in the Souls, in its own exaltation. Because of its superiority over its opponent (Ursa Major), it decreed the life of the soul of Gayōmard.

⁴ The star Saturn was in Libra, in the fourth house—which is the “under-ground Peg”—in its own exaltation, for the sake of its victory over its opponent (Polaris), it decreed the death of Gayōmard.

⁵ Since Jupiter was in its own exaltation in the Cusp of Souls and victorious over Saturn, it held off Gayōmard’s death for thirty years.

⁶ When Saturn returned again to Libra, in its own exaltation, at that time Jupiter was in Capricorn, which is its dejection.

On account of Saturn’s victory over Jupiter, death came to Gayōmard and he fell to the left side. ⁷ As he passed away, his seed entered the earth, just as now, too, all men spill their seed as they pass away.

⁸ Since Gayōmard’s body was made of metal, seven metals were revealed from his body.

⁹ His seed entered the earth and forty years later Mašyā and Mašyāne sprouted up; they were the source of the world’s human multitude, the demons’ destruction, and the Evil Spirit’s undoing.

¹⁰ This was Gayōmard’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6G

⁰ Fire fought the seventh battle.

¹ The Wāzišt fire stood against Spinjaruš during the rainmaking. The Farrōbag fire, the Gušnasp fire, and the Burzēnmihr fire are protectors of the world and defenders of creation. The other fires—those that sustain the lives of plants, mankind, and animals and make them grow and that order the creatures of the world—come from them.

² This was fire’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6H

⁰The stars fought the eighth battle against the fiendish planets.

¹Each one is set in battle against its own opponent, arrayed against its rival until the Restoration, as I have written in the chapter on the horoscope of the world.

²This was the stars' first battle with the Evil Spirit.

6I

⁰The deities, who cast the Evil Spirit, battered and defeated, to hell, fought the ninth battle.

¹As it says:

“The spiritual deities were vigilant and motionless⁶ for ninety days and nights during that battle.”

6J

⁰The unmixable stars fought the tenth battle, when they prevented darkness and sin from mixing with the upper region.

¹As it says:

“The glory of the good Mazdaean *dēn* was kept in place surrounding the sky like a girdle”—that is, like the *kustig*, adorned with stars and made by the spirits with three folds and four knots. ²Those stars will battle the Evil Spirit until the end, as I have written. The core of the fight is there; they call it, “the limit of purity in the Mixture.”

Chapter 7 continues the focus on Ahriman's attack on creation, in particular on the fate of the primordial plant, cow, and Gayōmard. After each one was destroyed by Ahriman, Ohrmazd took up their forms and consigned them to the stars (7:1), moon (7:5), and sun (7:8), respectively. This is why these celestial bodies now shine their light on earth.

A version of this story is already found in the *Avesta*. *Yašt* 12, dedicated to enumerating the dwelling places of Rašnu, the deity of justice, includes a reference to the “moon which contains the seed of the animal” (12:33) and “the swift-horsed, radiant sun.”

The idea of lunar preservation and purification was taken up by Mani, the third-century CE prophet of a syncretic, dualist religion known as Manichaeism. In Manichaean cosmology, those portions of good light mixed into the evil material world are collected and carried up to the moon by the savior known as the Third Messenger. From there, they enter the “ship of the sun” and are taken to paradise. Here as elsewhere, Manichaeism draws considerably on Iranian myth, cosmology, and ontology.

The chapter also mentions the three different essences of the stars: water essence, earth essence, and plant essence (7:2–3; compare *Sīh-rōzag* 2:13 and *Mēnōg ī Xrad* 49), a continuation of the astronomical discussions of chapters 2 and 5. This highlights, once more, the great eclecticism of the *Bundahišn*'s astrological and astronomical discussions.

Further Reading

Hintze, Almut. 2005. “The Cow That Came from the Moon: The Avestan Expression *māh-gaociθra*.” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19: 57–66.

On the Likenesses of the Creatures

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When the Evil Spirit burrowed through, he came not in a year, a month, or a day. Rather, because he was swift, he came in an hour. First, he came to one-third of the earth, second to one-fifth,¹ and finally to the whole earth. Then he came to the plant. Then Ohrmazd took up its form, carried it up to the star station, and entrusted it to the stars.” It is this light that the stars now shine back on the material world.

² As it says:

“Stars have water essence, earth essence, and plant essence.”

³ The stars with a water essence are Sirius, Canis Minor, ζ Hydræ, Padēwar, 41 Arietis, and seven² stars called the Pleiades. They all are of the water species. The stars with an earth essence are Ursa Major and Polaris; they are of the earth species. Apart from those, the others have a plant essence.

⁴ Then the Evil Spirit came to the cow. The cow fell toward the south, on his right side. It first folded its right leg. ⁵ Ohrmazd took up the form and likeness of the cow and entrusted them to the moon; it is this light that the moon shines back to the world.

⁶ As it says:

“The cattle-seed moon.”

That is, the form of cows and sheep remains in the moon station.

⁷ Then he came to Gayōmard. Gayōmard fell toward the south, on his left side. He first folded his left leg. ⁸ Ohrmazd took up his form and entrusted it to the sun; it is this light that the sun shines back on the world.

⁹ For the cow was like the moon and Gayōmard was like the sun. Ohrmazd fashioned them in the material world, but when the Adversary came he carried them high up above to shine back down on their place of origin, so that their glory, which the demons would use to rule, would not fall into their hands. If he had not done this, their light would not have shone on the material world. Like a fire joined to the brilliance of the endless light, when it is lit, it sheds light from above on its own place of origin.

¹⁰ It also says:

When death came to Gayōmard, the Evil Spirit first penetrated the pinky toe of his right foot, then let loose his hunger on his heart. Ohrmazd stood near him, countering the Evil Spirit by feeding Gayōmard meat and butter; he prevented the demons from tearing him apart by starvation. That is the reason why Gayōmard's vital breath was hardest in his chest. Then he came to his shoulder, and scurried inside the top of his head.

¹¹ The light left Gayōmard's body, as when a blacksmith strikes a red-hot iron on an anvil and it becomes black. ¹² This is also how people die now: first the legs wither, then the other limbs, and finally the vital breath itself. The vital breath turns hard in the chest and they eat food. People often mistakenly believe that the body is recovering, but then they die swiftly, and when they die their color changes.

The *Bundahišn*'s descriptions of lands, rivers, lakes, and mountains are heir to a long Iranian mythological and geographical tradition that also found expression in works in Arabic from the early Islamic period.

The *Avesta* contains a number of passages describing the locations and features of the lands inhabited by Iranians; the first chapter of the *Vidēvdād*, the *Mihr Yašt* (10:13–14), the *Frawardīn Yašt* (13:125, 127), and the *Zamyād Yašt* (19:1–8) are the most important of these. However, the regions described in the *Avesta* are not identical with the historic borders of the country of Iran, even at their greatest extent in the Sasanian period. Instead most scholars believe that the *Avesta* focuses on territories to the east, in what is now Afghanistan and Central Asia. It seems that this region may have been the home of the original Iranian tribes and also of the prophet Zoroaster, though this issue remains a matter of scholarly debate.

The following six chapters, as well as scattered geographic references later in the *Bundahišn*, rely on this Avestan background, but also on later developments in the science of geography, which appears to have flourished under the Sasanians. Several works touching on geography, originating probably in the circles of the Sasanian court, have been preserved in Middle Persian. These works, most importantly the *Šahrestānīhā ī Ėrānšahr*, list the regions of the Sasanian Empire and describe the distinguishing features of each. The *Bundahišn*'s recasting of Avestan geography has been modified to fit Sasanian traditions—or, at least, how those traditions were remembered in the early Islamic period.

Chapter 8, which can be seen as an introduction to this geography unit, describes the division of the earth into seven continents or climes (*kišwar*) and the special status accorded to the largest of them, Xwanirah, the site of creation and redemption and the home of the Iranians. This sevenfold division is referred to already in the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* 32:3) and attested in detail in the Avestan hymn to Mithra (*Yašt* 10:12–16, 67). The *Bundahišn*, like all Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature, retains the Avestan names of the continents rendered into Middle Persian.

The chapters that follow focus on the physical characteristics and qualities of the known world: its mountains, seas, rivers, and lakes. Scholars, in particular Carlo Cereti, have contributed extensively to identifying the bodies of water mentioned here.

Chapter 9's list of mountains can be divided into two parts, thus conveniently showing the dual origin of the *Bundahišn*'s geographic knowledge. The first portion of the chapter, up to paragraph 31, closely resembles a similar list included in *Yasna* 19:1–8—though the source may also have been a commentary on a related text—while the second half is likely based on Sasanian traditions of the “chronicles of the provinces” (*ayādgārihā i šahrihā*) mentioned in 9:32.

The list of seas in chapter 10 is predominantly devoted to mythic geography derived from the *Avesta*, such as the description of the water system of the cosmic ocean, the Frāxkard Sea (10:1–6 and compare *Yasna* 63:3–5 and *Yašt* 5:3–4), though the last few paragraphs (10:14–18) concern bodies of water not found in Avestan sources. Scholars have identified several of the seas mentioned in this chapter: the Pūdīg, already attested in the *Avesta*, is here the Persian Gulf; the Kamrōd, the Caspian Sea; the Syāwbun, the Black Sea; the Sadwēs, the Strait of Hormuz or Gulf of Oman; and the Kayānsē, the Hāmun-i Helmand in the region of Sistān, which straddles the present-day border of Iran and Afghanistan. The Kayānsē has an important role to play in the eschatological drama. Zoroaster's Glory (*xwarrah*) is preserved in this lake, and the mothers of the three future saviors, his posthumous children, will become pregnant after bathing in its water (33:43–45). The chapter also provides an interesting lunar explanation of the tides (10:12–13).

Chapters 11, 11A, 11B, and 11C concern rivers, in particular the Arang (Avestan *Rayhā*) and Weh Dāitī (Avestan *Dāitiā*) that both feature prominently in Iranian myth (compare *Wizidagīhā i Zādspram* 3:22–23). As mentioned in chapter 1A, Gayōmard and the cow were both created on the banks of the Dāitī. The chapters also discuss the ritual pollution of water and its purification (11C) and include a list of the different kinds of liquids in the world (11B). This latter section, which may be an interpolation, can be compared to the lists of animals, vermin, plants, and other good and evil creatures in the chapters that follow. The *Bundahišn*'s interest in such list making is indicative of its scholastic and scientific focus. Again, both the *Avesta* and Sasanian geographical works probably provided the sources for the rivers named here.

There is some overlap between the list of lakes in chapter 12 and the list of seas in chapter 10; Sadwēs and Kayānsē appear in both, for instance. Four

of the lakes mentioned can be tentatively identified with modern bodies of water: Lake Čēčast with Lake Urumieh; Lake Sōwar with the Čašma-yi Sabz in Afghanistan; Lake Xwārazm with the Aral Sea; and Lake Frazdān with Gaud-i Zira in the Sistān region. Kamindān, which the text describes as the location of one of the sources of hell (12:15–16), may be connected with the toponym of Kamandan, located between the cities of Qumis and Nishapur, or, reading Damindān, with a town on the border of Kerman. Both toponyms are found in tenth- and eleventh-century Arabic geographies such as Ibn al-Faqīh's *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān* and Abū Manṣūr al-Thā'ālibī's *Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-furs wa-siyarihim*.

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On the Nature of the Lands

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“There are thirty-three kinds of lands.”

² As I have already written in the chapter on the earth, when Sirius made the rains that produced the seas, the earth became moist everywhere. It split into seven pieces: some were high and some low, ranges¹ and basins. One piece, which made up half of the total land, was located in the middle and the other six pieces surrounded it. Those six pieces are as big together as Xwanirah. They were called continents [*kišwar*] because there were furrows [*kiš*].

³ The piece to the east they call the continent of Arzah; the piece to the west they call the continent of Sawah; the two pieces to the south are called the continents of Fradadafš and Wīdadafš; and the two pieces to the north are called the continents of Wōrūbaršn and Wōrūjaršn. The piece in the middle, as big as the others, is called Xwanirah. ⁴ It is not possible to go from continent to continent except by the guidance and power of the deities. ⁵ As it says:

“Between Arzah, Sawah and Xwanirah there is a sea, for a portion of the Frākard Sea surrounds² it. Between Fradadafš and Wīdadafš is a forest. Between Wōrūbaršn and Wōrūjaršn high mountains have sprung up in order to connect the continents, and so that it is not possible to go from one to the other.”

⁶ Of the seven continents, Xwanirah was given the greatest portion of goodness. The Evil Spirit fights most on this continent and fabricated the most destructive evil on Xwanirah on account of the beating he receives from it, because the Kayanids and heroes were created in Xwanirah. The good Mazdean *dēn* was created in Xwanirah, and was then taken to the other continents. Sōšāns, too, will be born in Xwanirah; he³ will destroy the Evil Spirit and bring about the Restoration and the Final Body. ⁷ One says this:

“Most people are in Xwanirah, and Xwanirah is the most powerful. The fiends in Xwanirah are also the worst.”

This too:

“Fiends were finally brought to the other continents from there.”

9

On the Nature of the Mountains

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“The first mountain that grew was the divinely fated Harburz. After it, all the mountains grew in eighteen years.² Harburz continued to grow for eight hundred years until it was complete: two hundred years to the star station, two hundred years to the moon station, two hundred years to the sun station, and two hundred years to the summit of the heavens.”

³ The other mountains grew out of Harburz, numbering two thousand two hundred forty-four: High Hugar; the Peak of Harburz; the Peak of Dāitī; the Arzūr Ridge; Mount Usindām; Mount Abursēn—one says it is called the mountain of Pārs;¹ Mount Zērēdaz, which is Mount Manuš; Mount Ēriz; Mount Kaf, which is Kafk; Mount Wādgēs; Mount Ušdāštār; Mount Arzūr; Mount Būm; Mount Rōyišnōmand; Mount Padišwārgar,² which they also call the greatest mountain in glory and bliss; Mount Rēwand; Mount Dārspand; Mount Bagīr; Mount Was-Škeft; Mount Gyāhōmand; Mount Wafrōmand; Mount Spandyād; Mount Kadrawasp; Mount Asnwand; Mount Kōirāh; Mount Sičidāw is one of those in Kangdiz, of which they say: Āšānīhōmand and Rāmišn ī Dādār ī Wēh are small mountains.³

⁴ I will describe them:

⁵ Harburz encircles the earth and is joined to the sky.⁶ The Peak of Harburz is where the sun, moon, and stars turn in and from which they turn back.

⁷ High Hugar is where the waters of Ardwīsūr leap down a drop as deep as one thousand men.

⁸ Mount Usindām is of shining metal—that is, of the substance of the sky—in the middle of the Frākard Sea whose water pours down into it from Hugar.

⁹ The Peak of Dāitī is in the middle of the world, as tall as one thousand men, on which stands the Činwad Bridge where souls are judged.

¹⁰ The Ridge of Arzūr is a peak at the gate of hell from which the demons all scurry—that is, they all do their fiendishness here.¹¹ As it says:

“Which is the most sorrowful place on earth? They say: The Ridge of Arzūr, at the gate of hell, where the demons scurry.”

¹² It also says this:

“Apart from Harburz, Abursēn is the largest mountain, for Abursēn is called ‘the mountain of all of Pārs,’ whose root is in Sagestān, its head in Xūzestān, and which even has a ridge in the east.”

¹³ Second largest is Mount Manuš, the mountain where Manuščihr was born. ¹⁴ Most of the other mountains of Pārs grew from them, as it says:

“Downstream and upstream⁴ villages are situated mostly around those three mountains.”

¹⁵ Mount Īriz is in May and Hamadān as far as Xwārazm. It grew from Mount Abursēn.

¹⁶ Mount Manuš is in Xwarāsān, on the border with Turkestān, and it is also joined to Abursēn.

¹⁷ Mount Kaf grew from the same Mount Abursēn.

¹⁸ Mount Ušdāštār is in Sagestān.

¹⁹ Mount Arzūr is in the direction of Rome. ²⁰ Mount Padišxwārgar is in Tabarestān, Gilān, and those districts.

²¹ Mount Rēwand is in Xwarāsān. The Burzēnmīhr fire sits on it; it is called Rēwand because it is majestic [*rāyōmand*].

²² Mount Wādgēs is on the border of Wādgēsān, in that district full of forests and trees.

²³ Mount Bagīr was held as a fortress by Frāsyāb the Turanian, and he made his dwelling deep inside. In our day, Šahr-Rām-Pērōz and myriad scattered towns are on it.

²⁴ Mount Was-Škeft is in Pārs, part of Mount Abursēn.

²⁵ Mount Gyāhōmand and Mount Wafrōmand are in Kāwul and in those districts that rose from them, as far as China.

²⁶ Mount Spandyād is by Lake Rēwand.

²⁷ Mount Kadrwasp is in the province of Tōs, and Lake Sōwar sits on top of it.

²⁸ Mount Kōirāh is in Īrānwēz.

²⁹ Mount Asnwand is in Ādurbādagān.

³⁰ Mount Rōyišnōmand is where plants grew.

³¹ Mount Būm is in every place, in every land, and in every province where they practice agriculture and cultivation.

³² With many different names and in great numbers, others have grown from these mountains, such as those found in the *Ayādgārihā ī Šahrihā*: Mount Wināwed; Mount Asprōz; Mount Pāhrgar; Mount Dumbāwand; Mount Rāwag; Mount Zarrēn; Mount Gēs-Baxt; Mount Dāwād; Mount Mēzan;

and Mount Marag, all of which have grown from Abursēn, Manuš, and the other mountains mentioned.³³ Mount Dāwād is joined to Xūzestān through Abursēn as well.

³⁴ Mount Dumbāwand, where Bēwarāsp was bound, is also from Padišwārgar.

³⁵ Mount Kōmiš is joined to Gurgān. They call Mount Kōmiš “Mount Came-to-Help”; that is where Wištāsp defeated Arjāsp. A mountain in the middle of the plain was split there by another mountain.³⁶ It says:

“In the battle of the *dēn*, when defeat was near for the Iranians, it split off from those mountains and fell down in the middle of the plain; the Iranians were thus saved and they called it ‘Came-to-Help.’”

³⁷ Mount Wināwed is on the same ridge as Wištāsp, toward Mount Rēwand; the abode of the Burzēnmīhr Fire lies nine *frasang* to the west of there.

³⁸ Rāwag Peak is in Zarāwad. Some call this place Zarāwad, some call it Rāwag Peak, and some call it Kalād. On both sides are mountains, and between them is a road, and a fortress is below. For this reason, some call the fortress built there below the Fortress of Kalād. This place is in the land of Sirāz.⁵

³⁹ Mount Asprōz is above China.

⁴⁰ Gēs-Baxt is in Pārs.

⁴¹ Pāhrgar is in Xwarāsān.

⁴² Mount Marag is in Lārān.

⁴³ Mount Zarrēn is in Turkestān.

⁴⁴ Mount Baystūn is in Spāhān and Garminšahr.⁶

⁴⁵ Aside from this current number, there are other mountains reckoned in the Mazdaean *dēn*. The small mountains are those that grew piece by piece in every place.

10

On the Nature of the Seas

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“The Fräxkard Sea is in the south, beside Mount Harburz, and covers one-third of this earth. ² It was made so broad [*fräxkard*] that it contains the water of one thousand lakes.” One says: “the springs of Ardwīsūr.” Another says: “the sources of the lakes.”

³ For every lake there is a water source from which water gushes out and pours into the lake. ⁴ Every lake and every water source are so wide and long that a man racing on a good horse would take forty days and nights to circle the sea, which amounts to one thousand eight hundred great *frasang*.

⁵ This is the reason why its water exceeds other waters in purity, moisture, and warmth.

Every day the water flows from the fonts of Ardwīsūr to the south—Mount Harburz is there—where one hundred thousand golden canals have been made. The water, with its natural warmth, passes through those canals up to High Hugar. There is a lake on its summit. The water pours into that lake and becomes pure. It returns by a different golden canal, as deep as one thousand men. A wide, golden branch of that canal juts out toward Mount Usindām, in the middle of the Fräxkard Sea. From there, a portion pours into the lake in order to purify it, and another portion spreads over the earth as moisture and droplets. All creatures gain moisture and healing from it, and those waters counteract the dryness of the atmosphere. ⁶ As it says:

“From the golden burrows of High Hugar the immaculate Ardwīsūr pours from a height as tall as one thousand men.”

⁷ There are three principal salt seas: Pūidīg, Kamrōd, and Syāwbun. ⁸ Of these, Pūidīg is the largest, and its waters ebb and flow. It borders the Fräxkard Sea and is connected to it. ⁹ Between the Fräxkard Sea and Pūidīg there is an arm of the sea they call Lake Sadwēs. A strong, high wind from Lake Sadwēs blows back all the coarseness, saltiness, and impurity that schemes to come from the Pūidīg Sea to the Fräxkard Sea. All that is pure and light goes to the Fräxkard Sea and the fonts of Ardwīsūr; all else flows back to Pūidīg. ¹⁰ A band joins this lake to the moon and wind; it rises and falls by the waxing

and waning of the moon, ^oas its revolution is to the south.¹ ¹¹ A band ties Lake Sadwēs to the star Deneb, which guards the seas and the region of the south, just as the Ursa Major protects the region of the north.

¹² Regarding the high and low tides, one says that two winds, which dwell in Lake Sadwēs, constantly blow from before the moon. They call one “exhalation” and the other “inhalation.” When “inhalation” blows, it is high tide, and when “exhalation,” blows it is low tide. ¹³ In the other seas, since the revolution of the moon has no effect on them, there is neither high tide nor low tide.

¹⁴ The Kamrōd Sea is in the north and it flows in Tabarestān. ¹⁵ Syāwbun is in Rome. ¹⁶ Among the lesser seas, the twentieth² is the Kayānsē Sea, which is in Sagestān. At first, there were no vermin, snakes, or frogs in it, and its water was sweet. ¹⁷ The water of the other, lesser seas was also sweet.

¹⁸ Also, on account of the stench of the salt seas, at first it was impossible to approach within a *hās^ar* of them. Little by little, through the blowing of the warm wind, that stench and salinity are driven out. When the Restoration comes, they will be sweet again.

On the Nature of the Rivers

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“Ohrmazd caused two rivers to flow from the northern side of Harburz: one goes to the west, which they call the Arang, and one to the east, which they call the Weh.”

² After these, eighteen other rivers have flowed out from the same source in Harburz, have gone down into the earth, and reappeared in Xwanirah, where other waters flow forth from them in great numbers. ³ As it says:

“They flow swiftly one after the other, like a man who recites an *Ašəm Vohū* prayer from the beginning.”

⁴ Those waters mix into the rivers Arang and Weh, ⁵ which both circle the edge of the earth and cross the seas, and all the continents drink from these springs of rivers. Then both meet in the Fräkard Sea and return to the source from which they first flowed. ⁶ As it says:

“Just as light enters Harburz and goes out through Harburz, so too the waters enter Harburz and go out through Harburz.”

⁷ It also says:

“The spirit of the Arang requested of Ohrmazd: ‘First give the Weh all the reverence that will benefit it, and only then give me immortality.’ The spirit of the Weh requested the same of Ohrmazd for the Arang’s sake.”

Because of their love and friendship for each other, they flow with equal strength.

Before the coming of the Adversary, they were still, and after the fiends will be struck down they will return to that stillness.

⁸ I will list the most famous of those eighteen principal rivers, apart from the Arang and the Weh, and the other rivers that flow from them: the Arang; the Weh; the Diglit, which is also called Digitl; the Frät; the Däitī; the Dargām; the Zand, the Harē; the Merv; the Hēdōmand; the Axōšir;¹ the Wātaēnī; the Zišmand; the Xwajand; the Baxl; the Mihrān, which they also call the Indian River; the Spēd; the Turt, which they also call the Kōr; the Ulē, which they also call the Egyptian River; the Harāz; the Tōrmēd; the Wandiš;² the Dārāja;

the Kāsag; the Šēd; the Pēdāmēhan,³ which is the water of the Čihromēhan;⁴ and the Mokrestān.⁹ I will describe them.

11A: On the Peculiarities of the Rivers

¹ The Arang River is the one that they say flows from Harburz and comes to the land of Syria, which they also call Šām, and crosses to the land of Egypt, also called Misr, where they call it the good river of Egypt.

² The Weh River crosses through the east, enters Sind, and pours into the sea in India. There they call it the Mihrān and also the Indian River.

³ The Frāt passes from its source on the border with the land of Rome through Āsurestān and flows into the Dīglit. Its abundance [frātīh]⁵ means that it nourishes the earth.

⁴ It is revealed that Manuščihr dug its source. He forced the water into one place. ⁵ As it says:

“I celebrate the Frāt, full of fish, that Manuščihr dug for the sake of his own soul: he took the water and nourished with it.”

⁶ The Dīglit River comes from Dēlmān and pours into the sea in Xūzestān.

⁷ The Dāitī River comes from Ērānwēz and goes to Gōbedestān;⁶ of all the rivers, it has the most vermin,⁸ as it says:

“The Dāitī River, full of vermin.”

⁹ The Dargām River is in Sugd.

¹⁰ The Zand River passes through the mountains of Panjestān and pours back into the Harē River.

¹¹ The Harē River flows from Mount Abursēn.

¹² The Hēdōmand River is in Sagestān, and its source is from Mount Abursēn. This is a different river than the one that Frāsyāb trampled.

¹³ The Axōšīr River is in Kōmiš.

¹⁴ The Zišmand River is toward Sugd; it flows back into the Xwajand River.

¹⁵ The Xwajand River goes between Samarkand and Fargān. It is also called the Yaxšard River.

¹⁶ The Merv River, full of glory, flows in the east from Mount Abursēn.

¹⁷ The Baxl River comes from Mount Abursēn to Mount Bāmīyān and flows into the Weh River.

¹⁸ The Spēd River is in Ādurbādagān. ¹⁹ They say that it was there that Dahāg asked a boon of Ahriman and the demons.

²⁰ The Turt River, which they also call the Kōr, comes from the Sea of Sirāz⁷ and flows into the Sea of Gurgān. ²¹ That river comes from its spring in Ādurbādagān and flows into the sea in Pārs.

²² The source of the Ulē River is in Spāhān; it flows through Xūzestān and pours into the Diglit; in Spāhān they call it the Misragān River.

²³ The Harāz River is in Tabarestān and its source is in Mount Dumbāwand.

²⁴ The Tōrmēd River also flows back to the Weh.

²⁵ The Wandiš River is in Pārs, which they also call the Sagān.

²⁶ The Kāsag River flows into the province of Tōs, where they call it the Kasaf. This is the Weh, though there they call it the Kāsag; in Sind they also call it the Kāsag.

²⁷ The Wātaēnī River is in Sagestān and its source is the Kayānsē Sea.

²⁸ The Pēdāmēhan⁸ and the water of Čihromēhan⁹ are in Kangdiz.

²⁹ The Dārāja River is in Ērānwēz, and the house of Pōrušāsp, the father of Zoroaster, was built on its banks.

³⁰ There are countless other waters, rivers, springs, and channels fed by those sources. ³¹ These rivers have one source, but in every province and in every place they are called by different names.

³² Frāsyāb, they say, trampled down one thousand wellsprings in the Kayānsē Sea: some were as deep as the height of a horse, some as deep as the height of a camel, some as deep as the height of a bull, and some as deep as the height of a donkey, large and small. In that same sea, he trampled down the source of the Zarrēnōmand, which is the shining Hēdōmand River, and he trampled down the source of the Wataēnī River and six water canals in the same sea, and he settled people there.

11B

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“There are seventeen kinds of water:

first, the moisture that sits on the plants;

second, the mountain streams, that is, rivers;

third, rain;

fourth, water from wells and swamps, and others that are not well known;

fifth, the semen of animals and men;

sixth, the urine of animals and men;

seventh, the saliva of animals and men;

eighth, the water in the skin of animals and men;
 ninth, the moisture and tears of animals and men;
 tenth, the blood of animals and men;
 eleventh, the oil of animals and men, which is the desire of the two existences;
 twelfth, the water in the copulation of animals and men;
 thirteenth, the sweat of animals and men;
 fourteenth, the fluid in the wombs of animals and men, which nourishes their young;
 fifteenth, that which is under the stalk of plants, it says: 'Every stalk has a drop of water at its base, and fire four fingers before it';
 sixteenth that which is mixed in the plants, which is called sap;
 seventeenth, the milk of animals and men."
² All these, spiritually or in bodily form, mix with these rivers, for water is both corporeal and embodied.

11C

¹ It says this:

"The spirits of three rivers, the Arang, the Marw, and the Hēdōmand, refused to flow in the world because of their discontent at the evil, defilement, and stagnation that they saw, until he [Ohrmazd] showed them Zoroaster, saying:

'I will create him, who, during the onslaught of evil, will pour the *Hōm* libation for them, will restore right and promise protection.'

² It says also this:

"Water that carries less bodily refuse than libation returns to its source in three years; that which carries bodily refuse and libation equally returns to its source in six years; and that which carries more bodily refuse than libation returns to its source in nine years. ³ So too, the growing plants strengthen their roots by the same measure, just as the prayers the righteous offer return to them by the same measure."

⁴ Regarding the Wātaēnī River, it says:

"Frāsyāb dug it with his mace, and when Ušēdar comes it will flow again to the depth of the height of a horse. So too the springs of the Kayānsē Sea. It is called the Kayānsē Sea because it is the resting place of the seed of the Kyanids."

12

On the Nature of Lakes

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“Many water springs appeared that are called lakes; those springs [čašmag] of water are like the eyes [čašm] of men. They are: Lake Čēčast, Lake Sōwar, Lake Xwārazm, Lake Frazdān, Lake Zarrēnōmand, Lake Astwāst, Lake Husraw, Lake Sadwēs, and Lake Urwēs.”

² I will describe them:

³ Lake Čēčast is in Ādurbādagān, has warm water, and repels animals, meaning that nothing can live in it. Its source is connected to the Frākard Sea.

⁴ Lake Sōwar is in the land of Abaršahr, on the peak of Mount Tōs, as it says:

“Profitable fortune, benevolence, goodness, increase, and generosity were created from it.”

⁵ It says about Lake Xwārazm:

“Profit and goodness¹ were created from it.” Ahrišwang is wealth, richness, fortune,² seemliness, and happiness.

⁶ Lake Frazdān is in Sagestān. ⁷ They say:

“When³ a righteous man throws something in it, the lake accepts it; if someone who is not righteous does, it throws it back out.”

⁸ Its ultimate source is connected to the Frākard Sea.

⁹ Lake Zarrēnōmand is in Hamadān.

¹⁰ It is revealed that Lake Astwāst’s water is undefiled and continuously flows into the seas. ¹¹ It is so luminous and filled with Glory that one says:

“Is that the sun’s brightness shining or did I see Lake Astwāst?”

¹² That water is necessary to prepare the Restoration.

¹³ Lake Husraw is four *frasang* from Lake Čēčast.

¹⁴ It is written about Lake Sadwēs that it is between the Frākard Sea and the Pūīdig Sea.

¹⁵ They say that in Kamindān there is an abyss from which smoke always rises. Nothing thrown into it is accepted, apart from animals. When they throw in an animal, it carries it down. ¹⁶ People say:

“Here is one of the sources of hell.”

¹⁷ Lake Urwēs is in High Hugar.

After astronomy and astrology (chapters 5–7) and physical geography (chapters 8–12), in chapter 13 the *Bundahišn* turns its attention to the living world. The chapter describes both the various species of plants that grew out of the body of the primordial cow (chapter 6E and *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* 3:43–50) and the 282 species of animals created from the cow’s seed, which was entrusted to the moon to keep it safe from Ahriman’s evil (chapter 7).

Plants are discussed in more detail elsewhere in the *Bundahišn*, particularly in chapter 16. This chapter’s main focus is the taxonomy of animal species. Like the rest of the material world, the good animals created by Ohrmazd are opposed by Ahriman’s evil countercreations, the vermin (*xrafstar*) (chapter 22). Good animals are organized into three kingdoms: grazing animals, mountain animals, and burrowing and aquatic animals (13:9). These kingdoms are further divided into five classes of cloven-hoofed grazing animals, equids, those with five-toed paws, birds, and aquatic creatures (13:10); examples of the largest and smallest members of each class are provided. The classes are organized into twelve families (13:11–27). The *Bundahišn* lists species that belong to each class, for example, the six species of horses: Arabian horses, Persian horses, mules, donkeys, onagers, and hippopotamuses. The remainder of the chapter concerns particularly important natural and supernatural animals, dogs, and the *Warišag* bird, for example, and describes how animals spread out over the world’s seven continents.

This chapter apparently relies on two “lost” sections of the *Avesta*: the *Dāmdād Nask*, on creation, and the *Čihrdād Nask*, on human genealogy, and their commentaries; in fact, the chapter contains two of the book’s few explicit references to the *Avesta* (*abestāg*, 13:3 and 26). While there are scattered references to the classification of animal species in *Yasna* 71:9, *Yašt* 3:74, and elsewhere, the lack of these lost *nasks*, as well as corruptions in the manuscript tradition, complicates the interpretation and translation of the chapter, especially of the names of the different animal species. In some cases, the translations are only best guesses, and in others no translation could be found at all.

These difficulties aside, it is evident that the classification system described here is neither exhaustive nor consistent and does not meet the standards of

modern scientific taxonomy. However, the chapter does resemble contemporaneous Islamic animal books. The most famous of these is undoubtedly the *Kitāb al-Hayawān* (Book of Animals) written by the ninth-century Basran intellectual al-Ǧāḥiẓ. Like the *Bundahišn*, though at greater length, al-Ǧāḥiẓ's work is a zoological catalogue and taxonomy that incorporates digressions on folklore, Quranic interpretation, philosophy, and other topics. While the chapter's animal classification system relies on Avestan sources and is likely informed by Greek and Indian material, the general similarity with al-Ǧāḥiẓ and other Islamic texts on animals situates the *Bundahišn* clearly in its Islamic context.

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On the Nature of the Five Forms of Animals

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When the sole-created cow passed away, in the place where his marrow scattered¹ grew fifty-five species of grain and twelve species of medicinal plants.”

² As it says:

“From the marrow, sesame and peas—because of their marrowy nature, they themselves are marrow;

from the horns, lentils;

from the nose [*wēnīg*], vetch [*wēnōg*];

from the blood, the fruit of the vine, from which they make wine—for this reason wine increases the blood so powerfully;

from the lungs [*sus*], mustard [*spandān*];

from the middle of the head, elecampane and marjoram to keep away the stench of Akōman, to oppose the coming of harm, and the other evils one by one.”

³ As it says in the *Avesta*^{o:2}

“He made one species of grain in the primal creation. He made it as fodder for horses.³ One species was there, and then he brought it to the Arang River.”

One said it was rice, another said it was wheat, the water drinker.

⁴ The seed of the cow was carried to the moon station, and it was purified there. He fashioned many species of animals from it: First, two cows, male and female, and then a pair of each species. They appeared in Ērānwēz in eight thousand *hās^ar* of land, which is like three *frasang*.⁵ As it says:

“On account of the worthiness of the cow, I created it twice: once as the cow and once along with the many species of animals.”

⁶ For thirty days and nights they went without eating. Afterward they first drank water, and then ate plants.

⁷ He fashioned the animals in three divisions.

⁸ As it says, “First goats and sheep, then camels and pigs, then horses and donkeys.”

⁹ For he first created grazing animals.

Second, he created mountain animals, those that roam widely, and flying creatures; these are undomesticated.

Third, he created aquatic and burrowing creatures.

¹⁰ In these three divisions, there are five genera:

The first genus is double cloven-footed grazing animals, of whom the camel is the biggest and a goat’s newborn kid the smallest.

The second genus is the donkey-footed, of whom the swift horse is the biggest and a donkey’s foal⁴ is the smallest.

The third genus has five-toed paws, of whom the dog is the biggest and the squirrel⁵ the smallest.

The fourth genus is birds, of whom the three-clawed Sēn is the biggest and the finch the smallest.

The fifth genus is aquatic creatures of whom the Kar fish is the biggest and the *phyg* is the smallest and *mtwk*.

¹¹ These five genera are divided into two hundred eighty⁶-two species.

¹² First, the five species of goat: oryx, small-goats, ibex, *nlyk*,⁷ and goats.

¹³ Second the five species of sheep: tailed sheep, tail-less sheep, dog-sheep, *tagal* sheep, and mouflon, which has horns, three humps, and is as big as a horse, and can be ridden. ¹⁴ As it says:

“Our ancestor Manuščihr had a mouflon as a mount.”

¹⁵ Third, two species of camel: mountain camels and grazing camels. One is suited to the mountains and the other to the plains; these have one hump or two humps.

¹⁶ Fourth, the thirteen species of cattle: white, dark-blue, red, yellow, black, mottled, deer, buffalos, giraffes, dolphins, *hwk’wš”n gāw plš*,⁸ *kajāw*, and other species of cattle.

¹⁷ Fifth, the six species of horses: Arabian horses, Persian horses, mules, donkeys, onagers, hippopotamuses, and the other species of horse.

¹⁸ Sixth, the ten species of dogs: the *pasušhōrw* [sheep-protecting], that is the shepherd’s; the *wišhōrw* [house-protecting], that is the watchdog; the *wohūnazg* [bloodhound], that is of the flock; jackals; water beavers, which they call water dogs; foxes; weasels, which they call *rasūg*; hedgehogs; otters; and squirrels, of which there are two species: one that is acclimated to live in burrows like foxes and weasels, and the other in forests like otters and hedgehogs—these have spines in their skin.

¹⁹ The seventh, the two⁹ species of hares and rabbits with two ears: one species dwells in burrows and the other in the forest.

²⁰ Eighth, the eight species of weasels: martens, black sables, squirrels, ermines,¹⁰ stone martens, stoats, white ermines, and other species of weasel.

²¹ Ninth, eight species of rats: common rats; musk rats that can counteract stench; wolfsbane rats that eat wolfsbane; black rats, which are the adversaries of serpents that live in great numbers by the sea; and other species of rats.

²² Tenth, the one hundred ten species of birds: there are thirteen species such as the Sēn bird; the Karšift; eagles; vultures,¹¹ which they call *dālman*; crows; owls; roosters, which they call *parōdarš* [he who foresees the dawn]; and cranes.

²³ Eleventh, bats: There are two that have milk and nourish their young at their breasts, the Sēn bird and bat. ²⁴ As it says:

“Bats were created in the likeness of three species: dogs, birds, and rats. For they fly like birds, have teeth like dogs, and dwell in burrows like rats.”

²⁵ He created one hundred ten bird species in eight kinds. He scattered them just like a man scatters seeds, letting the seeds fall to the ground between his fingers: big, middling, and small.

²⁶ Twelfth, he created ten species of fish: Araz fish, Arzuka, Marzuka, and others named in the *Avesta*.

²⁷ Each species is then separated into subspecies, until in total there are two hundred sixty-two species.

²⁸ Regarding dogs, it says:

“Then he created them from the star station, which is in the direction of the constellation Ursā Major, a *yūjyast* from men for protecting the cattle.”

They are a mixture of mankind and cattle, and this is why they are called dogs [*sag*], because they are one-third [*se ēk*] mankind. He created them swift, shod and dressed, sleepless, diligent, alert, with fourteen sharp teeth, and as leaders of herds. For a herd of cattle accompanied by a dog will remain braver.¹² Dogs protect them at the approach of the greater fear—the fearsome lion—and the lesser fear, the skulking jackal.

²⁹ Ohrmazd said when he created the Warišag bird, the bird of prey:

“I have created you, O Warišag bird, from whom I have more torment than delight! For you follow the wishes of the Evil Spirit more than mine. Like the wicked man who is not sated by wealth, you too are not sated by killing other birds. But if I had not created you, O Warišag bird, then the Evil Spirit would have created the winged wolf, in the form of a hawk,¹³ that would not have let the creatures live.”

³⁰ Ohrmazd created so many species of animals so that when the Evil Spirit destroys one, another would remain; because of his inability to destroy them all, he might struggle to destroy them less. ³¹ It also says this:

“He first created animals in the summer, that is, during the month of Frawardīn on the day of Ohrmazd at the beginning of the summer. They became pregnant during the month of Frawardīn the following year.”

³² Among them, the camel and the horse were the first to think of desiring offspring, while the pig was the last.

³³ Within nine years, those animals came to all seven continents: in three years to the six continents and in another three years to Xwanirah. ³⁴ As it says:

“First the Kar fish, which is the Araz, went to Sawah through the waters of the Arang River. Then the animals went to Wōrūbaršn and Wōrūjaršn, the Sēn bird went to the Frāxkard Sea, and the mighty horse went to Fradadafš and Wīdadafš. ³⁵ They went there six months before the birds. Within a year, mountain animals, apart from the Sēn bird, arrived. In two years, aquatic and burrowing animals arrived, apart from the Kar fish. In three years, grazing animals arrived, apart from the horse.”

³⁶ Among the cattle was the Bull Srisōg, which they call Hadayōš; among the donkeys was the three-legged donkey; among the birds, too, was the Čamrūš; and among the fish, the Wās of Five Hundred Lakes. ³⁷ I will describe their deeds in their own chapter.

14

Chapter 14 provides an account of the first human couple, Mašyā and Mašyāne, and their offspring, the progenitors of the diverse races of mankind. Two additional passages focus on “others”: women (14A) and monkeys and bears (14B).

Gayōmard, as earlier chapters of the *Bundahišn* tell us, was the first man who was killed during Ahriman’s attack on and pollution of creation. The myth of Gayōmard also appears elsewhere in the Iranian tradition. In the *Avesta*, Gayōmard is the prototype of mankind, without sharing fully in humanity himself, while here and in other Middle Persian texts he is recast and begins to take on royal attributes. This trait becomes dominant in the early Islamic histories and in the *Shahnameh*, which portray Gayōmard as the first Iranian king who, in poet Abd al-Qasim Ferdowsi’s retelling, ruled thirty years and gave birth to a son, Syāmag.

In our chapter’s version, Mašyā and Mašyāne are twins born of a rhubarb plant that grows from Gayōmard’s final, dying emission of semen (14:5–6). After being tempted by the demons, the pair consummate their relationship (14:28–29). Such sexual relationships between first-degree relatives—mother and son, father and daughter, or, as here, brother and sister—are known as *xwēdōdah*. Though Middle Persian texts hail *xwēdōdah* as a cardinal virtue, it is unclear how much it was actually practiced historically among Zoroastrians.

Pure and impure sexual relations have a strikingly prominent role in this chapter, given the lack of discussion of purity and pollution, a central theme in Zoroastrian legal works, elsewhere in the *Bundahišn*. Gayōmard’s final emission of semen is purified by the sun and watched over by Néryōsang and Spandarmad (14:5). This special protection is not only necessary because this seed holds the future of the human race. It is also required because emissions of semen were considered “bodily refuse” (*hixr*), just like blood, nail clippings, and any part of the body separated from it, and thus impure.

Similarly, sexuality plays a central part in Mašyā and Mašyāne’s temptation by the demons. Having gained a stranglehold on their minds, for fifty years the demons keep the pair from any thought of intercourse (14:28). This is a threat not only to their individual happiness but to the survival of humanity.

This episode demonstrates that in Zoroastrianism, sexuality is not only not a sin; it is a necessary virtue. As the pair say when they consummate their relationship, one suspects not without some humor, “For fifty years we should have been doing this!” (14:29).

The chapter ends with human genealogy, making special mention of Tāz and Tāzag, the eponymous progenitors of the Arabs, and Höšang and Gūzag, the forefathers of the Iranians (14:34).

In chapter 14A, Ohrmazd bemoans having created women, who are sexually voracious and the offspring of the demon Jeh, who awakens Ahriman from his slumber in chapter 1, but Ohrmazd complains that he could not have ensured the continuation of the human race any other way. The section parallels Ohrmazd’s lament over having created the Warīšag bird in 13:29.

Chapter 14B focuses on Africans, monkeys, and bears (14B:2). This castigation of Africans as the offspring of demons and human beings may have a connection with the extensive exploitation of African slaves during the first Arab caliphates and their ensuing dehumanization.

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On the Nature of Mankind

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“I fashioned ten species of men. The first was the bright, white-eyed Gayōmard. The others up to the tenth species, including the ninth, were like Gayōmard; the tenth is the monkey, which is called the lowest of mankind.”

² When Gayōmard became sick he fell to his left side. ³ Lead appeared from his head, tin from his blood, silver from his brain, iron from his legs, copper from his bones, crystal from his fat, steel from his arms, and gold from his departing spirit. That is why now, because of its value, men are willing to give their spirit for it.

⁴ Death entered Gayōmard’s body from the left side,¹ and thereby death descended on all creatures until the Restoration.

⁵ As he was passing away, Gayōmard emitted seed that was purified in the light of the sun. Nēryōsang kept watch over two parts of it, and Spandarmad accepted one part. It was in the earth for forty years. ⁶ At the completion of forty years, Mašyā and Mašyāne sprouted from the earth in the form of a rhubarb plant with a single stalk and fifteen leaves. The two were joined together and their hands were fixed beside their ears; they had the same stature and the same appearance.

⁷ Glory descended upon them both. Since they had the same stature, it was unclear which was male and which female. The creator Ohrmazd’s Glory was with them, that is the Glory given to mankind.

⁸ As it says:

“Which was created first, Glory or the body?

Ohrmazd answered: Glory was created first and the body was created afterward. Glory was created in the body, fashioned for its proper function, and the body was created for its proper function.”

⁹ The explanation is this: The soul was created first and the body after. The soul directs the body’s proper function.

¹⁰ Then both Mašyā and Mašyāne changed from plant form to human form, and Glory spiritually entered them; that is, through the soul. Now, too, that plant is likened to a sprouting tree whose fruits are the ten races of men.

¹¹ Ohrmazd said to Mašyā and Mašyāne:

“You are human beings, the parents of the world. I have created you with full awareness. Do work, follow the law, and practice full awareness: think good thoughts, speak good words, perform good actions, and do not worship the demons.”

¹² They both had the same first thought about each other. They thought: This is a human being. ¹³ The first action they did was walking and thinking. ¹⁴ The first words they spoke were:

“Ohrmazd created the water, the earth, plants, animals, the stars, the moon, the sun, and every good thing revealed through righteousness.”

One says: “Both the principal and the interest therefrom.”

¹⁵ Then the Adversary burrowed into their minds and polluted them. They howled:

“The Evil Spirit created the water, the earth, plants, animals, and all other things.”

¹⁶ As it said:

“The first false speech that deceived² them was uttered at the compulsion of the demons.”

The Evil Spirit robbed them of their first happiness with that false speech. Both became wicked and their souls will remain in hell until the Final Body.

¹⁷ For thirty days, their food was to be purified and they dressed in garments of grass. ¹⁸ After those thirty days, they came upon a white-haired goat in the wilderness. They suckled the milk from its udders with their mouths.

¹⁹ When they had drunk the milk, Mašyāne³ said:

“The peace I felt before drinking this semen-milk was greater than it is now that, having drunk it, there is something bad in my body.”

²⁰ By this second false speech, the demons gained power. They stole their taste for food so that only one-hundredth remained.

²¹ After another thirty days and nights, they came upon a dark sheep with white cheeks and killed it. Directed by the spiritual deities, they made a fire from lotus and box tree, as these two woods burn the best. They kindled the fire with their mouths and burned as fuel first straw, olive, frankincense, and fibers of date palm.⁴ They prepared the sheep on a spit. They cast three handfuls of the sheep’s flesh into the fire and said:

“This is the portion of the fire.”

They threw one part to the heavens and said:

“This is the portion of the gods.”

²² A vulture flying over them grabbed it and ate it like a dog eating its first meat.

They first covered themselves with leather garments, then they spun ^ohemp against the cold of the wilderness.²⁵ They made woven clothes and covered themselves.

²³ They dug a hole in the earth. They melted iron and beat it on a stone. They made a blade, cut wood with it, and made wooden bowls.

²⁴ On account of their ingratitude, the demons became oppressive ²⁵ and brought upon them the sin of jealousy. They assaulted one another and struck and tore at each other, and pulled out each other's hair.

²⁶ Then the demons howled from the gloom:

"You are human beings! Worship the demons so long as jealousy dwells in you."

²⁷ Mašyāne sprang forward, milked a cow, and poured the milk toward the north.

²⁸ Through that demon worship, the demons became powerful. They made them so indolent⁶ that for fifty years they had no desire for any intercourse. Even if they had had intercourse, there would have been no children.

At the end of fifty years, the desire for a son occurred in their minds. First to Mašyā and then to Mašyāne. Mašyā said to Mašyāne:

"When I see your belly,⁷ mine becomes big and rises up."

Then Mašyāne said:

"Brother Mašyā! When I see your penis, my belly⁸ trembles."

²⁹ Desire overwhelmed them both. And as they were fulfilling their desire, they thought:

"For fifty years we should have been doing this!"

³⁰ After nine months, twins were born, a girl and a boy. Because the children were so sweet, the mother devoured one and the father the other. Then Ohrmazd removed the thought of the children's sweetness from the minds of their parents, and set as much desire to nourish them in its place.

³¹ They had six pairs of twins, male and female; all the brothers married the sisters. Along with Mašyā and Mašyāne, these were the first six pairs.

³² All of them gave birth to a child in their fiftieth year and died in their hundredth year.

³³ Of those six pairs, one was called Syāmag, a boy, and Wašāg, a girl. Twins were born from them. The name of the boy was Frawāg and the girl was called Frawāgē. ³⁴ From them fifteen pairs of twins were born, each pair of a different race. Their progeny populated the whole world.

Nine of those fifteen races crossed the Fräkard Sea on the back of the Bull Srisōg to the other six continents and settled there. Six races remained in Xwanirah.

One of those six was a pair, male and female, called Tāz and Tāzag.⁹ They lived in the Arab [*tazīgān*] desert; this is the reason why the Arab desert has that name.

Another pair was a man called Hōšang and a woman named Gūzag. The Iranians are descended from them. The people of Māzandarān are descended from another pair of twins.

³⁵ This reckoning includes those in Iranian lands and non-Iranian lands; those in the land of Tür; those in the land of Salm—that is the land of Rome; and those in the land of Sīn—that is China; those in the land of Dāh¹⁰ and those in the land of Sind; and those in the six other continents, all from the line of Frawāg son of Syāmag son of Mašyā.

³⁶ The ten races of men mentioned at the beginning, plus the fifteen races descended from Frawāg, makes twenty-five human species, all from the seed of Gayōmard: terrestrial men; aquatic men; men with ears and eyes on their chests; one-legged men; men with wings like bats; forest-dwellers with tails and fur on their body like animals called bears; monkeys; people of Māzandarān¹¹ who are seven times a normal man's height; thumb-sized midgets who are one-sixth of a normal man's height; Romans; Turks; Chinese; Dāyīgān¹²; Arabs; Sindhis; Indians; Iranians; and others whom they say inhabit the six continents. Many other, newer races came from each of these races.

³⁷ Here, too, there was mixture on account of the Adversary. Such as Africans from the mixture of terrestrial and aquatic men, amphibious men who live on both land and water, and others of this kind.

14A: On the Nature of Women

¹ When Ohrmazd fashioned woman he said:

“You, too, are my creation, you who belong to the Adversary's race of whores. I have created a mouth near your anus so that sex seems to you like the sweetest taste of food in your mouth. You are my helper since man is born from you, but you are also my tormentor; I am Ohrmazd. If I had found a vessel in which I could make man, I would never have created you, you who belong to the Adversary's race of whores. But I searched under the water and

on the earth, among the plants and the animals, on the highest mountains and in the deepest riverbeds, and I did not find a vessel to make righteous men but women, the Adversary's whore."

14B: On the Nature of Monkeys and Bears

¹ It also says this:

"When Glory departed from Jam on account of his fear of the demons, he took a demon for a wife and gave a demon to his sister Jamag to wed. The monkeys and the bears, the tailed forest-dwellers, and the other sinful races descend from them. His line did not continue."

² Regarding Africans, it says:

"During his reign, Azdahāg set a demon on a young woman and a witch on a young man. They copulated under his gaze, and from that blameful¹³ act came black people."

³ When Frēdōn came, they scurried away from Iran and settled on the shores of the sea. Now with the overrunning of the Arabs, they have again mixed in Iran.

Chapter 15 provides the scientific counterpart to the previous chapter's mythological account of human origins. The chapter lays out a theory of conception in human beings (15:1–7) and in various animal species (15:8–13). Male and female seed are distinguished by their different functions, as well as their differing qualities in the rubric of the theory of humors: hot and dry in the case of male seed, cold and moist in the case of female seed. Male and female seed also form different parts of the embryo, with the father contributing the limbs, bones, and hair, as well as the mother's milk, and the mother the blood and muscle. Strikingly, the chapter considers menstruation to be a biological process that is a necessary part of the reproductive cycle, and not, as is the case in Zoroastrian ritual law, a sign of impurity (compare 4:3–6).

The reference to the theory of the four humors, which is discussed at greater length in parallel passages in *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* 30, points to the chapter's dialogue with Greek medicine, especially in the writings of the famed second-century CE physician and philosopher Galen. Galen was a syncretic thinker who incorporated ideas from pre-Socratic thinkers like Democritus and Anaxagoras as well as from Aristotle, even when they disagreed; the *Bundahišn*'s eclecticism could reflect Galen's own. As in our chapter, Galen proposed a dual-seed theory of conception and divided female and male into opposing categories of hot/dry and cold/wet. Galen also revived the earlier Hippocratic idea that male seed originates in the brain, as in 16:4. While the role of menstrual blood is not explained consistently in Galen's account of conception, in some cases he identifies it as female seed, following Aristotle. Galen also proposed a role for the uterine tubes (see 13:5), which had been discovered by the third-century BCE anatomist Herophilos.

Scholars disagree as to when Iranians first began studying and practicing Greek and Hellenistic medicine, with some arguing that Greek doctors were present already in the Achaemenid court. However, certainly by the late Sasanian period, Galen's writings, and Greek medical literature as a whole, were translated and adopted in Iran. According to the Byzantine historian Agathias, seven Greek Neoplatonists sought refuge at the Sasanian court of Khosrow I to escape persecution at the hands of Emperor Justinian, who

closed the School of Athens in 529 CE. One of these refugees was Priscian of Lydia, who composed his *Solutiones ad Chosroen* on physics, the theory of the soul, meteorology, and biology for the Sasanian king of kings. This process only accelerated and expanded under the Abbasid dynasty beginning in the eighth century, as part of the larger movement to translate Greek literature into Arabic. The *Bundahišn* could be relying on either or, more likely, both of these engagements with the Greek tradition.

The accompanying chapter 15A concerns the gender of various creations. The sky, metal, wind, and fire are only male, while water, earth, plants, and fish are only female, though this final statement contradicts the later description of the asexual reproduction of fish (15A:7–8). Aside from fish, the list seems to follow the gender division of the seven Amahraspands, four of whom, including Ohrmazd, have a male association, while the rest have a female one.

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On the Nature of the Birth of All Species

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“If a woman is approached by a man up to ten nights after she washes following her menstruation, she becomes pregnant more easily.”

So, too, horses, donkeys, and onagers up to seven nights; dogs and pigs up to five nights; and sheep, goats, and cows¹ up to one night; burrowing creatures and aquatic creatures, too, up to one night after.

² Menstruating women and menstruating animals are in seclusion [*wardag*] because when animals are in heat [*wardaghīh*] they discharge blood.

³ A woman can thus become pregnant until she menstruates again, but during those first ten nights she becomes pregnant more easily. Having washed herself after menstruation, when the time for pregnancy has arrived, as long as the man’s seed is stronger, the child will be a boy. If the woman’s seed is stronger, a girl will be conceived. If both seeds are equal, there will be twins or triplets.

⁴ If the male seed comes first, it becomes fat; it makes the woman grow and become stout. If the female seed comes first, it becomes blood; the woman is weakened by it. The female seed is cold and moist, it flows from the side and is red and yellow in color. The male seed is hot and dry, it flows from the brain, and it is white and blue in color. ⁵ The female seed always comes first and circulates in the uterine tubes [*kadaghā*].² The male seed settles on it and fills the uterine tubes; whatever excess remains turns back into blood and enters the woman’s veins. During birth, it returns to the breasts as milk that nourishes the child after birth; that is, all milk comes from the male seed. Then the male seed and the female blood mix and bind together, like milk and whey, in a cocoon in the opening of the uterine tubes.

⁶ Donkey’s semen remains liquid for forty days; of men, the different species of horses, oxen, and others, for thirty days; of sheep, for sixteen days; of dogs, for ten days; of foxes, for seven days; of weasels, for five days; and of rats, for six days.

It remains in a mixed state for three days, semen and blood, then grows like a lump³ sprouting eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. ⁷ The hands, feet, limbs,

all⁴ the bones, and hair are from the father; the blood and muscle are from the mother.

⁸ Mother camels become aware of their pregnancy in six months; people, horses, and cattle in five months; weasels in one month; and rats in fifteen days. Growth depends on what food the mother eats.

⁹ Camels are born after twelve months; people, the different species of horses, and cattle after ten months; sheep after five months; dogs after five months; foxes and pigs after three months; weasels after two months; and rats after one month.

¹⁰ Regarding birds, it says that eagles, vultures, Sēn birds, and other large birds remain forty days as semen, thirty days in a mixed state, fifteen days in the egg, and ten days until their wings grow. Others remain seven nights as semen, seven nights in a mixed state, seven nights in the egg until they hatch, and seven nights until their wings grow.

¹¹ This, too: The chick is conceived from the yolk of the egg, which is like milk, and the white is like an animal's flesh.⁵ For the egg has nourishment from the yolk and the white. As long as it is in the white of the egg, it lives on it like a child who lives on milk after it is born. When it has eaten the white, like milk, it becomes a chick and hatches. Some chicks gather their own grain, like roosters, and others' mothers gather it for them because they do not have wings.

¹² Roosters, which are also called *parōdarš* birds and foreseers, lay an egg every day: some lay them in secret, and some in the open among people. Roosters are the only birds of this kind.

¹³ Mountain buzzards, which they also call small mountain hawks, migrate to warm regions in summer and to cold regions in winter. They have chicks three times a year: the first time the chick lives in the winter, the second time in cold and warm seasons, and the third time in summer. Their chicks eat worms.

15A

¹ It says this, too:

“Four things are male and four female: the sky, metal, wind, and fire are male, and never otherwise. Water, the earth, plants, and fish are female, and never otherwise. The rest of creation can, then, be male and female.”

² As it says about fish:

“During the season of desiring offspring, they go down into the running water to a depth of one *hās^ar*, which is one fourth of a *frasang*. They swim down in the water two by two, then swim back up the same way one *hās^ar* against the current. In that coming and going, they rub their bodies together and their sweat mingles⁶ until both become pregnant.

³ In the Fräxkard Sea, the Kamrōd Sea, and other lakes, if there is no tide or movement of the water, they do the same thing when the wind ripples and stirs the water; it seems just like running water to them. ⁴ These fish feel the desire for offspring in shallow water, and give birth in deep water.”

⁵ It says about the Wās of Five Hundred Lakes that five hundred of its young reach maturity and two thousand of the Kar fish; this is the number that they nourish. Nine thousand Arzuka fish reach maturity every year, eight thousand Marzuka fish, seven thousand Warzuka fish, six thousand Takawirō fish, five thousand Spigzak fish and Atezak fish, four thousand Pašmāzag fish, and five thousand Somakčit fish. ⁶ These are names of fish in the *Avesta*.

⁷ Fish also have eggs. Each pair of fish is in the water,⁷ and there is a pair in each egg.⁸ The eggs mature. Like animals, they are round, each according to its own size. They nourish them when they have laid the eggs in a hole in the womb to which the entrance of the egg attaches. They nourish the eggs in the water and they hatch. Little fish come out of them one by one, and then grow, each according to its own size. ⁸ When the fish return to the deep water to lay eggs, they eat the superfluous eggs and scatter and nourish the others.

⁹ In the same way, water, earth, and plants nourish their own offspring; that is, there are no males.

¹⁰ Fish become pregnant in the month of Šahrewar, that is, the intercalary month of Tir, in the spring. They give birth in the month of Frawardīn, that is, the intercalary month of Spandarmad, during the festival of Hamspasmēdim.

¹¹ Among male birds, only roosters lay eggs; some even lay them when people are watching.

16

Chapter 16 is devoted to a detailed classification of plants and fruit, which is related to chapter 13's classification of animals; both chapters can be seen as taxonomical commentaries on the Avestan myth (compare *Yašt* 13 and *Vidēvdād* 3, 8, and 20) that plants and animals were created, respectively, from the body and seed of the sole-created cow (13:1 and 16:3). Plants are divided into fifteen kinds based on their growing season (perennial or annual), edibility, fragrance, and use.

Chapter 16 includes a myth that explains the seasonal pollination of the earth, connected to the astronomical myth of Sirius, by means of the prototypical Tree of Many Seeds (*wanī was-tōhmag*) (16:4). The chapter also refers to a second mythologized plant, *Hōm* (Avestan *haōma*; Vedic *soma*), used to prepare the elixir of immortality at the end of days (34:23). The accompanying chapter 16A is dedicated to flowers and their association with the deities of the Zoroastrian calendar.

Despite errors that have accumulated during the text's manuscript transmission, these chapters have provided scholars with important and otherwise unattested names of plants and flowers; some are still matters of debate and can be only tentatively identified and translated.

Just as interesting as philology, though, is the evidence of agriculture and trade in the early Islamic period. Already under the Sasanians, Iran traded extensively with India, China, east Africa, and Southeast Asia. Sasanian Zoroastrian merchants often triumphed over the Romans, and later Byzantines, in a long-term battle for control over the land and sea trade routes. The diversity of the plant species mentioned in the chapter, many of which came from distant corners of the ancient world, attests to this trade and the subsequent cultivation of crops far from their points of origin. Under Islamic empires, when the southern and eastern Mediterranean basin were united in one political, social, and economic unit with west Asia, this phenomenon only increased and expanded.

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On the Nature of Plants

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“Before the coming of the Adversary, plants had no thorns or bark. Then, after the onslaught of evil, they became rough and thorny.” For though the Adversary mixed with everything, he mixed with the plants most of all. ² That is why there are many plants mixed with venom, such as wolfsbane and marking nut, that are poisonous; men and animals who eat them die.

³ Fifty-five species of grains; twelve species of medicinal plants, which came from the sole-created cow; ten thousand species of plants, among them the principal plants; and one hundred thirty subspecies of plants grew on the earth.

⁴ From all these seeds, the Tree of Many Seeds grew in the Frāxkard Sea, on which were the seeds of all the plants along with those from the sole-created cow. Every year the Sēn bird shakes the tree and mixes the seeds in the water. Sirius lifts them up and pours them on the continents as rainwater.

⁵ Near that tree grows the white, healing, immaculate *Hōm* in the spring of Ardwīsūr. Whoever eats it becomes immortal; they call it the Gōkarēn tree. As it says:

“*Hōm* that keeps away death.”

At the Restoration, they will prepare immortality from it. It is the master of plants.

⁶ Plants are of the following several kinds: wood trees, fruits, grains, flowers, herbs, vegetables, spices, grass, wild flowers, medicinal plants, gums, firewood, plants for fragrance, plants for oil, plants for dyeing, and plants for cloth. ⁷ I will describe them:

⁸ Whatever¹ bears inedible fruit and is perennial, such as cypress, plane, white poplar, box, sissoo, tamarisk, and others of this kind, are called trees.

⁹ Whatever bears edible fruit and is perennial, such as date, jujube, grape, quince, apple, citron, pomegranate, peach, pear, fig, walnut, almond, and others of this kind are called fruit. ¹⁰ Whatever is perennial, whether its fruit is edible or not, is called a tree.

¹¹ Whatever is suitable for daily consumption and whose stem withers when its fruit is taken, such as wheat, barley, rice, pea, lentil,² vetch, millet, sorghum, chickpea, and others of this type, are called grains.

¹² Whatever has fragrant leaves, is cultivated by hand and is perennial, is called an herb.

¹³ Whatever has fragrant blossoms, is cultivated by hand, is seasonal or blossoms seasonally from a perennial root, such as rose, narcissus, jasmine, dog rose, tulip, colocynth,³ pandanus, champak, iris, saffron, safflower, violet, the flower of the palm-tree, and others of this type are called flowers.

¹⁴ Whatever has fragrant fruit or blossoms, is not planted by hand, and is seasonal, is called a wild flower.

¹⁵ Whatever is fodder for large and small cattle is called grass.

¹⁶ Whatever is used in appetizers is called a spice.

¹⁷ Whatever is suitable to be eaten with bread and main dishes, such as rue, celery, coriander, watercress, leek, and others of this kind, is called a vegetable.

¹⁸ Whatever is like hemp, reed, cotton, and others of this type is called cloth.

¹⁹ Whatever has a fatty marrow, such as sesame, nigella sativa,⁴ hemp seeds, olive, and others of this type, is called oil.

²⁰ Whatever can be used to color cloth, such as saffron, brazil wood, turmeric, woad, madder, indigo, and others of this kind, is called a dye.

²¹ Whatever has fragrant roots, bark, or wood, such as frankincense, juniper, costus, aloe, sandalwood, speckled basil, cardamom, camphor, lemon balm, and others of this type, is called fragrance-wood.

²² Whatever comes from the sticky part of plants is called gum.

²³ The cut wood of all these plants—dry or wet—is called firewood.

²⁴ All these plants together are called drugs. ²⁵ It is said that all plants are of two kinds, namely medicinal and nonmedicinal.

²⁶ There are thirty principal kinds of fruits:

Of these, ten can be eaten inside and out, such as figs, apples, quinces, citrons, grapes, mulberries, and pears.

Ten others have an outside that can be eaten, but an inside that is inedible, such as dates, peaches, apricots, many sorts⁵ of oleaster, lote berries, plums, and medlars.⁶ Another ten have an inside that can be eaten, but an outside that cannot, such as walnuts, almonds, pomegranates, coconuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, and the fruit of the Gurgān tree, which they also call pistachios.

There are more than these, but these are the principal ones. Those planted with shoots from two different trees, such as date, quince, plum,⁷ and almond, and others of this type, are called grafted.

16A

¹ It also says this:

“Every flower has its own Amahraspand.”

² As some say:

“Myrtle and jasmine are Ohrmazd’s own,
 White jasmine is Wahman’s,
 Marjoram is for Ardwhašt,
 Royal basil for Šahrewar,
 Speckled basil is Spandarmad’s,
 Lily is Hordād’s,
 Champak to Amurdād,
 Lemon Balm⁸ to Day-pad-Ādur,
 Anemone is for Ādur,
 Lotus for Ābān,
 White herb is Xwar’s,
 Narcissus is the moon’s,
 Violet is for Tīr,
 Adiantum for Gōš,
 The flower of the palm tree to Day-pad-Mihr,
 All the blossoms to Mihr,
 Red iris to Srōš,
 Dog rose to Rašn,
 Amaranth is Frawardīn’s
 Hyacinth is Wahrām’s,
 Yellow iris is for Rām,
 Fragrant lemon balm for Wād,
 Fenugreek to Day-pad-Dēn,
 Centfoil rose to Dēn,
 Oxeye daisy is for Ard,
 Tulip for Aštād,

White *Hōm* to Āsmān,
Lady flower to Zāmyād,
Saffron is Māraspand's
The herb of Ardašīr is Anagrān's
And the three kinds of *Hōm* are divine *Hōm*'s own."

³It says regarding plants:

"Each stalk has a drop of water at its tip and fire four fingers before."

It says:

"Of all the plants that are pressed, frankincense has the most stalks and the most flowers."

Chapters 17 and 17A provide a long list of the different creations and the archetypical “spiritual master” (*rad*, Avestan *ratu-*) of each.

In the *Avesta*, *ratu-* has two meanings. The first is “season, period of time.” The second, some scholars argue, has a primary meaning of “judge” and a wider sense of “chief,” “authority,” or “master.” The distinction between *ratu-* and the similar concept of lordship (Avestan *ahu-*, as in Ahura Mazdā) lies in the difference between deliberative judgment, on the one hand, and the political authority or power who executes justice, on the other. However, this distinction is based on parallels from other Indo-European cultures and is not made explicit in the *Avesta* itself; Ahura Mazdā is called both *ahu-* and *ratu-* (*Yasna* 27:1, *Vidēvdād* 2:43). The Avestan ritual text known as the *Visprad*, the name of which is derived from *vīspe ratauuō*, meaning “all the *ratus*,” invokes various spiritual masters of creatures in the spiritual and material worlds.

The eighth book of the *Dēnkard* ascribes a practical judicial role for the *rad*, as an individual’s spiritual master who mediates on his or her behalf in disputes. Other sources describe the *rad* as the one who doles out punishment for the crime of killing beneficent animals.

Interestingly, the *rad* of human beings is not Gayōmard but Zoroaster, the perfect Mazdaean man (17:1). *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* (23:2) includes a list of animals who took part in Zoroaster’s second revelatory conversation (*hampursagīh*) with Ohrmazd, and states that these animals are designated *rad*. Many of the animals included in that list also appear in chapter 17.

On the Mastery of Men, Animals, and Everything

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“The first man I fashioned was the bright, white-eyed Gayōmard. He was great, but he was not a master, for Zoroaster was master; all mastery is from Zoroaster.”

² The oryx, which keeps its head low,¹ is the master of goats. It was the first created of its species.

³ The dark-colored, white-cheeked sheep is the master of sheep. It was the first created of its species.

⁴ The two-humped, white-haired, fine-kneed² camel is the master of camels.

⁵ The yellow-kneed, black-haired cow was the first created. It is the master of cattle.

⁶ The white, yellow-eared, white-eyed horse was the first fashioned. It is the master of horses.

⁷ The white ass with cat’s paws is the master of asses.

⁸ The white- and yellow-haired dog was the first fashioned. It is the master of dogs.

⁹ The brown rabbit was first fashioned. It is the master of wild animals, the mountain dwellers who cannot be domesticated.

¹⁰ The three-clawed Sēn was the first created bird. But it is not the master: the Karšift is master, the bird that brought the *dēn* to the shelter built by Jam.

¹¹ The white ermine was the first fashioned weasel. It is the master of the weasels. ¹² As it says:

“The white ermine came to the assembly of the Amahraspands.”

¹³ The Kar fish, that is the Araz, is the master of aquatic creatures.

¹⁴ The Dāiti River is the master of the running waters.

¹⁵ The bank of the Dārāja River is the master of river banks, for the house of Zoroaster’s father was on that bank, and Zoroaster was born there.

¹⁶The White Forest is the master of the forests.

¹⁷High Hugar, from which the water of Ardwīsūr gushes out, is the master of the heights.

¹⁸The place of the star Deneb's revolution is the master of high hollows.

¹⁹The pressed *Hōm* is the master of medicinal plants.

²⁰Wild wormwood is the master of nonmedicinal plants.

²¹Coarse wheat is the master of grains.

²²Summer millet, which they also call sorghum, is the master of fine grains.

²³The sacred girdle is the master of garments.

²⁴The arm-guard is the master of armor.

²⁵When two men come together, the wiser and more truthful is the master.

17A

¹It also says this in the *dēn*:

“I did not create the corporeal existence equal, that all would be one, because the duty of Glory resides in many individuals. Everyone who acts and works rightly has great value.”

Thus the waters were not created equal, for the waters of Ardwīsūr the immaculate are worth all the waters in heaven and earth, apart from the Ohrmazd-created Arang River.

²The date palm, which they call the plant of sublime utility is worth all the plants in heaven and earth, apart from the Gōkarēn tree by which they will raise the dead.

³Among the mountains, Mount Abursēn, whose roots are in Sageshān and its peak in Xūzestān, which some call the mountain of all Pārs, is worth all the mountains in heaven and earth, apart from Harburz.

⁴Among birds, the Čamrūš bird is worth all the birds in heaven and earth, apart from the three-clawed Sēn.

⁵In the end, whoever does good and leads others to it is of great worth.

18

Fire plays a primary role in Zoroastrian ethics, ritual, and everyday life, and, as can be seen in chapter 1, is central to the story of creation. Fire is one of the first creations; it is used in the trial by fire to determine a person's guilt or innocence; Zoroastrian rituals take place in the fire temple; and fire will destroy all evil on earth and purify it at the end of days (see chapter 34). The Zoroastrian veneration of fire most likely dates back to the period when the groups who eventually settled India and Iran comprised a single Indo-Iranian community, if not to Indo-European prehistory.

Chapter 18, inspired by Avestan sources (compare *Yasna* 17:11), is paralleled in other Middle Persian texts, including *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* 3:78–86. It opens with a list of the five created fires and their natures (18:1–3) and then describes the sacred fires of Sasanian Iran: Farrōbag, Gušnasp, and Burzēnmihr. In accordance with French philologist Georges Dumézil's theory of the tripartite division of Indo-European societies, the *Bundahišn* states that the first fire belongs to priests, the second to warriors, and the third to farmers (18:13). The text also gives the locations of the three fires—in Xwārazm, Mount Asnawand in Ādurbādagān, and Mount Rēwand in Xwarāsān—though this is likely more myth than historical geography. The chapter devotes special attention to the victorious Wahrām fires, the highest degree of consecrated fire, located in fire temples established by different legendary kings (18:14–18). From a historical perspective, the reference to the extinction of some and the continuation of other Wahrām fires after the Arab conquests of Iran is especially interesting (18:18). According to Mary Boyce, the chapter's reference to the Framgar fire's ability to burn without fuel (18:19) may be an indication that this fire was fed by naphtha.

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On the Nature of Fire

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“He fashioned five kinds of fire: the Burzišwang fire, the Hufryān fire, the Urwāzišt fire, the Wāzišt fire, and the Speništ fire.”

² The Burzišwang fire is the fire burning before Lord Ohrmazd^o.¹

The Hufryān fire, which is explained as “the good conductor,” is the fire in the bodies of men and animals.

The Urwāzišt fire is in the plants.

The Wāzišt fire is in the clouds, where it fights against Spinjaruš.

The Speništ fire, which means “bountiful,” is the fire at work in the world; so, too, is the Wahrām fire.

³ Of these five fires, one consumes both water and food: this is the one created in people’s bodies, in their stomachs, and its duty is digesting food and water.

Another consumes water but not food: this is the one in the plants that lives and grows by means of water.

Another consumes food but not water: this is the one at work in the material world; so, too, the Wahrām fire.

Others consume neither water nor food: these are the Wāzišt fire and the Burzišwang fire, the fire in the earth, and in the mountains, and in other things.

⁴ At the primal creation, Ohrmazd fashioned the three fires of Farrōbag, Gušasp, and Burzēnmihr as three glories guarding and protecting² the world, and they remain in the world in that glorious form.

⁵ During the reign of Tahmurab, men crossed the sea from Xwanirah to other continents on the back of the Bull Srisōg. One night, violent winds and furious waters blew the burning fire altar, which had been set on the back of the bull, into the sea. They kindled each of these three fires, like three glories, in place of that fire altar on the back of the bull. Everything was illuminated and the people again began to cross the sea.

⁶ During his reign, Jam improved all his works with the aid of those three fires. He established the Farrōbag fire³ in its temple on Mount Xwarrahōmand

in Xwārazm, and when he was sawed in two, the Farrōbag fire saved his Glory from Dahāg's clutches.

⁷ As it is revealed in the *dēn*, during the reign of King Wištāsp they moved it from Xwārazm and reestablished it on Mount Rōšn in the land of Kanārang, where it remains to this very day.

⁸ Until the reign of Kay Husraw, the Gušnasp fire guarded the world in this way: When Kay Husraw razed the idolatrous temples on Lake Čēčast, the fire settled on the mane of his horse. It struck at the darkness and gloom and burned brightly until he destroyed them. He established fire temples in that very place, on Mount Asnwand. This is why they call it the Gušnasp fire, because it settled on the mane [*bus*] of his horse [*asp*].

⁹ Until the reign of King Wištāsp, in the same way, the Burzēnmīhr fire would fly through the world, guarding it. ¹⁰ When Zoroaster of immortal soul brought the *dēn*, in propagating it and removing doubt, he made many things visible so that Wištāsp and his children might join in the belief in the divine *dēn*. Wištāsp established its fire temple on Mount Rēwand, which they call "the ridge of Wištāsp."

¹¹ The body of all these three fires, and the Wahrām fire, is the same material fire. Glory resides in them just like in the human body, when it is formed in its mother's womb, a soul from the spiritual world settles in it, and the soul guides that body as long as it lives. When that body dies away, it mixes with the earth and the soul returns to the spiritual world.

¹² This too:

"When they combine a thousand material fires into one, bring offerings to it by the revealed incantation and establish it at the fire temple, then a spirit from the Glory of fires settles over it—like those that reside in material fires. The others also are the fire of Wahrām. Their body is the fire of the material world, but their soul is Glory coming from the divinities that settles in them. Even now, they destroy fiends and protect mankind in the same way. When they are extinguished, their Glory returns to the spiritual world."

¹³ This is the reason why they call them Wahrām fires, for all the fires in the material world are supported by Wahrām and protected by Srōš, in cooperation. It says that they assist Wahrām and Ādur Farrōbag, which is the fire of the priests; Ādur Gušnasp, which is the warriors' fire; and Ādur Burzēnmīhr, which is the farmers' fire. They will remain the guardians of the world until the Restoration. This can be clearly seen when a fire flies and strikes at demons and fiends; this is what really happens when people say: "a fire has gone out."

¹⁴ There are many Wahrām fires, and a ruler has been appointed for each one.

The detailed list is long:

¹⁵ Frēdōn established the Wardāstar fire, which is in Baxlān, in the district of Pēšag.

¹⁶ Uzaw, son of Tahmāsp, established the Kadāgān⁴ fire as a reward in the village where he would be invoked.⁵

¹⁷ Frāsyāb established the Karkōy fire as the only⁶ fire in Sagestān, when he ruled Iran.

¹⁸ From the days of Wištāsp's rule, when the *dēn* came, to the downfall of the Sasanians, there were other fires, many in number, with many names and many propitiations, all of which are considered Wahrām fires: Many of these were extinguished during the Arabs' rule, but many others still exist, each known as having been established by a ruler.

¹⁹ As for the Framgar fire, it is revealed that it burns without consuming anything day and night, the smoke being visible during the day and the fire during the night. When something pure is thrown in, the fire accepts it; but when it is impure, the fire throws it back. It is impossible to approach it because of the heat, and sorcerers and sinners dare not go near it. They say that it is near the settlement of Wēwgān.

²⁰ They say that there is a similar fire in Kōmiš, which they call the “unfed fire.” It is impossible to bank it with ashes. It burns when they put firewood on it but blazes even when they do not. Some say: “This is the Framgar fire.”

19

Chapters 19 and 19A contain a short description of the nature and function of sleep (*xwāb*). Earlier in the *Bundahišn*, Ohrmazd is said to have created sleep to aid Gayōmard in the form of a tall, fifteen-year-old youth (1A:16). Sleep's antagonist, the demon Būšāsp (Sloth) was fabricated by Ahriman (4:19). While this chapter does not refer to Būšāsp, the ontological opposition between sleep and sloth is maintained in the rest of the *Bundahišn* and in other Middle Persian texts.

Interestingly, the chapter also prescribes the correct amount of sleep, the length of three or four *Yaθa Ahū Vairiiō* prayers (19:3). As this central Zoroastrian prayer is only three lines long, the meaning of the passage remains obscure; perhaps the passage intends a recitation of the entire *yasna* ritual that begins with *Yaθa Ahū Vairiiō*. In any event, oversleeping, and for that reason not taking proper care of the consecrated fire, is considered a grave sin in Zoroastrianism.

Much of the *Bundahišn* presumes the unity and continuity of the living and inanimate worlds. In other words, water, plants, mountains, and other inanimate creations suffer from and resist Ahriman and the demons just as mankind does. Chapter 19A, however, makes an important distinction between living and nonliving creation: human beings and animals sleep and strive, while the earth, water, and plants do not.

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On the Nature of Sleep

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“Sleep was first created at the primal creation in the form of a fifteen-year-old, white-eyed man. The demons defiled it, too, just as they did the waters, plants, animals, forests, mountains, and plains.¹ Here everything² has been defiled, and then its essence mixed.”

² Sleep appears in the form of a young, four- or five-year-old stallion, following behind the females. So, too, it enters men from behind, passing through the head to the knees, taking as long as one needs to recite three or four *Yaθa Ahū Vairiō* prayers from beginning to end. It was not created with the body, but separately from the body at the same time. For when the body was created, sleep was behind it.

³ It is abnormal if men sleep longer than the length of four verses.

Sleep comes to all people. When one falls asleep, sleep moves on to another person. If no one is asleep and all keep on working diligently, sleep will abide. For there is a being like sleep in every person.

19A

¹ It also says this:

“It is not because of effort that the earth, the water, and the plants give fruit, and it is not because of sleeplessness and senselessness that they do not.”

For effort, sleepiness, and senselessness only exist in human beings and animals.

20

Chapter 20 is one of the *Bundahišn*'s most enigmatic chapters. The chapter's central term, the word *wang*, can be translated as "sound," "voice," "cry," or, as we have chosen here, "song." These "songs" are not only instrumental music or liturgical chants, like the performance of the *Avesta* (20:2), but the song of the grinding of the millstone, of water flowing, and of the earth moving.

As in all human culture, music must have had a central place in premodern Zoroastrianism, though the direct evidence is limited. *Vidēvdād* 2:30 perhaps refers to the trumpet (*suþrā-*) of the mythical King Jam (Avestan Yima), and Oxus trumpets have been found in archeological digs from sites within the Iranian cultural sphere, as have lyres, lutes, harps, and other instruments dating from the prehistoric period. As for music's place in the religion as such, Greek, Indian, Jewish, and other sources indicate that the *Gāthās*, and perhaps the rest of the *yasna* ritual, were chanted or sung, possibly to the accompaniment of music.

Music had pride of place in the Sasanian court. *Husraw ī Kawādān ud Rēdag-ē*, a courtly text in Middle Persian, contains a list of musical instruments, all of which are also named in 20:2. Interestingly, the *win* (lute) song described in this chapter seems to take its name from that of a class of plucked string instruments; *win* is otherwise unattested in Middle Persian, and is likely related to the Indian *vīṇa*.

Samra Azarnouche has pointed out that, in a legal context, *wang kardan* has the meaning of "to lodge a complaint." This is reflected in 20:1's "appeal" (*garzišnīg*) on behalf of the suffering righteous man.

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On Songs

¹ It also says this:

“When they appeal for a righteous person, on account of evil coming upon him from the Evil Spirit, and it is necessary to appeal, saying, ‘I need such-and-such a thing’ or ‘Such-and-such an evil has befallen me’—that is the song of grief.

Everything in the material world must labor to allay that evil.”

² When the righteous chant and recite the *Avesta*, that is the lute song. The lyres, zithers, harps, and all the stringed instruments that they play are called lutes.

³ When the millstone grinds grain for the righteous, that is the stone song. The reason that it says “for the righteous” is that all good things were created for the righteous, but the wicked also benefit from them. Then everything is put to use and endures for the righteous, and the noise that comes from it is called “righteous song.” But when it is for the wicked, it is unlawful and should not be considered a song.

⁴ When water flows forth in a stream, descends from the clouds, crashes together, or when people and animals pass through it, that is the water song.

⁵ When roots are cut and plants fall to the ground, that is the plant song.

⁶ When things hit the ground, or a house collapses, or they dig stones from the mountains, that is the earth song.

⁷ It also says this:

“When a plant is cut down, it mixes with the plants nearest to it.”

⁸ Regarding the back and the face of the earth, it says:

“The face is where plants grow, and the back is behind¹ it, underneath, where nothing grows.”

21

The mythic battle between Sirius and the demon Apōš is discussed briefly in chapter 6. Here in chapter 21, that myth of rainmaking is expanded and rationalized. The roles of the principal actors—the wind, the clouds, Sirius, the Wāzišt fire, and the demons—are described in detail, and the chapter presents a meteorological theory that explains the existence of rain, storms, lightning, rainbows, and other phenomena. The Čišmagian demons associated with storms also appear in *Dēnkard* 7.2:44–45.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the dualistic opposition between spiritual (*mēnōg*) and material (*gētīg*) existence is one of the foundations of the *Bundahišn*'s theology and ontology, as well as that of other Zoroastrian texts. Here, however, that seemingly clear distinction is challenged. Chapter 21B describes clouds as being both spiritual and material entities. Floating insubstantially between earth and heaven, clouds are depicted as invisible spiritual containers that hold and transport material water through the sky. The chapter explains that their visible manifestations—what are commonly referred to as “clouds”—are, in fact, produced by the water that they contain, like foam spilling over the sides of a boiling pot.

On the Nature of Wind, Clouds, and Rain

21A

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“The righteous wind was fashioned from this earth in the form of a bright, white-eyed fifteen-year-old man, dressed in very fine clothes and wooden shoes.”

It is so perfectly warm that when people encounter it, it seems as pleasant to them as a body endowed with life. It rises from the earth like raising a goblet of wine.¹ When the wind blows the clouds, the right half turns toward the sun and the other half turns toward the rays of the moon. It appeared at the source of the Arang River, its path on high. On account of its fear of the demons, it inspected everything separately and blew powerfully with great strength. It tore apart the poison that the Evil Spirit mixed with the earth and the plants, just like it once strongly swept the water and made of it the seas.

² Then the demons went up behind the wind to fight with it. They even defiled the wind and stunned it. ³ Then the wind could not come to every continent by its strength and in its own being and was broken in pieces.

⁴ As it says:

“The Evil Spirit snarled to the demons: ‘Destroy this wind, brave and swift, created by Ohrmazd. For when you destroy the wind, then you will have destroyed all creation.’”

⁵ In that battle, on account of the fact that Way, Lord of Long Dominion, did not come at that time to the wind’s aid, it was stunned. Now it blows from the breathing in and breathing out of mankind and animals, from their comings and goings.

⁶ The wind first turns swiftly from the continent of Xwanirah toward Arzah and Sawah, and from there it turns swiftly to Fradadafš and Wīdadafš, and from there it turns swiftly again to Xwanirah. ⁷ As it blows over all the continents, in whichever direction, and in whatever manner—cold or hot, moist or dry—it is one. When it passes through a stinking place, it brings

stench; when it passes through a fragrant place, it brings good fragrance; in cold, chill; in heat, warmth; and brings the essence of whichever kind of place it passes through.⁸ The wind preserves the slopes and ascents of the earth, the mountains and the seas, and the lives of mankind and animals.⁹ The wind orders the seasons.

¹⁰ Because of its confusion, it blows too much and too little. When it blows too much, they call it the tempestuous² wind. Because it was broken apart, it rushes in all directions and is called by different names. When it blows profitably, it is called the righteous wind. When it blows harmfully, it is called the evil³ wind, because it was defiled and confounded.

21B

¹ Regarding the cloud, it says:

“It is a spiritual agent that cannot be seen and apprehended with material eyes.”

² When Sirius lifts⁴ the water to the atmosphere by the power of the wind, the clouds reach every place spiritually, and it rains, drop by drop, through that agent. If such were not the case, the water would stand still in the atmosphere and could not be led in any direction; it would not rain drop by drop, but only in a mass, all at once.

What is visible in the atmosphere, the thing that people call “a cloud,” is the foam of water. Just like foam collects at the top of a boiling pot and, when it has accumulated, drips down the sides, so too is the thing called “cloud.” For the clouds spiritually remain and receive all the water that comes in the atmosphere.

³ As it says:

“The cloud is a spiritual being that holds material water.”

Some call it “cloud” and others call it “water pourer.”

⁴ At the primal creation, clouds appeared from the west. For the wind forced the water to rush there, which is called the home of the clouds. Now, too, the wind drives the water in the same way to the west, and from the west orders the clouds and sends them out in all directions, and it rains.

⁵ Regarding the righteous clouds, it says:

“I have fashioned forth water perfect and warm, that when it rains on people it seems as pleasant to them as a body endowed with⁵ life.”

21C

¹ At the primal creation, the clouds rose up on the right side of the sun like a goblet of wine.⁶ When they arrived, it rained for thirty days and nights, and that rain rendered powerless the vermin's poison. That rain formed the Fräxkard Sea.

² After the first rain abated, rain, too, was defiled because of the struggle with the demons; that is, it was broken in pieces.

³ As I myself wrote:

“During the rainmaking, the demon Apōš strove with Sirius, and Spinjaruš with the Wäzišt fire. Thunder and lightning appeared, and they made the rain that became the salt seas.”

⁴ Even now, that battle takes place three times a year, when Sirius causes the rain to fall and the demons and sorcerers arrive for the battle. They count three rains: one for sowing, one for flowering, and one for ripening grains.

⁵ Sporadic rain, sometimes in excess and sometimes deficient—harmful, ruinous, and defiling—is caused by the defilement of the demons.

⁶ Sirius takes the water from all the seas, but he takes the most from the Fräxkard Sea.

⁷ As it says:

“The three-legged donkey, when it moves in the Fräxkard Sea, causes the water to gush and splash and to crash against the shores of the sea.”

⁸ With the help of the righteous *frawahrs* and other spiritual deities, Sirius descends holding a huge rain goblet in his hand, which they call “a measured jug of cloud.” First, he places it over the water; second, he tips it; third, he fills it, moves it, and lifts it up, ascending into the atmosphere. Then that water proceeds alone on the wind.

⁹ Just like a whirlwind lifts dirt and dust up into the atmosphere, so too the wind raises up and fixes the water in the atmosphere with the aid of Sirius and directs it to each continent. The spiritual cloud stands to meet it, and it rains.

¹⁰ As can be clearly seen, a whirlwind on the sea carries water from the sea up to the atmosphere; people say that this is Sirius taking the water by this means. When the wind takes the water, that is Sirius. When he takes water from the salty sea, he leaves behind the saltiness and impurity, and only carries what is sweet with him. He carries it all up and sets everything in the atmosphere like mist, until the atmosphere is completely stiff with it. Then, drop by drop, it rains.

¹¹ When the demons attack, they let loose cold against it, freeze the water, and dry it so that it cannot rain. That is what happens when the droplets freeze and it hails. Or they drive the rain away from its proper raining place, and make it rain where it has no benefit, as can be seen when it rains on salty ground or on the sea itself, or it rains in excess on cultivated land and not in the place where it is supposed to.

¹² When this happens, the Wāzišt fire, created in the clouds in opposition to the demon Spinjaruš, melts the water and strikes Spinjaruš on the head with his mace. Because the mace causes the fire to burn and the water to melt and heat,⁷ there is light in the clouds, which they call lightning.

¹³ When the mace strikes him, Spinjaruš makes a terrible cry, which they call thunder.

¹⁴ The body of the Wāzišt fire is the same material fire that is with the water in the clouds. Its *frawahr* is the Glory that has come to it from the endless light.

¹⁵ Similarly, Sirius and the other spiritual deities who are his assistants fight against the demon Apōš and his assistants in the same way.

¹⁶ When the demons triumph, they cause it to rain sporadically where it does the most harm to the creatures, or prevent the rain where it would most benefit them. When the deities triumph, they cause it to rain beneficently and moderately.

¹⁷ As it says:

“For one and a half days it rains according to the inclination of the deities, and for one and a half days according to the inclination of the sorcerers, evil priests, and demons.”

¹⁸ Since the means of making rain, the wind itself, and even the deities who make the rain are in the Mixture, they gather the water for the clouds through the strength of the wind, and make it rain.

¹⁹ As it says:

“What the sorcerers had loosed before, the evil priests [*kayakān*] let loose now—they do it to harm people.”

²⁰ They carry water up to the atmosphere and also bring it down to the earth. As it says:

“It rains for half the day. Then that same water returns to the source of waters, and from there they take it up again.”

21D

¹ It says this as well:

“During the primal creation, on the same day that the Evil Spirit burrowed through, rain poured over all the earth, the wind blew over all the earth, and the sun shone over all the earth.”

21E

¹ It also says this:

“When Sirius brings water up to the atmosphere by the strength of the wind, whatever is in that water vortex comes up with it to the atmosphere: stones, fish, frogs, and the like.”

It is evident from this, too, that these same things rain back down with the rain, as can be clearly seen when fish, frogs, or stones rain down ^{“from what people call clouds.”}⁸

² These stones, when they rain back down with the water, have been warmed from the heat of the fire in the atmosphere. ³ This falling fire, which men call a thunderbolt, is, in fact, made up of those very same stones that come up to the atmosphere with the water from the sea. ⁴ When they fall into the clutches of the demons, the opponents of Sirius, they grab them, heat them, and spoil them with their sorcery; they defile them by excessive warmth and humidity, or cold and dryness, and send them back to the world to harm people.

⁵ The column that appears in the sky, which people call a rainbow, shines with dark blue, yellow, green, red, and violet.

The demons, in order to prevent the rain, fight in the clouds against the bright and strong Sirius. Some call them “Čišmagian demons.” Whatever is blazing white is divine and fights against the demons in order to aid Sirius.

⁶ The whirlwinds, too, are Čišmagian demons. When Sirius raises the water by the strength of the wind into the atmosphere, they rouse the dirt and dust and carry them up to antagonize the clouds, and thus to battle the clouds.

⁷ Regarding earthquakes, it is evident that those same Čišmagian demons use the *dēn* of sorcery to obstruct the passage of the life-preserving wind as it goes through the cracks in the mountains, so that it can no longer move. The part of the earth where the wind is trapped begins to shake and splits, and

the wind returns to its original path. It might cast a mountain down to the ground, it might overturn the seas, or it might topple houses and buildings.

⁸In a place where there are no mountains, earthquakes do not occur. For it is impossible to obstruct the passages that run through the earth. When they are obstructed, they quickly open up, and as long as there is a path for the wind, earthquakes do not happen.

⁹For the evil wind acts in the world just as it does in people's bodies. When the evil wind, corrupting and depleting,⁹ sits in the veins, the life-giving wind cannot come and go. The body suffers pain and vital breath longs for release. When it becomes unbearable, the life-giving wind is rejected, and the body dies. The more the mixture is bad, the more evil and oppressive it becomes.¹⁰ Likewise, it is evident that people become more sinful.

The evil wind in the earth, which they call "fearful,"¹⁰ is more oppressive and does much harm. A cord ties it to the planets, and its strength is multiplied by them.

22

Chapter 22 is devoted to *xrafstar*, the evil animals created by Ahriman in dualistic opposition to Ohrmazd's animal creation; we have translated the word as “vermin.” The term *xrafstra-* is used throughout the *Avesta*, and already in the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* 28:5 and 34:5), though its application to a class of noxious beings only begins in the *Young Avesta*.

Like the discussion of Ohrmazd's animal creation in chapter 13, this chapter, too, classifies Ahrimanic vermin. Reptiles—in particular serpents— insects, and mythological animals are divided into aquatic, terrestrial, and flying categories (22:8); similar lists appear in *Vidēvdād* 14:5–6 and in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 21. Wolves, a separate category of evil animals, are discussed in chapter 23.

As in the case of the earlier list of animals, not all of the species mentioned here can be confidently identified, and some names have been left in the original Middle Persian. One particularly interesting, if conjectural, cross-cultural identification is that of the “snakes with poison eyes” (22:19). These creatures may be the basilisks mentioned in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (8:32–33).

Vermin, despite the harm they do, are not entirely evil. Their material substance is composed of the four elements created by Ohrmazd (22:2). For this reason, their bodies can be used in the preparation of medicines (22:7). Furthermore, Ohrmazd in his omniscience was able to derive some benefit from vermin for his creation: bees produce honey and worms make silk (22:29).

Nevertheless, as other texts tell us, Zoroastrians are obligated to kill vermin whenever and wherever they are found (22:4, 27:28), a feature of Zoroastrian religious life also recorded by Herodotus and Plutarch. Killing vermin, who are easily identified by their frightful form and color (22:5), is a righteous act, a blow struck in the cosmic war between good and evil. The war will end when vermin, together with all the creatures of Ahriman, are destroyed in the final battle at the end of days (33:39).

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On the Nature of Vermin

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When the Evil Spirit burrowed through, he mixed the vermin’s poison and evil spirits—those of snakes, scorpions, lizards, ants, flies, locusts, and many other similar sorts—with the waters, the earth, and the plants. ² There they grew, conceived from the four elements, and the earth was knee-deep in vermin.”

³ Then, during the great rain, as has been said, they were destroyed. The overflowing water remained in the sea and on the earth. Once the land reemerged, they were conceived again as new from the four elements—water, earth, wind, and fire—in their forms and bodies. They are conceived in the usual manner: by birth, one from another.

⁴ Their being, the light in their eyes, and their vital spirits belong to Ohrmazd, as they are in the world; their wages of sin and malevolence belong to Ahriman. The fact that people can see them is a great advantage, for they can either kill them or protect themselves against them. ⁵ It is clear that they are not Ohrmazd’s creations because their displeasing form and color are unlike those of cattle and wild creatures.

⁶ Their scurrying, appearance, and nocturnal misdeeds are of the same nature as darkness. They do not hold back from injuring the creatures through fearsome trials, harm, and assault. ⁷ Like drugs, their bodies enter healing mixtures, and this benefits the creatures. For they come from the four essences and Ohrmazdean elements.

⁸ All vermin belong to three kinds: aquatic, terrestrial, and flying. They are called aquatic vermin, terrestrial vermin, and winged vermin. ⁹ Among the aquatic species, the worst is the frog; among the terrestrial species, the many-headed dragon; and among the flying species, the winged snake.

¹⁰ Snakes; dragons; Azdahāg; two-headed and seven-headed dragons; serpents; slugs that produce slime from their feet¹; lizards; black-tailed serpents; short serpents; terrestrial and wood vipers; eared snakes²; those called king snakes—because they sit on the heads of the biggest snakes—that

are thin, white, and the size of a finger, and many others of this kind belong to the species of snakes.

¹¹ Scorpions, frogs,³ tortoises, turtles,⁴ *n'tk'*—that is *ytk'*—and others of this type belong to the species of scorpions.

¹² Lizards, leaf snakes, trail⁵ and plain snakes, and others of this type belong to the species of lizards.

¹³ Dung-worms,⁶ spring-time worms,⁷ swift worms,⁸ those used as life-reviving⁹ antidotes,¹⁰ lamb-suckers,¹¹ and others¹² of this type belong to the species of worms.

¹⁴ Silk worms, and those in fire, such as can be found in the east, from which they extract red color; those in snow, each of which is as big as a hand; and others, conceived in different ways, are all of one species.

¹⁵ Grain-bearing ants, stinging ants, those called nocturnal¹³ and clay-loving—or “clay”—and others of this type belong to the species of ants.

¹⁶ Blue-green flies, black flies, the three species of honey bees, and wasps of several kinds, which make their homes and nests from clay, are all types of the fly species.

¹⁷ There are also many other species: locusts that kill men, gnats, fleas, winged species, and frogs, of which the list is even longer.

¹⁸ These vermin are both terrestrial and aquatic. One says:

“All vermin are sorcerers, and snakes more sorcerous.”

For this reason,¹⁴ we will speak of how they kill.

¹⁹ There are also snakes with poison eyes that kill people with a glance, just as if they had bitten them. There are others that can seize cows, sheep, horses, and people from a distance and devour them.

²⁰ Azdahāg is the one who has garnered so much knowledge of evildoing that he harms like sinners do.

²¹ The smallest clay-dwelling vermin use the *dēn* of sorcery to find food at a distance. It is certain that they attain it by sorcery, not by smell or sight.

²² Species of ants also take grains of food and heat them by the *dēn* of sorcery. They reproduce their own essences or make scorpions from it.

²³ There is a kind of wasp that makes clay nests, and lays worms inside the nest. It makes a head, and meanwhile the head digs. Some become blue-green flies; some others also become wasps.

²⁴ It says about the blue-green fly that when it defecates on meat, worms are conceived; when on the earth, fleas; when in the air, gnats; when it defecates in the dovecote, cocoons of small snakes are conceived; and when in the water, leeches.

²⁵ Regarding ants, it is revealed that if their nests are not destroyed after three hundred years, they transform into winged snakes.

²⁶ This saying was heard from the *dastwars*:

²⁷ “If a winged snake casts its shadow over someone, he dies.”

²⁸ The Creator created the white falcon to strike that snake. For when the snake grows wings, it flies out under the sun’s rays in order to cast its shadow over living people so they die. The white falcon flies out to battle that snake and kill it. Sometimes the falcon is victorious and kills the snake; sometimes the snake triumphs and kills the falcon. If both are equal in strength, they twist around each other and, dying, fall to the ground, as many have seen.

²⁹ In his omniscience, Ohrmazd turned many of these vermin to the benefit of creation. For example, bees make honey, worms produce silk and rough silk, *nw’tk'* kill scorpions, and leaf snakes kill snakes; these and others of this kind are like arrows fired by an enemy: they are not useless if they are shot back again at the same enemy.

The very same happens in the case of the creatures of Ohrmazd: fish kill other fish, birds kill other birds, and wild animals kill and eat other wild animals. These are signs of the battle and the Mixture in which nothing is pure.

23

Chapter 23 continues the previous chapter's discussion of Ahrimanic countercreations. Here, instead of vermin, the chapter focuses on wolves (*gurg*). This class of animals includes not only wolves proper, but also tigers, lions, owls, shark, and other species (23:2); some of these, such as the *garzag*, cannot be identified (23:3–4). Wolves were created directly by Ahriman (23:1; compare *Dēnkard* 3:95), though, like vermin, they are also composed of the four elements (23:9).

Like vermin, killing wolves is a virtuous act (compare *Vidēvdād* 13:40), and it is likely that, as hinted in 23:5, there was a standard calculation for how many sins could be forgiven for each wolf killed. Wolves also have a role to play in the apocalypse. The first of the three Zoroastrian saviors, Ušēdar, will perform a sacrifice and destroy the race of wolves (33:35, *Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 48:5–9, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 16:54).

Like dogs, in whose image they were countercreated (23:9), wolves share qualities with human beings (compare 13:28). In particular, heretics are described as resembling wolves, including Tūr ī Brādrōš, the evil priest “in wolf form” who kills Zoroaster (*Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 47:23).

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On the Nature of the Wolf Species

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“The Evil Spirit created the wolf-thief small, of dark worth, of dark birth, of dark seed, of dark and broken form, black and biting, hairless and indolent.”

This means, when it tears at sheep with its teeth, first it pulls its wool out.

² He fabricated fifteen species: First, small, fierce, black wolves who dare to charge at everything; then other species of wolves, such as tigers, lions, leopards—which they call “mountain-runners”; cheetahs, hyenas, jackals—which they also call *ušgal*; cave digger *garzag*, cats, winged ones such as owls, aquatic ones such as the water-drinker,¹ the blood-sucker vermin—which they call “water wolves”; sharks and other aquatic species. He created other species and subspecies like these until creating four-footed wolves that go in packs when they have pups.

³ When the Evil Spirit created the *garzag*, he howled:

“I fabricated you, Oh *garzag*, you who are the thirteenth wolf! You benefit me by striking with your fangs; you pierce and contaminate.”

Whoever eats it is never relieved of his pain. When it bites a person, a *garzag* is conceived in his or her body.

⁴ The *garzag* is the worst species of wolf. ⁵ As it says:

“One who kills four wolf-lions accrues as much merit as if he had killed one short-tailed *garzag*.”

⁶ The *dastwars* also say this in the *dēn*:

“The Evil Spirit wished to fabricate the wolf species in a spiritual form, just like fever, pain, and other fiends that are invisible until they affect human beings. But Ohrmazd, for the great advantage it would bring, prepared a bodily form for them, which he then showed to the Evil Spirit.

⁷ In his afterthought, the Evil Spirit howled:

‘Ohrmazd himself did just what I intended to do!’

⁸ He bound those fiends to those bodily forms and made them corporeal so that creatures can better protect themselves against them.”

⁹ This is evident also from the fact that their bodily form looks like that of beloved dogs.

Evil-created wild animals are not all like the other kinds of vermin. Some protect themselves out of fear, while others, such as elephants and lions, can be tamed by the will. Their corporeal being is from the four elements: water, earth, wind, and fire.

24

Chapter 24 continues the previous chapters' focus on the animal world. Here, though, the discussion encompasses mythical creatures that play a role in the earthly battle against evil animals and in Zoroastrian eschatology. While many of these creatures are already mentioned in the *Avesta*, the mythic role they play remains obscure. For example, a long section of the chapter is devoted to the three-legged donkey and its function in rainmaking (24:10–21), but we are missing crucial information about its origins, function, and character; Antonio Panaino has identified it as the Iranian instance of the myth of the unicorn.

The second part of the chapter (24:31–53) lists which good animals oppose which evil creations and demons: magpies kill locusts (35) and weasels kill serpents (40), for example.

The *Bundahišn*'s catalogue of fabulous creatures has a surprising cross-cultural resonance. The Babylonian Talmud, the vast compendium of Jewish law, lore, and exegesis compiled in late antique Mesopotamia under Sasanian rule, includes a series of "tall tales" attributed to the rabbinic explorer Rabbah bar Bar Hannah. Some of the fantastic beasts that the Talmud says the rabbi encountered on his journeys have been identified as "domesticated versions" of the Iranian mythical creatures mentioned in this chapter. The Talmud's inclusion of this Iranian material attests to the circulation of lists similar to those in the *Bundahišn* in the Sasanian period. More than that, though, Rabbah bar Bar Hannah's adopted "tall tales" show that Iranian myth was known and popular beyond the confines of the Iranian or Zoroastrian communities. The inclusion of Iranian mythic material in Islamic universal histories and other sources underlines this same point.

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On Various Things

How They Were Created and How Their Adversaries Came

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“White *Hōm*, which they call the Gōkarēn tree, grows in the Frāxkard Sea, that deep lake, and is necessary for the performance of the Restoration, since they will prepare the drink of immortality from it.”

² The Evil Spirit, in opposition to it, fabricated a frog in that deep water, so that it might destroy the *Hōm*. ³ To restrain the frog, Ohrmazd created two Kar fish who constantly circle the *Hōm*; one of the fish always faces the frog. Those fish consume only spiritual food—that means they do not need to eat so that they keep struggling until the Restoration.

In one place, it is written “the aquatic fish Araz.”

⁴ As it says:

“The greatest of Ohrmazd’s creatures is that fish, and the Evil Spirit’s greatest creature in strength of body is that frog. Everything in both creations is divided between them, except one fish, the Wās of Five Hundred Lakes.”

⁵ It also says this:

“That fish is so perceptive that in deep water it can sense a needle that¹ raises or lowers the water.”

⁶ It is revealed about the Wās of Five Hundred Lakes:

“It is so long that when it goes swiftly from dawn to dusk in the Frāxkard Sea, it does not even travel the length of its own large, well-grown body.”

⁷ It says this too:

“Most aquatic creatures live under its authority.”

⁸ The Tree of Many Seeds grew in the middle of the Frāxkard Sea, bearing the seeds of all the plants. Some call it “righteous medicine,” others “thorough medicine,” and others still, “all-healing medicine.” ⁹ Nine mountains were fashioned inside its trunk, and in those honeycombed mountains are nine thousand, nine hundred, ninety-nine myriad streams. Half² of the world’s water is created in those mountains; that is, water flows from there through

those streams and passages to the seven continents of the earth, since the spring of all the waters of the seas of the seven continents of the earth is there.

¹⁰ It says about the three-legged donkey:

“It stands in the middle of the Frākard Sea, and has three legs, six eyes, nine testicles, two ears, one horn, a dark blue head, a white body, spiritual food, and is righteous. ¹¹ Two of its six eyes are in its eye-sockets, two on top of its head, and two on its withers. With its six eyes it strikes down and overcomes the worst and most troubling dangers. ¹² Three of its nine testicles are on its head, three on its withers, and three on the inner part of its ribs. Each testicle is as big as a house, and the donkey itself is as big as Mount Xwanwand.

¹³ When it rests one of its three feet on the ground, each one takes up as much space as a herd of a thousand sheep when they sit down in a circle together. The pastern of its leg is so large that one thousand men with horses and one thousand chariots can pass beneath it. ¹⁴ Its two ears could surround the district of Māzandarān.

¹⁵ Its horn is golden and hollow, and a thousand other horns have grown from it; some the size of a camel, others the size of a horse, a cow, or a donkey, larger or smaller. With that horn, it strikes down and overcomes the worst contending dangers.

¹⁶ When that donkey turns in the sea and pricks up its ears, all the water in the Frākard Sea moves and tosses in agitation.³ ¹⁷ When it brays, all of Ohrmazd’s female aquatic creatures become pregnant, but when the pregnant aquatic vermin hear that braying, they miscarry.⁴ ¹⁸ When it urinates in the sea, it purifies the water in the seven continents of the earth. This is why, when donkeys see water, they urinate in it.”

¹⁹ As it says:

“If the three-legged donkey had not purified the water, all the water would have perished. The contamination of the Evil Spirit would have defiled the water by the death of the creatures of Ohrmazd.”

²⁰ Sirius takes up more water in abundance from the Frākard Sea through the aid of the three-legged donkey.

²¹ It is also revealed that amber comes from the dung of the three-legged donkey. For, even if most of its food is spiritual, it casts out as urine and dung the nourishing moisture of the water that enters its body through its holes.

²² It says about the Hadayōš Bull, which they also call Srisōg:

“At the primal creation, people passed from continent to continent on it, and at the Restoration they will prepare the food of immortality from it.”

²³ It says in the *dēn*:

“The heretic⁵ was bound by⁶ that preeminent man on a third of the earth and a fortress was built around him, until it [*Hōm*] will be needed at the Restoration.”

²⁴ It says about the Čamrūš bird:

“It is on the peak of Mount Harburz. Every three years, a horde from non-Iranian lands gathers in order to enter the land of Iran, and to damage, destroy, and devastate the world. Then divine Burz rises from the depths of Lake Arang and rouses the Čamrūš bird, which flies to the highest of all the high, ice-capped⁷ mountains and plucks off those from non-Iranian lands, just like a bird picking up grains.”

²⁵ It says about the Karšift:

“It knows how to speak, and it brought the *dēn* to the shelter built by Jam and propagated it. There they recite the *Avesta* in the language of the birds.”

²⁶ It says about the dolphin:

“It is in all the seas. When it cries, all the fish become pregnant, but all the pregnant vermin miscarry.”

²⁷ The Sēn bird and the bat are described in detail in another chapter.

²⁸ It says about the Ašōzušt bird, which they also call the righteous libation-bearing bird, the bird of Wahman, and also the owl.⁸

It says:

“The *Avesta* was created on its tongue. When it recites, the demons flee from it and do not dwell there. This is the reason why it builds its home in the desert and in non-Iranian lands, so that the demons will not dwell there.²⁹ In order to kill it, demons and sorcerers seize fingernails that have not been charmed by a spell, and shoot them like arrows at the bird.”

³⁰ This is the reason why that bird takes up and eats uncharmed nails, to keep demons and sorcerers from using them. It does not eat charmed nails, for the demons cannot cause any harm with them.

³¹ All other wild animals and birds were created to oppose the demons and vermin. ³² As it says:

“The birds and wild animals oppose the vermin and sorcerers.”

³³ It also says this:

“All birds are clever, but the crow is the cleverest.”

³⁴ It says about the white falcon:

“It kills winged snakes.”

³⁵ Magpies kill locusts and were created to oppose them.

³⁶ The vulture whose thought dwells on the old and dying—that is, the *dālman*—was created for eating corpses.

³⁷ So, too, crows, mountain buzzards, mountain goats, ibex, gazelles, onagers, and other wild animals all eat carrion, and so, too, do other vermin.

³⁸ Dogs were created to oppose the species of wolves, and to protect cattle.

³⁹ Foxes were created to oppose the demon Xabag.

⁴⁰ Weasels were created to oppose serpents and other burrowing vermin.⁴¹ Great rats were also created to oppose serpents.

⁴² Hedgehogs were created to oppose grain-bearing ants. As it says:

“Every time a hedgehog urinates on an ant nest, it kills one thousand ants.”

⁴³ When grain-bearing ants move over the earth, they make a hole in it, but when hedgehogs move over it, the hole disappears, and the earth becomes smooth again.⁹

⁴⁴ Water beavers were created to oppose leeches in the water. Partridge’s eggs are found where the cry of partridges is heard.¹⁰

⁴⁵ In conclusion, every wild animal, bird, and fish was created to oppose one of the vermin.

⁴⁶ It says about *dālmans*:

“When they fly on high, they can see even a fist-sized piece of meat on the ground. The fragrance of musk was created beneath their wings, so that if they detect the stench of decay while eating corpses, they put their heads under their wings and recover.”

⁴⁷ It says about Arabian horses:

“If a single hair lies upon the ground on a dark night, they can see it.”

⁴⁸ Roosters were created to oppose the demons and sorcerers. They cooperate with dogs.⁴⁹ As it says in the *dēn*:

“Among material creatures, dogs and roosters are the assistants of Srōš in striking down fiends.”

⁵⁰ It also says this:

“Houses would not have been constructed if I had not created sheep dogs and watchdogs.”

⁵¹ In protecting human existence, dogs strike down as many fiends and pains as pigs in protecting human existence and that of cattle. They beat back all pollution with their eyes.

⁵² When pigs grunt, they strike down pain. Their meat and fat are also remedies for relieving peoples’ pains and dispelling danger.

⁵³ Ohrmazd has created nothing useless. He created everything for some benefit. When you do not understand the reason, you must ask the *dastwars*. For he has created even the pig’s snout¹¹ in this way so that it can always strike down fiends.

25

Chapter 25 deals with time. As we learn from chapter 1, the separation of finite time from infinity is one of the foundational acts of creation. This chapter addresses more mundane—but no less important—issues of everyday time-keeping: the calendar, the divisions of the year, the lengths of day and night, and the periods of the day.

According to the *Dēnkard* (8:7), an entire book of the Sasanian *Avesta*, now lost, was devoted to these topics. This is no surprise. Accurate timekeeping, especially coordinating the lunar year with the longer solar year, was a major concern and achievement of all premodern civilizations; otherwise, one might find oneself celebrating the harvest in spring, or the midsummer festival while the snow falls. Ancient Iranians developed or adopted several different solutions to this and other problems of chronography, many of which are included in this chapter.

The chapter refers to three different calendars. The first is the 365-day calendar of Egyptian origin (25:1), known in Achaemenid times, with twelve months of equal length and five additional, intercalary days added at the end of year. The second is the more accurate sidereal year—the English word is derived from the Latin *sidus*, meaning “star”—of 365 days, six hours, and nine minutes (25:26), introduced in 46 BCE and known to Parthian astronomers. The last is the shorter lunar year of 360 days (25:21–26) that probably continued in civil and religious use until the end of Parthian times, when it was replaced by the Egyptian model.

Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī, the eleventh-century Muslim polymath whose *Chronicles of Ancient Nations* is one of the most important sources for Sasanian history, also describes a further calendar system of 365 days and an intercalated month added every 120 years. Al-Bīrūnī describes the calculation ceremony at the royal court, with priests, mathematicians, poets, and judges all taking part in the decision.

The chapter also includes two different divisions of the seasons. One divides the year in half between summer and winter, following the Avestan tradition, while the second divides the year into four seasons of three months each (25:25). The two-part division into summer and winter is given greater prominence here and elsewhere in the *Bundahišn* (1A:7, 5:20–21), most

likely because it was interwoven in the religious and social life of the community. *Herbēds*, a class of priest, seem to have adjudicated cases of impurity differently depending on whether it was the summer or winter season (25:8).

The length and divisions of the day in the different seasons are tackled with great precision (25:2–6). Days are divided into five ritual watches (*gāh*) in summer and four in winter, when days are shorter. Prayers were to be said five times a day, during each of the five watches (25:9–11).

The fifth, midday watch of Rapihwin, included in summer but absent in winter, also had mythic dimensions. The chapter's explanation that the spirit of Rapihwin is concealed underground during the winter, only to reemerge in summer, recalls the Greek myth of Persephone (25:12–17).

The chapter's digression on the climatic conditions of India in summer and winter (25:18) may be a late addition reflecting the Zoroastrian community's resettlement in the subcontinent in the centuries following the Muslim conquest. The concluding definition of a *hāsār*, usually a unit of time, as a unit of length may also be a later addition (25:5, 25:28–29).

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On the Religious Year

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“I created material creation in 365 days, that is the six periods of the Gāhānbār which are counted in one year.”

² One always has to count the day first, then the night. For day comes first, then night comes in and takes the place of that day.

³ From Midsummer, which is on the day of Xwar of the intercalary month of Tir, to Midwinter, which is on the day of Wahrām of the intercalary month of Day, the day decreases and the night increases. From Midwinter to Midsummer, the night decreases and the day increases. ⁴ The longest summer day is as long as the two shortest¹ winter days. The longest winter night is as long as the two shortest² summer nights. ⁵ The longest summer day is twelve *hās^ar*, and the night six *hās^ar*. The longest winter night is twelve *hās^ar* and the day six *hās^ar*. A *hās^ar* is one hour, and a *hās^ar* of distance on the ground is the same.

⁶ During the period of Hamspasmēdim, which is the five days at the end of the month of Spandarmad, day and night are again equal.

⁷ Now the seven months of summer last from the intercalary day of Ohrmazd in the month of Frawardīn to the intercalary day of Anagrān in the month of Mihr. And the five months of winter last from the intercalary day of Ohrmazd in the month of Ābān to the five intercalary days of Spandarmad.

⁸ *Hērbeds* adjudicate cases of ritual impurity and other matters in summer and winter according to this reckoning.

⁹ During the seven months of summer, day and night are divided into five periods, for they also celebrate Rapihwin then. Dawn is the period of Hāwan; midday is the period of Rapihwin; evening is the period of Uzērin; from when the stars appear until midnight is the period of Ēbsrūsim; and from midnight to when the stars disappear is the period of Ušahin.

¹⁰ In the winter, there are four periods: from dawn to the period of Uzērin is all considered the period of Hāwan; the others are as I said. ¹¹ The reason is that the abode [*āšārišn*]³ of winter is in the north, where the continents of

Wōrūbaršn and Wōrūjaršn are. The home of summer is in the south, where the continents of Fradadaſ and Wīdadaſ are.

¹² On the day of Ohrmazd in the intercalary month of Ābān, winter gains strength. It enters the world. The spirit of Rapihwin leaves the surface of the earth and goes underground; that is, to the source of the waters. Warmth and moisture enter the waters so that the roots of the trees do not wither in the cold and drought. ¹³ On the day of Ādur in the intercalary month of Day, coldest winter reaches Ěrānwēz. It reaches its peak all over the world in the intercalary month of Spandarmad. ¹⁴ This is the reason why on the day of Ādur in the month of Day they kindle fires everywhere to signal that winter has come. ¹⁵ During those five months, the water in the water sources is always warm because Rapihwin preserves warmth and moisture there. They do not celebrate the period of Rapihwin.

¹⁶ When the day of Ohrmazd in the month of Frawardīn comes, winter's strength and dominion diminish. Summer emerges from its home, gaining strength and dominion. Rapihwin returns from underground to the surface of the earth, and the fruit of the trees ripens. ¹⁷ The water in the water sources is cold in summer because Rapihwin is not there. They celebrate Rapihwin during those seven months when summer reaches the whole earth.

¹⁸ Also in India, which is closest to the home of summer, it is never cold or hot. For at the time of the dominion of summer, the rains always dispel the excessive heat so that it is not present. In winter, it does not rain, and extreme cold is not present. ¹⁹ In the north, which is the home of winter, it is always cold. For on account of the extreme violence of winter there, even in summer it is impossible to dispel the cold and to warm oneself. ²⁰ In the places in between, the cold of winter and the warmth of summer both come in full force.

²¹ Moreover, the revolution of the lunar year is not equal to the calculated year. ²² The reason is that a month is sometimes twenty-nine days and sometimes thirty days and has four additional hours. ²³ As it says:

“All those who say, ‘by the moon’ are liars, except those who say, ‘twice in sixty days.’”

²⁴ Whoever reckons the year by the revolution of the moon mixes summer with winter and winter with summer.

²⁵ This is: the intercalary month of Frawardīn, the month of Ardwahišt, and Hordād are spring. The months of Tir, Amurdād, and Šahrewar are summer. The months of Mihr, Ābān, and Ādur are autumn. The months of Day, Wahman, and Spandarmad are winter.

²⁶The sun departs from the lunar mansion of Aries and returns to the place where it began in 365 days, five hours, and a fraction, which is one year. So every three months it passes through approximately three constellations. ²⁷The moon returns to the place where it began in one hundred eighty days.

²⁸A *hās'a'r* on the ground is one *frasang*, a thousand paces of two feet. ²⁹The measure of a *frasang* is as far as a keen-eyed man, looking at a cow, can distinguish its black coloring from the white.

³⁰A month⁴ measures six spans of time.⁵

26

Zoroastrianism has been variously defined as a monotheistic, a dualistic, and a polytheistic religion. These definitions depend, of course, on the historical and cultural circumstances in which they were made in premodern times and, more recently, on the scholarly predilections of the modern definer. Even within the textual confines of the *Bundahišn*, though, we can see that there is evidence to support all three positions. Chapters 1 and 1A state clearly that both Ohrmazd and Ahriman are preexistent, and the division of power between good and evil in the spiritual world is never overturned. At the same time, Ohrmazd surpasses Ahriman in every way—in wisdom, in creation, in foresight—and the Evil Spirit seems at times little more than a shadow of the good Creator.

Chapter 26 paints a different picture of Zoroastrian theology. A detailed catalogue of Zoroastrian deities (*yazdān*) and their roles and functions, this chapter depicts a densely populated divine realm. These deities have distinct powers, attributes, and roles and are to be worshiped. The chapter draws from and comments on the hymns to various divine beings found in the Avestan *yašt*s (for instance, compare 26:22 and 26:25 to *Yašt* 7:4 and 7:5).

The chapter describes the specific attributes and duties of every deity in the protection of the world and in the war against the forces of Ahriman, thus modeling the organization of Ohrmazd's heavenly host on a military hierarchy. Ohrmazd is the commander in chief, followed by the six Amahraspands, the generals, each of whom has three or four assistants and other minor spirits under his or her command. Like the hierarchy of the stars (5A:3), this order reflects the state of the Sasanian military following its reorganization under Khosrow I in the sixth century.

To aid the reader, we have added subtitles throughout the chapter indicating the deity addressed in each part.

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On the Great Deeds of the Spiritual Deities

¹ Ohrmazd protects his own creation with mercifulness, care, and gloriousness. ² His mercifulness is nourishing his creatures; his care is generosity for his creatures; and his gloriousness is this: Ohrmazd-created Glory. ³ As it says:

“The advantageous Glory created by Ohrmazd, the Kayanid Glory created by Ohrmazd, the Iranian Glory created by Ohrmazd, and the unattainable Glory created by Ohrmazd.”

⁴ Kayanid Glory was created for Hōšang, Jam, Kay Us, and other lords, and the Kayanid line proceeded from it. ⁵ The Glory of Iran is that of the Iranians. ⁶ Unattainable Glory belongs to the priests, for knowledge is always with them; ⁷ Ohrmazd himself is a priest, and for this reason they call it unattainable Glory. For Ohrmazd is a mighty spirit among the spirits; his Glory is unattainable. What does “mighty” mean? That even the spirits cannot see them.

⁸ He gave the name Radwōbarzad to the six periods of the Gāhānbār, when he created the spiritual creation. The explanation of this is that Ohrmazd is the lord like those three days he established with his own name every month. He himself sits in endless light and protects the spiritual and material creatures; he is thus as near to the material world as he is to the spiritual world. Wahman, Ardwahišt, and Šahrewar sit on his right; Spandarmad, Hordād, and Amurdād on his left; and Srōš before him.

⁹ The creatures live by Ohrmazd’s mercifulness, they attain their best existence through Ohrmazd’s generosity, and they are saved from the Adversary through Ohrmazd’s gloriousness and omniscience; that is how they become Ohrmazd’s own. ¹⁰ His sign in the world is the righteous man. ¹¹ If someone comforts or harms a righteous man, then Ohrmazd will also be comforted or harmed.

Wahman

¹² Wahman's duty is to act as usher, ¹³ as it says:

“Good Wahman, the powerful, the peacemaker.”

¹⁴ His “goodness” is his ushering; that is, Wahman brings the righteous to the best existence and Wahman admits them into Ohrmazd's presence.

¹⁵ His “power” means that when a troop of deities or of Iranians makes peace and increases it, it is because Wahman goes among them. When a troop of demons or of non-Iranians make discord¹ and destroy,² it is because Wahman does not go among them.

¹⁶ His “peace” means that he gives peace to all of Ohrmazd's creation. By that peace he can better destroy Ahriman and the demons, cause the Resurrection and the Final Body, and prepare immortality.

¹⁷ Innate wisdom and acquired wisdom are first manifest in Wahman. Whoever possesses both attains the best existence, but if one has neither, he goes to the worst existence. When one has no innate wisdom, he cannot learn acquired wisdom. One who possesses innate wisdom, but has no acquired wisdom, does not know how to use his innate wisdom.

¹⁸ Of all the deities, Wahman is closest to the creator. ¹⁹ In the material creation, cattle and white garments belong to him. If someone comforts or harms them, then Wahman will also be comforted or harmed. ²⁰ His assistants are the moon, Gōšurwan, and Rām.

²¹ In allotting glory to the world, the moon waxes for fifteen days and wanes for fifteen days. It is like the male organ that gives seed to females when it passes above. So, too, does the moon: for fifteen days it waxes and disseminates goodness to material beings, and for fifteen days it wanes; that is, it receives good deeds from material beings and entrusts them to the treasury of the deities. ²² As it says:

“The new moon [*andarmāh*], the full moon, and the quarter moon [*wišafdah*].”

That is, from the first to the tenth it waxes and they call it the new moon. From the tenth to the fifteenth it waxes and it is called the full moon. From the twentieth to the twenty-fifth it decreases and is called the quarter moon. During these three five-day periods, it allots glory, and during those three five-day periods, it receives good deeds.

²³ Since the waters are connected to the moon, during those three five-day periods all the waters rise, as can be clearly seen by the eye. ²⁴ The trees also grow better during this period, and fruit ripens more. ²⁵ As it says:

“The divine moon, allotting glory; rich in clouds,” that is, clouds come more because of it; “hot,” that is, the world’s trees are warmer because of it; “growing,” that is, it increases herds of cattle; “profitable,” that is, it keeps things fresh; “good and prosperous,” that is, it gives all good prosperity; “giving due reward,” that is, it gives those who seek a due reward in due time.

²⁶ The spirit Gōš—also Gōšurwan—is the soul of the sole-created cow, from which came the five kinds of animals,²⁷ and likewise, the Hadayōš Bull—also Hađaiiaš—from which they will prepare the elixir of immortality at the Restoration. His duty is to nurture the creatures.

²⁸ Rām, who is said to be the good Way of Long Dominion, is himself Way of Long Dominion, whose duty is to be leader of the spiritual warriors.²⁹ When the souls of the righteous cross over the Činwad Bridge, Good Way takes their hands and brings them to their own places. This is the reason why he is called Rām, because he gives joy [*rāmišn*] to all creation.³⁰ Even when Evil Way severs vital breath from the body, Good Way receives it and gives it contentment.

³¹ Fate, fortune, and Zurwān come from him.³² As it says:

“The fortune of Lord Zurwān without origin” and “Zurwān of Long Dominion.”

³³ Fortune is that which apportions goodness, and its lordship and sovereignty. When farmers till the earth, he fixes their lot.

³⁴ There is a spirit, an assistant of Mihr, whom they call Sōg. All goodness, when it is fashioned by the heavenly beings for the material world, first comes to Sōg. Sōg consigns it to the moon, the moon to Ardwīsūr, Ardwīsūr to fortune, and fortune apportions it in the world. The one that gives more they call good fortune, and the one that gives less, bad fortune. This distribution takes place in time—that is, Way of Long Dominion, which some say is the weapon of Zurwān and some say of Ohrmazd. This means: Falsehood [*zur*] is vanquished [*wāned*] with it.

This is also the allotment³ of time, which was infinite until creation, and was refashioned as finite until the end, when the Evil Spirit will become powerless, and then will mix together with that same infinity forever and ever.

Ardwahišt

³⁵ Ardwahišt’s duty is to prevent and restrain the demons from punishing the souls in hell more than their sins deserve.³⁶ As it says:

“Ašwahišt the righteous, the excellent, the immortal, the beneficent.”

³⁷ For every person goes to paradise by the practice of righteousness and becomes worthy of it by goodness.

³⁸ At the primal creation, when Ohrmazd fashioned the six Amahraspands—he himself was the seventh and the best—he asked them:

“Who fashioned us?”

³⁹ None of them answered. ⁴⁰ He asked the same thing a second, and then a third time. ⁴¹ Then Ardwahišt said:

“You fashioned us.”

The others also gave the same answer. Then Ardwahišt repeated it with them.

⁴² Ardwahišt was the first who gave lordship to Ohrmazd. Then Ohrmazd recited the *Ašəm Vohū* prayer, and made Ardwahišt the highest point⁴ of all the spirits. Just as Wahman is the greatest, Ardwahišt is the highest point.⁵ For every ritual ends with the *Ašəm Vohū*, which is supreme righteousness, greater than all things.

⁴³ For his part,⁶ Ohrmazd asked them this because when they gave lordship to Ohrmazd, the demons were killed and harmed.

⁴⁴ In the material world, fire belongs to Ardwahišt. ⁴⁵ If someone comforts or harms fire, then Ardwahišt will also be comforted or harmed.

⁴⁶ His assistants are Ādur, Srōš, and Wahrām.

⁴⁷ Three spiritual fires are essential in the material world: Farrōbag, Gušnasp, and Burzēnmihr. Then come the other fires that sit in the fire temples, which were created to strike and destroy fiends and to protect the creatures.

⁴⁸ It says about the Farrōbag fire:

“When a righteous soul crosses the Āinwad Bridge, it arrives to strike away darkness and makes light.”

⁴⁹ Srōš preserves the material world through the protective action of Ohrmazd. ⁵⁰ Just as Ohrmazd is the leader of the spiritual and material worlds, Srōš is the leader of the material world. ⁵¹ As it says:

“Ohrmazd is the protector of the soul in the spiritual world, and Srōš of the body in the material world.”

⁵² He has not slept pleasantly since creation in order to protect the creatures. Every night, all night long, he chases⁷ Māzan demons away from every person three times, so that they will not be distressed by the fear of those demons. Because of him, all the defeated demons scurry unwillingly toward the darkness.

⁵³ The souls of the departed arrive at the Činwad Bridge under the protection of Srōš. Then in those seven continents for seven years they have to perform the *drōn* ritual and the *āfrīnagān* prayers, all for Srōš. For this reason, he sits there visibly in his authority. ⁵⁴ As it says:

“We praise the righteous Srōš, strong, embodying command, heavily armed, the lord.”

⁵⁵ His strength means that when he strikes with his mace in the east, the fear⁸ of it does not cease until he strikes again in the west. ⁵⁶ His embodying command means that he keeps his body ready for the commands of the deities. ⁵⁷ His heavy armor means that the demons are not safe from his blows. ⁵⁸ His lordship means that he is the commander of Arzah and Sawah.

⁵⁹ Divine Wahrām is the standard-bearer of the spiritual deities. None are more victorious than he, who always holds the banner of victory of the deities.

Šahrewar

⁶⁰ Šahrewar’s duty is to advocate before Ohrmazd on behalf of the poor. The foundation of all authority is from Šahrewar.

Some say, “dominion [šahr] desirable [war],” which can be explained as “sovereignty at will.”

It is because metal belongs to him in the material world that all desire for lordship, power, fulfillment of desire, and prowess in disputation are possible through weapons. All weapons are metallic. ⁶¹ The spirits’ weapons, with which they overcome the demons, are all metallic. ⁶² As it says:

“We worship the good-swinging club on the heads of the demons.”

⁶³ Mihr of wide pastures and the sun also carry metal weapons during the day⁹ in order to strike down the demons.

⁶⁴ Metals in the material world belong to Šahrewar. ⁶⁵ If someone comforts or harms metal, then Šahrewar is also comforted or harmed. His assistants are Xwar, Mihr, Āsmān, and Anagrān.

⁶⁶ Xwar is the immortal, splendid, swift-horsed sun.

⁶⁷ His immortality means that the Final Body will come to be from the coming and going of the sun. ⁶⁸ His having swift horses means that he has fine horses because their saddles carry the Glory of Druwāsp. His splendor means that he has many tools.

⁶⁹ It says this as well:

“Every night pollution rushes over the earth, the water, and the righteous creatures like a horse’s mane. But when the sun rises, it strikes down the demons and purifies the whole earth.”

⁷⁰ It also says:

“If the sun were to rise an hour later, the demons would destroy all creation.”

⁷¹ The sun strikes down gloom and darkness, the families of the dark demons, danger that goes in secret, thieves, evil priests, and oppressors.

⁷² Mihr’s duty is to judge the material world according to truth. ⁷³ As it says:

“Mihr of wide pastures who has one thousand ears and ten thousand eyes.”

⁷⁴ His having wide pastures means that one can come and go fearlessly in the desert because of Mihr. ⁷⁵ His having one thousand ears means that five hundred spirits all act as his ears. ⁷⁶ His having ten thousand eyes means that five thousand spirits all act as his eyes, saying:

“Mihr! Hear this and hear that; see this and see that!”

Every day until noon he and the sun are in this work together. This is the reason why judges in the material world keep court until noon.

⁷⁷ It also says this about Mihr:

“He is the ruler of every district, who gives judgment on every matter and every person who comes to him, for Ohrmazd created him most splendid of the spiritual deities.”

⁷⁸ There is a spirit with Mihr who is Mihr’s assistant. His place is between the moon and the sun.

⁷⁹ Āsmān is the spirit of the sky, which he wears on his body as armor. He guards the sky to prevent the Evil Spirit from scurrying back out. He has appointed the knowledge of the righteous to assist him.

⁸⁰ Anagrān is the infinite spiritual light that is a house, adorned with jewels, built of pierced crystal,¹⁰ spiritually fashioned.

Spandarmad

⁸¹ Spandarmad’s duty is nurturing the creatures and perfecting everything in them. The earth in the material world belongs to Spandarmad. ⁸² As it says:

“Good Spandarmad, with full awareness, with free-ranging eyes, created by Ohrmazd, righteous.”

⁸³ Her goodness means that she is patient and suppresses complaint. That is, Spandarmad the earth destroys all the evil that reaches her. ⁸⁴ Her full awareness means that she happily accepts all the evil they do to her. ⁸⁵ Her generosity means that all creatures live because of her.

⁸⁶ The spirit of the righteous was created to purify the earth. That is, when demons spread pollution at night, she purifies it. ⁸⁷ This too is her duty: Every evening, a Glory from all creation returns to enter the presence of Ohrmazd. During the period of Ušahin, that Glory comes to the star station and Ōšebām receives it. At dawn, it enters Lake Urwēs and a righteous spirit receives it. It comes with a chariot and every time entrusts its own Glory to him.

⁸⁸ If someone comforts or harms the earth, then Spandarmad is also comforted or harmed.

⁸⁹ Her assistants are Ābān, Day, Ard, and Māraspand.

⁹⁰ Dawn [ōšebām] is the ray of the sun that rises when the sun's light first appears. Its body is not visible until the sun is visible, at the brilliance [bām] of the dawn [oš].

Its duty is to preserve people's intelligence [oš]. It is evident from this that at that hour, intelligence more easily grasps good things and better learns the good; it is more receptive to it. Whoever loses his intelligence, if it is not distorted by death, returns to it at that hour.

⁹¹ The spirit of all the waters is watery Ardwīsūr, who is Anāhīd, the mother of waters. When men's seed is purified from the blood, and when women give birth and are pregnant again—that is Ardwīsūr's duty.

⁹² Divine Burz resides where watery Ardwīsūr and the immaculate waters are. ⁹³ His main duty is distributing the water in the sea to all the continents. Moreover, they save the creatures crossing the seas from the high fear,¹¹ and keep guard over all the Glory. ⁹⁴ As it says:

“Burz, lord of females, offspring of water, with swift horses.”

⁹⁵ Divine immaculate Hōm, healing Hōm in Gōkarēn; the Restoration will come to be through him.

⁹⁶ Dahmān Āfrīn is the spirit whose Glory reaches people when they make blessings [āfrīn]. For just as water returns to its source by the measure I have already mentioned, so too the blessings of Dahmān return by that measure to he who makes blessings.

He is the protector of diligently produced wealth. Four times every day and night Dahmān Āfrīn visits the bodies of all mortal beings, the roots of all the

plants, and the mountain heights. When they do good, that goodness reaches the breadth of the earth, the length of the rivers, and the height of the sun.

⁹⁷ *Dēn* is the worship of Ohrmazd and the protection of Spandarmad. All that is, was, and will be is revealed through it. It was first revealed to Wahman: the good Mazdaean *dēn*, antidemonic, abiding by the law of Ohrmazd, dispelling strife, and laying aside weapons.

The interpretation of this is that it was revealed that devilry is different from divinity: There is no enmity, contamination, and evil in it. By accepting the *dēn*, the demons' bodies were broken. By worshiping according to the *dēn*, the Evil Spirit and all the demons will perish. By worshiping according to the *dēn*, the strength of all spiritual divinities will increase; the might of Sirius, the good seasons of the year, the expansion of lawfulness by lords, and all other goodness comes to be. ⁹⁸ By worshiping according to the *dēn*, they will perform the Resurrection and the Final Body, and the creatures will attain immortality and happiness.

⁹⁹ Ard is the spiritual being of rectitude [*ardāyīh*] and heavenliness. Some¹² say it is Ahrišwang the good, and others Ašišwang. She is the increase of the Glory in the house; for whatever they give to worthy men will return to that home in abundance. She protects the treasures of the good. For paradise, too, is like a jewel-adorned house. As it says:

“The house and the dwelling are good for¹³ all corporeal existence is in Ohrmazd’s *dēn*.”

¹⁰⁰ The Amahraspand Ērman is the spiritual being who was created to heal the pains of all the creatures. ¹⁰¹ As it says:

“Creatures consume drugs to counteract pain. But if you, Ohrmazd, had not sent me, Ērman, for healing, those pains would never have become better.”

¹⁰² So, too, the spell and incantation of the law and the holy *Gāthās* keep watch over the spiritual worship and glory.

¹⁰³ Māraspand is the word of Ohrmazd, that is, the *Avesta*, which can be interpreted: the pure praise [*abēzag stāyišn*] of the deities.

¹⁰⁴ Nēryōsang is the messenger of deities, he who sends messages to all. Along with the Kayanids and heroes, he has been established to give aid to those in the material world. Regarding the Kayanid seed, it says that it prospers. ¹⁰⁵ As it says:

“The Kayanid seed is called from the line of lords.”

Nēryōsang is the generosity of the world. That is, the Kayanids and heroes were generous and governed with his help.

Hordād

¹⁰⁶ Hordād is the spiritual master of years, months, and days; he is the spiritual master of all. Water in the material world belongs to him. As it says:

“The becoming, birth, and nourishment of all corporeal beings in the world is from water, and the cultivation of the earth, too, is from it.”

If one can live well throughout the year, it is on account of Hordād. ¹⁰⁷ As it says:

“All the goodness that comes to the material world from the divinities arrives on the day of Hordād, New Year’s Day.”

Some say:

“It comes every day, but more on that day.”

¹⁰⁸ It is revealed that if, on that day, people dress well, smell pleasing fragrances, have good omens, sit far from impure places and evil men, share water, and consecrate the day of Ayaranam and Asnyanam, more goodness will come to them that year, and more evil will be taken from them.

¹⁰⁹ If someone comforts or harms water, then Hordād is also comforted or harmed.

¹¹⁰ His assistants are Tīr, Wād, and Frawardin. ¹¹¹ Tīr is Sirius, who acts as rain maker and nourisher of the creatures. ¹¹² Wād is the spirit of the wind who holds up the earth from below and above. Sirius entrusts the water he takes up to him. ¹¹³ Frawardin is the *frawahr* of Ardā Fraward, who is in the presence of Ohrmazd the lord, the *frawahr* of the born and unborn who continuously struggle against the fiends corporeally and spiritually. ¹¹⁴ As it says:

“The Evil Spirit was entirely silent until he saw a righteous man. For only a righteous man, excellent in thought, word, and deed can render powerless the Evil Spirit with all the misbegotten demons.”

¹¹⁵ Also, Sirius takes up the water more successfully with their help. And a righteous man—Sōšāns the victorious—will perform the Resurrection and the Final Body.

Amurdād

¹¹⁶ His assistant Amurdād is spiritual master of the innumerable¹⁴ plants. For plants in the material world belong to him; he causes plants to grow and herds of cattle to increase. All creatures eat and live because of him. So, too, at the Restoration, the elixir of immortality will be prepared from Amurdād.

¹¹⁷ If someone comforts or harms the plants, then Amurdād is also comforted or harmed. ¹¹⁸ His assistants are Rašn, Aštād, and Zāmyād.

¹¹⁹ Rašn is the spirit of truth, who has set in order the revelation.¹⁵ For, if the sinful demons cannot destroy material creation, it is owing to the spirit of truth. ¹²⁰ Rašn also reckons the sins and good deeds of people's souls. ¹²¹ As it says:

“Where the judge makes a false decision, Rašn does not see that place. Righteous Srōš laments: ‘I am confined in the material world.’”

That is, truth does not reside there.

¹²² Aštād is the guide of the spiritual and material beings. ¹²³ Zāmyād is the spirit of the earth. ¹²⁴ As it says:

“Three glories stand at the Činwad Bridge: Rašn who reckons the soul, and Aštād and Zāmyād who guide the soul to the scales.”

¹²⁵ Pārand, full of glory, is the nurturer¹⁶ who created profit with the Amahraspand Ahrišwang. ¹²⁶ As it says:

“Pārand, whose chariot is swift.”

¹²⁷ All the spirits' praise and all the demons' affliction come from the worship of the spirit of the *Gāthās*, as revealed in the *dēn*. ¹²⁸ These spirits are numerous and ascribed famous deeds, as the *dēn* says—long to recount and already written in brief by many. ¹²⁹ Ohrmazd and the six Amahraspands, whom one calls the foundation of all the Amahraspands, are immortal and bountiful.

They do not think, they do not speak, and they do not act. It also says this: One must not think, or one must not speak, or one must not act.

¹³⁰ Ohrmazd's law is good; his *dēn*, humility; his weapon, truth; his work, revelation; his desire this: Question, examine, study, and know me, for when you do, you will follow me more.

¹³¹ The Ohrmazdean essence is warm, humid, shining, fragrant, light, and visible from within.

The catalogue of demons in chapter 27, though shorter, mirrors the structure of the list of deities in chapter 26. The first part of the chapter is devoted to a description of the nature of Ahriman (27:1–5), followed by a list of the six archdemons (27:6–14), the major demons (27:15–45), and other minor fiends. The chapter’s concluding digression on hell (27:56–59; see in detail in chapter 30) seems to be an interpolation. One would expect the chapter to end with the definition of Ahriman’s essence (27:56), just as the final paragraph of the previous chapter lists the essences of Ohrmazd (26:131).

Here, as throughout the *Bundahišn* and Middle Persian Zoroastrian literature as a whole, the terms for demons and fiends look back to Avestan. Demon, *dēw*, reflects *daēuua-*, the Avestan cognate of Vedic Sanskrit *devá-*, meaning “god.” The precise understanding of the word *daēva-* in the Old Avesta remains a matter of fierce scholarly debate that has important implications for the history of Zoroastrianism: Did the prophet Zarathushtra himself castigate the “old gods,” the *daēvas*, as demons? Is the difference between the positive Vedic and negative Avestan words the result of a bifurcation that occurred much earlier in Indo-Iranian history? Or does the Avestan *daēva-* not mean “demon” at all?

Just as important is the word we have translated “fiend.” Middle Persian *druz* derives from Avestan *druj-*, a central concept in the *Gāthās* that stands in opposition to *aša-* (rightness, order, truth; cognate with Vedic *ṛtā-*). *Druj-* has been variously translated as “falsehood,” “deceit,” “deceptive order,” and “the Lie.”

The *Avesta* preserves the most important text on demons and the rules to maintain purity in the face of demonic pollution. This is the *Vidēvdād*, “The Law against the Demons,” of which a late Avestan version and a few Middle Persian commentaries and summaries survive. Chapter 27 reproduces and reflects on many passages also found in the *Vidēvdād*.

It is important to note that while the demons operate in and influence the material world, they are not material beings. Shaul Shaked has argued that Zoroastrianism sees the demons ultimately as acting on and within the psychological plane to undermine the moral, social, religious, and physiological aspects of human life and to turn human beings into soldiers of

Ahriman. One famous passage from the *Dēnkard* even states that Ahriman “never existed and does not exist” (6:278). This nonbeing is contrasted with Ohrmazd’s true existence, though the *Bundahišn* seems not to ascribe to this view.

Demons are destined to disappear alongside Ahriman at the end of days, when the world will be restored to its state before the onslaught of the Evil Spirit.

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On Ahriman and the Demons' Evil Deeds

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“The evil of the Evil Spirit was fabricated against the creation of Ohrmazd; one can say during a single winter.”

² His form resembles a frog. He never thinks, speaks, or acts for the goodness of Ohrmazd’s creatures. His task is mercilessness and destruction; that is, he strikes at the creation of Ohrmazd when it prospers. He does not refrain from harming the creatures, not even for the twinkling of an eye. ³ As it says:

“Since the moment that I created, I, who am Ohrmazd, have not rested from protecting my own creatures and from preventing the Evil Spirit from fabricating evil against creation.”

⁴ By the *dēn* of the sorcery, he seduces people to friendship with himself and enmity against Ohrmazd, so that they abandon the *dēn* of Ohrmazd and practice that of Ahriman. He projects into people’s minds:

“This is not the *dēn* of Ohrmazd, one must not profess it.”

⁵ Whoever gives something to those who made this saying a law, propitiates the Evil Spirit; that is, he will have pleased him.

⁶ Akōman’s job is giving creatures bad thinking and discord.

⁷ The demon Indar’s job is drawing creatures’ thoughts away from righteousness so that they will freeze like well-frozen snow. He projects in peoples’ minds the notion that they should not wear the *šabīg* and the *kustīg*.

⁸ The demon Sawul—the chief of the demons—has this job: evil rule, oppression, injustice, and rebellion.

⁹ The demon Nanhais’s job is to make creatures unhappy. ¹⁰ As it says:

“Whoever gives something to those whose law is that one must not wear the *šabīg* and the *kustīg* will have pleased Indar, Sawul, and Nanhais.”

¹¹ The demon Tariz is the one who mixes poison in the plants and the creatures.

¹² As it says:

“Tariz the thrasher and Zariz the poison-maker.”

¹³ These six are called the chief demons; the others are their assistants and helpers.

¹⁴ It also says this:

“Whoever gives something to a man who says that one should wear only one shoe and has made scuttering about with one shoe the law, will have pleased the fiend Tariz.”

¹⁵ The demon Tarōmad is the one who causes perverse thinking.

¹⁶ The demon Mihōxt is the fiend of doubt.

¹⁷ The demon Arešk is the fiend of vengefulness and envy.

¹⁸ These are the instruments of the demon Xēšm. ¹⁹ As it says:

“There are seven powers of Xēšm by which he destroys creatures.”

The Kayanids and heroes will strike six of these seven powers in their own time, and one will remain.

²⁰ Wherever Mihōxt comes, Arešk resides; wherever Arešk resides, Xēšm makes his camp. Wherever Xēšm makes his camp, many creatures are destroyed and he causes great desolation. ²¹ Of all the evils set on Ohrmazd's creatures, Xēšm fashions the most of all. The Kayanids and heroes were destroyed above all by Xēšm's evil deeds. ²² As it says:

“Xēšm with the bloody club [*xurdrus*].” For of all the desolation [*hamāg drōš*], he does the most.

²³ The demon Wizarš battles with the souls of the newly deceased during the three nights they spend in the material world and brings fear and blows upon them. He sits at the gates of hell.

²⁴ The demoness Ōdag spiritually strikes people in their vertebrae¹ while they sit on the toilet or eat, saying “Chatter and cry out!” so that they will eat chattering, shit chattering, and piss chattering—and thus not reach the best existence.

²⁵ The demon Akataš is the fiend of repudiation, who causes creatures to repudiate righteous things. ²⁶ As it says:

“Whoever gives anything to someone who turns people away from righteousness pleases Akataš. Whoever gives to someone whose law is that one should not have a *dastwar* pleases the demon Xēšm. Whoever gives to someone whose law is that one should not have a snake-killer pleases Ahriman and all the demons.” ²⁷ It says this about him:

“When he sees vermin, he does not kill them.”

²⁸ The snake-killer is a length of wood with a leather piece fitted on its end. It is revealed that every member of the good *dēn* must have one to strike and kill vermin and sinners, to greater merit.

²⁹ Zarmān is that demon who causes shortness of breath and whom they call “old age.”

³⁰ Čēšmag causes earthquakes and whirlwinds and opposes the clouds.

³¹ The demon Waran causes sinful fornication. As it says:

“Waran the defiler.”

³² The demon Būšāsp causes sloth. ³³ Sēj is the fiend who causes destruction, and the demon Niyāz causes destitution.

³⁴ The demon Āz devours; when, because of scarcity, nothing else can be found, she consumes her own body. Even when she is given all the wealth in the world, this demon puts nothing aside² and is never sated. ³⁵ As it says:

“The greedy eye is a limitless frontier.”

³⁶ Pēnīh is the demon who keeps a hoard, does not consume it and does not give it away. ³⁷ It also says this:

“The demon Āz’s strength comes from men discontented with their wives who steal the women of others.”

³⁸ The demon Nas causes filth and pollution, which they call corpse impurity [*nasā*].

³⁹ The demon Frētār deceives people.

⁴⁰ The demon Spazg brings words and bears them away. He speaks and shows in simulacrum things that are not, and people attack and destroy one another.

⁴¹ The demon Ānāst speaks deceitfully.

⁴² The demon Agāš is the fiend of the evil eye who attacks people with his eyes.

⁴³ They worship the demon But [Buddha] in India, and his spirit dwells in the idols that they worship as Būdāsf [Bodhisattva].

⁴⁴ Astwihād is the Evil Way who takes the soul. As it says:

“They call him sloth when he rubs him with his hand; fever, when he casts his shadow over him; death, when he looks at him with his eye and strikes away his soul.”

⁴⁵ Evil Eye is the demon who harms people when they see something and do not say “by the name of the gods.”

⁴⁶ There are many demons and fiends who are their assistants whom it would take too long to describe in detail. ⁴⁷ It speaks of a great number of nameless³ demons: demons of ruin and pain; of deceit and harm; givers of sorrow and destroyers of kinsmen;⁴ of dark seed; bringing stench, rottenness, and wickedness; who are many in number and known by many names. ⁴⁸ A portion of all of them has been mixed into people’s bodies, and their sign is manifest in mankind.

⁴⁹ The demon Apōš and the demon Spinjaruš are the ones who struggle with the rain makers.

⁵⁰ The Evil Spirit's law is wickedness; his *dēn*, sorcery; his weapon, falsehood; his action, concealing his nature; and his desire is this: "Do not ask about me and do not know me, for if you ask and know me, you will not follow me."

⁵¹ It also says this:

"The voice of the Evil Spirit resembles thunder, and the call of a six-year-old crane, and the braying of a donkey, and the cry of a righteous man when he is struck against his will and cries out."

⁵² The demon Kundag is the steed of the sorcerers.

⁵³ Many new demons burst forth from each new sin that creatures commit.

⁵⁴ So too are the planets that scurry across the firmament and join the battle in great numbers. Their chiefs are the seven planets, the head and the tail of Gōzihr, and the tailed Mūš-Parīg, ten in all. With their wickedness, these ten have defiled material creation: the sky, the water, the earth, the plants, the animals, the metals, the wind, light, fire, and mankind.

From them it reaches the water, the plants, and the other creation—that is, the material world; from those ten, light reaches living beings, just as from those ten, the fiendishness of harm, pain, disease, death, and other evils and defilement reaches them.

⁵⁵ The demons that I have enumerated have aids and instruments.

⁵⁶ The Ahrimanic essence is cold and dry; his place is dark, stinking, and unilluminated.

⁵⁷ Regarding hell, it says:

"You can grasp its darkness in your hand and cut its stench with a knife."

If they torment a thousand in the space of a handbreadth, each one imagines that he is alone; the torment of loneliness is the worst of all.

⁵⁸ Hell is bound to the seven planets, some of which are colder, like Saturn, and some warmer, like Mars.

⁵⁹ Their nourishment is stench, frog excrement, and other evil food.

28

Chapter 28 reconnects previous chapters' discussions of the divine realm with the human domain. This chapter focuses on the idea of the correspondence between the microcosm (*gēhān i kōdak*) and the macrocosm (*gēhān i wuzurg*), also found in Plato's *Timaeus*. The chapter lays out in detail the parallels between parts of the human body and entities in the world, in particular the heavenly world of the Amahraspands (28:22; compare with *Wizidagīhā i Zādsprām* 30:5–11, where the body's limbs and organs are associated with the seven planets). The underlying concept is well expressed in the chapter's opening statement, “The human body is the measure of the material world” (28:1), perhaps a reflection of the pre-Socratic philosopher Protagoras's well-known phrase “Man is the measure of all things,” which also appears in Plato's *Theaetetus*. The doctrine of the microcosm also has a broad diffusion in Islamic thought, including in the *Epistles* of the Ikhwān al-Safa. The chapter also resembles the pseudo-Hippocratic treatise *De hebdomadibus*, which similarly divides the human body and the cosmos into seven interacting elements.

While surviving Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature does not include a complete medical text, this chapter, along with *Wizidagīhā i Zādsprām* 30 and several passages in the third book of the *Dēnkard*, shed light on Iranian Zoroastrian theories of medicine and physiology, many of which have precedents in Greek thought. Greek physicians were a staple at the Iranian court since the Achaemenid period, and Nestorian medical schools, such as those at Nisibis and Gundēšābuhr, existed in Iran under the Sasanians.

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On the Human Body as the Measure of the Material World

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“The human body is the measure of the material world,² for the world was made from a drop of water.”

As it says:

“At first, this entire creation was one drop of water.”

So, too, all mankind came to be from one drop of water.

³ Just as the width of the world is equal to its length, so, too, for people: every person has his own length and width.

⁴ The skin is like the sky,

flesh like the earth,

bones like mountains,

and veins like rivers.

Blood in the body is like water in the sea,

and the belly is like the sea.

Hair is like plants,

and where hair grows most is like a forest.

The essence of the body is like metal,

innate wisdom is like people,

and acquired wisdom is like animals.

Heat is like fire,

the hands and feet are tools like the seven planets and twelve constellations.

The digesting stomach is like the clouds and the Wāzišt fire.

The breath, in and out, is like the wind.

The liver is like the Frāxkard Sea, the home of summer, and the spleen is like the northern region, where lies winter’s abode.

The round heart is like the immaculate waters of Ardwīsūr, for sickness never touches the heart, except for death.

The top of the head and the brain are like the endless light, and the head is like heaven.

The two eyes are the moon and sun, and the teeth like the stars.

The two ears are like two windows onto heaven—it is revealed that a sweet melody always passes through them that delights and calms the soul.

The two nostrils are like heavenly bellows—one says that various sweet scents always blow there that give the soul fragrance and joy.

The mouth is like the heavenly gates, through which different tastes constantly enter that make the soul plump and prosperous.

The anus is like hell deep in the earth; the anus is the lowest seat in the body.

The soul is like Ohrmazd, and intelligence, memory, perception, reflection, knowledge, and understanding are like the six Amahraspands who stand before Ohrmazd. The other spirits in the body are like the other spirits and deities.

⁵ Just as the throne of Ohrmazd is in the endless light and the threshold to heaven, and his power reaches everywhere, so, too, the place of the soul is in the brain inside the head, its home in the heart, and its power reaches the entire body.

⁶ Just as the wind comes from different directions, in people, too, from midday to midnight, wind and breath come through only one nostril, and from midnight to midday through the other.

⁷ Just as the sun is brighter than the moon, in people, too, one eye sees the road better than the other.

⁸ Just as the waters in the Fräkard Sea become pure when they pass over High Hugar, and part pour back to the sea while another part reaches the whole world as drops of rain, in men, too, blood in the body, which has a sort of home in the liver, goes from the liver every day at dawn and passes over the brain in the head and circulates in the brain; part pours back into the liver and part, which provides strength to the entire body, flows in the veins. The moisture in the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth comes from the foam in the head.

⁹ Just as in¹ the material world the lakes lie to the south, the west is on the right, all the lights come from the east, and full clouds come from the west, which is the home of the clouds, so, too, in people the liver, the home of the blood, is on the right side.

¹⁰ Just as in the material world people sin and do good deeds, and when they die their sins and good deeds are reckoned—whoever is pure goes to heaven and whoever is wicked is cast into hell—the same is true of the food people eat. Whatever is pure goes to the brain in the head and becomes pure blood and passes to the liver, providing strength to the entire body. Whatever

is more mixed goes from the stomach to the intestine, and is cast out from the anus, which is like hell.

¹¹ Just as in the rainmaking, when the fiends become violent and loose excessive cold against the water so it freezes, it does not rain or it freezes as drops and then falls as hail, and harm and trouble befall the creatures, so, too, when people eat more than they can digest, because it is undigested, the excess food accumulates in drops.² The undigested mass comes out, and harms and hurts the body.

¹² Just as Ohrmazd is on high and Ahriman in the depths, and their powers struggle one against the other in the material world, so too there are two winds in the human body. One is the vital wind, which is the soul: its place is in the brain in the head, its essence is warm and moist, and its movement is to the navel. The other is the evil wind: its essence is cold and dry, its place is in the anus, and its movement is to the bile.³

¹³ Just as the demons in the material world cause harm when they block the passages of the wind, so too when the evil wind sticks in their veins and becomes violent, it does not allow any passage for the vital wind, and that place is seized with pain and the body shivers and trembles. ¹⁴ There are other wicked spirits in the body, just as there are other demonic spirits in the material world.

¹⁵ Just as in the material world, the glory of the Mazdaean *dēn* is held in the sky like a star-studded sacred girdle fashioned by the spirits in three folds and four knots, so that darkness, filth, and other contaminations do not mix with the heavenly beings, so, too, people wear the sacred girdle of three folds and four knots around their waist, like the good thoughts, good words, and good deeds revealed in the four natures of humanity, which is purity in the mixture.

¹⁶ Just as in the material world people sin and do good deeds, and when they die their souls are reckoned—whoever is deserving of paradise goes to paradise and whoever is deserving of hell goes to hell—the same is true of the food people eat. Whatever is less mixed becomes clean blood and goes into the body's veins. Whatever is more mixed is dumped in the intestines and is cast out from the anus.

¹⁷ Similarly, material and spiritual things are divided into seven in four parts.

¹⁸ As it says:

“Seven are invisible and intangible: Ohrmazd and the six original Amahraspands.

Seven are visible and intangible: the sun, the moon, the stars, the clouds, the wind, the Wāzišt fire, and the fires that cross the passage killing fiends.

Seven are invisible and tangible: the endless light, the place of the Amahraspands, heaven, paradise, the unmixable firmament, the mixed firmament, and the sky.

Seven are visible and tangible: the earth, water, plants, animals, metals. . . .⁴

[So, too, in people] reflection and understanding are invisible and intangible.

The two ears, the two eyes, the two nostrils, and the mouth are visible and tangible.

The liver, the lungs, the bile, the round heart, the intestines, the spleen, and the kidneys are invisible and tangible.”

¹⁹ The reason there are more deserts than fertile lands in the material world is this: When darkness, cold, and other demonic powers are attacked by the spiritual deities, they scurry in defeat to the desert and refrain from harming creatures. But if the whole world were cultivated, even if they had been beaten back and defeated in multitudes, harm would never leave the creatures because they could not have run away.

²⁰ The same is true of summer and winter and darkness and light. For darkness flees the places light is to where light is not. When summer enters from the south, winter scurries back toward the north. When winter enters, summer returns to its home in the south. Summer is stronger when winter is weaker, and summer is weaker when winter is stronger. So, too, in people: When the liver is stronger, the spleen is weaker, and the liver is weaker when the spleen is stronger.

²¹ The demons’ desire⁵ and infamy are on the continents of Wōrūbaršn and Wōrūjaršn, and from there they come in and scurry back.

²²This, too, is revealed:

“Every limb of the human body belongs to a spirit. The vital breath and every light with the vital breath, intelligence, perception, and others of this kind belong to Ohrmazd. The flesh belongs to Wahman. The veins and the fat⁶ belong to Ardwahišt. The bones belong to Šahrewar. The brain belongs to Spandarmad, the blood to Hordād, and the hair to Amurdād.”

29

Chapter 29 concerns the spiritual masters (*rad*) who protect and guide each of the seven continents (29:1–3; on geography, see chapter 8). The chapter does not specify in detail what role these masters play, and their precise function remains unclear. In other contexts, *rad* (Avestan *ratu-*) refers to an individual’s personal religious guide (see chapter 17).

Most of the chapter is devoted to important mythical sites: the various strongholds located on the central continent of Xwanirah. These include Kangdiz, a fortress built of different metals and precious stones by the Iranian hero Syāwaxš (see 32:12 and *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 49:6–11); Ěrānwēz, the mythical homeland of the Aryans and the best of the sixteen countries created by Ohrmazd (*Vidēvdād* 1); and the shelter built by the primordial hero Jam to protect Ohrmazd’s creatures during a long, terrible winter—the Iranian version of the myth of the great destruction of the world that appears in many cultures.

Here, and in the chapters that follow, we come face to face with references and allusions to Iranian myth. Many of the characters and stories mentioned in the *Bundahišn* have roots in the oldest layers of the tradition. For example, Jam, called Yima in the *Avesta*, appears in the *Gāthās* and is clearly related to Yama, the ruler of the underworld in the Indian *Rigveda*.

However, the extant Zoroastrian literature—in Avestan and in Middle Persian—does not relate these myths in full. What we find in the *Bundahišn*, and elsewhere, are hints and allusions to longer tales. It is only in Abu al-Qasim Ferdowsi’s tenth-century *Shahnameh*, the “Book of Kings,” that Iranian epic reaches its fullest narrative expression.

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On the Mastery of the Continents

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“There are six masters of the continents; each one has its own master.”

² The master of Arzah is Ašāšagahtē, who is Nēwangdān.

The master of Sawah is Hōazarō-dāxhraxwa son of Parišturō.

The master of Fradadafš is Spitōid son of Uspōsin.

The master of Wīdadafš is Ěrēzrāsp son of Uspōsin.

The master of Wōrūbaršn is Huasp.

The master of Wōrūjaršn is Čaxrawāk.

³ Zoroaster is the master of the continent of Xwanirah and also of all righteous people in the material world. All mastery comes from Zoroaster; that is, all received the *dēn* from him.

⁴ There are many places on the continent of Xwanirah that have been made impregnable by spiritual powers during these evil times of the violent struggle with the Adversary. They are called the strongholds of Xwanirah.

⁵ There are similar places in the other continents. Such as Kangdiz, the land of Gōbedestān, the Arab desert, the Pēšānsē plain, the Nāydāg River, Ěrānwēz, the shelter built by Jam, and inner Kašmīr. An immortal master rules each one. ⁶ As it says:

“Pēšōtan son of Wištāsp, whom they also call Čihrōmān, is in shining Kangdiz.

⁷ The son of Agrērad son of Pašang is in the land of Gōbedestān; they call him king of Gōbed.

⁸ Fradaxšt son of Xumbig is in the Pēšānsē plain. He is called Xumbig because he was raised in a jug [*xumb*] for fear of Xēšm.

⁹ Ašem-Yahmāi-Ušt is in a place they call the Nāydāg River.

¹⁰ The harm-opposing tree is in Ěrānwēz.

Urwatadnar, son of Zoroaster, is in the shelter built by Jam.”

¹¹ It also says about them that they are immortal, like Narsē, son of Wiwanghān, Tōs, son of Nōdar, Wēw, son of Gōdarz, Warāzak the fighter, and Ašawazd, son of Purudaxšt. At the achievement of the Restoration, they will all come to Sōšāns’s aid.

¹² Concerning Sām, it says that he is¹ immortal. At the time when he scorned the Mazdaean *dēn*, a Turk called Nohīn shot him with an arrow when he lay sleeping in the Pēšānsē plain. Sinful sloth came over him. He slept² in the midst of a wormwood³ bush and snow has settled on him, so that when Azdahāg is freed, Sām will rise up and strike him down. Myriad *frawahr* of the righteous are his guardians.

¹³ It says about Dahāg, whom they also call Bēwarāsp:

“When Frēdōn captured him, it was not possible to kill him. Then Frēdōn bound him to Mount Dumbāwand. When he is freed, Sām will rise up and strike him with his mace and kill him.”

¹⁴ Kangdiz is in the east, many *frasangs* beyond the Frākard Sea.

¹⁵ The Pēšānsē plain is in Kāwulestān. As it says:

“The most visible peak in Kāwulestān is the Pēšānsē plain, and wormwood grows there on the highest height.”

¹⁶ Ērānwēz is in the province of Ādurbādagān.

¹⁷ The land of Sogdiana⁴ lies far⁵ to the north on the road from Turkestān to China.

¹⁸ The shelter built by Jam is in Sarwāg in the middle of Pārs. As they say:

“The shelter built by Jam is underneath Mount Čimgān.”⁶

¹⁹ Kašmīr is in India.

30

Chapter 30 deals with the destiny and the judgment of the individual soul after death. In the Zoroastrian tradition, there are three stages in the soul's journey to the next world. First, three days of torment and pain while the soul sits next to the body (30:4–9); then encounters with a series of apparitions (30:10–21); and, finally, passage across the Činwad Bridge (30:22–31).

The second and third stages in this journey deserve further elaboration. Other Zoroastrian texts, including in the Avestan corpus (*Vidēvdād* 19 and *Hādōxt Nask* 2), the Middle Persian *Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag* (4:7–14, 17:9–19), and inscriptions by the third-century Sasanian high priest Kērdīr, also describe the righteous soul's encounter with a beautiful maiden, and the wicked soul's confrontation with a hideous hag (30:14, 18) during the second stage. However, the *Bundahišn* is unique in also depicting the soul's encounter with a fat or lean cow and a lush or barren garden. The maiden and the other elements represent the soul's *dēn* (Avestan *daēnā-*). In this context, the polyvalent term *dēn* refers to the soul's vision or inward consciousness that is made prosperous or poor according to the quality of the soul's thoughts, words, and deeds in the material world (30:16, 20).

The *dēn* then escorts the soul in the third stage to the Činwad Bridge, meaning “separator” or “collector.” A uniquely Iranian contribution to accounts of otherworldly judgment found in many cultures, this bridge, which already figures in Old Avestan as *činuuatō pərətu-* (*Yasna* 46:10; 51:13), likely influenced similar imagery in Islamic texts, in the *Dialogues* of Saint Gregory, and in medieval Irish Christian literature. As the *Bundahišn* describes, the bridge is located between the Harburz Mountains and the mythical Peak of Dāitī (Avestan *dāitiia-* “lawful”) (30:1). It is protected by one (30:3) or two dogs (*Vidēvdād* 19:30), auspicious animals as seen in chapter 24. The bridge's path becomes wide for righteous souls who reach heaven (30:26) and as narrow as a blade for the wicked who will fall into hell (30:27, 31).

The chapter also provides details about the three otherworldly realms: paradise (literally, “the best,” *wahīšt*), the highest station of which is called *garōdmān* (House of Song); hell (*dušox*); and an intermediary state (*hammistagān*). The righteous soul takes three steps, from the star station to the moon station to the sun station, to reach Ohrmazd's throne in *garōdman*

(30:26). These three steps ascending the spheres of the Zoroastrian firmament (compare *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 23:13; *Mēnōg ī Xrad* 7:8–12; *Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag* 7:1–5, 8:1–5, 9:1–4, 10:1) represent the three ethical pillars of Zoroastrianism: good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

The wicked soul takes three similar steps downward and falls into hell (30:31). The *Bundahišn* does not describe hell further, and, overall, the conception of hell is inconsistent in the Zoroastrian tradition. Some sources divide it into three distinct circles (*Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 23:30; *Mēnōg ī Xrad* 7:20–22), while others imagine two different and independent zones to which a soul is assigned depending on the gravity of his or her sins (*Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag* 18:3–5, 53:1–2).

The chapter refers briefly to *hammistagān*, the “intermediary place” that seems to be an original Zoroastrian conception; influenced by readings of Dante, this realm has often been mistranslated by scholars as Purgatory or Limbo. It is the destination for those whose sins equal their good deeds (30:32–33). Residents of *hammistagān* suffer no punishment except the heat and cold emanating from the movement of the air (*Mēnōg ī Xrad* 7:18–19; *Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag* 6:5–6).

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On the Činwad Bridge and the Souls of the Departed

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“A peak in the middle of the world, as tall as the height of one hundred men, which they call the Peak of Dāitī, is the fulcrum of divine Rašn’s scales. One edge stands on the base of Mount Harburz in the north, and the other edge on the peak of Mount Harburz in the south, and the middle stands upon the Peak of Dāitī. ² In the middle, there is an edge as sharp as a sword that is as high, long, and wide as nine lances. ³ There stand the spirits who spiritually purify the souls of the righteous. A spiritual dog is at the end of the bridge, and hell is underneath it.

⁴ When people pass away, for three nights the soul sits near the body, by the place where the head used to be. During those nights, it is oppressed by the demon Wizarš and his assistants and turns its back on the fire kindled there.

⁵ That is why for those three nights they keep a fire burning until morning in the place where the head used¹ to be. If that fire is not there, it turns its back on the Wahram fire or other fires that have the same light.²

⁶ During those three nights, when the body is rent and destroyed, it seems as distressful to him as demolishing a house is for its owner.

⁷ For those three days, the soul sits next to the top part of the body, hoping:

“The blood will flow and the breath will return to the body, and I will be able to go back!”

⁸ Then at dawn after the third night, if it is a righteous soul, it says:

‘Good is he from whom goodness comes, whomever.’

That means, I am good and from my goodness, everyone is good. May Ohrmazd willingly grant me dominion.

⁹ If the soul is wicked, it says:

“This is the body, the vital breath, and form, with which I wickedly scurried. Now where can I flee from here?”

¹⁰ If it is righteous, with these words a wind blows toward him, gladdening his soul, that is better, more beautiful, more fragrant, and more triumphant

than all the winds of the material world.¹¹ But if it is wicked, a wind blows toward him that causes his soul unhappiness and fear, more fetid, more foul, and more vanquished than all the winds of the material world.¹² Then the wind bears way all³ the souls, righteous and wicked.

¹³ If the soul is righteous, then the form of a fat cow, full of milk, approaches him, bringing prosperity and fatness to the soul.¹⁴ Then the form of a fifteen-year-old girl approaches him, comely, wearing a white garment, beautiful in all her limbs, who gladdens the soul.¹⁵ Then comes the form of a garden, full of flowers, full of water, full of fruit, and fully prosperous, that fills the soul with gladness and contentment. Some say it is the heavenly land.

These are the signs the soul sees on earth before the reckoning.”

Some say:

“The soul asks each one when it meets them, ‘Who are you, that it seems to me you contain all bliss and peace?’¹⁶ They answer one by one, ‘I am your *dēn*, O righteous man, the deeds you performed when you did good. I am here because of you.’

¹⁷ If the soul is wicked, then the form of a parched cow, lean and frightful, approaches him, bringing drought and leanness to the soul.¹⁸ Then comes the form of a frightful and ugly girl, cloaked in perversity, in every way frightful, causing terror and fear in the soul.¹⁹ Then comes the form of a waterless, treeless, and joyless garden that causes bad thoughts in the soul. Some say it is the infernal land.

These are the signs the soul sees before the reckoning.”

Some say:

“They ask each one, ‘Who are you, that I have never seen anything more evil than you in the material world?’²⁰ They answer him, ‘I am your *dēn*, O wicked one, your own deeds when you performed evil. I am here because of you.’”

²¹ It is revealed that each person is met by his or her own deeds.

²² Then they conduct the soul to the base of Mount Harburz, above which the edge of the yoke goes up till the height of the ridge where that sharp knife’s edge stands.

²³ Then if the soul is righteous, the sharp knife’s edge stands broad and wide. The victorious Farrōbag fire strikes at the darkness. In the form of a fire, it leads the soul across the knife’s edge. The spirits purify it. The Farrōbag fire leads it spiritually over the second yoke up to the Heights of Harburz. Good Way takes its hand and brings it to its proper place. When he receives the soul, he deposits it there.²⁴ The body, too: when it is purified in the material world, so it is in the spiritual world.

²⁵ If the soul is wicked, when it comes by the yoke up to the peak, the sharp knife's edge remains a blade and does not allow any passage. The soul must walk across the blade against its will. It proceeds three steps—which are its past evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds—and is cut down and falls from the top of the bridge headlong into hell, experiencing all evil.

²⁶ It says this:

“Whoever has been righteous in his generosity, when the wind approaches him, sees the form of a girl in the wind. He asks the questions. The girl, guiding him, brings him to a street on which he takes three steps, and reaches heaven in three steps on this road—which are good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The first step is to the star station, the second to the moon station, and the third to the sun station, that is bright heaven.

²⁷ Whoever has been wicked in his miserliness, when that wind approaches him, sees the form of a girl in the wind. He asks the questions. Some say: His deeds will change into the semblance of a sharp blade that has sharp blades all over. It will say to the soul:

‘O wicked one! Whether you wish it or not, you must take your steps on this!’

²⁸ Then the soul will say:

‘If you slice me with a very sharp knife, that seems better than walking my steps on this.’

²⁹ It will say the same a second time, and the soul will answer:

‘If you shoot me with an arrow, that seems better than walking my steps on this.’

³⁰ It will say the same a third time, and the soul will answer:

‘If you beat the life out of my body, that seems better than walking my steps on this.’

³¹ Then its deeds will become a terrible and untamed wild beast and will stand in front of the soul. The soul will be so afraid that it will walk on the blade, and after three steps it will be cut down and will fall to hell.”

³² Those whose sins and good deeds are equal are given over to *hammistagān*. ³³ It says about *hammistagān*:

“It is a place just like the material world.”

³⁴ Each person is given a place and settled⁴ according to his or her deeds.

31

Chapter 31 describes the sixteen lands of Iran (31:40) and the adversary that Ahriman sent against each one. The *Bundahišn*'s list is modeled on the first chapter of the *Vidēvdād*, which describes Ērānwēz and fifteen adjacent countries, most of which are located in today's northeastern Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.

This chapter introduces the important toponym *Ērānšahr* meaning “the land of Iranians” or “the Iranian kingdom”; throughout the *Bundahišn* we have translated it as “Iran.” However, in Sasanian times *Ērānšahr* did not only have ethnic, linguistic, and religious connotations but also defined a political entity that included all Sasanian territories.

As is often the case in Sasanian reimaginings of Avestan geography, the chapter reascribes originally eastern toponyms to the southwestern districts that were the heartland of the Sasanian Empire as a form of mythic relocation. For instance, the land that the *Avesta* describes as *gāum yim suyδō šaiianəm*, “inhabited by Sogdians” (*Vidēvdād* 1:4), becomes the “Syrian plain,” which is glossed as Baghdad (31:6). Similarly, *haraxvaitīm* (*Vidēvdād* 1:12), the Avestan name for Arachosia in today's southeastern Afghanistan, becomes Armenia (31:23), and the Avestan *upa aοδaēšu rajhaiiā*, “by the falls of the *Rajha* River” (*Vidēvdād* 1:19), becomes “Ōdā of the Arabs” (31:37). The chapter even adds one region to the original list: Pārs, today's Fars province, the dynastic homeland of the Sasanians and Achamenids (31:39).

The reference to the “seven Indias” (31:35) derives from the Avestan *hapta həndu*, which is equivalent to the *Rigveda*'s designation “seven rivers” (*sapta sindhava*), that is, the five rivers of Punjab along with the Indus and Kābul rivers.

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On the Celebrated Lands of Iran and the Kayanid House

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“If I had not created a spirit for each land and country, all people would have gone to Ērānwēz because it is pleasant there.² For of all the places and districts I fashioned, the excellent Ērānwēz is the first.”

³ From the Adversary,¹ the Evil Spirit, demon-created winter, and winged and wingless serpents came there in excess.⁴ There are ten months of winter there, and two months of summer.⁵ As it says:

“Winter and summer are in all places the same, but there it is more severe in the middle of the intercalary month of Day.”

⁶ The second-best place created was the Syrian plain; that is, Syrians dwell² there. It is Baghdad, created by the gods [*bayān-dād*].⁷ Its adversary is that locusts infested worst there. Locusts ceaselessly eat the grass and cause sheep and cows to die.

⁸ The third-best place created was industrious Merv; that is, its business [lit. “work and law,” *kār ud dādestān*] has won it great renown.⁹ Its adversary is that armies crossed most there. For cavalry constantly rape more there; they are thieves, oppressors, heretics, liars, and tormentors of the righteous.

¹⁰ The fourth-best place created was Balx, beautiful to behold. Men there hold their banners diligently.¹¹ Its adversary is that holes came most there. Because of the holes, when one builds³ a house it collapses.

¹² The fifth-best place created was Nisa, which is between Merv and Balx.¹³ Its adversary is this: There was excessive doubt about divine matters.

¹⁴ The sixth-best place created was Harē.¹⁵ Its adversary is that lamentation with the harp and weeping came most there. One speaks, and others repeat with harp and song.¹⁶ As it says:

“Harē of abandoned villages.”

For they leave their houses and go away when a person has died within. Just as we observe the [*barašnūm-ī nō šab*] ritual for the length of nine nights

or a month, they leave their houses and go away for the length of nine nights or a month.

¹⁷ The seventh-best place created was Kāwul of evil shadows, which is Kāwulestān. There the trees' shadows harm the body. ¹⁸ Its adversary is that witches' desire came most there. They also practice demon worship, as Sām once did. Some say this is scurrying about unclad.

¹⁹ The eighth-best created place is Mēšān,⁴ abounding in pastures, that is, grain is abundant. ²⁰ Its adversary is that worst intelligence⁵ came most. As the people of Mēšān dwell there, no people worse than them exist in one group.

²¹ The ninth-best place created was Xēnēn, the Gurgān dwelling place; that is, they live there. Some always⁶ by the Xēnēn⁷ River, and others always in the plains. ²² Its adversary is that unatonable evil acts came most there; that is, they have male sexual intercourse most there. Some say: sodomy.

²³ The tenth-best place created was Arman.⁸ ²⁴ Its adversary is that corpse burial came most there; that is, they practice it in abundance.

²⁵ The eleventh-best created place is majestic and glorious Hēdōmand, that is Sagestān. ²⁶ Its adversary is that sorcery came most there. ²⁷ The sign that reveals it is that all people from there practice magic. Because of those sorcerers and soothsayers, snow, hail, spiders, and locusts fall.

²⁸ The twelfth-best created placed is Rāg of the three tribes; that is, Ādurbādagān. The reason it says "of the three tribes" is because the priests, warriors, and farmers of that place are the best. ²⁹ Its adversary is the worst doubts in divine matters. They themselves doubt and cause others to doubt as well.

³⁰ The thirteenth-best created place is beneficent Čaxr, which is Mazōn.⁹ ³¹ Its adversary is that cooking carcasses and gnawing on carcasses came most there. They are always cooking and gnawing on foxes and weasels.

³² The fourteenth-best created place is four-cornered War; that is, Dumbāwand. ³³ Having four corners means there are four sides. Some say that water enters the district from the four main villages. ³⁴ Its adversary is much evil menstruation; that is, it is more severe and worse there. Non-Iranian countrymen dwell there.

³⁵ The fifteenth-best created place is the seven Indias. India is one, but there are seven chief lords there. ³⁶ Its adversary is that evil heat and severe menstruation came most there.

³⁷ The sixteenth-best created place is Ōdā of the Arang; that is, Ōdā of the Arabs. ³⁸ The adversary that came most there is that they do not consider a leader a leader, and winter is severe there. Arabs live there.

³⁹ But the region that is good to look upon; deep and worthy in works and law; and whose inhabitants inquire much into the works and the law, is called Pārs.

⁴⁰ These are the most renowned lands of Iran.

32

Chapter 32, like chapter 29, draws on Iranian myths that form the basis of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. The chapter presents a list of the marvelous palaces built by Iranian heroes and their enemies, several of which are also mentioned elsewhere in Middle Persian literature and in the *Avesta*. For example, the palace of the sorcerer Frāsyāb (32:6, 13), built by magic, is also mentioned in the *Aogəmadaēčā* (61–65) and in the *Yasna* (11:7), which describes it as an underground metal fortress.

Included in this list of palaces are those belonging to one of the most captivating villains in Iranian myth: the powerful demon Azdahāg. Dahāg (Avestan *Aži Dahāka*) is a dragon or serpent who seizes the throne from Jam and becomes king for one thousand years (33:2). In Ferdowsi's famous telling of the story, the villain, who has two man-eating snakes growing out of his shoulders, is a paragon of corruption, misrule, and oppression.

Throughout the Iranian tradition, Dahāg is associated with neighboring Semitic cultures. In this chapter, Dahāg is said to have several palaces: one in Yemen (*Sambarān*, 32:8), one in India, and one in Babylon (32:4, 15), called *Kulang-dušdid* (meaning, “the vile crane”). The *Dēnkard* (7:4:72) and the Avestan *Ābān Yašt* (5:29) and *Rām Yašt* (15:19) also connect Dahāg with Babylon, an association that may have historical roots. Prods Oktor Skjærvø argues that Iranians connected Dahāg with Babylon because dragons were already central in the literature and art of the Ancient Near East. Elsewhere in the *Dēnkard*, though, Dahāg is said to be the inventor and propagator of Judaism, the author of the Bible, and the builder of Jerusalem (3:227), or, alternatively, an Arab (3:308). Ferdowsi adopts the latter lineage and even calls him Zahhak (Dahāg), spelled with the letter *đād*, uniquely characteristic of the Arabic language.

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On the Glorious Kayanid Palaces, Which They Call Wonders and Marvels

¹ One was built by Jam on Harburz.

² One was built by Frēdōn in Padišwārgar, in four-cornered War; that is, in Dumbāwand.

³ One was built by Kay Us on Harburz.

⁴ One was built by Dahāg in Babylon, which they call Kulang-dušdīd.¹

⁵ One was built by Syāwaxš, son of Kay Us, which they call Kangdiz.

⁶ One was built by sorcery underground by the Turanian sorcerer Frāsyāb.

⁷ One was built by Jam in Pārs, which they call “the shelter built by Jam.”

⁸ One was built by Dahāg in Šambarān and another in India.

⁹ These were made by wonderful work. But they built many other regions, districts, and palaces, too many to describe them all.

¹⁰ It says about the shelter built by Jam:

“He made in secret a palace under the earth. There is² a wonderful light there and neither summer nor winter prevail against it. It contains all the treasures of the material world.”

¹¹ It says about the palaces of Kay Us:

“One of gold was his dwelling, two of crystal were his stables, and two of steel were for his herds. It has an every-flavor spring from which flowed the water of immortality that vanquishes old age. An old man who enters by this gate comes out a fifteen-year-old youth by that gate, and he has defeated death.”

¹² It says about Kangdiz:

“It was handed and footed, mobile, always bowling over the heads of the demons, but Kay Husraw settled it on the ground. Its seven walls are gold, silver, steel, brass, iron, crystal, and lapis lazuli, and between each one are seven hundred straight³ *frasangs*. It has fifteen gates and it would take fifteen spring days to go with a swift⁴ horse from gate to gate.”

¹³ It says about the palace of Frāsyāb:

“It was built by sorcery underground. By the light of the palace night is bright as day. Four rivers flowed there: one of water, one of wine, one of milk, and one of beaten sour milk. It was decorated within by moving figures of the sun and moon. The palace was as tall as the height of one thousand average men.”

¹⁴ Jam’s palace on Harburz was made of jewels.

¹⁵ Dahāg’s palace in Babylon was like a crane.⁵

33

Chapter 33 contains the *Bundahišn*'s most extensive discussion of the mythic history that underlies the previous chapters. This chapter describes the events that occurred and will occur in each millennium from creation to the coming of the final savior, Sōšāns (33:42, and further chapter 34).

While the first two millennia, covering creation and the thousand-year-long misrule of Dahāg, are passed over quickly, the following sections (33:3–26) concisely recount the exploits of the heroes, kings, and villains whose stories are well known to readers of the *Shahnameh*: the champion Rustam (Rōdstahm); the prophecy of Zoroaster and the conversion of King Wištāsp; Alexander the Great's defeat of Dārāy son of Dārāy (possibly to be identified with the Achaemenid ruler Darius III, r. 336–330 BCE); and the history of the Sasanian kings. As in parallel sections of the *Dēnkard*, the compactness of these tales likely reflects the style of the now-lost Sasanian *Xwadāy Nāmag* (Book of Lords). In its Arabic translation, the *Xwadāy Nāmag* was a source for early Islamic universal histories and for Ferdowsi's poem.

Especially interesting in this historical section is the account, which appears elsewhere in Middle Persian literature, of the destruction of the written *Avesta* by Alexander (33:19). This story was likely produced by Zoroastrians in the early Islamic period in an attempt to claim a sacred scripture on par with those of Judaism and Christianity (“religions of the book,” according to Islam). This section also refers to the Sasanian king Kawād's conversion to Mazdakism and his son Khosrow I's reestablishment of Zoroastrianism (3:24).

However, this is not Ferdowsi's version of the Iranian past. This is true both in the stories themselves—for instance, the *Bundahišn*'s Rustam plays a minor role, while in the *Shahnameh* he is the tragic hero at the heart of the epic—and in conception of the larger arc and aim of history.

Ferdowsi ends his story with the Muslim conquest (33:26–28) and the death of the last Sasanian king, Yazdgird III (r. 632–651 CE). For the *Bundahišn*, however, past history is inseparable from future apocalyptic; as we know from chapter 1, the ultimate destiny of the world and the triumph of good over evil was fixed even before creation. Accordingly, the next section (33:29–31) lists a series of cryptic prophecies. In fact, though, these

prophecies likely refer to events that, from the perspective of the *Bundahišn*'s authors or compilers, took place in the distant past. Of particular note is a last, victorious Iranian king called Wahram who is said to rule over Iran, India, Rome, and Turkestān (33:32; see also *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 16:43–49 and *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 7:7). The identity of this figure is a matter of some scholarly debate. It is possible that the passage reflects the existence of local dynasties led by one or more pretenders to the Sasanian throne in the first centuries of the Islamic era. In the Zoroastrian imagination, these dynasties were reconceived as possible restorers of Zoroastrian faith and society.

Finally, the chapter turns to the end of days. Pēšōtan, the immortal son of Wištāsp, heralds the coming of three saviors, all of whom are posthumous sons of Zoroaster born from a virgin impregnated by the prophet's Glory preserved in the Kayānsē Sea (33:43–45, 11C:4; compare *Zand ī Wahman Yasn* 7:2). Ušēdar, the first, inaugurates the penultimate millennium (33:34–37). His brother Ušēdarmāh begins the final millennium (33:39–40), in which Dahāg will be defeated (33:42). The final savior, Sōšāns, inaugurates the eschatological process that is described in detail in chapter 34.

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On the Calamities That Have Befallen Iran, Millennium by Millennium

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When at the beginning of the first millennium of the Mixture the Evil Spirit burrowed through, the cow and Gayōmard existed. Mašyā and Mašyāne acted ungratefully, and then for fifty years they had no offspring. In that same millennium, Hōšang and Tahmurab both killed demons for seventy years. At the end of the millennium, the demons cut Jam in two.

² It was the beginning of the second millennium. Azdahāg seized the throne and exerted his misrule for a thousand years. When the millennium came to an end, Frēdōn seized and bound him.

³ It was the beginning of the third millennium. Frēdōn divided the continents, then Salm and Tūz murdered Ērez and destroyed his sons and descendants. ⁴ During that same millennium Manuščihr was born and sought revenge for Ērez. ⁵ Then Frāsyāb came and drove Manuščihr and the Iranians to Mount Padišwārgar; he destroyed them with ruin, want, and much death. He murdered Fryā¹ and Nōdar, Manuščihr’s sons, and all their kin. He seized Iran from Frāsyāb. ⁶ When Manuščihr was killed, Frāsyāb came again and terribly destroyed and desolated Iran. He held back the rain from Iran until Uzaw, son of Tahmāsp, came. He drove out Frāsyāb and caused the rain that they call “new rain.” ⁷ After Uzaw, Frāsyāb again caused grave evil to Iran until Kawād took the throne.

⁸ During the reign of Kay Us, in that same millennium, the demons became oppressive. They came to kill Ōšnar and deluded Kay Us’s mind so much that he went to battle against the sky and fell down headlong. Glory was taken from him. Then with men and horses he despoiled the world. By a trick, they imprisoned him and the Kayanid notables in the land of Šambarān. ⁹ One called Zēngāw, an Arab who had poison in his eyes, came to rule over Iran. He killed whomever he looked at with his evil eye.

¹⁰ The Iranians begged Frāsyāb to return to the country. He killed Zēngāw and ruled Iran. He carried off many people from Iran and settled them in

Turkestān. He desolated and destroyed Iran until Rōdstahm, trained in Sagestān, seized the king of Šambarān² and freed Kay Us and the other Iranians from their bonds. He fought with Frāsyāb on the banks of the Ulē River, which they call Spāhān. He defeated him there and fought many other battles until he drove him out and cast him back to Turkestān. He cultivated and civilized Iran anew.

¹¹ Frāsyāb brought strife again and Kay Syāwaxš made war against him. Because of the crime³ of Sūdāweh, the wife of Kay Us,⁴ Siyāwaxš did not return to Iran.⁵ ¹² Instead, Frāsyāb gave him protection. He did not come to Kay Us but went to Turkestān and took Frāsyāb's daughter in marriage. Kay Husraw was born from her.¹³ They killed Syāwaxš there.

¹⁴ In that same millennium, Kay Husraw killed Frāsyāb, and he himself came to Kangdiz and gave the rule to Luhrāsp.¹⁵ The millennium ended when Wištāsp had ruled for thirty years.

¹⁶ It was the beginning of the fourth millennium.¹⁷ In that millennium, Zoroaster received the *dēn* from Ohrmazd and proclaimed it. King Wištāsp accepted and promulgated it. He waged a hard battle with Arjāsp. Many Iranians and non-Iranians perished.⁶

¹⁸ In that same millennium, when lordship came to Wahman son of Spandyād, Iran became desolate and Iranians⁷ killed themselves. None remained of the royal line to rule. They seated Humāy the daughter of Wahman on the throne.

¹⁹ Then during the reign of Dārāy son of Dārāy, Emperor Alexander invaded from Rome and came to Iran. He killed King Dārāy, destroyed all the family of the lords and the magi and the notables of Iran. He extinguished many fires. He took the Mazdaean *dēn* and the *Zand* and sent them to Rome and burned the *Avesta*, and divided Iran among ninety provincial lords.⁸

²⁰ Then in the same millennium Ardašir, son of Pābag, arose. He killed those provincial lords and organized the kingdom. He promulgated the Mazdaean *dēn*. He restored many customs that had been preserved in his line.²¹ During the rule of Šāpūr son of Ohrmazd, the Arabs came and seized the banks of the Ulē River. For many years they held it with cavalry raids,⁹ until Šāpūr came to the throne and drove out the Arabs and took the country from them. He destroyed many Arab kings and caused great slaughter.¹⁰

²² During the reign of Pērōz, son of Yazdgird (II), there was no rain for six¹¹ years, and evil and heavy burdens befell the people.²³ Then Xašnawāz, the Hephtalite lord, came and killed Pērōz. Kawād and his sister brought a fire¹² as a pledge to the Hephtalites.

²⁴ During the reign of Kawād, Mazdak, son of Bāmdād, arose and established the Mazdakite law. He tricked and deluded Kawād and commanded that women, children, and property must be held in common and in partnership. He suppressed the Mazdaean *dēn* until Husraw of immortal soul, Kawād's son, reached maturity, killed Mazdak, and restored the Mazdaean *dēn*. He drove out the lords¹³ who had been raiding Iran and blocked their way. He freed Iran from fear.

²⁵ When Yazdgird (III) came to the throne, he ruled twenty years. Then the Arabs invaded Iran in great numbers. Yazdgird did not yield¹⁴ to them in battle. He went to Xwarāsān and Turkestān, asking for horses, men and aid. They killed him there.

²⁶ Yazdgird's son went to India and brought back an army and troops. Before he reached Xwarāsān, he was killed¹⁵ and his army and troops destroyed. Iran remained in the hands of the Arabs. They promulgated their own law and false *dēn* and destroyed many ancestral traditions and weakened the Mazdaean *dēn*. They established the practices of washing corpses, burying corpses, and eating corpses."

²⁷ From the primal creation until today, there was no evil worse than this. For their vile deeds have brought want, desolation, and violence, and their upholding of a bad law and a bad *dēn* have invited danger, misery, and other evils. ²⁸ It says in the *dēn*:

"Their evil rule shall end."

²⁹ A group will come with red banners and red flags. They will seize Pārs and the districts of Iran as far as Babylon; they will weaken the Arabs. ³⁰ Then a bad man will come from the east. He will drive back the people of Padišwārgar and will exercise his misrule for several years. At the end of that time, people will perish in Pārs—but for a few living on the shores of the Kāzarun Sea—until none remain. ³¹ Afterward, the Hyōns and Turks will invade Iran in great numbers and many flags. They will lay waste to thriving, sweet Iran and will destroy many noble families. They will do much violence and harm to the people of Iran, and raze, demolish, and seize many palaces, °until the gods have mercy.°¹⁶

³² When the Romans come, they will reign for one year. At that time, a man will come from Kāwulestān, endowed with glory and from the line of lords, whom they call Kay Wahrām. All people will rejoin him, and he will rule in India, Rome, Turkestān, and everywhere. He will uproot all sinful beliefs and restore the *dēn* of Zoroaster. No one will be able to come forward with another belief.¹⁷

³³ Within a short time,¹⁸ Pēšōtan, son of Wištāsp, will come from Kangdiz with one hundred fifty righteous men. He will raze the idol temples that were their place of secrets. He will establish the Wahrām fire in its natural stead. He will proclaim a *dēn* that is all truth and will restore it.

³⁴ Then will be the beginning of the fifth millennium of Ušēdar. ³⁵ Ušēdar, son of Zoroaster, will come as the guide to the *dēn* and a true messenger from Ohrmazd. He will reveal the *dēn*, just as Zoroaster did, and propagate it. He will reduce famine and drought, and generosity, peace, and freedom from vengeance will increase all over the world. For three years he will give golden freshness to the plants. The Wātaēni River will flow as deep as the height of a horse, and the springs of the Kayānsē Sea will flow again. For ten days and nights the sun will stand still at its exaltation in the sky, and all the species of wolves will perish.

³⁶ When the millennium of Ušēdar comes to its end, evil-natured Malkōs, the descendant of Tūr ī Brādarōš, the bane of Zoroaster, will appear. With the *dēn* of sorcery and witchy will, he will cause terrible rain, which they call "Malkōsian." For three years the cold in winter and the heat in summer, along with untold snow and hail, will be so destructive that all people will perish save a small number and few fires. Then people and animals will again adorn the earth, emerging from the shelter built by Jam that was hidden for this purpose. ³⁷ At the same time, remedies will be created from one thousand species of plants to counter the one thousand species of disease, but¹⁹ of two species one species will reach the earth. No one will die from disease anymore, only from old age or if killed.

³⁸ Then will be the beginning of the sixth millennium of Ušēdarmāh, called the millennium of Ušēdarmāh.

³⁹ During that millennium, Ušēdarmāh, the son of Zoroaster, will come as a messenger from Ohrmazd. He will reveal the *dēn* just like Zoroaster did, and promulgate it in the world. For twenty days and nights the sun will stand at its exaltation in the sky. For six years he will give golden freshness to the plants. The offspring of fiends²⁰ will be destroyed; that is, snakes and vermin will be destroyed. ⁴⁰ Near the end of the millennium of Ušēdarmāh, Dahāg will escape from his bonds. Bēwarāsp will destroy many creatures through his love of the demons.

⁴¹ At that time, Sōšāns, the son of Zoroaster, will appear. For thirty days and nights the sun will stand at its exaltation in the sky.

⁴² Of all material beings, they will first resurrect Garšāsp, son of Sām. He will kill Bēwarāsp with his mace and will remove him from the creatures.

The millennium of Sōšāns will begin. For his millennium—of the maker of bodies—will last for fifty-seven years.

⁴³ It says about these three sons of Zoroaster—Ušēdar, Ušēdarmāh and Sōšāns:

“Even before Zoroaster began to speak,²¹ Zoroaster’s Glory was entrusted to the Glory of the waters—that is, divine Anāhīd—for safekeeping for them in the waters of the Kayānsē Sea.”

⁴⁴ Now, too, they say:

“Three lamps burn at the bottom of the sea. At night they can be seen.”

⁴⁵ One by one, when their time comes, it will happen this way: A maiden will come to wash her head in the water of the Kayānsē. His Glory will mingle with her body and she will become pregnant. That is how, one by one, they will be born, each at the proper time.

Chapter 34 contains one of Zoroastrian literature's most complete accounts of eschatology, including the resurrection of the dead (*ristāxēz*) in their final physical form, known as the Final Body (*tan i pāsēn*), and the Restoration of the earth to its original state of peace and symmetry (*frašgird*; Avestan *frašō. kərəti-*, literally “making brilliant”). These events will take place at the end of the twelfth millennium of Iranian cosmic history, as described in the previous chapter, and will leave a new and undefiled world.

Just as the eschatological drama as a whole remakes the world as it was before Ahriman's attack, so too the stages in that process entail a reversal of human development. For example, the first section of the chapter (34:1–3) describes how people will cease eating and drinking before the coming of Sōšāns, returning to the state of Mašyā and Mašyāne before they began consuming milk and meat (chapter 14) and before their first transgression (see also *Dādestān i Dēnīg* 34:3; *Dēnkard* 7:10:2; compare *Wizīdagīhā i Zādsprām* 34:39).

The Restoration of the world affects all people, sinners as well as the righteous. However, the ethical question of whether and when sinners are released from their punishments in hell was resolved differently in various Zoroastrian texts. The *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān i Dēnīg* (48:67) tells us that all sinners deserving death (*margarzān*) will be resurrected, except for those who thought and committed evil acts against Ohrmazd and other deities. The *Šayast nē Šayast* (17:7) says that all sinners will be raised up with the exception of pederasts, heretics, and those who worshiped demons. In the *Bundahišn*, after a final punishment for the wicked, Ěrman (Avestan Airiāman; compare Vedic Aryaman)—a divine healer and messenger—will melt the mountains, forming a river of metal (34:18–19; see also *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān i Dēnīg* 48:70; compare *Ayādgār i Jāmāspīg* 17:15). All people will wade through the molten river, which will feel pleasant to the righteous and painful to the wicked. This act concludes the universal process of purification.

The end of days concludes with a final battle between good and evil and the molten river pouring into hell to destroy it (34:27–30). However, the ultimate destiny of Ahriman remains unclear. Once the earth is pure and flat and

people immortal (34:32–33), Ahriman is not destroyed, but is said to go back to his primal darkness and gloom (34:31). Perhaps this reflects Ahriman's inherent nonexistence, though it invites speculation that the Evil Spirit could attack creation again—a possibility explored in the later *Škand Gumānīg Wizār*. For the *Bundahišn*, though, while evil continues to exist, it cannot harm Ohrmazd's creatures any longer.

From a literary perspective, this chapter also contains one of the most fascinating and poetic passages in the *Bundahišn*: Ohrmazd's response to Zoroaster's question of how, after death and decay, the resurrection can be done and the body reconstituted (34:4–8). Like God's answer to Job from the whirlwind (Job 19:26; compare Ezekiel 37:1–14), Ohrmazd stuns the questioning prophet into awed silence with a résumé of his miraculous deeds as Creator and sustainer of the world. Powerful as the answer is, from a historical perspective the question may also reveal the anxieties surrounding the issue of resurrection in the Sasanian and early Islamic periods. Similar passages in the *Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (52), the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (36:1–3, 48:54–55), and *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādsprām* (34:1–24) reinforce this supposition.

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On Resurrection and the Final Body

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When Mašyā and Mašyāne grew forth from the earth, they first consumed only water, then plants, then milk, and finally meat. So, too, when death approaches, people first stop eating meat, then milk, then bread as well, and from that time until they die, they drink only water.”

² So too, during the millennium of Ušēdarmāh, the power of desire will wane so that people will be satisfied with eating one meal every three days and nights. ³ Then they will stop eating meat and will consume only vegetables and sheep’s milk. They will soon stop drinking milk and then eating vegetables as well; they will simply be drinkers of water. Ten years before Sōšāns comes, they will stop eating and they will not die. Then Sōšāns will raise the dead.

⁴ It also says:

Zoroaster asked Ohrmazd:

“How will you restore the body after the wind has wasted it and the water carried it away? How can the Resurrection be?”

⁵ Ohrmazd replied:

“When I created the unpillared sky fastened on a spiritual foundation, broad and light, from the substance of shining metal; when I created the earth that bears all corporeal existence but has no material support; when I loosed the sun, moon and stars in the atmosphere, moving as bodies of light; when I created the grain that is sown in the earth and returns growing forth in abundance; when I gave colors to the plants of every kind, and I placed in them and other things a burnless fire; when I created the child in its mother’s womb and protected him, creating individually hair and skin, nails and blood, sinews and eyes, ears, and other limbs; when I gave feet to the water to flow; when I created the spiritual clouds that bear material water and rain where they will; when I created the visible air that by the power of the wind blows above and below as it wills, and hands cannot grasp it: creating each one of these was more difficult than the Resurrection. For, at the Resurrection, I will have the aid of those I did not have when I made them; it will be as it was. Consider

this: If I could create what was not, how could it be that I will not be able to re-create what was? For at that time I will ask the spirit of the earth for the bones, the water for the blood, the plants for the hair, and the wind for the vital breath, just as they received them at the primal creation."

⁶ First, the bones of Gayōmard will rise up, then those of Mašyā and Mašyāne, and finally the bones of all others will stir. ⁷ Sōšāns will raise the dead and raise up all people in fifty-seven years, the righteous and the wicked; every person will stir again from the place where his vital breath left him or near the place where he fell to earth. ⁸ Then when all corporeal existence, body, and form are again restored, then they will give them their individuality. They will give half of the light of the sun to Gayōmard and half to other people.

⁹ Then people will begin to recognize each other, soul to soul and body to body. They will know this: that is my father; that is my brother; that is my wife; that is one of my closest relatives.

¹⁰ Then the assembly of Isadwāstar will take place, when all people will stand on the earth. ¹¹ In that assembly, every person will see his own good deeds and his own evil deeds, and the righteous will be distinguished from among the wicked as white sheep among the black. ¹² In that assembly, if there is a righteous man who in the material world had a wicked friend, that wicked man will accuse that righteous man, saying:

"When we were in the material world, why did you not make known to me the good deeds that you did?"

If the righteous man indeed did not let him know, then he must endure shame in that assembly.

¹³ Then they will separate the righteous from the wicked. They will take the righteous to heaven and they will cast the wicked back into hell. For three days and nights the wicked in hell will endure hellish punishments of body and soul. During those same three days and nights the righteous in heaven will enjoy all the pleasures of the body. ¹⁴ As it says:

"On the day when they divide the righteous from the wicked, every person's tears will fall to his ankles when sons will be torn from their fathers' company, brothers from brothers, and friends from friends."

¹⁵ Every person will suffer for his own deeds. The righteous will weep for the wicked and the wicked for themselves. It may be that a father was righteous and his son wicked, and it may be that one brother was righteous and the other wicked. Each one will be judged for his own deeds,¹ just as Dahāg, Frāsyāb, Wāmōn, and others like them deserving death will suffer

punishments that no men have ever endured; they call this punishment of the three nights.

¹⁶ During the making of the Restoration, fifteen men and fifteen maidens—those righteous people about whom it is written that they are living—will arrive to help Sōšāns.

¹⁷ The snake Gōzihr will fall through the firmament from the tip of the moon to the earth, and the earth will feel as much pain as a sheep whose fleece is torn off by a wolf.

¹⁸ Then fire and divine Ērman will melt the metal of the mountains and the hills which will lay on the earth like a river. ¹⁹ Every person will pass through that molten metal and will be pure. To the righteous it will feel like walking through warm milk, while to the wicked it will feel like walking through molten metal in the material world.

²⁰ Then all people will come together with great affection, fathers and sons, brothers and friends, and they will ask each other:

“Where have you been these many years? What was the judgment of your soul? Were you righteous or wicked?”

²¹ First, souls will see their bodies and question them and the bodies will answer. People will join in one voice, loudly declaring praises to Ohrmazd and the Amahraspands.

²² For Ohrmazd at that time the creation will be completed; that is, he will not have any more work to do when the dead are restored.

²³ Sōšāns, with his helpers, will perform the rite of the Restoration of the dead. In that sacrifice, they will kill the Hadayāns Bull and from its fat they will prepare white *Hōm*, the elixir of immortality. They will give it to all people, and all people will be immortal forever and ever.

²⁴ It also says this:

“Those who had reached their middle years will be restored at the age of forty. Those who were small and immature will be returned at the age of fifteen.”

Every person will be given his wife and children, and he will copulate with his wife just as in the material world, but no children will be born.

²⁵ Then, by the order of the Creator, Sōšāns will dispense rewards and recompense to all people according to their deeds. It also says that there are some who are so righteous that he will lead them to Ohrmazd’s heaven—for when he needs, he takes on a form—and walks in that company forever and ever.

²⁶ It also says this:

“Whoever did not pray, did not order an indulgence, or did not give clothes for charity to the deserving, will stand naked there. Ohrmazd will pray over him and the spirit of the *Gāthās* will serve as his garment.”

²⁷ Then Ohrmazd will seize the Evil Spirit;

Wahman, Akōman;

Ardwahišt, Indar;

Šahrewar, Sawul;

Spandarmad, Tarōmad who is Nanhais;

Hordād and Amurdād, Tariz and Zariz;

Right Speech, False Speech;

Righteous Srōš will seize Xēšm of the bloody club.

²⁸ Then two fiends will remain: Ahriman and Āz.

²⁹ Ohrmazd will come to the material world. He himself shall be the first officiating priest [zōd] and righteous Srōš his second officiating priest [rāspīg], and he will hold the sacred girdle in his hand.

³⁰ The Evil Spirit and Āz, lain low by the chanting of the *Gāthās* and made powerless, will scurry back to darkness and gloom through that passage in the sky where they first burrowed through.

³¹ The snake Gōzihr will burn in the molten metal.

The metal will pour into hell, and the stench and filth of the earth where hell was located will burn off in that metal and will become pure. The hole² through which the Evil Spirit burrowed will be sealed by the metal.

³² The earth where hell had been will be returned to the expanse of the world. The Restoration shall be in both existences forever and ever by the will of the immortal deities.³

³³ It also says this:

“This earth will be uncrowned, without depression, flat; there will be no mountains, peaks, hollows, ascents or descents.”

Chapters 35 and 35A provide genealogies of the epic and the religious heroes of the Iranian tradition, as well as the priestly families of the *mowbeds*. These genealogies have great importance for scholars because of the evidence they provide for Iranian onomastics, the study of names, and also contain interesting historical, mythical, and religious elements.

Chapter 35 provides the genealogy of the Kayanids, the line of heroes and kings who feature in Iranian epic. Particularly noteworthy here are the stories of Kay Kawād, whose rescue from a river as an infant recalls the biblical story of Moses (35:28), and Wahman the son of Spandyād, who is said to be an ancestor of the first Sasanian king, Ardašir (36:9); some scholars have identified Wahman with the Achaemenid kings Artaxerxes I or II.

The second part of the chapter deals with the genealogy of the prophet Zoroaster. We learn the prophet's ancestry, as well as the names of his historical sons and daughters (35:57): Isadwāstar was a priest who will be resurrected to judge humanity at the end of days (34:10–13); Urwatadnar was a farmer and master of the shelter built by Jam (32:10); and Wōrūčihr was a warrior, general of the army of Pēšotān in Kangdiz.

Chapter 35A deals with the lineage of Zoroastrian priests and claims that all are descended from the legendary Manuščihr (35A:7). This claim provides a strong link between everyday religious authorities and the Iranian mythical past; the chapter even refers to the priestly lineages mentioned in the now-lost *Xwadāy Nāmag*. The chapter also names the author (or compiler, or perhaps copyist) of the *Bundahišn*. Farrōbag, whose name appears only in this chapter, may have been a relative of two prominent ninth-century Zoroastrian priests: Zādspram (35A:8), author of the *Wizīdagīhā*, which significantly overlaps with the *Bundahišn*, and his brother Manuščihr, author of the *Epistles* and the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg*.

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On the Family and Lineage of the Kayanids

¹ Hōšang was the son of Frawāg, son of Syāmag, son of Mašyā, son of Gayōmard.

² Tahmurab was the son of Wiwanghān, son of Yanghad, son of Hōšang.

³ Jam, Tahmurab, Spitūr, and Narsē—whom they also call Rašn the Chinese¹—were all brothers.

⁴ From Jam and Jamag, who was his twin sister, were born a pair, a man and a woman, who were together wife and husband. The young man was named Aspiyān and the young woman Zarišōm, and their line descended from them.

⁵ Spitūr was the one who, along with Dahāg, cut Jam in two.

⁶ Narsē, whom they call Narsē of the desert, also lived then. It says that such a Glory was created for him that every day he passes through the markets and purifies and makes clean all the food.

⁷ Dahāg was the son of Xrūtāsp, son of Zēngāw, son of Wirafšang, son of Tāz, son of Frawāg, son of Syāmag. On his mother's side, he was Dahāg son of Ōdag, daughter of Bayag, daughter of Tambayag, daughter of Ōwōix, daughter of Pairiur, daughter of Wōrūwēsm, daughter of Gadwēsw, daughter of Druzaskān, daughter of the Evil Spirit.

⁸ Frēdōn was the son of Aspiyān Purr-gāw, son of Aspiyān Sōg-gāw, son of Aspiyān Bōr-gāw, son of Aspiyān Syā-gāw, son of Aspiyān Spēd-gāw, son of Aspiyān Dabr-gāw, son of Aspiyān Ramag-gāw, son of Aspiyān, son of Wanfrōgišn, son of Aspiyān, son of Jam, son of Wiwanghān.

⁹ Now, apart from Aspiyān Purr-gāw, there were ten generations; each one lived one hundred years, which together makes one thousand years, the same thousand years of Dahāg's evil rule.

¹⁰ Frēdōn, who sought to avenge Jam, was born to Aspiyān Purr-gāw. His other children were Barmāyōn and Katāyōn. Frēdōn was more replete with Glory than them. ¹¹ Frēdōn had three sons: Salm, Tūz, and Ērez. To Ērez were born two sons and a daughter. ¹² The twin sons were named Wānīdār and Anastōw, and his daughter was named Guzag.

¹³ Salm and Tūz murdered Ērez, his children and descendants. Frēdōn kept that daughter in hiding. From that daughter, a daughter was born. They knew about them and murdered the mother. Frēdōn hid away the daughter for ten generations, until Manuš, who had the sun on his nose, was born from his mother. He was called this because when he was born, the light of the sun fell on his nose.

¹⁴ Manuš and his sister gave birth to Manušwarnar; Manušwarnar and his sister gave birth to Manuščihr, who killed Salm and Tūz and satisfied the revenge for Ērez.

¹⁵ From Manuščihr, Fryā, Nōdar, and Dūrsraw were born. ¹⁶ So Manuščihr was the son of Manušwarnar, son of Manušwarnāk, whose mother was Guzag, daughter of Ērag, daughter of Sridag, daughter of Bīdag, daughter of Frazušag, daughter of Zušag, daughter of Fraguzag, daughter of Guzag, daughter of Ērez, the son of Frēdōn.

¹⁷ Frāsyāb was the son of Pašang, son of Zēšim, son of Tūrag, son of Spenasp, son of Dūrōšasp, son of Tūz, son of Frēdōn. So Frāsyāb, Garsēwaz—who they call Kēdān—and Agrērad were all brothers.

¹⁸ Pašang and Wēsag were brothers. ¹⁹ From Wēsag, Pirān, Humān, Šān, Šēdag, and other brothers were born. ²⁰ From Frāsyāb, Frīgīz of Čūr, Šān, Šēdag, and other children. ²¹ From Wispān-Fryā, Kay Husraw was born. She was the daughter of Frāsyāb. She had the same mother as Frīgīz of Čūr.

²² From Frīgīz of Čūr were born Sulīg, Asulīg, and other children. From them were born Anāst-Ēraxt, Šān-Ēraxt, Šān-Dāraxt, Frašāward, Lāwahag, and others, too many to list in detail.

²³ From Agrērad, Gōbedšah was born.

²⁴ When Frāsyāb held² Manuščihr with other Iranians captive in Mount Padišwārgar, he loosed trouble and misery upon them. Agrērad asked for a boon from the deities and was granted such goodness that he saved the Iranian army and troops from their trouble. ²⁵ That is why Frāsyāb murdered Agrērad. To Agrērad, in recompense, was born a child like Gōbedšah.

²⁶ Uzaw was the son of Tahmāsp, son of Kanag, son of Bayarz, son of Šad, son of Arwiš, son of Huwasp, son of Wēdang, son of Rag, son of Nōdayā, son of Mašwāg, son of Nōdar, son of Manuščihr. ²⁷ From Uzaw three sons and a daughter were born.

²⁸ When a child, Kawād was put in a basket and they abandoned him in the river. He was freezing in the vessel. Uzaw saw him, took him, raised him, and named him “the foundling child.”

²⁹ From Kawād, Kay Apiweh was born. ³⁰ From Kay Apiweh, Kay Arš, Kay Pasēn, and Kay Kāus were born. ³¹ From Kay Kāus, Syāwaxš was born, and from Syāwaxš, Kay Husraw was born.

³² Garšāsp and Urwaxš were brothers.

³³ Arsat was the son of Sām, son of Tūrag, son of Spenasp, son of Dūrōšasp, the son of Tūz, son of Frēdōn.

³⁴ Kay Luhrāsp was the son of Uzaw, son of Manuš, son of Kay Pasēn, son of Kay Apiweh, son of Kay Kawād. ³⁵ From Kay Luhrāsp, Wištāsp, Zarēr, and other brothers were born. From Wištāsp, Spandyād and Pēšōtan were born. From Spandyād, Wahman, Ādurdriš, Mihrdriš, and others were born.

³⁶ Ardašir the son of Pābag, whose mother was Pābag's daughter and his father Sāsān, the son of Weh-āfrīd, son of Zarēr, son of Sāsān, son of Ardašir, who was called Wahman the son of Spandyād.

³⁷ Kay Apiweh's mother was Frānag, daughter of Wadīrgā, son of Fraštā, son of Urwatgā, son of Fraxšt, son of Rag, son of Dūrsraw, son of Manuščihr.

³⁸ It also says this:

“Frēdōn's Glory had settled³ in the Frāxkard Sea in a reed. By sorcery, Wadīrgā made a cow for plowing⁴ and led it there. One year he reaped the reeds and gave them to the cow so that the Glory passed to the cow. He brought the cow back, milked it, and gave the milk to his three sons: Wāmōn, Šōn, and Čangranghā. But the Glory passed not to his sons but to Frānag.³⁹ Wadīrgā wished to murder Frānag, who fled from her father's sword with the Glory. She made a vow, saying: 'I will give my first child to Ōšebām.'⁴⁰ Then Ōšebām saved her from her father. When her first child, Kay Apiweh, was born, she gave him to Ōšebām. Now he went with Ōšebām and Ōšebām's assistant in the Mixture.”

⁴¹ Uzaw's mother was the daughter of Wāmōn the sorcerer, of the same line as Frīgīz and their mothers.

⁴² From Sām, six children were born in pairs of a male and a female. Their names were Damōg, Husraw, and Mārēndag: the men and women shared a single name.

⁴³ The name of one was Dastān. Among them he advanced the most. He was king of the Sakas and was given the districts of the south. He gave the lordship of Abaršahr to Abrang. ⁴⁴ Abaršahr is so called because it is Abrang's realm [šahr].

⁴⁵ They praised Srōš and Ardwahiš for their royal⁵ offspring. That is the reason why they had few troubles⁶ and an abundance of arms, steadfast faith,⁷ purity, fame, peace, delight, and renown.

⁴⁶ He gave the lordship of Āsurestān to Damōg.

⁴⁷ He reformed the lordship and the rules of governing and removed the fishery and the hard labor that had been on them.

⁴⁸ He gave the lordship of Spāhān to Sparōg.

⁴⁹ He gave the lordship of Rāg to Husraw.

⁵⁰ He gave the kingship of Padišwārgar, dwelling in the forests and dwelling in the mountains to Mārēndag, along with foot soldiers' marching, night raids, the good life and pleasant life, and constant victory over enemies.

⁵¹ From Dastān, Rōdstahm and Uzwārag were born.

On the Lineage of Pōrušāsp

⁵² Pōrušāsp was the son of Pītarasp, son of Hēčatasp, son of Čixšnuš, son of Pītarasp, son of Argēdaršn, son of Haredar, son of Spitāma, son of Wēdišt, son of Ayāzim, son of Rajan, son of Dūrsraw, son of Manuščihr.

⁵³ So Pītarasp had two sons: one Pōrušāsp and the other Ārāstāy. From Pōrušāsp, Zoroaster, Wadīrgā, and Hindainiš were born. From Ārāstāy, Mēdyōmāh was born.

⁵⁴ When Zoroaster brought the *dēn*, he first offered worship in Ěrānwēz, and Pašsidwad and Mēdyōmāh received it from him.

⁵⁵ All the *mowbeds* in Pārs trace their descent from Manuščihr. ⁵⁶ I will provide a detailed list:

From Zoroaster, three sons and three daughters were born.

⁵⁷ His sons were Isadwāstar, Urwatadnar, and Wōrūčihr. So Isadwāstar was the priest [*āsrōn*] and the *mowbed* of *mowbeds*. He passed away in the hundredth year of the *dēn*. Urwatadnar was the farmer and the master of the shelter built by Jam beneath the earth. Wōrūčihr was the warrior and the commander of the army of Pēšōtan, son of Wištāsp, in Kangdiz. His three daughters were named Frēn, Srīt, and Pōručist.

⁵⁸ Urwatadnar and Wōrūčihr were born to a subordinate wife [*čagar*], and the others were born to a primary wife [*pādixšāy*].

⁵⁹ From Isadwāstar was born a son named Urwarwizag, whom they called Urwiz ī Birādan.

Because they were born to an auxiliary wife, they were appointed to the trusteeship of Isadwāstar.

⁶⁰ Then there were three other sons of Zoroaster, namely Ušēdar, Ušēdarmāh, and Sōšāns who were born to Hwōwī. ⁶¹ As it says:

“Zoroaster approached his wife Hwōwī three times, and each time his seed spilled on the earth. The divine Nēryōsang received the light and power of that seed and entrusted it to the divine Anāhid for safekeeping. They will mix it with that of the mother at the appointed time. Nine thousand, nine hundred ninety-nine myriad *frawahrs* of the righteous are appointed to guard it so that demons will not harm it.”

⁶² Zoroaster’s mother’s name was Dugdāw. The name of Zoroaster’s mother’s father was Frāhim-ruwān.

35A: The Family of the *Mowbeds*

¹ Bahag was the son of Way-bōxt, son of Ādur-bandag, son of Māh-dād, son of Mēdyōmāh, son of Frawaxš-windād, son of Mēdyōmāh, son of Kād, son of Mēdyōmāh, son of Ārāstāy, son of Pītirasp.

² Thus Bahag was *mowbed* of *mowbeds* under Šāpūr, the son of Ohrmazd. Kād was chief minister under Dārāy.

³ Ādurbād was the son of Māraspand, son of Dād-ardāy, son of Dād-ēraxt, son of Hu-dēn, son of Ādur-dād, son of Manuščihr, son of Wahman-čihr, son of Fryān, son of Bayag, son of Frēdōn, son of Frašōštar, son of Pōrušāsp, son of Nēwasp, son of Niwar, son of Waxš, son of Wahizrōw, son of Frašt, son of Gāg, son of Waxš, son of Fryā, son of Rajan, son of Dūrsraw, son of Manuščihr.

⁴ Mihr-warāz was the son of Narsē, son of Abzūd-gāw, son of Šagr-gušnasp, son of Paršta, son of Urwatgā, son of Tahm, son of Zarēr, son of Dūrsraw, son of Manuš, son of Dūrnāmīg, son of Zāg, the son of Mašwāg, son of Nōdar, son of Manuščihr.

⁵ Mihr-akāwīd was the son of Mardān-weh, son of Āfrīnbag-windād, son of Windād-paydāg, son of Way-bōxt, son of Bahag, son of Way-bōxt.

⁶ The mother from whom I was born is the daughter of Frēh-māh, the son of Čahār-bōxt, son of Māh-ayār, son of Māh-bandag, son of Māh-bōxt, son of Pusān-šād, son of Mardān-weh, son of Āfrīnbag-windād, son of Windād-paydāg, son of Way-bōxt, son of Bahag, son of Way-bōxt.

⁷ All other *mowbeds* mentioned in the Book of Lords [Xwadāy Nāmag] are from the same family, from the line of Manuščihr. The *mowbeds* of today are also said to be from that same family.

⁸ As for me, Farrōbag, whom they call Dādāgih, I am the son of Ašawahīšt, son of Gušn-jam, son of Wahrām-šād, son of Zoroaster. Zoroaster was the

son of Ādurbād, son of Māraspand. Zādspram was the son of Gušn-jam, son of Ādurbād, son of Ēmēd, son of Ašawahišt, son of Frāy-srōš. Other *mowbeds* were all of the same family.

⁹ It also says this:

“Over the course of fifty winter days, the Mazdaean *dēn* reached the six other continents.”

The last chapter of the *Bundahišn* gives a brief chronology of the history of the world from the first human couple to the Arab conquest; this chronology differs in important respects from the apocalyptic history found in chapter 33.

Like previous chapters, the source of this chronology may have been the lost *Čihrdād Nask* of the *Avesta* and the *Xwadāy Nāmag*. As can be seen from chapter 35, the latter was probably similar to the Roman genre of annals, brief chronicles of the kings—and perhaps also priests—year by year. The sixth-century Byzantine Agathias might be referring to such a book when he wrote that he based his history of the Sasanian dynasty on royal records in the archive at Ctesiphon (*Histories* 4:30).

The chapter closes with two dates that mark the composition of the chapter, and perhaps of the *Bundahišn* as a whole. The first, 447 of the Parsīg era—which begins with the death of the last Sasanian king, Yazdgird III, in 651 CE—is equivalent to 1098 CE. This date likely refers to an unspecified prophecy on the fall of the Arabs (compare to *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* 15:28). The second date, 527 of the Parsīg era—1178 CE—is likely the date of the last interpolation of the chapter, but also a means of recording that the earlier prophecy did not come to pass.

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On the Chronology of the Arabs of Twelve Thousand Years

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“A spiritual state persisted for three thousand years in which the creatures were unthinking, unmoving, and intangible. These were the millennia of the lordships of Aries, Taurus, and Gemini.

² Gayōmard and the cow were in the material state for three thousand years. These were the millennia of the lordships of Cancer, Leo, and Virgo. Together, this makes six thousand years.

³ When the lordship of the millennium came to Libra, the Adversary broke through and Gayōmard lived thirty years during the onslaught of evil.

⁴ Then Mašyā and Mašyāne grew up for forty years, and for fifty years they did not act as husband and wife. They were together as husband and wife for ninety-three years and six months, until Hōšang reached maturity.

⁵ Hōšang ruled forty years, Tahmurab thirty years, and Jam six hundred sixteen years and six months, until Glory departed from him. Then he was in flight for one hundred years, which together make seven hundred sixteen years and six months.

⁶ Then the lordship of the millennium came to Scorpio, and Dahāg ruled for a thousand years.

⁷ Then the lordship of the millennium came to Sagittarius. Frēdōn ruled for five hundred years. During those same five hundred years of Frēdōn, Ērez ruled for twelve years and Manuščihr for one hundred twenty years. During the lordship of Manuščihr, when he was in Padišwārgar, Frāsyāb ruled for twelve years, Uzaw the son of Tahmāsp ruled for five years, and Kay Kawād ruled for fifteen years. Sām lived during the reigns of Uzaw, Kawād, and Manuščihr. Kay Kaūs ruled for seventy-five years, until he ascended to the sky, and afterward for another seventy-five years; together one hundred fifty years. Kay Husraw for sixty years; Kay Luhrāsp for one hundred twenty years; Kay Wištāsp for thirty years until the coming of the *dēn*. The sum is one thousand years.

⁸ Then the lordship of the millennium came to Capricorn. Zoroaster of the Spītāma family came as a messenger of the Creator Ohrmazd to King Wištāsp.

⁹ King Wištāsp ruled ninety years after accepting the *dēn*. Wahman the son of Spandyād for one hundred twelve years; Humāy the daughter of Wahman for thirty years; Dārāy the son of Čihr-āzād, who is Wahman, for twelve years; Dārāy the son of Dārāy for fourteen years; Alexander the Roman for fourteen years.

The Arsacids, who are renowned for their righteous lordship, for two hundred eighty-four years.

Ardašīr the son of Pābag and the Sasanians ruled four hundred sixty years in this reckoning, until the evil offspring of the Arabs took their place, until the year 447 of the Parsīg era [circa 1098 CE].”

¹⁰ Now it is the year 527 of the Parsīg era [circa 1178 CE].

Afterword

The God of Time and the End of Times

Guy G. Stroumsa

The *Bundahišn* was redacted after the end of the Sasanian Empire, at a time when Zoroastrians were adapting to their new, fragile situation as a tolerated minority under Islamic rule. Like most other Pahlavi literary texts, however, much of its contents reflects older conceptions, and it often presents theological and mythological traditions from the ancient past. A major question confronting scholars of ancient Iranian literature concerns the dating of these traditions, all the more so as this literature had been preserved orally for centuries before being committed to writing. It is often extremely difficult, or altogether impossible, to disentangle older layers from later accretions. Just like religious beliefs and practices, indeed like language itself, myths never remain static but constantly evolve, driven by an inner logic of development and under the impact of foreign traditions with which they are in contact.

Time, the theme with which the *Bundahišn* opens in its striking, majestic first chapter, also reflects the very core of the whole book, as its two translators emphasize in their introduction. When Ohrmazd, the Spirit of Light, understands in his prescience that Ahriman, the Spirit of Darkness, is about to launch an onslaught against him, thus creating a state of Mixture between the realms of the two Spirits, he decides to create time and the cosmos. Time is finite, just as is the cosmos, and establishes the parameters of both cosmic and human history. The last stage of cosmic history will display the renewed separation between the realms of Ohrmazd and Ahriman, the final victory of the Spirit of Light and the final failure of the attempt of the Evil Spirit to disrupt cosmic order. Cosmic history is thus divided into four periods of three thousand years each: before Ahriman's attack, after the attack but before the creation of the world, during the state of Mixture, and the final separation between the two realms. Time, which is limited, is created from Eternity, which remains, of course, unlimited. Zurwān, "the Lord of Long Dominion" or "the Lord of Fate," is created

by Ohrmazd (in the form of a fifteen-year-old man “whose power comes from virtue”) to counter the attack of the Evil Spirit. Scholars once postulated that Zurwān, the god of Time, who in a number of non-Iranian versions of the creation myth was the father of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman, was the supreme deity in a Zoroastrian heresy from the Sasanian era, but recent scholarship has now shown that a Zurvanite faith never existed.

In order to highlight the capital importance of our text for the intellectual and religious history of the Mediterranean and Near East, let us succinctly survey the broad spectrum of religious and philosophical conceptions of time in late antiquity. To be sure, reflecting on time as a core parameter of both the cosmic order and human existence is in no way specific to ancient Iran. While the *Vedas* also refer to the cosmic status of time, in India an entropic vision of time soon developed that played down cosmic and historical change. In Iranian mythological conceptions and theological reflection, on the other hand, both eternal and created time remained core elements of creation and of cosmic history. It is in the longue durée that one must observe the interface of Iran and other Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures, from the Achaemenids on. More particularly, it is with Greece and with Israel that this interface is crucial for future developments.

While Plato had already discussed time, in the *Timaeus* and elsewhere, whether or not he knew of Iranian conceptions of time remains a moot point. At various stages in later Greek philosophy, one can point to a number of possible contacts between Iran and Greece. For Aristotle, eternity, or *aion*, represented stability, while time, *chronos*, reflected mobility. In Greek, the meaning of both words was fluid and could represent at once abstract entities or divinities. Although in classical literature *chronos* was more frequently used to denote time, *aion* became more and more commonly used from the Hellenistic period on. Multifaceted cultural contacts between the Greek (and later the Hellenistic) world and the realm of Iran permitted a permanent transmission of knowledge, mediated by the Magi, Zoroastrian priests, living in the westernmost regions of the Zoroastrian diaspora as well as through other channels. There is, however, no hard evidence supporting the claim that the myth of Zurwān had an impact upon Greek thought. Whatever the case may be, Hellenic philosophers in the Roman Empire, in particular Jamblichus and the later Neoplatonists, learned to include in their system some sacred entities and divinities coming from the Orient. In philosophical texts, Aion, which is already attested in Orphic literature, becomes identified with the second god, *deuteros theos*.

The Hermetic *Mind to Hermes* (chapter XI) shows a striking predilection for *aion* (eternity), which appears twenty-seven times in the work. (There are only three other mentions of the word in the whole Hermetic corpus.) At the start of the treatise, Mind (*nous*) says to Hermes:

Hear how it is with god and the universe, my child

God, eternity, cosmos, time, becoming [*ho theos, ho aion, ho kosmos, ho chromos, he genesis*]

God makes eternity; eternity makes the cosmos; the cosmos makes time; time makes becoming . . . the essence of eternity is identity . . . of time, change . . . eternity is the essence [of all things] . . . eternity is the power of god.

The divinization of Aion in the Hellenistic and Roman world is well attested. Aion is identified not only with Helios but also with the Phoenician Baal Shamin. As a divine hypostasis, the word also appears, often in the plural, in various Gnostic texts and traditions. In these texts, the aeons usually represent the various heavenly circles that the soul of the Gnostic must cross in order to return to its heavenly abode. *Zostrianos*, one of the Gnostic texts found at Nag Hammadi, for instance, and which Plotinus may have known, offers such a description of the aeons. In the *Chaldean Oracles*, texts from the second century CE that reflect what has been called “the Platonic underworld,” Aion is not only a divinity but also a noetic hypostasis. It is also represented in statuary, as a naked, lion-headed man with four wings on his back, as well as in Mithraism.

Side by side with its interface with the Greek and Greco-Roman world, the Iranian conceptions of time and eternity had a long and powerful impact on attitudes toward time and history in biblical and post-biblical Israel, both directly and through Greek intermediaries. Beyond clear traces of Iranian dualism in Deutero-Isaiah as well as in some of the Qumran texts, Iran’s impact upon biblical views of the final apocalyptic times at the end of history is easily recognizable. Indeed Jewish apocalyptic literature (most of it apocryphal in character) reflects the impact of Iranian perceptions. The roots of Jewish apocalypticism are to be found in Iranian conceptions of the *Endzeit*. The very idea of Messianism in Israel, in particular, directly reflects Iranian contacts.

Such a deep influence on central tenets of Weltanschauung and religion continued for a long time. Let us mention here only the rabbinic

contradistinction between “this world” (*ha-’olam ha-ze*) and “the world to come” (*ha-’olam ha-ba*), which reflects the Greek opposition between the present and the future *aion*. The roots of the theologization of history in biblical Israel, then, can be found in Iranian conceptions of time. While nascent Christianity carried on Israelite *Heilsgeschichte*, it did so with a major twist: its acme, the coming of the Messiah, was now situated no longer in the future but in the past, and the idea of a Second Coming (*parousia*) of Christ had to be invented in order to explain the fact that history had not ended with the coming of the Messiah. But Christianity, which presented itself as the heir to Israel, soon became deeply indebted to various popular philosophies in the Greco-Roman world, thus conveying Iranian ideas through this channel as well. The visit to Bethlehem of the three Magi also highlights the importance of the Iranian element in early Christian conceptions of salvation of the world at the end of times.

Gnosticism, a cluster of dualist religious trends both adjacent to and inherent in the earliest stages of Christianity, is often presented as a revolt against time, or more precisely against history. It has been suggested that it emerged among Jewish Christian groups as a reaction to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and an expression of their inability to otherwise cope with the eradication of traditional visions of the end of history. Such an approach oversimplifies the complex intertwining of religious ideas that led to the crystallization of the Gnostic myths. It is nonetheless significant that some Jewish Christian traditions, for instance those incorporated in the apocryphal *II Enoch* (known as the *Slavonic Enoch*), also reflect Iranian eschatological traditions.

Although such Jewish Christians remained small minority groups in late antiquity, one cannot overemphasize the impact of their theology on religious history. The evidence of the *Cologne Mani Codex* now confirms that Mani grew up in just such a Jewish Christian group, as had long been supposed. Manichaeism represents a grandiose reinterpretation of Iranian dualism and eschatology, reflected through the prism of Jewish and early Christian visions of the end—visions, as we said, that are themselves deeply indebted to Iranian traditions. The fact that Jewish Christian traditions can also be identified in some Quranic passages (including some dealing with eschatology) highlights the dramatic extent of the impact of those Iranian traditions. In their deeply different ways, then, the complex myths of Time and Eternity so strikingly developed in the *Bundahišn* would prove to be a major catalyst in the history of religions.

Notes

Foreword

1. It may, however, be pointed out that the Middle Persian word *tan* means both “body” and “person.”
2. The second element of the word is no doubt associated with *čārag* (remedy, expedient, stratagem).

Prologue

1. Emend *nēw-* in Pakzad (2005, 1) with *did*.
2. Emend *saxwanān* in Pakzad (2005, 2) with *az yazdān*.
3. Emend *wirēzān* in Pakzad (2005, 2) with *rāzān*.
4. Emend *wany* in Pakzad (2005, 2) with *abd*.

Chapter 1

1. Emend *payrūd* in Pakzad (2005, 9) with *payrōg*.
2. Emend *nišastan* in Pakzad (2005, 12) with *wiyābānēnīdan*.
3. Emend *sayist* in Pakzad (2005, 15) with *nibast*.
4. Emend *nāmīgīh* in Pakzad (2005, 17) with *hamēyīh*.
5. This phrase is wrongly placed in Pakzad (2005, 18) in the following paragraph. Here and throughout, the symbols °...° indicate the phrase that will be discussed in the accompanying note.
6. Emend *pēsīdag* in Pakzad (2005, 18) with *dēsīdag*.
7. This passage is wrongly placed in Pakzad (2005, 19) in the preceding sentence.
8. Emend *xwēš-tan* in Pakzad (2005, 20) with *xwēš*.
9. Emend *xwā(h)rīh* in Pakzad (2005, 21) with *xwārīh*.
10. This sentence seems to be an interpolation.
11. Emend *pas* in Pakzad (2005, 22) with *ī*.
12. Emend *daštag* in Pakzad (2005, 22) with *gaštag*.
13. Emend *gušn* in Pakzad (2005, 27) with *juwān*.
14. Emend *hwps'l ud razur* in Pakzad (2005, 27–28) with *xubsān warzwar*.
15. Add *kē* to Pakzad (2005, 28).
16. Emend *wēm tnslk* in Pakzad (2005, 29) with *narm-gilag*.
17. Emend *ṣtd'hl* in Pakzad (2005, 29) with *astdār*.
18. Shaul Shaked suggests in private communication that this is the distinguishing mark of gender.

19. This sentence is wrongly placed at the beginning of the next paragraph in Pakzad (2005, 30).
20. Emend *aštād* in Pakzad (2005, 29) with *Ard*. See Cereti and MacKenzie 2003, 46.
21. This sentence is missing in Pakzad (2005, 32).

Chapter 2

1. Emend *a-mar* in Pakzad (2005, 37) with *ōšmār*.
2. Emend *meh* in Pakzad (2005, 37) with *mēx*.
3. Emend *wād* in Pakzad (2005, 40) with *zam*. See Henning 1942, 233.
4. Uncertain reading. We follow the suggestion of Henning 1942, 234.

Chapter 3

1. Emend *be* in Pakzad (2005, 45) with *bē*.
2. Emend *y'mk* in Pakzad (2005, 46) with *jāmag*. See Cereti 2007a, 24.
3. Emend *h'nk 'wp* in Pakzad (2005, 46) with *xānag xūb*. See Cereti 2007a, 24.
4. Emend *dard* in Pakzad (2005, 46) with *sard*.
5. Emend *daxšag* in Pakzad (2005, 48) with *kū-šān*. See Cereti 2007a, 25.
6. Emend *pāk* in Pakzad (2005, 50) with *nigāh*. See Cereti 2007a, 26.

Chapter 4

1. Emend *gast-dēs* in Pakzad (2005, 57) with *dīdan-dēs*.
2. Emend *gast* in Pakzad (2005, 58) with *jast*.
3. Emend *may* in Pakzad (2005, 60) with *mizd*.
4. This sentence is misplaced in the following paragraph in Pakzad (2005, 60).

Chapter 5

1. Emend *anōšag* in Pakzad (2005, 71) with *anōš*.
2. Emend *dēwōk* in Pakzad (2005, 72) with *sōg*.
3. Emend *duzān* in Pakzad (2005, 72) with *yozān*.
4. Emend *abaxšišnīh* in Pakzad (2005, 73) with *abesihišnīh*.
5. Emend *+harwīn* in Pakzad (2005, 73) with *sīhēn*. See Raffaelli 2010, 68n23.
6. Emend *amar čišmagān* in Pakzad (2005, 75) with *ham-čašmagān*. See MacKenzie 1964, 513.
7. This passage may be corrupted.
8. Emend *Xwāstgān* in Pakzad (2005, 76) with *Kisagān*. See MacKenzie 1964, 526 and Raffaelli 2001, 77.
9. Emend *Padēwar* in Pakzad (2005, 77) with *Pēšparwīz*. See Raffaelli 2001, 77.

10. Emend *īsōg* in Pakzad (2005, 79) with *ud 3-sōg*. See Raffaelli 2001, 77.
11. Emend *tglyt'* in Pakzad (2005, 80) with *widerēd*. See Raffaelli 2001, 77.

Chapter 6

1. Emend *abr* in Pakzad (2005, 92) with *abar*.
2. Emend *āb hndw'c* in Pakzad (2005, 94) with *ābānigān ab*.
3. Emend *gušn* in Pakzad (2005, 95) with *juwān*. See Bailey 1933, 255.
4. Emend *šast* in Pakzad (2005, 96) with *dašt*.
5. Emend *kašid* in Pakzad (2005, 99) with *kišt*.
6. Emend *+a-tišn* in Pakzad (2005, 116) with *a-čandišn*. See Bailey 1933, 286.

Chapter 7

1. An alternative and perhaps more logical reading would be *se dō*, “two-thirds.”
2. Pakzad (2005, 118) reasonably emends the manuscripts’ *panj* with *haft*, as we find this number also in the Indian tradition; other Zoroastrian traditions refer to five or six stars in the Pleiades.

Chapter 8

1. Emend *'p'y'l* in Pakzad (2005, 122) with *abesar*.
2. Emend *gašt* in Pakzad (2005, 124) with *dašt*.
3. In all manuscripts except M51 the verbs are in the plural. This may refer to all three saviors and not only to Sōšāns, or may be a *plurale maiestatis*.

Chapter 9

1. Emend *Abarsēn* in Pakzad (2005, 127) with *kōf i pārs*. See Cereti 2004, 26.
2. Emend *Padišhwār* in Pakzad (2005, 127) with *Padišhwāgar*.
3. Emend *awēšān weh xwarrah-xwurdag kōf* in Pakzad (2005, 129) with *ud rāmišn ī dādār ī weh xwurdag kōf*. See Cereti 2004, 26.
4. Emend *afsālig* in Pakzad (2005, 131) with *āb-sārīg*. See Cereti 2004, 26.
5. Emend *Saraxs* in Pakzad (2005, 137) with *Sīrāz*. See Cereti 2004, 27.
6. Emend *Garminšān* in Pakzad (2005, 138) with *Garminšahr*. See Cereti 2004, 27.

Chapter 10

1. This sentence is wrongly located at the beginning of the next paragraph in Pakzad (2005, 143).
2. Emend *warm* in Pakzad (2005, 144) with *wīstom*. See Cereti 2007b, 59.

Chapter 11

1. Emend *Xānsir* in Pakzad (2005, 149). See Cereti 2004, 32.
2. Expunge *Paydāg* in Pakzad (2005, 150). See Cereti 2004, 33. It may be read *Waxš*. See Grenet 2008.
3. Emend *Paydāg-waināidiš-mēhan* in Pakzad (2005, 150). See Cereti 2004, 33.
4. Emend *Čihrōmayān* in Pakzad (2005, 150). See Cereti 2004, 32.
5. Cereti (2004, 33) proposes that *frātīh* may be interpreted as connected to Avestan *frād-*, meaning “to increase, make great.”
6. Emend *Gawestān* in Pakzad (2005, 152). See Cereti 2004, 33.
7. Pakzad (2005, 154) has *Sirāw*.
8. Emend *Paydāg-mēhan* in Pakzad (2005, 156). See Cereti 2004, 33.
9. Emend *Čihrōmayān* in Pakzad (2005, 156). See Cereti 2004, 33.

Chapter 12

1. Add *sūd ud nēkīh* to Pakzad (2005, 164). See Cereti 2007b, 63.
2. Emend *xwābrīh* in Pakzad (2005, 164) with *hubahrih*.
3. Emend *āzād* in Pakzad (2005, 164).

Chapter 13

1. Emend *pargast* in Pakzad (2005, 167) with *pargand*.
2. This sentence is misplaced in the previous paragraph in Pakzad (2005, 168).
3. Emend *āb-kirbān* in Pakzad (2005, 168) with *asp-karpān*.
4. Emend *wargānīg* in Pakzad (2005, 170) with *kurragān*.
5. Emend *muškān-pad-rān* in Pakzad (2005, 170) with *muškān parrān*.
6. Emend *šast* in Pakzad (2005, 170) with *haštād*. See *Wizidagihā ī Zādsprām* 3:55.
7. Possibly emend *nlyk* in Pakzad (2005, 171) with *warrag*, “ram.”
8. Perhaps emend *hwk'wš"n gāw plš* in Pakzad (2005, 172) with *xūg ud +sān gāw +pārs*, “pigs, a kind of Persian cow.”
9. Expunge *panj sardag* in Pakzad (2005, 173).
10. Emend *b'ks* in Pakzad (2005, 173) with *bāyis*.
11. Emend *karkās* in Pakzad (2005, 174) with *kargās*.
12. Emend *dagrtar* in Pakzad (2005, 176) with *dilērtar*.
13. Emend *pad ēd tō kirb* in Pakzad (2005, 177) with *pad hēlag kirb*. See Bailey 1933, 452.

Chapter 14

1. Emend *anīg* in Pakzad (2005, 180) with *hōyag*.
2. Emend *w'hyhyt'* in Pakzad (2005, 184) with *wiyābīhīd*.
3. Emend *Mašyā* in Pakzad (2005, 185) with *Mašyāne*.

4. Emend *kahenz* in Pakzad (2005, 186) with *kāh-iz ud zayt-iz*. See Bailey 1933, 477.
5. Emend *šēr ud šān ud salmag* in Pakzad (2005, 186) with *wiškar ā-šan sarmāg*.
6. *Hušk kūn*, literally “dry-assed.” The same phrase appears with the meaning of “indolence” in colloquial modern Tehran Persian.
7. Emend *glymn* in Pakzad (2005, 188) with *aškomb*.
8. See note 7.
9. Emend *Gawāzak* in Pakzad (2005, 191).
10. Emend *Gāy* in Pakzad (2005, 192).
11. Emend *āb-zw'wngl* in Pakzad (2005, 192) with *māzandarān*. See *Ayādgār i Jāmāspīg* 4:33–37.
12. Emend *Gāyigān* in Pakzad (2005, 192).
13. Emend *nōg* in Pakzad (2005, 197) with *āhōg*.

Chapter 15

1. Emend *tkw'* in Pakzad (2005, 198) with *gāw*.
2. Emend *kadag-gāh* in Pakzad (2005, 200) with *kadagīhā*.
3. Emend *daštag* in Pakzad (2005, 201) with *gašt-ē*.
4. Emend *hamē* in Pakzad (2005, 201) with *hamāg*.
5. The word *gōšt* is misplaced in the sentence and appears later on. Expunge <*šīr i*> in Pakzad (2005, 202).
6. Emend *ēwēnag* in Pakzad (2005, 205) with *mayān*.
7. Emend *drayāb* in Pakzad (2005, 206) with *dar āb*.
8. Emend *ēwēnag* in Pakzad (2005, 206) with *xāyag*.

Chapter 16

1. Emend *tis* in Pakzad (2005, 211) with *čē*.
2. Emend *mōšanag* in Pakzad (2005, 212) with *mujūg*.
3. Emend *kust* in Pakzad (2005, 213) with *kawast*.
4. Emend *duš-dānag* in Pakzad (2005, 214) with *gōš-dānag*.
5. Emend *sywk* in Pakzad (2005, 217) with *i was gōnag*. See Porouchani 1991, 214.
6. Emend *shl* in Pakzad (2005, 217) with *sāl*.
7. Emend *ālag* in Pakzad (2005, 217) with *ālūg*.
8. Add *bōy*.

Chapter 17

1. Expunge *Zardu(x)št* in Pakzad (2005, 221).
2. Emend *ušnūg* in Pakzad (2005, 222) with *i hu-šnūg*.

Chapter 18

1. Pakzad (2005, 228) omits. See Shapira 2014, 128.
2. Add *panāhīh*. See Shapira 2014, 129.
3. Emend *Ādur-xwarrah* in Pakzad (2005, 231) with *Ādur-farrōbag*.
4. Emend *Kawādagān* in Pakzad (2005, 234).
5. Emend *Kawād windād* in Pakzad (2005, 234) with *xwānīhēd*. See Shapira 2014, 135.
6. Emend *se* in Pakzad (2005, 234) with *ēk*.

Chapter 19

1. Emend *wsk'* in Pakzad (2005, 236) with *wēs*. See Bailey 1933, 640.
2. Emend *sang-iz* in Pakzad (2005, 236) with *čē-iz*.

Chapter 20

1. Emend *pas-iš* in Pakzad (2005, 240) with *pasīh*.

Chapter 21

1. Emend *+āyišmag* in Pakzad (2005, 241) with *may-jāmag*.
2. Emend *gyānīg* in Pakzad (2005, 243) with *šnōdūg*. See Bailey 1933, 667.
3. Emend *g'ñ'nk* in Pakzad (2005, 243) with *gannag*.
4. Emend *+ārāst* in Pakzad (2005, 244) with *ārōyēd*.
5. Emend *būd* in Pakzad (2005, 245) with *abāg*.
6. Emend *+āyišmag* in Pakzad (2005, 246) with *may-jāmag*.
7. Expunge the second *ātaxš* in Pakzad (2005, 249).
8. In Pakzad (2005, 250) this sentence is misplaced at the beginning of the second paragraph.
9. Emend *+xōn* in Pakzad (2005, 253) with *kastagīh*.
10. Emend *+čišmagān* in Pakzad (2005, 253) with *sahmagān*.

Chapter 22

1. Emend *šglywk' kpg* in Pakzad (2005, 257) with *šīrēnag ī kaf*.
2. Emend *mārān dōš* in Pakzad (2005, 257) with *mārān gōš*.
3. Emend *pykwk* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *payag*.
4. Emend *tyš'swl* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *tašt-angur*.
5. Emend *nttlg* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *widaraq*.
6. Emend *gūh-girdag* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *gūh-gard*.
7. Emend *w'hyk* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *+wahārīg*.

8. Emend *thyk* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *tagīh*.
9. Emend *g'nkwt'l* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *gyān-kardār*.
10. Emend *pāč-zahr* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *pādzahr*.
11. Emend *rēy-mēz* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *warrag-mēz*.
12. Emend *'wlk* in Pakzad (2005, 258) with *abārīg az*.
13. Emend *špyk* in Pakzad (2005, 259) with *šabīg*.
14. Emend *nē* in Pakzad (2005, 259) with *rāy*.

Chapter 23

1. Emend *appar* in Pakzad (2005, 264) with *āb-xwār*.

Chapter 24

1. Emend *āb* in Pakzad (2005, 268) with *kē-š*.
2. Emend *pand* in Pakzad (2005, 269) with *nēm*.
3. Emend *kust w'pk'* in Pakzad (2005, 272), which seems to be the beginning of a new missing sentence.
4. Emend *bawēnd* in Pakzad (2005, 272) with *abganēnd*.
5. Emend *zīndag* in Pakzad (2005, 273) with *zandīg*.
6. Emend *xwarrah* in Pakzad (2005, 273) with *dast*.
7. Emend *'bnd* in Pakzad (2005, 274) with *isag-band*.
8. Emend *+šugzag-iz* in Pakzad (2005, 276) with *šugd-iz*.
9. The Indian *Bundahišn* adds “and it [the earth] becomes again straight.” See Pakzad 2005, 280n298.
10. Expunge *āb be gīrēd* in Pakzad (2005, 280).
11. Emend *pad-iz* in Pakzad (2005, 283) with *pōzag*.

Chapter 25

1. Emend *kāhēd* in Pakzad (2005, 284) with *kehist*.
2. See note 1.
3. See Bailey 1933, 807.
4. Emend *mard-ē* in Pakzad (2005, 292) with *māh-ē*.
5. Emend *gāmān* in Pakzad (2005, 292) with *zamān*.

Chapter 26

1. Add *kunēd*. See Bailey 1933, 831.
2. Emend *abaxšēnd* in Pakzad (2005, 295) with *abesīhēnēnd*.
3. Emend *kunišn* in Pakzad (2005, 299) with *baxšišn*.

4. Emend *tah* in Pakzad (2005, 300) with *tēx*.
5. See note 4.
6. Emend *čim* in Pakzad (2005, 300) with *nēm*.
7. Emend *+haxzēd* in Pakzad (2005, 301) with *hazēd*.
8. Emend *šk'h* in Pakzad (2005, 302) with *škōh*.
9. Emend *rōzānīhā* in Pakzad (2005, 303) with *rōzīhā*. See Bailey 1933, 858.
10. Emend *m'knd* in Pakzad (2005, 306) with *ābgēnag*.
11. Emend *ahl* in Pakzad (2005, 308) with *āhr*.
12. Emend *ka* in Pakzad (2005, 310) with *kē*.
13. Expunge *čiyōn* and emend *nē* in Pakzad (2005, 310) with *rāy*. This sentence may be corrupt.
14. Emend *a-margān* in Pakzad (2005, 314) with *a-maragān*.
15. Emend *'ywptkyh* in Pakzad (2005, 314) with *āhuftagīh*.
16. Emend *panjāh stārag* in Pakzad (2005, 315) with *dāyagīdārag*.

Chapter 27

1. Emend *ptgwnd* in Pakzad (2005, 322) with *paywand*.
2. Emend *[nē] +ōbārēd* in Pakzad (2005, 324) with *nē hanbārēd*. See Bailey 1933, 911.
3. Emend *čišmagān* in Pakzad (2005, 326) with *a-nāmagān*. See Bailey 1933, 914.
4. Emend *+wany* in Pakzad (2005, 326) with *xwēš*. See Bailey 1933, 914.

Chapter 28

1. We conjecturally add *andar*.
2. Emend *hngšnšn gīrēd* in Pakzad (2005, 332) with *hambawišnīh kunēd*.
3. Emend *zahār* in Pakzad (2005, 332) with *zahrag*.
4. This sentence seems to be incomplete.
5. Emend *+ānayišn* in Pakzad (2005, 337) with *xwāhišn*.
6. Emend *pay* in Pakzad (2005, 337) with *pīh*.

Chapter 29

1. Emend *būd* in Pakzad (2005, 341) with *bawēd*.
2. Emend *sayist* in Pakzad (2005, 342) with *nibast*.
3. Emend *+gar-may* in Pakzad (2005, 342) with *dramanag*.
4. Emend *Sugawestān* in Pakzad (2005, 343) with *Suβδastān*.
5. Emend *gur* in Pakzad (2005, 343) with *dur*. The word is misplaced and should be at the end of paragraph 17.
6. Emend *Jamagān* in Pakzad (2005, 344) with *Čimgān*.

Chapter 30

1. Emend *bawēd* in Pakzad (2005, 346) with *būd*.
2. Emend *ham-afrogōmand* in Pakzad (2005, 346) with *ham-abrangōmand*.
3. Emend *ō +āmār* in Pakzad (2005, 347) with *hamāg*.
4. Emend *nišīnēnd* in Pakzad (2005, 351) with *nišānēnd*.

Chapter 31

1. Remove *az* in Pakzad (2005, 352).
2. Emend *ānēnd* in Pakzad (2005, 353) with *mānēnd*.
3. Emend *gīrēd* in Pakzad (2005, 353) with *kunēd*.
4. Emend *Mazōn* in Pakzad (2005, 355) with *Mēšān*.
5. Emend *'wšnyh* in Pakzad (2005, 355) with *oših*.
6. Emend *+a-mar* in Pakzad (2005, 355) with *hamwar*.
7. Emend *xānīg* in Pakzad (2005, 355) with *Xēnēn*.
8. Probably a corrupted toponym in place of Harahvand. See Pahlavi *Vidēvdād* 1:12.
9. Emend *Mēzan* in Pakzad (2005, 356) with *Mazōn*.

Chapter 32

1. Emend *Kurind* in Pakzad (2005, 359) with *Kulang*.
2. Emend *ēdōn* in Pakzad (2005, 360) with *ast*.
3. Emend *rāstagān mayān* in Pakzad (2005, 360) with *rāst ū mayān*.
4. Emend *rah* in Pakzad (2005, 360) with *ray*.
5. Emend *kuring-dušid* in Pakzad (2005, 361) with *kulang-dušid*.

Chapter 33

1. Emend *Fraš* in Pakzad (2005, 363) with *Fryā*.
2. Emend *Šambarānīhā* in Pakzad (2005, 364) with *Šambarān šāh*.
3. Emend *wihānag* in Pakzad (2005, 365) with *āhōg*.
4. Expunge *Sūdāwag* in Pakzad (2005, 365).
5. This sentence is misplaced at the beginning of the paragraph 12 in Pakzad (2005, 365).
6. Emend *'pyst* in Pakzad (2005, 366) with *abesihid*.
7. Emend *'pyst* in Pakzad (2005, 366) with *abesihid*.
8. Emend *kardag-xwadāy* in Pakzad (2005, 366) with *kadag-xwadāy*.
9. Emend *+āwār ud tazišn* in Pakzad (2005, 367) with **aswār-tazišn*.
10. Emened *šānag nihaxt* in Pakzad (2005, 367) with *šān nihād*. See Bailey 1933, 1000.
11. Emend *haft* in Pakzad (2005, 367) with *šāš*.

12. Emend *'thwšb* in Pakzad (2005, 367) with *ātaxš-ē*.
13. Emend *Hyōnān* in Pakzad (2005, 368) with *axwān*.
14. Emend *+škēbīd* in Pakzad (2005, 367) with *škāft*.
15. Emend *uzīd* in Pakzad (2005, 368) with *ōzad*. See Bailey 1933, 1003.
16. Emend *tā-šān abaxšišn kūnēnd* in Pakzad (2005, 369) with *tā yazdān abaxšāyišn kūnēnd*.
17. Emend *grawišn* in Pakzad (2005, 370) with *wurrōyišn*.
18. Emend *nahang* in Pakzad (2005, 360) with *nīhang*.
19. Emend *be* in Pakzad (2005, 371) with *bē*.
20. Emend *āz-tōhmag* in Pakzad (2005, 372) with *az tōhmag*. See Bailey 1933, 1011.
21. Emend *+juxt* in Pakzad (2005, 373) with *gūft*.

Chapter 34

1. Emend *hwt 'snd'myh* in Pakzad (2005, 381) with *xwad +kunišnīh*.
2. A conjectural translation of *'lm* in Pakzad (2005, 387).
3. Emend *gēhān* in Pakzad (2005, 387) with *yazdān*.

Chapter 35

1. Emend *+Rašn-čīn-iz* in Pakzad (2005, 389) with *rašn čīnīg*.
2. Emend *kard* in Pakzad (2005, 396) with *grift*.
3. Emend *nišāt* in Pakzad (2005, 399) with *nišāst*.
4. Emend *bwcyt'* in Pakzad (2005, 399) with *warzīdan*.
5. Emend *šwl* in Pakzad (2005, 401) with *šāhwār*.
6. Emend *aspōmandīh* in Pakzad (2005, 401) with *a-sējōmandīh*.
7. Emend *stabr-sanwarih* in (Pakzad 2005, 401) with *stabr-dēnwarīh*.

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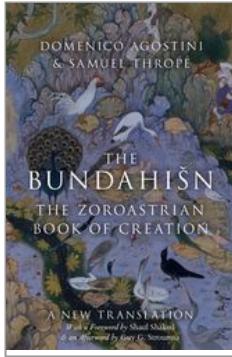
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 Āfrīnagān, blessing ceremony, 26:53
 Ahunawad Gāh, one of the five *Gāthās*, 1A:26
 Ahunawar prayer, the most sacred of the Gathic prayers, 1:28, 49
 Ašēm Vohū, the second of the four great prayers of the Zoroastrians, 11:3
 Ayādgārīhā ī Šahrīhā (Chronicles of the provinces), a lost book on geography, 9:32
 Dastwar (New Persian *dastūr*), Zoroastrian spiritual authority versed in theology and law, 22:26; 23:6; 24:53; 27:26
 Drōn, bread offering, 26:53
 Ěbsrūsim (sunset), 3:24, 25; 25:9
 Frasang, unit of measure equaling approximately 5.3 kilometers, 2:18; 6B:9, 12; 6E:4; 9:37; 10:4; 12:3; 13:5; 15A:2; 25:28, 29; 29:14; 32:12
 Gāthās (*Gāhān*), the five metrical chants that constitute the *Yasna*, the core of the

Zoroastrian liturgy, pr.: 2; 4:22; 26:102, 127; 34:26, 30
 Gāhānbār, Gāhān, festival day held at the end of each of the six seasons of the Zoroastrian year, 1A:26; 25:1; 26:8
 Hammistagān, the intermediary abode of the afterlife, 30:32, 33
 Hampsasmēdim, festival, 1A:25; 15A:10; 25:6
 Harvest (Pēdišāh), festival, 1A:22
 Hās⁴r, unit of measure equaling approximately 10 *frasang*, or one or one-quarter *frasang*, 2:18; 6E:4; 10:18; 13:4; 15A:2; 25:5, 28
 Hāwan (dawn), 3:24, 25; 25:9, 10
 Hērbed, class of Zoroastrian priest tasked with teaching and transmitting religious knowledge, 25:8
 Homecoming of the Herds (Ayāsrīm), 1A:23
 Kustīg, sacred girdle to be worn around the waist, 6J:1; 27:7, 10
 Midspring (Mēdōzārm), festival, 1A:20
 Midsummer (Mēdōyōšām), festival, 1A:21; 25:3
 Midwinter (Mēdīyārim), festival, 1A:24, 25:3
 Mowbed, highest rank of Zoroastrian priest charges with administrative offices and ceremonial functions, 35:55, 57; 35A:2, 7, 8
 Parsig era, from 651 CE onwards, 36:9, 10
 Rapihwin (noon), 3:24, 25; 25:9, 12, 15, 16, 17
 Šabig, sacred white undershirt, 27:7, 10
 Spandmad Gāh, one of the five *Gāthās*, 1A:26
 Ušahin (night), 3:24, 25; 25:9; 26:87
 Uštawad Gāh, one of the five *Gāthās*, 1A:26
 Uzērin (evening), 3:24, 25; 25:9, 10
 Wahištōišt Gāh, one of the five *Gāthās*, 1A:26
 Wohuxštr Gāh, one of the five *Gāthās*, 1A:26

Yaθā Ahū Vairiiō, opening sentence of *Ahunawar* prayer, 1:28, 49; 19:2
 Yūjyast, unit of measure; it may be equivalent to 16 *hās*^a*r*, 13:28
 Zand, Middle Persian commentary on the Sasanian Avesta, 1:0; 33:19

Concepts

Činwad Bridge (Avestan *činuuatō pərətu*-), the bridge of the “separator” or “collector” leading to the afterlife, 3:22; 9:9; 26:29, 48, 53, 124
 Dēn (Avestan *daēna*-), tradition, scripture; religion; one’s own internal consciousness, *passim*; *dēn of sorcery*: 21E:7; 22:21, 22; 33:36; *evil dēn*, pr.:2, 3
 Final Body (*tan ī pasēn*), the pure resurrected body of the eschatological times, 1:10, 11, 28, 52; 3:27; 8:6; 14:16; 26:16, 67, 98, 115
 Frawahr (Avestan *fravaši*-), a pre-existing portion of the soul, *passim*
 Glory (*xwarrah*; Avestan *x̌arənah*-), divine and royal charisma and grace, *passim*
 Mixture (*gumēzišn*), the mixed state of good and evil in the material world, 1:5, 24, 27, 41, 49, 57; 1A:7, 14; 2:9,

10, 11; 3:28; 5A:7; 6J:2; 21C:18; 22:29; 33:1; 35:40
 Restoration (*frašgird*; Avestan *frašō.kərəti*-), the process of the eschatological purification of the earth, 6A:4; 6H:1; 8:6; 10:18; 12:12; 14:4; 16:5; 18:13; 24:1, 3, 22, 23; 26:27, 95, 116; 29:11; 34:16, 23, 32
 Resurrection (*ristāxēz*), the raising of the dead performed in fifty-seven years by the last savior Sōšāns, 1:28; 26:16, 98, 115; 34:4, 5
 Time of Long Dominion (*zamān ī kanāragōmand*), finite and limited time, 1:38, 41, 49; 3:2
 Vermin (*xrafstar*; Avestan *xrafstra*-), noxious creatures fabricated by Ahriman, including reptiles and insects, *passim*
 Way of Long Dominion (*Way ī dagrand-xwadāy*), finite and limited space, 1:44, 45, 52, 53; 26:28, 34
 Zurwān of Long Dominion (*Zurwān ī dagrand-xwadāy*), finite and limited time, 3:7, 16; 26:32
 Zurwān without origin (*Zurwān ī a-kanārag*), infinite and unlimited time, 3:16; 26:32