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## Language, Writing, and Tradition in Iran

by  
David A. Utz

Victor H. Mair, Editor  
*Sino-Platonic Papers*  
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA  
vmair@sas.upenn.edu  
www.sino-platonic.org

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# Language, Writing, and Tradition in Iran\*

David A. Utz  
University of Pennsylvania

In discussing language, writing, and tradition in Iran, we must begin with some clarification. What we want to examine is the crystallization and development of a particular method and pattern of scribal practice, and its implications and consequences for the historical development and legacy of a particular cultural tradition. For this purpose we need to consider a particular geographical area, Iran, which for our purposes includes not only the modern Islamic Republic of Iran, but also Afghanistan, Armenia, and much of Central Asia. Furthermore, we are particularly concerned with a specific span of time, from the early Achaemenian period in the latter half of the 6th century B.C.E. until the progressive advent of Islam in these regions during the 7th-10th centuries C.E. Throughout this period, the paramount characteristic of language and writing was that they were separate and distinct: language was not writing and writing was not language.

The semi-independent development of writing became a powerful historical factor influencing **tradition** in this region. Moreover, orthographic systems and methods tend to define, at least for modern scholarship, distinctions between so-called Old, Middle, and New Iranian languages. Examples of Old Iranian languages are Old Persian and Avestan.<sup>1</sup> Examples of Middle Iranian languages are Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, Khwarezmian, Khotanese, and Bactrian.<sup>2</sup> Examples of New Iranian languages are Persian (including Farsi, Dari, and Tajiki), Pashtu, Baluchi, so-called "Kurdish" (in its disparate manifestations), as well as more obscure languages such as Ossetic, Yaghnobi, and the various Pamir languages.<sup>3</sup> For our present purposes, we will be primarily concerned with Middle Iranian languages. **Language**, itself, did not become an historical force of consequence until the 20th century, due primarily to the introduction of 19th century European ideas about language and ethnicity and their exploitation for purely utilitarian political purposes by 20th century governments in this entire region.

To better understand the highly idiosyncratic development of writing in Iran in this crucial period, it may be helpful to see it in the larger context of one of the major

operative factors in the formation of Iranian culture and tradition: the process of incessant dialectic and synthesis of the indigenous heritage of the Iranians, especially their distinctive religious and ethical ideology, and the accumulated traditions and methods of the Ancient Near East, especially the urban and mercantile society of Syria and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, it might be most effective to illustrate this process with a specific non-linguistic, non-scribal example: two specific major concepts within the Iranian view of history as presented in the *Šāhnāma* of Abu'l-Qāsim Firdausī.<sup>4</sup> Although this work, which contains the history of the Iranians from creation until the Arab conquest, was completed only in the very early 11th century, the historical ideas and information it embodies originate from late Sasanian times (*i.e.*, at the end of the particular span of time we want to consider) and from Sasanian historiographical works such as the *Kār-nāmak i Artaxšēr i Pāpakān* and the famous *X<sup>4</sup>atāi-nāmak*, translated into Arabic by Ibnu'l-Muqaffa' in the 8th century and used extensively by Islamic historiographers such as aṭ-Ṭabarī.<sup>5</sup> It should be pointed out in passing that, even if these concepts originate in the late Sasanian environment and in some sense reflect the self-image of that time and place, it is puzzling that some of them, such as Cosmic Kingship,<sup>6</sup> exemplified in the *Šāhnāma* especially by the four kings of the Pišdādiyān dynasty [Kayūmarš, Hūšang, Tahmūraš, and Jamšīd], do not at all reflect the reality of that environment.

The first of these two specific concepts we want to consider is called variously *čarx-i buland*, "the high wheel," *čarx-i kabūd*, "the blue wheel," *čarx-i gardān*, "the turning wheel," *čarx-i nāpāydār*, "the not-constant wheel," *čarx-i pīr*, "the wheel of the old man," *čarx-i falak*, "the wheel of the sky," or, more often than not, simply *čarx*, "the wheel."<sup>7</sup> This concept has a special prominence in the sections which deal with Kay Kāvus and Kay Xusrau.<sup>8</sup> *Čarx* is what ultimately determines the course of events. The concept had its origins in the cyclical time speculation of the Babylonians concerning the twelve divisions of the Zodiac which culminated in the late ancient Near East in the concepts surrounding the figure of Xronos-Zurvān, hence *čarx-i pīr*, "the wheel of the old man." It is also related in its origins to the Babylonian genre of Astronomical Diaries, in which an effort is made to document the harmonic correlation between astronomical and human or historical events.<sup>9</sup> The systematic study of this correlation became the all-important profession of astrologers. Of related importance are dreams and their professional interpretation, as is clear from the ubiquitous *axtarmārān* and *x<sup>4</sup>amnvicārān* of the Middle Persian *Kār-nāmak i Artaxšēr i Pāpakān*,<sup>10</sup> one of the two previously mentioned Sasanian prose precursors of the sort

of historiography of which the *Šāhnāma* is representative. Another related motif peculiar to the *Šāhnāma* and later Iranian tradition, especially poets like Ḥāfīz,<sup>11</sup> is the *jām-i gaitī-numā(y)* or world-revealing cup through which it is possible to know what is otherwise unknowable by normal human capability. For instance, Kay Xusrau is able to use it to locate the whereabouts of Bīžan, whom Afrāsiyāb has imprisoned in Tūrān.<sup>12</sup>

The other concept is *farr*, "splendor" or "legitimacy," an old concept indigenous to the Iranians themselves and occurring already as *x<sup>v</sup>arənah-* in the Avesta,<sup>13</sup> one of the oldest extant textual witnesses to autochthonous Iranian beliefs and practices. *Farr* is the special attribute of those who are the legitimate leaders of human society, for instance kings. It is not inherent to a person, nor can one go out and acquire it. But rather it must accrue to one, who may lose it. Like *čarx*, *farr* is also a determinant of the course of events, especially the personal fortunes of different individuals. In the *Šāhnāma* Jamšīd lost it through his pride and egotism,<sup>14</sup> Farīdūn possessed it and was able thereby to overcome the illegitimate tyrant Zāhḥāk,<sup>15</sup> and Kay Xusrau preserved it for the Kayāniyāns by abdicating in favor of Luhrāsp.<sup>16</sup> In the Avesta, the *x<sup>v</sup>arənah-* is one of the *yazatas*. It is praised in the so-called *Zamyād Yašt*,<sup>17</sup> which memorializes those who had it, and their various capabilities and accomplishments. It also describes how, when Yima Xšaēta ceased adhering to *aša*, "truth," and followed the Lie, *drug-*, the *x<sup>v</sup>arənah-* abandoned him three times,<sup>18</sup> and how Aži Dahāka and the Tūrānian Fraṅrasyan tried unsuccessfully to seize the *x<sup>v</sup>arənah-* by force.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the *Šāhnāma*, *čarx* and *farr* operate simultaneously and independently to determine the course of events. As such they exemplify the composite of both Iranian and Ancient Near Eastern concepts which constitutes the late Sasanian view of history embodied in the *Šāhnāma*, and, by extension, the all-pervasive **dual** heritage which became, over time, one of the pre-eminent formative factors in Iranian tradition. The motif of the *jām-i gaitī-numā(y)* or world-revealing cup is, in a sense, an example of a synthetic expression of this dual heritage. In the passage of the *Šāhnāma* referred to above,<sup>20</sup> Kay Xusrau has resolved to locate Bīžan with the aid of the cup. After seeking divine assistance,

He came strutting to (his) throne. He put on his head that auspicious hat.  
(He had) a cup in his palm (in which he had) put wine. The seven  
climes were visible in it. Time and the sign of the high sphere, he  
discovered it all: what and how and how many. The whole picture from

the Fish to the Ram was drawn all at once in the cup: not only Saturn and Mars and Venus and the Lion, but also the Sun and Mercury above and the Moon below.<sup>21</sup> The magician-king saw in it all things in the future. He gazed and then he put the cup in front (of him). He saw in it (even) more future things. He was looking in each of the seven climes. He didn't see a sign of Bižan anywhere.

On the one hand, the references in this passage to the planets, the signs of the Zodiac, and, especially, to *zamān*, "time," and to the *sipihr-i buland*, "the high sphere," should make the cup-motif's connections with the concept of *čarx* adequately clear. On the other hand, when Kay Xusrau begins by putting on his head the *xujasta kulāh* or "auspicious hat" of the Kayāniyāns, this is because the physical cup and the esoteric knowledge necessary to use it are the special possession of individuals such as Kay Xusrau who are possessed of the *farr*.

The craft of writing among Iranian peoples and in the Iranian cultural area is one of the features of the modern landscape which is a legacy of the infrastructure of Achaemenian administration.<sup>22</sup> Under the Achaemenians, beginning in the latter part of the 6th century B.C.E., Aramaic became the official language for chancellery purposes and the *sine qua non* for any effective control of such a vast and diverse geographical area. Already during previous centuries the Aramaeans, through their extensive and expanding mercantile activities, had made Aramaic the *lingua franca* of the Near East.<sup>23</sup> Under the Assyrians its official status as the basis of written communication set a precedent for future multi-national bureaucracies in this region.<sup>24</sup> In its capacity of official Achaemenian usage, as well as its continued importance for mercantile activities and other private communication, the specific knowledge of the writing of Aramaic spread throughout the eastern Achaemenian domains where writing was heretofore unknown, even into western Central Asia [Sogdiana and Chorasmia] and the extreme northwestern part of India.<sup>25</sup> As a result of this, Achaemenian chancellery Aramaic became for many centuries the basis of the craft of writing in Iran, definitively influencing how it developed: not alphabetic or remotely "scientific," but as the secret craft of a special and powerful guild. Scribes were called *\*dipibara-*, Middle Persian *dibīr*, a word based ultimately on Sumerian *DUB*, Akkadian *tuppu*, "writing (tablet)," probably through the intermediary of older Elamite *tuppi*, later *tippi*, "inscription."<sup>26</sup> Their training was received at a *\*dipibarastāna-*, Middle Persian *dibīristān*.<sup>27</sup> In the beginning of the Achaemenian

period, Aramaic would have been practiced by foreign scribes already familiar with it. However, eventually Iranians must have also learned the special craft of scribesmanship. Because Aramaic continued as the language of written communication, the populations of the various Iranian satrapies maintained their own languages (*e.g.*, Parthian, Sogdian, and Khwarezmian) instead of adopting Persian, the native language of the Achaemenians.

The Achaemenians had also become familiar with the cuneiform writing system through its use for Akkadian during the neo-Babylonian period, as well as through Elamite. The former was an ideographic system where a picture of a Sumerian word might be used to write an Akkadian word, but it would presumably be read out in Akkadian, not Sumerian.<sup>28</sup> This may have formed a sort of legacy for the Iranians that influenced the peculiar system which later developed for writing Middle Iranian languages in the former Achaemenian domains. A special form of cuneiform script was devised for writing down the Old Persian text of royal inscriptions.<sup>29</sup> This syllabary proves that the Achaemenians understood the principle of semi-alphabetic writing, but chose not to pursue it. Further underlying this situation was the indigenous hostility of the Iranians to writing because it was foreign. The Avesta continued in oral transmission throughout the Achaemenian period. Although the Iranians adopted the alien art of writing for practical purposes, the priests, especially, rejected it as unfit and unsuitable for adequately recording the sacred words.

With the collapse of Achaemenian administration in the wake of Alexander of Macedon, the Hellenistic Seleucids introduced the use of Greek, which exposed the Iranians to the advantages of the Greek alphabet for the representation of languages.<sup>30</sup> In spite of this, the Iranians maintained the use of Aramaic for private purposes, because of its traditional position as the normative method of written communication. Furthermore, in those regions in which the Seleucids were unable to exert any effective control, such as Persis, the local Frataraka princes maintained Aramaic as the official basis of written communication,<sup>31</sup> as had been the case under the Achaemenians. This official and unofficial maintenance of Aramaic in the various regions where Seleucid administration was unable to introduce its own bureaucratic apparatus led to the development of various regional forms of the Aramaic script which, in turn, led directly to the various Middle Iranian orthographic systems. During the earlier Parthian period, during which the Arsacids functioned as the successors of the Seleucids on the Iranian Plateau, this state of affairs continued.

Finally, towards the end of the second century B.C.E. and continuing throughout the 1st century B.C.E., there occurred the gradual abandonment of Aramaic as the common language of written communication in favor of the local Middle Iranian languages in the local developments of the Aramaic script. The beginnings of this development can be seen most clearly on the Nisā ostraca mostly from the earlier half of the 1st century B.C.E.<sup>32</sup> In these documents, the use of some scattered Parthian words as well as grammatical and syntactical irregularities in the use of Aramaic, such as the generalized use of the masculine demonstrative adjective *ZNH* irrespective of gender [*e.g.*, *B-ḤWT' ZNH*],<sup>33</sup> show that the Aramaic words were no longer pronounced or thought of as such, but rather they served as fixed or frozen shapes to convey Iranian words. The words which ultimately survived as ideograms were the ones most commonly used in letters, or official or business documents, and in the grammatical forms which were of most common occurrence: *e.g.*, *'BY*, "my father," and *BRH*, "his son," became generalized for "father" and "son."<sup>34</sup> Verbal ideograms were often the forms for the imperative singular or third person plural imperfect, *e.g.*, *YKTYBWN*, "to write."<sup>35</sup> To this was added the system of affixing a phonetic compliment to distinguish Iranian grammatical categories. The coins of the Frataraka princes of Persis from around the end of the 2nd century B.C.E. also illustrate this system,<sup>36</sup> as well as coins of Sogdian princes in Transoxiana<sup>37</sup> and the so-called "Old Khwarezmian" documents discovered by Soviet scholars in the delta of the Āmū Daryā.<sup>38</sup> By the first century C.E., the Avrōmān parchment legal document from Kurdistan, which was written with ideograms in the Parthian language and Parthian script,<sup>39</sup> shows that this process had advanced to the point where the regional differences in script, language, and even ideogram usage made what was written in the various regions no longer mutually intelligible. By the beginning of the Sasanian period in the earlier half of the 3rd century C.E., this process was complete, and elaborate, mutually-unintelligible, standardized systems had evolved for writing all of the major Middle Iranian languages in all of the former Achaemenian domains, except Bactria.<sup>40</sup> This state of affairs continued for centuries until, finally, during the 9th and 10th centuries, all these systems were abandoned, even by the Zoroastrian community,<sup>41</sup> in favor of the Arabic script.

In the meantime, the overall indigenous Iranian suspicion of and reticence about the foreign craft of writing continued, especially among the leadership of the Zoroastrian community, but also among the courtiers and landed gentry, as well. The Middle Persian *Ayyātkār i Zarērān* has preserved the tradition of the *gōsān* and the



oral poetry which was the staple literary genre of these groups.<sup>42</sup> Because of the importance of the exact pronunciation of the sacred words, the Zoroastrian clergy maintained the Avesta exclusively in oral transmission throughout much of the Sasanian period. However, they did utilize this method of writing for the **Zand**, the Middle Persian translation of the Avesta, with its commentary and glosses.<sup>43</sup> Finally, in the latter part of the 5th century or early 6th century C.E., the Avestan alphabet was devised, perhaps in response to the recent invention of the Armenian alphabet by Mašt'oc' and his circle,<sup>44</sup> but certainly due in part to the influence which Christians and especially Manichaeans in Iran must have had upon the growing importance of **books** for the Zoroastrian community. The Avestan alphabet derived from the so-called "Pahlavi" script, the highly evolved Sasanian cursive script for writing Middle Persian.<sup>45</sup> Through the elaboration of a number of signs, enough discrete characters were created to produce a truly alphabetic writing system capable of adequately rendering the sacred sounds exactly and without ambiguity. Now that this possibility existed, the Avesta was canonized in a written form in the 6th century C.E. Nevertheless, this existence of the written Sasanian Avesta in 21 Nasks<sup>46</sup> did not alter the importance and pre-eminence of the oral tradition.

The Aramaic system of writing is an alphabetic and semi-cursive one originally devised for writing the Northwest Semitic language of the Aramaeans, the native inhabitants of city-states in Syria in the early 1st millennium B.C.E.<sup>47</sup> It utilized 22 consonantal signs; it did not denote vowels. As we have seen, in Iranian lands the *abgad* gradually evolved distinct, highly-cursive regional forms for the writing of the various Middle Iranian languages in ideographic format. The apogee of this development was the late Sasanian book script, commonly called "Book Pahlavi,"<sup>48</sup> which was especially used by the Zoroastrian clergy and the Sasanian bureaucracy. Not only had the script become highly cursive, but the problem of legibility was further compounded by the confounding of various letters [Figure 1]. Additional problems were created by the abundant usage of Semitic ideograms, often in conjunction with Iranian phonetic compliments, historical spellings, pseudo-historical spellings, and arbitrary non-alphabetic short-hand forms [Figure 2]. All of these characteristics are paralleled in the development of the Aramaic script in Central Asia for writing Sogdian, although not to such an extensive degree.<sup>49</sup>

In areas of Iranian settlement and culture which were either beyond the bounds of Achaemenian Iran, *e.g.*, the Tarim Basin, or mountainous backwaters where Achaemenian administration was weak or effectively non-existent, *e.g.*, eastern

Afghanistan, the craft of writing came later under different circumstances: Greek for Bactrian and Brahmi for Khotanese and Tumshuq Saka. The latter was an indirect legacy of the Kushans and their cultural influence in eastern Central Asia, in so far as they introduced Indian scribal practice as the accepted norm in this region.<sup>50</sup> The Brahmi script was one based on consonantal signs and universal vowel markers. The use of the Greek alphabet as a basis for the Bactrian script is a legacy of Seleucid and Greco-Bactrian administration in this region. The Bactrian method of using the Greek script shows some parallels with the idiosyncratic developments of the Aramaic script in Iranian usage discussed above. In the cursive Bactrian script, as in the so-called "Hephthalite Fragments" of the German Turfan Collection,  $\alpha$ ,  $\delta$ , and  $o$  all became very hard to distinguish from each other.<sup>51</sup> Even in the block-letter style, although  $A$ ,  $\Delta$ , and  $O$  were distinguished,  $O$  could be read either vocalically as / $o$ / or consonantly as / $v$ /. This can be seen, for instance, in the Bactrian orthography for the important eastern Iranian deity Śiva-Vēš: *OHPO* [*Oēšo*],<sup>52</sup> which should be read /*Vēšo*/.

In thinking about the introduction of writing into the Iranian cultural area, how it developed, and what was its relation to the various indigenous Iranian languages, it may be helpful to bear in mind the major formative factor in the Iranian tradition which we discussed previously in conjunction with the Iranian view of history in Firdausī's *Šāhnāma*, i.e., the concurrent dual heritage of the methods and traditions of the urban centers of the Ancient Near East, and the indigenous cultural attitudes of the Iranians. On the one hand, writing in Iran was not just a scheme for the representation of human speech using graphic signs, but rather a complete ready-made system of written language, which was taken over from the Ancient Near East as a composite whole, together with the complex of social institutions surrounding the *dibīr* or "scribe," a member of a powerful and secret guild dedicated pre-eminently to self-preservation. On the other hand, the custodians of the indigenous heritage, especially those of the Iranian religious traditions, viewed this foreign craft with suspicion and relied on oral transmission in preference to its use. Out of this developed a strange hybrid method of written communication which eventually both literate groups in society, scribes and priests, came to use in common. Finally, it may be mentioned in passing that the use of Arabic in Islamic Iran in some ways mirrors this same historical pattern and ambivalent attitude.<sup>53</sup>

References to writing in the Avestan and Persian literature preserved by the Zoroastrians are rare and confined to the periphery. However, two particular passages illustrate further what the position of writing was within Iranian tradition by late

Sasanian times. The first of these comes from the Middle Persian text *Husrav i Kavātān u Rētak*, or "Khusrau, the Son of Kavād, and the Page."<sup>54</sup> Although it has been preserved through the agency of Zoroastrian tradition, it is a very secular text. In it a *rēdag* [*rētak*], an adolescent boy, presents himself to the Great King in the hope of employment in his service. He begins with a brief *resumé* in which we learn:

At the proper time I was sent to school (*frahangistān*), and I was unrelenting [hard pressed] in my studying. Like a *hērbad* [*hērpat*] I memorized the Yašt, the Hādōxt, the Bagān, and the Vidēvdāt, and I have heard the Zand passage by passage. My scribesmanship (*dipīrēh*) is such that, on account of it, I am a good writer (*xūp nipēk*) and a swift writer (*ray nipēk*), with keen understanding, successful, skillful, (and) learned.<sup>55</sup>

The text continues with a sort of job interview on subjects important for court life, such as the best food, musicians, wine, flowers, women, and riding-beasts, and concludes with the subsequent career of the *rēdag* in royal service. The second passage is from the post-Sasanian *Šad Dar Našr*, or "Prose of a Hundred Topics:"<sup>56</sup>

The ninety-eighth topic is this that those of the Good Religion must learn the Avestan script in the presence of *hērbads* and teachers, so that a mistake will not occur in reading the Niyāyiš and Yašt. Moreover, it is proper for *hērbads* and teachers to teach the Avestan script to all those of the Good Religion. And if a *hērbad* should prove deficient in teaching them, for him it would be a grave sin. For Ōrmazd, the increaser of Good, said to Zartušt: Every *hērbad* and teacher who makes a mistake in teaching Avestan to those of the Good Religion, him I will make as far from Heaven as is the breadth of the Earth.

The ninety-ninth topic is this that *mobads*, *dastūrs*, *rads*, and *hērbads* should not teach Pahlavī to everyone. For Zartušt asked Ōrmazd: For whom is learning Pahlavī proper? Ōrmazd, the increaser of Good, answered: Everyone who is of your lineage; a *mobad*, a *dastūr*, and a *hērbad* who is intelligent. It is not proper for anyone else except whom I have mentioned. If he should teach others, for him it would be a

grave sin. Even if he would have done many meritorious things, the end for him will be in Hell.

From these two passages we learn about the *frahangistān* where youth were sent to memorize the Avesta and hear the Zand or commentary upon it, and about *dibīrīh* [*dipīrēh*], scribesmanship, by which one could become a good and swift writer, *xūp nipēk u ray nipēk*. More importantly, however, from this first passage we learn by implication that *dibīrīh* was a specialized and arcane skill outside the mainstream of society's principal concerns, for this short passage occupies only a small incidental mention in a discussion concerned with more important educational qualifications for the secular court life. In the second passage, we learn that, within the religious hierarchy, writing had a dual character: on the one hand, it was a crucial method for insuring the accuracy of recitation of the sacred words, on the other hand, it was a secret craft which should not be taught to everyone.

The most important consequence of all this was that writing, not only because of the time-consuming difficulty of learning a complex heterographic system, but also because of the social implications and consequences of *dibīrīh*, "scribesmanship," itself, became a powerful historical factor, directly influencing elite culture and the dynamics of tradition in Iran. These factors could only have contributed formidably to the acute insularity of the Zoroastrian clergy and intellectuals during the Sasanian period, effectively isolating them from all but the most cursory access to and familiarity with the major ideas and intellectual currents of Late Antiquity. Moreover, the evident isolation of other highly literate communities within the realm of the Great King (*Mec T'agaworn*),<sup>57</sup> such as the Syrians and Armenians, from the written literature of the Zoroastrian community comes as still less of a surprise. In Central Asia the Achaemenian legacy of the Aramaeo-Sogdian writing system had much the same apparent effect, especially on the Buddhist Sogdian community, as I have tried to show elsewhere,<sup>58</sup> effectively creating a boundary between the Buddhist Sogdians and Indian Buddhism.

The case of the Armenians is especially striking because of their long-standing special position in Iran, and the historical connections of the Armenian royal and other noble families with the Arsacid family and other *mecameck'n* of Parthian Iran.<sup>59</sup> Because Armenia remained during the earlier Sasanian period a final bastion of the Arsacids in Iran and of the Christianized heritage of Parthian Iran,<sup>60</sup> the Armenians had good reason to merit special attention from Sasanian officials and clerics,<sup>61</sup> and to

be well-connected to Zoroastrian families elsewhere in Iran. Nevertheless, it is clear from the books of 5th century Armenian writers such as Eznik<sup>62</sup> and Elišē<sup>63</sup> that Armenian intellectuals, although they had ready access to the Court and to Sasanian officials, did not have ready access to Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts. In fact, in the case of the Christian hereseologist Eznik, it is clear that he relied for his account of the *Parsic' k'ēšn*, or "religion of the Persians," not on Middle Persian sources, but on a lost Syriac source, which would seem to have also been used in the 8th century by Theodore bar Koni in his *Book of Scholia*.<sup>64</sup> There is also some evidence that Eznik may have made use of the lost work of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Περὶ τῆς ἐν Περσίδι μαγικῆς, known from a brief summary in Photius.<sup>65</sup> That the principal source material for Eznik was, however, in Syriac and not Middle Persian or Parthian is clear from orthographic details such as the spelling of the name of Zurvān's pernicious twin son, *Arhmn*,<sup>66</sup> which is closer to the unvowelled Syriac spelling *'hrmn*<sup>67</sup> than to either Zoroastrian Middle Persian *'hlymn* or Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian *'hrmyn*. Although the genitive-dative form *Arhmeni*<sup>68</sup> might appear to have more in common with the Middle Iranian forms, within the overall context of Classical Armenian nominal inflection,<sup>69</sup> the irregular declension of this foreign proper noun, as it is attested in the text of Eznik, shows that the root stem must have been *Arhmn*, not *Arhmen*. We can only conclude that the failure of Armenian writers to consult Middle Persian sources was due, in part, to the inaccessibility of this material due to its peculiar written form as well as the secretive attitudes of its custodians. Finally, and in conclusion, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that all this has very serious implications for the study of the so-called "Iranian influence" upon the history of other religious traditions.<sup>70</sup>

\* This paper began as a presentation to the Oriental Studies Department Seminar, University of Pennsylvania, January 26, 1988. Its revision for publication benefited considerably from a one-year tenure (1990-91) as a Research Fellow of the International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, Japan.

<sup>1</sup> The standard comprehensive reference works on Iranian languages are R. Schmitt (ed.), *Compendium Linguarum Iranicarum* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1989); W. Geiger and E. Kuhn (eds.), *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, 2 vols. (Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974); B. Spuler (ed.), *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I. Abt., 4. Bd.: *Iranistik*, 1. Abschnitt: *Linguistik* (Leiden-Köln: E.J. Brill, 1958); and B. Spuler (ed.), *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I. Abt., 4. Bd.: *Iranistik*, 2. Abschnitt: *Literatur* (Leiden-Köln: E.J. Brill, 1968). Another important collection, especially for Middle Iranian languages, is W.B. Henning, *Selected Papers*, 2 vols. [Acta Iranica, 14-15] (Tehran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1977). The standard works on Old Persian are W. Brandenstein and M. Mayrhofer, *Handbuch des Altpersischen* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964), and R.G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, 2d. rev. ed. [American Oriental Series, 33] (New Haven, Conn.: American Oriental Society, 1953). The best overviews of the Avestan language and the contents of the extant Avestan texts are J. Kellens, "Avesta," and K. Hoffmann, "Avestan Language," in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 3 (London-New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989), pp. 35-44, 47-62; Chr. Bartholomae, "Awesta-sprache und Altpersisch," in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie* I.1, pp. 152-248; K. Hoffmann, "Altiranisch," in *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 1.4.1 [Iranistik: Linguistik], pp. 1-19; K.F. Geldner, "Awesta-litteratur," in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie* II, pp. 1-53; and I. Gershevitch, "Old Iranian Literature," in *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 1.4.2 [Iranistik: Literatur], pp. 1-30. The standard (and only) dictionary of Avestan is Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1961); and the only critical text edition is K.F. Geldner (ed.), *Avesta, the Sacred Books of the Parsis*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1886-96). Two important essays analyzing the Avestan orthography and sound system are G. Morgenstierne, "Orthography and Sound-system of the Avesta," in *Irano-Dardica* [Beiträge zur Iranistik, 5] (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1973), pp. 31-83, and K. Hoffmann, "Zum Zeicheninventar der Avesta-Schrift," in J. Narten (ed.), *Aufsätze zur Indoiranistik*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig

Reichert, 1975), pp. 316-26. The most comprehensively useful books for learning Avestan are H. Reichelt, *Awestisches Elementarbuch* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1909) and *Avesta Reader: Texts, Notes, Glossary and Index* (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1911) [which follow the philological analysis of Bartholomae], or A.V.W. Jackson, *An Avesta Grammar in Comparison with Sanskrit: Part I: Phonology, Inflection, Word-formation, with an Introduction on the Avesta* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1892) and *Avesta Reader, First Series: Easier Texts, Notes, and Vocabulary* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1893) [which follow the tradition of Geldner]. Two very important recent works, which substantially update the knowledge of the Avestan language are J. Kellens, *Le verbe avestique* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1984) and *Les noms-racines de l'Avesta* [Beiträge zur Iranistik, 7] (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1974).

<sup>2</sup> The best comprehensive survey of Middle Iranian languages and text material is to be found in the various relevant essays in Schmitt, *op. cit.*, and in *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 1.4.1 [Iranistik: Linguistik] and 1.4.2 [Iranistik: Literatur]: W.B. Henning, "Mitteliranisch," 1.4.1, pp. 20-130; H.W. Bailey, "Languages of the Saka," 1.4.1, pp. 131-54; M. Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," 1.4.2, pp. 31-66; "The Manichaean Literature in Middle Iranian," 1.4.2, pp. 67-76; and O. Hansen, "Die Buddhistische und Christliche Literatur," 1.4.2, pp. 77-99. These are further supplemented by the various chapters of E. Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 3: The Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian Periods, Part 8: Script, Language, and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1149-1258, 1379-96, especially for Parthian, Khwarezmian, and Bactrian. The survey of Buddhist literature in Hansen has been updated in D.A. Utz, *A Survey of Buddhist Sogdian Studies* [Bibliographia Philologica Buddhica: Series Minor, 3] (Tokyo: The Reiyukai Library, 1978) and R.E. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan* [Studia Philologica Buddhica: Occasional Paper Series, 3] (Tokyo: The Reiyukai Library, 1979). More detailed descriptions of the Zoroastrian Middle Persian literature can be found in E.W. West, "Pahlavi Literature," in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, II, pp. 75-129 and J.C. Tavadia, *Die mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur der Zarathustrier* [Iranische Texte und Hilfsbücher, 2] (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1956). Scholarly studies and standard reference works on all of the Middle Iranian languages tend to fracture along lines of script and orthography. For the West Middle Iranian languages (Middle Persian and Parthian), the best

overviews are W. Sundermann, "Parthisch" and "Mittelpersisch," in Schmitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-64. There are three excellent lexicographical tools: Ph. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions pehlevies et parthes* [Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum: Supplementary Series, 1] (London: Lund Humphries, 1972) for texts in the inscriptional script and orthography; M. Boyce, *A Word-list of Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* [Acta Iranica, 9a] (Tehran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1977) for texts in the Manichaean script; and D.N. MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) for texts in the orthography and script of the Zoroastrian books. A. Ghilain, *Essai sur la langue parthe: son système verbal d'après les textes manichéens du Turkestan oriental* [Bibliothèque du Muséon, 9] (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1939), and W. Skalmowski, "Das Nomen im Parthischen," *Bulletin de la Société Polonaise de Linguistique* 25 (1967): 75-89, describe the grammar of Manichaean Parthian, while W.B. Henning, "Das Verbum des Mittelpersischen der Turfanfragmente," in *Selected Papers*, I, pp. 65-160, is an excellent description of the verbal system of Manichaean Middle Persian. The most comprehensive introduction to the whole subject of Middle Persian in the various varieties of the native orthography (*i.e.*, not Manichaean) is H.S. Nyberg, *A Manual of Pahlavi*, Part I: *Texts* and Part II: *Glossary* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964-74). The most important Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian texts have been collected in M. Boyce, *A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* [Acta Iranica, 9] (Tehran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1977).

N. Sims-Williams, "Sogdian," in Schmitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-92, is an extremely excellent overview of the Sogdian language. The only grammar of Sogdian is I. Gershevitch, *A Grammar of Manichaean Sogdian* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), which, although primarily based on material in Manichaean orthography, has examples in Syriac and native Sogdian orthography as well. There is no dictionary of Sogdian. The major text editions contain glossaries, of which several are particularly important: For an overview of the Sogdian language, with particular reference to Manichaean Sogdian, W.B. Henning (ed. and tr.), "Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch," in *Selected Papers*, I, pp. 417-557, is a good introduction. Two more recent text (re-)editions which reflect particularly current knowledge of the Sogdian language are D.N. MacKenzie (ed. and tr.), *The Buddhist Sogdian Texts of the British Library* [Acta Iranica, 10] (Tehran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1976) [Buddhist Sogdian], and N. Sims-Williams (ed. and tr.), *The Christian Sogdian Manuscript C2* [Berliner Turfantexte, 12] (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985) [Christian Sogdian]. Two other



recent important text editions are W. Sundermann (ed. and tr.), *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts* [Berliner Turfantexte, 11] (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981) and *Ein manichäisch-soghdisches Parabelbuch* [Berliner Turfantexte, 15] (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985), the former of which also contains important West Middle Iranian material.

The **Khotanese** text corpus has been published in H.W. Bailey (ed.), *Khotanese Buddhist Texts*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); *Saka Documents: Text Volume* [Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, 2.5] (London: Percy Lund, Humphries, 1968); *Indo-Scythian Studies: Khotanese Texts*, Volume I-III, 2d. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), Volume IV: *Saka Texts from Khotan in the Hedin Collection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), Volume V (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); and R.E. Emmerick (ed. and tr.), *The Book of Zambasta* [London Oriental Series, 21] (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). A dictionary of Khotanese is H.W. Bailey, *Dictionary of Khotan Saka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), which must be used in conjunction with R.E. Emmerick and P.O. Skjaervø, *Studies in the Vocabulary of Khotanese*, I-II [Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Veröffentlichungen der iranischen Kommission, 12, 17] (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1982-87). An excellent grammatical description of the older Khotanese language is R.E. Emmerick, *Saka Grammatical Studies* [London Oriental Series, 20] (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); while M.J. Dresden, "Grammatical Notes," in *The Jātakastava or 'Praise of the Buddha's Former Births'* [Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 45.5] (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955), pp. 404-19 provides a description of later Khotanese. An excellent overall survey of Khotanese (and Tumshuqese) is R.E. Emmerick, "Khotanese and Tumshuqese," in Schmitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-29.

The study and reliable scientific analysis of the East Middle Iranian languages **Khwarezmian** and **Bactrian** have been almost exclusively the work of W.B. Henning. For Khwarezmian see "Über die Sprache der Chvarezmier," in *Selected Papers*, I, pp. 401-5; "The Structure of the Khwarezmian Verb," in *Selected Papers*, II, pp. 449-455; "The Khwarezmian Language," in *Selected Papers*, II, pp. 485-500; "The Choresmian Documents," in *Selected Papers*, II, pp. 645-658; *A Fragment of a Khwarezmian Dictionary*, edited by D.N. MacKenzie (London: Lund Humphries, 1971); and "Mitteliranisch," *passim*. The Bactrian material has been published in the comprehensive work of H. Humbach (ed. and tr.), *Baktrische Sprachdenkmäler*, 2

vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966-67). This has been further analysed in W.B. Henning, "Surkh Kotal," in *Selected Papers*, II, pp. 503-4; "The Bactrian Inscription," in *Selected Papers*, II, pp. 545-53; "A Bactrian Seal-Inscription," in *Selected Papers*, II, p. 575; "Surkh-Kotal und Kaniska," in *Selected Papers*, II, pp. 631-43; N. Sims-Williams, "A Note on Bactrian Syntax," *Indogermanische Forschungen* 78 (1973): 95-99; and "A Note on Bactrian Phonology," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985): 111-16. An excellent and extremely useful overview is N. Sims-Williams, "Bactrian," in Schmitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-35.

<sup>3</sup> The bibliography for these languages is vast: see especially G. Morgenstierne, "Neu-iranische Sprachen," in *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 1.4.1, pp. 155-178 [bibliography] and I.M. Oranskii, *Les langues iraniennes*, trans. by J. Blau (Paris: Klincksieck, 1977) [bibliography, especially Soviet publications]. The best grammatical description of New Persian is G. Lazard, *Grammaire du persan contemporain* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1957). Beyond the work of Lazard for New Persian, the study of New Iranian languages is in such a state that many, if not most, or even all of the "standard" descriptions of them and reference tools for them are fraught with problems. Recently, the contributions concerning New Iranian languages by various scholars in Schmitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-488, have substantially remedied this situation.

<sup>4</sup> Abu'l-Qāsim Firdausī *Šāhnāma-yi Firdausī: Matn-i intiqādī*, edited by E.E. Bertel's *et al.*, 9 vols. [Pamiatniki literatury narodov Vostoka: Teksty: Bol'shaia seriia, 2] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Nauka', 1960-71).

<sup>5</sup> Th. Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, 2d. ed. (Berlin-Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1920), pp. 5-19.

<sup>6</sup> H.P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas Brothers, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> F. Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1965), pp. 287-88.

8 *ibid.*

9 A.J. Sachs and H. Hunger (eds. and trs.), *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, 2 vols. [Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl., 195, 210] (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988-89). I should like to thank Professor Erle Leichty, University of Pennsylvania, for this reference, as well as for drawing my attention to the existence of this interesting genre of texts.

10 Nyberg, *op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 2, 5.

11 Šamsu'd-dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiz-i Širāzī, *Dīvān*, edited by M. Qazvīnī and Q. Ganī (Tehran: Majlis Press, 1941), p. 96:

*Sālhā dil ṭalab-i jān-i jam az mā mīkard,  
Vānča kud dāšt zi bīgāna tamannā mīkard;*

12 Firdausī, *op. cit.*, vol. 5, p. 43.

13 Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, pp. 1870-73.

14 Firdausī, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 42-43.

15 *ibid.*, pp. 57-78.

16 *ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 379-416.

17 Geldner, *Avesta*, Volume 2: *Vispered and Khorda Avesta*, pp. 242-58; H. Lommel (tr.), *Die Yāšt's des Avesta* [Quellen der Religionsgeschichte, 6, 15] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1927), pp. 168-86.

18 Geldner, *ibid.*, pp. 246-47; Lommel, *ibid.*, p. 179.

19 Geldner, *ibid.*, pp. 250-53; Lommel, *ibid.*, pp. 180-82.

20 See note 12.

21 *Hurmuz* (Jupiter) is missing, and the Sun appears twice (*i.e.*, as the Sun and the Lion). Note the textual variants.

22 Henning, "Mitteliranisch."

23 C. Brockelmann, "Das Aramäische, einschliesslich des Syrischen," in B. Spuler (ed.), *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I. Abt., 3. Bd.: *Semitistik* (Leiden-Köln: E.J. Brill, 1964), p. 137.

24 *ibid.*, pp. 137-39.

25 Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 139; Henning, "Mitteliranisch," pp. 21-30; H. Humbach, "Buddhistische Moral in aramäo-iranischem und griechischem Gewande," in J. Harmatta (ed.), *Prolegomena to the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979), pp. 189-96.

26 Mayrhofer, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24, 116.

27 M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 66-67.

28 J. Friedrich, *Geschichte der Schrift unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer geistigen Entwicklung* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1966), pp. 48-51.

29 Mayrhofer, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-25; Kent, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-24.

30 This process is best reflected in the numismatic evidence, not only from eastern Iran [A.D.H. Bivar, "The History of Eastern Iran," in Yarshater, *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 181-231, 1295-97], but especially in that of the Parthian period [D. Sellwood, "Parthian Coins," and "Minor States in Southern Iran," in *ibid.*, pp. 279-321, 1299-1302].

31 Henning, "Mitteliranisch," p. 25.

32 *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

33 *ibid.*

34 Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p. 96; Gignoux, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 20, 45; Nyberg, *op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 138, 148, Part II, pp. 162-63.

35 Boyce, *ibid.*; Gignoux, *ibid.*, p. 38; Nyberg, *ibid.*, Part I, p. 152, Part II, p. 141.

36 Henning, "Mitteliranisch," p. 25.

37 *ibid.*, p. 26.

38 *ibid.*, pp. 25, 56-58.

39 *ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

40 Where the Greek language became the official basis of written communication under Seleucid administration, and, as a result, the Greek script became the basis of the craft of writing in Bactria. Bivar, *op. cit.*; I. Gershevitch, "Bactrian Literature," in Yarshater, *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 1250-58, 1396.

41 This can be seen in a work such as the *Şad Dar Naşr*, a sort of catechism for the Zoroastrian laity. See below.

42 M. Boyce, "The Parthian *Gōsān* and Iranian Minstrel Tradition," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1957: 10-45.

43 Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," pp. 33-38; Tavadia, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-44; West, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-90.

44 S. Der Nersessian, *The Armenians* [Ancient Peoples and Places, 68] (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 84-85; Koriwn, *Patmut'iwn varuc' ew mahuan srboyn Mesropay vardapeti meroy t' argmanjī* (Venice: San Lazzaro, 1894), pp. 13-20.

45 Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, pp. 134-35; Hoffmann, "Zum Zeicheninventar der Avesta-Schrift."

46 Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," p. 34; Geldner, "Awestalitteratur," pp. 17-18; W.E. West (tr.), *Pahlavi Texts*, Part IV: *Contents of the Nasks* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892).

47 Friedrich, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-80, 82-89; Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-37.

48 See note 45.

49 R. Gauthiot, "De l'alphabet sogdien," *Journal asiatique* sér. 10, 17 (1911): 81-95; Henning, "Mitteliranisch," *passim*; Sims-Williams, "Sogdian," p. 177.

50 D.A. Utz, "India and Sogdiana," in P. Gaeffke and D.A. Utz (eds.), *The Countries of South Asia: Boundaries, Extensions, and Interrelations* [Proceedings of the South Asia Seminar, 3] (Philadelphia: Department of South Asia Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1988), pp. 23-24; "Khotan: Indian Urbanization, Historical Tradition, and Nomadic Culture" (unpublished paper (South Asia Seminar, University of Pennsylvania, 1984-85)), pp. 5-6.

51 Humbach, *Baktrische Sprachdenkmäler*, pp. 120-32, Plates 29-32; Henning, "A Bactrian Seal-inscription."

52 H. Humbach, "Vayu, Śiva, und der Spiritus Vivens im ostiranischen Synkretismus," in *Monumentum H.S. Nyberg*, vol. 1 [Acta Iranica, 4] (Tehran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1975), pp. 402-8, Plates 1, 2.

53 D.A. Utz, "Farsi," in A.T. Embree (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Asian History*, vol. 1, p. 462.

54 J.M. Jamasp-Asana (ed.), *Pahlavi Texts*, vol. 1 (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1897), pp. 27-38; J.M. Unvala (ed. and tr.), *The Pahlavi Text "King Husrav and His Boy"* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, n.d.).

- 55 Jamasp-Asana, *op. cit.*, p. 27; H.W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 160.
- 56 B.N. Dhabhar (ed.), *Saddar Nasr and Saddar Bundelesh* (Bombay: Trustees of the Parsee Panchayet Funds and Properties, 1909), pp. 66-67.
- 57 The technical term used especially in Armenian historiographical writing for the Sasanian head of state, e.g., Elišē, *Elišēi vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc' paterazmin*, 2d. ed. (Jerusalem: St. Jacobian Press, 1968), pp. 41, 79; *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, translated by R.W. Thomson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 103, 149.
- 58 Utz, "India and Sogdiana," pp. 26-33.
- 59 D.M. Lang, "Iran, Armenia, and Georgia," in Yarshater, *Cambridge History of Iran*, pp. 505-36, 1310-12.
- 60 M.-L. Chaumont, *Recherches sur l'histoire d'Arménie de l'avènement des Sassanides à la conversion du royaume* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1969).
- 61 Elišē, *vasn Vardanay*, pp. 5-72; *History of Vardan*, pp. 60-140.
- 62 L. Mariès and Ch. Mercier (eds. and trs.), *Eznik de Kołb De Deo*, 2 vols. [Patrologia Orientalis, 28, 3-4] (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1959), pp. 460-73, 597-611, 723-32.
- 63 Elišē, *vasn Vardanay*, pp. 12-42; *History of Vardan*, pp. 68-104.
- 64 L. Mariès, "Le *De Deo* d'Eznik de Kołb connu sous le nom de 'Contre les sectes'," *Revue des Études arméniennes* 4.2 (1924): 160-65.
- 65 *ibid.*, p. 166.
- 66 Mariès and Mercier, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-73.

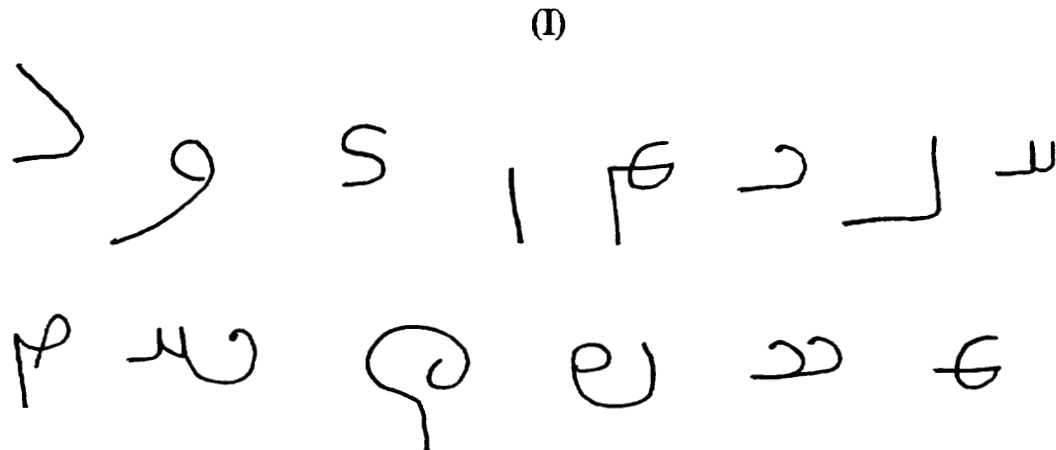
<sup>67</sup> Mariès, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>68</sup> Mariès and Mercier, *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> A. Meillet, *Altarmenisches Elementarbuch* [Indogermanische Bibliothek, 1, 1, 10] (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1913), pp. 44-58.

<sup>70</sup> Recently, J. Nattier has taken a different approach to some of these same issues in her very thoughtful paper, "Church Language and Vernacular Language in Central Asian Buddhism," *Numen* 37.2 (1990): 195-219.





(II)

| = [ w, n, r, ' , ' ]

∩ = [ g, d, y ]

∪ = [ ' , h ]

⊖ = [ m, q ]

∩∩ = [ s ] or [ gd, gy, dy, yd, etc. ]

∩∪ = [ š ] or [ g', gh, d', y', yh, etc. ]

∩⊖ = [ h ] or [ mn, mr, mw, etc. ]

**Figure 1**

**Diagram of the late Sasanian book script, illustrating (I) the basic character set and (II) those characters which were ambiguous and could be read in more than one way.**

## (I)

|| ㊀ [ PWN /pad/ ]

ㄣ ㄆ [ MNš /aziš/ ]

ㄣ ㄆ ㄨ ㄨ ㄨ ㄨ [ YK'YMWN't /ēstād/ ]

|| ㄣ ㄆ ㄨ ㄨ ㄨ ㄨ ㄣ [ ywdtŠDY'd't' /juddēvdād/ ]

## (II)

ㄣ ㄣ [ g's /gāh/ ] < \*gās

|| ㄣ ㊀ [ plhw' /farrox/ ] < \*frax<sup>u</sup>

## (III)

ㄣ ㄣ [ gyw'k /gyāg/ ] (no etymological labial)

|| ㄣ ㄣ [ štr' /šahr/ ] (no etymological dental stop)

## (IV)

|| ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ [ 'BYDWNtn' /kardan/ ] (short-hand *bēth*)

ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ [ 'BYDWN-x<sub>1</sub> ] (x<sub>1</sub> = short-hand compliment)

ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ ㄣ [ 'BYDWN-x<sub>2</sub> ] (x<sub>2</sub> = short-hand compliment)

Figure 2

Diagram illustrating (I) Semitic ideograms (upper case), used in conjunction with Iranian phonetic compliments, (II) historical spellings, (III) pseudo-historical spellings, and (IV) arbitrary non-alphabetic short-hand forms.



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