

THE WILEY BLACKWELL COMPANION TO

ZOROASTRIANISM



EDITED BY
**Michael Stausberg and
Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina**
with Anna Tessmann

WILEY Blackwell

**The Wiley Blackwell
Companion to
Zoroastrianism**

The Wiley Blackwell Companions to Religion

The Wiley Blackwell Companions to Religion series presents a collection of the most recent scholarship and knowledge about world religions. Each volume draws together newly-commissioned essays by distinguished authors in the field, and is presented in a style which is accessible to undergraduate students, as well as scholars and the interested general reader. These volumes approach the subject in a creative and forward-thinking style, providing a forum in which leading scholars in the field can make their views and research available to a wider audience.

Recently Published

The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought

Edited by Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'

The Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture

Edited by John F. A. Sawyer

The Blackwell Companion to Catholicism

Edited by James J. Buckley, Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, and Trent Pomplun

The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity

Edited by Ken Parry

The Blackwell Companion to the Theologians

Edited by Ian S. Markham

The Blackwell Companion to the Bible in English Literature

Edited by Rebecca Lemon, Emma Mason, John Roberts, and Christopher Rowland

The Blackwell Companion to the New Testament

Edited by David E. Aune

The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth Century Theology

Edited by David Fergusson

The Blackwell Companion to Religion in America

Edited by Philip Goff

The Blackwell Companion to Jesus

Edited by Delbert Burkett

The Blackwell Companion to Paul

Edited by Stephen Westerholm

The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence

Edited by Andrew R. Murphy

The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics, Second Edition

Edited by Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology

Edited by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice

Edited by Michael D. Palmer and Stanley M. Burgess

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religions

Edited by Randall L. Nadeau

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to African Religions

Edited by Elias Kifon Bongmba

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism

Edited by Julia A. Lamm

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion

Edited by Ian S. Markham, J. Barney Hawkins IV, Justyn Terry, and Leslie Nuñez Steffensen

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Interreligious Dialogue

Edited by Catherine Cornille

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to East and Inner Asian Buddhism

Edited by Mario Poceski

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism

*Corrected and Updated
Edited by*

Michael Stausberg
and
Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina
with the assistance of Anna Tessmann

WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2015
© 2022 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina to be identified as the authors of the editorial material in this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and authors have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services and neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism / Edited by Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4443-3135-6 (cloth)

I. Zoroastrianism. I. Stausberg, Michael, editor. II. Vevaina, Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw, editor.

III. Title: Companion to Zoroastrianism.

BL1572.W55 2015

295–dc23

2014044819

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Temple door at Chak Chak, Yazd, Iran. Photo © Jamshid Varza

Set in 10/12.5pt Photina by SPi Publisher Services, Pondicherry, India

Contents

Notes on Contributors	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Aims and Scope	xiii
A Note on Transcriptions	xix
Abbreviations	xxiii
Introduction: Scholarship on Zoroastrianism	1
<i>Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina</i>	
Part I Zarathustra Revisited	19
1 Zarathustra's Time and Homeland: Geographical Perspectives	21
<i>Frantz Grenet</i>	
2 Zarathustra's Time and Homeland: Linguistic Perspectives	31
<i>Almut Hintze</i>	
3 Interpretations of Zarathustra and the <i>Gāthās</i>	39
a The <i>Gāthās</i>	39
† <i>Helmut Humbach</i>	
b The <i>Gāthās</i> , Said to Be of Zarathustra	44
<i>Jean Kellens</i>	
c Dimensions of the <i>Gāthās</i> as Poetry	51
<i>Martin Schwartz</i>	
d The <i>Gāthās</i> as Myth and Ritual	59
<i>Prods Oktor Skjærvø</i>	
4 Zarathustra: Post-Gathic Trajectories	69
<i>Michael Stausberg</i>	

Part II	Periods, Regions, and Contexts	83
5	Religion and Politics in Pre-Islamic Iran <i>Albert de Jong</i>	85
6	Zoroastrianism under Islamic Rule <i>Touraj Daryaee</i>	103
7	Armenian and Georgian Zoroastrianism <i>Albert de Jong</i>	119
8	Zoroastrianism in Central Asia <i>Frantz Grenet</i>	129
9	Zoroastrianism in the Far East <i>Takeshi Aoki</i>	147
10	The Parsis <i>†John R. Hinnells</i>	157
11	Zoroastrians in Modern Iran <i>Michael Stausberg</i>	173
12	The Zoroastrian Diaspora <i>†John R. Hinnells</i>	191
Part III	Structures, Discourses, and Dimensions	209
13	Theologies and Hermeneutics <i>Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina</i>	211
14	Cosmologies and Astrology <i>Antonio Panaino</i>	235
15	Myths, Legends, Eschatologies <i>Carlo G. Cereti</i>	259
16	Gender <i>Jenny Rose</i>	273
17	Law in Pre-Modern Zoroastrianism <i>Maria Macuch</i>	289
18	Law and Modern Zoroastrians <i>Mitra Sharafi</i>	299
Part IV	Practices and Sites	313
19	Ethics <i>Alberto Cantera</i>	315
20	Prayer <i>Firoze M. Kotwal and Philip G. Kreyenbroek</i>	333
21	Purity and Pollution / The Body <i>Alan V. Williams</i>	345

22	Rituals	363
	<i>Michael Stausberg and Ramiyar P. Karanjia</i>	
23	Festivals and the Calendar	379
	<i>Jenny Rose</i>	
24	Religious Sites and Physical Structures	393
	<i>Jamsheed K. Choksy</i>	
Part V Intersections		407
25	Early India and Iran	409
	<i>Prods Oktor Skjærvø</i>	
26	Judaism	423
	<i>†Yaakov Elman and Shai Secunda</i>	
27	The Classical World	437
	<i>†Martin L. West</i>	
28	From Miθra to Roman Mithras	451
	<i>Richard L. Gordon</i>	
29	Christianity	457
	<i>Marco Frenschkowski</i>	
30	Manichaeism in Iran	477
	<i>Manfred Hutter</i>	
31	Islam	491
	<i>†Shaul Shaked</i>	
32	The Yezidi and Yarsan Traditions	499
	<i>Philip G. Kreyenbroek</i>	
33	The Bahā'ī Faith	505
	<i>Moojan Momen</i>	
Part VI Primary Sources		517
34	Primary Sources: Avestan and Pahlavi	519
	<i>Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo</i>	
35	Primary Sources: New Persian	529
	<i>Daniel J. Sheffield</i>	
36	Primary Sources: Gujarati	543
	<i>Daniel J. Sheffield</i>	
	Bibliography	555
	Index of People, Places, and Topics	633
	Index Locorum	659

Notes on Contributors

Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo is the FEZANA Professor in Zoroastrian Languages and Literatures in the Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto, Canada.

Takeshi Aoki teaches at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan.

Alberto Cantera is Professor of Iranian Studies, Free University of Berlin, Germany.

Carlo G. Cereti is the Professor of Iranian Philology, Religions and History, University of Rome “La Sapienza,” Rome, Italy.

Jamsheed K. Choksy is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University at Bloomington, USA.

Touraj Daryaee is the Maseeh Chair in Persian Studies and the Director of the Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture, University of California at Irvine, USA.

†**Yaakov Elman** was the Herbert S. and Naomi Denenberg Chair in Talmudic Studies, Yeshiva University, New York, USA.

Marco Frenschkowski is Professor of New Testament Studies, Faculty of Theology, Leipzig University, Germany.

Richard L. Gordon is Honorary Professor of Ancient Religions and Fellow of the Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, Erfurt University, Germany.

Frantz Grenet is Professor of the History and Cultures of Pre-Islamic Central Asia, Collège de France, Paris, France.

†**John R. Hinnells** was Professor of Comparative Religion, Liverpool Hope University, UK.

Almut Hintze is the Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism at SOAS, University of London, UK.

†**Helmut Humbach** was Professor of Indo-European Philology, University of Mainz, Germany.

Manfred Hutter is Professor of the Study of Religion, University of Bonn, Germany.

Albert de Jong is Professor of Comparative Religion (and Religions of Antiquity), Leiden University, the Netherlands.

Ramiyar P. Karanjia is the Principal of the Athornan Boarding Institute, Mumbai, India.

Jean Kellens is Professor Emeritus of Indo-Iranian Languages and Religions, Collège de France, Paris, France.

Firoze M. Kotwal is the former Principal of the M. F. Cama Athornan Institute and (former) High Priest (Dastur) of the H. B. Wadia Atash Bahram, Mumbai, India.

Philip G. Kreyenbroek is Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies, University of Göttingen, Germany.

Maria Macuch is Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies, Free University of Berlin, Germany.

Moojan Momen is an independent scholar based in the UK.

Antonio Panaino is Professor of Iranian Studies, University of Bologna, Italy.

Jenny Rose is Adjunct Professor in the Zoroastrian Studies Program at Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, USA.

Martin Schwartz is Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies, University of California at Berkeley, USA.

Shai Secunda is the Jacob Neusner Professor in the History and Theology of Judaism, Bard College, USA.

†**Shaul Shaked** was the Schwarzmunn Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

Mitra Sharafi is Professor of Law and Legal Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA.

Daniel J. Sheffield is Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies and John Witherspoon Bicentennial Preceptor, Princeton University, USA.

Prods Oktor Skjærvø is the Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Emeritus, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, USA.

Michael Stausberg is Professor of the Study of Religion, University of Bergen, Norway.

Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina is the Bahari Associate Professor of Sasanian Studies and Fellow of Wolfson College, University of Oxford, UK.

†**Martin L. West** was a Fellow of All Souls College, University of Oxford, UK.

Alan V. Williams is Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion, University of Manchester, UK.

Acknowledgments

The editors first met in Vienna in 2007 at the 6th European Conference of Iranian Studies organized by the Societas Iranologica Europaea, where we were introduced to each other by Prods Oktor Skjærvø. In the following year, Yuhán S.-D. Vevaina spent six weeks as a research fellow at Michael Stausberg's department at the University of Bergen (Norway), sponsored by the university, for which we both are very grateful. It was during this stay that the idea of putting together a companion volume first took shape and we subsequently met with Rebecca Harkin from Wiley Blackwell in November 2008 in Chicago at the American Academy of Religion Conference. After our proposal was favorably reviewed we started to invite contributors in May 2009. Some colleagues dutifully submitted their first drafts in 2010 as requested. Unfortunately, others kept us waiting until February of 2014 for their final versions. These delays reflect the fragility of our scholarly community, which for specific areas and themes depends almost exclusively on the singular competence of individual scholars, who cannot be replaced easily by others. Hence, the project was delayed considerably. We therefore thank all our colleagues for their patience and collaboration, which indeed is a very positive development in a field that in prior decades suffered heavily from often unpleasant rivalries between individual scholars and their "schools." Now, in the early 21st century, even though most of us continue to disagree on fundamental questions, a new spirit of collegiality and collaboration has appeared that finds its expression in the present volume. In this spirit, we hope the *Companion* will lead to further collaborative projects in the future.

During the final stages of the gestation of this volume, we were assisted by Dr Anna Tessmann (a private scholar based in Heidelberg), who in spite of her other duties tirelessly helped us with the copyediting of all the manuscripts with an untiring eye for details and a commitment to consistency which we hope will be much appreciated by our readers. She also prepared the two indexes. The editors and contributors owe her a great debt of gratitude. We are also grateful to the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion at the University of Bergen for providing the funds that allowed Anna to assist us in our project.

We must also acknowledge Professor John Kieschnick and Rafal Felbur from the Buddhist Studies Program in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University for kindly helping us to edit the Chinese and Japanese translations and citations found in Professor Aoki's chapter on East Asia, and we would also like to thank Dr Patrick Taylor for his translation of Jean Kellens's article from French into English. We would also like to thank the referees for their detailed and helpful comments and critiques; we have done our best to have them incorporated.

The severe delays and other shortcomings of the work notwithstanding, for both of us this project has been a great learning experience and we hope that both general readers and specialists will find reading the volume an equally rewarding experience. Ultimately, we hope that readers will appreciate our basic motivation for producing this work, namely, our passion for the study of Zoroastrianism and our desire for this specialist knowledge to be shared in academia and with the public.

Bergen and Stanford, June 2014
Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina

With the opportunity to publish a paperback version of the *WBCZ*, we have chosen to correct and update some stray errors and omissions. We have also selectively updated and augmented the references in the shared bibliography at the end of the volume to reflect the last half decade of recent publications, particularly new text editions and studies on topics we felt were missing or underrepresented in the original edition published in 2015. We would also like to acknowledge the passing of five of our most esteemed contributors: Yaakov Elman (1943–2018), John Hinnells (1941–2018), Helmut Humbach (1921–2017); Shaul Shaked (1933–2021); and Martin West (1937–2015). Each a trailblazer.

Bergen, Oxford, and Heidelberg, August 2022
Michael Stausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina with Anna Tessmann

Aims and Scope

Even though Zoroastrianism was relatively well studied in the early days of the comparative and historical study of religions (Stausberg 2008a: 562–564), scholarly interest has precipitously declined since, and the study of Zoroastrianism now largely operates in a disintegrated academic landscape (see Stausberg and Vevaina, “Introduction: Scholarship on Zoroastrianism,” this volume). In this volume, thirty-three scholars from ten countries seek to redress this situation by offering a comprehensive view of the state of the art in the study of Zoroastrianism in the early 21st century. While there are various companions to other religions (published in this series or by other publishers), this book is the first of its kind for Zoroastrianism. The scholarly books on Zoroastrianism in general (i.e., not covering specialized studies on particular texts, themes, or periods) published during the past thirty-five years can be divided into the following categories: shorter introductory volumes (Boyce 1979; Nigosian 1993; Clark 1998; Mazdāpūr 2003 [1382 in Persian]; Stausberg 2008b; Rose 2011a; Rose 2011b), selections of textual primary sources (Malandra 1983; Boyce 1984b; Skjærvø 2011a), a multivolume survey of Zoroastrian history and rituals (Stausberg 2002b; 2002c; 2004b), an as yet unfinished massive history of Zoroastrianism (Boyce 1975a; Boyce 1982; Boyce and Grenet with Roger Beck 1991; Boyce and de Jong, forthcoming), a lavishly illustrated volume with introductory essays (Godrej and Mistree 2002), an exhibition catalogue (Stewart 2013), and an ongoing and now largely online encyclopedic project on Iranian civilization that comprises numerous useful entries on Zoroastrian matters (the *Encyclopædia Iranica*, open access under www.iranicaonline.org). In sum, nothing comparable in scope to the present *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism* has ever been published.

This multi-authored volume is not dominated by one single overarching view of Zoroastrianism. In fact, by putting this volume together we as editors have endeavored to respect the diverse voices of the contributors as we seek to collectively grapple with and perhaps move beyond normative takes on the “essential” identity of Zoroastrianism that can often be found in the older literature. We, the editors, do not believe in such a thing as an essence of Zoroastrianism that would provide the one authentic, real, or normative version of this historically and geographically diverse religion. As scholars

we do not judge our sources in this light (even when the sources themselves make such claims), but our interests are of an analytic, critical, and historical nature, where we situate our sources in different historical contexts, attempt to understand them as driven by specific interests, and thus represent this historical diversity to a diverse readership. From our academic perspectives, we do not see Zoroastrianism as something given for one and all times or as simply the outcome of the words of the founder or prophet, but rather as a complex network of dynamic ongoing re-creations that its makers – believers and practitioners – are situated within, continually engage with, and often contest, or that we as scholars identify, in the light of our interpretative frameworks, as related to this trans-historical and transnational entity commonly referred to as “Zoroastrianism.” The latter, for example, is the case with material and visual remains in Central Asia, which make sense when interpreted as evidence for regional variations of Zoroastrianism which are, in certain striking cases, rather divergent from the more familiar cultural productions we find in textual and material sources from pre-modern Persian and the contemporary Iranian and Indian communities (see Grenet, “Zoroastrianism in Central Asia,” this volume). As scholars we are not in a position to arbitrate on the truth-value of any of the various attempts by Zoroastrians to represent the genuine and true vision of their religion as more authentic than that of their rivals, even though we can analyze to what extent these claims are consonant with earlier equally contested interpretations of Zoroastrianism. We therefore see it as our professional responsibility to analyze points of contrast or divergence between different understandings of this faith. What we describe as innovations may be dismissed by some Zoroastrians as aberrations or hailed by others as progress – both normative categories that are equally problematic for historical-critical research. The five main parts of this volume therefore present different facets of this scholarly agenda.

It could seem intuitively plausible for a discussion of Zoroastrianism to start with Zarathustra (Zoroaster), who is traditionally held to be the founder or prophet of the religion that in the modern age came to be called after him. Such a narrative strategy would build on the emphasis placed on Zarathustra in Zoroastrian sources. The inherent risk is simply conceptualizing the history of Zoroastrianism as a mere footnote to Zarathustra and thus placing the development of the religion under the intellectual spell of this remote point of reference. Since the exact time and homeland of Zarathustra continue to remain a matter of dispute, the first two chapters in Part I discuss this problem from both geographical and linguistic perspectives (Frantz Grenet and Almut Hintze respectively). Believers and many scholars alike hold Zarathustra to be the “author” of five enigmatic songs, the *Gāthās*, which are then often used to reconstruct the original message of the “prophet” and, by extension, “his” religion. The *Gāthās*, however, have yielded widely contrasting interpretations and translations in the 20th century and therefore, in order to not privilege one reading, we have invited four eminent scholars (Helmut Humbach, Jean Kellens, Martin Schwartz, and Prods Oktor Skjærvø), who have over the past decades made groundbreaking contributions to the understanding of these complex texts, to provide a synthesis of their current thinking on the *Gāthās*. We hope such a plurality of interpretations will prove stimulating to both specialist and general readers. The final chapter of this first part by Michael Stausberg looks at the trajectories of the figure of Zarathustra in the periods after the *Gāthās*, when

he was cast in the role of the foundational individual by Zoroastrian sources and came to signify whatever ideal the religion was and is supposed to mean in the context in question. The chapter also addresses non-Zoroastrian engagements with the figure of Zarathustra and examines various modern visual representations and discursive appropriations of the “prophet.”

Part II presents a survey of Zoroastrian history and Zoroastrian communities from antiquity to the present and thereby situates the Zoroastrian tradition(s) in different historical and geographical contexts. Three chapters deal with Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian communities in the course of Iranian history, from the time of the pre-Islamic empires (Albert de Jong) through the pre-modern Islamic periods (Touraj Daryaee) to the modern and contemporary Iranian Zoroastrian communities (Michael Stausberg). Chapters on the Caucasus (Albert de Jong) and Central Asia (Frantz Grenet) in pre- and early Islamic times survey regional versions of Zoroastrianism beyond the Persian orbit; these regions show some rather distinctive characteristics when compared to Persian Zoroastrianism that is often taken as the normative model for the religion. Nowadays, the majority of Zoroastrians live in India, where the Parsis, as they are known and self-identify, can look back to a long history, which is here reviewed by John R. Hinnells. Since colonial times, Parsis and later also Iranian Zoroastrians have settled in large parts of the world; these Zoroastrian diasporas, which have created novel organizational and material infrastructures, comprise multisited networks, where the negotiation of Zoroastrian identities occur with great intensity (John R. Hinnells). During the past twenty years new information technologies have allowed Zoroastrians across the globe to engage in translocal and transnational networks of communication with their fellow practitioners in an unprecedented manner. Via the Silk Road there were mercantile and religious connections to East Asia already in precolonial times, yet the East Asian part of the Zoroastrian world often tends to be overlooked in scholarship. In this volume, Takeshi Aoki reviews the history of Zoroastrianism in East Asian countries from the pre-Islamic period to the contemporary age. In addition, this chapter also provides a survey of East Asian scholarship on Zoroastrianism, which is often ignored in the West regrettably because of language barriers.

Part III of our *Companion* is called Structures, Discourses, and Dimensions. Instead of merely providing lists of deities and their attributes and narrated actions, Yuhan S.-D. Vevaina discusses theologies and hermeneutics, i.e., reflections as found in Zoroastrian Middle Persian (Pahlavi) sources on the status and functioning of the divine actors and their relationships to humans, the ways these statements are generated in the form of scriptural interpretation, and the teaching and transmission of religious knowledge. Antonio Panaino analyzes the structure of the cosmos and the place of astrology in ancient Zoroastrian sources and points to the importance of Iran in the transmission of astrological lore between East and West. Carlo G. Cereti recounts the mythological narratives relating to the beginning of the world, the figure of Zarathustra, and the events predicted to unfold at the end of time. Jenny Rose discusses the gendered nature of the divine world, the division of labor in religious and ritual practice along gender lines, the relationships between sexuality and ideas of purity and pollution, the different social, legal, and ritual status of women and men, and their respective expected roles and access to power. Maria Macuch provides an overview of the general principles of

Zoroastrian law, the main spheres of legal regulation and legal procedure in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic sources, followed by Mitra Sharafi's discussion of the modern reinventions and constructions of Zoroastrian (Parsi) law and the ways in which Zoroastrians have engaged with colonial and civil law to serve their identitarian needs as minority communities through various forms of boundary maintenance.

Part IV covers religious practices and religious sites. The first chapter reviews the question of ethics in Zoroastrianism, a religion which has been interpreted as being primarily ethical in nature by certain influential scholars of the past. Alberto Cantera distinguishes between rituals as an arena for moral intervention of humans in the cosmic events and morality in a broader sense, where ethics have become a dominant theme in Zoroastrian religious thought (including the understanding of law). Prayer is a central religious practice in Zoroastrianism, as in several other religions, but Firoze M. Kotwal and Philip G. Kreyenbroek point to differences between typical Western and Zoroastrian understandings of the nature and function of prayer before turning to the history of prayer in Zoroastrianism from the earliest sources to contemporary practices. The human body is the key site of ritual practice and conceptions of notions of purity and pollution, which are structuring elements of Zoroastrian theologies, their views on the cosmos, the ecosystem, space and the human being, social relationships, and the systems of ritual actions and obligations. Alan V. Williams analyzes Zoroastrian claims regarding the origin and removal of impurity and examines the ways in which these embodied practices construct order at the level of the individual, society, and the cosmos. Michael Stausberg and Ramiyar P. Karanjia address different forms and types of rituals and some of their structural principles and modes of organization, whereas Jenny Rose looks at collective celebrations timed according to the religious calendar and their historical developments from the earliest sources to contemporary practices in the Iranian and Indian communities. This part ends with Jamsheed K. Choksy's review of the history of Zoroastrian religious sites and structures, mainly temples and funerary structures (such as the so-called "Towers of Silence"), from the Achaemenid period to the present communities in India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Iran.

Part V contextualizes the "Good Religion," as pre-modern Zoroastrian sources referred to it, in its historical intersections with other religions and cultures. The organization of this section follows a historical timeline based on when Zoroastrianism came into contact with the other religions and cultures. Prods Oktor Skjærvø begins with the Indo-European and Indo-Iranian heritage of the Avestan texts, inherited similarities and cultural differences between Avestan and Old Indic texts and poetry, myths and mythological geography, names and functions of deities and demons and shared ritual features. (See Stausberg 2012b for a longer historical survey that also covers later Hinduism; a commissioned chapter on this topic for this *Companion* unfortunately did not materialize nor were we able to include a chapter on Buddhism.) Judaism continues to share a long history with Zoroastrianism from the 6th century BCE to the present; in their chapter, Yaakov Elman and Shai Secunda mainly focus on the rather intensive Jewish-Zoroastrian interactions in late antique Mesopotamia as found in rabbinic and Pahlavi sources. A survey of the intellectual fascination with Zoroastrianism and the Persians by writers from different periods of the Classical world (Martin L. West) is followed by a review of the question of the Zoroastrian background of Mithraism, or the

“romanization” of the Iranian deity Mithra (Richard L. Gordon). Marco Frenschkowski reviews intersections between Christianity and Zoroastrianism from early Christianity to the early Islamic period; he also pays attention to persecution of Christians in Sasanian Iran and Zoroastrian critiques of Christian doctrines. Manichaeism, which originated in the 3rd century CE, actively accommodated Zoroastrian themes in its self-fashioning and proselytization in the Iranian world. Manfred Hutter analyzes Zoroastrian topics in Manichaean writings and the mutual polemics between Manichaean and Zoroastrian authors. Islam emerged at the periphery of Iranian culture but its spread has fundamentally altered the societal role and shape of Zoroastrianism during the past millennium or so. Shaul Shaked addresses the attitude towards Zoroastrianism in early Islamic sources and their views of Zoroastrianism, Iranian and Zoroastrian influences on early Islam, Middle Persian writings translated into Arabic, and Zoroastrian polemics against Islam. Philip G. Kreyenbroek looks at minority communities whose religious centers lie in Kurdish-speaking regions, the Yezidis and Yarsan (also known as Ahl-e Haqq or Kaka’is), and their shared traits with Zoroastrianism. He points to the lasting and pervasive influence of an earlier Iranian religious tradition centering on the figure of Mithra in these regions. Finally, the Bahā’ī Faith, which originated in the second half of the 19th century in Iran, has since its beginnings had interactions with Zoroastrians and relatively numerous Zoroastrians converted to this new religion. Moojan Momen analyzes factors facilitating these conversions, later separation, integration and intermarriages between both religious communities, and more recent conversions by Zoroastrians who in many ways contributed to the development of the Bahā’ī Faith.

The final part (VI) of this *Companion* functions as an appendix that readers can draw on when reading the essays and that, we hope, will prove valuable for further engagement with Zoroastrian studies. It recapitulates the four main groups of primary textual sources. Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo gives a brief synopsis of the Avestan texts, the Avestan manuscripts with Middle Persian (Pahlavi) translations, and the Middle Persian writings arranged according to periods of origin from the third to the nineteenth centuries. The chapter lists editions, translations, and studies of the sources. Since these sources are relatively well studied, this chapter is meant to provide a useful recapitulation of existing scholarship. The two chapters by Daniel J. Sheffield on Zoroastrian writings in New Persian and Gujarati, on the other hand, deal with texts which are poorly studied, have not been studied at all, or were until recently altogether unknown, even to scholars of Zoroastrianism. These chapters therefore do not merely summarize extant studies but present original research. In particular, the texts in Gujarati remain a virtually untapped source for the study of Zoroastrianism; its neglect in research results from the disintegrated research landscape that will be discussed in the Introduction to Scholarship on Zoroastrianism by the editors.

The bibliographical references to the individual chapters have been compiled into a shared bibliography at the end of the volume, which thereby can serve as a comprehensive and up-to-date early 21st-century bibliography of Zoroastrian studies. Most chapters are provided with suggestions for further reading.

A Note on Transcriptions

Avestan

The transcription of Avestan in this volume is largely based on the now standard system established by Karl Hoffmann (Hoffmann 1987; Hoffmann and Narten 1989). The Avestan alphabet is a phonetic rather than a phonemic alphabet with every sound being represented by a single letter. It consists of 14 (or 16) letters for vowels and 37 letters for consonants (see the table in Hoffmann 1987; online: <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/avestan-language>; see also Skjærvø 2003a: 1–3 for suggestions on how these letters might have sounded).

Vowels									
<i>a</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>ō</i>
<i>ə</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>ā/ā̇</i>						
Consonants									
<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>m̥</i>				
<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>δ</i>	<i>δ₂</i>	<i>θ</i>	<i>t̥</i>	<i>t₂</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ṇ</i>	
<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>ḡ</i>	<i>γ</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>η</i>				
<i>c</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>ń</i>							
<i>y</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>ii</i>	<i>ś</i>	<i>η</i>					
<i>v</i>	<i>uu</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>η^v</i>						
<i>r</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>ṧ</i>	<i>š̌</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>h</i>		

Pahlavi (Zoroastrian Middle Persian)

The transcription of Pahlavi in this volume is based on the now almost universally standard system put forth by David N. MacKenzie in a seminal article from the 1960s and his *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* respectively (MacKenzie 1967, 1971).

The sound system (phonology) of Pahlavi is similar to that of New (Modern) Persian.

Vowels

<i>a</i>	(<i>e</i>)	<i>i</i>	(<i>o</i>)	<i>u</i>
<i>ā</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>ō</i>	<i>ū</i>

Consonants

<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>k</i>	
<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>ǰ</i>	<i>g</i>	
<i>f</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>x</i>	<i>h</i>
<i>z</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>γ</i>		
<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>			
<i>w</i>	<i>r / l</i>	<i>y</i>		

ž and γ are typically found in Avestan loanwords

č and ǰ are the sounds in English like ‘child’ and ‘jug’

š is like English ‘shirt’

ž is the voiced sound of English ‘measure’

x is the ch-sound in German ‘Bach’

γ (Greek gamma) is the sound of the Spanish *g* between vowels, as in *haga*

New Persian (Farsi)

The spelling of New Persian words in this volume (except for some geographic terms and names which are common in English) is based on the transliteration of the Arabic script with a particular attention to the sound system of contemporary New Persian. Throughout this volume we use a single Latin letter for a single Persian consonant, as recommended by the *Encyclopædia Iranica* (*EIr*) (<http://www.iranicaonline.org/pages/guidelines>). However, for common legibility of words we follow the conventional *j* for ج (Arab. *jīm*), *ch* or *č* for چ (Pers. *che*), *kh* for خ (Arab. *khā’*), *gh* for غ (Arab. *ghayn*), we use two options *zh* or *ž* for ژ (Pers. *zhe*), and *sh* or *š* for ش (Arab. *shīn*). In contrast to the *EIr*, the letters ذ (Arab. *dhāl*) and ث (Arab. *thā’*) are transliterated as *z* and *s* (and not as *d* and *t*) respectively. In our New Persian spelling for the volume the ending ا (Arab. *hā’*) in most words is *-e* (i.e. *khāne* ‘house’). In the case of the Zoroastrian manuscripts we use multiple forms like *nāma/nāme*. The *ezāfe*-constructions are connected with an *-e*. *Ey/ay* and *ow* are diphthongs. The New Persian spellings of Arabic words differ from the Arabic spellings; for instance, the coordinating conjunction و (meaning ‘and’) is different: *wa* in Arabic but *va* in New Persian.

Arabic

The Arabic terms in this volume are adapted from the system used in the *Encyclopædia of Islam Online*.

Gujarati

The transliteration of Gujarati in this volume is a modified version of that used by the Library of Congress, as follows:

Vowels

a ā i u ṛ e ai o au

The short vowel /a/, which is implicit after every consonant, is only transliterated when it is pronounced. The *anusvār* has been transliterated as /ṁ/ when it represents a nasal consonant and /̃/ when it represents a nasalized vowel. The use of *visarg* in Gujarati is very rare, but is transliterated /ḥ/ when it occurs. Since there is no phonemic distinction in Gujarati between *ī/ī* or *ū/ū*, length has not been indicated on these vowels. It should be noted that the Modern Standard Gujarati vowels *ī* and *ū*, which are now applied on the basis of etymological length, occur only very haphazardly prior to the standardization of Gujarati in the late 19th century. Alternate forms of the vowels /e/ and /o/ are very common in early publications.

Consonants

<i>k</i>	<i>kh</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>gh</i>	<i>ṅ</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>j / z</i>	<i>jh</i>	<i>ñ</i>
<i>ṭ</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>ḍ</i>	<i>ḍh</i>	<i>ṇ</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>dh</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>ph / f</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>bh</i>	<i>m</i>
<i>y</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>ś</i>
<i>ṣ</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>!</i>	

No phonemic distinction is made between *ś*, *ṣ*, and *s* and, in 18th- and 19th-century materials, *ś* and *s* were used interchangeably. We have therefore transliterated /ś/ only when it is etymological and have otherwise substituted /s/. The semi-vowels /y/ and /v/ in pre-standardized Gujarati are often represented by the juxtaposition of two vowels, thus /iaśt/ for /yaśt/. The consonant /h/ written after a vowel sometimes indicates a breathy vowel (murmured vowel) as in the distinction between /bār/ ‘twelve’ and /bār/ ‘outside’. Since this feature of pre-standardized Gujarati orthography, which is omitted in modern spelling, has not been investigated, it has simply been transliterated as /h/ here. Since Gujarati names are transliterated into English-language publications very irregularly, we have tried to provide their transliterations followed by their common forms in parentheses in the bibliography, e.g. Jamśetji Jijibhāi (Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy).

Readers will notice variant spellings of the same name in the various chapters, e.g. Šābuhr vs. Šāpūr or *kustī* vs. *kostī*. We have tried to regularize these variants across the chapters, though in some instances it did not seem useful to standardize all variants across different contexts, especially where specific forms are more appropriate. For

example, in the chapter on Manichaeism the reader will find Šābuhr, since Mani's text is commonly referred to as the *Šābuhragān*. Common names and titles like Zarathustra (Zaraθuštra), Mani (Mānī), Mithra (Miθra), the *Gāthās* (*Gāthās*) are not typically provided with their technical transcriptions.

We would like to acknowledge Daniel J. Sheffield for his assistance with the Gujarati transcription system.

Abbreviations

<i>A</i>	<i>Āfrīn(a)gān</i>
<i>AAASH</i>	Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
<i>AB</i>	Analecta Bollandiana
<i>acc.</i>	accusative case
<i>ActOr</i>	Acta Orientalia
<i>adj.</i>	adjective
<i>AG</i>	<i>Āfrīnagān ī Gāhānbār</i>
<i>AION</i>	Annali del'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli
<i>AJ</i>	<i>Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg</i>
<i>AMI</i>	Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran
<i>AMIT</i>	Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan
<i>ANRW</i>	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
<i>ANy</i>	<i>Ātaš Niyāyišn</i>
<i>AOASH</i>	Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae
<i>AoF</i>	Altorientalische Forschungen
<i>Aog</i>	<i>Aogəmadaēčā</i>
<i>Arab.</i>	Arabic
<i>ArOr</i>	Archiv Orientální
<i>AUU</i>	Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis
<i>Av.</i>	Avestan
<i>AV</i>	<i>Atharvaveda</i>
<i>AW</i>	<i>Ayādgār ī Wuzurgmihr</i>
<i>AWN</i>	<i>Ardā Wirāz-Nāmag</i>
<i>Az</i>	<i>Āfrīn ī Zardušt</i>
<i>AZ</i>	<i>Ayādgār ī Zarērān</i>
<i>A₂S</i>	Artaxerxes II Susa
<i>b.</i>	born
<i>Bactr.</i>	Bactrian
<i>BAI</i>	Bulletin of the Asia Institute
<i>BCE</i>	Before the Common/Current Era

<i>Bd</i>	<i>Bundahišn</i>
BDNA	Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan
BE	Bahā'ī Era, starting with the Bāb's declaration on Nowrūz 1844
<i>BEI</i>	Bulletin d'Études Indiennes
BPP	Bombay Parsi Punchayet
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
<i>c.</i>	circa
Canton.	Cantonese
CE	Common/Current Era
CHI	Cambridge History of Iran
Chin.	Chinese
Chor.	Chorasmian
col.	column
CRAIBL	Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
ČAP	Čidaġ Andarz ī Pōryōtkēšān (see also <i>PZ</i>)
ČK	Čim ī Kustīg
d.	died
DB	Darius I Bīsotūn
<i>DD</i>	<i>Dādestān ī Dēnīg</i>
<i>Dk</i>	<i>Dēnkard</i>
<i>DkB</i>	<i>Dēnkard</i> 'B' manuscript (Dresden 1966)
<i>DkM</i>	<i>Dēnkard</i> Madan edition
<i>Dn</i>	Book of Daniel (Old Testament)
DS	Darius I Susa
<i>EI</i>	Encyclopaedia of Islam
<i>Elr</i>	Encyclopædia Iranica
<i>EW</i>	East and West
f.	feminine
fn.	footnote
<i>Fīō</i>	<i>Frahang ī ōim</i> (-ēk)
<i>FrA</i>	Anklesaria's fragments in the <i>RAF</i> and in the <i>RFW</i>
<i>FrB</i>	Fragment Bartholomae
<i>FrBy</i>	Barthélemy's fragments
<i>FrD</i>	Fragment Darmesteter
<i>FrG</i>	Geldner's fragments
<i>FrGr</i>	Gray's fragment
<i>FrW</i>	Fragment Westergaard
<i>G</i>	<i>Gāh</i>
<i>GA</i>	<i>Mādayān ī Gizistag Abāliš</i>
<i>GBd</i>	<i>Great(er) (Iranian) Bundahišn</i>
Gk.	Greek
Gš	Fragments in the <i>Ganješāyagān</i>
Hebr.	Hebrew
<i>Hēr</i>	<i>Hērbedestān</i>
<i>HN</i>	<i>Hāδōxt Nask</i>

HR	History of Religions
IA	Iranica Antiqua
IBd	<i>Indian Bundahišn</i>
IE	Indo-European
IF	Indogermanische Forschungen
IJ	Indo-Iranian Journal
Ilr.	Indo-Iranian
IR	<i>Iṭhoter Revāyat (Revāyat-e Haftād va Hašt)</i>
IS	Iranian Studies
JA	Journal asiatique
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAAS	Journal of Asian and African Studies
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JKRCOI	Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute
JN	<i>Jāmāsp-Nāmag</i>
Jpn.	Japanese
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSI	Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
KAP	<i>Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšīr ī Pābagān</i>
Khot.	Khotanese
KKZ	Kerdīr Ka'ba-ye Zartošt
KNRb	Kerdīr Naqš-e Rajab
KNRm	Kerdīr Naqš-e Rostam
KSM	Kerdīr Sar Mašhad
Lat.	Latin
l.c.	<i>loco citato</i> (in the place cited)
m.	masculine
M	Manichaean Texts from Turfan, China (now in Berlin)
Man.	Manichaean
MHD	<i>Mādayān ī Hazār Dādestān</i>
MP	Middle Persian
ms.	manuscript
MSS	Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft
Mt	Gospel of Matthew (New Testament)
MX	<i>(Dādestān ī) Mēnōg ī Xrad</i>
N	<i>Nērangestān</i>
n.	neuter
n.	note
NChin.	Northern Chinese
n.d.	no date
n.ed.	no editor(s)
Nig	Fragment of the <i>Nigādom</i>
NM	<i>Nāmāgihā ī Manuščihr</i> (also 'The Epistles of Manuščihr')
nom.	nominative case

n.p.	no publisher
<i>Ny</i>	<i>Niyāyišn</i>
NP	New Persian
OAv.	Old Avesta(n)
OInd.	Old Indian
OIr.	Old Iranian
OP	Old Persian
OS	Orientalia Suecana
<i>P</i>	<i>Pursišnīhā</i>
Pahl.	Pahlavi
Parth.	Parthian
PF	Elamite Persepolis Fortification Tablets
PGuj.	Parsi Gujarati
pl.	plural
<i>PRDD</i>	<i>Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg</i>
PT	Pahlavi translation
<i>PVd</i>	<i>Pahlavi Vīdēvdād</i>
<i>PY</i>	<i>Pahlavi Yasna</i>
<i>PYt</i>	<i>Pahlavi Yašt</i>
<i>PZ</i>	<i>Pandnāmag ī Zardu(x)št</i> (see also ČAP)
<i>Pz</i>	<i>Pāzand</i>
<i>QS</i>	<i>Qešše-ye Sanjān</i>
r.	ruled
<i>RAF</i>	<i>Rivāyat of Ādurfarnbag ī Farroxxādān</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Rivāyat of Ēmēd ī Ašawahištān</i>
repr.	reprinted
<i>RFW</i>	<i>Rivāyat of Farrōbag-Srōš ī Wahmānān</i>
<i>RHR</i>	<i>Revue de l'Histoire des Religions</i>
<i>RSO</i>	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientalni</i>
<i>RV</i>	<i>Rigveda, Ṛg-Veda</i>
s./ss.	section(s)
<i>S</i>	<i>Sīrōze, Sīh-rōzag</i>
sg.	singular
<i>SBE</i>	Sacred Books of the East
SChin.	Standard Chinese
<i>SdBd</i>	<i>Šaddar(-e) Bondaheš</i>
<i>SdN</i>	<i>Šaddar(-e) Naṣr</i>
Skr.	Sanskrit
<i>Sn</i>	<i>Seyāsatnāma</i>
Sogd.	Sogdian
<i>SPAW</i>	Sitzungsberichte der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften der Philosophisch-Historischen Klasse
st.	stanza(s)
<i>StII</i>	Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik
<i>StIr</i>	Studia Iranica

<i>Supp.Šnš</i>	<i>The Supplementary Texts to the Šāyest-nē-šāyest</i>
s.v.	<i>sub verbo</i> (under the specified word)
Syr.	Syriac
ŠĒ	<i>Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr</i>
ŠGW	<i>Škand-gumānīg Wizār</i>
Šnš	<i>Šāyest-nē-šāyest</i>
TPS	Transactions of the Philological Society
trans.	translated
v./vv.	verse(s)
Vd	<i>Vīdēvdād</i>
Ved.	Vedic
VN	<i>Vaēθā Nask</i>
Vr	<i>Vīsp(e)rad</i>
Vyt	<i>Vištāsp Yašt</i>
WZ	<i>Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram</i>
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
XP	Xerxes I Persepolis
Y	<i>Yasna</i>
YH	<i>Yasna Haptaṇhāiti</i>
YAv.	Younger Avesta(n)
Yt	<i>Yašt</i>
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ZFJ	<i>Zand ī Fragard ī Juddēwdād</i>
ZfR	Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft
ZfvS	Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung
Zn	<i>Zarātoštnāma</i>
ZRGG	Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte
ZWY	<i>Zand ī Wahman Yasn (Yašt)</i>

Certain contributors use specialized abbreviations that are found at the end of their chapters.

Introduction

Scholarship on Zoroastrianism

Michael Stausberg and Yuhon Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina

Zoroastrianism currently has some 125,000 adherents worldwide with the majority living in India, mostly in Mumbai and Gujarat (57,264 in the Indian census of 2011). In South Asia the Zoroastrians are known as the “Parsis” (see Hinnells, “The Parsis,” this volume). Since World War II their numbers have been in rapid decline (there were just under 115,000 Parsis in pre-Partition India in 1941) and the Indian media report dire predictions according to which this trend will continue in the upcoming decades. The second largest group of Zoroastrians is to be found in Iran, from where the Parsis relocated in the aftermath of the Arab invasions in the mid-7th century CE and the Islamization of the country in the following centuries (see Daryaei, “Zoroastrianism under Islamic Rule,” this volume). Fewer than 20,000 Zoroastrians currently reside in Iran, where they are recognized as a religious minority by the constitution (see Stausberg, “Zoroastrians in Modern Iran,” this volume).

Political changes in India (Independence and Partition in 1947 and its aftermath) and Iran (the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and its aftermath) as well as socioeconomic factors have stimulated many Zoroastrians to migrate. By now, there are substantial (by Zoroastrian standards) communities in Britain, Canada, the United States, Dubai, and Australia as well as minor groups in other countries, including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, China, and New Zealand (see Hinnells, “The Zoroastrian Diaspora,” this volume).

Zoroastrianism is thus an interesting case of a globalizing, highly urbanized, and literate (over 90 percent in India) ethnic religion while being one of the oldest religious traditions in the world. Prior to the spread of Islam, which led to the concomitant marginalization of Zoroastrianism in its homelands (Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran, and adjacent areas), Zoroastrianism was one of the major religious forces of the ancient world. Zoroastrians lived in neighborhoods with Jewish, Christian, Manichaean, and Islamic communities for centuries. Its presumed influence on these religions has historically been the major factor warranting scholarly attention. In fact, Zoroastrianism was

a fashionable subject in the early history of the study of religion\’s. Remarkably, some of the early protagonists of the history of religions as an academic discipline had Zoroastrianism as one of their main areas of specialization. Consider such seminal scholars as Cornelis Petrus Tiele (1830–1902), Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931), Edvard Lehmann (1862–1930), Raffaele Pettazzoni (1883–1959), and, moving closer to the present, Geo Widengren (1907–1996) and Carsten Colpe (1929–2009). As historians of religions, their impact on subsequent Zoroastrian studies (and even more so on Iranian studies) has been fairly limited and as newer generations of historians of religions did not share the enthusiasm of their predecessors for this subject, relatively few articles on Zoroastrianism have been published in major history of religions journals since the 1960s (Stausberg 2008a).

A Disintegrated Academic Landscape

The study of Zoroastrianism faces the same challenges as those of other religious traditions operating over vast spans of time. To begin with, studying a religion in its various settings and contexts ideally requires philological expertise in a number of different languages. Taking into account only those languages in which we have substantial amounts of primary textual sources, this would basically include the fields of Old, Middle, and New Iranian studies plus Gujarati, the language spoken in the part of Western India where the Parsis first settled. Compared to the study of so-called world religions like Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism, scholars of Zoroastrianism face a rather limited selection of relevant languages with regard to primary sources. Nevertheless, what might appear as a good starting point from a comparative perspective turns out to be a severe problem in light of contemporary disciplinary and institutional boundaries. To quote from a recent survey on “Iranian Historical Linguistics in the Twentieth Century”:

Iranian studies are seldom recognized as an academic discipline *sui iuris* and very few Iranologists have been able to contribute to the fields of Old, Middle, and New Iranian alike. Since the Neogrammarian revolution [in the late 19th century], Avestan and Old Persian have been taught in Indo-European departments or programs, usually with an emphasis on linguistics. New Iranian (especially New Persian) is taught in departments of Middle Eastern studies (German: *Orientalistik*) alongside the other written languages of Islam (Arabic and Turkic), and the courses focus primarily on historical or social issues. Middle Iranian languages rarely receive more than introductory courses, either as an adjunct to New Persian or to the Indo-European curriculum. (Tremblay 2005: 2)

Even where one finds Iranian studies as a separate academic entity (chair, department, or center), Zoroastrianism is not always part of the academic specialization of the staff. As a rule of thumb one can say that Zoroastrianism is at least remotely on the scholarly agenda whenever there is a scholarly interest in pre-Islamic history and culture or in Old and Middle Iranian languages. However, whenever the balance leans towards the Islamic era and New Persian languages, Zoroastrianism is usually completely outside of the scholarly focus. The factual marginalization of Zoroastrians in Iranian history after

the Islamic conquest in the 7th century CE is thereby faithfully mirrored by the Western academic community. As implied by Tremblay, there is usually very little scholarly exchange crossing the iron curtain separating Old and Middle from New Persian studies. To pull down this rigid barrier will be one of the main challenges for the study of Zoroastrianism and maybe also for Iranian studies in general (see now, Sheffield 2012).

Apart from Iranian languages, there are significant (secondary) source materials in non-Iranian languages to be taken into account: Vedic Sanskrit for comparative purposes with the Avestan corpus, Greek and Latin for interactions with the Classical world, Akkadian, Egyptian, and Elamite for religion in the Persian Empire, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Arabic for interactions with Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Sasanian studies in general, Classical Armenian and Georgian for the Caucasus, not to mention the secondary scholarly languages of French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese. Texts, however, are obviously not the only sources for the study of Zoroastrianism. Nor is philology the only approach. Ancient history, archaeology, art history, sigillography (the study of seals), and numismatics (the study of coins), for example, are important related scholarly disciplines or endeavors, although their impact on the study of Zoroastrianism has up to now been fairly limited. Turning to the modern and contemporary periods, a number of recent anthropological, sociological, and historical studies have provided valuable insights on modern Zoroastrian social life and identities (see e.g., Luhrmann 1996; Walthert 2010; Ringer 2011 respectively).

Iranian studies or the related fields of study mentioned above are the traditional breeding-grounds of the study of Zoroastrianism, but (so far) Zoroastrian studies does not exist as an integrated field of study. While there are several loose networks of scholars regularly interacting in various contexts, there is neither a scholarly journal devoted to Zoroastrian studies nor a review bulletin; and there is no scholarly association or organization for scholars of Zoroastrianism. In all this, the study of Zoroastrianism is characterized by a considerable delay compared to the study of most other religious traditions.

In addition, there is no academic department of Zoroastrian studies, not even in Iran or India. However, just as specialist positions in a number of religions were being established during recent decades at Western universities – often with considerable financial input from adherents – there are now a handful of academic positions in Zoroastrian studies, all located in “diasporic” hot spots:

- From 1929 to 1947 the Bombay Zoroastrian community funded a position called the “Parsee Community’s Lectureship in Iranian Studies” at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, renamed from the School of Oriental Studies in 1938) in the University of London. The position was held by the two eminent Iranists Harold W. Bailey (from 1929 to 1936) and Walter B. Henning (from 1936 to 1947). In the 1990s three Zoroastrian benefactors (Faridoon and Mehraban Zartoshty and an anonymous Iranian benefactor) helped fund a professorship in Zoroastrianism with the aid of the estate of the late Professor Mary Boyce who was Professor of Iranian Studies at SOAS from 1961 to 1982 (see Hintze 2010 and more on Boyce below).

- In the early years of the new millennium, a Zoroastrian Studies Council was formed at Claremont Graduate University's School of Religion in Claremont, California. This and similar councils at Claremont are made up of "leaders" from the religious communities; their aims are defined as follows: "These councils represent a partnership with the religious community by advising the school on the needs of the community and consulting with the school as courses and programs are developed" (Claremont Graduate University n.d.). In this case the group of "leaders" is mainly composed of Iranian Zoroastrians. The council has successfully set up some classes in the study of Zoroastrianism during the past years, but as of yet there is no funded fulltime position. As of December 2012, a lectureship in Zoroastrian studies at Claremont Graduate University was permanently endowed, as an adjunct position, offering one course per year.
- In 2006 the young "transdisciplinary" Department of Historical Studies at the University of Toronto at Mississauga established a position in the history of Zoroastrianism.
- In 2010 the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University created an endowed (but not permanent) lectureship for Zoroastrian studies with the financial support of Zoroastrian donors and FEZANA (the Federation of the Zoroastrian Associations of North America; see Hinnells, "The Zoroastrian Diaspora," this volume). This Lectureship came to an end in 2016.

In three of these four cases, the scholars appointed are philologists with a documented expertise on Old and Middle Iranian texts respectively, which reflects the continued prominence of philology in this field. It remains to be seen whether these positions will have an impact on the consolidation of Zoroastrian studies as a more coherent field of study. While this paperback edition goes into press, the University of California at Irvine (with the financial support of an Iranian donor) and the University of Toronto (with a community-funded campaign spearheaded by FEZANA) are each in the process of filling a permanently-endowed position in Zoroastrian studies. Here again the published job profiles put emphasis on proficiency in ancient Iranian languages.

Attempts at Mapping Main Approaches

It is customary in scholarly literature to review past attempts before setting out on one's own path; these sorts of academic preludes being largely rhetorical reconstructions tend to point to perceived weak points in previous work. In the last fifteen years two scholars have attempted to map the field of Zoroastrian studies at large.

The Dutch historian of ancient religions Albert de Jong has distinguished between three main views of Zoroastrian history. He refers to them as "fragmentizing," "harmonizing," and "diversifying" views respectively (de Jong 1997: 44–68).

The characteristic feature of a "fragmentizing" view according to de Jong is the idea that "Zoroastrianism ought to be defined by the *Gāthās* and by the *Gāthās* only" (de Jong 1997: 46). The *Gāthās*, a tiny part of the Avestan corpus, are five songs (hymns or poetic compositions) that most scholars and believers ascribe to Zarathustra who is generally held to be the founder or "prophet" of the religion (see the chapters on the *Gāthās* and Stausberg, "Zarathustra: Post-Gathic Trajectories," this volume). In that

sense, what de Jong describes as “fragmentizing” can also be termed normative insofar as one text becomes the norm for any reconstruction of the religion. This raises the related question of the status of the later history of Zoroastrian (indigenous or emic) interpretations of the *Gāthās*: Should an interpretation of the *Gāthās* be based on their comparative linguistic or their transmissive cognates, that is, with the largely contemporaneous *Vedas* or the later Middle Persian (Pahlavi) writings in mind, or should both approaches be combined?

In another sense, fragmentizing views assume the existence not of one main pre-Islamic indigenous religion (“Zoroastrianism” or “Mazdaism”) but, rather, several different religious communities such as a (presumed) Mithra-community or regional religious traditions such as Median and Parthian religions.

The second main view discussed by de Jong is referred to as “harmonizing.” The characteristic feature of this group of approaches is their idea that the main collections of ancient source materials, the Old and Middle Iranian texts (the Avestan and the Pahlavi writings),

basically reflect the same tradition, a tradition that deserves to be called Zoroastrianism (because it grew out of the teaching of Zarathustra). The numerous developments are due not to ruptures or dramatic breaks in the tradition (as in fragmentising views) and certainly do not reflect different religions, but are interpreted as manifestations of an organic process of growth... (de Jong 1997: 50)

As is to be expected by his rhetorical arrangement, de Jong himself clearly favors the third view, which he refers to as “diversifying.” This view is held to avoid what he terms to be the other two “excessive” approaches and is apparently devised to strike the balance between an “outright denial of a continuous tradition” on the one hand and “the insistence on an unchanging kernel of Zoroastrian doctrine” on the other (de Jong 1997: 60). According to de Jong, this view “insists on using broad and preliminary” (de Jong 1997: 60) definitions of Zoroastrianism and points to “a variegated, classic tradition rather than a strict doctrinal system” (de Jong 1997: 61). This approach – as exemplified by de Jong’s own analysis of the classical (Greek and Roman) sources on Zoroastrianism – tries to reach beyond the focus on the textual output of the priestly tradition as the normative statement of whichever version of Zoroastrianism one is working on or writing about.

As part of a volume on postmodernist approaches to the study of religion in 1999, the British scholar of religion John Hinnells tried to map the history of the study of Zoroastrianism with regard to modernist and postmodernist features respectively. Hinnells finds that “the sort of theories propounded concerning Zoroastrianism and the debates which have raged (unfortunately an appropriate word at times!) mirror the sort of wider theoretical debates in the study of religion, history, and literature” (Hinnells 2000: 23). Hinnells reviews the work of six scholars and sees modernist tendencies in three of them and postmodernist ones in the other three, including his own work and that of his teacher Mary Boyce. Whereas de Jong seems to assume the synchronicity of the different views, the account given by Hinnells follows a chronological order. The main works assigned to the modernist approach were published from 1882 to 1961, while those showing postmodernist features were from around 1975 to the present. The main dividing line between both approaches, as Hinnells presents them, is the presence

of grand meta-narratives (versus an emphasis on diversity), the dependence or emphasis on the normative–priestly–textual tradition (versus domestic, daily, and female practices), and the assumption of a neutral, purely objective and detached point of view of the scholar (versus an awareness of his or her situatedness in the field).

Some Reflections

To begin with, an obvious point of critique against such mappings is whether the categories do any justice to the scholars so classified. Every classification is subjective and open to critique. Mary Boyce (see also below), in whose work her student Hinnells highlights postmodern features, would almost certainly have refused to consider herself as a postmodernist. The Belgian scholar of the *Avesta*, Jean Kellens (Emeritus Chair at the Collège de France; see his “The *Gāthās*, Said to Be of Zarathustra,” this volume) who features as something like the living arch-protagonist of the fragmentizing view for de Jong, has expressed his dissatisfaction with de Jong’s classifications and sees himself much more like a harmonizer or diversifier (Kellens 2003: 215). Furthermore, Kellens rightly points out that the subject of study and the research methodologies chosen in accordance with that focus are important factors that to some large extent determine the general point of view (Kellens 2003: 216). Writing a comprehensive history of Zoroastrianism makes one more prone to harmonize than when one studies the complexity of a specific period or a specific type of source material. In addition, what may be fragmentizing from the point of view that takes data that looks “Zoroastrian” as evidence for the internal plurality or diversity of a capacious Zoroastrianism can potentially be seen as diversifying from another point of view in which Zoroastrianism was merely one among several available socioreligious or cultural options in Iranian religious history. Put simply, is “Zoroastrianism” the big umbrella or is “pre-Islamic Iranian Religion(s)” to be understood as such in the pre-Islamic Iranian world? In other words, what might be harmonizing in Zoroastrian terms can potentially be seen as fragmentizing from the point of view of Indo-Iranian religious history.

A similar concern can be raised with regard to Hinnells’s schema. For it is hardly surprising that (quasi-) postmodernist views were primarily voiced by scholars studying postcolonial or diasporic communities. We refer to these views as quasi-postmodernist because the scholars Hinnells takes to represent postmodernist views do so only in a very vague sense and the way Hinnells himself writes is far from the way a “postmodernist” would. The postmodern challenge, we believe, has not generally been embraced in the study of Zoroastrianism, nor has the related debate on Orientalism had much of an impact on the field.

Some Main Figures in the History of Zoroastrian Studies

From these rather general reflections let us now turn to some key scholars in the history of the study of Zoroastrianism. (See Aoki, “Zoroastrianism in the Far East,” this volume for the history of the study of Zoroastrianism in China and Japan since 1923;

see Tessmann 2012: 107–138 for a mapping of the history and different approaches to Zoroastrian studies by scholars writing in Russian from the late 19th century to the present.) A recent book by Jean Kellens (2006b) may act as a companion in so far as the history of the study of the *Avesta* is concerned. The following snapshots of nine seminal figures in the study of Zoroastrianism are meant to illustrate some major turns scholarship has taken over the past three centuries.

Thomas Hyde (1636–1703)

There was a vivid interest in Zoroaster, the archetypal oriental sage and magician, throughout pre-modern European history (Stausberg 1998a; Rose 2000), and scholarly work on Zoroastrianism took root as part of the rise of Oriental studies in the 17th century. The first scholarly monograph on pre-Islamic Iranian religious history was published in 1700 by Thomas Hyde (Williams 2004), the Oxford scholar of Arabic, Semitic, and Persian who contributed to the establishment of the term “dualism” (which he held to be an aberration of “orthodox” Zoroastrianism). The massive (over 550 pages!) and richly illustrated *Historia religionis veterum Persarum, eorumque Magorum* (‘History of the Religion of the Ancient Persians and their Magi’), (second edition 1760) made use of virtually all the source materials available at his time, including ancient Mediterranean, Islamic, and Oriental Christian sources, as well as the accounts of contemporary European travelers. Not satisfied with that, Hyde also produced the first translation of an important Persian Zoroastrian text into a European language (the *Šaddar* ‘Hundred Chapters’; see Sheffield, “Primary Sources: New Persian,” this volume). Hyde had a fundamentally sympathetic attitude towards his ancient Persians and he emphatically defended their monotheism. At the same time, he placed ancient Persian religion into a Biblical framework and claimed that the oldest Persian religion derived from Abraham, before falling into decay in order to be then once more reformed into its pristine purity by Zoroaster who had been a pupil of one of the Biblical prophets. Despite its apologetic basis Hyde’s work, which also includes a number of comparative discussions, provided a wealth of information on various aspects of ancient Iranian religion, as accurately as was possible before the discovery of the earlier Zoroastrian source materials in Old and Middle Iranian languages. Hyde was well aware of the preliminary status of his work and explicitly exhorted his successors to actively search for the then still largely unknown ancient Zoroastrian scriptures (Stausberg 1998a: 680–718; Stroumsa 2010: 102–113).

Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (1731–1805)

Hyde’s call to action forcefully resounded with Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (see Duchesne-Guillemin 1987), the first European scholar who travelled to the East in order to study (with) the Zoroastrians. He was called “the first Orientalist, in the modern sense of the word” (Gardaz 2000: 354). Although the Frenchman’s encounter

with the Parsis in Surat was not without conflicts (Stausberg 1998d), it turned out to be extremely fruitful. To begin with, Anquetil brought a large number of important manuscripts home to Paris, now stored at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Moreover, in his *Le Zend-Avesta* (1771) he provided French translations of many key texts of ancient Zoroastrianism, based on what some Zoroastrian priests had taught him in India. From a philological point of view, they are now largely outdated, but they nevertheless provide invaluable insights into how the texts may have been understood by 18th-century Zoroastrian priests. Moreover, Anquetil gives important notes on the actual usage of the texts. In his introduction, he has an interesting sketch of Zoroastrian history in India and the volumes contain some important essays in which he presents the everyday life, typical biographies, and rituals of the Zoroastrians in ethnographic detail. The presentation is remarkably balanced, although his view of Zoroaster is rather negative (Stausberg 1998a: 796–808; for his biography, see Schwab 1934; for his seminal role in the development of oriental studies see Schwab 1950; App 2010: 363–439).

Martin Haug (1827–1876)

It was only with the work of the linguists Rasmus Rask (1787–1832) and Eugène Burnouf (1801–1852; see Herrenschildt 1990) and especially the latter's *Commentaire sur le Yaçna* from 1833 that the study of the *Avesta* was placed on a more solid linguistic grounding. But it was the German Martin Haug (see Hintze 2004) who put the study of Zoroastrianism on a new footing when he discovered the special importance of the *Gāthās* as the foundational document of early Zoroastrianism. He argued that these texts were “one or two centuries older than the ordinary Avestan language” (Haug 1907: 75). In his popular *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings and Religion of the Parsis* (first published in 1862), the epochal significance of which was immediately noted by the scholar of comparative mythology and religion Friedrich Max Müller (1867: 125), Haug claimed that the *Gāthās* “really contain the sayings and teachings of the great founder of the Parsi religion, Spitama Zarathushtra himself” (Haug 1907: 146). Moreover, Haug devised a highly influential interpretative framework for the understanding of early Zoroastrianism that has been largely adopted by many Zoroastrians themselves. He credited Zoroaster with the teaching of an anti-sacrificial, ethically advanced monotheism, and held that Zoroaster finally sealed the Indo-Aryan schism that had been raging ever since the Iranians had introduced agriculture (Haug 1907: 292–295). Rejecting the belief of the contemporary Parsis who, according to Haug, thought that “their prophet” lived around 550 BCE, Haug reasoned that a later date than 1000 BCE was out of the question (Haug 1907: 299). Nevertheless, the religious reforms of the “prophet” were later on retracted by subsequent generations who returned to a ritualization of the religion (Haug 1907: 263). The pivotal role assigned to Zoroaster implied that it was the study of the *Gāthās* which would ultimately shed light on Zoroastrianism (Herrenschildt 1987; Stausberg 1997; Kellens 2006b; Ringer 2011; Skjærvø 2011b; Sheffield 2012 and 2018; and Marchand 2016).

Friedrich von Spiegel (1820–1905)

The prolific and versatile German scholar of Iranian culture and languages Friedrich von Spiegel (see Schmitt 2002) was of a very different opinion in that matter. Spiegel not only repeatedly emphasized the importance of the indigenous tradition for an understanding of the *Avesta* but he also proclaimed the essential continuity of (pre-Islamic) Iranian religion throughout the ages (Spiegel 1873: 2–3). On the other hand, Spiegel believed that Semitic elements had found their way into Zoroastrianism. He also argued that Zoroastrianism was a learned system, similar to Schleiermacher's theology during his days, rather than a religion of the broad masses (Spiegel 1873: 171–172).

About Spiegel's magnum opus *Erânische Alterthumskunde* ('The Study of Ancient Iran'), a trilogy (1871–1878) dealing with virtually all aspects of Iranian history, it has been said:

The *Alterthumskunde* may be understood also as a first attempt to overcome the originally divergent development of Iranian studies, caused by the fact that Old Iranian studies followed more the philological model of Indo-Aryan and Indo-European studies, whereas research on Islamic Iran followed in the wake of Islamic and Semitic studies. In some ways Spiegel tried to bring together those two traditions scholarship for the benefit of Iranian studies in general, by explaining the data of later periods through those of antiquity and conversely by referring to modern data for both the linguistic and the factual interpretation of data for earlier periods. (Schmitt 2002)

James Darmesteter (1849–1894)

The French Iranist James Darmesteter (see Boyce and MacKenzie 1996) produced a rich and partly contradictory oeuvre despite dying at the age of forty-five. In his book *Ohrmazd et Ahriman: leurs origines et histoire* (1877) Darmesteter rooted Zoroastrian dualism deeply in the Indo-Iranian past, claiming that the main change brought by Zoroastrianism was to draw a more precise picture of the previously "unconscious dualism" which now also obtained a clear ethical shape (Darmesteter 1971: 308) with Zoroaster being regarded as a mythical priestly hero (Darmesteter 1971: 195). Darmesteter's main scholarly legacy was a French translation of the Avestan texts published in three massive volumes in 1892–1893. The lengthy introductions to each of the volumes provided many new and still valuable insights, for instance into the ritual practices accompanying the texts. Contrary to his earlier work, Darmesteter here emphasized the importance of the later Iranian sources for an understanding of the text. From a mythical figure, Zoroaster thereby turned into a historical personality. Darmesteter embraced the pseudohistorical date of 258 before Alexander, found in some late (Pahlavi) sources, and took it as a starting point for a chronology of the *Avesta*. Because he believed he had detected Neoplatonist influences on early Zoroastrianism, he regarded the *Gāthās*, whose importance he emphasized throughout, as a product of the 1st century CE. This opinion, however, was unanimously dismissed by his contemporaries and subsequent generations of scholars.

Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) invited Darmesteter to contribute an English translation of the *Avesta* for his series *Sacred Books of the East* (1879–1910; see Cereti 2014). Darmesteter managed to translate two of the three projected volumes (published in 1880 and 1883 respectively). The third one, containing the *Gāthās*, came to be entrusted to Lawrence Hayworth Mills (1837–1918), the professor of Persian at Oxford University.

The *Sacred Books of the East* also contained translations of major works from the Middle Persian literature, published from 1880 to 1897. This still cited but to some extent tentative work was undertaken by Edward W. West (1824–1905), a British railway engineer working in India. At the turn to the 20th century, the main body of Old and Middle Iranian Zoroastrian literature was thereby easily accessible to a larger audience. At the same time, the philological study of the Avestan corpus was put on a new basis by two events: the publication of the sixth and final critical edition of the main Avestan texts during the 19th century by the German Indo-Iranian scholar Karl Friedrich Geldner (1852–1929; see Schlerath 2001), first published from 1886 to 1895; and the appearance, in 1904, of the Avestan (and Old Persian) dictionary *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* by the German comparative philologist Christian Bartholomae (1855–1925; see Schmitt 1989). Bartholomae was also the author of a translation of the *Gāthās* (1905) largely accepted as the authoritative scholarly rendering of the voice of the prophet for at least half a century, if not longer (Kellens 2006b: 71). He also published a short study of Zoroaster's life and work (second edition 1924) in which he claimed that Zoroaster had fled from Western to Eastern Iran where he helped a king to adopt a sedentary lifestyle. The scholarly conversation about social conflicts representing the contexts of Zoroaster's career has continued throughout the 20th century (Kellens 2006b). Furthermore, Bartholomae emphasized monotheism and eschatology as key ingredients of Zoroaster's prophetic message.

Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson (1862–1937)

Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson (see Malandra 2008/2012), a pioneer of Iranian studies in America, was trained at Columbia University, where he also held appointments, from 1895 until 1935 as professor and head of the new department of Indo-Iranian Languages and Literatures. As many before and after him, he came to the study of Avestan, to which he contributed a grammar, from Sanskrit. In 1891 and 1892 he studied with Geldner in Germany. Jackson's main scholarly legacy is his book *Zoroaster: the Prophet of Ancient Iran* (1899), which provides a synthesis and discussion of all available sources on the life of Zarathustra. His aim with the book was to establish Zarathustra as "a historical character" (Jackson 1899: 3), although he acknowledges the "existence of legend, fable, and even of myth" (4) in dealing with Zoroaster's life. Despite his attempt to be cautious, contemporary readers will perhaps find his attempt at writing a biography of Zarathustra to be problematic and anachronistic. A Gujarati translation was published in Bombay in 1900. Jackson also wrote a comprehensive survey of Zoroastrian beliefs and history (originally in German, English translation in his collected essays, Jackson 1928: 1–215), where he emphasized the moral and ethical

character of the religion, the importance of eschatology, and the importance of the contemporary Zoroastrian communities as upholders of the “ancient creed” (1928: 214; see Ringer 2011: 107–109 for a critical discussion). In fact, Jackson, who travelled widely (and published travel books), visited both the Zoroastrian communities in India and Iran. In 1903, he traveled to Iran following the footsteps of Zoroaster with the plan “to traverse as much of the territory known to Zoroaster as I could” (Jackson 1906: 1), as he states in his *Persia Past and Present*, which contains a vivid and detailed description of the Zoroastrians of Yazd and their religious ceremonies (353–400).

Henrik Samuel Nyberg (1889–1974)

A very different image of Zoroaster and ancient Iranian religions emerged from the work of the Swedish scholar of Iranian and Semitic languages Henrik Samuel Nyberg (see Cereti 2004). As the title of his massive book *Irans forntida religioner* (‘The Ancient Religions of Iran’) from 1937, translated into German in 1938, already suggests, Nyberg’s account reckons with the existence of several competing and conflicting religious groups in ancient Iranian history, making his approach a prototypical fragmentizing view in de Jong’s typology. According to Nyberg, it was not Zoroaster’s innovation which provoked the religious conflict he found in the *Gāthās*, but Zoroaster rather defended his community against a new orgiastic sacrificial cult (Nyberg 1966: 200). Only later did he become a founder of a new religion that fused elements of heterogeneous origins (Nyberg 1966: 267). Moreover, in Nyberg’s interpretation, Zoroaster himself was a professional ecstatic typologically akin not so much to the prophets but rather to Muslim Dervishes (Nyberg 1966: 265), messianic Mahdis or North American Indian apocalyptic figures (Nyberg 1966: 267). This interpretation has been fiercely contested by many scholars representing various backgrounds and ideological positions: including Nazis such as Walther Wüst (1901–1993) and his pupil Otto Paul, as well as the luminary of Middle Iranian studies Walter Bruno Henning (1908–1967; see Sundermann 2004a/2012), who because of his marriage to a Jew left Berlin and went to SOAS and later UC Berkeley. Other critics included the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University Robert Charles Zaehner (1913–1974) and the Belgian Iranist Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin (1910–2012), two prolific scholars who published specialized as well as general studies of Zoroastrianism (Zaehner 1961; Duchesne-Guillemin 1962b, English translation 1973). As is often the case in such debates, Nyberg’s views were oversimplified by his critics.

Nyberg was a teacher of the influential historian of religions Geo Widengren (1907–1996), who also published a handbook in which he surveys various epochs and regional varieties of pre-Islamic Iranian religion (Widengren 1965). Widengren repeatedly emphasized the Iranian (rather than Zoroastrian) impact on Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam. Both Duchesne-Guillemin and Widengren came, to different degrees, under the spell of the trifunctional theory of society (divided along the lines of priests, warriors, and herdsmen) proposed by the French scholar of comparative Indo-European mythology Georges Dumézil (1898–1986; see Lincoln 2010; see also Pirart 2007 for a critique of one crucial aspect of Dumézil’s interpretation of Iranian religious history).

Marijan Molé (1924–1963)

During the same period when Zaehner, Duchesne-Guillemin, and Widengren published their handbooks, the Slovenian scholar Marijan Molé presented a new interpretation of ancient Iranian religion in his massive thesis *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien* of 1963 which also derived part of its inspiration from Dumézil and myth-ritual theories. Molé described ancient Iranian religion as a unitary system of myth, ritual, and ideology distinguished by different degrees of perfection, moral standards, and forms of social organization. The figure of Zoroaster plays a key role in the myth-ritual and eschatological scenario (re-)constructed by Molé and the “prophet” turns into a mythological figure rather than into a personality of history. Just as in the case of Nyberg some decades earlier, Molé’s innovative interpretation caused hostile reactions, among them once more by Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, but even more prominently by the famous French linguist Émile Benveniste (1902–1976; see Lazard 1989/2012) who refused to accept the innovative work as Molé’s doctoral thesis (see also Lincoln 2007: xiii–xv; for his *Nachlass*, see Khismatulin and Azarnouche 2014).

Mary Boyce (1920–2006)

In the footsteps of her teacher Henning, Mary Boyce (see Hinnells 2010) started her career with works on Manichaean hymns in Parthian, but her academic work took an unexpected turn as a result of a year (1963–1964) spent in Iran, mostly among Zoroastrians in Šarīfābād, a remote conservative village near Yazd. It seems that her view of Zoroastrianism right from the beginning was earmarked by her interaction with Zoroastrians. Apart from a romanticizing account of the religious life in Šarīfābād (Boyce 1977), her other monographs aim at presenting large-scale portrayals of Zoroastrian history, from its (reconstructed) prehistory down to the present. Her magnum opus, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, of which three volumes were published in 1975 (third edition 1996), 1982, and 1991 (co-authored with Frantz Grenet; see his “Zarathustra’s Time and Homeland: Geographical Perspectives” and “Zoroastrianism in Central Asia,” this volume) respectively, has sadly remained unfinished (see below).

Learned and meticulous to the extreme, her works on Zoroastrian history are based on a firmly essentialist vision of Zoroastrianism as given by the archaic priest-prophet Zoroaster, to whom she assigned an age of great antiquity (sometime between 1700 and 1200 BCE). Although she accounts for several historical changes, she emphasizes (as Spiegel had done before her) the fundamental continuity of what she terms “the tradition” from the earliest times to the present. One of her major insights was the coherence of the religion as encompassing such apparently diverse religious manifestations as archaic priestly speculations and contemporary everyday rituals in the 20th century, strongly reinforcing her notions of an “orthodox” strand of Zoroastrianism.

Boyce, whose main philological expertise lay in the realm of Middle Iranian languages, enjoys a singular position as a scholar of Zoroastrianism because she succeeded in integrating the study of Zoroastrianism into a consistent subject. She is the first Western academic who can be qualified as a Zoroastrian scholar per se. Her unfinished

work on Zoroastrian history is currently being continued by Albert de Jong, whose views of Zoroastrianism however are more diversifying (to invoke his own classification) and more up to date in methodological and theoretical terms, thus representing the next generation of scholars of Zoroastrian history. In fact, with the exception of Helmut Humbach (b. 1921), who began publishing on the *Gāthās* already in the 1950s, all the scholars writing in this *Companion* to some extent operate within or react to the Boycean legacy. Several of our contributors are her students, colleagues, or co-authors (de Jong, Grenet, Hinnells, Kotwal, Kreyenbroek, Rose, Shaked, Williams), and it is safe to say that scholars of Zoroastrianism can ill afford to not engage with her work, even if critically.

Contributions of Zoroastrian and Iranian Scholars

The reader will by now have noticed the complete absence of Zoroastrian scholars from our account. During the 18th and 19th centuries, when the academic study of Zoroastrianism developed in European Universities, Parsis were engaged in a fierce controversy on the calendar (Stausberg 2002b II: 434–440; see also Rose, “Festivals and the Calendar”; Sheffield, “Primary Sources: Gujarati,” this volume) that generated great scholarly interest in ancient Iranian texts and history.

Several Western scholars visited India during the 19th century, and Haug and Darmesteter lived or visited India and entertained professional and personal relationships with Parsis. Haug was asked by the Parsis to examine their two teaching schools for priests, which he did; he was also offered a permanent position but declined. In a letter dated October 27, 1864, published in an academic journal in 1865, Haug (1865: 305) states that he de facto held the position of a spiritual leader of the Parsi community (Stausberg 1998e: 337). On the other hand, some Parsis developed a genuine interest in a scholarly study of their own religion (for the Parsi reception of Orientalism, see Sheffield 2018). Kharshedji Rustamji Cama (1831–1909; see Russell 1990), a Parsi businessman, attended some European universities, among others Erlangen, where he studied Old and Middle Iranian languages with Spiegel in 1859. He later translated some of Spiegel’s works and also the writings of some other European scholars into English. After his return to India Cama started to teach philological methods to a number of young Zoroastrian priests, several of whom would later produce valuable studies of ancient Iranian texts, for example Tehmuras Dinshaw Anklesaria (1842–1903; see JamaspAsa and Boyce 1987a), Kavasji Edulji Kanga (1839–1904), and Edulji Kersaspji Antia (1842–1913; see JamaspAsa and Boyce 1987b). Cama also had some impact on the early career of the most famous Zoroastrian theologian of the 20th century, Manekji Nusservanji Dhalla (1875–1956; see JamaspAsa 1996) who went to New York in order to study with Jackson at Columbia University. Dhalla, a priest, was the first Zoroastrian to receive a doctorate from a Western university. After his dissertation on Avestan prayer texts, the *Niyāyišn*, together with their translations in Middle Persian, Sanskrit, and Gujarati (1908), Dhalla published several general works on Zoroastrianism (Dhalla 1914, 1922, 1930a, 1938; on Dhalla see also Hinnells, “The Zoroastrian Diaspora” and Sheffield, “Primary Sources: Gujarati,” this volume).

After Dhalla, a handful of other learned Parsi priests have had exposure to Western universities. An exceptionally early appointment was that of Jehangir Tavadia (1896–1955; see Kotwal and Choksy 2013), a Parsi who received his doctorate at the University of Hamburg and subsequently taught Iranian languages there from 1937 to 1954 (he returned to India in the war years). There were also a number of joint research projects. The most versatile and congenial communication partner for a number of scholars from several countries has been Dastur Feroze Kotwal (b. 1936), a student of Mary Boyce at SOAS where he earned his doctorate, formerly principal of a priestly training college, and now retired head-priest of a fire-temple in Mumbai (for his biography, see Boyce 2013; for his bibliography see Choksy and Dubeansky 2013: xvii–xix). Dastur Kotwal’s skills in Middle Persian and encyclopedic knowledge of Zoroastrian priestly history and practices are universally appreciated as an invaluable source of information (see e.g., his collaboration with Philip Kreyenbroek, “Prayer,” this volume).

The tradition of high priests in India who are knowledgeable in their own tradition as well as trained and proficient in philological approaches, however, seems to be coming to an end. Among the younger priests we cannot see anybody who is qualified and willing to continue the legacy of the scholar-priests. The younger generation is represented by Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia (b. 1965), the Principal of the Dadar Athornan Boarding Madressa in Mumbai (see his personal website www.ramiyarkaranjia.in and Stausberg and Karanjia, “Rituals,” this volume), one of two institutions for the professional training of future Zoroastrian priests.

Turning to 20th-century Iran, the study of the *Avesta* in the framework set by European scholarship started with the nationalist poet Ebrāhīm Pūrdāvūd (1886–1968) who had gone to Europe as a student. In Berlin he married a German and got increasingly interested in Orientalist scholarship. An Indian Zoroastrian organization convinced him to undertake the project of translating the *Gāthās* into modern Persian. Pūrdāvūd stayed in India for two years working on that project; his translation, for which he emphatically rejected any connection to the later Zoroastrian traditions (in order to represent the text in its pristine purity), was based on the work of the European philologists, especially Bartholomae. Pūrdāvūd held the first chair of ancient Iranian literature at the University of Tehrān (see also Stausberg, “Zoroastrianism in Modern Iran,” this volume). He also translated most other Avestan texts into Persian. These translations (still available in Iranian bookshops) have served as a starting point for most subsequent Persian translations of these texts with several learned Persian non-professional scholars still regarding Pūrdāvūd as their inspiration (Marashi 2020).

The history of religions as an academic subject in the modern Western sense is not institutionally grounded in Iran, but some scholars of Iranian studies such as the historian of Persian literature Ṣābiḥ’ollāḥ Ṣafā (1911–1999) have written general books on ancient Iranian religion. There are a number of luminaries of Persian Iranian scholarship whose work has bearings on the study of Zoroastrianism. They have not been mentioned here because they never or rarely published on Zoroastrianism directly. Several works of Western scholars, including books of Nyberg and Boyce, have in recent decades been translated into Persian.

Compared to the *Avesta*, the philological study of the Middle Iranian texts (which are linguistically much closer to modern Persian) has fared much better in Iranian

academia. Two outstanding scholars who have translated important Middle Persian texts into New Persian were Mehrdād Bahār (1930–1994) and Aḥmad Tafāẓẓolī (1937–1997; see Gignoux 2012), whose death under unknown circumstances has given rise to suspicions about the politically sensitive nature of pre-Islamic Iranian studies in contemporary Iran. Both scholars studied with Mary Boyce in London, and Tafāẓẓolī also with Jean Pierre de Menasce (1902–1973; see Gignoux 2014), a major scholar of Middle Persian philology, in Paris. In Iranian academia, the work of both scholars is continued by two of their former collaborators, Jāleh Amūzegār (b. 1939) and Katāyūn Mazdāpūr (b. 1943) respectively. Mazdāpūr is the first Iranian academic scholar from a Zoroastrian background. This may also have laid the ground for her substantial work on the local dialect spoken among the Zoroastrians in Yazd (Mazdāpūr 1995–). There are now also some younger Zoroastrian scholars of Zoroastrianism in Iran: Katāyūn Nemīrānīyān teaches at Šīrāz University and Farzāne Goštāsb (b. 1973) at the Tehrān Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies.

In departments of Iranian studies at Western universities one finds an increasing number of students and staff with Iranian backgrounds but with an academic socialization in Western universities. The same trend can also be seen with regard to the study of Zoroastrianism. There are now Zoroastrians who have received doctorates from the *École pratique des hautes études* (EPHE, Paris), SOAS (London), and Harvard University (including a co-editor of this volume). Jamsheed Choksy (b. 1962), a Parsi raised in Sri Lanka and a Harvard graduate (PhD 1991), is a full professor in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies at Indiana University in Bloomington (see his chapter, “Religious Sites and Physical Structures,” this volume).

The Impact of the Study of Zoroastrianism on Modern Zoroastrianism

While the specialist techniques of linguistic and historical analysis are quite remote from the concerns of believers, the outlines of the ivory tower of the academic study of Zoroastrianism always remain vaguely visible from the point of view of a fair number of Zoroastrians. The high rate of literacy and the advanced educational attainment of the communities keep the barriers between scholars and believers relatively low. We have already noted that several scholars had/have personal ties to Zoroastrians (as suppliers of materials and information, key informants, colleagues, and friends). Moreover, some Zoroastrian organizations, institutions, and individuals have regularly invited scholars to interact. In 2002, two wealthy Parsi ladies from Mumbai produced a massive illustrated volume on Zoroastrian art, religion, and culture, the most up-to-date and complete survey on Zoroastrian history currently available in English (Godrej and Mistree 2002). The sheer number and superb quality of the more than 1,000 illustrations (some conveniently assembled from previous publications, but many originals) will grant this volume a lasting place in libraries of Zoroastrian scholars.

Scholarly writings that are published in English (or in Persian with regard to the Iranian communities) are of course easier to absorb. The attempt to create meaning out

of obscure texts and coherence out of traditional practices as routinely attempted by scholars may seem attractive to a religious community devoid of a group of professional interpreters similar to Jewish rabbis or Christian theologians. This is why scholars of Zoroastrianism with the social capital of the Western academy and the legacies of colonial knowledge production and Orientalism behind them can relatively easily slip into the role of theologians (for a very explicit early case see Haug above and Lawrence H. Mills (1837–1918); see Stausberg 2002c II: 103–104).

Scholars of Zoroastrianism, on their side, in their construction of meaning do not shy away from interpretations that may sometimes seem like theological reconstructions. Kellens has recently – and to our minds rightly – pointed to the recurrent theological concern of Western scholarship (Kellens 2006b: 62). In another publication he has shown that different interpretations of the Avestan adjective *arədra-* (for which he seems to suggest a meaning of ‘competent’) seems to attest the tendency, among his fellow philologists, to be more “Zoroastrian” than Zoroastrian high priests (Kellens 2003: 220).

Apart from this general framework, through figures such as Cama and Dhalla Western scholarship has also had direct impact on modern Zoroastrianism. In these cases, the stimulus of Western interpretations went into programs of ritual and theological reform (Stausberg 2002c II: 104–111; Ringer 2011: 110–141). Especially the philological discovery of the special linguistic status of the *Gāthās* and their interpretation as the authentic words of the “prophet” proved to be a turning point in the religious self-understanding of all modern Zoroastrian groups and communities, both in India and Iran. In India, it also served as an antidote to missionary propaganda (Stausberg 1997; Sheffield 2012: 167–185; see also Palsetia 2006 for responses to conversions to Christianity). The focus on the *Gāthās* and their presumed message (see also Part I of this volume) has encouraged the devaluation of many traditional practices as secondary developments or meaningless additions to the original and authentic kernel. Based on that ideological premise, the social elite of the 20th-century Iranian Zoroastrian community has embraced quite radical religious changes of de-ritualization (see Stausberg, “Zoroastrians in Modern Iran,” this volume). But alternative scholarly approaches may also provide the intellectual backup to go against such changes. Especially the interpretation of Mary Boyce has served as a powerful stimulus to reevaluate the significance of “the tradition” (see above). In India, a former student of Boyce, Khojeste Mistree (for an interview with him, see Kreyenbroek with Munshi 2001: 126–144), some thirty years ago started a traditionalist revitalization movement (called “Zoroastrian studies”) which is now globally active and has set up a wide range of religious and social activities, especially to promote a strong campaign of boundary maintenance (Stausberg 2002c II: 141–144; Luhrmann 2002). His claims of Zoroastrianism as an “ethnic” religion are largely buttressed by citing the views of his teacher, Boyce (Mistree 1982).

Nonetheless, Western scholarship has, in some cases, been rejected as an inadequate approach to truly understanding Zoroastrianism. Fortunately, there have been no campaigns of the sorts faced by some colleagues studying Hinduism, Islam, Bahāʾism, or Sikhism. Relations between scholars and the various Zoroastrian communities are, in general, amicable. In India, the most coherent rejection came from an early

20th-century esoteric movement known as *Ilm-e Khshnoom* ('Path of Enlightenment' or 'Blissful Knowledge'; see Hinnells, "The Parsis," and Sheffield, "Primary Sources: Gujarati," this volume), which suspects, among other objections, that a study of the texts based on comparative grammar is misleading (Stausberg 1998e: 341–343). For example, then Ervad Kaikhusroo N. Dastoor (b. 1927), a retired lawyer who now serves as one of the highest-ranking Zoroastrian priests in India, opined:

The western studies with their 19th century paradigms are incapable of comprehending even the lowest mystical level. Mysticism is a taboo for them. One of their paradigms is that each word of the Gatha must have only one meaning and it has only one message from the Prophet. The confounding oddity is that in spite of this belief, they have as many highly variant translations as there are translators. (Dastoor n.d.)

Dastur Dastoor is correct that Western scholarship is not based on principles of mysticism; the fact that the *Gāthās* have many possible readings is reflected in our editorial decision to showcase different hermeneutical/scholarly approaches to these songs. Like Dastur Dastoor, many believers point to the widely divergent translations of the *Gāthās* as evidence for the failure of academic scholarship to account for the "true meaning" of the "prophet's" words and, hence, for the "essence" of Zoroastrianism. In Iran, the satirist and scholar Zābīḥ Behrūz (1889–1971; see Sprachman 1990) was an antidote to the school founded by Pūrdāvūd. While the latter was derived from Western scholarship (and continues to have relationships with Western scholars), Behrūz rejected Western scholarship as imperialist and Orientalist (and that already prior to Said's anti-Orientalist manifesto). His theories have had a certain influence on Iranian academia and also on Zoroastrians. Similarly, among many Iranian Zoroastrians, the interpretations of Boyce have not evoked much sympathy.

In Russia, where new self-identified Zoroastrian groups have emerged in the post-Soviet period (Tessmann 2012; Stausberg and Tessmann 2013), we find a different line of communication between scholars and believers since some Russian scholars have openly voiced negative views about these emerging religious groups (Tessmann 2012: 124–132).

Emerging Trends in Recent Scholarship

Despite a general tendency to paint gloomy pictures of the general state of scholarship on Zoroastrianism and the personality clashes that have obfuscated constructive discussions in the past, a review of the current state of the art reveals a high degree of new research activities. To us it seems that the past forty years have been the most fruitful decades of Zoroastrian studies so far in its history. While the quality of scholarly work is always a matter of dispute, the sheer range of topics covered by recent research is unprecedented. In a survey article, Stausberg (2008a) has sketched eighteen major subjects of innovative recent research activities. Topics include textual studies, law, astrology, secondary sources, religion and politics, regional diversity in Zoroastrianism, marginalization of Zoroastrianism in Iranian history, impact on and interaction

with other religious traditions, the modern communities in India, Iran, and various “diasporic” settings as well as gender, rituals, and outside reception. Many of these are dealt with in this *Companion* (which, in general, given the fields of specialization of most of our contributors, tends to privilege the pre-modern periods).

Not all of these subjects are new. Textual and philological studies, for example, have a long history. Other subjects, however, had been all but neglected in previous research. In some cases, innovations are reinterpretations of available data based on established methodologies. In other cases, new source materials are being explored for the first time. A third type of innovation results from the application of new methodological and theoretical insights or agendas from other research fields to the study of Zoroastrianism (see e.g., Vevaina 2010b for methodological borrowings from Jewish studies). Sometimes, and predictably, the study of Zoroastrianism begins to explore topics that have achieved a higher status and greater prominence in neighboring fields and the study of religion’s in general. Consider the fields of law, minorities, gender, diasporas, identity, politics, oral literatures, and the emphasis of diversity. Some “turns” have so far hardly been followed up in Zoroastrian studies. Think of the “iconic” or the “auditory” turns and the increasing attention paid to material culture in the study of religion’s. In ancient Iranian history, archaeology remains largely disintegrated from the study of religious history. Much more prosaically, one of the main challenges for progress in the study of Zoroastrianism, however, will be to do essential groundwork in filling the lacunae of hitherto neglected – post-Islamic era – corpora of source materials in Pāzand, Sanskrit, Persian, Gujarati, and even English.

In addition to the existing contributions, we as editors would have liked to have commissioned several additional chapters that we believe would have been useful for specialists and general readers alike. For example, Orientalism and Zoroastrian studies, philology and questions of textual transmission, the visual arts and material culture, the role of religion in (Parsi) literature, questions of boundary maintenance such as conversion and intermarriage, secularization and the breakdown of religious authority structures, and Zoroastrianism and media (from ancient inscriptions and coins to manuscripts, pamphlets, community magazines, fiction, and the internet) are just some of the topics that we were unable to accommodate due to concessions of space or the inability to find scholars who could write those chapters. These topics nonetheless represent desiderata and we hope that the *Companion* will provide a stimulus for new types of questions to be raised and fresh approaches to be pursued in the study of Zoroastrianism in the years to come.

Part I

Zarathustra Revisited

CHAPTER 1

Zarathustra's Time and Homeland Geographical Perspectives

Frantz Grenet

Does the *Avesta* contain any reliable evidence concerning the place where the “real” Zarathustra (i.e., the person repeatedly mentioned in the *Gāthās*) lived? The answer is no. Was Zarathustra's legendary biography associated to specific regions? The answer is probably yes, as far as one line of the Zoroastrian tradition is concerned. Can we determine the regional and, to a certain extent, the archaeological context where his followers lived a few centuries later, before they entered recorded history? The answer is definitely yes.

Zarathustra's Time and Homeland: Approximations and Dead Ends

The only relatively reliable criterion – allowing for a certain degree of latitude – for attributing a date to the historical Zarathustra is a linguistic one based on the evident archaisms of the *Gāthās* (and other Old Avestan texts in which his name does not appear), in comparison with the *Young Avesta*. The archaeological evidence is generally assumed to be of a negative character as far as the *Old Avesta* is concerned. As we will see, the archaeological situation of the regions where Zarathustra is generally supposed to have lived (i.e., southern Central Asia) does not correspond to what can be inferred from the *Old Avesta*. The Young Avestan corpus, in the form that it has come down to us, can neither be far more ancient nor far more recent than the Old Persian of the Achaemenid inscriptions (i.e., the 6th century BCE). The late Gherardo Gnoli, quite isolated in this contention, argued for Zarathustra's date being c. 620–c. 550 BCE as

given by the Zoroastrian tradition and also reflected in Greek, Hebrew, Manichean, and Islamic sources (“258 years before Alexander,” a figure for which indeed no convincing explanation has been proposed) (Gnoli 2000; response by Kellens 2001b). Almost all the philologists today consider that the evolution between Old and Young Avestan requires a gap of several and perhaps many centuries. Estimations by authoritative specialists vary from 1700–1200 BCE (Skjærvø 1994) to 1200–1000 BCE (Kellens 1998: 512–513).

The vocabulary of the Old Avestan texts also offers some indications. The material realities are entirely pastoral: one finds a mention of “dwelled-in abodes” (*šiiētibiiō vižibiiō*, Y 53.8) but we find no references to towns, temples, canals, or farming (except one possible mention of *yauua-* ‘barley’, ‘grain’, or ‘beer’, Y 49.1). Not one recognizable geographical name is mentioned. This picture seems to rule out southern Central Asia, where an urban civilization – the so-called Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex or BMAC – based on man-made irrigation flourished in the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE and left a certain cultural heritage in the second half. In particular, this consideration does not leave much room for Sistān, which has been proposed by some (Gnoli 1980: 129–158). Attempts to recognize manifestations of a “proto-Zoroastrianism” – a less than agreed upon concept – in the palatial sanctuaries of the Merv oasis in the early second millennium (e.g., Sarianidi 2008) are rejected by almost all other archaeologists (Francfort 2005: 277–281). On the other hand, older proposals to recognize the Gathic language as the direct ancestor of Chorasmian (Henning 1956: 42–45) have now been abandoned. All things considered, our chronological and cultural parameters tend to suggest locating Zarathustra (or, at least, the “Gathic community”) in the northern steppes in the Bronze Age period, prior to the southward migration of the Iranian tribes (Boyce 1992: 27–51), thus favoring some variant of the Andronovo pastoralist culture of present-day Kazakhstan around c. 1500–1200 BCE (but see Kuz'mina 2007: 349–450 for an original location of the Iranian tribes in the Urals and westwards). The complete absence of any material remains related to that religion in the area and period under discussion does not contradict the hypotheses formulated here, as it is generally held that Zoroastrian ritual practitioners did not feel the need for any permanent architectural structures before the late Achaemenid period.

The Location of the Legendary Zarathustra

Greek authors appear to have been acquainted with traditions according to which Zarathustra originated from Bactria (references gathered in Jackson 1899: 154–157, 186–188; Boyce 1992: 1–26). On the other hand, the traditions preserved in the Pahlavi books mention either Azerbaijan or the place “Rag,” sometimes explicitly identified as Ray in Media, as his birthplace. In order to reconcile these accounts some commentators state flatly that “Ray is in Azerbaijan” (e.g., *PVd* 1.15; *Bd* 33.28), which contradicts Sasanian administrative geography. As for Vīštāspa’s “kingdom” where Zarathustra is supposed to have moved subsequently, it is sometimes identified with Sistān (*Abdīh ud Sahīgīh ī Sagestān*), though other traditions mention Samarkand (*Šē* 1) or Bactria (the version echoed in the Iranian national epic of Ferdowsī).

Only the claim of “Rag” is found in texts which can safely be held as deriving from passages in the *Young Avesta*, most probably the lost *Spand Nask* which is the direct or indirect source of all the legendary biographies of Zarathustra (*Dk* 7.2.9–10, 7.2.51, 7.3.19; *WZ* 10.14–15). Modern authors have, in general, followed the tradition in identifying this place as Ray in Media. Gnoli (1980: 64–66), then Grenet (2002b; 2005: 36–38), consider it a different place located in the eastern Iranian countries, like all “Aryan countries” mentioned in the list of *Vd* 1 (see the following section). Indeed the “Rag” of the Pahlavi books stems from *rayā θrizantu* ‘Rayā of the three tribes’ mentioned as the twelfth country of this list (*Vd* 1.15). The Ahremanic plague attributed to it is *uparō.vimānah-*, generally translated as ‘extreme doubts’. In another Avestan passage (*Y* 19.18) it is stated that Rayā is the only country which has only four “masters” (*ratu*) instead of the usual five: one for the family / house, one for the clan / village, one for the tribe, and above them Zarathustra himself, but no master for the country as such. Consequently it is called *zaraθuštriš* ‘belonging to Zarathustra’ or ‘Zoroastrian’. These two sets of characteristics have provided the foundations for an imposing edifice, built step by step by successive scholars. In the last elaboration of this theory (Humbach 1991 I: 45–46), Rayā, a city in Media, would have become “a sort of Mazdayasnian Vatican whose pope called ‘Zarathustra’ is simultaneously the worldly ruler of the country and its supreme religious authority.” As for the “extreme doubts,” they would refer to theological disputes characteristic of such a major spiritual center. But these theories have recently been exposed to philological criticism: the expression understood as “extreme doubts” could rather mean something more mundane, probably “neighbourhood quarrels” (Kellens *apud* Grenet 2005: 36). In fact, the same epithet is also used for Nisāiia, that is, Juzjān (*Vd* 1.7), where nobody has ever proposed to locate a great Zoroastrian theological school. As for the country “belonging to Zarathustra” or to some holder of this title, one should not speculate on the meaning, which might represent no more than a scholastic conclusion inferred from its political fragmentation: *rayā θrizantu-* ‘of the three tribes’, was, it seems, a divided country not organized above the tribal level. Therefore, the only possible master for its whole Mazdean population might have been no other than Zarathustra himself, the archetype of every Mazdean man. This last circumstance, which probably initially had no particular bearing on Zarathustra’s biography, eventually gave rise to the idea that Rayā was his homeland.

In fact, this pseudo-biographical elaboration went further. Both *Dk* Book 7 and the *Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspram* (which also drew from the *Spand Nask*) describe how Zarathustra had the vision of Vohu Manah. These accounts are loaded with topographical details, which could provide a decisive clue to the actual location of the country of Rayā. In *WZ* 20.1–21.4 we find:

It is revealed that after the passing by of thirty years since he existed, after Nowruz, there was a festival called Wahār-būdag, in a place particularly well known where people from many directions had come to the festive place On the passing away of the five days at the festive place ..., Zarathustra went forth to the bank of the river Dāitiā in order to squeeze the *haoma* The river was in four channels and Zarathustra crossed them, the first one was up to the feet, the second up to the knees, the third up to the parting of the two thighs,

the fourth up to the neck When he came out of the water and put up his cloth, he saw the Amahraspand Wahman in human form.

If we look along the actual course of the Daryā-ye Panj, the river bordering present-day Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and to which the name of the Varjhuuī Dāitiīā was attached since at least the Achaemenid period (see below the section on the Airiianəm Vaējah), we find one ford which corresponds very well to this description. This ford, known as the Samti or Badakhshān ford, has always had a great importance, as it provided the main passage between the Kulyāb plain in the north and the high valleys of western Badakhshān in the south. It was thus described in a geographical account derived from British intelligence in the 19th century: “The river which is here divided into four channels with only a few paces of dry land between them is fordable. The current is rapid in the two middle channels, and the water waist deep” (Adamec 1972: 148). Even more interesting for our purpose is the fact that the region immediately to the southeast of the ford is still known as Rāgh, a name already attested since the 7th century CE by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (602–644 CE), who listed it as a separate political entity (Watters 1904–1905 II: 273). In the 19th century this country is described as a confederation of separate valleys (Adamec 1972: 139–140), which calls to mind the “Raghā of the three tribes” in *Vd* 1.15. In the only fragment of Zarathustra’s legend preserved in the Avestan language (*Vd* 19.4), Rayā is not named but Zarathustra’s father’s house is said to stand ‘on the meander of the Darəjī’ (*darəjiia paiti zbarahi*). It is at least tempting to identify this river with the Dargoidos mentioned by Ptolemy (*Geography* 6.11.2), in a position corresponding to the present Kokcha, the Rud-e Badakhshān in north-eastern Afghanistan.

To conclude: Rāgh in Badakhshān has a stronger claim than Ray in Media to be the Rayā of the *Vd* 1 list. The authors of the *Spand Nask*, perhaps dating from the late Achaemenid period, were, to judge from derived Pahlavi writings, well informed of the geography of Eastern Bactria and willing to promote the claims of this country as Zarathustra’s homeland.

The Geographical Horizon of the *Young Avesta*

It has long been recognized that some of the *Yašts* have a very precise setting in some east Iranian countries, albeit different ones in each case. The *Mīhr Yašt* clearly centered on the Bāmiyān and Band-e Amīr area, upon which Mithra’s gaze surveys those “Aryan countries” stretching along the rivers which spring from the central Hindukush. On the other side, the *Zamyād Yašt* continuously celebrates the area now known as Sistān, with its rivers flowing into the Hāmūn Lake; here the ultimate saviors will eventually come on Mount Ušidarəna, the mountain “with reddish cracks,” an appropriate descriptive epithet for the Kūh-e Khvāje Island where an important Zoroastrian sanctuary stood in the Parthian and Sasanian periods.

Besides these pieces of regional patriotism, the *Young Avesta* contains what purports to be a comprehensive list of countries created by Ahura Mazdā, each affected by a specific plague sent by Ahreman. This list constitutes the first chapter of the *Vīdēvdād*.

In the following list the name of the country is given in bold, followed by its Ohrmazdian characteristics (positive or neutral), then its Ahremanic ones.

1. **Airīianəm Vaējah**: 'Aryan rapids(?) of the Good (river) Dāitiā' / red snake (or dragon), demons-created winter (gloss: which lasts ten months);
2. **Gāuuu**: inhabited by the *suḡḡa*- 'Sogdians' / thorns fatal to the cows;
3. **Mouru (Margiana)**: strong, supporting the religious order / [unclear];
4. **Bāxōi (Bactria)**: beautiful, with uplifted banners / Barvara people and [unclear];
5. **Nisāiia**: lying between Margiana and Bactria / evil [neighborhood] discords;
6. **Harōiuua (Herāt)**: [unclear] / [unclear];
7. **Vaēkarəta**: inhabited by the *dužaka* / the *pairikā xnaθaitī* whom Kərəsāspa seduced;
8. **Urvā**: rich in pastures / evil masters;
9. **Xnəpta**: inhabited by the Vəhrkāna(?) people / sodomy;
10. **Harax'aitī (Arachosia)**: beautiful [with uplifted banners] / neglectful abandonment of corpses (*nasuspaia*);
11. **Haētumañt (Helmand)**: rich, possessing the *x'arənah* 'fortune, charisma' / evil sorcerers;
12. **Rayā**: of the three tribes / evil neighborhood discords;
13. **Caxra**: strong, supporting the religious order / cooking of carrion;
14. **Varəna**: with four corners (gloss: birthplace of Əraētaona who killed Aži Dahāka) / untimely menstruations, non-Aryan masters;
15. **Hapta Həndu**: [no Ohrmazdian characteristic] / untimely menstruations, excessive heat;
16. **Over (...) the Raḡhā**: [no Ohrmazdian characteristic] / demons-created winter, plunderer overlords.

The list starts with the country called Airīianəm Vaējah where winter lasts ten months, and it ends up with another country also affected by harsh winters, the Raḡhā. Of a total of sixteen countries, seven have always been identified beyond any doubt, as they kept their names until historical times or even today. Four of these countries are at the beginning of the list, directly following Airīianəm Vaējah: Gava-Sogdiana, Margiana, Bactria, Nisāiia said to be "between Margiana and Bactria" and therefore corresponding to Juzjān in northwest Afghanistan. Then comes the sixth country of the list, Harōiuua (the Herāt region). In addition, the tenth and eleventh countries are respectively Arachosia, the Qandahār region, named by its river Harax'aitī and Sistān, named by the Helmand River.

Almost all these countries are situated beyond the present borders of Iran, to the east and northeast. The only exception is Sistān, and only for its westernmost part. It is only possible to draw the Iranian plateau into the picture of early Zoroastrianism by recognizing one or several of these regions in the remaining countries in the list. This has been the tendency of Zoroastrian scholarship since the Sasanian commentators of the *Avesta*, and all modern scholars have followed this viewpoint until the postwar period. But Gnoli (1987) has brilliantly argued for a scheme that pushes the list definitively outside the boundaries of Iran and substantially into Pakistan, with the Hapta Həndu

recognized as the “seven rivers” (*Sapta Sindhava*) of the *Rigveda*, that is Punjab plus the Indus plus the Kābul River. Since then, attempts have been made to reinsert some countries of the Iranian plateau (at least Gorgān and the Median Ray, see Humbach 1991 I: 33–36; Witzel 2000).

Vogelsang (2000) then Grenet (2005) have argued for a return to Gnoli’s conclusions, keeping in mind that some progress can be made using the same principles as he did. These principles are: first, a skeptical attitude towards identifications in Pahlavi texts, most of which were clearly motivated by mythic relocalizations of the tradition to more central regions of the Sasanian Empire. Second, great attention has to be paid to the geographical characterization of the countries as they appear in the list. Sketchy as they are, they sometimes offer precious clues to anybody familiar with geographic conditions in Central Asia. To these methodological points one should add the recognition of a simple and logical order. This was in fact the weak point in Gnoli’s system: in particular, the middle part of the list as he reconstitutes it seems to proceed in huge zigzags, for example moving from Urvā in the Ghaznī region to Xneṭa, put in eastern Bactria on the basis of slim evidence from the Greek author Ctesias, then leapfrogging to Arachosia and Sistān. Moreover, the subsequent sequence, namely Rayā–Caxra–Varāna, is made to go in the opposite direction from the preceding one, because Gnoli wants to put the particularly holy place Caxra as close as possible to Sistān, which he considered the real focal point of the *Vīdēvdād* list.

Before reconsidering the list entirely, it might be worth examining the starting point, namely Airiianəm Vaējah, more precisely the “Airiianəm Vaējah of the Good River.” If this country is in central Afghanistan, as assumed by Gnoli and most modern scholars, one wonders what the “Good River” can be. This difficulty was first challenged when it was adduced by Steblin-Kamenskii (1978) that the name of the “Good River,” Varḡhuuī, had survived until the early 20th century under the form Wakh, transcribed by the Greeks as the Ochos, and designating the river today known as the Daryā-ye Panj on the upper course of the Oxus. The latter name, which eventually spread to the whole river downstream, initially belonged to a right-hand side tributary still known locally as the Wakhsh. Consequently, the cold country of the *airiianəm vaējō varḡhuuīā dāitiiaiiā*, best translated as ‘the Aryan rapids of the Good River’, would correspond rather well to the water system of the Pamirs and the pre-Pamirian highlands.

It is now time to reconsider the entire list of countries. If we take the Pamirian region as its starting point, it appears that the first part of the list, in which all countries can be easily identified, displays an order that is quite simple. As can be seen on Figure 1.1, there are neither to and fro movements nor important gaps, but rather several continuous sequences arranged in an anticlockwise order. The first chain of countries comprises Sogdiana, then Margiana; therefore it moves along the Good River, the Oxus. It is worth mentioning that Sogdiana, which occupies the second place in the list, has recently provided the earliest archaeological evidence compatible with Zoroastrian cult practices: from the pre-Achaemenid period, post-exarnation grave pits at Dzgharkutan near Termez (Bendezu-Sarmiento and Lhuillier 2013/2015: 283–317); from the Achaemenid period, a deposit of exarnated bones of humans and dogs at Samarkand (unpublished excavations by Igor’ Ivanitskii 1992) and a few sanctuaries centered on a fire place, one at Sangirtepe near Shahrīsabz (Rapin and Khasanov 2013: 48–51), a plausible one at

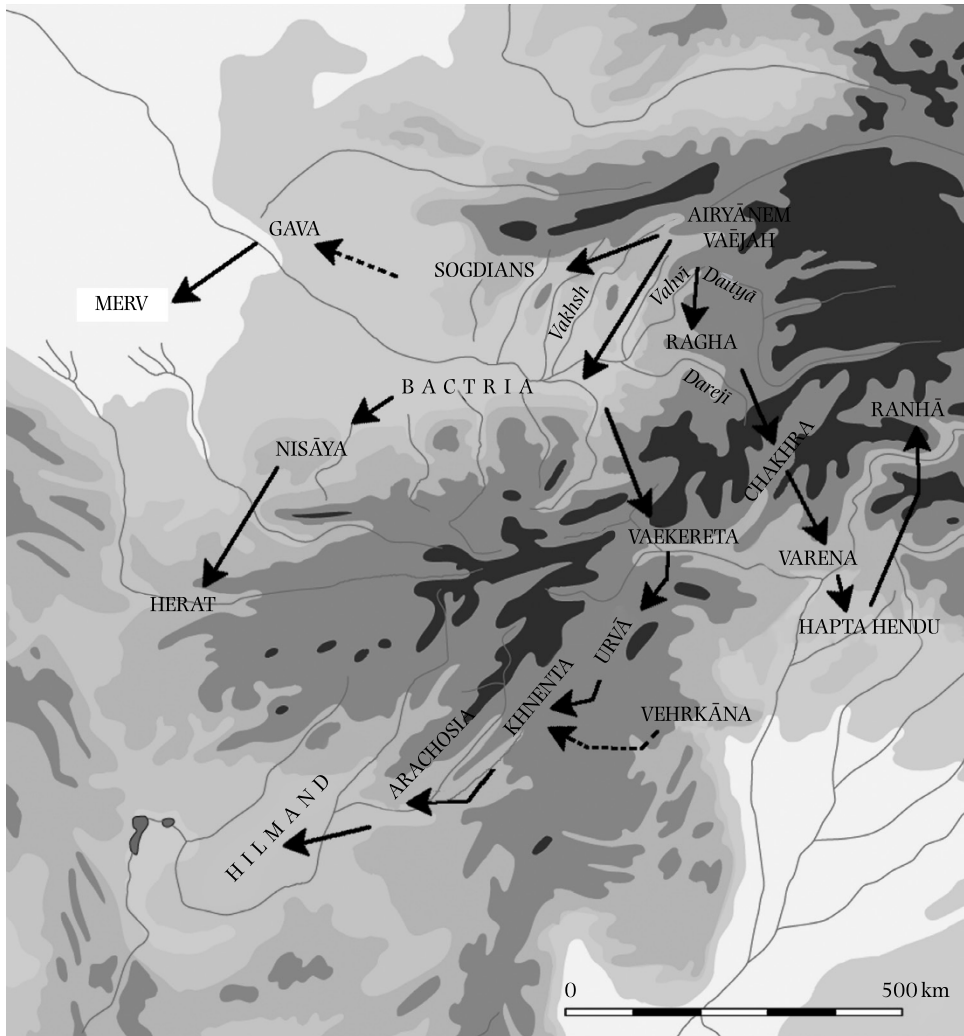


Figure 1.1 Chains of countries in the first chapter of the *Vīdēvdād*.

Koktepe near Samarkand (Rapin 2007: 36–42 with figure 4), and another one at Kindiktepe near Termez (Boroffka 2009: 138–141 with figure 11; see now Rapin 2017: 417–460).

The second chain, starting again from near the Pamir, comprises Bactria, Juzjān, and Herāt. It proceeds along the northern foothills of the Hindukush. In Bactria the urban site Češme-ye Šafā has provided the only example of an Achaemenid stone fire altar known to date, a monumental structure set in a building (Grenet 2008 [2012]: 30 with figure 1).

After this section come the countries Vaēkərəta, Urvā, Xnənta, followed by the more familiar Arachosia and Sistān. It has long been recognized that Vaēkərəta is most likely the same country as the one inhabited by the spirit Vaikṛtika in the Buddhist text *Mahāmāyurī* (72), namely Kapisa, the Kābul region. This brings us back again to the

foot of the Pamir, while the two last names on this section invite us to look for a location on the southern foothills of the Hindukush. Consequently, Urvā should correspond to the Ghazni region. Two arguments militate in favor of this identification. First, Urvā is also mentioned in the *Zamyād Yašt* (Yt 19.67) as a river eventually feeding the Hāmūn Lake, and in popular conception the Ghazni River was considered as linked in some way with the Arghandāb. An even more cogent argument comes from its specific epithet “rich in pastures.” The 19th-century travelers all mentioned the capacity of the plain immediately to the north of Ghazni for maintaining a huge cavalry, and more to the west the Dašt-e Nāvūr is still today a major summer station for Pashtun nomads. The next country, “Xnəṭta inhabited by the Vəhrkāna,” would be grossly out of place in Gorgān, where some modern commentators of the *Vīdēvdād* list have tried to place it. Their assumption is based on the presence of a common ethnonym *vṛk* ‘wolf’ and on the proposed emendation of Xnəṭta to *Xrənda, later Hirand, today the river of Gorgān. But tribal names formed on a base “(of) wolves” are quite widespread and, for example, we know of some of them in Wazīristān: the *vṛkī* mentioned in the *Rigveda*, and possibly the place-name Urgun. The Avesta Xnəṭta is therefore to be located near this region, more precisely in the Tarnak valley, set between the Ghazni and Arghandāb rivers, and where the Wazīristān herdsmen have their winter pastures.

The last chain of countries starts with Rāgh in Badakhshān and eventually brings us to northern India, the Hapta Həṇḍu. An isolated attempt to shift this country to the upper Oxus basin (Humbach 1991 I: 34 n. 52) is implausible in view of the Ahremanic plague of Hapta Həṇḍu: the “excessive heat.” The preceding country, Varəna, which shares the same evil, has been identified with Buner on the basis of the *Mahāmāyurī* list, which has already provided the decisive clue regarding Vaēkərəta. Between Rayā and Varəna comes Caxra, which logically would correspond to Chitral. There is, however, a possible southern alternative with the Lōgar valley near Kābul, as its town is still called Chakhr. In this case Varəna could correspond not to Buner but to Bannu, which was also called Varnu in Indian literature. In any case, the list eventually ends up near its starting point with the last country: Raḡhā, Indian Rasā, where winter lasts long as in the Airiianəm Vaējah. This country is endowed with mythological features, but it also has some basis in reality, namely being an upper tributary of the Indus.

These few points of uncertainty do not break the logical construction of the list: it is a group of four sequences each starting from the same area and each arranged according to the principle of continuity. This is exactly the underlying principle of the list of countries in the inscriptions of Darius (DB), except that the general order is clockwise in the inscriptions and anticlockwise in the *Vīdēvdād*.

A second observation is the total exclusion of the Iranian plateau. Everything stops on the Merv–Herāt–Sistān line. As a cluster of countries, it seems to prefigure two historical formations which were later created by horsemen descended from the north: the Indo-Scythian kingdoms in the 1st century BCE, then the early Hephthalite Empire in the 5th century CE. The early list in the *Vīdēvdād* bears witness to a period when the main focus of the Zoroastrian priests, or maybe rulers, was still along the Indian border, with combined or alternating phases of defense and encroachment. This impression is reinforced by the mention of “non-Aryan rulers” as the specific plague of Varəna, or “plunderer lords” in Raḡhā. No wonder the *Avesta* associates these southeastern

countries with typical “frontier-heroes”: the dragon-slayer *Θraētaona*, born in *Varəna*, and *Kərəsāspa*, connected with *Vaēkərəta*, who vanquished bandits and demons near Lake *Pišinah*, still existing with this name to the South of *Qandahār*. The grazing lands of southeast Afghanistan are in fact overrepresented in the list, suggesting a horizon centered on *Arachosia* (which, on completely independent grounds, is held as being the region from where the Avestan tradition was introduced in Persia under the early Achaemenids; see Hoffmann and Narten 1989). The latter place, *Haraxvaitī*, is described as being “with uplifted banners,” an epithet it shares only with *Bactria*. Indeed in the Achaemenid and probably even pre-Achaemenid period the sites of *Qandahār* and *Bactra* match each other on both sides of the *Hindukush*. They were the largest fortified sites in this period, suitable for military and religious gatherings.

At the time of the composition of *Vd* 1 the reception of the Zoroastrian faith by the Medes, then by the first Achaemenids, still lay ahead, or maybe it was not a primary concern from the viewpoint of those who composed the text. *Deioces* (the first Median king), *Cyrus*, and *Darius* were still very much in the wings. It is difficult to imagine that this text was composed anywhere other than in South Afghanistan and anytime later than the middle of the 6th century BCE.

Further Reading

A decisive turn in the approach to these questions was taken by Gnoli (1980), who presented and assessed all the previous literature on the subject. He was the first to adduce the results of archaeological research in southeast Iran and Central Asia and to locate all countries mentioned in the *Young Avesta* to the east of the Iranian plateau. Concerning Zarathustra's date he subsequently rallied to the late date transmitted by the Zoroastrian tradition (Gnoli 2000,

a position already held by Henning 1956). The present author does not follow him in this step. The discussion which followed Gnoli (1980) is summarized in Grenet (2005), where all relevant references can be found. The views presented here concerning the *Rayā* country were put forward by the author in previous articles and are not necessarily shared by others, though no refutation has been published hitherto.

CHAPTER 2

Zarathustra's Time and Homeland Linguistic Perspectives

Almut Hintze

Zoroastrianism, like any religion or cultural system, may be studied from either the internal or the external point of view. The internal, or emic, perspective arises from investigating the religion from within the system, as from the point of view of one of its adherents. By contrast, the external, or etic, perspective is that of the outside observer (Headland, Pike, and Harris 1990; Knott 2010).

From the internal perspective, after earlier attempts involving other individuals, including Yima (*Vd* 2.2) and Gaiiō Marətan (*Yt* 13.87; Stausberg 2012c), the god Ahura Mazdā communicated the Mazdayasnian religion most successfully to humankind through a man named Zarathustra. He conveyed it in the form of the *Avesta*, and especially the *Ahuna Vairiia* (or *Yaθā Ahū Vairiīō*) prayer (*Y* 27.13). Zarathustra was 'born' (*zātō Vd* 19.46) the son of Pourušaspa and Duyδōuuā (*FrD* 4), and his birth marks the end of the lawless and violent power of the *daēuuas*, or 'demons', and the beginning of the spreading of the Mazdayasnian religion on earth (*Yt* 19.80–81, 13.94). His followers acknowledge Ahura Mazdā as their god and Zarathustra as their role model by declaring themselves to be 'Mazdayasnian Zarathustrian(s)' (*mazdaiiasnō zaraθuštriš Y* 12.1). They perceive the birth of Zarathustra to be a turning point in world history, which is divided into the periods before and after Zarathustra. As soon as Zarathustra is born, Evil, embodied by Anra Mainiiu and his minions, the *daēuuas*, starts to withdraw from the surface of the earth and hide underground. Its eventual complete removal is the culmination and end (*frašō.kərati-*) of world history.

From the external perspective Zoroastrianism is viewed in its relationship to the history and prehistory of the oldest Iranian languages and religions. The sources, which include the sacred texts and literature produced by adherents of the religion, are examined with a view to contextualizing them in space and time and understanding their languages and conceptual worlds. Furthermore, the examination includes investigating how what we observe from an external point of view relates to the beliefs upheld by

insiders. In view of the fact that the earliest mention of the name of Zarathustra is in a Greek source dating from the mid-5th century BCE (Kingsley 1995), and that outside the *Avesta* there is no evidence for the person Zarathustra from the presumably prehistoric times of the religion's inception, the question of his time and homeland is essentially that of the date and provenance of the earliest expression of Zoroastrianism, the *Avesta*.

Linguistic analysis shows that the *Avesta* is comprised of texts dating from different periods (Skjærvø 2003–2004; Hintze 2009a). The oldest stratum is formed by the *Ahuna Vairiia* prayer (Y 27.13), the *Gāthās* (Y 28–34, 43–51, 53) the *Ā Airiīōma Išiiā* or *Airiīaman* prayer (Y 54.1) and the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* (Y 35.2–41). In recent years arguments have been put forward for a middle layer, termed Middle Avestan (Tremblay 2006b; Kellens 2007b: 104–110, but see the caveats of Skjærvø 2009: 45), which includes the 'Formula of the Cattle Breeder' (*Fšūšō Maθrō* Y 58) and some other texts, and which would represent the ancestor of the youngest stratum, usually referred to as the *Young(er) Avesta*. As no absolute dates for any of these texts are available, any dating has to be based on a relative chronology, on the one hand, of how the various strata of Avestan texts relate to one another, and, on the other, of how such strata relate to literature in related languages, particularly Old Persian and Vedic Sanskrit. The question of the date of the *Old(er) Avesta* is connected with that of its homeland if it is assumed that it originated in Proto-Iranian times when the Iranians were still one people and before they migrated southwards into Iran, presumably in the course of the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE (Schmitt 1987). As the *Avesta* is the vehicle of the Zoroastrian religion, its presence in any given area is taken as an indication of the practice of those beliefs there.

External Evidence for the *Avesta*

The earliest absolute dates of texts in any Iranian language come from the beginning of the reign of the Achaemenid king Darius the Great (522–486 BCE), who recorded his ascension to power in Elamite, Babylonian, and Old Persian rock inscriptions at Bīsotūn in Media (Huyse 2009). The religious affiliation of the Achaemenids has been much debated, but compelling evidence suggests that they were familiar with the *Avesta* (Skjærvø 1999, 2005a; Lincoln 2012b; but doubted by de Jong 2005: 88–90). That the Mazdayasnian religion was firmly established in western Iran and Asia Minor by the beginning of the Achaemenid period also emerges from the accounts of the Persian religion and its customs by the Greek historian Herodotus (c. 480–425 BCE; de Jong 1997: 76–120) and from the invocation of the *ahurānīš*, an epithet of the waters in the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*, found in the Aramaic version of the trilingual inscription from Xanthos in Lycia, dating from 358 BCE and discovered in 1973 (Boyce and Grenet 1991: 476; Hintze 2007: 235).

The earliest evidence for *mazdā*- 'Wise One' as the name of a deity is widely thought to be found in the collocation ^Pas-sa-ra ^Dma-za-āš in the neo-Assyrian cuneiform tablet K252, col. 9, line 23 (Menzel 1981 II: T122). Although the document comes from the library of Assurbanipal (668–c. 630 BCE), it could be a copy of a middle-Assyrian text. If, as is widely assumed, the expression represented the two parts of the name of the principal Zoroastrian god *ahura- mazdā*- (Dandamaev and Lukonin 1989: 321–322), then the case ending would be marked only in the second half. However, since the

assumption of a compound equivalent to OP *A^huramazdā* is difficult to reconcile with both the fact that in the Assyrian form *s* has not changed to *h*, whereas it does elsewhere in Iranian, and that the determinative DINGIR marks each of the two words as a separate divine name, one might consider the possibility that two, rather than one, Iranian divinities are intended. Since in most, though not all, cases on the tablet each line presents a separate deity, the two divine names could have constituted a fixed collocation. The expression would then be a rendering of what in Old Avestan is **ahurā* 'the lords', the plural being formed, like OAv. *mašiiā* 'mortals', with the ending of the Indo-European collective, and *mazdā* 'the Wise one'. The Gathic formula *mazdāscā ahurāñhō* has been shown to result from the inversion of an earlier (unattested) invocation **ahurāhah mazdāscā* 'O lords and the Wise one' (Narten 1982: 55–58, 65–66). The Assyrian *pas-sa-ra ma-za-āš* 'the lords, the Wise one', then lists the two parts of the uninverted collocation asyndetically in the nominative and in their proto-Iranian phonetic shape. The assumption that the pan-Iranian sound change of IIr. **s* > Iranian *h* was still in progress at the time Iranian speaking tribes moved into western Iran agrees with the hypothesis that such a phonetic development also affected geographical names in the Indo-Iranian borderlands when the Iranians adopted them from earlier Indo-Aryan inhabitants. The hypothesis entails that immigrating tribes of Iranian tongue would have taken over names such as *sārasvatī-*, *sarāyu-* from the earlier, Proto-Indo-Aryan population which by then would have migrated further into India. The names were subsequently subject to Iranian sound laws, including the change **s* > *h*, and eventually resulted in Av. *harax^aaitī-*, OP *harauvatiš*, the name of the country Arachosia, and YAv. *harōiuua-*, OP *haraiva-* (< IIr. **saraiua-*), NP *harē*, the present day region of Herat (Hintze 1998b: 144–149).

While *ahura-*, corresponding to Vedic *ásura-*, is inherited from Indo-Iranian (Hale 1986), this is probably not so in the case of *mazdā-* because there is no Vedic deity of the name **medhā-* 'Wise one', although personified *medhā-* might be attested in a personal name (Hintze 1998a: 156, fn. 58). However, the fact that the invocation *mazdāscā ahurāñhō* is used not only in its original vocative function 'O Wise one and the lords' (Y 30.9) but also as the subject of a sentence (Y 31.4) indicates that it was already being treated as a petrified formula and no longer felt to be part of the living language at the time the *Gāthās* were composed. This suggests that the collocation, and hence also the divine name *mazdā-*, already existed in the pre-Gathic religion (Narten 1982: 62–66; 1996: 83–87). A characteristic innovation of the religion of the *Avesta* is that the worship of Mazdā is coupled with the rejection of the gods of the Indo-Iranians, the *daēuuas*. The mindset of a person who sacrifices to Mazdā, the *daēnā- māzdaiiasni-*, is opposed to that of those who sacrifice to the *daēuuas*, the *daēnā- daēuuaiiasnanqm*. The fact that the adjective *māzdaiiasni-* was formed by means of an archaic derivational mechanism no longer productive in historical times points towards the prehistoric origins of the religion of the *Avesta* (Benveniste 1970; Hintze 2013b: 24, 28 fn.18).

The language of the *Avesta*, which constitutes the earliest surviving document of any Iranian language, is so closely related to that of the earliest sources of the Hindu tradition, the Vedic texts, that it is possible to find not only words but entire phrases which may be transposed from one idiom into the other merely by observing phonological rules (Sims-Williams 1998: 126). In the absence of absolute dates for

any of these sources and on the basis of a relative chronology most scholars assume that the Vedic texts cover a time span of approximately one thousand years, from c. 1500 to 500 BCE, with the oldest texts, the hymns of the *Rigveda*, being composed between 1500 and 1200 BCE, and the three other *Samhitās* somewhat later, between 1000 and 800 BCE (Jamison 1991: 1–16). Iranian loan words in Vedic sources have been adduced to provide clues for establishing the approximate time by which specific Young(er) Avestan forms had developed, although details remain uncertain. In particular, the *Atharvaveda*, which is generally dated around 1000 BCE, mentions the name of the tribe of the *bāhlika-* (AV 5.22), a people thought to be the Bactrians located in the far north-west of the Vedic tribes. The Vedic form seems to be borrowed from the local Iranian name of Bactria (Witzel 1980: 91). In the Bactrian language sources the name βαχλο is attested in the 4th century CE on Kushano-Sasanian coins and in a letter written on leather (BDNA cd). Although there is currently no evidence for another Bactrian word containing the cluster -xl-, βαχλο could result by regular sound development from *bāxθrī-, with -xl- < *-xθr-, just as -rl- < *-rθr- in ορλαγνο ‘Vərəθrayna’ and μορλο ‘death’ < *mṛθra- (Sims-Williams 2007: 19, 74–75, 202, 235). Since in the *Avesta* the form expected according to Avestan sound laws would be *bāxδrī-, cf. the noun *baxδra-* ‘share’, the actual Young(er) Avestan form of the name of Bactria, *bāxδī-*, could be a Bactrian dialect form, with -δ- either substituting non-Avestan -l- (Witzel 1980: 113, fn. 78a) or representing the middle step, which cannot be later than the early Achaemenid period, of the specifically Bactrian shift of post-consonantal θr > δ > l (de Blois 2013: 270; Tremblay 2004: 137). Vedic *bāhlika-* would then, like Av. *bāxδī-*, be based on the Bactrian dialect form, but it is difficult to imagine that the phonological developments exemplified by the form βαχλο should have taken place as early as around 1000 BCE. It is conceivable that the Bactrian dialect form *bāxδī-* entered the recitation of the *Avesta* at some point in the course of the east Iranian oral tradition, just as features of other dialects did (see below), and a similar scenario might need to be considered for the *Atharvaveda* form *bāhlika-*.

An instance of an Iranian form in Vedic texts is the verb *šavati-*, which in the Late Vedic *Nirukta* is said to mean ‘to go’ in the language of the Kambojas, a people of the Indo-Iranian borderlands. The stem of the form agrees with YAv. *šauua-* ‘sets in motion’, in which the initial IIR cluster *čī- has become palatal ś̌ (< ś̌ < *čī), as compared to śī- in OAv. *šīiauuu-* and čī- in Ved. *cyáva-* (Witzel 1980: 92; Boyce 1991: 129–130). However, since the development of *čī- to ś- and the form *šav-* ‘to go’ are not restricted to YAv. but are attested in Bactrian, Sogdian, and other Middle Iranian languages, Ved. *šavati* is not conclusive either.

Linguistic and Literary Relationship between the *Older* and *Younger Avesta*

Significant phonetic and morphological differences between the language systems of Old and Younger Avestan and Old Persian require the assumption of considerable diachronic (temporal) and diatopic (regional) dimensions of the texts. In comparison to Old Avestan, Young(er) Avestan generally represents a more advanced stage of language

development. Most notably, the Old Avestan verb with its distinct present, aorist, and perfect stems still functions along the lines of the IE tense-aspect system. The Young(er) Avestan and Old Persian verb, by contrast, has virtually lost the aorist and developed a temporal present–preterite system based on the present stem. The relationship between Old and Young(er) Avestan is subject to an ongoing debate. The model according to which Younger Avestan is the chronological successor to Old Avestan (de Vaan 2003: 8–10) contrasts with the view that Old and Younger Avestan descend from one common Proto-Avestan ancestor. The latter model is supported with reference to dialectal differences between Old and Younger Avestan. Such differences include instances in which Younger Avestan agrees with Vedic against Old Avestan (Kellens 1989c: 35–37; Skjærvø 2003–2004: 26–35, 2007a: 854–855; Tremblay 2006b: 241–243).

While such linguistic differences have also been interpreted in diatopic terms to the exclusion of the diachronic dimension (Panaino 2007b: 24, 29–30), the Young(er) Avestan liturgical texts warrant the assumption that when they were composed the *Old(er) Avesta* not only already existed but also did so with the same internal arrangement and central importance for the *Yasna* ritual as it has in its present form (Hintze 2002). Moreover, the literary character of the liturgical *Younger Avesta* reveals that the *Older Avesta*, the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* in particular, served as its compositional model. That the *Younger Avesta* presupposes the older one as a fixed, petrified text is indicated by the numerous quotations and adaptations from both the *Gāthās* and the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti*. Such citations may be either verbatim or adapted in varying degrees to different literary contexts. For example, Y 14.1, which appears in Old Avestan garb and has been included by scholars amongst the Middle Avestan texts, takes its compositional model from the *Yasna Haptaŋhāiti* passage Y 41.5, but is replaced by its Younger Avestan version when recited as Vr 5.1 in the *Vīšperad* ceremony (Hintze 2013a):

Old Avestan: Y 41.5 θβōi staotarascā mąθranascā ahurā mazdā
aogəmadaēcā usmahicā vīsāmadaēcā

We are declaring ourselves, are aspiring and making ourselves available
to be your praisers and chanters, O Wise Lord.

Middle Avestan: Y 14.1 vīsāi vā aməšā spəntā
staotā zaotā zbātā yaštā framarətā aibijarətā

I shall make myself available, O Life-giving Immortals,
as your praiser, priest, invoker, sacrificer, reciter, welcomer.

Young Avestan: Vr 5.1 vīse vō aməšā spənta
staota zaota zbāta yašta framarəta aibijarəta

I am making myself available, O Life-giving Immortals,
as your praiser, priest, invoker, sacrificer, reciter, welcomer.

In the oral, and later written, tradition of the *Avesta*, the respective idioms of the three passages, belonging to chronologically successive linguistic strata, continued to be distinguished. Instances like this testify to the continued compositional practice of Zoroastrian priests in the same vein as that of the *Older Avesta*.

That a considerable time elapsed between the composition of the *Old(er)* and *Young(er)* *Avesta* is also suggested by the presence of doctrinal developments (Kellens 1987; Stausberg 2002b: 117–156). The Zarathustra myth as summarized above is fully developed in the *Young(er)* *Avesta*. Moreover, Young(er) Avestan priests, while being inspired by the *Old(er)* *Avesta* in their compositions, developed their own exegetical tradition while the *Old(er)* *Avesta*, whose language gradually became archaic and eventually obscure, required explanation. This emerges from Young(er) Avestan commentaries on Old Avestan texts, particularly on the three holy prayers (the *Ahuna Vairiia*, the *Aṣəm Vohū*, and the *Yēfhe Hātəm*) in Y 19–21 respectively. They indicate that an exegetical tradition, documented by the Pahlavi translations and commentaries of the *Avesta*, existed not only in Middle Iranian times but already in the Young(er) Avestan period. This suggests that from the earliest times there was a continuous tradition during which the religious system developed and solidified.

The Provenance of the *Avesta*

It is not possible to locate the Avestan language geographically by associating it with any particular known dialect. While its geographical horizon is that of Southern Central Asia and Eastern Iran, it displays no phonological features characteristic of Eastern Iranian languages of later periods (Sims-Williams 1998: 136). As not only its composition but also the transmission of the *Avesta* was oral, by the time it was eventually committed to writing at some point in the, presumably, late Sasanian period (5th to 6th centuries CE) phonetic features from different local dialects seem to have entered its pronunciation at various stages of its transmission. Some of the peculiarities which are at variance with standard Avestan sound laws have been attributed to North-East Iranian (especially Sogdian), others to an otherwise unattested South-East Iranian ‘Arachotic’ dialect, and others again to Old Persian (Hoffmann and Narten 1989: 39–49, 77–85 with references; disputed by Tremblay 1996: 104–106). That local phonetic features entered the recitation of the *Avesta* is corroborated by the *Aṣəm Vohū* prayer in a Sogdian fragment (Gershevitch 1976; Hintze 1998a: 155–156; Skjærvø 2003–2004: 31).

While no geographical names occur in the *Gāthās*, the *Young(er)* *Avesta* mentions identifiable toponyms from Southern Central Asia and the Indo-Iranian borderlands (Gnoli 1987). Places such as the *Vourukaša* Sea, Lake *Kāsaoya* (the modern Lake Hāmūn) and the river *Haētumant* (the modern river Helmand in Sīstān) play significant parts in epic and theological imagery in the *Avesta*. Some of the beliefs, such as the birth of the “victorious” *Saošiiaṇt*, or world savior, are especially connected with the land of Sīstān. Cultic practices involving excessive spilling of blood by killing animals, burning of the juniper plant, and bodily convulsions of the *daēuua*-worshipping *Vyamburas*, described and rejected in Yt 14.54–56, are similar to those observed in the early 19th century among the “Kafirīs” in Nuristan in northeastern Afghanistan. They are still attested among the Kalash Kafirs and other peoples in the Hindukush (Schwartz 1990).

The insider perspective presents *Airiiana Vāējah* of the good (river) *Dāitiia* as the homeland of the Mazdayasnian religion. This was the land where Ahura Mazdā offered

sacrifices to Anāhitā and expressed the wish that he might succeed in persuading and teaching Zarathustra “to think, speak and act according to the Mazdayasnian Religion” (Yt 5.17–19). Yima, who had previously declined Ahura Mazdā's invitation to serve the religion (Vd 2.1–4), was, like Ahura Mazdā, ‘renowned’ (*srutō*) in that land (Vd 2.20–21), as was Zarathustra, since it was there that he had recited the *Ahuna Vairiia* prayer for the first time:

Y 9.14 *srūtō airiēne vāējahe*
tūm paoiriō zaraθuštra
ahunəm vairīm frasrāuuaiiō
vībərəθβantəm āxtūirīm
aparəm xraoždīehiia frasrūiti

Being renowned in Airiiana Vāējah,
 you, O Zarathustra, were the first
 to recite the *Ahuna Vairiia*,
 divided into phrases, four times,
 the last time with louder recitation.

That Zarathustra brought to mankind the religion that focuses on the worship of Mazdā and rejects the *daēuuas* is a conviction that has been upheld in the Zoroastrian tradition throughout the centuries. This emerges, for example, from the colophon following the *Memoir of Zarēr* in the oldest extant Pahlavi manuscript, the codex MK dating from 1321 CE (Jamasp-Asana 1913 II: 17):

MK fol.19v1–4: *namāz zardušt ī spitāmān kē āwurd dēn ī weh mazdēs nān abēzag rawāg pad*
ayārīh ī wištāsp-šāh ud zarēr ud spandyād.

Homage to Zarathustra, the Spitamid, who brought the good religion of the Mazdā-worshippers, the pure (and) current, with the help of King Wištāsp and Zarēr and Spandyād.

Starting from the ritual site where Zarathustra spread out the sacrificial straw, the “good Mazdayasnian religion,” expressing the mindset of one who sacrifices to Mazdā, rather than the *daēuuas*, expanded over the seven regions:

Yt 13.94 *ušta nō zātō āθrauua*
yō spitāmō zaraθuštrō
frā nō yazāite zaoθrābiō
stərətō.barəsmā zaraθuštrō
iḏa apəṇ vījasāiti
vaṇʰ hi daēna mādaiiasniš
vīspāiš auuī karšuuəṇ yāiš hapta

Hail to us, (for) the priest
 Spitama Zarathustra has been born.
 Zarathustra will worship for us with libations,
 with sacrificial straw spread out.

From here then will spread
the good, Mazdā-worshipping religion
over all seven regions.

The title *aθauruuan-*, which here applies to Zarathustra, is a general term for ‘priest’, one of whose tasks was to travel far and wide and spread the religion (Y 9.24, 42.6; Yt 16.17, quoted in Hintze 2009b: 178). One of its derivatives, the noun *aθauruna-* ‘priestly service’, describes an activity which any member of the community, regardless of age or gender, is encouraged to pursue after having undergone the necessary training. Chapter 5 of the priestly treatise entitled *Hērbedestān* seems to suggest that each family was expected to send out at least one of its members for ‘priestly service’ within a certain period of time for the dual purpose of disseminating the teachings of the Mazdayasnian religion and of carrying out various religious and ritual activities. The newly formed communities would then in turn have to send out some of their own members for *aθauruna-*, thus creating a domino effect which would account for the spread of the Mazdayasnian religion throughout the lands inhabited by Iranians (Hintze 2009b).

Conclusion

Linguistic, literary and conceptual characteristics suggest that the *Old(er) Avesta* pre-dates the *Young(er) Avesta* by several centuries. Although it is currently not possible to correlate archaeological and linguistic evidence, the most likely model historically is that Iranian tribes were on the move southwards into Iran some time around the mid-2nd millennium BCE. The provenance of the *Avesta* and of the Zoroastrian religion would then coincide with that of the Avestan language and early Iranians, presumably in the area of Southern Central Asia. The prehistoric origin of the religion is also indicated by the archaic formation of the adjective *māzdaiiasni-* characterizing the worldview, or *daēnā-*, of someone who worships Mazdā rather than *daēuuas*. Traces in the *Hērbedestān* for the idea of its planned dissemination suggest that the religion had a particular pre-historic starting point. The latter also forms part of the Zarathustra myth, according to which he started the Mazdayasnian religion in *Airiiana Vāējah*.

Further Reading

The most thorough archaeological attempt to resolve the problem of the Indo-Iranian migrations is Kuz'mina (2007). A good survey of the complex issues involved is Lamberg-Karlovsky (2002), which includes not only the author's own views but also comments by other experts in different disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology. Hintze (2009a) and Huyse (2009) survey Avestan and Old Persian literature respectively, and Jamison (1991: 1–41) surveys Vedic literature.

Sims-Williams (1998) gives both a concise presentation of Old Iranian grammar in comparison with Vedic and Middle Iranian and an annotated bibliography. The most recent survey of Avestan grammar is Skjærvø (2009), and for Old Avestan syntax see West (2011). The most detailed discussions of the relationship between Old(er) and Young(er) Avestan are Tremblay (2006b) and, with diametrically opposed conclusions, Skjærvø (2003–2004) and Panaino (2007b).

CHAPTER 3

Interpretations of Zarathustra and the *Gāthās*

CHAPTER 3A

The *Gāthās*

Helmut Humbach

Spitāma Zaratruštra (Zarathustra) is regarded by his followers, the Zoroastrians, as the prophet of the Mazdayasnian (Zoroastrian) religion. This view is also shared by the majority of non-Zoroastrian scholars. Non-Zoroastrians have, of course, the privilege to doubt that Zarathustra was a prophet in the strict sense of the word. As a matter of fact, it is possible that the Avestan term *mazdaiiasnō zaratruštriš* ‘Mazdayasnian [and] Zarathushtrian’ in its first occurrence, the Old Avestan Profession of Faith (Y 12.1–6), was no tautology as it is now generally assumed: It could originally have denoted the Mazdayasnian of Zarathushtrian observance, the existence of other observances of Mazdaism being implied, such as that of the Median Magi. However that may be, Zarathustra is the outstanding figure of the early political and religious history of the Iranian tribes.

Neither the geographical nor the chronological frame of the rule of Zarathustra’s host, protector, and sponsor *Kauii* ‘Prince’ Vīštāspa are known to us. Of some interest is, though, the name of Tūra Friiāna (Y 46.12), the ancestor of an undefined group partaking in a ritual arranged by Vīštāspa; the name points to inhabitants of the Turanian steppes of Central Asia (understood as “non-Iranians” in the *Younger Avesta*). Certainly more fruitful is the examination of the prophet’s own name.

Scholars agree that Av. *Zaratruštra* is a compound with the well-attested Avestan form of the word for ‘camel’ (Av. *uštra-*) as its second member (parallel to Av. *aspa-* ‘horse’ in the name of *Haēcat. aspa*, Y 46.15), desperately thinking of the prophet’s transmitted name as a variant of a hypothetical **Zaraṭ. uštra*, which would be absolutely irregular. In my opinion the problem cannot be resolved but by analyzing *Zaratruštra* as *Zaraṭ. huštra*

with *huštra* ‘camel’ instead of *uštra*. Underlying *huštra*- must have been a variant of *uštra*- in Zarathustra’s mother tongue, a solution which is of some historical consequence: Zarathustra’s native speech was not Avestan, as is generally taken for granted by believers and scholars, but it must have been the Old Iranian pre-form of a dialect related to the language of Sogdiana (the Central Asiatic lands between the Oxus and Iaxartes) documented since the 4th century CE. In Sogdian the word for ‘camel’ is attested as *xwštr*.

Old Avestan as adopted by the prophet for ritual purposes was a priestly language of an ancient tradition going back to Indo-Iranian prehistory. The re-evaluation of all values in connection with the downfall of the old gods attributed to Zarathustra by tradition did not extend to a notable number of inherited ritual terms and expressions such as the enigmatic phrase “footprints of (personified) cream-offering” (Y 50.8), which has a clear parallel in the Old Indian *Rigveda* (RV 10.70.8).

The *Gāthā* collection comprises seventeen songs (*hāiti*). According to their respective meters, they are arranged in five *Gāthās* (Y 28–34, 43–46, 47–50, 51, 53). Extraordinary in many respects is the fifth *Gāthā*, which covers just one song (Y 53). It was composed by Zarathustra to accompany a private event, the marriage of Pourucistā, his youngest daughter, with Djāmāspa (YAv. Jāmāspa). In this song the new couple, and the other participants in the ceremony as well, are given some instructions, partly of a sexual character, for a happy and successful married life. Unfortunately the song is enigmatic in several respects. Not only are numerous details poorly transmitted in the manuscripts, but even the name of the bridegroom, which, as suggested by the Pahlavi tradition, would be expected to be given in a separate stanza, is completely lost.

Seven of the remaining sixteen songs altogether show thirteen occurrences of Zarathustra’s name (Y 28.6, 29.8, 33.14, 43.8, 16, 46.13, 14, 19, 49.12, 50.6, 51.11, 12, 15). In reply to the question “Who are you?” the prophet introduces himself most explicitly as “Zarathustra” (Y 43.7–8). Yet elsewhere he speaks of himself in the third person, which, according to several scholars, would be a strong argument against his authorship, but which is likely a figure of speech. With regard to the expected reaction it is the natural desire of any worshipper to not only be noticed by the deity but also identified correctly by him or her.

When Zarathustra suggests himself as being the author of a *Gāthā* song, this does not necessarily mean that he would be its author in the modern sense of the word. In principle it is easily possible that he himself, no less than his rivals, borrowed smaller or larger portions of text from previous poets.

Most of the sixteen songs in question mainly follow an associative way of thought, displaying a quite simple poetic technique which mainly operates with lexical and grammatical variations of single terms or of sets of nouns such as “thought, word, action/deed” and “family, community, tribe,” or of the degrees of adjectival comparison such as “good, better, best.” Particularly notable is the stylistic feature of synecdoche in “my soul” for “I” (Y 50.1), “the soul of the cow” for “the cow” (Y 29.1), “the intellects of the benefactors” for “the benefactors” (Y 46.3).

Two songs stand out, Y 29 and Y 47. The former is a product of archaic mysticism: The soul of the cow (i.e., the cow) complains about being mistreated by her owner (compare Pahl. *a-paymān kušēd* ‘slaughters incorrectly’), whereby it attracts the attention of